

July 2012

**WHO AND WHERE THE DREAMERS ARE:
A Demographic Profile of Immigrants Who Might Benefit from the Obama
Administration's Deferred Action Initiative**

A new analysis casts some much-needed light on the question of exactly who might be eligible for the Obama Administration's "deferred action" initiative for unauthorized youth who were brought to this country as children. This initiative, announced by Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano on June 15, offers a two-year, renewable reprieve from deportation to unauthorized immigrants who are under the age of 31; entered the United States before age 16; have lived continuously in the country for at least five years; have not been convicted of a felony, a "significant" misdemeanor, or three other misdemeanors; and are currently in school, graduated from high school, earned a GED, or served in the military. Immigrants who meet these criteria are commonly referred to as "DREAMers" because they comprise most (though not all) of the individuals who meet the general requirements of the Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act.¹

Other analyses have produced national and state-level estimates of how many immigrants could benefit from the deferred action initiative.² However, the analysis by the IPC, together with Rob Paral & Associates, provides a new level of detail, breaking down the DREAMER population by nationality and age at the national and state level (as well as the [congressional district level](#)). Not surprisingly, most DREAMers are Mexican and are found in big immigrant-receiving states with large unauthorized populations, such as California and Texas. Yet DREAMers are also found in virtually every state, and significant numbers are non-Mexicans who hail from all corners of the globe. The majority of DREAMers are 15 or older and are therefore eligible to apply for deferred action right now. However, there are also large numbers who are 14 or younger and are not yet eligible to apply, but who will be eligible at some point in the future *if* the deferred action initiative remains in place. These sorts of demographic details are important as the federal government gears up to implement the deferred action initiative, and as community groups prepare to assist the populations they serve in taking advantage of this opportunity.

There are approximately 1.4 million immigrants currently in the United States who might meet the requirements of the deferred action initiative, either now or when they are older.³

- Roughly 936,930 immigrants between the ages of 15 and 30 might immediately meet the requirements of the deferred action initiative. They comprise 69 percent of all potential beneficiaries {Chart 1}.

- Approximately 426,330 immigrants between the ages of 5 and 14 might meet the requirements of the deferred action initiative at some point in the future if the initiative remains in place. They comprise 31 percent of all potential beneficiaries {Chart 1}.

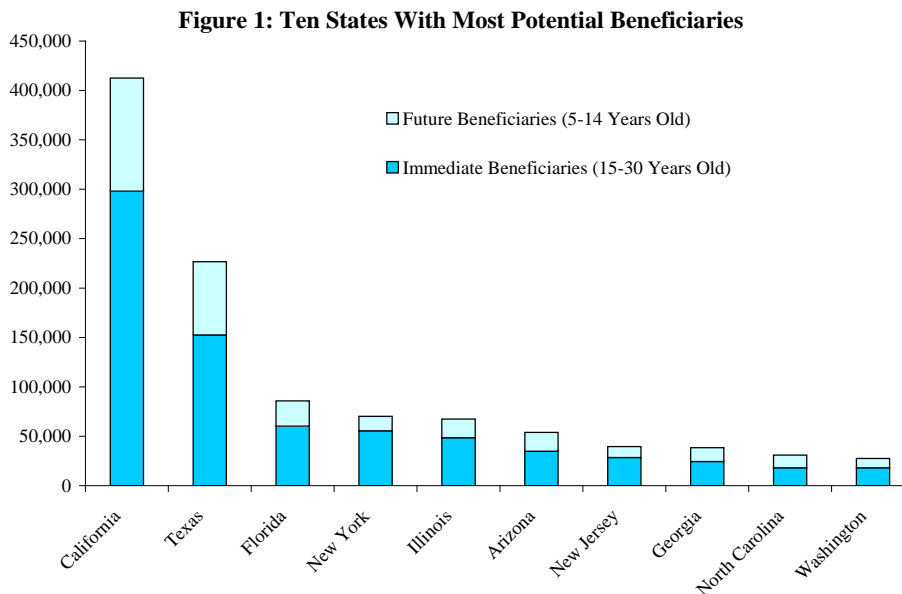
Chart 1: Potential Beneficiaries by State

