



U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

USCIS Announces Countries Eligible for H-2A and H-2B Visa Programs

USCIS and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), in consultation with the Department of State (DOS), have announced the list of countries whose nationals are eligible to participate in the H-2A and H-2B visa programs in 2019. The [notice](#) listing the eligible countries was published in the Federal Register on Jan. 18, 2019.

For 2019, Secretary of Homeland Security Kirstjen M. Nielsen and Secretary of State Mike Pompeo have agreed to:

- Add Mozambique and Samoa to the list of countries eligible to participate in the H-2A and H-2B visa programs;
- Add Paraguay to the list of countries eligible to participate in the H-2A visa program;
- No longer designate Ethiopia and the Philippines as eligible countries because they no longer meet the regulatory standards for the H-2A and H-2B visa programs; and
- No longer designate the Dominican Republic as an eligible country for the H-2B visa program because it no longer meets the regulatory standards for that program.

DHS maintains its authority to add countries to the eligible countries list at any time, and to remove any country at any time DHS and DOS determine that a country fails to meet the requirements for continued designation. Examples of factors that could result in the exclusion of a country or the removal of a country from the list include, but are not limited to, fraud, abuse, denial rates, overstay rates, human trafficking concerns, and other forms of non-compliance with the terms and conditions of the H-2 visa programs by nationals of that country.

The H-2A and H-2B visa programs allow U.S. employers to bring foreign nationals to the United States to fill temporary agricultural and nonagricultural jobs, respectively. Typically, USCIS approves H-2A and H-2B petitions only for nationals of countries that the Secretary of Homeland Security has designated as eligible to participate in the programs. However, USCIS may approve H-2A and H-2B petitions, including those that were pending as of the date of the Federal Register notice, for nationals of countries **not** on the list on a case-by-case basis only if doing so is determined to be in the interest of the United States.

Effective Jan. 19, 2019, nationals of the following countries are eligible to receive H-2A and H-2B visas:

- | | | | |
|-------------|-------------|--------------|-------------------|
| • Andorra | • Finland | • Malta | • Serbia |
| • Argentina | • France | • Moldova* | • Singapore |
| • Australia | • Germany | • Mexico | • Slovakia |
| • Austria | • Greece | • Monaco | • Slovenia |
| • Barbados | • Grenada | • Mongolia | • Solomon Islands |
| • Belgium | • Guatemala | • Montenegro | • South Africa |
| • Brazil | • Honduras | • Mozambique | • South Korea |
| • Brunei | • Hungary | • Nauru | • Spain |

- Bulgaria
- Canada
- Chile
- Colombia
- Costa Rica
- Croatia
- Czech Republic
- Denmark
- Dominican Republic*
- Ecuador
- El Salvador
- Estonia
- Fiji
- Iceland
- Ireland
- Israel
- Italy
- Jamaica
- Japan
- Kiribati
- Latvia
- Lichtenstein
- Lithuania
- Luxembourg
- Macedonia
- Madagascar
- The Netherlands
- Nicaragua
- New Zealand
- Norway
- Panama
- Papua New Guinea
- Paraguay*
- Peru
- Poland
- Portugal
- Romania
- Samoa
- San Marino
- St. Vincent and the Grenadines
- Sweden
- Switzerland
- Taiwan**
- Thailand
- Timor-Leste
- Tonga
- Turkey
- Tuvalu
- Ukraine
- United Kingdom
- Uruguay
- Vanuatu

*Moldova, Paraguay, and the Dominican Republic are eligible to participate in the H-2A program, but they are not eligible to participate in the H-2B program.

**With respect to all references to “country” or “countries” in this document, it should be noted that the Taiwan Relations Act of 1979, Pub. L. No. 96-8, Section 4(b)(1), provides that “[w]henver the laws of the United States refer or relate to foreign countries, nations, states, governments, or similar entities, such terms shall include and such laws shall apply with respect to Taiwan.” 22 U.S.C. § 3303(b)(1). Accordingly, all references to “country” or “countries” in the regulations governing whether nationals of a country are eligible for H-2 program participation, 8 CFR 214.2(h)(5)(i)(F)(1)(i) and 8 CFR 214.2(h)(6)(i)(E)(1), are read to include Taiwan. This is consistent with the United States’ one-China policy, under which the United States has maintained unofficial relations with Taiwan since 1979.

This notice does not affect the status of beneficiaries who currently are in the United States in H-2A or H-2B status unless they apply to change or extend their status. Each country’s designation is valid for one year from Jan. 19, 2019.

For more information on these programs, see the [H-2A Temporary Agricultural Workers](#) and [H-2B Temporary Non-Agricultural Workers](#) pages on our website.

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