



Asylees: 2023

Noah Schofield and Amanda Yap

October 2024



**Office of Homeland
Security Statistics**

U.S. Department of Homeland Security

Immigration

The United States provides asylum to certain eligible persons, along with their eligible relatives, who have been persecuted or have a well-founded fear of persecution and who are physically present or arriving in the United States at the time they apply for protection.¹ The 2023 *Asylees Annual Flow Report*, authored by the Office of Homeland Security Statistics (OHSS), presents information on persons who applied for asylum and those granted asylum in Fiscal Year 2023.²

SUMMARY

The United States provided protection to 54,350 asylees during 2023,³ including 22,300 individuals who were granted asylum affirmatively by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) within DHS,⁴ and 32,050 individuals who were granted asylum defensively by the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) Executive Office for Immigration Review (EOIR). An additional 4,790 individuals received derivative asylum status while residing in the United States based on a relative's asylum grant.⁵ In addition, 13,930 individuals abroad were approved as follow-to-join asylees and issued travel documents to enter the United States.⁶ The leading countries of nationality for persons granted either affirmative or defensive asylum were Afghanistan, the People's Republic of China (China), and Venezuela.

DEFINING "ASYLUM" STATUS

To be eligible for asylum status, a principal applicant must, among other requirements, meet the definition of a refugee set forth in Section 101(a)(42) of INA, 8 U.S.C. § 1101(a)(42), which states in part that a refugee is a person who is unable or unwilling to return to their country of nationality (or country of last habitual residence, if stateless) because of persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion.⁷ Applicants for asylum are either within the United States or arriving at a U.S. port of entry (POE), while applicants for refugee status are outside the United States.⁸

¹ See INA § 208, 8 U.S.C. § 1158. In addition to providing protection through refugee and asylum status, U.S. law generally bars removing individuals to a country where their "life or freedom would be threatened ... because of the [noncitizen]'s race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion." INA § 241(b)(3)(A), 8 U.S.C. § 1231(b)(3)(A). This is known as statutory withholding of removal. See 8 CFR § 208.16(a)-(b). Pursuant to regulations implementing the United States' obligations under Article 3 of the Convention Against Torture (CAT) and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, the United States is obligated not to remove individuals to a country where it is more likely than not that they would be tortured. Individuals may seek withholding or deferral of removal under these regulations. See 8 CFR §§ 208.16(c)-.18, 1208.16(c)-.18. Data on withholding and deferral of removal are not included in this report.

² This report was prepared by OHSS, which replaced the Office of Immigration Statistics in September 2023. Led by the DHS Statistical Official, OHSS' mission is to foster transparency and data-driven homeland security decision-making by analyzing and disseminating timely, objective DHS data and statistics. This report includes OHSS' analysis of relevant statutes, policy, and processes to provide background and context for DHS statistical data. DHS Component statistical officials have reviewed this report for accuracy. In this report, "years" refer to fiscal years, which run from October 1 to September 30. Fiscal Year 2023 ran from October 1, 2022 to September 30, 2023. The 2023 Yearbook of Immigration Statistics and other OHSS reports contain additional context and are available at <https://ohss.dhs.gov/topics/immigration/yearbook>. Not all numbers cited in this report are contained in this report's tables. To protect privacy, table cells and numbers in this report are rounded to the nearest ten. The totals may not sum due to rounding.

³ These asylum grants were based upon a principal asylum applicant's application, which may also include an accompanying spouse and unmarried children under 21 years of age. They do not include individuals who were approved for follow-to-join asylum status while residing in the United States or abroad.

⁴ Affirmative asylum data for 2023 were retrieved by OHSS March 5, 2024. Data in this report may differ slightly from year-end 2023 numbers retrieved and reported at different times by USCIS' Asylum Division.

⁵ Of these, 4,790 were based on a principal asylee's grant, and 20 were based on a principal refugee's admission to the United States.

⁶ OHSS does not currently receive data on how many of those issued travel documents reached the United States and actually obtained asylum status.

⁷ Congress expanded this definition in the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996, providing that persons who have been forced to abort a pregnancy or undergo involuntary sterilization or who have been persecuted for failure or refusal to undergo such a procedure or for other resistance to a coercive population control program shall be deemed to have been persecuted on account of political opinion.

⁸ See Refugees: 2023 at <https://ohss.dhs.gov/topics/immigration/refugees-and-asylees/rfa-annual-flow-report>.

FILING OF ASYLUM APPLICATIONS

Generally, any foreign national physically present in the United States or arriving at a POE may apply for asylum regardless of immigration status.⁹ Those seeking asylum must apply within one year from the date of last arrival or establish that an exception applies based on changed or extraordinary circumstances.¹⁰ Principal applicants obtain asylum in one of two ways: affirmatively through a USCIS asylum officer or defensively in removal proceedings before an immigration judge of the DOJ's EOIR.

Affirmative applicants initiate their own asylum applications by filing Form I-589, *Application for Asylum and for Withholding of Removal*, with USCIS. If applicants with a valid immigration status (e.g., a foreign student visa holder) or parole fail to establish eligibility for asylum, USCIS denies the application and the applicant remains in their valid status or parole. If affirmative applicants do not have a valid status or parole at the time of the final decision and are found ineligible for asylum, USCIS places these applicants in removal proceedings before an

