

SUMMARY

This *Report of the Visa Office* is a compilation of statistical data for Fiscal Year 2000 (October 1, 1999 – September 30, 2000).

The *Report* includes information on all visa issuances by consular offices and on the use of visa numbers in the numerically limited categories. The sources of information for the data are workload reports from visa-issuing offices abroad and immigrant visa number allocation records maintained at the Visa Office.

The *Report* does not contain information on refugees or on persons granted adjustment to permanent resident status by the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), **except** to the extent that such adjustments of status in the numerically limited categories are reflected in the tables of immigrant number use.

IMMIGRANT VISA CATEGORIES AND NUMERICAL LIMITATIONS

See Appendix A-1 for an outline of the categories of immigrants and the numerical limits established under the terms of the Immigration and Nationality Act, and Appendix A-2 for background on the numerical limits for Fiscal Year 2000.

Numerical Limitations

During Fiscal Year 2000, 294,601 family-sponsored and 142,299 employment-based preference visas were available, for a worldwide family and employment preference limit of 436,900.

Employment-based preference visas were available to most applicants without a waiting period. Exceptions were applicants chargeable to CHINA-mainland born and INDIA, for whom heavy visa demand in excess of the per-country annual limit set by law resulted in a visa availability cut-off date, and all applicants in the "Other (i.e., Unskilled) Worker" subgroup within Employment Third preference. All family-sponsored preference categories were oversubscribed.

The per-country limit on **preference** immigrants is set by the Immigration and Nationality Act at 7% of the worldwide family and employment preference limits. For Fiscal Year 2000, the per-country limit came to 30,583. The dependent area limit came to 8,738, 2% of the worldwide family and employment preference limits.

When demand for preference immigrant numbers exceeds the annual limitation set by law for a country, that country is considered oversubscribed. All oversubscribed chargeabilities are subject to the provisions of Section 202(e) of the Immigration and Nationality Act, which makes immigrant numbers within the per-country limitation available to each preference category in proportion to its worldwide numerical limitation. (See Appendix A-1, Section II.B. for breakdown.) The following chargeabilities were oversubscribed during Fiscal Year 2000: CHINA-mainland born, INDIA, MEXICO, and PHILIPPINES.

Diversity Immigrant (DV) Category

Section 203(c) of the Immigration and Nationality Act makes available 55,000 immigrant visas annually to persons from countries with low rates of immigration to the United States. Applicants for these visas are selected by means of an annual lottery. Congress established this category to provide more visas for Europe (the traditional source of immigration) and Africa (long underrepresented in total immigration) without restricting immigration from Asia and Latin America, from which about 80 percent of legal immigrants have come in recent years. The program also offers a chance to immigrants who do not already have close family members or employers in the United States and who thus cannot qualify for visas in other categories.

The Nicaraguan Adjustment and Central American Relief Act (NACARA) of 1997 (Pub. L. 105-500 enacted November 19, 1997) provides that beginning with Fiscal Year 1999, and for as long as necessary, the 55,000 diversity visa numbers available for a fiscal year will be reduced by up to 5,000 annually to offset adjustments under the NACARA program. This provision resulted in the reduction of the Fiscal Year 2000 DV limit to 50,000 numbers.

Not more than 3,500 DV visas (7% of the annual visa limit) may be provided to immigrants from any one country. Under a complex formula in the law based upon statistical data concerning immigration over a 5-year period, the visas are apportioned among six geographic regions: Africa; Asia; Europe; North America; South America, Central America, and the Caribbean; and Oceania.

Natives of all countries except those defined as "high admission" countries are eligible to participate in the DV program. For Fiscal Year 2000, the "high admission" countries were: Canada, China (mainland and Taiwan, except Hong Kong Special Administrative Region), Colombia, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Haiti, India, Jamaica, South Korea, Mexico, Philippines, Poland, United Kingdom (except Northern Ireland) and its dependent territories, and Vietnam. Natives of Macau became ineligible on December 20, 1999.

