



# Annual Flow Report

LAWFUL PERMANENT RESIDENTS

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**Homeland  
Security**

Office of Immigration Statistics  
OFFICE OF STRATEGY, POLICY & PLANS

# U.S. Lawful Permanent Residents: 2017

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A lawful permanent resident (LPR), or “green card” recipient, is defined in immigration law as a person who has been granted “the status of having been lawfully accorded the privilege of residing permanently in the United States as an immigrant in accordance with the immigration laws, such status not having changed.”<sup>1</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 and apply to become U.S. citizens if they meet certain additional eligibility requirements. This Office of Immigration Statistics (OIS) *Annual Flow Report* presents information obtained from applications for LPR status on the number and characteristics of persons who became LPRs in the United States during Fiscal Year 2017.<sup>2,3</sup>

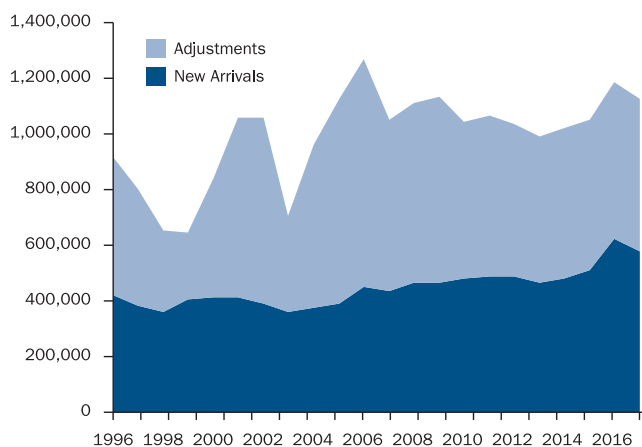
A total of 1,127,167 persons became LPRs in 2017 (Figure 1; Table 1). Just under half of these LPRs (49 percent) were already present in the United States when they were granted lawful permanent residence. Sixty-six percent were granted LPR status based on a family relationship with a U.S. citizen or LPR of the United States. The leading countries of birth of new LPRs were Mexico (15 percent), China (6.3 percent), and Cuba (5.8 percent).

## 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; possess certain skills, 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.

There are two paths to LPR status, depending on whether the applicant is seeking LPR status from within the United States or applying for an immigrant visa abroad. Eligible foreign nationals who are abroad apply for an immigrant visa at a U.S. Department of State (DOS) consular office following receipt and approval of a petition on their behalf (if sponsored by a family member or employer) and, if visas are numerically limited, based on the availability of a visa number. 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. These LPRs are referred to as “new arrivals” in this report. Eligible individuals who are present in the United States file a Form I-485, *Application to Register Permanent Residence or Adjust Status*, with U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). These applicants may apply for authorization to accept employment while their Form I-485 is pending. If their applications are approved, they generally are granted LPR status at the time of approval.<sup>4</sup> These LPRs are referred to as “adjustments of status” in this report.

**Figure 1.**  
Persons Obtaining Lawful Permanent Resident Status by Type: Adjustments of Status or New Arrivals: Fiscal Years 1996-2017



Source: U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

**Table 1.**  
Persons Obtaining Lawful Permanent Resident Status: Fiscal Years 2015 to 2017

Category of admission	2017		2016		2015	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total . . . . .	1,127,167	100.0	1,183,505	100.0	1,051,031	100.0
New arrivals . . . . .	578,081	51.3	618,078	52.2	508,716	48.4
Adjustments of status . .	549,086	48.7	565,427	47.8	542,315	51.6

Source: U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

<sup>1</sup> 8 USC 1101(a)(20).  
<sup>2</sup> In this report, “years” refer to U.S. fiscal years, which run from October 1 to September 30. For example, fiscal year 2017 began on October 1, 2016, and ended on September 30, 2017.  
<sup>3</sup> Additional context may be found in the 2017 Yearbook of Immigration Statistics and other OIS reports. Not all numbers reported are contained in the tables.  
<sup>4</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.

## Immediate Relatives of U.S. Citizens

The largest category of new LPRs consists of immediate relatives of U.S. citizens (46 percent), defined to include spouses of citizens, children of citizens, and parents of citizens age 21 and over.<sup>5</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 limits).

