

## Diversity Visa "Green Card" Lottery to Open Soon

Countries with high rates of immigration are NOT qualified. These typically include Brazil, China, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, India, Jamaica, Mexico, Poland, and the UK among others. By contrast, most African and European countries are typically eligible. Nationality is determined by the country of birth of the applicant, his or her spouse, or parents (provided certain requirements are met).

Last year, the government received over 14 million entries for the 50,000 available visas. Countries with the highest number of winners included Nigeria, Ukraine and Ethiopia.

### HOW TO APPLY

To enter the lottery, the foreign national must submit an electronic application through the official U.S. Department of State website (<http://travel.state.gov>) during a specified time each year. This year, registration will begin on Tuesday, October 2, 2012 at noon and end on Saturday, November 3, 2012 at noon. Recent photographs must be submitted electronically with the entry form. Next summer a computer will randomly select individuals from each qualified region. All applicants must check their case status on-line. Those selected will be directed to a confirmation page that will provide further instructions. If selected, the applicant and eligible family members (spouse, unmarried children under age 21) will then need to collect further documents and appear for an interview, typically at a US consulate.

### COMMON PITFALLS

The lottery process has a set of strict rules and failure to follow these rules may result in disqualification or potential immigration problems later on. Submitting multiple applications will result in the immediate disqualification of an applicant. However, a husband and wife can submit separate applications and immigrate together if only one of them is selected. Additionally, if the applicant omits his or her spouse or child from the application, this relative may not be able to get a green card, and the applicant may later have negative immigration consequences.

Failure to obtain a visa to the US between October 1 and September 30 of the government year following selection will result in disqualification from the program, so selected applicants will need to act on their visa applications quickly. Although it's possible to apply for the lottery from the US, those who are unlawfully present in the US will rarely be eligible to receive a green card.

### FRAUD WARNING

Every year, fraudulent websites pose as the official U.S. government site and charge applicants money to "register". Be wary of anyone seeking to collect a registration or filing fee for assistance in submitting an application. The government does not charge a fee for submitting the application. Only Internet sites that end with the .gov domain are official U.S. government websites. Others should not be trusted, and in no case should you send any personal information to any non-governmental websites, as it might be used for identity theft.

For these reasons, it is highly recommended to contact a qualified immigration attorney when applying for a green card through the diversity immigrant visa lottery. The attorneys at Fletcher Tilton, PC have extensive experience with this process and will be happy to provide assistance in submitting the application.

### RESPONSIVE SOLUTIONS

Two simple words that explain our commitment to you. Being responsive is a critical element in building a strong attorney-client relationship. Whether you are a new or existing client, we'll be quick to respond to your needs with the knowledge necessary to find solutions to your legal concerns.

[www.flechertilton.com](http://www.flechertilton.com)

#### THE GUARANTY BUILDING

370 Main Street, 12th Floor  
Worcester, MA 01608  
TEL 508.459.8000 FAX 508.459.8300

#### THE MEADOWS

161 Worcester Road, Suite 501  
Framingham, MA 01701  
TEL 508.532.3500 FAX 508.532.3100

#### CAPE COD

1579 Falmouth Road, Suite 3  
Centerville, MA 02632  
TEL 508.815.2500 FAX 508.459.8300