

New Americans in Allen County

The Demographic and Economic Contributions of Immigrants¹ in the County²



Population

25,300

the number of immigrants living in Allen County, Indiana in 2019.³

Immigrants made up



of the total population of the county in 2019.

Between 2014 and 2019, the total population of the county increased by



The immigrant population increased by



during the same time period.

24.0%

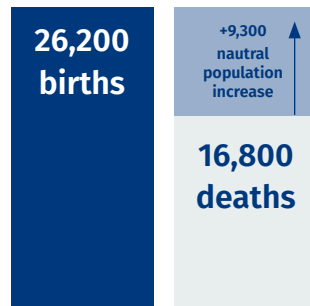
of the total population growth in the county was attributable to immigrants.

Population Trends



of population growth in the county from 2015 to 2019 was due to natural increases in population (births outnumbered deaths).

Between 2015 and 2019, there were approximately

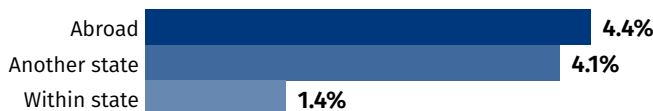


Migration to the county also contributed to population growth.

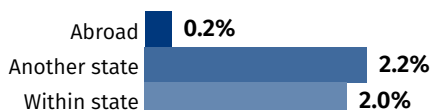


of the total population had moved to the county within the previous year.⁴

Percent of **immigrants** that moved into the county from:

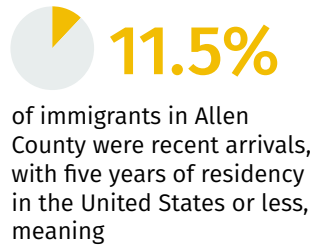
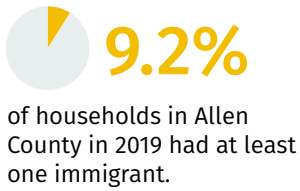


Percent of **U.S.-born residents** that moved in from:



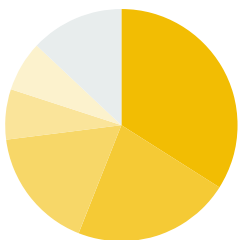
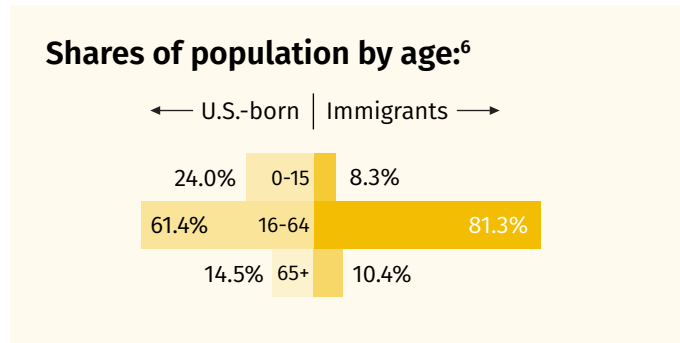
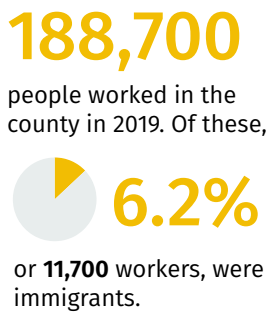
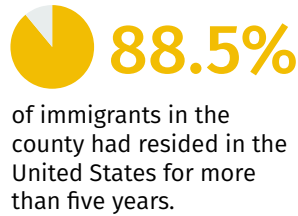
1. Estimates provided in this report may slightly undercount the immigrant population. The American Community Survey historically under-samples the immigrant population, especially among lower income, more recently arrived, and less English-fluent immigrant populations.
2. Unless otherwise specified, data comes from 5-year samples of the American Community Survey from 2014 and 2019 and figures refer to Allen County, Indiana.
3. We define "immigrant" as any non-citizen or any naturalized U.S. citizen. They include naturalized citizens, green card holders, temporary visa holders, refugees, asylees, and undocumented immigrants, among others.
4. All datapoints regarding domestic migration refer to those who had moved within one year of responding to the American Community Survey.

