



2017 diversity immigrant visa program coming to a close

MSK Client Alert

October 2015

On October 1, 2015, the US Department of State commenced accepting applications for the 2017 Diversity Immigrant Visa Program. The Diversity Immigrant Visa Program (DV Program) makes available up to 50,000 immigrant visas annually to individuals who are from countries with low rates of immigration to the United States. These immigrant visas are distributed by a random selection from among all eligible entries, similar to a lottery.

Eligibility for the DV Program is based on 1) country of BIRTH not citizenship; and 2) education or work experience. For the 2017 DV Program, individuals born in the following countries are NOT eligible to apply because more than 50,000 natives of these countries immigrated to the United States in the previous five years: Bangladesh, Brazil, Canada, China (mainland-born, Hong Kong SAR and Macau SAR are eligible), Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Haiti, India, Jamaica, Mexico, Nigeria, Pakistan, Peru, Philippines, South Korea, United Kingdom (except Northern Ireland) and its dependent territories, and Vietnam.

If a DV Applicant was born in an eligible country, he/she must meet the education/work experience requirement of the DV Program by having either at least a high school education or two years of work experience within the past five years in an occupation requiring at least two years of training or experience to perform.

Eligible DV Applicants must submit their application for the 2017 DV Program no later than 12:00 noon (EST) on November 3, 2015. The electronic application is available at www.dvlottery.state.gov, and late entries or papers entries are not accepted. Only one entry per person is allowed, and individuals with more than one entry will be disqualified. DV Applicants will be randomly selected by computer from among qualified entries.

For full details and requirements, interested individuals should go to <http://>

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travel.state.gov/content/visas/en/immigrate/diversity-visa/instructions.html

Starting May 3, 2016, DV Applicants will be able to check the status of their entry by returning to www.dvlottery.state.gov, clicking on the Entrant Status Check link, and entering their unique confirmation number and personal information. This is the only method available for DV Applicants to check if they have been selected for the 2017 DV Program. The US government will not mail notification letters or contact DV Applicants directly. US Embassies and Consulates will not provide a list of DV Applicants selected for the 2017 DV Program.

If a DV Applicant is selected for the 2017 DV Program, it is important not to delay in proceeding with the next step of the immigrant visa or adjustment of status application. All processing of entries and issuance of immigrant visas as part of the 2017 DV Program must be completed by midnight September 30, 2017. Applications cannot be approved after this date.

Should you have any questions regarding the topic(s) of this alert, please contact the MSK Immigration attorney with whom you work, or you may contact the author of this alert, Benjamin Lau, Esq. at bcl@msk.com.