

## U.S. Lawful Permanent Residents: 2020

IRENE GIBSON

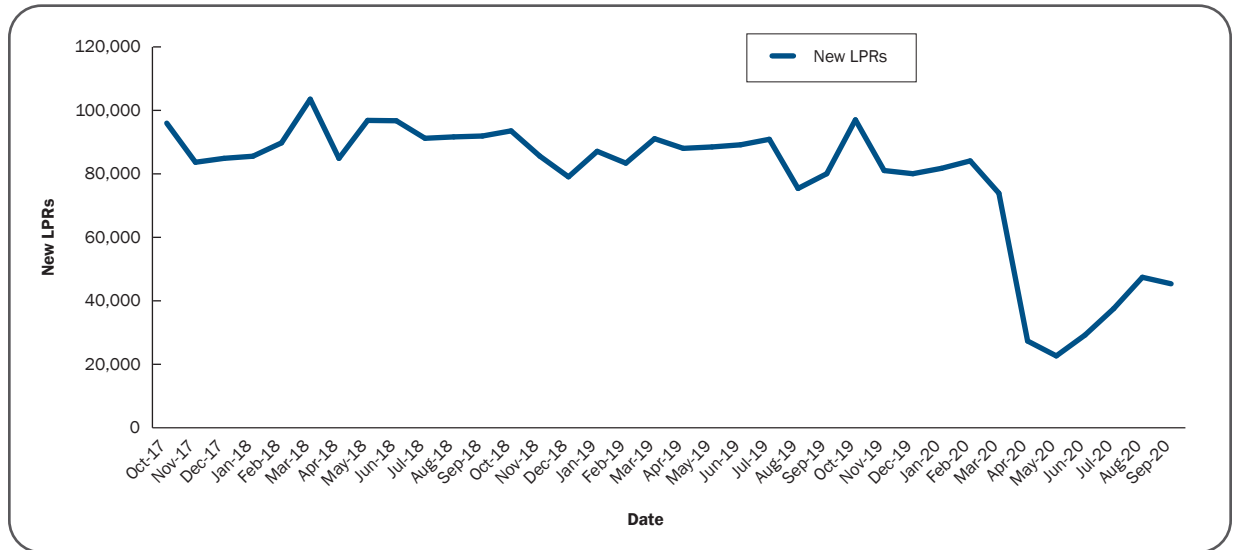
Immigration law defines a lawful permanent resident (LPR) or “green card” recipient as a noncitizen<sup>1</sup> who has been granted “the status of having been lawfully accorded the privilege of residing permanently in the United States as an immigrant in accordance with the immigration laws, such status not having changed.”<sup>2</sup> LPRs may live and work permanently anywhere in the United States, own property, and attend schools, colleges, and universities. They may also join the Armed Forces or apply to become U.S. citizens if they meet certain additional eligibility requirements. The 2020 *Lawful Permanent Residents Annual Flow Report*, authored by the Office of Immigration Statistics (OIS) in the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), presents information obtained from LPR applications on the number and characteristics of persons who became LPRs in the United States during Fiscal Year 2020.<sup>3,4</sup>

### SUMMARY

Just over 700 thousand persons became LPRs in 2020, as reduced international travel during the COVID-19 pandemic and policy changes brought new LPR admissions in 2020 to their lowest level since 2003. The majority of these LPRs (62 percent) were already present in the United States when they were granted lawful permanent residence. A little under two-thirds (63 percent) were granted LPR status based on a family relationship with a U.S. citizen or current LPR. The leading countries of birth of new LPRs were Mexico, India, and People’s Republic of

Figure 1.

New Lawful Permanent Residents by Month: Fiscal Years 2018 to 2020



Source: DHS Office of Immigration Statistics.

<sup>1</sup> This report defines a *noncitizen* as any person not a citizen or national of the United States. This report uses the term *noncitizen* interchangeably with *foreign national*.

<sup>2</sup> 8 USC 1101(a)(20).

<sup>3</sup> In this report, “years” refer to fiscal years, which run from October 1 to September 30.

<sup>4</sup> The 2020 *Yearbook of Immigration Statistics* and other OIS reports contain additional context. Not all numbers reported are contained in this report’s tables.



China (China). In 2020, there was a 31 percent reduction in U.S. grants of LPR status compared to 2019.

Largely due to the COVID-19 pandemic, LPR flows in 2020 were not representative of typical trends (Figure 1). Travel restrictions and processing slowdowns generally resulted in fewer inflows, while foreign-born residents within the United States also confronted [immigration status-specific COVID-19 vulnerabilities](#).<sup>5</sup> Due to the tumultuous nature of the year, it is difficult to trace shifting immigration flows to a single factor; but the overall impact of the pandemic means fiscal year 2020 LPR flows may not be directly comparable to earlier years of data.

## THE LAWFUL IMMIGRATION PROCESS

The Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) provides various bases for obtaining LPR status. These bases include (but are not limited to) sponsorship by a close family member who is a U.S. citizen or LPR, sponsorship by an employer, making investments that create a certain number of U.S. jobs, being from countries with relatively low levels of immigration to the United States, and holding refugee or asylee status for at least 1 year. Each person seeking LPR status is subject to a background check as part of the adjudication of their benefit request.

### New Arrivals versus Adjustments of Status

Two paths to LPR status are available, depending on whether a person applies for an immigrant visa abroad or seeks LPR status from within the United States. Foreign nationals who live abroad may apply for an immigrant visa at a U.S. Department of State (DOS) consular office after receiving an approved petition or application. Once issued an immigrant visa, the foreign national may seek admission to the United States and become an LPR when admitted at a port of entry. This report refers to these LPRs as *new arrivals*. Foreign nationals who are already present in the United States may file a Form I-485, *Application to Register Permanent Residence or Adjust Status*, with U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). These applicants may apply for authorization to accept employment while their Form I-485 is pending. If their applications are approved, they are generally granted LPR status at the time of approval.<sup>6</sup> This report refers to these LPRs as *adjustments of status*.

### Immediate Relatives of U.S. Citizens

The largest category of new LPRs consists of U.S. citizens' immediate relatives, defined as spouses, unmarried children under age 21, parents of U.S. citizens who are age 21 and over, and certain widows or widowers of U.S. citizens.<sup>7</sup> Immediate relatives of U.S. citizens are not subject to numerical limits and typically account for over 40 percent of new LPRs annually.

<sup>5</sup> For more information, see Gibson, Irene, Marc R. Rosenblum, Bryan Baker, and Alexander Eastman, May 2021. "COVID-19 Vulnerability by Immigration Status," DHS Office of Immigration Statistics, [https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/immigration-statistics/research\\_reports/research\\_paper\\_covid-19\\_vulnerability\\_by\\_immigration\\_status\\_may\\_2021.pdf](https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/immigration-statistics/research_reports/research_paper_covid-19_vulnerability_by_immigration_status_may_2021.pdf).

