

# AN ANALYSIS OF UNAUTHORIZED IMMIGRANTS IN THE UNITED STATES BY COUNTRY AND REGION OF BIRTH



By Marc R. Rosenblum and Ariel G. Ruiz Soto

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## Executive Summary

There are approximately 11 million unauthorized immigrants living in the United States, according to the most recent estimates. This report categorizes this population by country and region of origin, and focuses on how these origins have changed over time, how selected groups have taken advantage of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, and how unauthorized immigrants are distributed across U.S. states and top counties of residence.

Mexican and Central American immigrants have long histories of migration to the United States, and together represent slightly more than one-third (37 percent) of the overall U.S. foreign-born population, which stood at 40.3 million in 2013. Yet they are disproportionately represented (71 percent) among the total unauthorized population. Mexicans alone represent 6 million of the 11 million unauthorized immigrants (56 percent). No other country of origin has a U.S. unauthorized population of even 1 million. After Mexico, Asia accounts for the next-largest number of unauthorized immigrants, at 1.5 million (14 percent).

The unauthorized population increased by 3.5 million during the 1990s and by 4 million between 2000 and 2013. The population peaked in 2007, and has declined by about 1 million since then. Unauthorized immigrants from Mexico and South America accounted for the vast majority of the growth in the 1990s; Central American, Asian, and African populations grew at increasing rates during the 2000s. Mexico's share of the unauthorized population has fallen significantly since 2000, when the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) estimated that Mexicans accounted for 69 percent of all U.S. unauthorized immigrants. Since 2000, the fastest-growing unauthorized populations have included those from Guatemala, India, and Korea.

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### *Unauthorized immigrants' settlement patterns across the United States have changed considerably in recent years.*

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Various unauthorized populations differ in their rates of application to the DACA program, which provides temporary relief from deportation as well as work authorization. The DACA application rates are highest (above 80 percent) among nationals of Mexico and the Northern Triangle countries of Central America (El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras), with the notable exception of Guatemala (44 percent). They are lowest among Asian immigrants, followed by African and Caribbean immigrants (below 30 percent for most countries). Notably, an estimated 82 percent of Mexican youth who are immediately eligible for DACA have applied.

Unauthorized immigrants' settlement patterns across the United States have changed considerably in recent years, though the traditional immigrant-destination states of California, Texas, New York, Florida, Illinois, and New Jersey remain among the top locations for nearly every origin group. Unauthorized Mexican immigrants are concentrated in these states and along the Southwest border, in the West, and in parts of the Southeast. Guatemalan and Salvadoran immigrants, along with African immigrants, have a substantial presence in the Washington, DC, metropolitan area, while Hondurans are more concentrated in Texas, Florida, and the Southeast (and notably not in California). Compared with Mexican and Central American immigrants, unauthorized populations from South America, Europe, Canada, and Oceania are more concentrated in traditional settlement states (especially New York and Florida, in the case of South Americans), with smaller numbers in the Great Plains and Mountain West regions. Unauthorized immigrants from Asia are concentrated in California, New York, New Jersey, and Texas, and are also found in significant numbers in communities throughout the United States. Lastly, to a greater degree than any other group, Caribbean unauthorized immigrants are largely concentrated in the New York City metropolitan area.



## I. Introduction

According to the most recent estimates, there are about 11 million unauthorized immigrants living in the United States.<sup>1</sup> The Migration Policy Institute (MPI) estimates that 82 percent of the unauthorized population is concentrated in 14 states, including the seven traditional immigrant-destination states (California, Texas, New York, Florida, Illinois, New Jersey, and Massachusetts) as well as more recent destinations in the West (Arizona, Washington, and Colorado) and the Eastern Seaboard (Georgia, North Carolina, Virginia, and Maryland). But the effects of illegal immigration are felt in communities nationwide: 41 states and the District of Columbia are each home to at least 20,000 unauthorized immigrants.

Drawing on MPI's estimates of unauthorized immigrants in the United States, presented in online data tools,<sup>2</sup> this report analyzes the U.S. unauthorized population, broken down by countries and regions of origin and these migrants' location in the United States. The majority (56 percent) is from Mexico, and an additional 15 percent is from Central America, mainly the Northern Triangle countries of El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras. Substantial numbers of unauthorized immigrants also come from Asia (14 percent), with smaller shares from South America (6 percent); Europe, Canada, and Oceania (4 percent collectively);<sup>3</sup> Africa (3 percent); and the Caribbean (2 percent).

This report begins by describing trends in the origins of the unauthorized population, as estimated between 1990 and 2013. It then estimates how many members of each origin group are potentially eligible for the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, and how application rates have varied across nationalities. A third section maps where unauthorized immigrants are located across the United States. The report concludes by reviewing how unauthorized immigrant settlement patterns vary among new and old immigration destinations, and how these patterns may contribute to differences in DACA enrollment rates.

## II. Methodology

The estimates in this report are drawn from 2013 and 2009-13 American Community Survey (ACS) data from the U.S. Census Bureau,<sup>4</sup> with immigration status assigned based on responses to another national

- 1 The Center for Migration Studies of New York (CMS) estimates that there were 11.0 million unauthorized immigrants in the United States in 2013 based on 2010-13 U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey (ACS) data. See CMS, "Estimates of the Unauthorized Population for States," based on the augmented ACS-based Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMS), 2010 to 2013, accessed July 6, 2015, <http://data.cmsny.org>. The Pew Research Center Hispanic Trends Project estimates that there were 11.2 million unauthorized immigrants in 2012 based on 2009-12 ACS data. See Jeffrey S. Passel and D'Vera Cohn, *Unauthorized Immigrant Totals Rise in 7 States, Fall in 14* (Washington, DC: Pew Research Center Hispanic Trends Project, 2014), [www.pewhispanic.org/2014/11/18/unauthorized-immigrant-totals-rise-in-7-states-fall-in-14](http://www.pewhispanic.org/2014/11/18/unauthorized-immigrant-totals-rise-in-7-states-fall-in-14). The most recent estimate by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) is 11.4 million unauthorized immigrants in 2012 based on 2011 ACS data and DHS administrative records. See Bryan Baker and Nancy Rytina, *Estimates of the Unauthorized Immigrant Population Residing in the United States: January 2012* (Washington, DC: DHS, Office of Immigration Statistics, 2013), [www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/ois\\_ill\\_pe\\_2012\\_2.pdf](http://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/ois_ill_pe_2012_2.pdf).
- 2 For Migration Policy Institute (MPI) data on 23 countries and six regions of birth for unauthorized immigrants, see MPI Data Hub, "Unauthorized Immigrant Populations by Country and Region, Top State and County Destinations, 2009-13," [www.migrationpolicy.org/programs/data-hub/charts/unauthorized-immigrant-populations-country-and-region-top-state-and-county](http://www.migrationpolicy.org/programs/data-hub/charts/unauthorized-immigrant-populations-country-and-region-top-state-and-county). For sociodemographic profiles of unauthorized immigrants for the United States, 41 states, the District of Columbia, and 117 counties, see MPI Data Hub, "Unauthorized Immigrant Data Profiles," [www.migrationpolicy.org/programs/us-immigration-policy-program-data-hub/unauthorized-immigrant-population-profiles](http://www.migrationpolicy.org/programs/us-immigration-policy-program-data-hub/unauthorized-immigrant-population-profiles).
- 3 This report considers Europe, Canada, and Oceania collectively, following the U.S. Census Bureau's categorization for immigrants of these origins, who share similar characteristics.
- 4 MPI uses five years of pooled ACS data to ensure adequate sample size (measurable populations number at least 2,000 in this report) for reliable estimates in smaller geographies. The distribution by origin country and region was adjusted to match the distribution in the 2013 ACS.



Census Bureau survey, the 2008 Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP). James Bachmeier and Colin Hammar at Temple University analyzed the data on the legal status of immigrants that provide the basis for these estimates. Jennifer Van Hook at The Pennsylvania State University advised in the development of the methodology.<sup>5</sup>

This report employs the ACS and SIPP data as follows:

- Current information about the nativity of the foreign born is compared with earlier estimates to describe how the origins of the unauthorized population have changed over time.
- ACS data on age, education, and time in the United States are used to estimate the number of unauthorized immigrants eligible for the DACA program. These data are compared with U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) DACA application numbers to estimate application rates by country of origin.

MPI uses ACS data alongside immigration status assignments to produce detailed profiles of the overall U.S. unauthorized population, along with population estimates of unauthorized immigrants in the 41 states and 138 counties where such populations are measurable.<sup>6</sup> MPI's estimates at the county level represent the first such estimates published for most origin groups.

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*Twenty-nine percent of all U.S. immigrants, legal and unauthorized, were born in Mexico, making Mexico by far the largest country of origin for the overall U.S. foreign-born population.*

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### **III. Nativity of the U.S. Unauthorized Population: Current Patterns and Recent Trends**

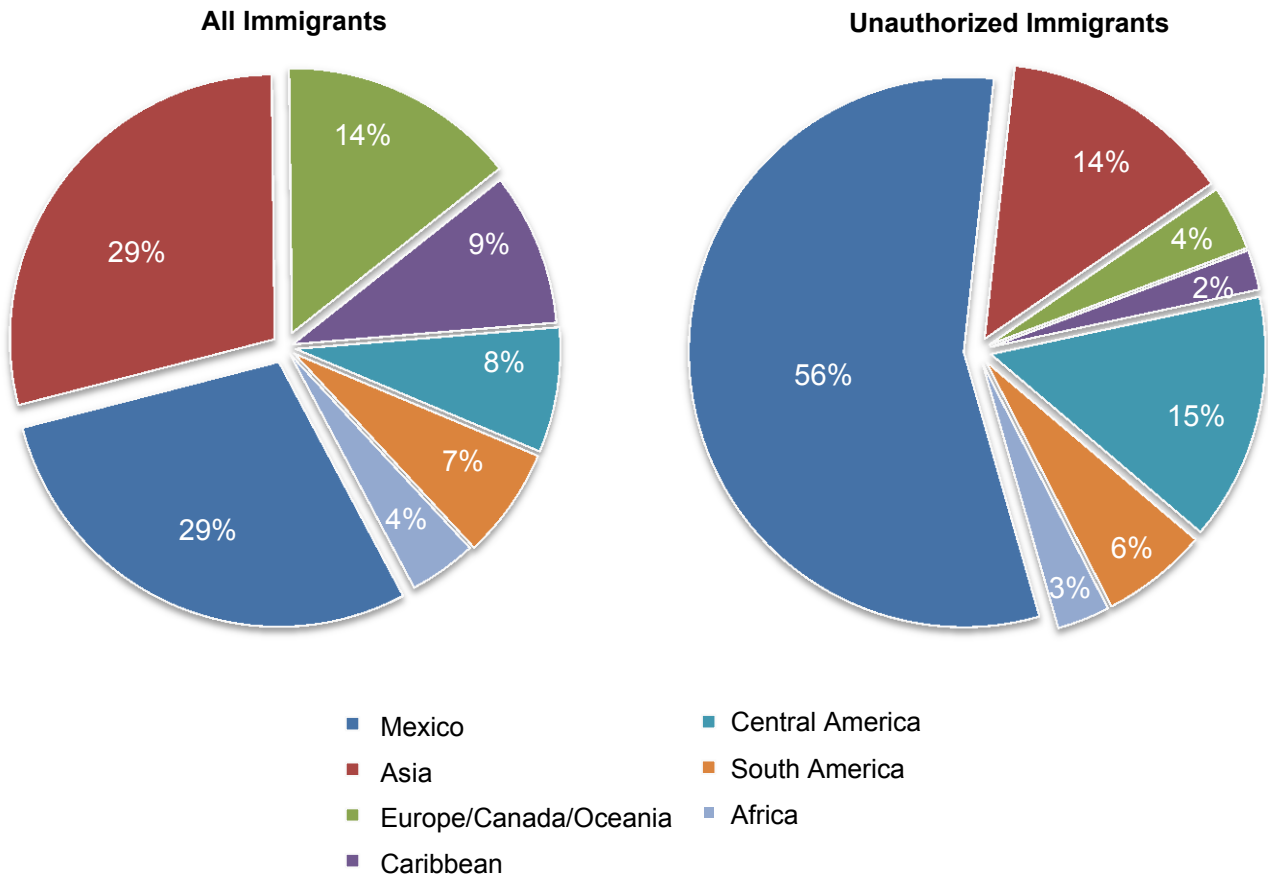
Twenty-nine percent of all U.S. immigrants, legal and unauthorized, were born in Mexico, making Mexico by far the largest country of origin for the overall U.S. foreign-born population (see Figure 1, left). Combined, Mexico and Central America account for 37 percent of the 40 million immigrants in the United States. The immigrant population from Asia (29 percent) accounts for the same share as that from Mexico, while the combined immigrant population from Europe, Canada, and Oceania accounts for the third-largest share (14 percent). Immigrants from the Caribbean (9 percent), South America (7 percent), and Africa (4 percent) account for the remainder.

