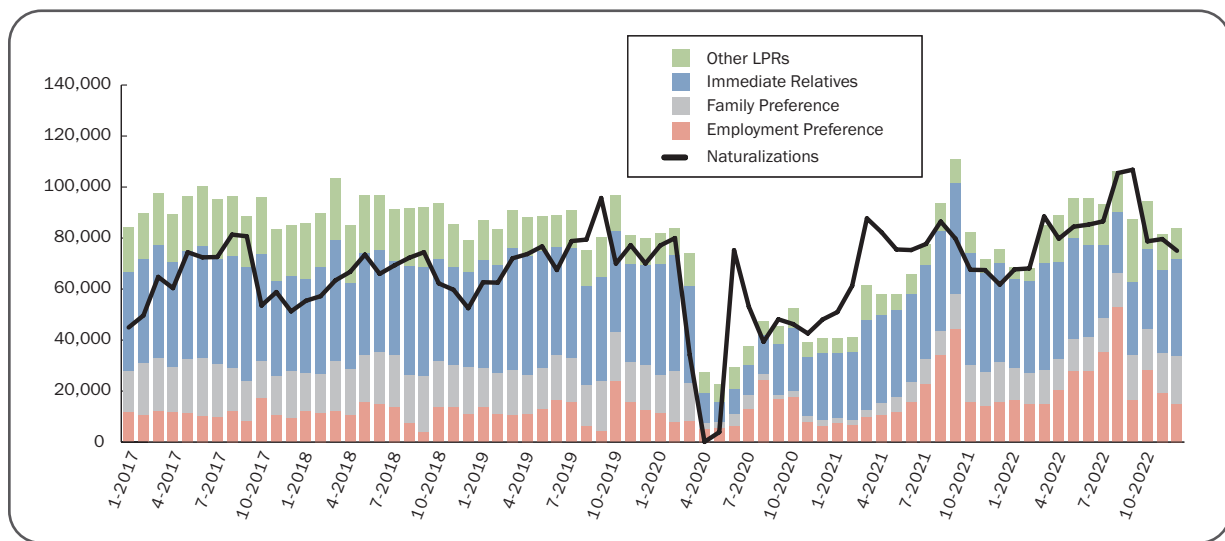


Estimates of the Lawful Permanent Resident Population in the United States and the Subpopulation Eligible to Naturalize: 2023

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This report presents annual estimates of the size and characteristics of the lawful permanent resident (LPR) population residing in the United States, and on the subpopulation potentially eligible to naturalize, as of January 1, 2023. LPRs, also known as Green Card holders, are immigrants who have been granted lawful permanent residence, but who have not yet become U.S. citizens. Estimates are tabulated by region and country of birth, initial state of residence, period of entry, age, and sex. The underlying data were obtained from U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) administrative records for LPRs who entered the United States in 1980 or later, supplemented with estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey (ACS) for LPRs who entered before 1980. The estimation methodology is similar to that used in previous DHS estimates (see Rytina, 2004).

Figure 1.
Naturalizations and LPR Inflows by Category and Month: January 2017–December 2022



Source: Office of Homeland Security Statistics (OHSS) analysis of U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) data.

There were 12.7 million LPRs living in the United States on January 1, 2023, down 202,000 from January 2022 (see Baker and Miller, 2022) despite over a million new LPRs in calendar year 2022. While both LPR inflows and naturalizations recovered to pre-pandemic levels by 2022, naturalizations rebounded more quickly and even set record

monthly highs for the past decade. (see Figure 1).^{1,2} Between the slower recovery of inflows and the more rapid recovery of outflow due to naturalization, the number of LPRs living in the United States on January 1, 2023 declined by 1.6 percent from 2022, nearly the same rate of decline observed between 2022 and 2021, and about twice the pre-pandemic decline of 0.8 percent from January 2019 to January 2020.

The LPR population living in the United States as of January 2023 was predominantly born in Mexico (nearly a quarter of the total LPR population). Over half of the 12.7 million LPRs lived in just four states: California, New York, Texas, and Florida. Almost 55 percent were between the ages of 35 and 65 and females outnumbered males by a small margin. More recent entries dominated the LPR population; the largest entry cohort was those who entered between 2015 and 2019 at 26 percent of the total, followed by the 2000 through 2009 entry cohort with 19 percent of the total LPR population living in the United States.

