

U.S. Naturalizations: 2019

JOHN TEKE

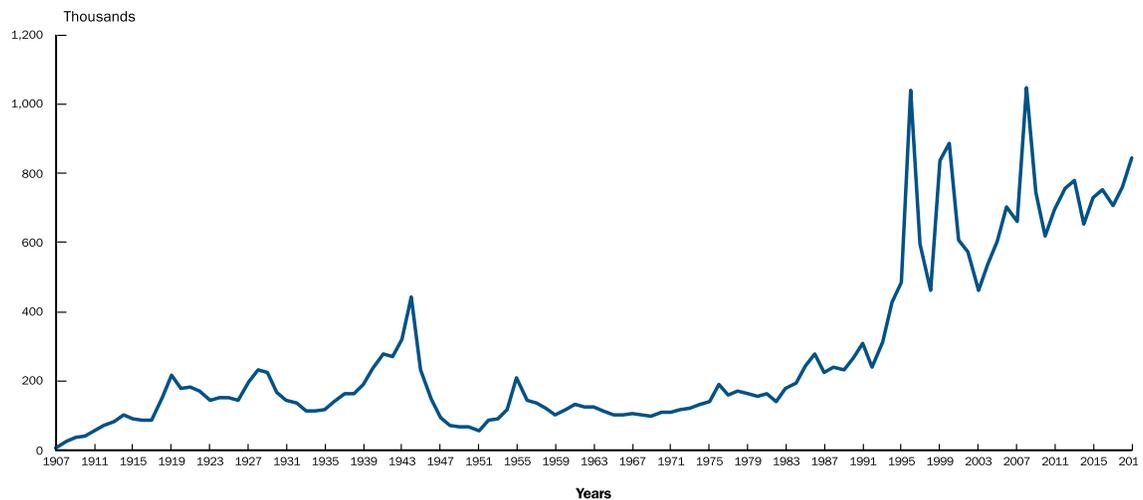
The naturalization process confers U.S. citizenship upon applicants who have fulfilled the requirements established in the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA). After naturalization, foreign-born citizens enjoy almost all the same benefits, rights, and responsibilities that the Constitution gives to U.S. citizens at birth, including the right to vote. The 2019 U.S. Naturalizations Annual Flow Report, authored by the Office of Immigration Statistics (OIS) in the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), presents information on the number and characteristics of applicants aged 18 years and over who naturalized during 2019.^{1,2}

SUMMARY

The number of U.S. naturalizations rose to 843,593 persons in 2019, up 11 percent from 761,901 in 2018 (Table 1) (Figure 1).³ The number of applications for citizenship in 2019 was down to 830,560 from 837,168 applications in 2018. The number of naturalizations exceeds the number of applications due to previous adjudicated application denials and delays in application processing (Figure 2).⁴ The leading countries of birth of newly naturalized citizens were Mexico (122,286), India (64,631), the Philippines (43,668), the People’s Republic of China (China) (39,490), and Cuba (36,246). The largest number of persons naturalizing lived in California (148,765), Texas (97,675), and Florida (96,149) (Table 2).

Figure 1.

Persons Naturalized: Fiscal Years 1907 to 2019



Source: U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

¹ In this report, “years” refer to fiscal years, which run from October 1 to September 30.

² This report does not include data on children acquiring citizenship based upon the citizenship status of a parent. The child of a U.S. citizen parent may acquire U.S. citizenship through his/her parent and is not required to file an N-400 application for naturalization. Therefore, naturalizations described in this report, obtained from N-400 records, do not represent a complete count of persons who obtained citizenship status during the reporting year.

³ Naturalization numbers reflect changes in the numbers of naturalization applications received as well as the number processed, which may be affected by applications pending from previous years and available resources. As a result, caution should be exercised in drawing conclusions from these data about trends in the underlying demand to naturalize. Average naturalization totals over a period of years provide a more accurate indication of long-term trends in naturalization.

⁴ See *2019 Yearbook of Immigration Statistics*; Table 20: Applications for Naturalization Filed, Persons Naturalized, and Applications for Naturalization Denied.



