



Office of Policy and Planning

Statistics Division

ANNUAL REPORT

Number 6

January 2002

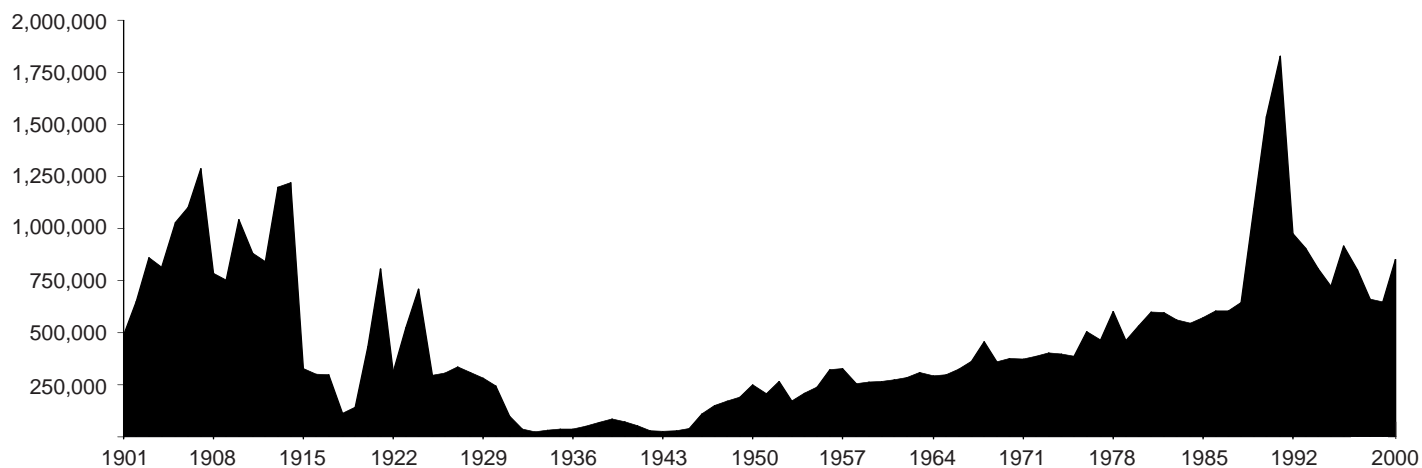
Legal Immigration, Fiscal Year 2000

This report provides a summary of INS statistics on immigrants admitted for legal permanent residence during fiscal year 2000 (October 1, 1999-September 30, 2000). Included as legal immigrants for 2000 are: 1) aliens who were previously living abroad and 2) aliens who were already living in the United States, in some cases, for many years. The former obtain immigrant visas through the U.S. Department of State (DOS) allowing them to enter the United States.

a decision. Because the impact of the backlog on the demographic composition of legal immigrants is unknown, caution should be taken in drawing conclusions regarding annual trends in immigrant characteristics.

Data were obtained from the Computer Linked Applicant Information Management System (CLAIMS) of INS. CLAIMS maintains

Chart 1. Legal Immigration: Fiscal Years 1901-2000



The latter adjust status through the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS).

In recent years, including fiscal year 2000, the number of immigrants granted legal permanent residence has been affected by a backlog in the number of adjustment of status applications pending

information from the Immigrant Visa and Alien Registration (OF-155A) of DOS for immigrant new arrivals and from applications to adjust status (I-485) of INS. Further information about the data is included in the Appendix. An attached set of tables includes detailed statistical information for further reference.

HIGHLIGHTS

- ◆ The number of persons granted legal permanent residence in the U.S. increased to 849,807 in fiscal year 2000 from 646,568 in fiscal year 1999 (see Chart 1). This increase of just over 200,000 was concentrated almost entirely among adjustments of status and reflects efforts to address the application backlog at INS. At the end of fiscal year 2000, there were 1 million adjustment of status cases pending a decision.
- ◆ Sixty-nine percent of all legal immigrants in 2000 were family sponsored, 13 percent were employment preferences, and 8 percent were refugees or asylees (see Table 1). The increase in legal immigration between 1999 and 2000 was greatest among spouses of U.S. citizens, employment preference immigrants, refugees, and NACARA (Section 202 of the Nicaraguan Adjustment and Central American Relief Act of 1997) immigrants. Most applications in these categories (all applications for refugees and NACARA) are adjustments of status.
- ◆ In 2000, as in 1999, the leading countries of origin for legal immigrants were: Mexico (173,919), the People's Republic of China (45,652), the Philippines (42,474), India (42,046), and Vietnam (26,747) (see Table 2). These five countries represented 39 percent of all immigrants in 2000.
- ◆ The primary destination states for legal immigrants in 2000, as in every year since 1971, were California (217,753), New York (106,061), Florida (98,391), Texas (63,840), New Jersey (40,013), and Illinois (36,180) (see Table 3). These six states accounted for 66 percent of all legal immigrants in 2000.

