



U.S. Embassy, Monrovia
Department of State
8800 Monrovia Place
Dulles, VA 20189
Email: ConsularMonrovia@state.gov

DATE: 20 October 2017
SUBJECT: 2019 Diversity Visa Program

The Department of State administers the Congressionally-mandated Diversity Immigrant Visa Program annually. Section 203(c) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) provides for a class of immigrants known as “diversity immigrants” from countries with historically low rates of immigration to the United States. For Fiscal Year 2019, 50,000 Diversity Visas (DVs) will be available.

Applicants who are selected in the program must meet simple but strict eligibility requirements to qualify for a diversity visa. The Department of State determines selectees through a randomized computer drawing. The Department of State distributes diversity visas among six geographic regions, and no single country may receive more than seven percent of the available DVs in any one year.

Unfortunately, due to technical issues, the current registration period for Diversity Visa-2019 is being extended, and all enrollments made prior to October 18, 2017, will need to be resubmitted. We are currently awaiting the results of systems’ testing, but anticipate **the new entry period for DV-2019 will open for electronic entries at 4PM, Liberia Time, Wednesday, October 18, 2017, and close at 4PM, Liberia Time, Wednesday, November 22, 2017.**

Applicants who entered before Wednesday, October 18, 2017, will not be considered and will need to submit another entry during the new registration period. These applicants may submit a new entry without fear of disqualification for submitting more than one entry.

Questions on the Application Process:

- Who can apply for the DV program?

U.S. immigration law and regulations require that every DV entrant must have at least a high school education or its equivalent or have two years of work experience within the past five years in an occupation that requires at least two years of training or experience. A “high school education or equivalent” is defined as successful completion of a 12-year course of elementary and secondary education in the United States OR the successful completion in another country of a formal course of elementary and secondary education comparable to a high school education in the United States. Only formal courses of study meet this requirement; correspondence programs or equivalency certificates (such as the General Equivalency Diploma G.E.D.) are not acceptable. You must present documentary proof of education or work experience to the consular officer at the time of the visa interview.

If you do not meet the requirements for education or work experience, your entry will be disqualified at the time of your visa interview, and no visas will be issued to you or any of your family members.

- Can someone else play DV for me?

We encourage you to prepare and submit your own entry, but you may have someone submit the entry for you. Regardless of whether you submit your own entry, or an attorney, friend, relative, or someone else submits it on your behalf, only one entry may be submitted in your name. You, as the entrant, are responsible for ensuring that information in the entry is correct and complete; entries that are not correct or complete may be disqualified. Entrants should keep their own confirmation number so that they are able to independently check the status of their entry using Entrant Status Check at dvlottery.state.gov. Entrants should retain access to the email account used in the E-DV submission.

- What are the fees to play DV?

There is no cost to enter the lottery. However, if you are selected and apply for a Diversity Visa, you must pay all required visa application fees at the time of visa application and interview directly to the consular cashier at the U.S. embassy or consulate.

- What family members must I include on my DV entry?

Spouse: If you are legally married, you must list your spouse regardless of whether he/she lives with you or intends to immigrate to the United States. You must list your spouse even if you currently are separated from him/her, unless you are legally separated. Legal separation is an arrangement when a couple remains married but live apart, following a court order. Failure to list your eligible spouse is grounds for disqualification. If you are divorced or your spouse is deceased, you do not have to list your former spouse.

Children: You must list ALL your living children who are unmarried and under 21 years of age at the time of your initial DV entry, whether they are your natural children, your step-children (even if you are now divorced from that child's parent), your spouse's children, or children you have formally adopted in accordance with the applicable laws. List all children under 21 years of age at the time of your electronic entry, even if they no longer reside with you.

- If you list family members on your entry, are they required to apply for a visa or to immigrate or travel with you?

