

**LEGAL IMMIGRATION TO CALIFORNIA,
1984-1994: A SUMMARY**

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The following tables summarize the trends and characteristics of legal immigration to California over Federal Fiscal Years (FFY) 1984–1994. The Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) of the US Department of Justice provided these data in their annual tapes, *Immigrants Admitted into the United States as Legal Permanent Residents, 1984–1994*. The Demographic Research Unit (DRU) of the California State Department of Finance tabulated these data.

A total of 3.49 million people legally immigrated to California over the FFY 1984–1994 period. The INS' definition of "immigration" is broader than the term as commonly understood. Forty percent (1.4 million) immigrated under the 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA). These IRCA immigrants were for the most part already present in California prior to 1982, and are not legal immigrants in the usual sense. They are excluded from further analysis. The remaining two million legal immigrants are the subject of this report.

Size of the Legal Immigrant Flow

California's two million legal immigrants was well more than any other state, and its share of the national total has remained fairly stable at 25–29 percent over the 1984–1994 period (Table 1).

Table 1
Legal Immigrants to the US and California, 1984–1994

Year	US	California	CA/US (%)
1984	543,903	140,289	25.8
1985	570,009	155,403	27.3
1986	601,708	168,790	28.1
1987	601,516	161,164	26.8
1988	643,025	188,696	29.3
1989	612,110	180,930	29.6
1990	656,111	186,225	28.4
1991	704,005	194,317	27.6
1992	810,635	238,281	29.4
1993	880,014	247,253	28.1
1994	798,394	205,872	25.8
Total	7,421,430	2,067,220	27.9

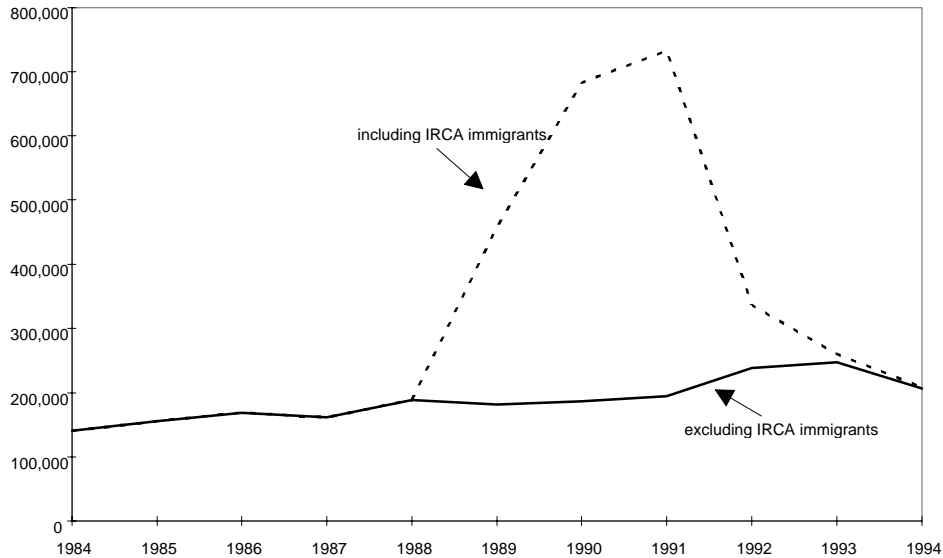
A cursory look at the data shows that over the last several years California's share of the national total of legal immigrants has fallen. This erroneous notion comes from an inappropriate comparison of the legal immigration data from the late 1980's with more recent

¹ Excluding IRCA immigrants.

data. Data from the late 1980's is distorted by the tremendous number of immigrants who were legalized by the IRCA. IRCA immigrants are reported as legal immigrants over the 1988–1992 period in the years in which their applications for legal permanent residency were approved. But most were residing in the US prior to 1982. Including their numbers in the legal immigrant total gives a false impression of a bulge in the number of immigrants (Figure 1). The inclusion of these formerly illegal aliens as legal immigrants boosts California's share to over forty percent of the national total for the 1988–1992 period, because California's share of the IRCA immigrants was over half of the national total. California consistently received at least one quarter of legal immigrants and more than one-half of the nation's illegal immigrants.

Figure 1

California's Legal Immigrants With and Without IRCA Legalization Immigrants: FFY 1984-1994



Characteristics of the Legal Immigrant Flow

California has more than 15 official ports of entry for immigration, and there are more than 300 for the entire US. Yet nearly 70 percent of all the legal immigrants entered through just two ports, Los Angeles or San Francisco. More than 4 in 5 legal immigrants intending to reside in California entered through a California port of entry (Table 2).

Table 2
Legal Immigrants by Port of Entry (POE), 1985–1994

	Total	Los Angeles	San Francisco	Sacramento	San Diego	San Jose	Other CA POE³	Non-CA POE⁴
1985	154,004	65,837	42,509	22	4,818	0	16,705	24,113
1986	167,409	69,468	46,650	44	5,255	1,514	21,978	24,409
1987	159,880	67,650	45,946	35	5,166	737	18,813	18,980
1988	188,696	95,471	46,238	80	18,765	1,806	2,576	23,757
1989	180,930	88,245	48,592	55	14,820	1,416	1,225	26,576
1990	186,225	88,847	50,491	57	17,055	1,642	1,476	26,657
1991	194,317	89,518	56,305	938	16,635	3,579	1,104	26,238
1992	238,281	102,275	53,090	6,776	30,916	7,811	1,135	36,278
1993	247,253	106,807	53,017	5,988	27,624	6,694	2,289	44,834
1994	205,872	78,805	43,941	5,991	6,950	4,938	7,066	58,181
Total	1,922,867	852,923	486,779	19,986	148,004	30,137	74,367	310,023
Percent	100.0	44.4	25.3	1.0	7.7	1.6	3.9	16.1

The two most frequent ports of entry had the most diverse flow of immigrants, with most nationalities having a relatively small share of the ports' totals. The smallest entry points, such as San Ysidro, Calexico, and Otay Mesa had flows that were heavily Mexican in origin. San Diego, Sacramento, and San Jose fell somewhere between these two poles. San Diego had a flow that was two-thirds Mexican, yet it also drew immigrants from all over the world. San Jose was the port of entry for very few Mexicans, yet it also had a very diverse flow of immigrants. Sacramento was not the port of entry for many Mexicans, yet its flow was heavily dominated by a small number of countries: Vietnam, Laos, Thailand, the (ex-) Soviet Union, Ukraine, and Russia. In general, the larger ports of entry had more diverse immigrant flows, and the more southerly ones had flows more heavily Mexican.

