**New Americans in the U.S. Armed Forces Fact Sheet**

Immigrants who are foreign-born have a proud history of serving honorably in the U.S. Armed Forces. One in five Medal of Honor recipients is an immigrant. Immigrant service members and their families should be supported and have the same access to services as all veterans. Commonsense immigration reform policies that expand the pool of people who can serve in the armed forces will improve our national security and military readiness.

**How many immigrants currently serve in the U.S. Armed Forces?**

* Between 1999 and 2010, about 80,000 immigrants joined the armed forces.
* About 24,000 immigrants were on active duty in 2012, and about 5,000 immigrants join each year.
* In 2013, 3,862 noncitizens enlisted just in the Army (3,161) and Army Reserve (701).

**What are the requirements for immigrants to join the armed forces?**

To be eligible to serve in the armed forces, those who are not citizens must:

* Be living permanently and legally in the United States;
* Have permission to work in the United States;
* Possess an I-551 (Permanent Residence Card);
* Have obtained a high school diploma; and
* Speak English.

**How many veterans are foreign-born?**

* As of 2016, 511,000 veterans who are immigrants live in the United States, making up approximately 3 percent of the total veteran population.
* About 82 percent of immigrant veterans (417,000) are naturalized U.S. citizens.

**How many noncitizen service members have naturalized?**

* From fiscal year 2001 to 2015, 109,321 immigrant members have naturalized.
* Since 2008, 2,650 military spouses have naturalized.

**What limitations exist for noncitizens in the U.S. Armed Forces?**

* Only U.S. citizens can be military officers and obtain security clearances, which limits higher-level opportunities for immigrants who are not yet naturalized.