



# International Student and Scholars Office Student Academic Affairs

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## Obtaining a Green Card (Permanent Residency)

### Background

According to U.S. immigration law, an applicant must meet both substantial and numerical criteria to obtain a green card.

Substantially, the applicant may receive a green card through a close relative of a U.S. citizen or a permanent resident, or an employer's sponsorship or a diverse lottery program.

Numerically, due to the statutory quota limits on most of the family and employment based categories, an applicant may have to wait for years before a green card is granted. There are about 670,000 immigrant visas available each year at present.

To find out the availability of the visa category you apply for, visit the web site of U.S. Department of State: **Visa Bulletin** <sup>[1]</sup>

### The Options for Obtaining a Green Card

#### Family Based Classifications

#### Immediate Relatives- children, spouses, or parents of U.S. citizens (no limit per year)

- Unmarried sons & daughters of U.S. citizens (23,400 visas per year plus unused from 4th preference )
- Spouses/minor children & unmarried sons and daughters of U.S. permanent residents (114,200 plus unused from first preference )
- Married sons and daughters of U.S. citizens ( 23,400 per year plus unused from first and second preferences)
- Brothers and sisters of U.S. citizens (65,000 per year plus unused from first, second and third preferences) U.S. citizen must be age 21 or over.

## Employment Based Classifications

### Priority Workers (EB-1)

- Extraordinary Ability (no job required)
- Outstanding professors & researchers (entering for tenure or tenure-track position or research position)

### Advanced degree holders (EB-2)

- Professionals with advanced degrees
- Exceptional ability in sciences, arts & business (job offer and labor certification required; limit of 40,000 per year plus any unused from EB-2a)

### Skilled & unskilled workers (EB-3)

- Skilled workers in short supply
- Professionals with baccalaureate degree
- Unskilled workers in short supply (requires a job offer and labor certification; limit of 40,000 per year plus unused from EB-3a and EB-3b)

### Special immigrants

- Religious workers; certain U.S. govt. employees; Panama Canal employees; plus certain dependent juveniles (10,000 per year)

### Investors

- must invest between \$500k and \$3 million
- must create at least 10 full time jobs (limit of 10,000 per year)

### Diversity Lottery Program

50,000 per year

Visit **Diversity Visa Lottery Instructions** <sup>[2]</sup> for more information.

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UCSF Main Site

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#### Links

[1] <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/legal/visa-law0/visa-bulletin.html>

[2] <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/immigrate/diversity-visa-program-entry.html>