

Characteristics of People Who Naturalized Between FY 2009 and FY 2014



U.S. Citizenship and
Immigration Services

Office of Policy and Strategy
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OVERVIEW

Over 4.2 million people became U.S. citizens between fiscal years (FY) 2009 and 2014.¹ This fact sheet summarizes data from U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) naturalization records and the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey to provide information on the demographic and economic characteristics of these new citizens.²

Appendix tables 1 through 8 show region and country of birth, years in lawful permanent resident (LPR) status prior to naturalization, age, gender, marital status, and class of admission to the United States. Table 9 presents estimates of educational attainment and median income.

On average, nearly 710,000 individuals naturalized each year in the FY 2009-2014 period, with annual totals ranging from 619,913 to 779,982. The yearly number of naturalizations depends both on operational factors, such as application processing times, and other factors such as the number of LPRs eligible to naturalize at any given time, and their motivation to apply and ability to pay the associated fees.³

REGION AND COUNTRY OF BIRTH

People from Asia comprised the largest share of naturalizations, followed by North America, the Caribbean, and Europe. Compared to the FY 2000-2008 period, the proportion of people naturalizing that were born in Africa and South America increased, while the proportion born in Asia and North America decreased slightly.

The top five countries of birth were Mexico, India, the Philippines, China, and the Dominican Republic.⁴ Starting in FY 2012, the Dominican Republic replaced Vietnam as the fifth largest origin country of citizens who naturalized in the FY 2009-2014 period. The proportion of individuals born outside of the top five countries of origin increased slightly compared to the FY 2000-2008 period, suggesting that the origins of naturalized citizens are becoming more diverse.

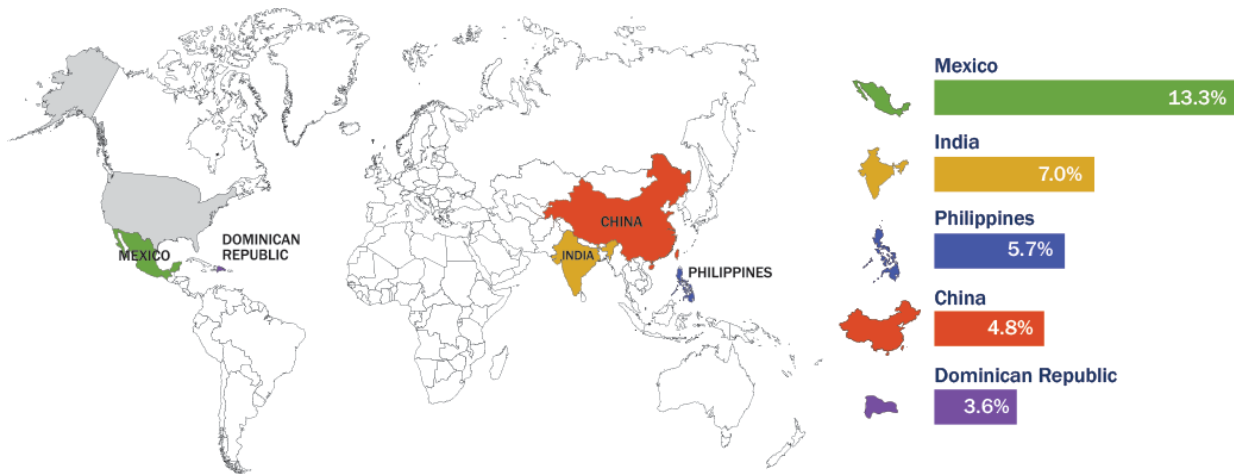
¹ The federal FY begins on October 1 and ends on September 30. For example, FY 2014 was October 1, 2013, through September 30, 2014. The number of naturalizations excludes individuals under 18 years of age, as they derive citizenship when a parent naturalizes.

² This is an update to the fact sheet produced by the Department of Homeland Security's Office of Immigration Statistics on characteristics of people who naturalized between FYs 1980 and 2008. This updated fact sheet also includes data on naturalized citizens' marital status and class of admission.

³ Filing Form N-400, Application for Naturalization, costs \$595, plus an \$85 biometrics fee where applicable. The filing fee may be waived, if the applicant can demonstrate an inability to pay. There is no charge for filing the N-400 through service in the U.S. Armed Forces. Updated information about Form N-400 can be found at: <https://www.uscis.gov/n-400>.

