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Characteristics of Specialty Occupation Workers (H-1B): Fiscal Year 2003

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Improvement Act of 1998

Characteristics of Specialty Occupation Workers (H-1B): October 2002 to September 2003

This report presents information on the characteristics of specialty occupation workers approved for H-1B nonimmigrant status during fiscal year 2003. The report is the fourth to be submitted to Congress under the American Competitive and Workforce Improvement Act of 1998 (ACWIA).¹

Highlights

- The number of petitions approved increased 10 percent from 197,000 in fiscal year 2002 to 217,000 in fiscal year 2003.
- Approved petitions in fiscal year 2003 were nearly equally divided between initial employment (48 percent) and continuous employment (52 percent). This breakdown was similar in fiscal year 2002.
- Nearly 37 percent of all petitions approved in fiscal year 2003 were for workers born in India.
- Sixty-five percent of petitions approved in fiscal year 2003 were for workers between the ages of 25 and 34. The average age of beneficiaries approved in fiscal year 2003 was 32 years.
- One-half of petitions approved in fiscal year 2003 were for workers with a bachelor's degree. Thirty-one percent had a master's degree.
- Thirty-nine percent of petitions approved in fiscal year 2003 were for workers in computer-related occupations.
- The median salary was \$52,000 for workers whose petitions were approved in fiscal year 2003. For workers in computer-related occupations, the median salary was \$60,000.

¹ Public Law 105-277, Division C, American Competitiveness and Workforce Improvement Act of 1998 (ACWIA), Section 416(c) requires DHS to submit a report with "information on the countries of origin and occupations of, educational levels attained by, and compensation paid to, aliens who were issued visas or otherwise provided nonimmigrant status under section 101(a)(15)(H)(i)(b) of the Immigration and Nationality Act during the previous fiscal year."

Background

An H-1B temporary worker is an alien admitted to the United States to perform services in “specialty occupations,” based on professional education, skills, and/or equivalent experience.

United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) is responsible for the processing and adjudication of H-1B petitions submitted by domestic employers and their representatives on behalf of nonimmigrant workers seeking temporary employment within the United States. The H-1B nonimmigrant classification permits foreign professionals to enter the United States on a temporary basis to work in their field of expertise.

Under the H-1B program, specialty workers are permitted to be employed for as long as three years initially with extensions not exceeding three years. The maximum stay is six years. In order to perform services in a specialty occupation, an employee must meet one of the following criteria: 1) hold a United States baccalaureate or higher degree as required by the specialty occupation from an accredited college or university; 2) possess a foreign degree determined to be equivalent to a United States baccalaureate or higher degree as required by the specialty occupation from an accredited college or university; 3) have any required license or other official permission to practice the occupation (for example, architect, surveyor, physical therapist) in the state in which employment is sought; or 4) have, as determined by USCIS, the equivalent of the degree required by the specialty occupation acquired through a combination of education, training, and/or experience. Specialty occupations include computer systems analysts and programmers, physicians, professors, engineers, and accountants.

In order to sponsor a foreign worker under the H-1B program, an employer must first file an application with the Department of Labor specifying the job, the salary, and the length and site of employment. In addition, the employer must agree to pay the prevailing salary and provide proof that the pay is fair. Once the Department of Labor certifies the application, U.S. employers file the petition with USCIS to sponsor an alien worker as an H-1B nonimmigrant. This petition may be filed to sponsor an alien for an initial period of H-1B employment or to extend the authorized stay of an alien as an H-1B nonimmigrant. Additionally, an employer may file the petition to sponsor an alien who currently has status as an H-1B nonimmigrant working for another employer or to seek an amendment of a previously approved petition. In the case of a petition to amend a previously approved petition, no corresponding request might be made to extend the authorized stay of the beneficiary. For example, an employer may file an amended petition notifying USCIS of a different location where the beneficiary will be employed or a material change in the beneficiary’s job duties. Therefore, the total number of approved petitions exceeds the actual number of aliens who are provided nonimmigrant status as H-1B.

The Immigration and Naturalization Act, as amended by the Immigration Act of 1990 and the American Competitiveness and Workforce Improvement Act of 1998 (ACWIA), regulates H-1B policy as well as guides H-1B procedures. Under ACWIA, the annual ceiling of H-1B petitions valid for initial employment was increased from 65,000 to 115,000 in fiscal years 1999 and 2000 and 107,500 in 2001. The enactment of the American Competitiveness in the Twenty-first Century Act (AC21) in October 2000 raised the limit on petitions in fiscal year 2001 from 107,500 to 195,000 and in fiscal year 2002 from 65,000 to 195,000. The limit in fiscal year 2003 was 195,000.

Petitions

During fiscal year 2003, USCIS approved 217,340 H-1B petitions submitted by employers on behalf of alien workers. The number of approved petitions exceeds the number of individual H-1B workers because sometimes more than one U.S. employer submits a petition on behalf of individual H-1B workers (multiple petitions). The number of approved petitions for initial employment exceeds the cap because of employer-based cap exemptions and multiple petitions for individuals. For example, approved petitions for initial employment are exempt from the cap if the sponsors are institutions of higher education or nonprofit organizations affiliated with institutions of higher education.

Table 1 shows for fiscal year 2003 the number of petitions filed and/or approved for initial and continuing employment. Of the 217,340 petitions approved in 2003, a total of 105,314 petitions or 48 percent were for initial employment.² The corresponding number of petitions for continuing employment was 112,026.³ These workers may have had a second (or subsequent) petition filed on their behalf in order to 1) extend the period allowed to work with their current employer, 2) notify USCIS of changes in the conditions of employment including a change of employer, or 3) request concurrent H-1B status with another employer.

The number of H-1B petitions filed increased 7 percent and petitions approved increased 10 percent between fiscal years 2002 and 2003. For initial employment, petitions decreased 1 percent and petitions approved rose 2 percent. In contrast, petitions filed for continuing employment climbed 16 percent and petitions approved increased 19 percent. The number of petitions approved for continuing employment increased from 93,953 in 2002 to 112,026 in 2003.

**Table 1. H-1B Petitions Filed and/or Approved by Type of Petition:
Fiscal Years 2000 to 2003**

	FY 2000	FY 2001	FY 2002	FY 2003
Petitions filed	299,046	342,035	215,190	231,030
Initial Employment	164,814	201,543	109,576	108,526
Continuing Employment	134,232	140,492	105,614	122,504
Petitions approved¹	257,640	331,206	197,537	217,340
Initial Employment	136,787	201,079	103,584	105,314
Continuing Employment	120,853	130,127	93,953	112,026

¹ Regardless of when filed.

