If you've been waiting for the green card lottery to reopen, we have an important update. On October 29, 2026, a federal appeals court put the brakes on a lower court's order that would have forced the government to restart the **Diversity Visa (DV-2027) lottery**. For now, the lottery remains closed — but the legal battle is far from over.

Here's what's going on, in plain terms.

A Quick Refresher: What Is the Green Card Lottery?

Every year, the U.S. government makes up to **55,000 green cards** available through a random lottery. It's open to people from countries that don't send many immigrants to the United States. For millions of people around the world, this lottery is one of the simplest ways to get a chance at living and working in America permanently.

It's been around since 1990 and is written into federal law.

So What Happened?

The Government Stopped the Lottery

The Trump administration quietly **stopped moving forward** with the DV-2027 lottery. No registration dates were

announced, and no application window was opened. This was part of a broader slowdown on immigration programs that began in late 2025.

A Law Firm Sued — and Won (At First)

An immigration law firm in San Diego called **Red Eagle Law** filed a lawsuit, arguing that the government was breaking the law by refusing to run a program that Congress created. A federal judge in California **agreed** and ordered the State Department to:

- Set a registration schedule by **October 29**, and
- Start accepting applications by **November 1**.

It looked like the lottery might reopen.

But the Appeals Court Stepped In

The government quickly asked a higher court — the **Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals** — to put that order on pause. A panel of three judges **granted that request**, and the lottery stayed closed.

Why Did the Court Side With the Government?

Here's the key part — and it's actually good news for future cases:

The court didn't say the government was right to cancel the lottery. In fact, the judges made a point of saying they were *not* approving the government's decision.

Instead, the court said that the **law firm was not the right party** to bring this kind of lawsuit. Here's why:

- The Diversity Visa program was created by Congress to help **immigrants** — not to create business for law firms.
- Red Eagle Law's main complaint was that it would lose out on **future clients and fees** if the lottery didn't run. The court said that wasn't the kind of harm the law was designed to prevent.
- No actual **immigrant applicants** were part of the lawsuit. It was just the law firm suing on its own.

In simple terms: **the court said the messenger was wrong, not the message.**

What Happens Next?

Because the court's decision was really about *who* filed the lawsuit and not about whether the lottery should run, it opened

the door for others to try.

And that's already happening. In early November 2026, **individual immigrants** — people who actually want to enter the lottery — filed **new lawsuits** to force the government to reopen both the DV-2027 and DV-2028 programs. These cases are designed to fix the exact problem that sank the first lawsuit.

What Does This Mean for You?

Here are the key takeaways:

- **The lottery is still closed.** There is no registration date right now.
- **New lawsuits are in progress.** Individual applicants are now challenging the freeze, and they have a stronger legal position than the law firm did.
- **The court did not say the freeze is legal.** That question is still open, and future rulings could go differently.
- **Get your documents ready.** If a court orders the lottery to reopen, it could happen on short notice. Having your paperwork in order now will put you ahead.

How Lunel Law Can Help

We know how stressful and confusing this is. At **Lunel Law**, we've helped families and individuals across the country navigate the immigration system — and we're here to help you too.

Whether you're waiting on the diversity visa lottery or exploring **other ways to immigrate**, we can walk you through your options.

We can help with:

- □ Family-based green cards and petitions
- □ Work visas and employer-sponsored immigration
- □ Asylum and refugee cases
- □ Deportation defense
- □ Citizenship and naturalization
- □ Appeals and court cases

Contact Lunel Law today to schedule a consultation.

NOTE

This blog post is for informational purposes only and is not legal advice. Every immigration case is different. If you have questions about your specific situation, please reach out to us for a consultation.