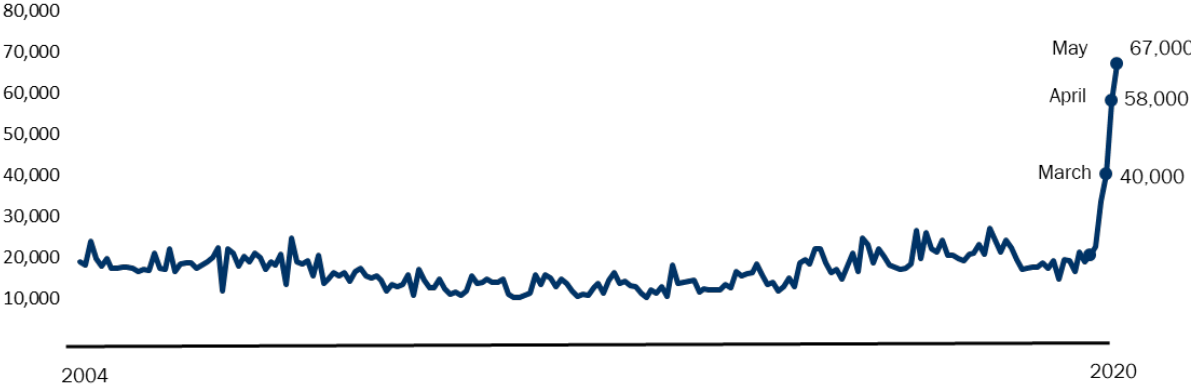


# Extension of Stay Requests Soar During Pandemic

In May 2020, in the midst of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, USCIS received a record 67,000 applications for extension of stay ([Form I-539](#)) by nonimmigrants in the United States, nearly four times the monthly average (17,000).

## Record Number of People Applied for an Extension of Stay in May 2020

Number of extension of stay applicant requests, by month



Note: Totals are rounded. Includes both paper and electronic filings of I-539. Number of applicants, not applications. Does not include those requesting a change in immigration status. Source: USCIS Performance Reporting Tool (PRT) data of [I-539](#) form (Jan 2004 to Feb 2020), USCIS Claims 3 consolidated data (Mar 2020 to May 2020), data accessed June 2020.

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By the end of May, USCIS had already received about 40% more (or about 280,000) extension of stay requests than the number of requests it usually receives in a single fiscal year, with four more months still to go in the fiscal year.

The B-2 visa category (tourism, pleasure or visiting) accounts for most of the increase in the number of

people applying for an extension of stay. For those in the B-2 visa category, USCIS saw a more than 500% increase in the number of extension of stay applications filed in May 2020 compared to May 2019.

Meanwhile, the number of family members of H nonimmigrant workers (H4 visa category), the

second largest visa category for extension of stay applications, was lower in May 2020 compared with May 2019. All other nonimmigrant visa categories as a group saw an increase year over year in May, increasing by about 100%.

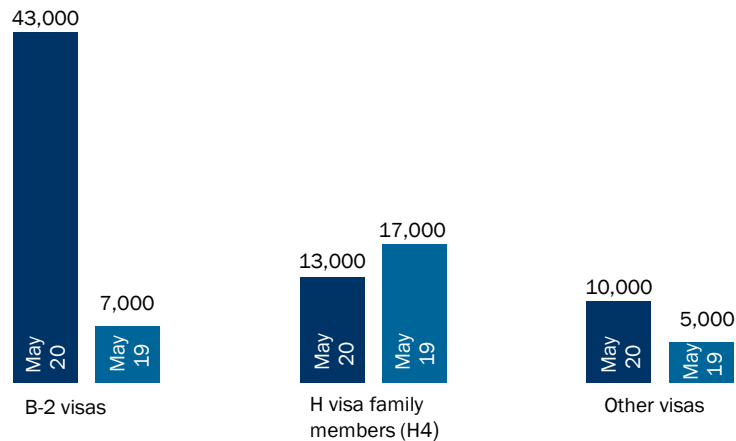
The number of requests for a change in status from a nonimmigrant visa to a different nonimmigrant visa was also greater in May 2020 (more than 8,000) than in May 2019 (about 4,000).

Meanwhile, the number of extension of stay/change of status requests filed online grew since the start of the pandemic. More than half (54%) of extension of stay/change of status requests were filed online in May 2020, up from less than half (45%) in March and about a quarter of requests (23%) in February.

Certain eligible nonimmigrants may request an extension of stay if they wish to remain in the United States beyond their authorized period of admission. They must make their request to USCIS within 45 days of the expiration of their authorized period of admission, although there is currently [increased flexibility](#) on this timeline because of the pandemic. Applicants must explain how their requested extension is due to extraordinary circumstances beyond their control and

## Five Times More B-2 Visitors Requested an Extension of Stay in May 2020 than in May 2019

Number of people applying to USCIS in May 2020 and May 2019 for an extension of stay, by nonimmigrant visa type



Note: Totals are rounded. Includes both paper and electronic filings of [I-539](#). Number of applicants, not applications. Does not include those requesting a change in immigration status. The B-2 visa category is for tourism, pleasure or visiting.

Source: USCIS C3 consolidated data, data accessed June 2020.

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that the length of the delay is reasonable. Applicants must not be in violation of their status or be in removal proceedings. Applicants may file the form by paper or electronically.

Not every category of nonimmigrant is eligible for extension of stay/change of status.

The [USCIS Data and Statistics](#) webpage on the USCIS website has more data on Form I-539 applications and other USCIS forms for fiscal year 2020 and previous years.

