



# 2023 IMMIGRATION TRENDS REPORT

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Insights from 500+ HR Professionals Specializing in Corporate  
Immigration and Global Mobility



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In Envoy Global's 8th annual Immigration Trends Report, we surveyed over 500 HR professionals who specialize in corporate immigration and global mobility for companies across the U.S. The survey covers employer sentiments on the U.S. immigration system, global immigration trends, corporate best practices and more.

In 2023, the global immigration landscape is being shaped by factors like mass tech layoffs, STEM talent moving to new industries and the Biden administration's actions on immigration policy. As a result, employers are reassessing and adapting their strategies to navigate these shifting conditions.

This year's report captures the temperature of the business community and forecasts what is to come, covering:

- The impact of macroeconomic factors on employer demand to hire foreign talent
- Offshoring, nearshoring and outsourcing of foreign talent
- Employer sentiments on the U.S. immigration system
- Benchmarking for corporate immigration programs

# KEY FINDINGS



**1**

**Foreign employees on visa sponsorship were negatively impacted by layoffs and hiring freezes in 2022, but they remain highly sought after by U.S. employers.**

**2**

**Immigration barriers in the U.S. are leading employers to relocate foreign employees overseas and outsource jobs.**

**3**

**Employers largely appreciate the Biden administration's direction on employment-based immigration but believe significant improvements are still needed.**

**4**

**Companies require more support, both internally and externally, to meet their immigration and global mobility needs effectively.**

# TERMINOLOGY

The survey and report use several terms common amongst corporate immigration and global mobility professionals. The definitions on this page contextualization each term used throughout the report.

<b>Foreign National:</b>	A non-U.S. citizen requiring either a work permit or employer-sponsored visa to be employed in the U.S.
<b>International Assignment:</b>	An employment assignment in a foreign country, ranging from short-term business trips to long-term transfers.
<b>Transfer:</b>	The relocation of an employee to a worksite location or office for work and, typically, residence.
<b>Relocate:</b>	The temporary or permanent moving of an employee to live and work in a foreign country, including to work remotely from abroad.
<b>Global Business Travel:</b>	International travel being undertaken for business purposes (in some instances, business travel may not require immigration support).
<b>Nearshoring:</b>	The practice of transferring an employee or other business resource to a nearby country due to the benefits the proximity brings to the company.
<b>Offshoring:</b>	The practice of transferring an employee or business practice to a country overseas.
<b>Immigration Services Provider:</b>	A firm providing immigration program support and oversight, including regulatory and policy strategy, visa processing, and compliance guidance to organizations with global mobility needs.
<b>Remote Work Visa:</b>	A permit or visa that enables an individual to reside and perform their job remotely for a foreign employer, for a limited period, in a country different from their own.

# ABOUT THE SURVEY

## Survey Respondents & Methodology

The national survey was conducted online in partnership with Cint from February 13-20, 2023, with 504 HR professionals participating from across a variety of industries and company sizes. Each respondent is a U.S. resident, 21+ in age, holds a full-time HR position, and is directly involved in the immigration or global mobility functions at their organization. q26-q33 received 443 responses. These questions were limited to respondents that work at companies with offices outside of the U.S. or require employees to obtain a visa or work authorization for business travel outside of the U.S.

### Number of Sponsored Employees

1-24	9%
25-99	17%
100-249	16%
250-999	25%
1,000-2,499	13%
2,500+	19%

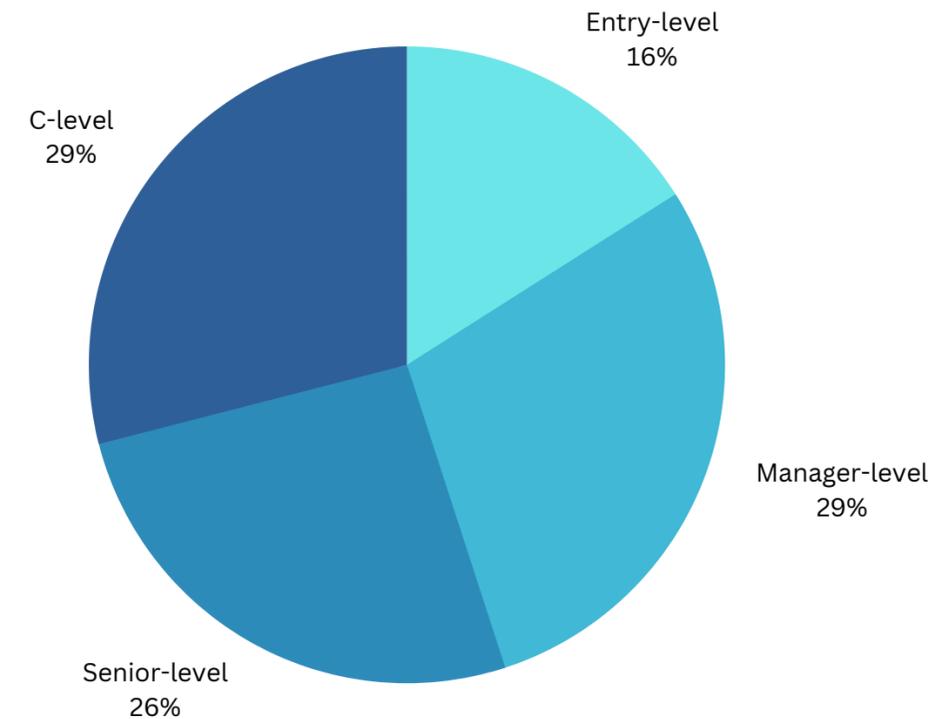
### Company Headcount

1-99	8%
100-499	20%
500-999	22%
1,000-2,499	17%
2,500-9,999	20%
10,000+	13%

## Industries

Accommodation and Food Services	8%
Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	3%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	1%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	2%
Construction	27%
Educational Services	3%
Finance and Insurance	21%
Health Care and Social Assistance	8%
Information	5%
Management of Companies and Enterprises	4%
Manufacturing	7%
Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	1%
Other Services	1%
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	3%
Retail Trade	6%
Transportation and Warehousing	2%

## Seniority Level



# 1

**In 2022, companies with foreign national employees experienced layoffs and hiring freezes due to macroeconomic trends.**

**78%** of companies instituted a hiring freeze.

**51%** of companies laid off foreign national employees.

Source: Envoy Global's 2023 Immigration Trends Survey. q1: How have macroeconomic trends impacted your company's global immigration program in the past 12 months? Data is the sum of respondents who selected "A. Our company implemented a hiring freeze" and "C. Both A and B;" and "B. Our company laid off foreign national employees" and "C. Both A and B."

