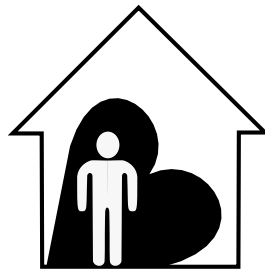


# **A Profile of DuPage County Immigrants**



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**DuPage Federation on Human Services Reform**

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# Profile on Immigrants in DuPage County

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# Introduction and Executive Summary

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The purpose of this study is:

1. to provide facts about the needs of immigrants in DuPage County;
2. to describe existing and potential resources devoted to this issue;
3. to identify gaps where the available resources are inadequate to meet the needs, and
4. to make recommendations to decisionmakers on approaches to better addressing this issue.

The purpose of this Profile is to provide essential information about the immigrant population of DuPage County, Illinois. This Profile is the third in a series; the earlier Profiles have covered the Working Poor, and the Homeless.

Data for this report was compiled from a variety of sources, including extensive use of information from Census 2000 and from several valuable reports recently completed by other organizations. Data from these sources has been augmented by interviews with experts conducted by DuPage Federation staff.

Over 138,000 foreign born persons were counted in the census in 2000. Experts believe this is a significant undercount, particularly for undocumented or illegal immigrants. Although there is no widely accepted methodology for estimating the number of undocumented immigrants, several different approaches all yielded estimates ranging from 21,000 to 29,000 undocumented persons in DuPage County. Most experts believe this is very low.

We have struggled to separate the issues of immigrants from the issues of the working poor, as that issue has been covered in our earlier report. Since immigrants are more likely to experience low incomes, particularly the Spanish speakers, it is an ongoing challenge to ensure that we have addressed the ways low income immigrants differ from low income persons in general.

Similarly, the issues of immigrants are interrelated with but not identical to the issues of limited English proficiency. Some immigrants enter the United States already proficient in English, while some native born US citizens grow up in households that do not speak English at home and enter school needing to learn English as a second language.

**SERVICES MOST NEEDED:** Immigrants have several critical needs, some related to their status as immigrants and others because they are often working poor. In these respects, they're not very different from other working poor persons. They need:

- A job that pays a living wage;
- A place to live they can afford;
- Access to health services, including interpretation for those with limited English proficiency;
- Access to English language instruction;
- Access to legal services if they wish to become US Citizens.

## 2000 Census Data DuPage Immigrant Populations

904,161	Total Population
138,656	Immigrant Population
61,601	Naturalized Citizen
77,055	Not a citizen
174,113	Language other than English
71,188	Speak English less than "very well"
64,823	Speak Spanish
62,177	Entered US 1990 to 2000
31,195	Lived in a different country in 1995

# Recommendations

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1. *Existing programs should run optimally.*

- a. *Everyone who is eligible should be enrolled.*

**Organizations serving immigrants need clear information** on which programs, particularly food and health care services, are available to which categories of immigrants so they can provide guidance to their communities.

**Programs for which immigrants are eligible should make special efforts to communicate this** to organizations serving immigrants.

**Community based organizations whose mission is to assist immigrants in achieving legal permanent residency or citizenship should be encouraged to begin or expand operations in DuPage**

- b. *Increase the program's capacity to meet the need.*

**Expand eligibility for Medicaid to include more low income immigrants:** Congress and the Illinois General Assembly should reconsider rules that severely limit inclusion of low income immigrants in Medicaid. Since the health care system is likely to have to care for many immigrants in the emergency room, whether they are legal or not, it is much more cost effective to provide physician care that could keep them out of the emergency room. Some specific recommendations include:

- i. Reduce the amount of time legal immigrants must wait in order to be eligible for Medicaid.
- ii. Increase the amount of time that refugees are eligible for Medicaid.
- iii. Consider allowing expanded coverage for undocumented children and other immigrants.

**Make Medicare or Medicaid available for low income elderly immigrants.** Elderly immigrants, many of whom legally immigrated to the US to live with citizen sons and daughters, are often not eligible for Medicare because they haven't worked in this country. They are also often not eligible for Medicaid and private insurance for a senior is prohibitively expensive if available at all. They fall into a major gap in eligibility that should be addressed for humanitarian reasons.

- c. *Make changes necessary to ensure that an adequate number of providers are available.*

**Health care and human services providers need information on Federal requirements regarding interpretation and translation services** so they can provide culturally and linguistically appropriate services to the immigrant communities they serve.

**The State should re-examine licensing procedures to ensure that competent foreign trained health, education and human services professionals are not prevented from working** in Illinois due to unnecessary restrictions.

2. *Develop a mosaic of programs necessary to serve the unserved.* **A Language Access Resource Center in DuPage should be developed** to provide assistance to health care and human services providers to improve their competency at serving immigrant and limited English proficient persons.

3. *Coordinate programs to make the system work most efficiently.* **The Federation should develop information on which programs are available** to which categories of immigrants, and should disseminate that information widely.

**When possible, agencies should not use Social Security numbers as client identifiers** except where required by law; when a program that is open to immigrants does use Social Security numbers, it should provide alternative identifiers.

