



New Americans in Arizona: The Political and Economic Power of Immigrants, Latinos, and Asians in the Grand Canyon State

Immigrants, Latinos, and Asians account for large and growing shares of the economy and electorate in Arizona. Immigrants (the foreign-born) make up 13.5% of the state's population, and more than one-third of them are naturalized U.S. citizens who are eligible to vote. "New Americans"—immigrants and the children of immigrants—account for 14% of registered voters in Arizona. Moreover, Latinos and Asians (both foreign-born and native-born) wield \$47.5 billion in consumer purchasing power, and the businesses they own had sales and receipts of \$12.5 billion and employed more than 85,000 people at last count. Immigrant, Latino, and Asian workers, consumers, and entrepreneurs are integral to Arizona's economy and tax base—and they are an electoral force with which every politician must reckon.

Immigrants and their children are growing shares of Arizona's population and electorate.

- The foreign-born share of Arizona's population rose from 7.6% in [1990](#),¹ to 12.8% in [2000](#),² to 13.5% in [2013](#),³ according to the U.S. Census Bureau. Arizona was home to 896,310 immigrants in [2013](#),⁴ which is more than the population of [San Francisco, California](#).⁵
- 38% of immigrants (or 342,265 people) in Arizona were naturalized U.S. citizens in [2013](#)⁶—meaning that they are eligible to vote.
- Unauthorized immigrants comprised roughly 4.6% of the state's population (or 300,000 people) in [2012](#), according to a report by the Pew Hispanic Center.⁷
- 14% (or 393,051) of all registered voters in Arizona were "New Americans"—naturalized citizens or the U.S.-born children of immigrants who were raised during the current era of immigration from Latin America and Asia that began in 1965—according to an analysis of 2012 Census Bureau data by the [American Immigration Council](#).⁸

One-third of Arizonans are Latino or Asian.

- The Latino share of Arizona's population grew from 18.8% in [1990](#),⁹ to 25.3% in [2000](#),¹⁰ to 30.3% (or 2,005,114 people) in [2013](#).¹¹ The Asian share of the population grew from 1.4% in [1990](#),¹² to 1.8% in [2000](#),¹³ to 2.9% (or 191,718 people) in [2013](#),¹⁴ according to the U.S. Census Bureau.
- Latinos comprised 16.6% (or 400,000) of Arizona voters in the 2012 elections, and Asians comprised 1.8% (or 43,000), according to the [U.S. Census Bureau](#).¹⁵

- In Arizona, 87.3% of children with immigrant parents were U.S. citizens in [2009](#), according to the Urban Institute.¹⁶
- In [2009](#), 90.5% of children in Asian families in Arizona were U.S. citizens, as were 92.5% of children in Latino families.¹⁷

Immigrant, Latino, and Asian entrepreneurs and consumers add billions of dollars and tens of thousands of jobs to Arizona's economy.

- The 2014 purchasing power of Arizona's Latinos totaled \$38.3 billion—an increase of 612% since 1990. Asian buying power totaled \$9.2 billion—an increase of 1,145% since 1990, according to the [Selig Center for Economic Growth](#) at the University of Arizona.¹⁸
- Immigration boosts housing values in communities. From 2000 to 2010, according to the [Americas Society/Council of the Americas](#), the value added by immigration to the price of the average home was \$18,045 in Maricopa County; \$3,183 in Pima County; and \$2,130 in Pinal County.¹⁹
- Arizona's 52,667 Latino-owned businesses had sales and receipts of \$8 billion and employed 54,530 people in 2007, the last year for which data is available. The state's 16,333 Asian-owned businesses had sales and receipts of \$4.5 billion and employed 31,339 people in 2007, according to the U.S. Census Bureau's [Survey of Business Owners](#).²⁰
- From 2006 to 2010, there were [50,706](#) new immigrant business owners in Arizona who had total net business income of \$2.2 billion (14.2% of all net business income in the state), according to Robert Fairlie of the University of California, Santa Cruz.²¹
- In 2010, 14.8% of all business owners in Arizona were foreign-born, according to the [Fiscal Policy Institute](#).²² In the Phoenix-Mesa-Glendale metropolitan area, [15.3% of business owners](#) were foreign-born in 2013, according to the Fiscal Policy Institute and Americans Society/Council of the Americas. Furthermore, 27.1% of "Main Street" business owners—owners of businesses in the retail, accommodation and food services, and neighborhood services sectors—in the Phoenix metro area were foreign-born in 2013.²³

Immigrants are integral to Arizona's economy as workers and taxpayers.

