

U.S. Naturalizations: 2014

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The naturalization process confers U.S. citizenship upon foreign citizens or nationals who have fulfilled the requirements established by Congress in the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA). After naturalization, foreign-born citizens enjoy nearly all of the same benefits, rights, and responsibilities that the Constitution gives to native-born U.S. citizens, including the right to vote. This Office of Immigration Statistics (OIS) *Annual Flow Report* presents information on the number and characteristics of foreign nationals aged 18 years and over who naturalized during 2014.¹

In 2014, a total of 653,416 persons naturalized (Figure 1). The leading countries of birth of new citizens were Mexico (94,889), India (37,854), the Philippines (34,591), and the People’s Republic of China (30,284). The largest number of persons naturalizing lived in California (140,234), Florida (79,637), and New York (77,717).

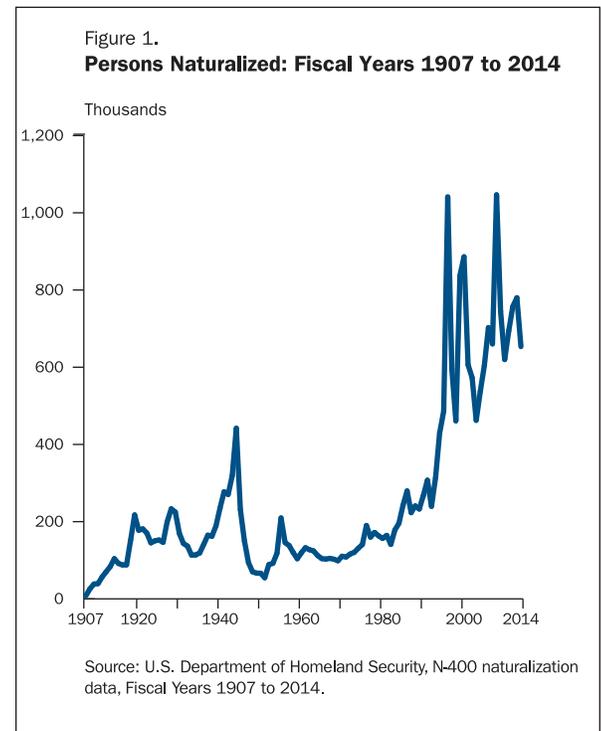
THE NATURALIZATION PROCESS

An applicant for naturalization must fulfill certain requirements set forth in the INA concerning age, lawful admission, and residence in the United States. These general naturalization provisions specify that a foreign national must be at least 18 years of age; be a U.S. lawful permanent resident (LPR); and have resided in the country continuously for at least five years. Additional requirements include the ability to speak, read, and write the English language; knowledge of U.S. government and history; and good moral character.

Special provisions of naturalization law exempt certain applicants from some of these general requirements. The primary types of applicants who may, under certain conditions, be eligible for specific exemptions include spouses and minor children of U.S. citizens and persons with qualifying military service in the Armed Forces of the United States.

Every applicant for naturalization who is 18 years of age or older must file an N-400 *Application for Naturalization*. All applicants who meet the preliminary documentary

requirements must be interviewed by officers from U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) to determine their eligibility to naturalize. Approved applicants are then scheduled for an oath ceremony before a judge or before an officer with authority delegated by the Secretary of Homeland Security.



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



DATA

This report uses data from administrative records of USCIS of the Department of Homeland Security. These records consist of information taken from N-400 applications, such as date and country of birth, sex, marital status, and state of residence. The Computer Linked Application Information Management System (CLAIMS) of USCIS provided nearly all of the data; a small number of records came from the Central Index System of USCIS.

Caution should be exercised in drawing conclusions from these data about trends in the demand to naturalize. Year-to-year fluctuations in the number of naturalizations are not uncommon and may reflect variation in application volume and other factors related to application processing. Changes in the numbers of persons naturalizing over a period of years provide a more accurate indication of long-term trends in naturalization.