APPENDIX

Notes on Data

Terms and definitions — Legal immigrants according to immigration law are persons lawfully admitted for permanent residence in the United States. Other terms used in INS reports to refer to legal immigrants include: aliens who were granted legal permanent residence; aliens admitted for legal permanent residence; immigrants admitted; and admissions.

There are two basic administrative paths open to aliens wishing to become legal permanent residents depending on their residence at the time of application. Aliens living abroad apply for an immigrant visa at a consular office of the Department of State. Once issued a visa, they may enter the United States. They are granted legal permanent residence at the time they pass through the port of entry. Aliens already living in the United States, including certain undocumented immigrants, temporary workers, foreign students, and refugees, become legal immigrants by filing an application with the INS for adjustment of status to legal permanent residence. Adjustment of status applicants are granted legal permanent residence at the time their applications are approved. New legal immigrants are automatically authorized to work. They should receive alien registration cards (“green cards”) within several weeks of becoming legal permanent residents, but in recent years this process has sometimes taken longer.

Data quality — Most immigrant records for fiscal year 2000 were identified in CLAIMS based on the date of approval for legal permanent residence. For certain categories of immigrants, including refugees, asylees, and those granted cancellation of removal, CLAIMS does not store the approval date so

alternative selection criteria were used. Refugee and cancellation of removal records were identified using the date that approved applications were received in INS service centers. Asylee records were identified by adding one year to the date appearing in the admission/adjustment date field. This field stores the date used to count the time spent toward meeting the residency requirement for naturalization. Asylees are eligible for naturalization four years after becoming legal permanent residents, so the admission/adjustment date represents the actual approval date rolled back one year.

Preference Limits

The Immigration Act of 1990 (P.L. 101-649) restructured the immigrant categories of admission and made other modifications to the Immigration and Nationality Act. The 1990 Act divided the preference classes into two general categories: family-sponsored and employment-based. Limits on the number of visas issued in these two categories are determined annually.

Family-sponsored limits — The worldwide level for family-sponsored preferences is calculated as:

480,000 minus the number of aliens who were issued visas or adjusted to legal permanent residence 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 lawful permanent residents on temporary trips abroad, and 4) certain categories of aliens paroled into the United States in the second preceding fiscal year (1998), plus unused employment preferences in the previous fiscal year.

The 1990 Act specifies that the family-sponsored limit may not fall below a minimum of 226,000 in any year. The number of legal permanent residents issued visas or who adjusted in fiscal year 1999 under categories 1-3 listed above was 263,340. The number of parolees in 1998 was estimated at 21,000. The number of unused employment-based visas in 1999 was 98,941. The 2000 family-sponsored limit, therefore, was set to 294,601 (480,000 - 263,340 - 21,000 + 98,941). The limits for each of the family-sponsored preferences and their descriptions are shown on the following page.

Employment-based limits — The 1990 Act specifies that the worldwide limit on employment-based preference immigrants is equal to 140,000 plus unused family-sponsored preference visas in the previous year. The limit for fiscal year 2000 was set to 142,299 (140,000 + 2,299 unused family preference visas in 1999).

Per-country limits — The per-country limit on preference immigration for independent countries is set to 7 percent of the total family and employment limits (294,601 + 142,299 = 436,900), while dependent areas are limited to 2 percent of the total. The 2000 limit for independent foreign states was 30,583 (7 percent of 436,900) and the limit for dependencies was 8,738 (2 percent of 436,900).

Diversity limits — The annual limit for 2000 is 50,000. The limit was set at 55,000 effective in fiscal year 1995, but reduced to 50,000 if necessary beginning in fiscal year 1999 to allow 5,000 visas for use under the (Nicaraguan Adjustment and Central American Relief Act of 1997) NACARA program.