- Immigrants comprised 17% of the state's workforce in [2013](#) (or 523,346 workers), according to the U.S. Census Bureau.²⁴
- Immigrants accounted for 15% of total economic output in the Phoenix metropolitan area as of 2007, according to a study by the [Fiscal Policy Institute](#).²⁵ In fact, "immigrants contribute to the economy in direct relation to their share of the population. The economy of metro areas grows in tandem with the immigrant share of the labor force."²⁶

- Unauthorized immigrants comprised 6% of the state’s workforce (or 180,000 workers) in [2012](#), according to a report by the Pew Hispanic Center.²⁷
- Latinos in Arizona paid \$4 billion in federal taxes and \$2.2 billion in state/local taxes in 2013, according to the [Partnership for a New American Economy](#). In particular, foreign-born Latinos paid \$1.2 billion in federal taxes and \$822 million in state/local taxes.²⁸
 - The federal tax contribution of Arizona’s Latino population included over \$3 billion to Social Security and \$725 million to Medicare in 2013. Foreign-born Latinos contributed over \$1 billion to Social Security and \$253.7 million to Medicare that year.²⁹

Unauthorized immigrants pay taxes.

- Unauthorized immigrants in Arizona paid \$374.5 million in state and local taxes in [2010](#), including \$305.9 million in sales taxes, \$29.2 million in state income taxes, and \$39.4 million in property taxes, according to data from the Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy.³⁰
- Were unauthorized immigrants in Arizona to have legal status, they would pay \$430.2 million in state and local taxes, including \$320.9 million in sales taxes, \$67.4 million in state income taxes, and \$41.9 million in property taxes.³¹
- If all unauthorized immigrants were removed from Arizona, the state would lose \$48.8 billion in economic activity, decrease total employment by 17.2%, and eliminate 581,000 jobs, according to a [study](#) by Dr. Raul Hinojosa-Ojeda and Marshall Fitz.³² If unauthorized immigrants in Arizona were legalized, it would add 261,000 jobs to the economy, increase labor income by \$5.6 billion, and increase tax revenues by \$1.7 billion.³³

Immigrants are integral to Arizona’s economy as students.

- Arizona’s 15,442 foreign students contributed \$442.7 million to the state’s economy in tuition, fees, and living expenses for the 2013-2014 academic year, according to [NAFSA: Association of International Educators](#).³⁴
- Foreign students contribute to Arizona’s metropolitan areas. From 2008 to 2012, according to the [Brookings Institution](#), 9,724 foreign students paid \$197 million in tuition and \$150 million in living costs in the Phoenix-Mesa-Glendale metropolitan area. In the Tucson metro area, 4,460 foreign students paid \$102 million in tuition and \$62 million in living costs.³⁵
- Foreign students also contribute to innovation in Arizona. In 2009, “non-resident aliens” comprised 47.9% of master’s degrees and 46.5% of doctorate degrees in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields, according to the [Partnership for a New American Economy](#).³⁶

Naturalized citizens excel educationally.

- In Arizona, 25.1% of foreign-born persons who were naturalized U.S. citizens in [2011](#) had a bachelor's or higher degree, compared to 14.5% of noncitizens. At the same time, only 23.3% of naturalized citizens lacked a high-school diploma, compared to 49.3% of noncitizens.³⁷
- The number of immigrants in Arizona with a college degree increased by 85.6% between 2000 and 2011, according to [data](#) from the Migration Policy Institute.³⁸
- In Arizona, 79.5% of children with immigrant parents were considered “English proficient” as of [2009](#), according to data from the Urban Institute.³⁹
- The English proficiency rate among Asian children in Arizona was 91.6%, while for Latino children it was 85.1%, as of [2009](#).⁴⁰