**But many companies benefited by recruiting foreign talent impacted by earlier layoffs.**

**89%**

of companies hired one or more foreign national employees who were previously laid off by another company in the last six months.

Source: Envoy Global's 2023 Immigration Trends Survey. q3: In the past six months, did your company hire one or more foreign national employees who were previously laid off by another company? Data is % who chose "Yes."

**And generally, employers  
continue to recruit  
foreign talent.**

**87%**

of employers are currently recruiting  
and hiring foreign national employees  
in the U.S.

Source: Envoy Global's 2023 Immigration Trends Survey. q5: Is your company currently recruiting and hiring new foreign national employees in the U.S.? Data is % who chose "Yes."

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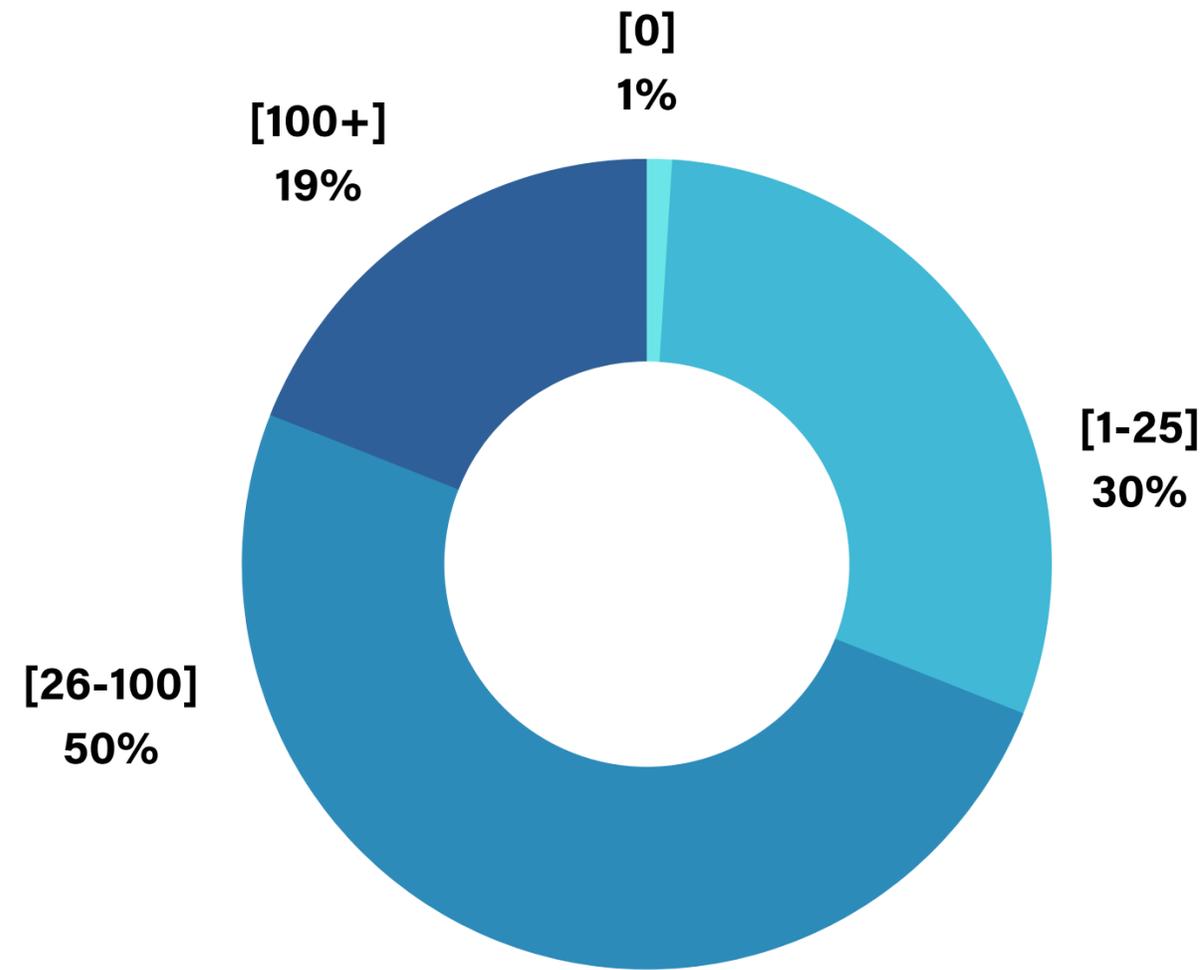
**In fact, employer demand for foreign talent is higher now than in early 2022, when the Department of Labor recorded an all-time high in foreign employee sponsorship.**

**71 %**

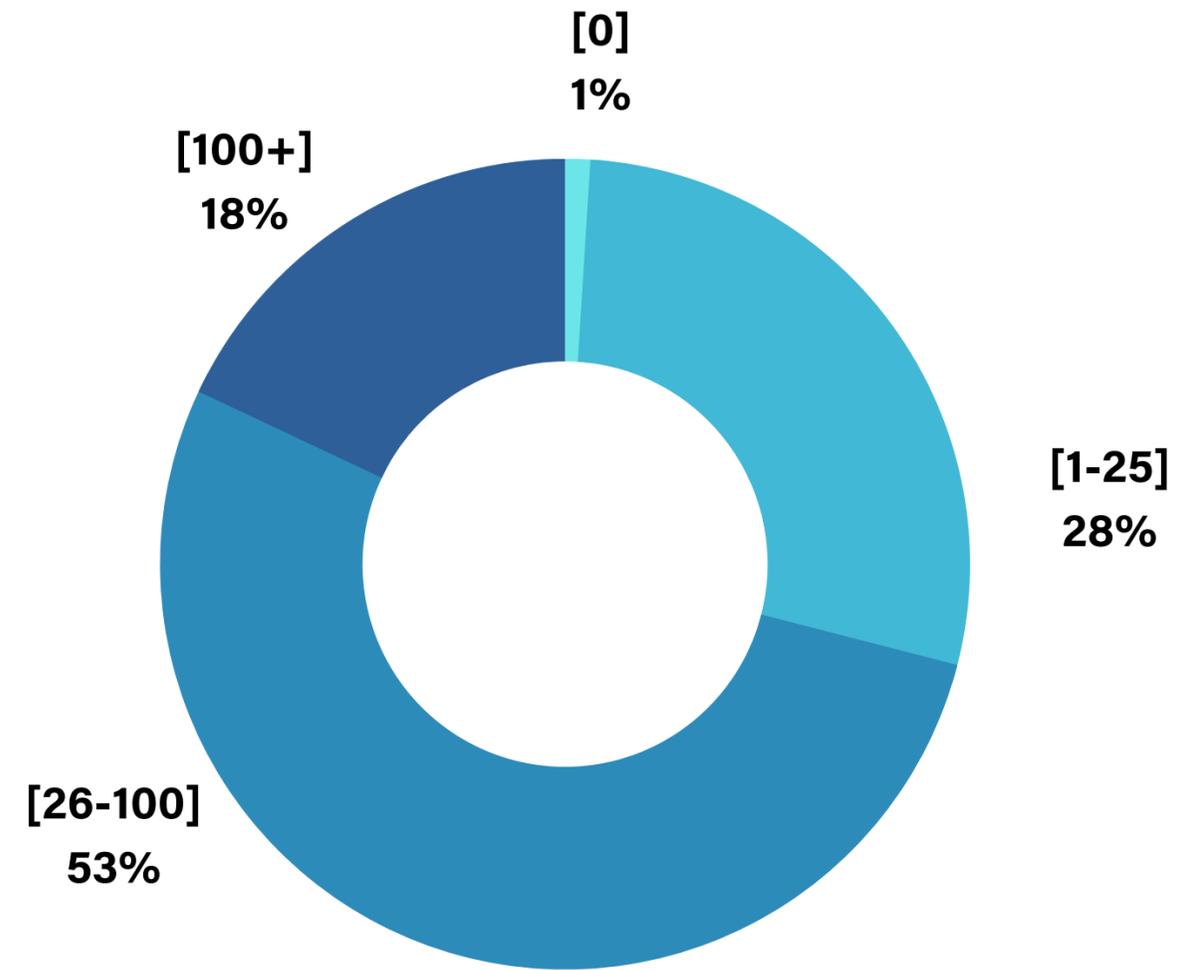
of companies report recruiting more foreign nationals in Q1 2023 than during the same period last year.

