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E-Verify released an update related to work authorization, pursuant to a Supreme Court order allowing immediate termination of the 2023 Venezuela Temporary Protected Status designation.

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[OFLC Resumes Application Processing; Delays Expected](#) – The Office of Foreign Labor Certification has resumed processing of employer requests for prevailing wages and labor certification determinations for temporary and permanent employment in the United States.

[Court Sets Expedited Briefing Schedule for \\$100K H-1B Fee Challenge](#) – The judge hearing a legal challenge to a \$100,000 fee on employers seeking to sponsor an employee for an H-1B visa has ordered that all legal briefings in the case be completed by December 8, 2025.

[USCIS Receives 'Overwhelming' Number of Applications for New 'Homeland Defender' Positions](#) – The announcement did not specify what vetting procedures or training Homeland Defenders will undergo to enable them to perform the specified duties of the position.

[Annual Asylum Fees Paused in Response to Court Order](#) – U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services has paused the issuance of Annual Asylum Fee (AAF) notices in accordance with a court order.

[DHS Terminates South Sudan TPS Designation](#) – The Department of Homeland is terminating South Sudan's designation for Temporary Protected Status, effective January 5, 2026.

[DOS Signals Upcoming Changes to DV Program, Postpones Launch of DV-2027](#) – The Department of State is implementing "certain changes" to the Diversity Visa (DV) entry process and has postponed the start date for the launch of DV-2027.

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DOS Expands Social Media Vetting to H-1B and H-4 Visa Applicants

Starting December 15, 2025, the Department of State (DOS) will [extend](#) its enhanced social media vetting to H-1B specialty-occupation workers and their H-4 dependent family members. This newest expansion of the government's online presence screening practices for foreign nationals applies to both new visa applications and renewals.

Highlights include:

- While DOS has not released detailed standards governing how consular officials will evaluate online content for H-1B and H-4 applicants, it is anticipated that it will be in line with DOS's June 2025 [rollout](#) of enhanced social media vetting for F, J, and M visa applicants. In its initial implementation, DOS instructed applicants to make their social media accounts publicly viewable and emphasized that consular officers may review online activity as part of the national security and eligibility assessment underlying every visa adjudication.
- The DS-160 already requires most nonimmigrant visa applicants to list all social media identifiers or usernames used during the past five years. DOS may treat a lack of accessible online presence or refusal to make accounts public as a warning sign. Also, a history of political activism, while not necessarily grounds for denial, may contribute to extended processing.
- In line with current vetting practices for F, J, and M visa applicants, consular officers will likely use the same online review tools to assess credibility, verify consistency with the offered employment, and evaluate compliance with past immigration status. Officers may also review online activity for indicators of potential security risks, including expressions of hostility toward U.S. institutions, affiliations that could implicate national-security concerns, or content that suggests involvement in or sympathy for unlawful conduct. Social media content that appears inconsistent with an applicant's job title, employer affiliation, work location, or prior status history, or that raises such security concerns may trigger follow-up questioning or administrative processing.

The Department of State also [reportedly](#) sent a cable to all diplomatic and consular posts to "be on the lookout" for H-1B visa applicants who are "responsible for or complicit in the censorship of Americans." The cable defines such activities as "adopting global content moderation policies inconsistent with freedom of expression, complying with global content moderation or censorship demands from a foreign entity and providing access to private data on American citizens in connection with content moderation." In addition to social media profiles and posts, DOS said, evidence could be obtained from resumes, work histories, and public statements.

Further, there have also been recent [reports](#) of H-1B visa refusals issued under § 214(b) of the immigration statute based on perceived credibility issues—even though H-1B status is a dual-intent category that should not be subject to traditional nonimmigrant-intent denials. While § 214(b) is normally used to refuse visas that require strong ties abroad, consular officers may invoke it for H-1B visa applicants when social-media review uncovers inconsistencies in employment information, questions about prior status compliance, or other credibility concerns, potentially increasing denial risks under the expanded vetting framework.

Employers and affected H applicants should anticipate longer processing times, lengthy background checks, and greater emphasis on consistency across their stated employment, resume, immigration history, online presence, and any potential security-related indicators.

