

CRS Reports & Analysis

Sources for Frequently Requested Immigration Statistics

Updated September 18, 2018 (R45315)

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Purpose and Scope

Multiple federal agencies play a role in administering immigration policies and enforcing immigration laws. These agencies make available various statistics related to their immigration work. This report provides guidance in identifying frequently requested immigration data from federal government sources, most of which are publicly available. This report is not a comprehensive listing of all federal immigration statistics.

The statistical sources included in this report are organized into five major categories:

- 1. foreign-born population in the United States,
- 2. lawful admissions,
- 3. naturalization,
- 4. immigration enforcement, and
- 5. special populations.

Some of these categories have subcategories. A brief overview is given for each category and subcategory, including definitions of key terms, relevant federal agencies, and examples of common data-related questions. A table listing selected statistical sources follows each overview. In addition, there is an appendix with a glossary of acronyms and abbreviations.

Foreign-Born Population in the United States

The foreign-born population refers to people born outside the United States who do not automatically acquire U.S. nationality or U.S. citizenship at birth. The foreign-born population includes naturalized U.S. citizens, lawful (or legal) permanent residents, nonimmigrants, refugees, and persons illegally residing in the United States.¹ In contrast, the native-born population is composed of anyone who is a U.S. citizen or U.S. national at birth, including people born in the United States, Puerto Rico, a U.S. territory (American Samoa, Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and the U.S. Virgin Islands), or abroad to a U.S. citizen parent or parents.²

The resource in [Table 1](#) may help answer questions related to, for instance, the

- number of foreign-born persons living in the United States,
- percentage of the foreign-born population with a bachelor's degree, and
- median household income of the foreign-born population.

Table 1. Foreign-Born Population

Resource Name	Content
Selected Characteristics of the Native and Foreign-Born Populations, 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates , Table S0501 ^a (U.S. Census Bureau)	Estimates of the foreign-born population by <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sex • Age • Race/ethnicity • Marital status • Educational attainment • Employment status • Earnings and income

- Poverty status
- Housing status

Table can be modified to obtain specific geographical data (state, county, congressional district, etc.). Click on the "Add/Remove Geographies" link above the table.

Source: Table compiled by the Congressional Research Service (CRS).

Notes: The American Community Survey (ACS) is a Census survey instrument that gathers demographic, income, education, and other information from a small percentage of the population and produces statistical estimates about characteristics of the American population based on the information gathered. For more information, see the ACS website at <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/> or CRS Report R41532, *The American Community Survey: Development, Implementation, and Issues for Congress*. Note that although the ACS asks people where they were born and whether they are citizens, it does not ask about their immigration status. Therefore ACS data may reflect foreign-born individuals who are in the United States legally as well as those who are unauthorized.

a. The ACS 5-Year Estimates are based on aggregated data from a monthly survey of households over a 5-year period. The most recent ACS 5-Year Estimates are for 2012-2016.

Lawful Admissions

The Immigration and Nationality Act (INA, codified at 8 U.S.C. § 1101 et seq.) provides for the admission of foreign nationals to the United States. A *foreign national* is a person who is not a U.S. citizen or U.S. national. Foreign nationals are sometimes referred to as *noncitizens* or *aliens*. Throughout this report, *foreign national* will generally be used, unless referring to a term of art or to a resource or statutory language that uses a different term.

Some foreign nationals are lawfully admitted to the United States for permanent residence. Others are lawfully admitted for a temporary period, such as tourists, students, or temporary workers. There are also categories of foreign nationals who are given permission to be in the United States but are not given an immigration status; these include individuals granted temporary protected status.³

Permanent Admissions

The term *immigrant* refers to a foreign national who is admitted from abroad to live lawfully and permanently in the United States or who adjusts to lawful (or legal) permanent resident status within the United States. In this report, the terms *immigrant* and *lawful (or legal) permanent resident (LPR)* are synonymous. LPRs who meet the naturalization requirements established in the INA have the opportunity to become U.S. citizens.⁴

Four major principles underlie U.S. policy on permanent immigration: (1) family reunification, (2) admission of immigrants with needed skills, (3) diversity of admissions by country of origin, and (4) humanitarian concerns. The first three principles are discussed in this section; humanitarian admissions are discussed in the "[Humanitarian Admissions](#)" section below.

