

# U.S. Lawful Permanent Residents: 2019

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Immigration law defines a lawful permanent resident (LPR) or “green card” recipient as an alien<sup>1</sup> who has been granted “the status of having been lawfully accorded the privilege of residing permanently in the United States as an immigrant in accordance with the immigration laws, such status not having changed.”<sup>2</sup> LPRs may live and work permanently anywhere in the United States, own property, and attend schools, colleges, and universities. They may also join the Armed Forces or apply to become U.S. citizens if they meet certain additional eligibility requirements. The *2019 Lawful Permanent Residents Annual Flow Report*, authored by the Office of Immigration Statistics (OIS) in the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), presents information obtained from LPR applications on the number and characteristics of persons who became LPRs in the United States during Fiscal Year 2019.<sup>3,4</sup>

## SUMMARY

Just over 1 million persons became LPRs in 2019. Slightly more than half of these LPRs (56 percent) were already present in the United States when they were granted lawful permanent residence. A little more than 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, China, and India.

## THE LAWFUL IMMIGRATION PROCESS

The Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) provides various criteria for obtaining LPR status, including but not limited to sponsorship by a close family member who is a U.S. citizen or LPR, sponsorship by an employer, making investments that create a certain number of U.S. jobs, being from countries with relatively low levels of immigration to the United States, and being 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 aliens 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, an alien 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 aliens who are present in the United States may file a Form I-485, *Application to Register Permanent Residence or Adjust Status*, with U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS).

These applicants may apply for authorization to accept employment while their Form I-485 is pending. If their applications are approved, they generally are granted LPR status at the time of approval.<sup>5</sup> This report refers to these LPRs as *adjustments of status*.

## Immediate Relatives of U.S. Citizens

The largest category of new LPRs consists of immediate relatives of U.S. citizens, defined to include spouses, unmarried children under age 21, parents of U.S. citizens who are age 21 and over, and certain widows or widowers of U.S. citizens.<sup>6</sup> 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 2019.)

<sup>1</sup> An alien is any person not a citizen or national of the United States. INA § 101(a)(3).

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

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

<sup>4</sup> The *2019 Yearbook of Immigration Statistics* and other OIS reports contain additional context. Not all numbers reported are contained in this report’s tables.

<sup>5</sup> Upon approval, certain classes of admission, such as refugees and asylees, receive credit for additional time in LPR status prior to approval, affecting when they are eligible to naturalize.

<sup>6</sup> The term *children* includes 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.

Immediate relatives and family-preference LPRs are collectively referred to as *family-based immigrants*. All family-based immigrants must be petitioned for by their U.S. citizen or LPR relative. Generally, that relative must financially sponsor the immigrant 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 are 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 2 years of training or experience), professionals (those who hold baccalaureate degrees), and unskilled workers (e.g., those with less than 2 years of training or experience);
- EB-4 "special" immigrants (e.g., ministers, religious workers, and employees of the U.S. Government abroad); and
- EB-5 immigrant investors.

The annual employment-based preference limit is equal to 140,000 plus any unused visas in the family-sponsored preference categories from the previous year. Many, 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 million into a new commercial enterprise that will create at least ten full-time jobs for qualifying employees. In certain rural areas or areas with high unemployment, the required minimum investment amount is \$500,000.<sup>7</sup>

In 2019, the limit on preference immigration was 367,918, which included 226,000 in the family-sponsored preference categories and 141,918 in the employment-based preference categories (see **APPENDIX**). The INA also specifies per-country limits equal to 7 percent of the combined total number of visas allotted to family- and employment-based preferences. Dependent areas of foreign states are limited to 2 percent of this combined total.<sup>8</sup> In 2019, these limits amounted to 25,754 preference immigrants from any single country and 7,358 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 aliens granted LPR status within family- and employment-based categories during the preceding 5 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 7 percent of the worldwide total, or 3,500 in 2019, and limits the number of diversity visas across six broad world regions based on regional migration levels during the preceding 5 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 aliens 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, along with 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 along with their spouse and/or children.

