

Asylum seeker arrivals and migration policy events in 2021

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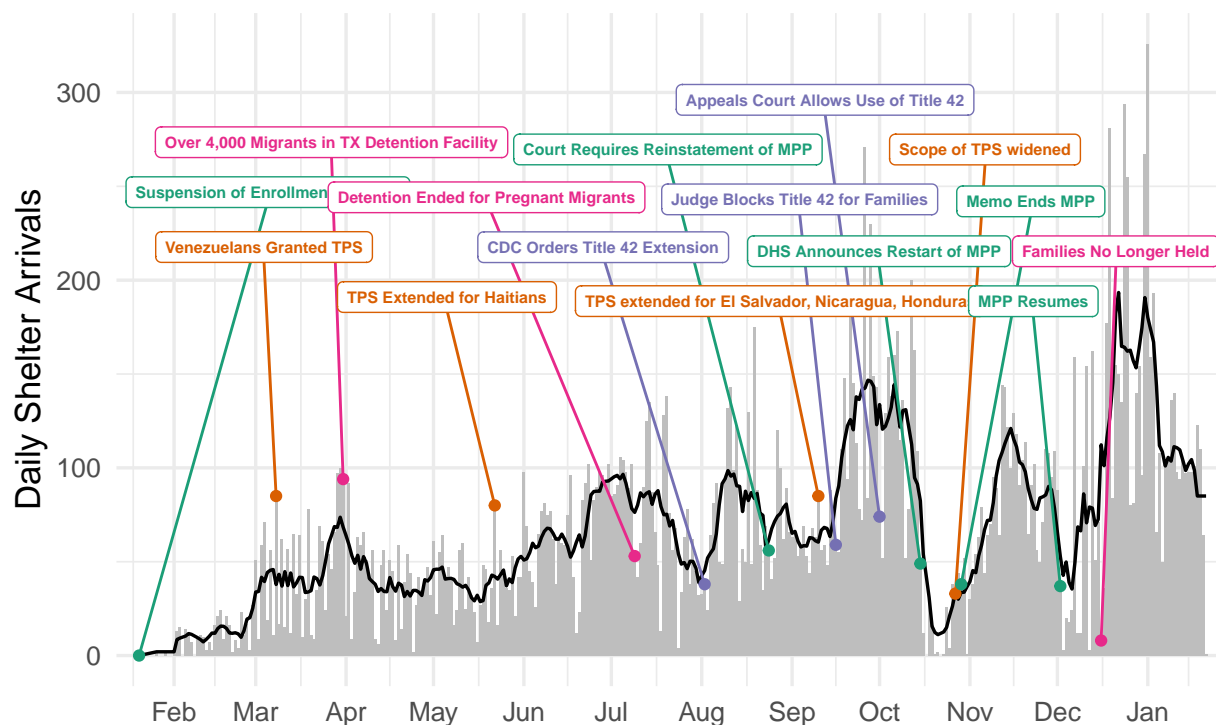
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Data Dates: 1/26/21-1/20/22

Data for this project were collected by volunteers and staff at Casa Alitas Welcome Center in Tucson, Arizona. This report was prepared by Kendra Lyons, a master's student in Information Science at the University of Arizona as a Capstone project. It does not represent the views of the Casa Alitas Program, nor those of Catholic Community Services of Southern Arizona. The dates and event descriptions were obtained online from the Investigative Reporting Workshop. These data visualizations have been created under a GNU General Public License.

Casa Alitas Arrivals and Migration Policy Shifts

Asylum seekers and migration policy events in 2021



Sources: Casa Alitas Program (CCS-SOAZ) & Investigative Reporting Workshop

Beginning in late January of 2021, the Casa Alitas Welcome Center run by Catholic Community Services of Southern Arizona re-opened its doors after a prolonged closure during the COVID-19 pandemic. Daily arrivals grew from just a few daily arrivals to hundreds. Noticeably, there were some significant ups and downs. Throughout the year, immigration policy shifts of many kinds preceded (and sometimes book-ended) large fluctuations in daily shelter arrivals. **Table 1** lists dates and descriptions of selected U.S. migration policy events in 2021.