² The terms initial employment and continuing employment are used throughout this report to identify two types of petitions. Petitions for initial employment are filed for first-time H-1B employment with employers, only some of which are applied to the annual cap. Continuing employment petitions refer to extensions, sequential employment, and concurrent employment, which are filed for aliens already in the United States. Extensions are filed for H-1B workers intending to work beyond the initial 3-year period up to 6 years, the maximum period permissible under law during fiscal year 2003. Sequential employment refers to petitions for workers transferring between H-1B employers within the 6-year period. Finally, petitions for concurrent employment are filed for H-1B workers intending to work simultaneously for a second or subsequent H-1B employer.

³ Neither AC21 nor prior legislation established a cap on H-1B petitions for continuing employment.

Table 2 and Chart A show the trend in petitions filed by quarter in fiscal year 2003. Petitions filed in 2003 increased from 50,633 in the first quarter to 66,373 in the fourth quarter. As Chart A indicates, receipts rose sharply during the October-December quarter of calendar year 2000. This increase was partly due to the fee increase that went into effect in mid-December 2000. During fiscal year 2002 and the first half of fiscal year 2003, receipts remained stable. By the fourth quarter of fiscal year 2003, receipts reached a level last attained eight quarters earlier.

Table 2. H-1B Petitions Filed by Quarter: Fiscal Years 2000 to 2003

Quarter	FY 2000	FY 2001	FY 2002	FY 2003	Initial Employment FY 2003	Percent of Total	Continuing Employment FY 2003	Percent of Total
Total	299,046	342,035	215,190	231,030	108,526	100.0	122,504	100.0
October-December	73,875	128,758	53,888	50,633	23,982	22.1	26,651	21.8
January-March	90,762	75,395	51,905	52,722	25,469	23.5	27,253	22.2
April-June	55,692	65,942	53,429	61,302	29,953	27.6	31,349	25.6
July-September	78,717	71,940	55,968	66,373	29,122	26.8	37,251	30.4

Chart A. H-1B Petitions Filed by Quarter: Fiscal Years 2000 to 2003

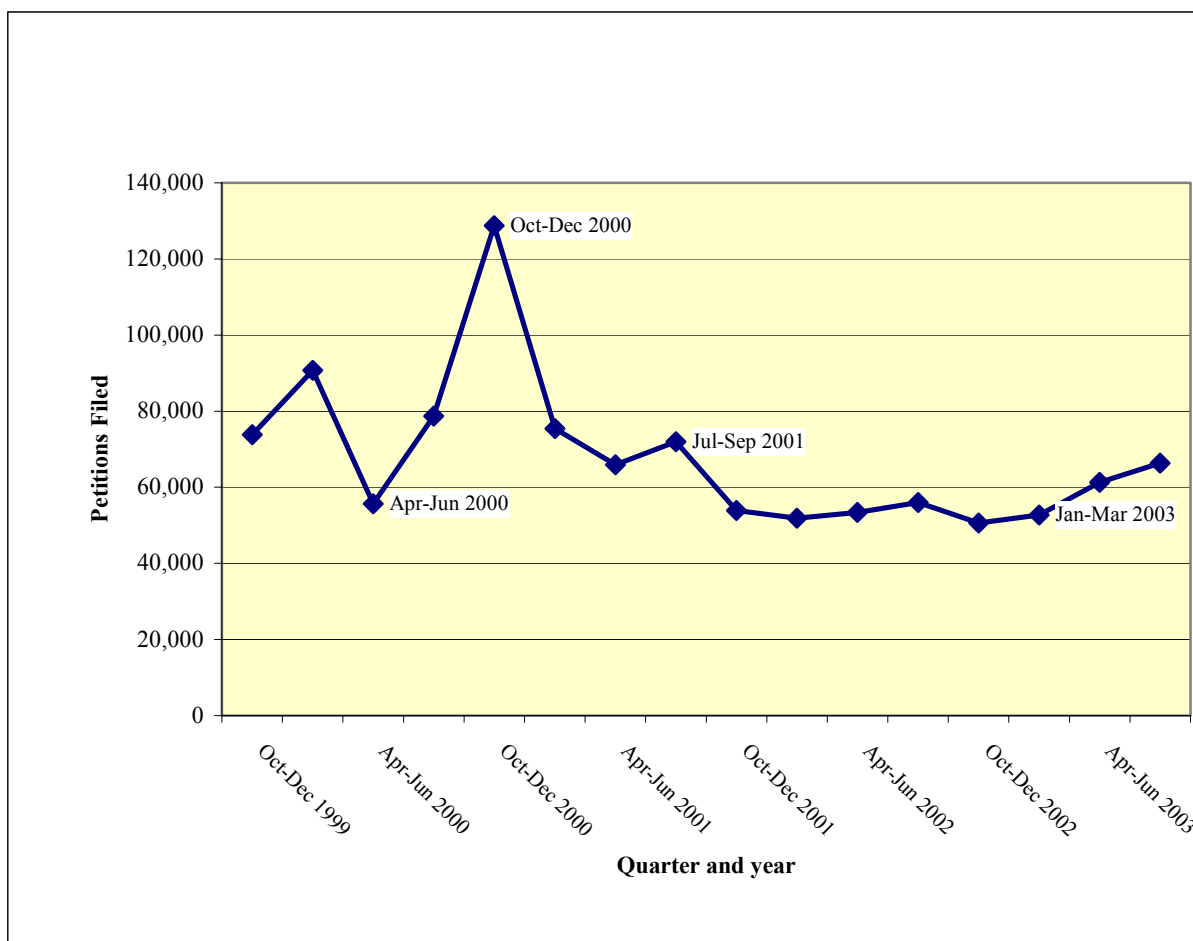


Table 3 provides a breakdown of approved petitions in fiscal year 2003 by type of petition. More than 105,000 H-1B beneficiaries were approved for initial employment and about 112,000 for continuing employment. Approximately 60 percent of the beneficiaries of initial employment were in the United States in another nonimmigrant status. In 2001 and 2002, these numbers were 40 and 65 percent, respectively.

The number of aliens outside the United States approved for initial employment grew from 36,500 to 41,900 in fiscal year 2003, still 64 percent below fiscal year 2001. The corresponding numbers for aliens in the United States changing to H-1B status declined to 63,400 in 2003 from 67,100. The number of H-1B workers approved to continue employment increased 19 percent in 2003.

Table 3. H-1B Petitions Approved by Type: Fiscal Years 2000 to 2003

Type of Petition	Petitions Approved							
	FY 2000 ¹	Percent	FY 2001	Percent	FY 2002	Percent	FY 2003	Percent
Total	257,640	100	331,206	100	197,537	100	217,340	100
Initial employment	136,787	53	201,079	61	103,584	52	105,314	48
Aliens outside U.S.	75,785	29	115,759	35	36,494	18	41,895	19
Aliens in U.S.	61,002	24	85,320	26	67,090	34	63,419	29
Continuing employment	120,820	47	130,127	39	93,953	48	112,026	52

¹ In fiscal year 2000, type was missing on 33 approved petitions.