4. *Work on long range strategies to address root causes* **Federal policymakers should examine the impact of the current exclusion of undocumented workers from the mainstream labor market.**

We estimate that there are at least 25,000 undocumented persons living in DuPage County. Yet, they are not allowed to work in this country legally. As a result, they are subject to exploitation by unscrupulous employers and they are not able to provide adequately for their children, who are often citizens.

We support open and vigorous public debate on the various proposals to authorize immigrants to work in the United States.

**The United States needs an honest way to deal with U.S. Employers' need for workers, and undocumented workers' need to earn a living,** that does not place undocumented immigrants at such great risk of exploitation. Federal policymakers should consider proposals for guest workers and legalization of certain groups of persons now in this country illegally.

# About Immigrants

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*“There is a stereotype of a typical “immigrant” as being someone who is not contributing to society. It’s something that’s really hard to break, but it’s so untrue. These people are doing a lot of the things that many people don’t want to do. And they are working very hard.”*

– Physician

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## What Is Important to Know about Immigrants?

- In 2000, the suburban Chicago immigrant population (788,000) surpassed the city of Chicago’s immigrant population (629,000), an unprecedented development.
- The suburban immigrant population grew by 377,000 persons in the 1990s, an increase of 91.9 percent.
- In DuPage County, immigration provided over 50% of the population growth in the decade between 1990 and 2000.
- Suburban immigrants are generally better off socioeconomically than Chicago immigrants. However, suburban immigrants have distinctly higher poverty rates, lower wages, and lower education levels than suburban native born residents.
- Immigrants make many positive contributions to society and the economy by “stabilizing population loss, playing a key role in certain industries, opening small businesses, paying their share of taxes and using low levels of welfare”
- Immigrants in Illinois (legal and undocumented combined) pay their fair share of taxes. Immigrants pay 10.6% of all major taxes collected, while they comprise 10.2% of the state’s population.
- However, immigrants use only 7% of major welfare and educational programs in Illinois.

(Source: *Illinois Coalition for Immigrant & Refugee Rights, 2000*).

### Did you know....

- In the past ten years, there has been explosive growth in all of Illinois’ major immigrant populations, including 69% growth in the Latino population and 53% growth in the Asian population since 1990.
- Approximately 15% of Illinois residents are immigrants. Illinois has the sixth largest immigrant population in the country.
- 15.3% of DuPage residents are immigrants.
- 49% of Illinois immigrants live in Chicago, 44% live in the suburbs, and 7% live in other parts of the state.
- Immigrants pay 10.6% of taxes paid by Illinois residents—\$7.2 billion. Immigrants receive 7% of welfare and educational services.
- The most common occupations for immigrants are professional jobs such as engineer, physician, or university professor (22.1%).

**Sources:** *Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights and Census 2000*

Suburban Residents	<i>Noncitizens</i>	<i>Naturalized</i>	<i>Native Born</i>
Median Age	34	48	32
Percent in Poverty	8.1%	4.7%	4.8%
Median Wage	\$ 9.62	\$ 14.42	\$ 14.10
Percent Arriving in 1990s	43.1%	3.8%	n/a
Percent with HS Diploma	62.8%	80.8%	92.4%
Percent with College Degree	25.1%	33.7%	33.9%

(Source: Current Population Survey, Suburban Immigrant Communities Assessments of Key Characteristics and Needs, Rob Paral)

## Who Are the Immigrants and Why Are They Immigrants?

### Subpopulations:

**Refugees** Refugees are persons who have been granted protected status by the United States government as a result of political or economic persecution in their country of origin. (Seigel, 2002) DuPage County is one of three Illinois counties (Cook, DuPage, Winnebago) that are the focus of government sponsored refugee resettlement activities. From 1975 to the present, the State of Illinois has assisted more than 115,000 refugees, defined as someone “who has left his or her country because of a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, social group or political opinion,” to begin their new life in the United States. (Source: Illinois Department of Human Services <http://www.dhs.state.il.us/ts/ccfs/RIS>).

Many refugees arrive in the U.S. after prolonged psychological and physical trauma, including imprisonment and torture. Some have lived for long periods in refugee camps where food and medicine were scarce and sanitation poor. Many have lost family members or are separated from loved ones. As a result, they have specific needs for health care and human services. Refugees may be eligible for TANF, SSI, and Medicaid for specific periods of time, after which they must qualify under one of the normal eligibility categories. Married couples without children and single adults are eligible for federally funded case and medical assistance for eight months after arrival. State funded health services often provide follow-up care in treating such diseases as tuberculosis and hepatitis, as well as chronic and mental health conditions resulting from prolonged deprivation and torture. (Siegel, 2002)

World Relief is the local organization the U.S. State Department has officially appointed to resettle refugees in DuPage. They have been resettling refugees in DuPage since 1976, and estimate that there are approximately 4000 to 5000 people in DuPage County who originally entered as refugees. Some of these have naturalized. (World Relief, 2003)

**Unaccompanied Youth** Among the refugee population, a significant subset are the youth under age eighteen who have become separated from their families. Sometimes the parents have been killed, or other tragedies have resulted in the permanent separation of the youth from their families.

