

## What Is the “L” Visa and How Should It Be Reformed?

The “L” visa is a numerically uncapped, temporary nonimmigrant visa category. The L visa category is divided into two subcategories: L-1A and L-1B.

- L-1A—This visa was created by Congress for intracompany transfers of executive leadership of multinational corporations from foreign offices to offices in the United States.
  - Because intracompany transfers of top executive management were not perceived as posing a grave threat to American workers, Congress did not require significant wage or labor protections in the program.
- L-1B—Congress also allowed for the issuance of L visas to aliens who are not executives, but who have “specialized knowledge” required by the corporation.
  - “Specialized knowledge” has never been adequately defined by Congress, courts, or the administrative state. This has created a massive fraud vulnerability that the government has been aware of for decades.
    - In 2006 the Department of Homeland Security Office of Inspector General (OIG) [reported](#) that the program was vulnerable to fraud, including specifically highlighting “specialized knowledge” as a problem.
    - In 2013, the OIG [reviewed](#) the program again and found the same vulnerabilities.
    - In 2025, Tata Consultancy Services [faces](#) a lawsuit alleging abuse of “specialized knowledge” to import front-line employees in circumvention of the H-1B numerical cap.

**LEGISLATIVE RECOMMENDATION:** The L-1B visa subcategory should be eliminated. This would drastically reduce the potential for fraud in the L visa by restricting it to only executives of multinational corporations. It also would obviate the need to come up with a strict definition of “specialized knowledge” that couldn’t be gamed by employers seeking cheap, foreign labor.

**ADMINISTRATIVE RECOMMENDATION:** The Departments of Homeland Security and State must immediately pause existing policy guidance to adjudicators and revise the [USCIS Policy Manual](#) and the State [Foreign Affairs Manual \(FAM\)](#). “Specialized knowledge” should be defined to mean employees with the same knowledge/skill an executive L visa holder possesses. This adheres to the plain language of the statute and would prevent the L visa from being used in lieu of the H-1B visa.