



## New Americans in Michigan: The Political and Economic Power of Immigrants, Latinos, and Asians in the Great Lakes State

Immigrants, Latinos, Asians, and Arab Americans account for large and growing shares of the economy and the electorate in Michigan. Immigrants (the foreign-born) make up 6.2% of the state's population, and half of them are naturalized U.S. citizens who are eligible to vote. "New Americans"—immigrants and the children of immigrants—account for 6.2% of all registered voters in the state. Immigrants are not only integral to the state's economy as workers, but also account for billions of dollars in tax revenue and consumer purchasing power. Moreover, Latinos and Asians (both foreign-born and native-born) wield \$21.6 billion in consumer purchasing power, and the businesses they own had sales and receipts of \$11.6 billion and employed more than 84,000 people at last count. Michigan is also home to the highest proportion of Arab Americans in the nation, who generate an estimated \$544 million in state tax revenue each year. As the economy continues to recover, Michigan can ill-afford to alienate such an important component of its labor force, tax base, and business community.

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

- The foreign-born share of Michigan's population rose from 3.8% in [1990](#),<sup>1</sup> to 5.3% in [2000](#),<sup>2</sup> to 6.2% in [2013](#),<sup>3</sup> according to the U.S. Census Bureau. Michigan was home to 616,786 immigrants in [2013](#),<sup>4</sup> which is more than the total population of [Portland, Oregon](#).<sup>5</sup>
- From 2000 to 2010, [over half](#) (54.2%) of the Lansing metro area's population gain was attributable to immigration, according to the Chicago Council on Global Affairs.<sup>6</sup> Other metro areas in Michigan also saw their populations increase in part due to immigration: Ann Arbor (36.9% change due to immigration), Grand Rapids (22.5% change due to immigration), and Kalamazoo (13.5% change).<sup>7</sup>
  - Although the Detroit metropolitan area lost population from 2000 to 2010, the area's population loss was partially offset by immigration. The Detroit metro area's native-born population declined by -4.5% (or -185,712) while the foreign-born population [increased by 11.9%](#) (or 39,722), according to the Chicago Council on Global Affairs.<sup>8</sup>
- 51.1% of immigrants (or 315,064 people) in Michigan were naturalized U.S. citizens in [2013](#)<sup>9</sup>—meaning that they are eligible to vote.
- Unauthorized immigrants comprised roughly 1.2% of the state's population (or 120,000 people) in [2012](#), according to a report by the Pew Hispanic Center.<sup>10</sup>
- 6.2% (or 347,174) of all registered voters in Michigan 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 which began in 1965 — according to an analysis of 2012 Census Bureau data by [American Immigration Council](#).<sup>11</sup>

### **7% of Michiganders are Latino or Asian — and they vote.**

- The Latino share of Michigan’s population grew from 2.2% in [1990](#),<sup>12</sup> to 3.3% in [2000](#),<sup>13</sup> to 4.7% (or 465,419 people) in [2013](#).<sup>14</sup> The Asian share of the population grew from 1.1% in [1990](#),<sup>15</sup> to 1.8% in [2000](#),<sup>16</sup> to 2.7% (or 266,406 people) in [2013](#),<sup>17</sup> according to the U.S. Census Bureau.
- Latinos comprised 1.5% (or 158,000) of Michigan voters in the 2012 elections, and Asians comprised 3.3% (or 73,000), according to the [U.S. Census Bureau](#).<sup>18</sup>
- In Michigan, 86.4% of children with immigrant parents were U.S. citizens in [2009](#), according to data from the Urban Institute.<sup>19</sup>
- In [2009](#), 86.4% of children in Asian families in Michigan were U.S. citizens, as were 94.3% of children in Latino families.<sup>20</sup>

### **Michigan has the highest proportion of Arab Americans in the nation, and they contribute to the state’s economy.**

- The share of Michigan’s population reporting Arab ancestry rose from 0.8% in [1990](#),<sup>21</sup> to 1.2% in [2000](#),<sup>22</sup> to 1.8% (or 178,121 people) in [2013](#),<sup>23</sup> according to the U.S. Census Bureau.
- Dearborn, Michigan, has the largest proportion of Arab Americans in the United States, representing 46.5% (44,575) of the city’s population in [2013](#).<sup>24</sup> By way of comparison, Arab Americans represented 1% of the population in New York and 0.8% in Los Angeles as of [2013](#).<sup>25</sup>
- Arab American employment accounted for \$7.7 billion in total earnings in the four counties of the Detroit metropolitan area in southeast Michigan, generating an estimated \$544 million in state tax revenue in 2005, according to the [Center for Urban Studies](#) at Wayne State University.<sup>26</sup>
- Arab American business and consumer spending supported an estimated 141,541 jobs in the four-county region in 2005, according to the same [study](#).<sup>27</sup>

### **Immigrant, Latino, and Asian entrepreneurs and consumers add billions of dollars and tens of thousands of jobs to Michigan’s economy.**

- The 2014 purchasing power of Michigan’s Latinos totaled \$9.8 billion—an increase of 354% since 1990. Asian buying power totaled \$11.8 billion—an increase of 540% since 1990, according to the [Selig Center for Economic Growth](#) at the University of Georgia.<sup>28</sup>
- 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 \$556 in Wayne County; \$1,811 in Oakland County; \$1,402 in Macomb County; \$664 in Kent County; and \$575 in Washtenaw County.<sup>29</sup>

