

# H-2B

# WORKFORCE COALITION

Protecting American Workers Through a Stable and Reliable Seasonal Workforce

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**Brian Crawford, Co-Chair**  
American Hotel &  
Lodging Association

**Laurie Flanagan, Co-Chair**  
AmericanHort  
National Association of Landscape  
Professionals

**Gregg Hartley, Co-Chair**  
Outdoor Amusement Business  
Association

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Seasonal Employment Alliance

U.S. Chamber of Commerce

## Statement on Release of Supplemental H-2B Visas for FY 2023

**Washington, DC (October 12, 2022)** Today, the Department of Homeland Security announced plans to release 64,716 additional H-2B for the fiscal year 2023, with 20,000 of these visas set aside for workers from Honduras, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Haiti.

We are grateful to the Departments of Homeland Security and Labor for recognizing the significant labor shortages faced by seasonal businesses across the country. Today's announcement will provide some relief for seasonal businesses that continue to struggle with filling temporary positions with American workers but cannot hire H-2B workers due to an outdated Congressionally mandated 66,000 annual visa cap. We urge the Department to quickly promulgate rules that allow employers who need workers this fall to apply for these supplemental visas.

"AmericanHort thanks both DHS Secretary Mayorkas and DOL Secretary Walsh for recognizing the urgent situation confronting seasonal employers by releasing an additional 64,716 H-2B temporary nonagricultural worker visas," said Ken Fisher, AmericanHort CEO. "These visas will benefit many U.S. employers in the green industry with DOL-approved labor certifications and urgent seasonal labor needs at hand, right now and next spring."

The Department's announcement will not only help seasonal businesses meet their labor needs, but it will also provide additional jobs and promotion opportunities for U.S. workers and allow companies to continue to provide important goods and services to their communities. Reserving a portion of these visas for workers from the Northern Triangle Countries and Haiti will contribute to the economies of those countries and could lessen illegal migration.

"We commend Secretary Mayorkas and the Biden Administration for taking this proactive step to release the maximum amount of supplemental H-2B visas available under the law, said Britt Wood, CEO of the National Association of Landscape Professionals. "The landscape industry is the largest user of the H-2B visa program, and this announcement reflects the understanding by the Biden Administration of how temporary guest workers play an integral role in boosting the U.S. economy. We look forward to working with Secretary Mayorkas on implementing this in a timely manner."

The H-2B program is expensive and requires employers to undertake extensive recruitment of American workers, offer employment to any qualified American worker, gain approval from four government agencies, and pay a premium wage.

H-2B workers allow U.S. businesses to operate at a greater capacity, retain their full-time workers and contribute to their local economies. This program serves as a critical safety valve for companies to address seasonal labor needs when there are not a sufficient number of available American workers to meet the demand for these short-term jobs.

“Hotels continue to compete for workers in one of the toughest labor markets in decades, and this announcement is great news for the lodging industry,” said Chip Rogers, President and CEO of the American Hotel & Lodging Association. “While AHLA members always look first to the U.S. workforce to fill critical job functions during peak seasons, the H-2B visa program is a vital tool that helps hotels and other industries with strong seasonal business needs meet demand.”

“On behalf of our nearly 2,500 members, the Outdoor Amusement Business Association would like to applaud DHS for announcing the release of nearly 65,000 additional H-2B for fiscal year 2023,” said Greg Chiecko, President & CEO of the Outdoor Amusement Business Association. “The industry continues to struggle with finding a U.S. workforce to fill critical job functions during peak seasons, particularly given the unique nature of our mobile business, and we encourage the Administration to quickly promulgate rules that allow employers who need workers this fall to apply for these supplemental visas.”

While today’s announcement will provide some much-needed relief to businesses that continue to struggle with vacant positions due to the lack of American workers willing to fill these temporary jobs, the economic demand for H-2B workers is well above the number of supplemental visas that DHS is authorized to release under the law. The continued shortage of domestic workers in seasonal industries underscores the need for Congress to address the arbitrary and outdated H-2B cap once and for all. We urge Congress to swiftly pass an H-2B returning worker exemption or other meaningful cap relief.

### **About the H-2B Workforce Coalition**

The H-2B Workforce Coalition is a consortium of industry associations throughout the United States that have joined together to protect American workers by ensuring American small and seasonal employers have access to legal short-term temporary workers during peak business periods.