

National Foundation for American Policy

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New Research: Immigrants Have Been Awarded 40% of U.S. Nobel Prizes in Chemistry, Medicine and Physics Since 2000

Arlington, Va. – Immigrants have been awarded 40% of the Nobel Prizes won by Americans in chemistry, medicine and physics since 2000, according to a [new report](#) by the National Foundation for American Policy (NFAP), a nonpartisan public policy research organization based in Arlington, Virginia. The study updates findings on immigrants and Nobel Prizes through 2026.

In 2026, one of the two U.S. winners of a Nobel Prize in a science category was an immigrant to the United States: Francis Halzen, an immigrant from Belgium, who was awarded the 2026 Nobel Prize in Physics “for decisive contributions to the IceCube Neutrino Observatory and the discovery of high-energy neutrinos of astrophysical origin.” He was affiliated with the University of Wisconsin–Madison when he received the award.

The study “Immigrants and Nobel Prizes: 1901-2026” can be found at <https://nfap.com/>.

“The achievements of immigrants, in the form of Nobel Prizes, successful businesses and contributions in other fields, are a testament to the American Dream,” said NFAP Executive Director Stuart Anderson.

Table 1
U.S. Nobel Prize Winners in Chemistry, Medicine and Physics: 2000-2026

Category	Immigrant	U.S.-Born	Percentage of Immigrant Winners
Physics	20	23	47%
Chemistry	17	23	43%
Medicine	12	27	31%
TOTAL	49	73	40%

Source: National Foundation for American Policy, Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences, George Mason University Institute for Immigration Research.

Between 1901 and 2026, immigrants have been awarded 36% of the Nobel Prizes won by Americans in chemistry, medicine and physics.

In 2025, three of the six U.S. winners in the three Nobel Prize science categories were immigrants to the United States. The only U.S. winner of the 2025 Nobel Prize in Chemistry was an immigrant, and two of the three U.S. recipients of the 2025 Nobel Prize in Physics were immigrants. In 2023, four of the six U.S. recipients of the Nobel Prizes in medicine, chemistry and physics were immigrants to the United States. In 2021, three of the four U.S. recipients of Nobel Prizes in medicine, chemistry and physics were immigrants to America.

Omar M. Yaghi, born into a refugee family in Jordan, won the 2025 Nobel Prize in Chemistry. At his father’s urging, he obtained a visa to study in the United States while a teenager, arriving in

America alone with limited English proficiency. Living in Troy, New York, he initially attended a community college and later graduated with a B.S. in chemistry from the State University of New York at Albany. He went on to earn a Ph.D. at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and held a series of faculty positions at Arizona State University, the University of Michigan and UCLA in 2007, before joining the chemistry faculty at UC Berkeley.

Michel H. Devoret, an immigrant from France, and John Clarke, an immigrant from the United Kingdom, shared the 2025 Nobel Prize in Physics with John M. Martinis, who was born in the United States. The three men shared the prize “for the discovery of macroscopic quantum mechanical tunnelling and energy quantisation in an electric circuit.” Devoret’s affiliation at the time of the award was as a professor at Yale University and the University of California, Santa Barbara. Clarke’s affiliation was as a professor at the University of California, Berkeley.

Although no immigrants to the United States won the 2025 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine, Shimon Sakaguchi was an assistant professor at Scripps Research in California from 1989 to 1991 before returning to Japan. Mary E. Brunkow and Fred Ramsdell, both born in America, shared the 2025 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine with Sakaguchi. Karl Deisseroth, who was born in Boston, was awarded the 2026 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine, along with Peter Hegemann (Germany) and Georg Nagel (Germany).

Among the findings of the report:

- Since 1901, immigrants have been awarded 39% of the U.S. Nobel Prizes in physics, 38% in chemistry and 32% in medicine.
- Immigration laws matter, particularly in determining whether the United States gains from increased globalization and rising educational achievement in the world. The Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 eliminated the discriminatory national origin quotas and opened the door to Asian immigrants, while the Immigration Act of 1990 increased employment-based green card numbers. Those two pieces of legislation have been essential factors in attracting international students to the country and enhancing America’s ability to assimilate talented individuals into its culture and economy.
- The rise in immigrant Nobel Prize winners reflects an overall increase in the reputation and capability of American institutions and researchers post-1960, and a greater openness to immigration has helped make the United States the leading global destination for research in many different science and technology fields, including computer and information sciences, cancer research and others.
- One can see the increasing influence and importance of immigrants on science in America reflected in Nobel Prize winners. Between 1901 and 1959, immigrants won 22 Nobel Prizes in chemistry, medicine and physics, but won 97 prizes in these fields between 1960 and 2026, more than four times as many.
- The pre-1960 immigrant (and U.S.) Nobel Prize total would have been lower if not for the many Jewish scientists who overcame significant restrictions against immigration in the 1930s and fled to the United States to escape European fascism.
- Since 2000, immigrants have been awarded 47% of the U.S. Nobel Prizes in physics, 43% in chemistry and 31% in medicine.
- Immigrants have also been awarded 32% of the Nobel Prizes won by Americans in economics, including 28% since 2000, according to a National Foundation for American Policy analysis. Two U.S.-born professors, Robert E. Hall of Stanford and Michael

Woodford of Columbia University, were awarded the 2026 Nobel Prize in Economic Sciences.

About the National Foundation for American Policy

Established in 2003, the National Foundation for American Policy (NFAP) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, nonpartisan public policy research organization based in Arlington, Virginia, focusing on trade, immigration and related issues. The Advisory Board members include Columbia University economist Jagdish Bhagwati, Ohio University economist Richard Vedder, Cornell Law School professor Stephen W. Yale-Loehr and former INS Commissioner James W. Ziglar. Over the past 24 months, NFAP's research has been written about in the *Wall Street Journal*, the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post* and other major media outlets. The organization's reports can be found at www.nfap.com. X.com: [@NFAPResearch](https://twitter.com/NFAPResearch) Bluesky: [@NFAPResearch.bsky.social](https://bsky.app/profile/nfapresearch.bsky.social)

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