

Annual Report of Immigrant Visa Applicants in the Family-sponsored and Employment-based preferences Registered at the National Visa Center as of November 1, 2023

Most prospective immigrant visa applicants qualify for immigrant status under U.S. law on the basis of family relationships or employer sponsorship. Entitlement to visa processing in these classes is established ordinarily through U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) approval of a petition filed on the applicant's behalf by the sponsoring family member or employer. USCIS forwards the approved petitions for applicants who will be processed at an overseas U.S. embassy or consulate to the Department of State. Applicants in categories subject under law to a numerical limit are registered on the visa waiting list discussed below. Note that applications for adjustment of status under U.S. law (Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) Section 245) which are pending at USCIS Offices are not included in the tabulation of the immigrant waiting list data provided below. As such, the following figures ONLY reflect approved petitions which the Department of State has received, and do not include the significant number of applications held with the USCIS Offices.

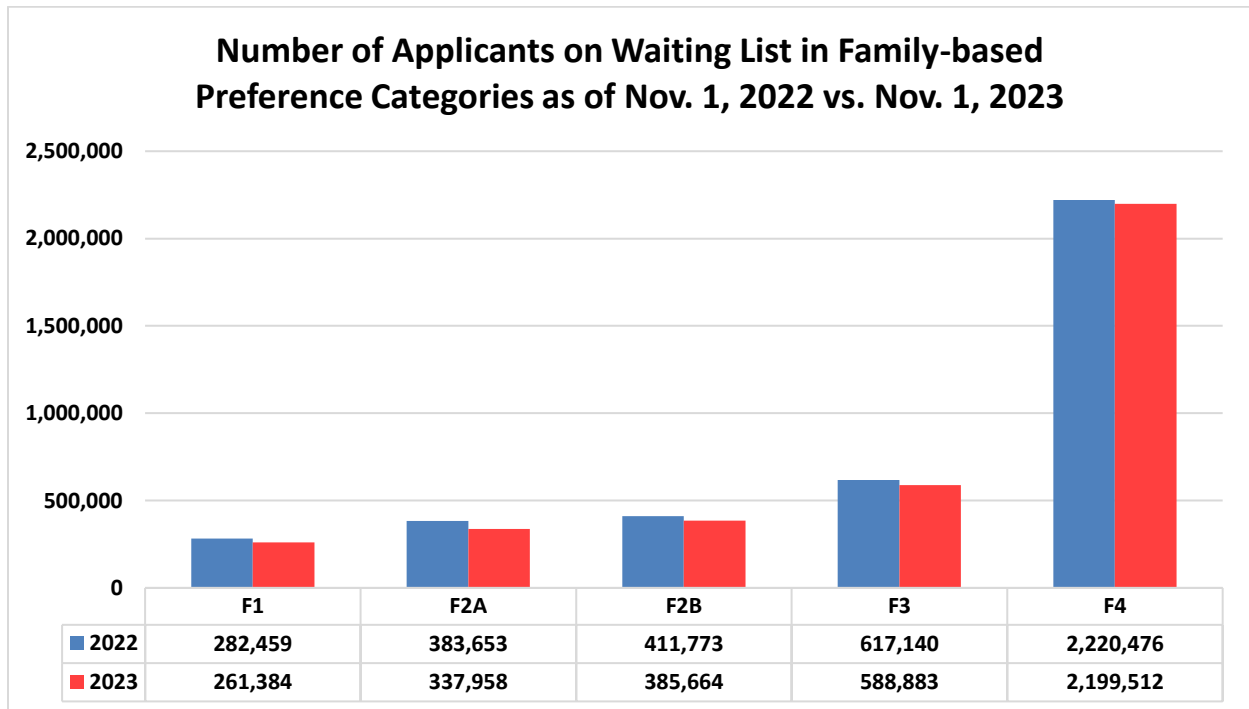
Each case is assigned a priority date based on the filing date accorded to the petition; this is the applicant's place in line. When their priority date is within the *dates for filing* published each month in the Department of State's Visa Bulletin, the Department of State's National Visa Center (NVC) advises the applicant to pay fees and assemble and submit documents required for visa processing (i.e., become documentarily complete). Visa issuance within each numerically limited category is possible only when the applicant's priority date is within the applicable *final action dates*, also published in the *Visa Bulletin*. Eligible family-based and employment-based immigrant visa applicants are subject to overall worldwide annual numerical limits within their respective categories; in addition, INA 202 sets a per-country maximum on the number of family and employment-based visas which may be issued in a single year to applicants from any one country regardless of where they are processed. The totals in this report reflect applicants with approved petitions slated for overseas visa application at all stages of this process – those that are not yet documentarily complete, those that are documentarily complete and waiting for their priority date to become current, and those whose priority date is current and are waiting to be scheduled for an interview.

