



# NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF GRADUATE-PROFESSIONAL STUDENTS

Thursday, Mar.21<sup>st</sup>, 2019

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Organization: [National Association of Graduate-Professional Students](http://NationalAssociationofGraduate-ProfessionalStudents.org)

Contact: Fang Zhang, [disc@nagps.org](mailto:disc@nagps.org)

### NOTIFICATION OF LAST MINUTE CHANGE THE DELAY OF 'PREMIUM PROCESSING' IN H-1B VISA

On Mar.19<sup>th</sup>, the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS) announced a new policy that delays the 'premium processing' of H-1B petitions for fiscal year 2020. The aim of 'premium processing' during the employment based visa process is to expedite the decision-making process and helps applicants receive their result within 15 days. This process includes a fee of \$1,410. In the recent statement, the USCIS said that "Starting April 1, FY 2020 cap-subject H-1B petitioners requesting a change of status on their Form I-129, Petition for a Nonimmigrant Worker, may request premium processing by concurrently filing Form I-907, Request for Premium Processing Service.... However, to prioritize data entry for cap-subject H-1B petitions, USCIS will not begin premium processing for these petitions immediately. USCIS will begin premium processing for these petitions no later than May 20, 2019, and will notify the public before premium processing begins for these petitions".

This sudden change has caught many by surprise, particularly given the opening date for H-1B visa application is less than 2 weeks from the announcement. Considering the large number of petitioners and the unchanging cap of 85,000 spots, the accessibility to "premium processing" is extremely important for international students who recently graduated from U.S university programs. In order to work in America, international graduates must apply for Optional Practical Training (OPT) and receive a job offer from company that welcomes immigrant workers. After that, they would need to apply for the lottery based H-1B visa in order to extend their stay, in which processing takes an average timespan of 6 months. Thus the availability of a timely premium processing offers them not only peace of mind, but also an opportunity to prepare for alternatives, in the event they are not chosen by the lottery.

NAGPS appreciates USCIS reopening premium processing after last year's shutdown, but we are concerned over this recent change. All international graduate and professional students could greatly contribute to the development of public service and advancement of technologies in this country. In order to retain these highly skilled immigrant workers, we should be doing all we can to increase their chances to lawfully work and stay in the United States. We hope policymakers would take into consideration the hardships international students face and create more thoughtful regulations that facilitate their wish to be lawfully employed in the US. and contribute to economic growth in the United States.

#####

*[NAGPS](http://NAGPS.org) is a national non-profit composed of graduate and professional student governments across the US. NAGPS represents hundreds of thousands of graduate and professional students at a diverse group of member institutions.*