

Ask the U.S. Embassy - May 17, 2017

Question: What kinds of Immigrant Visas (IVs) are there?

U.S. immigration law recognizes several categories of immigrant (permanent) visas, including family-based and employment-based; the majority of immigrant visas issued to Jamaicans are in the family-based immigration category. Almost all immigrant visas require a petition to be filed by a U.S. citizen or Legal Permanent Resident (LPR) to initiate the process. You can read about these categories at the Bureau of Consular Affairs' public website at: <https://travel.state.gov/content/visas/en/immigrate.html>

Question: Some people don't have to wait long for their IVs, but my application was submitted years ago. Why is it taking so long?

United States law limits the number of immigrant visa numbers available each year in certain visa categories. This means that even if USCIS approves an immigrant visa petition for you, you may not receive an immigrant visa number immediately. The availability of immigrant visa numbers depends on the date your petition was filed. This is called your priority date.

If a petition was filed on your behalf as a spouse of a U.S. citizen; an unmarried child (under age 21 of a U.S. citizen); or the parent of a U.S. citizen who is age 21 or older, then the number of immigrant visas are not limited. Petition numbers are limited, however, for adult sons and daughters of U.S. Citizens, brothers and sisters of adult U.S. citizens, spouses and children of Lawful Permanent Residents (LPRs), and employment based petitions.

It is also important to verify that the National Visa Center (NVC) has current and accurate information for the petitioner, beneficiary, and your agent/attorney. This will ensure that you do not miss time-sensitive communications about the status of your petition. To add, update, or change your contact information, please call the NVC at 1-603-334-0700 or through their online inquiry form at <https://secureforms.travel.state.gov/ask-nvc.php> You will need to provide your case number, the petitioner's full name, and the beneficiary's full name and date of birth.

You can find more information on our website; www.jm.usembassy.gov and the Department of State's travel website www.travel.state.gov keep on top of Embassy news on our Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/USEmbassyJamaica/> and by following @USEmbassyJA on Twitter. We also answer general visa questions on our Facebook and Twitter pages.