The following figures are compiled from the NVC report submitted to the Department on November 1, 2023, and show the number of immigrant visa applicants on the visa waiting list in the various preferences and subcategories subject to numerical limit. All figures reflect persons registered under each 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 Section 203(d) as well.

The Employment-based totals provided in this year's waiting list report are considerably higher than last year. This is in part due to the Employment-based annual limit, calculated based on the procedures established in INA Section 201(d), returning to baseline levels after record highs in the immediate post-pandemic years. Cases not processed under these lower annual limits have been retained at NVC and included in this year's report. Please see [here](#) for reporting on the interview-ready Immigrant Visa Scheduling Backlog, a subset of this total data.

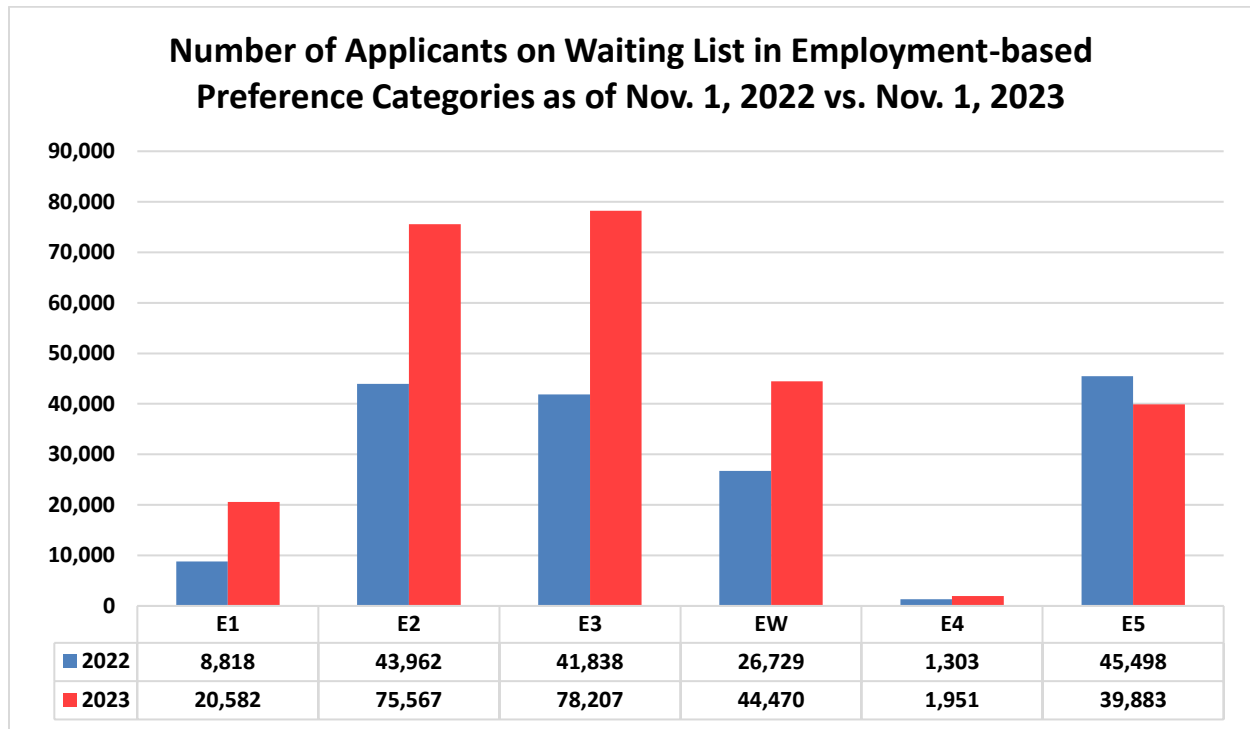
Family-sponsored Preference Applicants at the NVC