With the help of hundreds of volunteers and a staff that expanded from two to fourteen over the course of the year, Alitas assisted over 20,000 migrants in 2021. Kinds of aid provided include travel assistance, food, hygiene supplies, clothing, temporary lodging, COVID-19 tests and vaccinations, and assistance obtaining medical care when needed. Anyone who tested positive for COVID-19 quarantined in a motel or hotel room bloc contracted by Pima County with funding from FEMA. Families quarantined together until everyone tested negative, re-testing every five days.

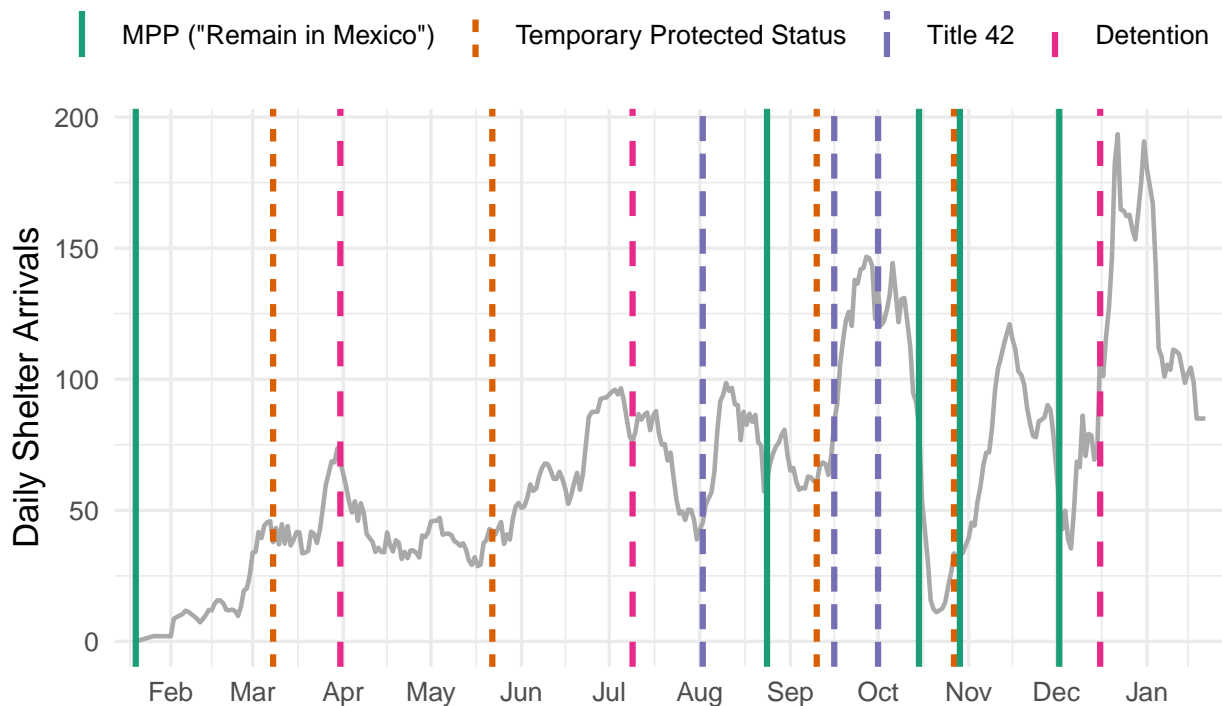
Table 1: Table 1: Immigration Policy Events in 2021 (Source: Investigative Reporting Workshop)

