

E-Notification Coming Soon For H-1B Visa Employers

The e-notification system should be online by April, when the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services begins accepting H-1B visa petitions for fiscal 2009.

By Marianne Kolbasuk McGee, [InformationWeek](#)

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This spring, when employers flood the U.S. government with petitions to hire H-1B visa workers, those companies likely will have a new convenience -- electronic notification from the Dept. of Homeland Security about whether those applications have been approved.

"We're getting away from snail mail and taking advantage of technology," said Chris Bentley, a U.S. Citizenship and Immigration spokesman, the Dept. of Homeland Security agency that handles the approval process for H-1B visa petitions.

So, rather than employers waiting for weeks to know the status of their H-1B visa petitions, this year they'll likely be notified a lot sooner electronically by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, he said.

The new e-notification system that's being developed should be online by April, when the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services begins accepting H-1B visa petitions for fiscal 2009, which starts on Oct. 1.

But that's not the only process change to H-1B visas that's being worked out. The Dept. of Homeland Security and Dept. of Labor are studying other administrative and regulatory "fixes" to help streamline H-1B processes, he said.

Those proposed changes likely will be made public in the coming months. Among the ideas being mulled is a plan for the U.S. government to host a meeting for "H-1B stakeholders" to discuss ways of improving the work visa process, he said.

Last April, in the first two days that the U.S. government accepted applications for H-1B work visas, more than 100,000 applications poured in seeking the 65,000 openings. [The crush](#) was enough that U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services cut off accepting new applications, the fastest the petition period has ever closed.