Shaded cells represent the petitions approved in either fiscal year 2000, 2001, 2002 or 2003 that qualified as counting towards the numerical limit of 195,000 based on rules existing prior to the enactment of AC21 and before adjustments for multiple petitions and revocations.

Country of Birth

Tables 4A and 4B show the distribution of beneficiaries by country of birth.⁴ Thirty-six percent of the H-1B petitions approved in fiscal year 2003 were granted to individuals born in India, an increase of 22 percent over 2002. Beneficiaries from China, the second leading source of H-1B beneficiaries, increased 6 percent in 2003. Of the top 20 suppliers, every country increased its number of H-1B beneficiaries except Canada (-600), Pakistan (-261), and Colombia (-195). The share of H-1B workers born in India remained much higher for continuing beneficiaries (45 percent) than for initial beneficiaries (28 percent). In contrast, initial beneficiaries from China outnumbered continuing beneficiaries.

⁴ Data actually represent countries and territories of birth.

**Table 4A. H-1B Petitions Approved by Country of Birth of Beneficiary and Type of
Petition (Number): Fiscal Years 2002 and 2003**

Country of Birth	All Beneficiaries		Initial Employment		Continuing Employment	
	FY 2002 Number	FY 2003 Number	FY 2002 Number	FY 2003 Number	FY 2002 Number	FY 2003 Number
Total	197,537	217,340	103,584	105,314	93,953	112,026
Country of birth known	197,092	217,031	103,350	105,185	93,742	111,846
India	64,980	79,166	21,066	29,269	43,914	49,897
China, People's Republic	18,841	20,063	11,832	11,144	7,009	8,919
Canada	11,760	11,160	7,893	6,201	3,867	4,959
Philippines	9,295	10,454	6,648	6,852	2,647	3,602
United Kingdom	7,171	7,599	4,192	3,871	2,979	3,728
Korea	5,941	6,614	3,886	3,893	2,055	2,721
Japan	4,937	5,716	2,970	3,287	1,967	2,429
Taiwan	4,025	4,076	2,366	2,109	1,659	1,967
Pakistan	3,810	3,549	1,955	1,501	1,855	2,048
Germany	3,291	3,408	1,955	1,788	1,336	1,620
Mexico	3,082	3,407	1,905	1,969	1,177	1,438
France	3,145	3,190	1,925	1,621	1,220	1,569
Colombia	3,320	3,125	2,362	1,771	958	1,354
Russia	2,864	2,905	1,523	1,265	1,341	1,640
Venezuela	2,398	2,677	1,610	1,798	788	879
Brazil	2,287	2,354	1,414	1,307	873	1,047
Turkey	2,004	2,305	1,319	1,311	685	994
Argentina	2,148	2,230	1,611	1,479	537	751
Australia	1,846	1,925	1,107	986	739	939
Israel	1,620	1,841	1,042	1,085	578	756
Other countries	38,327	39,267	22,769	20,678	15,558	18,589
Country of birth unknown	445	309	234	129	211	180

Notes: Countries of birth are ranked based on 2003 data.

0.2 and 0.1 of 1 percent of total petitions approved have an unknown country of birth in 2002 and 2003 respectively.

Table 4B. H-1B Petitions Approved by Country of Birth of Beneficiary and Type of Petition (Percent): Fiscal Years 2002 and 2003

Country of Birth	All Beneficiaries		Initial Employment		Continuing Employment	
	FY 2002 Percent	FY 2003 Percent	FY 2002 Percent	FY 2003 Percent	FY 2002 Percent	FY 2003 Percent
Total	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
Country of birth known	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
India	33.0	36.5	20.4	27.8	46.8	44.6
China, People's Republic	9.6	9.2	11.4	10.6	7.5	8.0
Canada	6.0	5.1	7.6	5.9	4.1	4.4
Philippines	4.7	4.8	6.4	6.5	2.8	3.2
United Kingdom	3.6	3.5	4.1	3.7	3.2	3.3
Korea	3.0	3.0	3.8	3.7	2.2	2.4
Japan	2.5	2.6	2.9	3.1	2.1	2.2
Taiwan	2.0	1.9	2.3	2.0	1.8	1.8
Pakistan	1.9	1.6	1.9	1.4	2.0	1.8
Germany	1.7	1.6	1.9	1.7	1.4	1.4
Mexico	1.6	1.6	1.8	1.9	1.3	1.3
France	1.6	1.5	1.9	1.5	1.3	1.4
Colombia	1.7	1.4	2.3	1.7	1.0	1.2
Russia	1.5	1.3	1.5	1.2	1.4	1.5
Venezuela	1.2	1.2	1.6	1.7	0.8	0.8
Brazil	1.2	1.1	1.4	1.2	0.9	0.9
Turkey	1.0	1.1	1.3	1.2	0.7	0.9
Argentina	1.1	1.0	1.6	1.4	0.6	0.7
Australia	0.9	0.9	1.1	0.9	0.8	0.8
Israel	0.8	0.8	1.0	1.0	0.6	0.7
Other countries	19.4	18.1	22.0	19.7	16.6	16.6
Country of birth unknown	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----

Notes: Countries of birth are ranked based on 2003 data.

0.2 and 0.1 of 1 percent of total petitions approved have an unknown country of birth in 2002 and 2003 respectively.

Percents shown in the table are based on the total number of petitions approved with country of birth known.

Totals may not add due to rounding.

Age

Table 5 shows the age structure of the H-1B beneficiaries in fiscal year 2003 by type of petition. Sixty-five (65) percent of workers granted H-1B status during 2003 were between 25 and 34 years of age at the time their petitions were approved. Initial beneficiaries were younger than continuing beneficiaries. Forty-eight percent of initial beneficiaries were under 30 compared with 34 percent of continuing beneficiaries.

Table 5. H-1B Petitions Approved by Age of Beneficiary at Time of Approval and by Type of Petition: Fiscal Year 2003

Age	Total	Percent	Initial Employment	Percent	Continuing Employment	Percent
Total	217,340	-----	105,314	-----	112,026	-----
Age known	217,114	100.0	105,194	100.0	111,920	100.0
Under 20	168	0.1	162	0.2	6	0.0
20-24	14,202	6.5	12,395	11.8	1,807	1.6
25-29	75,222	34.6	37,841	36.0	37,381	33.4
30-34	66,954	30.8	27,341	26.0	39,613	35.4
35-39	33,231	15.3	13,928	13.2	19,303	17.2
40-44	15,151	7.0	7,021	6.7	8,130	7.3
45-49	6,832	3.1	3,521	3.3	3,311	3.0
50-54	3,159	1.5	1,715	1.6	1,444	1.3
55-59	1,450	0.7	849	0.8	601	0.5
60-64	541	0.2	309	0.3	232	0.2
65 and over	204	0.1	112	0.1	92	0.1
Age unknown	226	-----	120	-----	106	-----

Notes: Age of beneficiary is calculated based on the date the petition was approved.
Sum of the percents may not add to 100.0 due to rounding.
0.1 of 1 percent of total beneficiaries have an unknown age.
Percentages shown in the table are based on the total number of approved petitions with known ages.

