Frequently Requested Statistics on Immigrants and Immigration in the United States

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Immigration has been a contested public policy issue at various points in U.S. history and has been elevated to a top concern for the public amid recent record encounters of asylum seekers and other migrants at the U.S.-Mexico border. High numbers and sustained arrivals through various pathways, including legal avenues, have caused a strain on the immigration system, as well as on municipal services in key U.S. cities and towns that have become leading destinations for recent arrivals. Yet other communities, though, are welcoming immigrants, seeing them as sources of demographic, economic, and civic vitality.

Legal immigration, both temporary and permanent, has rebounded from the decline that began in 2020 with the COVID-19 pandemic and the Trump administration's restrictive policies and rhetoric. In some cases the new flows have exceeded earlier levels. In fiscal year (FY) 2023, the State Department issued 10.4 million temporary visas for tourists, international students, and others, up from 8.7 million in FY 2019. Inside the United States, the 969,000 immigrants who became citizens in FY 2022, after spending years as lawful permanent residents (LPRs, or green-card holders), represented the largest naturalization total since FY 2008.

Worldwide, the United States is home to more international migrants than any other country, and more than the next four countries—Germany, Saudi Arabia, Russia, and the United Kingdom—combined, according to the most recent UN Population Division data, from mid-2020. While the U.S. population represents about 5 percent of the total world population, close to 20 percent of all global migrants reside in the United States.

This Spotlight offers information about the approximately 46.2 million immigrants in the United States as of 2022, more than three-quarters of whom are in the country legally. Drawing from the most authoritative and current data available, this article offers an overview of historic immigration trends in the United States, sociodemographic information about who is immigrating, and the channels through which they arrive. It also provides data on the government's enforcement actions and visa processing.

This article draws on statistics from the U.S. Census Bureau (using its 2022 American Community Survey [ACS], 2023 Current Population Survey [CPS], and 2000 decennial census); the U.S. Departments of Homeland Security (DHS) and State; and the Migration Policy Institute (MPI). (Note: DHS and State Department data refer to fiscal years that begin on October 1 and end on September 30; Census Bureau data refer to calendar years). For more detailed information on U.S. and global immigration data sources and one-click access to these datasets, see the MPI report *Immigration Data Matters*. All the data tools and maps

in this article can be accessed through MPI's Migration Data Hub.

This Spotlight has information on the following topics:

Definitions
"**Foreign born**" and "**immigrant**" are used interchangeably and refer to persons with no U.S. citizenship at birth. This population includes naturalized citizens, lawful permanent residents, refugees and asylees, people on certain temporary visas, and unauthorized immigrants.
Geographical regions: MPI follows the definition of Latin America as put forth by the United Nations and the U.S. Census Bureau, which spans Central America (including Mexico), the Caribbean, and South America. For more information about geographical regions, see the U.S. Census Bureau and United Nations Statistics Division.

Immigrants Now and Historically

How many immigrants reside in the United States?

Nearly 46.2 million immigrants lived in the United States in 2022, the most in U.S. history. That year, immigrants comprised 13.9 percent of the total U.S. population, a figure that remains short of the record high of 14.8 percent set in 1890 but slightly higher the 13.7 percent share they comprised in 2019, before the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The foreign-born population grew by 912,000 people between 2021 and 2022, or about 2 percent, the largest annual growth since an increase of more than 1 million between 2013 and 2014. Immigration remains an important contributor to overall U.S. population growth, which has slowed in the past decade due to falling birth rates. Between 2021 and 2022, the growth in the number of immigrants in the United States accounted for 65 percent of the total U.S. population increase (912,000 out of nearly 1.4 million).

How have the number and share of immigrants changed over time?

In 1850, the first year the United States began collecting nativity data through the Census, the country had 2.2 million immigrants, representing nearly 10 percent of the U.S. population.

Between 1860 and 1920, immigrants' share of the population fluctuated between 13 percent and nearly 15 percent, peaking at 14.8 percent in 1890 amid high levels of immigration from Europe. Restrictive immigration laws in 1921 and 1924 limited permanent immigration almost exclusively to arrivals from Northern and Western Europe. Combined with the Great Depression and onset of World War II, this led to a sharp drop in the number of new arrivals from the Eastern Hemisphere. Immigrants and their share of the overall U.S. population steadily declined, hitting a low of 9.6 million in 1970 and a record-low 4.7 percent share of all U.S. residents (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Size and Share of the Foreign-Born Population in the United States, 1850-2022
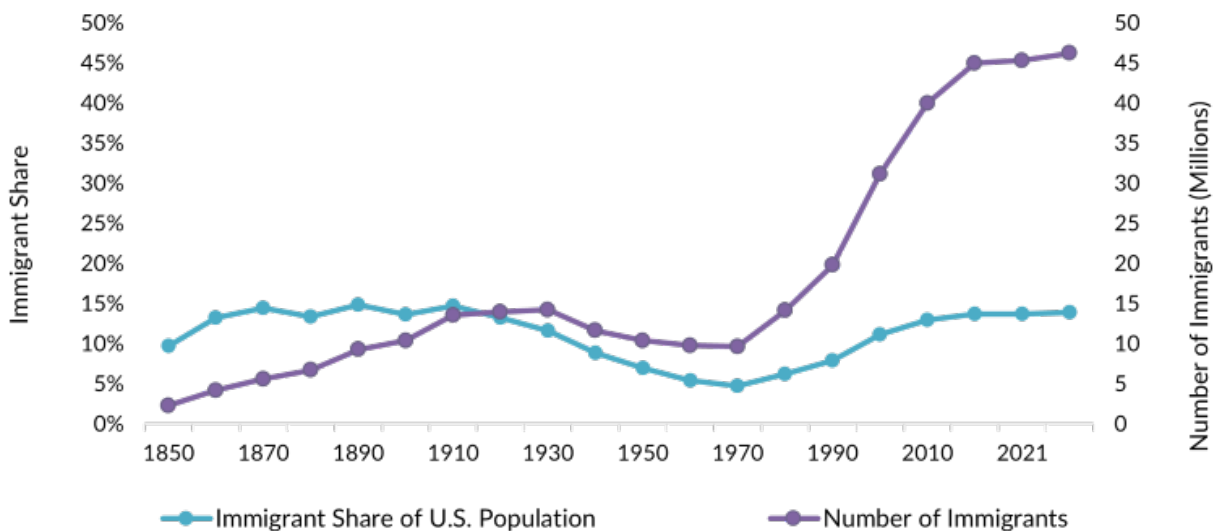
Sources: Migration Policy Institute (MPI) tabulation of data from U.S. Census Bureau 2010-22 American Community Surveys (ACS), and 1970, 1990, and 2000 decennial census; and Campbell J. Gibson and Emily Lennon, "Historical Census Statistics on the Foreign-Born Population of the United States: 1850 to 1990" (Working Paper no. 29, U.S. Census Bureau, Washington, DC, 1999).

Since 1970, the number of immigrants and their share of the U.S. population has increased rapidly, mainly because of increased immigration from Latin America and Asia. This followed important changes in U.S. immigration law such as enactment of the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965, which abolished national-origin admission quotas; the creation of a formal refugee resettlement program with the Refugee Act of 1980; and the Cold War-era grant of preferential treatment to Cuban immigrants. Other factors included the growing U.S. economic and military presence in Asia and Latin America, as well as economic and social ties with the United States' southern neighbors and major economic transformations and political instability in countries around the world.

Recent increases in encounters of asylum seekers and other migrants at U.S. borders reflect a number of factors, including worsening political and economic conditions in origin countries; the uneven repercussions of the pandemic; the war in Ukraine; and the perception that U.S. policy has become more welcoming.

► Want interactive data about historical immigration to the United States? Explore the U.S. Immigrant Population and Share over Time, 1850-Present data tool, which you can find at bit.ly/MPI-US-Immigration-Trends.

► Understand U.S. immigration trends and policies over the nation's history with this article: "Immigration Has Been a Defining, Often Contentious, Element Throughout U.S. History."

► Find a helpful synthesis of immigration policies and actions in the first three years of the Biden administration: "Biden at the Three-Year Mark: The Most Active Immigration Presidency Yet Is Mired in Border Crisis Narrative." See how that compares with policies advanced by the Trump administration, in the report *Four Years of Profound Change: Immigration Policy during the Trump Presidency*. Find them online at bit.ly/MPI-US-Resources.

Where are most immigrants from originally?

The 10.7 million U.S. residents born in Mexico represented by far the largest immigrant group in the United States in 2022, although their number is down by about 1 million since 2010. Mexican immigrants made up 23 percent of the U.S. immigrant population in 2022, down from 29 percent in 2010. India and China (including Hong Kong and Macao but not Taiwan) were the next largest sending countries, accounting for approximately 2.8 million and 2.5 million immigrants in 2022, respectively, or 6 percent and 5 percent of all immigrants. Other top countries of origin included the Philippines (4 percent); El Salvador, Vietnam, Cuba, and the Dominican Republic (each 3 percent); and Guatemala and Korea (each 2 percent).

Together, these ten countries accounted for 55 percent of all immigrants in the United States in 2022.

► Learn more about various immigrant populations with the *Migration Information Source*'s U.S. Immigrant Population Spotlights. These data snapshots provide a wealth of information about groups including Mexicans, Indians, Chinese, and Filipinos, as well as more recent populations such as Afghans, Ukrainians, and Venezuelans. They are available online at bit.ly/ImmigrantSpotlights.

How do today's top countries of origin compare to those of the past?

The large numbers of immigrants from Latin America and Asia in recent decades represent a sharp turn-around from the mid-1900s, when immigration came overwhelmingly from Europe. In the 1960s, no single country accounted for more than 15 percent of the U.S. immigrant population, but Italians were the top origin group, making up 13 percent of the foreign born in 1960, followed by Germans and Canadians (about 10 percent each).

