

New Americans in Southern Utah



The Demographic and Economic Contributions of Immigrants in Beaver, Garfield, Grand, Iron, Kane, San Juan, and Washington counties¹

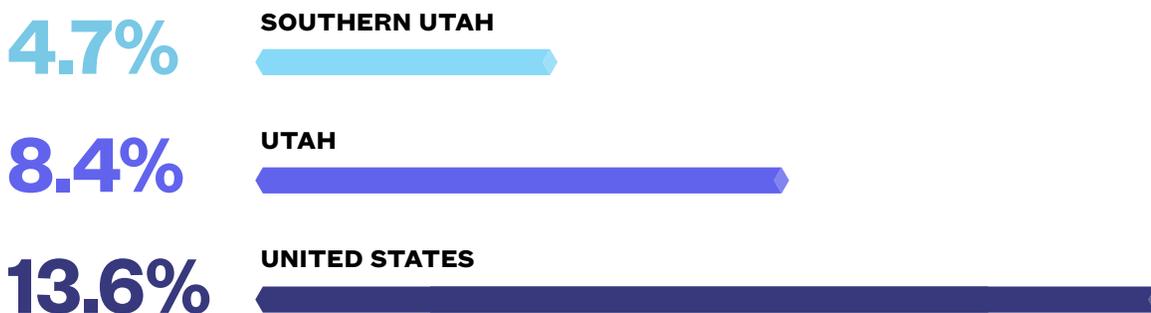
Between 2010 and 2019, Utah was the fastest growing state in the country, opening doors for economic opportunity, innovation, and workforce development.² As immigrants move to the Beehive State, they play a vital role in helping to fuel robust economic growth across the state's four regions—northern, eastern, south central, and southern—making contributions in the workforce, and as taxpayers, consumers, and entrepreneurs.³ This is especially true in southern Utah, which made up 8.6 percent of the total population of the state in 2020.⁴ This brief shows the demographic and economic contributions immigrants are making in the southern Utah region. Unless otherwise specified, the data in this brief comes from the 2000 and 2019 American Community Surveys.⁵ We define an immigrant as anyone born outside the country to non-U.S. citizen parents who is a resident of the United States.

Demographics

Southern Utah welcomed 6,100 immigrants between 2000 and 2019, including those immigrants who migrated from another state. During this time period, 6.7 percent of southern Utah's population growth was attributable to immigrants.

In 2019, approximately 12,200 immigrants lived in southern Utah. Immigrants made up a smaller share of the region's population (4.7 percent) than the state's (8.4 percent), and those demographics are changing rapidly.

IMMIGRANT SHARE OF THE POPULATION IN 2019

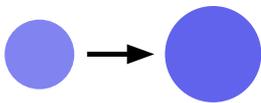


CHANGING DEMOGRAPHICS IN SOUTHERN UTAH

More immigrants are choosing to make southern Utah their home. Between 2000 and 2019, the number of immigrants in southern Utah increased by 100.1 percent, while the U.S.-born population grew by 51.9 percent. During this same period, the region's total population increased by 53.7 percent, or 91,400 people. As the region grows, U.S.-born and immigrant talent are poised to help meet the state's pressing workforce needs, thereby increasing economic opportunity for all residents.

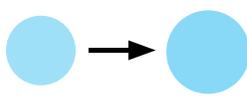
+100.1%

growth in the immigrant population in southern Utah between 2000 and 2019.



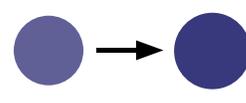
+51.9%

growth in the U.S.-born population in southern Utah between 2000 and 2019.



+53.7%

growth in southern Utah's total population between 2000 and 2019.



CHANGING DEMOGRAPHICS IN UTAH

In comparison, the number of immigrants across the state increased by 63.7 percent between 2000 and 2019, while the U.S.-born population grew by just 36.9 percent. During this same period, Utah's total population increased by 38.8 percent, or 866,000 people.

