



U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

USCIS Reaches FY 2017 H-1B Cap

Release Date: April 07, 2016

WASHINGTON – U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) has reached the congressionally mandated H-1B cap for fiscal year (FY) 2017. USCIS has also received more than the limit of 20,000 H-1B petitions filed under the U.S. advanced degree exemption.

USCIS will use a computer-generated process, also known as the lottery, to randomly select the petitions needed to meet the caps of 65,000 visas for the general category and 20,000 for the advanced degree exemption.

USCIS will first randomly select petitions for the advanced degree exemption. All unselected advanced degree petitions will become part of the random selection process for the 65,000 general cap. The agency will reject and return filing fees for all unselected cap-subject petitions that are not duplicate filings.

Before running the lottery, USCIS will complete initial intake for all filings received during the filing period, which ended April 7. Due to the high number of petitions, USCIS is not yet able to announce the date it will conduct the random selection process.

USCIS will continue to accept and process petitions that are otherwise exempt from the cap. Petitions filed on behalf of current H-1B workers who have been counted previously against the cap, and who still retain their cap number, will also not be counted toward the congressionally mandated FY 2017 H-1B cap. USCIS will continue to accept and process petitions filed to:

- Extend the amount of time a current H-1B worker may remain in the United States;
- Change the terms of employment for current H-1B workers;
- Allow current H-1B workers to change employers; and
- Allow current H-1B workers to work concurrently in a second H-1B position.

U.S. businesses use the [H-1B program](#) to employ foreign workers in occupations that require highly specialized knowledge in fields such as science, engineering and computer programming.

We encourage H-1B applicants to subscribe to the H-1B Cap Season email updates located on the [H-1B Fiscal Year \(FY\) 2017 Cap Season](#) Web page.

For more information on USCIS and its programs, please visit uscis.gov or follow us on Facebook ([/uscis](#)), Twitter ([@uscis](#)), YouTube ([/uscis](#)) and the USCIS blog [The Beacon](#).

Last Reviewed/Updated: 04/07/2016

