

# **International Migration to Minnesota**

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Office of State Demographer  
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## **International Migration to Minnesota**

New Americans arrive at the rate of nearly one million each year. They come seeking jobs, asylum and reunion with their families. International migrants, whether legal or illegal, have been the subject of much discussion in the press, in the recent presidential primaries and in the Congress. The purpose of this paper is to summarize data collected by the Immigration and Naturalization Service on legal international immigration both at the national level and in Minnesota. Questions of the costs or benefits of immigration will be left for others.

### ***U.S. Immigration***

In 1994, the majority of international migrants came from countries in Asia followed closely by North American (including Canada, Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean) migrants. In 1994, migrants from Asia made up 36.4% and those from North America 33.8% of all international migrants. One-fifth of international migrants originated in European countries. Mexico was the origin of 107,000 immigrants in 1994 or 13.4 percent of the total. This was more than twice the number from the second, third and fourth countries of origin -- the Philippines, mainland China and the Dominican Republic. Each of these countries sent more than 50,000 immigrants to the U.S. in 1994.

California received the most international immigrants with 205,873 in 1994; New York was second with 143,813. Together these two states accounted for 44% of all international immigrants. Florida ranked third with 57,934. Minnesota was the destination of 7,093 immigrants, or eighteenth among the fifty states and the District of Columbia. The INS bases the

state of destination data on where immigrants first indicate they plan to settle. Often immigrants make a secondary move to another state, but the data is based on the original destination.

Federal law has a substantial impact on immigration to the U.S. When laws change, the numbers of migrants from individual countries may increase or decrease. The Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) of 1986 was an amnesty program for illegal aliens resident in the U.S. IRCA allowed aliens to legalize their status and resulted in a large increase in legal immigration. The numbers of persons who applied to adjust their status under this act peaked in 1991 at 1,123,162, then declined markedly with only 163,342 in 1992. IRCA contained a special provision for seasonal agricultural workers. As a result, the vast majority of illegal aliens taking advantage of this amnesty program were Mexicans -- in 1991, 946,167 immigrants or about half of all legal immigration in that year. This provision also meant that the number of illegal aliens adjusting their status was much higher in California, Texas and Arizona than in eastern states.

International politics also affects immigration. After the Vietnam conflict, large numbers of refugees came to the U.S. In 1982, more than one-fifth of legal immigrants (128,087) to the U.S. originated in southeast Asia. That was the highest number of southeast Asian immigrants for the period 1982 to 1994. The second highest year was in 1992 when 96,094 southeast Asians came to the United States, 17 percent of these immigrants were legalizations under the IRCA program.

When Communist regimes in Europe began to crumble, the U.S. saw a marked increase in immigration from the former Soviet bloc. After 1989, the face of European immigration became predominantly Russian; roughly 60% of European immigrants were Russians or citizens of former Soviet Union republics. The total number of immigrants from the former Soviet Union

in 1993 and 1994 was more than twice the total for the 1982-1989 period. Emigrants from the Soviet Union increased from 15,462 in 1982 to 63,420 in 1994. Migrants from Poland increased from 5,874 in 1982 to 28,048 in 1994.

### ***Trends in International Immigration to MN***

Immigration to Minnesota from outside the U.S. declined from a total of 9,912 in 1982 to 4,665 in 1988. Since 1988, however, immigration into Minnesota has increased again to reach 7,414 in 1993 and 7,093 in 1994. Minnesota ranked 18th in the nation in total international migrants in 1994. Less than 1% of all international migrants to the U.S. came to Minnesota. International immigrants accounted for about 13 percent of Minnesota's population growth from 1993 to 1994.

International immigration to Minnesota reflects many of the same trends seen in the national data. In the early 1980s, the majority of international immigrants to Minnesota came from countries in southeast Asia, especially Laos and Vietnam . In 1982, two-thirds of international migrants came from southeast Asia; by 1992, the percentage had dropped to 3.3%. Total migrants declined from 6,127 in 1982 to 192 in 1992. In 1993 and 1994, the numbers and percentages increased to about 800 migrants or 11 percent, all from Vietnam .

Minnesota was the destination of a higher proportion of southeast Asian immigrants than most states. According to the 1990 census, Minnesota ranked second in the nation in the total number of Hmong persons. The population of Cambodians ranked seventh in the nation, and Vietnamese ranked eleventh. Programs sponsored by churches and social service agencies attracted large numbers of refugees to the state.

The declining numbers of migrants from Southeast Asia are in direct contrast to the increasing numbers from the former Soviet Union. In 1994, 762 former Soviet citizens migrated to Minnesota. While this is a large proportion of Minnesota's total international migrants (10.7%), Minnesota ranked only thirteenth nationally in the number of former Soviet émigrés. Many of these former Soviet citizens were Jewish people seeking asylum. The country sending the third largest number of immigrants in 1994 was mainland China, with 448 Chinese settling in Minnesota.

Unlike the national trend, Mexican immigrants are a very small proportion of Minnesota's total immigrant population. In 1994, only 207 Mexicans emigrated to the state, less than 3 percent of all immigrants. The highest number of Mexican immigrants occurred in 1991, when 780 Mexicans came to Minnesota. Since this was the peak year for IRCA legalization, probably most of these Mexican immigrants took advantage of the program and legalized their residence status.

### ***Categories of Admission – Refugees***

In 1994, 121,434 persons came to the U.S. seeking asylum. Immigrants in this category accounted for 15.2 percent of the U.S. total. In Minnesota, nearly 3,000 immigrants came seeking asylum in 1994, or more than 42 percent of the total. North Dakota and South Dakota are the only other states with such a high proportion of refugees in their immigrant populations, but the total numbers are much smaller, 311 and 326 respectively. Refugees tend to be about half male and half female. Their median age in 1994 was 31 years.