Some nationalities favored one port of entry. Armenians provide the most striking example, with 96 percent of all Armenians entering through Los Angeles. Guatemalans and Salvadorans exhibited a similar preference, 81 and 74 percent of them, respectively. All other countries sent no more than 70 percent of their immigrants through any one port, and in most cases far less than that.

Over the FFY 1984–1994 period, 2 million legal immigrants were admitted for permanent residency under 249 different classes of admission or kinds of visa.⁵ Each class is designated for a particular type of immigrant, and each has its own requirements. The most common

² Port of entry data is not available for 1984.

³ Includes Andrade, Calexico, Fresno, Otay Mesa, San Pedro, San Ysidro, Tecate, and the Western Service Center (Laguna Niguel).

⁴ Includes unknown ports of entry.

⁵ Each alien immigrated under only one visa class.

class of admission was refugee with 149,729 admissions. Several classes of admissions were relatively rare, with 97 classes each totaling less than one hundred admissions. Because there are so many different classes of admission, they are best summarized when aggregated into similar categories (Table 3).

Table 3
Legal Immigrants to California by Major Visa Type, 1984–1994

FFY	Family-Sponsored	Non-Capped	Employment-Based	Legalization of Dependents	Diversity Transition	Born to Alien Residents	Total⁶
1984	96,320	27,528	13,994	NA	NA	1,125	138,967
1985	106,541	30,099	16,328	NA	NA	1,036	154,004
1986	116,496	32,770	17,173	NA	NA	970	167,409
1987	112,986	29,861	16,129	NA	NA	904	159,880
1988	110,219	59,564	18,064	NA	NA	849	188,696
1989	113,717	48,910	17,601	NA	NA	702	180,930
1990	117,473	50,750	17,315	NA	NA	687	186,225
1991	117,728	59,120	16,877	NA	NA	592	194,317
1992	116,912	55,280	32,683	25,666	7,174	566	238,281
1993	121,782	55,589	38,143	27,634	3,540	565	247,253
1994	113,157	37,068	33,187	17,930	4,052	478	205,872
Total	1,243,331	486,539	237,494	71,230	14,766	8,474	2,061,834
Percent	60.3	23.6	11.5	3.5	0.7	0.4	100.0

Generally speaking, each class of admission can be assigned to one of several major headings; each heading corresponds to the alien's reason or purpose for immigrating. The INS currently categorizes classes of admission into six main headings: family-sponsored, non-capped, employment-based, legalization of dependents, diversity transition, and children born to alien residents. A brief explanation of each follows.

The *family-sponsored* set of admission classes are for the purpose of family reunification. US citizens and legal permanent residents may sponsor their family members, and they are admitted according to country- and admission-class quotas. Family-sponsored immigration is sometimes called "chain-migration" — the self-perpetuating process where one family member sponsors the immigration of another, who in turn later sponsors another, and so on. Family-sponsored immigration has been relatively stable in numbers over the past decade, and has been responsible for more than 60 percent of California's legal immigration over the period.

⁶ DRU totals for California for FFY 1984-1987 are slightly less than the INS tabulated totals for California due to the exclusion of immigrants with missing or erroneous ZIP Codes. The difference between the two is negligible, and should not bias the overall results.

Second in number to the family-sponsored is the *non-capped* category. It differs from the other headings in that immigrants entering through this category are not subject to numerical caps. The non-capped heading primarily contains immigrants whose entry into the US is allowed for humanitarian reasons. This includes not only refugees and asylees, but also other types such as Amerasian children, employees of US businesses in Hong Kong, (immigration) parolees from the Soviet Union or Indochina, and children born subsequent to visa issuance. Although the size of the category is not controlled by immigration caps, the US Congress does decide which groups of immigrants are eligible to enter through this category.

The third largest group of immigrants enters with *employment-based* visas. Their entry is designed to allow employers to fill positions which are difficult to fill with domestic labor. The Immigration Act of 1990 greatly increased the number of these visas, and the state's totals reflect this. This category is controversial. Critics argue that the jobs these immigrants fill could be done with domestic labor. Proponents argue that immigrant labor is vital to the economy, as it allows jobs to be filled which would otherwise go empty or have to be performed elsewhere. California has a large share of the national total in this category, having recently garnered about one in every three immigrants of this type.

Diversity Transition is a fourth category, one that is only of minor importance numerically. Created by Congress to increase immigration from certain countries whose quotas were negatively affected by earlier immigration reforms, the media has periodically spotlighted the workings of this category; the green-card "lottery", as it is commonly known, produces a newsworthy scramble of applicants struggling to file their applications on time. This category is the only one available for would-be immigrants who have no American relatives or job prospects, and can make no claims for entry on humanitarian grounds. California generally receives a smaller than expected share of this type of immigrant.

Similar in aim to the family-sponsored heading are two much smaller categories: *legalization of dependents* and *children born abroad to alien residents*. Both are family-related, but neither are considered part of the family-sponsored category. The legalization heading is for the dependents of IRCA-legalized aliens, and visas under this heading were not issued past FFY 1994. The numbers in this category are expected to drop dramatically. Similarly, the number of entries under the heading for children born abroad to legal residents has been decreasing steadily for the last dozen years, and will presumably bottom out at some lower figure. These two categories have played only a minor role in recent immigration to California, and their future role can be expected to be negligible.

The mean age of legal immigrants has hovered around 30 years of age since 1989, and the median age of all the legal immigrants over the period is 28 (Table 4). This compares with a median age of 31.4 for all Californians according to the 1990 Census.

