

# Immigration Sentinel

January 2026

Fisher Broyles

## USCIS Pauses Adjudications

USCIS is pausing the adjudication of all cases for individuals from Presidential Proclamation 10949 and Proclamation 10998 travel ban countries. This includes discretionary benefit requests for adjustment of status and extensions/changes of nonimmigrant status. Full entry restrictions now apply to 19 countries plus those traveling on Palestinian Authority-issued documents. Partial entry restrictions apply to 20 countries.

## H-1B Lawsuit Over \$100K Fee

The U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia ruled in favor of DHS in a lawsuit over a new \$100,000 H-1B fee. The Chamber of Commerce and the Association of American Universities sued DHS and the State Department, arguing the presidential proclamation limiting H-1B visas and imposing a \$100,000 fee was unlawful. The court found the President acted within authority granted by Congress under immigration statutes. As a result, plaintiffs' motion was denied, and defendants' cross-motion for summary judgment was granted. The case will now go on appeal.



## Prioritizing Higher Paid

DHS announced a final rule implementing a weighted selection process for cap-subject H-1B petitions that prioritizes higher-paid individuals, effective 2/27/26. It will be in place for the upcoming Fiscal Year 2027 H-1B cap registration season.

## **DV Program Hold**

USCIS issued a policy memo placing an immediate hold on all adjustment of status, ancillary benefits, and associated waiver applications for applicants under the Diversity Immigrant Visa (DV) Program. It also directs a comprehensive review of program policies and procedures. DOS also issued further guidance for affected individuals who will or have applied for an immigration visa at U.S. Embassies and Consulates, stating that applicants can still submit applications and attend scheduled interviews, and DOS will continue scheduling appointments without rescheduling or canceling existing ones. This policy does not affect visas that have already been issued.

## **TPS & Family Reunification Parole Programs Terminated**

USCIS announced the termination of Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for Haiti. The termination will be effective 2/3/26.

USCIS announced the termination of TPS for Ethiopia, effective February 13, 2026. DHS Secretary Kristi Noem cited a determination that conditions in Ethiopia no longer meet the statutory requirements for TPS.

DHS announced the termination of all categorical family reunification parole programs for nationals of Colombia, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, and Honduras and their immediate family members. Parole under these programs will expire on January 14, 2026, unless the individual has a Form I-485 pending that was postmarked or e-filed by December 15, 2025. For individuals with pending I-485s, parole remains valid until the earlier of the parole expiration date or a final decision on the application.

## **Work Authorization to Shorten**

USCIS announced it will shorten the validity period of EADs for several categories, including for refugees and asylees, from 5 years to 18 months for applications pending or filed on or after 12/5/25. USCIS also noted the shortened validity period mandated by H.R. 1 for TPS-holders and parolees, which applies to applications pending or filed on or after 7/22/25.

## **USCIS Vetting Center Establishment**

USCIS announced the establishment of the USCIS Vetting Center, a specialized unit to be headquartered in Atlanta, GA. The stated purpose of the unit is to "centralize the enhanced vetting" of applicants and "allow the agency to respond more nimbly to changes in a shifting threat landscape."

## Gold Card

USCIS made available new [Form I-140G](#), the Immigrant Petition for the Gold Card Program. Before filling out Form I-140G, applicants must first register on [www.trumpcard.gov](http://www.trumpcard.gov) and receive confirmation that their submission was accepted. The filing fee is \$15,000 per individual, including the principal beneficiary, spouse, and any children, as applicable. The program [permits](#) foreign nationals to obtain U.S. residency by paying \$1 million for a “gold card” visa, with a \$5 million “platinum” option under development that would allow holders to spend up to 270 days in the U.S. without being subject to U.S. taxes on non U.S. income.

## January 2026 Visa Bulletin

DOS [posted](#) the January 2026 Visa Bulletin. There was minor forward progress in the priority dates of the F2A and F2B family-sponsored preference categories, with more progress seen in other family-based categories for Mexico and the Philippines. Most employment-based categories had at least minor forward progress in priority dates. Similar to the month prior, USCIS [announced](#) that all applicants in both family- and employment-based categories must use the Dates for Filing chart for filing adjustment of status application.

## FIFA World Cup Visa

DOS's updated the Foreign Affairs Manual [9 FAM 402.2-5\(C\)\(10\)](#) to provide for the issuance of B-1 visas to FIFA-accredited volunteers selected to support the FIFA World Cup 2026 in the United States. The update reflects broader World Cup-related consular preparations, including increased staffing and special appointment accommodations for ticket holders. While the FAM language establishes a clear path for volunteers, it does not benefit fans, and recent trends of increased scrutiny of visa applications may continue to affect adjudications for all other visa applicants.

## Warehousing of Immigrant Detainees

The Washington Post [reported](#) a draft solicitation from the Trump Administration seeking contractors to help it overhaul the U.S. immigrant detention system in a plan that includes renovating industrial warehouses to hold more than 80,000 immigrant detainees at a time. Currently, detainees are often shuttled around the country to wherever detention space is available, but ICE aims to speed up deportations by establishing a deliberate feeder system. Newly arrested detainees would be booked into processing sites for a few weeks before being funneled into one of several large-scale warehouses holding 5,000 to 10,000 people each, where they would be staged for deportation.

## Heightened Social Media Vetting of H-1B Workers

DOS announced that it will expand the requirement that an online presence review be conducted for all H-1B visa applicants and their dependents, in addition to the students and exchange visitors already subject to this review. DOS instructs all such applicants to set their social media profiles to public. It was reported that this expansion is part of the Trump Administration's heightened vetting of H-1B visa applicants—particularly those in the tech sector—to identify any past involvement in activities deemed “censorship” of protected speech, which could make them ineligible for entry.

## 6-Month Club Update

The CBP Carrier Liaison Program issued a bulletin updating the list of countries that are exempt from the six-month rule and need only to have a passport valid for their intended period of stay.

## Withholding of SNAP Benefits

News medias reported that the Trump Administration plans to withhold SNAP benefits from 21 Democratic-led states, including California, New York, and Minnesota, after those states refused to provide the Agriculture Department with recipients' names and immigration status. The action comes despite a federal injunction blocking the Administration from withholding funding and ongoing lawsuits challenging the legality of the data request.

## CMS To Share Data with DHS and ICE

HHS published notice that its agency and the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) will share certain information with DHS and ICE. This notice applies to data collected by CMS in connection with its role in the Medicaid program and is applicable immediately.

## Public Health Risk To Bar Asylum

USCIS and EOIR published a new rule permits DHS and DOJ to treat public health risks as a security bar to asylum and withholding of removal during a public health emergency.

**PLEASE CONTACT US AT  
CORYIMMIGRATIONTEAM@FISHERBROYLES.COM OR  
1.833.4FB.VISA WITH QUESTIONS.  
WE STAND READY TO SUPPORT!**

The materials in this newsletter are for informational purposes only. They are not intended to provide legal advice for a specific situation or create an attorney-client relationship. You should not act upon the information provided without seeking advice from a lawyer licensed in your own state or country. Under rules applicable to the professional conduct of attorneys in various jurisdictions, content on this website may be considered advertising material. The choice of a lawyer is an important decision and should not be based solely upon advertisements. Where case studies are provided, previous results are not a guarantee of similar outcomes for other clients.