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USCIS Reduces Maximum Validity Period for Some Work Permits

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) has [reduced](#) the maximum validity period for Employment Authorization Documents (EADs) for certain categories. This update also incorporates changes to EAD validity periods made by recent legislation, USCIS said. USCIS Director Joseph Edlow said the reductions will enable increased vetting and "ensure that those seeking to work in the United States do not threaten public safety or promote harmful anti-American ideologies."

The maximum validity period for initial and renewal EADs has been changed from five years back to 18 months in several categories for applicants for work authorization that were pending or filed on or after December 5, 2025, including those:

- Admitted as refugees or granted asylum or withholding of removal;
- With pending applications for asylum or withholding of removal;
- With pending applications for adjustment of status under INA § 245; and
- With pending applications for suspension of deportation, cancellation of removal, or relief under the Nicaraguan Adjustment and Central American Relief Act.

As required by H.R. 1, the "One Big Beautiful Bill Act," the validity period for initial and renewal EADs will be one year or the end date of the authorized parole period or duration of Temporary Protected Status (TPS), whichever is shorter, for those whose work authorization applications were pending or filed on or after July 22, 2025, including those:

- Paroled as refugees or granted TPS or parole;
- With pending TPS applications; and
- Who are noncitizen spouses of persons with entrepreneur parole.

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USCIS Announces New 'Vetting Center'

On December 5, 2025, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) [announced](#) the establishment of a new USCIS Vetting Center to be headquartered in Atlanta, Georgia. The new center will be "a specialized unit to strengthen the ability of America's immigration system to screen out terrorists, criminal aliens, and other foreign nationals who pose potential threats to public safety or who have committed fraud or other crimes."

USCIS said that once the new vetting center "is fully operational, it will draw on the full spectrum of classified and nonclassified screening and vetting capabilities and provide a more thorough supplemental review of immigration applications and petitions. These reviews will leverage state-of-the-art technologies, including artificial intelligence." The center will use "Department of Homeland Security and other law enforcement and intelligence community screening resources to conduct this critical work and will be tasked with conducting reviews of pending applications as well as a more holistic review of already-approved applications," USCIS said. Reviews conducted by the center "will prioritize applications from presidentially designated countries of concern."

The announcement did not say when the center would be fully operational.

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USCIS Orders 'Hold and Review' of All Pending Asylum Applications, Review/Re-Review of Benefit Applications of Those From 'High-Risk Countries'

On December 2, 2025, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) issued a [memorandum](#) ordering USCIS personnel to "hold and review" all pending asylum applications and all USCIS benefit applications filed by those from "high-risk countries." The memo also calls for re-review and re-interview of certain applicants.

USCIS said it has determined that a "comprehensive re-review, potential interview, and re-interview" of those from high-risk countries of concern who entered the United States on or after January 20, 2021, is necessary. USCIS said it "may, when appropriate, extend this review and re-interview process to aliens who entered the United States outside of this timeframe."

The high-risk countries are listed in [Presidential Proclamation 10949](#), issued in June 2025. Secretary of Homeland Security Kristi Noem reportedly met with President Trump recently to discuss [expanding](#) the number of countries included in the Trump administration's travel ban to more than 30, and those plans are [moving forward](#). A Department of State (DOS) cable sent out in June [reportedly said](#) that the agency "has identified 36 countries of concern that might be recommended for full or partial suspension of entry if they do not meet established benchmarks and requirements within 60 days."

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DOS Prioritizes Attendees of Sports Events, Investors; Announces "FIFA PASS" Initiative

According to [reports](#), the Department of State (DOS) has sent cables to all diplomatic and consular posts instructing them to prioritize visa applications for U.S. visitors coming for major sports events, including the FIFA World Cup and the Olympics, and businesspeople considering "significant investments."

As part of this effort, DOS [announced](#) a new "FIFA Priority Appointment Scheduling System (PASS)," an initiative to prioritize attendees of World Cup events in the United States in 2026. DOS said that further information regarding the FIFA PASS "will be shared with ticket holders in early 2026."

