

PUBLICATION

H-1B CAP Alert: Key Dates and Updates to the FY 2027 H-1B Registration Process

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Mark your calendars: the H-1B CAP lottery opens March 4, 2026, at 12:00 p.m. ET, and will run through March 19, 2026, at 12:00 p.m. ET! During this period, prospective petitioners (U.S. employers) and representatives must use a USCIS online account to electronically register each beneficiary (prospective H-1B employee) for the selection process and pay the associated \$215 registration fee for each beneficiary. In addition, USCIS will use a weighted selection process this year, which will favor allocating H-1B visas to higher-skilled and higher-paid beneficiaries while maintaining the opportunity for petitioners to secure H-1B professionals at all wage levels.

If you are an H-1B petitioning employer who does not have a USCIS online account, you will need to create an organizational account. If you are a first-time registrant, please contact your Baker Donelson Immigration Team to create an account as soon as possible.

Baker Donelson and other representatives may begin adding clients to their accounts at any time, however, both representatives and registrants must wait until **March 4, 2026**, to enter individual beneficiary information and submit the \$215 registration fee. The USCIS has also confirmed that there is no requirement to register a beneficiary on the first day of the registration period, as selections will take place after the registration period closes on March 19, 2026.

Updates for FY2027

In addition to the \$100,000 fee imposed on certain H-1B petitions (see alert here: [Sigh of Relief for Many H-1B Workers and Petitioning Employers: USCIS Issues Clarification on \\$100,000 H-1B Fee | Baker Donelson](#)), USCIS is now using a weighted selection process that increases the probability of selection based on the salary level offered to the sponsored employee. Beneficiaries will receive multiple entries in the lottery based on the experience and skill-based wage level that corresponds to the offered salary under the Department of Labor's four-tier structure. For example, candidates offered the highest Level 4 wage will receive four entries in the selection pool; while those offered the lowest Level 1 wage, the entry-level tier, will receive only one entry in the selection pool. This means that employers must carefully consider job descriptions, experience and education requirements, and the appropriate corresponding salary level for the offered H-1B position. As part of the individual registration, petitioners will also need to provide additional details about the offered position and salary to ensure that the candidate receives the appropriate number of entries into the lottery pool.

The FY2027 H-1B CAP will again utilize the "**beneficiary-centric**" selection process launched in FY2025. A beneficiary's **passport or other valid travel document** will be required for an H-1B CAP registration submission and will be used as the **beneficiary's unique identifier** for selection in the H-1B CAP lottery. In addition to the details related to the offered position and salary noted above, we urge employers to begin gathering the following information and documentation for each prospective H-1B employee:

- Full legal name
- Gender
- Date of birth

- Country of birth
- Country of citizenship
- **Valid passport information—(the beneficiary must use the same passport or travel document for all registrations filed on their behalf)**
- Copy of university degree(s) and transcript(s) to determine whether the beneficiary is eligible for the U.S. advanced-degree cap or will be eligible for the advanced-degree cap at the time an H-1B cap petition is filed (i.e. receive advanced degree by June 30th, 2026) on the beneficiary's behalf.

If USCIS receives enough registrations to reach the congressionally mandated 65,000 H-1B regular cap and the 20,000 H-1B master's cap **by March 19, 2026**, the agency will randomly select unique beneficiaries and send selection notifications via users' USCIS online accounts. If not enough registrations are received, all properly submitted registrations for unique beneficiaries during the initial registration period will be selected. By **March 31, 2026**, USCIS intends to notify prospective petitioners and representatives whose accounts have at least one registration selected.

For more information see: [FY 2027 H-1B Cap Initial Registration Period Opens on March 4 | USCIS](#)

Our Immigration Team is prepared and well-equipped to guide, assist, and represent employers through the H-1B process. If you have any questions or would like more information on the issues discussed, please contact a member of Baker Donelson's [Immigration Team](#).