

Over 60K Indians received Green cards in 2017: DHS

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Out of the over 600,000 Indians waiting for the most sought-after Green Card, only 60,394 have received the legal permanent residency last year which allows them to live and work in the US, according to the latest official figures.

Under the current regulation, skilled immigrants from India need to wait anywhere between 25-92 years for a Green Card due to per-country limits, said GCReforms.org, a website founded by members of the Indian diaspora living in the United States that focuses on immigration issues.

As of April 2018, there were 632,219 Indian immigrants and their spouses and minor children waiting for Green Cards. Of the 60,394 Indians who received Green Cards in 2017, the maximum 23,569 were issued to the employment-based preferences like those on the H-1B visas.

Having a Green Card allows a person to live and work permanently in the US. Indian-Americans, most of whom are highly skilled and come to the US mainly on the H-1B work visas are the worst sufferers of the current immigration system which imposes a 7 per cent per country quota on allotment of Green Cards or permanent legal residency. US President Donald Trump Administration Reveals Plan to Block Visas and Green Cards.

As many as 20,549 Indians were issued Green Cards in the capacity of them being immediate relatives (spouses, children and parents) of the US citizens, while 14,962 Indians were issued the Green Cards under the family sponsored categories like brothers and sisters.

The latest annual figures released on October 2 by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), however, reveal that the number of Indians getting Green Cards has dropped - albeit marginally - than the previous two years.

In 2015, as many as 64,116 Indians were issued legal permanent residency, and the next year in 2016, the figure was 64,687.

Among the employment-based preferences - which is the route followed by the H-1B visa holders - 137,855 Green Cards were issued. The DHS said around half of its Green Cards were issued to the immediate relatives of US citizens - spouses (292,909), children (74,989) and parents (148,610).

In all 1,127,167 million foreigners received Green Cards, which is a step below citizenship, in the year 2017, the figures revealed. The previous year 1,183,505 foreigners received Green Cards in 2016 and 1,051,031 in 2015.

People from Asia (424,743) and North America (413,650) account for the maximum number of Green Card recipients in 2017. Country-wise figures reveal that China topped the list with 71,565 Green Cards, followed by Cuba (65,028) and India (60,394).

However, India is different from other countries as it has the maximum number of people waiting in line. Because of the Congressional mandated country quota, Indians according to Cato Institute, a libertarian think tank, would have to wait for decades and in some cases as much as 151 years to get a Green Card.

The figures also reveal that in 2017, Americans adopted 222 Indian kids, of which 176 were females and 46 males. Eight of these were of less than year old, 170 between one and four years, while 44 were over five years of age at the time of adoption.