

# Navigating the H-1B Cap Registration Season: Key Dates and Fee Changes for 2025

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As we approach the H-1B cap season for fiscal year 2026, it is crucial for employers and prospective H-1B candidates to stay informed about the registration process, important deadlines, and recent changes.

## Key Dates for H-1B Cap Registration

- **Registration Period:** The registration period begins on March 7, 2025, at noon EST, and will close at noon EST on March 24, 2025. During this time, employers must submit the necessary information about their prospective H-1B employees through the USCIS online registration system and pay the required fees.
- **Lottery Selection:** Assuming USCIS receives more registrations than the allotted number of visas available (which happens nearly every year), the agency will conduct a lottery selection. By March 31, 2025, USCIS will notify employers which of their registrants were selected, if any.
- **Petition Filing:** Employers whose registrations are selected will be given a 90-day window to file H-1B petitions starting April 1, 2025. Approved petitions will be effective on October 1, 2025.
- **Supplemental Lottery Selection:** USCIS may conduct supplemental lotteries if the initial round does not meet the annual cap due to withdrawals, rejections, or failure to timely file H-1B petitions. They generally announce the supplemental lottery in late July or early August, with the possibility of additional lotteries if needed. Any registrants who were not selected are automatically considered in the supplemental lottery.

## Increased Registration Fee

One of the most significant changes for the upcoming H-1B cap season is the increase in the registration fee. Previously set at \$10, the fee has been raised to \$215 per registration. This fee is non-refundable, regardless of selection result. Employers should ensure they account for this change when budgeting for the H-1B registration process.

## Preparation Tips

- **Early Planning:** Begin gathering the necessary documents and information well before the registration period opens. This includes verifying the eligibility of potential H-1B candidates and ensuring compliance with all legal requirements.
- **Stay Updated:** Keep an eye on USCIS announcements for any changes or updates to the registration process or timeline. This will ensure you are well-prepared to meet all deadlines.
- **Consider Alternatives:** If a registration is not selected in the lottery, explore other visa options, or consider reapplying in the next cap season.

Navigating the H-1B cap registration process can be complex, but staying informed about the important dates and changes can help streamline the experience. By preparing early and understanding the process, employers and candidates can maximize their chances of securing an H-1B visa for the upcoming fiscal year.

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