<sup>6</sup> Upon approval, certain classes of admission, such as refugees and asylees, receive credit for additional time in LPR status prior to approval, affecting when they are eligible to naturalize.

<sup>7</sup> The term *children* includes orphans adopted abroad or coming to the United States to be adopted.

## Preference Immigration

The term *preference* is used in immigration law to designate numerically limited family and employment priority categories for LPR status. The INA specifies the worldwide level of preference immigration in these two groupings. (See **APPENDIX** for details on the calculation of these limits for 2020.)

*Family-sponsored preferences* consist of four categories of relatives:

- First preference (F-1), a U.S. citizen's unmarried sons and daughters (age 21 years and over) and their children;
- Second preference, an LPR's spouse and children (F-2A), or an LPR's unmarried sons and daughters and their children (F-2B);
- Third preference (F-3), a U.S. citizen's married sons and daughters and their spouses and children; and
- Fourth preference (F-4), siblings of a U.S. citizen (if the citizen is age 21 years or older) and their spouses and children.

The annual limit for family-sponsored preferences depends on the previous year's immigration levels and is set at a minimum of 226,000.

Immediate relatives and family-preference LPRs are collectively referred to as *family-based immigrants*. All family-based immigrants must be petitioned for by their U.S. citizen or LPR relative. Generally, that relative must financially sponsor the immigrant.<sup>8</sup>

*Employment-based preferences* consist of five categories of workers (and their spouses and children):

- EB-1 priority workers (e.g., certain multinational executives and managers, persons of extraordinary ability, outstanding professors and researchers, and multinational executives and managers);
- EB-2 professionals with advanced degrees or persons of exceptional ability;
- EB-3 skilled workers (e.g., those with at least 2 years of training or experience), professionals (those who hold baccalaureate degrees), and unskilled workers (e.g., those with less than 2 years of training or experience);
- EB-4 "special" immigrants (e.g., ministers, religious workers, and employees of the U.S. Government abroad); and
- EB-5 immigrant investors.

The annual employment-based preference limit is equal to 140,000 plus any unused visas in the family-sponsored preference categories from the previous year. Many EB-1 and EB-2, and all EB-3 immigrants must be sponsored by a U.S. employer. In addition, most EB-2 and EB-3 petitions first require that the Secretary of the Department of Labor certify that sufficient U.S. workers who are able, willing, qualified, and available could not be found in the area of intended employment, and that the employment will not adversely affect the wages and working conditions of similarly employed U.S. workers. However, some EB-1 and EB-2

<sup>8</sup> Financial sponsorship includes signing an affidavit of support agreeing to make reimbursement should the sponsored relative receive any means-tested public benefits while in LPR status and before they are credited with 40 quarters (approximately 10 years) of work.

employment-based immigrants may self-petition and are not subject to labor certification and job offer requirements. EB-5 immigrants must invest funds at amounts specified by regulation into a new commercial enterprise that will create at least ten full-time jobs for qualifying employees. In certain rural areas or areas with high unemployment, the required minimum investment amount is reduced.

Most EB-4 special immigrants file self-petitions, though some are the beneficiaries of petitions filed by employers. There are several categories of special immigrants eligible for EB-4 visas, the three largest categories being special immigrant juveniles,<sup>9</sup> certain ministers of religion and religious workers, and certain current and former employees of the U.S. Government abroad.<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, in 2008 and 2009, respectively, special immigrant visas were authorized for certain Iraqis and Afghans employed by or on behalf of the U.S. Government (or for the International Security Assistance Force in the case of Afghans), along with their family members. The Iraqi program had an application deadline of 2014 with a numeric cap of 2,500 principal applicants after January 2014, while the Afghan program deadline is in 2022 with a numeric cap of 26,500 principal applicants after January 2014.<sup>11</sup> There is also an additional program for Iraqi and Afghan translators or interpreters, which has no deadline, but has a smaller numeric cap of 50 principal applicants per year. Average processing times for EB-4 applications in the first quarter of 2020 were 543 days for Iraqis and 996 days for Afghans.<sup>12</sup> In 2020, 19 principal applicants and 58 dependents obtained EB-4 visas under the permanent program for Afghan and Iraqi translators, while 1,829 principal applicants and 6,134 dependents obtained EB-4 visas under the temporary programs. Efforts to address the needs of Iraqi and Afghan EB-4 applicants while balancing security are ongoing.<sup>13</sup>

In 2020, the limit on preference immigration was 382,253, which included 226,000 in the family-sponsored preference categories and 156,253 in the employment-based preference categories (see **APPENDIX**). The INA also specifies per-country limits equal to 7 percent of the combined total number of visas allotted to family- and employment-based preferences. Dependent areas of foreign states are limited to 2 percent of this combined total.<sup>14</sup> In 2020, these limits amounted to 26,758 preference immigrants from any single country and 7,645 preference immigrants from any single dependent area.

## Diversity Visas

The Diversity Immigrant Visa Program is designed to allow immigration from countries with low rates of immigration to the United States, defined by the INA as countries with fewer than

50,000 foreign nationals granted LPR status within family- and employment-based categories during the preceding 5 years. In 2020, the diversity visa limit was 54,650.<sup>15</sup> The INA further limits the number of diversity visas per country to 7 percent of the worldwide total, or 3,826 in 2020, and limits the number of diversity visas across six broad world regions based on regional immigration levels during the preceding 5 years so that high admission regions are eligible for fewer diversity visas. Nationals of eligible countries must have either a high school degree (or equivalent) or qualifying work experience to apply to the diversity visa program. Visas are distributed to successful applicants through a random selection or lottery system based on the allocations described above.

## Refugee and Asylee Adjustments of Status

The United States provides humanitarian protections to foreign nationals who have experienced past persecution or have a well-founded fear of future persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion. Foreign nationals who have experienced or may experience this type of harm may apply for protection from outside the United States as a refugee, along with their spouse and/or children. If the noncitizen is physically present in the United States or is arriving at a port of entry, that individual may apply for this protection as an asylum applicant, along with their spouse and/or children.

As prescribed in the Refugee Act of 1980, the President, after consultation with Congress, establishes the number of foreign nationals who may be admitted to the United States as refugees each year. Since the passage of the Refugee Act of 1980, the United States has accepted more than 3.7 million refugees and asylees. The ceiling on refugee admissions was set between 70,000 and 85,000 each year from 2003 to 2016, but has varied in recent years. The ceiling was initially set at 110,000 in 2017, but was later reduced to 50,000 through a pair of Executive Orders.<sup>16</sup> The ceiling continued to decline over the next 3 years to 45,000 in 2018, 30,000 in 2019, and 18,000 in 2020. There is no numerical limit on the number of people who may be granted asylum each year.

