

U.S. Lawful Permanent Residents: 2018

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Immigration law defines a lawful permanent resident (LPR) or “green card” recipient 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. The *2018 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 2018.^{2,3}

SUMMARY

Nearly 1.1 million persons became LPRs in 2018. Just over half of these LPRs were already present in the United States when they were granted lawful permanent residence. Almost two-thirds 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, Cuba, and the People’s Republic of China (China).

THE LAWFUL IMMIGRATION PROCESS

The Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) provides various classifications for obtaining LPR status, including but not limited to foreign nationals who are sponsored by a close family member who is a U.S. citizen or LPR, are sponsored by an employer or make investments that create a certain number of U.S. jobs, are from countries with relatively low levels of immigration to the United States, or are granted refugee or asylee status. Everyone seeking LPR status is subject to a background check before adjudication.

New Arrivals versus Adjustments of Status

Two paths to LPR status are available, depending on whether the applicant is applying for an immigrant visa abroad or seeking LPR status from within the United States. 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 an immigrant visa, a foreign national may seek admission to the United States and become an LPR when admitted at a port of entry (POE). This report refers to these LPRs as new arrivals. 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.⁴ This report refers to these LPRs as *adjustments of status*.

Immediate Relatives of U.S. Citizens

The largest category of new LPRs consists of immediate relatives of U.S. citizens, defined to include spouses, children under age 21, parents of U.S. citizens who are age 21 and over, and certain widows or widowers of U.S. citizens.⁵ 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 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 2018).

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.

³ The *2018 Yearbook of Immigration Statistics* and other OIS reports contain additional context. Not all numbers reported are contained in this report’s tables.

⁴ 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.

⁵ Children include orphans adopted abroad or coming to the United States to be adopted.



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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), a U.S. citizen's (age 21 years and over) brothers and sisters 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 226,000.

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., certain multinational executives and managers, aliens of extraordinary ability, outstanding professors and researchers, and multinational executives and managers);
- EB-2 professionals with advanced degrees or aliens of exceptional ability;
- EB-3 skilled workers (e.g., those with at least two years of training or experience), professionals (those who hold baccalaureate degrees), and unskilled workers (e.g., those with less than two 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 employment creation immigrants or "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 but not all EB-1, EB-2, and EB-3 immigrants must be sponsored by a U.S. employer. Most EB-2 and EB-3 petitions require that first the Secretary 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. Some employment-based immigrants may self-petition and are not subject to the labor certification and job offer requirements. Investor immigrants, in general, must invest at least \$1,000,000 into a new commercial enterprise that will create at least 10 full-time jobs for qualifying employees. In certain rural areas or areas with high unemployment, the required minimum investment amount is \$500,000.

In 2018, the limit on preference immigration was 366,292, which included 226,000 in the family-sponsored preference categories and 140,292 in the employment-based preference categories (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.⁶ In 2018, these limits amounted to 25,640 preference immigrants from any single country and 7,326 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 categories 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 2018, 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 must have a high school degree or its 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 persons 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. Aliens who have experienced or may experience this type of harm may apply for protection outside the United States as a refugee, alongside their spouse and/or children. If the alien is physically present in the United States or is arriving at a POE, that individual may also apply for this protection as an asylum applicant, also alongside a spouse and/or children.

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 between 70,000 and 85,000 each year from 2003 to 2016, was initially set at 110,000 in 2017 and later reduced to 50,000 through a pair of Executive Orders,⁷ and was set at 45,000 in 2018. There is no numerical limit on the number of persons who may be granted asylum each year.

⁶ For more information regarding independent states, dependent areas, and visa allocations, see 9 Foreign Affairs Manual 503.2 at the DOS website.

⁷ Executive Orders 13769 and 13780, "Protecting the Nation from Foreign Terrorist Entry into the United States."

