

U.S. Naturalizations: 2018

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The naturalization process confers U.S. citizenship upon foreign nationals who have fulfilled the requirements established in the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA). After naturalization, foreign-born citizens enjoy most of the same benefits, rights, and responsibilities that the Constitution gives to native-born U.S. citizens, including the right to vote. The 2018 U.S. Naturalizations Annual Flow Report, authored by the Office of Immigration Statistics (OIS) in the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), presents information on the number and characteristics of foreign nationals aged 18 years and over who naturalized during 2018.^{1,2}

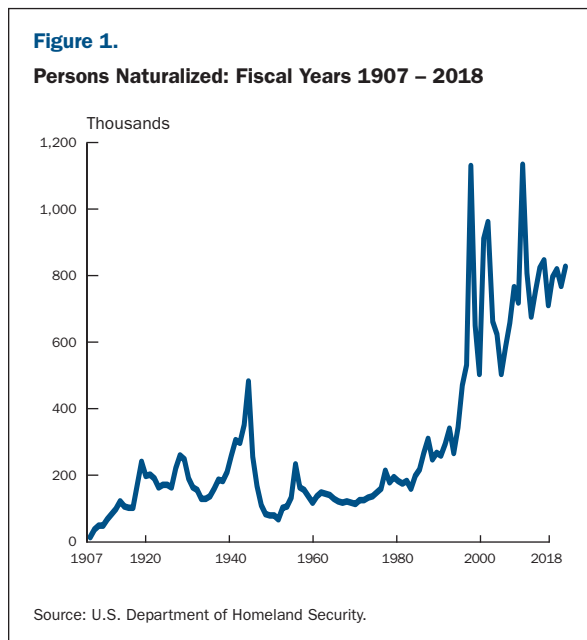
SUMMARY

The number of U.S. naturalizations rose to 761,901 persons in 2018 (Table 1), up 7.7 percent from 707,265 in 2017 and up 1.2 percent from 753,060 in 2016 (Figure 1).³ The number of applications for citizenship decreased from 986,851 in 2017 to 810,548 in 2018 (18 percent). The number of applications exceeds the number of naturalizations due to adjudicated application denials (11 percent in 2018) and delays in application processing (Figure 2).⁴ The leading countries of birth of new citizens were Mexico (131,977), India (52,194), the People’s Republic of China (China) (39,600), the Philippines (38,816), and Cuba (32,089). The largest number of persons naturalizing lived in California (163,059), Florida (95,978), and New York (81,404) (Table 2).

THE NATURALIZATION PROCESS AND REQUIREMENTS

An applicant must meet INA requirements, document them in and file a Form N-400, *Application for Naturalization*, to be considered for naturalization. U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) reviews documents and interviews all applicants to determine their eligibility to naturalize. Following approval, USCIS schedules applicants for a required oath ceremony before a judge or USCIS official.

Generally, the INA provisions specify that a foreign national must be at least 18 years of age, establish that he or she has been lawfully admitted to the United States for permanent residence at the time of filing the naturalization application, and have resided continuously in the United States for at least five years⁵ as an LPR immediately preceding the date of filing the application and up to the time of admission to citizenship. The applicant must be physically present in the United States for at least 30 months out of the five years immediately preceding the date of filing the application



¹ In this report, “years” refer to fiscal years, which run from October 1 to September 30.

² This annual flow report does not include children acquiring citizenship based upon the citizenship status of a parent. The child of a U.S. citizen parent may acquire U.S. citizenship through his/her parent and is not required to file an N-400 application for naturalization. Therefore, naturalizations described in this report, obtained from N-400 records, do not represent a complete count of persons who obtained citizenship status during the reporting year.

³ Naturalization numbers reflect changes in the numbers of naturalization applications received as well as the number processed, which may be affected by applications pending from previous years and available resources. As a result, caution should be exercised in drawing conclusions from these data about trends in the underlying demand to naturalize. Average naturalization totals over a period of years provide a more accurate indication of long-term trends in naturalization.

