

## Immigration: 2018 and Beyond

### I. Types of Immigration

Nearly 34 million lawful immigrants live in the United States. Many live and work in the country after receiving lawful permanent residence (also known as a green card), while others receive temporary visas available to students and workers. In addition, roughly 1 million unauthorized immigrants have temporary permission to live and work in the U.S. through the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) and Temporary Protected Status programs.

For years, proposals have sought to shift the nation's immigration system away from its current emphasis on family reunification and employment-based migration, and toward a points-based system that prioritizes the admission of immigrants with certain education and employment qualifications. These proposals have received renewed attention under the Trump administration. Below are key details about existing U.S. immigration programs.

#### A. Family-based Immigration

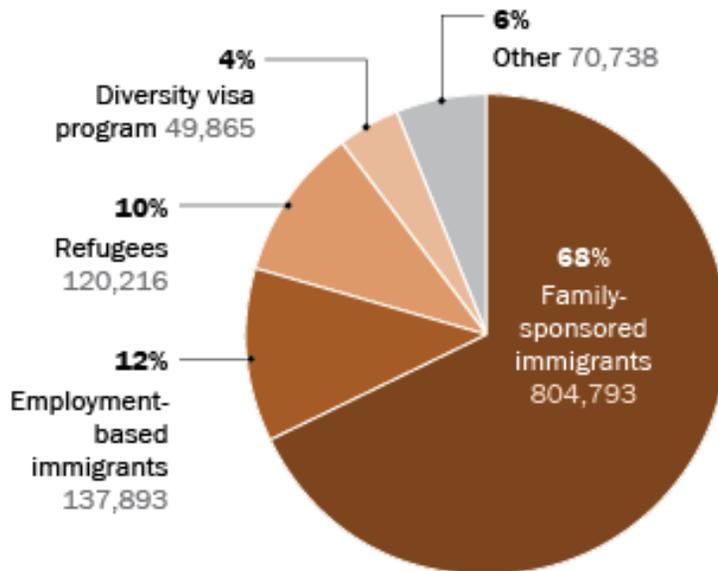
In fiscal year 2016, over 800,000 people received family-based U.S. lawful permanent residence. This program allows someone to receive a **green card** if they already have a spouse, child, sibling or parent living in the country with U.S. citizenship or, in some cases, a green card. Immigrants from countries with large numbers of applicants often wait for years to receive a green card because a single country can account for no more than 7% of all green cards issued annually. President Donald Trump has proposed restricting family-based green cards to only spouses and minor children. For other family members, a Senate bill would make a limited number of green cards available under a skills-based point system. Today, family-based immigration – referred to by some as “**chain migration**” – is the most common way people gain green cards, in recent years accounting for about 70% of the more than 1 million people who receive them annually.

#### B. Employment-Based Green Cards

In fiscal year 2016, 137,893 employment-based green cards were awarded to foreign workers and their families. A Senate bill would replace the existing eligibility criteria with a point system like that proposed for family-based green cards. The new system would eliminate a green card for immigrant investors who put money into commercial U.S. enterprises that are intended to create jobs or benefit the economy. This path to a green card, the EB-5 program, has drawn criticism from some lawmakers.

**Green card categories that have faced or may face reductions**

*Admission categories for fiscal 2016 lawful permanent residents*



Note: "Other" includes parolees and asylees.  
Source: U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

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**C. Refugee Admissions**

The U.S. admitted 84,995 refugees in fiscal year 2016, a total that declined to 53,716 in fiscal 2017 – the fewest admissions since 2007. This decline reflects a lower admissions cap. For fiscal year 2018, refugee admissions have been capped at 45,000, the lowest since Congress created the modern refugee program in 1980 for those fleeing persecution in their home countries. One of Trump’s first acts as president in 2017 was to freeze refugee admissions, citing security concerns. Admissions from most countries eventually restarted, though applicants from 11 nations deemed “high risk” by the administration were admitted on a case-by-case basis. In January 2018, refugee admissions resumed for all countries.