Education

Tables 6 and 7 show the highest level of education achieved by the beneficiaries at the time of their application. Employers are asked to provide highest degree (domestic or foreign) but not training or experience deemed equivalent to a degree. The reporting of a domestic or foreign degree is not required in a standard format on USCIS or Department of Labor forms. However, the petitioning employer almost always provides the information in supporting documentation. For degrees earned outside the United States, the employer usually supplies a credential evaluation stating that the foreign degree is “equivalent to” a particular U.S. degree. USCIS does not maintain separate data regarding whether the degree was earned in the United States or abroad.

The highest level of education achieved of H-1B beneficiaries remained about the same between fiscal years 2002 and 2003. As shown in Table 6, 50 percent of all H-1B petitions approved for workers in 2003 reported that the beneficiary had earned the equivalent of a bachelor’s degree; 31 percent a master’s degree; 12 percent a doctorate, and 6 percent a professional degree. Altogether, 98 percent earned at least a bachelor’s degree and more than 48 percent earned at least a master’s degree. Of the 223 beneficiaries without a high school diploma, 117 were fashion models, qualifying for H-1B status on the basis of experience in lieu of a degree. Regarding differences in education between workers approved for initial and continuing employment in 2003, the former were more likely to have a doctorate or professional degree (20 percent versus 16 percent).

**Table 6. H-1B Petitions Approved by Level of Education:
Fiscal Years 2000-2003**

Level of Education	Percent of beneficiaries			
	FY 2000	FY 2001	FY 2002	FY 2003
Education known	100	100	100	100
Less than a Bachelor's degree	2	2	2	2
Bachelor's degree	57	57	50	50
Master's degree	31	31	30	31
Doctorate degree	7	7	12	12
Professional degree	3	3	5	6

Note: Sum of percent may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

**Table 7. H-1B Petitions Approved by Level of Education of Beneficiary and Type of
Petition: Fiscal Year 2003**

Level of Education	Total	Percent	Initial Employment	Percent	Continuing Employment	Percent
Total	217,340	-----	105,314	-----	112,026	-----
Education known	217,157	100.0	105,221	100.0	111,936	100.0
No high school diploma	223	0.1	148	0.1	75	0.1
High school graduate	1,027	0.5	822	0.8	205	0.2
Less than 1 year of college credit	204	0.1	122	0.1	82	0.1
1 or more years of college credit, no diploma	1,096	0.5	623	0.6	473	0.4
Associate's degree	962	0.4	534	0.5	428	0.4
Bachelor's degree	107,944	49.7	51,141	48.6	56,803	50.7
Master's degree	66,672	30.7	30,612	29.1	36,060	32.2
Doctorate degree	26,565	12.2	14,448	13.7	12,117	10.8
Professional degree	12,464	5.7	6,771	6.4	5,693	5.1
Education unknown	183	-----	93	-----	90	-----

Notes: Sum of the percents may not add to 100.0 due to rounding.
Fewer than 0.1 of 1 percent of total petitions approved have an unknown level of education.
Percents shown in the table are based on the number of approved petitions with known levels of education.

Occupation

- Major Occupation Group

Table 8 shows the distribution of beneficiaries by major occupation group in descending order for fiscal year 2003. The petitioning employer supplies the occupation code on the Labor Condition Application (LCA).⁵ The relative distributions in 2002 and 2003 were similar. Computer-related occupations were the most numerous occupation group in 2003, though their share of total petitions approved declined from 58 percent in 2001 to 38 percent in both fiscal years 2002 and 2003. The corresponding percents for initial employment and continuing employment in computer-related occupations were 28 and 49, respectively. Of the 17 occupation categories, only computer-related and architecture, engineering, and surveying occupations had more continuing than initial H-1B beneficiaries. Computer-related occupations had 88 percent more continuing than initial beneficiaries. The second and third most numerous occupation groups were architecture, engineering, and surveying, followed by education. The former group includes computer and systems engineers while the latter contains primary and secondary school teachers and college professors.

The number of H-1B petitions approved for workers in computer-related occupations increased almost 11 percent from 75,100 in 2002 to 83,100 in 2003. Nearly every occupation group increased between 2002 and 2003. Notable exceptions were managers and officials n.e.c. (-1 percent), miscellaneous professional, technical, and professional workers (-1 percent), and entertainment and recreation employees (-9 percent).

⁵ H-1B status requires a sponsoring U.S. employer. The employer must file a labor condition application (LCA) with the Department of Labor attesting to several items, including payment of prevailing wages for the position, and the working conditions offered.

**Table 8A. H-1B Petitions Approved by Major Occupation Group of Beneficiary and
Type of Petition (Number): Fiscal Years 2002 and 2003**

Occupation LCA Code (2-digits)	All Beneficiaries		Initial Employment		Continuing Employment	
	FY 2002 Number	FY 2003 Number	FY 2002 Number	FY 2003 Number	FY 2002 Number	FY 2003 Number
Total	197,537	217,340	103,584	105,314	93,953	112,026
Occupation known	196,160	215,955	102,667	104,458	93,493	111,497
Computer-related occupations (03)	75,114	83,114	25,637	28,879	49,477	54,235
Occupations in architecture, engineering, and surveying (00/01)	25,197	26,843	14,467	12,551	10,730	14,292
Occupations in education (09)	20,613	23,980	13,996	15,008	6,617	8,972
Occupations in administrative specializations (16)	21,103	23,072	13,853	13,892	7,250	9,180
Occupations in medicine and health (07)	12,920	15,623	7,861	8,934	5,059	6,689
Managers and officials n.e.c. (18)	10,610	10,457	6,661	5,854	3,949	4,603
Occupations in life sciences (04)	6,910	8,111	4,665	4,770	2,245	3,341
Occupations in social sciences (05)	5,547	5,709	3,705	3,409	1,842	2,300
Occupations in mathematics and physical sciences (02)	5,443	5,679	3,428	3,110	2,015	2,569
Miscellaneous professional, technical, and managerial (19)	4,940	4,876	3,185	2,745	1,755	2,131
Occupations in art (14)	2,898	3,355	1,833	1,951	1,065	1,404
Occupations in law and jurisprudence (11)	1,436	1,575	985	977	451	598
Occupations in writing (13)	1,471	1,564	985	931	486	633
Fashion models (29)	749	808	626	705	123	103
Occupations in entertainment and recreation (15)	776	708	503	425	273	283
Occupations in museum, library, and archival sciences (10)	315	320	203	194	112	126
Occupations in religion and theology (12)	118	161	74	123	44	38
Occupation unknown	1,377	1,385	917	856	460	529

Notes: Occupations ranked based on 2003 data.

