
TEMPORARY ADMISSIONS FISCAL YEAR 2000

This report will appear as a chapter in the forthcoming *2000 Statistical Yearbook of the Immigration and Naturalization Service*. All references to Appendixes, Charts, Tables, and other sections of the *Statistical Yearbook*, as well as detailed table numbers, appear as they will in the final *Yearbook* edition.

IV. TEMPORARY ADMISSIONS

This section presents information on the number and characteristics of persons who come to the United States on a temporary basis (nonimmigrants), with subsections on parolees—persons allowed temporary entrance under special circumstances, and H-1B workers—persons allowed temporary entrance to perform services in “specialty occupations.”

Nonimmigrants

A nonimmigrant is an alien admitted to the United States for a specified purpose and temporary period but not for permanent residence.

(See Appendix 2, p. A.2-8.)

Although the typical nonimmigrant is a tourist who visits for a few days to several months, there are numerous classes of nonimmigrant admission, ranging from students to ambassadors. Nearly 33.7 million nonimmigrant

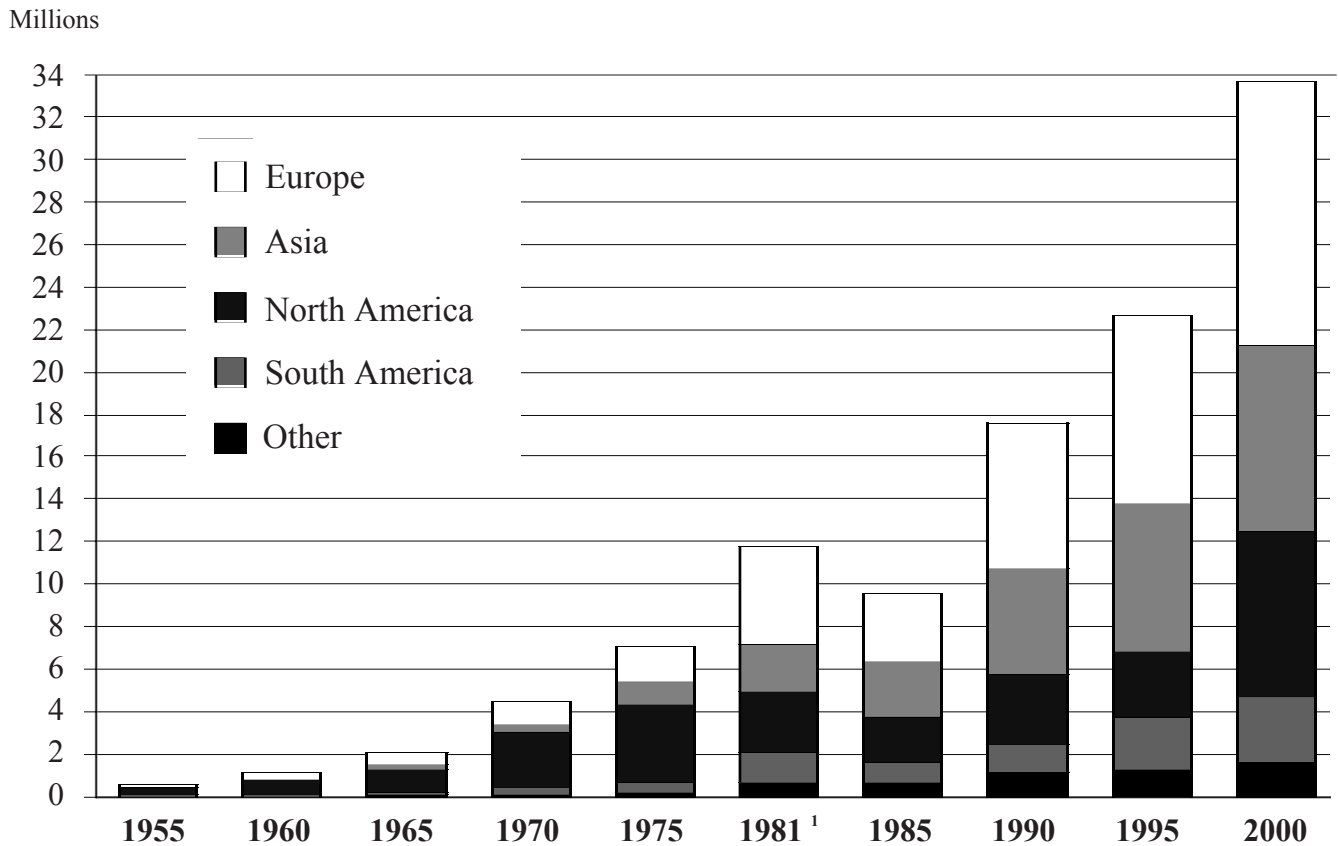
admissions were counted during fiscal year 2000—the largest number of nonimmigrant admissions to the United States in any year. This represents an increase of more than 2.2 million since 1999—an increase of 7.1 percent between 1999 and 2000.

U.S. Nonimmigrant Program

Nonimmigrants were first defined in the Immigration Act of 1819, but the Act of 1855 was the first to require the reporting of “temporary arrivals” separately. The Act of

Chart E

Nonimmigrants Admitted by Region of Last Residence: Selected Fiscal Years 1955-2000



¹ No data available for 1980. NOTE: See Glossary for fiscal year definitions.

Source: 2000, 1995, 1990, 1985, and 1981, Table 35; 1955-75, previous Yearbooks.

1924 defined several classes of admission that have been expanded in subsequent legislation. Though “tourists” (temporary visitors for pleasure) have consistently been by far the most numerous nonimmigrant class of admission to the United States, a wide variety of temporary visitors now fall within the nonimmigrant classification. Second in volume to tourists are business people coming to the United States to engage in commercial transactions (though not for employment in this country). (See Table 37.)

Nonimmigrant categories (Tables 35-38, 41, 43)

Other categories of admission make up a much smaller share of the nonimmigrant total, such as foreign students and temporary workers. Temporary workers are admitted to the United States with “specialty occupations” (such as computer systems analysts and programmers) or to perform temporary services or labor when persons capable of performing such services or labor cannot be found in this country (such as agricultural laborers). Others who are granted authorization to work temporarily in the United States include: exchange visitors who enter to study, teach, or conduct research; intracompany transferees, to render managerial or executive services in the United States to international firms or corporations; and industrial trainees. Though not strictly considered as employed in the United States, treaty traders and treaty investors enter temporarily to conduct trade or to invest substantially in enterprises under the provisions of treaties of commerce and navigation between the United States and foreign states.

Nonimmigrants also include several types of temporary visitors who are connected in some way with a foreign government or who represent an international organization. Ambassadors, public ministers, diplomats, and consular officers serve temporarily in this country, bringing with them members of their immediate families as well as personal employees, attendants, and servants. Officers and employees of international organizations such as the United Nations add to the list of nonimmigrant visitors entering the United States each year. The Glossary (Appendix 2) contains a detailed definition of nonimmigrants, a listing of each of the nonimmigrant classes of admission, and a detailed definition of each class.

Admission policy

The U.S. government has an “open door” policy for most nonimmigrant classes of admission. There is no set limit on the total number of admissions each year; indeed, tourists (the majority of nonimmigrants) are encouraged to visit as a

boon to the U.S. economy. The exception is certain categories of temporary workers. Limitations have been set by U.S. law on the number of H-1B (specialty occupations) and H-2B (occupations in which persons providing services or labor cannot be found in this country) workers allowed entry each year. Regulations govern additional areas such as the grounds for nonimmigrant admission, length and extension of stay, employment in the United States, accompaniment by family members, travel restrictions within the United States, and change of admission status. For example, ambassadors are allowed to remain in the United States for the duration of their service, students to complete their studies, visitors for business for a maximum of 6 months (plus 6-month extensions), and aliens in transit through the United States for not more than 29 days (with no extensions).

Employment (Tables 36-38, 41, 43)
family members

Most types of nonimmigrants are not allowed employment while in the United States, though exceptions may be granted, for example to students and to family members of international representatives. On the other hand, temporary workers come to the United States expressly for purposes of employment. Most nonimmigrant aliens may bring immediate family members with them; the exception is transit aliens other than foreign government officials. Some nonimmigrant aliens are prohibited from changing to another nonimmigrant category while in this country: transit aliens (except certain diplomats); crewmen; Visa Waiver Program visitors; fiance(e)s coming to the United States to marry U.S. citizens; visitors under a special program to provide certain critical information to Federal or State courts; and certain exchange visitors, non-agricultural workers, industrial trainees, vocational students, NATO personnel, and Irish Peace process aliens.

