

New Americans in Baltimore County

The Demographic and Economic Contributions of Immigrants¹ in the County²

JUNE 2023



Population

103,700

immigrants lived in Baltimore County, Maryland, in 2019.³

Immigrants made up



of the total population in the county in 2019.

Between 2014 and 2019, the total population in the county increased by



The immigrant population increased by

+14.2%

during the same time period.

127.5%

of the total population growth in the county was attributable to immigrants. This means that population growth would have been negative without immigrants moving to the county.

Demographics



of households in Baltimore County had at least one foreign-born resident in 2019.

In the county, immigrants were



more likely to be of working-age than their U.S.-born counterparts, allowing them to actively participate in the labor force and contribute to the economy as taxpayers and consumers.⁴

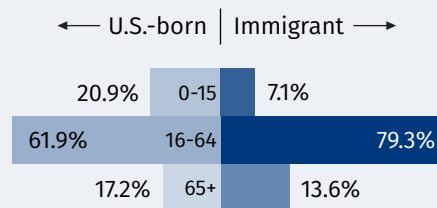


of immigrants in Baltimore County were recent arrivals, with no more than five years of residency in the United States, meaning



of immigrants in the county had resided in the United States for more than five years.

Shares of population by age groups:⁵



1. Estimates provided in this report may slightly undercount the immigrant population. The American Community Survey historically undersamples the foreign-born population, especially among lower income, more recently arrived, and less English-fluent immigrant populations.
2. Unless otherwise specified, data comes from 5-year samples of the American Community Survey from 2014 and 2019 and figures refer to Baltimore County, Maryland.
3. We define "immigrant" as any non-citizen or any naturalized U.S. citizen. They include naturalized citizens, green card holders, temporary visa holders, refugees, asylees, and undocumented immigrants, among others.
4. We define working age as 16-64 years of age.
5. Totals may not add up to 100 percent due to rounding.

Demographics

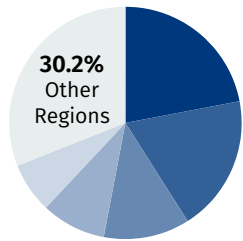
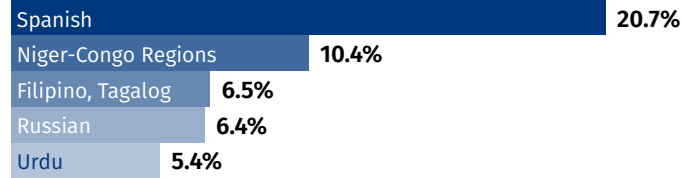
363,200

people worked in the county in 2019, of these,

13.2%

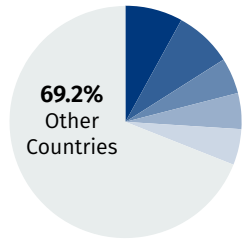
or **47,800** workers were foreign-born.

Among immigrants, the top languages spoken at home other than English were:



The top five regions of origin for immigrants living in the county:

- Mexico, Central America, and Caribbean (21.6%)
- India and Southwest Asia (19.4%)
- West Africa (12.2%)
- East Asia (9.3%)
- Southeast Asia (7.3%)



The top five countries of origin for immigrants living in the county:

- Nigeria (8.3%)
- India (7.9%)
- Philippines (5.1%)
- El Salvador (5.0%)
- Pakistan (4.5%)

Immigrants with Limited English Language Proficiency

15,700

immigrants living in the county had limited English language proficiency, making up

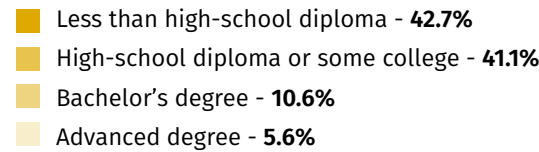


of the immigrant population.⁶

Among those with limited English proficiency, the top languages spoken at home other than English were:



Among those with limited English language proficiency, educational attainment was as follows:



Spending Power and Tax Contributions

Immigrants paid a significant amount in federal, state, and local taxes, including property, sales, and excise taxes levied by state and local governments.