Applicants registered for the Fiscal Year 2000 DV program were selected from the more than 8 million qualified entries received during the 1-month application period which ran from noon October 1 through noon October 31, 1998. The Department of State picked at random by computer and assigned rank order numbers to approximately 110,000 applicants. That figure anticipated that many of the registrants would not pursue their cases or might be ineligible to receive visas, and was intended to insure that all 50,000 Fiscal Year 2000 visa numbers could be used.

Entitlement to status for DV applicants registered for Fiscal Year 2000 expired at the end of the fiscal year, i.e., as of September 30, 2000. Of the visa numbers available for this category in Fiscal Year 2000, 47,715 numbers were issued.

IMMIGRANT VISAS

Immigrant Visa Workload

The total number of immigrant visas (including replaced visas) issued at offices abroad in Fiscal Year 2000 was 414,314. This figure is a decrease of 217 from the immigrant visa issuances for Fiscal Year 1999. Immediate Relative issuances were up 4.8 percent, Family-Sponsored Preference issuances decreased 5.4 percent, and Employment-Based Preference issuances were up 44.9 percent from the prior year.

On a regional basis the following variations are noted: Africa down 215 (-0.7%), Asia up 13,953 (+9.4%), Europe up 764 (+1.4%), North America down 14,681 (-9.5%), Oceania down 31 (-1.1%), and South America up 69 (+0.3%).

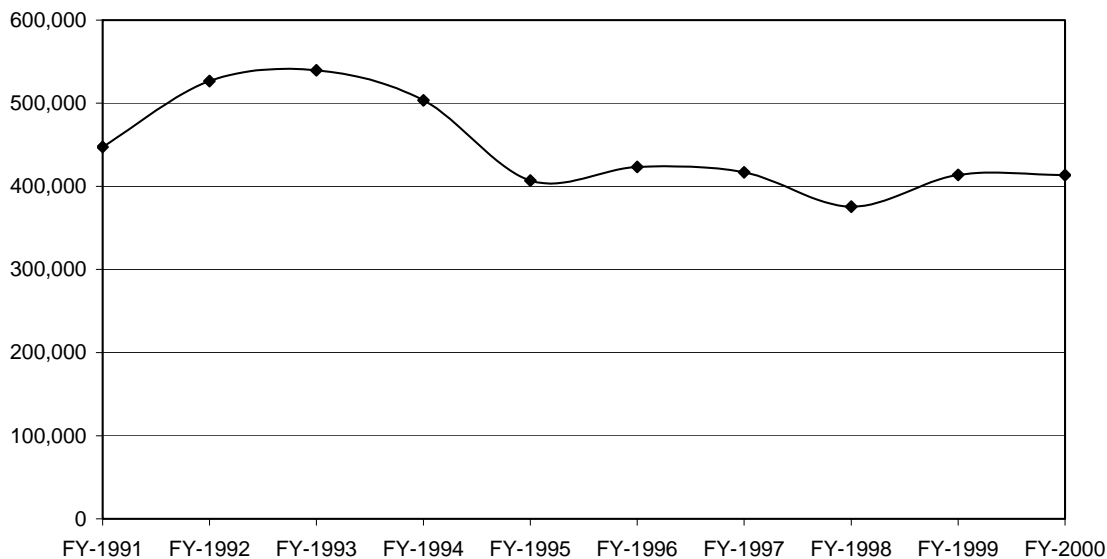
Immigrants from Asia represented 39.4% of the total visa issuances, with North America following with 33.9%.

