

# **Diversity Visa Programme**

## **2012**

**U.S. 'Green Card' Lottery**

September 2010

## U.S. Diversity Visa Programme 2012 General Information

The annual Diversity Visa Programme (DV Lottery) makes 50,000 U.S. visas available to persons meeting simple, but strict, eligibility requirements. A computer-generated, random lottery drawing chooses candidates for diversity visas.

While only 201 Irish applicants were chosen last year, Irish citizens who are interested in working in the United States are encouraged to apply for the lottery, as it is **free to enter**, and offers winning entrants the chance to apply for a 'Green Card' – allowing you to live and work in the U.S. as a legal permanent resident.

This leaflet is intended to outline some basic information on the Visa Lottery and to highlight the changes made to the Programme since last year.

**The official DV-2012 Instructions including full details on eligibility and the application process are available at the Department of State website [www.dvlottery.state.gov](http://www.dvlottery.state.gov). You are advised to read the official instructions carefully before preparing and submitting your application.**

### Registration Period

**\*\*Note that the registration period will only be open for 30 days this year\*\***

You must submit your entry for the DV-2012 Diversity Visa lottery electronically (online) between noon, Eastern Daylight Time (EDT) (GMT-4), **Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> October 2010**, and noon, Eastern Standard Time (EST) (GMT-5), **Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2010**.

You may access the electronic Diversity Visa entry form (E-DV) at [www.dvlottery.state.gov](http://www.dvlottery.state.gov) during the registration period. Paper entries will not be accepted.

You are strongly encouraged not to wait until the last week of the registration period to enter as heavy demand at that time may result in website delays. No entries will be accepted after noon, EST, on November 3<sup>rd</sup> 2010.

## How to Enter

There is only one way to enter the DV-2012 lottery. **You must submit the Electronic Diversity Visa Entry Form (E-DV Entry Form) online at [www.dvlottery.state.gov](http://www.dvlottery.state.gov).** The Department of State will not accept paper entries.

You **must complete the form in full**; otherwise your entry may be disqualified. **You may only submit one entry.** If more than one entry is submitted by you or on your behalf, you will be disqualified.

A husband and wife may submit one entry each if both spouses meet the eligibility requirements. If one spouse is selected and issued a visa, the other spouse and any unmarried children under the age of 21 can also apply for visas to accompany or follow-to-join the successful applicant.

Note that there is **no fee to enter** the DV Lottery. A DV case processing fee and regular visa fees are required later in the process **only if you are successful.**

## Photograph Requirements

In order to enter the lottery, you must submit recent photographs of you, and where applicable your spouse and all children under 21 years of age, at the same time as you submit your online DV entry form. **It is essential that you submit all required photographs as otherwise your entry will be incomplete and will not be accepted by the system.**

There are **detailed specifications** laid out for the photographs which must be strictly complied with. These exact details are available in the official DV-2012 Instructions and should be read carefully before submitting any photographs.

Sometimes people have difficulties in getting their photographs to meet the precise specifications with their own cameras or scanners. If this is the case, you could try bringing the detailed instructions to a professional camera shop or photographer and ask them to take photographs that meet the requirements.

You may test your photos for suitability through the **photo validator** link on the website [www.dvlottery.state.gov](http://www.dvlottery.state.gov) before submitting your entry. The photo validator also provides additional technical advice on photo composition, along with examples of acceptable and unacceptable photos.

## Beware of Fraudulent Websites

**Personal information and applications should only be submitted to the official website: [www.dvlottery.state.gov](http://www.dvlottery.state.gov) which is only open during the application period from 5<sup>th</sup> October 2010 until 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2010.**

This is the only official site. Only websites with '.gov' in their website address are official government sites. You should always check the web address, as there have been many instances of **fraudulent websites posing as official U.S. Government sites** or misrepresenting their services by saying that they are affiliated with the U.S. Government.

It is also important to **remember that there is no fee to apply for the DV lottery** when applying directly through the official website. Forms and information about the DV Lottery and other immigration procedures are freely available through the websites listed on the next page. **If a website requests credit card information, or another method of transferring funds, it is not the official website.**

Some non-government websites may provide legitimate and useful immigration and visa related information and services for a fee; however using such a company does not and cannot guarantee to increase your chances of being picked. The DV lottery picks people at random. **The use of an outside 'visa agent' or 'visa consultant' will NOT improve your chances of success due to the fact that successful candidates are chosen at random.**

Some other **scam websites** may require you to pay for services you will not receive in an effort to steal your money, and you may lose your opportunity to submit an entry. You may hand over your money and personal information, and often no application is actually filed. Be aware that **if you send in money to one of these scams, you may never see it again.**

### **You should be cautious of websites or emails that:**

- charge a fee to file an application for the DV Lottery;
- offer a guaranteed visa if you apply through them;
- say that their company has never had a lottery entry rejected; or
- imply that they have special expertise or a special entry form that is required to enter the lottery.

If you feel that you are the victim of a scam contact Crosscare Migrant Project or call your local Irish Immigrant Centre for assistance. If you feel that a company or consultant in connection with the DV lottery has cheated you, you can also make a formal online complaint at <http://www.ftc.gov>.