⁴ See *2018 Yearbook of Immigration Statistics*; Table 20: Applications for Naturalization Filed, Persons Naturalized, and Applications for Naturalization Denied.

⁵ A permanent resident who is married to a U.S. citizen and with evidence of continuous residency is eligible for naturalization after three years instead of the normally required five years as a permanent resident applying for citizenship.



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and must have lived within the state or USCIS district with jurisdiction over the applicant's place of residence for at least 90 days prior to the date of filing. Additional requirements for applicants include the ability to speak, read, and write the English language; knowledge of U.S. Government and history; attachment to the principles of the U.S. Constitution; and be of good moral character. Special provisions of naturalization law exempt certain applicants from some of these general requirements. These applicants may include spouses of U.S. citizens and persons with qualifying military service in the U.S. Armed Forces.

TRENDS AND CHARACTERISTICS OF PERSONS NATURALIZING

Historical Trend

The average number of persons naturalizing increased from fewer than 113,000 per year during the 1950s and 1960s to 210,000 during the 1980s, 500,000 during the 1990s, and 680,000 between 2000 and 2009. Since 2010, the average annual number of naturalizations has increased to over 712,000 (Figure 1). While annual naturalizations rates have gradually increased, short-term naturalization rates vary due to dynamics forces related to election years, USCIS fee increases, and proposed legislative or actual statutory changes.

Data

This report is based on data from USCIS administrative records of new U.S. citizens who naturalized in 2018.⁶ These records consist of information taken from Form N-400 applications, such as the date and country of birth, sex, marital status, and state of residence. USCIS Computer Linked Application Information Management System (CLAIMS 4) provided nearly all the data, while a small number of records were from the Electronic Immigration System (ELIS) and the Central Index System of USCIS.

Region and Leading Countries of Birth

Historically, the majority of persons naturalizing until the early 1970s were born in Europe. Asia overtook Europe as the leading region of origin for new citizens following increased Asian immigration pursuant to the 1965 amendments to the INA and the arrival of large numbers of Indochinese refugees in the 1970s, along with a pattern of higher-than-average naturalization rates among Asian immigrants. While Asia has remained a leading region of origin in recent decades (Figure 3), the North American region accounted for slightly more new citizens in both 2017 and 2018 (Table 1). From 2017 to 2018, the number of naturalizations increased among immigrants from every region. Oceanian

Table 1.

Persons Naturalized by Region and Country of Birth: Fiscal Years 2016 to 2018

(Countries ranked by 2018 persons naturalized)

Region and country of birth	2016		2017		2018	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
REGION						
Total	753,060	100.0	707,265	100.0	761,901	100.0
Africa	72,338	9.6	61,851	8.7	64,934	8.5
Asia	271,733	36.1	255,306	36.1	275,621	36.2
Europe	74,344	9.9	65,141	9.2	71,436	9.4
North America	259,845	34.5	258,371	36.5	277,592	36.4
Caribbean	105,204	14.0	92,540	13.1	95,298	12.5
Central America	41,649	5.5	39,359	5.6	40,815	5.4
Other North America	112,992	15.0	126,472	17.9	141,479	18.6
Oceania	3,953	0.5	3,327	0.5	3,792	0.5
South America	70,821	9.4	63,063	8.9	67,892	8.9
Unknown	26	-	206	-	634	0.1
COUNTRY						
Total	753,060	100.0	707,265	100.0	761,901	100.0
Mexico	103,550	13.8	118,559	16.8	131,977	17.3
India	46,188	6.1	50,802	7.2	52,194	6.9
China, People's Republic	35,794	4.8	37,674	5.3	39,600	5.2
Philippines	41,285	5.5	36,828	5.2	38,816	5.1
Cuba	32,101	4.3	25,961	3.7	32,089	4.2
Dominican Republic	31,320	4.2	29,734	4.2	22,970	3.0
Vietnam	24,848	3.3	19,323	2.7	21,082	2.8
Colombia	18,601	2.5	16,184	2.3	17,564	2.3
El Salvador	17,213	2.3	16,941	2.4	17,300	2.3
Jamaica	16,772	2.2	15,087	2.1	17,213	2.3
Korea, South	14,347	1.9	14,643	2.1	16,031	2.1
Haiti	15,276	2.0	12,794	1.8	14,389	1.9
Iraq	12,130	1.6	7,875	1.1	12,448	1.6
Brazil	10,268	1.4	9,701	1.4	10,538	1.4
United Kingdom	9,562	1.3	9,049	1.3	10,530	1.4
Pakistan	11,729	1.6	10,166	1.4	10,414	1.4
Peru	11,319	1.5	10,014	1.4	10,043	1.3
Guatemala	9,764	1.3	9,131	1.3	9,566	1.3
Canada	9,346	1.2	7,829	1.1	9,379	1.2
Nigeria	9,520	1.3	7,652	1.1	8,459	1.1
All other countries	272,127	36.1	241,318	34.1	259,299	34.0