⁹ DHS and the Department of Justice (DOJ) published a final rule with request for comment which took effect on May 11, 2023, titled "Circumvention of Lawful Pathways" (88 FR 31314, pages 31314–31452). Under the rule, which is scheduled to be in effect until May 11, 2025, certain noncitizens who cross the southwest land border or adjacent coastal borders without authorization after traveling through another country, and without having (1) availed themselves of an existing lawful process, (2) presented at a port of entry at a pre-scheduled time using the CBP One app, or (3) been denied asylum in a third country through which they traveled, are presumed ineligible for asylum unless they meet certain exceptions. The rule establishes exceptions that permit certain noncitizens to avoid the rebuttable presumption of asylum ineligibility, and also establishes a process for noncitizens to rebut the presumption of ineligibility in exceptionally compelling circumstances. Applications for and grants of asylum in 2023 that occurred after an asylum officer determined a noncitizen was excepted from or rebutted the presumption of ineligibility are included in the asylum data in this report. If an asylum officer, during a credible fear screening, determines that a noncitizen is subject to the rule and has not made a sufficient showing of being excepted from the rule or rebutting the presumption, the asylum officer will issue a negative credible fear determination with respect to the noncitizen's asylum claim, but will screen the noncitizen for withholding of removal and Convention Against Torture (CAT) protection; withholding and CAT applications are beyond the scope of this report. For more information see <https://www.dhs.gov/news/2023/05/11/fact-sheet-circumvention-lawful-pathways-final-rule>. In addition, on June 4, 2023, DHS and DOJ published an interim final rule titled "Securing the Border" (89 FR 48710, pages 48710–48772), which took effect the following day. The Securing the Border rule was implemented in FY 2024 and is beyond the scope of this report. For more information see <https://www.dhs.gov/news/2024/06/04/fact-sheet-presidential-proclamation-suspend-and-limit-entry-and-joint-dhs-doj>.

¹⁰ Unaccompanied noncitizen children are not subject to the one-year filing deadline. INA § 208(a)(2)(E), 8 U.S.C. § 1158(a)(2)(E).

EOIR immigration judge, where the asylum application is considered anew as a defensive application.¹¹

The other broad category of defensive asylum applicants consists of people who are unlawfully present, are in violation of their status, or were apprehended while attempting to enter the United States and are placed in removal proceedings by U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) or U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement. CBP may place arriving noncitizens directly in removal proceedings, which allows them to apply for asylum; but in many cases CBP processes arriving noncitizens for expedited removal or some other administrative removal process that does not permit an asylum claim unless the noncitizen claims a fear of return to their home country or country of repatriation and a USCIS asylum officer determines that their fear claim is "credible" or meets another specified standard that requires referral to removal proceedings.¹² Following referral to removal proceedings, defensive applicants generally apply for asylum directly with an immigration judge in EOIR.¹³

ADJUDICATION OF ASYLUM APPLICATIONS

The USCIS Asylum Division adjudicates asylum applications and may grant asylum directly through the affirmative asylum process. Asylum officers conduct interviews to determine asylum eligibility using an applicant's testimony, information on Form I-589, any accompanying evidence provided by the applicant, and material provided by DOS, other USCIS offices, or other credible sources. The asylum applicant must meet the definition of a refugee, be credible considering the

¹¹ OHSS tallies all asylum grants from an immigration judge as defensive grants, regardless of whether they first applied affirmatively.

¹² USCIS adjudicates fear claims against different standards depending on whether the person is being processed under expedited removal (INA § 235(b)(1)(A)(i)), reinstatement of removal (INA § 241(a)(5)), or administrative removal of an aggravated felon (INA § 238(b)). See Immigration Enforcement and Legal Processes Monthly Tables at <https://ohss.dhs.gov/topics/immigration/enforcement/legal-processes-monthly-tables> for additional details on fear claims and fear claim screen-in rates.

¹³ On March 29, 2022 DHS and DOJ published an interim final rule titled "Procedures for Credible Fear Screening and Consideration of Asylum, Withholding of Removal, and CAT Protection Claims by Asylum Officers." Under the rule, beginning in June 2022 USCIS asylum officers may consider the asylum applications of certain individuals subject to expedited removal who establish a fear of persecution or torture during their required credible fear screening. For cohort-based analysis of this group of asylees see OHSS' Asylum Processing Rule Cohort Reports at <https://www.dhs.gov/immigration-statistics/special-reports/asylum-processing-rule-report>. Through these processes, USCIS made 60 grants of asylum in 2022 and 340 in 2023 that are not reflected in this report's tables.

totality of the circumstances and all relevant factors, and not be barred from obtaining asylum. If the officer finds that the applicant satisfies the eligibility requirements, then the officer determines whether the application warrants a grant of asylum as a matter of discretion. Individuals may be barred for previously committing certain crimes, posing a national security threat, engaging in the persecution of others, or firmly resettling in another country before coming to the United States.

During the proceedings, an immigration judge may grant asylum or deny the asylum application and issue a removal order if the noncitizen does not qualify for any other forms of relief or protection (including withholding or deferral of removal under the statute or CAT). Asylum applicants may appeal an immigration judge's denial to the Board of Immigration Appeals and, if unsuccessful there, may seek further review by a U.S. Court of Appeals, and finally the U.S. Supreme Court.

DERIVATIVE ASYLUM

Spouses and unmarried children under the age of 21 who are not included in the principal's grant of asylum may obtain derivative asylum status.¹⁴ A principal asylee may petition for follow-to-join benefits for qualifying derivatives within two years after they were granted asylum, as long as the relationship between the principal and their spouse and/or child existed on the date the principal was granted asylum. The principal asylee must file a Form I-730 for each qualifying family member, who may be located abroad or in the United States. Once a Form I-730 is approved for an individual located abroad, there are no time constraints placed upon the derivative relative's travel to the United States, as long as (1) the principal's status has not been revoked; (2) the relationship of the derivative to the principal continues to exist; and (3) in the case of a child, the child is unmarried at the time of their admission.

Follow-to-join asylum beneficiaries are not required to demonstrate a persecution claim because their status is derived from the principal asylee. Beneficiaries in the United States are granted derivative asylum immediately upon the approval of their Form I-730 petitions. Beneficiaries abroad are granted derivative asylum when admitted to the United States at a POE.

