Immigrants in the City and County of Denver

A Snapshot of the Demographic and Economic Characteristics of Immigrants[1]
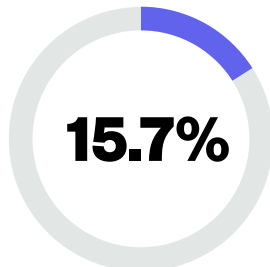
Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, local leaders in communities across the country have been working tirelessly to ensure that all community members have access to the services and support they need. The immigrant population is both essential to our country's rapid response efforts and especially vulnerable to gaps in our social safety nets. Understanding this population will help better inform local leaders as they aim to implement inclusive emergency response policies.

OVERVIEW

109,012
Immigrant Residents, 2018

15.7%

Immigrant Share of Population, 2018

POPULATION

39,588
Immigrants who were **Naturalized** U.S. Citizens, 2018[2]

36.3%
Naturalized Share of Immigrants, 2018

9,769
Immigrants who were **Refugees**, 2018[3]

9.0%
Share of Immigrants who were **Refugees**[4], 2018

5,568
DACA-Eligible Immigrants[5], 2018

5.1%
DACA-Eligible Share of Immigrants, 2018

There were approximately **9,240** DACA recipients in the Denver metropolitan area in 2019, making up approximately **63.1%** of Colorado's DACA population.[6]

39,028
Immigrants who were **Without Immigration Status**, 2018[7]

35.8%
Share of Immigrants who were **Without Immigration Status**, 2018

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1   Unless otherwise specified, data comes from 5-year samples of the American Community Survey (ACS) from 2018 and figures refer to the City of Denver, Colorado.

2   This refers to all the naturalized citizens who lived in the city in 2018, including immigrants who became naturalized in the city in 2018, as well as other foreign-born residents in the city who were naturalized in the previous years or in other places.

3   New American Economy. 2017. "From Struggle to Resilience: The Economic Impact of Refugees in America." We use the imputation method developed in this report to identify cases in the ACS microdata that are likely to be refugees, based on their countries of birth and years of arrival.
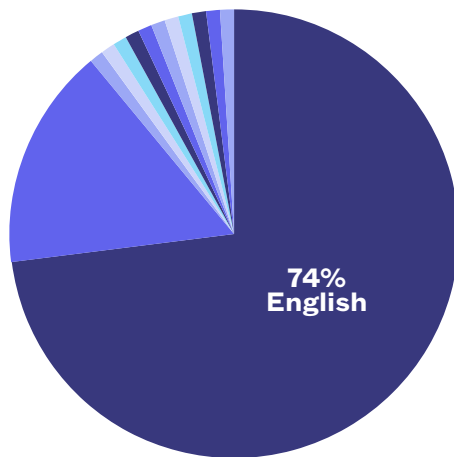
4   According to the Colorado Department of Human Services, among all the refugees that arrived in the Denver metropolitan area in fiscal year 2018, 821 refugees arrived in the Denver metropolitan area. Their top 10 countries of origin were: Afghanistan (268 refugees), DRC (139), Eritrea (71), Ethiopia (58), Myanmar (55), Bhutan (48), Bhutan (48), Somalia (25), Russia (24), Iraq (17), and Ukraine (13). Accessed at: https://www.colorado.gov/pacific/cdhs/about-refugees#Data%20Link.

5   DACA-eligible refers to individuals within the undocumented immigrant population who are eligible under the DACA policy. We apply the guidelines for DACA from United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) to ACS microdata to identify eligible cases.

6   U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, "Approximate Active DACA Recipients: As of December 31, 2019," https://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/USCIS/Resources/Reports%20and%20Studies/Immigration%20Forms%20Data/All%20Form%20Types/DACA/DACA_Population_Receipts_since_Injunction_Dec_31_2019.pdfImmigration Services (USCIS) to ACS microdata to identify eligible cases.

7   We apply the methodological approach outlined by Harvard University economist George Borjas to arrive at an estimate of the undocumented immigrant population in the United States. George J. Borjas, "The Labor Supply of Undocumented Immigrants," NBER Working Paper (National Bureau of Economic Research, Inc, 2016).

LANGUAGE

74%
English

32.4% of immigrants, or **35,348**, living in the city and county had limited English language

Top 13 Languages[8] Spoken by Denver City and County Residents

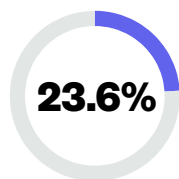|		
■	ENGLISH	74%
■	SPANISH	20%
■	OTHER AND UNSPECIFIED LANGUAGES	1%
■	OTHER INDO-EUROPEAN LANGUAGES	1%
■	VIETNAMESE	0.9%
■	OTHER ASIAN AND PACIFIC ISLAND LANGUAGES	0.7%
■	CHINESE	0.6%
■	ARABIC	0.6%
■	RUSSIAN, POLISH, OR OTHER SLAVIC LANGUAGES	0.5%
■	FRENCH, HAITIAN, OR CAJUN	0.5%
■	GERMAN OR OTHER WEST GERMANIC LANGUAGES	0.4%
■	KOREAN	0.2%
■	TAGALOG (INCLUDING FILIPINO)	0.2%

