

# Visa Bulletin

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## VISA BULLETIN FOR APRIL 2009

### A. STATUTORY NUMBERS

1. This bulletin summarizes the availability of immigrant numbers during **April**. Consular officers are required to report to the Department of State documentarily qualified applicants for numerically limited visas; the Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services in the Department of Homeland Security reports applicants for adjustment of status. Allocations were made, to the extent possible under the numerical limitations, for the demand received by March **6th** in the chronological order of the reported priority dates. If the demand could not be satisfied within the statutory or regulatory limits, the category or foreign state in which demand was excessive was deemed oversubscribed. The cut-off date for an oversubscribed category is the priority date of the first applicant who could not be reached within the numerical limits. Only applicants who have a priority date **earlier than** the cut-off date may be allotted a number. Immediately that it becomes necessary during the monthly allocation process to retrogress a cut-off date, supplemental requests for numbers will be honored only if the priority date falls within the new cut-off date.

2. Section 201 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) sets an annual minimum family-sponsored preference limit of 226,000. The worldwide level for annual employment-based preference immigrants is at least 140,000. Section 202 prescribes that the per-country limit for preference immigrants is set at 7% of the total annual family-sponsored and employment-based preference limits, i.e., 25,620. The dependent area limit is set at 2%, or 7,320.

3. Section 203 of the INA prescribes preference classes for allotment of immigrant visas as follows:

#### FAMILY-SPONSORED PREFERENCES

**First:** Unmarried Sons and Daughters of Citizens: 23,400 plus any numbers not required for fourth preference.

**Second:** Spouses and Children, and Unmarried Sons and Daughters of Permanent Residents: 114,200, plus the number (if any) by which the worldwide family preference level exceeds 226,000, and any unused first preference numbers:

A. Spouses and Children: 77% of the overall second preference limitation, of which 75% are exempt from the per-country limit;

B. Unmarried Sons and Daughters (21 years of age or older): 23% of the overall second preference limitation.

**Third:** Married Sons and Daughters of Citizens: 23,400, plus any numbers not required by first and second preferences.

**Fourth:** Brothers and Sisters of Adult Citizens: 65,000, plus any numbers not required by first three preferences.

#### EMPLOYMENT-BASED PREFERENCES

**First:** Priority Workers: 28.6% of the worldwide employment-based preference level, plus any numbers not required for fourth and fifth preferences.

**Second:** Members of the Professions Holding Advanced Degrees or Persons of Exceptional Ability: 28.6% of the worldwide employment-based preference level, plus any numbers not required by first preference.

**Third:** Skilled Workers, Professionals, and Other Workers: 28.6% of the worldwide level, plus any numbers not required by first and second preferences, not more than 10,000 of which to "Other Workers".

**Fourth:** Certain Special Immigrants: 7.1% of the worldwide level.

**Fifth:** Employment Creation: 7.1% of the worldwide level, not less than 3,000 of which reserved for investors in a targeted rural or high-unemployment area, and 3,000 set aside for investors in regional centers by Sec. 610 of P.L. 102-395.

4. INA Section 203(e) provides that family-sponsored and employment-based preference visas be issued to eligible immigrants in the order in which a petition in behalf of each has been filed. Section 203(d) provides that spouses and children of preference immigrants are entitled to the same status, and the same order of consideration, if accompanying or following to join the principal. The visa prorating provisions of Section 202(e) apply to allocations for a foreign state or dependent area when visa demand exceeds the per-country limit. These provisions apply at present to the following oversubscribed chargeability areas: CHINA-mainland born, INDIA, MEXICO, and PHILIPPINES.

5. On the chart below, the listing of a date for any class indicates that the class is oversubscribed (see paragraph 1) ; "C" means current, i.e., numbers are available for all qualified applicants; and "U" means unavailable, i.e., no numbers are available. (**NOTE:** Numbers are available only for applicants whose priority date is **earlier** than the cut-off date listed below.)

