

APRIL VISA AVAILABILITY

The bulletin issued by the Visa Office of the Bureau of Consular Affairs of the U.S. Department of State gives the following availability position for issuance of immigrant visas during April 2005:

Persons Chargeable to India

Family-Sponsored Preferences

1st Preference	Mar 15, 2001
2nd Preference	
2A	Jan 08, 2001
2B	Oct 15, 1995
3rd Preference	Jan 22, 1998
4th Preference	Sep 08, 1992

Employment-Based Preferences

1st Preference	Current
2nd Preference	Current
3rd Preference	Apr 01, 2002
Other Workers	Jul 01, 2001
Certain Religious	
Workers	Current
5th Preference	Current
Targeted Emp	
Areas	Current

Persons Chargeable to Other Countries

For other chargeability areas, including Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, United Kingdom, and the nations of Africa, the cut-off dates for April 2005 are:

Family-Sponsored Preferences

1st Preference	Mar 15, 2001
2nd Preference	
2A	Jan 08, 2001
2B	Oct 15, 1995
3rd Preference	Jan 22, 1998
4th Preference	May 15, 1993

Employment-Based Preferences

1st Preference	Current
2nd Preference	Current
3rd Preference	Current
Other Workers	Jul 01, 2001
4th Preference	Current
Certain Religious	
Workers	Current
5th Preference	Current
Targeted Emp	
Areas	Current

NEW H1B FILINGS BEGUN

With the beginning of the month of April, Labor Condition Applications can now be certified even for the jobs that begin on October 1, 2005. Prior to April 1, 2005, this could not be done because the Department of Labor would not certify LCAs for jobs that begin beyond six months from the date of certification.

The rush is on to get the LCAs certified and the H1B petitions filed for premium processing for jobs that shall begin on October 1, 2005. Employers fear that 65,000 H1B visa numbers could be exhausted very quickly and they will have to wait one more year...employment could then begin only on October 1, 2006!

The U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services recently stated that additional 20,000 H-1B visas to be issued this spring will be open to all qualified applicants -- not just those holding an advanced degree from U.S. universities. But no word yet on how soon one can petition to take advantage of the additional 20,000 numbers.