**Immigrant Visas Issued At Foreign Service Posts
By Geographic Areas
Fiscal Years 1996 – 2000**

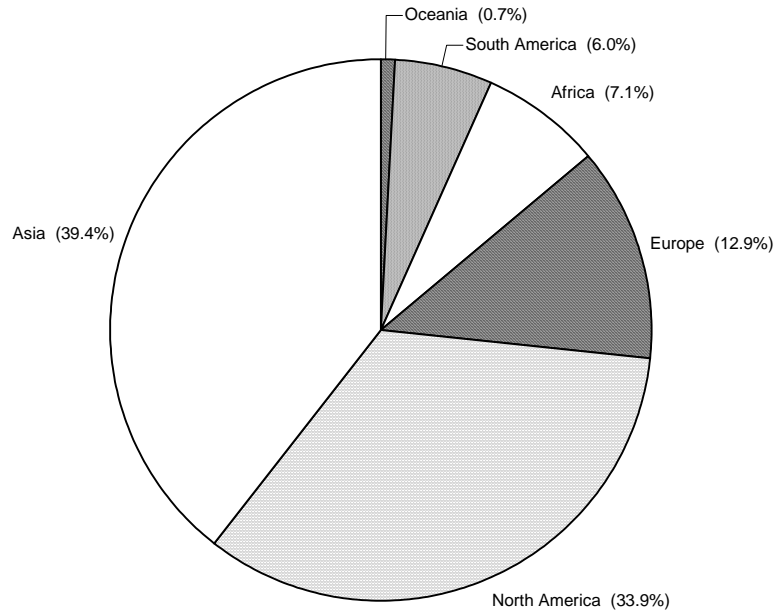
Region Of Birth Or Chargeability	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
Africa	30,002	30,514	27,141	29,579	29,364
Asia	174,359	173,614	152,800	148,819	162,772
Europe	49,971	50,059	49,478	52,769	53,533
North America	136,151	132,622	120,260	154,762	140,081
Oceania	2,648	2,601	2,835	2,802	2,771
South America	30,309	27,509	23,169	24,931	25,000
Total	423,440	416,919	375,683	413,662	413,521

Note: The above figures do not include replaced visas. Issuances to persons chargeable to dependent areas are included in the figure for the region of the governing country.

**Immigrant Visas Issued
Fiscal Years 1991 – 2000**



**Immigrant Visa Issuances
by Applicants' Area of Birth/Chargeability
Regional Breakdown
Fiscal Year 2000**



Classes of Immigrants

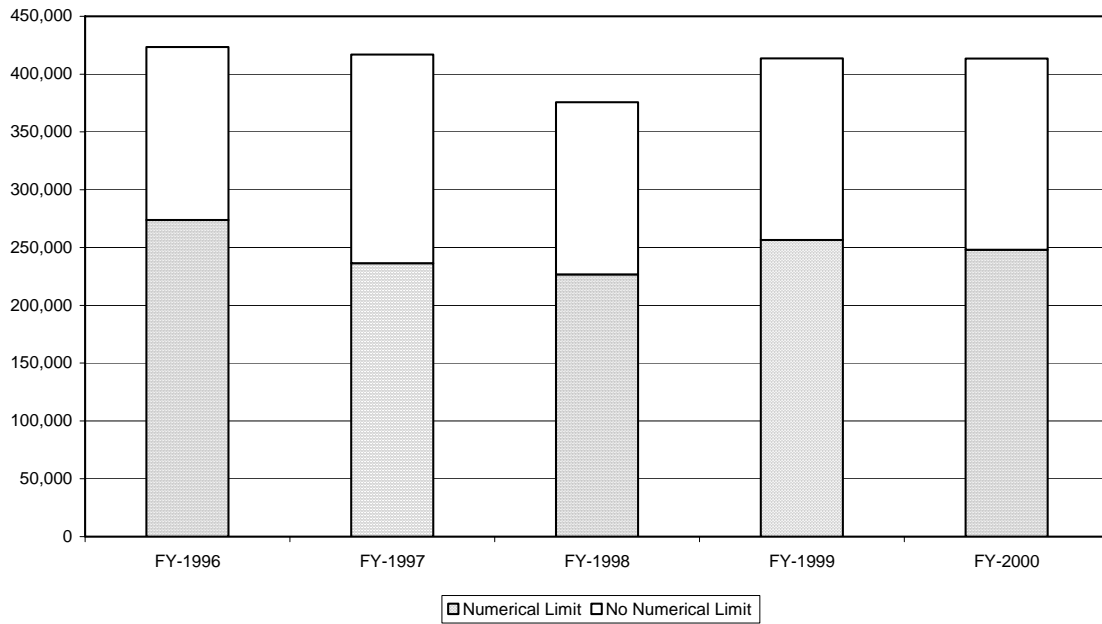
Immigrants may be divided into two broad categories: Those who are in classes subject to numerical limitations, and those in classes for which there are no numerical restrictions.

