

**Annual Report of Immigrant Visa Applicants in the Family-sponsored and  
Employment-based preferences Registered at the National Visa Center  
as of November 1, 2011**

Most prospective immigrant visa applicants qualify for status under the law on the basis of family relationships or employer sponsorship. Entitlement to visa processing in these classes is established ordinarily through approval by Citizenship and Immigration Services (CIS) of a petition filed on the applicant's behalf. The petitions of applicants who will be processed at an overseas post are forwarded by CIS to the Department of State; applicants in categories subject to numerical limit are registered on the visa waiting list. Each case is assigned a priority (i.e., registration) date based on the filing date accorded to the petition. Visa issuance within each numerically limited category is possible only if the applicant's priority date is within the applicable cut-off dates which are published each month by the Department of State in the Visa Bulletin. Family and Employment preference applicants compete for visa numbers within their respective categories on a worldwide basis according to priority date; a per-country limit on such preference immigrants set by INA 202 places a maximum on the amount of visas which may be issued in a single year to applicants from any one country, however.

In October, the Department of State asked the National Visa Center (NVC) at Portsmouth, New Hampshire to report the totals of applicants on the waiting list in the various numerically-limited immigrant categories. Applications for adjustment of status under INA 245 which are pending at CIS Offices are not included in the tabulation of the immigrant waiting list data which is being provided at this time. As such, the following figures ONLY reflect petitions which the Department of State has received, and do not include the significant number of applications held with the CIS Offices.

The following figures have been compiled from the NVC report submitted to the Department on November 1, 2011, and show the number of immigrant visa applicants on the waiting list in the various preferences and subcategories subject to numerical limit. All figures reflect persons registered under each respective numerical limitation, i.e., the totals represent not only principal applicants or petition beneficiaries, but their spouses and children entitled to derivative status under INA 203(d) as well.

## Family-sponsored Preferences

<u>Category</u>	<u>FY 2011</u>	<u>FY 2012</u>	<u>Increase/Decrease From 2011 Totals (and % of change)</u>
FAMILY FIRST	271,018	295,168	+ 24,150 (+ 8.9%)
FAMILY SECOND TOTAL	913,611	839,755	-73,856 (- 8.1%)
2A-Spouses/Children:	361,038	322,636	- 38,402 (-10.6%)
2B- Adult Sons/Daughters:	552,573	517,119	- 35,454 (- 6.4%)
FAMILY THIRD	853,083	846,520	-6,563 (- 0.8%)
FAMILY FOURTH	2,515,062	2,519,623	+4,561 (+ 0.2%)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4,552,774</b>	<b>4,501,066</b>	<b>-51,708 (- 1.1%)</b>

## Employment-based Preferences

<u>Category</u>	<u>FY 2011</u>	<u>FY 2012</u>	<u>Increase/Decrease From 2011 Totals (and % of change)</u>
EMPLOYMENT FIRST	2,961	2,118	-843 (- 28.5%)
EMPLOYMENT SECOND	6,738	6,888	+150 (+ 2.2%)
EMPLOYMENT THIRD TOTAL	119,183	112,023	-7,160 (- 6.0%)
Skilled Workers:	102,395	97,060	-5,335 (- 5.2%)
Other Workers:	16,788	14,963	-1,825 (- 10.9%)
EMPLOYMENT FOURTH TOTAL	554	498	-56 (- 10.1%)
EMPLOYMENT FIFTH TOTAL	1,183	1,806	+623 (+52.7%)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>130,619</b>	<b>123,333</b>	<b>-7,286 (- 5.6%)</b>
 <b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	 <b>4,683,393</b>	 <b>4,624,399</b>	 <b>-58,994 (- 1.3%)</b>

## **Immigrant Waiting List By Country**

Immigrant visa issuances during fiscal year 2012 are limited by the terms of INA 201 to no more than 226,000 in the family-sponsored preferences and approximately 144,000 in the employment-based preferences. (Visas for "Immediate Relatives" - i.e., spouses, unmarried children under the age of 21 years, and parents - of U.S. citizens are not subject to numerical limitation, however.)

