AI AND H-1B VISAS

An effort to excel in AI drives top technology companies' hiring of H-1B visa holders, according to a National Foundation for American Policy analysis. More than 80% of labor condition applications, or LCAs, certified for new H-1B petitions in FY 2025 for Amazon, Meta, Google, Microsoft and Apple were for occupations connected to artificial intelligence. While 60% of LCAs certified for the five technology companies in FY 2025 were for software developers, only 23% of positions certified for all employers were for software developers. The data reflect the number of LCAs certified in the first 3 quarters of FY 2025 for new employment, which are generally cases that count against the H-1B annual limit. DOL certifies positions prior to company H-1B petition filings, but not all certifications result in an approved H-1B petition. Amazon had the most H-1B petitions for initial employment approved in FY 2025, followed by Meta Platforms, Microsoft and Google. Apple was sixth.[1] In 2025 and 2026, the five companies are expected to spend more than $1 trillion combined in primarily AI-connected capital expenditures.

Table 1
Labor Condition Applications Certified for H-1B Petitions for New Employment for Amazon, Meta, Google, Microsoft and Apple (First 3 Quarters of FY 2025)

Occupations	Number of LCAs Filed	Percent of Total LCAs
Software Developers	8,036	59.7%
Computer & Information Research Scientists	814	6.0%
Data Scientists	567	4.2%
Business Intelligence Analysts	380	2.8%
Information Technology Project Managers	316	2.4%
Market Research Analysts and Marketing	304	2.3%
Electronics Engineers, Except Computer	239	1.8%
Operations Research Analysts	214	1.6%
Electrical Engineers	210	1.6%
Computer and Information Systems Managers	151	1.1%

Source: National Foundation analysis and tabulation of DOL H-1B Labor Condition Application (LCA) disclosure data for Amazon, Meta, Google, Microsoft and Apple. The data reflect the number of LCAs certified in the first 3 quarters of FY 2025 for new employment.

H-1B Filings Complement Significant Investments in AI

It makes sense that companies have hired talent to complement spending on AI and related capital expenditures. "Alphabet, Microsoft, Meta and Amazon are expected to spend nearly $700 billion combined this year to fuel their AI build-outs," reports CNBC. In 2025, the companies were expected to exceed $380 billion in capital expenditures. Alphabet is the parent company of Google. In February 2025, Apple announced it would invest more than $500 billion in the United States over four years.

[1] H-*1B Petitions and Denial Rates in FY 2025*, NFAP Policy Brief, National Foundation for American Policy, November 2025.

MOST GRADUATE STUDENTS IN AI FIELDS ARE INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

When U.S. companies recruit, they find that only a small percentage of full-time graduate students in key technology fields at U.S. universities are U.S. citizens or permanent residents. The rest are international students. A company usually must file an H-1B petition to employ recent international students in the United States. Companies with facilities abroad have the option of hiring and placing recent students in foreign countries. The supply of H-1B petitions has been exhausted annually for the past two decades.

Most full-time graduate students in AI-related fields in America are international students. At U.S. universities, international students account for 80% of full-time graduate students in computer and information sciences, 75% in electrical and computer engineering and 62% in mathematics and statistics. International students also represent a majority of full-time graduate students in other fields at U.S. universities, including industrial engineering, civil engineering and mechanical engineering.[2]

Table 2
Full-Time Graduate Students at U.S. Universities

Field of Study	Total	U.S. Citizens and Permanent Residents	International Students	Percent International Students
Computer and Information Sciences	113,633	23,063	90,570	79.7%
Electrical and Computer Engineering	37,357	9,274	28,083	75.2%
Industrial Engineering	9,291	2,598	6,693	72.0%
Civil Engineering	14,930	5,291	9,639	64.6%
Other Engineering	15,674	5,751	9,923	63.3%
Mathematics and Statistics	26,832	10,288	16,544	61.7%
Mechanical Engineering	20,323	8,512	11,811	58.1%
Multidisciplinary Science	17,187	7,286	9,901	57.6%
Chemical Engineering	9,328	4,035	5,293	56.7%
Metallurgical & Mining Engineering	5,990	2,955	3,035	50.7%
Physical Sciences	39,475	22,305	17,170	43.5%
Agricultural Sciences	8,319	4,702	3,617	43.5%
Biomedical Engineering	13,267	8,093	5,174	39.0%

Source: National Foundation for American Policy analysis and tabulation of the National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics Survey of Graduate Students and Postdoctorates in Science and Engineering (2023).