Classes Not Subject to Limitations

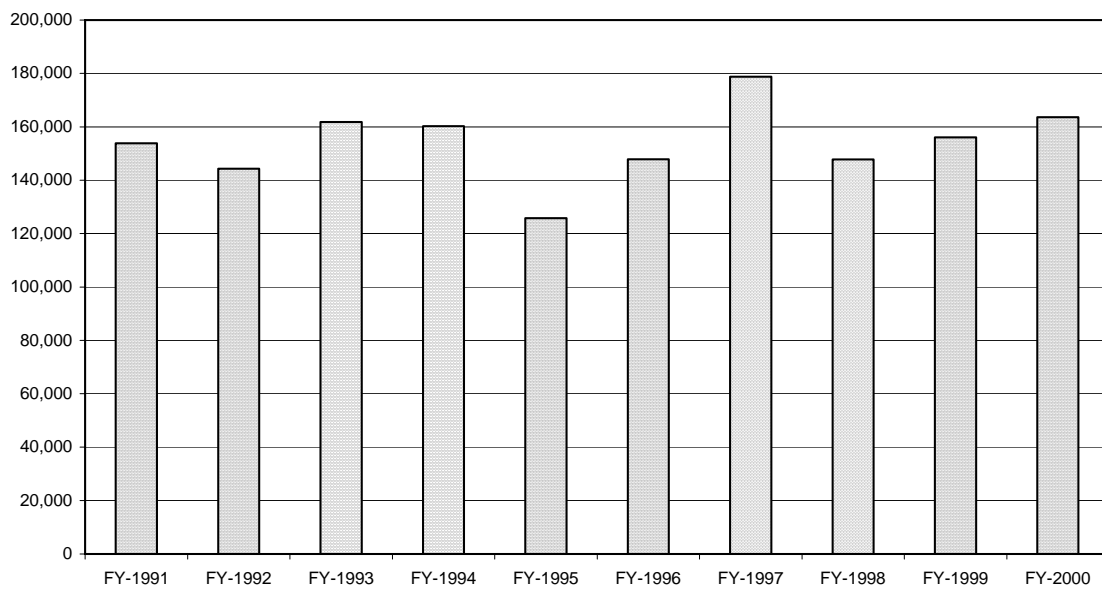
The classes not subject to numerical limitations include: "Immediate Relatives" of U.S. citizens, defined as spouse, child, orphan adopted or to be adopted, parent (if the citizen is at least 21 years of age), and certain widow(er)s and their children, and some "Special Immigrants," primarily returning resident aliens. The Vietnam Amerasian immigrant category also falls in this group.

The majority of nonlimited visas are issued to immediate relatives. During Fiscal Year 2000, the total of immediate relative visas issued at overseas posts was 163,610, an increase of 7,562 (+4.8%) from the Fiscal Year 1999 figure.