Source: Envoy Global's 2023 Immigration Trends Survey. q4: Is your company recruiting more, fewer, or the same number of foreign nationals in Q1 2023 as you did in Q1 2022? Data is % who chose "More." U.S. Department of Labor. Performance Data. LCA Programs (H-1B, H-1B1, E-3). LCA Disclosure Data FY2022 Q2 and LCA Disclosure Data FY2022 Q3.

That momentum should continue this year, as employers expect to submit slightly more H-1B registrations than they did in 2022, which saw a record 483,000 submissions.



In 2022, how many individuals did your company file an electronic registration for in the H-1B cap lottery?



In 2023, how many individuals do you anticipate your company will file an electronic registration for in the H-1B cap lottery?

Source: Envoy Global's 2023 Immigration Trends Survey. q6: In 2022, how many individuals did your company file an electronic registration for in the H-1B cap lottery? Data displays % who chose listed responses totaling 100%. q7: In 2023, how many individuals do you anticipate your company will file an electronic registration for in the H-1B cap lottery? Data displays % who chose the listed responses totaling 100%. U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services: "H-1B Electronic Registration Process."

# 2



**Despite the high demand to sponsor foreign talent in the U.S., immigration barriers are leading employers to relocate foreign national employees overseas and outsource jobs.**

**81%** of companies transferred foreign national employees to an office abroad because of visa-related issues in the U.S. in the last year.

**80%** of companies relocated employees to work remotely overseas because of visa-related issues in the U.S. in the last year.

Source: Envoy Global's 2023 Immigration Trends Survey. q9: In the past 12 months, did your company transfer one or more employees to an office outside of the U.S. due to visa-related issues? Data is % who chose "Yes." q10: In the past 12 months, did your company relocate one or more employees to work remotely in a country outside of the U.S. due to visa-related issues? Data is % who chose "Yes."

**Many companies are resorting to outsourcing jobs overseas due to the difficulty of securing visas for foreign talent within the U.S.**

**86%**

of companies hired employees outside the U.S. for roles originally intended to be based inside the country because of visa-related uncertainties.

Source: Envoy Global's 2023 Immigration Trends Survey. q12: In the past 12 months, did visa-related uncertainties cause your company to hire one or more employees outside of the U.S. for a role that was initially intended to be based inside of the U.S.? Data is % who chose "Yes."

# U.S. immigration barriers commonly cause employers to lose foreign talent.

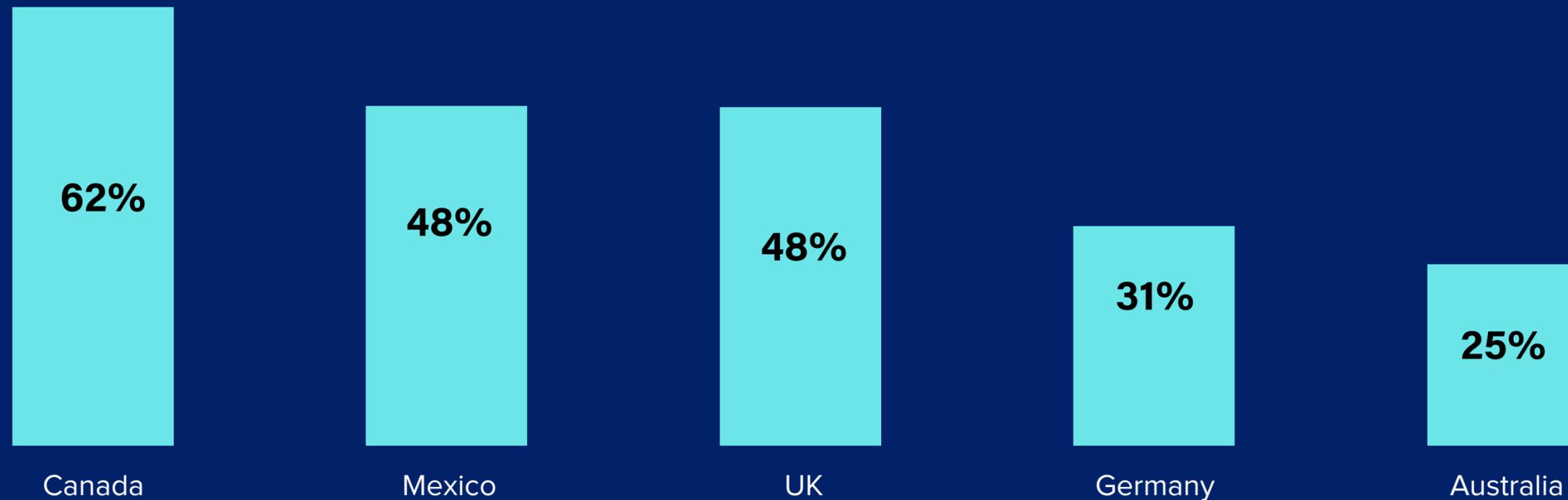
# 82%

of employers saw a foreign national employee forced to depart the U.S. because they were unable to obtain or extend an employment-based visa in the last year.