**Undocumented Immigrants** The newly created Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services (formerly Immigration and Naturalization Service) estimates that approximately 290,000 undocumented immigrants resided in Illinois in 1996, the most recent estimate available. This means that approximately 2% of Illinois' population is undocumented.

**Q: How many undocumented immigrants are there in DuPage County?**

A: There is no accepted methodology for estimating the number of undocumented immigrants in a county. Various statistically defensible methods give estimates ranging from 21,000 to 29,000. Experts uniformly believe these are too low.

**Immigrants from Mexico** As a group, immigrants from Mexico are different from many other immigrants. They are less likely to be in this country legally. They tend to be less educated, and therefore are likely to work in low skill, low wage jobs. As a result, their families have higher levels of poverty. Experts tell us that they tend to see themselves as being in this country on a temporary basis and are therefore less likely to learn to speak English and to acculturate to this country. (Source: Census 2000 )

**Where Are the Immigrants?** Although there are immigrants in every community in DuPage, there are particular concentrations in several communities in DuPage. The townships of Addison, Winfield, and Bloomingdale have the highest percentages of foreign born residents, while the townships of Naperville, Winfield, and Milton have seen the highest percentage increase in foreign born population (Appendix ).

**How Many Immigrants are there in DuPage County?**

According to the 2000 census data, DuPage County has 904,161 residents; of these, 138,656 or 15.3% are foreign-born. The state's foreign born population is 12.3 percent. Census data from 2000 shows that the immigrant population has increased by 94.37 percent since 1990. (Source: Census 2000)

DuPage County Population	1990	2000	Percent Change
Population	782,666	904,161	15.52%
Foreign Born	71,335	138,656	94.37%
Percent	9.11%	15.34%	

**Where do the Immigrants Come From?** The DuPage immigrant population totaled 138,656 in the 2000 Census. They largely come from (in order) Mexico, India, the Philippines, Poland, China Pakistan, the Soviet Union, Vietnam, Canada, and the United Kingdom.

Top Ten Places of Birth of DuPage Immigrants	
1. Mexico	35,448
2. India	21,745
3. Philippines	10,447
4. Poland	9,098
5. China	4,487
6. Italy	4,439
7. Pakistan	3,612
8. Korea	3,537
9. Canada	3,081
10. Germany	2,935

**What Service Systems Have Responsibility for Immigrants?**

**Federal: U.S. Department of Homeland Security (USDHS):** On March 1, 2003 the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (USDHS) became responsible for both security of U.S. borders and for managing the immigration process. In the past, these two missions were the responsibility of the Immigration and Naturalization Service. Under the new USDHS, immigration services and border enforcement functions are divided into separate agencies.

Under USDHS, the newly created Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services (formerly INS) focuses exclusively on providing services such as processing applications for U.S. citizenship, administering the Visa program, administering work authorizations and other permits, and providing services for new residents and citizens.

Border security and the enforcement of immigration laws are handled by the Directorate of Border and Transportation

Security. BTS absorbed the INS's Border Patrol agents and investigators, as well as the U.S. Customs Service, Transportation Security Administration and other enforcement personnel. The mission of BTS includes not only managing illegal immigration, but also securing the borders against illicit drugs, unlawful commerce and - as the Department's main priority - the entry of terrorists and the instruments of terrorism.

(Source: [http://www.dhs.gov/dhspublic/theme\\_home4.jsp](http://www.dhs.gov/dhspublic/theme_home4.jsp))

**State: Illinois Department of Human Services, Bureau of Refugee and Immigrant Services:**

The IDHS Bureau of Refugee and Immigrants Services' main objectives include:

- Help newly arriving refugees achieve self-sufficiency in the United States;
- Provide health services to low-income immigrants;
- Provide citizenship education and application services to resident non-citizens desiring to become United States citizens.

# Health Care

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Low income immigrants in DuPage County have all the access problems faced by other low income persons, plus significant additional barriers unique to their immigrant status.

- Those with limited English proficiency face significant challenges in accessing the health care system. There is a particular shortage of Spanish speaking health professionals compared to the number of persons who speak only Spanish. Many local health care providers are unfamiliar with (or not covered by) federal requirements regarding availability of interpreters and don't understand the solid medical reasons to use interpreters. As a result it is difficult for many persons with limited English proficiency to access health care in a language they can understand.
- There are major restrictions on the ability of many immigrants to use Medicaid and Medicare. Undocumented immigrants are simply ineligible except in life threatening emergencies. Legal immigrants who arrived after August 22, 1996 are ineligible for five years after arrival. Refugees are eligible only for a short time. Other restrictions limit the ability of immigrants to use these publicly funded health programs.
- If the physical health care needs are frequently unmet, their dental, mental health and vision needs are often not even on the radar screen. Missing teeth, severe vision problems and untreated depression pose real barriers to employment. Immigrant adults, particularly refugees, may face mental health problems due to exposure to traumatic situations within their native country.