[2] National Foundation for American Policy analysis and tabulation of the National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics Survey of Graduate Students and Postdoctorates in Science and Engineering (2023).

"Immigrants have founded or cofounded nearly two-thirds (65% or 28 of 43) of the top AI companies in the United States," according to a National Foundation for American Policy (NFAP) analysis. "Seventy-seven percent of the leading U.S.-based AI companies were founded or cofounded by immigrants or the children of immigrants. Forty-two percent (18 of 43) of the top U.S.-based AI companies had a founder who came to America as an international student."[3]

AMAZON LCA FILINGS IN FY 2025

More than 60% of the labor condition applications certified for new employment for Amazon were for software developers in FY 2025, followed by 7% for computer and information research scientists, 3% for data scientists and 1% or 2% for other AI-related occupations, including information technology project managers.[4]

Table 3
Labor Condition Applications Certified for H-1B Petitions for New Employment For Amazon
(First 3 Quarters of FY 2025)

Occupations	Number of LCAs Filed	Percent of Total LCAs
Software Developers	2,849	60.2%
Computer and Information Research Scientists	325	6.9%
Business Intelligence Analysts	225	4.8%
Operations Research Analysts	157	3.3%
Data Scientists	124	2.6%
Market Research Analysts	103	2.2%
Information Technology Project Managers	88	1.9%
Transportation, Storage, and Distribution	78	1.7%
Accountants and Auditors	67	1.4%
Computer and Information Systems Managers	65	1.4%
Project Management Specialists	58	1.2%
Logisticians	57	1.2%
Information Security Analysts	45	1.0%
Supply Chain Managers	38	0.8%
Software Quality Assurance Analysts	37	0.8%

Source: National Foundation analysis and tabulation of DOL H-1B Labor Condition Application (LCA) disclosure data for Amazon. The data reflect the number of LCAs certified in the first 3 quarters of FY 2025 for new employment.

[3] Stuart Anderson, *AI and Immigrants*, NFAP Policy Brief, National Foundation for American Policy, June 2023. The study analyzed U.S. companies in the *Forbes* AI 50 list.
[4] Parts of this analysis were included in Stuart Anderson, "New Immigration Limits Loom As AI Drives H-1B Visas For Tech Companies," *Forbes*, February 8, 2026.

META LCA FILINGS IN FY 2025

Fifty-eight percent of the labor condition applications for new employment certified for Meta in FY 2025 were for software developers, followed by approximately 17% for computer and information research scientists and 7% for data scientists. The company also filed LCAs for other positions, including information technology project managers.

Table 4
Labor Condition Applications Certified for H-1B Petitions for New Employment For Meta
(First 3 Quarters of FY 2025)

Occupations	Number of LCAs Filed	Percent of Total LCAs
Software Developers	1,037	57.9%
Computer and Information Research Scientists	295	16.5%
Data Scientists	133	7.4%
Information Technology Project Managers	37	2.1%
Computer Occupations, All Other	34	1.9%
Computer and Information Systems Managers	28	1.6%
Computer Network Architects	19	1.1%
Industrial Engineers	19	1.1%
Web and Digital Interface Designers	18	1.0%
Operations Research Analysts	17	0.9%
Market Research Analysts	16	0.9%
Computer Hardware Engineers	13	0.7%
Business Intelligence Analysts	12	0.7%
Software Quality Assurance Analysts	10	0.6%
Marketing Managers	8	0.4%

Source: National Foundation analysis and tabulation of DOL H-1B Labor Condition Application (LCA) disclosure data for Meta. The data reflect the number of LCAs certified in the first 3 quarters of FY 2025 for new employment.