The federal agencies involved in permanent admissions are the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), the Department of State (DOS), and, in some instances, the Department of Labor (DOL). DHS's U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) processes petitions filed by family members on behalf of relatives or by employers on behalf of prospective employees. If a petition is approved by USCIS and the beneficiary is coming from abroad, then

DOS processes the visa application and, if it approves the application, issues a visa. For some of the employment-based immigrant categories, a prospective employer must first obtain a labor certification approval from DOL before filing a petition with USCIS.⁵

The resources in [Table 2](#) include statistics related to petitions, visa applications, visa issuances, labor certifications, admissions into the United States, adjustments of status, and demographics. Several of these resources use the term *class of admission*—this refers to the specific eligibility and admissibility requirements, as established by the INA, under which an individual may be admitted to the United States. For example, *family-based admissions* is a broad class of admission and *brothers/sisters of U.S. citizens* is a more detailed class of admission.⁶

The resources listed in [Table 2](#) may help answer questions related to, for instance, the

- demographics of LPRs (e.g., age, sex, country of origin),
- number of people granted LPR status in a given year,
- number of diversity visas issued in a given year to people from particular countries, or
- number of permanent labor certification applications processed in a given year.

Table 2. Permanent Admissions

Resource Name	Content
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Legal Permanent Residents (DHS, Office of Immigration Statistics)

Yearbook of Immigration Statistics , ^a Tables 1-12	Number of people who obtained LPR status by <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fiscal year• Region and country of last residence• Region and country of birth• Core based statistical area of residence^b• State/territory of residence• Class of admission• Demographics
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Profiles on Lawful Permanent Residents	The interactive tool allows users to generate profiles of selected demographic characteristics of people who became LPRs during a given fiscal year.
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Demographic characteristics include

- Gender
- Age
- Marital status
- Occupation
- State of residence
- Country of birth
- Class of admission

Profiles are available by

- Country of birth

- State of residence
- Core based statistical area of residence^b

[Estimates of the Lawful Permanent Resident Population in the United States](#) Estimates of the total LPR population, including those eligible to naturalize, by

- Country of birth
- State of residence
- Year LPR status was obtained

Petitions for LPR Status (DHS, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services)

[Data Set: Form I-130 Petition for Alien Relative](#) Number of petitions for LPR status (based on a family relationship), which have been received, approved, or denied, or are pending, by fiscal year quarter.

Visas (DOS, Bureau of Consular Affairs)

[Report of the Visa Office](#) Number of immigrant (and nonimmigrant) visas issued by consular offices for different classes of admissions, presented in a series of tables.

[Immigrant Visa Statistics](#) Data on specialized topics, including special immigrant visas, final action dates for certain visa classes and countries, and immigrant visa waiting lists.

[Diversity Visa Program Statistics](#) Statistics for

- Entries received
- Entrants selected
- Visa issuances
- Adjustments of status

Labor Certification Applications (DOL, Office of Foreign Labor Certification)

[Performance Data website](#) For permanent visas, the available data related to labor certification applications include^c

- Number of applications received, certified, denied, and withdrawn
- Processing status of active applications
- Ranking of top occupations, states, industries, visa classifications, countries of citizenship, and minimum education requirements for certified applications

State profiles are also available.

Source: Table compiled by CRS.

a. The *Yearbook of Immigration Statistics* is a compendium of tables prepared by the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS's) Office of Immigration Statistics (OIS) that provides data from a given fiscal year on foreign nationals in the United States. Some tables contain historical data and state-level data. The tables are released as they become available and then a final PDF of all tables is compiled and published in one volume. The tables are also available as Excel files.

b. The Census Bureau defines core based statistical areas as consisting of "the county or counties or equivalent entities associated with at least one core (urbanized area or urban cluster) of at least 10,000 population, plus adjacent counties having a high degree of social and economic integration with the core as measured through commuting ties with the counties associated with the core." For more information see https://www.census.gov/geo/reference/gtc/gtc_cbsa.html.

c. Note that a single labor certification application may correspond to multiple positions.

Temporary Admissions

The INA authorizes the admission of various categories of foreign nationals, referred to as *nonimmigrants*, for a temporary period of time and a specific purpose, including as tourists, students, and temporary workers. There are 24 major nonimmigrant visa categories, most of which are defined in Section 101(a)(15) of the INA. These visa categories are commonly referred to by the letter and numeral that denotes their subsection in the INA; for example, B-2 tourists, E-2 treaty investors, F-1 foreign students, or H-1B temporary professional workers.