## Confirmation of Entry

When you submit the Electronic Diversity Visa Entry Form (E-DV Entry Form) online at the official website [www.dvlottery.state.gov](http://www.dvlottery.state.gov), if your online entry registers successfully in the system, a confirmation screen will be displayed straight away containing your name and a **unique confirmation number**. This confirmation number will be provided only once – at the time of your application.

**It is extremely important that you either print this confirmation page and/or keep a record of your confirmation number as this will be the only way you will be able to check whether or not you are selected in the lottery.**

## What happens next? Selection and Notification

After the DV Lottery closes for applications, a **computer randomly selects entries** from among all the entries received.

Starting from 1<sup>st</sup> May 2011 until 30<sup>th</sup> June 2012 you can go online and check the status of your application. To do this you will need to go to the website [www.dvlottery.state.gov](http://www.dvlottery.state.gov) and enter your confirmation number that you got at the time of your application, and other personal information.

### **\*\*Important Change for DV-2010\*\***

For DV-2012 the **online 'Entry Status Check' will be the only way to find out whether you have been selected in the lottery or not.**

**If you lose your confirmation number, you will not be able to check the status of your entry; and you will not receive notification by post or by email.** U.S. embassies and consulates will not provide a list of successful entrants. It is therefore essential that you keep your confirmation number.

Official notifications to those selected in the random lottery will not be sent by e-mail or by postal letter. If you receive an e-mail or letter of notification about your DV selection, you should ignore it and be aware that the message is not legitimate.

## If You Are Selected

The online Entry Status Check at [www.dvlottery.state.gov](http://www.dvlottery.state.gov) will tell you whether you were selected or not. If you are selected, it will direct you to a **confirmation page that will provide you with further instructions** on how to follow up on your selection and visa application.

There is no fee for submitting a DV lottery entry; however if you are selected, there will be fees relating to visa application and issuing. Information on these fees will be included in the instructions sent to you by the Kentucky Consular Centre.

The instructions will tell you to **pay these fees in person only at the U.S. Embassy or Consulate at the time of your visa application. You should never send money for DV fees through the mail, Western Union, or any other delivery service.**

Selection in the lottery does not automatically guarantee a visa. In order to receive a visa, you must still meet all eligibility requirements under U.S. law and attend an interview at a U.S. Embassy or Consular office.

You will be informed of the date and time of your appointment for your **immigrant visa interview at a U.S. Embassy or consular office** through the DV website's Entry Status Check. You will not be informed by email or letter of the details of your interview appointment. (However you may receive an email from the Kentucky Consular Center notifying you that details of your interview appointment are available on Entry Status Check.)

Interviews will begin in October 2011. If you are selected and you provide the information requested in the notification instructions, you will be informed of your visa interview appointment through the DV website's Entry Status Check four to six weeks before the scheduled interview.

If you are selected, you are **entitled to apply for a visa between 1<sup>st</sup> October 2011 and 30<sup>th</sup> September 2012 only**. All applicants must obtain the DV visa or adjust status by 30<sup>th</sup> September 2012. There is no carry-over of DV benefits into the next year for persons who are selected but who do not obtain visas before 30<sup>th</sup> September 2012.

Instructions for people who have been selected can also be found at the following webpage: [http://www.travel.state.gov/visa/visa\\_4756.html](http://www.travel.state.gov/visa/visa_4756.html).

## Further Information

Further official information on the DV Lottery can be found on the following **U.S. Government websites**:

- Diversity Visa Lottery Instructions:  
[www.travel.state.gov/visa/immigrants/types/types\\_1318.html](http://www.travel.state.gov/visa/immigrants/types/types_1318.html)
- Official Instructions in English: [www.travel.state.gov/pdf/DV-2012instructions.pdf](http://www.travel.state.gov/pdf/DV-2012instructions.pdf)
- Diversity Visa Lottery Programme Overview:  
[www.travel.state.gov/visa/immigrants/types/types\\_1322.html](http://www.travel.state.gov/visa/immigrants/types/types_1322.html)
- **To apply online and to check the status of your entry:**  
[www.dvlottery.state.gov](http://www.dvlottery.state.gov)

Information may also be available from **U.S. Embassies/Consulates**.

People currently living in the U.S. who intend to apply for the lottery should check with one of the **Irish Centres** regarding their eligibility for the Programme and for assistance in completing the application. These Centres can provide accurate information about how to submit an application and will also provide assistance to anyone who needs help. A list of Irish Centres in the U.S. can be found at [www.ciic-usa.org](http://www.ciic-usa.org).

Additionally, any applicants currently living in the U.S. who are successful in the lottery should check with an **immigration expert/attorney**, or with one of the Irish Centres to make sure that they are eligible.

**Alternatively please contact us at Crosscare Migrant Project**



**Tel: +353 1 873 2844**

**Email: [migrantproject@crosscare.ie](mailto:migrantproject@crosscare.ie)**

**Web: [www.migrantproject.ie](http://www.migrantproject.ie)**

***Disclaimer:*** This document is a guideline issued by Crosscare Migrant Project and should not be interpreted as a legal document.