In 2019, immigrant households⁷ in Baltimore County earned **\$3.9 billion**



■ **\$677.2 million**

went to federal taxes⁸

■ **\$396.5 million** went to state & local taxes⁹

■ **\$2.8 billion** left in spending power

This means that foreign-born households held



of all spending power in the county.

In 2019, foreign-born residents in the county contributed

\$9.7 billion

to the county's gross domestic product (GDP), or **14.1%** of the total.¹⁰

⁶ For the purpose of this report, we define people with limited English language proficiency as those who do not speak English at all or do not speak English well.

⁷ Immigrant households refer to those with an immigrant as head of the unit.

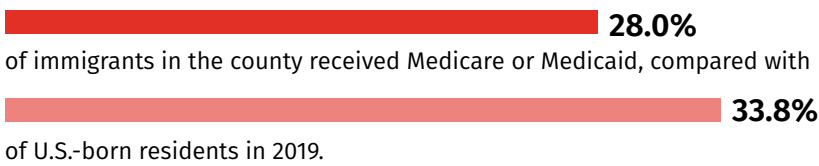
⁸ U.S. Congressional Budget Office, *The Distribution of Household Income and Federal Taxes, 2019* (Washington, DC: 2021), <https://www.cbo.gov/publication/58353>.

⁹ Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy, *Who Pays? A Distributional Analysis of the Tax Systems in All Fifty States* (Washington, DC: 2018), <https://itep.org/whopays/>.

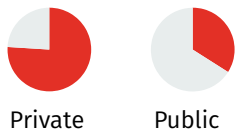
¹⁰ These figures derive from our calculations based on immigrants' share of wage income and self-employment income in the 5-year ACS sample from 2019 and the statistics of GDP from the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis.

Spending Power & Tax Contributions *(continued)*

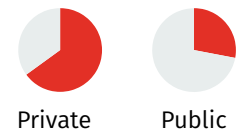
Immigrants in the county also supported federal social programs. In 2019, they contributed



About **76.0%** of U.S.-born residents had private health care coverage, while **34.3%** had public health care coverage.¹¹



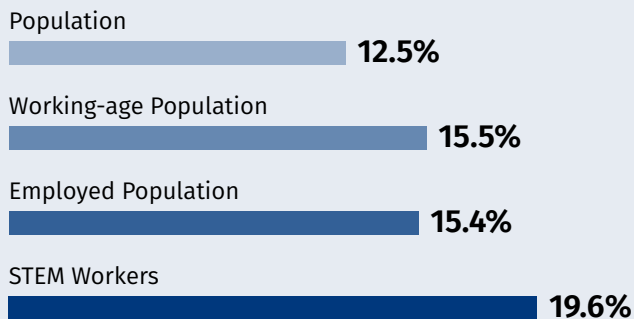
About **64.9%** of immigrants had private health care coverage, while **28.3%** had public health care coverage.



Workforce

Although immigrants made up **12.5%** of the county's overall population, they represented **15.5%** of its working-age population, **15.4%** of its employed labor force, and **19.6%** of its STEM workers in 2019.¹²

Immigrant shares of the...



The immigrant working-age population was **51.2%** female and **48.8%** male.



The employed population was **45.2%** female and **54.8%** male.



¹¹ Including people who have both public and private healthcare coverage.

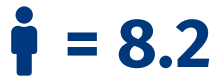
¹² STEM refers to occupations that require background or expertise in science, technology, engineering, or math.