The steps for obtaining a nonimmigrant visa can vary based on the visa category. In general, DOS processes visa applications for temporary admissions and a DHS Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officer determines whether to admit an individual into the country when he or she arrives at a port of entry. For some temporary employment visa categories, an employer must first obtain an approved labor certification application from DOL and then file a petition with DHS's USCIS on behalf of a prospective employee. If the petition is approved by USCIS, then DOS processes the visa application.⁷

The resources in [Table 3](#) include statistics related to nonimmigrant admissions, petitions, demographics, visa applications, visa issuances, and labor certification applications, as well as estimates of the nonimmigrant population in the United States. Several of these resources use the term *category of admission* or *class of admission*. Category of admission generally refers to a broad category such as *temporary workers* or *diplomats*. Class of admission refers to the specific eligibility and admissibility requirements, as established by the INA, under which an individual may be admitted to the United States. For example, H-1B temporary professional worker, M-1 vocational students, and A-1 ambassadors are classes of admission.⁸

The resources listed in [Table 3](#) may help answer questions related to, for instance, the

- number of business travelers admitted to the United States with either a B-1 visa or through the Visa Waiver Program,
- names of companies that submitted H-2A (temporary agricultural worker) petitions,
- number of foreign students in the United States, or
- number of H-1B labor certification applications processed and certified for a given state.

Table 3. Temporary Admissions

Nonimmigrant Admissions^a (DHS, Office of Immigration Statistics)

[Yearbook of Immigration Statistics](#),^b Tables 25-32

Nonimmigrant admissions by

- Class of admission
- Country of citizenship
- Country of last residence
- Destination state
- Age
- Sex
- Temporary worker category

Nonimmigrant Population in the U.S. (DHS, Office of Immigration Statistics)

[Estimates of the Size and Characteristics of the Resident Nonimmigrant Population in the United States](#)

Estimates of the total nonimmigrant population in the U.S. by

- Category of admission
- Country of citizenship
- Age and sex
- Destination state

Nonimmigrant Students (DHS, Student and Exchange Visitor Program)

[Student and Exchange Visitor Information System \(SEVIS\) by the Numbers](#) (*scroll to bottom of page for most recent SEVIS by the Numbers biannual report*^c)

Number of international students actively studying in the United States on F-1, M-1, or J-1 visas by

- Country of origin
- Courses of study
- States of residence (for select states)
- The website also contains information on Student and Exchange Visitor Program-certified schools.

Other Nonimmigrant Visas (DOS, Bureau of Consular Affairs)

[Report of the Visa Office](#)

Number of nonimmigrant (and immigrant) visas issued by consular offices for different classes of admissions, presented in a series of tables.

[Nonimmigrant Visa Statistics](#)

Data on specialized topics, including nonimmigrant visa issuances by visa class and nationality and visa refusals.

Labor Certification Applications (DOL, Office of Foreign Labor Certification)

[Performance Data website](#)

For temporary visas, there are data related to labor certification applications^d for the H-1B, H-1B1, H-2A, H-2B, and E-3 visa categories, including

- Number of applications received, certified, denied, and withdrawn
- Number of positions requested and certified
- Ranking of top occupations, states, and employers for certified positions

State profiles are also available, including data for H-1B, H-2A, and H-2B programs.

Source: Table compiled by CRS.

a. DHS's OIS resources present information gathered from DHS Form I-94 arrival records. However, not all nonimmigrants who enter the United States are required to complete an I-94 Form. As stated on page 3 of the DHS report, [Nonimmigrant Admissions to the United States: 2015](#), "In general, Canadians traveling to the United States on B1 tourist or B2 business visas and Mexicans entering with BCCs [Border Crossing Cards] who plan to remain in the border region are not required to complete the I-94 Form. These exceptions are significant because Canadian and Mexican citizens make up the vast majority of all nonimmigrant admissions."

b. DHS's OIS prepares the *Yearbook of Immigration Statistics*, which is a compendium of tables that provides data from a given fiscal year on foreign nationals in the United States. Some tables contain historical data and state-level data. The tables are released as they become available and then a final PDF of all tables is compiled and published in one volume. The tables are also available as Excel files.

c. SEVIS is the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System, a web-based system for maintaining information on international nonimmigrant students and exchange visitors in the United States. The most recent *SEVIS by the Numbers* biannual report is readily available. To locate reports for prior years, congressional clients may contact CRS for assistance.

d. Note that a single labor certification application may correspond to multiple positions.

Humanitarian Admissions

There are several ways in which U.S. immigration law allows for the provision of permanent or temporary assistance to individuals facing persecution, natural disasters, emergency medical issues, and other urgent circumstances. The refugee and asylee programs are the primary forms of permanent humanitarian assistance.

Refugees⁹

A *refugee* is generally defined in the INA as a person who is outside his or her country (and outside the United States) and unable or unwilling to return because of persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion. At the start of each fiscal year, the President in consultation with Congress typically sets the number of refugees that can be admitted into the United States, known as the refugee ceiling, with allocations by region.

Refugees are processed and admitted into the United States from abroad. DOS's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration coordinates and manages the U.S. refugee program, and DHS's USCIS makes final determinations of eligibility for admission. After one year in the United States, refugees are required to apply to adjust to LPR status.

