



Immigration Update

December 2025

H-1B and H-4 Applicants Face Visa Appointment Delays Under Expanded Social Media Review

Key Notes:

- U.S. Department of State announces policy for expanded screening and vetting of online presence for H-1B and H-4 applicants.
- U.S. consulates are reducing visa appointments per day to comply with new policy.
- Visa applicants being notified of rescheduled visa appointments, often months after the originally scheduled date.

Effective December 15, the U.S. Department of State is [expanding its online presence review](#) to include all H-1B principal applicants and their H-4 dependents, in addition to categories (such as students and exchange visitors) already subject to such screening. As a result, beginning December 8, many applicants with otherwise routine visa interview appointments have received cancellation or rescheduling notices. Consular posts have indicated that, due to operational constraints associated with the enhanced vetting and to ensure that no applicant poses a threat to U.S. national security or public safety, daily applicant volumes are being reduced. This reduction is causing some previously scheduled appointments to be canceled.

Applicants are receiving emails advising that the consulate “will not be able to see you on your original appointment date” and instructing them not to appear in person. In some cases, the newly assigned appointment date is months away.

Considering these uncertainties, applicants should proactively monitor for consular communications that could

affect a previously scheduled appointment and consider canceling international travel that will require a visa appointment. If an H-1B worker does not currently have a valid H-1B visa in their passport, they will need to obtain a new visa from a U.S. consulate before returning to the United States, except for brief trips to Canada or Mexico. If the H-1B worker has an appointment to obtain a new visa but the appointment is canceled and rescheduled months later, the H-1B worker may be unable to return to the United States as planned.

Prior to appearing for an interview, applicants should ensure they have, and take with them, the most up-to-date appointment confirmation letter. To the extent possible, applicants should consider deferring travel plans, booking refundable or changeable airfare and lodging, and build in extra buffer days in-country. It remains unclear how many interviews will be conducted per day, whether backlogs will develop, and whether expedited appointments will be available. If travel is urgent, applicants should review the post’s expedite criteria and request process in the scheduling portal and be prepared to document the urgency, understanding that approvals may be limited while reduced schedules remain in effect. Applicants should also confirm MRV receipt validity before rescheduling to avoid inadvertent fee forfeiture.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

For more information, please contact:

Sarah C. Flannery

216.566.5718

Sarah.Flannery@ThompsonHine.com

Kelli L. Hayes

614.469.3344

Kelli.Hayes@ThompsonHine.com

David W. Leopold

216.566.5543

David.Leopold@ThompsonHine.com

This advisory bulletin may be reproduced, in whole or in part, with the prior permission of Thompson Hine LLP and acknowledgment of its source and copyright. This publication is intended to inform clients about legal matters of current interest. It is not intended as legal advice. Readers should not act upon the information contained in it without professional counsel.

This document may be considered attorney advertising in some jurisdictions.

© 2025 THOMPSON HINE LLP. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.