

ALERT Diversity Visa FY2018

9/19/2016

Practices: Immigration

GREEN CARD LOTTERY FOR FY2018 OPEN OCTOBER 4TH THROUGH NOVEMBER 7TH

The U.S. Department of State (DOS) has released its instructions for the Diversity Immigrant Visa Lottery Program (DV-2018) for fiscal year 2018 (October 1, 2017 through September 30, 2018). The Lottery Program for DV-2018 registration will be open for only 33 days from October 4, 2016 at noon (EST) through close at noon (EST) on November 7, 2016. There are no significant changes from last year's Lottery Program, except that now applicants who lose their confirmation number can use a new tool on Entrant Status Check (ESC) on the DOS website to retrieve the number via email by entering certain identifying information.

The DOS makes 50,000 "green cards" available annually to persons from countries with low rates of immigration to the United States. Applicants for Diversity Visas are chosen by a computer-generated random lottery drawing. The DOS will notify a participant's selection exclusively online. Beginning on May 2, 2017, applicants can check the status of their registration online via Entry Status Check at www.dvlottery.state.gov to determine whether they were selected. Entry Status Check will also notify selected participants and provide them with instructions on the procedures for the application process and will confirm appointments for visa interviews. All entrants must check on the DOS website via the Entry Status Check to determine whether they have been selected to participate in the Lottery. The Entry Status Check is the ONLY manner in which entrants will be notified of their selection. The DOS will NOT mail any correspondence to the selected applicants nor will it send out an email. Furthermore, the Entry Status Check will be the only way in which selected individuals will be provided further instructions on immigrant visa procedures.

The Diversity Visa "green cards" are available only to citizens of countries with lower rates of immigration and no visas are available to citizens of countries sending more than 50,000 immigrants to the United States in the past five years. Within each region, no country may receive more than 7% of the available Diversity Visa "green cards" in any one year.

COUNTRIES INELIGIBLE TO PARTICIPATE IN DV-2018 LOTTERY PROGRAM

For the DV-2018 Lottery Program, natives of the following countries are not eligible to apply because they are the principal source countries of Family-Sponsored and Employment-Based immigration, or "high admission" countries: Bangladesh, Brazil, Canada, China (mainland-born), Colombia, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Haiti, India, Jamaica, Mexico, Nigeria, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, South Korea, United Kingdom (which includes Anguilla, Bermuda, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Falkland Islands, Gibraltar, Montserrat, Pitcairn, St. Helena, Turks and Caicos Islands – but not Northern Ireland) and Vietnam. Foreign nationals born in Hong Kong SAR, Macau SAR and Taiwan are eligible for the Diversity Visa Lottery. A list of the countries whose natives are qualified for the DV-2018 Visa Lottery Program is contained in Exhibit A below.

NOTE: There is only one change in the countries of eligibility from FY2017, namely, nationals of Ecuador are now eligible for the DV-2018 Lottery Program.

NOTE: Even if you were born in one of the ineligible countries you may still qualify for a Diversity Visa if your spouse was born in an eligible country (and you are applying for the visa together) or if one of your parents was either born in or at the time of your birth was a legal resident of an eligible country.

REGISTRATION PROCEDURES

The entries for the DV-2018 Lottery Program must be submitted electronically between noon (EDT/GMT-4) Tuesday, October 4, 2016 through noon (EST/GMT-5) Monday, November 7, 2016. The DOS will only accept entries made on an electronic diversity entry form which will be available at www.dvlottery.state.gov during the registration period. The DOS will not accept mail-in entries. Only one entry by and for each person during each registration period is permitted. Receipt of more than one entry per person will disqualify the person from registration, regardless of the source of the entry.

The procedures for submitting an entry in the DV-2018 Lottery Program are as follows:

Entry Form Contents. The DOS will only accept completed Electronic Diversity Visa Entry Forms submitted electronically at www.dvlottery.state.gov during the registration period. All entries by an applicant will be disqualified if more than one entry for the applicant is received, regardless of who submitted the entry. The entry form will ask the applicant to submit the following information:

1. Full name; (exactly as shown on your passport);
2. Date of birth;
3. Gender;
4. City/town and Country of birth;
5. Country of eligibility or chargeability;
6. Photograph according to the specifications described below;
7. Current mailing address;
8. Country where you live today;
9. Phone number (optional);
10. Email address;
11. Highest level of education completed;
12. Marriage status;
13. Number of children that are unmarried and under the age of 21 years of age and each child's information including name, date of birth, gender, city/town of birth, country of birth and photograph that meets the previously described specifications (failure to list all children, who are eligible, will result in

disqualification of the principal applicant and refusal of all visas in the case at the time of the visa interview); and

14. Spouse's information, including name, date of birth, gender, city/town of birth, country of birth and spouse's photograph that meets the previously described specifications (failure to list your spouse will result in disqualification of the principal applicant and refusal of all visas in the case at the time of the visa interview).