Visa Waiver Program (Table 37)

The Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) of 1986 authorized the establishment of a pilot program that permitted certain nonimmigrants from qualified countries to enter the United States on a temporary basis without nonimmigrant visas. The Visa Waiver Program (see Appendix 2, p. A.2-14) was originally extended only to approved countries that offered a reciprocal waiver of visas to U.S. citizens. The program is limited to admissions in the visitor for pleasure and for business classes of admission, with admission not to exceed 90 days. Various legislative efforts extended the pilot program on an incremental basis; the Visa Waiver

Table C
Nonimmigrants Admitted Under the Visa Waiver Program by Country of Citizenship:
Fiscal Years 1999-2000

Country of citizenship	2000	1999	Change	
			Number	Percent
All Visa Waiver countries	17,697,919	16,518,759	1,179,160	7.1
Japan	4,942,818	4,740,097	202,721	4.3
United Kingdom	4,563,621	4,088,050	475,571	11.6
Germany	1,893,534	1,972,189	-78,655	-4.0
France	1,193,256	1,141,334	51,922	4.5
Italy	737,641	723,149	14,492	2.0
Netherlands	623,088	579,923	43,165	7.4
Australia	519,176	451,158	68,018	15.1
Argentina	410,915	353,240	57,675	16.3
Spain	394,170	371,577	22,593	6.1
Ireland	338,793	292,625	46,168	15.8
Switzerland	322,935	313,724	9,211	2.9
Sweden	317,515	300,344	17,171	5.7
Belgium	234,136	223,961	10,175	4.5
Austria	190,194	195,835	-5,641	-2.9
New Zealand	171,403	151,356	20,047	13.2
Denmark	151,417	142,185	9,232	6.5
Norway	139,728	135,110	4,618	3.4
Finland	99,266	88,908	10,358	11.7
Portugal ¹	66,779	7,118	59,661	838.2
Singapore ¹	66,521	5,636	60,885	1,080.3
Uruguay ¹	33,625	3,802	29,823	784.4
Iceland	24,462	24,013	449	1.9
Slovenia	16,119	14,938	1,181	7.9
Luxembourg	11,141	12,817	-1,676	-13.1
Liechtenstein	1,392	1,394	-2	-.1
Andorra	723	686	37	5.4
Monaco	677	671	6	.9
Brunei	615	666	-51	-7.7
San Marino	531	522	9	1.7
Unknown	231,728	181,731	49,997	27.5

¹ Admitted August 1999. NOTE: Data include entries under the Guam Visa Waiver Program. Data for business and pleasure are not available separately due to temporary expiration of the Visa Waiver Program from May through October 2000.

Permanent Program Act made the program permanent as of October 30, 2000. During fiscal year 2000, 29 countries were members of the Visa Waiver Program.

Entries for current participant countries during fiscal year 1999 and 2000 are shown in Table C. Data for business and pleasure are not available separately for

2000 due to the expiration of the Visa Waiver Pilot Program. From May 1 through October 30, all visa waiver entries were inspected using parole provisions and were not differentiated as to visitors for business or pleasure.

Guam Visa Waiver Program

Under the Visa Waiver Program, certain visitors from designated countries may visit Guam for up to 15 days without first having to obtain nonimmigrant visitor visas. Guam Visa Waiver entries were not affected by the May through October 2000 period of expiration. The table below shows the countries participating in this program and entries for fiscal year 2000.

Country of citizenship	Visa Waiver visitors to Guam, fiscal year 2000	
	For pleasure	For business
Total	102,926	147
Korea	65,124	35
Taiwan ¹	31,592	14
Hong Kong	2,547	4
United Kingdom	1,321	2
Nauru	335	-
Japan	293	2
Australia	275	-
Indonesia	162	1
Singapore	133	1
Malaysia	83	1
Papua New Guinea ...	21	-
New Zealand	24	1
Solomon Islands	3	-
Burma	25	-
Samoa	-	-
Vanuatu	3	-
Brunei	1	-
Unknown	984	86

¹ Includes 6,515 pleasure and 2 business admissions from the People's Republic of China, which is not in the Guam Visa Waiver program.
- Represents zero.

North American Free-Trade Agreement

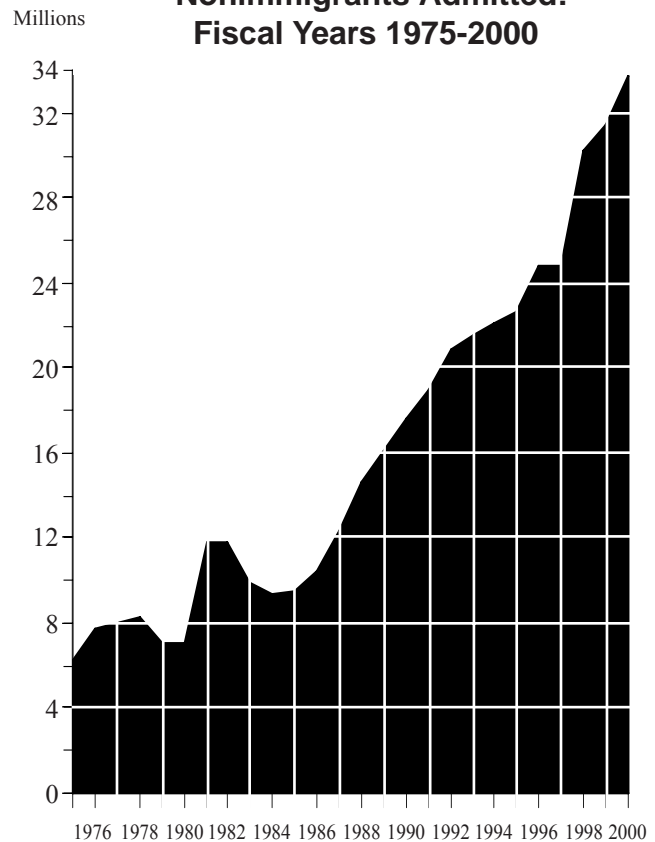
(Tables 36-38, 41, 43)

In December 1992, the Presidents of the United States and Mexico and the Prime Minister of Canada signed an

A record 33.7 million nonimmigrants were admitted to the United States during 2000.

agreement, enacted in December 1993, known as the North American Free-Trade Agreement (NAFTA). This law superseded the United States-Canada Free-Trade Agreement, establishing a special, reciprocal trading relationship among the United States, Canada, and Mexico. This agreement extended to the citizens of Mexico (with certain stipulations) and Canada the nonimmigrant class of admission exclusively for business people entering the United States to engage in activities at a "professional" level. Additionally, the agreement facilitates entry for Mexican as well as Canadian citizens seeking temporary entry as visitors for business, treaty traders and treaty investors, and intracompany transferees. Entries under NAFTA began in February 1994. Data for fiscal year 2000 are shown for NAFTA in Table 37.

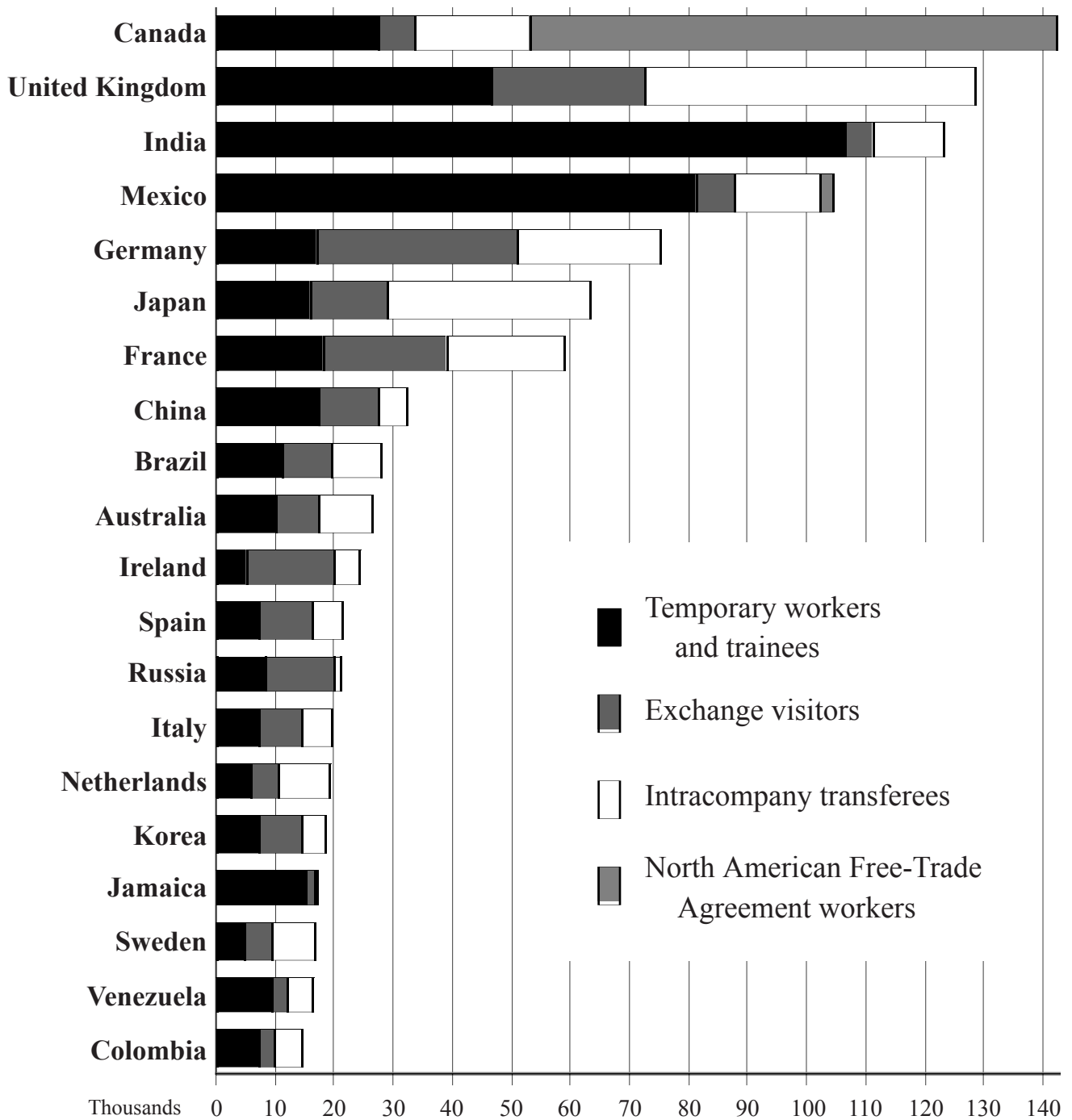
Chart F
Nonimmigrants Admitted:
Fiscal Years 1975-2000



NOTE: Data estimated for last quarter of 1979 and no data available for 1980 and 1997. See Glossary for fiscal year definitions.

