



Written by [David Kelly](#) on November 20, 2023

# Study: “Unauthorized Immigrant” Population in U.S. Is Growing and More Diverse

The number of illegal aliens, or “unauthorized immigrants,” living in the United States, according to a new study by the [Pew Research Center](#), reached 10.5 million in 2021. The estimate was a “modest increase over 2019 but nearly identical to 2017.”

“The number of unauthorized immigrants living in the U.S. in 2021 remained below its peak of 12.2 million in 2007. It was about the same size as in 2004 and lower than every year from 2005 to 2015,” Pew reported.



The report shared key findings showing changes in how the “U.S. unauthorized immigrant population changed from 2017 to 2021”:

- The most common country of birth for unauthorized immigrants is Mexico. However, **the population of unauthorized immigrants from Mexico dropped by 900,000 from 2017 to 2021**, to 4.1 million.
- **There were increases in unauthorized immigrants from nearly every other region of the world** - Central America, the Caribbean, South America, Asia, Europe and sub-Saharan Africa.
- Among U.S. states, **only Florida and Washington saw increases to their unauthorized immigrant populations**, while California and Nevada saw decreases. In all other states, unauthorized immigrant populations were unchanged.
- **4.6% of U.S. workers in 2021 were unauthorized immigrants**, virtually identical to the share in 2017.

U.S. Border Patrol/Picryl

Pew found that the “U.S. foreign-born population was 14.1% of the nation’s population in 2021. That



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was very slightly [higher than in the last five years](#) but below the record high of 14.8% in 1890.”

The study also notes that the population of “undocumented immigrants” in the U.S. is becoming more diverse, and Mexicans now have the smallest share they’ve ever had since the 1990s, accounting for “39% of the nation’s unauthorized immigrants in 2021.”

The total number of illegals in “the U.S. from countries other than Mexico has grown rapidly,” noted the report, with an “estimated 2021 population of 6.4 million, up by 900,000 from 2017.”

Pew also found that

almost every region in the world had a notable increase in the number of unauthorized immigrants in the U.S. from 2007 to 2021. The largest increases were from Central America (240,000) and South and East Asia (180,000). After Mexico, the countries of origin with the largest unauthorized immigrant populations in the U.S. in 2021 were: El Salvador (800,000), India (725,000), Guatemala (700,000) [and] Honduras (525,000).

The illegal-immigrant population has not only become more diverse, but also has become less geographically concentrated. Pew found that in 2021, the following “six states were home to 56% of the nation’s unauthorized immigrants, down from 80% in 1990.”

According to the study, the six states with the largest unauthorized immigrant populations in 2021 were:

- California (1.9 million)
- Texas (1.6 million)
- Florida (900,000)
- New York (600,000)
- New Jersey (450,000)
- Illinois (400,000)

However, Pew’s report did not include or reflect the massive surge of 5,967,726 [reported](#) illegals for fiscal years 2022 and 2023 that were allowed to enter America under President Biden’s open border policies.

According to [TheStockDork](#), the nearly six million illegal aliens noted above do not include the “almost two million individuals, referred to as ‘known got-aways,’ [that] have successfully crossed the border without being deterred by Border Patrol agents. Experts predict that there may be millions more illegal aliens who have made it across undetected, forming a group referred to as ‘unknown got-aways.’ Cumulatively, approximately 7.8 million illegal aliens have been encountered at U.S. borders since President Biden assumed office.”

Adding to the surge of illegals now residing in the country is the number of undocumented immigrants who are considered a “hidden population.” A 2018 [PLOS ONE](#) study using mathematical modeling on a range of demographic and immigration operations data suggests that the actual undocumented-immigrant population may be more than double what is estimated. The researchers estimate there are 22.1 million undocumented immigrants in the United States.

A Yale [article](#) on the study shared the difficulty in “estimating the size of a hidden population.” One researcher, Edward Kaplan, the William N. and Marie A. Beach Professor of Operations Research at the



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Yale School of Management, said, “people who are undocumented immigrants are not walking around with labels on their foreheads. Neither are populations of homeless people, neither are populations of drug users, and neither are populations of terrorists. Yet for policy, it is very important to know the size of these hidden populations because that sets the scale of the problem in each of these different policy areas.”

Both the Pew study and *PLOS ONE*’s estimate of the number of illegal aliens in the country highlight the overall problem not only of the “hidden population” of the border crisis in the United States, but of our nation’s failed immigration policies.

The results also the importance of having Congress and President Biden uphold their sworn constitutional duty to protect and secure our border and stop illegals from entering the nation. It’s time to hold our elected leaders accountable for the border crisis.

*To learn more about America’s immigration invasion — and how to hold our elected leaders accountable — [click here](#).*



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