



iCERT Visa Portal System
Implementation of Electronic Filing in the H-2B Program

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Office of Foreign Labor Certification
 Employment and Training Administration
 U.S. Department of Labor





Electronic Filing in the H-2B Program

- **iCERT Visa Portal System**
 - Background
 - Major benefits and features
 - Impact on H-2B process
 - Implementation schedule and helpful resources
- **Technical Demonstration**

<u>Part I</u>	<u>Part II</u>
- Creating an iCERT Account	- Preparing the ETA Form 9142
- Managing Sub-Account Users	- Uploading Scanned Documents
- Modifying Account Profiles	- Final Submission Steps
- Understanding Your Visa Portfolio	- Post Submission Functions



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iCERT Visa Portal System

Background

- As part of the Department's E-Government initiative, OFLC implemented the iCERT System on April 15, 2009
- The iCERT System is web-based and designed as an integrated business solution for filing and tracking applications across all OFLC administered programs
 - Receives and processes more than 450,000 customer applications annually
- On September 28th, the Department published a Federal Register Notice announcing the availability of electronic filing for H-2B and H-2A visa programs through the iCERT System
- Currently, employer filing of H-2B and H-2A applications is paper-based and OFLC case adjudication is manual in nature



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iCERT Visa Portal System

Major Benefits and Features

- The iCERT System is a "Government-to-Business (G²B)" solution designed to offer the following benefits:
 1. Enhance accessibility and quality of visa program services
 2. Reduce data collection and reporting burden on employers
 3. Facilitate more streamlined business processes
 4. Establish a greater level of transparency in the adjudicatory decisions issued by the OFLC



MOVE FROM ...
A Paper-Based, Manual
Determination Process

MOVE TO ...
An Electronic, Account-
Based, Responsive
Certification Process



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iCERT Visa Portal System

Feature: Single Point-of-Entry to Visa Services

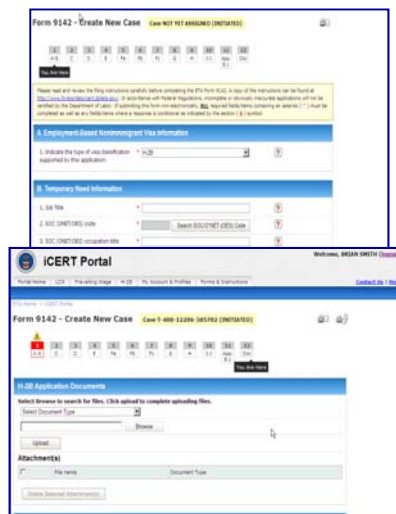
- Customers establish a single iCERT portal account
- Valid e-mail address serves as username for the account
- Account profile information can be updated anytime 24/7
- Create sub-account users and manage security privileges
- Prepare, submit and track all visa applications and prevailing wage requests through a “one-stop” portfolio summary



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Feature: Streamlined Form Preparation

- Uses customer account and other profile information to pre-populate sections of the ETA Form 9142
- Browser-level data validation edits provide immediate feedback to correct any inadvertent errors/mistakes
- Data entry “reuse” function reduces customer reporting to support recurring seasonal workforce needs
- Customers can upload supporting documentation for an application (MS Word, Adobe PDF, text formats)



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Feature: Electronic Notifications and Correspondence

- iCERT Account tracks the status of all customer applications
- E-mail notifications are automatically sent to the customer at different points in the business process (e.g., submission, final determination)
- OFLC's Chicago National Processing Center (NPC) can communicate with customers via e-mail or letter correspondence to ensure timely notification and case processing
- When a request is submitted from an Attorney/Agent account, iCERT sends a notification to all employer accounts matching the Federal Employer Identification Number (FEIN) on the ETA Form 9142
- Customers can check the status of applications anytime by accessing their iCERT accounts or using the "iCERT Case Status Check" function on the public iCERT home page



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Impact on H-2B Process

- Application Filing Requirements
 - Regulatory timeframes for filing remain unchanged
 - ETA Form 9142 bearing original signature(s) is **no longer required** for electronically filed applications
 - Employers or their authorized representatives must upload a signed and dated Appendix B.1 (*using Adobe PDF*) prior to submission
 - **Job contractors** must also upload a signed and dated Appendix B.1 and sections C and D of the ETA Form 9142 for the employer-client and a contract with the employer-client describing the employment relationship.

Important Notes:

- ✓ Employers or their authorized representatives electing to **NOT** file electronically must file using the traditional paper-based method
- ✓ Data from paper applications will be fully entered into the internal iCERT System by the Chicago NPC and processed electronically



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Impact on H-2B Process



- Supporting Documentation
 - Employers are still required to provide all documentation supporting the H-2B application *at the time of filing*
 - Prior to submission, the iCERT System accepts electronic documentation in Adobe PDF, Microsoft Word, or Text file formats
- Examples:**
- Upload scanned copy of recruitment report signed and dated by the employer in Adobe PDF
 - Upload scanned copy of FLC Registration Certificate or work itinerary (for occupations covered by special procedures and/or MSPA)
- Once the application is submitted, no additional documents can be uploaded by the external iCERT account holder
 - All documents requiring signature and dating must be scanned and uploaded using Adobe PDF (*e.g., Appendix B.1, recruitment report*)



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Impact on H-2B Process



IMPORTANT REMINDERS!

- Prior to electronic submission, preview all data entered on the ETA Form 9142 and uploaded supporting documents for completeness and accuracy
- Duplicate applications, where the employer or authorized representative files electronically and submits that same application via U.S. mail, will be rejected
- The Chicago NPC will only process the first application received and return the second application to the employer or authorized representative
- For electronically filed applications, keep a copy of the iCERT confirmation message and/or e-mail received from the Department as proof of submission



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Impact on H-2B Process

- Receiving an Approved Temporary Labor Certification
 - For all H-2B applications received on or after October 15, 2012, the Chicago NPC will send an original certified ETA Form 9142 and Appendix B.1 on special security paper from the Treasury
 - Upon receipt, the employer and, if applicable, the authorized representative must **sign and date** the Appendix B.1 and provide the ETA Form 9142 in original directly to USCIS
 - A certified ETA Form 9142 is valid when it contains . . .
 - A completed Section K
 - Bears the electronic signature of the OFLC Administrator (William L. Carlson)
 - A completed “For Department of Labor Use Only” footer on each page identifying the iCERT case number, determination status, and validity period



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Implementation Schedule

- iCERT H-2B Module will be implemented on **October 15, 2012**
 - Employers or authorized representatives with iCERT accounts will be able to prepare and submit H-2B applications electronically on this date
 - Applications submitted before October 15, 2012, will be processed under the current paper-based method

Important Note:

- ✓ Employers whose H-2B applications are filed **before** the implementation of electronic filing (i.e. before October 15, 2012) and granted a temporary labor certification will receive the certified ETA Form 9142 and Appendix B.1 in the currently established manner



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Helpful Resources



- Next Webinar: **October 4, 2012**
- For more resources and information, please visit our iCERT electronic filing implementation web page at:
http://www.foreignlaborcert.doleta.gov/h2ah2b_icert_rollout.cfm
- Helpdesk Resources:

Please send H-2B program-related questions to the Chicago NPC Help Desk Team at TLC.Chicago@dol.gov

Please send technical problems or other issues related to the creation and maintenance of iCERT System accounts and electronic filing to the iCERT System Help Desk Team at oflc.portal@dol.gov



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