Category	As of Nov. 1, 2022	As of Nov. 1, 2023	% of Change From 2022 Totals
FAMILY FIRST	282,459	261,384	(-7.5%)
FAMILY SECOND TOTAL	795,426	723,622	(-9.0%)
2A-Spouses/Children:	383,653	337,958	(-11.9%)
2B-Adult Sons/Daughters:	411,773	385,664	(-6.3%)
FAMILY THIRD	617,140	588,883	(-4.6%)
FAMILY FOURTH	2,220,476	2,199,512	(-0.9%)
TOTAL	3,915,501	3,773,401	(-3.6%)



Employment-based Preference Applicants at the NVC

Category	As of Nov. 1, 2022	As of Nov. 1, 2023	% of Change From 2022 Totals
EMPLOYMENT FIRST	8,818	20,582	(+133.4%)
EMPLOYMENT SECOND	43,962	75,567	(+71.9%)
EMPLOYMENT THIRD TOTAL	68,567	122,677	(+78.9%)
Skilled Workers:	41,838	78,207	(+86.9%)
Other Workers:	26,729	44,470	(+66.4%)
EMPLOYMENT FOURTH TOTAL	1,303	1,951	(+49.7%)
EMPLOYMENT FIFTH TOTAL	45,498	39,883	(-12.3%)
TOTAL	168,148	260,660	(+55.0%)
GRAND TOTAL	4,083,649	4,034,061	(-1.2%)



Immigrant Waiting List By Country

Immigrant visa issuances during fiscal year 2024 will be limited by the terms of INA Section 201 to no more than 226,000 in the family-sponsored preferences and approximately 161,000 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.)

It should by no means be assumed that once an applicant is registered, the case is continually included in the waiting list totals unless and until a visa is issued. 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.

The ten countries with the highest number of waiting list registrants for both family and employment visas in FY 2024 are listed below; together these represent 74.9% of the total. This list includes all countries with at least 78,000 persons on the waiting list. INA Section 202 prescribes that visa issuances to nationals of any single country may not exceed seven percent during a fiscal year. This limit serves to avoid the potential monopolization of the annual limitation by applicants from only a few countries. That limitation is not a quota to which any particular country is entitled, however. For FY 2024 the per-country limit will be approximately 27,090.

