2025

IMMIGRATION PROGRAM BENCHMARKING REPORT

Insights and Best Practices for Corporate Immigration
Programs and Policies from 100+ Industry Professionals

ABIL

ALLIANCE
OF BUSINESS
IMMIGRATION
LAWYERS

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ALLIANCE OF BUSINESS IMMIGRATION LAWYERS

IMMIGRATION PROGRAM BENCHMARKING REPORT

Presented by

IMMIGRATION PROGRAM BENCHMARKING REPORT

ABOUT ABIL

The **Alliance of Business Immigration Lawyers** is an invitation only strategic alliance of 40 prominent law firms in the U.S. and abroad practicing immigration, naturalization, and global mobility law.

ABIL is comprised of more than 400 experienced immigration attorneys and law professors (including several past presidents of the American Immigration Lawyers Association) who have joined forces in advancing best practices in the provision of legal services and positive outcomes for their immigration clients.

Ranked as the only "Band 1 Immigration Legal Network" in the prestigious Chambers and Partners Global Guide , ABIL advocates publicly for fair processes, the rule of law, and thoughtful immigration law reforms in the U.S. and internationally. Our public advocacy efforts include submitting comments on proposed regulations, providing ongoing legal education, contributing amicus briefs, and supporting the publication of educational resources and literature on immigration.

ABIL is associated with the award-winning book "Green Card Stories," which highlights the diverse experiences of 50 individuals from five continents who have made America their home, reflecting our nation's enduring promise of exceptionalism and its rich legacy as a land of immigrants.

Learn more about us at **www.abil.com**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

To prepare the ABIL Immigration Program Benchmarking Report, we surveyed Immigration, Global Mobility, Human Resources, and Legal professionals at the forefront of their organization's immigration strategy.

Our aim? To gather comprehensive insights across a spectrum of organization sizes and sectors to produce a report that analyzes current trends and guides organizations in crafting immigration policies that are proactive, data-driven, and aligned with their overarching business objectives.

This year's report offers a snapshot of the current climate within the immigration/global mobility community and provides projections for future developments.

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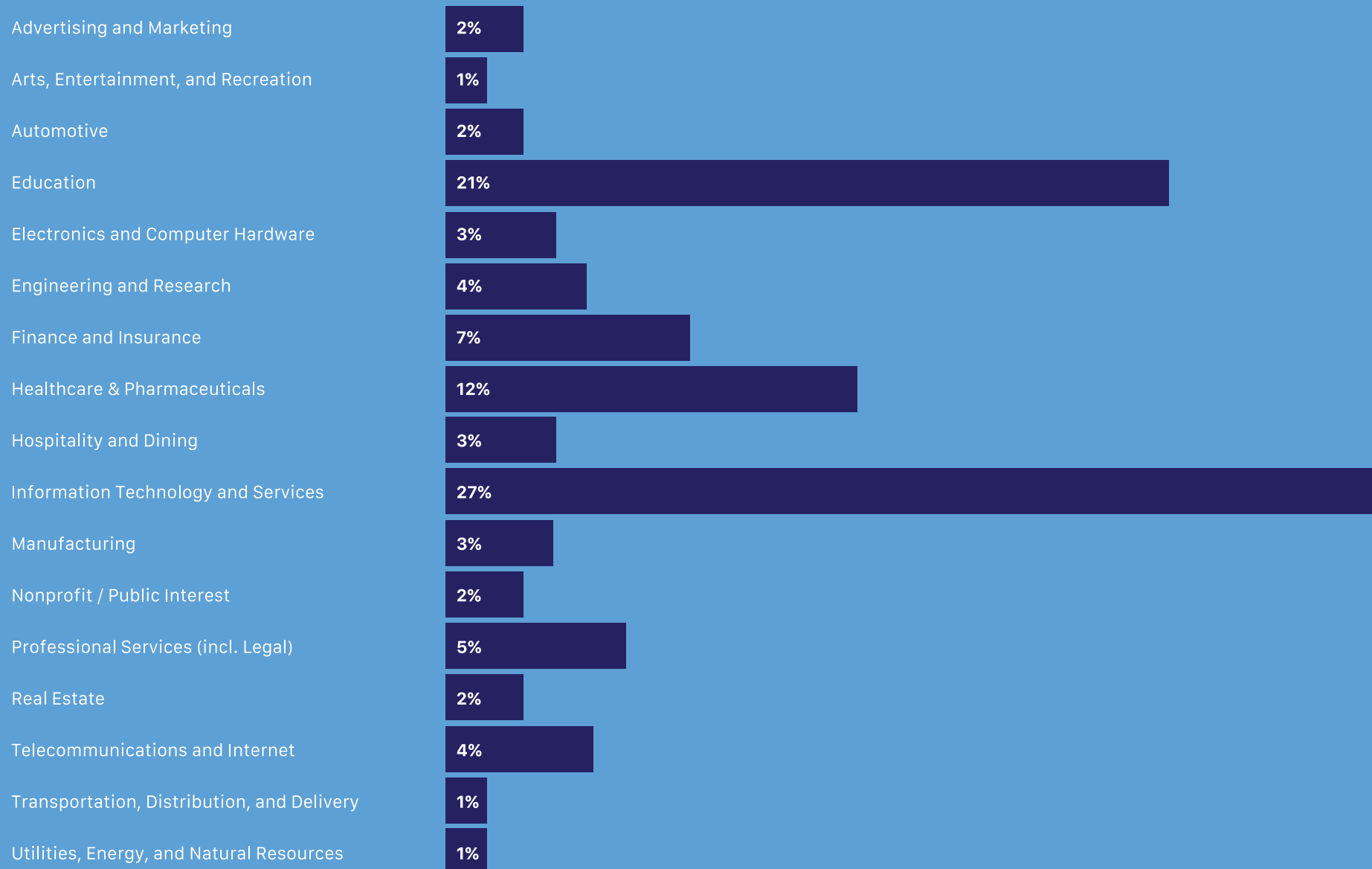
ABOUT THE SURVEY