The INA requires refugees to apply for adjustment to LPR status after 1 year of residence in the United States. Asylees are eligible to apply 1 year after they are granted asylum, but are not required to do so. Refugee and asylee adjustments of status are not subject to numerical limits.<sup>17</sup>

## Other Admission Categories

Remaining admission categories are generally limited to foreign nationals admitted under special legislation, and admission or adjustment may be subject to numerical limits. In 2000, the

<sup>9</sup> Notably, special immigrant juvenile visa numbers have been oversubscribed for several years, in particular for Northern Triangle Countries (El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras) and Mexico.

<sup>10</sup> For more information, see USCIS website <https://www.uscis.gov/working-in-the-united-states/permanent-workers/employment-based-immigration-fourth-preference-eb-4>.

<sup>11</sup> Bruno, Andorra. June 27, 2021. *Iraqi and Afghan Special Immigrant Visa Programs* (R43725). U.S. Congressional Research Service. Accessed July 27, 2021. <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/R/R43725>.

<sup>12</sup> Days here include U.S. Government processing time alone, and do not include portions of the application under the applicant's responsibility (e.g., filing a petition with USCIS).

<sup>13</sup> For more information, see footnote 9 resource.

<sup>14</sup> For more information regarding independent states, dependent areas, and visa allocations, see 9 Foreign Affairs Manual 503.2 at <https://fam.state.gov/FAM/09FAM/09FAM050302.html>.

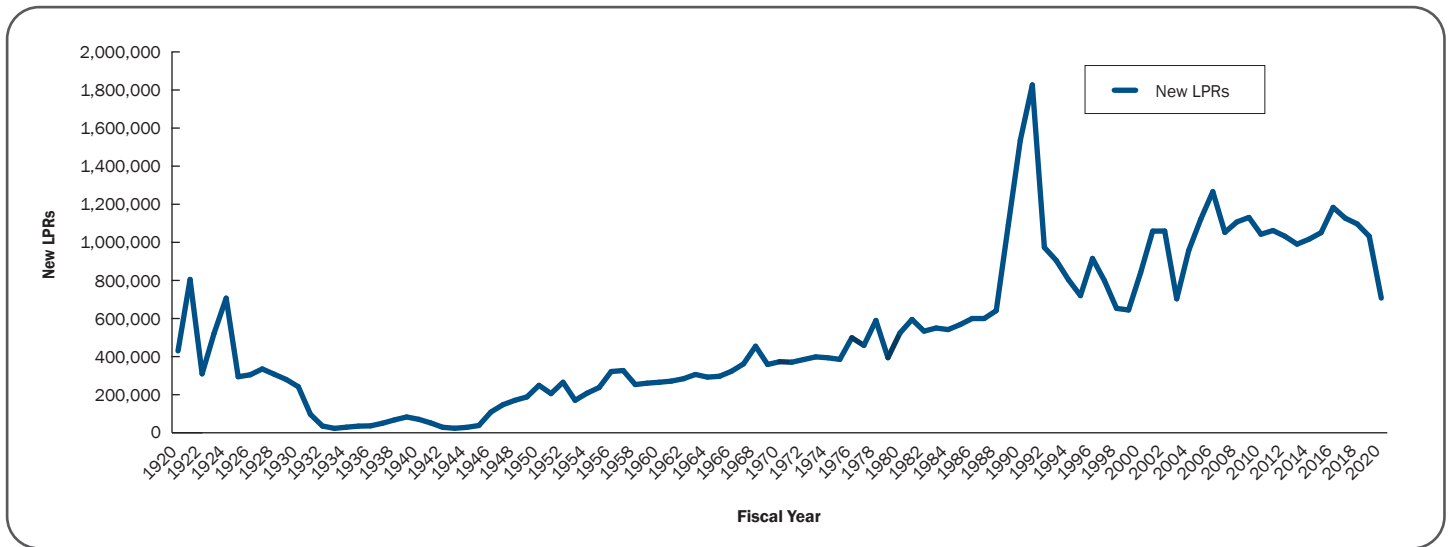
<sup>15</sup> The INA establishes an overall diversity visa limit of 55,000 per year, which in the past has been reduced by 5,000 annually to offset Nicaraguan Adjustment and Central American Relief Act (NACARA) adjustments. In recent years, there have been many fewer new NACARA adjustments than numbers offset. By 2020, all earlier years' NACARA adjustments had been offset, leaving only the immediate prior year's NACARA adjustments remaining to be offset. At the time the diversity visa lottery was run, it was estimated that there would be about 350 NACARA adjustments that would apply to the diversity visa limit; thus the final limit was determined as 54,650.

<sup>16</sup> Executive Orders 13769 and 13780, "Protecting the Nation from Foreign Terrorist Entry into the United States."

<sup>17</sup> Until 2005, an annual limit of 10,000 existed on the number of foreign nationals authorized to adjust status as asylees. The REAL ID Act removed that cap.

Figure 2.

New Lawful Permanent Residents: Fiscal Years 1920 to 2020



Source: DHS Office of Immigration Statistics.

Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act (including the Battered Immigrant Women Protection Act) created the T and U nonimmigrant statuses permitting qualifying victims of trafficking and certain other crimes to be admitted as nonimmigrants and then to petition for adjustment to LPR status. Certain foreign nationals admitted as parolees may adjust status from within the United States, and children born abroad to LPRs may enter as new arrival LPRs.

### Eligibility for Naturalization

Most LPRs who are at least 18 years of age are eligible to apply for citizenship after meeting certain requirements. These requirements generally include holding LPR status and residence in the United States for 5 years (or 3 years for those married to a U.S. citizen) and passing tests in English language and civics (unless an exemption or waiver applies for one or both tests). Typically, children in LPR status and under the age of 18 may automatically acquire citizenship through a U.S. citizen parent.

## TRENDS AND CHARACTERISTICS OF NEW LAWFUL PERMANENT RESIDENTS

### Historical Trends and Characteristics

The annual LPR flow has exhibited a general upward trend from 1944, increasing from an average of 250,000 new LPRs per year during the 1950s to averaging over 1 million per year from 1989 (Figure 2). These increases are partly explained by changes in immigration law, including elimination in 1965 of the National

Origins system<sup>18</sup> and an increase in the annual immigration ceiling in 1990. The spike in lawful immigration from 1989 to 1991 resulted from the legalization of 2.7 million unauthorized immigrants under the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) of 1986. The recent period (2016–2020) has exhibited the longest continuous decrease of new LPRs since the 1940s (1940–1944).<sup>19</sup> In other words, LPR admissions had fallen for four consecutive years even before the global pandemic contributed to their falling to a 17-year low in 2020.

