



---

# Timeline of U.S. Immigration

Marcia Drew Hohn, EdD

**IMMIGRANT STUDENT SUCCESS:**  
Models & Tools for K-12 & Adult Educators

Online Workshop  
The ILC Public Education Institute  
Malden, MA





# Timeline of U.S. Immigration

---

- Settlers in early 1600s: English, escaping political and religious persecution, coming with a “clean slate”
- Followed by Dutch, Scots, Huguenots (French), Germans and others
- 1619, involuntary immigration: First slave ship and criminals transported to America as punishment
- Indentured servants





# Timeline of U.S. Immigration

---

- 1790: First restrictions to free, white, good morals
- 1798, Alien and Sedition Act: Could deport at will



# Timeline of U.S. Immigration

---

- Early 1800s: Numbers of immigrants remain small, largely from Northwest Europe and geographically dispersed.
- Toward mid-century: Numbers begin rising driven by the Irish Potato Famine and German crop failures.
- By 1845: Specific anti-immigration parties arise especially targeting the Irish, echoing current talk about Mexicans and making certain immigrant groups scapegoats for economic woes.



# Timeline of U.S. Immigration

---

- 1863: Slaves freed but not included in society.
- Late 1800s: Chinese laborers forced out of searching for gold ("taking our jobs") and left to build railroads.
- By 1882: Chinese become targeted minority with stonings and mobbings, must always carry papers. Leads to the "Chinese Exclusion Act" of 1882 and detention on Angel Island in 1910.



# Timeline of U.S. Immigration

---

- 1900: Immigration slows in late 1800s but, by turn of the century, there is a dramatic increase in numbers from Eastern Europe, Greece, Italy and Russia coming through Ellis Island, established in 1892.
- These populations crowd into cities and have significant language barriers and distinct cultures, making them highly visible as “different.”



# Timeline of U.S. Immigration

---

- 1921: First quota system
- 1924: First permanent restrictions for immigration
- Immigration is greatly curtailed from the 1920s to the 1940s due to Great Depression and World War II. U.S. not seen as attractive and some populations, such as the Mexicans, are forced out.



# Timeline of U.S. Immigration

---

- Alien registration required in 1940 just prior to U.S. entrance into WWII.
- Little immigration during WWII although Bracero Program brings in Mexican workers to meet labor demand through contract labor.
- Post-WWII era sees slow rise in immigration.





# Timeline of U.S. Immigration

---

- 1965: Immigration Act eliminates race, creed and nationality as criteria for entrance replaced by family reunification resulting in increased ethnic diversity in the U.S.
- 1980s: Refugees from Cuba, Vietnam, Cambodia, El Salvador and Colombia formalize a system of processes for refugee intake and resettlement. Churches became sanctuaries.
- Rising labor demand and lack of visas for orderly intake of workers result in rising undocumented population.





# Timeline of U.S. Immigration

---

- 1986: Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) legalizes undocumented immigrants who entered the U.S. before January 1982 and to certain undocumented agricultural immigrants.
  - The act requires employers to attest to their employees' immigration status and makes it illegal to knowingly hire unauthorized immigrants.
  - However, these requirements are not enforced and largely ignored while labor demands rise. Border security stipulations are not implemented.



# Timeline of U.S. Immigration

---

- 1990: Immigration Act responds to labor demands by increasing legal immigration by 10 percent and tripling employer-based immigration.
- 1996: “Welfare Reform” reduces benefits to legal immigrants in U.S. five years or less and to all undocumented immigrants
- Post-9/11: 9/11 attack severely restricts immigration, especially on foreign university students. Anti-immigrant groups conflate immigration with terrorism and crime.





# Timeline of U.S. Immigration

---

- 2000s: Numbers of undocumented immigrants continues to rise in response to labor demands, peaking at 12.2 million in 2007 and estimated at 11.7 million in 2012.
- Largest share of undocumented population is Mexican (peaking at 60% in 2007; now at 51%); concentrated in CA, FL, IL, NJ, NY and TX.
- With the downturn in the U.S. economy and the improving economies in Latin America and Mexico, there is a noticeable decline in the numbers of undocumented immigrants.



# Timeline of U.S. Immigration

---

- Poignant dilemma for children of undocumented immigrants brought here when young and who often did not know their undocumented status until applying for college and jobs after high school (known as “Dreamers”).
- June 25, 2012: President Obama’s “Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals” enables undocumented immigrants under the age of 30 who were brought to the United States as children (up to age 15) to apply for work permits and the right to live free from fear of arrest. In most states, they can access in-state tuition rates as legal residents in their states.



# Timeline of U.S. Immigration

---

- June 2013: The U.S. Senate passes Comprehensive Immigration Reform, but the House of Representatives continues to refuse consideration of any form of immigration reform.
- Immigrant advocates look to the President for further executive action.
- Some states and cities are taking control by creating local legal papers for the undocumented, e.g. work permits, drivers' licenses and access to state services/benefits (NYC) or to create special state visas (MA).



# Timeline of U.S. Immigration

---

- 2014: A humanitarian crisis arises with thousands of unaccompanied children crossing the border from El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras erroneously believing that if they get to the U.S. alone they will be allowed to stay.



# Timeline of U.S. Immigration

---

Thank you