Source: Envoy Global's 2023 Immigration Trends Survey. q8: In the past 12 months, did any of your company's foreign national employees have to depart the U.S. because they were unable to obtain or extend an employment-based visa (such as the H-1B)? Data is % who chose "Yes."



# In response to U.S. immigration barriers, companies relocated employees to Canada, Mexico and the UK most frequently.



If your company transferred or relocated employees outside of the U.S. due to visa-related issues, which countries were they sent to?

Source: Envoy Global's 2023 Immigration Trends Survey. q11: If your company transferred or relocated employees outside of the U.S. due to visa-related issues, which countries were they sent to? Please select all that apply. Data is % who chose "Canada," "Mexico," "UK," "Germany," and "Australia."

# As a whole, our respondents tend to view other countries' immigration systems as more employer-friendly than the U.S.



Canada

**87%**



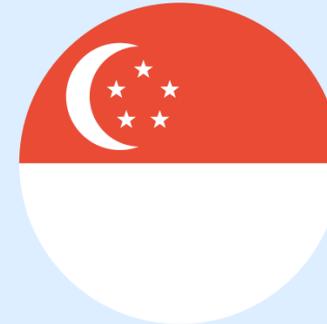
UK

**83%**



Ireland

**78%**



Singapore

**79%**



European Union

**81%**

In your opinion, is the immigration system in [Canada/UK/Ireland/Singapore/European Union] more favorable to employers than the U.S. immigration system?

Source: Envoy Global's 2023 Immigration Trends Survey. q26: In your opinion, is the Canadian immigration system more favorable to employers than the U.S. immigration system? Data is % who chose "Yes." q27: In your opinion, is the UK immigration system more favorable to employers than the U.S. immigration system? Data is % who chose "Yes." q28: In your opinion, is the immigration system in Ireland more favorable to employers than the U.S. immigration system? Data is % who chose "Yes." q29: In your opinion, is the immigration system in Singapore more favorable to employers than the U.S. immigration system? Data is % who chose "Yes." q30: In your opinion, is the immigration system in the European Union (other than Ireland) more favorable to employers than the U.S. immigration system? Data is % who chose "Yes."

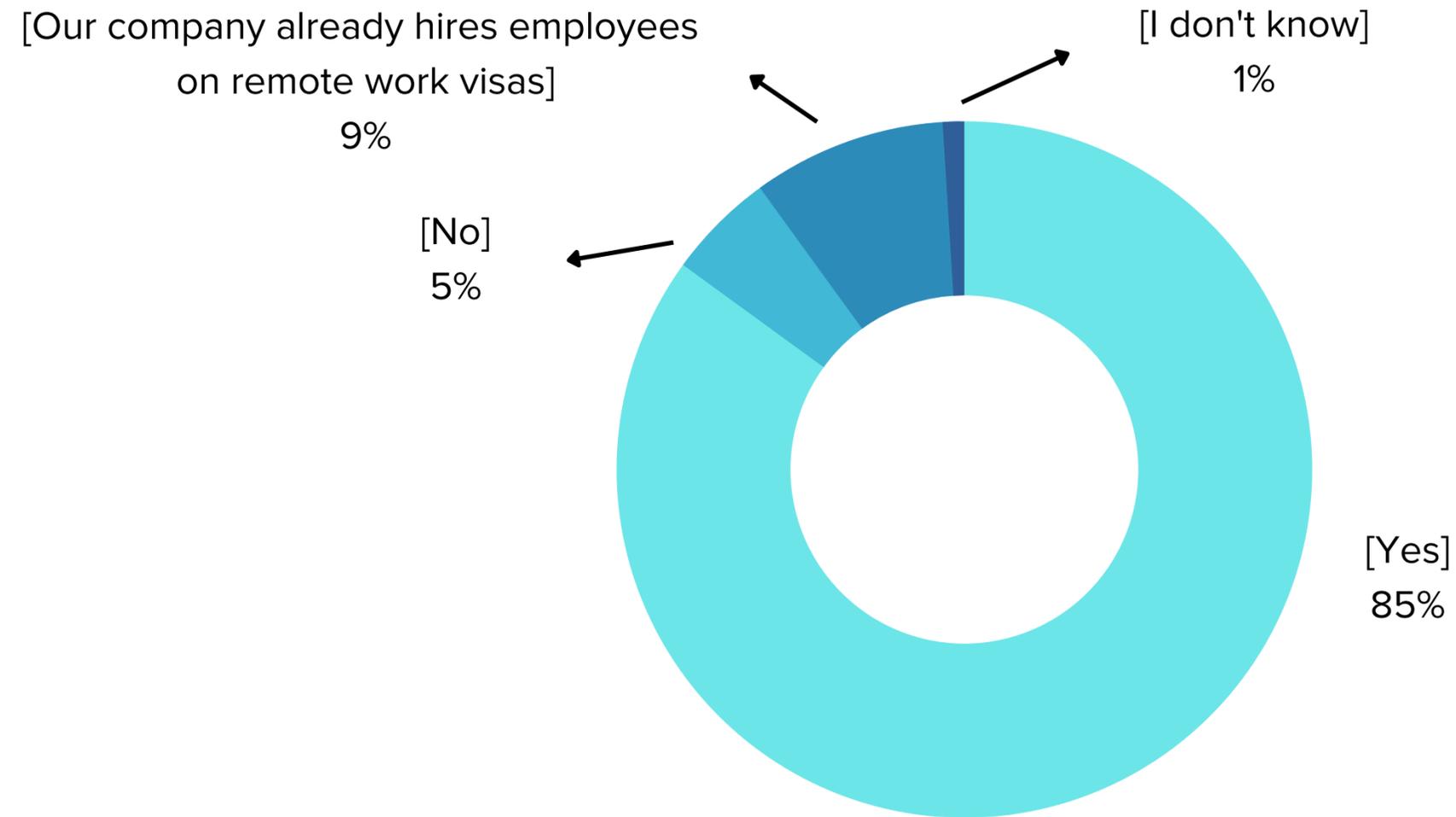
**And as destinations abroad become more attractive for employers, the U.S. will lose out on foreign talent flows.**

Source: Envoy Global's 2023 Immigration Trends Survey, q32: In 2023, do you expect your company will turn to nearshoring or offshoring to fill positions abroad due to immigration barriers and labor shortages in the U.S.? Data is % who chose "Yes."

