



EMBASSY OF THE UNITED STATES

# TIRANA • ALBANIA

## DIVERSITY VISAS

### Instructions for Diversity Visa Applicants

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After you've been contacted by the Kentucky Consular Center (KCC) with an interview date, you must register for DHL courier service and use this service to send all the following documents to the Consular Section of the U.S. Embassy in Tirana.

You should make every effort to ensure that the documents arrive to our office two weeks before your interview date. If you have not received yet the Affidavit of Support and taxes from the U.S. sponsor, you may bring them on the appointment date together with the medical examination envelope. Failure to provide any of the required documents will result in lengthy delays in processing your visa.

### Appointment Date for DV Selectees

DV Selectees will learn about their interview appointment date **ONLY** by entering their Confirmation Number, Last Name/Family Name, and Year of Birth through the web page of the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Consular Affairs, Electronic Diversity Visa "[Entrant Status Check](#)." You are advised to check the [Entrant Status Check](#) frequently to learn about your interview date. This is the only way you will learn about your interview date. **You will not receive notification by mail or by e-mail.**

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It is your responsibility to check for your interview date and to appear at the Consular Section on the scheduled appointment date. No assurance can be given by the Consular Section that you will be given a new appointment date upon your request.

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### Required documents from each Diversity Visa applicant

**1. HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA** and a photocopy of it; if applicable the College Diploma, and its photocopy. This applies to the principal applicant only. The High School diploma should be legalized by the Ministry of Education and Science and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Albania.

For information on which high school education qualifies for the DV, please read the DV Outreach and DV FAQs under "More Information" section of our website "[Diversity Visas](#)."

**2. BIRTH CERTIFICATE:** One original Birth Certificate for each applicant. It should read Certificate of Birth, not Personal Certificate (e.g., the certificate translated in six languages reads "Certificate of Birth – Certifikatë Lindjeje). Birth certificates must be issued by the government of the country where the applicant was born. Albanian birth certificates for applicants **not** born in Albania will not be accepted. Birth certificate must have all names used.

**3. MARRIAGE CERTIFICATE:** One original Marriage Certificate for each visa applicant (if applicable).

**4. DIVORCE DECREE OR DEATH CERTIFICATE:** If previously married, please include proof of termination of that marriage whether by death or divorce (e.g., death certificate of previous spouse, translated final decree of divorce, etc.)

**5. MINISTRY OF JUSTICE RECORDS:** Criminal record (in Albanian Dëshmi Penaliteti) issued by the Albanian Ministry of Justice for each applicant age 16 years or over in current and any former names, **including maiden names**. **Note:** Applicants are often refused for not submitting the certificate in **all names/surnames** used.

**Important:** When applying for the Ministry of Justice certificate at the Post Office, applicants must clearly note on the court certificate application form that they are applying for a U.S. visa. The Ministry of Justice certificates for applicants for U.S. visas are transferred directly to the Consular Section of the U.S. Embassy in Tirana. Only court certificates obtained directly through U.S. Embassy Tirana are acceptable; applicants may not present their own certificates. In order to certify that you've applied for the MOJ certificate, please

submit a copy of the receipt of payment for the criminal record, which you received from the Albanian Post Office (keep the original one with you, for any rare case where the issuing office in error sends the certificate back to the Post Office where you applied.)

**NOTE:** Persons convicted of a crime must obtain court records, even if the beneficiary has been pardoned or granted amnesty, or the criminal conviction is expunged. These documents must be translated and notarized.

**6. POLICE RECORDS FROM A FOREIGN COUNTRY:** A translated and notarized Police Record from a foreign country for applicants age 16 or over, if the applicant is currently living in that country for more than six months, or if the applicant has previously lived in that country for more than one year, in current and any former names, **including maiden names**. For further information, please read the Police Certificates title of the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Consular Affairs web page "[Documents the Applicant Must Submit to the NVC.](#)"

Applicants who are or were residents in Greece should apply for the Greek Police certificate at the Greek Embassy in Tirana, which will transfer the certificate directly to the U.S. Embassy. Applicants may not present their own Greek police records. These records do not require translation.

