



## LOTTERY (Special Program for Cuban Migration)

Because the total number of persons qualifying for immigrant visas and refugee status does not normally reach the 20,000 the U.S. has agreed to authorize each year pursuant to the joint U.S.-Cuban Migration Accords of 1994, the U.S. has adopted a lottery system by which persons who do not qualify as refugees or immigrants can seek to enter the U.S. This system is unique to Cuba and separate from the worldwide diversity visa lottery for which Cubans are also eligible.

Persons interested immigrating to the U.S. apply for the lottery by providing a letter to the U.S. Interests Section during the specified entry period. The last entry period was from June 15, 1998 to July 15, 1998. The next entry period has not been scheduled at this time. During lottery entry periods, entries are received through the Cuban mail system at the U.S. Interests Section. Applications thus received are forwarded to Washington for processing.

In Washington, all entries are data-entered and potential winners are randomly selected. All potential winners are rank-ordered in Washington and potential winners' application packets are prepared and sent to the U.S. Interests Section. The Interests Section contacts applicants for interviews starting from the top of the list throughout the fiscal year. These applicants are mailed letters that contain instructions and forms and describe the documents required for an interview. The letters also invite the applicants to call the Interests Section and schedule an interview once all of the required documents have been gathered. The number of letters mailed to successful entrants is based on estimates of the number of approved immigrants needed to complete the target of 20,000 at the end of the fiscal year as established by the U.S.-Cuban Migration Accord. Estimates are revised continually throughout the fiscal year and the number of letters that are mailed is adjusted accordingly.

Each lottery winner who contacts the Interests Section receives an appointment to be interviewed at the Consular Section. While the winners are admitted based on the Attorney General's parole authority rather than as regular immigrants, they must nevertheless establish that they are not ineligible for admission under U.S. law, including that they have not been convicted of serious crimes, are not a member of a terrorist organization, and will not become a public charge. (See above.) Winning the lottery does not guarantee the applicant's admission to the U.S.; rather it provides him or her an opportunity to be interviewed for consideration under the parole authority. The individual must also demonstrate that he meets at least two of the three basic qualifications for this program (high school education, three or more years' work experience, relatives living in the United States). Persons in the U.S. who wish to provide affidavits of support on behalf of winners of the Cuban lottery of the worldwide Diversity Visa lottery should note that the Form I-864 cannot be accepted for these types of cases. The proper form to use to provide an affidavit of support for all parole and Diversity Visa cases is the Form I-134.