## Did you know....

- Poor noncitizen families (those with incomes below 200% of the federal poverty level) use public benefits at a lower rate than do poor citizen families (14% vs. 25.8%).
- 49% of noncitizen children do not have health insurance (vs. 19% of citizen children).
- 31% of immigrant children under the age of 18 did not visit a doctor in the past year. (*This is double the rate for citizen children.*)
- Latinos represent 11.6% of the U.S. population, yet make up more than 21% of those without health insurance.
- 68% of Access DuPage Enrollees report that English is not their primary language

**Sources:** *Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights and Access DuPage*

## Needs

Survey data repeatedly shows that 5 to 7% of the DuPage population are without health insurance. However, among immigrants, the percentage is much higher. National data show that at least 50% of undocumented immigrants lack health employer sponsored health insurance. Even publicly funded health benefits such as KidCare or Medicaid are generally unavailable to immigrants, even those here legally, unless they fall into a special category that makes them eligible.

A local safety net program, Access DuPage, reports that 68% of its enrollees have a primary language other than English, and that over 40% speak no English. Many of these persons report that they do not know anyone who speaks English.

## Resources

For many years, the DuPage Community Clinic was the only resource for uninsured immigrants in DuPage, except the

hospital emergency rooms, and it continues to play an important role. A new safety net program, Access DuPage, has made primary care in the office of a private physician available to program participants. However, there is a shortage of physicians who can provide culturally and linguistically appropriate care for non-English speakers. On October 1, 2003, the Martin T. Russo Community Clinic in Bloomingdale opened as the first Federally Qualified Health Care Center in DuPage County. Planning is underway for future centers in West Chicago, Addison and southern DuPage County. These programs serve as the main source of health care for low income immigrants.

## **Gaps**

Few physicians in DuPage speak a language other than English, and almost 70% of Access DuPage enrollees report that English is not their primary language. Lower income immigrants generally do not receive health care except in life threatening emergencies when accidents or acute emergencies force them into the emergency room.

Immigrants face particular barriers to receiving Medicaid. Undocumented children and adults, except pregnant women, are simply ineligible except in genuine medical emergencies. Immigrants are eligible for Medicaid only if they have been legally present for more than five years **and** they fit into one of the existing categorically eligible programs. These include 'adults with children in their care', 'Over 65' or 'disabled'. Unless a disability has been established, single individuals under 65 without children in their care are simply ineligible for Medicaid. Even if an immigrant is able to establish eligibility for Medicaid, the logistics of navigating the health care system make it less than likely that the person will receive appropriate care, particularly if English proficiency is a problem.

## **Cultural Issues**

*Unfamiliarity with the American health care system structure and financial setup:* The United States is the only major industrialized nation that lacks a national health care system. Immigrants from westernized countries are often unfamiliar with the need to make sure that private health insurance is available to their families. Others, from countries where health care is available only to the wealthy, are unfamiliar with western concepts of preventative care, and with the vast array of complex and unfamiliar procedures.

*Cultural issues:* Many cultures have beliefs about sickness, reproduction and other health related issues that can be real barriers to receipt of care.

*Special health risks:* Some immigrants, particularly refugees, come from areas of the world with special health risks, including infectious diseases, environmental risks, and aftereffects from the events that led to the need to immigrate, including war, torture etc.

# EDUCATION

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## Key Points

- Language education is needed for first and some second generation children of immigrants since English may not be spoken at home
- Adults need access to programs to help them learn English

The major education issues affecting immigrants are:

1. Both children and adults need to learn English language skills (oral and written) that are adequate to function in an academic or business environment;
2. Immigrant children need to begin or continue their formal education, and to stay in school through at least high school graduation.
3. Immigrant adults need to develop job skills to permit them to become employed and subsequently advance within their employment.

**English:** Upon arrival, some immigrants already speak English, or learn it quickly. Surprisingly, some native born persons do not speak English, usually children of immigrants who do not speak English at home. Paral (2000) reports that less than 3% of suburban children are immigrants, but nearly 21% of all suburban children are first or second generation US residents. They are the children of immigrants and often their first language is the native language of their parents.

## RESOURCES

**English:** Schools focus on two different educational approaches to the needs of students with limited English proficiency. When the bilingual education approach is used, classes are conducted both in English and in the student's native language. This approach includes a transition plan that increases instruction in English as the student's English skills increase. A school's ability to provide bilingual classes depends on the presence of qualified teachers who are proficient in the native language of the student. Bilingual education is commonly used at the elementary and high school level.

With the English as a second language (ESL) approach, academic classes are conducted in English, with tutoring provided in the native language outside the classroom to address any gaps. Recently there have been some GED classes in Spanish for adults offered by the College of DuPage

Many factors are considered when deciding which is the best way a person can learn English, including:

- age of the student
- literacy level of the student in their native language

## Facts about non-English speakers in DuPage

138,656	foreign born persons in DuPage County
174,113	persons speak a language other than English at home.
35,000	(Estimated) native born citizens who do not speak English at home
39,524	persons who do not speak English very well and are considered linguistically isolated.
20.8%	residents who speak a language other than English.

*Source: Census 2000*

- educational level of the student in their native country
- whether the student has any disabilities, and
- how quickly the immigrant/student must become employed

**Children:** Immigrant children have the same educational needs as all other children. Existing Illinois law guarantees all students a free public education from kindergarten through grade twelve or up until age 21 regardless of immigrant status.