No. However, if you fail to include an eligible dependent on your original entry, your case will be disqualified at the time of your visa interview, and no visas will be issued to you or any of your family members. This only applies to those who were family members at the time the original application was submitted, not those acquired at a later date.

- Can I add parents, siblings, nephews and nieces to my DV entry?

No. Parents and siblings of the entrant are ineligible to receive DV visas as dependents, and you should not include them in your entry.

- What if I don't have a WAEC score?

It was important to emphasize the need to meet the academic requirements as early as possible; many principal applicants wait until they receive notification that they have “won” DV or have been chosen as a “selectee” to complete their high school course work by sitting for the WAEC – often, the results are not received before the DV season ends on September 30 and the cases are closed. DV entrants were encouraged to take the one year between their DV entry date and possible interview date to ensure they complete high school and pass the WAEC exam.

- Can I only enter once during the registration period?

Yes, the law allows only one entry by or for each person during each registration period. The Department of State uses sophisticated technology to detect multiple entries. Individuals with more than one entry will be disqualified. **However, for DV 2019 applicants, if their application was submitted before Wednesday, October 18, 2017, they will need to submit another application during the new registration period. These applicants may submit a new entry without fear of disqualification for submitting more than one entry.**

- How will I know when I am selected?

When an entry has been selected, the entrant will receive notification of his or her selection through the Entrant Status Check available starting May 1, 2018, on the E-DV website dvlottery.state.gov. You must use your confirmation number to access the Entrant Status Check. Entrant Status Check is the sole means by which the Department of State will notify you if you are selected, provide further instructions on your visa application, and notify you of your immigrant visa interview appointment date and time. Additionally, the U.S. government will not send out notifications to those not selected.

- Will I receive information from the Department of State by email or by postal mail?

No. The U.S. government has never sent emails to notify individuals that they have been selected, and there are no plans to use email for this purpose for the DV-2019 program. If you are a selectee, you will only receive email communications regarding your visa appointment after you have responded to the notification instructions on Entrant Status Check. **The Department of State will never ask you to send money by mail or by services such as Western Union.**

- If I am selected, does it guarantee I will receive a visa?

No. Selection merely means that you are eligible to apply for a Diversity Visa. Selected applicants must be prepared to act promptly on their cases. Individuals who miss their appointments or come without all required documents risk that a visa will not be available.

- If I receive a visa through the DV program, will the U.S. government pay for my airfare to the United States, help me find housing and employment, and/or provide healthcare or any subsidies until I am fully settled?

No. The U.S. government will not provide any of these services to you if you receive a visa through the DV program. If you are selected to apply for a DV, you must demonstrate that you will not become a public charge in the United States before being issued a visa. This evidence may be in the form of a combination of your personal assets, an Affidavit of Support (Form I-134) submitted by a relative or friend residing in the United States, an offer of employment from an employer in the United States, or other evidence.

Any additional advice you would like to share with our applicants?

- If you plan to enter, protect yourself: submit your entry yourself and ask a trusted friend or family member for help. Remember, visa fixers only want your money and they can't increase your chances of winning.
- If you cannot submit your own entry, it is critical to check that the information submitted on their behalf (photo, name, date, place, country of birth) was also correct and complete, as the applicants remain responsible for the information submitted under his/her name.
- Before you enter the DV lottery, be sure to check the entry requirements to confirm that you qualify. If a consular officer determines you do not meet requirements for the visa, or you are otherwise ineligible for the DV under U.S. law, the officer cannot issue a visa and you will forfeit all fees paid.
- If you are selected in the DV-2019 program, you are entitled to apply for visa issuance only during U.S. government fiscal year 2019, which is from October 1, 2018, through September 30, 2019. We encourage selectees to apply for visas as early as possible, once their program rank numbers become eligible.

Applicants can access the electronic DV entry form (E-DV) at the official E-DV website, dvlottery.state.gov, during the registration period. DV instructions are also available on the Department of State's webpage at usvisas.state.gov/dv/instructions.