

Pathways to Live and Work in the USA: Green Card Considerations and Immigration Trends

Dear valued clients and partners,

In this spring season, we wish to take a moment to provide some updates regarding the **EB-2 National Interest Waiver (NIW)** program, along with a few important developments on processing timelines and changes that may affect pilots.

As always, you will find the usual press review following these updates.

Extended Delays In I-140

It is no surprise that when we launched this EB-2 program during COVID, the processing times for the program were significantly shorter than it is presently. Previously, it would be commonplace to receive decisions on the I-140 within 4 months, even without applying for premium processing.

Presently, the latest USCIS processing times for I-140 Petitions show that 80% of cases are reviewed and completed within **16 months** for the Nebraska Service Centre (NSC), and **11.5 months** for the Texas Service Centre (TSC). We are proud to have been a trailblazer in this field, but it means that now when the EB-2 program is commonplace for law firms to offer, there will naturally be more applications that USCIS has to review thereby extending the processing times. According to our internal statistics, there is a slightly higher approval rate for the Nebraska Centre compared to the Texas Centre. Knowing this, we offer our clients the choice of where to submit their I-140 applications, either NSC with a longer processing time but a potentially higher likelihood of approval or TSC with a faster processing time but with a slightly lower probability of acceptance.

As before, Premium Processing remains an option for all applicants who wish to bypass the extended wait-times and to guarantee a response from USCIS within 45 business days for an

additional USCIS government fee of USD 2805. If you have submitted your I-140 application already, you are still eligible to apply for the premium processing option. If this option interests you, please contact your HLG representative.

Progression in DS-260

In contrast to the extended processing times for the I-140, the DS-260 process has experienced steady progression in the past two updates. From the April 2025 Visa Bulletin, the Final Action for the EB2 category has moved forward to 22 June 2023 for all chargeability areas (except Mainland China and India). This adjustment, one month ahead from the March 2025 Visa Bulletin reflects a promising and positive progression.

In other news, there are still ongoing significant shifts to the aviation industry, with increasing hiring demands due to pilot shortages, aging aircraft fleets requiring investment, and new airline expansions enhancing connectivity. With the Airbus Helicopter's launch of H140 helicopter, hopefully we can see a reconcile in what it sees as a gap in its H135 and H145 light-twin family. (You will find below more details in our usual press review.)

Re-Entry Permit

With the continued stream of approvals we receive, we also recognize that many approved pilots are not ready for one reason or another to relocate immediately to the U.S. upon receipt of the green card.

To reiterate, to maintain the green card, the requirement is that you and your dependents make the U.S. your primary residence otherwise you risk forfeiting your permanent residency (green card) status. USCIS immigration officers at the borders may raise concerns towards a lawful permanent resident's abandonment of status from prolonged absences, delays in relocation, or extended stays abroad. Importantly, if a Green Card holder has not moved to the U.S. within six months to a year of activation or has spent more than a year outside the U.S. (e.g. for schooling), they may be presumed to have relinquished their PR status, putting their Green Card at risk of revocation.

To mitigate these risks, Green Card holders may apply for a **Re-Entry Permit**, allowing them to remain outside the U.S. for up to two years without jeopardizing their permanent resident status. This travel document prevents the need for a returning resident visa and helps maintain the validity of the Green Card during prolonged travel. Typically, the **Re-Entry Permit** is valid for two years and cannot be extended, but applicants may reapply after expiration. If lost or stolen, a replacement permit can be requested.

However, the re-entry permit is not a foolproof plan. USCIS officers can still revoke your green card status, but it does provide a level of protection from this revocation. Immigration authorities assess an individual's intent to maintain residency based on travel patterns and ties to the U.S.

If you are interested in this re-entry permit option, we encourage you to contact your HLG representative for further information and discussion about whether this remains a good option for you and your family.

As always, HLG remains committed to assisting you and your family with your immigration matters and remains compliant with regulations to safeguard your permanent resident status.

Best regards,

Jean-Francois Harvey

Founder & Worldwide Managing Partner

Press Review

2. Ryan Ewing, '[Delta: 'More Normalized' Industrywide Pilot Hiring Anticipated](#)', Flying, 14 October 2024
 - After cutting its pilot hiring figures by roughly 50 percent in 2024, Delta Air Lines expects approximately 5,000 pilots to be hired across the U.S. in 2025.
 - These figures reflect a return to normalized pilot hiring across the industry post-pandemic.
2. Frank Holmes, '[Airlines Gear Up For Record 2025 As Boeing Resumes 737 MAX Production](#)', Forbes, 16 December 2024