Homeland Security

Office of Immigration Statistics
OFFICE OF STRATEGY, POLICY, AND PLANS

THE NATURALIZATION PROCESS AND REQUIREMENTS

To be considered for naturalization, an applicant must meet INA requirements and document them by filing a Form N-400, *Application for Naturalization*. U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) reviews documents and interviews all applicants to determine their eligibility to naturalize. Following approval, USCIS schedules applicants for a required oath ceremony before a judge or USCIS official.

Generally, to naturalize, an applicant must be at least 18 years of age, establish that he or she has been lawfully admitted to the United State for permanent residence at the time of filing the naturalization application, and have resided continuously in the United States for at least 5 years⁵ as a lawful permanent resident (LPR) immediately preceding the date of filing the application and up to the time of admission to citizenship. The applicant must be physically present in the United States for at least 30 months out of the 5 years immediately preceding the date of filing the application and must have lived within the state or district with jurisdiction over the applicant's place of residence for at least 90 days prior to the date of filing. Additional requirements for applicants include the ability to speak, read, and write the English language; knowledge of U.S. Government and its history; attachment to the principles of the U.S. Constitution; and being of good moral character. Special provisions of naturalization law exempt certain applicants from some of these general requirements. These applicants may include spouses of U.S. citizens and persons with qualifying military service in the U.S. Armed Forces.

TRENDS AND CHARACTERISTICS OF PERSONS NATURALIZING

Historical Trend

The average number of persons naturalizing increased from fewer than 113,000 per year during the 1950s and 1960s to 210,000 per year during the 1980s, 500,000 during the 1990s, and 680,000 per year between 2000 and 2009. Since 2010, the average annual number of naturalizations has increased to over 730,000 persons annually (Figure 1). While annual naturalizations rates have gradually increased, short-term naturalization rates vary due to dynamics forces related to election years, USCIS fee increases, and proposed legislative or actual statutory changes.

⁵ A permanent resident who is married to a U.S. citizen and with evidence of continuous residency is eligible for naturalization after 3 years instead of the normally required 5 years as a permanent resident applying for citizenship. In addition, persons with qualifying military service of at least 1 year in the U.S. Armed Forces during a period of peacetime may be eligible to apply for naturalization. For more information, please visit <https://www.uscis.gov/military/naturalization-through-military-service> and <https://www.uscis.gov/us-citizenship/citizenship-through-naturalization> for citizenship through military service and naturalization, respectively.

Table 1.

Persons Naturalized by Region and Country of Birth: Fiscal Years 2017 to 2019

(Regions and countries ranked by 2019 Naturalization)

Region and country of birth	2017		2018		2019	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
REGION						
Total	707,265	100.0	761,901	100.0	843,593	100.0
Africa	61,851	8.7	64,934	8.5	84,990	10.1
Asia	255,306	36.1	275,621	36.2	327,273	38.8
Europe	65,141	9.2	71,436	9.4	81,040	9.6
North America	258,371	36.5	277,592	36.4	276,910	32.8
Caribbean	92,540	13.1	95,298	12.5	101,312	12.0
Central America	39,359	5.6	40,815	5.4	42,077	5.0
Other North America	126,472	17.9	141,479	18.6	133,521	15.8
Oceania	3,327	0.5	3,792	0.5	4,308	0.5
South America	63,063	8.9	67,892	8.9	68,678	8.1
Unknown	206	-	634	0.1	394	-
COUNTRY						
Total	707,265	100.0	761,900	100.0	843,593	100.0
Mexico	118,559	16.8	131,977	17.3	122,286	14.5
India	50,802	7.2	52,194	6.9	64,631	7.7
Philippines	36,828	5.2	38,816	5.1	43,668	5.2
China, People's Republic	37,674	5.3	39,600	5.2	39,490	4.7
Cuba	25,961	3.7	32,089	4.2	36,246	4.3
Vietnam	19,323	2.7	21,082	2.8	25,646	3.0
Dominican Republic	29,734	4.2	22,970	3.0	23,101	2.7
Iraq	7,875	1.1	12,448	1.6	18,366	2.2
El Salvador	16,941	2.4	17,300	2.3	18,260	2.2
Jamaica	15,087	2.1	17,213	2.3	18,010	2.1
Colombia	16,184	2.3	17,564	2.3	17,126	2.0
Korea, South	14,643	2.1	16,031	2.1	16,298	1.9
Haiti	12,794	1.8	14,389	1.9	14,308	1.7
Pakistan	10,166	1.4	10,414	1.4	13,079	1.6
United Kingdom	9,049	1.3	10,530	1.4	12,195	1.4
Burma	6,825	1.0	7,858	1.0	11,674	1.4
Nigeria	7,652	1.1	8,459	1.1	11,360	1.3
Iran	8,324	1.2	8,409	1.1	11,310	1.3
Canada	7,829	1.1	9,379	1.2	11,059	1.3
Brazil	9,701	1.4	10,538	1.4	10,451	1.2
All other countries	245,314	34.7	262,640	34.5	305,029	36.2