Of the 12.7 million LPRs, 9 million met the naturalization age and length of residency requirements as an LPR and thus were potentially eligible to naturalize.³ This population decreased by about 200,000 since January 1, 2022, partly due to the large number of naturalizations in 2022, the result of both the pandemic rebound and the relatively large number of LPRs who obtained status in 2017 and met their residency requirement in 2022.⁴ While the inflow of new LPRs was substantially reduced due to the pandemic in 2020 and 2021, the size of the eligible-to-naturalize population will not be substantially affected until 2025–2026,⁵ when the smaller than usual 2020 and 2021 cohorts of new LPRs meet their residence requirement.

The demographic characteristics of the population eligible to naturalize remained similar to earlier years and the resident LPR population: more than a quarter of eligible-to-naturalize LPRs were from Mexico (more than four times the proportion of the next highest country); almost 60 percent resided in California, New York, Texas, or Florida; the sex ratio leaned very slightly female; and nearly 60 percent were between 35 and 65 years of age.

¹ The use of “pandemic” throughout this report refers to the Coronavirus Disease-2019 (COVID-19) pandemic.

² Since 2020, inflows of LPRs in immediate relative and family preference categories have recovered to near pre-pandemic levels by 2022. The downturn in family preference inflows during the pandemic resulted in unused family preference visas being reallocated to the employment-based category, and employment-based preference categories surpassed their pre-pandemic levels in 2022 and became the largest group of new immigrants that year.

³ Most LPRs who have attained 18 years of age and satisfied their required length of residency as an LPR are eligible to naturalize, though certain LPRs who meet these core requirements may fail to qualify for other reasons, and certain noncitizens may be eligible without meeting these requirements (see Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) § 312-331 and Appendix I for details). For the purpose of this report, “eligible to naturalize” refers to the satisfaction of these core requirements for age and length of residency; hereafter, the word “potentially” is omitted for simplicity.

⁴ Based on DHS analysis of USCIS data, about 1.10 million people obtained LPR status in calendar year 2017, which is the third largest number in the decade preceding the pandemic (2010–2019) and just larger than the average for that decade. Nearly 90 percent of that 2017 cohort of LPRs met their residency requirement in calendar year 2022.

⁵ For LPR classes with adjusted naturalization eligibility criteria, such as spouses of U.S. citizens who are eligible after three years of residency, the effect of the reduced LPR cohorts will first be observed in 2023.

BACKGROUND

The INA directs DHS to report annually on the size and characteristics of the LPR population to support Congress and the public’s ability to assess the impact of immigration on the United States.⁶ DHS collects data measuring administrative events such as the number of noncitizens granted lawful permanent residence and the number approved for naturalization, but the department does not collect data on the total population of LPRs or the population of LPRs eligible to naturalize at a point in time. Further, no nationally representative surveys distinguish between LPRs and other foreign-born persons. Therefore, national population data on the major subcategories of foreign-born persons including naturalized citizens, LPRs, nonimmigrants, and unauthorized immigrants are not available and must be estimated. This report presents estimates of the size and characteristics of the LPR population and the subpopulation eligible to naturalize on January 1, 2023.

METHODOLOGY

DHS estimates the size of the LPR population at a point in time in four stages. The first stage converts LPR inflow from 1980 through the estimation date into an estimate of the LPRs currently residing in the United States by accounting for naturalization, derivative citizenship, and attrition due to mortality and emigration. The second stage draws a population estimate from the ACS for noncitizens who entered the United States before 1980 and adjusts for attrition that occurred between ACS data collection and the date of this DHS estimate.⁷ The third stage generates the total LPR population size as the sum of the estimates for the two periods. In the fourth and final stage, the subpopulation that is eligible to naturalize is estimated by reducing the LPR population estimate to account for age and residency requirements. See Appendix I for a detailed discussion.

FINDINGS

Nearly 38.4 million immigrants who entered the United States in 1980 or later became LPRs by January 1, 2023 (Table 1). About half of that total have naturalized by the end of 2022, and another 5 percent derived citizenship⁸ from a parent before becoming 18 years of age. Of the remaining 17.4 million LPRs, about 5.6 million are estimated to have died and/or emigrated, leaving a population of 11.8 million. An additional 850,000 noncitizens who entered before 1980 brings the total population of LPRs living in the United States on January 1, 2023 to an estimated 12.7 million after adjusting the pre-1980 arrivals for mortality and emigration. Of those LPRs, about 9 million are adults who have met their residency requirement and are eligible to naturalize. Compared to 2022, the eligible to naturalize population decreased by about 200,000 (2.2 percent). While just under

⁶ INA § 103(d)-(e).

