



## Immigrants in Rhode Island

Rhode Island has a relatively large community of immigrants, many of whom emigrated from the Dominican Republic. One in eight Rhode Islanders was born in another country, while one in five residents is a native-born American who has at least one immigrant parent. The majority of immigrants speak English well and are naturalized citizens.

Rhode Island's economy and labor force benefits from the active participation of immigrants, who comprise nearly two-fifths of workers in production occupations and one-third of workers in healthcare support occupations. As neighbors, business owners, taxpayers, and workers, immigrants are an integral part of Rhode Island's diverse and thriving communities and make extensive contributions that benefit all.

### **One in eight Rhode Island residents is an immigrant, while about one in five residents is a native-born U.S. citizen with at least one immigrant parent.**

- In 2018, 139,063 immigrants (foreign-born individuals) comprised 13 percent of the population.<sup>1</sup>
- Rhode Island was home to 67,765 women, 63,685 men, and 7,613 children who were immigrants.<sup>2</sup>
- The top countries of origin for immigrants were the Dominican Republic (19 percent of immigrants), Guatemala (10 percent), Portugal (7 percent), Cabo Verde (5 percent), and India (4 percent).<sup>3</sup>
- In 2018, 201,216 people in Rhode Island (19 percent of the state's population) were native-born Americans who had at least one immigrant parent.<sup>4</sup>

### **Three out of five immigrants in Rhode Island are naturalized U.S. citizens.**

- 84,365 immigrants (61 percent) had naturalized as of 2018,<sup>5</sup> and 23,635 immigrants were eligible to become [naturalized U.S. citizens](#) in 2017.<sup>6</sup>
- Over three-fourths (77 percent) of immigrants reported speaking English "well" or "very well."<sup>7</sup>

### **Immigrants in Rhode Island are distributed across the educational spectrum.**

- More than one-fourth (27 percent) of adult immigrants had a college degree or more education in 2018, while one-fourth (25 percent) had less than a high school diploma.<sup>8</sup>

Education Level	Share (%) of All Immigrants	Share (%) of All Natives
College degree or more	27	36
Some college	18	28
High school diploma only	30	28
Less than a high school diploma	25	8
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2018 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates.		

**More than 18,000 U.S. citizens in Rhode Island live with at least one family member who is undocumented.**

- 30,000 [undocumented immigrants](#) comprised 19 percent of the immigrant population and 3 percent of the total state population in 2016.<sup>9</sup>
- 37,475 people in Rhode Island, including 18,465 U.S. citizens, lived with at least one [undocumented family member](#) between 2010 and 2014.<sup>10</sup>
- During the same period, about 6 percent of children in the state were U.S. citizens living with at least one undocumented family member (12,541 children in total).<sup>11</sup>

**Rhode Island is home to hundreds of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) recipients.**

- 890 [active DACA recipients](#) lived in Rhode Island as of March 2020, while DACA has been granted to 1,168 people in total since 2012.<sup>12</sup>
- As of 2019, 26 percent of [DACA-eligible immigrants](#) in Rhode Island had applied for DACA.<sup>13</sup>
- Fewer than 1,000 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.<sup>14</sup>

**One in six Rhode Island workers is an immigrant, together making up a vital part of the state’s labor force.**

- 90,131 immigrant workers comprised 16 percent of the labor force in 2018.<sup>15</sup>

- Immigrant workers were most numerous in the following industries:

Industry	Number of Immigrant Workers
Health Care and Social Assistance	18,438
Manufacturing	17,458
Educational Services	10,072
Administrative & Support; Waste Management; and Remediation Services	8,111
Retail Trade	7,675

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:<sup>16</sup>

Industry	Immigrant Share (%) (of all industry workers)
Administrative & Support; Waste Management; and Remediation Services	29
Manufacturing	26
Health Care and Social Assistance	19
Transportation and Warehousing	18
Other Services (except Public Administration)	15

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 Rhode Island workforce in a range of occupations.**

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

Occupation Category	Number of Immigrant Workers
Production	14,646
Transportation and Material Moving	9,151
Healthcare Support	8,996
Office and Administrative Support	8,717
Building and Grounds Cleaning & Maintenance	8,529

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:<sup>18</sup>

Occupation Category	Immigrant Share (%) (of all workers in occupation)
Production	38
Healthcare Support	34
Building and Grounds Cleaning & Maintenance	34
Community and Social Service	21
Transportation and Material Moving	20

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 4 percent of Rhode Island's workforce in 2016.<sup>19</sup>

**Immigrants in Rhode Island have contributed over a billion dollars in taxes.**

- [Immigrant-led households in the state paid](#) \$681.8 million in federal taxes and \$384.7 million in state and local taxes in 2018.<sup>20</sup>
- Undocumented immigrants in Rhode Island paid an estimated \$27.6 million in federal taxes and \$19.9 million in [state and local taxes](#) in 2018.<sup>21</sup>
- Rhode Island [DACA recipients](#) and DACA-eligible individuals paid an estimated \$3.1 million in state and local taxes in 2018.<sup>22</sup>

**As consumers, immigrants add billions of dollars to Rhode Island's economy.**

- Rhode Island residents in immigrant-led households had \$3 billion in [spending power](#) (after-tax income) in 2018.<sup>23</sup>

**Immigrant entrepreneurs in Rhode Island generate hundreds of millions of dollars in business revenue.**

- 7,187 immigrant business owners accounted for 16 percent of all self-employed Rhode Island residents in 2018 and generated \$280.7 million in business income.<sup>24</sup>
- In 2018, immigrants accounted for 29 percent of business owners in the Providence/Warwick metropolitan area, which extends from Rhode Island into Massachusetts.<sup>25</sup>

## 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](http://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/](http://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/](http://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](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](http://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](http://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](http://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.