	All Potential Beneficiaries	Immediate Beneficiaries (15-30 Years Old)	Share of All Potential Beneficiaries	Future Beneficiaries (5-14 Years Old)	Share of All Potential Beneficiaries
United States	1,363,260	936,930	69%	426,330	31%
California	412,560	298,030	72%	114,530	28%
Texas	226,700	152,550	67%	74,150	33%
Florida	85,750	60,190	70%	25,560	30%
New York	70,170	55,490	79%	14,680	21%
Illinois	67,460	48,590	72%	18,860	28%
Arizona	53,880	34,840	65%	19,040	35%
New Jersey	39,650	28,460	72%	11,180	28%
Georgia	38,500	24,360	63%	14,140	37%
North Carolina	31,010	18,150	59%	12,860	41%
Washington	27,490	18,130	66%	9,360	34%
Colorado	25,610	15,850	62%	9,760	38%
Nevada	23,300	15,050	65%	8,250	35%
Virginia	20,310	14,030	69%	6,290	31%
Massachusetts	17,040	12,210	72%	4,830	28%
Oregon	16,600	10,420	63%	6,190	37%
Maryland	15,950	11,270	71%	4,680	29%
Utah	13,060	7,800	60%	5,260	40%
New Mexico	12,840	8,240	64%	4,600	36%
Pennsylvania	12,570	8,580	68%	3,990	32%
Michigan	12,100	7,550	62%	4,540	38%
Indiana	10,520	5,980	57%	4,540	43%
Tennessee	10,370	5,870	57%	4,500	43%
Minnesota	9,570	6,010	63%	3,560	37%
Connecticut	9,370	6,670	71%	2,700	29%
Wisconsin	9,330	5,860	63%	3,470	37%
Oklahoma	9,170	6,230	68%	2,950	32%
Kansas	8,830	5,170	59%	3,660	41%
Ohio	8,190	5,170	63%	3,020	37%
South Carolina	7,530	4,460	59%	3,060	41%
Arkansas	6,860	4,470	65%	2,390	35%
Missouri	6,510	3,900	60%	2,610	40%
Alabama	6,220	3,090	50%	3,130	50%
Idaho	5,110	3,230	63%	1,870	37%
Nebraska	5,070	2,920	58%	2,150	42%

	All Potential Beneficiaries	Immediate Beneficiaries (15-30 Years Old)	Share of All Potential Beneficiaries	Future Beneficiaries (5-14 Years Old)	Share of All Potential Beneficiaries
Iowa	4,590	3,150	69%	1,440	31%
Louisiana	4,320	2,680	62%	1,640	38%
Kentucky	4,040	2,100	52%	1,930	48%
Hawaii	3,240	2,380	73%	860	27%
Rhode Island	2,450	1,690	69%	760	31%
Delaware	2,240	1,580	71%	660	29%
Mississippi	2,040	970	48%	1,070	52%
District of Columbia	1,190	960	81%	230	19%
New Hampshire	1,020	730	72%	290	28%
Wyoming	700	380	54%	320	46%
Maine	560	270	48%	290	52%
West Virginia	460	340	74%	120	26%
Alaska	410	320	78%	80	20%
South Dakota	340	160	47%	170	50%
Vermont	260	220	85%	40	15%
North Dakota	210	150	71%	60	29%
Montana	90	70	78%	10	11%

Nearly half of potential beneficiaries live in California and Texas, but there are significant numbers in other states across the country.

