



GMS Flash Alert

Immigration Edition

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United States - Stateside Visa Renewal Pilot Project Planned for Early 2024

The U.S. Department of State (DOS) sent a *Federal Register* notice titled, "Pilot Program to Resume Renewal of H-1B Nonimmigrant Visas in the United States for Certain Qualified Noncitizens" to the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs on October 17, 2023.¹ The notice provides additional information about an upcoming pilot program, which will allow certain H-1B principals to obtain a travel visa without leaving the United States.

WHY THIS MATTERS

The highly-anticipated roll-out of a stateside visa renewal program by the DOS could be pivotal for companies bringing workers into the U.S. and individuals coming to work in the U.S., especially in light of the challenges experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic and its aftermath. Currently all visa applicants are required to exit the United States, and schedule interview appointments at U.S. consular posts abroad. Even if granted an interview waiver, the visa applicant must leave the U.S. and be physically located in the consulate's jurisdiction. A stateside program will save certain H-1B visa applicants countless hours of travel and money spent on travel abroad, as they will no longer be required to exit the United States and visit a consular post for the renewal of an H-1B visa.

There is also hope that this program will alleviate consular backlogs and reduce delays that have resulted in prolonged visa appointment wait times and processing.

Nature of the Program

The initial details for the program have been released and are as follows:

- The program is set to begin in early 2024;

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- The program will be limited to H-1B principal applicants only;
- The program will be limited to nationals of countries that are not subject to reciprocity fees, one of which will be India;
- The program will have certain eligibility requirements along the lines of the interview-waiver program;
- The program will be available for 20,000 applicants initially; and
- The program will involve voluntary participation.

KPMG INSIGHTS

The understanding among the immigration community is that this program is just the beginning of a much more expansive visa-renewal program that will involve additional visa types and be open to additional applicants. It is widely appreciated that the DOS will be offering a much more efficient and safer method of carrying out visa renewals as an alternative to required international travel.

KPMG Law LLP will continue to monitor developments and provide updates as they become available.

FOOTNOTE:

1 American Immigration Lawyers' Association (AILA), "[Practice Alert: DOS Expected to begin Stateside Visa Renewal Pilot in Early 2024](#)," [Please note this website requires a Login] Doc. No. 23101806 (October 18, 2023). *Please note that by clicking on this link, you are leaving the KPMG website for an external site (non-governmental, non-KPMG), that KPMG is not affiliated with nor is KPMG endorsing its content. The use of the external site and its content may be subject to the terms of use and/or privacy policies of its owner or operator.*

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