Family-sponsored preferences consist of four categories of relatives:

- First preference, a U.S. citizen's unmarried adult sons and daughters and their children;
- Second preference, an LPR's spouse and children (F-2A), or an LPR's unmarried sons and daughters and their children (F-2B);
- Third preference, a U.S. citizen's married sons and daughters and their spouses and children; and
- Fourth preference, a U.S. citizen's (age 21 years and over) brothers and sisters and their spouses and children.

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

Family-preference LPRs and immediate relatives are collectively referred to as family-based immigrants. All family-based immigrants must be petitioned 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 family member receive any means-tested public benefits while in LPR status and before the family member can be credited with 40 quarters of work.

Employment-based preferences consist of five categories of workers along with their spouses and children:

- EB-1 priority workers (e.g., certain multinational executives and managers, aliens of extraordinary ability, and 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."

<sup>5</sup> Children include orphans adopted abroad or coming to the United States to be adopted.

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 2017, the limit on preference immigration was 366,000, which include 226,000 in the family-sponsored preference categories and 140,000 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.<sup>6</sup> In 2017, these limits amounted to 25,620 preference immigrants from any single country and 7,320 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 established 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 2017, and limits the number of diversity visas across six broad world regions based on regional migration levels during the preceding five years so that high-admission regions are eligible for fewer diversity visas. Nationals of eligible countries with a high school degree or its equivalent or with qualifying work experience may apply to the diversity visa program. Visas are distributed to successful applicants through a random selection, or lottery, system, and based on the allocations described above.

<sup>6</sup> For more information regarding independent states, dependent areas, and visa allocations, see 9 Foreign Affairs Manual 503.2 at the Department of State's website.

## Refugee and Asylee Adjustments of Status

The United States provides refuge to persons who have been persecuted or have a well-founded fear of persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or membership in a particular social group, through two programs: a refugee program for persons outside the United States and their spouse and/or children, and an asylum program for persons in the United States and their 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 at 70,000 from 2003 to 2007; 80,000 from 2008 to 2011; 76,000 for 2012; 70,000 from 2013 through 2015; 85,000 for 2016; and 110,000 for 2017, though refugee admissions were reset to 50,000 for 2017 through a pair of Executive Orders.<sup>7</sup>

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

The INA requires refugees to apply for adjustment to LPR status after one year of residence in the United States. Asylees are eligible, but not required, to apply one year after they are granted asylum. Refugee and asylee adjustments of status are not subject to numerical limits.<sup>8</sup>

## Other Admission Categories

Remaining admission categories are generally limited to persons admitted under special legislation and have remained fairly steady for the last several years, with a few exceptions. Arrivals of certain Iraqis and Afghans employed by the U.S. Government and their family members have increased sharply since 2013, and adjustments of status by T and U nonimmigrant visa holders have also increased since 2013 as the programs have become better known, and visa holders have become eligible for adjustment.<sup>9</sup>

## 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 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 derive citizenship through a U.S. citizen parent.

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

<sup>8</sup> 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.

<sup>9</sup> T and U nonimmigrant visas are for certain aliens who have been victims of human trafficking and other crimes, respectively; T and U visa holders may be eligible to apply for adjustment of status after three years of continuous presence in the United States.

## TRENDS AND CHARACTERISTICS OF NEW LAWFUL PERMANENT RESIDENTS

The United States granted a total of 1,127,167 individuals LPR status in 2017, a decrease of five percent from 1,183,505 in 2016. LPR new arrivals decreased from 618,078 in 2016 to 578,081 in 2017. LPRs adjusting status also decreased from 565,427 in 2016 to 549,086 in 2017.

The count of 516,508 immediate relatives of U.S. citizens who became LPRs in 2017 represents a decrease from 2016 (566,706), which saw the highest number since the 2006 count of 580,348. The number of immediate relatives of U.S. citizens who became LPRs decreased nine percent from 2016 to 2017 though it still represented a 24 percent increase over the recent low of 416,456 in 2014, which was the lowest count since 2003. The number of new employment-based preference LPRs remained relatively unchanged between 2016 and 2017, shifting from 137,893 to 137,855. Mexico was the leading country of birth of new LPRs in 2017, accounting for 15.1 percent (170,581) of the total, up from 14.7 percent of new LPRs (174,534) in 2016. Other demographic characteristics such as age, marital status, and intended destinations of settlement were largely unchanged, with the exception of the proportion of new LPRs identifying as single, which increased by more than two percentage points in 2017. Most of this change appears to be linked to a decrease in the number of new LPRs whose marital status falls into categories other than married or single.

