

- **MOST IMMIGRANTS GRANTED LEGAL PERMANENT RESIDENCE ARE RELATIVES OF U.S. RESIDENTS.**  
In 2003, 70% of the foreign-born granted legal permanent residence (LPR) or “green cards” were admitted because they had relatives who were U.S. citizens or current LPRs. Among the remaining 30%, 12% gained admission based on employment criteria or skill, 10% were admitted through the diversity lottery, and 8% were admitted as refugees.
- **CURRENT LAW EMPHASIZES FAMILY RELATIONS IN GRANTING LPR STATUS.**  
Some types of family members can be admitted in unlimited numbers each year; other types are subject to annual limits. Recent immigration reform discussions focusing on selection criteria suggest reducing the importance of family and increasing the importance of employment and skill.
- **EDUCATION LEVELS VARY WIDELY AMONG THOSE GRANTED LPR STATUS.**  
Spouses of U.S. citizens have relatively high levels of education: 33% have at least a B.A., which is higher than the percentage of native-born residents holding a bachelor’s degree in 2003 (27%), as reported by the U.S. Census Bureau. Not surprisingly, 73% of the immigrants admitted through employment preferences have earned at least a B.A., and they account for 26% of LPRs who have achieved this level of education, despite being just 12% of 2003 admissions. Parents and siblings of U.S. citizens are much less educated: 70% and 40%, respectively, have not earned a high school diploma. LPR-sponsored spouses are the least educated group: 75% have not earned a high school diploma.
- **IMMIGRANTS ADMITTED THROUGH EMPLOYMENT PREFERENCES HAVE THE BEST ENGLISH SKILLS...**  
Over half of the immigrants admitted through the employment preference category report levels of spoken and written English that are “very good,” as do approximately 40% of the unmarried adult children of citizens. Those most likely to have poor English skills are the parents of citizens (80%), spouses of LPRs (86%), and the siblings of citizens (69%).
- **... AND ALSO THE HIGHEST RATES OF EMPLOYMENT—BUT MANY FAMILY LPRs ALSO WORK.**  
Seventy-five percent of employment-preference LPRs are currently working (as are 75% of refugees), but large percentages of some family LPRs work as well. For example, 60% of the spouses of U.S. citizens and 59% of the adult children (ages 22 and older) of citizens are currently working. However, employment rates are low among parents of citizens (only 16% work, but 66% are ages 60 and older at the time they become LPRs) and spouses of LPRs (38%).
- **MOST EMPLOYMENT LPRs ARE HIGHLY SKILLED, BUT SO ARE MANY FAMILY LPRs.**  
Employment LPRs are the most likely to be working in high skill occupations (67%). Spouses of citizens are found in both high-skill (21%) and low-skill occupations (48%). Because of their large number and high employment rates, spouses of citizens account for 38% of all high-skill workers and nearly half of all low-skill workers. The groups of workers most likely to be working in low-skill occupations are spouses of LPRs (81%), parents of citizens (65%), and siblings of citizens (63%). These groups account for a relatively small share of all low-skilled LPR workers: 18% in total. Diversity LPRs and refugees each account for about 13% of low-skill workers.

