

## About the Researchers

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Information Center (MCIC), a not-for-profit organization dedicated to research and data collection in areas of public policy concern in the

six-county metropolitan Chicago area. Prior to leading MCIC Taylor was director of research and planning at the Chicago Urban League, and for a number of years before that he taught survey methods, data analysis, and public policy research at the University of Chicago. He received his PhD in sociology from the University of Chicago. He has written books on neighborhood change in Chicago, trends in American public opinion, and race relations in Boston (for which he won a national award from the American Political Science Association), as well as numerous articles and book chapters on survey research and data analysis methods. He is a recent recipient of the year-long Community Service Fellowship sabbatical grant from the Chicago Community Trust, in recognition of a distinguished career of leadership in the nonprofit community.

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## The Naturalization Trail: Mexican Nationality and US Citizenship

Mexican immigrants delay naturalization longer and have a lower rate of becoming US citizens than almost all other immigrant nationalities. Recent cohort studies show that about 35 percent of Mexican legal permanent residents become citizens as opposed to 59 percent among residents of all other countries.<sup>1</sup> The average span of time between obtaining legal permanent residence and becoming a citizen

is 8 years, but for Mexicans and other North American immigrants it is 11 years.<sup>2</sup> Many Mexicans are undocumented and therefore not eligible to apply. But what about those who are eligible? How do they view the road to citizenship? The purpose of this report is to examine the reasons why Mexican immigrants to the Chicago region choose to seek, or not seek, naturalization as US citizens.<sup>3</sup>

## STEPS IN US NATURALIZATION

**In general, people applying for naturalization must document that they:**

- are at least 18 years of age;
- have been lawfully admitted to the United States for permanent residence;
- have resided in the country continuously for at least 5 years;
- are able to speak, read, and write the English language;
- have knowledge of the US government and US history;
- are of good moral character; and
- are attached to the principles of the US Constitution.

**Those who file an application are interviewed to determine eligibility to naturalize. Those found qualified are scheduled for an oath ceremony before a judge or USCIS official.**

(US Citizenship and Immigration Services: [www.uscis.gov](http://www.uscis.gov))



## Metropolitan Chicago Initiative

The Metropolitan Chicago Initiative (MCI) conducts applied research and policy analysis and promotes community capacity-building in the metropolitan Chicago area. Community projects focus on Berwyn-Cicero, where the MCI profiles the status of Latino families and neighborhoods and identifies ways to improve their health, education, and well-being. Regional projects focus on measuring the minority education achievement gap, monitoring education public policy developments, and conducting analysis of Census data for Chicago-area neighborhoods and municipalities. Current projects are funded by the Arthur Foundation, the Joyce Foundation, and the Chicago Community Trust.

For more information visit [www.nd.edu/~latino/mci.htm](http://www.nd.edu/~latino/mci.htm).

# Mexicans in the Chicago Region: Legal Status

Table 1 shows that about one-fourth (27 percent) of the Chicago-area Mexican-born population are naturalized citizens. Another fifth (21 percent) have taken the first step toward naturalization and have become legal permanent residents (i.e., have a Green Card) and say they intend to take the second step and apply to become naturalized US citizens.

**Table 1: Naturalization Status/Plans of Chicago-Area Mexican-Born Residents**

Naturalized US citizen	27%
Permanent resident (Green Card), plan to naturalize	21%
Other (not permanent resident and/or no plan to naturalize)	51%
<b>Total* (568 respondents)</b>	<b>100%</b>

\*Discrepancies in this and in subsequent tables are due to rounding.

But about half do not report taking any steps toward naturalization: They do not report information about their US documentation, or they say they do not intend to become citizens. The 51 percent includes those who did not provide information on their documentation status.