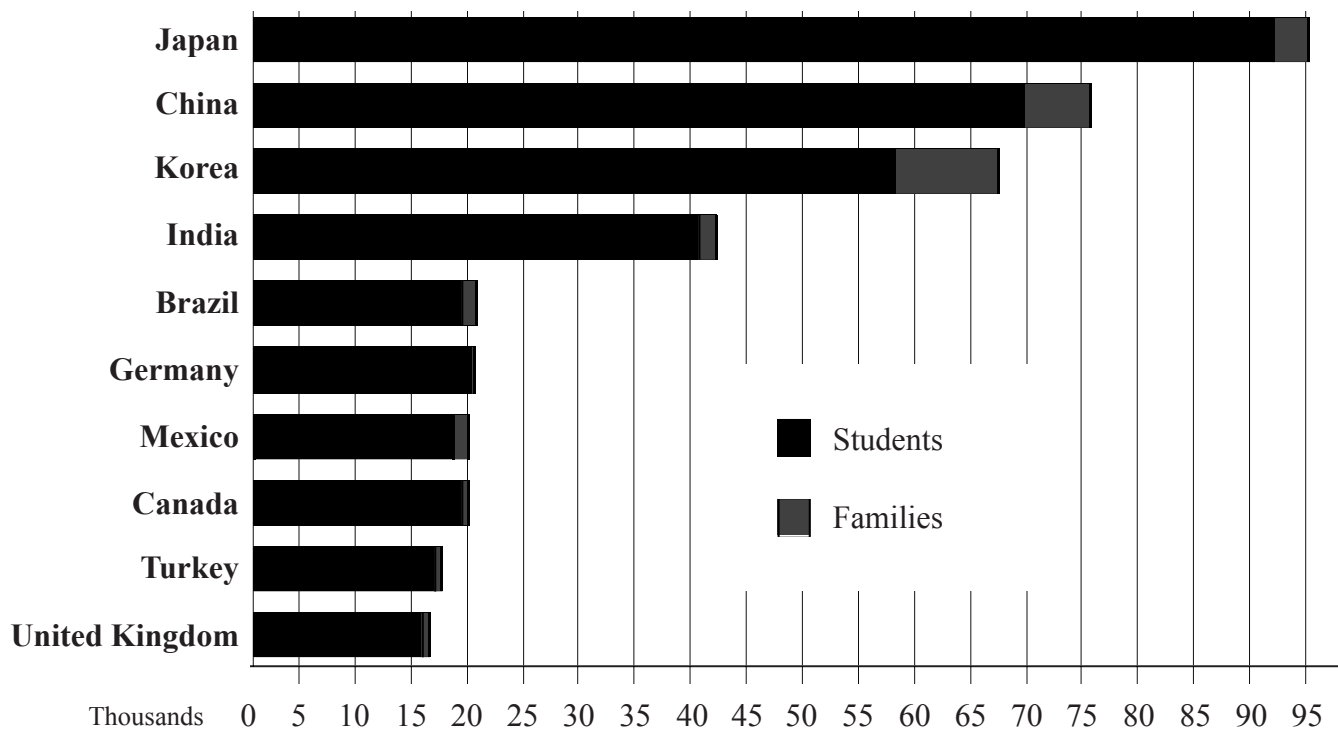
Source: Table 35 and previous *Yearbooks*.

Chart G
Nonimmigrants Admitted as Temporary Workers, Intracompany Transferees, and Exchange Visitors from Top Twenty Countries of Citizenship: Fiscal Year 2000



NOTE: China includes the People's Republic of China and Taiwan. "Temporary workers and trainees" includes admission classes H, O, P, Q, and R (see Nonimmigrant Admission section of text). Also, see Glossary for definitions of nonimmigrant classes of admission.
 Source: Table 38.

Chart H
Nonimmigrants Admitted as Students and Their Families for Top Ten Countries of Citizenship: Fiscal Year 2000



NOTE: China includes the People's Republic of China and Taiwan. Source: Table 36.

Data Overview

Recent trends in admission (Tables 35, 37)

As noted, the 2000 total of nearly 33.7 million nonimmigrant arrivals represents an increase of more than 2.2 million (7.1 percent) from fiscal year 1999. Total nonimmigrant admissions numbered about 6.3 million during 1975 and steadily increased to about 11.8 million in both 1981 and 1982. The number stabilized at about 9.5 million from 1983 to 1985 (recording a low in 1984), then began a steady increase that continued from 1985 to 2000 (Chart F).

Class of admission (Tables 35-38, 41, 43)

Of the 33.7 million nonimmigrants who arrived in fiscal year 2000, a large majority (90.6 percent) entered as visitors for pleasure (tourists) or visitors for business. More than 304,000 persons entered as exchange visitors to study, teach, or conduct research in the United States, bringing with them some 47,500 spouses and children (Chart G and Table 38). More than 659,000 foreign students entered the United States to pursue a full course of study

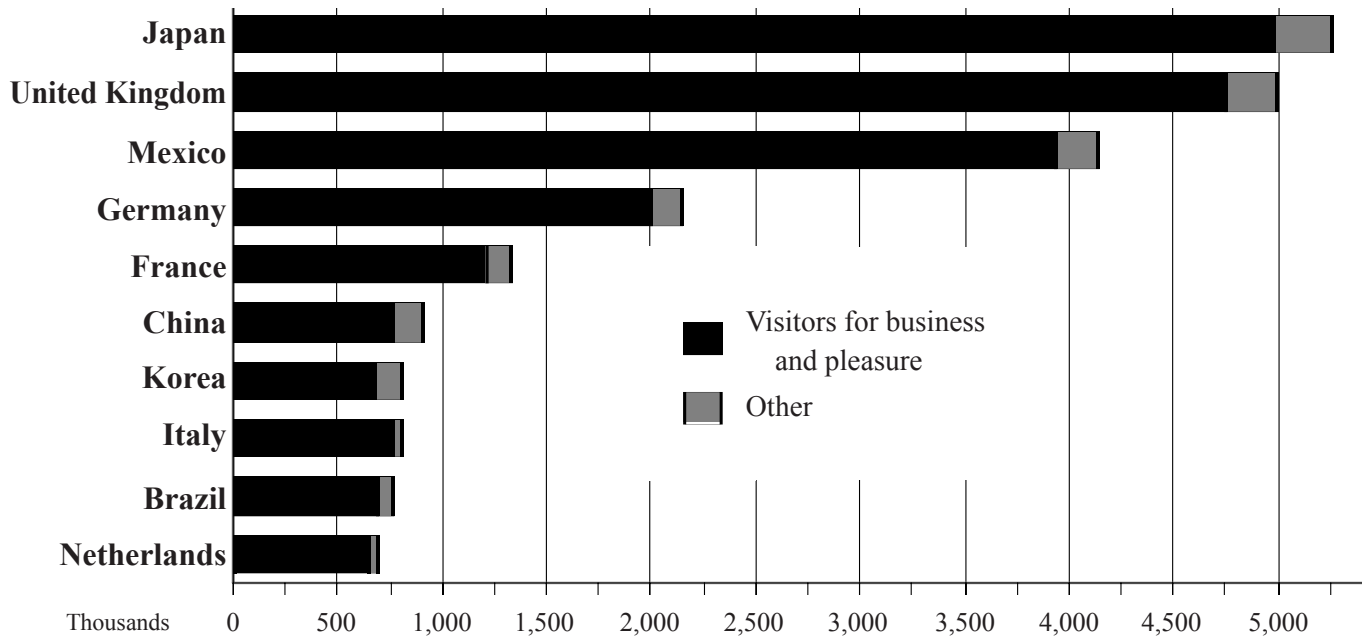
(predominantly in academic institutions) accompanied by almost 41,000 spouses and children (Chart H and Table 36).

Nearly 250,000 representatives of foreign governments (less than 1 percent of total entries) entered the United States as nonimmigrants in 2000. This figure consists of: more than 138,000 foreign government officials (including ambassadors, public ministers, career diplomats, and consular officers), family members, and attendants; nearly 98,000 foreign representatives to international organizations (including families and attendants); and more than 14,000 officials serving the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) (including family members).

Country of citizenship (Tables 36, 38-40, 42)

Nearly half of all nonimmigrants arriving in 2000 were citizens of one of four countries: Japan (15.6 percent), the United Kingdom (14.8), Mexico (12.3), and Germany (6.3). Tourists far outnumbered other classes of entry for almost every country of citizenship (Chart I). Nearly 95

Chart I
Nonimmigrants Admitted by Selected Class of Admission from Top Ten Countries of Citizenship: Fiscal Year 2000



NOTE: China includes the People's Republic of China and Taiwan. Source: Table 36.

percent of Japanese nonimmigrants were tourists (visitors for business or pleasure), compared to 92 percent of citizens of France, and 84 percent of Chinese (the People's Republic of China and Taiwan).

