



Immigrants in Mississippi

Mississippi has a small but growing immigrant community, much of which emigrated from Mexico. While roughly 2 percent of Mississippi's population was born in another country, foreign-born residents are an important part of the state's labor force, especially in certain sectors. For example, 8 percent of employees in both Mississippi's social sciences and construction fields are immigrants. As workers, business owners, taxpayers, and neighbors, immigrants are an integral part of Mississippi's diverse and thriving communities and make extensive contributions that benefit all.

More than 2 percent of Mississippi residents are immigrants, while another 2 percent are native-born U.S. citizens with at least one immigrant parent.

- In 2015, 72,258 immigrants (foreign-born individuals) comprised 2.4 percent of the state's population.¹
- Mississippi was home to 30,877 women, 35,461 men, and 5,920 children who were immigrants.²
- The top countries of origin for immigrants were Mexico (36 percent of immigrants), India (6.7 percent), Vietnam (6 percent), China (4.9 percent), and the Philippines (4.3 percent).³
- In 2016, 51,151 people in Mississippi (1.7 percent of the state's population) were native-born Americans who had at least [one immigrant parent](#).⁴

A third of all immigrants in Mississippi are naturalized U.S. citizens.

- 24,140 immigrants (33.4 percent) had naturalized as of 2015,⁵ and 13,300 immigrants were eligible to become [naturalized U.S. citizens](#) in 2015.⁶
- Three in four immigrants (75.1 percent) reported speaking English "well" or "very well."⁷

Immigrants in Mississippi are distributed across the educational spectrum.

- Almost one in four adult immigrants had a college degree or more education in 2015, while nearly one in three had less than a high school diploma.⁸

Education Level	Share (%) of All Immigrants	Share (%) of All Natives
College degree or more	24.8	20.7
Some college	18.0	32.0
High school diploma only	24.7	31.2
Less than a high-school diploma	32.5	16.0

More than 11,000 U.S. citizens in Mississippi live with at least one family member who is undocumented.

- In 2014, approximately 25,000 [undocumented immigrants](#) comprised 37 percent of the immigrant population, or a fraction of the total state population at 0.8 percent.⁹
- 26,954 people in Mississippi, including 10,195 born in the United States, lived with at least one [undocumented family member](#) between 2010 and 2014.¹⁰
- During the same period, 1 percent of children in the state were U.S. citizens living with at least one undocumented family member (8,876 children in total).¹¹

More than 1,000 Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) recipients live in Mississippi.¹²

- As of 2016, 61 percent of [DACA-eligible immigrants](#) in Mississippi, or 1,693 people, had applied for DACA.¹³
- An additional 2,000 residents of the state satisfied all but the educational requirements for DACA, and up to 1,000 others would be eligible as they grew older.¹⁴

Immigrants are vital members of the Mississippi labor force across industries.

- 34,901 immigrant workers comprised 2.6 percent of the labor force in 2015.¹⁵
- Immigrant workers were most numerous in the following industries:

Industry	Number of Immigrant Workers
Construction	6,402
Manufacturing	6,301
Accommodation and Food Services	4,284
Educational Services	4,173
Retail Trade	4,103

Analysis of the U.S. Census Bureau’s 2015 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)
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	6.8
Construction	6.1
Accommodation and Food Services	3.6
Wholesale Trade	3.1
Manufacturing	3.1

Analysis of the U.S. Census Bureau's 2015 American Community Survey 1-year PUMS data by the American Immigration Council.

Immigrants are an important part of the Mississippi workforce in a range of occupations.

- In 2015, immigrant workers were most numerous in the following occupation groups:¹⁷

Occupation Category	Number of Immigrant Workers
Construction and Extraction	6,856
Production	4,694
Education, Training, and Library Services	3,419
Sales and Related	3,288
Food Preparation and Serving Related	3,092

Analysis of the U.S. Census Bureau's 2015 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)
Life, Physical, and Social Sciences	7.9
Construction and Extraction	7.5
Military Specific	6.5
Farming, Fishing, and Forestry	6.0
Computer and Mathematical Sciences	4.5

Analysis of the U.S. Census Bureau's 2015 American Community Survey 1-year PUMS data by the American Immigration Council.