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 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 Categories

Remaining admission categories are generally limited to persons admitted under special legislation, and admission or adjustment may be subject to numerical limits. In 2000, the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act (including the Battered Immigrant Women’s Protection Act) created the T and U nonimmigrant statuses permitting victims of trafficking and other crime victims to be admitted as nonimmigrants and then to petition for adjustment to LPR status. In 2008 and 2009, respectively, special immigrant visas were authorized for certain Iraqis and Afghans employed by the U.S. Government and their family members. Certain aliens admitted as parolees may adjust status from within the United States and children born abroad to alien residents 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 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.

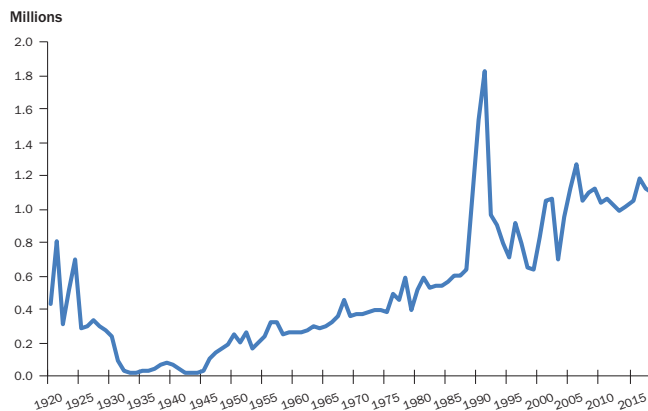
TRENDS AND CHARACTERISTICS OF NEW LAWFUL PERMANENT RESIDENTS

Historical Trends and Characteristics

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 (Figure 1). These increases are partly explained by changes in immigration law, 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 aliens 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

Figure 1.

New Lawful Permanent Residents: 1920 to 2018



Source: U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

the REAL ID Act, along with backlog reductions at USCIS (see U.S. *Legal Permanent Residents: 2006 Annual Flow Report*).

The United States has granted about 10.7 million individuals LPR status in the 10 year period from 2009 to 2018. Of these, 53 percent were already present in the United States in another status and 47 percent were new arrivals. Forty-five percent received LPR status as an immediate relative of a U.S. citizen, 21 percent under a family-sponsored preference, and 13 percent under an employment-based preference. The largest shares of new LPRs in this period were born in Mexico (14 percent), China (6.9 percent), and India (6.1 percent).

The United States granted LPR status to 1,096,611 individuals in 2018, a decrease of 2.7 percent from 1,127,167 in 2017 and a decrease of 7.3 percent from 1,183,505 in 2016.

Type and Class of Admission¹⁰

The proportion of new LPRs who are new arrivals, as compared to the number adjusting status, increased fairly steadily from 34 percent in 2005 to 52 percent in 2016, but decreased the following two years to 48 percent in 2018 (Table 1, Figure 2).

Family-sponsored immigrants (including immediate relatives of U.S. citizens and family-sponsored preferences) represented 63 percent of total new LPRs in 2018 (Table 2). The largest

Table 1.

New Lawful Permanent Residents: FY 2016 to 2018

Category of admission	2016		2017		2018	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total	1,183,505	100.0	1,127,167	100.0	1,096,611	100.0
New arrivals	618,078	52.2	578,081	51.3	528,727	48.2
Adjustments of status . .	565,427	47.8	549,086	48.7	567,884	51.8

Source: U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

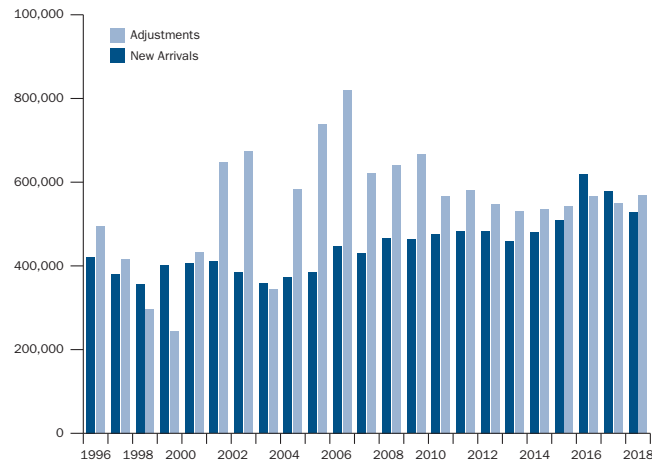
⁸ Until 2005, an annual limit of 10,000 existed on the number of persons authorized to adjust status as asylees. The REAL ID Act removed that cap.