Demographics



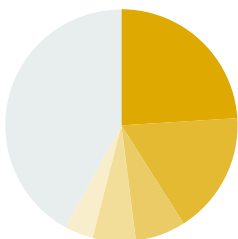
In the county, immigrants were

32.3%
more likely to be of working age than their U.S.-born counterparts, allowing them to actively participate in the labor force and contribute to the economy as taxpayers and consumers.⁵



The top regions of origin for immigrants living in the county:

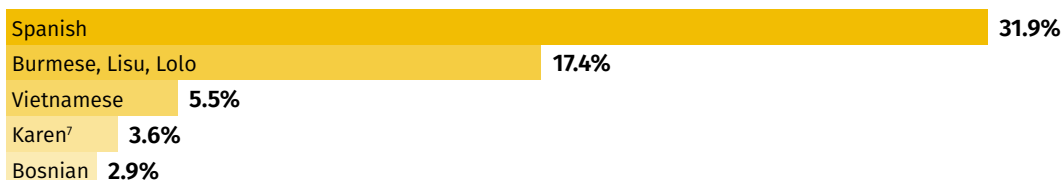
- Mexico, Central America, and Caribbean (**33.8%**)
- India and Southwest Asia (**21.5%**)
- Southeast Asia (**16.8%**)
- East Asia (**6.7%**)
- Central and Eastern Europe (**6.6%**)
- Other (**14.6%**)



The top countries of origin for immigrants living in the county:

- Mexico (**23.7%**)
- Burma (Myanmar) (**17.3%**)
- Thailand (**6.5%**)
- Vietnam (**5.6%**)
- Guatemala (**4.4%**)
- Other (**42.5%**)

The top languages spoken at home other than English among immigrants:



5. We define working age as 16-64 years of age.
 6. Totals may not add up to 100 percent due to rounding.
 7. The Karen community is an ethnic group from Burma (Myanmar) and Thailand.

Immigrants with Limited English Language Proficiency

7,000

immigrants living in the county had limited English language proficiency, making up



of the immigrant population.⁸

Among those, the top languages spoken at home other than English were:



Among those with limited English language proficiency, educational attainment was as follows:

- Less than a high-school diploma (78.9%)
- A high-school diploma or some college (15.7%)
- Other (5.4%)

Spending Power and Tax Contributions

Immigrants paid a significant amount in federal, state, and local taxes, including property, sales, and excise taxes levied by state and local governments.

In 2019, immigrant households⁹ in Allen County earned:

\$656.9 million

■ **\$99.1 million**

went to federal taxes.¹⁰

■ **\$61.8 million** went to state & local taxes.¹¹

■ **\$496.0 million** was left in spending power.

This means that immigrant households held



of all spending power in the county.

In 2019, immigrant residents in the county contributed

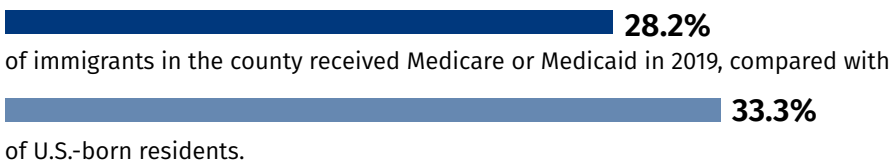
\$1.9 billion

to the county's gross domestic product (GDP), or **7.0%** of total GDP for that year.¹²

8. For the purpose of this report, we define people with limited English language proficiency as those who do not speak English at all or do not speak English well.
9. Immigrant households refer to those with an immigrant as head of the unit.
10. U.S. Congressional Budget Office, *The Distribution of Household Income and Federal Taxes, 2019* (Washington, DC: 2022), <https://www.cbo.gov/publication/58353>.
11. Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy, *Who Pays? A Distributional Analysis of the Tax Systems in All Fifty States in All Fifty States* (Washington, DC: 2018), <https://itep.org/whopays>.
12. These figures derive from our calculations based on immigrants' share of wage income and self-employment income in the 5-year ACS sample from 2019 and the statistics of GDP from the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis.