0.7 and 0.6 of 1 percent of total petitions approved have an unknown occupation in 2002 and 2003 respectively.

n.e.c. indicates *not elsewhere classified*.

**Table 8B. H-1B Petitions Approved by Major Occupation Group of Beneficiary and
Type of Petition (Percent): Fiscal Years 2002 and 2003**

Occupation LCA Code (2-digits)	All Beneficiaries		Initial Employment		Continuing Employment	
	FY 2002 Percent	FY 2003 Percent	FY 2002 Percent	FY 2003 Percent	FY 2002 Percent	FY 2003 Percent
Total	-----		-----		-----	
Occupation known	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Computer-related occupations (03)	38.3	38.5	25.0	27.6	52.9	48.6
Occupations in architecture, engineering, and surveying (00/01)	12.8	12.4	14.1	12.0	11.5	12.8
Occupations in education (09)	10.5	11.1	13.6	14.4	7.1	8.0
Occupations in administrative specializations (16)	10.8	10.7	13.5	13.3	7.8	8.2
Occupations in medicine and health (07)	6.6	7.2	7.7	8.6	5.4	6.0
Managers and officials n.e.c. (18)	5.4	4.8	6.5	5.6	4.2	4.1
Occupations in life sciences (04)	3.5	3.8	4.5	4.6	2.4	3.0
Occupations in social sciences (05)	2.8	2.6	3.6	3.3	2.0	2.1
Occupations in mathematics and physical sciences (02)	2.8	2.6	3.3	3.0	2.2	2.3
Miscellaneous professional, technical, and managerial (19)	2.5	2.3	3.1	2.6	1.9	1.9
Occupations in art (14)	1.5	1.6	1.8	1.9	1.1	1.3
Occupations in law and jurisprudence (11)	0.7	0.7	1.0	0.9	0.5	0.5
Occupations in writing (13)	0.7	0.7	1.0	0.9	0.5	0.6
Fashion models (29)	0.4	0.4	0.6	0.7	0.1	0.1
Occupations in entertainment and recreation (15)	0.4	0.3	0.5	0.4	0.3	0.3
Occupations in museum, library, and archival sciences (10)	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.1
Occupations in religion and theology (12)	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0
Occupation unknown	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----

Notes: Occupations ranked based on 2003 data.

Sum of the percents may not add to 100.0 due to rounding.

0.7 and 0.6 of 1 percent of total petitions approved have an unknown occupation in 2002 and 2003 respectively.

Percents shown in the table are based on the total number of petitions approved with known occupations.

n.e.c. indicates *not elsewhere classified*.

- Detailed Occupation

Table 9 indicates the distribution of beneficiaries by detailed major occupation group in descending order in fiscal year 2003. The relative distributions in 2002 and 2003 were similar. The list is limited to the top 23 categories. One-third of the approved petitions in 2003 were for aliens working as systems analysts or programmers, the same as in 2002. The second largest category was occupations in colleges and university education.

Every detailed major occupation shown in Table 9 increased in total petitions approved except for miscellaneous managers and officials, n.e.c. Total employment of systems analysts and programmers increased from 64,700 to 72,400, or 12 percent. However, among initial beneficiaries, declines occurred in 13 of the 23 groups. The largest decrease was 1,000 or 24 percent in electrical/electronics engineering occupations. In sharp contrast, every occupational category of continuing beneficiaries increased, including systems analysis and programming.

Table 9A. H-1B Petitions Approved by Detailed Occupation of Beneficiary and Type of Petition (Number): Fiscal Years 2002 and 2003

Occupation LCA Code (3-digits)	All Beneficiaries		Initial Employment		Continuing Employment	
	FY 2002 Number	FY 2003 Number	FY 2002 Number	FY 2003 Number	FY 2002 Number	FY 2003 Number
Total	197,537	217,340	103,584	105,314	93,953	112,026
Occupation known	196,035	215,890	102,595	104,430	93,440	111,460
Occupations in systems analysis and programming (030)	64,687	72,359	21,300	24,967	43,387	47,392
Occupations in colleges and university education (090)	14,502	16,840	9,386	10,116	5,116	6,724
Accountants, auditors, and related occupations (160)	9,629	10,415	6,331	6,223	3,298	4,192
Electrical/Electronics engineering occupations (003)	8,023	8,391	4,197	3,169	3,826	5,222
Computer-related occupations, n.e.c. (039)	6,649	6,744	2,511	2,270	4,138	4,474
Physicians and surgeons (070)	5,045	6,111	2,495	2,976	2,550	3,135
Occupations in biological sciences (041)	5,172	6,075	3,471	3,507	1,701	2,568
Occupations in economics (050)	5,099	5,161	3,398	3,035	1,701	2,126
Miscellaneous managers and officials, n.e.c. (189)	5,313	4,985	3,245	2,615	2,068	2,370
Occupations in architecture, engineering, and surveying, n.e.c. (019)	3,850	4,547	1,954	1,796	1,896	2,751
Misc. professional, technical, and managerial occupations n.e.c. (199)	4,291	4,187	2,702	2,277	1,589	1,910
Mechanical engineering occupations (007)	3,775	3,928	2,208	1,927	1,567	2,001
Occupations in medicine and health, n.e.c. (079)	3,172	3,825	2,185	2,511	987	1,314
Occupations in administrative specializations, n.e.c. (169)	3,239	3,599	2,129	2,271	1,110	1,328
Budget and management systems occupations (161)	2,851	3,443	1,906	2,183	945	1,260
Occupations in preschool, primary school, and kindergarten education (092)	2,769	3,355	2,115	2,412	654	943
Civil engineering occupations (005)	2,548	2,740	1,679	1,592	869	1,148
Architectural occupations (001)	2,471	2,610	1,593	1,438	878	1,172
Occupations in chemistry (022)	2,295	2,515	1,427	1,354	868	1,161
Sales and distribution management occupations (163)	2,149	2,211	1,323	1,206	826	1,005
Occupations in secondary school education (091)	1,932	2,194	1,434	1,415	498	779
Commercial artists: designers and illustrators, graphic arts (141)	1,801	2,177	1,150	1,281	651	896
Therapists (076)	1,859	2,153	1,139	1,240	720	913
Other occupations	32,914	35,325	21,317	20,649	11,597	14,676
Occupation unknown	1,502	1,450	989	884	513	556

Notes: Occupations ranked on 2003 data.

0.8 and 0.7 of 1 percent of total petitions approved have an unknown occupation for fiscal years 2002 and 2003 respectively.

n.e.c. indicates *not elsewhere classified*.

