

**Individuals with Multiple
Identities in Historical
Fingerprint Enrollment
Records Who Have
Received Immigration
Benefits**





DHS OIG HIGHLIGHTS

Individuals with Multiple Identities in Historical Fingerprint Enrollment Records Who Have Received Immigration Benefits

September 25, 2017

Why We Did This Inspection

Following our September 2016 report on U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) granting citizenship to individuals ordered deported or removed under another identity, we received a congressional request to more broadly examine the number of individuals who “may have naturalized fraudulently.” In response, we determined how many aliens with multiple identities whose fingerprints were uploaded into an electronic system through the first phase of Historical Fingerprint Enrollment (HFE I) received immigration benefits, the benefit received, and the country of origin.

What We Recommend

We are making no recommendations in this report.

For Further Information:

Contact our Office of Public Affairs at (202) 254-4100, or email us at DHS-OIG.OfficePublicAffairs@oig.dhs.gov

What We Found

In response to a congressional request, we analyzed a USCIS data set of aliens whose fingerprints had been uploaded into the Automated Biometric Identification System (IDENT) through HFE I. From this data set, we determined that, as of April 24, 2017, 9,389 aliens USCIS identified as having multiple identities had received an immigration benefit. When taking into account the most current immigration benefit these aliens received, we determined that naturalization, permanent residence, work authorization, and temporary protected status represent the greatest number of benefits, accounting for 8,447 or 90 percent of the 9,389 cases. Benefits approved by USCIS for the other 10 percent of cases, but not discussed in this report, include applications for asylum and travel documents. According to USCIS, receiving a deportation order or having used another identity does not necessarily render an individual ineligible for immigration benefits. USCIS has drafted a policy memorandum outlining how it will prioritize for review cases of individuals with multiple identities whose fingerprints were uploaded into IDENT through HFE.



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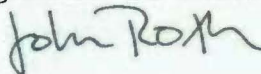
Department of Homeland Security

Washington, DC 20528 / www.oig.dhs.gov

September 25, 2017

MEMORANDUM FOR: James McCament
Acting Director
U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

Thomas D. Homan
Acting Director
U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement

FROM: John Roth 
Inspector General

SUBJECT: *Individuals with Multiple Identities in Historical
Fingerprint Enrollment Records Who Have Received
Immigration Benefits*

For your action is our final report, *Individuals with Multiple Identities in Historical Fingerprint Enrollment Records Who Have Received Immigration Benefits*. We have incorporated your offices' technical comments, as appropriate. We made no recommendations in this report.

Consistent with our responsibility under the *Inspector General Act*, we will provide copies of our report to congressional committees with oversight and appropriation responsibility over the Department of Homeland Security. We will post the report on our website for public dissemination.

Please call me with any questions, or your staff may contact Jennifer L. Costello, Assistant Inspector General for Inspections and Evaluations or Angela Garvin, Deputy Assistant Inspector General, at (202) 254-4100.



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Background

On September 8, 2016, we issued a report, *Potentially Ineligible Individuals Have Been Granted U.S. Citizenship Because of Incomplete Fingerprint Records* (OIG-16-130). As a result of our inspection, we determined that U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) granted U.S. citizenship to some individuals ordered deported or removed under another identity when, during the naturalization process, their digital fingerprint records were not available in the Automated Biometric Identification System (IDENT). We also reported that U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) later identified about 315,000 fingerprint records missing from IDENT for aliens who had final deportation orders or who were criminals or fugitives. ICE received \$5 million to process the 315,000 records through the Historical Fingerprint Enrollment (HFE) project. At that time, ICE reviewed about 167,000 alien files and enrolled the available fingerprint records into IDENT through what was called HFE I. After the \$5 million was exhausted, about 148,000 alien files were left to review.

In our report we recommended that ICE finish reviewing the 148,000 alien files for fingerprint records of aliens with final deportation orders, criminal histories, or who are fugitives, and digitize and upload into IDENT all available fingerprint records. The Department of Homeland Security concurred with our recommendation and planned to complete processing of the remaining 148,000 alien files in June 2017. As of August 2017, we had not received a formal request from ICE to close the recommendation. We also recommended that USCIS, ICE, and the DHS Office of Operations Coordination establish a plan for evaluating the eligibility of each naturalized citizen whose fingerprint record revealed a deportation order under a different identity. DHS also concurred with this recommendation and reported in June 2017 that it had completed its review of the naturalized citizens, prioritized the cases for prosecution, and had begun presenting them to the Department of Justice (DOJ) for action. As a result, we closed this recommendation.

