



AmericanHort

WORKING FOR HORTICULTURE

ABOUT US

AmericanHort unites the horticultural industry and represents professionals from all facets of the industry.

From growers to retailers, breeders to installers, suppliers to innovators, students to researchers, and everyone in between, people and businesses across the horticulture industry call AmericanHort their inspiration, voice, community, business partner, leader, and advocate.

With farm gate crop value of roughly \$17 billion, total industry economic output of \$348 billion, and directly supporting 2.32 million full- and part-time jobs, the horticulture industry is a key player in the American economy.

Matt Mika
Vice President, Advocacy & Government Affairs
MattM@AmericanHort.org
(202) 222-5719

Rachel Pick
Senior Manager, Advocacy & Government Affairs
RachelP@AmericanHort.org
(712) 212-2525

Kamron Newberry
Advocacy Project Coordinator
KamronN@AmericanHort.org
(806) 315-1046



Workforce & Labor

WHAT WE SEEK

Labor shortages and access to labor continue to pose significant challenges to the horticulture industry, particularly in plant production and landscape installation. Horticulture is one of the few industries that utilize H-2A and H-2B visas.

H-2A

The H-2A visa program is essential but in need of reform to better meet workforce demands. In the 118th Congress, the House Agriculture Committee's bipartisan Agricultural Labor Working Group released targeted policy recommendations to modernize the program, improve access, and enhance stability. Chairman G.T. Thompson is working to translate these recommendations into legislation that would:

- Streamline the H-2A application process through a single electronic portal.
- Allow staggered start dates and expedite processing for returning workers.
- Shift recruitment from print to digital and require USDA consultation on program rules.
- Provide greater wage predictability by capping fluctuations and eliminating mid-contract adjustments.
- Offer flexibility in job duties without triggering higher pay and explore alternative AEWR calculations.
- Expand support for safe, affordable farmworker housing and allow small farm waivers based on financial need.

H-2B

The H-2B visa program is essential for landscape businesses that face chronic shortages of seasonal labor. It enables companies to scale during peak seasons, supporting U.S. jobs across the landscape

and horticulture supply chains. The program's outdated annual cap of 66,000 visas—set over 30 years ago—is far below current demand, with roughly half of all H-2B visas used by the landscape industry, the program's largest user.

The following fixes would provide relief and assistance to the landscape and horticulture industry:

- Raise the annual visa cap to a minimum of 120,000 visas a year.
- Include "may to shall" H-2B discretionary language in the FY26 DHS appropriations bill.
- Create a certified seasonal employer H-2B cap exemption.

We urge members of Congress to support legislation that strengthens the H-2A and H-2B visa programs and ensures a stable, legal workforce for the American horticulture industry.

FURTHER BACKGROUND:

President Trump and his administration can take immediate steps to stabilize the agricultural workforce through executive and administrative actions. These include prioritizing H-2A visa processing, modernizing wage calculations, expanding eligibility for non-seasonal roles, and clarifying the definition of agricultural labor. While these actions are helpful, they are only temporary.

President Trump, his family, and businesses have utilized the H-2A and H-2B programs—just like many growers across the country. But agriculture cannot rely on stopgap measures. We urge the administration to lead in securing a permanent legislative solution that ensures a reliable, legal workforce for U.S. horticulture and agriculture.

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