It is estimated that about 75 percent of the Mexican immigrants who arrived in Illinois in the 1990s are undocumented.<sup>4</sup> To the extent there are 'undocumented' in the Chicago Area Latino Survey data base, they are included in the third category.<sup>5</sup>

**Table 2: Recent Eras in US Immigration Policy**

<b>• 1994–2004 NAFTA / IRCA / TANF</b>	
1996	<b>Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act</b> , Increased border patrol, expedited deportation, elimination of key federal benefits to permanent residents.
1994	<b>Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, TANF)</b> .
1994	<b>NAFTA, Mexican recession, peso devaluation, California passes Proposition 187.</b>
<b>• 1986–1993 IRCA</b>	
1993	Expanded border interdiction programs.
1992	Mandatory Green Card replacement program.
1986	<b>1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA)</b> , Amnesty for 2.7 million, employer sanctions, permanent residency through temporary agricultural labor; restrictions on public aid.
<b>• 1965–1985 INA</b>	
1980	<b>Refugee Act of 1980</b> , Provision for refugees.
1976	<b>1976 Amendments to INA</b> , Provision for refugees.
1965	<b>1965 Immigration and Naturalization Act (INA)</b> , Family reunification principle.
<b>• 1938–1964 Bracero</b>	
1942	<b>Bracero program established</b> , Temporary work permits for migrant labor.

1 Nancy F. Rytina, *IRCA Legalization Effects: Lawful Permanent Residence and Naturalization through 2001*, Office of Policy and Planning, Statistics Division, US Immigration and Naturalization Service (October 2002), 3–4.

2 Immigration and Naturalization Service, *2002 Statistical Yearbook*, 162.

3 Survey data presented here are from the Chicago Area Latino Survey conducted in the summer of 2003. The lines of inquiry and questionnaire were designed by a group of scholars working with the Institute for Latino Studies at the University of Notre Dame. Fieldwork was conducted by NuStats Corporation of Austin Texas. Approximately 21,750 households were eligible for interviewing. A total of 2,326 interviews were completed among Latinos, Whites, and Blacks in the Chicago region. Survey data in this report are from the 568 surveys completed among Latino respondents who reported that they were born in Mexico.



## Immigration Policy Context

US immigration and incorporation policies have always been contentious, and recently this has been especially true in regard to the neighbors to the south. There have been four broad policy periods that have had an impact on the ways people migrate from Mexico to the United States.<sup>6</sup> These are outlined in Table 2.

## Time in the United States

Table 3 shows that about one-third (34 percent) of the Chicago-area Mexican-born population have been in the United States 18 years or more. They arrived when the governing policy was the 1965 Immigration and Naturalization Act (INA) which established family reunification as the key principle to replace the Bracero system of transient labor for Mexican immigrants.<sup>7</sup>

About one-fourth (25 percent) of the Chicago-area Mexican-born population have been in the United

States for 10 to 17 years. They entered between 1986 and 1993, a period that began with the 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) which offered retroactive amnesty to long-time undocumented residents and attempted to control future immigration during this period with employer sanctions and restrictions on public assistance.

**Table 3: Years in the US**

Group	Arrived United States	Years in United States	%
3. NAFTA	1994–2003	0–9	32%
2. IRCA	1986–1993	10–17	25%
1. INA	before 1985	18+	34%
	(Missing Data)		9%
	<b>Total</b>		<b>100%</b>

About one-third of the Chicago-area Mexican-born have been in the United States less than 10 years. They entered the United States in 1994 or later, when the NAFTA Treaty raised hopes for Mexican economic growth and the 1996 Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant

Responsibility Act and the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA/TANF) legislation severely restricted Federal benefits for non-citizens.

Era of immigration is linked to naturalization rate. This may be due to the fact that as immigrants live here longer they acquire the English necessary to pass the exam and are more likely to want the benefits of naturalization such as immediate immigration of relatives and access to benefits. Table 4 shows that in the INA group (18+ years in the United States) about 45 percent have become US citizens and 23 percent more are Legal Permanent Residents (Green Card) and say they intend to become US citizens. By contrast, in the IRCA group (10–17 years) only 22 percent have become US citizens and only about 29 percent have a Green Card and intend to naturalize. Finally, among the NAFTA group only 5 percent are naturalized, 26 percent have a Green Card and intend to naturalize, and more than two-thirds (68 percent) did not say they have a Green Card and/or do not plan to naturalize. The naturalization process of the IRCA and NAFTA groups are not yet complete, and the proportion who are citizens will

**Table 4: Rates of Naturalization**

Group	Naturalized	Green Card, plan to naturalize	Other	Sum
3. NAFTA	5%	26%	68%	100%
2. IRCA	22%	29%	49%	100%
1. INA	45%	23%	32%	100%

4 Rob Paral and Michael Norkewicz, *The Metro Chicago Immigration Fact Book* (Roosevelt University Institute for Metropolitan Affairs, 2003).