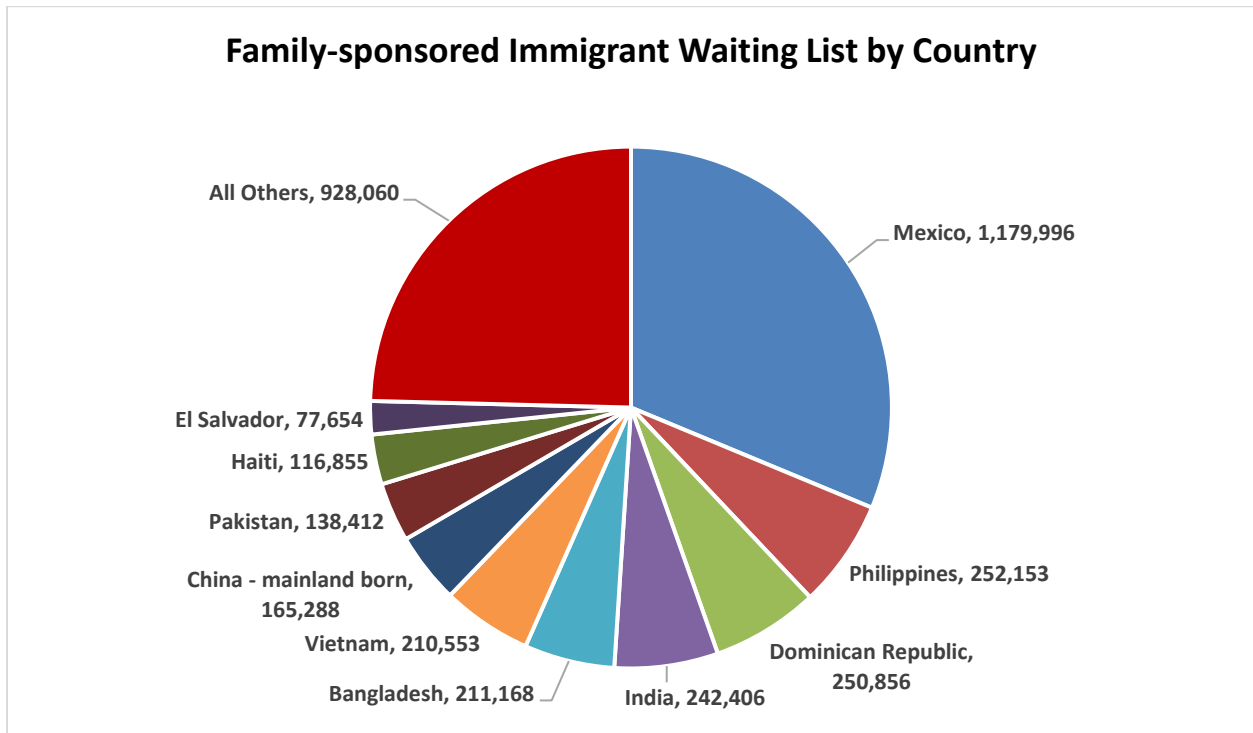
Country	Applicants
Mexico	1,190,444
India	290,942
Philippines	288,294
Dominican Republic	251,271
China - mainland born	230,626
Vietnam	216,653
Bangladesh	215,386
Pakistan	142,091
Haiti	116,948
El Salvador	78,212
All Others	1,013,194
Worldwide Total	4,034,061

Family-sponsored Immigrant Waiting List by Country

The ten countries with the highest number of Family-sponsored waiting list registrants are listed below; together these represent 75.4% of the total. This list includes all countries with at least 77,000 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 2024 per-country limit will be 15,820.)

Family-sponsored Preference Applicants

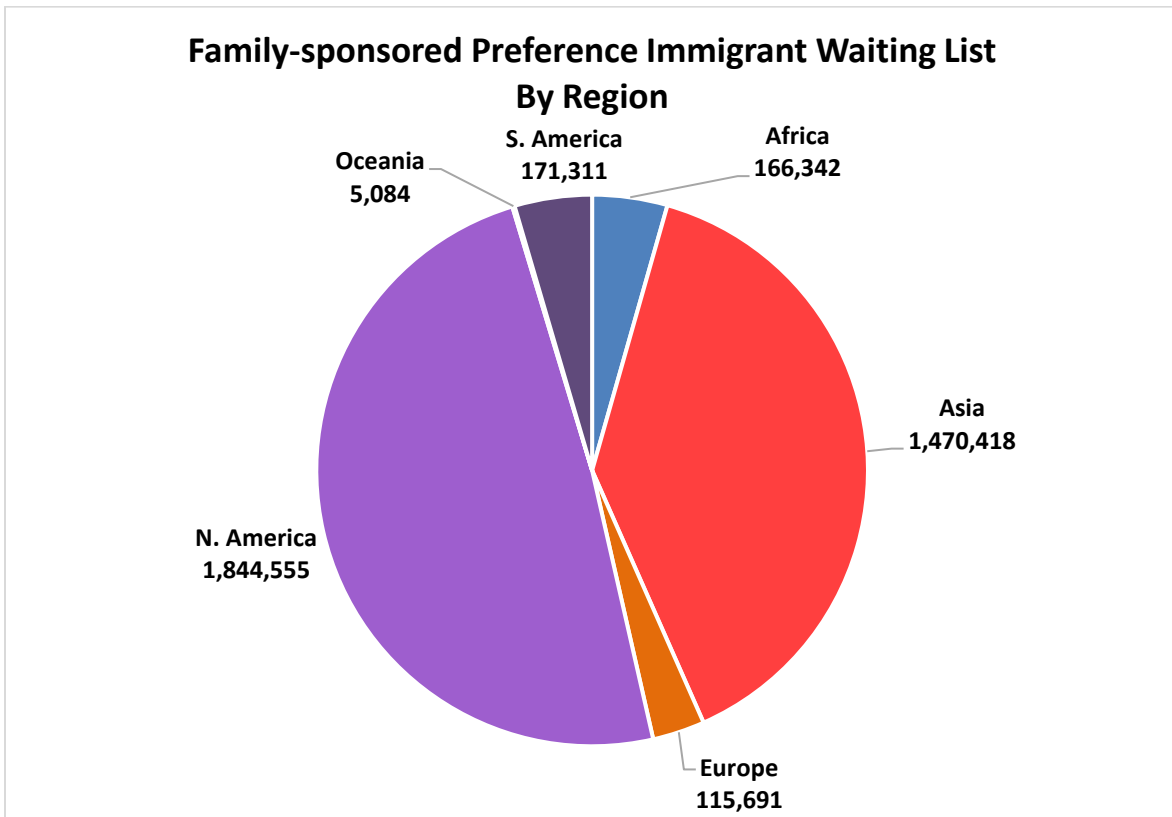
Country	Total
Mexico	1,179,996
Philippines	252,153
Dominican Republic	250,856
India	242,406
Bangladesh	211,168
Vietnam	210,553
China - mainland born	165,288
Pakistan	138,412
Haiti	116,855
El Salvador	77,654
All Others	928,060
Worldwide Total	3,773,401