Table 9B. H-1B Petitions Approved by Detailed Occupation of Beneficiary and Type of Petition (Percent): Fiscal Years 2002 and 2003

Occupation LCA Code (3-digits)	All Beneficiaries		Initial Employment		Continuing Employment	
	FY 2002 Percent	FY 2003 Percent	FY 2002 Percent	FY 2003 Percent	FY 2002 Percent	FY 2003 Percent
Total	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
Occupation known	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Occupations in systems analysis and programming (030)	33.0	33.5	20.8	23.9	46.4	42.5
Occupations in colleges and university education (090)	7.4	7.8	9.1	9.7	5.5	6.0
Accountants, auditors, and related occupations (160)	4.9	4.8	6.2	6.0	3.5	3.8
Electrical/Electronics engineering occupations (003)	4.1	3.9	4.1	3.0	4.1	4.7
Computer-related occupations, n.e.c. (039)	3.4	3.1	2.4	2.2	4.4	4.0
Physicians and surgeons (070)	2.6	2.8	2.4	2.8	2.7	2.8
Occupations in biological sciences (041)	2.6	2.8	3.4	3.4	1.8	2.3
Occupations in economics (050)	2.6	2.4	3.3	2.9	1.8	1.9
Miscellaneous managers and officials, n.e.c. (189)	2.7	2.3	3.2	2.5	2.2	2.1
Occupations in architecture, engineering, and surveying, n.e.c. (019)	2.0	2.1	1.9	1.7	2.0	2.5
Misc. professional, technical, and managerial occupations n.e.c. (199)	2.2	1.9	2.6	2.2	1.7	1.7
Mechanical engineering occupations (007)	1.9	1.8	2.2	1.8	1.7	1.8
Occupations in medicine and health, n.e.c. (079)	1.6	1.8	2.1	2.4	1.1	1.2
Occupations in administrative specializations, n.e.c. (169)	1.7	1.7	2.1	2.2	1.2	1.2
Budget and management systems occupations (161)	1.5	1.6	1.9	2.1	1.0	1.1
Occupations in preschool, primary school, and kindergarten education (092)	1.4	1.6	2.1	2.3	0.7	0.8
Civil engineering occupations (005)	1.3	1.3	1.6	1.5	0.9	1.0
Architectural occupations (001)	1.3	1.2	1.6	1.4	0.9	1.1
Occupations in chemistry (022)	1.2	1.2	1.4	1.3	0.9	1.0
Sales and distribution management occupations (163)	1.1	1.0	1.3	1.2	0.9	0.9
Occupations in secondary school education (091)	1.0	1.0	1.4	1.4	0.5	0.7
Commercial artists: designers and illustrators, graphic arts (141)	0.9	1.0	1.1	1.2	0.7	0.8
Therapists (076)	0.9	1.0	1.1	1.2	0.8	0.8
Other occupations	16.8	16.4	20.8	19.8	12.4	13.2
Occupation unknown	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----

Notes: Occupations ranked on 2003 data.
Sum of the percents may not add to 100.0 due to rounding.
Percents shown in the table are based on the total number of petitions approved with known occupations.
n.e.c. indicates *not elsewhere classified*.

Annual Compensation ⁶

Tables 10, 11, and 12 show compensation by occupation for beneficiaries of all, initial, and continuing employment respectively. Occupations in each table are arranged by the total number of beneficiaries approved in fiscal year 2003. As shown in Table 10, the median annual compensation reported by employers of H-1B workers approved for employment during fiscal year 2003 was \$52,000. This number compares with \$53,200 in 2002 and \$55,000 in 2001. One-half were expected to earn between \$39,100 and \$70,000. Median compensation ranged from a low of \$24,000 for occupations in religion and theology to a high of \$100,000 for fashion models.

**Table 10. Annual Compensation of All H-1B Beneficiaries by Major Occupation
Group: Fiscal Year 2003**

Occupation LCA Code (2-digits)	Total Reported	25th Percentile	Median	75th Percentile
Total	214,190	39,083	52,000	70,000
Occupations with annual compensation known	212,917	39,250	52,000	70,000
Computer-related occupations (03)	82,496	47,200	60,000	72,815
Occupations in architecture, engineering, and surveying (00/01)	26,523	45,000	58,217	75,000
Occupations in education (09)	23,571	31,326	38,000	48,000
Occupations in administrative specializations (16)	22,691	33,600	42,000	60,000
Occupations in medicine and health (07)	15,240	37,396	46,943	93,600
Managers and officials n.e.c. (18)	10,267	39,000	60,000	93,000
Occupations in life sciences (04)	8,049	32,808	39,000	52,000
Occupations in mathematics and physical sciences (02)	5,635	40,000	55,000	74,000
Occupations in social sciences (05)	5,588	34,000	44,000	65,000
Miscellaneous professional, technical, and managerial (19)	4,798	35,707	52,000	80,450
Occupations in art (14)	3,275	32,000	40,000	55,000
Occupations in writing (13)	1,532	28,800	36,000	49,000
Occupations in law and jurisprudence (11)	1,523	40,000	70,720	125,000
Occupations in entertainment and recreation (15)	669	25,000	33,280	43,000
Fashion models (29)	592	100,000	100,000	100,000
Occupations in museum, library, and archival sciences (10)	310	30,655	37,040	50,000
Occupations in religion and theology (12)	158	24,000	30,000	41,606
Occupation unknown	1,273	31,459	40,000	55,000

Notes: Occupations ranked by number of beneficiaries.
 Of the 217,340 petitions approved, 1.4 percent (3,150) did not have compensation reported.
 Of the 214,190 petitions approved with compensation reported, 0.6 of 1 percent (1,273) did not have an occupation reported.
 n.e.c. indicates *not elsewhere classified*.

Definitions: Median is the middle ranking value (50th percentile) of all values.
 25th percentile and 75th percentile are the lower quarter and upper quarter ranking values, respectively.

⁶ Annual compensation refers to what the employer agreed to pay the beneficiary at the time the application was filed. The amount excludes non-cash compensation and benefits such as health insurance and transportation. Further, compensation is based on full-time employment for 12 months, even if beneficiary actually worked fewer than 12 months.

As revealed in Tables 11 and 12, beneficiaries for continuing employment reported annual compensation one-third higher than did beneficiaries for initial employment. Median annual compensation was \$60,000 for the former and \$44,800 for the latter. In fiscal year 2002, workers approved for continuing employment and initial employment reported median annual compensation of \$60,000 and \$45,000, respectively.