| date | category | description |
|------------|----------------------------|--|
| 2021-01-20 | MPP ("Remain in Mexico") | Suspension of Enrollments in MPP |
| 2021-03-08 | Temporary Protected Status | Venezuelans Granted TPS |
| 2021-03-31 | Detention | Over 4,000 Migrants in TX Detention Facility |
| 2021-05-22 | Temporary Protected Status | TPS Extended for Haitians |
| 2021-07-09 | Detention | Detention Ended for Pregnant Migrants |
| 2021-08-02 | Title 42 | CDC Orders Title 42 Extension |

| date | category | description |
|------------|----------------------------|---|
| 2021-08-24 | MPP (“Remain in Mexico”) | Court Requires Reinstatement of MPP |
| 2021-09-10 | Temporary Protected Status | TPS extended for El Salvador, Nicaragua, Honduras |
| 2021-09-16 | Title 42 | Judge Blocks Title 42 for Families |
| 2021-10-01 | Title 42 | Appeals Court Allows Use of Title 42 |
| 2021-10-15 | MPP (“Remain in Mexico”) | DHS Announces Restart of MPP |
| 2021-10-27 | Temporary Protected Status | Scope of TPS widened |
| 2021-10-29 | MPP (“Remain in Mexico”) | Memo Ends MPP |
| 2021-12-02 | MPP (“Remain in Mexico”) | MPP Resumes |
| 2021-12-16 | Detention | Families No Longer Held |

The **Migrant Protection Protocols (MPP)**, also known as “Remain in Mexico”, had considerable ups and downs in 2021. Its suspension early in the year is what precipitated a rise in people allowed to enter the United States to undergo the legal process of seeking asylum due to fear of returning to their home countries. MPP’s suspension led to increasing arrival numbers starting in late February, when border authorities began allowing people already enrolled in MPP to enter the country again. MPP forced people with legitimate asylum claims to await a U.S. immigration court trial in Mexico, rather than allowing them temporary permission to enter the country. MPP was reinstated again at the beginning of December, 2021.

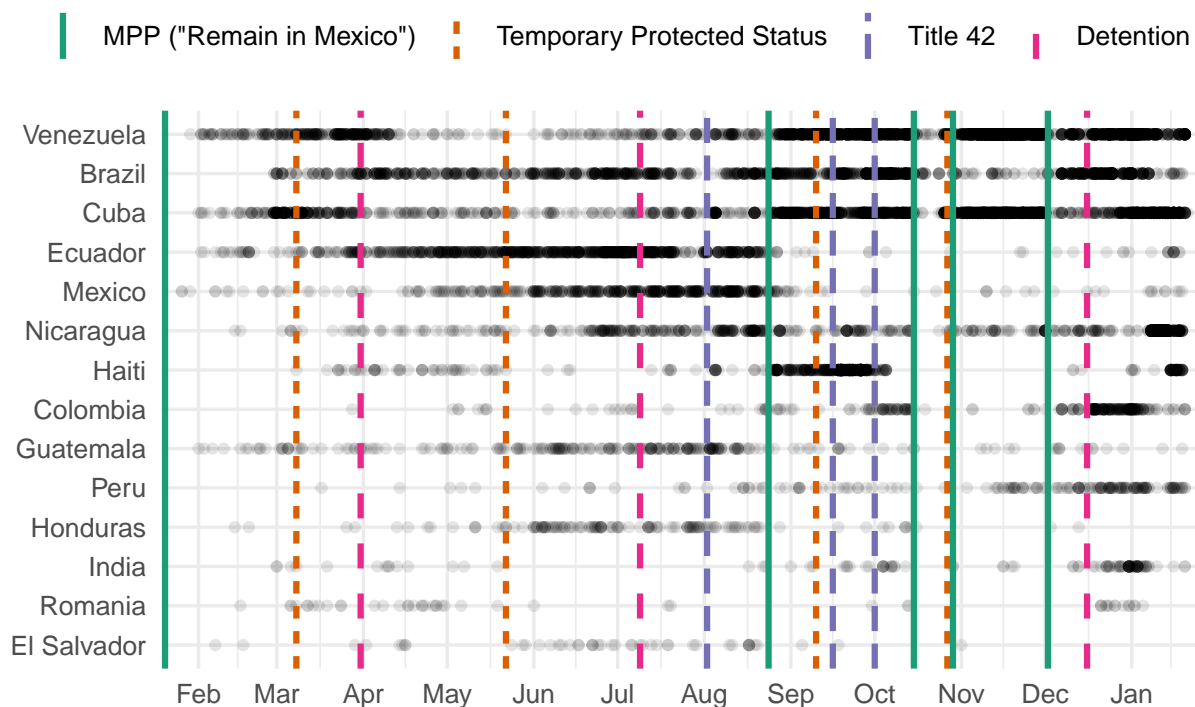
Migration policy changes affect daily shelter arrivals



