DIVERSITY VISA PROGRAM – DV-2018


- The Congressionally-mandated Diversity Immigrant Visa Program makes available up to 55,000 diversity visas (DV) each year, drawn from random selection among all entries, to persons who meet strict eligibility requirements from countries with low rates of immigration to the United States. For DV-2018, 55,000 DVs are set aside; however, since DV-1999, Congress has set aside 5,000 of this annual allocation to be made available for use under the Nicaraguan and Central American Relief Act (NACARA). Therefore, up to 50,000 visas are available for DV-2018.

- Applicants can access the electronic DV entry form (E-DV) at the official E-DV website: dvlottery.state.gov during the registration period. DV instructions also are available on the Department of State’s public webpage at usvisas.state.gov/dv/instructions.

- The Department accepts DV entries ONLY through the E-DV site, which has complete instructions. **There is no fee to enter.** All entrants must print and retain their online confirmation page after completing their DV entries so that they will be able to check their entry status as explained below.

- **It is very important for entrants to keep a record of their unique confirmation number until at least September 30, 2018.** The confirmation number is the only way to check whether an entry has been selected and to obtain visa application and appointment information, if selected. The unique confirmation number helps to protect DV entrants against fraud, malfeasance, and problems with the mail. Unscrupulous visa facilitators have been known to assist entrants with their entries, retain the confirmation page, and then demand more money in exchange for information on the entry. Entrants can avoid this by ensuring they receive the unique confirmation number at the time of entry.

- Beginning May 2, 2017, DV-2018 entrants will be able to use their unique confirmation number provided at registration to check the online Entrant Status Check at dvlottery.state.gov to see if their entry was selected. Entrant
Status Check will inform successful entrants how to apply for DVs for themselves and their eligible family members. The Department also will confirm visa interview appointments through the Entrant Status Check.

- All entrants must enroll with a recent photo, taken within the last six months. Entries submitted with the same photo from the last DV year (DV-2017) will be disqualified.

- The law allows only one entry per person during the registration period. Entrants who submit more than one entry will be disqualified.

- The Department will not notify successful entrants of the status of their E-DV online entry by email. Any email claiming to notify entrants they have been selected for the DV program is not legitimate. Entrants can only access information on their application through the online Entrant Status Check at dvlottery.state.gov.

- Those selected in the DV program may apply for immigrant visas (IVs). Selectee notification information will be available on Entrant Status Check beginning May 2, 2017, and will provide successful entrants further instructions, including information about immigrant visa application fees.

- Being randomly chosen as a selectee does not guarantee that you will receive a visa. Selection merely means that you are eligible to apply for a Diversity Visa, and if your rank number becomes eligible for final processing, potentially to be issued a DV.

- Because it is likely that some of the first 50,000 persons selected will not qualify for visas or pursue their cases to visa issuance, the program will select more than 50,000 entries to ensure that the Department issues all of the available DVs.

- However, this means there will not be a sufficient number of visas for all those who are initially selected. Once the Department issues all of the 50,000 DV visas, the program will end. In principle, visa numbers could be finished before September 2018.

- Selected DV applicants who wish to apply for visas must be prepared to act promptly on their cases. Individuals who miss or reschedule their visa
application appointments or come without all required documents risk that a visa number will not be available.

- DV applicants must pay all application fees and costs, including those for medical examinations, for themselves and qualifying family members. Visa applicants under the DV program also must prove that they will be able to support themselves in the United States. Immigration under the DV program does not entitle the immigrant or family members to any financial or settlement assistance in the United States.

- The section of the law establishing the DV program limits the list of “eligible countries” to those countries from which fewer than 50,000 persons in various visa categories immigrated to the United States during the previous five years. U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) modifies the list of eligible countries for each year’s DV program on the sole basis of this five-year calculation.

- Countries whose natives are ineligible for DV-2018 are 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. A “native” ordinarily means someone born in a particular country, regardless of the individual's current country of residence or nationality. Persons born in Hong Kong SAR, Macau SAR, and Taiwan are eligible.

- Entrants must provide an email address as part of their entry. Entrants should provide a personal email address they can access easily, rather than someone else’s address or a standard company address. Entrants should be aware that the Department of State will only send an email to applicants alerting them to check their status or to say that details of their immigrant visa appointment are available on Entrant Status Check. Any email communications will not provide selectee notification, will not direct recipients to pay fees, will not provide application instructions, and will not detail visa interview dates and times. This information is ONLY available by directly accessing Entrant Status Check on the E-DV website.
We encourage entrants to prepare and submit their own entries. Entrants may have someone submit the entry for them, though they should be cautious if the assistant tries to charge them a fee. Whether an individual submits an entry directly, or an attorney, friend, relative, etc., provides assistance, only one entry may be submitted in the name of each individual. Entrants remain responsible for ensuring that their information is correct and complete. All entrants, including those not selected, will be able to check the status of their entries by directly accessing Entrant Status Check on the E-DV website. Entrants should not allow others to retain their confirmation page information but should hold on to it themselves so they may independently check the status of their entry.