TRENDS AND CHARACTERISTICS OF PERSONS NATURALIZING

The number of U.S. naturalizations decreased to 653,416 in 2014 from 779,929 in 2013 and 757,434 in 2012. Although the number of applications for naturalization remained relatively unchanged from 2013 to 2014, the number of applications processed decreased substantially.²

Historical Trend

The average annual number of persons naturalizing increased from less than 120,000 during the 1950s and 1960s to 210,000 during the 1980s, 500,000 during the 1990s, and to 680,000 between 2000 and 2009. Since 2010, the average annual number of naturalizations has increased to 701,000 (see Figure 1). Until the 1970s, the majority of persons naturalizing were born in European countries. The regional origin of new citizens shifted from Europe to Asia due to increased legal immigration from Asian countries, the arrival of Indochinese refugees in the 1970s, and the historically higher naturalization rate of Asian immigrants. Consequently, Asia has been the leading region of origin of new citizens in most years since 1976.

Region and Leading Countries of Birth

Thirty-six percent of persons naturalizing in 2014 were born in Asia, followed by 34 percent born in North America, and 11 percent born in Europe (see Table 1). Mexico was the leading country of birth of persons naturalizing in 2014 (15 percent), followed by India (5.8 percent), the Philippines (5.3 percent), and the People's Republic of China (4.6 percent). The ten countries with the largest

Table 1.

Persons Naturalized by Region and Country of Birth: Fiscal Years 2012 to 2014

(Countries ranked by 2014 persons naturalized)

Region and country of birth	2014		2013		2012	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
REGION						
Total	653,416	100.0	779,929	100.0	757,434	100.0
Africa	62,175	9.5	71,872	9.2	74,775	9.9
Asia	233,163	35.7	275,700	35.3	257,035	33.9
Europe	71,325	10.9	80,333	10.3	82,714	10.9
North America	222,547	34.1	271,807	34.9	261,673	34.5
Caribbean	83,376	12.8	120,995	15.5	109,762	14.5
Central America	35,866	5.5	42,682	5.5	40,592	5.4
Other North America	103,305	15.8	108,130	13.9	111,319	14.7
Oceania	3,399	0.5	3,849	0.5	3,886	0.5
South America	60,665	9.3	76,167	9.8	76,992	10.2
Unknown	142	—	201	—	359	—
COUNTRY						
Total	653,416	100.0	779,929	100.0	757,434	100.0
Mexico	94,889	14.5	99,385	12.7	102,181	13.5
India	37,854	5.8	49,897	6.4	42,928	5.7
Philippines	34,591	5.3	43,489	5.6	44,958	5.9
China, People's Republic	30,284	4.6	35,387	4.5	31,868	4.2
Cuba	24,092	3.7	30,482	3.9	31,244	4.1
Dominican Republic	23,775	3.6	39,590	5.1	33,351	4.4
Vietnam	18,837	2.9	24,277	3.1	23,490	3.1
Colombia	16,478	2.5	22,196	2.8	23,972	3.2
El Salvador	15,598	2.4	18,401	2.4	16,685	2.2
Haiti	13,676	2.1	23,480	3.0	19,114	2.5
Korea, South	13,587	2.1	15,786	2.0	13,790	1.8
Jamaica	13,547	2.1	16,442	2.1	15,531	2.1
Iraq	12,377	1.9	7,771	1.0	3,523	0.5
Pakistan	11,210	1.7	12,948	1.7	11,150	1.5
Iran	9,620	1.5	11,623	1.5	9,627	1.3
Peru	9,572	1.5	11,782	1.5	11,814	1.6
United Kingdom	8,906	1.4	9,459	1.2	9,145	1.2
Nigeria	8,667	1.3	9,545	1.2	9,322	1.2
Brazil	8,625	1.3	9,565	1.2	9,884	1.3
Guatemala	8,549	1.3	9,530	1.2	8,797	1.2
All other countries	238,682	36.5	278,894	35.8	285,060	37.6

— Figure rounds to 0.0.

