



# Foreign Residents in South Korea: Seventeen Province Profiles

SEPTEMBER 2026

Profiles of the foreign-resident population of each province and metropolitan city, 2006 to 2024, with the policies, industries and universities around it.

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Korea Immigration Regional Dashboard (KIRD) dataset, <https://doi.org/10.3886/E249944V1>. University of Michigan School of Social Work.

# Foreign Residents in Gyeonggi Province

SEPTEMBER 2026

## Summary

Gyeonggi Province, which borders Seoul, had 467,398 registered foreigners on 31 December 2024, the largest number among South Korea's 17 provinces and metropolitan cities and 31.4 percent of the national total of 1,488,353. It had 3.4 registered foreigners per 100 Korean residents, against 2.9 nationally, the fourth-highest ratio among the 17. The Ministry of the Interior and Safety, whose count adds naturalized citizens and the children of foreign residents, recorded 845,074 foreign residents in the province in 2024.

## Highlights

- ▶ Gyeonggi Province had 467,398 registered foreigners at the end of 2024, the largest number among South Korea's 17 provinces and 31.4 percent of the national total, with 3.4 registered foreigners per 100 Korean residents against 2.9 nationally.
- ▶ The number of registered foreigners in the province grew 32.7 percent between 2014 and 2024 (from 352,166 to 467,398), about three times the 10.8 percent growth of its Korean population.
- ▶ In 2024 the province was home to 48.3 percent of all Korean-Chinese registered foreigners in South Korea (119,240 of 246,988), 47.1 percent of H-2 visiting employment holders and 36.7 percent of E-9 non-professional employment holders.

Between 2006 and 2024 the number of registered foreigners in Gyeonggi grew 134.2 percent, from 199,538 to 467,398, while the Korean population grew 25.6 percent, from 10,906,033 to 13,694,685. Registered foreigners fell from 414,318 in 2019 to 360,412 in 2021, the years of COVID-19 border restrictions, and then rose each year to the highest count on record in 2024. Their growth of 12.8 percent between 2019 and 2024 was the 13th-fastest among the 17 provinces, and the Korean population grew 3.4 percent over the same period.

Rotation labor statuses, led by E-9 non-professional employment, covered 35.2 percent of the province's registered foreigners in 2024, and settlement statuses such as permanent residence 32.8 percent, both above the national shares of 31.1 and 27.6 percent. Study and job search statuses covered 9.8 percent, about half the national share of 18.6 percent. Korean-Chinese residents made up a quarter of the province's registered foreigners, and all ten ethnic enclaves in the province were Korean-Chinese. Two districts, Yeoncheon-gun and Gapyeong-gun, were designated population-decline areas in 2021. In July 2024 Gyeonggi created an Immigration and Social Affairs Bureau, the first of its kind among Korea's provincial-level governments (Gyeonggi Provincial Government, 2025).

### BOX 1

#### Definitions

**Registered foreigners (등록외국인).** Foreign nationals in South Korea for more than 90 days who register with immigration authorities, counted by the Ministry of Justice on 31 December of each year. Overseas Koreans with F-4 status report their place of residence instead of registering and are not included. Unless another count is named, figures in this Spotlight refer to registered foreigners.

**MOIS foreign residents (외국인주민).** The count of foreign residents by the Ministry of the Interior and Safety (MOIS) on 1 November. It adds naturalized Korean citizens and the children of foreign residents to foreign nationals, among them overseas Koreans of foreign nationality.

**Korean residents.** Korean nationals in the resident registration statistics of the Ministry of the Interior and Safety. Registered foreigners per 100 Korean residents equals the number of registered foreigners divided by the number of Korean residents, multiplied by 100.

**Residence status groups.** Rotation labor comprises E-9 non-professional employment, E-8 seasonal work, H-2 visiting employment, E-10 crew employment and D-3 industrial training. Skilled statuses are E-1 to E-7. Study and job search comprises D-2 study, D-4 general training and D-10 job seeking. Settlement comprises F-2 residence, F-5 permanent residence and F-6 marriage migration. Family comprises F-1 visiting cohabitation and F-3 dependent family. All other statuses are grouped as other.

**Population-decline areas (인구감소지역).** The 89 districts that the Ministry of the Interior and Safety designated as population-decline areas on 19 October 2021. The ministry also designated 18 areas of interest (관심지역).

**Ethnic enclave.** In this Spotlight, a district where a nationality's location quotient is at least 2 and the group makes up at least 30 percent of the district's registered foreigners. The location quotient divides the group's number per Korean resident in the district by its number per Korean resident in South Korea as a whole.

**Diversity index (Shannon H).** An index of nationality diversity among registered foreigners. It is 0 when all have the same nationality and rises with the number of nationalities and the evenness of their shares.

## 1 Size of the Foreign-Resident Population

The number of registered foreigners in Gyeonggi rose each year from 199,538 in 2006 to 302,447 in 2011, dipped to 288,251 in 2012, and rose each year again to 414,318 in 2019. It fell to 380,144 in 2020 and 360,412 in 2021, 13.0 percent below the 2019 level (53,906 fewer people), then grew to 382,865 in 2022, 425,629 in 2023 and 467,398 in 2024, the highest count on record.

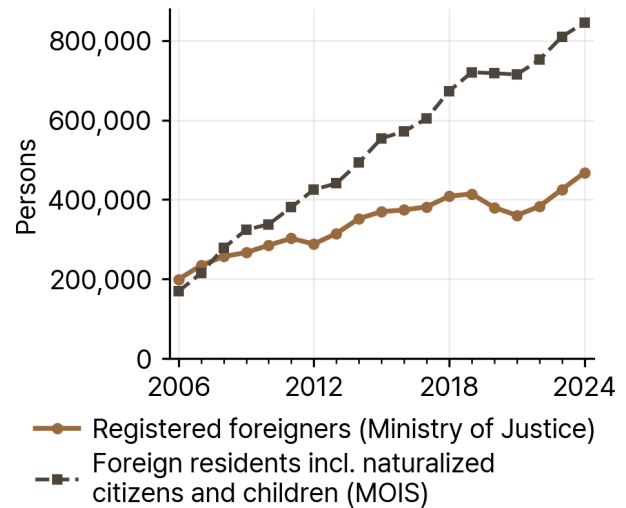
The MOIS count of foreign residents, which adds naturalized citizens and the children of foreign residents, rose from 277,991 in 2008 to 720,090 in 2019. It changed little in 2020 and 2021 (717,900 and 714,497), while the registered count fell, and rose to 845,074 in 2024, 1.8 times the number of registered foreigners that year (467,398).

With 2014 set to 100, the registered foreign population of Gyeonggi stood at 132.7 in 2024 and its Korean population at 110.8. The number of registered foreigners per 100 Korean residents rose from 1.8 in 2006 to 2.8 in 2014, 3.1 in 2019 and 3.4 in 2024, when the national ratio was 2.9.

In 2024 Gyeonggi ranked first among the 17 provinces by the number of registered foreigners and fourth by registered foreigners per Korean resident. Its registered foreign population grew by 53,080 people (12.8 percent) between 2019 and 2024, the 13th-fastest growth of the 17.

FIGURE 1

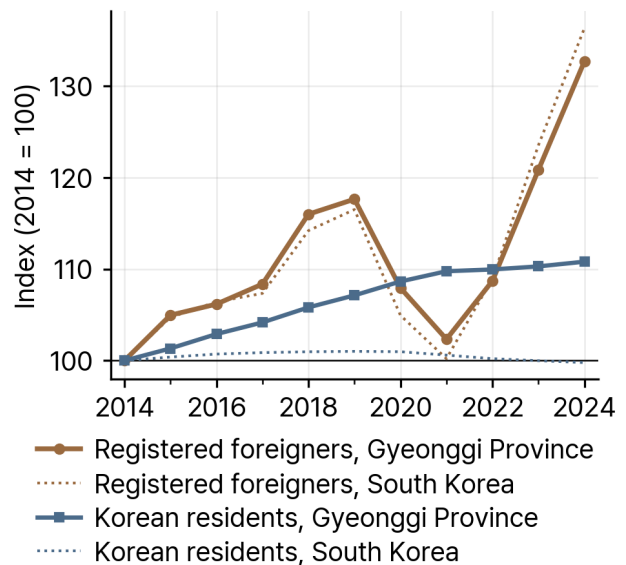
**Registered Foreigners and MOIS Foreign Residents in Gyeonggi Province, 2006-24**



Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks and Ministry of the Interior and Safety statistics, 2006-2024.

FIGURE 2

**Registered Foreigners and Korean Residents in Gyeonggi Province and South Korea, 2014-24 (index, 2014 = 100)**



Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks and Ministry of the Interior and Safety resident registration statistics, 2014-2024.

## 2 Nationalities

Korean-Chinese residents were the largest group of registered foreigners in Gyeonggi in 2024 (119,240, or 25.5 percent), followed by nationals of China other than Korean-Chinese (65,688, or 14.1 percent) and of Vietnam (51,072, or 10.9 percent). Nepal, Myanmar, Cambodia, the Philippines, Thailand, Uzbekistan and Bangladesh each accounted for between 2.9 and 5.0 percent. Korean-Chinese made up a

larger share of registered foreigners in the province than in South Korea as a whole (16.6 percent), and Vietnamese a smaller share (17.6 percent nationally).

Between 2019 and 2024 the number of Korean-Chinese registered foreigners in the province fell by 30,620 (20.4 percent, from 149,860 to 119,240), and their share of the province's registered foreigners dropped from 36.2 percent (149,860 of 414,318) to 25.5 percent. Uzbek nationals also declined, by 1,476 (8.1 percent). The other eight of the ten largest groups grew, most quickly Myanmar nationals (up 76.0

percent, from 12,283 to 21,620), Bangladeshis (up 71.8 percent, from 7,983 to 13,718) and Nepalis (up 59.1 percent, from 14,727 to 23,437).

Gyeonggi was home to about half of all registered foreigners from Bangladesh in South Korea (49.2 percent, 13,718 of 27,875) and from Nigeria (49.1 percent, 1,259 of 2,566) in 2024, and to 48.3 percent of Korean-Chinese registered foreigners (119,240 of 246,988). Its shares of the country's Ghanaian (43.3 percent, 530 of 1,224) and Myanmar nationals (41.5 percent, 21,620 of 52,034) were also above 40 percent.

TABLE 1

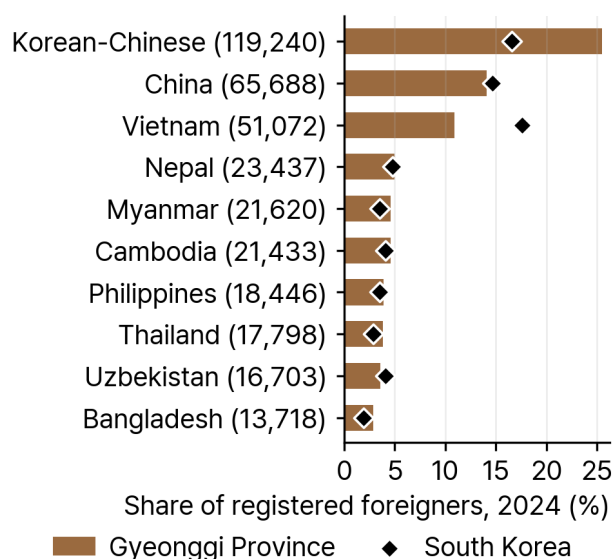
**Registered Foreigners, MOIS Foreign Residents and Korean Residents in Gyeonggi Province, Selected Years**

| Year | Registered foreigners | MOIS foreign residents | Korean residents | Registered foreigners per 100 Korean residents |
|------|-----------------------|------------------------|------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| 2006 | 199,538               | n/a                    | 10,906,033       | 1.8                                            |
| 2014 | 352,166               | 492,790                | 12,357,830       | 2.8                                            |
| 2019 | 414,318               | 720,090                | 13,239,666       | 3.1                                            |
| 2024 | 467,398               | 845,074                | 13,694,685       | 3.4                                            |

Note: Registered foreigners are counted on 31 December and MOIS foreign residents on 1 November. MOIS foreign residents are shown from 2008. The MOIS counts for 2006 (169,081) and 2007 (214,727) were lower than the registered counts for those years (199,538 and 234,292). In 2024 South Korea had 1,488,353 registered foreigners, 2.9 per 100 Korean residents.

Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks and Ministry of the Interior and Safety statistics, 2006–2024.

FIGURE 3

**Ten Largest Nationalities among Registered Foreigners, Gyeonggi Province and South Korea, 2024**

Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks, 2024.

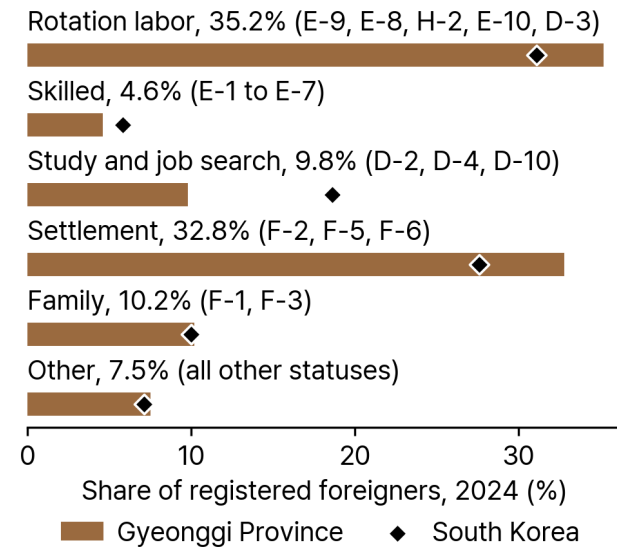
The KIRD data record 177 nationalities among the province's registered foreigners in 2024. The Shannon diversity index for the province rose from 2.2 in 2014 to 2.5 in 2024, the ninth-highest value among the 17 provinces.

Overseas Koreans with F-4 status report their place of residence instead of registering, so they are not among the registered foreigners counted above. In 2024, 239,460 F-4 holders reported a residence in Gyeonggi, 43.3 percent of the 553,664 in South Korea. Most were Korean-Chinese (182,659), followed by ethnic Koreans of US (15,768), Russian (13,057), Uzbek (11,697) and Canadian (5,787) nationality. The two registers together counted 301,899 Korean-Chinese in the province in 2024 (119,240 registered foreigners and 182,659 F-4 holders).

### 3 Residence Statuses

Rotation labor statuses covered 164,548 registered foreigners in Gyeonggi in 2024 (35.2 percent), against 31.1 percent nationally, and settlement statuses 153,105 (32.8 percent), against 27.6 percent. Family statuses (47,459, or 10.2 percent) and other statuses (35,004, or 7.5 percent) were close to the national shares of 10.0 and 7.1 percent. Study and job search statuses covered 45,661 people (9.8 percent), about half the national share of 18.6 percent, and skilled statuses 21,621 (4.6 percent), against 5.8 percent nationally.

FIGURE 4

**Registered Foreigners by Residence Status Group, Gyeonggi Province and South Korea, 2024**

Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks, 2024.

E-9 non-professional employment was the most common single status in 2024, with 120,561 holders (25.8 percent of the province's registered foreigners), followed by F-5 permanent residence (86,777, or 18.6 percent) and F-6 marriage migration (45,019, or 9.6 percent). The province accounted for 47.1 percent of all H-2 visiting employment holders in South Korea, 42.8 percent of F-5 holders and 36.7 percent of E-9 holders, and for 16.0 percent of D-2 student holders.

The MOIS count of 845,074 foreign residents in Gyeonggi in 2024 comprised 681,201 foreign nationals, 83,971 naturalized Korean citizens and 79,902 children of foreign residents. Naturalized citizens and children together made up 19.4 percent of the MOIS count (163,873 of 845,074). The foreign nationals included 184,365 ethnic Koreans of foreign nationality, 177,122 foreign workers, 62,496 marriage migrants, 38,501 international students and 218,717 other foreign nationals.

TABLE 2

**Ten Largest Nationalities among Registered Foreigners in Gyeonggi Province, 2019 and 2024**

| Nationality    | 2019    | 2024    | Share of the province's registered foreigners, 2024 (%) | Province's share of all registered foreigners of this nationality in South Korea, 2024 (%) |
|----------------|---------|---------|---------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Korean-Chinese | 149,860 | 119,240 | 25.5                                                    | 48.3                                                                                       |
| China          | 54,133  | 65,688  | 14.1                                                    | 30.0                                                                                       |
| Vietnam        | 38,204  | 51,072  | 10.9                                                    | 19.5                                                                                       |
| Nepal          | 14,727  | 23,437  | 5.0                                                     | 32.5                                                                                       |
| Myanmar        | 12,283  | 21,620  | 4.6                                                     | 41.5                                                                                       |
| Cambodia       | 16,861  | 21,433  | 4.6                                                     | 35.1                                                                                       |
| Philippines    | 17,248  | 18,446  | 3.9                                                     | 35.5                                                                                       |
| Thailand       | 15,893  | 17,798  | 3.8                                                     | 41.0                                                                                       |
| Uzbekistan     | 18,179  | 16,703  | 3.6                                                     | 27.1                                                                                       |
| Bangladesh     | 7,983   | 13,718  | 2.9                                                     | 49.2                                                                                       |

Note: China excludes Korean-Chinese, who are counted separately. The last column divides the province's count by all registered foreigners of that nationality in South Korea.

Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks, 2019 and 2024.

## 4 Districts and Population-Decline Areas

Of the province's 42 districts, Hwaseong-si had the most registered foreigners in 2024 (51,059), followed by Siheung-si (40,493), Ansan-si Danwon-gu (38,321), Pyeongtaek-si (32,489) and Bucheon-si (29,304). Together they had 41.0

percent of the province's registered foreigners (191,666 of 467,398), and the ten largest districts had 59.9 percent (279,889). Relative to the Korean population, the largest foreign populations in 2024 were in Ansan-si Danwon-gu (13.1 registered foreigners per 100 Korean residents), Pocheon-si (11.5), Siheung-si (7.8), Anseong-si (7.7) and Suwon-si Paldal-gu (6.3).

TABLE 3

**Ten Most Common Residence Statuses among Registered Foreigners in Gyeonggi Province, 2024**

| Status | Meaning                         | Registered foreigners | Share of the province's registered foreigners (%) | Province's share of all holders in South Korea (%) |
|--------|---------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| E-9    | Non-professional employment     | 120,561               | 25.8                                              | 36.7                                               |
| F-5    | Permanent residence             | 86,777                | 18.6                                              | 42.8                                               |
| F-6    | Marriage migration              | 45,019                | 9.6                                               | 30.7                                               |
| H-2    | Visiting employment             | 43,263                | 9.3                                               | 47.1                                               |
| F-1    | Visiting cohabitation           | 31,677                | 6.8                                               | 32.7                                               |
| D-2    | Student                         | 28,564                | 6.1                                               | 16.0                                               |
| F-2    | Residential                     | 21,309                | 4.6                                               | 34.9                                               |
| G-1    | Other (miscellaneous)           | 19,676                | 4.2                                               | 34.8                                               |
| E-7    | Specially designated activities | 16,353                | 3.5                                               | 26.0                                               |
| F-3    | Dependent family                | 15,782                | 3.4                                               | 30.8                                               |

Note: Shares of the province's registered foreigners use the 2024 total of 467,398. The last column divides the province's count by all registered holders of that status in South Korea.

Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks, 2024.

TABLE 4

**Ten Districts with the Most Registered Foreigners in Gyeonggi Province, 2024**

| District               | Registered foreigners, 2024 | Per 100 Korean residents, 2024 | Change in Korean residents, 2019-24 | Change in registered foreigners, 2019-24 | Population-decline area |
|------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Hwaseong-si            | 51,059                      | 5.3                            | +153,425                            | +10,506                                  | No                      |
| Siheung-si             | 40,493                      | 7.8                            | +44,450                             | +5,796                                   | No                      |
| Ansan-si<br>Danwon-gu  | 38,321                      | 13.1                           | -12,917                             | -5,367                                   | No                      |
| Pyeongtaek-si          | 32,489                      | 5.4                            | +85,529                             | +8,381                                   | No                      |
| Bucheon-si             | 29,304                      | 3.8                            | -60,078                             | +3,615                                   | No                      |
| Gimpo-si               | 25,608                      | 5.3                            | +49,632                             | +5,273                                   | No                      |
| Pocheon-si             | 16,317                      | 11.5                           | -6,916                              | +3,053                                   | No (area of interest)   |
| Ansan-si<br>Sangnok-gu | 15,919                      | 4.9                            | -17,422                             | +3,140                                   | No                      |
| Paju-si                | 15,466                      | 3.0                            | +57,268                             | +3,894                                   | No                      |
| Gwangju-si             | 14,913                      | 3.8                            | +24,951                             | +1,927                                   | No                      |

Note: Changes are 2024 counts minus 2019 counts. Pocheon-si is one of the 18 areas of interest designated with the population-decline areas in October 2021. Gwangju-si is a city in Gyeonggi Province, separate from the metropolitan city of Gwangju.

Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks and Ministry of the Interior and Safety statistics, 2019-2024; designations from the Ministry of the Interior and Safety, October 2021.

Between 2019 and 2024 the Korean population grew most in Hwaseong-si (by 153,425), Pyeongtaek-si (85,529) and Yangju-si (66,691), and registered foreigners increased most in

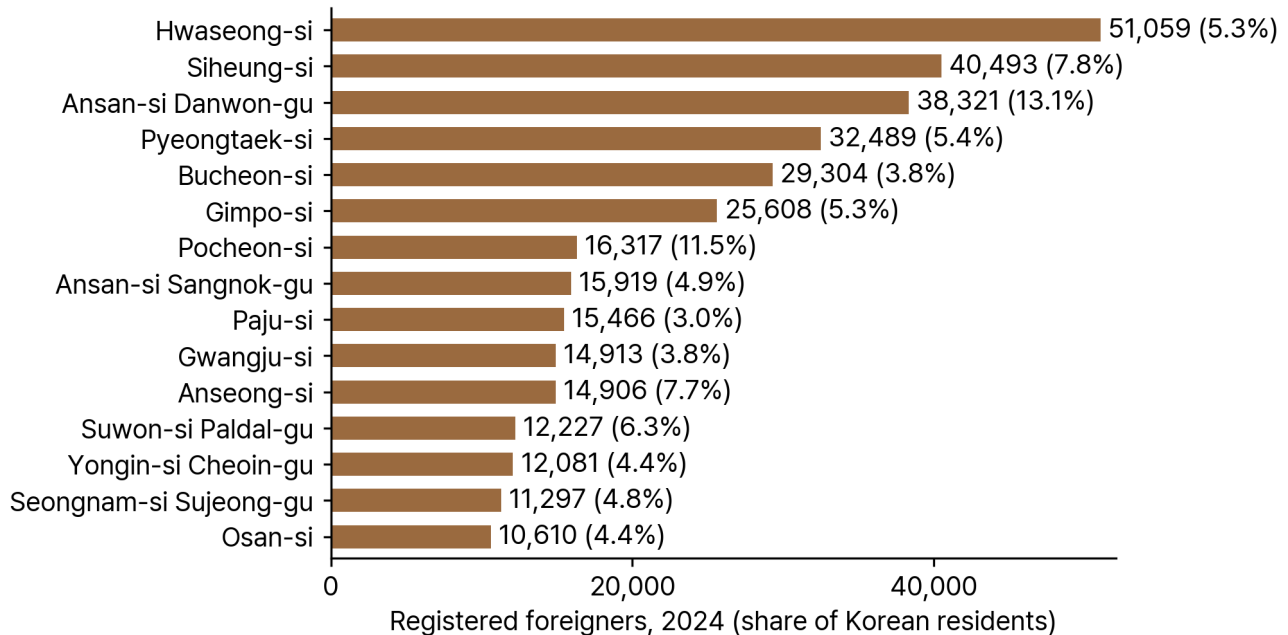
Hwaseong-si (10,506), Pyeongtaek-si (8,381) and Siheung-si (5,796). The Korean population fell in 19 of the 42 districts, and in 10 of those 19 the number of registered foreigners rose.

Among them, Bucheon-si had the largest Korean decline (60,078), while its registered foreigners increased by 3,615. In Ansan-si Danwon-gu both fell, Korean residents by 12,917 and

registered foreigners by 5,367, the largest foreign decline of any district in the province.

FIGURE 5

**Districts with the Most Registered Foreigners in Gyeonggi Province, 2024**



Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks and Ministry of the Interior and Safety resident registration statistics, 2024.

Two districts in Gyeonggi, Yeoncheon-gun and Gapyeong-gun, were among the 89 population-decline areas designated by the Ministry of the Interior and Safety in October 2021, and two others, Pocheon-si and Dongducheon-si, were among the 18 areas of interest. Between 2019 and 2024 the two decline areas together lost 2,846 Korean residents and gained 569 registered foreigners, a foreign gain equal to 20.0 percent of the Korean loss. The whole Korean loss was in Yeoncheon-gun (2,958), since the Korean population of Gapyeong-gun grew by 112. In 2024 Yeoncheon-gun had 1,345 registered foreigners (3.3 per 100 Korean residents) and Gapyeong-gun 1,286 (2.1).

In the two areas of interest the Korean population fell by 6,916 in Pocheon-si and by 7,930 in Dongducheon-si between 2019 and 2024, while registered foreigners rose by 3,053 and 781, equal to 44.1 and 9.8 percent of the Korean losses. Pocheon-si had 16,317 registered foreigners in 2024, 11.5 per 100 Korean residents, the second-highest ratio of any district in the province.

By the definition used in this Spotlight, ten districts in Gyeonggi were Korean-Chinese enclaves in 2024, and no other nationality formed an enclave in the province. The largest were Siheung-si (17,727 Korean-Chinese, 43.8 percent of the district's registered foreigners, location quotient 7.1), Ansan-si Danwon-gu (15,146; 39.5 percent; 10.7) and Bucheon-si

(14,979; 51.1 percent; 4.0). The others were Suwon-si Paldal-gu, where Korean-Chinese made up 60.8 percent of registered foreigners (7,431 of 12,227), Suwon-si Gwonseon-gu, Osan-si, Ansan-si Sangnok-gu, Seongnam-si Sujeong-gu, Gunpo-si and Anyang-si Manan-gu. The ten enclaves together had 80,508 Korean-Chinese registered foreigners, 67.5 percent of the group in the province.

## 5 Population Trends

Gyeonggi had 13,694,685 Korean residents in 2024, 26.7 percent of the national total of 51,217,221 and 2,788,652 more than in 2006 (up 25.6 percent). Growth slowed from 7.1 percent between 2014 and 2019 (881,836 people) to 3.4 percent between 2019 and 2024 (455,019 people).

In 2024 the province had a net inflow of 64,318 residents, the largest of the 17 provinces, and three second-phase new towns (Dongtan 2 in Hwaseong, Okjeong in Yangju and Unjeong in Paju) accounted for 91.8 percent of it, according to the Ministry of the Interior and Safety's resident registration statistics (Kihoilbo, 2025). Statistics Korea reported that the net inflows to Incheon, Gyeonggi and Sejong in 2024 were mainly for housing and family reasons (Korea.kr, 2025). In the KIRD data, the Korean population grew between 2019 and 2024 by 153,425 in Hwaseong-si, 66,691 in Yangju-si and 57,268 in Paju-si.

**TABLE 5**  
**Population-Decline Areas and Areas of Interest in Gyeonggi Province, 2019-24**

| District                          | Designation,<br>October 2021 | Registered<br>foreigners,<br>2024 | Per 100 Korean<br>residents,<br>2024 | Change in Korean<br>residents, 2019-<br>24 | Change in<br>registered<br>foreigners, 2019-<br>24 | Foreign gain as a<br>share of the<br>Korean loss (%) |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| Yeoncheon-gun                     | Population-<br>decline area  | 1,345                             | 3.3                                  | -2,958                                     | +330                                               | 11.2                                                 |
| Gapyeong-gun                      | Population-<br>decline area  | 1,286                             | 2.1                                  | +112                                       | +239                                               | n/a                                                  |
| Both population-<br>decline areas |                              | 2,631                             | 2.5                                  | -2,846                                     | +569                                               | 20.0                                                 |
| Pocheon-si                        | Area of interest             | 16,317                            | 11.5                                 | -6,916                                     | +3,053                                             | 44.1                                                 |
| Dongducheon-si                    | Area of interest             | 4,258                             | 4.9                                  | -7,930                                     | +781                                               | 9.8                                                  |

Note: The foreign gain as a share of the Korean loss divides the increase in registered foreigners by the decrease in Korean residents. It is not computed for Gapyeong-gun, where the Korean population grew. The combined ratio for the two decline areas divides 2,631 registered foreigners by 103,393 Korean residents (40,866 in Yeoncheon-gun and 62,527 in Gapyeong-gun).

Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks and Ministry of the Interior and Safety statistics, 2019-2024; designations from the Ministry of the Interior and Safety, October 2021.

Gyeonggi's total fertility rate was 0.79 in 2024, against 0.75 nationally. The province recorded 71,300 births that year, 29.9 percent of the national total of 238,300 and the largest share of any province (Seoul Economic TV, 2025).

The share of the province's population aged 65 and over rose from 9.8 percent in 2013 to 14.2 percent in 2022. It is projected to rise to 20.1 percent in 2028, the level of a super-aged society, and to 21.8 percent in 2030, 26.3 percent in 2035 and 31.9 percent in 2042. The total dependency ratio, the number of children and older residents per 100 working-age residents, is projected to increase from 36.8 in 2022 to 68.8 in 2042 (KPI News, 2025).

Statistics Korea's provincial population projections of May 2022 place Gyeonggi among four provinces, with Sejong, Jeju and South Chungcheong, whose population is projected to grow between 2020 and 2050. The province's working-age population is projected to shrink by 22.2 percent over that period, the smallest decline of any province, and the share aged 65 and over to rise to 36.4 percent in 2050, against 49.5 percent in South Jeolla, the highest of any province (Statistics Korea, 2022).

## 6 Industry and Foreign Workers

At the end of 2024 Gyeonggi had 120,561 registered foreigners on E-9 non-professional employment status, the status issued under the Employment Permit System (EPS). They made up 25.8 percent of the province's registered foreigners and 36.7 percent of all E-9 holders in South Korea. The count was 100,925 in 2014 and 106,617 in 2019, fell to 84,804 in 2021, and then rose by 35,757 (42.2 percent) by 2024.

Ministry of Employment and Labor statistics on E-9 workers employed under the EPS cover later dates. At the end of December 2025 Gyeonggi had 103,972 E-9 workers, more than any other province (e-Nara Index, 2025). In the second quarter of 2026 it had 104,474, or 36.5 percent of the national total of 285,880. Of these, 92,497 (88.5 percent) worked in manufacturing, 9,004 in agriculture and livestock, 2,169 in construction, 477 in services and 324 in fishing (KOSIS, 2026).

For 2025 the province estimated its agricultural labor demand at about 1.2 million workers and planned to supply 270,000 of them from public sources, including 8,000 through the EPS (Nongmin Ilbo, 2025).

The count of E-8 seasonal workers on 31 December misses most of them, because their contracts end before winter. The KIRD data record 50 E-8 holders in Gyeonggi on 31 December 2022, 205 on 31 December 2023 and 500 on 31 December 2024. The province's allocation of seasonal workers (계절근로자) was 1,263 in 2022, 1,497 in 2023 and 2,877 in 2024, and it rose to 5,258 in 2025 and 7,130 in 2026 (Joongboo Ilbo, 2026).

## 7 International Students and Universities

At the end of 2024, 42,808 registered foreigners in Gyeonggi were on D-2 student or D-4 general training status, 16.6 percent of all D-2 and D-4 holders in South Korea. D-2 students numbered 28,564 and D-4 trainees 14,244 (42,808 minus 28,564). The province's share of these statuses was lower than its 31.4 percent share of all registered foreigners, and study and job search statuses covered 9.8 percent of its registered foreigners, against 18.6 percent nationally.

The number of D-2 and D-4 holders in the province rose from 6,433 in 2008 to 16,013 in 2010, was between 10,533 and 11,448 from 2012 to 2015, and grew to 22,721 in 2019. After a dip to 20,334 in 2020 it rose to 28,848 in 2022, 34,478 in 2023 and 42,808 in 2024, 88.4 percent above the 2019 level.

In the university disclosure data of the Korean Educational Development Institute (KEDI) for 1 April 2024, Gachon University had 5,149 international students, the most of any four-year university in Gyeonggi, followed by the Natural Science Campus of Myongji University in Yongin with 2,451 and Ajou University with 2,231. The 75 higher-education institutions located in the province, including junior colleges, graduate schools, and technical and cyber colleges, had 31,895 international students on that date (KEDI, 2024).

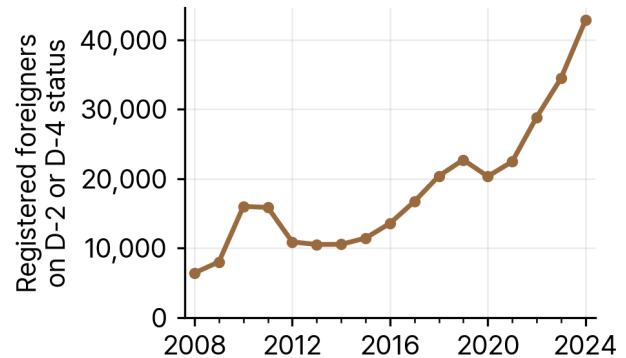
## 8 Provincial Policy

The province's ordinance on foreign residents is the Gyeonggi-do Foreign Resident Support Ordinance (경기도 외국인주민 지원 조례), Provincial Ordinance No. 8942, whose latest amended

form took effect on 14 July 2026 (National Law Information Center, 2026).

FIGURE 6

**Registered Foreigners on D-2 Student or D-4 General Training Status in Gyeonggi Province, 2008-24**



Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks, 2008-2024.

TABLE 6

**Universities with the Most International Students in Gyeonggi Province, 1 April 2024**

| University                                          | International students |
|-----------------------------------------------------|------------------------|
| Gachon University                                   | 5,149                  |
| Myongji University, Natural Science Campus (Yongin) | 2,451                  |
| Ajou University                                     | 2,231                  |
| Calvin University                                   | 1,742                  |
| Dankook University                                  | 1,672                  |
| The Catholic University of Korea                    | 1,603                  |

Note: Four-year universities located in Gyeonggi Province, ranked by the number of international students on 1 April 2024. All 75 higher-education institutions in the province had 31,895 international students on that date. These counts differ in date and source from the Ministry of Justice count of D-2 and D-4 holders on 31 December 2024.

Source: KEDI, 2024, university disclosure data distributed by the National Assembly Library.

In July 2024 Gyeonggi became the first of Korea's provincial-level governments to create an Immigration and Social Affairs Bureau (이민사회국), which it set up in response to its rapidly growing immigrant population. The province's Immigrant Society Master Plan for 2025-2027 (경기도 이민사회 종합계획) sets 33 tasks in four areas (social integration, human rights protection, immigration policy and governance). They include an integrated support platform for immigrants, better housing and working conditions for migrant workers, attracting and developing skilled talent, and support for the basic rights of children with migration backgrounds (Gyeonggi Provincial Government, 2025).

By 2025 the Gyeonggi Immigration and Social Integration Support Center in Uijeongbu had expanded its office more than 14-fold, from 53.24 to 766.96 square meters. It offers

consultations in 10 languages, and it supported more than 10,000 people with education and living consultations in 2024 (Gyeonggi Provincial Government, 2025).

Under the Ministry of Justice's metropolitan-type visa pilot, Gyeonggi secured 630 of the 1,210 places in the nationwide E-7 quota (52 percent). In April 2025 it began operating its own Gyeonggi-type metropolitan visa, planned to continue through 2026, to recruit skilled foreign workers in 12 occupations (Asia Economy, 2025).

Both of the province's population-decline areas participated in the Ministry of Justice's regional specialized visa pilot. Yeoncheon-gun conducted the fourth round of the pilot from 4 October 2022 to 3 October 2023, with 38 places for holders of the F-2-R regional talent visa and F-1-R visas for accompanying family members. Holders were required to remain employed in the county for up to five years after their

first visa was issued (Yeoncheon County, 2022). Gapyeong-gun announced on 10 December 2022 that it had been added to the pilot, ahead of the program's nationwide start on 1 January 2023 under the special act supporting population-decline areas (Seoul Shinmun, 2022).

## 9 Languages

The KIRD dataset estimates first-language speakers among registered foreigners from nationality counts and the first-language shares that Ethnologue reports for each country. By this estimate, Chinese was the most common first language among registered foreigners in Gyeonggi in 2024 (65,609 speakers), followed by Vietnamese (43,789), Khmer (21,231),

Tagalog/Filipino (16,123) and Thai (15,681). Thirty-two languages had 1,000 or more estimated speakers in the province in 2024.

The estimates do not cover the 119,240 Korean-Chinese registered foreigners in the province, for whom the dataset assigns no first-language shares. An estimate can also differ from the matching nationality count, because Ethnologue records other first languages for part of a country's population. In 2024 the province had 23,437 Nepali nationals and 12,275 estimated first-language speakers of Nepali, equal to 52.4 percent of the number of Nepali nationals. The provincial support center in Uijeongbu offers consultations in 10 languages (see Provincial Policy).

TABLE 7

**Estimated First-Language Speakers among Registered Foreigners in Gyeonggi Province, 2024**

| Language         | Estimated speakers |
|------------------|--------------------|
| Chinese          | 65,609             |
| Vietnamese       | 43,789             |
| Khmer            | 21,231             |
| Tagalog/Filipino | 16,123             |
| Thai             | 15,681             |
| Burmese          | 13,866             |
| Uzbek            | 12,544             |
| Nepali           | 12,275             |
| English          | 12,264             |
| Bengali          | 11,614             |

Note: Estimates multiply the number of registered foreigners of each nationality by Ethnologue's first-language shares for that country and add the results across nationalities. Korean-Chinese registered foreigners are not included.

Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks, 2024, and Ethnologue first-language shares.

## 10 Service Organizations and Community Places

The KIRD census of 1,717 migrant-serving organizations in South Korea lists 347 in Gyeonggi, 20.2 percent of the total, against the province's 31.4 percent share of registered foreigners in 2024. The province had 7.4 organizations per 10,000 registered foreigners, against 11.5 for the country as a whole. Of the 347 organizations, 337 provide direct services to migrants.

The most common types were social integration program providers (120), civic and faith-based organizations (61), medical support institutions (38), migrant worker support centers (28) and migrant community organizations (25), and the census also lists 12 migrant places of worship in the province. Twenty-nine of the organizations have "family center" (가족센터) in their names. Organizations can name more

than one population. Of the 347, 139 name migrant workers, 84 all migrants, 79 families, 47 refugees and 28 youth of migrant background. Smaller numbers name overseas Koreans (23), children (22), undocumented migrants (22), migrant women (9) and international students (5).

In 2011 Wongok-dong in Ansan, known as a "borderless village" (국경없는 마을), had about 170 restaurants and shops operated by immigrants, representing 50 countries of origin (Kyeonggi Ilbo, 2011). In early 2010, 16,214 of the neighborhood's 45,564 residents, about one in three, were foreign nationals (Korea.kr, 2010). Ansan City opened a foreign resident center and a migrant interpretation support center in Wongok-dong in March 2008 (Kim, n.d.). In 2010 the center was staffed and operated directly by city officials, while most foreign-resident support centers in Korea were set up by national or local governments and then contracted out to private organizations or NGOs (Korea.kr, 2010). Ansan-si

Danwon-gu, the district that includes Wongok-dong, had 13.1 registered foreigners per 100 Korean residents in 2024, the highest ratio in the province.

In neighboring Siheung, about 70 percent of the city's 27,700 foreign residents lived in the Jeongwang-dong area in August 2012, and the Kyeongin Ilbo called Jeongwang-dong a

"second international village" after Wongok-dong. The foreign-resident population of Siheung grew 23.3 percent (5,244 people) that year (Kyeongin Ilbo, 2012). In 2024 Siheung-si had 40,493 registered foreigners, the second-largest number of any district in the province, and 17,727 Korean-Chinese registered foreigners, the largest Korean-Chinese enclave in Gyeonggi.

**About these profiles.** The KIRD province profiles describe the foreign-resident population of each of South Korea's seventeen provinces and metropolitan cities. Figures come from the Korea Immigration Regional Dashboard (KIRD) dataset, built from the Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks and the Ministry of the Interior and Safety foreign-resident statistics for 2006 to 2024 (<https://doi.org/10.3886/E249944V1>); context comes from the sources listed. Interactive maps and tables: <https://immigrantsinkorea.today>.

Suggested citation: Korea Immigration Regional Dashboard (KIRD). 2026. "Foreign Residents in Gyeonggi Province." Foreign Residents in South Korea series, September 2026. Data: Korea Immigration Regional Dashboard (KIRD) dataset, <https://doi.org/10.3886/E249944V1>. Interactive maps and tables: <https://immigrantsinkorea.today>.

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# Foreign Residents in Seoul

SEPTEMBER 2026

## Summary

On 31 December 2024, Seoul was home to 265,544 registered foreigners, 17.8 percent of the 1,488,353 in South Korea. By that count it ranked second among the 17 provinces and metropolitan cities, after Gyeonggi Province. Relative to its Korean population it ranked ninth, with 2.8 registered foreigners per 100 Korean residents against 2.9 nationally. The Ministry of the Interior and Safety (MOIS), whose count also includes naturalized citizens and the children of foreign residents, recorded 450,888 foreign residents in Seoul in 2024, 1.7 times the registered count.

## Highlights

- ▶ Seoul had 265,544 registered foreigners at the end of 2024, the second-largest number among the 17 provinces (17.8 percent of the national total), and 450,888 foreign residents in the 2024 count of the Ministry of the Interior and Safety, which also includes naturalized citizens and children of foreign residents.
- ▶ Between 2019 and 2024, the number of registered foreigners in Seoul fell 5.8 percent, the lowest growth rate among the 17 provinces; over the same years, registered Korean-Chinese declined from 115,637 to 68,560, and registered foreigners on student or general trainee status (D-2 or D-4) rose from 62,081 to 83,673.
- ▶ In 2024, study and job-search statuses (33.9 percent) and settlement statuses (33.4 percent) together covered 67.3 percent of Seoul's registered foreigners, against 46.2 percent nationally, while rotation labor statuses covered 10.8 percent, against 31.1 percent nationally.

The number of registered foreigners in Seoul rose from 175,047 in 2006 to a high of 283,984 in 2018, fell to 226,569 in 2021 and recovered to 265,544 in 2024, close to the 2014 count of 266,360. Seoul's Korean population was 8.3 percent smaller in 2024 (9,331,828) than in 2006 (10,181,166), so the

number of registered foreigners per 100 Korean residents rose from 1.7 to 2.8. Between 2019 and 2024, registered foreigners fell 5.8 percent (16,332 people), the lowest growth rate among the 17 provinces, and Korean residents fell 4.1 percent (397,279 people).

Seoul's foreign population differs from the national one in its residence statuses and nationalities. Two-thirds of its registered foreigners had study, job-search or settlement statuses in 2024, and between 2019 and 2024 the number on student or general trainee status rose by 21,592 while the number on all other statuses fell by 37,924. Korean-Chinese and Chinese nationals made up 50.6 percent of registered foreigners in 2024. Seoul was home to 44.2 percent of the Taiwanese and 37.1 percent of the Japanese nationals registered in South Korea, and to between 63.2 and 81.9 percent of the German, Italian, Spanish, French and Saudi nationals. Another 147,773 overseas Koreans of foreign nationality reported a residence in Seoul on F-4 status in 2024 and are not counted as registered foreigners.

### BOX 1

#### Definitions

**Registered foreigners (등록외국인).** Foreign nationals in South Korea for more than 90 days who register with immigration authorities, counted by the Ministry of Justice on 31 December of each year. Overseas Koreans on F-4 status report their residence instead of registering and are not included. Figures in this Spotlight are registered foreigners unless stated otherwise.

**MOIS foreign residents (외국인주민).** The count of foreign residents by the Ministry of the Interior and Safety (MOIS), taken on 1 November in recent years. It adds naturalized citizens and the children of foreign residents to foreign nationals. It uses a different population definition from the Ministry of Justice count, so the two are not directly comparable.

**Korean residents (주민등록인구).** Korean nationals in the resident registration of the Ministry of the Interior and Safety. Ratios of registered foreigners per 100 Korean residents use this count as the denominator.

**Status groups.** Rotation labor covers E-9 (non-professional employment), E-8 (seasonal worker), H-2 (visiting employment), E-10 (crew employment) and D-3 (industrial trainee). Skilled covers E-1 to E-7. Study and job search covers D-2 (student), D-4 (general trainee) and D-10 (job seeker). Settlement covers F-2 (residential), F-5 (permanent residence) and F-6 (marriage migration). Family covers F-1 (visiting cohabitation) and F-3 (dependent family). All other statuses form the other group.

**Population-decline areas (인구감소지역).** The 89 districts that the Ministry of the Interior and Safety designated as population-decline areas on 19 October 2021, with 18 further districts designated as areas of interest. No district of Seoul is on either list.

**Ethnic enclave.** A district where a nationality's location quotient is at least 2 and the nationality makes up at least 30 percent of the district's registered foreigners. The location quotient divides the nationality's number per Korean resident in the district by the same ratio for South Korea.

242,623 in 2020 and 226,569 in 2021. It rose again in each of the next three years, to 265,544 in 2024 (see Figure 1). The 2024 count was 51.7 percent above the 2006 count (90,497 more people) and 0.3 percent below the 2014 count (816 fewer).

The MOIS count of foreign residents was 148,966 in 2006 and peaked at 465,885 in 2019. It fell to 426,743 in 2021 and was 450,888 in 2024, about three times the 2006 figure. It has exceeded the registered count in every year since 2008. In 2024 it included 367,291 foreign nationals, 47,124 naturalized citizens and 36,473 children of foreign residents. The foreign nationals in the MOIS count outnumbered registered foreigners by 101,747 in 2024; the two ministries use different population definitions and reference dates.

Seoul's Korean population declined in every year from 2011 to 2024. With 2014 set to 100, registered foreigners in Seoul stood at 99.7 in 2024 and Korean residents at 92.4 (see Figure 2). The number of registered foreigners per 100 Korean residents rose from 1.7 in 2006 to 2.6 in 2014 and 2.9 in 2019, and was 2.8 in 2024 (see Table 1). In 2024 Seoul ranked second among the 17 provinces by the number of registered foreigners and ninth by registered foreigners per Korean resident. Its registered foreign population fell 5.8 percent between 2019 and 2024, the lowest growth rate of the 17 provinces.

## 1 Size of the Foreign-Resident Population

Seoul had 175,047 registered foreigners in 2006. The number rose each year to 279,220 in 2011, ranged between 244,410 (2013) and 283,984 (2018) from 2012 to 2019, and fell to

TABLE 1

**Registered Foreigners, MOIS Foreign Residents and Korean Residents in Seoul, Selected Years, 2006-24**

| Year | Registered foreigners | MOIS foreign residents | Korean residents | Registered foreigners per 100 Korean residents |
|------|-----------------------|------------------------|------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| 2006 | 175,047               | 148,966                | 10,181,166       | 1.7                                            |
| 2014 | 266,360               | 415,059                | 10,103,233       | 2.6                                            |
| 2019 | 281,876               | 465,885                | 9,729,107        | 2.9                                            |
| 2024 | 265,544               | 450,888                | 9,331,828        | 2.8                                            |

Note: Registered foreigners are Ministry of Justice counts on 31 December. MOIS foreign residents also include naturalized citizens and children of foreign residents. In South Korea as a whole there were 1,488,353 registered foreigners and 51,217,221 Korean residents in 2024, or 2.9 registered foreigners per 100 Korean residents.

Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks and Ministry of the Interior and Safety statistics, 2006-2024.

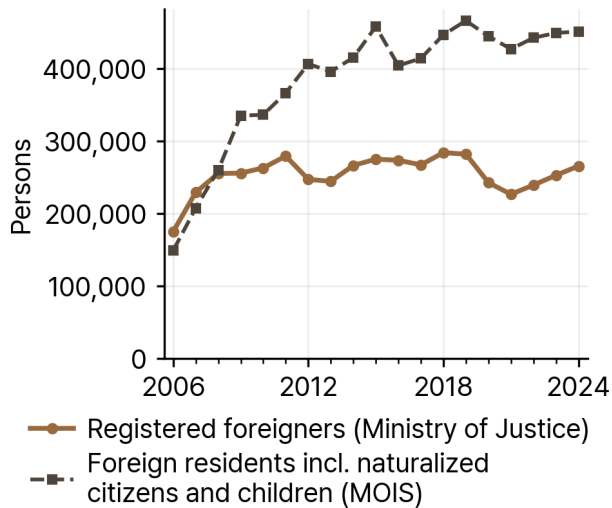
## 2 Nationalities

Korean-Chinese (68,560) and Chinese nationals (65,833) were the two largest groups of registered foreigners in Seoul in 2024 and together made up 50.6 percent of the total (see Figure 3 and Table 2). The Ministry of Justice reports Korean-Chinese, Chinese nationals of Korean ethnicity, separately from other Chinese nationals. Vietnamese nationals were third (27,032, or 10.2 percent), followed by nationals of the United States (11,387), Mongolia (10,938) and Japan (10,395). Korean-Chinese and Chinese nationals made up larger shares of registered foreigners in Seoul than in South Korea as a

whole (25.8 and 24.8 percent, against 16.6 and 14.7 percent), and Vietnamese nationals a smaller share (10.2 percent, against 17.6 percent).

FIGURE 1

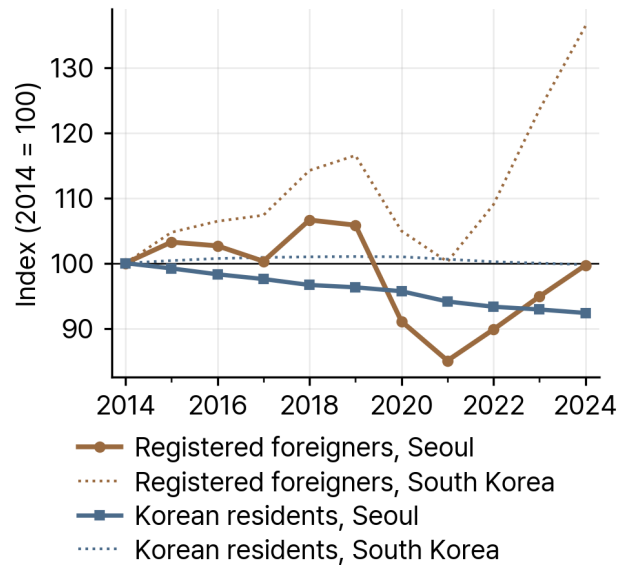
**Registered Foreigners and MOIS Foreign Residents in Seoul, 2006-24**



Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks and Ministry of the Interior and Safety foreign-resident statistics, 2006-2024.

FIGURE 2

**Registered Foreigners and Korean Residents in Seoul and South Korea, 2014-24 (Index, 2014 = 100)**



Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks and Ministry of the Interior and Safety resident registration statistics, 2014-2024.

TABLE 2

**Ten Largest Nationalities among Registered Foreigners in Seoul, 2019 and 2024**

| Nationality    | 2019    | 2024   | Share of Seoul's registered foreigners, 2024 (%) | Seoul's share of the nationality's registered foreigners in South Korea, 2024 (%) |
|----------------|---------|--------|--------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Korean-Chinese | 115,637 | 68,560 | 25.8                                             | 27.8                                                                              |
| China          | 66,053  | 65,833 | 24.8                                             | 30.1                                                                              |
| Vietnam        | 19,122  | 27,032 | 10.2                                             | 10.3                                                                              |
| United States  | 9,636   | 11,387 | 4.3                                              | 32.6                                                                              |
| Mongolia       | 6,307   | 10,938 | 4.1                                              | 29.0                                                                              |
| Japan          | 8,696   | 10,395 | 3.9                                              | 37.1                                                                              |
| Taiwan         | 8,687   | 7,691  | 2.9                                              | 44.2                                                                              |
| Nepal          | 1,353   | 4,165  | 1.6                                              | 5.8                                                                               |
| Uzbekistan     | 3,053   | 3,943  | 1.5                                              | 6.4                                                                               |
| Philippines    | 3,484   | 3,651  | 1.4                                              | 7.0                                                                               |

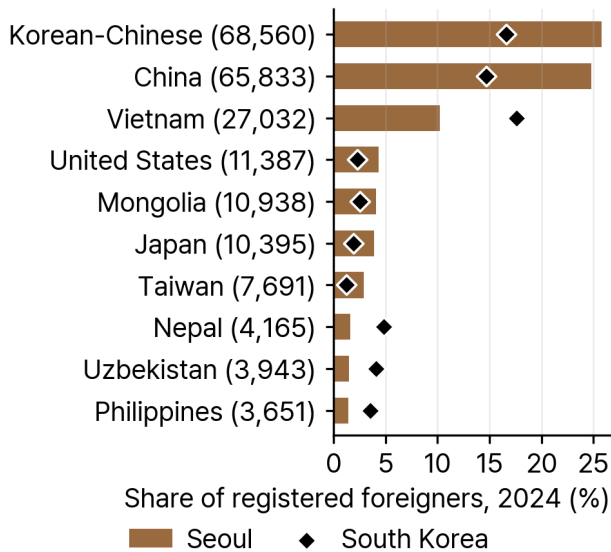
Note: Korean-Chinese are Chinese nationals of Korean ethnicity, whom the Ministry of Justice reports separately from other Chinese nationals. Seoul accounted for 17.8 percent of all registered foreigners in South Korea in 2024.

Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks, 2019 and 2024.

Between 2019 and 2024, the number of registered Korean-Chinese in Seoul fell from 115,637 to 68,560. The decline of 47,077 (40.7 percent) was larger than the net decline of 16,332 in all registered foreigners. The number of Chinese nationals changed little (66,053 in 2019). Mongolian nationals increased by 73.4 percent (from 6,307 to 10,938), Vietnamese nationals

by 41.4 percent (from 19,122 to 27,032) and Nepali nationals from 1,353 to 4,165, while Taiwanese nationals decreased by 11.5 percent (from 8,687 to 7,691).

FIGURE 3

**Ten Largest Nationalities among Registered Foreigners in Seoul, Share in Seoul and in South Korea, 2024**

Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks, 2024.

Seoul was home to 17.8 percent of all registered foreigners in South Korea in 2024 and to larger shares of several nationalities, including 44.2 percent of Taiwanese, 37.1 percent of Japanese, 32.6 percent of US and 30.1 percent of Chinese nationals. Its shares were larger still for Saudi nationals (81.9 percent, or 885 of 1,080), French nationals (66.1 percent, or 3,513 of 5,314), Spanish nationals (65.3 percent, or 780 of 1,194), Italian nationals (64.1 percent, or 827 of 1,291) and German nationals (63.2 percent, or 1,968 of 3,114).

Registered foreigners in Seoul came from 185 nationalities in 2024. The Shannon diversity index (H) of their nationalities, which rises as registered foreigners are spread more evenly across more nationalities, went from 1.6 in 2014 to 2.2 in 2024. On this index Seoul ranked 16th among the 17 provinces in 2024, where first is the most diverse.

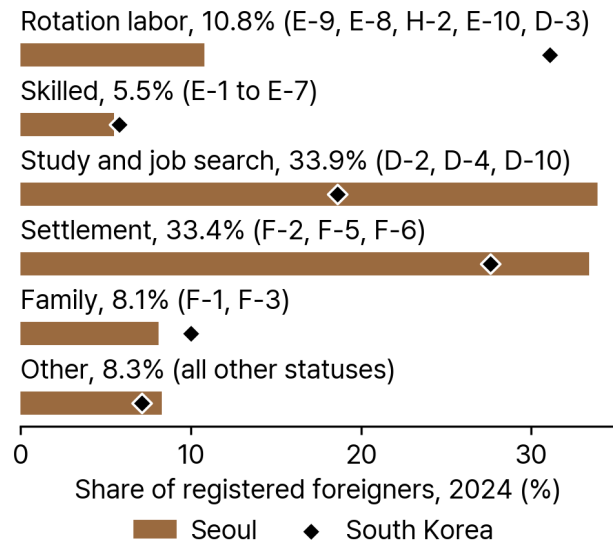
Overseas Koreans on F-4 status report their residence instead of registering and are not counted among registered foreigners. In 2024, 147,773 F-4 holders reported a residence in Seoul, 26.7 percent of the 553,664 in South Korea. Most were Korean-Chinese (111,832), followed by nationals of the United States (20,838), Canada (7,348), Australia (2,149) and New Zealand (1,094). In Seoul, Korean-Chinese on F-4 status outnumbered registered Korean-Chinese (111,832 against 68,560), and US nationals on F-4 status outnumbered registered US nationals (20,838 against 11,387).

### 3 Residence Statuses

Study and job-search statuses (D-2, D-4 and D-10) covered 89,929 registered foreigners in Seoul in 2024, 33.9 percent of the total against 18.6 percent nationally, and settlement

statuses (F-2, F-5 and F-6) covered 88,605, or 33.4 percent against 27.6 percent (see Figure 4). Rotation labor statuses covered 28,743 people (10.8 percent), about a third of the national share of 31.1 percent. The family group (F-1 and F-3) covered 21,538 (8.1 percent, against 10.0 percent nationally), skilled statuses (E-1 to E-7) 14,697 (5.5 percent, against 5.8 percent) and all other statuses 22,032 (8.3 percent, against 7.1 percent).

FIGURE 4

**Registered Foreigners by Status Group, Seoul and South Korea, 2024**

Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks, 2024.

The student status (D-2) was the most common single status in Seoul in 2024, with 63,328 holders, 23.8 percent of the city's registered foreigners and 35.6 percent of all D-2 holders in South Korea (see Table 3). Permanent residence (F-5) followed with 51,045 holders and visiting employment (H-2) with 25,567, 27.8 percent of all H-2 holders in the country. H-2 holders made up 89.0 percent of Seoul's rotation labor group. The unclassified category (ETC), which covers statuses under the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) and treaties, included 9,502 people in Seoul, 30.0 percent of the national total in that category. E-7 (specially designated activities) was the largest skilled status, with 8,010 holders.

The MOIS count classifies foreign residents in its own categories (see Table 4). Of the 450,888 foreign residents it recorded in Seoul in 2024, ethnic Koreans of foreign nationality (104,134) and international students (72,261) were the largest named categories of foreign nationals, ahead of foreign workers (37,734) and marriage migrants (34,368). The count also included 47,124 naturalized citizens and 36,473 children of foreign residents.

TABLE 3

**Ten Most Common Residence Statuses among Registered Foreigners in Seoul, 2024**

| Status | Meaning                                 | Registered foreigners | Share of Seoul's registered foreigners (%) | Seoul's share of all holders in South Korea (%) |
|--------|-----------------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| D-2    | Student                                 | 63,328                | 23.8                                       | 35.6                                            |
| F-5    | Permanent residence                     | 51,045                | 19.2                                       | 25.2                                            |
| H-2    | Visiting employment                     | 25,567                | 9.6                                        | 27.8                                            |
| F-6    | Marriage migration                      | 22,367                | 8.4                                        | 15.2                                            |
| D-4    | General trainee                         | 20,345                | 7.7                                        | 25.5                                            |
| F-2    | Residential                             | 15,193                | 5.7                                        | 24.9                                            |
| F-1    | Visiting cohabitation                   | 12,309                | 4.6                                        | 12.7                                            |
| ETC    | Unclassified (SOFA and treaty statuses) | 9,502                 | 3.6                                        | 30.0                                            |
| F-3    | Dependent family                        | 9,229                 | 3.5                                        | 18.0                                            |
| E-7    | Specially designated activities         | 8,010                 | 3.0                                        | 12.7                                            |

Note: Seoul's share of all holders is the number of holders of each status in Seoul divided by the number of registered foreigners with that status in South Korea. The status groups are defined in the Definitions box.

Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks, 2024.

TABLE 4

**Foreign Residents in Seoul by MOIS Category, 2024**

| Category                              | Foreign residents | Share of MOIS foreign residents (%) |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Foreign workers                       | 37,734            | 8.4                                 |
| Marriage migrants                     | 34,368            | 7.6                                 |
| International students                | 72,261            | 16.0                                |
| Ethnic Koreans of foreign nationality | 104,134           | 23.1                                |
| Other foreign nationals               | 118,794           | 26.3                                |
| Naturalized citizens                  | 47,124            | 10.5                                |
| Children of foreign residents         | 36,473            | 8.1                                 |
| Total                                 | 450,888           | 100.0                               |

Note: The first five categories are foreign nationals (367,291 in total).

Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of the Interior and Safety foreign-resident statistics, 2024.

## 4 Districts and Population-Decline Areas

Guro-gu (23,747) and Yeongdeungpo-gu (23,400) had the most registered foreigners of Seoul's 25 districts (gu) in 2024, followed by Dongdaemun-gu (19,868), Gwanak-gu (17,808) and Gwangjin-gu (16,689) (see Figure 5 and Table 5). Relative to the Korean population, the ratio was highest in Jung-gu (8.9 registered foreigners per 100 Korean residents) and Jongno-gu

(8.1), followed by Yongsan-gu (6.5), Yeongdeungpo-gu (6.3) and Geumcheon-gu (6.2), and lowest in Yangcheon-gu (0.8) and Dobong-gu (0.9).

Between 2019 and 2024, the number of registered foreigners fell in 11 districts and rose in 14. The largest decreases were in Yeongdeungpo-gu (9,908 fewer), Guro-gu (8,960 fewer) and Geumcheon-gu (5,099 fewer), and together these southwestern districts lost 23,967 registered foreigners, more than the citywide net decrease of 16,332. The largest increases were in Dongdaemun-gu (3,039 more), Gangbuk-gu (2,036 more) and Seodaemun-gu (1,995 more). The Korean

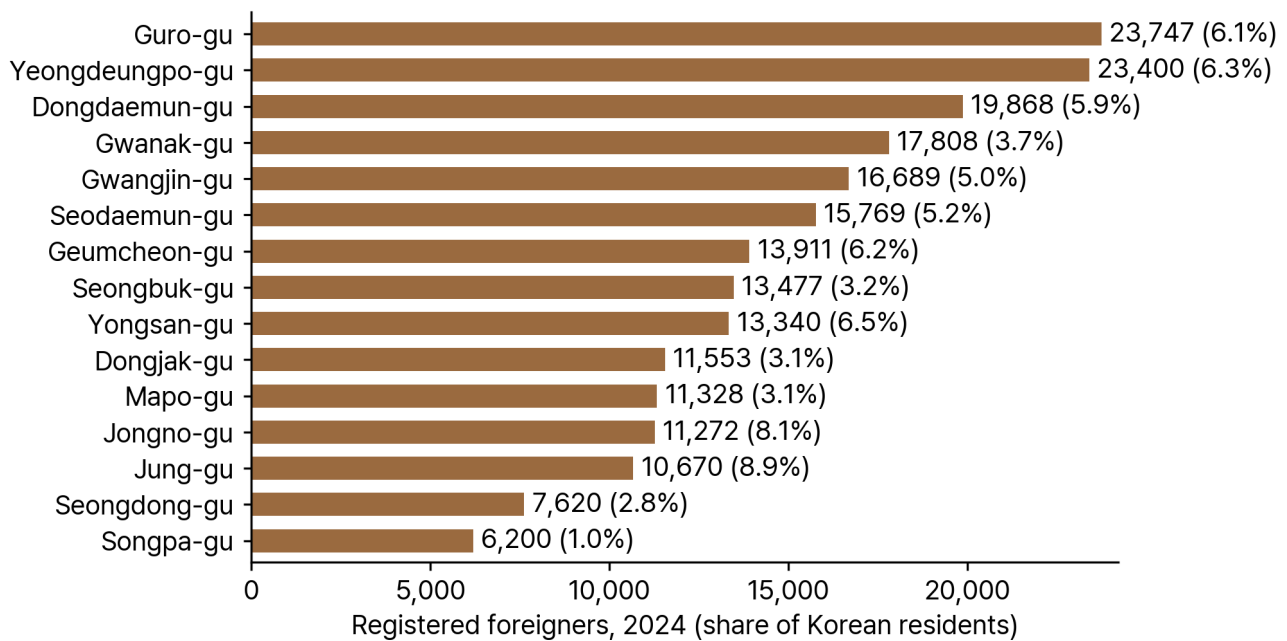
population fell in 22 districts and rose in Gangdong-gu (40,875 more), Gangnam-gu (12,176 more) and Yeongdeungpo-gu (6,095 more).

None of Seoul's 25 districts was among the population-decline areas or areas of interest that the Ministry of the Interior and Safety designated in October 2021, and none appears on the

ministry's current lists (Ministry of the Interior and Safety, n.d.). For the city as a whole, the Korean population fell by 397,279 between 2019 and 2024 and registered foreigners fell by 16,332, so the change in registered foreigners offset none of the Korean decline. The foreign decline equaled 4.1 percent of the Korean decline (16,332 of 397,279).

FIGURE 5

**Fifteen Districts of Seoul with the Most Registered Foreigners, 2024 (Registered Foreigners per 100 Korean Residents in Parentheses)**



Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks and Ministry of the Interior and Safety resident registration statistics, 2024.

TABLE 5

**Ten Districts of Seoul with the Most Registered Foreigners, 2024**

| District        | Registered foreigners, 2024 | Registered foreigners per 100 Korean residents, 2024 | Change in Korean residents, 2019-24 | Change in registered foreigners, 2019-24 | Population-decline area |
|-----------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Guro-gu         | 23,747                      | 6.1                                                  | -18,495                             | -8,960                                   | No                      |
| Yeongdeungpo-gu | 23,400                      | 6.3                                                  | +6,095                              | -9,908                                   | No                      |
| Dongdaemun-gu   | 19,868                      | 5.9                                                  | -7,459                              | +3,039                                   | No                      |
| Gwanak-gu       | 17,808                      | 3.7                                                  | -22,282                             | +568                                     | No                      |
| Gwangjin-gu     | 16,689                      | 5.0                                                  | -19,387                             | +1,067                                   | No                      |
| Seodaemun-gu    | 15,769                      | 5.2                                                  | -6,544                              | +1,995                                   | No                      |
| Geumcheon-gu    | 13,911                      | 6.2                                                  | -7,651                              | -5,099                                   | No                      |
| Seongbuk-gu     | 13,477                      | 3.2                                                  | -21,090                             | +1,383                                   | No                      |
| Yongsan-gu      | 13,340                      | 6.5                                                  | -24,816                             | -3,175                                   | No                      |
| Dongjak-gu      | 11,553                      | 3.1                                                  | -20,164                             | -1,396                                   | No                      |

Note: No district of Seoul was designated a population-decline area or an area of interest in 2021.

Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks and Ministry of the Interior and Safety resident registration statistics, 2019 and 2024.

By the definition used in this Spotlight, 12 districts in Seoul had an ethnic enclave in 2024. Korean-Chinese formed enclaves in Guro-gu (15,726 people, 66.2 percent of the district's registered foreigners, location quotient 8.4), Yeongdeungpo-gu (14,933; 63.8 percent; 8.3), Geumcheon-gu (9,133; 65.7 percent; 8.4) and Gwanak-gu (5,507; 30.9 percent; 2.4). Guro-gu, Yeongdeungpo-gu and Geumcheon-gu together had 39,792 registered Korean-Chinese, 58.0 percent of those in Seoul.

Chinese nationals formed enclaves in seven districts, the largest in Dongdaemun-gu (8,007; 40.3 percent; 5.5) and Seodaemun-gu (5,517; 35.0 percent; 4.3), followed by Gwangjin-gu (5,447; 32.6 percent; 3.8), Seongbuk-gu (4,362; 32.4 percent; 2.4), Jongno-gu (3,890; 34.5 percent; 6.6), Jung-gu (3,243; 30.4 percent; 6.3) and Seongdong-gu (2,479; 32.5 percent; 2.1). Together these districts had 32,945 registered Chinese nationals, half of those in Seoul (50.0 percent). Jungnang-gu had a Mongolian enclave (1,970; 32.4 percent; 7.1).

## 5 Population Trends

Seoul's Korean population rose from 10,181,166 in 2006 to 10,312,545 in 2010 and declined in every year from 2011 to 2024. It fell below 10 million in 2016 (9,930,616) and was 9,331,828 in 2024, 7.6 percent below the 2014 figure (771,405 fewer people) and 4.1 percent below the 2019 figure (397,279 fewer). Seoul accounted for 18.2 percent of South Korea's 51,217,221 Korean residents in 2024.

The Seoul Institute, using a different population series, reported that Seoul's registered population was 9.288 million in 2024, 0.5 percent below 2023 and 6.2 percent below the 9.907 million of 2015 (Seoul Institute, n.d.).

Seoul's total fertility rate was 0.58 in 2024, the lowest of the 17 provinces, against 0.75 nationally and 1.03 in Sejong and South Jeolla Province, the highest (Statistics Korea, 2025a).

People aged 65 and older made up 19.9 percent of Seoul's population in 2025, according to Statistics Korea figures reported by MBC News, below the national share of 20.3 percent, which exceeded 20 percent that year for the first time. The report named South Jeolla Province (27.4 percent), North Gyeongsang Province (26.1 percent), Gangwon State (25.7 percent), Jeonbuk State (25.4 percent) and Busan (24.5 percent) as the provinces with the highest shares, and Seoul, Gyeonggi Province (17 percent) and Incheon (18.2 percent) as those below 20 percent (MBC News, 2025).

Seoul was one of 12 provinces with net domestic out-migration in 2024 and had the third-highest rate of net out-migration. It had net inflows for job and education reasons and larger net outflows for housing and family reasons (Statistics Korea, 2025b).

Under the low scenario of Statistics Korea's 2022-2052 regional population projection, Seoul's population would fall from 9.42 million in 2022 to 7.22 million in 2052, a decrease of

2.2 million (23.3 percent). Under the medium scenario the decrease would be about 1.49 million, roughly 15 percent (Newspim, 2024).

## 6 Industry and Foreign Workers

A 2025 Newsis report based on Seoul city data describes Garibong-dong in Guro-gu, Siheung-dong in Geumcheon-gu, and Daerim-dong and Singil-dong in Yeongdeungpo-gu as traditional destinations for foreign workers in factories, industrial parks, garment sewing and manufacturing. The city's southwestern area was home to 102,954 of the 269,893 registered foreign residents in that count, the largest number of any area of the city (Newsis, 2025). According to the same report, the Imun-dong and Hwigyeong-dong neighborhoods of Dongdaemun-gu have many foreign workers in garment sewing and retail shops.

The report also found many American, Japanese and European professionals in Gangnam-gu (Samseong-dong, Yeoksam-dong and Apgujeong-dong) and Seocho-gu (Banpo-dong, Seocho-dong and Bangbae-dong), where international schools, foreign companies, embassies and international business facilities are concentrated (Newsis, 2025). In the KIRD data, Gangnam-gu had 5,870 registered foreigners in 2024 (1.1 per 100 Korean residents) and Seocho-gu 4,700 (1.2 per 100).

Registered foreigners on non-professional employment (E-9) status numbered 4,964 in Seoul in 2014, 3,442 in 2019, 2,684 in 2021 and 3,130 in 2024, when they made up 1.2 percent of the city's registered foreigners. Visiting employment (H-2) was the most common work status in Seoul in 2024, with 25,567 holders, 27.8 percent of all H-2 holders in South Korea. Skilled statuses (E-1 to E-7) covered 14,697 registered foreigners, including 8,010 on E-7 (specially designated activities) status.

The Ministry of Justice counted 6 registered foreigners on seasonal worker (E-8) status in Seoul on 31 December 2024. A count on that date misses most seasonal workers, whose contracts end before winter. Seoul is not named among the participating local governments in the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs notice on the second-half 2025 allocation of seasonal workers, which put the 2025 total at 95,700 workers (86,633 in agriculture, 8,796 in fisheries and 271 in reserve) across about 100 local governments (Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, 2025).

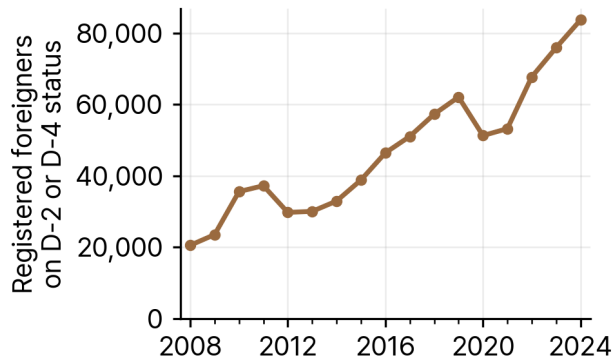
## 7 International Students and Universities

Registered foreigners on student (D-2) or general trainee (D-4) status in Seoul numbered 20,539 in 2008. The count rose to 37,229 in 2011, fell to 29,755 in 2012, grew every year to 62,081 in 2019, fell to 51,277 in 2020, and then grew every year to 83,673 in 2024, about four times the 2008 figure (see

Figure 6). In 2024 these students and trainees made up 31.5 percent of Seoul's registered foreigners and 32.4 percent of all D-2 and D-4 holders in South Korea.

FIGURE 6

**Registered Foreigners on Student (D-2) or General Trainee (D-4) Status in Seoul, 2008-24**



Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks, 2008-2024.

Between 2019 and 2024 their number grew by 21,592 (34.8 percent), while registered foreigners on all other statuses fell from 219,795 to 181,871. The MOIS count, which uses its own categories, recorded 72,261 international students in Seoul in 2024.

Among universities in Seoul, Hanyang University had the most international students in 2023 (6,612), followed by Kyung Hee University (6,395), Sungkyunkwan University (5,472, counted across its campuses in Jongno-gu, Seoul, and in Suwon), Yonsei University (4,965) and Chung-Ang University (4,480), according to Korean Council for University Education data reported in 2024 (EToday, 2024a). The same data put about 45 percent of South Korea's 181,842 international students in 2023 at universities in Seoul. That share counts students by the location of their university in 2023; the KIRD share of 32.4 percent counts registered foreigners on D-2 or D-4 status by place of residence in 2024.

## 8 Provincial Policy

Seoul's support for foreign residents rests on the Seoul Metropolitan Government Ordinance on Support for Foreign Residents and Multicultural Families, enacted as Ordinance No. 5726 on 17 July 2014. The ordinance replaced a 2007 ordinance promoting Seoul as a global city and a 2009 ordinance on support for multicultural families. Its current text was last amended by Ordinance No. 7423 of 31 December 2019, part of a citywide revision of Japanese-style legal wording (Korea Law Information Center, n.d.).

In 2018, when the city's foreign resident population had grown to about 400,000, Seoul adopted the Da-Value Seoul Master Plan, with 4 goals, 14 major tasks and 100 projects, including a second Global Center scheduled to open in July 2018 (Seoul

Metropolitan Government, 2018). The master plan for 2024-2028 allocates KRW 250.6 billion over five years to four areas (attracting and supporting talented foreigners, expanding foreign labor to match demand, stable settlement in local communities, and mutual respect and communication between Korean and foreign residents). Its targets include attracting 1,000 science and engineering talents at the master's and doctoral level and opening a second Seoul Foreign Residents Support Center in Seongdong-gu, in the city's northeast, to provide living information, employment training and specialized counseling (EToday, 2024b).

The city's Global City Policy Bureau lists 18 support facilities for foreign residents in five categories. They are the Seoul Global Center (38 Jongno, Jongno-gu; opened 1 January 2008), 7 Foreign Resident Centers, 7 Global Village Centers, the Global Youth Education Center (Yeongdeungpo-gu; opened 1 January 2022) and 2 facilities for migrant women affected by violence (Seoul Metropolitan Government, n.d.).

Because none of its districts is a population-decline area or an area of interest, Seoul is outside the Ministry of Justice's regional specialized visa pilot, whose eligibility depends on those designations (Ministry of the Interior and Safety, n.d.). The city operates its own metropolitan-type visa pilot for international students in science and engineering (D-2 and D-4, from associate and bachelor's to doctoral level) who begin their studies in 2026, aimed at future talent for its core industries of robotics, artificial intelligence, bio and fintech. Under the 2025 pilot, 10 participating universities recommend students, the city issues a recommendation letter, and the Ministry of Justice grants the visa or change of status. The universities are Kookmin University, Seoul National University of Science and Technology, the Seoul School of Integrated Sciences and Technologies (aSSIST, a graduate business school), the University of Seoul, Seoul National University, Seoul Women's University, Sungshin Women's University, Sejong University, Soongsil University and Chung-Ang University (Sungshin Women's University, 2026).

Seoul also conducts the annual Seoul Survey, a nationally approved statistic (No. 201011). Its 2024 round surveyed 2,500 foreign residents of Seoul aged 20 or older with more than 90 days of residence, alongside 20,000 households and 5,000 citizens (Seoul Metropolitan Government, 2024).

## 9 Languages

The KIRD dataset estimates the first languages of registered foreigners by applying each country's first-language shares from Ethnologue to the counts of registered foreigners by nationality. By this estimate, registered foreigners in Seoul in 2024 included 69,050 first-language speakers of Chinese, 23,226 of Vietnamese, 13,735 of English, 10,198 of Japanese and 9,604 of Mongolian (see Table 6). In total, 21 languages had at least 1,000 estimated speakers in Seoul in 2024.

**TABLE 6**  
**Ten Most Common Estimated First Languages among Registered Foreigners in Seoul, 2024**

| Language         | Estimated first-language speakers |
|------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Chinese          | 69,050                            |
| Vietnamese       | 23,226                            |
| English          | 13,735                            |
| Japanese         | 10,198                            |
| Mongolian        | 9,604                             |
| Cantonese        | 5,293                             |
| Russian          | 4,345                             |
| Spanish          | 3,834                             |
| French           | 3,648                             |
| Tagalog/Filipino | 3,442                             |

Note: Estimates apply Ethnologue first-language shares for each country to the counts of registered foreigners by nationality.

Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks and Ethnologue first-language shares, 2024.

The estimates exclude Korean, and they do not cover the 68,560 registered Korean-Chinese in Seoul, for whom the dataset has no first-language shares.

## 10 Service Organizations and Community Places

The KIRD census of 1,717 migrant-serving organizations in South Korea includes 305 in Seoul (17.7 percent), or 11.5 per 10,000 registered foreigners in 2024, close to the national rate of 11.5. Of the 305, 284 provide services directly to migrants. The largest types are providers of social integration and early adaptation programs (81), civic and faith-based support organizations (67), medical support institutions (30), migrant community organizations (23) and foreign resident support centers (20). The census also includes 25 family centers in Seoul.