<sup>5</sup> For more on the methodology, see Jeanne Batalova, Sarah Hooker, and Randy Capps, *DACA at the Two-Year Mark: A National and State Profile of Youth Eligible and Applying for Deferred Action* (Washington, DC: Migration Policy Institute, 2014), [www.migrationpolicy.org/research/daca-two-year-mark-national-and-state-profile-youth-eligible-and-applying-deferred-action](http://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/daca-two-year-mark-national-and-state-profile-youth-eligible-and-applying-deferred-action).

<sup>6</sup> MPI imputes unauthorized status using U.S. Census Bureau 2009-13 ACS and 2008 Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP) data, as analyzed by Colin Hammar and James Bachmeier of Temple University, and Jennifer Van Hook of The Pennsylvania State University, Population Research Institute.



**Figure 1. U.S. Foreign-Born Population Overall and Unauthorized, by Country/Region of Origin, (%), 2009-13**



Sources: Migration Policy Institute analysis of 2009-13 data from the American Community Survey (ACS); MPI analysis of 2009-13 ACS data and data from the 2008 Survey of Income Program Participation (SIPP) by Colin Hammar and James Bachmeier of Temple University and Jennifer Van Hook of The Pennsylvania State University Population Research Institute.

This distribution looks quite different when the 11 million unauthorized immigrants in the United States are separated out from the total number of foreign born (see Figure 1, right). Mexico and Central America together account for 71 percent of U.S. unauthorized immigrants, far above their share of the foreign-born population. Immigrants from other countries and regions represent 63 percent of the U.S. foreign born, but only 29 percent of the unauthorized population.

Table 1 situates these numbers in a timeframe (1990-2013) by comparing MPI's current estimates with estimates previously published by the former Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS). The U.S. unauthorized population rose substantially during the 1990s, doubling from 3.5 million to 7 million (see Table 1). The population continued increasing during the 2000s, peaking at 12.2 million in 2007 by some estimates, and then falling to 11.0 million by 2013.<sup>7</sup> The unauthorized population increased rapidly during a period of strong job growth before the 2008 recession, and then declined during and after the recession alongside reductions in the demand for low-skilled workers.

<sup>7</sup> The Pew Research Center has estimated the unauthorized population at several points in time between 1995 and 2013. The Pew estimate peaked at 12.2 million in 2007. See Passel and Cohn, *Unauthorized Immigrant Totals Rise in 7 States*. Because the Pew estimates are not disaggregated by country of origin for the years displayed in Table 1, the authors did not include them in the table.





**Table 1. Estimates of the Unauthorized Immigrant Population in the United States, by Country and Region of Birth: 1990, 2000, and 2013**

Country or Region of Birth	Unauthorized Population in 1990 (INS)	Unauthorized Population in 2000 (INS)	Unauthorized Population in 2013 (MPI)	% Change between 1990 and 2000	% Change between 2000 and 2013	% Change between 1990 and 2013
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3,500,000</b>	<b>7,000,000</b>	<b>11,022,000</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>215</b>
Mexico	2,040,000	4,808,000	6,194,000	136	29	204
<b>Central America</b>	<b>543,000</b>	<b>546,000</b>	<b>1,603,000</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>194</b>	<b>195</b>
Guatemala	118,000	144,000	704,000	22	389	497
El Salvador*	298,000	189,000	436,000	-37	131	46
Honduras*	42,000	138,000	317,000	229	130	655
Nicaragua	50,000	21,000	68,000	-58	224	36
<b>Asia</b>	<b>311,000</b>	<b>500,000</b>	<b>1,509,000</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>202</b>	<b>385</b>
China	70,000	115,000	285,000	64	148	307
India	28,000	70,000	284,000	150	306	914
Philippines	70,000	85,000	197,000	21	132	181
South Korea	24,000	55,000	192,000	129	249	700
Vietnam	N/A	N/A	116,000	N/A	N/A	N/A
Pakistan	17,000	26,000	55,000	53	112	224
<b>South America</b>	<b>185,000</b>	<b>497,000</b>	<b>690,000</b>	<b>169</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>273</b>
Ecuador	37,000	108,000	146,000	192	35	295
Colombia	51,000	141,000	137,000	176	-3	169
Brazil	20,000	77,000	117,000	285	52	485
Peru	27,000	61,000	105,000	126	72	289
Venezuela	10,000	34,000	44,000	240	29	340
Argentina	7,000	15,000	35,000	114	133	400
<b>Europe/Canada/Oceania</b>	<b>158,000</b>	<b>261,000</b>	<b>423,000</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>168</b>
<b>Africa</b>	<b>82,000</b>	<b>131,000</b>	<b>342,000</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>161</b>	<b>317</b>
Nigeria	16,000	32,000	45,000	100	41	181
Ghana	6,000	12,000	36,000	100	200	500
Ethiopia	7,000	5,000	35,000	-29	600	400
Kenya	3,000	15,000	24,000	400	60	700
<b>Caribbean</b>	<b>182,000</b>	<b>258,000</b>	<b>260,000</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>43</b>
Dominican Republic	46,000	91,000	123,000	98	35	167
Jamaica	37,000	41,000	77,000	11	88	108

Notes: INS = U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service. MPI's estimates of unauthorized immigrants from El Salvador and Honduras exclude individuals with Temporary Protected Status (TPS), but the INS estimate of the U.S. unauthorized Honduran population in 2000 includes 105,000 individuals who were granted TPS in December 1998. (El Salvador was designated for TPS in March 2001.) Totals may not add up due to rounding. Percentages are calculated on unrounded numbers and may not match those calculated based on rounded numbers.

Sources: MPI analysis of 2009-13 ACS and 2008 SIPP data by Hammar, Bachmeier, and Van Hook; INS, *Estimates of the Unauthorized Immigrant Population Residing in the United States*, Table 2: Estimated Unauthorized Resident Population, by Country of Origin: 1990 and 2000 (Washington, DC: INS, Office of Policy and Planning, 2003), [www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/statistics/publications/III\\_Report\\_1211.pdf](http://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/statistics/publications/III_Report_1211.pdf).



Mexicans composed a majority of unauthorized immigrants throughout these years; their share rose from 58 percent in 1990 to 69 percent in 2000, and then fell to 56 percent in 2013. In absolute numbers, this represented an increase of 2.8 million in 1990-99, and of 1.4 million in 2000-13. The slower growth rate since 2000 masks two different trends: the unauthorized Mexican population grew by about 2.4 million between 2000 and 2007, then fell by about 1 million.<sup>8</sup> The net outflow of Mexican unauthorized immigrants between 2007 and 2013 likely is the result of a weak U.S. labor market, improved employment opportunities in Mexico, aggressive U.S. immigration enforcement, and a drop in Mexico's birthrate since the 1970s (resulting in fewer Mexicans entering the labor force).<sup>9</sup>

Unauthorized populations from South America; Europe, Canada, Oceania; and the Caribbean also grew relatively slowly after 2000 (the unauthorized Caribbean population hardly grew at all).

In contrast, unauthorized populations from Central America, Asia, and Africa grew at relatively modest rates between 1990 and 2000<sup>10</sup> and faster since, with the unauthorized populations from Central America and Asia tripling and from Africa doubling between 2000 and 2013.<sup>11</sup> These regional trends reflect notable increases in the size of the unauthorized populations from certain individual countries. Since 1990 the number of unauthorized Guatemalans and Hondurans increased six-fold and seven-fold, respectively; Ghanaians and Ethiopians increased six-fold and eight-fold; and Chinese, Koreans, and Indians increased four-fold, eight-fold, and ten-fold. The unauthorized population from India—which rose from an estimated 28,000 in 1990 to approximately 284,000 in 2013—grew at the fastest proportional rate of any national-origin group during this period.

Increased unauthorized inflows from these countries since 1990 are part of a broader trend toward greater diversity in the overall U.S. foreign-born population. For example, the overall Asian immigrant population in the United States achieved parity with the Mexican immigrant population for the first time in 2013 (see Figure 1), a function of rising inflows from China and India and slowing migration from Mexico.<sup>12</sup> Increased migration from these varied countries is a function of multiple factors, including demographic and human-capital trends,<sup>13</sup> increasing violence and insecurity in Africa and Central America, falling transportation costs and rising income levels worldwide (which allow more people to finance international travel), and increasingly robust immigrant family and social networks in the United States.<sup>14</sup>

8 See Passel and Cohn, *Unauthorized Immigrant Totals Rise in 7 States*.

9 On Mexico's changing demographics, see Aaron Terrazas, Demetrios G. Papademetriou, and Marc R. Rosenblum, *Evolving Demographic and Human-Capital Trends in Mexico and Central America and Their Implications for Regional Migration* (Washington, DC: MPI, 2011), [www.migrationpolicy.org/research/RMSG-demographic-human-capital-trends-mexico-central-america](http://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/RMSG-demographic-human-capital-trends-mexico-central-america).

10 In part, limited growth in the Central American unauthorized population between 1990 and 2000 is a result of the *Nicaraguan Adjustment and Central American Relief Act of 1997*, which permitted about 44,000 unauthorized Nicaraguans, Salvadorans, and Guatemalans to adjust their status by 2000, according to MPI analysis of DHS admissions data for 1998-2000. See DHS, *Yearbook of Immigration Statistics*, various years (Washington, DC: DHS, Office of Immigration Statistics), [www.dhs.gov/archives](http://www.dhs.gov/archives).