The majority of Vietnamese, Ukrainian, Russian, other former Soviet citizens and Cuban immigrants come to the U.S. seeking asylum. These four groups account for 62 percent of all immigrants seeking asylum.

According to Refugee Services in the Minnesota Department of Human Services, for the five years ending in July 1995, the largest numbers of refugees in Minnesota came from southeast Asia. In addition, 3,000 came from the former Soviet Union and 2,500 from Somalia. In the last five years, 14,500 refugees have resettled in Minnesota. Refugee Services estimates a total refugee population in the state at 73,000. These estimates are based on official first resettlement numbers from the U.S. Department of State, the Minnesota Department of Health's births to refugee mothers, data from public assistance roles and input from community leaders.

### ***Family-sponsored Preference***

Nearly 43% of immigrants to Minnesota in 1994 came under the family-sponsored preference category. Under law, aliens who are unmarried children of U.S. citizens, spouses and unmarried children of permanent resident aliens, married children of U.S. citizens or siblings of U.S. citizens receive preference in immigration, in that order. The proportion of U.S. immigrants who enter under these categories is much higher than in Minnesota; 62.3 percent of all U.S. immigrants migrated in order to be reunited with family members, and virtually all Mexican immigrants (96.1 percent) came under family preference categories.

Family sponsored immigrants make up a very large proportion of immigrants from Central and South American countries. Of the top ten countries in this category, only Pakistan and the Philippines are outside the Western hemisphere. In 1994, 99 percent of all immigrants

from the Dominican Republic and 96.1 percent of Mexican immigrants came under this preference category.

Immigrants who enter the U.S. under family preference tend to be younger than immigrants who enter under other categories. The proportion of family sponsored migrants who are female is higher than for other categories of admission. In 1994, of the nearly half million immigrants entering under family preference, 56.8% were female. Median age for family sponsored migrants was significantly lower than for other categories. Median age for all immigrants was 28.3, but for family preference migrants median age ranged from 16.9 for legalization dependents to 22.1 for family sponsored to 29.8 for immediate relatives. One-fifth of family preference immigrants were children under 15, and another 36 percent were between 15 and 29 years of age.

A significant number of children entering under family preferences are orphans. In 1994, 8,200 immigrant-orphans entered the U.S. to be adopted by American citizens. Orphans must be adopted by U.S. citizens abroad or enter in order to be adopted. Nearly 45 percent of immigrant-orphans came from Asian countries, with almost half of those arriving from Korea. Another 29 percent came from Europe, the majority from Russia and other former Soviet republics. South American orphans made up another 15 percent, with the majority originating in Paraguay, Colombia and Brazil. More than half of immigrant-orphans were less than 1 year old when they entered, and 84 percent were less than 5 years old. Almost 57 percent of orphans adopted in 1994 were female. This disparity results from the predominance of females among Chinese and Indian orphans. Less than 5 percent of Chinese orphans and only 30 percent of Indian orphans were male. Data on immigrant-orphans is only available at the national level.

### ***Employment Preference***

According to U.S. law, individuals with exceptional ability or needed skills receive employment preference. Those who have extraordinary ability (e.g., outstanding professors and researchers), professionals with advanced degrees, skilled workers and needed unskilled workers, and employment creation immigrants (investors) receive preference. In 1994, 15.4 percent of all immigrants to the U.S. came under employment preference; in Minnesota 12 percent received employment preference. In 1994, 62.2 percent of Chinese immigrants came under employment preference, the highest proportion of any country. Canada was second with 43.2 percent immigrating under this category. Asian immigrants tend to come under employment preference categories more than immigrants from other continents, with one-quarter of Asian legal immigrants coming under this category. After Canada, Taiwan (38.6 percent) and Japan (34 percent) have the highest proportion of immigrants given employment preference.

Those immigrants who came under employment preferences were more likely to be in technical and professional occupations. In 1994, 44.3% of these migrants worked in professional, technical, engineering, medical or other scientific fields. Another 10,000 (16.6 percent) worked in executive, administrative or managerial occupations.

### ***Occupation***

While the majority of international immigrants who enter under employment preference has scientific or executive occupations, working age immigrants as a whole have a very different occupational profile. In 1994, immigrants without occupations, including children under 16, homemakers or unemployed or retired persons, made up 45.4 percent of all immigrants to the U.S. Immigrants in scientific and executive occupations made up 22.5 percent of all immigrants of working age (16 to 64). Operators, fabricators and laborers add another 11.3 percent.



Workers in farming, fishing and forestry occupations amount to only 2.1 percent of all working age immigrants.

### ***Minneapolis and St. Paul***

International immigrants to Minnesota are most likely to choose to live in the Minneapolis-St. Paul Metropolitan Statistical Area, according to the INS. In 1994, 85.3 percent opted to live in the Twin Cities. Two-thirds of Guatemalans (but only 43 persons) and almost half of Mexican émigrés (93 out of 207 persons) chose to live outside the Twin Cities.

Immigrants from the former Soviet republics chose the Twin Cities overwhelming -- 94.2 percent. Nearly 90 percent of mainland Chinese live in the Twin Cities. But only 77 percent of Vietnamese immigrants stay in the Minneapolis-St. Paul area.

Some areas of Minnesota have small concentrations of immigrants. Between 350 and 500 Somalis reside in the Rochester area, and another 100 in Marshall. Small enclaves of African immigrants live in Willmar and Worthington. These residence patterns echo earlier migration patterns, with immigrants following the paths of earlier émigrés from their home country. Like other minority populations in southern Minnesota, many of these new Americans were attracted to these small towns because of jobs in food processing plants. In addition, social service agencies have established refugee services to assist these people in adjusting to life in Minnesota.