Immigrants from Mexico have comprised the largest group since 1980, but the composition of new arrivals has changed since the Great Recession of 2007-09. By 2013, India and China had displaced Mexico as the top origins for new arrivals. However, amid pandemic-related mobility restrictions, Mexico has regained its position as the origin of most new arrivals since 2021.

Between 2010 and 2022, the immigrant population from India increased by more than 1 million and the population from China rose by 647,000. In contrast, the number of Mexican immigrants declined by more than 1 million during the same period, representing the largest absolute decline of any immigrant group.

The number of immigrants from Venezuela, the Dominican Republic, Honduras, Guatemala, Colombia, Brazil, Nigeria, Cuba, and the Philippines each increased by at least 200,000 from 2010 to 2022.

Among the groups numbering at least 100,000 in 2022, the Venezuelan immigrant population increased the fastest, by 263 percent, followed by immigrants from Afghanistan (258 percent), Nepal (175 percent), Nigeria (104 percent), and Myanmar (also known as Burma; 94 percent). In comparison, the total foreign-born population grew by 16 percent in this period.

► See how immigrants countries and regions of origin have changed over time with data tools for the Regions of Birth for Immigrants in the United States, 1960-Present, Countries of Birth for U.S. Immigrants, 1960-Present, and Largest U.S. Immigrant Groups over Time, 1960-Present, online at bit.ly/MPI-US-Immigration-Trends.

How long have current immigrants resided in the United States?

Nearly 46 percent of all immigrants resident in the United States in 2022 arrived prior to 2000, including more than 26 percent who entered before 1990 and 19 percent who came between 1990 and 1999. Additionally, 23 percent entered between 2000 and 2009, and 31 percent have come since 2010.

How many U.S. residents are from immigrant families?

Immigrants and their U.S.-born children number approximately 90.8 million people, or 27 percent of the to-tal civilian noninstitutionalized U.S. population in 2023. This is an increase of approximately 14.7 million (or 20 percent) from 2010.

What are the largest diaspora groups?

Reflecting a centuries-long history of immigration from Europe, four of the five largest U.S. groups tracing their origin or ancestry to a particular country are European. Germany is the largest, with more than 41.6 million U.S. residents tracing their origin or ancestry there as of 2022; the United Kingdom came in third, with 37.9 million; followed by Ireland with 32.7 million; and Italy with 16.1 million. The overwhelming major-ity of these diaspora groups are people born in the United States. The Mexican-origin diaspora ranked as the second largest, with approximately 38.8 million people.

► Check out the top 35 diaspora groups in the United States, broken down by U.S. or foreign birthplace, with the data tool Top Diaspora Groups in the United States, online at bit.ly/USdiasporagroups.

Demographic, Educational, and Linguistic Characteristics

What is the median age for immigrants?

The immigrant population's median age in 2022 was 47 years, making it older than the U.S.-born population, which had a median age of 37 years.

One reason for this difference is that immigrants arrive largely as adults, whereas immigrants' U.S.-born children contribute to the younger median age of the native-born population. Less than 1 percent of immigrants were under age 5 in 2022, compared to 6 percent of the U.S. born. Five percent of immigrants were children ages 5 to 17, as compared with 18 percent of the U.S. born. Seventy-seven percent of immigrants were of working age (18 to 64 years), a much higher figure than the 58 percent of the U.S. born. Close to 18 percent of immigrants and 17 percent of the U.S. born were age 65 or older.

> **Definitions**
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> **College-educated persons** are defined as adults 25 years and older with a bachelor's degree or higher.
>
> **Race** as used by the U.S. Census Bureau reflects the race or races with which individuals most closely self-identify. Race categories include both racial and national-origin groups.
>
> **Hispanic and Latino** are ethnic, not racial, categories. They include individuals who classified themselves in one of the specific Spanish, Hispanic, or Latino categories listed on the decennial census and American Community Survey questionnaire—"Mexican, Mexican Am., Chicano," "Puerto Rican," or "Cuban"—as well as those who indicate that they are "other Spanish/Hispanic/Latino origin." Persons who indicated that they are "other Spanish/Hispanic/Latino" include those whose origins are from Spain, the Spanish-speaking countries of Central or South America, the Dominican Republic, or people who self-identify more generally as Spanish, Spanish-American, Hispanic, Hispano, Latino, and so on.
>
> Read more about the U.S. Census Bureau's definitions on its website.

What is the sex ratio of the immigrant population?

About 51 percent of all U.S. immigrants in 2022 were female, compared to 50 percent of the native born. The share has fluctuated slightly over the past four decades, but immigrant women and girls tend to slightly outnumber men and boys. They accounted for 53 percent of the immigrant population in 1980, 51 percent in 1990, 50 percent in 2000, and 51 percent in 2010.

What is the racial makeup of immigrants?

In 2022, 27 percent of immigrants reported their race as single-race Asian, 20 percent as White, 9 percent as Black, 1 percent as American Indian and Alaska Native, fewer than 0.5 percent as Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander, and 20 percent as some other race. About 21 percent reported having two or more races.

Note: These statistics reflect changes in how the Census Bureau asks about race that have been made since the 2020 decennial census.

► Use MPI's State Immigration Data Profiles to learn more about the demographic characteristics of immigrants and the U.S. born (including age, race, and ethnicity) in each of the 50 states, the District of Columbia, and nationwide. Find them online at bit.ly/StateImmProfiles.

How many immigrants are Hispanic or Latino?

In 2022, 44 percent of U.S. immigrants (20.4 million people) reported having Hispanic or Latino ethnic origins.

Note: *The Census Bureau classifies Hispanic and Latino as ethnic categories, separate from the racial categories listed above (see Definitions box for more information).*

How many Hispanics in the United States are immigrants?

Most U.S. Hispanics are U.S. born. Of the 63.6 million people in 2022 who self-identified as Hispanic or Latino, 68 percent (43.2 million) were native born and 32 percent (20.4 million) were immigrants.

Which languages are most frequently spoken at home?

Regardless of nativity, in 2022 approximately 78 percent (246 million) of all 315 million U.S. residents ages 5 and older reported speaking only English at home.

Among the 69 million people who reported speaking a language other than English at home, 61 percent spoke Spanish. Other top languages were Chinese (including Mandarin and Cantonese, 5 percent); Tagalog (almost 3 percent); and Vietnamese, Arabic, and French (including Cajun; about 2 percent each; see Table 1).

Table 1. Top Languages Other than English Spoken at Home by U.S. Residents (ages 5 and older), 2022

	Number	Share of All Speakers of Foreign Languages
TOTAL	**68,990,000**	**100.0%**
Spanish	41,968,000	60.8%
Chinese	3,494,000	5.1%
Tagalog	1,790,000	2.6%
Vietnamese	1,543,000	2.2%
Arabic	1,370,000	2.0%
French	1,218,000	1.8%
Korean	1,104,000	1.6%
Portuguese	989,000	1.4%
Russian	975,000	1.4%
Haitian Creole	903,000	1.3%
Hindi	885,000	1.3%
German	856,000	1.2%
Urdu	530,000	0.8%
Italian	529,000	0.8%
Telugu	501,000	0.7%
Polish	479,000	0.7%
Gujarati	463,000	0.7%
Farsi/Persian	439,000	0.6%
Japanese	439,000	0.6%
Bengali	427,000	0.6%

Note: Chinese includes Mandarin and Cantonese; French includes Cajun; Portuguese includes Cape Verdean Creole; and Tagalog includes Filipino.
Source: MPI analysis of data from the U.S. Census Bureau 2022 ACS.

Not including English, Spanish was the most commonly spoken language at home in all but two states: Hawaii (Ilocano) and Maine (French). Not including English or Spanish, Chinese, German, French, Vietnamese, Arabic, and Portuguese were among the commonly spoken languages (see Figure 2). Among less typical languages, Hmong was the third most spoken language (after English and Spanish) in Wisconsin, Marshallese in Arkansas, and Polish in Illinois.

Figure 2. Map of Most Commonly Spoken Languages Other than English and Spanish by U.S. State, 2022

Notes: Chinese includes Mandarin and Cantonese; Dakota+ includes Dakota, Lakota, Nakota, and Sioux; French includes Cajun; Portuguese includes Cape Verdean Creole; and Tagalog includes Filipino.
Sources: MPI analysis of data from the U.S. Census Bureau 2022 ACS.

**How many immigrants had limited proficiency in English?**

In 2022, 46 percent (21.1 million) of all 45.9 million immigrants ages 5 and older spoke English less than "very well," accounting for about 80 percent of the country's 26.5 million individuals with limited proficiency in English.

> ► MPI has compiled information on the size of the LEP population across the United States and by state in the data table Number and Share of Limited English Proficient (LEP) Persons, by State: 1990 to 2022, which you can find at bit.ly/MPI-US-Immigration-Trends.

What share of the immigrant population has a college degree?

In 2022, 35 percent of all 40.8 million immigrant adults ages 25 and older had a bachelor's degree or higher, a rate similar to that of U.S.-born adults (see Figure 3). However, newer arrivals tend to be better educated; 48 percent of immigrants who entered the country between 2020 and 2022 held at least a bachelor's degree.