In Illinois, each school district is required to administer a standardized home language survey to each student entering the districts' schools for the first time, for the purpose of identifying students of non-English speaking background. If a child is identified as having a non-English background, an individual language proficiency assessment is completed. Placement of the student in bilingual or ESL programs is based on their scoring on this assessment.

Based on their behavior or academic performance, students will be assessed by schools for learning disabilities. Problems arise when children with limited English are considered for special education services, since it is often difficult to distinguish whether academic problems are caused by learning disabilities or by limited English proficiency. Cultural differences can also result in a student's behavior being classified as a behavioral disorder. Assessment of learning disabilities usually occurs when the child is young, so often immigrants who are adolescents miss out on opportunities as they are not being assessed. (Paral, 2000)

In addition to the educational needs, immigrant students, particularly refugees, may experience mental health problems created by exposure to traumas in their native country.

**Adults:** The focus for adults is on acquisition of sufficient English skills to become employed. The College of DuPage, World Relief and West Chicago District 94 offer adult education and family literacy programs, funded by the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB). There are many other ESL programs available to adults through faith based organizations, the Literacy Volunteers of America and community based organizations.

The College of DuPage reports that some quarters there has been a waiting list of 1400 students for adult education/ESL classes. Currently 6208 students are enrolled in ESL classes at the College of DuPage and DuPage Tapestry 2001 reports that 9500 persons are enrolled in GED, ABE, or ESL courses. The 2000 census reports that 61,872 adults do not speak English very well, resulting in a gap of over 51,000 persons needing and receiving services. Once adults acquire sufficient English to become employed, they are less likely to pursue post secondary education. Often time and location of classes conflict with work schedules and access to transportation.

#### **Innovative Approaches**

In West Chicago, the elementary and high schools have established a Newcomer Center, and work closely with local immigrant organizations and social service organizations in order to meet the academic, social and health care needs of immigrant students.

Marquardt School District 15 has a program that helps non-English speaking parents become more comfortable with the American school system and promotes increasing parental interest and participation in their children's school work and school life.

### **CULTURE ISSUES**

Adults who lack adequate previous formal education may have difficulty with conventional classroom methods.

Communication between schools and parents is strongly influenced by a family's cultural background. "Parents come from cultures, unlike American society, where parents are not expected to advocate for changes in school curriculum or practices. Immigrant parents may also simply not understand how American school systems function, what are their rights, what are the recourses to assistance and information, etc." (Paral, 2000)

Parental, or cultural preference can have a significant impact in a number of areas:

- Asian and other immigrant groups are more likely to enroll their children in Head Start or early childhood programs than are Latino families. Children who remain at home are more likely to enter schools speaking only the language spoken at home.
- Families where parents have little formal education may not understand the need for high school completion.
- Financial need may force earlier entry into the workforce
- Some cultures are male dominated, and these families may have different expectations of female students than do US schools.
- The role of the teacher and student may be different in their home country. Teaching in the US is more interactive and less dependent on rote memorization. Students regularly interrupt faculty to ask questions or offer constructive criticism of the lecture. In many cultures this interruption or questioning of the teacher would not be acceptable.

## **GAPS**

There is a shortage of teachers and other professionals, such as speech pathologists, psychologists, and social workers, who speak languages other than English. This shortage creates problems for limited English persons to be assessed for learning disabilities, behavior disorders, and any other disabilities that can inhibit their ability to learn. The shortage of teachers to train adults is even more critical.

Many education programs are focused on the early learner and the adult learner. There are limited supports available to assist the adolescent immigrant. Any special needs they may have may not be diagnosed as this traditionally occurs in the elementary grades (Paral). If they have immigrated from a country where they have had no formal education, they may not be able to attend classes in schools that are age appropriate.

Illinois does not have a standardized test for assessing language proficiency. School districts are able to select from a number of nationally normed tests to test student language proficiency. There can even be differences in the test used within school districts, resulting in inconsistencies in identification of which students should receive services.

There is no central tracking system for adult access to education programs. Right now estimates can be made from general census data, and information available through informal surveys as to how great the need is for English education of adults. Working with estimates makes it difficult to plan without knowing what really is the need. The need for English literacy programs appears to be growing faster than the ability to create and implement new programs. (???)

# Legal Issues

## Key Points

- Immigration law is very complex. Immigrants who wish to stay in the US need expert legal advice.
- Many other legal issues are affected by a non-citizen's status.
- Even if an immigrant entered the US legally, it is possible to lose the immigration status that can permit the immigrant to apply for legal permanent residency. Expert legal advice is required at every stage before becoming a citizen.

Immigrants have all the same legal issues as do native born persons, but sometimes their status as immigrants adds complications. For example, when a divorce takes place and one of the spouses is not a citizen, or a criminal case involves a noncitizen there can be additional complications.

However, the main legal issue that is unique to immigrants is immigration law. The United States immigration code is extremely complex. One expert interviewed for this report remarked: *"The United States doesn't have an immigration policy, or if it does it's 'Very few people can immigrate'. Then there is a codified list of exceptions to that basic policy that is over a foot thick."*

Most legal immigrants qualify to immigrate because of their employment, or their family relationships with US citizens. Relatively small numbers qualify to immigrate as refugees, asylees or in other categories.