Workforce (continued)

Immigrants in the county were

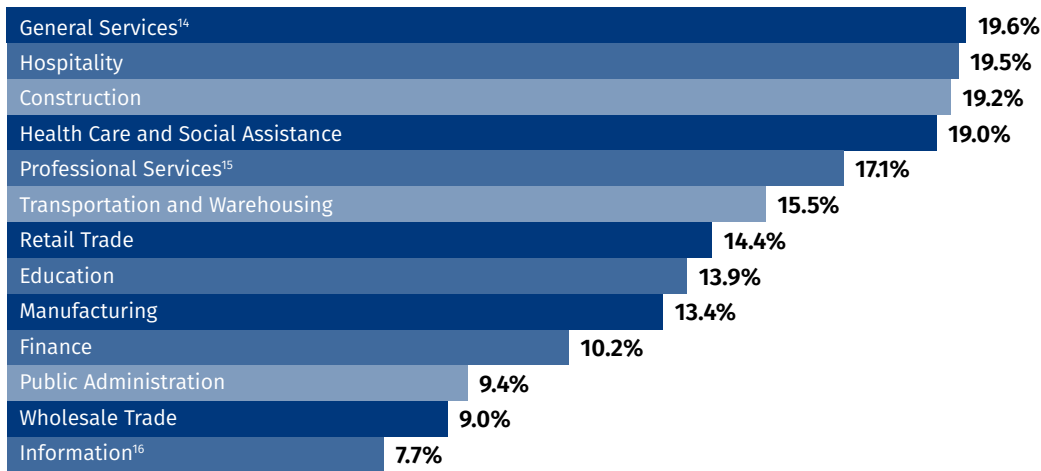


more likely to be of working-age than their U.S.-born counterparts.

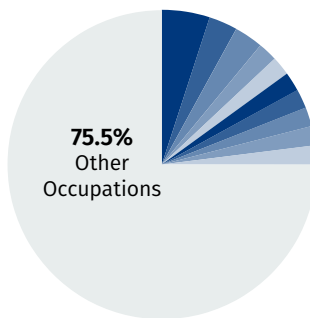
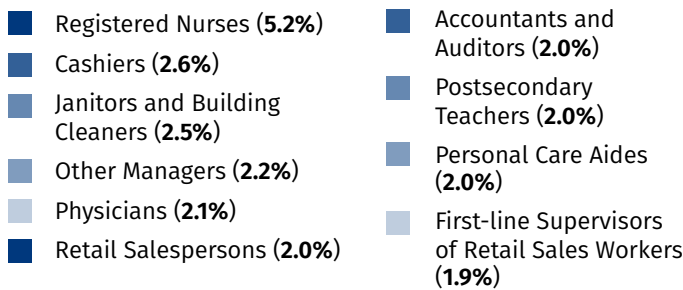


In 2019, there were 8.2 open STEM job postings for every available unemployed STEM worker in the county.¹³

Immigrants played a critical role in several key industries in the county. This included:



Immigrants tended to work in these occupations in the county in 2019:



¹³ Data is obtained from Lightcast for the time period between January 1, 2019 and December 31, 2019.

¹⁴ General services include personal services (e.g. laundry services, barber shops, and repair and maintenance), religious organizations, social services, and labor unions.

¹⁵ Professional services: Most of these industries include professions that require a degree or a license, such as legal services, accounting, scientific research, consulting services, etc.

¹⁶ Information includes: Newspaper, magazine, book, and directory publishers, software publishing, motion pictures and video industries, sound recording industries, broadcasting (except internet), internet publishing and broadcasting and web search portals, wired telecommunications (telephone) carriers, telecommunications (cell phone and mobile) except wired telecommunications carriers, data processing, hosting, and related services, and libraries and archives.

Workforce (continued)

Top Occupations for Female Workers:

Registered Nurses.....	9.4%
Nursing Assistants.....	3.5%
Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners.....	3.3%

Top Occupations for Male Workers:

Other Managers.....	3.1%
Physicians.....	2.7%
Cashiers.....	2.5%

Due to the role immigrants play in the workforce helping companies keep jobs on U.S. soil, we estimate that immigrants living in the county helped create or preserve

4,800
manufacturing jobs

that would have otherwise vanished or moved elsewhere by 2019.¹⁷

SPOTLIGHT ON Job Demand In Baltimore County In 2021

Not only immigrants more likely to be of working age in the county, but they also a crucial part of the county's economy, and could help us meet the needs of its fastest growing and most in-demand fields.¹⁸

 = **3.87** job postings

for every available unemployed software developer.