11 Recent growth rates for unauthorized immigrants from El Salvador and Honduras would be higher were it not for the fact that about 64,000 Hondurans and 212,000 Salvadorans received Temporary Protected Status (TPS) in 1999 and 2001, respectively. TPS is a form of humanitarian relief granted by the executive branch to nationals of certain countries embroiled in violent conflict or following a natural disaster. Its recipients are granted deferral of deportation and work authorization for a period of six to 18 months, which can be extended based on conditions in the country of origin. For a fuller discussion, see Madeline Messick and Claire Bergeron, "Temporary Protected Status in the United States: A Grant of Humanitarian Relief that Is Less than Permanent," *Migration Information Source*, July 2, 2014, [www.migrationpolicy.org/article/temporary-protected-status-united-states-grant-humanitarian-relief-less-permanent](http://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/temporary-protected-status-united-states-grant-humanitarian-relief-less-permanent). The methodology used by the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) counted Honduran TPS recipients as part of that country's unauthorized population in 2000; most Salvadoran TPS recipients (i.e., all except those arriving between 2000 and 2001) are counted among that country's 2000 population. The 2013 MPI estimates, however, exclude TPS beneficiaries.

12 See Muzaffar Chishti and Faye Hipsman, "In Historic Shift, New Migration Flows from Mexico Fall Below Those from China and India," *Migration Information Source*, May 21, 2015, [www.migrationpolicy.org/article/historic-shift-new-migration-flows-mexico-fall-below-those-china-and-india](http://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/historic-shift-new-migration-flows-mexico-fall-below-those-china-and-india).

13 For more on the demographic and human-capital-related push factors in Central America, see Terrazas, Papademetriou, and Rosenblum, *Evolving Demographic and Human-Capital Trends in Mexico and Central America*.

14 On the cumulative effect of previous migration in facilitating subsequent flows, see Douglas S. Massey, "Social Structure, Household Strategies, and the Cumulative Causation of Migration," *Population Index* 56, no. 1 (1990): 3-26.



## IV. DACA-Eligible Populations by Country and Region of Birth

On June 15, 2012, the Secretary of Homeland Security announced the DACA program, allowing certain unauthorized youth to apply for a deferral of deportation as well as work authorization for a period of two years, subject to renewal (see Box 1).

### Box 1. The Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals Program

To be eligible for the DACA program, unauthorized immigrants must fulfill the following requirements:

- Be at least 15 years old
- Have entered the United States before the age of 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
- Have not been convicted of a felony, significant misdemeanor, or three or more misdemeanors, or otherwise pose a threat to public safety or national security.

The Migration Policy Institute (MPI) defines the immediately eligible DACA population as immigrants who meet the age, age-at-arrival, year-of-arrival, and education requirements. MPI estimates that nearly 1.2 million unauthorized immigrants were immediately eligible for DACA as of 2013. MPI defines the eligible-but-for-education DACA population as immigrants who meet the age, age-at-arrival, and year-of-arrival requirements, but who are not enrolled in school or have not graduated from high school. MPI estimates this group at 402,000 unauthorized immigrants. MPI's definition of the potentially eligible DACA population combines the immediately eligible and eligible-but-for-education populations for a total of nearly 1.6 million unauthorized immigrants.

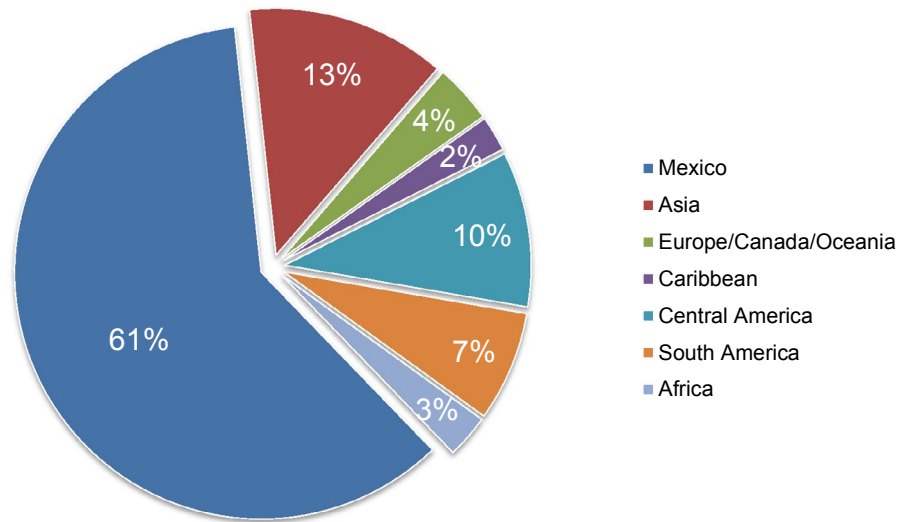
The potentially eligible population does not include unauthorized immigrants who will become eligible in the future. Immigrants in this group (423,000) met the age-at-arrival and year-of-arrival requirements, but were not yet 15 years old in 2013. An average of 53,000 immigrants in this category will age into eligibility each year between 2013 and 2020, provided they stay in school.

None of MPI's DACA eligibility estimates account for immigrants who have been convicted of crimes or who otherwise pose a threat to public safety or national security that could make them ineligible for DACA.

President Obama announced an expansion of the DACA program in November 2014, but the expansion was enjoined by a federal court in February 2015 and has not been implemented. For this reason, this report focuses on the original 2012 DACA program.

*Sources:* U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), "Consideration of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA)," last updated August 3, 2015, [www.uscis.gov/humanitarian/consideration-deferred-action-childhood-arrivals-daca](http://www.uscis.gov/humanitarian/consideration-deferred-action-childhood-arrivals-daca); Jeanne Batalova, Sarah Hooker, and Randy Capps, *DACA at the Two-Year Mark: A National and State Profile of Youth Eligible and Applying for Deferred Action* (Washington, DC: MPI, 2014), [www.migrationpolicy.org/research/daca-two-year-mark-national-and-state-profile-youth-eligible-and-applying-deferred-action](http://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/daca-two-year-mark-national-and-state-profile-youth-eligible-and-applying-deferred-action).

Mexican immigrants are over-represented among the DACA-eligible population to an even greater degree than among the overall unauthorized population (see Figure 2). Mexican immigrants comprise 61 percent of those immediately eligible for DACA even as they account for 56 percent of the total unauthorized population and just 29 percent of the total U.S. foreign-born population. Immigrants from the Western Hemisphere (including Mexico, Central America, South America, and the Caribbean) account for about half of the U.S. foreign-born population, but represent four of five immigrants potentially eligible for the DACA program.

**Figure 2. Population Immediately Eligible for DACA, by Country and Region of Origin, 2009-13**

*Note:* The figure describes the population immediately eligible for the DACA program (see Box 1) and does not account for unauthorized immigrants who are ineligible because of insufficient formal education (i.e., lack of a high school degree, an equivalent credential, or school enrollment) or because they have a criminal record or otherwise pose a threat to public safety or national security.

*Source:* MPI analysis of 2009-13 ACS and 2008 SIPP data by Hammar, Bachmeier, and Van Hook.

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*At the national level, between 1.2 million and 1.6 million unauthorized immigrants are currently eligible to apply to the DACA program.*

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## V. Participation in the DACA Program

Table 2 presents MPI's estimates of immigrants eligible for the DACA program, organized by country of origin, along with USCIS data on DACA applications as of March 31, 2015, the most recent date for which data have been made public. The table lists estimates of both the immediately eligible and the potentially eligible DACA populations (see Box 1). Because some potentially eligible immigrants have subsequently enrolled in school or completed their high school degrees, the actual population that is currently eligible to apply for DACA—and the number that may be used to calculate a DACA application rate—falls somewhere between these two estimates. Thus, the last two columns of Table 2 may be interpreted as the range within which DACA participation rates fall. For example, at the national level, between 1.2 million and 1.6 million unauthorized immigrants are currently eligible to apply to the DACA program; USCIS has accepted approximately 749,000 initial applications, and the application rate therefore falls between 48 percent and 64 percent.



**Table 2. Estimated Application Rates for DACA among Immediately and Potentially Eligible Unauthorized Youth, by Country of Birth, 2009-13**

Country	MPI Estimates of DACA-Eligible Populations			DACA Applications (USCIS administrative data as of March 31, 2015)	Estimated Application Rates (%)	
	Immediately Eligible	Eligible But for Education	Potentially Eligible: Immediate + But for Education		Potentially Eligible	Immediately Eligible
<b>All Countries</b>	<b>1,165,000</b>	<b>401,000</b>	<b>1,566,000</b>	<b>749,000</b>	<b>48%</b>	<b>64%</b>
Mexico	703,000	316,000	1,019,000	578,000	57%	82%
Guatemala	45,000	37,000	83,000	20,000	24%	44%
South Korea	44,000	1,000	44,000	9,000	20%	20%
El Salvador	31,000	12,000	44,000	28,000	65%	91%
Honduras	23,000	10,000	34,000	19,000	56%	81%
Philippines	20,000	1,000	21,000	5,000	22%	23%
Colombia	19,000	1,000	20,000	7,000	34%	36%
India	17,000	<1,000	18,000	3,000	19%	20%
Peru	14,000	1,000	15,000	9,000	59%	62%
Ecuador	12,000	3,000	15,000	7,000	44%	54%
Brazil	12,000	1,000	13,000	7,000	58%	63%
Jamaica	10,000	1,000	11,000	4,000	35%	38%
Dominican Republic	9,000	3,000	12,000	3,000	26%	34%
Venezuela	8,000	<1,000	8,000	3,000	39%	40%
Nicaragua	7,000	1,000	8,000	2,000	19%	23%
Pakistan	6,000	<1,000	7,000	2,000	26%	28%
Argentina	5,000	1,000	5,000	4,000	81%	91%
Nigeria	4,000	<1,000	4,000	1,000	31%	33%

*Notes:* The immediately eligible population includes unauthorized immigrants 15 years and older who meet the age, year-of-arrival, continuous presence, and education requirements for the 2012 DACA program. The potentially eligible population includes unauthorized immigrants who meet the same age, year-of-arrival, and continuous presence requirements but who do not have a high school degree or equivalent, and were not enrolled in school. These estimates do not include immigrants possibly eligible in the future, who meet the age-at-arrival and year-of-arrival requirements but who were not yet 15 years old in 2013.

*Sources:* MPI analysis of 2009-13 ACS and 2008 SIPP data by Hammar, Bachmeier, and Van Hook; USCIS, "Number of I-821D, Consideration of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals by Fiscal Year, Quarter, Intake, Biometrics and Case Status: 2012-2015 (March 31)," [www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/USCIS/Resources/Reports%20and%20Studies/Immigration%20Forms%20Data/Naturalization%20Data/I821d\\_performancedata\\_fy2015\\_qtr2.pdf](http://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/USCIS/Resources/Reports%20and%20Studies/Immigration%20Forms%20Data/Naturalization%20Data/I821d_performancedata_fy2015_qtr2.pdf).

### Variation in Application Rates by National Origin

DACA application rates vary substantially by national origin. Unauthorized immigrant youth from three major origin countries (Mexico, El Salvador, and Honduras), along with Argentina, apply at a rate exceeding 55 percent among the potentially eligible population and exceeding 80 percent among the immediately eligible. Notably, the application rate of immediately eligible youth from Mexico was 82 percent, and for El Salvador it was 91 percent. These findings suggest that the vast majority of



unauthorized youth from these countries who meet all DACA requirements have already applied for the program.<sup>15</sup> Efforts to expand the DACA enrollment of youth from these countries should therefore focus on moving people from the potentially to the immediately eligible category—for example, by ensuring that they complete high school or enroll in school.

In comparison, the DACA application rates of unauthorized immigrant youth from Brazil and Peru are lower, at around 60 percent. The lowest application rates, below 30 percent, are among immediately eligible youth from Korea, India, the Philippines, Nicaragua, and Pakistan.

