

SCAM WARNING ON GREEN CARDS

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Body

Mayor Giuliani joined celebrity activist Bianca Jagger yesterday to warn immigrants to protect themselves from scams in next year's national lottery for 55,000 green cards.

Immigrant applicants were warned not to believe any lawyer, newspaper ad or group that promises to give a leg up in winning one of the cherished documents, since a State Department computer will make the choice.

"Anyone who says they want to help you, who wants a fee for this, you should turn in. Tell us who is scamming you," Giuliani said in a ceremony at Holy Cross Catholic Church in Flatbush, Brooklyn.

"The very best way to protect yourself, your family, is to become a citizen as quickly as you can."

Applications for the lottery will be accepted only between Feb. 3 and March 5, with those sent before or after rejected. Only one application per person is accepted, and multiple applications will result in disqualification.

The lottery, an annual event in recent years, sets aside 55,000 green cards nationwide for immigrants. Green cards give immigrants the legal right to live and work in the U.S. and are a requirement for citizenship.

The lottery is open to legal and illegal immigrants, living here or abroad, who have a high school education or have worked at least two of the past five years in a job for which at least two years of training is required.

Legalizing immigration status, especially for illegal immigrants, will avoid "a generation without hope and security," said Jagger, a native of Nicaragua and long-time human rights activist.

Countries whose citizens are not eligible include Canada, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, India, Jamaica, Mexico, the Philippines, Poland, South Korea and Vietnam. Citizens of China and Taiwan are not eligible, but those from Hong Kong are. Among United Kingdom citizens, only those from Northern Ireland are eligible.

People from the excluded countries, traditional sources of immigration to the U.S., are barred from the lottery in an attempt to diversify national background.

Information on the lottery is available from the New York Immigration Hotline, (718) 899-4000.

Graphic

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MIKE ALBANS DAILY NEWS PROSPECTIVE CITIZEN has a quiet moment in ceremony at Holy Cross Church in Brooklyn yesterday.

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