Documents issued by Greek authorities (such as school documents, court records, birth certificates, etc.) must be apostilled and translated into English by the Translation Services of the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Please visit [the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs](#) website for more information and contact information.

Please note that applicants often get refused 221(g), because of not submitting the certificate **in all names they've used**.

**7. MILITARY RECORDS:** issued by the Army Recruiting Office (Zyra e Rekrutim-Mobilizimit), for all **male** applicants age 18 and over, regardless of having served the military service or not, and all female applicants with prior military service.

**8. OTHER CIVIL DOCUMENTS:** Decisions issued by the responsible state authority regarding name changes, age amendments, adoption and similar subjects must also be submitted at the time of interview.

**9. TRANSLATION:** You are not required to translate documents issued by the Albanian authorities, except for court decisions. Certified English translations must accompany all documents that are not in Albanian or in English. Translations must be certified by a competent translator and sworn before a Notary Public.

**10. PHOTOS:** Regardless of age, all U.S. Immigrant Visa applicants must present two un-retouched color photographs, approximately 2 X 2 inches (5 X 5 cm) in size, taken on a white background. The photo should have a full frontal view of the face, with the head centered in the frame. For more details please visit the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Consular Affairs web page "[Photograph Requirements.](#)" If the requirements are not met, the photo will not be accepted. The photo should be taken within the **past six months**.

**11. DOCUMENT EXPIRATION: All documents should bear issuance date less than one year ago from interview date. Otherwise, your case will be refused until we receive updated documents.**

**12. DHL COURIER CONFIRMATION PAGE.** See below for detailed information.

**13. PHOTOCOPY OF PASSPORT:** A photocopy of all applicants' passports must be provided. The beneficiary's passport must be valid for travel to the United States and must have at least one year validity beyond the issuance date of the visa. You must present your passport at the interview date. Passport must bear your most recent name.

**14. EVIDENCE OF FINANCIAL SUPPORT BY U.S. SPONSOR:**

- a) A signed [Form I-134](#) - original Affidavit of Support (not photocopy, or by email),
- b) A photocopy of the sponsor's U.S. passport or legal permanent resident card,
- c) A recently issued job letter, that includes information on length of employment and salary,

d) Tax returns of the last year (Form 1040), or an Internal Revenue Service (IRS) transcript (even if the sponsor filed electronically). To request IRS-generated transcripts or copies of a tax return, please visit the [IRS website](#). This document must be less than 12 months old when presented on the interview date.

e) Most recent tax year W-2s for all jobs held,

f) If the sponsor is married, his or her spouse should also present a signed Form I-134, accompanied by a photocopy of the U.S. passport or legal permanent resident card of the spouse of sponsor. You can download Form I-134 through the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services ([USCIS website](#)). For more information for preparing Affidavit of Support forms, please visit the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Consular Affairs web page "[Affidavit of Support Instructions](#)." You can find detailed information regarding [Instructions for Selectees](#) of DV Program at: [http://www.travel.state.gov/visa/visa\\_4756.html](http://www.travel.state.gov/visa/visa_4756.html). Note that sponsor's income must meet the requirements of 125 percent of the Poverty Guidelines, established yearly by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) <http://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty/> otherwise you will be required to find another sponsor.

## Processing Of Immigrant Visas

Your interview date will be scheduled by the Kentucky Consular Center (KCC). You will be notified of your interview date by entering your unique confirmation number at the Entrant Status Check available at [www.dvlottery.state.gov](http://www.dvlottery.state.gov). Only after you are selected, you respond to the notification instructions made available to you via Entry Status Check, and processing begins on your case, you may receive follow-up e-mail communication from the Kentucky Consular Center (KCC) informing you to review Entry Status Check for new information about your application. Be careful to not become a victim of fraudulent e-mails that request payments. The KCC will not ask you to send money to them, to this Embassy or any other U.S. Embassy by mail or by services such as Western Union. For more information, please visit our website at: <http://tirana.usembassy.gov/dv.html>

### Before The Interview

**1. THE VISA APPLICANT SHOULD READ [THE INFORMATION on the Legal Rights Available to Immigrant Victims of Domestic Violence in the United States and Facts about Immigrating on a Marriage-Based Visa](#).** Failure to read this information may delay processing of your visa.