Organizations in the census list the groups they serve, and one organization can list several. In Seoul, 98 list migrant workers, 69 families, 64 refugees, 33 youth, 21 children, 21 overseas Koreans, 19 women, 15 undocumented migrants and 8 international students, and 46 serve all migrants.

Daerim-dong in Yeongdeungpo-gu, known as Seoul's Chinatown, has about 45,000 residents, more than 60 percent of whom are Korean-Chinese or Chinese nationals, the highest concentration of any ethnic enclave in Korea according to Seoul Metropolitan Government population data (Korea JoongAng Daily, 2026).

The Seoul Central Mosque, Korea's first mosque, was built in 1976 in Hannam-dong, Yongsan-gu, near Itaewon (Korea Herald, 2026). A 2020 city report described a Filipino market open every Sunday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. in front of Hyehwa-dong Catholic Church in Jongno-gu, which began as the number of Filipinos in the area grew (Seoul Metropolitan Government, 2020).

Seorae Village in Seocho-gu (Banpo 4-dong and parts of Bangbae-dong) became a French residential area after the Seoul French School moved there from Hannam-dong, and more than 40 percent of the French nationals in Korea live there (Ilyo Seoul, 2023). In the KIRD data, 3,513 of the 5,314 registered French nationals in South Korea lived in Seoul in 2024.

**About these profiles.** The KIRD province profiles describe the foreign-resident population of each of South Korea's seventeen provinces and metropolitan cities. Figures come from the Korea Immigration Regional Dashboard (KIRD) dataset, built from the Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks and the Ministry of the Interior and Safety foreign-resident statistics for 2006 to 2024 (<https://doi.org/10.3886/E249944V1>); context comes from the sources listed. Interactive maps and tables: <https://immigrantsinkorea.today>.

Suggested citation: Korea Immigration Regional Dashboard (KIRD). 2026. "Foreign Residents in Seoul." Foreign Residents in South Korea series, September 2026. Data: Korea Immigration Regional Dashboard (KIRD) dataset, <https://doi.org/10.3886/E249944V1>. Interactive maps and tables: <https://immigrantsinkorea.today>.

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# Foreign Residents in South Gyeongsang Province

SEPTEMBER 2026

## Summary

South Gyeongsang Province (Gyeongsangnam-do) had 102,333 registered foreigners on 31 December 2024, 6.9 percent of the 1,488,353 in South Korea. It ranked third among the 17 provinces and metropolitan cities by this count, after Gyeonggi Province and Seoul, and sixth by registered foreigners per Korean resident, with 3.2 per 100 Korean residents against 2.9 nationally. The Ministry of the Interior and Safety (MOIS), whose count adds naturalized citizens and the children of foreign residents, recorded 162,714 foreign residents in the province on 1 November 2024.

## Highlights

- ▶ South Gyeongsang Province had 102,333 registered foreigners at the end of 2024, the third-largest number among the 17 provinces and metropolitan cities and 34.4 percent more than in 2019, while the number of Korean residents in the province fell 4.0 percent (134,173 people) over the same five years.
- ▶ Rotation labor statuses (E-9, E-8, H-2, E-10, D-3) covered 49.0 percent of the province's registered foreigners in 2024, against 31.1 percent nationally, and the province had 12.4 percent of all E-9 non-professional employment holders in South Korea, compared with its 6.9 percent share of all registered foreigners.
- ▶ Vietnamese nationals made up 25.5 percent of the province's registered foreigners in 2024, against 17.6 percent nationally, and the province was home to 17.8 percent of all registered Indonesians and 16.4 percent of registered Sri Lankans in South Korea.

The number of registered foreigners rose from 35,915 in 2006 to 82,316 in 2015, fell to 63,148 in 2021, and rose again to 102,333 in 2024, the highest count between 2006 and 2024. Between 2019 and 2024 it grew 34.4 percent (26,210 people), the seventh-fastest growth among the 17 provinces, while the number of Korean residents fell 4.0 percent (134,173 people);

the foreign gain equaled 19.5 percent of the Korean loss. The Korean resident population peaked at 3,380,404 in 2017 and declined in every year after that, to 3,228,380 in 2024.

Compared with registered foreigners nationally, those in the province in 2024 were more likely to have rotation labor statuses (49.0 percent, against 31.1 percent) and skilled statuses (10.3 percent, against 5.8 percent) and less likely to have study and job-search statuses (6.5 percent, against 18.6 percent). Vietnamese nationals made up 25.5 percent of them and Indonesians 10.1 percent, while Chinese and Korean-Chinese nationals together made up 10.2 percent, against 31.3 percent nationally. Gimhae-si and Geoje-si had 38.8 percent of the province's registered foreigners in 2024 and 47.2 percent of its net gain between 2019 and 2024. All ten of the province's counties and one city, Miryang-si, were designated population-decline areas in 2021, and in these 11 districts registered foreigners increased by 6,293 between 2019 and 2024 while Korean residents decreased by 47,087.

### BOX 1

#### Definitions

**Registered foreigners (등록외국인).** Foreign nationals in South Korea for more than 90 days who register with immigration authorities, counted by the Ministry of Justice on 31 December of each year. Overseas Koreans on F-4 status report their residence instead of registering and are not included. This Spotlight uses registered foreigners unless it names another count.

**MOIS foreign residents (외국인주민).** The Ministry of the Interior and Safety (MOIS) count of foreign residents on 1 November of each year. It adds naturalized Korean citizens and the children of foreign residents to the foreign nationals it counts.

**Korean residents.** Korean nationals in the MOIS resident registration population. They are the denominator of registered foreigners per 100 Korean residents.

**Status groups.** This Spotlight groups residence statuses as rotation labor (E-9, E-8, H-2, E-10, D-3), skilled (E-1 to E-7), study and job search (D-2, D-4, D-10), settlement (F-2, F-5, F-6), family (F-1, F-3), and other (all remaining statuses).

**Population-decline areas (인구감소지역).** The 89 districts that the Ministry of the Interior and Safety designated as population-decline areas on 19 October 2021, together with 18 districts designated as areas of interest (관심지역).

**Ethnic enclave.** In the KIRD dataset, a district where registered foreigners of one nationality number at least 200, make up at least 30 percent of the district's registered foreigners, and have a location quotient of at least 2. The location quotient divides the nationality's count per Korean resident in the district by its count per Korean resident in South Korea.

**Shannon diversity index (H).** A measure of the nationality diversity of registered foreigners that increases with the number of nationalities and the evenness of their sizes. The KIRD dataset computes it over the nationalities largest in South Korea in each year plus one residual group, so that values can be compared across provinces and years.

## 1 Size of the Foreign-Resident Population

The number of registered foreigners in South Gyeongsang Province rose from 35,915 in 2006 to 82,316 in 2015, more than twice the 2006 count (see Figure 1). It declined to 74,304 in 2018 and, after a rise to 76,123 in 2019, fell to 63,148 in 2021, 17.0 percent below the 2019 count. It then increased to 70,390 in 2022, 89,312 in 2023, and 102,333 in 2024, the highest count between 2006 and 2024 and 62.1 percent above the 2021 count.

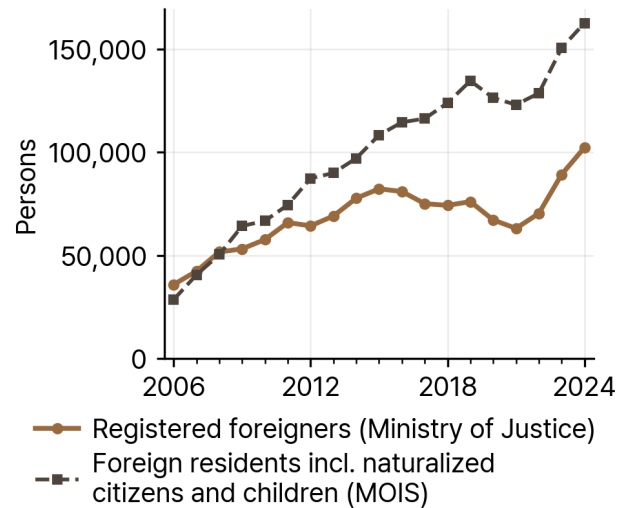
The MOIS count of foreign residents, which adds naturalized citizens and the children of foreign residents, was smaller than the registered count from 2006 to 2008 and larger in every year from 2009 to 2024. It rose every year from 50,431 in 2008 to 134,675 in 2019, declined to 123,074 in 2021, and increased to 162,714 in 2024. Between 2015 and 2019, when the registered count fell by 6,193 (from 82,316 to 76,123), the MOIS count rose by 26,300 (from 108,375 to 134,675).

With 2014 set to 100, the index of registered foreigners in the province rose to 105.8 in 2015, fell to 81.2 in 2021, and was 131.6 in 2024 (see Figure 2, which also shows the indexes for South Korea as a whole). The index of Korean residents in the province was highest in 2017 (100.9) and declined to 96.4 in 2024. Over the ten years from 2014 to 2024, the registered count grew 31.6 percent (24,555 people) and the Korean count fell 3.6 percent (121,877 people).

In 2024 the province ranked third among the 17 provinces by the number of registered foreigners and sixth by registered foreigners per Korean resident (3.2 per 100 Korean residents, against 2.9 for South Korea as a whole). It had 6.9 percent of the country's registered foreigners and 6.3 percent of its Korean residents (3,228,380 of 51,217,221). Between 2006 and 2024 the registered count grew 184.9 percent (66,418 people) and the Korean count 1.7 percent (55,523 people) (see Table 1).

FIGURE 1

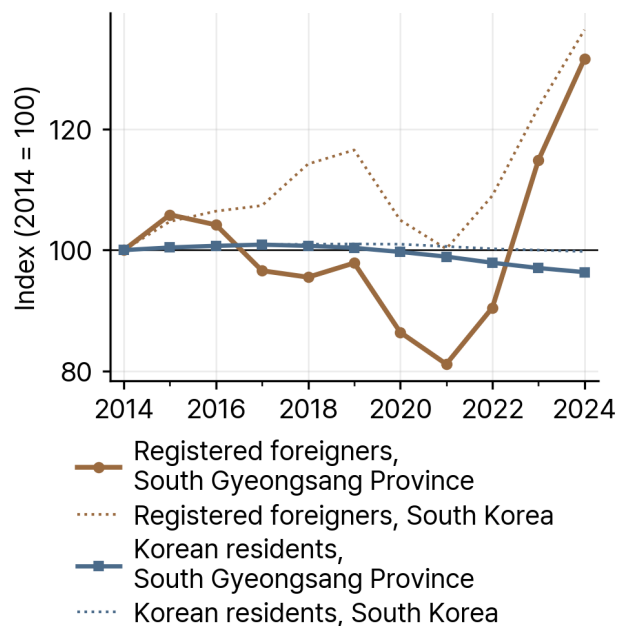
**Registered Foreigners and MOIS Foreign Residents in South Gyeongsang Province, 2006-24**



Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks and Ministry of the Interior and Safety foreign-resident statistics, 2006-2024.

FIGURE 2

**Registered Foreigners and Korean Residents in South Gyeongsang Province and South Korea, 2014-24 (index, 2014 = 100)**



Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks and Ministry of the Interior and Safety resident registration statistics, 2014-2024.

## 2 Nationalities

Vietnamese nationals were the largest group of registered foreigners in the province in 2024 (26,072 people, 25.5 percent), against 17.6 percent of registered foreigners nationally (see Figure 3 and Table 2). Indonesians followed with 10,348 (10.1 percent, against 3.9 percent nationally), then Uzbeks with 7,681 (7.5 percent), Cambodians with 6,972 (6.8

percent), and Nepalis with 6,778 (6.6 percent). The ten largest groups made up 80.0 percent of the province's registered foreigners in 2024.

Between 2019 and 2024 the Vietnamese group grew by 7,309 (from 18,763 to 26,072), equal to 27.9 percent of the province's net gain of 26,210 registered foreigners. Among the ten largest groups, the fastest growth was among Nepalis (84.7 percent,

from 3,670 to 6,778), Sri Lankans (72.2 percent, from 3,229 to 5,561), nationals of Myanmar (68.8 percent, from 2,362 to 3,987), and Indonesians (54.3 percent, from 6,705 to 10,348).

Chinese nationals decreased from 6,271 in 2019 to 5,741 in 2024 and Korean-Chinese from 5,845 to 4,649. In 2024 the two groups together made up 10.2 percent of the province's registered foreigners (10,390 people), against 31.3 percent nationally (14.7 percent Chinese and 16.6 percent Korean-Chinese).

TABLE 1

**Registered Foreigners, MOIS Foreign Residents, and Korean Residents in South Gyeongsang Province, Selected Years, 2006-24**

| Year | Registered foreigners | MOIS foreign residents | Korean residents | Registered foreigners per 100 Korean residents |
|------|-----------------------|------------------------|------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| 2006 | 35,915                | n/a                    | 3,172,857        | 1.1                                            |
| 2014 | 77,778                | 97,148                 | 3,350,257        | 2.3                                            |
| 2019 | 76,123                | 134,675                | 3,362,553        | 2.3                                            |
| 2024 | 102,333               | 162,714                | 3,228,380        | 3.2                                            |

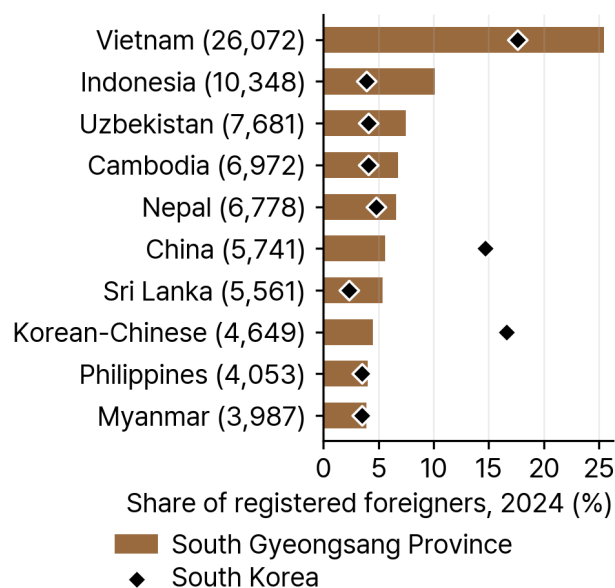
Note: MOIS counts are shown from 2008, when MOIS counted 50,431 foreign residents in the province; n/a = not shown. Registered foreigners are counted on 31 December and MOIS foreign residents on 1 November.

Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks and Ministry of the Interior and Safety statistics, 2006-2024.

The province had larger shares of several national groups than its 6.9 percent share of all registered foreigners in South Korea in 2024. It was home to 20.3 percent of registered nationals of Timor-Leste (881 of 4,336), 17.8 percent of Indonesians (10,348 of 58,248), 17.6 percent of Laotians (1,169 of 6,641), 16.4 percent of Sri Lankans (5,561 of 33,965), and 16.1 percent of Brazilians (236 of 1,464).

The Shannon diversity index of the province's registered foreigners was 2.6 in both 2014 and 2024, the fourth-highest value among the 17 provinces in 2024. Registered foreigners in the province came from 121 nationalities in 2024.

FIGURE 3

**Ten Largest Nationalities among Registered Foreigners in South Gyeongsang Province, Shares in the Province and South Korea, 2024**


Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks, 2024.

Overseas Koreans on F-4 status report their residence instead of registering and are not counted among registered foreigners. In 2024, 14,937 F-4 holders reported residence in the province, 2.7 percent of the 553,664 in South Korea, a smaller share than the province's 6.9 percent of registered foreigners. Korean-Chinese made up 7,677 of them, followed by Korean-Russians (2,306) and holders of Uzbek (1,909), U.S.

(1,025), and Kazakh (990) nationality. Counting both groups, 12,326 Korean-Chinese residents were recorded in the province in 2024 (7,677 reporting residence on F-4 status and

4,649 registered foreigners).

TABLE 2

#### Ten Largest Nationalities among Registered Foreigners in South Gyeongsang Province, 2019 and 2024

| Nationality    | 2019   | 2024   | Share of the province's registered foreigners, 2024 (%) | Province's share of this nationality's registered foreigners in South Korea, 2024 (%) |
|----------------|--------|--------|---------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Vietnam        | 18,763 | 26,072 | 25.5                                                    | 10.0                                                                                  |
| Indonesia      | 6,705  | 10,348 | 10.1                                                    | 17.8                                                                                  |
| Uzbekistan     | 6,620  | 7,681  | 7.5                                                     | 12.4                                                                                  |
| Cambodia       | 4,728  | 6,972  | 6.8                                                     | 11.4                                                                                  |
| Nepal          | 3,670  | 6,778  | 6.6                                                     | 9.4                                                                                   |
| China          | 6,271  | 5,741  | 5.6                                                     | 2.6                                                                                   |
| Sri Lanka      | 3,229  | 5,561  | 5.4                                                     | 16.4                                                                                  |
| Korean-Chinese | 5,845  | 4,649  | 4.5                                                     | 1.9                                                                                   |
| Philippines    | 3,621  | 4,053  | 4.0                                                     | 7.8                                                                                   |
| Myanmar        | 2,362  | 3,987  | 3.9                                                     | 7.7                                                                                   |

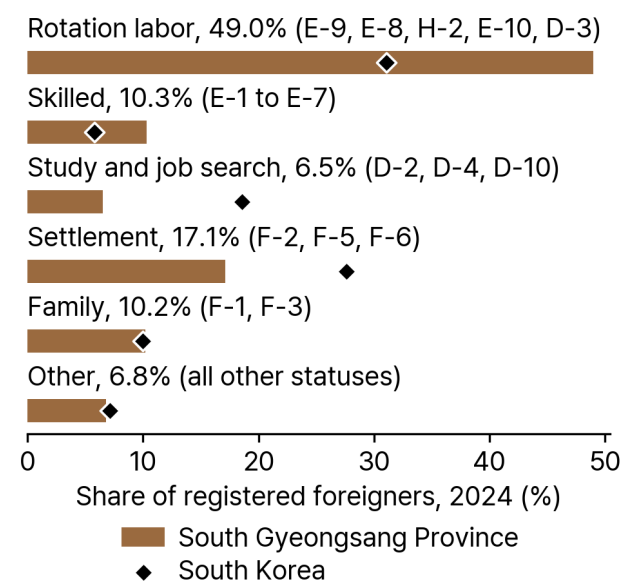
Note: Korean-Chinese (한국계중국인) are listed separately from other Chinese nationals in the Ministry of Justice data. The province had 6.9 percent of all registered foreigners in South Korea in 2024.

Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks, 2019 and 2024.

### 3 Residence Statuses

FIGURE 4

#### Registered Foreigners by Status Group, South Gyeongsang Province and South Korea, 2024



Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks, 2024.

Rotation labor statuses covered 49.0 percent of the province's registered foreigners in 2024 (50,133 people), against 31.1 percent nationally, and skilled statuses covered 10.3 percent (10,566), against 5.8 percent (see Figure 4). Settlement statuses covered 17.1 percent (17,503), against 27.6 percent nationally, and study and job-search statuses 6.5 percent (6,689), against 18.6 percent. Family statuses covered 10.2 percent (10,455), close to the national 10.0 percent, and all other statuses 6.8 percent (6,987), against 7.1 percent.

E-9 non-professional employment was the most common single status in 2024 (40,717 holders, 39.8 percent of registered foreigners), followed by E-7 specially designated activities (9,548, 9.3 percent) and F-6 marriage migration (9,510, 9.3 percent) (see Table 3). Against its 6.9 percent share of all registered foreigners, the province had 12.4 percent of E-9 holders in South Korea, 15.2 percent of E-7 holders, 16.6 percent of E-10 crew employment holders, and 19.0 percent of those registered on E-8 seasonal worker status. Its shares of F-5 permanent residents (2.8 percent) and D-2 students (1.9 percent) were smaller.

The MOIS count of 162,714 foreign residents in the province in 2024 comprised 128,519 foreign nationals, 12,422 naturalized citizens, and 21,773 children of foreign residents. MOIS classified the foreign nationals as workers (54,925), marriage migrants (10,839), international students (5,594), ethnic

Koreans of foreign nationality (11,767), and other foreign residents (45,394). Workers made up 33.8 percent of the MOIS total in 2024 and children 13.4 percent.

TABLE 3

**Ten Most Common Residence Statuses among Registered Foreigners in South Gyeongsang Province, 2024**

| Status | Meaning                         | Status group         | Registered foreigners | Share of the province's registered foreigners (%) | Province's share of all holders in South Korea (%) |
|--------|---------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| E-9    | Non-professional employment     | Rotation labor       | 40,717                | 39.8                                              | 12.4                                               |
| E-7    | Specially designated activities | Skilled              | 9,548                 | 9.3                                               | 15.2                                               |
| F-6    | Marriage migration              | Settlement           | 9,510                 | 9.3                                               | 6.5                                                |
| F-1    | Visiting cohabitation           | Family               | 6,178                 | 6.0                                               | 6.4                                                |
| F-5    | Permanent residence             | Settlement           | 5,578                 | 5.5                                               | 2.8                                                |
| G-1    | Other (miscellaneous)           | Other                | 4,682                 | 4.6                                               | 8.3                                                |
| F-3    | Dependent family                | Family               | 4,277                 | 4.2                                               | 8.3                                                |
| E-8    | Seasonal worker                 | Rotation labor       | 3,738                 | 3.7                                               | 19.0                                               |
| E-10   | Crew employment                 | Rotation labor       | 3,571                 | 3.5                                               | 16.6                                               |
| D-2    | Student                         | Study and job search | 3,426                 | 3.3                                               | 1.9                                                |

Note: Shares of the province's registered foreigners are out of 102,333. The ten statuses together covered 91,225 registered foreigners (89.1 percent).

Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks, 2024.

## 4 Districts and Population-Decline Areas

The KIRD data divide the province into 22 districts, made up of seven cities (si), Changwon-si's five districts (gu), and ten counties (gun). Gimhae-si had the most registered foreigners in 2024 (24,727, or 24.2 percent of the province's total), followed by Geoje-si (14,969), Yangsan-si (8,187), and Jinju-si (6,340); Changwon-si's five districts together had 18,121 (see Figure 5 and Table 4). In 2024, registered foreigners per 100 Korean residents ranged from 1.4 in Hamyang-gun to 7.7 in Haman-gun and were also high in Geoje-si (6.4) and Changnyeong-gun (6.0).

Between 2019 and 2024 registered foreigners increased in 21 of the 22 districts, and Korean residents decreased in 19. Geoje-si (by 6,667, from 8,302 to 14,969) and Gimhae-si (by 5,714, from 19,013 to 24,727) had the largest foreign gains, together 47.2 percent of the province's net gain of 26,210. The

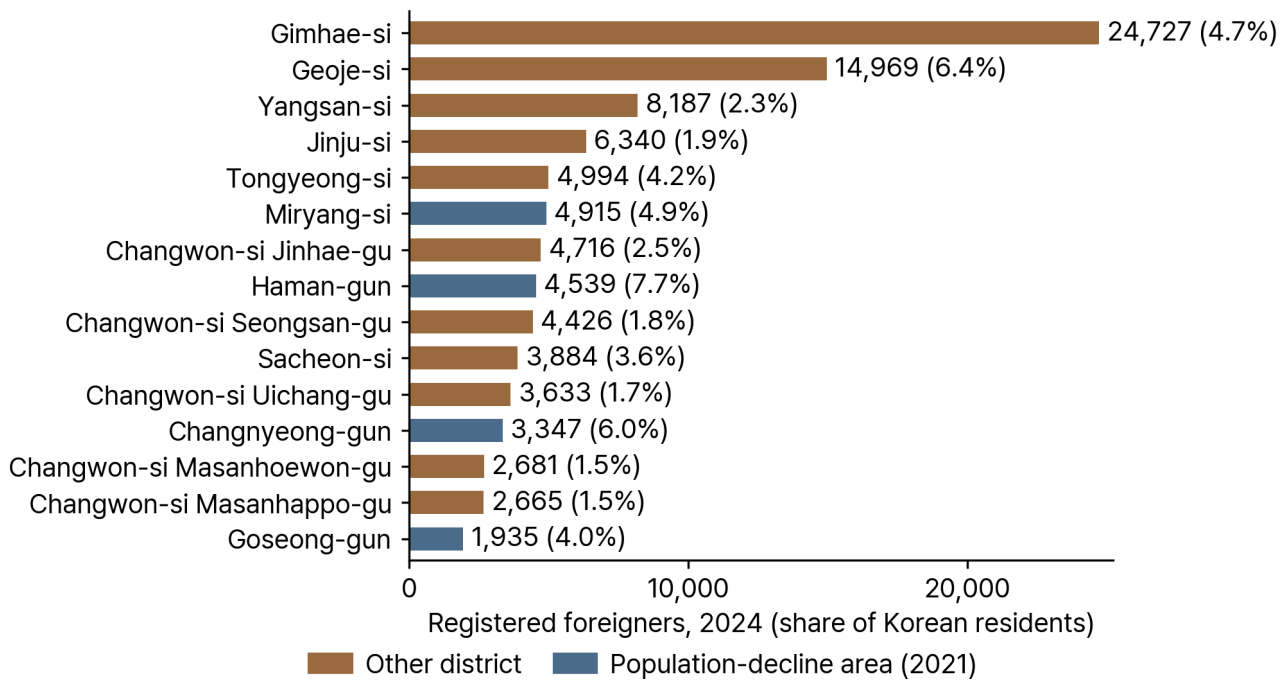
foreign gain equaled 43.6 percent of Geoje-si's loss of 15,304 Korean residents and 53.0 percent of Gimhae-si's loss of 10,779.

Within Changwon-si, Korean residents increased between 2019 and 2024 in Seongsan-gu (by 23,544) and Masanhappo-gu (by 427) and decreased in the other three districts. Uichang-gu had the largest Korean loss in the province (48,887) and was the only district where registered foreigners decreased (by 31). For the city as a whole, Korean residents fell by 44,882 and registered foreigners rose by 3,048. Outside Changwon-si, Yangsan-si was the only district that gained Korean residents (8,772).

Eleven of the 22 districts, all ten counties and Miryang-si, were among the 89 population-decline areas that the Ministry of the Interior and Safety designated in October 2021. The ten counties are Haman-gun, Changnyeong-gun, Goseong-gun, Uiryeong-gun, Sancheong-gun, Namhae-gun, Hapcheon-gun, Hadong-gun, Geochang-gun, and Hamyang-gun. Tongyeong-si and Sacheon-si are among the 18 areas of interest.

FIGURE 5

## Fifteen Districts with the Most Registered Foreigners in South Gyeongsang Province, 2024



Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks and Ministry of the Interior and Safety resident registration statistics, 2024; Ministry of the Interior and Safety designation of population-decline areas, 2021.

TABLE 4

## Registered Foreigners and Korean Residents in the Ten Districts with the Most Registered Foreigners, South Gyeongsang Province, 2019-24

| District                | Registered foreigners, 2024 | Per 100 Korean residents, 2024 | Change in Korean residents, 2019-24 | Change in registered foreigners, 2019-24 | Population-decline area |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Gimhae-si               | 24,727                      | 4.7                            | -10,779                             | +5,714                                   | No                      |
| Geoje-si                | 14,969                      | 6.4                            | -15,304                             | +6,667                                   | No                      |
| Yangsan-si              | 8,187                       | 2.3                            | +8,772                              | +1,868                                   | No                      |
| Jinju-si                | 6,340                       | 1.9                            | -8,549                              | +1,121                                   | No                      |
| Tongyeong-si            | 4,994                       | 4.2                            | -12,923                             | +1,032                                   | No (area of interest)   |
| Miryang-si              | 4,915                       | 4.9                            | -4,861                              | +2,045                                   | Yes                     |
| Changwon-si Jinhae-gu   | 4,716                       | 2.5                            | -4,883                              | +1,335                                   | No                      |
| Haman-gun               | 4,539                       | 7.7                            | -6,858                              | +1,041                                   | Yes                     |
| Changwon-si Seongsan-gu | 4,426                       | 1.8                            | +23,544                             | +731                                     | No                      |
| Sacheon-si              | 3,884                       | 3.6                            | -3,421                              | +467                                     | No (area of interest)   |
| Province total          | 102,333                     | 3.2                            | -134,173                            | +26,210                                  |                         |

Note: Per 100 Korean residents is the number of registered foreigners divided by the number of Korean residents in the district, times 100. The ten districts had 81,697 of the province's registered foreigners in 2024 (79.8 percent).

Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks and Ministry of the Interior and Safety resident registration statistics, 2019 and 2024; Ministry of the Interior and Safety designation of population-decline areas, 2021.

Between 2019 and 2024 the 11 decline areas lost 47,087 Korean residents (8.0 percent, from 585,660 to 538,573) and gained 6,293 registered foreigners (42.5 percent, from 14,818 to 21,111), so the foreign gain equaled 13.4 percent of the Korean loss (see Table 5). Miryang-si accounted for 2,045 of

the foreign gain, and in Hamyang-gun registered foreigners rose by 14. In 2024 the decline areas had 3.9 registered foreigners per 100 Korean residents, against 3.2 for the province as a whole.

TABLE 5

**Korean Residents and Registered Foreigners in the Population-Decline Areas and Areas of Interest of South Gyeongsang Province, 2019-24**

| District                        | Designation             | Registered foreigners, 2024 | Per 100 Korean residents, 2024 | Change in Korean residents, 2019-24 | Change in registered foreigners, 2019-24 | Foreign gain as share of Korean loss (%) |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| Miryang-si                      | Population-decline area | 4,915                       | 4.9                            | -4,861                              | +2,045                                   | 42.1                                     |
| Haman-gun                       | Population-decline area | 4,539                       | 7.7                            | -6,858                              | +1,041                                   | 15.2                                     |
| Changnyeong-gun                 | Population-decline area | 3,347                       | 6.0                            | -6,246                              | +558                                     | 8.9                                      |
| Goseong-gun                     | Population-decline area | 1,935                       | 4.0                            | -4,271                              | +679                                     | 15.9                                     |
| Namhae-gun                      | Population-decline area | 1,180                       | 3.0                            | -3,790                              | +319                                     | 8.4                                      |
| Sancheong-gun                   | Population-decline area | 990                         | 3.0                            | -2,158                              | +382                                     | 17.7                                     |
| Uiryeong-gun                    | Population-decline area | 967                         | 3.8                            | -2,018                              | +202                                     | 10.0                                     |
| Hapcheon-gun                    | Population-decline area | 939                         | 2.3                            | -4,979                              | +344                                     | 6.9                                      |
| Hadong-gun                      | Population-decline area | 913                         | 2.2                            | -5,809                              | +388                                     | 6.7                                      |
| Geochang-gun                    | Population-decline area | 868                         | 1.5                            | -2,591                              | +321                                     | 12.4                                     |
| Hamyang-gun                     | Population-decline area | 518                         | 1.4                            | -3,506                              | +14                                      | 0.4                                      |
| Population-decline areas, total |                         | 21,111                      | 3.9                            | -47,087                             | +6,293                                   | 13.4                                     |
| Tongyeong-si                    | Area of interest        | 4,994                       | 4.2                            | -12,923                             | +1,032                                   | 8.0                                      |
| Sacheon-si                      | Area of interest        | 3,884                       | 3.6                            | -3,421                              | +467                                     | 13.7                                     |
| Areas of interest, total        |                         | 8,878                       | 3.9                            | -16,344                             | +1,499                                   | 9.2                                      |

Note: The last column divides the change in registered foreigners by the loss of Korean residents in the same row, times 100. Totals are sums of the districts listed.

Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks and Ministry of the Interior and Safety resident registration statistics, 2019 and 2024; Ministry of the Interior and Safety designation of population-decline areas, 2021.

In the two areas of interest, Korean residents fell by 16,344 between 2019 and 2024 (12,923 in Tongyeong-si and 3,421 in Sacheon-si), and registered foreigners rose by 1,499 (1,032 and 467), a foreign gain equal to 9.2 percent of the Korean loss.

Four districts in the province contained an ethnic enclave in 2024 by the KIRD definition. Two of them were Indonesian enclaves, in Tongyeong-si, where 2,056 Indonesians made up 41.2 percent of registered foreigners (location quotient 15.3), and in Namhae-gun, where 540 made up 45.8 percent (location quotient 11.9). The two districts had 2,596 (25.1

percent) of the province's 10,348 registered Indonesians. The other two were Vietnamese enclaves, in Hadong-gun, where 425 Vietnamese nationals made up 46.5 percent of registered foreigners (location quotient 2.0), and in Uiryeong-gun, where 299 made up 30.9 percent (location quotient 2.3).

## 5 Population Trends

The number of Korean residents in South Gyeongsang Province rose every year from 3,172,857 in 2006 to 3,380,404 in 2017 and declined every year from 2018 to 2024, to 3,228,380. The largest annual decline was in 2022 (33,690 people). The Korean count fell 3.6 percent between 2014 and 2024 (121,877 people) and 4.0 percent between 2019 and 2024 (134,173 people), and in 2024 it was 1.7 percent (55,523 people) above its 2006 level.

In the population census with a reference date of 1 November 2025, the province had a total population of 3,252,634, including 3,117,070 Korean nationals. Its population was 6.3 percent of South Korea's and the third-largest among the 17 provinces, and it had fallen 2.9 percent since 2018, when it was 3,350,350 (Gyeongnam Ilbo, 2026a). The other 135,564 people in the census total (3,252,634 less 3,117,070) were foreign nationals. The census counts differ from the resident registration and immigration counts used elsewhere in this Spotlight.

In July 2026, 22,946 people moved into the province from elsewhere in South Korea and 23,759 moved out, a net outflow of 813, against a net outflow of 1,104 in July 2025 (Gyeongnam News, 2026).

The province's total fertility rate fell from 1.41 in 2014 to 0.80 in 2023 and then rose for two consecutive years, to 0.82 in 2024 and 0.88 in 2025, according to Statistics Korea's provisional birth and death statistics for 2025 (Gyeongnam Domin Ilbo, 2026a). Statistics Korea's 2025 Elderly Statistics, released on 29 September 2025, counted 716,000 people aged 65 and older in the province, 22.2 percent of its population (Gyeongnam Domin Ilbo, 2025a).

In an analysis of Statistics Korea's population projections by the Dongnam Regional Statistics Office, the province's population is projected to decline 21 percent, from 3.287 million in 2022 to 2.597 million in 2052. Over the same period the share aged 65 and older is projected to rise from 18.7 percent to 47.8 percent and the share aged 0 to 14 to fall from 12.2 percent to 6.5 percent (Gyeongnam Domin Ilbo, 2025b).

## 6 Industry and Foreign Workers

Registered foreigners on E-9 non-professional employment status, the status of workers admitted through the Employment Permit System (EPS), numbered 38,195 in the province in 2014, 33,356 in 2019, 24,717 in 2021, and 40,717 in 2024. The 2024 count was 64.7 percent above the 2021 count

and 6.6 percent above the 2014 count. E-9 holders made up 39.8 percent of the province's registered foreigners in 2024 and 12.4 percent of all E-9 holders in South Korea.

A 2026 news report counted 16.8 foreign workers per 1,000 population in the province in 2024, the third-highest ratio among South Korea's provinces. According to the report, the number of foreign workers had grown most over the previous ten years in manufacturing and in agriculture, forestry, and fisheries, and in areas such as Geoje and Miryang (Gyeongnam Ilbo, 2026b). In the KIRD data, Geoje-si and Miryang-si had the largest and third-largest gains in registered foreigners among the province's districts between 2019 and 2024 (6,667 and 2,045).

In Geoje's shipbuilding industry, 4,292 foreign workers were placed in the first half of 2023, and the count was 4,565 at the end of July 2023; the two major shipyards and their subcontractors estimated that they needed about 1,000 more by the end of that year (Geoje Sinmun, 2023).

The number of foreign residents in Geoje rose from 5,410 in August 2022 to 15,790 in August 2025, an increase that News1 attributed to demand for labor in the city's shipbuilding industry. The Geoje Foreign Worker Support Center opened in March 2025, and about 2,500 foreign workers visited it after it opened (News1, 2025).

Registered foreigners on E-8 seasonal worker status numbered 326 on 31 December 2022, 1,873 on 31 December 2023, and 3,738 on 31 December 2024, when the province had 19.0 percent of those registered on E-8 status in South Korea. A count taken on 31 December misses the seasonal workers whose contracts end before winter. The Busan Ilbo reported 1,142 foreign seasonal workers on E-8 visas employed in the province's agriculture in 2022, 3,465 in 2023, and 7,380 in 2024, two to three times as many each year as in the year before (Busan Ilbo, 2025). The 3,738 counted on 31 December 2024 were about half of the 7,380 in that report for 2024.

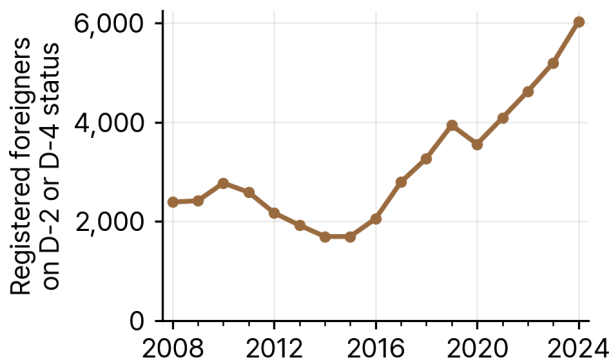
The province's recruitment of foreign workers for shipbuilding and manufacturing through the metropolitan-type visa and the regional specialized visa (F-2-R) is described under Provincial Policy.

## 7 International Students and Universities

Registered foreigners on D-2 student and D-4 general trainee status in the province numbered 2,392 in 2008 and 2,776 in 2010, declined to 1,697 in 2014, the same count as in 2015, and rose to 3,942 in 2019 (see Figure 6). After a drop to 3,562 in 2020, the count rose each year to 6,037 in 2024 (3,426 on D-2 status and, by difference, 2,611 on D-4), about 3.6 times the 2014 count. In 2024 the province had 2.3 percent of all D-2 and D-4 holders in South Korea, against its 6.9 percent share of all registered foreigners.

As of April 2025, 4,162 international students were enrolled at 20 universities in the province (Gyeongnam Ilbo, 2026c). At that date Inje University had the most (1,025), followed by Kyungnam University (576), Gyeongsang National University (571), Changwon National University (451), and Masan University (393) (Gyeongnam Domin Ilbo, 2026b). Together they had 3,016 of the 4,162 students (72.5 percent).

**FIGURE 6**  
**Registered Foreigners on Student (D-2) and General Trainee (D-4) Status in South Gyeongsang Province, 2008-24**



Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks, 2008-2024.

The university counts differ from the KIRD count of 6,037, which refers to registered foreigners on D-2 or D-4 status on 31 December 2024, and from the MOIS count of 5,594 international students on 1 November 2024.

Under the country's first pilot of the Regional Innovation System and Education (RISE) program, which the province began in March 2024, four colleges in the province each developed an industry specialization for recruiting international students and placing them in jobs, with Masan University in root industries and caregiving, Geoje College in welding, Geochang College in automotive work, and Namhae College in aviation manufacturing (Kukinews, 2024). The province's target of 10,000 international students by 2028 and its council for supporting international students are described under Provincial Policy.

## 8 Provincial Policy

South Gyeongsang Province's Ordinance on Support for Foreign Residents (경상남도 외국인주민 지원 조례) is administered by the Women and Family Division of the provincial Welfare and Women Bureau, and the Local Regulations Information System lists the ordinance with the date 2 January 2024 (ELIS, 2024). Under Article 19 of the ordinance, the province established the Gyeongsangnam-do Foreign Residents Support Center, which the nonprofit Gyeongnam Migrant Workers' Labor Welfare Center (경남이주민노동복지센터) operates under contract at an office in Palyong-dong, Uichang-gu, Changwon (Changwon City, 2024).

The province's 2026 population policy covers its 11 population-decline areas and 2 areas of interest and funds 70 projects worth 796.8 billion won. Six of the projects, worth 11.4 billion won, promote the inflow of foreign workers under region-specific programs (Gyeongnam Sinmun, 2026).

In the first round of applications for the metropolitan-type visa (광역형 비자) pilot in 2025, the Ministry of Justice approved the province's request for 130 workers in 21 machinery and metals occupations and did not approve its request for 800 workers in three shipbuilding occupations, pending better methods of verifying skills in occupations such as welding and painting (KNN, 2025a).

A December 2025 report stated that 670 foreign workers were to arrive in the province under the pilot by the end of 2026, 540 in shipbuilding and 130 in machine-parts and information and communications technology jobs on E-7-1 visas, as part of 1,130 planned for the province and Ulsan together. The province had sent skill-verification teams to Vietnam, Indonesia, and Thailand from July 2025 (Seoul Sinmun, 2025a).

The Gyeongnam Visa Support Center, in full operation since December 2025, provides visa-conversion counseling and job matching together as a single service for employers in manufacturing, shipbuilding, and machinery. For the regional specialized visa (F-2-R), 231 foreign workers were recommended in 2024 and 750 in 2025 (Seoul Sinmun, 2025b).

In 2026 the province adopted its first integrated support plan for international students. The plan aims to raise their number from 4,162 in April 2025 to 10,000 by 2028 and their rate of local employment from 15 percent to 25 percent (Gyeongnam Domin Ilbo, 2026c).

A council for supporting international students, launched in 2026, brings together 24 organizations. Its members are the province, 17 universities in the province, the Changwon Immigration Office, the regional center for local talent development (경남앰커센터, formerly the Gyeongnam RISE Center), the Gyeongnam Visa Support Center, the Gyeongnam Foreign Residents Support Center, NH Nonghyup Bank, and BNK Gyeongnam Bank (Gyeongnam Domin Ilbo, 2026b).

## 9 Languages

The KIRD dataset estimates first-language speakers among registered foreigners by multiplying each nationality count by the first-language shares that Ethnologue reports for that country. By this estimate, 17 languages had at least 1,000 speakers among the province's registered foreigners in 2024. Vietnamese was the most common first language (22,300 estimated speakers), followed by Indonesian (7,252), Khmer (7,043), Chinese (6,619), and Uzbek (5,584). Sinhala (3,832), Nepali (3,535), Tagalog/Filipino (3,529), Russian (3,074), and Thai (2,924) were the next five.

Because each nationality is divided among the first languages reported for its country, an estimate can be smaller than the count of the corresponding nationality, as with Nepali (3,535 estimated speakers, against 6,778 registered Nepali nationals) and Sinhala (3,832, against 5,561 Sri Lankan nationals). The estimates exclude Korean, and the dataset has no first-language shares for Korean-Chinese residents, so the province's 4,649 registered Korean-Chinese are not counted under any language.

## 10 Service Organizations and Community Places

The KIRD census of 1,717 migrant-serving organizations in South Korea lists 96 in South Gyeongsang Province, or 9.4 per 10,000 registered foreigners in 2024, against 11.5 per 10,000 nationally. Of the 96, 93 provide services directly to migrants, and 21 have 가족센터 (family center) in their names. The census also counts 10 medical providers, 7 worker centers, 7 nongovernmental organizations, 5 administrative offices, 3 resident support centers, and 3 youth and education providers in the province.

Organizations can name more than one population they serve. In the province, 35 name workers, 30 name families, and 24 name all foreign residents. Smaller numbers name refugees (8), children (7), undocumented migrants (7), youth (6), overseas Koreans (4), and women (4), and one names students.

The administrative offices in the census are the Changwon Immigration Office, its branch offices in Geoje, Sacheon, and Tongyeong, and the Gimhae branch of the Busan Immigration Office. The worker centers include foreign worker support centers in Gimhae, Yangsan, Geoje, and Sacheon and a

support center for foreign workers on aquaculture farms in Tongyeong. The census also lists a support center for Goryeoin (ethnic Koreans from the former Soviet Union) in Yangsan-si and, as a place of worship, the Changwon headquarters of the Indonesian Muslim Community (KMI), the Masjid Sayyidina Bilal, in Changwon-si Seongsan-gu.

In the old downtown of Gimhae-si, the district with the most registered foreigners in the province, shops selling food and daily necessities to migrant workers multiplied from around 2008 and formed what became known as the foreign street (외국인 거리). A 2013 study described the street as a place for exchanging information and for shopping and as a source of psychological stability for migrants (Cha and Cha, 2013).

The Gimhae Foreign Workers Support Center, established in December 2008, has served migrants from nine countries, among them China, Vietnam, Uzbekistan, Indonesia, Thailand, Nepal, Cambodia, and Sri Lanka. Its director put the number of foreign residents in Gimhae at about 28,000 as of November 2018 (Gyeongnam Domin Ilbo, 2019).

The Changwon Foreign Workers Support Center in Masanhappo-gu, operated by the Tongdosa Social Welfare Foundation, offers counseling on unpaid wages, industrial accidents, changes of workplace, and immigration matters, along with interpretation and Korean-language classes, and has resident counselors for Vietnamese, Cambodian, Nepali, Indonesian, and Uzbek workers (Gyeongnam Ilbo, 2026d).

In 2025 Changwon's commercial revitalization foundation began working with a foreign worker support center to introduce foreign workers living in Bongam-dong, Odong-dong, and other parts of the city's Masan area to the nearby Changdong shopping district (KNN, 2025b).

**About these profiles.** The KIRD province profiles describe the foreign-resident population of each of South Korea's seventeen provinces and metropolitan cities. Figures come from the Korea Immigration Regional Dashboard (KIRD) dataset, built from the Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks and the Ministry of the Interior and Safety foreign-resident statistics for 2006 to 2024 (<https://doi.org/10.3886/E249944V1>); context comes from the sources listed. Interactive maps and tables: <https://immigrantsinkorea.today>.

Suggested citation: Korea Immigration Regional Dashboard (KIRD). 2026. "Foreign Residents in South Gyeongsang Province." Foreign Residents in South Korea series, September 2026. Data: Korea Immigration Regional Dashboard (KIRD) dataset, <https://doi.org/10.3886/E249944V1>. Interactive maps and tables: <https://immigrantsinkorea.today>.

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# Foreign Residents in South Chungcheong Province

SEPTEMBER 2026

## Summary

South Chungcheong Province (Chungcheongnam-do) had 96,687 registered foreigners on 31 December 2024, 6.5 percent of the 1,488,353 in South Korea and the fourth-largest number among the 17 provinces and metropolitan cities. With 4.5 registered foreigners per 100 Korean residents, the province had the highest ratio of the 17; the national ratio was 2.9. The Ministry of the Interior and Safety (MOIS) count of foreign residents, which also includes naturalized citizens and the children of foreign residents, was 169,245 in 2024, 1.75 times the registered count.

## Highlights

- ▶ At the end of 2024, South Chungcheong Province had 96,687 registered foreigners, the fourth-largest number among South Korea's 17 provinces and metropolitan cities and the largest relative to the Korean population, at 4.5 per 100 Korean residents against 2.9 nationally.
- ▶ Registered foreigners increased 77.2 percent between 2014 and 2024 while Korean residents increased 3.6 percent, and in the province's nine population-decline areas the gain of 9,857 registered foreigners from 2019 to 2024 equaled 23.2 percent of the 42,404 Korean residents those areas lost.
- ▶ Rotation labor statuses covered 42.1 percent of the province's registered foreigners in 2024, against 31.1 percent nationally, and its 30,040 holders of the E-9 non-professional employment status made up 9.2 percent of all E-9 holders in South Korea.

The foreign-resident population grew much faster than the Korean population. Between 2014 and 2024 the number of registered foreigners rose 77.2 percent, from 54,557 to 96,687, while the number of Korean residents rose 3.6 percent, from 2,062,273 to 2,136,574. From 2019 to 2024 the province added 26,012 registered foreigners (36.8 percent, the fourth-

fastest growth among the 17) and 12,865 Korean residents (0.6 percent). The registered count fell from 70,675 in 2019 to 62,578 in 2021 and then rose in each of the next three years.

Rotation labor statuses covered 42.1 percent of the province's registered foreigners in 2024, against 31.1 percent nationally, and settlement statuses 21.1 percent, against 27.6 percent. Among factories newly registered in 2023, the province had the highest ratio of foreign to Korean workers of any province (MRTC, 2024). Vietnam was the largest nationality (21.6 percent), and the province was home to 15.7 percent of all registered Kazakhstan nationals in South Korea, 11.5 percent of Cambodians and 11.4 percent of Nepalis. Nine of its cities and counties were designated population-decline areas in 2021, and the five districts that met this Spotlight's definition of an ethnic enclave in 2024, all for Vietnamese nationals, were among them.

### BOX 1

#### Definitions

**Registered foreigners (등록외국인).** Foreign nationals in South Korea for more than 90 days who register with immigration authorities, counted by the Ministry of Justice on 31 December of each year. Overseas Koreans on F-4 status report their place of residence instead of registering and are not included. Unless stated otherwise, counts in this Spotlight are registered foreigners.

**MOIS foreign residents (외국인주민).** Foreign residents as counted by the Ministry of the Interior and Safety (MOIS), with 1 November as the reference date of the 2024 count. Besides foreign nationals, the count includes naturalized Korean citizens and the children of foreign residents.

**Korean residents.** The resident-registration population published by MOIS, which counts Korean nationals and excludes foreign nationals (Chungcheongnam-do, 2026a). Ratios of registered foreigners per 100 Korean residents use it as the denominator.

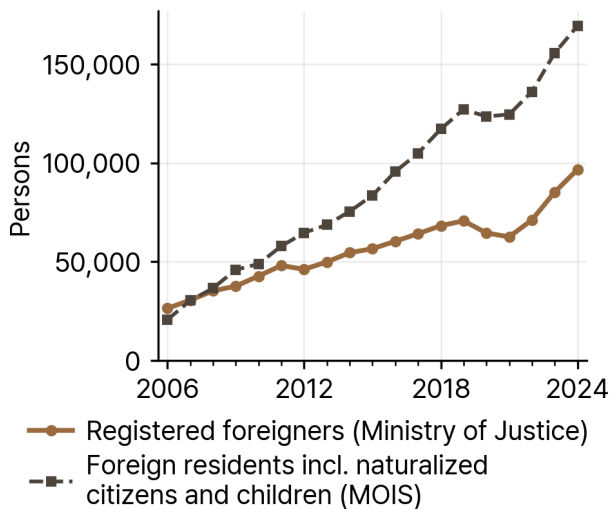
**Status groups.** The rotation labor group comprises E-9 (non-professional employment), E-8 (seasonal worker), H-2 (visiting employment), E-10 (crew employment) and D-3 (industrial trainee). The skilled group comprises E-1 to E-7, the study and job search group D-2 (student), D-4 (general trainee) and D-10 (job seeker), the settlement group F-2 (residential), F-5 (permanent residence) and F-6 (marriage migration), and the family group F-1 (visiting cohabitation) and F-3 (dependent family). All other statuses form a residual group.

**Population-decline areas (인구감소지역).** On 19 October 2021 the Ministry of the Interior and Safety designated 89 districts as population-decline areas and 18 as areas of interest. Nine districts of South Chungcheong Province are population-decline areas, and none is an area of interest.

**Ethnic enclave.** A district where one nationality makes up at least 30 percent of registered foreigners and has a location quotient of at least 2. The location quotient compares the nationality's number relative to the district's Korean residents with the same ratio for South Korea as a whole.

## 1 Size of the Foreign-Resident Population

**FIGURE 1**  
**Registered Foreigners and MOIS Foreign Residents in South Chungcheong Province, 2006-24**



Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks and Ministry of the Interior and Safety statistics, 2006-2024.

The number of registered foreigners in South Chungcheong Province rose from 26,441 in 2006 to 54,557 in 2014 and 70,675 in 2019 (Figure 1). It fell to 64,546 in 2020 and 62,578 in 2021, 8,097 fewer than in 2019 (a drop of 11.5 percent), then

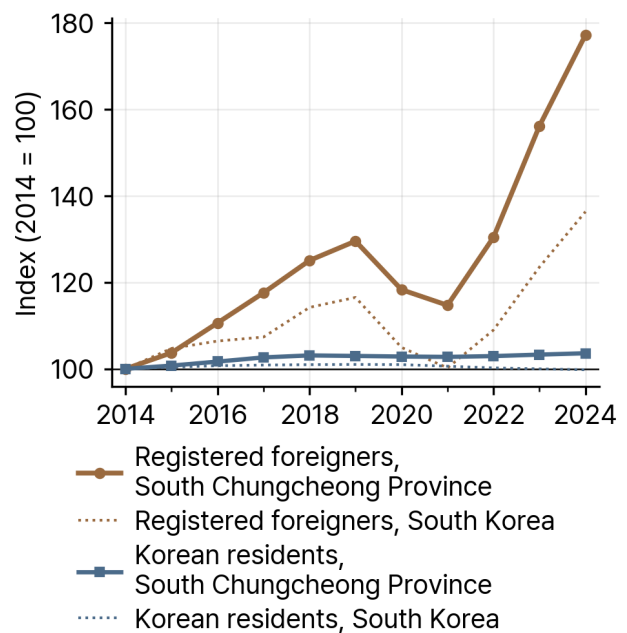
rose to 71,159 in 2022, 85,215 in 2023 and 96,687 in 2024, the highest count in the series. The increase from 2023 to 2024 alone was 11,472 people (13.5 percent).

The MOIS count of foreign residents rose from 75,438 in 2014 to 127,057 in 2019 and 169,245 in 2024, an increase of 124.3 percent over ten years. It fell to 123,430 in 2020 and rose in each year from 2021 to 2024.

The province's figures for 2006 to 2011 include the area that became Sejong Special Self-Governing City in 2012. The counts of registered foreigners and Korean residents both drop between 2011 and 2012 mainly for this reason, from 48,091 to 46,141 and from 2,101,284 to 2,028,777.

Korean residents numbered 2,062,273 in 2014, 2,123,709 in 2019 and 2,136,574 in 2024. With 2014 set to 100, the number of registered foreigners in the province stood at 177.2 in 2024 and the number of Korean residents at 103.6 (Figure 2). Registered foreigners per 100 Korean residents rose from 1.3 in 2006 to 2.6 in 2014, 3.3 in 2019 and 4.5 in 2024 (Table 1).

**FIGURE 2**  
**Registered Foreigners and Korean Residents in South Chungcheong Province and South Korea, 2014-24 (index, 2014 = 100)**



Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks and Ministry of the Interior and Safety resident-registration statistics, 2014-2024.

In 2024 the province ranked fourth among the 17 provinces and metropolitan cities by the number of registered foreigners and first by registered foreigners per Korean resident. Its ratio of 4.5 per 100 compared with 2.9 for South Korea as a whole.

TABLE 1

**Registered Foreigners, MOIS Foreign Residents and Korean Residents in South Chungcheong Province, Selected Years, 2006-24**

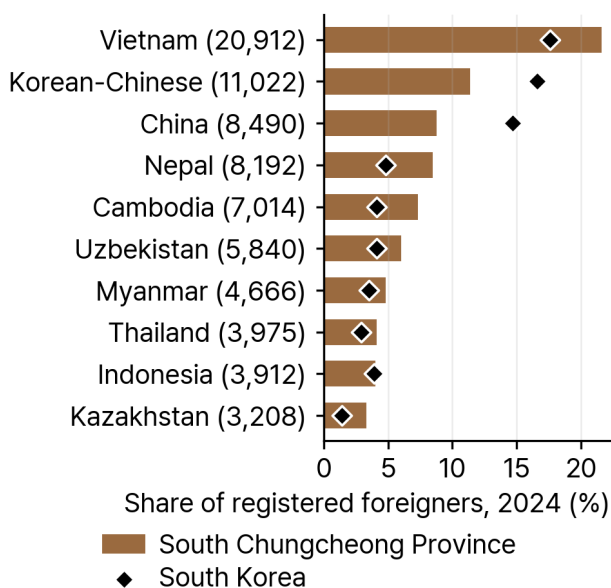
| Year | Registered foreigners | MOIS foreign residents | Korean residents | Registered foreigners per 100 Korean residents |
|------|-----------------------|------------------------|------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| 2006 | 26,441                | –                      | 1,974,433        | 1.3                                            |
| 2014 | 54,557                | 75,438                 | 2,062,273        | 2.6                                            |
| 2019 | 70,675                | 127,057                | 2,123,709        | 3.3                                            |
| 2024 | 96,687                | 169,245                | 2,136,574        | 4.5                                            |

Note: The MOIS series is shown from 2008. The MOIS count published for 2006 (20,641, plotted in Figure 1) was below the registered count for that year. Figures for 2006 include the area that became Sejong Special Self-Governing City in 2012. South Korea had 2.9 registered foreigners per 100 Korean residents in 2024.

Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks and Ministry of the Interior and Safety statistics, 2006-2024.

## 2 Nationalities

FIGURE 3

**Ten Largest Nationalities among Registered Foreigners in South Chungcheong Province, Compared with South Korea, 2024**


Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks, 2024.

Vietnam was the largest nationality among registered foreigners in the province in 2024, with 20,912 people (21.6 percent of the total, compared with 17.6 percent nationally). Korean-Chinese residents, Chinese nationals of Korean descent, numbered 11,022 (11.4 percent). They were followed by nationals of China (8,490), Nepal (8,192), Cambodia (7,014), Uzbekistan (5,840), Myanmar (4,666), Thailand (3,975), Indonesia (3,912) and Kazakhstan (3,208) (Figure 3). These ten groups made up 79.9 percent of registered foreigners in the province.

Between 2019 and 2024 the number of Vietnamese nationals rose by 8,707 (71.3 percent), and Vietnam passed the Korean-Chinese group, which had been larger in 2019 (12,670 against

12,205). Among the ten largest groups, nationals of Myanmar grew fastest, from 1,737 to 4,666 (168.6 percent), followed by Nepalis (73.3 percent) and Vietnamese. The Korean-Chinese group shrank by 1,648 (13.0 percent) and Chinese nationals by 384 (4.3 percent) (Table 2).

The province was home to 6.5 percent of all registered foreigners in South Korea in 2024 and to larger shares of several national groups. It had 15.7 percent of all registered Kazakhstan nationals in the country (3,208 of 20,482), 14.4 percent of Korean-Russians (Russian nationals of Korean descent; 344 of 2,383), 11.5 percent of Cambodians (7,014 of 61,006), 11.4 percent of Nepalis (8,192 of 72,151) and 11.3 percent of Kyrgyzstan nationals (927 of 8,170).

The Shannon diversity index of nationalities, which rises as registered foreigners are spread more evenly over more nationalities, increased from 2.4 in 2014 to 2.6 in 2024, the second-highest value among the 17 provinces. Registered foreigners of 133 nationalities lived in the province in 2024.

Overseas Koreans on F-4 status are not registered foreigners and are not part of these counts. In 2024, 34,193 of them reported a place of residence in the province, 6.2 percent of the 553,664 residence reports nationally. Korean-Chinese filed 19,351 of the reports (56.6 percent). Korean-Russians (4,610) and nationals of Uzbekistan (4,415) and Kazakhstan (2,922), ethnic Koreans from the former Soviet Union who are also called Goryeoin, filed 11,947, and United States nationals filed 1,172.

## 3 Residence Statuses

Rotation labor statuses (E-9, E-8, H-2, E-10 and D-3) covered 42.1 percent of registered foreigners in the province in 2024 (40,716 people), against 31.1 percent nationally (Figure 4). Settlement statuses covered 21.1 percent (20,363 people; 27.6 percent nationally), study and job search 14.6 percent (14,145; 18.6 percent), family 11.2 percent (10,808; 10.0 percent), skilled statuses 4.1 percent (3,998; 5.8 percent) and all other statuses 6.9 percent (6,657; 7.1 percent).

TABLE 2

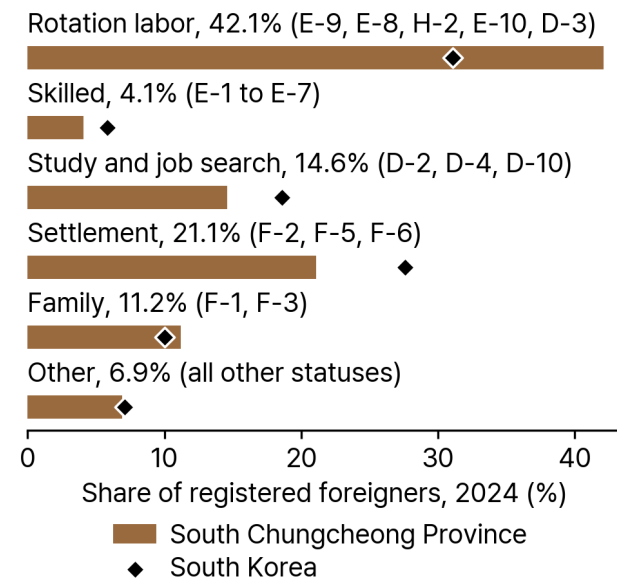
**Ten Largest Nationalities among Registered Foreigners in South Chungcheong Province, 2019 and 2024**

| Nationality    | 2019   | 2024   | Share of the province's registered foreigners, 2024 (%) | Province's share of the nationality's registered foreigners in South Korea, 2024 (%) |
|----------------|--------|--------|---------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Vietnam        | 12,205 | 20,912 | 21.6                                                    | 8.0                                                                                  |
| Korean-Chinese | 12,670 | 11,022 | 11.4                                                    | 4.5                                                                                  |
| China          | 8,874  | 8,490  | 8.8                                                     | 3.9                                                                                  |
| Nepal          | 4,726  | 8,192  | 8.5                                                     | 11.4                                                                                 |
| Cambodia       | 4,569  | 7,014  | 7.3                                                     | 11.5                                                                                 |
| Uzbekistan     | 5,373  | 5,840  | 6.0                                                     | 9.5                                                                                  |
| Myanmar        | 1,737  | 4,666  | 4.8                                                     | 9.0                                                                                  |
| Thailand       | 2,782  | 3,975  | 4.1                                                     | 9.1                                                                                  |
| Indonesia      | 2,491  | 3,912  | 4.0                                                     | 6.7                                                                                  |
| Kazakhstan     | 2,529  | 3,208  | 3.3                                                     | 15.7                                                                                 |

Note: Korean-Chinese are Chinese nationals of Korean descent, listed separately from other Chinese nationals. The province had 6.5 percent of all registered foreigners in South Korea in 2024.

Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks, 2019 and 2024.

FIGURE 4

**Registered Foreigners by Status Group in South Chungcheong Province and South Korea, 2024**

Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks, 2024.

E-9 non-professional employment was the most common single status, with 30,040 holders in 2024, 31.1 percent of the province's registered foreigners and 9.2 percent of all E-9

holders in South Korea (Table 3). Permanent residence (F-5, 9,239 holders), student (D-2, 8,574), marriage migration (F-6, 8,121) and visiting cohabitation (F-1, 7,857) followed. Among the ten most common statuses, the province's largest share of a national total was for E-8 seasonal workers, 15.7 percent of all holders counted on 31 December 2024.

The MOIS count of 169,245 foreign residents in 2024 comprised 139,111 foreign nationals, 12,411 naturalized citizens and 17,723 children of foreign residents. MOIS divides the foreign nationals into workers (40,237), marriage migrants (10,169), international students (12,407), ethnic Koreans with foreign nationality (28,102) and other foreign nationals (48,196).

## 4 Districts and Population-Decline Areas

The KIRD district-level data divide the province into 16 districts, the seven cities (si) and seven counties (gun) outside Cheonan and the two gu of Cheonan (Dongnam-gu and Seobuk-gu). Asan-si had the most registered foreigners in 2024 (23,572), followed by Cheonan-si Seobuk-gu (15,795), Cheonan-si Dongnam-gu (10,902) and Dangjin-si (8,101) (Figure 5 and Table 4). Asan and the two Cheonan districts together accounted for 52.0 percent of the province's registered foreigners (50,269 of 96,687).

TABLE 3

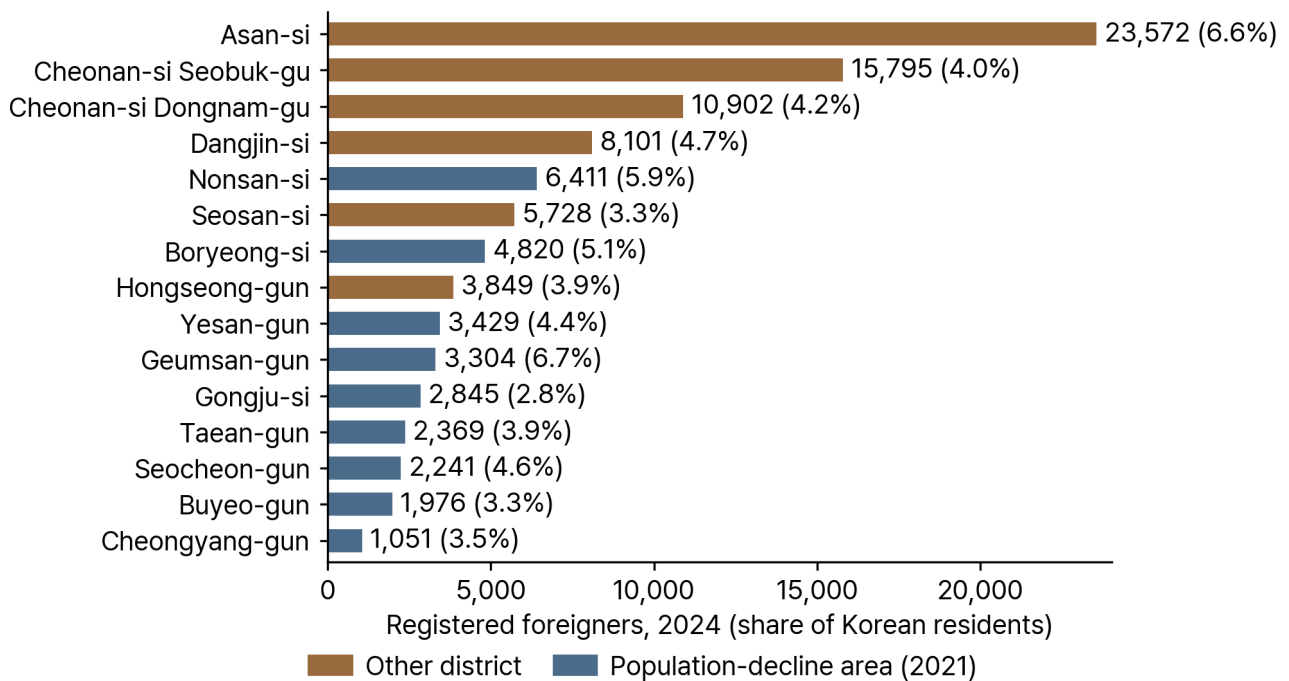
**Ten Most Common Residence Statuses among Registered Foreigners in South Chungcheong Province, 2024**

| Status | Meaning                         | Registered foreigners | Share of the province's registered foreigners (%) | Province's share of all holders in South Korea (%) |
|--------|---------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| E-9    | Non-professional employment     | 30,040                | 31.1                                              | 9.2                                                |
| F-5    | Permanent residence             | 9,239                 | 9.6                                               | 4.6                                                |
| D-2    | Student                         | 8,574                 | 8.9                                               | 4.8                                                |
| F-6    | Marriage migration              | 8,121                 | 8.4                                               | 5.5                                                |
| F-1    | Visiting cohabitation           | 7,857                 | 8.1                                               | 8.1                                                |
| H-2    | Visiting employment             | 5,393                 | 5.6                                               | 5.9                                                |
| D-4    | General trainee                 | 4,770                 | 4.9                                               | 6.0                                                |
| G-1    | Other (miscellaneous)           | 4,352                 | 4.5                                               | 7.7                                                |
| E-7    | Specially designated activities | 3,272                 | 3.4                                               | 5.2                                                |
| E-8    | Seasonal worker                 | 3,094                 | 3.2                                               | 15.7                                               |

Note: Counts are registered foreigners on 31 December 2024, so F-4 overseas Koreans are not included. Status groups are defined in the Definitions box.

Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks, 2024.

FIGURE 5

**Registered Foreigners by District and Population-Decline Area in South Chungcheong Province, 2024**

Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks and Ministry of the Interior and Safety statistics, 2024; population-decline areas as designated by the Ministry of the Interior and Safety in October 2021.

Relative to the Korean population, the highest ratios were in Geumsan-gun (6.7 registered foreigners per 100 Korean residents), Asan-si (6.6), Nonsan-si (5.9), Boryeong-si (5.1)

and Dangjin-si (4.7). Gyeryong-si, the one district not shown in Figure 5, had the fewest registered foreigners (294) and the lowest ratio (0.6).

Between 2019 and 2024 the number of registered foreigners rose in all 16 districts. The Korean population grew in five districts, led by Asan-si (40,619 more Korean residents), and

fell in the other 11. In Seosan-si, Hongseong-gun and Yesan-gun the increase in registered foreigners was larger than the decrease in Korean residents (Table 4).

TABLE 4

**Ten Districts with the Most Registered Foreigners in South Chungcheong Province, 2024**

| District                 | Registered foreigners, 2024 | Per 100 Korean residents, 2024 | Change in Korean residents, 2019-24 | Change in registered foreigners, 2019-24 | Population-decline area |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Asan-si                  | 23,572                      | 6.6                            | +40,619                             | +4,893                                   | No                      |
| Cheonan-si<br>Seobuk-gu  | 15,795                      | 4.0                            | +5,901                              | +4,853                                   | No                      |
| Cheonan-si<br>Dongnam-gu | 10,902                      | 4.2                            | +1,761                              | +1,546                                   | No                      |
| Dangjin-si               | 8,101                       | 4.7                            | +4,889                              | +2,119                                   | No                      |
| Nonsan-si                | 6,411                       | 5.9                            | -10,313                             | +2,272                                   | Yes                     |
| Seosan-si                | 5,728                       | 3.3                            | -245                                | +1,267                                   | No                      |
| Boryeong-si              | 4,820                       | 5.1                            | -7,334                              | +1,772                                   | Yes                     |
| Hongseong-gun            | 3,849                       | 3.9                            | -1,225                              | +1,400                                   | No                      |
| Yesan-gun                | 3,429                       | 4.4                            | -466                                | +1,179                                   | Yes                     |
| Geumsan-gun              | 3,304                       | 6.7                            | -2,642                              | +965                                     | Yes                     |

Note: Per 100 Korean residents is registered foreigners divided by Korean residents, times 100. The other six districts are Gongju-si, Taean-gun, Seoecheon-gun, Buyeo-gun and Cheongyang-gun, all population-decline areas, and Gyeryong-si.

Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks and Ministry of the Interior and Safety statistics, 2019-2024; population-decline areas as designated by the Ministry of the Interior and Safety in October 2021.

In October 2021 the Ministry of the Interior and Safety designated nine of the province's districts as population-decline areas, namely Gongju-si, Boryeong-si, Nonsan-si, Geumsan-gun, Buyeo-gun, Seoecheon-gun, Cheongyang-gun, Yesan-gun and Taean-gun. None of the province's districts was designated an area of interest. The nine decline areas had 28,446 registered foreigners in 2024, 29.4 percent of the province's total.

Between 2019 and 2024 the nine decline areas lost 42,404 Korean residents and gained 9,857 registered foreigners, a foreign gain equal to 23.2 percent of the Korean loss. The Korean loss was largest in Nonsan-si (10,313), Boryeong-si (7,334) and Buyeo-gun (7,190). Nonsan-si also gained the most registered foreigners (2,272), and Yesan-gun was the only decline area where the foreign gain (1,179) exceeded the Korean loss (466). The same nine cities and counties are the participants in the province's 2025 regional specialized visa program, described under Provincial Policy.

Five districts met this Spotlight's definition of an ethnic enclave in 2024, all for Vietnamese nationals and all in population-decline areas. They were Boryeong-si (2,234 Vietnamese residents, 46.3 percent of the district's registered foreigners, location quotient 4.7), Taean-gun (1,283; 54.2 percent; 4.2),

Geumsan-gun (1,074; 32.5 percent; 4.2), Seoecheon-gun (821; 36.6 percent; 3.3) and Cheongyang-gun (321; 30.5 percent; 2.1).

## 5 Population Trends

The Korean resident population of the province grew 3.6 percent between 2014 and 2024 (74,301 people) and 0.6 percent between 2019 and 2024 (12,865 people). It declined slightly from 2,123,709 in 2019 to 2,119,257 in 2021 and then rose to 2,136,574 in 2024, the highest figure in the series.

The growth from 2019 to 2024 came from five districts, Asan-si (40,619 more Korean residents), Cheonan-si Seobuk-gu (5,901), Dangjin-si (4,889), Gyeryong-si (3,569) and Cheonan-si Dongnam-gu (1,761), which together gained 56,739 Korean residents. The other 11 districts lost 43,874.

The provincial government counted 2,138,938 people on the resident register in August 2026, 2,185 (0.1 percent) more than at the end of 2025; the register excludes foreign nationals (Chungcheongnam-do, 2026a). In May 2026, 515,078 of the 2,138,517 registered residents (24.1 percent) were aged 65 and older (Chungcheongnam-do, 2026b).

The total fertility rate in the province rose from 0.84 in 2023 to 0.88 in 2024. In 2024 the rate was highest in South Jeolla Province and Sejong (1.03 each) and lowest in Seoul (0.58)

(Statistics Korea, 2025a).

Domestic migration added 14,664 people to the province in 2024, a net inflow rate of 0.7 percent. South Chungcheong was one of five provinces with a net inflow that year, with Gyeonggi, Incheon, Sejong and North Chungcheong (Statistics Korea, 2025b).

The province also publishes population projections for its cities and counties for 2022 to 2042 as approved statistics (approval no. 213011, first approved on 16 November 2017), as basic data for its medium- and long-term development plans (Chungcheongnam-do, 2024).

## 6 Industry and Foreign Workers

The number of registered foreigners with the E-9 non-professional employment status, issued under the Employment Permit System (EPS), was 18,755 in 2014, 22,116 in 2019, 17,952 in 2021 and 30,040 in 2024. The 2024 count was 35.8 percent above the 2019 count, and E-9 holders made up 73.8 percent of the province's rotation labor group.

Among factories newly registered in 2023, foreign employment in South Chungcheong equaled 6.7 percent of Korean employment, the highest ratio of any province, ahead of North Chungcheong (6.2 percent) and Gyeonggi and South Jeolla (5.5 percent each). By number, the province ranked second in new foreign employment at newly registered factories in 2023, after Gyeonggi with 2,818 workers (MRTC, 2024).

Over 2010 to 2023, Asan-si ranked fifth among South Korea's cities, counties and districts in cumulative foreign employment at newly registered factories, with 3,269 workers. The report attributed this pattern to new industrial parks in the Chungcheong region built around steel, metal and other root industries (ppuri saneop) (MRTC, 2024).

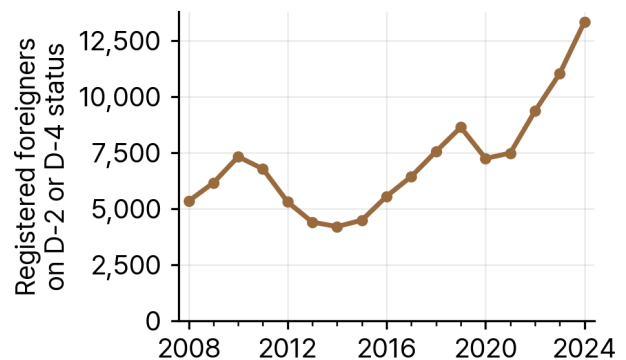
The province has seven Foreign Investment Zones of the industrial-park type, in Cheonan, Asan and Dangjin, covering 1,496,473.1 square meters. The provincial government reported in 2026 that 89.7 percent of their rental space was leased and that 74 foreign-invested companies were registered in them (67 operating, 6 under construction and 1 in preparation). Another 17 foreign-invested companies were in individual-type zones in Cheonan (7), Asan (5), Seosan (3), Dangjin (1) and Yesan (1) (Chungcheongnam-do, 2026c). The Local Ordinance Information System (ELIS) lists a separate Foreign Investment Promotion Ordinance with an effective date of 10 August 2026 (ELIS, 2026).

E-8 seasonal workers in the KIRD data are counted on 31 December. Most seasonal workers' contracts end before winter, so the year-end count misses most of them. The count in the province rose from 11 in 2021 to 527 in 2022, 2,229 in 2023 and 3,094 in 2024, when it equaled 15.7 percent of the national year-end total.

For 2025 the provincial government aimed to bring in more than 9,000 foreign seasonal workers across 14 participating cities and counties to supply farm labor, supported by 14 public agricultural labor intermediary centers, one province-level intermediary organization and worker dormitories under construction in three cities and counties (Jungbu Maeil, 2025).

## 7 International Students and Universities

**FIGURE 6**  
**Registered Foreigners on Student (D-2) and General Trainee (D-4) Status in South Chungcheong Province, 2008-24**



Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks, 2008-2024.

Registered foreigners on student (D-2) and general trainee (D-4) status numbered 5,344 in 2008 and 7,324 in 2010, fell to 4,207 in 2014 and grew to 8,638 in 2019 (Figure 6); figures before 2012 include the area that became Sejong. After 7,247 in 2020 and 7,486 in 2021, the count increased to 13,344 in 2024 (8,574 on D-2 and 4,770 on D-4), 3.2 times the 2014 level. The province had 5.2 percent of all D-2 and D-4 holders in South Korea in 2024, below its 6.5 percent share of all registered foreigners.

Other counts use different dates and definitions. The MOIS count for 2024 listed 12,407 international students in the province. In the disclosure data of the Korean Educational Development Institute (KEDI), the province's 23 higher education institutions reported 12,713 international students as of 1 April 2024, counting degree students and language trainees together (KEDI, 2024).

By the KEDI count for 1 April 2024, the institutions with the most international students were Sun Moon University (1,980), Namseoul University (1,902), Joongbu University (1,628), Hoseo University (999) and Soonchunhyang University (961) (KEDI, 2024). Sun Moon University reported 1,957 international students from 59 countries in September 2024 and a goal of 3,000 by 2027 (Seoul Pn, 2024).

Soonchunhyang University established an International College for international students only, with programs in Global Free Major, Global Health, Global Industrial Engineering and Global Sports Management, and aims to recruit about 3,000 international students over five years (Goodmorning

Chungcheong, 2026). Six universities in the province, Sun Moon and Soonchunhyang among them, participate in the metropolitan-type visa pilot described under Provincial Policy.

## 8 Provincial Policy

As of 2026, foreign-resident affairs in the provincial government were the responsibility of the Foreign Policy Division in the Youth and Women Bureau. On 12 May 2025 the province replaced its combined ordinance on foreign residents and multicultural families with two separate ordinances, the Ordinance on Support for Foreign Residents and the Ordinance on Support for Multicultural Families (ELIS, 2026).

