



Mission Foods Texas-Mexico Center Research Based Recommendations for Immigration Reform

1. Increase the number of H-1B visas allocated to the private sector, allow the quantity to change with the business cycle and consider a more efficient allocation system, such as employer auctions or other criteria to prioritize high-value hires.
2. Comprehensive immigration reform should take into consideration the needs of states and allow the flexibility for state input (for example, Texas has a shortage of nurses and senior care providers).
3. Allow spouses of H-1B holders, who have H-4 visas, to retain the ability to work.
4. Increase the number of employment-based visas, particularly in the EB-3 category for skilled workers and professionals, and make the overall cap flexible. Remove the country caps.
5. Some of the additional permanent resident visas for employment-based immigrants can come from placing new limits on the family-based system. Eliminating family-based visas for parents of citizens will free up about 150,000 green cards per year, siblings (and their families) another 70,000.
6. Implement an entrepreneur visa to grant permanent residence specifically for individuals who start new companies in the US.
7. Increase the H-2B visa cap and consider allowing it to vary with the business cycle. Consider a more efficient distribution system, such as employer auctions or other criteria for prioritizing high-value hires.
8. Extend H-2B visas to more industries, including year-round jobs.
9. Since our research show that Texas and Mexico act as a single production unit in terms of what we build together, reform should include a guest worker program that allows more brain circulation across the region.
10. Change asylum policies, restricting grants of asylum to those for whom the program was originally intended, and widely publicize these changes in origin countries as well as in the US. Increase the number of immigration judges and allocate more resources to them in order to work through backlogs and expedite claims.
11. Consider resuming processing of humanitarian migrants in the source country as was briefly done under the Central American Minors program from 2014 to 2017. Collaborate with Mexico, helping with resources and intelligence to intercept and dissuade migrants before they are able to reach the US border.
12. Allow undocumented immigrants to apply for work permits and permission to remain legally in the US. Make the permits renewable and conditional on a background check and payment of all applicable taxes.
13. Enable undocumented immigrants who have an employer willing to sponsor them for permanent residence to adjust status by lifting the re-entry bars imposed in 1996 or re-instating 245(i), allowing them to pay a fine and apply for residence without leaving the US.
14. Reform should include language that aides states towards degree and certification recognition across the North American region.