

Mapping Trends in Naturalizations: 1980 to 2003

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Every year hundreds of thousands of legal permanent residents (LPRs) become naturalized citizens. To obtain citizenship, LPRs must fulfill certain age, residence, and admissions requirements. Once naturalized, they have nearly all of the same privileges, rights, and responsibilities as native-born citizens.

Where do the newly naturalized live in the United States? The geographic distribution of persons naturalizing is concentrated in just six states, including California, New York, Florida, Texas, Illinois, and New Jersey. Since 1980, the proportion of the total newly naturalized living in these six states has increased. In general, the residency pattern of persons naturalizing mirrors that of new LPRs but lags in time due to the five year residency requirement for naturalization for most LPRs. Additionally, the residence of new LPRs and new citizens will differ to some degree because the propensity to naturalize and the geographic distribution of LPRs vary by country of origin¹. This Office of Immigration Statistics *Working Paper* presents a visual analysis of the state of residence of newly naturalized citizens for the period 1980 to 2003.

METHODS

Data for this report were obtained from applications for naturalization (N-400), which are maintained in administrative case tracking systems of the Department of Homeland Security. Information on the state of residence comes from the mailing address provided by the applicants.

Naturalization flows by state of residence were tabulated for calendar years 1980 to 1989, 1990 to 1999, and 2000 to 2003. These flows represent the total number of persons who naturalized during each time period, not the average population of naturalized citizens during each time period. The year 1980 was used as the starting point for the tabulations because

this was the beginning of the first full decade in which automated records for naturalizations were available. The analysis is based on the naturalization flow to the 50 states and the District of Columbia. The percent of the total naturalization flow for each state and the District of Columbia was calculated for each time period.

Map categories showing the naturalized percentage flow for each state were initially selected using the Natural Breaks method, also known as Jenks optimization. This procedure creates classes where the differences between categories are maximized while minimizing differences within classes. The maps were then compared, and a standard set of proportional categories was selected to facilitate comparisons.

RESULTS

State Flows: 1980 to 2003

Between 1980 and 1989, more than 2 million persons naturalized (see Table 1). Five states were home to almost 64 percent of the total naturalized flow (see Table 2). The state with the highest percentage of naturalized citizens was California (28 percent), followed by New York (17 percent), Florida (6.3 percent), New Jersey (6.1 percent), and Texas (6.0 percent). States ranked sixth through tenth in the number of persons naturalizing received 14 percent of the total flow and included Illinois, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, Hawaii, and Maryland. When combined, these ten states represented almost 78 percent of newly naturalized citizens. An additional 8 percent of the total flow was represented by states ranked 11th through 15th and included Michigan, Virginia, Washington, Ohio, and Connecticut. When combined, these 15 states accounted for 86 percent of the naturalization flow from 1980 to 1989. The map in Figure 1 shows the proportion of the flow of newly naturalized citizens for each state as a percent of the total flow from 1980 to 1989.

Between 1990 and 1999, 4.7 million persons naturalized (see Table 1). This was more than double the number of LPRs who naturalized during the 1980s. The increase in naturalizations during the 1990s was due to several factors. A mandatory permanent resident card

¹ For more information on the trends in the geographic settlement patterns of new LPRs, see J. Simanski (2005), *Mapping Trends in U.S. Legal Immigration: 1980 to 2003*. The report is available on the OIS web site at <http://uscis.gov/graphics/shared/statistics/publications/TrendsRpt1980-2004.pdf>.



**Homeland
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Table 1.
Naturalization Flow by State of Residence: 1980 to 1989, 1990 to 1999, and 2000 to 2003
 (Ranked by 1980 to 1989 data)