Port of entry (Table 39)

Just as four countries dominated nonimmigrant admissions to the United States in 2000, so did four ports of entry. Miami (13.2 percent), New York (12.7), Los Angeles (10.7), and Honolulu (5.9) together accounted for nearly 43 percent of all entrants. The share of all four ports decreased in 2000, indicating a continuing dispersement of arrivals to other ports within the United States since 1996.

State of intended destination (Tables 41, 42)

Five states were most often the intended destination of temporary visitors to the United States: Florida (17.4

percent of total admissions, nearly 25 percent from the United Kingdom), California (14 percent of the total, more than 14 percent from Japan and more than 12 percent from Mexico), New York (12.6 percent of the total, more than 18 percent from the United Kingdom), Hawaii (5.9 percent of the total, 83 percent from Japan), and Texas (5.6 percent of the total, nearly 57 percent from Mexico).

Age and sex (Table 43)

The largest age group for all nonimmigrant admissions is 25-39 years, with nearly 37 percent. Males account for 53.2 percent of total nonimmigrant admissions; nearly 86 percent of intracompany transferees; nearly 77 percent of temporary workers and trainees; more than 73 percent of foreign government officials; and more than 71 percent of foreign information media.

Parolees

A parolee is an alien, appearing to be inadmissible to the inspecting officer, allowed to enter the United States under urgent humanitarian reasons or when that alien's entry is determined to be for significant public benefit.

(See Appendix 2, p. A.2-9.)

Authority to grant parole

The Attorney General has the authority to allow the temporary admission of an alien on a case-by-case basis who may appear inadmissible but who enters the United States for urgent humanitarian reasons or when that alien's entry is determined to be for significant public benefit. Parole does not constitute formal admission to the United States. It confers only temporary status, and parolees are required to leave when the conditions supporting their admission are ended.

Nearly 300,000 parolees were admitted to the United States during 2000.

U.S. Parole Program

Parolees are treated as nonimmigrants at port processing, but their numbers are not reported in the nonimmigrant admission data (Tables 35-43). They are classified into six categories: deferred inspections; port-of-entry paroles; district advance paroles; humanitarian, public interest, and overseas parolees. To simplify presentation, some of these categories are combined in Table D. In fiscal years 1998 and 1999, more than 200,000 parole admissions were authorized annually, and in fiscal year 2000 the number was nearly 300,000.

Table D
Parolees Admitted by Selected Class of Admission from Top Five Countries of Citizenship:
Fiscal Years 1998-2000

Class of admission/ country of citizenship	1998	1999	2000
All parolees	234,545	263,755	299,851
Deferred inspections	10,108	9,608	10,272
Mexico	1,786	1,806	1,773
Canada	822	851	991
United Kingdom	480	445	556
Cuba	212	399	362
China ¹	333	349	347
Other	6,475	5,758	6,243
Port-of-entry and district advance paroles	177,701	204,364	247,664
Mexico	57,019	52,557	51,632
Canada	13,219	17,228	19,344
China ¹	8,962	9,967	15,497
United Kingdom	9,348	12,456	15,177
India	6,188	7,539	14,896
Other	82,965	104,617	131,118
Humanitarian, public interest, and overseas parolees	46,736	49,783	41,915
Mexico	21,476	19,801	18,340
Cuba	13,888	17,209	9,188
Canada	2,376	2,153	2,072
Ukraine ²	704	1,582	1,290
United Kingdom	345	339	939
Other	7,947	8,699	10,086

¹ Includes the People's Republic of China and Taiwan. ² Totals for the former Soviet Union were 2,281 in 1998, 3,814 in 1999, and 2,745 in 2000.

Table E
Parolees Admitted by Selected Category of Parole from Selected Countries of Citizenship:
Fiscal Years 1998-2000

Class of admission/ country of citizenship	1998	1999	2000
All selected parole categories	46,736	49,783	41,915
Overseas parolees	1,072	2,130	3,345
Ukraine	144	601	640
Russia	159	372	304
Vietnam	101	138	176
China ¹	47	20	135
Cuba	107	181	103
Cambodia	9	10	39
Other	505	808	1,948
Humanitarian parolees (medical and related reasons)	25,141	22,571	22,933
Mexico	18,292	16,106	15,948
Canada	1,802	1,620	1,704
El Salvador	742	1,077	699
Cuba.....	234	260	325
Honduras	66	68	291
Iraq	42	37	259
United Kingdom	224	218	248
Other	3,739	3,185	3,459
Public interest parolees (legal and related reasons) ..	20,523	25,082	15,637
Cuba	13,547	16,768	8,760
Mexico	3,092	3,581	2,300
Ukraine	493	874	504
Canada	543	516	319
Russia	483	547	280
Other	2,365	2,796	3,474

¹ Includes the People's Republic of China and Taiwan.

Categories of parole

Deferred inspection is used when an alien does not appear to be clearly admissible based on the evidence at hand. The parole is issued and an appointment is made for the alien to appear at another INS office, where more information is available and the inspection can be completed. These cases are usually resolved within 2 weeks, and the alien is admitted in the appropriate category. Parole may also be granted by advance application to an INS District Office. Advance parole is issued to an alien residing legally in the United States in other than permanent resident status who has an unexpected need to travel abroad and return, and whose

conditions of stay do not otherwise allow for readmission if he or she departs. Advance parole admissions account for 2 percent of all paroles in fiscal year 2000. Most commonly, parole is extended at ports of entry. Port of entry parole admissions accounted for nearly 81 percent of all paroles in fiscal year 2000 (Table D). These cases are most common at the land border ports and often involve the reentry of permanent resident aliens who are not carrying their documents. Again, these cases are typically resolved rapidly when the documents are produced.

The more exceptional instances of parole arise in emergencies or special situations. People may be admitted

under humanitarian parole to receive medical treatment or because they are injured or acutely ill. They may be brought to the United States under public interest parole to take part in legal proceedings as witnesses or defendants, or as part of a special overseas program undertaken in an agreement with another government. The latter category is the only one that may result in a long-term admission to the United States.

Country of citizenship

Table D displays the total number of parolees admitted from fiscal year 1998 through fiscal year 2000 by the three major categories of parole. Within each category, the five countries accounting for the largest number of parole admissions in fiscal year 2000 are shown. As in previous years our neighboring countries, Canada and Mexico, account for the largest number of parolees in the deferred inspections and port-of-entry, and district advance categories. Deferred inspections were stable at about 10,000 during the period. Most of the growth in the use of parole came in the port-of-entry category. The number paroled from Mexico declined during the period, while the number from Canada and many other countries increased.

Table E presents more detail for the same years regarding admissions under the overseas, humanitarian, and public interest parole categories. A large proportion of the humanitarian parolees admitted annually for medical and related reasons are from Canada and Mexico. The rest come in small numbers from many other countries. Many of the annual admissions under public interest parole for legal and related reasons also are from Canada and Mexico. Otherwise, the use of these three parole categories has reflected the operations of the special programs that account for many of the admissions. The largest number of public interest parolees were Cubans admitted under the 1994 migration agreement with Cuba. Most of the parolees from Vietnam, Cambodia, and the former Soviet Union arrived under special legislation after being denied refugee status.¹ These persons are allowed to adjust to immigrant status after one year of residence in the United States.

Notes on the parole data

Several changes were made in the presentation of the parole data for fiscal year 2000, and the corresponding

¹ The Foreign Operations Act of November 21, 1989. This provision is commonly known as the Lautenberg Amendment.

changes were made retroactively in the data for fiscal years 1998 and 1999 in Tables D and E. First, the data for the independent republics of the former Soviet Union are no longer combined. This affects the ranking of countries in the tables, since the former Soviet Union as a whole accounted for a significant share of the paroles in some categories. Second, the practice of combining the humanitarian and public interest parolees from selected countries with special programs into the overseas parole category is no longer being followed. Most Cubans admitted under the 1994 migration agreement are now being classified under public interest parole. Parolees from the republics of the former Soviet Union and Vietnam may be classified under overseas or public interest parole. Third, from May 1, 2000 through the end of fiscal year 2000, the public interest parole authority was used to admit more than 7.5 million temporary visitors after the Visa Waiver Pilot Program expired without being reauthorized. While procedures were adopted to distinguish these paroles from ordinary public interest paroles in the data, analysis indicates that the distinction was not made correctly in every case. For this reason, interpretation of the public interest parole data for 2000 should be made with caution.

Understanding the Data Data Collection

The Nonimmigrant Information System (NIIS) is designed to provide for each nonimmigrant a record of legal admission and departure. The system also produces statistics for such variables as age, country of citizenship, class of admission, visa-issuing post, port of entry, and destination in the United States. Many nonimmigrants enter and leave the United States more than once each year and the NIIS system records each entry separately.

A description of the principal steps in the process of nonimmigrant admission to the United States is useful for understanding the data produced by the NIIS system. A nonimmigrant visa is secured at a U.S. Consulate abroad (except for those entering under the Visa Waiver Program—see Visa Waiver Program section). These visas may be valid for multiple visits to the United States. Prior to departing for the United States, nonimmigrants are screened initially by the transportation company to ensure that their documents are in order. During the trip, INS Form I-94 is distributed to non-U.S. citizens.