The same division administers the Ordinance on Support for Goryeoin Residents, which the province has had since 17 August 2021, and the Ordinance on the Protection and Support of Foreign Workers, listed with an effective date of 30 December 2025 (ELIS, 2026).

The Chungnam Foreign Global Center opened in March 2025 in the Asan branch of the Chungnam Economic Promotion Foundation as a dedicated body for planning and implementing the province's policies on foreign residents (DTNews24, 2025). ELIS lists the ordinance on the center's establishment and operation with an effective date of 31 July 2026 (ELIS, 2026).

Under the 2025 regional specialized visa program, nine cities and counties in the province (Gongju, Boryeong, Nonsan, Geumsan, Buyeo, Seochon, Cheongyang, Yesan and Taean) shared a quota of 668 F-2-R (regional talent) visas, with visa applications accepted from 4 March 2025 to 31 December 2026 (Chungcheongnam-do, 2025a). They are the nine districts designated as population-decline areas in 2021.

The province was also selected for the Ministry of Justice's 2025 metropolitan-type visa pilot, after meetings with universities and companies and consultation with experts. Six universities participate (Ajou Motor College, Konyang University, Sun Moon University, Soonchunhyang University, Hoseo University and Hyejeon College), with a target of issuing visas under eased requirements to 250 international students by 2026 (Chungcheongnam-do, 2025b).

In 2026 the province funded 15 multicultural family support centers, one in each of its cities and counties, alongside a province-wide Foreign Resident Integrated Support Call Center (1522-1866) (Chungcheongnam-do, 2026d). Its seasonal worker program for 2025 is described under Industry and Foreign Workers.

## 9 Languages

The KIRD dataset estimates first languages by dividing each nationality's count among the languages of its country of origin, using Ethnologue first-language shares. Korean is excluded, so the province's 11,022 Korean-Chinese residents add nothing to the estimates.

By this estimate, the most common first languages among registered foreigners in the province in 2024 were Vietnamese (17,897 speakers), Chinese (9,110), Khmer (7,007), Uzbek (4,397) and Nepali (4,269). Thai (3,570), Russian (3,546), Burmese (2,995), Indonesian (2,745) and Tagalog or Filipino (2,602) followed, and 17 languages had at least 1,000 estimated speakers.

## 10 Service Organizations and Community Places

The KIRD census of 1,717 migrant-serving organizations in South Korea lists 75 in South Chungcheong Province, 7.8 per 10,000 registered foreigners in 2024, against 11.5 per 10,000 nationally. All but one of the 75 provide services directly to migrants, and 13 have family center (gajok senteo) in their names.

The populations the organizations name most often are families (26 organizations), workers (20) and all foreign residents (19), followed by refugees (12), women (6), undocumented migrants (4), young people (4), children (3), overseas Koreans (3) and students (2). An organization can name more than one population. The census also counts six community groups and three religious sites among the 75.

Cheonan, the province's largest city, counted 40,917 foreign residents in January 2026, 5.8 percent of its population of 705,186. The largest numbers lived in Sinan-dong (5,515) and Seonghwan-eup (4,048), together 23.4 percent of the city's foreign residents (Seoul Shinmun, 2026). The city's count is not directly comparable with the registered-foreigner counts in this Spotlight.

In Asan, the high share of migrant residents in Sinschang-myeon, among them foreign workers and Goryeoin, was one reason the city opened the Asan Dagachi Education Center there in September 2026. The center occupies a former school site and combines a lifelong learning branch, a youth center, a family center branch and a multicultural education support center (News Home, 2026).

**About these profiles.** The KIRD province profiles describe the foreign-resident population of each of South Korea's seventeen provinces and metropolitan cities. Figures come from the Korea Immigration Regional Dashboard (KIRD) dataset, built from the Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks and the Ministry of the Interior and Safety foreign-resident statistics for 2006 to 2024 (<https://doi.org/10.3886/E249944V1>); context comes from the sources listed. Interactive maps and tables: <https://immigrantsinkorea.today>.

Suggested citation: Korea Immigration Regional Dashboard (KIRD). 2026. "Foreign Residents in South Chungcheong Province." Foreign Residents in South Korea series, September 2026. Data: Korea Immigration Regional Dashboard (KIRD) dataset, <https://doi.org/10.3886/E249944V1>. Interactive maps and tables: <https://immigrantsinkorea.today>.

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# Foreign Residents in Incheon

SEPTEMBER 2026

## Summary

On 31 December 2024, 89,129 registered foreigners lived in Incheon, 6.0 percent of the 1,488,353 in South Korea. Incheon ranked fifth among the 17 provinces and metropolitan cities by that count and eighth by registered foreigners per Korean resident, with 3.0 registered foreigners for every 100 Korean residents against 2.9 nationally. The Ministry of the Interior and Safety (MOIS), whose count adds naturalized citizens and the children of foreign residents, recorded 169,219 foreign residents in Incheon on 1 November 2024, 1.90 times the registered count.

## Highlights

- ▶ At the end of 2024, Incheon had 89,129 registered foreigners, the fifth-largest number among South Korea's 17 provinces and metropolitan cities and 61.1 percent more than in 2014, while its Korean population grew 4.1 percent over the same ten years.
- ▶ Settlement statuses (F-2, F-5 and F-6) covered 40.7 percent of Incheon's registered foreigners in 2024, against 27.6 percent nationally, and 9.7 percent of all permanent residents (F-5) in South Korea lived in Incheon.
- ▶ In 2024 Incheon was home to 36.4 percent of the Yemeni nationals registered in South Korea (437 of 1,200), 24.3 percent of Tajik nationals and 22.4 percent of Egyptian nationals, compared with its 6.0 percent share of all registered foreigners.

The number of registered foreigners in Incheon more than doubled between 2006 and 2024, from 39,466 to 89,129 (an increase of 125.8 percent), while the number of Korean residents grew 15.1 percent, from 2,624,391 to 3,021,010. Between 2014 and 2024, registered foreigners increased 61.1 percent and Korean residents 4.1 percent. The registered count fell from 72,259 in 2019 to 66,364 in 2021 and then rose by 22,765 to its 2024 level. Its growth of 23.3 percent between

2019 and 2024 ranked tenth among the 17 provinces, while Korean residents grew 2.2 percent. In January 2024 the city's Korean population passed 3 million for the first time (Incheon Metropolitan City, 2024).

In 2024, larger shares of Incheon's registered foreigners than of all registered foreigners in South Korea were on settlement statuses (40.7 against 27.6 percent) and family statuses (13.7 against 10.0 percent). Smaller shares were on rotation labor statuses (23.3 against 31.1 percent) and study and job search statuses (9.7 against 18.6 percent). Korean-Chinese (ethnic Koreans of Chinese nationality) were the largest group, at 22.9 percent of registered foreigners against 16.6 percent nationally. The city was also home to large shares of the Yemeni, Tajik, Egyptian, Syrian and Kyrgyz nationals registered in the country. Yeonsu-gu, which includes Songdo and Hambak-maul, a neighborhood of Koryoin (ethnic Koreans from the former Soviet Union), had the most registered foreigners of Incheon's ten districts in 2024 and the most per Korean resident. Incheon's Chinatown in Jung-gu dates from a Qing Chinese concession set up in 1884, the first foreign concession in Korea (Kyeongin Ilbo, 2026).

### BOX 1

#### Definitions

**Registered foreigners (등록외국인).** Foreign nationals in South Korea for more than 90 days who register with immigration authorities, counted by the Ministry of Justice on 31 December of each year. Overseas Koreans on F-4 status report their residence instead of registering and are not included. Nationality, residence status and district figures in this Spotlight use registered foreigners.

**MOIS foreign residents (외국인주민).** The Ministry of the Interior and Safety count of foreign residents on 1 November of each year. It adds naturalized Korean citizens and the children of foreign residents to foreign nationals, and it is not directly comparable with the Ministry of Justice count.

**Korean residents.** Korean nationals in the Ministry of the Interior and Safety resident registration count. Registered foreigners per 100 Korean residents is the Ministry of Justice count divided by this count, times 100.

**Status groups.** This Spotlight sorts residence statuses into six groups. Rotation labor covers E-9 (non-professional employment), E-8 (seasonal worker), H-2 (visiting employment), E-10 (crew employment) and D-3 (industrial trainee). Skilled covers E-1 to E-7. Study and job search covers D-2 (student), D-4 (general trainee) and D-10 (job seeker). Settlement covers F-2 (residential), F-5 (permanent residence) and F-6 (marriage migration), and family covers F-1 (visiting cohabitation) and F-3 (dependent family). All other statuses form the other group.

**Population-decline areas (인구감소지역).** The 89 districts that the Ministry of the Interior and Safety designated as population-decline areas on 19 October 2021. At the same time it named 18 other districts areas of interest (관심지역).

**Ethnic enclave.** In this Spotlight, a district where a nationality's location quotient is at least 2 and the nationality makes up at least 30 percent of the district's registered foreigners. The location quotient is the nationality's share of the district's registered foreigners divided by its share of all registered foreigners in South Korea.

## 1 Size of the Foreign-Resident Population

Incheon had 39,466 registered foreigners in 2006, 55,323 in 2014 and 72,259 in 2019 (see Figure 1). The count fell to 67,648 in 2020 and 66,364 in 2021, 8.2 percent below the 2019 level, then rose to 71,849 in 2022, 81,016 in 2023 and 89,129 in 2024, the highest count since the series began in 2006. The increase from 2023 to 2024 alone was 8,113, or 10.0 percent.

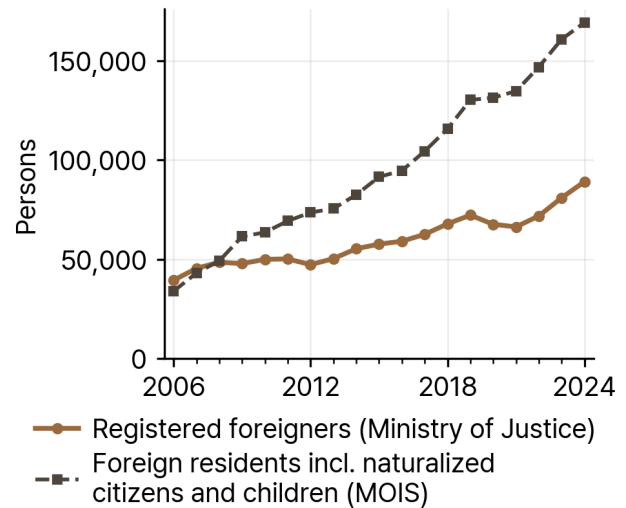
The MOIS count of foreign residents, which adds naturalized Korean citizens and the children of foreign residents, rose from 49,253 in 2008 to 82,523 in 2014, 130,292 in 2019 and 169,219 in 2024, increasing in every year of the period. It was 1.02 times the registered count in 2008, 1.49 times in 2014 and 1.90 times in 2024.

With 2014 set to 100, registered foreigners in Incheon stood at 161.1 in 2024 and Korean residents at 104.1 (see Figure 2). Registered foreigners increased by 33,806 over 2014-24 and Korean residents by 118,402, so registered foreigners accounted for 22.2 percent of the combined increase of 152,208.

In 2024 Incheon ranked fifth among the 17 provinces and metropolitan cities by the number of registered foreigners and eighth by registered foreigners per Korean resident. It had 3.0 registered foreigners per 100 Korean residents in 2024, up from 1.5 in 2006, 1.9 in 2014 and 2.4 in 2019, against 2.9 for South Korea as a whole (see Table 1).

FIGURE 1

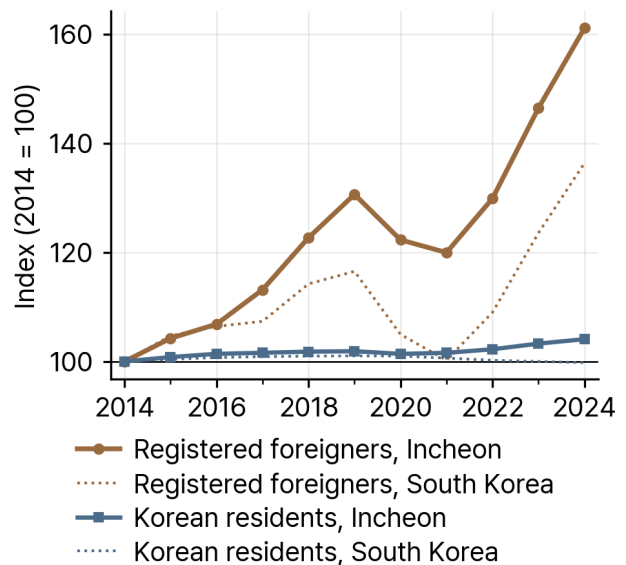
**Registered Foreigners and MOIS Foreign Residents in Incheon, 2006-24**



Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks and Ministry of the Interior and Safety statistics, 2006-2024.

FIGURE 2

**Registered Foreigners and Korean Residents in Incheon and South Korea, 2014-24 (Index, 2014 = 100)**



Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks and Ministry of the Interior and Safety resident registration statistics, 2014-2024.

## 2 Nationalities

Korean-Chinese were the largest group among Incheon's registered foreigners in 2024 (20,395, or 22.9 percent), followed by Chinese nationals other than Korean-Chinese (13,037, or 14.6 percent) and Vietnamese nationals (9,829, or 11.0 percent) (see Figure 3 and Table 2). Korean-Chinese and other Chinese nationals together made up 37.5 percent of registered foreigners in 2024 (33,432), down from 42.0

percent in 2019 (30,355 of 72,259). The ten largest nationalities accounted for 65,005 people, 72.9 percent of the 2024 total.

TABLE 1

**Registered Foreigners, MOIS Foreign Residents and Korean Residents in Incheon, Selected Years, 2006-24**

| Year | Registered foreigners | MOIS foreign residents | Korean residents | Registered foreigners per 100 Korean residents |
|------|-----------------------|------------------------|------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| 2006 | 39,466                | –                      | 2,624,391        | 1.5                                            |
| 2014 | 55,323                | 82,523                 | 2,902,608        | 1.9                                            |
| 2019 | 72,259                | 130,292                | 2,957,026        | 2.4                                            |
| 2024 | 89,129                | 169,219                | 3,021,010        | 3.0                                            |

Note: Registered foreigners are counted on 31 December and MOIS foreign residents on 1 November. The table shows MOIS counts from 2008, when the MOIS count for Incheon was 49,253. Korean residents are Korean nationals in the MOIS resident registration count.

Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks and Ministry of the Interior and Safety statistics, 2006-2024.

Compared with all registered foreigners in South Korea in 2024, Incheon had larger shares of Korean-Chinese (22.9 against 16.6 percent), Myanmar (5.4 against 3.5 percent) and Kazakh nationals (2.9 against 1.4 percent). Its shares of Vietnamese (11.0 against 17.6 percent) and Indonesian nationals (2.7 against 3.9 percent) were smaller.

Between 2019 and 2024 the number of Myanmar nationals in Incheon more than doubled, from 2,337 to 4,799, and Myanmar was the fourth-largest nationality in 2024. Mongolian nationals increased 53.5 percent (from 1,880 to 2,886), Kazakh nationals 50.3 percent (from 1,732 to 2,604) and Indonesian nationals 45.2 percent (from 1,671 to 2,426). The number of Filipino nationals changed little, from 2,838 to 2,848.

TABLE 2

**Ten Largest Nationalities among Registered Foreigners in Incheon, 2019 and 2024**

| Nationality    | 2019   | 2024   | Share of Incheon's registered foreigners, 2024 (%) | Share of all registered foreigners in South Korea, 2024 (%) | Incheon's share of the nationality in South Korea, 2024 (%) |
|----------------|--------|--------|----------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| Korean-Chinese | 19,071 | 20,395 | 22.9                                               | 16.6                                                        | 8.3                                                         |
| China          | 11,284 | 13,037 | 14.6                                               | 14.7                                                        | 6.0                                                         |
| Vietnam        | 9,294  | 9,829  | 11.0                                               | 17.6                                                        | 3.8                                                         |
| Myanmar        | 2,337  | 4,799  | 5.4                                                | 3.5                                                         | 9.2                                                         |
| Uzbekistan     | 3,663  | 3,919  | 4.4                                                | 4.1                                                         | 6.3                                                         |
| Mongolia       | 1,880  | 2,886  | 3.2                                                | 2.5                                                         | 7.7                                                         |
| Philippines    | 2,838  | 2,848  | 3.2                                                | 3.5                                                         | 5.5                                                         |
| Kazakhstan     | 1,732  | 2,604  | 2.9                                                | 1.4                                                         | 12.7                                                        |
| Indonesia      | 1,671  | 2,426  | 2.7                                                | 3.9                                                         | 4.2                                                         |
| Thailand       | 1,862  | 2,262  | 2.5                                                | 2.9                                                         | 5.2                                                         |

Note: China excludes Korean-Chinese, who are counted separately. Incheon had 6.0 percent of all registered foreigners in South Korea in 2024, so a value above 6.0 in the last column means the nationality is more concentrated in Incheon than registered foreigners as a whole.

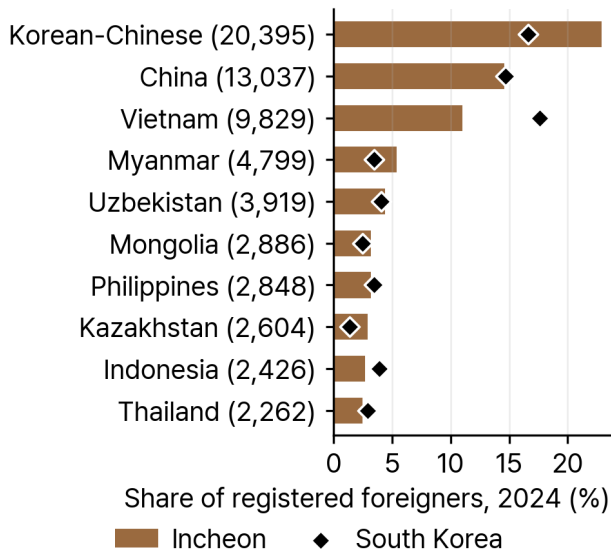
Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks, 2019 and 2024.

In 2024 Incheon's shares of several smaller national groups were far above its 6.0 percent share of all registered foreigners. The city was home to 437 of the 1,200 Yemeni nationals registered in South Korea (36.4 percent), 380 of 1,567 Tajik nationals (24.3 percent) and 635 of 2,835 Egyptian

nationals (22.4 percent). It also had 298 of 1,904 Syrian nationals (15.7 percent) and 1,148 of 8,170 Kyrgyz nationals (14.1 percent). Among the ten largest nationalities, the city's share was highest for Kazakh (12.7 percent), Myanmar (9.2 percent) and Korean-Chinese nationals (8.3 percent).

FIGURE 3

**Ten Largest Nationalities among Registered Foreigners in Incheon, with Their Shares in South Korea, 2024**



Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks, 2024.

The Shannon diversity index (H), which rises as registered foreigners are spread more evenly over more nationalities, increased from 2.4 in 2014 to 2.6 in 2024, when Incheon

ranked seventh among the 17 provinces. Registered foreigners in Incheon came from 160 nationality categories in 2024.

Overseas Koreans on F-4 status report their residence instead of registering, so they are not included in the counts above. In 2024, 43,637 F-4 residence reports listed an address in Incheon, 7.9 percent of the 553,664 in South Korea. Korean-Chinese accounted for 28,838 of them (66.1 percent), followed by Korean-Russians (4,909) and nationals of Uzbekistan (3,157), the United States (2,458) and Kazakhstan (1,960). Adding the two counts, 49,233 Korean-Chinese in Incheon were registered foreigners or F-4 residents in 2024.

### 3 Residence Statuses

In 2024, settlement statuses (F-2, F-5 and F-6) covered 40.7 percent of Incheon's registered foreigners (36,291 people), compared with 27.6 percent nationally, and family statuses (F-1 and F-3) covered 13.7 percent (12,254), compared with 10.0 percent (see Figure 4). Rotation labor accounted for 23.3 percent (20,790), study and job search for 9.7 percent (8,638) and skilled statuses for 3.9 percent (3,512), below the national shares of 31.1, 18.6 and 5.8 percent. The other group made up 8.6 percent (7,644), against 7.1 percent in South Korea.

TABLE 3

**Ten Most Common Residence Statuses among Registered Foreigners in Incheon, 2024**

| Status | Meaning                     | Registered foreigners | Share of Incheon's registered foreigners (%) | Incheon's share of all holders in South Korea (%) |
|--------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| F-5    | Permanent residence         | 19,601                | 22.0                                         | 9.7                                               |
| E-9    | Non-professional employment | 14,664                | 16.5                                         | 4.5                                               |
| F-6    | Marriage migration          | 10,901                | 12.2                                         | 7.4                                               |
| F-1    | Visiting cohabitation       | 7,730                 | 8.7                                          | 8.0                                               |
| F-2    | Residential                 | 5,789                 | 6.5                                          | 9.5                                               |
| H-2    | Visiting employment         | 5,777                 | 6.5                                          | 6.3                                               |
| D-2    | Student                     | 5,460                 | 6.1                                          | 3.1                                               |
| G-1    | Other (miscellaneous)       | 4,610                 | 5.2                                          | 8.2                                               |
| F-3    | Dependent family            | 4,524                 | 5.1                                          | 8.8                                               |
| D-4    | General trainee             | 2,526                 | 2.8                                          | 3.2                                               |

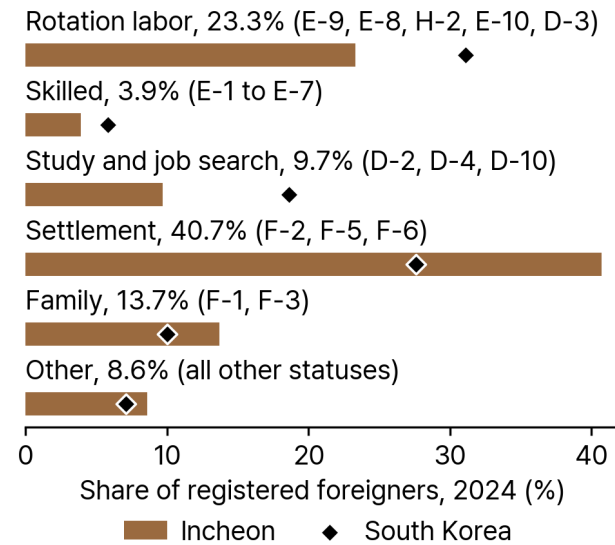
Note: Incheon had 6.0 percent of all registered foreigners in South Korea in 2024, so a value above 6.0 in the last column means the status is more common in Incheon than in the country as a whole.

Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks, 2024.

Permanent residence (F-5) was the most common single status in 2024, with 19,601 registered foreigners (22.0 percent), and Incheon was home to 9.7 percent of all F-5 holders in South Korea (see Table 3). Non-professional employment (E-9) followed with 14,664 (16.5 percent) and

marriage migration (F-6) with 10,901 (12.2 percent). The ten largest statuses in Table 3 accounted for 81,582 people (91.5 percent).

FIGURE 4

**Registered Foreigners in Incheon and South Korea by Status Group, 2024**

Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks, 2024.

In 2024, Incheon's share of the national holders of a status was above its 6.0 percent share of all registered foreigners for seven of the ten statuses in Table 3. It was highest for F-5 (9.7 percent), F-2 residential (9.5 percent) and F-3 dependent family (8.8 percent), followed by G-1 other (8.2 percent), F-1 visiting cohabitation (8.0 percent), F-6 (7.4 percent) and H-2 visiting employment (6.3 percent). It was below 6.0 percent for E-9 (4.5 percent), D-2 student (3.1 percent) and D-4 general trainee (3.2 percent).

The MOIS count sorts foreign residents into its own categories. Of the 169,219 foreign residents it recorded in Incheon on 1 November 2024, 127,960 were foreign nationals, among them 33,694 ethnic Koreans of foreign nationality, 23,039 foreign workers, 14,483 marriage migrants, 7,397 international students and 49,347 other foreign nationals. The remaining 41,259 (24.4 percent of the total) were 22,065 naturalized Korean citizens and 19,194 children of foreign residents.

## 4 Districts and Population-Decline Areas

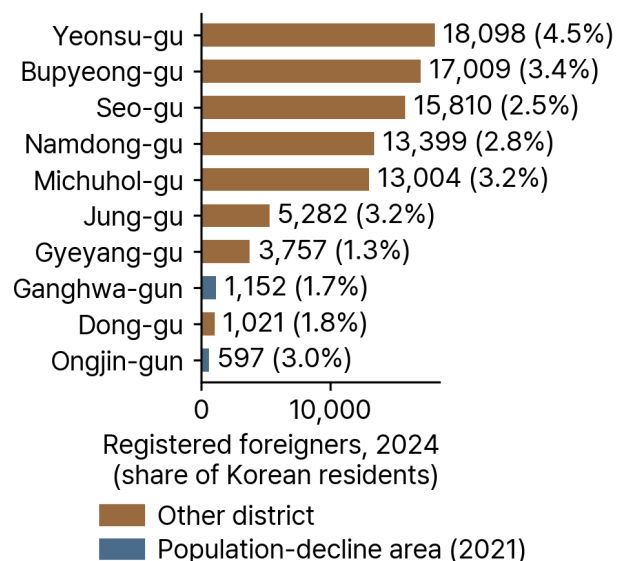
Incheon had ten districts in 2024, eight urban districts (gu) and two rural counties (gun). Yeonsu-gu had the most registered foreigners (18,098), followed by Bupyeong-gu (17,009), Seo-gu (15,810), Namdong-gu (13,399) and Michuhol-gu (13,004) (see Figure 5 and Table 4). Those districts together accounted for 77,320 registered foreigners, 86.8 percent of the city total. Yeonsu-gu also had the most registered foreigners per Korean resident (4.5 per 100), followed by Bupyeong-gu (3.4), Jung-gu and Michuhol-gu (3.2 each) and Ongjin-gun (3.0).

Between 2019 and 2024 the number of registered foreigners rose in all ten districts, most in Yeonsu-gu (by 4,921), Michuhol-gu (3,372), Seo-gu (2,951) and Bupyeong-gu

(2,460). Korean residents increased in five districts, led by Seo-gu (89,508), Yeonsu-gu (33,663) and Jung-gu (31,978), and decreased in the other five, led by Namdong-gu (46,479 fewer), Gyeyang-gu (23,244 fewer) and Bupyeong-gu (18,377 fewer). Where Korean residents declined, their combined loss was 94,801 and the combined gain in registered foreigners was 4,301.

The Ministry of the Interior and Safety designated Ganghwa-gun and Ongjin-gun as population-decline areas in October 2021 and named Dong-gu an area of interest. In 2024, Ganghwa-gun had 1,152 registered foreigners (1.7 per 100 Korean residents) and Ongjin-gun 597 (3.0 per 100). Between 2019 and 2024, Ganghwa-gun gained 224 Korean residents and 293 registered foreigners, and Ongjin-gun lost 570 Korean residents and gained 372 registered foreigners, raising its count of registered foreigners from 225 to 597. Combined, the two counties lost 346 Korean residents and gained 665 registered foreigners, a foreign gain equal to 192.2 percent of the Korean loss. In Dong-gu the Korean population fell by 6,131 and the number of registered foreigners rose by 86, a gain equal to 1.4 percent of the Korean loss.

FIGURE 5

**Registered Foreigners by District in Incheon, 2024**

Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks and Ministry of the Interior and Safety statistics, 2024.

Two districts met the definition of an ethnic enclave used in this Spotlight in 2024. In Bupyeong-gu, 8,903 Korean-Chinese made up 52.3 percent of registered foreigners (location quotient 3.7), and they were 43.7 percent of all Korean-Chinese registered foreigners in Incheon. In Ongjin-gun, 214 Indonesian nationals made up 35.8 percent of registered foreigners (location quotient 9.4). Yeonsu-gu, which contains the Koryoin neighborhood of Hambak-maul, had no enclave by this definition (see Service Organizations and Community Places).

**TABLE 4**  
**Registered Foreigners and Korean Residents by District in Incheon, 2019-24**

| District    | Registered foreigners, 2024 | Per 100 Korean residents, 2024 | Change in Korean residents, 2019-24 | Change in registered foreigners, 2019-24 | Population-decline area |
|-------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Yeonsu-gu   | 18,098                      | 4.5                            | +33,663                             | +4,921                                   | No                      |
| Bupyeong-gu | 17,009                      | 3.4                            | -18,377                             | +2,460                                   | No                      |
| Seo-gu      | 15,810                      | 2.5                            | +89,508                             | +2,951                                   | No                      |
| Namdong-gu  | 13,399                      | 2.8                            | -46,479                             | +972                                     | No                      |
| Michuhol-gu | 13,004                      | 3.2                            | +3,412                              | +3,372                                   | No                      |
| Jung-gu     | 5,282                       | 3.2                            | +31,978                             | +1,032                                   | No                      |
| Gyeyang-gu  | 3,757                       | 1.3                            | -23,244                             | +411                                     | No                      |
| Ganghwa-gun | 1,152                       | 1.7                            | +224                                | +293                                     | Yes                     |
| Dong-gu     | 1,021                       | 1.8                            | -6,131                              | +86                                      | No (area of interest)   |
| Ongjin-gun  | 597                         | 3.0                            | -570                                | +372                                     | Yes                     |

Note: Per 100 Korean residents is the number of registered foreigners divided by the number of Korean residents, times 100. Changes compare 2024 with 2019. The Ministry of the Interior and Safety designated Ganghwa-gun and Ongjin-gun as population-decline areas and Dong-gu as an area of interest on 19 October 2021.

Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks and Ministry of the Interior and Safety statistics, 2019-2024.

## 5 Population Trends

Incheon's Korean population grew from 2,624,391 in 2006 to 2,902,608 in 2014, 2,957,026 in 2019 and 3,021,010 in 2024. It grew 15.1 percent over 2006-24, 4.1 percent over 2014-24 and 2.2 percent over 2019-24. The count dipped to 2,942,828 in 2020 and rose in each year from 2021 to 2024. In 2024 Incheon had 5.9 percent of South Korea's 51,217,221 Korean residents and 6.0 percent of its registered foreigners.

The city's resident registration population of Korean nationals passed 3 million for the first time at 6 p.m. on 29 January 2024, when it stood at 3,000,043. Incheon became the third city in South Korea to pass 3 million and the first metropolitan city to do so since Busan in 1980. An earlier crossing of 3 million, in October 2016, had included registered foreign residents (Incheon Metropolitan City, 2024).

Incheon's total fertility rate rose 9.8 percent to 0.76 in 2024, above the national average of 0.75. Births rose 11.6 percent to 15,242, according to provisional Statistics Korea figures released on 26 February 2025 (Incheon Metropolitan City, 2025). Registered residents aged 65 and older numbered 495,272 in 2023 data released with the city's 2024 regional statistics, 16.4 percent of the population, up 30.9 percent from 2019 and 7.3 percent from the previous year (Incheon Today, 2024).

In Statistics Korea's 2024 domestic migration statistics, released on 24 January 2025, Incheon was one of five provinces and metropolitan cities where more people moved in than moved out. It also had net in-migration in every age group (Statistics Korea, 2025). In December 2024 the city applied Statistics Korea's 2022-2052 provincial projections to its own districts. The results projected growth from 2.975 million people in 2022 to a peak of about 3.126 million in 2037 and a decline to about 3.111 million by 2042. The projection described Incheon as the only one of South Korea's six metropolitan cities whose population continues to grow. Incheon became an aged society in 2022 and was projected to become a super-aged society by 2027 (Newsis, 2024).

## 6 Industry and Foreign Workers

The number of registered foreigners with E-9 non-professional employment status, issued under the Employment Permit System, was 16,134 in Incheon in 2014, 13,538 in 2019, 10,812 in 2021 and 14,664 in 2024. The 2021 count was 33.0 percent below the 2014 level, and the count then rose 35.6 percent by 2024. E-9 holders made up 29.2 percent of Incheon's registered foreigners in 2014 and 16.5 percent in 2024. In 2024 Incheon had 4.5 percent of all E-9 holders in South Korea, below its 6.0 percent share of all registered foreigners. Rotation labor statuses as a group covered 23.3 percent of the city's registered foreigners in 2024, against 31.1 percent nationally.

A 2025 report on the Namdong National Industrial Park (남동국가산업단지) cited Ministry of Justice figures showing 14,613 foreign workers in Incheon with E-9-01 (manufacturing) permits in March 2025, up from 10,077 a year earlier. The report did not break down that citywide figure by district. According to the same report, about 90 percent of the industrial park's tenant firms had fewer than 10 employees and more than 95 percent fewer than 30. Business owners there said the labor shortage left them able to hire almost only foreign workers (Kihoilbo, 2025). The March counts refer to one manufacturing subcategory of E-9 and to a different date than the KIRD count of all E-9 holders on 31 December (14,664 in 2024).

An Incheon Development Institute brief counted 25,628 foreign workers in Incheon in 2017, led by Korean-Chinese (7,503, or 29.3 percent) and followed by Vietnamese, Filipino and Indonesian nationals. Namdong-gu, where the Namdong National Industrial Park is located, had the most foreign workers among the city's districts (7,773), ahead of Seo-gu (7,013) and Bupyeong-gu (3,476) (Incheon Development Institute, 2017).

The Ministry of Justice counts E-8 seasonal workers on 31 December, and because their contracts end before winter, that count misses most seasonal workers. Among the years 2021 to 2024, the year-end count for Incheon recorded E-8 holders only on 31 December 2023, when there were 4. Ganghwa-gun's recruitment of seasonal farm workers from Laos is described under Provincial Policy.

## 7 International Students and Universities

Registered foreigners on student (D-2) or general trainee (D-4) status in Incheon numbered 1,848 in 2008, 2,490 in 2014, 6,330 in 2019 and 7,986 in 2024 (see Figure 6). The count fell to 5,250 in 2021, 17.1 percent below the 2019 level, and then rose 52.1 percent by 2024. In 2024, 5,460 were on D-2 status and 2,526 on D-4 status.

Incheon had 3.1 percent of all D-2 and D-4 holders in South Korea in 2024, about half its 6.0 percent share of registered foreigners. Study and job search statuses (D-2, D-4 and D-10) covered 9.7 percent of the city's registered foreigners, against 18.6 percent nationally.

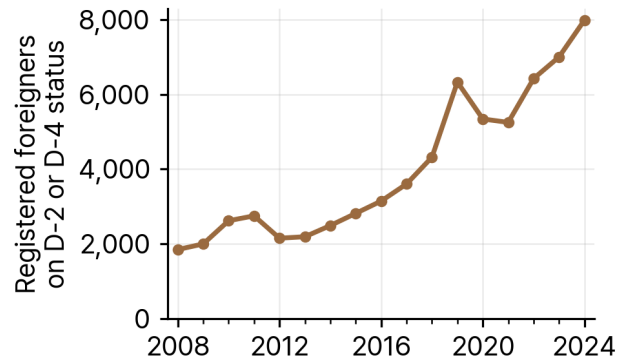
Inha University's main campus in Michuhol-gu reported 1,954 foreign students in the 2026 key indicators of the University Information Disclosure service (대학알리미). Incheon National University's main campus in Songdo, Yeonsu-gu, reported 512 in the same 2026 figures (Academyinfo, 2026).

Incheon Global Campus in Songdo is home to branch campuses of foreign universities in the Incheon Free Economic Zone. It enrolled 4,519 students in the spring 2025 semester, up from 45 when it opened in 2012 (Incheon Today, 2025a). About 10 percent of those students (about 450) were foreign nationals enrolled as long-term students, short of the

campus's original target of 40 percent. Including exchange and short-term program participants, the foreign share was about 30 percent (Incheon Today, 2025b).

FIGURE 6

**Registered Foreigners on Student (D-2) or General Trainee (D-4) Status in Incheon, 2008-24**



Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks, 2008-2024.

A news report put the number of D-2 holders in university and graduate programs living in Incheon at 5,460 as of 3 October 2025, the third-lowest among South Korea's seven special and metropolitan cities (Kyeongin Ilbo, 2025). That figure equals the Ministry of Justice count of D-2 holders in Incheon on 31 December 2024 in the KIRD data. A metropolitan-type visa pilot for students at Incheon Global Campus is described under Provincial Policy.

## 8 Provincial Policy

Incheon's Ordinance on Support for Foreign Residents and Multicultural Families aims to help foreign residents and multicultural families living in the city establish themselves as members of the local community by supporting stable family life and self-reliance. The version in force since 8 January 2024 is Ordinance No. 7166. An amendment dated 30 November 2023 changed the deputy mayor named in the ordinance from the political deputy mayor for culture and welfare to the political deputy mayor for Global City affairs, the renamed office (U-LEX, 2024).

On 22 May 2024, Yeonsu-gu promulgated the Ordinance on Social Integration of Korean and Foreign Residents, reported as the first ordinance of its kind enacted by a local government in South Korea. It was prompted in part by the district's foreign population and by Hambak-dong, where more than 65 percent of residents are foreign nationals (Kihoilbo, 2024).

Ganghwa-gun and Ongjin-gun were among the 89 population-decline areas eligible for the first one-year pilot round of the Ministry of Justice's regional specialized visa program, which began on 4 October 2022. The program grants qualifying foreign talent and the families of overseas Koreans special conditions of residence and employment, with the aim of easing labor shortages in areas at risk of decline (Incheon Today, 2022).

In March 2025 the Ministry of Justice selected Incheon for its metropolitan-type visa pilot, which covers the second half of 2025 through 2026. The pilot targets about 60 D-2 students at the foreign university branch campuses of Incheon Global Campus in Songdo, extends their maximum period of residence from one year to two years and eases limits on internships during the semester (Siminilbo, 2025).

Ganghwa-gun arranged its first intake of E-8 seasonal farm workers under a memorandum of understanding signed in 2025 with the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare of Laos. A May 2026 report said 35 Lao workers would arrive in mid-May 2026 and be placed with local agricultural cooperatives and individual farms for the farming season (Ganghwa Today, 2026).

The city opened the Incheon Support Center for Foreign Residents (인천외국인종합지원센터) in Namdong-gu in March 2016 to improve conditions for foreign residents' long-term residence and daily life. At its opening it offered a weekday counseling desk in Korean, English, Filipino, Chinese and Vietnamese, with information on education and housing and referrals for legal and labor questions, as well as Korean-language classes (Bupyeong-gu Office, 2016).

## 9 Languages

The KIRD dataset estimates the first languages of registered foreigners by dividing each nationality's count among the languages spoken as a first language in that country, using first-language shares from Ethnologue. Korean is excluded, so Korean-Chinese residents, whose first language the method takes to be Korean, add no speakers to the estimates.

By this estimate, Chinese was the most common first language among Incheon's registered foreigners in 2024 (14,461 speakers), followed by Vietnamese (8,424), Russian (3,564), Uzbek (3,118) and Burmese (3,052). Arabic ranked sixth (2,630), ahead of Mongolian (2,523), Tagalog/Filipino (2,503), Thai (2,017) and Kazakh (1,995). Sixteen languages had at least 1,000 estimated speakers in Incheon in 2024.

When the Incheon Support Center for Foreign Residents opened in 2016, its counseling desk offered Korean, English, Filipino, Chinese and Vietnamese (see Provincial Policy). Those languages covered three of the ten most common estimated first languages of 2024 (Chinese, Vietnamese and Tagalog/Filipino).

## 10 Service Organizations and Community Places

The KIRD census of 1,717 migrant-serving organizations in South Korea lists 108 in Incheon, or 12.1 per 10,000 registered foreigners in 2024, against 11.5 per 10,000 nationally. Of the 108, 104 provide services directly. By type, the census counts 25 program sites, 14 medical providers, 14 nongovernmental organizations, 10 family centers (가족센터) and 10 community associations in the city. It also lists 6 foreign resident support centers, 6 migrant worker centers, 5 youth and education providers, 5 overseas Korean organizations and 4 shelters.

Counting each population an organization names as a target group, 37 of Incheon's organizations serve workers, 28 serve families, 20 children, 18 refugees, 12 undocumented migrants and 11 diaspora communities, and 16 serve all migrants.

A 2022 report described Hambak-maul in Yeonsu-gu as the largest Koryoin settlement in South Korea formed along a single street; Koryoin are ethnic Koreans from the former Soviet Union. About 10,000 people lived there officially, of whom a little over 5,000 were registered Koryoin, rising to about 7,000 when residents not clearly classified as Koryoin were included. About 60 to 70 restaurants and shops there were operated by Koryoin (Incheon Ilbo, 2022).

Incheon's Chinatown in Jung-gu dates from 1884, when a Qing Chinese concession, the first foreign concession in Korea, was set up there. The 1882 commercial treaty between Joseon and Qing China had first permitted Chinese migration to Korea. The overseas Chinese population grew from fewer than 200 at the start to more than 10,000 by 1910. In 2026 the community was centered on overseas Chinese of Taiwanese (Republic of China) nationality, whose community had lived in the city for more than 140 years (Kyeongin Ilbo, 2026).

By 2020 a Myanmar community had formed around Bupyeong 1-dong in Bupyeong-gu, centered on a Myanmar Buddhist temple. It grew with 112 Myanmar refugees resettled there under a 2015-2018 government pilot program and with Myanmar migrant workers on E-9 permits, and Myanmar restaurants, phone shops and temples were clustered along Gwangjang-ro 4-gil (EKW, 2020). In the KIRD data, the number of registered Myanmar nationals in Incheon rose from 2,337 in 2019 to 4,799 in 2024, and Incheon had 9.2 percent of all registered Myanmar nationals in South Korea in 2024.

**About these profiles.** The KIRD province profiles describe the foreign-resident population of each of South Korea's seventeen provinces and metropolitan cities. Figures come from the Korea Immigration Regional Dashboard (KIRD) dataset, built from the Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks and the Ministry of the Interior and Safety foreign-resident statistics for 2006 to 2024 (<https://doi.org/10.3886/E249944V1>); context comes from the sources listed. Interactive maps and tables: <https://immigrantsinkorea.today>.

Suggested citation: Korea Immigration Regional Dashboard (KIRD). 2026. "Foreign Residents in Incheon." Foreign Residents in South Korea series, September 2026. Data: Korea Immigration Regional Dashboard (KIRD) dataset, <https://doi.org/10.3886/E249944V1>. Interactive maps and tables: <https://immigrantsinkorea.today>.

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# Foreign Residents in North Gyeongsang Province

SEPTEMBER 2026

## Summary

At the end of 2024, 76,768 registered foreigners lived in North Gyeongsang Province (Gyeongsangbuk-do), 5.2 percent of the 1,488,353 registered foreigners in South Korea. The province ranked sixth among the 17 provinces and metropolitan cities by the number of registered foreigners and seventh by registered foreigners per Korean resident, with 3.0 registered foreigners per 100 Korean residents against 2.9 nationwide. The Ministry of the Interior and Safety counted 128,725 foreign residents in the province on 1 November 2024, a broader count that adds naturalized citizens and the children of foreign residents.

## Highlights

- ▶ North Gyeongsang Province had 76,768 registered foreigners at the end of 2024, sixth among South Korea's 17 provinces and metropolitan cities, and within its current boundary their number rose 33.3 percent between 2019 and 2024 (from 57,581), while the Korean population fell 4.2 percent (from 2,641,993 to 2,531,384).
- ▶ Rotation labor statuses covered 39.3 percent of the province's registered foreigners in 2024, against 31.1 percent nationwide, and the province had 14.8 percent of all E-10 crew employment holders and 14.6 percent of all E-8 seasonal workers in South Korea, compared with 5.2 percent of all registered foreigners.
- ▶ In the 15 districts designated as population-decline areas in 2021, the number of registered foreigners rose by 5,360 between 2019 and 2024 while the Korean population fell by 56,885, a foreign gain equal to 9.4 percent of the Korean loss.

Gunwi County moved from the province to Daegu on 1 July 2023. Province totals in this Spotlight follow each year's boundary, so they include Gunwi County through 2022, while

district figures exclude it in every year. Within the current boundary, the number of registered foreigners increased by 19,187 between 2019 and 2024, from 57,581 to 76,768 (33.3 percent), and the number of Korean residents decreased by 110,609, from 2,641,993 to 2,531,384 (4.2 percent), so the foreign gain equaled 17.3 percent of the Korean loss. The 2019 figures subtract Gunwi County's 538 registered foreigners and 23,843 Korean residents from the province totals of 58,119 and 2,665,836. Registered foreigners per 100 Korean residents rose from 1.1 in 2006 to 1.8 in 2014, 2.2 in 2019 and 3.0 in 2024.

Compared with registered foreigners nationwide, those in North Gyeongsang Province in 2024 included more Vietnamese nationals (30.8 percent against 17.6 percent) and Indonesians (8.0 percent against 3.9 percent) and fewer Korean-Chinese (3.6 percent against 16.6 percent). Larger shares of them had rotation labor statuses (39.3 percent against 31.1 percent) and study and job search statuses (24.0 percent against 18.6 percent), and a smaller share had settlement statuses (16.1 percent against 27.6 percent). Gyeongsan-si, where the four universities in the province with the most international students in 2025 have their main campuses, had 18,485 registered foreigners in 2024, 24.1 percent of the province's total, and was the only district in the province whose Korean population grew between 2019 and 2024. Gyeongju-si was home to 5,838 of the province's 6,401 Koryoin, ethnic Koreans who returned from the former Soviet Union, in November 2024 (Kyongbuk Ilbo, 2026a). Fifteen of the province's 23 districts were designated population-decline areas in 2021.

**BOX 1****Definitions**

**North Gyeongsang Province (경상북도).** The province has 22 cities and counties; this Spotlight counts the two general districts of Pohang-si (Nam-gu and Buk-gu) separately, for 23 districts. Gunwi County (Gunwi-gun) moved from the province to Daegu on 1 July 2023. Province totals follow each year's boundary, so they include Gunwi County through 2022 and exclude it from 2023, and district figures exclude it in every year. Comparisons of 2019 and 2024 within the current boundary subtract Gunwi County's 2019 counts (538 registered foreigners and 23,843 Korean residents, the difference between the 2019 province totals and the sum of the 23 districts) from the 2019 province totals.

**Registered foreigners (등록외국인).** Foreign nationals in South Korea for more than 90 days who register with immigration authorities, as counted by the Ministry of Justice on 31 December of each year. Overseas Koreans on F-4 status report their place of residence instead of registering and are excluded from this count. Counts in this Spotlight are registered foreigners unless another count is named.

**MOIS foreign residents (외국인주민).** The count of foreign residents by the Ministry of the Interior and Safety (MOIS) on 1 November of each year. It adds naturalized Korean citizens and the children of foreign residents to foreign nationals, and it classifies foreign nationals as workers, marriage migrants, international students, foreign nationals of Korean descent and other foreigners.

**Korean residents (주민등록인구).** South Korean nationals in the resident registration of the Ministry of the Interior and Safety. The number of registered foreigners per 100 Korean residents uses this count as its denominator.

**Status groups.** This Spotlight groups residence statuses into rotation labor (E-9 non-professional employment, E-8 seasonal work, H-2 working visit, E-10 crew employment and D-3 technical training), skilled (E-1 to E-7), study and job search (D-2 student, D-4 general trainee and D-10 job seeking), settlement (F-2 residence, F-5 permanent residence and F-6 marriage migration) and family (F-1 visiting cohabitation and F-3 dependent family). All other statuses are counted as other.

**Population-decline areas (인구감소지역).** The Ministry of the Interior and Safety designated 89 districts as population-decline areas on 19 October 2021 and named 18 other districts as areas of interest (관심지역). Fifteen of North Gyeongsang Province's 23 current districts are population-decline areas, and Gyeongju-si and Gimcheon-si are areas of interest. Gunwi-gun, designated on the same date while it was part of the province, is counted under Daegu.

**Diversity index.** The Shannon index of the nationality composition of registered foreigners. It rises with the number of nationalities and with the evenness of their shares.

**Ethnic enclave.** In this Spotlight, a district where one nationality makes up at least 30 percent of the district's registered foreigners and has a location quotient of at least 2. The location quotient divides the group's number per Korean resident in the district by the same ratio for South Korea.

## 1 Size of the Foreign-Resident Population

The number of registered foreigners in North Gyeongsang Province rose from 29,709 in 2006 to 47,805 in 2014 and 58,119 in 2019. It fell to 52,469 in 2020 and 51,100 in 2021, 12.1 percent below the 2019 level, and then rose each year to 76,768 in 2024, 50.2 percent above the 2021 count. The 2024 total was 2.58 times the 2006 total, an increase of 47,059 people (158.4 percent). The totals through 2022 include Gunwi County, which had 538 registered foreigners in 2019.

The MOIS count, which adds naturalized citizens and the children of foreign residents, rose from 36,685 in 2008 to 104,596 in 2019, dipped to 98,566 in 2020 and 98,197 in 2021 and rose to 128,725 in 2024.

With 2014 set to 100, the number of registered foreigners in the province stood at 160.6 in 2024 and the number of Korean residents at 93.7. Both series follow each year's boundary. The Korean population fell by 46,168 between 2022 and 2023, a drop that includes Gunwi County's move to Daegu, against 26,117 between 2021 and 2022 and 22,940 between 2023 and 2024.

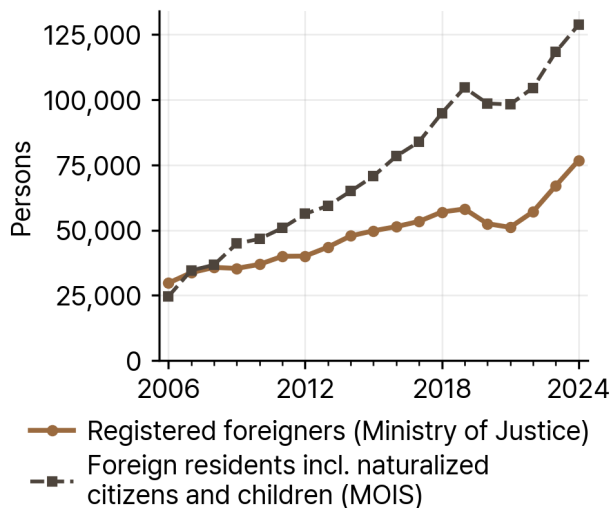
Within the current boundary, registered foreigners increased by 19,187 (33.3 percent) between 2019 and 2024 and Korean residents decreased by 110,609 (4.2 percent), so the foreign gain equaled 17.3 percent of the Korean loss. The province totals, which include Gunwi County in 2019, show an increase of 18,649 registered foreigners (32.1 percent) and a decrease of 134,452 Korean residents (5.0 percent), a ratio of 13.9 percent.

Registered foreigners per 100 Korean residents rose from 1.1 in 2006 to 1.8 in 2014, 2.2 in 2019 and 3.0 in 2024, when the national figure was 2.9. In 2024 North Gyeongsang Province ranked sixth among the 17 provinces and metropolitan cities by the number of registered foreigners and seventh by registered foreigners per Korean resident.

## 2 Nationalities

Vietnam was the largest nationality among registered foreigners in North Gyeongsang Province in 2024, with 23,632 people (30.8 percent of the total), compared with 17.6 percent of registered foreigners nationwide. China followed with 7,912 (10.3 percent), then Indonesia (6,115), Uzbekistan (4,815) and Nepal (4,498). The ten largest nationalities made up 80.8 percent of the province's registered foreigners (62,033 of 76,768).

FIGURE 1

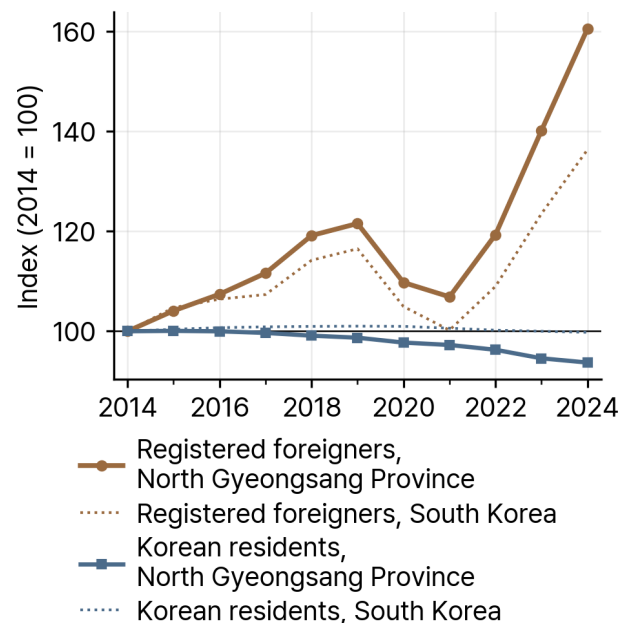
**Registered Foreigners and MOIS Foreign Residents in North Gyeongsang Province, 2006-24**

Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks and Ministry of the Interior and Safety foreign-resident statistics, 2006-2024. Totals follow each year's boundary and include Gunwi County through 2022.

Between 2019 and 2024 the number of Vietnamese nationals rose by 5,130 (27.7 percent), Chinese nationals by 2,101 (36.2 percent), Indonesians by 1,926 (46.0 percent) and Nepalis by 1,605 (55.5 percent), and the number of Thai nationals rose from 1,435 to 2,191 (52.7 percent). The number of Korean-

Chinese fell from 3,388 to 2,800 (17.4 percent). The 2019 counts include Gunwi County, which had 538 registered foreigners of all nationalities that year.

FIGURE 2

**Registered Foreigners and Korean Residents in North Gyeongsang Province and South Korea, 2014-24 (index, 2014 = 100)**

Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks and Ministry of the Interior and Safety resident registration statistics, 2014-2024. Province series follow each year's boundary and include Gunwi County through 2022.

TABLE 1

**Registered Foreigners, MOIS Foreign Residents and Korean Residents in North Gyeongsang Province, Selected Years**

| Year | Registered foreigners | MOIS foreign residents | Korean residents | Registered foreigners per 100 Korean residents |
|------|-----------------------|------------------------|------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| 2006 | 29,709                | —                      | 2,688,577        | 1.1                                            |
| 2014 | 47,805                | 64,931                 | 2,700,794        | 1.8                                            |
| 2019 | 58,119                | 104,596                | 2,665,836        | 2.2                                            |
| 2024 | 76,768                | 128,725                | 2,531,384        | 3.0                                            |

Note: Registered foreigners are counted on 31 December and MOIS foreign residents on 1 November. The MOIS column starts in 2008, when the count was 36,685. Totals follow each year's boundary, so those for 2006, 2014 and 2019 include Gunwi County, which moved to Daegu on 1 July 2023; in 2019 the county had 538 registered foreigners and 23,843 Korean residents. South Korea had 2.9 registered foreigners per 100 Korean residents in 2024.

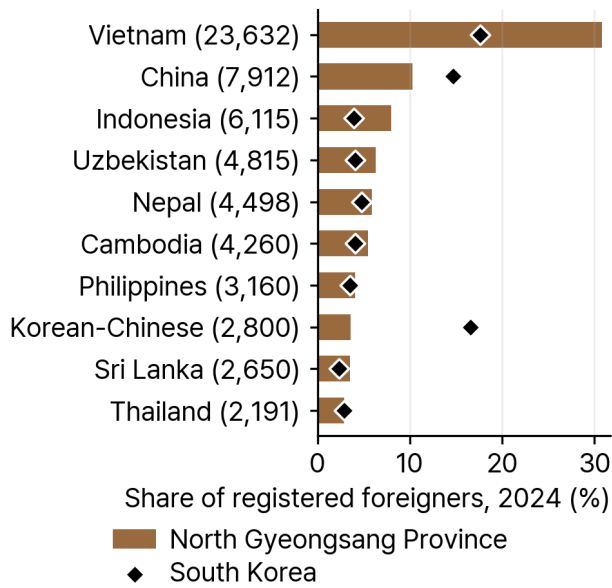
Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks and Ministry of the Interior and Safety statistics, 2006-2024.

The province was home to 5.2 percent of all registered foreigners in South Korea in 2024 and to larger shares of several national groups, including 10.5 percent of Indonesians (6,115 of 58,248), 9.0 percent of Vietnamese (23,632 of 261,581), 7.8 percent each of Uzbek and Sri Lankan nationals and 7.0 percent of Cambodians. Its shares of Syrians (187 of 1,904, or 9.8 percent), Egyptians (225 of 2,835, or 7.9 percent) and Yemenis (94 of 1,200, or 7.8 percent) were also larger than its overall share. By contrast, 1.1 percent of Korean-Chinese

registered foreigners lived in the province, where they made up 3.6 percent of registered foreigners against 16.6 percent nationwide.

The Shannon diversity index of the province's registered foreigners was 2.5 in 2014 and 2.5 in 2024, and in 2024 it ranked 11th among the 17 provinces and metropolitan cities. Registered foreigners in the province came from 130 nationalities in 2024.

FIGURE 3

**Ten Largest Nationalities among Registered Foreigners, North Gyeongsang Province and South Korea, 2024**

Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks, 2024.

Overseas Koreans on F-4 status report their residence instead of registering, so they are not counted among registered foreigners. In 2024, 10,697 F-4 holders reported a residence in

North Gyeongsang Province, 1.9 percent of the 553,664 nationwide. Korean-Chinese made up the largest group (4,845), followed by nationals of Uzbekistan (1,480) and Kazakhstan (1,363), Korean-Russians (1,344) and nationals of the United States (845).

### 3 Residence Statuses

Rotation labor statuses covered 30,188 registered foreigners in North Gyeongsang Province in 2024, or 39.3 percent, compared with 31.1 percent nationwide. The study and job search group covered 18,388 (24.0 percent, against 18.6 percent nationwide), settlement 12,380 (16.1 percent, against 27.6 percent), family 7,575 (9.9 percent, against 10.0 percent) and skilled 3,449 (4.5 percent, against 5.8 percent). The remaining 4,788 (6.2 percent, against 7.1 percent) had other statuses.

E-9 non-professional employment was the most common single status in 2024, with 22,347 holders (29.1 percent), followed by D-2 student (10,930), F-6 marriage migration (7,266) and D-4 general trainee (6,214). Against its 5.2 percent share of all registered foreigners, the province had 14.8 percent of all E-10 crew employment holders in South Korea (3,199 people) and 14.6 percent of all E-8 seasonal workers (2,878), as well as 7.8 percent of D-4 general trainees and 6.8 percent of E-9 holders. Its share of F-5 permanent residents was 1.6 percent (3,312 people).

TABLE 2

**Ten Largest Nationalities among Registered Foreigners in North Gyeongsang Province, 2019 and 2024**

| Nationality    | 2019   | 2024   | Share of the province's registered foreigners, 2024 (%) | Province's share of the nationality's registered foreigners in South Korea, 2024 (%) |
|----------------|--------|--------|---------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Vietnam        | 18,502 | 23,632 | 30.8                                                    | 9.0                                                                                  |
| China          | 5,811  | 7,912  | 10.3                                                    | 3.6                                                                                  |
| Indonesia      | 4,189  | 6,115  | 8.0                                                     | 10.5                                                                                 |
| Uzbekistan     | 3,824  | 4,815  | 6.3                                                     | 7.8                                                                                  |
| Nepal          | 2,893  | 4,498  | 5.9                                                     | 6.2                                                                                  |
| Cambodia       | 3,279  | 4,260  | 5.5                                                     | 7.0                                                                                  |
| Philippines    | 2,623  | 3,160  | 4.1                                                     | 6.1                                                                                  |
| Korean-Chinese | 3,388  | 2,800  | 3.6                                                     | 1.1                                                                                  |
| Sri Lanka      | 1,974  | 2,650  | 3.5                                                     | 7.8                                                                                  |
| Thailand       | 1,435  | 2,191  | 2.9                                                     | 5.0                                                                                  |

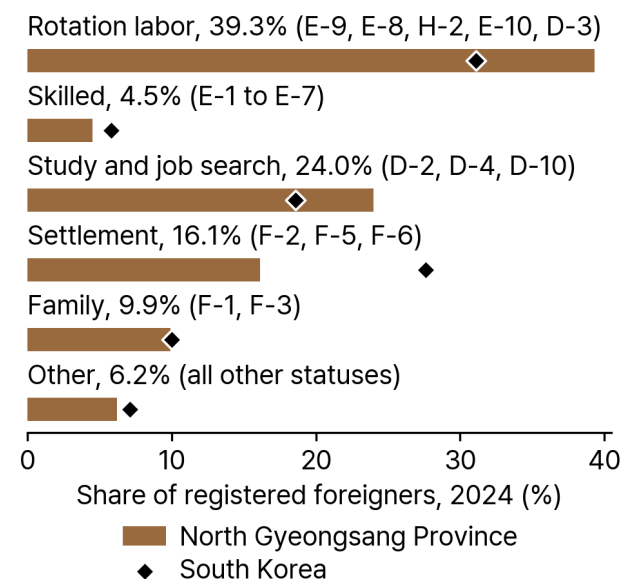
Note: Korean-Chinese are ethnic Koreans of Chinese nationality, whom the Ministry of Justice counts separately from other Chinese nationals. The 2019 counts include Gunwi County, which moved to Daegu in 2023 and had 538 registered foreigners in 2019. North Gyeongsang Province had 5.2 percent of all registered foreigners in South Korea in 2024.

Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks, 2019 and 2024.

Within the rotation labor group, E-9, E-10 and E-8 holders numbered 28,424 of 30,188 in 2024, and the other 1,764 had H-2 or D-3 status. In the study and job search group, D-2 and

D-4 holders numbered 17,144 of 18,388, leaving 1,244 on D-10 status.

FIGURE 4

**Registered Foreigners by Status Group, North Gyeongsang Province and South Korea, 2024**

Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks, 2024.

The MOIS count uses its own categories. On 1 November 2024 it recorded 29,693 foreign workers, 8,291 marriage migrants, 16,541 international students, 8,327 foreign nationals of Korean

descent and 38,300 other foreigners in the province, 101,152 foreign nationals in all, together with 9,765 naturalized citizens and 17,808 children of foreign residents, for a total of 128,725.

## 4 Districts and Population-Decline Areas

Gyeongsan-si had the most registered foreigners in North Gyeongsang Province in 2024 (18,485, or 24.1 percent of the province's total), followed by Gyeongju-si (12,819), Gumi-si (6,557), Chilgok-gun (5,412) and the Nam-gu general district of Pohang-si (4,404). Relative to the Korean population, the ratio was highest in Goryeong-gun (7.4 registered foreigners per 100 Korean residents), Gyeongsan-si (6.9), Seongju-gun (5.7), Gyeongju-si (5.2) and Chilgok-gun (5.0), and lowest in Yecheon-gun (1.1) and Pohang-si Buk-gu (1.2).

Between 2019 and 2024 the number of registered foreigners rose in 22 of the 23 districts, most in Gyeongsan-si (6,772), Gumi-si (1,580), Chilgok-gun (1,374), Gimcheon-si (1,362) and Pohang-si Nam-gu (1,123), and fell by 17 in Ulleung-gun. The Korean population fell in every district except Gyeongsan-si, which gained 3,213 Korean residents. The largest Korean losses were in Pohang-si Nam-gu (15,020), Gumi-si (14,922) and Gyeongju-si (10,633).

TABLE 3

**Ten Most Common Residence Statuses among Registered Foreigners in North Gyeongsang Province, 2024**

| Status | Meaning                     | Registered foreigners | Share of the province's registered foreigners (%) | Province's share of all holders in South Korea (%) |
|--------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| E-9    | Non-professional employment | 22,347                | 29.1                                              | 6.8                                                |
| D-2    | Student                     | 10,930                | 14.2                                              | 6.1                                                |
| F-6    | Marriage migration          | 7,266                 | 9.5                                               | 5.0                                                |
| D-4    | General trainee             | 6,214                 | 8.1                                               | 7.8                                                |
| F-1    | Visiting cohabitation       | 4,978                 | 6.5                                               | 5.1                                                |
| F-5    | Permanent residence         | 3,312                 | 4.3                                               | 1.6                                                |
| E-10   | Crew employment             | 3,199                 | 4.2                                               | 14.8                                               |
| G-1    | Other (miscellaneous)       | 3,145                 | 4.1                                               | 5.6                                                |
| E-8    | Seasonal worker             | 2,878                 | 3.7                                               | 14.6                                               |
| F-3    | Dependent family            | 2,597                 | 3.4                                               | 5.1                                                |

Note: Counts are registered foreigners on 31 December 2024. North Gyeongsang Province had 5.2 percent of all registered foreigners in South Korea in 2024.

Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks, 2024.

On 19 October 2021 the Ministry of the Interior and Safety designated 15 of the province's current districts as population-decline areas (Andong-si, Mungyeong-si, Sangju-si, Yeongcheon-si, Yeongju-si, Bonghwa-gun, Cheongdo-gun, Cheongsong-gun, Goryeong-gun, Seongju-gun, Uiseong-gun,

Uljin-gun, Ulleung-gun, Yeongdeok-gun and Yeongyang-gun) and named Gyeongju-si and Gimcheon-si areas of interest. Gunwi-gun, designated on the same date while it was part of

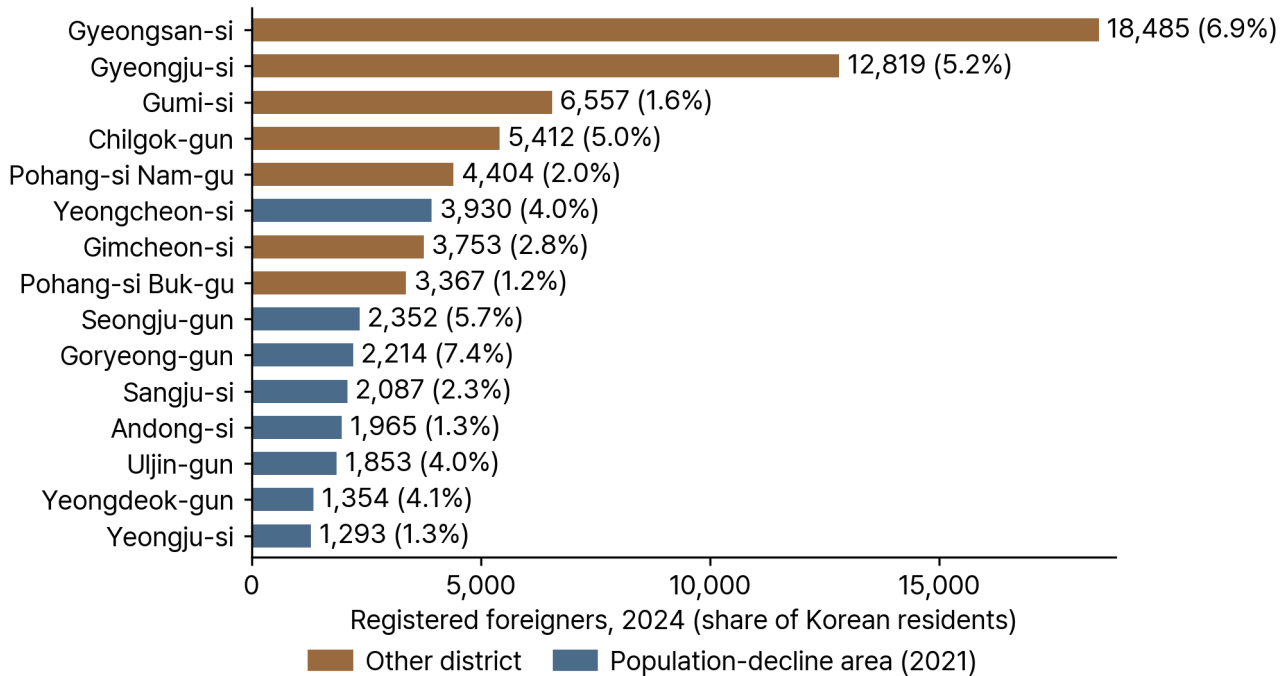
the province, is counted under Daegu. In 2024 the 15 decline areas were home to 21,385 registered foreigners, 27.9 percent of the province's total.

Between 2019 and 2024 the 15 decline areas lost 56,885 Korean residents and gained 5,360 registered foreigners, so the foreign gain equaled 9.4 percent of the Korean loss,

against 17.3 percent for the province as a whole within its current boundary. Sangju-si had the largest foreign gain among them (1,097) and lost 8,838 Korean residents. The two areas of interest lost 10,633 (Gyeongju-si) and 5,783 (Gimcheon-si) Korean residents and gained 1,025 and 1,362 registered foreigners.

FIGURE 5

**Fifteen Districts with the Most Registered Foreigners and Their Population-Decline Status, North Gyeongsang Province, 2024**



Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks and Ministry of the Interior and Safety statistics, 2024; population-decline areas as designated by the Ministry of the Interior and Safety in October 2021.

Four districts met the definition of an ethnic enclave for at least one nationality in 2024, three of them population-decline areas. In Gyeongsan-si, 6,362 Vietnamese made up 34.4 percent of registered foreigners (location quotient 4.7). In Uljin-gun, Vietnamese (816, or 44.0 percent; location quotient 3.5) and Indonesians (714, or 38.5 percent; location quotient 13.6) each met the definition. In Yeongdeok-gun, 578 Vietnamese made up 42.7 percent (location quotient 3.4), and in Cheongdo-gun, 462 Cambodians made up 37.3 percent (location quotient 9.6).

## 5 Population Trends

Among the years from 2006 to 2024, the Korean population of North Gyeongsang Province was highest in 2015, at 2,702,826, and it declined every year from 2016 to 2024, when it stood at 2,531,384. By the province totals, it fell by 157,193 (5.8 percent) between 2006 and 2024, by 169,410 (6.3 percent) between 2014 and 2024 and by 134,452 (5.0 percent) between 2019 and 2024. These totals include Gunwi County through 2022, and the fall of 46,168 between 2022

and 2023 includes the county's move to Daegu. Within the current boundary, the Korean population fell by 110,609 (4.2 percent) between 2019 and 2024. The province's Korean residents made up 4.9 percent of South Korea's 51,217,221 in 2024.

The province's resident registration population fell from 2.639 million in 2020, when Gunwi County was still part of the province, to 2.507 million in 2025 and dropped below 2.5 million in May 2026 (Gyeongbuk Domin Ilbo, 2026).

The province's total fertility rate rose for a second consecutive year, from a record low of 0.86 in 2023 to a provisional 0.93 in 2025, 0.13 points above the national average of 0.80 in 2025. Its crude birth rate rose from 4.0 per 1,000 population in 2023 to 4.2 in 2025 (Eroun.net, 2026). A report on Statistics Korea's 2025 statistics on older people, published on 29 September 2025, put the share of the province's population aged 65 and over at 26.1 percent, the second-highest share after South Jeolla Province (27.4 percent) and ahead of Gangwon State (25.7 percent) (Gyeongbuk Gumi Sinmun, 2025).

**TABLE 4**  
**Ten Districts with the Most Registered Foreigners in North Gyeongsang Province, 2024**

| District            | Registered foreigners, 2024 | Registered foreigners per 100 Korean residents, 2024 | Change in Korean residents, 2019-24 | Change in registered foreigners, 2019-24 | Population-decline area |
|---------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Gyeongsan-si        | 18,485                      | 6.9                                                  | +3,213                              | +6,772                                   | No                      |
| Gyeongju-si         | 12,819                      | 5.2                                                  | -10,633                             | +1,025                                   | No (area of interest)   |
| Gumi-si             | 6,557                       | 1.6                                                  | -14,922                             | +1,580                                   | No                      |
| Chilgok-gun         | 5,412                       | 5.0                                                  | -9,664                              | +1,374                                   | No                      |
| Pohang-si<br>Nam-gu | 4,404                       | 2.0                                                  | -15,020                             | +1,123                                   | No                      |
| Yeongcheon-si       | 3,930                       | 4.0                                                  | -4,327                              | +679                                     | Yes                     |
| Gimcheon-si         | 3,753                       | 2.8                                                  | -5,783                              | +1,362                                   | No (area of interest)   |
| Pohang-si Buk-gu    | 3,367                       | 1.2                                                  | -424                                | +569                                     | No                      |
| Seongju-gun         | 2,352                       | 5.7                                                  | -2,563                              | +654                                     | Yes                     |
| Goryeong-gun        | 2,214                       | 7.4                                                  | -2,311                              | +465                                     | Yes                     |

Note: The other 13 districts had 13,475 registered foreigners in 2024. All of them except Yecheon-gun (586) are population-decline areas: Sangju-si (2,087), Andong-si (1,965), Uljin-gun (1,853), Yeongdeok-gun (1,354), Yeongju-si (1,293), Cheongdo-gun (1,238), Mungyeong-si (1,110), Uiseong-gun (835), Bonghwa-gun (397), Cheongsong-gun (346), Yeongyang-gun (260) and Ulleung-gun (151). District figures count Gunwi County under Daegu in every year. Population-decline areas and areas of interest are those designated by the Ministry of the Interior and Safety in October 2021.

Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks and Ministry of the Interior and Safety statistics, 2019 and 2024.

Statistics Korea's provincial population projections for 2022-2052, released in 2024, put the share of the province's population aged 65 and over at 49.4 percent in 2052, the second-highest after South Jeolla Province (49.6 percent). The province is one of four provinces and metropolitan cities, with Ulsan, South Gyeongsang Province and South Jeolla Province, where the population aged 0 to 14 is projected to fall by more than half between 2022 and 2052 (Statistics Korea, 2024).

Between July 2022 and May 2026, the province had a net outflow of 38,524 residents aged 20 to 39 to other parts of South Korea, the second-largest after South Gyeongsang Province (46,075). Over the same period about 60,000 people in this age group left Daegu and the province for areas with semiconductor and other advanced industries (Kyongbuk Ilbo, 2026b).

## 6 Industry and Foreign Workers

Registered foreigners on E-9 non-professional employment status in North Gyeongsang Province numbered 20,371 in 2014 and 19,085 in 2019. The count fell to 14,609 in 2021 and rose to 22,347 in 2024, 53.0 percent above the 2021 level and 6.8 percent of all E-9 holders in South Korea. The counts for 2014, 2019 and 2021 include Gunwi County. The MOIS count recorded 29,693 foreign workers in the province on 1 November 2024, 23.1 percent of its 128,725 foreign residents.

The province also had 3,199 registered foreigners on E-10 crew employment status in 2024, 14.8 percent of all E-10 holders in South Korea. As of 2024, Pohang was the only city in the province that subsidized the cost of bringing in foreign fishing crew and their health checkups, which it had done since 2017. In 2024 a city delegation visited Vietnam to interview and select crew and discussed with two recruitment agencies the problems of crew leaving their workplaces and remaining in Korea without authorization (Gyeongbuk Maeil, 2024).

The number of E-8 seasonal workers counted on 31 December rose from 69 in 2021 to 498 in 2022, 1,890 in 2023 and 2,878 in 2024, when the province had 14.6 percent of all E-8 holders in South Korea. Most seasonal workers' contracts end before winter, so a count on 31 December misses most of them. The province brought in 12,544 foreign seasonal workers in 2025 and received an allocation of 14,638 for 2026, 16 percent more and the largest allocation of any province (Kyongbuk Ilbo, 2026c).

Seongju-gun, the largest melon-growing area in South Korea, depends on foreign seasonal workers for the labor concentrated in transplanting, crop management, harvesting and sorting, because rural depopulation and aging have made domestic workers unavailable. A 2026 news feature reported that the saying that farming there is impossible without foreign workers is no longer an exaggeration (Daegu Ilbo, 2026).

Seongju-gun has signed a memorandum with Cambodia's labor ministry and will add Cambodia to Laos, the Philippines and Vietnam as a source of seasonal workers from its program for the first half of 2027. Entry for the 2027 program moves earlier, to late December 2026, January 2027 and February 2027, from January, February and mid-March in earlier programs (Kyongbuk Ilbo, 2026d).

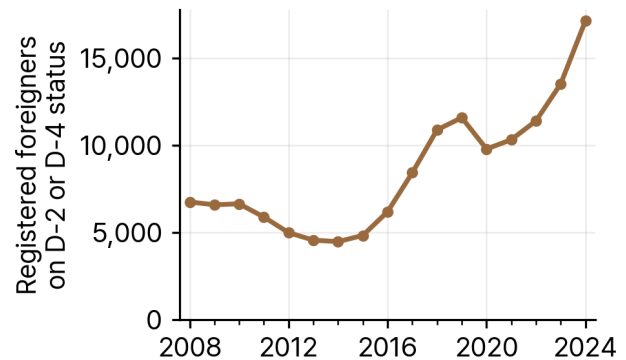
## 7 International Students and Universities

Registered foreigners on D-2 student and D-4 general trainee status in North Gyeongsang Province numbered 6,748 in 2008 and declined to 4,474 in 2014, the lowest count in the series. The count increased in each year from 2015 to 2019, when it was 11,583, dipped to 9,785 in 2020 and then rose each year to 17,144 in 2024, about 3.8 times the 2014 level. In 2024, 10,930 were on D-2 status and 6,214 on D-4 status, and the province had 6.6 percent of all D-2 and D-4 holders in South Korea, against 5.2 percent of all registered foreigners. The MOIS count recorded 16,541 international students in the province on 1 November 2024.

Among universities with main campuses in the province, Daegu University had the most international students in the August 2025 disclosure on Academyinfo (대학알리미), with 1,660, followed by Daegu Haany University (1,637), Yeungnam University (1,439) and Daegu Catholic University (1,178) (Kyongbuk Ilbo, 2025a). All four have their main campuses in Gyeongsan-si (Academyinfo, 2026), the district with the most registered foreigners in the province in 2024 (18,485).

FIGURE 6

**Registered Foreigners on Student (D-2) and General Trainee (D-4) Status in North Gyeongsang Province, 2008-24**



Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks, 2008-2024.

TABLE 5

**International Students at Four Universities in Gyeongsan-si, August 2025 Disclosure**

| University                | International students, August 2025 |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Daegu University          | 1,660                               |
| Daegu Haany University    | 1,637                               |
| Yeungnam University       | 1,439                               |
| Daegu Catholic University | 1,178                               |

Note: Counts are the numbers of international students in the August 2025 disclosure on Academyinfo (대학알리미). The four are the universities with main campuses in North Gyeongsang Province that had the most international students; universities with main campuses in Daegu are not included.

Source: Kyongbuk Ilbo, 2025a, from Academyinfo (대학알리미), August 2025.

The Ministry of Education and the Korean Educational Development Institute counted 22,456 international students in the province in their 2026 Basic Statistics on Education, 6,347 (39.4 percent) more than the 16,109 of the previous year. Students in degree programs increased by 49.1 percent to 18,736, of whom 14,333 were undergraduates, and master's and doctoral students increased by 51.8 percent to 4,403 (Financial News, 2026).