On September 27, 2016, we received a letter from Representative Bennie G. Thompson requesting we consider “a broader examination of the number of individuals who may have naturalized fraudulently.” In a subsequent discussion, Representative Thompson’s staff asked us to determine whether aliens whose digital fingerprints were uploaded into IDENT through HFE I had received immigration benefits. In response to this request, we sought to determine how many of the 167,000 aliens with multiple identities whose fingerprints were uploaded into IDENT through HFE I received immigration benefits, the type of benefit they received, and their country of origin. For this report, the country of origin is the country of citizenship cited by the alien on the USCIS benefit application form.



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Results of Review

We analyzed a USCIS data set of aliens whose fingerprints had been uploaded into IDENT through HFE I. From this data set, we determined that, as of April 24, 2017, 9,389 aliens USCIS identified as having multiple identities¹ had received an immigration benefit. Taking into account the most current immigration benefit these aliens received,² naturalization, permanent residence, work authorization, and temporary protected status represent the greatest number of benefits, accounting for 8,447 or 90 percent of the 9,389 cases. Benefits approved by USCIS for the other 10 percent of cases, but not discussed in this report, include applications for asylum and travel documents. According to USCIS, receiving a deportation order or having used another identity does not necessarily render an individual ineligible for immigration benefits.

USCIS has drafted a policy memorandum, *Guidance for Prioritizing IDENT Derogatory Information Related to Historical Fingerprint Enrollment Records* (draft policy memo), outlining how it will review cases of individuals with multiple identities whose fingerprints were uploaded into IDENT through HFE. Per the draft policy memo, USCIS will prioritize cases for review according to the type of approved immigration benefit. USCIS will take appropriate action if it determines the individual engaged in fraud or willful misrepresentation, or obtained the benefit unlawfully, and is not subject to an exception or eligible for a waiver. Actions include rescinding, revoking, or terminating an immigration benefit, and/or initiating removal proceedings; or referring the case to the appropriate enforcement authority (i.e., ICE or DOJ). USCIS will not take action if it determines the alien was eligible for the benefit.

Naturalization

Individuals from other countries may apply to become naturalized U.S. citizens and may be granted citizenship, provided they meet the eligibility requirements established by Congress. To become a naturalized citizen, aliens must file Form N-400 (Application for Naturalization) with USCIS, the adjudication authority. Aliens are required to reveal on the N-400 and during naturalization interviews any other identities they have used. However, according to USCIS officials, merely having used multiple identities does not necessarily render an

¹ USCIS screens benefit request forms and fingerprints using fraud criteria to identify multiple identities. Our data did not include aliens who were incorrectly flagged as having multiple identities, such as those with outdated marriage information.

² We analyzed only the most recent immigration benefit an alien received and did not take into account receipt of multiple benefits. Additionally, although a benefit may have been granted, it may no longer be valid. In our analysis, we did not take into account whether the approved benefits had expired.



