

The Impact of Counting Changes on Nonimmigrant Admissions: Preliminary Findings

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Interpreting recent trends in I-94 nonimmigrant admissions has been complicated by more complete recording of entries into the United States. Beginning in 2005,¹ at selected Southwest border crossings, the Department of Homeland Security installed new technology to record land admissions previously excluded from I-94 data systems; by 2010 this technology was installed at nearly all pedestrian crossings and vehicular lanes along the Southwest and Northern borders. The increase in I-94 nonimmigrant admissions² after 2005 as reported by the Office of Immigration Statistics (OIS)³ is partly due to more complete counting. This OIS Fact Sheet provides an indication of the impact by displaying trends in nonimmigrant admissions compared to trends in the number of individuals admitted each year during 2001–2010. Counts of individuals are largely independent of changes in admission counting. Estimates of individuals were created by matching admission records on birth date, last name, and first 3 characters of the first name. For comparison, estimates of overall expected admission levels absent changes in counting mechanisms were computed for 2006 to 2010.⁴

TRENDS

Both the annual number of nonimmigrant admissions and estimated individuals increased from 2001 to 2010. The difference between admissions and individuals increased from 2006, remained elevated in 2007 to 2009, and spiked in 2010 (see Figure 1). The number of expected admissions (absent counting changes) is substantially lower than the number of actual admissions in 2010.

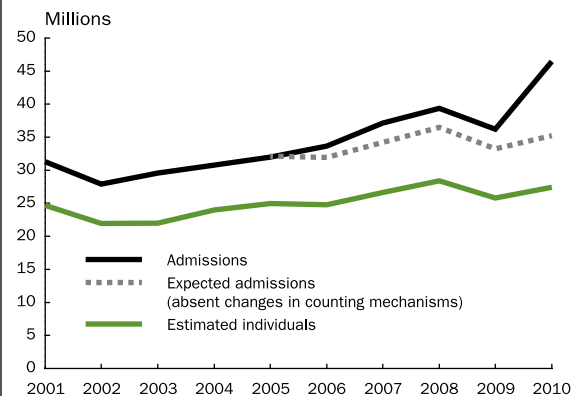
¹ Years refer to fiscal years (October 1 to September 30).

² Admissions refer to the number of events (i.e., I-94 nonimmigrant entries into the U.S.). More than one entry on the same day is counted as one admission.

³ See U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Office of Immigration Statistics, 2011. *Yearbook of Immigration Statistics: 2010* (http://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/statistics/yearbook/2010/ois_yb_2010.pdf) and Monger, Randall and Megan Mathews, 2011. *Nonimmigrant Admissions to the United States: 2010* (http://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/statistics/publications/ni_fr_2010.pdf).

⁴ Specifically, the ratio of admissions to individuals for 2006 to 2010 was assumed to be constant and based on the average of annual ratios for 2001 to 2005.

Figure 1.
Nonimmigrant Admissions, Expected Admissions,
and Estimated Individuals (I-94 only): 2001–2010



Notes: Data on estimated individuals are preliminary and subject to revision. Admissions for 2003 are higher than previously reported due to data updates.

Source: U.S. Department of Homeland Security, fiscal years 2001 to 2010.

Figure 2 illustrates how trends in admissions and individuals vary by select classes of admission. In general, trends in estimated counts of individuals for each category are flatter than trends in admissions—see especially North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) professional workers (TN), intracompany transferees (L1), workers in specialty occupations (H1B), academic students (F1), and temporary visitors for pleasure (B2).