### ***Illegal Immigration***

Illegal immigration totals about 300,000 persons per year. The Immigration and Naturalization Service estimated the total number of illegal aliens resident in the U.S. in 1992 at 3.3 million. The largest numbers of undocumented aliens live in California, New York and Florida. Minnesota is one of 29 states with fewer than 10,000 undocumented aliens. The INS

estimated a total of 151,000 illegal immigrants for all 29 states, but did not estimate the actual number resident in each of those 29 states. However, the INS reported that the two states with the fewest illegal aliens were South Dakota and North Dakota, each with about 100 illegals.

In 1994, 81 persons were deported and 159 were required to depart at the St. Paul district office of the INS. In 1993, 59 persons were deported and another 420 were required to leave the country. The St. Paul office presides over Minnesota, South Dakota, and North Dakota. If deportations in the St. Paul office's jurisdiction are in the same proportion as nationally, then illegal immigrants in these three states would number somewhere between 750 and 7,000, with the majority in Minnesota. The arrest of 55 undocumented workers in Cold Springs on April 2, 1996, has drawn more attention to this problem in Minnesota.

### *Notes on Data Sources*

The majority of the data in this report was published by the INS in their annual series, Statistical Yearbook of the Immigration and Naturalization Service. Data from 1982 through 1994 was used, but is not always consistent from year to year. State level data is limited to country of origin and preference categories of admission.

Some of the information on illegal immigration was taken from an INS report, "Estimates of the Unauthorized Immigrant Population Residing in the United States, by Country of Origin and State of Residence: October 1992," by Robert Warren. Information on the arrests in Cold Springs came from the Minneapolis Star-Tribune.

Dam Quy of the Refugee and Immigrant Services Division in the Department of Human Service provided information on refugees resident in Minnesota. Jonathan Harris of Lutheran Social Service, Marshall, helped in locating Africans in southern Minnesota.

### Immigrants to Minnesota by Region and Selected Country of Birth

	1994	1993	1992	1991	1990	1989	1988	1987	1986	1985	1984	1983	1982
<b>All countries</b>	<b>7098</b>	<b>7438</b>	<b>6851</b>	<b>7461</b>	<b>6627</b>	<b>5704</b>	<b>4665</b>	<b>5621</b>	<b>5189</b>	<b>4995</b>	<b>5243</b>	<b>6103</b>	<b>9192</b>
Africa	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	?	284	309	291	
Asia	2127	2693	1481	1884	3171	3127	2717	3509	3159	2472	3519	4364	7180
Europe	1054	1218	729	839	418	169	273	206	243	278	298	262	464
North America	644	577	604	1140	730	514	420	399	335	433	366	337	228
Caribbean	74	38	41	54	71	83	81	58	40	45	33	25	24
Central America	95	41	55	123	93	87	15	50	37	76	57	52	10
Other North America	475	498	508	963	566	344	324	291	258	312	276	260	194
Oceania		201	218	217	235	209	202	203	184	39	31	37	186
South America	276	196	207	304	229	264	183	237	210	262	228	253	176
Unknown	2922	2586	2711	3241	2014	1127	820	866	926	—	—	—	808
<b>Cambodia (aka Kampuchea)</b>													
Canada	268	306	313	183	209	171	151	676	527	468	545	628	620
China, Mainland	448	911	282	188	135	122	129	207	163	181	187	166	125
Colombia	96	89	67	74	70	93	80	78	110	101	104	108	145
Cuba	11	1	5	2	10	19	35	16	25	68	78	71	68
Dominican Republic	14	5	10	14	8	2	4	4	4	4	4	3	3
Ecuador		14	14	12	13	10	4	8	4	4	4	4	6
El Salvador	29	18	16	40	20	9	4	10	7	10	8	8	10
Germany	95	76	138				85	97	96	76	90	75	63
Guatemala	66	23	25	36	22	13	11	16	14	22	10	15	
Guyana	141	68	105	131	110	145	87	140	121	80	98	132	108
Haiti	16	5	9	15	23	35	17	7		5	1		5
Hong Kong	64	74	63	50	39	58	56	40		25	44	39	
Honduras				40		59		24		15	8	6	
India	183	236	257	226	171	232	195	231	196	197	197	170	166
Iran	76	82	63	109	132	115	104	116	127	145	112	96	100
Iraq										5	16	5	
Ireland	89	64	39		41		50			9	6	11	

### Immigrants to Minnesota by Region and Selected Country of Birth

	1994	1993	1992	1991	1990	1989	1988	1987	1986	1985	1984	1983	1982
Jamaica	20	27	17	23	30	27	25	31	11	12	16	5	16
Japan	60		41							32	41	27	
Korea	243	237	230	260	351	450	634	646	764	665	692	628	652
Laos					1298	1270	846	894	671	0	749	1717	3318
Lebanon							31		23	22	20	20	
Mexico	207	192	195	780	357	173	99	84	95	131	89	93	69
Nicaragua			14	7	12	6				3	5	8	
Other & unknown	2922	2586	2711	3241	2014	1127	820	866	926	1425	689	672	808
Pakistan	31	50	41	41	41	39	37	40	30	44	28	23	
Peru	39	25	35	87	36	16	16	11	17	15	6	8	
Philippines	157	201	218	217	235	209	202	203	184	193	172	130	186
Poland	49	77	57	67	36	51	48	50	65	88	98	59	14
Soviet Union (Unknown Republi	762	942	436	713	282	59				24	25	38	328
Taiwan	59	90	94	61	50	34	74	64	76	101	70	92	89
Thailand						442	199	350	209	143	117	212	285
Trinidad & Tobago	13									6	3	4	
United Kingdom	167	199	182	106	124	123	112	113	110	133	118	106	110
Vietnam	806	812	192	732	758	598	289	508	474	496	749	701	1904

Cells with no data or "?" indicate data is missing.