LAWFUL PERMANENT RESIDENCE AND CITIZENSHIP

One year after being granted asylum, asylees are eligible to have their LPR applications adjudicated, as are their qualifying family members who meet the eligibility

¹⁴ See reference to Child Status Protection Act.

criteria. If LPR status is approved, the asylee's "resident since" date is rolled back to one year prior to the LPR approval date. Asylees who have become LPRs may apply for naturalization five years after their "resident since" date.¹⁵

TRENDS AND CHARACTERISTICS OF ASYLEES

Asylum Filings

Affirmative asylum case filings with USCIS nearly doubled from 241,280 applications in 2022 to 456,750 in 2023, the highest number on record (and covering 636,380 individuals) (Tables 1a and 1b, Figure 1).¹⁶ Venezuela and Cuba dominated asylum applications in 2023, making up more than one-third (39 percent) of all applications combined. In terms of proportion, Venezuelan applications made up the highest proportion of total applications in 2023 (22 percent). Cuban applications, the second largest group in 2023, made up 17 percent of applications in 2023, much lower than their proportion in 2022 (27 percent). The next highest number of asylum applications in 2023 came from Colombia, at 8.3 percent. Unaccompanied children made up just 2.6 percent of applications in 2023, down from 9.4 percent in 2021 and 4.1 percent in 2022.¹⁷

In the past decade, about 79 percent of affirmative asylum applicants self-reported the status in which they entered the United States before applying for asylum.¹⁸ Of those who provided a response, 32 percent reported having entered on B-2 visas (tourists), 25 percent reported having entered without inspection (EWI, i.e., having been unauthorized), and 5.8 percent reported having entered on B-1 visas (temporary business visitors).

The total number of defensive asylum applications filed with EOIR nearly doubled from 260,830 in 2022 to

¹⁵ In other words, an asylee is generally considered an LPR one year before the date USCIS approves the adjustment application for naturalization eligibility purposes.

¹⁶ The number of individuals included in these applications included 238,840 principal applicants and 101,750 dependents.

¹⁷ Unaccompanied children, unlike other populations, can apply affirmatively before a USCIS asylum officer after being placed in removal proceedings before an immigration judge. See INA § 208(b)(3)(C), 8 U.S.C. § 1158(b)(3)(C).

¹⁸ Data in this paragraph are limited to grants for principal applicants. Past decade is defined as 2014–2023.

Table 1a.

Affirmative Asylum Cases Filed (USCIS) by Country of Nationality: Fiscal Years 2021 to 2023

(Ranked by 2023 Country of Nationality)

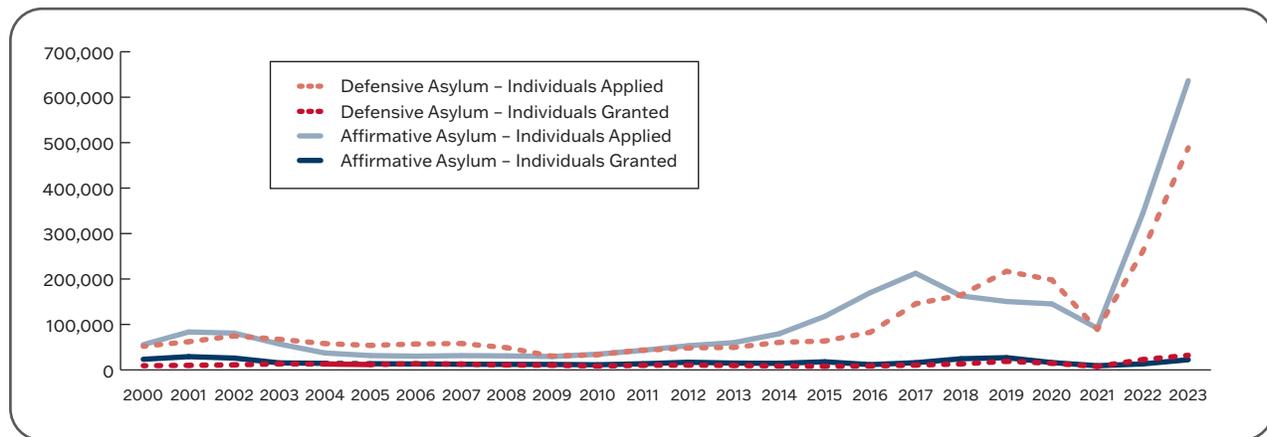
Country of Nationality	2021		2022		2023	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total	63,340	100.0	241,280	100.0	456,750	100.0
Venezuela	9,150	14.4	47,550	19.7	98,690	21.6
Cuba	2,800	4.4	65,140	27.0	78,620	17.2
Colombia	4,100	6.5	10,750	4.5	38,050	8.3
Nicaragua	650	1.0	6,220	2.6	34,600	7.6
Haiti	5,060	8.0	18,540	7.7	30,030	6.6
Guatemala	6,670	10.5	13,370	5.5	17,460	3.8
Honduras	4,480	7.1	9,880	4.1	13,040	2.9
India	2,090	3.3	5,370	2.2	13,030	2.9
China, People's Republic	3,500	5.5	5,040	2.1	12,300	2.7
Afghanistan	140	0.2	9,370	3.9	11,490	2.5
All other countries, including unknown	24,700	39.0	50,060	20.7	109,470	24.0

Notes: To protect privacy, table cells are rounded to the nearest ten. Data are as of March 5, 2024.

Source: Office of Homeland Security Statistics analysis of USCIS data.

Figure 1.

Applications and Grants of Affirmative and Defensive Asylum: Fiscal Years 2000 to 2023



Notes: Data exclude follow-to-join asylees. Data have been updated back to 2012 for affirmative asylum and 2013 for defensive asylum. Defensive asylum data include I-862 and asylum-only initial case completions with an asylum grant. Defensive asylum data are as of February 1, 2024; affirmative asylum data are as of March 5, 2024.

Source: Office of Homeland Security Statistics analysis of USCIS and DOJ data.

488,620 in 2023, the highest count on record.¹⁹ Similarly to 2022, the largest numbers of applications lodged with the courts in 2023 were from Venezuela (15 percent) and

Cuba (12 percent), but Colombia (9 percent) has reached the top three with a more than five-fold increase from the previous fiscal year (Table 1c). These three countries made up over a third (36 percent) of defensive asylum applications filed with EOIR.