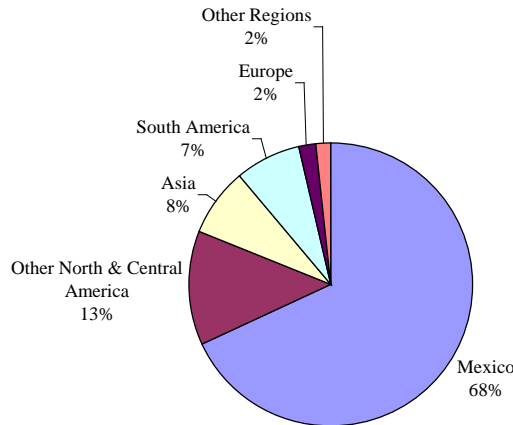
- The states with the most potential beneficiaries (both immediate and future) are California (412,560), Texas (226,700), Florida (85,750), New York (70,170), and Illinois (67,460) {Figure 1}.



Nearly seven-tenths of potential beneficiaries are Mexican, but immigrants who might be eligible come from all corners of the globe.

- Roughly 68 percent of potential beneficiaries are Mexican, while 13 percent are from other countries in North and Central America (including the Caribbean) {Figure 2}.
- Approximately 8 percent of potential beneficiaries are from Asia, 7 percent from South America, 2 percent from Europe, and 2 percent from other parts of the world {Figure 2}.

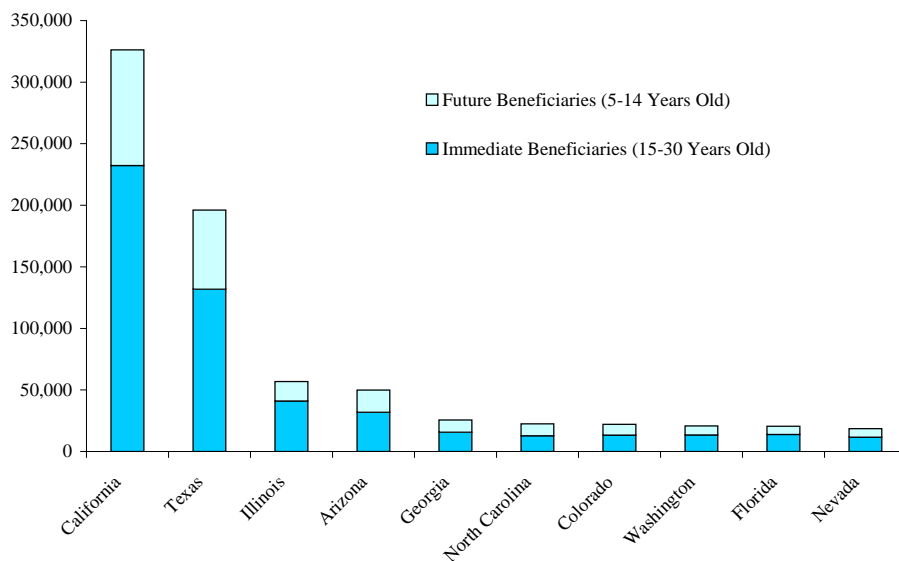
Figure 2: Potential Beneficiaries by Country/Region of Origin



Potential beneficiaries from different parts of the world are distributed differently across the country.