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Workforce Coalition Presses DHS and DOL on H-2B Supplemental Visas for FY 2026

On December 2, 2025, a group of organizations calling itself the "H-2B Workforce Coalition" [urged](#) Secretary of Homeland Security Kristi Noem and Secretary of Labor Lori Chavez-DeRemer to "promptly make available 64,716 supplemental H-2B visas for fiscal year 2026" due to a "dire shortage of seasonal labor." The coalition said the visas "will provide employers with the ability to better handle their labor challenges, as they will have additional certainty regarding their workforce planning decisions in the coming months."

The coalition also urged the agencies "to promptly publish a temporary rule implementing the release of these supplemental visas," and expressed support for the Trump administration's "efforts to increase access to H-2B visas for foreign nationals from the Northern Triangle countries and Haiti, Colombia, Ecuador, and Costa Rica."

The coalition represents "small and seasonal businesses" across the United States in industries such as "lodging, landscaping, seafood, restaurants, tourism, equine, forestry, mobile outdoor amusement, golf courses, and others." The letter says that the coalition's members "rely on the H-2B visa program to supplement their U.S. workforce during seasonal surge and peak business needs."

Trump Vows Crackdown After National Guard Shootings

After an Afghan asylum recipient shot two National Guardsmen in the District of Columbia, killing one and putting the other in critical condition, President Trump [vowed](#) to take additional actions against certain noncitizens in the United States or waiting to get in. He called for a halt to asylum decisions, a "[permanent pause](#)" on "migration from all Third World Countries," and an indefinite pause on visas for Afghan nationals, along with reviewing those who were admitted under the Biden administration. He also [ordered](#) a review of green card holders from 19 countries and threatened other actions, including denaturalizing "migrants who undermine domestic tranquility" and deporting those who are "non-compatible with Western Civilization." He said the goal was "achieving a major reduction in illegal and disruptive populations."

Shortly after President Trump's post, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) Director Joseph Edlow [confirmed](#) that USCIS "has halted all asylum decisions until we can ensure that every alien is vetted and screened to the maximum degree possible." USCIS officers [can still work on](#) asylum applications and review cases but will not approve, deny, or close applications until further notice. He also [said](#) that "[a]t the direction of @POTUS, I have directed a full scale, rigorous reexamination of every Green Card for every alien from every country of concern." The Department of State [said](#) the agency has "IMMEDIATELY paused visa issuance for individuals traveling on Afghan passports." According to [reports](#), there are about 265,000 Afghans outside of the United States whose applications were in the pipeline, including approximately 180,000 Afghan applicants for Special Immigrant Visas who had worked for the U.S. government. A cable sent to all diplomatic and consular posts on November 28, 2025, said that consular officers should reject all immigrant and nonimmigrant visa applications from Afghans, effective immediately. Consular officers were [told](#) not to give out any visas to Afghans, including those that have already been printed. Department of Homeland Security Assistant Secretary Tricia McLaughlin [said](#), "Effective immediately, processing of all immigration requests relating to Afghan nationals is stopped indefinitely pending further review of security and vetting protocols. The Trump Administration is also reviewing all asylum cases approved under the Biden Administration."

The 19 countries whose green card holders will undergo a review [include](#) Afghanistan, Burma, Chad, Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Haiti, Iran, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Yemen, Burundi, Cuba, Laos, Sierra Leone, Togo, Turkmenistan, and Venezuela. USCIS [said](#) it "will consider relevant country-specific factors when using its broad discretionary authorities" regarding people from these countries. "Effective immediately, I am issuing new policy guidance that authorizes USCIS officers to consider country-specific factors as significant negative factors when reviewing immigration requests," USCIS Director Edlow [said](#). USCIS said the new [policy guidance](#), "including consideration of country-specific factors such as a country's ability to issue secure identity documents," applies to requests pending or filed on or after November 27, 2025. The guidance notes that country-specific factors "include but are not limited to insufficient vetting and screening information that limits USCIS' ability to assess the risks posed" by people from the identified countries.

A motive for the shootings has not yet been identified. According to reports, the person who shot the National Guardsmen entered the United States under [Operation Allies Welcome](#) in 2021 after he had [worked with the United States](#) on counterterrorism operations in Afghanistan. He was vetted along with others who came in via that program. The Trump administration [granted him asylum](#) earlier this year. His green card was pending.

