

Immigration Backlog Still Rising Despite New Judge Investitures

Latest Figures as of June 2016

The number of cases awaiting resolution before the Immigration Courts climbed to a new all-time high of 496,704 as of the end of June 2016, according to very timely government court data obtained by the Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse (TRAC) at Syracuse University. This is up from 456,216 at the beginning of this fiscal year nine months ago, and up from 408,037 at the beginning of FY 2015. See Figure 1.

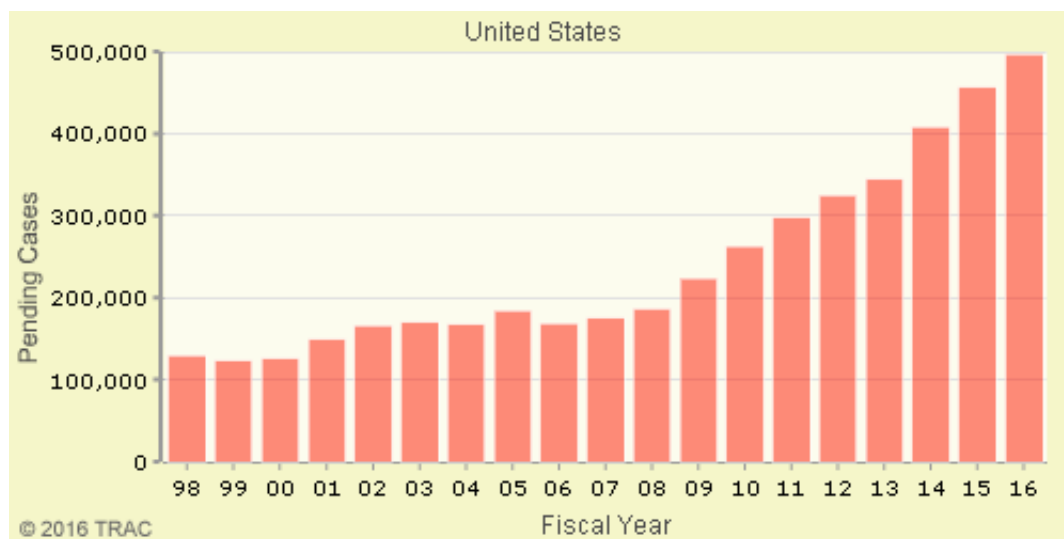


Figure 1. Number of Cases Pending in Immigration Court, FY 1998 - FY 2016

for details see TRAC's [Immigration Court Backlog tool](#), updated monthly

While the backlog continues to rise, there has been some slackening in the rate of its growth with the hiring of new Immigration Judges. Since February 2016, the Executive Office for Immigration Review (EOIR) has announced the investiture of 34 new Immigration Judges. [According to EOIR](#), this brings the

current Immigration Judge corps to 273. However, these new appointments have been insufficient thus far to stop the continued rise in backlogged cases. Currently the flow of new incoming cases continues to exceed the number of case dispositions each month so that the backlog continues to grow.

As of the end of last month, the backlog represented an average of 1,819 cases waiting resolution for each of the 273 judges now on the bench. Or expressed another way, the backlog now represents about 2.5 years of workload to clear up even if there were no new cases being filed.



Full details on the backlog for each nationality by state, immigration court and hearing location are available in TRAC's [backlog tool](#), now with data updated through the end of June 2016.

Backlog Continues To Grow Even for Priority Cases: Unaccompanied Children and "Women with Children"

The new judge appointments thus far have also been insufficient to stem the recent growth in the court's so-called "rocket-docket" of priority cases. Pending cases involving unaccompanied children on the court's priority docket now number 69,278. There are an additional 74,502 individuals in pending priority "women with children" cases. Together these represent nearly 29 percent of the court's current pending backlog.

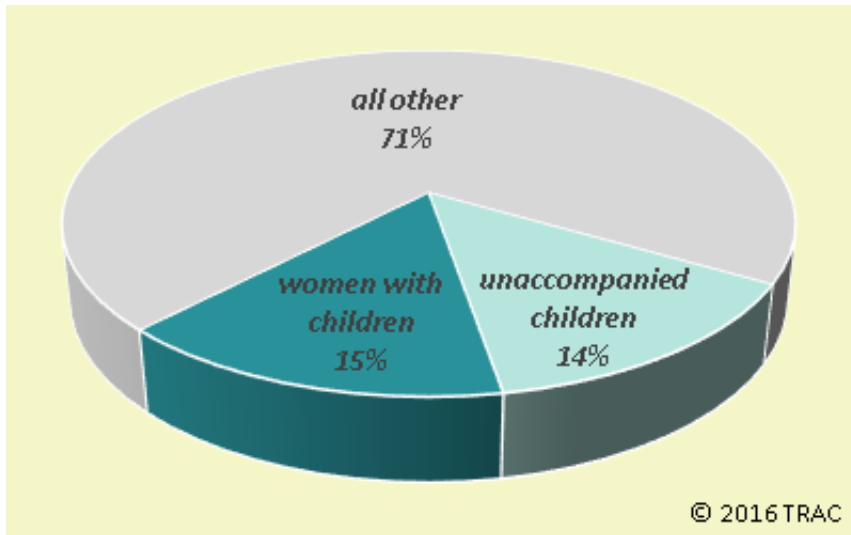


Figure 2. Pending Workload in Immigration Court

The rise in backlogged unaccompanied children's cases reflects a change from last year. During FY 2015, as [TRAC previously reported](#), the backlog in unaccompanied children's cases was slowly dropping as the court gave priority to handling these cases. However, with the [increase this year in border apprehensions of unaccompanied children](#) the court backlog of these priority matters has been inching up once again. The court's capacity to handle these cases has simply proven insufficient despite their priority status and the recent hiring of new judges.

The number of pending priority cases involving women with children has been rising the fastest. Backlogged cases in this category jumped by more than 10,000 cases just in the last two months — from 64,164 at the end of April to 74,502 at the end of June.

To examine the latest available details on both pending cases as well as outcomes for [unaccompanied children](#) or for "[women with children](#)" cases select either of the following tools. Information is available not only for the nation as a whole, but for each separate nationality, state, immigration court, and hearing location.