

# US Immigration Policy & Reform:

What does the evidence tell us?

Institute for the Study of International Migration

GEORGETOWN  
UNIVERSITY

## Low Wage Migration: Present Challenges, Future Supply

Report on an experts' roundtable  
Georgetown University, Washington D.C.



### ABOUT THE PROJECT

The Institute for the Study of International Migration, with the support of the MacArthur Foundation, is organizing a series of public presentations, as well as expert roundtables that address the multiple challenges of immigration reform. The aim of the project is to inform debate on immigration reform, with a focus on addressing the challenges of implementation

## SUMMARY

The Institute for the Study of International Migration in the School of Foreign Service hosted a roundtable in March of 2014 on the future of the migration of low-wage workers. The roundtable participants followed Chatham House rules and came from academia, industry, government and advocacy organizations.

The US has admitted migrant labor on the H-2 visa for seasonal jobs since the 1950s. It was separated in 1986 into the H-2A for agriculture and the H-2B for lower skilled work in other seasonal industries. The number of workers employed on these visas has generally been rather small until the turn of this century.

There were roughly 6,000 H-2A visas issued in the early 1990s, by 2000 that number increased to 30,000, and the numbers more than doubled to 74,000 in 2013. They make up between 5 to 10 percent of all hired workers. The top six crops of employment are tobacco, oranges, onions, hay, apples and nurseries. With about one half of agricultural jobs taken by unauthorized workers, the H-2A should play an important role as an alternative supply of labor.

There are three major complaints about the H-2A program: the process of getting a worker is cumbersome for employers; the wage range is not flexible enough; and workers are tied to employers, creating conditions for potential abuse. Some experts point out that H-2As are, nevertheless, protected compared to unauthorized workers. Mexico has been the major supplier of unauthorized labor and H-2 workers. It is likely to remain the major source, despite recent belief that employers would have to source H-2As from countries further abroad.

Outside of agriculture, the H-2B visa program has also grown, from around 10,000 in 1990 to 45,000 in 2000, and up to 58,000 in 2013. The H-2A is capped at 66,000 visas annually. Employment as landscapers dominates this visa followed by jobs in forestry, amusement parks, housekeeping and commercial grounds keeping. Advocates argue there is huge untapped employer demand for this visa. Critics are concerned with a lack of fairness, transparency, and weak enforcement.

The H-2B visa has fewer rights compared with the agricultural H-2A; the latter provides for transportation, housing, and a minimal seasonal employment of available domestic workers. Visa-work violations are held to higher standards and willful misrepresentation must be demonstrated for H-2Bs, in comparison to the H-2A. The recruitment process is often outsourced to employment agencies, removing responsibility from the ultimate employer in cases of fraud. The H-2B program experiences abuses associated with the visa's particular vulnerabilities.

The roundtable debated whether temporary work programs can efficiently allocate labor while ensuring the humane treatment of workers who return home. As the

number of temporary workers increases, contradictory problems become difficult to manage. One argument suggests as many as one million visas should be awarded because that is the real demand for labor. Very large programs, however, magnify the challenge of how best to ensure that workers return home. Ultimately, temporary visas function best when they reinforce temporary behaviors; when they are restricted to seasonal or temporary (peak-load) jobs. At the same time, large numbers of guestworkers can impede investment and technological alternatives, perpetuating inefficiencies that are not in the interest of employers or US competitiveness.

The roundtable agreed that regulatory principles must address how to protect workers' rights, meet employer demand, and support efficient markets. There was some agreement on the following:

Visa-work portability is important for the health of the labor market and for the protection of workers. Permitting visa holders to shift between employers gives them an independence that is fundamental to efficient marketplaces.

It is reasonable to expect that an employer's initial job offer includes a wage that is fair and will not undercut the domestic market. Determining what is fair, however, is more difficult. More effective post-employment enforcement is required to ensure fair employment practices.

