As EB-1 advances for Indians, experts break down the October visa bulletin

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Indian professionals pursuing U.S. permanent residency saw some gains in the October Visa Bulletin, which advanced EB-1 by seven months and restored EB-2 availability. The movement comes as immigration attorneys explain why a rising numbers of Indians turn to EB-1A and EB-5 options.

While October brings thoughts of crisp fall air and pumpkin patches for most in America, for immigrants waiting in the green card backlog, the month is associated with something entirely different: the release of the October Visa Bulletin. Issued at the start of the federal government's new fiscal year, the bulletin is consequential and is closely watched because it often brings fresh visa numbers and movement in long-stalled immigration categories. As was expected, this year's bulletin brought some forward movement, offering relief to at least some applicants waiting in the green card queue.

Several categories saw significant movement. One of the most awaited visa categories, EB-1 saw some significant movement both for India and China. Both countries saw a 7-month advancement – bringing in significant relief for many. It may be noted that in the past several months, the interest in the EB1A visa category has

grown significantly amongst Indians. While earlier, only those who had extraordinary achievements or substantial national or international acclaim would consider moving forward in that category, immigration experts confirm that a growing number of professionals, particularly from India, are weighing in their options and even seeking attorney intervention to best evaluate their chances as well as seeking advice on strengthening their resume. Many attorneys also say that they have seen an increased EB1A self-petitioning interest among Indian technology professionals. The trend comes as compounding, decades-long backlogs in traditional employer-sponsored visa categories prompt senior engineers, artificial intelligence researchers, data architects, and technical executives to actively explore extraordinary ability pathways to secure permanent U.S. residency. But, with EB-1A gaining interest, a downside also came: an increase in rejections. As immigration attorney Kevin J. Andrews informs, “The EB-1A approval rates fell to 53.4% in the fourth quarter of fiscal year 2025, down from 66.9% for the full year. The NIW approvals fell even further, from 71% in fiscal year 2024 to 55.2% in fiscal year 2025, with that last quarter marking the first on record with more denials than approvals. Pending EB-1A cases grew by more than half over the same period.” The October visa bulletin for India, for EB-1 showed some movement as the final action date for India in EB-1 showed forward movement and is now February 1, 2023. The date for filing in this category is July 1, 2024.”

As for the EB-2 visa category which was unavailable for India, it is back again to November 1, 2013. Another visa category with a steadily growing demand amongst Indians is EB-5 or investor visa program. As Zenny Jhan, founder and chief executive officer of Beyond Holding Company, says, “A typical Indian EB-5 investor has shifted from high-net-worth individuals to professionals or international students already in the US.”

In an encouraging trend for many investors as well as professionals considering the investor visa path, EB-5 unreserved too saw availability, with final action dates being December 1, 2023.

On the growing interest in EB-5 visa, which until less than a decade ago was a category that was only explored by extremely wealthy Indians, Chaitrali Karve, Senior Director, North America at LCR Capital Partners, says, “Long-term residency pathways, including the EB-5 Immigrant Investor Program, allow families to align immigration strategy with capital allocation and legacy planning. Permanent residency can anchor a broader global portfolio, not only of investments but of opportunity.” The October bulletin also showed the F4 visa category, which is a family-based green card allowing adult U.S. citizens over 21 years to sponsor their siblings along with their spouses and minor children. This category, which is often

considered the slowest for Indians, also showed forward movement, with the final action date now being December 15, 2006, and the date for filing is February 1, 2007.