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" refers to admission to LPR status rather than admission to the United States. "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).

Figure 2.

New Lawful Permanent Residents by Type (Adjustments of Status and New Arrivals): FY 1996 to 2018



Source: U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

Table 2.

New Lawful Permanent Residents by Major Class of Admission: FY 2016 to 2018

Class of admission	2016		2017		2018	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total	1,183,505	100.0	1,127,167	100.0	1,096,611	100.0
Family-sponsored immigrants	804,793	68.0	748,746	66.4	695,524	63.4
Immediate relatives of U.S. citizens	566,706	47.9	516,508	45.8	478,961	43.7
Spouses	304,358	25.7	292,909	26.0	268,149	24.5
Parents	173,854	14.7	148,610	13.2	144,018	13.1
Children*	88,494	7.5	74,989	6.7	66,794	6.1
Family-sponsored preferences	238,087	20.1	232,238	20.6	216,563	19.7
Unmarried sons/daughters of U.S. citizens	22,072	1.9	26,219	2.3	27,251	2.5
Spouses and children of alien residents	121,267	10.2	113,500	10.1	109,841	10.0
Married sons/daughters of U.S. citizens	27,392	2.3	23,260	2.1	19,531	1.8
Siblings of U.S. citizens	67,356	5.7	69,259	6.1	59,940	5.5
Employment-based preferences	137,893	11.7	137,855	12.2	138,171	12.6
Priority workers	42,862	3.6	41,060	3.6	39,514	3.6
Professionals with advanced degrees	38,858	3.3	39,331	3.5	40,095	3.7
Skilled workers, professionals, unskilled workers	35,933	3.0	38,083	3.4	39,228	3.6
Special immigrants	10,377	0.9	9,504	0.8	9,711	0.9
Investors	9,863	0.8	9,877	0.9	9,623	0.9
Diversity programs	49,865	4.2	51,592	4.6	45,350	4.1
Refugees and Asylees	157,425	13.3	146,003	13.0	185,909	17.0
Refugee adjustments	120,216	10.2	120,356	10.7	155,734	14.2
Asylee adjustments	37,209	3.1	25,647	2.3	30,175	2.8
Parolees	15	-	26	-	14	-
Other categories	33,514	2.8	42,945	3.8	31,643	2.9
Children born abroad to alien residents	92	-	75	-	69	-
Certain Iraqis and Afghans employed by U.S. Government and their spouses and children	12,151	1.0	19,191	1.7	10,297	0.9
Cancellation of removal	3,453	0.3	3,539	0.3	4,421	0.4
Subject to annual limit	2,567	0.2	2,849	0.3	3,695	0.3
Not subject to limit (NACARA† Section 203)	886	0.1	690	0.1	726	0.1
Victims of human trafficking	1,069	0.1	1,317	0.1	1,208	0.1
Victims of crimes and their spouses and children	16,184	1.4	18,065	1.6	15,012	1.4
Other‡	565	-	758	0.1	636	0.1

*Includes adoptees.

†Nicaraguan Adjustment and Central American Relief Act of 1997.

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

— Figure rounds to 0.0.

Source: U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

share of these (44 percent of total new LPRs in 2018) were immediate relatives of U.S. citizens, half of whom were new arrivals. Spouses of U.S. citizens made up 24 percent of new LPRs; parents made up 13 percent; and children, including adopted children, made up 6.1 percent. The number of immediate relatives of U.S. citizens becoming LPRs and their proportion of total new LPRs decreased in both 2017 and 2018, but the proportion has remained between 41 and 48 percent of total new LPRs each year since 2006. In the 10 year period from 2009 to 2018, immediate relatives made up 45 percent of new LPRs, and just under half (49 percent) were new arrivals.