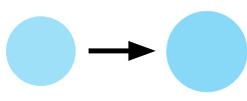
+63.7%

growth in the immigrant population in Utah between 2000 and 2019.



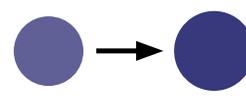
+36.9%

growth in the U.S.-born population in Utah between 2000 and 2019.



+38.8%

growth in Utah's total population between 2000 and 2019.



CHANGING DEMOGRAPHICS IN THE UNITED STATES

Meanwhile, nationally the immigrant population increased by 41.4 percent between 2000 and 2019, while the U.S.-born population grew by 12.1 percent. During the same period, the overall U.S. population increased by 15.4 percent, or 43.3 million people.

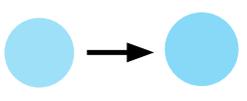
+41.4%

growth in the national immigrant population between 2000 and 2019.



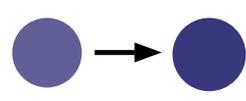
+12.1%

growth in the national U.S.-born population between 2000 and 2019.



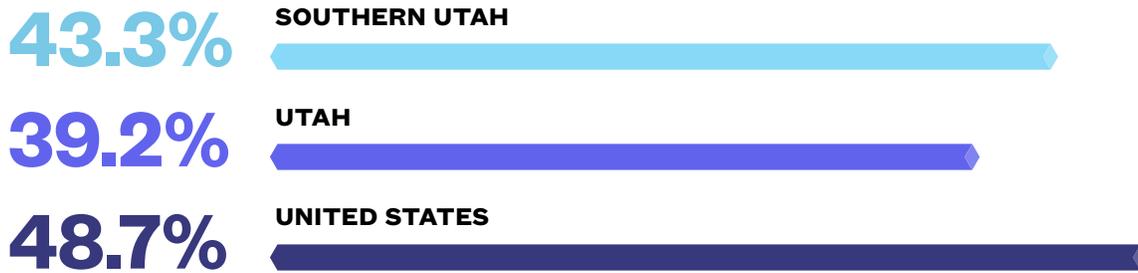
+15.4%

growth in the overall U.S. population between 2000 and 2019.



SHARE OF IMMIGRANTS WHO ARE NATURALIZED CITIZENS

In 2019, nearly half, or 43.3 percent, of southern Utah’s immigrants were naturalized U.S. citizens. This represents a total of 5,300 immigrants. In the same period, 39.2 percent and 48.7 percent of immigrants were naturalized citizens in Utah and in the United States, respectively.



TOP COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN FOR IMMIGRANTS LIVING IN SOUTHERN UTAH



Workforce and Entrepreneurship

The growth in the immigrant population has strengthened southern Utah’s labor force. Immigrants play vital roles in some of the region’s fastest growing and most in-demand fields, even as some immigrants face barriers to finding jobs that match their skill levels.

AGE BREAKDOWN OF SOUTHERN UTAH'S LABOR FORCE

In southern Utah’s workforce, immigrants are also more likely to be of working age (25-54) than U.S.-born workers, allowing them to participate more actively in the labor force and contribute to the economy as taxpayers and consumers.

