Immigrants in New Jersey

New Jersey has a large immigrant community, much of which hails from India. More than 22 percent of the state’s population was born in another country, while nearly 1 in 6 residents is a native-born U.S. citizen with at least one immigrant parent. Foreign-born residents are vital to New Jersey’s workforce, with immigrants accounting for nearly half of all workers in the computer and math sciences and roughly 44 percent of production employees. As workers, business owners, taxpayers, and neighbors, immigrants are an integral part of New Jersey’s diverse and thriving communities and make extensive contributions that benefit all.

More than one in five New Jersey residents is an immigrant, while nearly one in six is a native-born U.S. citizen with at least one immigrant parent.

- In 2015, 2 million immigrants (foreign-born individuals) comprised 22.1 percent of the state’s population.¹
- New Jersey was home to 958,560 women, 910,116 men, and 108,649 children who were immigrants.²
- The top countries of origin for immigrants were India (12.5 percent of immigrants), the Dominican Republic (8.4 percent), Mexico (6 percent), the Philippines (4.5 percent), and Korea (4 percent).³
- In 2016, 1.5 million people in New Jersey (16.5 percent of the state’s population) were native-born Americans who had at least one immigrant parent.⁴

Over half of all immigrants in New Jersey are naturalized U.S. citizens.

- 1.1 million immigrants (55.2 percent) had naturalized as of 2015,⁵ and 315,478 immigrants were eligible to become naturalized U.S. citizens in 2015.⁶
- More than three-quarters of immigrants (76.4 percent) reported speaking English “well” or “very well.”⁷

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

- More than a third of adult immigrants had a college degree or more education in 2015, while one in five had less than a high school diploma.⁸
Education Level | Share (%) of All Immigrants | Share (%) of All Natives
--- | --- | ---
College degree or more | 37.8 | 37.5
Some college | 17.8 | 25.0
High school diploma only | 24.5 | 30.1
Less than a high-school diploma | 19.9 | 7.4

More than a half-million U.S. citizens in New Jersey live with at least one family member who is undocumented.

- 500,000 [undocumented immigrants](#) comprised 24 percent of the immigrant population and 5.4 percent of the total state population in 2014.⁹
- 604,615 people in New Jersey, including 204,946 born in the United States, lived with at least one [undocumented family member](#) between 2010 and 2014.¹⁰
- During the same period, 1 in 11 children in the state was a U.S. citizen living with at least one undocumented family member (180,580 children in total).¹¹

More than 17,000 [Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) recipients](#) live in New Jersey.¹²

- As of 2016, 49 percent of [DACA-eligible immigrants](#) in New Jersey, or 25,650 people, had applied for DACA.¹³
- An additional 11,000 residents of the state satisfied all but the educational requirements for DACA, and another 7,000 would be eligible as they grew older.¹⁴

Immigrants are vital members of New Jersey’s labor force, accounting for a third of workers in multiple industries.

- 1.3 million immigrant workers comprised 27.8 percent of the labor force in 2015.¹⁵
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>Health Care and Social Assistance</td>
<td>200,705</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>145,192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail Trade</td>
<td>140,461</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accommodation and Food Services</td>
<td>130,889</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services</td>
<td>125,281</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The largest shares of immigrant workers were in the following industries:¹⁶

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>Immigrant Share (%) (of all industry workers)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accommodation and Food Services</td>
<td>35.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Services (except Public Administration)</td>
<td>35.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation and Warehousing</td>
<td>34.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>34.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative &amp; Support; Waste Management; and Remediation Services</td>
<td>32.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation Category</th>
<th>Number of Immigrant Workers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Management</td>
<td>136,449</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office and Administrative Support</td>
<td>132,520</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales and Related</td>
<td>129,551</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation and Material Moving</td>
<td>124,910</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food Preparation and Serving Related</td>
<td>97,536</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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:\(^{18}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation Category</th>
<th>Immigrant Share (%) (of all workers in occupation)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Computer and Mathematical Sciences</td>
<td>48.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farming, Fishing, and Forestry</td>
<td>44.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building and Grounds Cleaning &amp; Maintenance</td>
<td>44.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Production</td>
<td>43.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthcare Support</td>
<td>36.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

Undocumented immigrants comprised 7.9 percent of the state’s workforce in 2014.\(^{19}\)

**Immigrants in New Jersey have contributed billions of dollars in taxes.**

- Immigrant-led households in the state paid \(\$13.1\) billion in federal taxes and \(\$6.5\) billion in state and local taxes in 2014.\(^{20}\)
- Undocumented immigrants in New Jersey paid an estimated \(\$587.4\) million in state and local taxes in 2014. Their contribution would rise to \(\$661.1\) million if they could receive legal status.\(^{21}\)
- DACA recipients in New Jersey paid an estimated \(\$66\) million in state and local taxes in 2016.\(^{22}\)

**As consumers, immigrants add tens of billions of dollars to New Jersey’s economy.**

- New Jersey residents in immigrant-led households had \(\$54.6\) billion in spending power (after-tax income) in 2014.\(^{23}\)

**Immigrants account for a third of all self-employed business owners in New Jersey.**

- 139,240 immigrant business owners accounted for 32.9 percent of all self-employed New Jersey residents in 2015 and generated \(\$3.3\) billion in business income.\(^{24}\)
- In 2015, immigrants accounted for 35.2 percent of business owners in the New York/Northern New Jersey/Long Island metropolitan area (which spans New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania) and 13.1 percent in the Philadelphia/Camden/Wilmington metro area (which extends from Pennsylvania into New Jersey and Delaware).\(^{25}\)
Endnotes

1 “Foreign born” does not include people born in Puerto Rico or U.S. island areas and U.S. citizens born abroad of American parent(s). U.S. Census Bureau, 2015 American Community Survey 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, there 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.


5 2015 ACS 1-Year Estimates.


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.


14 Ibid.


16 Ibid.


18 Ibid.


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.