

# The Economic Contributions of Immigrants in Texas

## The Key Role Immigrants Play in Manufacturing, Healthcare, and Education

Immigrants have played a crucial role in the economy of Texas throughout the state's history. Today, immigrants continue to make valuable contributions in some of the state's fastest growing and most in-demand fields, such as manufacturing, healthcare, behavioral health, and education.<sup>1</sup> In 2019, Texas had the second-largest immigrant population in the country, with more than 4.9 million<sup>2</sup> immigrants calling the state home. The growth in the immigrant population has helped strengthen the Texas labor force; immigrants comprised 21.9 percent of the state's overall workforce,<sup>3</sup> despite making up just 17.1 percent of its population in 2019.<sup>4</sup>

As the state's economy continues to grow and more businesses move to Texas, immigrants are needed to complement U.S.-born workers and fill crucial gaps in the workforce—gaps that are expected to grow as Texans age out of the workforce, thereby exacerbating existing labor shortages.

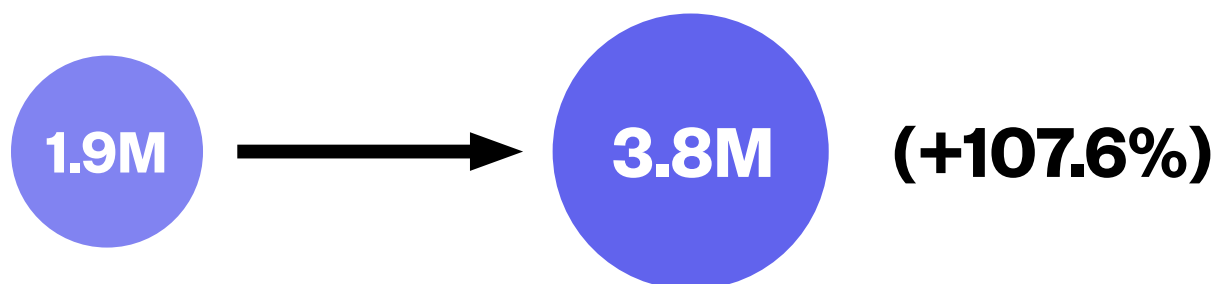
**As of 2021, there were 7.1 million Texans aged 55 and older, representing a significant portion of the workforce that can be expected to retire over the next decade.<sup>5</sup>**

### THE GROWING DEMAND FOR WORKERS IN TEXAS

---

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, labor shortages, and supply-chain disruptions, the Texas economy continues to grow larger and stronger, as evidenced by an increase in demand for workers. From 2017 to 2021, the number of online job postings in Texas more than doubled, increasing from 1.85 million to 3.84 million.<sup>6</sup> Immigrants will be crucial to meeting demand in a multitude of sectors that power the Texas economy.

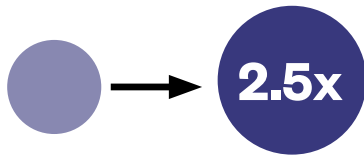
**From 2017 to 2021, overall online job postings in Texas increased from**



## MANUFACTURING AND PRODUCTION

Manufacturing is a key economic driver in Texas. In 2019, the economic output of the state's manufacturing sector was larger than the manufacturing GDP of either Russia or Mexico, and of Portugal's entire national economy.<sup>7</sup> Even as the Texas manufacturing sector weathers pandemic-related challenges, the industry continues to attract talent across the skills spectrum, spurring economic development and innovation throughout the state.