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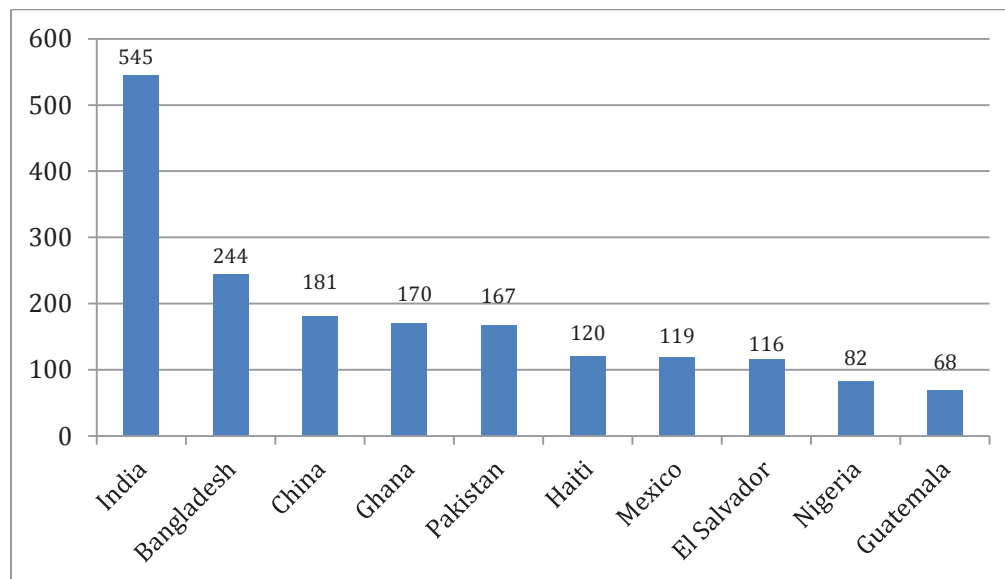
individual ineligible for naturalization. USCIS determines whether individuals qualify for immigration benefits on a case-by-case basis.

Based on our analysis of USCIS data, we determined that USCIS approved 3,053 HFE I aliens³ with multiple identities for naturalization. Of those approved, as of April 24, 2017, 2,536 individuals from 107 different countries were naturalized; 517 were approved, but had not yet been naturalized.

The USCIS draft policy memo prioritizes reviewing cases of HFE I individuals who obtained citizenship through naturalization. As of July 2017, USCIS had referred three of these cases to DOJ for denaturalization. On June 13, 2017, USCIS also directed its field staff not to naturalize the 517 HFE I individuals with approved naturalization applications who may have multiple identities until the multiple identity is addressed.

Figure 1 shows the top 10 countries of origin for HFE I aliens with multiple identities who have been naturalized. Appendix A contains a list of all countries of origin for all 2,536 naturalized individuals and appendix B lists the countries of origin for 517 HFE I aliens approved for naturalization, but not yet naturalized.

Figure 1: Top 10 Countries of Origin for HFE I Aliens Naturalized



Source: Office of Inspector General (OIG) analysis of USCIS data as of April 24, 2017

³ In this report, we use “HFE I aliens” to mean individuals ICE has identified as having deportation orders or as criminals or fugitives whose fingerprint records were digitized and uploaded into IDENT through HFE I.



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Permanent Residence

Certain aliens who currently reside in the United States may be eligible for permanent residence (a “green card”), which they may apply for by submitting Form I-485 (Application to Register Permanent Residence or Adjust Status) to USCIS.⁴ USCIS conducts background checks in various DHS databases and reviews the applicant’s eligibility for the benefit under immigration laws and regulations.

Individuals who have already been granted a green card and who need to renew or replace it submit USCIS Form I-90 (Application to Replace Permanent Resident Card). Before granting the renewed or replacement card, USCIS verifies that the applicant is the same person who received the initial green card. According to USCIS, it will not delay renewing or replacing a green card if derogatory information is uncovered during the reissuance process, but it will review the derogatory information and take appropriate action as needed.

Based on our data analysis, we determined that USCIS granted green cards to 893 HFE I aliens with multiple identities who came from 59 countries. USCIS renewed or replaced green cards for 1,754 HFE I aliens with multiple identities who came from 80 countries.

In its draft policy memo, USCIS prioritizes review of individuals with multiple identities whose fingerprints were uploaded into IDENT through HFE and who have green cards immediately after those who have been naturalized. But, as of July 2017, USCIS had not started reviewing HFE I individuals who had been granted green cards or who had received renewed or replaced green cards.

Figure 2 shows the top 12 countries of origin for HFE I aliens who were granted a green card or received a renewed or replacement card. Appendix C contains the countries of origin for all 893 HFE I aliens granted a green card. Appendix D lists the countries of origin for all 1,754 HFE I aliens who renewed or replaced green cards.

