

More legal immigrants calling city home

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

April 23, 1997, Wednesday,, ALL EDITIONS

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Section: LOCAL NEWS; Pg. 03B

Length: 229 words

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Body

The number of **legal immigrants** settling in Atlanta increased steadily during the last three years, according to a national report released Tuesday by the Immigration and Naturalization Service.

The report showed that 9,870 **legal immigrants** settled in Atlanta in 1996, a 4 percent increase from the 9,494 **legal immigrants** who moved here in 1995, and up from 7,825 in 1994.

Statewide, 12,608 **legal immigrants** settled in Georgia in 1996, a 1.8 percent increase from 1995, and up from 10,032 in 1994.

Nationally, 915,900 **immigrants** entered the country legally in 1996, a 27 percent increase from 1995, according to the report. Among **cities** in the Southeast, Miami attracted the most **legal immigrants**, with 41,527 new **immigrants** in 1996.

Bill Castro, public affairs officer for the INS regional office in Atlanta, said **immigrants** are attracted to Atlanta because of rapid job growth, moderate weather and affordable housing.

Atlanta ranked 23 out of 25 metro regions in the country for the number of new **legal immigrants**.

Marta Gonzalez, a community organizer with the Catholic Services Association, which helps Atlanta's **immigrants** and refugees, said **immigrants** have had a significant impact on the region.

"These people have gone out and acquired their own businesses, created their own newspapers, started their own cultural activities," Gonzalez said.

Classification

Language: ENGLISH

Subject: IMMIGRATION (91%); IMMIGRATION LAW (90%); CITIZENSHIP (88%); REFUGEES (73%); EMPLOYMENT GROWTH (73%)

Company: IMMIGRATION & NATURALIZATION SERVICE (90%); IMMIGRATION & NATURALIZATION SERVICE (84%)

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Organization: IMMIGRATION & NATURALIZATION SERVICE (90%); IMMIGRATION & NATURALIZATION SERVICE (84%)

Geographic: ATLANTA, GA, USA (94%); GEORGIA, USA (73%)

Load-Date: April 24, 1997

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