



College of Humanities and Social Sciences
**INSTITUTE FOR
IMMIGRATION RESEARCH**
George Mason University®

The Immigration Landscape Today

Facts about Immigrants, the Border,
and Immigration Policy

Michelle S. Dromgold-Sermen, PhD
Assistant Director, Institute for Immigration Research



The Immigration Landscape Today

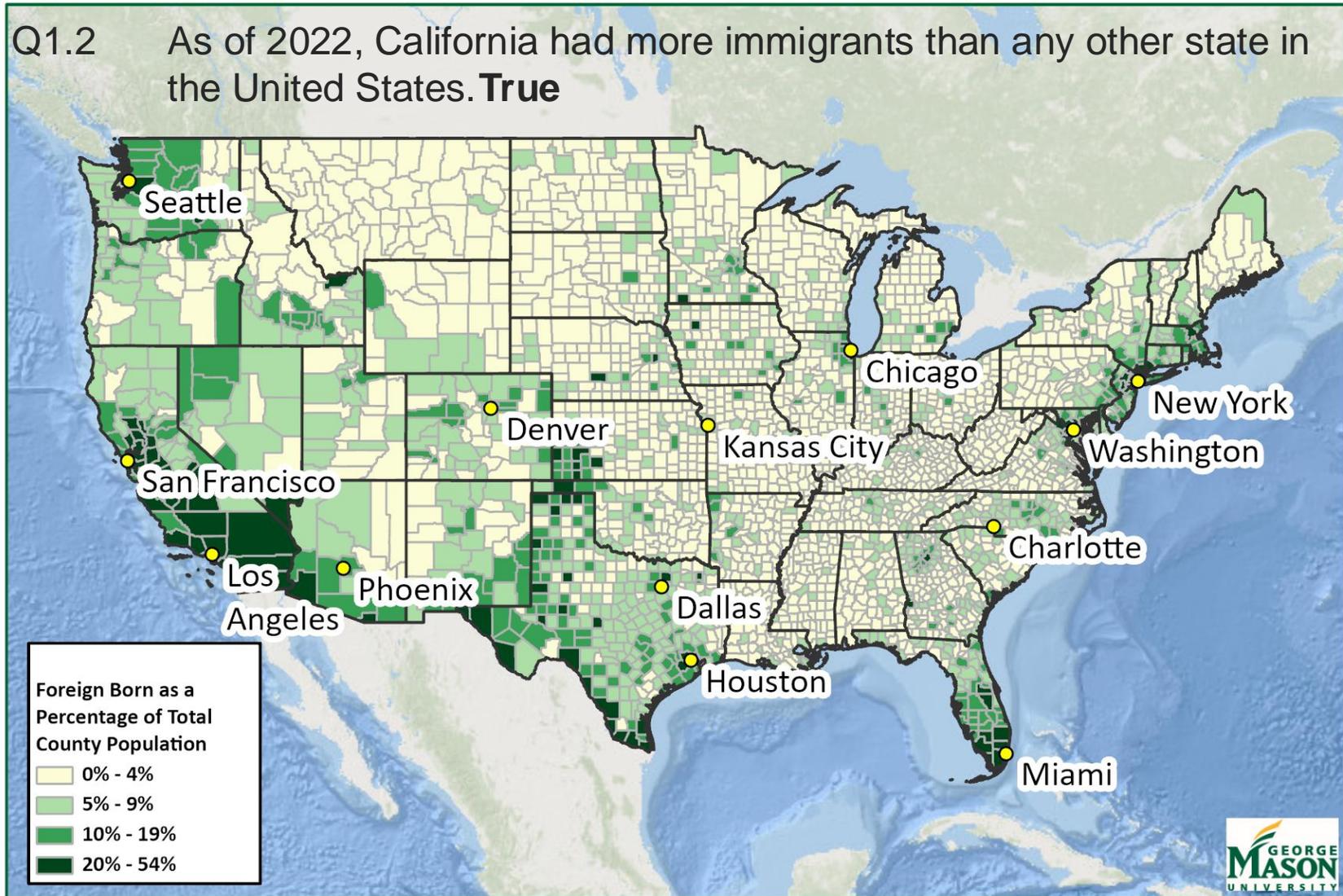
Facts about Immigrants in the United States

Q1.1

An estimated 45.4 million people living in the United States in 2022 were immigrants born outside of the United States (14% of the U.S. population).