- Figure rounds to 0.0.

Source: U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

Table 2.

Persons Naturalized by State of Residence: Fiscal Years 2016 to 2018

(States ranked by 2018 persons naturalized)

State of residence	2016		2017		2018	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total	753,060	100.0	707,265	100.0	761,901	100.0
California	151,830	20.2	157,364	22.2	163,059	21.4
Florida	88,764	11.8	69,485	9.8	95,978	12.6
New York	93,376	12.4	86,407	12.2	81,404	10.7
Texas	63,945	8.5	50,552	7.1	64,685	8.5
New Jersey	40,344	5.4	38,611	5.5	40,089	5.3
Illinois	26,003	3.5	24,933	3.5	26,477	3.5
Massachusetts	24,577	3.3	27,739	3.9	24,826	3.3
Pennsylvania	17,239	2.3	14,898	2.1	19,007	2.5
Virginia	20,437	2.7	21,930	3.1	18,118	2.4
Georgia	18,866	2.5	16,461	2.3	16,590	2.2
Other*	186,024	24.7	182,855	25.9	196,923	25.8

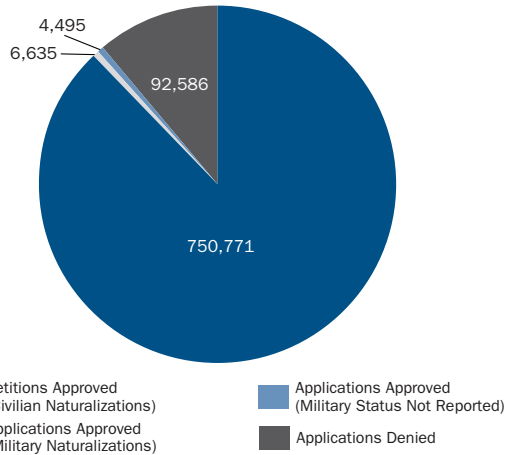
*Includes unknown, U.S. territories, and Armed Forces posts.

Source: U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

⁶ A permanent U.S. resident becomes a naturalized U.S. citizen only after the oath ceremony date.

Figure 2.

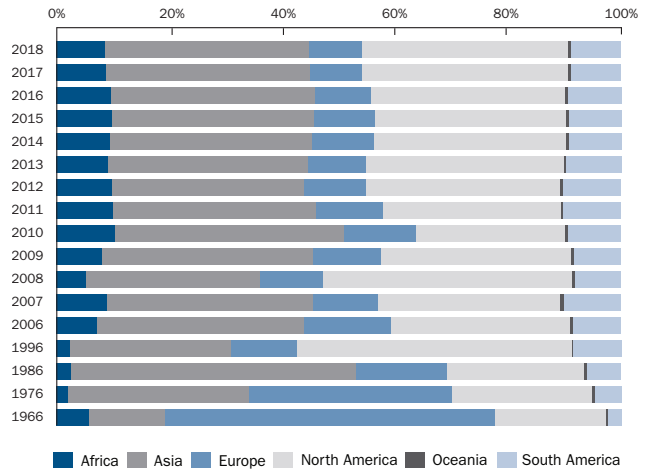
Applications for U.S. Citizenship: Fiscal Year 2018



Source: U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

Figure 3.