⁴ This order was generally consistent except in 2012.

Map and Graph 1 Leading Countries of Birth (Percent of Total)

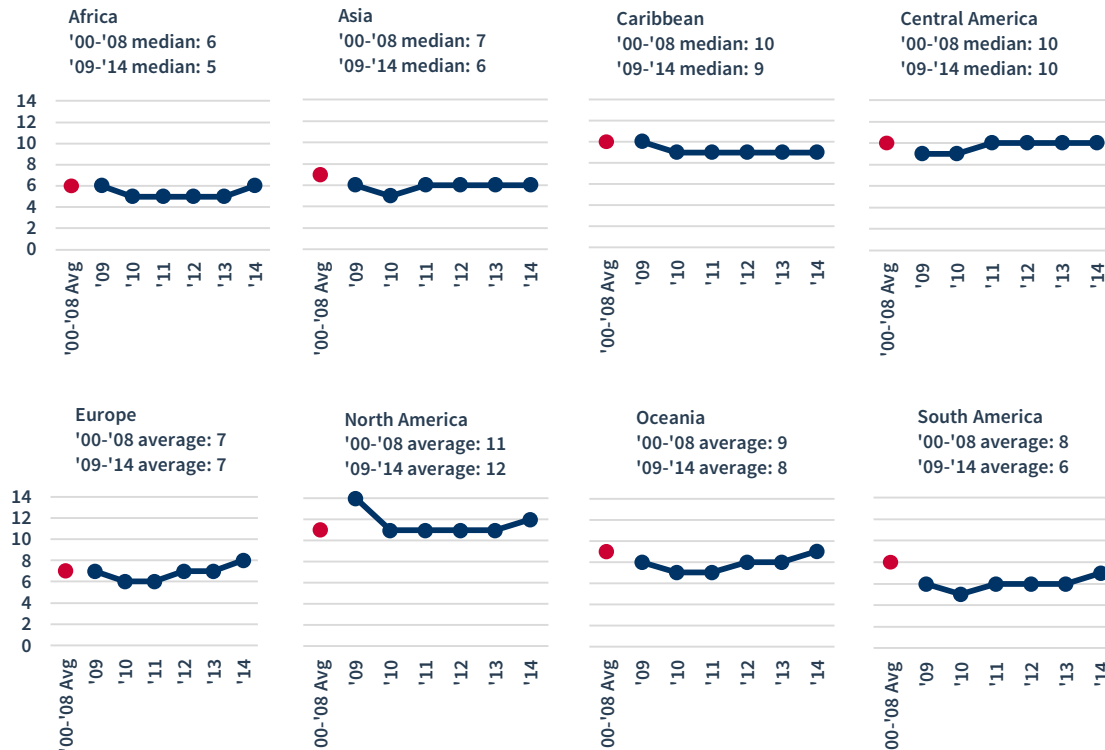


MEDIAN YEARS IN LAWFUL PERMANENT RESIDENT STATUS

For everyone who naturalized between FY 2009 and FY 2014, the median length of time spent in LPR status ranged from 6-7 years – down from a median of 8 years in FY 2000-2008. African- and Asian-born immigrants spent less time as LPRs (5-6 years), while those born in the Caribbean and Central America spent more time (9-10 years). Immigrants from North America (Canada and Mexico) tended to wait the longest (11-14 years) before naturalizing.

Graph 2

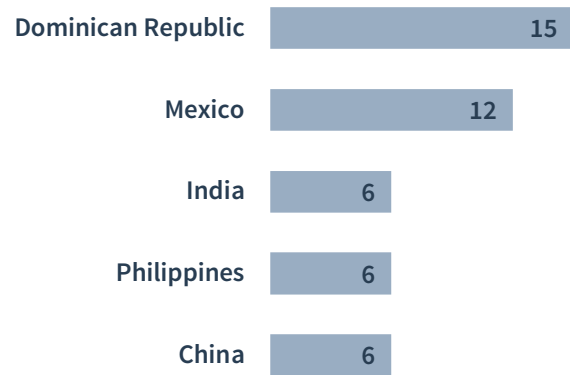
Median Years in Lawful Permanent Resident Status by Region of Birth



Compared to the FY 2000-2008 period, the median number of years in LPR status stayed the same or decreased for immigrants from four of the top five countries of birth: Mexico, India, the Philippines, and China. People from the Dominican Republic, the fifth-largest origin of naturalizing citizens between FY 2009 and FY 2014, spent more time in LPR status (15 years) than Dominicans who naturalized between FY 2000 and FY 2008 (13 years).

