

# Facts about immigration in the U.S.



**11 million**

Estimated number of undocumented immigrants in the U.S. in 2013, 60 percent of whom have been in the U.S. for more than a decade

**409,849**

People deported from the U.S. in Fiscal Year (FY) 2012

**20 years**

Wait time for a U.S. citizen to bring their adult unmarried children from Mexico to the U.S.

**23 years**

Wait time for a sibling from the Philippines

**4.5 million**

Approximate number of U.S. citizen children who have at least one undocumented parent

**46,000**

Estimated number of their parents deported in first half of 2011

**5,000**

Approximate number now in foster care after one or both parents were deported

**5**

Number of years a green card holder must wait to be eligible for federal public benefits, such as Medicaid and food stamps

**3 million**

Estimated number of migrant and seasonal farmworkers in the U.S.

**55,921**

Number of H2A visas for temporary, agricultural work in 2010

**\$18 billion**

U.S. federal government spending on immigration enforcement in FY 2012, more than all other federal law enforcement agencies combined

Sources: U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Office of Immigration Statistics; Immigration Policy Center; U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Immigration and Customs Enforcement; Migration Policy Institute; Applied Research Center; U.S. Department of State, Visa Bulletin; National Center for Farmworker Health. Photo credits: Saulo Padilla, Matthew Lester/MCC, West Coast MCC.

## POLICY PRINCIPLES

# U.S. immigration policy should...



### 1 Ensure a pathway to citizenship.

Many of the estimated 11 million undocumented immigrants in the U.S. are long-time members of their communities and have established families, jobs, businesses, and churches. Some were brought to the country as children and know no other home. Any immigration reform bill should contain a **legal pathway to citizenship for immigrants currently living in the United States, without requiring unworkable fines or “touchback” provisions.**

### 2 Maintain family-based immigration.

Long wait lists keep families separated for years and encourage efforts to circumvent the system. **The current family-based immigration system should be maintained and there should be an increase in the number of available family visas, so that families can reunite and immigrate together in a legal and timely way.**

### 3 Create fair guest worker programs.

Lax oversight of guest worker programs leaves a system ripe for exploitation and worker abuse. **Guest worker programs should contain appropriate oversight mechanisms to protect labor rights such as fair wages, employer choice and due process protections.** Immigrant workers should have the opportunity to apply for permanent status and, eventually, citizenship.

### 4 Ensure access to basic benefits.

Many current immigration policies seek to deter access to public health and safety services and lead to a culture of fear and isolation in immigrant communities. **Lawfully present immigrants should have access to basic public benefits and services. No one should be discouraged from seeking necessary health care or reporting a crime.**

### 5 Choose smart and humane border security strategies.

Current U.S. immigration policies have increased fear in immigrant communities and contributed to the rise in deaths of migrants crossing the border. **Border security strategies should protect community rights, human dignity and the natural environment.**

### 6 Address the root causes of migration.

Individuals are willing to risk their lives crossing the desert because the alternative—facing abject poverty or persecution in their home country—is so bleak. Ultimately, **the United States must seek foreign policy solutions and trade agreements that promote economic opportunity and stability in migrants' home countries.**

### 7 End indiscriminate raids and detention.

Workplace raids and mass detentions create a culture of fear and harm entire communities. **Indiscriminate raids and detention should be halted for non-dangerous immigrants, while targeting enforcement efforts on drug, weapon and people smugglers.**

#### Resources for learning more

MCC Washington Office  
[washington.mcc.org/immigration](http://washington.mcc.org/immigration)

Interfaith Immigration Coalition  
[interfaithimmigration.org](http://interfaithimmigration.org)

Migration Policy Institute  
[migrationpolicy.org](http://migrationpolicy.org)

American Immigration Lawyers Association  
[aila.org](http://aila.org)