Percent of Total Persons Naturalized per Year by Region: Fiscal Years 1966 to 2018



Note: Oceania has an average value of 0.5% over the last 10-year period.

Source: U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

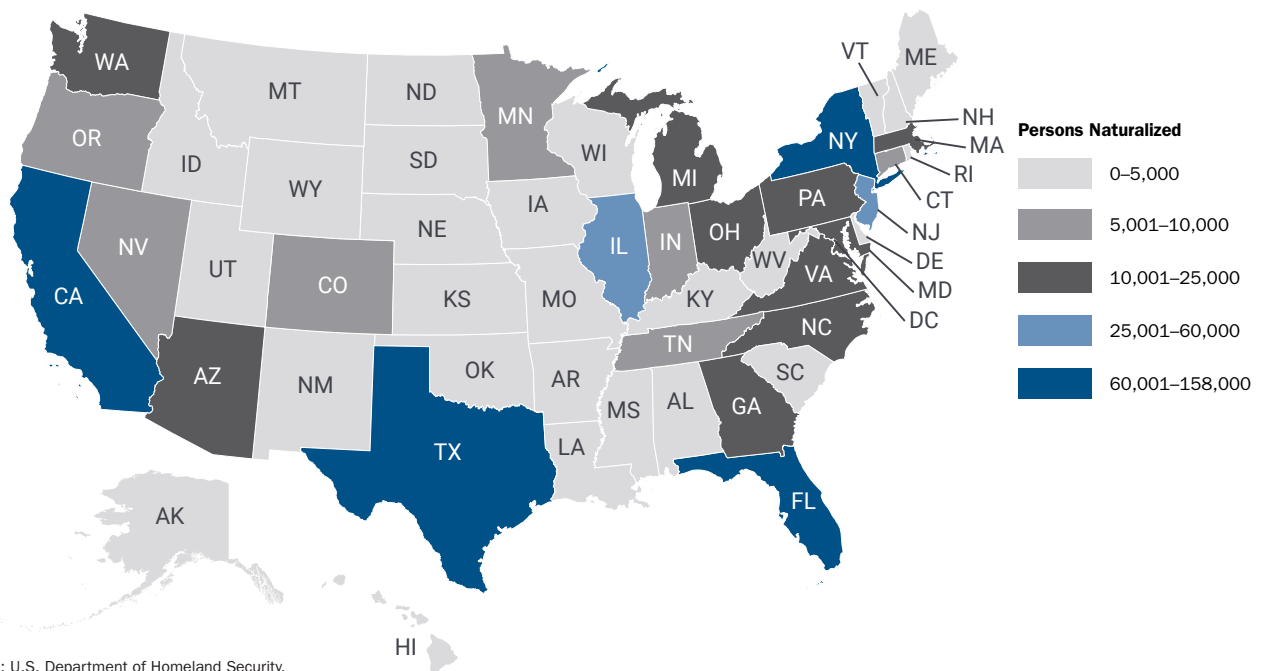
naturalizations increased by the largest proportion year-to-year increase at 14 percent; followed by Other North Americans (non-Caribbean and non-Central American countries) with 12 percent.