5 This category also includes a small number of Mexican-born Chicago-area residents who are legal permanent residents but who said they do not intend to become citizens. They have taken the first step on the naturalization trail but are not planning to take the second.

6 R. Bean Frank, Rodolfo de la Garza, Bryan Roberts, and Sidney Weintraub, eds., *At the Crossroads: Mexican Migration and US Policy* (Rowan & Littlefield, 1997); Kenneth Lee, *Huddled Masses, Muddled Laws: Why Contemporary Immigration Policy Fails to Reflect Public Opinion* (Praeger, 1998).

7 A very small number arrived before 1965 and are included in the tabulations for the INA group.



The three wavy lines shown throughout this publication are a symbol from ancient times representing the human intellect in action. From *The Book of Signs*, collected, drawn, and explained by Rudolf Koch (London: The First Edition Club, 1930, page 8).

increase as some naturalize and others leave the United States, but some suggest that the lower rate of naturalization in more recently arrived groups is a permanent phenomenon.<sup>8</sup>

## Age

As with length of residence, age is a factor in naturalization. Older immigrants are more likely to have lived in the United States for sufficient time to acquire English skills. Older immigrants may have more interest in naturalization as part of their desire to obtain security, and they may have decided that return to Mexico is unlikely. Table 5 shows that among those over age 50, almost two-thirds (64 percent) are US citizens; among those between

children of immigrants born in the United States which makes them automatically citizens regardless of their parents' status.<sup>9</sup>

Table 6 shows that among Mexican immigrants to the Chicago region about half (46 percent) live in mixed-status households. The percentage in mixed households is high regardless of the number of years the respondent has lived in the United States.

Age	Naturalized	Green Card, plan to naturalize	Other	Sum
18–30 yrs.	10%	30%	60%	100%
31–50 yrs.	36%	21%	43%	100%
51 yrs. +	64%	19%	17%	100%

age 31 and 50 about one-third are citizens (36 percent) and another 21 percent have the Green Card and say they intend to apply. Among those age 30 and under, few are US citizens (10 percent) and a substantial majority (60 percent) do not say they have documentation or say they do not intend to become citizens.

## Mixed Households

Many Mexican families are made up of members who have different legal status. Indeed, the fastest growing sector of the Mexican community is

## Reasons for Becoming a US citizen

Non-naturalized Mexican immigrants were asked: “Do you plan to become a naturalized citizen?” Those who said “Yes” were asked “Why?” and those who said “No” were asked “Why not?” The responses were content analyzed.<sup>10</sup> Table 7 shows the major themes explaining why Mexican-born immigrants to the Chicago area plan to become US citizens: (1) to acquire or maintain benefits; (2) to pursue opportunities and enjoy the quality of life; (3) to ensure civil rights or to vote; and (4) to join other family members or to help them get here.<sup>11</sup>

Group	All HH members are US citizens	Some in HH are citizens, some are not	None in HH are citizens, or undetermined	Sum
3. NAFTA	3%	45%	53%	100%
2. IRCA	13%	58%	28%	100%
1. INA	36%	42%	23%	100%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>46%</b>	<b>33%</b>	<b>100%</b>

## Why? Benefits

The desire to acquire or maintain benefits, for oneself or one's family, is a major theme in the

8 Wayne Cornelius, “From Sojourners to Settlers: The Changing Profile of Mexican Immigrants to the US,” in J. Bustamante et al., eds., *US-Mexico Relations: Labor Market Interdependence* (Stanford, 1992), 155–92.

9 Urban Institute, *Children of Immigrants Fact Sheet* (Washington, DC: The Urban Institute, 2001).

10 Klaus Krippendorff, *Content Analysis: An Introduction to Its Methodology* (Sage, 1981); Robert Philip Weber, *Basic Content Analysis* (Sage, 1990).

11 See also Susan Gonzalez-Baker, Luis Plasencia, Gary Freeman, Manuel Orozco, *The Making of Americans: Results of the Texas Naturalization Survey* (Austin: Tomás Rivera Center, August 2000), 8. This report has similar themes with a different rank ordering, probably due to differences in the survey method.

12 Rodolfo de la Garza, Miguel Baraona, Harry Pachon, Emily Edmonds, Fernando Acosta-Rodriguez, and Michelle Morales, *Dual Citizenship, Domestic Politics and Naturalization Rates of Latino Immigrants in the U.S.* (Austin: Tomás Rivera Center, June 1996).