The United States has granted about 10.3 million individuals LPR status in the past decade. Of these, 53 percent were already present in the United States in another status and 47 percent were new arrivals. Sixty-three percent received LPR status as family-sponsored immigrants and 21 percent under employment-based preferences. Immediate relatives of U.S. citizens consistently made up the largest subcategory of LPRs, comprising 45 percent of total LPRs. The largest shares of new LPRs in this period were born in Mexico (14 percent), India (6.6 percent), and China (5.9 percent).

The United States granted LPR status to 707,362 individuals in 2020, a decrease of almost a third (31 percent) from 1,031,765 in 2019 and a decrease of 35 percent from 1,096,611 in 2018. New LPR counts are at their lowest point in 17 years.

Notably, this decrease has come almost entirely from family-sponsored immigrants, while the numbers of employment-based preference LPRs have increased.

<sup>18</sup> Under the National Origins system included in the original version of the INA passed in 1952, immigration limits were established on a per-country basis, with each country's quota set by a formula based on the national origins of the U.S. population in the 1920 census.

<sup>19</sup> This excludes the period of 1992–1996, during which the LPR flow was returning to normal levels after its historic 1991 peak.

## Processing Times During COVID-19

One of the reasons that admissions and adjustments were so low in 2020 was due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which caused delays and shutdowns that significantly impacted processing times. U.S. consulates and embassies around the world suspended routine visa services for varying lengths of time depending on location, which affected submission of forms DS-230 and DS-260 (see data section below). For example, in January 2020 approximately 75,000 immigrant visa cases were pending at the National Visa Center;<sup>20</sup> in February 2021, there were over six times that number of visa cases pending (approximately 473,000).<sup>21</sup> In addition, average processing times for I-485 registrations and adjustments increased across categories in 2020 compared to the average over the previous 4 years (Figure 3).

## Type and Class of Admission<sup>22</sup>

Since 2000, the majority of LPRs have typically been adjustments (about 56 percent on average), rather than new arrivals (Table 1, Figure 4).<sup>23</sup> However, adjustments made up even higher percentages of LPRs in 2020; with the sharp drop in new arrivals, adjustments (which fell by a smaller amount) accounted for 62 percent of the total.

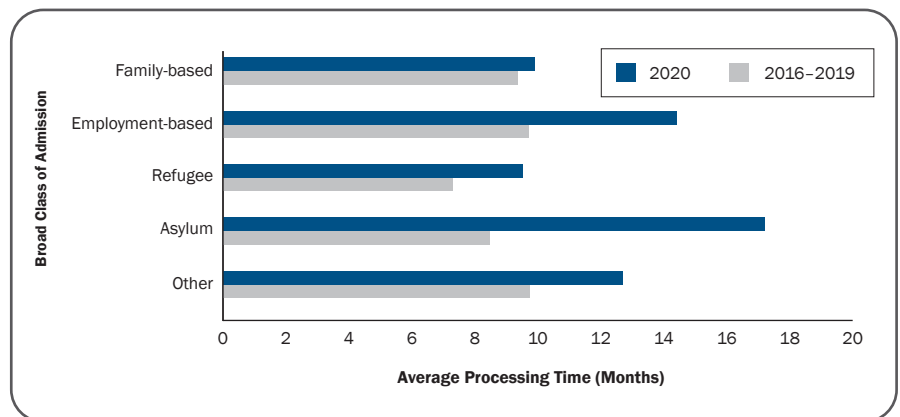
Family-sponsored immigrants (including immediate relatives of U.S. citizens and family-sponsored preference immigrants) represented 63 percent of total new LPRs in 2020 (Table 2). In terms of total count, family-sponsored immigrants in 2020 were at their lowest level since 1989, and 31 percent lower than the next lowest year in the recent decade. The largest share of family-sponsored immigrants (45 percent of total new LPRs in 2020) were immediate relatives of U.S. citizens. Spouses of U.S. citizens made up 28 percent of all new LPRs, parents made up 12 percent, and children (including adopted children) made up 5.3 percent.

Family-sponsored preference LPRs made up 17 percent of all new LPRs in 2020, down 2.6 percentage points from 2019. In terms of total count, family-sponsored preferences in 2020 were at the lowest level since 1975. The largest proportion of family preference LPRs was in the second preference class (spouses and children LPRs) and made up 7.3 percent of new LPRs in 2020. However, the proportion of the second preference class, which historically makes up the

Figure 3.

### Average Processing Times to Register Permanent Residence or Adjust Status

Ranked by Broad Class of Admission



Source: OIS analysis of USCIS data, based on mean processing times.

Table 1.

### New Lawful Permanent Residents: Fiscal Years 2018 to 2020

Category of admission	2018		2019		2020	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total	1,096,611	100.0	1,031,765	100.0	707,362	100.0
New arrivals	523,884	47.8	453,718	44.0	268,153	37.9
Adjustments of status	572,727	52.2	578,047	56.0	439,209	62.1

Note: Data updated from previous reports to correct for previous mis-categorization, where some adjustments were inaccurately marked as new arrivals.

Source: DHS Office of Immigration Statistics.

largest proportion of family preference LPRs, was at its lowest proportion in a decade, and lowest count since 1975. The fourth preference class (siblings of U.S. citizens) accounted for 6.3 percent of new LPRs.

Employment-based preference LPRs constituted 21 percent of all new LPRs in 2020, the highest proportion in over a decade, and up nearly eight percentage points from 2019. In terms of total count, employment-based preference was the only major category of admission to increase 2019-2020. The largest share of employment preference LPRs were in the first preference class (priority workers), making up 6.7 percent of new LPRs in 2020. The second and third preference categories (professionals with advanced degrees and skilled workers, professionals, and unskilled workers) made up 6.2 percent and 6.1 percent of new LPRs, respectively.

<sup>20</sup> Julie Shift, Consular Affairs Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary for Visa Services, Special Briefing March 1, 2021, <https://www.state.gov/briefing-with-consular-affairs-acting-deputy-assistant-secretary-for-visa-services-julie-m-stuff-on-the-current-status-of-immigrant-visa-processing-at-embassies-and-consulates/>.

<sup>21</sup> The National Visa Center holds approved immigrant visas petitions until a visa is available.

<sup>22</sup> In this report, *type of admission* distinguishes new arrivals (who receive admission to the United States at the same time as admission to LPR status) and adjustments of status (who are already within the United States). *Class of admission* refers to category of admission to LPR status rather than admission to the United States.

<sup>23</sup> Notably, this was not the case in 2003, 2016, and 2017, when there were more new arrivals than adjustments.

