
The Triennial Comprehensive Report on Immigration

Part II

Education and Social Services Impacts

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Immigration and the U.S. Educational System

Abstract

The Department of Education (DOEd) administers a variety of programs that may serve recent immigrants. Most are based on the students' educational or financial need. Only the Immigrant Education program provides assistance on the basis of immigration status. In 1998, roughly \$2 billion in DOEd funding supported services that benefited students with limited English proficiency, many of whom are immigrants.

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Introduction

Discussions of the impact of immigration on the nation's education system usually focus on growth in school enrollments in communities where immigrants settle, the need to provide special training for schoolchildren whose native language is not English, and the need of some adults for English language instruction. In the decennial census and the Current Population Survey (CPS), the U.S. Census Bureau collects information on all these topics, for both foreign-born and native-born residents. At the time this report is being prepared, detailed information from the CPS on English proficiency has not been published, and the results of the 2000 Census are not yet available. Therefore, the material below summarizes data collected in the 1990 Census that was used in the last Triennial Report to provide background information and context for the program descriptions that follow.

- In 1990, foreign-born persons aged 3 and older accounted for 6.4 percent of total enrollment in "regular" schools at all levels, from preprimary through college. At the elementary and high school level, they numbered 2.2 million or 5.1 percent of the total enrollment of 42.6 million.
- At the college level, 10.9 percent (1.9 million persons) of the total enrollment were foreign born, including a significant number of aliens on student visas.
- Citizen children born in the United States to immigrant families constitute part of the impact of immigration on school enrollment, by increasing the population that must be served and in many cases by adding to the numbers in need of English language instruction, because English is not spoken in their homes.
- In 1990, 6.3 million persons aged 5 to 17 were reported to speak a language other than English at home; three-fourths of them were native-born citizens, and the majority of them were bilingual.
- About 2.4 million persons aged 5 to 17 were described as not speaking English "very well."
- Among adults aged 18 and over, 25.5 million spoke a language other than English at home, and 11.6 million of them were characterized as not speaking English "very well." This number might be treated as a measure of the potential demand for English language training for adults, although many will not seek formal language training.

Because the proportion of foreign-born persons in the U.S. population increased during the 1990's from 8 percent to an estimated 10 percent, data collected in 2000 are expected to show increases in all these measures of the impact of immigration on the educational system.

Impact of Immigrant Students on the U.S. Educational System

For more than 200 years, the United States has been highly successful in welcoming new immigrants and providing them with the opportunity to prosper and make a contribution to the growth of this country. Our greatness, in no small share, is the product of the blood, sweat, tears, and wisdom of these immigrants. Today, the challenge of providing new immigrants with the opportunity they seek is greater than ever before. The basic educational requirements for meaningful employment have increased enormously over the last 50 years. Quality employment now requires a sophistication with the English language and a range of technical competencies that were unnecessary just a few decades ago. This challenge is further heightened by the current rate of immigration. Since 1970, the number of foreign-born persons living in the United States has nearly tripled, rising from 9.6 million to 26.3 million in 1997. The magnitude of this latest wave of immigration has had the greatest impact on the educational systems of the six States where 76 percent of new immigrants reside -- California, New York, Texas, Florida, New Jersey, and Illinois.

High rates of immigration create a significant burden, particularly on the Nation's elementary and secondary schools. The cost of providing public education is underwritten by local property tax revenues, and to a lesser extent by State and Federal funds. Recent immigrants frequently earn low wages and, in the short run, contribute less than established residents to the cost of instructing their children. However, a number of Federal programs assist local school districts in meeting this cost. For example, the Immigrant Education program provides assistance to local educational agencies with concentrations of recent immigrant students. For fiscal year (FY) 1996 and again in 1997, the Administration sought to double the appropriation for this program from \$50 million to \$100 million, a request that the Congress accepted for 1997. In 1998, the Administration proposed to again increase funding for this program to \$150 million, which the Congress accepted. Similarly, the Department requested increases in other programs, such as the Title I, Education for the Disadvantaged program, that serve large numbers of disadvantaged students, many of whom are recent immigrants.