Table 4
Legal Immigrants by Age Group, 1984–1994

	0–4	5–17	18–24	25–39	40–64	65+	Total⁷	Mean Age⁸
1984	7,117	31,130	24,309	48,206	23,165	5,038	138,965	NA
1985	7,390	31,808	26,533	55,110	26,913	6,250	154,004	NA
1986	7,711	33,451	27,191	60,224	30,872	7,960	167,409	NA
1987	6,835	30,373	25,666	57,702	31,769	7,528	159,873	NA
1988	6,629	31,405	27,851	67,437	46,379	8,992	188,693	NA
1989	7,292	35,417	27,592	62,985	38,286	9,348	180,920	30.7
1990	7,995	37,924	27,540	60,267	40,673	11,818	186,217	31.2
1991	8,241	39,788	28,303	61,667	42,912	13,397	194,308	31.5
1992	9,280	58,758	37,871	72,487	47,411	12,461	238,268	29.5
1993	9,002	61,353	39,353	75,294	49,360	12,878	247,240	29.5
1994	7,467	49,971	31,271	62,608	42,758	11,787	205,862	30.1
Total	84,959	441,378	323,480	683,987	420,498	107,457	2,061,759	NA
Percent	4.1	21.4	15.7	33.2	20.4	5.2	100.0	NA

Although the median and mean ages of legal immigrants have remained roughly the same over the period, there has been some shift in the age structure, with a notable decrease in the very youngest age group, and an increase in the proportion of retirement age (Figure 2).

Figure 2

Proportion of Legal Immigrants in Ages 0-4 and 65+, 1984-1994



⁷ Excludes unknowns.

⁸ Mean age calculable only from 1989 onwards, as prior to that the INS truncated the age distribution at the upper ages.

A most notable change in the age and sex structure of the legal immigrant flow over the period is its increasing feminization. During the mid-1980's, legal immigrants were about evenly split between the sexes (Table 5).

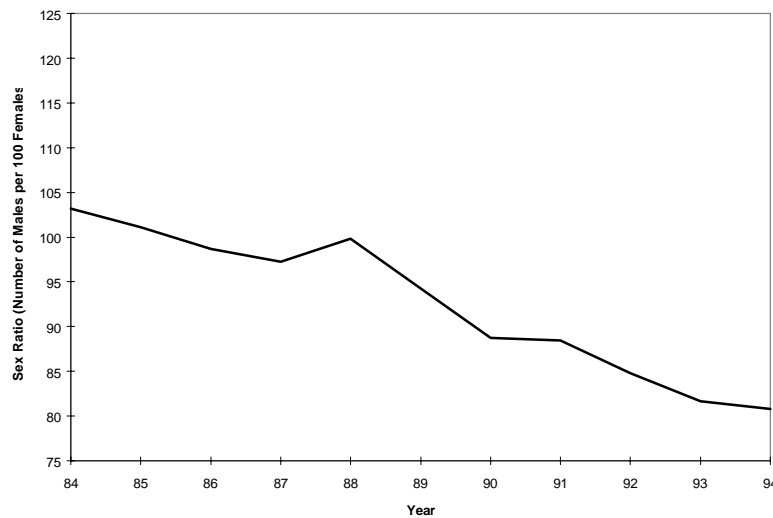
Table 5
Legal Immigrants by Age and Sex, 1984–1994 Combined

	Total⁹		Males		Females		Sex Ratio
	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>	
<5	84,959	4.1	43,256	4.4	41,689	3.9	103.8
5–9	141,354	6.9	72,922	7.4	68,418	6.3	106.6
10–14	176,228	8.6	92,034	9.4	84,180	7.8	109.3
15–19	217,579	10.6	112,308	11.4	105,264	9.8	106.7
20–24	229,697	11.1	106,719	10.9	122,968	11.4	86.8
25–29	284,063	13.8	133,239	13.6	150,808	14.0	88.4
30–34	233,300	11.3	111,104	11.3	122,170	11.3	90.9
35–39	166,624	8.1	78,663	8.0	87,948	8.2	89.4
40–44	120,299	5.8	56,058	5.7	64,232	6.0	87.3
45–49	88,591	4.3	40,931	4.2	47,652	4.4	86.0
50–54	74,390	3.6	31,985	3.3	42,405	3.9	75.4
55–59	70,794	3.4	29,008	3.0	41,781	3.9	69.4
60–64	66,424	3.2	27,730	2.8	38,692	3.6	71.7
65+	107,457	5.2	47,237	4.8	60,200	5.6	78.5
Unk.	75	0.0	43	0.0	32	0.0	134.4
Total	2,061,834	100.0	983,237	100.0	1,078,439	100.0	91.2

The sex ratio has decreased since then so that now there are about five female immigrants for every four males (Figure 3).

Figure 3

Sex Ratio of Legal Immigrants, 1984-1994

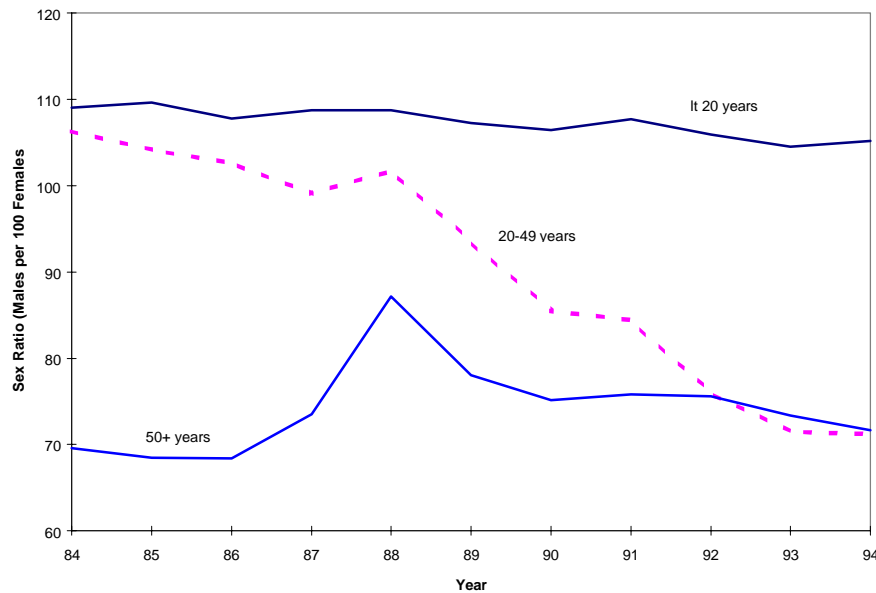


⁹ Includes 158 of unknown sex.