Graph 3

Median Years in Lawful Permanent Resident Status by Leading Countries of Birth, FY 2009-2014

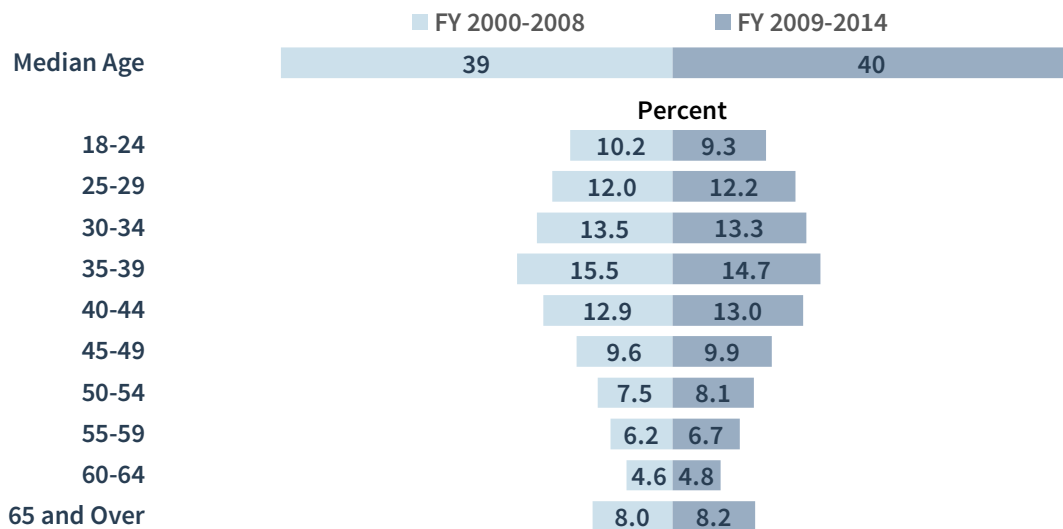


AGE, GENDER, AND MARITAL STATUS

The median age at naturalization was 39 in FYs 2010 and 2011, and 40 in FYs 2009, 2012, 2013, and 2014. This is similar to the median age (39) during the FY 2000-2008 period. The prime age range for naturalization was 25-49. However, almost 30 percent of new citizens were age 50 or over.

Graph 4

Age at Naturalization



The proportion of females in the naturalizing population was about 10 percentage points higher than the proportion of males. This difference is mainly because approximately 100,000 more females than males attain LPR status each year, mostly as immediate relatives of U.S. citizens. Thus, more females become eligible to naturalize. Most (65 percent) of the individuals who naturalized were married.