Photograph Requirements. The entry will be disqualified if photographs are not submitted of the applicant, his/her spouse and each child under the age of 21 (including all natural children as well as legally-adopted and stepchildren, except a child who is already a U.S. citizen or lawful permanent resident) even if the child no longer resides with the applicant and does not intend to immigrate under the Lottery Program. The photographs must be submitted electronically with the entry form. Group or family photos will not be accepted. There must be a separate photo for each family member. Each applicant, his/her spouse and each child will therefore need a computer file containing his/her digital photograph which will be submitted on-line with the entry form. The image file can be produced either by taking a new digital photograph or by scanning a photographic print with a digital scanner. The submitted digital images must conform to the following specifications:

NEW DIGITAL IMAGE

1. The image must be in the Joint Photographic Experts Group (JPEG) format;
2. The image must be in color - 24 bits per pixel (black and white or 8-bit images will not be accepted);
3. The maximum image size accepted is 240 kilobytes (240KB);
4. The minimum dimensions accepted are 600 pixels (width) by 600 pixels (height) and the height must equal the width;

SCANNING A SUBMITTED PHOTOGRAPH

5. Scanner Resolution must be at least 300 dots per inch (dpi);
6. The image must be in the Joint Photographic Experts Group (JPEG) format;
7. The maximum image file size accepted is 240 kilobytes (240KB);
8. Image resolution must be 600 by 600 pixels;
9. The image must be in color - 24 bits per pixel (black and white or 8-bit images will not be accepted);

ADDITIONAL SPECIFICATIONS

10. The applicant, spouse or child must be directly facing the camera;
11. The head of the person being photographed must directly face the camera and should not be tilted up, down or to the side;
12. The head should cover about 50% of the area of the photograph;

13. The photograph should be taken with the person being photographed in front of a neutral, light-colored background (photographs taken with a very dark or patterned background will not be accepted);
14. Photographs in which the face of the person being photographed is not in focus will not be accepted;
15. Photographs in which the person being photographed is wearing sunglasses or other paraphernalia which detracts from the face will not be accepted; and
16. Photographs of applicants wearing head coverings or hats are only acceptable due to religious beliefs and still may not obscure any portion of the face of the applicant.

DOS PROCESSING OF ENTRIES

After an applicant submits his/her entry, the DOS will send him/her an electronic confirmation notice of receipt of a completed entry form. Applicants will be selected at random by computer from among qualified entries. All entrants must check on the DOS website via the Entry Status Check whether they have been selected to participate in the Lottery on or after May 2, 2017 through September 30, 2018. The Entry Status Check is the ONLY manner in which entrants will be notified of their selection. The DOS will NOT mail any correspondence to the selected applicants nor will it send out an email. The DOS normally notifies approximately 100,000 applicants that they have been selected through the DV Lottery Program. However, only 50,000 "green cards" are available annually. The green cards based upon the DV-2018 Lottery Program will be issued between October 1, 2017 and September 30, 2018. However, because more individuals will be registered than there are immigrant visas available, a registered applicant who wishes to receive his/her immigrant visa must be prepared to act quickly after being notified, especially if he/she is assigned a favorable lottery number in the random selection process. The DOS emphasized that random selection in the lottery process does NOT guarantee that an applicant will receive a "green card."

EDUCATION OR WORK EXPERIENCE REQUIRED

In order to qualify for a "green card" through the Diversity Visa Lottery Program, each applicant must have at least a high school education or its equivalent or, within the past five years, have two years of work experience in an occupation requiring at least two years of training. A high school education or its equivalent is defined as successful completion of a 12-year course of elementary and secondary education in the United States or successful completion in another country of a formal course of elementary and secondary education comparable to a high school education in the United States. Evidence of educational work experience should not be submitted with the lottery entry but must be submitted to the consular official or U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) officer at the time of the visa or adjustment of status interview. In order to determine eligibility based on work experience, definitions from the Department of Labor's (DOL) O*Net On-Line database will be used.

DOS DOES NOT CHARGE TO ENTER THE DV LOTTERY PROGRAM

There is no charge to enter the annual DV Lottery Program. The DOS does not employ outside consultants or private services to operate the program. A qualified entry submitted electronically directly by the applicant has an equal chance of being selected by the computer at the DOS Kentucky Consular Center as does an entry submitted electronically through a paid intermediary who completes the entry for the applicant. However, if an

applicant or a paid intermediary submits more than one entry per person, the person will be disqualified from the program. A special DV Lottery Case processing fee will be payable later to the DOS by persons who "win" the lottery and are processed for a "green card" based upon the lottery program.

