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By Nepal Digest - October 26, 2026 - Nepal

The US Diversity Visa lottery has a court timetable, but its entry website still has a closed door. For Nepalis waiting to apply for DV-2027, that distinction matters more than a headline promising that the lottery is back.

A federal judge has ordered the State Department to announce registration details by 29 October 2026 and open entries by 1 November. Yet when Nepal Digest checked the official entry portal on 26 October, it still displayed the closed DV-2026 entry period and said entries were not being accepted. A court deadline and an operational application window are separate things.

The immediate task is preparation: understand the ruling, wait for the government's programme-specific instructions and avoid paying someone who claims to have access before the official system opens. Neither the injunction nor an eventual lottery selection amounts to a visa.

What the court has ordered

The dispute is *Red Eagle Law, L.C. v. Rubio*, in the US District Court for the Southern District of California. Independent reporting on the original injunction described how the immigration law firm challenged the government's failure to launch the annual lottery. Judge Jinsook Ohta granted preliminary relief on 14 October.

The amended injunction dated 21 October supersedes the earlier operative orders. Its timetable places obligations on the government; it does not tell applicants that they can submit an entry today.

DV-2027 timetable in the 21 October court order

Date	Government obligation	Meaning for readers

29 October 2026	Announce dates, entry website and participation requirements.	Read the official instructions before applying.
1 November 2026	Open a registration period lasting 30 days.	Check the announced opening and closing times.
3 December 2026	Notify selectees; an extension may be requested by 30 October.	The selection timetable may change.
30 September 2027	End processing under the order, or earlier if the allocation is exhausted.	Selection leaves further requirements and a finite visa year.

The order specifies midnight EST for the first three deadlines. Readers in Nepal, the Gulf, East Asia or Australia should use the exact time in the eventual official announcement rather than treat a US date as a local closing time.

Why the appeal still matters

The government challenged the injunction. On 21 October, Ohta denied its request to suspend the order pending appeal. Her ruling explains that the administration’s own delay could otherwise prevent the programme from operating during its allotted fiscal year.

That district-court decision does not settle every appellate question. The public appeals docket reviewed for this article lists a further emergency stay request. Nepal Digest has not verified a subsequent appellate ruling disposing of that request. Readers should therefore treat the dates as requirements in the inspected order, subject to further court action, rather than a guaranteed launch schedule.

The useful distinction is between a request and a decision. A government request to pause the timetable is not evidence that a court granted it. Equally, rejection of one request is not a promise that no higher court will intervene. Before acting on a screenshot of a legal update, check which court issued it and when.

Does this mean Nepalis can apply?

The ruling requires the government to administer the programme under the applicable law. It does not publish a new country list or waive eligibility requirements. On the State Department instructions page reviewed on 26 October, the detailed

programme instructions still concerned DV-2026.

Nepal has a documented stake. The State Department’s DV-2026 selection statistics recorded 3,933 prospective applicants chargeable to Nepal, including selectees and their spouses and children. That is not a count of visas issued, and it cannot establish Nepal’s eligibility or selection prospects for the next programme.

For diaspora families, nationality, birthplace and present residence can be different. The previous programme’s instructions explain that country eligibility normally follows country of birth, not the country where someone lives or holds nationality. They also describe limited spouse- and parent-related exceptions. Those historical instructions help explain the distinction; applicants must still check the DV-2027 rules when released.

A Nepali worker living in Qatar should not simply choose Qatar because that is the current address. A Nepali citizen born outside Nepal should not assume a Nepali passport alone resolves the eligibility question. Where the documents or an exception make the answer unclear, seek qualified advice before submitting information.

Prepare the records, then check the new instructions

The current diversity-immigrant regulation retains education or qualifying work-experience requirements. It also provides for passport information and a passport scan, subject to specified exemptions, and an electronic registration fee. Advice copied from an older cycle may therefore miss current requirements.

Start with a private folder containing identity details, education records and accurate family information. Check spellings and dates across documents now. Do not invent an answer to make inconsistent records fit a form. Gathering information is useful preparation; uploading it to an unofficial website is a different decision.

Work experience is not a shortcut available to anyone who has held a job. The regulation requires qualifying experience in an occupation meeting its training or experience standard. Someone relying on employment rather than education should check the relevant criteria instead of assuming that years abroad automatically qualify.

The one-entry rule also matters: multiple petitions submitted by or for the same person in a single fiscal year invalidate those petitions. Coordinate with anyone helping you so that a relative, cybercafé or consultant does not submit another entry on your behalf.

Once DV-2027 instructions appear, compare them with any checklist already prepared. Confirm the programme year, country rules, required documents, photograph specifications, official fee and payment method, and the precise closing time. An old form saved on a phone is not a substitute for that review.

A photograph is a requirement, not a makeover

The State Department’s digital-image guidance requires a square colour JPEG within its stated size and file limits. It also warns against digital changes that alter a person’s appearance. The new programme’s instructions should be checked for the exact specifications that apply to its entries.

Give a photographer the government requirements rather than asking for a generic passport picture. Keep an original digital copy and inspect the finished file. A brighter portrait or an attractive background does not make an image suitable for an immigration application. Avoid beauty filters and generated replacements.

For a family separated across countries, collecting suitable photographs may require coordination. Arrange that early, while keeping the files private. There is no reason to hand a stranger a complete family document pack merely because the court has set an announcement deadline.

Protect the entry from fraud

The State Department’s fraud warning says consultants cannot improve someone’s chance of selection. It directs entrants to the official government system and warns about messages claiming that a recipient has won and must send money.

Practical help with language or typing is different from purchasing better odds. Stay involved in any assisted submission, review the answers and retain access to your email and confirmation information. Ask what a service charge covers; do not accept a claim that payment guarantees selection or a green card.

For fee information, follow the current regulation and the forthcoming DV-2027 instructions. Older pages describing a free entry process should not be used to settle what the new system will require. A genuine government fee also does not make an unrelated agent’s payment request legitimate.

Do not confuse separate US visa developments

Another source of confusion is the January 2026 immigrant-visa issuance pause covering 75 nationalities, including Nepal. The State Department’s updated notice says that pause ceased to be in effect on 21 August following a separate court order. Circulating the original country list without the update gives readers an outdated picture.

That notice is not the DV-2027 registration announcement. Nor does the lottery litigation renew an existing work permit, extend a student’s authorised stay or settle a person’s admissibility. Anyone already managing an immigration case should keep its deadlines separate and obtain advice relevant to that case.

The next useful document is the official announcement. It should turn the court’s timetable into instructions an applicant can follow. Until then, prepare accurate records, keep control of personal information and check the government portal directly. A promised opening is still not an accepted entry.

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