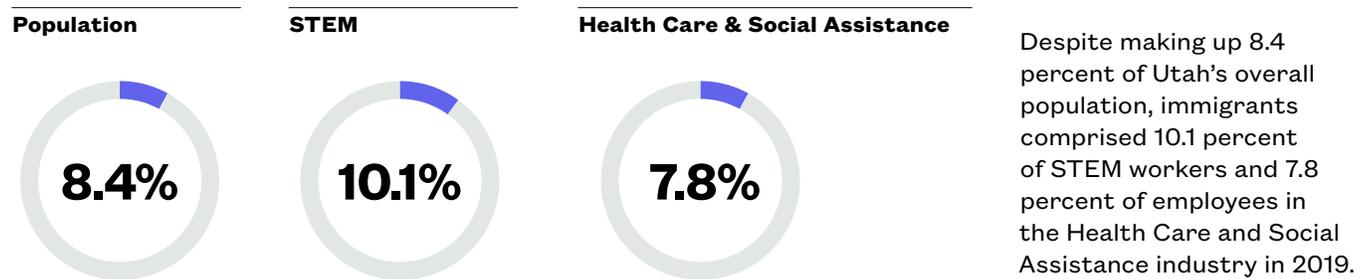
Age Group	Immigrants	U.S.-born
16-24	13.7%	19.5%
25-34	18.3%	20.4%
35-44	26.3%	20.7%
45-54	23.8%	16.9%
55-64	16.1%	15.2%
65+	1.8%	7.1%

IMMIGRANT SHARE OF WORKERS IN SOUTHERN UTAH

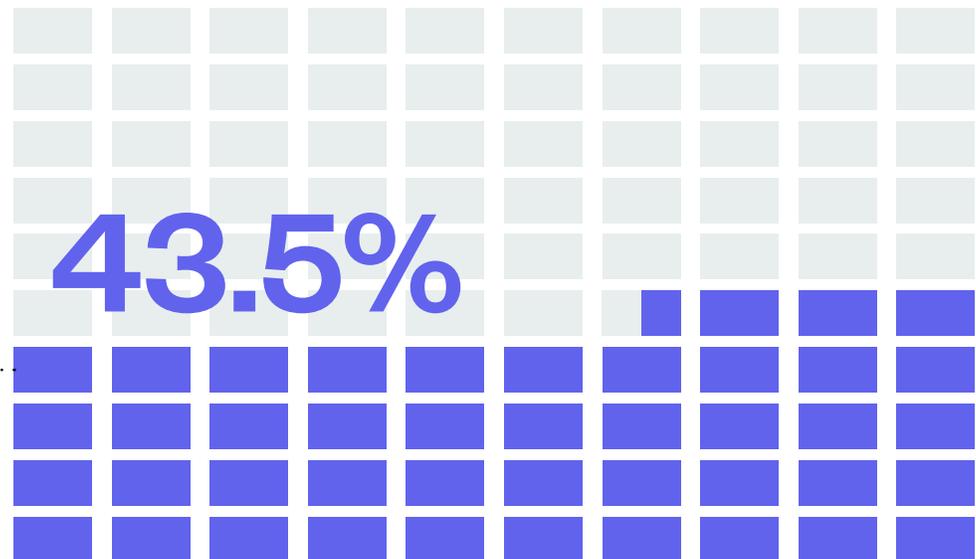
While immigrants made up 4.7 percent of southern Utah’s overall population in 2019, they represented 11.8 percent of its construction workforce, 9.9 percent of its hospitality workforce, 9.5 percent of its manufacturing workforce, and 4.1 percent of its retail trade workforce.



IMMIGRANT SHARE OF WORKERS IN UTAH



Although many immigrants have brought their professional skills and experience to Utah, a significant number face barriers to finding employment that matches those skills.