The top 5 occupations with the highest demand for bilingual workers:¹⁹

- | | | |
|--|---|------------------------|
| 1. Customer Service Representatives | 2. Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing, Except Technical and Scientific Products | 3. Retail Salespersons |
| 4. Middle School Teachers, Except Special and Career/Technical Education | 5. First-Line Supervisors of Retail Sales Workers | |

Immigrants have helped fill many high-demand roles, especially as the need for bilingual and culturally competent public services and healthcare workers increases.

¹⁷ Jacob Vigdor, *Immigration and the Revival of American Cities: From Preserving Manufacturing Jobs to Strengthening the Housing Market* (New York, NY: Americas Society/Council of the Americas and New American Economy, 2013), <https://www.newamericaneconomy.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/revival-of-american-cities.pdf>.

¹⁸ Data is obtained from Lightcast for the time period between January 1, 2019 and December 31, 2019.

¹⁹ Data is obtained from Lightcast for the time period between January 1, 2019 and December 31, 2019.

Entrepreneurship

7,400

immigrant entrepreneurs generated

\$204.4 million

in business income for Baltimore County.

Immigrant entrepreneurs self-identified as **33.2%** female and **66.8%** male.



Despite making up **12.5%** of the population, immigrants made up



of the business owners in the county in 2019.

In the county, immigrant residents were



more likely to be an entrepreneur than the U.S.-born population.

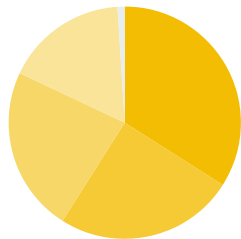
While **7.7%** of the U.S.-born population were entrepreneurs, **11.3%** of foreign-born residents worked for their own businesses.



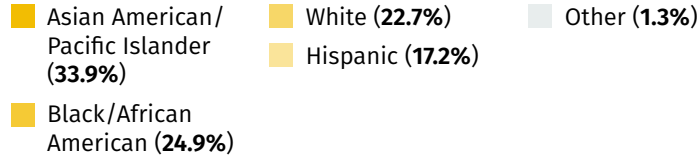
U.S.-born Immigrant

The top countries of origin for immigrant entrepreneurs were

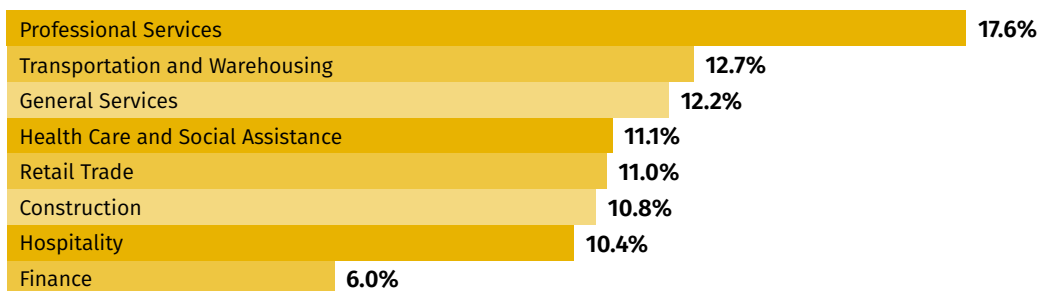
Korea (6.6%) and India (5.6%).