FURTHER STUDY

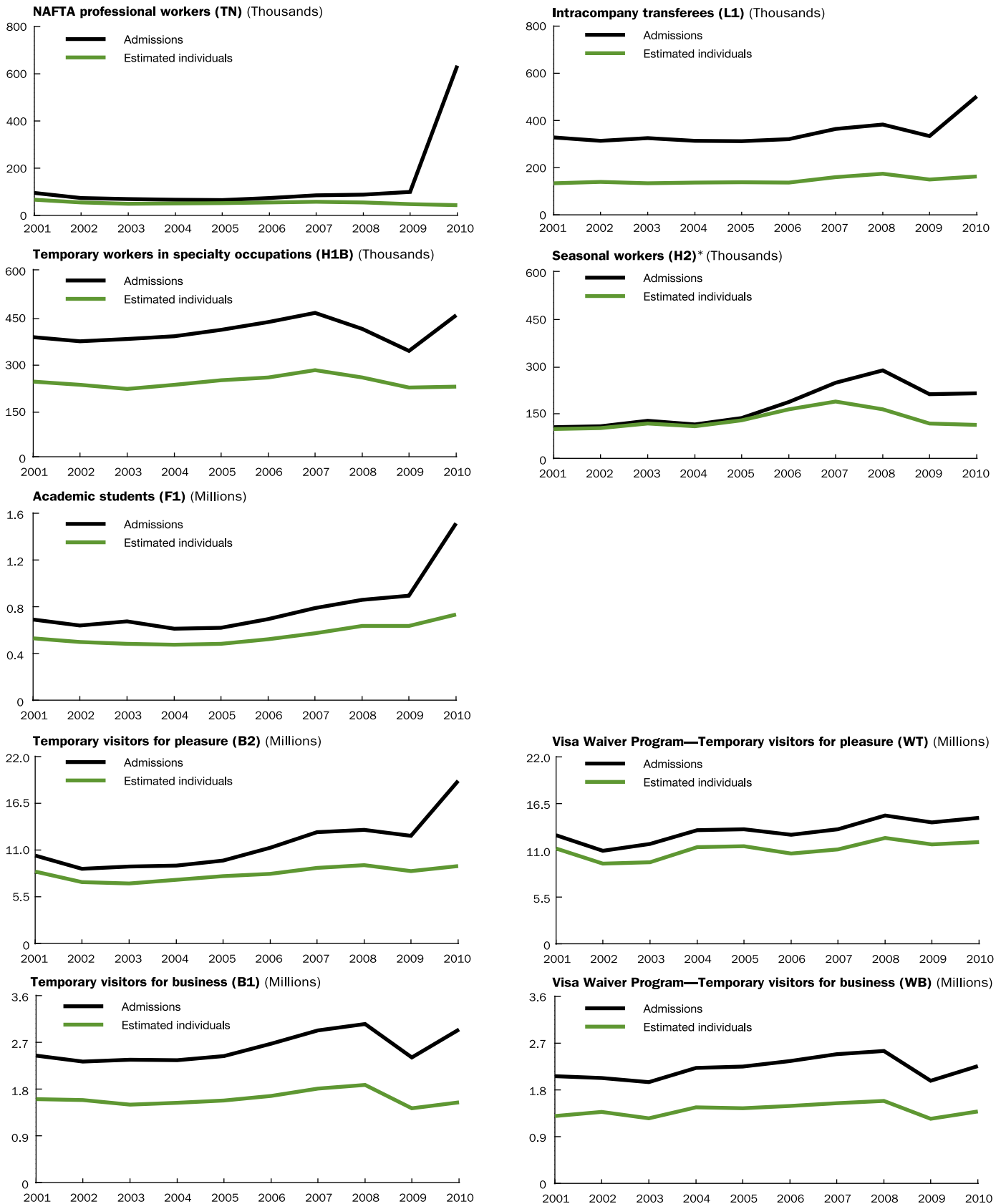
Analysis underway will evaluate multiple record matching methods used to estimate individuals. A detailed report will examine trends in nonimmigrant admissions and individuals admitted by class of admission, country of citizenship, port of entry, and other variables.



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Figure 2.
Nonimmigrant Admissions and Estimated Individuals for Selected Classes of Admission (I-94 Only): 2001–2010



*Seasonal workers (H2) refers to H2A, H2B, and H2R classes of admissions. Issuances of H2R visas (returning H2B workers not subject to annual numerical limits) ceased at the end of 2007.
 Notes: Data on estimated individuals are preliminary and subject to revision.
 Source: U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Customs and Border Protection (CBP), TECS, Arrival File, fiscal years 2001–2010.