

# U.S. ‘Green Card’ Diversity Visa Lottery 2011

Information for  
Irish Citizens

October 2009

## U.S. Diversity Visa Programme 2011

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 167 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 a free programme that 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.

**More detailed information on all of the topics below, including full details on eligibility and the application process, and the official DV-2011 Instructions are available at the Department of State website [www.dvlottery.state.gov](http://www.dvlottery.state.gov).**

### Registration Period

Entries for the DV-2011 Diversity Visa lottery must be submitted electronically between noon, Eastern Daylight Time (EDT) (GMT-4), **Friday, 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2009**, and noon, Eastern Standard Time (EST) (GMT-5), **Monday, 30<sup>th</sup> November 2009**.

Applicants 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.

Applicants are strongly encouraged not to wait until the last week of the registration period to enter. Heavy demand may result in website delays. No entries will be accepted after noon, EST, on November 30<sup>th</sup> 2009.

### Basic Entry Requirements

To enter the DV lottery, you must be a **native of one of the countries listed** among the qualifying areas. Ireland is listed as an eligible country and so Irish natives are eligible to apply for DV-2011. Natives of the United Kingdom are not eligible to apply as the UK has sent a total of more than 50,000 immigrants to the U.S. in the previous five years. For the purposes of the DV lottery however, Northern Ireland is treated separately and its natives are eligible to apply.

In most cases, a 'native' means someone born in a particular country and is not related to your current country of residence or nationality. It may also be possible to qualify based on your spouse or parents' country of birth in certain circumstances. Please see the official DV-2011 Lottery Instructions for more details.

In addition, in order to enter the lottery, applicants must **meet either the educational or work experience requirements** of the Programme. Applicants must have either a high school education or its equivalent, defined as successful completion of a 12-year course of elementary and secondary 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.

If you cannot meet either of these requirements, you should not submit an entry to the DV programme.

## How to Enter

There is only one way to enter the DV-2011 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 only accept completed Electronic Diversity Visa (E-DV) Entry Forms submitted electronically. Paper entries will not be accepted.

Applicants **must complete the form in full**, as failure to complete the form in its entirety will disqualify the entry. **Applicants may only submit one entry. If more than one entry is submitted for an individual, that applicant 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.

## New for DV-2011

For the first time, you **must provide an email address as part of your entry**, it is no longer optional. It is recommended that you use a personal email address that you have direct access to rather than someone else's address or a company address. If you are selected, your notification letter will still be sent by post, however you may receive some follow up communication by email.

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**. Such fees should be paid in person only at the relevant U.S. Embassy or Consulate. You will not be asked to send money by mail, by Western Union or any other delivery service.

## 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 all required photographs are submitted as otherwise your entry will be incomplete and will not be accepted by the system.**

The required photographs can be produced by either taking a new digital image or using a digital scanner to scan an existing photograph. There are detailed specifications laid out for the photographs which must be strictly complied with. **All photos must meet the required compositional and technical specifications** in order to be accepted. These exact details are available in the official DV-2011 Instructions and should be read carefully before submitting any photographs.

Applicants frequently have difficulties in getting their photographs to meet the precise specifications with their own cameras or scanners. If this is the case, you might want to try bringing the detailed instructions to a professional camera shop or photographer and asking 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.

### **After you Apply Confirmation, Selection and Notification**

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**. You should print this confirmation screen for your records using the print function of your web browser. This confirmation number will be provided only once – at the time of your application – therefore it is **extremely important that you print or write down your number for later use**.

After the end of the registration period, a **computer will randomly select entries** from among all the entries received for each geographic region. If your entry has been selected, you will be sent a **notification letter by post from the Kentucky Consular Centre**, which will provide further instructions on visa application, and information on fees connected with immigration to the U.S. This notification letter will be sent to the postal address that you indicated on your entry within five to seven months from the end of the application period – i.e. **between May and July 2010**.

**Important Note: Official notifications to those selected in the random lottery are not sent by e-mail.** If you receive an e-mail notification about your E-DV selection, you should ignore it and be aware that the message is not legitimate. Any genuine and official selection letter will be sent by post. It is only after you have been selected and notified by letter and processing has begun on your case that you may receive follow up communication via email from the Kentucky Consular Centre.