Source: U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

number of naturalizations accounted for almost half of all new citizens in 2014.

From 2013 to 2014, the number of naturalizations decreased among immigrants from all regions. Among leading countries of birth, the largest numeric decrease in naturalizations occurred among immigrants born in the Dominican Republic (15,815), India (12,043), Haiti (9,804), and the Philippines (8,898). The largest increase in naturalization was among immigrants born in Iraq (4,606), a 59 percent increase from 2013. In terms of percentage change, the leading countries of birth with the largest decrease in naturalizations were Haiti (42 percent), the Dominican Republic (40 percent), Colombia (26 percent), and India (24 percent).

² See Table 20: *Petitions for Naturalization Filed, Persons Naturalized, and Petitions for Naturalizations Denied* in the 2014 Yearbook of Immigration Statistics.

Table 2.**Persons Naturalized by State of Residence: Fiscal Years 2012 to 2014**

(Ranked by 2014 persons naturalized)

State of residence	2014		2013		2012	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total	653,416	100.0	779,929	100.0	757,434	100.0
California	140,234	21.5	164,792	21.1	158,850	21.0
Florida	79,637	12.2	101,773	13.0	100,890	13.3
New York	77,717	11.9	107,330	13.8	93,584	12.4
Texas	52,879	8.1	57,947	7.4	57,762	7.6
New Jersey	32,939	5.0	41,173	5.3	42,622	5.6
Illinois	26,224	4.0	27,706	3.6	28,376	3.7
Massachusetts	21,608	3.3	21,404	2.7	22,753	3.0
Virginia	19,646	3.0	22,279	2.9	24,224	3.2
Georgia	15,242	2.3	19,534	2.5	17,093	2.3
Pennsylvania	14,500	2.3	17,813	2.3	16,470	2.2
Other*	172,790	26.4	198,178	25.4	194,810	25.7

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

Source: U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

Leading States and Metropolitan Areas of Residence

Seventy-four percent of all persons naturalizing in 2014 resided in ten states (see Table 2). California was home to the largest percentage of persons naturalizing (22 percent), followed by Florida and New York (12 percent each). Over 50 percent of all new citizens in 2014 lived in ten metropolitan areas (see Table 3).³ The leading metropolitan areas of residence were New York-Newark-Jersey City, NY-NJ-PA (15 percent), Los Angeles-Long Beach-Anaheim, CA (8.8 percent), and Miami-Fort Lauderdale-West Palm Beach, FL (8.0 percent).

From 2013 to 2014, the largest percentage decreases in the number of naturalizations among leading states of residence occurred in

³The most current 2013 CBSA definitions are available from OMB at <https://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/bulletins/2013/b-13-01.pdf>.

Table 3.**Persons Naturalized by Metropolitan Area of Residence: Fiscal Years 2012 to 2014**

(Ranked by 2014 persons naturalized)

Metropolitan area of residence	2014		2013		2012	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total	653,416	100.0	779,929	100.0	757,434	100.0
New York-Newark-Jersey City, NY-NJ-PA	100,250	15.3	137,500	17.6	124,942	16.5
Los Angeles-Long Beach-Anaheim, CA	57,674	8.8	70,188	9.0	65,679	8.7
Miami-Fort Lauderdale-West Palm Beach, FL	52,544	8.0	66,925	8.6	68,072	9.0
Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV	24,648	3.8	30,097	3.9	31,641	4.2
Chicago-Naperville-Elgin, IL-IN-WI	24,617	3.8	26,173	3.4	26,942	3.6
San Francisco-Oakland-Hayward, CA	19,842	3.1	23,506	3.0	20,474	2.7
Houston-The Woodlands-Sugar Land, TX	17,547	2.7	22,575	2.9	22,050	2.9
Boston-Cambridge-Newton, MA-NH	17,311	2.6	17,383	2.2	18,264	2.4
Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington, TX	16,581	2.5	16,304	2.1	16,935	2.1
San Diego-Carlsbad, CA	13,695	2.2	14,376	1.8	12,876	1.7
Other, including unknown	308,707	47.2	354,902	45.5	349,559	46.2

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

Source: U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

New York (28 percent), Georgia, and Florida (22 percent each). Among leading metropolitan areas of residence, the largest percentage decrease from 2013 to 2014 occurred in New York-Newark-Jersey City, NY-NJ-PA (27 percent) and Houston-The Woodlands-Sugar Land, TX (22 percent).

