



New Americans in New Mexico: The Political and Economic Power of Immigrants, Latinos, and Asians in the Land of Enchantment State

Immigrants, Latinos, and Asians account for growing shares of the economy and electorate in New Mexico. Immigrants (the foreign-born) make up 1 in 10 New Mexicans, and about one-third of them are naturalized U.S. citizens who are eligible to vote. “New Americans” —immigrants and the children of immigrants—account for 5.9% of registered voters in the state. Immigrants are not only essential 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 \$24.9 billion in consumer purchasing power, and the businesses they own had sales and receipts of \$7.6 billion and employed more than 60,000 people at last count. Immigrant, Latino, and Asian workers, consumers, and entrepreneurs are integral to New Mexico’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 New Mexico’s population and electorate.

- The foreign-born share of New Mexico’s population rose from 5.3% in [1990](#),¹ to 8.2% in [2000](#),² to 10.1% in [2013](#),³ according to the U.S. Census Bureau. New Mexico was home to 211,249 immigrants in [2013](#),⁴ which is more than the total population of [Montgomery, Alabama](#).⁵
- 34.4% of immigrants (or 72,651 people) in New Mexico were naturalized U.S. citizens in [2013](#)⁶—meaning that they are eligible to vote.
- Unauthorized immigrants comprised roughly 3.4% of the state’s population (or 70,000 people) in [2012](#), according to a report by the Pew Hispanic Center.⁷
- 5.9% (or 57,438) of registered voters in New Mexico 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](#).⁸

Nearly half of all New Mexicans are Latino or Asian.

- The Latino share of New Mexico’s population grew from 38.2% in [1990](#),⁹ to 42.1% in [2000](#),¹⁰ to 47.3% (or 986,553 people) in [2013](#).¹¹ The Asian share of the population grew from 0.9% in [1990](#),¹² to 1.1% in [2000](#),¹³ to 1.4% (or 28,274 people) in [2013](#),¹⁴ according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

- Latinos accounted for 34.9% (or 306,000) of New Mexico voters in the 2012 elections, according to the [U.S. Census Bureau](#).¹⁵
- In New Mexico, 85.2% of children with immigrant parents were U.S. citizens in [2009](#), according to data from the Urban Institute.¹⁶
- In [2009](#), 90.7% of children in Asian families in New Mexico were U.S. citizens, as were 94.7% of children in Latino families.¹⁷

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

- The 2014 purchasing power of Latinos in New Mexico totaled \$23.4 billion—an increase of 374% since 1990. Asian buying power totaled \$1.5 billion—an increase of 724% since 1990, according to the [Selig Center for Economic Growth](#) at the University of Georgia.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 \$2,654 in Bernalillo County.¹⁹
- New Mexico's 37,195 [Latino-owned](#) businesses had sales and receipts of \$6.5 billion and employed 50,021 people in 2007, the last year for which data is available.²⁰ The state's 3,321 [Asian-owned](#) businesses had sales and receipts of \$1.1 billion and employed 10,739 people in 2007, according to the U.S. Census Bureau's Survey of Business Owners.²¹
- From 2006 to 2010, there were [11,440](#) new immigrant business owners in New Mexico, and they had total net business income of \$389 million, which makes up 8.9% of all net business income in the state, according to Robert Fairlie of the University of California, Santa Cruz.²²
- In 2010, [8.4% of all business owners](#) in New Mexico were foreign-born, according to the Fiscal Policy Institute.²³

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

- Immigrants comprised 12.6% of the state's workforce in [2013](#) (or 122,131 workers), according to the U.S. Census Bureau.²⁴
- Latinos in New Mexico paid \$2.7 billion in federal taxes and \$1.3 billion in state/local taxes in 2013, according to the [Partnership for a New American Economy](#). In particular, foreign-born Latinos paid \$463 million in federal taxes and \$252 million in state/local taxes.²⁵

- The federal tax contribution of New Mexico's Latino population included \$1.9 billion to Social Security and \$441 million to Medicare in 2013. Foreign-born Latinos contributed \$356 million to Social Security and \$83 million to Medicare that year.²⁶
- Unauthorized immigrants comprised roughly 4.7% of the state's workforce (or 45,000 workers) in [2012](#), according to a report by the Pew Hispanic Center.²⁷
- If all unauthorized immigrants were removed from New Mexico, the state would lose \$1.8 billion in economic activity, \$809.1 million in gross state product, and approximately 12,239 jobs, even accounting for adequate market adjustment time, according to a report by the [Perryman Group](#).²⁸

Unauthorized immigrants pay taxes.