- Figure rounds to 0.0.

Source: U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

Table 2.

Persons Naturalized by State of Residence: Fiscal Years 2017 to 2019

(States ranked by 2019 Naturalization)

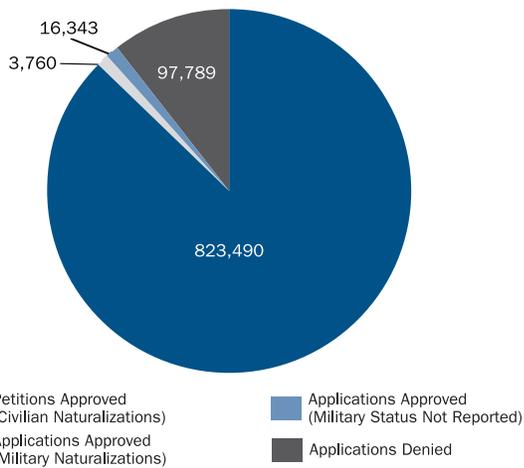
State of residence	2017		2018		2019	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total	707,265	100.0	761,901	100.0	843,593	100.0
California	157,364	22.2	163,059	21.4	148,765	17.6
Texas	50,552	7.1	64,685	8.5	97,675	11.6
Florida	69,485	9.8	95,978	12.6	96,149	11.4
New York	86,407	12.2	81,404	10.7	85,444	10.1
New Jersey	38,611	5.5	40,089	5.3	36,661	4.3
Illinois	24,933	3.5	26,477	3.5	30,472	3.6
Georgia	16,461	2.3	16,590	2.2	25,858	3.1
Virginia	21,930	3.1	18,118	2.4	23,345	2.8
Massachusetts	27,739	3.9	24,826	3.3	22,894	2.7
Pennsylvania	14,898	2.1	19,007	2.5	21,014	2.5
Other*	198,885	28.1	211,668	27.8	255,316	30.3

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

Source: U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

Figure 2.

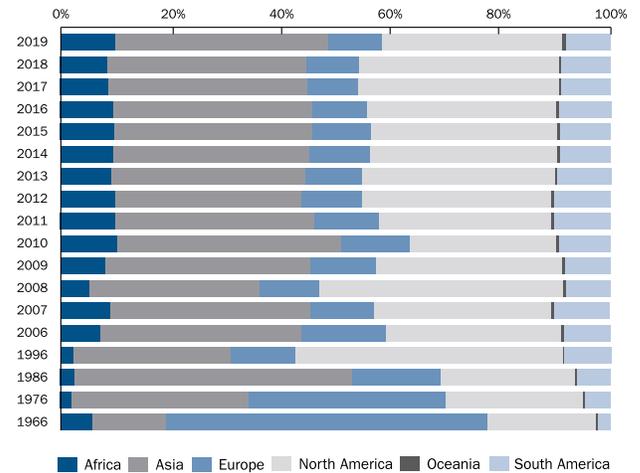
Applications for U.S. Citizenship: Fiscal Year 2019



Source: U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

Figure 3.

Percent of Total Persons Naturalized per Year by Region: Fiscal Years 1966 to 2019



Note: Oceania has an average value of 0.5 percent over the last 10-year period.

