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Canada trumps US, opens H-1B doors to Indians

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Canada is set to welcome 3,10,000 new permanent residents under the Global Skills Strategy programme.

By [Ayan Pramanik](#), ET Bureau | Last Updated: Apr 24, 2019, 08:36 AM IST

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Nearly one third of the H-1B visa holders moving to Canada are Indians.

BENGALURU: With the Trump administration tightening regulations for **H-1B visa** holders in the United States, **software professionals**, mostly Indian, are making a beeline to **Canada**, said two people with direct knowledge of the people movement.

A large chunk of technology professionals on H-1B visas in the US are **Indians**, with the country offering 85,000 H-1B visas each year.

The Canadian government has adopted a programme called Global Skills Strategy in 2017, which has set a target to welcome 3,10,000 new permanent residents in 2018 and 3,30,000 in 2019. According to a report called 'Building a Nation of Innovators' by the Canadian government, 40,833 jobs and 3,625 applications have been approved for high-skilled immigrants as of November 2018.

StackRaft, a startup that facilitate borderless technology sector recruitment in the US and in Canada, said software professionals are opting for Canada due to liberalised visa regime. Typically, a professional with an H-1B visa would have got an extension for another three years in the US, but tougher guidelines increased scrutiny of these visa holders and new visa applications.

"If someone is moving after working in the US, they are given priority and they get the access faster," said Vartika Manasvi, founder, Stack-Raft. "In fact, there are many people who are on visa extensions till 2021 and have OPT status (when you do a STEM degree in the US), (but) they still want to move to Canada," she said, adding nearly one third of the H-1B visa holders moving to Canada are Indians.

Uncertainty over the H-1B visa extension has been the primary reason some companies have set up offices in Canada and moved people with complex skills such as data analytics, said Manasvi. Technology services companies such as TCS, Infosys, Wipro, Cognizant and US arms of Tech Mahindra and HCL accounted for nearly two thirds of the 13,177 rejection of H-1B extensions for the top 30 companies, a report said. The data was analysed by the Centre for Immigration Studies, a US-based think tank. Canada is also luring highly-skilled professionals with potential citizenship in three years, whereas Indians have to wait as much as a decade for a green card in the US.

In the past two years, more than 3,500 offers were released with more than 900 employers, including Canadian and multi-national firms, said StackRaft, citing the government's data. Analysts, however, said remuneration packages in Canada are lower

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compared to the US, but the path to citizenship is faster. There is an increasing trend of tech talent movement to Canada as the immigration process is much more predictable there, said Poorvi Chothani, managing partner, LawQuest.

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