Family-sponsored Immigrant Waiting List by Region

A breakdown of the NVC waiting list by region is:

Region	Total
Africa	166,342
Asia	1,470,418
Europe	115,691
N. America*	1,844,555
Oceania	5,084
S. America	171,311
Family Total	3,773,401



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

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:

Country	Family First Preference Total	Percent of Category Waiting List
Mexico	85,950	32.9%
Dominican Republic	22,974	8.8%
Philippines	21,311	8.2%
Haiti	13,702	5.2%
Jamaica	12,656	4.8%
El Salvador	9,937	3.8%
Cuba	7,037	2.7%
Colombia	5,086	2.0%
Honduras	4,969	1.9%
Nigeria	4,555	1.7%
All Others	73,207	28.0%
Total	261,384	100%

Applicants 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 applicants into FIRST preference upon the naturalization of the petitioner.

The overall decrease in total applicants in the FIRST preference could result in gradual advances in the worldwide final action date in the coming fiscal year. Only two countries, Mexico and Philippines, have FIRST preference final action dates which are earlier than the worldwide date. (NOTE: A Family 2B petition automatically converts to a Family FIRST petition if the petitioner naturalizes. However, Section 6 of the Child Status Protection Act of 2002, Pub. L. 107-208, provides relief for Family 2B applicants who would be disadvantaged by a conversion to Family FIRST status due to a less favorable Family FIRST final action date.)

Family SECOND Preference:

The total Family SECOND preference waiting list figure is 723,622. Of these, 337,958 (46.7%) are spouses and children of permanent residents of the United States (the 2A class), and 385,664 (53.3%) are adult unmarried sons/daughters of permanent residents (the 2B class). The Family SECOND preference represents 19.2% of the total Family preference waiting list. It will receive 114,200 visa numbers for FY 2024, 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 87,900 visa numbers are available for use during FY 2024. The top ten countries with the highest 2A waiting list totals are:

Country	Family 2A Preference Total	Percent of Category Waiting List
Mexico	94,625	28.0%
Dominican Republic	63,595	18.8%
Haiti	20,410	6.0%
El Salvador	15,252	4.5%
Cuba	13,848	4.1%
Philippines	12,749	3.8%
Guatemala	8,894	2.6%
Honduras	8,406	2.5%
Ethiopia	5,914	1.8%
Vietnam	5,903	1.8%
All Others	88,362	26.1%
Total	337,958	100%

Upon naturalization of the petitioner, a pending 2A case is usually converted automatically into the “Immediate Relative” visa category, which is not subject to numerical limit and therefore has no visa waiting period. If 2A children applicants are over 21 years of age once the petitioner naturalizes, their case is usually converted into the Family FIRST category. As a result, the number of cases being processed in the “Immediate Relative” or Family FIRST categories may increase and partially offset new F2A filings.