Afghans in the United States [expressed horror](#) at the shootings. An Afghan community coalition said that "[t]wenty years of Afghan-U.S. partnership must not be forgotten."

DHS Terminates Temporary Protected Status Designation for Haiti and Burma

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) announced that it is terminating Temporary Protected Status (TPS) designations for [Haiti](#) and [Burma](#).

- **Haiti.** The termination of the Haiti TPS designation is effective February 3, 2026. DHS said those leaving the United States can use the [CBP Home mobile application](#) to report their departure. The self-deportation process "includes a complimentary plane ticket, a \$1,000 exit bonus, and potential future opportunities for legal immigration to the United States," DHS said. DHS issued the related [Federal Register notice](#) on November 28, 2025. DHS estimated that there are approximately 352,959 nationals of Haiti (and those having no nationality who last habitually resided in Haiti) who hold TPS under Haiti's designation.
- **Burma.** The termination of the Burma TPS designation is effective January 26, 2026. DHS said that Burmese nationals leaving the United States are "encouraged" to use the CBP Home app. DHS issued the related [Federal Register notice](#) on November 25, 2025. DHS estimated that there are 3,969 current approved beneficiaries under the designation of Burma for TPS.

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USCIS, CBP, ICE Announce New 'Inflationary Adjustments' for Certain Fees

On November 21, 2025, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) announced increases in fees for certain benefits as [mandated](#) by the "[One Big Beautiful Bill Act](#)" (H.R. 1) for Fiscal Year (FY) 2026.

- USCIS's [notice](#) lists the adjusted fees, effective January 1, 2026. USCIS warned that "[a]ny immigration benefit request postmarked on or after that date without the proper filing fee will be rejected." As an example, the fee for an initial asylum or initial parole applicant filing Form I-765, Employment Authorization Document, is increasing from \$550 to \$560. The notice explains USCIS's methodology in calculating the fee increases.
- CBP's [notice](#) states that fees are increasing for enrollment in the Electronic Visa Update System (from \$30 to \$30.75) and the Electronic System for Travel Authorization (from \$40 to \$40.27), and for those paroled into the United States (from \$1,000 to \$1,020).
- CBP said that in accordance with H.R. 1, the existing fee for Form I-94 Arrival/Departure Record applications will not change for FY 2026. Accordingly, the total fee to apply for a CBP Form I-94 at a land border port of entry for FY 2026 will continue to be \$30, consisting of the \$6 land border fee and the \$24 H.R. 1 fee. (CBP does not assess a fee for those arriving at air or sea ports of entry because they are not required to submit an application for a CBP Form I-94.)
- ICE's [notice](#) states that the adjusted fee amount for individuals removed in absentia and inadmissible individuals arrested between ports of entry is increasing from \$5,000 to \$5,130.

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USCIS Now Accepting Only Electronic Payments for Benefit Requests, With Exceptions

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) released a reminder that as of October 28, 2025, it is accepting payments only through [Pay.gov](#) for benefit requests filed electronically, with some exceptions. For benefit requests mailed to USCIS, it will only accept ACH debit transactions using [Form G-1650](#).

[Authorization for ACH Transactions](#), or credit, debit, or prepaid card payments using [Form G-1450, Authorization for Credit Card Transactions](#).

Those qualify for an exemption from the requirement to use an electronic payment method should mail the benefit request, with the correct fee payment and a completed and signed [Form G-1651, Exemption for Paper Fee Payment](#), to the [appropriate lockbox](#). Practitioners [recommend](#) placing the form on top of the packet (including the cover letter) so USCIS sees the form first.

USCIS said that those requesting an exemption must certify that electronic payment and collection methods are not possible and they meet one or more of the following requirements:

- They do not have access to banking services or electronic payment systems;
- Electronic disbursement would cause them undue hardship, as discussed in 31 C.F.R. Part 208;
- Non-electronic transactions are necessary or desirable for national security or law enforcement reasons; or
- There are other circumstances as determined by the Secretary of the Treasury, as reflected in regulations or other guidance.

