



Immigrants in South Dakota

South Dakota has a small but growing immigrant community, much of which emigrated from Mexico and Nepal. While roughly 3 percent of South Dakota's population was born in another country, foreign-born residents support the state's economy across sectors. Immigrants make up a critical share of the state's labor force; 12 percent of all residents working in the manufacturing industry, for example, are immigrants, as are over 10 percent of the state's building maintenance workers and groundskeepers. As workers, business owners, taxpayers, and neighbors, immigrants are an integral part of South Dakota's diverse and thriving communities and make extensive contributions that benefit all.

More than 3 percent of South Dakota residents are immigrants, and a similar share are native-born U.S. citizens with at least one immigrant parent.

- In 2015, 27,845 immigrants (foreign-born individuals) comprised 3.2 percent of the state's population.¹
- South Dakota was home to 11,867 women, 11,877 men, and 4,101 children who were immigrants.²
- The top countries of origin for immigrants were Mexico (12.1 percent of immigrants), Nepal (9.8 percent), Ethiopia (9.7 percent), Croatia (8 percent), and Guatemala (7.4 percent).³
- In 2016, 28,478 people in South Dakota (3.4 percent of the state's population) were native-born Americans who had at least [one immigrant parent](#).⁴

More than a third of all immigrants in South Dakota are naturalized U.S. citizens.

- 10,426 immigrants (37.4 percent) had naturalized as of 2015,⁵ and 6,002 immigrants were eligible to become [naturalized U.S. citizens](#) in 2015.⁶
- Nearly three in four immigrants (74.3 percent) reported speaking English "well" or "very well."⁷

Immigrants in South Dakota are distributed across the educational spectrum.

- More than a quarter of adult immigrants had a college degree or more education in 2015, while just over one-third had less than a high school diploma.⁸

Education Level	Share (%) of All Immigrants	Share (%) of All Natives
College degree or more	25.6	27.6
Some college	16.6	32.9
High school diploma only	23.0	31.6
Less than a high-school diploma	34.8	7.9

More than 3,000 U.S. citizens in South Dakota live with at least one family member who is undocumented.

- In 2014, approximately 5,000 [undocumented immigrants](#) comprised 21 percent of the immigrant population, or a fraction of the total state population at 0.6 percent.⁹
- 6,762 people in South Dakota, including 3,055 born in the United States, lived with at least one [undocumented family member](#) between 2010 and 2014.¹⁰
- During the same period, 2,485 U.S.-citizen children (about 1 percent of all children in the state) were living with at least one undocumented family member.¹¹

Just over 200 Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) recipients live in South Dakota.¹²

- As of 2017, about 311 people in South Dakota had applied for DACA.¹³
- [DACA recipients](#) in South Dakota paid an estimated \$585,000 in state and local taxes in 2016.¹⁴

Immigrants are vital members of the South Dakota labor force across industries.

- 18,398 immigrant workers comprised 4.1 percent of the labor force in 2015.¹⁵
- Immigrant workers were most numerous in the following industries:

Industry	Number of Immigrant Workers
Manufacturing	6,249
Health Care and Social Assistance	2,954
Accommodation and Food Services	2,436
Transportation & Warehousing	1,163
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	1,018

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)
Manufacturing	12.2
Transportation and Warehousing	6.6
Wholesale Trade	6.0
Accommodation and Food Services	5.6
Administrative & Support; Waste Management; and Remediation Services	4.4

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

Immigrants are a significant part of the South Dakota 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
Production	5,286
Building and Grounds Cleaning & Maintenance	2,339
Transportation and Material Moving	1,737
Personal Care and Service	1,436
Food Preparation and Serving Related	1,286

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)
Production	12.6
Building and Grounds Cleaning & Maintenance	10.1
Personal Care and Service	7.9
Farming, Fishing, and Forestry	6.3
Legal	6.2

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

- Undocumented immigrants comprised a fraction of the state's workforce at 0.8 percent in 2014.¹⁹

Immigrants in South Dakota contribute tens of millions of dollars in yearly taxes.

- [Immigrant-led households in the state paid](#) \$58 million in federal taxes and \$32.6 million in state and local taxes in 2014.²⁰
- Undocumented immigrants in South Dakota paid an estimated \$5.3 million in [state and local taxes](#) in 2014. Their contribution would rise to \$5.9 million if they could receive legal status.²¹

As consumers, immigrants add hundreds of billions of dollars to South Dakota's economy every year.

- South Dakotans in immigrant-led households had \$339.1 million in [spending power](#) (after-tax income) in 2014.²²

Immigrant entrepreneurs in South Dakota generate millions of dollars in annual business revenue.

- 1,972 immigrant business owners accounted for 3.2 percent of all self-employed South Dakota residents in 2015 and generated \$3.2 million in business income.²³

Endnotes

“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 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).

Children are defined as people age 17 or younger. Men and women do not include children. Ibid.

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

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).

2015 ACS 1-Year Estimates.

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.

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.

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

Pew Research Center, “U.S. unauthorized immigration population estimates,” November 3, 2016,

www.pewhispanic.org/interactives/unauthorized-immigrants/.

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/>.

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).

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>.

Number represents total initial requests for deferred action received by USCIS as of June 30, 2017. USCIS, *Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals Process Through Fiscal Year 2017, 3rd Qtr* (Washington, DC: Dept. of Homeland Security, September 20, 2017), Number of Form I-821D:

Consideration of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals by Fiscal Year Quarter [dataset], <https://www.uscis.gov/tools/reports-studies/immigration-forms-data/data-set-form-i-821d-deferred-action-childhood-arrivals>.

Institute on Taxation & Economic Policy (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/>.

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www.newamericaneconomy.org/research/the-contributions-of-new-americans-in-south-dakota/.

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

New American Economy, *The Contributions of New Americans in South Dakota*, 5.

“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.