



*United States Department of State
Bureau of Consular Affairs*

VISA BULLETIN

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IMMIGRANT NUMBERS FOR MARCH 2020

A. STATUTORY NUMBERS

This bulletin summarizes the availability of immigrant numbers during March 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 February 10th. 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. 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, EL SALVADOR, GUATEMALA, HONDURAS, INDIA, MEXICO, PHILIPPINES, and VIETNAM.

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	08OCT13	08OCT13	08OCT13	15SEP97	01SEP09
F2A	C	C	C	C	C
F2B	15SEP14	15SEP14	15SEP14	15OCT98	01OCT09
F3	15DEC07	15DEC07	15DEC07	08APR96	01OCT99
F4	01JUL06	01JUL06	08DEC04	15FEB98	01DEC99

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	08JUN14	08JUN14	08JUN14	22NOV99	01MAY10
F2A	01JAN20	01JAN20	01JAN20	01JAN20	01JAN20
F2B	15MAY15	15MAY15	15MAY15	22JUN99	01JUN10
F3	15AUG08	15AUG08	15AUG08	15JUL00	01JUN00
F4	22JUL07	22JUL07	08AUG05	08JAN99	01JUL00

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.)

	All Charge- ability Areas Except Those Listed	CHINA- mainland born	EL SALVADOR GUATEMALA HONDURAS	INDIA	MEXICO	PHILIPPINES	VIETNAM
<u>Employment- Based</u>							
1st	01MAR19	01JUN17	01MAR19	01MAR15	01MAR19	01MAR19	01MAR19
2nd	C	15AUG15	C	22MAY09	C	C	C
3rd	01JAN17	22MAR16	01JAN17	15JAN09	01JAN17	01JAN17	01JAN17
Other Workers	01JAN17	01JUN08	01JAN17	15JAN09	01JAN17	01JAN17	01JAN17
4th	C	C	15JUL16	C	15NOV17	C	C
Certain Religious Workers	C	C	15JUL16	C	15NOV17	C	C
5th Non-Regional Center (C5 and T5)	C	15MAY15	C	22OCT18	C	C	15JAN17
5th Regional Center (I5 and R5)	C	15MAY15	C	22OCT18	C	C	15JAN17

*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 final action date reached November 19, 1997 during Fiscal Year 2001, the reduction in the EW annual limit to 5,000 began in Fiscal Year 2002. For Fiscal Year 2020 this reduction will be limited to approximately 350.

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 Charge-ability Areas Except Those Listed	CHINA - mainland born	EL SALVADOR GUATEMALA HONDURAS	INDIA	MEXICO	PHILIPPINES
1st	C	01OCT17	C	15MAR17	C	C
2nd	C	01AUG16	C	01JUL09	C	C
3rd	01JAN19	01MAR17	01JAN19	01FEB10	01JAN19	01JAN19
Other Workers	01JAN19	01AUG08	01JAN19	01FEB10	01JAN19	01JAN19
4th	C	C	15AUG16	C	C	C
Certain Religious Workers	C	C	15AUG16	C	C	C
5 th Non-Regional Center (C5 and T5)	C	15DEC15	C	C	C	C
5 th Regional Center (I5 and R5)	C	15DEC15	C	C	C	C

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

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

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 will result in reduction of the DV-2020 annual limit to approximately 54,650. 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 March, immigrant numbers in the DV category are available to qualified DV-2020 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	31,500	Except: Egypt 22,000
ASIA	12,500	Except: Iran 7,600 Nepal 8,800
EUROPE	21,000	
NORTH AMERICA (BAHAMAS)	9	
OCEANIA	1,625	
SOUTH AMERICA, and the CARIBBEAN	1,300	

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-2020 program ends as of September 30, 2020. DV visas may not be issued to DV-2020 applicants after that date. Similarly, spouses and children accompanying or following to join DV-2020 principals are only entitled to derivative DV status until September 30, 2020. DV visa availability through the very end of FY-2020 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 APRIL

For April, immigrant numbers in the DV category are available to qualified DV-2020 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	41,000	Except:	Egypt 30,700
ASIA	15,800	Except:	Iran 9,800 Nepal 10,500
EUROPE	21,200		
NORTH AMERICA (BAHAMAS)	16		
OCEANIA	1,975		
SOUTH AMERICA, and the CARIBBEAN	1,560		

D. OVERSUBSCRIPTION OF THE WORLDWIDE, EL SALVADOR, GUATEMALA, HONDURAS, MEXICO, AND PHILIPPINES EMPLOYMENT-BASED THIRD AND THIRD OTHER WORKER PREFERENCE CATEGORIES

As readers were advised in item E of the February Visa Bulletin, there continues to be an extremely high rate of demand for Employment Third (E3) and Third Other Worker (EW) numbers, primarily for USCIS adjustment of status applicants. Therefore, pursuant to the Immigration and Nationality Act, it has been necessary to impose E3 and EW final action dates for the month of March.

The March final action date is 01JAN17 and is being imposed immediately for all future requests for numbers. This action will allow the Department to hold worldwide number use within the maximum allowed under these FY 2020 annual limits. No forward movement of this date is expected in the foreseeable future.

E. EMPLOYMENT-BASED FIFTH PREFERENCE VISA AVAILABILITY

There has been a very rapid advancement of the China-mainland born fifth preference final action date for the month of March. This action has been taken in an effort to generate an increased level of demand. Despite the large amount of registered China fifth preference demand, currently there are not enough applicants who are actively pursuing final action on their case to fully utilize the amount of numbers which are expected to be available under the annual limit.

Once large numbers of applicants do begin to have their cases brought to final action, some type of corrective action may be required to control number use within the annual limit. It is important to remember that applicants who are entitled to immigrant status become documentarily qualified, and potentially eligible for interview, 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.

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 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 17th 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.)