Under the Refugee Act of 1980, the President, after appropriate consultation with Congress, establishes the number of aliens who may be admitted to the United States as refugees each year. Since the passage of the Refugee Act, the United States has accepted more than 3.7 million refugees and asylees. The ceiling on refugee admissions was set between 70,000 and 85,000 each year from 2003 to 2016, was initially set at 110,000 in 2017 and later

<sup>7</sup> The investment amounts increased to \$1.8 million and \$900,000 on November 21, 2019, after the end of Fiscal Year 2019.

<sup>8</sup> For more information regarding independent states, dependent areas, and visa allocations, see 9 Foreign Affairs Manual 503.2 at <https://fam.state.gov/FAM/09FAM/09FAM050302.html>.

reduced to 50,000 through a pair of Executive Orders,<sup>9</sup> was set at 45,000 in 2018, and was set at 30,000 in 2019. There is no numerical limit on the number of aliens who may be granted asylum each year.

The INA requires refugees to apply for adjustment to LPR status after 1 year of residence in the United States. Asylees are eligible to apply 1 year after they are granted asylum, but not required to do so. Refugee and asylee adjustments of status are not subject to numerical limits.<sup>10</sup>

### Other Admission Categories

Remaining admission categories are generally limited to aliens 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 crimes 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 5 years of LPR status and residence in the United States (or 3 years for those married to a U.S. 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.

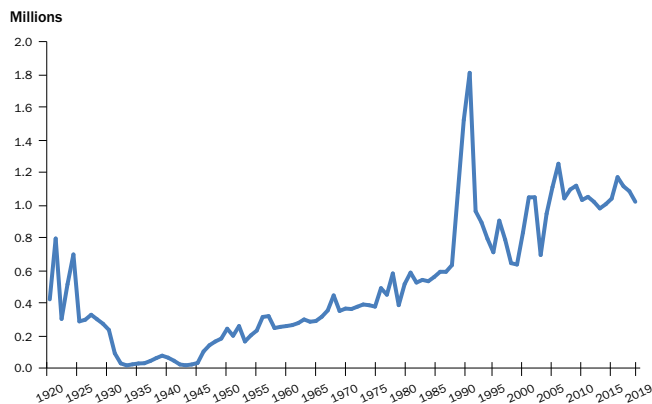
## TRENDS AND CHARACTERISTICS OF NEW LAWFUL PERMANENT RESIDENTS

### 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 1 million per year since 1999 (Figure 1). These increases are partly explained by changes in immigration law, including elimination in 1965 of the

Figure 1.

New Lawful Permanent Residents: Fiscal Years 1920 to 2019



Source: U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

National Origins system<sup>11</sup> and an increase in the annual immigration ceiling in 1990. The spike in lawful immigration from 1989 to 1991 resulted from the legalization of 2.7 million unauthorized 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 the REAL ID Act, along with backlog reductions at USCIS (see U.S. *Legal Permanent Residents: 2006 Annual Flow Report*).

The United States granted about 10.6 million individuals LPR status in the 10-year period from 2010 to 2019. Of these, 52 percent were already present in the United States in another status and 48 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 14 percent under an employment-based preference. The largest shares of new LPRs in this period were born in Mexico (14 percent), China (7.0 percent), and India (6.2 percent).

The United States granted LPR status to 1,031,765 individuals in 2019, a decrease of 5.9 percent from 1,096,611 in 2018 and a decrease of 8.5 percent from 1,127,167 in 2017.

Table 1.

New Lawful Permanent Residents: Fiscal Years 2017 to 2019

Category of admission	2017		2018		2019	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total . . . . .	1,127,167	100.0	1,096,611	100.0	1,031,765	100.0
New arrivals . . . . .	578,081	51.3	528,727	48.2	459,252	44.5
Adjustments of status . .	549,086	48.7	567,884	51.8	572,513	55.5

Source: U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

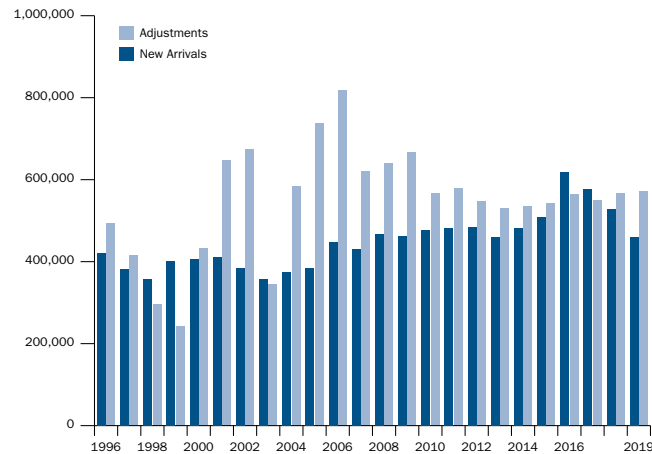
<sup>9</sup> Executive Orders 13769 and 13780, “Protecting the Nation from Foreign Terrorist Entry into the United States.”