The province's scholarship program for international graduate students in natural science and engineering is described under Provincial Policy.

## 8 Provincial Policy

In January 2023 the province set up a Foreign Community Division (외국인공동체과) under its Local Era Policy Bureau to strengthen its immigration and foreign-resident policy (Seoul

Sinmun, 2023). In 2024 it prepared an immigration policy master plan, the K-Dream Foreign Resident Responsibility System (K-드림 외국인책임제), with 3 strategies, 9 strategic tasks and 27 detailed tasks, which the province describes as a full-cycle model covering the process from attracting immigrants to social integration (Munhwa Ilbo, 2024).

As of September 2025 the province operated the K-Dream Foreign Support Center in Gumi and an overseas talent recruitment center in Uzbekistan and supported 14 foreign-resident counseling centers (Metro Seoul, 2025a).

Under the metropolitan-type visa (광역형 비자) pilot, in effect from 1 July 2025 to 31 December 2026, the province designs its own requirements and procedures for 23 professional (E-7-1) and 2 semi-professional (E-7-2) occupations under the E-7 status and plans to bring 350 foreign workers into its 22 cities and counties over the two years (Metro Seoul, 2025b).

In June 2025 the province became the fifth region, after Seoul, Busan, Gangwon and Jeju, where hotels and vacation condominiums may legally employ workers on E-9 status, as building cleaners, kitchen assistants and hall servers (Kyongbuk Ilbo, 2025b).

In December 2025 the province evaluated the foreign-resident policies of its cities and counties, the first such evaluation by a provincial-level government in South Korea. Seongju-gun received the grand prize, and Gyeongju-si and Goryeong-gun received top-excellence awards (Yeongnam Economy, 2025).

The province's own invitational scholarship program for international students (K-GKS, 경북형 초청장학제도) pays full-semester scholarships to master's and doctoral students in natural science and engineering, on condition that they remain in the province for three years after graduation (Financial News, 2026).

## 9 Languages

The KIRD dataset estimates first-language speakers by multiplying the number of registered foreigners of each nationality by the share of that country's population with the

language as a first language, as reported by Ethnologue. By this estimate, Vietnamese was the most common first language among registered foreigners in North Gyeongsang Province in 2024 (20,202 speakers), followed by Chinese (8,409), Khmer (4,415) and Indonesian (4,287). Sixteen languages had at least 1,000 estimated speakers in 2024, and the table shows the ten with the most.

Because the estimate applies first-language shares to nationality counts, it differs from the counts by nationality. The estimate for Vietnamese (20,202) is below the number of Vietnamese nationals (23,632), and the estimate for Chinese (8,409) is above the number of Chinese nationals (7,912).

## 10 Service Organizations and Community Places

The KIRD census of 1,717 migrant-serving organizations in South Korea lists 106 in North Gyeongsang Province, or 13.8 per 10,000 registered foreigners in 2024, compared with 11.5 per 10,000 nationwide. Of the 106, 103 provide services directly to migrants, and 22 have 가족센터 (family center) in their names.

TABLE 6

**Estimated First-Language Speakers among Registered Foreigners in North Gyeongsang Province, 2024**

| Language         | Estimated speakers |
|------------------|--------------------|
| Vietnamese       | 20,202             |
| Chinese          | 8,409              |
| Khmer            | 4,415              |
| Indonesian       | 4,287              |
| Uzbek            | 3,556              |
| Tagalog/Filipino | 2,754              |
| Nepali           | 2,345              |
| Thai             | 2,055              |
| Russian          | 1,859              |
| Sinhala          | 1,827              |

Note: Estimates multiply the number of registered foreigners of each nationality by the share of that country's population with the language as a first language (Ethnologue) and sum across nationalities. Korean is excluded. Sixteen languages had at least 1,000 estimated speakers in 2024; the table shows the ten with the most.

Source: KIRD dataset, language estimates from Ministry of Justice nationality counts and Ethnologue first-language shares, 2024.

Organizations can name more than one population they serve. Families are the population named most often (39 organizations), followed by workers (29), refugees (12), youth (10), children (8), undocumented migrants (7), students (4), women (4) and overseas Koreans (3). Another 25 organizations serve all foreign residents.

In November 2024 the province had 6,401 Koryoin, ethnic Koreans who returned from the former Soviet Union. Of these, 5,838 (91.2 percent) lived in Gyeongju, 175 in Gyeongsan, 148

in Yeongcheon and 240 in other areas (Kyongbuk Ilbo, 2026a).

Seonggeon-dong in Gyeongju, a former university-student district near the Gyeongju campus of Dongguk University, has become known as a Koryoin village. A foreign residents' help center opened there in 2015, a Koryoin village center in 2018 and the provincial Gyeongbuk Koryoin Integrated Support Center in 2020. A 2021 report described a Russian bakery with

Central Asian clay ovens in the neighborhood, as well as public notices written in Russian, Vietnamese and Chinese (The AsiaN, 2021).

At Heungmu Elementary School in Seonggeon-dong, Koryoin students made up more than 30 percent of enrollment by 2021, and the school had five Russian-speaking bilingual instructors (The AsiaN, 2021).

**About these profiles.** The KIRD province profiles describe the foreign-resident population of each of South Korea's seventeen provinces and metropolitan cities. Figures come from the Korea Immigration Regional Dashboard (KIRD) dataset, built from the Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks and the Ministry of the Interior and Safety foreign-resident statistics for 2006 to 2024 (<https://doi.org/10.3886/E249944V1>); context comes from the sources listed. Interactive maps and tables: <https://immigrantsinkorea.today>.

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# Foreign Residents in South Jeolla Province

SEPTEMBER 2026

## Summary

South Jeolla Province (Jeollanam-do), in the southwest of South Korea, had 57,189 registered foreigners on 31 December 2024, or 3.8 percent of the national total of 1,488,353. It ranked seventh among the 17 provinces and metropolitan cities by number of registered foreigners and fifth by registered foreigners per Korean resident, with 3.2 per 100 Korean residents against 2.9 for the country as a whole. The Ministry of the Interior and Safety (MOIS), whose count adds naturalized citizens and children of foreign residents, recorded 95,832 foreign residents in the province in 2024.

## Highlights

- ▶ South Jeolla Province had 57,189 registered foreigners at the end of 2024, 65.1 percent more than in 2019 and the fastest growth among the 17 provinces and metropolitan cities, while its Korean population fell 4.3 percent over the same period.
- ▶ In 2024, 56.5 percent of the province's registered foreigners were on rotation labor statuses, against 31.1 percent nationally, and the province had 29.3 percent of all registered E-8 seasonal workers and 18.1 percent of all registered E-10 crew workers in South Korea.
- ▶ The 16 counties designated as population-decline areas lost 53,230 Korean residents and gained 14,552 registered foreigners between 2019 and 2024, and in 2024 they were home to 57.6 percent of the province's registered foreigners (32,963 of 57,189).

The number of registered foreigners in the province doubled between 2014 and 2024 (up 102.4 percent, from 28,254 to 57,189), while the number of Korean residents fell 6.1 percent (from 1,905,780 to 1,788,819). Most of the increase came after 2021, when the count was 32,656. Between 2019 and 2024 registered foreigners grew 65.1 percent, the fastest growth

among the 17 provinces, and the gain of 22,551 registered foreigners equaled 28.2 percent of the loss of 79,926 Korean residents.

Registered foreigners in South Jeolla are concentrated in rotation labor statuses and in counties with declining Korean populations. In 2024, 56.5 percent were on rotation labor statuses (mainly E-9 non-professional employment, E-8 seasonal work and E-10 crew employment), against 31.1 percent nationally, and 14.9 percent were on settlement statuses, against 27.6 percent. The 16 counties designated as population-decline areas were home to 57.6 percent of the province's registered foreigners. Yeongam-gun, the site of the HD Hyundai Samho shipyard and the Daebul national industrial park (Namdo Ilbo, 2024; Namdo Ilbo, 2026), had 18.8 registered foreigners per 100 Korean residents, the highest ratio in the province. Vietnamese nationals made up 31.3 percent of registered foreigners, and the province had 28.7 percent of all registered foreigners from Timor-Leste in South Korea.

### BOX 1

#### Definitions

**Registered foreigners (등록외국인).** Foreign nationals in South Korea for more than 90 days who register with immigration authorities, counted by the Ministry of Justice on 31 December of each year. Overseas Koreans on F-4 status report their residence instead of registering and are not included. Unless stated otherwise, the counts in this Spotlight are registered foreigners.

**Foreign residents, MOIS count (외국인주민).** The Ministry of the Interior and Safety (MOIS) count of foreign residents on 1 November of each year. It adds naturalized citizens and children of foreign residents to foreign nationals.

**Korean residents.** Korean nationals in the resident registration population of the Ministry of the Interior and Safety. Ratios of registered foreigners per 100 Korean residents use this count as the denominator.

**Residence status groups.** Rotation labor covers E-9 (non-professional employment), E-8 (seasonal work), H-2 (visiting employment), E-10 (crew employment) and D-3 (industrial training). Skilled covers E-1 to E-7. Study and job search covers D-2 (study), D-4 (general training) and D-10 (job seeking). Settlement covers F-2 (residence), F-5 (permanent residence) and F-6 (marriage migration). Family covers F-1 (visiting cohabitation) and F-3 (dependent family). All other statuses form a residual group.

**Population-decline areas (인구감소지역).** The 89 cities, counties and districts designated by the Ministry of the Interior and Safety on 19 October 2021, when it also named 18 areas of interest (관심지역). In South Jeolla Province, 16 counties were designated population-decline areas and no district was named an area of interest.

**Ethnic enclave.** In this Spotlight, a district where one nationality makes up at least 30 percent of registered foreigners and has a location quotient of at least 2. The location quotient divides the group's number relative to the district's Korean residents by the same ratio for South Korea as a whole.

## 1 Size of the Foreign-Resident Population

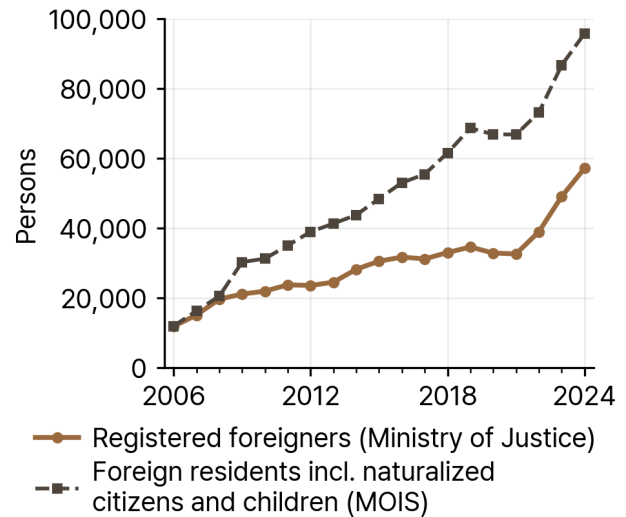
South Jeolla Province had 11,905 registered foreigners in 2006, 28,254 in 2014, 34,638 in 2019 and 57,189 in 2024 (see Figure 1 and Table 1). The number fell slightly in 2020 (to 32,906) and 2021 (to 32,656) and then rose by 6,332 in 2022, 10,122 in 2023 and 8,079 in 2024. Over the whole period the count grew by 45,284 people, or 380.4 percent.

The Ministry of the Interior and Safety count of foreign residents, taken on 1 November, rose from 20,551 in 2008 to 43,828 in 2014, 68,719 in 2019 and 95,832 in 2024, with small declines in 2020 and 2021. The 2024 count was 1.68 times the number of registered foreigners (95,832 against 57,189) and included 8,171 naturalized citizens and 16,725 children of foreign residents.

Indexed to 2014 = 100, the number of registered foreigners in the province stood at 122.6 in 2019 and 202.4 in 2024, and the number of Korean residents at 93.9 in 2024 (see Figure 2). Between 2019 and 2024 registered foreigners grew faster in South Jeolla than in any other province, while the province's Korean population fell 4.3 percent.

FIGURE 1

**Registered Foreigners and Foreign Residents in South Jeolla Province, 2006-24**

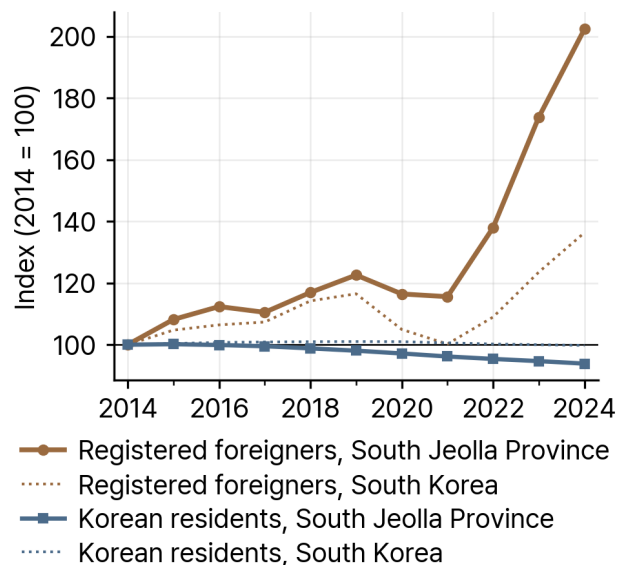


Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks and Ministry of the Interior and Safety statistics, 2006-2024.

In 2024 the province ranked seventh among the 17 provinces and metropolitan cities by number of registered foreigners and fifth by registered foreigners per Korean resident. It had 3.2 registered foreigners per 100 Korean residents, up from 0.6 in 2006 and above the national ratio of 2.9.

FIGURE 2

**Registered Foreigners and Korean Residents in South Jeolla Province and South Korea, 2014-24 (index, 2014 = 100)**



Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks and Ministry of the Interior and Safety resident registration statistics, 2014-2024.

## 2 Nationalities

Vietnam was the largest nationality among registered foreigners in South Jeolla Province in 2024, with 17,883 people or 31.3 percent of the total, against 17.6 percent of registered foreigners nationally (see Figure 3 and Table 2). Indonesia

(5,195), Nepal (4,198), China (4,007, excluding Korean-Chinese), Cambodia (3,956), the Philippines (3,764) and Sri Lanka (3,678) followed, with 6.4 to 9.1 percent each. The ten

largest nationalities together accounted for 48,571 people (84.9 percent).

TABLE 1

**Registered Foreigners, Foreign Residents and Korean Residents in South Jeolla Province, Selected Years, 2006-24**

| Year | Registered foreigners | MOIS foreign residents | Korean residents | Registered foreigners per 100 Korean residents |
|------|-----------------------|------------------------|------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| 2006 | 11,905                | n/a                    | 1,942,925        | 0.6                                            |
| 2014 | 28,254                | 43,828                 | 1,905,780        | 1.5                                            |
| 2019 | 34,638                | 68,719                 | 1,868,745        | 1.9                                            |
| 2024 | 57,189                | 95,832                 | 1,788,819        | 3.2                                            |

Note: Registered foreigners are counted on 31 December and MOIS foreign residents on 1 November. The MOIS count adds naturalized citizens and children of foreign residents and is shown from 2008, when it stood at 20,551.

Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks and Ministry of the Interior and Safety statistics, 2006-2024.

Between 2019 and 2024 the number of Vietnamese nationals rose by 7,489, or 33.2 percent of the province's total increase of 22,551. The Philippine (up 130.4 percent), Indonesian (126.4 percent), Thai (124.6 percent) and Nepali (114.7 percent) populations more than doubled. Korean-Chinese registered foreigners, the only group among the ten to decline, fell from 1,935 to 1,543.

The province had 3.8 percent of all registered foreigners in South Korea in 2024 but larger shares of several nationalities. It was home to 1,246 of the 4,336 registered foreigners from Timor-Leste in the country (28.7 percent), 881 of the 6,641 from Laos (13.3 percent), 3,678 of the 33,965 from Sri Lanka (10.8 percent), 112 of the 1,200 from Yemen (9.3 percent) and 5,195 of the 58,248 from Indonesia (8.9 percent).

TABLE 2

**Ten Largest Nationalities among Registered Foreigners in South Jeolla Province, 2019 and 2024**

| Nationality    | 2019   | 2024   | Share of the province's registered foreigners, 2024 (%) | Province's share of all registered foreigners of this nationality in South Korea, 2024 (%) |
|----------------|--------|--------|---------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Vietnam        | 10,394 | 17,883 | 31.3                                                    | 6.8                                                                                        |
| Indonesia      | 2,295  | 5,195  | 9.1                                                     | 8.9                                                                                        |
| Nepal          | 1,955  | 4,198  | 7.3                                                     | 5.8                                                                                        |
| China          | 3,304  | 4,007  | 7.0                                                     | 1.8                                                                                        |
| Cambodia       | 2,934  | 3,956  | 6.9                                                     | 6.5                                                                                        |
| Philippines    | 1,634  | 3,764  | 6.6                                                     | 7.2                                                                                        |
| Sri Lanka      | 2,753  | 3,678  | 6.4                                                     | 10.8                                                                                       |
| Uzbekistan     | 1,451  | 2,303  | 4.0                                                     | 3.7                                                                                        |
| Thailand       | 910    | 2,044  | 3.6                                                     | 4.7                                                                                        |
| Korean-Chinese | 1,935  | 1,543  | 2.7                                                     | 0.6                                                                                        |

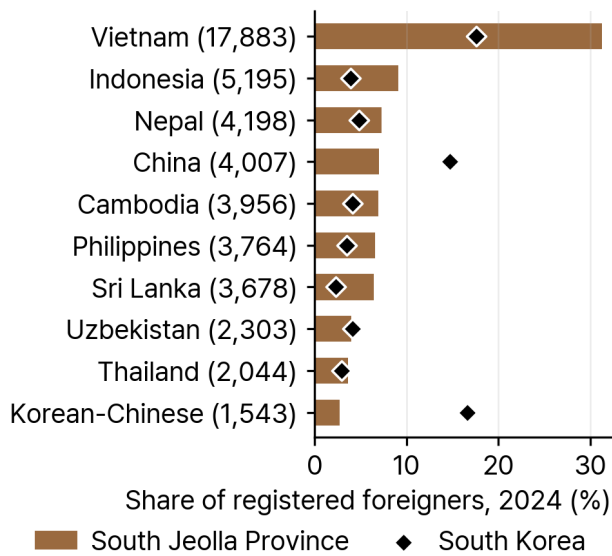
Note: Korean-Chinese are Chinese nationals of Korean ethnicity, counted separately from other Chinese nationals. The province had 3.8 percent of all registered foreigners in South Korea in 2024.

Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks, 2019 and 2024.

The Shannon diversity index of nationalities rises when registered foreigners are spread over more nationalities in more even shares. It was 2.4 in 2014 and again in 2024. The

province ranked 14th of the 17 provinces on this index in 2024, although registered foreigners of 108 nationalities were counted there.

FIGURE 3

**Ten Largest Nationalities among Registered Foreigners in South Jeolla Province and Their Shares in South Korea, 2024**

Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks, 2024.

Overseas Koreans on F-4 status report their residence instead of registering and are not counted as registered foreigners. In 2024, 4,049 of them reported residence in South Jeolla Province, 0.7 percent of the 553,664 nationwide. Most were Korean-Chinese (2,797), followed by citizens of the United

States (627), Canada (166) and Uzbekistan (137) and by Korean-Russians (129). The 2,797 Korean-Chinese on F-4 status outnumbered the 1,543 Korean-Chinese registered foreigners in the province.

### 3 Residence Statuses

In 2024, 32,288 registered foreigners in South Jeolla Province (56.5 percent) were on rotation labor statuses, against 31.1 percent of registered foreigners nationally (see Figure 4). Settlement statuses covered 14.9 percent (27.6 percent nationally), study and job search statuses 10.5 percent (18.6 percent), family statuses 8.1 percent (10.0 percent) and other statuses 4.4 percent (7.1 percent), all below the national shares. Skilled statuses covered 5.7 percent, close to the national 5.8 percent.

The E-9 non-professional employment status, issued under the Employment Permit System, was the most common status in the province, with 22,070 holders (38.6 percent of registered foreigners). E-8 seasonal work (5,769) and F-6 marriage migration (5,752) followed, with 10.1 percent each (see Table 3). On 31 December 2024 the province had 29.3 percent of all E-8 holders in South Korea and 18.1 percent of all E-10 crew employment holders, compared with its 3.8 percent share of all registered foreigners. Its shares of D-2 student holders (2.0 percent) and F-5 permanent residents (1.0 percent) were below that level.

TABLE 3

**Ten Most Common Residence Statuses among Registered Foreigners in South Jeolla Province, 2024**

| Status | Meaning                         | Registered foreigners | Share of the province's registered foreigners (%) | Province's share of all holders of this status in South Korea (%) |
|--------|---------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
| E-9    | Non-professional employment     | 22,070                | 38.6                                              | 6.7                                                               |
| E-8    | Seasonal worker                 | 5,769                 | 10.1                                              | 29.3                                                              |
| F-6    | Marriage migration              | 5,752                 | 10.1                                              | 3.9                                                               |
| E-10   | Crew employment                 | 3,907                 | 6.8                                               | 18.1                                                              |
| D-2    | Student                         | 3,518                 | 6.2                                               | 2.0                                                               |
| F-1    | Visiting cohabitation           | 3,481                 | 6.1                                               | 3.6                                                               |
| E-7    | Specially designated activities | 2,722                 | 4.8                                               | 4.3                                                               |
| F-5    | Permanent residence             | 2,058                 | 3.6                                               | 1.0                                                               |
| D-4    | General trainee                 | 2,054                 | 3.6                                               | 2.6                                                               |
| G-1    | Other (miscellaneous)           | 1,701                 | 3.0                                               | 3.0                                                               |

Note: Counts on 31 December 2024. The province had 3.8 percent of all registered foreigners in South Korea.

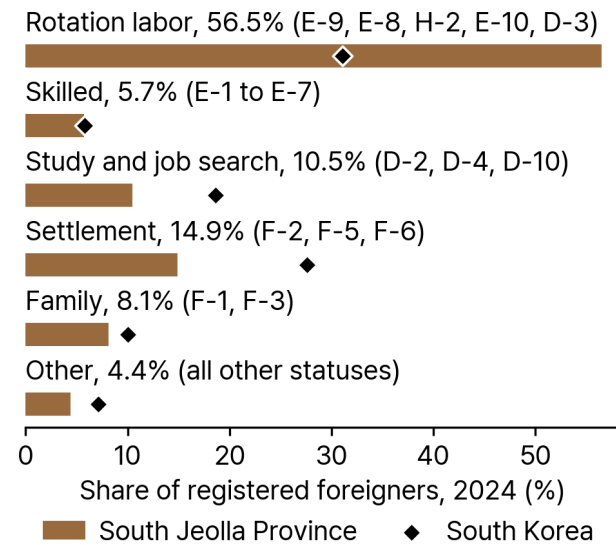
Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks, 2024.

The Ministry of the Interior and Safety uses different categories. Of the 95,832 foreign residents it counted in the province on 1 November 2024, 70,936 were foreign nationals,

among them 29,115 foreign workers, 6,705 marriage migrants, 4,938 international students, 2,896 ethnic Koreans of foreign nationality and 27,282 other foreigners. The count also

included 8,171 naturalized citizens and 16,725 children of foreign residents, who together made up 26.0 percent of the total (24,896 of 95,832).

**FIGURE 4**  
**Registered Foreigners by Residence Status Group, South Jeolla Province and South Korea, 2024**



Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks, 2024.

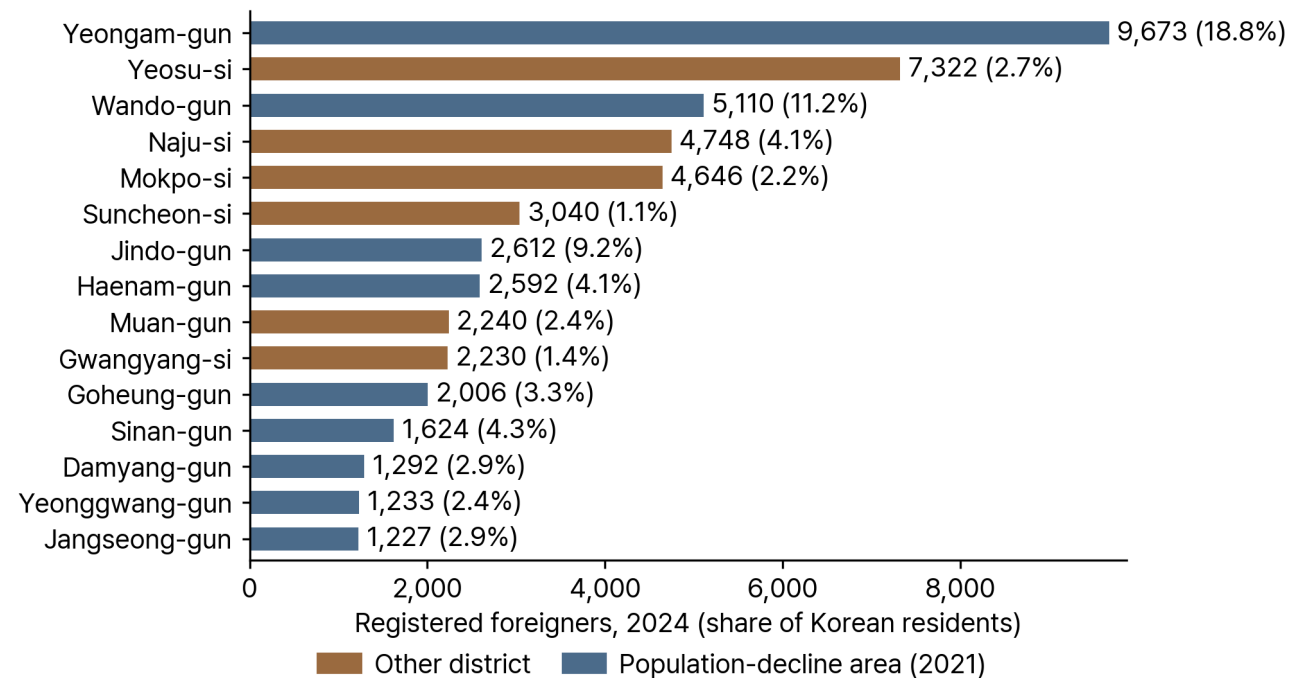
## 4 Districts and Population-Decline Areas

South Jeolla Province is divided into 5 cities (si) and 17 counties (gun), referred to here as districts. Yeongam-gun had the most registered foreigners in 2024 (9,673, or 16.9 percent of the province's total), followed by Yeosu-si (7,322), Wando-gun (5,110), Naju-si (4,748) and Mokpo-si (4,646) (see Figure 5 and Table 4). The 17 counties together had 35,203 registered foreigners (61.6 percent).

Yeongam-gun also had the highest ratio of registered foreigners to Korean residents, 18.8 per 100, followed by Wando-gun (11.2) and Jindo-gun (9.2). Among the cities, the ratio ranged from 1.1 per 100 in Suncheon-si to 4.1 in Naju-si.

Between 2019 and 2024 the number of registered foreigners rose in 21 of the 22 districts, and Gurye-gun, the exception, had 20 fewer. Korean residents declined in 20 districts and increased only in Muan-gun (by 11,582) and Naju-si (by 1,990). In Yeongam-gun the gain of 5,157 registered foreigners exceeded the loss of 3,202 Korean residents, and the county accounted for 22.9 percent of the province's increase in registered foreigners (5,157 of 22,551). Mokpo-si lost the most Korean residents (19,971) and gained 1,332 registered foreigners.

**FIGURE 5**  
**Districts with the Most Registered Foreigners in South Jeolla Province, 2024**



Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice registered-foreigner statistics by district and Ministry of the Interior and Safety resident registration statistics, 2024; population-decline areas as designated by the Ministry of the Interior and Safety in October 2021.

In October 2021 the Ministry of the Interior and Safety designated 16 of the province's 17 counties as population-decline areas. They are Boseong-gun, Damyang-gun, Gangjin-gun, Goheung-gun, Gokseong-gun, Gurye-gun, Haenam-gun,

Hampyeong-gun, Hwasun-gun, Jangheung-gun, Jangseong-gun, Jindo-gun, Sinan-gun, Wando-gun, Yeongam-gun and Yeonggwang-gun. Muan-gun and the cities were not

designated, and no district in the province was named an area of interest.

**TABLE 4**  
**Ten Districts with the Most Registered Foreigners in South Jeolla Province, 2024**

| District     | Registered foreigners, 2024 | Registered foreigners per 100 Korean residents, 2024 | Change in Korean residents, 2019-24 | Change in registered foreigners, 2019-24 | Population-decline area |
|--------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Yeongam-gun  | 9,673                       | 18.8                                                 | -3,202                              | +5,157                                   | Yes                     |
| Yeosu-si     | 7,322                       | 2.7                                                  | -14,970                             | +2,629                                   | No                      |
| Wando-gun    | 5,110                       | 11.2                                                 | -5,058                              | +2,941                                   | Yes                     |
| Naju-si      | 4,748                       | 4.1                                                  | +1,990                              | +1,967                                   | No                      |
| Mokpo-si     | 4,646                       | 2.2                                                  | -19,971                             | +1,332                                   | No                      |
| Suncheon-si  | 3,040                       | 1.1                                                  | -3,269                              | +916                                     | No                      |
| Jindo-gun    | 2,612                       | 9.2                                                  | -2,237                              | +1,095                                   | Yes                     |
| Haenam-gun   | 2,592                       | 4.1                                                  | -7,234                              | +1,140                                   | Yes                     |
| Muan-gun     | 2,240                       | 2.4                                                  | +11,582                             | +612                                     | No                      |
| Gwangyang-si | 2,230                       | 1.4                                                  | -2,058                              | +543                                     | No                      |

Note: Districts are the province's cities (si) and counties (gun). Population-decline areas are those designated by the Ministry of the Interior and Safety in October 2021.

Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice registered-foreigner statistics by district and Ministry of the Interior and Safety resident registration statistics, 2019 and 2024; population-decline areas as designated by the Ministry of the Interior and Safety in October 2021.

Between 2019 and 2024 the population-decline areas lost 53,230 Korean residents (7.4 percent, from 723,981 to 670,751) and gained 14,552 registered foreigners (79.0 percent, from 18,411 to 32,963). The foreign gain equaled 27.3 percent of the Korean loss. In the other six districts, Korean residents fell by 26,696 and registered foreigners rose by 7,999. In 2024 the decline areas had 37.5 percent of the province's Korean residents and 57.6 percent of its registered foreigners, or 4.9 registered foreigners per 100 Korean residents against 3.2 for the province.

By the definition used in this Spotlight, five districts were Vietnamese ethnic enclaves in 2024, and no other nationality formed an enclave in the province. Vietnamese nationals made up 60.8 percent of registered foreigners in Boseong-gun (675 people, location quotient 3.6) and 48.4 percent in Goheung-gun (971 people, location quotient 3.2). The other enclaves were Naju-si (1,791 people, 37.7 percent, location quotient 3.0), Sinan-gun (545 people, 33.6 percent, location quotient 2.8) and Jindo-gun (810 people, 31.0 percent, location quotient 5.6).

## 5 Population Trends

The number of Korean residents in South Jeolla Province fell from 1,942,925 in 2006 to 1,905,780 in 2014, 1,868,745 in 2019 and 1,788,819 in 2024, a loss of 154,106 people (7.9 percent). Korean residents fell by 37,035 between 2014 and 2019 and by 79,926 (4.3 percent) between 2019 and 2024.

The count fell in every year from 2016 to 2024, and the largest annual loss was 18,746 in 2021. In 2024 the province had 3.5 percent of South Korea's 51,217,221 Korean residents.

Over a longer period, the province's population fell from 2.50 million in 1990 and 2.13 million in 2000 to 1.79 million in March 2024, a decline of about 700,000 over 34 years (Newsis, 2024).

The province's total fertility rate rose from 0.97 in 2023 to 1.03 in 2024, the highest in the country for the second consecutive year (in 2024 tied with Sejong), and births rose from 7,828 to 8,226, an increase of 398 (5.1 percent), according to Statistics Korea's provisional birth and death statistics for 2024 (Pressian, 2025).

Residents aged 65 and over made up 28.46 percent of the province's population in the Ministry of the Interior and Safety's resident registration statistics for 2025, the highest share of any province, ahead of North Gyeongsang (27.46 percent), Gangwon (26.81 percent) and North Jeolla (26.61 percent) (Seoul Economic Daily, 2026). In Statistics Korea's provincial projections for 2022 to 2052, South Jeolla and North Gyeongsang had the highest shares of residents aged 65 and over in 2022, and South Jeolla had the highest median age (50.1 years). South Jeolla is one of four provinces, with Ulsan, South Gyeongsang and North Gyeongsang, where the population aged 0 to 14 is projected to fall by 50 percent or more by 2052 (Statistics Korea, 2024).

In Statistics Korea's domestic migration statistics for 2024, South Jeolla was one of 12 provinces where more people moved out than moved in, and education was the reason with the largest net outflow from the province. The Honam region, which includes South Jeolla and Gwangju, lost about 18,000 people through net out-migration, 3,000 more than in 2023 (Statistics Korea, 2025).

## 6 Industry and Foreign Workers

Registered foreigners on E-9 non-professional employment status, issued under the Employment Permit System, numbered 10,491 in the province in 2014 and 14,496 in 2019.

The count fell to 12,291 in 2021 and rose to 22,070 in 2024, 79.6 percent above the 2021 level and 6.7 percent of all E-9 holders in South Korea. Crew employment (E-10) holders numbered 3,907 in 2024, 18.1 percent of all E-10 holders in the country (see Table 5).

E-8 seasonal workers numbered 794 on 31 December 2022, 3,019 on 31 December 2023 and 5,769 on 31 December 2024, when the province had 29.3 percent of all E-8 holders in South Korea. Because the Ministry of Justice counts status holders on 31 December, these figures miss the seasonal workers whose contracts ended before winter. In 2024 the province was allocated 5,818 seasonal workers, of whom 3,846 had arrived by early July (Seoul Shinmun, 2024a).

**TABLE 5**  
**Foreign Workers in South Jeolla Province, Selected Indicators, 2014-26**

| Indicator                                                                               | Value                                                          | Source               |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|
| Registered foreigners on E-9 status, 2014                                               | 10,491                                                         | KIRD dataset         |
| Registered foreigners on E-9 status, 2019                                               | 14,496                                                         | KIRD dataset         |
| Registered foreigners on E-9 status, 2021                                               | 12,291                                                         | KIRD dataset         |
| Registered foreigners on E-9 status, 2024                                               | 22,070 (6.7% of all E-9 holders in South Korea)                | KIRD dataset         |
| Registered foreigners on E-8 status, 31 December 2022                                   | 794                                                            | KIRD dataset         |
| Registered foreigners on E-8 status, 31 December 2023                                   | 3,019                                                          | KIRD dataset         |
| Registered foreigners on E-8 status, 31 December 2024                                   | 5,769 (29.3% of all E-8 holders in South Korea)                | KIRD dataset         |
| Registered foreigners on E-10 status, 2024                                              | 3,907 (18.1% of all E-10 holders in South Korea)               | KIRD dataset         |
| Seasonal workers allocated to the province, 2024                                        | 5,818, of whom 3,846 had arrived by early July                 | Seoul Shinmun, 2024a |
| Foreign workers in manufacturing, including shipbuilding, December 2022 and June 2024   | 4,946 and 6,404                                                | Namdo Ilbo, 2024     |
| Workers at the HD Hyundai Samho shipyard and its in-house subcontractors, November 2024 | About 12,000, of whom about 3,000 (25%) were foreign nationals | Namdo Ilbo, 2024     |
| Foreign share of workers at the Daebul national industrial park, 2026                   | More than half                                                 | Namdo Ilbo, 2026     |

Note: E-9, E-8 and E-10 counts are registered foreigners on 31 December of each year, so the E-8 counts miss the seasonal workers whose contracts ended before winter.

Source: KIRD dataset and news reports as listed in each row.

As of November 2024, the HD Hyundai Samho shipyard in Yeongam and its in-house subcontractors employed about 12,000 workers, about 25 percent of them (about 3,000) foreign nationals. The same report put the number of foreign workers in the province's manufacturing sector, including shipbuilding, at 4,946 in December 2022 and 6,404 in June 2024, an increase of about 1,500 (Namdo Ilbo, 2024). A March 2026 report said foreign nationals made up more than half of the workers at the Daebul national industrial park (대불국가산업단지) in Yeongam and about 30 percent of on-site workers at HD Hyundai Samho, including its subcontractors (Namdo Ilbo, 2026).

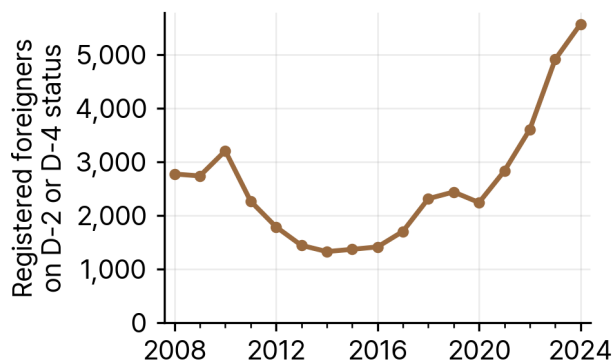
## 7 International Students and Universities

Registered foreigners on D-2 (student) or D-4 (general trainee) status numbered 2,773 in the province in 2008 and 3,206 in 2010, fell to 1,326 in 2014 and then rose to 2,438 in 2019 and 5,572 in 2024 (see Figure 6). The 2024 count, 3,518 on D-2 and 2,054 on D-4, was 4.2 times that of 2014 and equaled 2.2 percent of all D-2 and D-4 holders in South Korea, below the province's 3.8 percent share of all registered foreigners.

A 2025 report put the number of international students in South Jeolla at about 5,000 (Women's News, 2025). Dongshin University in Naju-si had 2,352 international students from 23 countries as of 1 September 2026, including 201 language-

program students, and admitted 344 new international students from eight countries (190 undergraduates and 154 graduate students) in the fall 2026 semester (Money Today, 2026). Mokpo Science University, a junior college in Mokpo-si, had 288 international students as of 31 December 2025, according to Ministry of Justice international-student data (K-Study Times, 2026).

**FIGURE 6**  
**Registered Foreigners on Student (D-2) and General Trainee (D-4) Status in South Jeolla Province, 2008-24**



Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks, 2008-2024.

Under a five-year program for 2025 to 2029 worth 15 billion won, which supports the settlement of international students in the region, Suncheon National University was designated the Korean-language center for the province's eastern area, Mokpo National University for its western area and Dongshin University for its north-central area (Women's News, 2025).

Sehan University, which has campuses in Yeongam-gun and in Dangjin in South Chungcheong Province, was one of 24 universities nationwide (11 for degree programs and 13 for language programs) placed under enhanced visa screening for international students for one year from the fall 2025 semester. The measure followed the 2024 evaluation by the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Justice of universities' internationalization capacity and of their recruitment and management of international students (University Journal, 2025).

From 2 April 2025, South Jeolla was also one of the provinces covered by the Ministry of Justice's pilot of metropolitan-type visas. Under the pilot, North Jeolla, South Jeolla and Jeju eased visa issuance conditions for international students in foundational manufacturing and tourism, whereas the pilot in Seoul, Busan, Gwangju, Gangwon and North and South Chungcheong covered talent for semiconductors, robotics, artificial intelligence, batteries and bio industries (Korea JoongAng Daily, 2025).

## 8 Provincial Policy

South Jeolla's basic ordinance on foreign residents is the Jeollanam-do Ordinance on Support for Foreign Residents, whose current text is Ordinance No. 6024 of 13 June 2024. Its

stated purpose is to help foreign residents living in the province adapt to their communities and to improve their daily lives (South Jeolla Province, 2024).

In 2024 the province expanded its settlement-support program for foreign residents from two operating agencies to four, adding the Jeonnam Migrant Integration Support Center in Mokpo and Road World Vision in Suncheon, and funded each agency with about 10 million won (Seoul Shinmun, 2024b).

In 2025 the province extended its regional specialized visa program to 13 population-decline counties (Damyang, Gokseong, Gurye, Goheung, Hwasun, Jangheung, Gangjin, Haenam, Yeongam, Yeonggwang, Jangseong, Jindo and Sinan), seven more than the year before. It aimed to attract 386 people on the regional talented-personnel visa (F-2-R) and 308 on the regional specialized skilled-worker visa (E-7-4R), 694 in all (Newsis, 2025).

For seasonal workers, in 2024 the province funded interpretation helpers at the county level, medical-cost support of up to 250,000 won per worker and 2.1 billion won for remodeling vacant houses and idle agricultural-cooperative facilities into dormitories (Seoul Shinmun, 2024a).

On 24 September 2025 the province convened the final report meeting of a joint study with the Ministry of Justice's Immigration Policy Research Institute and the Jeonnam Institute, titled "Survey of Foreign Residents and Firms in Response to Industrial Demand and Development of a Jeonnam-style Immigration Policy Model." The study surveyed about 1,300 foreign residents and 707 firms. The province also formed an interdepartmental task force covering eight areas to draft a master plan for supporting foreign residents (Korea NGO News, 2025).

In 2026 the province plans a 4 billion won project, from the second half of the year, to choose one area where foreign residents are concentrated through a competition among its cities and counties and develop it as a "foreigner-specialized street," with murals, night lighting, a landmark, community space, multilingual signs and safety facilities (Mokpo Times, 2026). Measures for international students are described in the section on international students and universities.

## 9 Languages

In estimates built from nationality counts and the share of each country's population that speaks a language as a first language (from Ethnologue), Vietnamese was the most common first language among registered foreigners in South Jeolla Province in 2024, with an estimated 15,288 speakers. Chinese (4,446), Khmer (4,041), Indonesian (3,640), Tagalog or Filipino (3,265), Sinhala (2,534), Nepali (2,180), Thai (1,926), Uzbek (1,659) and Tamil (956) followed. Nine languages had an estimated 1,000 speakers or more.

Each nationality is divided among languages in proportion to the first-language shares of its country, so a language can have fewer estimated speakers than the matching nationality has registered foreigners. The province had 17,883 Vietnamese nationals and an estimated 15,288 Vietnamese speakers, for example, and 4,198 Nepali nationals and an estimated 2,180 Nepali speakers. The estimates cover registered foreigners only.

## 10 Service Organizations and Community Places

The KIRD census of 1,717 migrant-serving organizations in South Korea lists 91 in South Jeolla Province, or 15.9 per 10,000 registered foreigners, against 11.5 per 10,000 nationally. Eighty-nine of them provide services directly to migrants. Twenty-three are family centers (가족센터), and the others include 15 nongovernmental organizations, 6 medical institutions, 6 community groups, 5 administrative offices, 3 worker centers and 3 shelters.

An organization can serve more than one population. Forty of the 91 organizations name families among the populations they serve, 27 name workers, 23 all migrants, 12 refugees, 9

women, 7 children and 6 undocumented migrants.

A 2026 report on Samho-eup in Yeongam-gun, next to the Daebul industrial park, described grocery shelves stocked with tropical fruit such as mangoes, pineapples and bananas and with strong-smelling vegetables, and foreign workers gathering outside a shop called Asia Mart. A seafood-shop owner said that foreign customers communicated easily with local residents, and in the evening some workers shared canned beer on benches in the parking lots of one-room apartment buildings (Namdo Ilbo, 2026).

The same report put foreign residents at 21.1 percent of Yeongam County's population and described it as the highest immigrant share of any county or city in South Korea. In the KIRD data, which compare registered foreigners with Korean residents, Yeongam-gun had 18.8 registered foreigners per 100 Korean residents in 2024.

Migrant workers at the Daebul industrial park also organized an amateur soccer league by nationality. Starting on 19 March 2025, 116 players on five national teams (Vietnam, Indonesia, Thailand, Nepal and Korea) were scheduled to play three matches every Tuesday and Wednesday evening through November, 180 games in all (Bitgaram News, 2025).

**About these profiles.** The KIRD province profiles describe the foreign-resident population of each of South Korea's seventeen provinces and metropolitan cities. Figures come from the Korea Immigration Regional Dashboard (KIRD) dataset, built from the Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks and the Ministry of the Interior and Safety foreign-resident statistics for 2006 to 2024 (<https://doi.org/10.3886/E249944V1>); context comes from the sources listed. Interactive maps and tables: <https://immigrantsinkorea.today>.

Suggested citation: Korea Immigration Regional Dashboard (KIRD). 2026. "Foreign Residents in South Jeolla Province." Foreign Residents in South Korea series, September 2026. Data: Korea Immigration Regional Dashboard (KIRD) dataset, <https://doi.org/10.3886/E249944V1>. Interactive maps and tables: <https://immigrantsinkorea.today>.

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# Foreign Residents in North Chungcheong Province

SEPTEMBER 2026

## Summary

North Chungcheong Province (Chungcheongbuk-do) had 56,301 registered foreigners on 31 December 2024, 3.8 percent of the 1,488,353 registered foreigners in South Korea. The province ranked eighth among the 17 provinces and metropolitan cities by that count and third by the ratio of registered foreigners to Korean residents, with 3.5 per 100 Korean residents against 2.9 nationally. The Ministry of the Interior and Safety counted 97,341 foreign residents in the province on 1 November 2024, a broader count that includes naturalized citizens and children of foreign residents.

## Highlights

- ▶ At the end of 2024, North Chungcheong Province had 56,301 registered foreigners, the eighth-largest number among South Korea's 17 provinces and metropolitan cities and the third-highest ratio to Korean residents (3.5 per 100, against 2.9 nationally).
- ▶ Between 2019 and 2024 the number of registered foreigners in the province grew 38.3 percent (15,587 people), the second-fastest growth among the 17 provinces, while the Korean resident population fell 0.6 percent (8,830 people).
- ▶ Rotation labor statuses covered 41.0 percent of the province's registered foreigners in 2024, against 31.1 percent nationally, and the province was home to 6.1 percent of all E-9 non-professional employment visa holders in South Korea.

The number of registered foreigners rose from 17,334 in 2006 to 56,301 in 2024, about 3.2 times the 2006 count, while the Korean resident population grew 6.5 percent, from 1,494,559 to 1,591,177. Between 2019 and 2024, registered foreigners increased by 15,587 (38.3 percent), the second-fastest growth among the 17 provinces, and Korean residents decreased by 8,830 (0.6 percent), so the foreign gain equaled 176.5 percent of the Korean loss. In the six districts designated as

population-decline areas, the gain of 2,414 registered foreigners equaled 11.1 percent of the loss of 21,791 Korean residents.

Compared with registered foreigners nationwide, those in North Chungcheong in 2024 were more likely to hold rotation labor statuses (41.0 percent against 31.1 percent) and less likely to hold settlement statuses (19.8 percent against 27.6 percent). The province was home to 6.1 percent of the country's E-9 non-professional employment visa holders and 7.6 percent of its registered Nepali nationals. By the Shannon index, its registered foreigners were the most diverse by nationality of the 17 provinces, with Vietnamese nationals the largest group at 16.2 percent. Eumseong-gun had 15.1 registered foreigners per 100 Korean residents, and Eumseong-gun and Jincheon-gun together accounted for 39.5 percent of the province's registered foreigners.

### BOX 1

#### Definitions

**Registered foreigners (등록외국인).** Foreign nationals in South Korea for more than 90 days who register with immigration authorities, counted by the Ministry of Justice on 31 December of each year. Overseas Koreans on F-4 status report their residence instead of registering and are not included. Counts in this Spotlight are registered foreigners unless stated otherwise.

**MOIS foreign residents (외국인주민).** The Ministry of the Interior and Safety (MOIS) count of foreign residents on 1 November of each year. It adds naturalized citizens and children of foreign residents to foreign nationals.

**Korean residents.** Korean nationals in the Ministry of the Interior and Safety resident registration count. The ratio of registered foreigners per 100 Korean residents uses this count as its denominator.

**Status groups.** Residence statuses grouped as rotation labor (E-9, E-8, H-2, E-10, D-3), skilled (E-1 to E-7), study and job search (D-2, D-4, D-10), settlement (F-2, F-5, F-6) and family (F-1, F-3). All other statuses form a sixth group, other.

**Korean-Chinese and Korean-Russians.** Ethnic Koreans who hold Chinese or Russian nationality. The Ministry of Justice counts them separately from other Chinese and Russian nationals, and this Spotlight follows that classification.

**Population-decline areas (인구감소지역).** The 89 districts designated by the Ministry of the Interior and Safety on 19 October 2021, with 18 further districts designated as areas of interest (관심지역). Six districts in North Chungcheong are population-decline areas, and none is an area of interest.

**Ethnic enclave.** A district where a nationality's location quotient (its share of the district's registered foreigners divided by its share of all registered foreigners in South Korea) is at least 2 and the nationality makes up at least 30 percent of the district's registered foreigners.

## 1 Size of the Foreign-Resident Population

The number of registered foreigners in North Chungcheong rose from 17,334 in 2006 to 30,700 in 2014 and 40,714 in 2019 (Figure 1 and Table 1). It fell to 37,060 in 2020 and 36,045 in 2021, 11.5 percent below the 2019 level, then rose to 41,270 in 2022, 48,866 in 2023 and 56,301 in 2024, the highest count in the 2006-2024 series. The increase from 2023 to 2024 alone was 7,435 people (15.2 percent).

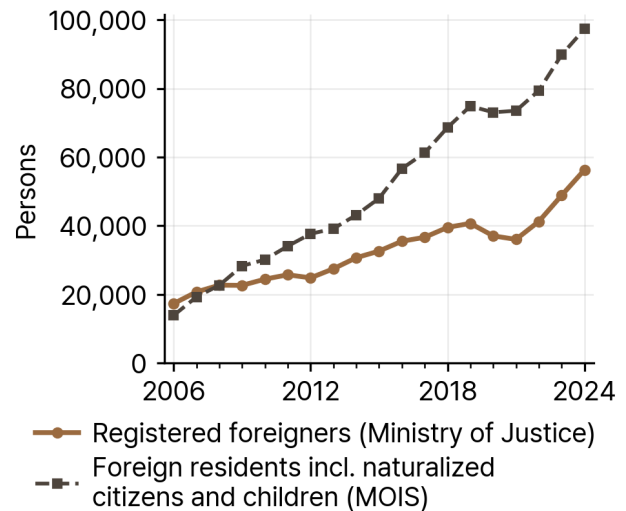
The MOIS count of foreign residents, which adds naturalized citizens and children of foreign residents, rose from 22,669 in 2008 to 43,148 in 2014 and 74,880 in 2019. It fell to 73,064 in 2020, rose in each year after that and stood at 97,341 in 2024, 1.7 times the registered-foreigner count (97,341 against 56,301).

Registered foreigners per 100 Korean residents rose from 1.2 in 2006 to 1.9 in 2014, 2.5 in 2019 and 3.5 in 2024; the national ratio in 2024 was 2.9. In 2024 the province ranked eighth

among the 17 provinces by the number of registered foreigners and third by registered foreigners per Korean resident. It was home to 3.8 percent of all registered foreigners in South Korea.

FIGURE 1

**Registered Foreigners and MOIS Foreign Residents in North Chungcheong Province, 2006-24**



Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks and Ministry of the Interior and Safety statistics, 2006-2024.

Figure 2 sets registered foreigners and Korean residents in 2014 to 100, for the province and for South Korea. By 2024 the index for registered foreigners in the province stood at 183.4 (56,301 against 30,700) and the index for Korean residents at 100.8 (1,591,177 against 1,578,933). The Korean resident count peaked at 1,600,837 in 2020 and declined in each year from 2021 to 2024.

TABLE 1

**Registered Foreigners, MOIS Foreign Residents and Korean Residents in North Chungcheong Province, Selected Years, 2006-24**

| Year | Registered foreigners | MOIS foreign residents | Korean residents | Registered foreigners per 100 Korean residents |
|------|-----------------------|------------------------|------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| 2006 | 17,334                | n/a                    | 1,494,559        | 1.2                                            |
| 2014 | 30,700                | 43,148                 | 1,578,933        | 1.9                                            |
| 2019 | 40,714                | 74,880                 | 1,600,007        | 2.5                                            |
| 2024 | 56,301                | 97,341                 | 1,591,177        | 3.5                                            |

Note: Registered foreigners are counted on 31 December and MOIS foreign residents on 1 November. MOIS counts are used from 2008, so the 2006 cell is n/a. Figure 1 also shows the MOIS counts for 2006 (13,889) and 2007 (19,274); both were lower than the registered-foreigner counts of those years (17,334 and 20,733).

Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks and Ministry of the Interior and Safety statistics, 2006-2024.

## 2 Nationalities

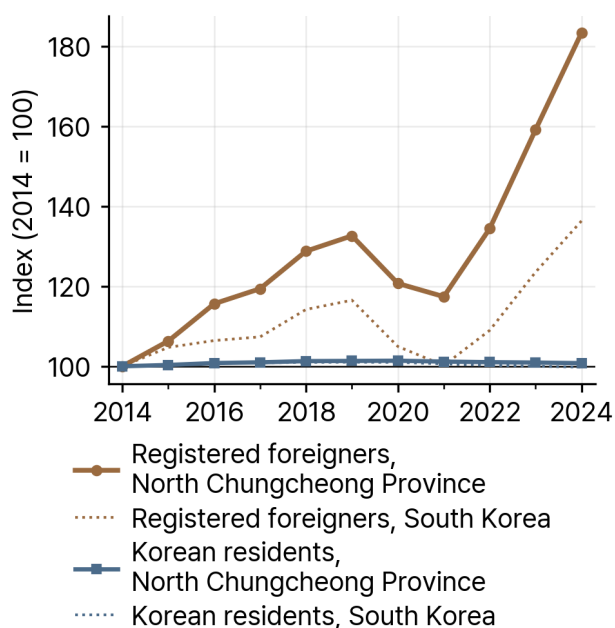
Vietnamese nationals were the largest group of registered foreigners in North Chungcheong in 2024 (9,140, or 16.2 percent), followed by Chinese (6,388, 11.3 percent), Nepali

(5,495, 9.8 percent), Korean-Chinese (4,929, 8.8 percent) and Uzbek nationals (4,468, 7.9 percent) (Figure 3 and Table 2).

The ten largest nationalities made up 76.6 percent of registered foreigners (43,145 of 56,301).

FIGURE 2

**Registered Foreigners and Korean Residents in North Chungcheong Province and South Korea, 2014–24 (index, 2014 = 100)**



Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks and Ministry of the Interior and Safety resident registration statistics, 2014–2024.

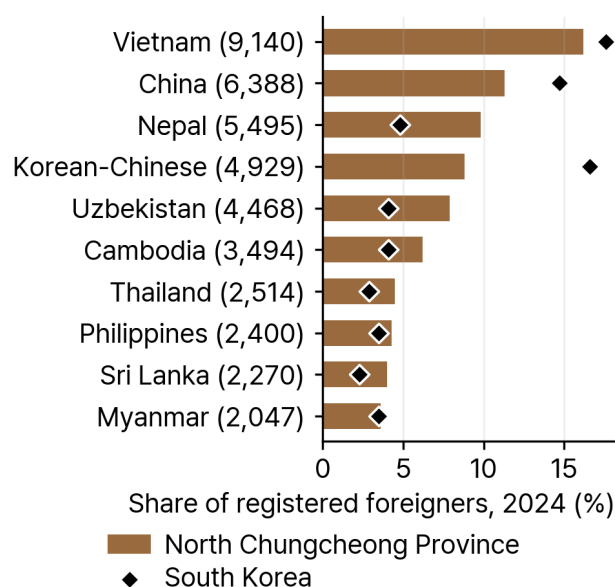
The province was home to 3.8 percent of all registered foreigners in South Korea in 2024 and to larger shares of several of its main groups: 7.6 percent of registered Nepali nationals, 7.2 percent of Uzbek nationals, 6.7 percent of Sri Lankans, 5.8 percent of Thais, 5.7 percent of Cambodians and 4.6 percent of Filipinos. Its shares of Vietnamese (3.5 percent),

Chinese (2.9 percent) and Korean-Chinese (2.0 percent) were smaller. Korean-Chinese made up 8.8 percent of the province's registered foreigners, against 16.6 percent nationally.

Among all nationalities with at least 1,000 registered foreigners in South Korea, the province's largest shares were of Malaysians (578 of 5,134, or 11.3 percent), Ethiopians (144 of 1,445, 10.0 percent), Korean-Russians (209 of 2,383, 8.8 percent), Nepali nationals (5,495 of 72,151, 7.6 percent) and Yemenis (91 of 1,200, 7.6 percent).

FIGURE 3

**Ten Largest Nationalities among Registered Foreigners, North Chungcheong Province and South Korea, 2024**



Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks, 2024.

TABLE 2

**Ten Largest Nationalities among Registered Foreigners in North Chungcheong Province, 2019 and 2024**

| Nationality    | 2019  | 2024  | Share of the province's registered foreigners, 2024 (%) | Province's share of all registered foreigners of this nationality, 2024 (%) |
|----------------|-------|-------|---------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Vietnam        | 6,929 | 9,140 | 16.2                                                    | 3.5                                                                         |
| China          | 5,110 | 6,388 | 11.3                                                    | 2.9                                                                         |
| Nepal          | 2,627 | 5,495 | 9.8                                                     | 7.6                                                                         |
| Korean-Chinese | 6,082 | 4,929 | 8.8                                                     | 2.0                                                                         |
| Uzbekistan     | 3,542 | 4,468 | 7.9                                                     | 7.2                                                                         |
| Cambodia       | 2,116 | 3,494 | 6.2                                                     | 5.7                                                                         |
| Thailand       | 1,743 | 2,514 | 4.5                                                     | 5.8                                                                         |
| Philippines    | 2,056 | 2,400 | 4.3                                                     | 4.6                                                                         |
| Sri Lanka      | 1,452 | 2,270 | 4.0                                                     | 6.7                                                                         |
| Myanmar        | 1,025 | 2,047 | 3.6                                                     | 3.9                                                                         |

Note: The province was home to 3.8 percent of all registered foreigners in South Korea in 2024. Korean-Chinese are counted separately from other Chinese nationals.

Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks, 2019 and 2024.

Between 2019 and 2024, the number of Nepali nationals more than doubled, from 2,627 to 5,495, and the number of Myanmar nationals almost doubled, from 1,025 to 2,047. Cambodians increased 65.1 percent and Sri Lankans 56.3 percent. Korean-Chinese were the only one of the ten largest groups to decline, from 6,082 to 4,929 (19.0 percent).

By the Shannon diversity index, which rises with the number of nationalities and the evenness of their shares, registered foreigners in North Chungcheong were the most diverse of the 17 provinces in 2024, with an index of 2.7, up from 2.5 in 2014. The 2024 data recorded 117 nationalities in the province.

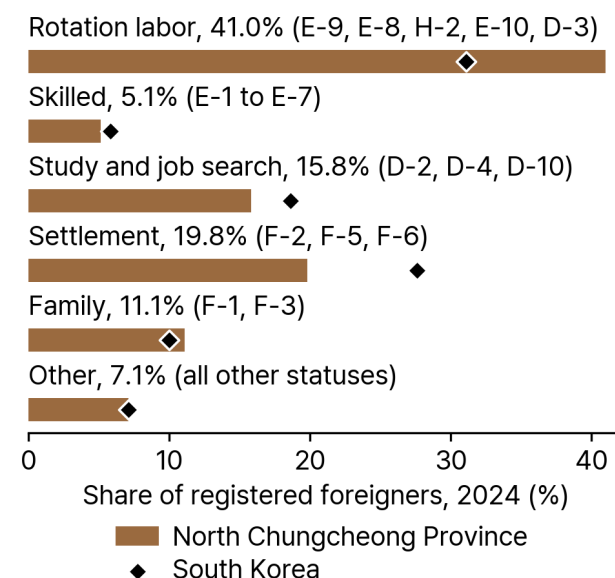
Overseas Koreans on F-4 status report their residence instead of registering and are not counted above. In 2024, 16,418 F-4 holders reported residence in the province, 3.0 percent of the 553,664 nationwide. Korean-Chinese were the largest group (9,326), followed by Korean-Russians (2,563) and nationals of Uzbekistan (2,206), Kazakhstan (787) and the United States (635). The F-4 Korean-Chinese outnumbered the 4,929 registered Korean-Chinese by almost two to one.

### 3 Residence Statuses

Registered foreigners in North Chungcheong held rotation labor statuses more often than registered foreigners nationwide (Figure 4). In 2024 these statuses covered 41.0 percent of the province's registered foreigners (23,080 people), against 31.1 percent nationally. Settlement statuses

covered 19.8 percent (27.6 percent nationally), study and job search statuses 15.8 percent (18.6 percent), family statuses 11.1 percent (10.0 percent), skilled statuses 5.1 percent (5.8 percent) and other statuses 7.1 percent (7.1 percent).

**FIGURE 4**  
**Registered Foreigners by Status Group, North Chungcheong Province and South Korea, 2024**



Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks, 2024.

**TABLE 3**  
**Ten Most Common Residence Statuses among Registered Foreigners in North Chungcheong Province, 2024**

| Status | Meaning                         | Registered foreigners | Share of the province's registered foreigners (%) | Province's share of all holders in South Korea (%) |
|--------|---------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| E-9    | Non-professional employment     | 20,089                | 35.7                                              | 6.1                                                |
| D-2    | Student                         | 6,135                 | 10.9                                              | 3.4                                                |
| F-6    | Marriage migration              | 5,056                 | 9.0                                               | 3.4                                                |
| F-5    | Permanent residence             | 4,419                 | 7.8                                               | 2.2                                                |
| F-1    | Visiting cohabitation           | 4,317                 | 7.7                                               | 4.5                                                |
| G-1    | Other (miscellaneous)           | 3,171                 | 5.6                                               | 5.6                                                |
| H-2    | Visiting employment             | 2,524                 | 4.5                                               | 2.7                                                |
| E-7    | Specially designated activities | 2,463                 | 4.4                                               | 3.9                                                |
| D-4    | General trainee                 | 2,431                 | 4.3                                               | 3.0                                                |
| F-3    | Dependent family                | 1,944                 | 3.5                                               | 3.8                                                |

Note: Shares of the province's registered foreigners use the 2024 total of 56,301. Meanings follow the English status labels in the KIRD dataset.

Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks, 2024.

The E-9 non-professional employment visa was the most common status in 2024, held by 20,089 people, or 35.7 percent of the province's registered foreigners and 6.1 percent

of all E-9 holders in South Korea (Table 3). D-2 students were next (6,135), followed by F-6 marriage migrants (5,056), F-5 permanent residents (4,419) and F-1 visiting cohabitation

holders (4,317). Among the ten most common statuses, the province's share of all holders in the country was highest for E-9 and for G-1, a miscellaneous status (5.6 percent), and lowest for F-5 (2.2 percent) and H-2 visiting employment (2.7 percent).

The MOIS count classifies foreign residents by other categories. Of the 97,341 foreign residents it counted in the province on 1 November 2024, 78,349 did not hold Korean nationality: 24,432 foreign workers, 6,065 marriage migrants, 7,705 international students, 13,240 ethnic Koreans of foreign nationality and 26,907 other foreign nationals. The remaining 18,992 were naturalized citizens (7,530) and children of foreign residents (11,462).

#### 4 Districts and Population-Decline Areas

The KIRD data divide North Chungcheong into 14 districts, made up of Cheongju-si's four general districts (gu), the cities of Chungju-si and Jecheon-si, and eight counties (gun). Eumseong-gun had the most registered foreigners in 2024 (13,808), 24.5 percent of the provincial total, and the highest ratio to Korean residents, 15.1 per 100 (Figure 5 and Table 4).

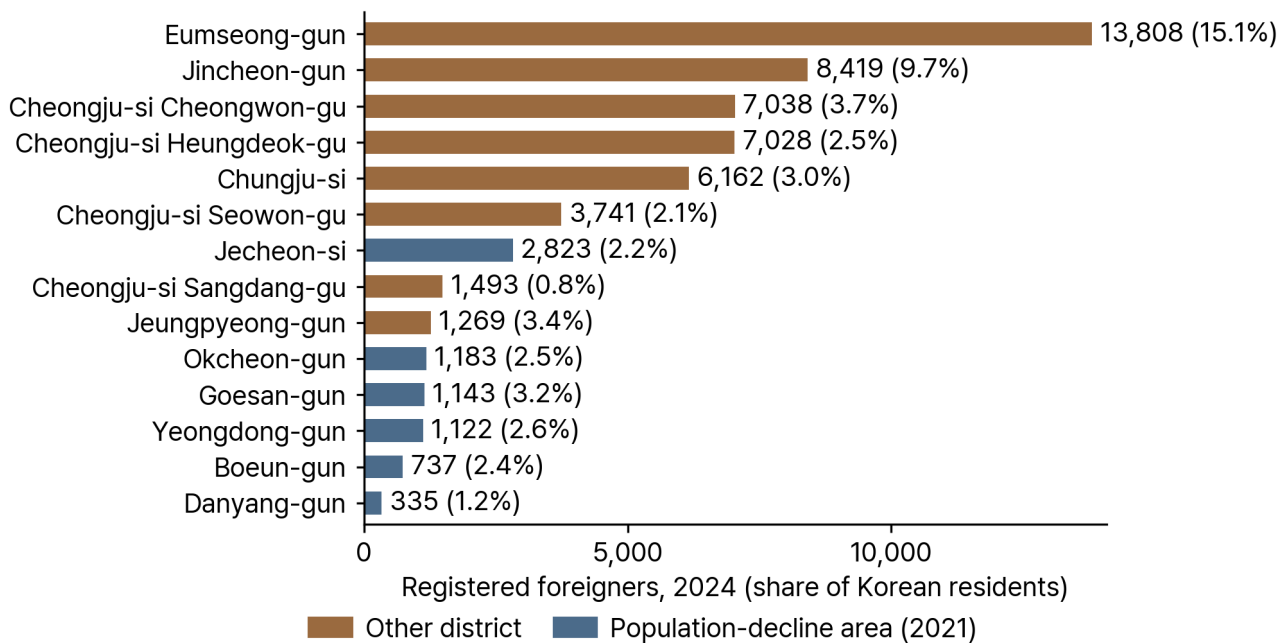
Jincheon-gun followed with 8,419 (9.7 per 100 Korean residents). The two counties together accounted for 39.5 percent of the province's registered foreigners (22,227 of 56,301).

Cheongju's four general districts had 19,300 registered foreigners in 2024, 34.3 percent of the provincial total, or 2.3 per 100 Korean residents (19,300 against 854,537). Cheongwon-gu (7,038) and Heungdeok-gu (7,028) had the most. Chungju-si had 6,162 registered foreigners (3.0 per 100 Korean residents).

Between 2019 and 2024, the number of registered foreigners rose in all 14 districts. The largest gains were in Eumseong-gun (4,356), Cheongju-si Cheongwon-gu (2,571) and Jincheon-gun (2,346), which together accounted for 59.5 percent of the provincial increase of 15,587. Korean residents declined in 11 of the 14 districts. In Eumseong-gun the gain of 4,356 registered foreigners exceeded the loss of 3,746 Korean residents, and Jincheon-gun gained both Korean residents (5,453) and registered foreigners (2,346). Korean resident counts in Cheongju's general districts moved in opposite directions, from a gain of 23,701 in Heungdeok-gu to a loss of 21,588 in Seowon-gu, with a net gain of 14,971 for the city.

FIGURE 5

Registered Foreigners by District and per 100 Korean Residents, North Chungcheong Province, 2024



Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks and Ministry of the Interior and Safety resident registration statistics, 2024; population-decline areas as designated by the Ministry of the Interior and Safety in October 2021.

The Ministry of the Interior and Safety designated six of the province's districts as population-decline areas in October 2021: Jecheon-si and the counties of Goesan, Yeongdong, Okcheon, Boeun and Danyang. It designated no area of interest in the province. From 2019 to 2024 these areas together lost 21,791 Korean residents and gained 2,414 registered foreigners, a foreign gain equal to 11.1 percent of the

Korean loss. In 2024 they had 7,343 registered foreigners (13.0 percent of the provincial total), or 2.3 per 100 Korean residents (7,343 against 314,455), below the provincial ratio of 3.5. Jecheon-si had the most registered foreigners among them (2,823) and the largest gain (1,198), and Danyang-gun the fewest (335).

By the definition used in this Spotlight, the province had one ethnic enclave in 2024. In Cheongju-si Cheongwon-gu, 2,504 Chinese nationals made up 35.6 percent of the district's

registered foreigners, with a location quotient of 3.1.

TABLE 4

#### Ten Districts with the Most Registered Foreigners in North Chungcheong Province, 2019-24

| District                    | Registered foreigners, 2024 | Per 100 Korean residents, 2024 | Change in Korean residents, 2019-24 | Change in registered foreigners, 2019-24 | Population-decline area |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Eumseong-gun                | 13,808                      | 15.1                           | -3,746                              | +4,356                                   | No                      |
| Jincheon-gun                | 8,419                       | 9.7                            | +5,453                              | +2,346                                   | No                      |
| Cheongju-si<br>Cheongwon-gu | 7,038                       | 3.7                            | -6,742                              | +2,571                                   | No                      |
| Cheongju-si<br>Heungdeok-gu | 7,028                       | 2.5                            | +23,701                             | +1,624                                   | No                      |
| Chungju-si                  | 6,162                       | 3.0                            | -3,496                              | +829                                     | No                      |
| Cheongju-si<br>Seowon-gu    | 3,741                       | 2.1                            | -21,588                             | +659                                     | No                      |
| Jecheon-si                  | 2,823                       | 2.2                            | -6,048                              | +1,198                                   | Yes                     |
| Cheongju-si<br>Sangdang-gu  | 1,493                       | 0.8                            | +19,600                             | +298                                     | No                      |
| Jeungpyeong-gun             | 1,269                       | 3.4                            | -221                                | +490                                     | No                      |
| Okcheon-gun                 | 1,183                       | 2.5                            | -2,819                              | +436                                     | Yes                     |

Note: Per 100 Korean residents is registered foreigners divided by Korean residents in the district, times 100. The four districts not shown, all population-decline areas, are Goesan-gun (1,143 registered foreigners in 2024), Yeongdong-gun (1,122), Boeun-gun (737) and Danyang-gun (335).

Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks and Ministry of the Interior and Safety resident registration statistics, 2019-2024; population-decline areas as designated by the Ministry of the Interior and Safety in October 2021.

## 5 Population Trends

The Korean resident population of North Chungcheong grew from 1,494,559 in 2006 to a peak of 1,600,837 in 2020, then declined each year to 1,591,177 in 2024. It grew 0.8 percent (12,244 people) between 2014 and 2024 and fell 0.6 percent (8,830 people) between 2019 and 2024. Over the same two periods, registered foreigners grew 83.4 percent (25,601 people) and 38.3 percent (15,587 people).

The province's population passed 1.66 million for the first time at the end of March 2026, and its month-on-month growth rate that month was the highest of any province (Chungbuk Daily, 2026). Internal migration brought a net inflow of 5,468 people in the fourth quarter of 2025, 3,770 more than in the same quarter a year earlier, and a net inflow of 10,789 for the whole of 2025 (Newspim, 2026a).

The total fertility rate in the province fell to 0.87 in 2022 and rose to 0.88 in 2024 and 0.96 in 2025, according to Statistics Korea figures (Newspim, 2026b). In 2025, 21.9 percent of the province's population was aged 65 or older, and the province was one of nine where that share exceeded 20 percent (Statistics Korea, 2025).

Statistics Korea's provincial population projections for 2022-2052, released on 28 May 2024, placed North Chungcheong among five provinces, with Gangwon, Jeju, Incheon and South Chungcheong, projected to continue growing through the 2030s before declining (Statistics Korea, 2024).

## 6 Industry and Foreign Workers

Among factories newly registered nationwide in 2023, North Chungcheong had the second-highest ratio of foreign to Korean workers of any province, 6.2 percent, after South Chungcheong's 6.7 percent, and the third-largest number of newly hired foreign factory workers, after Gyeonggi and South Chungcheong. The Migration Research and Training Centre brief that reports these figures attributes foreign factory employment in the Chungcheong region to new industrial parks and root industries such as steel and metals (MRTC, 2024).

In Jincheon and Eumseong, the development plan for the second urban high-tech industrial park of the innovation city was approved on 8 June 2023, and construction began on 7 March 2024 (Eumseong County, 2024). Chungju's advanced industrial park in Daesowon-myeon covers 1,992,339 square meters and targets companies in electronics, electrical and

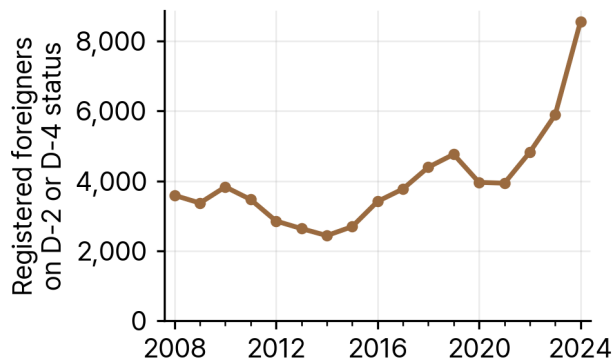
information technology, precision machinery, materials, solar power, and aircraft and transport equipment (Chungju City, 2025).

E-9 non-professional employment visa holders, admitted through the Employment Permit System, numbered 11,550 in 2014, 14,680 in 2019, 12,239 in 2021 and 20,089 in 2024 (see Residence Statuses). The 2024 count was 36.8 percent above that of 2019 and 64.1 percent above that of 2021.

The Ministry of Justice count on 31 December misses most seasonal workers, because their contracts end before winter. It recorded 4 E-8 seasonal workers in the province in 2021, 68 in 2022, 361 in 2023 and 403 in 2024. The province was allocated 4,672 seasonal agricultural workers for the first half of 2025 and 6,008 for 2026, 28.6 percent more (inews24, 2026).

## 7 International Students and Universities

**FIGURE 6**  
**Registered Foreigners on D-2 Student or D-4 General Trainee Status in North Chungcheong Province, 2008-24**



Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks, 2008-2024.

Registered foreigners on D-2 student or D-4 general trainee status numbered 3,586 in 2008 and 2,434 in 2014. The count rose to 4,760 in 2019, fell to 3,957 in 2020 and 3,934 in 2021, and then rose to 4,820 in 2022, 5,889 in 2023 and 8,566 in 2024, an increase of 45.5 percent in the last year (Figure 6). The 2024 total comprised 6,135 D-2 students and 2,431 D-4 trainees and equaled 3.3 percent of all D-2 and D-4 holders in South Korea.

In the Korean Educational Development Institute's count of international students on 1 April 2024, Cheongju University had the most in the province (1,543), followed by Chungbuk National University (1,109), Far East University (534) and Seowon University (445). Chungcheong University had the most among the province's junior colleges (409). The per-institution counts for the 16 higher-education institutions in the province sum to 5,361, and the two largest universities enrolled 49.5 percent of them (2,652) (KEDI, 2024).

The KEDI figures refer to 1 April 2024 and the Ministry of Justice figures to 31 December 2024. In April 2025 the province received a quota of 830 D-2 visas under a pilot of metropolitan-type visas (JoongAng Ilbo, 2025), described under Provincial Policy.

## 8 Provincial Policy

North Chungcheong's ordinance on support for foreign residents was last amended on 13 February 2026 (Ordinance No. 5529). The amendment added Article 14-2, which authorizes the province to establish and operate an integrated support center for foreign residents. The ordinance assigns its duties to the governor and does not name an administering department (Chungcheongbuk-do, 2026).

On 11 March 2024, Governor Kim Young-hwan announced the province's bid to host the planned national immigration agency. The announcement cited Eumseong-gun and Jincheon-gun as first and fourth in the country in the ratio of foreign residents to total population, and the province's work on cities specialized for foreign residents, such as Osong International City (Edaily, 2024).

On 2 April 2025, North Chungcheong was one of 14 regions selected for a pilot of metropolitan-type visas (광역형 비자) and received a quota of 830 D-2 student visas. For these students the required financial guarantee was lowered from 16 million to 8 million won, and permitted part-time work rose from 25 to 30 hours a week for those at TOPIK level 3 or above (JoongAng Ilbo, 2025).

Under the regional specialized visa (F-2-R) program for 2025, the six population-decline areas (Jecheon-si and the counties of Boeun, Okcheon, Yeongdong, Goesan and Danyang) had a combined quota of 311 people. From 2 July 2025, the income requirement was lowered from 70 percent of per-capita gross national income to the annual living wage of 29,601,924 won, and local governments' designation of permitted jobs was abolished, so holders may work in any industry within population-decline areas (Kyunghyang Shinmun, 2025).

In 2024 the province awarded special adjustment grants of 150 million won each to Eumseong-gun and Jincheon-gun to improve settlement conditions for foreign workers. The grants paid for a smart classroom and a counseling room at Eumseong's foreign resident support center and expanded the classrooms of the Chungbuk Foreign Migrant Workers Support Center in Jincheon from four to ten (Nongmin Sinmun, 2024).

Seasonal worker allocations are described under Industry and Foreign Workers, and the city support centers in Cheongju and Jecheon under Service Organizations and Community Places.

## 9 Languages

The KIRD dataset estimates the first languages of registered foreigners by dividing each nationality's count among its country's first languages, using first-language shares from

Ethnologue. By this estimate, Vietnamese was the most common first language among registered foreigners in North Chungcheong in 2024 (7,826 speakers), followed by Chinese (6,683), Khmer (3,472), Uzbek (3,299), Nepali (2,860), Russian (2,262), Thai (2,236), Tagalog or Filipino (2,095), Mongolian (1,634) and Sinhala (1,566). Fifteen languages had an estimated 1,000 or more speakers in 2024.

The estimate excludes Korean, so the 4,929 registered Korean-Chinese, whose first language the dataset records as Korean, add no speakers to these counts. Because each nationality is divided among its country's first languages, the estimate of 2,860 Nepali speakers is lower than the 5,495 registered Nepali nationals.

Jecheon's Foreign Resident Center plans interpreters for seven languages, including Vietnamese, Chinese, English, Nepali and Russian, from 2027 (Sinailbo, 2026).

## 10 Service Organizations and Community Places

Of the 1,717 migrant-serving organizations in the KIRD census, 66 are in North Chungcheong, all of them providing direct services. The province has 11.7 organizations per 10,000 registered foreigners (66 against 56,301 in 2024), close to the national rate of 11.5. Twelve of the 66 are family centers (가족센터). The others include 13 nongovernmental organizations, 5 medical providers, 5 community groups, 4 worker centers and 3 administrative offices.