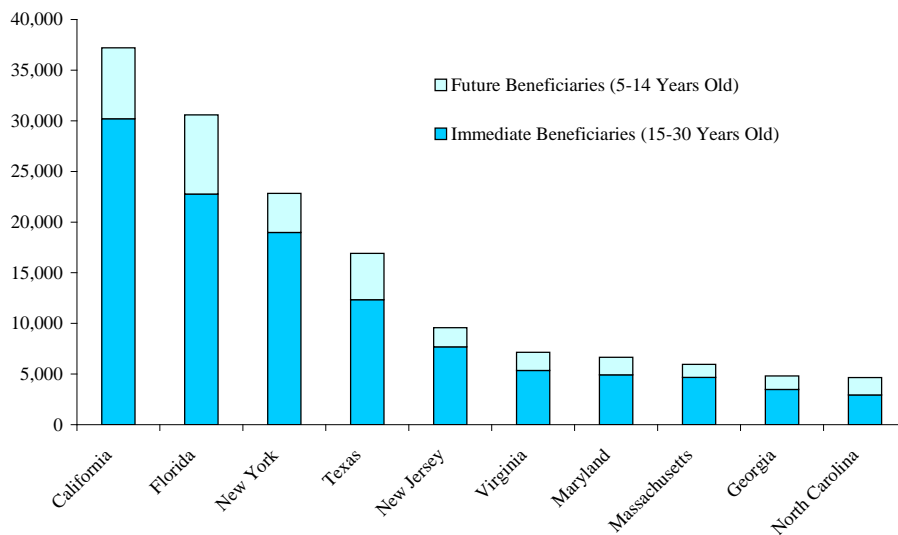
- The greatest numbers of potential beneficiaries from Mexico are found in California (326,250), Texas (196,130), Illinois (56,850), Arizona (49,860), and Georgia (25,590) {Figure 3 & Appendix}.

Figure 3: Ten States With Most Potential Mexican Beneficiaries



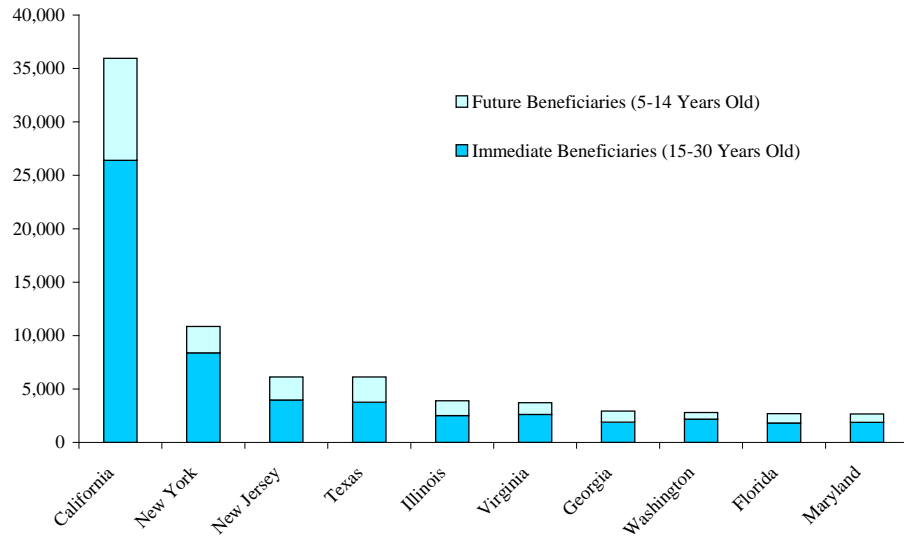
- The greatest numbers of potential beneficiaries from other countries in North and Central America (including the Caribbean) are found in California (37,210), Florida (30,590), New York (22,840), Texas (16,910), and New Jersey (9,570) {Figure 4 & Appendix}.

Figure 4: Ten States With Most Potential Beneficiaries From Other North & Central American Countries



- The greatest numbers of potential beneficiaries from Asian countries are found in California (35,950), New York (10,850), New Jersey (6,120), Texas (6,120), and Illinois (3,900) {Figure 5 & Appendix}.