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USCIS Adjusts EB-5 Fees Under Court Order

On November 18, 2025, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) [announced](#) adjustments to certain EB-5-related fees under a district court order in *Moody v. Noem*, issued November 12. The order stayed certain fees codified by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) in the [2024 Fee Rule](#), which became effective April 1, 2024. USCIS noted that the court determined that the EB-5 Reform and Integrity Act of 2022 precluded DHS from adjusting EB-5 program fees in the 2024 Fee Rule. DHS and USCIS said they "believe the Court's decision is incorrect but are working to implement it."

Effective immediately, USCIS will accept the fees that were in effect until March 31, 2024, which are listed in the "Current Fee" schedule in USCIS's announcement. USCIS said that in general, petitioners and applicants "should pay fees according to the 'Current Fee' schedule, not the higher 'Previous Fee' schedule." However, for items postmarked November 26, 2025, or earlier, USCIS will also accept payment of the Previous Fee. For items postmarked after that date, USCIS will reject petitions or applications that are accompanied by the Previous Fee.

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TSA Launches Alternative ID Verification Program and Fee

On November 20, 2025, the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) [announced](#) that it is launching a "modernized alternative identity verification program" at TSA checkpoints for those without the required acceptable form of identification, such as a [REAL ID](#) or passport.

For participants in the optional program, TSA will check the traveler's "biographic and/or biometric identification to verify identity and match the individual to their Secure Flight watch list result" and will charge a nonrefundable \$18 fee. TSA said that collection of the fee "will begin when TSA announces that individuals may register for the modernized alternative identity verification program on the TSA website [TSA.gov](#)." TSA noted that those who use the alternative identity verification program may still be subject to additional screening or experience delays.

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E-Verify Updates Policy Under Supreme Court Order Allowing Termination of 2023 Venezuela TPS Designation

E-Verify released an [update](#) on November 14, 2025, related to work authorization, pursuant to a Supreme Court order allowing immediate termination of the 2023 Venezuela Temporary Protected Status (TPS) designation.

E-Verify said that for Forms I-766, Employment Authorization Documents (EADs), the termination means that:

- For beneficiaries of the 2021 designation for Venezuela TPS who do not have an EAD or Form I-94, Arrival/Departure Record, with an October 2, 2026, expiration date, their TPS and employment authorization terminated on November 7, 2025. EADs with a category A12 or C19 and an expiration date of September 10, 2025; March 10, 2024; or September 9, 2022, issued under the 2021 TPS designation of Venezuela were automatically extended until November 7, 2025. Employers must have reverified TPS Venezuela beneficiaries who presented these EADs before they started work on November 8, 2025.
- With a timely filed EAD renewal application, EADs with a category A12 or C19 and an expiration date of September 10, 2025, or April 2, 2025, for TPS beneficiaries who reregistered under the January 17, 2025 [extension notice](#) may still be [automatically extended for up to 540 days](#). Employees must present their Form I-797, Notice of Action, indicating that their Form I-765, Application for Employment Authorization (EAD renewal) was received before February 6, 2025.

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Shutdown Aftermath: Visa Services Resume, Delays Expected

According to reports, routine visa services have resumed after the federal government shutdown [ended](#) on November 12, 2025, after a record 43 days. Federal funding has been extended until January 30, 2026, but delays and backlogs remain. Although [funding through fees](#) helped to continue some visa services during the shutdown, staff furloughs and layoffs have led to slowdowns, and coordination among agencies is also an issue. Documenting the reason for any delay is [recommended](#) for employers.

The Department of Labor (DOL) [announced](#) before the shutdown ended that the Office of Foreign Labor Certification (OFLC) [resumed processing on October 31, 2025](#), of employer requests for prevailing wages and labor certification determinations for temporary and permanent employment in the United States. OFLC's [Foreign Labor Application Gateway \(FLAG\)](#) system is now accessible, DOL said, as is OFLC's [SeasonalJobs.dol.gov](#) system, an online job registry of H-2A and H-2B temporary job opportunities. Processing and response times may be longer than normal, OFLC said.

The Executive Office for Immigration Review provides [updated operational status information](#) for each immigration court. For information about a particular case, check the [Automated Case Information System](#) online or at 800-898-7180 (TDD: 800-828-1120) or [call the immigration court](#) handling the case.

