CYRUS D. MEHTA & PARTNERS PLLC
US IMMIGRATION & NATIONALITY LAW

IMMIGRATION UPDATE - JANUARY 12, 2026

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Headlines:

DHS to Raise Premium Processing Fees – U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services is raising premium processing fees effective March 1, 2026.

DOL, DHS Announce Additional 35,000 Visas to Supplement FY 2026 H-2B Cap – The agencies said they will focus these additional H-2B visas on U.S. businesses with seasonal or temporary workforce needs in "critical infrastructure sectors of the U.S. economy, such as seafood, forestry, hospitality and tourism, transportation, and manufacturing."

DOS Adds Countries Subject to Visa Bonds and Expands Ports of Entry – All visa holders who have posted a visa bond must enter and exit the United States through designated ports of entry.

DHS Launches Sweeping Fraud Investigation in Minnesota – Operation PARRIS is part of a broader strategy to implement enhanced screening standards, the Department of Homeland Security said. It appears that all refugee approvals from January 21, 2021, to February 20, 2025 (approximately 233,000 cases) will be reviewed.

Details:

DHS to Raise Premium Processing Fees

On January 9, 2026, the Department of Homeland Security announced that U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) is raising premium processing fees effective March 1, 2026. Those submitting a request for premium processing postmarked on or after that date must include the new fee.

Please consult the new fee schedule below:

Form	Previous Fee	New Fee
Form I-129, Petition for a Nonimmigrant Worker, H-2B or R-1 nonimmigrant status	$1,685	$1,780
Form I-129, Petition for a Nonimmigrant Worker, all other available Form I-129 classifications: E-1, E-2, E-3 H-1B, H-3 L-1A, L-1B, LZ O-1, O-2 P-1, P-1S, P-2, P-2S, P-3, P-3S Q-1 TN-1, TN-2	$2,805	$2,965
Form I-140, Immigrant Petition for Alien Worker, employment-based classifications: E11, E12, E13 E21 (NIW and non-NIW) E31, E32 EW3	$2,805	$2,965
Form I-539, Application to Extend/Change Nonimmigrant Status, requesting: F-1, F-2 J-1, J-2 M-1, M-2	$1,965	$2,075
Form I-765, Application for Employment Authorization, for certain eligible applications (OPT and STEM-OPT Classifications)	$1,685	$1,780

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DOL, DHS Announce Additional 35,000 Visas to Supplement FY 2026 H-2B Cap

The Departments of Labor (DOL) and Homeland Security (DHS) said they will make an additional 35,000 H-2B temporary nonagricultural worker visas available for Fiscal Year (FY) 2026, on top of the congressionally mandated

66,000 H-2B visas that are available each fiscal year.

The agencies said they will focus these additional H-2B visas on U.S. businesses with seasonal or temporary workforce needs in "critical infrastructure sectors of the U.S. economy, such as seafood, forestry, hospitality and tourism, transportation, and manufacturing." DOL and DHS said they plan to release these additional H-2B visas, including any eligibility criteria and filing requirements, "in the coming weeks through a temporary final rule published in the Federal Register."

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DOS Adds Countries Subject to Visa Bonds and Expands Ports of Entry

The Department of State (DOS) has identified nationals from a list of countries as needing visa bonds. Any citizen or national traveling on a passport issued by one of these countries, who is found otherwise eligible for a B1/B2 visa, must post a bond for either $5,000, $10,000, or $15,000. The amount is determined at the time of the visa interview.

All visa holders who have posted a visa bond must enter and exit the United States through one of the designated ports of entry listed below. Failure to do so might lead to a denied entry or a departure that is not properly recorded, DOS said. The earliest date on which a visa holder who posted a visa bond may enter or exit at each port of entry is in parentheses. Additional designated ports of entry will be added on a rolling basis:

Boston Logan International Airport (BOS) (August 20, 2025)

John F. Kennedy International Airport (JFK) (August 20, 2025)

Washington Dulles International Airport (IAD) (August 20, 2025)

Newark Liberty International Airport (EWR) (January 1, 2026)

Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport (ATL) (January 1, 2026)

Chicago O'Hare International Airport (ORD) (January 1, 2026)

Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) (January 1, 2026)

Toronto Pearson International Airport (YYZ) (January 1, 2026)

Montréal-Pierre Elliott Trudeau International Airport (YUL) (January 1, 2026)

The applicant must also submit a Form I-352 with the Department of Homeland Security. Applicants must agree to the terms of the bond through the Department of the Treasury's online payment platform Pay.gov. This requirement applies regardless of place of application, DOS said.

Applicants should submit Form I-352 to post a bond only after a consular officer directs them to do so. Applicants will receive a direct payment link through Pay.gov. They must not use any third-party website for posting the bond, according to DOS.

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DHS Launches Sweeping Fraud Investigation in Minnesota

On January 9, 2026, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) announced that they have launched Operation PARRIS (Post-Admission Refugee Reverification and Integrity Strengthening) in Minnesota, "a sweeping initiative reexamining thousands of refugee cases through new background checks and intensive verification of refugee claims."

The initial focus is on Minnesota's 5,600 refugees who have not yet received green cards. DHS said that USCIS's newly established vetting center is leading Operation PARRIS, with adjudicators conducting background checks, reinterviews, and merit reviews of refugee claims.

Begun in mid-December and now referring cases to U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Operation PARRIS is part of a broader strategy to implement enhanced screening standards, DHS said. It appears that all refugee approvals from January 21, 2021, to February 20, 2025 (approximately 233,000 cases) will be reviewed.

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