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Immigration

State Department Announces Tiered Immigrant Visa Prioritization

Legal Update

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This article was prepared with the assistance of ABIL, the Alliance of Business Immigration Lawyers, of which Loan Huynh, Fredrikson Immigration Department Chair, is a member.

On April 30, 2021, the Department of State (DOS) announced a tiered prioritization approach to "triage" immigrant visa applications in light of reduced operating capacity as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The main categories of immigrant visas in priority order are:

- **Tier One:** Immediate relative intercountry adoption visas, age-out cases (cases where the applicant will soon no longer qualify due to their age), and certain Special Immigrant Visas (SQ and SI for Afghan and Iraqi nationals working with the U.S. government)
- **Tier Two:** Immediate relative visas; fiancé(e) visas; and returning resident visas
- **Tier Three:** Family preference immigrant visas and SE Special Immigrant Visas for certain employees of the U.S. government abroad
- **Tier Four:** All other immigrant visas, including employment preference and diversity visas