The material that follows provides more detailed information on programs that the Department of Education administers that serve significant numbers of immigrant students.

Federally Funded Educational Services for Immigrant Students

The vast majority of educational programs administered by the U.S. Department of Education serve students on the basis of educational or financial need. Many of these programs serve significant numbers of recent immigrant students who are not yet proficient in English and are, consequently, classified as limited English proficient. At the elementary and secondary level, immigrant students are served under the Title I (Education for the Disadvantaged) Grants to Local Educational Agencies program; the Title I Migrant Education program; and the Bilingual Education program. Many older immigrants are served under the Adult Education program and the Vocational Education Basic State Grants program. At the postsecondary level, federally funded student financial assistance is available to certain non-citizens who intend to become citizens or permanent residents. However, of all the programs administered by the Department, only the Immigrant Education program provides assistance on the basis of immigration status.

Elementary and Secondary Education

In the case of elementary and secondary education programs, educational need is typically defined in terms of academic achievement. For example, in 1998 Title I Grants to Local Educational Agencies served an estimated 11.8-12.3 million low-achieving students, from pre-K through grade 12. These students received supplemental instruction to assist them in achieving to the same high standards as all other children. In 1998, an estimated 2 million students who received these services were limited English proficient. While some of these students were born in the United States, many were immigrants.

Another program authorized by the Title I legislation provides grants to State educational agencies for educational services for students who are children of migrant agricultural workers and fishermen. In 1998, an estimated 141,000 of some 564,000 students served were identified as limited in English proficiency. It is likely that many of these students were immigrants.

In 1998, the Bilingual Education program served almost 1.3 million students. This program provides instructional services to assist students in learning English and achieving to high standards in the academic curriculum. Based on 1991-92 data from a descriptive study of services provided to limited-English-proficient students, the Department estimates that about 60 percent of the students served by this program were born outside the United States.

As previously mentioned, the Department also administers the Immigrant Education program, which provides grants for supplementary educational services and costs to local educational agencies enrolling substantial numbers of recent immigrants. Immigrant students may be counted for formula allocations under this program only if they have been enrolled in U.S. schools for less than 3 academic years. Participation is limited to districts with at least 500 such students or where immigrant children represent at least 3 percent of the enrollment. Funds are channeled through State educational agencies, which award subgrants to school districts on the basis of the number of immigrant students enrolled. Beginning in FY 1996, States could also distribute these funds to local educational agencies through competitive grants. In FY 1998, a total of 1,047 local educational agencies, enrolling almost 820,000 eligible immigrant students, qualified for subgrants under this program. California schools enrolled 26 percent of these students, New York schools 16 percent, Florida schools 13 percent, and Texas schools 8 percent. According to State educational agency reports for school year 1995-96, nearly two-thirds of these students were from just 10 countries: Mexico, the Dominican Republic, Vietnam, the Philippines, Russia, El Salvador, Haiti, China, Poland, and Jamaica. Table 3-1 lists the numbers of immigrant students reported by participating States for FY 1998.

Table 3-2 lists elementary and secondary programs, funded by the Department, that serve large numbers of limited English proficient persons. The table also provides data on the number of such persons served and the funds estimated to be used for these services.

Adult and Vocational Education

The FY 1998 appropriation for the Vocational Education State Grants program was more than \$1 billion. Basic State Grants assist States and outlying areas to expand and improve their programs of vocational education and provide equal access in vocational education to "special-needs" populations. The populations assisted by Basic State Grants range from adults who need retraining to adapt to changing technological and labor market conditions, to limited English proficient secondary school students. Grant recipients are required by law to make special efforts to ensure that special-needs students, including limited English proficient students, many of whom are likely to be immigrants, have full access to the complete range of vocational education programs and services.