⁷ All noncitizens represented in the ACS who entered prior to 1980 are assumed to be LPRs. Under the registry provisions of immigration law, noncitizens are eligible for LPR status if they have lived continuously in the United States since January 1, 1972 and meet other basic requirements. Additionally, certain persons living in the United States before 1982 as unauthorized residents were permitted to adjust to LPR status under the provisions of the *Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986*.

⁸ Certain children may automatically acquire citizenship upon the naturalization of a parent (see INA § 320).

three-fourths of the total LPR population are eligible to naturalize, this subpopulation is very similar to the total resident population in terms of characteristics and proportions of the total.

Table 1.
Components of the Population Estimate: January 2023

	Estimate
POPULATION 1: Population of LPRs who entered in 1980+ and obtained status before the estimate date	
LPRs entered and obtained status from 1980 through the estimate date	38,360,000
- Naturalized by the estimate date	19,030,000
- Derived citizenship by the estimate date	1,930,000
= Non-naturalized/derivative subtotal	17,390,000
- Mortality	1,680,000
- Emigration	3,890,000
= Subtotal (remaining population of LPRs entered and obtained status in 1980+)	11,820,000
POPULATION 2: Population of LPRs entered before 1980	
Population of LPRs entered before 1980	900,000
- Emigration and mortality from July 1, 2021 to January 1, 2023 ..	50,000
= Subtotal (population of LPRs entered before 1980)	850,000
POPULATION 3: Population of LPRs eligible to naturalize	
Total LPR Population (non-USC) (Population 1 + Population 2)	12,680,000
- Ineligible total	3,630,000
Ineligible (minor)	780,000
Ineligible (residency requirement)	2,860,000
= Population of LPRs potentially eligible to naturalize	9,040,000

Notes: Detail may not sum to total due to rounding; for exceptions to the core criteria used to indicate eligibility or lack thereof in this report, see INA § 312-331 and Appendix 1.

Source: Office of Homeland Security Statistics analysis of USCIS and U.S. Census Bureau data.

Three-quarters of LPRs in the United States were born in North America or Asia (Table 2). Mexico alone accounted for over half of the North American region and nearly a quarter of all LPRs. The subpopulation eligible to naturalize was similar to the total LPR population, but a slightly larger proportion of LPRs eligible to naturalize are from the North American region (driven by those of Mexican origin) compared to the total LPR population. The top countries of birth for the LPR population are Mexico, the People’s Republic of China (China), India, the Dominican Republic, and Cuba. More than 25 percent of the LPRs who were eligible to naturalize in 2023 were from Mexico. The next leading countries of birth after Mexico were China, with 6 percent, followed by Cuba, the Dominican Republic, and the Philippines with 4 percent each. The differences in rank among countries of birth reflects more recent immigration flows, for example, India is the third leading country of birth for remaining LPRs, but sixth among the eligible to naturalize. The top 20 countries comprised over 70 percent of the LPR population eligible to naturalize.

Table 2.
Estimated Resident LPR and Eligible to Naturalize Populations by Region and Country of Birth: January 2023

Region/Country	LPR Population	Eligible to Naturalize
REGION		
Total	12,680,000	9,040,000
Africa	820,000	460,000
Asia	4,090,000	2,610,000
Europe	1,340,000	1,050,000
North America	5,490,000	4,310,000
Caribbean	1,600,000	1,180,000
Central America	730,000	510,000
Other North America	3,160,000	2,620,000
Oceania	80,000	70,000
South America	840,000	530,000
Unknown	20,000	10,000
COUNTRY		
Total	12,680,000	9,040,000
Mexico	2,890,000	2,390,000
China, People's Republic	800,000	550,000
Cuba	500,000	390,000
Dominican Republic	560,000	390,000
Philippines	490,000	350,000
India	630,000	290,000
Vietnam	350,000	230,000
El Salvador	320,000	220,000
Canada	260,000	220,000
Korea, South	270,000	200,000
United Kingdom	230,000	190,000
Haiti	220,000	160,000
Jamaica	210,000	150,000
Colombia	200,000	130,000
Germany	140,000	130,000
Guatemala	180,000	130,000
Japan	130,000	120,000
Poland	100,000	80,000
Ecuador	120,000	80,000
Pakistan	130,000	80,000
Unknown	20,000	10,000
Other	3,940,000	2,540,000

Notes: Countries are sorted by size of the eligible to naturalize population. The People’s Republic of China does not include Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Macau. Detail may not sum to total due to rounding; for exceptions to the core criteria used to indicate eligibility or lack thereof in this report, see INA § 312 331 and Appendix 1.