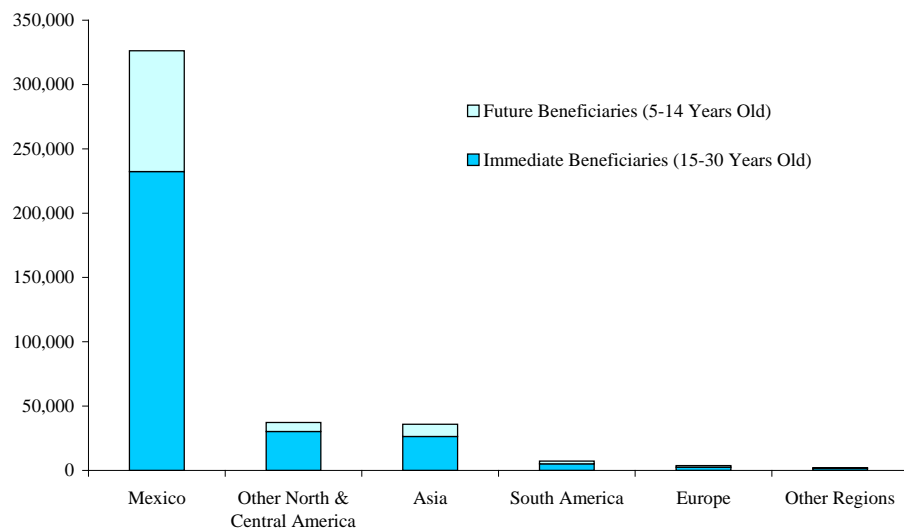
Figure 5: Ten States With Most Potential Beneficiaries from Asian Countries



In the biggest immigrant-receiving states, Mexicans predominate among potential beneficiaries.

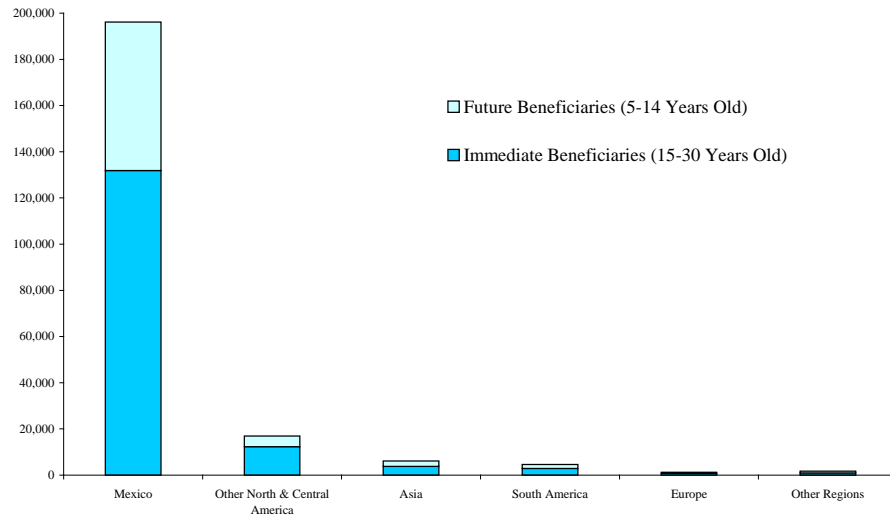
- In California, the largest numbers of potential beneficiaries are from Mexico (326,250), followed by other countries in North and Central America (including the Caribbean) (37,210) and Asia (35,950) {Figure 6 & Appendix }.

Figure 6: Potential Beneficiaries in California by Country/Region of Origin



- In Texas, the largest numbers of potential beneficiaries are from Mexico (196,130), followed by other countries in North and Central America (including the Caribbean) (16,910) and Asia (6,120) {Figure 7 & Appendix }.