**D. Diversity Visas**

Each year, about 50,000 people receive green cards through the U.S. diversity visa program, also known as the visa lottery. Since the program began in

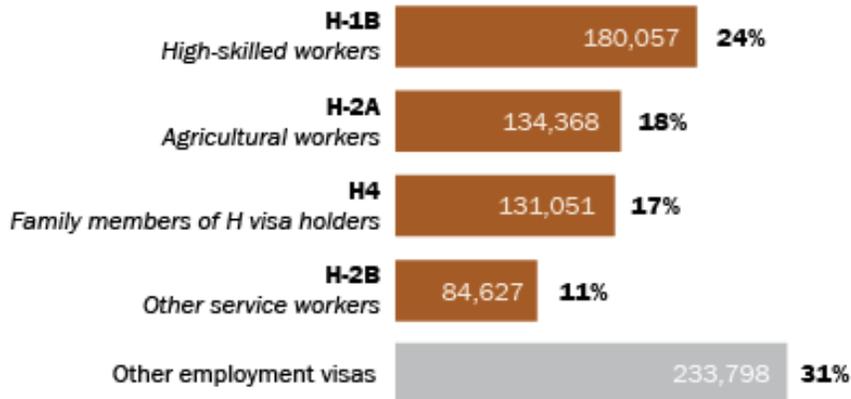
1995, more than 1 million immigrants have received green cards through the lottery. Trump has said he wants to eliminate the program, which seeks to diversify the U.S. immigrant population by granting visas to underrepresented nations. Citizens of countries with the most legal immigrant arrivals in recent years – such as Mexico, Canada, China and India – are not eligible to apply.

**E. H-1B Visas**

In fiscal year 2016, 180,057 high-skilled foreign workers received H-1B visas. As the nation’s biggest temporary employment visa program, H-1B visas accounted for about a quarter (24%) of all temporary visas for employment issued in 2016. In all, more than 1.4 million H-1B visas have been issued from fiscal years 2007 to 2016. Under the Trump administration, the number of H-1B applications challenged by the federal government has increased. In addition, the administration has considered restricting the number of years foreign workers can hold H-1B visas. In Congress, long-standing efforts to expand the H-1B visa program continue.

## H-1B visas account for a quarter of temporary employment visas issued in 2016

*Temporary employment visas issued, fiscal year 2016*



Note: "Other employment visas" includes H1B1, H3, L, O, P and Q visas.  
Source: U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

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## F. Temporary Permissions

A relatively small number of unauthorized immigrants who came to the U.S. under unusual circumstances have received temporary legal permission to stay in the country. One key distinction for this group of immigrants is that, despite having received permission to live in the U.S., most don't have a path to gain lawful permanent residence. The following two programs, DACA and Temporary Protected Status, are examples of this.

## G. DACA

About 700,000 unauthorized immigrants had temporary work permits and protection from deportation through Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals as of Sept. 5, 2017. The program has been central to negotiations as Congress debates changes to U.S. immigration law. Trump ended the program in September 2017. As a result, DACA enrollees whose benefits expire March 5 would be the first to be dropped from the program. However, two federal court cases may temporarily keep DACA in place after March 5, 2018.

## H. Temporary Protected Status

More than 320,000 immigrants from 10 nations have permission to live and work in the U.S. under Temporary Protected Status (TPS), because war, hurricanes or other disasters in their home countries could make it dangerous for them to return. Many are expected to lose their benefits in 2018 and 2019. The Trump administration has said it will not renew the program for people from El Salvador, Haiti, Nicaragua and Sudan, who together account for about 76% of enrolled immigrants. The first group expected to lose their benefits will be roughly 1,000 Sudanese whose benefits expire Nov. 2, 2018. Benefits for the largest group, about 195,000 people from El Salvador, are scheduled to expire on Sept. 9, 2019. About 7,000 Syrians with TPS recently had their benefits renewed. Under the Trump administration, only those from Syria and South Sudan have received TPS extensions with the possibility of future renewals.

## Immigrants from 10 nations have Temporary Protected Status

■ Trump administration says it will not renew\*

NATION	ESTIMATE	EXPIRES
Nepal	8,950	June 24, 2018
Honduras	57,000	July 5, 2018
Yemen	1,000	Sept. 3, 2018
Somalia	250	Sept. 17, 2018
<b>Sudan</b>	<b>1,040</b>	<b>Nov. 2, 2018</b>
<b>Nicaragua</b>	<b>2,550</b>	<b>Jan. 5, 2019</b>
South Sudan	70	May 2, 2019
<b>Haiti</b>	<b>46,000</b>	<b>July 22, 2019</b>
<b>El Salvador</b>	<b>195,000</b>	<b>Sept. 9, 2019</b>
Syria	7,000	Sept. 30, 2019

\*Administration positions as of Feb. 22, 2018.

Note: For Syrians, TPS only available for those who have been in the U.S. since Aug. 1, 2016.

Source: U.S. Department of Homeland Security estimates included in Federal Register notices, 2016-2018.

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## II. Immigration and Population Changes

One law seems to have done more to make America a nation of immigrants than any other policy. The 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act removed the national origins quota system that previously “tried to keep America white” and instead focused on reunification of immigrant families as well as attracting skilled laborers. Since then the United States has grown stronger and more competitive through diversity. Without the influx immigration has brought in the past 50 years the United States would be much whiter but also demographically older. Instead, the United States has enjoyed a competitive advantage over our peers and competitors for decades thanks to a relatively younger population and abundance of skilled working-age and military-age people.