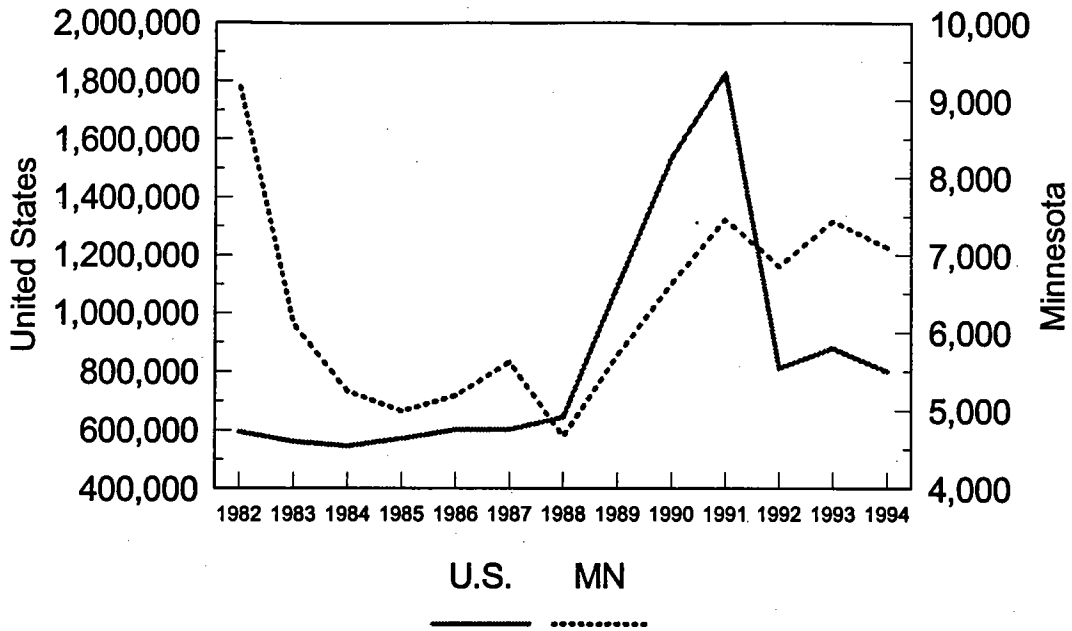
**Immigrants Admitted by Major Category of Admission and State of Intended Residence  
Fiscal Year 1994**

States	Total	Family Sponsored Relatives							Employment Based	Diversity Transition	Refugees & Asylees	Other
		Immediate Relatives	Legalization dependents	Employment Based	Diversity Transition	Refugees & Asylees	Other					
<b>Total</b>	<b>798,394</b>	<b>211,961</b>	<b>251,647</b>	<b>34,074</b>	<b>123,291</b>	<b>41,056</b>	<b>121,434</b>	<b>14,931</b>				
California	205,873	57,279	56,357	17,930	33,187	4,052	29,284	7,784				
New York	143,813	49,360	41,209	611	19,899	10,963	20,846	925				
Florida	57,934	15,153	18,957	746	6,207	1,914	14,108	849				
Texas	54,603	16,520	19,948	5,741	6,394	538	4,576	886				
New Jersey	44,034	14,549	13,558	164	8,751	4,007	2,680	325				
Illinois	42,209	11,695	10,726	2,668	4,219	8,507	4,122	272				
Massachusetts	22,819	5,157	6,631	18	3,407	3,587	3,824	195				
Washington	18,123	3,126	5,314	1,174	1,427	395	6,330	357				
Pennsylvania	15,949	2,746	4,905	282	3,450	1,045	3,313	208				
Maryland	15,923	3,508	4,543	32	4,566	310	2,774	190				
Virginia	15,323	3,371	4,768	88	4,323	356	2,258	159				
Michigan	12,723	2,441	4,403	48	2,617	510	2,594	110				
Georgia	9,990	1,611	3,352	258	1,873	402	2,287	207				
Connecticut	9,519	2,204	3,303	10	1,590	1,390	904	118				
Ohio	9,180	1,441	3,122	15	1,903	328	2,254	117				
Arizona	9,053	2,420	3,325	908	1,285	198	708	209				
Hawaii	7,742	2,180	4,236	4	908	109	239	66				
Minnesota	7,093	706	2,297	33	847	137	2,989	84				
Colorado	6,772	1,046	2,671	553	981	192	1,186	143				
Oregon	6,756	1,317	1,969	517	759	102	1,935	157				
North Carolina	6,173	844	2,176	181	1,505	163	1,162	142				
Wisconsin	5,323	495	1,690	112	975	205	1,814	32				
Missouri	4,359	530	1,387	43	834	100	1,338	127				
Nevada	3,977	955	1,970	230	401	76	297	48				
Indiana	3,713	626	1,436	48	975	108	463	57				
Tennessee	3,592	474	1,145	20	813	63	942	135				
Louisiana	3,362	633	1,205	19	692	82	614	117				