Third parties are involved in the market for foreign workers and their involvement requires scrutiny. Governments of destination countries are not well positioned to deal with fraud and abuse in source countries. Temporary employment agencies sometimes misrepresent their activities and recruiters are a source of indentured labor. More oversight and enforcement is required.

Policymakers should consider adopting some of the ideas to better manage the number of temporary workers. A Commission might be one alternative, charging employers market rates for foreign workers is another, and there has been interest in visa auctions. Combined with visa portability, such approaches address critics' concerns and could be attractive to employers.

There is little shortage of ideas on reform, but there is substantial concern about substituting untested ideas for known policies. Policymakers might stress how alternatives address stakeholders' concerns: more efficient marketplaces should enhance employers' access to labor and protect workers' interests. They might phase in reforms or use small scale pilot programs to test ideas. They should insist on audits and enforcement to ensure a level playing field for all employers and safeguard the integrity of programs against abuse or adverse publicity.

The Institute for the Study of International Migration in the School of Foreign Service hosted a roundtable in March of 2014 on the future of the migration of low-wage workers. The assembled experts discussed the admission of seasonal temporary workers on legal visas in and outside of agriculture. The roundtable participants came from academia, industry, government and advocacy organizations. The roundtable followed Chatham House rules and this summary does not attribute comments to participants.

The US has admitted migrant labor on the H-2 visa for seasonal jobs since the 1950s. It was separated in the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) 1986 into the H-2A visa for agriculture and the H-2B for lower skilled work in other seasonal industries. The number of workers employed on these visas has generally been rather small until the turn of this century, when the number of visas issued began to grow. While the number of workers employed on these visas remains relatively small compared with the larger US labor force, these visas play a greater role in the low-wage workforce.

## **AGRICULTURE AND H-2A WORKERS**

The agriculture industry's workforce has quintessentially seasonal jobs and growers approved by the Department of Labor intend to employ their H-2A's workers an average of 10 months. The top six crops of employment are tobacco, oranges, onions, hay, apples and nurseries. With about one half of agricultural jobs taken by unauthorized workers, the H-2A should play an important role in supplying migrants to meet the demand for legally authorized workers. In 1986, IRCA legalized roughly one million agricultural workers, resulting in a largely authorized workforce. Over the 1990s, the percent of unauthorized agricultural workers rose to a little over one half, and that share has since stabilized. Over the past two and a half decades, the total number of agricultural workers has continued its long-run decline, particularly the number of seasonal workers (employed less than 150 days per year).

Today's agricultural workforce is smaller than it was two and half decades ago and, while the majority of workers are unauthorized, the composition is tilted somewhat more toward legal longer-term workers. The Department of Labor's National Agricultural Workers Survey (NAWS) finds that the number of all new hires in agriculture peaked in 2000 and, since the mid-2000s; there has been a decrease in the number of newly-arrived unauthorized workers. It is against those trends that the increasing supply of H-2As has taken place. There were roughly 6,000 H-2A visas issued after IRCA. By 2000 that number had increased to 30,000. The numbers of H-2A visas fell slightly during the Great Recession only to rebound to 74,000 in 2013. There are no caps on the number of H-2A visas that can be issued. Today, H-2A workers make up somewhere between 5 and 10 percent of the total agricultural

workforce. Wages for H-2A workers have increased along with agricultural wages generally.

The H-2A workforce in agriculture consists predominately of Mexican men; women are generally absent in the program. The supply of H-2As varies by state. California has the largest agricultural workforce, but its employers employ rather few H-2A workers. Growers insist that the program cannot meet the state's need for seasonal labor in a timely or cost-efficient manner. In Washington State, on the other hand, there is a relatively high demand for H-2A workers. There have been efforts to expand the program with employer associations that permit workers to be moved between farms. The associations are one effective way to supply H-2As to growers, but that same flexibility may compete with domestic workers who might otherwise move to meet grower demand.

