Immigrants in Texas

Texas has a long history of immigration, with the majority of immigrants hailing from Mexico. Immigrants now account for one-sixth of the state's total population and support the local economy in a growing number of industries. Construction—one of the state's largest and fastest growing industries—relies on immigrants for more than a third of its workers. As neighbors, business owners, taxpayers, and workers, immigrants are an integral part of Texas's diverse and thriving communities and make extensive contributions that benefit all.

One in six Texas residents is an immigrant, while another one in six residents is a native-born U.S. citizen with at least one immigrant parent.

- In 2018, 4.9 million immigrants (foreign-born individuals) comprised 17 percent of the population.[1]

- Texas was home to 2.3 million women, 2.3 million men, and 319,331 children who were immigrants.[2]

- The top countries of origin for immigrants were Mexico (51 percent of immigrants), India (6 percent), El Salvador (5 percent), Vietnam (4 percent), and Honduras (3 percent).[3]

- In 2018, 4.5 million people in Texas (16 percent of the state's population) were native-born Americans who had at least one immigrant parent.[4]

More than one-third of all immigrants in Texas are naturalized U.S. citizens.

- 1.9 million immigrants (38 percent) had naturalized as of 2018,[5] and 957,647 immigrants were eligible to become naturalized U.S. citizens in 2017.[6]

- Two-thirds (66 percent) of immigrants reported speaking English "well" or "very well."[7]

Immigrants in Texas are concentrated at either end of the educational spectrum.

- More than a quarter (26 percent) of adult immigrants had a college degree or more education in 2018, while over a third (37 percent) had less than a high school diploma.[8]

Education Level	Share (%) of All Immigrants	Share (%) of All Natives
College degree or more	26	32
Some college	16	32
High school diploma only	20	26
Less than a high school diploma	37	10
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2018 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates.		

1.4 million U.S. citizens in Texas live with at least one family member who is undocumented.

- 1.6 million underdocumented immigrants comprised 33 percent of the immigrant population and 6 percent of the total state population in 2016.[9]

- 2.7 million people in Texas, including 1.4 million U.S. citizens, lived with at least one undocumented family member between 2010 and 2014.[10]

- During the same period, about one in seven children in the state was a U.S. citizen living with at least one undocumented family member (1 million children in total).[11]

Texas is home to over 106,000 Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) recipients.

- 106,090 active DACA recipients lived in Texas as of March 2020, while DACA has been granted to 134,058 people in total since 2012.[12]

- As of 2019, 56 percent of DACA-eligible immigrants in Texas had applied for DACA.[13]

- An additional 55,000 residents of the state would satisfy all but the educational requirements for DACA, and another 7,000 would become eligible as they grew older.[14]

One in five workers in Texas is an immigrant, together making up a vital part of the state's labor force in a range of industries.

- 3.1 million immigrant workers comprised 22 percent of the labor force in 2018.[15]

- Immigrant workers were most numerous in the following industries:

Industry	Number of Immigrant Workers
Construction	517,957
Manufacturing	361,818
Health Care and Social Assistance	353,961
Accommodation and Food Services	336,864
Retail Trade	332,182
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:[16]

Industry	Immigrant Share (%) (of all industry workers)
Construction	37
Other Services (except Public Administration)	28
Administrative & Support; Waste Management; and Remediation Services	28
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, and Hunting	27
Manufacturing	27
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 Texas workforce in a range of occupations.

- In 2018, immigrant workers were most numerous in the following occupation groups:[17]

Occupation Category	Number of Immigrant Workers
Construction and Extraction	469,689
Building and Grounds Cleaning & Maintenance	305,269
Sales and Related	285,774
Transportation and Material Moving	277,412
Food Preparation and Serving Related	269,968
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]

Occupation Category	Immigrant Share (%) (of all workers in occupation)
Building and Grounds Cleaning & Maintenance	46
Construction and Extraction	42
Farming, Fishing, and Forestry	39
Production	32
Computer and Mathematical	27
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 8 percent of Texas's workforce in 2016.[19]

Immigrants in Texas have contributed tens of billions of dollars in taxes.

- Immigrant-led households in the state paid $26.3 billion in federal taxes and $12.3 billion in state and local taxes in 2018.[20]

- Undocumented immigrants in Texas paid an estimated $2.6 billion in federal taxes and $1.6 billion in state and local taxes in 2018.[21]

- Texas DACA recipients and DACA-eligible individuals paid an estimated $244.7 million in state and local taxes in 2018.[22]

As consumers, immigrants add well over one-hundred billion dollars to Texas's economy.

- Texas residents in immigrant-led households had $112.8 billion in spending power (after-tax income) in 2018.[23]

Immigrant entrepreneurs in Texas generate over ten billion dollars in business revenue.

- 429,414 immigrant business owners accounted for 29 percent of all self-employed Texas residents in 2018 and generated $10.8 billion in business income.[24]

- In the following Texas metropolitan areas in 2018, at least one-fifth of business owners were immigrants. Immigrants accounted for:
  - 20 percent of business owners in the Austin/Round Rock metro area,
  - 27 percent in Dallas/Fort Worth/Arlington,
  - 51 percent in Houston/Baytown/Sugar Land, and
  - 24 percent in San Antonio.[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, 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.
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/.
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/.
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_performancedata_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, and were under the age of 31 as of 201who 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.
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.
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.
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.