Figure 3. Educational Attainment of the U.S. Population (ages 25 and older), by Origin, 2022
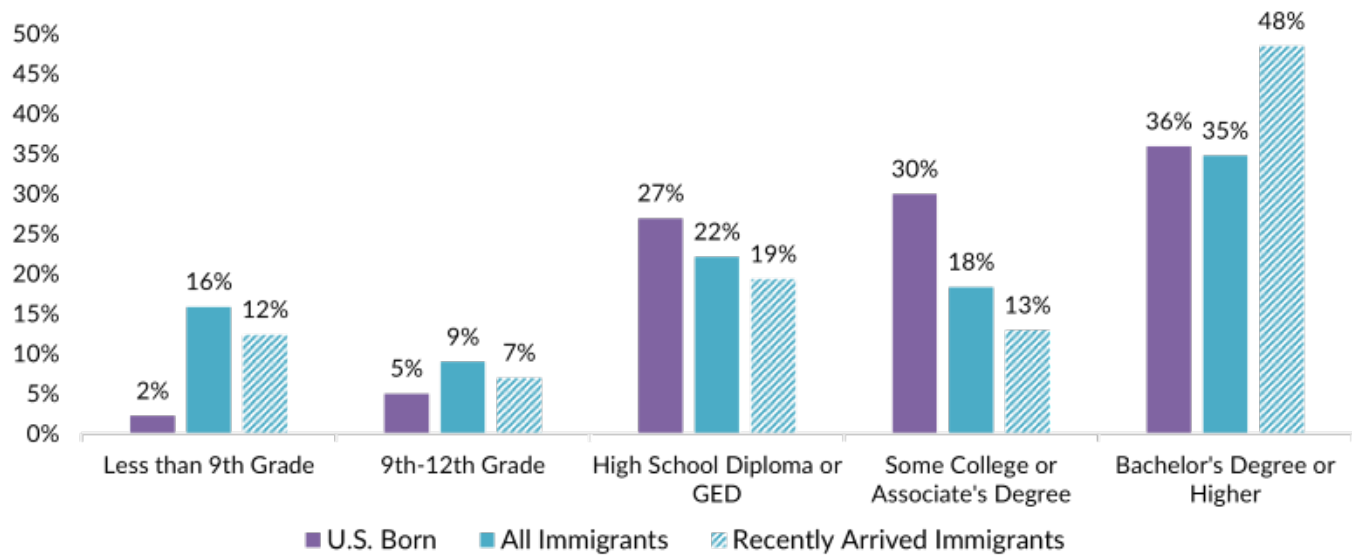
Note: Recently arrived immigrants are those who entered the United States between 2020 and 2022.
Source: MPI tabulation of data from the U.S. Census Bureau 2022 ACS.

Educational attainment data vary by country of origin. Approximately 81 percent of immigrant adults from the United Arab Emirates and India had a bachelor's degree or more in 2022. Other top countries were Saudi Arabia (80 percent), Mongolia (75 percent), Taiwan (74 percent), and Singapore (70 percent). The college-educated share is also high among Venezuelans (53 percent), who represent the fastest-growing U.S. immigrant group. Among immigrants who arrived between 2020 and 2022, the share who were college graduates was the largest among Taiwanese (88 percent), followed by those from Korea, France, India, and Japan (between 85 percent and 87 percent).

► Find information for all origin countries in this dataset: Educational Attainment Among U.S.-Born Adults and All Immigrant Adults by Country of Birth in 2022, which you can find at bit.ly/MPI-US-Immigration-Trends.

Immigrant Destinations

Which U.S. states and cities have the largest numbers of immigrants?

The U.S. states with the most immigrants in 2022 were California (10.4 million), Texas (5.2 million), Florida (4.8 million), New York (4.5 million), and New Jersey (2.2 million). As a percentage of the total population, immigrants made up the largest shares in California (27 percent), New Jersey (24 percent), New York (23 percent), Florida (22 percent), and Nevada (19 percent).

In terms of cities, the New York City metropolitan area was home to the most immigrants (approximately 5.9 million), as of the 2018-22 period, followed by the greater Los Angeles (4.2 million), Miami (2.5 million), and Chicago and Houston (1.7 million each) areas (see Figure 4).

Figure 4. Top Metropolitan Areas of Residence for Immigrants in the United States, 2018-22
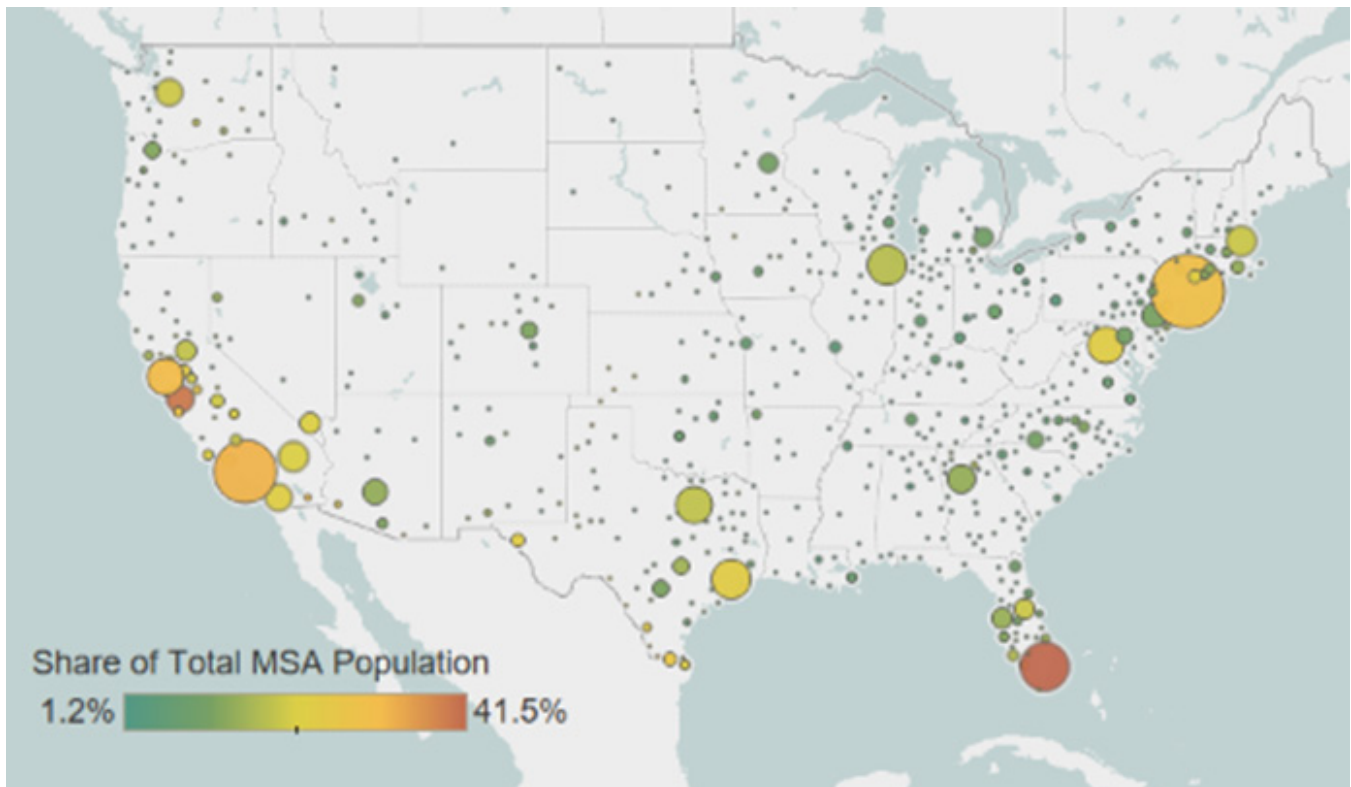
Source: MPI tabulation of data from the U.S. Census Bureau pooled 2018-22 ACS.

► For more information on immigrants' top states of residence over time, see the Immigrant Population by State, 1990-Present data tool. Want to know where immigrants from a particular region or country of origin have settled in the United States? Our interactive maps show top immigrant concentrations at state and county and metropolitan-area levels. Find them at bit.ly/MPI-US-Immigration-Trends.

Which states have experienced the fastest growth of their immigrant populations?

Traditional immigrant destinations such as Florida and Texas have gained the largest absolute number of new immigrants, but other states have seen much larger relative growth in their immigrant populations. In some cases, this is because the states' initial foreign-born populations were quite small, so a relatively small absolute increase has translated into high-percent growth (see Table 2). For instance, more immigrants moved to Florida between 2010 and 2022 than any other state (1.2 million), but the size of the immigrant population in North Dakota grew by the largest relative share (131 percent).

Table 2. Top U.S. States by Absolute and Relative Growth in Immigrant Population, 2010-22

Rank	Absolute Growth		Percent Change	
1	Florida	1,159,000	North Dakota	131%
2	Texas	1,027,000	West Virginia	44%
3	New Jersey	337,000	South Dakota	42%
4	Washington	302,000	Delaware	41%
5	California	278,000	Indiana	38%
6	Massachusetts	276,000	Iowa	37%
7	Pennsylvania	239,000	Tennessee	36%
8	Maryland	226,000	Washington	34%
9	Georgia	225,000	Idaho	33%
10	North Carolina	198,000	Pennsylvania	32%

Source: MPI tabulation of data from the U.S. Census Bureau 2010 and 2022 ACS.

Immigrants in the Labor Force

How many immigrants are in the U.S. civilian labor force?

Immigrants constituted 17 percent (28.6 million people) of the 166.9 million people in the U.S. civilian labor force in 2022, which comprises both the employed and the unemployed looking for work. Immigrants' share of the U.S. labor force has more than tripled since 1970, when they accounted for approximately 5 percent of the civilian labor force.

Definition

The **civilian labor force** is comprised of civilians ages 16 and older who were either employed or unemployed but looking for work in the week prior to participation in the ACS or decennial census.

► Understand immigrants' evolving share in the labor force nationwide and by state with the Immigrant Share of the U.S. Population and Civilian Labor Force, 1980-Present data tool, which is online at bit.ly/MPI-US-Immigration-Trends.