Family-sponsored preference LPRs made up 20 percent of all new LPRs in 2018, and the vast majority (94 percent) were new arrivals. The majority of family preference LPRs were in the second preference class (spouses and children of alien residents), and they made up 10 percent of new LPRs in 2018, while the fourth preference class (siblings of U.S. citizens) accounted for 5.5 percent. In the 10 year period from 2009 to 2018, family-sponsored preference LPRs made up 21 percent of new LPRs, and 90 percent were new arrivals.

Employment-based preference LPRs constituted almost 13 percent of all new LPRs in 2018, and just 20 percent were new arrivals. In the 10 year period from 2009 to 2018, employment-based LPRs made up 13 percent of new LPRs, and 14 percent were new arrivals. The largest share of employment preference LPRs were in the second preference class (professionals with advanced degrees), and they made up 3.7 percent of new LPRs in 2018. The first preference (priority workers) and the third preference (skilled workers, professionals, and unskilled workers) each made up 3.6 percent.

Refugee adjustments in 2018 accounted for 14 percent of new LPRs in 2018, and asylee adjustments accounted for 2.8 percent. In the 10 year period from 2009 to 2018, they accounted for 10 percent and 3.8 percent of new LPRs, respectively.

Diversity immigrants accounted for 4.1 percent of all new LPRs in 2018, slightly less than in in the 10 year period from 2009 to 2018 (4.5 percent). The vast majority of diversity immigrants are new arrivals (97 percent over the last ten years).

Region and Country of Birth

The leading regions of birth of new LPRs in 2018 were North America (including the Caribbean and Central America) (38 percent) and Asia (36 percent) (Table 3). Together, Asia and North America have accounted for at least 70 percent of new LPRs each year since 2009.

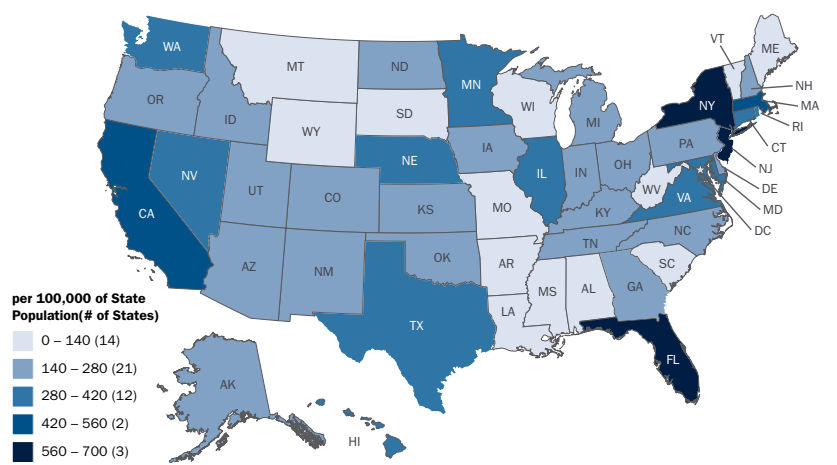
In 2018, 15 percent of all persons granted LPR status were born in Mexico, just under half of whom (48 percent) were new arrivals (Tables 3 and 4). Mexico has been the leading source of new LPRs each year since 1978.

Next-leading countries of birth of new LPRs in 2018 were Cuba (7.0 percent), China (5.9 percent), India (5.5 percent), the Dominican Republic (5.2 percent), the Philippines (4.3 percent), and Vietnam (3.1 percent). Of new LPRs in 2018 born in these countries, Cuban-born LPRs had the lowest proportion who gained LPR status as new arrivals (8.2 percent), while Dominican-born had the highest proportion (86 percent). Most Cuban-born LPRs (91 percent) adjusted as refugees,¹¹ while the vast majority of Dominican-born (99 percent) gained LPR status based on a family relationship with a U.S. citizen or LPR. These seven leading countries of birth in 2018 were also the leading countries of birth of new LPRs over the 10 year period from 2009 to 2018, together accounting for 45 percent of new LPRs during this period.