Categories of Immigrants Included in World-Wide Annual Limit Specified in Section 201 of the Immigration and Nationality Act: Fiscal Year 2000 Limits

PREFERENCE	DESCRIPTION	UNADJUSTED LIMIT	LIMIT
Family-sponsored immigrants		480,000 ¹	480,000 ¹
Family-sponsored preferences		226,000	294,601
First	Unmarried sons and daughters of U.S. citizens and their children	23,400 ²	23,400 ²
Second	Spouses, children, and unmarried sons and daughters of permanent resident aliens	114,200 ³	182,801 ³
Third	Married sons and daughters of U.S. citizens	23,400 ³	23,400 ³
Fourth	Brothers and sisters of U.S. citizens (at least 21 years of age)	65,000 ³	65,000 ³
Immediate relatives of adult U.S. citizens (spouses, children, and parents) and children born abroad to alien residents		Not limited: 254,000 ¹	Not limited: 254,000 ¹
Employment-based preferences		140,000	142,299
First	Priority workers	40,040 ⁴	40,698 ⁴
Second	Professionals with advanced degrees or aliens of exceptional ability	40,040 ³	40,698 ³
Third	Skilled workers, professionals, needed unskilled workers	40,040 ³	40,698 ³
Fourth	Special immigrants	9,940	10,103
Fifth	Employment creation ("Investors")	9,940	10,103
Diversity		55,000	50,000
TOTAL		675,000	672,299

Note: The annual limits are adjusted based on visa usage in the previous year.

¹ The number of immediate relatives of U.S. citizens included in these figures is assumed to be 254,000. Immediate relatives may enter without any limitation; however, the limit for family-sponsored preference immigrants in a fiscal year is equal to 480,000 minus the number of immediate relatives admitted in the preceding year. The limit of family-sponsored preference visas cannot fall below a minimum of 226,000—the worldwide limit of 480,000 minus 254,000.

² Plus unused family 4th preference visas.

³ Visas not used in higher preferences may be used in these categories.

⁴ Plus unused employment 4th and 5th preference visas.

Table 1. Immigrants Admitted by Major Category of Admission: Fiscal Years 1997-2000

Category of admission	2000		1999		1998		1997	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total	849,807	100.0	646,568	100.0	654,451	100.0	798,378	100.0
New arrivals	407,402	47.9	401,775	62.1	357,037	54.6	380,719	47.7
Adjustments of status	442,405	52.1	244,793	37.9	297,414	45.4	417,659	52.3
Categories related to world-wide limits	742,183	87.3	580,833	89.8	598,787	91.5	675,816	84.6
Family-sponsored immigrants	584,159	68.7	476,445	73.7	475,750	72.7	535,771	67.1
Family-sponsored preferences	235,280	27.7	216,883	33.5	191,480	29.3	213,331	26.7
Unmarried sons/daughters of U.S. citizens	27,707	3.3	22,392	3.5	17,717	2.7	22,536	2.8
Spouses and children of alien residents	124,595	14.7	108,007	16.7	88,488	13.5	113,681	14.2
Married sons/daughters of U.S. citizens	22,833	2.7	24,040	3.7	22,257	3.4	21,943	2.7
Siblings of U.S. citizens	60,145	7.1	62,444	9.7	63,018	9.6	55,171	6.9
Immediate relatives of U.S. citizens	348,879	41.1	259,562	40.1	284,270	43.4	322,440	40.4
Spouses	197,525	23.2	127,988	19.8	151,172	23.1	170,263	21.3
Parents	67,619	8.0	61,483	9.5	61,724	9.4	74,114	9.3
Children	82,726	9.7	69,113	10.7	70,472	10.8	76,631	9.6
Children born abroad to alien residents	1,009	.1	978	.2	902	.1	1,432	.2
Legalization dependents	55	Z	X	X	21	Z	64	Z
Employment-based preferences ..	107,024	12.6	56,817	8.8	77,517	11.8	90,607	11.3
Priority workers	27,706	3.3	14,898	2.3	21,408	3.3	21,810	2.7
Professionals with advanced degree or of exceptional ability	20,304	2.4	8,581	1.3	14,384	2.2	17,059	2.1
Skilled workers, professionals, unskilled workers	49,736	5.9	27,966	4.3	34,317	5.2	42,596	5.3
Special immigrants	9,052	1.1	5,086	.8	6,584	1.0	7,781	1.0
Investors	226	Z	286	Z	824	.1	1,361	.2
Diversity programs	50,945	6.0	47,571	7.4	45,499	7.0	49,374	6.2
Permanent	50,945	6.0	47,571	7.4	45,499	7.0	49,360	6.2
Transition	X	X	X	X	X	X	14	Z
Other categories	107,624	12.7	65,735	10.2	55,664	8.5	122,562	15.4
Amerasians	943	Z	239	Z	346	.1	738	.1
Parolees, Soviet and Indochinese	3,163	.4	1,827	.3	1,225	.2	1,844	.2
Refugees and asylees	65,941	7.8	42,852	6.6	52,193	8.0	112,158	14.0
Refugee adjustments	59,083	7.0	39,495	6.1	44,645	6.8	102,052	12.8
Asylee adjustments	6,858	.8	3,357	.5	7,548	1.2	10,106	1.3
Cancellation of removal ¹	12,349	1.5	9,032	1.4	428	.1	4,628	.6
Total, IRCA legalization	421	Z	8	Z	955	.1	2,548	.3
NACARA ²	23,641	2.8	11,267	1.7	1	Z	X	X
Other	1,166	.1	510	.1	516	.1	646	.1