From 2017 to 2021, job postings for production and manufacturing occupations increased<sup>8</sup> by a factor of



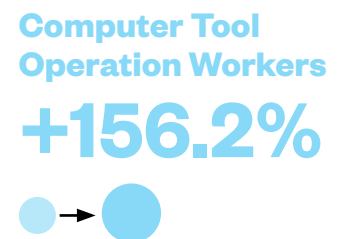
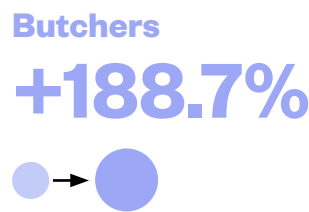
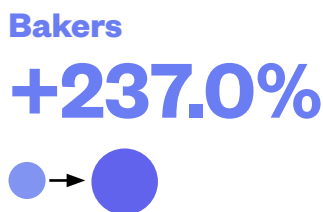
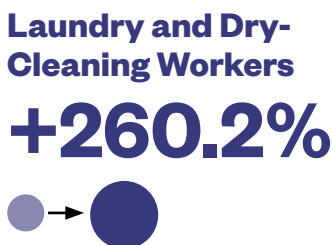
The greatest number of online job postings in 2021 was for production workers;<sup>9</sup> these postings tripled in five years,<sup>10</sup> from

**7,508 to 23,010**

The share of workers in 2019 who were immigrants:<sup>11</sup>



Many production occupations saw significant increases in online job postings from 2017 to 2021, including:<sup>12</sup>



## NURSING

In the healthcare industry, job postings increased by 90.9 percent from 2017 to 2021, and job postings for healthcare occupations that requested bilingual workers grew by 264.6 percent,<sup>13</sup> demonstrating the critical need for healthcare workers across the state.<sup>14</sup> As the state's population continues to both grow and age, the need for additional healthcare workers will increase.

**From 2017 to 2021, online job postings for licensed practical nurses (LPNs)<sup>15</sup> increased by**

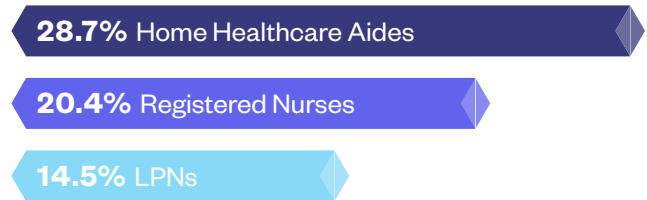
**+120.1%**

**During the same period, online job postings for home healthcare aides increased<sup>16</sup> by a factor of**

**5x**

**Registered nurses (RNs) recorded the most job postings in healthcare in 2021.<sup>17</sup>**

The share of workers in 2019 who were immigrants:<sup>18</sup>



## ORAL HEALTH

The demand for oral healthcare workers also grew in Texas between 2017 and 2021.<sup>19</sup>

**From 2017 to 2021, online job postings for dentists nearly doubled,<sup>20</sup> growing from**

**1,886 to 3,684**

**During the same period, online job postings for dental assistants nearly tripled,<sup>21</sup> from**

**2,526 to 9,894**

The share of workers in 2019 who were immigrants:<sup>22</sup>



## SOCIAL WORK AND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

Social workers and behavioral health practitioners play an essential role in ensuring that the state provides a safe, healthy, and secure environment for all Texans. As the state's population grows, the demand for behavioral health professionals rises. As the state becomes more diverse, the demand for culturally competent and multilingual social workers and behavioral health professionals continues to grow.

**From 2017 to 2021, online job postings for general social workers in Texas doubled.<sup>23</sup>**

**From 2017 to 2021, online job postings for social work and counseling occupations that listed bilingual skills<sup>24</sup> grew by**

**+241.4%** ● → ●

**During the same period, online job postings for counseling jobs increased for:<sup>25</sup> Substance abuse counselors (nearly +250.0%) and mental health social workers (+221.5%).**

The share of workers in 2019 who were immigrants:<sup>26</sup>

9.1% Social Workers

4.6% General Counselors

## K-12 EDUCATION

As school districts struggle to recruit and retain teachers, immigrants play a critical role in easing teacher shortages. With an increase in demand for multilingual educators in areas like English as a second language and bilingual special education, immigrants are uniquely positioned to provide support in the classroom.