Source: U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

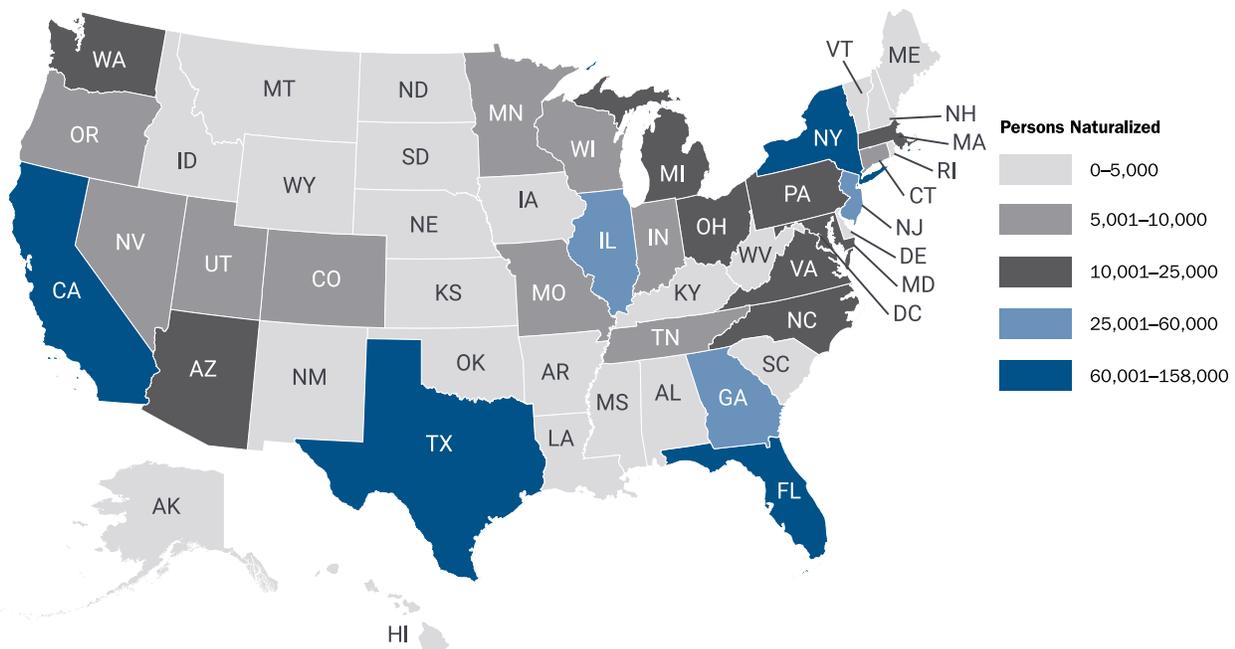
Region and Leading Countries of Birth

Historically, the majority of persons naturalizing until the early 1970s were born in Europe. Asia overtook Europe as the leading region of origin for new citizens following increased Asian immigration pursuant to the 1965 amendments to the INA and the arrival of large numbers of Indochinese refugees in the 1970s, along with a pattern of higher-than-average naturalization rates among Asian immigrants. Asia has continued to be the leading

region of origin in recent decades (Figure 3) and is closely followed by the North American region. Africa recorded its highest number of new citizens since 2010 even though immigrants born in Africa spent the least number of years in LPR status (6 years). From 2018 to 2019, the number of naturalizations varied among immigrants from these regions. African naturalizations increased by the largest proportion year-to-year increase at approximately 31 percent followed by Asia with 19 percent.

Figure 4.

Persons Naturalized by State of Residence: Fiscal Year 2019



Source: U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

Table 3.