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

<sup>11</sup> Under the National Origins system included in the original version of the INA passed in 1952, immigration limits were established on a per-country basis, with each country’s quota set by a formula based on the national origins of the U.S. population in the 1920 census.

**Figure 2.**

**New Lawful Permanent Residents by Type (Adjustments of Status and New Arrivals): Fiscal Years 1996 to 2019**



Source: U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

**Table 2.**

**New Lawful Permanent Residents by Major Class of Admission: Fiscal Years 2017 to 2019**

Category of admission	2017		2018		2019	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total	1,127,167	100.0	1,096,611	100.0	1,031,765	100.0
Family-sponsored immigrants	748,746	66.4	695,524	63.4	709,904	68.8
Immediate relatives of U.S. citizens	516,508	45.8	478,961	43.7	505,765	49.0
Spouses	292,909	26.0	268,149	24.5	304,334	29.5
Parents	148,610	13.2	144,018	13.1	140,128	13.6
Children*	74,989	6.7	66,794	6.1	61,303	5.9
Family-sponsored preferences	232,238	20.6	216,563	19.7	204,139	19.8
Unmarried sons/daughters of U.S. citizens	26,219	2.3	27,251	2.5	24,497	2.4
Spouses and children of lawful permanent residents	113,500	10.1	109,841	10.0	93,398	9.1
Married sons/daughters of U.S. citizens	23,260	2.1	19,531	1.8	25,213	2.4
Siblings of U.S. citizens	69,259	6.1	59,940	5.5	61,031	5.9
Employment-based preferences	137,855	12.2	138,171	12.6	139,458	13.5
Priority workers	41,060	3.6	39,514	3.6	39,471	3.8
Professionals with advanced degrees	39,331	3.5	40,095	3.7	39,506	3.8
Skilled workers, professionals, unskilled workers	38,083	3.4	39,228	3.6	41,787	4.1
Special immigrants	9,504	0.8	9,711	0.9	9,609	0.9
Investors	9,877	0.9	9,623	0.9	9,085	0.9
Diversity programs	51,592	4.6	45,350	4.1	43,463	4.2
Refugees and Asylees	146,003	13.0	185,909	17.0	106,911	10.4
Refugee adjustments	120,356	10.7	155,734	14.2	80,908	7.8
Asylee adjustments	25,647	2.3	30,175	2.8	26,003	2.5
Parolees	26	-	14	-	16	-
Other categories	42,945	3.8	31,643	2.9	32,013	3.1
Children born abroad to lawful permanent residents or nationals	75	-	69	-	60	-
Certain Iraqis and Afghans employed by U.S. Government and their spouses and children	19,191	1.7	10,297	0.9	8,081	0.8
Cancellation of removal	3,539	0.3	4,421	0.4	4,033	0.4
Subject to annual limit	2,849	0.3	3,695	0.3	3,585	0.3
Not subject to limit (NACARA <sup>†</sup> Section 203)	690	0.1	726	0.1	448	-
Victims of human trafficking	1,317	0.1	1,208	0.1	818	0.1
Victims of crimes and their spouses and children	18,065	1.6	15,012	1.4	18,442	1.8
Other <sup>‡</sup>	758	0.1	636	0.1	579	0.1

\*Includes adoptees.

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

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

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Source: U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

## Type and Class of Admission<sup>12</sup>

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 3 years to 45 percent in 2019 (Table 1, Figure 2).

