

How to Recognize a Diversity Visa Lottery Scam

Each year, the U.S. Department of State runs the Diversity Visa Lottery Program. That program lets people from some countries apply to be a “Lawful Permanent Resident.” That is what many people call “getting a Green Card.”

You can enter the lottery if you are from an eligible country and you meet the educational or work requirements. If your entry is picked, you get the chance to apply to be a Lawful Permanent Resident.

But dishonest people might try to trick you. Learn the facts about the Diversity Visa Lottery Program. It can help you avoid these scams.

How do I enter the Diversity Visa Lottery?

This is what you need to know:

- You can enter the Diversity Visa Lottery once a year. The Lottery is open for about a month in the fall.
- There is only one place to enter the Diversity Visa Lottery: dvlottery.state.gov. This State Department website has a form where you:
 - answer questions
 - give information about yourself, your spouse, and your children under 21
 - submit digital photos of yourselves.
- It is **free** to enter the Diversity Visa Lottery.
- You can enter once each year. If you enter the Diversity Visa Lottery more than once in a year, your entries will not count. Your spouse can enter separately if he or she qualifies.
- If your entry is picked, you can include your spouse on your application, and children if they are single and under 21.

What happens after I enter the Diversity Visa Lottery?

- You enter the Diversity Visa Lottery at dvlottery.state.gov. Then the State Department gives you a confirmation number. Keep that number safe. You will need it to check your status.
- Diversity Visa Lottery winners are picked at random by a computer. There is **no way** to increase your chance of being picked.
- You can find out your status only at dvlottery.state.gov. The State Department will never send you a letter or email to say you won. If you see that kind of message, it is a scam.



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- If your entry is picked, you will have to pay a fee. You pay it only when you go to the U.S. embassy or consulate for your appointment. The U.S. government will never ask you to send money in advance by check, money order, or wire transfer.

What do I need to know about scams?

Scammers try to trick people who enter the Diversity Visa Lottery. Scammers might:

- charge you money to help you apply
- promise to increase your chance of being picked
- send you a message saying you won and ask for money.

If you remember how the Diversity Visa Lottery works, it will be hard for scammers to get your money.

- It is free to enter the Diversity Visa lottery at dvlottery.state.gov.
- The drawing is random. There is no way to increase your chance of winning.
- You can find out your status only at dvlottery.state.gov.
- You do not pay until you find out your entry was picked, and you go to the U.S. embassy or consulate in person for your appointment.

What should I do if I spot a scam?

If you suspect a scam, please report it to the Federal Trade Commission:

- Call 1-877-382-4357.
- Go to ftc.gov/complaint.

You can give as much information as you want. Investigators are happy for any information you give.