It should by no means be assumed that once an applicant is registered, the case is then continually included in the waiting list totals unless and until a visa is issued. The consular procedures mandate a regular culling of visa cases to remove from the count those unlikely to see further action, so that totals are not unreasonably inflated. If, for example, a consular post receives no response within one year from an applicant to whom the visa application instruction letter (i.e., the consular "Packet 3" letter) is sent when the movement of the visa availability cut-off date indicates a visa may become available within a reasonable time frame, the case is considered "inactive" under the consular procedures and is no longer included in waiting list totals.

The fourteen countries with the highest number of waiting list registrants in FY 2012 are listed below; together these represent 79.5% of the total. This list includes all countries with at least 60,000 persons on the waiting list. The per-country limit in INA 202 sets an annual maximum on the amount of preference visas which may be issued to applicants from any one country; the 2012 per-country limit will be approximately 25,900.

<u>Country</u>	<u>Applicants</u>
Mexico	1,374,294
Philippines	503,266
India	343,401
Vietnam	281,439
China-mainland born	248,494
Dominican Republic	171,217
Bangladesh	161,769
Pakistan	118,985
Haiti	112,450
Cuba	85,908
El Salvador	83,221
Jamaica	66,016
Korea, South	64,020
Colombia	61,430
<u>All Others</u>	<u>948,489</u>
<b>Worldwide Total</b>	<b>4,624,399</b>

**Immigrant Waiting List  
By Preference Category**

**FAMILY-SPONSORED PREFERENCES**

**Family FIRST Preference:**

The worldwide Family FIRST preference numerical limitation is 23,400. The top ten countries with the highest F1 waiting list totals are:

<b><u>Country</u></b>	<b><u>Family First Preference Total</u></b>	<b><u>Percent of Category Waiting List</u></b>
Mexico	90,546	30.7%
Philippines	29,529	10.0%
Dominican Republic	20,230	6.9%
Jamaica	19,669	6.7%
Haiti	16,412	5.6%
El Salvador	8,749	3.0%
Vietnam	8,106	2.7%
Guyana	8,098	2.7%
Cuba	7,476	2.5%
Colombia	6,353	2.1%
<u>All Others</u>	<u>80,000</u>	<u>27.1%</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>295,168</b>	<b>100%</b>

Cases are being added to the waiting list in this category not only by the approval of new FIRST preference petitions, but also through automatic conversion of pending 2B cases into FIRST preference upon the naturalization of the petitioner.

Given the 517,119 Family 2B waiting list and the several years' interval between 2B petition filing and visa issuance, it is likely that increasing numbers of petitioners will be naturalized and the petitions converted to Family FIRST preference long before 2B visas become available. The prospect is for increasing oversubscription in the FIRST preference, with slower advances in the worldwide cut-off date the consequence. Only two countries, Mexico and the Philippines, have FIRST preference cut-off dates which are earlier than the worldwide date.

**Family SECOND Preference:**

The total Family SECOND preference waiting list figure is 839,755. Of these, 322,636 (38.4%) are spouses and children of permanent residents of the United States (the 2A class), and 517,119 (61.6%) are adult unmarried sons/daughters of permanent residents (the 2B class). The Family SECOND preference represents 18.7% of the total Family preference waiting list. It will receive 114,200 visa numbers for FY 2012, just over half of the 226,000 family preference total; 77% of SECOND preference numbers are provided to 2A applicants, while the remaining 23% go to the 2B class.

**2A:** About 88,000 visa numbers are expected to be available during FY 2012. The top five countries with the highest 2A waiting list totals are:

<u>Country</u>	<u>Family 2A Preference Total</u>	<u>Percent of Category Waiting List</u>
Mexico	138,628	43.0%
Dominican Republic	30,963	9.6%
Cuba	16,084	5.0%
Haiti	15,804	4.9%
Philippines	14,598	4.5%
All Others	106,559	33.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>322,636</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Upon naturalization of the petitioner, a pending 2A case is converted automatically into the "Immediate Relative" visa category, which is not subject to numerical limit and therefore has no visa waiting period. As a result, the amount of cases being processed in the "Immediate Relative" category may increase and partially offset new F2A filings.**

**2B:** Visa numbers for this class of adult sons and daughters will be approximately 26,250 during FY 2012. The waiting list far exceeds the annual limit. The top ten countries with the highest 2B waiting list totals are:

