

Removing Talent Barriers: SHRM's Workplace Immigration Strategies

SHRM Supports

SHRM supports policies that strengthen the workplace immigration system to help organizations hire top talent, meet workforce demands, and remain globally competitive. Employers often face challenges filling critical roles, addressing seasonal workforce needs, and fostering innovation through cultural exchange programs. Immigration provides essential tools to meet these demands, including employment-based visas, H-2A/B programs, and J-1 exchange opportunities.

Modernizing the workplace immigration system will require collaboration between the executive and legislative branches, as well as input from all relevant stakeholders. As we prepare for a new regulatory agenda and the 119th Congress, SHRM's Workplace Immigration priorities focus on practical solutions to strengthen economic growth and meet workforce demands.

Talent Acquisition and Retention

Increasing access to legally authorized, skilled workers is essential to fill workforce gaps, especially in critical industries like healthcare, manufacturing, and education, which face significant disruptions due to worker shortages. **U.S. immigration policies should support skills-based hiring, allowing employers to assess their workforce needs and use reasonable criteria to select the most qualified candidates.** This flexibility is crucial for U.S. employers to thrive in the modern workplace.

Efficiency and Predictability

Removing arbitrary barriers that limit access to talent and promote inefficiencies. **SHRM research highlights that processing delays and unpredictability are the top challenges in the U.S. workplace immigration system, making it risky for employers to invest in foreign-born talent.** SHRM advocates for removing unwarranted barriers to recruiting, hiring, transferring, and retaining top talent.

Innovation and Cultural Exchange

Promoting the importance of visa programs that increase cross cultural exchanges and exposure to various viewpoints. **Cultural exchanges are crucial for workplaces as they bring diverse perspectives and improve problem-solving skills and adaptability.** Programs like the J-1 visa and F-1 visa holders on Optional Practical Training provide significant benefits, such as access to qualified talent and exposure to different cultures, with most employers reporting positive experiences with these programs and their participants.



Nearly 3 in 4 (73%) employers agree that increased immigration fuels economic growth and enhances America's global competitiveness.

However, over half of employers (54%) believe the current U.S. immigration system causes the nation to lose top talent to other countries.

Additionally, 78% of employers disagree that increased immigration would make it harder for Americans to find jobs.

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SHRM pursues data-driven, non-partisan, multi-faceted policy solutions that advance workplaces and is committed to engaging at every stage of federal policymaking.

