

U.S. Lawful Permanent Residents: 2016

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A lawful permanent resident (LPR) or “green card” recipient is defined in immigration law as a person 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.”¹ 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 and apply to become U.S. citizens if they meet certain additional eligibility requirements. This Office of Immigration Statistics (OIS) *Annual Flow Report* presents information obtained from applications for LPR status on the number and characteristics of persons who became LPRs in the United States during 2016.^{2,3}

A total of 1,183,505 persons became LPRs in 2016 (Table 1). Just under half of these LPRs (48 percent) were already present in the United States when they were granted lawful permanent residence.⁴ Sixty-eight percent were granted LPR status based on a family relationship with a U.S. citizen or LPR of the United States. The leading countries of birth of new LPRs were Mexico (15 percent), China (6.9 percent), and Cuba (5.6 percent).

THE LAWFUL IMMIGRATION PROCESS

The Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) gives priority for LPR status to foreign nationals who are sponsored by a close family member who is a U.S. citizen or LPR, sponsored by an employer or make investments that create a

certain number of U.S. jobs, from countries with relatively low levels of immigration to the United States, or granted refugee or asylee status. Everyone seeking LPR status is subject to a background check before adjudication.

There are two paths to LPR status, depending on whether the applicant is present in the United States or abroad at the time of application. Eligible foreign nationals who are abroad apply for an immigrant visa at a U.S. Department of State (DOS) consular office after receiving an approved petition or application. Once issued a visa, a foreign national may seek admission to the United States and become an LPR when admitted at a port of entry (POE). These LPRs are referred to as new arrivals in this report. Eligible individuals who are present in the United States 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 generally are granted LPR status at the time of approval.⁵ These LPRs are referred to as adjustments of status in this report.

⁵ 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.

¹ 8 USC 1101(a)(20).

² In this report, “years” refer to U.S. fiscal years, which run from October 1 to September 30. For example, fiscal year 2016 began on October 1, 2015, and ended on September 30, 2016.

³ Additional context may be found in the 2016 Yearbook of Immigration Statistics and other OIS reports. Not all numbers reported are contained in the tables.

⁴ Partly in response to recommendations in the Government Accountability Office’s (GAO) report CGD-98-164, this year’s flow report clarifies that a large proportion of those becoming LPRs are already present in the United States in another status and do not represent new entries. Further, it is important to note that variable application processing time, including a slowdown in 1995 and 1996, affects the numbers becoming LPRs. The GAO report addresses conceptual issues with estimating the size of the LPR population, but that falls outside the scope of this flow report which discusses new LPRs rather than the LPR population as a whole.

Table 1.
New Lawful Permanent Residents: Fiscal Years 2014 to 2016

Type of admission	2016		2015		2014	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total	1,183,505	100.0	1,051,031	100.0	1,016,518	100.0
New arrivals	618,078	52.2	508,716	48.4	481,392	47.4
Adjustments of status . .	565,427	47.8	542,315	51.6	535,126	52.6

Source: U.S. Department of Homeland Security.



Homeland Security

Office of Immigration Statistics
OFFICE OF STRATEGY, POLICY & PLANS

Immediate Relatives of U.S. Citizens

The largest broad class of admission of new LPRs consists of immediate relatives of U.S. citizens, defined to include spouses, children, and parents of U.S. citizens age 21 and over.⁶ Immediate relatives of U.S. citizens are not subject to numerical limits and typically account for more than 40 percent of new LPRs annually.

Preference Immigration

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

Family-sponsored preferences consist of four categories of relatives:

- first-preference, a U.S. citizen's unmarried adult sons and daughters 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, a U.S. citizen's married sons and daughters and their spouses and children; and
- fourth-preference, a U.S. citizen's (age 21 years and over) brothers and sisters and their spouses and children.

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

Family-preference LPRs and immediate relatives are collectively referred to as family-based immigrants. All family-based immigrants must be petitioned by their U.S. citizen or LPR relative. Generally, that relative must financially sponsor the immigrant and sign 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 can be credited with 40 quarters of work.

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

- EB-1 priority workers (e.g., outstanding professors and researchers);
- EB-2 professionals with advanced degrees or aliens of exceptional ability;
- EB-3 skilled workers, professionals (without advanced degrees), and needed unskilled workers;
- EB-4 "special" immigrants (e.g., ministers, religious workers, and employees of the U.S. Government abroad); and
- EB-5 employment creation immigrants or "investors."

