
Visa Bulletin For October 2020

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A. STATUTORY NUMBERS

This bulletin summarizes the availability of immigrant numbers during October 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 September 8th. 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.)

Family-Sponsored	All Chargeability Areas Except Those Listed	CHINA-mainland born	INDIA	MEXICO	PHILIPPINES
F1	15SEP14	15SEP14	15SEP14	08JAN98	15DEC11
F2A	C	C	C	C	C
F2B	08JUL15	08JUL15	08JUL15	08APR99	01AUG11
F3	15JUN08	15JUN08	15JUN08	01AUG96	15FEB02
F4	22SEP06	22SEP06	08MAR05	22JUN98	01JAN02

**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	22JUL15	22JUL15	22JUL15	22FEB00	08OCT12
F2A	01AUG20	01AUG20	01AUG20	01AUG20	01AUG20
F2B	01MAY16	01MAY16	01MAY16	01DEC99	01APR12
F3	01JUN09	01JUN09	01JUN09	15AUG00	22DEC02
F4	15SEP07	15SEP07	22NOV05	22APR99	01SEP02

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.)

Employment-based	All Chargeability Areas Except Those Listed	CHINA-mainland born	EL SALVADOR GUATEMALA HONDURAS	INDIA	MEXICO	PHILIPPINES	VIETNAM
1st	C	01JUN18	C	01JUN18	C	C	C
2nd	C	01MAR16	C	01SEP09	C	C	C
3rd	C	01JUL17	C	15JAN10	C	C	C
Other Workers	C	01DEC08	C	15JAN10	C	C	C
4th	C	C	01AUG17	C	01SEP18	C	C
Certain Religious Workers	U	U	U	U	U	U	U
5th Non-Regional Center (C5 and T5)	C	15AUG15	C	C	C	C	01AUG17
5th Regional Center (I5 and R5)	U	U	U	U	U	U	U

*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

provides that once the Employment First 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 2021 this reduction will be limited to approximately 150.

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	EL SALVADOR GUATEMALA HONDURAS	INDIA	MEXICO	PHILIPPINES
1st	C	01SEP20	C	01SEP20	C	C

2nd	C	01OCT16	C	15MAY11	C	C
3rd	C	01JUN18	C	01JAN15	C	C
Other Workers	C	01OCT08	C	01JAN15	C	C
4th	C	C	01FEB18	C	C	C
Certain Religious Workers	C	C	01FEB18	C	C	C
5th Non-Regional Center (C5 and T5)	C	15DEC15	C	C	C	C
5th 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 OCTOBER

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-2021 annual limit to approximately 54,850. 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 October, immigrant numbers in the DV category are available to qualified DV-2021 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:

	All DV Chargeability	
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Region	Areas Except Those Listed Separately	
AFRICA	2,900	Except: Egypt 2,700
ASIA	1,600	Except: Iran 1,000 Nepal 1,050
EUROPE	2,500	
NORTH AMERICA (BAHAMAS)	2	
OCEANIA	250	
SOUTH AMERICA, and the CARIBBEAN	350	

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-2021 program ends as of September 30, 2021. DV visas may not be issued to DV-2021 applicants after that date. Similarly, spouses and children accompanying or following to join DV-2021 principals are only entitled to derivative DV status until September 30, 2021. DV visa availability through the very end of FY-2021 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 NOVEMBER

For November, immigrant numbers in the DV category are available to qualified DV-2021 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	5,100	Except: Egypt 3,300
ASIA	2,800	Except: Iran 1,300 Nepal 2,700
EUROPE	4,800	
NORTH AMERICA (BAHAMAS)	3	
OCEANIA	350	
SOUTH AMERICA, and the CARIBBEAN	475	

D. FOR THE LATEST INFORMATION ON VISA PROCESSING AT U.S. EMBASSIES AND CONSULATES DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC, PLEASE VISIT THE BUREAU OF CONSULAR AFFAIRS WEBSITE AT TRAVEL.STATE.GOV

E. MOVEMENT OF THE OCTOBER FINAL ACTION AND APPLICATION FILING DATES

Family-sponsored: Final Action Dates movement during the past six months focused on two goals: 1) to allow number use to be maximized should it become possible to return to normal visa processing levels at some point prior to the end of the fiscal year, and 2) to encourage applicants to continue acting on their cases in a timely manner to support long-term recovery from the suspension of routine services. This movement ensured sufficient demand would be available for adjudication throughout FY 2021 under a resumption of full operational status.