Note that federal agencies track refugee *admissions* or *arrivals* (these terms are sometimes used interchangeably). Once refugees have adjusted to LPR status, they are no longer considered refugees and are no longer tracked in that category.

The resources listed in [Table 4](#) may help answer questions related to, for instance, the

- refugee ceiling for the past three fiscal years;
- number of people admitted to the United States as refugees from particular countries, by month and year; or
- age, education level, and gender of refugees admitted to the United States.

Table 4. Refugees

Resource Name

Content

Annual Refugee Ceiling

[Presidential Determinations on Refugee Admissions as published in the Federal Register](#)

Total number of refugees that can be admitted into the United States in a given fiscal year with allocations by world region.

(Office of the Federal Register, National Archives and Records Administration)

Admissions and Demographics

[Yearbook of Immigration Statistics](#),^a Tables 13-15

Refugee arrivals by

(DHS Office of Immigration Statistics)

- Region and country of nationality
- Sex
- Age
- Marital status

[Worldwide Refugee Admissions Processing System \(WRAPS\) database – Reports link](#)^b

Refugee admissions by

(DOS, Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration, Refugee Processing Center)

- Region and country of origin
- Nationality
- Religion
- Destination city and state
- Age
- Ethnicity
- Gender
- Education level
- Language
- WRAPS provides standard reports and an interactive tool that generates custom reports.

Source: Table compiled by CRS.

a. DHS's OIS prepares the *Yearbook of Immigration Statistics*, which is a compendium of tables that provides data from a given fiscal year on foreign nationals in the United States. Some tables contain historical data and state-level data. The tables are released as they become available and then a final PDF of all tables is compiled and published in one volume. The tables are also available as Excel files.

b. To access the most current admissions report with a cumulative summary of refugee admissions up through the most recent month ended, go to the "Reports" link on the WRAPS homepage and select "[Admissions & Arrivals](#)." From the list of reports that is displayed on this page, select "Refugee Admissions Report." This will download an Excel file with data on refugee admissions going back to 1975 (annual numbers) and with a monthly breakdown for FY2001 to the most recent month available. To access the Interactive Reporting Tool, go to the Reports link on the WRAPS homepage and select "Interactive Reporting." CRS can assist congressional clients with using the WRAPS database.

Asylum Seekers

Asylum status is a form of protection available to foreign nationals who are physically present in the United States or at a land border or port of entry and who meet the definition of a refugee.¹⁰ The INA authorizes the granting of asylum on a case-by-case basis. Asylum may be obtained in one of three ways: (1) affirmatively through USCIS, (2) defensively in removal proceedings before an immigration judge of the Department of Justice's (DOJ's) Executive Office for Immigration Review (EOIR), or (3) as the spouse or child of someone granted asylum (i.e., derivative status). To obtain asylum, a foreign national generally must apply within one year from the date of last arrival. Asylees (those granted asylum) may apply for LPR status one year after their grant of asylum.¹¹

The resources listed in [Table 5](#) may help answer questions related to, for instance, the

- number of people granted asylum over a particular period of time,
- nationalities of people granted asylum, or
- number of defensive asylum claims granted.

Table 5. Asylum Seekers

Resource Name

Content

Demographics (DHS, Office of Immigration Statistics)

[Yearbook of Immigration Statistics](#),^a
Tables 16-19

Persons who have been granted asylum
(affirmatively or defensively) by

- Nationality
- Age
- Sex
- Marital status

Asylum Cases (DOJ, Executive Office for Immigration Review)

[EOIR Workload and Adjudication Statistics](#)

Most recent data on

- Asylum Decision Rates
- Defensive Asylum Applications
- Asylum Applicant *In Absentia* Removal Orders
- Rates of Asylum Filings in Cases Originating with a Credible Fear Claim
- Asylum Decision Rates in Cases Originating with a Credible Fear Claim

[Asylum Statistics Chart](#)

Number of defensive asylum applications received, granted, denied, abandoned, and withdrawn, by nationality, over five fiscal years.

[EOIR Statistics Yearbooks](#)

A wide range of data related to cases received and completed by immigration courts, including several tables and figures specific to asylum cases. Yearbooks are available back to FY2000.

Source: Table compiled by CRS.

a. DHS's OIS prepares the *Yearbook of Immigration Statistics*, which is a compendium of tables that provides data from a given fiscal year on foreign nationals in the United States. Some tables contain historical data and state-level data. The tables are released as they become available and then a final PDF of all tables is compiled and published in one volume. The tables are also available as Excel files.

