

Immigrant Workers

Fast Facts

- In 2004, approximately 13 percent of the U.S. population was foreign-born, and more than 40 percent of foreign-born individuals were naturalized citizens. The foreign-born percentage of the U.S. population peaked in 1890, when it was 14.8 percent of the total.
- The majority of immigrants come to the United States legally. More than six of 10 legal immigrants come to join close family members, immediate relatives such as spouses, unmarried minor children, parents of U.S. citizens or relatives of permanent legal residents.
- Without the contribution of immigrant labor, the output of goods and services in the United States would be at least \$1 trillion smaller than it is today. The National Academy of Sciences and National Research Council concluded that in 1997, the United States reaped a \$50 billion surplus from taxes paid by immigrants at all levels of government. The total net benefit to the Social Security system, if immigration levels remain constant, will be nearly \$500 billion through 2022 and nearly \$2 trillion through 2072.
- Researchers estimated the nation's undocumented population at 11 million in March 2005. Over the past decade, approximately 700,000–800,000 unauthorized immigrants arrived in the United States every year. The large majority of undocumented workers originate from Mexico, with the flow from that country at approximately 485,000 persons annually.
- According to the 2000 U.S. Census, the five states with the largest number of immigrants are California, New York, Florida, Texas and Arizona. In the past decade, the most rapid growth in the immigrant population, especially the undocumented population, has occurred in the Rocky Mountain states, the South and the mid-Atlantic.
- States experiencing the highest growth rate of undocumented immigrants include North Carolina, New Jersey, Georgia, Tennessee, Kentucky and Nebraska.