Immigrant entrepreneurs by race and ethnicity:

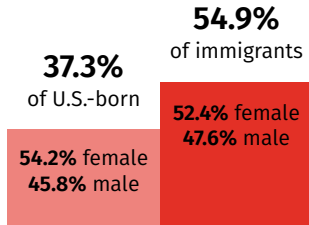


Immigrant entrepreneurs tended to work in these key industries:

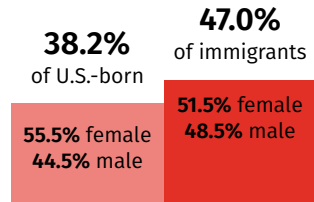


Education

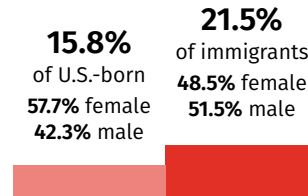
Share of the county's population aged 25 or above that had a **high school education or some college** in 2019:



Share of the county's population aged 25 or above that held a **bachelor's degree or higher** in 2019:



Share of the county's population aged 25 or above that held an **advanced degree** in 2019:



of K-12 students in the county were foreign-born in 2019.



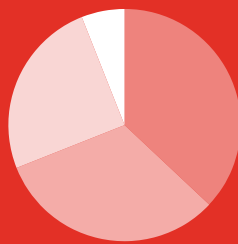
of K-12 students in the county were children of immigrants in 2019.²⁰

SPOTLIGHT ON

University Population

2,900

students enrolled in colleges and universities in Baltimore County in fall 2021 were temporary U.S. residents.²¹



The breakdown of international students is as follows:

- Full-time undergraduate students (1,082)
- Part-time undergraduate students (740)
- Full-time graduate students (942)
- Part-time graduate students (136)

The universities with the largest international student populations were:

University of Maryland, Baltimore County	1,427 international students
Community College of Baltimore County	1,023
Towson University	361

406

international students graduated with STEM degrees from colleges and universities in the county in the 2020-21 academic year.

673

jobs in higher education and other areas including accommodations, food, and transportation were supported by international students in the county.

\$73.4M

was spent by international students in the 2021-22 academic year in the county.²²

²⁰ Children of immigrants includes both U.S.-born and foreign-born people who are under the age of 18 with at least one foreign-born parent.

²¹ Data on student enrollment in the county is derived from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System maintained by the National Center for Education Statistics. Temporary residents refer to people who are not U.S. citizens or permanent residents.

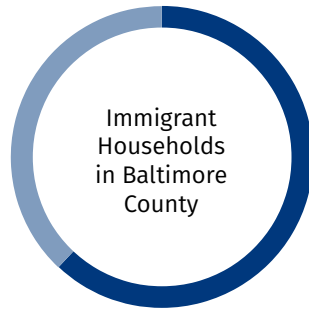
²² Economic data is derived from the International Student Economic Value Tool maintained by NAFA, the Association of International Educators.

Housing

In 2019, **53.8%** of immigrant households in Baltimore County owned their own homes, compared with **67.4%** of U.S.-born households.



Immigrant U.S.-born



Lived in Houses
25,700, or 61.8%

Lived in Apartments
15,900, or 38.2%

Total property value of immigrant households was

\$7.3B



of immigrant households were renters. Their total annual rent paid was

\$262.7M

85.5% of immigrant households in the county had access to broadband connection in their place of residence as compared with **88.8%** of U.S.-born households in 2019.²³



Immigrant U.S.-born

The average household size for foreign-born residents is **3.0** compared to **2.3** for U.S.-born residents.



Foreign-born households



U.S.-born households

Naturalization



52.5% Naturalized Citizens (54,500)

14.1% Likely Eligible to Naturalize (14,600)

33.4% Not Eligible to Naturalize (34,600)

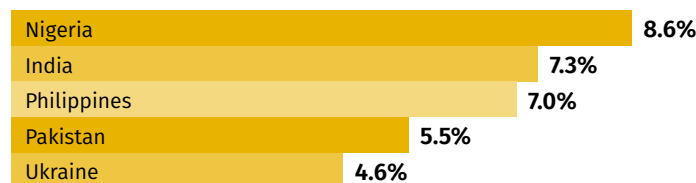


Nationally, **48.7%** of immigrants are naturalized citizens, **15.9%** are likely eligible to naturalize, and **35.4%** are not yet eligible.

