

U.S. Lawful Permanent Residents: 2014

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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 resident status confers certain rights and responsibilities. For example, LPRs may live and work permanently anywhere in the United States, own property, and attend public schools, colleges, and universities. They may also join the Armed Forces and apply to become U.S. citizens if they meet certain 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 2014.¹

In 2014, a total of 1,016,518 persons became LPRs (see Figure 1). Over half of the new LPRs (53 percent) already lived in the United States when they were granted lawful permanent residence. Sixty-four percent of the new LPRs were granted lawful permanent resident status based on a family relationship with a U.S. citizen or lawful permanent resident of the United States. The leading countries of birth of new LPRs were Mexico (13 percent), India (7.7 percent), and China (7.5 percent).

THE LAWFUL IMMIGRATION PROCESS

Admission Priorities

The Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) and its amendments are the basis of most immigration laws in effect today. U.S. law gives priority for LPR status to foreign nationals who have a close family relationship with a U.S. citizen or LPR, needed job skills, refugee or asylee status, or who are from countries with relatively low levels of immigration to the United States.

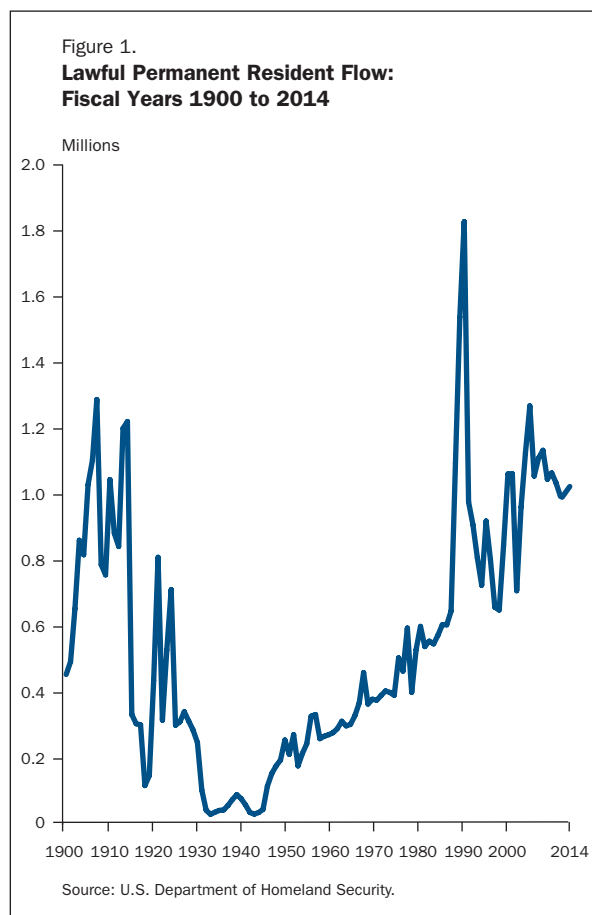
Preference Immigration and Diversity Limits

The term *preference* is used in immigration law to designate priority categories for LPR status. As specified by the INA, an annual limit of between 416,000 and 675,000 currently exists for the combined total of family-sponsored preference, employment-based preference, and diversity immigrants.

Family-sponsored preferences consist of four categories: unmarried sons and daughters of U.S. citizens and their children; spouses, children, and unmarried sons and daughters of lawful permanent residents and their children; married sons and daughters of U.S. citizens and their spouses and children; and brothers and sisters of U.S. citizens age 21 years and older and their spouses and children. The annual limit for family-sponsored preferences

ranges from 226,000 to 480,000 (See **APPENDIX** for more details on the limit calculations).