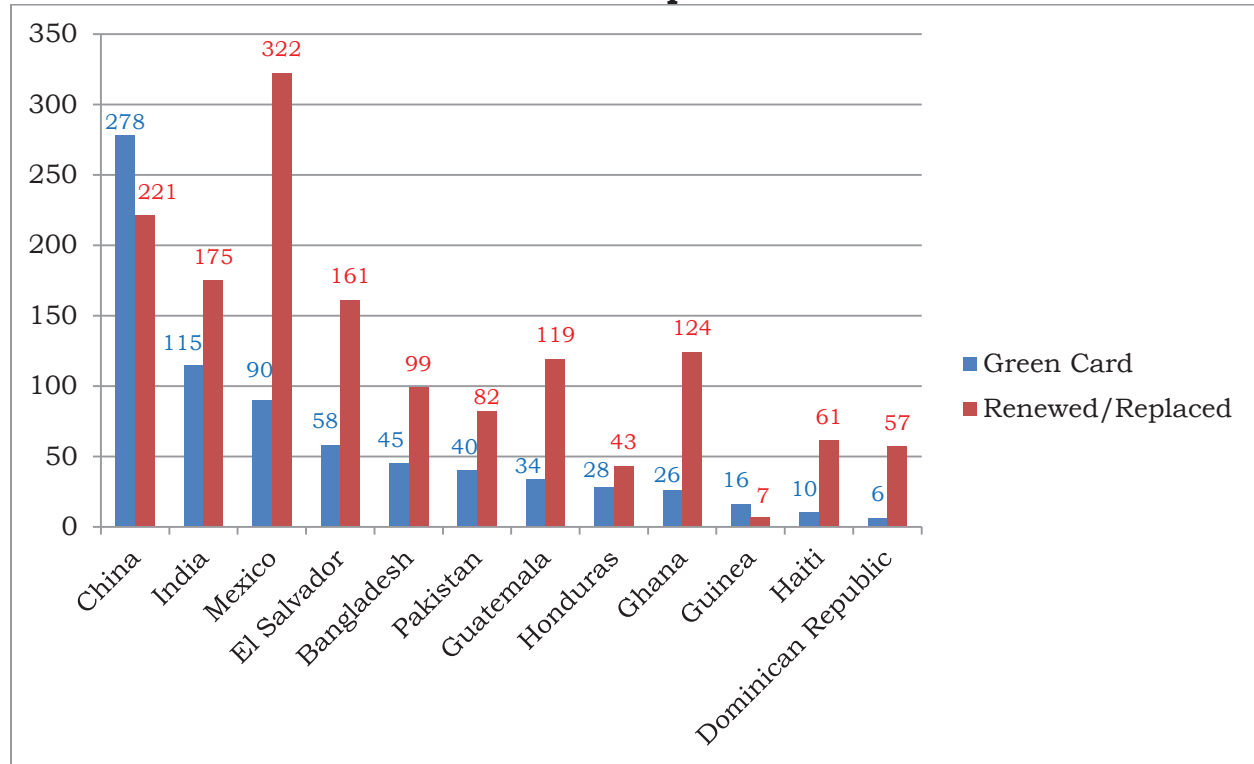
⁴ According to a USCIS official, other approved forms may also result in obtaining permanent resident status.



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Figure 2: Top 12 Countries of Origin for HFE I Aliens Granted a Green Card or Who Received a Renewed or Replacement Green Card



Source: OIG analysis of USCIS data as of April 24, 2017

Employment Authorization

Certain aliens who wish to work in the United States must apply for an Employment Authorization Document (EAD). Applicants complete USCIS Form I-765 (Application for Employment Authorization), indicating that they belong to certain categories of individuals eligible to receive an EAD, which include asylees, refugees, eligible family members, and individuals receiving temporary immigration benefits, such as temporary protected status (TPS) or foreign student visas. Aliens who have received final deportation orders from an immigration judge are also eligible to request work authorization if they provide USCIS with documentation showing (1) dependents' reliance on them for support; (2) an economic necessity for employment; or (3) the anticipated length of time before removal from the United States.

Our analysis of USCIS data showed that 1,360 HFE I aliens received an EAD. According to USCIS, because receiving an EAD is always tied to another principal immigration status or category, such as TPS, EADs will be reviewed when the principal benefit expires and is reviewed for renewal.