Methodology

To inform this report, we surveyed senior professionals responsible for Immigration, Global Mobility, Human Resources, and Legal functions across a broad range of industries and organizational structures.

The survey yielded 115 unique responses from organizations with headquarters in North America, Europe, and Asia, and with extensive operational footprints spanning 24 U.S. states.
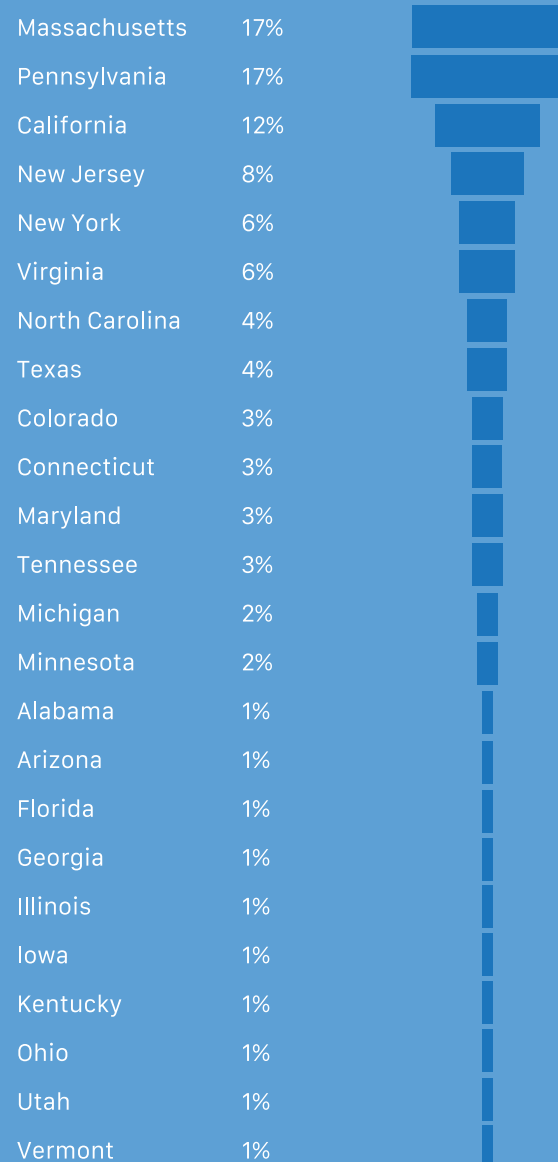
Respondents offered direct, experience-based insights into the management of corporate immigration programs, emerging operational challenges, and evolving best practices. All responses were collected anonymously, with data aggregated and analyzed under strict confidentiality standards.
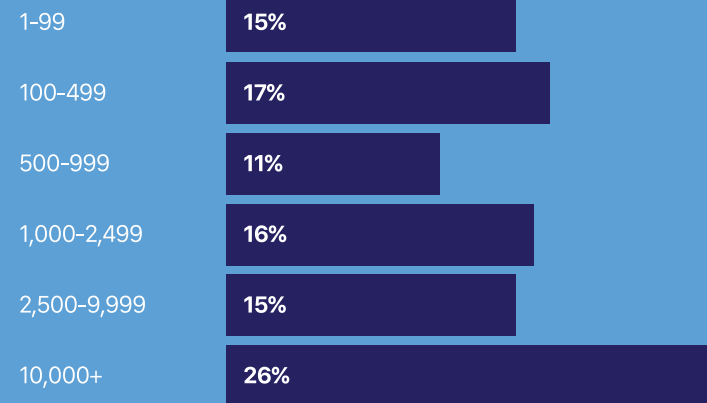
2025

