Addressing Visa Processing in the Wake of our Immigration Climate Today

Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory (Berkeley Lab) is taking a deliberate and prudent stance with respect to actions taken by the HR Shared Services’ International Researchers and Scholars Office (IRSO) in response to changes to the immigration climate both in the U.S. and around the globe. Specifically, IRSO is carefully considering the two recent Executive Orders issued, as well as the upcoming temporary suspension of the H-1B Premium Processing program when making decisions regarding our foreign national hires and affiliates.

The role of IRSO is to facilitate the ongoing employment and visits of foreign national nonimmigrants so that they can help further the mission of the Laboratory and engage in the highly valuable collaborate research and efforts of the Department of Energy and the Berkeley Lab community.

IRSO’s staff uses their vast knowledge and experience to carefully evaluate each individual’s immigration history and background, taking into consideration all relevant factors to assess the best possible visa status for each individual. Determinations are made based primarily on the best interests of the Laboratory, factoring in fiscal responsibility and business needs. In today’s environment, we are also taking into consideration the political climate and dynamic immigration regulations and processes, as they may change from day to day, potentially impacting our employees, affiliates, and Berkeley Lab research programs.

In furtherance of our work, IRSO liaises with retained immigration attorneys to ensure that we are aware of activities or dynamics that potentially impact our foreign national population. When there are confirmed changes in the law, regulations, policies, practices, or processes, we inform our population via Today at Berkeley Lab (TABL) articles or updates via IRSO’s web page.

Decisions regarding visa processing are made on a case by case basis by the IRSO Advisors. There are nuances to each immigration case and visa request that must be carefully reviewed in its entirety before concluding which visa is best for an individual case.

We work diligently with the managers and foreign nationals to ensure we meet our end goal of facilitating the work and research that is so critical to the Laboratory and appreciate the support of all involved to meet this mutually beneficial end result.

If you have inquiries or concerns about visas or immigration, please reach out to IRSO at irso@lbl.gov or to your area’s IRSO Advisor. We are here to assist you and answer any questions that you may have.