

## Facts about Immigrants and Refugees in San Diego and Imperial Counties.

Immigrants and refugees have deeply shaped our region since a Portuguese explorer named Juan Carrillo sailed into our bay nearly 500 years ago. Each new arrival has built a life here, and in the process has played an integral role in lifting the San Diego region into a dynamic, culturally rich area renowned worldwide. Here are a few facts to consider as you “share the journey” of our immigrant neighbors.

### IMMIGRANTS

- An immigrant is someone who chooses to resettle in another country. (Source)
- 23.5 percent of the population of San Diego County is foreign-born, 36.6 percent in Imperial County. That’s nearly a total 730,000 foreign-born residents in both counties. (Source)
- Immigrants make up nearly one-third of the workforce in San Diego and Imperial counties. Immigrants without legal status make up 7 percent of the workforce and more than 30 percent of workers in agriculture. (Source)
- 37.4 percent of population speaks a language other than English at home in San Diego County, 74.7 percent in Imperial County. Related fact: 23.5 percent of the population is multi-lingual, English-speaking residents. (Source)
- Immigrants contribute almost \$650 billion to the California economy and \$27 billion to the economies of San Diego and Imperial counties. Immigrants contribute about 31 percent to California’s annual GDP, and 26 percent to the GDP of San Diego and Imperial counties. (Source)
- According to the U.S. Small Business Administration, the role of immigrant entrepreneurs has grown in the last 20 years. The multiethnic chambers of commerce promote the entrepreneurial drive of these populations. (Source)
- Some 71 percent of noncitizen residents of San Diego and Imperial counties live in mixed status households, meaning some members are U.S. citizens and others are not. (Source)

### REFUGEES

- A refugee is someone who has been forced to flee his or her country because of persecution, war or violence. (Source)
- In 2017, there are 65.6 million forcibly displaced people worldwide and 22.5 million refugees. In 2016, 189,300 refugees were resettled worldwide and only 84,995 refugees were resettled in the U.S. (Source)
- The average wait time in a refugee camp is 17 years. (Source)
- Refugees undergo an extreme vetting process before they are considered for resettlement in the U.S., ranging from in-person interviews, health screenings, cultural orientations and background checks. Refugees are screened from security agencies such as the Department of Defense (DOD), Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), among others. (Source)
- Since the Vietnam War, San Diego has resettled an estimated 85,000 refugees. In 2016, refugees arrived in San Diego for resettlement from various countries such as Democratic Republic of Congo, Eritrea, Afghanistan, Burma, and Iraq. (Source)
- There are four resettlement agencies in San Diego that help welcome refugees: Catholic Charities, Jewish Family Services, International Rescue Committee and Alliance for African Assistance.

## ASYLUM-SEEKERS

### How many asylees live in San Diego and Imperial Counties?

- An asylee is an individual who arrives at the U.S. border and is found unable to return to his or her country of nationality because of persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution  
(Source)
- Asylum-seekers often wait two to five years in the U.S. until their claim is adjudicated. During this period, they are allowed to enter into the U.S. and to work legally to sustain themselves.  
(Source)

## DACA

- The Obama Administration began the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program in 2012 (Source) for individuals brought into the country without authorization as children. After a vetting process that included a criminal background check, those approved to participate in the program were protected from deportation and allowed to work in the U.S. legally, have a Social Security number and obtain a driver's license for two years at a time. (Source) The Trump Administration terminated the program in October 2017.
- There are 9,800 DACA recipients in the San Diego Diocese region, nearly 800,000 nationwide.  
(Source)
- It's estimated that the annual GDP loss from removing DACA workers in the region is covered by the San Diego Catholic Diocese is nearly \$591 million.  
(Source)
- In California, there are 108,900 employed DACA recipients. Their most common occupations are in sales, office and administrative support and food preparation and serving.  
(Source)

## UNAUTHORIZED IMMIGRANTS

- About one of every 20 residents in San Diego County is an unauthorized immigrant.  
(Source)
- Unauthorized immigrants choose their new home largely by where they can find work and where there is a sense of community.  
(Source)
- Unauthorized immigrants pay a wide range of taxes, including sales taxes where applicable and property taxes  
(Source)
- Estimates are that undocumented immigrants in San Diego County pay \$218.5 million in state and local taxes annually  
(Source)
- Immigrants commit crimes (Source) and are incarcerated at a much lower rate than U.S. citizens (Source), according to two separate studies released in 2017.
- Some of the top industries for employment for unauthorized immigrants in California include arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services; manufacturing; professional, scientific, management, administrative and waste management; construction; and agriculture.  
(Source)