MICROSOFT LCA FILINGS IN FY 2025

The Department of Labor certified over 50% of Microsoft's labor condition applications for new employment in FY 2025 for software developers, 13% for data scientists, 8% for information technology managers and 7% for computer systems engineers/architects. Other positions certified included electrical engineers and computer and information research scientists.

Table 5
Labor Condition Applications Certified for H-1B Petitions for New Employment For Microsoft
(First 3 Quarters of FY 2025)

Occupations	Number of LCAs Filed	Percent of Total LCAs
Software Developers	622	50.2%
Data Scientists	167	13.5%
Information Technology Project Managers	100	8.1%
Computer Systems Engineers/Architects	89	7.2%
Market Research Analysts	48	3.9%
Business Intelligence Analysts	44	3.6%
Computer Hardware Engineers	17	1.4%
Electrical Engineers	16	1.3%
Financial Risk Specialists	15	1.2%
Industrial Engineers	15	1.2%
Management Analysts	14	1.1%
Computer and Information Research Scientists	10	0.8%
Commercial and Industrial Designers	9	0.7%
Computer Network Architects	9	0.7%
Information Security Analysts	9	0.7%

Source: National Foundation analysis and tabulation of DOL H-1B Labor Condition Application (LCA) disclosure data for Microsoft. The data reflect the number of LCAs certified in the first 3 quarters of FY 2025 for new employment.

GOOGLE LCA FILINGS IN FY 2025

The Department of Labor certified more than 71% of Google's labor condition applications for new employment in FY 2025 for software developers, 4% for computer and information research scientists and 3% for data scientists.

Table 6
Labor Condition Applications Certified for H-1B Petitions for New Employment for Google
(First 3 Quarters of FY 2025)

Occupations	Number of LCAs Filed	Percent of Total LCAs
Software Developers	2,873	71.2%
Computer and Information Research Scientists	179	4.4%
Market Research Analysts	121	3.0%
Data Scientists	118	2.9%
Sales Engineers	117	2.9%
Computer Hardware Engineers	88	2.2%
Business Intelligence Analysts	79	2.0%
Graphic Designers	58	1.4%
Information Technology Project Managers	40	1.0%
Information Security Analysts	31	0.8%
Computer and Information Systems Managers	27	0.7%
Information Security Engineers	27	0.7%
Network and Computer Systems Administrators	26	0.6%
Computer Network Architects	23	0.6%
Management Analysts	22	0.5%

Source: National Foundation analysis and tabulation of DOL H-1B Labor Condition Application (LCA) disclosure data for Google. The data reflect the number of LCAs certified in the first 3 quarters of FY 2025 for new employment.

APPLE LCA FILINGS IN FY 2025

The composition of Apple's H-1B certifications differs from that of other technology companies because of the significant role of hardware sales in its operations. The Department of Labor certified 40% of Apple's labor condition applications for new employment in FY 2025 for software developers, 24% for electronics engineers and electrical engineers (combined), 2% for computer and information systems managers and 1.5% for data scientists.

Table 7
Labor Condition Applications Certified for H-1B Petitions for New Employment for Apple
(First 3 Quarters of FY 2025)

Occupations	Number of LCAs Filed	Percent of Total LCAs
Software Developers	655	39.5%
Electronics Engineers, Except Computer	232	14.0%
Electrical Engineers	166	10.0%
Mechanical Engineers	75	4.5%
Software Quality Assurance Analysts	63	3.8%
Information Technology Project Managers	51	3.1%
Industrial Engineers	49	3.0%
Logisticians	32	1.9%
Computer and Information Systems Managers	31	1.9%
Materials Engineers	29	1.8%
Operations Research Analysts	28	1.7%
Data Scientists	25	1.5%
Business Intelligence Analysts	20	1.2%
Market Research Analysts	16	1.0%
Graphic Designers	15	0.9%

Source: National Foundation analysis and tabulation of DOL H-1B Labor Condition Application (LCA) disclosure data for Apple. The data reflect the number of LCAs certified in the first 3 quarters of FY 2025 for new employment.