The employment-based preference limit is equal to 140,000 plus any unused visas in the family-sponsored preference classes from the previous year. EB-2 and EB-3 immigrants must be sponsored for a visa by a U.S. employer (subject to waivers in the case of certain EB-2 workers), and they are generally inadmissible unless the Secretary of Labor certifies that there are not sufficient U.S. workers who are able, willing, qualified, and available at the destination and that their employment will not adversely affect the wages and working conditions of

workers in the United States similarly employed. The other three types of employment-based immigrants may initiate their own visa applications and are not subject to the labor certification process. In general, investor immigrants must invest \$1,000,000 into a new commercial enterprise that will create at least ten full-time jobs. In certain areas with high unemployment, the investment amount may be as low as \$500,000, and in areas of very low unemployment, the required investment may be up to \$3,000,000.

In 2016, the limit on preference immigration was 366,338 which included 226,000 in the family-sponsored preference classes and 140,338 in the employment-based preference classes (see **APPENDIX**). The INA also specifies per-country limits equal to seven percent of the combined total number of visas allotted to family- and employment-based preferences. Dependent areas of foreign states are limited to two percent of this combined total.⁷ In 2016, these limits amounted to 25,644 preference immigrants from any single country and 7,327 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 persons granted LPR status within family- and employment-based classes during the preceding five years. The INA establishes an overall diversity visa limit of 55,000 per fiscal year, which has been reduced to 50,000 since 1999 under the provisions of the Nicaraguan Adjustment and Central American Relief Act (NACARA). The INA further limits the number of diversity visas per country to seven percent of the worldwide total, or 3,500 in 2016, and limits the number of diversity visas across six broad world regions based on regional migration levels during the preceding five years so that high-admission regions are eligible for fewer diversity visas. Nationals of eligible countries with a high school degree or its equivalent or with qualifying work experience may apply to the diversity visa program, and visas are distributed to successful applicants through a random selection, or lottery, system, and based on the allocations described above.

Refugee and Asylee Adjustments of Status

The United States provides refuge to persons who have been persecuted or have a well-founded fear of persecution through two programs: a refugee program for persons outside the United States and their immediate relatives, and an asylum program for persons in the United States and their immediate relatives.

Under the Refugee Act of 1980, the President, in consultation with Congress, establishes the number of persons who may be admitted to the United States as refugees each year. The ceiling on refugee admissions was set at 70,000 from 2003 to 2007, 80,000 from 2008 to 2011, 76,000 for 2012, back to 70,000 from 2013 through 2015, and 85,000 for 2016.

There is no numerical limit on the number of persons who may be granted asylum each year.

The INA requires refugees to apply for adjustment to LPR status after one year of residence in the United States. Asylees are eligible, but not

⁶Children include orphans adopted abroad or coming to the United States to be adopted.

⁷For more information regarding independent states, dependent areas, and visa allocations, see 9 Foreign Affairs Manual 503.2 at the Department of State's website.

required, to apply one year after they are granted asylum. Refugee and asylee adjustments of status are not subject to numerical limits.⁸

Other Admission Classes

Remaining admission classes are generally limited to persons admitted under special legislation and have remained fairly steady for the last several years, with a few exceptions. Arrivals of certain Iraqis and Afghans employed by the U.S. Government and their family members have increased sharply since 2013, and adjustments of status by T and U nonimmigrant visa holders have also increased since 2013 as the program has become more well-known and visa holders have become eligible for adjustment.

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 five years of LPR status in the United States (or three years for those married to a United States citizen) and successful completion of English language and civics tests (unless an exemption or waiver applies for one or both tests). Children in LPR status and under the age of 18 may automatically acquire citizenship through a U.S. citizen parent if that parent naturalizes.

TRENDS AND CHARACTERISTICS OF NEW LAWFUL PERMANENT RESIDENTS

The United States granted a total of 1,183,505 individuals LPR status in 2016, an increase of 13 percent from 1,051,031 in 2015. LPR new arrivals increased from 508,716 in 2015 to 618,078 in 2016. LPRs adjusting status increased slightly from 542,315 in 2015 to 565,427 in 2016, though they decreased as a percent of total LPRs. This decrease continued a trend in which the proportion of new LPRs who adjust status, as compared to the number of new arrivals, has decreased fairly steadily from 66 percent in 2005 to 48 percent in 2016.

The count of 566,706 immediate relatives of U.S. citizens becoming LPRs in 2016 is the highest number since 2006's count of 580,348. The number increased 22 percent from 2015 to 2016 and 36 percent since a recent low of 416,456 in 2014, which was the lowest count since 2003. The number of new employment-based preference LPRs decreased four percent between 2015 and 2016 and 14 percent since 2013, partially because of reductions in the annual limit for the employment preferences. Mexico was the leading country of birth of new LPRs in 2016. The number of individuals born there becoming LPRs increased 10 percent from 2015 to 2016 and 30 percent since 2014 to reach 174,534, the highest count since 2008's count of 189,989. Other demographic characteristics such as age, marital status, and intended destinations of settlement were largely unchanged.

