Immigrants in Idaho

Idaho has a small but growing immigrant population. While only 6 percent of the state’s residents are foreign-born, immigrants represent a greater share of the workforce. Idaho’s farming and fishing industry—one of the state’s top economic drivers—benefits from immigrants who make up more than a quarter of its labor force. The majority of immigrants speak English well and are naturalized citizens or eligible for naturalization. As neighbors, business owners, taxpayers, and workers, immigrants are an integral part of Idaho’s diverse and thriving communities and make extensive contributions that benefit all.

Six percent of Idaho residents are immigrants, while 8 percent of residents are native-born U.S. citizens with at least one immigrant parent.

- In 2018, 105,228 immigrants (foreign-born individuals) comprised 6 percent of the population.¹
- Idaho was home to 50,071 women, 49,215 men, and 5,942 children who were immigrants.²
- The top countries of origin for immigrants were Mexico (52 percent of immigrants), Canada (5 percent), the Philippines (5 percent), China (3 percent), and Germany (2 percent).³
- In 2018, 130,252 people in Idaho (8 percent of the state’s population) were native-born Americans who had at least one immigrant parent.⁴

More than two out of five immigrants in Idaho are naturalized U.S. citizens.

- 45,441 immigrants (43 percent) had naturalized as of 2018,⁵ and 18,168 immigrants were eligible to become naturalized U.S. citizens in 2017.⁶
- Seven in ten (71 percent) immigrants reported speaking English “well” or “very well.”⁷

Most immigrants in Idaho have at least a high school education.

- Nearly one-fifth (18 percent) of adult immigrants had a college degree or more education in 2018, while more than one-third (37 percent) had less than a high school diploma.⁸
### Immigrants in Idaho

#### Tens of thousands of U.S. citizens in Idaho live with at least one family member who is undocumented.

- 35,000 [undocumented immigrants](#) comprised 37 percent of the immigrant population and 2 percent of the total state population in 2016.\(^9\)

- 58,327 people in Idaho, including 29,841 U.S. citizens, lived with at least one [undocumented family member](#) between 2010 and 2014.\(^10\)

- During the same period, about 1 in 20 children in the state was a U.S. citizen living with at least one undocumented family member (22,905 children in total).\(^11\)

#### Idaho is home to thousands of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) recipients.

- 2,760 [active DACA recipients](#) lived in Idaho as of March 2020, while DACA has been granted to 3,390 people in total since 2012.\(^12\)

- As of 2019, 64 percent of [DACA-eligible immigrants](#) in Idaho had applied for DACA.\(^13\)

- Fewer than 2,000 residents of the state would satisfy all but the educational requirements for DACA, and fewer than 1,000 would become eligible as they grew older.\(^14\)

#### One in 12 Idaho workers is an immigrant, making up a vital part of the state’s labor force.

- 70,868 immigrant workers comprised 8 percent of the labor force in 2018.\(^15\)
Immigrants in Idaho | American Immigration Council | 2020

Immigrant workers were most numerous in the following industries:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>Number of Immigrant Workers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, and Hunting</td>
<td>13,810</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>12,713</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Care and Social Assistance</td>
<td>9,144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accommodation and Food Services</td>
<td>6,851</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail Trade</td>
<td>6,264</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>Immigrant Share (%) (of all industry workers)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, and Hunting</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative &amp; Support; Waste Management; and Remediation Services</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wholesale Trade</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accommodation and Food Services</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 Idaho workforce in a range of occupations.

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation Category</th>
<th>Number of Immigrant Workers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Farming, Fishing, and Forestry</td>
<td>13,042</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Production</td>
<td>8,362</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building and Grounds Cleaning &amp; Maintenance</td>
<td>7,249</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office and Administrative Support</td>
<td>5,276</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales and Related</td>
<td>5,234</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation Category</th>
<th>Immigrant Share (%) (of all workers in occupation)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Farming, Fishing, and Forestry</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building and Grounds Cleaning &amp; Maintenance</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Production</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthcare Support</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Architecture and Engineering</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 3 percent of Idaho’s workforce in 2016. 19

Immigrants in Idaho have contributed over a half-billion dollars in taxes.

- Immigrant-led households in the state paid $419.5 million in federal taxes and $220.9 million in state and local taxes in 2018. 20

- Undocumented immigrants in Idaho paid an estimated $31.1 million in federal taxes and $22.5 million in state and local taxes in 2018. 21

- Idaho DACA recipients and DACA-eligible individuals paid an estimated $5.4 million in state and local taxes in 2018. 22

As consumers, immigrants add billions of dollars to Idaho’s economy.

- Idaho residents in immigrant-led households had $2.1 billion in spending power (after-tax income) in 2018. 23

Immigrant entrepreneurs in Idaho generate over a million dollars in business revenue.

- 4,956 immigrant business owners accounted for 5 percent of all self-employed Idaho residents in 2018 and generated $123.8 million in business income. 24
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.


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.


14. Ibid.


16. Ibid.


18. Ibid.


21. Ibid. at sec. Undocumented Immigrants.


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.