At the port of entry, each arriving nonimmigrant presents a visa, which usually is stamped in the passport, and a completed INS Form I-94 to an immigration inspector. Among other actions, the inspector checks the form for completeness, determines the length of admission, and stamps the class of admission and port of entry on the form. The arrival portion is torn off and sent to a central data processing facility. The matching departure section of the form, usually stapled into the passport, is the nonimmigrant's proof of legal admission to the United States. This section of INS Form I-94, collected at departure, also is sent to the data processing facility where it is processed and matched electronically to the arrival section of the form.

Other temporary visitors

The Nonimmigrant Information System also includes information on: parolees, *e.g.*, entering for humanitarian, medical, or legal reasons or deferred inspections (allowed to enter to appear at an INS office where formal inspection can be completed); withdrawals; stowaways; and refugees. Data for these classes of admission are not shown in the nonimmigrant tables but are included in summary in footnotes to the appropriate tables. Additionally, parolee data are shown in the Parolees section of the text.

Temporary visitor information not collected

The Nonimmigrant Information System does not include data for permanent resident aliens returning after short visits abroad or for most of the millions of citizens of Canada and Mexico who cross the border for brief periods of time. Most aliens entering the United States from Canada or Mexico do not require documentation in the NIIS system. Canadians may travel for business or pleasure without travel restrictions for a period of 6 months without obtaining nonimmigrant visas. Mexicans crossing the border frequently may apply for border crossing cards, which can be used for admission to the United States for business or pleasure within 25 miles of the Southwestern border for a period not to exceed 72 hours.

Limitations of Data

A new data system was developed and put into place in mid-1996. While the new system introduced needed improvements in many of the data processing functions, start-up difficulties produced less complete capture of some data elements for fiscal year 1996, such as port of entry and state of intended destination. As noted, data for fiscal year 1997 do not appear in this edition due to data inconsistencies resulting from the reengineering of both the data entry and data base management components of the Nonimmigrant Information System.

As mentioned, the data system records arrivals via collection of INS Form I-94; thus, data represent each arrival event during the year rather than the actual number of individuals admitted. Nonimmigrants in several classes of admission often enter (and leave) many times in any given year, especially students, intracompany transferees, and visitors for business.

Changes in the procedures for processing student records, whereby certain records were prematurely moved off-line and subsequently not included in annual totals, resulted in a substantial underreporting in the number of student arrivals for 1991 through 1993. These procedures have been revised and new student arrival figures developed for these years. Table 39 in earlier editions of the *Yearbook* reflects revised student arrival counts as well as minor differences in numbers for other classes of admission and country of last residence.

The tables on parole admissions in fiscal year 1998 reflect a later edition of the data than was available for production of the report entitled, *Use of the Attorney General's Parole Authority Under the Immigration and Nationality Act: Fiscal Years 1997-1998*.

Missing information

Finally, there are gaps in the historical nonimmigrant data series due to the unavailability of arrival and departure records for July to September 1979, all of 1980, and for most characteristics for 1981 and 1982. Country of last residence and class of admission are the only variables available for 1981 and 1982. No reliable data are available for 1997.

H-1B Petition Workers

An H-1B temporary worker is an alien admitted to the United States to perform services in “specialty occupations,” based on professional education, skills, and/or equivalent experience. (See Appendix 2, p. A.2-13.)

The Immigration and Naturalization Act, as amended by the Immigration Act of 1990 and the American Competitiveness and Workforce Improvement Act (ACWIA) of 1998, regulates H-1B policy as well as guides H-1B procedures. Under ACWIA, the annual ceiling of H-1B petitions valid for initial employment was increased from 65,000 to 115,000 in fiscal years 1999 and 2000 and 107,500 in 2001.²

H-1B Program

The INS is responsible for the processing and approval of H-1B petitions submitted by domestic employers and their representatives on behalf of nonimmigrant workers seeking temporary employment within the United States. The H-1B nonimmigrant classification permits foreign professionals to enter the United States on a temporary basis to work in their field of expertise.

Under the H-1B program, specialty workers are permitted to be employed as long as three years initially with extensions not exceeding three years. The maximum stay is six years. In order to perform services in a specialty occupation, an employee must meet one of the following criteria: 1) hold a baccalaureate or higher degree as required by the specialty occupation from an accredited U.S. college or university; 2) possess a foreign degree determined to be equivalent to a baccalaureate or higher degree as required by the specialty occupation from an accredited U.S. college or university; 3) have any required license or other official credential to practice the occupation (for example, architect, surveyor, physical therapist) in the state in which employment is sought; or 4) have, as determined by the INS, the equivalent of the degree required by the specialty occupation acquired through a combination of education, training, and/or experience. Specialty occupations include computer systems analysts and programmers, physicians, professors, engineers, and accountants.

² The enactment of the American Competitiveness in the Twenty-First Century Act (AC21) in October 2000 raised the limit on petitions initially valid in fiscal year 2001 from 107,500 to 195,000.

Table F
H-1B Petitions Filed and Approved by Type:
Fiscal Year 2000

Type of petition	Petitions filed	Petitions approved
All petitions	299,046	257,640
Initial beneficiaries	164,814	136,787 ¹
Aliens outside U.S.	93,942	75,785 ¹
Aliens in U.S.	70,872	61,002 ¹
Continuing beneficiaries	134,207	120,820
Unknown	25	33

¹ Petitions approved in fiscal year 2000 that may have qualified as counting towards the numerical limit of 115,000 based on rules existing prior to the enactment of AC21 and before adjustment for multiple petitions and revocations. Under AC21, approved petitions in fiscal year 2000 above 115,000 do not count against the fiscal year 2000 cap.

To bring a foreign worker to the United States, an employer must file an application with the U.S. Department of Labor specifying the job, salary, and the length and site of employment. In addition, the employer must agree to pay the prevailing salary and provide proof that the pay is fair. Once the Department of Labor certifies the application, U.S. employers file the petition with the INS to sponsor an alien worker as an H-1B nonimmigrant. This petition may be filed to sponsor an alien for an initial period of H-1B employment or to extend the authorized stay of an alien as an H-1B nonimmigrant. Additionally, an employer may file the petition to sponsor an alien who currently has status as an H-1B nonimmigrant working for another employer or to seek an amendment of a previously approved petition. In the case of a petition to amend a previously approved petition, there might be no corresponding request to extend the authorized stay of the beneficiary. For example, an employer may file an amended petition notifying the INS of a different location where the beneficiary will be employed or a material change in the beneficiary’s job duties. Therefore, the total number of approved petitions exceeds the actual number of aliens who are provided nonimmigrant status as H-1B.

Data Overview

Petitions filed and approved (Table F)

The terms initial and continuing employment are used throughout this section on H-1B petitions to identify two types of petitions. Petitions for initial employment are filed for first-time H-1B employment with employers, only some

Table G. Common Characteristics of H-1B Beneficiaries: Fiscal Year 2000

Characteristic ¹	All beneficiaries	Initial beneficiaries	Continuing beneficiaries
Country of birth	India ²	India	India
Age	29 years	28 years	30 years
Education	Bachelor's degree ²	Bachelor's degree	Bachelor's degree
Occupation	Computer-related ²	Computer-related	Computer-related
Annual compensation	\$52,800	\$48,000	\$62,000

¹ Country of birth, education, and occupation are the most numerous or mode values. Age and annual compensation are median or middle values.

² Thirty-seven percent of all beneficiaries were born in India, had a bachelor's or master's degree, and were in a computer-related occupation.

of which are applied to the annual cap. ³ Continuing employment petitions refer to extensions, sequential employment, and concurrent employment, which are filed for aliens already in the United States. Extensions are filed for H-1B workers intending to work beyond the initial 3-year period up to six years, the maximum period permissible under law during fiscal year 2000. ⁴ Sequential employment refers to petitions for workers transferring between H-1B employers within the 6-year period. Finally, petitions for concurrent employment are filed for H-1B workers intending to work simultaneously for a second or subsequent H-1B employer.

Historical data on all H-1B petitions filed and approved is incomplete before fiscal year 2000. Demographic data was compiled on a sample basis representing 15 months in 1998 and 1999 and released in a report in February 2000. ⁵ However, the availability of comprehensive H-1B data does not begin until fiscal year 2000, a direct response to the aforementioned ACWIA. This legislation requires INS to submit an annual report on selected characteristics of H-1B beneficiaries.

The number of H-1B petitions filed in fiscal year 2000 was approximately 299,000, of which 165,000 or 55 percent were for initial employment. The remaining 134,000, or 45 percent, were for extensions of status and sequential or concurrent employment.

³ H-1B petitions approved for initial employment with non-exempt employers, adjusted for multiple petitions for individuals and revocations, count against the annual cap.

⁴ Enactment of AC21 amended the 6-year limitation for certain aliens (Public Law 106.313, Sec. 104(c) and 106).

⁵ The report, *Characteristics of Specialty Occupation Workers (H-1B)—May 1998 to July 1999*, is available on the INS website (www.ins.usdoj.gov/graphics/services/employerinfo/report1.pdf).

During the same period, the INS approved about 258,000 H-1B petitions submitted by employers on behalf of alien workers. In some cases, more than one U.S. employer submitted a petition on behalf of an individual H-1B worker (multiple petitions); therefore, the number of approved petitions exceeds the number of individual H-1B workers. The references in the tables and charts to beneficiaries represent actual petitions approved.