Historical Trends

The annual LPR flow has exhibited a general upward trend since 1945, increasing from an average of 250,000 new LPRs per year during the 1950s to averaging over one million per year since 1999. These increases are partly explained by changes in immigration law,

⁸ Until 2005, an annual limit of 10,000 existed on the number of persons authorized to adjust status as asylees. The REAL ID Act removed that cap.

including elimination in 1965 of the National Origins system⁹ 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 increases in the number of new LPRs in 2005 and 2006 primarily resulted from changes to employment preferences in the American Competitiveness in the 21st Century Act (AC21) and the REAL ID Act, along with backlog reductions at USCIS (see *U.S. Legal Permanent Residents: 2006 Annual Flow Report*).

Class of Admission¹⁰

Family-sponsored immigrants (including immediate relatives of U.S. citizens and family-sponsored preferences) represented 68 percent of total new LPRs in 2016 (Table 2). The largest share of these (48 percent of total new LPRs in 2016) were immediate relatives of U.S. citizens, including spouses of U.S. citizens (26 percent of new LPRs), parents of adult U.S. citizens (15 percent), and children of U.S. citizens, including adopted children (7.5 percent). Fifty-five percent of immediate family members who became LPRs in 2016 were new arrivals while 45 percent adjusted their status. In the five-year period from 2012–2016, immediate relatives made up 45 percent of new LPRs and were evenly split between those newly arriving and those adjusting status.

Family-sponsored preference LPRs made up 20 percent of all new LPRs in 2016, similar to the proportion in the five-year period from 2012–2016, and the vast majority (94 percent) of them were new arrivals. In the five-year period from 2012–2016, 91 percent of new family-sponsored preference LPRs received their status upon arrival, while nine percent adjusted status while already in the United States. The second preference class (spouses and children of alien residents) accounted for 51 percent of new family-sponsored preference LPRs in 2016, and the fourth preference class (siblings of U.S. citizens) accounted for 28 percent.

Employment-based preference LPRs constituted 12 percent of all new LPRs in 2016, 82 percent of whom adjusted status while already in the United States. In the five-year period from 2012–2016, 85 percent of new employment-based LPRs were already in the country. The annual limit decreased for the third consecutive year due to declining numbers of unused family-preference visas between 2012 and 2015.¹¹ The first preference class (priority workers) and the second preference class (professionals with advanced degrees) accounted for 31 percent and 28 percent of new employment-based LPRs, respectively, in 2016.

Refugee adjustments in 2016 were only slightly higher than in 2015 but were 25 percent higher than in 2014, while asylee adjustments were 11 percent higher than in 2015 and similar to the level in 2014. Refugee adjustments are higher than refugee admissions partially because Cuban refugees are counted as refugees when adjusting status

⁹ 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.

¹⁰ In this report, "class of admission" does not refer to admission to the United States but rather admission to LPR status. This applies both to new arrivals (who receive admission to the United States at the same time as admission to LPR status) and to adjustments of status (who are already within the United States).

¹¹ On November 20, 2014, the President announced executive action directing USCIS to work with DOS to develop a method to allocate immigrant visas to ensure that all immigrant visas authorized by Congress are issued to eligible individuals when there is sufficient demand for such visas.

to LPR but often not when receiving admission to the United States.¹² Refugee and asylee adjustments represented 10 and 3.1 percent, respectively, of new LPRs in 2016. In the five-year period from 2012 to 2016, they accounted for 9.8 and 3.7 percent of new LPRs, respectively.

Diversity immigrants accounted for 4.2 percent of all new LPRs in 2016 and 4.5 percent in the five-year period from 2012–2016, of whom the vast majority (97 percent) were new arrivals.

Table 3 provides the proportion of those in a given broad class of admission who adjusted status as opposed to being new arrivals, and Table 4 provides cross tabulated proportions of total new LPRs by type and broad class of admission to highlight broad trends in how immigrants are gaining LPR status. Overall, the proportion of new LPRs adjusting status while already within the United States has steadily decreased from 65 percent in 2006 to 48 percent in 2016 (Table 3 and Figure 1). Changing patterns of adjustment of status versus new arrivals among immediate relatives and family sponsored preference classes, the two largest classes of admission, largely drive this trend. Sixty-two percent of those in immediate relative classes of admission adjusted status while already in the country in 2006, while 54 percent adjusted status in 2011 and just 45 percent in 2016. Adjustments represented 36 percent of those becoming new LPRs under family preference classes of admission in 2006, but only accounted for 12 percent in 2011 and 6.3 percent in 2016 (Table 3). Those becoming LPRs within employment preference classes of admission tend to adjust status while already in the United States. This was recently most pronounced in 2008, when over 90 percent of this

Table 2.