State of Residence	1980 to 1989		1990 to 1999		2000 to 2003	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total	2,099,484	100.0	4,658,490	100.0	2,311,711	100.0
California	592,859	28.2	1,610,933	34.6	741,939	31.8
New York	358,863	17.1	747,162	16.0	387,116	16.6
Florida	132,002	6.3	411,465	8.8	197,383	8.5
New Jersey	128,737	6.1	227,704	4.9	106,283	4.6
Texas	126,905	6.0	332,534	7.1	162,934	7.0
Illinois	102,289	4.9	227,749	4.9	122,740	5.3
Massachusetts	57,427	2.7	110,690	2.4	67,944	2.9
Pennsylvania	48,104	2.3	79,867	1.7	40,318	1.7
Hawaii	45,721	2.2	46,820	1.0	11,126	0.5
Maryland	41,731	2.0	67,349	1.4	39,189	1.7
Michigan	40,584	1.9	68,820	1.5	36,391	1.6
Virginia	36,904	1.8	82,194	1.8	40,668	1.7
Washington	36,610	1.7	86,862	1.9	44,468	1.9
Ohio	32,398	1.5	40,716	0.9	18,483	0.8
Connecticut	30,110	1.4	63,513	1.4	22,201	1.0
Arizona	22,714	1.1	42,372	0.9	31,281	1.3
Colorado	19,213	0.9	35,848	0.8	20,798	0.9
Minnesota	18,420	0.9	24,925	0.5	22,429	1.0
Georgia	18,353	0.9	53,789	1.2	37,878	1.6
Louisiana	15,654	0.7	22,010	0.5	5,953	0.3
Oregon	14,654	0.7	21,149	0.5	17,177	0.7
North Carolina	13,739	0.7	21,721	0.5	25,100	1.1
Missouri	13,014	0.6	14,582	0.3	11,575	0.5
Wisconsin	11,832	0.6	10,631	0.2	13,481	0.6
Nevada	11,109	0.5	25,540	0.5	12,925	0.6
Indiana	11,085	0.5	15,339	0.3	10,569	0.5
Oklahoma	10,815	0.5	12,251	0.3	5,882	0.3
Kansas	10,794	0.5	13,290	0.3	7,803	0.3
Rhode Island	10,705	0.5	17,528	0.4	4,709	0.2
Utah	8,274	0.4	11,951	0.3	6,675	0.3
Tennessee	7,556	0.4	11,306	0.2	7,901	0.3
South Carolina	6,983	0.3	9,473	0.2	4,234	0.2
New Mexico	6,473	0.3	5,904	0.1	3,229	0.1
Iowa	5,846	0.3	4,146	0.1	4,576	0.2
Alabama	5,754	0.3	8,099	0.2	4,208	0.2
Alaska	5,505	0.3	5,892	0.1	3,082	0.1
Kentucky	5,038	0.2	5,606	0.1	4,794	0.2
District of Columbia	4,672	0.2	11,068	0.2	4,027	0.2
Nebraska	3,903	0.2	14,014	0.3	5,136	0.2
Arkansas	3,663	0.2	3,700	0.1	1,786	0.1
New Hampshire	3,023	0.1	5,456	0.1	2,960	0.1
Mississippi	2,804	0.1	3,919	0.1	1,704	0.1
Maine	2,710	0.1	3,962	0.1	1,719	0.1
Delaware	2,705	0.1	5,462	0.1	3,136	0.1
Idaho	2,497	0.1	4,237	0.1	912	-
West Virginia	2,326	0.1	2,017	-	980	-
North Dakota	1,671	0.1	1,304	-	774	-
Vermont	1,484	0.1	2,508	0.1	1,524	0.1
Montana	1,209	0.1	1,172	-	248	-
Wyoming	1,050	0.1	1,024	-	531	-
South Dakota	993	-	917	-	832	-

Source: U.S. Department of Homeland Security, administrative data (N-400 Naturalization Application)

(“green card”) replacement program led some LPRs to naturalize rather than remain in LPR status. Additionally, beginning in 1994, the first of the 2.7 million immigrants legalized under the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) of 1986 became eligible to naturalize. Legislative efforts during the mid-1990s restricting public benefits for non-citizens also led LPRs to naturalize.

Seventy-one percent of the 4.7 million newly naturalized citizens were concentrated in just five states (see Table 2). These five states were California (35 percent), New York (16 percent), Florida (8.8 percent), Texas (7.1 percent), and Illinois (4.9 percent). States ranked sixth through tenth received almost 13 percent of the total flow. These states included New Jersey, Massachusetts, Washington, Virginia, and Pennsylvania. When combined, these ten states represented 84 percent of the total flow. States ranked 11th through 15th accounted for 6 percent of newly naturalized citizens. These states included Michigan, Maryland, Connecticut, Georgia, and Hawaii. These 15 states accounted for 90 percent of the total flow between 1990 and 1999. The map in Figure 2 shows the proportion of the newly naturalized citizen flow for each state as a percent of the total flow from 1990 to 1999.

Of the 2.3 million persons who naturalized between 2000 and 2003, 69 percent resided in just five states (see Table 2). California was the leading state of residence, receiving almost 32 percent of the total flow. New York (17 percent), Florida (8.5 percent), Texas (7.0 percent), and Illinois (5.3 percent) were the next highest ranked states. States ranked sixth through tenth received almost 13 percent of newly naturalized citizens and included New Jersey, Massachusetts, Washington, Virginia, and Pennsylvania. When combined, these ten states accounted for almost 82 percent of the total flow. States ranked 11th through 15th were home to 7.3 percent of the total flow and included Maryland, Georgia, Michigan, Arizona, and North Carolina. The top 15 states accounted for 89 percent of all newly

Table 2.