Endnotes

1. U.S. Census Bureau, *The Foreign-Born Population: 2000*, December 2003.
2. Ibid.
3. 2013 American Community Survey (1-Year Estimates).
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid.
7. Jeffrey S. Passel, D'Vera Cohn, and Molly Rohal, *Unauthorized Immigrant Totals Rise in 7 States, Fall in 14: Decline in Those From Mexico Fuels Most State Decreases* (Washington, DC: Pew Hispanic Center, November 18, 2014), p. 29.
8. Walter A. Ewing and Guillermo Cantor, *New Americans in the Voting Booth: The Growing Electoral Power of Immigrant Communities* (Washington, DC: American Immigration Council, October 2014), p. 25.
9. U.S. Census Bureau, *The Hispanic Population: 2000*, May 2001.
10. Ibid.
11. 2013 American Community Survey (1-Year Estimates).
12. U.S. Census Bureau, *The Asian Population: 2000*, February 2002.
13. Ibid.
14. 2013 American Community Survey (1-Year Estimates).
15. 2012 Current Population Survey, [Table 4b. Reported Voting and Registration, by Sex, Race and Hispanic Origin, for States: November 2012](#).
16. [The Urban Institute](#), data from the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series datasets drawn from the 2005 - 2009 American Community Survey.
17. Ibid.
18. Jeffrey M. Humphreys, *The Multicultural Economy 2014* (Athens, GA: Selig Center for Economic Growth, University of Georgia, 2014), pp. 22, 24.
19. 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, 2013).
20. U.S. Census Bureau, *Estimates of Business Ownership by Gender, Ethnicity, Race, and Veteran Status: 2007*, June 2011.

21. Robert W. Fairlie, [*Open for Business: How Immigrants are Driving Small Business Creation in the United States*](#) (New York, NY: Partnership for a New American Economy, 2012), p. 32.
22. David Dyssegaard Kallick, [*Immigrant Small Business Owners: A Significant and Growing Part of the Economy*](#) (New York, NY: Fiscal Policy Institute, 2012), p. 24.
23. David Dyssegaard Kallick, [*Bringing Vitality to Main Street: How Immigrant Small Businesses Help Local Economies Grow*](#) (New York, NY: Americas Society/Council of the Americas and Fiscal Policy Institute, 2015).
24. 2013 American Community Survey (1-Year Estimates).
25. David Dyssegaard Kallick, [*Immigrants in the Economy: Contribution of Immigrant Workers to the Country's 25 Largest Metropolitan Areas*](#) (New York, NY: Fiscal Policy Institute, December 2009), p. 11.
26. Ibid., p. 1.
27. Jeffrey S. Passel, D'Vera Cohn, and Molly Rohal, [*Unauthorized Immigrant Totals Rise in 7 States, Fall in 14: Decline in Those From Mexico Fuels Most State Decreases*](#) (Washington, DC: Pew Hispanic Center, November 18, 2014), p. 29.
28. Partnership for a New American Economy, [*The Power of the Purse: The Contributions of Hispanics to America's Spending Power and Tax Revenues in 2013*](#) (New York, NY: Partnership for a New American Economy, 2014).
29. Ibid.
30. Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy, [*Undocumented Immigrants' State and Local Tax Contributions*](#) (Washington, DC: July 2013).
31. Ibid.
32. Raul Hinojosa-Ojeda and Marshall Fitz, [*A Rising Tide or a Shrinking Pie: The Economic Impact of Legalization Versus Deportation in Arizona*](#) (Washington, DC: Immigration Policy Center and the Center for American Progress, March 2011).
33. Ibid.
34. NAFSA: Association of International Educators, [*The Economic Benefits of International Students to the U.S. Economy: Academic Year 2013-2014*](#) (Washington, DC: 2014).
35. Neil Ruiz, [*The Geography of Foreign Students in U.S. Higher Education: Origins and Destinations*](#) (Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 2014).
36. Partnership for a New American Economy, [*Help Wanted: The Role of Foreign Workers in the Innovation Economy*](#) (New York, NY: Partnership for a New American Economy, 2013), p. 21.
37. Migration Policy Institute Data Hub, [Arizona: Language & Education](#).
38. Ibid.
39. [The Urban Institute](#), data from the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series datasets drawn from the 2005 - 2009 American Community Survey.
40. Ibid.