## Historical Trends

The annual LPR flow has exhibited a general upward trend since 1945, increasing from an average of 250,000 new LPRs per year during the 1950s to averaging over one million per year since 1999. These increases are partly explained by changes in immigration law, including the elimination in 1965 of the National Origins system,<sup>10</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 immigrants under the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) of 1986. The increases in the number of new LPRs in 2005 and 2006 primarily resulted from changes to employment preferences in the American Competitiveness in the 21st Century Act (AC21) and the REAL ID Act, along with backlog reductions of applications at USCIS (see *U.S. Legal Permanent Residents: 2006 Annual Flow Report*).

<sup>10</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.

**Table 2.**

**Persons Obtaining Lawful Permanent Resident Status by Major Class of Admission: Fiscal Years 2015 to 2017**

Category of admission	2017		2016		2015	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total	1,127,167	100.0	1,183,505	100.0	1,051,031	100.0
Family-sponsored immigrants	748,746	66.4	804,793	68.0	678,978	64.6
Immediate relatives of U.S. citizens	516,508	45.8	566,706	47.9	465,068	44.2
Spouses	292,909	26.0	304,358	25.7	265,367	25.2
Parents	148,610	13.2	173,854	14.7	132,961	12.7
Children*	74,989	6.7	88,494	7.5	66,740	6.3
Family-sponsored preferences	232,238	20.6	238,087	20.1	213,910	20.4
Unmarried sons/daughters of U.S. citizens	26,219	2.3	22,072	1.9	24,533	2.3
Spouses and children of alien residents	113,500	10.1	121,267	10.2	104,892	10.0
Married sons/daughters of U.S. citizens	23,260	2.1	27,392	2.3	24,271	2.3
Siblings of U.S. citizens	69,259	6.1	67,356	5.7	60,214	5.7
Employment-based preferences	137,855	12.2	137,893	11.7	144,047	13.7
Priority workers	41,060	3.6	42,862	3.6	41,688	4.0
Professionals with advanced degrees	39,331	3.5	38,858	3.3	44,344	4.2
Skilled workers, professionals, unskilled workers	38,083	3.4	35,933	3.0	37,243	3.5
Special immigrants	9,504	0.8	10,377	0.9	10,584	1.0
Investors	9,877	0.9	9,863	0.8	10,188	1.0
Diversity programs	51,592	4.6	49,865	4.2	47,934	4.6
Refugees and Asylees	146,003	13.0	157,425	13.3	151,995	14.5
Refugee adjustments	120,356	10.7	120,216	10.2	118,431	11.3
Asylee adjustments	25,647	2.3	37,209	3.1	33,564	3.2
Parolees	26	-	15	-	23	0.0
Other categories	42,945	3.8	33,514	2.8	28,054	2.7
Children born abroad to alien residents	75	-	92	-	403	-
NACARA <sup>†</sup> Section 202	35	-	34	-	49	-
Cancellation of removal	3,539	0.3	3,453	0.3	4,713	0.4
Subject to annual limit	2,849	0.3	2,567	0.2	3,720	0.4
Not subject to limit (NACARA <sup>†</sup> Section 203)	690	0.1	886	0.1	993	0.1
Haitian Refugee Immigrant Fairness Act	12	-	15	-	9	-
Other <sup>‡</sup>	39,284	3.5	29,920	2.5	22,880	2.2

\*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.

— Figures round to 0.0.

Source: U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

**Table 3.**

**Persons Obtaining Lawful Permanent Resident Status by Type and Selected Major Classes of Admission: Fiscal Years 2015 to 2017**

Category of admission	2017			2016			2015		
	Total	Adjustments	New Arrivals	Total	Adjustments	New Arrivals	Total	Adjustments	New Arrivals
All classes of admission	1,127,167	549,086	578,081	1,183,505	565,427	618,078	1,051,031	542,315	508,716
(proportion of year total)	(100.0)	(48.7)	(51.3)	(100.0)	(47.8)	(52.2)	(100.0)	(51.6)	(48.4)
Family-sponsored preferences	232,238	13,478	218,760	238,087	15,116	222,971	213,910	16,783	197,127
(proportion of year total)	(20.6)	(1.2)	(19.4)	(20.1)	(1.3)	(18.8)	(20.4)	(1.6)	(18.8)
Immediate relatives of U.S. citizens	516,508	252,231	264,277	566,706	257,302	309,404	465,068	230,194	234,874
(proportion of year total)	(45.8)	(22.4)	(23.4)	(47.9)	(21.7)	(26.1)	(44.2)	(21.9)	(22.3)
Employment-based preferences	137,855	113,330	24,525	137,893	113,640	24,253	144,047	121,978	22,069
(proportion of year total)	(12.2)	(10.1)	(2.2)	(11.7)	(9.6)	(2.0)	(13.7)	(11.6)	(2.1)
Other	240,566	170,047	70,519	240,819	179,369	61,450	228,006	173,360	54,646
(proportion of year total)	(21.3)	(15.1)	(6.3)	(20.3)	(15.2)	(5.2)	(21.7)	(16.5)	(5.2)