New Lawful Permanent Residents by Major Class of Admission: Fiscal Years 2014 to 2016

Class of admission	2016		2015		2014	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total	1,183,505	100.0	1,051,031	100.0	1,016,518	100.0
Family-sponsored immigrants	804,793	68.0	678,978	64.6	645,560	63.5
Immediate relatives of U.S. citizens	566,706	47.9	465,068	44.2	416,456	41.0
Spouses	304,358	25.7	265,367	25.2	238,852	23.5
Parents	173,854	14.7	132,961	12.7	116,387	11.4
Children*	88,494	7.5	66,740	6.3	61,217	6.0
Family-sponsored preferences	238,087	20.1	213,910	20.4	229,104	22.5
Unmarried sons/daughters of U.S. citizens.	22,072	1.9	24,533	2.3	25,686	2.5
Spouses and children of alien residents	121,267	10.2	104,892	10.0	105,641	10.4
Married sons/daughters of U.S. citizens.	27,392	2.3	24,271	2.3	25,830	2.5
Siblings of U.S. citizens.	67,356	5.7	60,214	5.7	71,947	7.1
Employment-based preferences	137,893	11.7	144,047	13.7	151,596	14.9
Priority workers	42,862	3.6	41,688	4.0	40,554	4.0
Professionals with advanced degrees	38,858	3.3	44,344	4.2	48,801	4.8
Skilled workers, professionals, unskilled workers.	35,933	3.0	37,243	3.5	43,156	4.2
Special immigrants	10,377	0.9	10,584	1.0	8,362	0.8
Investors	9,863	0.8	10,188	1.0	10,723	1.1
Diversity programs	49,865	4.2	47,934	4.6	53,490	5.3
Refugees and Asylees	157,425	13.3	151,995	14.5	134,242	13.2
Refugee adjustments.	120,216	10.2	118,431	11.3	96,066	9.5
Asylee adjustments	37,209	3.1	33,564	3.2	38,176	3.8
Parolees	15	-	23	-	95	-
Other categories	33,514	2.8	28,054	2.7	31,535	3.1
Children born abroad to alien residents.	92	-	403	-	594	0.1
NACARA [†] Section 202	34	-	49	-	70	-
Cancellation of removal	3,453	0.3	4,713	0.4	5,248	0.5
Subject to annual limit	2,567	0.2	3,720	0.4	3,592	0.4
Not subject to limit (NACARA [†] Section 203)	886	0.1	993	0.1	1,656	0.2
Haitian Refugee Immigrant Fairness Act	15	-	9	-	22	-
Other [‡]	29,920	2.5	22,880	2.2	25,601	2.5

*Includes adoptees.

[†]Nicaraguan Adjustment and Central American Relief Act of 1997.

[‡]Primarily consists of those admitted or adjusted under special legislation.

— Figures round to 0.0.

Source: U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

Table 3.

Adjustments of Status by Selected Major Classes of Admission: Fiscal Years 2006, 2011, and 2016

	2016		2011		2006	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total (All Classes of Admission)	565,427	47.8	580,092	54.6	819,248	64.7
Immediate relatives of U.S. citizens.	257,302	45.4	243,174	53.7	357,127	61.5
Family-sponsored preferences	15,116	6.3	28,346	12.1	142,841	35.9
Employment-based preferences.	113,640	82.4	124,384	89.3	121,587	76.4
Other classes	179,369	74.5	184,188	78.5	260,825	85.7

Note: Percent listed is the percentage of new LPRs in the given broad class of admission that are adjustments of status rather than new arrivals. For example, the 15,116 individuals adjusting status under family-sponsored preferences are 6.3 percent of the 238,087 new family-sponsored preference LPRs. Table 4 shows both the total combined new arrivals and adjustments of status for this broad class of admission (238,087) and the number of new arrivals (222,971).

Source: U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

group adjusted status while already in the United States. By 2016, the proportion had declined to 82 percent.