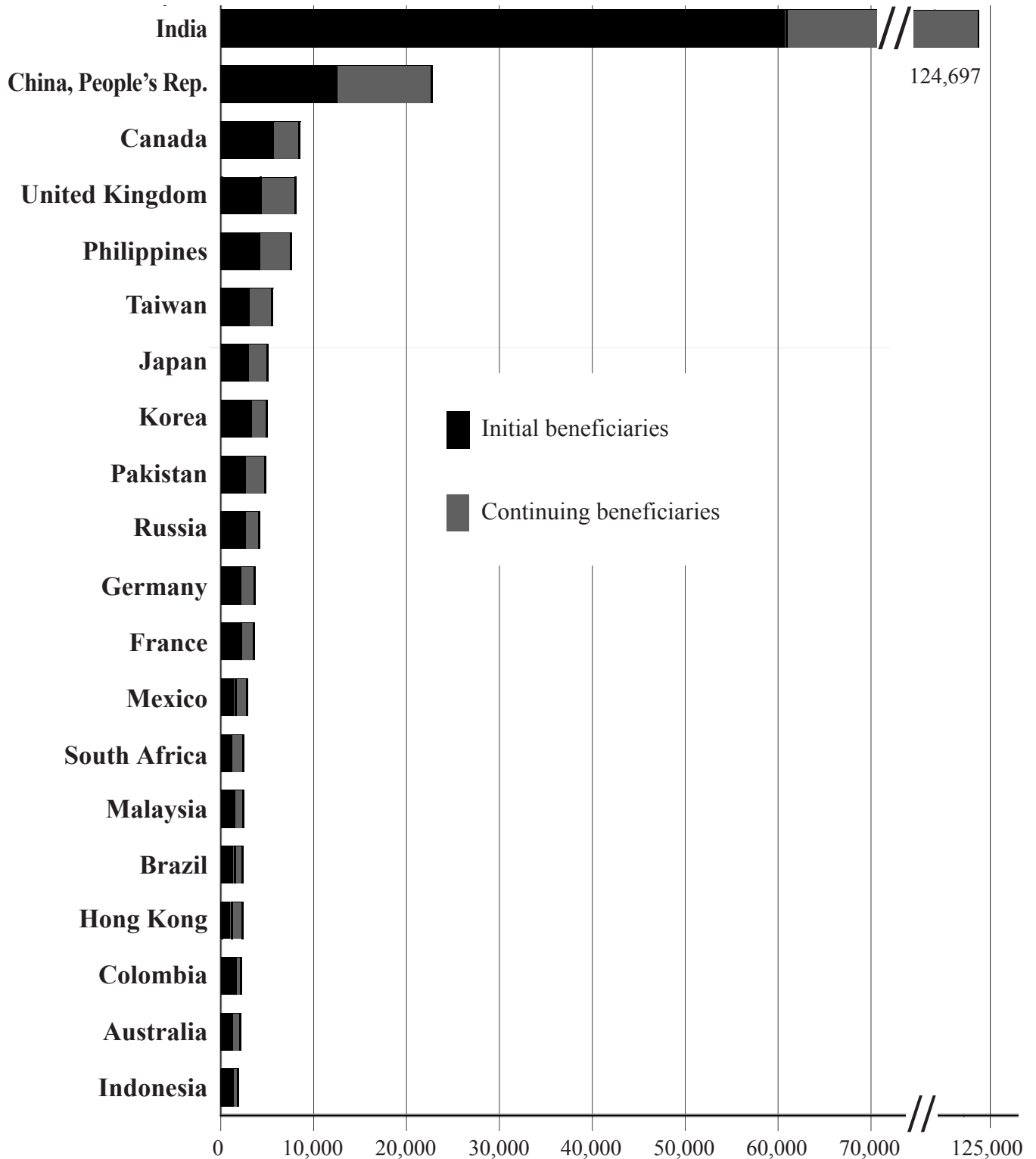
Of the petitions approved in fiscal year 2000, about 137,000, or 53 percent, were for initial employment. ⁶ Approximately 44 percent of the beneficiaries of initial employment were in the United States in another nonimmigrant status. The corresponding number of petitions for continuing employment was nearly 121,000. ⁷ These workers may have had a second (or subsequent) petition filed on their behalf in order to: 1) extend the period allowed to work with their current employer; 2) notify the INS of changes in the conditions of employment, including a change of employer; or 3) request concurrent H-1B status with another employer.

The number of H-1B petitions approved presented in this section and the number of H-1B temporary worker admissions reported above in the Nonimmigrants section are not comparable because they measure different populations. Petitions approved pertain to H-1B petitions

⁶ AC21 raised the cap on initial employment from 65,000 to 195,000 in fiscal years 2002 and 2003. In addition, under AC21 petitions filed for initial employment after March 22, 2000 (when the INS has enough petitions to reach the 115,000 cap in fiscal year 2000) and before September 1, 2000, regardless of when approved, do not count towards the fiscal year cap. Applications for initial employment filed in September 2000 count against the fiscal year 2001 cap.

⁷ Neither AC21 nor prior legislation established a cap on H-1B petitions for continuing employment.

Chart J
H-1B Beneficiaries from Top Twenty Countries of Birth:
Fiscal Year 2000



Source: Tables 44 and 45.

Table H. Profile of H-1B Beneficiaries by Top Twenty Countries of Birth: Fiscal Year 2000

Country of birth	All beneficiaries	Initial beneficiaries (percent)	Continuing beneficiaries (percent)	Initial and continuing beneficiaries				
				Median age (years)	Median income (dollars ¹)	Bachelor's degree or higher (percent ¹)	Master's degree or higher (percent ¹)	Computer-related occupation (percent ¹)
All countries	257,640	53	47	29	52,800	98	41	58
India	124,697	49	51	27	54,000	99	34	84
China, People's Rep.	22,570	55	45	31	53,000	100	79	45
Canada	8,365	65	35	33	66,158	93	38	28
United Kingdom	7,937	52	48	32	70,000	91	31	30
Philippines	7,396	54	46	31	46,000	99	12	39
Taiwan	5,420	53	47	30	47,219	99	73	34
Japan	4,920	57	43	30	36,540	97	32	13
Korea	4,815	66	34	33	44,200	99	54	21
Pakistan	4,651	54	46	30	51,995	99	42	55
Russia	3,983	62	38	31	50,000	99	63	55
Germany	3,534	57	43	32	55,412	95	57	20
France	3,415	59	41	29	57,000	96	52	26
Mexico	2,711	54	46	31	50,000	98	28	26
South Africa	2,299	44	56	33	65,000	87	17	44
Malaysia	2,253	59	41	26	45,000	99	28	40
Brazil	2,243	61	39	31	55,000	94	29	30
Hong Kong	2,216	48	52	27	47,260	99	34	33
Colombia	2,082	73	27	32	40,000	97	31	13
Australia	1,936	55	45	31	70,000	91	31	35
Indonesia	1,738	66	34	26	42,370	100	37	35
Other ²	38,459	58	42	31	50,000	97	47	31

¹ Based on all beneficiaries with known level of income, education, or occupation. ² Includes 562 beneficiaries with unknown country of birth.

authorizing temporary employment for specialty workers, whether they are in the United States or overseas, while admissions pertain to H-1B workers arriving from abroad. H-1B petitions can be approved for aliens changing nonimmigrant status without leaving the United States. Most significantly, H-1B workers can be admitted multiple times using a single petition, and admitted with a petition approved in a prior fiscal year.

Common characteristics of beneficiaries

(Table G)

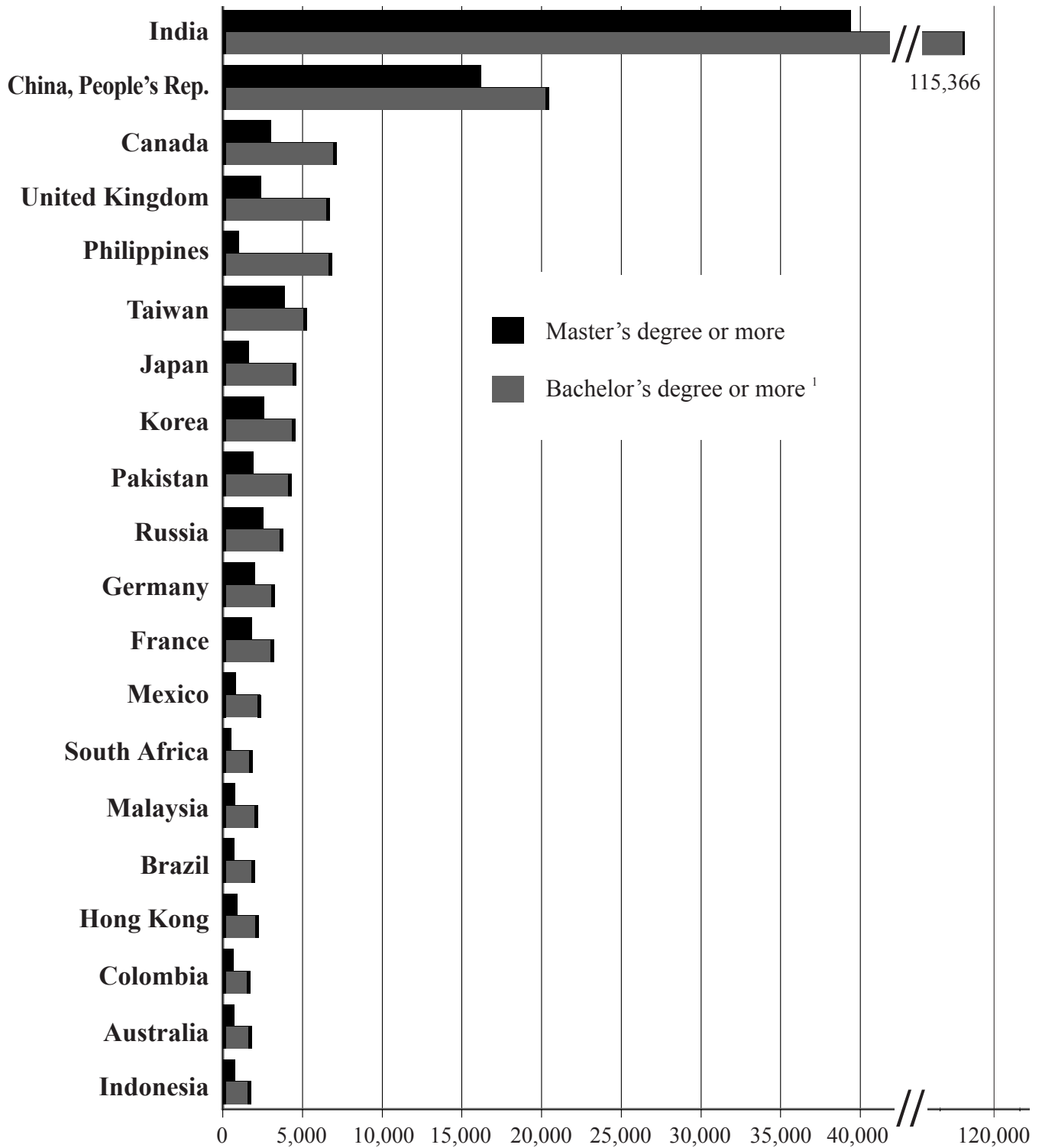
The typical H-1B beneficiary whose petition was approved in fiscal year 2000 had the following characteristics: born