The change in the overall sex ratio is the result of changes in only certain age groups, and not throughout all ages. As illustrated below, the change in the sex ratio occurred mostly in the prime working ages, ages 20–49, while the younger than 20 and 50+ age groups maintained a relatively stable sex ratio over the period (Figure 4).

Figure 4

Sex Ratio by Age Group, 1984-1994



Overall, 63 percent of legal immigrants of marriageable age (15 and older) were married, with a higher proportion of females (65 percent) than males (61 percent). Men were more likely than women to be single, with 37 percent vs. 27 percent, while women were more likely than men to be widowed, with 6 percent vs. 1 percent. Both sexes were equally likely to be separated or divorced (Table 6).

Table 6

Legal Immigrants (15+) by Sex and Marital Status, 1984–1994 Combined

Marital Status	Total ¹⁰		Males		Females	
	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Single	521,279	31.4	284,340	36.7	236,912	26.8
Married	1,046,286	63.0	470,768	60.8	575,447	65.1
Widowed	59,300	3.6	8,098	1.0	51,195	5.8
Divorced	25,914	1.6	9,420	1.2	16,493	1.9
Separated	2,900	0.2	993	0.1	1,907	0.2
Unknown	3,539	0.2	1,363	0.2	2,166	0.2
Total	1,659,218	100.0	774,982	100.0	884,120	100.0

¹⁰ Includes 116 of unknown sex

The propensity to be married varied by age between the sexes. A higher proportion of women than men were married at the younger ages (below age 35), while a higher proportion of men than women were married at the older ages (40 and older). This difference has two likely causes. The first is that in most cultures, on average women tend to marry at an earlier age than do men. The second is that in most cultures women tend to marry men who are, on average, somewhat older, hence making them the sex more likely to lose a spouse (Table 7).

Table 7
Legal Immigrants (15+) by Age, Sex, and Marital Status, 1984–1994 Combined

Ages	Males			Females		
	Total	Married	Percent	Total	Married	Percent
15–19	112,308	2,018	1.8	105,264	7,574	7.2
20–24	106,719	38,698	36.3	122,968	71,003	57.7
25–29	133,239	80,673	60.6	150,808	115,582	76.6
30–34	111,104	79,323	71.4	122,170	98,812	80.9
35–39	78,663	63,404	80.6	87,948	72,529	82.5
40–49	96,989	84,926	87.6	111,884	91,997	82.2
50–59	60,993	55,923	91.6	84,186	64,515	76.6
60–64	27,730	25,375	91.5	38,692	25,822	66.7
65 +	47,237	40,428	85.6	60,200	27,613	45.9
Total	774,982	470,768	60.7	884,120	575,447	65.1

Asia was the most frequent continent of birth for the immigrants, being the birthplace for more than half of the immigrants over the period. It was followed by North America, and then Europe, with the remaining three continents following distantly (Table 8).

Table 8
Legal Immigrants by Continent of Birth, 1984–1994

FFY	Asia	Europe	Africa	Oceania	N. America	S. America	Total ¹²
1984	85,128	11,247	2,620	1,726	34,918	3,322	138,967
1985	95,300	11,477	3,047	1,869	38,596	3,715	154,004
1986	100,319	11,667	3,005	1,820	46,357	4,240	167,409
1987	91,677	9,692	2,750	1,995	49,464	4,302	159,880
1988	98,123	10,965	3,116	1,808	70,199	4,479	188,696
1989	107,025	14,909	3,211	1,812	49,336	4,637	180,930
1990	115,481	19,042	3,581	2,031	41,415	4,675	186,225
1991	115,385	25,267	4,028	1,833	43,012	4,792	194,317
1992	128,975	27,277	4,376	1,676	70,317	5,660	238,281
1993	124,507	30,852	4,788	1,858	79,844	5,404	247,253
1994	100,619	26,827	4,179	1,853	67,606	4,788	205,872
Total	1,162,539	199,222	38,701	20,281	591,064	50,014	2,061,834
Percent	56.4	9.7	1.9	1.0	28.6	2.4	100.0

¹¹ For purposes of this tabulation, Turkey is counted as part of Asia, and the Soviet Union and its successor states are all counted as part of Europe.

¹² Includes 6 unknowns in 1984, 1 in 1986, and 6 in 1988.

Only eight countries held one of the top five spots each year among the sending countries. Mexico, the Philippines, and Vietnam all fairly consistently held their relative rankings in the list of sending countries — only the fourth and fifth ranks saw a variety of countries in those positions. The relative stability in the rankings over the period is testimony to the conditions that make leaving the sending countries an attractive option, as well as to the power that US immigration policy has in shaping the composition of the flow by providing preference to immigrants with relatives already within the US (Table 9).

Table 9
Top Five Countries of Birth of Legal Immigrants, 1984–1994

FFY	RANK				
	1	2	3	4	5
1984	Mexico	Philippines	Vietnam	Korea	China
1985	Mexico	Philippines	Vietnam	Korea	China
1986	Mexico	Philippines	Vietnam	Korea	China
1987	Mexico	Philippines	Vietnam	China	Korea
1988	Mexico	Philippines	China	Vietnam	Korea
1989	Mexico	Philippines	Vietnam	China	Iran
1990	Mexico	Philippines	Vietnam	China	Iran
1991	Philippines	Mexico	Vietnam	Soviet Union	China
1992	Mexico	Vietnam	Philippines	El Salvador	China
1993	Mexico	Philippines	Vietnam	China	El Salvador
1994	Mexico	Philippines	China	Vietnam	El Salvador

More than 130 different countries were the birthplace of California's legal immigrants over the 1984–1994 period, ranging in amount from Mexico's 400,000 to the lone immigrant from Mongolia. Some ninety countries sent a total of at least 1,000 immigrants over the period (Table 10). A striking feature of California's immigration is the year-to-year steadiness of the flows from most countries. There were some notable exceptions, however. Ireland, the Soviet Union, Bangladesh, Nicaragua, Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras all had immigration levels that were at least twice as large over the 1991–1994 period compared to their 1984–1987 levels. On the other hand, Cambodia, Cuba, Tonga, and Portugal in the 1990's had levels that were only half of their earlier levels.