State and Metropolitan Area of Residence

California was the state of residence of nearly one-fifth (18 percent) of persons granted LPR status in 2018, and half of new LPRs residing in California were new arrivals (Tables 5 and 6). The next leading states of residence for new LPRs in 2018 were New York (12 percent), Florida (12 percent), Texas (9.5 percent), New Jersey (5.0 percent), and Illinois (3.5 percent). Of these states, New York had the highest proportion (62 percent) of new arrivals, while Florida had the lowest proportion (34 percent). While these 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 steadily decreased from 82 percent in 1990 to 60 percent in 2018. Four of these states—New York, Florida, New Jersey, and California—were also the four leading states for new LPRs per capita in 2018, each having between 500 and 700 new

Figure 3.
New LPRs per Capita by State of Residence: FY 2018



Source: U.S. Department of Homeland Security and U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division.

¹¹ Though Cuban refugees are often not admitted to the United States as refugees, and so they are not counted toward annual refugee admissions and ceilings, they are often counted as adjusting to LPR status as refugees.

Table 3.

New Lawful Permanent Residents by Region and Country of Birth: FY 2016 to 2018

(Countries ranked by 2018 LPR flow)

Region/country of birth	2016		2017		2018	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
REGION						
Total	1,183,505	100.0	1,127,167	100.0	1,096,611	100.0
Africa	113,426	9.6	118,824	10.5	115,736	10.6
Asia	462,299	39.1	424,743	37.7	397,187	36.2
Europe	93,567	7.9	84,335	7.5	80,024	7.3
North America	427,293	36.1	413,650	36.7	418,991	38.2
Caribbean	182,151	15.4	174,591	15.5	182,408	16.6
Central America	57,343	4.8	56,585	5.0	64,519	5.9
Other North America	187,799	15.9	182,474	16.2	172,064	15.7
Oceania	5,588	0.5	5,071	0.4	4,653	0.4
South America	79,608	6.7	79,076	7.0	78,869	7.2
Unknown	1,724	0.1	1,468	0.1	1,151	0.1
COUNTRY						
Total	1,183,505	100.0	1,127,167	100.0	1,096,611	100.0
Mexico	174,534	14.7	170,581	15.1	161,858	14.8
Cuba	66,516	5.6	65,028	5.8	76,486	7.0
China, People's Republic	81,772	6.9	71,565	6.3	65,214	5.9
India	64,687	5.5	60,394	5.4	59,821	5.5
Dominican Republic	61,161	5.2	58,520	5.2	57,413	5.2
Philippines	53,287	4.5	49,147	4.4	47,258	4.3
Vietnam	41,451	3.5	38,231	3.4	33,834	3.1
El Salvador	23,449	2.0	25,109	2.2	28,326	2.6
Haiti	23,584	2.0	21,824	1.9	21,360	1.9
Jamaica	23,350	2.0	21,905	1.9	20,347	1.9
Korea, South	21,801	1.8	19,194	1.7	17,676	1.6
Colombia	18,610	1.6	17,956	1.6	17,545	1.6
Pakistan	19,313	1.6	17,408	1.5	15,802	1.4
Bangladesh	18,723	1.6	14,693	1.3	15,717	1.4
Guatemala	13,002	1.1	13,198	1.2	15,638	1.4
Brazil	13,812	1.2	14,989	1.3	15,394	1.4
Syria	4,800	0.4	5,877	0.5	14,686	1.3
Iraq	18,904	1.6	14,203	1.3	14,351	1.3
Nigeria	14,380	1.2	13,539	1.2	13,952	1.3
Honduras	13,302	1.1	11,387	1.0	13,794	1.3
All other countries, including unknown	413,067	34.9	402,419	35.7	370,139	33.8

Source: U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

Table 4.