## Immigrants Admitted by Major Category of Admission and State of Intended Residence Fiscal Year 1994

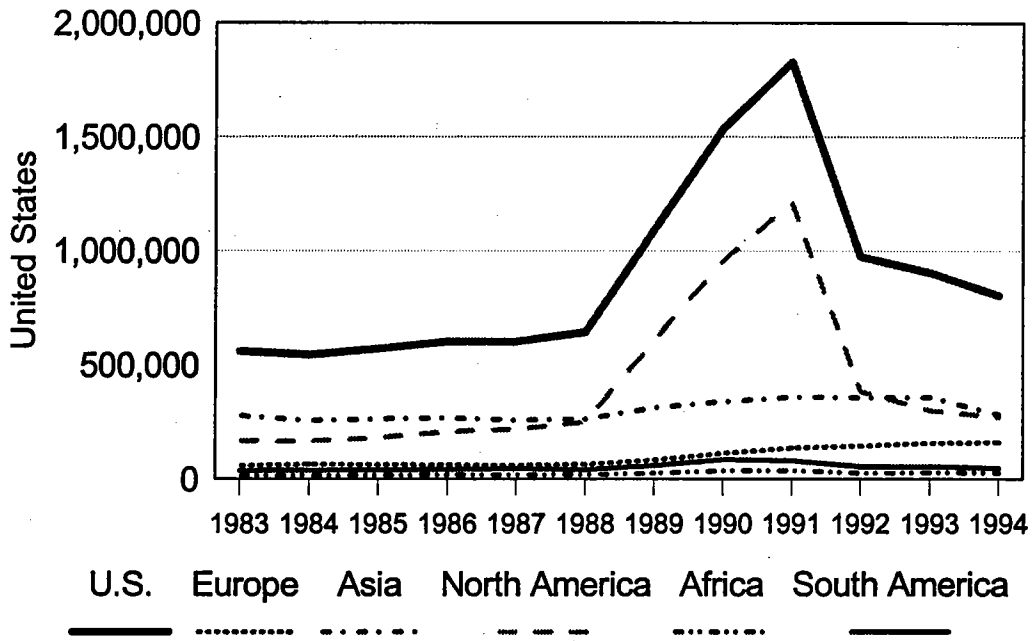
States	Total	Family Sponsored					Employment Based	Diversity Transition	Refugees & Asylees	Other
		Immediate Relatives	Legalization dependents	Relatives	Spouses	Children				
<b>Total</b>	<b>798,394</b>	<b>211,961</b>	<b>251,647</b>	<b>34,074</b>	<b>123,291</b>	<b>41,056</b>	<b>121,434</b>	<b>14,931</b>		
District of Columbia	3,200	771	816	6	1,003	81	413	110		
Rhode Island	2,900	897	1,118	3	348	183	321	30		
Kansas	2,896	447	1,032	259	439	28	655	36		
Utah	2,890	315	1,301	60	569	72	500	73		
New Mexico	2,857	737	1,108	469	299	25	196	23		
Oklahoma	2,701	475	1,109	198	436	42	419	22		
Iowa	2,158	211	720	55	559	49	467	97		
South Carolina	2,104	324	881	9	584	136	120	50		
Kentucky	2,032	260	732	6	559	106	267	102		
Alabama	1,834	283	782	22	529	48	106	64		
Nebraska	1,588	178	543	81	228	27	490	41		
Idaho	1,539	326	515	351	99	17	217	14		
New Hampshire	1,142	164	476	-	236	110	144	12		
Alaska	1,128	180	730	5	137	17	47	12		
Arkansas	1,009	162	416	39	251	28	111	2		
Delaware	977	214	330	29	285	60	51	8		
Maine	829	67	428	-	127	63	127	17		
Mississippi	810	136	357	5	212	11	75	14		
West Virginia	663	54	265	1	316	17	3	7		
Vermont	658	46	313	-	122	48	70	59		
North Dakota	634	24	166	-	82	3	311	48		
South Dakota	569	15	151	-	65	6	326	6		
Montana	447	25	284	-	53	23	42	20		
Wyoming	215	22	129	9	42	8	4	1		
Other & unknown	14,684	3,241	10,342	14	923	9	111	44		

