



A WORLD-CLASS WORKFORCE

Employment-Based Immigration:
Reducing Barriers and Recognizing
Global Talent

INTRODUCTION

U.S. employers are being rocked by global competition and an increasing demand for highly skilled workers. The workforce simply does not have enough workers and skilled job candidates. **7 million** jobs were open in December 2018, but only **6.3 million** unemployed people were looking for work.

Productivity, economic growth and innovation are negatively affected by the difficulty in recruiting and keeping qualified workers.

Foreign-born talent is a necessary component to the U.S. workforce, particularly as the workforce continues to age and the skills gap widens.

Our research shows that, while it's not the only solution to bridge the skills gap and help employers staff difficult-to-fill job openings, hiring foreign-born workers can be extremely effective. It can be the right choice for highly specialized positions that can take months or years to fill otherwise.

Foreign-born workers also play a positive role in the U.S. economy. **76%** of HR professionals say these workers contribute to economic growth, and **74%** say they help drive innovation.

Much of the public-policy discussion about immigration focuses on enforcement. Employers care about enforcement, but they also need access to global talent.

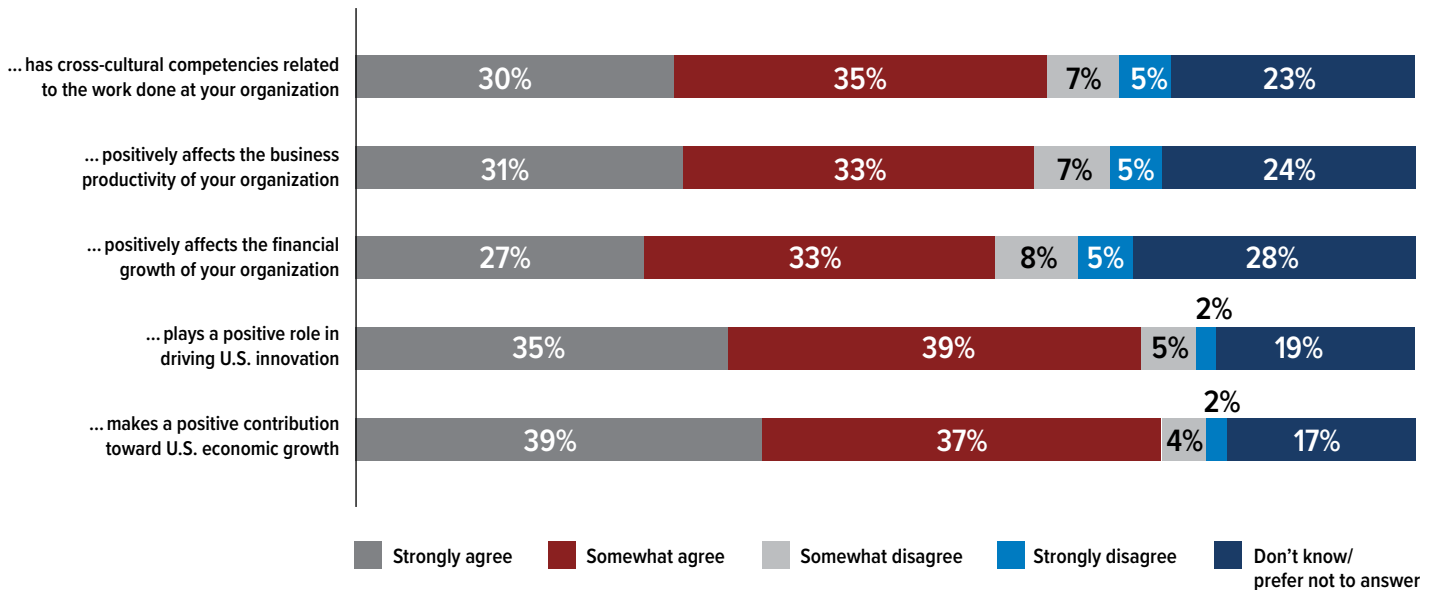
Because they work most closely with workplace immigration laws, human resources professionals are in a powerful position to promote the changes needed in the workplace immigration system. It is vital to the success of U.S. business that employers have access to a safe, secure employment verification system and a legal immigration system that allows them to respond to market demands and compete globally.

The study described in this report begins the exploration of foreign-born talent's role in lessening recruiting difficulty. To supplement these preliminary findings, SHRM will be conducting robust additional studies in 2019 and beyond.



EMPLOYMENT-BASED IMMIGRATION ATTITUDES IN THE U.S. ARE **GENERALLY POSITIVE**

FOREIGN-BORN TALENT ...