<u>Country</u>	<u>Family 2B Preference Total</u>	<u>Percent of Category Waiting List</u>
Mexico	212,621	41.1%
Dominican Republic	57,385	11.1%
Philippines	52,823	10.2%
Haiti	25,851	5.0%
El Salvador	17,370	3.4%
China-mainland born	17,170	3.3%
Cuba	14,035	2.7%
Vietnam	9,442	1.8%
Jamaica	8,223	1.6%
Guatemala	7,610	1.5%
All Others	94,589	18.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>517,119</b>	<b>100%</b>

As noted above, some of the 2B cases are applicants converted from the 2A class upon their turning 21.

**Family THIRD Preference:**

The annual visa limit is 23,400. Two oversubscribed countries (Mexico and Philippines) have sufficiently heavy demand in this preference to require a cut-off date substantially earlier than the worldwide date. The top ten countries with the highest F3 waiting list totals are:

<u>Country</u>	<u>Family Third Preference Total</u>	<u>Percent of Category Waiting List</u>
Mexico	180,982	21.4%
Philippines	156,107	18.4%
Vietnam	77,653	9.2%
India	66,569	7.9%
China-mainland born	33,049	3.9%
Cuba	21,239	2.5%
Pakistan	16,896	2.0%
Poland	16,021	1.9%
Dominican Republic	15,204	1.8%
Jamaica	15,072	1.8%
All Others	247,728	29.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>846,520</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Family FOURTH Preference:**

Applicants registered in the Family FOURTH preference total 2,519,623. Annual visa issuances are limited to 65,000. The waiting period for the Family FOURTH preference is longer than any other category because the demand severely exceeds the number of available visas. The countries listed below have the largest number of FOURTH preference applicants:

<b><u>Country</u></b>	<b><u>Family Fourth Preference Total</u></b>	<b><u>Percent of Category Waiting List</u></b>
Mexico	746,815	29.6%
India	237,445	9.4%
Philippines	205,342	8.2%
Vietnam	179,648	7.1%
China-mainland born	175,417	7.0%
Bangladesh	149,526	5.9%
Pakistan	92,458	3.7%
Dominican Republic	47,356	1.9%
Haiti	43,441	1.7%
South Korea	38,385	1.5%
<u>All Others</u>	<u>603,790</u>	<u>24.0%</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,519,623</b>	<b>100%</b>

The steadily growing waiting period in this preference is now more than eleven years for countries of most favorable visa availability and even longer for some oversubscribed countries.

## EMPLOYMENT-BASED PREFERENCES

It is important to note that over eighty-five percent of all Employment preference immigrants are currently being processed as adjustment of status cases at CIS offices. Cases pending with CIS are not counted in the consular waiting list tally which is presented below. Therefore, in several Employment categories the waiting list totals being provided below understate real immigrant demand. The Employment waiting list counts not only prospective workers, but also their spouses and children entitled under the law to derivative preference status.

### **Employment FIRST Preference:**

Top countries are:

<b><u>Country</u></b>	<b><u>Employment First Preference</u></b>	<b><u>Percent of Category Waiting List</u></b>
China-mainland born	268	12.7%
Canada	232	11.0%
Great Britain & Northern Ireland	222	10.5%
India	164	7.7%
Venezuela	107	5.0%
Korea, South	106	5.0%
Japan	80	3.8%
Mexico	57	2.7%
Philippines	57	2.7%
France	52	2.4%
All Others	773	36.5%
<b>Worldwide Total</b>	<b>2,118</b>	<b>100%</b>

Visa availability is "current" for all countries.

### **Employment SECOND Preference:**

Top countries are:

<b><u>Country</u></b>	<b><u>Employment Second Preference</u></b>	<b><u>Percent of Category Waiting List</u></b>
India	3,705	53.8%
China-mainland born	1,053	15.3%
Korea, South	379	5.5%
Philippines	292	4.2%
Canada	161	2.3%
All Others	1,298	18.9%
<b>Worldwide Total</b>	<b>6,888</b>	<b>100%</b>

This category is "current" at present for all but two countries.



