



## May Visa Bulletin, continued

The Bulletin includes a warning that retrogression in future months may be necessary due to President Trump's proclamations pausing the issuance of immigrant visas to countries deemed high risk.

## FY2027 H-1B Cap Reached

USCIS announced it received enough registrations during the initial registration period to reach the Fiscal Year 2027 H-1B cap, including the master's cap. USCIS has notified prospective petitioners with selected beneficiaries that they are eligible to file. Those selected in the H-1B lottery can now file the cap-based petitions.

## Increased USCIS Screening and Vetting

USCIS announced increased screenings and vetting of applications for immigration benefits, having developed an internal process for lifting holds it placed 4 months ago on benefit applications filed by nationals of certain countries designated as high-risk. USCIS says it has already lifted holds for applicants vetted through its Operation PARRIS. USCIS further announced implementation of new enhanced screening and vetting practices to shorten validity periods of employment authorization documents, reduce reuse of fingerprints for biometric identity verification, increase interviewing and re-interviewing of applicants at USCIS field offices, and add social media and financial vetting, and community interviews.

## Annual Asylum Fee Payments

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) published an interim final rule to address the consequence of an asylum applicant failing to timely pay the Annual Asylum Fee (AFF). Beginning in 2025, an applicant is required to pay the AFF each calendar year his/her asylum application is pending. USCIS sends a notice to the applicant when the payment is due. Failure to pay the AFF within 30 days of receiving the notice will result in the asylum application being denied and immediate loss of any work authorization issued. The AFF is currently \$102.

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