Naturalization

Naturalization is the process that grants U.S. citizenship to LPRs who fulfill requirements established by Congress in the INA (e.g., the person has had LPR status for at least five years and has continuously resided in the United States for a specified period). In general, U.S. immigration policy gives all LPRs who meet these requirements the opportunity to naturalize, and doing so is a voluntary act. Naturalized immigrants gain significant benefits, including the right to vote, security from deportation in most cases, access to certain public-sector jobs, and the ability to travel with a U.S. passport. U.S. citizens are also advantaged over LPRs for sponsoring relatives to immigrate to the United States. USCIS is responsible for processing naturalization petitions.¹²

The resources in [Table 6](#) may help answer questions related to, for instance, the

- number of people who became naturalized citizens in a given year,
- number of naturalized citizens living in a particular state,
- countries of origin of naturalized citizens, or
- number of members of the military that have naturalized.

Table 6. Naturalization

Resource Name

Content

Petitions and Demographics (DHS, Office of Immigration Statistics)

[Yearbook of Immigration Statistics](#),^a
Tables 20-24

Number of naturalization petitions filed and denied

Persons naturalized by

- Region and country of birth
- State or territory of residence
- Core based statistical area of residence
- Sex
- Age
- Marital status

[Demographic Profiles of Naturalized Citizens](#)

Profiles include

- Gender
- Age
- Marital Status
- Occupation
- State of Residence
- Country of birth

Profiles may be generated for a particular region or country of birth, state of residence, or core based statistical area of residence.

[Selected Characteristics of the Native and Foreign-Born Populations, 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates](#), Table S0501^b

(U.S. Census Bureau)

Estimates of the foreign-born, naturalized population by

- Sex
- Age
- Race/ethnicity
- Marital status
- Educational attainment
- Employment status
- Earnings and income
- Poverty status
- Housing status

The table linked to in the first column can be modified to obtain specific geographical data (state, county, congressional district, etc.). Click on the "Add/Remove Geographies" link above the table.

Military Naturalizations (DHS, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services)

[Data Set: Form N-400 Application for Naturalization](#)

Number of military and nonmilitary naturalization applications received, approved, denied, and pending.

(Prior to Fiscal Year 2016, 4th Quarter, the military naturalization data included in these reports reflected only domestic military naturalizations, not international ones.)

[Military Naturalization Statistics](#)

Number of naturalizations, by fiscal year and location, involving

- Service members
- Military spouses
- Military children

Source: Table compiled by CRS.

a. DHS's OIS prepares the *Yearbook of Immigration Statistics*, which is a compendium of tables that provides data from a given fiscal year on foreign nationals in the United States. Some tables contain historical data and state-level data. The tables are released as they become available and then a final PDF of all tables is compiled and published in one volume. The tables are also available as Excel files.

b. The ACS 5-Year Estimates are based on aggregated data from a monthly survey of households over a 5-year period. The most recent ACS 5-Year Estimates are for 2012-2016.

Immigration Enforcement

Immigration enforcement encompasses enforcing the INA's civil provisions (e.g., violations of admission conditions) and criminal provisions (e.g., marriage fraud, alien smuggling). It involves

- border security at ports of entry and between ports of entry (i.e., along U.S. borders);
- enforcing immigration laws in the U.S. interior, including worksite enforcement; and
- identifying, investigating, apprehending, prosecuting, and deporting foreign nationals who violate U.S. laws and become removable.

The Departments of Homeland Security, State, and Justice all may play roles in immigration enforcement.¹³

Removal: Inadmissibility and Deportability¹⁴

The INA spells out removal processes available for different categories of aliens, broadly differentiating between those who have been lawfully admitted into the country and those who have not. Lawfully admitted aliens may be removed if they engage in conduct rendering them deportable. Aliens applying for a visa from abroad, seeking initial entry into the United States at a designated port of entry, or who are physically present in the United States without having been lawfully admitted, may be excluded or removed from the United States if they have engaged in conduct rendering them inadmissible.¹⁵ Some foreign nationals found removable may be granted voluntary departure or permitted to withdraw their application for admission to the United States. These actions are often referred to as types of *returns* rather than removals.

DHS's Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) is the main agency tasked with interior enforcement. Within ICE, Enforcement and Removal Operations is responsible for locating, arresting, detaining if appropriate, and removing foreign nationals who have entered illegally, overstayed their visas, or otherwise become removable. As noted above, CBP is primarily responsible for the inspection and admission of foreign nationals at designated ports of entry, and the agency also generally takes the lead role in immigration enforcement along the border. U.S. Border Patrol, a component

of CBP, generally is charged with apprehending aliens along the border between designated ports of entry.

The resources listed in [Table 7](#) may help answer questions related to, for instance, the

- number of visa applications denied in a given year,
- number of people from a particular country determined to be inadmissible in a given year,
- number of people apprehended in specific border sectors,
- number of women vs. men apprehended,
- number of removals,
- number of removals of convicted criminals, or
- nationality of persons removed.