True

Immigrants in the United States, 2020



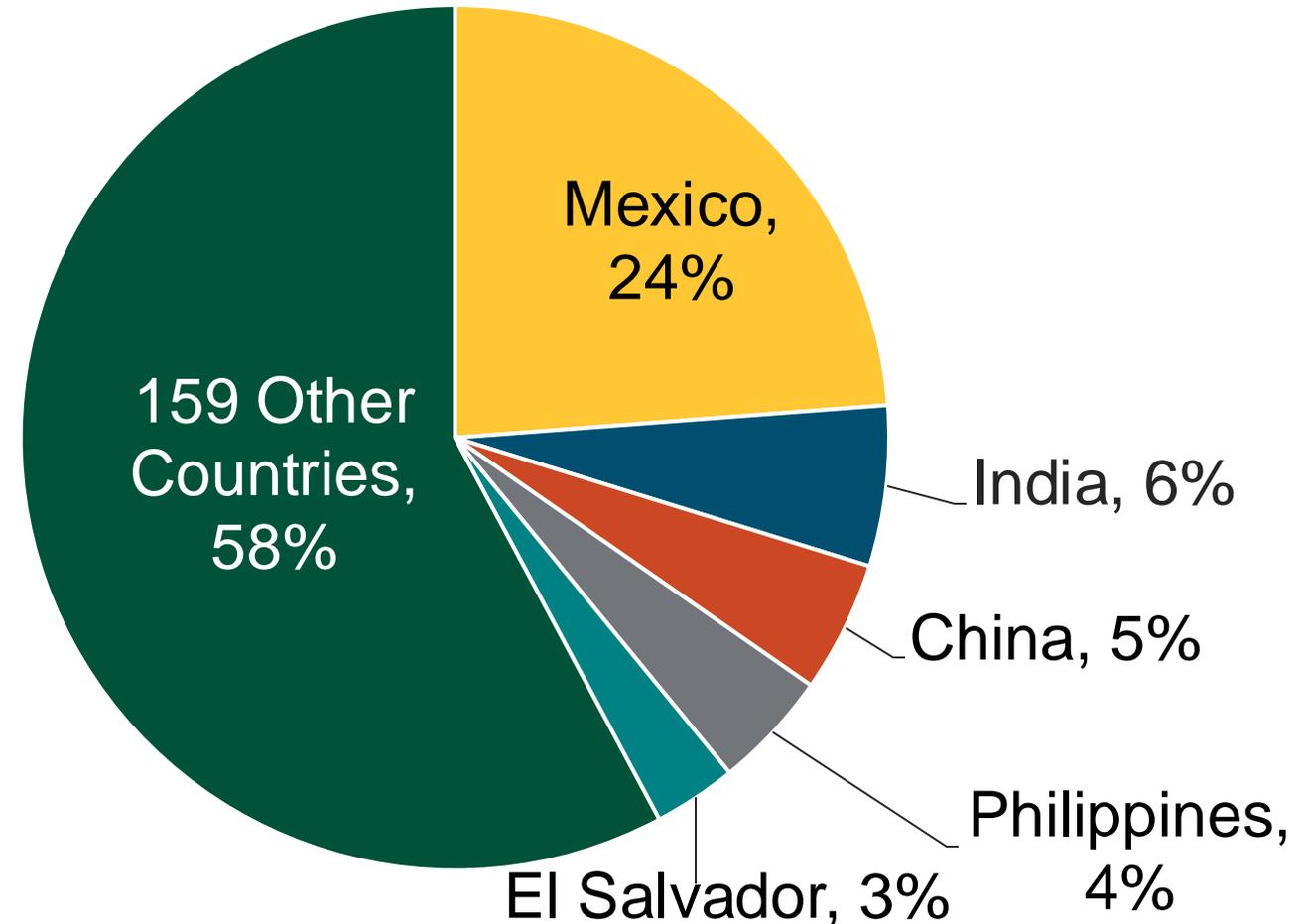
This data was prepared by the George Mason University Institute for Immigration Research (IIR). 2023. This data is displayed at the county level. Maps are based on IPUMS National Historical Geographic Information System: Version 18.0. ACS 2016-2020 dataset. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota. 2023.