Table 10

**Countries of Birth (in Rank Order) for Countries
Providing 2,000 or More Legal Immigrants, 1984–1994**

	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	Sum
Mexico	24,189	25,206	30,490	34,977	53,622	33,031	26,792	22,658	47,086	52,848	49,964	400,863
Philippines	18,985	23,056	25,529	24,365	25,012	24,144	25,961	26,253	25,256	27,404	23,916	269,881
Vietnam	13,647	13,751	13,569	10,082	11,096	15,959	19,590	21,525	33,471	25,428	14,162	192,280
China	8,832	9,382	9,456	10,070	11,273	10,280	10,918	11,926	11,597	13,690	17,442	124,866
Iran	5,833	7,320	8,094	6,983	8,160	9,718	10,885	10,904	6,840	8,730	6,284	89,751
Korea	9,061	9,470	9,747	9,932	9,748	9,574	8,901	6,493	5,816	5,913	4,957	89,612
El Salvador	3,841	4,624	5,452	5,600	6,829	7,086	5,460	7,470	11,851	12,892	7,900	79,005
Taiwan	4,997	6,585	6,029	5,130	4,300	5,402	6,142	5,528	7,483	7,143	4,855	63,594
India	3,720	4,500	4,467	4,744	4,576	5,026	5,297	5,879	6,946	8,622	7,076	60,853
Laos	3,614	2,216	3,210	2,238	3,649	5,473	4,844	4,788	4,424	3,650	2,617	40,723
Hong Kong	2,198	2,089	2,137	1,956	3,750	3,784	3,438	4,416	4,513	3,880	3,356	35,517
Soviet Union¹³	1,275	684	553	514	805	4,553	7,506	14,403	1,061	1,640	1,600	34,594
United Kingdom	3,051	2,911	3,053	2,554	2,684	2,673	2,873	2,610	4,051	3,979	3,186	33,625
Thailand	1,806	2,070	2,678	2,451	2,754	3,324	3,265	3,079	3,384	3,311	2,689	30,811
Guatemala	1,343	1,652	1,870	2,328	2,726	2,426	2,170	2,704	3,950	6,115	3,527	30,811
Cambodia	3,246	5,157	5,143	3,939	3,289	2,531	2,242	1,438	970	655	513	29,123
Canada	1,890	2,063	2,115	2,159	2,243	2,064	2,423	1,917	2,211	2,496	1,918	23,499
Japan	1,624	1,752	1,536	1,605	1,689	1,552	1,846	1,599	4,090	2,437	1,914	21,644
Nicaragua	970	1,002	1,134	1,194	1,308	1,413	1,667	5,172	2,132	2,123	1,526	19,641
Armenia									5,934	5,938	3,606	15,478
Peru	743	824	1,009	1,051	1,206	1,378	1,467	1,576	1,653	1,718	1,612	14,237
Romania	1,222	1,553	1,558	966	980	1,123	1,010	1,477	1,645	1,206	669	13,409
Pakistan	865	1,038	1,120	1,013	1,009	1,120	1,255	1,522	1,474	1,594	1,387	13,397
Lebanon	856	919	1,036	1,022	1,199	1,510	1,159	1,342	1,614	1,453	1,128	13,238
Afghanistan	1,064	922	1,191	1,006	1,195	1,342	1,026	1,207	1,278	1,352	1,066	12,649
Germany	972	1,072	1,097	1,080	1,061	1,043	1,186	1,075	1,458	1,122	1,030	12,196
Indonesia	551	684	620	688	753	635	1,985	1,287	1,961	970	696	10,830
Ukraine									2,329	4,125	3,996	10,450
Israel	730	773	926	918	775	946	991	860	1,328	1,315	821	10,383
Ireland	201	210	294	317	601	860	1,270	630	1,759	1,830	2,338	10,310
Fiji	778	825	823	1,026	853	760	1,092	966	611	700	829	9,263
Cuba	552	1,840	2,789	684	645	667	378	379	375	406	411	9,126
Poland	880	1,043	891	609	865	775	779	864	745	884	597	8,932
Ethiopia	572	837	670	426	661	629	739	1,194	1,043	1,248	766	8,785
Syria	493	432	505	436	695	869	1,005	875	996	1,172	802	8,280
Colombia	613	751	821	850	771	761	715	653	856	768	660	8,219
Honduras	352	457	618	676	569	668	686	773	1,070	1,233	906	8,008
Egypt	549	610	724	778	669	797	823	810	741	745	672	7,918
Jordan	435	547	638	624	634	794	865	797	788	861	747	7,730

¹³ If total number of immigrants from the former Soviet Union and its successor countries were aggregated, the overall total would have been 75,270 — enough to rank it ninth in the table above.