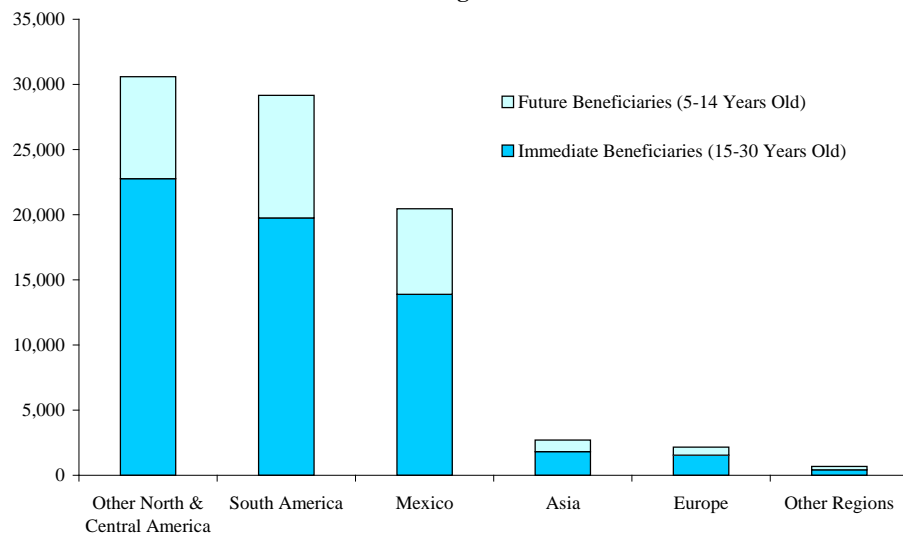
Figure 7: Potential Beneficiaries in Texas by Country/Region of Origin



In other states, Mexicans do not predominate among potential beneficiaries.

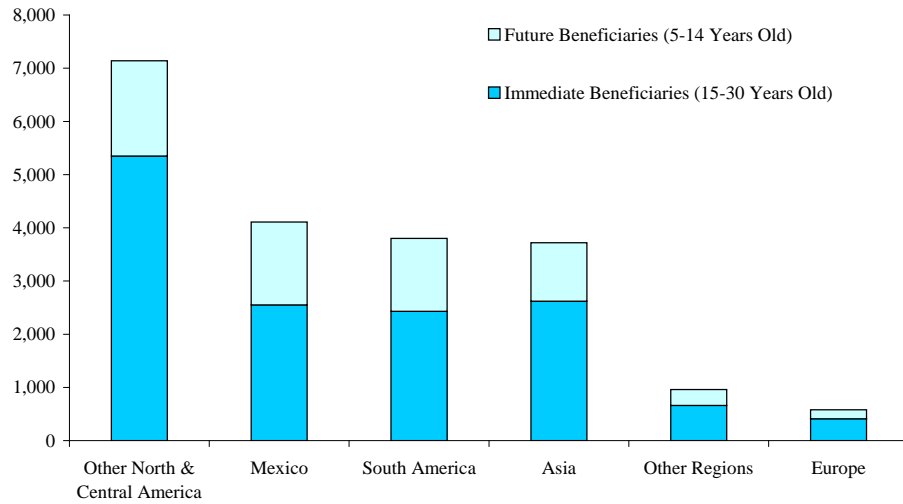
- In Florida, the largest numbers of potential beneficiaries are from North and Central American countries other than Mexico (including the Caribbean) (30,590), followed by South America (29,160) and Mexico (20,460) {Figure 8 & Appendix }.

Figure 8: Potential Beneficiaries in Florida by Country/Region of Origin



- The largest groups of potential beneficiaries in Virginia are from North and Central American countries other than Mexico (including the Caribbean) (7,140), followed by Mexico (4,110), South America (3,800), and Asia (3,720) {Figure 9 & Appendix}.

