

# **Immigration 101: A Fact Sheet**

All facts/statistics accurate as of 6/2019

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1. Global Migration / Diaspora – from everywhere to everywhere
  - a. There are close to 260 million international migrants in the world today
    - i. Over 3% of the world’s population is on the move
    - ii. 1 in every 30 individuals in the world today is living outside of their country of birth
    - iii. If all international migrants lived in 1 country it would be the 5<sup>th</sup> most populous country on the globe
  - b. 70.8 million have been forcibly displaced, 25.9 million refugees (over half under 18)
    - i. In today’s world, nearly 1 person is forcibly displaced every 2 seconds as a result of conflict or persecution.
  
2. Immigration in the United States
  - a. Foreign-born residents made up 13.7 percent of the U.S. population in 2017.
    - i. 1 in 7 US residents is foreign born
  - b. That puts the proportion of immigrants in the United States at the highest since 1910, when they made up 14.7 percent of the population
  - c. The current Foreign-Born Population in the US is over 45 million, of this total amount:
    - i. 22 million are naturalized US citizens
    - ii. 12 million are legal permanent residents
    - iii. 2 million temporary lawful residents
    - iv. 10 million are undocumented
      1. Over 45% are visa overstays (legally entered the United States)
      2. Over 66% have lived in the United States over 10 years
  - d. Immigrants and their U.S.-born children now number approximately 89.4 million people, or 28 percent of the overall U.S. population
  
3. The historical pathways
  - a. Before 1882, the pathway was simply to arrive at the nation’s borders
  - b. National Origins Act of 1924 – greatly restricted immigration and set immigration quotas based on previous census data (based on a nativist perspective that sought to restrict changing demographics)
    - i. Immigrants from central, northern, and western Europe were accepted, but restrictions on those from southern and eastern Europe, Asia, Africa, or Latin America
    - ii. A summary of the “line” then (think Ellis Island) - 3-5 hours, 5,000 unskilled workers per day, 29 questions, physical examination, and individuals entered as a resident
  - c. 1965 Hart-Cellar Act - new federal immigration system that replaced a nationality-based preference system with one based on family connections and employable skills (finally open to individuals from Asia and Africa)
  - d. 1986 IRCA – its major provisions stipulated legalization of undocumented aliens who had been continuously unlawfully present since 1982, legalization of certain agricultural workers, sanctions for employers who knowingly hire undocumented workers, and increased enforcement at U.S. borders
  
4. The 4 current pathways – Family-based, Employment-based, Humanitarian, & Diversity Lottery
5. Family based immigration - admitted either as immediate relatives of U.S. citizens or through the family preference system which is a two-step process (first, do you have the right relationships and second, are you admissible)
  - a. Prospective immigrants under the immediate relatives’ category are: spouses of USC; unmarried minor children of USC (under 21-years-old); and parents of USC (petitioner must be at least 21-years-old to petition for a parent).
  - b. A limited number of visas are available every year under the family preference system: adult children (married and unmarried) and brothers and sisters of U.S. citizens (petitioner must be at least 21-years-old to petition for a sibling), and spouses and unmarried children (minor and adult) of LPRs.
  - c. Only 480,000 family-based immigrant visas per year means the preference categories have to wait until a visa is available – currently that wait for some categories can be over 25 years

6. Employment based immigration – the focus is on extraordinary abilities, an advanced degree, or an ability to invest
  - a. Only 140,000 visas available per year. This number includes the immigrants plus their eligible spouses and minor unmarried children, meaning the actual number of employment-based immigrants is actually less
  - b. Only 5,000 unskilled workers per year
7. Humanitarian based immigration - Refuge/Asylee – well-founded fear of persecution due to race, membership in a particular social group, political opinion, religion, or national origin.
  - a. 70.8 million forcibly displaced people worldwide – that is 1 out of every 106 people
  - b. 25.9 million refugees in the world today (UNHCR)
  - c. USA used to accept 85,000 per year; currently the ceiling is an all-time low of 30,000 and last year the USA only accepted 22,491 of the 50,000 ceiling
  - d. Asylee – All time high of those seeking asylum (especially from the Northern Triangle), all time high of family units and unaccompanied minors, all time high of those passing credible fear interview at the border, and all time high of those being denied for asylum (over 65% of asylum cases are denied – much higher rates for Mexico [86% denial rate] and Northern Triangle [78%-82% denial rate])
8. Diversity Lottery - 1 in 300 chance but only for “under-represented” countries
9. Immigrants and the economy
  - a. It’s a popular talking point that immigrants drain the economy
  - b. Things to think about:
    - i. Immigrants fill need niches on both ends – both highly skilled and unskilled
    - ii. Most undocumented immigrants do pay taxes (3 out of 4 pay payroll taxes) but are ineligible for almost all public benefits.
    - iii. Undocumented immigrants pay over \$12 billion into Social Security each year (based on a report Chief Actuary of the Social Security Administration)
10. Immigrants and the community
  - a. In every major comprehensive study, it has been shown that immigrants are less likely to commit crimes or be imprisoned than native-born US citizens
    - i. These studies have shown that neighborhoods with larger immigrant populations have less crime
  - b. Latino immigrants are more likely to attend church weekly than the average native-born US citizen
  - c. While many first-generation immigrants may struggle with the English language, by the second generation almost all immigrants speak English well (including 88% of second-generation Latino immigrants)
11. Immigration – Systemic Issues
  - a. Immigrants can’t just “fix” their status when the system itself is broken
  - b. Immigration is a complex, changing system that’s hard to navigate at countless levels – in many states, undocumented immigrants can’t renew their driver’s licenses since the laws changed in 2001
  - c. Obstacles like the 10-year bar: If you Entered Without Inspection, in order to receive a visa you have to go through Consular Processing; when an immigrant crosses the border to return to their country of origin, if they have been unlawfully present for more than 1 year, they are barred from re-entry for 10 years
12. What can you do? How to commit to hope, grace, & reconciliation through strong, persistent, & determined action
  - a. Become aware: educate yourself and teach others
  - b. Diversify your own experience
    - i. Assess your “Last 5” (books, movies, people you’ve invited over to your house, etc)
    - ii. Are your “Last 5” all similar to you or are you listening to, learning from, and experiencing more from individuals and families who are different from you?
  - c. Learn someone else’s story and amplify immigrant voices
    - i. Are you a voice for the voiceless or are you simply not listening?
  - d. Become a change agent in your sphere of influence
    - i. Ask: What social capital do I have access to? In what ways can I spend that social capital for the sake of justice?
  - e. Practice Biblical hospitality (philo-xenos, love-immigrants) – spread welcome
    - i. Understand the power of a table and the power of a shared meal