



Immigrants in Georgia

Georgia has a sizeable immigrant community, much of which hails from Mexico. One in ten Georgians was born in another country, while 1 in 13 residents is a native-born U.S. citizen with at least one immigrant parent. The state benefits from the various ways foreign-born residents participate in the economy and labor force, with immigrants accounting for one-quarter of all farmers, fishers, and foresters in the state and one-quarter of computer and math science employees. As neighbors, business owners, taxpayers, and workers, immigrants are an integral part of Georgia's diverse and thriving communities and make extensive contributions that benefit all.

One in ten Georgia residents is an immigrant, while 7 percent of residents are native-born U.S. citizens with at least one immigrant parent.

- In 2018, 1.1 million immigrants (foreign-born individuals) comprised 10 percent of the population.¹
- Georgia was home to 502,347 women, 493,737 men, and 67,989 children who were immigrants.²
- The top countries of origin for immigrants were Mexico (22 percent of immigrants), India (9 percent), Jamaica (4 percent), Korea (4 percent), and Guatemala (4 percent).³
- In 2018, 717,062 people in Georgia (7 percent of the state's population) were native-born Americans who had at least one immigrant parent.⁴

More than two in five immigrants in Georgia are naturalized U.S. citizens.

- 480,192 immigrants (45 percent) had naturalized as of 2018,⁵ and 182,406 immigrants were eligible to become [naturalized U.S. citizens](#) in 2017.⁶
- More than three-fourths (78 percent) of immigrants reported speaking English "well" or "very well."⁷

Immigrants in Georgia are concentrated at either end of the educational spectrum.

- More than a third (35 percent) of adult immigrants had a college degree or more education in 2018, while one-quarter (25 percent) had less than a high school diploma.⁸

Education Level	Share (%) of All Immigrants	Share (%) of All Natives
College degree or more	35	31
Some college	18	29
High school diploma only	22	29
Less than a high school diploma	25	10

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

More than 236,000 U.S. citizens in Georgia live with at least one family member who is undocumented.

- 400,000 [undocumented immigrants](#) comprised 36 percent of the immigrant population and 4 percent of the total state population in 2016.⁹
- 503,155 people in Georgia, including 236,662 U.S. citizens, lived with at least one [undocumented family member](#) between 2010 and 2014.¹⁰
- During the same period, about 1 in 13 children in the state was a U.S. citizen living with at least one undocumented family member (186,822 children in total).¹¹

Georgia is home to nearly 21,000 Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) recipients.

- 20,610 [active DACA recipients](#) lived in Georgia as of March 2020, while DACA has been granted to 25,743 people in total since 2012.¹²
- As of 2019, 48 percent of [DACA-eligible immigrants](#) in Georgia had applied for DACA.¹³
- An additional 16,000 residents of the state would satisfy all but the educational requirements for DACA, and fewer than 2,000 would become eligible as they grew older.¹⁴

One in eight workers in Georgia is an immigrant, together making up a vital part of the state's labor force in a range of industries.

- 701,962 immigrant workers comprised 13 percent of the labor force in 2018.¹⁵

- Immigrant workers were most numerous in the following industries:

Industry	Number of Immigrant Workers
Manufacturing	99,559
Construction	89,245
Retail Trade	84,638
Health Care and Social Assistance	72,848
Accommodation and Food Services	63,971

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:¹⁶

Industry	Immigrant Share (%) (of all industry workers)
Construction	23
Other Services (except Public Administration)	17
Administrative & Support; Waste Management; and Remediation Services	16
Manufacturing	16
Information	14

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 Georgia workforce in a range of occupations.

- In 2018, immigrant workers were most numerous in the following occupation groups:¹⁷

Occupation Category	Number of Immigrant Workers
Construction and Extraction	77,966
Production	68,321
Management	67,532
Sales and Related	67,197
Transportation and Material Moving	63,057

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:¹⁸

Occupation Category	Immigrant Share (%) (of all workers in occupation)
Construction and Extraction	26
Computer and Mathematical	25
Farming, Fishing, and Forestry	25
Building and Grounds Cleaning & Maintenance	22
Production	18

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 5 percent of Georgia's workforce in 2016.¹⁹

Immigrants in Georgia have contributed billions of dollars in taxes.

- [Immigrant-led households in the state paid](#) \$6.6 billion in federal taxes and \$3.2 billion in state and local taxes in 2018.²⁰
- Undocumented immigrants in Georgia paid an estimated \$563.7 million in federal taxes and \$355.2 million in [state and local taxes](#) in 2018.²¹
- Georgia [DACA recipients](#) and DACA-eligible individuals paid an estimated \$61.4 million in state and local taxes in 2018.²²

As consumers, immigrants add tens of billions of dollars to Georgia's economy.

- Georgia residents in immigrant-led households had \$26.3 billion in [spending power](#) (after-tax income) in 2018.²³

Immigrant entrepreneurs in Georgia generate nearly \$2 billion in business revenue.

- 88,290 immigrant business owners accounted for 17 percent of all self-employed Georgia residents in 2018 and generated \$1.8 billion in business income.²⁴
- In 2018, nearly one-quarter (23 percent) of business owners in the Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Marietta metropolitan area were immigrants.²⁵

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%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. Estimates of the DACA-eligible population as of 2019 include unauthorized immigrant youth who had been in the United States since 2007, were under the age of 16 at the time of arrival, were under the age of 31 as of 2012, and who met DACA eligibility requirements as of 2016. Migration Policy Institute (MPI) analysis of U.S. Census Bureau data from the 2012-16 American Community Survey (ACS) pooled, and the 2008 Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP), with legal status assignments by James Bachmeier and Colin Hammar of Temple University and Jennifer Van Hook of The Pennsylvania State University, Population Research Institute, as cited in “Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) Data Tools,” accessed April 2020, www.migrationpolicy.org/programs/data-hub/deferred-action-childhood-arrivals-daca-profiles.
14. Ibid.
15. 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.
16. Ibid.
17. 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.
18. Ibid.
19. Pew Research Center, “U.S. unauthorized immigration population estimates, 2016,” 2019.
20. 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/>.
21. Ibid. at sec. Undocumented Immigrants.
22. 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>.
23. New American Economy, “Map the Impact,” section Taxes and Spending Power.
24. “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.
25. American Immigration Council analysis of 2018 CPS data. Flood, King, Rodgers, Ruggles, and Warren, *IPUMS CPS* dataset.