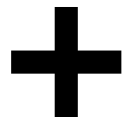




Navigating the Labor Market: Foreign and Domestic

Thursday, November 20 — 1:30 to 2:30 PM

Presenters: Raul Calvo, Joe Martinez



Rapid Growth of H-2A in California:

Over the last decade, H-2A program participation in California has increased more than sixfold.

This growth has led to more domestic crews working alongside H-2A employees.

One major driver of this expansion is the **ongoing immigration climate**, which has resulted in **approximately 1.6 million self-deportations and around 400,000 formal deportations**, significantly reducing the available domestic workforce.

The **current administration's enforcement priorities** indicate that deportations will continue for at least the next three years, and potentially longer depending on future leadership.

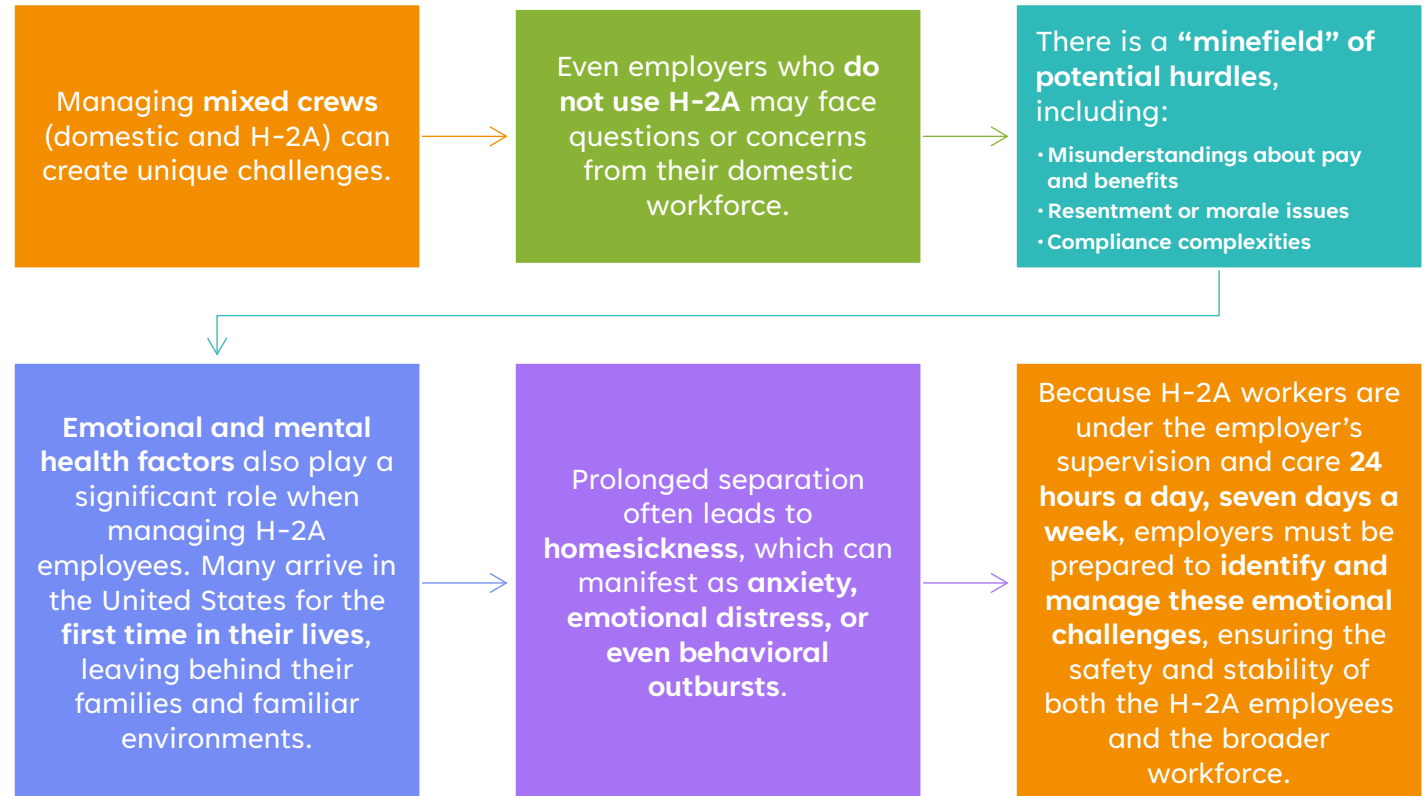
California's rising minimum wage—combined with a recent **downward adjustment in the Adverse Effect Wage Rate (AEWR)**—has made the H-2A program increasingly necessary to employers, especially as many domestic workers decline to accept agricultural jobs at or near minimum wage levels.

Rising Awareness Among Domestic Workers:

- Domestic workers are now more familiar with **H-2A program details**, such as:
 - **Housing requirements**
 - **Wage rates and protections**
- This awareness has also led to new **tensions and comparisons** between domestic and H-2A workers.
- Many domestic employees **lack accurate information or education** about how the H-2A program operates, leading to **misunderstandings and false assumptions**.
- There is a growing **fear among domestic workers** that they may be **replaced by H-2A employees**, especially when employers expand participation in the program.
- Some domestic employees **perceive favoritism** toward H-2A workers due to visible benefits such as **employer-provided housing, transportation, and meals**, which can fuel resentment if not properly explained and managed.



Challenges for Employers and Managers:



Key Questions :

- How can employers **defuse pressures and prevent resentment** between worker groups?
- How can management **improve compliance** with labor and housing requirements?
- What strategies can help **foster open communication** to address issues proactively?
- How can leadership **set workplace culture and expectations** intentionally rather than by default?
- What steps can be taken to **educate domestic workers** on the H-2A program to reduce misinformation and perceived favoritism?
- How can employers **recognize and respond** to the **emotional and mental health challenges** that H-2A employees experience while living and working far from home?
- What practical measures can management use to **balance operational efficiency with compassion**, ensuring that productivity, compliance, and worker well-being are all maintained?
- How can supervisors be trained to **identify early signs of stress, conflict, or cultural tension** before they escalate into larger problems?





Thank you!

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