

## Fraud Warning

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### **Diversity Visa Program Scammers Sending Fraudulent Emails and Letters**

The Department of State, Office of Visa Services, advises the public of a notable increase in fraudulent emails and letters sent to Diversity Visa (DV) program (Visa Lottery) applicants. The scammers behind these fraudulent emails and letters are posing as the U.S. government in an attempt to extract payment from DV applicants. All applicants should be familiar with [information about DV scams provided by the Federal Trade Commission](#). Applicants are encouraged to review the [rules and procedures for the DV](#) program so that you know what to expect, when to expect it, and from whom.

While DV-2012 and DV-2013 applicants may receive an email from the U.S. government reminding them to check their status online through DV Entrant Status Check, they will not receive a notification letter or email informing them that they are a successful DV entrant.

**Applicants can only find out if they were selected to continue with DV processing by checking their status online through the DV Entrant Status Check at <http://www.dvlottery.state.gov> .**

Finally, remember that fees for the DV application process are paid to the U.S. Embassy or consulate cashier at the time of your scheduled appointment. The U.S. government will never ask you to send payment in advance by check, money order, or wire transfer.

**Visa Related Fraud Information** - Refer to these frequently asked questions.

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## Frequently Asked Questions

[Open All](#) [Close All](#)

*How do I know if a website or email is from the U.S. government?*

Internet sites ending in the ".gov" top-level domain suffix are official government websites. To link directly to the more than 200 U.S. Embassy and Consulate websites, visit [www.usembassy.gov](http://www.usembassy.gov). Visa information on official U.S. government websites ending in ".gov" is official and correct. Official U.S. government email addresses also end in ".gov,"

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and any visa-related correspondence coming from an address that does not end with ".gov" should be considered suspect.

The main U.S. government websites containing official visa and immigration information, including free information and forms, are:

U.S. Embassy and Consulate websites:	<a href="http://www.usembassy.gov/">http://www.usembassy.gov/</a>
Department of State, Consular Affairs travel website:	<a href="http://travel.state.gov">http://travel.state.gov</a>
Department of State, Diversity Visa Lottery website:	<a href="http://www.dvlottery.state.gov">http://www.dvlottery.state.gov</a>
Department of Homeland Security (DHS):	<a href="http://www.dhs.gov">http://www.dhs.gov</a>
DHS, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services:	<a href="http://www.uscis.gov">http://www.uscis.gov</a>
DHS, U.S. Customs and Border Protection:	<a href="http://www.cbp.gov">http://www.cbp.gov</a>
DHS, Immigration and Customs Enforcement:	<a href="http://www.ice.gov">http://www.ice.gov</a>
Department of Labor:	<a href="http://www.doleta.gov">http://www.doleta.gov</a>

### *Is immigration information on other websites official?*

Many other non-governmental websites (e.g., addresses ending with ".com," ".org" or ".net") provide legitimate and useful immigration and visa-related information and services. Regardless of the content of other websites, the Department of State does not endorse, recommend, or sponsor any information or material shown on these other websites. The information provided may not be correct or up-to-date, so should always be verified by consulting an official U.S. government source. Visa applicants are advised to be cautious in all dealings with companies that claim to offer any assistance in obtaining U.S. visas.

### *How do I recognize fraudulent websites and emails?*

Some websites and emails try to mislead customers and members of the public into thinking they are official U.S. government websites. These websites are designed to appear official, and often have images of the U.S. flag, U.S. Capitol, White House, or Statue of Liberty. What these websites and emails are missing is the ".gov" suffix on their addresses. Remember that anything that does not end with ".gov" should be considered suspect.

### *What is the purpose of these fraudulent websites and emails?*

Some of these fraudulent organizations may require payment for immigration and visa services. If payment is made to a non-governmental source, this payment is not received by the U.S. government and does not apply toward visa processing. Sometimes these costs are for information or forms that are otherwise available for free on official U.S. government websites. Additionally, these imposter websites and emails cannot provide

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the services they advertise and for which they require payment. For example, many fraudulent emails promise U.S. visas or "green cards" in return for a large fee. These non-governmental, unofficial organizations are not able to provide these services. These services can only be obtained from official U.S. government entities, such as the Department of State, a U.S. embassy or consulate, or the Department of Homeland Security. Finally, be wary of providing any personal information through these fraudulent websites and emails, since such action that could result in identity fraud or theft. Visa applicants are strongly advised to be cautious in all dealings with non-governmental companies that claim to offer any assistance in obtaining U.S. visas.

*Where do I get official information on the Diversity Visa program and how do I check my status?*

The only official information about the DV program is found on U.S. government websites ending in ".gov," such as <http://travel.state.gov> or <http://www.dvlottery.state.gov>. The only official way to apply for the DV program is directly through the official [U.S. Department of State website](#) during the specified and limited registration period.

**DV program entrants must check their status of their DV lottery entry online at <http://www.dvlottery.state.gov> to find out if they were selected or not. The U.S. Department of State Kentucky Consular Center does not mail or email notifications to DV entrants informing them of their winning entries.**

For more information about the Diversity Visas and the process, review the Department of State, [Diversity Visa Program](#) webpage.

No other organization or private company is authorized to notify DV applicants of their winning entries, or the next steps in the process. Imposters frequently contact DV applicants to extract money or personal information through websites, emails, and letters. Entrants should **only** refer to the online status check at <http://www.dvlottery.state.gov> or instructions on <http://travel.state.gov> for official information about the DV process.

*Where can I find information on international financial scams?*

For more information about international scams involving internet dating, inheritance, work permits, overpayment, and money-laundering, please visit our [International Financial Scams](#) page.

*How do I report internet fraud or unsolicited email?*

If you wish to file a complaint about internet fraud, please see visit [econsumer.gov](http://econsumer.gov), which is a joint effort of consumer protection agencies from 17 nations, hosted by the Federal Trade Commission. You can also visit the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) [Internet Crime Complaint Center \(IC3\)](#) website. To file a complaint about unsolicited email, contact the [Department of Justice](#).