¹⁹ EOIR has recently changed its methodology in reporting affirmative asylum cases referred from USCIS. Instead of using the court application date as they do for defensive asylum cases, EOIR now reports on affirmative cases based on the date of the initial asylum application filing with USCIS. This change may result in a slight difference in historical numbers, and OHSS has updated the data reported here and in the Yearbook(s) of Immigration Statistics for 2015 to 2021. One asylum case in EOIR covers one individual.

Asylum Grants

The total number of persons granted asylum in the United States increased from 35,720 in 2022 to 54,350 in 2023. USCIS granted asylum affirmatively to 22,300 people in 2023, an increase of 69 percent from 2022 levels and

Table 1b.

Number of Individuals Included in Affirmative Asylum Cases Filed (USCIS) by Country of Nationality: Fiscal Years 2021 to 2023

(Ranked by 2023 Country of Nationality)

Country of Nationality	2021		2022		2023	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total	91,620	100.0	344,270	100.0	636,380	100.0
Venezuela	14,100	15.4	71,890	20.9	127,250	20.0
Cuba	3,520	3.8	77,970	22.6	96,910	15.2
Colombia	7,740	8.4	19,760	5.7	63,510	10.0
Nicaragua	970	1.1	8,190	2.4	42,980	6.8
Haiti	6,290	6.9	23,690	6.9	37,970	6.0
Afghanistan	220	0.2	17,760	5.2	23,100	3.6
Guatemala	7,970	8.7	16,210	4.7	20,470	3.2
Honduras	6,070	6.6	14,390	4.2	17,730	2.8
Russia	2,260	2.5	9,020	2.6	17,630	2.8
India	3,070	3.4	7,390	2.1	17,350	2.7
All other countries, including unknown	39,400	43.0	78,010	22.7	171,480	26.9

Notes: To protect privacy, table cells are rounded to the nearest ten. The totals may not sum due to rounding. Case receipts include I-862, Notice to Appear, and asylum-only asylum receipts. Data are as of February 1, 2024.

Source: Office of Homeland Security Statistics analysis of USCIS data.

Table 1c.

Defensive Asylum Cases Received (EOIR) by Country of Nationality: Fiscal Years 2021 to 2023

(Ranked by 2023 Country of Nationality)

Category of admission	2021		2022		2023	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total	89,040	100.0	260,830	100.0	488,620	100.0
Venezuela	5,540	6.2	38,300	14.7	74,500	15.2
Cuba	3,750	4.2	28,230	10.8	57,790	11.8
Colombia	1,230	1.4	7,520	2.9	43,600	8.9
Nicaragua	2,260	2.5	15,400	5.9	33,970	7.0
India	2,240	2.5	9,200	3.5	28,300	5.8
Honduras	13,540	15.2	28,370	10.9	27,030	5.5
Russia	1,080	1.2	5,900	2.3	23,420	4.8
Guatemala	15,330	17.2	23,660	9.1	20,410	4.2
Peru	320	0.4	2,260	0.9	19,950	4.1
Mexico	10,560	11.9	11,910	4.6	19,320	4.0
All other countries, including unknown	33,200	37.3	90,080	34.5	140,340	28.7

Notes: To protect privacy, table cells are rounded to the nearest ten. The totals may not sum due to rounding. Data exclude follow-to-join asylees. Data are as of March 5, 2024.

Source: Office of Homeland Security Statistics analysis of DOJ data.

Table 2.**Grants of Affirmative Asylum by Basis of Claim: Fiscal Years 2021 to 2023**

(Ranked by 2023 Basis of Claim)

Basis of Claim	2021		2022		2023	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total	5,880	100.0	8,340	100.0	12,910	100.0
Political Opinion	2,600	44.2	4,290	51.4	8,750	67.8
Particular Social Group	1,900	32.3	2,230	26.7	2,100	16.3
Religion	880	15.0	1,070	12.8	1,050	8.1
Race	200	3.4	340	4.1	600	4.6
Multiple Bases	150	2.6	220	2.6	220	1.7
Coercive Family Planning	100	1.7	120	1.4	140	1.1
Nationality	50	0.9	80	1.0	50	0.4
Unknown	0	0.0	0	0.0	10	0.1

Notes: To protect privacy, table cells are rounded to the nearest ten. The totals may not sum due to rounding. Data exclude follow-to-join asylees and derivative asylees. Data are as of March 5, 2024.

Source: Office of Homeland Security Statistics analysis of USCIS data.

144 percent from 2021 levels. EOIR immigration judges granted defensive asylum to 32,050 people in 2023, an increase of 42 percent from 2022 levels and an over four-fold increase from 2021 levels (Figure 1).

Of those who applied for affirmative asylum and received grants in the last 10 years, 93 percent self-reported their entry status.²⁰ Of those who reported a status, 39 percent of those who received grants of asylum reportedly entered on B-2 visas (tourists), 18 percent as EWI (unauthorized immigrants), and 9.2 percent as F-1 visa holders (students). In 2023, about 96 percent of applicants granted asylum self-reported their entry status. Of those, 60 percent applied as Operation Allies Refuge/Welcome parolees (OAR),²¹ 20 percent as B-2 visa holders, and 4.4 percent as F-1 visa holders.

Basis of Asylum Claims

USCIS collects data on the specific bases under which individuals are granted asylum. Of those principal applicants who successfully received asylum in 2023, the majority were granted asylum based on political opinion

(68 percent), followed by membership in a particular social group (16 percent) and religion (8.1 percent). These three bases of claim were also the top three reasons for asylum grants in 2021 and 2022 (Table 2).

Affirmative Asylum Case Processing Capacity

This section examines USCIS processing capacity relative to affirmative asylum applications filed, i.e., the asylum processing backlog.²²

While the number of asylum applications filed fluctuates widely year to year, making it difficult to anticipate processing needs, the number of asylum applications has consistently outpaced adjudications, driving a growing processing backlog.^{23, 24} The number of applications adjudicated has also varied with changes in USCIS's broader workload, resources, and dedicated funding available to asylum processing.²⁵ In the past decade, USCIS processed a low of approximately 27,000 applicants in 2014 and a high of nearly 74,000 applicants in 2018. Yet as Figure 2 shows, the number of applications filed in the same decade ranged from almost 57,000 to just under

²⁰ Data in this paragraph are limited to grants for affirmative asylum principal applicants. Microdata for defensive asylum cases are not available.