**Immigrant Visas Issued
At Offices Abroad
Fiscal Years 1996 – 2000**



**Immediate Relative Visas Issued
At Offices Abroad
Fiscal Years 1991 – 2000**

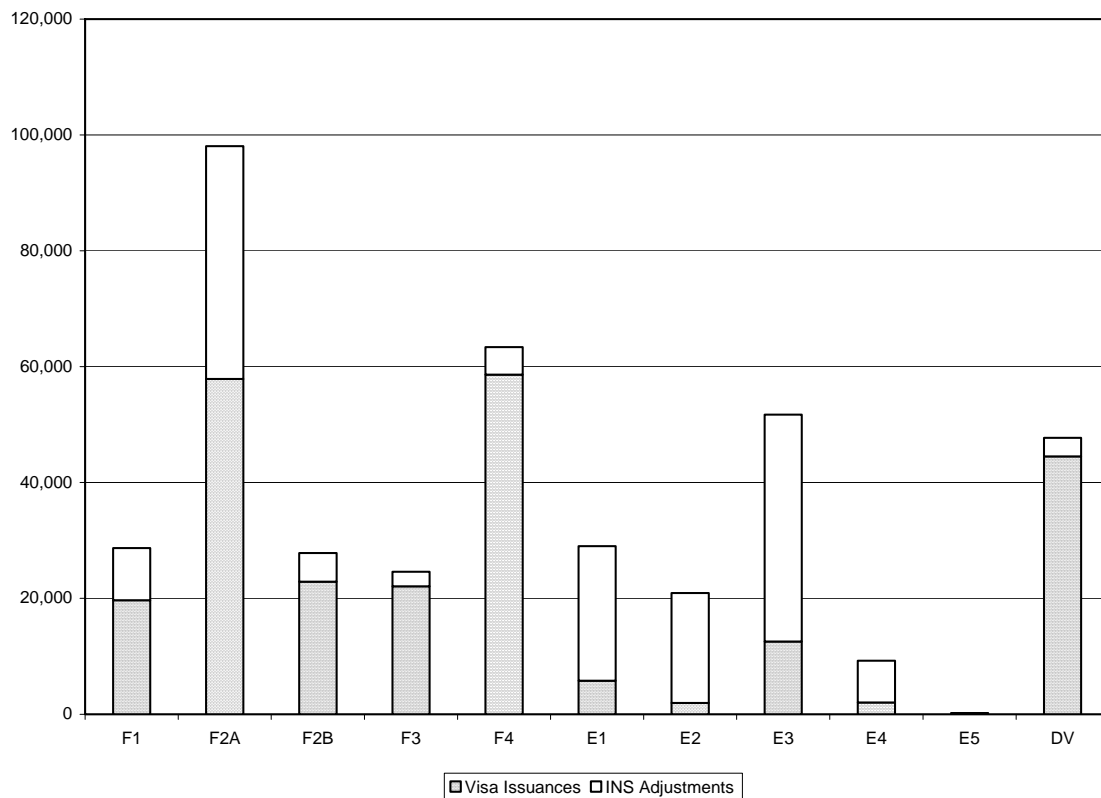


Numerically Limited Classes

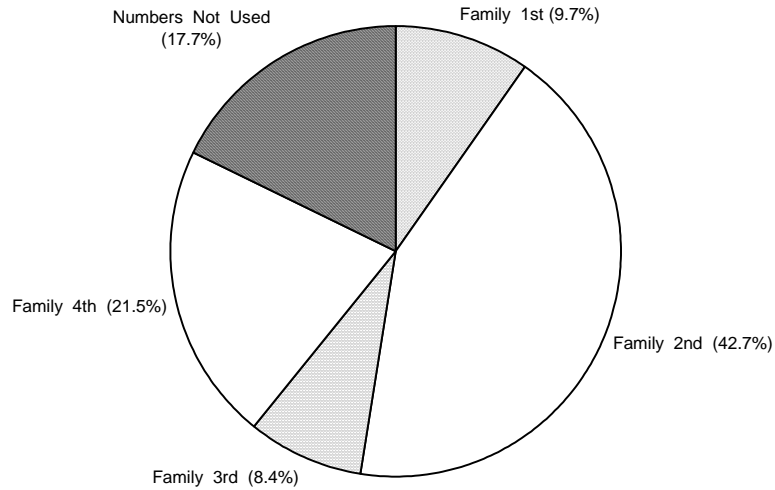
Most immigrant visas are issued to persons in the classes subject to numerical limitation. A description of these classes and numerical limits can be found in Appendix A-1, Section II.

For Fiscal Year 2000, visas provided at posts abroad represented 75% of the issuances in the Family preferences, 20% of the Employment preference number use, and 93% of the Diversity Immigrant category issuances. The balance were applicants for adjustment of status at offices of the Immigration and Naturalization Service in the United States. The overall percentage of visas in these classes provided at posts abroad decreased from Fiscal Year 1999, when such visas represented 86% of the Family preference issuances, 25% of the Employment preference number use, and 92% of the Diversity Immigrant issuances.