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### *DACA application rates vary substantially by national origin.*

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Based on these metrics, application rates mostly follow a clear geographic pattern. Mexico, Central America, and South America account for nine of the top ten origins in terms of application rates, with Jamaica barely surpassing Colombia for the tenth position. Well over half—and perhaps as much as 80 to 90 percent—of the DACA-eligible populations from Mexico, El Salvador, and Honduras applied to the program. Meanwhile, four of the five countries with the lowest application rates are located in Asia; of the four countries just above them on the list, three are in Africa or the Caribbean. Notably, while MPI estimates that 23,000 Chinese unauthorized immigrants are immediately eligible to apply, USCIS has not released data on the number of Chinese applicants, suggesting that China’s application rate is even lower than those of other Asian countries.

Several factors may contribute to the pattern of DACA application rates among youth of various origins. Mexican, Central American, and South American unauthorized immigrants are much more likely to be deported than those from other countries and regions.<sup>16</sup> Eligible immigrants from these origins thus have a particular incentive to seek protection via the DACA program. Latin American immigrants may also benefit from the widespread availability of Spanish-language information and services promoting DACA; Mexicans and Salvadorans may further benefit from their countries’ large, active consular networks, both of which have prioritized assisting their nationals in the DACA enrollment process.

In contrast, the stigma of unauthorized status may be a particularly discouraging factor for Asian immigrants seeking public assistance to apply for DACA.<sup>17</sup> Also, unauthorized immigrants from distant countries, such as those in the Eastern Hemisphere, are more likely to have become unauthorized by overstaying a legal visa than by illegally crossing a U.S. border. Visa overstayers have more opportunities than do illegal border crossers to regularize their status outside the DACA program—including by

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- <sup>15</sup> Indeed, the actual proportion of immediately eligible youth who have already applied for DACA is likely somewhat higher than the estimates in Table 2 since the data do not control for potential disqualifying factors, such as criminal convictions or periods spent outside the United States after the date of arrival.
- <sup>16</sup> Mexicans and Central Americans together account for about 71 percent of the unauthorized population, as noted above; but they represented 91 percent of deportees in 2004-13. See Marc R. Rosenblum and Kristen McCabe, *Deportation and Discretion: Reviewing the Record and Options for Change* (Washington, DC: MPI, 2014), 11, [www.migrationpolicy.org/research/deportation-and-discretion-reviewing-record-and-options-change](http://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/deportation-and-discretion-reviewing-record-and-options-change). Furthermore, while Asian unauthorized immigrants outnumber South American unauthorized immigrants by more than two to one (see Table 1), about twice as many South Americans were deported in 2004-13, according to MPI calculations from DHS, *Yearbook of Immigration Statistics* data. Thus, unauthorized immigrants from South America are about four times more likely than those from Asia to be deported.
- <sup>17</sup> Researchers have found that strong distrust in the temporary nature of the DACA program, parental reluctance to reveal their children’s unauthorized status, and privacy concerns are important factors contributing to the low participation rates of Asian immigrants. See Audrey Singer, Nicole Prchal Svajlenka, and Jill H. Wilson, *Local Insight from DACA for Implementing Future Programs for Unauthorized Immigrants* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 2015), [www.brookings.edu/~media/research/files/reports/2015/06/04-daca/bmpp\\_srvy\\_dacaimmigration\\_june3b.pdf](http://www.brookings.edu/~media/research/files/reports/2015/06/04-daca/bmpp_srvy_dacaimmigration_june3b.pdf); Sylvia Rusin, “Origin and Community: Asian and Latin American Unauthorized Youth and U.S. Deportation Relief,” *Migration Information Source*, August 13, 2015, [www.migrationpolicy.org/article/origin-and-community-asian-and-latin-american-unauthorized-youth-and-us-deportation-relief](http://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/origin-and-community-asian-and-latin-american-unauthorized-youth-and-us-deportation-relief).



becoming lawful permanent residents<sup>18</sup>—and some who are eligible for DACA may prefer to seek regularization through other means.

Finally, one of the most striking points evident in Table 2 is the low DACA application rate by Guatemalans, which falls between 24 percent and 44 percent—about half the rate of Mexico and the other two Northern Triangle countries.<sup>19</sup> This finding may be partly explained by the fact that MPI's estimate of the unauthorized population from Guatemala, along with the share potentially eligible for DACA, is higher than estimates from other sources (see Appendix), which suggests that Table 2 may underestimate Guatemalan application rates because the share eligible for DACA is used as the denominator in the rate calculation. Yet even when accounting for differences across various estimates, Guatemalans eligible for DACA still are far less likely to apply than their peers from Mexico, Honduras, and El Salvador—despite the fact that Guatemala, which also has a large unauthorized population relative to its national population, would also appear to be a country with a strong interest in DACA enrollment. Possible reasons for this relatively low rate include Guatemalans' lower education levels (reflected in the large gap between the immediately and potentially eligible Guatemalan populations in Table 2), lower literacy rates, and lower levels of fluency in Spanish (not to mention English), as many speak indigenous languages. For cultural and historical reasons, Guatemalans may also be more likely than other Central Americans to distrust government agencies, including their own consulates, thus limiting their access to necessary documents and imposing a barrier to DACA enrollment.

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*Guatemalans eligible for DACA are far less likely to apply than their peers from Mexico, Honduras, and El Salvador.*

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## VI. National and Regional Patterns of Unauthorized Immigrant Settlement

Figures 3 through 11 display the distribution of unauthorized populations from Mexico, the three Northern Triangle countries of Central America; South America; Asia; Europe, Oceania, and Canada; Africa; and the Caribbean across U.S. states and selected counties. For each map, states with at least 2,000 unauthorized immigrants are shaded in proportion to the number of unauthorized immigrants residing in the state, and counties with at least 2,000 resident unauthorized immigrants are marked by circles, with the size of the circle proportional to the number of unauthorized immigrants in the county. While these minimum thresholds for inclusion in each map are the same, shading and circle sizes are scaled to the size of each country or region's unauthorized population, as indicated by the legends of the individual maps. (This implies that a circle of the same size may, in two different maps, refer to a different number of immigrants.) Detailed tables and an interactive map displaying data on unauthorized immigrants from 23 countries and six regions are available online.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>18</sup> A visa overstayer who becomes eligible for lawful permanent resident (LPR) status (e.g., because he or she is sponsored by a U.S.-citizen spouse or other family member) usually can adjust to permanent residency without leaving the United States, but an unauthorized immigrant who entered the United States unlawfully usually can only adjust to permanent residency by departing the United States and applying for a visa at a U.S. consulate abroad. By leaving the country, however, unauthorized immigrants who have been in the United States for more than six months trigger additional penalties that make them ineligible to re-enter the country for three years, and those who have been in the United States for more than a year become ineligible to re-enter for ten years.

<sup>19</sup> The Nicaraguan DACA application rate is even lower, but this finding is less surprising in light of the small size of this unauthorized population, and the fact that as a whole the Nicaraguan population in the United States is much smaller, wealthier, and more likely to have legal status than most other Central American immigrants. These factors likely limit the infrastructure and social networks in support of DACA enrollment within the Nicaraguan community.

<sup>20</sup> MPI Data Hub, "Unauthorized Immigrant Populations by Country and Region, Top State and County Destinations, 2009-13," [www.migrationpolicy.org/programs/data-hub/charts/unauthorized-immigrant-populations-country-and-region-top-state-and-county](http://www.migrationpolicy.org/programs/data-hub/charts/unauthorized-immigrant-populations-country-and-region-top-state-and-county).

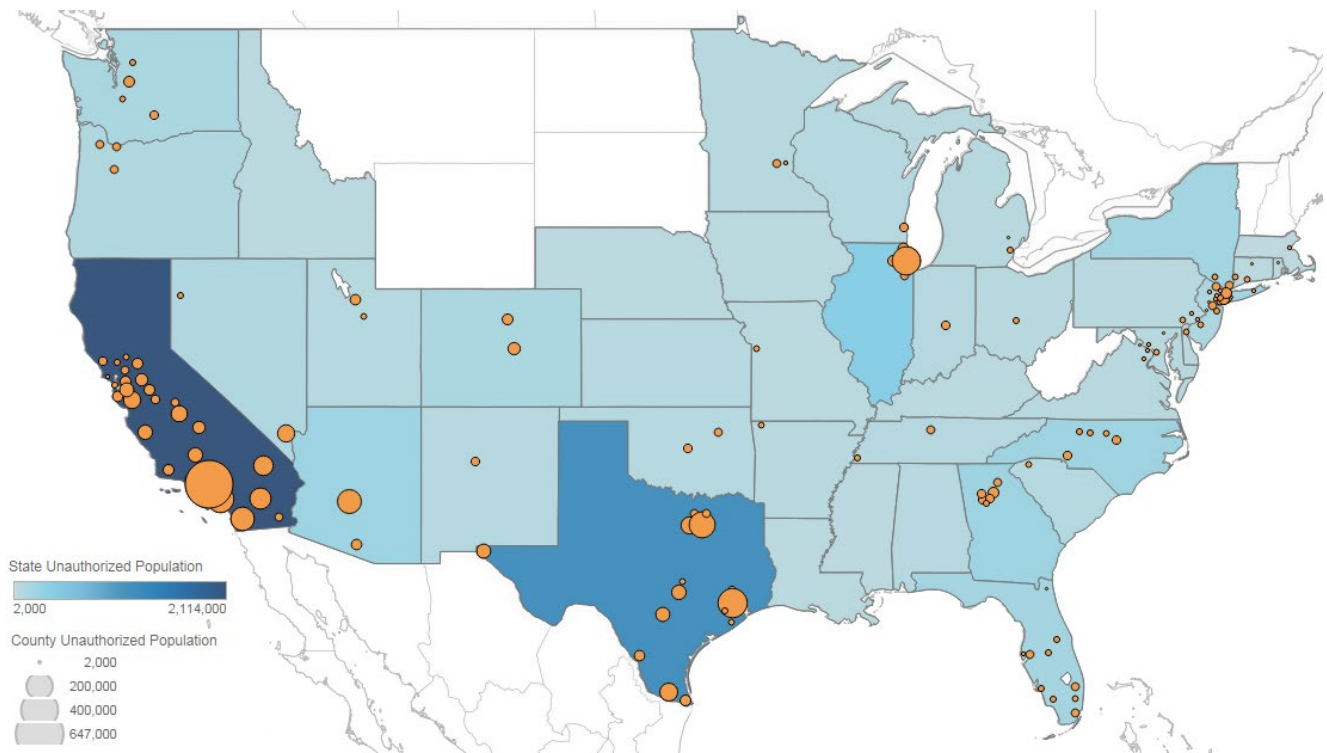


## A. Mexico

Mexico’s 6.1 million unauthorized immigrants are widely distributed across 40 states and the District of Columbia (see Figure 3). That said, the majority (53 percent) live in just two states: California (2.1 million) and Texas (1.2 million). Nearly 80 percent of unauthorized Mexican immigrants reside in ten states, including three other traditional immigrant destinations (Illinois, New York, and Florida) and five more recent destination states (Arizona, Georgia, North Carolina, Washington, and Colorado).<sup>21</sup>

At the county level, more than 10 percent of all Mexican unauthorized immigrants live in Los Angeles County (650,000), and their numbers exceed 150,000 in the urban counties surrounding Houston, Chicago, Dallas, Phoenix, and San Diego. Though Mexican unauthorized immigrants are concentrated in the West and Southwest, five Eastern counties are each home to at least 25,000: Queens, Kings, and Bronx counties (New York City) in New York; Gwinnett County (suburban Atlanta) in Georgia; and Wake County (Raleigh) in North Carolina.

