

International Immigration to Minnesota

Nearly 1 million new Americans arrive in the United States each year. These immigrants come looking for jobs, seeking asylum and hoping to be reunited with their families. The U.S. Department of Justice's Immigration and Naturalization Service collects data each year on the number of people entering from abroad. This issue of PopBites and the associated working paper summarize INS data on legal immigration from 1982 to 1994.

International Migrants Head to California

Minnesota is not a prime destination for legal immigrants to the United States. In 1994, only 7,093 people migrated here, making Minnesota 18th among the 50 states and the District of Columbia. About a quarter of all immigrants settled in California and another fifth in New York.

Asians made up 36.4 percent of all immigrants to the United States in 1994. North Americans — people originating in Canada, Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean — were second with 33.8 percent. Europeans accounted for one-fifth of all immigrants.

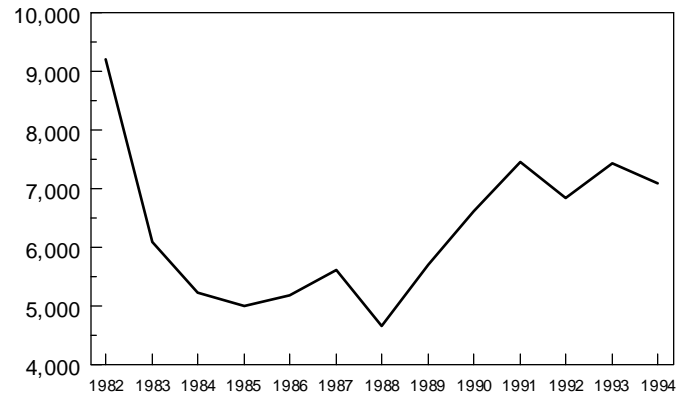
In 1994, 107,000 Mexican immigrants entered legally. The Philippines, mainland China and the Dominican Republic — which rank second, third and fourth, respectively, among countries of origin — each sent more than 50,000 emigrants.

Immigrants to Minnesota

Less than 3 percent of international immigrants to Minnesota originated in Mexico in 1994. About 800 people immigrated from Vietnam and the former Soviet republics. Third in total immigrants was mainland China, with 450. Only 207 immigrants came from Mexico.

In 1994, nearly 3,000 people, or about 42 percent of immigrants, came to Minnesota seeking asylum. This proportion is much higher than the 15.2 percent of the national total who came as refugees. Another 43 percent of immigrants to Minnesota came to be reunited with family members. Minnesota has large numbers of refugees from southeast Asia, the former Soviet republics and Somalia.

International Immigrants to Minnesota
1982 - 1994



Source: U. S. Department of Justice, Immigration and Naturalization Service

Illegal Aliens Choose California

Nearly one-half of the estimated 3.3 million undocumented aliens in the United States live in California. A very small proportion live in Minnesota. The recent arrests of 55 undocumented workers in Cold Spring drew attention to the problem here. The INS estimates a total of 151,000 illegals in 29 other states, including Minnesota. Each of these states has fewer than 10,000.

This issue of PopBites summarizes findings from "International Immigration to Minnesota," a working paper by Barbara Ronningen. The working paper describes immigration data sources. To receive a copy of the paper, contact the Minnesota State Demographer's Office Helpline at (612) 296-2557; via e-mail at helpline@mnplan.state.mn.us, at the Demography Internet address <http://www.mnplan.state.mn.us/pubs.html#dem> or by writing Minnesota Planning, 658 Cedar St., St. Paul, MN 55155.