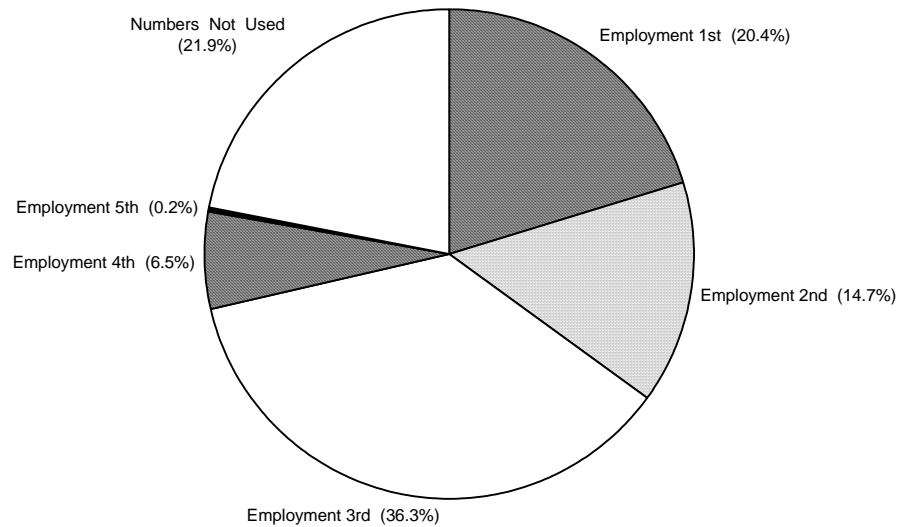
**Immigrant Visa Number Use
By Category
Fiscal Year 2000**



**Immigrant Visa Number Use in the
Family-Sponsored Preference Classes
294,601 Worldwide Limitation
Fiscal Year 2000**



**Immigrant Visa Number Use in the
Employment-Based Preference Classes
142,299 Worldwide Limitation
Fiscal Year 2000**



NONIMMIGRANT VISAS

In Fiscal Year 2000, nonimmigrant visa issuances at Foreign Service posts totaled 7,141,636, an increase of 949,158 (+15.3%) from the Fiscal Year 1999 figure of 6,192,478. This increase is attributable mainly to the replacement of existing Mexican Border Crossing Cards by the new machine-readable cards with a biometric indicator mandated by Section 104 of Pub. L. 104–208. Issuances in the H (temporary worker) visa classes also increased.

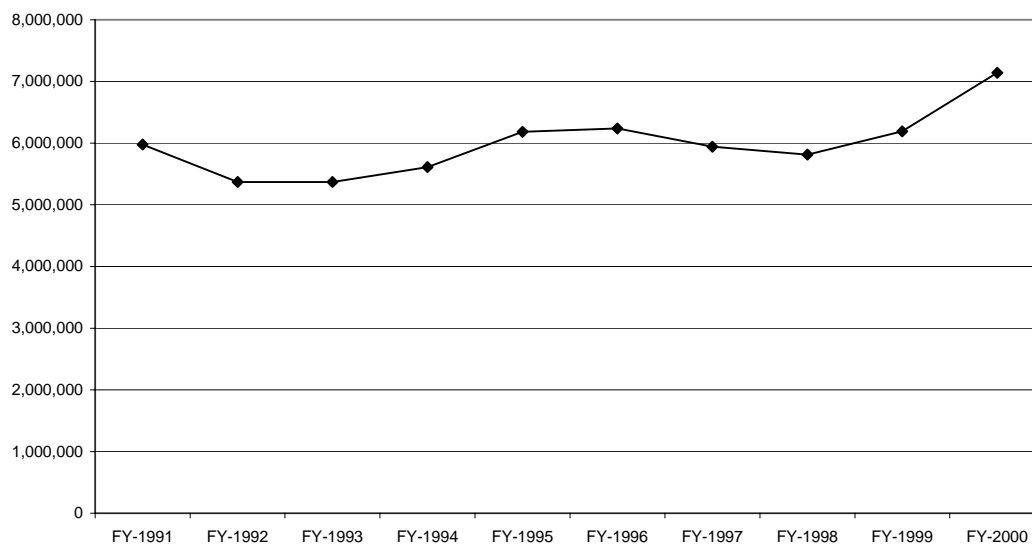
Nonimmigrant visa issuances remained considerably below the record high of 8,679,709 set in Fiscal Year 1988, a continuing reflection of the Visa Waiver Pilot Program. The 29 countries in the Program during FY–2000 were Andorra, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brunei, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Monaco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, San Marino, Singapore, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and Uruguay. Under the waiver program, citizens of the designated countries may visit the United States for up to 90 days without the need of obtaining a visitor visa.