²¹ On August 29, 2021, President Biden directed DHS to lead the implementation of efforts across the Federal Government to support vulnerable Afghans, these coordinated efforts became known as Operation Allies Refuge/Welcome. Section 212(d)(5)(A) of INA authorizes the Secretary of Homeland Security, at the Secretary's discretion, to "parole into the United States temporarily under such conditions as he [or she] may prescribe only on a case-by-case basis for urgent humanitarian reasons or significant public benefit any alien applying for admission into the United States."

²² Data in this section are limited to affirmative asylum principal applicants. Data for defensive asylees are not available.

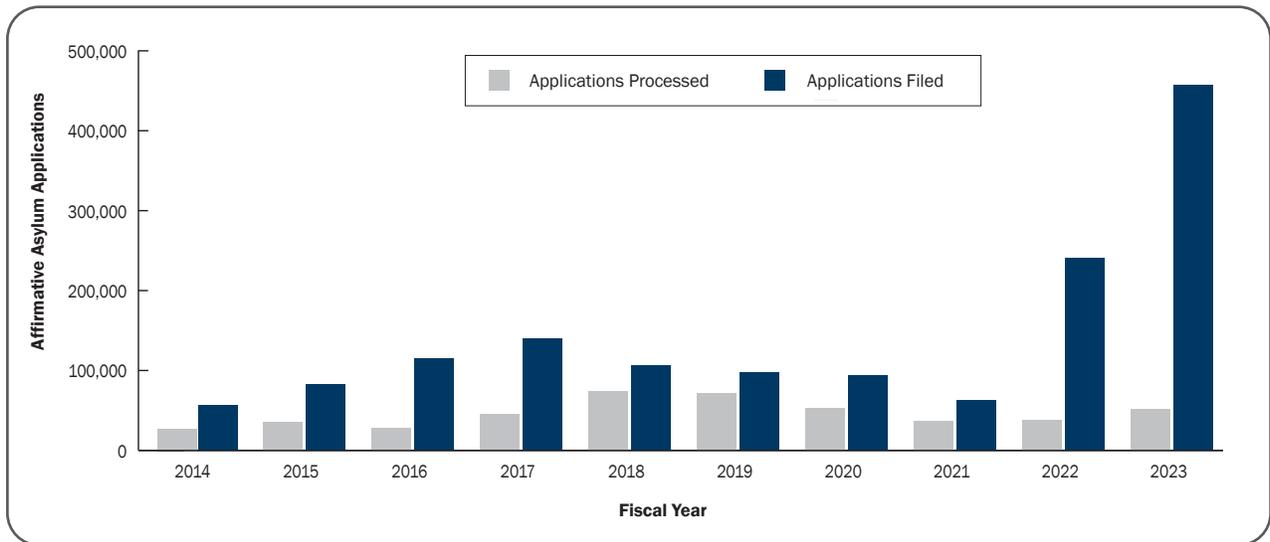
²³ "Adjudications" and "processing" here mean the application received an outcome from USCIS (e.g., grant of asylum, denial of asylum).

²⁴ Notably, an individual's application may not be processed the same year as its submission; comparisons here are made between the number of applications filed and the number of applications that completed processing within the same year for workload purposes.

²⁵ USCIS is fee-funded, but asylum filings do not have a fee, so USCIS relies on funding from other fee-funded filings and any congressional appropriations to fund its humanitarian portfolio.

Figure 2.

Affirmative Asylum Applications Processed and Filed per Year: Fiscal Years 2014 to 2023



Notes: Data exclude follow-to-join asylees and derivative asylees. Data are as of March 5, 2024.
Source: Office of Homeland Security Statistics analysis of USCIS data.

457,000, and the gap between incoming applications and completed adjudications (i.e., the difference between the dark blue and light blue columns in Figure 2) ranged from approximately 26,000 in 2019 and 2021 to almost 406,000 in 2023.

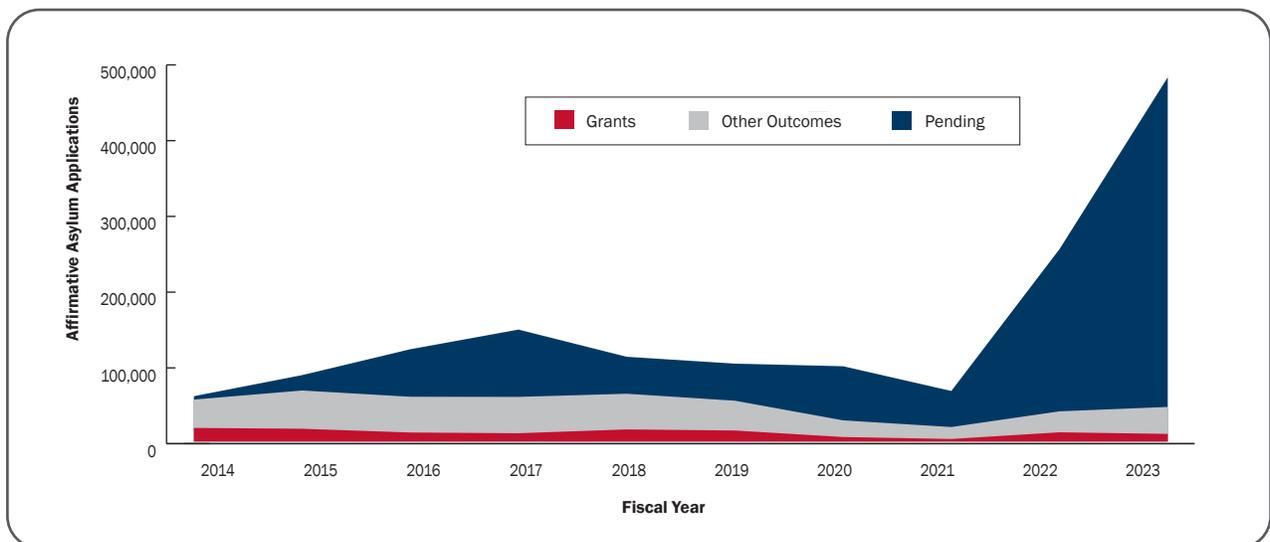
Notably, cases are not necessarily processed in the same year they are received. Figure 3 depicts applications by filing year since 2014, broken out by adjudication status as of March 2024. For example, of the nearly 57,000 cases filed in 2014, approximately 7.4 percent of cases

