Collection of Information

Title: National Business Emergency Operation Center (NBEOC) Membership Agreement Form.

Type of Information Collection: Existing collection in use without an OMB control number.

OMB Number: 1660–NW141.


Abstract: FEMA’s NBEOC collects this data for the primary purpose of maintaining a private sector stakeholder roster and mailing list for information dissemination, outreach, and coordination. FEMA leverages this information to engage stakeholders to coordinate disaster response operations, garner donations, and gain situational awareness around private sector actions that will help inform FEMA leadership and assist evidence-based decision making.

Affected Public: Business or other for-profit, Not-for-profit institutions, Federal Government, and State, Local or Tribal Government.

Estimated Number of Respondents: 232.

Estimated Number of Responses: 232.

Estimated Total Annual Burden Hours: 116.

Estimated Total Annual Respondent Cost: $6,817.

Estimated Respondents’ Operation and Maintenance Costs: $0.

Estimated Respondents’ Capital and Start-Up Costs: $0.

Estimated Total Annual Cost to the Federal Government: $7,165.

Comments

Comments may be submitted as indicated in the ADDRESSES caption above. Comments are solicited to (a) evaluate whether the proposed data collection is necessary for the proper performance of the agency, including whether the information shall have practical utility; (b) evaluate the accuracy of the agency’s estimate of the burden of the proposed collection of information, including the validity of the methodology and assumptions used; (c) enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and (d) minimize the burden of the collection of information on those who are to respond, including through the use of appropriate automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology, e.g., permitting electronic submission of responses.

Millicent L. Brown,

[FR Doc. 2021–24569 Filed 11–9–21; 8:45 am]
BILLING CODE 9111–24–P

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

[Docket No. DHS–2011–0108]

RIN 1601–ZAI1

Identification of Foreign Countries Whose Nationals Are Eligible To Participate in the H–2A and H–2B Nonimmigrant Worker Programs

AGENCY: Office of the Secretary, DHS.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: Under Department of Homeland Security (DHS) regulations, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) may generally only approve petitions for H–2A and H–2B nonimmigrant status for nationals of countries that the Secretary of Homeland Security, with the concurrence of the Secretary of State, has designated by notice published in the Federal Register. Each such notice shall be effective for one year after its date of publication. This notice announces that the Secretary of Homeland Security, in consultation with the Secretary of State, is identifying 85 countries whose nationals are eligible to participate in the H–2A program and 86 countries whose nationals are eligible to participate in the H–2B program for the coming year.

DATES: The designations in this notice are effective from November 10, 2021 and shall be without effect on November 10, 2022.


SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background

Generally, USCIS may approve H–2A and H–2B petitions for nationals of only those countries that the Secretary of Homeland Security, with the concurrence of the Secretary of State, has designated as participating...
countries. Such designation must be published as a notice in the Federal Register and expires after one year. In designating countries to include on the lists, the Secretary of Homeland Security, with the concurrence of the Secretary of State, will take into account factors including, but not limited to: (1) The country’s cooperation with respect to issuance of travel documents for citizens, subjects, nationals, and residents of that country who are subject to a final order of removal; (2) the number of final and unexecuted orders of removal against citizens, subjects, nationals, and residents of that country; (3) the number of orders of removal executed against citizens, subjects, nationals, and residents of that country; and (4) such other factors as may serve the U.S. interest. See 8 CFR 214.2(h)(5)(i)(F)(1)(i) and 8 CFR 214.2(h)(6)(i)(E)(1). Examples of specific factors serving the U.S. interest that are taken into account when considering whether to designate or terminate the designation of a country include, but are not limited to: Fraud (such as fraud in the H–2 petition or visa application process by nationals of the country, the country’s level of cooperation with the U.S. government in addressing H–2 associated visa fraud, and the country’s level of information sharing to combat immigration-related fraud), nonimmigrant visa overstays rates for nationals of the country (including but not limited to H–2A and H–2B nonimmigrant visa overstays), and non-compliance with the terms and conditions of the H–2 visa programs by nationals of the country.