Family-sponsored immigrants (including immediate relatives of U.S. citizens and family-sponsored preference immigrants) represented 69 percent of total new LPRs in 2019 (Table 2). The largest share of these (49 percent of total new LPRs in 2019) were immediate relatives of U.S. citizens. Spouses of U.S. citizens made up 29 percent of new LPRs; parents made up 14 percent; and children, including adopted children, made up 5.9 percent. In 2019, immediate relatives of U.S. citizens made up their highest proportion of total new LPRs (49 percent) ever, and adjustments made up their highest proportion of these (62 percent) since 2004. In the 10-year period from 2010 to 2019, immediate relatives made up 45 percent of new LPRs, and almost half (48 percent) were new arrivals.

Family-sponsored preference LPRs made up 20 percent of all new LPRs in 2019, and the vast majority (91 percent) were new arrivals. The majority of family preference LPRs were in the second preference class (spouses and children of LPRs), and they made up 9.1 percent of new LPRs in 2019, while the fourth preference class (siblings of U.S. citizens) accounted for 5.9 percent. In the 10-year period from 2010 to 2019, family-sponsored preference LPRs made up 21 percent of new LPRs, and 91 percent were new arrivals.

Employment-based preference LPRs constituted almost 14 percent of all new LPRs in 2019, and 79 percent were adjustments. In the 10-year period from 2010 to 2019, employment-based LPRs made up 14 percent of new LPRs, and 85 percent were adjustments. The largest share of employment preference LPRs were in the third preference class (skilled workers, professionals, and unskilled workers), and they made up 4.1 percent of new LPRs in 2019. The first and second preference categories (priority workers and professionals with advanced degrees) each made up 3.8 percent of new LPRs.

Refugee adjustments accounted for 7.8 percent of new LPRs in 2019, and asylee adjustments accounted for 2.5 percent. In the 10-year period from 2010 to 2019, they accounted for 10 percent and 3.5 percent of new LPRs, respectively.

Diversity immigrants accounted for 4.2 percent of all new LPRs in 2019, slightly less than in the 10-year period from 2010 to 2019 (4.5 percent). The vast majority of diversity immigrants are new arrivals (97 percent over the last ten years).

## Region and Country of Birth

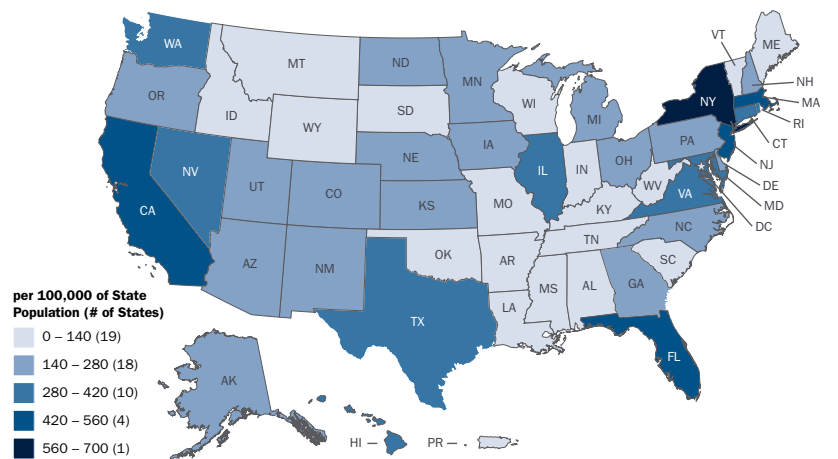
The leading regions of birth of new LPRs in 2019 were North America (including the Caribbean and Central America) (36 percent) and Asia (35 percent) (Table 3). Together, Asia and North America have accounted for at least 71 percent of new LPRs each year since 2010.

In 2019, 15 percent of all aliens granted LPR status were born in Mexico, just over a third of whom (36 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 2019 were China (6.0 percent), India (5.3 percent), the Dominican Republic (4.8 percent), the Philippines (4.5 percent), Cuba (4.0 percent), and Vietnam (3.8 percent). Of new LPRs in 2019 born in these countries, Cuban-born LPRs had the lowest proportion who gained LPR status as new arrivals (19 percent), while Dominican- and Vietnam-born had the highest proportions (79 percent and 77 percent, respectively). Most Cuban-born LPRs (79 percent) adjusted as refugees,<sup>13</sup> 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 2019 were also the leading countries of birth of new LPRs over the 10-year period from 2010 to 2019, together accounting for 45 percent of new LPRs during this period.