Employment-based preferences consist of five categories of workers (and their spouses and children): priority workers (e.g. outstanding professors and researchers); professionals with advanced degrees or aliens of exceptional ability; skilled workers, professionals (without advanced degrees), and



¹ In this report, years refer to fiscal years (October 1 to September 30).



needed unskilled workers; certain special immigrants (e.g., ministers, religious workers, and employees of the U.S. Government abroad); and employment creation immigrants or “investors.” The employment-based preference limit is equal to 140,000 plus any unused visas in the family-sponsored preferences from the previous year.

In 2014, the limit on preference immigration was 376,241 which included 226,000 in the family-sponsored preferences and 150,241 in the employment-based preferences (see **APPENDIX**). In addition, there are per-country limits equal to seven percent of the total number of family-sponsored and employment preferences. Dependent areas of foreign states are limited to two percent. In 2014, the per-country limit was 26,337 and the dependent area limit was 7,525.

Diversity immigrants are nationals of countries with low rates of lawful immigration to the United States. The Diversity Immigrant Visa Program is available to nationals of countries with fewer than 50,000 persons granted LPR status during the preceding five years in the employment-based and family-sponsored preferences and immediate relative classes of admission. The annual diversity visa limit has been 50,000 since 1999. OIS calculates diversity limits for six broad world regions using a formula based on immigrant admissions during the preceding five years and the population total of the region. The per-country limit of diversity visas was 3,500 in 2014.

Immediate Relatives of U.S. Citizens

Some LPR admission categories are not subject to numeric limits. The largest category numerically is immediate relatives (spouses and children, including orphans adopted abroad, of U.S. citizens and parents of adult U.S. citizens ages 21 and over). Immediate relatives of U.S. citizens typically account for more than 40 percent of new LPRs annually. New LPRs in the immediate relatives and family-sponsored preference categories of admission are collectively referred to as family-sponsored immigrants.

Refugee and Asylee Adjustments of Status

The number of persons who may be admitted to the United States as refugees each year, as defined by the Refugee Act of 1980, is established by the President in consultation with Congress. The ceiling on refugee admissions was set at 70,000 from 2003 to 2007, 80,000 from 2008 to 2011, 76,000 for 2012 and back to 70,000 for 2013 and 2014. There is no numerical limit on the number of persons who can be granted asylum each year.

Refugees are required by the INA to apply for adjustment to LPR status after one year of residence in the United States. Asylees are eligible to apply one year after they are granted asylum. Refugee and asylee adjustments of status are not subject to numerical limits.²

² 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.

Table 1.

Lawful Permanent Resident Flow: Fiscal Years 2012 to 2014

Category of admission	2014		2013		2012	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total	1,016,518	100.0	990,553	100.0	1,031,631	100.0
New arrivals	481,392	47.4	459,751	46.4	484,072	46.9
Adjustments of status . .	535,126	52.6	530,802	53.6	547,559	53.1

Source: U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

Other Admission Categories

Until recently, the remaining admission categories, normally limited to persons admitted under special legislation, have accounted for less than two percent of the annual LPR flow. However, the remaining admission categories increased from 7,270 in 2013 to 25,601 in 2014. The sharp rise was driven primarily by an increase in new arrivals of certain Iraqis and Afghans employed by the U.S. government and their family members (11,873) as well as an increase in status adjustment of victims of criminal activities and their family members, mostly from Mexico and Central America (11,715).

Paths to LPR Status

There are two paths to LPR status depending on whether the applicant is living in the United States or another country at the time of application. Eligible foreign nationals living abroad apply for an immigrant visa at a Department of State consular office. Once issued a 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 living in the United States, including refugees, asylees, and certain temporary workers, foreign students, family members of U.S. citizens or alien residents, and unauthorized immigrants, file an application for adjustment of status to lawful permanent residence with U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). At the time they apply for adjustment of status, they may also apply for permission to work. Adjustment of status applicants are granted LPR status at the time their applications are approved. These LPRs are referred to as adjustments of status in this report.

Eligibility for Naturalization

Most lawful permanent residents 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 United States citizen) and successful completion of English language, civics, and history tests. LPR children under 18 years of age may automatically acquire citizenship when a parent naturalizes.