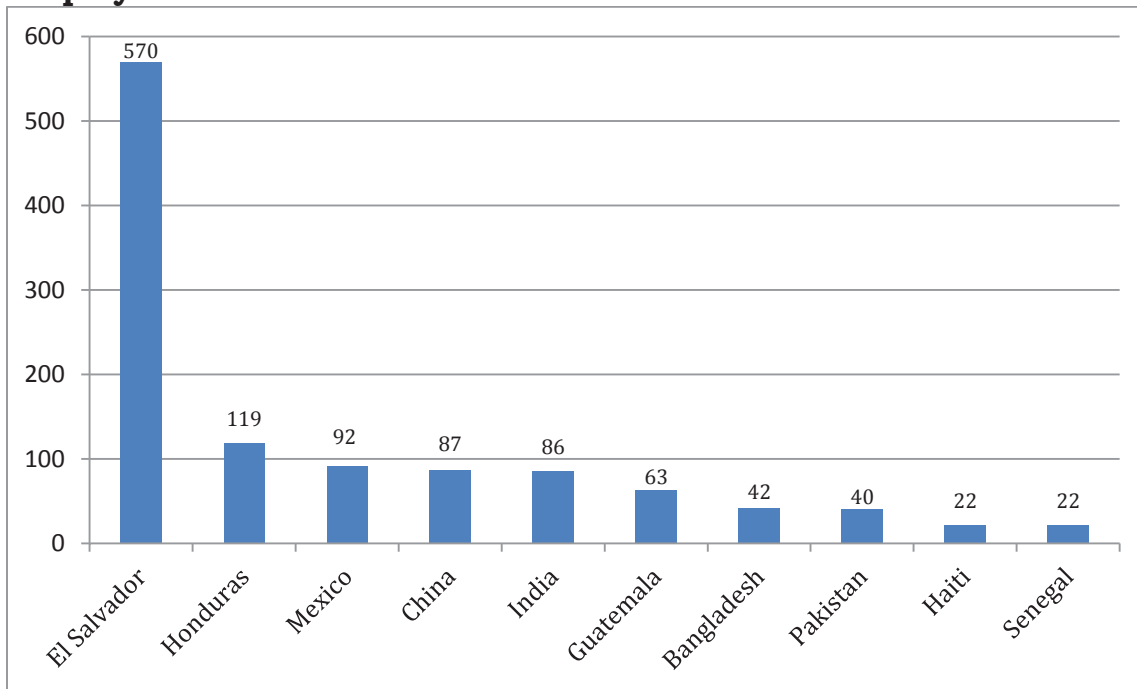


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Figure 3 shows the top 10 countries of origin for HFE I aliens who received an EAD. Appendix E contains a list of the countries of origin for all 1,360 HFE I aliens who received an EAD.

Figure 3: Top 10 Countries of Origin for HFE I Aliens Who Received an Employment Authorization Document



Source: OIG analysis of USCIS data as of April 24, 2017

Temporary Protected Status

The Secretary of Homeland Security designates foreign countries eligible for TPS if the conditions in those countries, such as ongoing civil wars or recovery from a natural disaster, prevent safe repatriation. All nationals of TPS-designated countries must complete USCIS Form I-821 (Application for Temporary Protected Status). Eligible individuals must prove that they are nationals of a TPS-designated country and that they have continuously resided in the United States since the effective date of the TPS designation.

Our analysis of USCIS data showed that 1,387 HFE I aliens were granted TPS. Because all TPS applicants must also apply for an EAD, USCIS often issues these benefits together, but in our data analysis, we took into account only one benefit for each HFE I alien.

As of July 2017, USCIS had not reviewed the cases of individuals with multiple identities whose fingerprints were uploaded into IDENT through HFE and who



