



U.S. and Canadian Immigration and Nationality Law (Bimonthly) Newsletter and Updates.

Dear Reader:

Happy New Year. As we begin 2026, immigration compliance and planning continue to bring new challenges for employers and foreign nationals. With the next H-1B cap season approaching, now is the time to review headcount needs, confirm job requirements, and prepare documentation early.

Notably, DHS announced on December 23, 2025 that it plans to replace the current random H-1B lottery with a weighted selection process that may favor higher-skilled and higher-paid registrations, with the stated goal of better protecting U.S. wages and job opportunities. The rule is scheduled to take effect on February 27, 2026 and is expected to apply to the FY 2027 H-1B cap registration season, while annual limits remain 65,000 plus 20,000 for U.S. advanced degree holders.

DHS and DOJ also announced on December 29, 2025 that they have finalized a rule clarifying when an applicant may be barred from asylum or withholding of removal if the individual is deemed a danger to U.S. security, including in certain public health emergency circumstances. The rule maintains the public health-related provisions while withdrawing outdated amendments, and it became effective December 31, 2025. The announcement follows USCIS's December 2 hold on asylum application processing pending a broader review, signaling a continued tightening of screening and eligibility standards for protection-based filings.

We encourage you to stay informed as immigration and travel-related policies evolve. If you have any questions about how these changes may affect your status, workforce, or travel plans, please contact NPZ Law Group at info@visaserve.com

or call 201-670-0006 (ext. 104). Our experienced U.S. and Canadian immigration attorneys are ready to assist you.

Know Your Rights: What to Do If ICE Comes to Your Home, Workplace, or Stops You in Public (English & Spanish Versions). [Please click here](#) to download and feel free to share it with your friends and family.

Here are this month's top stories to keep you informed:

ABC's OF H-1Bs (THIS IS PART 1 OF AN 7 PART SERIES) H-1B FILING SEASON GETS INTO FULL-SWING FOR H-1B EMPLOYERS AND PROSPECTIVE H-1B EMPLOYEES.

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) requires employers seeking to file H-1B cap-subject petitions, including those eligible for the advanced degree exemption, to first electronically register and pay the associated \$215.00 H-1B registration fee before filing a petition.

[To read more, please click here . . .](#)

DHS OVERHAULS THE H-1B LOTTERY: WHAT EMPLOYERS AND FOREIGN WORKERS NEED TO KNOW.

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has announced a major change to how H-1B work visas will be selected in the future. For the first time, the government is moving away from the long-criticized random lottery system and replacing it with a weighted selection process that favors higher-paid and higher-skilled workers.

[To read more, please click here . . .](#)

USCIS INTRODUCES A WEIGHTED H-1B CAP SELECTION SYSTEM: WHAT CHANGES STARTING FY 2027.

On December 23, 2025, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) announced a major change to how H-1B cap registrations will be selected in future years. Instead of using a fully random lottery, USCIS will begin using a weighted selection system that gives higher chances of selection to higher-paid positions.

[To read more, please click here . . .](#)

WORLD CUP 2026 AND U.S. VISA RESTRICTIONS: WHAT INTERNATIONAL FANS AND TRAVELERS SHOULD KNOW.

With the 2026 FIFA World Cup set to take place across multiple U.S. cities, many international fans are planning travel to attend matches, support their national teams, and experience the tournament. At the same time, ongoing U.S. travel

restrictions and visa policies are creating uncertainty for travelers from certain countries.

[To read more, please click here . . .](#)

IMPORTANT H-1B UPDATE: PRESIDENTIAL PROCLAMATION AND \$100,000 FEE.

A recent Presidential Proclamation introduces significant changes for certain new H-1B workers, including a temporary pause on approvals and new entry restrictions unless a \$100,000 government fee is paid.

[To read more, please click here . . .](#)

USCIS UPDATES PHOTO RULES TO STRENGTHEN IDENTITY VERIFICATION.

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) has issued new guidance that limits the age of photos used for certain immigration documents. Effective immediately, USCIS generally requires photos to have been taken within three (3) years of the date a USCIS form is filed.

[To read more, please click here . . .](#)

UNDERSTANDING THE NEW USCIS “GOLD CARD” PROGRAM: WHAT WE KNOW SO FAR.

USCIS has released instructions for a new filing option, Form I-140G, Immigrant Petition for the Gold Card Program, created under Executive Order 14351 (“The Gold Card”). This program introduces a unique pathway that allows certain high-net-worth individuals to request permanent residence under an employment-based category.

