

# Nonimmigrant Admissions and Estimated Nonimmigrant Individuals: 2016

JOHN TEKE AND WALEED NAVARRO

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Office of Immigration Statistics' (OIS) Annual Nonimmigrant Flow Report describes the number and characteristics of I-94 nonimmigrant admission events, but not the number of unique individuals admitted on I-94 nonimmigrant visas. This distinction is important because many nonimmigrants enter the United States more than once on multiple-entry visas. This factsheet presents data on I-94 nonimmigrant admission events and on the estimated number of individuals entering the United States as I-94 nonimmigrants in 2016.<sup>1</sup> Overall, an estimated 42.7 million individuals entered the United States as I-94 nonimmigrants in 2016, making a total of 76.8 million entries. Thus, on average, each I-94 nonimmigrant was admitted 1.8 times. Average admissions per nonimmigrant were higher for Mexicans (4.4 entries per person) and Canadians (2.4 entries per person); and higher for B2 temporary visitors for pleasure (2.6 entries per person) and B1 temporary visitors for business (2.1 entries per person).

## Data and Methodology

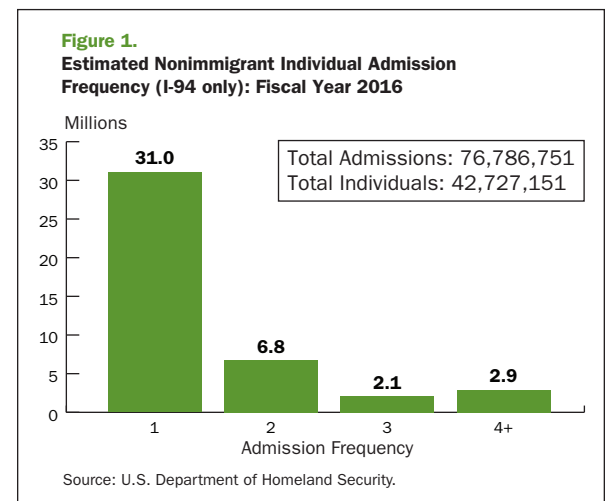
This factsheet is limited to I-94 nonimmigrants. As discussed in greater detail in the OIS Nonimmigrant Flow Report, the I-94 data do not describe all nonimmigrant admissions because certain visitors are not required to provide I-94 information.<sup>2</sup> In general, Canadians traveling to the United States on B1 business or B2 tourist visas and Mexicans entering with Border Crossing Cards (BCCs) or B1/B2 visas who plan to remain in the border region are not required to provide I-94 data.<sup>3</sup> These exceptions are significant because Canadian and Mexican tourists and business travelers make up the majority of nonimmigrant admissions.

Unique nonimmigrant admissions are not readily available because many nonimmigrants are admitted to the United States more than once on a given visa. Therefore, to estimate unique nonimmigrant individuals, OIS matched I-94 admission records on birth date, last name, and first three characters of the first name to

identify unique individuals and create estimates of the total number of individuals admitted on I-94 visas.

## I-94 Admission Events and Unique Individuals

Figure 1 depicts the number of times unique I-94 nonimmigrants were admitted to the United States in 2016. Out of an estimated 43 million individuals admitted as I-94 nonimmigrants, 31 million were admitted into the United States once, 6.8 million were admitted twice, and 5.0 million were admitted three or more times.



<sup>1</sup> In this factsheet, years refer to U.S. fiscal years, which run from October through September. Fiscal year 2016 began October 1, 2015 and ended September 30, 2016.

<sup>2</sup> For additional information, please see the 2015 Nonimmigrant Admissions to the United States report at <https://www.dhs.gov/immigration-statistics/nonimmigrant>.

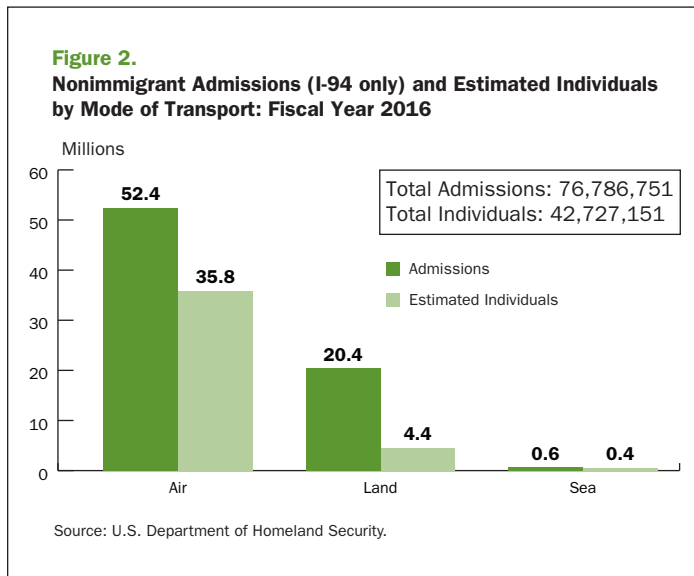
<sup>3</sup> North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) officials (seeking N1-N5 nonimmigrant classification) also are not required to submit an I-94 but may do so to document their admissions. Members of the foreign military generally are not issued an I-94 when entering the U.S. under military orders.



**Homeland  
Security**

Office of Immigration Statistics  
OFFICE OF STRATEGY, POLICY & PLANS

Figure 2 indicates the number of I-94 admissions and estimated number of unique visitors to the United States by mode of transport. About 36 million individuals visited the United States by air in 2016 accounting for 52 million admission events. On average, I-94 nonimmigrants traveling by air were admitted to the United States 1.5 times in 2016, those traveling by land were admitted 4.6 times, and those traveling by sea were admitted 1.5 times.