Region and Country of Birth

The leading regions of birth of new LPRs in 2016 were Asia (39 percent) and North America (36 percent) (Table 5). Together, Asia and North America have accounted for at least 70 percent of new LPRs each year since 2009. Between 2000 and 2016, the proportions of

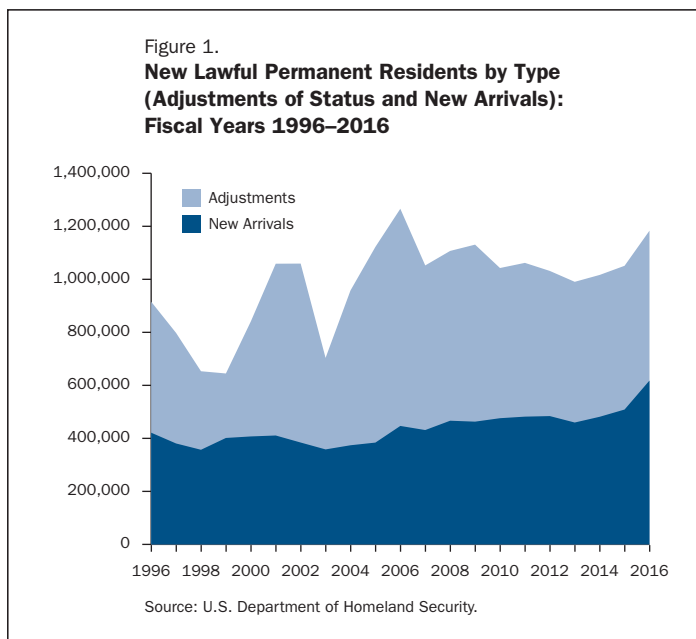
¹² See Table 13: Refugee Arrivals in the 2016 Yearbook of Immigration Statistics for refugee admissions.

Table 4.

New Lawful Permanent Residents by Type and Selected Major Classes of Admission: Fiscal Years 2006, 2011, and 2016

Class of Admission	2016			2011			2006		
	Total	Adjustments	New Arrivals	Total	Adjustments	New Arrivals	Total	Adjustments	New Arrivals
All classes of admission	1,183,505	565,427	618,078	1,062,040	580,092	481,948	1,266,129	819,248	446,881
(proportion of year total) . . .	(100.0)	(47.8)	(52.2)	(100.0)	(54.6)	(45.4)	(100.0)	(64.7)	(35.3)
Immediate relatives of U.S. citizens	566,706	257,302	309,404	453,158	243,174	209,984	580,348	357,127	223,221
(proportion of year total) . . .	(47.9)	(21.7)	(26.1)	(42.7)	(22.9)	(19.8)	(45.8)	(28.2)	(17.6)
Family-sponsored preferences .	238,087	15,116	222,971	234,931	28,346	206,585	222,229	79,709	142,520
(proportion of year total) . . .	(20.1)	(1.3)	(18.8)	(22.1)	(2.7)	(19.5)	(17.6)	(6.3)	(11.3)
Employment-based preferences	137,893	113,640	24,253	139,339	124,384	14,955	159,081	121,587	37,494
(proportion of year total) . . .	(11.7)	(9.6)	(2.0)	(13.1)	(11.7)	(1.4)	(12.6)	(9.6)	(3.0)
Other	240,819	179,369	61,450	234,612	184,188	50,424	304,471	260,825	43,646
(proportion of year total) . . .	(20.3)	(15.2)	(5.2)	(22.1)	(17.3)	(4.8)	(24.0)	(20.6)	(3.5)

Source: U.S. Department of Homeland Security.



new LPRs from Asia and Africa have increased by 6.8 and 4.3 percentage points, respectively, while the proportions from Europe and North America have respectively decreased by 6.9 and 4.2 percentage points.

In 2016, 15 percent of all persons granted LPR status were born in Mexico, which has been the leading source of new LPRs each year since 1978. Other prominent countries of birth were China (6.9 percent), Cuba (5.6 percent), India (5.5 percent), and the Dominican Republic (5.2 percent). These five countries accounted for 38 percent of all new LPRs in 2016.

State and Metropolitan Area of Residence

California was the state of residence of nearly one-fifth (19 percent) of persons granted LPR status in 2016 (Table 6). Other leading states of residence included New York (14 percent), Florida (12 percent), Texas (9.3 percent), and New Jersey (4.7 percent). Fifty-eight percent of new LPRs resided in these five states in 2016. These states, along with Illinois,

have been the top six states of residence for new LPRs every year since 1971. However, the proportion of LPRs settling in these six states has steadily decreased from 82 percent of all new LPRs in 1990 to 62 percent in 2016.

Numbers fluctuate from year to year and evaluating data across several years helps to reveal longer term trends. Comparison of the adjacent three-year periods 2011–2013 and 2014–2016 shows that the greatest recent proportional growth in new LPRs occurred in North Dakota with a 37 percent increase in new LPRs. At the same time, the general population increased by only 6.6 percent.¹³ Nebraska, Kentucky, Florida, Minnesota, Ohio, and Oregon followed with increases in new LPRs ranging from 15 to 17 percent between the two adjacent three-year windows. South Dakota showed the greatest proportional decline (12 percent), followed by Hawaii (8.6 percent) and New Hampshire (8.0 percent), despite positive growth in the general populations.