What types of jobs do immigrants perform?

Of the 28.2 million employed foreign-born workers ages 16 and older in 2022, the largest share (37 percent) worked in management, professional, and related occupations (see Figure 5).

Figure 5. Employed Workers in the U.S. Civilian Labor Force (ages 16 and older), by Nativity and Occupation, 2022
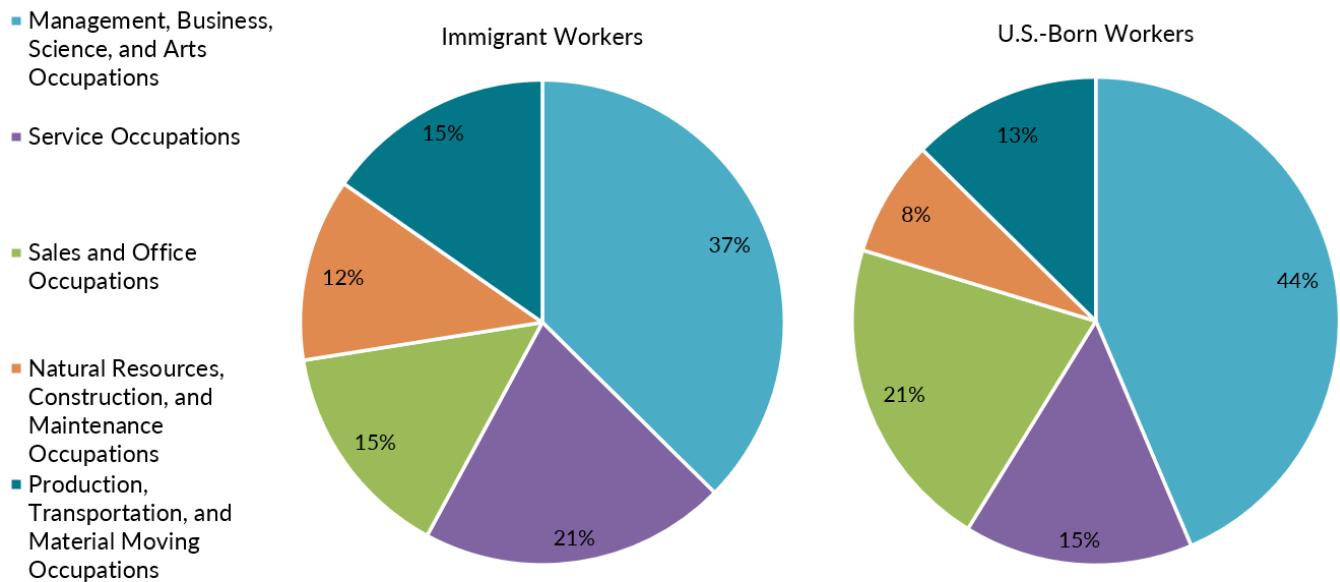
Note: Numbers may not add up to 100 as they are rounded to the nearest whole number.
Source: MPI tabulation of data from the U.S. Census Bureau 2022 ACS.

► Check out our State Immigration Data Profiles for more information on the labor force participation of immigrants and the U.S. born nationally and in each of the 50 states and the District of Columbia, online at bit.ly/MPI-US-Immigration-Trends.

Income and Poverty

Immigrants' median household income in 2022 was approximately $75,500, slightly higher than that of U.S.-born households, $74,600.

At the same time, immigrants were slightly more likely to be in poverty than their U.S.-born counterparts (14 percent versus 12 percent). (The Census Bureau defined poverty in 2022 as having an income below $29,700 for a family of four.)

Health Insurance Coverage

What share of immigrants have health insurance?

Approximately 57 percent of immigrants had private health insurance in 2022 (compared to 69 percent of the U.S. born), and 32 percent had public health insurance coverage (compared to 38 percent for the native born). Meanwhile, 18 percent lacked health insurance (compared to 7 percent of the U.S. born).

Since implementation of the Affordable Care Act in 2014, health insurance coverage rates have increased for the U.S. population overall. In 2013, 32 percent of immigrants were uninsured (compared to 12 percent of the native born), a number that fell to 20 percent in 2017 (and 7 percent of the native born).

Note: Health insurance coverage is calculated only for the civilian, noninstitutionalized population. Since some people simultaneously hold both private and public health insurance coverage, the sum of these rates may be greater than the total share of people with health insurance.

Children of Immigrants

How many U.S. children live with immigrant parents?

Approximately 17.6 million U.S. children under age 18 lived with at least one immigrant parent in 2022. They accounted for 26 percent of all 68.6 million children under age 18, up from 24 percent in 2010, 19 percent in 2000, and 13 percent in 1990.

Definitions
First-generation immigrant children are foreign-born children with at least one foreign-born parent.
Second-generation immigrant children are U.S.-born children with at least one foreign-born parent.
Children with immigrant parents are both first- and second-generation immigrant children.

Most of these children are U.S. born. Second-generation immigrant children born in the United States to at least one foreign-born parent accounted for 87 percent (15.4 million) of all children with immigrant parents. The remaining 13 percent (2.3 million) were born abroad.

Note: These data include only children between ages 0 and 17 (regardless of nativity) who reside with at least one parent. This means that the number of children shown here is smaller than the overall number of U.S. children under 18.

> ► For information on children living with immigrant parents by age and in different states, see the Children in U.S. Immigrant Families data tool. Find it at bit.ly/MPI-US-Immigration-Trends.

How has the number of children in immigrant families changed over time?

From 2021 to 2022, the number of children with immigrant parents declined slightly from 18 million to 17.6 million. Still, the overall trend has been one of growth. Between 2010 and 2022, the number of children

with immigrant parents grew by 4 percent, from just under 17 million. This was a significantly smaller rate of growth than during the 2000-10 era, when the number grew by 30 percent, from 13.1 million.

This growth has been driven by the increasing number of U.S.-born children with immigrant parents. Their numbers increased by 5 percent between 2010 and 2022, from 14.6 million up to 15.4 million. This followed rapid growth of 40 percent between 2000—when their population was 10.4 million—to 2010.

Meanwhile, the population of first-generation immigrant children has declined over the last 20 years. It dropped by 4 percent between 2010 and 2022, from 2.4 million to 2.3 million, after a 12 percent decline from 2000 to 2010, at the start of which there were 2.7 million first-generation immigrant children.

How many children living with immigrant parents are in low-income families?

Regardless of nativity, 24.5 million children under 18 lived in families with incomes below 200 percent of the federal poverty threshold in 2022 (amounting to $59,400 for a family of four with two children). Of them, 7.4 million (or 30 percent) had one or more foreign-born parent.

Of the 17.6 million children of immigrants, 42 percent were in low-income families, a higher rate than for children of U.S.-born parents (33 percent of 51 million).

In which states do most children in immigrant families live?

In terms of absolute numbers, the top states for children under age 18 living with immigrant parents in 2022 were California (3.7 million), Texas (2.3 million), Florida and New York (1.4 million each), and New Jersey (792,000). These states accounted for 55 percent of the 17.6 million U.S. children with immigrant parents.

In terms of the share of children who had immigrant parents, the top states in 2022 were California (where 45 percent of all children had immigrant parents), New Jersey (41 percent), New York (38 percent), Florida (35 percent), and Nevada (34 percent).

Which states have experienced the fastest growth of the number of children in immigrant families?

Traditional immigrant destinations including Florida and Texas experienced the largest absolute growth in the number of children with immigrant parents between 2010 and 2022, but other states have seen much larger relative growth (see Table 3). In states such as North Dakota, the initial number of children with immigrant parents was quite small, so relatively small absolute increases have translated into high-percent growth.

Table 3. Top U.S. States by Absolute and Relative Growth in Number of Children with Immigrant Parents, 2010-22

Rank	Absolute Growth		Percent Change	
1	Florida	246,000	North Dakota	108%
2	Texas	134,000	District of Columbia	80%
3	New Jersey	114,000	West Virginia	73%
4	Maryland	108,000	South Dakota	66%
5	Pennsylvania	98,000	Montana	61%
6	Washington	83,000	Delaware	47%
7	Georgia	78,000	Indiana	45%
8	Massachusetts	75,000	Tennessee	43%
9	North Carolina	70,000	Kentucky	39%
10	Virginia	68,000	Pennsylvania	35%

Source: MPI tabulation of data from the U.S. Census Bureau 2010 and 2022 ACS.

Permanent Immigration

How many immigrants obtain a green card?

In fiscal year (FY) 2022, more than 1 million immigrants became lawful permanent residents. This was a 44 percent increase over the 707,000 new green cards issued in FY 2020, which covered the end of the Trump administration and the first few months of the COVID-19 pandemic. It was also a 38 percent increase from the green 740,000 cards issued in FY 2021. Despite this increase, the number of new green-card holders in FY 2022 represented a decrease of 14 percent from the recent high of almost 1.2 million in FY 2016.

The lower numbers of new LPRs in 2020 and 2021 was largely due to the fewer green cards granted to individuals living outside the United States, in large part as result of processing delays and other interruptions during the pandemic. In the past decade, immigrants obtaining a green card have been about evenly divided between those already living in the United States and adjusting their status, and those applying from abroad. Just 31 percent of new green cards in FY 2021 were issued to applicants abroad; that share increased to 46 percent in FY 2022, in line with pre-pandemic levels. Of the 466,000 new green-card holders from abroad in FY 2022, 78 percent were immediate family members of U.S. citizens and LPRs.

Meanwhile, approximately 55 percent (553,000) of the 1 million new LPRs in FY 2022 received a green card from within the United States. Most of these new permanent residents were spouses, children, and parents of U.S. citizens and LPRs (42 percent), followed by people who obtained their green card through employment (40 percent) or adjusting from refugee or asylee status (15 percent).

