

U.S. MIGRATION METRICS

This brief was written by Yoadam Dawit, editor at Penn State University. It is based on research by A. Nicole Kreisberg, Penn State, and Natalee D. Chin, Penn State.

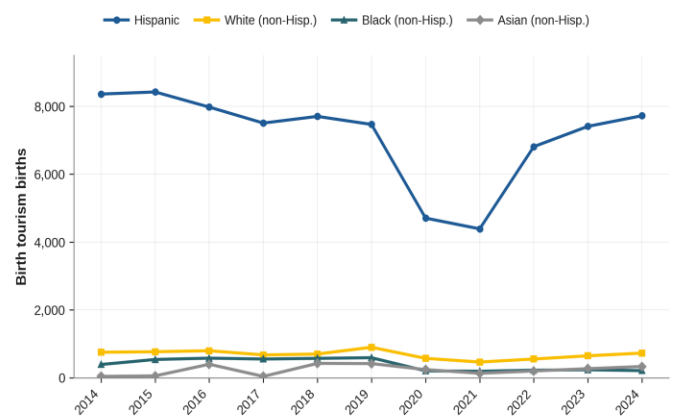
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The Demographic Composition of Birth Tourism in the United States

Fast Facts

- Birth tourism accounts for fewer than 0.3% of all U.S. births in any year from 2014 – 2024.
- About 85% of birth tourist births are to Hispanic mothers, most often mothers from Mexico.
- Asian birth tourist births remain below 0.2% of all Asian births in the United States.
- Mexican birth tourist mothers are more educated than Mexican mothers living in the U.S. and have education levels similar to mothers giving birth in Mexico.

Figure 2. Birth Tourism Births by Race/Ethnicity, 2014–2024



Who are Birth Tourists?

Public discussions often portray birth tourism, or migrating to the U.S. for the sole purpose of giving birth to a U.S. citizen, as being driven by wealthy Asian families or low-income Hispanic families attempting to access public benefits. Demographic evidence suggests a different pattern. The majority of birth tourist births are to Hispanic mothers, particularly women of Mexican origin, who account for nearly four out of every five Hispanic birth-tourist births. But their above average levels of education do not align with the public benefits narrative. Additionally, birth tourist births among Asian mothers remain consistently low, with only 42 birth tourist births to Asian mothers in 2014 and 425 in 2018.

What about the Northern Mariana Islands?

Contrary to popular rhetoric citing millions of Chinese mothers giving birth in the Northern Mariana Islands, only 2 foreign-born mothers gave birth in the Northern Mariana Islands (out of 558 live births) in 2024. In 2018, the number of birth tourist births in the Northern Mariana Islands was less than 700.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. CDC WONDER. <https://wonder.cdc.gov/>

Birth Tourism is a Small Share of U.S. Births

Annual birth tourism, measured as a foreign-born mother giving birth in the U.S. to a child that does not remain a U.S. resident, even at its height in 2015, represented fewer than 0.3% of all U.S. births. Birth tourist births remained relatively stable, before declining sharply during the COVID-19 pandemic as international travel restrictions took effect. Births gradually increased after 2021, but they did not fully return to pre-pandemic levels by 2024. This suggests that pandemic-era travel restrictions had lasting effects on cross-border birth patterns.

Figure 1. Birth Tourism vs. Non-Birth Tourism Births, 2014–2024

