

Dear UAMS International Community,

The U.S. Department of State will expand its enhanced social media vetting to H-1B specialty-occupation workers and their H-4 dependents beginning December 15, 2025. This change applies to both new visa applications and renewals.

Under this expanded review:

- Consular officers may examine applicants' public social media content as part of standard national-security and eligibility screening.
- Applicants are expected to make their accounts publicly viewable. Limited or inaccessible online presence may be treated as a credibility concern.
- As with other visa categories already subject to enhanced vetting (F, J, and M), officers may review online content to assess:
 - Consistency with employment details (job title, employer, work location)
 - Past immigration compliance
 - Potential security risks, including affiliations or content suggesting unlawful activity or hostility toward U.S. institutions
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Inconsistencies or concerning content may lead to follow-up questioning or **INA 221(g) administrative processing**, which can result in longer wait times.

Important clarification:

Because the new policy requires consular officers to conduct expanded online-presence vetting **after** determining that an applicant is otherwise eligible, **many applicants should expect a 221(g) administrative processing step even when their cases are fully accurate and consistent.** Under the new procedure, 221(g) does **not** necessarily signal a problem, inconsistency, or negative finding—it may simply indicate that the required enhanced vetting is underway.

There have also been recent reports of H-1B refusals issued under §214(b) based on credibility issues uncovered through social media review, even though H-1B is a dual-intent category. Such refusals may occur when online information conflicts with details provided to the consulate.

What to expect:

Applicants should be prepared for longer processing times, possible background checks, and increased scrutiny of the alignment between their visa application, immigration history, and online presence. Appointment availability may also be affected as consulates allocate more time for required vetting.

If you have questions about how these changes may affect your situation, please contact the UAMS Immigration Services team. For additional information on the Department of State's announcement, please visit [this link](#).