**93%**

of companies expect to turn to nearshoring or offshoring to fill positions abroad due to immigration barriers and labor shortages in the U.S.

# The growth of remote work has enabled companies to bypass U.S. immigration barriers by hiring and relocating talent overseas more easily.



Will your company pivot to hiring some employees on remote work visas to avoid undergoing the employment-based sponsorship process in the U.S.?

Source: Envoy Global's 2023 Immigration Trends Survey. q33: As of January 2023, more than 28 countries have introduced remote work visas. Will your company pivot to hiring some employees on remote work visas to avoid undergoing the employment-based sponsorship process in the U.S.? Data displays % who chose the listed responses totaling 100%.

# 3

**Employers widely approve of the Biden administration's approach to employment-based immigration, but many feel the system continues to become more difficult for businesses.**

**84%**

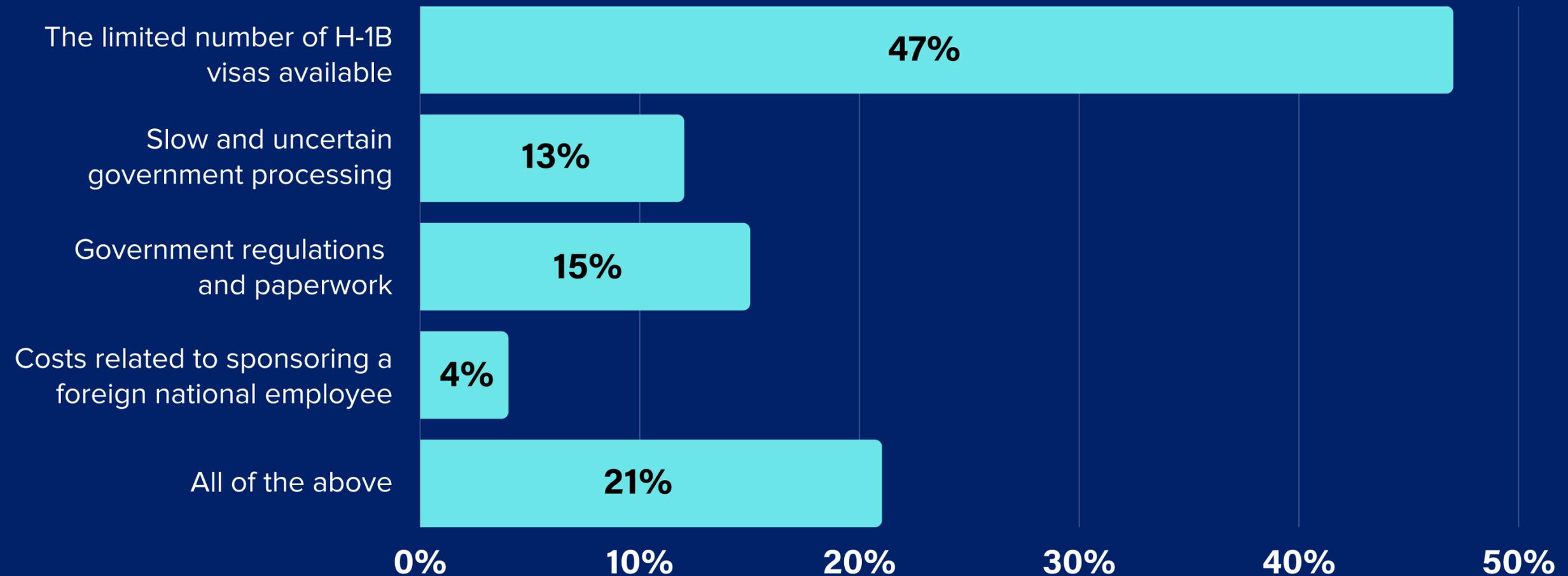
of respondents approve of the Biden administration's handling of employment-based immigration.

**51%**

of respondents feel the immigration process in the U.S. is more difficult than in previous years.

Source: Envoy Global's 2023 Immigration Trends Survey. q13: Do you approve of the Biden administration's handling of employment-based immigration? Data is % who chose "Yes." q14: In the past 12 months, do you feel the immigration process in the U.S. was more or less difficult for your company than in previous years? Data is % who chose "More difficult."

# Employer frustration is mounting as the government continues to make little headway on the primary immigration barriers impacting companies, including:



What is the primary barrier for your company when it comes to hiring and sponsoring foreign national employees in the U.S.?

Source: Envoy Global's 2023 Immigration Trends Survey, q15: What is the primary barrier for your company when it comes to hiring and sponsoring foreign national employees in the U.S.? Data displays % who chose the listed responses totaling 100%.

# Respondents view the Department of Labor as the primary barrier to hiring and sponsoring foreign national employees.



**61%**

Department of Labor



**25%**

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS)