Counting every population an organization names, 24 of the 66 serve families, 21 workers, 15 refugees, 8 children, 5 women, 4 undocumented migrants, 3 overseas Koreans, 3 students and 2 youth, and 10 serve all foreign residents.

Cheongju's Foreign Resident Support Center in Heungdeok-gu states its purpose as supporting the stable settlement of foreign residents and their communication and exchange with the local community. The city contracts its operation to the nonprofit Chungbuk International Cooperation Association (Cheongju City, 2025).

Jecheon's support center began as a center for overseas Koreans. The city signed an agreement with Daewon University on 18 September 2026 to operate it as a Foreign Resident Center for all foreign residents and planned a signboard ceremony for October 2026. The city's foreign resident population had grown from 1,916 at the end of 2022 to 4,400 at the end of June 2026 (Sinailbo, 2026).

In Cheongju, Central Asian residents and Koryo-saram (고려인, ethnic Koreans of the former Soviet Union) began living in Bongmyeong 1-dong in 2008. Grocery stores and other shops with Russian-language signs line its streets, and the concentration has spread to neighboring Sachang-dong and Bokdae-dong (Jungbu Maeil, 2024). In 2023, foreign residents made up 22.1 percent of Bongmyeong 1-dong's population, about one in five and the highest share of any neighborhood (dong) in Cheongju (Chungcheong Today, 2025).

**About these profiles.** The KIRD province profiles describe the foreign-resident population of each of South Korea's seventeen provinces and metropolitan cities. Figures come from the Korea Immigration Regional Dashboard (KIRD) dataset, built from the Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks and the Ministry of the Interior and Safety foreign-resident statistics for 2006 to 2024 (<https://doi.org/10.3886/E249944V1>); context comes from the sources listed. Interactive maps and tables: <https://immigrantsinkorea.today>.

Suggested citation: Korea Immigration Regional Dashboard (KIRD). 2026. "Foreign Residents in North Chungcheong Province." Foreign Residents in South Korea series, September 2026. Data: Korea Immigration Regional Dashboard (KIRD) dataset, <https://doi.org/10.3886/E249944V1>. Interactive maps and tables: <https://immigrantsinkorea.today>.

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# Foreign Residents in Busan

SEPTEMBER 2026

## Summary

Busan had 55,805 registered foreigners on 31 December 2024, 3.7 percent of the 1,488,353 in South Korea, and ranked ninth among the 17 provinces and metropolitan cities by this count. Its share of the country's Korean residents was larger, 6.4 percent (3,266,598 of 51,217,221). With 1.7 registered foreigners per 100 Korean residents, against 2.9 nationally, Busan ranked 15th of the 17 provinces on this ratio. The Ministry of the Interior and Safety (MOIS) counted 88,542 foreign residents in Busan in November 2024, a broader count that adds naturalized citizens and the children of foreign residents.

## Highlights

- ▶ At the end of 2024, Busan had 55,805 registered foreigners, the ninth-largest number among South Korea's 17 provinces and metropolitan cities, or 1.7 per 100 Korean residents against 2.9 nationally.
- ▶ Between 2014 and 2024, the number of registered foreigners in Busan grew 45.6 percent (by 17,490 people), while the city's Korean resident population fell 7.2 percent (by 252,803).
- ▶ In 2024, 35.7 percent of Busan's registered foreigners had study and job search statuses (D-2, D-4, D-10), against 18.6 percent nationally, and Busan had 7.3 percent of all D-2 and D-4 holders in South Korea.

The number of registered foreigners in Busan grew 45.6 percent between 2014 and 2024, from 38,315 to 55,805, while the Korean resident population fell 7.2 percent, from 3,519,401 to 3,266,598. The foreign count dropped in 2020 and 2021 and rose in each year from 2022 to 2024. Between 2019 and 2024 it increased by 9,806 (21.3 percent, the 12th-fastest growth among the 17 provinces), a gain equal to 6.7 percent of the 147,243 Korean residents Busan lost over the same five years.

Busan's foreign population differs from the national one in its residence statuses and nationalities. In 2024, the study and job search statuses (D-2, D-4, D-10) covered 35.7 percent of its registered foreigners, against 18.6 percent nationally, and D-2 student status was the most common single status. Vietnamese nationals made up 27.6 percent of registered foreigners in Busan (17.6 percent nationally) and Korean-Chinese residents 3.3 percent (16.6 percent nationally). Busan also had 15.3 percent of all holders of E-10 crew employment status in South Korea. Statistics Korea projects that Busan's total population will fall 25.8 percent between 2022 and 2052, the largest projected decline among the 17 provinces (Kookje Ilbo, 2024).

### BOX 1

#### Definitions

**Registered foreigners (등록외국인).** Foreign nationals in South Korea for more than 90 days who register with immigration authorities, counted by the Ministry of Justice on 31 December of each year. Overseas Koreans on F-4 status report their residence instead of registering and are not included. Figures in this Spotlight are registered foreigners unless stated otherwise.

**MOIS foreign residents (외국인주민).** The Ministry of the Interior and Safety (MOIS) count of foreign residents on 1 November of each year. It adds naturalized Korean citizens and the children of foreign residents to foreign nationals, and it sorts foreign nationals into workers, marriage migrants, international students, ethnic Koreans of foreign nationality, and others. The two counts are defined differently and are not directly comparable.

**Korean residents.** Korean nationals in the MOIS resident registration population. Registered foreigners per 100 Korean residents is 100 times the number of registered foreigners divided by the number of Korean residents.

**Residence status groups.** Rotation labor covers E-9 (non-professional employment), E-8 (seasonal work), H-2 (working visit), E-10 (crew employment), and D-3 (industrial training). Skilled covers E-1 to E-7. Study and job search covers D-2 (student), D-4 (general trainee), and D-10 (job seeking). Settlement covers F-2 (residential), F-5 (permanent residence), and F-6 (marriage migration). Family covers F-1 (visiting cohabitation) and F-3 (dependent family). All remaining statuses are grouped as other.

**Population-decline areas (인구감소지역).** The 89 districts that the Ministry of the Interior and Safety designated as population-decline areas on 19 October 2021. The ministry also named 18 areas of interest (관심지역). In Busan, Seo-gu, Yeongdo-gu, and Dong-gu are population-decline areas, and Jung-gu and Geumjeong-gu are areas of interest.

**Ethnic enclave.** In this Spotlight, a district where the location quotient of a nationality is at least 2 and the nationality makes up at least 30 percent of the district's registered foreigners. The location quotient divides the nationality's count per Korean resident in the district by the same ratio for South Korea.

## 1 Size of the Foreign-Resident Population

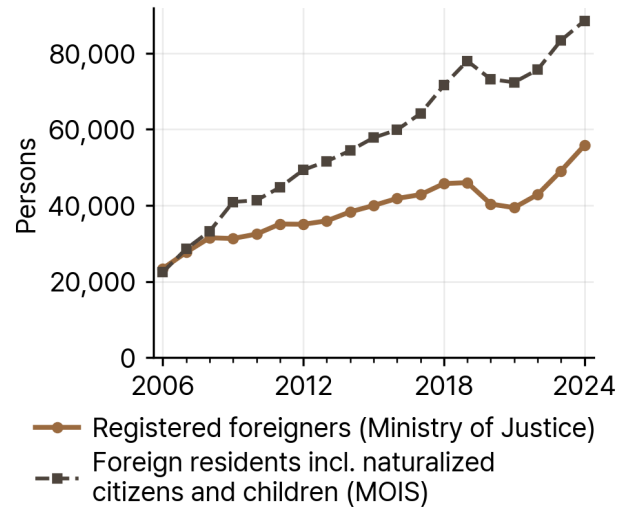
The number of registered foreigners in Busan rose from 23,381 in 2006 to 38,315 in 2014, with small declines in 2009 and 2012, and to 45,999 in 2019. It fell to 40,366 in 2020 and 39,420 in 2021, 6,579 fewer (14.3 percent) than in 2019, then rose to 42,863 in 2022, 49,090 in 2023, and 55,805 in 2024, the highest count in the series. The 2024 count was 2.4 times the 2006 count.

The MOIS count of foreign residents grew from 33,192 in 2008 to 77,968 in 2019, declined to 73,185 in 2020 and 72,361 in 2021, and rose to 88,542 in 2024, 2.7 times the 2008 count. Of

the 2024 total, 67,762 were foreign nationals, 7,589 were naturalized citizens, and 13,191 were children of foreign residents.

FIGURE 1

**Registered Foreigners and MOIS Foreign Residents in Busan, 2006-24**



Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks and Ministry of the Interior and Safety statistics, 2006-2024.

Busan ranked ninth among the 17 provinces and metropolitan cities by the number of registered foreigners in 2024 and 15th by registered foreigners per Korean resident. The number of registered foreigners per 100 Korean residents rose from 0.6 in 2006 to 1.1 in 2014, 1.3 in 2019, and 1.7 in 2024, against 2.9 for South Korea in 2024.

TABLE 1

**Registered Foreigners, MOIS Foreign Residents, and Korean Residents in Busan, Selected Years, 2006-24**

| Year | Registered foreigners | MOIS foreign residents | Korean residents | Registered foreigners per 100 Korean residents |
|------|-----------------------|------------------------|------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| 2006 | 23,381                | n.a.                   | 3,611,992        | 0.6                                            |
| 2014 | 38,315                | 54,394                 | 3,519,401        | 1.1                                            |
| 2019 | 45,999                | 77,968                 | 3,413,841        | 1.3                                            |
| 2024 | 55,805                | 88,542                 | 3,266,598        | 1.7                                            |

Note: Registered foreigners are counted on 31 December and MOIS foreign residents on 1 November. MOIS foreign residents are shown from 2008 (33,192 in Busan that year); the figure above also plots the MOIS counts for 2006 and 2007. n.a. = not reported. South Korea had 2.9 registered foreigners per 100 Korean residents in 2024.

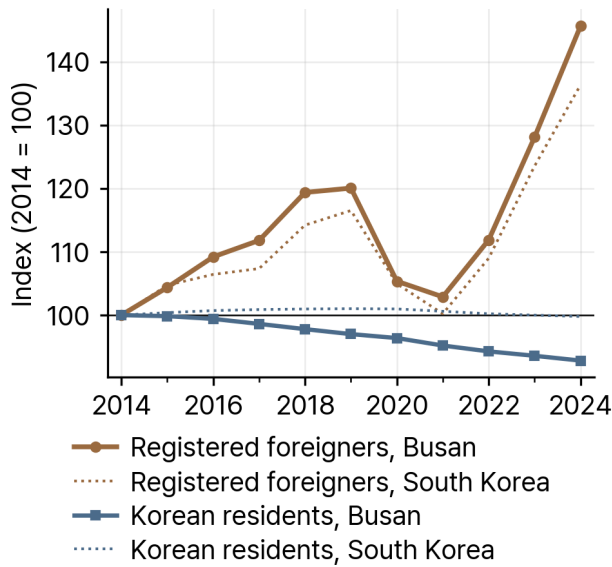
Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks and Ministry of the Interior and Safety statistics, 2006-2024.

With 2014 set to 100, the index of registered foreigners in Busan stood at 145.6 in 2024 (55,805 against 38,315) and the index of Korean residents at 92.8 (3,266,598 against 3,519,401). Between 2019 and 2024, the registered-foreigner count grew 21.3 percent, the 12th-fastest growth among the

17 provinces, and the Korean population fell 4.3 percent. The foreign gain of 9,806 people from 2019 to 2024 equaled 6.7 percent of the Korean loss of 147,243.

FIGURE 2

**Growth of Registered Foreigners and Korean Residents in Busan and South Korea, 2014-24 (index, 2014 = 100)**



Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks and Ministry of the Interior and Safety resident registration statistics, 2014-2024.

## 2 Nationalities

Vietnam was the largest nationality among Busan's registered foreigners in 2024, with 15,389 people (27.6 percent), up from 12,131 in 2019; nationally, Vietnamese nationals made up 17.6 percent of registered foreigners. China followed with 8,221 (14.7 percent), down from 9,294 in 2019, then Indonesia (3,903), Nepal (2,765), Uzbekistan (2,396), the Philippines (2,322), and Myanmar (2,312). The ten largest groups made up 75.8 percent of Busan's registered foreigners (42,274 of 55,805).

Korean-Chinese residents (Chinese nationals of Korean descent, counted separately from other Chinese nationals) made up 16.6 percent of registered foreigners in South Korea in 2024 and 3.3 percent in Busan (1,856 people), down from 2,492 in Busan in 2019. Among the ten largest groups, Nepali nationals grew fastest between 2019 and 2024, from 1,050 to 2,765 (2.6 times), followed by nationals of Myanmar (from 1,276 to 2,312, up 81.2 percent) and Indonesia (from 2,710 to 3,903, up 44.0 percent).

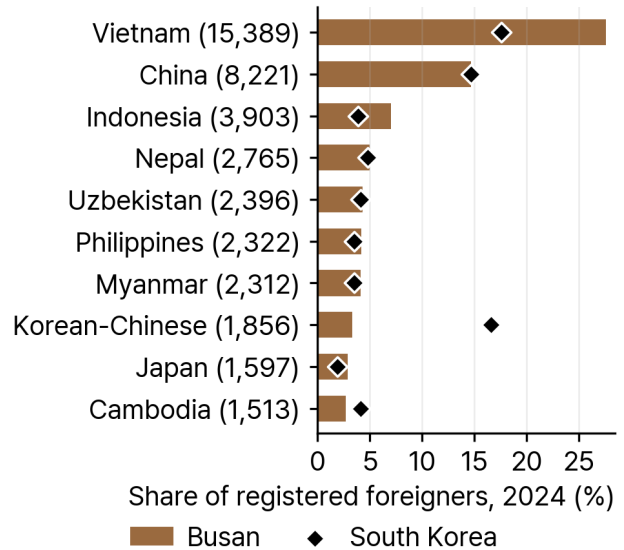
Busan had 3.7 percent of South Korea's registered foreigners in 2024 and larger shares of several national groups: 8.5 percent of Korean-Russian registered foreigners (203 of 2,383), 7.4 percent of Taiwanese (1,280 of 17,384), 6.7 percent of Indonesians (3,903 of 58,248), 6.5 percent of Canadians

(291 of 4,452), and 6.3 percent of Iranians (84 of 1,336). Among the ten largest groups, it also had 5.9 percent of Vietnamese and 5.7 percent of Japanese registered foreigners.

Registered foreigners in Busan came from 144 nationalities in 2024. The Shannon diversity index, which increases with the number of nationalities and with the evenness of their shares, was 2.5 in both 2014 and 2024, and Busan ranked 10th of the 17 provinces on this index in 2024.

FIGURE 3

**Ten Largest Nationalities among Registered Foreigners in Busan, Compared with Their Shares in South Korea, 2024**



Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks, 2024.

Overseas Koreans of foreign nationality on F-4 status report their residence instead of registering, so they are not counted among registered foreigners. In 2024, 7,485 F-4 holders reported residence in Busan, 1.4 percent of the 553,664 in South Korea. The largest groups were Korean-Chinese (2,860), U.S. nationals (1,818), Korean-Russians (1,210), Canadians (594), and Australians (243).

## 3 Residence Statuses

The study and job search group (D-2, D-4, D-10) covered 35.7 percent of Busan's registered foreigners in 2024 (19,924 people), compared with 18.6 percent nationally. Rotation labor statuses covered 24.2 percent (13,496), against 31.1 percent nationally, and settlement statuses 21.0 percent (11,714), against 27.6 percent. Family statuses accounted for 8.0 percent (4,457; 10.0 percent nationally), skilled statuses for 6.8 percent (3,811; 5.8 percent), and all other statuses for 4.3 percent (2,403; 7.1 percent).

TABLE 2

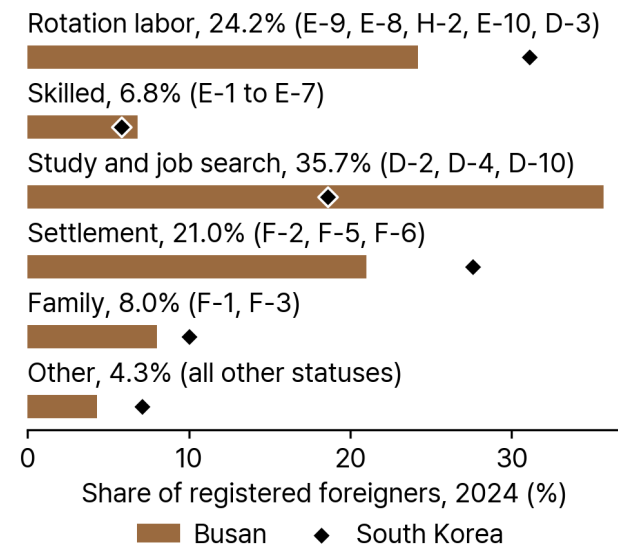
**Ten Largest Nationalities among Registered Foreigners in Busan, 2019 and 2024**

| Nationality    | 2019   | 2024   | Share of Busan's registered foreigners, 2024 (%) | Busan's share of this nationality's registered foreigners in South Korea, 2024 (%) |
|----------------|--------|--------|--------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Vietnam        | 12,131 | 15,389 | 27.6                                             | 5.9                                                                                |
| China          | 9,294  | 8,221  | 14.7                                             | 3.8                                                                                |
| Indonesia      | 2,710  | 3,903  | 7.0                                              | 6.7                                                                                |
| Nepal          | 1,050  | 2,765  | 5.0                                              | 3.8                                                                                |
| Uzbekistan     | 1,868  | 2,396  | 4.3                                              | 3.9                                                                                |
| Philippines    | 1,956  | 2,322  | 4.2                                              | 4.5                                                                                |
| Myanmar        | 1,276  | 2,312  | 4.1                                              | 4.4                                                                                |
| Korean-Chinese | 2,492  | 1,856  | 3.3                                              | 0.8                                                                                |
| Japan          | 1,396  | 1,597  | 2.9                                              | 5.7                                                                                |
| Cambodia       | 1,205  | 1,513  | 2.7                                              | 2.5                                                                                |

Note: Korean-Chinese are Chinese nationals of Korean descent, counted separately from other Chinese nationals. Busan had 3.7 percent of all registered foreigners in South Korea in 2024.

Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks, 2019 and 2024.

FIGURE 4

**Residence Status Groups of Registered Foreigners in Busan and South Korea, 2024**

Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks, 2024.

D-2 student status was the most common single status in 2024, with 13,136 holders (23.5 percent of Busan's registered foreigners), and Busan had 7.4 percent of all D-2 holders in South Korea. E-9 non-professional employment came second (9,497), followed by F-6 marriage migration (6,429), D-4 general trainee (5,726), and F-5 permanent residence (3,843).

Busan had 15.3 percent of all E-10 crew employment holders in South Korea (3,296 people), the largest national share among its ten most common statuses.

Within the groups, E-9 and E-10 holders made up 12,793 of the 13,496 people on rotation labor statuses (9,497 plus 3,296). D-10 job seekers numbered 1,062 (the study and job search total of 19,924, minus 13,136 D-2 and 5,726 D-4 holders). F-6 marriage migrants were the largest status in the settlement group (6,429 of 11,714).

The MOIS count of 1 November 2024 groups foreign residents differently. Of Busan's 88,542 foreign residents, 67,762 were foreign nationals, among them 17,778 international students, 16,445 foreign workers, 7,518 marriage migrants, 4,432 ethnic Koreans of foreign nationality, and 21,589 other foreign nationals. The count also included 7,589 naturalized citizens and 13,191 children of foreign residents.

## 4 Districts and Population-Decline Areas

Busan has 16 districts, 15 gu and one county (Gijang-gun). In 2024 the most registered foreigners lived in Nam-gu (7,387), Gangseo-gu (6,852), and Sasang-gu (6,574), which together accounted for 37.3 percent of the city's total (20,813 of 55,805). Relative to the Korean population, Jung-gu had the highest ratio, 6.8 registered foreigners per 100 Korean residents, followed by Gangseo-gu (4.8) and Sasang-gu (3.3). Yeonje-gu had the fewest registered foreigners (886) and is the one district not shown in the figure.

TABLE 3

**Ten Most Common Residence Statuses among Registered Foreigners in Busan, 2024**

| Status | Meaning                         | Registered foreigners, 2024 | Share of Busan's registered foreigners (%) | Busan's share of all holders in South Korea (%) |
|--------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| D-2    | Student                         | 13,136                      | 23.5                                       | 7.4                                             |
| E-9    | Non-professional employment     | 9,497                       | 17.0                                       | 2.9                                             |
| F-6    | Marriage migration              | 6,429                       | 11.5                                       | 4.4                                             |
| D-4    | General trainee                 | 5,726                       | 10.3                                       | 7.2                                             |
| F-5    | Permanent residence             | 3,843                       | 6.9                                        | 1.9                                             |
| E-10   | Crew employment                 | 3,296                       | 5.9                                        | 15.3                                            |
| F-1    | Visiting cohabitation           | 2,720                       | 4.9                                        | 2.8                                             |
| E-7    | Specially designated activities | 2,362                       | 4.2                                        | 3.8                                             |
| F-3    | Dependent family                | 1,737                       | 3.1                                        | 3.4                                             |
| F-2    | Residential                     | 1,442                       | 2.6                                        | 2.4                                             |

Note: Busan had 3.7 percent of all registered foreigners in South Korea in 2024. Status groups are defined under Definitions.

Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks, 2024.

TABLE 4

**Ten Districts of Busan with the Most Registered Foreigners, 2024**

| District     | Registered foreigners, 2024 | Registered foreigners per 100 Korean residents, 2024 | Change in Korean residents, 2019-24 | Change in registered foreigners, 2019-24 | Population-decline area |
|--------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Nam-gu       | 7,387                       | 2.9                                                  | -19,982                             | +1,456                                   | No                      |
| Gangseo-gu   | 6,852                       | 4.8                                                  | +13,223                             | +1,726                                   | No                      |
| Sasang-gu    | 6,574                       | 3.3                                                  | -19,459                             | +1,632                                   | No                      |
| Saha-gu      | 4,948                       | 1.7                                                  | -28,513                             | +688                                     | No                      |
| Geumjeong-gu | 4,626                       | 2.2                                                  | -29,130                             | +153                                     | No (area of interest)   |
| Haeundae-gu  | 4,150                       | 1.1                                                  | -29,698                             | +126                                     | No                      |
| Busanjin-gu  | 3,017                       | 0.8                                                  | +1,401                              | +356                                     | No                      |
| Gijang-gun   | 2,820                       | 1.6                                                  | +10,910                             | +857                                     | No                      |
| Seo-gu       | 2,716                       | 2.6                                                  | -5,041                              | +839                                     | Yes                     |
| Jung-gu      | 2,536                       | 6.8                                                  | -4,373                              | +602                                     | No (area of interest)   |

Note: Population-decline areas and areas of interest as designated by the Ministry of the Interior and Safety in October 2021. The other two population-decline areas, Yeongdo-gu (2,444 registered foreigners) and Dong-gu (1,863), are not among the ten districts shown.

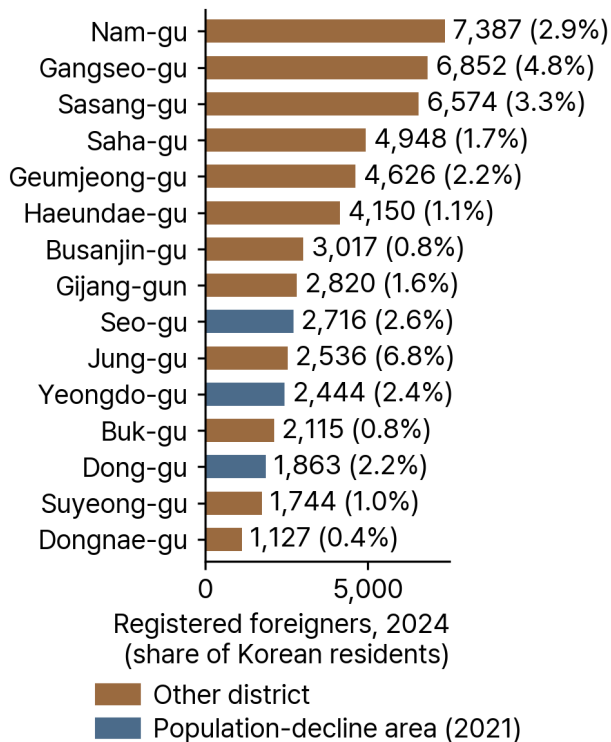
Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks and Ministry of the Interior and Safety statistics, 2019 and 2024; Ministry of the Interior and Safety list of population-decline areas, 2021.

Between 2019 and 2024 the number of registered foreigners rose in 15 of the 16 districts and fell only in Buk-gu (by 165). The largest gains were in Gangseo-gu (1,726), Sasang-gu (1,632), and Nam-gu (1,456). Korean residents declined in 11

districts, most in Haeundae-gu (29,698 fewer), Geumjeong-gu (29,130), and Saha-gu (28,513), and increased in Gangseo-gu (13,223 more), Gijang-gun (10,910), Yeonje-gu (3,194), Dongnae-gu (3,123), and Busanjin-gu (1,401).

FIGURE 5

**Registered Foreigners by District and Population-Decline Area in Busan, 2024**



Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks and Ministry of the Interior and Safety statistics, 2024; Ministry of the Interior and Safety list of population-decline areas, 2021.

In October 2021 the Ministry of the Interior and Safety designated three Busan districts, Seo-gu, Yeongdo-gu, and Dong-gu, as population-decline areas and two, Jung-gu and Geumjeong-gu, as areas of interest. From 2019 to 2024 the population-decline areas together lost 20,269 Korean residents and gained 1,691 registered foreigners, a foreign gain equal to 8.3 percent of the Korean loss. In 2024 they had 7,023 registered foreigners (2,716 in Seo-gu, 2,444 in Yeongdo-gu, and 1,863 in Dong-gu) and 292,836 Korean residents, or 2.4 registered foreigners per 100 Korean residents, against 1.7 for Busan as a whole.

The two areas of interest lost 33,503 Korean residents from 2019 to 2024 (4,373 in Jung-gu and 29,130 in Geumjeong-gu) and gained 755 registered foreigners (602 and 153), a gain equal to 2.3 percent of the Korean loss.

Three districts met this Spotlight's definition of an ethnic enclave in 2024, all for Vietnamese nationals: Sasang-gu (2,644 Vietnamese registered foreigners, 40.2 percent of the district's registered foreigners, location quotient 2.6), Seo-gu (1,297; 47.8 percent; 2.5), and Jung-gu (943; 37.2 percent; 4.9). Seo-gu is a population-decline area and Jung-gu an area of interest.

## 5 Population Trends

Busan's Korean resident population fell from 3,611,992 in 2006 to 3,519,401 in 2014, 3,413,841 in 2019, and 3,266,598 in 2024. The loss was 345,394 people (9.6 percent) over 2006-24, 252,803 (7.2 percent) over 2014-24, and 147,243 (4.3 percent) over 2019-24, and the population declined in every year from 2011 to 2024. Over 2006-24 the number of registered foreigners increased by 32,424, from 23,381 to 55,805.

Busan's total fertility rate was 0.68 in 2024, the second-lowest among the 17 provinces after Seoul (0.58), against a national rate of 0.75 (Statistics Korea, 2025). Its working-age population (ages 15 to 64) fell from 2,179,000 in 2024 to 2,129,000 in 2025, a drop of 2.3 percent (50,000 people) and the steepest rate of decline among the 17 provinces. Over the same year the population aged 65 and older rose 5.1 percent, from 768,000 to 807,000 (Kookje Ilbo, 2026).

Busan has recorded net outmigration every year since 1989, and its net outmigration rate was 0.4 percent in 2024 (News1, 2025). In Statistics Korea's provincial population projections, Busan's total population falls from 3,303,000 in 2022 to 2,991,000 in 2035, the first year below 3 million, and to 2,451,000 in 2052. The projected decline of 25.8 percent from 2022 to 2052 is the largest among the 17 provinces (Kookje Ilbo, 2024).

## 6 Industry and Foreign Workers

Non-professional employment (E-9), the general permit of the Employment Permit System (EPS), was the most common work status among Busan's registered foreigners. E-9 holders numbered 9,668 in 2014, 8,186 in 2019, and 6,069 in 2021, and rose to 9,497 in 2024, still below the 2014 level. The 2024 count was 17.0 percent of Busan's registered foreigners and 2.9 percent of all E-9 holders in South Korea, less than Busan's 3.7 percent share of all registered foreigners. The MOIS count of 1 November 2024 classified 16,445 of Busan's foreign residents as foreign workers.

In the first quarter of 2022, 1,302 business establishments in Busan were registered under the EPS, 1,178 of them under the general E-9 permit; in the second quarter of 2022 the figures were 1,283 and 1,170 (Korea Employment Information Service, 2022).

Busan also had 3,296 registered foreigners on E-10 crew employment status in 2024, 5.9 percent of its registered foreigners and 15.3 percent of all E-10 holders in South Korea.

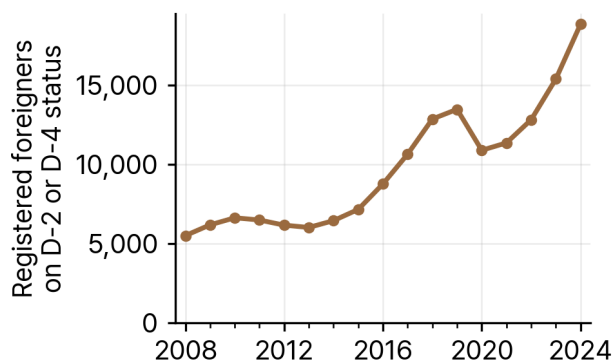
A 2023 news report counted the most foreign residents in Nam-gu (7,938) and attributed this to the district's universities and international students. It attributed the next-largest counts, in Sasang-gu (7,666), Saha-gu (7,323), and Gangseo-gu (6,594), to the Sasang and Noksan industrial parks, which in the report's account provide more jobs for foreign workers

there than in other districts (Sisa Journal, 2023). These counts predate the 2024 registered-foreigner counts in the district table.

Seasonal workers on E-8 status hardly appear in the year-end count, with 3 registered in Busan on 31 December 2023 and 28 on 31 December 2024. The 31 December count misses most seasonal workers, because their contracts end before winter, so these figures do not measure seasonal employment in Busan over the year. To our knowledge, no published source reports an allocation of seasonal workers to Busan.

## 7 International Students and Universities

**FIGURE 6**  
**Registered Foreigners on D-2 (Student) or D-4 (General Trainee) Status in Busan, 2008-24**



Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks, 2008-2024.

Registered foreigners on D-2 (student) or D-4 (general trainee) status in Busan numbered 5,507 in 2008 and 6,453 in 2014. The count rose to 13,484 in 2019, fell by 2,587 to 10,897 in 2020, and rose in each year from 2021 to 18,862 in 2024, the highest in the series and 3.4 times the 2008 count. In 2024 Busan had 7.3 percent of all D-2 and D-4 holders in South Korea, about twice its 3.7 percent share of all registered foreigners.

In the count of the Korean Educational Development Institute (KEDI) as of 1 April 2024, Kyungsung University had the most international students among Busan's higher education institutions (1,930), followed by Dong-A University (1,846), Pusan National University (1,793), Pukyong National University (1,741), and Dongseo University (1,625). KEDI's institution-level figures for Busan sum to 15,063 international students at 24 universities and colleges, and the universities named above enrolled 8,935 of them (59.3 percent) (KEDI, 2024).

According to the city, Busan had 24,328 international students in 2026, about 30 percent more than the 18,630 of 2025, and the city aims to attract 30,000 international students by 2028 (The CEN News, 2026). The KEDI and city counts come from different sources and dates than the D-2 and D-4 counts above. The metropolitan-type visa pilot and the support hub for international students are described under Provincial Policy.

## 8 Provincial Policy

Busan's Ordinance on Support for Foreign Residents is managed by the Population Policy Officer in the city's Population and Youth Policy Bureau, and its current version took effect on 23 September 2026 (Ordinance No. 8003). Article 7, unchanged since a full revision of the ordinance on 3 April 2024, requires the mayor to prepare and carry out an annual Foreign Resident Support Plan covering support goals, a survey of foreign residents' living conditions, and education, counseling, medical, and childcare services for foreign residents and their families (Local Statutes Information System, 2026).

Article 6-2, added on 16 April 2025 (Ordinance No. 7568), allows the mayor to support children and adolescents in foreign-resident families with education for school adjustment and language skills, home-visit learning before school entry, social and cultural adaptation education for children who came to Korea partway through childhood, and the cost of care for infants and young children at daycare centers under the Infant Care Act (Local Statutes Information System, 2026).

The national government's 2026 foreign policy implementation plan for local governments lists 50 tasks for Busan, with a 2026 budget of KRW 11,922 million, 13.8 percent more than the KRW 10,474 million of 2025 (Joint Government Ministries, 2026).

For the 2025 regional specialized visa program, Busan accepted applications at district offices from 26 March to 25 April 2025. The program supports foreign nationals in obtaining F-2-R, E-7-4R, and F-4-R visas on conditions that include living and working in the population-decline areas of Seo-gu, Dong-gu, and Yeongdo-gu or the areas of interest of Jung-gu and Geumjeong-gu (Busan Metropolitan City, 2025a).

The Ministry of Justice selected Busan on 3 April 2025 for its metropolitan-type visa pilot program. Under the program the city plans to bring 1,000 international students to local universities over two years, with the aim of training professionals for the semiconductor, secondary-battery, and future automotive-parts industries (Busan Metropolitan City, 2025b). In the first year, Busan recruited 335 students from 10 countries, including Bangladesh, Nepal, and Vietnam, through 14 local universities (Kookje Ilbo, 2025).

In February 2026 the city opened the Integrated Support Hub for Foreign Students. With the Busan Immigration Service, the hub offers group fingerprint registration for new international students, financial and visa counseling, Korean-language education, and cultural mentoring (The CEN News, 2026).

The nonprofit Association With Migrants began operating the city-commissioned Busan Foreign Workers Support Center in 2012 and renamed it the Busan Foreign Residents Support Center in 2021 (Association With Migrants, 2021).

## 9 Languages

The KIRD dataset estimates the first languages of registered foreigners by applying Ethnologue's first-language shares for each country of origin to the nationality counts. By this estimate, Vietnamese was the most common first language among Busan's registered foreigners in 2024, with 13,164 speakers (23.6 percent of 55,805). Chinese followed with 9,278, then Indonesian (2,748), Tagalog/Filipino (2,041), Russian (1,881), English (1,795), Uzbek (1,752), Khmer (1,672), Japanese (1,566), and Burmese (1,464).

Twelve languages had at least 1,000 estimated first-language speakers among Busan's registered foreigners in 2024. Korean is excluded from the estimates, so Korean-Chinese residents, whose first language the dataset takes to be Korean, add no speakers. The estimates also do not cover naturalized citizens or overseas Koreans on F-4 status, who are not registered foreigners.

## 10 Service Organizations and Community Places

The KIRD census of 1,717 migrant-serving organizations in South Korea lists 88 in Busan (5.1 percent of the total), or 15.8 per 10,000 registered foreigners, against 11.5 nationally. Of the 88, 84 provide services directly, and 13 are family centers (가족센터). The census also counts 6 medical providers, 4 foreign-

resident support centers, 4 migrant-worker centers, 4 nongovernmental organizations, 4 community groups, 3 international student centers, 3 youth and education organizations, 2 schools, 2 research institutes, 2 administrative offices, 2 media outlets, and 1 legal office.

Counted by the populations they serve, 30 of Busan's 88 organizations work with families, 27 with all migrants, 19 with workers, and 11 with children. Six each work with refugees, undocumented migrants, and students, and one each with women and youth. An organization can be counted under more than one population.

Choryang-dong, near Busan Station in Dong-gu, contains two places associated with foreign residents. A 2022 study describes the area known as Texas Village as the "debut stage" in Korea for Russian-speaking migrants and shuttle traders after South Korea and Russia established diplomatic relations in the 1990s (Noh, 2022). Development of Shanghai Street in the neighborhood's Chinatown began after Busan and Shanghai became sister cities in 1993; the area was designated a Chinatown special zone in 2007 and has hosted a Chinatown festival each October since 2008 (EKW, 2019).

The Busan Mosque in Geumjeong-gu opened in September 1980. A 2002 news report put its congregation at about 1,000 people, 99 percent of them foreigners and about half Indonesian (OhmyNews, 2002).

**About these profiles.** The KIRD province profiles describe the foreign-resident population of each of South Korea's seventeen provinces and metropolitan cities. Figures come from the Korea Immigration Regional Dashboard (KIRD) dataset, built from the Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks and the Ministry of the Interior and Safety foreign-resident statistics for 2006 to 2024 (<https://doi.org/10.3886/E249944V1>); context comes from the sources listed. Interactive maps and tables: <https://immigrantsinkorea.today>.

Suggested citation: Korea Immigration Regional Dashboard (KIRD). 2026. "Foreign Residents in Busan." Foreign Residents in South Korea series, September 2026. Data: Korea Immigration Regional Dashboard (KIRD) dataset, <https://doi.org/10.3886/E249944V1>. Interactive maps and tables: <https://immigrantsinkorea.today>.

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# Foreign Residents in Jeonbuk State

SEPTEMBER 2026

## Summary

At the end of 2024, 43,795 registered foreigners lived in Jeonbuk State, 2.9 percent of the 1,488,353 registered foreigners in South Korea. The province, called North Jeolla Province until it became Jeonbuk Special Self-Governing Province on 18 January 2024, ranked 10th among the 17 provinces and metropolitan cities by the number of registered foreigners and 10th by registered foreigners per Korean resident, with 2.5 registered foreigners per 100 Korean residents against 2.9 nationwide. The Ministry of the Interior and Safety counted 79,224 foreign residents in the province on 1 November 2024, a broader count that adds naturalized citizens and the children of foreign residents. The KIRD series used in this Spotlight are continuous across the change of name.

## Highlights

- ▶ Jeonbuk State had 43,795 registered foreigners at the end of 2024, 10th among South Korea's 17 provinces and metropolitan cities, after an increase of 74.6 percent since 2014, while its Korean population decreased by 7.1 percent over the same years, to 1,738,690.
- ▶ Vietnamese nationals made up 30.8 percent of the province's registered foreigners in 2024 (13,482 people), against 17.6 percent nationwide, and the province was home to 5.2 percent of all Vietnamese and 5.4 percent of all Cambodian registered foreigners in South Korea, compared with 2.9 percent of all registered foreigners.
- ▶ In the ten districts designated as population-decline areas in 2021, the number of registered foreigners rose by 3,544 between 2019 and 2024 while the Korean population fell by 36,689, a foreign gain equal to 9.7 percent of the Korean loss.

The number of registered foreigners increased by 74.6 percent between 2014 and 2024, from 25,086 to 43,795, while the Korean population decreased by 7.1 percent, from 1,871,560 to 1,738,690. Between 2019 and 2024 registered foreigners grew by 10,721 (32.4 percent, the eighth-fastest growth among the 17 provinces and metropolitan cities) and Korean residents fell by 80,227 (4.4 percent), so the foreign gain equaled 13.4 percent of the Korean loss.

Compared with registered foreigners nationwide, those in Jeonbuk State in 2024 included more Vietnamese nationals (30.8 percent against 17.6 percent) and fewer Korean-Chinese (3.6 percent against 16.6 percent). Larger shares of them had rotation labor statuses (34.3 percent against 31.1 percent) and study and job search statuses (26.3 percent against 18.6 percent), and a smaller share had settlement statuses (19.5 percent against 27.6 percent). In 2024 the province was home to 8.3 percent of all registered foreigners on E-8 seasonal worker status in South Korea. The KIRD census of migrant-serving organizations lists 17.8 organizations in the province per 10,000 registered foreigners in 2024, against 11.5 nationwide. Ten of its 15 districts were designated population-decline areas in 2021, and the province's regional specialized visa (F-2-R) program covers all ten (Jeonbuk State, 2025a).

### BOX 1

#### Definitions

**Registered foreigners (등록외국인).** Foreign nationals in South Korea for more than 90 days who register with immigration authorities, as counted by the Ministry of Justice on 31 December of each year. Overseas Koreans on F-4 status report their place of residence instead of registering and are not included. Counts in this Spotlight are registered foreigners unless another count is named.

**MOIS foreign residents (외국인주민).** The count of foreign residents by the Ministry of the Interior and Safety (MOIS) on 1 November of each year. It adds naturalized Korean citizens and the children of foreign residents to foreign nationals, and it classifies foreign nationals as workers, marriage migrants, international students, foreign nationals of Korean descent and other foreigners.

**Korean residents (주민등록인구).** South Korean nationals in the resident registration of the Ministry of the Interior and Safety. The number of registered foreigners per 100 Korean residents uses this count as its denominator.

**Status groups.** This Spotlight groups residence statuses into rotation labor (E-9 non-professional employment, E-8 seasonal work, H-2 working visit, E-10 seafarer employment and D-3 technical training), skilled (E-1 to E-7), study and job search (D-2 student, D-4 general trainee and D-10 job seeking), settlement (F-2 residence, F-5 permanent residence and F-6 marriage migration) and family (F-1 visiting cohabitation and F-3 dependent family). All other statuses are counted as other.

**Population-decline areas (인구감소지역).** The Ministry of the Interior and Safety designated 89 districts as population-decline areas on 19 October 2021 and named 18 other districts as areas of interest (관심지역). Ten of Jeonbuk State's 15 districts are population-decline areas, and Iksan-si is an area of interest.

**Districts (시군구).** The province's cities (si) and counties (gun), with the two general districts (gu) of Jeonju-si, Deokjin-gu and Wansan-gu, counted separately, for 15 districts in all.

**Diversity index.** The Shannon index of the nationality composition of registered foreigners. It rises with the number of nationalities and with the evenness of their shares.

**Ethnic enclave.** In this Spotlight, a district where one nationality makes up at least 30 percent of the district's registered foreigners and has a location quotient of at least 2. The location quotient divides the group's number per Korean resident in the district by the same ratio for South Korea.

## 1 Size of the Foreign-Resident Population

The number of registered foreigners in Jeonbuk State rose from 13,475 in 2006 to 25,086 in 2014 and 33,074 in 2019. It fell to 31,288 in 2020 and 30,331 in 2021, 8.3 percent below the 2019 level, and then rose each year to 43,795 in 2024, 44.4 percent above the 2021 count. The 2024 total was 3.25 times the 2006 total, an increase of 30,320 people (225.0 percent).

The MOIS count, which adds naturalized citizens and the children of foreign residents, rose from 18,423 in 2008 to 62,151 in 2019, dipped to 60,684 in 2021 and rose to 79,224 in 2024.

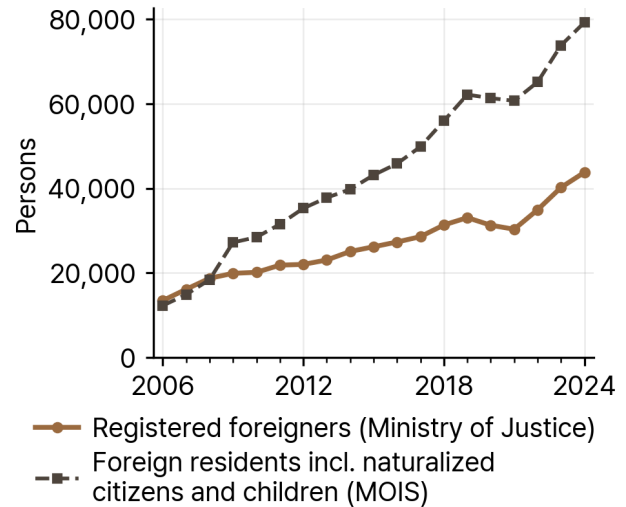
With 2014 set to 100, the number of registered foreigners in the province stood at 174.6 in 2024 and the number of Korean residents at 92.9. Between 2019 and 2024 registered foreigners grew by 32.4 percent (10,721 people), the eighth-fastest growth among the 17 provinces and metropolitan cities, while Korean residents fell by 4.4 percent (80,227 people), a foreign gain equal to 13.4 percent of the Korean loss.

Registered foreigners per 100 Korean residents rose from 0.7 in 2006 to 1.3 in 2014, 1.8 in 2019 and 2.5 in 2024, when the national figure was 2.9. In 2024 Jeonbuk State ranked 10th

among the 17 provinces and metropolitan cities by the number of registered foreigners and 10th by registered foreigners per Korean resident.

FIGURE 1

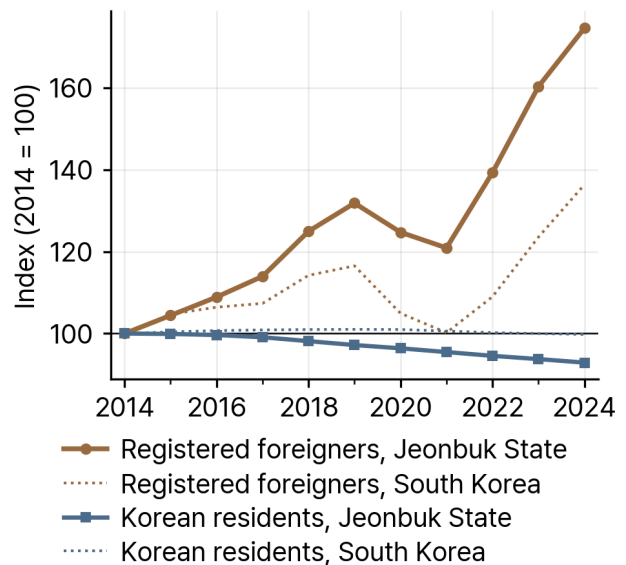
**Registered Foreigners and MOIS Foreign Residents in Jeonbuk State, 2006-24**



Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks and Ministry of the Interior and Safety foreign-resident statistics, 2006-2024.

FIGURE 2

**Registered Foreigners and Korean Residents in Jeonbuk State and South Korea, 2014-24 (index, 2014 = 100)**



Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks and Ministry of the Interior and Safety resident registration statistics, 2014-2024.

## 2 Nationalities

Vietnam was the largest nationality among registered foreigners in Jeonbuk State in 2024, with 13,482 people (30.8 percent of the total), compared with 17.6 percent of registered foreigners nationwide. China followed with 5,228 (11.9

percent), then Cambodia (3,315), Nepal (3,258) and Uzbekistan (2,316). The ten largest nationalities made up 80.9 percent of the province's registered foreigners.

**TABLE 1**  
**Registered Foreigners, MOIS Foreign Residents and Korean Residents in Jeonbuk State, Selected Years**

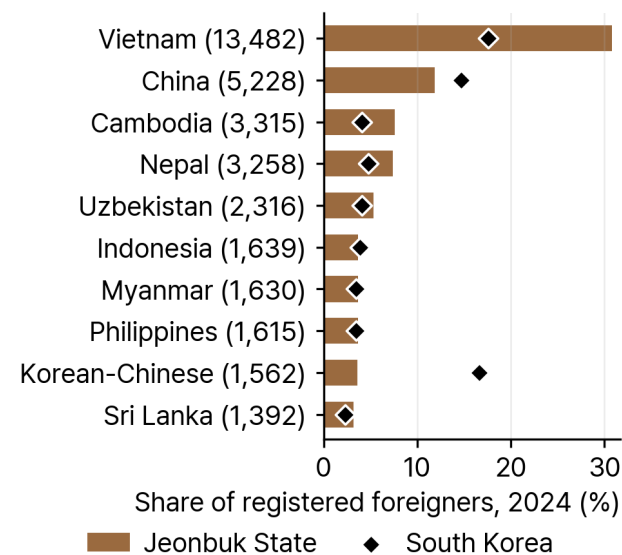
| Year | Registered foreigners | MOIS foreign residents | Korean residents | Registered foreigners per 100 Korean residents |
|------|-----------------------|------------------------|------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| 2006 | 13,475                | –                      | 1,868,365        | 0.7                                            |
| 2014 | 25,086                | 39,777                 | 1,871,560        | 1.3                                            |
| 2019 | 33,074                | 62,151                 | 1,818,917        | 1.8                                            |
| 2024 | 43,795                | 79,224                 | 1,738,690        | 2.5                                            |

Note: Registered foreigners are counted on 31 December and MOIS foreign residents on 1 November. The MOIS column starts in 2008, when the count was 18,423. The national ratio in 2024 was 2.9 per 100.

Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks and Ministry of the Interior and Safety statistics, 2006–2024.

Between 2019 and 2024 the number of Vietnamese nationals rose by 3,459 (34.5 percent), Cambodians by 1,320 (66.2 percent) and Nepalis by 1,370 (72.6 percent), and the number from Myanmar more than doubled, from 810 to 1,630. The number of Chinese nationals fell from 6,074 to 5,228 and the number of Korean-Chinese from 1,978 to 1,562.

**FIGURE 3**  
**Ten Largest Nationalities among Registered Foreigners, Jeonbuk State and South Korea, 2024**



Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks, 2024.

The province was home to 2.9 percent of all registered foreigners in South Korea in 2024 and to larger shares of several national groups, including 5.4 percent of Cambodians (3,315 of 61,006), 5.2 percent of Vietnamese (13,482 of 261,581) and 4.5 percent of Nepalis (3,258 of 72,151). Its shares of Yemenis (90 of 1,200, or 7.5 percent) and Syrians (124 of 1,904, or 6.5 percent) were higher still. By contrast, 0.6

percent of Korean-Chinese registered foreigners lived in the province, where they made up 3.6 percent of registered foreigners against 16.6 percent nationwide.

The Shannon diversity index of the province's registered foreigners was 2.5 in 2014 and 2.5 in 2024, and in 2024 it was the 13th-highest among the 17 provinces and metropolitan cities. Registered foreigners in the province came from 117 nationalities in 2024.

Overseas Koreans on F-4 status report their residence instead of registering, so they are not counted among registered foreigners. In 2024, 4,295 F-4 holders reported a residence in Jeonbuk State, 0.8 percent of the 553,664 nationwide. Korean-Chinese made up the largest group (2,618), followed by nationals of the United States (893), Canada (257) and Uzbekistan (160) and by Korean-Russians (81).

### 3 Residence Statuses

Rotation labor statuses covered 15,022 registered foreigners in Jeonbuk State in 2024, or 34.3 percent, compared with 31.1 percent nationwide. The study and job search group covered 11,515 (26.3 percent, against 18.6 percent nationwide), settlement 8,537 (19.5 percent, against 27.6 percent), family 4,491 (10.3 percent, against 10.0 percent) and skilled 2,033 (4.6 percent, against 5.8 percent). The remaining 2,197 (5.0 percent, against 7.1 percent) had other statuses.

E-9 non-professional employment was the most common single status in 2024, with 12,355 holders (28.2 percent), followed by D-2 student (6,785), F-6 marriage migration (5,065) and D-4 general trainee (3,888). Against its 2.9 percent share of all registered foreigners, the province had 8.3 percent of all E-8 seasonal worker status holders registered in South Korea on 31 December 2024 (1,626 people) and 4.9 percent of all D-4 general trainees. Its share of F-5 permanent residents was 1.1 percent (2,234 people).

The MOIS count uses its own categories. On 1 November 2024 it recorded 14,956 foreign workers, 5,936 marriage migrants, 10,198 international students, 2,768 foreign nationals of Korean

descent and 23,830 other foreigners in the province, 57,688 foreign nationals in all, together with 7,540 naturalized citizens and 13,996 children of foreign residents, for a total of 79,224.

TABLE 2

### Ten Largest Nationalities among Registered Foreigners in Jeonbuk State, 2019 and 2024

| Nationality    | 2019   | 2024   | Share of the province's registered foreigners, 2024 (%) | Province's share of the nationality's registered foreigners in South Korea, 2024 (%) |
|----------------|--------|--------|---------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Vietnam        | 10,023 | 13,482 | 30.8                                                    | 5.2                                                                                  |
| China          | 6,074  | 5,228  | 11.9                                                    | 2.4                                                                                  |
| Cambodia       | 1,995  | 3,315  | 7.6                                                     | 5.4                                                                                  |
| Nepal          | 1,888  | 3,258  | 7.4                                                     | 4.5                                                                                  |
| Uzbekistan     | 1,521  | 2,316  | 5.3                                                     | 3.8                                                                                  |
| Indonesia      | 957    | 1,639  | 3.7                                                     | 2.8                                                                                  |
| Myanmar        | 810    | 1,630  | 3.7                                                     | 3.1                                                                                  |
| Philippines    | 1,273  | 1,615  | 3.7                                                     | 3.1                                                                                  |
| Korean-Chinese | 1,978  | 1,562  | 3.6                                                     | 0.6                                                                                  |
| Sri Lanka      | 887    | 1,392  | 3.2                                                     | 4.1                                                                                  |

Note: Korean-Chinese are ethnic Koreans of Chinese nationality, listed separately from other Chinese nationals. Jeonbuk State had 2.9 percent of all registered foreigners in South Korea in 2024.

Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks, 2019 and 2024.

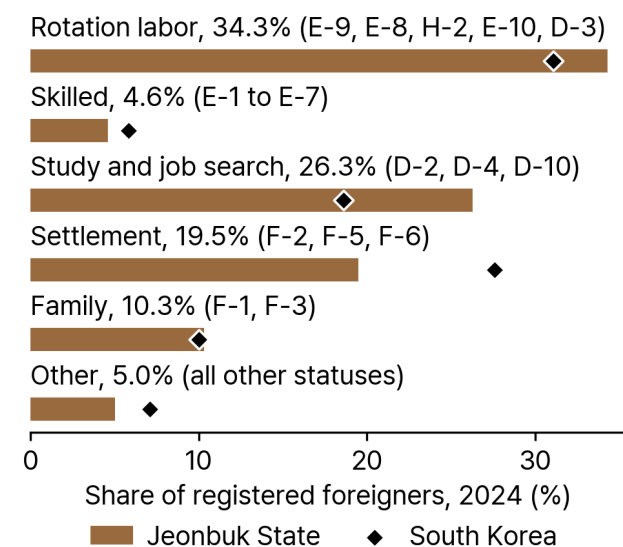
## 4 Districts and Population-Decline Areas

Gunsan-si had the most registered foreigners in Jeonbuk State in 2024 (9,414, or 21.5 percent of the province's total), followed by Iksan-si (6,395) and the two general districts of Jeonju-si, Deokjin-gu (5,946) and Wansan-gu (4,575). Relative to the Korean population, the ratio was highest in Wanju-gun (4.5 registered foreigners per 100 Korean residents), Gimje-si (4.1), Gunsan-si (3.6), Gochang-gun (3.3) and Jeongeup-si (3.2).

Between 2019 and 2024 the number of registered foreigners rose in all 15 districts, most in Gunsan-si (3,313), Gimje-si (1,257), Iksan-si (1,250) and Jeonju-si Deokjin-gu (1,192). The Korean population fell in 14 of the 15 districts. Wanju-gun gained 7,059 Korean residents, and the largest losses were in Iksan-si (19,770), Jeonju-si Wansan-gu (16,929) and Gunsan-si (12,084).

FIGURE 4

### Registered Foreigners by Status Group, Jeonbuk State and South Korea, 2024



Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks, 2024.

In October 2021 the Ministry of the Interior and Safety designated ten of the province's districts as population-decline areas (Jeongeup-si, Namwon-si, Gimje-si, Jinan-gun, Muju-gun, Jangsu-gun, Imsil-gun, Sunchang-gun, Gochang-gun and

Buan-gun) and named Iksan-si an area of interest. In 2024 the ten decline areas were home to 13,007 registered foreigners, 29.7 percent of the province's total.

**TABLE 3**  
**Ten Most Common Residence Statutes among Registered Foreigners in Jeonbuk State, 2024**

| Status | Meaning                         | Registered foreigners | Share of the province's registered foreigners (%) | Province's share of all holders in South Korea (%) |
|--------|---------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| E-9    | Non-professional employment     | 12,355                | 28.2                                              | 3.8                                                |
| D-2    | Student                         | 6,785                 | 15.5                                              | 3.8                                                |
| F-6    | Marriage migration              | 5,065                 | 11.6                                              | 3.5                                                |
| D-4    | General trainee                 | 3,888                 | 8.9                                               | 4.9                                                |
| F-1    | Visiting cohabitation           | 2,989                 | 6.8                                               | 3.1                                                |
| F-5    | Permanent residence             | 2,234                 | 5.1                                               | 1.1                                                |
| E-8    | Seasonal worker                 | 1,626                 | 3.7                                               | 8.3                                                |
| F-3    | Dependent family                | 1,502                 | 3.4                                               | 2.9                                                |
| E-7    | Specially designated activities | 1,444                 | 3.3                                               | 2.3                                                |
| G-1    | Other (miscellaneous)           | 1,411                 | 3.2                                               | 2.5                                                |

Note: Counts are registered foreigners on 31 December 2024. Jeonbuk State had 2.9 percent of all registered foreigners in South Korea.

Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks, 2024.

**TABLE 4**  
**Ten Districts with the Most Registered Foreigners in Jeonbuk State, 2024**

| District    | Registered foreigners, 2024 | Registered foreigners per 100 Korean residents, 2024 | Change in Korean residents, 2019-24 | Change in registered foreigners, 2019-24 | Population-decline area |
|-------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Gunsan-si   | 9,414                       | 3.6                                                  | -12,084                             | +3,313                                   | No                      |
| Iksan-si    | 6,395                       | 2.4                                                  | -19,770                             | +1,250                                   | No (area of interest)   |
| Jeonju-si   | 5,946                       | 1.9                                                  | -1,814                              | +1,192                                   | No                      |
| Deokjin-gu  |                             |                                                      |                                     |                                          |                         |
| Jeonju-si   | 4,575                       | 1.4                                                  | -16,929                             | +625                                     | No                      |
| Wansan-gu   |                             |                                                      |                                     |                                          |                         |
| Wanju-gun   | 4,458                       | 4.5                                                  | +7,059                              | +797                                     | No                      |
| Jeongeup-si | 3,295                       | 3.2                                                  | -8,414                              | +421                                     | Yes                     |
| Gimje-si    | 3,286                       | 4.1                                                  | -3,260                              | +1,257                                   | Yes                     |
| Gochang-gun | 1,701                       | 3.3                                                  | -4,522                              | +738                                     | Yes                     |
| Namwon-si   | 1,325                       | 1.8                                                  | -5,794                              | +303                                     | Yes                     |
| Buan-gun    | 1,232                       | 2.6                                                  | -5,229                              | +377                                     | Yes                     |

Note: The other five districts, all population-decline areas, had 2,168 registered foreigners in 2024: Jinan-gun (490), Sunchang-gun (472), Jangsu-gun (446), Imsil-gun (426) and Muju-gun (334). Population-decline areas and areas of interest are those designated by the Ministry of the Interior and Safety in October 2021.

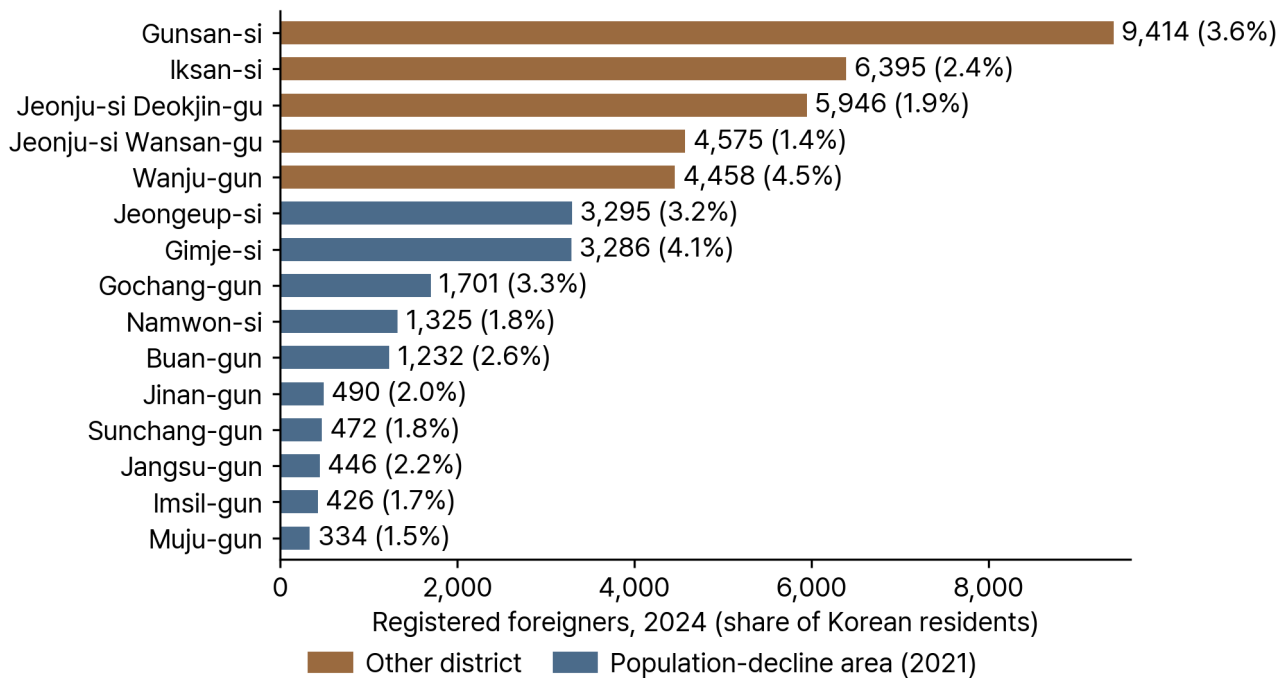
Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks and Ministry of the Interior and Safety statistics, 2019 and 2024.

Between 2019 and 2024 the ten decline areas lost 36,689 Korean residents and gained 3,544 registered foreigners, so the foreign gain equaled 9.7 percent of the Korean loss, against 13.4 percent for the province as a whole. Gimje-si had

the largest foreign gain among them (1,257) and lost 3,260 Korean residents. Iksan-si, the area of interest, lost 19,770 Korean residents, more than any other district, and gained 1,250 registered foreigners.

FIGURE 5

#### Registered Foreigners by District and Population-Decline Area, Jeonbuk State, 2024



Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks and Ministry of the Interior and Safety statistics, 2024; population-decline areas as designated by the Ministry of the Interior and Safety in October 2021.

Two districts met the definition of an ethnic enclave in 2024, both for Vietnamese nationals and both population-decline areas. In Jeongeup-si, 1,195 Vietnamese made up 36.3 percent of registered foreigners (location quotient 2.3), and in Buan-gun, 543 Vietnamese made up 44.1 percent (location quotient 2.2).

## 5 Population Trends

Among the years from 2006 to 2024, the Korean population of Jeonbuk State was highest in 2011, at 1,874,031, and it declined every year from 2012 to 2024, when it stood at 1,738,690. It fell by 129,675 (6.9 percent) between 2006 and 2024, by 132,870 (7.1 percent) between 2014 and 2024 and by 80,227 (4.4 percent) between 2019 and 2024. The province's Korean residents made up 3.4 percent of South Korea's 51,217,221 in 2024.

The province reported 1,724,856 people in its resident registration at the end of 2025 (859,325 men and 865,531 women), in 868,116 households (Jeonbuk State, 2025b).

Jeonbuk Ilbo, citing the Honam Regional Statistics Office, reported 6,780 births in the province in 2024, 2.4 percent more than in 2023, and a total fertility rate of 0.81, above the national rate of 0.75 and the 10th-highest among the 17

provinces and metropolitan cities (Jeonbuk Ilbo, 2025). In Statistics Korea's 2025 figures, 25.4 percent of the province's population was 65 or older, the fourth-highest share after South Jeolla Province (27.4 percent), North Gyeongsang Province (26.1 percent) and Gangwon State (25.7 percent) (Statistics Korea, 2025).

In the second quarter of 2025, 979 more people moved from the province to other parts of South Korea than moved in. Gimje had the largest net inflow among the province's cities and counties (440 people) and Jeonju the largest net outflow (1,930) (News1, 2025).

Statistics Korea's provincial projections for 2022-2052 place the province among six regions, with Seoul, North Gyeongsang, Gwangju, South Jeolla and Daejeon, whose population is projected to decline by about 15 percent by 2052, and among seven provinces where the school-age population (ages 6 to 21) is projected to decline by more than 50 percent over the same period (Statistics Korea, 2024).

## 6 Industry and Foreign Workers

In 2022, foreign workers in Jeonbuk State were less concentrated in manufacturing and more concentrated in agriculture than foreign workers nationwide. In employment

administration statistics from the Korea Employment Information Service for the fourth quarter of 2022, reproduced in a 2023 Jeonbuk Institute report, 57.3 percent of the province's foreign workers were in manufacturing, 29.9 percent in agriculture and livestock, 7.4 percent in fishing, 4.8 percent in construction and 0.6 percent in services. Nationally, 78.0 percent were in manufacturing and 11.0 percent in agriculture and livestock (Jeonbuk Institute, 2023).

The MOIS count of 1 November 2021 recorded 9,464 foreign workers in the province, 15.6 percent of its foreign residents and 2.4 percent of foreign workers nationwide. Among the provinces outside the metropolitan cities, only Gangwon (1.4 percent) and Jeju (2.1 percent) had smaller shares. The largest nationalities among the province's foreign workers were Cambodian (14.6 percent), Nepali (14.5 percent) and Vietnamese (13.8 percent), while nationally Chinese nationals, including Korean-Chinese, were the largest group (25.8 percent) (Jeonbuk Institute, 2023). On 1 November 2024 the same count recorded 14,956 foreign workers in the province, 18.9 percent of its 79,224 foreign residents.

Registered foreigners on E-9 non-professional employment status numbered 7,812 in 2014 and 8,983 in 2019. The count fell to 7,302 in 2021 and rose to 12,355 in 2024, 69.2 percent above the 2021 level and 3.8 percent of all E-9 holders in South Korea.

The number of E-8 seasonal workers counted on 31 December rose from 24 in 2021 to 447 in 2022, 1,157 in 2023 and 1,626 in 2024, when the province had 8.3 percent of all E-8 holders in South Korea. Most seasonal workers' contracts end before winter, so a count on 31 December misses most of them. In the first half of 2023, 2,660 seasonal workers were allocated to 791 farm employers in 13 of the province's 14 cities and counties, 9.9 percent of the 26,788 allocated nationwide, and Gochang-gun received the most (776) (Jeonbuk Institute, 2023).

Gunsan-si, the district with the most registered foreigners in 2024, contains a free trade zone at the entrance to the Saemangeum seawall, inside the Gunsan No. 2 National Industrial Park (군산2국가산업단지). The city describes it as the country's first free trade zone to combine manufacturing, logistics, trade and distribution. It covers 1,256,000 square meters, and in 2017 it had 30 tenant companies, 25 of them operating, with 1,623 workers (Gunsan City, 2017).

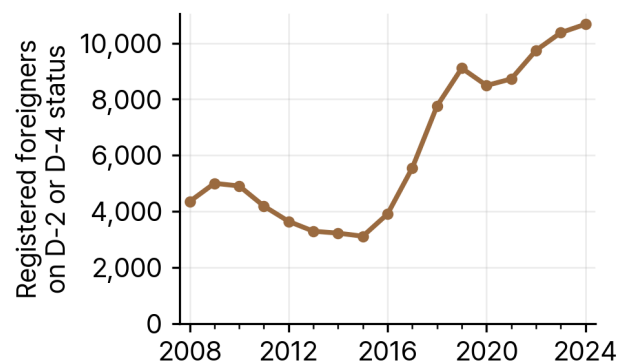
## 7 International Students and Universities

Registered foreigners on D-2 student and D-4 general trainee status in Jeonbuk State numbered 4,353 in 2008 and 5,001 in 2009, then declined each year to 3,116 in 2015. The count rose to 9,107 in 2019, dipped to 8,490 in 2020 and then rose each year to 10,673 in 2024, about 3.4 times the 2015 level. In 2024, 6,785 were on D-2 status and 3,888 on D-4 status, and the province had 4.1 percent of all D-2 and D-4 holders in South

Korea, against 2.9 percent of all registered foreigners. The MOIS count recorded 10,198 international students in the province on 1 November 2024.

In the 2026 university information disclosure on Academyinfo (대학알리미), Jeonbuk National University reported 2,722 international students, the most of any university in the province (Academyinfo, 2026a), and Woosuk University in Samnye, Wanju-gun, reported 1,250, the second most (Academyinfo, 2026b). Howon University in Gunsan reported 762, Wonkwang University in Iksan 506 and Kunsan National University 436.

**FIGURE 6**  
**Registered Foreigners on Student (D-2) and General Trainee (D-4) Status in Jeonbuk State, 2008-24**



Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks, 2008-2024.

The province's ordinance on international students and its 2025 metropolitan-type visa pilot are described under Provincial Policy.

## 8 Provincial Policy

The provincial website, as updated in February 2026, lists the Foreign Affairs and International Policy Division (외국인국제정책과) as the office responsible for foreign-resident and international policy in Jeonbuk State (Jeonbuk State, 2026). In 2015 the province established the Jeonbuk International Cooperation Agency (전북국제협력진흥원) to build communication and community between residents and foreign residents and to strengthen the province's international competitiveness (Jeonbuk Institute, 2023).

On 31 March 2023 the province enacted its Ordinance on Support for Foreign Residents, dividing the Ordinance on Support for Foreign Residents and Multicultural Families of 12 August 2016 into separate ordinances for foreign residents and for multicultural families. The new ordinance requires the province to draft and implement a support plan for foreign residents every year. An ordinance on support for international students, enacted on 21 October 2022, covers degree students and language trainees living in the province, with the aim of attracting more international students and raising the region's competitiveness through their participation in community activities (Jeonbuk Institute, 2023).

In August 2023 the Jeonbuk Institute submitted to the provincial governor the final report of its study for a master plan on foreign-resident policy in the province (Jeonbuk

Institute, 2023).

TABLE 5

International Students at Five Universities in Jeonbuk State, 2026 Disclosure

| University                  | Location          | International students, 2026 | Source             |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|------------------------------|--------------------|
| Jeonbuk National University | Jeonju            | 2,722                        | Academyinfo, 2026a |
| Woosuk University           | Samnye, Wanju-gun | 1,250                        | Academyinfo, 2026b |
| Howon University            | Gunsan            | 762                          | Academyinfo, 2026c |
| Wonkwang University         | Iksan             | 506                          | Academyinfo, 2026d |
| Kunsan National University  | Gunsan            | 436                          | Academyinfo, 2026e |

Note: Counts are the number of international students (외국인 학생 수) that each university reported for 2026 on Academyinfo (대학알리미), the university information disclosure service. Jeonbuk National University had the most international students of any university in the province and Woosuk University the second most.

Source: Academyinfo (대학알리미), Korean Council for University Education, 2026.

The province's regional specialized visa (F-2-R) program covers ten population-declining cities and counties (Jeongeup, Namwon, Gimje, Jinan, Muju, Jangsu, Imsil, Sunchang, Gochang and Buan), the ten districts designated as population-decline areas in 2021. Current and recent holders of technical training (D-3), general training (D-4), hotel entertainment (E-6-2), seasonal work (E-8), non-professional employment (E-9), seafarer employment (E-10), miscellaneous (G-1) or working holiday (H-1) status are not eligible (Jeonbuk State, 2025a).

Under the 2025 pilot program for a metropolitan-type visa (광역형 비자), the province announced settlement support and links with companies to attract and retain 670 international students. It received the central government's implementation guidelines on 13 June 2025, and together with 13 universities in the province it selected 51 majors that match its priority industries and set up an academic structure for these students (Jeonbuk State, 2025c).

## 9 Languages

The KIRD dataset estimates first-language speakers by multiplying the number of registered foreigners of each nationality by the share of that country's population with the language as a first language, as reported by Ethnologue. By this estimate, Vietnamese was the most common first language among registered foreigners in Jeonbuk State in 2024 (11,529 speakers), followed by Chinese (5,537) and Khmer (3,364). Ten languages had at least 1,000 estimated speakers in 2024, the others being Nepali (1,696), Uzbek (1,686), Tagalog or Filipino (1,407), Thai (1,160), Indonesian (1,151), Burmese (1,044) and Mongolian (1,007).

Because the estimate applies first-language shares to nationality counts, the estimate for Vietnamese (11,529) is below the number of Vietnamese nationals (13,482).

## 10 Service Organizations and Community Places

The KIRD census of 1,717 migrant-serving organizations in South Korea lists 78 in Jeonbuk State, or 17.8 per 10,000 registered foreigners in 2024, compared with 11.5 per 10,000 nationwide. Of the 78, 77 provide services directly to migrants, and 14 have 가족센터 (family center) in their names.

Organizations can name more than one population they serve. Families are the population named most often (33 organizations), followed by workers (22), all foreign residents (15), women (14), refugees (9), undocumented migrants (8), children (6), youth (5), students (4) and ethnic Koreans (1).

St. Joseph Workers' House (성요셉노동자의 집) in Iksan was founded in 1983 and is operated by the migrant ministry office of the Catholic Diocese of Jeonju. It expanded its work with migrant workers in 2008 and provides community support, labor and human rights counseling, help with administrative lawsuits and a shelter for migrants. The Jeonju Workers' Mission Counseling Center (전주근로자선교상담소), also called the Foreign Workers' Mission Center, began its work with Chinese workers in June 1996 and was established in 1998 by the Jeonbuk and Jeonju presbyteries of the Presbyterian Church of Korea. It provides labor and human rights counseling and medical support to migrant workers in Jeonju (Jeonbuk Institute, 2023).

A 2010 newspaper report described Dasik (다식), a Southeast Asian restaurant that Gimje City and the Gimje Multicultural Family Support Center opened that year in the Yocheon-dong housing development district of Gimje. Ten marriage migrant women from the Philippines and Vietnam cooked and sold dishes from their home countries there (Seoul Shinmun, 2010). The report does not establish whether the restaurant still operates.

TABLE 6  
Estimated First-Language Speakers among Registered Foreigners in Jeonbuk State, 2024

| Language         | Estimated speakers |
|------------------|--------------------|
| Vietnamese       | 11,529             |
| Chinese          | 5,537              |
| Khmer            | 3,364              |
| Nepali           | 1,696              |
| Uzbek            | 1,686              |
| Tagalog/Filipino | 1,407              |
| Thai             | 1,160              |
| Indonesian       | 1,151              |
| Burmese          | 1,044              |
| Mongolian        | 1,007              |

Note: Estimates multiply the number of registered foreigners of each nationality by the share of that country's population with the language as a first language (Ethnologue) and sum across nationalities. Korean is excluded. The ten languages shown are all those with at least 1,000 estimated speakers in 2024.

Source: KIRD dataset, language estimates from Ministry of Justice nationality counts and Ethnologue first-language shares, 2024.

**About these profiles.** The KIRD province profiles describe the foreign-resident population of each of South Korea's seventeen provinces and metropolitan cities. Figures come from the Korea Immigration Regional Dashboard (KIRD) dataset, built from the Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks and the Ministry of the Interior and Safety foreign-resident statistics for 2006 to 2024 (<https://doi.org/10.3886/E249944V1>); context comes from the sources listed. Interactive maps and tables: <https://immigrantsinkorea.today>.

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# Foreign Residents in Daegu

SEPTEMBER 2026

## Summary

Daegu Metropolitan City had 36,710 registered foreigners on 31 December 2024, 2.5 percent of the 1,488,353 in South Korea, and 2,363,629 Korean residents, 4.6 percent of the national total of 51,217,221. It ranked 11th among the 17 provinces and metropolitan cities by the number of registered foreigners and 17th, the lowest, by registered foreigners per Korean resident (1.6 per 100, against 2.9 nationally). The Ministry of the Interior and Safety, whose count adds naturalized citizens and children of foreign residents, counted 61,554 foreign residents in Daegu in 2024.

## Highlights

- ▶ At the end of 2024, Daegu had 36,710 registered foreigners, the 11th-largest number among South Korea's 17 provinces and metropolitan cities, and the lowest ratio of registered foreigners to Korean residents of the 17 (1.6 per 100, against 2.9 nationally).
- ▶ Counting Gunwi County in both years, the number of registered foreigners in Daegu rose 19.5 percent between 2019 and 2024 (from 30,729 to 36,710), while the number of Korean residents fell 4.0 percent (from 2,461,874 to 2,363,629).
- ▶ Study and job-search statuses (D-2, D-4 and D-10) formed the largest status group among Daegu's registered foreigners in 2024 (28.7 percent, against 18.6 percent nationally), and Vietnamese nationals the largest nationality (29.7 percent, against 17.6 percent nationally).

The number of registered foreigners more than doubled between 2006 and 2024 while the number of Korean residents declined. Within Daegu's boundary before Gunwi County joined the city in July 2023, registered foreigners rose from 17,104 in 2006 to 36,128 in 2024 (up 111.2 percent) and Korean residents fell from 2,496,115 to 2,341,166 (down 6.2 percent). On the current boundary, Daegu gained 5,981 registered foreigners between 2019 and 2024 and lost 98,245 Korean

residents, so the foreign gain equaled 6.1 percent of the Korean loss. Residents aged 65 and older made up 22.1 percent of Daegu's registered population in December 2025, and the city has been a super-aged society, in which at least 20 percent of residents are 65 or older, since April 2024 (Daegu Policy Institute, 2025).

Vietnamese nationals made up 29.7 percent of Daegu's registered foreigners in 2024, against 17.6 percent nationally, and Chinese nationals, including Korean-Chinese, made up 15.0 percent, against 31.3 percent. Students, trainees and job seekers on D-2, D-4 and D-10 status formed the largest status group (28.7 percent, against 18.6 percent nationally), and rotation labor statuses covered a smaller share than nationally (21.8 against 31.1 percent). Daegu was also home to 6.7 percent of all registered Pakistanis in South Korea (1,064 of 15,950) and had more migrant-serving organizations per registered foreigner than the country as a whole (14.4 against 11.5 per 10,000).

### BOX 1

#### Definitions

**Daegu.** Daegu Metropolitan City (대구광역시), which had nine districts in 2024 (seven gu and two gun). Gunwi County (Gunwi-gun) moved from North Gyeongsang Province to Daegu on 1 July 2023. Province totals in this Spotlight follow each year's boundary, so they include Gunwi County from 2023 and exclude it in earlier years; district figures include Gunwi County in every year. Comparisons of 2019 and 2024 on the current boundary add Gunwi County's 2019 counts (538 registered foreigners and 23,843 Korean residents) to the 2019 province totals.