**Needs** Immigrants need access to competent, affordable legal advice from the time they first seek to immigrate until they have completed the naturalization process.

Even if an immigrant originally entered the US legally, it is possible to 'fall out of status' and lose the ability to continue on the process toward naturalization. Immigrants need to have clear information on what they need to do and not do in order to become US citizens.

Immigrants who did not enter the United States legally but wish to stay need to consult with a lawyer well trained in immigration law to

## Family-based preference categories

Except for immediate relatives of U.S. citizens (parents, spouses and unmarried children under the age of 21), relatives in the remaining categories must wait for an immigrant visa number to become available according to the following preferences:

- 1<sup>st</sup> Preference: Unmarried, adult sons and daughters of U.S. citizens. Adult means 21 years of age or older.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Preference: Spouses of legal permanent residents, and the unmarried sons and daughters (regardless of age) of legal permanent residents and their children.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Preference: Married sons and daughters of U.S. citizens, their spouses and their minor children.
- 4<sup>th</sup> Preference: Brothers and sisters of adult U.S. citizens, their spouses and their minor children.

## Employment-based preference categories

All people who want to become immigrants based on employment must wait for an immigrant visa number to become available according to the following preferences:

- 1<sup>st</sup> Preference: Priority Workers including aliens with extraordinary abilities, outstanding professors and researchers, and certain multinational executives and managers.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Preference: Members of Professions Holding Advanced Degrees or Persons of Exceptional Ability.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Preference: Skilled Workers, professionals and other qualified workers.
- 4<sup>th</sup> Preference: Certain special immigrants including those in religious vocations.
- 5<sup>th</sup> Preference: Immigrant Investors creating employment

determine whether this is possible. For some illegal immigrants, there is no way at present for them to become legal permanent residents.

## **Resources**

A list of organizations accredited by the Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services is found in Appendix 3.

## **Gaps**

There are few organizations in DuPage that counsel immigrants on their legal situation. Qualified community based organizations whose mission is to assist immigrants in achieving legal permanent residency or citizenship should be encouraged to begin or expand their operations in DuPage.

# Immigrants and Public Benefits

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- Immigrants are more likely to be in jobs where health coverage is not offered or not affordable.
- Many immigrants are specifically excluded from eligibility for public benefits by legislation or by informal agency practice.

Immigrants are more likely to need health care and human services, and less likely to be eligible for publicly funded benefits. Eligibility for public benefits is affected by whether an individual is in the United States legally or not. Undocumented immigrants are generally ineligible for most means-tested benefits, including Medicaid (except in emergencies), Supplemental Security Income and TANF cash assistance.

## Needs

Low income immigrants, particularly those who are elderly or have physical or mental disabilities, need better access to public benefits.

## Resources

There is a dearth of clear information on the eligibility of immigrants for the various public benefit programs. Changes in eligibility further complicate the understanding of community providers and immigrants themselves. As a result, people who might in fact be eligible do not apply.

## Gaps

Elderly immigrants, many of whom legally immigrated to the US to live with citizen sons and daughters, are often not eligible for Medicare because they haven't worked in this country. They are also often not eligible for Medicaid and private insurance for a senior is prohibitively expensive if available at all. They fall into a major gap in eligibility that should be addressed for humanitarian reasons.

<b>Immigrants' Eligibility for Public Benefits in Illinois</b>				
<b>DRAFT</b>	<b>Refugees Asylees &amp; Victims of Trafficking</b>	<b>Legal Permanent Residents</b>	<b>Other Qualified Immigrants</b>	<b>Unqualified Immigrants</b>
<b>CASH ASSISTANCE</b>				
<u>Supplemental Security Income</u>	Yes	After 5 years	No	No
<u>Social Security Retirement and Disabilities benefits</u>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<u>Veterans Administration</u>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<u>Aid to the Aged, Blind or Disabled (AABD)</u>	Yes	After 5 years	No	No
<u>Refugee Assistance</u>	Yes	NA	NA	NA
<u>Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF)</u>	Yes	After 5 years	No	No
<u>Unemployment Insurance</u>	Yes	Yes	Yes if authorized to work	No
<u>General Assistance</u>	Yes	Yes	No	No
<b>HEALTH CARE</b>				
<u>Medicare</u>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<u>Veterans Administration</u>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<u>Medicaid - Medical Assistance No Grant (MANG)</u>	Yes	After 5 years	No	No
<u>Medical Assistance with Grant (MAG)</u>	Yes	After 5 years	No	No
<u>Medicaid Assistance No Grant – for Pregnant women and children (MANG-P)</u>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<u>Emergency Medical Assistance</u>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<u>Health insurance for children (KidCare)</u>	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
<u>Health insurance for parents (FamilyCare)</u>	Yes	After 5 years	Yes	No
<u>Access DuPage</u>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<u>Access Community Health Network</u>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>FOOD</b>				
<u>Supplemental food program for women, infants, and children (WIC)</u>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<u>Food Stamps</u>	Yes	Only disabled adults, children and elderly	Only disabled adults, children and elderly	No
<u>Food Pantries</u>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>OTHER</b>				
<u>Child Care Assistance</u>	Based on Child's Status	Based on Child's status	Based on Child's status	Based on Child's Status
<u>Energy Assistance (LIHEAP)</u>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Nos

**Source:** Adapted from *Improving Health and Human Services for Immigrants and Refugees*, Siegel and Kappaz, 2002

**Notes:** In each case, “YES” assumes that the immigrant applicant meets all of the other eligibility requirements for the particular program such as income, work record, disability status, military service, etc. An immigrant is ‘unqualified’ unless s/he is eligible for one of the ‘qualified’ categories, which are often eligible for benefits. See box below. For more information, including application process, see the Federation’s publication “Making the Connection: A guide to mainstream public benefits” and other resources online at [www.dupagefederation.org](http://www.dupagefederation.org).

