

Epsten Group's Eleventh-Hour H-1B Petition is Approved With Envoy

As a global leader in sustainable building practices, Atlanta-based Epsten Group has assessed more than 8,500 high-performance structures in more than 50 countries. The architecture and building firm has 25 years of experience delivering design and consulting services to clients globally – but when it came to building its team back home, the company found that it needed to evolve its recruiting practices. Its primary challenge? Finding talent that would help the company stand out in a fiercely competitive industry. “This is a highly specialized job and very hard to find, so oftentimes when we post a position, most of the qualified candidates are coming from foreign nationals,” says Cheryl Glover, human resources manager at Epsten Group.

Finding a Quality Provider

Glover began to develop her company’s visa sponsorship program – but found she needed a partner she could trust to navigate the process. So she began looking for a quality immigration services provider. “I worked with Envoy, so I had that comfort level,” she says. During her tenure as a human resources generalist at a previous company, Glover built a relationship with Envoy, an online immigration services provider.

With the added recruitment expenses associated with foreign national sponsorship, finding the most cost-efficient solution became a priority.

“Of course my CEO encouraged me to reach out to some immigration attorneys as well,” Glover says. “I wanted to know, on average, how much I would spend on a typical H-1B visa sponsorship. Their fees were based on hourly rates and we really didn’t like the unknown.”

That need for certainty was met by Envoy’s clear flat rate for each visa application. “We liked knowing how much money we’re going to spend every time,” Glover says. “My CEO particularly liked [Envoy’s] flat fee, and I personally liked the communication portal and having the single point of contact.” Since its first H-1B petition with Envoy in 2013, Epsten Group has successfully sponsored multiple H-1B applications and transfers. Recently, the company advanced its immigration program by sponsoring a foreign national for legal permanent residency. To date, 15 percent of its 50-person team is foreign-born.



About the Company

Mission

“The Epsten Group provides sustainable building solutions by assisting clients with design, consulting, certification, policy and science. We connect our clients to sustainable, regenerative practices that contribute to a livable planet.”

Impact

The multidisciplinary architecture and building consulting firm has assessed more than 8,500 high-performance buildings in over 50 countries.

Employees

50

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-Cheryl Glover

Trusted Immigration Partner

“I like being able to log in to the application with any questions, or I can reach out to my designated liaison,” Glover says. “If there’s something that I need the answer to right away, that person works with attorneys to get me everything I need.”

For each company, Envoy designates a customer relationship manager as the primary point of contact during the application process from start to finish. The relationship manager answers questions, facilitates attorney calls, sets reminders for visa renewals and more.

“The cap season lottery typically fills up in the first week of April.”

Due to the 85,000 cap on new H-1B petitions accepted for processing each year, it’s important to prepare the petitions months before the April 1 lottery start date. But in March, a last-minute recruiting effort required the firm to begin a cap-eligible application just nine business days before the lottery opened.

Cap Season Time Crunch

The H-1B petition benefited Jialu Xie, a Chinese national recruited as the company’s new energy modeling specialist. As an expert in Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification, she was an important addition to Epstein Group’s team of high-performance building professionals.

“I was [worried],” Glover says of starting the application at the last minute. “But talking to my contact person, he assured me that everything should be fine.”

A Positive Outcome

“I started the case and [Envoy] reached out to Jialu and explained the process to her,” Glover says. “She started immediately uploading her documentation. A lot of what was needed from me is already on file, so it was very limited work that I had to do.”

After an initial work visa application is prepared through Envoy’s platform, a company’s documents and information are stored in the system securely, reducing the company’s time commitment for preparing subsequent applications.

Additionally, foreign national employees receive account access, allowing them to upload documents through the portal and ask Envoy-affiliated attorneys questions about their case directly via the Communication Center.

“The process for me was pretty painless and seamless.”

Due to the quick work of the attorneys, Xie’s petition was completed and submitted to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services by April 1. Shortly after the petition was filed, Envoy informed Xie and Cheryl of the good news: The application was selected for processing and the petition was approved.





“I’m really proud to work for a company that supports sponsoring foreign nationals,” Glover says. “I’ve worked for some companies where we were encouraged to steer away from sponsorship because it could be expensive. But here at Epsten Group, we’re more concerned with getting the talent that we need. For us, it is a foreign national candidate.”



Cheryl Glover, PHR
THE HR MANAGER

ROLE: Human Resources Manager

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE: More than 16 years

IMMIGRATION ADVICE:

“I would definitely advise every HR specialist to rely on the expertise of an immigration attorney or a boutique firm such as Envoy to help navigate through sponsorship because it can be a challenge. There’s a lot of complexities and if you don’t have any experience with immigration, you may not realize until you’re in too deep.”



Jialu Xie
THE VISA HOLDER

VISA TYPE: H-1B: Person in Specialty Occupation

TITLE: Energy Modeling Specialist

JOB DUTIES: Provides technical expertise for LEED certification and serves as a primary technical subject matter expert for the evaluation of projects pursuing LEED certification.

EDUCATION:

- M.S. in Renewable and Clean Energy and B.S. in Mechanical Engineering Technology, University of Dayton
- B.S. in Mechanical Engineering, Shanghai Normal University