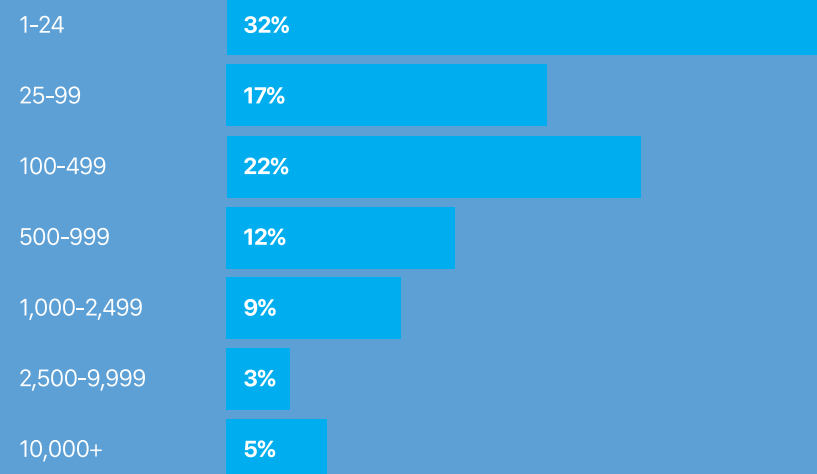## What business sector best describes your organization's operations?

Sector	Percentage
Advertising and Marketing	2%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	1%
Automotive	2%
Education	21%
Electronics and Computer Hardware	3%
Engineering and Research	4%
Finance and Insurance	7%
Healthcare & Pharmaceuticals	12%
Hospitality and Dining	3%
Information Technology and Services	27%
Manufacturing	3%
Nonprofit / Public Interest	2%
Professional Services (incl. Legal)	5%
Real Estate	2%
Telecommunications and Internet	4%
Transportation, Distribution, and Delivery	1%
Utilities, Energy, and Natural Resources	1%

Where is your organization's primary business location in the United States?

Location	Percentage
Massachusetts	17%
Pennsylvania	17%
California	12%
New Jersey	8%
New York	6%
Virginia	6%
North Carolina	4%
Texas	4%
Colorado	3%
Connecticut	3%
Maryland	3%
Tennessee	3%
Michigan	2%
Minnesota	2%
Alabama	1%
Arizona	1%
Florida	1%
Georgia	1%
Illinois	1%
Iowa	1%
Kentucky	1%
Ohio	1%
Utah	1%
Vermont	1%

How many employees does your organization have in the United States?

Employees	Percentage
1-99	15%
100-499	17%
500-999	11%
1,000-2,499	16%
2,500-9,999	15%
10,000+	26%

How many visa sponsored employees does your organization have in the United States?

Employees	Percentage
1-24	32%
25-99	17%
100-499	22%
500-999	12%
1,000-2,499	9%
2,500-9,999	3%
10,000+	5%

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Which function best describes your role/department?

