



Immigrants in Alaska

Alaska has a sizable immigrant community, much of which hails from the Philippines. Roughly 8 percent of Alaskans were born in another country, while 7 percent are native-born Americans who have at least one immigrant parent. Foreign-born residents also represent vital shares of the state's labor force in various sectors: more than a third of workers in the manufacturing industry are immigrants, as are nearly one-quarter in the finance and insurance industry. As neighbors, business owners, taxpayers, and workers, immigrants are an integral part of Alaska's diverse and thriving communities and make extensive contributions that benefit all.

Eight percent of Alaska residents are immigrants, while 7 percent of residents are native-born U.S. citizens with at least one immigrant parent.

- In 2018, 60,784 immigrants (foreign-born individuals) comprised 8 percent of the population.¹
- Alaska was home to 30,662 women, 25,905 men, and 4,217 children who were immigrants.²
- The top countries of origin for immigrants were the Philippines (32 percent of immigrants), Mexico (10 percent), Canada (7 percent), Thailand (7 percent), and Korea (5 percent).³
- In 2018, 50,685 people in Alaska (7 percent of the state's population) were native-born Americans who had at least one immigrant parent.⁴

Three-fifths of all immigrants in Alaska are naturalized U.S. citizens.

- 36,275 immigrants (60 percent) had naturalized as of 2018,⁵ and 11,053 immigrants were eligible to become [naturalized U.S. citizens](#) in 2017.⁶
- 86 percent of immigrants reported speaking English "well" or "very well."⁷

Most immigrants in Alaska have pursued education at or above the college level.

- Nearly one in three (30 percent) adult immigrants had a college degree or more education in 2018, while almost one in eight (12 percent) had less than a high school diploma.⁸

Education Level	Share (%) of All Immigrants	Share (%) of All U.S.-Born
College degree or more	30	30
Some college	27	36
High school diploma only	31	28
Less than a high school diploma	12	6

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2018 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates.

Thousands of U.S. citizens in Alaska live with at least one family member who is undocumented.

- 5,000 [undocumented immigrants](#) comprised 13 percent of the immigrant population and 1 percent of the total state population in 2016.⁹
- 9,353 people in Alaska, including 4,521 U.S. citizens, lived with at least one [undocumented family member](#) between 2010 and 2014.¹⁰
- During the same period, about 1 percent of children in the state were U.S. citizens living with at least one undocumented family member (2,064 children in total).¹¹

Alaska is home to a small number of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) recipients.

- 70 [active DACA recipients](#) lived in Alaska as of March 2020, while DACA has been granted to about 85 people in total since 2012.¹²

Immigrants are vital to Alaska’s labor force across industries, accounting for one in nine workers in the state.

- 40,834 immigrant workers comprised 11 percent of the labor force in 2018.¹³

- Immigrant workers were most numerous in the following industries:

Industry	Number of Immigrant Workers
Manufacturing	7,170
Health Care and Social Assistance	6,475
Accommodation and Food Services	5,736
Retail Trade	4,972
Educational Services	4,658

Source: Analysis of the U.S. Census Bureau's 2018 American Community Survey 1-year PUMS data by the American Immigration Council.

- The largest shares of immigrant workers were in the following industries:¹⁴

Industry	Immigrant Share (%) (of all industry workers)
Manufacturing	38
Finance and Insurance	23
Wholesale Trade	21
Accommodation and Food Services	16
Utilities	12

Source: Analysis of the U.S. Census Bureau's 2018 American Community Survey 1-year PUMS data by the American Immigration Council.

Immigrants are an integral part of the Alaska workforce in a range of occupations.

- In 2018, immigrant workers were most numerous in the following occupation groups:¹⁵

Occupation Category	Number of Immigrant Workers
Office and Administrative Support	5,438
Transportation and Material Moving	5,114
Food Preparation and Serving Related	4,621
Building and Grounds Cleaning & Maintenance	3,774
Management	3,597

Source: Analysis of the U.S. Census Bureau's 2018 American Community Survey 1-year PUMS data by the American Immigration Council.

- The largest shares of immigrant workers were in the following occupation groups:¹⁶

Occupation Category	Immigrant Share (%) (of all workers in occupation)
Building and Grounds Cleaning & Maintenance	23
Production	23
Business and Financial Operations	16
Food Preparation and Serving Related	15
Healthcare Support	13

Source: Analysis of the U.S. Census Bureau's 2018 American Community Survey 1-year PUMS data by the American Immigration Council.

- Undocumented immigrants comprised 2 percent of Alaska's workforce in 2016.¹⁷

Immigrants in Alaska have contributed hundreds of millions of dollars in taxes.

- [Immigrant-led households in the state paid](#) \$399.1 million in federal taxes and \$71 million in state and local taxes in 2018.¹⁸
- Undocumented immigrants in Alaska paid an estimated \$10.8 million in federal taxes and \$2.5 million in [state and local taxes](#) in 2018.¹⁹
- Alaska [DACA recipients](#) and DACA-eligible individuals paid an estimated \$73,000 in state and local taxes in 2018.²⁰

As consumers, immigrants add over a billion dollars to Alaska's economy.