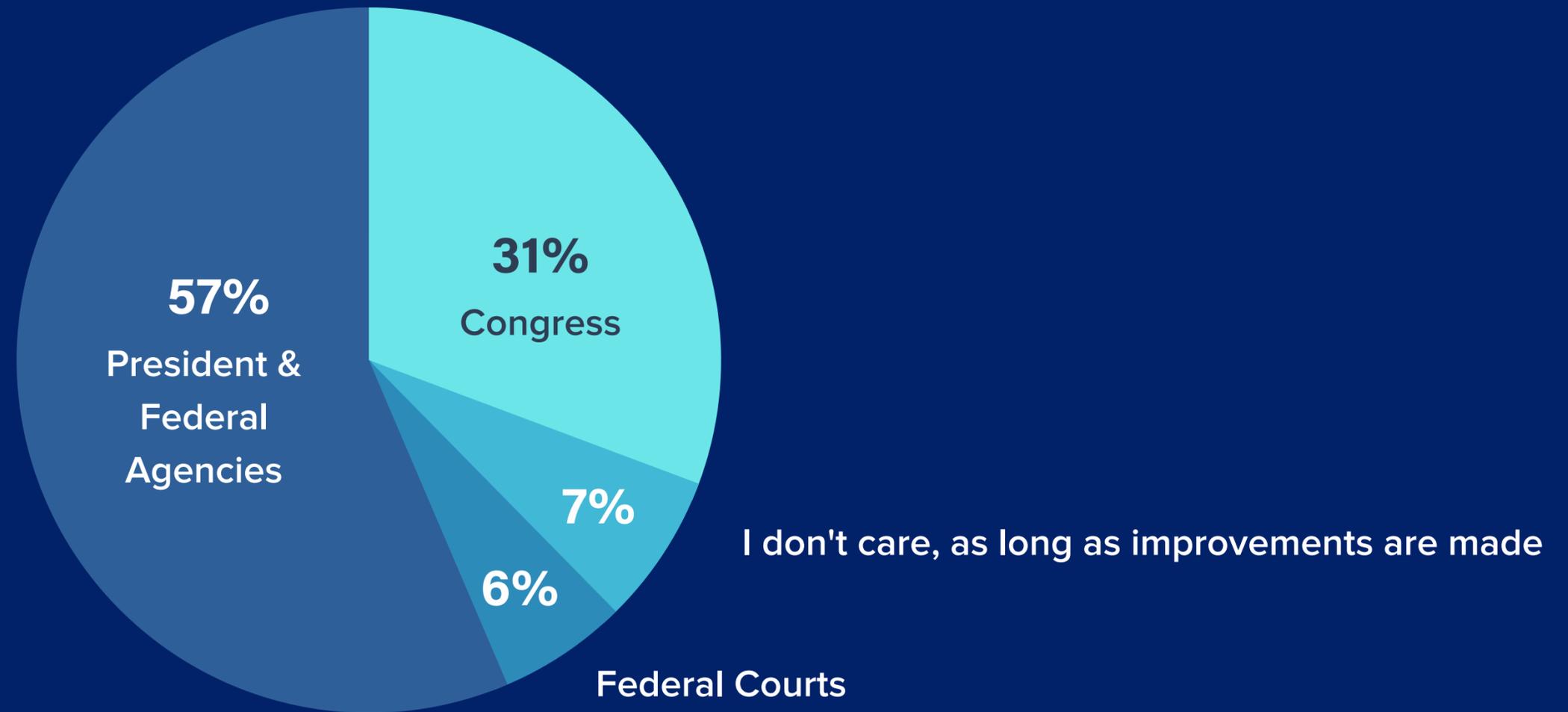
**14%**

Department of State

In your opinion, which U.S. government agency is the primary barrier to your company's ability to hire and sponsor foreign national employees?

Source: Envoy Global's 2023 Immigration Trends Survey. q17: In your opinion, which U.S. government agency is the primary barrier to your company's ability to hire and sponsor foreign national employees? Data displays % who chose listed responses totaling 100%.

# And employers look primarily to the Executive Branch to improve employment-based immigration in the U.S.



In your opinion, which branch of government should be most responsible for improving the employment-based immigration system in the U.S.?

Source: Envoy Global's 2023 Immigration Trends Survey. q15: What is the primary barrier for your company when it comes to hiring and sponsoring foreign national employees in the U.S.? Data displays % who chose the listed responses totaling 100%.

**The business community supports key improvements to the employment-based immigration system, and some employers are willing to pay for certain enhancements to the system.**

**89%** of companies would pay an additional fee to the government for faster processing of immigration cases (expanded premium processing).

**93%** of companies would prefer a digital government platform for immigration cases over the current paper-based system.

**58%** of respondents prefer Congress increase the overall number of employment-based green cards available each year over removing per-country green card caps.

**41%** of respondents prefer Congress remove per-country green card caps over increasing the overall number of employment-based green cards available each year.

Source: Envoy Global's 2023 Immigration Trends Survey. q19: Employers can pay \$2,500 to "premium process" certain visa applications like the H-1B and receive a response from the government within 15 calendar days. If given the same option for other immigration applications (Prevailing Wage Determination, Adjustment of Status, etc.), would your company pay an additional fee for faster processing? Data is % who chose "Yes." q20: Currently, most U.S. visa applications must be submitted by mailing a paper filing to the government. Would your company prefer if immigration applications could be filed and tracked through a digital government platform? Data is % who chose "Yes." q24: Despite the government approving a record high 280,000 employment-based green cards, the green card backlog for Indian and Chinese foreign nationals worsened in 2022. Of the solutions listed below, which would you be in favor of Congress enacting to address the growing green card backlog?. Data is %% who chose "Increasing the overall number of employment-based green cards available each year for all applicants" and "Removing per-country green card caps that disproportionately impact Indian and Chinese green card applicants."



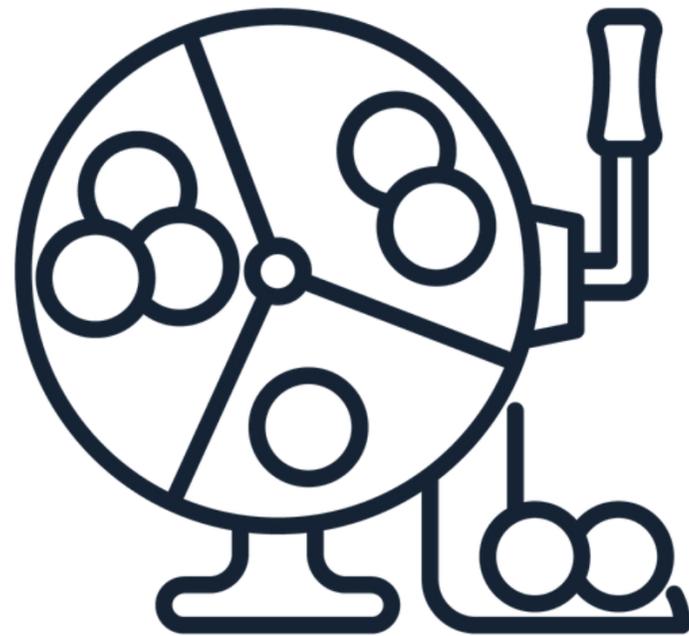
**The government's inability to implement these popular solutions is impeding companies' ability to sponsor the foreign talent they need.**

Source: Envoy Global's 2023 Immigration Trends Survey. q16: Would your company hire more foreign nationals if there were fewer immigration barriers in the U.S. (costs, visa caps, processing uncertainty, reduced paperwork, etc.)? Data is % who chose "Yes."

**94%**

of companies would hire more foreign nationals if there were fewer immigration barriers in the U.S.

**Even the government's announcement to increase the registration fee for the H-1B lottery is not preventing employers from pursuing foreign talent.**



**75%**

of companies expect to file more H-1B registrations next year despite a potential 2050% increase in the related government fee.

Source: Envoy Global's 2023 Immigration Trends Survey. q22: USCIS announced in January 2023 that the registration fee for the H-1B cap lottery will increase from \$10 to \$215 per applicant. If this change goes into effect, do you anticipate your company will register more, fewer or the same number of foreign nationals for the H-1B cap lottery next year? Data is % who chose "More."

**But the H-1B lottery continues to be restrictive, and employers would sponsor more foreign nationals without the uncertainty of the lottery system.**

**91%**

of companies would seek to hire and sponsor more H-1B employees if there was not an annual cap and uncertain lottery system.