2B: Visa numbers for this class of adult sons and daughters will be approximately 26,260 during FY 2024. The top ten countries with the highest 2B waiting list totals are:

Country	Family 2B Preference Total	Percent of Category Waiting List
Mexico	117,903	30.6%
Dominican Republic	66,011	17.1%
Philippines	40,315	10.5%
Haiti	20,021	5.2%
Vietnam	17,875	4.6%
Cuba	16,516	4.3%
El Salvador	15,528	4.0%
China - mainland born	10,750	2.8%
Ecuador	6,275	1.6%
Honduras	5,180	1.3%
All Others	69,290	18.0%
Total	385,664	100%

Some of the 2B applicants were formerly counted in the 2A waiting list and have since turned 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 final action date substantially earlier than the worldwide date. The top ten countries with the highest F3 waiting list totals are:

Country	Family Third Preference Total	Percent of Category Waiting List
Mexico	192,778	32.7%
Philippines	94,236	16.0%
India	31,141	5.3%
Vietnam	25,332	4.3%
Dominican Republic	16,384	2.8%
Haiti	15,734	2.7%
China - mainland born	15,242	2.6%
Pakistan	13,897	2.3%
Cuba	11,589	2.0%
Nigeria	11,086	1.9%
All Others	161,464	27.4%
Total	588,883	100%

Family FOURTH Preference:

Applicants registered in the Family FOURTH preference total 2,199,512. 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 significantly exceeds the number of available visas. The countries listed below have the largest number of FOURTH preference applicants:

Country	Family Fourth Preference Total	Percent of Category Waiting List
Mexico	688,740	31.3%
India	204,195	9.3%
Bangladesh	198,223	9.0%
Vietnam	157,073	7.2%
China - mainland born	132,460	6.0%
Pakistan	117,048	5.3%
Philippines	83,542	3.8%
Dominican Republic	81,892	3.7%
Haiti	46,988	2.2%
El Salvador	27,144	1.2%
All Others	462,207	21.0%
Total	2,199,512	100%

The waiting period in this preference is now over sixteen years for countries of most favorable visa availability and even longer for some oversubscribed countries (notably Mexico, India, and Philippines).

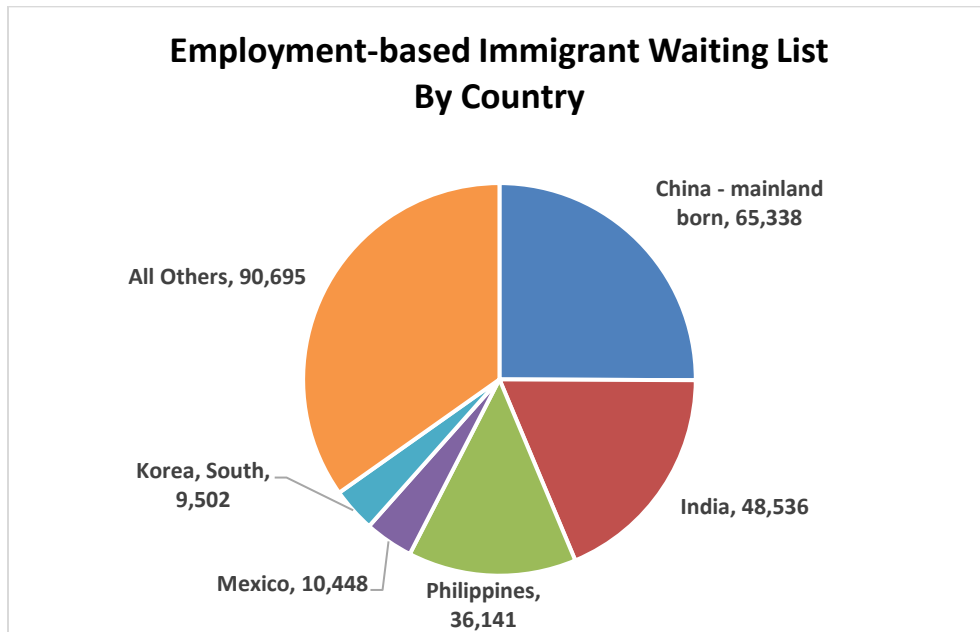
Employment-based Immigrant Waiting List by Country

It is important to note that normally about eighty-five percent of all Employment preference immigrants are processed as adjustment of status cases at USCIS offices. Cases pending with USCIS are not counted in the consular waiting list tally presented below. Therefore, in several Employment categories the waiting list totals being provided below significantly understate true 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.