As previously indicated, see 86 FR 2689, in evaluating the U.S. interest, the Secretary of Homeland Security, with the concurrence of the Secretary of State, will generally ascribe a negative weight to evidence that a country had a suspected in-country visa overstays rate of 10 percent or higher with a number of expected departures of 50 individuals or higher in either the H–2A or H–2B classification according to U.S. Customs and Border Protection overstays data, and generally will terminate designation of that country from the H–2A or H–2B nonimmigrant visa program, as appropriate, unless, after consideration of other relevant factors, it is determined not to be in the U.S. interest to do so.

Similarly, DHS recognizes that countries designated under longstanding practice by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) as “At Risk of Non-Compliance” or “Uncooperative” with removals based on ICE data put the integrity of the immigration system and the American people at risk. Therefore, unless other favorable factors in the U.S. interest outweigh such designations by ICE, the Secretary of Homeland Security, with the concurrence of the Secretary of State, generally will terminate designation of such countries from the H–2A and H–2B nonimmigrant visa programs. Because there are separate lists for the H–2A and H–2B categories, it is possible that, in applying the above-described regulatory criteria for listing countries, a country may appear on one list but not the other.

Even where the Secretary of Homeland Security has determined to terminate or decided not to designate a country, DHS, through USCIS, may allow, on a case-by-case basis, a national from a country that is not on the list to be named as a beneficiary of an H–2A or H–2B petition based on a determination that it is in the U.S. interest for that individual noncitizen to be a beneficiary of an H–2 petition. Determination of such U.S. interest will take into account factors including but not limited to: (1) Evidence from the petitioner demonstrating that a worker with the required skills is not available either from among U.S. workers or from among foreign workers from a country currently on the list described in 8 CFR 214.2(h)(5)(i)(F)(1)(i) (H–2A nonimmigrants) or 214.2(h)(6)(i)(E)(1) (H–2B nonimmigrants), as applicable; (2) evidence that the beneficiary has been admitted to the United States previously in H–2A or H–2B status; (3) the potential for abuse, fraud, or other harm to the integrity of the H–2A or H–2B visa program through the potential admission of a beneficiary from a country not currently on the list; and (4) such other factors as may serve the U.S. interest. See 8 CFR 214.2(h)(5)(ii)(F)(1)(iii) and 8 CFR 214.2(h)(6)(ii)(E)(2).

In December 2008, DHS published the first lists of eligible countries for the H–2A and H–2B Visa Programs in the Federal Register. These notices, “Identification of Foreign Countries Whose Nationals Are Eligible to Participate in the H–2A Visa Program,” and “Identification of Foreign Countries Whose Nationals Are Eligible to Participate in the H–2B Visa Program,” designated 28 countries whose nationals were eligible to participate in the H–2A and H–2B programs. See 73 FR 77043 (Dec. 18, 2008); 73 FR 77729 (Dec. 19, 2008). The notices ceased to have effect on January 17, 2010, and January 18, 2010, respectively. See 8 CFR 214.2(h)(5)(i)(F)(2) and 8 CFR 214.2(h)(6)(i)(E)(3). In implementing these regulatory provisions, the Secretary of Homeland Security, with the concurrence of the Secretary of State, has published a series of notices on a regular basis. See 75 FR 2879 (Jan. 19, 2010) (adding 11 countries to both programs); 76 FR 2915 (Jan. 18, 2011) (removing one country and adding 15 countries to both programs); 77 FR 2558 (Jan. 18, 2012) (adding five countries to both programs); 78 FR 4154 (Jan. 18, 2013) (adding one country to each program); 79 FR 3214 (Jan. 17, 2014) (adding four countries to both programs); 79 FR 74735 (Dec. 16, 2014) (adding five countries to both programs); 80 FR 72079 (Nov. 18, 2015) (removing one country from the H–2B program and adding 16 countries to both programs); 81 FR 74468 (Oct. 26, 2016) (adding one country to both programs); 83 FR 2646 (Jan. 18, 2018) (removing three countries and adding one country to both programs); 84 FR 133 (Jan. 16, 2019) (removing two countries and adding 2 countries from both programs, removing one country from only the H–2B program, and adding one country to only the H–2A program); 85 FR 3067 (Jan. 17, 2020) (remained unchanged); and 86 FR 2689 (Jan. 13, 2021) (removing two countries from both programs, removing one country from only the H–2A program, and adding one country to only the H–2B program).