► Trace changing trends in permanent immigration over time with the Legal Immigration to the United States, 1820-Present data tool , online at bit.ly/MPI-US-Immigration-Trends.

► To understand changes to the legal immigration system spurred by the pandemic, read the article "Antiquated U.S. Immigration System Ambles into the Digital World." Find it at bit.ly/USPolicyBeat.

Under which categories are lawful permanent residents admitted?

There are four main pathways to obtain a green card: through a family relationship, employment sponsorship, humanitarian protection (for refugees and asylees), and the Diversity Visa (DV) lottery (also known as the green-card lottery). Some categories within these pathways have annual caps.

Of the 1 million immigrants receiving a green card in FY 2022, 42 percent were immediate relatives of U.S. citizens (an uncapped visa category) and 16 percent were in family categories that are limited by visa and country caps (see Figure 6). About 27 percent of new LPRs were sponsored by their employer or self-petitioned (including investors who create jobs), a jump from 21 percent of new LPRs in FY 2020 and 14 percent in FY 2019. Meanwhile, 8 percent adjusted from refugee or asylee status and approximately 4 percent were selected through the diversity lottery (see Figure 6).

Figure 6. Immigration Pathways of New Lawful Permanent Residents in the United States, 2022
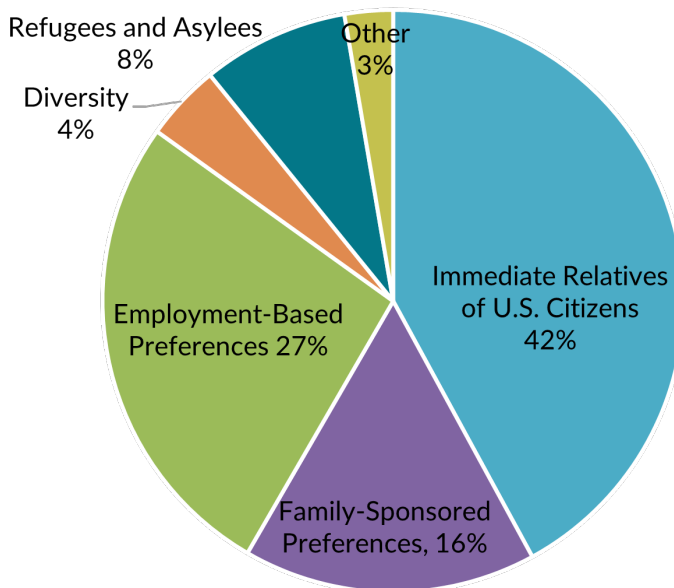
Notes: Immediate Relatives of U.S. Citizens: Includes spouses, minor children, and parents of U.S. citizens. *Family-Sponsored Preferences*: Includes adult children and siblings of U.S. citizens as well as spouses and children of green-card holders. The Diversity Visa lottery was established by the Immigration Act of 1990 to allow entry to immigrants from countries with low rates of immigration to the United States. The law states that 55,000 diversity visas in total are made available each fiscal year. Individuals born in countries with large immigrant populations residing in the United States—including Mexico, India, China, and the Philippines—are ineligible for the 2025 lottery. Percentages may not add up to 100 as they are rounded to the nearest whole number.
Source: MPI tabulation of data from Department of Homeland Security (DHS), "Table 10D: Persons Obtaining Lawful Permanent Resident Status by Broad Class of Admission and Region and Country of Birth: Fiscal Year 2022," updated August 21, 2023, available online.

What are the most common countries of origin for new permanent immigrants?

The top countries of birth for new LPRs in FY 2022 were Mexico (14 percent); India (12 percent); mainland China (7 percent); the Dominican Republic, Cuba, and the Philippines (4 percent apiece); El Salvador (3 percent); and Vietnam, Brazil, and Colombia (2 percent each). Together, these top 10 countries were the origin of about 54 percent of all new green-card recipients in FY 2022.

How many people are selected in the Diversity Visa lottery and where do they come from?

The DV lottery is available to individuals from countries with low rates of immigration to the United States. Created in 1990, the lottery sets aside 55,000 green cards annually, of which 5,000 must be used for applicants under the Nicaraguan Adjustment and Central American Relief Act of 1997.

Interest in the lottery is significantly higher than the number of available visas; more than 7.3 million qualified applications were filed for the DV-2022, covering nearly 13.2 million individuals (applicants as well as their spouses and minor children). This number was an increase from the 6.7 million qualified applications filed for DV-2021 but down from 14.4 million in DV-2019. (The number of applications varies each year in part because the list of eligible countries is modified annually.) Before receiving permission to immigrate, lottery winners must provide proof of a high school education or its equivalent or show two years of work experience within the past five years in an occupation that requires at least two years of training or experience. They also must pass a medical exam and a background check.

In FY 2022, 43,200 people received a green card as diversity immigrants, representing 4 percent of all 1 million new LPRs. The leading countries of birth of DV recipients were Nepal, Morocco, Algeria, Ukraine, and Russia, together accounting for 26 percent of all diversity visa recipients that year.

For some countries, the lottery is responsible for a majority of all new LPRs. For example, 65 percent of all nationals of Algeria and 64 percent of those from Turkmenistan who obtained a green card in FY 2022 did so through the lottery. Shares were also high for nationals of Kyrgyzstan and Fiji (56 percent apiece) and Tajikistan (53 percent).

▶ Read the most recent State Department Visa Bulletin for more on the DV lottery.

▶ For more on the Diversity Visa program, read *The Diversity Visa Program Holds Lessons for Future Legal Immigration Reform*, which you can find at bit.ly/MPI-VisaPolicy.

Temporary Visas

How many nonimmigrant visas does the State Department issue each year?

The State Department issued 10.4 million temporary visas in FY 2023, an increase over the 6.8 million in FY 2022 and 8.7 million in pre-pandemic FY 2019. The public-health crisis and the Trump administration's travel ban were partly responsible for a sharp decline in nonimmigrant visas; in FY 2021, just 2.8 million nonimmigrant visas were issued, the lowest number since 1996. Since then, the State Department has issued

nonimmigrant visas at a faster rate in categories for students as well as temporary workers, trainees, and their family members. For these visas, the State Department has waived the interview requirement to reduce wait times to enter the country. Reflecting these efforts as well as the reduction in global travel restrictions, the number of nonimmigrant visas issued rose rapidly.

Seventy-four percent of nonimmigrant visas issued in FY 2023 were temporary business and tourist visas (B and BCC visas). The next largest visa class was for temporary workers and trainees and their family members (H visa categories; 9 percent), followed by academic students and exchange visitors and their family members (F and J visa categories; 8 percent).

Definition
Nonimmigrants are citizens of other countries who come to the United States temporarily for a specific purpose, such as education or tourism. There are more than 80 classes of nonimmigrant visas, including temporary workers and trainees, religious workers, intracompany transferees, foreign students, visitors for business or for pleasure, international representatives, and foreign government officials. Most classes of nonimmigrants must have a permanent home abroad and most can be accompanied by a spouse and minor children. Nonimmigrants are restricted to the activities allowed by their visa while in the United States.

Note: *The number of visas issued does not necessarily match the number of foreign nationals who entered the United States that year because some nonimmigrant visas may not be used.*

How many temporary employment-based visas does the State Department issue each year?

In FY 2023, the State Department issued nearly 1.3 million employment-based temporary visas for foreign workers (along with immediate family members) in multiple categories, up from 1.1 million in FY 2022 and 965,000 in FY 2019. Among these were approximately 311,000 H-2A seasonal agriculture worker visas, 266,000 H-1B specialty occupation worker visas, 132,000 H-2B seasonal nonagricultural worker visas, and 77,000 L-1 intracompany transferee visas.

Note: Temporary workers and trainees include workers in specialty occupations (H-1B visa), seasonal agricultural workers (H-2A), seasonal nonagricultural workers (H-2B), workers with extraordinary ability or achievements (O-1 and O-2), athletes and artists (P-1, P-2, and P-3), intracompany transferees (L-1), treaty traders and investors (E-1, E-2, and E-3), people working for employers in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands and their immediate families (CW-1 and CW-2), representatives of foreign information media (I-1), workers in international cultural exchange programs (Q-1), workers in religious occupations (R-1), and TN visas reserved for Canadian and Mexican professionals, as well as their spouses and minor children.

► Want more information about temporary nonimmigrant trends? Read the article "Temporary Visa Holders in the United States," online at bit.ly/ImmigrantSpotlights.

► Read the State Department's Annual Reports of the Visa Office and fact sheet on Visa Denials.

How many nonimmigrant admissions does the Department of Homeland Security grant each year?

Foreign nationals were admitted into the United States for nonimmigrant purposes 96.8 million times in FY 2022—nearly triple the 35.3 million in FY 2021 but still significantly below the 186.2 million in FY 2019. Of

these FY 2022 admissions, 54 percent (51.9 million) were Canadians and Mexicans traveling for business or pleasure, who are exempt from completing the I-94 arrival/departure form at the port of entry; DHS does not provide characteristics for this group.

The remaining 44.9 million temporary admissions were of nonimmigrants who filled out the I-94 form. This number was more than three times higher than the 13.6 million such admissions in FY 2021 but significantly fewer than the 81.6 million in 2019. Most of these admissions in FY 2022 were of tourists (78 percent) or business travelers (9 percent), followed by temporary workers and their families (7 percent; see Table 4).