**Table 2.**

**New Lawful Permanent Residents by Major Class of Admission: Fiscal Years 2018 to 2020**

Category of admission	2018		2019		2020	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total	1,096,611	100.0	1,031,765	100.0	707,362	100.0
Family-sponsored immigrants	695,524	63.4	709,904	68.8	442,708	62.6
Immediate relatives of U.S. citizens	478,961	43.7	505,765	49.0	321,148	45.4
Spouses	268,149	24.5	304,334	29.5	195,718	27.7
Parents	144,018	13.1	140,128	13.6	88,051	12.4
Children*	66,794	6.1	61,303	5.9	37,379	5.3
Family-sponsored preferences	216,563	19.7	204,139	19.8	121,560	17.2
Unmarried sons/daughters of U.S. citizens	27,251	2.5	24,497	2.4	11,383	1.6
Spouses and children of lawful permanent residents	109,841	10.0	93,398	9.1	51,701	7.3
Married sons/daughters of U.S. citizens	19,531	1.8	25,213	2.4	13,930	2.0
Siblings of U.S. citizens	59,940	5.5	61,031	5.9	44,546	6.3
Employment-based preferences	138,171	12.6	139,458	13.5	148,959	21.1
Priority workers	39,514	3.6	39,471	3.8	47,388	6.7
Professionals with advanced degrees	40,095	3.7	39,506	3.8	43,666	6.2
Skilled workers, professionals, unskilled workers	39,228	3.6	41,787	4.1	43,218	6.1
Special immigrants	9,711	0.9	9,609	0.9	10,704	1.5
Investors	9,623	0.9	9,085	0.9	3,983	0.6
Diversity programs	45,350	4.1	43,463	4.2	25,028	3.5
Refugees and Asylees	185,909	17.0	106,911	10.4	63,875	9.0
Refugee adjustments	155,734	14.2	80,908	7.8	44,404	6.3
Asylee adjustments	30,175	2.8	26,003	2.5	19,471	2.8
Parolees	14	-	16	-	13	-
Other categories	31,643	2.9	32,013	3.1	26,779	3.8
Children born abroad to alien residents	69	-	60	-	30	-
Certain Iraqis and Afghans employed by U.S. Government and their spouses and children	10,297	0.9	8,081	0.8	9,727	1.4
Cancellation of removal	4,421	0.4	4,033	0.4	3,685	0.5
Subject to annual limit	3,695	0.3	3,585	0.3	3,420	0.5
Not subject to limit (NACARA <sup>†</sup> Section 203)	726	0.1	448	-	265	-
Victims of human trafficking	1,208	0.1	818	0.1	866	0.1
Victims of crimes and their spouses and children	15,012	1.4	18,442	1.8	11,937	1.7
Other <sup>‡</sup>	636	0.1	579	0.1	534	0.1

\* Includes adoptees.

<sup>†</sup> Nicaraguan Adjustment and Central American Relief Act of 1997.

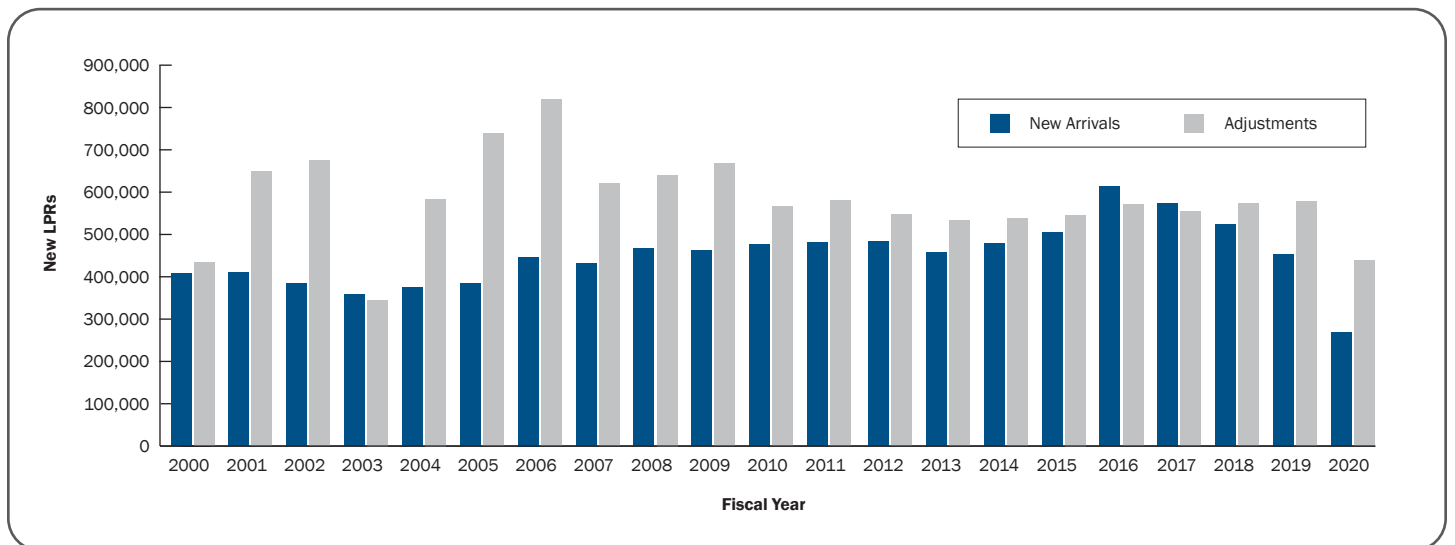
<sup>‡</sup> Primarily consists of those admitted or adjusted under special legislation.

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Source: DHS Office of Immigration Statistics.

**Figure 4.**

**New Lawful Permanent Residents by Type (Adjustments of Status and New Arrivals): Fiscal Years 2000 to 2020**



Note: Data depicted in this figure are updated from previous reports to correct for previous mis-categorization, where some adjustments were inaccurately marked as new arrivals.

Source: DHS Office of Immigration Statistics.

Refugee adjustments accounted for 6.3 percent of new LPRs in 2020, and asylee adjustments accounted for 2.8 percent. With refugee admissions at their lowest count since the passage of the Refugee Act of 1980 (when current categories were created) and likely their lowest level since World War II, 2020 also saw the lowest count of refugee adjustments of status since 2003. Grants of asylum have also been low in recent years, resulting in the lowest number of asylum adjustments since 2004.

Diversity immigrants accounted for 3.5 percent of all new LPRs in 2020, the lowest proportion in the decade and the first time that numbers have dropped below 40 thousand since 2003.

### Region and Country of Birth

The leading regions of birth of new LPRs in 2020 were Asia (39 percent) and North America (including the Caribbean and Central America) (31 percent) (Table 3). Together, Asia and North America have accounted for at least 70 percent of new LPRs each year from 2008.

In 2020, 14 percent of all noncitizens granted LPR status were born in Mexico, over two-thirds of whom (70 percent) were adjustments (Tables 3 and 4). Mexico has been the leading source of new LPRs each year since 1978.