**Determination of Countries With Continued Eligibility**

The Secretary of Homeland Security has determined, with the concurrence of the Secretary of State, that 80 countries previously designated to participate in the H–2A program in the January 13,
2021 notice continue to meet the regulatory standards for eligible countries and therefore should remain designated as countries whose nationals are eligible to participate in the H–2A program. Additionally, the Secretary of Homeland Security has determined, with the concurrence of the Secretary of State, that 80 countries previously designated to participate in the H–2B program in the January 13, 2021 notice continue to meet the regulatory standards for eligible countries and therefore should remain designated as countries whose nationals are eligible to participate in the H–2B program. These determinations take into account how the regulatory factors identified above apply to each of these countries.

Countries No Longer Designated as Eligible

The Secretary of Homeland Security has determined, with the concurrence of the Secretary of State, that Moldova should no longer be designated as an H–2A eligible country because it no longer meets the regulatory standards identified above. Specifically, The Department of State (DOS) has evidence of agents recruiting applicants for H and J visas in Moldova collecting recruitment fees prohibited under U.S. law for certain visas including H–2A. The United States Government has also documented increasingly sophisticated levels of fraud by Moldovan nationals seeking to obtain H–2A visas with a photocopy of a bona fide unnamed petition and fraudulent work contracts. Considering these factors, and absent significant mitigating factors, the continued eligibility of Moldova to participate in the H–2A program no longer serves the U.S. interest. Therefore, the Secretary of Homeland Security, with the concurrence of the Secretary of State, is removing Moldova from the list of H–2A eligible countries. In a November 18, 2015 Federal Register Notice, the Secretary of Homeland Security, with the concurrence of the Secretary of State, removed Moldova from the list of eligible countries to participate in the H–2B program. As such, Moldova will no longer be eligible to participate in either the H–2A and H–2B programs. However, Moldova’s eligibility for the H–2A program remains effective until the prior designation expires on January 18, 2022.

Based on the foregoing analysis, DHS, with the concurrence of DOS, has removed one country from the H–2A eligible country list. Nonetheless, and as already noted, nationals of non-designated countries may still be beneficiaries of approved H–2A and H–2B petitions upon the request of the petitioner if USCIS determines, as a matter of discretion and on a case-by-case basis, that it is in the U.S. interest for the individual to be a beneficiary of such petition. See 8 CFR 214.2(h)(5)(i)(F)(1)(ii) and 8 CFR 214.2(h)(6)(i)(E)(2). USCIS may favorably consider a beneficiary of an H–2A or H–2B petition who is not a national of a country included on the H–2A or H–2B eligibility list as serving the national interest, depending on the totality of the circumstances. Factors USCIS may consider include, among other things, whether a beneficiary has previously been admitted to the United States in H–2A or H–2B status and complied with the terms of the program. An additional factor for beneficiaries of H–2B petitions, although not necessarily determinative standing alone, would be whether the H–2B petition qualifies under section 1049 of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for FY 2018, Public Law 115–91, section 1045 of the NDAA for FY 2019, Public Law 115–232, or section 9502 of the NDAA for FY 2021, Public Law 116–23. However, any ultimate determination of eligibility will be made according to all the relevant factors and evidence in each individual circumstance.

Countries Now Designated as Eligible

The Secretary of Homeland Security has also determined, with the concurrence of the Secretary of State, that Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Republic of Cyprus, the Dominican Republic (currently only eligible for H–2A), Haiti, Mauritius, and Saint Lucia should be designated as eligible countries to participate in the H–2A and H–2B non-immigrant visa programs because the participation of these countries is in the U.S. interest consistent with the regulations governing these programs.