Persons Naturalized by Core Based Statistical Area (CBSA) of Residence: Fiscal Years 2017 to 2019

(CBSA ranked by 2019 Naturalization)

Metropolitan area of residence	2017		2018		2019	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total	707,265	100.0	761,901	100.0	843,593	100.0
New York-Newark-Jersey City, NY-NJ-PA	111,705	15.8	107,196	14.1	107,964	12.8
Miami-Fort Lauderdale-Pompano Beach, FL	44,520	6.3	58,165	7.6	60,590	7.2
Los Angeles-Long Beach-Anaheim, CA	59,356	8.4	62,075	8.1	56,850	6.7
Houston-The Woodlands-Sugar Land, TX	15,120	2.1	22,998	3.0	33,826	4.0
Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV	29,684	4.2	22,468	2.9	30,808	3.7
Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington, TX	11,562	1.6	17,702	2.3	30,521	3.6
Chicago-Naperville-Elgin, IL-IN-WI	23,044	3.3	24,879	3.3	29,049	3.4
Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Alpharetta, GA	14,045	2.0	14,092	1.8	21,001	2.5
San Francisco-Oakland-Berkeley, CA	21,352	3.0	21,156	2.8	20,903	2.5
Boston-Cambridge-Newton, MA-NH	22,002	3.1	19,680	2.6	17,786	2.1
Other, including unknown	354,875	50.2	391,490	51.4	434,295	51.5

Notes: Metropolitan areas defined based on the 2013 update of Core Based Statistical Areas (CBSAs) definitions. As a result, numbers for previous years may differ from previously published figures.

Source: U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

In contrast, other North American (non-Caribbean and non-Central American countries) naturalizations decreased by the largest proportion at 5.6 percent; followed by North America with 0.2 percent (Tables 1 and 7).

Among the top ten countries of birth for persons naturalizing in 2019, Mexico was the lead country (15 percent of the total), followed by India (7.7 percent), the Philippines (5.2 percent), China (4.7 percent), and Cuba (4.3 percent) (Table 1).

The top four countries of birth were unchanged from 2017, although Philippines replaced China as the third country; and Cuba replaced the Dominican Republic as the fifth leading country.

The top ten countries of origin accounted for almost 49 percent of all naturalizing citizens in 2019, essentially unchanged from 2018. The largest numeric increase in naturalizations from 2018 and 2019 occurred among immigrants born in India (12,437), Iraq (5,918), the Philippines (4,852), Vietnam (4,564), and Cuba (4,157).

The largest proportional increase in naturalizations was experienced by immigrants born in Iraq (48 percent), Burma (49 percent), Somalia (74 percent), Iran (39 percent), and Nigeria (34 percent). Mexican naturalizations had the largest decrease between 2018 and 2019 (9,691 persons, or 7.3 percent) after an increase of between 2017 and 2018. However, this decline followed on an increase in naturalization 2019 count of 13,418 between 2017 and 2018.

Leading States and Metropolitan Areas of Residence

In 2019, 148,765 people, 70 percent of all persons naturalizing, resided in ten states, down from a 10-year average percentage of 73 percent in 2018. California was home to the largest number of persons naturalizing, representing 18 percent of the total; Texas followed with 97,675 persons (12 percent), up from 64,685 in 2018; and Florida with 96,149 persons (11 percent), was up from 95,978 in 2018 (Table 2). California continued to remain the leading state of residence.

Table 4.

Persons Naturalized by Sex: Fiscal Years 2017 to 2019

Sex	2017		2018		2019	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total	707,265	100.0	761,901	100.0	843,593	100.0
Female	396,234	56.0	420,415	55.2	464,561	55.1
Male	310,987	44.0	341,378	44.8	378,792	44.9
Unknown	44	0.0	108	0.0	240	0.0

- Figure rounds to 0.0.

Source: U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

Age	2017		2018		2019	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total	707,265	100.0	761,901	100.0	843,593	100.0
18 to 24 years	55,283	7.8	59,037	7.7	69,013	8.2
25 to 34 years	162,131	22.9	170,465	22.4	196,412	23.3
35 to 44 years	189,076	26.7	201,434	26.4	229,217	27.2
45 to 54 years	137,688	19.5	148,617	19.5	157,821	18.7
55 to 64 years	94,437	13.4	103,120	13.5	107,926	12.8
65 years and over	68,649	9.7	79,223	10.4	83,204	9.9
Unknown	1	-	5	-	-	-
Median age (years)	42	X	42	X	41	X

X Not applicable.