Figure 9: Potential Beneficiaries in Virginia by Country/Region of Origin



Appendix:
Potential Beneficiaries by State & Country/Region of Origin

	Total	Mexico	Other North & Central America	Asia	South America	Europe	Other Regions
United States	1,363,260	929,400	177,050	104,290	102,040	28,700	21,790
California	412,560	326,250	37,210	35,940	7,290	3,760	2,100
Texas	226,700	196,130	16,900	6,120	4,580	1,250	1,730
Florida	85,750	20,460	30,590	2,710	29,160	2,160	680
New York	70,170	15,690	22,840	10,840	15,790	3,240	1,770
Illinois	67,460	56,850	2,270	3,890	1,540	2,410	500
Arizona	53,880	49,860	1,720	970	410	550	370
New Jersey	39,650	9,790	9,570	6,120	11,700	1,540	930
Georgia	38,500	25,590	4,820	2,940	3,490	800	860
North Carolina	31,010	22,460	4,650	1,430	1,260	620	600
Washington	27,490	20,820	1,190	2,800	410	1,580	690
Colorado	25,610	22,110	1,360	1,020	450	410	260
Nevada	23,300	18,580	2,270	1,590	520	230	100
Virginia	20,310	4,110	7,140	3,720	3,800	580	960
Massachusetts	17,040	950	5,950	2,370	5,870	1,000	910
Oregon	16,600	13,930	780	870	220	610	190
Maryland	15,950	2,320	6,650	2,660	2,380	500	1,450
Utah	13,060	10,230	860	290	1,240	180	270
New Mexico	12,840	12,210	410	80	80	50	10
Pennsylvania	12,570	4,210	2,110	2,580	1,840	920	910
Michigan	12,100	7,250	1,160	2,000	290	920	470
Indiana	10,520	8,150	880	720	350	230	190
Tennessee	10,370	7,200	1,490	740	350	240	350
Minnesota	9,570	5,820	600	1,240	380	490	1,040
Connecticut	9,370	1,770	2,070	980	3,370	930	250
Wisconsin	9,330	7,170	370	950	390	310	140

	Total	Mexico	Other North & Central America	Asia	South America	Europe	Other Regions
Oklahoma	9,170	7,470	650	330	370	90	260
Kansas	8,830	7,440	700	360	160	40	130
Ohio	8,190	3,470	1,240	1,330	580	790	780
South Carolina	7,530	5,240	560	470	840	290	140
Arkansas	6,860	5,800	640	220	60	20	130
Missouri	6,510	3,890	850	660	320	440	360
Alabama	6,220	4,990	390	440	250	90	70
Idaho	5,110	4,560	200	80	110	100	50
Nebraska	5,070	3,960	460	240	70	40	300
Iowa	4,590	3,430	390	340	100	180	150
Louisiana	4,320	1,900	1,400	360	500	110	60
Kentucky	4,040	2,620	540	320	100	280	160
Hawaii	3,240	230	110	2,360	80	70	380
Rhode Island	2,450	300	1,190	190	430	130	220
Delaware	2,240	1,380	260	190	170	30	200
Mississippi	2,040	1,390	310	210	60	50	30
District of Columbia	1,190	320	580	70	50	60	110
New Hampshire	1,020	190	170	100	340	150	70
Wyoming	700	560	20	60	50	10	0
Maine	560	20	80	80	0	120	260
West Virginia	460	40	180	100	100	30	20
Alaska	410	150	30	70	110	50	0
South Dakota	340	130	90	60	10	30	20
Vermont	260	10	140	50	0	30	40
North Dakota	210	0	20	10	0	50	130
Montana	90	30	20	20	20	0	0

Methodology Used by [Rob Paral and Associates](#)

Estimating Immigration Status of Countries and Regions of Origin

- Develop [estimates of unauthorized populations](#) for 10 countries of origin from the Office of Immigration Statistics (OIS) of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security; develop five-year estimate using 2006-2010 annual reports from OIS.⁴
- Develop estimates of unauthorized populations for residual world regions based on the 2010 OIS report.⁵
- Tabulate numbers of foreign-born noncitizens for these same 10 countries and residual world regions using the American Community Survey (ACS) 2006-2010 Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS).
- Estimate rate of unauthorized immigrants in the ACS data by dividing the OIS unauthorized numbers by ACS 2006-2010 PUMS noncitizen estimates. Use country- and region-specific rates to re-weight PUMS records of noncitizens.

