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Client Alert: FY 2027 H-1B Cap Lottery Registration and Selection

As you know, the FY 2027 H-1B lottery will look different than in years past. Last year, a rule was released subjecting registrants in the lottery to a process that gives greater weight to those with higher skills and higher pay. While the number of H-1B visa issued will not increase, the current random selection is shifting to a weighted selection that will grant an alien with higher skills and higher pay an increased possibility for selection. The final rule is effective February 27, 2026, just in time for the FY 2027 H-1B cap registration season.

While specifics have not yet been released, Shumaker is keeping a close eye on these announcements and will alert clients once more information becomes available to better prepare you for the registration and lottery selection process. To do so, we are providing you with information that can be completed and provided in anticipation of the registration period in March.

Here are the categories of employees you should consider:

- Any employees entered into last year's lottery who were not selected
- Any employee working under the F-1 Optional Practical Training (OPT) program—even those with STEM extensions in place—who need to be transitioned to H-1B status
- Any individual the company wishes to hire from abroad to work for in the U.S. in a professional position

The H-1B registration requests the employer's: (1) legal entity name, (2) primary address, (3) Federal Employer Identification Number (FEIN), and (4) authorized signatory's contact information. It will also request the foreign national's: (1) name, (2) gender, (3) date of birth, (4) country of birth and citizenship, (5) passport number, and (6) whether s/he has at least a master's degree from a U.S. institution. This year, we are also anticipating adding Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) codes and wage levels.

SERVICE LINE

Immigration

RELATED PROFESSIONALS

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If you have a candidate who you would like entered into the FY 2027 H-1B lottery, please provide us with copies of the following:

1. Biographic page of candidate's passport^[1];
2. Current immigration status;
3. Copy of candidate's resume/CV;
4. Copies of diploma(s) and transcript(s) for *all* degrees held;
5. Proposed job description, including job title and salary^[2];
6. Proposed work site location(s), including whether remote work will be allowed.

Today, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) released the dates for the initial registration period:

- March 4, 2026: The FY 2027 H-1B lottery initial registration period opens at noon Eastern Standard Time (EST). This involves the employer creating an online account with USCIS and submitting their H-1B registration during this time.
- March 19, 2026: The registration period closes at noon EST. All registrations must be submitted by this date.
- Late March 2026: USCIS will conduct the initial lottery and notify employers whose registrations have been selected by March 31, 2026.
- April 1, 2026: The petition filing period opens for those selected in the lottery. Employers have 90 days to submit the complete H-1B petition and supporting documents.
- June 30, 2026: Last day to submit petitions for FY 2027 under the regular lottery process.

If you would like assistance with entering candidates into the FY 2027 H-1B lottery selection process, please contact Maria Ramos as soon as possible.

^[1] USCIS now requires registrants to provide valid passport information or valid travel document information. The passport or travel document provided must be the one the beneficiary, if or when abroad, intends to use to enter the United States if issued an H-1B visa. Each beneficiary must only be registered under one passport or travel document.

^[2] While the registration does not ask specifically about the proposed job duties or work site location, our office will need this information in order to establish that the individual qualifies for an H-1B specialty occupation related to their degree and to determine the SOC Code and wage level for the proposed job.