in India; 29 years old; holding a bachelor's degree; working in a computer-related occupation; and earning an annual compensation of \$52,800. Thirty-seven percent of all beneficiaries were born in India, had either a bachelor's or master's degree, and were employed in a computer-related occupation. The beneficiary continuing in H-1B status, in relation to the beneficiary initially in H-1B status, was two years older earning \$14,000 more annually. Their other characteristics were the same.

Top twenty countries (Charts J and K, Table H)

Beneficiaries born in India dominate the H-1B program, representing nearly half of the total. A distant second are

Chart K
H-1B Beneficiaries from Top Twenty Countries of Birth by Level of Education: Fiscal Year 2000



¹ For the top 20 countries of birth, beneficiaries with less than a bachelor's degree constitute 13 percent or less of all beneficiaries. See Table H.

**Table I. Median Annual Compensation of H-1B Beneficiaries by Age and Occupation:
Fiscal Year 2000**

Occupation	All beneficiaries	Median compensation by age of beneficiary						
		All ages (dollars)	Under 25 years (dollars)	25-29 years (dollars)	30-34 years (dollars)	35-39 years (dollars)	40 years and older (dollars)	Unknown age (dollars)
All occupations	235,128¹	52,800	46,800	52,000	57,000	56,100	55,000	50,016
Computer-related	138,383	55,000	48,000	55,000	60,000	62,004	64,500	54,682
Architecture, engineering, and surveying	28,297	58,000	49,500	56,000	61,000	62,000	60,000	50,000
Administrative specializations	16,518	40,795	35,000	40,800	46,000	42,285	42,000	47,920
Education	10,900	35,000	28,000	31,500	35,000	36,031	37,500	32,546
Medicine and health	8,725	46,200	38,000	41,100	50,000	62,609	57,218	41,000
Managers and officials n.e.c.	7,056	60,000	35,000	46,300	66,000	78,177	76,000	61,000
Life sciences	4,512	35,000	30,913	34,368	34,600	36,000	39,111	37,500
Social sciences	4,395	42,000	40,000	42,000	47,000	45,000	40,000	52,000
Miscellaneous professional, technical, and managerial	4,321	50,000	40,000	53,000	60,000	55,000	52,000	49,500
Mathematics and physical sciences	3,875	51,100	45,000	49,000	54,000	54,777	57,871	61,512
Art	2,826	38,000	31,200	36,500	41,600	41,600	41,600	40,000
Writing	1,360	35,000	30,000	33,000	36,000	40,123	36,000	28,800
Law and jurisprudence	1,012	90,000	35,502	95,000	95,000	83,780	55,000	165,550
Fashion models	689	125,000	125,000	125,000	130,000	128,180	130,000	127,400
Entertainment and recreation	584	33,280	30,000	33,000	35,000	35,000	33,300	18,950
Museum, library, and archival sciences	280	36,696	35,000	34,055	36,000	41,975	39,277	60,000
Religion and theology	82	30,520	47,780	30,500	29,120	31,600	30,039	X
Unknown	1,313	46,000	35,000	43,159	50,000	57,783	62,400	28,300

¹ Excludes 22,512 petitions with unknown annual compensation. Note: n.e.c. represents not elsewhere classified. X Not applicable.

beneficiaries from the People's Republic of China, accounting for 9 percent.⁸

Chart J and Table H show that initial beneficiaries born in Colombia (73 percent) and South Africa (44 percent) made up the highest and lowest percentages, respectively, of all beneficiaries born in the countries listed.

⁸ All percentages expressed about H-1B beneficiaries are based on the total number of reported values for a particular characteristic.

As indicated in Chart K and Table H, of the top twenty countries, the People's Republic of China and Taiwan had the highest percentage of beneficiaries with at least a master's degree (79 and 73, respectively). The corresponding countries with the lowest percentages were the Philippines (12) and South Africa (17).

Profile of beneficiaries by top twenty countries of birth (Table H)

Table H shows how beneficiaries from the leading countries compare with respect to age, income, education, and occupation.

Table J. H-1B Beneficiaries by Education and Occupation: Fiscal Year 2000

Occupation	All beneficiaries	Education of beneficiary			
		No diploma	High school graduate	Less than one year college	One year or more college, no diploma
All occupations	257,640	760	522	283	2,176
Computer-related	148,426	72	152	101	1,211
Architecture, engineering, and surveying	31,384	23	79	49	258
Administrative specializations	18,419	24	67	30	181
Education	12,648	6	10	3	30
Medicine and health	10,065	8	-	4	19
Managers and officials n.e.c.	7,781	42	69	41	197
Social sciences	5,179	6	10	6	33
Life sciences	5,010	-	5	-	9
Miscellaneous professional, technical, and managerial	4,748	8	20	11	61
Mathematics and physical sciences	4,276	1	3	-	14
Art	3,046	8	11	6	83
Writing	1,501	1	3	2	14
Law and jurisprudence	1,132	-	-	1	1
Fashion models	781	544	85	21	24
Entertainment and recreation	727	3	-	1	19
Museum, library, and archival sciences	330	1	1	1	4
Religion and theology	103	-	-	1	1
Unknown	2,084	13	7	5	17

See footnotes at end of table.

Indians tend to be younger, at age 27, than workers from other countries. The youngest beneficiaries, with median ages of 26, were born in Indonesia and Malaysia, while the oldest, with median ages of 33, were born in Canada, Korea, and South Africa. The median age of all beneficiaries was 29 years.

Median income ranged from \$36,000 for beneficiaries born in Japan to \$70,000 for beneficiaries born in Australia and United Kingdom. For all beneficiaries, median income was nearly \$53,000.

Virtually every beneficiary born in Indonesia or the People's Republic of China had a minimum of a bachelor's degree. In contrast, 87 percent of beneficiaries born in South Africa had a bachelor's

degree, the lowest percentage of any country in the top twenty. Ninety-eight percent of all beneficiaries had a bachelor's degree or higher, and 41 percent at least a master's degree.

Eighty-four percent of beneficiaries born in India had a computer-related occupation. For all beneficiaries the percentage was 58. Only beneficiaries from India exceeded the average percentage. Without India, the percentage of beneficiaries employed in computer-related occupations drops to 34.

Annual compensation by age and occupation of beneficiaries (Table I)

Table I indicates the annual income of beneficiaries by occupation and age. For all beneficiaries, median annual

Table J. H-1B Beneficiaries by Education and Occupation: Fiscal Year 2000—Continued

Occupation	Education of beneficiary					
	Associate's degree	Bachelor's degree	Master's degree	Professional degree	Doctorate degree	Unknown
All occupations	1,228	134,126	73,220	6,474	16,960	21,891
Computer-related	625	89,948	44,084	133	2,359	9,741
Architecture, engineering, and surveying	200	14,050	10,957	94	2,668	3,006
Administrative specializations	105	10,231	5,694	105	150	1,832
Education	24	2,504	2,099	759	5,496	1,717
Medicine and health	19	2,637	682	4,314	1,097	1,285
Managers and officials n.e.c.	102	4,142	2,186	69	219	714
Social sciences	16	2,296	1,843	24	180	765
Life sciences	9	694	879	313	2,605	496
Miscellaneous professional, technical, and managerial	19	2,160	1,757	86	207	419
Mathematics and physical sciences	7	868	1,155	55	1,775	398
Art	66	2,126	522	3	13	208
Writing	11	931	362	13	32	132
Law and jurisprudence	1	222	272	467	51	117
Fashion models	8	11	1	2	-	85
Entertainment and recreation	3	400	153	-	10	138
Museum, library, and archival sciences	1	99	137	21	18	47
Religion and theology	-	42	32	1	5	21
Unknown	12	765	405	15	75	770

Note: n.e.c. represents not elsewhere classified. - Represents zero.

compensation was \$52,800, with a peak at \$57,000 for 30-34 year olds. The highest paid beneficiaries were fashion models, with median annual compensation of \$125,000. At the other end of the spectrum were religion and theology workers, with annual compensation under \$31,000.