**Figure 3. Mexican Unauthorized Immigrants, by State and County, 2009-13**



Source: MPI analysis of 2009-13 and 2008 SIPP ACS data by Hammar, Bachmeier, and Van Hook.

<sup>21</sup> On the diffusion of Mexican and other immigrants across “new-gateway” states and cities, see Audrey Singer, Susan W. Hardwick, and Caroline Brettell, *Twenty-First Century Gateways: Immigrant Incorporation in Suburban America* (Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution, 2008); Douglas S. Massey, *New Faces in New Places: The Changing Geography of American Immigration* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2010).



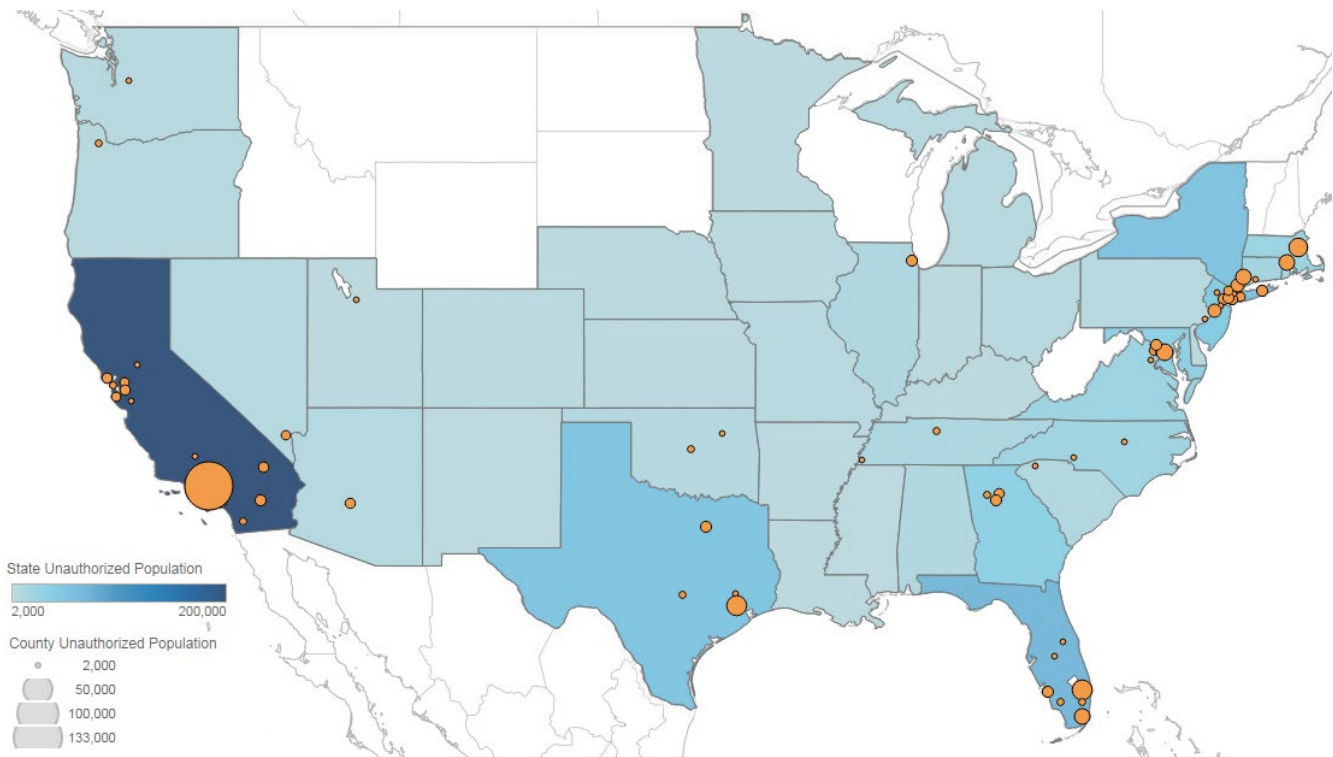


## B. Guatemala

Though only a fraction of its Mexican counterpart, the Guatemalan unauthorized population (704,000) is the second-largest among all countries of origin—and significantly larger than those from the other Northern Triangle countries of El Salvador and Honduras. Guatemalan unauthorized immigrants are found in significant numbers in 38 states and the District of Columbia. California is home to the largest number: 200,000. Otherwise, the settlement pattern of unauthorized Guatemalans diverges from that of Mexicans, as ten of the 12 states with the largest Guatemalan populations are located on the East Coast. Additional smaller populations of at least 10,000 reside in Tennessee, Illinois, and Alabama.

Los Angeles County is home to 19 percent of the nation’s Guatemalan unauthorized immigrants, the largest concentration in the country. Guatemalans also have a substantial presence (numbering at least 10,000) in counties overlapping the metropolitan areas of New York City, Miami, Washington, DC, Boston, Providence, and Houston.

**Figure 4. Guatemalan Unauthorized Immigrants, by State and County, 2009-13**



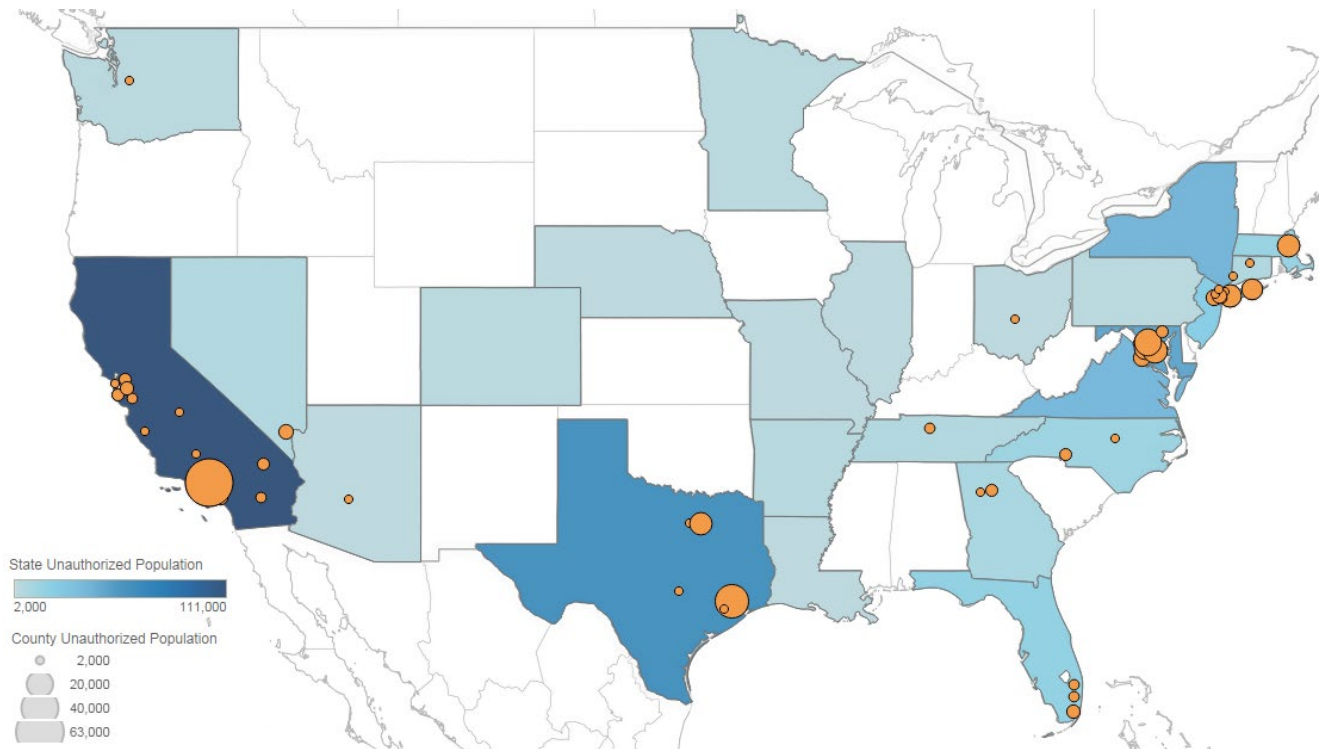
Source: MPI analysis of 2009-13 ACS and 2008 SIPP data by Hammar, Bachmeier, and Van Hook.

### C. *El Salvador*

Excluding about 212,000 Salvadorans granted TPS, the population of unauthorized immigrants from El Salvador is 436,000; many arrived after 2001.<sup>22</sup> Twenty-five states have measurable numbers of Salvadoran unauthorized immigrants, including nine states with 10,000 or more. As with the Mexican population, Salvadorans are most heavily concentrated in California and Texas; but as with Guatemalans most of the remaining population is concentrated on the East Coast. More than 20 percent of the unauthorized Salvadoran population resides in Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia—meaning Salvadorans are more heavily concentrated in the Washington, DC area than any other major unauthorized population.

Likewise, four of the ten counties with the largest Salvadoran unauthorized populations are found in the Washington, DC, metropolitan area. Montgomery and Prince George’s counties in Maryland together have 37,000 unauthorized immigrants from El Salvador, while Fairfax and Prince William counties in Virginia combined have 21,000. Like Guatemalans, Salvadoran unauthorized immigrants are also concentrated in the Los Angeles, Houston, Boston, and New York City metropolitan areas, each home to at least 10,000 such immigrants.

**Figure 5. Salvadoran Unauthorized Immigrants, by State and County, 2009-13**



Source: MPI analysis of 2009-13 ACS and 2008 SIPP data by Hammar, Bachmeier, and Van Hook.

<sup>22</sup> Most otherwise-unauthorized Salvadoran immigrants who have been continuously present in the United States at least since March 9, 2001, are eligible for TPS, and about 212,000 Salvadorans currently hold TPS status. MPI does not consider TPS to be a form of unauthorized status, and its methodology for identifying unauthorized immigrants in the ACS therefore excludes most Salvadorans arriving before 2001.

