

## Immigration

### Practice Contacts:

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Preti Flaherty provides professional legal services to business and individual clients for all types of immigration and visa-related matters.

Many businesses in northern New England are not only becoming increasingly reliant on foreign-born workers but they are also dealing with a broad new spectrum of issues involving their multicultural workforces. With enactment of the Homeland Security Act -- a comprehensive reorganization of federal agencies precipitated by 9/11 and its aftermath -- businesses with multicultural workforces, such as those in the hospitality and resort, software development and health care industries face tremendous uncertainty as a result of the elimination of the Immigration and Naturalization Service.

Our Business Immigration Practice Group has analyzed the Homeland Security Act, evaluated its provisions as they relate to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services' existing functions and can place these developments in context for clients whose managers or employees routinely interact with USCIS.

We specialize in business-related immigration work, including nonimmigrant visas such as H-1B specialty occupation visas and L-1 intra-company transferee visas and we are experienced in obtaining immigrant visas (green cards), particularly for first preference priority workers (including transnational executives), second, and third preference professional and skilled workers requiring labor certifications.

Preti Flaherty can coordinate all necessary tasks or provide more generalized assistance in:

- Obtaining temporary visas for high technology workers, such as computer programmers, researchers or engineers;
- Obtaining permanent resident status for an employee of a business on the basis of employment;
- Obtaining permanent resident status for spouses or other close relatives of U.S. citizens;
- Renewing or transferring company visas, such as H-1B visas, for specialty occupation employees;
- Analyzing taxation issues and ensuring proper tax treatment of foreign-born employees;
- I-9 employment eligibility verification, recordkeeping and compliance;
- Responding to USCIS compliance audit and conducting self-audits, and;
- The naturalization (U.S. citizenship) process.

Our Group goes beyond visa processing to provide advice and strategic counsel in the development of comprehensive corporate strategies to transition foreign-born employees from nonimmigrant to permanent work-authorized status. Our objective is to protect our client's right to employ its most productive, profitable foreign-born employees. To promote effective human resources decisionmaking, we discuss alternative tactical visa options with our clients in advance and develop plans tied directly to their long-term corporate objectives. We can also advise clients on the effect of mergers and acquisitions and other changes in corporate ownership that impact employment-based visa petitions.