



New Americans in Mississippi: The Economic Power of Immigrants, Latinos, and Asians in the Magnolia State

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 over 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 nearly \$3.3 billion in consumer purchasing power, and the businesses they own had sales and receipts of \$1.7 billion and employed more than 14,000 people at last count. As the economy continues to grow, Mississippi would be ill-advised to alienate a significant 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 [2013](#),³ according to the U.S. Census Bureau. Mississippi was home to 62,899 immigrants in [2013](#).⁴
- 38.2% of immigrants (or 24,044 people) in Mississippi were naturalized U.S. citizens in [2013](#)⁵—meaning that they are eligible to vote.
- Unauthorized immigrants comprised roughly 0.9% of the state's population (or 25,000 people) in [2012](#), according to a report by the Pew Hispanic Center.⁶
- 1.5% (or 27,708) of registered voters in Indiana 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 the [American Immigration Council](#).⁷

3.6% of Mississippians are Latino or Asian.

- The Latino share of Mississippi's population grew from 0.6% in [1990](#),⁸ to 1.4% in [2000](#),⁹ to 2.7% (or 80,455 people) in [2013](#).¹⁰ The Asian share of the population grew from 0.5% in [1990](#)¹¹ to 0.9% (or 28,159 people) in [2013](#),¹² according to the U.S. Census Bureau.
- In Mississippi, 85.4% of children with immigrant parents were U.S. citizens in [2009](#), according to data from the Urban Institute.¹³

- In [2009](#), 89.7% of children in Asian families in Mississippi were U.S. citizens, as were 89.5% of children in Latino families.¹⁴

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

- The 2014 purchasing power of Latinos in Mississippi totaled \$2.1 billion—an increase of 1,262% since 1990. Asian buying power totaled \$1.2 billion—an increase of 802% since 1990, according to the [Selig Center for Economic Growth](#) at the University of Georgia.¹⁵
- Mississippi's 1,828 Latino-owned businesses had sales and receipts of \$323.7 million and employed 2,759 people in 2007, the last year for which data is available.¹⁶ The state's 4,002 Asian-owned businesses had sales and receipts of \$1.4 billion and employed 11,878 people in 2007, according to the [U.S. Census Bureau's Survey of Business Owners](#).¹⁷
- From 2006 to 2010, there were [4,534](#) new immigrant business owners in Mississippi who had total net business income of \$181 million (3.2% of all net business income in the state), according to Robert Fairlie of the University of California, Santa Cruz.¹⁸
- In 2010, 4.5% of all business owners in Mississippi were foreign-born, according to the [Fiscal Policy Institute](#).¹⁹

Immigrants contribute to Mississippi's economy as workers and taxpayers.

- Immigrants comprised 2.9% of the state's workforce in [2013](#) (or 39,080 workers), according to the U.S. Census Bureau.²⁰
- Latinos in Mississippi paid \$158 million in federal taxes and \$80 million in state/local taxes in 2013, according to the [Partnership for a New American Economy](#). In particular, foreign-born Latinos paid \$75 million in federal taxes and \$38 million in state/local taxes.²¹
 - The federal tax contribution of Mississippi's Latino population included over \$112 million to Social Security and \$26 million to Medicare in 2013. Foreign-born Latinos contributed over \$54 million to Social Security and \$13 million to Medicare that year.²²

Unauthorized immigrants contribute to Mississippi's economy as workers.

- Unauthorized immigrants comprised roughly 1.2% of the state's workforce (or 15,000 workers) in [2012](#), according to a report by the Pew Hispanic Center.²³
- 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](#).²⁴

Unauthorized immigrants pay taxes.

- Unauthorized immigrants in Mississippi paid \$48.1 million in state and local taxes in [2010](#), according to data from the Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy, which includes \$7.3 million in state income taxes, \$2.6 million in property taxes, and \$38.1 million in sales taxes.²⁵
- Were unauthorized immigrants in Mississippi to have legal status, they would pay \$60.8 million in state and local taxes, including \$39.7 million in sales taxes, \$18.2 million in state income taxes, and \$2.9 million in property taxes.²⁶

Immigrants contribute to Mississippi's economy as students.

- Mississippi's 2,840 foreign students contributed \$55.6 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](#).²⁷
- Foreign students also contribute to innovation in Mississippi. In 2009, "non-resident aliens" comprised 26.6% of master's degrees and 53.6% of doctorate degrees in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields, according to the [Partnership for a New American Economy](#).²⁸

Naturalized citizens excel educationally.

- In Mississippi, 27.1% of foreign-born persons who were naturalized U.S. citizens in [2011](#) had a bachelor's or higher degree, compared to 16.3% of noncitizens. At the same time, 24.4% of naturalized citizens lacked a high-school diploma, compared to 52.4% of noncitizens.²⁹
- The number of immigrants in Mississippi with a college degree increased by 30.3% between 2000 and 2011, according to [data](#) from the Migration Policy Institute.³⁰
- In Mississippi, 85.5% of children with immigrant parents were considered "English proficient" as of [2009](#), according to data from the Urban Institute.³¹
- The English proficiency rate among Asian children in Mississippi was 87.6%, while for Latino children it was 84.2%, as of [2009](#).³²

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. Ibid.
6. 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. 29.
7. 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.
8. U.S. Census Bureau, [*The Hispanic Population: 2000*](#), May 2001.
9. Ibid.
10. 2013 American Community Survey (1-Year Estimates).
11. U.S. Census Bureau, [*The Asian Population: 2000*](#), February 2002.
12. 2013 American Community Survey (1-Year Estimates).
13. [The Urban Institute](#), data from the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series datasets drawn from the 2005 - 2009 American Community Survey.
14. Ibid.
15. Jeffrey M. Humphreys, [*The Multicultural Economy 2014*](#) (Athens, GA: Selig Center for Economic Growth, University of Georgia, 2014).
16. U.S. Census Bureau, [*Estimates of Business Ownership by Gender, Ethnicity, Race, and Veteran Status: 2007*](#), June 2011.
17. Ibid.
18. 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.
19. David Dyssegaard Kallick, [*Immigrant Small Business Owners: A Significant and Growing Part of the Economy*](#) (New York, NY: Fiscal Policy Institute, 2012), p. 24.
20. 2013 American Community Survey (3-Year Estimates).
21. 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).
22. Ibid.
23. 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. 29.
24. 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.
25. Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy, [*Undocumented Immigrants' State and Local Tax Contributions*](#) (Washington, DC: July 2013).
26. Ibid.
27. NAFSA: Association of International Educators, [*The Economic Benefits of International Students to the U.S. Economy: Academic Year 2013-2014*](#) (Washington, DC: 2014).
28. 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.
29. Migration Policy Institute Data Hub, [Mississippi: Language & Education](#).
30. Ibid.
31. [The Urban Institute](#), data from the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series datasets drawn from the 2005 - 2009 American Community Survey.
32. Ibid.