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Avoid Diversity Visa (DV) or Green Card Lottery Fraud or Scams

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Avoid Diversity Visa (DV) or Green Card Lottery Fraud or Scams

Recently, the Department of State (DOS), Office of Visa Services, issues another fraud warning advising the public of a substantial increase in fraudulent emails and letters sent to Diversity Immigrant Visa (DV) program (Visa Lottery)(also known as “green card lottery”) applicants. Posing as the U.S. government, these fraudulent letters and e-mails request DV applicants for payment of fees. In addition, the scammers will also claim that, for a fee, they can increase a person’s chances of winning the green card lottery; or that people from ineligible countries can still “qualify” to enter the lottery.

Green Card lottery is one of the U.S. green card programs to allow the lottery winners to apply for immigrant visas to live and work in the U.S. as green card holders. Each year, the State Department conducts a lottery through its DV program to distribute applications for 50,000 immigrant visas. PLEASE NOTE, winners are selected randomly, and there is no fee to enter the lottery.

The DOS reminds the public that DV-2012 applicants will not receive any letter of notification from the U.S. government. DV-2012 applicant must [check their status online](#), and that **DV Entry Status Check will only be provided through the DOS secure online site**, at <http://www.dvlottery.state.gov/>

DOS has issued Frequently Asked Questions to educate green card lottery applicants or potential applicants from becoming victims of green card lottery fraud. For more information, please visit http://travel.state.gov/visa/immigrants/types/types_1749.html. Some examples of the DOS’ advice include:

A. *How do I know if a website or email is from the U.S. government?*

When surfing the internet on the U.S. government, the DOS advises the public that:

1. Internet sites ending in the “.gov” top-level domain suffix are official government websites. Official U.S. government email addresses also end in “.gov,” and any

visa-related correspondence coming from an address that does not end with “.gov” should be considered suspect.

2. To link directly to the more than 200 U.S. Embassy and Consulate websites, visit www.usembassy.gov. Visa information on official U.S. government websites ending in “.gov” is official and correct.
3. The main U.S. government websites containing official visa and immigration information, including free information and forms, are:

U.S. Embassy and Consulate websites:	http://www.usembassy.gov/
Department of State, Consular Affairs travel website:	http://travel.state.gov
Department of State, Diversity Visa Lottery website:	http://www.dvlottery.state.gov
Department of Homeland Security (DHS):	http://www.dhs.gov
DHS, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services:	http://www.uscis.gov
DHS, U.S. Customs and Border Protection:	http://www.cbp.gov
DHS, Immigration and Customs Enforcement:	http://www.ice.gov
Department of Labor:	http://www.doleta.gov

B. Is immigration information on other websites official?

Even though some non-governmental websites provide legitimate and useful immigration- and visa-related information and services, these information may not be correct or up-to-date. The public should, therefore, always verify the information with an official U.S. government source. Visa applicants are advised to be cautious in all dealings with companies that claim to offer any assistance in obtaining U.S. visas.

Regardless of the content of other websites, the Department of State does not endorse, recommend, or sponsor any information or material shown on non-governmental websites (e.g., addresses ending with “.com,” “.org” or “.net”).

C. How do I recognize fraudulent websites and emails posing as U.S. government?

Some websites and emails try to mislead customers and members of the public into thinking they are official U.S. government websites.

These fraudulent or misleading e-mails or websites ARE NOT from the U.S. government because they do not have the “.gov” suffix on their addresses.

D. What is the purpose of these fraudulent websites and emails?

The purpose of these green card lottery fraudulent websites and emails are to defraud money from the public. For examples:

1. Some of these fraudulent websites or e-mails may require payment for immigration and visa services. If payment is made to a non-governmental source, this payment is not received by the U.S. government and does not apply toward visa processing. Sometimes

these costs are for information or forms that are otherwise available for free on official U.S. government websites.

2. The imposter websites and emails cannot provide the services they advertise and for which they require payment. For example, many fraudulent emails promise U.S. visas or “green cards” in return for a large fee. Please note, only the U.S. government has the authority to approve U.S. visas and green cards. These non-governmental, unofficial organizations are not able to provide these services.
3. The fraudulent websites or e-mails may request personal information which could result in identity fraud or theft.

E. Where do I get official information on the Diversity Visa program and how do I check my status?

The only official information on green card lottery program is from the U.S. government websites ending in “.gov,” such as <http://travel.state.gov> or <http://www.dvlottery.state.gov>. The only official way to apply for the green card lottery is directly through the official U.S. Department of State website during the specified and limited registration period.

DV program entrants must check their status of their DV lottery entry online at <http://www.dvlottery.state.gov>:

DV 2011: Entrants who completed online DV-2011 entries between October 2, 2009, and November 30, 2009, and who were selected in the random drawing were notified by the Department of State, Kentucky Consular Center, **by letter**. Entrants can also check the status of their entries at <http://www.dvlottery.state.gov> from July 1, 2010, until June 30, 2011, using the information from their DV-2011 confirmation page saved at the time of DV entry. **For successful DV 2011 entrants, the diversity immigrant visa application process must be completed and visas issued by September 30, 2011.**

DV 2012: Entrants who completed online DV-2012 entries **will not** receive notification letters from the Kentucky Consular Center, and must check the status of their entries at <http://www.dvlottery.state.gov> between May 1, 2011, and June 30, 2012.

Notice: The U.S. Department of State’s Kentucky Consular Center DOES NOT E-MAIL NOTIFICATIONS to green card lottery entrants informing them of their winning entries. No other organization or private company is authorized to notify DV applicants of their winning entries, or the next steps in the process. Imposters frequently contact DV applicants asking for money or personal information through websites, emails, and letters. Entrants should only refer to the online status check at <http://www.dvlottery.state.gov> or instructions on <http://travel.state.gov> for official information about the DV process. For more information about the Diversity Visas review the Department of State, [Diversity Visa Program](#) webpage.

To learn more about DV or green card lottery scams, please see the [Federal Trade Commission Warning](#) at <http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/edu/pubs/consumer/alerts/alt003.shtm>

F. Where can I find information on international financial scams?

For additional information on international scams involving internet dating, inheritance, work permits, overpayment, and money-laundering, please visit the [International Financial Scams](http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/financial_scams/financial_scams_3155.html) page at http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/financial_scams/financial_scams_3155.html

G. How do I report internet fraud or unsolicited email?

If a person wishes to file a complaint about internet fraud, please visit <http://econsumer.gov/> . econsumer.gov is a joint effort of consumer protection agencies from 17 nations, hosted by the Federal Trade Commission.

In addition, a person can also visit the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) [Internet Crime Complaint Center \(IC3\)](http://www.ic3.gov/default.aspx) website at <http://www.ic3.gov/default.aspx>.

If a person wishes to file a complaint about unsolicited email, please contact the U.S. Department of Justice at <http://www.justice.gov/spam.htm> .

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We represent employers, and individuals and their families in green card, work visa and waiver matters in U.S. immigration law. We also have a focus on self-petition green card cases such as extraordinary ability and exceptional ability.

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