are currently pending, 30 percent have received grants of asylum, 44 percent have been denied or referred to an immigration judge, and 18 percent have been administratively closed.²⁶ The majority of cases filed in 2016 to 2017 and 2020 to 2023 are still pending, with 91 percent of cases filed in 2023 still pending and 2.1 percent granted.

²⁶ Some applicants are referred to an immigration judge when USCIS is unable to approve the asylum application and the applicant is out of status.

Figure 3.

Affirmative Asylum Applications by Current Status and Filing Year: Fiscal Years 2014 to 2023



Notes: Data exclude follow-to-join asylees and derivative asylees. Application status as of March 5, 2024.
Source: Office of Homeland Security Statistics analysis of USCIS data.

Table 3.**Total Individuals Granted Asylum (Affirmatively or Defensively) by Country of Nationality: Fiscal Years 2021 to 2023**

(Ranked by 2023 Country of Nationality)

Country of Nationality	2021		2022		2023	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total	16,550	100.0	35,720	100.0	54,350	100.0
Afghanistan	110	0.7	1,240	3.5	14,470	26.6
China, People's Republic	1,870	11.3	4,540	12.7	4,870	9.0
Venezuela	1,910	11.5	3,650	10.2	3,760	6.9
El Salvador	1,420	8.6	2,640	7.4	2,990	5.5
India	700	4.2	2,180	6.1	2,710	5.0
Guatemala	1,300	7.9	2,300	6.4	2,580	4.7
Honduras	990	6.0	1,820	5.1	2,120	3.9
Russia	550	3.3	1,140	3.2	2,070	3.8
Turkey	900	5.4	1,160	3.2	1,490	2.7
Colombia	180	1.1	600	1.7	1,140	2.1
All other countries, including unknown	6,630	40.1	14,470	40.5	16,160	29.7

Notes: To protect privacy, table cells are rounded to the nearest ten. The totals may not sum due to rounding. Data exclude follow-to-join asylees. Defensive asylum includes I-862 and asylum-only initial case completions with an asylum grant. Defensive asylum data are as of February 1, 2024; affirmative asylum data are as of March 5, 2024.

Source: Office of Homeland Security Statistics analysis of USCIS and DOJ data.

Country of Nationality

The three leading countries of nationality of persons granted asylum (affirmatively or defensively) in 2023 were Afghanistan (27 percent), China (9.0 percent), and Venezuela (6.9 percent) (Table 3). Nationals of these three countries accounted for more than 40 percent of all persons granted asylum in 2023. China and Venezuela have been in the top three leading countries for 2021–2023 and comprised 29 percent of asylum grants in both 2021 and 2022. While the number of people granted asylum from each of the top three countries of nationality increased, Afghanistan experienced an over 11-fold increase between 2022 and 2023. The large proportional increase for Afghan asylees is most likely due to the stand up of OAR in 2020, an effort that permitted eligible Afghans into the United States as parolees for a period of up to two years.^{27,28}

The leading countries of nationality for persons granted affirmative asylum in 2023 were Afghanistan

(64 percent), China (6.1 percent), and Turkey (4.6 percent) (Table 4). Seventy-five percent of those granted asylum affirmatively in 2023 were nationals of these three countries, up from 27 percent in 2022.

The leading countries of nationality for persons granted defensive asylum in 2023 were China (11 percent), Venezuela (9.2 percent), and El Salvador (8.9 percent) (Table 5). Twenty-nine percent of those granted asylum defensively in 2023 were nationals of these countries, about the same level as in 2022 (31 percent).

The leading countries of nationality for follow-to-join asylees authorized for travel to the United States in 2023 were China (22 percent), India (18 percent), and Cameroon (6.5 percent) (Table 6). Nationals of these countries accounted for just under half (46 percent) of all follow-to-join derivative asylees issued travel documents allowing their travel to the United States. Additionally, 4,790 individuals were approved for derivative asylum while residing in the United States based on a relative's asylum grant.

Age, Sex, and Marital Status

In 2023, 62 percent of persons granted affirmative asylum were between the ages of 18 and 44 (Table 7), and the median age of affirmative asylees was 23. Fifty-five percent of all persons granted affirmative asylum were male, and 60 percent of the adults granted affirmative asylum were married. The median age of follow-to-join

²⁷ On August 29, 2021, President Biden directed DHS to lead the implementation of efforts across the Federal Government to support vulnerable Afghans, these coordinated efforts became known as OAR.

²⁸ Section 212(d)(5)(A) of the INA authorizes the Secretary of Homeland Security, at the Secretary's discretion, to "parole into the United States temporarily under such conditions as he [or she] may prescribe only on a case-by-case basis for urgent humanitarian reasons or significant public benefit any alien applying for admission into the United States."

