

New Americans in Kentucky



OVERVIEW¹

Immigrant Residents ²	188,771
Immigrant Share of Population	4.2%
Immigrant Taxes Paid	\$1.5B
Immigrant Spending Power	\$4.5B

DEMOGRAPHICS

In the United States, immigrants are more likely to be working-age than their U.S.-born counterparts. This means they are more likely to be active in the labor force, allowing them to contribute to the economy not only as consumers but also as taxpayers, helping fund social services and programs like Medicare and Social Security.

Share of immigrant women	51.3%
Share of immigrant men	48.7%
Number of immigrant children	20,957
Share of total population who are U.S.-born residents with at least one immigrant parent	2.3%
Number of U.S.-born residents with at least one immigrant parent	101,872
Foreign-born, share proficient in English	81.0%

Age Group	Foreign-Born Population	U.S.-Born Population
0-15	9.6%	20.2%
16-64	81.7%	62.5%
65+	8.7%	17.3%

Top Countries of Origin for Immigrants

Mexico	18.3%
India	9.6%
Cuba	8.7%
China	3.7%
Philippines	3.5%

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ENTREPRENEURSHIP

It is hard to overstate the importance of entrepreneurship since new businesses are the main driver of job growth in the United States. Immigrants play a particularly important role in this—founding businesses at far higher rates than the U.S. population overall. Today, millions of American workers are employed at immigrant-founded and immigrant-owned companies.

Immigrant entrepreneurs	11,255
Share of entrepreneurs who are immigrants	6.9%
Total business income of immigrant entrepreneurs	\$458.3M

TAXES & SPENDING POWER

Immigrant households contribute hundreds of billions of dollars in federal, state, and local taxes and hold a tremendous amount of spending power. This gives them significant economic clout, helping support local communities as consumers and taxpayers. Like all residents of the United States, regardless of where they were born, immigrants make use of public services like education, healthcare, and public safety. Even with these costs, however, immigrants' economic contributions far outweigh the cost of additional public services they incur.

Immigrant household income	\$6.0B
Total taxes paid	\$1.5B
Federal taxes paid ³	\$966.6M
State & local taxes paid ⁴	\$565.7M
Total spending power	\$4.5B

WORKFORCE

The growth in the immigrant population has helped to strengthen America's labor force. As baby boomers retire, younger immigrants are filling crucial gaps in the market. Nationally, immigrants are more likely to hold an advanced degree than the U.S.-born. They are also more likely to have less than a high school education. As such, this allows them to fill critical shortages at both ends of the skill spectrum, from high-tech fields to agriculture, hospitality, and service industries.

Number of immigrant workers in the labor force	123,541
Share of workers in the labor force who are immigrants	5.8%

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Education Level	Foreign-Born Population	U.S.-Born Population
Less than high school	23.2%	12.2%
High school & some college	38.8%	63.1%
Bachelor's degree	21.0%	14.8%
Graduate degree	17.1%	9.8%

Top Industries with Highest Share of Immigrant Workers

Electronic shopping and mail-order houses	26.2%
Computer systems design and related services	20.8%
Colleges, universities, and professional schools, including junior colleges	11.6%
Construction (the cleaning of buildings and dwellings is incidental during construction and immediately after construction)	7.8%
Motor vehicles and motor vehicle equipment manufacturing	6.8%

Top Occupation with Highest Share of Immigrant Workers

Physicians	22.7%
Carpenters	19.3%
Postsecondary teachers	18.9%
Miscellaneous production workers, including equipment operators and tenders	13.2%
Laborers and freight, stock, and material movers, hand	9.0%

Science Technology, Engineering, and Math

Jobs in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) fields are some of the most in-demand occupations in the U.S. economy. These jobs are also expected to experience some of the highest growth rates in the next decade, second only to healthcare jobs. While immigrants already play a huge part in maintaining the United States' role as a leading innovator, they will also be instrumental in helping high-tech industries meet their full potential as their needs for high-skilled STEM workers increase rapidly in the future.

