

Interstate Migration of Lawful Permanent Residents Who Naturalize

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SUMMARY

The geographic mobility of lawful permanent residents (LPRs) within the United States has implications for their integration and socioeconomic achievement. Migration data on LPRs are not routinely collected by the Department of Homeland Security. However, information supplied on applications for LPR status and naturalization may be used to measure changes in the state of residence occurring between the grant of LPR status and the time of naturalization. This Office of Immigration Statistics Fact Sheet examines interstate migration among LPRs who became naturalized U.S. citizens by comparing their state or territory of residence (or intended residence) when they became LPRs with their residence when they naturalized.

DATA

Data were obtained from administrative case-tracking systems of U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) of the Department Homeland Security. The analysis was limited to individuals who 1) were granted LPR status during 1973–1975,¹ 1983–1985, and 1993–1995 (considered representative of the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s, respectively) and naturalized by the end of 2012;² 2) were 18 years of age or older at the time they obtained LPR status, and 3) had a valid U.S. state or territory code on both LPR and naturalization records. Data showing the proportion of LPRs living in a different state at the time they naturalized were tabulated by selected immigrant characteristics.

RESULTS

- The proportion of LPRs living in a different state at the time they naturalized compared to the time when they obtained LPR status was greater among those who obtained LPR status in 1973–75 (31 percent) than either in 1983–85 (26 percent) or 1993–1995 (21 percent) (see Table 1).

- Individuals who obtained LPR status at an older age were more likely to naturalize in the state in which he/she obtained LPR status than individuals who obtained LPR status at a younger age.
- LPRs from Africa and Asia were more likely to live in a different state when they naturalized than LPRs from other regions of the world. LPRs from Europe, North America, and the Caribbean were less likely to naturalize in a different state.
- Employment-based LPRs were more likely to have moved to a different state between the time they obtained LPR status and naturalized than individuals who received LPR status on another basis.
- States that attract individuals as LPRs remain attractive to those individuals when they naturalize; the proportion of individuals living in a different state at the time they naturalized was lower for those who obtained LPR status in the four leading states than the average of all other states. The four leading states of residence were California, New York, Florida, and Texas.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

For more information about immigration and immigration statistics, visit the Department of Homeland Security web site at <http://www.dhs.gov/immigration-statistics>.

¹ In this fact sheet, all years refer to fiscal years.

² Individuals who naturalized in 1977 were excluded due to data limitations.



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Table 1.

Percent of LPRs Who Naturalize in a Different State* by Year LPR Status Obtained and Selected Characteristics

Characteristic	Year LPR Status Obtained					
	1973–75†		1983–85		1993–95‡	
	Total	Different State (%)	Total	Different State (%)	Total	Different State (%)
TOTAL	465,160	30.9	746,492	25.9	1,029,533	21.0
AGE AT TIME LPR STATUS OBTAINED						
18 to 24 years	130,675	32.1	197,895	27.7	223,776	22.8
25 to 34 years	197,111	33.9	306,746	26.9	366,847	24.2
35 to 44 years	78,160	27.1	130,775	23.6	214,581	20.2
45 years and over	59,214	23.6	111,076	22.6	224,329	15.3
SEX						
Male	205,294	30.1	366,167	25.8	453,325	22.0
Female	259,866	31.6	380,280	25.9	576,151	20.4
REGION OF BIRTH						
Africa	9,588	36.3	28,675	33.2	54,352	29.3
Asia	195,107	39.5	396,858	28.0	495,662	22.8
Europe	76,470	26.7	66,990	26.0	179,772	17.1
North America and Caribbean	150,622	21.4	194,911	20.9	227,848	19.0
South America	30,104	30.7	55,836	24.2	67,591	20.1
MAJOR CATEGORY OF ADMISSION AS LPR						
Immediate Relatives of U.S. Citizens	127,460	34.0	238,759	27.4	300,587	21.3
Family Preferences	111,587	26.6	289,852	24.6	231,258	22.0
Employment Based	46,301	45.1	76,820	30.0	187,749	30.9
Asylees and Refugees	45,978	23.2	139,059	23.7	207,367	10.7
LENGTH OF TIME IN LPR STATUS						
0 to 4 years	33,016	24.6	57,764	20.4	73,016	10.2
5 to 9 years	196,884	31.6	320,307	24.3	660,814	19.7
10 to 19 years	96,810	34.1	273,004	26.1	294,599	26.9
20 years and greater	13,723	29.1	95,080	33.8	1,007	26.4
STATE OF RESIDENCE AT TIME LPR STATUS OBTAINED						
California	102,582	12.4	201,340	10.7	279,461	11.4
New York	109,771	31.1	144,405	22.8	185,919	21.5
Florida	27,561	15.5	44,937	15.7	82,019	13.8
Texas	20,704	22.8	50,793	29.3	56,280	19.9
Other	204,542	43.0	305,017	38.2	425,854	28.9

* Compared to reported state of residence when LPR status obtained.

† Fiscal years 1973–1975 are measured July 1st to June 30th. Additionally, naturalization data for Fiscal year 1977 are not available.

‡ The 1993–1995 cohort includes 40,869 beneficiaries of the Chinese Student Protection Act.

Subsection totals may not sum to column totals due to the omission of categories, as well as unknown or missing data.

Source: U.S. Department of Homeland Security legal immigrant data (1973 to 1995) and naturalization data (1973 to 2012).