- Unauthorized immigrants in New Mexico paid \$66.3 million in state and local taxes in [2012](#), according to data from the Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy, which includes \$49.1 million in sales taxes, \$3.9 million in personal income taxes, and \$13.3 million in property taxes.²⁹
- Were unauthorized immigrants in New Mexico to have lawful permanent residence, they would pay \$74.3 million in state and local taxes, including \$54 million in sales taxes, \$5.6 million in personal income taxes, and \$14.6 million in property taxes.³⁰

Immigrants are integral to New Mexico's economy as students.

- New Mexico's 3,711 foreign students contributed \$85.1 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](#).³¹
- Foreign students contribute to New Mexico's metropolitan areas. From 2008 to 2012, according to the [Brookings Institution](#), 1,848 foreign students paid \$17.8 million in tuition and \$11.3 million in living costs in the Las Cruces metropolitan area.³²
- Foreign students also contribute to innovation in New Mexico. In 2009, "non-resident aliens" comprised 42.1% of master's degrees and 42.9% of doctorate degrees in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields, according to the [Partnership for a New American Economy](#).³³

Naturalized citizens excel educationally.

- In New Mexico, 20.3% of foreign-born persons who were naturalized U.S. citizens in [2011](#) had a bachelor's or higher degree, compared to 9.7% of noncitizens.
- The number of immigrants in New Mexico with a college degree increased by 42.7% between 2000 and 2011, according to [data](#) from the Migration Policy Institute.³⁴

- In New Mexico, 79% of children with immigrant parents were considered “English proficient” as of [2009](#), according to data from the Urban Institute.³⁵
- The English proficiency rate among Asian children in New Mexico was 88.1%, while for Latino children it was 91.1%, as of [2009](#).³⁶

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. U.S. Census Bureau, [2008 Annual Estimates of the Resident Population for Counties](#), May 13, 2009.
6. Ibid.
7. Jeffrey S. Passel, D’Vera Cohn, and Molly Rohal, [Unauthorized Immigrant Totals Rise in 7 States, Fall in 14](#) (Washington, DC: Pew Research Center’s Hispanic Trends Project, November 18, 2014), p. 30.
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. Ibid.
22. 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.
23. David Dyssegaard Kallick, [Immigrant Small Business Owners: A Significant and Growing Part of the Economy](#) (New York, NY: Fiscal Policy Institute, 2012), p. 24.
24. 2013 American Community Survey (1-Year Estimates).
25. 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).
26. Ibid.

27. Jeffrey S. Passel, D'Vera Cohn, and Molly Rohal, [*Unauthorized Immigrant Totals Rise in 7 States, Fall in 14*](#) (Washington, DC: Pew Research Center's Hispanic Trends Project, November 18, 2014), p. 30.
28. The Perryman Group, [*An Essential Resource: An Analysis of the Economic Impact of Undocumented Workers on Business Activity in the US with Estimated Effects by State and by Industry*](#) (Waco, TX: April 2008), p. 69.
29. Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy, [*Undocumented Immigrants' State and Local Tax Contributions*](#) (Washington, DC: April 2015).
30. Ibid.
31. NAFSA: Association of International Educators, [*The Economic Benefits of International Education to the United States for the 2013-2014 Academic Year: A Statistical Analysis*](#) (Washington, DC: NAFSA: Association of International Educators, 2014).
32. Neil Ruiz, [*The Geography of Foreign Students in U.S. Higher Education: Origins and Destinations*](#) (Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution, 2014).
33. 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.
34. Ibid.
35. [The Urban Institute](#), data from the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series datasets drawn from the 2005 - 2009 American Community Survey.
36. Ibid.