Immigrant Country of Birth

Q1.3 China is the most prevalent country of birth for immigrants in the United States.

False

Mexico is the most prevalent country of birth for foreign-born immigrants in the United States.



This data was prepared by the Institute for Immigration Research (IIR). 2024. Immigration Data on Demand (iDod). Source: IPUMS USA: Version 15.0 [American Community Survey (ACS) 2018-2022 5 year averages]. Minneapolis, MN: IPUMS, 2024. <https://doi.org/10.18128/D010.V15.0>

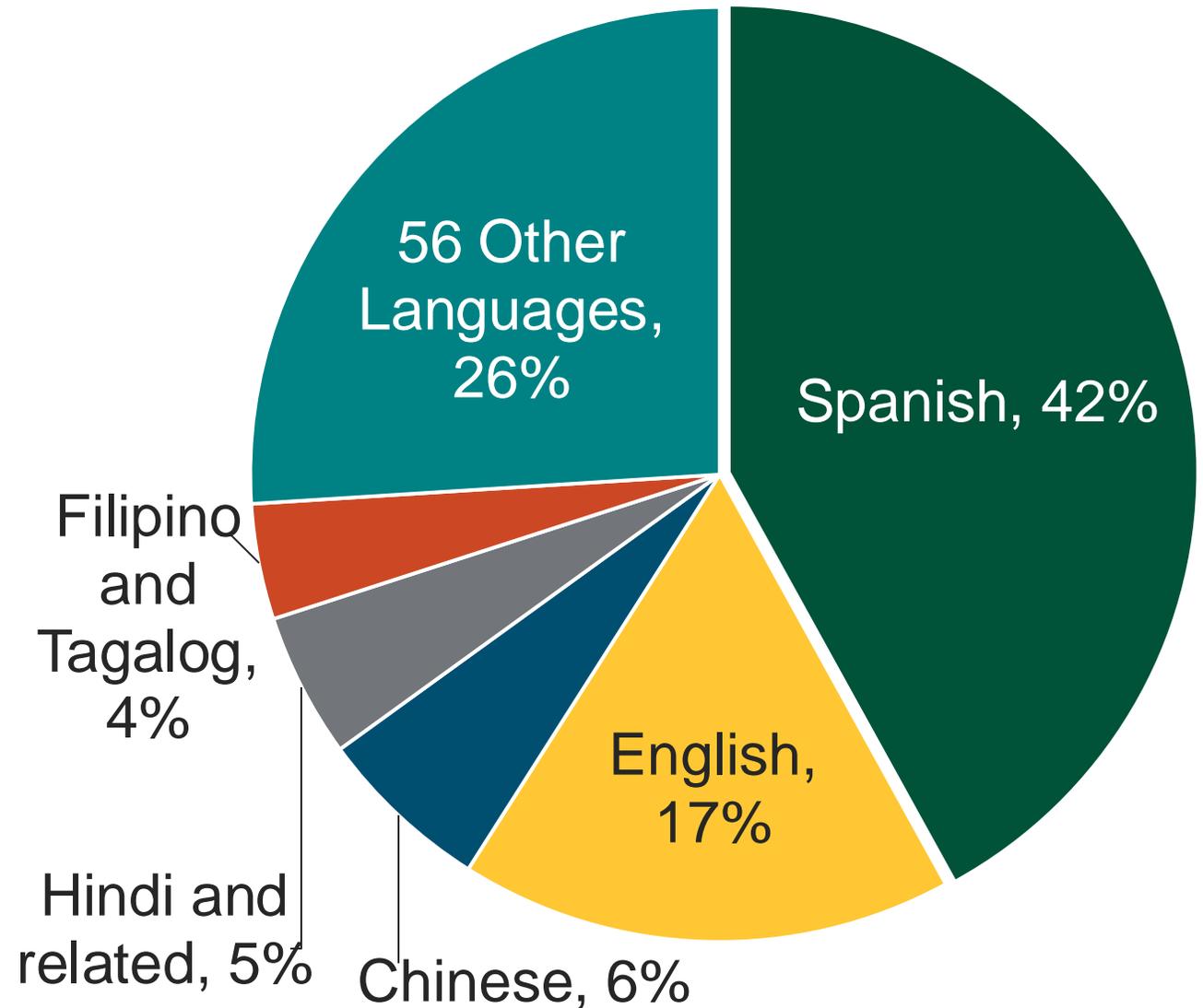
Top Languages Spoken at Home

Ages 5+

Q1.4 Most immigrants in the United States are not proficient in English.

False

54% of the foreign born speak only English or speak English very well.



This data was prepared by the Institute for Immigration Research (IIR). 