Define Persons Potentially Eligible

- Determine universe of persons potentially eligible for deferred action by using eligibility specifications described in [Secretary Napolitano memorandum](#) of June 15, 2012.
- Tabulate ACS data by country/region of origin, age, school enrollment, educational attainment, citizenship and year of entry to the United States to correspond to the policy memorandum.⁶

Allocate State Estimates to Congressional Districts

- Allocate state-level estimates by country and region of origin to Congressional Districts on the following bases:
 - For all countries and regions excluding Mexico, proportionally allocate into Congressional Districts on basis of foreign-born population by country/region, using 2006-2010 ACS data.
 - For Mexico only, the ACS provides summary-level data on period of entry by citizenship. Estimated unauthorized Mexican noncitizens aged 5-14 were allocated on basis of noncitizen Mexicans who arrived since year 2000. Estimated unauthorized Mexican noncitizens aged 15-30 were allocated on basis of noncitizen Mexicans who arrived in the 1990s. These periods were chosen based on analysis of median year of entry for these age cohorts at the national level; Mexican noncitizens aged 5-14 have a median entry year of 2000, and those aged 15-30 have a median year of 1995.

Comparison to Other Estimates

Migration Policy Institute in Washington, DC published a set of [state-level estimates](#) of the population potentially eligible for deferred action.⁷ Our estimates are close to those of MPI, as seen below. Differences between the estimates are due to important differences in methodology. The MPI estimates are based on three years (2008-2010) of Current Population Survey estimates assigned unique weights by

the [Pew Hispanic Center](#); the RPA estimates are based on five years (2006-2010) of the American Community Survey. Definitions of those eligible may also be different. At the national level, however, the two sets of estimates are within two percent of each other.

Comparison of MPI and RPA Estimates			
	MPI	Rob Paral and Associates	Difference (MPI - RPA)
United States	1,390,000	1,363,262	26,738
California	350,000	412,559	-62,559
Texas	170,000	226,702	-56,702
Florida	120,000	85,747	34,253
New York	90,000	70,169	19,831
Illinois	70,000	67,457	2,543
New Jersey	60,000	39,645	20,355
Arizona	50,000	53,876	-3,876
Georgia	40,000	38,499	1,501
Nevada	30,000	23,298	6,702
Colorado	20,000	25,608	-5,608
Other States	390,000	319,702	70,298
Under 15 years	500,000	426,329	73,671
15+ years	890,000	936,933	-46,933

Endnotes

¹ See Roberto G. Gonzales, [Investing in the American DREAM](#) (Washington, DC: Immigration Policy Center, American Immigration Council, December 2010). While the specific eligibility criteria of the DREAM Act as introduced in different sessions of Congress has varied, its essential scope covers those young people who were brought to the United States as children, have resided in the country for a prolonged period, and have been educated in U.S. schools.

² Migration Policy Institute, [“As Many as 1.4 Million Unauthorized Immigrant Youth Could Gain Relief from Deportation under Obama Administration Grant of Deferred Action”](#) (Washington, DC: June 15, 2012).

³ All of the estimates in this report are approximations, not precise figures.

⁴ These estimates are found in annual publications, e.g., Michael Hoefer, Nancy Rytina, and Bryan C. Baker, [Estimates of the Unauthorized Immigrant Population Residing in the United States: January 2010](#) (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Office of Immigration Statistics, February 2011).

⁵ We used the 2010 report only because five years’ of data were not available for world regions; specifically, 2006 is not found in the OIS publications. Residual world regions were developed by subtracting country estimates in Table 3 from world regions in Figure 2 in the 2010 OIS report.

⁶ Although the memorandum cited veteran status as one condition of eligibility, all veterans were removed from the potentially eligible population.

⁷ Migration Policy Institute, [“As Many as 1.4 Million Unauthorized Immigrant Youth Could Gain Relief from Deportation under Obama Administration Grant of Deferred Action”](#) (Washington, DC: June 15, 2012).