EXHIBIT A

REGIONAL CLASSIFICATION OF COUNTRIES

ELIGIBLE FOR THE DV-2018 LOTTERY PROGRAM

Except as noted, the list below shows the countries qualified within each geographic region for the DV-2018 Diversity Immigrant Visa Lottery Program.

AFRICA

Algeria	Ethiopia	Niger
Angola	Gabon	Rwanda
Benin	Gambia, The	Sao Tome and Principe
Botswana	Ghana	Senegal
Burkina Faso	Guinea	Seychelles
Burundi	Guinea-Bissau	Sierra Leone
Cameroon	Kenya	Somalia
Cape Verde	Lesotho	South Africa
Central African Republic	Liberia	South Sudan
Chad	Libya	Sudan
Comoros	Madagascar	Swaziland
Congo	Malawi	Tanzania
Congo, Democratic Republic of	Mali	Togo
Cote D'Ivoire (Ivory Coast)	Mauritania	Tunisia
Djibouti	Mauritius	Uganda
Egypt*	Morocco	Zambia
Equatorial Guinea	Mozambique	Zimbabwe
Eritrea	Namibia	

* Persons born in the areas administered by Israel, Jordan and Syria prior to June 1967 are chargeable, respectively, to Israel, Jordan and Syria. Individuals born in the Gaza Strip are chargeable to Egypt; individuals born in the West Bank are chargeable to Jordan; individuals born in the Golan Heights are chargeable to Syria)

NOTE: Individuals born in Nigeria are not eligible for DV-2018.

ASIA

Afghanistan	Japan	Qatar
Bahrain	Jordan*	Saudi Arabia
Bhutan	Kuwait	Singapore
Brunei	Laos	Sri Lanka
Burma	Lebanon	Syria*
Cambodia	Malaysia	Taiwan**
Hong Kong Special Admin. Region*	Maldives	Thailand
Indonesia	Mongolia	Timor-Leste
Iran	Nepal	United Arab Emirates
Iraq	North Korea	Yemen
Israel*	Oman	

*Natives of the following Asian countries do not qualify for this year's Lottery Program: Bangladesh, China (mainland-born), India, Pakistan, South Korea, Philippines and Vietnam. The Hong Kong S.A.R., Taiwan, and Macau S.A.R. do qualify.

EUROPE

Albania	Hungary	Norway
Andorra	Iceland	Poland
Armenia	Ireland	Portugal*
Austria	Italy	Romania
Azerbaijan	Kazakhstan	Russia
Belarus	Kosovo	San Marino
Belgium	Kyrgyzstan	Serbia
Bosnia and Herzegovina	Latvia	Slovakia
Bulgaria	Liechtenstein	Slovenia

Croatia	Lithuania	Spain
Cyprus	Luxembourg	Sweden
Czech Republic	Macau S.A.R.	Switzerland
Denmark*	Macedonia	Tajikistan
Estonia	Malta	Turkey
Finland	Moldova	Turkmenistan
France*	Monaco	Ukraine
Georgia	Montenegro	Uzbekistan
Germany	Netherlands*	Vatican City
Greece	Northern Ireland**	

*Including components and areas overseas.

**Great Britain (United Kingdom); including: Anguilla, Bermuda, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Falkland Islands, Gibraltar, Montserrat, Pitcairn, St. Helena and Turks and Caicos Islands does not qualify. Northern Ireland does qualify.

NORTH AMERICA

The Bahamas

In North America, Canadian and Mexican natives do not qualify for this year's Lottery Program.

OCEANIA

Australia*	Micronesia, Federated States of Nauru	Samoa
Fiji	New Zealand*	Solomon Islands
Kiribati	Palau	Tonga
Marshall Islands	Papua New Guinea	Tuvalu
		Vanuatu

*Including components and dependent areas overseas.

SOUTH AMERICA, CENTRAL AMERICA, AND THE CARIBBEAN

Antigua and Barbuda	Ecuador	Saint Kitts and Nevis
Argentina	Grenada	Saint Lucia
Barbados	Guatemala	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines
Belize	Guyana	Suriname

Bolivia

Honduras

Trinidad and Tobago

Chile

Nicaragua

Uruguay

Costa Rica

Panama

Venezuela

Cuba

Paraguay

Dominica

Natives of the following countries do not qualify for this year's Lottery Program: Brazil, Colombia, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Haiti, Jamaica, Mexico and Peru.