

MARCH 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 March 2005:

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

Persons Chargeable to India

Family-Sponsored Preferences

1st Preference	Feb 22, 2001
2nd Preference	
2A	Nov 15, 2000
2B	Sep 15, 1995
3rd Preference	Jan 15, 1998
4th Preference	Jul 22, 1992

Employment-Based Preferences

1st Preference	Current
2nd Preference	Current
3rd Preference	Mar 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 March 2005 are:

Family-Sponsored Preferences

1st Preference	Feb 22, 2001
2nd Preference	
2A	Nov 15, 2000
2B	Sep 15, 1995
3rd Preference	Jan 15, 1998
4th Preference	Mar 01, 1993

Employment-Based Preferences

1st Preference	Current
2nd Preference	Current

It is important to note that Employment-based India 3rd Preference is not current any more. It has a cut-off date of March 1, 2002. Also, for all countries of the world, the employment based "3rd preference **other workers**" category has now a cut-off date of July 1, 2001.

Aliens in the third preference category who receive their labor certifications now with a priority date of later than March 1, 2002 will have to wait for filing their adjustment of status applications since the priority date is not current. Similarly, aliens with approved I-140 petitions under third preference whose priority date is later than March 1, 2002 will not be able to file their immigrant visa applications at U.S. Consulates abroad until their respective priority date is reached and so reported by the Visa Office in its monthly visa bulletin.

LCAS TO BE CERTIFIED ON APRIL 1

Those desirous of obtaining H1B status are aware that the H1B cap for the current year has long been reached. In the new fiscal year beginning October 1, 2005, a fresh supply of H1B numbers will become available. For H1B petitions to be filed for jobs beginning October 1, 2005, Labor Condition Applications can be filed on April 1, 2005. As most of you are aware, LCA Certification is a prerequisite for filing petitions for H1B status. It will certainly be a run to the finish line on April 1, 2005 by those employers who are eagerly waiting to petition for their H1B candidates. Do not count on filing regular H1B petitions. File under "PREMIUM PROCESSING" by paying an additional fee of \$1,000 to the Citizenship and Immigration Services for

that purpose. If you file for normal processing, chances are that H1B numbers would be all used by petitioners who filed under Premium Processing and you may need to wait for another long year!