The five countries with the highest number of Employment-based waiting list registrants are listed below; together these represent 65.2% of the total. This list includes all countries with at least 9,500 persons on the waiting list. (INA 202 sets an annual maximum per country limit on the amount of Employment preference visas which may be issued to applicants from any one country; the FY 2024 per-country limit will be approximately 11,270.)

Employment-based Preferences

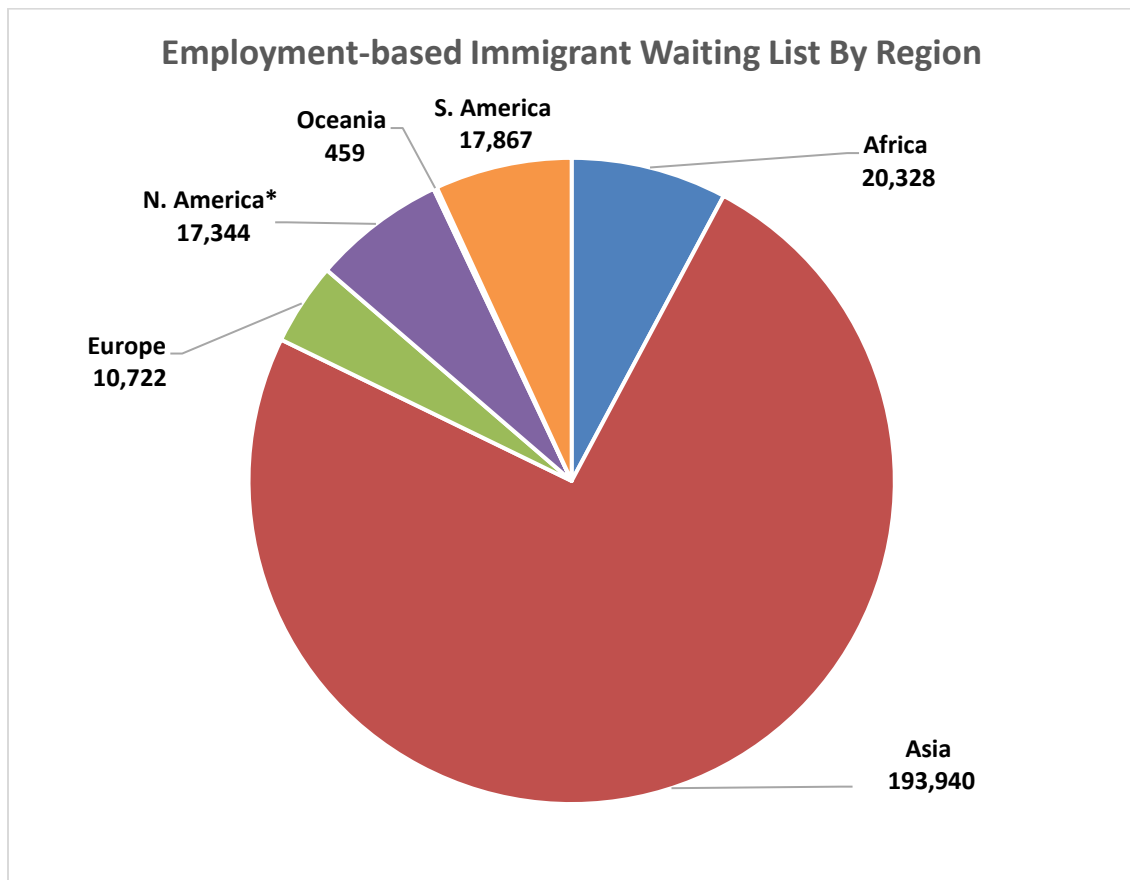
Country	Total
China - mainland born	65,338
India	48,536
Philippines	36,141
Mexico	10,448
Korea, South	9,502
All Others	90,695
Worldwide Total	260,660