DATA

This report used data from the Computer Linked Application Information Management System (CLAIMS) and the Electronic Immigration System (ELIS)³ of USCIS. CLAIMS maintains information from applications for lawful permanent resident status: the DS-230

³ ELIS replaced CLAIMS as the system maintaining biographic information for new arrivals admitted during or after April of 2013. Data elements were missing more frequently in 2013 – the first year of implementation - than any other year, due to incomplete records in ELIS.

Table 2.

Lawful Permanent Resident Flow by Major Category of Admission: Fiscal Years 2012 to 2014

Category of admission	2014		2013		2012	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total	1,016,518	100.0	990,553	100.0	1,031,631	100.0
Family-sponsored immigrants	645,560	63.5	649,763	65.6	680,799	66.0
Family-sponsored preferences	229,104	22.5	210,303	21.2	202,019	19.6
Unmarried sons/daughters of U.S. citizens.	25,686	2.5	24,358	2.5	20,660	2.0
Spouses and children of alien residents.	105,641	10.4	99,115	10.0	99,709	9.7
Married sons/daughters of U.S. citizens.	25,830	2.5	21,294	2.1	21,752	2.1
Siblings of U.S. citizens.	71,947	7.1	65,536	6.6	59,898	5.8
Immediate relatives of U.S. citizens	416,456	41.0	439,460	44.4	478,780	46.4
Spouses	238,852	23.5	248,332	25.1	273,429	26.5
Parents	116,387	11.4	119,746	12.1	124,230	12.0
Children*	61,217	6.0	71,382	7.2	81,121	7.9
Employment-based preferences	151,596	14.9	161,110	16.3	143,998	14.0
Priority workers	40,554	4.0	38,978	3.9	39,316	3.8
Professionals with advanced degrees	48,801	4.8	63,026	6.4	50,959	4.9
Skilled workers, professionals, unskilled workers	43,156	4.2	43,632	4.4	39,229	3.8
Special immigrants	8,362	0.8	6,931	0.7	7,866	0.8
Investors	10,723	1.1	8,543	0.9	6,628	0.6
Diversity programs	53,490	5.3	45,618	4.6	40,320	3.9
Refugees and Asylees	134,242	13.2	119,630	12.1	150,614	14.6
Refugee adjustments.	96,066	9.5	77,395	7.8	105,528	10.2
Asylee adjustments.	38,176	3.8	42,235	4.3	45,086	4.4
Parolees	95	—	556	0.1	758	0.1
Other categories	31,535	3.1	13,876	1.4	15,142	1.5
Children born abroad to alien residents.	594	0.1	643	0.1	643	0.1
NACARA [†] Section 202	70	—	138	—	183	—
Cancellation of removal	5,248	0.5	5,763	0.6	6,818	0.7
Subject to annual limit	3,592	0.4	4,156	0.4	4,015	0.4
Not subject to limit (NACARA [†] Section 203)	1,656	0.2	1,607	0.2	2,803	0.3
Haitian Refugee Immigrant Fairness Act	22	—	62	—	93	—
Other	25,601	2.5	7,270	0.7	7,405	0.7

*Includes orphans.

[†]Nicaraguan Adjustment and Central American Relief Act of 1997.

— Figures round to 0.0.

Source: U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

Application for Immigrant Visa and Alien Registration or the DS-260 Electronic Application for Immigrant Visa and Alien Registration of the Department of State (used by applicants living abroad) and the I-485 Application to Register Permanent Residence or Adjust Status of USCIS (used by applicants living 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, geographic residence, 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.