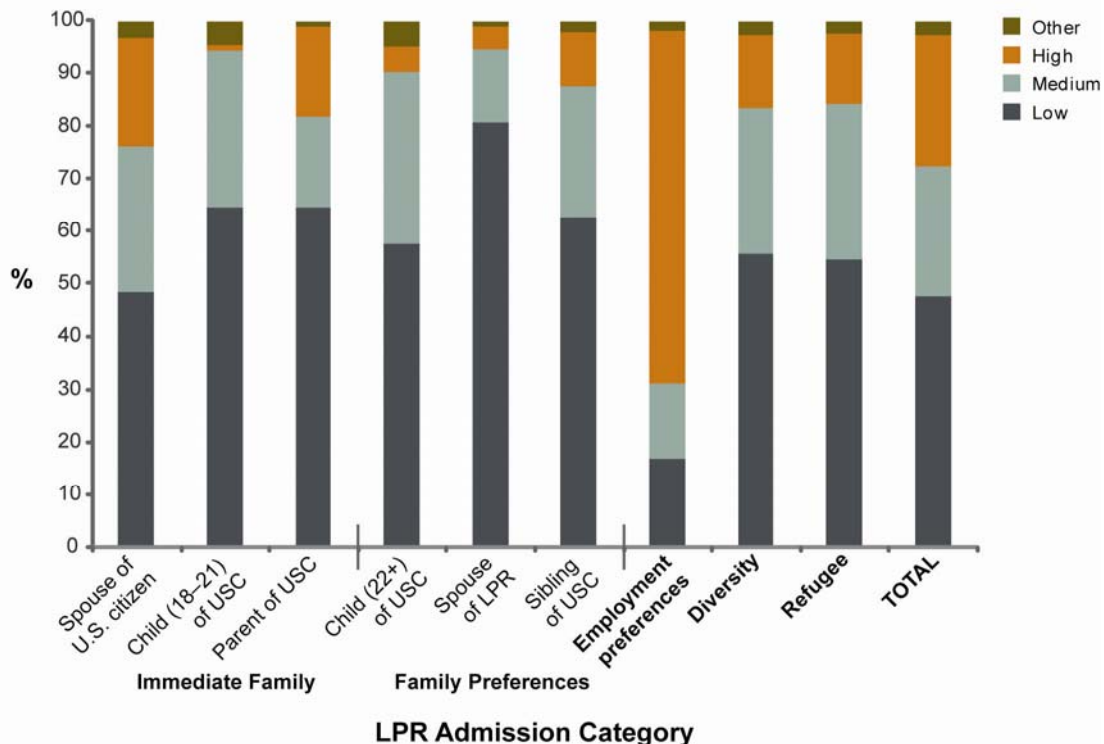


## 2003 Legal Permanent Residents

LPR Admission Category		2003 Adult Admissions (%) <sup>5</sup>	Education		Employment	
			Mean Years	< HS Diploma (%)	Employed (%)	Median Hourly Wage (\$)
Immediate Family <sup>1</sup>	<i>Spouse of U.S. citizen</i>	41	13.2	29	60	10.00
	<i>Child (18–21) of U.S. citizen</i>	3	NA	NA	46	7.00
	<i>Parent of U.S. citizen</i>	14	7.5	70	13	8.00
Family Preferences <sup>2</sup>	<i>Spouse of LPR</i>	3	8.0	75	38	7.75
	<i>Child (22+) of U.S. citizen</i>	1	12.6	26	59	8.65
	<i>Sibling of U.S. citizen</i>	8	11.6	42	44	7.25
Employment Preferences <sup>2</sup>		12	16.1	11	75	24.68
Diversity <sup>3</sup>		10	14.6	13	56	7.75
Refugee <sup>4</sup>		8	12.3	33	75	10.00
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>100</b>	<b>12.5</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>10.00</b>

Notes: <sup>1</sup>Unlimited admissions each year. <sup>2</sup>Limited admissions each year. <sup>3</sup>Admitted by lottery from countries with low immigration rates; limited to 55,000 admissions in 2003. <sup>4</sup>Number of LPRs admitted in a given year depends upon number of refugees admitted with temporary visas in the prior year. <sup>5</sup>Excludes those not classified and those admitted through “legalization.”

### Occupational Skill Among LPRs Currently Working



**Note:** **High skill:** computer/math scientist; management, professional; engineer; life, physical, social scientists; lawyers, counselors; health diagnosis and treating practitioners; teachers, education workers. **Medium skill:** technician; sales and office. **Low skill:** farming, fishing, forestry; cleaning, building services; food services; personal care; production, transportation, construction, extraction, maintenance.

**Sources:** 2003 New Immigrant Survey. U.S. Census Bureau.

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