

Next Steps After the H-1B Lottery

January 10, 2024

By Mohammad Ali Syed

Originally posted 05.5.19, content updated 01.10.24

After the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) finishes the H-1B lottery, they will send out receipt notices, process and adjudicate petitions, send out approval notices, and then send reject notices along with the filed petition and filing fees.^[1]

Prior to sending out a notice of receipt, the USCIS must first verify the fees and signatures and make sure the form has been filled correctly. If properly filled, USCIS will stamp the petition with the date of arrival at the service center. If the application is not properly filled out, they will reject the petition and return it to the employer. A paper file will be created for all petitions that were properly filled. The file is sorted into cap and non-cap cases.^[2]

Notice of Receipt

The first step the USCIS takes after it finished the H-1B lottery is to send out notices of receipt to petitions that were selected in the lottery. For petitions not selected in the lottery, nothing will be sent until the rejection notice.

1. If you filed for premium processing, then you would first receive an email receipt notice and then a hard copy notice of receipt in the mail.
2. Notices of receipt for H-1B master's cap petitions are usually sent prior to the H-1B bachelor's cap petitions.

Once you receive a notice of receipt you can check your status on the USCIS website by using your receipt number.^[3]

Adjudication Process

Once the receipt notices are all sent, the USCIS will begin to adjudicate petitions. Depending on where your petition was filed, you will receive a USCIS number beginning with WAC or EAC. WAC is the California Service Center and EAC is the Vermont Service Center.^[4]

Once the petition is adjudicated there are several scenarios that could occur: your case could be approved; you could receive a Request for Evidence (RFE), submit a response and eventually get a notice of approval; or after submitting the response to the RFE, your petition could be denied.

1. Receiving an approval notice – After you receive your notice of receipt you will get an approval notice. For premium processing you will first receive an approval notice by email and then by mail. For regular processing you will only receive

the notice by hard copy mail.

2. Receiving an RFE - If you receive an RFE you will need to carefully review the notice and respond by submitting the additional evidence required. This process can take several weeks to months. After the response is sent, you will either receive an approval notice or a denial notice.

Reject Notices Sent

For the H-1B petitions that were not selected in the lottery, the USCIS will send a reject notice. These notices are not sent immediately. Rather, you will receive it only after all of the premium processing petitions are taken care of and the notices of receipt have been mailed to H-1B petitions that were selected in the lottery. In the past, these notices were not sent until mid to late July. You will also receive the rejected petition and filing fees that were submitted.

[1] <https://redbus2us.com/steps-after-h1b-lottery-processing-approval-flow-chart/>

[2] <https://redbus2us.com/h1b-visa-petition-processing-steps-at-uscis-service-center-adjudication-info/>

[3] <https://egov.uscis.gov/casestatus/landing.do>

[4] <https://redbus2us.com/h1b-visa-receipt-case-number-meaning-check-status/>