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**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 6.1% 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 6% 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 \$20.2 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 largest proportion of Arab Americans in the country, who generate an estimated \$544 million in state tax revenue each year. At a time when the economy is still recovering, 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](#),¹ to 5.3% in [2000](#),² to 6.1% in [2011](#),³ according to the U.S. Census Bureau. Michigan was home to 604,014 immigrants in [2011](#),⁴ which is more than the total population of [Portland, Oregon](#).⁵
- **50.9% of immigrants (or 307,726 people) in Michigan were naturalized U.S. citizens in [2011](#)**⁶—meaning that they are eligible to vote.
- Unauthorized immigrants comprised roughly **1.5% of the state's population** (or 150,000 people) in [2010](#), according to a report by the Pew Hispanic Center.⁷
- **6% (or 331,841) of all registered voters** in Michigan are "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 2008 Census Bureau data by [Rob Paral & Associates](#).⁸

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

- The **Latino share of Michigan's population** grew from 2.2% in [1990](#),⁹ to 3.3% in [2000](#),¹⁰ to 4.5% (or 447,420 people) in [2011](#).¹¹ The Asian share of the population grew from 1.1% in [1990](#),¹² to 1.8% in [2000](#),¹³ to 2.5% (or 242,232 people) in [2011](#),¹⁴ according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

- **Latinos comprised 1.4% (or 70,000) of Michigan voters in the 2008 elections, and Asians 1.1% (or 53,000),** according to the [U.S. Census Bureau](#).¹⁵
- In Michigan, **86.4% of children with immigrant parents were U.S. citizens** in [2009](#), according to data from the Urban Institute.¹⁶
- In [2009](#), **86.4% of children in Asian families** in Michigan were U.S. citizens, as were **94.3% of children in Latino families**.¹⁷

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](#),¹⁸ to 1.2% in [2000](#),¹⁹ to 1.7% (or 170,476 people) in [2011](#),²⁰ according to the U.S. Census Bureau.
- **Dearborn, Michigan, has the largest proportion of Arab Americans** in the United States, representing 40.9% (39,762) of the city's population in [2011](#).²¹ By way of comparison, Arab Americans represented 1.1% of the population in New York and 0.8% in Los Angeles as of [2011](#).²²
- 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.²³
- Arab American business and consumer spending **supported an estimated 141,541 jobs** in the four-county region in 2005, according to the same [study](#).²⁴

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

- **The 2012 purchasing power of Michigan's Latinos totaled \$9.2 billion**—an increase of 327% since 1990. **Asian buying power totaled \$11 billion**—an increase of 494.4% since 1990, according to the [Selig Center for Economic Growth](#) at the University of Georgia.²⁵
- Michigan's 21,589 **Asian-owned businesses had sales and receipts of \$7.7 billion and employed 66,293 people** in 2007,²⁶ 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 2007,²⁷ according to the U.S. Census Bureau's Survey of Business Owners.

Immigrants are essential to Michigan's economy as workers.

- Immigrants comprised **7.1% of the state's workforce** in [2011](#) (or 342,106 workers), according to the U.S. Census Bureau.²⁸
- **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](#).²⁹
- Unauthorized immigrants comprised **2% of the state's workforce** in [2010](#) (or 100,000 workers), according to a report by the Pew Hispanic Center.³⁰

- 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](#).³¹

Unauthorized immigrants pay taxes.

- Unauthorized immigrants in Michigan paid **\$141.7 million** in state and local taxes in [2010](#), according to data from the Institute for Taxation and Economic Policy,³² which includes:
 - \$28.1 million in state income taxes.
 - \$12.5 million in property taxes.
 - \$101.1 million in sales taxes.

Immigrants are integral to Michigan's economy as students.

- Michigan's 25,551 **foreign students contributed \$758.7 million** to the state's economy in tuition, fees, and living expenses for the 2011-2012 academic year, according to the [NAFSA: Association of International Educators](#).³³

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.³⁴
- 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.³⁵
- **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.³⁶
- In Michigan, **86.6% of children with immigrant parents** were considered "English proficient" as of [2009](#), according to data from the Urban Institute.³⁷
- The English proficiency rate among **Asian children in Michigan was 87.3%**, while for **Latino children it was 89.8%**, as of [2009](#).³⁸

Endnotes

¹ U.S. Census Bureau, [The Foreign-Born Population: 2000](#), December 2003.

² Ibid.

³ 2011 American Community Survey (1-Year Estimates).

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Jeffrey S. Passel and D'Vera Cohn, [Unauthorized Immigrant Population: National and State Trends, 2010](#) (Washington, DC: Pew Hispanic Center, February 1, 2011), p. 24.

⁸ Rob Paral & Associates and the Immigration Policy Center, [The New American Electorate: The Growing Political Power of Immigrants and Their Children](#) (Washington, DC: American Immigration Council, October 2010).

⁹ U.S. Census Bureau, [The Hispanic Population: 2000](#), May 2001.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ 2011 American Community Survey (1-Year Estimates).

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- ¹² U.S. Census Bureau, [*The Asian Population: 2000*](#), February 2002.
- ¹³ Ibid.
- ¹⁴ 2011 American Community Survey (1-Year Estimates).
- ¹⁵ 2008 Current Population Survey, [*Table 4b: Reported Voting and Registration of the Voting-Age Population, by Sex, Race and Hispanic Origin, for States: November 2008*](#).
- ¹⁶ [The Urban Institute](#), data from the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series datasets drawn from the 2005 - 2009 American Community Survey.
- ¹⁷ Ibid.
- ¹⁸ U.S. Census Bureau, [*The Arab Population: 2000*](#), December 2003.
- ¹⁹ Ibid.
- ²⁰ 2011 American Community Survey (1-Year Estimates).
- ²¹ Ibid.
- ²² Ibid.
- ²³ Center for Urban Studies, [*Arab American Economic Contribution Study*](#) (Detroit, MI: Wayne State University: March 2007).
- ²⁴ Ibid.
- ²⁵ Jeffrey M. Humphreys, [*The Multicultural Economy 2012*](#) (Athens, GA: Selig Center for Economic Growth, University of Georgia, 2012).
- ²⁶ U.S. Census Bureau, [*Estimates of Business Ownership by Gender, Ethnicity, Race, and Veteran Status: 2007*](#), June 2011.
- ²⁷ Ibid.
- ²⁸ 2011 American Community Survey (1-Year Estimates).
- ²⁹ David Dyssegaard Kallick, [*Immigrants in the Economy: Contribution of Immigrant Workers to the Country's 25 Largest Metropolitan Areas*](#) (New York, NY: Fiscal Policy Institute, December 2009), p. 11.
- ³⁰ Jeffrey S. Passel and D'Vera Cohn, [*Unauthorized Immigrant Population: National and State Trends, 2010*](#) (Washington, DC: Pew Hispanic Center, February 1, 2011), p. 24.
- ³¹ 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.
- ³² The Immigration Policy Center, [*Unauthorized Immigrants Pay Taxes, Too*](#) (Washington, DC: April 2011).
- ³³ NAFSA: Association of International Educators, [*The Economic Benefits of International Students to the U.S. Economy: Academic Year 2011-2012*](#) (Washington, DC: 2012).
- ³⁴ Migration Policy Institute Data Hub, [Michigan: Language & Education](#).
- ³⁵ Ibid.
- ³⁶ Ibid.
- ³⁷ [The Urban Institute](#), data from the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series datasets drawn from the 2005 - 2009 American Community Survey.
- ³⁸ Ibid.