Table 7. Enforcement Actions

Resource Name

Content

Visa Application Refusals

[DOS Report of the Visa Office](#)—See Table XX. Number of visa applications refused and refusals overcome, by grounds for refusal under the INA.

Immigrant and Nonimmigrant Visa Ineligibilities

Inadmissible Foreign Nationals

[Yearbook of Immigration Statistics](#),^a Tables 36-37. Number of foreign nationals determined to be inadmissible at ports of entry, by region and country of nationality.

Apprehensions/Arrests

[Yearbook of Immigration Statistics](#),^a Tables 33-35. Combined data from U.S. Border Patrol and ICE, by

- Region
- Country of nationality
- Agency unit
- Border patrol sector

[U.S. Border Patrol Sector Profiles](#)

Apprehensions by

- Border patrol sector
- Age (adult vs. juvenile)
- Gender

[U.S. Border Patrol, Stats and Summaries—apprehensions tables](#)

Apprehensions for family units and/or individuals:

- Southwest border patrol sectors only (annual, selected fiscal years)
- All border patrol sectors (by month, selected fiscal years)
- Total annual apprehensions back to 1925

[ICE Immigration Enforcement reports](#)

(within a report for a given fiscal year, navigate to the "Arrests" tab)

Administrative arrests by

- Criminal vs. Non-Criminal Aliens
- Criminal charge category and conviction
- Location (in the community, or "at-large" vs. in a custodial setting such as prison or jail)

Removals/Returns

[Yearbook of Immigration Statistics](#),^a Tables 39-41

Combined data from U.S. Border Patrol and ICE:

- Total alien removals/returns
- Alien returns by region and country of nationality
- Alien removals by criminal status

[ICE Immigration Enforcement reports](#)

(within a report for a given fiscal year, navigate to the "Removals" tab)

Removals by

- Civil immigration enforcement priorities^b
- Criminality
- Interior vs. border
- Citizenship

Source: Table compiled by CRS.

Notes: For information about unaccompanied alien children, see the section "[Unaccompanied Alien Children](#)" below. Definitions of terms such as apprehension, arrest, detention, return, and removal can be found in [DHS Immigration Enforcement: 2016 Annual Flow Report](#) (page 2) or on the DHS Office of Immigration Statistics' [Definition of Terms](#) web page.

a. DHS's OIS prepares the *Yearbook of Immigration Statistics*, which is a compendium of tables that provides data from a given fiscal year on foreign nationals in the United States. Some tables contain historical data and state-level data. The tables are released as they become available and then a final PDF of all tables is compiled and published in one volume. The tables are also available as Excel files.

b. Enforcement priority levels change. Data presented by enforcement priority may not be

comparable from year to year.

Immigration Court Cases

Although DHS is responsible for most immigration enforcement functions, removal proceedings are primarily conducted by the Executive Office for Immigration Review (EOIR) within DOJ. The removal process is initiated when DHS issues a *Notice to Appear*, a document that outlines the INA provisions that a foreign national is charged with violating. The standard removal process is a civil administrative proceeding in which an EOIR immigration judge determines whether an alien is removable. DOJ's Board of Immigration Appeals (BIA) has appellate review over the decisions of immigration judges. There are also streamlined removal procedures, including expedited removal, with limited or no administrative review by immigration judges in EOIR or judicial review by federal courts.¹⁶

The resources listed in [Table 8](#) may help answer questions related to, for instance, the

- number of immigration court cases opened and completed in a given year or
- number of cases that resulted in removals.

Table 8. Immigration Court Cases

Resource Name	Content
EOIR Workload and Adjudication Statistics	Most recent data on the overall number of pending cases, new cases, completed cases, administratively closed cases, and <i>In Absentia</i> removal orders, among other topics.
EOIR Statistics Yearbooks	A wide range of data related to cases received and completed by immigration courts and by the BIA. Yearbooks are available back to FY2000.

Source: Table compiled by CRS.

Special Populations

Estimates of the Unauthorized Population

Unauthorized foreign nationals are foreign nationals who enter the country without inspection, who enter with fraudulent documents, or who enter legally but overstay the terms of their temporary visas.¹⁷ Statistics related to the unauthorized population are estimates because there is no official way to track their presence in the country. It is important to review the methodology used to create estimates of the unauthorized population because different methodologies can yield diverging estimates. Statistics related to arrests or removals of unauthorized foreign nationals are in the "[Immigration Enforcement](#)" section of this report.

The resource in [Table 9](#) may help answer questions related to, for instance, estimates of

- the total number of unauthorized foreign nationals in the United States,
- unauthorized foreign nationals in the United States from different regions of the world, and
- unauthorized foreign nationals living in particular states.

