

GAO

Report to the

July 1998



Table 2.1:

Legal status of foreign-born	Annual flow	
	New residents (entered U.S. during reference year)	Transitions to a new status (during reference year)
A. Legal permanent residents	Number who received green-card status upon admission to the U.S.	Number transitioning to green-card status; entered the U.S. earlier (as B, C, D)
B. Refugees and asylees (without LPR status) ^b	Number who were admitted to the U.S. as refugees or as asylees ("trailing relatives" of those granted asylum)	Number of new asylees who had entered the U.S. earlier (as C, D)
C. Students, temporary workers, and their families; others temporarily here who stayed > 1 year ^c	Number of new residents who entered with student or work visa, or other temporary form of admission	Number already here who newly obtained legal temporary status; entered U.S. earlier (as D)
D. Illegal immigrants (EWIs and overstays) who stayed > 1 year	Number of new illegal immigrants who "entered without inspection" (EWI)	Number who illegally overstayed; entered U.S. earlier (as C)
E. Naturalized citizens	Not an entry status ^d	Number who achieved citizenship; entered U.S. earlier (as A-D)
Total	Total annual flow from foreign countries to U.S. = sum of above	Total not meaningful because of double-counting; some persons make more than one transition per year

Demographic concept			
	Population size	Net change in size	Annual emigration
Combined-flow to each status (sum of first two columns)	Number of foreign-born persons residing here (at given point in time)	Annual increase or decrease in the size of foreign-born population	Foreign-born emigrating (during reference year)
All new LPRs	Number of LPRs	Increase or decrease in the number of LPRs residing here	Number of LPRs who emigrated
All new refugees and asylees	Number of refugees and asylees (without LPR status)	Increase or decrease in the number of refugees and asylees (without LPR status) residing here	Number of refugees and asylees (without LPR status) who emigrated
All residents who newly achieved temporary legal status	Number of residents with student or temporary work visas or other temporary legal status	Increase or decrease in the number of residents with temporary legal status	Number of residents with legal temporary status who emigrated
All new illegal immigrants	Number of residents here illegally	Increase or decrease in number of illegal residents	Number of illegal residents who emigrated
Same as number in previous column	Number of naturalized citizens	Increase or decrease in the number of naturalized citizens residing here	Number of naturalized citizens who emigrated
Total not meaningful because of double-counting; some enter the U.S. and transition to a different status within the same year	Total foreign-born who reside here = sum of above	Net change in the size of the foreign-born population = sum of above	Total who emigrated = sum of above

Legend

Statistics are not relevant to the shaded categories.

EWI Entry without inspection

LPR Legal permanent resident

Table 3.1:

Legal status of the foreign-born	Demographic concept: annual flow		
	New residents (entered U.S. during reference year)	Transitions to a new status (during reference year)	Combined-flow to each status (sum of first two columns)
A. Legal permanent residents	421,405 new LPRs Overcount: Some persons who transitioned to LPR status (and belong in the next col.) were counted here.	494,495 new LPRs Undercount: Some persons counted as new residents belong here; also, processing slowdown lowered the count.	915,900 new LPRs Conceptual problem: The majority of new LPRs were already living in U.S., so the count does not measure flow into the U.S.; in 1995 and continuing into 1996, a processing slowdown affected the count. Confused reporting: INS Yearbook highlights trends as if meaningful; some statements in the Yearbook imply that new LPRs represent new entries.
B. Refugees and asylees^b	74,791 new refugees Undercount: "Trailing relatives" who enter the U.S. as asylees are not counted in the INS Yearbook.	18,556 new asylees Undercount: Persons granted asylum on appeal and some "trailing relatives" (who were already in the U.S.) are not counted in the INS Yearbook.	93,347 new refugees and asylees Undercount: Some asylees are not counted.
C. Students, temporary workers, and their families; others temporarily here who stayed > 1 year^c	No published estimate. Gap: No data identify the number new to the U.S. who stayed 1 year.	No published estimate. Gap: No data identify the number new to this category who were already in the U.S.	No published estimate. Gap: No data identify the number who stayed 1 year.
D. Illegal immigrants (EWIs and overstays) who stayed for > 1 year	No published estimate. Gap: INS has not estimated illegal flow.	No published estimate. Gap: INS has not estimated illegal flow.	No published estimate. Gap: INS estimates net change in the illegal population, but has not estimated illegal flow.
E. Naturalized citizens	Not applicable. Not an entry status ^d	1,044,689 new citizens Undercount: Most minor children are not counted.	1,044,689 new citizens Undercount: Most minor children are not counted.
Total flow	No published estimate. Gap: Because of gaps for some categories, the total cannot be tallied.	Total not meaningful because of double-counting. Some persons make more than one transition in the same year.	Total not meaningful because of double-counting. Some persons enter the U.S. and then transition to a different status—within the same year.

(Table notes on next page)

Legend

EWI Entry without inspection

LPR Legal permanent resident

Note: Statistics are not relevant to the shaded cells.

Table 4.1:

	Demographic concept		
	Population size	Net change in size	Annual emigration
Legal status of foreign-born	Number of foreign-born persons residing here (at given point in time)	Annual increase or decrease in the size of foreign-born population	Number of foreign-born residents who left the U.S. (calendar 1996)
A. Legal permanent residents	10,525,000 LPRs ^b Uncertain: Composite estimate requires major assumptions.	No published estimate. Gap: No administrative or survey data.	No published estimate. Gap: No administrative or survey data.
B. Refugees and asylees (without LPR status)^c	No published estimate. Gap: No comprehensive administrative data; questions about legal status deemed too sensitive to ask survey respondents.	No published estimate. Gap: No administrative or survey data.	No published estimate. Gap: No administrative or survey data.
C. Students, temporary workers, and their families; others here temporarily who stayed >1 yr^d	No published estimate. Gap: No usable administrative data; questions about legal status too sensitive to ask in a survey.	No published estimate. Gap: No administrative or survey data.	No published estimate. Gap: No administrative or survey data.
D. Illegal immigrants (EWIs and overstays) who stayed > 1 year	5 million EWIs and overstays ^e Uncertain: Composite estimate requires major assumptions.	275,000 more illegal residents ^f Uncertain: Composite estimate requires major assumptions.	No published estimate. Gap: No administrative or survey data.
E. Naturalized citizens	7.9 million naturalized citizens ^g Unevaluated: Survey estimate is disputed in literature owing to possible overreporting of citizenship not firmly resolved.	1.1 million more naturalized citizens (3/97 versus 3/96) ^h 300,000 more naturalized citizens (3/96 versus 3/95) ⁱ Uncertain: These survey estimates involve time lag in reporting.	No published estimate. Gap: No administrative or survey data.
Total	24.6 million foreign-born residents ^l Unevaluated: Analysts have raised questions about survey estimates' underrepresentation of newcomers, etc.	1.2 million more foreign-born residents (3/97 versus 3/96) ^k 0.1 million more foreign-born residents (3/96 versus 3/95) ^l Uncertain: Survey estimates of year-to-year change are imprecise.	No published estimate. Gap: Census first said estimate of emigration (195,000) referred to all foreign-born; Census now says it refers to emigration of legal residents only.

(Table notes on next page)

Legend

EWI Entry without inspection

LPR Legal permanent resident

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