Arguments for expanding the H-2A often start from the premise that H-2As are preferable to unauthorized workers and contrast the protections the legal visa affords workers. Arguments against expanding use of the visa raise concerns over employer abuse and lack of consistent evidence of shortages of domestic labor. Critics of the visa point to different problems for both employers and workers. There are three major complaints about the H-2A visa program: the process of getting a worker is cumbersome and inefficient for employers; the wage range is not flexible enough; and workers are tied to employers which creates conditions for potential abuse. These complaints might not have as much force if the supply of unauthorized workers was not essentially unlimited and susceptible to even greater abuse. Regardless, there are reasonable criticisms of the program from any vantage.

The inefficiencies of the H-2A program primarily fall on the employers. They must pre-clear their application for an H-2A worker by having the DOL certify that the position they wish to fill has no willing, able, qualified or available domestic employees for the role. They must post an advertisement with a State Workforce Agency and the entire process is time consuming. Congress has been considering legislation that would streamline the process and exclude the DOL, lowering the requirements on advertisement. In turn, employers would have to register with the USDA and report labor shortages. Critics argue this fails to test the labor market for a shortage of domestic workers.

Employers also complain that wages are too high and inflexible. There is little variation within occupational categories to account for specialized jobs or levels of experience. In order to improve this situation, the Congress has entertained specifying wages for qualifying occupations and levels of experience. The Senate has also entertained setting wages that are the greater of the minimum wage or the prevailing wage. While there are good arguments for proposing greater flexibility in wages, some experts are concerned that such proposals fail to set wages that protect both foreign and domestic workers.

Employers must also pay for transportation and housing for the H-2A workers. In rural settings, transportation can be difficult and housing scarce. But it can be both costly to provide transportation and difficult to maintain appropriate housing. The latter is often a problem. Congress has considered modifying the requirements to permit employers to provide housing vouchers. In some localities this might work, but in others it could leave workers out in the fields. The House has considered lifting housing provisions altogether. Most outside experts understand that reducing employer burden makes the visa program more attractive, but lifting responsibilities from employers is tantamount to shuffling off responsible government oversight.

For the foreign worker, the risk of abuse is heightened under the current system as workers are tied to their employers. Workers must complain to DOL inspectors if they expect redress when they are denied compensation, receive insufficient pay, work excessive hours, live in substandard housing or are asked to work in dangerous conditions. But there is a fear of retaliation by employers and a need for protection for whistleblowers. Temporary protection should be issued for employees during labor disputes. Temporary protection might encourage victims of abuse to report violations. Policymakers have, thus far, not entertained such proposals or considered barring abusive employers from the program, even though many experts believe that stricter consequences for labor violations will act as deterrence to abuse.

At the same time, although many experts point out that any immigration program will have flaws and abuses; the H-2A program still protects its workers when compared to their unauthorized worker counterparts. There are laws regulating the H-2A program to ensure the rights and obligations of the workers and employers which the DOL can enforce. The primary challenges are the limitations of the DOL's capacity. There is a lack of financial resources allocated to enforcement. Reform of the system, especially if amnesty is extended to most unauthorized workers, should include workable employer sanctions on work authorization, as well as stepped up enforcement of labor law compliance.

Other experts suggest that an alternative to today's H-2A might be modeled on guestworker programs that are binationally managed. The Canadian agricultural program, for example, appears to minimize abuse while ensuring the return of Mexican workers who are processed by the authorities. While there are many reasons to recommend binational management, some experts raised concerns about the capacity of Mexico or other source countries to manage large scale guestworker programs. There are also examples of source countries imposing significant taxes on their workers or failing to pay withheld wages. There needs to be mechanisms for ensuring that the government partnership is not subverted.

Mexico has been, of course, the major supplier of unauthorized labor and H-2 workers to the United States. It is reasonable to believe that it may remain the major source in the future. However, some analysts have noted recent upticks in agricultural employment within Mexico. Combined with the recent slowdown of Mexican migration to the United States, they speculate that future labor will have to be

supplied by other countries. If true, that forecast would call for a very serious reconsideration of current policy proposals as US employers would have to source their H-2A workers from countries further abroad. One expert questioned this scenario, noting that Mexico's fertility rate has not fallen as much as many had thought it would, so there remains a significant number of youth in the rural job market. What is more, while earnings have increased in some sectors in Mexico, such as mining and fishing, overall salary growth has stagnated in the last few years.

