

Characteristics of Employment-Based Legal Permanent Residents: 2004

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Hundreds of thousands of immigrants become legal permanent residents (LPRs) of the United States every year. Some of these are employment-based immigrants who were granted permanent status because their job skills met an employer's need. This Office of Immigration Statistics *Fact Sheet* provides definitions for terms related to LPRs and descriptive characteristics of persons who became employment-based LPRs in the United States during 2004.

The data presented in this fact sheet were derived from approved applications for LPR status that are maintained in the Computer Linked Application Information Management System (CLAIMS) of the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) of the Department of Homeland Security.

DEFINING "LEGAL PERMANENT RESIDENT"

A legal permanent resident (LPR) is a foreign national who has been granted lawful permanent residence in the United States. LPRs, more commonly known as "green card" recipients, are authorized to live and work permanently in the United States.

The immigration laws of the U.S. government give high priority for LPR status to immediate relatives of U.S. citizens. Preference categories with annual limits are used to designate other priority groups for LPR status. These include: 1) family-sponsored preferences – sponsored by certain family members, annual limit of 226,000 to 480,000; 2) employment-based preferences – sponsored by employers, annual limit of 140,000 plus unused family-sponsored preferences in the previous year; and 3) diversity – nationals of countries with low rates of immigration to the United States, annual limit of 50,000 in 2004. Other major categories of foreign nationals who may be eligible for LPR status include refugees and asylees.

Employment-Based LPRs

An LPR who obtained a "green card" based on an opening for employment is referred to as an employment-based LPR. In most cases, the employer must first obtain certification from the Department of Labor that U.S. workers won't be adversely affected, and that none are qualified, available, and willing to accept the

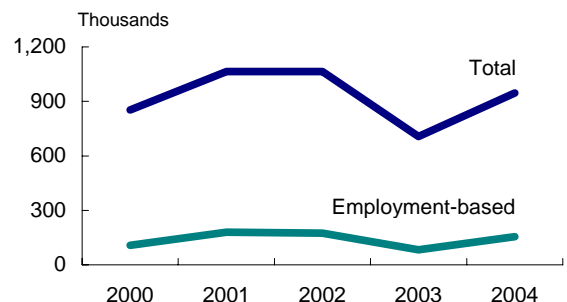
job at prevailing wages. Then, an immigrant worker petition (Form I-140) must be approved by USCIS before the person may obtain a visa abroad and enter the United States as an LPR. Individuals already living in the United States may apply for an adjustment of status to LPR. This category includes individuals applying to work permanently within the United States, as well as their spouses and children.

The term *principal employment-based LPR* refers to the worker, while *dependent* includes the spouse and children of the worker.

Employment-Based Preference Categories. There are five categories within the employment-based preference, including:

- **First Preference: Priority Workers.** Includes those with extraordinary ability, outstanding professors and researchers, managers, and executives subject to international transfer to the United States.
- **Second Preference: Professionals with Advanced Degrees.** Includes those with exceptional ability, advanced degree professionals, and physicians to practice in underserved areas of the United States.
- **Third Preference: Other Professionals, Skilled, and Needed Unskilled Workers.** Includes professionals with a bachelor's degree, skilled workers, and unskilled workers.

Figure 1.
Total and Employment-Based LPR Flow to the United States: Fiscal Year 2000 to 2004



Source: U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Computer Linked Application Information Management System (CLAIMS), Legal Immigrant Data, Fiscal Year 2000 to 2004.



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- *Fourth Preference: Special Immigrants.* Includes religious workers and employees or former employees of the U.S. government abroad.
- *Fifth Preference: Employment Creation.* LPRs admitted as immigrant investors.

DEMOGRAPHIC DESCRIPTIVES

In 2004, a total of 946,142 persons became LPRs of the United States, and 16 percent of those were employment-based immigrants. Figure 1 illustrates the flow of employment-based LPRs relative to the total LPR flow from 2000 to 2004. Employment preferences typically account for only 10 to 17 percent of the LPR flow in a given year.

Table 1 compares the demographic characteristics of all persons who became LPRs during 2004 to those of employment-based LPRs. Five out of six employment-based principals were between 25 and 44 years of age, while the age distribution for total employment-based LPRs more closely resembled that for all LPRs. Males represented a larger proportion of employment-based LPRs (52 percent) than all LPRs (46 percent). This pattern was more pronounced for employment-based principals (72 percent male). More LPRs come from Mexico than any other single country; however, more employment-based LPRs originated in India, China, or the Philippines.