2024. Immigration Data on Demand (iDod). Source: IPUMS USA: Version 15.0 [American Community Survey (ACS) 2018-2022 5 year averages]. Minneapolis, MN: IPUMS, 2024. <https://doi.org/10.18128/D010.V15.0>

The Immigration Landscape Today

Facts about Immigrants in the United States

Q1.5

Most immigrants in the United States are naturalized U.S. citizens.

True

52% of the foreign born are naturalized U.S. citizens.

48% are not U.S. citizens. Not all are eligible for citizenship.

Source: IPUMS USA: Version 15.0 [American Community Survey (ACS) 2018-2022 5 year averages]. Minneapolis, MN: IPUMS, 2024. <https://doi.org/10.18128/D010.V15.0>

Poll #2: Immigration and the Border



Photo Credit: Canva

Unauthorized Immigrants

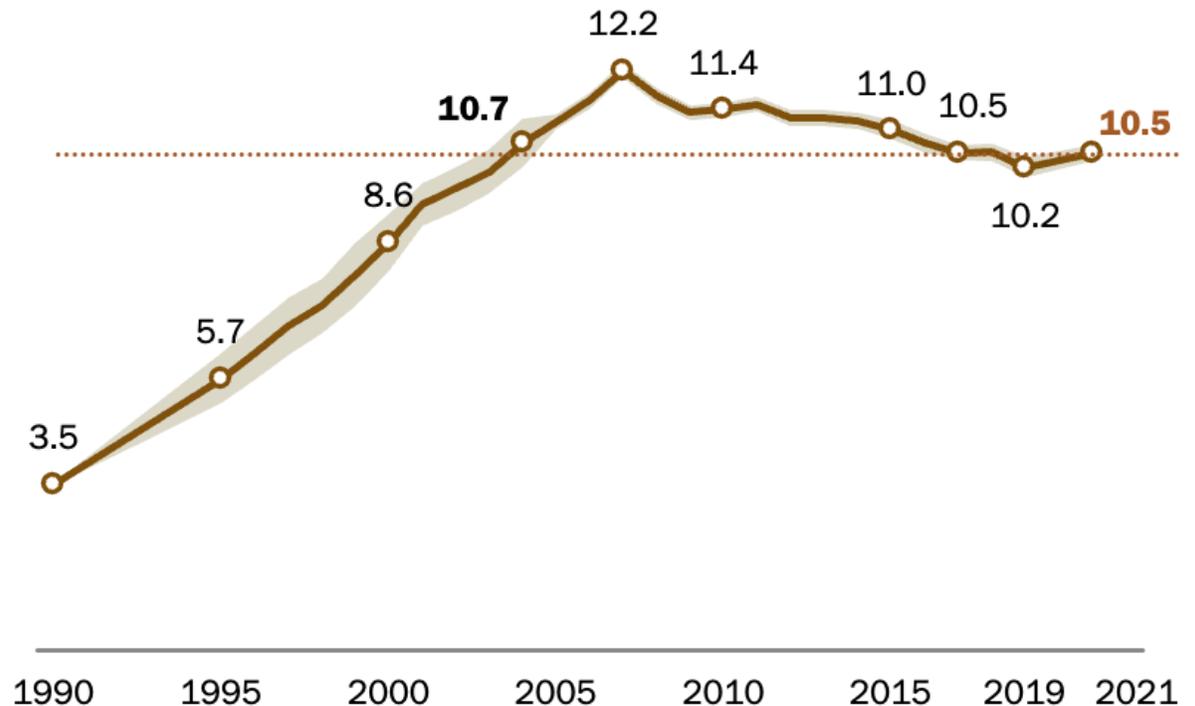
Estimates from Pew Research Center, 1990-2021

Q2.1 There are an estimated 10.5 million unauthorized/undocumented immigrants in the United States.