### Total International Immigrants U.S. and Minnesota



Source: Immigration and Naturalization Service

### Total International Immigrants to U.S., 1983 – 1994



Source: Immigration and Naturalization Service

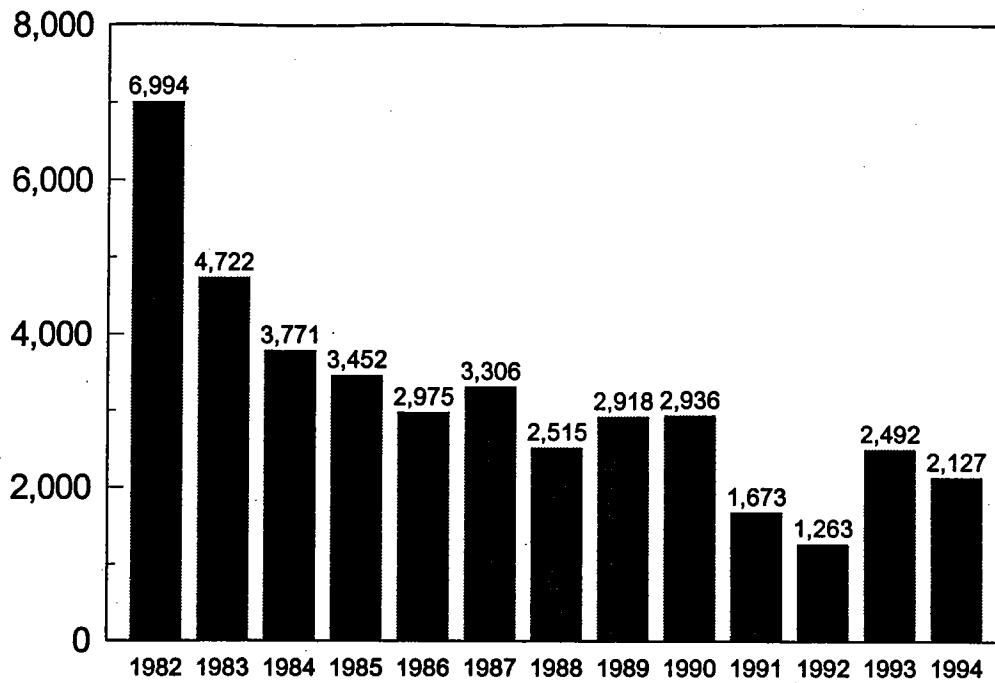
# Immigrant Orphans in 1994

## United States Totals

	Total	% Male	% Under 5
<b>All Countries</b>	8,200	43.17%	84.23%
<b>Europe</b>	2,370	46.75%	74.35%
Russia	1,324	48.41%	77.95%
<b>Asia</b>	3,684	38.06%	90.77%
China, Mainland	748	4.81%	96.66%
India	390	30.26%	82.31%
Korea	1,757	49.00%	99.32%
Philippines	320	52.19%	58.44%
Vietnam	228	46.49%	71.49%
<b>Africa</b>	83	48.19%	49.40%
<b>North America</b>	847	48.88%	81.46%
Guatemala	431	49.88%	93.50%
<b>South America</b>	1,205	47.63%	88.46%
Brazil	150	50.67%	63.33%
Colombia	342	49.12%	87.72%
Paraguay	497	45.27%	98.39%

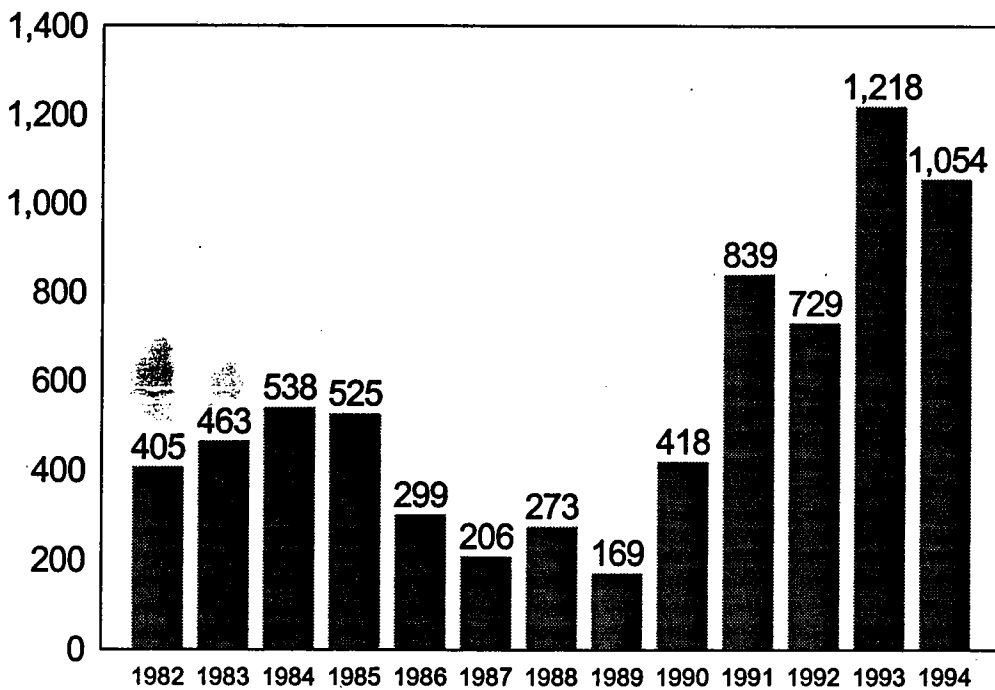


### Asian Immigrants to Minnesota



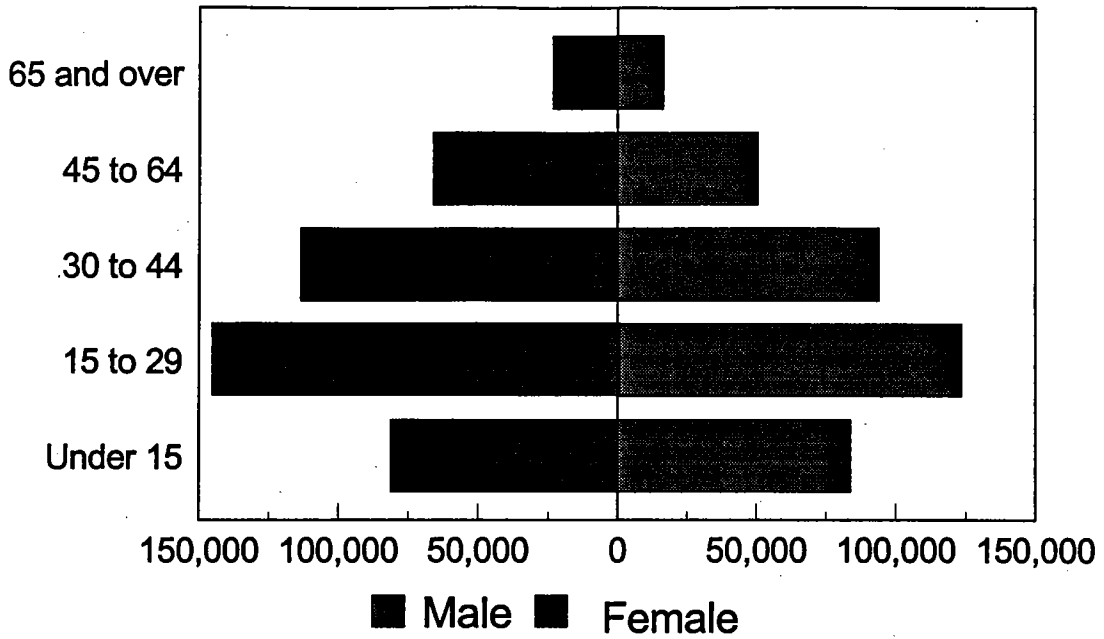
Source: Immigration and Naturalization Service, U.S. Department of Justice