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DOS Expands Public Charge Exclusions, Encourages Visa Officers to Speculate

According to [reports](#), the Department of State sent a cable to diplomatic and consular posts that greatly expands the public charge reasons for excluding visa applicants beyond the current requirements of a medical exam, required vaccines, and screening procedures.

"Certain medical conditions—including, but not limited to, cardiovascular diseases, respiratory diseases, cancers, diabetes, metabolic diseases, neurological diseases, and mental health conditions—can require hundreds of thousands of dollars' worth of care," the cable warns. It also includes obesity and age in the list of conditions visa officers should consider, along with the health of dependent family members and potential future scenarios. The cable encourages officers to speculate: "Does the applicant have adequate financial resources to cover the costs of such care over his entire expected lifespan without seeking public cash assistance or long-term institutionalization at government expense?"

[Reportedly](#), the new guidance primarily applies to immigrant visas, not nonimmigrants and short-term visitors.

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Visa Bulletin for December Notes Extension of 'Certain Religious Workers' Category

The Department of State's [Visa Bulletin for December 2025](#) includes the following update:

H.R. 5371, signed on November 12, 2025, extends the Employment Fourth Preference Certain Religious Workers (SR) category until January 30, 2026. No SR visas may be issued overseas, or final action taken on adjustment of status cases, after midnight January 29, 2026. Visas issued prior to that date will be valid only until January 29, 2026, and all individuals seeking admission in the non-minister special immigrant category must be admitted (repeat admitted) into the United States no later than midnight January 29, 2026.

As indicated in item D of the November 2025 Visa Bulletin, the extension resulted in this category immediately becoming available in November, subject to the same final action dates as the other Employment Fourth Preference categories per applicable foreign state of chargeability. For December, the applicable SR final action date will be 01SEP20 for all countries.

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OFLC Resumes Application Processing; Delays Expected

The Department of Labor (DOL) [announced](#) that the Office of Foreign Labor Certification (OFLC) has resumed processing of employer requests for prevailing wages and labor certification determinations for temporary and permanent employment in the United States. OFLC's [Foreign Labor Application Gateway \(FLAG\)](#) system is now accessible, DOL said, as is OFLC's [SeasonalJobs.dol.gov](#) system, an online job registry of H-2A and H-2B temporary job opportunities.

OFLC said it is "taking all steps necessary to resume application processing." OFLC anticipates "increased requests for stakeholder assistance, and this means some stakeholders may experience longer than normal processing and response times."

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Court Sets Expedited Briefing Schedule for \$100K H-1B Fee Challenge

The judge hearing a legal challenge to a \$100,000 fee on employers seeking to sponsor an employee for an H-1B visa ordered that all legal briefings in the case be completed by December 8, 2025.

Judge Beryl Howell's order specified that the government had to file its opposition to summary judgment by November 28, 2025. The Chamber and the Association of American Universities (AAU) are allowed to file a reply to the government's arguments, due December 8, 2025. Following completion of briefings, the court will decide whether to hold oral argument, although Judge Howell recognized that the plaintiffs had established that they were entitled to prompt judicial review. As such, according to [observers](#), the judge may be prepared to issue a decision before the end of December.

If the Chamber and AAU prevail, the court could invalidate or enjoin enforcement of the Proclamation nationwide. Regardless of the initial decision, the losing party will have the right of appeal to the District of Columbia Circuit Court. The DC Circuit may allow the [Presidential Proclamation](#) establishing the fee to stay in effect or may allow it to stay blocked while the litigation proceeds in the DC Circuit. A final decision would then be more than a year away, but Judge Howell's initial decision—and whether the DC Circuit allows that decision to go into effect while it considers the appeal—is expected to clarify, for employers and H-1B visa holders, how long they will need to be concerned about the Proclamation and its \$100,000 fee.

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USCIS Receives 'Overwhelming' Number of Applications for New 'Homeland Defender' Positions

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) [announced](#) on November 6, 2025, that since starting its hiring campaign for "Homeland Defenders" on September 30, the agency "has received an overwhelming 35,000-plus applications—the most for any position in agency history" and has made "hundreds of job offers," with more to come.