Bosnia and Herzegovina consistently cooperates with accepting its nationals subject to a final order of removal. Additionally, Consular Affairs does not have significant fraud concerns associated with visa applications submitted by nationals of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Bosnian historically participate in the Summer Work Travel and other exchange programs without presenting significant overstays, fraud, or abuse concerns. Additionally, nationals of Bosnia and Herzegovina do not present significant overstays concerning in nonimmigrant visa categories. Inclusion of Bosnia and Herzegovina in the H–2A and H–2B programs would bolster bilateral relationship, further contributing to the United States’ goals of countering malign foreign influence and promoting Euro-Atlantic integration. As such, adding Bosnia and Herzegovina to the H–2A and H–2B eligible countries lists serves the U.S. interest.

National of the Republic of Cyprus (ROC) do not present significant overstays concerns and are consistently compliant with the terms and conditions of visa categories. ROC also consistently cooperates on accepting its nationals subject to a final order of removal. Furthermore, DOS’s recent validation studies have not identified significant fraud concerns with Cypriot travelers to and from the United States. Its strategic location, European Union membership, and support for democratic principles make the ROC an increasingly important partner for the United States. Adding the ROC to the H–2 eligible country lists would both demonstrate an immediate commitment to strengthening the bilateral relationship and help counter malign foreign influence. Additionally, ROC participation in the H–2A and H–2B non-immigrant visa programs further serves the U.S. interest and Embassy Nicosia’s Integrated Country Strategy goals of engaging both the Greek and Turkish Cypriot communities and improving people-to-people contact across the island. Based on the foregoing reasons, adding the ROC to the H–2A and H–2B eligible countries lists serves the U.S. interest.

The Dominican Republic was removed from the list of H–2B eligible countries in a January 18, 2019 Federal Register Notice because in FY 2017, DHS estimated that nearly 30 percent of H–2B visa holders from the Dominican Republic overstayed their period of authorized stay. However, according to FY 2019 overstays rates in H–2B categories, DHS estimated that about five percent of nationals of the Dominican Republic overstayed their period of authorized stay. The Government of the Dominican Republic has a strong working relationship with DHS with respect to accepting its nationals subject to a final order of removal which proceeded uninterrupted throughout the COVID–19 pandemic. There have been no specific fraud trends observed in the H–2A and H–2B visa categories or other nonimmigrant visa categories. The Dominican Republic is a valued partner and works with the United States to advance U.S. interests in the region, such as combating drug trafficking, protecting the security of U.S. citizens, and promoting democracy in the region. The Dominican Republic’s location at the crossroads of transportation routes through the Caribbean, its status as a top
five overseas U.S. citizen tourist destination, the family connections for nearly two million U.S. citizens, and its close proximity to U.S. territory, make its continued development and stability vital to the interests of the United States as defined in the National Security Strategy. Therefore, adding the Dominican Republic to the H–2B eligible countries list serves the U.S. interest.

The Government of Haiti has been a valued partner, and consistently cooperated on accepting the return of its nationals subject to a final order of removal which proceeded almost uninterrupted throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, despite the political, environmental, and economic challenges facing Haiti. Adding Haiti back to H–2A and H–2B programs serves the U.S. interest and is consistent with the whole-of-government efforts to address the root causes of irregular migration and create lawful pathways to manage the causes of migration to manage a safe, orderly, and legal migration.\(^3\)

Given the recent challenges (political instability, increasing gang-related violence, and a 7.2 magnitude earthquake) that have faced Haiti, DHS and DOS assess that the H–2A and H–2B programs will provide a stabilizing lawful channel for Haitian nationals seeking economic opportunities. Adding Haiti back to these programs will provide Haitians the opportunity not only to contribute to the U.S. economy, but also apply their earnings and technical experience to advance Haiti's reconstruction and stabilization. Sustainable development and the stability of Haiti is vital to the interests of the United States as a close partner and neighbor. While some factors, including nonimmigrant visa overstay and refusal rates that precipitated Haiti's removal from H–2A and H–2B programs in 2018 remain a concern, the foregoing favorable factors in the U.S. interest outweigh these concerns. DOS will continue to monitor visa applications for fraud trends and compliance with travel regulations. Based on the foregoing analysis, adding Haiti back to the H–2A and H–2B eligible countries lists serves the U.S. interest.