### European Immigrants to Minnesota



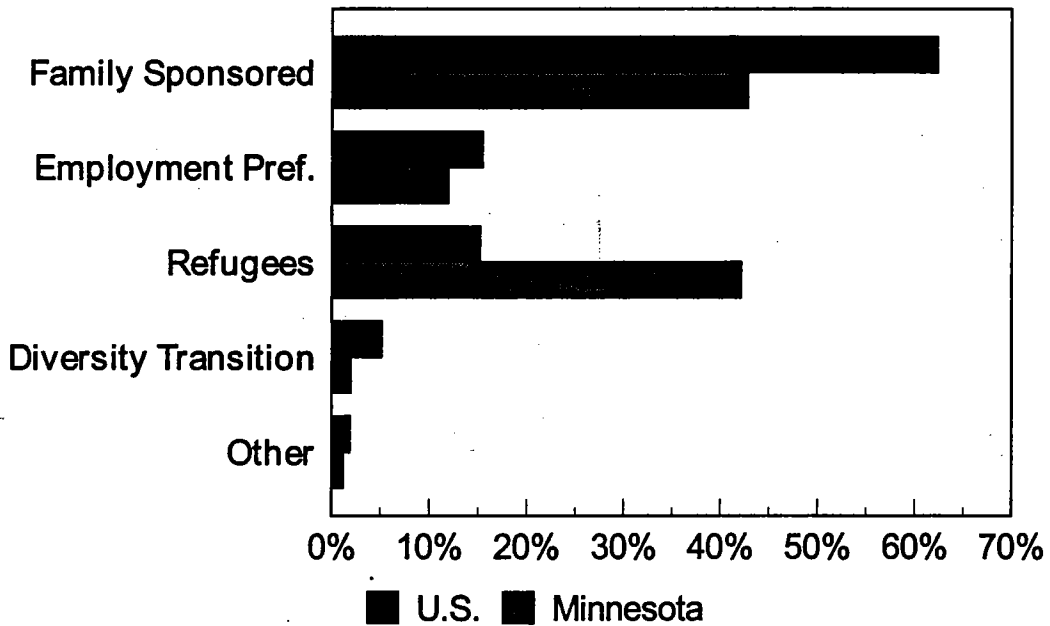
Source: Immigration and Naturalization Service, U.S. Department of Justice

## Age Distribution of International Immigrants U.S. 1994



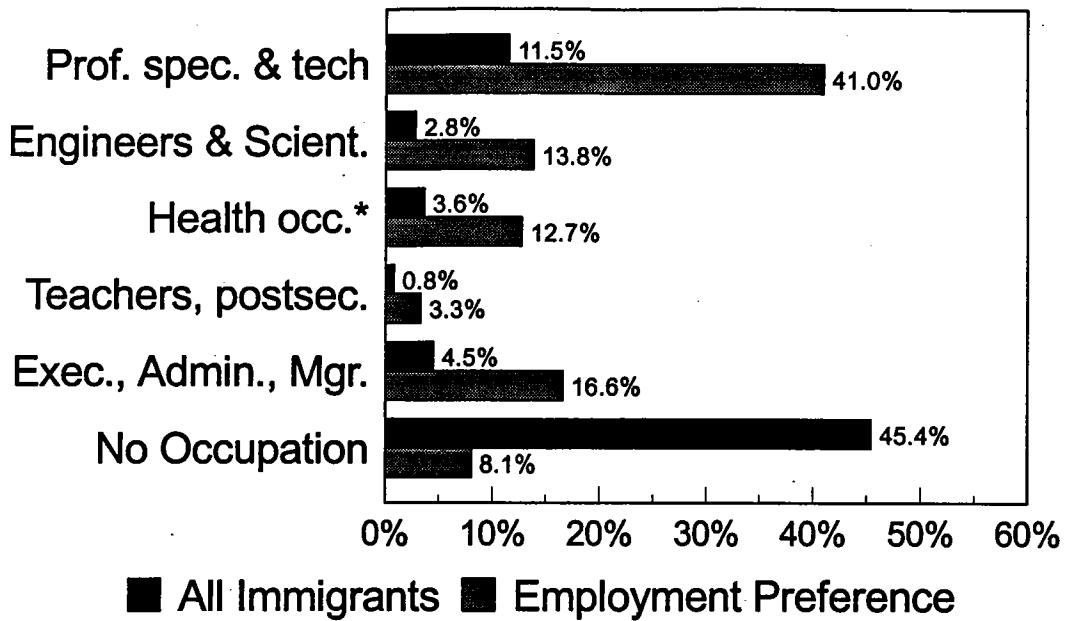
Source: Immigration and Naturalization Service, Department of Justice