In FY 1998, the budget for the Department's Adult Education Grants to States program was more than \$345 million, which supported services to more than 4 million persons. Under this program, adult and family literacy and high school equivalency instruction is provided through public schools, community colleges, community-based organizations, private businesses, churches, libraries, and labor unions. The Department estimates that 33 percent of the participants in federally funded adult education classes are limited English proficient. It is likely that the great majority of these participants are immigrants.

Table 3-2 lists adult and vocational programs, funded by the Department, that serve large numbers of limited English proficient persons. The table also provides data on the number of such persons served and the funds estimated to be used for these services.

Higher Education

In FY 1998, 92 percent of the Department's appropriation for postsecondary education was for student financial aid. The student financial assistance programs authorized by Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended, provide student financial aid to needy students who are U.S. citizens or permanent residents.

During the fall of 1996, about 4.1 percent (788,230) of all students enrolled in institutions of postsecondary education were eligible noncitizens. During the same period, about 432,912 eligible noncitizens received assistance under the Department's Title IV student financial assistance programs.

Any student aid applicant who is a permanent resident or has other eligible noncitizen status must provide documentation of that status to receive Title IV student financial aid. Such documentation may be provided automatically through the results of a computer match of information from the financial aid application form and Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) records. If this process fails to confirm the student's status, the institution of higher education must collect additional documentation from the student to verify the student's immigration status.

U.S. Department Of Education Programs Serving Limited English Proficient (LEP) Persons

The U.S. Department of Education operates a variety of programs designed to meet the special instructional needs of limited English proficient (LEP) children and adults. Roughly \$2 billion in 1998 funds supported services that benefited several million LEP students. These figures do not include student financial aid.

The Bilingual Education program is the primary program within the Department designed to address the needs of LEP children. In addition, the Immigrant Education program provides services for LEP students who are recent immigrants. (See Table 3-1.)

Table 3-1 — Emergency Immigrant Education Program Grants: FY 1998

State	Number of Immigrants	Percent of Immigrants	Grant Award
Alabama	1,692	0.21%	\$309,637
Arizona	25,428	3.10%	\$4,653,343
California	212,976	25.99%	\$38,974,766
Colorado	7,625	0.93%	\$1,395,381
Connecticut	4,264	0.52%	\$780,315
District of Columbia	2,501	0.31%	\$457,685
Florida	105,674	12.89%	\$19,338,421
Georgia	11,114	1.36%	\$2,033,870
Hawaii	2,235	0.27%	\$409,007
Idaho	2,782	0.34%	\$509,108
Illinois	58,904	7.19%	\$10,779,476
Iowa	3,432	0.42%	\$628,059
Kansas	5,115	0.62%	\$936,049
Kentucky	1,621	0.20%	\$296,644
Louisiana	2,353	0.29%	\$430,601
Maine	488	0.06%	\$89,304
Maryland	8,490	1.04%	\$1,553,676
Massachusetts	17,876	2.18%	\$3,271,321
Michigan	8,084	0.99%	\$1,479,378

Table 3-1 — Emergency Immigrant Education Program Grants: FY 1998 (Continued)

State	Number of immigrants	Percent of Immigrants	Grant Award
Minnesota	5,068	0.62%	\$927,448
Missouri	2,951	0.36%	\$540,035
Montana	207	0.03%	\$37,881
Nebraska	2,710	0.33%	\$495,932
Nevada	5,742	0.70%	\$1,050,790
New Jersey	28,306	3.45%	\$5,180,019
New Mexico	7,946	0.97%	\$1,454,124
New York	131,177	16.01%	\$24,005,488
North Carolina	5,986	0.73%	\$1,095,442
North Dakota	487	0.06%	\$89,121
Ohio	2,352	0.29%	\$430,418
Oklahoma	2,139	0.26%	\$391,439
Oregon	6,347	0.77%	\$1,161,506
Pennsylvania	4,427	0.54%	\$810,144
Rhode Island	8,436	1.03%	\$1,543,794
Tennessee	2,834	0.35%	\$518,624
Texas	65,061	7.94%	\$11,906,211
Utah	11,729	1.43%	\$2,146,416
Vermont	211	0.03%	\$38,613
Virginia	11,886	1.45%	\$2,175,147
Washington	17,153	2.09%	\$3,139,012
Wisconsin	2,901	0.35%	\$530,885
Territories	12,505	1.53%	\$2,288,426
Total	819,523	100.00%	\$149,973,318