- Undocumented immigrants comprised 1.3 percent of the state's workforce in 2014.¹⁹

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

- [Immigrant-led households in the state paid](#) \$245.4 million in federal taxes and \$112.3 million in state and local taxes in 2014.²⁰
- Undocumented immigrants in Mississippi paid an estimated \$22.7 million in [state and local taxes](#) in 2014. Their contribution would rise to \$28 million if they could receive legal status.²¹
- [DACA recipients](#) in Mississippi paid an estimated \$4.2 million in state and local taxes in 2016.²²

As consumers, immigrants add a billion dollars to Mississippi's economy each year.

- Mississippi residents in immigrant-led households had \$983 million in [spending power](#) (after-tax income) in 2014.²³

Immigrant entrepreneurs in Mississippi generate hundreds of millions of dollars in annual business revenue.

- 4,208 immigrant business owners accounted for 3.5 percent of all self-employed Mississippi residents in 2015 and generated \$107.3 million in business income.²⁴
- In 2015, immigrants accounted for 9.9 percent of business owners in the Memphis metropolitan area (which spans Mississippi, Arkansas, and Tennessee).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, 2015 American Community Survey (ACS) 1-Year Estimates. The American Immigration Council elected to use data from the 2015 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 2015 American Community Survey 1-year PUMS data by the American Immigration Council.

⁴ Analysis of data from the 2016 Current Population Survey by the American Immigration Council, using IPUMS-CPS. Sarah Flood, Miriam King, Steven Ruggles, and J. Robert Warren, *Integrated Public Use Microdata Series, Current Population Survey: Version 5.0* [dataset] (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota, 2017).

⁵ 2015 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 August 2017, data.cmsny.org/state.html.

⁷ Figure includes immigrants who speak only English. Data based on survey respondents age 5 and over. Analysis of 2015 ACS 1-Year Estimates by the American Immigration Council.

⁸ Data based on survey respondents age 25 and older. 2015 ACS 1-Year Estimates.

⁹ Pew Research Center, “U.S. unauthorized immigration population estimates,” November 3, 2016, 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, <https://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 “Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals” (DACA) initiative began in 2012 and provides certain immigrants (those who were brought to the United States as children and meet specific requirements) with temporary relief from deportation, or deferred action. American Immigration Council, “Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals: A Q&A Guide,” August 17, 2012, www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/research/deferred-action-childhood-arrivals-qa-guide. The number of DACA recipients reflects U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services’ (USCIS) estimate of those with active DACA grants as of September 4, 2017. USCIS CLAIMS3 and ELIS Systems, *Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals: Population Data* (Washington, DC: Dept. of Homeland Security, September 20, 2017), Approximate Active DACA Recipients: State of Residence as of September 4, 2017 [dataset], <https://www.uscis.gov/daca2017>.

¹³ Migration Policy Institute analysis of U.S. Census Bureau data from the 2014 American Community Survey (ACS), 2010-14 ACS pooled, and the 2008 Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP), as cited in “Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) Data Tools,” accessed June 2017, www.migrationpolicy.org/programs/data-hub/deferred-action-childhood-arrivals-daca-profiles.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Analysis of 2015 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 2015 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.

²⁰ New American Economy, *The Contributions of New Americans in Mississippi* (New York, NY: August 2016), 5, <http://www.newamericaneconomy.org/research/the-contributions-of-new-americans-in-mississippi/>.

²¹ Institute on Taxation & Economic Policy (ITEP), *Undocumented Immigrants’ State & Local Tax Contributions* (Washington, DC: March 2017), 3, <https://itep.org/undocumented-immigrants-state-local-tax-contributions-2/>.

²² ITEP, *State & Local Tax Contributions of Young Undocumented Immigrants* (Washington, DC: April 2017), Appendix 1, <https://itep.org/state-local-tax-contributions-of-young-undocumented-immigrants/>.

²³ New American Economy, “Immigrants and the economy in Mississippi: Taxes and Spending Power,” accessed August 2017, <http://www.newamericaneconomy.org/locations/mississippi/>.

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 2015 ACS 1-year PUMS data by the American Immigration Council.

²⁵ American Immigration Council analysis of 2016 CPS data. Flood, King, Ruggles, and Warren, *IPUMS CPS* dataset.