A lawful permanent resident (LPR) or “green card” recipient is defined by immigration law as a person who has been granted lawful permanent residence in the United States. Lawful permanent residents may live and work permanently in the United States; own property; attend public schools, colleges, and universities; join the U.S. Armed Forces; and apply for U.S. citizenship after meeting certain eligibility requirements. This graphic provides information on people who received LPR status in Fiscal Year 2017.

LAWFUL PERMANENT RESIDENTS SINCE 1917

The spike in new LPRs from 1989 to 1991 reflects the legalization of 2.7 million unauthorized immigrants under the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) of 1986.

There were 1,127,167 new lawful permanent residents in Fiscal Year 2017. About 51% were new arrivals to the United States.

LPRs BY REGION OF BIRTH & TOP CATEGORIES OF ADMISSION

Asia | 37.7% | Immediate Relatives of U.S. Citizens | 36.8%
North America | 36.7% | Immediate Relatives of U.S. Citizens | 52.1%
Africa | 10.5% | Immediate Relatives of U.S. Citizens | 43.0%
Europe | 7.5% | Immediate Relatives of U.S. Citizens | 50.0%
South America | 7.0% | Immediate Relatives of U.S. Citizens | 60.4%
Oceania | 0.4% | Immediate Relatives of U.S. Citizens | 53.5%

LPRs BY CATEGORY OF ADMISSION

Immediate Relatives of U.S. Citizens | 45.8%
Family-Sponsored Preferences | 20.6%
Employment-Based Preferences | 12.2%
Refugees | 10.7%
Diversity | 4.6%
Asylees | 2.3%
Other | 3.8%

The Diversity Immigrant Visa Program is available to nationals of countries with low rates of immigration over the past 5 years. Visas are distributed by lottery and were limited in 2017 to 3,500 per eligible country and to a total of 50,000 visas.