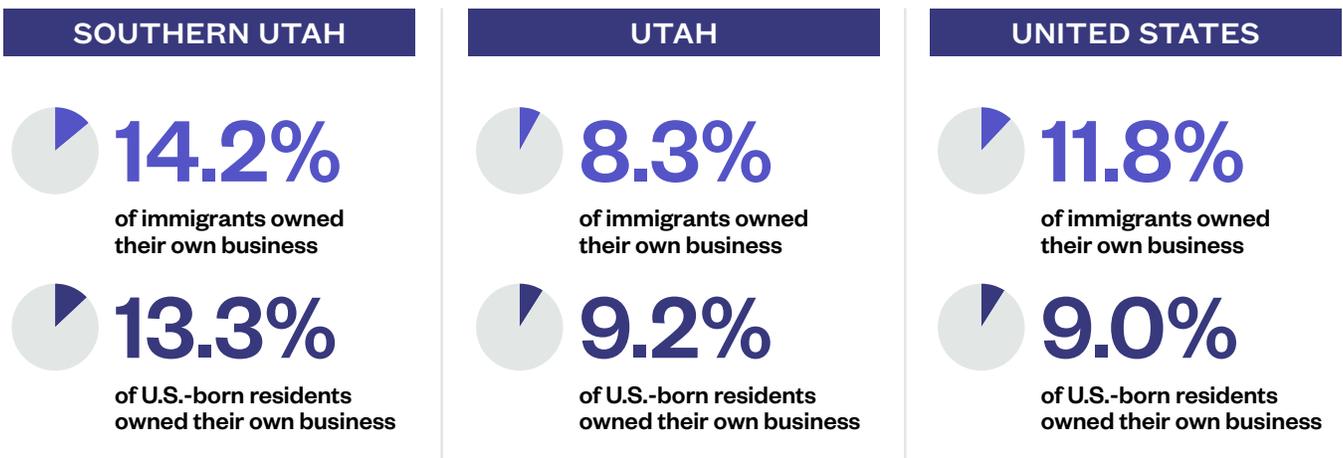


Share of college-educated immigrants who worked in jobs that did not require a bachelor’s degree in 2019.

SHARE OF ENTREPRENEURS IN SOUTHERN UTAH

When looking at entrepreneurship in southern Utah, immigrants in the southern region are starting businesses at higher rates than their U.S.-born counterparts, which is different than much of the rest of the state. Across the state, 8.3 percent of immigrants were entrepreneurs, while 9.2 percent of U.S.-born residents worked for their own business.

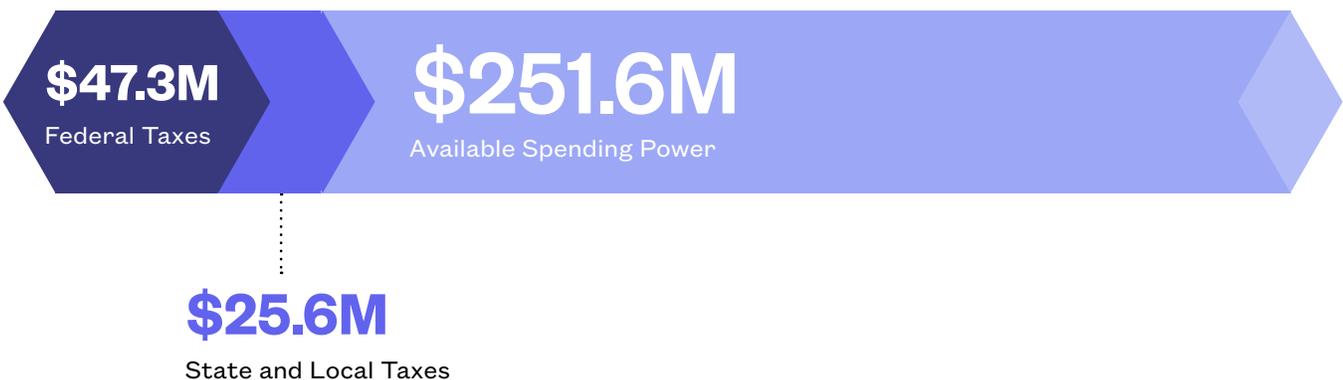
Nationally, immigrants are more likely to be business owners than U.S.-born residents. In 2019, 11.8 percent of immigrants were entrepreneurs, while 9.0 percent of U.S.-born residents worked for their own business.



Spending Power and Tax Contributions

Immigrant households contribute billions of dollars in federal, state, and local taxes and hold a significant amount of spending power. This gives them economic clout and the ability to support local communities as consumers and taxpayers.