Source: U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

## Category of Admission<sup>11</sup>

Family-sponsored immigrants (including immediate relatives of U.S. citizens and family-sponsored preferences) represented 66 percent of total new LPRs in 2017 (Table 2). The largest share of these (46 percent of total new LPRs in 2017) were immediate relatives of U.S. citizens, including spouses of U.S. citizens (26 percent of new LPRs), parents of adult U.S. citizens (13 percent), and children of U.S. citizens, including adopted children (6.7 percent). Fifty-one percent of immediate family members who became LPRs in 2017 were new arrivals while 49 percent adjusted their status (Table 3). In the five-year period from 2013 to 2017, immediate relatives made up 45 percent of new LPRs and were evenly split between those newly arriving and those adjusting status.

Family-sponsored preference LPRs made up 21 percent of all new LPRs in 2017, similar to the proportion in the five-year period from 2013 to 2017, and the vast majority (94 percent) of them were new arrivals. In the five-year period from 2013 to 2017, 92 percent of new family-sponsored preference LPRs received their status upon arrival, while eight percent adjusted status while already in the United States. The second preference class (spouses and children of alien residents) accounted for 49 percent of new family-sponsored preference LPRs in 2017, and the fourth preference class (siblings of U.S. citizens) accounted for 30 percent.

Employment-based preference LPRs constituted 12 percent of all new LPRs in 2017, 82 percent of whom adjusted status while already in the United States. In the five-year period from 2013 to 2017, 84 percent of new employment-based LPRs were already in the country. The first preference class (priority workers) and the second preference class (professionals with advanced degrees) accounted for 30 percent and 29 percent of new employment-based LPRs, respectively, in 2017.

The number of refugees adjusting to LPR status in 2017 remained largely unchanged (120,356) as compared to 2016 and 2015; however, these years reported noticeable increases over the preceding years (96,066 in 2014). Asylee adjustments were 31 percent lower (25,647) than in 2016 (37,209). Refugee and asylee adjustments represented 11 and 2.3 percent, respectively, of new LPRs in 2017. In the five-year period from 2013 to 2017, they accounted for 9.9 and 3.3 percent of new LPRs, respectively.

<sup>11</sup> In this report, "class of admission" or "category of admission" does not refer to admission to the United States but rather admission to LPR status. This applies both to new arrivals (who receive admission to the United States at the same time as admission to LPR status) and to adjustments of status (who are already within the United States).

Diversity immigrants accounted for 4.6 percent of all new LPRs in 2017 and 4.5 percent in the five-year period from 2013 to 2016, of whom the vast majority (97 percent) were new arrivals.

Overall, the proportion of new LPRs adjusting status while already within the United States has steadily decreased from 65 percent in 2006 to 49 percent in 2017. This trend is largely driven by changing patterns of adjustment of status versus new arrivals among immediate relatives and family-sponsored preference classes, the two largest classes of admission. Sixty-two percent of individuals in the immediate relative classes of admission adjusted status while already in the country in 2006, whereas 54 percent adjusted status in 2011 and just 49 percent in 2017. Individuals adjusting status represented 36 percent of those becoming new LPRs under family preference classes of admission in 2006, but only accounted for 12 percent in 2011 and 5.8 percent in 2017. Those becoming LPRs within employment preference classes of admission tend to adjust status while already in the United States. This was recently most pronounced in 2008, when over 90 percent of this group adjusted status while already in the United States. By 2017, the proportion had declined to 82 percent.