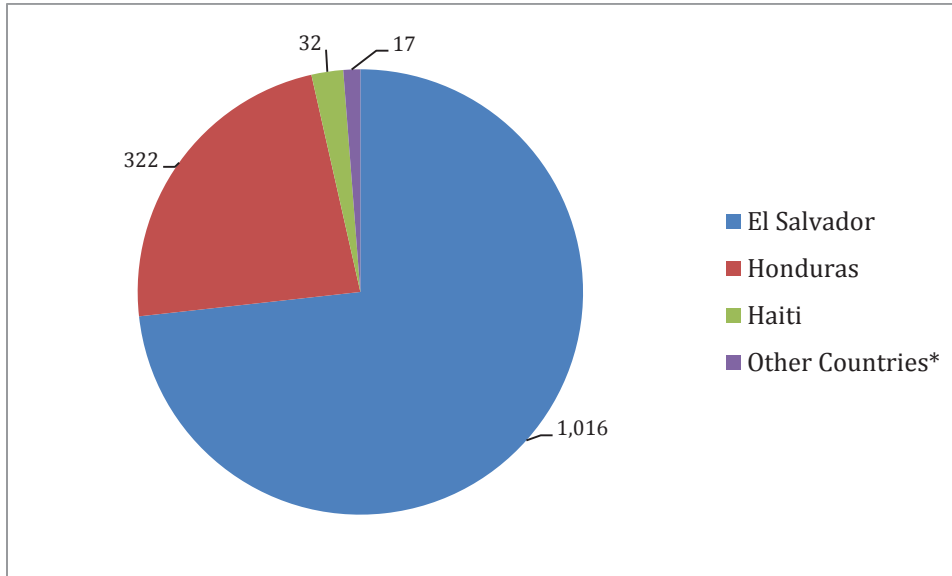
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received TPS, but it is currently determining how to identify those individuals who may have tried to change their country of origin to qualify for TPS.

Figure 4 shows that these HFE I aliens who received TPS were primarily from El Salvador, Honduras, and Haiti.

Figure 4: Countries of Origin for HFE I Aliens Who Received Temporary Protected Status



Source: OIG analysis of USCIS data as of April 24, 2017

*The other countries of origin cited by the alien on the benefit form are Guinea, Liberia, Mexico, Nicaragua, China, Guatemala, Philippines, Somalia, and Sudan; the country of origin for one HFE I alien was unknown.



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Objective, Scope, and Methodology

DHS OIG was established by the *Homeland Security Act of 2002*, Pub. L. No. 107-296, 116 Stat. 2135, which amended the *Inspector General Act of 1978*.

We conducted this review in response to a congressional request to determine how many aliens with multiple identities whose fingerprints were digitized and uploaded into IDENT through HFE I received immigration benefits, the type of benefit they received, and their country of origin.

We reviewed an OIG report, OIG-16-130; a U.S. Government Accountability Office report; and a DOJ report on immigration benefit fraud and the use of digital fingerprint records. We also reviewed Privacy Impact Assessments, draft of the *Automated Biometric Identification System (IDENT) Data Interpretation Reference Guide*, DHS immigration systems documentation, a summary presentation of the ICE HFE effort as of December 2016, and USCIS data on efforts to denaturalize individuals as of March 2017. We also reviewed a USCIS summary presentation on the types of immigration benefits granted.

We interviewed headquarters officials from ICE Enforcement and Removal Operations Law Enforcement Systems and Analysis Division, National Protection and Programs Directorate Office of Biometric Identity Management, USCIS Field Operations Directorate, and USCIS Fraud Detection and National Security Directorate.

We analyzed a USCIS data set of aliens whose fingerprints had been uploaded into IDENT through HFE I as of April 24, 2017. The data contained information on known identities for the HFE I aliens, the last USCIS benefit application form number submitted and approved, and the country of citizenship cited by the alien on the benefit form.

For some HFE I cases, the approved benefit was clear. For cases in which the approved benefit was not clear, we determined the benefit status by reviewing the raw data provided by USCIS. We identified the last benefit approved and noted the form number in the data set for that case. If the last benefit was not approved and no other benefits had been approved, we noted so. If the last benefit was denied, but a different benefit had been approved before, we noted the form number of the prior approval. We did not analyze cases that were denied, rejected, or pending.

We analyzed 9,389 cases of HFE I aliens that USCIS identified as having multiple identities and who had an approved benefit application. To determine the HFE I aliens with multiple identities, we selected cases with a System



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Generated Notification flag, which indicates potential fraud, or those with consolidated case files. According to USCIS, an alien's files are consolidated if manual review reveals multiple identities.