Figure 3.

New Lawful Permanent Residents per Capita by State of Residence: Fiscal Year 2019



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

<sup>12</sup> 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).

<sup>13</sup> 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: Fiscal Years 2017 to 2019**

(Countries ranked by 2019 country of birth)

Region/country of birth	2017		2018		2019	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
<b>REGION</b>						
Total . . . . .	1,127,167	100.0	1,096,611	100.0	1,031,765	100.0
Africa . . . . .	118,824	10.5	115,736	10.6	111,194	10.8
Asia . . . . .	424,743	37.7	397,187	36.2	364,761	35.4
Europe . . . . .	84,335	7.5	80,024	7.3	87,597	8.5
North America . . . . .	413,650	36.7	418,991	38.2	370,860	35.9
Caribbean . . . . .	174,591	15.5	182,408	16.6	138,114	13.4
Central America . . . . .	56,585	5.0	64,519	5.9	65,041	6.3
Other North America . . . . .	182,474	16.2	172,064	15.7	167,705	16.3
Oceania . . . . .	5,071	0.4	4,653	0.4	5,359	0.5
South America . . . . .	79,076	7.0	78,869	7.2	90,850	8.8
Unknown . . . . .	1,468	0.1	1,151	0.1	1,144	0.1
<b>COUNTRY</b>						
Total . . . . .	1,127,167	100.0	1,096,611	100.0	1,031,765	100.0
Mexico . . . . .	170,581	15.1	161,858	14.8	156,052	15.1
China, People's Republic . . . . .	71,565	6.3	65,214	5.9	62,248	6.0
India . . . . .	60,394	5.4	59,821	5.5	54,495	5.3
Dominican Republic . . . . .	58,520	5.2	57,413	5.2	49,911	4.8
Philippines . . . . .	49,147	4.4	47,258	4.3	45,920	4.5
Cuba . . . . .	65,028	5.8	76,486	7.0	41,641	4.0
Vietnam . . . . .	38,231	3.4	33,834	3.1	39,712	3.8
El Salvador . . . . .	25,109	2.2	28,326	2.6	27,656	2.7
Jamaica . . . . .	21,905	1.9	20,347	1.9	21,689	2.1
Colombia . . . . .	17,956	1.6	17,545	1.6	19,841	1.9
Brazil . . . . .	14,989	1.3	15,394	1.4	19,825	1.9
Korea, South . . . . .	19,194	1.7	17,676	1.6	18,479	1.8
Haiti . . . . .	21,824	1.9	21,360	1.9	17,253	1.7
Honduras . . . . .	11,387	1.0	13,794	1.3	15,901	1.5
Nigeria . . . . .	13,539	1.2	13,952	1.3	15,888	1.5
Venezuela . . . . .	11,809	1.0	11,762	1.1	15,720	1.5
Bangladesh . . . . .	14,693	1.3	15,717	1.4	15,176	1.5
Pakistan . . . . .	17,408	1.5	15,802	1.4	13,921	1.3
Guatemala . . . . .	13,198	1.2	15,638	1.4	13,453	1.3
Ukraine . . . . .	10,135	0.9	11,879	1.1	11,762	1.1
All other countries, including unknown . . . . .	400,555	35.5	375,535	34.2	355,222	34.4

Source: U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

**Table 4.**

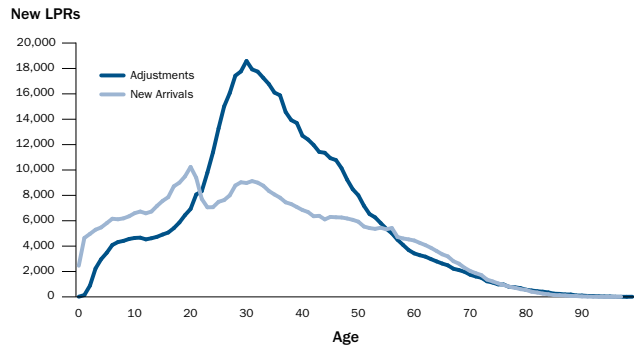
**Type of Admission of New Lawful Permanent Residents for Top Ten Countries of Birth: Fiscal Year 2019**

