

Feds plan 25,000 on-site H-1B inspections

Immigration Services to take a more aggressive stance on H-1B visa enforcement

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[\(Computerworld\)](#) U.S. immigration officials are taking H-1B enforcement from the desk to the field with a plan to conduct 25,000 on-site inspections of companies hiring foreign workers over this fiscal year.

The move marks a nearly five-fold increase in inspections over last fiscal year, when the agency conducted 5,191 site visits under a new site inspection program. The new federal fiscal year began Oct. 1.

Tougher enforcement from U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services comes in response to a study conducted by the agency last year that [found fraud and other violations](#) in one-in-five H-1B applications.

In a letter to U.S. Sen. Charles Grassley (R-Iowa), Alejandro Mayorkas, director of the Citizenship and Immigration Services, said the agency began a site visit and verification program in July to check on the validity of H-1B applications. Mayorkas' letter was released on Tuesday by Grassley.

"[The inspection program determines] whether the location of employment actually exists and if a beneficiary is employed at the location specified, performing the duties as described, and paid the salary as identified in the petition," said Mayorkas in his letter to Grassley.

Mayorkas is a former federal prosecutor who was recently appointed by President Barack Obama. He was sworn in August and said since then, "I have worked tirelessly to learn of the condition of our anti-fraud efforts and other critical programs in our agency."

In September, Grassley, an ardent critic of the H-1B program, asked Mayorkas to outline the steps his agency was taking in regard to H-1B enforcement. Among the

issues that Grassley asked for was specific information about companies that are hiring H-1B workers for jobs that didn't exist, and who, instead, are not paid until contract work is found.

As part of its enforcement effort, Mayorkas said the Citizenship and Immigration Services has hired Dunn and Bradstreet Inc., which provides credit reports among other services, to act as "an independent information provider" and help verify information submitted by companies hiring H-1B workers.

Grassley, a co-sponsor of legislation [that will increase H-1B program enforcement](#), said in a statement released today, "If employers are hiring visa holders without actual jobs lined up, American workers are losing out. Employers must be held accountable, and should be required to submit contracts and itineraries to prove that a job exists. Simply having them attest that they are complying with the law isn't good enough."

Immigration attorneys have seen an increase in demands for documentation from the Citizenship and Immigration Services as part of the approval process.