



U.S. Immigration: National and State Trends and Actions

Methodology and sources

The share of each state’s population that is foreign-born is calculated by dividing the state’s foreign-born population by its total population. Likewise, the share of each state’s unauthorized residents is found by dividing its unauthorized immigrant population by its total population.

The estimates of the unauthorized population for 1990-2012 were adjusted to include people not counted in the census, and the total population numbers for those years were not adjusted, so the share of each state’s unauthorized immigrant population may be slightly overstated. However, any differences are likely to be insignificant, because small increases in the total population would have very little effect on the ratio.

No single source has all the necessary data for every year examined, so Pew researchers consulted several sources to produce the maps in this infographic. Slight differences exist in the data across these sources, as shown in the table.

Table 1
Data Sources for U.S., Foreign-Born, and Unauthorized Populations, by Year

Total United States population and foreign-born population		
Year	Source	Notes
1980, 1990, and 2000	U.S. Census Bureau, “Historical Census Statistics on the Foreign-Born Population of the United States: 1850 to 2000,” Working Paper No. 81	Not adjusted for unauthorized immigrants not counted in the census
2010 and 2012	American Community Survey (ACS) 1-year estimates	Not adjusted for unauthorized immigrants not counted in the ACS
Unauthorized population		
Year	Source	Notes
1980	Jeffery Passel and Karen A. Woodrow, “Population Division, U.S. Bureau of the Census, Geographic Distribution of Undocumented Immigrants: Estimates of Undocumented Aliens Counted in the 1980 Census by State,” <i>International Migration Review</i> 18:3 (1984): 642-71	Not adjusted for unauthorized immigrants not counted in the census
1990, 2000, 2010, and 2012	Jeffrey Passel and D’Vera Cohn, “Unauthorized Immigrant Totals Rise in 7 States, Fall in 14,” Pew Research Center’s Hispanic Trends Project (2014), http://www.pewhispanic.org/files/2014/11/2014-11-18_unauthorized-immigration.pdf and http://www.pewhispanic.org/2014/12/11/unauthorized-trends/	Adjusted for unauthorized immigrants not counted in the census, ACS, or the March Supplement to the Current Population Survey

For a description of Pew Hispanic Center's methodology for estimating the unauthorized population, see "Unauthorized Immigrants: How Pew Research Counts Them and What We Know About Them" (April 2013), <http://www.pewresearch.org/2013/04/17/unauthorized-immigrants-how-pew-research-counts-them-and-what-we-know-about-them>. Also see Appendix C: Methodology of "Unauthorized Immigrant Totals Rise in 7 States, Fall in 14," Pew Hispanic Center (2014), http://www.pewhispanic.org/files/2014/11/2014-11-18_unauthorized-immigration.pdf.

For a history of estimates of the unauthorized population, see the Congressional Research Service's 2011 report "Unauthorized Aliens Residing in the United States: Estimates Since 1986," <http://trac.syr.edu/immigration/library/P5844.pdf>.

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