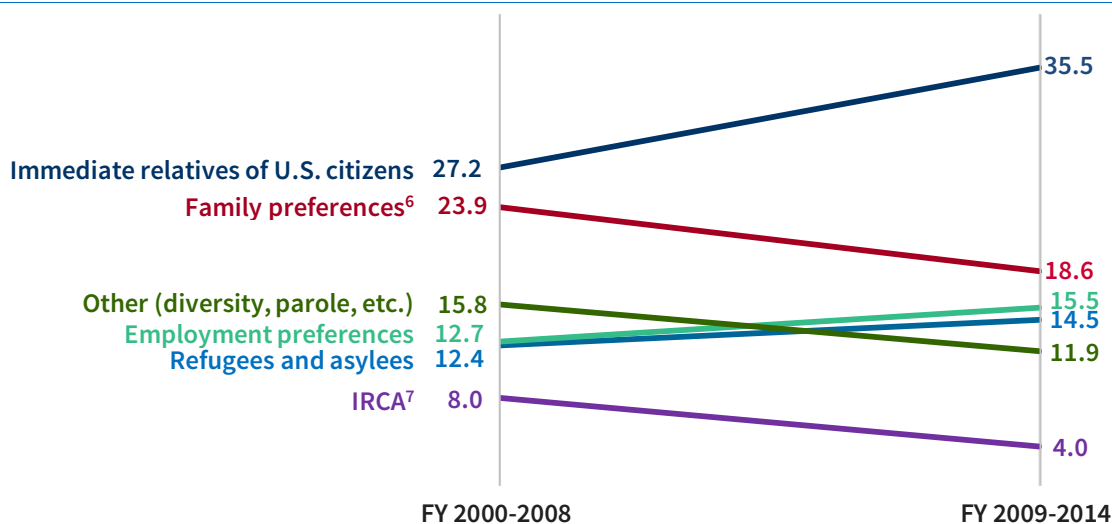
CLASS OF ADMISSION

The majority of people who naturalized came to the United States as immediate relatives of U.S. citizens or through family-sponsored preference categories. Compared to FY 2000-2008, a higher percentage of the total naturalizations in FY 2009-2014 were by immediate relatives of U.S. citizens. A lower percentage of total naturalizations were by people admitted through family-sponsored preferences such as married sons or daughters of U.S. citizens. The naturalization numbers reflect a trend in overall admissions between the FY 2000-2008 and FY 2009-2014 periods: The number of immediate relatives of U.S. citizens grew in proportion to total admissions whereas the number of admissions through family-sponsored preferences declined.⁵

Compared to FY 2000-2008, people who were admitted as refugees or asylees before adjusting their status to LPR comprised larger percentages of total naturalizations. This increase can be attributed to The REAL ID Act of 2005, which eliminated the annual cap of 10,000 asylee adjustments to LPR status. The initial surge of asylees who adjusted their status became eligible to naturalize (and started doing so) in 2010.