If all immigrants in the United States who are eligible to naturalize became U.S. citizens, the earning potential of those eligible to naturalize would increase by

+8.9%²⁴

Top five countries of origin for naturalized citizens in Baltimore County were:



²³ This data point reports whether the respondent or any member of their household subscribed to the Internet using broadband (high speed) Internet service such as cable, fiber optic, or DSL.

²⁴ Maria E. Enchautegui and Linda Giannarelli, *The Economic Impact of Naturalization on Immigrants and Cities*, Urban Institute, 2015, <https://www.urban.org/research/publication/economic-impact-naturalization-immigrants-and-cities>.

Refugees

6,200

residents,²⁵ or **6.0%** of the foreign-born population in Baltimore County, were likely refugees.²⁶

About **36.9%** of refugees held at least a bachelor's degree, while **15.1%** held an advanced degree.



Bachelor's Degree Advanced Degree

64.0%

of refugees in the area were naturalized U.S. citizens.



Refugees tended to work in these industries:

- Health Care and Social Assistance (**18.8%**)
- Professional Services (**13.1%**)

DACA-Eligible Population

In 2019, **2,400** DACA-eligible people made up

2.3%

of the immigrant population in Baltimore County.

In 2019, refugee households in the county earned

\$228.5 million

■ **\$35.8 million**

went to federal taxes²⁷

■ **\$23.8 million** went to state & local taxes²⁸

■ **\$168.8 million** left in spending power

Top countries of origin for the county's refugee population:



In 2019, undocumented immigrant households earned

\$68.6 million

■ **\$10.3 million**

went to federal taxes²⁹

■ **\$6.8 million** went to state & local taxes³⁰

■ **\$51.6 million** was left in spending power

25 Refugee households refer to those with a refugee as the head of the unit.

26 New American Economy, *From Struggle to Resilience: The Economic Impact of Refugees in America*, (New York, NY: 2017), <https://research.newamericaneconomy.org/report/from-struggle-to-resilience-the-economic-impact-of-refugees-in-america/>.

27 U.S. Congressional Budget Office, *The Distribution of Household Income and Federal Taxes, 2019* (Washington, DC: 2021), <https://www.cbo.gov/publication/58353>.

28 Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy, *Who Pays? A Distributional Analysis of the Tax Systems in All Fifty States* (Washington, DC: 2018), <https://itep.org/whopays/>.

29 U.S. Congressional Budget Office, *The Distribution of Household Income and Federal Taxes, 2019* (Washington, DC: 2021), <https://www.cbo.gov/publication/58353>.

30 Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy, *Who Pays? A Distributional Analysis of the Tax Systems in All Fifty States* (Washington, DC: 2018), <https://itep.org/whopays/>.

SPOTLIGHT ON

Rocio Herrera

Owner, Herrera's Cleaning Service

Rocio Herrera grew up in the shadow of an active volcano in a picturesque but impoverished region of central Mexico. She and her husband worked hard—she sold beauty products and cared for elderly people, and her husband was a carpenter—but they struggled to make ends meet. In 2004, they crossed the border wall into the United States in search of a better life.

“We dreamed of having a house—just a place of our own, with a kitchen and a bedroom,” Herrera says.

Building a life in Baltimore was hard. Herrera had previously enjoyed being her own boss, but in America she had to work backbreaking shifts in laundries and factories. “I’d work from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m., with just a 30-minute break for lunch, ironing 450 shirts every day,” she recalls. “I’d come home saying, ‘I can’t go back!’”

Things got even harder when Herrera’s husband, a carpenter, injured his hand and was unable to work. But the couple persisted, and Herrera worked night shifts in a variety of different jobs to support the family—including her two young U.S.-born daughters—while her husband went through surgery and rehabilitation.