TRENDS AND CHARACTERISTICS OF NEW LAWFUL PERMANENT RESIDENTS

The number of individuals granted LPR status in 2014 increased from 990,553 in 2013 to 1,016,518 (2.6 percent) (see Table 1). LPR new

arrivals increased from 459,751 in 2013 to 481,392 in 2014. Lawful permanent residents adjusting status increased slightly from 530,802 in 2013 to 535,126 in 2014 although they have decreased as a percent of the total LPRs. The number of new LPRs admitted under an employment-based preference declined six percent between 2013 and 2014 because of a decrease in the annual limit for the employment preferences.

Historical Trends

The annual LPR flow has exhibited a general upward trend since 1945 (see Figure 1). The annual flow increased from approximately 250,000 during the 1950s to an annual average of over 1,000,000 each year since 1999. Changes in immigration law associated with this increase included the elimination of country quotas limiting Eastern Hemisphere immigration, increases in annual limits for hemispheric and preference immigration, and the inclusion of parents of adult U.S. citizens as numerically exempt immediate relatives. The spike in lawful

immigration from 1989 to 1991 reflects the legalization of 2,700,000 unauthorized immigrants under the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) of 1986. Increases in the number of new LPRs in 2005 and 2006 (primarily in the employment preferences) were due largely to the American Competitiveness in the 21st Century Act (AC21), the Real ID Act, and backlog reductions at USCIS (see U.S. Legal Permanent Residents: 2006 Annual Flow Report).

Category of Admission

Family-sponsored immigrants (immediate relatives of U.S. citizens and family preference classes of admission) represented 64 percent of the total LPR flow in 2014 (see Table 2). Immediate relatives of U.S. citizens were 41 percent of the total LPR flow in 2014. Spouses of U.S. citizens represented 57 percent of immediate relative LPRs, parents of U.S. citizens accounted for 28 percent, and children of U.S. citizens, including adopted orphans, comprised 15 percent.

Twenty-three percent of new LPRs in 2014 were admitted under a family-sponsored preference. The second preference (spouses and children of alien residents) accounted for 46 percent of family-sponsored preference LPRs, and the fourth preference (siblings of U.S. citizens) comprised 31 percent.

Immigrants admitted under an employment-based preference constituted 15 percent of the total LPR flow in 2014. The annual limit was lower in 2014 than 2013 because there were fewer unused family preference visas in 2013 than in 2012. Most of the decline in employment preference numbers in 2014 occurred within the second preference (professionals with advanced degrees) which represented 32 percent of new employment-based preference LPRs. The third preference (skilled workers, professionals, and unskilled workers) and the first preference (priority workers) accounted for 28 percent and 27 percent of new employment-based LPRs, respectively.

From 2013 to 2014, there was a 12 percent increase in refugee and asylee LPRs that adjusted their status. Refugee adjustments increased by 24 percent while asylee adjustments decreased by 9.6 percent. The increase in refugee adjustments is consistent with a larger eligible population, resulting from previous increases in refugee admissions since 2012 (see Refugees and Asylees: 2013 Annual Flow Report). Refugee and asylee adjustments represented 9.5 and 3.8 percent, respectively, of the total LPR flow in 2014.

Diversity immigrant classes of admission accounted for 5.3 percent of the total LPR flow in 2014.

Region and Country of Birth

The leading regions of birth of new LPRs in 2014 were Asia (42 percent) and North America (32 percent) (see Table 3). Together, Asia and North America accounted for 70 percent or more of the LPR flow each year since 2009.

In 2014, 13 percent of all persons granted LPR status were born in Mexico. Other prominent countries of birth were India (7.7 percent), China (7.5 percent), the Philippines (4.9 percent), and Cuba (4.6 percent). These five countries accounted for 38 percent of all new LPRs in 2014.

State and Metropolitan Area of Residence

California was the state of residence of nearly one-fifth (20 percent) of persons granted LPR status in 2014 (see Table 4). Other leading states of residence included New York (14 percent), Florida (11 percent), Texas (9.4 percent), and New Jersey (5.1 percent). Fifty-nine percent of new LPRs resided in these five states in 2014.