Table 4. U.S. Nonimmigrant Admissions by Category, FY 2022 (I-94 only)

Category of Temporary Admission	Number of Admissions	Share of Total
TOTAL	**44,898,000**	**100.0%**
Tourists	34,946,000	77.8%
Temporary Visitors for Business	4,235,000	9.4%
Temporary Workers and Families	3,177,000	7.1%
Students and Families	1,264,000	2.8%
Exchange Visitors	432,000	1.0%
Transit Admissions	447,000	1.0%
Diplomats and Other Representatives	331,000	0.7%
Fiancé(e) and Child Admissions	26,000	0.1%
Other	39,000	0.1%

Notes: Nonimmigrant admissions represent the number of entries; individuals may have multiple entries within the year. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Office of Homeland Security Statistics only reports characteristics of nonimmigrants who must complete an I-94 arrival/departure form at entry.
Source: MPI tabulation of data from DHS, *2022 Yearbook of Immigration Statistics* (Washington, DC: DHS Office of Homeland Security Statistics, 2023), available online.

These data are for the number of times people were admitted into the country—not the number of individuals who were admitted (in other words, a single individual can be admitted multiple times in a year). Often, temporary visitors stay in the United States for only a short period, such as for the duration of their vacation or business trip.

Refugees and Asylum Seekers

How many refugees enter the United States each year, and where are they from?

Every year, the president in consultation with Congress sets the annual refugee admissions ceiling and allocations by region of origin. The Biden administration set the ceiling at 125,000 each for FY 2022, FY 2023, and FY 2024. Since the resettlement program was formally created in 1980, the lowest limit was set by the Trump administration for FY 2021, at 15,000. It was later increased to 62,500 by the Biden administration.

This number is a ceiling, and the number of resettled refugees rarely reaches this limit. For instance, due to reduced resettlement capacity and pandemic-related logistical challenges, slightly fewer than 25,500 refugees were resettled in FY 2022, amounting to just 20 percent of the 125,000 allocated spaces.

> **Notes on Refugees, Asylum Seekers, and Asylees**
>
> What is the difference between a refugee and an asylum seeker? In the United States, the main difference is the person's location at the time of application. **Refugees** are nearly always outside the United States when they are considered for resettlement, whereas **asylum seekers** submit their applications while physically present in or at a port of entry to the United States. Individuals granted asylum are called **asylees**.
>
> Asylum seekers submit an asylum request either affirmatively or defensively, based on their circumstances. The **affirmative asylum** process applies to people who are not in removal proceedings and file an asylum application with U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) within one year of U.S. arrival. The **defensive asylum** process applies to those crossing the border without authorization or who are in the United States and placed into removal proceedings in immigration court.

As the resettlement system rebounded, the numbers went up, although remained significantly below the cap. In FY 2023, more than 60,000 refugees were resettled, or 48 percent of the 125,000 allocated spots, comprising the most resettlements since FY 2016. For the first five months of FY 2024 (October 2023 through February 2024), 41,200 refugees arrived in the United States, which is 33 percent of the 125,000 available spaces.

For refugees arriving in FY 2023, primary countries of nationality were the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Syria, Afghanistan, Myanmar, and Guatemala. Combined, the nearly 43,500 refugees from these five countries accounted for 72 percent of all refugees resettled that year. Another 7,000 refugees from Sudan, Venezuela, Somalia, Ukraine, and Iraq were resettled. Together, nationals of these ten countries comprised 84 percent (nearly 50,500) of all refugee arrivals in FY 2023 (see Table 5).

Table 5. Top Countries of U.S. Refugee Admissions by Nationality, FY 2023

Country	Number of Admissions	Share of Total
TOTAL	**60,000**	**100.0%**
Democratic Republic of the Congo	18,100	30.2%
Syria	10,800	18.0%
Afghanistan	6,600	11.0%
Myanmar	6,200	10.3%
Guatemala	1,700	2.9%
Sudan	1,600	2.7%
Venezuela	1,400	2.4%
Somalia	1,400	2.3%
Ukraine	1,300	2.2%
Iraq	1,200	2.1%

Source: MPI tabulation of U.S. State Department, Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration, Summary of Refugee Admissions, updated February 29, 2024, available online.

► For more data on refugees and asylees, including top U.S. states of resettlement, read the article "Refugees and Asylees in the United States" at bit.ly/ImmigrantSpotlights.

► Track the annual U.S. resettlement ceiling and the number of refugees resettled each year since FY 1980 with the tool U.S. Annual Refugee Resettlement Ceilings and Number of Refugees Admitted, 1980-Present, online at bit.ly/MPI-US-Immigration-Trends.

What are the most common religions of admitted refugees?

Refugees identifying as Christian made up 52 percent of all admitted refugees in FY 2023. Muslims comprised 44 percent of admitted refugees. The remainder included Buddhists (1 percent), Hindus and Jews (less than 0.2 percent combined), and those who reported no religious affiliation or being atheists (about 3 percent).

Overall, the largest share of refugees admitted to the United States tend to be Christians. Between FY 2010 and FY 2023, Christians represented 49 percent (338,900) of the 697,800 refugees, compared to 35 percent (240,900) who were Muslim. FY 2016 marked the only year since 2010 when the United States resettled more Muslim refugees (38,900 individuals, or 46 percent of all 85,000 refugees resettled that year) than Christians (37,500 individuals, or 44 percent of the total).

Note: Refugee demographic data are based on self-identification, so religious breakdowns include major religions as well as denominations.

How many asylum applications are filed annually?

In FY 2023, more than 455,000 affirmative applications were received by USCIS, representing a 133 percent increase over FY 2022 (195,000) and the most affirmative applications since FY 2017.

Meanwhile, nearly 466,00 new defensive asylum applications were received by the immigration courts (formally known as the Executive Office of Immigration Review, EOIR) in FY 2023. This was the most on record and marks a significant increase from the 237,000 applications filed in FY 2022.

What is the current asylum application backlog?

Due to the large application volume and limited resources, both the affirmative and defensive asylum systems have extensive backlogs. Based on USCIS data, more than 1 million asylum I-589 applications were pending in a backlog in September 2023, up from 572,000 a year earlier. In FY 2023, the total backlog for asylum claims at EOIR was nearly 938,000, down slightly from 944,000 in FY 2022.

How many people receive asylum?

In FY 2022, 36,600 individuals were granted asylum after seeking protection upon or after U.S. arrival, including principal applicants, their spouses, and unmarried children under age 21. This represented a 120 percent increase from the 16,600 grants in FY 2021 but a 20 percent drop from the 45,800 people granted asylum in FY 2019, before the pandemic.

In FY 2022, an additional 2,500 individuals received derivative asylum status in the United States as immediate family members of principal applicants and 8,700 were approved for derivative status outside the United States. (This number reflects travel documents issued to these family members, not their arrival in the United States.)

From which countries do most asylum seekers originate?

China was the top country of origin for those receiving asylum in FY 2022, with 4,600 people (close to 13 percent of total asylum grants), followed by Venezuela, with nearly 3,700 individuals (10 percent). Other top countries of origin were El Salvador (2,600), Guatemala (2,300), and India (2,200). Together, nationals of these five countries made up 42 percent of people receiving asylum in FY 2022.

► For more information on humanitarian immigration, see the USCIS affirmative asylum quarterly reports, EOIR's workload and adjudication statistics data on asylum cases, and the *Refugees and Asylees Annual Flow Report* from DHS's Office of Homeland Security Statistics.

► For more on the overstretched U.S. asylum systems, see the MPI report *Outmatched: The U.S. Asylum System Faces Record Demands*. Available at https://bit.ly/MPIAsylumAnalysis.

Unauthorized Immigrants

How many unauthorized immigrants are in the United States?

MPI estimates there were about 11.2 million unauthorized immigrants in the United States in 2021, up from 11 million in 2019. The unauthorized population was largely stable in size from 2007 to 2021. Since then, the population has likely increased due to the large number of border arrivals post-pandemic, although more recent data are not available. The size of the unauthorized population is affected not only by arrivals, but also by departures, deaths, or in certain cases adjustment to a legal status.

What are unauthorized immigrants' top regions and countries of birth?

Mexicans and Central Americans accounted for two-thirds (66 percent, or 7.4 million) of U.S. unauthorized immigrants in 2021, according to MPI estimates. About 1.2 million (11 percent) were from Asia; close to 1.1 million (9 percent) from South America; 780,000 (7 percent) from Europe, Canada, or Oceania; 436,000 (4 percent) from the Caribbean; and 321,000 (3 percent) from Africa.

Top countries of birth were Mexico (46 percent), Guatemala and El Salvador (7 percent each), Honduras (5 percent), and India (4 percent).

- ► Read more about MPI's estimates of the U.S. unauthorized immigrant population in *A Turning Point for the Unauthorized Immigrant Population in the United States*, online at bit.ly/MPI-unauthorized-analysis.

- ► Visit the Migration Data Hub's Unauthorized Immigrant Population Profiles for detailed sociodemographic information about unauthorized immigrants nationwide, in 41 states and the District of Columbia, and 130 counties, as well as topline estimates of unauthorized immigrant populations for 273 counties. Use the interactive map Unauthorized Immigrant Populations by Country and Region, Top States and Counties of Residence, 2019 to view top U.S. concentrations by country or region of origin. Find them online at bit.ly/MPI-US-Immigration-Trends.

How many immigrants hold "twilight" status?

In recent years, there has been a rapidly growing number of migrants who hold or arrive through some kind of liminal legal status that may offer protection from deportation and the right to work but does not lead to a green card. Among this population of immigrants with "twilight" statuses are more than 1 million individuals who entered the United States through humanitarian parole, either at the U.S.-Mexico border after making an appointment with the CBP One app or through nationality-specific programs for Afghans, Cubans, Haitians, Nicaraguans, Ukrainians, and Venezuelans (see Table 6). Combined with unauthorized immigrants already in the United States benefitting from the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, Temporary Protected Status (TPS), or similar policies, more than 2.5 million people hold some provisional or liminal legal status, according to MPI estimates.