Source: Office of Homeland Security Statistics analysis of USCIS and U.S. Census Bureau data.

Table 3 describes the initial or current state of residence for LPRs and those eligible to naturalize. ACS data on current state of residence are available for LPRs who arrived prior to 1980. For all other LPRs, the only available data are based on LPR's state of residence at the time they obtained LPR status. Many years have passed in most of these cases, so the accuracy of these state-of-residence data depends on the extent to which in- and out-migration rates vary from state to state. With this caveat, the most common state of residence among both the LPR population and LPRs eligible to naturalize in 2023 was California (nearly a quarter), followed by New York, Texas, and Florida (Table 3). As noted previously, these top four states comprised nearly 60 percent of the total for both the LPR population and among those eligible to naturalize.

Table 3.
Estimated Resident LPR and Eligible to Naturalize Populations by Initial or Current State of Residence: January 2023

State	LPR Population	Eligible to Naturalize
Total	12,680,000	9,040,000
California	2,890,000	2,200,000
New York	1,570,000	1,150,000
Texas	1,350,000	980,000
Florida	1,250,000	880,000
New Jersey	570,000	380,000
Illinois	500,000	370,000
Massachusetts	330,000	220,000
Washington	300,000	190,000
Virginia	280,000	180,000
Arizona	240,000	180,000
Pennsylvania	260,000	170,000
Georgia	260,000	170,000
Maryland	240,000	160,000
Michigan	200,000	140,000
North Carolina	190,000	120,000
Colorado	150,000	110,000
Connecticut	140,000	100,000
Ohio	160,000	100,000
Nevada	130,000	90,000
Minnesota	130,000	90,000
Unknown	40,000	20,000
Other	1,480,000	1,040,000

Notes: Detail may not sum to total due to rounding. States are sorted by size of the eligible to naturalize population. Residency data are based on residency at time of entry for LPRs arriving after 1980 and based on current state of residence as reported in the 2021 Census ACS for LPRs arriving prior to 1980; for exceptions to the core criteria used to indicate eligibility or lack thereof in this report, see INA § 312-331 and Appendix 1.
Source: Office of Homeland Security Statistics analysis of USCIS and U.S. Census Bureau data.

The sex ratio among both the resident LPR population and those eligible to naturalize leaned slightly female (Table 4). Among those eligible to naturalize, 51 percent were female, while females outnumbered males by a slightly larger margin (52 percent) among the total LPR population, driven by larger female LPR inflows and lower mortality rates. However, female LPRs naturalize at a higher rate,⁹ offsetting some of the difference.

⁹ See Baker, 2022.

Table 4.
Estimated Resident LPR and Eligible to Naturalize Populations by Sex: January 2023

Sex	LPR Population	Eligible to Naturalize
Total	12,680,000	9,040,000
Female	6,590,000	4,630,000
Male	6,090,000	4,410,000

Notes: Detail may not sum to total due to rounding; for exceptions to the core criteria used to indicate eligibility or lack thereof in this report, see INA § 312-331 and Appendix 1.
Source: Office of Homeland Security Statistics analysis of USCIS and U.S. Census Bureau data.

Table 5 describes the age distribution of the LPR and the eligible to naturalize populations as of January 1, 2023. All age groups declined since 2022 except for the two oldest age groups of 65 through 74 and 75 and older, the growth particularly pronounced with the oldest age group with a 12 and 13 percent increase for all LPRs and the eligible to naturalize respectively. Among older age groups, a higher proportion of LPRs are eligible to naturalize. These changes are largely explained by the relative sizes of the age groups and people aging in or out of groups, and by younger immigrants' higher tendency to naturalize.