USCIS said it is seeking "fiercely dedicated, America-first patriots to serve on the frontlines and hold the line against terrorists, criminal aliens, and bad actors intent on infiltrating our nation. This includes interviewing aliens, reviewing applications, and identifying criminal or ineligible aliens." Among those receiving offers, USCIS said, are "former law enforcement personnel and veterans who have experience serving and protecting their communities and our homeland." The announcement did not specify what vetting procedures or training Homeland Defenders will undergo to enable them to perform the specified duties of the position. USCIS said it "has cut red tape and can make on-the-spot job offers at upcoming job fairs."

USCIS Director Joseph Edlow said that USCIS is "not wasting time" and is hiring "at a rapid pace," and that he looks forward to "onboarding many more Homeland Defenders in the coming weeks."

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Annual Asylum Fees Paused in Response to Court Order

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) [announced](#) on November 7, 2025, that in accordance with an October 30, 2025, court order, it has paused the issuance of [Annual Asylum Fee \(AAF\) notices](#).

"Any applicant who has received a notice from USCIS instructing him or her to pay the AAF may disregard that notice while the temporary stay is in place. USCIS will not refund previously paid annual

asylum fees, and applicants who paid the fee should retain their receipts. USCIS will issue updated instructions on payment of the AAF pending further litigation developments," the agency said.

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DHS Terminates South Sudan TPS Designation

On November 5, 2025, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) [announced](#) that it has published a [Federal Register notice](#) terminating South Sudan's designation for Temporary Protected Status (TPS), effective January 5, 2026.

The Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements (SAVE) program [noted](#) that:

- Employment Authorization Documents (EADs) with a category of A12 or C19 and a Card Expires date of November 3, 2025; May 3, 2025; or November 3, 2023, issued under a prior TPS designation of South Sudan are now valid through January 5, 2026. TPS South Sudan applicants or beneficiaries presenting an EAD from a previous TPS South Sudan designation are not required to show any other document, such as a Form I-797 or Form I-797C, Notice of Action, approval or receipt notice, to establish the new EAD validity period.
- SAVE will verify if a person has TPS or a pending TPS application (and any updated employment authorization validity period) using information from any documents noted above. In some instances, the benefit-granting agency may need to institute additional verification.
- If a person's TPS has expired and they have no other lawful status, SAVE will provide a "No Status" response.
- Benefit applicants whose TPS has been terminated may have another lawful basis to remain in the U.S. and may also be employment-authorized based on another immigration status or a pending application.

DHS said that South Sudanese nationals leaving the United States "should use the U.S. Customs and Border Protection [CBP Home Mobile App](#) to report their departure from the United States and take advantage of a safe, secure way to self-deport that includes a complimentary plane ticket, a \$1,000 exit bonus, and potential future opportunities for legal immigration."

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DOS Signals Upcoming Changes to DV Program, Postpones Launch of DV-2027

The Department of State (DOS) [announced](#) on November 5, 2025, that it is implementing "certain changes" to the Diversity Visa (DV) entry process and has postponed the start date for the launch of DV-2027.

"We will announce the start date for the DV-2027 registration period as soon as practicable, as well as the date that DV-2027 selection results may become available through the Entry Status Check (ESC)," DOS said, adding that the changes "will not affect the visa application period for individuals selected for DV-2027, which will remain October 1, 2026, to September 30, 2027."

DOS did not indicate a reason for the delay. Some analysts [reportedly](#) believe that it may be related to eligibility and registration requirements under review, in addition to the federal government shutdown.

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New Publications and Items of Interest

Know your rights. A number of organizations, including the [American Civil Liberties Union](#) (ACLU) ([English](#) and [Spanish](#)), the [Immigrant Legal Resource Center](#), [Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc.](#), the [National Immigrant Justice Center](#), the [American Immigration Lawyers Association](#), and the [Asian Law Caucus](#), have published resources highlighting immigrants' and nonimmigrants' rights in the United States and at ports of entry, including "know your rights" information and what documents they may want to carry when traveling inside the United States. ACLU of Northern California also released [Know Your Rights: U.S. Airports and Ports of Entry](#).

E-Verify webinars: E-Verify has [added a webinar](#) with a focus on acceptable documents for Form I-9 verification, and has updated its [calendar of webinars](#).