### **Qualified Immigrants**

1. Legal Permanent Resident (LPR): A person who has been granted legal permanent residence (a 'green card' holder) and thus is entitled to remain in the US indefinitely.
2. Refugee: A person who flees his/her country due to persecution or fear of persecution and is granted refugee status while abroad to come and live permanently in the United States.
3. Asylee: A person who has been determined to meet the same requirements as a refugee, but who was present in the US when granted asylee status.
4. Immigrant who has had deportation withheld: A person who establishes that he/she would likely face persecution if returned to his/her country.
5. Immigrant granted parole for at least one year: The US Department of Justice can grant certain groups or persons parole for humanitarian, legal or medical reasons.
6. Immigrant granted conditional entry: A person who immigrated based on a marriage that occurred within two years of obtaining permanent residence.
7. Battered immigrant and her child/children: A person with an approved or pending application under the Violence against Women Act (VAWA)
8. U.S. Veterans and service members and certain members of their families
9. Victims of trafficking

# Appendices

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**Appendix 1:** Resources on Health Care for Immigrants

**Appendix 2:** Immigration Law Resources

**Appendix 3:** Census Data on Immigrants

## **Appendix 1: Resources on Health Care for Immigrants**

American Public Health Association *Understanding the Health Culture Of Recent Immigrants to the United States: A Cross-Cultural Maternal Health Information Catalog* <http://www.apha.org/ppp/red/>

Draft Standards for Providing Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Health Care Services:

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), Office of Minority Health

<http://www.omhrc.gov/clas/ds.htm>

"Public Charge" Guidance: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), Office of Civil Rights

<http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/publicc.htm>

U.S. Department of Justice, Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS)

[http://www.ins.usdoj.gov/graphics/publicaffairs/factsheets/public\\_cfs.htm](http://www.ins.usdoj.gov/graphics/publicaffairs/factsheets/public_cfs.htm)

Legal obligation for health care providers to offer translation services pursuant to Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964:

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), Office of Civil Rights

<http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/lepfinal.htm>

Medicaid eligibility of legal immigrants:

U.S. Health Care Financing Administration (HCFA)

<http://www.hcfa.gov/medicaid/wrfs3.htm>

## Appendix 2: Immigration Law Resources

<http://www.illinoislawhelp.org/> Easily understandable information on immigration.

### Accredited Community-Based Organizations Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services Chicago District Office Illinois

This list gives the names of selected accredited organizations and individuals who are entitled to represent individuals before the Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services, Immigration Courts, and the Board of Immigration Appeals. For a more extensive list, visit the BCIS website at <http://www.bcis.gov/>

Archdiocese Latin-American Committee Immigration & Refugee Services 126 N. Des Plaines Chicago, IL 60661 (312) 427-7078 (312) 427-3130 (Fax)	Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society 216 W. Jackson Chicago, IL 60606 (312) 357-4666 (312) 855-3750 (Fax)	Heartland Alliance Midwest Immigrant and Human Rights Center 208 S. LaSalle St., # 1818 Chicago, IL 60604 (312) 660-1370 (312) 660-1505 (Fax)
Catholic Charities Diocese of Rockford 300 N. Alpine Rockford, IL 61107 (815) 399-1709 (815) 399-1731 (Fax)	InterChurch Refugee and Immigration Ministries 4753 N. Broadway, # 401 Chicago, IL 60640 (773) 989-5647 (773) 989-0484 (Fax)	United Neighborhood Organization 954 W. Washington, 3rd fl Chicago, IL 60607 (312) 432-6301 (312) 432-0077 (Fax)
Centro de Informacion y Progreso 28 N. Grove Avenue Elgin, IL 60120 (847) 695-9050 (847) 931-7991 (Fax)	Legal Services Center for Immigrants 111 W. Jackson Blvd. Ste 300 Chicago, IL 60604 (312) 341-1070 (312) 341-1040 (Fax)	World Relief 3507 W. Lawrence, # 206 Chicago, IL 60625 (773) 583-3010 (773) 583-9410 (Fax)
Centro Romero 6216 N. Clark Chicago, IL 60660 (773) 508-5300 (773) 508-5399 (Fax)	Life Span 20 E. Jackson Blvd. # 500 Chicago, IL 60604 (312) 408-1210 (312) 408-1223 (Fax)	World Relief DuPage Office 1825 College Ave. # 230 Wheaton, IL 60187 (630) 462-7566 (630) 462-8103 (Fax)
Chinese American Service League 310 W. 24th Place Chicago, IL 60616 (312) 791-0418 (312) 326-5244 (Fax)	Polish American Association 3834 N. Cicero Avenue Chicago, IL 60641 (773) 282-8206 Ext. 353 (773) 282-1324 (Fax)	
Counseling Center of Lake View 3225 N. Sheffield Avenue Chicago, IL 60657 (773) 549-5886 (773) 549-5892 (Fax)	Heartland Alliance Midwest Immigrant and Human Rights Center 1817 S. Loomis Chicago, IL 60608 (312) 435-4550 (312) 421-0923 (Fax)	