Nations of Mauritius do not present significant visa overstay concerns and there are no outstanding issues with the repatriation of nationals of Mauritius with a final order of removal from the United States. Additionally, DOS conducted two separate validation studies on proper use of certain visa categories and the results indicated that over 99 percent of nationals of Mauritius complied with the terms and conditions of their visas. Additionally, DHS visa overstay data across all visa categories does not indicate a significant concern over the course of several years. Furthermore, eligibility for H–2A and H–2B nonimmigrant worker programs would bolster the bilateral and economic relationship. Therefore, adding Mauritius to the H–2A and H–2B eligible countries lists serves the U.S. interest.

Saint Lucia does not present significant overstaying or fraud concerns across all nonimmigrant visas. Furthermore, adding Saint Lucia to both H–2A and H–2B programs is in the U.S. national interest. First, by providing economic opportunities to Saint Lucians in agriculture and seafood processing, including will directly meet one of the key goals of the country’s newly elected government, thereby bolstering bilateral relations at a time when the country is reexamining its foreign policy directions. Second, by affording Saint Lucian nationals greater familiarity with U.S. agriculture and aquaculture best practices, the country’s designation for H–2A and H–2B participation by its nationals will increase the productivity of their businesses in these sectors upon their nationals’ return from the United States, thus advancing U.S. economic development goals of strengthening entrepreneurship and diversifying the economy away from its current heavy reliance on tourism. Finally, Saint Lucia is consistently cooperative with the United States on accepting their nationals subject to a final order of removal. As such, adding Saint Lucia to both the H–2A and H–2B eligible countries lists serves the U.S. interest.

**Designation of Countries Whose Nationals Are Eligible To Participate in the H–2A and H–2B Nonimmigrant Worker Programs**

Pursuant to the authority provided to the Secretary of Homeland Security under sections 214(a)(1) and 215(a)(1) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1184(a)(1) and 1185(a)(1)), I am designating, with the concurrence of the Secretary of State, nations from the following countries to be eligible to participate in the H–2A nonimmigrant worker program:

1. Andorra
2. Argentina
3. Australia
4. Austria
5. Barbados
6. Belgium
7. Bosnia and Herzegovina
8. Brazil
9. Brunei
10. Bulgaria
11. Canada
12. Chile
13. Colombia
14. Costa Rica
15. Croatia
16. Republic of Cyprus
17. Czech Republic
18. Denmark
19. Dominican Republic
20. Ecuador
21. El Salvador
22. Estonia
23. Fiji
24. Finland
25. France
26. Germany
27. Greece
28. Grenada
29. Guatemala
30. Haiti
31. Honduras
32. Hungary
33. Iceland
34. Ireland
35. Israel
36. Italy
37. Jamaica
38. Japan
39. Kiribati
40. Latvia
41. Liechtenstein
42. Lithuania
43. Luxembourg
44. Madagascar
45. Malta
46. Mauritius
47. Mexico
48. Monaco
49. Montenegro
50. Mozambique
51. Nauru
52. The Netherlands
53. New Zealand
54. Nicaragua
55. North Macedonia (formerly Macedonia)
56. Norway
57. Panama
58. Papua New Guinea
59. Paraguay
60. Peru
61. Poland
62. Portugal
63. Romania
64. Saint Lucia
65. San Marino
66. Serbia
67. Singapore
68. Slovakia
69. Slovenia
70. Solomon Islands
71. South Africa
72. South Korea
73. Spain
74. St. Vincent and the Grenadines
75. Sweden
76. Switzerland
77. Taiwan
78. Thailand
79. Timor-Leste
80. Turkey
81. Tuvalu
82. Ukraine
83. United Kingdom