Naturalization Flow by Rank: 1980 to 1989, 1990 to 1999, and 2000 to 2003

State ranking	1980 to 1989			1990 to 1999			2000 to 2003		
	States	Number of naturalizations	Percent of total naturalizations	States	Number of naturalizations	Percent of total naturalizations	States	Number of naturalizations	Percent of total naturalizations
1 to 5	CA, NY, FL, NJ, TX	1,339,366	63.8	CA, NY, FL, TX, IL	3,329,843	71.5	CA, NY, FL, TX, IL	1,612,112	69.1
6 to 10	IL, MA, PA, HI, MD	295,272	14.1	NJ, MA, WA, VA, PA	587,317	12.6	NJ, MA, WA, VA, PA	299,681	12.9
11 to 15	MI, VA, WA, OH, CT	176,606	8.4	MI, MD, CT, GA, HI	300,291	6.4	MD, GA, MI, AZ, NC	169,839	7.3
16 to 20	AZ, CO, MN, GA, LA	94,354	4.5	AZ, OH, CO, NV, MN	169,401	3.6	MN, CT, CO, OH, OR	101,088	4.3
21 to 51	All other states	193,886	9.2	All other states	271,638	5.8	All other states	148,991	6.4

Source: U.S. Department of Homeland Security, administrative data (N-400 Naturalization Application)

naturalized citizens. The map in Figure 3 shows the proportion of the flow of newly naturalized citizens for each state as a percent of the total flow from 2000 to 2003.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Visit the Office of Immigration Statistics Web page at <http://www.dhs.gov/immigrationstatistics> or <http://uscis.gov/graphics/shared/statistics>.

NEXT STEPS

Future analysis will examine trends in immigrant flows by metropolitan area as well as update the trends of naturalization flows.

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Figure 1. Persons Naturalizing by State of Residence: 1980 to 1989