Table 11. Annual Compensation of H-1B Beneficiaries for Initial Employment by Major Occupation Group: Fiscal Year 2003

Occupation LCA Code (2-digits)	Total Reported	25th Percentile	Median	75th Percentile
Total	103,393	35,000	44,803	60,000
Occupations with annual compensation known	102,602	35,000	44,901	60,000
Computer-related occupations (03)	28,608	42,000	50,500	60,000
Occupations in education (09)	14,753	31,000	36,000	45,000
Occupations in administrative specializations (16)	13,605	31,900	38,900	52,000
Occupations in architecture, engineering, and surveying (00/01)	12,345	40,000	50,000	65,000
Occupations in medicine and health (07)	8,753	35,381	43,680	78,000
Managers and officials n.e.c. (18)	5,722	35,422	49,000	80,000
Occupations in life sciences (04)	4,729	31,500	36,166	45,000
Occupations in social sciences (05)	3,328	32,100	40,000	55,000
Occupations in mathematics and physical sciences (02)	3,094	37,000	49,000	66,014
Miscellaneous professional, technical, and managerial (19)	2,692	33,230	44,510	68,000
Occupations in art (14)	1,895	30,000	35,312	48,420
Occupations in law and jurisprudence (11)	935	35,000	60,000	125,000
Occupations in writing (13)	912	27,000	33,000	42,500
Fashion models (29)	515	100,000	100,000	100,000
Occupations in entertainment and recreation (15)	407	25,000	31,160	40,000
Occupations in museum, library, and archival sciences (10)	189	30,000	35,000	45,000
Occupations in religion and theology (12)	120	23,280	29,509	37,853
Occupation unknown	791	30,000	36,000	48,000

Notes: Occupations ranked by the number of beneficiaries.
Of the 105,314 petitions approved for initial employment, 1.8 percent (1,921) did not have compensation reported.
Of the 103,393 petitions approved for initial employment with compensation reported, 0.8 of 1 percent (791) did not have an occupation reported.
n.e.c. indicates *not elsewhere classified*.

Definitions: Median is the middle ranking value (50th percentile) of all values.
25th percentile and 75th percentile are the lower quarter and upper quarter ranking values, respectively.

**Table 12. Annual Compensation of H-1B Beneficiaries for Continuing Employment by
Major Occupation Group: Fiscal Year 2003**

Occupation LCA Code (2-digits)	Total Reported	25th Percentile	Median	75th Percentile
Total	110,797	45,000	60,000	77,560
Occupations with annual compensation known	110,315	45,000	60,000	77,700
Computer-related occupations (03)	53,888	50,978	63,000	78,000
Occupations in architecture, engineering, and surveying (00/01)	14,178	50,000	64,756	80,000
Occupations in administrative specializations (16)	9,086	38,000	50,000	70,000
Occupations in education (09)	8,818	33,000	40,556	53,000
Occupations in medicine and health (07)	6,487	40,514	54,000	110,000
Managers and officials n.e.c. (18)	4,545	45,000	72,500	104,000
Occupations in life sciences (04)	3,320	35,000	42,784	60,062
Occupations in mathematics and physical sciences (02)	2,541	46,500	63,000	80,000
Occupations in social sciences (05)	2,260	38,400	52,155	75,842
Miscellaneous professional, technical, and managerial (19)	2,106	41,000	63,900	92,000
Occupations in art (14)	1,380	36,000	47,509	65,000
Occupations in writing (13)	620	33,039	41,600	57,000
Occupations in law and jurisprudence (11)	588	52,000	100,000	150,000
Occupations in entertainment and recreation (15)	262	27,000	36,520	47,840
Occupations in museum, library, and archival sciences (10)	121	33,000	41,600	54,538
Fashion models (29)	77	40,000	100,000	100,000
Occupations in religion and theology (12)	38	27,600	40,810	46,000
Occupation unknown	482	36,000	45,760	63,650

Notes: Occupations ranked by the number of beneficiaries.

Of the 112,026 petitions approved for continuing employment, 1.1 percent (1,229) did not have compensation reported.

Of the 110,797 petitions approved for continuing employment with compensation reported, 0.4 of 1 percent (482) did not have an occupation reported.

n.e.c. indicates *not elsewhere classified*.

Definitions: Median is the middle ranking value (50th percentile) of all values.

25th percentile and 75th percentile are the lower quarter and upper quarter ranking values, respectively.

Industry

Table 13 shows the industries that employed the most H-1B workers in fiscal year 2003. The leading industry was computer systems design and related services with nearly 56,900 workers compared to 50,800 in 2002, an increase of 12 percent. Of the top ten industries, only telecommunications decreased between 2002 and 2003 (from 4,400 to 3,800 beneficiaries). Among the top ten industries, semiconductor and other electronic component manufacturers, elementary and secondary schools, and colleges, universities, and professional schools experienced the fastest growth: 26, 25, and 19 percent, respectively.

The industry distribution was different for those workers approved for initial employment and continuing employment. Computer systems design and related services employed a larger proportion of continuing beneficiaries (36 percent) than initial beneficiaries (20 percent). In contrast, colleges, universities, and professional schools employed a larger proportion of initial beneficiaries (14 percent) than continuing beneficiaries (8 percent).

Industry data is collected using the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS). Unlike country of birth, age, education, and occupation, USCIS does not verify the NAICS code because the sponsor does not provide supporting documentation.

**Table 13A. H-1B Petitions Approved by Detailed Industry and Type of Petition
(Number): Fiscal Years 2002 and 2003**

Industry NAICS Code (4-digits)	All Beneficiaries		Initial Employment		Continuing Employment	
	FY 2002 Number	FY 2003 Number	FY 2002 Number	FY 2003 Number	FY 2002 Number	FY 2003 Number
Total	197,537	217,340	103,584	105,314	93,953	112,026
Industry known	179,757	198,407	93,227	94,615	86,530	103,792
Computer systems design & related services (5415)	50,776	56,872	16,714	19,347	34,062	37,525
Colleges, universities, & professional schools (6113)	18,401	21,956	11,989	13,116	6,412	8,840
Architectural, engineering, & related services (5413)	8,963	8,969	5,407	4,589	3,556	4,380
Management, scientific, & technical consulting services (5416)	7,458	8,612	4,081	5,023	3,377	3,589
Scientific research and development services (5417)	6,695	7,119	4,187	3,818	2,508	3,301
Elementary and secondary schools (6111)	3,983	4,992	3,034	3,413	949	1,579
General medical and surgical hospitals (6221)	3,442	4,042	2,009	2,171	1,433	1,871
Telecommunications (5133)	4,357	3,807	1,798	1,022	2,559	2,785
Accounting, tax preparation, bookkeeping, & payroll services (5412)	3,507	3,759	2,161	2,160	1,346	1,599
Semiconductor & other electronic component manufacturing (3344)	2,891	3,636	1,396	1,084	1,495	2,552
Securities & commodity contracts intermediation & brokerage (5231)	2,917	3,100	1,589	1,294	1,328	1,806
Offices of physicians (6211)	2,475	3,019	1,271	1,596	1,204	1,423
Other professional, scientific, & technical services (5419)	1,929	1,916	1,226	1,109	703	807
Professional, scientific, and technical services (5410)	1,799	1,888	956	845	843	1,043
Offices of other health practitioners (6213)	1,430	1,871	933	1,145	497	726
Communications equipment manufacturing (3342)	1,688	1,856	721	353	967	1,503
Other financial investment activities (5239)	1,785	1,788	1,099	923	686	865
Computer and peripheral equipment manufacturing (3341)	1,612	1,692	814	470	798	1,222
Specialized design services (5414)	1,417	1,551	874	904	543	647
Employment services (5613)	1,245	1,508	747	788	498	720
Legal Services (5411)	1,429	1,479	976	882	453	597
Pharmaceutical and medicine manufacturing (3254)	1,633	1,477	934	703	699	774
Software publishers (5112)	1,165	1,319	476	355	689	964
Computer and electronic product manufacturing (3340)	1,207	1,315	480	346	727	969
Information services (5141)	1,676	1,292	613	458	1,063	834
Advertising and related services (5418)	1,104	1,218	668	663	436	663
Other industries	42,773	46,354	26,074	26,038	16,699	20,208
Industry unknown	17,780	18,933	10,357	10,699	7,423	8,234