Immigration and Global Mobility Professional

46%

Human Resources Professional

30%

In-House Legal Professional

13%

Other

11%

What is your seniority level?

Entry-level

6%

Senior-level

28%

Managerial-level

43%

C-suite/Executive

22%

Other

1%

How many different people at your organization are responsible for immigration/global mobility functions?

24%

1 person 24%

49%

2-4 people 49%

10%

5-9 people 10%

17%

10+ people 17%

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H-1B Visas

Does your organization hire or sponsor candidates for H-1B Specialty Occupation visas?

No 3%

Yes 97%

Does your organization require an H-1B candidate to have a minimum amount of time remaining in their overall 6-year maximum for them to be eligible for hire?

Yes 35%

No 53%

I don't know 12%
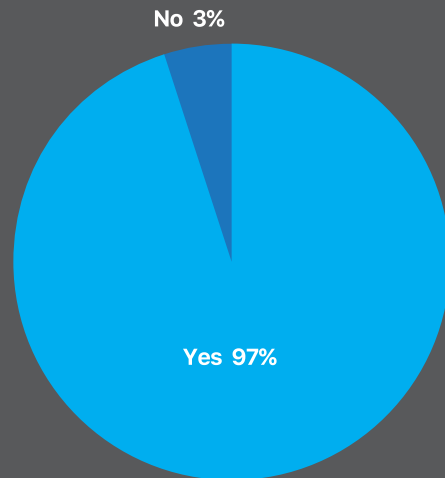
How many months must be remaining in their H-1B status (time before max out)?

1-5 months   0%

6-11 months   4%

4%

12-14 months   19%

19%

15+ months   54%

54%

I don't know   23%

23%
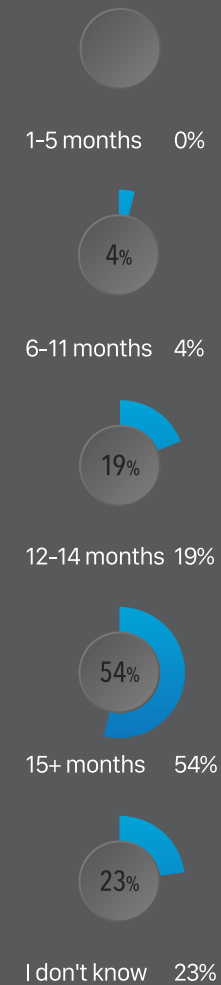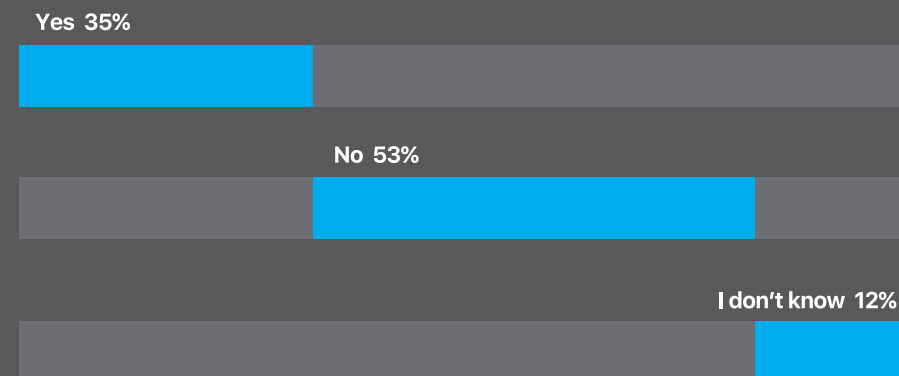
When are employees eligible to start with your organization after an H-1B transfer (Change of Employer) petition has been filed?

- Immediately after petition/application delivery to USCIS – 24%
- After USCIS issuance of receipt notice – 31%
- After USCIS approval – 45%

How many months before an employee's status expiration does your organization initiate an H-1B extension?

- 1-3 months — 4%
- 4-6 months — 63%
- 7-9 months — 28%
- 10+ months — 4%
- I don't know — 1%

Are H-1B employees eligible for Green Card sponsorship?

Yes 88%

No 5%

I don't know 7%

L-1 Visas

Does your organization sponsor L-1 visas for Intracompany Transferees?