Next-leading countries of birth of new LPRs in 2020 were India (6.6 percent), China (5.9 percent), the Dominican Republic (4.2 percent), and Vietnam (4.2 percent). Among the top ten leading countries of birth for new LPRs, Brazil-born LPRs had the lowest proportion who gained LPR status as new arrivals (12 percent), while Vietnam-born LPRs had the highest proportion (79 percent). Nine of the leading countries of birth in 2020 (each of the top ten excluding Brazil) were also the leading countries of birth of new LPRs from 2011 to 2020, together accounting for an average of 51 percent of new LPRs during this 10-year period.

### State and Metropolitan Area of Residence

California was the state of residence of one-fifth (20 percent) of noncitizens granted LPR status in 2020, and over one-third (38 percent) of new LPRs residing in California were new arrivals (Tables 5 and 6). The next leading states of residence for new LPRs in 2020 were New York (12 percent), Texas (11 percent), Florida (9.3 percent), and New Jersey (4.3 percent). Of the top ten states of residence for new LPRs, Virginia had the highest proportion (about half) of new arrivals, while Florida had the lowest

**Table 3.**

### New Lawful Permanent Residents by Region and Country of Birth: Fiscal Years 2018 to 2020

(Ranked by 2020 country of birth)

Region/country of birth	2018		2019		2020	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
<b>REGION</b>						
Total.....	1,096,611	100.0	1,031,765	100.0	707,362	100.0
Africa.....	115,736	10.6	111,194	10.8	76,649	10.8
Asia.....	397,187	36.2	364,761	35.4	272,597	38.5
Europe.....	80,024	7.3	87,597	8.5	68,994	9.8
North America.....	418,991	38.2	370,860	35.9	222,272	31.4
Caribbean.....	182,408	16.6	138,114	13.4	72,927	10.3
Central America.....	64,519	5.9	65,041	6.3	39,303	5.6
Other North America.....	172,064	15.7	167,705	16.3	110,042	15.6
Oceania.....	4,653	0.4	5,359	0.5	3,998	0.6
South America.....	78,869	7.2	90,850	8.8	62,219	8.8
Unknown.....	1,151	0.1	1,144	0.1	633	0.1
<b>COUNTRY</b>						
Total.....	1,096,611	100.0	1,031,765	100.0	707,362	100.0
Mexico.....	161,858	14.8	156,052	15.1	100,325	14.2
India.....	59,821	5.5	54,495	5.3	46,363	6.6
China, People's Republic... ..	65,214	5.9	62,248	6.0	41,483	5.9
Dominican Republic.....	57,413	5.2	49,911	4.8	30,005	4.2
Vietnam.....	33,834	3.1	39,712	3.8	29,995	4.2
Philippines.....	47,258	4.3	45,920	4.5	25,491	3.6
El Salvador.....	28,326	2.6	27,656	2.7	17,907	2.5
Brazil.....	15,394	1.4	19,825	1.9	16,746	2.4
Cuba.....	76,486	7.0	41,641	4.0	16,367	2.3
Korea, South.....	17,676	1.6	18,479	1.8	16,244	2.3
Jamaica.....	20,347	1.9	21,689	2.1	12,826	1.8
Nigeria.....	13,952	1.3	15,888	1.5	12,398	1.8
Venezuela.....	11,762	1.1	15,720	1.5	12,136	1.7
Colombia.....	17,545	1.6	19,841	1.9	11,989	1.7
Afghanistan.....	12,935	1.2	10,136	1.0	11,407	1.6
Pakistan.....	15,802	1.4	13,921	1.3	10,474	1.5
Ukraine.....	11,879	1.1	11,762	1.1	9,886	1.4
United Kingdom.....	9,908	0.9	11,337	1.1	9,655	1.4
Canada.....	9,898	0.9	11,388	1.1	9,526	1.3
Haiti.....	21,360	1.9	17,253	1.7	9,338	1.3
All other countries.....	387,943	35.4	366,891	35.6	256,801	36.3

Source: DHS Office of Immigration Statistics.

**Table 4.**

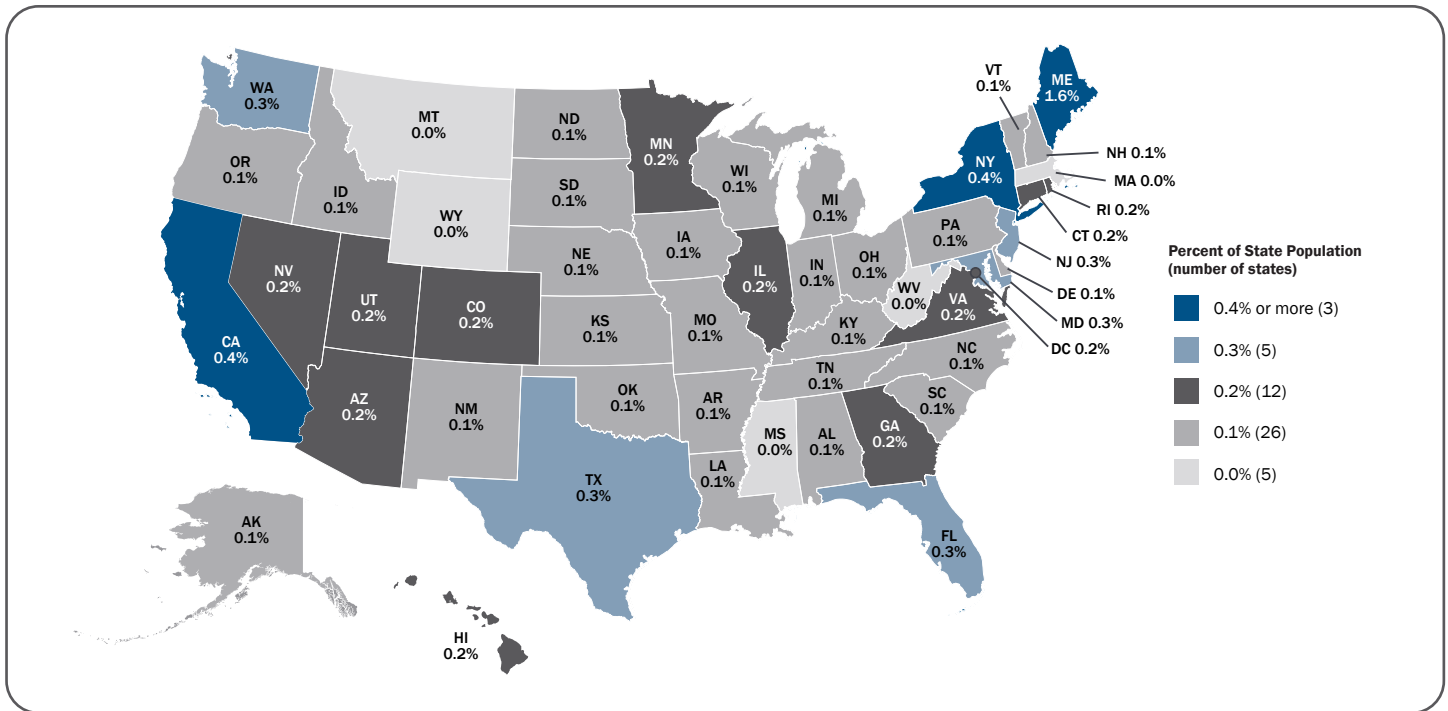
### Type of Admission of New Lawful Permanent Residents for Top Ten Countries of Birth: Fiscal Year 2020