Notes: Industries ranked by total beneficiaries in 2003.
9.0 and 8.7 percent of total petitions approved had an unknown industry in 2002 and 2003 respectively.
NAICS stands for North American Industrial Classification System.

**Table 13B. H-1B Petitions Approved by Detailed Industry and Type of Petition
(Percent): Fiscal Years 2002 and 2003**

Industry NAICS Code (4-digits)	All Beneficiaries		Initial Employment		Continuing Employment	
	FY 2002 Percent	FY 2003 Percent	FY 2002 Percent	FY 2003 Percent	FY 2002 Percent	FY 2003 Percent
Total	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
Industry known	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Computer systems design & related services (5415)	28.2	28.7	17.9	20.4	39.4	36.2
Colleges, universities, & professional schools (6113)	10.2	11.1	12.9	13.9	7.4	8.5
Architectural, engineering, & related services (5413)	5.0	4.5	5.8	4.9	4.1	4.2
Management, scientific, & technical consulting services (5416)	4.1	4.3	4.4	5.3	3.9	3.5
Scientific research and development services (5417)	3.7	3.6	4.5	4.0	2.9	3.2
Elementary and secondary schools (6111)	2.2	2.5	3.3	3.6	1.1	1.5
General medical and surgical hospitals (6221)	1.9	2.0	2.2	2.3	1.7	1.8
Telecommunications (5133)	2.4	1.9	1.9	1.1	3.0	2.7
Accounting, tax preparation, bookkeeping, & payroll services (5412)	2.0	1.9	2.3	2.3	1.6	1.5
Semiconductor & other electronic component manufacturing (3344)	1.6	1.8	1.5	1.1	1.7	2.5
Securities & commodity contracts intermediation & brokerage (5231)	1.6	1.6	1.7	1.4	1.5	1.7
Offices of physicians (6211)	1.4	1.5	1.4	1.7	1.4	1.4
Other professional, scientific, & technical services (5419)	1.1	1.0	1.3	1.2	0.8	0.8
Professional, scientific, and technical services (5410)	1.0	1.0	1.0	0.9	1.0	1.0
Offices of other health practitioners (6213)	0.8	0.9	1.0	1.2	0.6	0.7
Communications equipment manufacturing (3342)	0.9	0.9	0.8	0.4	1.1	1.4
Other financial investment activities (5239)	1.0	0.9	1.2	1.0	0.8	0.8
Computer and peripheral equipment manufacturing (3341)	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.5	0.9	1.2
Specialized design services (5414)	0.8	0.8	0.9	1.0	0.6	0.6
Employment services (5613)	0.7	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.6	0.7
Legal Services (5411)	0.8	0.7	1.0	0.9	0.5	0.6
Pharmaceutical and medicine manufacturing (3254)	0.9	0.7	1.0	0.7	0.8	0.7
Software publishers (5112)	0.6	0.7	0.5	0.4	0.8	0.9
Computer and electronic product manufacturing (3340)	0.7	0.7	0.5	0.4	0.8	0.9
Information services (5141)	0.9	0.7	0.7	0.5	1.2	0.8
Advertising and related services (5418)	0.6	0.6	0.7	0.7	0.5	0.6
Other industries	23.8	23.4	28.0	27.5	19.3	19.5
Industry unknown	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----

Notes: Industries ranked by total beneficiaries in 2003.

Sum of the percents may not add to 100.0 due to rounding.

Percents shown are based on the total number of petitions approved with industry known.

NAICS stands for North American Industrial Classification System

Appendix: H-1B Petition Processing and Data Limitations

Petition Processing

Petitions for obtaining H-1B nonimmigrant status for alien workers are submitted by their prospective employers on USCIS form I-129 (Petition for a Nonimmigrant Worker) and the addendum I-129W (H-1B Data Collection and Filing Fee Exemption). The petitions are mailed to one of four USCIS Service Centers for processing depending on the location of the sponsoring employer: St. Albans, Vermont; Lincoln, Nebraska; Dallas Texas; and Laguna Nigel, California.

Upon receipt, each petition is stamped with its date of arrival at the Service Center. File assembly clerks create a paper file that contains the original petition as well as all supporting documentation. This file becomes the official file of record for all activities connected with the petition.

Bio-data such as name, date of birth, and country of birth are entered from the petition by data entry clerks into the case tracking system Computer-Linked Application Information Management System (CLAIMS3). The computer system generates a unique number for the file, known as a receipt number. The files are distributed to adjudicators after being sorted into potential cap and non-cap cases.

After being received, the files are reviewed by adjudicators who determine whether they have adequate information in the file on which to base a decision to approve or deny the petition. If sufficient evidence is available, a decision is made by the adjudicator and then corresponding information entered into the tracking system. Otherwise, additional information is sought from the sponsoring employer by the adjudicator. A response from the employer must be made within a set period of time or else the petition will be denied.

After petitions have been adjudicated, the associated paper files are forwarded for storage to the USCIS records center in Harrisonburg, Virginia.

Data Limitations

The tables in this report have been tabulated from an electronic data file created at headquarters from USCIS service center electronic data files. Errors in this extract file could have occurred in several ways. For example, petition data might have been inaccurate on petitions, miskeyed into computers at the service centers or improperly transferred electronically between the service centers and headquarters. Very little editing has been done to the data in this file. Impossible or very improbable values have been defined as unknown. Examples are beneficiaries younger than 16 (except for fashion models) or those beneficiaries working without compensation.

In fiscal year 2003 the percentage of petitions with unknown information improved slightly over the previous year, except for annual compensation. The percentage of petitions approved with missing data was 0.1 of 1 percent for education and 1.4 percent for compensation. For the other characteristics, the percentages of approved petitions with missing data were: age (0.1 of 1 percent), country of birth (0.1 of 1 percent), major occupation (0.6 of 1 percent), and detailed occupation (0.7 of 1 percent). In contrast, the percent of missing data for industry in its third year of availability remained high at 8.7 percent, though down from 9.0 percent in 2002.

Finally, information is not available on the city or state where H-1B workers are employed.