## Preference Categories of Immigrants U.S. and Minnesota 1994



Source: Immigration and Naturalization Service

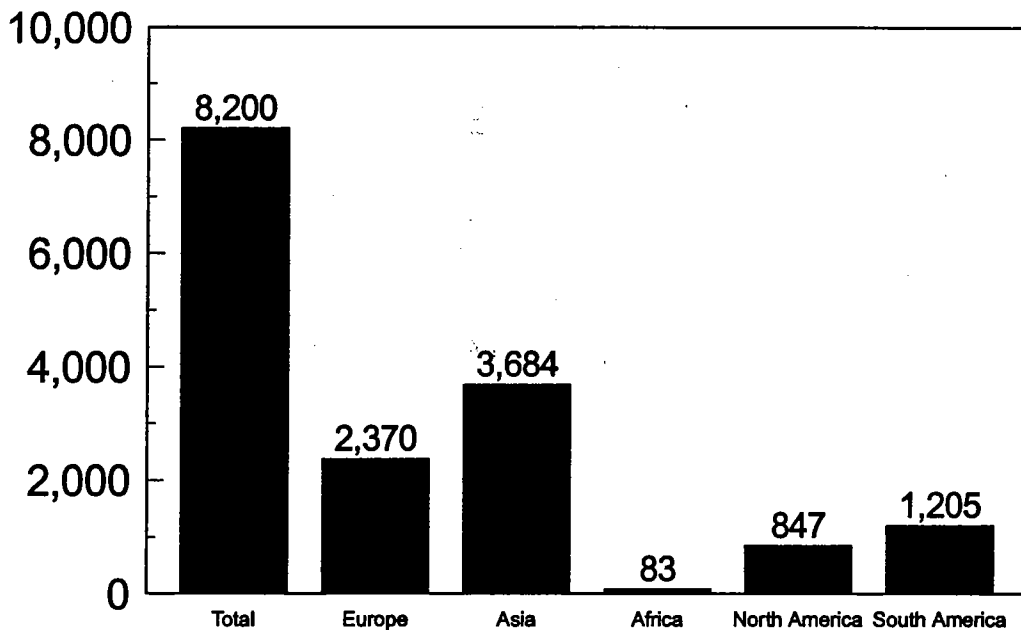
## Occupations of Immigrants U.S. 1994



\* includes doctors

Source: Immigration and Naturalization Service

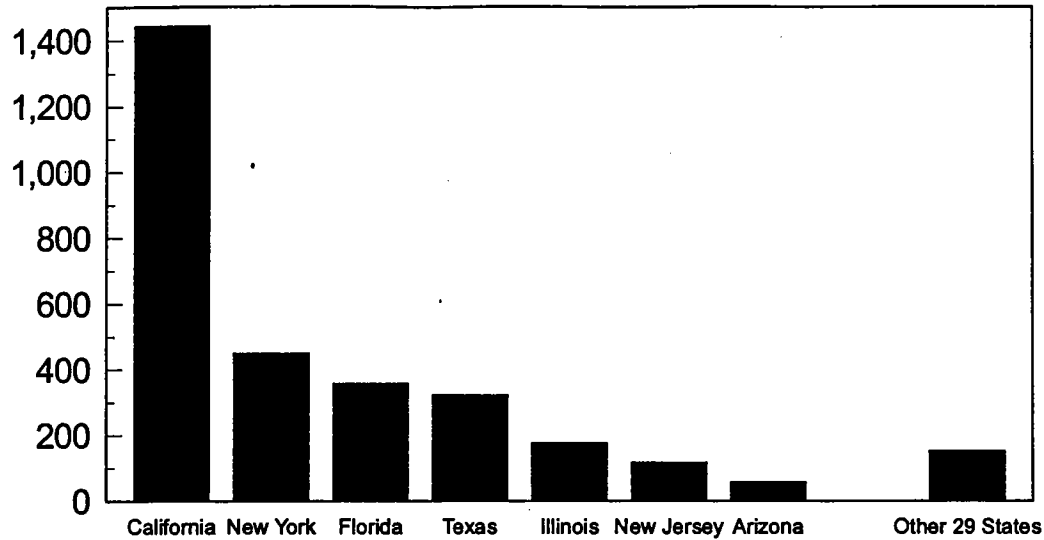
## Immigrant-Orphans by Continent of Origin 1994



Source: Immigration and Naturalization Service, Department of Justice

## Illegal Aliens in the U.S. by State of Residence in 1992

Thousands

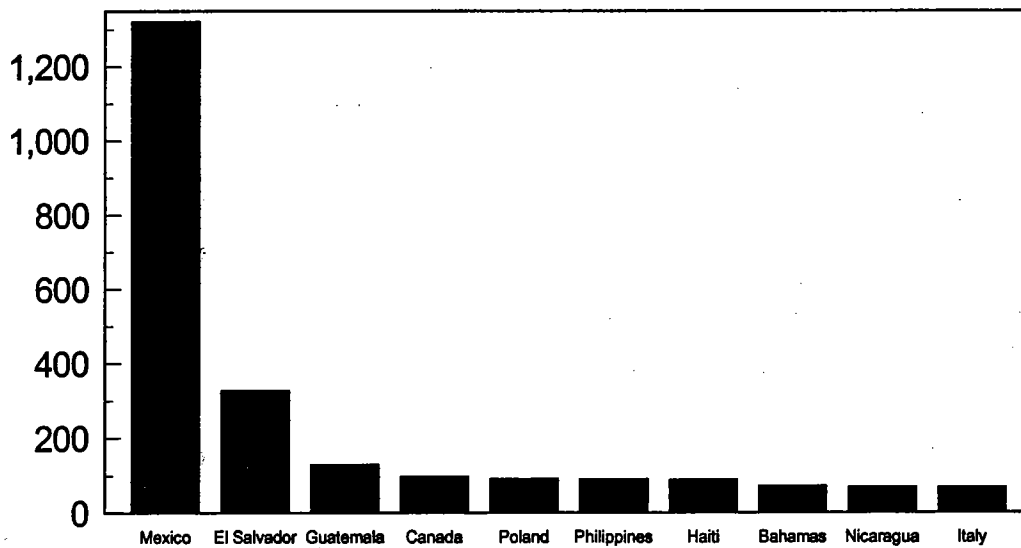


Total illegal aliens in 1992 was 3,379,000.

Source: Immigration and Naturalization Service, Department of Justice

## Illegal Aliens in the U.S. Top Ten Countries of Origin in 1992

Thousands



Total illegal aliens in 1992 was 3,379,000.

Source: Immigration and Naturalization Service, Department of Justice