13 Immigration and Naturalization Service, *2002 Statistical Yearbook*, 160.

14 Harry Pachon and Louis DeSipio, *New Americans by Choice: Political Perspectives of Latino Immigrants* (Westview Press, 1994), tables 3.55, 6.11.

15 George Borjas, *Friends or Strangers: The Impact of Immigrants on the U.S. Economy* (Basic, 1990), 13.

16 Mike Davis, *Magical Urbanism: Latinos Reinvent the U.S. City* (Verso, 2000), 94; Julio Moguel, “Salinas’ Failed War on Poverty,” *NACLA Report on the Americas* 28 (July/Aug 1994): 39.

17 John J. Audley, Demetrios G. Papademetriou, Sandra Polaski, Scott Vaughan, *NAFTA’s Promise and Reality: Lessons from Mexico for the Hemisphere* (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2003), 5–6.



reasons Mexican-born immigrants give for taking steps toward naturalization. During the 1990s Congress considered prohibiting legal permanent residents from participating in over 35 major social programs such as lead-based poisoning prevention programs and Medicaid.<sup>12</sup> Many immigrants naturalized in response to legislation restricting public benefits, including the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRWORA), the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996 (IIRIRA), and Proposition 187 in California (1994).<sup>13</sup> The National Latino Immigrant Survey conducted in 1988 found that 70 percent applied for US citizenship to “establish eligibility for government programs.”<sup>14</sup>

### Why? Opportunity, Quality of Life

The desire to pursue economic opportunities, to advance one’s position, to live in the greater comfort of the American way of life is a second major theme explaining interest in naturalization. The income gap between the United States and Mexico is now the greatest found between any two contiguous countries in the world.<sup>15</sup> Beginning in the 1980s, debt crises and civil unrest strengthened the ‘push’ factors for Mexican emigration: Between 1982

Themes expressed	No.
<b>Benefits</b> Benefits for self or family, retirement benefits	65
<b>Opportunity, Quality of Life</b> Opportunities general, better life, economic or employment opportunities, financial situation, the future	35
Education opportunity	3
Culture, society, way of life, live in peace, security, comfort	4
<b>Legal Rights, Civil Rights, Political Participation</b> To be legal, easier to live here, because I live here, to not feel discriminated against, to be equal, treated the same as others, have/exercise legal rights, citizenship rights, to vote, to voice concerns	24
Dual citizen option, ability to travel between countries	7
<b>Family Reunification</b> To be with family, other family members are here, to help other family members get here	18

and 1991 salaries paid to laborers in manufacturing industries lost 36 percent of their purchasing power; the real wages of white-collar workers in those same industries fell 22 percent; and the average real wages paid to agricultural workers fell 51 percent over the same period.<sup>16</sup> NAFTA has not helped the Mexican economy keep pace with the growing demand for jobs. Real wages for most Mexicans today are lower than they were when NAFTA took effect.<sup>17</sup> Table 8 shows that Mexican-born immigrants who have done best economically are more likely to be citizens—among those at the top of the income scale, 42 percent are naturalized—or to be in the third

category (not permanent resident and/or no plan to naturalize) which includes many who are in the United States for a short period of time solely for the purpose of earning.

### Why? Legal Rights, Civil Rights, Political Participation

The third theme explaining steps toward naturalization is that US citizenship is seen as a way to fight discrimination and ensure equal treatment. A 1994 California statewide poll of immigrants revealed, for example, that 25 percent personally feared discrimination or violence.<sup>18</sup> Only a small number say they want to become citizens in order to vote. Voting and civic engagement may receive high endorsement as civic values, but they do not rank high on the open-ended list of reasons for becoming a citizen.<sup>19</sup> Only a small number said that dual citizenship or the right to cross freely across the border was a reason for naturalization.<sup>20</sup>

Weekly Pay	Naturalized	Green Card, plan to naturalize	Other	Sum
Upper half (>\$480/week)	42%	12%	46%	100%
Second quarter (\$480/week)	32%	25%	43%	100%
Lowest quarter (\$320/week)	12%	54%	35%	100%

## Why? Family Reunification

The fourth theme is a desire to unite with family or to help other family members who want to come to the United States. Family reunification is the most common reason for legal admission to the United States.

