



Written by [William F. Jasper](#) on April 8, 2009

More H-1B Visas, More U.S. Tech Layoffs

The total current 85,000 includes an annual 65,000 “cap” and an additional 20,000 exemptions for applicants with advanced degrees. If precedent holds, other exemptions will add tens of thousands more; in 2008 the number of H-1B visas, including exemptions, totaled about 122,000.



The 85,000 H-1B visas about equal the number of domestic tech workers laid off recently. MarketWatch.com [reported](#) on April 6 that “high-tech companies announced job cuts totaling 84,217 in the first quarter,” the steepest reduction since the fourth-quarter lay-offs of 2002. “The latest decline follows 66,312 reported layoffs in the 2008 fourth [quarter],” the MarketWatch report continued, noting job cuts “have risen five straight quarters.” That, of course, is but part of the job-loss picture; nearly ten times that number of workers were laid off, in all occupations, during the month of March. The U.S. economy [lost 663,000 jobs](#) in March and the unemployment rate shot up to a 26-year high of 8.5 percent, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.



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