Source: Envoy Global's 2023 Immigration Trends Survey. q21: Would your company seek to hire and sponsor more H-1B employees if there was not an annual cap and uncertain lottery system? Data is % who chose "Yes."



# 4

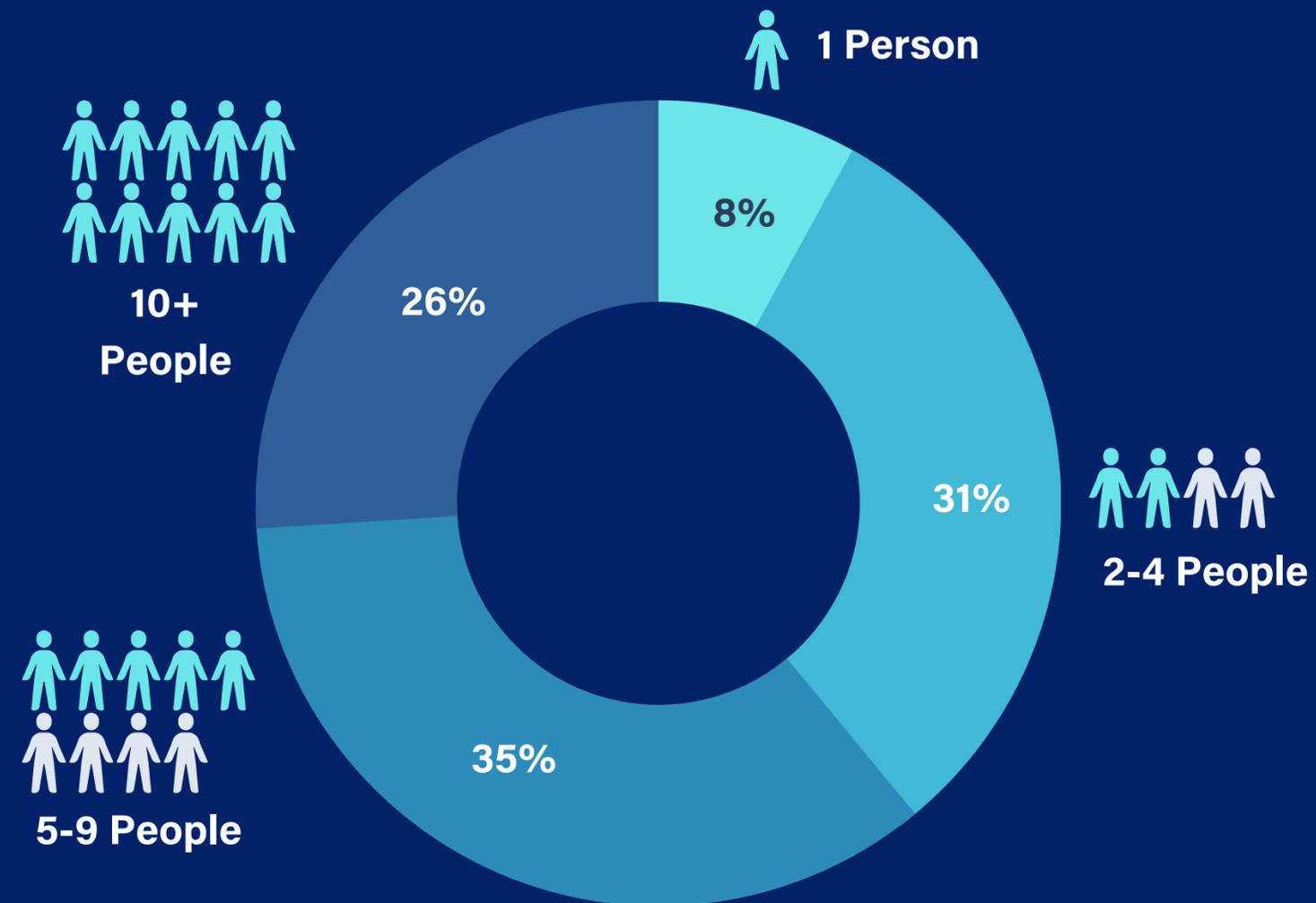
**Companies require more support to handle the growing importance of corporate immigration and global mobility.**

**84%** of respondents said their company needs to hire more internal support for immigration and global mobility.

**48%** of respondents said their company needs more support from immigration service providers.

Source: Envoy Global's 2023 Immigration Trends Survey. q41: In 2023, do you feel your company needs more support to manage immigration and global mobility functions? Data is the sum of respondents who selected "A. Yes, we need to hire more internal support for immigration and global mobility" and "C. Both A and B;" and "B. Yes, we need more support from immigration services providers."

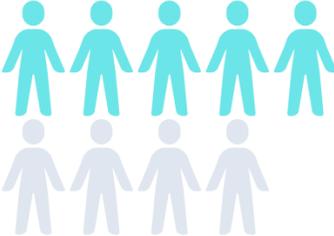
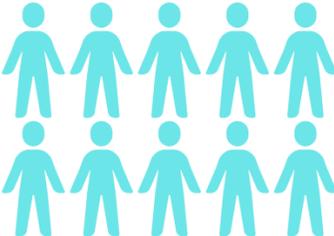
# Most employers assign more than one individual to the immigration and global mobility functions.



How many different people at your company are responsible for the immigration and global mobility functions?

Source: Envoy Global's 2023 Immigration Trends Survey. q35: How many different people at your company are responsible for the immigration and global mobility functions? Data displays % who chose the listed responses totaling 100%.

# Here's how companies with varying numbers of sponsored employees structure their immigration and global mobility teams, according to our respondents.

Size of Team (People)	1-24 foreign nationals	25-99 foreign nationals	100-499 foreign nationals	500-999 foreign nationals	1,000+ foreign nationals
 1	16%	2%	3%	26%	4%
 2-4	47%	36%	39%	25%	22%
 5-9	33%	47%	42%	26%	29%
 10+	4%	15%	17%	23%	45%

How many different people at your company are responsible for the immigration and global mobility functions?

Source: Envoy Global's 2023 Immigration Trends Survey. q35: How many different people at your company are responsible for the immigration and global mobility functions? Data displays % who chose the listed responses totaling 100%, cate by q49: How many sponsored employees do you have in your organization?

# Given the tight labor market for foreign talent, companies are increasingly offering better immigration perks for sponsored employees.

**43%** of companies start the green card application process immediately upon a foreign national employee's start date.

**83%** of companies start the green card application process within one year of a foreign national employee's start date.