Spending Power & Tax Contributions *(continued)*

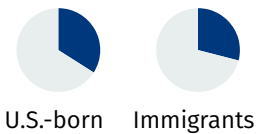
Immigrants in the county also supported federal social programs. In 2019, they contributed



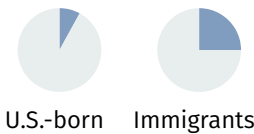
About **68.7%** of U.S.-born residents had private health care coverage, compared with **53.4%** of immigrants.¹³



About **34.2%** of U.S.-born residents had public health care coverage, compared with **28.6%** of immigrants.



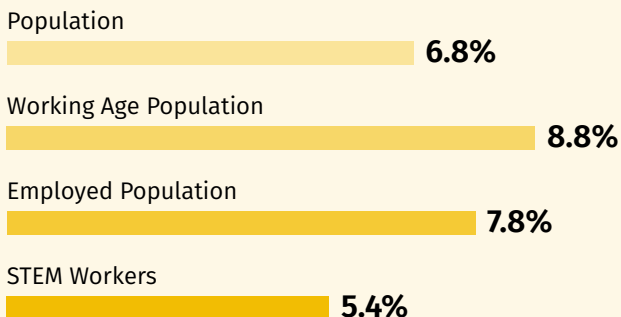
Approximately **8.1%** of U.S.-born residents and **24.8%** of immigrants in Allen County were uninsured.



Workforce

Although immigrants made up **6.8%** of the county's total population, they represented **8.8%** of its working age population, **7.8%** of its employed labor force, and **5.4%** of its workers in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) fields in 2019.¹⁴

Immigrant shares of the...



The immigrant working age population was **50.3%** female and **49.7%** male.



The immigrant employed population was **42.0%** female and **58.0%** male.



13. Including people who have both public and private healthcare coverage.

14. STEM refers to occupations that require background or expertise in science, technology, engineering, or math.

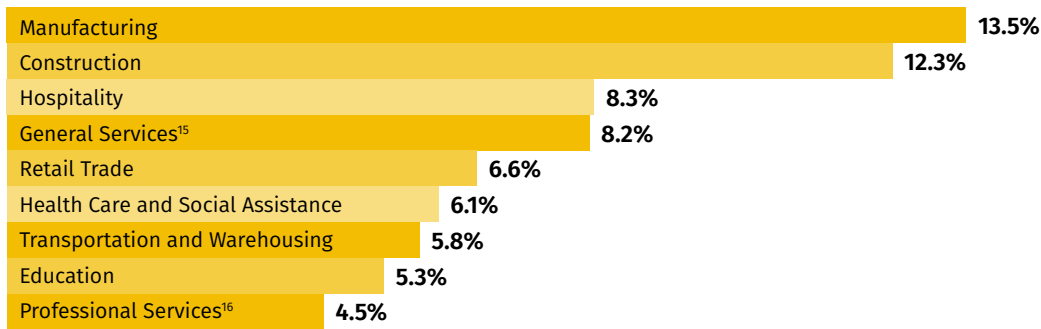
Workforce (continued)

Immigrants in the county were

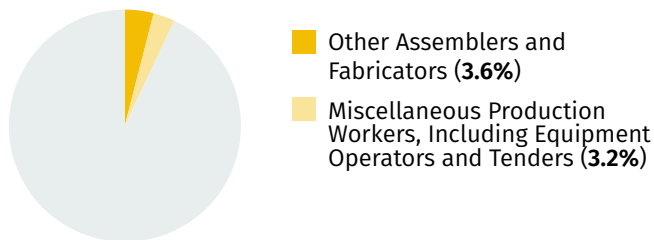


more likely to be of working age than their U.S.-born counterparts.

The industries with the largest number of immigrant workers in 2019 includes:



The occupations with the largest number of immigrant workers in 2019:



Due to the role immigrants play in the workforce helping companies keep jobs on U.S. soil, our research says that immigrants living in the county helped create or preserve

1,200 manufacturing jobs

that would have otherwise been eliminated or moved elsewhere by 2019.¹⁷

15. General services include personal services (e.g. laundry services, barber shops, and repair and maintenance), religious organizations, social services, and labor unions.
16. Professional services: Most of these industries include professions that require a degree or a license, such as legal services, accounting, scientific research, consulting services, etc.
17. Jacob Vigdor, *Immigration and the Revival of American Cities: From Preserving Manufacturing Jobs to Strengthening the Housing Market* (New York, NY: Americas Society/Council of the Americas and New American Economy, 2013), <https://www.newamericaneconomy.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/revival-of-american-cities.pdf>.