THE ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF AI INVESTMENT

AI investments by U.S. technology companies have contributed to economic growth. That suggests that H-1B visa holders are playing an important positive role in the U.S. economy. "The AI buildout is adding resilience to the economy at a time when consumption is softening, and rates remain elevated, and shows some independence to variables like interest rates, labor markets and even trade shocks," concluded Stephanie Aliagi of J.P. Morgan.[5]

Economists Giovanni Peri, Kevin Shih and Chad Sparber found, "When we aggregate at the national level, inflows of foreign STEM workers explain between 30% and 50% of the aggregate productivity growth that took place in the United States between 1990 and 2010." According to George Mason University economics professor Michael Clemens, that translates into 1/6th of U.S. economic growth over that period being due to the flow of foreign-born professionals in science and engineering fields. U.S. companies' AI plans also boosted stock market returns in 2025.[6]

TOP EMPLOYERS OF NEW H-1B VISA HOLDERS IN FY 2025

Amazon had the most H-1B petitions for initial employment approved in FY 2025, with 4,644, an increase from 3,871 in FY 2024 but lower than its total of 6,396 in FY 2022. Meta Platforms had the second-most H-1B petitions approved for initial employment in FY 2025, with 1,555, followed by Microsoft with 1,394 and Google with 1,050. This was the first time these four large U.S. companies have held the top four spots for approvals of new H-1B petitions. Only three Indian-based companies in FY 2025 appeared among the top 25 employers with approved H-1B petitions for initial employment. In FY 2025, the top seven Indian-based companies had only 4,573 H-1B petitions approved for initial employment, a drop of 70% from FY 2015 and 37% fewer than in FY 2024. (See Table 8.)

[5] https://am.jpmorgan.com/us/en/asset-management/adv/insights/market-insights/market-updates/on-the-minds-of-investors/is-ai-already-driving-us-growth/.
[6] https://giovanniperi.ucdavis.edu/uploads/5/6/8/2/56826033/stem-workers.pdf.

Table 8
Approved H-1B Petitions and Denial Rates for Initial Employment: FY 2025, FY 2024 and FY 2023

Employer	FY 2025 Approved Petitions Initial Employment	FY 2024 Approved Petitions Initial Employment	FY 2023 Approved Petitions Initial Employment	FY 2025 Denial Rate Initial Employment	FY 2024 Denial Rate Initial Employment	FY 2023 Denial Rate Initial Employment
Amazon	4,644	3,871	4,052	1%	1%	1%
Meta Platforms	1,555	920	735	1%	0.4%	0.4%
Microsoft	1,394	1,264	987	0.4%	0.4%	0.2%
Google	1,050	1,058	1,267	1%	1%	1%
TCS	846	1,452	1,174	2%	1%	4%
Apple	823	864	707	0.4%	1%	1%
Goldman Sachs	746	678	349	1%	0.4%	0%
Cognizant	743	2,873	2,597	4%	1%	1%
Ernst & Young	718	714	580	1%	1%	1%
Intel	635	851	519	3%	1%	1%
Nvidia	563	376	291	1%	1%	0%
JPMorgan Chase	553	468	453	0.4%	1%	0.4%
IBM	501	1,348	979	1%	0.4%	1%
Oracle	482	379	342	1%	0%	0.3%
Walmart	478	654	435	1%	0.5%	1%
ByteDance	449	424	153	1%	1%	1%
Deloitte	432	891	591	1%	0.4%	1%
TikTok	412	271	115	4%	2%	2%
Capgemini	401	1,041	1,110	4%	1%	1%
LTIMindtree	401	798	914	5%	1%	0.4%
HCL America	379	1,248	715	6%	1%	4%
Citibank	371	399	202	0.3%	1%	0.5%
Tesla	319	742	328	2%	1%	0%
Avant Healthcare	308	30	15	1%	0.3%	0%
McKinsey & Co.	303	477	290	2%	1%	1%

Source: USCIS, National Foundation for American Policy. Data extracted and analyzed from USCIS H-1B Employer Data Hub. Percentages are rounded off except when below 0.5%. Related entities and affiliates were identified when possible. Initial employment includes new and concurrent employment. USCIS records cases in the fiscal year approved, not by the cap year or when they were filed.

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