

## Visa Bulletin For December 2011

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### A. STATUTORY NUMBERS

1. This bulletin summarizes the availability of immigrant numbers during **December**. Consular officers are required to report to the Department of State documentarily qualified applicants for numerically limited visas; U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services in the Department of Homeland Security reports applicants for adjustment of status. Allocations were made, to the extent possible, in chronological order of reported priority dates, for demand received by November **8th**. If not all demand could be satisfied, 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. If 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 announced in this bulletin.

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. 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.

4. Section 203(a) of the INA prescribes preference classes for allotment of Family-sponsored immigrant visas as follows:

#### FAMILY-SPONSORED PREFERENCES

**First: (F1)** Unmarried Sons and Daughters of U.S. 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, plus any unused first preference numbers:

A. **(F2A)** Spouses and Children of Permanent Residents: 77% of the overall second preference limitation, of which 75% are exempt from the per-country limit;

B. **(F2B)** Unmarried Sons and Daughters (21 years of age or older) of Permanent Residents: 23% of the overall second preference limitation.

**Third: (F3)** Married Sons and Daughters of U.S. Citizens: 23,400, plus any numbers not required by first and second preferences.

**Fourth: (F4)** Brothers and Sisters of Adult U.S. Citizens: 65,000, plus any numbers not required by first three preferences.

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.)

Family-Sponsored	All Chargeability Areas Except Those Listed	CHINA-mainland born	INDIA	MEXICO	PHILIPPINES
F1	01SEP04	01SEP04	01SEP04	08APR93	01MAR97
F2A	22MAR09	22MAR09	22MAR09	08FEB09	22MAR09

F2B	15AUG03	15AUG03	15AUG03	22NOV92	15AUG01
F3	08OCT01	08OCT01	08OCT01	15DEC92	08JUL92
F4	15JUL00	15JUL00	15JUL00	01MAY96	08SEP88

\*NOTE: For December, F2A numbers **EXEMPT from per-country limit** are available to applicants from all countries with priority dates earlier than 08FEB09. F2A numbers **SUBJECT to per-country limit** are available to applicants chargeable to all countries EXCEPT MEXICO with priority dates beginning 08FEB09 and earlier than 22MAR09. (All F2A numbers provided for MEXICO are exempt from the per-country limit; there are no F2A numbers for MEXICO subject to per-country limit.)

5. Section 203(b) of the INA prescribes preference classes for allotment of Employment-based immigrant visas as follows:

**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 Pub. L. 102-395.

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.)

Employment-Based	All Chargeability Areas Except Those Listed	CHINA-mainland born	INDIA	MEXICO	PHILIPPINES
1st	C	C	C	C	C
2nd	C	15MAR08	15MAR08	C	C
3rd	15JAN06	08SEP04	01AUG02	15JAN06	15JAN06
Other Workers	01JAN06	22APR03	22JUL02	01JAN06	01JAN06
4th	C	C	C	C	C
Certain Religious Workers	C	C	C	C	C
5th Targeted Employment Areas/ Regional Centers and Pilot Programs	C	C	C	C	C

\*Employment Third Preference Other Workers Category: Section 203(e) of the Nicaraguan and Central American Relief Act (NACARA) passed by Congress in November 1997, 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.

6. The Department of State has a recorded message with visa availability information which can be heard at: (202) 663-1541. This recording is updated on or about the tenth of each month with information on cut-off dates for the following month.

**B. DIVERSITY IMMIGRANT (DV) CATEGORY**

Section 203(c) of the INA provides up to 55,000 immigrant visas each fiscal year to permit additional immigration opportunities for persons from countries with low admissions during the previous five years. The NACARA 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 resulted in reduction of the DV-2012 annual limit 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 **December**, immigrant numbers in the DV category are available to qualified DV-2012 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	
AFRICA	18,500	Except: Egypt 12,700 Ethiopia 13,500 Nigeria 12,000
ASIA	15,000	
EUROPE	13,500	
NORTH AMERICA (BAHAMAS)	5	
OCEANIA	575	
SOUTH AMERICA, and the CARIBBEAN	600	

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-2012 program ends as of September 30, 2012. DV visas may not be issued to DV-2012 applicants after that date. Similarly, spouses and children accompanying or following to join DV-2012 principals are only entitled to derivative DV status until September 30, 2012. DV visa availability through the very end of FY-2012 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 JANUARY**

For **January**, immigrant numbers in the DV category are available to qualified DV-2012 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	
AFRICA	24,700	Except: Egypt 16,800 Ethiopia 16,800 Nigeria 14,500
ASIA	18,500	
EUROPE	16,500	
NORTH AMERICA (BAHAMAS)	6	
OCEANIA	650	
SOUTH AMERICA, and the CARIBBEAN	675	

**D. OBTAINING THE MONTHLY VISA BULLETIN**

The Department of State's Bureau of Consular Affairs publishes the monthly Visa Bulletin on their website at [www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov) under the Visas section. Alternatively, visitors may access the Visa Bulletin directly by going to:

[http://www.travel.state.gov/visa/bulletin/bulletin\\_1360.html](http://www.travel.state.gov/visa/bulletin/bulletin_1360.html)

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

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

[VISABULLETIN@STATE.GOV](mailto:VISABULLETIN@STATE.GOV)

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

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