

# DIVERSITY VISA PROGRAMME 2013

U.S. Green Card Lottery

Information Leaflet

October 2011

# U.S. Diversity Visa Programme 2013 (DV-2013)

## What is the Diversity Visa Programme?

The Diversity Visa Programme (also known as the 'DV Lottery' or 'Green Card Lottery') is a visa lottery that makes **50,000 visas for the United States** available to persons every year.

A computer-generated, random lottery drawing chooses the successful candidates for visas. Last year, 213 applicants from the Republic of Ireland and 59 applicants from the North of Ireland were randomly selected in the draw.

Any Irish citizen who is interested in living and working in the United States is encouraged to apply for the lottery, as it is **free to enter**, and successful entrants have chance to apply for a 'Green Card' or **permanent resident visa** – which allows you to live and work in the U.S. as a legal permanent resident.

## How do I apply?

To enter the lottery, you must **apply online** by submitting an Electronic Diversity Visa Entry Form (E-DV Entry Form). The online system is the only way to enter the lottery; paper entries are not accepted.

**There is only one official website where you can register and apply for the DV Lottery. This website is [www.dvlottery.state.gov](http://www.dvlottery.state.gov).**

On this website you will also find the official entry instructions for the DV Lottery which you should read carefully before starting your online entry. The official instructions provide you with all the information you need to provide as part of your entry, including detailed instructions and specifications for the digital photograph that must accompany your application.

**The official instructions can be found at the following link:**

**[http://travel.state.gov/pdf/DV\\_2013\\_instructions.pdf](http://travel.state.gov/pdf/DV_2013_instructions.pdf)**

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

## When can I apply?

The entry period for the DV Lottery is from noon, Eastern Daylight Time (EDT) (GMT-4), **Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> October 2011**, until noon, Eastern Daylight Time (EDT) (GMT-4), **Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> November 2011**.

You must submit your entry for the DV Lottery electronically (online) between these dates only. You are strongly encouraged not to wait until the last week of the entry period to apply, as heavy demand at that time may result in website delays.

## How much does it cost?

There is **no fee to enter** the DV Lottery. If you submit your application through the official website [www.dvlottery.state.gov](http://www.dvlottery.state.gov) you will NOT be asked to pay any fees or charges for submitting your application.

A DV case processing fee and regular visa fees will be required later in the process only if you are successful in being selected in the Lottery.

## Can I include my spouse or partner on my application?

If you are married or have any children, you **MUST list your spouse (husband or wife), and all unmarried children under 21 years of age**, regardless of whether or not they are living with you, or whether or not they will be joining you in the United States.

In addition, 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.

However, U.S. immigration law does not recognise same sex marriages or common law relationships; therefore a **partner or fiancé cannot be included on a DV entry**. Partners may submit their own separate entries to the lottery if they meet the eligibility requirements.

## Can I use an agency or company to submit my application for me?

There are many websites, agencies and companies out there offering services related to the DV Lottery, most of which charge fees for their services.

While some of these may provide legitimate and useful immigration and visa related information and services for a fee; **using a visa company or agency does not and cannot guarantee to increase your chances of being selected in the Lottery**. The DV Lottery picks people at random.

There are also **many fraudulent companies and websites** out there which you should beware of. 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. You may hand over your money and personal information, and often no application is actually sent in on your behalf. Be aware that if you send in money to one of these scams, you may never see it again.

The **only** official site for making an application to the DV Lottery is [www.dvlottery.state.gov](http://www.dvlottery.state.gov). 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. If a website requests credit card information, or another method of transferring funds, it is not the official website.**

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>.

## Do I need to include a photo with my application?

Yes. 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.** You must submit these photos online as part of your application process so you will need digital copies of all photos, or else you will need to scan in copies of printed photographs so that you can **upload the photos as part of your online application.** 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 very particular requirements that your photo must meet in order to be acceptable for the Lottery. The **photographs must meet exact technical specifications regarding the image size, the image resolution, dimension and colour.** The exact requirements for the photographs can be found on pages 3 and 4 of the official DV Lottery instructions available here: [http://travel.state.gov/pdf/DV\\_2013\\_instructions.pdf](http://travel.state.gov/pdf/DV_2013_instructions.pdf). You are recommended to read these specifications carefully before taking your photograph.

It is possible to **check if your photo meets the requirements** before you start your online entry to the Lottery. You can do this through the **photo validator link on the official website:** <https://www.dvlottery.state.gov/photo.aspx>. The photo validator also provides additional technical advice on photo composition, along with examples of acceptable and unacceptable photos.

If you are not familiar with digital photos, or if you are having problems getting your photographs to meet the precise specifications with your own camera or scanner, you could print out the specifications and **bring the detailed instructions to a professional camera shop or photographer** and ask them to take photographs that meet the requirements.

## How do I know if my application was accepted?

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 only be provided at the time of your application so it is extremely important that you print this confirmation page and keep a record of your confirmation number in a safe place, as this will be the only way you will be able to check whether or not you are selected in the lottery.**

## How do I know if I am selected?

After the entry period closes, a computer will randomly select entries from among all the valid entries received.

**To check whether or not your entry has been selected, you will need to check your entry online using the confirmation number you received when you submitted your application.**

Starting from 1<sup>st</sup> May 2012, the '**Entrant Status Check**' will be available on the website [www.dvlottery.state.gov](http://www.dvlottery.state.gov). You will be asked to enter the confirmation number that you got at the time of your application and other personal information and the system will let you know whether or not your entry was selected.

The online 'Entrant Status Check' is the only way to find out whether you have been selected in the lottery or not. **Official notifications to people that are selected in the random lottery are not sent by e-mail or by letter**, so if you receive an e-mail or letter of notification informing you that you have been selected in the Lottery, you should ignore it and be aware that the message is not legitimate.

U.S. Embassies or Consulates are NOT able to provide a list of people selected. If you lose your confirmation number, you will not be able to check the status of your entry. It is therefore **essential that you keep your confirmation number**.

## What do I do if I am selected?

If you are selected, the Entry Status Check system will redirect you to a **confirmation page that will provide you with additional information and further instructions on how to proceed with your selection and visa application**.

If you are selected in the Lottery, this 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 a visa 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 for visas will begin in October 2012.** 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.

There is no fee for submitting your entry to the DV Lottery; however if you are selected, there will be **fees relating to visa application and issuing**. The confirmation page will tell you to pay these fees **in person only at the U.S. Embassy or Consulate** at the time of your visa interview. You should never send money for DV fees through the mail, Western Union, or any other delivery service.

## Further Information

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

- To apply online and to check the status of your entry: [www.dvlottery.state.gov](http://www.dvlottery.state.gov)
- Diversity Visa Lottery Instructions: [http://www.travel.state.gov/pdf/DV\\_2013\\_instructions.pdf](http://www.travel.state.gov/pdf/DV_2013_instructions.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)

People currently living in the U.S. who intend to apply for the lottery should check with an Irish Immigration Centre regarding their eligibility for the Lottery 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 to proceed with their visa application.

**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.