Table 5.
Estimated Resident LPR and Eligible to Naturalize Populations by Age Group: January 2023

Age	LPR Population	Eligible to Naturalize
Total	12,680,000	9,040,000
00-17	740,000	0
18-24	870,000	530,000
25-34	1,970,000	1,290,000
35-44	2,360,000	1,580,000
45-54	2,300,000	1,770,000
55-64	2,130,000	1,800,000
65-74	1,410,000	1,230,000
75 and over	900,000	830,000

Notes: Detail may not sum to total due to rounding; for exceptions to the core criteria used to indicate eligibility or lack thereof in this report, see INA § 312-331 and Appendix 1.
Source: Office of Homeland Security Statistics analysis of USCIS and U.S. Census Bureau data.

Table 6 describes entry cohorts which refers to when an individual first entered the United States, not necessarily as an LPR. Capturing length of time in the United States rather than time as an LPR, some who entered before 2014 are not yet eligible because they only recently became an LPR. For example, about 80 percent of the 2010–2014 cohort are eligible to naturalize as of January 2023. Given nearly 3 million LPRs have not yet satisfied the U.S. residency requirement for naturalization eligibility, and another three quarters of a million are still minors, there are differences in entry cohort distribution between the LPR population and the group eligible to naturalize. Among the total LPR population, the largest entry cohort is the 2015 through 2019 entrants, but less than half are eligible to naturalize, so that cohort comprises only 17 percent of the eligible to naturalize population. Twenty-four percent of the LPRs eligible to naturalize in 2023 entered the United States in 2000–2009, slightly more than 30 percent entered in 2010 or later, and 9 percent entered before

1980. The numbers for the more recent entry years will continue to swell as current LPRs enter adulthood and/or satisfy their residency requirements. The number of eligible-to-naturalize pre-1980 entrants will continue to decline, mostly due to mortality instead of emigration or naturalization, because the bulk of those LPRs are well established and less likely to emigrate, but they are also well past the usual ages for naturalization.

Table 6.
Estimated Resident LPR and Eligible to Naturalize Populations by Period of Entry: January 2023

Period of Entry	LPR Population	Eligible to Naturalize
Total.....	12,680,000	9,040,000
<1980.....	850,000	850,000
1980–1989.....	1,330,000	1,320,000
1990–1999.....	1,790,000	1,660,000
2000–2009.....	2,410,000	2,190,000
2010–2014.....	1,800,000	1,450,000
2015–2019.....	3,330,000	1,570,000
2020+.....	1,170,000	0

Notes: Detail may not sum to total due to rounding; the year an individual entered may precede the year in which that individual obtained LPR status; for exceptions to the core criteria used to indicate eligibility or lack thereof in this report, see INA § 312-331 and Appendix 1.
Source: Office of Homeland Security Statistics analysis of USCIS and U.S. Census Bureau data.

APPENDIX 1: DETAILED METHODOLOGY

Stage 1: LPRs who entered in 1980 or later. Stage 1 starts with administrative records of LPR admissions and adjustments to LPR status for all persons who entered and obtained LPR status in 1980 or later.¹⁰ That population is then reduced by subtracting out LPRs who entered the United States prior to 1980 and LPRs who naturalized or derived citizenship status from a parent prior to the estimate date.¹¹ Finally, attrition due to mortality and emigration is estimated based on risk for each LPR in each year from acquisition of LPR status through the estimate date, with mortality risk drawn from National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) life tables by age and sex, and emigration risk drawn from an emigration schedule adapted from U.S. Census Bureau emigration risk research.

Naturalization. LPRs who subsequently naturalized are excluded by matching individual LPR and naturalization records by A-number. The data are also adjusted for derivative citizenship.

Derivative Citizenship. In most cases, LPRs under 18 years of age automatically acquire U.S. citizenship upon the naturalization of one or both parents.¹² Derivative citizens may choose to apply for a certificate documenting citizenship, but they are not required to do so, and many may not pursue official documentation or may forego a

certificate of citizenship in favor of a U.S. passport.¹³ Nonetheless, given the lack of other available data, this report makes the conservative assumption that the number of LPRs deriving citizenship is equal to the number of approved certificate applications. This assumption means the estimates of derivative citizens are likely to be downwardly biased, which means that too few derivative citizens are subtracted from the LPR inflow in Stage 1, but the extent of underestimation (and the resulting over-estimate of the remaining LPR population) is unknown.