- According to the International Air Transport Association (IATA), the average age of the global commercial aircraft fleet now stands at 14.8 years—the highest on record. Aging aircraft require more maintenance, more fuel, and more repairs.
 - This presents a massive opportunity for new aircraft deliveries. IATA estimates that 1,254 new planes will be delivered this year, including those from Boeing.
 - The IATA projects total industry revenues to top \$1 trillion for the first time in aviation history. Passenger numbers are expected to soar to 5.2 billion, a 6.7% increase from 2024 and another all-time high.
3. Jarrod Roberts, '[What Is The Pilot Shortage?](#)' Thrust Flight, 4 February 2025
 - Worldwide passenger traffic is expected to increase by about four percent every year over the next 20 years. This equates to a demand for about 40,000 new passenger and freight aircraft.
 - The US Bureau of Labor Statistics similarly reports a 4 percent growth in demand for airline and commercial pilots per year. They estimate that there are about 16,800 job openings for airline pilots every year, and there will be a need for 5,400 more pilots in the U.S. alone by 2032.
 4. Leslie Caubbe, '[The Real Reasons Airlines Are Facing A Pilot Shortage Right Now](#)', Northstar Aviation, February 2025
 - A combination of factors, including more travelling, more cargo, resolving supply chain issues, and a projected 17,000 mandatory retirements by the end of the decade—the majority of which will take place during the next 3-5 years—create the perfect conditions for increased hiring and elevated salaries for pilots.
 5. Valerie Volcovici & David Shepardson, '[FAA Fires Fewer Than 400 Workers, Transportation Chief Says](#)', Reuters, 19 February 2025
 - Senator Maria Cantwell slams Trump administration for firing FAA employees who inspect and maintain air traffic control communications, radio and computer systems. "The FAA is already short 800 technicians and these findings inject unnecessary risk into the airspace [...] ."
 6. '[Global Pilot Shortage Intensifies As Airline Expansion and Retirements Surge](#)', Airline Ratings, 6 March 2025

- The aviation industry is facing an escalating pilot shortage, with new estimates projecting the need for 649,000-674,000 pilots between 2024 and 2043—significantly higher than previous forecasts.
 - Despite ongoing recruitment efforts, the FAA's 2023 Pilot Workforce Analysis indicates that the number of new pilots entering the industry is insufficient to offset retirements and meet expansion needs. Some estimates suggest a shortfall of 5,000-7,000 pilots per year, creating the perfect scenario for rising salaries.
7. Yan Zhuang, '[Firefighting Pilots Face High-Pressure Job: 'It Gets A Bit Scary'](#)', The New York Times, 15 January 2025
- Pilots play a crucial role in combating wildfires, using specialized aircraft to drop water and fire retardant on blazes that are often inaccessible to ground crews. Their ability to navigate turbulent, low-altitude conditions in intense heat and smoke makes them essential in containing wildfires and protecting homes and communities from the spreading flames.
8. Grace Toohey, '[Inside The Dramatic Air Attack That Saved Brentwood And Encino From The Surging Palisades Fire](#)', Los Angeles Times, 14 January 2025
- In contrast to the chaos of Tuesday — when aircraft were grounded during a key portion of the initial firefight due to winds that hit up to 80 mph — the aerial attack Friday into Saturday was key in halting another disastrous run from the fire.
 - “With all of that devastation or loss, we had a lot of successes, a lot of saves, [...] [a]nd [...] the air assets were an absolute key component to large volume saves.”
9. Niki Britton, '[Aerial Attack Crucial To Fighting Los Angeles Fires](#)', AOPA, 16 January 2025
- California airports Camarillo and Oxnard have again served as an invaluable resource welcoming firefighting aircraft from throughout the region, including Utah and Arizona, as the United States faces the largest and most destructive fires in Los Angeles County's history. To say that regional airports play a critical role in firefighting is an understatement.
 - Firefighting aircraft were able to stop the Hurst Fire with 800 acres burned before it expanded into another major conflagration. It was initially growing as fast as the Palisades Fire, and where it was located actually made it a threat to the whole northern end of the valley.

10. Megan Swift, '[It's A Nightmare': DC 10 Pilot Describes Battling Calif. Wildfires](#)', The Tribune-Review, 14 January 2025
 - 65-year-old Ligonier native working for 10 Tanker, an aerial firefighting organization, helped to drop more than 175,000 gallons of fire retardant during more than a dozen flights over the fires from 9 a.m. until dark Friday and Saturday.
 - "We're the biggest tool in the (U.S.) Forest Service's arsenal in terms of air [...] when we get called to a fire, it's a big fire, and it's a big deal."
11. '[JetBlue Expands New England Service With New Nonstop Flights Between Manchester And New York](#)', JetBlue, 27 February 2025
 - JetBlue announced it will launch new, daily summer-seasonal service between Manchester-Boston Regional Airport (MHT) and New York's John F. Kennedy International Airport (JFK), beginning June 12, 2025.
 - JetBlue will operate the route with its Airbus A320 aircraft, making it easier than ever for travelers in New Hampshire and greater New England to get to the Big Apple and beyond.
12. Charlotte Bailey, '[Airbus Unveils H140 To Bridge Light Twin Market Gap](#)', Aviation International News, 11 March 2025
 - Airbus Helicopters has launched the H140 helicopter to bridge what it sees as a gap in its H135 and H145 light-twin family.
 - The H140 will be certified under EASA CS-27/FAA FAR 27 requirements, being at the top end of the 'small rotorcraft' designation with an MTOW of 6,985 pounds, which is 429 pounds more than the H125. Airbus said this will translate into elevated useful load and performance specifications that, although largely undisclosed for now, will include a maximum speed of 155 knots.



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