The leading metropolitan area of residence for new LPRs in 2016 was New York–Newark–Jersey City, NY–NJ–PA (17 percent) (Table 7).¹⁴ Other prominent metropolitan areas of residence included Los Angeles–Long Beach–Anaheim, CA (7.5 percent); Miami–Fort Lauderdale–West Palm Beach, FL (7.5 percent); Washington–Arlington–Alexandria, DC–VA–MD–WV (3.4 percent); Chicago–Naperville–Elgin, IL–IN–WI (3.4 percent); and Houston–The Woodlands–Sugar Land, TX (3.2 percent). These six metropolitan areas accounted for the residence of 42 percent of new LPRs in 2016.

Of the top 50 leading metropolitan areas for new LPRs in 2016, Miami–Fort Lauderdale–West Palm Beach, FL had the most new LPRs per capita, with 15 per 1,000 residents.¹⁵ Other leading metropolitan areas for new LPRs per capita included San Jose–Sunnyvale–Santa Clara, CA (10 per 1,000 residents), New York–Newark–Jersey City, NY–NJ–PA (9.7 per 1,000), and San Francisco–Oakland–Hayward, CA (7.8 per 1,000). Of the same top 50 metropolitan areas for new LPRs in 2016, Louisville/Jefferson County, KY–IN saw the largest proportional increase in new LPRs between the adjacent three-year periods 2011–2013 and

¹³ Population estimates used in this report’s analyses are as of July 1 of each respective year and from American Factfinder.

¹⁴ The most current CBSA definitions are available from OMB at <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/sites/default/files/omb/bulletins/2013/b13-01.pdf>

¹⁵ See Table 5: Persons Obtaining Lawful Permanent Resident Status by Core Based Statistical Area (CBSA) of Residence in the 2016 Yearbook of Immigration Statistics.

Table 5.**New Lawful Permanent Residents by Region and Country of Birth: Fiscal Years 2014 to 2016**

(Countries ranked by 2016 LPR flow)

Region/country of birth	2016		2015		2014	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
REGION						
Total	1,183,505	100.0	1,051,031	100.0	1,016,518	100.0
Africa	113,426	9.6	101,415	9.6	98,413	9.7
Asia	462,299	39.1	419,297	39.9	430,508	42.4
Europe	93,567	7.9	85,803	8.2	83,266	8.2
North America	427,293	36.1	366,126	34.8	324,354	31.9
Caribbean	182,151	15.4	146,753	14.0	133,952	13.2
Central America	57,343	4.8	47,711	4.5	44,403	4.4
Other North America	187,799	15.9	171,662	16.3	145,999	14.4
Oceania	5,588	0.5	5,404	0.5	5,112	0.5
South America	79,608	6.7	72,309	6.9	73,715	7.3
Unknown	1,724	0.1	677	0.1	1,150	0.1
COUNTRY						
Total	1,183,505	100.0	1,051,031	100.0	1,016,518	100.0
Mexico	174,534	14.7	158,619	15.1	134,052	13.2
China, People's Republic	81,772	6.9	74,558	7.1	76,089	7.5
Cuba	66,516	5.6	54,396	5.2	46,679	4.6
India	64,687	5.5	64,116	6.1	77,908	7.7
Dominican Republic	61,161	5.2	50,610	4.8	44,577	4.4
Philippines	53,287	4.5	56,478	5.4	49,996	4.9
Vietnam	41,451	3.5	30,832	2.9	30,283	3.0
Haiti	23,584	2.0	16,967	1.6	15,274	1.5
El Salvador	23,449	2.0	19,487	1.9	19,273	1.9
Jamaica	23,350	2.0	17,642	1.7	19,026	1.9
Korea, South	21,801	1.8	17,138	1.6	20,423	2.0
Pakistan	19,313	1.6	18,057	1.7	18,612	1.8
Iraq	18,904	1.6	21,107	2.0	19,153	1.9
Bangladesh	18,723	1.6	13,570	1.3	14,645	1.4
Colombia	18,610	1.6	17,316	1.6	18,175	1.8
Nigeria	14,380	1.2	11,542	1.1	12,828	1.3
Brazil	13,812	1.2	11,424	1.1	10,429	1.0
Honduras	13,302	1.1	9,274	0.9	8,156	0.8
Iran	13,298	1.1	13,114	1.2	11,615	1.1
Ethiopia	13,232	1.1	11,394	1.1	12,300	1.2
All other countries, including unknown	404,339	34.2	363,390	34.6	357,025	35.1

Source: U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

Table 6.**New Lawful Permanent Residents by State of Residence: Fiscal Years 2014 to 2016**

(Ranked by 2016 LPR flow)

