



## Special Features

Despite a slack labor market, filings suggest that Microsoft, Oracle, IBM, KPMG LLP, and dozens of other big technology and consulting concerns are still searching for talent overseas and are sponsoring workers on temporary H-1B visas. Universities and medical centers also top the list. Most companies won't confirm an actual number sponsored.

Of course, the vast majority of the nation's 8.1 million job seekers don't have the skills for most of those positions. But the hard times have emboldened longtime critics. "The number of H-1Bs being brought in is very high," says LeEarl Bryant, president of the U.S. chapter of the Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers. Ms. Bryant says overseas workers are taking jobs that can be filled by her members. The H-1B status allows foreign professionals to work here for up to six years.

The Immigration and Naturalization Service hasn't disclosed the identities of the most active H-1B filers, saying it isn't required to under the law. But the Labor Department's data on labor condition applications, or LCAs, provide a clue.

Employers must file an LCA before they can receive an H-1B. But they also file dozens of ultimately unfulfilled LCAs, or file them even when the worker moves to another city.

For example, consulting firm Aquent LLC filed about 350 applications in the fiscal year ended Monday . The firm says it sponsored two overseas workers, while hiring an additional 15 who were already in the U.S. "There are way too many Americans without jobs," says Ross Fernandes, an Aquent area manager, adding they "would be our preference."

Microsoft, Oracle and IBM top the list of LCA filers, but they won't say how many workers are involved or what they believe are the skills lacking in the U.S. Baylor College of Medicine in Houston says it sponsors 150 H-1B holders among faculty, scientists in training and research technicians. "We have to literally scour the globe for some of these people," says Michele Stelljes, senior immigration adviser.

Meanwhile, Mr. Khanna, the attorney, says H-1B activity hit bottom this year and won't anytime soon reach its 1990s peak. "My mother said I should go to medical school," he laments.

### Special Features

#### Foreign Workers Continue To Join the U.S. Work Force

Rajiv Khanna, an Arlington VA, immigration attorney, saw demand for temporary workers from overseas soar in the 1990s. Now, with the labor market weakened, he estimates his workload has fallen 75 percent. But "there's still demand out there for the right kind of people," Mr. Khanna says. Medical personnel, programmers, and civil and mechanical engineers are still popular, he says.

[\[Read More\]](#)

#### PAST ISSUES

[April 2002](#)

[May 2002](#)

[June 2002](#)

[July 2002](#)

[August 2002](#)

[September 2002](#)

[October 2002](#)

[November 2002](#)

[December 2002](#)

[January 2003](#)

[February 2003](#)

[March 2003](#)

[April 2003](#)