

An Overview of Available Statistical Data on the Foreign-Born Population in the United States¹

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Foreign-Born as Percentage of Population

- **Portion of population:**
 - In 1980, according to the US Census Bureau, the foreign born represented 6.2 percent (14.1 million individuals) of the total US population.
 - In 1990, foreign-born population represented 7.9 percent (19.8 million individuals).
- **Current:**
 - Total foreign-born population- 39 million.
 - Naturalized citizens 35% (as of 2005)
 - Legal Permanent Residents 33% (as of 2005)
 - Undocumented people- estimated 11.9 million
 - (30% of foreign-born population, 4 % of US pop.)²
 - Undocumented people are estimated to be 5.4% of U.S. workforce (as of 2008). This has increased from 4.3% in 2003.³
- **Of the current 38 million foreign-born, when did they enter?**
 - Before 1990- 42.9 percent
 - 1990-1999- 29.4 percent
 - After 2000- 27.7 percent

Undocumented Population

- Total estimated undocumented population (2008): 11.9 million⁴
- 9.6 million are from Latin American countries (as of March 2008).
- 7 million of these people are from Mexico.⁵
 - As of 2007, 47.5% report themselves as Latinos.⁶
- Regional breakdown (as of 2008):
 - Asia (11%), Central America (11%), South America (7%), the Caribbean (4%) and the Middle East (less than 2%)⁷

¹ Prepared and assembled by Lindsay Nash, Yale Law School.

² Pew Hispanic Center, A Portrait of Unauthorized Immigrants in the United States at 2 (Apr. 14, 2009) [hereinafter Pew Report on Unauthorized Immigrants].

³ *Id.* at 12.

⁴ *Id.* at 3.

⁵ *Id.* at 21.

⁶ Migration Policy Institute, Most Up-To-Date Frequently-Requested Statistics on Immigrants in the United States (Dec. 2008), available at <http://www.migrationinformation.org/USFocus/display.cfm?ID=714>.

⁷ Pew Report on Unauthorized Immigrants at 21.

- Status at Entry:⁸
 - Held now-expired visas (“overstayers”): 4-5.5 million (45%)
 - Border crossing card violators: 250,000-500,000 million
 - Entered illegally: 6-7 million
- Estimates of the increase in the undocumented immigrant population suggest that the number has decreased from about 800,000 per year from 2000-2004 to about 500,000 per year currently.⁹
- Estimates vary on the number of current undocumented immigrants who are waiting in the immigrant visa backlog.

Geographic Distribution of Foreign-Born Communities

- Interactive *New York Times* map of immigrant populations from 1880 to present: <http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2009/03/10/us/20090310-immigration-explorer.html>
- In 2007, the top five US states by the number of foreign born were California (10,024,352), New York (4,205,813), Texas (3,828,904), Florida (3,440,918), and Illinois (1,768,518).
- Between 2000 and 2007, the five states with the largest absolute growth of the foreign-born population were California (1,160,097), Texas (929,262), Florida (770,090), New York (337,680), and Arizona (335,401).
- Between 1990 and 2000, the five states with the largest percent growth of the foreign-born population were North Carolina (273.7 percent), Georgia (233.4 percent), Nevada (202.0 percent), Arkansas (196.3 percent), and Utah (170.8 percent).
- Between 2000 and 2007, the five states with the largest percent growth of the foreign-born population were South Carolina (63.8 percent), Arkansas (60.7 percent), Nevada (57.2 percent), Tennessee (56.9 percent), and Alabama (56.4 percent).

Naturalization Trends

- **Average Numbers of Legal Permanent Residents Naturalized Annually:**
 - 1970’s-141,000
 - 1980’s- 205,000
 - 1990’s- 498,000
 - After 2000- 629,000
- Overall, tendency to naturalize has increased since 1995. Now, immigrants are 40-50% more likely to naturalize. This varies depending on factors like country of origin and time in country.¹⁰

⁸ Pew Hispanic Center, Modes of Entry for the Unauthorized Migrant Population (May 22, 2006) [hereinafter Modes of Entry].

⁹ Migration Policy Institute, Most Up-To-Date Frequently-Requested Statistics on Immigrants in the United States (Dec. 2008), available at <http://www.migrationinformation.org/USFocus/display.cfm?ID=714>.

- Time in Country as Related to Naturalization (as of March 2007)¹¹
 - In country more than 20 years- 75% had naturalized.
 - In country 11-20 years- 53% had naturalized.
 - In country for 6-10 years- 31% had naturalized.
- Since 1995, naturalization rates higher for people from Latin America than from Europe and Canada (from which rates were historically higher).¹²
- In 2005, 8.5 million immigrants were eligible for naturalization. 3 million of these are from Mexico.¹³
- Proportion of legal foreign-born residents eligible to naturalize that have naturalized is 59% (12.8 million in 2005). The proportion of that have naturalized to the population of legal foreign-born residents including those not yet eligible to naturalize is 52%.¹⁴
- Naturalization is more common and applications are processed more quickly than before.
- In 2007, US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) naturalized 660,477 lawful permanent residents (LPRs) according to data from the Department of Homeland Security.
- Over half of the 660,477 LPRs who naturalized in 2007 lived in California (27.5 percent), New York (11.2 percent), Florida (8.3 percent), and Texas (8.0 percent).

¹⁰ Jeffrey S. Passel, Pew Hispanic Research Center, *Growing Share of Immigrants Choose Naturalization* at 17 (Mar. 28, 2007) [Hereinafter *Pew Report on Naturalization*]

¹¹ *Pew Report on Naturalization* at 15.

¹² *Id.* at 8-9.

¹³ *Pew Report on Naturalization* at ii.

¹⁴ *Id.* at 14.