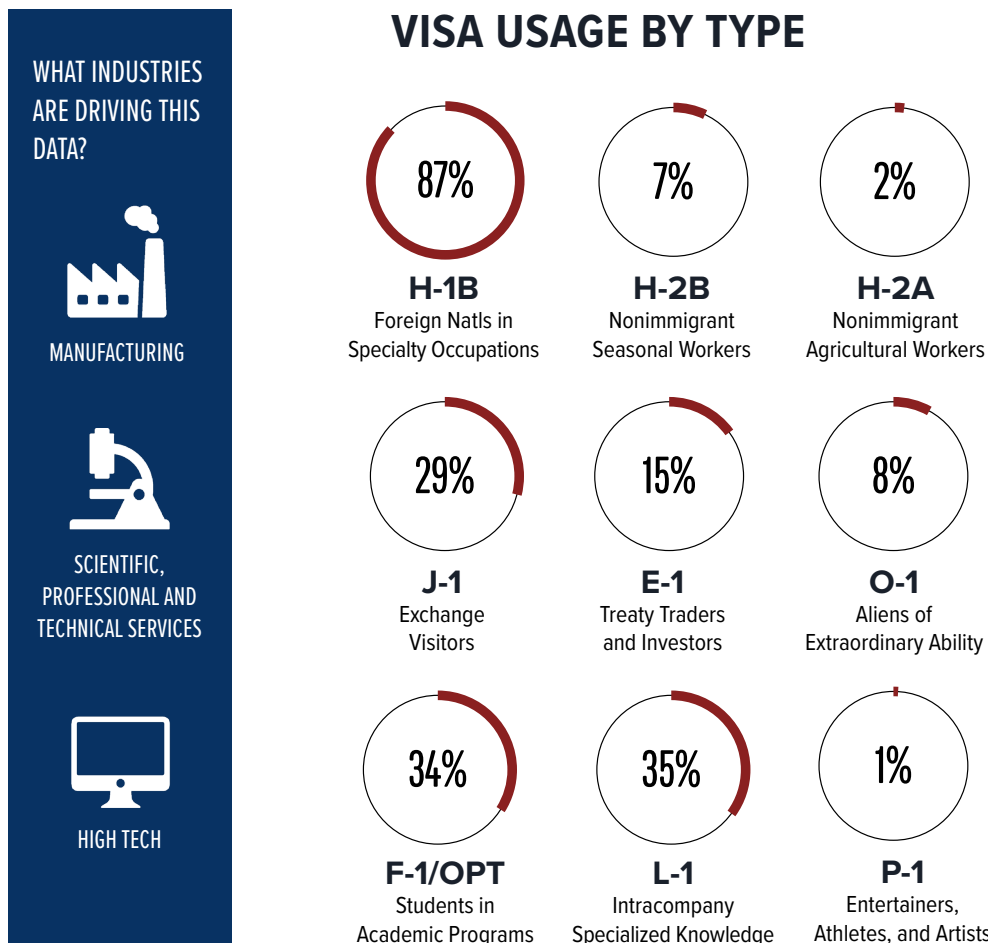


Source: SHRM Employment-Based Immigration Survey

SO WHO USES THESE VISAS?

52% OF ORGANIZATIONS HAVE SPONSORED AN EMPLOYMENT-BASED VISA FOR AT LEAST ONE WORKER IN THE PAST 5 YEARS.

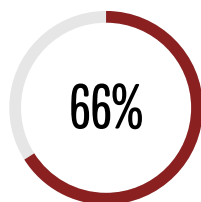
Most organizations that sponsor employment-based visas sponsor between 1 and 25 visas—65% of respondents who indicated that their organization had sponsored any number of visas. Ten percent of organizations sponsored over 100 visas, and 13% of organizations sponsored between 26 and 100.



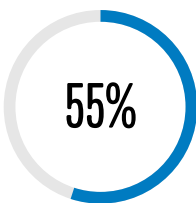
CHALLENGES OF THE U.S. EMPLOYMENT-BASED IMMIGRATION SYSTEM

Over 85% of respondents feel that it is very or extremely important to recruit talent to meet business needs, regardless of their national origin. Foreign workers are a critical complement to the domestic workforce, especially as the U.S. labor market faces an aging workforce and record low unemployment.

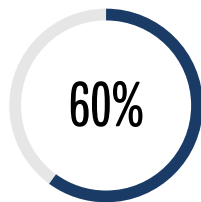
TOP 3 CHALLENGES ORGANIZATIONS FACE WHEN HIRING FOREIGN TALENT:



LENGTHY PROCESSING TIMES



UNPREDICTABILITY OF THE
VISA PROCESS



COMPLEX VISA APPLICATION
PAPERWORK

WHAT ABOUT GREEN CARDS?

Some see Green Cards, or Lawful Permanent Resident Cards, as a solution to the challenges of the employment-based visa process. So how many organizations are actively pursuing green cards for their foreign-born employees?