SAVE webinars: Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements (SAVE) has updated its [calendar of webinars](#).

Immigration agency X (formerly Twitter) accounts:

- EOIR: @DOJ_EOIR
- ICE: @ICEgov
- Study in the States: @StudyinStates
- USCIS: @USCIS

Alliance of Business Immigration Lawyers: ABIL is available on X (formerly Twitter): [@ABILImmigration](#)

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ABIL Member/Firm News

Klasko Immigration Law Partners, LLP, has published a client alert: [Expedited Briefing Schedule Set in Lawsuit Challenging the \\$100K H-1B Fee](#).

Cyrus Mehta has authored several new blog posts: [Trump's Escalating Extreme Immigration Measures Towards Noncitizens in the Wake of the National Guard Member Shootings Will Not Make America Any Safer](#), [Navigating the Immigration Maze in an Age of Fear and Hope](#), [Reappraisal of the Encouragement Provision as Interpreted in United States v. Hansen Under Trump's Immigration Policies](#), and [Immigrant Power Through Mamdani's Historic Win as NYC Mayor](#).

Mr. Mehta was quoted by the *Times of India*:

- [International Students – OPT – 180 Days Auto Extension Continues](#). Mr. Mehta said, "The 180-day automatic extension will still be available to F-1 students seeking the additional STEM-OPT."
- [Donald Trump Admin Ends Automatic Work Permit Extensions, Placing Nearly One Lakh \[100,000\] Indian Spouses at Risk of Job Disruptions](#). Mr. Mehta said, "Even if [U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services] is advising that people start the renewal process [for an Employment Authorization Document (EAD)] up to 180 days before, it is likely to take longer than six months. This will cause disruption and delays as employees may no longer be able to work if the EAD has not been renewed prior to the expiration of the current EAD."

Stephen Yale-Loehr, of **Miller Mayer, LLP**, was quoted by *Newsweek* in *8 Immigration Judges Fired in Latest Trump Admin Move*. Noting that President Trump's plan for large-scale removals is running into a bottleneck of nearly four million pending cases, he said that "you just cannot deport people without a hearing."

Mr. Yale-Loehr and four other Cornell Law experts will present a free webinar on Thursday, January 8, 2026, from 1 to 2 p.m. ET on how immigration law and policy changed in 2025 and what we might expect in 2026. More information and registration is here:

<https://ecornell.cornell.edu/keynotes/overview/K010826a/> If you can't make the live webinar, you can register to get the link to view the webinar afterwards.

Mr. Yale-Loehr authored an op-ed: [The U.S. Economy Needs International Students Now More Than Ever](#).

Mr. Yale-Loehr was quoted by *Chosun Biz* in [Trump Orders Review of Green Cards From 19 Countries After Washington, DC, Terror Shooting](#). He said, "A green card is a right protected by constitutional due process. An executive order revoking green cards solely on the basis of nationality, without individualized criminal facts or evidence of fraudulent entry, is clearly constitutionally suspect." He predicted that as with the "Muslim travel ban" executive order under the first Trump administration, "this measure is also likely to be drawn into protracted legal battles in federal court, including motions for temporary restraining orders."

Government Agency Links

Follow these links to access current processing times of the USCIS Service Centers and the Department of State's latest Visa Bulletin with the most recent cut-off dates for visa numbers:

USCIS case processing times online: <https://egov.uscis.gov/processing-times/>

Department of State Visa Bulletin: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/legal/visa-law0/visa-bulletin.html>

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About ABIL

The Alliance of Business Immigration Lawyers (ABIL) offers a single point of contact for customer needs, news alerts, staff training, and other programs that benefit clients through the collaboration of more than 400 member lawyers and their more than 1,000 staff. Corporate counsel, human resource professionals, in-house immigration managers, and other corporate decision-makers turn to ABIL lawyers for outstanding legal skills and services. ABIL's work also includes advocating for enlightened immigration reform, providing speakers and media sources, presenting at conferences, publishing books and articles on cutting-edge immigration topics, and sharing best practices, all with the ultimate goal of offering value-added services to business immigration clients.

The Alliance of Business Immigration Lawyers' website is at <https://www.abil.com/>.

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