Country of birth	Total	Adjustments		New Arrivals	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Mexico.....	100,325	69,787	69.6	30,538	30.4
India.....	46,363	34,181	73.7	12,182	26.3
China, People's Republic.....	41,483	29,380	70.8	12,103	29.2
Dominican Republic.....	30,005	8,270	27.6	21,735	72.4
Vietnam.....	29,995	6,340	21.1	23,655	78.9
Philippines.....	25,491	13,939	54.7	11,552	45.3
El Salvador.....	17,907	11,990	67.0	5,917	33.0
Brazil.....	16,746	14,820	88.5	1,926	11.5
Cuba.....	16,367	12,677	77.5	3,690	22.5
Korea, South.....	16,244	12,665	78.0	3,579	22.0

Source: DHS Office of Immigration Statistics.

**Figure 5.**

**New Lawful Permanent Residents per Capita by State of Residence: Fiscal Year 2020**



Source: DHS Office of Immigration Statistics and U.S. Census Bureau

proportion (29 percent). While the six leading states of residence have been the same for new LPRs every year since 1971, the proportion of new LPRs residing in these six states has decreased from 82 percent in 1990 to 59 percent in 2020 as new LPRs have gradually become more likely to live in other parts of the country. For example, the leading state for new LPRs per capita in 2020 was Maine, which hosted four times the proportion of new LPRs per capita as New York, the next leading state (Figure 5). Massachusetts had the fewest new LPRs per capita, less than half the proportion of the next lowest state, West Virginia. However, the proportion of new LPRs per state fluctuates significantly from year to year; in 2019 Massachusetts hosted the fifth most LPRs per capita of any state.<sup>24</sup>

The leading metropolitan area of residence for new LPRs in 2020 was New York-Newark-Jersey City, NY-NJ-PA (14 percent) (Table 7). Other prominent metropolitan areas of residence included Los Angeles-Long Beach-Anaheim, CA and Miami-Fort Lauderdale-Pompano Beach, FL, which each host more than 5 percent of new LPRs. These three areas have been the top areas

<sup>24</sup> State populations sourced from U.S. Census Bureau (see footnote 19 for detailed source information).

**Table 5.**

**New Lawful Permanent Residents by State of Residence: Fiscal Years 2018 to 2020**

(Ranked by 2020 state of residence)

State of residence	2018		2019		2020	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total	1,096,611	100.0	1,031,765	100.0	707,362	100.0
California	200,897	18.3	193,093	18.7	138,996	19.6
New York	134,839	12.3	124,026	12.0	81,755	11.6
Texas	104,515	9.5	107,955	10.5	74,565	10.5
Florida	130,405	11.9	118,140	11.5	65,799	9.3
New Jersey	54,424	5.0	48,754	4.7	30,275	4.3
Illinois	38,287	3.5	37,958	3.7	27,377	3.9
Massachusetts	33,174	3.0	30,834	3.0	22,107	3.1
Washington	26,029	2.4	25,570	2.5	21,549	3.0
Georgia	26,725	2.4	27,246	2.6	18,282	2.6
Virginia	27,426	2.5	24,784	2.4	18,183	2.6
Other*	319,890	29.2	293,405	28.4	208,474	29.5

\*Includes unknown, U.S. territories, and Armed Forces posts.

Source: DHS Office of Immigration Statistics.



of residence each of the past 10 years, though both the New York and Miami metro areas saw their shares drop by about a percentage point from 2019.

### Age, Sex, and Marital Status

New LPRs have historically been younger than the native-born population of the United States. In 2020, the median age for new LPRs was 34 years (31 for new arrivals and 35 for adjustments), compared to 38 for the whole U.S. population (Table 8).<sup>25</sup>

A higher proportion of new LPRs are female (54 percent) than the whole U.S. population (51 percent) (Table 9).<sup>26</sup> About 62 percent of all new LPRs in 2020 were married (Table 10). Nearly three-quarters (74 percent) of new LPRs at least 18 years old were married, compared with half (53 percent) of all U.S. adults in the same age group (Table 10).<sup>27</sup> In 2020, a higher proportion of adult adjustments were married (76 percent) than new arrivals (70 percent).

### DATA

This report uses data from the USCIS Computer Linked Application Information Management System (CLAIMS) and Electronic Immigration System (ELIS). CLAIMS maintains information for applicants present in the United States from USCIS' Form I-485, *Application to Register Permanent Residence or Adjust Status*. ELIS uses a combination of data sources for information on applicants living abroad: (1) biographical and demographic information from DOS's Form DS-230, *Application for Immigrant Visa and Alien Registration*, or Form DS-260, *Electronic Application for Immigrant Visa and Alien Registration*; and (2) data on the date of entry, port of entry, and updated class of admission (if there is any change from the originally approved class of admission) collected by Customs and Border Protection at a port of entry. Since 2019, ELIS has also maintained information on family-sponsored applicants present in the United States from USCIS' Form I-485.

The size and demographic composition of new LPR cohorts are affected by many factors including changes to immigration law and procedure, variation in application volume, and other factors related to application processing. For these reasons, caution should be exercised in drawing conclusions about the propensity to immigrate from the data presented in this report.

<sup>25</sup> U.S. Census Bureau/MDAT. 2021. Current Population Survey, Annual Social and Economic Supplement, March 2020. Web. 23 June 2021.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

**Table 6.**

### Type of Admission of New Lawful Permanent Residents for Top Ten States of Residence: Fiscal Year 2020

State of residence	Total	Adjustments		New Arrivals	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent
California	138,996	86,089	61.9	52,907	38.1
New York	81,755	43,271	52.9	38,484	47.1
Texas	74,565	50,577	67.8	23,988	32.2
Florida	65,799	46,609	70.8	19,190	29.2
New Jersey	30,275	16,570	54.7	13,705	45.3
Illinois	27,377	17,058	62.3	10,319	37.7
Massachusetts	22,107	13,190	59.7	8,917	40.3
Washington	21,549	15,167	70.4	6,382	29.6
Georgia	18,282	10,838	59.3	7,444	40.7
Virginia	18,183	9,184	50.5	8,999	49.5

Source: DHS Office of Immigration Statistics.

