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Visa Bulletin -April 2012

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• 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; 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 **March 9th**. 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	01APR05	01APR05	01APR05	08MAY93	22JUN97
F2A	08OCT09	08OCT09	08OCT09	01SEP09	08OCT09
F2B	15JAN04	15JAN04	15JAN04	01DEC92	08DEC01
F3	15FEB02	15FEB02	15FEB02	15JAN93	22JUL92
F4	08NOV00	08NOV00	08NOV00	01JUN96	08JAN89

*NOTE: For April, F2A numbers **EXEMPT from per-country limit** are available to applicants from all countries with priority dates **earlier** than 01SEP09. F2A numbers **SUBJECT to per-country limit** are available to applicants chargeable to all countries **EXCEPT MEXICO** with priority dates beginning 01SEP09 and earlier than 08OCT09. (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	01MAY10	01MAY10	C	C
3rd	08APR06	01MAR05	01SEP02	08APR06	08APR06
Other Workers	08APR06	22APR03	01SEP02	08APR06	08APR06
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
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*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 **April**, 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	39,000	Except: Egypt 29,500 Ethiopia 29,500 Nigeria 20,000

ASIA	32,600	
EUROPE	32,000	Except: Uzbekistan 16,500
NORTH AMERICA (BAHAMAS)	9	
OCEANIA	1,000	
SOUTH AMERICA, and the CARIBBEAN	1,000	

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 MAY

For **MAY**, 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	50,000	Except: Egypt 33,000 Ethiopia 33,000 Nigeria 25,000
ASIA	40,500	
EUROPE	40,000	Except: Uzbekistan 16,500
NORTH AMERICA (BAHAMAS)	10	
OCEANIA	1,150	
SOUTH AMERICA, and the CARIBBEAN	1,150	

D. CHINA-MAINLAND BORN FAMILY FOURTH PREFERENCE

In recent months we have been experiencing very heavy applicant demand in the China-mainland born Family Fourth preference category. Based on the current rate of demand, it is likely that future movement of this cut-off date will slow and possibly stop at some point in the near future. This action will be taken in an effort to keep issuances within the annual numerical limits.

E. I-601 PROVISIONAL WAIVER

USCIS is considering changes that would allow certain immediate relatives (the spouse,

children or parents of a U.S. citizen) who can demonstrate extreme hardship to a U.S. citizen spouse or parent to receive a provisional waiver of the unlawful presence bars before leaving the United States. These new procedures will not apply to the Family-sponsored numerically controlled preference visa categories.

These procedures are not in effect and will not be available to potential applicants until USCIS publishes a final rule in the Federal Register specifying the effective date. USCIS plans to publish a notice of proposed rulemaking in the coming months and will consider all comments received as part of that process before publishing a final rule.

- Do not send an application requesting a provisional waiver at this time. USCIS will reject any application requesting this new process and we will return the application package and any related fees to the applicant. USCIS cannot accept applications until a final rule is issued and the process change becomes effective.
- Be aware that some unauthorized practitioners of immigration law may wrongly claim they can currently file a provisional waiver application (Form I-601) for you. These same individuals may ask you to pay them to file such forms although the process is not yet in place. Please avoid such scams. USCIS wants you to learn the facts about protecting yourself and your family against scammers by visiting uscis.gov/avoidscams.

If you already have an immigrant visa interview with the U.S. Department of State, we strongly encourage you to attend. The Department of State may cancel your immigrant visa registration if you fail to appear at this interview.

Those interested in this I-601 provisional waiver issue should consult the USCIS.gov web site for the latest updates.

F. 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 ^[2] 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 ^[3]

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:

listserv@calist.state.gov ^[4]

and in the message body type:

Subscribe Visa-Bulletin *First name/Last name*
(example: *Subscribe Visa-Bulletin Sally Doe*)

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listserv@calist.state.gov ^[4]

and in the message body type: **Signoff Visa-Bulletin**

The Department of State also has available a recorded message with visa cut-off dates which can be heard at: (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 [5]

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

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