Share of STEM workers who are immigrants ⁵	12.5%
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Healthcare

As millions of baby boomers become elderly, the U.S. healthcare system is facing unprecedented demand, adding jobs faster than any other segment of the economy. Many healthcare businesses and providers are struggling to find enough workers, and in some rural areas shortages are particularly acute. Immigrants have already been filling some of our most glaring healthcare needs. They are twice as likely as the U.S.-born to work as home health aides, but also twice as likely to be physicians and surgeons.

Nurses who are foreign-born	2.9%
Health aides who are foreign-born	3.7%

HOUSING

Immigrant families have long played an important role in helping to build housing wealth in the United States. In recent decades, the more than 40 million immigrants collectively increased U.S. housing wealth by trillions of dollars. Much of this was possible because immigrants moved into neighborhoods once in decline, helping to revitalize communities and make them more attractive to U.S.-born residents.

Immigrant homeowners	32,960
Share of recent homebuyers who were foreign-born	4.4%
Housing wealth held by immigrant households	\$7.8B
Amount paid by immigrant-led households in rent	\$385.5M

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS⁶

International students in the United States contribute tens of billions of dollars to the U.S. economy every year and support a significant number of U.S. jobs through their tuition payments and day-to-day spending. Research has also found that increases in the number of international students at American universities boost innovation and patent creation.

Students at U.S. colleges and universities who are international students	10,523
Economic contribution of international students	\$272.7M
Jobs supported by international students	1,893

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NATURALIZATION & VOTING POWER

As more immigrants naturalize and become eligible to vote, they continue to gain political power. The number of immigrant voters is only projected to rise in the next decade, but in some states foreign-born voters are already capable of deciding elections.

Share of all immigrants who are naturalized U.S. citizens	40.0%
Number of immigrants who are naturalized U.S. citizens	75,517
Number of immigrants who are eligible for naturalization	59,030
Immigrants eligible to vote	69,108

UNDOCUMENTED IMMIGRANTS

The presence of the significant number of undocumented immigrants in the United States, most of whom have lived in the country for more than five years, poses many legal and political challenges. But while politicians continue to debate what to do about illegal immigration, millions of undocumented immigrants are working across the country, contributing billions of dollars to the U.S. economy.

Number of undocumented immigrants ⁷	49,336
Share of undocumented immigrants who are working age	85.3%
Undocumented entrepreneurs	-
Undocumented household income	\$933.8M
Total taxes paid ⁸	\$99.8M
Federal taxes paid	\$51.5M
State & local taxes paid	\$48.3M
Total spending power	\$834.0M
Share of immigrant population who are undocumented immigrants	26.1%
Share of total U.S. workforce that is undocumented	1.6%
Share of total U.S. population that is undocumented	1.1%
Number of U.S. citizens living with at least one undocumented family member	35,192
Share of U.S. citizens living with at least one undocumented family member	0.8%

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UNDOCUMENTED IMMIGRANTS (CONTINUED)

Number of U.S. citizen children living with at least one undocumented family member	26,119
Share of U.S. citizen children living with at least one undocumented family member	2.7%
Number of U.S. citizen children living with at least one undocumented parent	24,286
Share of U.S. citizen children living with at least one undocumented parent	2.5%

THE DACA-ELIGIBLE POPULATION

DACA-eligible people contribute billions of dollars to the U.S. economy. Removing the protections afforded to DACA recipients will likely upset local economies, communities, and schools, hurting employers and businesses that depend on these young immigrants as workers and customers.

Number of DACA-eligible residents	4,247
Share of DACA-eligible population in labor force that is employed	-
Number of DACA-eligible entrepreneurs	-
DACA-eligible household income ⁹	\$100.0M
Total taxes paid	\$23.7M
Federal taxes paid	\$13.7M
State & local taxes paid	\$10.1M
Total spending power	\$76.3M
Number of active DACA recipients ¹⁰	2,590
Number of people with DACA granted ¹¹	3,315
Number of additional residents who would satisfy all but the educational requirements for DACA	

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REFUGEES¹²

Refugees living in the United States make tremendous contributions to our economy as earners, taxpayers, and consumers. Rather than a drain on communities, refugees, with their high employment rate and entrepreneurial spirit, actually sustain and strengthen their new hometowns.