Finding support wasn’t always easy, especially early on. Many organizations in Baltimore County offer language classes and help newcomers access government services, but Herrera would like to see more targeted support for Spanish speakers, especially those who are undocumented and nervous about using public services. “I was lucky—we had a neighbor who’d help out with things I didn’t understand,” she says. “But it isn’t easy if you don’t speak good English.”

Over time, though, Herrera was able to volunteer with church and neighborhood groups, work on her English skills, and take a computer class. “I was always looking for ways to grow,” she explains. With her daughters in school, Herrera also began thinking about starting a business. “I’d been working on other people’s schedules for years,” she explains. “I wanted to do something of my own.”

Today, Herrera runs a cleaning service for local homes and offices. Her daughters and husband pitch in, and Herrera employs two people full time, and also offers a training program for local teenagers. “It’s important for young people to see what it’s like to work,” she explains. “It encourages them to study hard.”

After many years of renting cramped apartments, Herrera was recently able to buy her own home. “It’s been a difficult journey, but we’re so grateful and fortunate,” she says. “We achieved our dream, and we’ve given my daughters the opportunity to study and have careers here in America.”

SPOTLIGHT ON

Narayan Khakurel

Owner, Coffee Talk Cafe

Narayan Khakurel grew up in a farming community in rural Nepal, where his family raised cattle and crops like tobacco and sugarcane. He never felt particularly deprived but, looking back, he recalls walking to school barefoot and not being able to afford a book bag.

Today, though, Khakurel is a college graduate and the owner of Coffee Talk Cafe in downtown Towson, and his young daughters are thriving in the local public schools. “I’m incredibly grateful to have been able to build a life here in Maryland,” he says.

It’s been a long journey. After gaining degrees in commerce in Nepal and hospitality studies in Singapore, Khakurel traveled to over 30 countries, including parts of Europe, the United Arab Emirates, and Hong Kong to gain work experience in the service industry. He also traveled to the United States, where his deaf brother was studying at Montgomery College in Rockville. There, he met a local restaurant owner who offered to sponsor his green card and hire Khakurel to support his food and beverage operations team.

While Khakurel waited for his visa to be processed, he returned to Kathmandu and opened several successful coffee shops. Then in 2015, disaster struck: a huge earthquake razed much of the city, including Khakurel’s shops, forcing him to close his businesses.

Fortunately, soon afterward his green card finally came through. Khakurel returned to the United States, first supporting restaurant operations in Virginia, then moving to Towson to start Coffee Talk Cafe in 2016. At first, he didn’t need much help from local organizations. But when the COVID-19 pandemic struck, local government agencies helped him access the loans and grants he needed to stay in business. The Towson Chamber of Commerce also stepped up, using social media and hosting events to encourage local residents to support businesses like Coffee Talk Cafe.

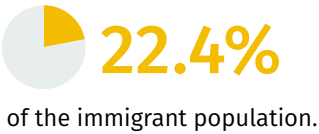
During the worst of the pandemic, Khakurel spent 13 hours a day driving an Uber and Lyft in order to pay rent and prevent the cafe from going under. “It was a real struggle,” he says. But with a Small Business Association loan, support from other local businesses, and the backing of Maryland’s 20,000-strong Nepali-American community, he was able to stay in business.

Today Coffee Talk Cafe is bustling, and Khakurel is seeking to hire new workers to support his two-person team. He is grateful for the community’s support and has chosen to repay that debt by supporting other local entrepreneurs. He purchases all the café’s food, from coffee beans to bread and ice-cream, from businesses in and around Baltimore County. “We want to make a contribution to the community,” he explains. “Every day is a challenge for an entrepreneur, but I feel incredibly lucky that our doors are still open.”