## Region and Country of Birth

The leading regions of birth of new LPRs in 2017 were Asia (38 percent) and North America (37 percent) (Table 4). Together, Asia and North America have been the regions of birth for at least 70 percent of new LPRs each year since 2009, with North Americans representing an increasing share of new LPRs. However, between 2000 and 2017, the proportions of new LPRs from Asia and Africa have increased by 5.4 and 5.3 percentage points, respectively, while the proportions from Europe and North America have respectively decreased by 7.3 and 3.9 percentage points during this time.

In 2017, over 15 percent of all persons granted LPR status were born in Mexico, which has been the leading source of new LPRs each year since 1978. Other prominent countries of birth of new LPRs were China (6.3 percent), Cuba (5.8 percent), India (5.4 percent), and the Dominican Republic (5.2 percent). These five countries accounted for 38 percent of all new LPRs in 2017.

**Table 4.**

**Persons Obtaining Lawful Permanent Resident Status by Region and Country of Birth: Fiscal Years 2015 to 2017**

(Countries ranked by 2017 LPR flow)

Region/country of birth	2017		2016		2015	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
<b>REGION</b>						
Total . . . . .	1,127,167	100.0	1,183,505	100.0	1,051,031	100.0
Africa . . . . .	118,824	10.5	113,426	9.6	101,415	9.6
Asia . . . . .	424,743	37.7	462,299	39.1	419,297	39.9
Europe . . . . .	84,335	7.5	93,567	7.9	85,803	8.2
North America . . . . .	413,650	36.7	427,293	36.1	366,126	34.8
Caribbean . . . . .	174,591	15.5	182,151	15.4	146,753	14.0
Central America . . . . .	56,585	5.0	57,343	4.8	47,711	4.5
Other North America . . . . .	182,474	16.2	187,799	15.9	171,662	16.3
Oceania . . . . .	5,071	0.4	5,588	0.5	5,404	0.5
South America . . . . .	79,076	7.0	79,608	6.7	72,309	6.9
Unknown . . . . .	1,468	0.1	1,724	0.1	677	0.1
<b>COUNTRY</b>						
Total . . . . .	1,127,167	100.0	1,183,505	100.0	1,051,031	100.0
Mexico . . . . .	170,581	15.1	174,534	14.7	158,619	15.1
China, People's Republic . . . . .	71,565	6.3	81,772	6.9	74,558	7.1
Cuba . . . . .	65,028	5.8	66,516	5.6	54,396	5.2
India . . . . .	60,394	5.4	64,687	5.5	64,116	6.1
Dominican Republic . . . . .	58,520	5.2	61,161	5.2	50,610	4.8
Philippines . . . . .	49,147	4.4	53,287	4.5	56,478	5.4
Vietnam . . . . .	38,231	3.4	41,451	3.5	30,832	2.9
El Salvador . . . . .	25,109	2.2	23,449	2.0	19,487	1.9
Jamaica . . . . .	21,905	1.9	23,350	2.0	17,642	1.7
Haiti . . . . .	21,824	1.9	23,584	2.0	16,967	1.6
Afghanistan . . . . .	19,538	1.7	12,513	1.1	8,328	0.8
Korea, South . . . . .	19,194	1.7	21,801	1.8	17,138	1.6
Colombia . . . . .	17,956	1.6	18,610	1.6	17,316	1.6
Pakistan . . . . .	17,408	1.5	19,313	1.6	18,057	1.7
Brazil . . . . .	14,989	1.3	13,812	1.2	11,424	1.1
Bangladesh . . . . .	14,693	1.3	18,723	1.6	13,570	1.3
Ethiopia . . . . .	14,637	1.3	13,232	1.1	11,394	1.1
Iraq . . . . .	14,203	1.3	18,904	1.6	21,107	2.0
Iran . . . . .	13,791	1.2	13,298	1.1	13,114	1.2
Nigeria . . . . .	13,539	1.2	14,380	1.2	11,542	1.1
All other countries . . . . .	384,915	34.1	405,128	34.2	364,336	34.7

Source: U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

**Table 5.**

**Persons Obtaining Lawful Permanent Resident Status by State of Residence: Fiscal Years 2015 to 2017**

(Ranked by 2017 LPR flow)