China’s median age is set to surpass America’s no later than 2020 while Japan’s median age is already 46 years old. Much of Europe and Asia is rapidly aging while the United States looks to remain an exception for two big reasons – immigration and fertility. Currently both previous advantages are changing and being challenged in unprecedented ways. Traditionally America’s Latinos have kept its median age younger and its population growing. Median age for Latinos in the US was 28 years old compared to 43 years old for whites in 2015. Latinos have been considered a principal driver for US demographic growth but lately more Mexicans are returning rather than coming to the US.

Currently, fertility rates have dropped below replacement level. Without immigrants, the United States’ working-age population will shrink by more than 17 million people in the next 17 years, just as

the baby boomer generation is retiring. If the United States stays open to current levels of immigration, immigrants and their descendants will account for 88% of population growth over the next 47 years.

### **III. Immigrants in Cincinnati**

#### **A. How Immigrants Make Cincinnati Home**

Most foreign-born arrivals to Cincinnati often do not move here from other countries. Rather, they move here from other parts of our own state. And for those who are new to both our state and our city, more than 1 in 5 arrive from another part of the United States through secondary migration, rather than from another country. Fewer than 30% of Cincinnati's foreign-born population comes directly from a sending nation. Roughly half of these people become American citizens. There are presently 220,000 foreign born Ohio residents who are now citizens and are eligible to vote (This number is growing annually in the Cincinnati region, partially in gratitude to the amazing LWVCA volunteers who register over 1,000 new voters each year at naturalization ceremonies in our region). Another 101,286 immigrants are eligible for naturalization. Immigrants also invest in quality education. Best estimates indicate that Ohio's universities are home to roughly 33,000 international college students.

From this we can infer that immigrants who settle in our city have a healthy grasp of contemporary American culture. Second, the reality is that most Cincinnati-based immigrants are coming from Europe, Africa and Asia rather than the more frequently discussed Latin America regions. Key Cincinnati Public Schools (CPS) with significant immigrant populations include Withrow and Academy of World Languages (AWL) where English Language Learners (ELL) curriculum is widely offered. There are 63 languages other than English spoken by CPS students and families. Spanish, French, and Arabic, in that order, are the most common non-English languages found among CPS families.

#### **B. Making Cincinnati a Welcoming Place**

The Immigrant Friendly Task Force run from City Hall was started in 2016 to make Cincinnati a more welcoming city for immigrants. The Chamber of Commerce started COMPASS, a resource center to help people who have relocated to Cincinnati for work and assists local businesses to recruit the talent they need to compete in a global marketplace. COMPASS supports economic arguments for immigrants in our community. Immigrants make up less than 4% of Cincinnati's regional population, but they have \$1.5 billion in annual purchase power and generate \$189 million in state and local tax revenues. While Ohio's population growth rate has slowed in recent decades, our foreign-born population has continued to increase steadily. Data indicates Cincinnati's immigrants are most likely to come from Western Europe, Eastern Africa, Central and Western Asia, and India.

Catholic Charities and RefugeeConnect continue to support refugees who have been vetted (are THE most vetted immigrants, spending an average of 17 years in the process before being allowed to enter the United States) by the government through thorough health and background checks. There are over 25,000 refugees (through initial and secondary migration) living in the Cincinnati region today. They

come from Cuba, Iraq, Bhutan, DRC (Congo), Rwanda, Syria, Burundi, and a host of other nations spanning the globe and are fleeing unspeakable horrors. There are over 100 other local organizations as part of the Refugee Empowerment Initiative (REI) which support job and language training opportunities for immigrants and refugees in the region. ♦

### **LWVUS Position**

“The League supports immigration policies which promote family reunification, and meet economic, business, and employment needs while being responsive to those facing political persecution or humanitarian crises.

We support a federal immigration law that provides an efficient, expeditious system for legal entry of immigrants into the United States including the DREAM ACT. We support policies to improve economies, education, job opportunities and living conditions in nations with large emigrating populations. We support provisions for unauthorized immigrants already in the country to earn legal status. We support federal payments to impacted communities to address the financial costs borne by states and local governments with large immigrant populations.” <https://www.lwv.org/other-issues/immigration>

### **Discussion Questions:**

- 1) Without the immigration rates of the past 50+ years, the United States would be less able to compete in global trade or to challenge terrorism and other conflicts. Do you think this is true or untrue? Why?
- 2) More Mexicans are returning than coming to the United States. What does this suggest about US immigration policy? Where are most people coming from and what should be considered our larger concern for security, drug trade, and other threats to society?
- 3) What can be done about unauthorized immigration? Do you think this is a pressing issue in the Cincinnati region?
- 4) What can we do to make immigrants feel more welcome in the Cincinnati region?
- 5) How can Cincinnati better promote the economic value propositions around immigrants to help the general population understand the value these individuals bring to our region?