The leading metropolitan area of residence for new LPRs in 2014 was New York-Newark-Jersey City, NY-NJ-PA (17 percent) (see Table 5).⁴ Other prominent metropolitan areas of residence included Los Angeles-Long Beach-Anaheim, CA (7.9 percent), Miami-Fort Lauderdale-West Palm Beach, FL (7.1

Table 3.

Lawful Permanent Resident Flow by Region and Country of Birth: Fiscal Years 2012 to 2014

(Countries ranked by 2014 LPR Flow)

Region and country of birth	2014		2013		2012	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
REGION						
Total	1,016,518	100.0	990,553	100.0	1,031,631	100.0
Africa	98,413	9.7	98,304	9.9	107,241	10.4
Asia	430,508	42.4	400,548	40.4	429,599	41.6
Europe	83,266	8.2	86,556	8.7	81,671	7.9
North America	324,354	31.9	315,660	31.9	327,771	31.8
Caribbean	133,952	13.2	122,406	12.4	127,477	12.4
Central America	44,403	4.4	44,724	4.5	40,675	3.9
Other North America	145,999	14.4	148,530	15.0	159,619	15.5
Oceania	5,112	0.5	5,277	0.5	4,742	0.5
South America	73,715	7.3	80,945	8.2	79,401	7.7
Unknown	1,150	0.1	3,263	0.3	1,206	0.1
COUNTRY						
Total	1,016,518	100.0	990,553	100.0	1,031,631	100.0
Mexico	134,052	13.2	135,028	13.6	146,406	14.2
India	77,908	7.7	68,458	6.9	66,434	6.4
China, People's Republic	76,089	7.5	71,798	7.2	81,784	7.9
Philippines	49,996	4.9	54,446	5.5	57,327	5.6
Cuba	46,679	4.6	32,219	3.3	32,820	3.2
Dominican Republic	44,577	4.4	41,311	4.2	41,566	4.0
Vietnam	30,283	3.0	27,101	2.7	28,304	2.7
Korea, South	20,423	2.0	23,166	2.3	20,846	2.0
El Salvador	19,273	1.9	18,260	1.8	16,256	1.6
Iraq	19,153	1.9	9,552	1.0	20,369	2.0
Jamaica	19,026	1.9	19,400	2.0	20,705	2.0
Pakistan	18,612	1.8	13,251	1.3	14,740	1.4
Colombia	18,175	1.8	21,131	2.1	20,931	2.0
Haiti	15,274	1.5	20,351	2.1	22,818	2.2
Bangladesh	14,645	1.4	12,099	1.2	14,705	1.4
Nigeria	12,828	1.3	13,840	1.4	13,575	1.3
Nepal	12,357	1.2	13,046	1.3	11,312	1.1
Ethiopia	12,300	1.2	13,097	1.4	14,544	1.4
United Kingdom	12,225	1.2	12,984	1.3	12,014	1.3
Iran	11,615	1.1	12,863	1.3	12,916	1.3
All other countries	351,028	34.5	357,152	36.1	361,259	35.0

Source: U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

Table 4.

Lawful Permanent Resident Flow by State of Residence: Fiscal Years 2012 to 2014

(Ranked by 2014 LPR flow)

State of residence	2014		2013		2012	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total	1,016,518	100.0	990,553	100.0	1,031,631	100.0
California	198,379	19.5	191,806	19.3	196,622	19.2
New York	141,406	13.9	133,601	13.5	149,505	14.5
Florida	109,310	10.8	102,939	10.4	103,047	10.0
Texas	95,295	9.4	92,674	9.4	95,557	9.3
New Jersey	51,609	5.1	53,082	5.4	50,790	4.9
Illinois	36,535	3.6	35,988	3.6	38,373	3.7
Massachusetts	29,776	2.9	29,482	3.0	31,392	3.0
Virginia	28,477	2.8	27,861	2.8	28,227	2.7
Maryland	24,787	2.4	25,361	2.6	24,971	2.4
Pennsylvania	23,944	2.4	24,720	2.5	25,032	2.4
Other*	277,000	27.2	273,039	27.5	288,115	27.9

*Includes unknown, U.S. territories and armed forces posts.