Fam-ily	All Charge-ability Areas Except Those Listed	CHINA-mainland born	INDIA	MEXICO	PHILIPP-INES
1st	15AUG02	15AUG02	15AUG02	08OCT92	01AUG93
2A	15AUG04	15AUG04	15AUG04	01JAN02	15AUG04
2B	01SEP00	01SEP00	01SEP00	01MAY92	15JAN98
3rd	22AUG00	22AUG00	22AUG00	22OCT92	15JUN91
4th	15APR98	08JAN98	15APR98	22APR95	22JUN86

**\*NOTE:** For April, 2A numbers **EXEMPT from per-country limit** are available to applicants from all countries with priority dates **earlier** than 01JAN02. 2A numbers **SUBJECT to per-country limit** are available to applicants chargeable to all countries **EXCEPT MEXICO** with priority dates beginning 01JAN02 and earlier than 15AUG04. (All 2A numbers provided for MEXICO are exempt from the per-country limit; there are no 2A numbers for MEXICO subject to per-country limit.)

	All Charge-ability Areas Except Those Listed	CHINA-mainland born	INDIA	MEXICO	PHILIP-PINES
<b>Employ-ment -Based</b>					
1st	C	C	C	C	C
2nd	C	15FEB05	15FEB04	C	C
3rd	01MAR03	01MAR03	01NOV01	01MAR03	01MAR03
Other Workers	01MAR01	01MAR01	01MAR01	01MAR01	01MAR01
4th	C	C	C	C	C
Certain Religious Workers	U	U	U	U	U
5th	C	C	C	C	C
Targeted Employ-					

ment Areas					
5th Pilot Programs	U	U	U	U	U

The Department of State has available a recorded message with visa availability information which can be heard at: (area code 202) 663-1541. This recording will be updated in the middle of each month with information on cut-off dates for the following month.

Employment Third Preference Other Workers Category: Section 203(e) of the NACARA, as amended by Section 1(e) of Pub. L. 105-139, provides that once the Employment Third Preference Other Worker (EW) cut-off date has reached the priority date of the latest EW petition approved prior to November 19, 1997, the 10,000 EW numbers available for a fiscal year are to be reduced by up to 5,000 annually beginning in the following fiscal year. This reduction is to be made for as long as necessary to offset adjustments under the NACARA program. Since the EW cut-off date reached November 19, 1997 during Fiscal Year 2001, the reduction in the EW annual limit to 5,000 began in Fiscal Year 2002.

## B. DIVERSITY IMMIGRANT (DV) CATEGORY

Section 203(c) of the Immigration and Nationality Act provides a maximum of up to 55,000 immigrant visas each fiscal year to permit immigration opportunities for persons from countries other than the principal sources of current immigration to the United States. The Nicaraguan and Central American Relief Act (NACARA) passed by Congress in November 1997 stipulates that beginning with DV-99, and for as long as necessary, up to 5,000 of the 55,000 annually-allocated diversity visas will be made available for use under the NACARA program. **This reduction has resulted in the DV-2009 annual limit being reduced to 50,000.** DV visas are divided among six geographic regions. No one country can receive more than seven percent of the available diversity visas in any one year.

For **April**, immigrant numbers in the DV category are available to qualified DV-2009 applicants chargeable to all regions/eligible countries as follows. When an allocation cut-off number is shown, visas are available only for applicants with DV regional lottery rank numbers **BELOW** the specified allocation cut-off number:

Region	All DV Chargeability Areas Except Those Listed Separately	
<b>AFRICA</b>	26,900	Except: Egypt 17,400 Ethiopia 15,700 Nigeria 9,900
<b>ASIA</b>	17,400	Except: Bangladesh 11,000
<b>EUROPE</b>	20,800	
<b>NORTH AMERICA (BAHAMAS)</b>	7	
<b>OCEANIA</b>	715	
<b>SOUTH AMERICA, and the CARIBBEAN</b>	900	

Entitlement to immigrant status in the DV category lasts only through the end of the fiscal (visa) year for which the applicant is selected in the lottery. The year of entitlement for all applicants registered for the DV-2009 program ends as of September 30, 2009. DV visas may not be issued to DV-2009 applicants after that date. Similarly, spouses and children accompanying or following to join DV-2009 principals are only entitled to derivative DV status until September 30, 2009. DV visa availability through the very end of FY-2009 cannot be taken for granted. Numbers could be exhausted prior to September 30.