Under separate provisions of law, visas are also not required of most Canadians and of certain other limited categories of travelers.

Nonimmigrant issuances to nationals of Asian countries were about 34.4% of the total, and visas issued to nationals of North American countries equaled about 33.1%. Visitor (B) visas and Border Crossing Cards (BCCs) accounted for about 79.3% of the nonimmigrant visas issued, and temporary employment (E, H, I, L, O, P, Q, R, and NAFTA) visas about 7.2%. Visas issued to 10 nationalities (Mexico, South Korea, India, China (mainland and Taiwan), Brazil, Colombia, Philippines, Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and Israel) accounted for about 58.3% of the total issuances.

It should be noted that most nonimmigrant visas are valid for several years. The total of persons holding valid visas, therefore, is several times the figure for visas issued in any one year. The Department of State has made a conscious effort to authorize the maximum possible nonimmigrant visa validity for qualified applicants to reduce the need for frequent reapplication, thus helping to make worldwide nonimmigrant visa processing as efficient as possible.

Nonimmigrant Visas Issued Fiscal Years 1991 – 2000



Section 101(a)(15)(H)(i)(C), which was added by section 2(a) of the Nursing Relief for Disadvantaged Areas Act of 1999 (Pub. L. 106–95 enacted November 12, 1999), creates a new visa class for nurses coming to areas in which there is a health professional shortage. It is effective from the date of enactment, but will require the promulgation of regulations in order to be implemented. The new visa class will remain in effect for 4 years from the date that regulations are first promulgated. Section 101(a)(15)(H)(i)(A) relating to registered nurses was repealed by section 2(c) of Pub. L. 106–95.

Section 101(a)(15)(Q)(ii), which was added by section 2(b)(1) of the Irish Peace Process Cultural and Training Program Act of 1998 (Pub. L. 105–319 enacted October 30, 1998), creates a new visa class, effective through September 30, 2005 only, for aliens coming temporarily to the United States as participants in a cultural and training program approved by the Secretary of State and the Attorney General under section 2(a) of that Act, and the spouse and children of such aliens.

Section 101(a)(15)(S), which was added by section 130001 of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 (Pub. L. 103–322 enacted September 13, 1994), provided for the admission through September 12, 1999 only of certain informants possessing critical reliable information concerning a criminal or terrorist organization, enterprise, or operation, as well as their accompanying or following-to-join spouse, married and unmarried sons and daughters, and parents. Section 2 of the Act of November 13, 1999 (Pub. L. 106–104) extends admission in this classification for 2 additional years, through September 12, 2001.

**Nonimmigrant Visas Issued ¹
By Geographic Areas
Fiscal Years 1996 – 2000**

Region Of Nationality	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
Africa	250,049	267,210	284,071	299,726	327,568
Asia	2,289,590	2,389,684	2,047,626	2,127,317	2,456,459
Europe	1,179,665	1,145,164	1,099,114	1,081,904	1,095,296
North America	947,241	967,475	1,227,651	1,666,356	2,361,973
Oceania	290,367	46,409	47,053	52,565	52,835
South America	1,213,811	1,079,655	1,085,251	941,607	826,236
No Nationality Recorded ²	67,147	46,464	23,387	23,003	21,269
Total	6,237,870	5,942,061	5,814,153	6,192,478	7,141,636

Note: Issuances to persons with the nationality of a dependent area are included in the figures for the region of the governing country.

¹ Includes border crossing cards.