Table 9. Unauthorized Population

Resource Name

Content

[Estimates of the Unauthorized Immigrant Population Residing in the U.S.](#)

(DHS Office of Immigration Statistics)

Estimates available by

- Period of entry
- Region and country of origin
- State of residence
- Age
- Sex

Source: Table compiled by CRS.

Notes: These estimates of the unauthorized population include certain "quasi-legal" foreign nationals who have temporary authorization to remain in the United States but are not given an immigration status, such as applicants for asylum and persons with temporary protected status.

Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals

Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) is an initiative that was established in 2012 by the Secretary of Homeland Security. DACA has allowed certain individuals without a lawful immigration status who were brought to the United States as children and who meet other criteria to be considered for relief from removal for two years, subject to renewal. USCIS is responsible for processing requests for consideration of deferred action.

DHS announced plans in September 2017 to rescind the DACA program effective March 5, 2018. However, there is ongoing litigation over the rescission of DACA. Federal courts have enjoined the rescission in most respects on the ground that it is likely "arbitrary and capricious" under the Administrative Procedure Act, while another federal court is considering a challenge to the lawfulness of the underlying DACA program. As of the date of this report, DHS is required to process DACA renewal applications but not initial applications. A United States District Court for the District of Columbia order—which is currently subject to an indefinite stay pending appeal and has yet to go into effect—would require DHS to process both first-time and renewal applications for DACA relief.¹⁸

The resources in [Table 10](#) may help answer questions related to, for instance, the

- number of DACA requests made since the initiative was established,
- countries of origin for DACA recipients, or
- number of active DACA recipients in a given state.

Table 10. DACA

Resource Name

Content

[Immigration and Citizenship Data](#)—See the section "Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals."

(DHS U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services)

- Cumulative number of DACA requests received, accepted for processing, completed, and pending to-date (see Quarterly Form I-821D)
- Approximate active DACA recipients by country of birth, state of residence, core based statistical area, sex, age, and marital status (see Population Data links)

- DACA expiration data
- DACA pending renewals and pending initial requests
- DACA recipients serving in the military
- DACA terminations related to criminal and gang activity

Source: Table compiled by CRS.

Unaccompanied Alien Children

Unaccompanied alien children (UACs) are defined as children who have no lawful immigration status in the United States, are under the age of 18, and are either without a parent or legal guardian in the United States or without a parent or legal guardian in the United States who is available to provide care and physical custody.¹⁹ Agencies in DHS and the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) share responsibility for the processing, treatment, and placement of UACs. DOJ's Executive Office for Immigration Review (EOIR) is responsible for adjudicating removal proceedings regarding UACs. EOIR has specific policies for conducting removal hearings of UACs.²⁰

The resources in [Table 11](#) may help answer questions related to, for instance, the

- number of UAC who have entered the United States,
- age and gender breakdown of UAC,
- countries of origin of UAC, or
- outcomes of EOIR cases involving UAC.

Table 11. Unaccompanied Alien Children

Resource Name

Content

Apprehensions (DHS, Customs and Border Protection)

[U.S. Border Patrol, Southwest Border, Family Unit and UAC Apprehensions](#)

Data on UAC apprehensions in specific Southwest border sectors.

Demographics and Services (HHS, Office of Refugee Resettlement)

[Unaccompanied Children—Facts and Data](#)

Data on UACs by

- Age
- Country of origin
- Gender
- Use of post-release services
- Release to sponsors by state and county

This resource also provides information on UAC length of stay in shelter care for FY2017 and DHS referrals of UAC to ORR for FY2012-FY2017.

EOIR Cases Involving UACs (DOJ, Executive Office for Immigration Review)

[EOIR Workload and Adjudication Statistics](#) This page includes links to the following tables:

- Pending Unaccompanied Alien Child (UAC) Cases
- Current Median UAC Case Pending Time
- Current UAC Cases Pending More than Three Years
- UAC *In Absentia* Removal Orders
- UAC Statistics

Source: Table compiled by CRS.

Temporary Protected Status

Temporary Protected Status (TPS) provides temporary lawful status to foreign nationals in the United States from countries experiencing armed conflict, natural disaster, or other extraordinary circumstances that prevent their safe return. Provisions exist in the INA to offer TPS under specified circumstances. The Secretary of Homeland Security has the discretion to issue TPS for periods of 6 months to 18 months and can extend these periods if conditions warrant. Congress has also provided TPS legislatively. A foreign national who is granted TPS receives a registration document and employment authorization for the duration of a given TPS designation. However, individuals granted TPS are not considered to be permanently residing in the United States, and TPS does not provide a direct path to lawful permanent residence or citizenship.²¹

The resource listed in [Table 12](#) may help answer questions related to, for instance, the

- number of TPS beneficiaries from a given country and
- number of TPS beneficiaries residing in a given U.S. state.