	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	Sum
France	487	571	652	570	644	625	667	671	824	739	733	7,183
Argentina	464	443	575	511	601	610	683	672	1,066	731	558	6,914
Iraq	652	432	460	280	291	261	413	408	1,008	1,237	1,382	6,824
Russia									1,658	2,368	2,756	6,782
Turkey	498	473	456	386	398	528	623	564	673	581	391	5,571
Belize	574	471	579	486	762	552	499	467	352	449	319	5,510
Burma	364	518	516	474	467	608	618	526	379	469	503	5,442
Brazil	311	365	427	344	429	514	544	503	576	687	695	5,395
South Africa	343	329	402	425	493	478	521	439	741	628	547	5,346
Malaysia	303	334	294	318	394	421	546	514	762	676	428	4,990
Australia	361	393	411	322	401	470	472	399	557	637	566	4,989
Ecuador	335	333	372	376	440	339	314	491	562	484	390	4,436
Jamaica	380	399	386	406	456	415	345	332	328	335	253	4,035
Italy	332	380	364	311	371	338	347	334	438	392	366	3,973
Chile	329	369	396	431	407	389	336	334	319	319	264	3,893
Nigeria	248	311	295	244	317	310	361	321	439	441	417	3,704
Greece	266	206	250	189	236	340	432	356	418	445	251	3,389
Sweden	260	315	308	272	304	309	327	289	352	334	286	3,356
Czechoslovakia	340	365	387	388	354	229	312	318	234	194	127	3,248
Panama	262	291	281	277	287	350	286	442	257	269	201	3,203
Portugal	424	385	351	309	253	257	263	227	133	229	172	3,003
Yugoslavia	206	231	239	219	216	287	305	289	280	324	284	2,880
Hungary	204	287	308	223	252	238	343	305	227	247	199	2,833
New Zealand	197	233	198	215	215	238	240	243	302	322	263	2,666
Costa Rica	248	254	237	253	250	251	218	240	270	209	230	2,660
Netherlands	215	248	243	230	244	217	244	202	265	263	202	2,573
Sri Lanka	128	149	182	180	185	250	249	288	302	323	285	2,521
Bangladesh	76	106	118	157	115	158	320	450	295	294	308	2,397
Switzerland	144	184	193	176	192	205	185	183	240	284	235	2,221
Tonga	283	324	252	304	218	219	143	124	112	112	94	2,185
Spain	183	187	208	205	206	176	163	208	224	198	220	2,178
Singapore	138	173	184	166	176	192	193	173	295	286	174	2,150
Bolivia	163	181	184	196	191	200	180	151	186	227	158	2,017

Legal immigrant flows from some countries were particularly large relative to their home population. Four countries sent California at least one percent of their population. Belize sent the largest fraction, at 2.6 percent of its population, followed by Tonga (2.1 percent), El Salvador¹⁴ (1.4 percent), and Fiji (1.2 percent).

Although the 2 million immigrants came from all over the globe, half were born in only five countries: Mexico, Philippines, Vietnam, China, and Iran. The number of Mexican immigrants

¹⁴ El Salvador would have a much higher percentage if the number of immigrants under Temporary Protective Status (TPS) were included. Technically, however, they are not legal immigrants. Nor are they illegal immigrants until their TPS expires.

immigrating to California over the period was greater than the population of Fresno, the sixth largest city in the state. The 269,000 Filipinos immigrating was greater than the population of Riverside, the state's eleventh largest city. Overall, comparing California's nearly six million births with the two million legal immigrants arriving over the same period suggests that for every three Californians born here, yet another one arrives here legally from abroad¹⁵

Los Angeles received more than 800,000 legal immigrants over the period, making it the most popular county of intended residence, and giving it forty percent of the state's total. Orange and Santa Clara were the next most popular counties, receiving respectively 9 and 8 percent of the total (Table 11). Map 1 in the Appendix depicts the distribution of immigrants by county, showing that the preponderance of immigrants settled in the coastal, central, and southern counties. Map 2 in the Appendix depicts the distribution of immigrants relative to each county's 1990 Census population. Although the overall picture is similar in that both show a dearth of immigrants in the northern and mountain counties, the emphasis changes. San Francisco, Santa Clara, and Imperial Counties have the highest relative amounts of immigration, followed by Los Angeles, Orange, and several Central Valley counties.

Table 11
Legal Immigrants by County of Intended Residence, 1984–1994

County	1985											Total	Percent of Total
	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994		
Alameda	6,677	8,075	8,450	8,089	7,902	8,393	8,690	10,096	10,425	11,316	9,781	97,894	4.7
Alpine	2	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	2	3	1	11	0.0
Amador	11	16	8	11	17	16	10	20	20	25	22	176	0.0
Butte	206	175	208	198	209	370	347	324	472	330	499	3,338	0.2
Calaveras	10	17	16	22	10	25	20	10	21	15	22	188	0.0
Colusa	56	56	66	71	63	30	60	42	51	92	179	766	0.0
Contra Costa	2,434	3,056	2,950	2,762	3,197	3,184	3,673	3,791	4,202	4,572	3,897	37,718	1.8
Del Norte	9	24	14	15	7	28	23	29	27	21	12	209	0.0
El Dorado	29	28	50	32	54	40	42	59	100	183	171	788	0.0
Fresno	2,538	1,775	3,048	2,233	2,911	3,383	3,167	3,913	4,530	6,160	5,673	39,331	1.9
Glenn	45	73	67	55	35	66	29	28	36	53	71	558	0.0
Humboldt	106	80	102	86	97	105	109	161	114	87	131	1,178	0.1
Imperial	852	1,176	1,600	1,528	1,548	1,397	1,998	1,787	2,123	1,536	1,342	16,887	0.8
Inyo	13	6	9	7	20	15	13	25	24	20	28	180	0.0
Kern	1185	1,172	1,318	1,292	1,240	1,222	1,218	1,302	1,754	2,423	2,982	17,108	0.8
Kings	242	228	236	249	254	247	209	233	319	457	518	3,192	0.2
Lake	26	24	34	32	42	32	36	46	33	43	76	424	0.0
Lassen	10	15	25	9	5	8	21	4	17	9	15	138	0.0
Los Angeles	54,192	61,575	68,294	65,075	89,233	78,471	76,185	76,481	93,186	99,372	75,855	837,919	40.6
Madera	153	118	134	199	156	127	125	98	172	402	491	2,175	0.1
Marin	700	743	760	782	769	662	736	896	969	1,086	868	8,971	0.4
Mariposa	12	5	16	7	5	6	7	2	11	11	13	95	0.0

¹⁵ This understates immigration's role in population growth, as many of the legal immigrants are of child-bearing age, and so not only contribute directly to the population size, but increase the number of births, as well.