Employment-based Immigrant Waiting List By Region

A breakdown of the NVC waiting list by region is:

Region	Total
Africa	20,328
Asia	193,940
Europe	10,722
N. America*	17,344
Oceania	459
S. America	17,867
Employment Total	260,660



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

EMPLOYMENT-BASED PREFERENCES

Employment FIRST Preference:

Top countries are:

<u>Country</u>	<u>Employment First Preference Total</u>	<u>Percent of Category Waiting List</u>
China - mainland born	9,787	47.5%
India	2,426	11.8%
Canada	872	4.2%
Brazil	840	4.1%
Russia	597	2.9%
Korea, South	510	2.5%
Great Britain and Northern Ireland	434	2.1%
Iran	362	1.8%
Mexico	315	1.5%
Argentina	239	1.2%
All Others	4,200	20.4%
Total	20,582	100%

This category is "current" at present for all countries except China-mainland born and India.

Employment SECOND Preference:

Top countries are:

<u>Country</u>	<u>Employment Second Preference Total</u>	<u>Percent of Category Waiting List</u>
India	28,921	38.3%
China - mainland born	13,815	18.3%
Korea, South	4,740	6.3%
Brazil	6,024	8.0%
Iran	3,906	5.1%
All Others	18,161	24.0%
Total	75,567	100%

Sufficiently heavy demand in the Employment Second Preference category has necessitated the establishment of a final action date for all countries. Two oversubscribed countries (China-mainland born and India) have enough demand to require earlier final action dates.

Employment THIRD Preference:

Skilled Worker/Professional Components - Top countries are:

Country	Employment Third Preference: Skilled Worker/Professional Components	Percent of Category Waiting List
Philippines	29,798	38.1%
India	15,030	19.2%
Kenya	4,955	6.3%
China - mainland born	3,553	4.6%
Nigeria	3,005	3.8%
All Others	21,886	28.0%
Total	78,207	100%

Other Worker Components - Top Countries are:

Country	Employment Third Preference: Other Worker Components	Percent of Category Waiting List
Mexico	8,173	18.4%
Philippines	5,892	13.3%
Vietnam	4,911	11.0%
China - mainland born	4,467	10.0%
Bangladesh	3,064	6.9%
All Others	17,963	40.4%
Total	44,470	100%

Sufficiently heavy demand in the Employment Third Preference category has necessitated the establishment of a final action date for all countries. Two oversubscribed countries (China-mainland born and India) have enough demand to require earlier final action dates. In the Third "Other Worker" Preference category, demand has been sufficient to necessitate a worldwide final action date, while China-mainland born, India, and Philippines require earlier final action dates.

Employment FOURTH Preference:

Top countries are:

Country	Employment Fourth Preference	Percent of Category Waiting List
India	316	16.2%
Nigeria	190	9.7%
Mexico	111	5.7%
Brazil	76	3.9%
Korea, South	73	3.8%
All Others	1,185	60.7%
Total	1,951	100%

The above Employment Fourth Preference category totals include the SR category.

Sufficiently heavy demand has required the establishment of a final action date for the Employment Fourth Preference category for all countries.

Employment FIFTH Preference:

Top countries are:

Country	Employment Fifth Preference	Percent of Category Waiting List
China - mainland born	33,676	84.4%
India	1,652	4.2%
Hong Kong S.A.R.	575	1.4%
Vietnam	571	1.4%
Korea, South	517	1.3%
All Others	2,892	7.3%
Total	39,883	100%

The Fifth Preference (C5, I5, R5, and T5) categories are “current” at present for all countries except China and India. The EB-5 Reform and Integrity Act of 2022 reserved Employment Fifth Preference visas for qualified immigrants who invest in rural areas, high unemployment areas, and infrastructure projects. These set-aside categories are “current” at present for all countries. State and USCIS anticipate issuing these visas in the coming fiscal year, and final action dates may be set if demand for any of these categories exceeds the annual limits.