Yes 57%	No 43%

Are L-1 employees eligible for H-1B cap lottery sponsorship?

Yes 92%

No 8%

Does your organization sponsor L-1A visas (for Executives and Multinational Managers) and/or L-1B visas (for Specialized Knowledge Workers)?

95%
Yes, we sponsor both L-1A and L-1B employees

4%
Yes, but only L-1A Executives and/or Multinational Managers

1%
Yes, but only L-1B Specialized Knowledge workers

Does your organization have an L-1 Blanket Approval?

Yes
68%

No
24%

I don't know
8%

Are L-1 employees eligible for Green Card sponsorship?

- No – 2%
- Yes, both L-1A and L-1B are eligible – 85%
- Yes, but only L-1A employees are eligible – 13%
- Yes, but only L-1B employees are eligible – 0%

F-1 OPT
and Other Nonimmigrant Visas

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Does your organization employ/sponsor F-1 Students for Optional Practical Training (OPT or STEM OPT)?

82%
YES

18%
NO

Does your organization require F-1 OPT candidates to have a minimum time period remaining (on OPT or STEM OPT) for them to be eligible for hire?

Yes 33%	No 67%

How many months must be remaining in their F-1 OPT status (time before max out)?

1-5 months	3%
6-11 months	19%
12-14 months	52%
15+ months	26%

Does your organization sponsor nonimmigrant visas that can be renewed indefinitely (e.g., TN, E-1, E-2, E-3, O-1, etc.)?

Yes 81%	No 19%

Are employees on indefinitely renewable visas (e.g., TN, E-1, E-2, E-3, O-1, etc.) eligible for H-1B cap lottery sponsorship?

Yes 67%	No 33%

Are employees on indefinitely renewable visas (e.g., TN, E-1, E-2, E-3, O-1, etc.) eligible for Green Card sponsorship?
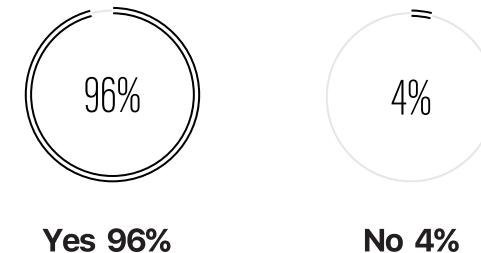
Yes 78%	No 22%

Green Cards
(U.S. Permanent Residence)

How soon after an employee's start date are they eligible for initiation of a Green Card process?

- 24% — 0-5 months
- 21% — 6-11 months
- 38% — 12-17 months
- 7% — 18-23 months
- 10% — 24+ months
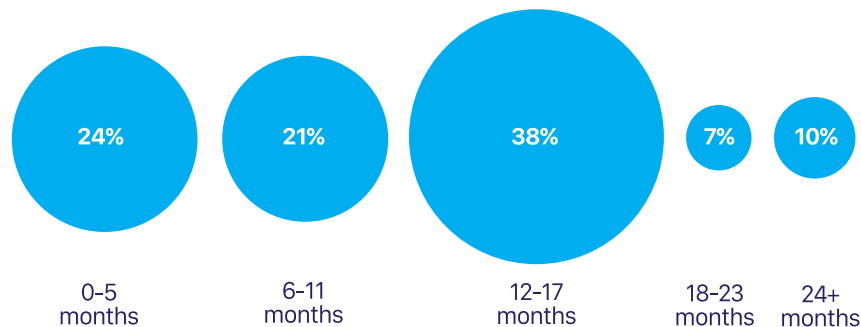
Does your organization maintain the employee's underlying nonimmigrant visa status once an I-485 is pending?

- Yes 96%
- No 4%

Employers are required to cover the cost of PERM Labor Certification, but either the employer or employee can cover the cost of the I-140 and I-485 processes.

What portion of I-140 costs does your organization cover?

- All 76%
- Some 16%
- None 8%

What portion of the employee's I-485 costs does your organization cover?

- All 67%
- Some 16%
- None 17%

Does your organization offer employees the option of filing subsequent I-140 petitions to leverage Visa Bulletin changes (e.g. EB-3 downgrade or EB-2 upgrade petitions)?