**From 2017 to 2021, online job postings for teachers and teaching assistants in Texas K-12 schools doubled.<sup>27</sup>**

**During the same period, online job postings for elementary school teachers grew the most,<sup>28</sup> increasing from 2,771 to 7,479, or**

**+169.9%** ● → ●

**From 2017 to 2021, online job postings for K-12 teachers and educational support occupations that listed bilingual skills<sup>29</sup> grew by**

**+158.1%** ● → ●

**Since 2017, middle school teachers have become the most in-demand K-12 workers with an increase in job postings<sup>30</sup> of**

**+108.8%** ● → ●

**From 2017 to 2021, online job postings for teaching assistants grew<sup>31</sup> from**

**3,609 to 9,383**

The share of workers in 2019 who were immigrants:<sup>32</sup>

21.4% Teaching Assistants

10.1% Elementary and Middle School Teachers

9.5% K-12 Teachers

**Immigrants already contribute skills that are crucial to innovation, healthy living, and education. If Texas is to meet the growing demands of the labor market, the state must create policies and welcoming strategies that ensure immigrants can thrive and fully participate in the economy.**

## ENDNOTES

---

1. Unless stated otherwise, all data in this report is reflective of Texas.
2. American Immigration Council analysis of data from the 1-year 2019 American Community Survey. See American Immigration Council, “Map the Impact: Texas,” accessed on April 22, 2022, <https://www.newamericaneconomy.org/locations/texas/>.
3. American Immigration Council analysis of the IPUMS microdata from the 2019 American Community Survey, 1-Year Sample.
4. American Immigration Council analysis of data from the 1-year 2019 American Community Survey. See American Immigration Council, “Map the Impact: Texas,” accessed on April 22, 2022, <https://www.newamericaneconomy.org/locations/texas/>.
5. American Immigration Council analysis of data compiled by Burning Glass Technologies Labor Insight™ 2022, <https://kb.emsidata.com/methodology/ems-data-basic-overview/>.
6. Ibid.
7. Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts, “Texas Regional Manufacturing Overview,” 2020, <https://comptroller.texas.gov/economy/economic-data/manufacturing/2020/>.
8. American Immigration Council analysis of data compiled by Burning Glass Technologies Labor Insight™ 2022, <https://kb.emsidata.com/methodology/ems-data-basic-overview/>.
9. Production workers mostly include industries that assemble products, operate machinery to make products, and oversee production flows.
10. American Immigration Council analysis of data compiled by Burning Glass Technologies Labor Insight™ 2022, <https://kb.emsidata.com/methodology/ems-data-basic-overview/>.
11. American Immigration Council analysis of the IPUMS microdata from the 2019 American Community Survey, 1-Year Sample. Ibid.
12. American Immigration Council analysis of data compiled by Burning Glass Technologies Labor Insight™ 2022, <https://kb.emsidata.com/methodology/ems-data-basic-overview/>.
13. This includes nurses, pharmacists, dentists, and health tech and healthcare support occupations. However, it does not include physicians.
14. American Immigration Council analysis of data compiled by Burning Glass Technologies Labor Insight™ 2022, <https://kb.emsidata.com/methodology/ems-data-basic-overview/>.
15. Ibid.
16. Ibid.
17. Ibid.
18. American Immigration Council analysis of the IPUMS microdata from the 2019 American Community Survey, 1-Year Sample.
19. American Immigration Council analysis of data compiled by Burning Glass Technologies Labor Insight™ 2022, <https://kb.emsidata.com/methodology/ems-data-basic-overview/>.
20. Ibid.
21. Ibid.
22. American Immigration Council analysis of the IPUMS microdata from the 2019 American Community Survey, 1-Year Sample.
23. American Immigration Council analysis of data compiled by Burning Glass Technologies Labor Insight™ 2022, <https://kb.emsidata.com/methodology/ems-data-basic-overview/>.
24. Ibid.

## ENDNOTES

---

25. Ibid.
26. American Immigration Council analysis of the IPUMS microdata from the 2019 American Community Survey, 1-Year Sample.
27. American Immigration Council analysis of data compiled by Burning Glass Technologies Labor Insight™ 2022, <https://kb.emsidata.com/methodology/emsidata-basic-overview/>.
28. Ibid.
29. Ibid.
30. Ibid.
31. Ibid.
32. American Immigration Council analysis of the IPUMS microdata from the 2019 American Community Survey, 1-Year Sample.