

FWD.us Methodology for Estimating the Immigration Status of 2024 U.S. Immigrant Population

FWD.us’s methodology for estimating the size and characteristics of U.S. immigration status groups is based on Dr. Phillip Connor of Princeton University’s detailed methodology for the immigration statuses of all noncitizen respondents in the 2024 American Community Survey (ACS). A more detailed methodology can be found at phillip-connor.com. During his career, Dr. Connor has worked for the Pew Research Center, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, and most recently as senior demographer for FWD.us.

Dr. Connor’s methodology follows a similar process taken by leading research organizations (such as the Pew Research Center, the Center for Migration Studies, and the Migration Policy Institute) that also estimate the immigration status of immigrants in the U.S., including the undocumented and temporarily protected population.

Dr. Connor’s methodology first follows a series of logical edits, assigning selected noncitizens with likely lawful immigration statuses, including lawful permanent residency and nonimmigrant (temporary) visa holders. The remainder is considered to be the broader undocumented population, including those with temporary protections. Dr. Connor’s methodology has been peer-reviewed and can be found at the International Migration Review.

Lawful Permanent Residents (LPRs). The first step is to identify LPRs, including those who entered the U.S. before 1982; have been married to a U.S. citizen spouse for 13 years or longer; were born in Cuba and entered the U.S. before 2017; were born in top U.S. refugee resettlement countries; work in occupations that require lawful status due to official licensure; are veterans or government workers; or use public health insurance and/or other social welfare programs. The total number of respondents in the ACS with LPR meets the expected national population target in 2024 using active LPR status figures from the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) data.

Nonimmigrants (temporary immigrants). The second step is to identify all nonimmigrant (temporary) visa immigrant holders, including diplomats, international students (including Optional Practical Training - OPT - participants), H-1B specialty occupation visa holders, H-2A agricultural workers, H-2B non-agricultural workers, other temporary worker visa holders (J, L, O, P, R, and TN), as well as all nonimmigrant dependents (spouses and children less than 21 years of age). The resulting total nonimmigrant population estimate in the ACS is similar to that provided by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS).

Undocumented and temporarily protected population. The number of undocumented immigrants is the residual of *lawful* noncitizens—LPRs and nonimmigrants assigned above—from the *total* number of noncitizens living in the U.S., per the 2024 ACS, after initial population reweighting for overall undercounting in the ACS. The data are further reweighted to account for recent arrivals, including those

paroled into the U.S. out of parole programs like Operation Allies (Afghanistan), Uniting for Ukraine, the CHNV parole process (Cuba-Haiti-Nicaragua-Venezuela); or permitted to enter the U.S. via the southern border, including through the CBP One process. Necessary adjustments by nationality and year of entry are made after comparisons to [DHS data](#). In all, the resulting total number of undocumented and temporarily protected immigrants estimated to live in the United States in 2024, at more than 15 million, is in line with recent estimates by other organizations who pinned it to around 14 million a year earlier in 2023.

Temporarily protected groups, a subset of the broader undocumented population, include those actively adjusting their status to LPR; Temporary Protected Status (TPS) holders; Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) recipients; those with parole; those in the process of adjusting to a nonimmigrant status (e.g. U or T visas) or in the Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS) application backlog or visa queue; and those waiting for an asylum decision. An undocumented individual can have multiple protected statuses, such as TPS and parole, or parole and a pending asylum claim. The number of temporarily protected individuals were more than 6 million as of December 31, 2024, providing a view near the end of the Biden administration or near the start of the second Trump administration.