

IMMIGRATION



The video game industry helps drive the U.S. economy by creating good, high-paying jobs across the nation. Developing and producing some of the world's most creative and innovative entertainment requires a highly skilled workforce that is built for the challenges of the 21st century. To support U.S. competitiveness, the industry seeks to recruit and cultivate U.S. employees in today's highly competitive marketplace and to help build a strong, diverse pipeline of future innovators through a commitment to science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) education programs that start young Americans on the path toward rewarding high-tech careers. At the same time, to help bridge gaps in the existing U.S. labor market and to keep these jobs in the U.S., video game companies must be able to attract and employ all the talent necessary to continue growing the industry and contributing to the U.S. economy. The video game industry supports immigration policies that include provisions for increasing the number of highly skilled applicants from around the world, highly educated students and esports athletes. The video game industry also supports preserving and creating opportunities for those who qualify under the Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act as another path toward cultivating the next generation of innovators in the U.S.

Employment-Based Visa Programs Enable U.S. Companies to Compete Globally

The video game industry relies on human capital to drive creativity and innovation. While the industry is committed to hiring U.S. workers and matching them with high-paying jobs, the fact remains that there is a shortage of U.S.-born workers with the necessary, specialized skills to fill the tens of thousands of technology-based jobs that are currently available across the country. Employment-based visa programs help ensure that U.S. companies remain the world's leading innovators. The H-1B visa system was designed to allow U.S. employers to temporarily employ foreign workers in specialty occupations. However, the current, outdated system numerically restricts the video game industry from accessing worldwide talent. The visa cap effectively prevents video game companies from attracting and utilizing the talent needed to continue growing the industry and contributing to the U.S. economy.

In addition, U.S. immigration laws should create opportunities to give those impacted by the DREAM Act—known as “DREAMers”—a chance to be among tomorrow's innovators. Federal legislation to preserve Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) honors American values and is sound policy from both an economic and humanitarian perspective.

U.S. Video Game Innovation Requires a Highly Skilled Pipeline

The U.S. video game industry requires a robust pipeline of highly skilled workers to produce the next generation of products and services for the U.S. and global markets. Toward that end, the industry supports the training of American students for STEM careers. In fact, the industry

assisted with the formation of the Higher Education Video Game Alliance (HEVGA), which enables American students, through scholarships and resources, to study coding, game design and other STEM subjects at U.S. universities.

Despite these efforts, there remains an insufficient number of American students and workers with advanced STEM degrees. As a result, the industry also must turn to foreign talent to maintain its U.S. operations and position as a world-leading innovator today and in the future. Overbroad restrictions placed on the entry of highly skilled students and workers risks making it difficult for companies to remain in the U.S. and succeed globally.

Simplifying Complex, Inconsistent and Inefficient Visa Rules Will Advance the Growth of Esports

Because esports includes global competitors, U.S. travel visa policies should be simplified for esports athletes to train and compete internationally and for companies to host major international tournaments. Reforms should include: (1) streamlined and efficient application procedures with reasonable turnaround times and increased government support, including appeal support and fast-tracking; (2) expanding visa eligibility beyond esports athletes to include those who support or work closely with esports competitors, such as coaches, team managers, commentators and technical operational staff; and (3) permitting the use of P-1 (athlete) and B-1 (business worker) visas for esports athletes.