State of residence	2016		2015		2014	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total	1,183,505	100.0	1,053,031	100.0	1,016,518	100.0
California	223,141	18.9	209,568	19.9	198,379	19.5
New York	159,878	13.5	130,010	12.4	141,406	13.9
Florida	136,337	11.5	118,873	11.3	109,310	10.8
Texas	110,651	9.3	99,727	9.5	95,295	9.4
New Jersey	56,187	4.7	49,801	4.7	51,609	5.1
Illinois	43,207	3.7	40,482	3.9	36,535	3.6
Massachusetts	35,706	3.0	28,535	2.7	29,776	2.9
Georgia	29,572	2.5	25,919	2.5	23,792	2.3
Virginia	29,242	2.5	27,622	2.6	28,477	2.8
Washington	27,304	2.3	24,765	2.4	22,710	2.2
Other*	332,280	28.1	295,729	28.1	279,229	27.5

*Includes unknown, U.S. territories, and armed forces posts.

Source: U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

2014–2016 (32 percent). The next largest proportional increases in new LPRs among leading metropolitan areas were in Cape Coral-Fort Myers, FL (30 percent), Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater, FL (25 percent), and Cincinnati, OH-KY-IN (23 percent). El Paso, TX saw the greatest proportional decrease (13 percent), followed by Urban Honolulu, HI (9.2 percent), and McAllen-Edinburg-Mission, TX (8.6 percent), despite positive growth in the general populations.

Age, Sex, and Marital Status

New LPRs have historically been younger than the native population of the United States. In 2016, the median age for new LPRs was 32 years, compared to 36 for the U.S. native population (Table 8).¹⁶

New LPRs are more likely to be female (54 percent) than the native U.S. population (51 percent) (Table 9).¹⁷ The majority (58 percent) of new LPRs were married, compared with 37 percent of the native population (Table 10).¹⁸

DATA

This report uses data from the USCIS Computer Linked Application Information Management System (CLAIMS) and Electronic Immigration System (ELIS), which replaced CLAIMS as the system maintaining biographic information for new arrivals admitted during or after April of 2013.¹⁹ CLAIMS and ELIS maintain information from applications for LPR status: DOS's DS-230 *Application for Immigrant Visa and Alien Registration* or DS-260 *Electronic Application for Immigrant Visa and Alien Registration* for applicants living abroad and USCIS' I-485 *Application to Register Permanent Residence or Adjust Status* for applicants present in the United States.

The data fields in both CLAIMS and ELIS include class of admission, date the applicant was granted LPR status, country of birth, country of last residence, date of birth, marital status, location of residence within the United States, occupation, and, for adjustments of status, prior nonimmigrant status and date of most recent entry as a nonimmigrant.

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

¹⁶ Calculated from the March 2016 Current Population Survey (CPS) Annual Social and Economic Supplement (ASEC) from the U.S. Census Bureau.¹⁷ Ibid.¹⁸ Ibid.¹⁹ While USCIS is currently addressing ongoing issues with ELIS (see Office of Inspector General report OIG-16-48), the system contains incomplete data from a subset of immigration benefit applications.

the propensity to immigrate from the data presented in this report.

APPENDIX

PREFERENCE IMMIGRATION LIMITS²⁰

Worldwide limits on the number of family- and employment-based visas are determined by a complex set of rules defined in section 201 of the INA. Section 202 of the INA describes per-country limits based on the worldwide total.

Family-sponsored Preference Limit

The annual limit for family-sponsored preference immigration is calculated as 480,000 people minus the number of aliens who were issued visas or who adjusted to LPR status in the previous fiscal 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 aliens paroled into the United States in the second preceding fiscal year, and plus (5) unused visas in the employment-preference classes in the preceding year.

The family-sponsored preference limit may not fall below a minimum of 226,000 in any year. A total of 484,005 new LPRs were issued visas or adjusted status in 2015 under categories (1) through (4). At the same time, visa issuances in the employment-preference classes were under their annual limit by 853 in 2015 (less than one percent of the total annual limit). Thus, the calculated limit for family-sponsored preference classes in 2016 was -3,152 (480,000 minus 484,005 plus 853), and since this number was below 226,000, the family-sponsored preferences limit was set at 226,000. The limit for each category is shown in 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 fiscal year. With 338 unused numbers in the family-sponsored preference classes in 2015, the 2016 employment-based

Table 7.