In arriving at our conclusions, we analyzed only the most recent immigration benefit an alien received and did not take into account receipt of multiple benefits. Additionally, although a benefit may have been granted, it may no longer be valid. In our analysis, we did not take into account whether approved benefits had expired.

We conducted this review between December 2016 and June 2017 under the authority of the *Inspector General Act of 1978*, as amended, and according to the Quality Standards for Inspection and Evaluation issued by the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency.

The Office of Inspections and Evaluations major contributors to this report are: John D. Shiffer, Chief Inspector; Carie Mellies, Lead Inspector; Michael Brooks, Senior Inspector; Marybeth Dellibovi, Senior Inspector; Samuel Tunstall, Inspector; Kelly Herberger, Communications and Policy Analyst; and Erika Lang, Independent Referencer.



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Appendix A Countries of Origin for HFE I Aliens Naturalized

Country	Count
India	545
Bangladesh	244
China	181
Ghana	170
Pakistan	167
Haiti	120
Mexico	119
El Salvador	116
Nigeria	82
Guatemala	68
Mauritania	54
Guinea	37
Honduras	34
Peru	34
Philippines	34
Cote D'Ivoire	33
Nicaragua	28
Senegal	24
Mali	22
Sierra Leone	22
Dominican Republic	19
Ecuador	19
Colombia	17
Somalia	17
Unknown	14
Burundi	12
Gambia	12
Niger	12
Jordan	11
Romania	11
Albania	10
Egypt	10
Azerbaijan	9
Liberia	9
Russia	9
Congo	8
Iran	8

Rwanda	8
Afghanistan	7
Ethiopia	7
Lebanon	7
Thailand	7
Bolivia	6
Myanmar	6
Ukraine	6
Yugoslavia	6
Brazil	5
Guyana	5
South Korea	5
Togo	5
Trinidad	5
Bahamas	4
Fiji	4
Jamaica	4
Nepal	4
Sudan	4
Armenia	3
Bulgaria	3
Cameroon	3
Hong Kong	3
Iraq	3
Lithuania	3
Sri Lanka	3
Taiwan	3
Yemen	3
Belarus	2
Belize	2
Benin	2
Burkina Faso	2
Croatia	2
Cuba	2
Dominica	2
Georgia	2
Hungary	2
Israel	2

Kazakhstan	2
Laos	2
Malaysia	2
Mauritius	2
Poland	2
South Africa	2
Suriname	2
Turkey	2
USSR	2
Venezuela	2
Argentina	1
Barbados	1
Bosnia	1
Cape Verde	1
Chile	1
Costa Rica	1
Czech Republic	1
Guinea-Bissau	1
Japan	1
Kenya	1
Kosovo	1
Latvia	1
Macedonia	1
Morocco	1
Paraguay	1
Qatar	1
Singapore	1
St. Kitts	1
St. Lucia	1
Syria	1
Turks and Caicos	1
Uzbekistan	1
Zambia	1
Grand Total	2,536



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Appendix B Countries of Origin for HFE I Aliens Approved for Naturalization But Not Yet Naturalized*

Country	Count
India	73
China	50
Bangladesh	47
Pakistan	44
Mexico	32
Haiti	26
El Salvador	24
Guatemala	20
Ghana	18
Guinea	14
Mauritania	12
Honduras	11
Senegal	11
Dominican Republic	10
Mali	9
Nigeria	9
Cote D'Ivoire	8
Gambia	7
Colombia	6
Ecuador	5
Sierra Leone	5
Somalia	5

Philippines	4
Armenia	3
Ethiopia	3
Nepal	3
Nicaragua	3
Yemen	3
Azerbaijan	2
Burundi	2
Congo	2
Iran	2
Jamaica	2
Jordan	2
Liberia	2
Nigeria	2
Peru	2
Russia	2
Rwanda	2
USSR	2
Unknown	2
Albania	1
Bahamas	1
Bolivia	1
Brazil	1
Bulgaria	1

Burkina Faso	1
Canada	1
Cape Verde	1
Costa Rica	1
Egypt	1
Fiji	1
France	1
Germany	1
Guinea-Bissau	1
Kuwait	1
Latvia	1
Lebanon	1
Malaysia	1
South Korea	1
Sri Lanka	1
Sudan	1
Taiwan	1
Thailand	1
Togo	1
Trinidad	1
Ukraine	1
Grand Total	517