All entrants, including those not selected, will be able to **check the status of their application online** and find out whether they were selected or not by entering the unique confirmation number and personal information through the E-DV website **from 1<sup>st</sup> July 2010, until 30<sup>th</sup> June 2011**.

If you lose the confirmation page information, you will not be able to check the status of your entry online; however you will still receive a letter from the Kentucky Consular Centre by post notifying you of your selection if you are successful. **Those individuals not selected will not receive any notification.** U.S. embassies and consulates will not provide a list of successful entrants.

### **If you are Selected**

Selection in the lottery does not automatically guarantee a visa. In order to receive a visa, those selected in the lottery must still meet all eligibility requirements under U.S. law.

If you are selected in the lottery, you will receive further directions and visa application instructions from the Kentucky Consular Centre. You will be instructed to appear for a **visa interview** at a U.S. consular office (or at a domestic USCIS office if qualifying to apply to change status within the United States).

Applicants will receive an appointment letter from the Kentucky Consular Centre four to six weeks before the scheduled interview at the U.S. Embassy or Consular Office. Interviews for the DV-2011 program will begin in October 2010.

Persons selected in the DV-2011 lottery are **entitled to apply for visas from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2010 until 30<sup>th</sup> September 2011**. Selected applicants who wish to receive visas must be prepared to act promptly on their cases as all applicants must obtain the DV visa or adjust status by the 30<sup>th</sup> September 2011. There is no carry-over of DV benefits into the next year for persons who are selected but who do not obtain visas before that date.

## Fraudulent Website Warning

**Personal information and applications should only be submitted to the official website: [www.dvlottery.state.gov](http://www.dvlottery.state.gov) which is only operational during the application period from 2nd October 2009 (noon, EST) until 30<sup>th</sup> November 2009 (noon, EST).**

This is the only official site. Only websites with the '.gov' indicator in their website address are official government sites. You should always check the web address, as there are fraudulent websites with similar names to which you can be re-directed and 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**. Forms and information about the DV Lottery and other immigration procedures are freely available on the Department of State Visa Services website or through U.S. embassy consular sections' websites. **If a website requests credit card information, or another method of transferring funds, it is not the official website.**

### **Applicants 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 people from ineligible countries still are 'qualified' to enter the lottery;
- 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.

Some non-governmental websites (e.g., using the suffixes '.com' or '.org' or '.net') may provide legitimate and useful immigration and visa related information and services. Some of these web organisations may charge you for the service they offer - i.e. filling out the application form for you. Be aware that while they may be familiar with filling out the DV lottery online application forms, using such a company will not 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.**

Applicants should also be aware that **fraudulent websites are plentiful**, and applicants should be wary of sending any personal information to websites that might be used for identity fraud/theft. Additionally, some **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. Often the scammers will not even request your digital photo. Applicants may hand over their 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.**

To protect yourself from scams or fraud, you are advised do careful research before submitting your information. **If you feel that you are the victim of a scam contact Crosscare Migrant Project or call your local Irish Immigrant Centre for assistance.** A list of Irish Centres can be found at [www.ciic-usa.org](http://www.ciic-usa.org). 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>.

## Further Information

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

- [www.dvlottery.state.gov](http://www.dvlottery.state.gov)
- [www.travel.state.gov/pdf/DV-2011instructions.pdf](http://www.travel.state.gov/pdf/DV-2011instructions.pdf)
- [www.travel.state.gov/visa/immigrants/types/types\\_1318.html](http://www.travel.state.gov/visa/immigrants/types/types_1318.html)
- [www.travel.state.gov/visa/immigrants/types/types\\_1322.html](http://www.travel.state.gov/visa/immigrants/types/types_1322.html)

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

Crosscare Migrant Project recommends that 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 provides information on the Diversity Visa Programme only. This document should not be interpreted as a legal document.

Full official details of the Programme, instructions on how to apply, and Frequently Asked Questions can be viewed and downloaded from the U.S. Department of State Electronic Diversity Visa Lottery website at: [www.dvlottery.state.gov](http://www.dvlottery.state.gov).