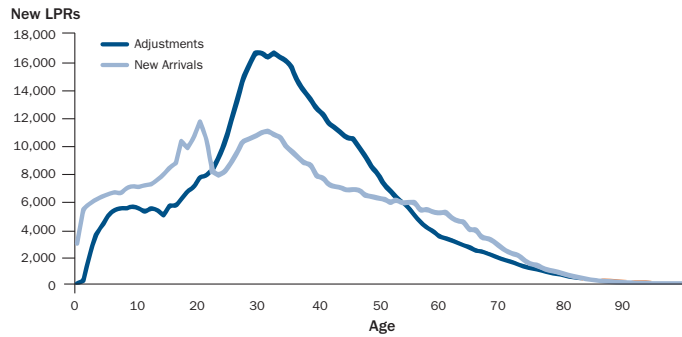
Type of Admission of New Lawful Permanent Residents for Top Ten Countries of Birth: FY 2018

Country of birth	Total	Adjustments		New Arrivals	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Mexico	161,858	84,552	52.2	77,306	47.8
Cuba	76,486	70,188	91.8	6,298	8.2
China, People's Republic	65,214	36,208	55.5	29,006	44.5
India	59,821	32,456	54.3	27,365	45.7
Dominican Republic	57,413	8,046	14.0	49,367	86.0
Philippines	47,258	15,414	32.6	31,844	67.4
Vietnam	33,834	7,041	20.8	26,793	79.2
El Salvador	28,326	12,114	42.8	16,212	57.2
Haiti	21,360	6,053	28.3	15,307	71.7
Jamaica	20,347	7,370	36.2	12,977	63.8

Source: U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

Figure 4.

New Lawful Permanent Residents by Type and Age: FY 2018



Source: U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

were evenly divided between new arrivals and adjustments of status, the other states with large proportional declines saw larger changes in adjustments of status. Of these states or territories experiencing recent declines in new LPRs, only Puerto Rico experienced a concurrent overall population decline.

The leading metropolitan area of residence for new LPRs in 2018 was New York-Newark-Jersey City, NY-NJ-PA (15 percent) (Table 7). Other prominent metropolitan areas of residence included Miami-Fort Lauderdale-Pompano Beach, FL (7.3 percent); Los Angeles-Long Beach-Anaheim, CA (6.8 percent); Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV (3.4 percent); Houston-The Woodlands-Sugar Land, TX (3.3 percent); and Chicago-Naperville-Elgin, IL-IN-WI (3.2 percent).

Table 5.

New Lawful Permanent Residents by State of Residence: FY 2016 to 2018

(Ranked by 2018 LPR flow)

State of residence	2016		2017		2018	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total	1,183,505	100.0	1,127,167	100.0	1,096,611	100.0
California	223,141	18.9	214,243	19.0	200,897	18.3
New York	159,878	13.5	139,409	12.4	134,839	12.3
Florida	136,337	11.5	127,609	11.3	130,405	11.9
Texas	110,651	9.3	110,126	9.8	104,515	9.5
New Jersey	56,187	4.7	54,440	4.8	54,424	5.0
Illinois	43,207	3.7	40,530	3.6	38,287	3.5
Massachusetts	35,706	3.0	37,010	3.3	33,174	3.0
Virginia	29,242	2.5	29,466	2.6	27,426	2.5
Georgia	29,572	2.5	26,242	2.3	26,725	2.4
Pennsylvania	27,217	2.3	27,762	2.5	26,078	2.4
Other*	332,367	28.1	320,330	28.4	319,841	29.2

*Includes unknown, U.S. territories, and Armed Forces posts.
Source: U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

LPRs per 100,000 population (Figure 3).¹² The next leading states for new LPRs per capita in 2018 were Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Maryland. West Virginia, Montana, and Mississippi had the fewest new LPRs per capita, each with fewer than 60 new LPRs per 100,000 population.

