

DATA

Two States Are Pausing H-1B Hiring at Public Universities. Here's What That Could Mean.



By *Jacquelyn Elias*

January 28, 2026



Colleges rely on highly skilled employees from abroad to fill key roles in research, medicine, and other fields. But a new raft of federal and state changes is disrupting that pipeline.

This week, Texas Gov. Greg Abbott, a Republican, ordered a pause on hiring new foreign employees at the state's public universities until June 2027. The move followed [a similar directive](#) from another reform-minded Republican, Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis, who in October told public universities to end "H-1B abuse." DeSantis was referring to the H-1B visas that allow international scholars to work in the United States.

The State University System of Florida's Board of Governors will vote Thursday on [a proposed policy](#) that would halt H-1B hiring until early 2027. DeSantis has cited the need "to make sure our citizens here in Florida are first in line for job opportunities."

Public universities in Texas and Florida had over 1,000 foreign-worker applications approved in 2025, including new petitions and renewals. The states' pauses apply only to

new H-1B employees, not existing visa-holders who renew their status or request a change in employment conditions, such as taking a job at a different university.

During the pause, Texas universities will be investigated by the state's work-force commission. Abbott [asked institutions](#) to provide detailed information about H-1B applications and renewals, and evidence that qualified U.S. citizens were given opportunities to apply for jobs.

H-1B visas allow thousands of foreign scholars and professionals to work at U.S. colleges, particularly research universities. But the Trump administration [has sought to shrink](#) the program as part of its "America First" focus, drawing alarm from higher-ed advocates.

NEWSLETTERS

The Review

Follow the conversation on the big ideas and arguments shaping the academy with our free weekly newsletter.

[Sign Up](#)

In September, the federal government began requiring universities to pay a \$100,000 fee to sponsor a highly skilled employee from abroad. (That fee doesn't apply to new hires who are already in the United States on, for instance, a student visa.) [A Chronicle analysis](#) found that some research institutions could have to pay millions of dollars to sustain the same rate of H-1B hiring.

Here's how the hiring pauses in Texas and Florida could affect near-term university staffing.

These Universities Could Be Affected By H-1B Pauses

Texas and Florida public institutions saw over 1,000 H-1B applications approved over FY 2025. Explore below to see which universities sponsored the greatest number of foreign workers.

Filter by state: Texas Florida

Page 1 of 5 >

Institution	▼ Approved New Applications	Approved Renewal Applications
Texas A&M U. at College Station College Station, TX 12,783 staff members	121	54
U. of Texas Southwestern Medical Center at Dallas Dallas, TX 9,990 staff members	119	34
U. of Texas at Austin Austin, TX 18,740 staff members	82	8
U. of Texas M.D. Anderson Cancer Center Houston, TX 50 staff members	80	33
Texas Tech U. Lubbock, TX 6,272 staff members	54	34
U. of Houston Houston, TX 5,882 staff members	39	32
U. of Texas Health Science Center at Houston Houston, TX 13,432 staff members	37	19
U. of Texas at Dallas Richardson, TX 4,058 staff members	33	25
U. of Texas at Arlington Arlington, TX 4,658 staff members	32	16
U. of Texas at El Paso El Paso, TX 3,158 staff members	30	12

Note: Data is representative of universities that had an H-1B application approved or denied between Oct. 1, 2024 to Sept. 30, 2025 as of Jan. 28, 2026. Staff counts are representative of Fall 2024 from the U.S. Department of Education's Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System.

Public Universities in Texas, Florida Are Among Top H-1B Sponsors

These 15 institutions had the most such visas approved during fiscal year 2025. Three of the top six public campuses are located in the two states pausing new petitions.

230

U. of Michigan at Ann Arbor	
U. of Florida	131
U. of Pittsburgh main campus	127
U. of California at San Francisco	125
Texas A&M U. at College Station	121
U. of Texas Southwestern Medical Center at Dallas	119
Ohio State U.	118
U. of Iowa	116
Purdue U. at West Lafayette	97
U. of Utah	95
U. of Minnesota-Twin Cities	94
U. of Washington	94
Arizona State U.	90
U. of California at Los Angeles	89
U. of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign	89

Note: Data is representative of universities that had an H-1B application approved or denied between Oct. 1, 2024 to Sept. 30, 2025 as of Jan. 28, 2026. College systems were not included.

Source: [USCIS](#) • [Get the data](#) • Created with [Datwranner](#)

*We welcome your thoughts and questions about this article.
Please [email the editors](#) or [submit a letter](#) for publication.*

Tags

Hiring & Retention

International

Data

Share



About the Author

Jacquelyn Elias

Jacquelyn Elias is a news applications developer for *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. She builds data visualizations and news applications. Follow her [@jacquelynrelias](https://twitter.com/jacquelynrelias), or email her at jacquelyn.elias@chronicle.com.

Top Jobs from *The Chronicle*

[Visiting Assistant Professor, Department of Art History](#)

New York University Arts and Science

[Accessibility Services - Assistant Director of Student Life](#)

Maine College of Art & Design

[Visiting Assistant Professor, The Wilf Family Department of Politics](#)

New York University Arts and Science

[CLINICAL ASSISTANT/ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, REAL ESTATE](#)

New York University School of Professional Studies

[AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE - LECTURER/SENIOR LECTURER](#)

University of Vermont College of Education and Social Services

[Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs](#)

Colorado State University

[Director of Development](#)

American Philosophical Society

[Search All Jobs](#)