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At 18,607, USCIS denied fewer H-1B visas in Q1 of FY20

The USCIS follows an October-September financial year. The USCIS, which administers the visa process, said it had received 77,899 new petitions during the quarter and a total of 93,637 had been approved. The numbers do not tally as some of the petitions approved or denied would have been received in a different time period.

By *Priyanka Sangani*, ET Bureau | Last Updated: Feb 03, 2020, 08:41 AM IST

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PUNE: The United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) denied a total of 18,607 H-1B non-immigrant visas in the first quarter of fiscal year 2020. While the approval rate for the quarter was at 83.4%, lower than the average for the previous fiscal year (84.3%), it was a marked improvement over the first quarter of fiscal year 2019 when 25,080 visas were denied.

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While country or company-specific data is not available yet, Indians have always been the biggest beneficiaries of the H-1B work permit, with almost 70% being awarded to Indian nationals. As a result, most of the visas rejected are often of Indian nationals, especially those working for Indian services firms at third-party locations. "In my view, there was a more significant dip in the first half of FY2019 and the approval rates seem to have improved in the recent months, after some court cases went against the USCIS regarding specialty occupation, relevance of education etc," said Poorvi Chothani, managing partner of LawQuest, a US immigration firm headquartered in Mumbai.

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