**2. REGISTER FOR DHL COURIER SERVICE:** After you have received the notification from KCC with your appointment date, each visa applicant regardless of age must create an account at <http://albania.usvisa-info.com>, and follow the instructions on how to register for DHL courier service to return your passport upon completion of your case, and/or document submission if requested by the Consular Officer. Optionally, you may contact the Call Center at the toll free numbers (+355) (0) 445-000-37 (in Albania), (703) 439-2349 (in the United States), or USVisaAlbania (on Skype) to speak to an agent who will assist you. Please save your account details as you may need to go back to this website to learn about your passport delivery status, and/or to submit new documents to Consular Section, if instructed to do so. This free of charge DHL courier service is valid only within Albania.

- Print out the DHL confirmation page and bring it on the appointment date. If you do not register, it will create delays in processing of your case. **A visa cannot be issued without a DHL registration.**

**3. SECURITY INFORMATION:** No one may enter the Consular Section with weapons of any sort, cellular telephones, iPods, photographic or video cameras, electronics such as radios, portable CD players or other equipment, including computers. Please do not bring any type of electronic equipment. Please do not bring large or bulky bags to the Consular Section. These items are not permitted inside and there is no storage space for them. There is no parking available at the Embassy for visa applicants. You are advised to not have unnecessary items in your bag on the interview day, because you will undergo a security check.

**4. MEDICAL EXAMINATION:** Before their final immigrant visa interview, all applicants are required to undergo a medical examination performed only by the medical doctors authorized by this Embassy to administer the examination. The principal applicant should go for the medical examination **exactly three weeks prior** to his/her interview date.

You will have to print the [medical examination](#), read it carefully, fill it in, and present it to one of the panel physicians. The applicant is also responsible for the cost of the examination. A medical examination is also required for each accompanying child. You should bring the appointment letter with you on the day of the medical examination. Copy your case number and provide it to the panel physician.

Do not send the results of your medical examination to this office before your interview. You will be required to submit your medical report to this office at the time of your interview. **Do not bring the X-ray CD to the Embassy.** Please read section " After you have Received the Passport and the Visa Packet" below regarding the X-rays.

You can download the Medical Examination form by visiting the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Consular Affairs web page "[Interview Preparation - Medical Examination](#)." Search for TIA –Tirana and download the medical examination form.

## Interview

**APPLICATION FEE:** You will be required to pay the application fee at the time of your interview at the cashier of the Consular Section. The payment is made by **cash only** at the Consular Cashier, in U.S. Dollars or Albanian Lekë.

Effective April 13, 2012, the fee for the Diversity Visa is \$330.00 per person. Since the fees are subject to change, please visit the Department of State's Bureau of Consular Affairs web page "[Fees for Visa Services](#)" for updated information on visa fees.

You can view the status of your visa case at: <https://ceac.state.gov/CEAC/>. All you need is your case number and the location of your interview to monitor your case's progress.

## After the Interview

After your personal interview with the Consular Officer, if your file is complete and you are found qualified, your visa will be issued and sent together with the visa packet by DHL courier service to the DHL branch you chose when registering for DHL courier. You will be notified by DHL via e-mail to pick up your passport. Important: Please **do not open the visa** packet envelope.

Some visa applications may require: a) additional documents, or b) further [administrative processing](#).

- a) When additional documents are requested, the Consular Officer will provide you with a refusal letter which lists the missing documents. Only the marked items apply in your case. Please note that the Consular Officer may use the Albanian language to explain the documents required by the applicant, and English language to explain the documents required by the sponsor. Therefore, you may have to send a copy of the refusal letter by fax or email to the sponsor. It is strongly recommended that you send all the requested documents at once; otherwise, your case may take more time.
- b) A further administrative processing takes additional time after the visa applicant's interview by a Consular Officer. Applicants are advised of this requirement when they apply. Most administrative processing is resolved within 60 days of the visa interview. When administrative processing is required, the timing will vary based on individual circumstances of each case. Before making inquiries about the status of administrative processing, applicants or their representatives will need to wait at least 60 days from the date of interview or submission of supplemental documents, whichever is later.