Occupation of Employment-Based LPRs

The occupations of employment-based principal LPRs are displayed by the major categories used by the U.S. Census Bureau (see Table 2). Nearly three-fourths (72 percent) were employed in management, professional, and related occupations. Computer/math scientists and technicians and engineers represented 17 percent and 15 percent, respectively. Approximately 6 percent of all employment-based principals worked in service occupations.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Visit the Office of Immigration Statistics Web page at uscis.gov/graphics/shared/statistics.

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Table 1.

Demographic Characteristics of All LPRs and Employment-Based Principal LPRs: Fiscal Year 2004

			Employment-based					
			Total		Principals		Dependents	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Age								
Total	946,142	100.0	155,330	100.0	72,550	100.0	82,780	100.0
0 to 14	137,741	14.6	23,048	14.8	36	--	23,012	27.8
15 to 24	164,347	17.4	14,274	9.2	662	0.9	13,612	16.4
25 to 34	268,327	28.4	55,344	35.6	32,254	44.5	23,090	27.9
35 to 44	183,655	19.4	44,922	28.9	28,281	39.0	16,641	20.1
45 to 54	94,884	10.0	14,353	9.2	9,036	12.5	5,317	6.4
55 to 64	53,866	5.7	3,011	1.9	2,019	2.8	992	1.2
65 and over	43,282	4.6	376	0.2	262	0.4	114	0.1
Unknown	40	--	2	--	--	--	2	--
Sex								
Male	430,662	45.5	80,289	51.7	52,417	72.2	27,872	33.7
Female	515,314	54.5	75,025	48.3	20,125	27.7	54,900	66.3
Unknown	166	--	16	--	8	--	8	--
Marital Status								
Single	346,185	36.6	52,819	34.0	17,942	24.7	34,877	42.1
Married	561,886	59.4	99,865	64.3	52,196	71.9	47,669	57.6
Other	35,770	3.8	2,278	1.5	2,246	3.1	32	--
Unknown	2,301	0.2	368	0.2	166	0.2	202	0.2
Country of Birth								
India	70,116	7.4	38,443	24.7	18,539	25.6	19,904	24.0
China	51,156	5.4	15,583	10.0	7,435	10.2	8,148	9.8
Philippines	57,827	6.1	15,497	10.0	7,398	10.2	8,099	9.8
Korea	19,678	2.1	8,656	5.6	3,269	4.5	5,387	6.5
Mexico	175,364	18.5	7,225	4.7	3,102	4.3	4,123	5.0
Canada	15,567	1.6	6,694	4.3	2,511	3.5	4,183	5.1
United Kingdom	14,915	1.6	6,437	4.1	2,945	4.1	3,492	4.2
Brazil	10,504	1.1	3,605	2.3	1,675	2.3	1,930	2.3
Pakistan	12,086	1.3	2,591	1.7	1,161	1.6	1,430	1.7
Taiwan	8,961	0.9	2,295	1.5	1,262	1.7	1,033	1.2
Other	509,968	53.9	48,304	31.1	23,253	32.1	25,051	30.3

Figure is zero or rounds to 0.0. Source: U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Computer Linked Application Information Management System (CLAIMS), Legal Immigrant Data, Fiscal Year 2000 to 2004.

Table 2.

Occupation of All Employment-Based Principal LPRs: Fiscal Year 2004

Occupation	Number	Percent
Total	72,550	100.0
Management, professional and related	52,621	72.5
Computer/math scientists and technicians	12,377	17.1
Engineers	10,900	15.0
Executive, administrative, managerial	9,725	13.4
Nurses	6,625	9.1
Physical and life scientists	3,136	4.3
Other	9,858	18.7
Service occupations	4,285	5.9
Production, transportation, material moving	2,008	2.8
Sales and office	1,479	2.0
Construction, extraction, maintenance	1,146	1.6
Farming, fishing, and forestry	196	0.3
Military	11	--
Other (including no occupation)	944	1.3
Unknown	9,860	13.6

-- Figure rounds to 0.0. Source: U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Computer Linked Application Information Management System (CLAIMS), Legal Immigrant Data, Fiscal Year 2000 to 2004.