FRONTLINE WORKERS

Immigrants serve in essential industries and carry out vital roles that keep the country functioning. Immigrants in the city and county are working in these frontline and essential industries during the COVID-19 crisis:
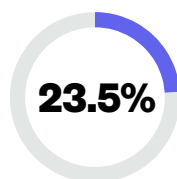
■ Share of workers who are immigrants

1

Transportation & Warehousing[10]
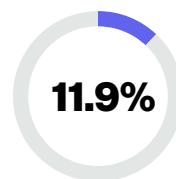
1,945 immigrant workers

23.6%

2

Food Sector[11]

9,598 immigrant workers

23.5%

3

Healthcare

4,549 immigrant workers

11.9%

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8 According to the City of Denver Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs', "Denver Immigrants and Refugee Community and Neighborhood Assessment" (December 2019) the top languages spoken by Denver Public School students are English (60%) and Spanish (36%). The remaining 4 percent of the student population speak (in order of size): Arabic, Vietnamese, Amharic, Somali, Nepali, French, Burmese, Dari—Zoroastrian, and Marshallese. Accessed at: https://www.denvergov.org/content/dam/denvergov/Portals/643/documents/Office%20of%20Immigrant%20and%20Refugee%20Affairs/2020/2019%20Neighborhood%20Assessment.pdf.

9 Amharic and related refers to Ethio-Semitic languages including Amharic, Tigrinya, Hareri, and Gurage, but we wouldn't be able to provide a share breakdown.

10 These industries include rail, water, truck, and pipeline transportation, bus and public transit, postal service, couriers and messengers, warehousing and storage.

11 The food sector includes agriculture, food processing, food wholesale trade, grocery stores and supermarkets, and restaurants and food services.

ENTREPRENEURS

While all Americans are struggling to adapt to their new reality in a time of economic shutdown, **entrepreneurs[12] within particularly vulnerable industries in the city and county face severe challenges posed by the crisis.**
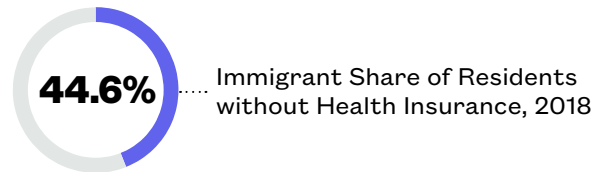
Number of Entrepreneurs	Industry	Share of Entrepreneurs who are Immigrants
5,304	CONSTRUCTION	**34.3%**
4,505	GENERAL SERVICES[13]	**20.5%**
11,173	PROFESSIONAL & BUSINESS SERVICES[14]	**8.0%**

HEALTHCARE COVERAGE

Access to healthcare and medical services remains critical during this pandemic.

75,548

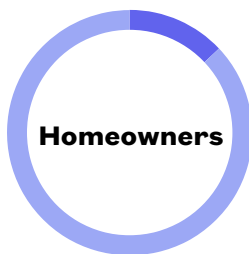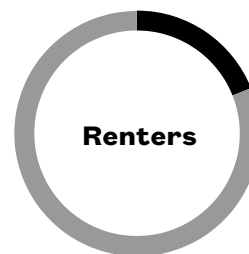## Number of Residents without Health Insurance, 2018

44.6% ········ Immigrant Share of Residents without Health Insurance, 2018

HOUSING CONDITIONS

The COVID-19 economic upheaval has highlighted the need for stable housing.[15]

Homeowners

Among Homeowners in 2018...

■ **13.3%** were immigrant households (19,091)

■ **86.7%** were U.S-born households (124,056)

Renters

Among Renters in 2018...

■ **18.8%** were immigrant households (28,299)

■ **81.2%** were U.S-born households (122,485)

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12 Entrepreneurs refers to self-employed individuals who have their own businesses.

13 General services include personal services (e.g. laundry services, barber shops, and repair and maintenance), religious organizations, social services, and labor unions.and food services.

14 Most of these industries include professions that require a degree or a license, such as legal services, accounting, scientific research, consulting services, etc.

15 According to the City of Denver's "Housing an inclusive Denver: Annual Action Plan (2019)," 36 percent of all households in Denver, or 110,355 households, were considered cost-burdened, paying more than 30 percent of their gross income for housing costs in 2016, and 17 percent, or 50,657 households, paid more than 50 percent of their gross income for housing costs. Accessed at: https://www.denvergov.org/content/dam/denvergov/Portals/690/Housing/DRAFT%20Public%20Review%20Draft%20-%20 2019%20Annual%20Action%20Plan%20(2018%2008-02).pdf.