Undocumented Immigrants

23,200

undocumented immigrants³¹ lived in Baltimore County in 2019. They made up

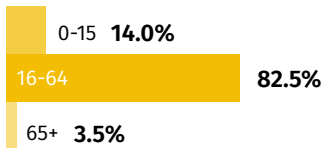


Undocumented immigrants were highly active in the labor force. About



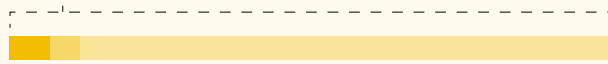
were of working-age in the county.³²

Undocumented immigrants by age groups:³³



In 2019, undocumented immigrant households earned

\$443.5 million



■ **\$30.8 million**

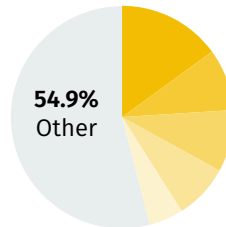
went to federal taxes³⁴

■ **\$22.7 million** went to state & local taxes³⁵

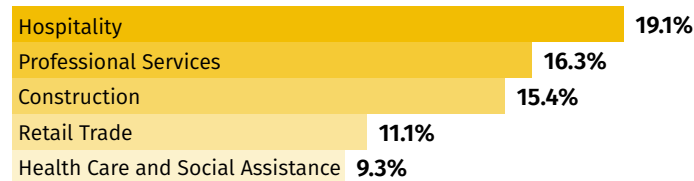
■ **\$390.1 million** was left in spending power

Top countries of origin for the undocumented in the county:

- El Salvador (14.9%)
- Nigeria (9.1%)
- India (8.6%)
- Mexico (7.8%)
- Guatemala (4.7%)



Undocumented immigrants tended to work in these key industries in the county.



³¹ Undocumented immigrant households refer to people living in a housing unit with an undocumented immigrant being the head of their unit.

³² We define working age as 16-64 years of age.

³³ Totals may not add up to 100 percent due to rounding.

³⁴ U.S. Congressional Budget Office, *The Distribution of Household Income and Federal Taxes, 2019* (Washington, DC: 2021), <https://www.cbo.gov/publication/58353>.

³⁵ Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy, *Who Pays? A Distributional Analysis of the Tax Systems in All Fifty States* (Washington, DC: 2018), <https://itep.org/whopays/>.

H-1B and H-2B Visas

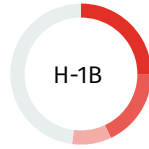
1,372

H-1B visas were certified³⁶ in Baltimore County during Fiscal Year 2022.

504

H-2B visas were certified³⁷ in Baltimore County during Fiscal Year 2022.

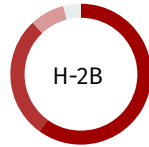
The top occupations among certified H-1B and H-2B visa applications were:



■ Software Developers, Applications (340 certifications)

■ Computer Occupations, All Other (137)

■ Physical Therapists (245)



■ Landscaping and Groundskeeping Workers (304)

■ Nonfarm Animal Caretakers (38)

■ Construction Laborers (139)

³⁶ Before an employer can file a petition with United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) to hire an employee using an H-1B visa, the employer must take steps to ensure that hiring the foreign worker will not adversely affect U.S. workers. To do this, employers file a labor condition application (LCA) to be certified by the Department of Labor (DOL), which ensures that employment of the H-1B worker will not adversely affect the wages and working conditions of similarly employed U.S. workers. The number of certified H-1B visas is therefore a good indication of the demand for foreign-born workers of a given occupation in a given region. More information on the H-1B process can be found here: <https://www.uscis.gov/working-in-the-united-states/h-1b-specialty-occupations>.

³⁷ Similar to the H-1B process, in order for an employer to obtain an H-2B certification, the DOL must determine that there are not enough U.S. workers available to do the temporary job being petitioned for, and that employing H-2B workers will not adversely affect the wages and working conditions of similar workers. Additionally, the need for the worker must be temporary. Certified jobs are not necessarily the jobs filled, though they do indicate a level of demand for temporary foreign-born workers in a particular occupation. More information on the H-2B process can be found here: <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/foreign-labor/programs/h-2b>.