² Crew list visas and issuances in UN Laissez Passer are included in the "No Nationality Recorded" figure.

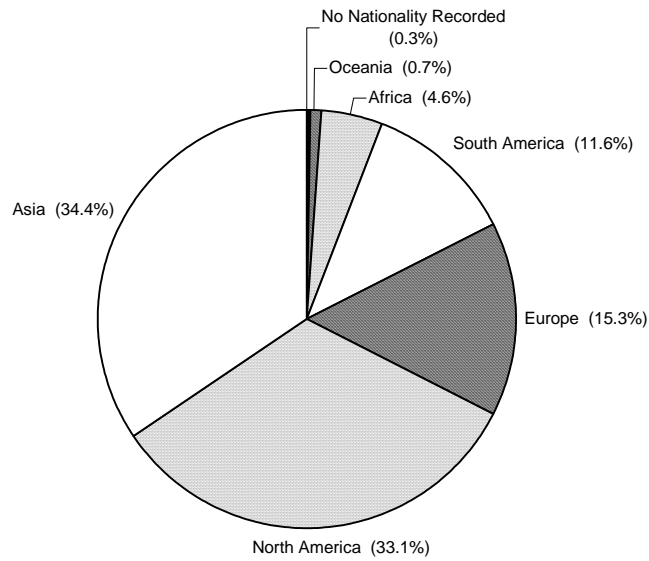
NATIONAL VISA CENTER

The National Visa Center, located in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, provides administrative support for U.S. embassies and consulates abroad which process immigrant visas. The mailing address of the Center is: National Visa Center, 32 Rochester Avenue, Portsmouth, New Hampshire 03801. The public inquiries telephone number of the Center is: (603) 334-0700.

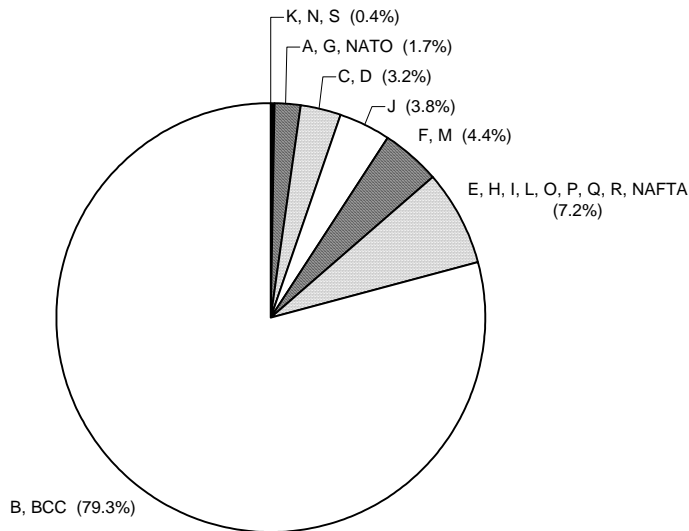
CHANGES IN VISA SERVICES AT FOREIGN SERVICE POSTS

The following post began immigrant visa services during Fiscal Year 2000: Embassy Skopje, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

**Nonimmigrant Visa Issuances
By Applicants' Nationality
Regional Breakdown
Fiscal Year 2000**



**Nonimmigrant Issuances
By Classification
Fiscal Year 2000**



CHANGES IN FOREIGN STATE REPORTING

East Timor voted for independence from Indonesia in an August 30, 1999 referendum and is currently under the authority of the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET). During this transitional period, and until East Timor becomes a fully independent country, a separate immigrant visa chargeability will not be established for East Timor. However, East Timorese are no longer considered Indonesian nationals, and nonimmigrant visas issued to East Timorese applicants are now reported under East Timor.

The Government of Portugal signed an agreement with China on April 13, 1987 returning Macau to Chinese administration effective December 20, 1999. As of December 20, 1999, Macau was designated as the Special Administrative Region of Macau, and the China-mainland immigrant visa chargeability became applicable to Macau. Nonimmigrant visas issued to bearers of Macau Special Administrative Region travel documents are reported under Macau Special Administrative Region.