Table 4.**Individuals Granted Asylum Affirmatively by Country of Nationality: Fiscal Years 2021 to 2023**

(Ranked by 2023 Country of Nationality)

Country of Nationality	2021		2022		2023	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total	9,130	100.0	13,170	100.0	22,300	100.0
Afghanistan	100	1.1	1,180	9.0	14,330	64.3
China, People's Republic	1,080	11.8	1,480	11.2	1,360	6.1
Turkey	850	9.3	910	6.9	1,020	4.6
Venezuela	1,430	15.7	2,180	16.6	830	3.7
Iran	160	1.8	180	1.4	480	2.2
Egypt	590	6.5	660	5.0	470	2.1
Ethiopia	250	2.7	560	4.3	280	1.3
Russia	390	4.3	430	3.3	260	1.2
Syria	210	2.3	210	1.6	250	1.1
Guatemala	410	4.5	300	2.3	210	0.9
All other countries, including unknown	3,660	40.1	5,090	38.6	2,810	12.6

Notes: To protect privacy, table cells are rounded to the nearest ten. The totals may not sum due to rounding. Data exclude follow-to-join asylees. Data are as of March 5, 2024.
Source: Office of Homeland Security Statistics analysis of USCIS data.

Table 5.**Individuals Granted Asylum Defensively by Country of Nationality: Fiscal Years 2021 to 2023**

(Ranked by 2023 Country of Nationality)

Country of Nationality	2021		2022		2023	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total	7,420	100.0	22,550	100.0	32,050	100.0
China, People's Republic	780	10.5	3,060	13.6	3,510	11.0
Venezuela	480	6.5	1,470	6.5	2,940	9.2
El Salvador	1,160	15.6	2,350	10.4	2,850	8.9
India	630	8.5	2,080	9.2	2,630	8.2
Guatemala	890	12.0	2,010	8.9	2,370	7.4
Honduras	610	8.2	1,540	6.8	1,970	6.1
Russia	160	2.2	710	3.1	1,800	5.6
Nicaragua	160	2.2	850	3.8	1,020	3.2
Ecuador	50	0.7	750	3.3	1,010	3.2
Colombia	50	0.7	160	0.7	970	3.0
All other countries, including unknown	2,460	33.2	7,570	33.6	10,980	34.3

Notes: To protect privacy, table cells are rounded to the nearest ten. The totals may not sum due to rounding. Data exclude follow-to-join asylees. Includes I-862 and asylum-only initial case completions with an asylum grant. Data are as of February 1, 2024.
Source: Office of Homeland Security Statistics analysis of DOJ data.

beneficiaries was 17 years, meaning more than half were minors (Table 8). Data on marital status are not available for follow-to-join beneficiaries.

State of Residence

In 2023, the leading states of residence for individuals granted asylum affirmatively were California (23 percent), Texas (12 percent), and Virginia (10 percent)

(Table 9). Forty-four percent of individuals granted affirmative asylum in 2023 resided in these three states, up from 37 percent in 2022.

In 2023, the leading states of residence for individuals granted asylum defensively were California (28 percent), New York (27 percent), and Maryland (4.4 percent) (Table 10). Fifty-nine percent of individuals granted

Table 6.**Follow-to-join Asylee Travel Documents Issued by Country of Nationality: Fiscal Years 2021 to 2023**

(Ranked by 2023 Country of Nationality)

Country of Nationality	2021		2022		2023	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total	2,290	100.0	8,580	100.1	13,930	100.0
China, People's Republic	320	14.0	2,280	26.6	3,060	22.0
India	30	1.3	1,790	20.9	2,460	17.7
Cameroon	290	12.7	360	4.2	900	6.5
Guatemala	50	2.2	290	3.4	640	4.6
Ethiopia	50	2.2	140	1.6	580	4.2
Cuba	0	0.0	10	0.1	470	3.4
El Salvador	50	2.2	370	4.3	460	3.3
Bangladesh	50	2.2	160	1.9	440	3.2
Nepal	30	1.3	360	4.2	400	2.9
Egypt	140	6.1	430	5.0	370	2.7
All other countries, including unknown	1,280	55.9	2,400	28.0	4,150	29.8

Notes: To protect privacy, table cells are rounded to the nearest ten. The totals may not sum due to rounding. Data are as of February 13, 2024 from the CAMINO system and as of March 1, 2024 from CCD.

Source: Office of Homeland Security Statistics analysis of USCIS and DOS data.

Table 7.**Individuals Granted Asylum Affirmatively by Age, Sex, and Marital Status: Fiscal Years 2021 to 2023**

Characteristic	2021		2022		2023	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
AGE						
Total	9,130	100.0	13,170	100.0	22,300	100.0
0 to 17 years	1,800	19.7	2,450	18.6	5,680	25.5
18 to 24 years	1,340	14.7	1,770	13.4	3,690	16.5
25 to 34 years	2,130	23.3	3,270	24.8	6,160	27.6
35 to 44 years	2,230	24.4	3,210	24.4	3,900	17.5
45 to 54 years	1,120	12.3	1,690	12.8	1,810	8.1
55 to 64 years	350	3.8	570	4.3	760	3.4
65 and over	160	1.8	220	1.7	310	1.4
SEX						
Total	9,130	100.0	13,170	100.0	22,300	100.0
Female	4,400	48.2	6,330	48.1	9,910	44.4
Male	4,730	51.8	6,830	51.9	12,320	55.2
Unknown	0	0.0	10	0.1	70	0.3
MARITAL STATUS						
Total	9,130	100.0	13,170	100.0	22,300	100.0
Married	3,870	42.4	5,740	43.6	9,580	43.0
Single	4,790	52.5	6,720	51.0	11,940	53.5
Other ¹	470	5.1	720	5.5	770	3.5

¹ Includes persons who were divorced, separated, widowed, or of unknown marital status.

Notes: To protect privacy, table cells are rounded to the nearest ten. The totals may not sum due to rounding. Age is the individual's age at grant. Data exclude follow-to-join asylees. Data are as of March 5, 2024.

Source: Office of Homeland Security Statistics analysis of USCIS data.

defensive asylum in 2023 resided in these three states, down from 65 percent in 2022.

State of residence data are not available for follow-to-join asylees.

Lawful Permanent Residence and Naturalization of Asylees

One year after being admitted to the United States, asylees may apply for LPR status, but are not required to do so. Of the nearly 109,000 adults granted affirmative asylum from 2014 to 2021, 88 percent have gained LPR status.²⁹ Rates of attaining LPR status are not available for defensive asylees.