State of residence	2017		2016		2015	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total . . . . .	1,127,167	100.0	1,183,505	100.0	1,053,031	100.0
California . . . . .	214,243	19.0	223,141	18.9	209,568	19.9
New York . . . . .	139,409	12.4	159,878	13.5	130,010	12.4
Florida . . . . .	127,609	11.3	136,337	11.5	118,873	11.3
Texas . . . . .	110,126	9.8	110,651	9.3	99,727	9.5
New Jersey . . . . .	54,440	4.8	56,187	4.7	49,801	4.7
Illinois . . . . .	40,530	3.6	43,207	3.7	40,482	3.9
Massachusetts . . . . .	37,010	3.3	35,706	3.0	28,535	2.7
Virginia . . . . .	29,466	2.6	29,242	2.5	27,622	2.6
Pennsylvania . . . . .	27,762	2.5	27,217	2.3	24,969	2.4
Washington . . . . .	27,363	2.4	27,304	2.3	24,765	2.4
Other* . . . . .	319,209	28.3	334,635	28.3	296,679	28.2

\*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 persons granted LPR status in 2017 (Table 5). Other leading states of residence included New York (12 percent), Florida (11 percent), Texas (9.8 percent), and New Jersey (4.8 percent). Fifty-seven percent of new LPRs resided in these five states in 2017. These states, along with Illinois, have been the top six states of residence for new LPRs every year since 1971. However, the proportion of LPRs settling in these six states has steadily decreased from 82 percent of all new LPRs in 1990 to 61 percent in 2017.

The leading metropolitan area of residence for new LPRs in 2017 was New York-Newark-Jersey City, NY-NJ-PA (16 percent) (Table 6).<sup>12</sup> Other prominent metropolitan areas of residence included Los Angeles-Long Beach-Anaheim, CA (7.3 percent); Miami-Fort Lauderdale-West Palm Beach, FL (7.1 percent); Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV (3.5 percent); Houston-The Woodlands-Sugar Land, TX (3.4 percent); and Chicago-Naperville-Elgin, IL-IN-WI (3.3 percent). These six metropolitan areas accounted for the residence of 40 percent of new LPRs in 2017.

## Age, Sex, and Marital Status

New LPRs have historically been younger than the native population of the United States. In 2017, the median age for new LPRs continued to be 32 years old, as it was in 2016 and 2015 (Table 7).

New LPRs are more likely to be female (54 percent) – a trend that has held consistent over recent years (Table 8). Additionally, as in recent years, the majority (58 percent) of new LPRs are married (Table 9).

<sup>12</sup> The most current CBSA definitions are available from OMB at <https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/bulletins/2013/b13-01.pdf>.

**Table 6.**  
**Persons Obtaining Lawful Permanent Resident Status by Metropolitan Area of Residence:**  
**Fiscal Years 2015 to 2017**

(Ranked by 2017 LPR flow)

Metropolitan area of residence	2017		2016		2015	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total . . . . .	1,127,167	100.0	1,183,505	100.0	1,053,031	100.0
New York-Newark-Jersey City, NY-NJ-PA . . . . .	174,421	15.5	195,593	16.5	162,168	15.4
Los Angeles-Long Beach-Anaheim, CA . . . . .	82,470	7.3	88,743	7.5	82,979	7.9
Miami-Fort Lauderdale-West Palm Beach, FL . . . . .	80,133	7.1	88,651	7.5	77,647	7.4
Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV . . . . .	39,927	3.5	40,642	3.4	37,340	3.6
Houston-The Woodlands-Sugar Land, TX . . . . .	38,686	3.4	37,777	3.2	34,591	3.3
Chicago-Naperville-Elgin, IL-IN-WI . . . . .	36,832	3.3	39,749	3.4	36,658	3.5
San Francisco-Oakland-Hayward, CA . . . . .	35,420	3.1	36,476	3.1	34,152	3.2
Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington, TX . . . . .	34,620	3.1	33,605	2.8	29,660	2.8
Boston-Cambridge-Newton, MA-NH . . . . .	29,908	2.7	28,677	2.4	22,836	2.2
Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Roswell, GA . . . . .	21,341	1.9	23,620	2.0	20,875	2.0
Other . . . . .	553,409	49.1	569,972	48.2	512,125	48.7

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

## 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.<sup>13</sup> 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.

