



## NEWS RELEASE

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

#### **H-2B Cap Relief Is Essential to Sustaining America's Seasonal Workforce and Local Economies**

**Charlottesville, VA, December 31, 2025** - As U.S. employers continue to face unprecedented labor shortages, business leaders across hospitality, construction, landscaping, seafood processing, and tourism are urging policymakers to expand H-2B visa cap relief, emphasizing its essential role in sustaining local economies and protecting American jobs.

The H-2B visa program allows U.S. employers to hire foreign workers for temporary, non-agricultural positions when qualified domestic workers are unavailable. **Employers must first actively recruit U.S. workers and are legally required to hire any qualified applicants, ensuring the program supplements, rather than displaces, the domestic workforce.**

Despite these safeguards, demand for H-2B visas has surged far beyond the program's statutory limits. In FY 2025, employers requested more than 149,000 H-2B positions for April 1 start dates alone, while only 66,000 visas are available annually. Early data for FY 2026 shows continued acceleration, with 47,488 requests already submitted for October 1 start dates.

*"H-2B workers play a vital role in keeping seasonal businesses open and local economies strong,"* said Richard Keeth, Chief Operating Officer of másLabor. *"These are legal, temporary workers who fill critical gaps when U.S. workers are not available. When employers can operate at full capacity, the economic impact extends well beyond a single business supporting local spending, tax revenue, and year-round American jobs in the communities they serve."*

#### **A Cap That No Longer Reflects Economic Reality**

The H-2B program is capped at 66,000 visas per fiscal year, split evenly:

33,000 visas for employment between October 1 and March 31

33,000 visas for employment between April 1 and September 30

In recent years, these caps have been reached within days of filing windows opening, leaving thousands of employers without access to the seasonal labor they depend on.

#### **Why Cap Relief Matters Locally**

Seasonal labor shortages affect construction, landscaping, hospitality, food service, tourism, seafood processing, golf courses and clubs, and more during peak periods. Without sufficient seasonal labor, projects are delayed, operating hours are reduced, and local revenue is lost.

### **What Is H-2B Cap Relief?**

H-2B cap relief consists of supplemental visas authorized by Congress or the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) during periods of demonstrated labor shortage. These temporary measures help prevent economic disruption while maintaining strict worker protections and compliance requirements.

### **Why Cap Relief Matters to the Business Community**

- **Supports Critical Industries:** Seasonal employers rely on H-2B workers to meet peak demand
- **Protects American Jobs:** When businesses scale back or close due to labor shortages, U.S. jobs in management, sales, logistics, and administration are also at risk
- **Stabilizes Local Economies:** Many rural, coastal, and tourism-driven communities depend on seasonal industries to sustain year-round economic activity.
- **Promotes Economic Growth:** Cap relief allows businesses to meet demand, maintain production, support community growth and viability
- **Provides Predictability:** Employers gain the certainty needed to plan operations, invest locally, and manage financial risk

### **The Path Forward**

While long-term reform is needed to align the H-2B program with modern labor market realities, annual cap relief remains a critical tool to prevent workforce disruptions and economic losses.

*“At másLabor, our focus has always been on serving U.S. employers who are trying to operate responsibly, grow their businesses, and support their local communities,” said Chris Ball, Chief Executive Officer of másLabor. “H-2B workers are part of a legal, highly regulated program that helps businesses stay open and competitive when domestic labor simply isn’t available. Cap relief is essential, not just for our clients, but for the American jobs, small businesses, and communities that depend on a stable seasonal workforce.”*

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