In short, it is premature to assume that Mexico's supply of workers to the rural US will rapidly decline and it will likely remain a leading supplier of H-2A workers. At the same time, bilateral conversations suggest that cooperation between the states would enhance the protection of workers' rights. And with increasing numbers of Mexican H-2A workers there is an additional incentive to carry through on social security totalization agreements. Migrants might also be permitted to register through their families for Mexico's health insurance option. If migrants return legally with their documents, enrollment would be straight forward.

## **THE SEASONAL H-2B WORKFORCE**

Outside of agriculture, the H-2B visa primarily supplies jobs in landscaping, but also provides for jobs in forestry, amusement parks, housekeeping and commercial grounds keeping. The program has grown since IRCA, from around 10,000 in 1990 to 45,000 in 2000; and up to 58,000 in 2013. The H-2A is capped at 66,000 visas annually. Like the H-2A, employers must first file with the Department of Labor to have a job certified before petitioning the US Citizenship and Immigration Services for an H-2A worker. The final refusal rate on DOL certifications is around 8 percent and most H-2A petitions for workers are approved under the cap. A majority of H-2B visas are awarded for workers going to Texas.

The DOL certification of the employers' request to fill a job with an H-2B worker is intended to protect the domestic workforce, but employers otherwise have few regulations to comply with, particularly when compared with the H-2A visa. Indeed, the H-2B visa has relatively few regulations that protect the rights of these foreign workers and critics have long argued the program is plagued by abuse. Certain industries and employers have been subject to particular scrutiny. There is some concern that a few abusers now use J-visas where there is even less oversight. Ironically, the level of effort to evade H-2B regulations are often more complex than simply complying with the visa regulations.

The cap on the H-2B visa was lifted between 2005 and 2008 when provisions permitted employers to keep returning workers with issuance of an H-2R visa. The culture of employment for the H-2R visas created a market for the circular transfers of employees; being recycled and moved around between different industries and jobs. The movement of workers placed greater importance on third party agencies, many of

whom have remained in place since the H-2R visa was discontinued. Employers responded positively to the H-2R visa and the market has taken time to readjust, albeit with the legacy of third party agencies complicating compliance with the program.

Some experts attribute the increasing use of the H-2B to domestic workers' reluctance to take the types of jobs this visa supplies. Advocates argue there is huge untapped employer demand for this visa and that, if streamlined, visas like this could successfully offset employment of unauthorized workers. Critics argue that the H-2B visa regulations provide too few worker protections. They also note that many unauthorized workers are employed in year-round jobs. The H-2B visa has a double-temporary requirement: the workers must be temporary and jobs must be temporary.

Employers may want to hire native workers, but relatively few US workers are interested in jobs that pay as little as those taken by many H-2B workers. Less than 10 percent of today's workers lack a high school degree and, all too often, many are not readily employable. At the same time, employers believe that the H-2B program has proven to attract foreign workers with a high level of productivity, because of the recruitment process abroad, as well as their relationship with the employer. The workers feel the need to ensure their employers are satisfied with their work for continued employment and they strive to be highly productive. Experts state, nevertheless, that given a temporary program of sufficient numbers, employers would embrace visas that permitted portability between different employers. In an ideal world, a significantly expanded visa system would be the basis for an above board marketplace.

In the same vein, some experts believe there is a general misconception that temporary workers want to remain permanently. They believe this misconception drives some opposition to temporary visa programs when, in fact, they argue, foreign workers want to return to their country of origin after they have earned sufficient money. Some travel back and forth between their country of origin and the US along with industrial seasonality. Undoubtedly, some will come to prefer remaining, and a well-designed visa system should be able to accommodate some of these individuals. But, as it is currently structured, the system bypasses market competition that would more effectively protect workers while supplying enough temporary labor to meet employers demand.