**Call to Action & Local Opportunities****1) Cultural Competence Training**

<https://www.cincinnati-chamber.com/the-inclusive-chamber/diverse-by-design/building-cultural-competence-a-program-for-leaders>

**2) Intercommunity Justice and Peace Center**

<http://ijpccincinnati.org/programs/immigration/>

**3) The Welcome Project**

<https://welcomecincinnati.org/>

**4) Cincinnati Interfaith Workers Center**

<http://www.cworkers.org/dlop.htm>

**5) Cincinnati Public Schools English Language Learners (ELL)**

<https://www.cps-k12.org/academics/programs/ell-welcome-center>

**6) Citizenship and Green Card Workshop**

Assist immigrant/refugee families complete I-485 forms (to help refugees apply for their green cards) and N-400 forms (to help green card holders/LPRs apply for naturalization and citizenship)

- April 7, 11:30am-2:30pm, location TBD (likely College Hill)

Contact Simon @ [ssvirnovskiy@fbtlaw.com](mailto:ssvirnovskiy@fbtlaw.com) or Emily @ [ethobe@yahoo.com](mailto:ethobe@yahoo.com) for more info.

\*This will be repeat session every six weeks on Saturdays through the remainder of 2018.

**7) Stories of Survival Series**

Tickets available at [refugeeconnect.org/storiesofsurvival](http://refugeeconnect.org/storiesofsurvival)

- April 25, Former Soviet Union Discussion
- May 23, Burundi Discussion
- June 20, Bhutan Discussion

\*in partnership with RefugeeConnect and No Lost Generation, a University of Cincinnati student org.

**8) Voter registration with LWVCA for new citizens at local Naturalization ceremonies**

<http://www.signupgenius.com/go/30e0d48afad2caaff2-naturalization>

- April 6 @ Cincinnati State, 3520 Central Pkwy, 12:30-2:30pm
- April 20 @ US District Court, Rm 842, 100 East 5<sup>th</sup> St. 1:30-3:30pm
- May 11 @ St Veronica School, 4475 Mt Carmel-Tobasco Rd., 1:30-3:30pm
- May 25 @ US District Court, Rm 842, 100 East 5<sup>th</sup> St. 1:30-3:30pm

LWVUS supports legislation introduced by Senator Patrick Leahy (D-VT) and Representative Robert Brady (D-PA) on June 14, 2017. The Automatic Voter Registration Act of 2017 would enhance access for eligible voters in our elections and work to modernize our electoral system. The bill would improve accuracy of voter records, cut down on costs, and modernize outdated registration systems. The League is a leader in voter registration efforts across the country, including local efforts in Cincinnati through presence at Naturalization ceremonies and other events. Expanding voter registration has been a principal goal of the League since its founding in the wake of the passage in 1920 of the 19th Amendment, which gave women the right to vote.

#### 9) **Women's Journeys, Women's Voices: The Refugee Experience**

- March 28, 2018 @ Miami Middletown, 142 Johnston. 1:15-2:35 pm

At the present time there over 22 million refugees worldwide registered with the UN. The United States welcomed nearly 45,000 refugees last year, and in the past year over 300 refugees were resettled in the Cincinnati area. While refugees are among us, in many cases they may be invisible and their voices not heard. This program offers the opportunity for us to hear the voices of women refugees living in Southwest Ohio. Invitations have been made to refugees from a variety of areas including Bhutan, Burundi, Iraq and Syria. By hearing refugee voices Southwest Ohio moves closer to becoming a welcoming community for refugees. Please contact John Schaefer, 513 727-3204 or [schaeferj@miamioh.edu](mailto:schaeferj@miamioh.edu)

#### **Sources:**

<http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/02/26/key-facts-about-u-s-immigration-policies-and-proposed-changes/> 26 February 2018

<https://www.cincinnati.com/story/opinion/contributors/2017/01/28/cincinnati-remain-welcoming-city-immigrants/97181432/> 21 January 2017

Robyn Lamont, Executive Director, RefugeeConnect

<http://www.cincinnati.com/Data/Demographics/>

<https://www.usatoday.com/story/opinion/2018/02/02/older-less-fertile-america-needs-immigration-stay-competitive-jennifer-sciubba-column/1082523001/> 2 February 2018

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