



[https://www.postguam.com/news/local/number-of-h--workers-still-dwindling/article\\_e0586760-50d4-11e7-8efc-ff458cece2f6.html](https://www.postguam.com/news/local/number-of-h--workers-still-dwindling/article_e0586760-50d4-11e7-8efc-ff458cece2f6.html)

## Number of H-2 workers still dwindling

Louella Losinio | The Guam Daily Post 4 hrs ago

While the preliminary results of a survey detailing impacts of the H-2B visa issue on the Guam economy will be released next month, temporary worker numbers continue to dwindle, with current numbers now at 113 visa holders.

Greg Massey, administrator of the Guam Department of Labor–Alien Labor Processing and Certification Division, said the H-2B visas are still at a 0 percent approval rate. Massey said the 113 are from the last batch of approvals from 2015 and 2016. Some of the workers are appealing their visa denial.

The lack of H-2B approvals prompted the Guam Contractors Association and several business entities to file suit against federal labor officials in October 2016. Guam had about 1,500 workers in March 2016, but visa expiration have reduced that to just around 260 by the end of February. As of yesterday, the number has been further reduced.

### H-2B task force

The Guam Department of Labor is leading an H-2B task force assigned to do the H-2B impact study. The department is working with the Guam Economic Development Authority and other local agencies for the report. They are also reaching out to organizations such as the Guam Chamber of Commerce, Guam Contractors Association, Society for Human Resource Management and others to provide input.

For the study, businesses are encouraged to consider impacts that may result from several reasons, such as a rise in construction costs; delays in construction work due to lack of available workers; inability to supplement local skilled workforce; and inability to engage in large projects.

According to Massey, the survey ends June 16. The next step would be to generate data from the

survey and create a working group.

Massey said they are hoping to release the H-2B impact report by early July. Meanwhile, the department is doing everything they can to train local workers for apprenticeship and job training.

## Economic outlook

The Fiscal Year 2018 Economic Outlook report from the Bureau of Statistics and Plans noted the employment in the construction industry accounts for about 10 percent of the island's economy.

**HONDA** STRESS FREE PRICING  
No Hassle, No Haggles, Just Our Best Price.

**HOT-SUMMER SAVINGS**

**\$0 DOWN PAYMENT**

**1.9% FINANCING\*** LIMITED TIME ONLY

**2017 HR-V**

- 1.8L i-VTEC® Awd Engine
- Security System w/ Remote Entry
- 8-Speed Manual Transmission
- Bluetooth® HandsFreeLink
- 200Ah ColdStart
- 17" Alloy Wheels

**\$164 per paycheck**

**35**

**GET PRE-APPROVED INSTANTLY** [www.TRIPLEJGUAM.com](http://www.TRIPLEJGUAM.com)

**BUY WITH CONFIDENCE!**  
**TRIPLE ADVANTAGE**  
100% Satisfaction Guarantee  
1 Year, 50,000 Mile Powertrain Warranty  
24-Hour Roadside Assistance

Customer Care: **TRIPLE J Honda**  
1000 G Street, Suite 100, San Juan, PR 00901  
Call: 800-999-4668 • Fax: 787-3588  
[www.TRIPLEJGUAM.com](http://www.TRIPLEJGUAM.com)

\*MSRP. Excludes tax, license, title, and destination charge. Dealer sets actual price. See dealer for details. ©2017 Honda Motor Co., Ltd. All rights reserved. Honda, the Honda logo, and the Honda emblem are trademarks of Honda Motor Co., Ltd. in the U.S. and other countries. All other trademarks are the property of their respective owners.

Employment in the industry has declined due to several factors, including the reduction in the number of workers due to “nonrenewal and the repatriation of the majority of foreign workers employed with H-2 visas.” According to the report, most of Guam’s H-2B foreign workers were in the construction industry and “accounted for about 17 percent of the industry workforce.”

However, the H-2 visa issue has impacted not only construction, but also the medical, hospitality and real estate industries, among others.

## 2017 NDAA

Guam Delegate Madeleine Bordallo had attempted to include legislation in the House-passed 2017 National Defense Authorization Act that would provide some relief for Guam, but the provision was removed. Bordallo offers another legislative solution by attempting to include language in both House and Senate bills this year.

Bordallo, according to a release, also met with Assistant Secretary for Legislative Affairs Ben Cassidy of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, to raise concerns on the continuing H-2B visa denials with the belief that the issue can be addressed “internally without legislative action.”

“I asked Assistant Secretary Cassidy to discuss the issue with DHS Secretary (John) Kelly and leadership within DHS. He committed to raising the issue and communicating openly with me and my staff. In the meantime, I continue to work with my colleagues in Congress to address this situation legislatively and provide relief to our island,” Bordallo said.

---

Louella Losinio

