



GOVERNOR GREG ABBOTT

January 27, 2026

Dear Agency Heads:

The economy of Texas should work for the benefit of Texas workers and Texas employers. Since assuming office, I have prioritized growing Texas' economy by making this State a premier location for job seekers and job creators alike, while investing in education and workforce training to ensure Texans are equipped to fill the high-paying, in-demand jobs of today and tomorrow. In light of recent reports of abuse in the federal H-1B visa program, and amid the federal government's ongoing review of that program to ensure American jobs are going to American workers, I am directing all state agencies to immediately freeze new H-1B visa petitions as outlined in this letter.

As noted in President Trump's proclamation, *Restriction on Entry of Certain Nonimmigrant Workers*, the federal H-1B visa program was created to supplement the United States' workforce—not to replace it. Evidence suggests that bad actors have exploited this program by failing to make good-faith efforts to recruit qualified U.S. workers before seeking to use foreign labor. In the most egregious schemes, employers have even fired American workers and replaced them with H-1B employees, often at lower wages. Rather than serving its intended purpose of attracting the best and brightest individuals from around the world to our nation to fill truly specialized and unmet labor needs, the program has too often been used to fill jobs that otherwise could—and should—have been filled by Texans.

Texas' workforce is large, diverse, and skilled. Over the last several years, the State has made historic investments in education and job training to ensure that our workforce can meet the demands of a growing economy. In 2023, I signed legislation investing \$5 billion to modernize and expand academic and technical programs across Texas' higher education system. In 2025, I built on those commitments by allocating hundreds of millions of dollars for workforce services and job training programs, including initiatives designed to align educational attainment with high-demand skills and credentials needed by Texas employers. These investments, alongside many others during my tenure as governor, have distinguished Texas as the best state in the nation to work and have made Texans among the most proficient workers in the nation. We will not cede this distinction.

Texas state agencies and institutions of higher education collectively employ hundreds of thousands of Texans and have a significant role in shaping the State's labor market. State government must lead by example and ensure that employment opportunities—particularly those funded with taxpayer dollars—are filled by Texans first. Therefore, I hereby direct the following:

1. No state agency controlled by a gubernatorially appointed head or public institution of higher education shall, without the written permission of the Texas Workforce Commission, initiate or file any new petition to sponsor a nonimmigrant worker under the federal H-1B visa program until the end of the Texas Legislature's 90th Regular Session on May 31, 2027.
2. All state agencies controlled by a gubernatorially appointed head and public institutions of higher education shall, by March 27, 2026, provide the Texas Workforce Commission with a report identifying:
 - a. How many new and renewal petitions the entity submitted for H-1B visas in 2025;
 - b. How many H-1B visa holders the entity currently sponsors;
 - c. The countries of origin of all H-1B visa holders the entity currently sponsors;
 - d. Job classifications and descriptions for each visa holder the entity currently sponsors;
 - e. The anticipated expiration date for each visa holder the entity currently sponsors; and
 - f. Documentation demonstrating efforts to provide qualified Texas candidates with a reasonable opportunity to apply for each position filled by a H-1B visa holder before a new petition was submitted for that position.
3. The Texas Workforce Commission shall issue any guidance necessary to effectuate these directives.

These steps will provide time for the Texas Legislature to establish statutory guardrails for future employment practices regarding federal visa holders in state government, for the U.S. Congress to modify federal law, and for the Trump Administration to implement reforms aimed at eliminating abuse of this visa program.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Greg Abbott", written in a cursive style.

Greg Abbott
Governor