New Lawful Permanent Residents by Metropolitan Area of Residence: Fiscal Years 2014 to 2016

(Ranked by 2016 LPR flow)

Metropolitan area of residence	2016		2015		2014	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total	1,183,505	100.0	1,053,031	100.0	1,016,518	100.0
New York-Newark-Jersey City, NY-NJ-PA	195,593	16.5	162,168	15.4	174,723	17.2
Los Angeles-Long Beach-Anaheim, CA	88,743	7.5	82,979	7.9	80,527	7.9
Miami-Fort Lauderdale-West Palm Beach, FL	88,651	7.5	77,647	7.4	72,038	7.1
Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV	40,642	3.4	37,340	3.6	39,532	3.9
Chicago-Naperville-Elgin, IL-IN-WI	39,749	3.4	36,658	3.5	33,038	3.3
Houston-The Woodlands-Sugar Land, TX	37,777	3.2	34,591	3.3	33,856	3.3
San Francisco-Oakland-Hayward, CA	36,476	3.1	34,152	3.2	32,904	3.2
Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington, TX	33,605	2.8	29,660	2.8	28,780	2.8
Boston-Cambridge-Newton, MA-NH	28,677	2.4	22,836	2.2	24,026	2.4
Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Roswell, GA	23,620	2.0	20,875	2.0	19,626	1.9
Other, including unknown	569,972	48.2	512,125	48.7	477,468	47.0

Notes: Metropolitan areas defined based on the 2013 update of Core Based Statistical Areas (CBSAs) definitions. Numbers from previous years may differ from previously published figures. Source: U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

Table 8.

New Lawful Permanent Residents by Age: Fiscal Years 2014 to 2016

Age	2016		2015		2014	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total	1,183,505	100.0	1,051,031	100.0	1,016,518	100.0
Under 5 years	41,863	3.5	37,267	3.5	37,578	3.7
5 to 14 years	128,776	10.9	112,674	10.7	106,180	10.4
15 to 24 years	194,230	16.4	172,766	16.4	169,844	16.7
25 to 34 years	286,454	24.2	258,528	24.6	255,148	25.1
35 to 44 years	213,952	18.1	201,674	19.2	196,709	19.4
45 to 54 years	148,185	12.5	127,551	12.1	121,747	12.0
55 to 64 years	98,517	8.3	81,870	7.8	75,830	7.5
65 years and over	71,528	6.0	58,696	5.6	53,080	5.2
Unknown age	-	-	5	-	402	-
Median age (years)	32	NA	32	NA	32	NA

NA Not applicable. — Figure rounds to 0.0. Source: U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

Table 9.

New Lawful Permanent Residents by Sex: Fiscal Years 2014 to 2016

Sex	2016		2015		2014	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total	1,183,505	100.0	1,051,031	100.0	1,016,518	100.0
Female	644,002	54.4	569,536	54.2	547,361	53.8
Male	539,472	45.6	481,485	45.8	468,653	46.1
Unknown	31	-	10	-	504	-

— Figure rounds to 0.0. Source: U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

Table 10.

New Lawful Permanent Residents by Marital Status: Fiscal Years 2014 to 2016

Marital status	2016		2015		2014	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total	1,183,505	100.0	1,051,031	100.0	1,016,518	100.0
Married	688,392	58.2	615,259	58.5	594,216	58.5
Single	401,561	33.9	363,590	34.6	365,309	35.9
Other*	83,259	7.0	68,824	6.5	53,306	5.2
Unknown	10,293	0.9	3,358	0.3	3,687	0.4

*Includes persons who are widowed, divorced, or separated. Source: U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

²⁰ The Bureau of Consular Affairs, U.S. Department of State, is responsible for determining these limits. See the monthly Visa Bulletin for more information on the limits.

preference limit was 140,338. 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 2016, these limits were 40,137 and 9,964.

Per Country and Dependent Area Limits

A limit of seven percent of the combined total visa limits for family-sponsored and employment-based preference classes is set for independent countries, and a limit of two percent is set for dependent areas. The 2016 per country limit for independent foreign states was 25,644 (seven percent of 366,338—the sum of the 2016 employment-based and family-based preference limits), and the limit for dependencies was 7,327 (two percent of 366,338).

Table A1.

Annual Limits for Preference and Diversity Immigrants: Fiscal Year 2016

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†
Third: Married sons and daughters of U.S. citizens	23,400†
Fourth: Brothers and sisters of U.S. citizens (at least 21 years of age)	65,000†
Employment-based preferences	140,338
First: Priority workers	40,137‡
Second: Professionals with advanced degrees or aliens of exceptional ability	40,137‡
Third: Skilled workers, professionals, and needed unskilled workers	40,137‡
Fourth: Certain special immigrants	9,964
Fifth: Employment creation (“investors”)	9,964
Diversity	50,000

*Plus unused family fourth preference visas.

†Plus unused higher preference visas.

‡Plus unused employment fourth and fifth preference visas.

Source: U.S. Department of State.