The H-2B visa has some regulations intended to protect foreign and domestic workers. The certification filed with the DOL requires the employer to demonstrate that domestic workers are unavailable; and a wage requirement has the intent of ensuring fair payment. At the same time, the H-2B visa has fewer rights compared with the agricultural H-2A. The latter visa requires transportation, housing and a minimal seasonal employment of available domestic workers. Visa-work violations are held to higher standards and willful misrepresentation must be demonstrated for H-2Bs, in comparison to the H-2A and other visas. The recruitment process is often outsourced to employment agencies which can hamper the ability of establishing the responsibility of the ultimate employer in cases of fraud.



Indeed, the H-2B program experiences abuses associated with the visa's particular vulnerabilities. Employers with well-known brands have an incentive to keep their reputations unsullied and are likely to comply with visa and labor regulations. Sometimes smaller, less visible employers or those seeking an unfair advantage are prone to abuse their employees. Some employers of H-2Bs seek to offset their wage bill by charging for the housing of foreign workers. The H-2B visa does not stipulate that employers cover housing, yet, in forestry worksites are often in remote areas and housing may be provided by the employer. In the current system, employers or third parties sometimes require fees which can lead workers to end the season in debt.

Some of these labor problems trace their roots back to the time when the H-2A and H-2B were separated out from the original H-2 visa, others to the period of the Clinton administration when the wage requirement for the H-2B visa was lowered to make the visa program more competitive with unauthorized workers. Today, unauthorized workers in the same occupations can actually earn more than the H-2B visa holder. A 4-tier wage-setting requirement for certifying the visa along with a reduction in the definition of full time employment, set during the Bush administration, is viewed by some as exacerbating these differences. It has proven difficult to resolve these issues and the DOL's regulatory determinations have been before the courts.

Many experts are concerned that a lack of fairness and transparency in the H-2B visa program is compounded by a perception of weak enforcement. Though employers can be investigated by the DOL for labor abuses after receiving complaints or as part of other investigations, very few H-2B workers complain of their situation. Workers tend to be either unaware of their rights, have little access to effective legal counsel, and/or fear crossing their sponsoring employer who controls their work authorization in the United States. It is more likely that complaints will originate from organizations than workers.

At the same time, the experts at the roundtable agreed many of the visas problems could be resolved by addressing the restriction of worker mobility in the job market, which hinders fair and just employment. The lack of mobility, the effective tie between the H-2B worker and their sponsoring employer, limits the workers' bargaining power. It limits the degree to which they will confront the employer to complain or register complaints with labor enforcement agents. Expanded workers' rights and portability of visas between employers might help alleviate this situation.

There is some agreement about the value of rationalizing the H-2B program as part of the larger immigration system and to better serve the needs of the economy. Some experts argue that the supply of H-2Bs should be set by objective mechanisms or by the analysis and recommendations of an independent commission on immigration. It could determine when local and occupational shortages are best addressed with an increased (decreased) supply of foreign workers. Moreover, the temporary stay of the H-2B should in some cases permit a pathway toward permanent residency. A pathway for permanent residency could benefit foreign workers who develop long term interests, as well as the employers who have trained them. This option may be

exercised by a small portion of workers, but a route to permanency would be in the national interest.

## CONCLUSIONS

The roundtable debated best policies and whether temporary work programs can efficiently allocate labor while ensuring the humane treatment of workers who return home. Many argued that foreign workers welcome temporary jobs and the opportunity to earn monies that they can bring home. Against that perspective is the assumption that temporary work programs necessarily undercut labor rights and undermine preferred permanent residency. As the number of temporary workers admitted increases, these contradictory perspectives become more difficult to reconcile. One argument suggests as many as one million visas should be awarded because that is the real demand for labor, evident from the number of unauthorized workers in the labor market.

