U.S. Diversity Visa Lottery

Each year, the United States makes 50,000 immigrant visas available through a Diversity Visa Lottery for people who are natives of countries with low rates of immigration to the United States. The National Visa Center holds the lottery every year and chooses winners randomly from all qualified entries.

Entries for this year’s Diversity Visa Lottery, for fiscal year 2018, must be submitted electronically at (dvlottery.state.gov) between Tuesday, October 4, 2016 at 12:00 noon, Eastern Daylight Time, and Monday, November 7, 2016 at 12:00 noon, Eastern Standard Time.

An applicant who is selected in the Diversity Visa Lottery is given the opportunity to apply for permanent residence (a “green card”) for himself or herself, a spouse and any unmarried children under age 21. Same-sex spouses are eligible for the same U.S. immigration benefits as opposite-sex spouses. Spouses can each file a lottery application if they each meet the eligibility requirements independently. If one spouse is selected, both will be eligible for green cards.) If permanent residence is granted, the lottery winner will be authorized to live and work permanently in the United States.

A lottery applicant must possess either a high school diploma or two years of qualifying work experience within the past five years. Applicants now possessing H or L visas need not worry about concurrently stating immigrant and nonimmigrant intent. Applicants with other types of visas should review this issue carefully before applying for the lottery.

Natives of these countries are not eligible for the Lottery: Bangladesh, Brazil, Canada, China (mainland-born), Colombia, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Haiti, India, Jamaica, Mexico, Nigeria, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, South Korea, United Kingdom (except Northern Ireland) and its dependent territories and Vietnam. Persons born in Hong Kong SAR, Macau SAR and Taiwan are eligible.

Additional information and the Lottery Entry Form, which must be completed online, are available here: www.travel.state.gov/content/visas/en/immigrate/diversity-visa/instructions.html. There is no cost to register for the Diversity Visa Lottery, but individuals who are selected, must pay all required visa fees at the time of the application and interview.