



*United States Department of State
Bureau of Consular Affairs*

VISA BULLETIN

Number 9 Volume X

Washington, D.C.

IMMIGRANT NUMBERS FOR SEPTEMBER 2017

A. STATUTORY NUMBERS

This bulletin summarizes the availability of immigrant numbers during September for: "Final Action Dates" and "Dates for Filing Applications," indicating when immigrant visa applicants should be notified to assemble and submit required documentation to the National Visa Center.

Unless otherwise indicated on the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) website at www.uscis.gov/visabulletininfo, individuals seeking to file applications for adjustment of status with USCIS in the Department of Homeland Security must use the "Final Action Dates" charts below for determining when they can file such applications. When USCIS determines that there are more immigrant visas available for the fiscal year than there are known applicants for such visas, USCIS will state on its website that applicants may instead use the "Dates for Filing Visa Applications" charts in this Bulletin.

1. Procedures for determining dates. Consular officers are required to report to the Department of State documentarily qualified applicants for numerically limited visas; USCIS reports applicants for adjustment of status. Allocations in the charts below were made, to the extent possible, in chronological order of reported priority dates, for demand received by August 9th. If not all demand could be satisfied, the category or foreign state in which demand was excessive was deemed oversubscribed. The final action date for an oversubscribed category is the priority date of the first applicant who could not be reached within the numerical limits. If it becomes necessary during the monthly allocation process to retrogress a final action date, supplemental requests for numbers will be honored only if the priority date falls within the new final action date announced in this bulletin. If at any time an annual limit were reached, it would be necessary to immediately make the preference category "unavailable", and no further requests for numbers would be honored.

2. The fiscal year 2017 limit for family-sponsored preference immigrants determined in accordance with Section 201 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) is 226,000. The fiscal year 2017 limit for employment-based preference immigrants calculated under INA 201 is 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 for FY-2017. 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, EL SALVADOR, GUATEMALA, HONDURAS, INDIA, MEXICO, 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.

A. FINAL ACTION DATES FOR FAMILY-SPONSORED PREFERENCE CASES

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 authorized for issuance to all qualified applicants; and "U" means unauthorized, i.e., numbers are not authorized for issuance. (NOTE: Numbers are authorized for issuance only for applicants whose priority date is **earlier** than the final action date listed below.)

| <u>Family-Sponsored</u> | All Charge-ability Areas Except Those Listed | CHINA-mainland born | INDIA | MEXICO | PHILIPPINES |
|--------------------------------|--|---------------------|---------|---------|-------------|
| F1 | 01MAY10 | 01MAY10 | 01MAY10 | 01FEB96 | 01JAN07 |
| F2A | 01OCT15 | 01OCT15 | 01OCT15 | 22SEP15 | 01OCT15 |
| F2B | 01NOV10 | 01NOV10 | 01NOV10 | 01JUL96 | 01JAN07 |
| F3 | 08JUL05 | 08JUL05 | 08JUL05 | 08APR95 | 15FEB95 |
| F4 | 01JAN02 | 01JAN02 | 01JAN02 | 15SEP97 | 01JUN94 |

*NOTE: For September, F2A numbers EXEMPT from per-country limit are authorized for issuance to applicants from all countries with priority dates earlier than 22SEP15. F2A numbers SUBJECT to per-country limit are authorized for issuance to applicants chargeable to all countries EXCEPT MEXICO with priority dates beginning 22SEP15 and earlier than 01OCT15. All F2A numbers provided for MEXICO are exempt from the per-country limit.

B. DATES FOR FILING FAMILY-SPONSORED VISA APPLICATIONS

The chart below reflects dates for filing visa applications within a timeframe justifying immediate action in the application process. Applicants for immigrant visas who have a priority date earlier than the application date in the chart below may assemble and submit required documents to the Department of State's National Visa Center, following receipt of notification from the National Visa Center containing detailed instructions. The application date for an oversubscribed category is the priority date of the first applicant who cannot submit documentation to the National Visa Center for an immigrant visa. If a category is designated "current," all applicants in the relevant category may file applications, regardless of priority date.

The "C" listing indicates that the category is current, and that applications may be filed regardless of the applicant's priority date. The listing of a date for any category indicates that only applicants with a priority date which is **earlier** than the listed date may file their application.