Table 6. U.S. Immigrants with Twilight Statuses, 2023-24

Program	Number of Beneficiaries	Share of the Total
TOTAL	**2,508,000**	**100.0%**
New Entrants	**1,087,000**	**43.3%**
Processed via CBP One App	459,000	18.3%
Cuban, Haitian, Nicaraguan, and Venezuelan (CHNV) Parole	357,000	14.2%
Uniting for Ukraine Parole Program	196,000	7.8%
Afghans Paroled via Operation Allies Welcome	75,000	3.0%
Longer-Term Residents	**1,421,000**	**56.7%**
Temporary Protected Status (TPS)	698,000	27.8%
Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA)	545,000	21.7%
Deferred Action – U Visa	99,000	3.9%
Deferred Action – Special Immigrant Juvenile Status	80,000	3.2%

Notes: CBP One numbers are for successfully scheduled appointments made through the app; not every appointment results in an individual being processed into the country. Table shows the number of parolees via the CBP One app and through the Cuban, Haitian, Nicaraguan, and Venezuelan (CHNV) parole program through January 2024. The Uniting for Ukraine number is through November 8, 2023, and includes 20,000 Ukrainians paroled at the border before the program was created in April 2022. The number of Afghans assisted through Operation Allies Welcome is as of March 2023. The number of holders of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) and Temporary Protected Status (TPS) are as of September 2023. The figure for deferred action for Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS) shows the number of holders as of April 2023. Deferred action for U Visa applicants reflects the number of holders as of September 2023. Numbers for the SIJS and U-visa types of deferred action indicate the number of people initially granted deferred action. Some parolees and grantees of deferred action may have obtained a different immigration status, including asylum, TPS, or lawful permanent residence.
Sources: Camilo Montoya-Galvez, "Biden Administration Has Admitted More than 1 Million Migrants into U.S. Under Parole Policy Congress Is Considering Restricting," CBS News, January 22, 2024, available online; U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), "CBP Releases January 2024 Monthly Operational Data" press release, February 13, 2024, available online; U.S. Citizenship and Naturalization Services (USCIS), "Count of Active Daca Recipients as of September 30, 2023," accessed January 2, 2024, available online; USCIS, "Number of Form I-918 Petitions for U Nonimmigrant Status By Fiscal Year, Quarter, and Case Status, Fiscal Years 2009-2023," accessed January 3, 2024, available online; U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Citizenship and Immigration Services Ombudsman, *Annual Report 2023* (Washington, DC: DHS, 2023), available online; Jill H. Wilson, *Temporary Protected Status and Deferred Enforced Departure* (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 2023), available online; the SIJS number comes from panel discussion at the spring conference of the American Immigration Lawyers Association, Washington, DC, April 27-28, 2023.

► Understand the swelling population of immigrants with twilight status by reading this article: "In the Twilight Zone: Record Number of U.S. Immigrants Are in Limbo Statuses." Find it at bit.ly/ USPolicyBeat.

How many people are eligible for the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program under original rules and how many applications have been received since its launch in 2012?

The DACA program, announced in 2012, offers two years of deportation relief and work authorization to eligible young unauthorized immigrants. To be eligible, one must be at least 15 years old; have entered the United States before age 16; have continuously resided in the United States since June 15, 2007; be enrolled

in school, have earned a high school diploma or its equivalent, or be an honorably discharged veteran; and have not been convicted of a felony, a significant misdemeanor, or three or more misdemeanors; or otherwise pose a threat to public safety or national security.

The Trump administration attempted to terminate DACA in 2017, but after multiple court challenges the program has remained alive, albeit closed to new entrants. The Biden administration attempted to revive and expand the program, but ongoing court challenges mean that DHS is prohibited from granting requests for DACA and accompanying employment authorization made by new applicants.

Between August 15, 2012 (when DACA began) and September 30, 2023, approximately 835,000 applicants were approved, suggesting this is the maximum number of people who have ever held DACA status during the life of the program. USCIS granted 82 percent of the 1 million accepted initial applications; 8 percent (83,600) were denied, and 98,200 remain pending.

Because of application limits imposed by the courts, lack of desire to apply, or inability to do so, not all eligible individuals have applied for or received DACA. MPI estimates that as of December 2023, 1.5 million individuals had met the eligibility criteria for DACA under the program's original rules, 1.2 million of whom were immediately eligible under the program's age and educational requirements (the rest were eligible aside from the education requirements).

Among the 1 million accepted initial applications since the program's inception (as of September 30, 2023), individuals' top states of residence were California (28 percent), Texas (17 percent), Illinois and New York (5 percent each), and Florida (4 percent). The top five countries of origin of accepted applicants were Mexico (79 percent), El Salvador (4 percent), Guatemala (3 percent), Honduras (2 percent), and South Korea (1 percent).

How many people currently have DACA status?

USCIS reports that 544,700 individuals were actively enrolled in DACA as of September 30, 2023.

The top states of residence for active DACA participants were California (28 percent), Texas (17 percent), and Illinois (5 percent), followed by New York, Florida, North Carolina, and Arizona (about 4 percent each).

Active DACA participants' top countries of origin were Mexico (81 percent), El Salvador (4 percent), Guatemala (3 percent), Honduras (2 percent), and South Korea, Peru, Brazil, Ecuador, and Colombia (about 1 percent each).

► View data tool showing DACA recipients by state, as well as top countries of origin at bit.ly/MPI-DACATools.

► Want a full history of DACA? Read the U.S. Policy Beat article "At Its 10th Anniversary, DACA Faces a Tenuous Future Despite Societal Benefits," online at bit.ly/USPolicyBeat.

How many people are covered by Temporary Protected Status?

Since the Immigration Act of 1990, the U.S. government has occasionally granted TPS when the origin countries of foreign nationals in the United States experience natural disasters, armed conflicts, or other circumstances making return unsafe. TPS offers work authorization and protection from deportation for periods of six months to 18 months. El Salvador was the first country to be designated for TPS in 1990, to protect Salvadorans who had fled its civil war. Since then, 28 countries have been designated for TPS.

Since taking office, the Biden administration has added Afghanistan, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Myanmar, Ukraine, and Venezuela to the list of eligible countries and expanded eligibility for multiple countries previously designated for TPS. Also, certain Liberians and residents of Hong Kong were designated for Deferred Enforced Departure (DED), a similar status offering temporary protection from deportation and work authorization. Sixteen countries are currently designated for TPS: Afghanistan, Cameroon, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Haiti, Honduras, Myanmar, Nepal, Nicaragua, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria, Ukraine, Venezuela, and Yemen.

Collectively, approximately 697,500 individuals in the United States held TPS as of September 2023. Of them, 84 percent were nationals of Venezuela (239,000), El Salvador (184,000), or Haiti (164,000).

Immigration Enforcement

How many times are unauthorized immigrants stopped at the border each year?

U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) reported more than 3.2 million encounters at U.S. borders, airports, and seaports in FY 2023, a record high and up from the nearly 2.8 million in FY 2022 and 2 million in FY 2021.

The vast majority of FY 2023 encounters (nearly 2.5 million) were at the U.S.-Mexico border. This is the highest number of border encounters on record, surpassing the nearly 2.4 million in FY 2022 and 1.7 million in FY 2021 and FY 2000. The Title 42 order was replaced with a new policy restricting access to asylum for migrants encountered between ports of entry and incentivizing them to use the CBP One app to make an appointment at a port of entry.

Definition
The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) uses the term **enforcement encounters** to span **apprehensions** and **expulsions** of migrants at the Southwest border. Historically, migrants caught crossing the border without authorization have been apprehended and processed under Title 8, but under the Title 42 public-health order that was in effect from March 2020 to May 2023, migrants were immediately expelled approximately 2.8 million times.
Encounters are events, not individuals. In other words, the same individual can be encountered more than once, with each encounter counted separately. The recidivism rate increased sharply during the Title 42 expulsions era.

Motivations for migrants coming to the United States vary, but the rapid increase in arrivals in recent years reflects ongoing crises in the Americas, including major displacement in countries such as Cuba, Haiti, Nicaragua, and Venezuela; political persecution, faltering economies, and other types of instability in China, India, Russia, Turkey, and a number of African countries; the strong U.S. economy, particularly

post-pandemic; the perception that the Biden administration's policies present a unique window of opportunity for reception; and increasingly sophisticated smuggling networks.

► Understand the changing patterns at the border with the MPI commentary *Shifting Patterns and Policies Reshape Migration to U.S.-Mexico Border in Major Ways in 2023*. Get insights on historical and recent border trends with the reports *Migration at the U.S.-Mexico Border: A Challenge Decades in the Making* and *Shifting Realities at the U.S.-Mexico Border: Immigration Enforcement and Control in a Fast-Evolving Landscape*. Curious how the border encounters have affected the Biden immigration agenda? Read the article "Biden at the Three-Year Mark: The Most Active Immigration Presidency Yet Is Mired in Border Crisis Narrative." Find them at bit.ly/MPI-US-Resources.

How many families and unaccompanied children have been encountered at the U.S.-Mexico border?

In FY 2023, authorities recorded 822,000 encounters of individuals traveling in "family units" (CBP parlance for children under 18 and a parent or legal guardian travelling as families) at the U.S.-Mexico border, up from 561,000 in FY 2022. Their top three origin countries were Mexico (19 percent), Venezuela (13 percent), and Honduras (12 percent).

There were also 137,000 encounters of unaccompanied minors at the border in FY 2023, down from 152,000 the previous year. Most unaccompanied children encountered in FY 2023 were from Guatemala (36 percent), Honduras (25 percent), or Mexico (21 percent).