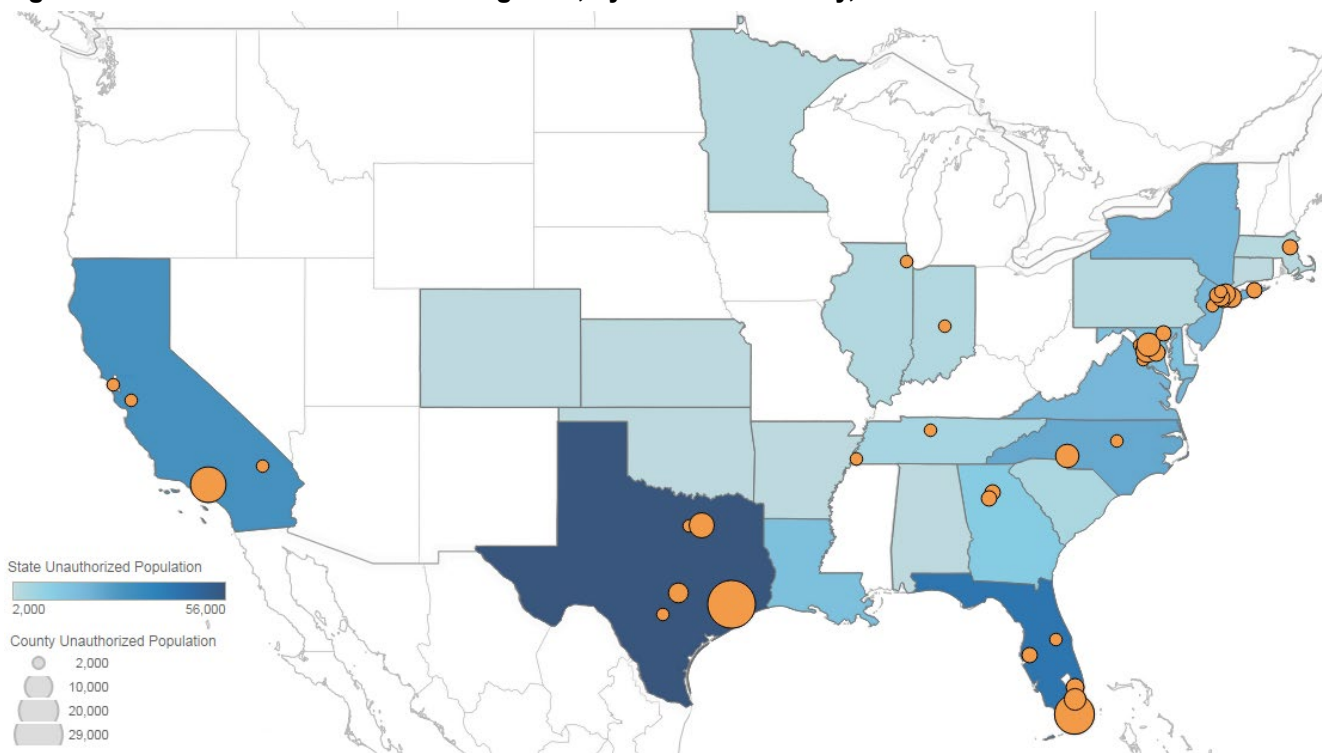


## D. Honduras

Numbering 317,000 people (excluding 64,000 with TPS), the unauthorized Honduran population is substantially smaller than those from Guatemala and El Salvador. Even so, Honduran unauthorized immigrants are found in significant numbers in 23 states, including ten states with populations of 10,000 or more. In contrast to unauthorized populations from the other Northern Triangle countries and Mexico, the largest numbers of Honduran unauthorized immigrants are found in Texas and Florida; California is in third place. Other significant populations are located on the East Coast and in Louisiana.

Of the eight counties with more than 5,000 Honduran unauthorized immigrants, two are located in Texas (Harris and Dallas), two in Florida (Miami-Dade and Broward), and one in California (Los Angeles). The other three counties are Mecklenburg County (Charlotte), North Carolina; Fairfax County, Virginia; and Montgomery County, Maryland (these second two are both in the Washington, DC, metropolitan area).

**Figure 6. Honduran Unauthorized Immigrants, by State and County, 2013**



Source: MPI analysis of 2009-13 and 2008 SIPP ACS data by Hammar, Bachmeier, and Van Hook.

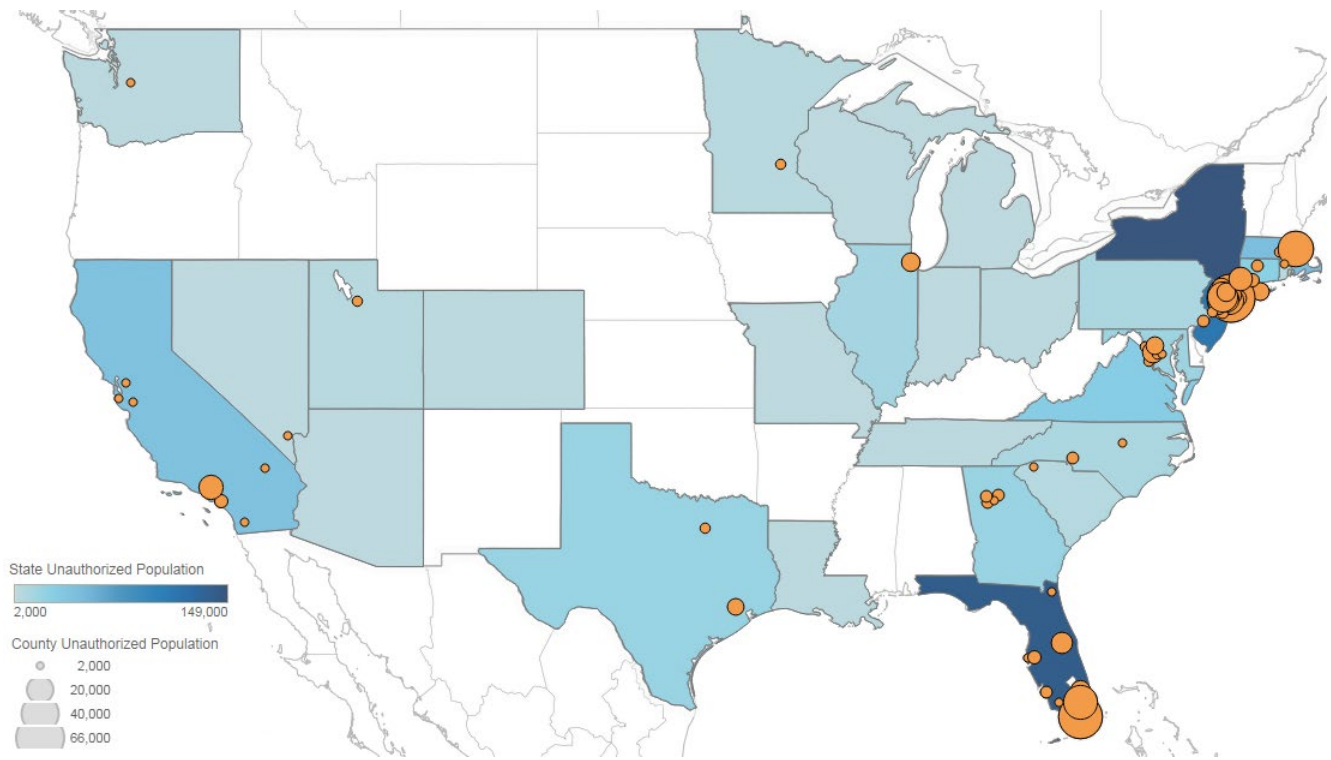


### E. South America

While Mexican and Central American unauthorized populations are concentrated in California and New York, the estimated 690,000 unauthorized immigrants from South America are concentrated in New York (150,000), Florida (141,000), and New Jersey (112,000), representing 58 percent of the total population of South American unauthorized immigrants. Among the 28 states and the District of Columbia with measurable South American unauthorized populations, other large concentrations are found along the East Coast and in the traditional immigrant settlement states of California, Texas, and Illinois.

Ten of the 18 counties with at least 10,000 unauthorized immigrants from South America are located in the greater New York City metropolitan area, together representing almost one-third (31 percent) of South American unauthorized immigrants. Other significant populations are located in the metropolitan areas of Miami, Boston, Washington, DC, Los Angeles, and Atlanta.

**Figure 7. South American Unauthorized Immigrants, by State and County, 2009-13**



Source: MPI analysis of 2009-13 ACS and 2008 SIPP data by Hammar, Bachmeier, and Van Hook.

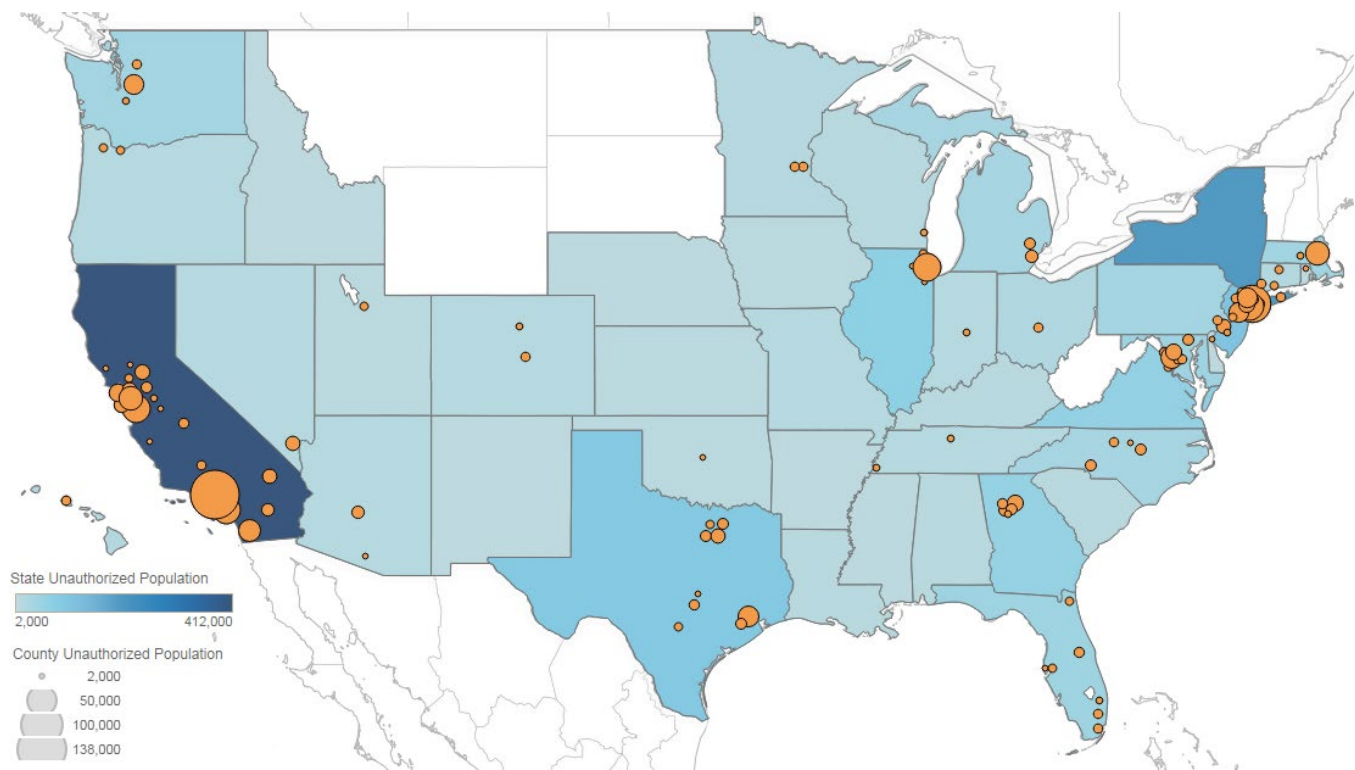


## F. Asia

California is home to more than 400,000 (27 percent) of the 1.5 million Asian unauthorized immigrants in the United States, the largest number of any state. Unauthorized immigrants from Asia are also present in large numbers in the other traditional immigration states of New York, New Jersey, Texas, and Illinois, as well as states along the East Coast. Measurable Asian unauthorized populations can also be found in 41 states and the District of Columbia.<sup>23</sup>

These state patterns are also reflected at the county level. Seven of the ten counties with the largest Asian unauthorized populations are located in California or New York. And the top 20 counties are clustered around the metropolitan areas of Los Angeles, New York City, Chicago, Boston, San Francisco, Houston, Washington, DC, and Seattle, each with at least 20,000 immigrants.

**Figure 8. Asian Unauthorized Immigrants, by State and County, 2009-13**



Source: MPI analysis of 2009-13 ACS and 2008 SIPP data by Hammar, Bachmeier, and Van Hook.