Sources: Casa Alitas Program (CCS–SOAZ) & Investigative Reporting Workshop

Title 42 is another policy used to expel people immediately upon their arrival at the border, without giving them the opportunity to request asylum. This use of Title 42 was challenged in court by the ACLU in August and a series of rulings first blocked it in September, then allowed its use again in October of 2021. As of May 5, 2022 Title 42 is still in effect, but it may or may not be allowed to expire on May 23.

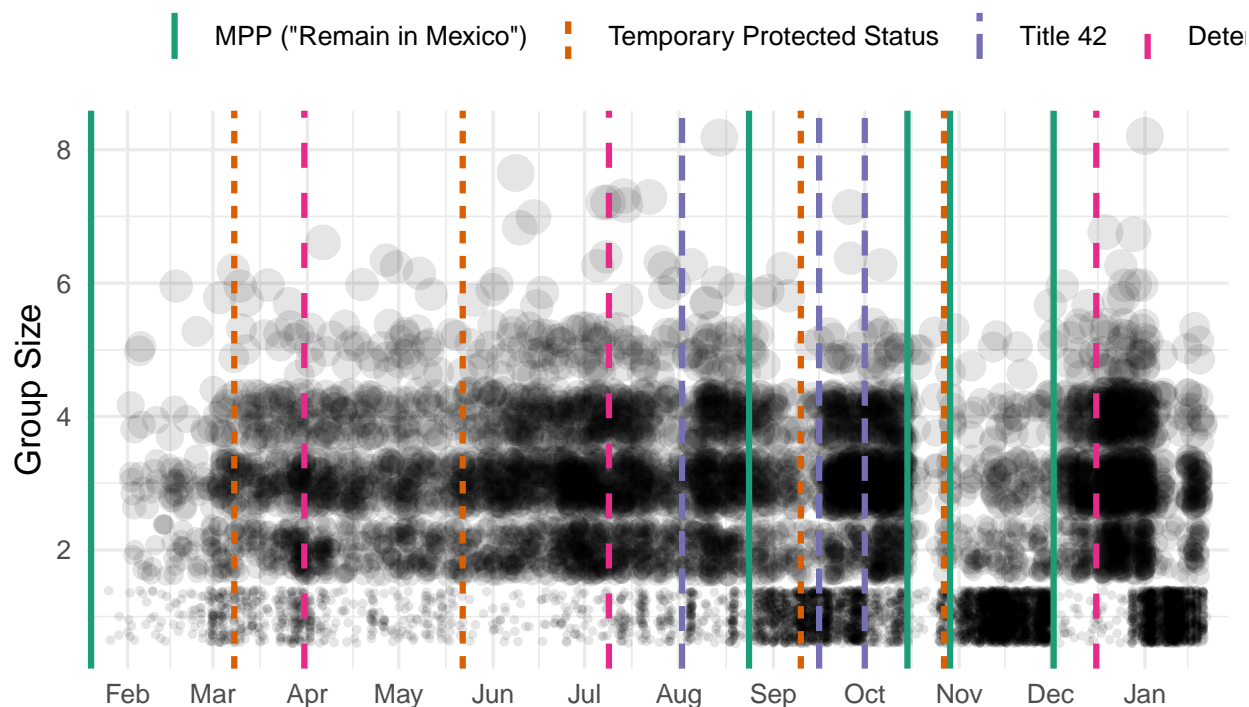
Migration policy shifts affect nationalities differently