## C. ADVANCE NOTIFICATION OF THE DIVERSITY (DV) IMMIGRANT CATEGORY RANK CUT-OFFS WHICH WILL APPLY IN MAY

For **May**, immigrant numbers in the DV category are available to qualified DV-2009 applicants chargeable to all

regions/eligible countries as follows. When an allocation cut-off number is shown, visas are available only for applicants with DV regional lottery rank numbers **BELOW** the specified allocation cut-off number:

<b>Region</b>	<b>All DV Chargeability Areas Except Those Listed Separately</b>	
<b>AFRICA</b>	32,400	Except: Egypt 19,150 Ethiopia 17,750 Nigeria 11,550
<b>ASIA</b>	22,800	
<b>EUROPE</b>	24,900	
<b>NORTH AMERICA (BAHAMAS)</b>	10	
<b>OCEANIA</b>	825	
<b>SOUTH AMERICA, and the CARIBBEAN</b>	1,000	

#### **D. EXPIRATION OF TWO EMPLOYMENT VISA CATEGORIES**

Employment Fourth Preference Certain Religious Workers:

Pursuant to Section 2(a) of the Special Immigrant Nonminister Religious Worker Program Act (Pub. L. 110-391), the nonminister special immigrant program expires on March 6, 2009.

Employment Fifth Preference Pilot Program Categories (I5, R5):

Pursuant to Section 144 of the Consolidated Security, Disaster Assistance, and Continuing Appropriations Act, 2009 (Public Law 110-329), the immigrant investor pilot program expires on March 6, 2009.

The cut-off dates for the above categories are shown as "Unavailable" for April. Congress is considering an extension for each of these categories, but there is no certainty when such legislative action may occur. If legislation to extend either of these categories is enacted, the cut-off date for that category would immediately become "Current."

#### **E. RETROGRESSION OF THE WORLDWIDE, MEXICO, AND PHILIPPINES EMPLOYMENT THIRD PREFERENCE CUT-OFF DATES FOR APRIL**

Despite the established cut-off date having been held for the past five months in an effort to keep demand within the average monthly usage targets, the amount of demand being received from Citizenship and Immigration Services (CIS) Offices for adjustment of status cases remains extremely high. Therefore, it has been necessary to retrogress the April cut-off dates in an attempt to hold demand within the FY-2009 annual limit. Since over 60 percent of the Worldwide and Philippines Employment Third preference CIS demand received this year has been for applicants with priority dates prior to January 1, 2004, the cut-off date has been retrogressed to 01MAR03 to help ensure that the amount of future demand is significantly reduced. As indicated in the last sentence of Item A, paragraph 1, of this bulletin, this cut-off date will be applied immediately. It should also be noted that further retrogression or "unavailability" at any time cannot be ruled out.

It has also been necessary to retrogress the Employment Third Preference Other Worker cut-off date for all countries in order to hold the issuance level within the annual limit.

#### **F. VISA AVAILABILITY IN THE COMING MONTHS**

During the past year, many preference categories have experienced steady and sometimes rapid cut-off date movement. Such action is normally followed by an increase in applicant demand. Heavy applicant demand for numbers in some categories could require cut-off date movements to slow, stop, or even retrogress at some point during the remainder of FY-2009, in order to hold visa use within the applicable annual numerical limits. Should

such action occur, it would most likely be only temporary in nature, pending the start of the new fiscal year in October.

#### **G. OBTAINING THE MONTHLY VISA BULLETIN**

The Department of State's Bureau of Consular Affairs offers the monthly "Visa Bulletin" on the INTERNET'S WORLDWIDE WEB. The INTERNET Web address to access the Bulletin is:

<http://travel.state.gov/>

From the home page, select the VISA section which contains the Visa Bulletin.

To be **placed on** the Department of State's E-mail subscription list for the "Visa Bulletin", please send an E-mail to the following E-mail address:

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Readers may submit questions regarding Visa Bulletin related items by E-mail at the following address:

**VISABULLETIN@STATE.GOV**

(This address cannot be used to subscribe to the Visa Bulletin.)

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