<sup>23</sup> In part, this wide distribution reflects the large number of countries from which this category has been constructed; no single Asian country has a settlement pattern that exactly resembles the pattern for Asia as a whole. Among the listed countries in Asia, for example, only China has a measurable presence in the Mountain West, and only Vietnam has a substantial presence in Florida. See the interactive online data tool for additional details on the settlement patterns of Asian unauthorized populations; MPI Data Hub, "State-Level Estimates on DACA & DAPA Populations by Country or Region of Origin," [www.migrationpolicy.org/sites/default/files/datahub/DACA-DAPA-2013State%20Estimates-Spreadsheet-FINAL.xlsx](http://www.migrationpolicy.org/sites/default/files/datahub/DACA-DAPA-2013State%20Estimates-Spreadsheet-FINAL.xlsx).

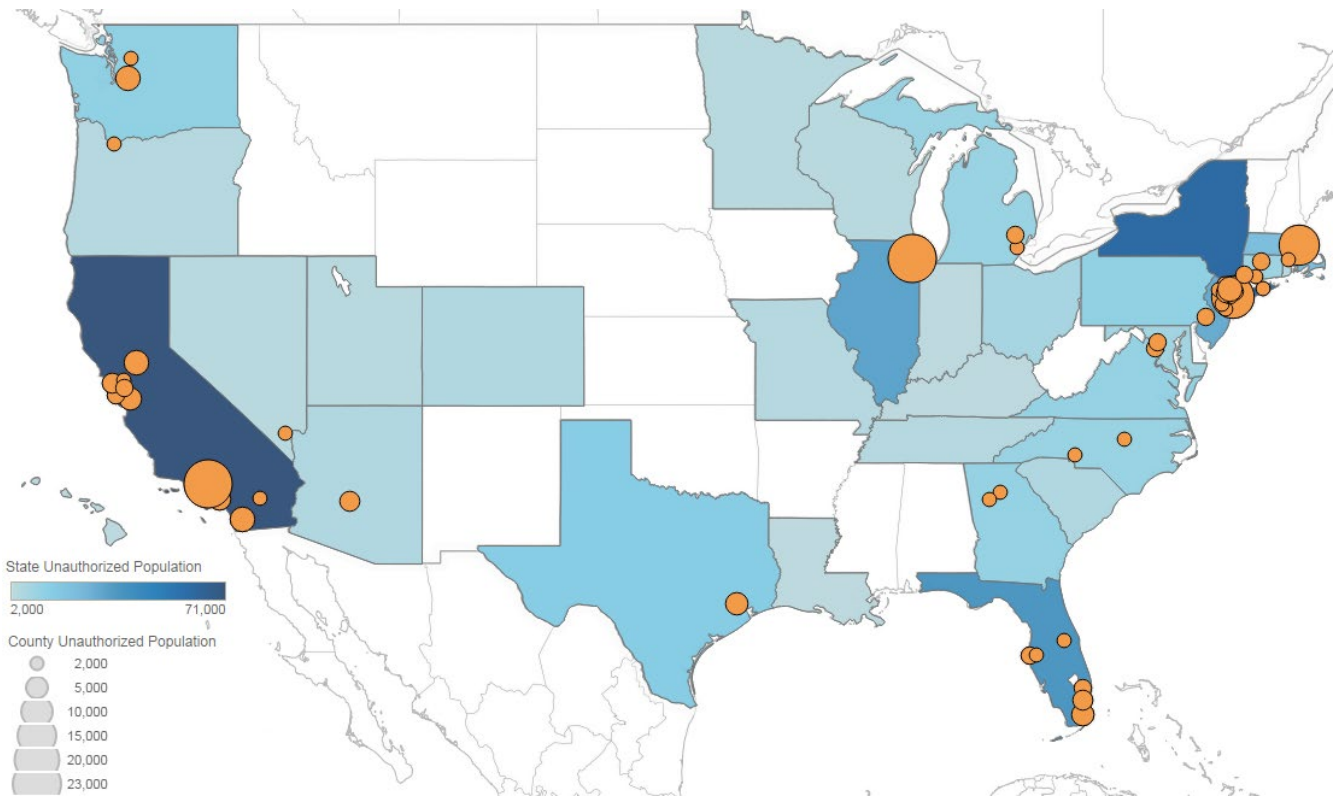


### G. Europe, Canada, and Oceania

The estimated 423,000 unauthorized immigrants from Europe, Canada, and Oceania (primarily Australia and New Zealand) are in a single category in MPI’s analysis because all have broadly similar ethnic and socioeconomic characteristics, and all exhibit similar settlement patterns. Given their long history of immigration to the United States, immigrants from these regions are primarily settled in traditional destination states. In fact, nearly two-thirds of unauthorized immigrants from Europe, Canada, and Oceania reside in the seven traditional immigration states of California, New York, Florida, Illinois, New Jersey, Massachusetts, and Texas (listed by population size). Only Washington, Pennsylvania, Georgia, and Virginia also have unauthorized populations from these regions of more than 10,000. Unlike Mexican and Asian populations, there are no significant populations of unauthorized immigrants from these regions in the Great Plains or most of the Mountain West.

Six large counties each are home to at least 10,000 unauthorized immigrants from these regions. Three (Kings, New York, and Queens) are located in New York City area, together representing 10 percent of the total unauthorized population from Europe, Canada, and Oceania. The other three counties are located in the cities of Los Angeles, Chicago, and Boston, together accounting for an additional 14 percent of the population. Other metropolitan areas with notable unauthorized populations from Europe, Canada, and Oceania include San Diego, San Francisco, Miami, Seattle, and Houston.

**Figure 9. European, Canadian, and Oceanian Unauthorized Immigrants, by State and County, 2009-13**



Source: MPI analysis of 2009-13 ACS and 2008 SIPP data by Hammar, Bachmeier, and Van Hook.

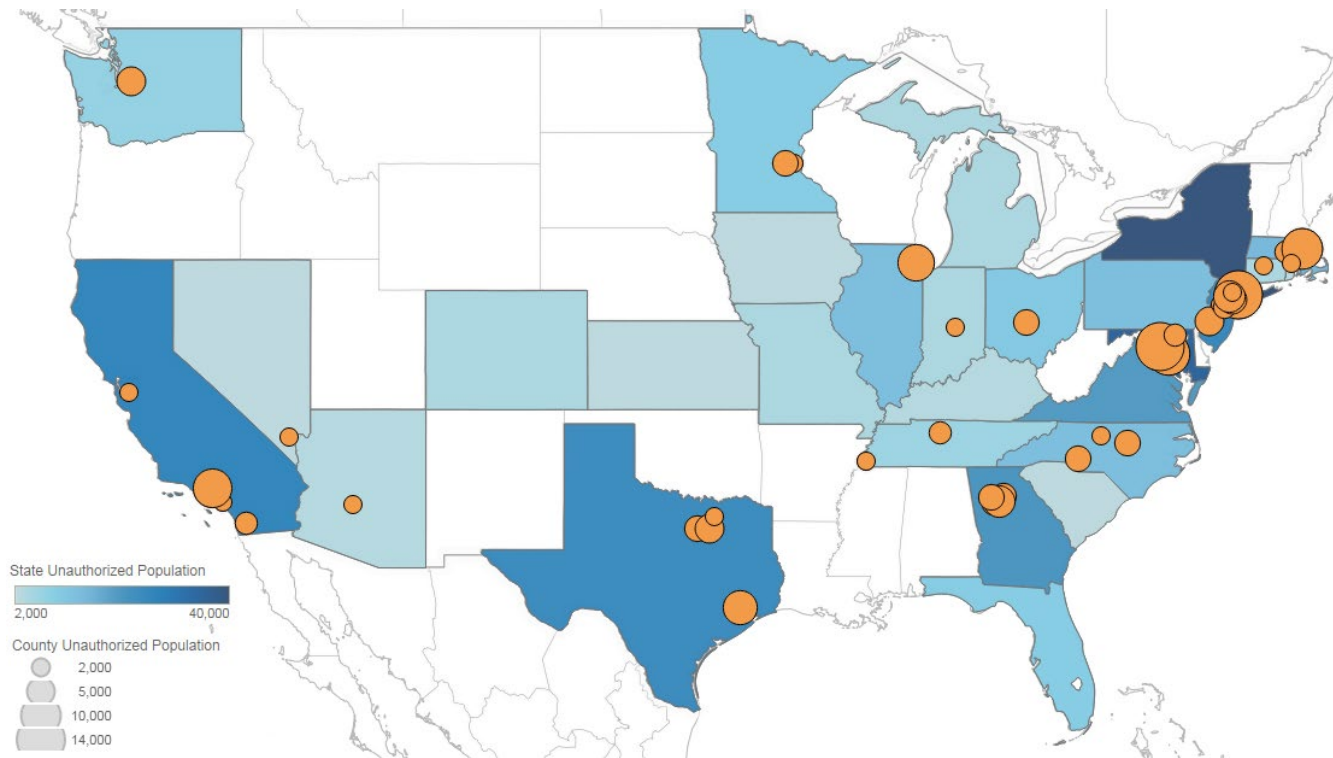


## H. Africa

The African unauthorized population is highly concentrated in traditional settlement states like New York, California, New Jersey, and Texas. Together, immigrants in these four states represent 34 percent of the 342,000 estimated unauthorized immigrants from Africa. A significant share (17 percent) of the total unauthorized population from the region also lives in Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia<sup>24</sup> (only unauthorized Salvadorans compose a similarly large population in the Washington, DC, area). Among recent destination states in the South, only Georgia has a population of at least 20,000 African unauthorized immigrants.

Numerous counties across the United States have notable African unauthorized populations, though all are home to large numbers of other immigrants, making the African populations relatively small compared with those of immigrants from other regions. Only four counties have at least 10,000 African unauthorized immigrants, including Montgomery and Prince George's counties in Maryland, Bronx County in New York, and the Boston area NECTA<sup>25</sup> in Massachusetts. Other counties with African unauthorized populations of at least 5,000 are found in the metropolitan areas of Chicago, Houston, Philadelphia, and Dallas.

**Figure 10. African Unauthorized Immigrants, by State and County, 2009-13**



Source: MPI analysis of 2009-13 ACS and 2008 SIPP data by Hammar, Bachmeier, and Van Hook.

