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By **Shubhangi Chowdhury** — October 29, 2025



In a move that could significantly affect thousands of foreign workers, the Trump administration has rolled back a key safeguard for visa holders by ending the automatic extension of work permits, or otherwise known as Employment Authorization Document (EAD), for certain noncitizens awaiting renewal.

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) announced an interim final rule halting the long-standing practice, marking another step in the administration's broader effort to tighten **employment-based immigration**.

The new rule, according to DHS, is aimed at ensuring that all employment authorization renewals undergo thorough review and verification before approval, emphasizing tighter screening and vetting measures for foreign workers.

“USCIS is placing a renewed emphasis on robust alien screening and vetting, eliminating policies the former administration implemented that prioritized aliens’ convenience ahead of Americans’ safety and security,” said USCIS Director Joseph Edlow.

“It’s a commonsense measure to ensure appropriate vetting and screening has been completed before an alien’s employment authorization or documentation is extended. All aliens must remember that working in the United States is a privilege, not a right,” he added.

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In 2024, the **DHS introduced a rule** that allowed immigrants waiting for the renewal of their work permits to continue working for up to 540 days beyond their permit’s expiration, a significant increase from the earlier 180-day automatic extension. The extended grace period primarily benefited refugees, asylum seekers, and dependents of employment-based visa holders, allowing them to maintain work eligibility while their renewal applications were under review.

The interim final rule, set to take effect on Oct. 30, clarifies that work permits already granted automatic extensions before its release will remain valid and unaffected by the new policy.

“The main change is if the new EAD is not issued before the previous one expires, there will be a gap in employment. The applicant will have to stop working until the new EAD is issued. In order to avoid interruptions, applicants have to submit the EAD renewal applications 180 days before the expiration date,” says Leaondro Carvalho, attorney at Florida-based Dell’Ome Law Firm which specializes in immigration and tax law.

By ending automatic work permit extensions, DHS aims to increase the frequency of background checks for individuals seeking employment authorization in the U.S. Officials say that more regular reviews will help U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services identify potential fraud and flag applicants who may pose security risks, allowing for timely enforcement actions when necessary.

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When asked if there is any guarantee that a renewal would arrive within the legally permissible period to work, Carvalho said, “There is no guarantee, as it would depend on the processing times of USCIS. For instance, during COVID, EAD renewals were taking close to one year to be issued.”

The new policy includes only a few exceptions, such as automatic extensions allowed under Temporary Protected Status (TPS) or other provisions established by law or official Federal Register notices.

USCIS has advised noncitizens to submit their renewal applications as early as 180 days before their work permit expires to prevent any lapse in employment authorization once the automatic extension policy is phased out.

Earlier in 2019, “The DHS formally submitted the proposed rule titled, ‘Removing H-4 Dependent Spouses from the Class of Aliens Eligible for Employment Authorization,’ both to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs (OIRA) for their review on February 20, 2019.”

In 2019, the Trump administration moved to revoke the H-4 EAD program, a policy introduced under the Obama administration that allowed certain spouses of H-1B visa holders to work legally in the United States. The DHS had submitted a proposed rule to officially rescind the H-4 EAD, arguing that it undermined job opportunities for American workers.

Department of Homeland Security

Employment Authorization Document (EAD)

Employment based immigration

extension policy

immigrant work permits

immigration policy

Trump administration

USCIS

Work Permit Renewal

Shubhangi Chowdhury



Shubhangi Chowdhury is a Staff Writer at The American Bazaar. She holds a postgraduate degree in Mass Communication and Journalism and brings a strong foundation in content writing and copywriting. With a passion for storytelling and a growing interest in impactful reporting, she is now contributing to the field of journalism.

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