FAMILY-BASED IMMIGRATION

Historically, family reunification has been the principal policy underpinning U.S. immigration law. Family-based immigration, a tightly regulated system, allows for close relatives of U.S. Citizens and Legal Permanent Residents (LPR) to rejoin their families here in America.

Family-based immigrants are admitted to the U.S. either as *immediate relatives* of U.S. citizens or through the *family preference system*.

Immediate Relatives are:

- Spouses of U.S. citizens;
- Unmarried minor children of U.S. citizens; and
- Parents of U.S. citizens.

There is no cap on the number of visas available every year for immediate relatives.

The Family Preference System allows into the U.S.:

- Adult children (unmarried and married) and brothers and sisters of U.S. citizens; and
- Spouses and unmarried children (minor and adult) of LPRs.

There are a limited number of visas available every year under the Family Preference system.

Under current immigration law, visas are allocated as follows:

The Family Preference System			
U.S. Sponsor	**Relationship**	**Preference #**	**Visa Allocated**
U.S. Citizen	unmarried adult children	1st Preference	23,400visas/yr1[1]
LPR	spouses and minor children	2nd A Preference	87,900 visas/yr
LPR	unmarried adult children (21 yrs or older)	2nd B Preference	26,300 visas/yr
U.S. Citizen	married adult children	3rd Preference	23,400 visas/yr2[2]
U.S. Citizen	brothers and sisters	4th Preference	65,000 visas/yr3[3]

1[1] Plus any visas left over from the 4th preference.

2[2] Plus any visas left over from the 1st and 2nd preferences.

	(21 yrs or older)		

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3[3] Plus any visas left over from the previous preferences.