US Visa Bulletin May 2026: No relief for Indian green card applicants, EB-5 warning issued

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In the May US Visa bulletin updates, there is no relief for green card applicants, but a special mention of India and the EB-5 category.

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The U.S. Department of State has released the May 2026 Visa Bulletin, which summarizes the availability of immigrant numbers during May for “Final Action Dates” and “Dates for Filing Applications,” indicating when immigrant visa applicants should be notified to assemble and submit required documentation to the National Visa Center.

Employer-sponsored EB-1 and EB-2 categories are two of the most common ways to enter the US and eventually qualify for green cards. In the May bulletin, there is no relief for the green card applicants. The reduced forward movement in U.S. visa numbers is attributed to decreased immigrant visa issuance at consulates, influenced by nationality-based travel restrictions and ongoing processing limitations for many countries.

US visa bulletin for May has a special mention of India and the EB-5 category — Sufficient demand and increased usage of EB-5 unreserved visas by India may necessitate retrogression of the final action date or render the category unavailable to maintain number usage within the FY 2026 annual limit. This situation will be monitored for necessary adjustments.

“While the May Visa Bulletin shows limited movement on the surface, it signals we are entering a phase where demand may start outpacing visa availability. For Indian families considering the program, this is a moment that calls for decisive action. Our role at LCR is to bring clarity to the EB-5 planning process, helping investors navigate not only the immigration timeline, but also the underlying investment, so they can move forward with confidence,” says Shilpa Menon, Managing Director, Commercial at LCR Capital.

What is Retrogression

Retrogression occurs when visa applications exceed the monthly quota, leading the government to restrict access to earlier application dates to comply with legal limits, thereby moving the dates backwards.

Sometimes, a priority date that is current one month will not be current the next month, or the cut-off date will move backward to an earlier date. This is called visa retrogression, which occurs when more people apply for a visa in a particular category than there are visas available for that month.

Visa retrogression generally occurs when the annual limit for a category or country has been exhausted or is expected to run out soon. When the new fiscal year begins on Oct. 1, a new supply of visa numbers becomes available. Usually, though not always, the new supply returns the cut-off dates to their pre-retrogression state.

Therefore, if additional demand arises or policy changes occur, retrogression may be implemented to adhere to annual limits.

ALSO READ

A. Final Action Dates – Family-Sponsored

For India, May 2026 brings advances across most family-sponsored final action dates. The F1 category (Unmarried Sons and Daughters of U.S. Citizens) moves forward by about four months, from 01 May 2017 to 01 September 2017. F2A (Spouses and Children of Permanent Residents) sees the biggest jump — advancing six months from 01 February 2024 to 01 August 2024. F3 (Married Sons and Daughters of U.S. Citizens) inches forward by roughly two months, from 22 December 2011 to 15 February 2012. F2B and F4 remain unchanged at 22 May 2017 and 01 November 2006, respectively.

Family-Sponsored	All Chargeability Areas Except Those Listed	CHINA-mainland born	INDIA	MEXICO	PHILIPPINES
F1	01SEP17	01SEP17	01SEP17	15AUG07	01MAY13
F2A	01AUG24	01AUG24	01AUG24	01AUG23	01AUG24
F2B	22MAY17	22MAY17	22MAY17	15FEB09	08APR13
F3	15FEB12	15FEB12	15FEB12	01MAY01	22NOV05
F4	15SEP08	15SEP08	01NOV06	08APR01	15JUL07

B. Dates for Filing – Family-Sponsored

The filing dates chart also shows forward movement for India in May. F1 advances by approximately seven months, from 01 March 2018 to 01 October 2018 — the largest single jump in this chart. F2B moves ahead by about five months, from 08 August 2017 to 01 January 2018. F3 advances marginally by about two weeks, from 22 November 2012 to 08 December 2012. F2A remains current (C) as before, and F4 stays unchanged at 15 December 2006.

Family-Sponsored	All Chargeability Areas Except Those Listed	CHINA-mainland born	INDIA	MEXICO	PHILIPPINES
F1	01OCT18	01OCT18	01OCT18	01OCT08	22APR15
F2A	C	C	C	C	C
F2B	01JAN18	01JAN18	01JAN18	15MAY10	01OCT13
F3	08DEC12	08DEC12	08DEC12	15JUL01	08AUG06
F4	01SEP09	01SEP09	15DEC06	30APR01	22MAR08

A. Final Action Dates – Employment-Based

There are no changes for India in the employment-based final action dates between April and May 2026. EB-1 holds at 01 April 2023, EB-2 at 15 July 2014, EB-3 and Other Workers both at 15 November 2013, EB-4 at 15 July 2022, and EB-5 Unreserved at 01 May 2022. All EB-5 set-aside categories remain current.

However, the May bulletin contains a new India-specific caution not present in April: the State Department has warned that high demand and increased number use by India in the EB-5 Unreserved category may force a retrogression of the final action date, or make the category unavailable entirely, before the end of FY 2026.

Employment-based	All Chargeability Areas Except Those Listed	CHINA-mainland born	INDIA	MEXICO	PHILIPPINES
1st	C	01APR23	01APR23	C	C
2nd	C	01SEP21	15JUL14	C	C
3rd	01JUN24	15JUN21	15NOV13	01JUN24	01AUG23
Other Workers	01FEB22	01FEB19	15NOV13	01FEB22	01NOV21
4th	15JUL22	15JUL22	15JUL22	15JUL22	15JUL22
Certain Religious Workers	15JUL22	15JUL22	15JUL22	15JUL22	15JUL22
5th Unreserved (including C5, T5, I5, R5, NU, RU)	C	22SEP16	01MAY22	C	C
5th Set Aside: Rural (20%, including NR, RR)	C	C	C	C	C
5th Set Aside: High Unemployment (10%, including NH, RH)	C	C	C	C	C
5th Set Aside: Infrastructure (2%, including RI)	C	C	C	C	C

B. Dates for Filing – Employment-Based

The employment-based filing dates are also completely unchanged for India in May 2026. EB-1 remains at 01 December 2023, EB-2 and EB-3 both stay at 15 January 2015, Other Workers at 15 January 2015, EB-4 at 01 January 2023, and EB-5 Unreserved at 01 May 2024. All EB-5 set-aside categories continue to be current.

Employment-based	All Chargeability Areas Except Those Listed	CHINA-mainland born	INDIA	MEXICO	PHILIPPINES
1st	C	01DEC23	01DEC23	C	C
2nd	C	01JAN22	15JAN15	C	C
3rd	C	01JAN22	15JAN15	C	01JAN24
Other Workers	01AUG22	01OCT19	15JAN15	01AUG22	01AUG22
4th	01JAN23	01JAN23	01JAN23	01JAN23	01JAN23
Certain Religious Workers	01JAN23	01JAN23	01JAN23	01JAN23	01JAN23
5th Unreserved (including C5, T5, I5, R5)	C	01MAR17	01MAY24	C	C
5th Set Aside: (Rural: NR, RR - 20%)	C	C	C	C	C
5th Set Aside: (High Unemployment: NH, RH - 10%)	C	C	C	C	C
5th Set Aside: (Infrastructure: RI - 2%)	C	C	C	C	C

Allocations in the charts above were for demand received by April 2nd.

ALSO READ

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