### Countries of Nationality

Figure 3 presents the numbers of I-94 nonimmigrant admissions to the United States and the estimated number of unique I-94 visitors for the top five admitted countries of citizenship. Tables with more complete data for Figures 3-7 are available at the Office of Immigration Statistics website.<sup>4</sup>

As Figure 3 indicates, nonimmigrants from Mexico and Canada made more entries per visa than those from countries further from the United States. Approximately 4.5 million and 5.5 million nonimmigrant from Mexico and Canada accounted for 20 million and 13 million admissions, respectively. Mexicans on I-94 nonimmigrant visas entered an average of 4.4 times during 2016, and Canadians entered an average of 2.4 times, compared to an average of 1.3 for nonimmigrants from the United Kingdom, Japan, and China. Looking across all other countries, the average I-94 nonimmigrant entered 1.4 times in 2016.

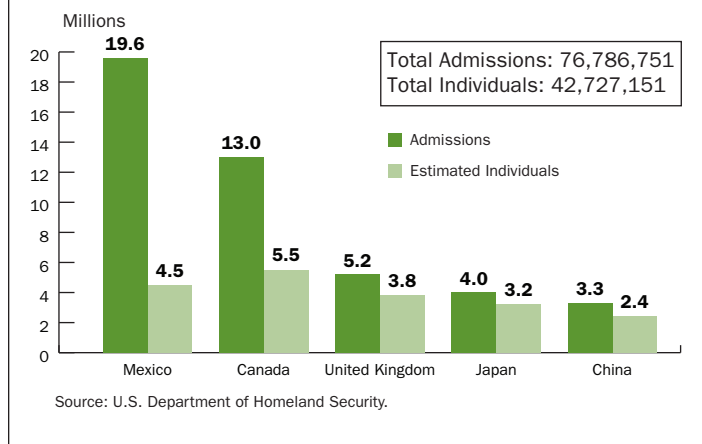
### Classes of Admission

The principal purposes for which a nonimmigrant may be admitted to the United States include temporary visits for business or pleasure, academic or vocational study, temporary employment, and to act as a representative of a foreign government or international organization, among others. As Figure 4 illustrates, B2 tem-

<sup>4</sup> Supplementary tables with more complete data for Figures 3-7 are available at <https://www.dhs.gov/immigration-statistics/readingroom>.

<sup>5</sup> This report (posted March 2018) corrects a previous version posted with erroneous values reported for F1 (foreign student) visas.

**Figure 3.**  
**Nonimmigrant Admissions (I-94 only) and Estimated Individuals by Leading Countries of Citizenship: Fiscal Year 2016**



porary visitors for pleasure were admitted many more times than all other classes of admission in 2016, though B1 temporary visitors for business made more entries per visa. Approximately 19 million B2 temporary visitors for pleasure and 15 million WT Visa Waiver Program temporary visitors for pleasure accounted for 41 million and 19 million admissions, respectively. Thus, B2 nonimmigrant visitors entered an average of 2.1 times each during 2016, and those with WT visas entered an average of 1.2 times each. Business visitors with B1 visas entered an average of 2.6 times each; and WB Visa Waiver Program business visitors, F1 students, and both entered an average of 1.9 times each. Overall, nonimmigrants in all other classes of admission also entered an average of 1.9 times each in 2016. Though not among the top five classes of admission, 66,000 TN North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) professional workers entered the United States an average of 12 times each in 2016.

Figures 5 through 7 provide additional details about foreign students (admitted on F1 visas), temporary workers in specialty occupations (H-1B visas), and non-agricultural temporary or seasonal workers (H-2B visas) broken down by top countries of nationality. As Figure 5 illustrates, Chinese students accounted for a plurality of the 1.9 million F1 visa admissions in 2016, with an estimated 322,000 Chinese students accounting for 487,000 admissions (an average of 1.5 admissions per student). Indian and South Korean students were the next largest groups of individual students, with an estimated 132,000 Indians admitted 163,000 times (1.2 admissions per student) and an estimated 60,000 South Koreans admitted 95,000 times (1.6 admissions per student). Mexican and Canadian students accounted for larger numbers of admissions: an estimated 35,000 Canadians were admitted 191,000 times (5.4 admissions per student), and an estimated 22,000 Mexicans were admitted 232,000 times (10.5 admissions per student).<sup>5</sup>

Figure 6 depicts H-1B admissions by leading countries of nationality. An estimated 290,000 individuals were admitted to the United States on H-1B visas in 2016, accounting for 534,000 admissions. OIS estimates that 66 percent of H-1B workers admitted in 2016 were Indian nationals: 193,000 individuals admitted 270,000 times (1.4 admissions per worker). The next-largest groups of workers were Chinese (24,000 workers admitted 43,000 times; 1.8 admissions per worker) and Canadians (11,000 workers admitted 57,000 times; 5.2 admissions per worker). Slightly more than 3,000 H-1B Mexican workers were admitted 18,000 times (5.3 admissions per worker).

Figure 7 depicts H-2B admissions by top countries of nationality. OIS estimates that 60,000 Mexicans were admitted as H-2B workers (73 percent of H-2B workers), making 90,000 entries (76 percent of entries). Jamaicans were the next largest group of H-2B workers (9,000 individuals, making 9,600 entries). No other group accounted for more than five percent of H-2B workers.