In 2019, immigrant households in southern Utah earned \$324.5 million, contributing \$47.3 million in federal taxes⁶ and \$25.6 million in combined state and local taxes.⁷ This left them with \$251.6 million in spending power.



International Students

International students in southern Utah contribute millions of dollars to the national, regional, and state economies every year and support a significant number of U.S. jobs through their tuition payments and day-to-day consumer spending.

In the 2022-23 school year, 800 international students were enrolled in colleges and universities in southern Utah,⁸ contributing \$27.1 million in spending to the economy and supporting 129 jobs.⁹

800

international students enrolled at southern Utah colleges and universities during the 2022-23 school year.

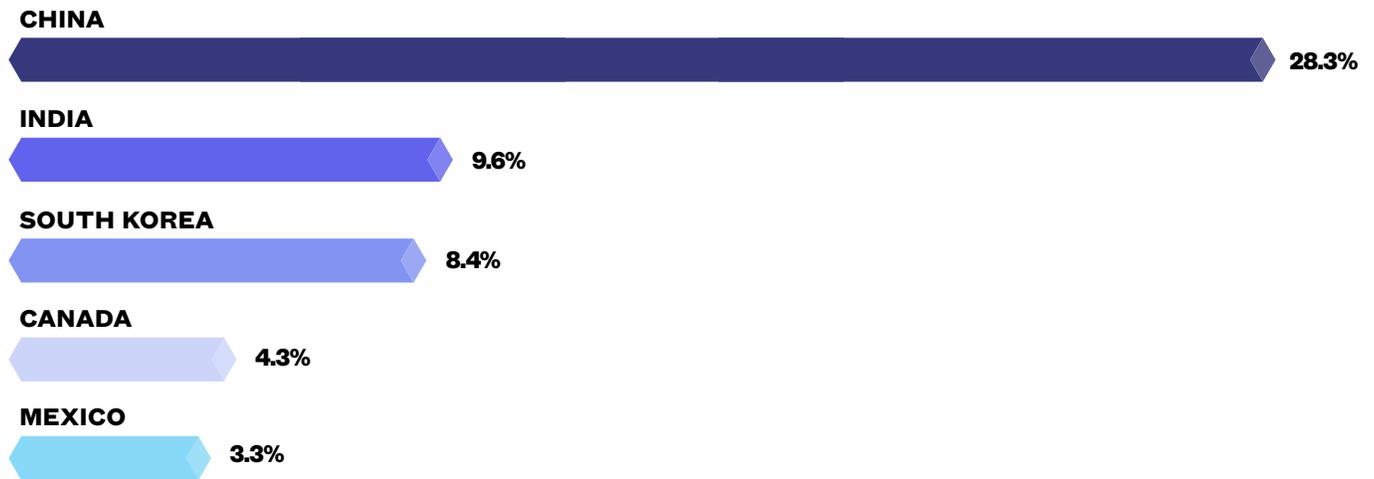
\$27.1M

was contributed to the U.S. economy by international students enrolled at southern Utah colleges and universities during the 2022-23 school year.

129

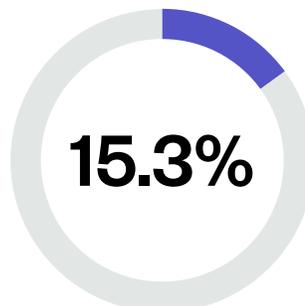
jobs were supported by international students enrolled at southern Utah colleges and universities during the 2022-23 school year.

TOP COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS IN UTAH¹⁰



K-12 EDUCATION

Southern Utah's growing immigrant population is also reflected in an increasingly diverse student population in its K-12 schools.



Share of southern Utah's students under the age of 18 that were enrolled in local schools who were immigrants or children of immigrants in 2019.

SPOTLIGHT

Salt Lake County, Utah

The Salt Lake County spotlight is included in this report to contextualize the changing demographics of southern Utah compared to the area with the highest concentration of New Americans. As this region of the state continues to see growth, it is important to recognize the numerous contributions of New Americans as cities and counties grow and change.