**Registered foreigners (등록외국인).** Foreign nationals in South Korea for more than 90 days who register with immigration authorities, counted by the Ministry of Justice on 31 December of each year. Overseas Koreans on F-4 status report their residence instead of registering and are not included.

**MOIS foreign residents (외국인주민).** The count of foreign residents in each local government published by the Ministry of the Interior and Safety (MOIS), taken on 1 November in recent years. It adds naturalized citizens and children of foreign residents to foreign nationals.

**Korean residents.** Korean nationals in the resident registration statistics of the Ministry of the Interior and Safety at the end of each year. The number of registered foreigners per 100 Korean residents is the registered count divided by the Korean count, times 100.

**Status groups.** Rotation labor covers E-9 (non-professional employment), E-8 (seasonal worker), H-2 (visiting employment), E-10 (crew employment) and D-3 (industrial trainee). The skilled group covers E-1 to E-7, study and job search covers D-2 (student), D-4 (general trainee) and D-10 (job seeker), settlement covers F-2 (residential), F-5 (permanent residence) and F-6 (marriage migration), and family covers F-1 (visiting cohabitation) and F-3 (dependent family). All other statuses form a sixth group.

**Population-decline areas (인구감소지역).** The 89 districts that the Ministry of the Interior and Safety designated as population-decline areas on 19 October 2021. The ministry designated 18 further districts as areas of interest (관심지역) at the same time.

**Shannon diversity index (H).** A measure of nationality diversity among registered foreigners that rises with the number of nationalities and the evenness of their shares. It is 0 when all registered foreigners have the same nationality.

**Ethnic enclave.** A district where one nationality makes up at least 30 percent of registered foreigners and has a location quotient of at least 2. The location quotient divides the nationality's share of the district's population by its share of South Korea's population.

## 1 Size of the Foreign-Resident Population

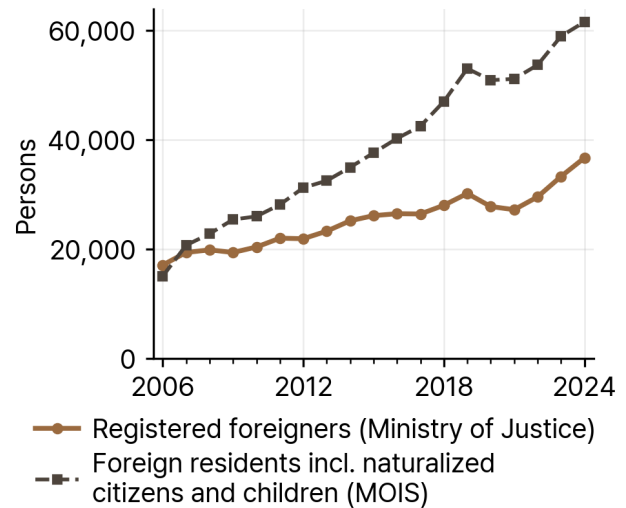
The number of registered foreigners in Daegu rose from 17,104 in 2006 to 25,203 in 2014 and 30,191 in 2019 (Figure 1). It fell to 27,798 in 2020 and 27,230 in 2021, then rose to 29,568 in 2022, 33,305 in 2023 and 36,710 in 2024, the highest count in the series. The 2023 and 2024 totals include Gunwi County, which had 582 registered foreigners in 2024.

The Ministry of the Interior and Safety count grew from 15,068 in 2006 to 34,976 in 2014, 53,023 in 2019 and 61,554 in 2024. It was lower than the registered count in 2006 and higher in every later year; in 2024 it was 1.7 times the registered count.

Registered foreigners per 100 Korean residents rose from 0.7 in 2006 to 1.0 in 2014, 1.2 in 2019 and 1.6 in 2024 (Table 1). In 2024 Daegu ranked 11th among the 17 provinces and metropolitan cities by the number of registered foreigners and 17th, the lowest, by registered foreigners per Korean resident; the national figure was 2.9 per 100.

FIGURE 1

**Registered Foreigners and MOIS Foreign Residents in Daegu, 2006-24**

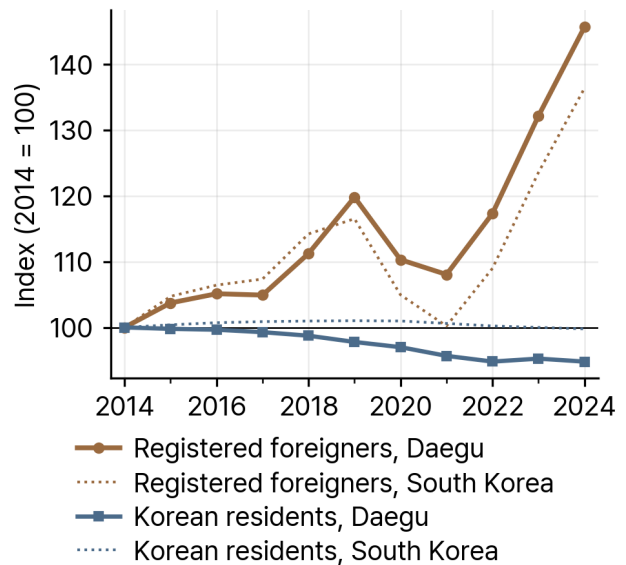


Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks and Ministry of the Interior and Safety statistics, 2006-2024.

With 2014 set to 100, the index for registered foreigners in Daegu stood at 145.7 in 2024 and the index for Korean residents at 94.8 (Figure 2). Both 2024 values include Gunwi County. Excluding the county, registered foreigners rose 43.3 percent between 2014 and 2024 (from 25,203 to 36,128) and Korean residents fell 6.1 percent (from 2,493,264 to 2,341,166).

FIGURE 2

**Registered Foreigners and Korean Residents in Daegu and South Korea, 2014-24 (Index, 2014 = 100)**



Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks and Ministry of the Interior and Safety resident registration statistics, 2014-2024.

Between 2019 and 2024, on the current boundary, the number of registered foreigners increased by 5,981 (19.5 percent, from 30,729 to 36,710) and the number of Korean residents decreased by 98,245 (4.0 percent, from 2,461,874 to

2,363,629). The 2019 figures add Gunwi County's 538 registered foreigners and 23,843 Korean residents to the province totals of 30,191 and 2,438,031.

TABLE 1

**Registered Foreigners, MOIS Foreign Residents and Korean Residents in Daegu, Selected Years, 2006-24**

| Year | Registered foreigners | MOIS foreign residents | Korean residents | Registered foreigners per 100 Korean residents |
|------|-----------------------|------------------------|------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| 2006 | 17,104                | 15,068                 | 2,496,115        | 0.7                                            |
| 2014 | 25,203                | 34,976                 | 2,493,264        | 1.0                                            |
| 2019 | 30,191                | 53,023                 | 2,438,031        | 1.2                                            |
| 2024 | 36,710                | 61,554                 | 2,363,629        | 1.6                                            |

Note: Province totals follow each year's boundary, so among the years shown only 2024 includes Gunwi County (582 registered foreigners and 22,463 Korean residents). Daegu's district figures for 2019, which include Gunwi County, sum to 30,729 registered foreigners and 2,461,874 Korean residents. In 2024, South Korea had 1,488,353 registered foreigners and 51,217,221 Korean residents, or 2.9 registered foreigners per 100 Korean residents.

Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks and Ministry of the Interior and Safety statistics, 2006-2024.

## 2 Nationalities

Vietnam was the largest nationality among Daegu's registered foreigners in 2024, with 10,909 people (29.7 percent), up from 8,285 in 2019 (Figure 3 and Table 2). China was second with 4,061 (11.1 percent), down from 4,768, followed by Indonesia (2,056), the United States (1,709) and the Philippines (1,689). The ten largest nationalities together numbered 27,250, or 74.2 percent of registered foreigners, and 131 nationalities were represented in all.

Compared with South Korea as a whole, Daegu had larger shares of Vietnamese (29.7 against 17.6 percent), Indonesians (5.6 against 3.9 percent) and Americans (4.7 against 2.3 percent), and smaller shares of Chinese (11.1 against 14.7 percent) and Korean-Chinese (4.0 against 16.6 percent). The two Chinese groups together made up 15.0 percent of Daegu's registered foreigners (5,513 of 36,710), against 31.3 percent nationally (14.7 plus 16.6).

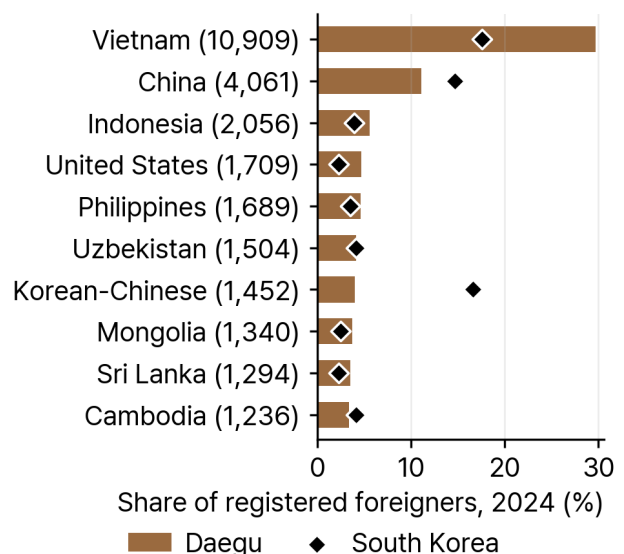
Among the ten largest nationalities, the number of Mongolians grew fastest between 2019 and 2024, from 347 to 1,340 (3.9 times), followed by Indonesians (up 47.8 percent) and Sri Lankans (up 41.4 percent). The number of Chinese nationals fell 14.8 percent and that of Korean-Chinese 24.8 percent.

Daegu was home to 2.5 percent of South Korea's registered foreigners in 2024 and to larger shares of several national groups, including 6.7 percent of Pakistanis (1,064 of 15,950), 5.1 percent of South Africans (236 of 4,641), 4.9 percent of nationals of Tajikistan (77 of 1,567) and of Americans (1,709 of 34,886), and 4.3 percent of French nationals (227 of 5,314).

The Shannon diversity index of Daegu's registered foreigners by nationality was 2.6 in both 2014 and 2024, the eighth-highest value among the 17 provinces in 2024.

Overseas Koreans with foreign nationality on F-4 status report their residence instead of registering and are not counted among registered foreigners. In 2024, 5,539 of them reported a residence in Daegu, 1.0 percent of the 553,664 nationwide. The largest groups were Korean-Chinese (2,404), US nationals (1,065), Korean-Russians (588), nationals of Uzbekistan (552) and Canadians (341).

FIGURE 3

**Shares of the Ten Largest Nationalities among Registered Foreigners, Daegu and South Korea, 2024**

Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks, 2024.

## 3 Residence Statuses

Study and job search was the largest status group among Daegu's registered foreigners in 2024, with 10,547 people, 28.7 percent of the total against 18.6 percent nationally (Figure 4). Settlement statuses covered 8,624 people (23.5 percent, against 27.6 percent nationally), rotation labor 8,001 (21.8

against 31.1 percent), family statuses 4,154 (11.3 against 10.0 percent), skilled statuses 2,216 (6.0 against 5.8 percent) and all other statuses 3,168 (8.6 against 7.1 percent).

E-9 non-professional employment was the most common single status (7,417 people, 20.2 percent), followed by D-2 student (5,494), F-6 marriage migration (5,204) and D-4

general trainee (4,132) (Table 3). Daegu had 5.2 percent of all D-4 holders in South Korea and 3.5 percent of F-6 holders, above its 2.5 percent share of all registered foreigners, and 2.3 percent of E-9 holders and 1.2 percent of F-5 permanent residents, below that share.

**TABLE 2**  
**Ten Largest Nationalities among Registered Foreigners in Daegu, 2019 and 2024**

| Nationality    | 2019  | 2024   | Share of Daegu's registered foreigners, 2024 (%) | Daegu's share of the nationality's registered foreigners in South Korea, 2024 (%) |
|----------------|-------|--------|--------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Vietnam        | 8,285 | 10,909 | 29.7                                             | 4.2                                                                               |
| China          | 4,768 | 4,061  | 11.1                                             | 1.9                                                                               |
| Indonesia      | 1,391 | 2,056  | 5.6                                              | 3.5                                                                               |
| United States  | 1,306 | 1,709  | 4.7                                              | 4.9                                                                               |
| Philippines    | 1,674 | 1,689  | 4.6                                              | 3.2                                                                               |
| Uzbekistan     | 1,634 | 1,504  | 4.1                                              | 2.4                                                                               |
| Korean-Chinese | 1,930 | 1,452  | 4.0                                              | 0.6                                                                               |
| Mongolia       | 347   | 1,340  | 3.7                                              | 3.6                                                                               |
| Sri Lanka      | 915   | 1,294  | 3.5                                              | 3.8                                                                               |
| Cambodia       | 946   | 1,236  | 3.4                                              | 2.0                                                                               |

Note: Korean-Chinese are Chinese nationals of Korean ethnicity, whom the Ministry of Justice counts separately from other Chinese nationals. The 2019 counts exclude Gunwi County, which had 538 registered foreigners in 2019. Daegu had 2.5 percent of all registered foreigners in South Korea in 2024.

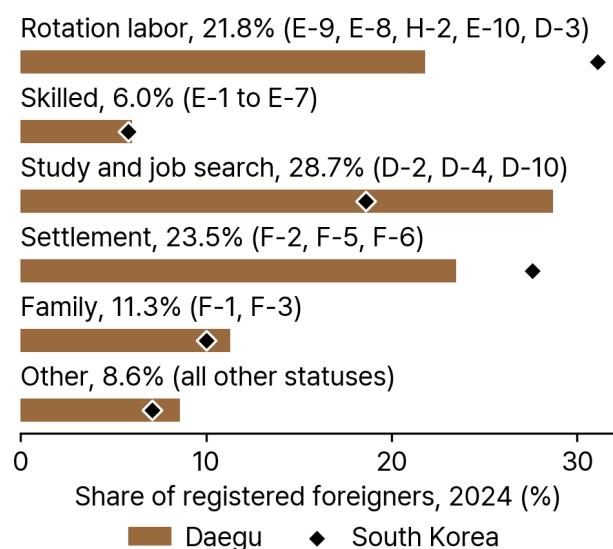
Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks, 2019 and 2024.

The Ministry of the Interior and Safety counted 61,554 foreign residents in Daegu on 1 November 2024. Of these, 45,295 were foreign nationals, comprising 9,897 foreign workers, 5,838 marriage migrants, 8,709 international students, 3,869 ethnic Koreans with foreign nationality and 16,982 other foreigners. The count also included 5,798 naturalized citizens (9.4 percent of the total) and 10,461 children of foreign residents (17.0 percent).

## 4 Districts and Population-Decline Areas

Daegu had nine districts in 2024, seven gu and two gun. Dalseo-gu had the most registered foreigners (12,761, or 34.8 percent of the city's total), followed by Dalseong-gun (7,399) and Buk-gu (6,498); together they had 26,658 registered foreigners, 72.6 percent of the total (Figure 5 and Table 4).

**FIGURE 4**  
**Registered Foreigners by Status Group, Daegu and South Korea, 2024**



Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks, 2024.

Relative to the Korean population, registered foreigners were most numerous in Dalseong-gun (2.9 per 100 Korean residents), Gunwi-gun (2.6) and Dalseo-gu (2.4) and least

numerous in Suseong-gu (0.4) and Dong-gu (0.6).

TABLE 3

**Ten Most Common Residence Statuses among Registered Foreigners in Daegu, 2024**

| Status | Meaning                         | Status group         | Registered foreigners | Share of Daegu's registered foreigners (%) | Daegu's share of all holders in South Korea (%) |
|--------|---------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| E-9    | Non-professional employment     | Rotation labor       | 7,417                 | 20.2                                       | 2.3                                             |
| D-2    | Student                         | Study and job search | 5,494                 | 15.0                                       | 3.1                                             |
| F-6    | Marriage migration              | Settlement           | 5,204                 | 14.2                                       | 3.5                                             |
| D-4    | General trainee                 | Study and job search | 4,132                 | 11.3                                       | 5.2                                             |
| F-1    | Visiting cohabitation           | Family               | 2,893                 | 7.9                                        | 3.0                                             |
| F-5    | Permanent residence             | Settlement           | 2,401                 | 6.5                                        | 1.2                                             |
| ETC    | Unclassified (SOFA / treaty)    | Other                | 1,491                 | 4.1                                        | 4.7                                             |
| G-1    | Other (miscellaneous)           | Other                | 1,385                 | 3.8                                        | 2.5                                             |
| F-3    | Dependent family                | Family               | 1,261                 | 3.4                                        | 2.5                                             |
| E-7    | Specially designated activities | Skilled              | 1,177                 | 3.2                                        | 1.9                                             |

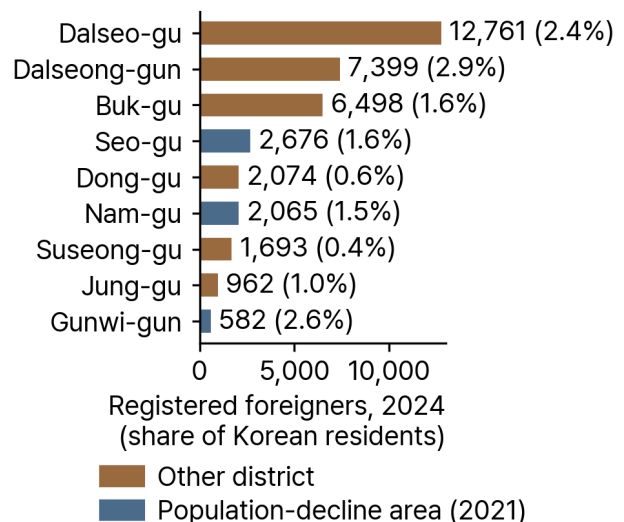
Note: Status groups follow the Definitions box. Daegu had 2.5 percent of all registered foreigners in South Korea in 2024.

Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks, 2024.

Between 2019 and 2024, the number of registered foreigners rose in eight of the nine districts, most in Dalseo-gu (by 2,296), Dalseong-gun (1,359) and Buk-gu (1,265), and fell by 27 in Suseong-gu. The number of Korean residents fell in seven districts, most in Dalseo-gu (by 46,866) and Buk-gu (by 24,700), and rose in Jung-gu (by 20,290) and Dalseong-gun (by 1,040).

Seo-gu, Nam-gu and Gunwi-gun are population-decline areas. The Ministry of the Interior and Safety designated Seo-gu and Nam-gu on 19 October 2021, and Gunwi-gun on the same date, when the county was part of North Gyeongsang Province. None of Daegu's districts is an area of interest. Between 2019 and 2024, Seo-gu lost 12,142 Korean residents and gained 195 registered foreigners, Nam-gu lost 11,850 and gained 518, and Gunwi-gun lost 1,380 and gained 44. Together the decline areas lost 25,372 Korean residents and gained 757 registered foreigners, a foreign gain equal to 3.0 percent of the Korean loss; for Daegu as a whole on the current boundary, the figure was 6.1 percent (5,981 against 98,245).

FIGURE 5

**Registered Foreigners and Population-Decline Areas by District in Daegu, 2024**

Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks and Ministry of the Interior and Safety statistics, 2024; population-decline areas as designated in 2021.

No district in Daegu met the ethnic enclave definition in 2024.

## 5 Population Trends

The number of Korean residents in Daegu was 2,496,115 in 2006, peaked at 2,511,676 in 2010 and fell in every later year except 2023, the year Gunwi County (22,463 Korean residents in 2024) was added to the city. On each year's boundary, the count fell 5.3 percent between 2006 and 2024 (by 132,486, to 2,363,629). Excluding Gunwi County, the 2024 count was

2,341,166, 6.2 percent below the 2006 level. On the current boundary, Daegu lost 98,245 Korean residents (4.0 percent) between 2019 and 2024.

Daegu's registered population fell to 2,353,032 in December 2025, 10,597 (0.4 percent) fewer than a year earlier, while the number of households rose by 8,378 (0.8 percent) to 1,112,508, and one- and two-person households made up 67.0 percent of all households (Daegu Policy Institute, 2025).

**TABLE 4**  
**Registered Foreigners and Korean Residents by District in Daegu, 2019-24**

| District     | Registered foreigners, 2024 | Registered foreigners per 100 Korean residents, 2024 | Change in Korean residents since 2019 | Change in registered foreigners since 2019 | Population-decline area |
|--------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Dalseo-gu    | 12,761                      | 2.4                                                  | -46,866                               | +2,296                                     | No                      |
| Dalseong-gun | 7,399                       | 2.9                                                  | +1,040                                | +1,359                                     | No                      |
| Buk-gu       | 6,498                       | 1.6                                                  | -24,700                               | +1,265                                     | No                      |
| Seo-gu       | 2,676                       | 1.6                                                  | -12,142                               | +195                                       | Yes                     |
| Dong-gu      | 2,074                       | 0.6                                                  | -3,130                                | +167                                       | No                      |
| Nam-gu       | 2,065                       | 1.5                                                  | -11,850                               | +518                                       | Yes                     |
| Suseong-gu   | 1,693                       | 0.4                                                  | -19,507                               | -27                                        | No                      |
| Jung-gu      | 962                         | 1.0                                                  | +20,290                               | +164                                       | No                      |
| Gunwi-gun    | 582                         | 2.6                                                  | -1,380                                | +44                                        | Yes                     |

Note: District figures include Gunwi County in both years. Population-decline areas are those the Ministry of the Interior and Safety designated on 19 October 2021; no district in Daegu is an area of interest.

Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks and Ministry of the Interior and Safety statistics, 2019-2024.

Residents aged 65 and older numbered 519,405 in December 2025, 22.1 percent of the population and 26,149 (5.3 percent) more than a year earlier, and Daegu has been a super-aged society, with at least 20 percent of its population aged 65 or older, since April 2024 (Daegu Policy Institute, 2025). According to Statistics Korea's birth and death statistics, the total fertility rate in Daegu rose from 0.70 in 2023 to 0.75 in 2024, when 10,100 babies were born in the city (Maeil Shinmun, 2025).

Daegu lost 4,712 residents through net internal migration in 2024 (a net loss of 0.2 percent). Among residents in their 20s, the net outflow was 6,300, or 2.3 percent, the highest rate for that age group among South Korea's eight special and metropolitan cities (Yeongnam Ilbo, 2025).

Statistics Korea's regional population projections for 2022-2052, released on 28 May 2024, place Daegu among four regions, with Busan, South Gyeongsang and Ulsan, projected to lose more than 20 percent of their population by 2052, and among seven regions projected to lose more than half of their school-age population (ages 6 to 21) (Statistics Korea, 2024).

Statistics Korea's 2025 Social Indicators of Korea report projects Daegu's population to fall from 2.335 million in 2025 to 1.796 million in 2052, a decline of 539,000 (TBC, 2026).

## 6 Industry and Foreign Workers

The number of registered foreigners on E-9 non-professional employment status in Daegu was 8,237 in 2014, 6,675 in 2019 and 4,910 in 2021, and it rose to 7,417 in 2024, still below the 2014 level (counts before 2023 exclude Gunwi County). E-9 holders made up 20.2 percent of Daegu's registered foreigners in 2024 and 2.3 percent of all E-9 holders in South Korea, and the rotation labor group as a whole covered 21.8 percent of registered foreigners, against 31.1 percent nationally. The Ministry of the Interior and Safety counted 9,897 foreign workers in Daegu on 1 November 2024.

The Ministry of Justice counted 30 seasonal workers on E-8 status in Daegu on 31 December 2023 and 46 on 31 December 2024. A count taken on 31 December misses most seasonal workers, because their contracts end before winter.

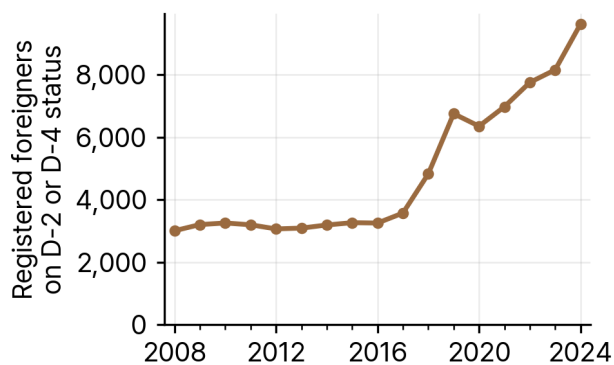
A survey conducted for Daegu Metropolitan City by Research Korea from October to December 2025 covered 205 companies, 224 foreign workers and 303 foreign students, and 98.2 percent of the foreign workers surveyed worked in manufacturing (Asia Economy, 2026a). Of the same workers, 93.2 percent had production jobs, 90.2 percent were on E-9 status, and 67.4 percent had worked in Korea for less than three years (Newspim, 2026).

In the same survey, 81.7 percent of the foreign workers said they would continue living in Daegu if they could obtain a visa allowing long-term residence, and 57.5 percent of the companies rated their foreign workers' productivity higher than that of Korean workers (Asia Economy, 2026a).

## 7 International Students and Universities

The number of registered foreigners on D-2 student or D-4 general trainee status in Daegu ranged from 3,004 to 3,570 a year between 2008 and 2017, then rose to 4,825 in 2018 and 6,753 in 2019 (Figure 6). After a fall to 6,352 in 2020, it increased each year to 9,626 in 2024 (5,494 on D-2 and 4,132 on D-4), 3.7 percent of all D-2 and D-4 holders in South Korea. Counts before 2023 exclude Gunwi County.

**FIGURE 6**  
**Registered Foreigners on Student (D-2) and General Trainee (D-4) Status in Daegu, 2008-24**



Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks, 2008-2024.

Korea Educational Development Institute (KEDI) statistics counted 5,991 international students at the 11 higher education institutions located in Daegu on 1 April 2024. Keimyung University had the most, 2,654, followed by Kyungpook National University with 1,972 (KEDI, 2024). Daegu Metropolitan City cited a total of 5,951 international students for 2024 when it set a target of 10,000 by 2028 (Kyunghyang Shinmun, 2025).

Keimyung University had about 4,100 international students in spring 2026, counting Korean-language trainees and undergraduate, graduate and exchange students, and 1,414 new students from 33 countries began its regular Korean-language program that spring (Asia Economy, 2026b).

The KEDI count covers students enrolled at institutions in Daegu on 1 April; the KIRD count covers registered foreigners on D-2 or D-4 status living in Daegu on 31 December.

## 8 Provincial Policy

Daegu's ordinance on support for foreign residents and multicultural families (대구광역시 외국인주민 및 다문화가족 지원 조례, Daegu Metropolitan City Ordinance No. 4480) was enacted and took effect on 10 April 2013 (National Law Information Center, 2013).

On 7 March 2024 the city reopened the Daegu Foreign Worker Support Center in Dasa-eup, Dalseong-gun, after it was selected for a Ministry of Employment and Labor program supporting the regional settlement of foreign workers. The program provides up to 200 million won a year in national funds for three years, and the center's budget for 2024 was 400 million won. The center offers grievance counseling, administrative and interpretation support, education in Korean, digital skills and law, and cultural programs (Daegu Metropolitan City, 2024).

Daegu's basic plan for attracting and developing international students sets a target of 10,000 international students by 2028, up from 5,951 in 2024, and provided for an integrated support center for international students (외국인 유학생 원스톱지원센터) and a hub Korean-language center to open in the second half of 2025 (Kyunghyang Shinmun, 2025).

The Ministry of Justice selected Daegu for its pilot of the metropolitan-type visa (광역형 비자), which lasts from April 2025 to the end of December 2026, about 21 months, and provides for about 100 visas. The pilot applies to E-7-1 professional visas for data specialists in ABB fields, robotics engineers, semiconductor electronics engineers, future-mobility mechanical engineers and healthcare life-science specialists. It extends eligibility to junior-college graduates and reduces the required work experience from five years to three (Metro Seoul, 2025).

Two of Daegu's population-decline areas participate in the regional specialized visa (지역특화형 비자) program for 2025 and 2026. Nam-gu has 100 places for the regional specialized talent visa (F-2-R), and the regional specialized skilled worker visa (E-7-4R) has up to 95 places under a quota for all of Daegu; applications for recommendation letters were accepted until 18 September 2026 (Daily DG News, 2025). Seo-gu was allocated 25 F-2-R places for 2025 and 25 for 2026, with no limit on the regional specialized overseas Korean visa (F-4-R), and accepted applications for recommendation letters from 31 March 2025 to 18 September 2026 (Seo-gu District Office, 2025).

## 9 Languages

The KIRD dataset estimates the first languages of registered foreigners by allocating each nationality's count across languages according to the first-language shares Ethnologue

reports for that country. By this estimate, Vietnamese was the most common first language among Daegu's registered foreigners in 2024 (9,331 speakers), followed by Chinese (4,600), English (1,727), Tagalog or Filipino (1,481) and Indonesian (1,446) (Table 5). Eight languages had 1,000 or more estimated speakers in 2024, adding Khmer (1,342), Mongolian (1,166) and Uzbek (1,122) to those five.

## 10 Service Organizations and Community Places

The KIRD census of 1,717 migrant-serving organizations in South Korea lists 53 in Daegu, 14.4 per 10,000 registered foreigners in 2024, against 11.5 per 10,000 nationally. Of the 53, 51 provide services directly to migrants, and 9 have 가족센터 (family center) in their names (Table 6). By the populations they list, 20 serve migrant workers, 15 families, 10 refugees, 6 children and 3 women, and 12 serve all foreign residents; one organization each lists undocumented migrants, international students and youth.

The census includes the Daegu Foreign Worker Support Center in Dalseong-gun and the city's integrated support center for international students in Dalseo-gu, both described under Provincial Policy, as well as the Daegu Overseas Chinese Association in Jung-gu and Pakistani Community Korea in Dalseo-gu.

Chinese laborers, Daegu's earliest foreign workers, began arriving around 1905, when the Gyeongbu railway line between Seoul and Busan opened, and in the following decades foreign residents were concentrated around Jongno street, then the city's downtown commercial center (Park, 2023).

The same encyclopedia entry describes Dalseo-gu as home to more than half of Daegu's registered foreigners, with migrant workers making up 60 percent of the district's foreign residents, and reports that as of 2007 the Ministry of Justice designated the Seongseo industrial estate (성서공단) in Dalseo-gu as one of six special management zones among the 52 areas of dense foreign population it monitored; the entry does not say whether the designation is still in effect (Park, 2023). In the KIRD data for 2024, Dalseo-gu had 34.8 percent of Daegu's registered foreigners (12,761 of 36,710).

**TABLE 5**  
**Estimated First-Language Speakers among Registered Foreigners in Daegu, Ten Most Common Languages, 2024**

| Language         | Estimated speakers, 2024 |
|------------------|--------------------------|
| Vietnamese       | 9,331                    |
| Chinese          | 4,600                    |
| English          | 1,727                    |
| Tagalog/Filipino | 1,481                    |
| Indonesian       | 1,446                    |
| Khmer            | 1,342                    |
| Mongolian        | 1,166                    |
| Uzbek            | 1,122                    |
| Sinhala          | 892                      |
| Russian          | 823                      |

Note: Estimates allocate each nationality's registered foreigners across languages by the first-language shares Ethnologue reports for the country of nationality. Korean is not counted.

Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks and Ethnologue first-language shares, 2024.

Waryong Market (와룡시장) in Sindang-dong, Dalseo-gu, near Keimyung University, sells Asian foods such as sugarcane juice and durian, and the Asian grocery stores and Vietnamese restaurants in Dalseo-gu act as hubs of the district's migrant community networks (Park, 2023).

The mosque in Daehyeon-dong, Buk-gu (다름이만경복앤드이슬람센터), dates from 2012, when Muslim international students at Kyungpook National University rented space near the

university's west gate for prayer. In 2014 the students pooled their money to buy a nearby house, and the center was approved as a nonprofit corporation in December of that year. A 2022 study reported the mosque's estimate of about 150 Muslim students at Kyungpook National University (Yuk and Lee, 2022).

**TABLE 6**  
**Migrant-Serving Organizations in Daegu by Type, KIRD Census**

| Type                                                      | Organizations |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|---------------|
| Social integration and early adaptation program providers | 15            |
| Medical support institutions                              | 6             |
| Family centers                                            | 5             |
| Migrant worker support centers                            | 5             |
| Civic and faith-based support organizations               | 5             |
| Migrant community organizations                           | 5             |
| Foreign resident support centers                          | 3             |
| Legal and human rights support                            | 2             |
| Migrant media outlets                                     | 2             |
| Shelters                                                  | 2             |
| Migrant-background youth and multicultural education      | 1             |
| International student support center                      | 1             |
| Immigration office                                        | 1             |
| Total                                                     | 53            |

Note: Each organization is classified under one type. Nine organizations have 가족센터 (family center) in their names, including organizations classified under other types. The national rate of 11.5 per 10,000 registered foreigners (2024) counts all 1,717 organizations in the census, including 7 with no provincial location.

Source: KIRD census of migrant-serving organizations; registered foreigners from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks, 2024.

By 2025 construction of the mosque had been delayed for five years. In concluding observations published on 7 May 2025 after reviewing South Korea's periodic report, the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

recommended that South Korea take appropriate measures to resolve the delay and described opposition tactics, such as pig heads and banners placed at the construction site, as racist hate crimes and hate speech (Peace News, 2025).

**About these profiles.** The KIRD province profiles describe the foreign-resident population of each of South Korea's seventeen provinces and metropolitan cities. Figures come from the Korea Immigration Regional Dashboard (KIRD) dataset, built from the Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks and the Ministry of the Interior and Safety foreign-resident statistics for 2006 to 2024 (<https://doi.org/10.3886/E249944V1>); context comes from the sources listed. Interactive maps and tables: <https://immigrantsinkorea.today>.

Suggested citation: Korea Immigration Regional Dashboard (KIRD). 2026. "Foreign Residents in Daegu." Foreign Residents in South Korea series, September 2026. Data: Korea Immigration Regional Dashboard (KIRD) dataset, <https://doi.org/10.3886/E249944V1>. Interactive maps and tables: <https://immigrantsinkorea.today>.

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# Foreign Residents in Jeju

SEPTEMBER 2026

## Summary

Jeju Special Self-Governing Province had 27,990 registered foreigners on 31 December 2024, 1.9 percent of the 1,488,353 registered foreigners in South Korea. Among the 17 provinces and metropolitan cities, it ranked 12th by the number of registered foreigners and second by registered foreigners per Korean resident, with 4.2 per 100 Korean residents against 2.9 nationally. The Ministry of the Interior and Safety (MOIS), whose count adds naturalized citizens and the children of foreign residents, recorded 38,714 foreign residents in the province on 1 November 2024.

## Highlights

- ▶ Jeju had 27,990 registered foreigners at the end of 2024, 97.1 percent more than in 2014, and its ratio of 4.2 registered foreigners per 100 Korean residents was the second-highest among the 17 provinces and metropolitan cities, against 2.9 nationally.
- ▶ Chinese nationals made up 34.9 percent of Jeju's registered foreigners in 2024 (9,764 people), against 14.7 percent nationally, and the province had the lowest Shannon diversity index of nationalities among the 17 provinces and metropolitan cities.
- ▶ Skilled statuses (E-1 to E-7) covered 16.4 percent of Jeju's registered foreigners in 2024, against 5.8 percent nationally, and the province was home to 15.1 percent of all holders of E-10 crew employment status in South Korea (3,245 people).

The number of registered foreigners rose from 3,199 in 2006 to 14,204 in 2014 and 25,668 in 2019, fell to 20,717 in 2021, and rose again to 27,990 in 2024, the highest count in the series. The number of Korean residents grew every year from 558,496 in 2006 to 678,159 in 2022 and then fell to 670,368 in 2024. Between 2014 and 2024 registered foreigners increased 97.1 percent (13,786 people) and Korean residents 10.4 percent (63,022 people). Between 2019 and 2024 the province gained

2,322 registered foreigners (9.0 percent, which ranked 15th among the 17 provinces and metropolitan cities) and lost 621 Korean residents (0.1 percent).

By the Shannon diversity index, registered foreigners in Jeju were less varied by nationality in 2024 than in any other province or metropolitan city. Chinese nationals made up 34.9 percent of them, against 14.7 percent nationally, and the province was home to 6.5 percent of all Indonesian nationals registered in South Korea, against its 1.9 percent share of all registered foreigners. Skilled statuses (E-1 to E-7) covered 16.4 percent of the province's registered foreigners, against 5.8 percent nationally, and study and job-search statuses 6.6 percent, against 18.6 percent. Jeju was home to 15.1 percent of all holders of E-10 crew employment status in South Korea. The province has two district-level cities, Jeju-si and Seogwipo-si, and neither is a population-decline area.

### BOX 1

#### Definitions

**Registered foreigners (등록외국인).** Foreign nationals in South Korea for more than 90 days who register with immigration authorities, as counted by the Ministry of Justice on 31 December of each year. Overseas Koreans on F-4 status report their residence instead of registering and are not included.

**MOIS foreign residents (외국인주민).** The Ministry of the Interior and Safety count of foreign residents on 1 November of each year. It adds naturalized Korean citizens and the children of foreign residents to foreign nationals, so it covers a wider population than the count of registered foreigners.

**Korean residents.** Korean nationals in the MOIS resident registration. Registered foreigners per 100 Korean residents is the number of registered foreigners divided by the number of Korean residents in the same area, multiplied by 100.

**Residence status groups.** This Spotlight groups registered foreigners by residence status (visa type): rotation labor (E-9 non-professional employment, E-8 seasonal work, H-2 visiting employment, E-10 crew employment and D-3 industrial training); skilled (E-1 to E-7); study and job search (D-2 student, D-4 general trainee and D-10 job seeker); settlement (F-2 residential, F-5 permanent residence and F-6 marriage migration); family (F-1 visiting cohabitation and F-3 dependent family); and other (all other statuses).

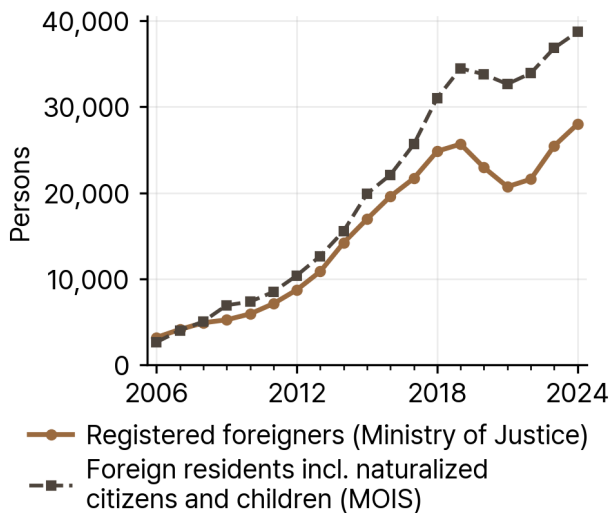
**Population-decline areas (인구감소지역).** The 89 cities, counties and districts that the Ministry of the Interior and Safety designated as population-decline areas on 19 October 2021, together with 18 areas of interest (관심지역) designated at the same time. Jeju-si and Seogwipo-si, the two cities of Jeju, received neither designation.

**Ethnic enclave.** In this Spotlight, a city, county or district where the location quotient of a nationality is at least 2 and the nationality makes up at least 30 percent of the area's registered foreigners. The location quotient divides the nationality's number per Korean resident in the area by its number per Korean resident in South Korea as a whole.

**Shannon diversity index.** A measure of the variety of nationalities among registered foreigners. It is higher when there are more nationalities and when their shares are more even.

## 1 Size of the Foreign-Resident Population

**FIGURE 1**  
**Registered Foreigners and Foreign Residents in Jeju, 2006-24**



Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks and Ministry of the Interior and Safety statistics, 2006-2024.

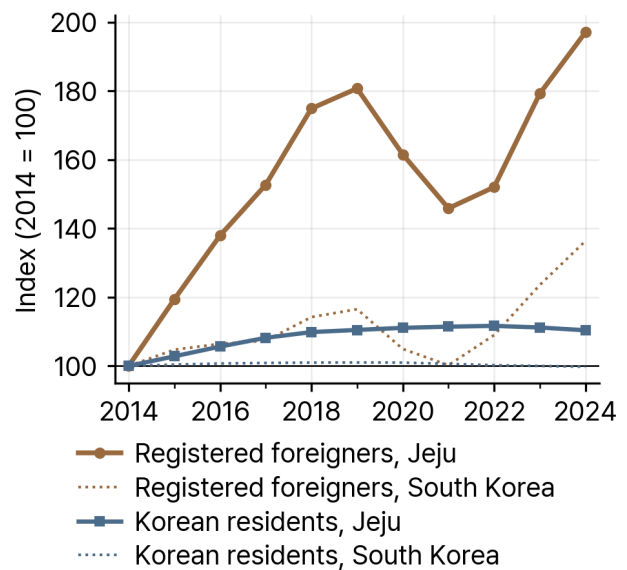
The number of registered foreigners in Jeju rose from 3,199 in 2006 to 14,204 in 2014, about 4.4 times as many, and to 25,668 in 2019 (see Figure 1). It fell 10.6 percent to 22,943 in

2020 (2,725 fewer people) and to 20,717 in 2021, 19.3 percent below the 2019 level. The count then rose to 21,592 in 2022, 25,456 in 2023 and 27,990 in 2024, 35.1 percent above the 2021 level. In 2024 it was 775.0 percent above the 2006 level (24,791 more people).

The MOIS count of foreign residents rose from 5,052 in 2008 to 15,568 in 2014 and 34,473 in 2019. It fell to 32,643 in 2021, 5.3 percent below the 2019 level (registered foreigners fell 19.3 percent over the same years), and rose to 38,714 in 2024, 1.4 times the number of registered foreigners. Of the 38,714 people in 2024, 30,511 were foreign nationals, 2,824 were naturalized Korean citizens and 5,379 were children of foreign residents (see Residence Statuses).

Between 2014 and 2024 the number of registered foreigners in Jeju grew 97.1 percent (13,786 people) and the number of Korean residents 10.4 percent (63,022 people), both faster than in South Korea as a whole (see Figure 2). Registered foreigners per 100 Korean residents rose from 0.6 in 2006 and 2.3 in 2014 to 3.8 in 2019 and 4.2 in 2024 (see Table 1).

**FIGURE 2**  
**Growth of Registered Foreigners and Korean Residents in Jeju and South Korea, 2014-24 (index, 2014 = 100)**



Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks and Ministry of the Interior and Safety resident registration statistics, 2014-2024.

In 2024 Jeju ranked 12th among the 17 provinces and metropolitan cities by the number of registered foreigners and second by registered foreigners per Korean resident (4.2 per 100 Korean residents, against 2.9 nationally). Its growth of 9.0 percent between 2019 and 2024, from 25,668 to 27,990, ranked 15th among the 17.

TABLE 1

**Registered Foreigners, Foreign Residents and Korean Residents in Jeju, Selected Years, 2006-24**

| Year | Registered foreigners | MOIS foreign residents | Korean residents | Registered foreigners per 100 Korean residents |
|------|-----------------------|------------------------|------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| 2006 | 3,199                 | –                      | 558,496          | 0.6                                            |
| 2014 | 14,204                | 15,568                 | 607,346          | 2.3                                            |
| 2019 | 25,668                | 34,473                 | 670,989          | 3.8                                            |
| 2024 | 27,990                | 38,714                 | 670,368          | 4.2                                            |

Note: Registered foreigners are counted on 31 December and MOIS foreign residents on 1 November. The table shows MOIS counts from 2008, when the province had 5,052 MOIS foreign residents.

Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks and Ministry of the Interior and Safety statistics, 2006-2024.

## 2 Nationalities

The KIRD data record 109 nationalities among registered foreigners in Jeju in 2024. Chinese nationals were the largest group (9,764, or 34.9 percent), followed by Vietnamese nationals (4,619, or 16.5 percent) and Indonesian nationals (3,803, or 13.6 percent); together these groups made up 65.0

percent of registered foreigners (18,186 of 27,990) (see Figure 3 and Table 2). The ten largest nationalities accounted for 87.0 percent (24,342 of 27,990).

Chinese and Indonesian nationals made up larger shares of registered foreigners in Jeju in 2024 than in South Korea as a whole (34.9 and 13.6 percent, against 14.7 and 3.9 percent). Korean-Chinese made up 5.0 percent, against 16.6 percent nationally, and Cambodian nationals 2.0 percent, against 4.1 percent.

TABLE 2

**Ten Largest Nationalities among Registered Foreigners in Jeju, 2019 and 2024**

| Nationality    | 2019   | 2024  | Share of the province's registered foreigners, 2024 (%) | Share of all registered foreigners of this nationality in South Korea, 2024 (%) |
|----------------|--------|-------|---------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| China          | 10,844 | 9,764 | 34.9                                                    | 4.5                                                                             |
| Vietnam        | 3,680  | 4,619 | 16.5                                                    | 1.8                                                                             |
| Indonesia      | 1,843  | 3,803 | 13.6                                                    | 6.5                                                                             |
| Nepal          | 1,335  | 1,541 | 5.5                                                     | 2.1                                                                             |
| Korean-Chinese | 1,656  | 1,397 | 5.0                                                     | 0.6                                                                             |
| Sri Lanka      | 882    | 868   | 3.1                                                     | 2.6                                                                             |
| Philippines    | 644    | 732   | 2.6                                                     | 1.4                                                                             |
| United States  | 679    | 708   | 2.5                                                     | 2.0                                                                             |
| Cambodia       | 509    | 551   | 2.0                                                     | 0.9                                                                             |
| India          | 161    | 359   | 1.3                                                     | 2.4                                                                             |

Note: Korean-Chinese are Chinese nationals of Korean descent and are reported separately from other Chinese nationals. Jeju was home to 1.9 percent of all registered foreigners in South Korea in 2024.

Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks, 2019 and 2024.

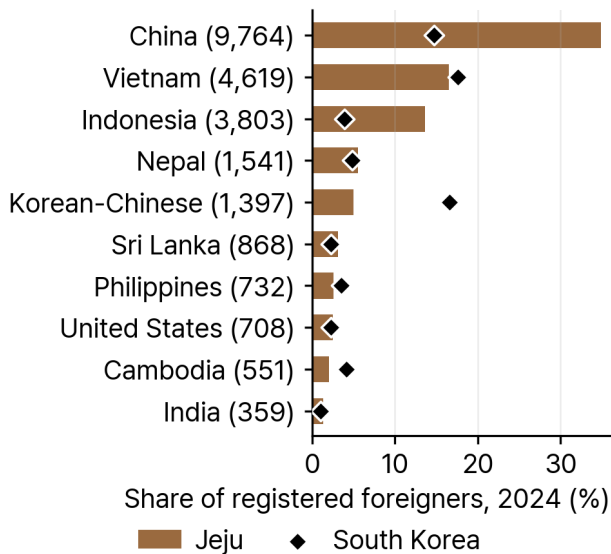
Between 2019 and 2024 the number of Indonesian nationals in the province more than doubled, from 1,843 to 3,803, and the number of Indian nationals rose from 161 to 359. Vietnamese nationals increased from 3,680 to 4,619 (25.5 percent). Among the ten largest nationalities, three declined: Chinese nationals

from 10,844 to 9,764 (10.0 percent), Korean-Chinese from 1,656 to 1,397 (15.6 percent) and Sri Lankan nationals from 882 to 868.

Jeju was home to 1.9 percent of all registered foreigners in South Korea in 2024 and to larger shares of several national groups: 6.5 percent of Indonesian nationals (3,803 of 58,248),

5.5 percent of British nationals (287 of 5,228), 4.9 percent of registered foreigners from Hong Kong (110 of 2,224), 4.5 percent of Chinese nationals (9,764 of 218,893) and 4.0 percent of Canadian nationals (178 of 4,452).

**FIGURE 3**  
**Shares of the Ten Largest Nationalities among Registered Foreigners in Jeju and South Korea, 2024**



Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks, 2024.

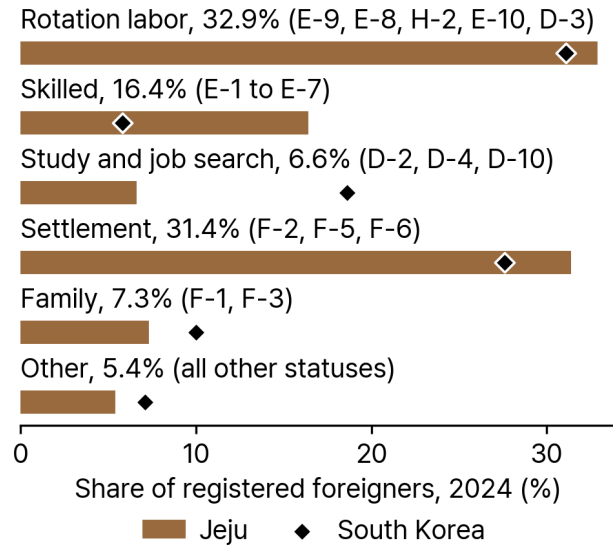
The Shannon diversity index of registered foreigners' nationalities in Jeju was 2.1 in both 2014 and 2024. In 2024 it was the lowest among the 17 provinces and metropolitan cities.

Overseas Koreans on F-4 status report their residence instead of registering and are not counted among registered foreigners. In 2024, 3,511 of them reported a residence in Jeju, 0.6 percent of the 553,664 nationwide. The largest groups were Korean-Chinese (2,443), nationals of the United States (592), Canada (193) and Australia (92), and Korean-Russians (48).

### 3 Residence Statuses

Rotation labor statuses covered 32.9 percent of registered foreigners in Jeju in 2024 (9,203 people), against 31.1 percent nationally, and settlement statuses 31.4 percent (8,799), against 27.6 percent (see Figure 4). Skilled statuses covered 16.4 percent (4,589), about 2.8 times the national share of 5.8 percent. Study and job-search statuses covered 6.6 percent (1,860), against 18.6 percent nationally; family statuses 7.3 percent (2,041), against 10.0 percent; and all other statuses 5.4 percent (1,498), against 7.1 percent.

**FIGURE 4**  
**Residence Status Groups of Registered Foreigners in Jeju and South Korea, 2024**



Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks, 2024.

E-9 non-professional employment was the most common status in 2024, with 4,766 holders (17.0 percent of registered foreigners), followed by E-7 specially designated activities (4,119, or 14.7 percent), F-5 permanent residence (3,639, or 13.0 percent) and E-10 crew employment (3,245, or 11.6 percent) (see Table 3). The province's 3,245 E-10 holders were 15.1 percent of all E-10 holders in South Korea, and its 4,119 E-7 holders 6.5 percent of all E-7 holders, against its 1.9 percent share of all registered foreigners. The province's share of all holders was also above 1.9 percent for F-2 residential status (4.1 percent) and E-8 seasonal work (4.0 percent), and below it for E-9 (1.5 percent) and D-2 student status (0.6 percent).

In 2024, within the rotation labor group, 4,766 people held E-9 status, 3,245 E-10 status and 793 E-8 status, and the remaining 399 held H-2 or D-3 status. The settlement group consisted of 3,639 F-5 holders, 2,641 F-6 holders and 2,519 F-2 holders. E-7 holders accounted for 4,119 of the 4,589 people in the skilled group.

The MOIS count for 1 November 2024 uses different categories. Of the 38,714 foreign residents it recorded in Jeju, 30,511 (78.8 percent) were foreign nationals: 12,361 foreign workers, 3,201 marriage migrants, 1,524 international students, 2,240 ethnic Koreans of foreign nationality and 11,185 other foreign nationals. The remaining 8,203 (21.2 percent) were 2,824 naturalized Korean citizens and 5,379 children of foreign residents.

TABLE 3

**Ten Most Common Residence Statuses among Registered Foreigners in Jeju, 2024**

| Status | Meaning                         | Registered foreigners | Share of the province's registered foreigners (%) | Share of all holders of this status in South Korea (%) |
|--------|---------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| E-9    | Non-professional employment     | 4,766                 | 17.0                                              | 1.5                                                    |
| E-7    | Specially designated activities | 4,119                 | 14.7                                              | 6.5                                                    |
| F-5    | Permanent residence             | 3,639                 | 13.0                                              | 1.8                                                    |
| E-10   | Crew employment                 | 3,245                 | 11.6                                              | 15.1                                                   |
| F-6    | Marriage migration              | 2,641                 | 9.4                                               | 1.8                                                    |
| F-2    | Residential                     | 2,519                 | 9.0                                               | 4.1                                                    |
| F-1    | Visiting cohabitation           | 1,340                 | 4.8                                               | 1.4                                                    |
| G-1    | Other (miscellaneous)           | 1,158                 | 4.1                                               | 2.1                                                    |
| D-2    | Student                         | 1,048                 | 3.7                                               | 0.6                                                    |
| E-8    | Seasonal worker                 | 793                   | 2.8                                               | 4.0                                                    |

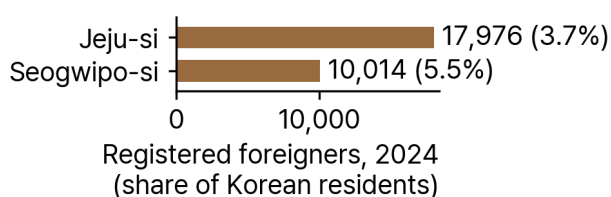
Note: Shares of the province's registered foreigners use the 2024 total of 27,990. E-8 holders are counted on 31 December, after most seasonal contracts have ended (see Industry and Foreign Workers).

Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks, 2024.

## 4 Districts and Population-Decline Areas

Jeju has two district-level units, the cities (si) of Jeju-si and Seogwipo-si. In 2024 Jeju-si had 17,976 registered foreigners, 64.2 percent of the province's total, and 3.7 registered foreigners per 100 Korean residents. Seogwipo-si had 10,014 registered foreigners (35.8 percent of the total) and 5.5 per 100 Korean residents, and it was home to 27.2 percent of the province's Korean residents (182,020 of 670,368) (see Figure 5 and Table 4).

FIGURE 5

**Registered Foreigners in Jeju-si and Seogwipo-si, 2024  
(number and share of Korean residents)**


Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks and Ministry of the Interior and Safety resident registration statistics, 2024.

Between 2019 and 2024 the number of registered foreigners rose by 1,431 in Jeju-si (8.6 percent) and by 891 in Seogwipo-si (9.8 percent). Over the same years Jeju-si lost 1,057 Korean residents and Seogwipo-si gained 436.

Neither Jeju-si nor Seogwipo-si was among the 89 population-decline areas or the 18 areas of interest that the Ministry of the Interior and Safety designated on 19 October 2021. For the province as a whole, the gain of 2,322 registered foreigners between 2019 and 2024 equaled 373.9 percent of the loss of 621 Korean residents. In Jeju-si the gain of 1,431 registered foreigners equaled 135.4 percent of the loss of 1,057 Korean residents.

By the definition used in this Spotlight, both cities were Chinese enclaves in 2024. Chinese nationals made up 36.0 percent of registered foreigners in Jeju-si (6,479 people), with a location quotient of 3.1, and 32.8 percent in Seogwipo-si (3,285 people), with a location quotient of 4.2.

## 5 Population Trends

The number of Korean residents in Jeju rose every year from 558,496 in 2006 to a peak of 678,159 in 2022. The largest annual gains were in 2015 (17,049 people) and 2016 (17,202). The count fell by 2,907 in 2023 and by 4,884 in 2024, to 670,368. In 2024 it was 20.0 percent above the 2006 level (111,872 more people), 10.4 percent above the 2014 level (63,022 more) and 0.1 percent below the 2019 level (621 fewer).

Jeju Sori reported the province's total population as 700,708 in 2023, the first year it exceeded 700,000, and 698,358 in 2024 (Jeju Sori, 2025a). These totals equal the KIRD counts of Korean residents and registered foreigners combined (675,252 and 25,456 in 2023; 670,368 and 27,990 in 2024), so the fall of 2,350 people between the two years combined a loss of

4,884 Korean residents with a gain of 2,534 registered foreigners. Jeju Sori also reported that the total population grew 12.4 percent (76,808 people) over the ten years to 2024

(Jeju Sori, 2025a); by the KIRD counts, registered foreigners accounted for 13,786 of that increase (17.9 percent).

TABLE 4

**Registered Foreigners and Korean Residents in Jeju-si and Seogwipo-si, 2019-24**

| District              | Registered foreigners, 2024 | Per 100 Korean residents, 2024 | Change in Korean residents, 2019-24 | Change in registered foreigners, 2019-24 | Population-decline area |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Jeju-si               | 17,976                      | 3.7                            | -1,057                              | +1,431                                   | No                      |
| Seogwipo-si           | 10,014                      | 5.5                            | +436                                | +891                                     | No                      |
| Jeju (province total) | 27,990                      | 4.2                            | -621                                | +2,322                                   | -                       |

Note: Population-decline areas and areas of interest as designated by the Ministry of the Interior and Safety on 19 October 2021; neither city was designated as either. Registered foreigners per 100 Korean residents use the Korean residents of the same city in 2024.

Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks and Ministry of the Interior and Safety statistics, 2019 and 2024.

In 2024 Jeju recorded 3,156 births, 2.0 percent fewer than the 3,222 in 2023, and 4,902 deaths, 4.8 percent more than the 4,677 in 2023, according to Statistics Korea's 2024 Honam-Jeju regional population trends release (Jeju Domin Ilbo, 2025). Net migration in 2024 was -3,361, as more people moved out of the province than moved in (Jeju Sori, 2025a).

The total fertility rate was 0.83 in 2024, unchanged from 2023 and above the national rate of 0.75. People aged 80 and older accounted for 52.0 percent of deaths in 2024, and the age-standardized mortality rate rose from 312.0 in 2023 to 317.7, above the national rate of 294.6 (Jeju Domin Ilbo, 2025). People aged 65 and older made up 18.9 percent of the population in 2024, 5.4 percentage points more than ten years earlier (Jeju Sori, 2025a).

## 6 Industry and Foreign Workers

The number of registered foreigners on E-9 non-professional employment status, the status issued under the Employment Permit System (EPS), was 2,355 in 2014, 3,929 in 2019, 2,907 in 2021 and 4,766 in 2024. It rose 63.9 percent from 2021 to 2024 and 102.4 percent from 2014 to 2024. E-9 holders made up 17.0 percent of the province's registered foreigners in 2024, and Jeju's share of all E-9 holders in South Korea was 1.5 percent, below its 1.9 percent share of all registered foreigners. E-10 crew employment status was held by 3,245 registered foreigners in Jeju in 2024, 11.6 percent of the province's registered foreigners and 15.1 percent of all E-10 holders in South Korea (see Residence Statuses).

Seoul Shinmun reported 3,778 E-9 workers in Jeju at the end of May 2026, 84.6 percent more than the 2,046 at the end of 2022. Fisheries employed 1,491 of them (39.5 percent), agriculture and livestock 1,205 (31.9 percent), manufacturing 987 (26.1 percent) and services 92 (2.4 percent) (Seoul Shinmun, 2026). These counts differ from the Ministry of Justice count used in the KIRD data, which recorded 4,766 registered foreigners on E-9 status on 31 December 2024.

The province launched a survey of 350 E-9 workers on wages, working hours and industrial accidents, scheduled from August to December 2026 and offered in eight languages: Nepali, Vietnamese, Indonesian, English, Chinese, Cambodian, Filipino and Thai (Seoul Shinmun, 2026).

E-8 seasonal workers counted on 31 December numbered 49 in 2022, 382 in 2023 and 793 in 2024, and on 31 December 2024 the province was home to 4.0 percent of all E-8 holders in South Korea. Because most seasonal workers' contracts end before winter, the 31 December count misses most of the seasonal workers employed during the year. In 2024, citrus farms hiring public-type foreign seasonal workers paid men about 120,000 won per day, including lunch and snacks, against 150,000 won per day for Korean workers (Seoul Shinmun, 2024). The province's public-type seasonal worker program is described under Provincial Policy.

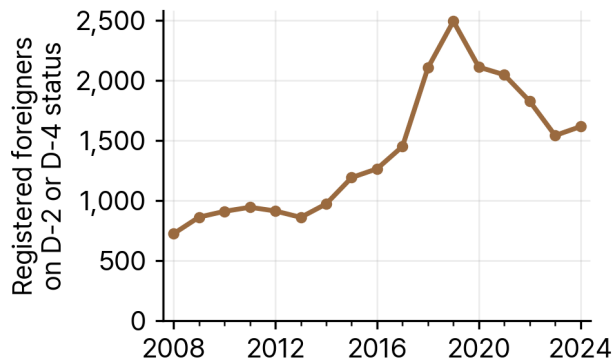
## 7 International Students and Universities

Registered foreigners on D-2 student and D-4 general trainee status in Jeju numbered 723 in 2008 and 971 in 2014, then rose to 2,490 in 2019, 2.6 times the 2014 count (see Figure 6). The count fell each year from 2020 to 2023, to 1,540, and was 1,614 in 2024 (1,048 on D-2 and 566 on D-4), 35.2 percent below the 2019 level. Students and trainees made up 5.8 percent of the province's registered foreigners in 2024, down from 9.7 percent in 2019, and the province's share of all D-2 and D-4 holders in South Korea was 0.6 percent, against its 1.9 percent share of all registered foreigners.

Jeju National University reported 733 international students, including graduate students, as of 1 September 2026, up from 596 a year earlier. Of these, 477 were undergraduate, language-training and other non-degree students, 32.9 percent more than the 359 counted on 1 October 2025. The

students came from 42 countries, led by China (349, or 47.6 percent of the 733), Pakistan (79), Vietnam (63), and Sri Lanka and India (34 each) (Jeju Domin Ilbo, 2026).

**FIGURE 6**  
**Registered Foreigners on Student (D-2) and General Trainee (D-4) Status in Jeju, 2008-24**



Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks, 2008-2024.

Jeju National University and Jeju Tourism University are the two universities in the province's 2025-2026 metropolitan-type visa pilot for international students in tourism-related departments (see Provincial Policy).

## 8 Provincial Policy

Jeju Province created a Foreign Residents and Immigration Policy Team (외국인이민정책팀) on 14 January 2025 to lead its work on foreign residents and immigration (Ministry of Justice, 2026). In November 2025 the province submitted a draft Basic Ordinance for Foreign Residents and Immigration Policy Support (외국인주민 및 이민정책 지원 기본 조례안) to the provincial council. The draft would consolidate existing related ordinances, require the governor to set an annual support plan for foreign residents and immigration policy, and create a deliberation committee and a foreign-resident support center (외국인 주민 종합지원센터) (News1, 2025).

As of 2026, the province designates and funds the Jeju Special Self-Governing Province Foreign Workers Support Center (제주특별자치도외국인노동자지원센터). The nonprofit Jeju Foreigners' Peace Community (제주외국인평화공동체), which has operated the center under contracts for 2019-2021, 2022-2024 and 2025-2027, also runs the Jeju Migrant Center, the Seogwipo Migrant Center and the Jeju Migrant Women's Counseling Center (Jeju Foreigners' Peace Community, 2026).

Jeju submitted a plan for the Ministry of Justice's metropolitan-type visa (광역형 비자) pilot on 7 February 2025, and the ministry announced the province's selection on 2 April 2025. The 2025-2026 pilot covers international students on D-2 visas admitted to tourism-related departments at Jeju National University and Jeju Tourism University, with a quota of 250 students. For qualifying students the financial requirement

is eased to 10 million won per year, and part-time work is allowed for up to 30 hours per week (Ministry of Justice, 2026).

At a November 2025 immigration-policy forum hosted by Jeju Halla University and the Korea Immigration Policy Society, with Jeju Province and the Jeju Immigration and Foreign Affairs Office as sponsors, a director in Jeju Halla University's RISE Project Group said Jeju had been excluded from the regional specialized visa program. The director also proposed a Jeju-type metropolitan visa that would grant residence status on the governor's recommendation, as part of a wider proposal to allow visa-free entrants to move on to study, employment and settlement (Jeju Sori, 2025b).

Jeju's public-type foreign seasonal worker program began in 2023 under memoranda of understanding with Vietnam's Ninh Binh province (29 March 2023) and Mongolia's Uvurkhangaï province (26 July 2023), with 41 workers first placed at the Wimi Agricultural Cooperative (Ministry of Justice, 2026). In November 2024, 109 Vietnamese public-type seasonal workers were working at three citrus-growing agricultural cooperatives (49 at Wimi, 30 at Daejeong and 30 at Gosan). The province planned to add three more cooperatives in 2025 and expected 210 to 220 foreign seasonal workers, more than double the November 2024 number (Seoul Shinmun, 2024).

For 2026 the province has budgeted 621 million won for a multilingual Foreign Resident Portal, led by its Population Policy Officer. The portal is planned to combine information on health care, education, legal matters, jobs and visa procedures with an AI chatbot, and to provide content in English, Chinese, Vietnamese and other languages (Ministry of Justice, 2026).

The public Jeju Free International City Development Center (JDC) has developed Jeju Global Education City since 2008 to reduce spending on study abroad. In 2025, 4,144 students were enrolled at its four international schools, including the Jeju campus of Korea International School, and the JDC estimated the cumulative savings in study-abroad spending at 1.5828 trillion won (JDC, 2025).

## 9 Languages

The KIRD dataset estimates the first languages of registered foreigners by applying each nationality's first-language shares from Ethnologue to the number of registered foreigners of that nationality. By this estimate, four languages had 1,000 or more first-language speakers among registered foreigners in Jeju in 2024: Chinese (9,414), Vietnamese (3,953), Indonesian (2,668) and English (1,075) (see Table 5).

Because the estimate divides each nationality among its first languages, the count for a language can differ from the count of the corresponding nationality. In 2024 the estimate for Indonesian (2,668) was 70.2 percent of the number of Indonesian nationals (3,803), and the estimate for Nepali (801)

was 52.0 percent of the number of Nepali nationals (1,541). Cantonese is counted separately from Chinese, with an estimated 717 speakers in 2024.

The province's 2026 survey of E-9 workers is offered in Nepali, Vietnamese, Indonesian, English, Chinese, Cambodian, Filipino and Thai (Seoul Shinmun, 2026), and its planned Foreign Resident Portal is to provide content in English, Chinese, Vietnamese and other languages (Ministry of Justice, 2026).

TABLE 5

**Estimated First-Language Speakers among Registered Foreigners in Jeju, Ten Most Common Languages, 2024**

| Language         | Estimated speakers | Share of the province's registered foreigners (%) |
|------------------|--------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| Chinese          | 9,414              | 33.6                                              |
| Vietnamese       | 3,953              | 14.1                                              |
| Indonesian       | 2,668              | 9.5                                               |
| English          | 1,075              | 3.8                                               |
| Nepali           | 801                | 2.9                                               |
| Cantonese        | 717                | 2.6                                               |
| Tagalog/Filipino | 648                | 2.3                                               |
| Sinhala          | 598                | 2.1                                               |
| Khmer            | 595                | 2.1                                               |
| Hindi            | 385                | 1.4                                               |

Note: Estimates apply Ethnologue first-language shares for each nationality to the number of registered foreigners of that nationality on 31 December 2024. Shares use the province total of 27,990 registered foreigners.

Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks, 2024, with first-language shares from Ethnologue.

## 10 Service Organizations and Community Places

The KIRD census of 1,717 migrant-serving organizations in South Korea lists 27 in Jeju, or 9.6 per 10,000 registered foreigners in 2024, against 11.5 per 10,000 nationally. All 27 provide direct services, and they include two family centers (가족센터). By type, 13 are sites that host programs for foreign residents, 4 are nonprofit organizations, 3 are medical institutions and 2 are community groups; the other five are a legal support organization, a youth education center, a foreign-resident center, a shelter and an administrative office.

By the populations they list, 8 of the 27 organizations serve families, 8 serve all foreign residents, 8 serve workers, 7 serve refugees, 4 serve children and 3 serve undocumented residents. Two each serve youth and women, and one each serves diaspora members and students. An organization can list more than one population.

The nonprofit Jeju Foreigners' Peace Community runs the Jeju Migrant Center in downtown Jeju-si (56 Jungang-ro), where it operates a Korean-culture school. The Migrant Center's own cultural programs are a foreign-family festival, a Chuseok event for migrants, a summer camp for migrant workers and a Korean-speaking contest, and the parent organization organizes the Jeju Multi-ethnic Culture Festival (제주다민족문화제) (Jeju Foreigners' Peace Community, 2026).

The same organization runs the Jeju Migrant Women's Counseling Center, which offers counseling in the women's native languages, interpretation and emergency shelter to immigrant women who have experienced violence, and the Jeju Refugee Support Center, which provides free room, board and counseling to refugee claimants, recognized refugees and people granted humanitarian status in Jeju (Jeju Foreigners' Peace Community, 2026).

Jeju's first Yemeni restaurant, Wardah, whose name means flower in Arabic, was open by February 2019, after 484 Yemeni asylum seekers arrived on the island in June 2018 (Korea Times, 2019).

**About these profiles.** The KIRD province profiles describe the foreign-resident population of each of South Korea's seventeen provinces and metropolitan cities. Figures come from the Korea Immigration Regional Dashboard (KIRD) dataset, built from the Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks and the Ministry of the Interior and Safety foreign-resident statistics for 2006 to 2024 (<https://doi.org/10.3886/E249944V1>); context comes from the sources listed. Interactive maps and tables: <https://immigrantsinkorea.today>.

Suggested citation: Korea Immigration Regional Dashboard (KIRD). 2026. "Foreign Residents in Jeju." Foreign Residents in South Korea series, September 2026. Data: Korea Immigration Regional Dashboard (KIRD) dataset, <https://doi.org/10.3886/E249944V1>. Interactive maps and tables: <https://immigrantsinkorea.today>.

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# Foreign Residents in Ulsan

SEPTEMBER 2026

## Summary

Ulsan had 27,642 registered foreigners on 31 December 2024, 1.9 percent of the 1,488,353 registered foreigners in South Korea. The city ranked 13th among the 17 provinces and metropolitan cities by the number of registered foreigners and 11th by registered foreigners per Korean resident, with 2.5 per 100 Korean residents against 2.9 nationally. The Ministry of the Interior and Safety (MOIS), whose count adds naturalized citizens and the children of foreign residents, recorded 45,392 foreign residents in Ulsan in 2024.

## Highlights

- ▶ The number of registered foreigners in Ulsan fell from 26,183 in 2015 to 16,827 in 2021 and then rose to 27,642 in 2024, the highest count in the 2006-2024 series, while the number of Korean residents declined every year from 2016 to 2024.
- ▶ Skilled statuses (E-1 to E-7) covered 18.6 percent of Ulsan's registered foreigners in 2024, against 5.8 percent nationally, and the city accounted for 7.5 percent of registered E-7 holders in South Korea and 1.9 percent of all registered foreigners.
- ▶ Dong-gu accounted for 6,143 of Ulsan's net gain of 7,192 registered foreigners between 2019 and 2024 and had 6.4 registered foreigners per 100 Korean residents in 2024, the highest ratio among the city's five districts.

The registered-foreigner count rose from 10,494 in 2006 to 26,183 in 2015, fell to 16,827 in 2021, and rose again to 27,642 in 2024. Between 2019 and 2024 it grew 35.2 percent (7,192 people), the sixth-fastest growth among the 17 provinces, while the number of Korean residents fell 4.4 percent (49,970 people); the foreign gain equaled 14.4 percent of the Korean loss. The Korean resident count peaked at 1,173,534 in 2015 and declined every year after that, to 1,098,049 in 2024.

Vietnamese nationals were the largest group of registered foreigners in 2024 (22.7 percent), followed by Korean-Chinese (13.9 percent) and Chinese nationals (8.8 percent). Compared with registered foreigners nationally, those in Ulsan were more likely to have skilled statuses (18.6 percent, against 5.8 percent) and less likely to have study and job-search statuses (6.8 percent, against 18.6 percent). The city was home to 7.5 percent of registered E-7 (specially designated activities) holders and 6.7 percent of registered Sri Lankans in South Korea. Dong-gu and Ulju-gun, two of the city's five districts, together had 18,305 registered foreigners in 2024 (66.2 percent of the city's total), and Dong-gu alone accounted for 6,143 of the 7,192 added between 2019 and 2024.

### BOX 1

#### Definitions

**Registered foreigners (등록외국인).** Foreign nationals in South Korea for more than 90 days who register with immigration authorities, counted by the Ministry of Justice on 31 December of each year. Overseas Koreans on F-4 status report their residence instead of registering and are not included. This Spotlight uses registered foreigners unless it names another count.

**MOIS foreign residents (외국인주민).** The Ministry of the Interior and Safety count of foreign residents on 1 November of each year. It adds naturalized Korean citizens and the children of foreign residents to the foreign nationals it counts.

**Korean residents.** Korean nationals in the MOIS resident registration population. They are the denominator of registered foreigners per 100 Korean residents.

**Status groups.** This Spotlight groups residence statuses as rotation labor (E-9, E-8, H-2, E-10, D-3), skilled (E-1 to E-7), study and job search (D-2, D-4, D-10), settlement (F-2, F-5, F-6), family (F-1, F-3), and other (all remaining statuses).

**Population-decline areas (인구감소지역).** The 89 districts that the Ministry of the Interior and Safety designated as population-decline areas on 19 October 2021, together with 18 districts designated as areas of interest (관심지역).

**Ethnic enclave.** A district where the location quotient of a national group (its share of the district's registered foreigners divided by its share of all registered foreigners in South Korea) is at least 2 and the group makes up at least 30 percent of the district's registered foreigners.

**Shannon diversity index (H).** A measure of nationality diversity among registered foreigners. It increases with the number of nationalities and with the evenness of their sizes.

## 1 Size of the Foreign-Resident Population

Ulsan's registered foreigners increased every year from 10,494 in 2006 to 26,183 in 2015 (see Figure 1). The number then declined to 20,002 in 2018 and, after a rise to 20,450 in 2019, fell to 16,827 in 2021, 35.7 percent below the 2015 level. It increased to 18,379 in 2022, 23,620 in 2023, and 27,642 in 2024, the highest count between 2006 and 2024.

The MOIS count of foreign residents, which adds naturalized citizens and children, grew from 14,667 in 2008 to 38,183 in 2015. It ranged from 34,373 to 37,284 between 2016 and 2022 and then rose to 41,698 in 2023 and 45,392 in 2024. From 2015 to 2021 the MOIS count fell 8.9 percent (from 38,183 to 34,800), while the registered count fell 35.7 percent.

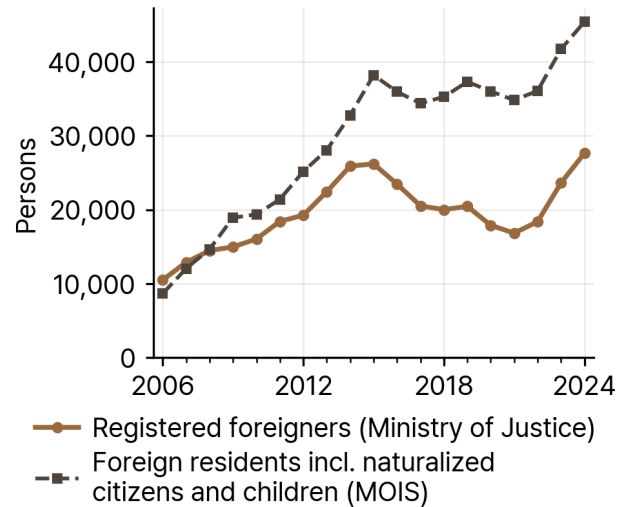
With 2014 set to 100, the index of registered foreigners in Ulsan fell to 65.0 in 2021 and rose to 106.8 in 2024 (see Figure 2, which also shows the indexes for South Korea as a whole). The index of Korean residents in Ulsan was 100.6 in 2015 and declined each year after that, to 94.1 in 2024. Over the ten years from 2014 to 2024, the registered count grew 6.8 percent (1,757 people) and the Korean count fell 5.9 percent (68,328 people).

In 2024 Ulsan ranked 13th among the 17 provinces by the number of registered foreigners and 11th by registered foreigners per Korean resident (2.5 per 100 Korean residents,

against 2.9 for South Korea as a whole). Its growth of 35.2 percent in registered foreigners between 2019 and 2024 was the sixth-fastest among the 17 provinces (see Table 1).

FIGURE 1

### Registered Foreigners and MOIS Foreign Residents in Ulsan, 2006-24



Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks and Ministry of the Interior and Safety foreign-resident statistics, 2006-2024.

## 2 Nationalities

Vietnamese nationals made up 22.7 percent of Ulsan's registered foreigners in 2024 (6,263 people), against 17.6 percent of registered foreigners nationally (see Figure 3 and Table 2). Korean-Chinese followed with 3,851 (13.9 percent), then Chinese nationals with 2,430 (8.8 percent) and Sri Lankan nationals with 2,272 (8.2 percent). The ten largest groups made up 80.7 percent of the city's registered foreigners in 2024.

TABLE 1

### Registered Foreigners, MOIS Foreign Residents, and Korean Residents in Ulsan, Selected Years, 2006-24

| Year | Registered foreigners | MOIS foreign residents | Korean residents | Registered foreigners per 100 Korean residents |
|------|-----------------------|------------------------|------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| 2006 | 10,494                | n/a                    | 1,092,494        | 1.0                                            |
| 2014 | 25,885                | 32,772                 | 1,166,377        | 2.2                                            |
| 2019 | 20,450                | 37,284                 | 1,148,019        | 1.8                                            |
| 2024 | 27,642                | 45,392                 | 1,098,049        | 2.5                                            |

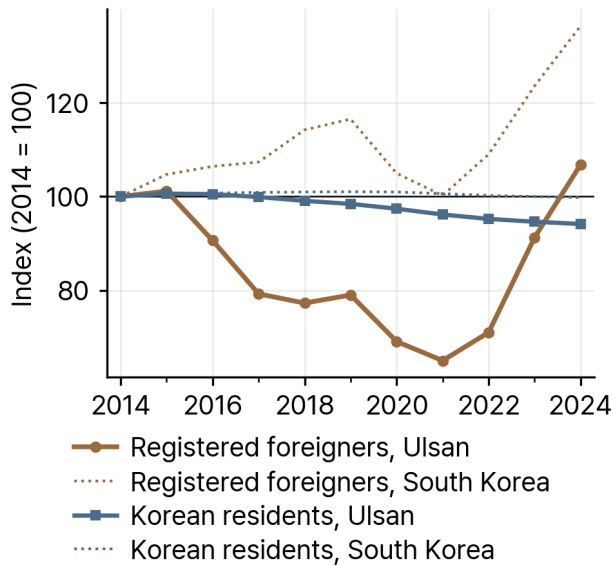
Note: MOIS counts are shown from 2008, when MOIS counted 14,667 foreign residents in Ulsan; n/a = not shown. The MOIS counts for 2006 (8,664) and 2007 (12,034) were below the registered counts for those years (10,494 and 12,887); in every year from 2008 to 2024, the MOIS count was the larger of the two.

Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks and Ministry of the Interior and Safety statistics, 2006-2024.

Between 2019 and 2024 the number of Vietnamese nationals grew from 3,908 to 6,263, while Korean-Chinese fell from 5,041 to 3,851 and Chinese nationals from 2,667 to 2,430; in

2019, Korean-Chinese had outnumbered Vietnamese. The Sri Lankan, Indonesian, Thai, and Nepali groups each more than doubled over the same period, Sri Lankans from 883 to 2,272.

FIGURE 2

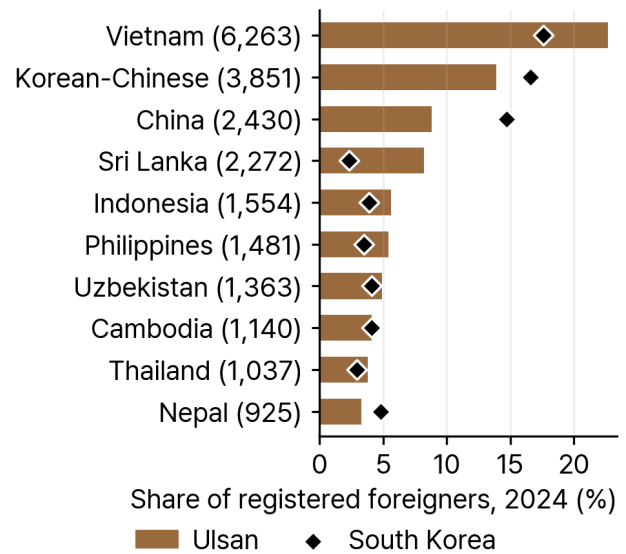
**Registered Foreigners and Korean Residents in Ulsan and South Korea, 2014-24 (index, 2014 = 100)**

Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks and Ministry of the Interior and Safety resident registration statistics, 2014-2024.

Ulsan accounted for 1.9 percent of all registered foreigners in South Korea in 2024 and for larger shares of several national groups. It was home to 6.7 percent of registered Sri Lankans

(2,272 of 33,965), 3.1 percent of Russians (695 of 22,450) and of South Africans (142 of 4,641), 2.9 percent of nationals of Türkiye (99 of 3,441), and 2.8 percent of Filipinos (1,481 of 51,991).

FIGURE 3

**Ten Largest Nationalities among Registered Foreigners in Ulsan, Shares in Ulsan and South Korea, 2024**

Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks, 2024.

TABLE 2

**Ten Largest Nationalities among Registered Foreigners in Ulsan, 2019 and 2024**

| Nationality    | 2019  | 2024  | Share of Ulsan's registered foreigners, 2024 (%) | Ulsan's share of this nationality's registered foreigners in South Korea, 2024 (%) |
|----------------|-------|-------|--------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Vietnam        | 3,908 | 6,263 | 22.7                                             | 2.4                                                                                |
| Korean-Chinese | 5,041 | 3,851 | 13.9                                             | 1.6                                                                                |
| China          | 2,667 | 2,430 | 8.8                                              | 1.1                                                                                |
| Sri Lanka      | 883   | 2,272 | 8.2                                              | 6.7                                                                                |
| Indonesia      | 669   | 1,554 | 5.6                                              | 2.7                                                                                |
| Philippines    | 1,121 | 1,481 | 5.4                                              | 2.8                                                                                |
| Uzbekistan     | 877   | 1,363 | 4.9                                              | 2.2                                                                                |
| Cambodia       | 888   | 1,140 | 4.1                                              | 1.9                                                                                |
| Thailand       | 378   | 1,037 | 3.8                                              | 2.4                                                                                |
| Nepal          | 423   | 925   | 3.3                                              | 1.3                                                                                |

Note: Korean-Chinese (한국계중국인) are listed separately from other Chinese nationals in the Ministry of Justice data.

Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks, 2019 and 2024.

The Shannon diversity index of Ulsan's registered foreigners rose from 2.3 in 2014 to 2.6 in 2024, the fifth-highest value among the 17 provinces in 2024. Registered foreigners in the city came from 110 nationalities in 2024.

Overseas Koreans on F-4 status report their residence instead of registering and are not counted among registered foreigners. In 2024, 6,526 F-4 holders reported residence in Ulsan, 1.2 percent of the 553,664 in South Korea. Korean-Chinese made up 5,632 of them, followed by Korean-Russians

(221) and holders of U.S. (217), Uzbek (167), and Kazakh (108) nationality. Counting both groups, 9,483 Korean-Chinese residents were recorded in Ulsan in 2024 (5,632 reporting residence on F-4 status and 3,851 registered foreigners).

### 3 Residence Statuses

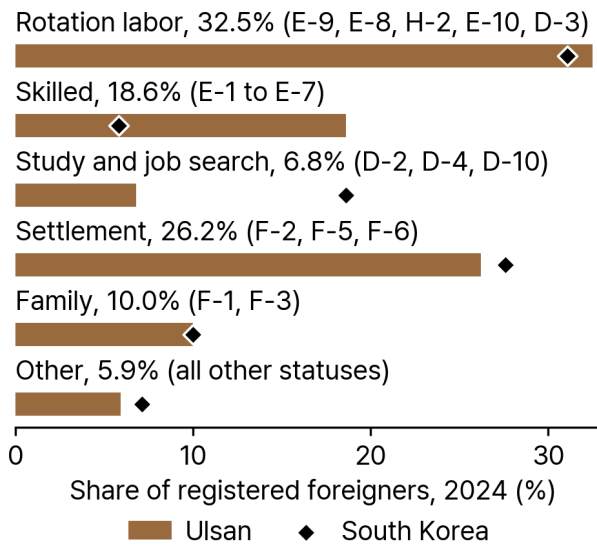
Rotation labor statuses covered 32.5 percent of Ulsan's registered foreigners in 2024 (8,987 people), close to the national share of 31.1 percent, and settlement statuses covered 26.2 percent (7,237), against 27.6 percent nationally (see Figure 4). Skilled statuses covered 18.6 percent (5,147), more than three times the national share of 5.8 percent. Study and job-search statuses covered 6.8 percent (1,891), against 18.6 percent nationally. Family statuses covered 10.0 percent (2,753), equal to the national share, and all other statuses 5.9 percent (1,627), against 7.1 percent nationally.

E-9 non-professional employment was the most common single status in 2024 (7,223 holders, 26.1 percent), followed by E-7 specially designated activities (4,707, 17.0 percent), F-5 permanent residence (3,254, 11.8 percent), and F-6 marriage migration (2,947, 10.7 percent) (see Table 3). Ulsan accounted for 7.5 percent of registered E-7 holders in South Korea in 2024, about four times its 1.9 percent share of all registered

foreigners. Ulsan's share of national holders of the other nine statuses in the table ranged from 0.6 percent (D-2) to 2.2 percent (E-9).

FIGURE 4

**Registered Foreigners by Status Group, Ulsan and South Korea, 2024**



Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks, 2024.

TABLE 3

**Ten Most Common Residence Statuses among Registered Foreigners in Ulsan, 2024**

| Status | Meaning                         | Status group         | Registered foreigners | Share of Ulsan's registered foreigners (%) | Ulsan's share of all holders in South Korea (%) |
|--------|---------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| E-9    | Non-professional employment     | Rotation labor       | 7,223                 | 26.1                                       | 2.2                                             |
| E-7    | Specially designated activities | Skilled              | 4,707                 | 17.0                                       | 7.5                                             |
| F-5    | Permanent residence             | Settlement           | 3,254                 | 11.8                                       | 1.6                                             |
| F-6    | Marriage migration              | Settlement           | 2,947                 | 10.7                                       | 2.0                                             |
| F-1    | Visiting cohabitation           | Family               | 1,777                 | 6.4                                        | 1.8                                             |
| G-1    | Other (miscellaneous)           | Other                | 1,175                 | 4.3                                        | 2.1                                             |
| D-2    | Student                         | Study and job search | 1,152                 | 4.2                                        | 0.6                                             |
| H-2    | Visiting employment             | Rotation labor       | 1,107                 | 4.0                                        | 1.2                                             |
| F-2    | Residential                     | Settlement           | 1,036                 | 3.7                                        | 1.7                                             |
| F-3    | Dependent family                | Family               | 976                   | 3.5                                        | 1.9                                             |

Note: Shares of Ulsan's registered foreigners are out of 27,642. The ten statuses together covered 25,354 registered foreigners (91.7 percent).

Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks, 2024.

The MOIS count of 45,392 foreign residents in Ulsan in 2024 comprised 35,193 foreign nationals, 3,992 naturalized citizens, and 6,207 children of foreign residents. MOIS classified the foreign nationals as workers (13,100), marriage migrants (3,503), international students (1,553), ethnic Koreans of

foreign nationality (5,239), and other foreign residents (11,798). Workers made up 28.9 percent of the MOIS total in 2024 and children 13.7 percent.

## 4 Districts and Population-Decline Areas

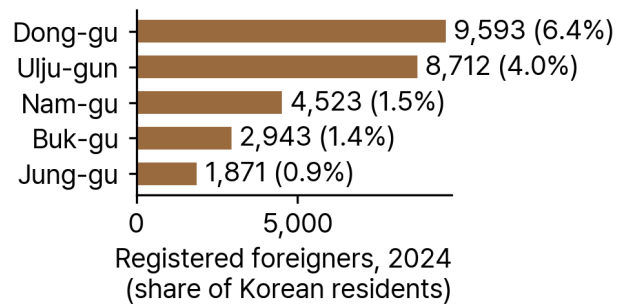
Ulsan has four urban districts (gu), Jung-gu, Nam-gu, Dong-gu, and Buk-gu, and one county (gun), Ulju-gun. Dong-gu had the most registered foreigners in 2024 (9,593, or 34.7 percent of the city's total) and the most per Korean resident (6.4 per 100). Ulju-gun followed with 8,712 (4.0 per 100 Korean residents). Nam-gu (4,523), Buk-gu (2,943), and Jung-gu (1,871) each had fewer than 2 registered foreigners per 100 Korean residents in 2024 (see Figure 5 and Table 4).

Every district lost Korean residents between 2019 and 2024, with losses ranging from 1,274 in Buk-gu to 18,934 in Nam-gu. Registered foreigners increased in Dong-gu (by 6,143, from 3,450 to 9,593), Ulju-gun (by 1,415), and Buk-gu (by 416) and decreased in Nam-gu (by 590) and Jung-gu (by 192). Dong-gu's gain equaled 85.4 percent of the city's net gain of 7,192 registered foreigners and 69.6 percent of the district's loss of 8,820 Korean residents.

None of Ulsan's five districts was among the 89 population-decline areas or the 18 areas of interest that the Ministry of the Interior and Safety designated in October 2021. For the city as a whole, the gain of 7,192 registered foreigners between 2019 and 2024 equaled 14.4 percent of the loss of 49,970 Korean residents.

FIGURE 5

### Registered Foreigners by District in Ulsan, 2024



Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks and Ministry of the Interior and Safety resident registration statistics, 2024.

TABLE 4

### Registered Foreigners and Korean Residents by District in Ulsan, 2019-24

| District    | Registered foreigners, 2024 | Per 100 Korean residents, 2024 | Change in Korean residents, 2019-24 | Change in registered foreigners, 2019-24 | Population-decline area |
|-------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Dong-gu     | 9,593                       | 6.4                            | -8,820                              | +6,143                                   | No                      |
| Ulju-gun    | 8,712                       | 4.0                            | -4,361                              | +1,415                                   | No                      |
| Nam-gu      | 4,523                       | 1.5                            | -18,934                             | -590                                     | No                      |
| Buk-gu      | 2,943                       | 1.4                            | -1,274                              | +416                                     | No                      |
| Jung-gu     | 1,871                       | 0.9                            | -16,581                             | -192                                     | No                      |
| Ulsan total | 27,642                      | 2.5                            | -49,970                             | +7,192                                   |                         |

Note: Per 100 Korean residents is the number of registered foreigners divided by the number of Korean residents in the district, times 100.

Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks and Ministry of the Interior and Safety resident registration statistics, 2019 and 2024; Ministry of the Interior and Safety designation of population-decline areas, 2021.

No district in Ulsan met this Spotlight's definition of an ethnic enclave in 2024 (a location quotient of at least 2 for a national group, with the group making up at least 30 percent of the district's registered foreigners).

## 5 Population Trends

Ulsan's Korean resident population grew from 1,092,494 in 2006 to a peak of 1,173,534 in 2015 and declined every year from 2016 to 2024, to 1,098,049. It fell 5.9 percent between 2014 and 2024 (68,328 people) and 4.4 percent between 2019 and 2024 (49,970 people). In 2024 it was 0.5 percent (5,555 people) above its 2006 level.

Net internal out-migration from Ulsan declined from 13,674 people in 2021 to 9,536 in 2022, 6,215 in 2023, and 4,854 in 2024, the smallest net outflow in nine years (Ulsan Maeil,

2024). In October 2025 the city's registered domestic population rose by 163 from the previous month to 1,092,797, its first increase after 96 consecutive months of decline, and the total population including foreign residents was 1,122,221 (Financial News, 2025).

Births in Ulsan rose 5.5 percent, from 5,282 in 2024 to 5,574 in 2025, and the total fertility rate rose to 0.92 in 2025, the highest of South Korea's seven special and metropolitan cities (Ulsan Maeil, 2025a). The share of residents aged 65 and older rose from 16.8 percent in 2024 to 18.2 percent in 2025, and the growth rate of the elderly population, 7.8 percent, was the second-highest among the 17 provinces after Incheon's 8.1 percent (Ulsan Maeil, 2025b).

Statistics Korea's 2022-2052 provincial population projection, published on 28 May 2024, projects that Ulsan's population will decline from 1.11 million in 2022 to below 1 million by 2040 and to 830,000 by 2052. Over the same period, the working-age population (ages 15 to 64) is projected to decline from 810,000 to 410,000 (Ulsan Sinmun, 2024).

## 6 Industry and Foreign Workers

Registered foreigners on E-9 non-professional employment status, the status of workers admitted through the Employment Permit System (EPS), numbered 6,125 in Ulsan in 2014, 5,006 in 2019, 3,572 in 2021, and 7,223 in 2024. The 2024 count was about twice the 2021 count. E-9 holders made up 26.1 percent of the city's registered foreigners in 2024 and 2.2 percent of all E-9 holders in South Korea.

A local news report counted 6,510 EPS (E-9) migrant workers in Ulsan in 2024, up 28.3 percent (1,434 workers) from the previous year, and reported that 94.8 percent of them (6,172) worked in manufacturing (Ulsan Journal, 2025). The report's count is lower than the KIRD count of 7,223 registered foreigners on E-9 status on 31 December 2024.

The KIRD data record no registered foreigners on E-8 seasonal-worker status in Ulsan on 31 December of any year from 2021 to 2024. A count taken on 31 December misses most seasonal workers, because their contracts end before winter. Ulju-gun operated its first public-type seasonal farm-worker program in 2026, bringing in 20 Laotian nationals to work in pear orchards from May through September, with a local agricultural cooperative handling their hiring and placement on farms (Newsis, 2026).

The city's programs for recruiting foreign shipbuilding workers, a metropolitan-type visa pilot and a training center in Uzbekistan, are described under Provincial Policy.

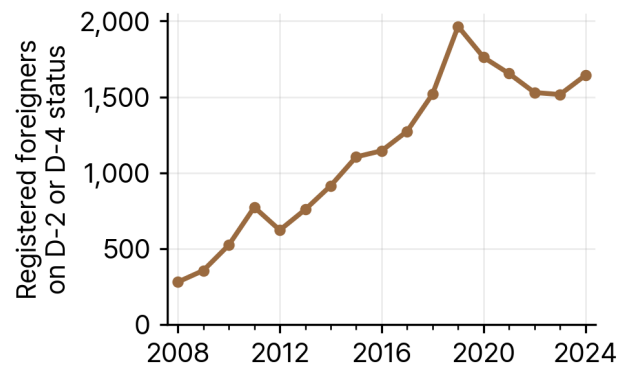
## 7 International Students and Universities

Registered foreigners on student (D-2) and general trainee (D-4) status in Ulsan increased from 280 in 2008 to 915 in 2014 and 1,965 in 2019, the highest count in the series (see Figure 6). The number declined each year to 1,516 in 2023 and rose to 1,643 in 2024, when it equaled 0.6 percent of D-2 and D-4 holders in South Korea, against the city's 1.9 percent share of all registered foreigners. In 2024, 1,152 were D-2 students and 491 were D-4 trainees (1,643 less 1,152).

The Korean Educational Development Institute (KEDI) counted 1,079 international students at six higher-education institutions headquartered in Ulsan on 1 April 2024. University of Ulsan had 409, UNIST (Ulsan National Institute of Science and Technology) 325, Ulsan College 287, and KEPCO International Nuclear Graduate School 50 (KEDI, 2024). These counts differ from the KIRD count of 1,643, which refers to registered foreigners on D-2 or D-4 status on 31 December 2024.

FIGURE 6

**Registered Foreigners on Student (D-2) and General Trainee (D-4) Status in Ulsan, 2008-24**



Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks, 2008-2024.

In October 2024, University of Ulsan and UNIST signed international-student recruitment agreements with Indonesia's Sepuluh Nopember Institute of Technology and Vietnam's Ho Chi Minh City University of Technology and Education, as part of Ulsan's WSU program for a planned Graduate School of Future New Industries (Seoul Sinmun, 2024).

## 8 Provincial Policy

Ulsan Metropolitan City's Foreign Resident Support Ordinance (Ulsan Ordinance No. 1897) has been in force since 1 January 2019, following its amendment of 27 December 2018 (National Law Information Center, 2019). The city's Women, Family and Youth Division is the office in charge of foreign-resident and multicultural-family policy (Ulsan Metropolitan City, 2024).

The city's foreign resident support center opened on 17 October 2022 at 60 Dojil-ro, Nam-gu (Sinjeong-dong). The center has four staff members, is managed by an outsourced operator, and provides counseling, education, and cultural programs (Ulsan Metropolitan City, 2022).

Ulsan's metropolitan-type visa pilot, an E-7-3 general skilled-worker visa for shipbuilding welders, electricians, and painters, was planned to bring in 89 foreign workers in its first year, 2025, and 440 in total by the end of 2026 (Seoul Pn, 2025). The first 49 workers admitted under the pilot, Vietnamese nationals with E-7 visas, arrived on 26 November 2025 after at least three months of job and Korean-language training abroad. They were placed with subcontractors of HD Hyundai Heavy Industries and HD Hyundai Mipo in Dong-gu (Ulsan Maeil, 2025c).

Ulsan City and HD Hyundai Heavy Industries jointly built a workforce training center in Uzbekistan, the Ulsan Global Manpower Training Center. By June 2026 they had placed 385 Uzbek workers in Ulsan shipbuilding companies through the center, up from the program's original scale of 280 workers (Herald Corp, 2026).

As of late 2025, Ulju-gun was the only one of Ulsan's five districts rated at the 'risk' stage of the regional-extinction index, and it was excluded from the F-2-R regional specialized visa program that the government has operated nationally since 2023 (krnews21, 2025).

## 9 Languages

The KIRD dataset estimates first-language speakers among registered foreigners by applying each country's first-language shares from Ethnologue to the nationality counts. By this estimate, seven languages had at least 1,000 estimated speakers among Ulsan's registered foreigners in 2024. Vietnamese was the most common first language (5,354 speakers), followed by Chinese (2,635), Sinhala (1,565), Tagalog/Filipino (1,287), Khmer (1,181), Indonesian (1,091), and Uzbek (1,013). Thai (930), Russian (911), and Tamil (599) were the next largest.

The estimates exclude Korean. The dataset assigns Korean as the first language of Korean-Chinese residents, so the 3,851 registered Korean-Chinese in Ulsan add nothing to these counts.

## 10 Service Organizations and Community Places

The KIRD census of 1,717 migrant-serving organizations in South Korea lists 44 in Ulsan, or 15.9 per 10,000 registered foreigners in 2024, against 11.5 per 10,000 nationally. Forty-three of the 44 provide direct services. By type, they are 13

program sites, 8 nongovernmental organizations, 6 family-support organizations (5 of which are family centers, or *gajok senteo*), 5 medical providers, 3 community groups, 3 worker centers, 2 resident support centers, 2 youth education providers, 1 school, and 1 administrative office.

The census records the populations each organization serves, and an organization can serve more than one. In Ulsan, 17 organizations list families among the populations they serve, 16 list workers, 10 serve all foreign residents, 7 list refugees, 6 list children, and 4 list women; 2 list undocumented migrants and 2 list youth.

Kkotbawi Foreign Specialized Street (꽃바위외국인특화거리) in Bangeo-dong, Dong-gu, was built around the city's concentration of foreign shipyard workers, and Dong-gu designated it as part of the Namjin-gil specialized-street project promoted since late 2015. The street emptied out during a shipbuilding downturn and has revived with the recent return of Southeast Asian workers (Gyeongsang Ilbo, 2024).

In Nam-gu, Beongae Market hosts a cluster of 'Asia markets' selling ingredients and goods from China, Mongolia, Vietnam, Thailand, the Philippines, and Indonesia, and about half of the market's shoppers are foreign customers (Ulsan Nam-gu, 2024).

At the pilot foreign-worker support center that opened in Ilsan-dong, Dong-gu, Indonesian workers asked staff whether they could rent shared community and exercise space, and the center has been guiding foreign residents to facilities for their own community activities (Kyongsang Ilbo, 2026).

**About these profiles.** The KIRD province profiles describe the foreign-resident population of each of South Korea's seventeen provinces and metropolitan cities. Figures come from the Korea Immigration Regional Dashboard (KIRD) dataset, built from the Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks and the Ministry of the Interior and Safety foreign-resident statistics for 2006 to 2024 (<https://doi.org/10.3886/E249944V1>); context comes from the sources listed. Interactive maps and tables: <https://immigrantsinkorea.today>.

Suggested citation: Korea Immigration Regional Dashboard (KIRD). 2026. "Foreign Residents in Ulsan." Foreign Residents in South Korea series, September 2026. Data: Korea Immigration Regional Dashboard (KIRD) dataset, <https://doi.org/10.3886/E249944V1>. Interactive maps and tables: <https://immigrantsinkorea.today>.

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# Foreign Residents in Gwangju

SEPTEMBER 2026

## Summary

At the end of 2024, 26,557 registered foreigners lived in Gwangju Metropolitan City, 1.8 percent of the 1,488,353 registered foreigners in South Korea. Gwangju ranked 14th among the 17 provinces and metropolitan cities by the number of registered foreigners and 12th by registered foreigners per Korean resident, with 1.9 per 100 Korean residents against 2.9 nationally. The Ministry of the Interior and Safety, whose count adds naturalized citizens and the children of foreign residents, counted 47,728 foreign residents in the city in 2024.

## Highlights

- ▶ Gwangju had 26,557 registered foreigners at the end of 2024, 55.6 percent more than in 2014 (17,064), while its Korean population fell 4.6 percent over the same years, from 1,475,884 to 1,408,422.
- ▶ Study and job search statuses (D-2, D-4 and D-10) covered 32.2 percent of Gwangju's registered foreigners in 2024, against 18.6 percent nationally, and D-2 student status was the most common single status, with 5,173 holders.
- ▶ Vietnamese nationals were the largest group in 2024, with 7,887 people or 29.7 percent of registered foreigners (17.6 percent nationally), and their increase of 2,372 since 2019 equaled 86.8 percent of the city's net gain of 2,732 registered foreigners.

The number of registered foreigners more than tripled between 2006 and 2024, from 8,155 to 26,557. The Korean population was almost the same at both ends of that period (1,407,798 in 2006 and 1,408,422 in 2024), after peaking at 1,475,884 in 2014. Between 2014 and 2024, Korean residents decreased by 67,462 (4.6 percent) and registered foreigners increased by 9,493 (55.6 percent). Growth in the registered count slowed from 39.6 percent between 2014 and 2019 (from 17,064 to 23,825) to 11.5 percent between 2019 and 2024, the 14th-fastest growth among the 17 provinces in the later period.

The gain of 2,732 registered foreigners from 2019 to 2024 equaled 5.7 percent of the city's loss of 48,046 Korean residents over the same years.

Compared with registered foreigners nationally, those in Gwangju were more often students and trainees and less often rotation workers. In 2024, study and job search statuses (D-2, D-4 and D-10) covered 32.2 percent of them, against 18.6 percent nationally, and rotation labor statuses 20.4 percent, against 31.1 percent. Vietnamese nationals made up 29.7 percent of the total. More than half of the city's registered foreigners (56.3 percent) lived in one district, Gwangsan-gu, where the Hanam industrial park and the Koryoin Village of Wolgok-dong are located. The city created a dedicated Foreign Resident Affairs Division in July 2023, which it describes as the first among Korea's special and metropolitan cities (Kyunghyang Shinmun, 2024). The KIRD census of migrant-serving organizations lists 109 organizations in Gwangju, 41.0 per 10,000 registered foreigners in 2024, against 11.5 nationally.

### BOX 1 Definitions

**Registered foreigners (등록외국인).** Foreign nationals in South Korea for more than 90 days who register with immigration authorities, counted by the Ministry of Justice on 31 December of each year. Overseas Koreans on F-4 status report their residence instead of registering and are not included. Counts in this profile are registered foreigners unless another measure is named.

**Foreign residents, MOIS count (외국인주민).** The count of foreign residents by the Ministry of the Interior and Safety (MOIS) on 1 November, which adds naturalized citizens and the children of foreign residents to foreign nationals. In Gwangju in 2024 it was 1.8 times the number of registered foreigners (47,728 against 26,557).

**Korean residents (주민등록인구).** Korean nationals in the resident registration statistics of the Ministry of the Interior and Safety. Ratios per 100 Korean residents in this profile use this population.

**Status groups.** This profile sorts residence statuses into five groups. Rotation labor covers E-9 (non-professional employment), E-8 (seasonal worker), H-2 (visiting employment), E-10 (crew employment) and D-3 (industrial trainee). Skilled covers E-1 to E-7. Study and job search covers D-2 (student), D-4 (general trainee) and D-10 (job seeker). Settlement covers F-2 (residential), F-5 (permanent residence) and F-6 (marriage migration), and family covers F-1 (visiting cohabitation) and F-3 (dependent family). All other statuses form the other group.

**Population-decline areas (인구감소지역).** The 89 districts that the Ministry of the Interior and Safety designated as population-decline areas on 19 October 2021. The ministry named 18 further districts as areas of interest (관심지역) at the same time.

**Korean-Chinese, Korean-Russians and Koryoin.** The Ministry of Justice counts ethnic Koreans of Chinese nationality (Korean-Chinese) and of Russian nationality (Korean-Russians) separately from other Chinese and Russian nationals. Koryoin (고려인), ethnic Koreans of the former Soviet Union and their descendants, are otherwise counted by citizenship, for example as nationals of Uzbekistan or Kazakhstan.

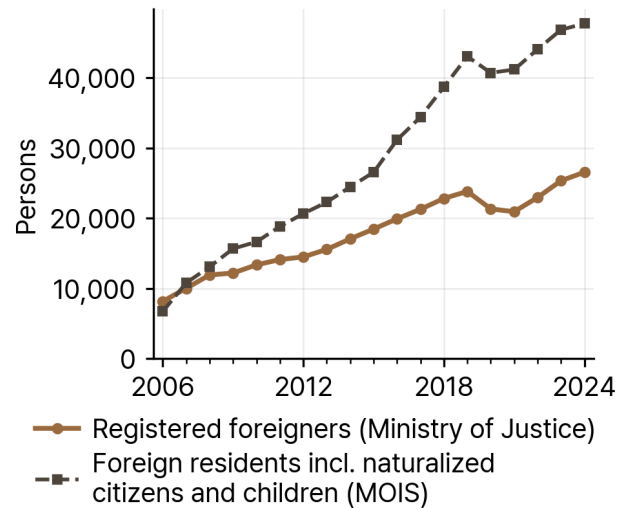
## 1 Size of the Foreign-Resident Population

Gwangju had 26,557 registered foreigners at the end of 2024, up from 8,155 in 2006, 17,064 in 2014 and 23,825 in 2019 (Figure 1 and Table 1). The count rose every year from 2006 to 2019. It fell to 21,323 in 2020 and 20,934 in 2021, when it was 2,891 (12.1 percent) below the 2019 level, and then rose each year to the 2024 total, the highest in the series.

The Ministry of the Interior and Safety count rose from 13,077 in 2008 to 24,466 in 2014 and 43,053 in 2019. It fell to 40,715 in 2020, grew again from 2021 and stood at 47,728 in 2024, 1.8 times the number of registered foreigners. That year it included 4,229 naturalized citizens and 7,617 children of foreign residents.

FIGURE 1

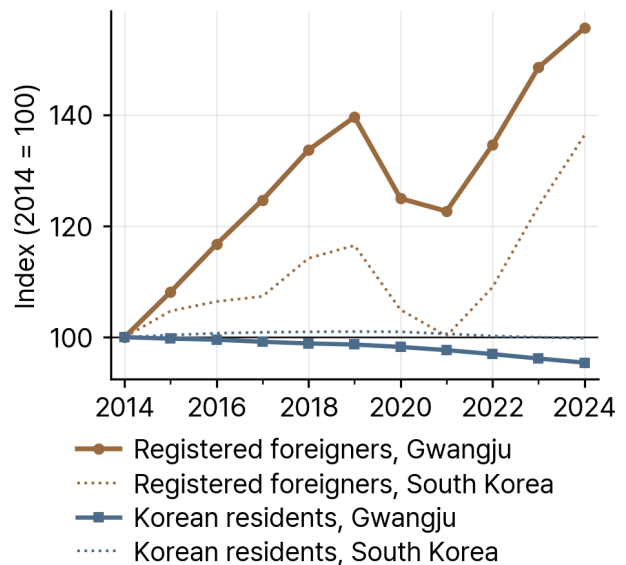
**Registered Foreigners and Foreign Residents in Gwangju, 2006-24**



Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks and Ministry of the Interior and Safety foreign-resident statistics, 2006-2024.

FIGURE 2

**Registered Foreigners and Korean Residents in Gwangju and South Korea, 2014-24 (index, 2014 = 100)**



Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks and Ministry of the Interior and Safety resident registration statistics, 2014-2024.

Gwangju's Korean population peaked at 1,475,884 in 2014 and declined every year after that, to 1,408,422 in 2024. With 2014 set to 100, the index for registered foreigners in Gwangju stood at 155.6 in 2024 and the index for Korean residents at 95.4 (Figure 2). Between 2019 and 2024 the registered count grew 11.5 percent (from 23,825 to 26,557), the 14th-fastest growth among the 17 provinces and metropolitan cities, while the number of Korean residents fell 3.3 percent (from 1,456,468 to 1,408,422).

Registered foreigners per 100 Korean residents rose from 0.6 in 2006 to 1.2 in 2014, 1.6 in 2019 and 1.9 in 2024, against 2.9 for South Korea as a whole in 2024. That year Gwangju ranked 14th among the 17 provinces and metropolitan cities by the number of registered foreigners and 12th by registered foreigners per Korean resident.

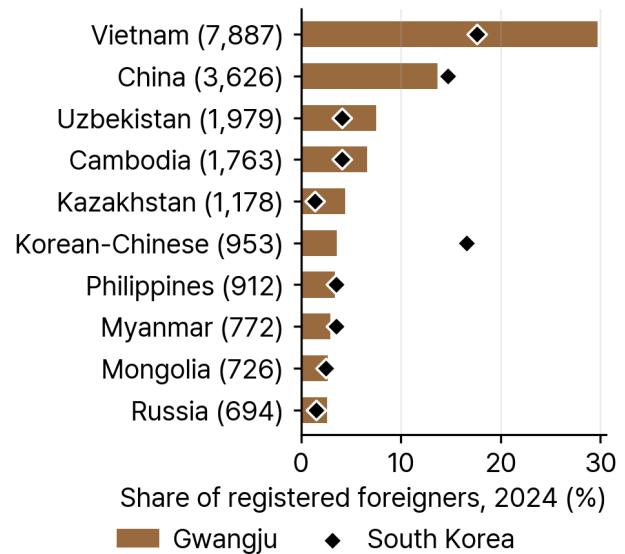
## 2 Nationalities

Vietnamese nationals were the largest group among Gwangju's registered foreigners in 2024, with 7,887 people or 29.7 percent, against 17.6 percent of registered foreigners nationally (Figure 3 and Table 2). Nationals of China (3,626, or 13.7 percent), Uzbekistan (1,979), Cambodia (1,763) and Kazakhstan (1,178) followed. Korean-Chinese, whom the Ministry of Justice counts separately from other Chinese nationals, numbered 953 (3.6 percent), against 16.6 percent of registered foreigners nationally.

Between 2019 and 2024 the number of Vietnamese nationals rose by 2,372, from 5,515 to 7,887, equal to 86.8 percent of the net increase of 2,732 in all registered foreigners. Among the ten largest groups, the fastest growth was among nationals of Myanmar (from 399 to 772, up 93.5 percent), Cambodia (from 1,173 to 1,763, up 50.3 percent) and Russia (from 484 to 694, up 43.4 percent). The numbers of Chinese nationals (from 4,468 to 3,626), Uzbek nationals (from 2,679 to 1,979), Korean-Chinese (from 1,396 to 953) and Filipino nationals (from 953 to 912) fell.

FIGURE 3

**Shares of the Ten Largest Nationalities among Registered Foreigners, Gwangju and South Korea, 2024**



Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks, 2024.

Gwangju was home to 1.8 percent of all registered foreigners in South Korea in 2024 and to larger shares of several national groups. Its shares were 8.1 percent for Ukrainian nationals (221 of 2,730), 5.8 percent for Kazakh nationals (1,178 of 20,482), 3.3 percent for South African nationals (152 of 4,641) and 3.2 percent each for Korean-Russians (77 of 2,383) and Uzbek nationals (1,979 of 61,733).

Registered foreigners in Gwangju came from 113 nationality groups in 2024. The Shannon diversity index, which rises with the number of groups and the evenness of their shares, was 2.5 in both 2014 and 2024, the 12th-highest value among the 17 provinces and metropolitan cities in 2024.

TABLE 1

**Registered Foreigners, Foreign Residents and Korean Residents in Gwangju, Selected Years, 2006-24**

| Year | Registered foreigners | Foreign residents (MOIS) | Korean residents | Registered foreigners per 100 Korean residents |
|------|-----------------------|--------------------------|------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| 2006 | 8,155                 | –                        | 1,407,798        | 0.6                                            |
| 2014 | 17,064                | 24,466                   | 1,475,884        | 1.2                                            |
| 2019 | 23,825                | 43,053                   | 1,456,468        | 1.6                                            |
| 2024 | 26,557                | 47,728                   | 1,408,422        | 1.9                                            |

Note: Registered foreigners are counted by the Ministry of Justice on 31 December. Foreign residents are counted by the Ministry of the Interior and Safety (MOIS) on 1 November and include naturalized citizens and the children of foreign residents. The table shows MOIS counts from 2008, when the ministry counted 13,077 foreign residents in Gwangju (– = not shown). In 2024, South Korea had 2.9 registered foreigners per 100 Korean residents.

Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks and Ministry of the Interior and Safety statistics, 2006-2024.

Overseas Koreans on F-4 status report their residence instead of registering and are not counted among registered foreigners. In 2024, 6,175 of them reported a residence in Gwangju, 1.1 percent of the 553,664 in South Korea. The

largest groups were nationals of Uzbekistan (1,673), Korean-Chinese (1,654), Korean-Russians (1,001), nationals of Kazakhstan (739) and nationals of the United States (422).

TABLE 2

**Ten Largest Nationalities among Registered Foreigners in Gwangju, 2019 and 2024**

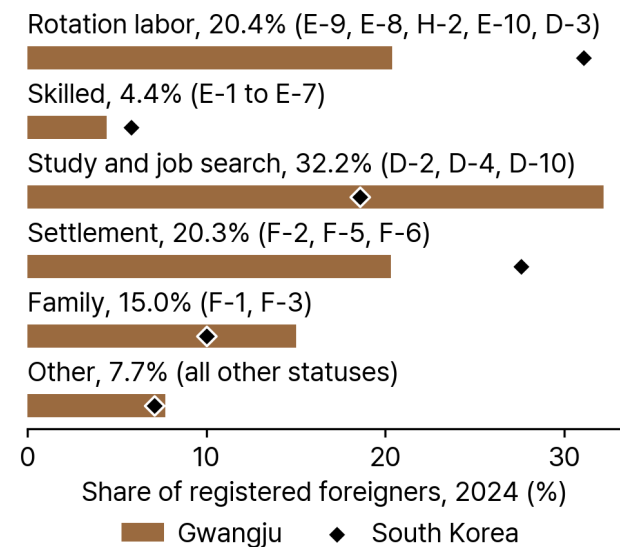
| Nationality    | 2019  | 2024  | Share of Gwangju's registered foreigners, 2024 (%) | Gwangju's share of the group in South Korea, 2024 (%) |
|----------------|-------|-------|----------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| Vietnam        | 5,515 | 7,887 | 29.7                                               | 3.0                                                   |
| China          | 4,468 | 3,626 | 13.7                                               | 1.7                                                   |
| Uzbekistan     | 2,679 | 1,979 | 7.5                                                | 3.2                                                   |
| Cambodia       | 1,173 | 1,763 | 6.6                                                | 2.9                                                   |
| Kazakhstan     | 1,051 | 1,178 | 4.4                                                | 5.8                                                   |
| Korean-Chinese | 1,396 | 953   | 3.6                                                | 0.4                                                   |
| Philippines    | 953   | 912   | 3.4                                                | 1.8                                                   |
| Myanmar        | 399   | 772   | 2.9                                                | 1.5                                                   |
| Mongolia       | 555   | 726   | 2.7                                                | 1.9                                                   |
| Russia         | 484   | 694   | 2.6                                                | 3.1                                                   |

Note: China excludes Korean-Chinese and Russia excludes Korean-Russians, whom the Ministry of Justice counts separately. Gwangju had 1.8 percent of all registered foreigners in South Korea in 2024.

Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks, 2019 and 2024.

### 3 Residence Statuses

FIGURE 4

**Registered Foreigners by Status Group, Gwangju and South Korea, 2024**

Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks, 2024.

Study and job search was the largest status group in Gwangju in 2024, with 8,562 registered foreigners or 32.2 percent, against 18.6 percent nationally (Figure 4). Rotation labor covered 5,425 people (20.4 percent, against 31.1 percent nationally), settlement 5,401 (20.3 percent, against 27.6 percent), family 3,971 (15.0 percent, against 10.0 percent) and

skilled statuses 1,160 (4.4 percent, against 5.8 percent). The other 2,038 (7.7 percent, against 7.1 percent nationally) were on other statuses.

D-2 student status was the most common single status in 2024, with 5,173 holders (19.5 percent), followed by E-9 non-professional employment (4,522), F-6 marriage migration (3,311), F-1 visiting cohabitation (3,004) and D-4 general trainee status (2,672) (Table 3). Among the ten most common statuses, Gwangju's share of all holders in South Korea was highest for D-10 job seekers (3.9 percent), D-4 (3.3 percent), F-1 (3.1 percent), the G-1 miscellaneous status (3.0 percent) and D-2 (2.9 percent). It was lowest for F-5 permanent residence (0.7 percent), H-2 visiting employment (1.0 percent) and E-9 (1.4 percent), all below the city's 1.8 percent share of registered foreigners.

The Ministry of the Interior and Safety count uses its own categories. Of the 47,728 foreign residents it counted in Gwangju in 2024, 35,882 were foreign nationals, made up of 6,400 workers, 3,760 marriage migrants, 7,430 international students, 5,021 ethnic Koreans of foreign nationality and 13,271 other foreign nationals. The other 11,846 were 4,229 naturalized citizens and 7,617 children of foreign residents.

### 4 Districts and Population-Decline Areas

Gwangju is divided into five autonomous districts (gu). Gwangsan-gu had 14,957 registered foreigners in 2024, 56.3 percent of the city's total (14,957 of 26,557), and 3.8 per 100 Korean residents (Figure 5 and Table 4). It was followed by

Buk-gu with 5,295 (1.2 per 100 Korean residents), Seo-gu with 2,714 (1.0), Dong-gu with 1,879 (1.8) and Nam-gu with 1,712 (0.8).

Between 2019 and 2024, four of Gwangju's five districts lost Korean residents, and Dong-gu gained 7,618. Seo-gu lost the most (21,925) and gained 1,023 registered foreigners.

Gwangsan-gu lost 13,704 Korean residents and gained 1,496 registered foreigners, the largest gain of any district. Dong-gu was the only district where the number of registered foreigners fell, by 40.

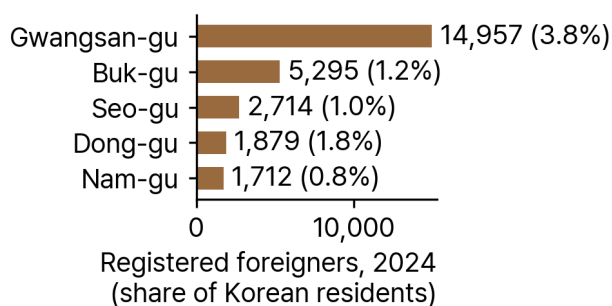
**TABLE 3**  
**Ten Most Common Residence Statuses among Registered Foreigners in Gwangju, 2024**

| Status | Meaning                     | Registered foreigners | Share of Gwangju's registered foreigners (%) | Gwangju's share of all holders in South Korea (%) |
|--------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| D-2    | Student                     | 5,173                 | 19.5                                         | 2.9                                               |
| E-9    | Non-professional employment | 4,522                 | 17.0                                         | 1.4                                               |
| F-6    | Marriage migration          | 3,311                 | 12.5                                         | 2.3                                               |
| F-1    | Visiting cohabitation       | 3,004                 | 11.3                                         | 3.1                                               |
| D-4    | General trainee             | 2,672                 | 10.1                                         | 3.3                                               |
| G-1    | Other (miscellaneous)       | 1,688                 | 6.4                                          | 3.0                                               |
| F-5    | Permanent residence         | 1,513                 | 5.7                                          | 0.7                                               |
| F-3    | Dependent family            | 967                   | 3.6                                          | 1.9                                               |
| H-2    | Visiting employment         | 875                   | 3.3                                          | 1.0                                               |
| D-10   | Job seeker                  | 717                   | 2.7                                          | 3.9                                               |

Note: Meanings follow the Ministry of Justice status labels. Gwangju had 1.8 percent of all registered foreigners in South Korea in 2024.

Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks, 2024.

**FIGURE 5**  
**Registered Foreigners by District in Gwangju, 2024**



Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks and Ministry of the Interior and Safety resident registration statistics, 2024.

None of Gwangju's districts was among the 89 population-decline areas that the Ministry of the Interior and Safety designated in October 2021. Dong-gu was one of the 18 areas of interest named at the same time. Between 2019 and 2024 it gained 7,618 Korean residents and lost 40 registered foreigners. Dong-gu was again among 18 areas of interest in a designation announced jointly by the Ministry of the Interior and Safety and the industry ministry, effective 31 December 2025 (Asia Economy, 2025).

In 2025 the Ministry of Justice extended its regional specialized visa (F-2-R) from the 89 population-decline areas to 107 areas by adding the 18 areas of interest, the category that includes Dong-gu. The program had 85 participating basic local governments (cities, counties and districts), and the ministry planned a total of 5,072 places under the visa nationwide (Edaily, 2025).

No district in Gwangju met the definition of an ethnic enclave used in this profile in 2024, a location quotient of at least 2 for a nationality (its share of the district's registered foreigners divided by its share of all registered foreigners nationwide) with the group making up at least 30 percent of the district's registered foreigners.

## 5 Population Trends

Gwangju's Korean population rose from 1,407,798 in 2006 to a peak of 1,475,884 in 2014 and fell every year from 2015 to 2024, when it was 1,408,422, 624 more than in 2006. It fell by 67,462 (4.6 percent) between 2014 and 2024 and by 48,046 (3.3 percent) between 2019 and 2024. The gain of 2,732 registered foreigners over the latter period equaled 5.7 percent of that loss.

TABLE 4

**Registered Foreigners and Korean Residents by District in Gwangju, 2019-24**

| District    | Registered foreigners, 2024 | Per 100 Korean residents, 2024 | Change in Korean residents, 2019-24 | Change in registered foreigners, 2019-24 | Population-decline area |
|-------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Gwangsan-gu | 14,957                      | 3.8                            | -13,704                             | +1,496                                   | No                      |
| Buk-gu      | 5,295                       | 1.2                            | -9,572                              | +94                                      | No                      |
| Seo-gu      | 2,714                       | 1.0                            | -21,925                             | +1,023                                   | No                      |
| Dong-gu     | 1,879                       | 1.8                            | +7,618                              | -40                                      | No (area of interest)   |
| Nam-gu      | 1,712                       | 0.8                            | -10,463                             | +159                                     | No                      |

Note: Population-decline areas and areas of interest as designated by the Ministry of the Interior and Safety in October 2021. For Gwangju as a whole, the change from 2019 to 2024 was -48,046 Korean residents and +2,732 registered foreigners.

Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks and Ministry of the Interior and Safety statistics, 2019-2024.

The 2025 Population and Housing Census counted 1,432,000 people in Gwangju, 12,000 fewer than in 2024 and 46,000 fewer than in 2020 (Mudeung Ilbo, 2025). The resident-registration population was 1,399,880 in May 2025, below 1.4 million (Siminsori, 2025).

In 2024 Gwangju had the highest net out-migration rate among the 17 provinces and metropolitan cities (-0.6 percent) for the second year in a row, according to Statistics Korea's domestic migration statistics (Namdo Ilbo, 2025a). Net out-migration of people in their 20s and 30s rose from 3,137 in 2020 to 5,860 in 2024, 73.6 percent of the city's total net out-migration that year (Siminsori, 2025).

Gwangju's total fertility rate was 0.70 in 2024, down from 0.71 in 2023. Across the city's districts it ranged from 0.59 in Seo-gu and Nam-gu to 0.86 in Dong-gu (Namdo Ilbo, 2025b).

A population impact assessment commissioned by the city and released on 7 December 2025 projects that Gwangju's population will fall by about 266,000 people (18.4 percent) between 2025 and 2052. Over the same period the median age rises from 45.1 to 57.3, the share of people aged 15 to 64 falls from 70.9 percent to 52.5 percent, and the share aged 65 and older rises from 17.9 percent to 38.8 percent (Gwangju Maeil Shinmun, 2025).

## 6 Industry and Foreign Workers

Registered foreigners on E-9 (non-professional employment) status, the status issued under the Employment Permit System, numbered 4,422 in Gwangju in 2014, 4,002 in 2019, 3,307 in 2021 and 4,522 in 2024. In 2024 they made up 17.0 percent of the city's registered foreigners and 1.4 percent of all E-9 holders in South Korea.

Ministry of Employment and Labor data for the second quarter of 2026 count 3,599 E-9 workers in Gwangju. Of these, 3,171 (88.1 percent) worked in manufacturing, 199 in agriculture and

livestock, 186 in construction and 43 in services, and none in fishing, mining or forestry (Ministry of Employment and Labor, 2026).

The Ministry of the Interior and Safety count of foreign workers in Gwangju fell from 7,312 in 2019 to 6,006 in 2023, a decline of about 18 percent, while the count in neighboring South Jeolla Province rose about 36 percent, from 18,839 to 25,625 (Namdo Ilbo, 2024a). In the KIRD data, the ministry counted 6,400 foreign workers in Gwangju in 2024.

The same 2024 report describes foreign workers in Gwangju as concentrated in the root industries (ppuri saneop) of the Hanam industrial park, including steel-product manufacturing and processing, casting, molding, machining and welding. It reported that these sectors were losing foreign staff amid a prolonged downturn in construction and wage competition from the Seoul metropolitan area (Namdo Ilbo, 2024a).

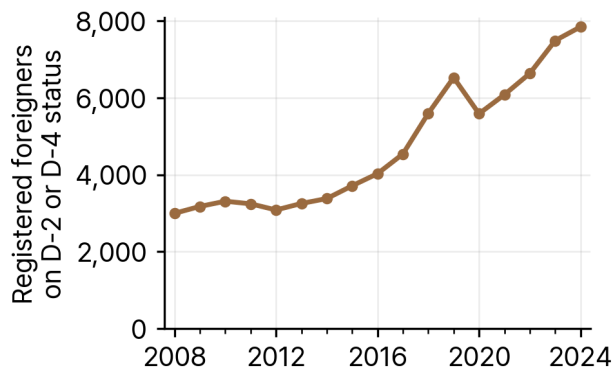
Seasonal workers on E-8 status numbered 5 on 31 December 2022 and 14 on 31 December of both 2023 and 2024. The Ministry of Justice count is taken on 31 December and misses most seasonal workers, whose contracts end before winter. To our knowledge, no published source reports a seasonal-worker allocation or arrival count for Gwangju alone.

## 7 International Students and Universities

Registered foreigners on D-2 (student) or D-4 (general trainee) status in Gwangju numbered 2,995 in 2008 and 3,378 in 2014. The count nearly doubled by 2019, to 6,525, fell to 5,585 in 2020 and rose every year after that, to 7,845 in 2024 (Figure 6). Gwangju had 3.0 percent of all D-2 and D-4 holders in South Korea in 2024, against 1.8 percent of all registered foreigners. Another 717 registered foreigners were on D-10 job seeker status.

FIGURE 6

**Registered Foreigners on Student (D-2) or General Trainee (D-4) Status in Gwangju, 2008-24**



Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks, 2008-2024.

The Ministry of the Interior and Safety counted 7,430 international students in Gwangju in 2024, 20.7 percent of the 35,882 foreign nationals in its count (7,430 divided by 35,882). A newspaper report of the ministry's count put Gwangju's international students at 7,199 in November 2023. As of November 2023, the universities with the most international students were Honam University (1,293), Chonnam National University (884, excluding its Yeosu campus and graduate students), Gwangju Women's University (714), Songwon University (554), Gwangju University (462) and Chosun University (290) (Namdo Ilbo, 2024b).

Education statistics for 1 April 2024 counted 1,753 international students at Honam University, of whom 1,474 (84.1 percent) were Chinese nationals (SBS News, 2026).

The city cites 6,339 international students enrolled in its higher education institutions in 2024 as the baseline for its plan to raise the number to 12,000 by 2029 (Korea.net, 2025). The counts in this section differ in scope. The city's figure covers students enrolled in higher education, the Ministry of the Interior and Safety figure covers international students among foreign residents, and the KIRD series covers all registered foreigners on D-2 or D-4 status. The city's measures for international students are described under Provincial Policy.

## 8 Provincial Policy

Gwangju's basic ordinance on foreign residents, the Gwangju Metropolitan City Ordinance on Support for Foreign Residents, was enacted on 28 September 2020. Its stated purpose is to improve foreign residents' living conditions, protect their human rights and contribute to social integration (U-LEX, 2020).

In July 2023 the city created a Foreign Resident Affairs Division (외국인주민과), which it describes as the first dedicated department of its kind among Korea's special and metropolitan cities (Kyunghyang Shinmun, 2024). Gwangsan-gu had created its own Foreign Resident Affairs Division, the first among Gwangju's five districts, by upgrading its multicultural

team with effect from 31 December 2022. At the time, 54 percent of Gwangju's foreign residents, about 22,859 people as of 2021, lived in Gwangsan-gu (Namdo Ilbo, 2022).

The Gwangju Foreign Resident Support Center opened on 14 April 2024 near the Hanam industrial park in Gwangsan-gu, in the facility of the former Gwangju foreign workers' support center. The Gwangju International Center, chosen in a public competition in March 2024, operates it through 2026. It provides integrated services to all foreign residents, including international students, marriage migrants and overseas Koreans; the earlier center had supported foreign workers only (Kyunghyang Shinmun, 2024).

Under the Ministry of Justice's 2025 pilot of metropolitan-type visas (gwangyeokhyeong bija), Gwangju was one of 10 provincial-level governments that submitted business plans for a customized student visa (D-2) scheme tied to designated priority fields of study. The others were Seoul, Busan, Incheon, Gangwon State, North Chungcheong Province, South Chungcheong Province, Jeonbuk State, South Jeolla Province and Jeju (MRTC, 2025).

In 2025 the city submitted to the city council a draft International Student Support Ordinance, which would be the city's first legal basis for attracting international students and helping them remain in the region, in response to regional population decline and the crisis of local universities. The legislative notice period was 9 to 29 September 2025, and the city expected the council to approve the ordinance by December 2025. The city's targets are 12,000 international students and a local settlement rate of 10 percent by 2029, up from under 5 percent, with 5,125 million won budgeted for each of 2025 and 2026 (4,297 million won in national funds and 828 million won in city funds) (Local Newspapers Association of Korea, 2025).

An integrated support plan for international students for 2025 to 2029 commits 25.85 billion won to regionally customized recruitment, talent development and student-life support, and support for employment, startups and settlement. It includes a Gwangju Global Hub Center and overseas study fairs organized jointly with local universities (Korea.net, 2025). National measures that apply to Dong-gu as a population-decline area of interest are described under Districts and Population-Decline Areas.

## 9 Languages

The KIRD dataset estimates first-language speakers among registered foreigners from nationality counts and Ethnologue first-language shares. By this estimate, Vietnamese was the most common first language among Gwangju's registered foreigners in 2024, with 6,744 speakers. Chinese (3,777), Khmer (1,800), Uzbek (1,481) and Russian (1,339) followed, and these five were the only languages with 1,000 or more estimated speakers (Table 5). Kazakh (883), Tagalog or Filipino (797), Mongolian (636), Thai (586) and Burmese (495) completed the ten most common.

## 10 Service Organizations and Community Places

The KIRD census of 1,717 migrant-serving organizations in South Korea lists 109 in Gwangju, 41.0 per 10,000 registered foreigners in 2024, against 11.5 per 10,000 nationally. Of the

109, 103 provide direct services. The most common types are medical providers (27), program sites (18), nongovernmental organizations (18), community organizations (14) and worker centers (11). Five of the 109, identified by name, are family centers (gajok senteo).

TABLE 5  
Ten Most Common Estimated First Languages among Registered Foreigners in Gwangju, 2024

| Language         | Estimated speakers |
|------------------|--------------------|
| Vietnamese       | 6,744              |
| Chinese          | 3,777              |
| Khmer            | 1,800              |
| Uzbek            | 1,481              |
| Russian          | 1,339              |
| Kazakh           | 883                |
| Tagalog/Filipino | 797                |
| Mongolian        | 636                |
| Thai             | 586                |
| Burmese          | 495                |

Note: Speakers are estimated by applying Ethnologue first-language shares to the number of registered foreigners of each nationality.

Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks and Ethnologue first-language shares, 2024.

By population served, 44 organizations serve workers, 27 families, 14 refugees, 9 women, 8 all migrants, 8 overseas Korean (diaspora) communities, 7 children and 6 undocumented migrants, and 4 each serve students and youth. An organization can serve more than one population, so these counts sum to 131.

According to the Ministry of Justice, 4,762 Koryoin lived in Wolgok 1-dong and 2-dong in Gwangsan-gu in June 2024, 176 times the 27 recorded in 2008, and their number is estimated at about 7,000 when undocumented residents are included (Namdo Ilbo, 2024c).

The area, known as the Koryoin Village, is the subject of a "history and culture village number one" (yeoksa munhwa maeul 1beonji) project that presents Koryoin history, life and

culture (Namdo Ilbo, 2022). The Digital Encyclopedia of Gwangju Culture describes it as a representative place where Koryoin lead a communal life. It lists a support center opened in 2005 that grew into an integrated support center, a kindergarten opened in 2012, a Koryoin FM radio station launched in 2016 as the first of its kind in the country, and a Koryoin history museum that received a presidential award for its record-keeping in 2020 (Jang, 2020).

In Wolgok 2-dong, near the village, the Darasil Merchants' Association (달아실상인회) had grown from 23 founding members to 68 merchants by 2026, a mix of long-established businesses and businesses operated by immigrants that includes restaurants, a bakery and an art gallery, under an initiative to create jobs for Koryoin who moved to Gwangju (News Portal 1, 2026).

**About these profiles.** The KIRD province profiles describe the foreign-resident population of each of South Korea's seventeen provinces and metropolitan cities. Figures come from the Korea Immigration Regional Dashboard (KIRD) dataset, built from the Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks and the Ministry of the Interior and Safety foreign-resident statistics for 2006 to 2024 (<https://doi.org/10.3886/E249944V1>); context comes from the sources listed. Interactive maps and tables: <https://immigrantsinkorea.today>.

Suggested citation: Korea Immigration Regional Dashboard (KIRD). 2026. "Foreign Residents in Gwangju." Foreign Residents in South Korea series, September 2026. Data: Korea Immigration Regional Dashboard (KIRD) dataset, <https://doi.org/10.3886/E249944V1>. Interactive maps and tables: <https://immigrantsinkorea.today>.

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# Foreign Residents in Daejeon

SEPTEMBER 2026

## Summary

At the end of 2024, 26,249 registered foreigners lived in Daejeon, 1.8 percent of the 1,488,353 in South Korea. Daejeon ranked 15th among the 17 provinces and metropolitan cities by this count and 13th by registered foreigners per Korean resident, with 1.8 registered foreigners per 100 Korean residents against 2.9 nationally. The Ministry of the Interior and Safety (MOIS) counted 42,043 foreign residents in the city in 2024, a count that also includes naturalized citizens and the children of foreign residents.

## Highlights

- ▶ Daejeon had 26,249 registered foreigners at the end of 2024, 15th among the 17 provinces and metropolitan cities, after an increase of 37.4 percent from 2019 that was the third-fastest among them, while the city's Korean population fell 2.4 percent.
- ▶ Students, trainees and job seekers on D-2, D-4 and D-10 status made up 54.8 percent of Daejeon's registered foreigners in 2024, against 18.6 percent nationally, and the city was home to 5.4 percent of all D-2 and D-4 holders in South Korea, three times its 1.8 percent share of all registered foreigners.
- ▶ Vietnamese nationals were 37.3 percent of Daejeon's registered foreigners in 2024, and their number rose from 4,182 in 2019 to 9,794, an increase equal to 78.6 percent of the city's net gain of 7,140 registered foreigners over the period.

The registered foreign population grew from 9,804 in 2006 to 26,249 in 2024, an increase of 167.7 percent, while the number of Korean residents fell 1.8 percent, to 1,439,157. More than half of the increase (8,957 of 16,445) came between 2021 and 2024, after the count had dropped from 19,109 in 2019 to 16,895 in 2020. Between 2019 and 2024, registered foreigners

increased 37.4 percent, the third-fastest growth among the 17 provinces, and the gain of 7,140 equaled 20.0 percent of the city's loss of 35,713 Korean residents.

In 2024, D-2 students, D-4 general trainees and D-10 job seekers made up 54.8 percent of Daejeon's registered foreigners, against 18.6 percent nationally, and rotation labor statuses such as E-9 covered 6.5 percent, against 31.1 percent nationally. Higher-education institutions with main campuses in Daejeon enrolled 11,950 international students as of 1 April 2024 KEDI, 2024. Vietnamese nationals were the largest group of registered foreigners, at 37.3 percent. The KIRD census of migrant-serving organizations counts 64 in Daejeon, 24.4 per 10,000 registered foreigners in 2024, about twice the national rate of 11.5. None of the city's five districts is a population-decline area, and three are among the 18 areas of interest designated in 2021.

### BOX 1

#### Definitions

**Registered foreigners (등록외국인).** Foreign nationals in South Korea for more than 90 days who register with immigration authorities, counted by the Ministry of Justice on 31 December of each year. Overseas Koreans on F-4 status report their residence instead of registering and are not included. Counts in this Spotlight are registered foreigners unless another source is named.

**MOIS foreign residents (외국인주민).** The count of foreign residents published by the Ministry of the Interior and Safety (MOIS), taken on 1 November in recent years. It adds naturalized citizens and the children of foreign residents to foreign nationals.

**Korean residents.** Korean nationals in the Ministry of the Interior and Safety resident registration count at the end of each year. Registered foreigners per 100 Korean residents is the registered count divided by this count, multiplied by 100.

**Residence status groups.** Rotation labor covers E-9 (non-professional employment), E-8 (seasonal worker), H-2 (visiting employment), E-10 (crew employment) and D-3 (industrial trainee). Skilled covers E-1 to E-7. Study and job search covers D-2 (student), D-4 (general trainee) and D-10 (job seeker). Settlement covers F-2 (residential), F-5 (permanent residence) and F-6 (marriage migration). Family covers F-1 (visiting cohabitation) and F-3 (dependent family). All other statuses form a residual group.

**Population-decline areas (인구감소지역).** The 89 districts that the Ministry of the Interior and Safety designated as population-decline areas on 19 October 2021. At the same time it designated 18 districts as areas of interest (인구감소 관심지역), a separate watch list.

**Location quotient and ethnic enclave.** The location quotient divides a nationality's registered foreigners per Korean resident in a district by the same ratio for South Korea as a whole. In this Spotlight, a district is an ethnic enclave of a nationality when the quotient is at least 2, the nationality makes up at least 30 percent of the district's registered foreigners, and its members number at least 200.

**Diversity index.** The Shannon index (H) of the nationalities of registered foreigners. It is higher when registered foreigners are spread more evenly across more nationalities.

## 1 Size of the Foreign-Resident Population

The Ministry of Justice counted 26,249 registered foreigners in Daejeon on 31 December 2024, up from 9,804 in 2006, 15,658 in 2014 and 19,109 in 2019 (Figure 1). The count fell 11.6 percent between 2019 and 2020, to 16,895, and rose in each year after 2020. The increase from 2021 (17,292) to 2024 was 8,957 people, or 51.8 percent.

The MOIS count of foreign residents, which adds naturalized citizens and the children of foreign residents, grew from 14,682 in 2008 to 23,729 in 2014, 34,148 in 2019 and 42,043 in 2024. It was larger than the registered count in every year from 2008 to 2024, and in 2024 it was 1.6 times the registered count (42,043 against 26,249).

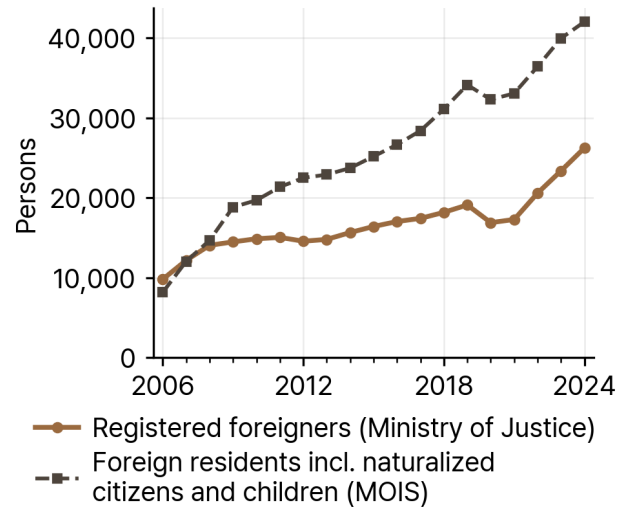
The number of Korean residents of Daejeon peaked at 1,532,811 in 2013 and declined in every year from 2014 to 2024, to 1,439,157 (Figure 2). Between 2014 and 2024 it fell 6.0 percent (92,652 people), while registered foreigners grew 67.6 percent (10,591 people). Between 2019 and 2024, registered foreigners grew 37.4 percent, the third-fastest growth among the 17 provinces, and Korean residents fell 2.4 percent. The gain of 7,140 registered foreigners equaled 20.0 percent of the loss of 35,713 Korean residents.

Daejeon had 0.7 registered foreigners per 100 Korean residents in 2006, 1.0 in 2014, 1.3 in 2019 and 1.8 in 2024 (Table 1). In 2024 it ranked 15th among the 17 provinces by the number of registered foreigners and 13th by registered

foreigners per Korean resident. The national figure in 2024 was 2.9 per 100 Korean residents, and Daejeon's share of South Korea's 1,488,353 registered foreigners was 1.8 percent.

FIGURE 1

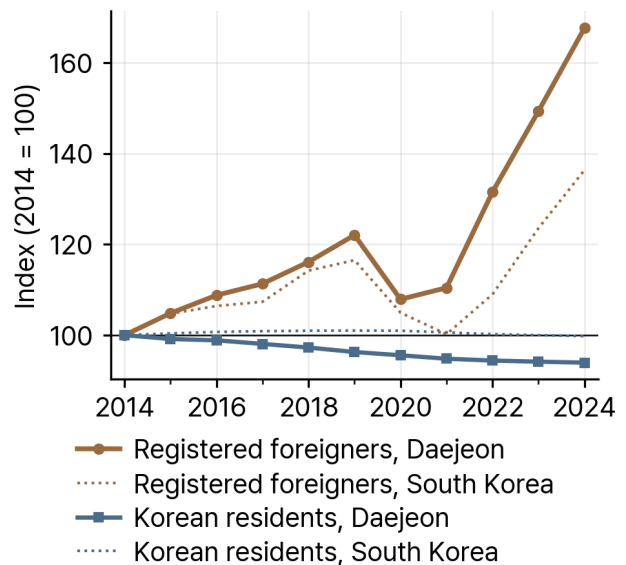
**Registered Foreigners and MOIS Foreign Residents in Daejeon, 2006-24**



Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks and Ministry of the Interior and Safety statistics, 2006-2024.

FIGURE 2

**Registered Foreigners and Korean Residents in Daejeon and South Korea, 2014-24 (2014 = 100)**



Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks and Ministry of the Interior and Safety resident registration statistics, 2014-2024.

## 2 Nationalities

Vietnam was the largest nationality among Daejeon's registered foreigners in 2024, with 9,794 people (37.3 percent), followed by China (4,138; 15.8 percent), Korean-Chinese (1,093; 4.2 percent), Mongolia (951; 3.6 percent) and Uzbekistan (900; 3.4 percent) (Figure 3 and Table 2). The ten largest nationalities made up 75.8 percent of the total (19,908

people). The Vietnamese share was about twice the national share of 17.6 percent in 2024, and the Korean-Chinese share was about a quarter of the national share of 16.6 percent.

Between 2019 and 2024 the number of Vietnamese nationals rose from 4,182 to 9,794. The increase of 5,612 equaled 78.6 percent of the city's net gain of 7,140 registered foreigners. In

2019 China had more registered foreigners in Daejeon than Vietnam (5,446 against 4,182), and by 2024 the Chinese count had fallen by 1,308, to 4,138. The Korean-Chinese count fell from 1,382 to 1,093 over the same years and the United States count from 714 to 595. Mongolia (469 to 951), Bangladesh (242 to 590) and Indonesia (348 to 627) grew faster than the city total.

TABLE 1

**Registered Foreigners, MOIS Foreign Residents and Korean Residents in Daejeon, Selected Years, 2006-24**

| Year | Registered foreigners | MOIS foreign residents | Korean residents | Registered foreigners per 100 Korean residents |
|------|-----------------------|------------------------|------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| 2006 | 9,804                 | n/a                    | 1,466,158        | 0.7                                            |
| 2014 | 15,658                | 23,729                 | 1,531,809        | 1.0                                            |
| 2019 | 19,109                | 34,148                 | 1,474,870        | 1.3                                            |
| 2024 | 26,249                | 42,043                 | 1,439,157        | 1.8                                            |

Note: n/a = not shown. MOIS counts appear in the table from 2008. The MOIS counts for 2006 (8,167) and 2007 (12,044), plotted in Figure 1, were below the registered counts for those years (9,804 and 12,177) although the MOIS definition is broader. For South Korea as a whole in 2024, there were 1,488,353 registered foreigners, 51,217,221 Korean residents and 2.9 registered foreigners per 100 Korean residents.

Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks and Ministry of the Interior and Safety statistics, 2006-2024.

Daejeon had 1.8 percent of South Korea's registered foreigners in 2024 and larger shares of several national groups: 7.5 percent of Ethiopians (108 of 1,445), 5.1 percent of Ghanaians (63 of 1,224), 4.4 percent of South Africans (202 of 4,641), 3.9 percent of Indians (577 of 14,762) and 3.7 percent of Vietnamese (9,794 of 261,581).

The KIRD data record 141 nationalities among Daejeon's registered foreigners in 2024. The Shannon diversity index was 2.2 in both 2014 and 2024 at one decimal place, and in

2024 it was 15th of the 17 provinces, counting from the most diverse.

Overseas Koreans on F-4 status report their residence instead of registering, so they are not among the registered foreigners counted above. In 2024, 3,380 of them reported a residence in Daejeon, 0.6 percent of the 553,664 nationwide. Korean-Chinese made up 1,791 of the 3,380, followed by nationals of the United States (899), Canada (309) and Australia (107), and by Korean-Russians (63).

TABLE 2

**Ten Largest Nationalities among Registered Foreigners in Daejeon, 2019 and 2024**

| Nationality    | 2019  | 2024  | Share of Daejeon's registered foreigners, 2024 (%) | Daejeon's share of this nationality in South Korea, 2024 (%) |
|----------------|-------|-------|----------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|
| Vietnam        | 4,182 | 9,794 | 37.3                                               | 3.7                                                          |
| China          | 5,446 | 4,138 | 15.8                                               | 1.9                                                          |
| Korean-Chinese | 1,382 | 1,093 | 4.2                                                | 0.4                                                          |
| Mongolia       | 469   | 951   | 3.6                                                | 2.5                                                          |
| Uzbekistan     | 793   | 900   | 3.4                                                | 1.5                                                          |
| Philippines    | 661   | 643   | 2.4                                                | 1.2                                                          |
| Indonesia      | 348   | 627   | 2.4                                                | 1.1                                                          |
| United States  | 714   | 595   | 2.3                                                | 1.7                                                          |
| Bangladesh     | 242   | 590   | 2.2                                                | 2.1                                                          |
| India          | 404   | 577   | 2.2                                                | 3.9                                                          |

Note: Korean-Chinese (Chinese nationals of Korean ethnicity) are counted separately from other Chinese nationals. Shares of Daejeon's registered foreigners use the 2024 total of 26,249. Daejeon's share of all registered foreigners in South Korea was 1.8 percent in 2024.

Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks, 2019 and 2024.

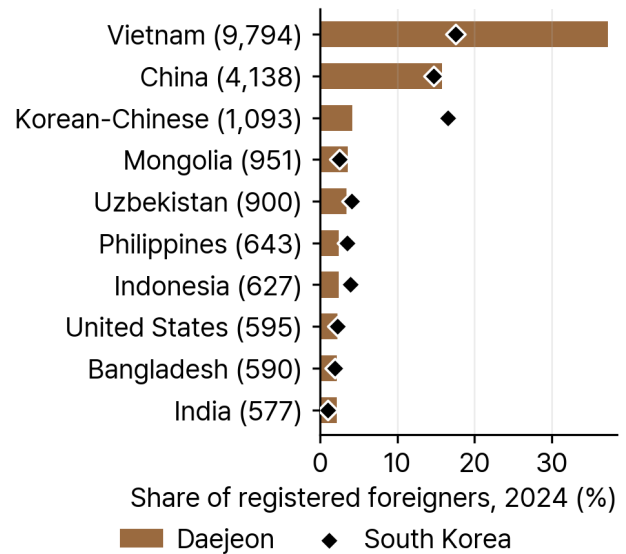
### 3 Residence Statuses

Study and job-search statuses (D-2, D-4 and D-10) covered 14,378 of Daejeon's registered foreigners in 2024, 54.8 percent of the total, against 18.6 percent in South Korea as a whole (Figure 4). Settlement statuses (F-2, F-5 and F-6) covered 20.6 percent (27.6 percent nationally), family statuses (F-1 and F-3) 9.1 percent (10.0 percent), rotation labor 6.5 percent (31.1 percent), skilled statuses (E-1 to E-7) 5.7 percent (5.8 percent) and all other statuses 3.2 percent (7.1 percent).

D-2 student status was the most common in 2024, with 9,302 holders (35.4 percent of registered foreigners), followed by D-4 general trainees (4,501; 17.1 percent) and F-6 marriage migrants (2,985; 11.4 percent) (Table 3). In 2024 Daejeon had 5.2 percent of all D-2 holders and 5.6 percent of all D-4 holders in South Korea, about three times its 1.8 percent share of registered foreigners, and 3.2 percent of D-10 job seekers. Its 1,260 E-9 workers were 0.4 percent of the national total, and its 1,633 permanent residents (F-5) were 0.8 percent.

FIGURE 3

Ten Largest Nationalities among Registered Foreigners in Daejeon, with Their Shares in South Korea, 2024



Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks, 2024.

TABLE 3

Ten Most Common Residence Statuses among Registered Foreigners in Daejeon, 2024

| Status | Meaning                     | Registered foreigners | Share of Daejeon's registered foreigners (%) | Daejeon's share of all holders in South Korea (%) |
|--------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| D-2    | Student                     | 9,302                 | 35.4                                         | 5.2                                               |
| D-4    | General trainee             | 4,501                 | 17.1                                         | 5.6                                               |
| F-6    | Marriage migration          | 2,985                 | 11.4                                         | 2.0                                               |
| F-5    | Permanent residence         | 1,633                 | 6.2                                          | 0.8                                               |
| F-1    | Visiting cohabitation       | 1,382                 | 5.3                                          | 1.4                                               |
| E-9    | Non-professional employment | 1,260                 | 4.8                                          | 0.4                                               |
| F-3    | Dependent family            | 1,014                 | 3.9                                          | 2.0                                               |
| F-2    | Residential                 | 794                   | 3.0                                          | 1.3                                               |
| G-1    | Other (miscellaneous)       | 624                   | 2.4                                          | 1.1                                               |
| D-10   | Job seeker                  | 575                   | 2.2                                          | 3.2                                               |

Note: Shares of Daejeon's registered foreigners use the 2024 total of 26,249. Daejeon's share of all registered foreigners in South Korea was 1.8 percent in 2024. F-4 overseas Koreans report their residence and are not included.

Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks, 2024.

In the MOIS count for 2024, Daejeon's 42,043 foreign residents consisted of 31,322 foreign nationals, 3,911 naturalized citizens and 6,810 children of foreign residents. The foreign nationals comprised 12,605 students, 3,593 marriage migrants, 2,895 workers, 2,098 ethnic Koreans of foreign nationality and 10,131 other foreign nationals. Students made up 30.0 percent of the MOIS total and workers 6.9 percent.

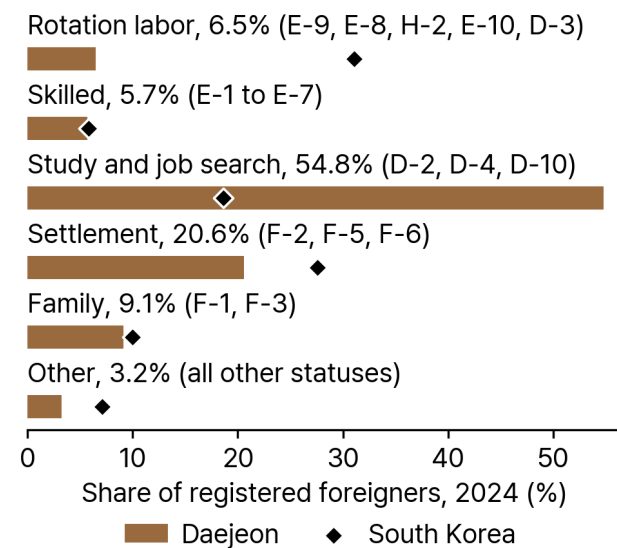
### 4 Districts and Population-Decline Areas

Daejeon has five districts (gu). In 2024 Yuseong-gu had the most registered foreigners (8,515, or 32.4 percent of the city total), followed by Dong-gu (7,089; 27.0 percent), Seo-gu (5,841), Daedeok-gu (3,154) and Jung-gu (1,650) (Figure 5 and

Table 4). Relative to the Korean population, Dong-gu had the most registered foreigners in 2024, 3.2 per 100 Korean residents, and Jung-gu the fewest, 0.7.

FIGURE 4

**Residence Status Groups of Registered Foreigners in Daejeon and South Korea, 2024**



Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks, 2024.

TABLE 4

**Registered Foreigners and Korean Residents by District in Daejeon, 2019-24**

| District   | Registered foreigners, 2024 | Per 100 Korean residents, 2024 | Change in Korean residents, 2019-24 | Change in registered foreigners, 2019-24 | Population-decline area | Area of interest |
|------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------|
| Yuseong-gu | 8,515                       | 2.3                            | +20,095                             | +2,372                                   | No                      | No               |
| Dong-gu    | 7,089                       | 3.2                            | -8,258                              | +1,848                                   | No                      | Yes              |
| Seo-gu     | 5,841                       | 1.3                            | -23,271                             | +2,037                                   | No                      | No               |
| Daedeok-gu | 3,154                       | 1.9                            | -8,814                              | +766                                     | No                      | Yes              |
| Jung-gu    | 1,650                       | 0.7                            | -15,465                             | +117                                     | No                      | Yes              |
| Daejeon    | 26,249                      | 1.8                            | -35,713                             | +7,140                                   |                         |                  |

Note: Population-decline areas and areas of interest are the Ministry of the Interior and Safety designations of October 2021.

Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks and Ministry of the Interior and Safety statistics, 2019-2024.

Between 2019 and 2024 the number of registered foreigners rose in all five districts, most in Yuseong-gu (by 2,372) and Seo-gu (by 2,037). In Seo-gu the count grew 53.5 percent, from 3,804 to 5,841. Yuseong-gu was the only district where the number of Korean residents grew over those years, by 20,095, and Seo-gu lost the most Korean residents (23,271).

None of Daejeon's districts is among the 89 population-decline areas designated by the Ministry of the Interior and Safety in October 2021. Dong-gu, Jung-gu and Daedeok-gu are among the 18 areas of interest designated at the same time. Between 2019 and 2024 these districts together lost 32,537 Korean residents (8,258 in Dong-gu, 15,465 in Jung-gu and 8,814 in Daedeok-gu) and gained 2,731 registered foreigners (1,848, 117 and 766). The foreign gain equaled 8.4 percent of the Korean loss, against 20.0 percent for the city as a whole (7,140 of 35,713). The ratio was 22.4 percent in Dong-gu, 8.7 percent in Daedeok-gu and 0.8 percent in Jung-gu.