According to official statistics, about 70 percent of Mexican-born immigrants who are legally admitted to the United States are admitted under family reunification provisions.<sup>21</sup> Citizens can bring close family members to become citizens almost immediately, whereas there are lengthy backlogs in visa applications sponsored by legal permanent residents.

## Reasons for Not Becoming a US Citizen

Why is naturalization so frequently the road not taken? A 1997 survey of legal residents in Texas cities who had not yet applied for citizenship found that the major reasons for delay are: not yet eligible (25 percent); don't have time (21 percent); cost (18 percent); insufficient English skill (15 percent); don't know how (14 percent).<sup>22</sup>

The Chicago Area Latino Survey obtained very few responses to the question on why Mexican-born immigrants had not taken steps toward naturalization. The small

number of responses that were obtained were content analyzed, and the results show three general themes: (1) Procedural Barriers, (2) Ties to Mexico, and (3) Low Perceived Value.

Themes expressed	No.
<b>Procedural Barriers</b>	
Literacy/language boundaries	4
Can't afford it	2
I can't, don't know if I can, don't know how, unsure of eligibility and/or naturalization process	6
Not enough time in US	1
Illegal status	2
Too Old	1
<b>Ties to Mexico</b>	
Do not plan to stay in United States	10
<b>Low Perceived Value, Non-Engagement</b>	
Don't want to, don't care, not interested, doesn't seem necessary, haven't paid attention, "lots of reasons"	35

### Why Not? Procedural Barriers

There is some debate about the importance of language skill vs. educational level as a procedural barrier to naturalization.<sup>23</sup> The data strongly support the view that it is language skill, not educational level, that is the barrier. Rates of naturalization are strongly

related to English language ability, whereas they are nearly identical for educational levels. This may be because the test is disproportionately a test of English ability. Knowledge of US civics and government are not dependent on a high school or college education and can be gained by persons of almost all educational levels. Lack of formal education is not the barrier to passing the test that English ability is.

Cost is sometimes proposed as a barrier to naturalization but very few in the survey said they could not afford the cost, perhaps because the 1992 mandatory Green Card Replacement program made the cost of renewing a green card about the same as applying for citizenship.

### Why Not? Ties to Mexico

A second theme from the reasons for not pursuing naturalization is that many do not intend to stay in the United States. Ease of reverse migration and proximity to Mexico permit immigrants to maintain their distinct culture and language to a far greater degree than other immigrants could in the past.<sup>24</sup>

Table 10 shows that among those with strong ties to the United States, naturalization rates are high: Among those who expect to live in the United States after retirement, 42 percent are naturalized citizens; among those

18 de la Garza et al., *Dual Citizenship*, op. cit. n. 12.

19 Gonzalez-Baker et al., *The Making of Americans*, op. cit. n. 11; Pachon and Desipio, *New Americans*, op. cit. n. 14.

20 de la Garza et al., *Dual Citizenship*, op. cit. n. 12.

21 <http://uscis.gov/graphics/shared/aboutus/statistics/IMM02yrbk/IMMExcel/table8.xls>.

22 Gonzalez-Baker et al., *The Making of Americans*, op. cit. n. 11, 10.

23 Tracy Ann Goodis, *The Political Adaptation of Hispanic Immigrants to the U.S.* (Urban Institute, 1988); Douglas Massey, Rafael Alarcon, Jorge Durand, and Humberto Gonzalez, *Return to Aztlan: The Social Process of International Migration from Western Mexico* (University of California, 1987), 187; NALEO, *The National Latino Immigrant Survey* (1989).

24 Linda Chavez, *Out of the Barrio: Toward a New Politics of Hispanic Assimilation* (Basic, 1991), 129.

25 At present, about 300,000 legal permanent residents and about 183,000 undocumented residents emigrate from the United States each year, and it is expected that the rate of emigration from the United States of non-US-born immigrants will increase substantially. US Immigration and Naturalization Service, *Estimates of*



who do not send money to Mexico, 38 percent are naturalized citizens.

By contrast, among those with strong ties to Mexico, naturalization plans are low: Among those who send money frequently or who do not expect to retire in the United States, about 60 percent do not report having a Green Card or plans to obtain citizenship.<sup>25</sup> It remains to be seen whether this pattern changes over time. 'Doble nacionalidad' may contribute to more willingness for Mexican nationalists to have US citizenship. Indeed, the Mexican consulates have been supporting US citizenship among Mexican nationals in the United States.