Among the top 10 countries of birth for persons naturalizing in 2018, Mexico was the lead country (17 percent of the total), followed by India (6.9 percent), China (5.2 percent), the Philippines (5.1 percent), and Cuba (4.2 percent) (Table 1). The top four countries of birth were unchanged from 2017, with

Cuba replacing the Dominican Republic as the fifth country. The ten top countries of origin accounted for 51 percent of all naturalizing citizens in 2018, essentially unchanged from 2017. The largest numeric increase in naturalizations between 2018 and 2017 occurred among immigrants born in Mexico (13,418), Cuba (6,128), Iraq (4,573), and Jamaica (2,126). The largest proportional increases in naturalizations were accounted for by Iraq (58 percent), Cuba (24 percent), and Canada (20 percent).

Figure 4.

Persons Naturalized by State of Residence: Fiscal Year 2018



Source: U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

Table 3.**Persons Naturalized by Core Based Statistical Area (CBSA) of Residence: Fiscal Years 2016 to 2018**

(CBSA ranked by 2018 Naturalization)

Metropolitan area of residence	2016		2017		2018	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total	753,060	100.0	707,265	100.0	761,901	100.0
New York-Newark-Jersey City, NY-NJ-PA	120,659	16.0	111,705	15.8	107,196	14.1
Los Angeles-Long Beach-Anaheim, CA	61,950	8.2	59,356	8.4	62,075	8.1
Miami-Fort Lauderdale-Pompano Beach, FL	59,227	7.9	44,520	6.3	58,165	7.6
Chicago-Naperville-Elgin, IL-IN-WI	24,907	3.3	23,044	3.3	24,879	3.3
Houston-The Woodlands-Sugar Land, TX	23,858	3.2	15,120	2.1	22,998	3.0
Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV	29,140	3.9	29,684	4.2	22,468	2.9
San Francisco-Oakland-Berkeley, CA	23,261	3.1	21,352	3.0	21,156	2.8
Boston-Cambridge-Newton, MA-NH	19,690	2.6	22,002	3.1	19,680	2.6
Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington, TX	18,743	2.5	11,562	1.6	17,702	2.3
San Diego-Chula Vista-Carlsbad, CA	14,764	2.0	16,638	2.4	17,611	2.3
Other, including unknown	344,748	45.8	335,534	47.4	372,522	48.9

Notes: Metropolitan areas defined based on the 2013 update of Core Based Statistical Areas (CBSAs) definitions. As a result, numbers for previous years may differ from previously published figures.

Source: U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

(Iraqi naturalizations decreased 35 percent between 2017 and 2018, so the increase in 2018 resulted in a similar naturalization count as two years earlier: 12,130 in 2016 versus 12,448 in 2018.)

Leading States and Metropolitan Areas of Residence

In 2018, 72 percent of all persons naturalizing resided in 10 states. With 163,059 persons, California was home to the largest number of persons naturalizing, representing 21 percent of the total, followed by Florida with 95,978 persons (13 percent), and New York with 81,404 persons (11 percent) (Table 2). The leading

states of residence were unchanged from 2017. The largest proportional increases in naturalizations between 2017 and 2018 among leading states of residence occurred in Florida (38 percent), Texas (28 percent), and Pennsylvania (28 percent). With its 38 percent increase, Florida saw its highest number of naturalizations since 2008 when it recorded 128,328.

Forty-nine percent of all new citizens in 2018 lived in 10 metropolitan areas (Table 3).⁷ The leading metropolitan areas were New York-Newark-Jersey City, NY-NJ-PA, having 107,196 persons (14 percent of the total); Los Angeles-Long Beach-Anaheim, CA with 62,075 persons (8.1 percent); and Miami-Fort Lauderdale-West Palm Beach, FL with 58,165 persons (7.6 percent). The leading metropolitan areas of residence remained the same as 2017. Among the leading metropolitan areas of residence, the largest percent increases between 2017 and 2018 occurred in Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington, TX (53 percent) and Houston-The Woodlands-Sugar Land, TX (52 percent). Five of the leading metropolitan areas of residence had decreases in

Table 4.**Persons Naturalized by Sex: Fiscal Years 2016 to 2018**

Sex	2016		2017		2018	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total	753,060	100.0	707,265	100.0	761,901	100.0
Female	420,483	55.8	396,234	56.0	420,415	55.2
Male	332,563	44.2	310,987	44.0	341,378	44.8
Unknown	14	0.0	44	0.0	108	0.0

- Figure rounds to 0.0.

