



U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

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Cap Count for H-2B Nonimmigrants

The H-2B Program

The H-2B non-agricultural temporary worker program allows U.S. employers to bring foreign nationals to the United States to fill temporary non-agricultural jobs. For more information about the H-2B program, see the link to the left under "H-2B Non-Agricultural Workers."

What is the H-2B Cap?

There is a statutory numerical limit, or "cap," on the total number aliens who may be issued a visa or otherwise provided H-2B status (including through a change of status) during a fiscal year. Currently, the H-2B cap set by Congress is 66,000 per fiscal year, with 33,000 to be allocated for employment beginning in the 1st half of the fiscal year (October 1 - March 31) and 33,000 to be allocated for employment beginning in the 2nd half of the fiscal year (April 1 - September 30). Any unused numbers from the first half of the fiscal year will be made available for use by employers seeking to hire H-2B workers during the second half of the fiscal year. There is no "carry over" of unused H-2B numbers from one fiscal year to the next.

Persons who are exempt from the H-2B cap

Generally, an H-2B worker who extends his/her stay in H-2B status will not be counted again against the H-2B cap. Similarly, the spouse and children of H-2B workers classified as H-4 nonimmigrants are not counted against this cap. Additionally petitions for the following types of workers are exempt from the H-2B cap

- Fish roe processors, fish roe technicians and/or supervisors of fish roe processing
- From November 28, 2009 until December 31, 2014, workers performing labor or services in the Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) and/or Guam.

Once the H-2B cap is reached, USCIS may only accept petitions for H-2B workers who are exempt from the H-2B cap.

Fiscal Year 2011 H-2B Cap Count

As USCIS receives H-2B petitions for fiscal year 2011, the below chart will be regularly updated.

Cap Type	Cap Amount	Beneficiaries Approved ¹	Beneficiaries Pending	Total ¹	Date of Last Count
H-2B 1st Half	33,000	14,540	3,638	18,178	11/19/10
H-2B 2nd Half	33,000 ²				

¹ This number may be higher than the actual cap, as USCIS provides an allowance for withdrawals, denials and revocations.

² As noted, if the cap is not reached for the 1st half of the fiscal year, those numbers will be made available for use during the 2nd half of the fiscal year. In some fiscal years, therefore, depending on demand for H-2B workers, more than 33,000 cap-subject persons may be granted H-2B status during the 2nd half of the fiscal year.

This page can be found at http://www.uscis.gov/h-2b_count

Last updated:11/23/2010

More Information

Forms

- I-129, Petition for a Nonimmigrant Worker
- Employment Based Forms
- Premium Processing

Other USCIS Links

- TITLE 8 CODE OF FEDERAL REGULATIONS (8 CFR)
- Public Releases: Visas: H-2A and H-2B
- Numerical Limitation Exemption for H Nonimmigrants Employed in the CNMI and Guam (PDF)

Non-USCIS Links

- U.S. Department of Labor: Foreign Labor Certification
- Department of State: Visa Bulletin
- Identification of Foreign Countries Whose Nationals Are Eligible to Participate in the H-2A and H-2B Visa Programs

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