**Table 10: Attachment to Mexico & Naturalization**

Expects to live in the US after retirement	Naturalized	Green Card, plan to naturalize	Other	Sum
Yes	42%	19%	39%	100%
Don't Know	20%	34%	46%	100%
No	20%	19%	61%	100%
<b>Sends money to Mexico</b>				
Monthly or more often	24%	17%	59%	100%
Less often	25%	36%	38%	100%
Does not send money	38%	21%	41%	100%

### Why Not? Low Value, Non-Engagement

The third and probably most important theme explaining why Mexican-born immigrants defer naturalization is that many do not believe US citizenship has the benefits (social, civic, economic) that others see.<sup>26</sup> Some give a reason that specifically denies the value—i.e., citizenship won't help me. But most are generally disengaged from the issue—i.e., citizenship doesn't

**Table 11: Naturalization Backlog**

Foreign born, non-citizen 2000	US Total	Illinois
	18,571,410	925,080
Legal permanent residents (LPR), 2002	11,451,000	518,000
LPR eligible to naturalize, 2002	7,842,000	348,000
Persons naturalized, 2002	573,708	32,636

seem important, I'm not interested, I haven't thought about it, I don't care, etc.

## The Future

Table 11 shows that in 2000 there were nearly a million foreign-born non-citizens in Illinois.<sup>27</sup> It is expected that the demand for naturalization will increase because increased homeland security, cutbacks in eligibility for benefits, and challenges to the civil rights of immigrants are sharpening the value of US citizenship.<sup>28</sup> In addition, many of their US-born children may encourage their parents to seek citizenship.

### Widening the Trail

Regardless of their aspirations, many who are eligible will not become US citizens unless the USCIS widens the naturalization trail by providing more resources to process the applications.<sup>29</sup> There are 348,000 legal permanent residents eligible to naturalize in Illinois. If we assume that only 70 percent of them want to become US citizens, then at the current rate (about 33,000 per year) it will take 7½ years to clear the backlog from 2002.<sup>30</sup>

Whether to widen the naturalization trail is a public policy decision related to the broader discussion over immigration. This report reflects the values immigrants support when they choose to pursue vs. not pursue naturalization, so that these values can be compared with the goals of immigration and naturalization policy.

*the Unauthorized Immigrant Population Residing in the United States: 1990 to 2000* (Office of Policy and Planning, 2004); Frederick W. Hollmann, Tammany J. Mulder, and Jeffrey E. Kallan, "Methodology and Assumptions for the Population Projections of the United States: 1999 to 2100," Population Division Working Paper No. 38, Bureau of the Census: Washington, D.C., January 2000.

<sup>26</sup> Goodis, *The Political Adaptation of Hispanic Immigrants*, op. cit. n. 23; NALEO, *The National Latino Immigrant Survey* (1989).

<sup>27</sup> Nancy F. Rytina, *Estimates of the Legal Permanent Resident Population and Population Eligible to Naturalize in 2002*, US Department of Homeland Security Office of Immigration Statistics (May, 2004); US Census, *Persons Naturalized by Region and Country of Birth, Fiscal Years 1991–2002*, <http://www.census.gov/prod/2003pubs/c2kbr-34.pdf>.

<sup>28</sup> The General Accounting Office reports that 6.2 million applications are pending as of September 2003—a 59% increase in the last two years. General Accounting Agency, *Immigration Application Fees: Current Fees Are Not Sufficient to Fund U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services' Operations*, GAO-04-309R, January 05, 2004.

<sup>29</sup> Immigration and Naturalization Service, *2002 Statistical Yearbook*, 160.

<sup>30</sup> The situation is worse nationally—by this procedure the total US backlog is about 9½ years.

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## About the Researchers

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**Rob Paral** is a consultant and writer specializing in public policy, demographics, and human services—related issues involving immigrants and low-income populations. He is the principal of Rob Paral and Associates, a Fellow of the Institute for Latino Studies at the University of Notre Dame, and a Research Fellow with the American Immigration Law Foundation in Washington, DC. Paral has published numerous analyses of immigration and its economic and social impacts. His recent publications include reports and book chapters on Mexican immigrant integration in Chicago, the role of Mexican immigrant workers in the national labor force, immigrant use of welfare, and poverty trends in Illinois.



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