County	1985											Total	Percent of Total
	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994		
Mendocino	95	114	87	119	106	98	68	86	90	127	157	1,147	0.1
Merced	893	498	979	711	957	1,074	1,007	1,096	1,154	1,346	1,518	11,233	0.5
Modoc	4	6	8	9	12	8	3	8	5	11	6	80	0.0
Mono	7	4	9	11	13	7	18	15	31	33	26	174	0.0
Monterey	1,792	1,691	1,863	1,639	1,525	1,281	1,346	1,349	1,877	2,617	2,677	19,657	1.0
Napa	226	218	199	160	168	197	193	167	275	302	480	2,585	0.1
Nevada	18	17	31	40	24	31	29	24	48	61	49	372	0.0
Orange	12,741	13,769	14,114	13,426	14,609	15,771	16,490	16,151	26,223	23,567	15,255	182,116	8.8
Placer	68	73	88	117	121	147	150	165	209	256	285	1,679	0.1
Plumas	15	14	15	9	13	6	7	12	12	5	8	116	0.0
Riverside	1,405	1,532	2,006	1,930	2,034	2,046	2,432	2,449	3,909	4,175	4,092	28,010	1.4
Sacramento	3,384	2,820	2,983	3,042	2,565	3,638	4,348	5,440	7,086	6,199	6,138	47,643	2.3
San Benito	113	100	95	113	113	94	87	62	131	216	209	1,333	0.1
San Bernardino	2,058	2,214	2,942	2,800	3,537	3,527	3,858	4,166	5,413	5,681	4,657	40,853	2.0
San Diego	7,638	8,690	10,056	9,777	10,529	9,349	10,923	12,500	15,432	15,891	13,904	124,689	6.0
San Francisco	11,016	11,837	11,086	10,641	10,501	10,358	11,188	13,198	11,935	13,133	11,990	126,883	6.2
San Joaquin	2,949	2,258	2,079	3,558	2,394	3,666	2,701	2,824	3,422	2,482	2,482	30,815	1.5
San Luis Obispo	210	294	233	266	253	226	241	225	333	401	491	3,173	0.2
San Mateo	4,332	5,012	4,970	5,019	5,108	4,936	5,079	5,827	6,186	6,618	5,753	58,840	2.9
Santa Barbara	976	1,023	1,198	1,070	1,053	1,014	1,101	1,140	1,361	1,856	2,128	13,920	0.7
Santa Clara	9,528	12,736	12,490	10,831	11,849	11,871	13,904	15,344	21,141	19,228	16,144	155,066	7.5
Santa Cruz	754	743	696	692	716	605	493	534	899	1,159	1,448	8,739	0.4
Shasta	69	73	97	91	143	174	170	213	206	232	111	1,579	0.1
Sierra	3	3	1	7	2	2	1	2	3	2	5	31	0.0
Siskiyou	44	14	31	15	16	18	36	23	36	21	35	289	0.0
Solano	964	1,206	1,144	1,058	1,187	1,432	1,539	1,487	1,538	2,011	1,505	15,071	0.7
Sonoma	585	793	790	657	769	587	543	617	762	1,071	1,189	8,363	0.4
Stanislaus	928	925	1,757	1,373	1,441	1,193	1,280	1,127	1,424	1,581	1,667	14,696	0.7
Sutter	340	354	354	320	267	365	323	369	405	511	570	4,178	0.2
Tehama	26	30	39	40	25	43	20	26	22	32	34	337	0.0
Trinity	6	3	5	3	4	9	5	3	4	6	3	51	0.0
Tulare	880	812	954	898	932	1,026	1,170	975	1,143	1,931	1,828	12,549	0.6
Tuolumne	21	24	24	24	20	22	24	28	26	28	23	264	0.0
Ventura	2,357	2,328	2,513	2,347	2,339	2,498	2,459	2,446	3,549	3,761	4,079	30,676	1.5
Yolo	371	380	376	392	486	645	703	649	977	986	1,036	7,001	0.3
Yuba	130	102	142	155	171	375	217	328	281	270	393	2,564	0.1
Unknown	2,513	2,857	3,549	3,765	4,920	4,763	5,351	3,895	2,125	1,230	850	35,818	1.7
TOTAL	140,951	155,989	169,395	161,867	190,684	182,919	186,225	194,317	240,273	249,246	207,866		100.0

The two million immigrants reported more than 4,000 different ZIP Codes of intended residence. Twenty-one of these ZIP Codes received at least 10,000 immigrants over the period, cumulatively accounting for twelve percent, or one-eighth of all arrivals. Eleven of

the twenty-one were in Los Angeles County. Yet the top two ZIP Codes, although in Los Angeles County, were not in the city of Los Angeles, but rather Glendale and Monterey Park (Table 12).

Table 12
ZIP Codes of Intended Residence Receiving 10,000 or More
Legal Immigrants Total, 1984–1994 (in Rank Order)

ZIP Code	County	City	Immigrants
91205	Los Angeles	Glendale	16,157
91754	Los Angeles	Monterey Park	15,008
94112	San Francisco	San Francisco	13,547
90027	Los Angeles	Los Angeles	13,510
90026	Los Angeles	Los Angeles	13,332
90004	Los Angeles	Los Angeles	12,546
90006	Los Angeles	Los Angeles	12,510
90046	Los Angeles	Los Angeles	12,141
94110	San Francisco	San Francisco	12,110
92683	Orange	Westminster	12,007
94122	San Francisco	San Francisco	11,697
90029	Los Angeles	Los Angeles	11,685
94015	San Mateo	Daly City	11,513
90701	Los Angeles	Artesia	11,494
91801	Los Angeles	Alhambra	11,048
94121	San Francisco	San Francisco	10,552
95122	Santa Clara	San Jose	10,452
92704	Orange	Santa Ana	10,296
91770	Los Angeles	Rosemead	10,230
92105	San Diego	San Diego	10,053
94109	San Francisco	San Francisco	10,051

There were some differences between these ZIP Codes in the immigration patterns. Most ZIP Code areas, such as 94110 in San Francisco, for example, garnered a steady stream of immigrants without much year-to-year variation. But some had a different pattern, such as 91205 in Glendale, attracting relatively few immigrants during the earlier part of the period, and then attracting a huge volume of immigrants later on. The former received about one thousand legal immigrants per year, year after year. In contrast, the latter received relatively few immigrants until 1989, when the number tripled over earlier levels. The difference between the two stems from their composition. 94110's flow is a melting pot of large and steady numbers of immigrants from China, Philippines, El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Mexico. 91205's flow is composed mainly of large numbers of immigrants from Iran, Armenia, and the (ex-) Soviet Union. These countries sent negligible numbers of immigrants earlier in the

period, but much increased volumes later in the period, reflecting the changing political circumstances in that part of the world.

California's most famous ZIP Code, Beverly Hills' 90210, received 2,871 legal immigrants over the 1984–1994 period — a sizable amount, but not nearly enough to put it near the top ranks.