- Alaska residents in immigrant-led households had \$1.5 billion in [spending power](#) (after-tax income) in 2018.²¹

Immigrant entrepreneurs in Alaska generate tens of millions of dollars in business revenue.

- 2,552 immigrant business owners accounted for 6 percent of all self-employed Alaska residents in 2018 and generated \$76.3 million in business income.²²

Endnotes

1. “Foreign born” does not include people born in Puerto Rico or U.S. island areas or U.S. citizens born abroad of American parent(s). U.S. Census Bureau, 2018 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates. The American Immigration Council elected to use data from the 2018 ACS 1-Year estimates wherever possible to provide the most current information available. Since these estimates are based on a smaller sample size than the ACS 5-year, however, they are more sensitive to fluctuations and may result in greater margins of error (compared to 5-year estimates).
2. Children are defined as people age 17 or younger. Men and women do not include children. Ibid.
3. Analysis of the U.S. Census Bureau’s 2018 American Community Survey 1-year PUMS data by the American Immigration Council.
4. Analysis of data from the 2018 Current Population Survey by the American Immigration Council, using IPUMS CPS. Sarah Flood, Miriam King, Renae Rodgers, Steven Ruggles and J. Robert Warren, *Integrated Public Use Microdata Series, Current Population Survey: Version 7.0* [dataset] (Minneapolis, MN: IPUMS, 2020), <https://doi.org/10.18128/D030.V7.0>.
5. 2018 ACS 1-Year Estimates.
6. Augmented IPUMS-ACS data, as published in “State-Level Unauthorized Population and Eligible-to-Naturalize Estimates,” Center for Migration Studies data tool, accessed April 2020, data.cmsny.org/state.html.
7. Figure includes immigrants who speak only English. Data based on survey respondents age 5 and over. Analysis of 2018 ACS 1-Year Estimates by the American Immigration Council.
8. Data based on survey respondents age 25 and older. Ibid.
9. Pew Research Center, “U.S. unauthorized immigration population estimates, 2016,” February 5, 2019, www.pewhispanic.org/interactives/unauthorized-immigrants/.
10. Silva Mathema, “State-by-State Estimates of the Family Members of Unauthorized Immigrants,” University of Southern California’s Center for the Study of Immigrant Integration and the Center for American Progress, March 2017, www.americanprogress.org/issues/immigration/news/2017/03/16/427868/state-state-estimates-family-members-unauthorized-immigrants/.
11. American Immigration Council analysis of data from the 2010-2014 ACS 5-Year, using Silva Mathema’s “State-by-State Estimates of the Family Members of Unauthorized Immigrants” and IPUMS-USA. Steven Ruggles, Katie Genadek, Ronald Goeken, Josiah Grover, and Matthew Sobek, *Integrated Public Use Microdata Series: Version 7.0* [dataset] (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota, 2017).
12. The number of DACA recipients reflects USCIS’ estimate of those with active DACA grants as of March 31, 2020. U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), “Approximate Active DACA Recipients: As of March 31, 2020” [dataset], July 22, 2020, <https://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/document/data/Approximate%20Active%20DACA%20Receipts%20-%20March%2031%2C%202020.pdf>. DACA grants reflect USCIS Form I-821D initial requests approved from Aug. 15, 2012-Mar. 31, 2020, as of April 2020. USCIS, “Number of Form I-821D, Consideration of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, Status, by Fiscal Year, Quarter, and Case Status: Aug. 15, 2012-Mar. 31, 2020,” July 22, 2020, https://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/document/data/DACA_performance_data_fy2020_qtr2.pdf.
13. Analysis of 2018 ACS 1-year PUMS data by the American Immigration Council. Categories are based on the 2012 North American Industry Classification System (NAICS), www.census.gov/eos/www/naics/index.html.
14. Ibid.
15. Analysis of 2018 ACS 1-year PUMS data by the American Immigration Council. Categories are based on the 2010 Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) system, www.bls.gov/soc/major_groups.htm.
16. Ibid.
17. Pew Research Center, “U.S. unauthorized immigration population estimates, 2016,” 2019.
18. New American Economy analysis of 2018 ACS microdata using IPUMS. New American Economy, “Map the Impact,” section Taxes and Spending Power, January 31, 2020, <https://www.newamericaneconomy.org/locations/>.
19. Ibid. at sec. Undocumented Immigrants.
20. Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy, State & Local Tax Contributions of Young Undocumented Immigrants (Washington, DC: April 2018), Appendix 1, <https://itep.org/state-local-tax-contributions-of-young-undocumented-immigrants>.
21. New American Economy, “Map the Impact,” section Taxes and Spending Power.
22. “Business owners” include people who are self-employed, at least 18 years old, and work at least 15 hours per week at their businesses. Analysis of 2018 ACS 1-year PUMS data by the American Immigration Council.