Demographics

Salt Lake County welcomed more than 51,600 immigrants between 2000 and 2019, including immigrants who migrated from another state. During this time period, 21.6 percent of Salt Lake County’s population growth was attributable to immigrants.

In 2019, approximately 143,700 immigrants lived in Salt Lake County. Immigrants made up a larger share of the county's population (12.7 percent) than the state’s (8.4 percent).

IMMIGRANT SHARE OF THE POPULATION IN 2019



CHANGING DEMOGRAPHICS IN SALT LAKE COUNTY

More immigrants are making Salt Lake County their home, helping to strengthen the county and the state labor forces. Between 2000 and 2019, the number of immigrants in Salt Lake County increased by 56.1 percent, while the U.S.-born population grew by 23.3 percent. During this same period, the county's total population increased by 26.7 percent, or 238,900 people.

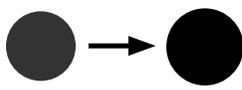
+56.1%

growth in the immigrant population in Salt Lake County between 2000 and 2019.



+23.3%

growth in the U.S.-born population in Salt Lake County between 2000 and 2019.



+26.7%

growth in the county's total population between 2000 and 2019.



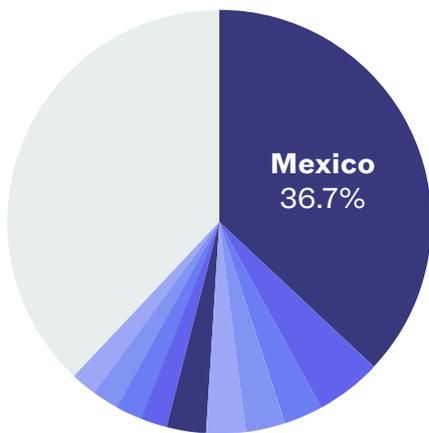
SHARE OF IMMIGRANTS WHO ARE NATURALIZED CITIZENS IN SALT LAKE COUNTY

37.8%

Share of Salt Lake County's immigrants who were naturalized U.S. citizens in 2019. This represents **54,400 immigrants**.

TOP COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN FOR IMMIGRANTS LIVING IN SALT LAKE COUNTY

More than one-third of immigrants in Salt Lake County came from Mexico. The top countries of origin were:



■ MEXICO.....	36.7%
■ INDIA.....	4.8%
■ VIETNAM.....	3.2%
■ CHINA.....	3.0%
■ VENEZUELA.....	2.7%
■ EL SALVADOR.....	2.5%
■ CANADA.....	2.1%
■ PERU.....	2.1%
■ BRAZIL.....	2.0%
■ PHILIPPINES.....	1.9%

TOP LANGUAGES SPOKEN IN IMMIGRANT HOUSEHOLDS WITH CHILDREN

Salt Lake County's growing immigrant population is also reflected in the increasingly diverse languages spoken at home.

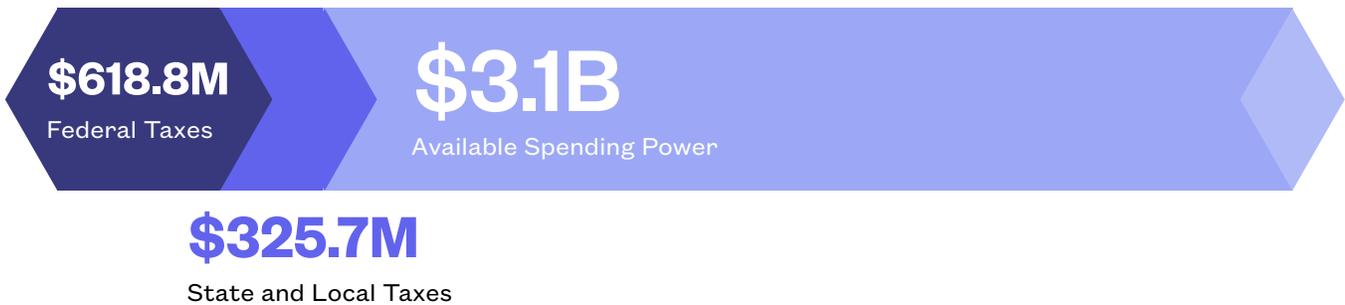
Top Languages Spoken in Immigrant Households with Children