Number of likely refugees	25,698
Share of likely refugees, employed	-
Refugee household income	\$642.7M
Total taxes paid	\$150.2M
Federal taxes paid	\$87.6M
State & local taxes paid	\$62.6M
Total spending power	\$492.5M
Number of refugee entrepreneurs	-
Total business income of refugee entrepreneurs	\$-

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To learn more about Map the Impact, visit maptheimpact.org.

The American Immigration Council works to empower immigrants from arrival to belonging. To learn more about the Council's work, visit americanimmigrationcouncil.org.

ENDNOTES

1. Unless otherwise specified, data comes from the American Immigration Council analysis of microdata from the 1-year sample of the 2019 American Community Survey (ACS), downloaded from the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMS), <https://www.ipums.org/>.
2. Except where otherwise noted, an immigrant refers to anyone born outside the country to non-U.S. citizen parents who is resident in the United States. This includes naturalized citizens, green card holders, individuals holding temporary (nonimmigrant) status, refugees, asylees, and undocumented immigrants, among others.
3. Congressional Budget Office. 2020. "The Distribution of Household Income and Federal Taxes, 2017." <https://www.cbo.gov/publication/56575>.
4. Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy (ITEP). 2018. "Who Pays? A Distributional Analysis of the Tax Systems in All 50 States (6th edition)," <https://itep.org/whopays/>.
5. U.S. Census Bureau. 2010. "STEM, STEM-related, and Non-STEM Occupation Code List 2010." <https://www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/demo/guidance/industry-occupation/stem-census-2010-occ-code-list.xls>
6. We use the state-level data of international students who are enrolled at U.S. colleges and universities and those that are on Optional Practical Training (OPT) in the 2021-22 academic year from the "International Student Economic Value Tool" developed by NAFSA, <https://www.nafsa.org/policy-and-advocacy/policy-resources/nafsa-international-student-economic-value-tool-v2>.
7. We use data from the ACS to arrive at an estimate of the undocumented immigrant population by applying the methodological approach outlined by Harvard University economist George Borjas in his 2016 NBER working paper, "The Labor Supply of Undocumented Immigrants", <https://ideas.repec.org/p/nbr/nberwo/22102.html>.
8. When estimating the tax contributions of undocumented immigrants, we take into consideration the fact that about 50 percent of undocumented immigrants pay taxes using false Social Security or Individual Tax Identification numbers and follow the methodology detailed by ITEP in "Undocumented Immigrants' State & Local Tax Contributions" to discount the total amount by half, <https://itep.org/undocumented-immigrants-state-local-tax-contributions-2017/>.
9. We treat each DACA-eligible individual as a single taxpaying unit, following the lead of other groups that have also sought to quantify the economic and tax contributions of this population, such as ITEP in its report "State & Local Tax Contributions of Young Undocumented Immigrants", <https://itep.sfo2.digitaloceanspaces.com/2017DACA.pdf>.
10. U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). "Count of Active DACA Recipients by Month of Current DACA Expiration as of March 31, 2022." https://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/document/data/Active_DACA_Recipients_March_31_2022.pdf
11. USCIS. "Number of Form I-821D, Consideration of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals – Requests by Intake and Case Status, by Fiscal Year, Aug. 15, 2012 – March 31, 2022." https://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/document/data/Active_DACA_Recipients_March_31_2022.pdf.
12. To identify cases in microdata from the 2019 ACS that are likely to be refugees, we use an imputation method based on each foreign-born respondent's country of birth and their year of arrival, similar to the work of Kallick and Mathema in "Refugee Integration in the United States," <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/refugee-integration-in-the-united-states/>, and Capps et al in "The Integration Outcomes of U.S. Refugees: Successes and Challenges", <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/integration-outcomes-us-refugees-successes-and-challenges>.