

Global Immigration alert

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Georgia

Georgia expands work authorization exemptions, introduces employer quota system and clarifies short-term professional activity rules

Executive summary

Georgia has adopted further amendments to its immigration and labor migration framework. The changes expand work authorization exemptions for certain foreign nationals, replace prior job posting and labor market testing requirements with a new employer quota system, and clarify the rules governing short-term professional activities which may also create opportunities for certain foreign nationals to move into longer-term employment.

Background

In March 2026, Georgia introduced significant immigration reforms, including the introduction of work authorization requirements and D1 visa/work residence permit requirements for foreign nationals employed by Georgia-registered employers, as well as mandatory vacancy posting requirements prior to applying for a foreign national's work authorization. The latest amendments abolish the prior job posting and labor market testing requirements, and instead introduce a quota-based system and provide further clarification regarding the application of work authorization requirements.

Key developments

- **Expanded work authorization exemptions:** Effective April 2026, work permit exemptions were expanded under the Law of Georgia on Labor Migration to include the following categories of foreign nationals working in Georgia:
 - Individuals who work entirely remotely for a local employer, where their work does not require entry in the territory of Georgia;
 - Individuals who work or provide services for a non-resident employer, provided the work or services relate to the employer's or service recipient's business outside Georgia;
 - Individuals who perform management or governance functions, or who serve on an audit committee in a first-, second- or third-category enterprise as defined

by the Law of Georgia on Accounting, Reporting and Audit; and

- Individuals performing short-term professional activities in Georgia.

Foreign nationals falling within these categories are exempt from work authorization requirements, related residence permit requirements and other obligations under the Law of Georgia on Labor Migration.

- **Employer quota requirements:** Where an employer intends to sponsor a foreign national for employment in Georgia, the employer may first need to obtain an annual employer quota. Georgia has replaced its previous prior job posting and labor market testing requirements with a quota-based system. Under the previous framework, employers were required to advertise vacancies on a designated portal and consider Georgian candidates before hiring foreign workers. These requirements have now been abolished.

Under the new framework, employers must obtain an annual quota from the relevant authority if they intend to employ more than five foreign nationals during a calendar year, or if foreign nationals account for more than five percent of their workforce, unless that percentage represents fewer than five individuals.

Quota applications must be submitted electronically at least 10 working days before filing a work authorization application. Following review, the authority will determine the employer's annual quota based on annual turnover. In general, employers must demonstrate annual turnover of at least GEL50,000 per foreign national for whom work authorization is sought. For educational and medical institutions, the threshold is reduced to GEL35,000 per foreign national.

- **Registration of short-term professional activities:** The amendments also clarify the rules governing short-term professional activities in Georgia. Such activities may be undertaken for a cumulative period of up to four months in a calendar year, calculated from the date the foreign national commences the activity in Georgia.

Before the activity begins, the local employer or service organizer must register the foreign national through the dedicated electronic labor migration portal. Registration is free of charge and is automatically approved by the competent authority.

- **Transition to long-term employment:** While the individual is carrying out the registered short-term activity, employers may obtain quota approval if the employer is subject to the quota requirement. Employers may then submit a work authorization application, allowing them to transition individuals from short-term assignments to longer-term employment without interrupting the individual's activities in Georgia.

Impact on employers

Employers should review whether foreign nationals may benefit from the expanded work authorization exemptions before initiating sponsorship processes. They should also implement procedures to ensure that eligible short-term professional activities are registered before commencement and consider using the registration framework to facilitate transitions to longer-term employment where appropriate. Where work authorization is required, employers should assess whether they are subject to the new quota requirements and obtain the necessary quota approval before filing work authorization applications.

Key steps

EY will continue to monitor these developments. Should you have any questions, we encourage you to contact one of our immigration professionals.

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