By the definition used in this Spotlight, Dong-gu was a Vietnamese enclave in 2024. Its 2,566 Vietnamese residents made up 36.2 percent of the district's registered foreigners, with a location quotient of 2.3. No other district in Daejeon met the definition in 2024.

## 5 Population Trends

The number of Korean residents of Daejeon fell 1.8 percent between 2006 and 2024 (27,001 people), 6.0 percent between 2014 and 2024 (92,652 people) and 2.4 percent between 2019 and 2024 (35,713 people). Over the same three periods the number of registered foreigners grew by 16,445, 10,591 and 7,140.

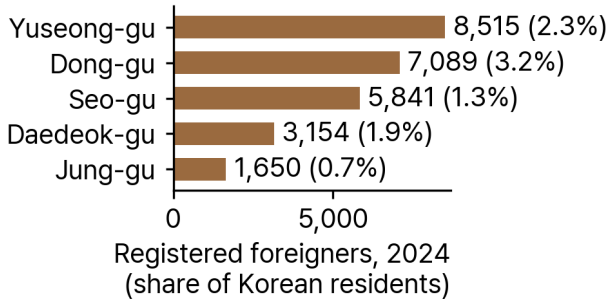
Daejeon's population rose to 1,440,729 at the end of 2025, 1,572 more than the 1,439,157 at the end of 2024, ending a decline that had continued since 2013 Chungcheong Times, 2026. The report's figure for the end of 2024 matches the count of Korean residents used in this Spotlight.

In 2025, 80,173 people moved to Daejeon from other regions of Korea and 77,339 moved out, a net inflow of 2,834. People in their 20s and 30s made up about 60 percent of those who moved in, and the most common reasons for the move were

work or business (36.9 percent), marriage or a change of household (24.8 percent), education (16 percent) and housing (12.5 percent) Chungcheong Times, 2026.

FIGURE 5

#### Registered Foreigners by District in Daejeon, 2024



Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks and Ministry of the Interior and Safety resident registration statistics, 2024.

Daejeon's total fertility rate rose from 0.81 births per woman in 2021 to 0.84 in 2022, when it was the only region of South Korea where the rate increased, and fell to 0.79 in 2023 Daejeon Ilbo, 2024.

At the end of 2022, 232,663 residents were aged 65 or older, 16.1 percent of the city's 1,446,072 residents, up from 14.4 percent in 2020 and 15.2 percent in 2021 (Chungnam Ilbo, 2023).

## 6 Industry and Foreign Workers

In 2022, 9,201 foreign residents of Daejeon were in employment, 16th of the 17 provinces by that number (Chungnam Ilbo, 2025). The same report put the average annual total income of employed foreign residents in Daejeon at 31,982,362 won, the highest among the 17 provinces after Seoul.

Rotation labor statuses covered 1,708 of Daejeon's registered foreigners in 2024 (6.5 percent, against 31.1 percent nationally). Holders of the E-9 non-professional employment status, issued under the Employment Permit System, numbered 806 in 2014, 937 in 2019, 725 in 2021 and 1,260 in 2024. In 2024 they made up 73.8 percent of the rotation labor group in Daejeon and 0.4 percent of all E-9 holders in South Korea.

The Ministry of Justice counts E-8 seasonal workers on 31 December, and most seasonal contracts end before winter, so the year-end count misses most seasonal workers. Daejeon had 4 E-8 holders at the end of 2023 and 9 at the end of 2024.

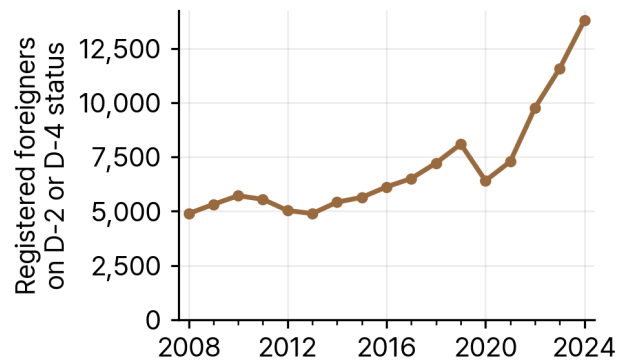
Skilled statuses (E-1 to E-7) covered 1,503 registered foreigners in Daejeon in 2024, 5.7 percent of the total, close to the national 5.8 percent. In a 2026 recruitment round for foreign skilled workers on E-7-3 status in automobile body repair and painting, Daejeon was allocated 9 of the 330 places distributed nationwide Early Adopter News, 2026.

## 7 International Students and Universities

Registered foreigners on D-2 student or D-4 general trainee status in Daejeon numbered 4,894 in 2008, 5,422 in 2014 and 8,098 in 2019 (Figure 6). The count fell to 6,408 in 2020, then rose each year to 13,803 in 2024, 70.4 percent above the 2019 level. In 2024 Daejeon had 5.4 percent of all D-2 and D-4 holders in South Korea, three times its 1.8 percent share of all registered foreigners. D-2 students numbered 9,302 and D-4 general trainees 4,501 in 2024, and 575 registered foreigners were D-10 job seekers.

FIGURE 6

#### Registered Foreigners on Student (D-2) and General Trainee (D-4) Status in Daejeon, 2008-24



Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks, 2008-2024.

The Korea Educational Development Institute (KEDI) counts international students by institution and places each institution in the province of its main campus. As of 1 April 2024, higher-education institutions with main campuses in Daejeon enrolled 11,950 international students KEDI, 2024. Woosong University had the most, 2,891, followed by Mokwon University (1,648), Hannam University (1,317), KAIST (1,236) and Chungnam National University (989), all as of 1 April 2024. Together they enrolled 8,081 of the 11,950 (67.6 percent).

The KEDI count differs from the government residence counts in reference date and coverage. The Ministry of Justice counted 13,803 D-2 and D-4 holders living in Daejeon on 31 December 2024, and the MOIS count for 2024 listed 12,605 students among the city's foreign residents.

## 8 Provincial Policy

Daejeon's ordinance on support for foreign residents (대전광역시 외국인주민 지원 조례) was fully revised in 2019 (Ordinance No. 5391 of 27 December 2019) and most recently amended in 2024 (Ordinance No. 6356 of 27 December 2024) U-LEX, 2024.

The city opened its Foreign Resident Integrated Support Center (외국인주민 통합지원센터) on 18 February 2021. The city's International Affairs Division oversees the center, and the

Daejeon Social Service Agency (대전광역시사회서비스원) operates it under a contract from 1 January 2025 to 31 December 2027 Daejeon Metropolitan City, 2025.

In the Ministry of Justice's 2025 pilot of metropolitan-type visas (광역형 비자), Daejeon was one of six regional governments, with Daegu, Ulsan, Gyeonggi, Gyeongbuk and Gyeongnam, that submitted plans for the E-7 visa for skilled workers in specially designated activities. Ten others (Seoul, Busan, Incheon, Gwangju, Gangwon, Chungbuk, Chungnam, Jeonbuk, Jeonnam and Jeju) submitted plans for the D-2 student visa Migration Research and Training Centre, 2025.

The Ministry of Justice opened a Global Talent Visa Center (글로벌 인재 비자 센터) inside KAIST in Daedeok Innopolis (대덕연구개발특구), with an opening ceremony on 23 December 2021. The ministry described its aims as resolving immigration complaints of foreign residents of the Daedeok research zone and recruiting more skilled foreign talent Ministry of Justice, 2021.

Dong-gu, Jung-gu and Daedeok-gu are among the 18 population-decline areas of interest (인구감소 관심지역). Of the regional visas, a list of the designated areas published by

Jobploy, a job portal for foreign workers, ties only the E-7-4R regionally specialized skilled-worker visa to the areas of interest Jobploy, 2025.

## 9 Languages

The KIRD dataset estimates the first languages of registered foreigners by splitting each nationality's count across the first languages of its country, using Ethnologue first-language shares. Korean is excluded, so the 1,093 Korean-Chinese registered foreigners in Daejeon in 2024 add no speakers to the estimates.

By this estimate, 8,369 registered foreigners in Daejeon in 2024 spoke Vietnamese as a first language and 4,367 spoke Chinese (Table 5). These were the only two languages with 1,000 or more estimated speakers in 2024. Mongolian (831), English (774), Uzbek (700), Russian (634), Tagalog/Filipino (569), Bengali (529), Khmer (518) and Japanese (467) followed. The Vietnamese estimate equals 85.5 percent of the 9,794 Vietnamese nationals, because the method assigns part of each national group to the other first languages of its country.

TABLE 5

**Estimated First-Language Speakers among Registered Foreigners in Daejeon, Ten Largest Languages, 2024**

| Language         | Estimated speakers |
|------------------|--------------------|
| Vietnamese       | 8,369              |
| Chinese          | 4,367              |
| Mongolian        | 831                |
| English          | 774                |
| Uzbek            | 700                |
| Russian          | 634                |
| Tagalog/Filipino | 569                |
| Bengali          | 529                |
| Khmer            | 518                |
| Japanese         | 467                |

Note: Estimates split each nationality's count by Ethnologue first-language shares for its country and exclude Korean.

Source: KIRD dataset, language estimates from Ministry of Justice nationality counts and Ethnologue first-language shares, 2024.

## 10 Service Organizations and Community Places

The KIRD census of 1,717 migrant-serving organizations in South Korea counts 64 in Daejeon, 3.7 percent of the national total. That equals 24.4 organizations per 10,000 registered foreigners in 2024, about twice the national rate of 11.5. Of the 64, 62 provide direct services to migrants.

The most common types in Daejeon were foreign resident support centers (15), providers of the Social Integration Program and early adaptation programs (14) and medical support institutions (13). The census also lists 4 family centers, 4 civic and faith-based support organizations, 3 migrant community organizations, 2 migrant places of worship and 2 research and policy institutes, along with 7 organizations of other types, among them a migrant worker support center, an international student support center and a shelter.

An organization can name more than one group it serves. In Daejeon, 21 organizations name migrant workers, 14 families, 13 all foreign residents, 8 undocumented migrants, 7 women, 6 children, 5 refugees and 4 students.

The city government lists a multicultural family support center in each of its five districts, Dong-gu, Jung-gu, Seo-gu, Yuseong-gu and Daedeok-gu Daejeon Metropolitan City, 2026. The KIRD census includes 4 family centers in Daejeon.

Daejeon's mosque, the Islamic Center of Daejeon, is in Gung-dong, Yuseong-gu (Daejeon Mosque, n.d.).

Daejeon has hosted an annual soccer tournament for Vietnamese international students since 2009. The 12th tournament, in 2023, resumed after a four-year break during the COVID-19 pandemic and drew about 1,000 Vietnamese students from Seoul, Busan, Gwangju, Ulsan and other parts of the country TJB, 2023.

**About these profiles.** The KIRD province profiles describe the foreign-resident population of each of South Korea's seventeen provinces and metropolitan cities. Figures come from the Korea Immigration Regional Dashboard (KIRD) dataset, built from the Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks and the Ministry of the Interior and Safety foreign-resident statistics for 2006 to 2024 (<https://doi.org/10.3886/E249944V1>); context comes from the sources listed. Interactive maps and tables: <https://immigrantsinkorea.today>.

Suggested citation: Korea Immigration Regional Dashboard (KIRD). 2026. "Foreign Residents in Daejeon." Foreign Residents in South Korea series, September 2026. Data: Korea Immigration Regional Dashboard (KIRD) dataset, <https://doi.org/10.3886/E249944V1>. Interactive maps and tables: <https://immigrantsinkorea.today>.

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# Foreign Residents in Gangwon State

SEPTEMBER 2026

## Summary

Gangwon State had 26,074 registered foreigners on 31 December 2024, 1.8 percent of the 1,488,353 registered foreigners in South Korea. Among the 17 provinces and metropolitan cities, it ranked 16th by the number of registered foreigners, ahead of only Sejong, and 14th by registered foreigners per Korean resident, with 1.7 per 100 Korean residents against 2.9 nationally. The Ministry of the Interior and Safety (MOIS), whose count adds naturalized citizens and the children of foreign residents, recorded 50,652 foreign residents in the province on 1 November 2024. Gangwon Province became Gangwon Special Self-Governing Province (Gangwon State) on 11 June 2023, and the series in this Spotlight are continuous across the change.

## Highlights

- ▶ At the end of 2024, 26,074 registered foreigners lived in Gangwon State, 80.5 percent more than in 2014, while the province's Korean resident population fell 1.7 percent (26,676 people) over the same ten years.
- ▶ Study and job-search statuses (D-2, D-4 and D-10) covered 29.4 percent of the province's registered foreigners in 2024, against 18.6 percent nationally, and the number of students and general trainees on D-2 and D-4 status rose from 2,146 in 2014 to 7,336 in 2024.
- ▶ The 12 population-decline areas among the province's 18 cities and counties lost 31,915 Korean residents between 2019 and 2024 and gained 2,460 registered foreigners, a foreign gain equal to 7.7 percent of the Korean loss.

The number of registered foreigners rose from 10,252 in 2006 to 19,069 in 2019, fell to 17,332 in 2020, and then rose each year to 26,074 in 2024. The number of Korean residents peaked at 1,550,806 in 2016 and declined to 1,517,766 in 2024. Between 2019 and 2024 the province gained 7,005 registered foreigners (36.7 percent, the fifth-fastest growth among the 17

provinces and metropolitan cities) and lost 23,736 Korean residents (1.5 percent), so the foreign gain equaled 29.5 percent of the Korean loss.

In 2024, students and trainees made up a larger share of registered foreigners in Gangwon State than in South Korea as a whole. Study and job-search statuses covered 29.4 percent of the province's registered foreigners, against 18.6 percent nationally, while settlement statuses covered 20.8 percent, against 27.6 percent. The province was home to 4.3 percent of the country's registered Russian nationals, 3.8 percent of Nepali nationals and 3.1 percent of Thai nationals, compared with its 1.8 percent share of all registered foreigners. In Goseong-gun, registered foreigners equaled 7.1 per 100 Korean residents in 2024, the highest ratio in the province, and Nepali nationals made up 44.0 percent of them. Twelve of the province's 18 cities and counties were designated population-decline areas in October 2021, and four more were designated areas of interest.

### BOX 1

#### Definitions

**Registered foreigners (등록외국인).** Foreign nationals in South Korea for more than 90 days who register with immigration authorities, as counted by the Ministry of Justice on 31 December of each year. Overseas Koreans on F-4 status report their residence instead of registering and are not included.

**MOIS foreign residents (외국인주민).** The Ministry of the Interior and Safety count of foreign residents on 1 November of each year. It adds naturalized Korean citizens and the children of foreign residents to foreign nationals, so it covers a wider population than the count of registered foreigners.

**Korean residents.** Korean nationals in the MOIS resident registration. Registered foreigners per 100 Korean residents is the number of registered foreigners divided by the number of Korean residents in the same area, multiplied by 100.

**Residence status groups.** This Spotlight groups registered foreigners by residence status (visa type): rotation labor (E-9 non-professional employment, E-8 seasonal work, H-2 visiting employment, E-10 crew employment and D-3 industrial training); skilled (E-1 to E-7); study and job search (D-2 student, D-4 general trainee and D-10 job seeker); settlement (F-2 residential, F-5 permanent residence and F-6 marriage migration); family (F-1 visiting cohabitation and F-3 dependent family); and other (all other statuses).

**Population-decline areas (인구감소지역).** The 89 cities, counties and districts that the Ministry of the Interior and Safety designated as population-decline areas on 19 October 2021, together with 18 areas of interest (관심지역) designated at the same time. In Gangwon State, 12 of the 18 cities and counties are population-decline areas and 4 are areas of interest.

**Ethnic enclave.** In this Spotlight, a city or county where the location quotient of a nationality (its share of the area's registered foreigners divided by its share of all registered foreigners in South Korea) is at least 2 and the nationality makes up at least 30 percent of the area's registered foreigners.

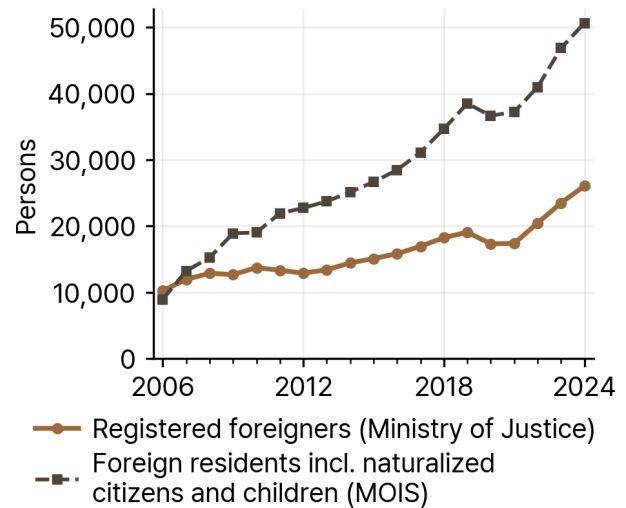
## 1 Size of the Foreign-Resident Population

The number of registered foreigners in Gangwon State rose from 10,252 in 2006 to 14,443 in 2014 and 19,069 in 2019 (see Figure 1). It fell 9.1 percent to 17,332 in 2020 (1,737 fewer people) and was 17,384 in 2021. The count then rose to 20,472 in 2022, 23,484 in 2023 and 26,074 in 2024, 50.0 percent above the 2021 level. The 2024 count was about 2.5 times the 2006 count (15,822 more people, an increase of 154.3 percent).

The MOIS count of foreign residents rose from 15,236 in 2008 to 38,504 in 2019 and 50,652 in 2024, when it was 1.9 times the registered-foreigner count. Of the 50,652 people in 2024, 36,580 were foreign nationals, 5,253 were naturalized Korean citizens and 8,819 were children of foreign residents (see Residence Statuses).

FIGURE 1

**Registered Foreigners and Foreign Residents in Gangwon State, 2006-24**

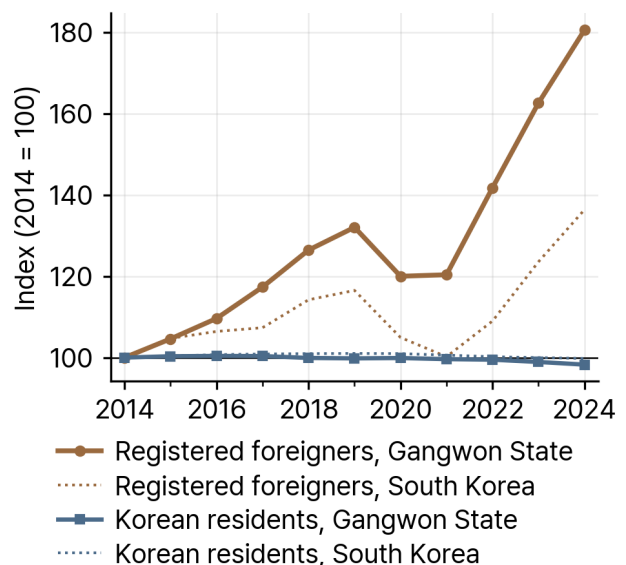


Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks and Ministry of the Interior and Safety statistics, 2006-2024.

Between 2014 and 2024 the number of registered foreigners in Gangwon State grew 80.5 percent (11,631 people), faster than in South Korea as a whole, while the number of Korean residents fell 1.7 percent (26,676 people), a larger decline than the national one (see Figure 2). Registered foreigners per 100 Korean residents rose from 0.7 in 2006 and 0.9 in 2014 to 1.2 in 2019 and 1.7 in 2024 (see Table 1).

FIGURE 2

**Growth of Registered Foreigners and Korean Residents in Gangwon State and South Korea, 2014-24 (index, 2014 = 100)**



Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks and Ministry of the Interior and Safety resident registration statistics, 2014-2024.

In 2024 Gangwon State ranked 16th among the 17 provinces and metropolitan cities by the number of registered foreigners and 14th by registered foreigners per Korean resident (1.7 per

100 Korean residents, against 2.9 nationally). Its growth of 36.7 percent between 2019 and 2024, from 19,069 to 26,074, was the fifth-fastest among the 17.

TABLE 1

**Registered Foreigners, Foreign Residents and Korean Residents in Gangwon State, Selected Years, 2006-24**

| Year | Registered foreigners | MOIS foreign residents | Korean residents | Registered foreigners per 100 Korean residents |
|------|-----------------------|------------------------|------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| 2006 | 10,252                | –                      | 1,505,420        | 0.7                                            |
| 2014 | 14,443                | 25,141                 | 1,544,442        | 0.9                                            |
| 2019 | 19,069                | 38,504                 | 1,541,502        | 1.2                                            |
| 2024 | 26,074                | 50,652                 | 1,517,766        | 1.7                                            |

Note: Registered foreigners are counted on 31 December and MOIS foreign residents on 1 November. The table shows MOIS counts from 2008, when the province had 15,236 MOIS foreign residents; Figure 1 also plots the MOIS counts for 2006 and 2007. South Korea had 2.9 registered foreigners per 100 Korean residents in 2024.

Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks and Ministry of the Interior and Safety statistics, 2006-2024.

## 2 Nationalities

The KIRD data record 114 nationalities among registered foreigners in Gangwon State in 2024. Vietnamese nationals were the largest group (6,555, or 25.1 percent), followed by

Chinese nationals (3,174, or 12.2 percent) and Nepali nationals (2,739, or 10.5 percent) (see Figure 3 and Table 2). The ten largest nationalities accounted for 79.3 percent of registered foreigners (20,686 of 26,074).

TABLE 2

**Ten Largest Nationalities among Registered Foreigners in Gangwon State, 2019 and 2024**

| Nationality    | 2019  | 2024  | Share of the province's registered foreigners, 2024 (%) | Share of all registered foreigners of this nationality in South Korea, 2024 (%) |
|----------------|-------|-------|---------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Vietnam        | 4,947 | 6,555 | 25.1                                                    | 2.5                                                                             |
| China          | 2,768 | 3,174 | 12.2                                                    | 1.5                                                                             |
| Nepal          | 1,361 | 2,739 | 10.5                                                    | 3.8                                                                             |
| Thailand       | 694   | 1,363 | 5.2                                                     | 3.1                                                                             |
| Indonesia      | 753   | 1,251 | 4.8                                                     | 2.1                                                                             |
| Uzbekistan     | 744   | 1,221 | 4.7                                                     | 2.0                                                                             |
| Cambodia       | 961   | 1,214 | 4.7                                                     | 2.0                                                                             |
| Korean-Chinese | 1,337 | 1,118 | 4.3                                                     | 0.5                                                                             |
| Philippines    | 818   | 1,091 | 4.2                                                     | 2.1                                                                             |
| Russia         | 371   | 960   | 3.7                                                     | 4.3                                                                             |

Note: Korean-Chinese are Chinese nationals of Korean descent and are reported separately from other Chinese nationals.

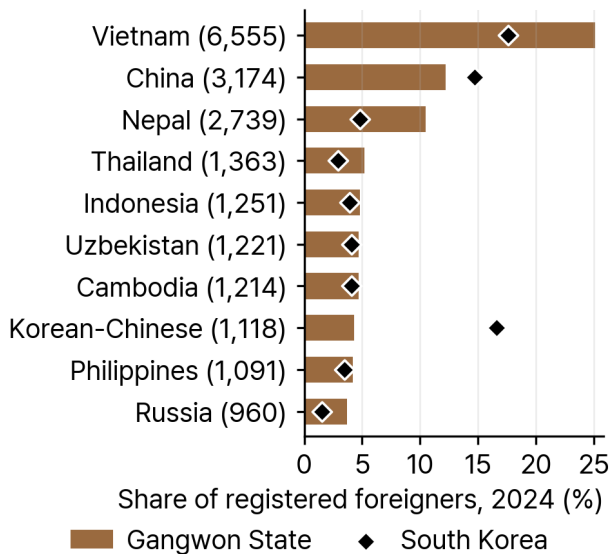
Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks, 2019 and 2024.

Vietnamese, Nepali, Thai and Russian nationals made up larger shares of registered foreigners in the province than in South Korea as a whole in 2024 (25.1, 10.5, 5.2 and 3.7 percent, against 17.6, 4.8, 2.9 and 1.5 percent). Korean-Chinese made up 4.3 percent, against 16.6 percent nationally, and other Chinese nationals 12.2 percent, against 14.7 percent.

Between 2019 and 2024 the number of Russian nationals in the province rose from 371 to 960 (2.6 times), the number of Nepali nationals doubled from 1,361 to 2,739, and the number of Thai nationals nearly doubled from 694 to 1,363. Korean-Chinese were the only group among the ten largest to decline, from 1,337 to 1,118.

Gangwon State was home to 1.8 percent of all registered foreigners in South Korea in 2024 and to larger shares of several national groups: 4.3 percent of Russian nationals (960 of 22,450), 3.9 percent of South African nationals (181 of 4,641), 3.8 percent of Nepali nationals (2,739 of 72,151), 3.1 percent of Thai nationals (1,363 of 43,459) and 2.8 percent of Tajik nationals (44 of 1,567).

**FIGURE 3**  
**Shares of the Ten Largest Nationalities among Registered Foreigners in Gangwon State and South Korea, 2024**



Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks, 2024.

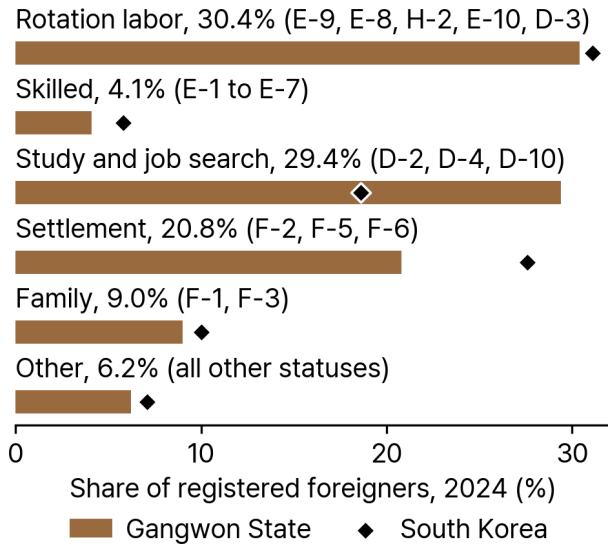
The Shannon diversity index of registered foreigners' nationalities rises with the number of nationalities and with the evenness of their shares. In Gangwon State it was 2.5 in 2014 and 2.6 in 2024, the sixth-highest among the 17 provinces and metropolitan cities in 2024.

Overseas Koreans on F-4 status report their residence instead of registering and are not counted among registered foreigners. In 2024, 4,144 of them reported a residence in Gangwon State, 0.7 percent of the 553,664 nationwide. The largest groups were Korean-Chinese (1,990), nationals of the United States (1,244) and Canada (313), Korean-Russians (168) and nationals of Australia (121).

### 3 Residence Statuses

Rotation labor statuses covered 30.4 percent of registered foreigners in Gangwon State in 2024 (7,936 people), close to the national share of 31.1 percent (see Figure 4). Study and job-search statuses covered 29.4 percent (7,668 people), against 18.6 percent nationally. Settlement statuses covered 20.8 percent (5,424), against 27.6 percent; family statuses 9.0 percent (2,357), against 10.0 percent; skilled statuses 4.1 percent (1,067), against 5.8 percent; and all other statuses 6.2 percent (1,622), against 7.1 percent.

**FIGURE 4**  
**Residence Status Groups of Registered Foreigners in Gangwon State and South Korea, 2024**



Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks, 2024.

E-9 non-professional employment was the most common status in 2024, with 5,717 holders (21.9 percent of registered foreigners), followed by D-2 student status (5,178, or 19.9 percent) and F-6 marriage migration status (3,339, or 12.8 percent) (see Table 3). Among the ten most common statuses, the province's share of all holders in South Korea was highest for E-10 crew employment (4.8 percent, 1,038 holders) and E-8 seasonal work (3.8 percent, 746 holders on 31 December), followed by D-2 (2.9 percent) and D-4 general trainee status (2.7 percent). For F-5 permanent residence it was 0.8 percent (1,694 holders), less than half the province's 1.8 percent share of all registered foreigners.

The MOIS count for 1 November 2024 uses different categories. Of the 50,652 foreign residents it recorded in Gangwon State, 36,580 (72.2 percent) were foreign nationals: 7,989 foreign workers, 4,118 marriage migrants, 6,786 international students, 2,519 ethnic Koreans of foreign nationality and 15,168 other foreign nationals. The remaining 14,072 (27.8 percent) were 5,253 naturalized Korean citizens and 8,819 children of foreign residents.

### 4 Districts and Population-Decline Areas

Gangwon State has seven cities (si) and 11 counties (gun). In 2024 Wonju-si (5,163 registered foreigners) and Chuncheon-si (5,052) had the most registered foreigners, followed by Gangneung-si (3,835); together they accounted for 53.9 percent of the province's registered foreigners (14,050 of 26,074) (see Figure 5 and Table 4). The number of registered foreigners per 100 Korean residents was highest in Goseong-gun (7.1), followed by Hoengseong-gun (2.6) and Cheorwon-gun (2.2). Goseong-gun is the location of Kyungdong

University's Global Campus, which reported 984 international students as of 1 April 2024 (Academy Info, 2026a; see International Students and Universities).

Between 2019 and 2024 the number of registered foreigners rose in all 18 cities and counties, and the number of Korean residents fell in 16 of them. Only Wonju-si and Chuncheon-si gained Korean residents (12,949 and 4,778) as well as registered foreigners (1,518 and 758).

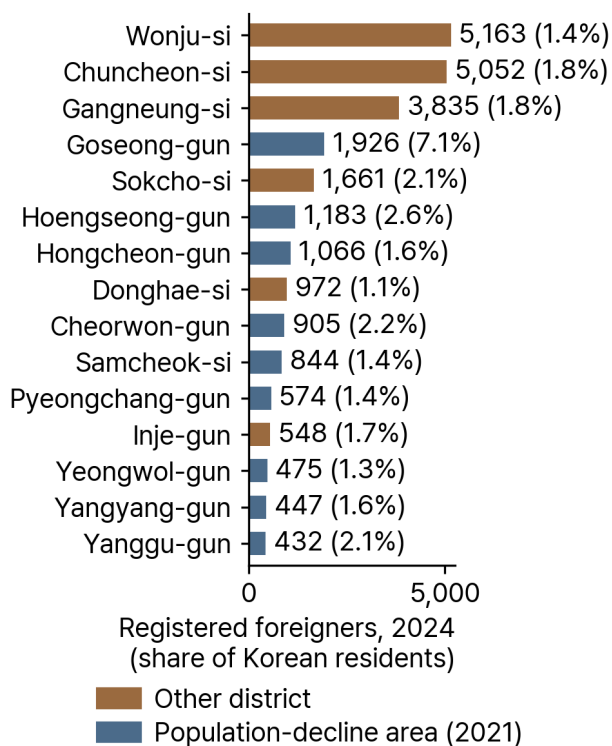
**TABLE 3**  
**Ten Most Common Residence Statutes among Registered Foreigners in Gangwon State, 2024**

| Status | Meaning                     | Registered foreigners | Share of the province's registered foreigners (%) | Share of all holders of this status in South Korea (%) |
|--------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| E-9    | Non-professional employment | 5,717                 | 21.9                                              | 1.7                                                    |
| D-2    | Student                     | 5,178                 | 19.9                                              | 2.9                                                    |
| F-6    | Marriage migration          | 3,339                 | 12.8                                              | 2.3                                                    |
| D-4    | General trainee             | 2,158                 | 8.3                                               | 2.7                                                    |
| F-1    | Visiting cohabitation       | 1,788                 | 6.9                                               | 1.8                                                    |
| F-5    | Permanent residence         | 1,694                 | 6.5                                               | 0.8                                                    |
| G-1    | Other (miscellaneous)       | 1,385                 | 5.3                                               | 2.5                                                    |
| E-10   | Crew employment             | 1,038                 | 4.0                                               | 4.8                                                    |
| E-8    | Seasonal worker             | 746                   | 2.9                                               | 3.8                                                    |
| F-3    | Dependent family            | 569                   | 2.2                                               | 1.1                                                    |

Note: Shares of the province's registered foreigners use the 2024 total of 26,074. E-8 holders are counted on 31 December, after most seasonal contracts have ended (see Industry and Foreign Workers).

Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks, 2024.

**FIGURE 5**  
**Fifteen Cities and Counties with the Most Registered Foreigners in Gangwon State, 2024**



Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks and Ministry of the Interior and Safety statistics, 2024; population-decline areas as designated by the Ministry of the Interior and Safety in 2021.

The Ministry of the Interior and Safety designated 12 of the 18 cities and counties as population-decline areas in October 2021: Goseong-gun, Hoengseong-gun, Cheorwon-gun, Yanggu-gun, Yangyang-gun, Hongcheon-gun, Pyeongchang-gun, Samcheok-si, Hwacheon-gun, Yeongwol-gun, Jeongseon-gun and Taebaek-si. Between 2019 and 2024 these 12 areas lost 31,915 Korean residents and gained 2,460 registered foreigners, so the foreign gain equaled 7.7 percent of the Korean loss. The largest Korean losses were in Taebaek-si (5,930), Samcheok-si (5,493) and Cheorwon-gun (5,087), and the largest foreign gains were in Goseong-gun (794) and Hoengseong-gun (501).

Four other cities and counties were designated areas of interest: Gangneung-si, Sokcho-si, Donghae-si and Inje-gun. Between 2019 and 2024 they lost 9,548 Korean residents (5,711, 853, 2,847 and 137, respectively) and gained 2,269 registered foreigners (1,366, 623, 41 and 239), a foreign gain equal to 23.8 percent of the Korean loss.

Two counties met the definition of an ethnic enclave in 2024, both for Nepali nationals. In Goseong-gun, a population-decline area, 848 Nepali nationals made up 44.0 percent of

registered foreigners, with a location quotient of 22.3. In Inje-gun, an area of interest, 226 Nepali nationals made up 41.2 percent, with a location quotient of 5.1.

## 5 Population Trends

The Korean resident population of Gangwon State grew from 1,505,420 in 2006 to a peak of 1,550,806 in 2016 and then declined to 1,517,766 in 2024. The 2024 count was 0.8 percent above the 2006 level, 1.7 percent below the 2014 level and 1.5

percent (23,736 people) below the 2019 level. The two largest annual declines in the series were in 2023 (8,691 people) and 2024 (10,041).

The province's total fertility rate was 0.89 in 2024, the fourth-highest among the 17 provinces and metropolitan cities and above the national rate of 0.75, while the number of births fell 1.4 percent from the year before to 6,600. Hwacheon-gun (1.50) and Inje-gun (1.27) ranked third and ninth nationally (Kangwon Domin Ilbo, 2025). In 2024, 384,585 residents of the province were aged 65 or older, 25.3 percent of a population of about 1.52 million (Kangwon Ilbo, 2024a).

**TABLE 4**  
**Ten Cities and Counties with the Most Registered Foreigners in Gangwon State, 2024**

| City or county | Registered foreigners, 2024 | Per 100 Korean residents, 2024 | Change in Korean residents, 2019-24 | Change in registered foreigners, 2019-24 | Population-decline area |
|----------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Wonju-si       | 5,163                       | 1.4                            | +12,949                             | +1,518                                   | No                      |
| Chuncheon-si   | 5,052                       | 1.8                            | +4,778                              | +758                                     | No                      |
| Gangneung-si   | 3,835                       | 1.8                            | -5,711                              | +1,366                                   | No (area of interest)   |
| Goseong-gun    | 1,926                       | 7.1                            | -261                                | +794                                     | Yes                     |
| Sokcho-si      | 1,661                       | 2.1                            | -853                                | +623                                     | No (area of interest)   |
| Hoengseong-gun | 1,183                       | 2.6                            | -464                                | +501                                     | Yes                     |
| Hongcheon-gun  | 1,066                       | 1.6                            | -2,433                              | +151                                     | Yes                     |
| Donghae-si     | 972                         | 1.1                            | -2,847                              | +41                                      | No (area of interest)   |
| Cheorwon-gun   | 905                         | 2.2                            | -5,087                              | +194                                     | Yes                     |
| Samcheok-si    | 844                         | 1.4                            | -5,493                              | +71                                      | Yes                     |

Note: Population-decline areas and areas of interest as designated by the Ministry of the Interior and Safety on 19 October 2021. Registered foreigners per 100 Korean residents use the Korean residents of the same city or county in 2024.

Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks and Ministry of the Interior and Safety statistics, 2019 and 2024.

Gangwon State lost population to other regions of South Korea through domestic migration in each year from 2023 to 2025, with net out-migration of 1,397 people in 2023, 2,527 in 2024 and 1,387 in 2025. Over 2023-2025, people in their twenties made up the largest net outflow to the capital region of any age group, 11,916 people (Wonju Sinmun, 2026).

Statistics Korea's 2022-2052 provincial population projections put the province's total population at 1.53 million in 2022, 1.50 million in 2045 and 1.44 million in 2052 under the baseline scenario, and at 1.41 million in 2052 under the low-fertility scenario (Kangwon Ilbo, 2024b).

## 6 Industry and Foreign Workers

The number of registered foreigners on E-9 non-professional employment status, the status issued under the Employment Permit System (EPS), was 3,301 in 2014, 4,161 in 2019, 3,193 in 2021 and 5,717 in 2024, an increase of 79.0 percent from 2021 to 2024. Gangwon State's share of E-9 holders in South Korea was 1.7 percent in 2024, slightly below its 1.8 percent share of all registered foreigners.

According to the Kangwon Domin Ilbo, 5,246 E-9 workers were employed at 1,517 workplaces in Gangwon State at the end of July 2026. Of these workers, 1,421 (27.1 percent) worked in agriculture and livestock, at 633 workplaces, the largest number of workplaces of any sector. In second-quarter counts reported in the same article, E-9 workers in agriculture and

livestock increased from 1,037 in 2022 to 1,364 in 2023, 1,475 in 2024, 1,600 in 2025 and 1,713 in 2026, about 65 percent over four years (Kangwon Ilbo, 2026).

In 2023 the vacancy rate for foreign workers in manufacturing in Gangwon State was 25.1 percent, above the national average of 16.2 percent and the fourth-highest among the 17 provinces and metropolitan cities (Kangwon Ilbo, 2024c). In the third quarter of 2023, 3,743 foreign workers were employed in the province under the EPS, 1.6 percent of the national total. A Kangwon Ilbo report that year described an ice-cream manufacturer in Gangneung, a pollock-processing plant in Sokcho and a restaurant in Pyeongchang struggling to find workers, and stated that the province had no long-term overall plan for foreign labor. In the same report, the chair of the Korea Association for Migration Studies, a professor at Kangwon National University, said that no policy existed to make foreign workers choose Gangwon as a place to work or live (Kangwon Ilbo, 2023).

E-8 seasonal workers counted on 31 December numbered 190 in 2021, 630 in 2022, 760 in 2023 and 746 in 2024. The 31 December count misses most seasonal workers, because their contracts end before winter. For 2024, the province had projected demand for 7,428 seasonal workers, 9.2 percent more than for the year before (Kangwon Ilbo, 2023), and for 2026 it was allocated 11,168 (see Provincial Policy).

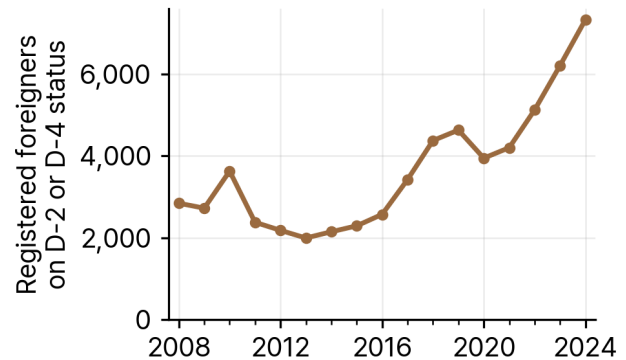
In 2024 the province had 1,038 registered foreigners on E-10 crew employment status, 4.8 percent of all E-10 holders in South Korea. In January 2026 Samcheok-si became the first city or county in Gangwon State to subsidize rent for foreign fishing-boat crew, covering 50 percent of the actual rent up to 70 percent of the two-person minimum housing standard under the Housing Benefit Act; the head of the city's marine and fisheries division described foreign crew as core personnel sustaining the local fishing industry (Newspim, 2026). The

Sokcho Marine Industrial Park (속초해양산업단지), with about 120 companies in three estates and about 1,300 Korean and foreign workers, had about 350 foreign workers in 2025, about 30 percent of its workforce (Gangwon Sinmun, 2025).

## 7 International Students and Universities

FIGURE 6

**Registered Foreigners on Student (D-2) and General Trainee (D-4) Status in Gangwon State, 2008-24**



Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks, 2008-2024.

Registered foreigners on D-2 student and D-4 general trainee status in Gangwon State numbered 2,844 in 2008 and 3,630 in 2010, declined to 1,993 in 2013, and rose to 4,633 in 2019 (see Figure 6). After a drop to 3,947 in 2020, the count rose each year to 7,336 in 2024 (5,178 on D-2 and 2,158 on D-4), 58.3 percent more than in 2019. Students and trainees made up 28.1 percent of the province's registered foreigners in 2024, up from 14.9 percent in 2014, and the province's share of all D-2 and D-4 holders in South Korea was 2.8 percent, against its 1.8 percent share of all registered foreigners.

TABLE 5

**International Students at Five Universities in Gangwon State, 2024-26**

| University                                           | 2024 | 2025  | 2026  | In degree programs, 2026 | Source              |
|------------------------------------------------------|------|-------|-------|--------------------------|---------------------|
| Kyungdong University, Global Campus (Goseong)        | 984  | 1,169 | 1,572 | 1,436                    | Academy Info, 2026a |
| Kangwon National University, main campus (Chuncheon) | 483  | 1,015 | 1,400 | 1,123                    | Academy Info, 2026b |
| Gangneung-Wonju National University                  | 243  | 299   | 296   | 141                      | Academy Info, 2026c |
| Sangji University (Wonju)                            | 92   | 75    | 245   | 245                      | Academy Info, 2026d |
| Catholic Kwandong University (Gangneung)             | 204  | 157   | 206   | 67                       | Academy Info, 2026e |

Note: Counts are as of 1 April of each year and include degree and non-degree programs. Kangwon National University figures cover its main campus only, and Kyungdong University figures cover its Global Campus in Goseong.

Source: Academy Info (대학알리미) disclosures of each university, as linked in each row.

At the end of 2025, 7,565 international students were enrolled at 17 higher-education institutions in the province: 4,723 undergraduates, 1,517 graduate students and 1,325 non-degree trainees (Kangwon Ilbo, 2026).

Academy Info (대학알리미), the government's university disclosure system, reports international students as of 1 April of each year (see Table 5). Kyungdong University's Global Campus in Goseong reported 984 international students in

2024, 1,169 in 2025 and 1,572 in 2026, of whom 1,436 were in degree programs (Academy Info, 2026a). Kangwon National University's main campus in Chuncheon reported 483 in 2024, 1,015 in 2025 and 1,400 in 2026, of whom 1,123 were in degree programs (Academy Info, 2026b). In 2026 Gangneung-Wonju National University reported 296, Sangji University in Wonju 245 (up from 75 in 2025) and Catholic Kwandong University in Gangneung 206. The regional visa pilot for international students at 12 universities in the province is described under Provincial Policy.

## 8 Provincial Policy

Gangwon State enacted an ordinance on support for foreign residents (강원특별자치도 외국인주민 지원 조례) on 27 February 2026. Under it the province formed a Foreign Resident Support Council chaired by the vice governor, with 10 appointed members (experts and foreign residents) whose terms end on 31 August 2028 (Shinailbo, 2026). The council met for the first time on 10 September 2026. A working-level foreign policy task force of officials from agencies in four sectors (education, the economy, daily life and safety) shares the status of support projects for foreign residents and develops cooperation measures (Gukje News, 2026).

For 2025–2026 the province plans to operate its regional specialized visa programs (F-2-R, F-4-R and E-7-4R) for a combined 229 people, as part of an effort, coordinated by the

province's population-decline response policy officer, to recruit foreign workers and support their settlement in the region (Herald Corp, 2025).

In 2025 the Ministry of Justice selected Gangwon State as one of 14 provincial-level governments for its regional visa pilot (광역형 비자). Under the pilot the province can issue up to 770 visas through 2026 to international students in semiconductor, biohealth, future mobility, future energy, food technology, ICT and tourism-related programs at 12 participating universities, with eased D-2 student visa requirements and semester-long internships (Korea JoongAng Daily, 2025).

In 2026 the provincial assembly advanced an amendment to the province's ordinance on supporting and recruiting international students (강원특별자치도 외국인 유학생 등의 지원 및 유치에 관한 조례) to create a legal basis for a dedicated International Student Support Center (Weekly Today, 2026).

The province was allocated 11,168 foreign seasonal workers (E-8) for 2026 under memoranda of understanding with eight countries, including the Philippines, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia and Thailand, 1,921 more (20.7 percent) than in 2025. Of these, 10,409 were allocated under direct contracts with farms and 759 under a public model mediated by cooperatives (Asiae, 2026).

## 9 Languages

**TABLE 6**  
**Estimated First-Language Speakers among Registered Foreigners in Gangwon State, Ten Most Common Languages, 2024**

| Language         | Estimated speakers | Share of the province's registered foreigners (%) |
|------------------|--------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| Vietnamese       | 5,607              | 21.5                                              |
| Chinese          | 3,465              | 13.3                                              |
| Nepali           | 1,421              | 5.4                                               |
| Khmer            | 1,256              | 4.8                                               |
| Thai             | 1,219              | 4.7                                               |
| Russian          | 1,090              | 4.2                                               |
| Tagalog/Filipino | 953                | 3.7                                               |
| Uzbek            | 909                | 3.5                                               |
| Indonesian       | 880                | 3.4                                               |
| Japanese         | 564                | 2.2                                               |

Note: Estimates apply Ethnologue first-language shares for each nationality to the number of registered foreigners of that nationality on 31 December 2024. Shares use the province total of 26,074 registered foreigners.

Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks, 2024, with first-language shares from Ethnologue.

The KIRD dataset estimates the first languages of registered foreigners by applying each nationality's first-language shares from Ethnologue to the number of registered foreigners of that nationality. By this estimate, six languages had 1,000 or more first-language speakers among registered foreigners in

Gangwon State in 2024: Vietnamese (5,607), Chinese (3,465), Nepali (1,421), Khmer (1,256), Thai (1,219) and Russian (1,090) (see Table 6).

Because the estimate divides each nationality among its first languages, the count for a language can differ from the count of the corresponding nationality. The estimate for Nepali (1,421) is about half the number of Nepali nationals in 2024 (2,739). The estimate for Russian (1,090) exceeds the number of Russian nationals (960), because the shares also assign Russian as a first language to some registered foreigners of other nationalities.

## 10 Service Organizations and Community Places

The KIRD census of 1,717 migrant-serving organizations in South Korea lists 49 in Gangwon State, or 18.8 per 10,000 registered foreigners in 2024, against 11.5 per 10,000 nationally. Of the 49, 48 provide direct services. They include 18 family centers (가족센터), one in each of the province's 18 cities and counties. Seven hospitals in the census are designated to provide medical support to foreign workers and undocumented residents, and five of them are regional public medical centers, in Wonju, Gangneung, Sokcho, Yeongwol and Samcheok. The census also lists the Chuncheon Immigration Office and its branch offices in Goseong, Donghae and Sokcho.

By the populations they list, 24 of the 49 organizations serve families, 12 serve all foreign residents, 11 serve workers, 7 serve undocumented residents and 5 serve refugees. Other organizations in the census include the Gangwon Migrant Women Counseling Center (강원이주여성상담소) in Chuncheon,

operated by the Catholic Diocese of Chuncheon; foreign worker support centers in Wonju and Gangneung; Haemil School (해밀학교) in Hongcheon, an alternative school for teenagers from multicultural families; and the Gangwon office of the National Human Rights Commission of Korea in Wonju.

The Gangneung City Foreign Worker Support Center (강릉시 외국인근로자 지원센터), at 26 Okga-ro 19beon-gil in Gangneung, is designated by the Ministry of Justice as an operating institution of the Social Integration Program (KIIP) and offers Korean-language classes, counseling and cultural programs for foreign workers (Gangneung City Foreign Worker Support Center, 2025).

In 2025 the Sokcho Marine Industrial Park, where foreign workers made up about 30 percent of the workforce, launched a Sokcho Tour that took foreign workers to the municipal museum, the mountain museum and Cheongcho Lake, to support their early settlement in the city (Gangwon Sinmun, 2025).

In Wonju's Miro Art Market (미로예술시장), a multicultural cafe operated jointly by an immigrant from the Philippines, an immigrant from Japan and the Korean head of the Rainbow cultural-tourism cooperative (원주문화관광협동조합무지개) serves Japanese-style desserts such as souffle cake and mitarashi dango. The cooperative's local-market tour ends at the cafe (Erounnet, 2024).

To our knowledge, no published source describes a place of worship or a residential neighborhood associated with a particular immigrant group in the province.

**About these profiles.** The KIRD province profiles describe the foreign-resident population of each of South Korea's seventeen provinces and metropolitan cities. Figures come from the Korea Immigration Regional Dashboard (KIRD) dataset, built from the Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks and the Ministry of the Interior and Safety foreign-resident statistics for 2006 to 2024 (<https://doi.org/10.3886/E249944V1>); context comes from the sources listed. Interactive maps and tables: <https://immigrantsinkorea.today>.

Suggested citation: Korea Immigration Regional Dashboard (KIRD). 2026. "Foreign Residents in Gangwon State." Foreign Residents in South Korea series, September 2026. Data: Korea Immigration Regional Dashboard (KIRD) dataset, <https://doi.org/10.3886/E249944V1>. Interactive maps and tables: <https://immigrantsinkorea.today>.

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# Foreign Residents in Sejong

SEPTEMBER 2026

## Summary

Sejong Special Self-Governing City had 6,182 registered foreigners on 31 December 2024, the fewest of South Korea's 17 provinces and metropolitan cities (referred to here as provinces) and 0.4 percent of the country's 1,488,353 registered foreigners. The Ministry of the Interior and Safety counted 10,739 foreign residents in Sejong on 1 November 2024, a broader count that includes naturalized citizens and the children of foreign residents. Sejong was created on 1 July 2012, so the series for the city begin that year, when it had 2,360 registered foreigners.

## Highlights

- ▶ Sejong had 6,182 registered foreigners at the end of 2024, the fewest among South Korea's 17 provinces and metropolitan cities and 0.4 percent of the national total of 1,488,353.
- ▶ Between 2014 and 2024, Sejong's Korean resident population grew 150.2 percent and its registered foreigners 126.4 percent, so registered foreigners per 100 Korean residents fell from 1.7 to 1.6, the second-lowest ratio of the 17 provinces in 2024 (the national ratio was 2.9).
- ▶ In 2024, 23.1 percent of Sejong's registered foreigners were on study and job-search statuses (D-2, D-4 and D-10), compared with 18.6 percent nationally, and 22.4 percent were on settlement statuses (F-2, F-5 and F-6), compared with 27.6 percent nationally.

Registered foreigners in Sejong more than doubled between 2014 and 2024, from 2,730 to 6,182 (an increase of 126.4 percent), while the city's Korean resident population rose from 156,125 to 390,685 (150.2 percent). Because Korean residents increased faster, registered foreigners per 100 Korean residents fell from 2.1 in 2012 to 1.7 in 2014 and 1.6 in 2024, when Sejong ranked 16th of the 17 provinces on this measure; the national ratio was 2.9. The registered-foreigner count rose

to 5,700 in 2019, fell to 4,884 in 2021 and then rose each year to 6,182 in 2024. Its increase of 8.5 percent between 2019 and 2024 was the second-lowest among the 17 provinces, while Sejong's Korean population grew 14.7 percent over the same period.

Sejong's registered foreigners came from 94 nationalities in 2024, and by the Shannon diversity index the city had the third most diverse foreign population of the 17 provinces. China (18.7 percent) and Vietnam (18.0 percent) were the largest groups, and Korean-Chinese made up 9.2 percent, compared with 16.6 percent of registered foreigners nationwide. Sejong had the lowest median age of any province in 2022, 38.8 years (Statistics Korea, 2024), and in 2025 it was the only province where births exceeded deaths (Statistics Korea, 2026). This Spotlight describes the size of the foreign-resident population, its nationalities and residence statuses, districts, population trends, foreign workers, international students, provincial policy, languages, and service organizations.

### BOX 1

#### Definitions

**Registered foreigners (등록외국인).** Foreign nationals in South Korea for more than 90 days who register with immigration authorities, counted by the Ministry of Justice on 31 December of each year. Overseas Koreans on F-4 status report their residence instead of registering and are not included. Figures in this Spotlight are registered foreigners unless stated otherwise.

**MOIS foreign residents (외국인주민).** The Ministry of the Interior and Safety count of foreign residents on 1 November of each year. Besides foreign nationals, it includes naturalized Korean citizens and the children of foreign residents, so it is larger than the registered-foreigner count and is not directly comparable with it.

**Korean residents.** Korean nationals in the Ministry of the Interior and Safety resident registration population. Ratios of registered foreigners per 100 Korean residents use this population.

**Korean-Chinese (한국계중국인).** Ethnic Koreans with Chinese nationality. The Ministry of Justice counts them separately from other Chinese nationals, and this Spotlight follows that classification.

**Status groups.** Residence statuses are grouped as in the KIRD dataset. Rotation labor covers E-9 (non-professional employment), E-8 (seasonal worker), H-2 (visiting employment), E-10 (crew employment) and D-3 (industrial trainee). Skilled covers E-1 to E-7. Study and job search covers D-2 (student), D-4 (general trainee) and D-10 (job seeker). Settlement covers F-2 (residential), F-5 (permanent residence) and F-6 (marriage migration). Family covers F-1 (visiting cohabitation) and F-3 (dependent family). All other statuses are grouped as other.

**Population-decline areas (인구감소지역).** The 89 districts that the Ministry of the Interior and Safety designated as population-decline areas on 19 October 2021. The ministry designated a further 18 districts as areas of interest (관심지역).

**Ethnic enclave.** In this Spotlight, a district where a nationality has a location quotient of at least 2 (its count relative to the district's Korean population is at least twice the national ratio) and makes up at least 30 percent of the district's registered foreigners.

**Shannon diversity index.** A measure of diversity across nationalities that is higher when registered foreigners are spread over more groups of more equal size. The KIRD dataset computes it over the 19 nationalities that were largest in South Korea that year, plus one group for all others.

## 1 Size of the Foreign-Resident Population

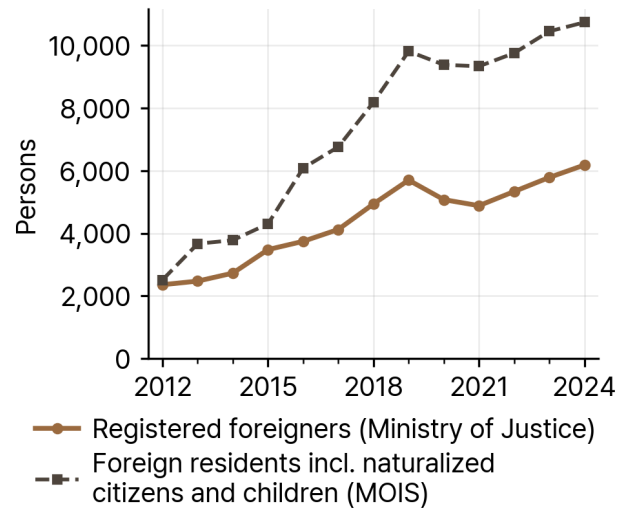
Sejong had 2,360 registered foreigners at the end of 2012, the year the city was created. The count rose to 2,730 in 2014 and 5,700 in 2019, fell to 5,076 in 2020 and 4,884 in 2021, during the COVID-19 pandemic, and then rose each year to 6,182 in 2024, about 2.6 times the 2012 count.

The Ministry of the Interior and Safety count of foreign residents grew from 2,515 in 2012 to 3,782 in 2014 and 9,814 in 2019, declined to 9,382 in 2020 and 9,335 in 2021, and rose to 10,739 in 2024, about 4.3 times the 2012 count.

With 2014 set to 100, Sejong's Korean resident population rose every year, to an index of 250.2 in 2024. The index for registered foreigners rose to 208.8 in 2019, fell to 178.9 in 2021 and rose to 226.4 in 2024. The figure also plots the same two measures for South Korea as a whole.

FIGURE 1

**Registered Foreigners and Foreign Residents in Sejong, 2012-24**

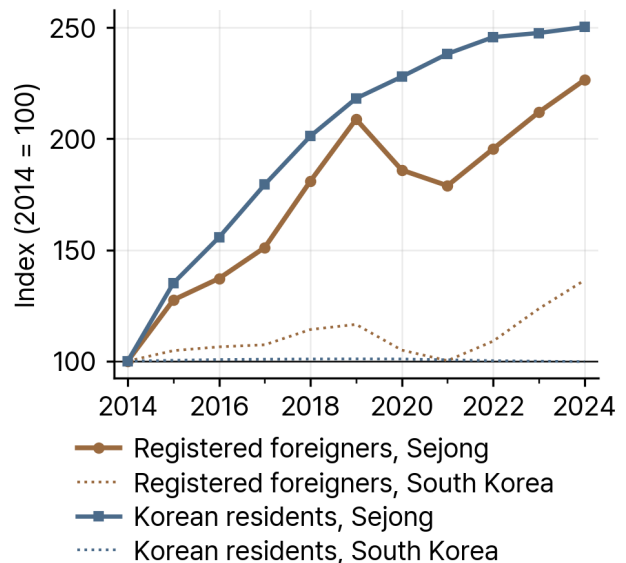


Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks and Ministry of the Interior and Safety statistics, 2012-2024.

In 2024, Sejong ranked 17th of the 17 provinces by the number of registered foreigners and 16th by registered foreigners per Korean resident. It had 1.6 registered foreigners per 100 Korean residents, against 2.9 for South Korea as a whole, and accounted for 0.4 percent of the country's registered foreigners.

FIGURE 2

**Growth of Registered Foreigners and Korean Residents in Sejong and South Korea, 2014-24 (index, 2014 = 100)**



Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks and Ministry of the Interior and Safety resident registration statistics, 2014-2024.

## 2 Nationalities

China and Vietnam were the largest nationalities among Sejong's registered foreigners in 2024, with 1,155 (18.7 percent) and 1,111 (18.0 percent). Korean-Chinese followed

with 568 (9.2 percent), then nationals of Myanmar (363), Nepal (346), Cambodia (324) and Thailand (314). The ten largest nationalities made up 78.0 percent of registered foreigners (4,825 of 6,182).

**TABLE 1****Registered Foreigners, MOIS Foreign Residents and Korean Residents in Sejong, Selected Years, 2012-24**

| Year | Registered foreigners | MOIS foreign residents | Korean residents | Registered foreigners per 100 Korean residents |
|------|-----------------------|------------------------|------------------|------------------------------------------------|
| 2012 | 2,360                 | 2,515                  | 113,117          | 2.1                                            |
| 2014 | 2,730                 | 3,782                  | 156,125          | 1.7                                            |
| 2019 | 5,700                 | 9,814                  | 340,575          | 1.7                                            |
| 2024 | 6,182                 | 10,739                 | 390,685          | 1.6                                            |

Note: Sejong was created on 1 July 2012, so 2012 is the first year available. Registered foreigners are counted on 31 December and MOIS foreign residents on 1 November; the MOIS count adds naturalized citizens and the children of foreign residents.

Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks and Ministry of the Interior and Safety statistics, 2012-2024.

Vietnamese nationals had outnumbered Chinese nationals in 2019 (1,250 against 912). Between 2019 and 2024 the Vietnamese count fell by 139 and the Korean-Chinese count by 257 (from 825 to 568), while the Chinese count rose by 243. Among the ten largest groups, the fastest growth was among nationals of Nepal (from 188 to 346, up 84.0 percent) and Myanmar (from 208 to 363, up 74.5 percent).

In 2024, compared with registered foreigners in South Korea as a whole, Sejong had higher shares of nationals of China (18.7 against 14.7 percent), Myanmar (5.9 against 3.5 percent) and Thailand (5.1 against 2.9 percent), and a lower share of Korean-Chinese (9.2 against 16.6 percent).

**TABLE 2****Ten Largest Nationalities among Registered Foreigners in Sejong, 2019 and 2024**

| Nationality    | 2019  | 2024  | Share of Sejong's registered foreigners, 2024 (%) | Sejong's share of this nationality in South Korea, 2024 (%) |
|----------------|-------|-------|---------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| China          | 912   | 1,155 | 18.7                                              | 0.5                                                         |
| Vietnam        | 1,250 | 1,111 | 18.0                                              | 0.4                                                         |
| Korean-Chinese | 825   | 568   | 9.2                                               | 0.2                                                         |
| Myanmar        | 208   | 363   | 5.9                                               | 0.7                                                         |
| Nepal          | 188   | 346   | 5.6                                               | 0.5                                                         |
| Cambodia       | 323   | 324   | 5.2                                               | 0.5                                                         |
| Thailand       | 326   | 314   | 5.1                                               | 0.7                                                         |
| Uzbekistan     | 243   | 241   | 3.9                                               | 0.4                                                         |
| Philippines    | 187   | 206   | 3.3                                               | 0.4                                                         |
| Indonesia      | 145   | 197   | 3.2                                               | 0.3                                                         |

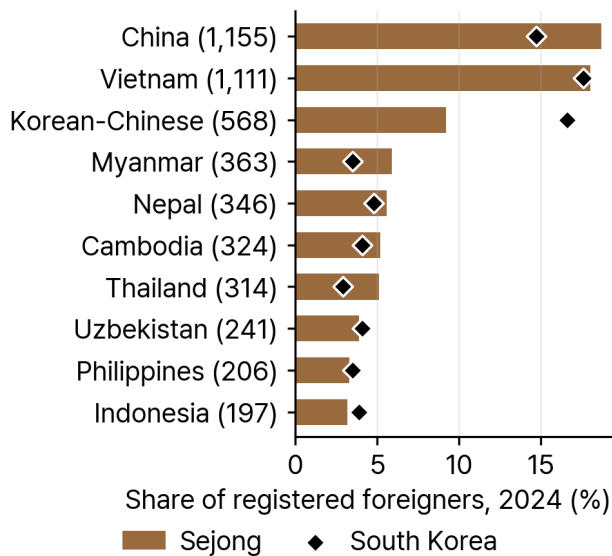
Note: Korean-Chinese are ethnic Koreans of Chinese nationality, counted separately from other Chinese nationals. Shares of Sejong's registered foreigners use the 2024 total of 6,182.

Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks, 2019 and 2024.

Sejong had 0.4 percent of all registered foreigners in South Korea in 2024. Among nationalities with at least 1,000 registered foreigners in the country, its largest shares were of South Africans (71 of 4,641, or 1.5 percent), Canadians (41 of

4,452, 0.9 percent), British nationals (40 of 5,228, 0.8 percent), Ghanaians (9 of 1,224, 0.7 percent) and Kazakhs (150 of 20,482, 0.7 percent).

FIGURE 3

**Shares of the Ten Largest Nationalities among Registered Foreigners in Sejong and South Korea, 2024**

Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks, 2024.

Sejong's registered foreigners came from 94 nationalities in 2024. The Shannon diversity index was 2.5 in 2014 and 2.6 in 2024, when it was the third highest among the 17 provinces.

Overseas Koreans on F-4 status report their residence instead of registering, so they are not among the registered foreigners counted above. In 2024, 1,445 F-4 holders had a reported residence in Sejong, 0.3 percent of the national total of 553,664 and equal to 23.4 percent of the city's registered-foreigner count. The largest groups were Korean-Chinese (827), U.S. nationals (271), Canadians (113), Uzbek nationals (88) and Korean-Russians (56).

### 3 Residence Statuses

In 2024, rotation labor statuses (E-9, E-8, H-2, E-10 and D-3) covered 2,039 of Sejong's registered foreigners (33.0 percent, against 31.1 percent nationally). Study and job-search statuses (D-2, D-4 and D-10) covered 1,430 (23.1 percent, against 18.6 percent), settlement statuses (F-2, F-5 and F-6) 1,382 (22.4 percent, against 27.6 percent), family statuses (F-1 and F-3) 510 (8.2 percent, against 10.0 percent) and skilled statuses (E-1 to E-7) 448 (7.2 percent, against 5.8 percent). The remaining 373 (6.0 percent, against 7.1 percent) were on other statuses.

TABLE 3

**Ten Most Common Residence Statuses among Registered Foreigners in Sejong, 2024**

| Status | Meaning                         | Registered foreigners | Share of Sejong's registered foreigners (%) | Sejong's share of all holders in South Korea (%) |
|--------|---------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| E-9    | Non-professional employment     | 1,739                 | 28.1                                        | 0.5                                              |
| D-2    | Student                         | 904                   | 14.6                                        | 0.5                                              |
| F-6    | Marriage migration              | 759                   | 12.3                                        | 0.5                                              |
| F-5    | Permanent residence             | 498                   | 8.1                                         | 0.2                                              |
| D-4    | General trainee                 | 476                   | 7.7                                         | 0.6                                              |
| F-1    | Visiting cohabitation           | 377                   | 6.1                                         | 0.4                                              |
| G-1    | Other (miscellaneous)           | 304                   | 4.9                                         | 0.5                                              |
| H-2    | Visiting employment             | 259                   | 4.2                                         | 0.3                                              |
| E-7    | Specially designated activities | 247                   | 4.0                                         | 0.4                                              |
| E-2    | Foreign language instructor     | 175                   | 2.8                                         | 1.3                                              |

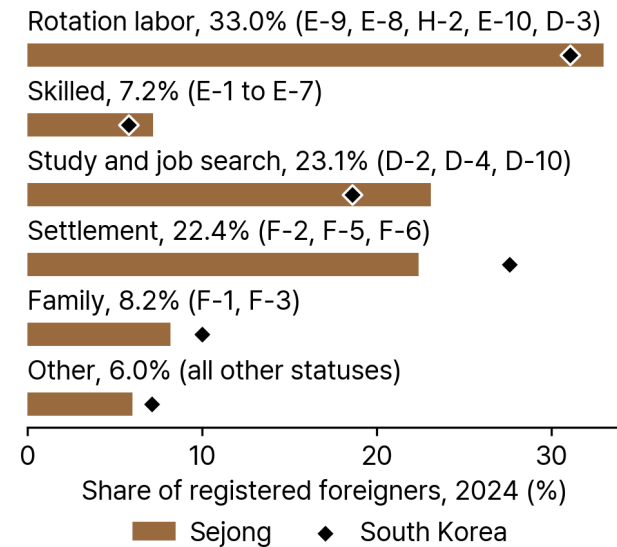
Note: Shares of Sejong's registered foreigners use the 2024 total of 6,182. Overseas Koreans on F-4 status report their residence instead of registering and are not included.

Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks, 2024.

E-9 non-professional employment was the most common single status in 2024, with 1,739 holders (28.1 percent), followed by D-2 student (904, 14.6 percent), F-6 marriage migration (759, 12.3 percent), F-5 permanent residence (498, 8.1 percent) and D-4 general trainee (476, 7.7 percent). Sejong had 1.3 percent of all E-2 foreign language instructors in South

Korea (175 people), the largest share among its ten most common statuses and above its 0.4 percent share of all registered foreigners. Its share of F-5 permanent residents was 0.2 percent.

**FIGURE 4**  
**Shares of Registered Foreigners by Status Group in Sejong and South Korea, 2024**



Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks, 2024.

**TABLE 4**  
**Registered Foreigners and Korean Residents in Sejong-si, 2019-24**

| District  | Registered foreigners, 2024 | Registered foreigners per 100 Korean residents, 2024 | Change in Korean residents, 2019-24 | Change in registered foreigners, 2019-24 | Population-decline area |
|-----------|-----------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Sejong-si | 6,182                       | 1.6                                                  | +50,110                             | +482                                     | No                      |

Note: Sejong has one district-level unit. Population-decline areas are those designated by the Ministry of the Interior and Safety on 19 October 2021.

Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks, Ministry of the Interior and Safety resident registration statistics and the ministry's 2021 list of population-decline areas, 2019-2024.

No nationality in Sejong met the ethnic-enclave definition used in this Spotlight in 2024 (a location quotient of at least 2 and at least 30 percent of the district's registered foreigners). The largest group, China, made up 18.7 percent of registered foreigners.

## 5 Population Trends

Sejong's Korean resident population grew from 113,117 in 2012 to 156,125 in 2014, 340,575 in 2019 and 390,685 in 2024. It increased by 234,560 (150.2 percent) between 2014 and 2024 and by 50,110 (14.7 percent) between 2019 and 2024. The yearly increase was 54,759 in 2015, 26,449 in 2019, 2,934 in 2023 and 4,160 in 2024.

The city's statistics portal reported a total population of 397,359, including foreign residents, on 31 August 2026 (Sejong Statistics Portal, 2026).

Sejong's total fertility rate was 1.06 in 2025 (provisional), the second highest among the 17 provinces after South Jeolla (1.1). Sejong was the only province where births exceeded deaths in

The Ministry of the Interior and Safety counted 10,739 foreign residents in Sejong on 1 November 2024. Of these, 7,992 were foreign nationals: 2,294 workers, 1,310 international students, 984 ethnic Koreans of foreign nationality, 956 marriage migrants and 2,448 others. The count also included 983 naturalized citizens and 1,764 children of foreign residents, together 25.6 percent of the total.

## 4 Districts and Population-Decline Areas

Sejong has a single district-level unit, Sejong-si, so the KIRD district-level data contain one entry for the city and no district figure is shown. Between 2019 and 2024, Sejong-si gained 50,110 Korean residents and 482 registered foreigners, and in 2024 it had 1.6 registered foreigners per 100 Korean residents.

Sejong-si was not among the 89 population-decline areas or the 18 areas of interest that the Ministry of the Interior and Safety designated on 19 October 2021.

2025, by 1,300, while the other 16 provinces recorded a natural decrease (Statistics Korea, 2026).

Sejong had the lowest median age of the 17 provinces in 2022, 38.8 years, and is projected to have the lowest in 2052 as well, at 52.1 years (Statistics Korea, 2024). In 2025 it had the lowest share of residents aged 65 and older, 11.6 percent (Bravo My Life, 2025, reporting Statistics Korea's 2025 statistics on older persons).

Statistics Korea's projections for 2022 to 2052 show Sejong's population growing 41.1 percent, and Gyeonggi (0.9 percent) is the only other province projected to grow. Sejong is also the only province where the working-age population (ages 15 to 64) is projected to grow, by 16.7 percent through 2052 (Statistics Korea, 2024).

## 6 Industry and Foreign Workers

Registered foreigners on E-9 non-professional employment status, the status for workers admitted under the Employment Permit System, numbered 1,145 in Sejong in 2014, 1,542 in

2019, 1,236 in 2021 and 1,739 in 2024. In 2024 they made up 28.1 percent of the city's registered foreigners and 0.5 percent of E-9 holders in South Korea.

Sejong's 2026 implementation plan under the 4th Basic Plan for Immigration Policy reports that the city's registered foreigners have gradually increased since the COVID-19 pandemic and that foreign workers are increasing in agriculture, a sector with severe labor shortages. The plan describes Sejong's farming as moving toward multi-crop, small-volume production, with consumer markets nearby and more small farms, and reports that rising farmland prices are increasing the number of small-scale farmers (Ministry of Justice, 2026).

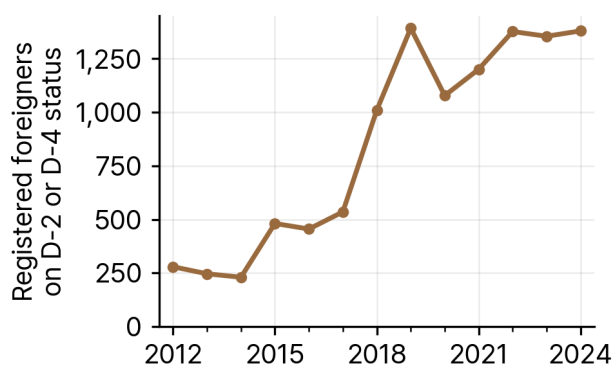
E-8 seasonal workers counted on 31 December numbered 6 in 2022, 10 in 2023 and 40 in 2024. The year-end count misses most seasonal workers, whose contracts end before winter. Sejong's seasonal worker program for the first half of 2025 allowed employment in facility horticulture, specialty crops, mushrooms and orchard fruit, and excluded livestock farming (Sejong City, 2025). Eligibility for the program is described under Provincial Policy.

Sejong's page on the Jeonui industrial park, which covers 1,347,229 square meters, lists 44 companies employing 2,877 workers, split between Jeonui 1 (8 companies, 1,339 workers) and Jeonui 2 (36 companies, 1,538 workers) (Sejong City, 2026a).

## 7 International Students and Universities

Registered foreigners on student (D-2) or general trainee (D-4) status numbered 279 in Sejong in 2012 and 230 in 2014. The count rose to 535 in 2017, 1,010 in 2018 and 1,393 in 2019, fell to 1,078 in 2020, and was 1,380 in 2024, when 904 were on D-2 status and 476 on D-4 status. In 2024 the two statuses covered 22.3 percent of Sejong's registered foreigners and 0.5 percent of D-2 and D-4 holders in South Korea.

**FIGURE 5**  
**Registered Foreigners on Student (D-2) or General Trainee (D-4) Status in Sejong, 2012-24**



Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks, 2012-2024.

Korea University and Hongik University have Sejong campuses in Jochiwon-eup. The city's other higher-education institutions are Korea University of Media Arts, a junior college in Janggun-myeon, the KDI School of Public Policy and Management, a graduate school in Bangok-dong, and Daejeon Catholic University in Jeonui-myeon. Sejong University, despite its name, is in Seoul (Sejong University, n.d.).

Chungcheong Today, citing Ministry of Education and Korean Educational Development Institute data, reported that international students at universities in Sejong rose from 1,026 in 2022 to 1,356 in April 2026, and that 56 international students in Sejong withdrew from their studies in the previous year, out of more than 1,200 a year in the Chungcheong region (Chungcheong Today, 2026). The university count and the KIRD count of D-2 and D-4 holders differ in source, reference date and coverage.

City support for international students, including the Sejong Global Leader program and stipends for students at the KDI School, is described under Provincial Policy.

## 8 Provincial Policy

Sejong's Ordinance on Support for Foreign Residents and Multicultural Families (Sejong Ordinance No. 375) took effect on 30 July 2013 (National Law Information Center, 2013).

The Population, Women and Family Affairs Division is part of Sejong's Health and Welfare Bureau (Sejong City, 2026b). The city's 2026 implementation plan under the 4th Basic Plan for Immigration Policy lists this division as responsible for multicultural-family programs such as Korean-language education and job support for marriage migrants. Other units handle other programs for foreign residents, including the Agricultural Policy Division for seasonal workers and the External Cooperation Officer for international students (Ministry of Justice, 2026).

According to the plan, the city's Family Center provided Korean-language education in 2025 to marriage migrants and to children who came to Korea later in childhood, through five courses (among them beginner Korean and Korean through television dramas) with 2,700 participants. In 2025 the city also paid living stipends to international students at the KDI School of Public Policy and Management and organized internationalization programs for them, to help them adapt to study in Korea and build international networks (Ministry of Justice, 2026).

The plan lists budgets of 52 million won a year for 2024, 2025 and 2026 for Sejong Global Leader, an international-student recruitment and support program managed by the External Cooperation Officer. The budget for the city's citizen safety insurance for foreign residents rises from 198 million won in 2025 to 235 million won in 2026, an increase of 18.7 percent (Ministry of Justice, 2026).

Sejong's seasonal worker program for the first half of 2025 was limited to family members in the home country, or relatives up to cousins, of marriage migrants living in the city,

aged 19 to 55 (Sejong City, 2025).

## 9 Languages

TABLE 5

**Estimated First-Language Speakers among Registered Foreigners in Sejong, 2024**

| Language         | Estimated speakers |
|------------------|--------------------|
| Chinese          | 1,144              |
| Vietnamese       | 951                |
| Khmer            | 326                |
| Thai             | 276                |
| Burmese          | 233                |
| English          | 210                |
| Nepali           | 182                |
| Tagalog/Filipino | 181                |
| Uzbek            | 180                |
| Russian          | 144                |

Note: Estimates apply each nationality's first-language shares from Ethnologue to its registered-foreigner count. Korean is excluded.

Source: KIRD dataset, from Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks and Ethnologue first-language shares, 2024.

The KIRD dataset estimates the first languages of registered foreigners by applying Ethnologue (24th edition) first-language shares to the count of each nationality, with Korean excluded. By this estimate, Chinese was the most common first language among Sejong's registered foreigners in 2024, with 1,144 speakers, followed by Vietnamese (951) and Khmer (326). Chinese was the only language with 1,000 or more estimated speakers.

## 10 Service Organizations and Community Places

The KIRD census of 1,717 migrant-serving organizations in South Korea lists 5 in Sejong, equal to 8.1 per 10,000 registered foreigners in 2024, against 11.5 per 10,000 nationally. They are a family center, a migrant worker support center, a Social Integration Program provider, a youth and multicultural education center and a medical support institution, and all five provide direct services.

Two of the organizations serve children, two serve families and two serve workers. One serves all migrants, one serves refugees and one serves undocumented migrants. Some organizations serve more than one population.

The migrant worker support center is the Sejong City Migrant Worker Welfare Center in Jochiwon-eup, a privately operated organization that supports foreign migrant workers and their children, with Korean-language education and programs for adapting to Korean society. In May 2026, Lotte Construction chose it as the 100th site of its Love House facility-improvement project (Asia Economy, 2026).

The Sejong Healthy Family and Multicultural Family Support Center, in the Saerom Integrated Welfare Center, describes its work as customized programs on family relationships, family care and family life for multicultural families and all other families (Sejong Welfare Platform, 2026).

To our knowledge, no published source describes gathering places, such as places of worship or shops, used by particular national groups in Sejong.

**About these profiles.** The KIRD province profiles describe the foreign-resident population of each of South Korea's seventeen provinces and metropolitan cities. Figures come from the Korea Immigration Regional Dashboard (KIRD) dataset, built from the Ministry of Justice immigration yearbooks and the Ministry of the Interior and Safety foreign-resident statistics for 2006 to 2024 (<https://doi.org/10.3886/E249944V1>); context comes from the sources listed. Interactive maps and tables: <https://immigrantsinkorea.today>.

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