Source: U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

⁴The most current CBSA definitions are available from OMB at <https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/bulletins/2013/b13-01.pdf>

Table 5.**Lawful Permanent Resident Flow by Metropolitan Area of Residence: Fiscal Years 2012 to 2014**

(Ranked by 2014 LPR flow)

Metropolitan area of residence	2014		2013		2012	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total	1,016,518	100.0	990,553	100.0	1,031,631	100.0
New York-Newark-Jersey City, NY-NJ-PA	174,714	17.2	168,727	17.1	180,583	17.5
Los Angeles-Long Beach-Anaheim, CA	80,527	7.9	79,892	8.1	81,508	7.9
Miami-Fort Lauderdale-West Palm Beach, FL	72,038	7.1	66,636	6.7	66,153	6.4
Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV	39,531	3.9	39,222	4.0	38,575	3.7
Houston-The Woodlands-Sugar Land, TX	33,856	3.3	31,949	3.2	31,728	3.1
Chicago-Naperville-Elgin, IL-IN-WI	33,042	3.3	32,819	3.3	34,898	3.4
San Francisco-Oakland-Hayward, CA	32,904	3.2	30,600	3.1	29,583	2.9
Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington, TX	28,780	2.8	26,810	2.7	28,081	2.7
Boston-Cambridge-Newton, MA-NH	24,026	2.4	23,868	2.4	25,045	2.4
Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Roswell, GA	19,626	1.9	20,065	2.0	21,299	2.1
Other	477,474	47.0	469,965	47.4	494,178	47.9

Notes: Metropolitan areas defined based on the 2013 update of Core Based Statistical Areas (CBSAs) definitions. As a result, numbers from previous years may differ from previously published figures.

Source: U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

percent), Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV (3.9 percent), Houston-The Woodlands-Sugar Land, TX and Chicago-Naperville-Elgin, IL-IN-WI (3.3 percent each). These six metropolitan areas accounted for the residence of 43 percent of new LPRs in 2014.

Age, Sex, and Marital Status

New LPRs have historically been younger than the native population of the United States. In 2014, the median age for new LPRs was 32

years; in contrast, the median age of the U.S. native population was 37 years (see Table 6).⁵

New LPRs are more likely to be female (54 percent) than the native U.S. population (51 percent). In 2014, females were eight percentage points more likely to be granted LPR status compared to their male counterparts who accounted for 46 percent of persons granted LPR status (see Table 7). The majority (59 percent) of new LPRs were married compared with 38 percent of the native population (see Table 8).⁶

⁵ Calculated from the March 2014 Current Population Survey (CPS) Annual Social and Economic Supplement (ASEC) from the U.S. Census Bureau.

⁶ Ibid.

Table 6.**Lawful Permanent Resident Flow by Age: Fiscal Years 2012 to 2014**

Age	2014		2013		2012	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total	1,016,518	100.0	990,553	100.0	1,031,631	100.0
Under 5 years	37,578	3.7	33,750	3.4	37,495	3.6
5 to 14 years	106,180	10.4	103,191	10.4	115,986	11.2
15 to 24 years	169,844	16.7	165,893	16.7	189,698	18.4
25 to 34 years	255,148	25.1	234,690	23.7	249,111	24.2
35 to 44 years	196,709	19.4	186,102	18.8	187,101	18.1
45 to 54 years	121,747	12.0	113,819	11.5	117,397	11.4
55 to 64 years	75,830	7.5	71,724	7.3	79,206	7.7
65 years and over	53,080	5.2	48,875	4.9	55,628	5.4
Unknown age	402	—	32,509	3.3	9	—
Median age (years)	32	X	32	X	31	X

X Not applicable.