True

The number of unauthorized immigrants in the U.S. remained mostly stable from 2017 to 2021

Unauthorized immigrant population in the United States, in millions



Note: Shading shows range of estimated 90% confidence interval.

Source: Pew Research Center estimates based on augmented U.S. Census Bureau data.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Table 1. Estimates of the Unauthorized Population from Various Sources

Estimate Source	Estimate	Year	Data Source(s)
Center for Immigration Studies	11.35 million	2022	Current Population Survey (CPS); DHS and other administrative data
Center for Migration Studies New York	10.3 million	2019	ACS; DHS administrative data
Congressional Budget Office	11.0 million	2018	CPS; DHS administrative data
Migration Policy Institute	11.0 million	2019	ACS; Survey of Income Participation; DHS administrative data
Pew Research Center	10.5 million	2017	ACS; DHS administrative data
U.S. Department of Homeland Security	11.4 million	2018	ACS; DHS and other administrative data

Source: Steven A. Camarota and Karen Zeigler, “Estimating the Illegal Immigrant Population Using the Current Population Survey,” Center for Immigration Studies, March 29, 2022; Center for Migration Studies New York, “Estimates of Undocumented and Eligible-to-Naturalize Populations by State,” 2021; Julia Heinzl, Rebecca Heller, and Natalie Tawil, “Estimating the Legal Status of Foreign-Born People,” Congressional Budget Office, Working Paper 2021-02, March 2021; Migration Policy Institute, “Profile of the Unauthorized Population: United States,” accessed May 16, 2022; Mark Hugo Lopez, Jeffrey S. Passel, and D’Vera Cohn, “Key Facts about the Changing U.S. Unauthorized Immigrant Population,” Pew Research Center, April 13, 2021; and Bryan Baker, “Estimates of the Unauthorized Immigrant Population Residing in the United States: January 2015-January 2018,” U.S. Department of Homeland Security, January 2021.

Source: Straut-Eppsteiner, Holly, and Abigail F. Kolker. 2022. “Unauthorized Immigrants: Frequently Asked Questions.” <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/R/R47218/2>.

The Immigration Landscape Today

Facts about Immigration and the Border

Q2.2

Most unauthorized/undocumented immigrants in the United States today crossed the U.S.-Mexico border without authorization.

True

But, an estimated 46% of the unauthorized population in 2017 were visa overstayers.