[To read more, please click here . . .](#)

MAJOR VISA APPOINTMENT CHANGES FOR H-1B AND H-4 APPLICANTS: WHAT TRAVELERS AND EMPLOYERS NEED TO KNOW.

Many H-1B and H-4 visa applicants are experiencing unexpected changes to their stamping appointments at U.S. consulates abroad. Starting December 8, 2025, consular posts began rescheduling interviews originally set for mid-December and beyond. Many new dates now fall in March 2026, and some are being pushed as far out as June 2026.

[To read more, please click here . . .](#)

UNLOCKING THE O-1 VISA: A PRACTICAL GUIDE FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH EXTRAORDINARY ABILITY.

For many talented professionals, artists, researchers, founders, and athletes, the O-1 visa is one of the most strategic ways to work in the United States. It is often chosen by individuals who are highly accomplished in their field and want a path that does not require a degree, does not rely on a lottery, and offers the flexibility to build a long-term future in the U.S.

[To read more, please click here . . .](#)

UNDERSTANDING L-1A, L-1B, AND L-1 BLANKET VISAS: A PRACTICAL GUIDE FOR GLOBAL BUSINESSES EXPANDING TO THE U.S.

Many international companies look to the United States to expand their operations—whether it's an IT firm, a medical group, or a restaurant business entering the U.S. market. One of the most effective immigration tools for this type of expansion is the L-1 visa, which allows companies to transfer key personnel from a foreign office to a U.S. entity.

[To read more, please click here . . .](#)

DOS VISA BULLETIN UPDATE: VISA BULLETIN FOR JANUARY 2026 - IF YOUR "PRIORITY DATE" IS CURRENT, PLEASE LET US KNOW?

The January 2026 Visa Bulletin opens the calendar year with notable forward movement in several Employment-Based categories, steady progress in Family-Based preferences, and an important reminder regarding the pending expiration of the Religious Worker (SR) program. Applicants should review the updates carefully, as demand continues to shape cut-off dates early in FY 2026. **[Read more . . .](#)**

[To view the current cutoff dates for each visa preference category and country of chargeability, please click here to access two charts provided by the U.S. Department of State's monthly visa bulletin.](#)

CANADIAN IMMIGRATION LAW NEWS.

CANADA INTRODUCES NEW RESTRICTIONS ON STEEL IMPORTS: WHAT BUSINESSES AND CROSS-BORDER COMPANIES SHOULD KNOW.

Canada has announced a new round of restrictions affecting steel and steel-related imports. These measures, which took effect in late December 2025, significantly change how certain steel products and derivative goods are treated at the border.

[To read more, please click here . . .](#)

CANADA'S NEW CITIZENSHIP-BY-DESCENT RULES ARE NOW IN EFFECT: WHAT FAMILIES ABROAD NEED TO KNOW.

Canada has officially implemented new citizenship rules that affect Canadians born or adopted outside the country, and their children. These changes are now in force under Bill C-3, an amendment to the Citizenship Act, and are intended to make citizenship law clearer and more consistent for modern Canadian families living internationally.

[To read more, please click here . . .](#)

CANADA UPDATES POST-GRADUATION WORK PERMIT (PGWP) RULES: WHAT INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS NEED TO KNOW.

Canada has issued an important update to its Post-Graduation Work Permit (PGWP) program that directly affects international students graduating in 2025 and beyond.

[To read more, please click here . . .](#)

NPZ's Immigration Insights: New YouTube Series on U.S. & Canadian Law

H-1B & H-4 VISA STAMPING DELAYS: WHAT TRAVELERS AND EMPLOYERS NEED TO KNOW.



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Managing Attorney

H-1B & H-4 Visa Stamping Delays That Travelers and Employers Need to Know

YOUR LATEST INTERVIEW DATE.

 **SUBSCRIBE**

PUBLIC CHARGE CRACKDOWN: NEW DOS MEMO, STRICTER VISA INTERVIEWS & WHAT FAMILIES MUST PREPARE.



Snehal Batra, Esq.
Managing Attorney

Public Charge Crackdown: New DOS Memo, Stricter Visa Interviews - What Families Must Prepare For (Dec 2025)



 **SUBSCRIBE**

UPCOMING EVENT

NJICLE Webinar: H-1B Visa Update: Navigating the Effect on Employers

February 5, 2026

Time: 9:00am-11:00am

Venue: Online via Zoom

[Register now — click here](#)

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