**Employment THIRD Preference:**

Top countries are:

<b><u>Country</u></b>	<b><u>Employment Third Preference</u></b>	<b><u>Percent of Category Waiting List</u></b>
Philippines	42,872	44.2%
India	21,119	21.8%
China-mainland born	6,191	6.4%
Korea, South	2,955	3.0%
Mexico	2,271	2.3%
<u>All Others</u>	<u>21,652</u>	<u>22.3%</u>
<b>Worldwide Total</b>	<b>97,060</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Employment Third “Other Workers”:**

Top Countries are:

<b><u>Country</u></b>	<b><u>Employment Third Preference: Skilled Worker/ Professional Components</u></b>	<b><u>Percent of Waiting List in These Classes</u></b>
China-mainland born	4,718	31.5%
Korea, South	3,051	20.4%
Mexico	2,277	15.2%
Philippines	1,615	10.8%
India	605	4.1%
<u>All Others</u>	<u>2,697</u>	<u>18.0%</u>
<b>Worldwide Total</b>	<b>14,963</b>	<b>100%</b>

With visa demand well in excess of the Employment Third Preference annual limits, a significant wait for a visa must be expected to continue for the indefinite future.

**Employment FOURTH Preference:**

Top countries are:

<u>Country</u>	<u>Employment Fourth Preference</u>	<u>Percent of Waiting List in These Classes</u>
India	107	21.5%
Korea, South	32	6.5%
Philippines	27	5.4%
Nigeria	26	5.2%
Colombia	25	5.0%
Israel	21	4.2%
All Others	260	52.2%
<b>Worldwide Total</b>	<b>498</b>	<b>100%</b>

Visa availability is "current" for all countries.

**Employment FIFTH Preference:**

Top countries are:

<u>Country</u>	<u>Employment Fifth Preference</u>	<u>Percent of Waiting List in These Classes</u>
China-mainland born	1,157	64.1%
Korea, South	182	10.1%
Venezuela	58	3.2%
Iran	49	2.7%
China-Taiwan born	43	2.4%
India	31	1.7%
All Others	286	15.8%
<b>Worldwide Total</b>	<b>1,806</b>	<b>100%</b>

Visa availability is "current" for all countries.

**Family  
Immigrant Waiting List  
By Country**

The seven countries with the highest number of Family-sponsored waiting list registrants are listed below; together these represent 66.5% of the total. This list includes all countries with at least 150,000 persons on the waiting list. (The per-country limit in INA 202 sets an annual maximum on the amount of Family preference visas which may be issued to applicants from any one country; the FY 2012 per-country limit will be 15,820.)

**Family Preferences**

<u>Country</u>	<u>Total</u>
Mexico	1,369,592
Philippines	458,399
India	317,670
Vietnam	281,221
China-mainland born	235,106
Dominican Republic	171,138
Bangladesh	161,567
All Others	1,506,373
<b>Worldwide Total</b>	<b>4,501,066</b>

**Family  
Immigrant Waiting List  
By Region**

A breakdown of the NVC waiting list by region is:

<u>Region</u>	<u>Total</u>
Africa	122,725
Asia	1,915,772
Europe	160,899
N. America*	2,034,395
Oceania	12,046
S. America	255,229
<b>Family Total</b>	<b>4,501,066</b>

\*North America includes Canada, Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean.

**Employment  
Immigrant Waiting List  
By Country**

The five countries with the highest number of Employment-based waiting list registrants are listed below; together these represent 77.3% of the total. This list includes all countries with at least 4,500 persons on the waiting list. (The per-country limit in INA 202 sets an annual maximum on the amount of Employment preference visas which may be issued to applicants from any one country; the FY 2012 per-country limit will be approximately 10,080.)

**Employment Preferences**

<u>Country</u>	<u>Total</u>
Philippines	44,867
India	25,731
China-mainland born	13,388
Korea, South	6,705
Mexico	4,702
All Others	27,940
<b>Worldwide Total</b>	<b>123,333</b>

**Employment  
Immigrant Waiting List  
By Region**

A breakdown of the NVC waiting list by region is:

<u>Region</u>	<u>Total</u>
Africa	2,813
Asia	100,432
Europe	6,441
N. America*	9,007
Oceania	305
S. America	4,335
<b>Family Total</b>	<b>123,333</b>

\*North America includes Canada, Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean.