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**NEW AMERICANS IN NEVADA:
The Economic and Political Power of Immigrants, Latinos, and Asians
in the Silver State**

There are few states where the growing political and economic clout of immigrants, Latinos, and Asians is as apparent as in Nevada. Immigrants (the foreign-born) make up roughly 1 in 5 Nevadans, and 41.8% of them are naturalized U.S. citizens who are eligible to vote. Immigrants and the children of immigrants account for just over 15% of all registered voters in the state. Latinos and Asians (both foreign-born and native-born) account for one-third of all Nevadans and wield over \$25.7 billion in consumer purchasing power. At last count, the sales and receipts of businesses owned by Latinos and Asians totaled \$7 billion and employed more than 45,000 people. Immigrant, Latino, and Asian workers, consumers, and entrepreneurs are integral to Nevada's economy and tax base—and they are an electoral force with which every politician must reckon.

15% of registered voters in Nevada are immigrants or the children of immigrants.

- **The foreign-born share** of Nevada's population rose from 8.7% in [1990](#),¹ to 15.8% in [2000](#),² to 19.2% in [2011](#),³ according to the U.S. Census Bureau. Nevada was home to 522,463 immigrants in [2011](#),⁴ which greater than the total population of [Atlanta, Georgia](#).⁵
- **40.9% of immigrants in Nevada (or 213,675 people) were naturalized U.S. citizens** in [2011](#)—meaning that they are eligible to vote.⁶
- Unauthorized immigrants comprised **7.2% of the state's population** (or 190,000 people) in [2010](#), according to a report by the Pew Hispanic Center.⁷
- **15.1% (or 173,268) of all registered voters** in Nevada are “New Americans”—naturalized citizens or the U.S.-born children of immigrants who were raised during the current era of large-scale immigration from Latin America and Asia which began in 1965—according to an analysis of 2008 Census Bureau data by [Rob Paral & Associates](#).⁸

Latinos and Asians make up one-third of all Nevadans—and they vote.

- The **Latino share of Nevada's population** grew from 10.4% in [1990](#),⁹ to 19.7% in [2000](#),¹⁰ to 27.1% (or 737,221 people) in [2011](#).¹¹ The Asian share of the population grew from 2.9% in [1990](#),¹² to 4.5% in [2000](#),¹³ to 7.1% (or 194,695 people) in [2011](#),¹⁴ according to the U.S. Census Bureau.
- **Latinos comprised 11.6% (or 119,000) of Nevada voters** in the 2008 elections, and **Asians 3.4% (or 35,000)**, according to the [U.S. Census Bureau](#).¹⁵ The numbers of Latino and Asian voters exceeded Barack Obama's margin of victory over John McCain ([120,909 votes](#)) in this electoral battleground state.¹⁶

- In Nevada, **86.8% of children with immigrant parents** were U.S. citizens in [2009](#), according to data from the Urban Institute.¹⁷
- In [2009](#), **90.6% of children in Asian families** in Nevada were U.S. citizens, as were **90.2% of children in Latino families**.¹⁸

Immigrants are essential to Nevada's economy as workers and taxpayers.

- Immigrants comprised **25.1% of the state's workforce** in [2011](#) (or 348,671 workers), according to the U.S. Census Bureau.¹⁹
- Latino immigrants in Nevada paid roughly **\$2.6 billion in federal taxes** and **\$1.6 billion in state and local taxes** (including \$500 million in sales taxes) in 2005. The money that Latino immigrants “earn and spend in Nevada accounts for about 25% of the State's Gross State Product,” and Latino immigrant “employment, income and spending results in the creation of 108,380 jobs in Nevada,” according to a [2007 report](#) from the Progressive Leadership Alliance of Nevada.²⁰
- Latino immigrants comprised about **16% of the state's entire workforce** in 2005, and an even higher share in select industries: 81% of the agricultural workforce, 47% of the construction and mining workforce, and 22% of the entertainment and tourist services workforce, according to a [2007 report](#) from the Progressive Leadership Alliance of Nevada.²¹

Unauthorized immigrants are integral to Nevada's economy as workers, taxpayers, and consumers.

- Unauthorized immigrants comprised **10% of the state's workforce** in [2010](#) (or 140,000 workers), according to a report by the Pew Hispanic Center.²²
- Unauthorized immigrants in Nevada paid **\$133.5 million** in state and local taxes in [2010](#), according to data from the Institute for Taxation and Economic Policy,²³ which includes:
 - \$16.1 million in property taxes.
 - \$117.4 million in sales taxes.
- If all unauthorized immigrants were removed from Nevada, **the state would lose \$9.7 billion in economic activity, \$4.3 billion in gross state product, and approximately 45,533 jobs**, even accounting for adequate market adjustment time, according to a report by the [Perryman Group](#).²⁴

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

- **The 2012 purchasing power of Nevada's Latinos totaled \$16.3 billion**—an increase of 1,126% since 1990. **Asian buying power totaled \$9.4 billion**—an increase of 1,606% since 1990, according to the [Selig Center for Economic Growth](#) at the University of Georgia.²⁵
- Nevada's 18,035 [Latino-owned](#) businesses had sales and receipts of **\$3.2 billion** and employed **21,922 people** in 2007, the last year for which data is available.²⁶ The state's

17,542 [Asian-owned](#) businesses had sales and receipts of \$3.8 billion and employed 23,862 people in 2007, according to the U.S. Census Bureau's Survey of Business Owners.²⁷

Immigrants are important to Nevada's economy as students.

- Nevada's 2,551 **foreign students contributed \$70 million** to the state's economy in tuition, fees, and living expenses for the 2011-2012 academic year, according to [NAFSA: Association of International Educators](#).²⁸

Naturalized citizens excel educationally.

- In Nevada, **24.7% of foreign-born persons** who were naturalized U.S. citizens in [2011](#) **had a bachelor's or higher degree**, compared to 12.2% of noncitizens. At the same time, only 23.5% of naturalized citizens lacked a high-school diploma, compared to 46.7% of noncitizens.²⁹
- The number of immigrants in Nevada with a college degree **increased by 140.9%** between 2000 and 2011, according to [data](#) from the Migration Policy Institute.³⁰
- In Nevada, **79.8% 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 Nevada was 90.6%**, while for **Latino children it was 81.3%**, as of [2009](#).³²

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).

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 U.S. Electoral College, [2008 Presidential Election: Popular Vote Totals](#).

¹⁷ [The Urban Institute](#), data from the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series datasets drawn from the 2005 - 2009 American Community Survey.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ 2011 American Community Survey (1-Year Estimates).

²⁰ Robert Ginsberg, Ph.D., [Vital Beyond Belief: The Demographic and Economic Facts about Hispanic Immigrants in Nevada](#) (Las Vegas, NV: Progressive Leadership Alliance of Nevada, 2007).

²¹ Ibid.

²² 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.

²³ The Immigration Policy Center, [Unauthorized Immigrants Pay Taxes, Too](#) (Washington, DC: April 2011).

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).

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- 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 NAESA: Association of International Educators, [*The Economic Benefits of International Students to the U.S. Economy: Academic Year 2011-2012*](#) (Washington, DC: 2012).
- ²⁹ Migration Policy Institute Data Hub, [Nevada: 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.