- Michigan's 21,589 Asian-owned businesses had sales and receipts of \$7.7 billion and employed 66,293 people in 2007,<sup>30</sup> the last year for which data is available. The state's 10,770 Latino-owned businesses had sales and receipts of \$3.9 billion and employed 18,508 people in 2007,<sup>31</sup> according to the [U.S. Census Bureau's Survey of Business Owners](#).
- From 2006 to 2010, there were [30,223](#) new immigrant business owners in Michigan who had total net business income of \$1.8 billion (9.2% of all net business income in the state), according to Robert Fairlie of the University of California, Santa Cruz.<sup>32</sup>
- In 2010, [10.4% of all business owners](#) in Michigan were foreign-born,<sup>33</sup> and [17.9% of business owners](#) in the Detroit-Warren-Livonia metropolitan area were foreign-born in 2013, according to the Fiscal Policy Institute and Americas Society/Council of the Americas.<sup>34</sup> Furthermore, over one-third (34.6%) of "Main Street" business owners—owners of businesses in the retail, accommodation and food services, and neighborhood services sectors—in the Detroit metro area were foreign-born in 2013.<sup>35</sup>

### **Immigrants are essential to Michigan's economy as workers and taxpayers.**

- Immigrants comprised 7.2% of the state's workforce in [2013](#) (or 349,138 workers), according to the U.S. Census Bureau.<sup>36</sup>
- Immigrants accounted for 11% of total economic output in the Detroit metropolitan area as of 2007, according to a study by the [Fiscal Policy Institute](#).<sup>37</sup>
- Latinos in Michigan paid \$1.1 billion in federal taxes and \$565 million in state/local taxes in 2013, according to the [Partnership for a New American Economy](#). In particular, foreign-born Latinos paid \$296 million in federal taxes and \$152 million in state/local taxes.<sup>38</sup>
  - The federal tax contribution of Michigan's Latino population included over \$799 million to Social Security and \$187 million to Medicare in 2013. Foreign-born Latinos contributed over \$216 million to Social Security and \$51 million to Medicare that year.<sup>39</sup>
- Unauthorized immigrants comprised 1.6% of the state's workforce in [2012](#) (or 75,000 workers), according to a report by the Pew Hispanic Center.<sup>40</sup>
- If all unauthorized immigrants were removed from Michigan, the state would lose \$3.8 billion in economic activity, \$1.7 billion in gross state product, and approximately 20,339 jobs, even accounting for adequate market adjustment time, according to a report by the [Perryman Group](#).<sup>41</sup>

### **Unauthorized immigrants pay taxes.**

- Unauthorized immigrants in Michigan paid \$125.9 million in state and local taxes in [2010](#), according to

data from the Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy, which includes \$26.2 million in state income taxes, \$14.5 million in property taxes, and \$85.1 million in sales taxes.<sup>42</sup>

- Were unauthorized immigrants in Michigan to have legal status, they would pay \$161.2 million in state and local taxes, including \$89.7 million in sales taxes, \$56.2 million in state income taxes, and \$15.2 million in property taxes.<sup>43</sup>

### **Immigrants are integral to Michigan's economy as students.**

- Michigan's 29,648 foreign students contributed \$927 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](#).<sup>44</sup>
- Foreign students contribute to Michigan's metropolitan areas. From 2008 to 2012, according to the [Brookings Institution](#), 10,432 foreign students paid \$356 million in tuition and \$169 million in living costs in the Ann Arbor metropolitan area. In the Detroit-Warren-Livonia metro area, 9,215 foreign students paid \$124 million in tuition and \$70 million in living costs. In the Kalamazoo-Portage metro area, 2,152 foreign students paid \$34 million in tuition and \$23 million in living costs. In the Lansing-East Lansing metro area, 8,509 foreign students paid \$206 million in tuition and \$99 million in living costs<sup>45</sup>
- Foreign students also contribute to innovation in Michigan. International students in Michigan are [three times as likely](#) as native-born students to major in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields.<sup>46</sup> In 2009, "non-resident aliens" comprised 35.1% of master's degrees and 47.9% of doctorate degrees in STEM fields, according to the [Partnership for a New American Economy](#).<sup>47</sup>

### **Immigrants excel educationally.**

- In Michigan, 38.1% of foreign-born persons who were naturalized U.S. citizens in [2011](#) had a bachelor's or higher degree, compared to 34.8% of noncitizens. At the same time, only 19.7% of naturalized citizens lacked a high-school diploma, compared to 29.1% of noncitizens.<sup>48</sup>
- The number of immigrants in Michigan with a college degree increased by 33.2% between 2000 and 2011, according to [data](#) from the Migration Policy Institute.<sup>49</sup>
- 36.6% of Michigan's foreign-born population age 25 and older had a bachelor's or higher degree in [2009](#), compared to 24.7% of native-born persons age 25 and older.<sup>50</sup>
- In Michigan, 86.6% of children with immigrant parents were considered "English proficient" as of [2009](#), according to data from the Urban Institute.<sup>51</sup>
- The English proficiency rate among Asian children in Michigan was 87.3%, while for Latino children it was 89.8%, as of [2009](#).<sup>52</sup>

## Endnotes

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11. 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.
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33. David Dyssegaard Kallick, [\*Immigrant Small Business Owners: A Significant and Growing Part of the Economy\*](#) (New York, NY: Fiscal Policy Institute, 2012), p. 24.
34. 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).

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