Workforce *(continued)*

SPOTLIGHT Job Demand In Allen County In 2022

Not only were immigrants more likely to be of working age than the U.S.-born, but they were also a crucial part of the county’s economy, and helped meet the needs of its fastest growing and most in-demand fields.¹⁸

The top in-demand jobs in the county in 2022 were:

- | | | |
|----------------------|--|------------------------|
| 1. Registered Nurses | 2. Heavy and Tractor-Trailer Truck Drivers | 3. Retail Salespersons |
|----------------------|--|------------------------|

4. Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing, Except Technical and Scientific Products

5. Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand

The top skills listed for these in-demand jobs are **Sales, Customer Service, Registered Nurse (RN), Communications, and Nursing.**

Immigrants help fill many high-demand roles, especially as the need for bilingual and culturally competent public services and healthcare workers increases.

The top five occupations with the highest demand for bilingual workers:¹⁹

- | | | |
|--|------------------------------------|---|
| 1. Administrative and Support Services | 2. Ambulatory Health Care Services | 3. Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services |
|--|------------------------------------|---|

4. Chemical Manufacturing

5. Insurance Carriers and Related Activities

18. Data is obtained from Lightcast Technologies for the time period between January 1, 2022 and December 31, 2022.

19. Data is obtained from Lightcast Technologies for the time period between January 1, 2022 and December 31, 2022.

Entrepreneurship

1,300

immigrant entrepreneurs generated

\$37.9 million

in business income in Allen County.

Immigrant entrepreneurs self-identified as **32.0%** female and **68.0%** male.



Immigrants represented



of the business owners in the county in 2019 despite making up **6.8%** of the population.

Immigrants were



more likely to be an entrepreneur than their U.S.-born counterparts.

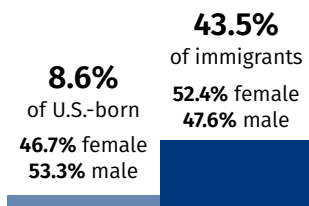
8.9% of immigrants worked for their own businesses, while **6.9%** of the U.S.-born population were entrepreneurs.²⁰



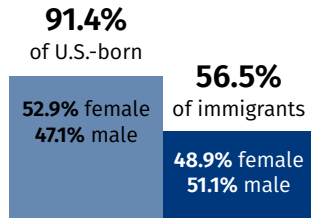
Immigrant U.S.-born

Education

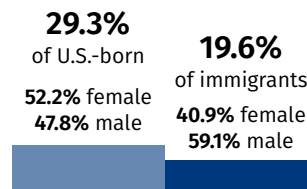
Share of the county's population aged 25 or above that had **less than a high school education** in 2019:



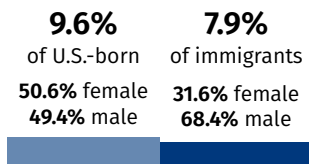
Share of the county's population aged 25 or above that had **at least a high school education** or some college in 2019:



Share of the county's population aged 25 or above that held a **bachelor's degree or higher** in 2019:



Share of the county's population aged 25 or above that held an **advanced degree** in 2019:



of K-12 students in the county were immigrants in 2019.



of K-12 students in the county were immigrants or the children of immigrants in 2019.²¹

20. Data obtained from the ACS may not capture those who work in informal jobs and businesses, and as a result may not capture immigrants' full entrepreneurial contributions within the County.

21. Children of immigrants includes both U.S.-born and immigrants who are under the age of 18 with at least one immigrant parent.