- Yes 79%
- No 21%
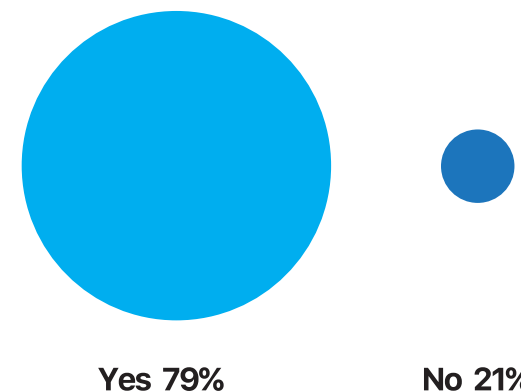
Expense Allocation and Liquidated Damages

Does your organization cover the costs of Green Card processing for the employee's dependent family members?

We cover all costs for dependent family members

32%

We cover some costs for dependent family members

18%

We do not cover costs for dependent family members

50%

Does your organization cover nonimmigrant visa costs for the employee's dependent family members?

We cover all costs for dependent family members

45%

We cover some costs for dependent family members

20%

We do not cover costs for dependent family members

35%

Does your organization cover the costs of applying for an Employment Authorization Document (EAD) for the employee's eligible dependents?

22% Yes   78% No
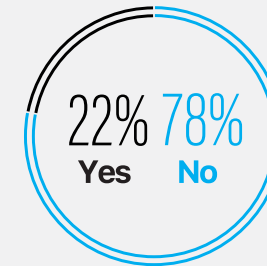
Does your organization cover travel expenses related to consular processing of visa applications?

14% — Yes, always

42% — Yes, but only if the travel is business-related

44% — No
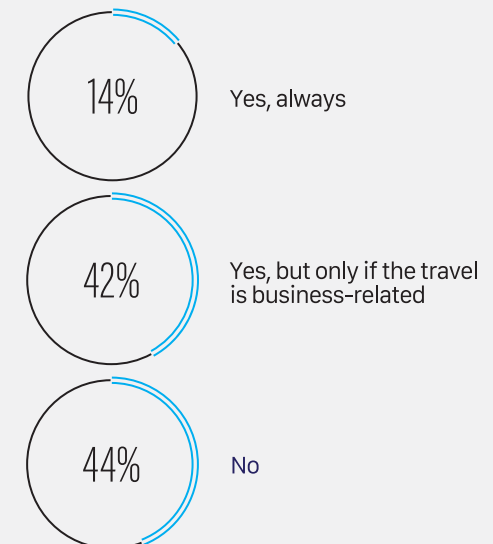
What portion of visa issuance/consular processing costs does your organization cover when an employee goes abroad to obtain a visa stamp?

All	24%
Some	22%
None	54%
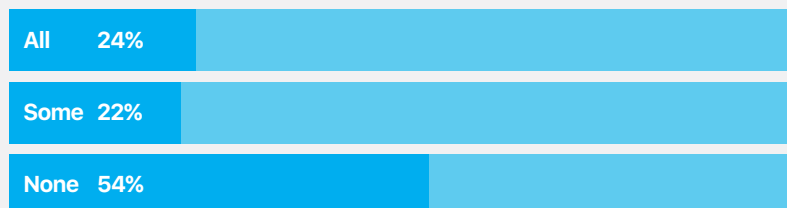
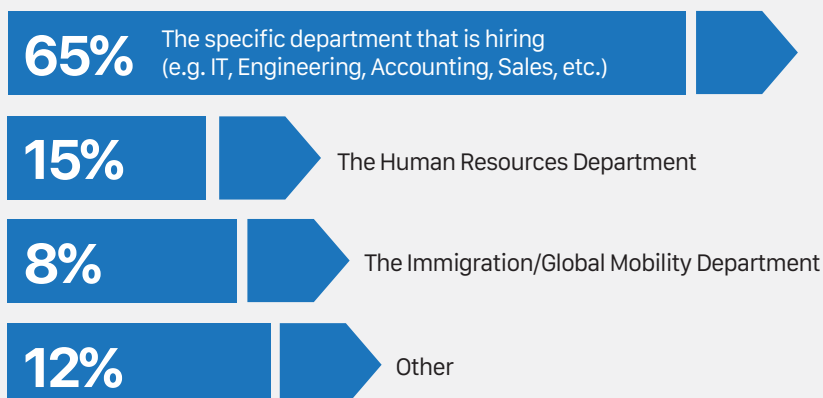**If an application is filed with USCIS' Premium Processing option, who covers the cost?**

The organization always covers the cost when Premium Processing is used
43%

The organization only covers the cost when necessary due to a business need
57%

Who is responsible for immigration costs at your organization?