Graph 5

Class of Admission (Percent of Total)



Compared to FY 2000-2008, persons admitted for employment-based reasons comprised larger percentages of total naturalizations. In part this is because these persons made up a larger proportion of the population who became eligible to naturalize each year: an average of 15 percent in FY 2009-2014 compared to 12 percent in FY 2000-2008.

⁵ In FY 2000-2008, 36 percent of LPRs who became eligible to naturalize each year had been admitted as immediate relatives of U.S. citizens. In FY 2009-2014, this figure rose to 41 percent. For LPRs admitted through family-sponsored preferences, the corresponding percentage dropped from 33 to 18.

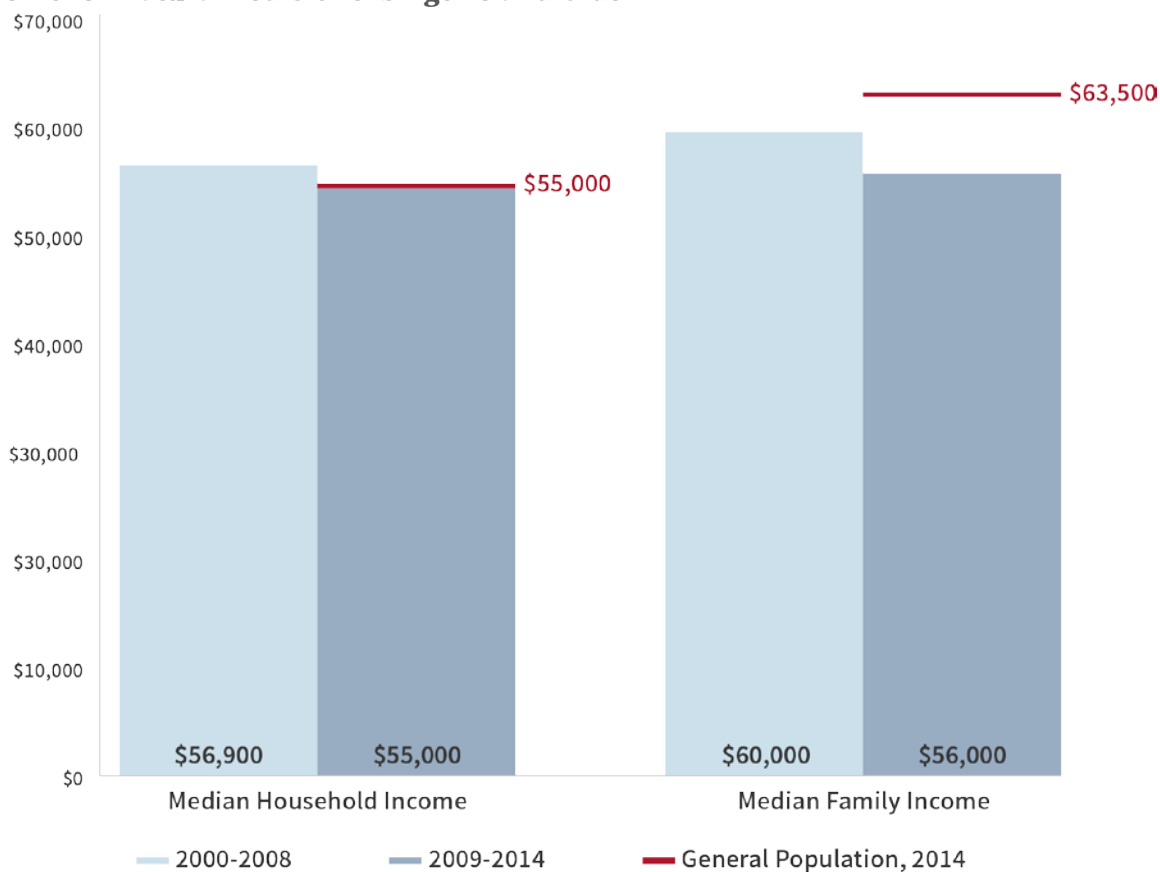
⁶ Preference categories apply to family members who are not immediate relatives, such as adult sons and daughters of U.S. citizens, brothers and sisters of adult U.S. citizens, and adult sons and daughters of permanent residents. The visas allotted for these categories are subject to annual numerical limits. A visa becomes available to a preference category based on the priority date. In family immigration, this is generally the date a petition was filed with USCIS.