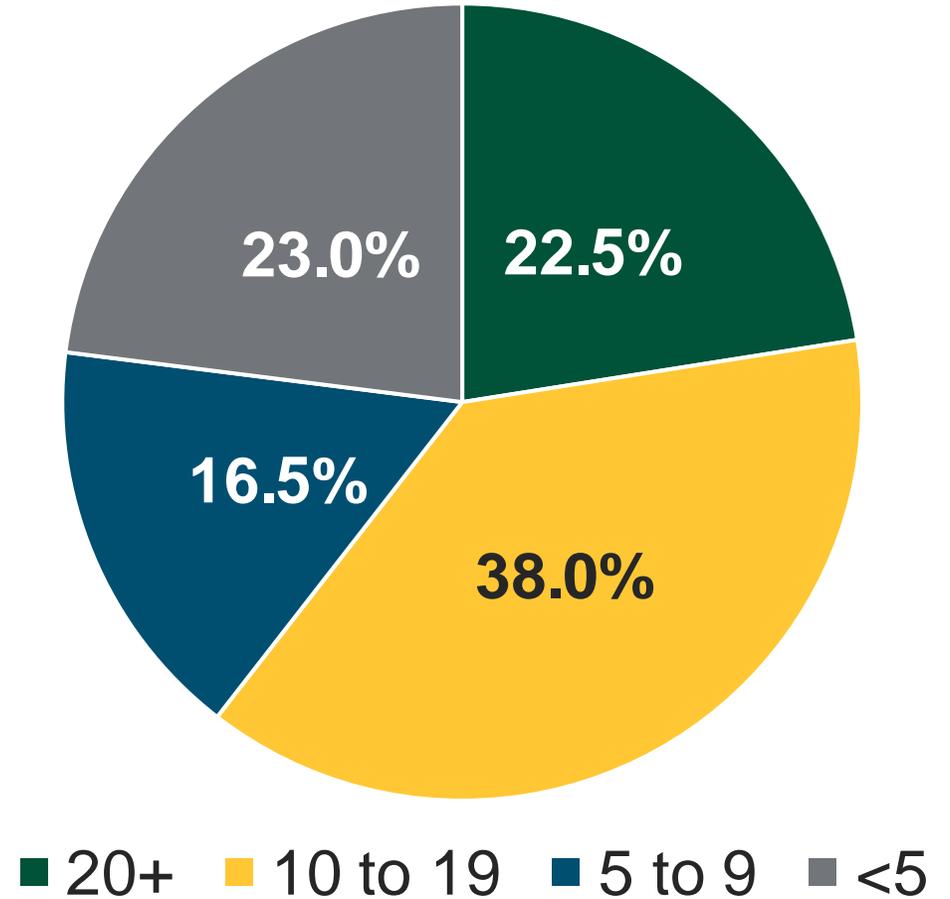
Source: Straut-Eppsteiner, Holly, and Abigail F. Kolker. 2022. "Unauthorized Immigrants: Frequently Asked Questions."
<https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/R/R47218/2>.

Unauthorized Immigrants, Years in the United States

Estimates from Congressional Research Service

Source: Straut-Eppsteiner, Holly, and Abigail F. Kolker. 2022. "Unauthorized Immigrants: Frequently Asked Questions." <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/R/R47218/2>.

Estimated Years in the United States



The Immigration Landscape Today

Facts about Immigration and the Border

Q2.3

Crossing the U.S.-Mexico border without a U.S. visa, passport, or green card is illegal.

A trick question:

Entering the United States **without inspection** is illegal.

Entering the United States to **claim asylum is not illegal.**

Poll #3: Immigration Policy



Photo Credit: Michelle Dromgold-Sermen

The Immigration Landscape Today

Facts about Immigration Policy

Q3.1

The core tenets of contemporary U.S. immigration policy have not been updated in almost sixty years.

True

1952	Immigration and Nationality Act (INA)
1965	Hart-Celler Amendments to the INA
1980	Refugee Act
1986	Immigration Reform and Control Act
1990	Immigration Act
1996	Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigration Responsibility Act

The Immigration Landscape Today

Facts about Immigration Policy

Asylum Seeker

A person who moves across international borders in search of protection, but whose claim for refugee status has not yet been decided.

Refugee

A person who is outside their country of nationality and is unable or unwilling to return because of persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution.

In the U.S. context, refugees typically arrive in the United States through *resettlement*, with their claim for refugee status already decided.

Q3.2

The terms “refugee” and “asylum seeker” are synonymous.

False

The Immigration Landscape Today

Facts about Immigration Policy

Q3.3

Individuals granted asylum in Fiscal Year 2022 were most often from China. True

Asylum Seekers

Country of Nationality	Percent of Individuals Granted Asylum in Fiscal Year 2022
China	13%
Venezuela	10%
El Salvador	7%
Guatemala	6%
India	6%

Refugees

Country of Nationality	Percent of Refugee Arrivals in Fiscal Year 2022
Democratic Republic of Congo	30%
Syria	18%
Burma (Myanmar)	8%
Afghanistan	6%
Ukraine	6%

Source: Department of Homeland Security. 2023. Yearbook of Immigration Statistics. <https://www.dhs.gov/ohss/topics/immigration/yearbook>



College of Humanities and Social Sciences

**INSTITUTE FOR
IMMIGRATION RESEARCH**

George Mason University®

www.iir.gmu.edu



Thank You!