Table 12. Temporary Protected Status

Resource Name	Content
CRS Report RS20844, Temporary Protected Status: Overview and Current Issues	See in particular the following tables: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Table 1. TPS Beneficiaries by Country of Citizenship• Table 2. Individuals with Temporary Protected Status by State of Residence

Source: Table compiled by CRS.

Appendix. Glossary of Acronyms and Abbreviations

BIA Board of Immigration Appeals (DOJ)

CBP	Customs and Border Protection (DHS)
DACA	Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals
DHS	Department of Homeland Security
DOJ	Department of Justice
DOL	Department of Labor
DOS	Department of State
EOIR	Executive Office for Immigration Review (DOJ)
ERO	Enforcement and Removal Operations (DHS, ICE)
HHS	Department of Health and Human Services
ICE	Immigration and Customs Enforcement (DHS)
INA	Immigration and Nationality Act
LPR	Lawful (or legal) permanent resident
SEVIS	Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (DHS, ICE)
TPS	Temporary Protected Status
UAC(s)	Unaccompanied Alien Child(ren)
USCIS	U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (DHS)

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Footnotes

1. These various immigration statuses are described in more detail in subsequent sections of this report.
2. Based on information in CRS Report R41592, *[The U.S. Foreign-Born Population: Trends and Selected Characteristics](#)* and from the U.S. Census website at <https://census.gov/topics/population/foreign-born/about.html>.
3. Adapted from CRS In Focus IF10520, *[Immigration](#)*.
4. Lawful permanent residents (LPRs) are colloquially known as "green card" recipients.
5. This overview was adapted from CRS Report R42866, *[Permanent Legal Immigration to the United States: Policy Overview](#)* and from "The Immigrant Visa Process" page on the Department of State website at <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/us-visas/immigrate/the-immigrant-visa-process.html>.
6. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), "Immigrant Classes of Admission," at <https://www.dhs.gov/immigration-statistics/lawful-permanent-residents/ImmigrantCOA>.
7. Paragraphs are based on information in CRS Report R45040, *[Nonimmigrant \(Temporary\) Admissions to the United States: Policy and Trends](#)* and from the Department of Labor website at <https://www.foreignlaborcert.doleta.gov/hiring.cfm>.
8. DHS, "Nonimmigrant Classes of Admission," at <https://www.dhs.gov/immigration-statistics/nonimmigrant/NonimmigrantCOA>.
9. Section adapted from CRS Report RL31269, *[Refugee Admissions and Resettlement Policy](#)*.
10. USCIS, "Refugees & Asylum," at <https://www.uscis.gov/humanitarian/refugees-asylum>.
11. Nadwa Mossaad and Ryan Baugh, *[Refugees and Asylees: 2016. Annual Flow Report](#)*, DHS, Office of Immigration Statistics, January 2018.
12. CRS Report R43366, *[U.S. Naturalization Policy](#)*.
13. Paragraph adapted from CRS Report R45020, *[A Primer on U.S. Immigration Policy](#)*.
14. Section adapted from CRS Report R43892, *[Alien Removals and Returns: Overview and Trends](#)*, and CRS Report

R45151, [*Immigration Consequences of Criminal Activity*](#).

15. Section 212(a) of the INA specifies broad classes of inadmissible foreign nationals. Section 237(a) of the INA specifies six broad classes of deportability.
16. Based on information in CRS Report R43892, [*Alien Removals and Returns: Overview and Trends*](#).
17. CRS Report R43892, [*Alien Removals and Returns: Overview and Trends*](#). Other terms (such as illegal aliens, illegal immigrants, unauthorized immigrants, and undocumented immigrants) are sometimes also used to refer to unauthorized foreign nationals in the popular press, academic or policy literature, or by advocacy organizations.
18. Section adapted from CRS Report R44764, [*Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals \(DACA\): Frequently Asked Questions*](#), CRS Report R45158, [*An Overview of Discretionary Reprieves from Removal: Deferred Action, DACA, TPS, and Others*](#), and CRS Legal Sidebar LSB10136, [*DACA Rescission: Legal Issues and Litigation Status*](#).
19. [*6 U.S.C. §279\(g\)\(2\)*](#).
20. See CRS Report R43599, [*Unaccompanied Alien Children: An Overview*](#).
21. Paragraph adapted from CRS Report RS20844, [*Temporary Protected Status: Overview and Current Issues*](#). For a legal overview of TPS, see CRS Legal Sidebar LSB10070, [*UPDATE: Termination of Temporary Protected Status for Sudan, Nicaragua, Haiti, and El Salvador: Key Takeaways and Analysis*](#).