¹ Includes immigrants admitted under Section 203 of the Nicaraguan Adjustment and Central American Relief Act of November, 1997 (8,015 in fiscal year 2000 and 573 in fiscal year 1999) who are exempt from the 4,000 annual limit. ² Section 202 of the Nicaraguan Adjustment and Central American Relief Act of November 1997.

X Not applicable. Z Rounds to less than .05 percent.

Table 2. Immigrants Admitted by Region and Selected Country of Birth: Fiscal Years 1997-2000

Region and country of birth	2000		1999		1998		1997	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
All countries	849,807	100.0	646,568	100.0	654,451	100.0	798,378	100.0
Africa	44,731	5.3	36,700	5.7	40,660	6.2	47,791	6.0
Asia	265,400	31.2	199,411	30.8	219,696	33.6	265,810	33.3
Europe	132,480	15.6	92,672	14.3	90,793	13.9	119,871	15.0
North America	344,805	40.6	271,365	42.0	252,996	38.7	307,488	38.5
Caribbean	88,198	10.4	71,683	11.1	75,521	11.5	105,299	13.2
Central America	66,443	7.8	43,216	6.7	35,679	5.5	43,676	5.5
Other North America	190,164	22.4	156,466	24.2	141,796	21.7	158,513	19.9
Oceania	5,136	.6	3,676	.6	3,935	.6	4,344	0.5
South America	56,074	6.6	41,585	6.4	45,394	6.9	52,877	6.6
Unknown	1,181	.1	1,159	.2	977	.1	197	Z
1. Mexico	173,919	20.5	147,573	22.8	131,575	20.1	146,865	18.4
2. China, People's Republic	45,652	5.4	32,204	5.0	36,884	5.6	41,147	5.2
3. Philippines	42,474	5.0	31,026	4.8	34,466	5.3	49,117	6.2
4. India	42,046	4.9	30,237	4.7	36,482	5.6	38,071	4.8
5. Vietnam	26,747	3.1	20,393	3.2	17,649	2.7	38,519	4.8
6. Nicaragua	24,029	2.8	13,389	2.1	3,521	.5	6,331	.8
7. El Salvador	22,578	2.7	14,606	2.3	14,590	2.2	17,969	2.3
8. Haiti	22,364	2.6	16,532	2.6	13,449	2.1	15,057	1.9
9. Cuba	20,831	2.5	14,132	2.2	17,375	2.7	33,587	4.2
10. Dominican Republic	17,536	2.1	17,864	2.8	20,387	3.1	27,053	3.4
11. Russia	17,110	2.0	12,347	1.9	11,529	1.8	16,632	2.1
12. Canada	16,210	1.9	8,864	1.4	10,190	1.6	11,609	1.5
13. Jamaica	16,000	1.9	14,733	2.3	15,146	2.3	17,840	2.2
14. Korea	15,830	1.9	12,840	2.0	14,268	2.2	14,239	1.8
15. Ukraine	15,810	1.9	10,123	1.6	7,448	1.1	15,696	2.0
16. Pakistan	14,535	1.7	13,496	2.1	13,094	2.0	12,967	1.6
17. Colombia	14,498	1.7	9,966	1.5	11,836	1.8	13,004	1.6
18. United Kingdom	13,385	1.6	7,690	1.2	9,018	1.4	10,708	1.3
19. Bosnia-Herzegovina	11,828	1.4	5,442	.8	4,212	.6	6,392	.8
20. Poland	10,114	1.2	8,798	1.4	8,469	1.3	12,038	1.5
Subtotal	583,496	68.7	442,255	68.4	431,588	65.9	544,841	68.2
Other and unknown	266,311	31.3	204,313	31.6	222,863	34.1	253,537	31.8

Z Rounds to less than .05 percent.

