



A Statistical and Demographic Profile of the US Temporary Protected Status Populations from El Salvador, Honduras, and Haiti

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Executive Summary

This report presents detailed statistical information on the US Temporary Protected Status (TPS) populations from El Salvador, Honduras, and Haiti. TPS can be granted to noncitizens from designated nations who are unable to return to their countries because of armed conflict, environmental disaster, or other extraordinary and temporary conditions. In January 2017, an estimated 325,000 migrants from 13 TPS-designated countries resided in the United States. This statistical portrait of TPS beneficiaries from El Salvador, Honduras, and Haiti reveals hardworking populations with strong family and other ties to the United States. In addition, high percentages have lived in the United States for 20 years or more, arrived as children, and have US citizen children. The paper finds that:

- The labor force participation rate of the TPS population from the three nations ranges from 81 to 88 percent, which is well above the rate for the total US population (63 percent) and the foreign-born population (66 percent).
- The five leading industries in which TPS beneficiaries from these countries work are: construction (51,700), restaurants and other food services (32,400), landscaping services (15,800), child day care services (10,000), and grocery stores (9,200).
- TPS recipients from these countries live in 206,000 households: 99,000 of these households (almost one-half) have mortgages.
- About 68,000, or 22 percent, of the TPS population from these nations arrived as children under the age of 16.
- TPS beneficiaries from these nations have an estimated 273,000 US citizen children (born in the United States).

- Ten percent of El Salvadoran, nine percent of the Haitian, and six percent of the Honduran TPS beneficiaries are married to a legal resident.
- More than one-half of El Salvadoran and Honduran, and 16 percent of the Haitian TPS beneficiaries have resided in the United States for 20 years or more.
- The six US states with the largest TPS populations from these countries are California (55,000), Texas (45,000), Florida (45,000), New York (26,000), Virginia (24,000), and Maryland (23,000).
- Eighty-seven percent of the TPS population from these countries speaks at least some English, and slightly over one-half speak English well, very well, or only English.
- About 27,000, or 11 percent, of those in the labor force are self-employed, having created jobs for themselves and likely for others as well.

TPS status should be extended until beneficiaries can safely return home and can successfully reintegrate into their home communities. Most long-term TPS recipients should be afforded a path to lawful permanent resident (LPR) status and ultimately to US citizenship.

Introduction

This article provides social and demographic information on Temporary Protected Status (TPS) beneficiaries from the three countries with the largest numbers of TPS recipients — El Salvador, Honduras, and Haiti.

Under the law, the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) “may designate” a foreign state or part of a foreign state for TPS upon a finding that:

- “there is an ongoing armed conflict within the state and due to such conflict,” the return of its nationals “would pose a serious threat to their personal safety”;
- “there has been an earthquake, flood, drought, epidemic, or other environmental disaster in the state,” the state is “unable, temporarily, to handle adequately the return” of its nationals, and the state has “officially” requested TPS; or
- “there exist extraordinary and temporary conditions” in the state that prevent its nationals from safely returning, unless allowing them to stay would be “contrary to the national interest.”¹

To be eligible for TPS, nationals of designated states must: (1) satisfy continuous presence (from the date of designation or re-designation) and continuous residence requirements;

¹ Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) § 244 (b)(1).

(2) register for TPS during a set period; (3) pay a fee; and (4) meet other requirements.² At least 60 days before the end of a TPS designation, extension or re-designation period, the DHS Secretary is required to “determine” whether the conditions that gave rise to the designation “continue to be met.”³ If so, he or she can either extend the designation period, allowing existing TPS beneficiaries to re-register, or can redesignate the nation for TPS, which extends TPS eligibility to members of the designated nation who arrived *after* the original designation date.⁴ If the DHS Secretary decides that the state “no longer meets the conditions for designation,” he or she is required to terminate the designation through a notice in the Federal Register. The termination is effective no “earlier than 60 days after notice is published or, if later, the expiration of the most recent previous extension.”⁵

Table A in the appendix provides basic information about cutoff dates for continuous residence and estimated numbers of TPS recipients from each of the 13 TPS-designated countries. For El Salvador, Honduras, and Haiti, these dates are respectively February 13, 2001, December 30, 1998, and January 12, 2011.⁶

As the Trump administration considers whether to terminate TPS for El Salvador, Honduras, and Haiti, this paper answers two important questions: (1) from a demographic perspective, who are TPS beneficiaries and how are they faring in the United States; and (2) what would be the major negative consequences, for the United States and for TPS recipients, if the program were discontinued for these three nations? This paper recognizes — although does not describe at length — the inability of TPS recipients from the three nations to reintegrate safely and productively in their home communities, and the way expatriate communities benefit their home states.⁷