— Figure rounds to 0.0.

Source: U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

Table 7.**Lawful Permanent Resident Flow by Sex: Fiscal Years 2012 to 2014**

Sex	2014		2013		2012	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total	1,016,518	100.0	990,553	100.0	1,031,631	100.0
Female	547,361	53.8	513,736	51.9	563,958	54.7
Male	468,653	46.2	434,284	43.8	467,638	45.3
Unknown	504	—	42,533	4.3	35	—

— Figure rounds to 0.0.

Source: U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

Table 8.**Lawful Permanent Resident Flow by Marital Status: Fiscal Years 2012 to 2014**

Marital status	2014		2013		2012	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total	1,016,518	100.0	990,553	100.0	1,031,631	100.0
Single	365,309	35.9	355,199	35.9	374,559	36.2
Married	594,216	58.5	579,295	58.5	600,961	58.3
Other*	53,306	5.2	51,671	5.2	51,281	5.0
Unknown	3,687	0.4	4,388	0.4	4,830	0.5

*Other includes persons who are widowed, divorced, or separated.

Source: U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

PREFERENCE IMMIGRATION LIMITS⁷

Family-sponsored Preferences Limit

The annual limit is calculated as 480,000 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, and 3) children born abroad to lawful permanent residents on temporary trips abroad minus 4) certain categories of aliens paroled into the United States in the second preceding fiscal year plus 5) unused visas in the employment preferences in the preceding year.

The family-sponsored preference limit may not fall below a minimum of 226,000 in any year. The number of LPRs who were issued visas or who adjusted status in 2013 under categories 1 to 4 above was 448,148. In 2013, visa issuance in the employment preferences exceeded the annual limitation by 2,800 (less than two percent of the total annual limit), possibly as a result of lower than usual visas returned unused to consular offices, within the fiscal year. The calculated limit for family-sponsored preferences in 2014 was 29,052 (480,000 minus 448,148 minus 2,800). Since this number was below 226,000, the family-sponsored preferences limit was set at 226,000. The limit for each category is shown in Table A1.

Employment-based Preference Limit

The annual limit is equal to 140,000 plus unused numbers in the family-sponsored preferences in the previous fiscal year. There were 10,241 unused numbers in the family-sponsored preferences in 2013. The 2014 employment-based preference limit was

⁷The 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.

Table A1.

Annual Limits for Preference and Diversity Immigrants: Fiscal Year 2014

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†
Third: Married sons and daughters of U.S. citizens	23,400†
Fourth: Brothers and sisters of U.S. citizens (at least 21 years of age)	65,000†
Employment-based preferences	150,241
First: Priority workers	42,969†
Second: Professionals with advanced degrees or aliens of exceptional ability	42,969†
Third: Skilled workers, professionals, and needed unskilled workers	42,969†
Fourth: Certain special immigrants	10,667
Fifth: Employment creation (“investors”)	10,667
Diversity	50,000

*Plus unused family 4th preference visas.
 †Visas not used in higher preferences may be used in these categories.
 ‡Plus unused employment 4th and 5th preference visas.
 Source: U.S. Department of State.

150,241. The limit is 28.6 percent of the total for each of the first three employment preferences and 7.1 percent for each of the last two preferences.

Per Country and Dependent Area Limits

A limit of seven percent of the total family-sponsored and employment-based preferences is set for independent countries, and a limit of two percent is set for dependent areas. The 2014 per country limit for independent foreign states was 26,337 (7 percent of 376,241—the sum of the 2014 employment-based and family-based preference limits), and the limit for dependencies was 7,525 (2 percent of 376,241).

Diversity Limits

The annual limit for the diversity program was 50,000 in 2014.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

For more information about immigration and immigration statistics, visit the Office of Immigration Statistics web page at <http://www.dhs.gov/immigration-statistics>.