⁷ The Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) of 1986 legalized unauthorized immigrants who entered the United States before 1982, had resided in the United States continuously, and did not owe back taxes or have a criminal record. Today the number of naturalizations of people who became LPRs under the IRCA is declining.

MEDIAN INCOME AND EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF NATURALIZED CITIZENS BY YEAR OF NATURALIZATION

Income and levels of education were fairly consistent between citizens who naturalized in the FY 2000-2008 period and citizens who naturalized in the FY 2009-2014 period. The median household income of citizens who naturalized in FY 2009-2014 period was \$55,000 – the same as that of the general population. Newly naturalized citizens’ median family income was about \$7,500 lower than the general population median.⁸

Graph 6
Income for Naturalized Citizens Age 25 and Older



Source: U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey, 2008 and 2014 1-year estimates

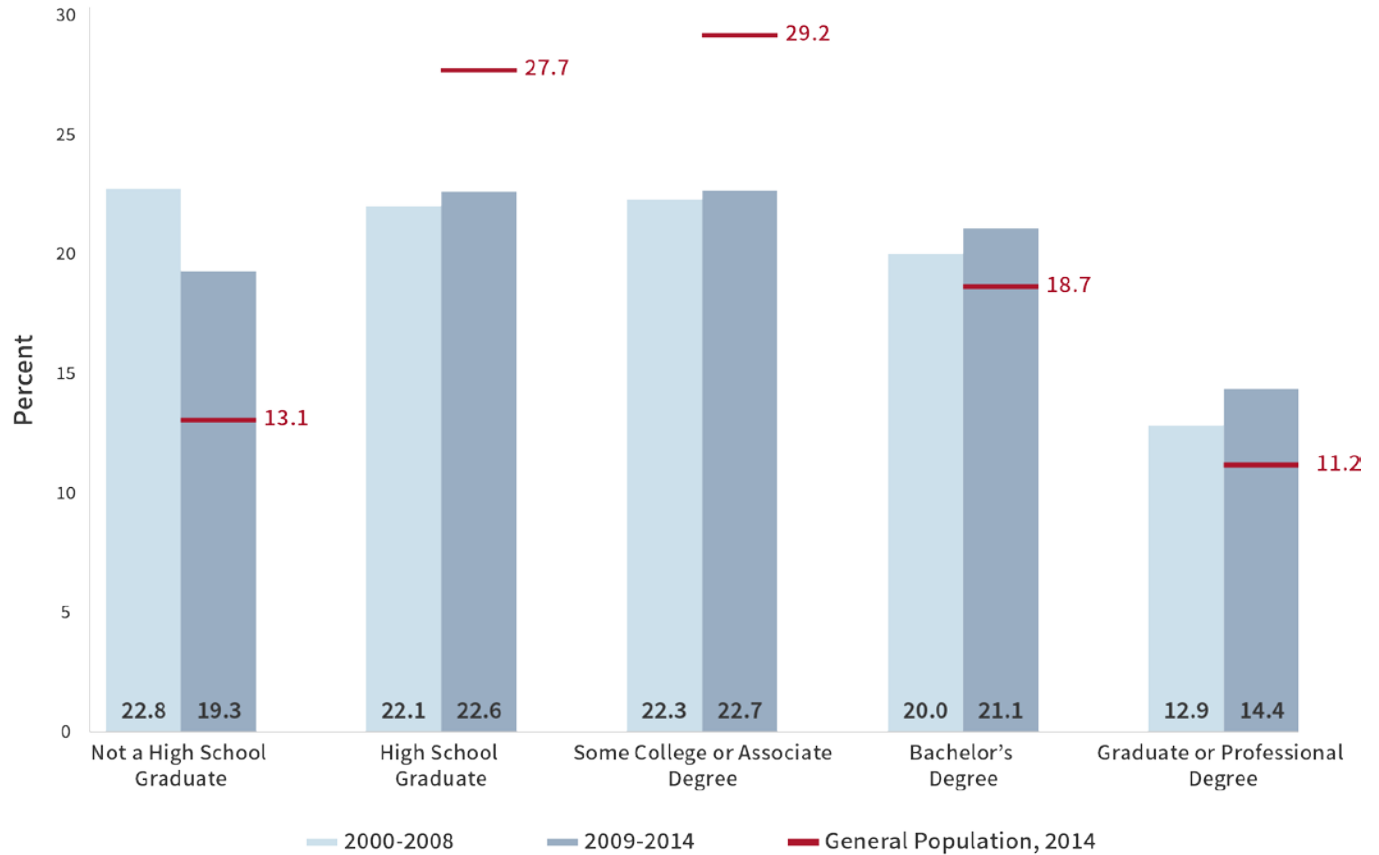
Nearly 20 percent of people age 25 and over who naturalized in the FY 2009-2014 period did not have a high school diploma or its equivalent. This proportion is higher than the general population average of 13.1 percent but slightly lower than the FY 2000-2008 percentage.

⁸ Household income is the combined pretax income of all persons living in a household, whether or not they are related to each other. Family income is the combined pretax income of all persons living in a household who are related to the household head. People living alone are counted as households, but not as families. The median incomes for the general population include foreign-born individuals.

Naturalized citizens are also more likely than the general population to hold a bachelor's degree or higher. Over 35 percent of those who naturalized during FY 2009-2014 had a bachelor's, graduate, or professional degree, while the general population average⁹ was 30 percent.

Graph 7

Educational Attainment for Naturalized Citizens Age 25 and Older



Source: U.S. Census Bureau American Community Surveys, 2008 and 2014

⁹ The general population average is for all persons living in the United States age 25 and over, including foreign-born individuals.

APPENDIX

Table 1
Region of Birth

Year of Naturalization	FY 2000-2008	FY 2009-2014	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Total Naturalizations	675,234/yr.	708,100/yr.	743,714	619,913	694,191	757,433	779,928	653,416
Region of Birth (percent of total)								
Africa	5.4	9.5	8.1	10.3	10.1	9.9	9.2	9.5
Asia	38.4	36.3	37.2	40.6	36.0	33.9	35.4	35.7
Caribbean	11.0	12.7	11.4	10.1	11.5	14.5	15.5	12.8
Central America^a	5.8	5.2	5.9	4.2	4.9	5.4	5.5	5.5
Europe	13.5	11.4	12.1	12.6	11.8	10.9	10.3	10.9
North America^b	17.8	14.7	16.3	12.2	15.0	14.7	13.9	15.8
Oceania^c	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.6	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5
South America	7.4	9.5	8.3	9.4	10.2	10.2	9.8	9.3
Unknown	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0

Total percentages may not equal 100 because of rounding.