*Not naturalized as of April 24, 2017



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Appendix C Countries of Origin for HFE I Aliens Receiving a Green Card

Country	Count
China	278
India	115
Mexico	90
El Salvador	58
Bangladesh	45
Pakistan	40
Guatemala	34
Honduras	28
Ghana	26
Guinea	16
Gambia	12
Nigeria	11
Haiti	10
Mali	9
Nicaragua	8
Unknown	8
Ecuador	7
Peru	7
Dominican Republic	6

Mauritania	6
Senegal	6
Azerbaijan	4
Brazil	4
Cote D'Ivoire	4
Sierra Leon	4
Somalia	4
Burundi	3
Jamaica	3
Myanmar	3
Yugoslavia	3
Albania	2
Argentina	2
Colombia	2
Congo	2
Cuba	2
Egypt	2
Fiji	2
Iran	2
Philippines	2
Russia	2

Togo	2
Angola	1
Armenia	1
Chile	1
Costa Rica	1
Ethiopia	1
Guyana	1
Indonesia	1
Ireland	1
Kenya	1
Latvia	1
Liberia	1
Nepal	1
Niger	1
Paraguay	1
Rwanda	1
South Korea	1
Uganda	1
United Kingdom	1
United States	1
Grand Total	893



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Appendix D Countries of Origin for HFE I Aliens Receiving Renewed or Replacement Green Cards

Country	Count
Mexico	322
China	221
India	175
El Salvador	161
Ghana	124
Guatemala	119
Bangladesh	99
Pakistan	82
Haiti	61
Dominican Republic	57
Honduras	43
Nicaragua	35
Ecuador	23
Unknown	21
Peru	13
Philippines	11
Colombia	10
Cote D'Ivoire	10
Dominica	9
Nigeria	9
Niger	8
Guinea	7
Sierra Leone	7
Mali	6
Malaysia	5
Vietnam	5
Cameroon	4

Guyana	4
Mauritania	4
Poland	4
Senegal	4
South Korea	4
Ukraine	4
United Kingdom	4
Yugoslavia	4
Bolivia	3
Brazil	3
Costa Rica	3
Ethiopia	3
Jamaica	3
Jordan	3
Sri Lanka	3
Trinidad	3
Venezuela	3
Afghanistan	2
Armenia	2
Azerbaijan	2
Gambia	2
Myanmar	2
Nepal	2
Netherlands	2
New Zealand	2
Russia	2
Thailand	2
Turkey	2

Albania	1
Antilles	1
Australia	1
Bahamas	1
Belarus	1
Burkina Faso	1
Congo	1
Cuba	1
Indonesia	1
Iran	1
Israel	1
Kenya	1
Laos	1
Lebanon	1
Liberia	1
Lithuania	1
Morocco	1
Panama	1
Portugal	1
Romania	1
St. Lucia	1
Slovakia	1
Somalia	1
Sudan	1
Syria	1
Yemen	1
Grand Total	1,754



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Appendix E Countries of Origin for HFE I Aliens Receiving Employment Authorization

Country	Count
El Salvador	570
Honduras	119
Mexico	92
China	87
India	86
Guatemala	63
Bangladesh	42
Pakistan	40
Haiti	22
Senegal	22
Ghana	20
Guinea	18
Mauritania	18
Nigeria	18
Ecuador	17
Gambia	14
Mali	14
Sierra Leone	12

Cote D'Ivoire	11
Unknown	10
Dominican Republic	8
Somalia	8
Colombia	7
Myanmar	5
Jamaica	4
Philippines	3
Burundi	2
Cameroon	2
Liberia	2
Malaysia	2
South Korea	2
Albania	1
Brazil	1
Burkina Faso	1
Cambodia	1
Canada	1

Central African Republic	1
France	1
Indonesia	1
Israel	1
Jordan	1
Laos	1
Lebanon	1
Nepal	1
Nicaragua	1
Peru	1
Romania	1
St. Lucia	1
South Africa	1
Suriname	1
Thailand	1
Grand Total	1,360



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