H-2A AGRICULTURAL WORKFORCE TIMELINE

From planning to worker arrival — a step-by-step guide for agricultural employers.

Recommended: Contact Marlin **4–6 months** before workers are needed.

4–6 MONTHS BEFORE START
INITIAL CONSULTATION & PLANNING

Review your operations, labor needs, job duties, housing, and timeline. Develop a filing strategy.

75–60 DAYS BEFORE START
AGRICULTURAL JOB ORDER

Prepare and submit the required agricultural job order through the Department of Labor for State Workforce Agency review.

AT LEAST 45 DAYS BEFORE START
H-2A LABOR CERTIFICATION

Submit the temporary agricultural labor certification application to the Department of Labor.

AFTER ACCEPTANCE
U.S. WORKER RECRUITMENT

Conduct required domestic recruitment and document recruitment results.

~ 30 DAYS BEFORE START
DOL DETERMINATION

The Department of Labor generally targets a final determination at least 30 days before the requested start date for a complete application.

AFTER CERTIFICATION
USCIS PETITION & VISA PROCESSING

File the H-2A petition with USCIS. Workers complete consular processing and travel arrangements (as applicable).

EMPLOYMENT START DATE
WORKERS ARRIVE & BEGIN WORK

Workers begin authorized employment. Marlin continues to provide program management, compliance support, and legal counsel throughout the season.

H-2B NON-AGRICULTURAL WORKFORCE TIMELINE

From planning to worker arrival — a step-by-step guide for non-agricultural employers.

Recommended: Contact Marlin **6–9 months** before workers are needed.

6–9 MONTHS BEFORE START
INITIAL CONSULTATION & TEMPORARY NEED ASSESSMENT

Review your business operations, temporary need, worker counts, and timeline. Develop a filing strategy.

4–6 MONTHS BEFORE START
PREVAILING WAGE & DOCUMENTATION

Prepare the prevailing wage request and develop supporting documentation. The wage determination must be obtained before filing the H-2B application.

90–75 DAYS BEFORE START
H-2B APPLICATION & SWA JOB ORDER

Submit the temporary labor certification application to the Department of Labor and the State Workforce Agency job order within the applicable filing window.

AFTER ACCEPTANCE
U.S. WORKER RECRUITMENT

Complete required domestic recruitment, generally within **14** days of the Notice of Acceptance, and prepare the recruitment report.

AFTER RECRUITMENT
DOL DETERMINATION

The Department of Labor reviews the application and recruitment results and issues its determination.

AFTER CERTIFICATION
USCIS PETITION & VISA PROCESSING

File the H-2B petition with USCIS. Workers complete consular processing and travel arrangements (as applicable).

EMPLOYMENT START DATE
WORKERS ARRIVE & BEGIN WORK

Workers begin authorized employment. Marlin continues to provide program management, compliance support, and legal counsel throughout the season.

Important: These timelines represent the typical filing process and are for planning purposes only. Actual processing times, government requirements, and case-specific circumstances can affect the timeline. H-2B visas are subject to numerical limitations, and filing early does not guarantee visa availability.