65% The specific department that is hiring (e.g. IT, Engineering, Accounting, Sales, etc.)

15% The Human Resources Department

8% The Immigration/Global Mobility Department

12% Other

Does your organization have a liquidated damages clause that allows it to recoup permissible immigration expenses under an applicable state law provision when an employee leaves the organization within a specific time period?

31% Yes   69% No
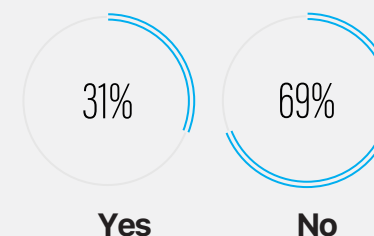
How long after sponsorship approval must an employee remain employed before a liquidated damages claim is waived?

0-6 months	0%
7-12 months	14%
13-24 months	52%
24+ months	34%
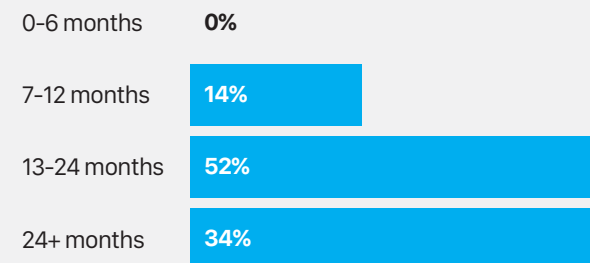
Immigration Program Maturity & Health

How would you describe the current state of your organization's reporting on immigration data, such as employee status and expiration dates, in terms of its accuracy and impact on planning and decision-making?

14%	7%	41%	18%	19%

We lack formal reports or structured data   14%
We use spreadsheets, but their accuracy is often questionable   7%
Our data is mostly accurate, but our reporting tools and processes could be improved   41%
Our data is clean, and we have comprehensive reporting that consistently informs our decisions   18%
We rely on external providers for our reporting needs   19%

How confident are you in your organization's practices surrounding your sponsored employees' Personally Identifiable Information (PII) and the organization's ability to retrieve immigration-related data in the event of a disaster or security incident?

42%	12%	9%	31%	6%
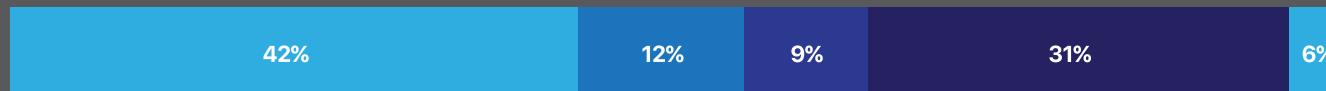
Very confident in both aspects   42%
Confident in data security practices but unsure about data retrieval   12%
Confident in data retrieval but unsure about data security practices   9%
Somewhat confident in both aspects   31%
Not confident in either aspect   6%

With heightened government scrutiny on immigration compliance, particularly the Department of Labor's focus on Public Access Files (PAFs) for H-1B, H-1B1, and E-3 visas, how would you characterize your organization's PAF management process?

27%

Manual and inconsistent:
We utilize a template and store it either physically or digitally, with potential gaps in consistency

33%

Adequate but could be improved:
We store received completed files digitally, yet lack a system for periodic purging

40%

Streamlined and comprehensive:
We (or our immigration services provider) manages our files digitally, including both storage and scheduled purging

Inconsistent application of corporate immigration policies can lead to mistrust among employees and unpredictability for HR teams. How do your recruiters, supervisory managers, department heads, and executives approach decisions on immigration sponsorship, such as role eligibility, timing of Green Card sponsorship, and cost responsibilities?