Note: Unlisted States did not participate in the grant program in FY 1998.

Other programs also serve significant numbers of LEP students. Table 3-2 below lists the major programs that served LEP students in 1998, the estimated number of such persons, and the estimated amount of funding used to serve them. In some cases LEP students are served by more than one program.

Table 3-2 — Major Programs That Served LEP Students in FY 1998

	Estimated Number of LEP Students Served	Estimated FY 1998 Funds (\$000)
I. Programs with the primary purpose of serving LEP students		
<u>Bilingual Education</u>	1,270,092	\$199,000
The Bilingual Education program is designed to build local capacity to teach English to LEP students and assist them in meeting the same challenging State educational standards as apply to all other students. Grants help school districts establish programs that will continue once Federal funds are reduced or no longer available. Awards to institutions of higher education increase the pool of trained teachers and strengthen the skills of teachers currently providing instruction to LEP students. The estimates above represent all LEP students served by the Bilingual Education program and are based on data from 1997 grantees.		
<u>Immigrant Education</u>	821,215	\$150,000
This program provides formula grants to States for subgrants to school districts that enroll substantial numbers of recent immigrant students. Virtually all of these students are limited English proficient. The student estimate is the total number of eligible immigrants reported by States in their 1997 applications.		
II. Other programs that devote significant resources to serving LEP students		
<u>Title I Grants to LEAs</u>	2,040,000	\$1,232,700
This program supports supplementary education services provided by local school districts to children who are failing, or most at risk of failing, to meet State academic standards. A significant number of children served have limited proficiency in English. The dollar and child estimates are derived from 1993 program data.		
<u>Title I Migrant Program</u>	141,000	\$76,370
This program provides funds to States for compensatory education services to children of migrant agricultural workers and fishermen. Nearly 75 percent of all the program's participants are Hispanic and a significant number lack English proficiency. Estimates of LEP funding and of the number of LEP children served are derived from program data.		
<u>Individuals with Disabilities Education Act-Grants to States and Preschool Grants</u>	218,000	\$150,000
These programs provide funds to States for the education of children with disabilities. Approximately 3.6 percent of the children served lack proficiency in English; this estimate is based on data provided in the 1994 Elementary and Secondary School Civil Rights Survey and State reported special education data for the 1997-98 school year.		
<u>Vocational Rehabilitation Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers Program</u>	4,400	\$1,020
The Migratory Workers program makes comprehensive vocational rehabilitation services available to migrant or seasonal farmworkers with vocational disabilities. Emphasis is given to outreach, specialized bilingual rehabilitation counseling, and coordination of vocational rehabilitation services with services from other sources. Most projects supported under this program serve LEP adults.		
<u>Vocational Education Basic State Grants</u>	267,496	\$25,966
This program assists States to expand and improve their programs of vocational education and provide equal access in vocational education to "special-needs" populations. Estimates of the number of LEP adults served are derived from State data collected by the Office of Vocational and Adult Education.		
<u>Adult Education State Programs</u>	1,854,406	\$135,961
This activity provides formula grants to States to assist educationally disadvantaged adults in developing basic literacy skills and achieving certification of high school equivalency. States are required to give special attention to the needs of LEP adults. Estimates of the number of LEP adults served are derived from State data collected by the Office of Vocational and Adult Education		
Total expenditures, all programs		\$1,971,017

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