## After you have Received the Passport and the Visa Packet

Do not open the sealed envelope, which contains your immigration packet. It should not be changed, and it should be surrendered along with the X-rays to the U.S. immigration officer at a port of entry into the United States. Do not pack it; it must be hand-carried. Form I-551, Alien registration Card, also known as a Green Card, will be mailed to the address in the United States that is written in your application forms. This is a very important document, which will serve as proof that you have permission for permanent residency and gives you the opportunity to stay and enter the USA without a visa. See the paragraph "For New Immigrants: Welcome to the United States" below for more information.

The visa in the passport is usually valid for six months (in some cases for less than six months, so check your visa's expiration date). Check your data on the visa for any possible misspelling. If you notice any misspelling on the visa, you should send an e-mail to [TiranaUSConsulate@state.gov](mailto:TiranaUSConsulate@state.gov) providing us with information regarding the error, and you will receive instructions to return to the Consular Section of the U.S. Embassy, Tirana, together with the sealed envelope and your passport to correct the data. You should enter the U.S. before your visa expires; otherwise, you will lose your status. Do not travel outside USA before you have received your Permanent Resident Card.

If you are qualified for the Diversity Visa Program and your family would like to travel at a different time to the U.S., it is very important that the member of family wishing to travel first should be accompanied by the principal applicant. Children, who turn 21 years old after visa issuance, should travel to the United States before they turn 21 years old; otherwise they lose their status.

Your visa cannot be extended beyond the the expiration date, and the fees paid for the visa are not refundable. If for any reason you could not use your visa, please return it to the Consular Section of the U.S. Embassy in Tirana. Another visa will be issued only if you prove that you did not travel due to reasons beyond your control.

## In Rare Cases, When you Could not Receive Notification from KCC

Required forms, in addition to the above mentioned documents, are:

- [Form DS-230](#), for each applicant.
- [Form DSP-122](#), only for the principal applicant.

You can download these forms at the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Consular Affairs web page "[Visa Application Forms](#)."

## Most Important

No assurance can be given in advance that a visa will be issued. A consular officer can make a decision only after the formal application and all documents are reviewed, and that officer has personally interviewed the applicants.

Beneficiaries should not make any travel arrangements for departure, dispose of personal property or make other life changes until the visa has been issued. An immigrant visa is valid for a maximum of six months from the date of issuance. Applicants must travel and apply for admission to the United States before their immigrant visas expire.

This office will make every effort to expedite the process. However should complications arise, applicants may be required to return to this office or furnish additional information.

For the DV applicants the last date a visa can be issued is September 30 of each fiscal year. Because of the limited number of the visas that may be issued under the program, visas may cease to be available even before this date. This is especially true the closer to September 30 an application is made.

## USCIS Immigrant Fee

Effective February 1, 2013, all individuals issued immigrant visas overseas must pay a \$165.00 USCIS Immigrant Fee before traveling to the United States. You will receive instructions on how to pay the fee once the visa is issued. [The USCIS website](#) has more details on the new fee, including contact information for USCIS, if there are further questions.

## For New Immigrants: Welcome to the United States

For a guide concerning new immigrants to the United States, please visit the USCIS web page "[Welcome to the United States: A Guide for New Immigrants](#)" and [Welcome To USA website](#).

After being issued the Permanent Resident Card, you should stay abroad **for less than one year**, otherwise you will be considered to have lost your status of Legal Permanent Resident. For more information on the

rights and responsibilities as Legal Permanent Residents, please visit the USCIS pamphlets "[I am a Permanent Resident. How Do I... Know What My Responsibilities Are?](#)" (PDF 1.19 KB), and "[How Do I Get a Reentry Permit](#)" (PDF 1.18 KB).

If you have questions regarding the Permanent Resident Card, or if you did not receive your card within a certain time, please contact the [USCIS office](#) in the state where you are residing.



## WARNING

**VISA FRAUD IS A SERIOUS OFFENSE. ATTEMPTS TO MISREPRESENT A MATERIAL FACT OR MISLEAD A CONSULAR OFFICER MAY JEOPARDIZE CURRENT AND FUTURE VISA APPLICATIONS.**