## Definitions of Citizenship and Legal Status Categories

### 1. Non-citizens

- a. *Legal (or lawful) permanent residents (LPRs)*. These are foreign-born people who are legally admitted to live permanently in the United States through qualifying for immigrant visas abroad or adjustment to permanent resident status in the United States. LPRs are issued documentation commonly referred to as "green cards," although the cards have not been green for many years. Almost all LPRs are "sponsored" (i.e., brought to the United States) by close family members or employers and are eligible to naturalize 3 or 5 years after receiving a green card. This is the largest group of non-citizen immigrants.
- b. *Refugees and asylees*. These are foreign-born people granted legal status due to a "well-founded fear" of persecution in their home countries. Refugee status is granted before entry to the United States. Refugee status may be granted to a group of persons, although each individual must also qualify for the status. Asylees must meet the same criteria regarding fear of persecution. Unlike refugees, asylees usually arrive in the country without authorization (or overstay a valid visa), later claim asylum, and are granted their legal status while in the United States. After one year, refugees and asylees are generally eligible for permanent residency. Almost all "adjust" their status and become LPRs, although they retain certain rights—for instance eligibility for major federal benefit programs—by virtue of their designation as refugees or asylees.
- c. *Temporary residents*. Diverse sets of foreign-born U.S. residents have been admitted to the United States for a temporary or indefinite period, but have not attained permanent residency. Most are people who have entered for a temporary period, for work, as students or because of political disruption or natural disasters in their home countries. Some seek to stay for a permanent or indefinite period and have a "pending" status that allows them to remain in the country and often to work but does not carry the same rights as legal permanent residency.
- d. *Undocumented aliens* (illegal immigrants). These are foreign-born people who do not possess a valid visa or other immigration document (because they entered the United States clandestinely or "without inspection," stayed longer than their temporary visas permitted, or otherwise violated the terms under which they were admitted). Some eventually adjust their status and attain legal residency after a sponsorship petition has been filed by a relative, spouse or employer.

### 2. Citizens

- a. *Naturalized citizens*. LPRs may become U.S. citizens through the naturalization process. Typically, they must be in the United States for five or more years to qualify for naturalization, although immigrants who marry citizens can qualify in three years, and some small categories qualify even sooner. LPRs must take a citizenship test—in English—and pass background checks before qualifying to naturalize. Many LPRs take English language and civics instruction to help them qualify for citizenship.
- b. *Native-born citizens*. All people born in the United States are granted birthright citizenship, regardless of their parents' birthplace or legal status. Native-born citizens also include people born in Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands, other U.S. territories and possessions, and those born in foreign countries to a U.S. citizen parent.

**Source:** The New Neighbors

### Appendix 3 Census data on DuPage County Immigrants

	Township	Total Population	Foreign Born Population	Percentage of Foreign Born
1	Addison	88,900	23,661	26.6%
2	Winfield	45,155	9,009	20.0%
3	Bloomingtondale	111,709	22,192	19.9%
4	Wayne	63,776	9,799	15.4%
5	Downers Grove	148,110	19,595	13.2%
6	Naperville	85,736	10,994	12.8%
7	Lisle	117,604	14,972	12.7%
8	York	124,553	15,116	12.1%
9	Milton	118,616	13,318	11.2%

	Township	Total Population	Foreign Born Population	Percent Change 1990 - 2000
1	Naperville	85,736	10,994	124.7%
2	Winfield	45,155	9,009	111.1%
3	Milton	118,616	13,318	107.4%
4	Lisle	117,604	14,972	90.9%
5	Addison	88,900	23,661	86.8%
6	Bloomingtondale	111,709	22,192	71.4%
7	York	124,553	15,116	65.2%
8	Downers Grove	148,110	19,595	62.9%
9	Wayne	63,776	9,799	56.5%

(Source: *The Changing Face of Illinois*, Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights)

Places of Birth Foreign Born DuPage Residents Census 2000		
Total:	138656	100.00%
Mexico	35448	25.57%
India	21745	15.68%
Philippines	10447	7.53%
Poland	9098	6.56%
China, excluding Hong Kong and Taiwan	4487	3.24%
Italy	4439	3.20%
Other Eastern Europe	3710	2.68%
Pakistan	3612	2.61%
Korea	3537	2.55%
Canada	3081	2.22%
Germany	2935	2.12%
United Kingdom	2615	1.89%
Vietnam	2525	1.82%
Taiwan	2304	1.66%
Greece	1823	1.31%
Yugoslavia	1551	1.12%
Guatemala	1321	0.95%
Other Countries	23,978	17.29%
Grand Total	138,656	100.00%

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