**Table 3. Immigrants Admitted by Selected State and Metropolitan Area of Intended Residence:
Fiscal Years 1997-2000**

State and metropolitan area	2000		1999		1998		1997	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
All states	849,807	100.0	646,568	100.0	654,451	100.0	798,378	100.0
1. California	217,753	25.6	161,247	24.9	170,126	26.0	203,305	25.5
2. New York	106,061	12.5	96,979	15.0	96,559	14.8	123,716	15.5
3. Florida	98,391	11.6	57,484	8.9	59,965	9.2	82,318	10.3
4. Texas	63,840	7.5	49,393	7.6	44,428	6.8	57,897	7.3
5. New Jersey	40,013	4.7	34,095	5.3	35,091	5.4	41,184	5.2
6. Illinois	36,180	4.3	36,971	5.7	33,163	5.1	38,128	4.8
7. Massachusetts	23,483	2.8	15,180	2.3	15,869	2.4	17,317	2.2
8. Virginia	20,087	2.4	15,144	2.3	15,686	2.4	19,277	2.4
9. Washington	18,486	2.2	13,046	2.0	16,920	2.6	18,656	2.3
10. Pennsylvania	18,148	2.1	13,514	2.1	11,942	1.8	14,553	1.8
11. Maryland	17,705	2.1	15,605	2.4	15,561	2.4	19,090	2.4
12. Michigan	16,773	2.0	13,650	2.1	13,943	2.1	14,727	1.8
13. Georgia	14,778	1.7	9,404	1.5	10,445	1.6	12,623	1.6
14. Arizona	11,980	1.4	8,667	1.3	6,211	.9	8,632	1.1
15. Connecticut	11,346	1.3	7,887	1.2	7,780	1.2	9,528	1.2
16. Ohio	9,263	1.1	6,855	1.1	7,697	1.2	8,189	1.0
17. North Carolina	9,251	1.1	5,792	0.9	6,415	1.0	5,935	.7
18. Minnesota	8,671	1.0	5,956	0.9	6,981	1.1	8,233	1.0
19. Oregon	8,543	1.0	5,233	0.8	5,909	.9	7,699	1.0
20. Colorado	8,216	1.0	6,984	1.1	6,513	1.0	7,506	.9
Subtotal	758,968	89.3	579,086	89.6	587,204	89.7	718,513	90.0
Other	90,839	10.7	67,482	10.4	67,247	10.3	79,865	10.0
All metropolitan areas	849,807	100.0	646,568	100.0	654,451	100.0	798,378	100.0
1. New York, NY	85,867	10.1	80,893	12.5	81,417	12.4	107,434	13.5
2. Los Angeles-Long Beach, CA	70,644	8.3	55,236	8.5	60,220	9.2	62,314	7.8
3. Miami, FL	47,404	5.6	30,179	4.7	29,242	4.5	45,707	5.7
4. Chicago, IL	32,300	3.8	33,754	5.2	31,033	4.7	35,386	4.4
5. Washington, DC-MD-VA	29,394	3.5	23,976	3.7	25,639	3.9	31,444	3.9
6. Orange County, CA	20,859	2.5	14,423	2.2	14,291	2.2	18,190	2.3
7. Houston, TX	17,429	2.1	14,662	2.3	13,189	2.0	17,439	2.2
8. San Jose, CA	16,874	2.0	10,252	1.6	11,811	1.8	17,374	2.2
9. Boston-Lawrence-Lowell- Brockton, MA	16,469	1.9	11,501	1.8	12,854	2.0	13,937	1.7
10. Oakland, CA	16,150	1.9	10,794	1.7	13,499	2.1	15,723	2.0
11. San Francisco, CA	16,143	1.9	11,755	1.8	14,553	2.2	16,892	2.1
12. Fort Lauderdale, FL	14,835	1.7	8,407	1.3	9,954	1.5	10,646	1.3
13. San Diego, CA	14,624	1.7	10,309	1.6	9,836	1.5	14,758	1.8
14. Dallas, TX	14,044	1.7	9,598	1.5	9,641	1.5	11,061	1.4
15. Riverside-San Bernardino, CA	12,994	1.5	9,928	1.5	10,227	1.6	9,518	1.2
16. Philadelphia, PA-NJ	12,635	1.5	9,441	1.5	9,197	1.4	10,858	1.4
17. Detroit, MI	11,229	1.3	9,432	1.5	9,852	1.5	10,019	1.3
18. Atlanta, GA	11,190	1.3	7,068	1.1	7,504	1.1	9,823	1.2
19. Newark, NJ	11,055	1.3	9,751	1.5	9,551	1.5	10,801	1.4
20. Seattle-Bellevue-Everett, WA ...	10,188	1.2	7,197	1.1	9,497	1.5	10,692	1.3
Subtotal	482,327	56.8	378,556	58.5	393,007	60.1	480,016	60.1
Other and unknown	367,480	43.2	268,012	41.5	261,444	39.9	318,362	39.9