Source: USCIS Form N-400 naturalization data, FY 2000 - 2014.

^a Central America comprises Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Panama.

^b North America comprises Canada, Mexico, and the United States.

^c Oceania includes Australia, New Zealand, Fiji, French Polynesia, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Nauru, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Vanuatu, and surrounding island countries.

Table 2
Leading Countries of Birth (Percent of Total)

Year of Naturalization	FY 2000-2008	FY 2009-2014	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Mexico	16.5	13.3	15.0	10.8	13.7	13.5	12.7	14.5
India	6.2	7.0	7.1	9.9	6.6	5.7	6.4	5.8
Philippines	5.7	5.7	5.2	5.7	6.1	5.9	5.6	5.3
China	5.1	4.8	5.0	5.5	4.7	4.2	4.5	4.6
Dominican Republic	3.0	3.6	2.8	2.5	3.0	4.4	5.1	3.6
All Other Countries	63.5	65.6	63.5	65.0	65.9	67.6	65.6	66.2

Total percentages may not equal 100 because of rounding.

Source: USCIS Form N-400 naturalization data, FY 2000 - 2014.

Table 3**Median Years in Lawful Permanent Resident Status by Region of Birth**

Year of Naturalization	FY 2000-2008	FY 2009-2014	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
All Regions	8	7	7	6	6	7	7	7
Africa	6	5	6	5	5	5	5	6
Asia	7	6	6	5	6	6	6	6
Caribbean	10	9	10	9	9	9	9	9
Central America	10	10	9	9	10	10	10	10
Europe	7	7	7	6	6	7	7	8
North America	11	12	14	11	11	11	11	12
Oceania	9	8	8	7	7	8	8	9
South America	8	6	6	5	6	6	6	7

Recently naturalized citizens of unknown region of birth comprise less than 0.01 percent of totals.

Source: USCIS Form N-400 naturalization data, FY 2000 - 2014.

Table 4**Median Years in Lawful Permanent Resident Status by Leading Countries of Birth**

Year of Naturalization	FY 2000-2008	FY 2009-2014	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Mexico	11	12	15	11	12	11	11	12
India	7	6	6	5	6	6	6	6
Philippines	8	6	6	6	6	6	7	7
China	7	6	6	5	5	6	6	6
Dominican Republic	13	15	15	14	15	15	16	14

Source: USCIS Form N-400 naturalization data, FY 2000 - 2014.

Table 5**Age at Naturalization**

Year of Naturalization	FY 2000-2008	FY 2009-2014	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Age at Naturalization^a								
Median Age (years)	39	40	40	39	39	40	40	40
Age at Naturalization (percent of total)								
18-24	10.2	9.3	8.2	9.6	9.8	9.6	9.2	9.1
25-29	12.0	12.2	11.7	12.6	12.4	12.4	12.2	12.1
30-34	13.5	13.3	13.6	14.2	13.2	12.9	12.9	12.9
35-39	15.5	14.7	15.8	16.5	14.6	13.8	13.8	13.6
40-44	12.9	13.0	13.2	13.3	12.8	12.8	12.9	12.9
45-49	9.6	9.9	10.1	9.7	9.8	9.8	9.9	10.0
50-54	7.5	8.1	7.9	7.3	8.1	8.3	8.4	8.5
55-59	6.2	6.7	6.8	5.9	6.5	6.9	6.9	6.9
60-64	4.6	4.8	4.9	4.1	4.5	4.9	5.1	5.1
65 and Over	8.0	8.2	7.8	6.9	8.1	8.7	8.9	8.9

Total percentages may not equal 100 because of rounding. Recently naturalized citizens of unknown age comprise less than 0.10 percent of totals.

Source: USCIS Form N-400 naturalization data, FY 2000 - 2014.

^a Generally, people must be 18 years of age or over to be eligible to naturalize.

Table 6
Gender (Percent of Total)

Year of Naturalization	FY 2000-2008	FY 2009-2014	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Male	44.8	45.7	47.3	46.9	45.6	44.8	44.7	44.8
Female	54.0	54.3	52.7	53.1	54.4	55.2	55.3	55.2

Total percentages may not equal 100 because of rounding. Recently naturalized citizens of unknown gender comprise less than 1.3 percent of totals.

