



U.S. Citizenship and
Immigration Services

As CNMI Transitional Worker Program Draws Down, USCIS Announces Cap for Final Three Fiscal Years

[Version en español](#)

Release Date: Nov. 21, 2017

WASHINGTON— Today, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) [announced](#) the number of visas the agency will grant for the last three fiscal years (FYs) of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI)-Only Transitional Worker (CW-1) program. Congress previously mandated that USCIS end the program by reducing the number of workers in the program to zero by Dec. 31, 2019.

Under the CW-1 program, employers in the CNMI can apply for permission to employ foreign workers who are ineligible to work in the territory under other nonimmigrant worker categories. The intent of phasing out this foreign worker program is to encourage the territory's transition into the U.S. immigration system, as well as to bolster recruitment of U.S. workers in the CNMI.

The table below provides the cap for FY 2018, FY 2019 and FY 2020 until the end of the program:

Fiscal Year (FY)	Cap
FY 2018	9,998
FY 2019	4,999
FY 2020 (until Dec. 31, 2019)	2,499

USCIS [announced](#) in May that the agency received a sufficient number of petitions to reach the maximum possible CW-1 cap for FY 2018. April 11, 2017, was the last day that USCIS accepted FY 2018 CW-1 petitions requesting an employment start date before Oct. 1, 2018. USCIS encourages employers to file petitions for CW-1 workers as early as possible within 6 months of the requested employment start date. Please note, however, that USCIS will reject a petition if it is filed more than six months in advance.

For more information about the CW-1 worker program, visit the [CW-1: CNMI-Only Transitional Worker page](#) or call the National Customer Service Center at 1-800-375-5283.

Last Reviewed/Updated: 11/21/2017