<sup>13</sup> 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 7.****Persons Obtaining Lawful Permanent Resident Status by Age: Fiscal Years 2015 to 2017**

Age	2017		2016		2015	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total . . . . .	1,127,167	100.0	1,183,505	100.0	1,051,031	100.0
Under 5 years . . . . .	41,287	3.7	41,863	3.5	37,267	3.5
5 to 14 years . . . . .	124,252	11.0	128,776	10.9	112,674	10.7
15 to 24 years . . . . .	180,320	16.0	194,230	16.4	172,766	16.4
25 to 34 years . . . . .	278,821	24.7	286,454	24.2	258,528	24.6
35 to 44 years . . . . .	209,343	18.6	213,952	18.1	201,674	19.2
45 to 54 years . . . . .	142,128	12.6	148,185	12.5	127,551	12.1
55 to 64 years . . . . .	89,456	7.9	98,517	8.3	81,870	7.8
65 years and over . . . . .	61,560	5.5	71,528	6.0	58,696	5.6
Unknown age . . . . .	-	-	-	-	5	-
Median age (years) . . . . .	32	NA	32	NA	32	NA

NA Not applicable.

— Figure rounds to 0.0.

Source: U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

**Table 8.****Persons Obtaining Lawful Permanent Resident Status by Sex: Fiscal Years 2015 to 2017**

Sex	2017		2016		2015	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total . . . . .	1,127,167	100.0	1,183,505	100.0	1,051,031	100.0
Female . . . . .	605,911	53.8	644,002	54.4	569,536	54.2
Male . . . . .	521,242	46.2	539,472	45.6	481,485	45.8
Unknown . . . . .	14	-	31	-	10	-

— Figure rounds to 0.0.

Source: U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

**Table 9.****Persons Obtaining Lawful Permanent Resident Status by Marital Status: Fiscal Years 2015 to 2017**

Marital status	2017		2016		2015	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total . . . . .	1,127,167	100.0	1,183,505	100.0	1,051,031	100.0
Married . . . . .	656,878	58.3	688,392	58.2	615,259	58.5
Single . . . . .	405,916	36.0	401,561	33.9	363,590	34.6
Other* . . . . .	58,187	5.2	83,259	7	68,824	6.5
Unknown . . . . .	6,186	0.5	10,293	0.9	3,358	0.3

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

Source: U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

# APPENDIX

## PREFERENCE IMMIGRATION LIMITS<sup>14</sup>

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

### Family-sponsored Preference Limit

The annual limit for family-sponsored preference immigration is calculated as 480,000 people minus the number of aliens who were issued visas or who adjusted to LPR status in the previous fiscal year as (1) immediate relatives of U.S. citizens, (2) children born subsequent to the issuance of a visa to an accompanying parent, (3) children born abroad to LPRs on temporary trips abroad, and (4) certain categories of aliens paroled into the United States in the second preceding fiscal year, and plus (5) unused visas in the employment-preference classes in the preceding year.

The family-sponsored preference limit may not fall below a minimum of 226,000 in any year. Because the calculated limit (based on visa usage during the prior year) for family-sponsored preference classes in 2017 was below 226,000, the family-sponsored preferences limit was set at 226,000 (Table A1).

<sup>14</sup> 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.

### 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 zero unused numbers in the family-sponsored preference classes in 2016, the 2017 employment-based preference limit was 140,000. 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 2017, these limits were 40,040 and 9,940.

### 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 2017 per country limit for independent foreign states was 25,620 (seven percent of 366,000 – the sum of the 2017 employment-based and family-based preference limits), and the limit for dependencies was 7,320 (two percent of 366,000).

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

Visit the Office of Immigration Statistics Web page at <http://www.dhs.gov/immigration-statistics>.

**Table A1.**

**Annual Limits for Preference and Diversity Immigrants: Fiscal Year 2017**

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 <sup>†</sup>
Third: Married sons and daughters of U.S. citizens . . . . .	23,400 <sup>†</sup>
Fourth: Brothers and sisters of U.S. citizens (at least 21 years of age) . . . . .	65,000 <sup>†</sup>
Employment-based preferences . . . . .	140,000
First: Priority workers . . . . .	40,040 <sup>†</sup>
Second: Professionals with advanced degrees or aliens of exceptional ability . . . . .	40,040 <sup>†</sup>
Third: Skilled workers, professionals, and needed unskilled workers . . . . .	40,040 <sup>†</sup>
Fourth: Certain special immigrants . . . . .	9,940
Fifth: Employment creation (“investors”) . . . . .	9,940
Diversity . . . . .	50,000

\*Plus unused family fourth preference visas.

<sup>†</sup>Plus unused higher preference visas.

<sup>†</sup>Plus unused employment fourth and fifth preference visas.

Source: U.S. Department of State.