

H-1B and L-1 Visa Fact Sheet

- The two most common U.S. work visas are the H-1B visa for skilled workers and the L-1 visa for intra-company transferees.
- India is the world's largest beneficiary – by far – of U.S. visas in both categories. Last year, Indians received more than half of the world's H-1B visas and more than a third of the world's L-1 visas.
- There are two types of L-1 visas: Individual L-1 and Blanket L-1.
- Individual L-1 visas require a petition be filed in the United States for each individual applicant. In these cases, a consular officer's role is to ensure that the information presented in the petition is consistent with that presented by the beneficiary at the visa window. Over 90% of Individual L-1 cases are approved by the consular team in India.
- Blanket L-1 visas allow large firms to apply under a single petition filed in the United States for an unspecified number of applicants over a period of time. Applicants can qualify for a Blanket L-1 visa as managers or specialized knowledge workers.
- The U.S. established the blanket L-1 visa program to enable companies to quickly send qualified employees on long-term assignments to the United States. They are not subject to numerical or salary restrictions.
- Sometimes, companies apply for L-1 visas for employees who do not meet the definition of "specialized knowledge" established by the U.S. Congress. The constant evolution of the IT industry means that many skills and technologies that were once highly specialized are now commonplace.
- Frequently, applicants who are initially refused for an L-1 visa are later approved for an H-1B visa when they apply under the correct category. In fact, H-1B work visa issuances in India increased 24% between 2010 and 2011.
- We work closely with India's business community and government leaders to understand their business needs and to explain the standards for qualifying for U.S. visas. To ensure greater consistency and faster service, we have now centralized all Blanket L-1 processing in Chennai.