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# Automatic EAD extension to benefit spouses of H-1B workers in the US

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**Pune:** US President [Joe Biden](#)'s administration on Tuesday increased the automatic [extension period](#) for [employment authorization](#) and employment authorization documents (EADs), which

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would apply to green card holders and spouses of H-1B visa holders.

This is expected to benefit thousands of Indians in the United States.

The automatic extension has been increased to 540 days, or 18 months, and will be effective immediately, the US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) said in a statement.

This will help mitigate the impact that a slow processing of cases would have had on people whose employment authorisation was up for renewal.

“As USCIS works to address pending EAD caseloads, the agency has determined that the current 180-day automatic extension for employment authorization is currently

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insufficient,” USCIS Director Ur M. Jaddou said. “This temporary rule will provide those noncitizens otherwise eligible for the automatic extension an opportunity to maintain employment and provide critical support for their families, while avoiding further disruption for US employers.”

Spouses of workers on an [H-1B](#) visa are allowed to work in the United States once they receive an EAD.

Over 90% of the H-4 EAD holders are Indians, as per data from the US immigration agency.

However, immigration lawyers pointed out that this would be useful only for as long as your status was valid. "For most of the H-4 holders who file for these extensions, their status is expiring at the same time as their EAD, and they would not benefit from this," said Rajiv S Khanna, managing partner at immigration.com.

There have been reports of several of them having to



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leave their jobs on account of delays in renewing their EADs, which could be mitigated to some extent by this development.

The backlogs, a result of the hiring freeze and furloughs since 2020, have resulted in a reduction in staff capacity at the USCIS. There was a sudden increase in initial and renewal EAD filings in 2021, USCIS said, resulting in an increase in processing times.

The agency is expected to reach a three-month processing time by the end of FY23.

Beginning October 27, 2023, automatic extensions of employment authorization and EAD validity will revert to the up to 180-day period for those eligible applicants who file their renewal applications in time.

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