- Figure rounds to 0.0 or 0.

Source: U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

The largest proportional increases in naturalizations between 2018 and 2019 among leading states of residence occurred in Georgia (56 percent), Texas (51 percent, and up to a total of 93 percent since 2017), and Virginia (29 percent).

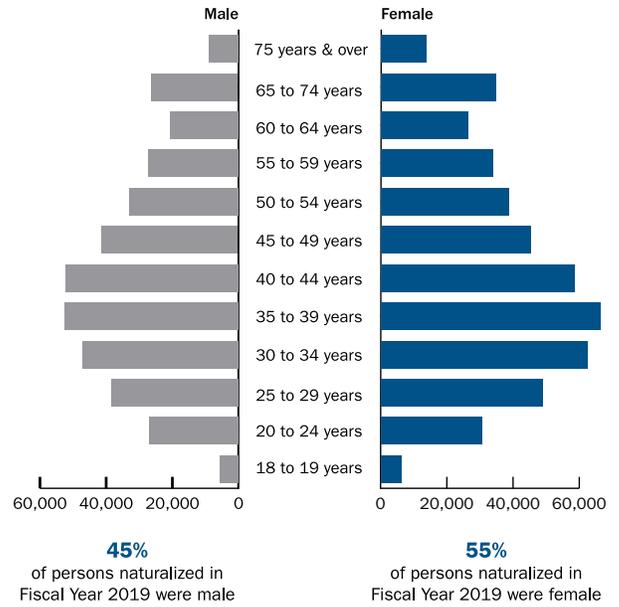
California experienced the largest decrease from 2018 to 2019 (8.8 percent), followed by New Jersey (8.6 percent), and Massachusetts (7.8 percent).

Table 6.
Persons Naturalized by Marital Status: Fiscal Years 2017 to 2019

Marital status	2017		2018		2019	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total	707,265	100.0	761,901	100.0	843,593	100.0
Single	149,666	21.2	158,954	20.9	177,418	21.0
Married	457,506	64.7	494,461	64.9	543,672	64.4
Other*	100,093	14.2	108,486	14.2	122,503	14.5

*Includes persons who were divorced, separated, widowed, or of unknown marital status.
Source: U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

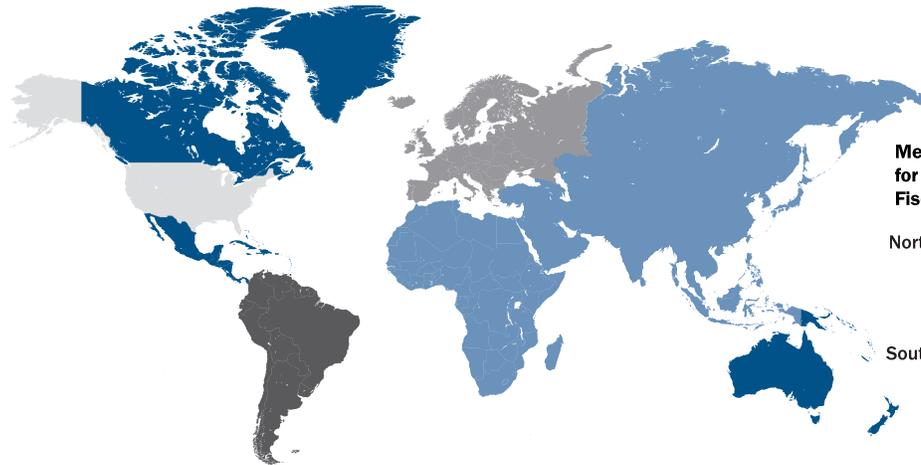
Figure 5.
Naturalizations by Age and Sex: Fiscal Year 2019



Source: U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

Figure 6.
Median Years in LPR Status Before Naturalizing: Fiscal Year 2019

Persons naturalizing in Fiscal Year 2019 spent a median of **8 Years** in LPR status before becoming citizens.