Mortality and Emigration. Reliable, direct measurements of LPR mortality and emigration do not exist, so attrition due to mortality and emigration is estimated for each year from acquisition of LPR status through the estimate date. LPRs are survived (i.e., reduced for mortality) using NCHS mortality rates from 1999–2001 decennial life tables by age and sex (see Arias et al, 2008).¹⁴ Emigration is estimated using a schedule based on research on emigration of the foreign-born population by the U.S. Census Bureau (see Ahmed and Robinson, 1994), adapted into a schedule for use with the LPR population (see Warren, 2003).¹⁵ Warren’s schedule assumes an emigration rate of 3.258 percent in the first year and decreases each subsequent year’s rate by 5 percent. In addition, individuals who obtained LPR status as refugees and asylees, having escaped persecution in their previous home countries, are assumed to emigrate at a rate of zero percent.¹⁶

While the COVID-19 pandemic is expected to have affected the rates of both emigration and mortality, the exact magnitude and/or direction of these impacts is still unknown. It is likely mortality rates increased, but future research is needed to determine the exact adjustments to emigration and mortality schedules to account for the influence of COVID-19.

Stage 2: LPRs who entered before 1980. Stage 2 starts with the 2021 1-year ACS Public Use Microdata Sample data on noncitizens and naturalized citizens who entered before 1980. While the ACS represents the average value over a calendar year, to produce an estimate as of a specific date, it is treated in this analysis as the midpoint of 2021 and shifted forward to the estimate date by applying one and a half years of mortality and emigration risk. Mortality and emigration are calculated using the same schedules as in Stage 1, but with risk zeroed out for all years prior to the ACS estimate year.

Stage 3: Full LPR population. The total LPR population is the sum of the Stage 1 population of LPRs who entered in 1980 or later and the Stage 2 population of LPRs who entered before 1980.

Stage 4: LPR Subpopulation Eligible to Naturalize. LPRs generally become eligible to naturalize after turning 18 years old and meeting U.S. residency and other requirements. The population eligible to

¹⁰ All noncitizens who entered prior to 1980 are assumed to be LPRs; see footnote 5.
¹¹ Some persons who became LPRs in 1980 or later entered the United States under a different status before 1980.
¹² Prior to February 2001, children obtained derivative citizenship upon the naturalization of both parents. The Child Citizenship Act of 2000, Pub.L. 106-395, amended the INA to allow for derivative citizenship based on the naturalization of a single parent, applying to children under the age of 18 as of February 27, 2001.

¹³ The Form N-600, *Application for Certificate of Citizenship*, currently carries a filing fee of \$1,170, though some individuals may qualify for a fee waiver (application Form I-912, *Request for a Fee Waiver*). Alternatively, a U.S. passport card and/or book can be obtained for a child for \$50 to \$65, depending on the age of the child. Note that a Certificate of Citizenship does not expire, whereas a U.S. passport card and/or book does expire.
¹⁴ This method may overestimate mortality because immigration favors younger, healthier people, and because older or less healthy immigrants may be more likely to emigrate than members of the native-born population.
¹⁵ Attrition due to emigration must be estimated because reliable, direct measurements of LPR emigration do not exist.
¹⁶ See Baker 2021 on limitations of this approach.

naturalize is estimated by first filtering the LPR population to those 18 years of age and older, and then filtering to those who have met the residency requirements based on class and year of admission.

Most LPRs are required to meet a 5-year residency requirement after obtaining LPR status, but persons adjusting to LPR status as spouses of U.S. citizens generally are only subject to a 3-year requirement, and the 5-year clock starts earlier for persons adjusting to LPR status under certain other classes of admission. For asylees adjusting to LPR status, the date of LPR admission is rolled back to one year prior to the date on which the LPR application was approved, so asylees are assumed to be eligible to naturalize after four years as an LPR. For immigrants adjusting to LPR status as refugees, Lautenberg parolees, or through cancellation of removal, the date of LPR admission is rolled back to the date of arrival in the United States as a refugee, the date of parole, or the date of cancellation of removal. This report assumes that two years elapse between the earlier dates and the date of approval of the application for permanent residence so that these LPRs are eligible to naturalize three years after obtaining LPR status.¹⁷

¹⁷ Several other exceptions to the 5-year residency requirement exist, most of which affect small numbers of immigrants. For example, under certain circumstances (e.g., military service in time of hostilities), certain noncitizens may be permitted to naturalize without first becoming an LPR, and some categories (e.g., INA § 319(b)) do not require prior residence or a specified period of physical presence in the United States. Other LPRs, such as those not found to be of good moral character, may not be eligible to naturalize regardless of length of residency (see INA Title III for details).

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