VO learned during October 2020 date determination, that movement of final action dates in the previous six months combined with the global suspension of routine visa services resulted in enough accumulated demand to fully utilize the numbers normally made available during the first quarter of the fiscal year. Therefore, no date movement is required at this time. VO will closely monitor the situation in the early months of the fiscal year.

Employment-based: All of the Final Action and Application Filing Dates have been advanced at a very rapid pace, in anticipation of the FY 2021 annual limit being

approximately 261,500, an all-time high. The movement of these dates has been taken in consultation with USCIS Office of Policy and Strategy to accommodate processing plans for USCIS Offices during the coming fiscal year and to maximize number use within the FY 2021 annual limits. Pending demand, in the form of applications for adjustment of status, and documentarily qualified immigrant visa applicants, is well below the estimated annual limit of 261,500.

F. VISA AVAILABILITY IN THE COMING MONTHS

FAMILY-sponsored categories (potential monthly movement)

Worldwide dates:

- F1: Up to three weeks
- F2A: Current
- F2B: Up to three weeks
- F3: Up to two weeks
- F4: Up to one week

EMPLOYMENT-based categories (potential monthly movement)

Employment First:

- WORLDWIDE: Current
- China: Rapid forward movement
- India: Rapid forward movement

Employment Second:

- Worldwide: Current
- China: Rapid forward movement
- India: Rapid forward movement

Employment Third:

- Worldwide: Current
- China: Rapid forward movement
- India: Rapid forward movement
- Mexico: Current
- Philippines: Likely to remain at the Worldwide date

Employment Third – Other Workers:

Worldwide: Current

worldwide: Current

China: Steady forward movement

Employment Fourth: Current for most countries

El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras: Steady forward movement

Mexico: Steady forward movement

Employment Fifth: The category will remain "Current" for most countries

China: No forward movement

Vietnam: Limited forward movement

The above final action date projections for the Family and Employment categories indicate what is likely to happen on a monthly basis through January. The determination of the actual monthly final action dates is subject to fluctuations in applicant demand and a number of other variables.

G. SCHEDULED EXPIRATION OF TWO EMPLOYMENT CATEGORIES

Employment Fourth Preference Certain Religious Workers (SR):

Pursuant to Section 102 of Division I, Title I of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2020 (Public Law 116-94), the non-minister special immigrant program expires on September 30, 2020. No SR visas may be issued overseas, or final action taken on adjustment of status cases, after midnight September 29, 2020. Visas issued prior to this date will only be issued with a validity date of September 29, 2020, and all individuals seeking admission as a non-minister special immigrant must be admitted (repeat, admitted) into the U.S. no later than midnight September 29, 2020.

The final action date for this category has been listed as "Unavailable" for October.

If there is legislative action extending this category for FY-2021, the final action date would immediately become "Current" for October for all countries except El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras which would be subject to an August 1, 2017 final action date and Mexico which would be

August 1, 2017 final action date and Mexico which would be subject to a September 1, 2018 final action date.

Employment Fifth Preference Categories (I5 and R5):

Section 104 of Division I, Title I of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2020 (Public Law 116-94) extended this immigrant investor pilot program until September 30, 2020.

The I5 and R5 visas may be issued until close of business on September 30, 2020, and may be issued for the full validity period. No I5 or R5 visas may be issued overseas, or final action taken on adjustment of status cases, after September 30, 2020.

The final action dates for the I5 and R5 categories have been listed as "Unavailable" for October.

If there is legislative action extending them for FY-2021, the final action dates would immediately become "Current" for October for all countries except China-mainland born I5 and R5 which would be subject to an August 15, 2015 final action date and Vietnam I5 and R5 which would be subject to an August 1, 2017 final action date.

H. OBTAINING THE MONTHLY VISA BULLETIN

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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.)

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