Source: U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

⁷ The most current Core Based Statistical Area (CBSA) definitions are available from OMB at <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/sites/default/files/omb/bulletins/2013/b13-01.pdf>.

Table 5.**Persons Naturalized by Age: Fiscal Years 2016 to 2018**

Age	2016		2017		2018	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total	753,060	100.0	707,265	100.0	761,901	100.0
18 to 24 years	67,696	9.0	55,283	7.8	59,037	7.7
25 to 34 years	188,411	25.0	162,131	22.9	170,465	22.4
35 to 44 years	194,291	25.8	189,076	26.7	201,434	26.4
45 to 54 years	139,790	18.6	137,688	19.5	148,617	19.5
55 to 64 years	92,732	12.3	94,437	13.4	103,120	13.5
65 years and over	70,140	9.3	68,649	9.7	79,223	10.4
Unknown	-	-	1	-	5	-
Median age(years)	41	X	42	X	42	X

X Not applicable.

- Figure rounds to 0.0.

Source: U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

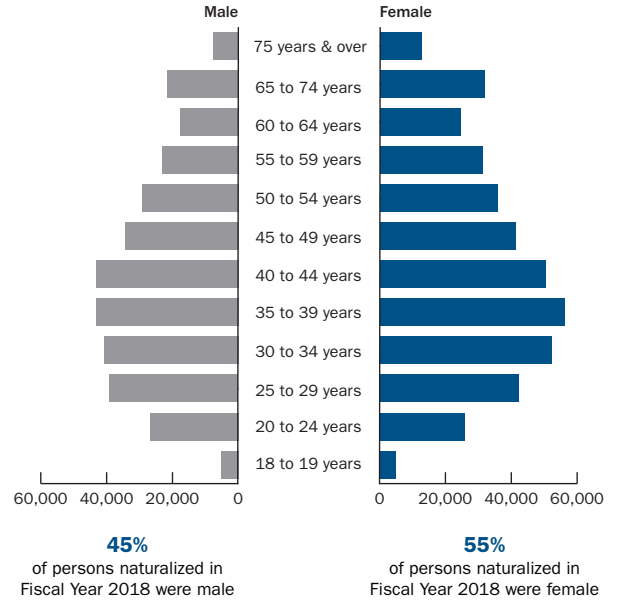
naturalizations between 2017 and 2018. The largest annual decrease occurred in Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV, which had both the largest proportional (24 percent) and the largest numeric (7,216) decrease in naturalizations.

Sex, Age, and Marital Status

The breakdowns of the 10 leading countries by sex, age, and marital status all generally remained unchanged between 2017 and 2018 (Tables 4, 5, and 6, respectively). In 2018, females accounted for the majority of naturalizations at 55 percent of all persons naturalizing (a slight one percentage point decrease from 2017) (Figure 5). Nearly 49 percent of new citizens were ages 25 to 44 years. About 24 percent were ages 55 years and older, and 7.7

Figure 5.

Naturalizations by Age and Sex: Fiscal Year 2018



Source: U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

Table 6.