**81%** of companies cover all green card related fees for foreign national employees, with approximately one-half of that group including a contractual pay-back stipulation if the employee leaves the company within a certain period.

**83%** of companies cover the government fees and legal expenses for the immigration cases of their employees' spouse and children.

Source: Envoy Global's 2023 Immigration Trends Survey. q36: When does your company start the green card application process for your foreign national employees? Data is % who chose "Immediately upon the employee's start date" and the sum of respondents who selected "Immediately upon the employee's start date," "Within 3 months of the employee's start date," and "Within 1 year of the employee's start date." q37: What green card costs does your company cover for foreign national employees? Data is sum of respondents who selected "We cover all green card related fees" and "We cover all green card related fees with a contractual stipulation attached for the eligible fees to be paid back if the employee leaves within a certain time period." q38: Does your company cover the government fees and legal expenses for the immigration applications of your employees' spouse and children (dependents)? Data is % who chose "Yes."

**In an effort to expand their hiring options, companies are sponsoring foreign employees on visas beyond the H-1B.**

**67%** of companies sponsor employees for the L-1 visa.

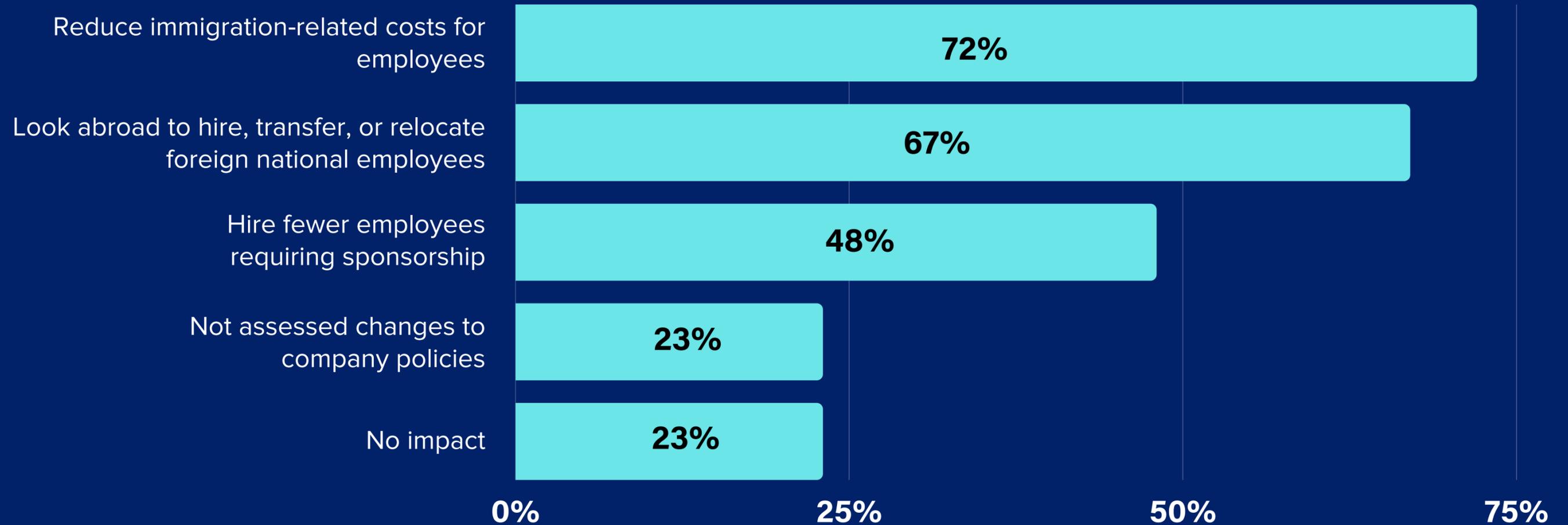
**57%** of companies sponsor employees for the TN visa.

**59%** of companies sponsor employees for the O-1 visa.



Source: Envoy Global's 2023 Immigration Trends Survey. q34: Other than the H-1B, which temporary U.S. visas does your company sponsor for?  
Please select all that apply. Data is % who chose "L-1," "TN," and "O-1."

# In response to immigration fee increases proposed by USCIS, employers are making adjustments to their global immigration strategies.



In January 2023, the U.S. government proposed fee increases for several common immigration applications (H-1B, Adjustment of Status, etc.). What changes do you plan to make to your company's global immigration strategy in response to the planned increase in U.S. immigration filing fees?

Source: Envoy Global's 2023 Immigration Trends Survey. q23: In January 2023, the U.S. government proposed fee increases for several common immigration applications (H-1B, Adjustment of Status, etc.). What changes do you plan to make to your company's global immigration strategy in response to the planned increase in U.S. immigration filing fees? Please select all that apply. Data is % who chose the listed responses.

**As U.S. immigration barriers put global immigration front-and-center, employers are seeking the support of multiple immigration service providers.**

Source: Envoy Global's 2023 Immigration Trends Survey. q42: Does your company employ different service providers for U.S. immigration support versus global immigration support? Data is % who chose "Yes, we have different service providers."

**77** %

of companies employ different service providers for U.S. immigration support versus global immigration support.

## Companies are also anticipating an increase in global business travel in 2023.



# 83%

of companies expect global business  
travel to increase in 2023 compared to  
last year.

Source: Envoy Global's 2023 Immigration Trends Survey. q31: In 2023, do you anticipate that your company's global business travel will increase, decrease, or remain the same compared to 2022? Data is % who chose "Increase."

**Following the layoffs and hiring freezes of the previous 12 months, our survey findings indicate signs of a rebound in the recruiting, hiring and sponsoring of foreign talent.**

**Employers are eager to hire more foreign talent in the U.S., but persistent barriers in the immigration system continue to pose a significant obstacle.**

**In response, companies are turning to relocating foreign talent to countries with more favorable immigration systems.**

**In 2023, employers will continue to assess and adjust their strategies to access talent globally.**



Founded in 1998, Envoy Global is a global immigration services provider offering the only immigration management platform that makes it seamless for companies to hire and manage an international workforce. By combining expert legal representation and proprietary technology, Envoy empowers companies to acquire the best talent regardless of where they live, while simultaneously managing their entire global workforce and enabling employees to take advantage of business opportunities around the world.



Cint is a global software leader in digital insights and research technology. Cint has one of the world's largest consumer networks for digital survey-based research, with millions of engaged respondents across more than 130 countries. In January 2022, Cint acquired Lucid, a survey-based programmatic marketplace. The additional acquisition of GapFish in 2021 provides dedicated access to more than 500,000 panellists with deep profiling in Germany, Austria and Switzerland.

To learn more, visit  
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