Overall, of the nearly 2.5 million migrant encounters at the southern border in FY 2023, single adults accounted for 61 percent, followed by family units (33 percent), and unaccompanied minors (6 percent). This represents a slight shift from the year before, when there was a higher share of single adults (70 percent) and a lower share of families (24 percent).

How many people are arrested by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement each year?

ICE conducts administrative arrests of noncitizens for civil violations of U.S. immigration law, carrying out removals and returns. The agency made 171,000 administrative arrests in FY 2023, up almost 20 percent from 143,000 the year before. The increase in administrative arrests in FY 2023 was driven by arrests of noncitizens who had criminal convictions or pending criminal charges.

How many people are deported per year?

In FY 2023, ICE conducted 143,000 removals to more than 180 countries, almost double the number of removals (72,000) the year before. Additionally, that year ICE expelled nearly 63,000 noncitizens under Title 42 before the policy ended in mid-May 2023.

► For more information, see *Fiscal Year 2023 ICE Annual Report*.

Note: Removals and returns, which are carried out both by ICE and CBP, result in the confirmed movement of in-admissible or deportable migrants out of the United States. Title 42 expulsions carried out at the border are not included in these numbers.

Naturalization Trends

How many immigrants are naturalized citizens?

More than 24.5 million immigrants were naturalized U.S. citizens in 2022, accounting for approximately 53 percent of all 46.2 million immigrants and 7 percent of the total U.S. population (333.3 million).

Of these naturalized citizens, 40 percent were naturalized in 2010 or later, 25 percent between 2000 and 2009, and 35 percent prior to 2000.

In general, the requirements for naturalization are being at least 18 years of age, passing English and civic exams, and residing in the United States with LPR status continuously for at least five years (three years for those married to a U.S. citizen).

How many immigrants become U.S. citizens annually?

USCIS naturalized about 969,000 green-card holders in FY 2022, a 19 percent increase from the nearly 814,000 people who became citizens in FY 2021 and the highest number since more than 1 million immi-grants became citizens in FY 2008. There were 781,000 petitions for naturalization filed in FY 2022, a de-crease of 1 percent from a year earlier (789,000). At the same time, the number of denied petitions rose by 31 percent, from 85,000 in FY 2021 to close to 112,000 in FY 2022. The number of denials in FY 2022 was also the highest since FY 2008.

From a historical perspective, the number of annual naturalizations has increased dramatically in recent decades. On average, fewer than 115,000 LPRs became citizens each year between FY 1950 and FY 1969, 145,000 in the 1970s, 210,000 in the 1980s, 500,000 in the 1990s, 685,000 during the 2000s, and about 730,000 between 2010 and 2019. Naturalizations reached an all-time high in FY 2008, increasing 58 percent from 660,000 the prior year to 1,047,000. This came as a result of impending application fee increases and the promotion of U.S. citizenship in advance of the 2008 presidential election.

The amount of time USCIS takes to process naturalization applications increased from an average of 5.6 months in FY 2016 to 11.5 months in FY 2021, but then declined to 6.1 months in FY 2023 and 5.2 months as of the end of January 2024.

► For historical data on naturalization, see the data tool Naturalization in the United States, 1910-Present online at bit.ly/MPI-US-Immigration-Trends.

► Find a wealth of sociodemographic information in the article "Naturalized Citizens in the United States." It is available at bit.ly/ImmigrantSpotlights.

How many immigrants become U.S. citizens through military naturalization?

In FY 2022, about 5,400 foreign-born military personnel became U.S. citizens, a 21 percent increase from FY 2021 (4,500) but significantly below the nearly 8,900 military naturalizations in FY 2016.

Where are newly naturalized citizens from?

Of the new U.S. citizens in FY 2022, 13 percent were born in Mexico, 7 percent in India, and 6 percent in the Philippines (see Table 7). Immigrants from these three countries, together with those from Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Vietnam, China, Jamaica, El Salvador, and Colombia accounted for 47 percent of the 969,000 immigrants who naturalized that year.

Table 7. Top Countries of Origin of Newly Naturalized U.S. Citizens, FY 2022

Country	Naturalized Persons	Share of Total
TOTAL	969,400	100.0%
Mexico	128,900	13%
India	66,000	7%
Philippines	53,400	6%
Cuba	46,900	5%
Dominican Republic	34,500	4%
Vietnam	33,200	3%
China	27,000	3%
Jamaica	23,000	2%
El Salvador	21,500	2%
Colombia	18,100	2%

Source: DHS Office of Homeland Security Statistics, *2022 Yearbook of Immigration Statistics*.

Where in the United States do newly naturalized citizens live?

Fifty-seven percent of people naturalized as U.S. citizens in FY 2022 lived in one of five states: California (19 percent); Texas, Florida, and New York (11 percent apiece), and New Jersey (6 percent).

The top metropolitan areas with the largest number of new naturalizations were the greater New York (15 percent); Miami (7 percent); Los Angeles (6 percent); Houston (5 percent); and Washington, DC and San Francisco (4 percent each) metropolitan areas. These six metro areas were the home to 40 percent of all immigrants who became citizens in FY 2022.

How many green-card holders are eligible to naturalize?

According to the most recent DHS estimates, more than 9 million of the 12.7 million green-card holders in the United States as of January 2023 were eligible to become U.S. citizens based on how long they had held LPR status. The top nationalities for those eligible to naturalize were Mexico (2.4 million), China (550,000), Cuba and the Dominican Republic (390,000 each), and the Philippines (350,000).

> ► For more information, see the DHS report *Estimates of the Lawful Permanent Resident Population in the United States and the Subpopulation Eligible to Naturalize: 2023*.

How long does it take on average for green-card holders to naturalize?

On average, immigrants who became U.S. citizens in FY 2022 had previously held green cards for about seven years, the same length of time as those being naturalized in FY 2020 and FY 2021 and a decrease from an average of eight years during the FY 2017-19 period.

The time varied by region of origin. In FY 2022, immigrants from Africa and Asia spent an average of six years in LPR status before naturalization; those born in South America tended to spend seven years; those from the Caribbean or Europe eight years; and those from Central America or Oceania ten years.

At what rate do immigrants naturalize?

The number of green-card holders who naturalize every year depends on many factors, including the number eligible, application processing times, and stringency and length of background checks. This number can also be affected by barriers to naturalization, such as high application fees, as well as personal motivations. For instance, green-card holders from mainland China may be less inclined to become U.S. citizens because China prohibits dual citizenship, whereas immigrants from countries that allow dual citizenship may have greater incentive.

The share of green-card holders who naturalize within a certain time period, such as within ten years of receiving a green card, varies by country and region of birth and class of admission. This is known as a naturalization rate.

Overall, 53 percent of the immigrant cohort who became LPRs in FY 2008 naturalized by FY 2018, the most recent year for which data are available. A ten-year naturalization rate was the highest for those born in Africa (76 percent) and South America (64 percent) and the lowest for LPRs from North America, including Mexico and Canada (27 percent). The ten-year naturalization rate was nearly 70 percent for Indian-born green-card holders, 60 percent for those from the Philippines, 52 percent for Cubans, 44 percent for LPRs from China, and 27 percent for Mexicans.

> ► For more information, read the DHS report *Trends in Naturalization Rates: FY 2018 Update Report*.

Visa Backlogs

How many visa applications for lawful permanent residence are backlogged?

Because of limits on certain visa categories and per-country caps, the U.S. government in some cases is still processing applications from the 1990s. In March 2024, the State Department was processing some family-sponsored visa applications filed in September 1998 and employment-related visa applications submitted in March 2012.

According to the most recent available data, nearly 4.1 million applicants (including spouses and minor children) were on the State Department's immigrant visa waiting list as of November 1, 2022, a 1 percent decline from the more than 4.1 million applicants in the backlog a year previous.

Notes on Visa Backlogs

Two types of backlogs impact the issuance of green cards.

The first is due to **visa availability**, which for some categories is limited by caps established in 1990:

► Family-sponsored preferences are limited to 226,000 visas per year.

► Employment-based permanent visas for foreign workers and their families are capped at 140,000 per year.

► No country can be the origin for more than 7 percent of the total annual number of family-sponsored and employment-based visas (approximately 25,600 visas).

The second type of backlog is due to **delays processing applications**, which is related to government capacity as well as increased background and criminal checks.

The overwhelming majority of applications in the backlog were from family-sponsored applicants (more than 3.9 million, including principal applicants and their immediate family members). About 168,000 backlogged applicants were for employment-sponsored channels and their families.

Of the overall 4.1 million applicants, the largest number (1.2 million) were citizens of Mexico, followed by those from the Philippines (296,000), India (294,000), the Dominican Republic (284,000), and Vietnam (229,000). Family- and employment-based prospective immigrants already within the United States who are waiting to adjust their status are not included in the State Department estimates.

USCIS also publishes backlog statistics for petitions approved in one of the five employment-based categories. As of September 2023, nearly 1.1 million approved employment-based immigrant petitions were awaiting an open visa slot. This includes the number of primary applicants covered by these petitions but not their dependents.

In other words, the overall number of people waiting for a green card—within and outside the United States—is likely to be larger than the nearly 4 million family-based applicants reported by the State Department (as of November 2022) and more than 1 million employment-based petitions reported by USCIS (as of September 2023).

► Get more information about capped employment- and family-based preference categories with MPI's *Explainer: How the U.S. Legal Immigration System Works*, which you can find at bit.ly/Immigration-Explainers.

► For more on the impact of immigration backlogs during the pandemic, read the article "Mounting Backlogs Undermine U.S. Immigration System and Impede Biden Policy Changes." Find it online at bit.ly/USPolicyBeat.

Check out this article online and bookmark it for future use:
bit.ly/topimmigrantstats

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