**Table 7.**

### New Lawful Permanent Residents by Metropolitan Area of Residence: Fiscal Years 2018 to 2020

(Ranked by 2020 metropolitan area of residence)

Metropolitan area of residence	2018		2019		2020	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total	1,096,611	100.0	1,031,765	100.0	707,362	100.0
New York-Newark-Jersey City, NY-NJ-PA	168,933	15.4	155,187	15.0	99,746	14.1
Los Angeles-Long Beach-Anaheim, CA	74,032	6.8	75,859	7.4	51,429	7.3
Miami-Fort Lauderdale-Pompano Beach, FL	80,341	7.3	73,040	7.1	39,318	5.6
San Francisco-Oakland-Berkeley, CA	31,918	2.9	32,787	3.2	27,376	3.9
Houston-The Woodlands-Sugar Land, TX	36,263	3.3	40,137	3.9	26,861	3.8
Chicago-Naperville-Elgin, IL-IN-WI	35,045	3.2	34,881	3.4	25,043	3.5
Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV	37,796	3.4	33,964	3.3	24,693	3.5
Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington, TX	28,915	2.6	32,984	3.2	22,462	3.2
Boston-Cambridge-Newton, MA-NH	26,411	2.4	24,717	2.4	17,695	2.5
Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue, WA	19,553	1.8	19,850	1.9	17,347	2.5
Other	557,404	50.8	508,359	49.3	355,392	50.2

Notes: Metropolitan areas defined based on the 2020 update of Core-Based Statistical Areas (CBSAs) definitions. Numbers from previous years may differ from previously published figures.

Source: DHS Office of Immigration Statistics.

**Table 8.**

### New Lawful Permanent Residents by Age: Fiscal Years 2018 to 2020

Age	2018		2019		2020	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total	1,096,611	100.0	1,031,765	100.0	707,362	100.0
0 to 17 years	208,683	19.0	177,102	17.2	117,860	16.7
18 to 24 years	125,852	11.5	116,780	11.3	74,907	10.6
25 to 34 years	262,281	23.9	252,986	24.5	177,079	25.0
35 to 44 years	210,160	19.2	204,152	19.8	153,114	21.6
45 to 54 years	142,407	13.0	142,144	13.8	98,066	13.9
55 to 64 years	87,007	7.9	83,164	8.1	52,991	7.5
65 and over	60,221	5.5	55,437	5.4	33,344	4.7
Unknown	NA	-	NA	-	1	-
Median age (years)	33	NA	33	NA	34	NA

NA Not applicable.

- Figure rounds to 0.0

Source: DHS Office of Immigration Statistics.

**Table 9.****New Lawful Permanent Residents by Sex: Fiscal Years 2018 to 2020**

Sex	2018		2019		2020	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total .....	1,096,611	100.0	1,031,765	100.0	707,362	100.0
Female .....	584,426	53.3	561,903	54.5	380,786	53.8
Male .....	512,176	46.7	469,710	45.5	326,414	46.1
Unknown.....	9	-	152	-	162	-

- Figure rounds to 0.0.

Source: DHS Office of Immigration Statistics.

**Table 10.****New Lawful Permanent Residents by Marital Status: Fiscal Years 2018 to 2020**

Marital status	2018		2019		2020	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total .....	1,096,611	100.0	1,031,765	100.0	707,362	100.0
Married .....	627,443	57.2	628,330	60.9	435,758	61.6
Single .....	400,196	36.5	339,227	32.9	230,043	32.5
Other* .....	58,995	5.4	53,332	5.2	33,182	4.7
Unknown.....	9,977	0.9	10,876	1.1	8,379	1.2

\* Includes persons who are widowed, divorced, or separated.

Source: DHS Office of Immigration Statistics.

**APPENDIX****PREFERENCE IMMIGRATION LIMITS<sup>28</sup>**

Section 201 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) defines a complex set of rules determining worldwide limits on the number of family- and employment-based visas. Section 202 of the INA describes per-country limits based on the worldwide total.

<sup>28</sup> The DOS Bureau of Consular Affairs is responsible for determining these limits. See the monthly Visa Bulletin for more information on the limits.

**Family-sponsored Preference Limit**

The annual limit for family-sponsored preference immigration is calculated as 480,000 people minus the number of noncitizens who were issued visas or who adjusted to Lawful Permanent Resident (LPR) status in the previous year as (1) immediate relatives of U.S. citizens, (2) children born subsequent to the issuance of a visa to an accompanying parent, (3) children born abroad to LPRs on temporary trips abroad, and (4) certain categories of noncitizens paroled into the United States in the second preceding year, and plus (5) unused visas in the employment-preference classes in the preceding year.

**Table A1:****Annual Limits for Preference and Diversity Immigrants: Fiscal Year 2020**

Preference/description	Limit
Family-sponsored preferences .....	226,000
First: Unmarried sons and daughters of U.S. citizens and their children .....	23,400*
Second: Spouses, children, and unmarried sons and daughters of permanent resident aliens .....	114,200 <sup>†</sup>
Third: Married sons and daughters of U.S. citizens .....	23,400 <sup>†</sup>
Fourth: Brothers and sisters of U.S. citizens (at least 21 years of age) .....	65,000 <sup>†</sup>
Employment-based preferences .....	156,253
First: Priority workers .....	44,688 <sup>‡</sup>
Second: Professionals with advanced degrees or aliens of exceptional ability .....	44,688 <sup>†</sup>
Third: Skilled workers, professionals, and needed unskilled workers .....	44,688 <sup>†</sup>
Fourth: Certain special immigrants .....	11,094
Fifth: Employment creation ("investors") .....	11,094
Diversity .....	54,650

\* Plus unused family fourth preference visas.

<sup>†</sup> Plus unused higher preference visas.

<sup>‡</sup> Plus unused employment fourth and fifth preference visas.

Source: DHS Office of Immigration Statistics.

The family-sponsored preference limit may not fall below a minimum of 226,000 in any year. Because the calculated limit (based on visa usage during the prior year) for family-sponsored preference classes in 2020 was below 226,000, the family-sponsored preferences limit was set at 226,000 (Table A1).

### **Employment-based Preference Limit**

The annual limit for employment-based preference immigration is equal to 140,000 plus unused numbers in the family-sponsored preference classes in the previous year. With 16,253 unused numbers in the family-sponsored preference classes in 2019, the 2020 employment-based preference limit was 156,253. The limit is 28.6 percent of this total for each of the first three employment-preference classes and 7.1 percent for each of the last two preference classes. In 2020, these limits were 44,688 and 11,094, respectively.

### **Per Country and Dependent Area Limits**

A limit of 7 percent of the combined total visa limits for family-sponsored and employment-based preference classes is set for independent countries, and a limit of 2 percent is set for dependent areas. The 2020 per country limit for independent foreign states was 26,758 (7 percent of 382,253; the sum of the 2020 employment-based and family-based preference limits), and the limit for dependencies was 7,645 (2 percent of 382,253).

### **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

Visit the Office of Immigration Statistics webpage at <https://www.dhs.gov/immigration-statistics>.