

FAQs

Q: How was this error discovered?

- The results showed a pattern that was inconsistent with the statistical outcome expected from a random selection: more than 90 percent of the selectees had registered for the DV program on the first two days of the 30-day registration period.

Q: Why is it necessary to invalidate the results and run a new selection?

- The Immigration and Nationality Act requires that Diversity Immigrant Visas be made available on a strictly random basis. Since the computer programming error resulted in an outcome that was not truly random, the outcome does not meet the requirements of the law. Relying on the original results also would have meant unfairly disadvantaging many DV entrants.
- The Department has long made the DV random selection with the aid of computer software. For the 2012 program, a new computer program was used which failed to run a random process. This is the first problem of this sort to occur in the 15 years of conducting a computer-aided drawing for the DV program.

Q: What about people who checked the website last week and thought they had won? Aren't you taking visas away from them?

- Selection in the DV process does not guarantee anyone a visa. It provides selectees only with an opportunity to apply for a visa.
- We regret that incorrect results were posted on our DV Entry Status Check webpage before this problem was discovered and resolved. Any information that appeared on the Entry Status Check website between May 1 and May 6, 2011 is void and invalid. We understand that some people who viewed the confirmation website and thought they had been selected are disappointed, and we are sorry for any inconvenience or disappointment that this error caused.
- Everyone who submitted a valid DV entry for the 2012 selection will have an equal chance to be selected when the new, corrected random process is run.

Q: Do you believe the software was intentionally corrupted or hacked?

- No. This appears to be solely a computer programming error.
- We have no evidence that this resulted from any intentional act. We also have no evidence that any outside party accessed any data related to the DV program.

Q: Did you invalidate the results because too many winners came from a particular country?

- No. The distribution of results by country fell within a normal statistical range. The distribution of selectees by date of registration, however, showed that the program gave unequal weight to the date of registration. More than 90 percent of the selectees had registered on the first two days of the registration period.
- Furthermore, the law that established the DV program stipulates that applicants from a single country cannot be issued more than seven percent of the available visas in any one fiscal year.

Q: Will you reopen the entry period?

- No. We will rerun the computer selection with the qualified DV entries received during the official entry period (October 5, 2010, to November 3, 2010). It is not necessary to resubmit entries. DV confirmation numbers provided to check results on our Entry Status Check webpage are still valid.

Q: When will the new selection be run? When will correct results be available on your website?

- We expect new results to be available on the Entry Status Check webpage by July 15, 2011.

Q: How much did this error cost the U.S. government?

- Because the problem was corrected before any DV applications were processed, the financial impact is minimal.