Country of birth	Total	Adjustments		New Arrivals	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Mexico . . . . .	156,052	100,139	64.2	55,913	35.8
China, People's Republic . . . . .	62,248	35,853	57.6	26,395	42.4
India . . . . .	54,495	30,133	55.3	24,362	44.7
Dominican Republic . . . . .	49,911	10,679	21.4	39,232	78.6
Philippines . . . . .	45,920	17,771	38.7	28,149	61.3
Cuba . . . . .	41,641	33,601	80.7	8,040	19.3
Vietnam . . . . .	39,712	9,128	23.0	30,584	77.0
El Salvador . . . . .	27,656	16,702	60.4	10,954	39.6
Jamaica . . . . .	21,689	10,914	50.3	10,775	49.7
Colombia . . . . .	19,841	13,878	69.9	5,963	30.1

Source: U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

**Figure 4.**

**New Lawful Permanent Residents by Type and Age: Fiscal Year 2019**



Source: U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

The next leading states for new LPRs per capita in 2019 were Massachusetts, Nevada, Texas, Maryland, and Hawaii. West Virginia, Montana, Mississippi, Wyoming, and Alabama had the fewest new LPRs per capita, each with between 45 and 75 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 5-year periods—from 2010 to 2014 and from 2015 to 2019—shows that the greatest recent proportional growth in new LPRs occurred in North Dakota with 37 percent more new LPRs in 2015-2019 compared to 2010-2014. Kentucky, Nebraska, Iowa, Ohio, Oregon, and Minnesota followed with increases of 19 to 33 percent between the two periods.

**Table 5.**

**New Lawful Permanent Residents by State of Residence: Fiscal Years 2017 to 2019**

(Ranked by 2019 state of residence)

State of residence	2017		2018		2019	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total	1,127,167	100.0	1,096,611	100.0	1,031,765	100.0
California	214,243	19.0	200,897	18.3	193,093	18.7
New York	139,409	12.4	134,839	12.3	124,026	12.0
Florida	127,609	11.3	130,405	11.9	118,140	11.5
Texas	110,126	9.8	104,515	9.5	107,955	10.5
New Jersey	54,440	4.8	54,424	5.0	48,754	4.7
Illinois	40,530	3.6	38,287	3.5	37,958	3.7
Massachusetts	37,010	3.3	33,174	3.0	30,834	3.0
Georgia	26,242	2.3	26,725	2.4	27,246	2.6
Washington	27,363	2.4	26,029	2.4	25,570	2.5
Pennsylvania	27,762	2.5	26,078	2.4	25,329	2.5
Other*	322,433	28.6	321,238	29.3	292,860	28.4

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

Source: U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

### State and Metropolitan Area of Residence

California was the state of residence of nearly one-fifth (19 percent) of aliens granted LPR status in 2019, and nearly half (45 percent) of new LPRs residing in California were new arrivals (Tables 5 and 6). The next leading states of residence for new LPRs in 2019 were New York (12 percent), Florida (12 percent), Texas (11 percent), New Jersey (4.7 percent), and Illinois (3.7 percent). Of these states, New York had the highest proportion (56 percent) of new arrivals, while Florida and Texas had the lowest proportions (34 percent and 37 percent, respectively). 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 decreased from 82 percent in 1990 to 61 percent in 2019 as new LPRs have gradually become more likely to live in other parts of the country. Four of these states—New York, Florida, New Jersey, and California—were also the four leading states for new LPRs per capita in 2019, each having between 480 and 640 new LPRs per 100,000 population (Figure 3).<sup>14</sup>

In comparison, the country as a whole saw 6.7 percent more LPR admissions in the most recent period.

Hawaii and Guam showed the greatest proportional declines (with 14 percent and 11 percent fewer new LPRs in 2015-2019 versus 2010-2014, respectively), followed by Vermont, New Hampshire, and Alaska (each with between 6 and 9 percent fewer new LPRs). While Hawaii's, Guam's, and Alaska's declines in new LPRs between these periods included declines in both new arrivals and adjustments of status, Vermont's and New Hampshire's declines were due to large declines in adjustments of status and came despite modest growth in new arrivals.