Numbers of new LPRs fluctuate from year to year and evaluating data pooled across several years helps to reveal longer-term trends. Comparison of the numbers of new LPRs in two adjacent five year periods—from 2009 to 2013 and from 2014 to 2018—shows that the greatest recent proportional growth in new LPRs occurred in North Dakota with 47 percent more new LPRs in 2014-2018 compared to 2009-2013. Kentucky, Nebraska, Iowa, Ohio, Oklahoma, and North Carolina followed with increases of 14 to 33 percent between the two periods. In comparison the country as a whole saw 4.1 percent more LPRs admissions in the most recent period.

Hawaii and Guam showed the greatest proportional declines (each with about 14 percent fewer new LPRs in 2014-2018 versus 2009-2013), followed by Puerto Rico, South Dakota, and New Hampshire (each with just under ten percent fewer new LPRs). While Hawaii's and Guam's declines in new LPRs

Of the top 25 leading metropolitan areas for new LPRs in 2018, Miami-Fort Lauderdale-Pompano Beach, FL; San Jose-Sunnyvale-Santa Clara, CA; New York-Newark-Jersey City, NY-NJ-PA; San Francisco-Oakland-Berkeley, CA; and Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV metropolitan areas had the most new LPRs per capita, each with over 600 new LPRs per 100,000 population.¹³

Age, Sex, and Marital Status

New LPRs have historically been younger than the native-born population of the United States. In 2018, the median age for new LPRs was 33 years, compared to 36 for the U.S. native-born population (Table 8).¹⁴ While the median age for those gaining LPR status as new arrivals in 2018 was 31 and the median age of those adjusting status was 34, new arrivals predominated amongst new LPRs aged 21 years or younger

¹² State population estimates used in this report's analyses are as of July 1, 2018 and from American Factfinder.

¹³ Per capita new LPR counts by CBSA are rough as new LPR counts in this report's analyses use the most current CBSA definitions, updated in September 2018 (available from OMB at <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Bulletin-18-04.pdf>), while overall 2018 Core Based Statistical Areas (CBSA) population estimates use the Census Bureau's April 2019 release based on OMB's August 2017 definitions.

¹⁴ Calculated from the March 2018 Current Populations Survey (CPS) Annual Social and Economic Supplement (ASEC) from the U.S. Census Bureau.

Table 6.

Type of Admission of New Lawful Permanent Residents for Top Ten States of Residence: FY 2018

State of residence	Total	Adjustments		New Arrivals	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent
California	200,897	99,575	49.6	101,322	50.4
New York	134,839	51,301	38.0	83,538	62.0
Florida	130,405	85,605	65.6	44,800	34.4
Texas	104,515	57,771	55.3	46,744	44.7
New Jersey	54,424	23,925	44.0	30,499	56.0
Illinois	38,287	18,518	48.4	19,769	51.6
Massachusetts	33,174	14,531	43.8	18,643	56.2
Virginia	27,426	12,215	44.5	15,211	55.5
Georgia	26,725	13,239	49.5	13,486	50.5
Pennsylvania	26,078	11,192	42.9	14,886	57.1

Source: U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

Table 7.

New Lawful Permanent Residents by Metropolitan Area of Residence: FY 2016 to 2018

(Ranked by 2018 LPR flow)

Metropolitan area of residence	2016		2017		2018	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total	1,183,505	100.0	1,127,167	100.0	1,096,611	100.0
New York-Newark-Jersey City, NY-NJ-PA	194,008	16.4	173,005	15.3	168,931	15.4
Miami-Fort Lauderdale-Pompano Beach, FL	88,651	7.5	80,133	7.1	80,341	7.3
Los Angeles-Long Beach-Anaheim, CA	88,743	7.5	82,470	7.3	74,032	6.8
Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV	40,644	3.4	39,936	3.5	37,796	3.4
Houston-The Woodlands-Sugar Land, TX	37,777	3.2	38,686	3.4	36,263	3.3
Chicago-Naperville-Elgin, IL-IN-WI	39,749	3.4	36,831	3.3	35,045	3.2
San Francisco-Oakland-Berkeley, CA	36,476	3.1	35,420	3.1	31,918	2.9
Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington, TX	33,529	2.8	34,533	3.1	28,915	2.6
Boston-Cambridge-Newton, MA-NH	28,676	2.4	29,907	2.7	26,411	2.4
Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Alpharetta, GA	23,620	2.0	21,341	1.9	21,334	1.9
Other	571,632	48.3	554,905	49.2	555,625	50.7