Very large programs, however, magnify the challenge of how best to ensure the fundamental purpose of temporary visas, namely that workers return home. Accepting that some temporary workers may become permanent seems obvious. European 1960's guestworker programs, however, were provisional, and successful employment led to permanent status and family reunification. More workers ended up staying than originally anticipated. Creating incentives for return and binational management, as in the Mexican-Canadian case, are good practices. Ultimately, temporary visas function best when they reinforce temporary behaviors, through restrictions to seasonal or temporary (peak-load) jobs.

The continued use and expansion of temporary visas must also take into account what economics tells us about marketplaces. A ready supply of workers reduces the relative cost of labor and employer incentives to invest in more productive alternatives to getting the job done. After the Bracero program ended the supply of Mexican agricultural workers in the mid-1960s, nobody predicted what happened in the California processing and tomato industry. Huge gains in mechanization occurred very quickly and even now growers produce many times more tomatoes at a fraction of the cost. Mechanization is facilitated by pressure. Guestworker programs can perpetuate industries that are functioning inefficiently, which is not in the best interest of employers or US competitiveness.

The roundtable agreed that regulatory principles must address the protection of workers' rights, meet employer demand, and support efficient markets. If there are going to be expanded guest worker program, there are a few principles that must be addressed:

- *Employment portability*: There was some agreement that visa-work portability is important for the health of the labor market and for the protection of workers. Permitting visa holders to shift between employers gives them an independence

that is fundamental to efficient marketplaces. Many of the concerns about underpayment and exploitation are resolved when workers can move to better employment opportunities.

- *Adjudicating compensation:* It is reasonable to expect that an employer's initial job offer includes a wage that is fair and will not undercut the domestic market. Determining what is fair, nevertheless, is more difficult. Tiered wage scales that approximate work experience may be reasonable in some occupations, but in lower-wage jobs they can undercut fair wages. Employers can arbitrarily specify the lowest scale wage. Regulatory mechanisms should permit flexibility but ensure fair payment. More effective post-employment enforcement is required to ensure fair employment practices.
- *International recruitment:* Third parties are involved in the market for foreign workers and their involvement requires scrutiny. The Canadian example should be investigated since they have moved towards privatization of recruitment, employer participation has increased but at what cost to workers? Governments of receiving countries are not well positioned to deal with fraud and abuse in foreign countries.

Many employers of low-wage workers do not make a lot of money. If they are managing a low-wage, high turn-over operation, there is a benefit to outsource the management of this workforce. If employers outsource recruitment of workers to contractors, they are not responsible for the legal status or employment of their workers. Temporary employment agencies sometimes misrepresent their activities, and recruiters are a source of indentured abuse, e.g., charging payments for employment opportunities. More oversight and enforcement is required.

- *Supply management:* Policymakers should consider, even if on a pilot basis, implementing many of the ideas to better manage the number of temporary workers. Visa supply could be set without pre-clearing jobs through the Department of Labor. A Commission might be one alternative, drawing on objective measures of shortages in the labor market and providing regular recommendations to Congress. Charging employers market rates for foreign workers is another alternative, the amount set at levels otherwise paid for recruitment. There has been much interest recently in visa auctions of differing designs. If these alternatives are combined with visa portability, they might be more attractive to employers if prevailing wage requirements are flexible.

There is little shortage of ideas on meaningful reform of the temporary visa system, but there is substantial opposition to reforms that either deviate from the status quo or appear to give either labor or employers an advantage. Many innovative proposals are dead on arrival because big employer representatives would rather work with the

devils they know, making only a few tweaks, rather than risk a wholesale change. Implementation is a tripping point that scares government regulators in the same way; they have enough difficulty running the current regulatory framework. Worker advocates too are invested in working with the status quo, fixating on seemingly tangible paperwork regulations.