Persons Naturalized by Marital Status: Fiscal Years 2016 to 2018

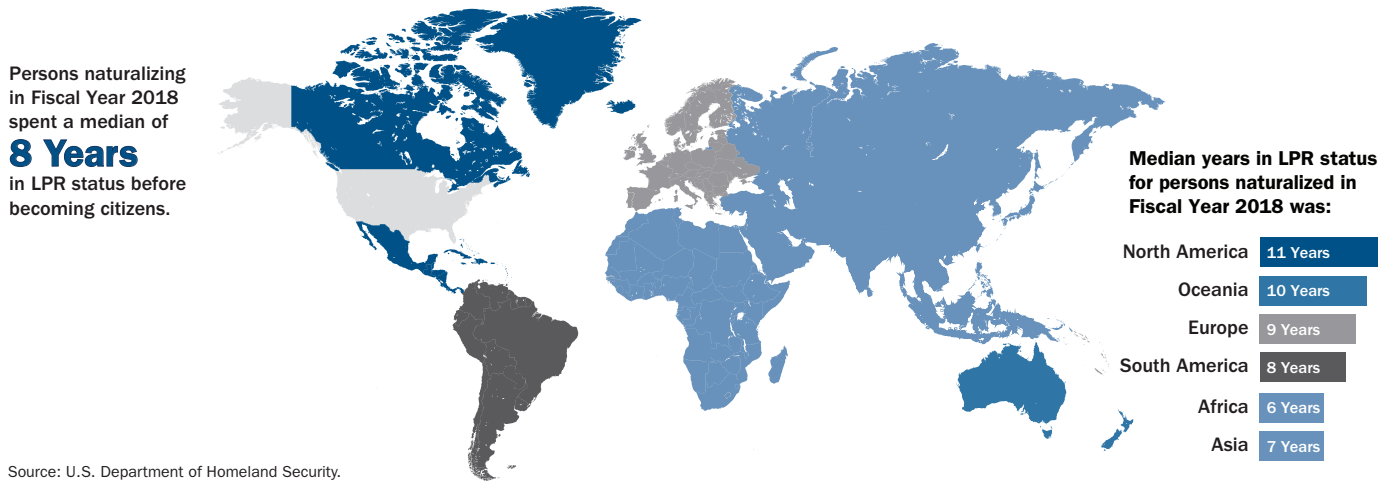
Marital status	2016		2017		2018	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total	753,060	100.0	707,265	100.0	761,901	100.0
Married	171,428	22.8	149,666	21.2	158,954	20.9
Single	477,843	63.5	457,506	64.7	494,461	64.9
Other*	103,789	13.8	100,093	14.2	108,486	14.2

*Includes persons who were divorced, separated, widowed, or of unknown marital status.

Source: U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

Figure 6.

Median Years in LPR Status Before Naturalizing: Fiscal Year 2018



Source: U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

Table 7.

Median Years in Lawful Permanent Resident Status for Persons Naturalized by Region of Birth and Year of Naturalization: Fiscal Years 2009 to 2018

Region of birth	Fiscal Year									
	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Total	7	6	6	7	7	7	7	7	8	8
Africa	6	5	5	5	5	6	6	6	6	6
Asia	6	5	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	7
Europe	7	6	6	7	7	8	9	9	9	9
North America	11	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	11	11
Oceania	8	7	7	8	8	9	9	10	10	10
South America	6	5	6	6	6	7	7	7	8	8

Note: Excludes persons who were not required to be lawful permanent residents prior to naturalization.

Source: U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

percent were ages 18 to 24 years (Figure 5). The median age of those naturalizing in 2018 remained unchanged at 42 in 2018 as in 2017, a trend consistent with the increasing average age of the U.S. population. Marital status of person naturalizing also matched recent trends of the broader U.S. population, with about 65 percent of persons naturalizing in 2018 identifying as married, and 21 percent as single (Table 6).

Years in Immigrant Status

In 2018, persons naturalizing spent a median of seven years in lawful permanent resident (LPR) status before becoming U.S. citizens, the same period as in 2017 (Table 7). Immigrants born in Africa spent the least number of years in LPR status (six years), followed by immigrants from Asia (seven years), South America (eight years), Europe (nine years), Oceania (ten years), and North America (11 years) (Figure 6). Oceania has seen a continual increase in time spent in LPR status since 2010, when the median time spent in LPR status was seven years.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

For more information about immigration and immigration statistics, visit the OIS web page at <http://www.dhs.gov/immigration-statistics>.