Similar to refugees, asylees have some of the highest naturalization rates of all immigrants. Of the nearly

582,000 adults who obtained LPR status from 2000 to 2017 based on a prior grant of asylum (affirmative or defensive), 56 percent naturalized within a six-year window.³⁰ These rates varied slightly across sex, with a six-year naturalization rate of 57 percent for female adult asylees who obtained LPR status and 55 percent for adult males. Rates varied more considerably by age group, with a six-year naturalization rate of 63 percent for those asylees who gained LPR status between 18 and 34 years of age, 49 percent for those between 35 and 54 years of age, and 53 percent for those who became LPRs at 55 years of age or older. Rates also varied considerably by world region, with a six-year naturalization rate of 47 percent for adult affirmative asylees from Asia, 27 percent for those from Africa, and 9 percent or less for those from other regions.

²⁹ Here, 2021 is used as an end year due to it being one year of waiting to be eligible for LPR status plus one additional year to file paperwork and undergo processing before the end of the current 2023 data; in other words, this allows a full two years for asylees to gain green card status. The data were restricted to individuals who were at least 18 years of age when LPR status was obtained, indicating a choice to adjust status was made.

³⁰ Here, 2017 is used as an end year due to it being five years of waiting to be eligible for naturalization plus one additional year to file paperwork and undergo processing before the end of the current 2023 data; in other words, allowing a full six years for asylees to naturalize. The data were restricted to individuals who were at least 18 years of age when LPR status was obtained, indicating a choice to adjust status was made.

Table 8.
Follow-to-join Asylee Travel Documents Issued by Age and Sex: Fiscal Years 2021 to 2023

Characteristic	2021		2022		2023	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
AGE						
Total	2,220	100.0	8,580	100.0	13,930	100.0
0 to 17 years	1,140	51.4	4,240	49.4	6,970	50.0
18 to 24 years	410	18.5	1,530	17.8	2,580	18.5
25 to 34 years	230	10.4	900	10.5	1,460	10.5
35 to 44 years	250	11.3	1,130	13.2	1,750	12.6
45 to 54 years	130	5.9	570	6.6	880	6.3
55 to 64 years	50	2.3	180	2.1	250	1.8
65 and over	10	0.5	30	0.3	50	0.4
SEX						
Total	2,220	100.0	8,580	100.0	13,930	100.0
Female	1,210	54.5	4,820	56.2	7,900	56.7
Male	1,010	45.5	3,710	43.2	5,990	43.0
Unknown	0	0.0	60	0.7	40	0.3

Notes: To protect privacy, table cells are rounded to the nearest ten. The totals may not sum due to rounding. Data are as of February 13, 2024 from the CAMINO system and as of March 1, 2024 from CCD.

Source: Office of Homeland Security Statistics analysis of USCIS and DOS data.

Table 9.**Individuals Granted Asylum Affirmatively by State of Residence: Fiscal Years 2021 to 2023**

(Ranked by 2023 State of Residence)

State of Residence	2021		2022		2023	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total	9,130	100.0	13,170	100.0	22,300	100.0
California	2,670	29.2	3,180	24.1	5,030	22.6
Texas	580	6.4	740	5.6	2,570	11.5
Virginia	400	4.4	1,000	7.6	2,310	10.4
Florida	570	6.2	1,640	12.5	1,650	7.4
New York	640	7.0	770	5.8	1,120	5.0
Arizona	30	0.3	220	1.7	830	3.7
Colorado	10	0.1	80	0.6	700	3.1
Maryland	360	3.9	650	4.9	690	3.1
New Jersey	320	3.5	480	3.6	600	2.7
Illinois	830	9.1	1,090	8.3	600	2.7
Other, including unknown	2,730	29.9	3,340	25.4	6,210	27.8

Notes: To protect privacy, table cells are rounded to the nearest ten. The totals may not sum due to rounding. Data exclude follow-to-join asylees. Data are as of March 5, 2024.

Source: Office of Homeland Security Statistics analysis of USCIS data.

Table 10.**Individuals Granted Asylum Defensively by State of Residence: Fiscal Years 2021 to 2023**

(Ranked by 2023 State of Residence)

State of Residence	2021		2022		2023	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total	7,420	100.0	22,550	100.0	32,050	100.0
California	2,320	31.3	6,200	27.5	8,860	27.6
New York	1,170	15.8	7,410	32.9	8,740	27.3
Maryland	740	10.0	930	4.1	1,400	4.4
Texas	170	2.3	920	4.1	1,320	4.1
Massachusetts	320	4.3	840	3.7	1,280	4.0
Virginia	250	3.4	710	3.1	1,270	4.0
New Jersey	210	2.8	530	2.4	1,110	3.5
Utah	200	2.7	360	1.6	1,070	3.3
Florida	250	3.4	660	2.9	990	3.1
Illinois	210	2.8	440	2.0	650	2.0
Other, including unknown	1,580	21.3	3,550	15.7	5,350	16.7

Notes: To protect privacy, table cells are rounded to the nearest ten. The totals may not sum due to rounding. Data exclude follow-to-join asylees. Data include I-862 and asylum-only initial case completions with an asylum grant. Data are as of February 1, 2024.

Source: Office of Homeland Security Statistics analysis of DOJ data.

DATA

The affirmative asylee data presented in this report were obtained from Global, a cloud-based platform of USCIS that has replaced the Refugees, Asylum, and Parole System (RAPS) mainframe system for storing and managing asylum-related data.³¹ Defensive asylee data were obtained from EOIR. Follow-to-join asylum derivative data for

people residing outside the United States at the time of their admission were obtained from the CLAIMS system of USCIS and the Consular Consolidated Database (CCD) of DOS. These data reflect travel documents issued, not admissions. Follow-to-join data for people residing within the United States at the time of the approval of their Form I-730 petition were obtained from CLAIMS.

For more information, visit the Office of Homeland Security Statistics web page at <https://ohss.dhs.gov>.

³¹ Data migration from RAPS to Global caused slight changes in historical numbers.