Visit www.uscis.gov/visabulletininfo for information on whether USCIS has determined that this chart can be used (in lieu of the chart in paragraph 4.A.) this month for filing applications for adjustment of status with USCIS.

| Family-Sponsored | All Chargeability Areas Except Those Listed | CHINA-mainland born | INDIA | MEXICO | PHILIPPINES |
|-------------------------|--|----------------------------|--------------|---------------|--------------------|
| F1 | 22JUL11 | 22JUL11 | 22JUL11 | 01APR96 | 08SEP07 |
| F2A | 08APR16 | 08APR16 | 08APR16 | 08APR16 | 08APR16 |
| F2B | 01SEP11 | 01SEP11 | 01SEP11 | 08AUG96 | 22JUL07 |
| F3 | 01DEC05 | 01DEC05 | 01DEC05 | 01MAY95 | 01MAR95 |
| F4 | 15NOV04 | 15NOV04 | 22JUN04 | 08JAN98 | 08FEB95 |

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.

A. FINAL ACTION DATES FOR EMPLOYMENT-BASED PREFERENCE CASES

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 authorized for issuance to all qualified applicants; and "U" means unauthorized, i.e., numbers are not authorized for issuance. (NOTE: Numbers are authorized for issuance only for applicants whose priority date is **earlier** than the final action date listed below.)

| <u>Employment- Based</u> | All Charge- ability Areas Except Those Listed | CHINA- mainland born | EL SALVADOR GUATEMALA HONDURAS | INDIA | MEXICO | PHILIPPINES |
|--|--|----------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------|---------|-------------|
| 1st | C | 01JAN12 | C | 01JAN12 | C | C |
| 2nd | 01JAN16 | 15MAY13 | 01JAN16 | 22AUG08 | 01JAN16 | 01JAN16 |
| 3rd | C | 01JAN12 | C | 15OCT06 | C | 01NOV15 |
| Other Workers | C | 01JAN04 | C | 15OCT06 | C | 01NOV15 |
| 4th | C | C | 22OCT15 | 22OCT15 | 22OCT15 | C |
| Certain Religious Workers | C | C | 22OCT15 | 22OCT15 | 22OCT15 | C |
| 5th Non-Regional Center (C5 and T5) | C | 15JUN14 | C | C | C | C |
| 5th Regional Center (I5 and R5) | C | 15JUN14 | 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.

B. DATES FOR FILING OF EMPLOYMENT-BASED VISA APPLICATIONS

The chart below reflects dates for filing visa applications within a timeframe justifying immediate action in the application process. Applicants for immigrant visas who have a priority date earlier than the application date in the chart may assemble and submit required documents to the Department of State's National Visa Center, following receipt of notification from the National Visa Center containing detailed instructions. The application date for an oversubscribed category is the priority date of the first applicant who cannot submit documentation to the National Visa Center for an immigrant visa. If a category is designated "current," all applicants in the relevant category may file, regardless of priority date.

The "C" listing indicates that the category is current, and that applications may be filed regardless of the applicant's priority date. The listing of a date for any category indicates that only applicants with a priority date which is **earlier** than the listed date may file their application.

Visit www.uscis.gov/visabulletininfo for information on whether USCIS has determined that this chart can be used (in lieu of the chart in paragraph 5.A.) this month for filing applications for adjustment of status with USCIS.

| Employment-Based | All Chargeability Areas Except Those Listed | CHINA - mainland born | INDIA | MEXICO | PHILIPPINES |
|---|--|------------------------------|--------------|---------------|--------------------|
| 1st | C | C | C | C | C |
| 2nd | C | 01OCT13 | 01FEB09 | C | C |
| 3rd | C | 01SEP15 | 01JAN07 | C | 01JAN16 |
| Other Workers | C | 01JUN08 | 01JAN07 | C | 01JAN16 |
| 4th | C | C | C | C | C |
| Certain Religious Workers | C | C | C | C | C |
| 5 th Non-Regional Center (C5 and T5) | C | 01SEP14 | C | C | C |
| 5 th Regional Center (I5 and R5) | C | 01SEP14 | C | C | C |

6. The Department of State has a recorded message with the cut-off date information for Final Application Action which can be heard at: (202) 485-7699. This recording is updated on or about the tenth of each month with information on final action dates for the following month.

B. DIVERSITY IMMIGRANT (DV) CATEGORY FOR THE MONTH OF SEPTEMBER

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-2017 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 September, immigrant numbers in the DV category are available to qualified DV-2017 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 | Current | Except: Egypt 36,500 |
| ASIA | Current | Except: Nepal 7,450 |
| EUROPE | Current | |
| NORTH AMERICA (BAHAMAS) | Current | |
| OCEANIA | Current | |
| SOUTH AMERICA, and the CARIBBEAN | Current | |

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-2017 program ends as of September 30, 2017. DV visas may not be issued to DV-2017 applicants after that date. Similarly, spouses and children accompanying or following to join DV-2017 principals are only entitled to derivative DV status until September 30, 2017. DV visa availability through the very end of FY-2017 cannot be taken for granted. Numbers could be exhausted prior to September 30.