For any occupation and age group the highest paid beneficiaries were fashion models between ages 30 and 34, while the lowest paid were educators under 25. Fashion models and educators in these age groups were compensated on an annualized basis of \$130,000 and \$28,000, respectively. For all beneficiaries, the peak earners at \$57,000 were between 30 and 34 years old.

The annual compensation of computer-related workers was positively correlated with age—younger

beneficiaries were paid less than older beneficiaries. Computer-related beneficiaries under 25 and between 25 and 29 years old were reported to have been paid a median of \$48,000 and \$55,000, respectively. By comparison, their peers ages 30-34, 35-39, and over 39 years were paid a median of \$60,000, \$62,000, and \$64,500, respectively.

Education by occupation of beneficiaries
(Table J)

Table J reveals the highest level of education achieved by beneficiaries by occupation. Ninety-eight and 41 percent of all beneficiaries had at least a bachelor's or master's degree, respectively. Three percent had a professional degree and another 7 percent had a doctorate degree.

Table K. Median Annual Compensation of H-1B Beneficiaries by Education and Occupation: Fiscal Year 2000

Occupation	All beneficiaries	Median compensation by education of beneficiary				
		All education levels (dollars)	No diploma (dollars)	High school graduate (dollars)	Less than one year college (dollars)	One year or more college, no diploma (dollars)
All occupations	235,128 ¹	52,800	100,000	70,000	65,000	55,000
Computer-related	138,383	55,000	69,250	73,600	65,713	60,000
Architecture, engineering, and surveying	28,297	58,000	65,000	60,000	62,400	62,700
Administrative specializations	16,518	40,795	68,500	50,000	67,500	46,800
Education	10,900	35,000	43,500	47,615	27,500	25,422
Medicine and health	8,725	46,200	59,220	X	42,400	42,000
Managers and officials n.e.c.	7,056	60,000	73,500	67,000	70,000	56,160
Life sciences	4,512	35,000	X	35,000	X	43,830
Social sciences	4,395	42,000	31,308	52,375	75,000	36,500
Miscellaneous professional, technical, and managerial	4,321	50,000	48,880	52,000	65,000	47,000
Mathematics and physical sciences	3,875	51,100	36,500	75,000	X	51,000
Art	2,826	38,000	61,100	40,352	31,000	46,000
Writing	1,360	35,000	62,400	54,000	78,500	39,921
Law and jurisprudence	1,012	90,000	X	X	23,040	19,000
Fashion models	689	125,000	127,400	100,000	115,000	138,000
Entertainment and recreation	584	33,280	52,000	X	30,000	35,000
Museum, library, and archival sciences	280	36,696	50,000	39,000	95,000	48,100
Religion and theology	82	30,520	X	X	30,000	35,000
Unknown	1,313	46,000	100,000	59,779	70,000	41,600

See footnotes at end of table.

For beneficiaries in computer-related occupations, 65 percent had no more than a bachelor's degree and 32 percent no more than a master's degree. In sharp contrast, 10 percent of fashion models had more than a high school diploma.

Museum, library, and archival workers were the most likely group with at most a master's degree. Forty-eight percent had a maximum education of a master's degree.

Forty-nine percent of medicine and health and 46 percent of law and jurisprudence beneficiaries, respectively, had a professional degree at most. With respect to a doctorate, the corresponding percentages were 58 for beneficiaries in life sciences and 46 for mathematics and physical sciences occupations.

Annual compensation by education and occupation of beneficiaries (Table K)

Table K shows annual compensation of beneficiaries by

Table K. Median Annual Compensation of H-1B Beneficiaries by Education and Occupation: Fiscal Year 2000—Continued

Occupation	Median compensation by education of beneficiary					
	Associate's degree (dollars)	Bachelor's degree (dollars)	Master's degree (dollars)	Professional degree (dollars)	Doctorate degree (dollars)	Unknown (dollars)
All occupations	50,000	50,000	57,000	64,000	50,000	51,118
Computer-related	55,000	53,000	60,000	65,000	75,000	55,900
Architecture, engineering, and surveying	63,000	53,000	60,000	71,153	70,011	55,000
Administrative specializations	39,500	38,000	47,400	47,000	75,000	36,691
Education	27,612	30,246	33,383	36,851	39,000	37,327
Medicine and health	40,000	42,000	40,000	85,000	39,125	39,425
Managers and officials n.e.c.	41,000	50,000	75,000	84,000	90,000	58,000
Life sciences	40,850	33,000	38,000	32,400	35,000	42,450
Social sciences	38,000	39,000	49,190	69,000	70,000	36,000
Miscellaneous professional, technical, and managerial	42,000	45,000	60,000	39,500	65,000	32,256
Mathematics and physical sciences	45,000	45,000	50,000	55,300	56,677	55,000
Art	35,500	37,898	40,000	41,600	39,000	30,000
Writing	30,000	35,000	35,000	32,000	44,740	29,190
Law and jurisprudence	27,612	39,900	85,500	100,500	90,000	60,000
Fashion models	36,000	137,500	40,000	134,000	X	113,253
Entertainment and recreation	30,160	33,540	31,000	X	35,850	37,840
Museum, library, and archival sciences	35,000	36,400	35,000	53,100	42,266	X
Religion and theology	X	26,000	37,399	23,000	52,312	46,000
Unknown	37,250	41,500	58,000	72,000	59,383	42,020

¹ Excludes 22,512 petitions with unknown annual compensation. Note: n.e.c. represents not elsewhere classified. X Not applicable.

occupation and education. The highest paid beneficiaries, at \$100,000, did not have a high school diploma. The primary reason is that 73 percent of beneficiaries without a high school diploma were fashion models, the highest paid beneficiaries on an annualized basis.

The second-highest paid beneficiaries, at \$70,000, had only a high school diploma. Nearly half of this group was comprised of relatively well compensated computer-related workers and fashion models.

By far, the most numerous group with regard to education has a bachelor's degree with a median income of \$50,000. Along with workers having an associate's degree or a doctorate, this group has the lowest median income of all education levels. This median income of \$50,000 is lower than the median for all workers of \$52,800.

With respect to occupation and education, the two most numerous groups—computer-related workers with bachelor's or master's degrees—had median incomes of

\$53,000 and \$60,000, respectively. These incomes are both higher than the median for all workers (\$52,800) but only one is higher than the median (\$55,000) for all computer-related workers.

The next two most numerous groups—architecture, engineering, and surveying workers with bachelor’s or master’s degrees—had median incomes of \$53,000 and \$60,000, respectively. These incomes are both higher than the median for all workers (\$52,800) but only one is higher than the median of (\$58,000) for all architecture, engineering, and surveying workers.

Occupation by country of birth of initial and continuing beneficiaries (Tables 44 and 45)

Tables 44 and 45 show the occupations of initial and continuing beneficiaries by country of birth. By far the most numerous occupation is computer-related for both initial and continuing beneficiaries.

Understanding the Data

Data Collection

Petitions for obtaining H-1B nonimmigrant status for alien workers are submitted by their prospective employers on INS form I-129 (*Petition for a Nonimmigrant Worker*) and the addendum I-129W (*H-1B Data Collection and Filing Fee Exemption*). The petitions are mailed to one of four INS Service Centers for processing, depending on the location of the sponsoring employer: St. Albans, Vermont; Lincoln, Nebraska; Dallas, Texas; and Laguna Niguel, California.

Upon receipt, each petition is stamped with its date of arrival at the Service Center. File assembly clerks create a paper file that contains the original petition as well as all supporting documentation. This file becomes the official file of record for all activities connected with the petition.

Biographical data such as name, date of birth, and country of birth are entered from the petition by data entry clerks

into the *Computer-Linked Application Information Management System (CLAIMS3)* case-tracking system. The computer system generates a unique number for the file, known as a receipt number. The files are distributed to adjudicators after being sorted into potential cap and non-cap cases.

After being received, the files are reviewed by adjudicators who determine whether they have adequate information in the file on which to base a decision to approve or deny the petition. If sufficient evidence is available, a decision is made by the adjudicator and the corresponding information is entered into the tracking system. Otherwise, additional information is sought by the adjudicator from the sponsoring employer. A response from the employer must be made within a set period of time or the petition will be denied.

After petitions have been adjudicated, the associated paper files are forwarded for storage to the INS records center in Harrisonburg, Virginia.

Limitations of Data

The tables in this report have been tabulated from an extract file created at headquarters from INS service center files. Errors in this extract file could have occurred in several ways. For example, petition data might have been inaccurate on petitions, miskeyed into computers at the service centers, or improperly transferred electronically between the service centers and headquarters. There is very little editing to the data used to generate the tables. Impossible or very improbable values have been defined as unknown. Examples are beneficiaries younger than 16 or those beneficiaries working without compensation.

The percentage of petitions with unknown information was relatively high, at 8.5 percent for education and 8.7 percent for compensation. On the other hand, the percentages of approved petitions with missing data on age, country of birth, and major occupation were only .3, .2, and .8 percent, respectively.