Source: U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

Table 7.
Median Years in Lawful Permanent Resident Status for Persons Naturalized by Region of Birth and Year of Naturalization: Fiscal Years 2010 to 2019

Region of birth	Fiscal Year									
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Total	6	6	7	7	7	7	7	8	8	8
Africa	5	5	5	5	6	6	6	6	6	6
Asia	5	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	7	7
Europe	6	6	7	7	8	9	9	9	9	9
North America	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	11	11	10
Oceania	7	7	8	8	9	9	10	10	10	10
South America	5	6	6	6	7	7	7	8	8	8

Note: Excludes persons who were not required to be lawful permanent residents prior to naturalization.
Source: U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

In 2019, 49 percent of all new citizens lived in ten metropolitan areas (Table 3), below the average percentage of 52 percent over the past decade.⁶

The leading metropolitan areas were New York-Newark-Jersey City, NY-NJ-PA, having 107,964 persons (13 percent of the total), essentially unchanged from 2018; Miami-Fort Lauderdale-West Palm Beach, FL with 60,590 persons (7.2 percent), up from 58,165 persons in 2018; and Los Angeles-Long Beach-Anaheim, CA with 56,850 persons (6.7 percent), down from 62,075 persons in 2018. The leading metropolitan areas of residence remained the same as in 2018, although Houston-The Woodlands-Sugar Land, TX, moved up from the eighth highest number of naturalizations in 2017 to the fourth highest in 2019 as its number of naturalizations more than doubled during this period (from 15,120 to 33,826); and Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington, TX moved up from ninth highest to sixth highest as its naturalizations nearly tripled (from 11,562 to 30,808).

The largest numeric decrease in naturalizations occurred in Los Angeles-Long Beach-Anaheim, CA (5,225) and Boston-Cambridge-Newton, MA-NH (1,894), which has been declining since 2017.

Sex, Age, and Marital Status

The breakdowns of the ten leading countries by sex, age, and marital status slightly varied between 2018 and 2019 (Tables 4, 5, and 6, respectively). In 2019, females accounted for the majority of naturalizations at 55 percent of all persons naturalizing, almost unchanged from 2018 (Figure 5). Fifty-one percent of new naturalized citizens were ages 25 to 44 years, up from nearly 49 percent in 2018. About 23 percent were ages 55 years and older, down from 24 percent in 2018, and 8.2 percent were ages 18 to 24 years, up from 7.7 percent in 2018 (Figure 5). The median age of those naturalizing in 2019 was 41 in 2019, down from 42

since 2017. Marital status of persons naturalizing favored married at 64 percent of individuals naturalizing in 2019, down from 65 percent in 2018; and 21 percent as single, the same as in 2018 (Table 6).

Years in Immigrant Status

Just as in 2017 and 2018, persons naturalizing in 2019 spent a median of 8 years in LPR status before becoming U.S. citizens (Table 7). Immigrants born in Africa spent the least number of years in LPR status (6 years), followed by immigrants from Asia (7 years), South America (8 years), Europe (9 years), Oceania (10 years), and North America (10 years), all essentially unchanged over the last decade (Figure 6). South America and Oceania have seen a continual increase in time spent in LPR status since 2010, when the median time spent in LPR status was 5 and 7 years, respectively.

Data

This report is based on data from USCIS administrative records of new U.S. citizens⁷ who naturalized in 2019. These records consist of information taken from Form N-400 applications, such as the date and country of birth, sex, marital status, and state of residence. Electronic Immigration System (ELIS) provided slightly more than 86 percent of the data, while USCIS Computer Linked Application Information Management System (CLAIMS 4)⁸ and the Central Index System provided 12 and 2.0 percent, respectively.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

For more information about immigration and immigration statistics, visit the OIS web page at <http://www.dhs.gov/immigration-statistics>.

⁶ The most current Core Based Statistical Area (CBSA) definitions are available from OMB at <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/sites/default/files/omb/bulletins/2013/b13-01.pdf>.

⁷ A permanent U.S. resident becomes a naturalized U.S. citizen only after the oath ceremony date.

⁸ Use of CLAIMS 4 is being phased out. USCIS stopped ingesting N-400 cases on October 26, 2017 but is processing the existing N-400 cases until they are all done.