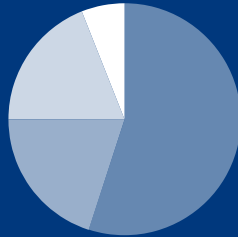
SPOTLIGHT

University Population

In fall 2021,

1,502

students enrolled in colleges and universities in Allen County were temporary U.S. residents.²²



The breakdown of international students is as follows:

- Part-time graduate students (830)
- Full-time undergraduate students (296)
- Full-time graduate students (307)
- Part-time undergraduate students (69)

219

international students graduated with STEM degrees from colleges and universities in the county in the 2020-21 academic year.

89

jobs in higher education and other areas including accommodations, food, and transportation were supported by international students in the county.

\$20.6M

was spent by international students in the 2021-22 academic year in the county.²³

Housing

In 2019, **61.3%** of immigrant households in the county owned their own homes, compared with **69.0%** of U.S.-born households.



Immigrant U.S.-born



- Lived in houses **7,300, or 71.6%**
- Lived in apartments **2,700, or 26.6%**
- Other **1.8%**

Total property value of immigrant households:

\$855.5M

The average household size for immigrants in Allen County was **3.2** compared to **2.4** for U.S.-born residents.



38.7%

of immigrant households were renters. Their total annual rent paid was:

\$28.7M

83.2% of immigrant households in the county had access to broadband connection in their place of residence as compared with **83.3%** of U.S.-born households that did.²⁴



Immigrant U.S.-born

22. Data on student enrollment in the county is derived from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System maintained by the National Center for Education Statistics. Temporary residents refer to people who are not U.S. citizens or permanent residents.
23. Economic data is derived from the International Student Economic Value Tool maintained by NAFSA: the Association of International Educators.
24. This data point reports whether the respondent or any member of their household subscribed to the internet using broadband (high speed) internet service such as cable, fiber optic, or DSL.

Naturalization



- **44.1%** Naturalized Citizens²⁵ (11,200)
- **18.9%** Likely Eligible to Naturalize (4,800)
- **37.0%** Not Eligible to Naturalize (9,400)

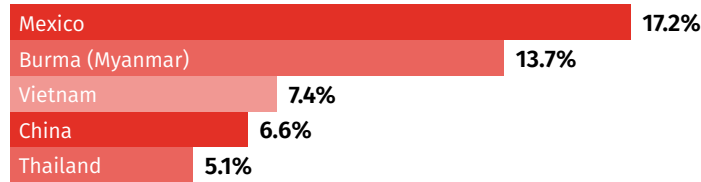


Nationally, **48.7%** of immigrants are naturalized citizens, **15.9%** are likely eligible to naturalize, and **35.4%** are not yet eligible.

When eligible immigrants naturalize, their income increased, on average, by

+8.9%²⁶

The top five countries of origin for naturalized citizens in Allen County were:



Refugees

6,900

immigrants,²⁷ or **27.4%** of the immigrant population in Allen County, were likely refugees²⁸ in 2019.²⁹



of refugees held at least a bachelor's degree.



of refugees worked in **Manufacturing**. This was the industry with the largest share of refugees.



of refugees in were naturalized U.S. citizens.

In 2019, refugee households in the county earned:

\$142.4 million

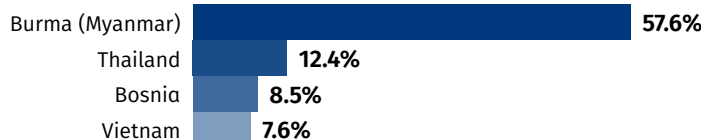
■ **\$16.5 million**

went to federal taxes.³⁰

■ **\$14.3 million** went to state & local taxes.³¹

■ **\$111.6 million** was left in spending power.

Top countries of origin for the county's refugee population:



- Naturalization is the process through which one can become a U.S. citizen, dependent on certain eligibility requirements. Learn more here: <https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/research/how-united-states-immigration-system-works>.
- Maria E. Enchautegui and Linda Giannarelli, *The Economic Impact of Naturalization on Immigrants and Cities*, Urban Institute, 2015, <https://www.urban.org/research/publication/economic-impact-naturalization-immigrants-and-cities>.
- Refugee households refer to those with a refugee as head of the unit.
- Refugees are admitted to the United States based upon an inability to return to their home countries because of a "well-founded fear of persecution" due to their race, membership in a particular social group, political opinion, religion, or national origin. Learn more here: <https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/research/how-united-states-immigration-system-works>.
- New American Economy, From Struggle to Resilience: The Economic Impact of Refugees in America*, (New York, NY: 2017), https://www.newamericaneconomy.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/NAE-Refugees_V5.pdf.
- U.S. Congressional Budget Office, *The Distribution of Household Income and Federal Taxes, 2019* (Washington, DC: 2021), <https://www.cbo.gov/publication/58353>.
- Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy, *Who Pays? A Distributional Analysis of the Tax Systems in All Fifty States* (Washington, DC: 2018), <https://itep.org/whopays/>.