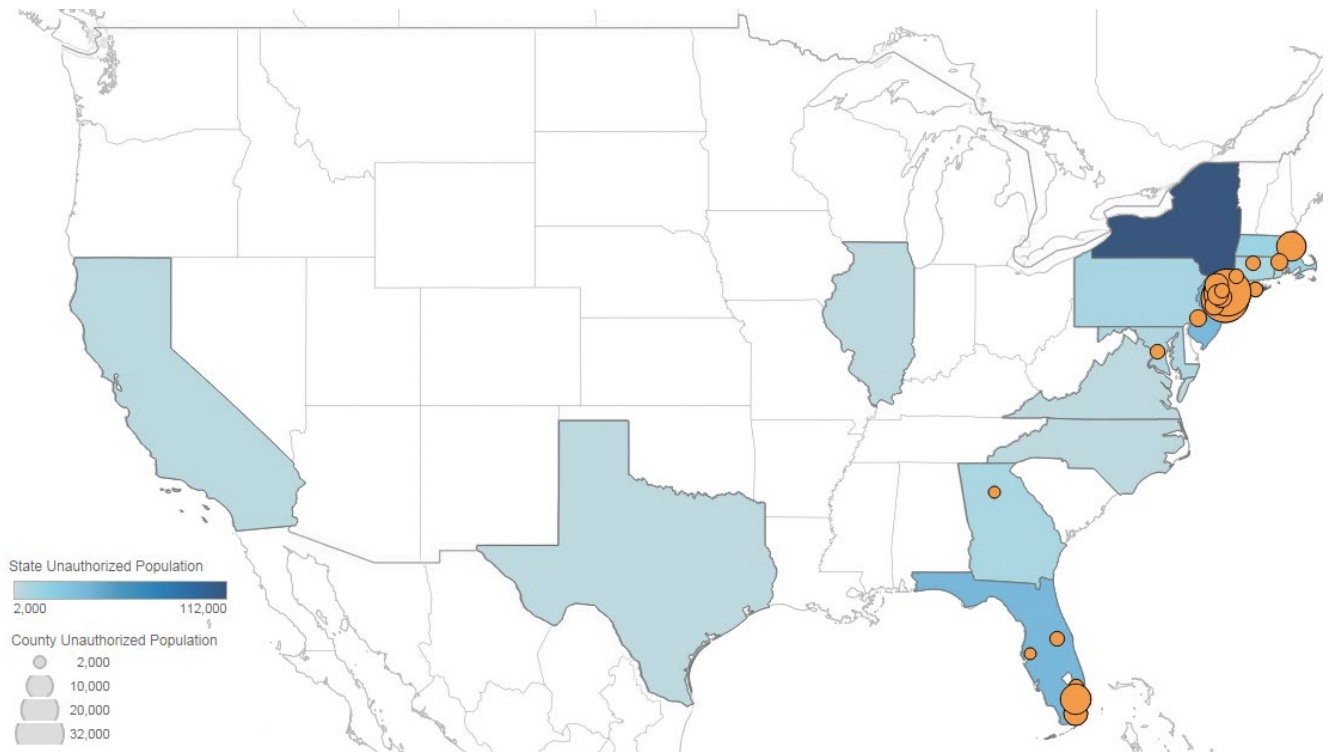
<sup>24</sup> Of African countries with unauthorized populations in the Washington, DC, area large enough to estimate, Ethiopia (total U.S. unauthorized population of 35,000) and Ghana (U.S. total of 36,000) have the highest share in this area—at least 13,000 and 8,000, respectively.

<sup>25</sup> NECTA refers to the New England City and Town Area, a geographic entity defined by the U.S. Census Bureau for use as an alternative to the county in the six-state New England region.

## I. The Caribbean

The Caribbean unauthorized population, numbering 260,000, is the smallest of the regional groups described in this report, and has remained almost unchanged since 2000 (as noted earlier; see Table 1). To a far greater degree than any other population, Caribbean unauthorized immigrants are highly concentrated in New York state, where more than 40 percent (112,000) reside. Another 29 percent live in Florida (38,000) or New Jersey (37,000). There are also small concentrations in New England, Atlanta, and the Washington, DC, metropolitan area.

**Figure 11. Caribbean Unauthorized Immigrants, by State and County, 2009-13**



Source: MPI analysis of 2009-13 ACS and 2008 SIPP data by Hammar, Bachmeier, and Van Hook.

## VII. Further Observations

Using the most recent data available, this report describes unauthorized immigrants in the United States by their country and region of birth, and focuses on recent trends in the sizes of their populations, their potential eligibility for the DACA program, and their geographic distribution across the United States.

The distribution of unauthorized immigrants across the United States—as with immigrants overall—has become more diffuse than in the past; significant numbers of unauthorized immigrants can be found in 41 states and the District of Columbia, and in 138 counties. These locations include major cities in traditional destination states like California, Texas, New York, Florida, and Illinois, as well as smaller cities and suburban areas. Many are in states that only recently began receiving large numbers of immigrants, such as Georgia (where 392,000 unauthorized immigrants now compose 4 percent of the state’s population), North Carolina (342,000, 3 percent), and Arizona (264,000, 4 percent).





The diffusion of unauthorized immigrants—and immigrants in general—across new destinations has been accompanied by an increase in the diversity of immigrants’ countries of origin. Just as Mexico’s share of the overall foreign-born population peaked in 2007 and has since declined, so too has its share of the unauthorized—from 69 percent in 2000 to 56 percent in 2013. Similarly, while Mexican immigrants account for 70-78 percent of the unauthorized populations in traditional immigration states like California, Texas, and Illinois—and even larger shares in Western states that include Arizona (87 percent), Idaho (83 percent), and Colorado (79 percent)—they account for well under half the unauthorized populations of Midwestern states like Michigan (41 percent), Ohio (41 percent), and Pennsylvania (26 percent). Each of these states is also home to significant numbers of unauthorized immigrants from India, Guatemala, and China. Strikingly, India is now among the top three national origins of unauthorized immigrants in 12 different states, most of them concentrated in the Midwest.

Mexican unauthorized immigrants constitute even smaller proportions of the unauthorized populations in Washington, DC (8 percent), and the nearby states of Maryland (11 percent) and Virginia (17 percent)—a region whose unauthorized immigrants come primarily from Central America. Central and South Americans also account for most unauthorized immigrants in the Miami metropolitan area (42 percent and 35 percent, respectively), where Mexicans immigrants account for just 10 percent.

These changing patterns provide an important backdrop against which to analyze the experiences of these populations, including the degree to which they have taken advantage of the 2012 DACA program. As the data in this report indicate, DACA enrollment rates vary substantially by national origin. DACA-eligible unauthorized immigrants from Mexico, El Salvador, and Honduras have taken advantage of the program at high rates: more than 80 percent of the immediately eligible from these countries have applied. Application rates are between 30 percent and 60 percent for immediately eligible Guatemalans and most South American populations; and rates are well below 30 percent for most Asian immigrants.

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*The diffusion of unauthorized immigrants—and immigrants in general—across new destinations has been accompanied by an increase in the diversity of immigrants’ countries of origin.*

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In part, these findings confirm that DACA is a high-stakes program for Mexico and El Salvador, both of which have invested substantial consular resources in supporting their nationals’ efforts to take advantage of the program. The findings also raise questions about the extent to which Guatemala—also with a relatively large U.S. unauthorized population—has undertaken a similar push. What is less clear is whether consulates and other service providers supporting DACA enrollment will succeed in helping unauthorized immigrant youth who lack a high school degree enroll in school and thereby become eligible for DACA relief.

Differences in DACA enrollment rates also direct attention to the types of services available to support applicants, and services for unauthorized immigrants more generally. Amid the growing diversity and diffusion of the unauthorized population, both the mix of immigrants and the types of services available to them differ in important ways in new and old immigration destinations; and government agencies, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), consulates, and other service providers may struggle to meet the specific linguistic, cultural, and other needs of their target populations.



This observation suggests a checklist of questions for agencies charged with supporting enrollment in the DACA program:

- To what extent does current outreach by governmental organizations, including USCIS and foreign consular networks, parallel the geographic concentrations of unauthorized immigrants who may be eligible for deferred action?
- Do governmental and nongovernmental service organizations have appropriate resources in the right locations to match the potential number of DACA applicants?
- How can resources be reallocated and targeted to meet the specific needs of immigrants from different countries of origin?

Traditional destinations have been important locations for immigration service provision for decades. And while services in these states continue to play a crucial role in supporting unauthorized populations, devoting attention to more recent immigrant destinations and national-origin groups will become increasingly important as settlement patterns continue to evolve.

For more on MPI's U.S. Immigration Policy Program, please visit:  
[www.migrationpolicy.org/programs/  
us-immigration-policy-program](http://www.migrationpolicy.org/programs/us-immigration-policy-program)



## Appendix

### Comparison of Recent U.S. Unauthorized Population Estimates, by Selected Country of Birth and Data Source

Country of Birth	Migration Policy Institute, 2009-2013	Center for Migration Studies, 2013	Pew Hispanic Research Center, 2012	Department of Homeland Security, 2012
<b>All Countries</b>	<b>11,022,000</b>	<b>11,012,000</b>	<b>11,200,000</b>	<b>11,430,000</b>
Mexico	6,194,000	6,088,000	5,850,000	6,720,000
Guatemala	704,000	518,000	525,000	560,000
El Salvador*	436,000	588,000	675,000	690,000
Honduras*	317,000	324,000	350,000	360,000
China	285,000	305,000	300,000	210,000
India	284,000	401,000	450,000	260,000
Philippines	197,000	246,000	200,000	290,000
South Korea	192,000	187,000	180,000	230,000
Ecuador	146,000	144,000	130,000	170,000
Colombia	137,000	133,000	150,000	N/A
Dominican Republic	123,000	194,000	170,000	N/A
Brazil	117,000	108,000	100,000	N/A
Vietnam	116,000	113,000	N/A	160,000
Peru	105,000	109,000	120,000	N/A
Jamaica	77,000	104,000	100,000	N/A
Nicaragua	68,000	55,000	N/A	N/A
Pakistan	55,000	50,000	N/A	N/A
Guyana/British Guiana	47,000	N/A	N/A	N/A
Nigeria	45,000	34,000	N/A	N/A
Venezuela	44,000	57,000	N/A	N/A
Bangladesh	39,000	N/A	N/A	N/A
Thailand	39,000	N/A	N/A	N/A
Poland	37,000	66,000	N/A	N/A
Canada	21,000	40,000	120,000	N/A
Haiti	N/A	122,000	110,000	N/A
Argentina	35,000	38,000	N/A	N/A
Ghana	36,000	35,000	N/A	N/A
Ethiopia	35,000	40,000	N/A	N/A

Note: MPI's estimates of unauthorized immigrants from El Salvador and Honduras exclude individuals with TPS. The TPS population is included in estimates of unauthorized immigrants from other sources listed above.

Sources: MPI analysis of U.S. Census Bureau data from the 2009-13 ACS, pooled, and the 2008 SIPP by Hammar, Bachmeier, and Van Hook; Center for Migration Studies of New York (CMS), "Estimates of the Unauthorized Population for States," accessed on July 6, 2015, drawing on the augmented ACS-based Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMS), 2010 to 2013, <http://data.cmsny.org>; Pew Research Center Hispanic Trends Project, "Unauthorized Immigrant Population Trends of States, Birth Countries, and Regions," 2014, based on augmented ACS data from IPUMS for 2005-12, [www.pewhispanic.org/2014/12/11/unauthorized-trends/](http://www.pewhispanic.org/2014/12/11/unauthorized-trends/); DHS, *Estimates of the Unauthorized Immigrant Population Residing in the United States: January 2012, 2013, Table 3—Country of Birth of the Unauthorized Immigrant Population: January 2012 and 2010* (Washington, DC: DHS, Office of Immigration Statistics), [www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/ois\\_ill\\_pe\\_2012\\_2.pdf](http://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/ois_ill_pe_2012_2.pdf).



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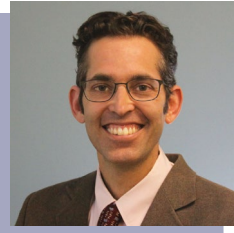
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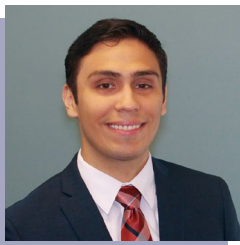


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The Migration Policy Institute is a nonprofit, nonpartisan think tank dedicated to the study of the movement of people worldwide. MPI provides analysis, development, and evaluation of migration and refugee policies at the local, national, and international levels. It aims to meet the rising demand for pragmatic and thoughtful responses to the challenges and opportunities that large-scale migration, whether voluntary or forced, presents to communities and institutions in an increasingly integrated world.

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