The leading metropolitan area of residence for new LPRs in 2019 was New York-Newark-Jersey City, NY-NJ-PA (15 percent) (Table 7). Other prominent metropolitan areas of residence included Los Angeles-Long Beach-Anaheim, CA (7.4 percent), Miami-Fort Lauderdale-Pompano Beach, FL (7.1 percent); Houston-The Woodlands-Sugar Land, TX (3.9 percent), Chicago-Naperville-Elgin, IL-IN-WI (3.4 percent), and Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV (3.3 percent).

<sup>14</sup> State population estimates used in this report's analyses are from U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division's December 2019 release and are as of July 1, 2019.

**Table 6.**

**Type of Admission of New Lawful Permanent Residents for Top Ten States of Residence: Fiscal Year 2019**

State of residence	Total	Adjustments		New Arrivals	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent
California . . . . .	193,093	105,581	54.7	87,512	45.3
New York . . . . .	124,026	54,012	43.5	70,014	56.5
Florida . . . . .	118,140	78,012	66.0	40,128	34.0
Texas . . . . .	107,955	68,012	63.0	39,943	37.0
New Jersey . . . . .	48,754	22,852	46.9	25,902	53.1
Illinois . . . . .	37,958	20,904	55.1	17,054	44.9
Massachusetts . . . . .	30,834	14,675	47.6	16,159	52.4
Georgia . . . . .	27,246	15,456	56.7	11,790	43.3
Washington . . . . .	25,570	15,097	59.0	10,473	41.0
Pennsylvania . . . . .	25,329	12,448	49.1	12,881	50.9

Source: U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

**Table 7.**

**New Lawful Permanent Residents by Metropolitan Area of Residence: Fiscal Years 2017 to 2019**

(Ranked by 2019 metropolitan area of residence)

Metropolitan area of residence	2017		2018		2019	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total . . . . .	1,127,167	100.0	1,096,611	100.0	1,031,765	100.0
New York-Newark-Jersey City, NY-NJ-PA . . . . .	173,005	15.3	168,931	15.4	155,187	15.0
Los Angeles-Long Beach-Anaheim, CA . . . . .	82,470	7.3	74,032	6.8	75,859	7.4
Miami-Fort Lauderdale-Pompano Beach, FL . . . . .	80,133	7.1	80,341	7.3	73,040	7.1
Houston-The Woodlands-Sugar Land, TX . . . . .	38,686	3.4	36,263	3.3	40,137	3.9
Chicago-Naperville-Elgin, IL-IN-WI . . . . .	36,831	3.3	35,045	3.2	34,881	3.4
Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV . . . . .	39,936	3.5	37,796	3.4	33,964	3.3
Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington, TX . . . . .	34,533	3.1	28,915	2.6	32,984	3.2
San Francisco-Oakland-Berkeley, CA . . . . .	35,420	3.1	31,918	2.9	32,787	3.2
Boston-Cambridge-Newton, MA-NH . . . . .	29,907	2.7	26,411	2.4	24,717	2.4
Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Alpharetta, GA . . . . .	21,341	1.9	21,334	1.9	21,573	2.1
Other, including non-CBSA and unknown . . . . .	554,905	49.2	555,625	50.7	506,636	49.1

Notes: Metropolitan areas defined based on the 2018 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 2017 to 2019**

Age	2017		2018		2019	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total . . . . .	1,127,167	100.0	1,096,611	100.0	1,031,765	100.0
0 to 17 years . . . . .	212,364	18.8	208,683	19.0	177,102	17.2
18 to 24 years . . . . .	133,495	11.8	125,852	11.5	116,780	11.3
25 to 34 years . . . . .	278,821	24.7	262,281	23.9	252,986	24.5
35 to 44 years . . . . .	209,343	18.6	210,160	19.2	204,152	19.8
45 to 54 years . . . . .	142,128	12.6	142,407	13.0	142,144	13.8
55 to 64 years . . . . .	89,456	7.9	87,007	7.9	83,164	8.1
65 and over . . . . .	61,560	5.5	60,221	5.5	55,437	5.4
Median age (years) . . . . .	32	NA	33	NA	33	NA

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



Of the top 50 leading metropolitan areas for new LPRs in 2019, Miami-Fort Lauderdale-Pompano Beach, FL; San Jose-Sunnyvale-Santa Clara, CA; New York-Newark-Jersey City, NY-NJ-PA; and San Francisco-Oakland-Berkeley, CA metropolitan areas had the most new LPRs per capita, each with over 600 new LPRs per 100,000 population.<sup>15</sup>

