

Global Directions

Americas

United States

FY 2020 H-1B Cap Updates: Premium Processing Limited to Change of Status Filings, Employer Data Made Public

US Citizenship and Immigration Services (“USCIS”) recently announced that it will be reinstating premium processing in two phases for H-1B cap-subject petitions filed for inclusion in the [FY 2020 cap](#).

Premium processing will initially be offered for cap-subject petitions requesting a change of status. Although USCIS will accept premium processing requests for these petitions upon filing, premium processing will not begin until May 20, 2019, at the latest.

Premium processing will be made available for all other cap-subject petitions in June 2019, at the earliest.

USCIS also announced that beginning April 1, 2019, a new H-1B Employer Data Hub will be available on USCIS.gov. The data hub will contain information about employers that use the H-1B program and will make available to the public key data points including petitioner name, city, state, zip code, and NAICS industry code.

Brazil

Brazil to Offer Visa Waiver for US, Canadian, Japanese, and Australian Citizens

Effective June 17, 2019, citizens of the United States, Canada, Japan, and Australia will benefit from a waiver of visa requirements when traveling to Brazil for tourism. The change was announced by Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro on March 18 following his meeting with US President Donald Trump. Following their meeting, the two presidents issued a joint statement that they “agreed to take the steps necessary to enable Brazil to participate in the Department of Homeland Security’s Trusted Traveler Global Entry Program.”

The visa waiver for US, Canadian, Japanese, and Australian citizens is an effort to bolster tourism in Brazil and generate employment and income for Brazilian citizens. Currently, US citizens can travel to Brazil for tourism by first obtaining an e-visa online.

Asia

Australia

Government Targets Labor Shortage in Regional Areas Through Introduction of New Visa Categories

On March 20, 2019, the government announced new measures aimed to boost the economy of regional Australia, which includes parts of the country beyond the major cities, regions that suffer from labor shortages. One key change is the introduction of two new Skilled Regional Provisional visas for skilled workers, which would require visa holders to live and work in regional Australia for three years as a prerequisite for permanent residence. Applicants in:

- The Skilled Employer-Sponsored Regional visa category: Must be sponsored by an employer to work in a regional area
- The Skilled Work Regional visa category: Must be:
 - Nominated by a state or territory government or
 - Sponsored by an eligible family member located in a regional area

Applicants will have access to a larger pool of jobs on the eligible occupation lists compared to those who live in major cities. In addition, applications for the two new regional visa categories will be priority processed. The

government will issue up to 23,000 Skilled Regional Provisional visas a year. Applications for these visas will be accepted beginning in November 2019.

In addition, the government will begin offering AU \$15,000 scholarships to 1,000 domestic and international students each year to attract Australian and international students to study in regional Australia. International students studying at regional universities will be provided an additional year in Australia on a post-study work visa.

China

Skilled Migration System to be Piloted in Guangdong Province

The Chinese government recently announced plans to pilot a skilled migration system in nine cities in Guangdong province. The program will offer permanent residency on an expedited basis. The program will use a points-based evaluation system and new processes for identifying and evaluating talent. Additional details of the program are forthcoming.

Vietnam

E-Visa Program Expanded

The Vietnamese government recently announced the addition of new nationalities to its e-visa program. Currently, nationals from the following countries are eligible for e-visas: Andorra, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Croatia, Cyprus, Estonia, Fiji, Georgia, Hong Kong, Iceland, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Macau, Macedonia, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mexico, Micronesia, Moldova, Monaco, Montenegro, Nauru, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Portugal, Qatar, San Marino, Serbia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, Switzerland, Vanuatu, and Western Samoa. The e-visa allows individuals from these countries to apply for a visa online prior to traveling to Vietnam for periods of stay 30 days or less for the purpose of business or tourism. Employment is not permitted under the e-visa program.