Immigration resource news magazine for United states of america

Immigration Magazine

Immigrate to the U.S. via Green Card Lottery (DV Lottery): Diversity Immigrant Visa (DV) Program

Isabel Davila · Wednesday, January 19th, 2011

Each year, the Diversity Immigrant Visa (DV) Program (DV lottery)(also known as green card lottery) makes 50,000 immigrant visas available to eligible applicants who are selected in the lottery. To qualify for the lottery, an applicant must be a native of one of the listed country; and have the U.S. equivalent of a high school diploma, or have 2 years of related experience in the last 5 years in an occupation that requires at least 2 years of experience or training.

The initial DV lottery submission is absolutely free.

The U.S. Department of State (DOS) advises that there are many websites posing as the U.S. government and charging fees for this online submission. Applicants should be wary of websites posting as the U.S. government. Only applicants who win the lottery will be required to, eventually, pay any visa or other fees set by and to the U.S. government.

For applicants who seek help to submit a DV lottery entry using “Visa Agents”, Visa Consultants” or other individuals (collectively, Facilitator), the DOS further advises applicants to be present during the online DV lottery submission to ensure that all his/her personal information is entered accurately, and to retain the confirmation page containing the unique confirmation number because some Facilitators may extort money in exchange for the confirmation number. The confirmation number is the ONLY way for an applicant to verify if (s)he has been selected in the DV lottery and further procedures.

While applicants are free to seek help, most applicants submit this initial part of the DV lottery application on their own. Some winning applicants do seek out help from lawyers in preparing for their visa interviews since the information and documentation required for the visa interview is a bit more detailed than the initial free online submission.

If an applicant can meet these requirements, they can submit their entries online free

at http://www.dvlottery.state.gov/ . Each applicant will be required to electronically submit photographs and information about themselves, their spouse, and unmarried children under the age of 21. The information required of each applicant and their family members includes, but are not limited to:

1. FULL NAME – Last/Family Name, First Name, Middle Name

2. DATE OF BIRTH – Day, Month, Year

3. GENDER – Male or Female

4. CITY WHERE YOU WERE BORN

5. COUNTRY WHERE YOU WERE BORN – The name of the country should be that which is currently in use for the place where you were born.

6. COUNTRY OF ELIGIBILITY OR CHARGEABILITY FOR THE DV PROGRAM – Your country of eligibility will normally be the same as your country of birth. Your country of eligibility is not related to where you live. If you were born in a country that is not eligible for the DV program, please review the instructions to see if there is another option for country chargeability available for you. For additional information on chargeability, please review DOS DV 2012 Instructions under “Frequently Asked Question #1”.

7. MAILING ADDRESS – In Care Of, Address Line 1, Address Line 2, City/Town, District/Country/Province/State, Postal Code/Zip Code, and Country

8. COUNTRY WHERE YOU LIVE TODAY

9. PHONE NUMBER (optional)

10. E-MAIL ADDRESS – provide an e-mail address to which you have direct access. You will NOT receive an official selection letter at this address. However, if your entry is selected and you respond to the notification of your selection through the Entry Status Check, you will receive follow-up communication from the Kentucky Consular Center (KCC) by e-mail notifying you that details of your immigrant visa interview are available on Entry Status Check.

11. WHAT IS THE HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION YOU HAVE ACHIEVED, AS OF TODAY? You must indicate which one of the following represents your own highest level of educational achievement: (1) Primary school only, (2) High school, no degree, (3) High school degree, (4) Vocational school, (5) Some university courses, (6) University degree, (7) Some graduate level courses, (8) Master degree, (9) Some doctorate level courses, and (10) Doctorate degree

12. MARITAL STATUS – Unmarried, Married, Divorced, Widowed, or Legally Separated

13. NUMBER OF CHILDREN – Entries MUST include the name, date, and place of birth of your spouse and all natural children. Entries must also include all children

legally adopted by you, and stepchildren who are unmarried and under the age of 21 on the date of your electronic entry , even if you are no longer legally married to the child's parent, and even if the spouse or child does not currently reside with you and/or will not immigrate with you. Note that married children and children 21 years or older are not eligible for the DV; however, U.S. law protects children from "aging out" in certain circumstances. If your electronic DV entry is made before your unmarried child turns 21, and the child turns 21 before visa issuance, he/she may be protected from aging out by the Child Status Protection Act and be treated as though he/she were under 21 for visa-processing purposes. Failure to list all children who are eligible will result in disqualification of the principal applicant and refusal of all visas in the case at the time of the visa interview. See DOS DV 2012 Instructions under Frequently Asked Question #11.

14. SPOUSE INFORMATION – Name, Date of Birth, Gender, City/Town of Birth, Country of Birth, and Photograph. Failure to list your eligible spouse will result in disqualification of the principal applicant and refusal of all visas in the case at the time of the visa interview. You must list your spouse here even if you plan to be divorced before you apply for a visa.

15. CHILDREN INFORMATION – Name, Date of Birth, Gender, City/Town of Birth, Country of Birth, and Photograph: Include all children declared in question #13 above.

When an applicant completes the online lottery application, they will get a confirmation number which they should print out. This confirmation number will be the only means by which the applicant will learn of their having won the lottery. Entry into each year's DV Lottery is allowed only during a limited period of time. The period to apply for the 2011 and 2012 DV lottery has already closed. The entry period for the 2013 DV lottery will be announced on this website.

Once the application is submitted online, applicants can check the status of their DV lottery application online at www.dvlottery.state.gov . 2011 DV lottery winners have already been notified that they won. 2012 DV lottery winners will only find out that they have won by using the Entry Status Check section of the DV lottery website and how to proceed on their applications. Non-winning entries will learn of their non-selection using the Entry Status Check online system as well. The entry status check portion of the above website will provide winning applicants with a link to further instructions on how to proceed on their applications if they are selected.

If you would like more information on the DV lottery, please consult the website above or contact an immigration attorney.

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We represent employers, and individuals and their families in green card and work visa matters in U.S. immigration law.

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This entry was posted on Wednesday, January 19th, 2011 at 11:46 am and is filed under Green Card – Others, Immigration Forms, Immigration News
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