The paper focuses on TPS beneficiaries from El Salvador, Honduras, and Haiti because they account for more than 90 percent of all TPS beneficiaries, DHS will decide whether to extend or terminate TPS to each of these nations over the next six months, and TPS populations from these nations are large enough to generate useful estimates (see Table A). Even though TPS recipients have a status similar to nonimmigrants (i.e., noncitizens admitted temporarily for specific reasons), they have usually been included in estimates of the undocumented, along with asylum seekers and certain other legally present noncitizens

2 INA § 244(c). The Act allows a waiver for many grounds of inadmissibility, except for two or more crimes of “moral turpitude” and most controlled substance and national security offenses. Likewise, Temporary Protected Status (TPS) is not available to those who have persecuted others, or who have committed a felony or two or more misdemeanors.

3 INA § 244(b)(3)(A).

4 US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) (2017) stipulates that a nation may be designated for TPS — or TPS may be extended or redesignated — “in certain circumstances, where the country is unable to handle the return of its nationals adequately.”

5 INA § 244(b)(3)(B).

6 The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) must determine whether to extend or terminate TPS for these populations at least 60 days prior to these dates.

7 In a May 16, 2017 letter to DHS Secretary John F. Kelly and Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, Boston Mayor Martin J. Walsh outlines the benefits of this program to sending and receiving communities. He argues that “failure to extend TPS for Haiti would have a negative impact on the US and Haitian economies, endangering lives, further destabilizing Haiti, and potentially separating families” (Walsh 2017). The letter highlights the contributions of Haitian TPS recipients to their US communities, including in “key industries such as health and elder care” (ibid.).

(Warren 2017, 502, note 11). The Center for Migration Studies (CMS) has continued to include them in its annual series of undocumented population estimates to maintain consistency with other national population totals. The fact that they are included in those estimates makes it possible to compile the information shown in this report.

The CMS estimates are based on detailed statistics on the foreign-born population collected in the Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS), as described in detail in Warren (2014). A summary of the procedures used to derive estimates of the TPS population and the undocumented population is presented in the appendix.

Even though the information presented here essentially overlaps with the TPS population, the fit is not exact and CMS's estimates of El Salvadorans, Hondurans, and Haitians residing in the United States by the TPS designation dates — or, in the case of Haiti, by the redesignation date — are slightly larger than the US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) and the Congressional Research Service (CRS) estimates of TPS beneficiaries. In addition, data limitations include imperfect matches of the CMS data with TPS residency requirements,⁸ as well as sampling and possible non-sampling errors. However, even with these limitations, the CMS estimates provide a well-defined and useful profile of the TPS population. In fact, this is the *only* detailed information available about this population.

Estimates of the TPS Population by Country

Table 1 shows the CMS estimates of the population by period of arrival compared to the estimated number eligible for TPS in January 2017, as compiled by USCIS and reported by the CRS. As would be expected, the CMS totals are higher than the number of TPS beneficiaries shown in Table 1. The CMS estimates include some migrants who did not register for TPS, and the CMS estimate for Haiti probably includes an unknown number who were approved for asylum but have not adjusted to lawful permanent resident (LPR) status. Despite the differences shown in Table 1, the overlap between the CMS estimates and TPS beneficiaries is sufficient to produce a reliable statistical description of the TPS population from these three countries.

The estimates of the TPS population described below were derived by combining the detailed characteristics data from the CMS estimates (top panel, Table 1) with the total estimated TPS beneficiaries (lower panel, Table 1). We can illustrate the estimation of the TPS population using Honduras as an example. The CMS estimates for 2015 show that about 67,000 Hondurans entered the United States before 1999.⁹ That figure encompasses the estimated 57,000 TPS recipients from Honduras shown in Table 1. First, we compiled CMS year-of-entry data (at the microdata level) for Honduras that overlaps with the period of eligibility for TPS. Then we controlled the detailed characteristics to the total number of TPS recipients from Honduras. The same procedure was used for each country.

8 For example, to be eligible for TPS from El Salvador, applicants had to have continuously resided in the United States since before February 13, 2001. The CMS estimates by year of entry for El Salvador are in whole years, so the CMS data shown in this report is for "entered before 2001." The CMS data for Honduras and Haiti were estimated as closely as possible to the entry dates for eligibility for those countries.

9 This is the appropriate period of entry because Hondurans were eligible to apply for TPS if they entered the United States before December 30, 1998.