

## Employers: Start Planning Now for H-1B Visa Petitions

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US employers wishing to secure H-1B visas to permit foreign nationals to work in professional positions need to start planning now. ***The H-1B visa category is currently capped at 65,000 visas per year for visa applicants*** with bachelor's degrees or the equivalent (not limited to US degrees or experience), with 20,000 additional visas allotted to those with master's or higher degrees from qualifying US academic institutions. The first day for an employer to file an H-1B visa petition is Wednesday, April 1, 2015 - employment for approved filings begins October 1, 2015, the first day of the new federal fiscal year.

In the past few years, the government received significantly more visa petitions than available under the quota, and a computer operated lottery system was implemented to select candidates for review. It has been predicted that with the economy on the rise this year, even more filings will be made than in previous years, and early filing is critical. In order to file on time, employers need to begin reviewing possible employees now, securing US credentials evaluations, and making the required preliminary government filings as soon as possible.

Please note that H-1B visa transfers from other US employers are not subject to the annual H cap. These potential employees should be evaluated to determine the maximum length of time left in H-1B status, and if desired, options for permanent residency.

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