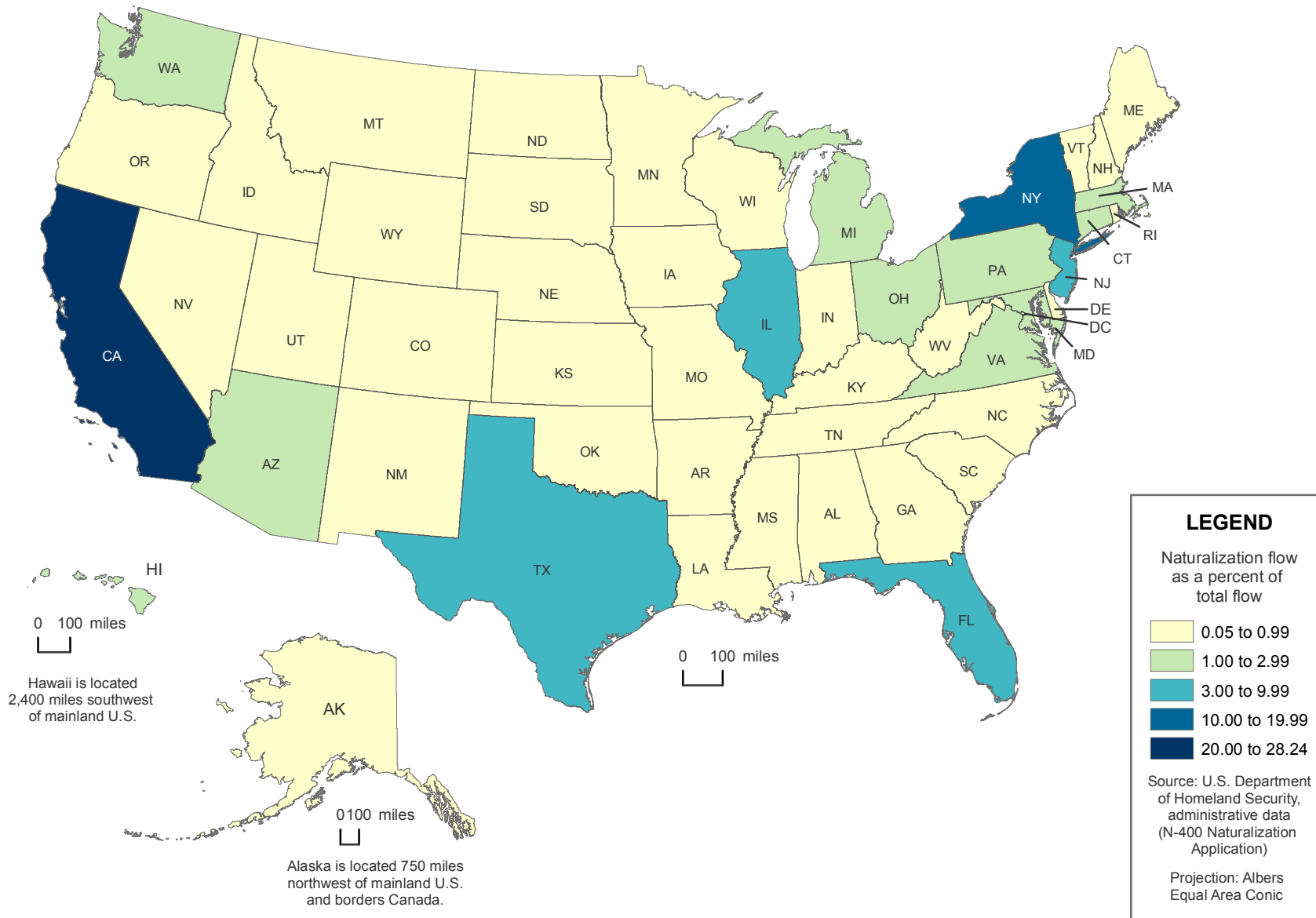


Figure 2. Persons Naturalizing by State of Residence: 1990 to 1999

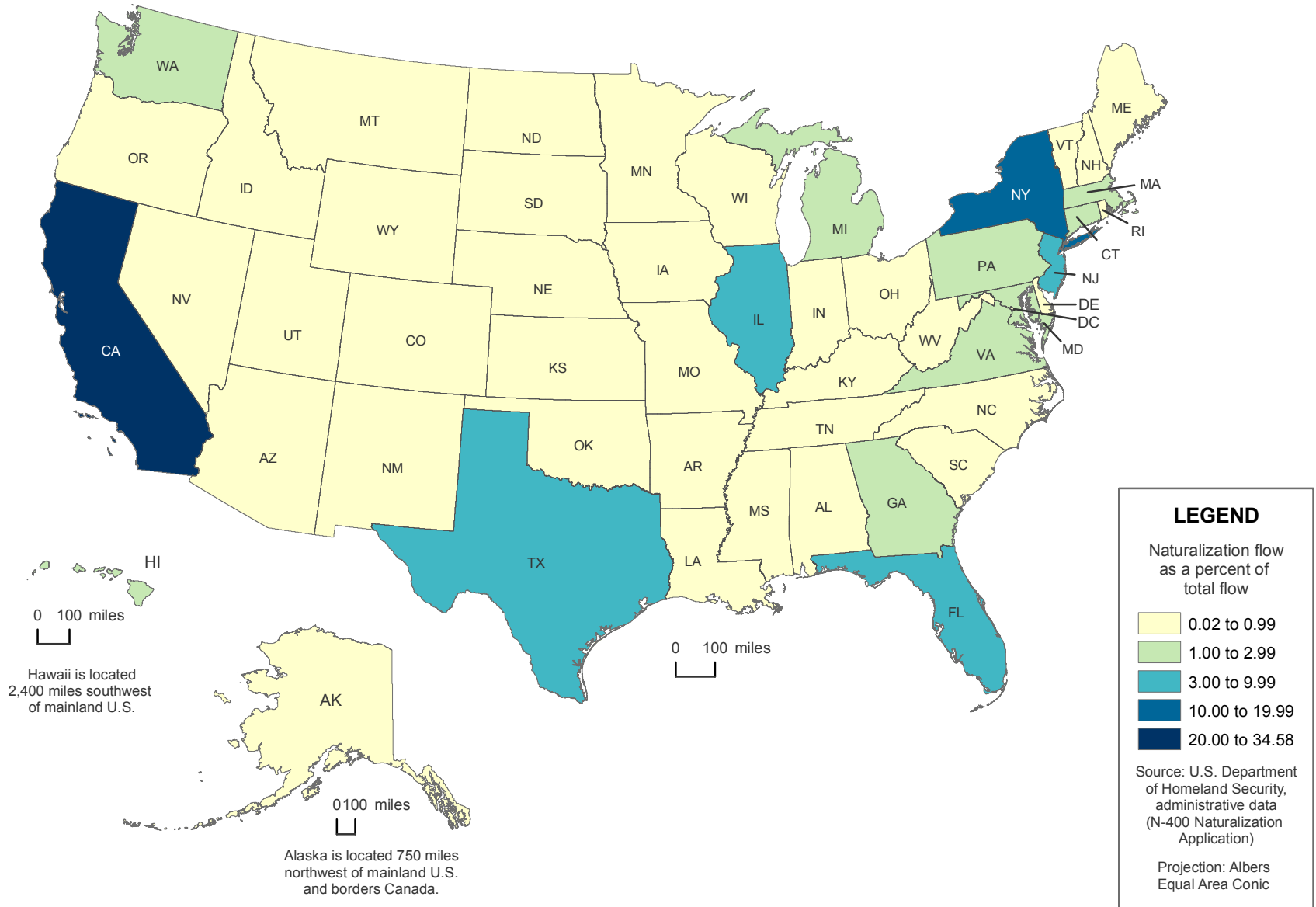


Figure 3. Persons Naturalizing by State of Residence: 2000 to 2003