SPOTLIGHT ON

Flora Barrón

Owner of Flora & Lily's Mexican Kitchen, Kanela, and Pikoso

Flora Barrón had a comfortable childhood in Northern Mexico, attended college, and worked as an administrative assistant before marrying a successful rural veterinarian. But when an economic downturn pushed local farmers into bankruptcy, her husband's business struggled.

"That's when we came to America," she explains. "Our plan was to come here and work for two years, save some money, then go back and open a bigger clinic."

The pair arrived on tourist visas in late 1993, and temporarily moved in with an uncle in Fort Wayne. They didn't speak much English and became briefly homeless when their housing arrangements fell through. "It was very hard — we didn't know where to go," Barrón recalls.

Fortunately, a family from their local Assemblies of God congregation offered the couple a room. The pair took language classes and got career advice at the Benito Juarez Center. They began working in restaurants and factories, and rented an apartment of their own.

They were still intending to return to Mexico when their church hired Barrón's husband to run a Spanish-language radio program. The job helped the couple obtain their green cards. From there, doors opened. Barrón received a bachelor's degree in education from Purdue University Fort Wayne and a master's in education from Indiana Wesleyan. For the next 20 years, she taught math in Fort Wayne's public schools.

After all that time, Barrón recalled the veterinary clinic that she and her husband never got to run. "I had a lot of regret about that," she said. "But I knew that here, if we worked hard, we could start a successful business — and that was always my real dream."

In 2017, the couple opened Flora & Lily's Mexican Kitchen food truck, followed by a coffee trailer, two coffee shops and a fast-casual restaurant called Pikoso. The couple now employ 30 people. Despite the strains of the pandemic, their businesses are thriving. "After all the financial worries we had in Mexico, we found that in America it's possible to be successful if you work hard," Barrón says.

She has also volunteered at International House, a center for immigrants; Hope Center, a pregnancy counseling group; and Casa Advocate, an advocacy center for kids. "Fort Wayne has been there for us, and we want to give something back," Barrón explains. "I'm so thankful for the community that helped me to achieve my dreams."

SPOTLIGHT ON

So Min Oo

Operations Manager at Kroger

So Min Oo remembers the day in January 1977 when the Burmese government bombed his family's village. "It stays in my nightmares — the gunfire, the people screaming," he recalls. He was 11.

His parents and three siblings spent the next several months fleeing on foot to Thailand, where they built the refugee camp that became their home. Early on, there were no schools, healthcare facilities, or even clean water, and Oo saw many people die from preventable diseases. But he eventually attended school and taught himself English by repeating the things that aid workers said. "I always dreamed of traveling to first-world countries, and I knew English would be important," he explains.

In 2008, after a years-long vetting process, Oo's family was granted refugee status. Like many other Burmese refugees, they found their way to Fort Wayne. But when Oo's father died, he was left to support the family. Refugee resettlement services, other Burmese families and local food banks kept the family going for a short time. Still, finding work wasn't easy. "When I went for my first job interview, when I was 20 years old, I didn't even know what a CV was," Oo says. "I wrote a whole essay about my life, and they had to explain to me that wasn't what they needed."

Eventually, Oo found work as a translator, first for Catholic Charities — the same group that had helped him figure out how to write his CV — and later in East Allen County public schools.

With stable employment, he was now able to give back to his community. In 2010, he helped found the Burmese Muslim Education and Community Center, which provides free funeral services for local families along with social and educational services. "Immigrants and refugees still need lots of help settling in," Oo says. "Buying houses, using banks, starting businesses — these things are very hard if you don't know how to do them."