Source: USCIS Form N-400 naturalization data, FY 2000 - 2014.

Table 7
Marital Status at Naturalization (Percent of Total)

Year of Naturalization	FY 2000-2008	FY 2009-2014	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Married	64.9	64.8	67.0	66.7	64.4	63.5	63.6	63.8
Single	21.6	21.8	19.8	21.2	21.9	22.5	22.5	22.6
Divorced	7.4	9.9	9.5	8.8	9.8	10.4	10.4	10.2
Widowed	3.4	3.1	3.0	2.7	3.1	3.3	3.2	3.2
Unknown	2.6	0.5	0.8	0.6	0.9	0.4	0.3	0.2

Total percentages may not equal 100 because of rounding.

Source: USCIS N-400 naturalization data, FY 2000 - 2014.

Table 8
Class of Admission^a (Percent of Total)

Year of Naturalization	FY 2000-2008	FY 2009-2014	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Immediate relatives of U.S. citizens ^b	27.2	35.5	35.8	33.7	34.8	35.6	36.4	36.8
Family-sponsored preferences ^c	23.9	18.6	20.5	17.0	17.6	18.4	19.4	18.6
Refugees and asylees	12.4	14.5	10.3	15.2	15.8	16.4	14.7	14.7
Employment preferences	12.7	15.5	13.7	19.0	15.8	14.2	15.1	15.4
Other (Diversity Visa, parolees, etc.)	15.8	11.9	14.8	11.9	11.2	11.3	11.1	11.1
IRCA ^d	8.0	4.0	5.0	3.3	4.8	4.1	3.3	3.3

Total percentages may not equal 100 because of rounding.

Source: USCIS N-400 naturalization data, FY 2000 - 2014.

^a Class of admission reflects the immigration category held when becoming a lawful permanent resident.

^b Immediate relatives of U.S. citizens include: spouses of U.S. citizens, children (unmarried and under 21) of U.S. citizens, and parents of U.S. citizens (where the petitioning U.S. citizen is 21 or older).

^c Preference categories apply to family members who are not immediate relatives, such as adult sons and daughters of U.S. citizens, brothers and sisters of adult U.S. citizens, spouses and unmarried children (those under the age of 21) of permanent residents, and unmarried adult sons and daughters (those 21 years of age or older) of permanent residents. The visas allotted for these categories are subject to annual numerical limits. A visa becomes available to a preference category based on the priority date. In family immigration, this is generally the date a petition was filed with USCIS.

^d The IRCA of 1986 legalized unauthorized immigrants who entered the United States before 1982, had resided there continuously, and did not owe back taxes or have a criminal record. Since the enactment of IRCA occurred almost 30 years ago, the number of naturalizations of people who became LPRs under the IRCA is declining.

Table 9**Household Income and Educational Attainment for Naturalized Citizens Age 25 and Older**

Naturalized Citizens by Year of Naturalization									General Population
Income (past 12 months)	2000-2008 ^a	2009-2014	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2014
Median household income	\$56,900	\$55,000	\$57,600	\$57,000	\$56,500	\$50,000	\$54,200	\$54,200	\$55,000
Median family income	\$60,000	\$56,000	\$59,100	\$60,000	\$58,000	\$51,800	\$55,000	\$55,600	\$63,500
Education (percent of total)									
Not a high school graduate	22.8	19.3	20.1	18.0	18.2	19.6	20.0	20.1	13.1
High school graduate	22.1	22.6	22.2	21.7	22.3	22.9	23.7	23.3	27.7
Some college or associate degree	22.3	22.7	22.6	22.7	22.5	24.7	21.7	20.9	29.2
Bachelor's degree	20.0	21.1	19.8	22.2	22.8	20.0	20.5	21.8	18.7
Graduate or professional degree	12.9	14.4	15.3	15.5	14.3	12.9	14.2	13.9	11.4

Survey estimates presented here are subject to sampling and non-sampling error.

Total percentages may not equal 100 because of rounding.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2008 and 2014, 1-year estimates. (Steven Ruggles, Katie Genadek, Ronald Goeken, Josiah Grover, and Matthew Sobek. Integrated Public Use Microdata Series: Version 6.0 [Machine-readable database]. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2015).

^aBased on 2008 American Community Survey 1-year estimates.