37%

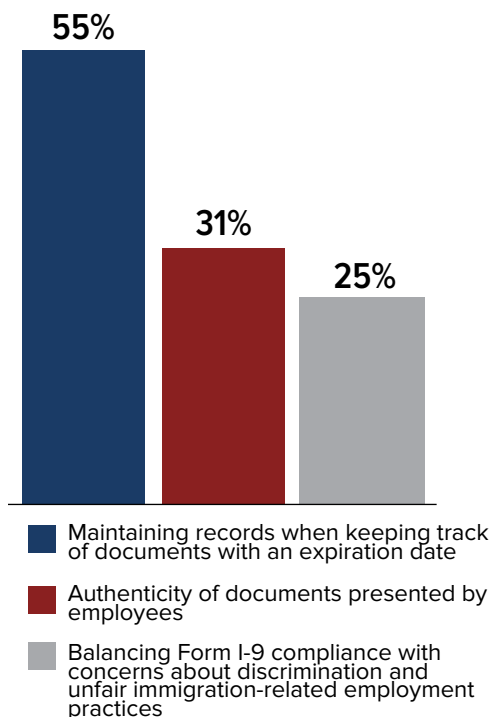
OF ORGANIZATIONS SURVEYED
HAVE SPONSORED AT LEAST ONE
GREEN CARD IN THE PAST 5 YEARS.

FORM I-9 AND E-VERIFY

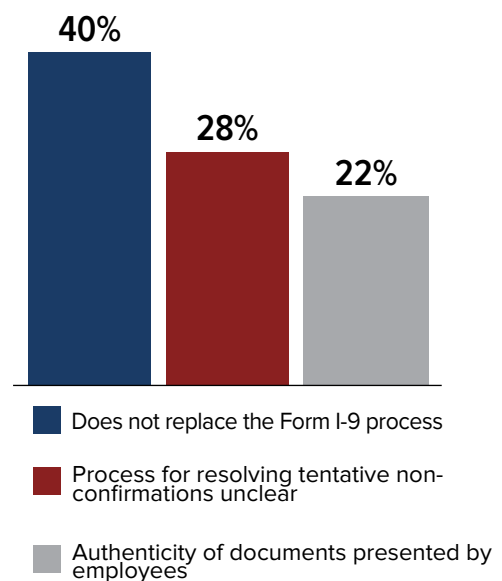
Some of the other challenges of the U.S. employment-based immigration system are related to the paperwork that must be done to verify identity and work authorization for candidates. Many organizations—67% of those surveyed—participate in the E-Verify system. For the organizations that don't participate, the leading reason is that E-Verify does not eliminate the required paper-based Form I-9 process. Currently, participating in E-Verify leads to duplication of work due to the required Form I-9 process and lengthens the processing time for foreign job candidates.

78% OF RESPONDENTS WOULD SUPPORT A MANDATORY E-VERIFY SYSTEM THAT ELIMINATES FORM I-9.

CHALLENGES OF FORM I-9

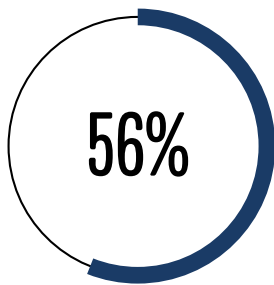


CHALLENGES OF E-VERIFY

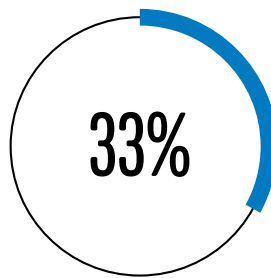


HOW DO WE IMPROVE THE SYSTEM?

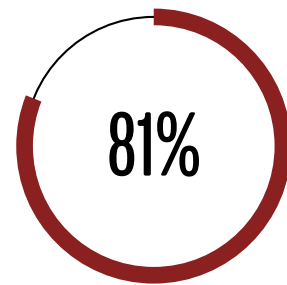
The data all points to the conclusion that U.S. businesses need a modern, predictable and efficient employment-based immigration system.



of respondents say that the U.S. government should create a Trusted Employer Program; one that would streamline the process for low-risk immigration-compliant employers to obtain visas and save resources for top government priorities.



of respondents marked not enough visas as one of the challenges they face when hiring foreign-born talent; policymakers should provide enough visas to allow businesses to recruit, hire, transfer and retain top talent.



of respondents would support a mandatory E-Verify system that authenticates identity; this would make the employment-based immigration system more efficient and resolve some of the unpredictability generated by the current paperwork process.

PROJECT TEAM

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METHODOLOGY NOTE

20,000 U.S.-based SHRM—Society for Human Resource Management—members were invited by e-mail to participate in this survey, which was fielded September 12-26, 2018. 785 members participated, yielding a response rate of about 4%.

The number of respondents varies from one finding to another as some respondents did not answer all of the questions. Individuals may not have responded to a question on the survey because the question or some of its parts were not applicable or because they did not know the answer to some questions, thus the varying number of responses to different items.

As with any research, readers should exercise caution when generalizing results and take individual circumstances and experiences into consideration when making decisions based on these data. Although SHRM is confident in its research, it is prudent to understand that the results presented in this survey report are only truly representative of the sample of HR professionals responding to the survey.