Over the 1984–94 period California received between 23,000 and 45,000 refugees and asylees annually, totaling nearly 369,000. This was about a third of the national total (Table 13).

Table 13
Refugees and Asylees to California and the US, 1984–1994

FFY	Refugees and Asylees to		
	US	California	CA/US (%)
1984	92,127	27,499	29.8
1985	95,040	30,142	31.7
1986	104,383	32,680	31.3
1987	91,840	23,907	26.0
1988	81,719	27,423	33.6
1989	84,288	36,136	42.9
1990	97,364	38,507	39.5
1991	139,079	45,594	32.8
1992	117,037	38,261	32.7
1993	127,343	39,516	31.0
1994	121,434	29,284	24.1
Total	1,151,654	368,949	32.0

The number of refugees and asylees granted permanent residency in a given year does little to indicate the actual number of asylum seekers that currently reside here. At the start of FFY 1994 there were over 150,000 asylum seekers¹⁶ within the state waiting to have their applications for asylum approved, an increase of roughly 50,000 over the start of the preceding year. Past records indicate that only a small proportion of these asylum seekers will have their applications approved. Yet due to the large backlog of applications and the often drawn out nature of the proceedings, most applicants will continue to be present here for some time into the future. These people are not legal immigrants nor are they undocumented aliens or permanent legal residents — they are in a quasi-legal status.

¹⁶ Asylum seekers are aliens awaiting approval of their application for asylum. Asylees are asylum seekers who have received approval. Aliens may only apply for asylum once they are within the US, otherwise they apply at US embassies abroad as refugees.

Naturalizations

California has long been the leading destination of legal immigrants in the nation. This high level of immigration also makes California the leading state in producing new American citizens. The surge in this year's numbers of naturalizations, combined with political concerns over both voting and of the distribution certain benefits, has made an issue of a subject that usually has been of little interest.

Just as arrival at the port of entry is the first step in an immigrant's odyssey in America, naturalization (the acquisition of citizenship) is the last step. Not all immigrants naturalize, however. The table below provides an overview of naturalizations in California and the US (Table 14).

Table 14
Naturalizations of Legal Immigrants in California and US,
1984–1994

FFY	California	US	CA/US (%)
1984	40,490	197,023	20.6
1985	70,159	244,717	28.7
1986	105,284	280,623	37.5
1987	82,607	227,008	36.4
1988	65,397	242,063	27.0
1989	50,286	233,777	21.5
1990	61,736	270,101	22.9
1991	125,661	308,058	40.8
1992	52,411	240,252	21.8
1993	68,100	314,681	21.6
1994	90,279	407,398	22.2
Total	812,410	2,965,701	27.4

Although there are exceptions, naturalization generally requires the fulfillment of certain requirements regarding age, lawful admission to the US, residency, and knowledge of American government and history, and proficiency in English. Most naturalizing immigrants face a minimum requirement of five years of legal permanent residency, although in practice the average length of time between immigration and naturalization has tended to run several years longer. Not all legal immigrants naturalize. The proportion naturalizing varies widely by country of origin, with those from Asia, Africa, and Eastern Europe having the highest rates, and immigrants from North America and Western Europe having the lowest rates.

Naturalizations have been increasing since the late 1960's and climbed more steeply since 1992. A number of factors play an important role in increasing the number of naturalizations this year. The Green Card Replacement Program, begun in 1992, requires some legal residents to apply for a new, more counterfeit-resistant residency card ("green card"), and so may also be prompting some to naturalize instead of continuing their legal immigrant status. Additionally, the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) has recently deployed more resources and personnel. Both the Los Angeles and San Francisco regional INS offices had tremendous backlogs of naturalization applications. The increased resources were targeted to reduce the backlogs, increasing the number of naturalizations. The greatest factor in the increase is the pool of potential applicants for naturalization. An enormous number of immigrants legalized by the Immigration and Reform Control Act of 1986 (IRCA) acquired legal residency between 1989 and 1992 – more than one and a half million in California. They were not eligible for naturalization until 1994 at the earliest. They are just now acquiring citizenship in large numbers.

Non-Immigrant Aliens

In addition to legal immigration, that is, acquisitions of permanent residency, the INS also distributes statistics on the numbers of non-immigrant aliens coming to California and the US. Non-immigrant aliens are those who come to the US with non-residential visas, that is, visas for what are supposed to be stays of a temporary rather than permanent nature. Examples of temporary stays would be visits for business or pleasure, transit travel, stays for studying or temporary work or training, and so forth. Except in cases of visa overstays (where the alien then attains illegal or "undocumented" status), non-immigrant aliens should be considered as temporary visitors, with little or no effect on population size. As the table below shows, California's share of non-immigrant aliens is both constant and about proportionate to its population size (Table 15).

Table 15

Non-Immigrant Aliens to California and US, 1992–1994

FFY	Non-Immigrants ¹⁷ to		CA/US (%)
	US	California	
1992	20,793,847	3,063,685	14.7
1993	21,446,993	3,266,028	15.2
1994	22,118,706	3,265,123	14.8

¹⁷ The unit of analysis here is visas (or alien visits), and not the aliens themselves. That is, each visa represents one entry, but in the course of a year an alien may have more than one entry. This is less likely to be true for visa types for longer-duration stays, such as for students or temporary workers, and more likely to be true for visitors with shorter durations, such as for tourist or business purposes.

Numerically, the two largest classes of non-immigrant visas to California are those for business or pleasure trips. Aliens with non-immigrant visas in general should have little net effect on population. But from a population perspective, there are two non-immigrant visa types, students and temporary workers, that because of their semi-permanent nature may fact increase the resident population to above what it would otherwise be (Table 16).

Table 16
Non-Immigrant Aliens to California and the US
with Student- or Temporary Worker Visas, 1992–1994

FFY	Students			Temporary Workers and Trainees		
	US	California	US/CA (%)	US	California	US/CA (%)
1994	394,001	69,235	17.6	185,988	25,459	13.7
1993	257,430	42,855	16.6	165,238	22,755	13.8
1992	241,093	39,529	16.4	163,137	22,781	14.0