To overcome inertia, policymakers might stress how the alternatives they propose address the concerns of all stakeholders. More efficient marketplaces should enhance both employers' access to labor and protect workers' interests. Phasing in reforms, perhaps including triggers for future expansion might be one way to get buy in. And the US could copy other nations in using small scale pilot programs to test and improve innovative ideas before scaling them up. Finally, employment audits and enforcement should be an integral part of any system to ensure a level playing field for all employers and safeguard the integrity of programs against abuse or adverse publicity.

**APPENDIX:**  
**ROUNDTABLE AGENDA AND LIST OF EXPERTS**



*Institute for the Study of International Migration,  
Georgetown University*

## **Low-Wage Migration: Present Challenges, Future Supply**

**April 15, 2014**

**8:15am – 2:00pm**

**Georgetown University**

**School of Continuing Studies, Room C-228**

**640 Massachusetts Ave NW, Washington, DC**

### **MEETING AGENDA**

Immigrants take a wide variety of low-wage jobs in America's labor force. Managing the visa system that supplies the demand for low-wage labor is a challenge.

Temporary visas target specific employer-occupation demands. What are the major problems of employers who apply for temporary work visas? How well do temporary visas systems protect foreign and U.S. workers? How do these programs affect low-wage native workers who compete with temporary foreign workers? What impacts do temporary programs have on unauthorized migration?

8:15/9:00am — Continental Breakfast

9:00/9:15am — Introductions

#### **9:15/9:30am — STATISTICAL TRENDS AND POLICY DEBATE**

Short presentations on trends of relevant visas and occupations, as well as, the major provisions of proposed Congressional legislation and its possible impacts on the supply of low-wage workers.

#### **9:30/10:45am — THE AGRICULTURAL WORKFORCE AND H-2A WORKERS**

Recent trends suggest that the influx of unauthorized Mexican workers may be decreasing; the NAWS finds ever fewer newly arrived unauthorized Mexican workers. Legalization could change the supply of farm workers by requiring newly legalized farm workers to continue to do farm work and make it easier for farm employers to obtain guest workers. What are alternative scenarios for legalization, new guest worker flows, and US workers in the farm work force?

**11:00/12:30pm — LOW-WAGE WORKERS AND THE ROLE OF SEASONAL VISAS (H-2B)**

US employers usually request more than the 66,000 H-2B seasonal work visas available each year, prompting proposals for new low-skill guest worker programs. Should the US introduce a new guest worker program that allows US employers to employ guest workers in year-round jobs? How should the number of low-skill guest worker visas be determined? Should policymakers consider how new and expanded guest worker programs would interact with the expansion of low-wage supply from regularization and expansion of family immigration?

**12:30/2:00pm — WORKING LUNCH**

**PROVISIONAL LIST OF ATTENDING EXPERTS**

Edward Alden, Council on Foreign Relations  
Francis Cissna, Department of Homeland Security  
Michael Clemens, Center for Global Development  
Daniel Costa, Economic Policy Institute  
Maria Enchautegui, Urban Institute  
Agustin Escobar Latapi, CIESAS Occidente  
Peter Feather, Office of the Chief Economist at the U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Bruce Goldstein, Farmworker Justice  
David Griffith, East Carolina University  
Tom Hertz, U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Robert Hill, Hill Visa Law  
Tamar Jacoby, Immigration Works USA  
Isabella Johnson, Government Accountability Office  
William Kandel, Congressional Research Service  
James Kessler, Department of Labor, Wage and Hour Division  
B. Lindsay Lowell, Georgetown University  
Tara Magner, MacArthur Foundation  
Philip Martin, University of California, Davis  
Susan Martin, ISIM, Georgetown University  
Neha Misra, AFL-CIO  
Revae Moran, Government Accountability Office  
Ann Morse, National Conference of State Legislatures  
David North, Center for Immigration Studies  
Arthur Read, Friends of Farmworkers  
Jennifer Rosenbaum, National Guestworker Alliance  
Alvaro Santos, Georgetown Law  
Madeleine Sumption, Migration Policy Institute  
Ruth Wasem, Congressional Research Service  
Michele Waslin, Pew Charitable Trust