Sources: Casa Alitas Program (CCS-SOAZ) & Investigative Reporting Workshop

Another important policy, **Temporary Protected Status**, determined which nationalities were permitted to stay in the U.S. on a temporary basis due to war, natural disasters or “other extraordinary and temporary conditions” in their home countries (USCIS). The list of nationalities that qualify for TPS changes often, but most migrants who qualify come from Venezuela and El Salvador and many are from Honduras, Haiti and other countries. In September, TPS set to expire for people from El Salvador, Nicaragua, Sudan, Honduras, and Nepal was extended until the end of 2022.

Migration policy shifts affect individuals and groups differently



Sources: Casa Alitas Program (CCS-SOAZ) & Investigative Reporting Workshop

Shifts in migrant **detention** policy determined which people could be detained or released to await an immigration court date. In July, detention was ended for pregnant people. In mid-December, detention was ended for families and was followed by a large increase in arrivals at the Welcome Center.

The policies highlighted in this report are only a few important pieces in the puzzle that is the U.S. immigration system, but they were frequently discussed and monitored by those at the Southern border who work to provide humanitarian aid to migrants. Some advance warning of changes was obtained from local and federal government institutions, or through participation in the Southern Border Communities Coalition, an extensive network of organizations that deal with border issues. Despite these ties providing some access to information, the ups and downs were bewildering, frustrating and sometimes chaotic for volunteers and shelter staff. It was all of that, in addition to being truly dangerous for migrants.

To Learn More:

- **Casa Alitas Program:** <https://www.casaalitas.org/>
- **Southern Border Communities Coalition:** <https://www.southernborder.org/>

Migration Policy Changes

- **Boundless:** <https://www.boundless.com/blog/biden-immigration-tracker/>
- **Center for Migration Studies:** <https://cmsny.org/biden-immigration-executive-actions/>
- **Immigration Policy Tracking Project:** <https://impolicytracking.org/home/>

- **Investigative Reporting Workshop:** <https://investigativereportingworkshop.org/news/timeline-bidens-immigration-policy/>
- **Lawfare Blog:** <https://www.lawfareblog.com/president-bidens-immigration-executive-actions-recap#Asylum>
- **Pew Research:** <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2022/01/11/key-facts-about-u-s-immigration-policies-and-bidens-proposed-changes/>

“Remain in Mexico” (MPP)

- **Department of Homeland Security:** <https://www.dhs.gov/migrant-protection-protocols>
- **Migration Policy Institute:** <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/court-order-relaunch-remain-in-mexico>
- **Reuters:** <https://www.reuters.com/world/us/biden-administration-issues-new-memo-ending-trump-remain-mexico-policy-2021-10-29/>

Temporary Protected Status

- **Federal Register:** <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2021/09/10/2021-19617/continuation-of-documentation-for-beneficiaries-of-temporary-protected-status-designations-for-el>
- **National Immigration Forum:** <https://immigrationforum.org/article/fact-sheet-temporary-protected-status/>
- **U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services:** <https://www.uscis.gov/humanitarian/temporary-protected-status>

Title 42

- **CBS News:** <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/immigration-title-42-senate-bill-border-expulsions/>
- **Deseret News:** <https://www.deseret.com/2022/4/8/23015106/what-is-title-42-and-why-does-biden-plan-to-end-it-your-questions-answered-us-mexico-border>
- **El Paso Matters:** <https://elpasomatters.org/2021/10/08/timeline-how-title-42-came-to-be-used-on-asylum-seekers/>
- **Puente Arizona:** <https://puenteaz.org/title42/>
- **Washington Office on Latin America:** <https://www.wola.org/analysis/a-tragic-milestone-20000th-migrant-deported-to-haiti-since-biden-inauguration/>