Language	Immigrant Households
Spanish	58.6%
English	9.3%
Vietnamese	2.4%
Arabic	1.9%
Chinese	1.6%

TAXES AND SPENDING POWER

Immigrant households contribute billions of dollars in federal, state, and local taxes and hold a significant amount of spending power. This gives them economic clout and the ability to support local communities as consumers and taxpayers.

In 2019, immigrant households in Salt Lake County, Utah earned \$4.1 billion, contributing \$618.8 million in federal taxes¹¹ and \$325.7 million in combined state and local taxes.¹² This left them with \$3.1 billion in spending power.



Refugees in Salt Lake County

14,200

Approximate number of refugees who called Salt Lake County home in 2019.

6.0%

Share of immigrants in Salt Lake County who were refugees in 2019.

REFUGEE SPENDING POWER & TAX CONTRIBUTIONS

Refugee households contribute billions of dollars in federal, state, and local taxes and hold a significant amount of spending power. This gives them economic clout and the ability to support local communities as consumers and taxpayers.

In 2019, refugee households in Salt Lake County earned \$394.2 million, contributing \$58.0 million in federal taxes¹³ and \$31.4 million in combined state and local taxes.¹⁴ This left them with \$304.8 million in spending power.



ENDNOTES

- 1** Unless otherwise specified, figures refer to the southern Utah region, which includes Beaver, Garfield, Grand, Iron, Kane, San Juan, and Washington counties.
- 2** U.S. Census Bureau, “2020 Census: Percent Change in Resident Population for the 50 States, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico: 2010 to 2020,” April 27, 2021, <https://www.census.gov/library/visualizations/2021/dec/2020-percent-change-map.html>.
- 3** Except where otherwise noted (e.g., “DACA-eligible”), we define an immigrant or new American as anyone born outside the country to non-U.S. citizen parents who is a resident of the United States. This includes naturalized citizens, green card holders, temporary visa holders, refugees, asylees, and undocumented immigrants, among others.
- 4** Emily Harris, Eric Albers, and Mallory Bateman, “First Insights—2020 Census Utah Counties and Communities,” Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute and David Eccles School of Business at the University of Utah, August 2021, <https://gardner.utah.edu/wp-content/uploads/C2020-Counties-FS-Aug2021.pdf?x71849>.
- 5** Unless otherwise noted, data comes from the 5-year sample of the 2019 American Community Survey and the 5-percent sample of the 2000 American Community Survey.
- 6** U.S. Congressional Budget Office, The Distribution of Household Income and Federal Taxes, 2019 (Washington, DC: 2022), <https://www.cbo.gov/publication/58353>.
- 7** 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/>.
- 8** Data on student enrollment in the region is derived from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System maintained by the National Center for Education Statistics.
- 9** Economic data is derived from the International Student Economic Value Tool maintained by NAFSA: Association of International Educators.
- 10** Institute of International Education, “Open Doors 2022,” November 13, 2022, https://opendoorsdata.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/OD_State-Sheet_Utah_2022.pdf.
- 11** U.S. Congressional Budget Office, The Distribution of Household Income and Federal Taxes, 2019 (Washington, DC: 2022), <https://www.cbo.gov/publication/58353>.
- 12** 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/>.
- 13** U.S. Congressional Budget Office, The Distribution of Household Income and Federal Taxes, 2019 (Washington, DC: 2022), <https://www.cbo.gov/publication/58353>.
- 14** 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/>.