



IMMIGRATION UPDATE - JANUARY 22, 2024

Posted on January 22, 2024 by Cyrus Mehta

Headlines:

[DOS Provides Guidance, FAQs on Domestic Renewal of H-1B Visas for Certain Applicants](#)

– The Department of State has released guidance and frequently asked questions on its new pilot program to resume domestic visa renewals for qualified H-1B nonimmigrant visa applicants who meet certain requirements. The pilot program will accept applications from January 29, 2024, through April 1, 2024, or when all 20,000 application slots are filled, whichever comes first.

[CBP Publishes Interim Final Rule Requiring Electronic Travel Authorization Before Traveling to Guam or CNMI and Establishing a New Travel Authorization Program](#)

– A new U.S. Customs and Border Protection interim final rule, effective September 30, 2024, requires persons intending to travel to Guam or the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) under the Guam-CNMI Visa Waiver Program to submit Form I-736 electronically before traveling and receive an electronic travel authorization before embarking on a carrier for travel to Guam or the CNMI. The rule also establishes the CNMI Economic Vitality & Security Travel Authorization Program.

[DOL Seeks OMB Approval, Comments on O*NET Data Collection Program](#)

– The Department of Labor has submitted the O*NET Data Collection Program to the Office of Management and Budget for review and approval. DOL seeks comments on O*NET by February 16, 2024.

[U.S., Mexican Officials Meet in Washington, DC, to Continue Migration Talks](#)

– Top officials from the United States and Mexico met in Washington, DC, on January 19, 2024, to continue their discussion and cooperation on efforts to reduce the flow of migrants heading to the United States from Mexico.

Details:

DOS Provides Guidance, FAQs on Domestic Renewal of H-1B Visas for Certain Applicants

The Department of State (DOS) has released guidance and frequently asked questions on its new pilot program to resume domestic visa renewals for qualified H-1B nonimmigrant visa applicants who meet certain requirements. The pilot program will accept applications from January 29, 2024, through April 1, 2024, or when all 20,000 application slots are filled, whichever comes first.

DOS said it will make available a maximum of 20,000 application slots during this pilot program. Approximately 2,000 per week will be for applicants whose most recent H-1B visa was issued by U.S. Mission Canada with an issuance date of January 1, 2020, through April 1, 2023, and approximately 2,000 per week will be for applicants whose most recent H-1B visa was issued by U.S. Mission India with an issuance date of February 1, 2021, through September 30, 2021.

Participation in the pilot program is voluntary. DOS said that individuals who do not meet the requirements for participation in the pilot program, or those who choose not to participate in the pilot program, may continue to apply for visa renewal at a U.S. embassy or consulate overseas.

Details:

- [DOS guidance/FAQs.](#)

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CBP Publishes Interim Final Rule Requiring Electronic Travel Authorization Before Traveling to Guam or CNMI and Establishing a New Travel Authorization Program

A new U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) interim final rule, effective September 30, 2024, requires persons intending to travel to Guam or the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) under the Guam-CNMI Visa Waiver Program (G-CNMI VWP) to submit Form I-736 electronically before traveling and receive an electronic travel authorization before embarking on a carrier for travel to Guam or the CNMI. The rule also establishes the CNMI Economic Vitality & Security Travel Authorization Program (EVS-TAP) as a restricted sub-program of the G-CNMI VWP.

CBP said that the CNMI EVS-TAP is being established based on consultations between the United States and the CNMI under the Covenant to Establish the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands in Political Union with the United States of America. Once implemented, EVS-TAP will allow prescreened nationals of the People's Republic of China to travel to the CNMI without a visa under specified conditions.

Comments must be received by March 18, 2024, using the method set forth in the interim final rule.

Details:

- CBP [interim final rule](#), 89 Fed. Reg. 3299 (Jan. 18, 2024).

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DOL Seeks OMB Approval, Comments on O*NET Data Collection Program

The Department of Labor (DOL) has submitted the O*NET Data Collection Program to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) for review and approval.

DOL said that O*NET is "an ongoing effort to collect and maintain current information on the detailed characteristics of occupations and skills for more than 900 occupations. The resulting database provides the most comprehensive standardized source of occupational and skills information in the nation."

OMB will consider all written comments that the agency receives by February 16, 2024.

Details:

- DOL [O*NET OMB notice](#), 89 Fed. Reg. 2985 (Jan. 17, 2024).

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U.S., Mexican Officials Meet in Washington, DC, to Continue Migration Talks

Top officials from the United States and Mexico met in Washington, DC, on January 19, 2024, to continue their discussion and cooperation on efforts to reduce the flow of migrants heading to the United States from Mexico, which has fallen since the start of 2024, due in part to Mexico's resumption of

enforcement efforts that had been paused. According to reports, the discussion included a variety of topics, and no major announcements resulted.

After a visit by U.S. officials to Mexico in late December, the two countries issued a joint communique reaffirming their mutual commitment to "orderly, humane and regular migration." Topics discussed included addressing the root causes of migration; initiatives for Cubans, Haitians, Nicaraguans, and Venezuelans; enhanced efforts to disrupt human smuggling and trafficking; and promoting legal migration pathways. Also discussed were bilateral trade and the benefit of regularizing the situation of long-term undocumented Hispanic migrants and Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals recipients. The new meeting in January was a continuation of those discussions.

Details:

- [Top U.S., Mexican Officials in Washington for Migration Talks](#), Voice of America (Jan. 19, 2024).
- [Briefing](#), Department of State (Jan. 18, 2024).
- [Mexico-U.S. Joint Communique](#) (Dec. 28, 2023).

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