

# Fact Sheet: Promoting a Secure and Humane Border Security System



## Introduction

Immigration is essential to building a strong economy and bolstering the national security interests of the United States. However, the U.S. also has an obligation to maintain border security and the capability to identify non-U.S. persons entering our country. To do so, the U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) agency, along with its component agencies, should have the resources necessary to uphold their responsibility to manage and secure the border in a humane manner.

## What is the Current State of Immigration at the U.S. Southern Border?

All CBP component agencies face substantial resource and capacity problems, while asylum claims and illegal immigration continue to increase and the threat posed by drugs smuggled across the border remains pervasive.

- CBP manages 50 border crossings along the 1,954-mile U.S.-Mexico border, with over 18,000 Border Patrol (USBP) agents deployed there. Nationwide, CBP has a force of more than 25,000 officers. However, the agency has a staffing gap of 1,700 officers, largely due to high attrition rates, slow hiring processes, and a lack of resources to fund improved recruitment.
- In May 2022, CBP encountered 239,416 undocumented migrants who entered the United States at the U.S.-Mexico border, demonstrating a 2% increase from the 235,478 encounters in April 2022 and a 44% increase from February. These are the highest month-to-month encounters of unauthorized individuals since the U.S. government began recording apprehensions at the southwest border.

## What Happens After an Individual is Apprehended?

- If an individual apprehended by CBP is determined to be inadmissible to enter the United States, he or she is processed for appropriate removal proceedings and may be detained during those proceedings. Individuals who assert that they intend to apply for asylum are also typically subject to detention.
- Proceedings for detained individuals can take anywhere from days to years, from apprehension to resolution. These long wait times create uncertainty for those with legitimate claims to remain in the United States, while also potentially encouraging migrants with weaker cases to cross the border illegally.



## What Funding is Available to CBP?

- The Biden administration's first budget request to Congress In 2021 for FY 2022 requested no new funding for additional Border Patrol officers and Congress appropriated \$100 million for hiring additional Border Patrol officers.
- However, noting the urgency of the situation at the border, for Fiscal Year 2023, the Biden administration requested \$63.3 million for 300 additional Border Patrol agents and \$23 million to hire an additional 300 Border Patrol processing coordinators.
- Congress appropriated \$201.8 million for border security technology, and the Biden administration has requested \$1 billion more to allocate for this purpose In FY 2023 and is calling for funding.

## What Can the U.S. Government Do to Address These Border Issues?

- Congress should provide the necessary funding to help mitigate unlawful entry at the border by Investing in border security technology, including the deployment of unmanned aircraft systems, autonomous surveillance systems, and mesh networks to detect unlawful migrant entries and illicit drug smuggling among the U.S.-Mexico border.
- Congress should boost funding for CBP personnel numbers and the Administration should Improve hiring practices to enhance U.S. capacity to manage the migrant surge, including efforts by migrants to illegally enter the United States, while also ensuring that CBP Is meeting its statutory responsibilities to screen imported cargo, legal foreign visitors, and returning U.S. citizens.
- Conduct a study to examine the relationship between CBP's capacity to process asylum claims at ports of entry, the rates of unlawful migrant entry between ports of entry, and the time to process defensive asylum requests for migrants who unlawfully entered the United States.
- Modernizing and expanding ports of entry at the southwest border to ensure adequate processing while maintaining the flow of lawful visitors, workers, and goods.

The United States is a beacon of hope for many people who are attempting to leave unstable countries and pursue a life of safety and economic freedom. However, in order for us to protect those seeking asylum, we must have a working border with the resources necessary to quickly process asylum claims and control who is entering our country.

*This fact sheet drew from the white paper “Promoting a Secure and Humane Border Security System” written by Julie Myers Wood and Michael Neifach for CNSI. You can read the full paper [here](#).*