21%

47%

31%

Lacking formal guidelines:
Decisions are made on a case-by-case basis

Semi-structured approach:
We have general guidelines, but their application can vary

Well-defined and adhered to:
Our immigration policy is comprehensive and consistently applied

Clear insights into immigration costs are vital for optimizing budgets and preventing unexpected expenditures. How would you describe your organization's data on past and projected immigration spending?

44%
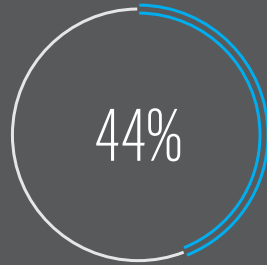
Limited to historical data: Extracting this requires sifting through past invoices

33%
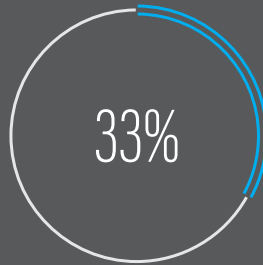
Historical and attempted forecasts: We have access to past spending and have made efforts to project expenses using Excel, though it's challenging

24%
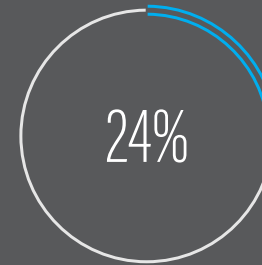
Comprehensive: We can readily access both historical data and detailed projections on upcoming expenditures

Effective Form I-9 management is crucial for immigration compliance, especially with international employees requiring frequent re-verifications. If subjected to a Department of Homeland Security audit, how confident are you in your organization's I-9 practices and recordkeeping?

9%
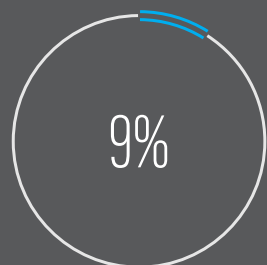
Not confident: Our I-9 practices and recordkeeping are inconsistent

38%
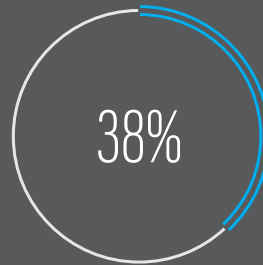
Moderately confident: We maintain consistent I-9 practices but don't conduct internal audits for potential errors

53%
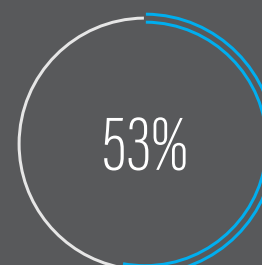
Highly confident: We uphold consistent I-9 practices and routinely carry out self-audits to ensure compliance

Immigration benefits can significantly influence an international employee's decision to join and remain with the organization. How would you describe the clarity of your organization's immigration benefits as perceived by your employees?

Limited clarity: We primarily discuss only the initial onboarding process

20%

Somewhat clear: We offer general, verbal information about our immigration benefits

44%

Highly clear: Our immigration benefits, including potential future sponsorships, are well-documented and explicitly communicated

36%

Employee anxiety can often be alleviated with transparency and visibility into immigration policies and processes. How would your employees characterize their insight into your organization's immigration policies and procedures?

Lacking visibility: They frequently seek information or basic updates due to feeling uninformed

7%

Moderate visibility: They often desire further specificity, such as timelines for initiating Green Card processing

59%

Excellent visibility: Our transparent policies and processes consistently provide them with reassurance and clarity

34%

Inconsistent job descriptions, especially concerning degree, experience, and skill prerequisites, can lead to heightened legal risks, longer processing times, and increased costs for immigration procedures. How would you characterize the consistency of the job descriptions utilized for your organization's immigration applications?

33%

Ad-hoc adaptations: We typically use our recruitment job descriptions and often find the need to modify them specifically for immigration applications

44%

Attempted standardization: We've tried to create a set of 'immigration-optimized' job descriptions, but these frequently require case-by-case adjustments

23%

Highly standardized: Our established immigration job bank ensures consistent application and even facilitates grouped PERM applications

In the past 12 months, how have economic fluctuations influenced your organization's immigration program?

We instituted a hiring freeze

17%

We laid off foreign national employees

3%

We undertook both actions mentioned above

15%

We did not implement either of the actions mentioned above

64%

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Thank You