### Age, Sex, and Marital Status

New LPRs have historically been younger than the native-born population of the United States. In 2019, the median age for new LPRs was 33 years (31 for new arrivals and 34 for adjustments), compared to 36 for the U.S. native-born population (Table 8).<sup>16</sup> New arrivals predominated amongst new LPRs aged 21 years or younger and those aged 56 to 77 years, while adjustments predominated amongst those new LPRs aged 22 to 55 years as well as those aged 78 years or more (Table 8, Figure 4). The age group of 22 to 55 years accounted for almost three-quarters (73 percent) of adjustments in 2019, while it only accounted for about half (53 percent) of new arrivals.

A higher proportion of new LPRs are female (55 percent) than the native-born U.S. population (51 percent) (Table 9).<sup>17</sup> The majority (73 percent) of new LPRs at least 18 years old were married, compared with 51 percent of native-born adults (Table 10).<sup>18</sup> A higher proportion of adults adjusting status (77 percent) are married than of new arrivals (69 percent).

<sup>15</sup> Core-Based Statistical Area (CBSA) population estimates used in this report's analyses are from U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division's March 2020 release and are as of July 1, 2019. Per capita new LPR counts by CBSA use CBSA definitions updated in September 2018 (available from OMB at <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Bulletin-18-04.pdf>.)

<sup>16</sup> Calculated from the 2019 March Current Population Survey as downloaded from IPUMS-CPS, University of Minnesota, [www.ipums.org](http://www.ipums.org).

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

### DATA

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

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

**Table 9.**  
**New Lawful Permanent Residents by Sex: Fiscal Years 2017 to 2019**

Sex	2017		2018		2019	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total . . . . .	1,127,167	100.0	1,096,611	100.0	1,031,765	100.0
Female . . . . .	605,911	53.8	584,426	53.3	561,903	54.5
Male . . . . .	521,242	46.2	512,176	46.7	469,710	45.5
Unknown . . . . .	14	-	9	-	152	-

- Figure rounds to 0.0.

Source: U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

**Table 10.**  
**New Lawful Permanent Residents by Marital Status: Fiscal Years 2017 to 2019**

Marital status	2017		2018		2019	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total . . . . .	1,127,167	100.0	1,096,611	100.0	1,031,765	100.0
Married . . . . .	656,878	58.3	627,443	57.2	628,330	60.9
Single . . . . .	405,916	36.0	400,196	36.5	339,227	32.9
Other* . . . . .	58,187	5.2	58,995	5.4	53,332	5.2
Unknown . . . . .	6,186	0.5	9,977	0.9	10,876	1.1

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

Source: U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

# APPENDIX

## PREFERENCE IMMIGRATION LIMITS<sup>19</sup>

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 2019 was below 226,000, the family-sponsored preferences limit was set at 226,000 (Table A1).

<sup>19</sup> The DOS Bureau of Consular Affairs is responsible for determining these limits. See the monthly Visa Bulletin for more information on the limits.

### 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 1,918 unused numbers in the family-sponsored preference classes in 2018, the 2019 employment-based preference limit was 141,918. 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 2019, these limits were 40,589 and 10,076.

### Per Country and Dependent Area Limits

A limit of 7 percent of the combined total visa limits for family-sponsored and employment-based preference classes is set for independent countries, and a limit of 2 percent is set for dependent areas. The 2019 per country limit for independent foreign states was 25,754 (7 percent of 367,918; the sum of the 2019 employment-based and family-based preference limits), and the limit for dependencies was 7,358 (2 percent of 367,918).

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

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

**Table A1.**

**Annual Limits for Preference and Diversity Immigrants: Fiscal Year 2019**

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 lawful permanent residents . . . . .	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 . . . . .	141,918
First: Priority workers . . . . .	40,589‡
Second: Professionals with advanced degrees or aliens of exceptional ability . . . . .	40,589‡
Third: Skilled workers, professionals, and needed unskilled workers . . . . .	40,589‡
Fourth: Certain special immigrants . . . . .	10,076
Fifth: Employment creation (“investors”) . . . . .	10,076
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.