He was also able to enroll in school and received a bachelor's degree in business administration from Indiana Institute of Technology. Before long, he'd become an operations manager at Kroger, overseeing 1000 people; he's now working on his MBA, and expects to graduate by the end of the year.

Today, Oo owns a house and a car, and is a U.S. citizen. The ceremony was especially moving, because his family came from a persecuted minority without citizenship in Burma. He's proud to be raising his young children as Americans who know they truly belong. "This feels like one of my greatest accomplishments," Oo says.

Undocumented Immigrants

5,100

undocumented immigrants³² lived in Allen County in 2019. They made up



of the county's immigrant population.

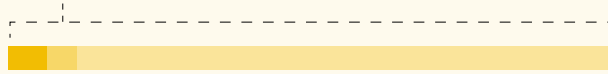
About



were of working age in the county.³⁶

In 2019, undocumented immigrant households³³ earned:

\$107.1 million



■ **\$6.8 million**

went to federal taxes.³⁴

■ **\$5.3 million** went to state & local taxes.³⁵

■ **\$95.1 million** was left in spending power.



of undocumented immigrants in the county came from **Mexico**. This was the top country of origin for undocumented immigrants in the county.



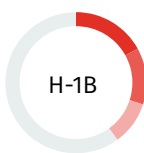
of undocumented immigrants in the county worked in the **Manufacturing** industry. This industry had the highest share of undocumented immigrant workers in the county.

H-1B and H-2B Visas

206

H-1B visas were certified³⁷ in Allen County during Fiscal Year 2022.

The top occupations among certified H-1B and H-2B visa applications were:



■ Physicians and Surgeons, All Other (**36 certifications**)

■ Medical and Clinical Laboratory Technologists (**21**)

■ Software Developers, Applications (**27**)

62

H-2B visas were certified³⁸ in Allen County during Fiscal Year 2022.



■ Molding, Coremaking, and Casting Machine Setters, Operators, and Tenders, Metal and Plastic (**20**)

■ Helpers-Roofers (**12**)

■ Sewing Machine Operators (**20**)

32. Undocumented immigrants are identified by applying the methodological approach outlined by Harvard University economist George Borjas in his work: George Borjas, *The Labor Supply of Undocumented Immigrants* (Harvard University, *Labour Economics*, volume 46, pages 1-3, 2017), <https://scholar.harvard.edu/files/gborjas/files/le2017.pdf>. Immigrants who do not meet a set of criteria for legal status are identified as being undocumented. More on our methodology here: <https://map.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/methodology/>.
33. Undocumented immigrant households refer to people living in a housing unit with an undocumented immigrant being the head of their unit.
34. U.S. Congressional Budget Office, *The Distribution of Household Income and Federal Taxes, 2019* (Washington, DC: 2021), <https://www.cbo.gov/publication/58353>.
35. Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy, *Who Pays? A Distributional Analysis of the Tax Systems in All Fifty States* (Washington, DC: 2018), <https://itep.org/whopays/>.
36. We define working age as 16-64 years of age.
37. Before an employer can file a petition with United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) to hire an employee using an H-1B visa, the employer must take steps to ensure that hiring the foreign worker will not adversely affect U.S. workers. To do this, employers file a labor condition application (LCA) to be certified by the Department of Labor (DOL), which ensures that employment of the H-1B worker will not adversely affect the wages and working conditions of similarly employed U.S. workers. The number of certified H-1B visas is therefore a good indication of the demand for immigrant workers of a given occupation in a given region. More information on the H-1B process can be found here: <https://www.uscis.gov/working-in-the-united-states/h-1b-specialty-occupations>.
38. Similar to the H-1B process, in order for an employer to obtain an H-2B certification, the DOL must determine that there are not enough U.S. workers available to do the temporary job being petitioned for, and that employing H-2B workers will not adversely affect the wages and working conditions of similar workers. Additionally, the need for the worker must be temporary. Certified jobs are not necessarily the jobs filled, though they do indicate a level of demand for temporary immigrant workers in a particular occupation. More information on the H-2B process can be found here: <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/foreign-labor/programs/h-2b>.