Notes: Metropolitan areas defined based on the 2018 update of Core Based Statistical Areas (CBSA) 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: FY 2016 to 2018

Age	2016		2017		2018	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total	1,183,505	100.0	1,127,167	100.0	1,096,611	100.0
0 to 17 years	222,836	18.8	212,364	18.8	208,683	19.0
18 to 24 years	142,033	12.0	133,495	11.8	125,852	11.5
25 to 34 years	286,454	24.2	278,821	24.7	262,281	23.9
35 to 44 years	213,952	18.1	209,343	18.6	210,160	19.2
45 to 54 years	148,185	12.5	142,128	12.6	142,407	13.0
55 to 64 years	98,517	8.3	89,456	7.9	87,007	7.9
65 and over	71,528	6.0	61,560	5.5	60,221	5.5
Median age (years)	32	NA	32	NA	33	NA

NA Not applicable. Source: U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

and those aged 54 to 82 years, while adjustments predominated amongst those new LPRs aged 22 to 53 years as well as those aged 83 years or more (Table 8, Figure 4). The age group of 22 to 53 years accounted for just over two-thirds (68 percent) of adjustments in 2018, while it only accounted for half of new arrivals.

A higher proportion of new LPRs are female (53 percent) than the native-born U.S. population (51 percent) (Table 9).¹⁵ The majority (57 percent) of new LPRs were married, compared with 38 percent of the native-born population (Table 10).¹⁶ A higher proportion of those adjusting status are married (62 percent) than of new arrivals (52 percent).

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 2013.¹⁷ 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 the propensity to immigrate from the data presented in this report.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ USCIS has built the ELIS case management system as a part of its Transformation effort. 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, including payments for immigrant visa fees and immigration visa packets.

Table 9.
New Lawful Permanent Residents by Sex: FY 2016 to 2018

Sex	2016		2017		2018	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total	1,183,505	1,183,505	1,127,167	100.0	1,096,611	100.0
Female	644,002	644,002	605,911	53.8	584,426	53.3
Male	539,472	539,472	521,242	46.2	512,176	46.7
Unknown	31	31	14	-	9	-

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

Table 10.
New Lawful Permanent Residents by Marital Status: FY 2016 to 2018

Marital status	2016		2017		2018	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total	1,183,505	100.0	1,127,167	100.0	1,096,611	100.0
Married	688,392	58.2	656,878	58.3	627,443	57.2
Single	401,561	33.9	405,916	36.0	400,196	36.5
Other*	83,259	7.0	58,187	5.2	58,995	5.4
Unknown	10,293	0.9	6,186	0.5	9,977	0.9

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

APPENDIX

PREFERENCE IMMIGRATION LIMITS¹⁸

Section 201 of the 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.

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. Because the calculated limit (based on visa usage during the prior year) for family-sponsored preference classes in 2018 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 fiscal year. With 292 unused numbers in the family-sponsored preference classes in 2017, the 2018 employment-based preference limit was 140,292. 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 2018, these limits were 40,124 and 9,961.

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 2018 per country limit for independent foreign states was 25,640 (seven percent of 366,292; the sum of the 2018 employment-based and family-based preference limits), and the limit for dependencies was 7,326 (two percent of 366,292).

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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

¹⁸ 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.

Table A1.

Annual Limits for Preference and Diversity Immigrants: Fiscal Year 2018

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	140,292
First: Priority workers	40,124†
Second: Professionals with advanced degrees or aliens of exceptional ability	40,124†
Third: Skilled workers, professionals, and needed unskilled workers	40,124†
Fourth: Certain special immigrants	9,961
Fifth: Employment creation (“investors”)	9,961
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.