Sex, Age, and Marital Status

The percentage breakdown by sex, age, and marital status remained largely unchanged from recent years (see Tables 4, 5, and 6). In 2014, females accounted for 55 percent of all persons naturalizing. Slightly more than one-half (52 percent) of new citizens were ages 25 to 44 years, about 21 percent were ages 55 years and older, and fewer than ten percent were ages 18 to 24 years. The median age of all persons naturalizing was 40 years. Nearly two-thirds (64 percent) of persons naturalizing in 2014 were married, and nearly one-quarter (23 percent) were single.

Years in Immigrant Status

Persons naturalizing in 2014 spent a median of seven years in LPR status before becoming citizens (see Table 7), unchanged from the previous two years. Immigrants born in Africa and Asia spent the least time in lawful immigrant status (6 years), followed by immigrants from South America (7 years), Europe (8 years), Oceania (9 years), and North America (10 years).

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>.

Table 4.

Persons Naturalized by Sex: Fiscal Years 2012 to 2014

Sex	2014		2013		2012	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total	653,416	100.0	779,929	100.0	757,434	100.0
Female	360,547	55.2	431,427	55.3	418,125	55.2
Male	292,858	44.8	348,486	44.7	339,260	44.8
Unknown	11	—	16	—	49	—

— Figure rounds to 0.0.
Source: U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

Table 6.

Persons Naturalized by Marital Status: Fiscal Years 2012 to 2014

Marital status	2014		2013		2012	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total	653,416	100.0	779,929	100.0	757,434	100.0
Single	147,369	22.6	175,367	22.5	170,125	22.5
Married	417,117	63.8	496,262	63.6	480,863	63.5
Other*	88,930	13.6	108,300	13.9	106,446	14.0

*Includes persons who were divorced, separated, widowed, or of unknown marital status.
Source: U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

Table 5.

Persons Naturalized by Age: Fiscal Years 2012 to 2014

Age	2014		2013		2012	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total	653,416	100.0	779,929	100.0	757,434	100.0
18 to 24 years	59,431	9.2	71,714	9.2	72,834	9.6
25 to 34 years	163,264	25.0	195,472	25.1	191,480	25.3
35 to 44 years	173,413	26.5	208,008	26.7	201,386	26.6
45 to 54 years	121,187	18.5	142,245	18.2	136,604	18.0
55 to 64 years	78,058	11.9	93,053	11.9	88,993	11.7
65 years and over	58,063	8.9	69,436	8.9	66,136	8.7
Unknown	0	—	1	—	1	—
Median age	40	X	40	X	40	X

X Not applicable.
— Figure rounds to 0.0.
Source: U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

Table 7.

Median Years in Lawful Permanent Resident Status for Persons Naturalized by Region of Birth and Year of Naturalization: Fiscal Years 2005 to 2014

Region of birth	Year									
	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006	2005
Total	7	7	7	6	6	7	9	8	7	8
Africa	6	5	5	5	5	6	6	6	6	7
Asia	6	6	6	6	5	6	7	6	6	7
Europe	8	7	7	6	6	7	7	6	6	6
North America	10	10	10	10	10	11	12	11	10	11
Oceania	9	8	8	7	7	8	9	9	8	9
South America	7	6	6	6	5	6	8	7	7	8

Note: Excludes persons who were not required to be lawful permanent residents prior to naturalization.
Source: U.S. Department of Homeland Security.