C. THE DIVERSITY (DV) IMMIGRANT CATEGORY RANK CUT-OFFS WHICH WILL APPLY IN OCTOBER

For October, immigrant numbers in the DV category are available to qualified DV-2018 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 | 8,500 | Except: Egypt 2,350 Ethiopia 2,100 |
| ASIA | 1,200 | Except: Iran 750 Nepal 750 |
| EUROPE | 2,600 | |
| NORTH AMERICA (BAHAMAS) | 2 | |
| OCEANIA | 185 | |
| SOUTH AMERICA, and the CARIBBEAN | 190 | |

D. RETROGRESSION OF FAMILY PREFERENCE FINAL ACTION DATES

Family First Preference (F1): Worldwide, China, El Salvador, Guatemala, India, and Honduras: The continued high level of demand for F1 preference numbers has required the retrogression of the final action date for the month of September. This action has been taken in an attempt to hold number use within the Worldwide F1 annual limit. The final action date for these countries will return to December 22, 2010 for October, the first month of fiscal year 2018.

Family Fourth Preference (F4): Worldwide, China, El Salvador, Guatemala, India, and Honduras: The continued high level of demand for F4 preference numbers has required the retrogression of the final action date for the month of September. This action has been taken in an attempt to hold number use within the Worldwide F4 annual limit. When the final action dates for these countries are announced for October, the first month of fiscal year 2018, they will be returned to the final action dates which had been established for August.

Please Note: Applicants entitled to immigrant status become documentarily qualified at their own initiative and convenience. By no means has every applicant with a priority date earlier than a prevailing final action date been processed for final visa action. On the contrary, visa allotments are made only on the basis of the total applicants reported documentarily qualified each month, compared with the amount of available numbers. For example, during the past month, over 12,000 applicants who became documentarily qualified in the Family preference categories have priority dates earlier than the final action dates established for August. Such demand for visa numbers can fluctuate from month to month, with the inevitable impact on final action dates.

E. DETERMINATION OF THE NUMERICAL LIMITS ON IMMIGRANTS REQUIRED UNDER THE TERMS OF THE IMMIGRATION AND NATIONALITY ACT (INA)

The State Department is required to make a determination of the worldwide numerical limitations, as outlined in Section 201(c) and (d) of the INA, on an annual basis. These calculations are based in part on data provided by U.S. Citizen and Immigration Services (USCIS) regarding the number of immediate relative adjustments in the preceding year and the number of aliens paroled into the United States under Section 212(d) (5) in the second preceding year. Without this information, it is impossible to make an official determination of the annual limits. To avoid delays in processing while waiting for the USCIS data, the Visa Office (VO) bases allocations on the minimum annual limits outlined in Section 201 of the INA. On July 31st, USCIS provided the required data to VO.

The Department of State has determined the Family and Employment preference numerical limits for FY-2017 in accordance with the terms of Section 201 of the INA. These numerical limitations for FY-2017 are as follows:

| | |
|--|---------|
| Worldwide Family-Sponsored preference limit: | 226,000 |
| Worldwide Employment-Based preference limit: | 140,000 |

Under INA Section 202(a), the per-country limit is fixed at 7% of the family and employment annual limits. For FY-2017 the per-country limit is 25,620. The dependent area annual limit is 2%, or 7,320.

F. REPORTING CHANGES OF ADDRESS FOR CASES BEING PROCESSED OVERSEAS

All readers should be aware that any change of address for applicants processing their case overseas should always be reported to the National Visa Center (NVC). For faster processing, please provide an email address where NVC can contact you about your case. It is essential that NVC have the correct address so they can send information regarding the processing of the case to the applicant.

When contacting NVC directly about an immigrant visa petition, always include the following information:

- NVC case number or USCIS receipt number
- Principal applicant's name
- Principal applicant's date of birth
- Petitioner's name

Email (Preferred)

Email is NVC's preferred method of communication. You may email questions to NVC by using the online Public Inquiry Form located at: <https://nvc.state.gov/ask>

Telephone

(603) 334-0700. Customer Service Representatives can speak with you Monday through Friday from 7:00 a.m. to Midnight (Eastern Time), excluding holidays.

Postal Mail

You can mail NVC letters to the following address:

National Visa Center
Attn: WC
31 Rochester Avenue, Suite 200
Portsmouth, NH 03801-2915

G. 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/content/visas/english/law-and-policy/bulletin.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:

listserv@calist.state.gov

and in the message body type:

Subscribe Visa-Bulletin

(example: *Subscribe Visa-Bulletin*)

To be removed from the Department of State's E-mail subscription list for the "Visa Bulletin", send an e-mail message to the following E-mail address:

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 final action dates which can be heard at: **(202) 485-7699**. The recording is normally updated on/about the 10th of each month with information on final action 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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