61. The Philippines
60. Peru
59. Papua New Guinea
57. Norway
56. North Macedonia (formerly Macedonia)
53. The Netherlands
52. Nauru
51. Mozambique
50. Montenegro
49. Mexico
48. Monaco
46. Mauritius
45. Malta
43. Luxembourg
42. Lithuania
40. Latvia
37. Jamaica
36. Italy
35. Israel
34. Ireland
33. Iceland
32. Hungary
31. Honduras
30. Haiti
29. Guatemala
28. Grenada
26. Germany
25. France
24. Finland
23. Fiji
22. Estonia
21. El Salvador
20. Ecuador
19. Dominican Republic
18. Denmark
17. Czech Republic
16. Republic of Cyprus
15. Croatia
14. Costa Rica
13. Colombia
12. Chile
11. Canada
10. Bulgaria
9. Brunei
8. Brazil
6. Belgium
5. Barbados
4. Austria
3. Australia
2. Argentina
1. Andorra

Pursuant to the authority provided to the Secretary of Homeland Security under sections 214(a)(1) and 215(a)(1) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C. 1184(a)(1) and 1185(a)(1)), I am designating, with the concurrence of the Secretary of State, nationals from the following countries to be eligible to participate in the H–2B nonimmigrant worker program:

1. Andorra
2. Argentina
3. Australia
4. Austria
5. Barbados
6. Belgium
7. Bosnia and Herzegovina
8. Brazil
9. Brunei
10. Bulgaria
11. Canada
12. Chile
13. Colombia
14. Costa Rica
15. Croatia
16. Republic of Cyprus
17. Czech Republic
18. Denmark
19. Dominican Republic
20. Ecuador
21. El Salvador
22. Estonia
23. Fiji
24. Finland
25. France
26. Germany
27. Greece
28. Grenada
29. Guatemala
30. Haiti
31. Honduras
32. Hungary
33. Iceland
34. Ireland
35. Israel
36. Italy
37. Jamaica
38. Japan
39. Kiribati
40. Latvia
41. Liechtenstein
42. Lithuania
43. Luxembourg
44. Madagascar
45. Malawi
46. Mauritius
47. Mexico
48. Monaco
49. Mongolia
50. Montenegro
51. Mozambique
52. Nauru
53. The Netherlands
54. New Zealand
55. Nicaragua
56. North Macedonia (formerly Macedonia)
57. Norway
58. Panama
59. Papua New Guinea
60. Peru
61. The Philippines
62. Poland
63. Portugal
64. Romania
65. Saint Lucia
66. San Marino
67. Serbia
68. Singapore
69. Slovakia
70. Slovenia
71. Solomon Islands
72. South Africa
73. South Korea
74. Spain
75. St. Vincent and the Grenadines
76. Sweden
77. Switzerland
78. Taiwan
79. Thailand
80. Timor-Leste
81. Turkey
82. Tuvalu
83. Ukraine
84. United Kingdom
85. Uruguay
86. Vanuatu

This notice does not affect the current status of noncitizens who at the time of publication of this notice hold valid H–2A or H–2B nonimmigrant status. Noncitizens currently holding such status, however, will be affected by this notice should they seek an extension of stay in the H–2 classification, or a change of status from one H–2 status to another, for employment on or after the effective date of this notice. Similarly, noncitizens holding nonimmigrant status other than H–2 are not affected by this notice unless they seek a change of status to H–2.

Nothing in this notice limits the authority of the Secretary of Homeland Security or his designee or any other federal agency to invoke against any foreign country or its nationals any other remedy, penalty, or enforcement action available by law.

Alejandro N. Mayorkas,
Secretary of Homeland Security.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:
Comments Invited

In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. 3501 et seq.), an agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number. The ICR documentation will be available at http://www.reginfo.gov upon its submission to OMB. Therefore, in preparation for OMB review and approval of the following information collection, TSA is soliciting comments to—

(1) Evaluate whether the proposed information requirement is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information will have practical utility;
(2) Evaluate the accuracy of the agency’s estimate of the burden;
(3) Enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and
(4) Minimize the burden of the collection of information on those who are to respond, including using appropriate automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology.

Information Collection Requirement

OMB Control Number 1652–0039; TSA Claims Application allows the agency to collect information from claimants in order to thoroughly examine and resolve tort claims against the agency. TSA receives approximately 750 tort claims per month arising from airport screening activities and other circumstances, including motor vehicle accidents and employee loss. The Federal Tort Claims Act (28 U.S.C. 1346(b), 1402(b), 2401(b), 2671–2680) is...