

VISA BULLETIN

Number 51 Volume IX

Washington, D.C.

IMMIGRANT NUMBERS FOR DECEMBER 2012

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 7th. 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.)

<u>Family-Sponsored</u>	All Charge-ability Areas Except Those Listed	CHINA-mainland born	INDIA	MEXICO	PHILIPPINES
F1	01DEC05	01DEC05	01DEC05	01JUL93	08OCT97
F2A	22AUG10	22AUG10	22AUG10	01AUG10	22AUG10
F2B	15NOV04	15NOV04	15NOV04	01NOV92	22MAR02
F3	08JUN02	08JUN02	08JUN02	01MAR93	01AUG92
F4	01APR01	01APR01	01APR01	22JUL96	22MAR89

*NOTE: For December, F2A numbers EXEMPT from per-country limit are available to applicants from all countries with priority dates earlier than 01AUG10. F2A numbers SUBJECT to per-country limit are available to applicants chargeable to all countries EXCEPT MEXICO with priority dates beginning 01AUG10 and earlier than 22AUG10. (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.)

<u>Employment-Based</u>	All Charge-ability Areas Except Those Listed	CHINA-mainland born	INDIA	MEXICO	PHILIPPINES
1st	C	C	C	C	C
2nd	C	22OCT07	01SEP04	C	C
3rd	22DEC06	01JUL06	01NOV02	22DEC06	15AUG06
Other Workers	22DEC06	01JUL03	01NOV02	22DEC06	15AUG06
4th	C	C	C	C	C
Certain Religious Workers	C	C	C	C	C
5th	C	C	C	C	C
Targeted Employment Areas/ Regional Centers and Pilot Programs					

*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-2013 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-2013 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	15,500	Except: Egypt	8,300
		Ethiopia	14,800
		Nigeria	10,000
ASIA	2,700		
EUROPE	9,250		
NORTH AMERICA (BAHAMAS)	2		
OCEANIA	500		
SOUTH AMERICA, and the CARIBBEAN	700		

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-2013 program ends as of September 30, 2013. DV visas may not be issued to DV-2013 applicants after that date. Similarly, spouses and children accompanying or following to join DV-2013 principals are only entitled to derivative DV status until September 30, 2013. DV visa availability through the very end of FY-2013 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-2013 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	18,100	Except: Egypt	10,900
		Ethiopia	16,700
		Nigeria	10,000
ASIA	3,400		
EUROPE	10,950		
NORTH AMERICA (BAHAMAS)	2		
OCEANIA	600		
SOUTH AMERICA, and the CARIBBEAN	750		

D. VISA AVAILABILITY IN THE COMING MONTHS

FAMILY-sponsored categories (monthly)

Worldwide dates:

- F1: three or four weeks
- F2A: four to six weeks
- F2B: three to five weeks
- F3: one or two weeks
- F4: one or two weeks

EMPLOYMENT-based categories (monthly)

Employment First: Current

Employment Second:

Worldwide: Current

China: five to eight weeks

India: no movement

Employment Third:

- Worldwide: three to five weeks
- China: one to two months
- India: up to two weeks
- Mexico: three to five weeks
- Philippines: one to three weeks

Employment Fourth: Current

Employment Fifth: Current*

*The following advisory is based strictly on the current demand situation. Since demand patterns can (and sometimes do) change over time, this should be considered a worst case scenario at this point.

It appears likely that a cut-off date will need to be established for the China Employment Fifth preference category at some point during second half of fiscal year 2013. Such action would be delayed as long as possible, since while number use may be excessive over a 1 to 5 month period, it could average out to an acceptable level over a longer (e.g., 4 to 9 month) period. This would be the first time a cut-off date has been established in this category, which is why readers are being provided with the maximum amount of advance notice regarding the possibility.

The above projections for the Family and Employment categories are for what could happen during each of the next few months based on current applicant demand patterns. The determination of the actual monthly cut-off dates is subject to fluctuations in applicant demand and a number of other variables which can change at any time. Those categories with a "Current" projection will remain so for the foreseeable future, with the possible exception of the China Employment Fifth preference category mentioned above.

E. 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 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.

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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(example: *Subscribe Visa-Bulletin Sally Doe*)

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listserv@calist.state.gov

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

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

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