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**NEW AMERICANS IN THE MAGNOLIA STATE:
The Economic Power of Immigrants, Latinos, and Asians in Mississippi**

Immigrants, Latinos, and Asians account for growing shares of Mississippi's population and economy. Immigrants (the foreign-born) make up 2.1% of the state's population, and nearly one-third of them are naturalized U.S. citizens who are eligible to vote. Immigrants not only contribute 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 \$2.5 billion in consumer purchasing power, and the businesses they own had sales and receipts of \$1.4 billion and employed more than 11,000 people at last count. At a time of economic recession, Mississippi would be ill-advised to alienate such an important component of its tax base and business community.

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

- **The foreign-born share** of Mississippi's population rose from 0.8% in [1990](#),¹ to 1.4% in [2000](#),² to 2.1% in [2008](#),³ according to the U.S. Census Bureau. Mississippi was home to 60,555 immigrants in [2008](#).⁴
- **30.4% of immigrants (or 18,419 people) in Mississippi were naturalized U.S. citizens** in [2008](#)⁵—meaning that they are eligible to vote.

2.8% of Mississippians are Latino or Asian.

- The **Latino share of Mississippi's population** grew from 0.6% in [1990](#),⁶ to 1.4% in [2000](#),⁷ to 2.0% (or 58,772 people) in [2008](#).⁸ The **Asian share of the population** grew from 0.5% in [1990](#)⁹ to 0.8% (or 23,509 people) in [2008](#),¹⁰ according to the U.S. Census Bureau.
- In Mississippi, **more than four-in-five (or 85% of) children in immigrant families were U.S. citizens** in [2007](#),¹¹ according to the Center for Social and Demographic Analysis at the University of Albany.

Latino and Asian entrepreneurs and consumers add billions of dollars and thousands of jobs to Mississippi's economy.

- **The 2009 purchasing power of Latinos in Mississippi totaled \$1.6 billion**—an increase of 902.8% since 1990. **Asian buying power totaled \$862.1 million**—an increase of 564.4% since 1990, according to the [Selig Center for Economic Growth](#) at the University of Georgia.¹²

- Mississippi's 1,326 **Latino-owned businesses** had sales and receipts of \$213 million and employed 2,080 people in 2002, the last year for which data is available.¹³ The state's 2,921 **Asian-owned businesses** had sales and receipts of \$1.2 billion and employed 9,232 people in 2002, according to the U.S. Census Bureau's Survey of Business Owners.¹⁴

Immigrants contribute to Mississippi's economy as workers.

- Immigrants comprised **2.8% of the state's workforce** in **2008** (or 38,786 workers), according to the U.S. Census Bureau.¹⁵

Unauthorized immigrants contribute to Mississippi's economy as workers and taxpayers.

- Unauthorized immigrants comprised roughly **1.8% of the state's workforce** (or 25,000 workers) in **2008**, according to a report by the Pew Hispanic Center.¹⁶
- Unauthorized immigrants in Mississippi contributed **\$44.2 million** in taxes in **2005**,¹⁷ according to a 2006 study by the Mississippi Office of the State Auditor.
- If all unauthorized immigrants were removed from Mississippi, **the state would lose \$583 million in economic activity, \$259 million in gross state product, and approximately 4,680 jobs**, even accounting for adequate market adjustment time, according to a report by the **Perryman Group**.¹⁸

Immigrants contribute to Mississippi's economy as students.

- Mississippi's 2,589 **foreign students contributed \$44.3 million** to the state's economy in tuition, fees, and living expenses for the 2008-2009 academic year, according to **NAFSA: Association of International Educators**.¹⁹

Naturalized citizens excel educationally.

- In Mississippi, **28.8% of foreign-born persons** who were naturalized U.S. citizens in **2008 had a bachelor's or higher degree**, compared to 24.1% of noncitizens. At the same time, 23.3% of naturalized citizens lacked a high-school diploma, compared to 44.0% of noncitizens.²⁰
- The number of immigrants in Mississippi with a college degree **increased by 42.5%** between 2000 and 2008, according to **data** from the Migration Policy Institute.²¹
- In Mississippi, **74.1% of all children** between the ages of 5 and 17 in families that spoke a language other than English at home also spoke English "very well" as of **2008**.²²

Endnotes

- ¹ U.S. Census Bureau, [*The Foreign-Born Population: 2000*](#), December 2003.
- ² Ibid.
- ³ 2008 American Community Survey (1-Year Estimates).
- ⁴ Ibid.
- ⁵ Ibid.
- ⁶ U.S. Census Bureau, [*The Hispanic Population: 2000*](#), May 2001.
- ⁷ Ibid.
- ⁸ 2008 American Community Survey (1-Year Estimates).
- ⁹ U.S. Census Bureau, [*The Asian Population: 2000*](#), February 2002.
- ¹⁰ 2008 American Community Survey (1-Year Estimates).
- ¹¹ Center for Social and Demographic Analysis, [*Children in Immigrant Families in Mississippi*](#) (Albany, NY: University of Albany, SUNY, September 2009).
- ¹² Jeffrey M. Humphreys, [*The Multicultural Economy 2009*](#) (Athens, GA: Selig Center for Economic Growth, University of Georgia, 2009).
- ¹³ U.S. Census Bureau, [*Hispanic-Owned Firms: 2002*](#), August 2006.
- ¹⁴ U.S. Census Bureau, [*Asian-Owned Firms: 2002*](#), August 2006.
- ¹⁵ 2008 American Community Survey (1-Year Estimates).
- ¹⁶ Jeffrey S. Passel and D’Vera Cohn, [*A Portrait of Unauthorized Immigrants in the United States*](#) (Washington, DC: The Pew Charitable Trusts, April 14, 2009), p. 30.
- ¹⁷ Phil Bryant, [*The Impact of Illegal Immigration on Mississippi: Costs and Population Trends*](#) (Jackson, MS: Office of the State Auditor, 2006).
- ¹⁸ 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.
- ¹⁹ NAFSA: Association of International Educators, [*The Economic Benefits of International Education to the United States for the 2008-2009 Academic Year: A Statistical Analysis*](#) (Washington, DC: NAFSA: Association of International Educators, 2009).
- ²⁰ Migration Policy Institute Data Hub, [*Mississippi: Language & Education*](#).
- ²¹ Ibid.
- ²² Ibid.