



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 47.4% of them are naturalized U.S. citizens who are eligible to vote. Immigrants and the children of immigrants account for just over 20.8% of all 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 over \$24.9 billion in consumer purchasing power, and the businesses they own had sales and receipts of \$7 billion and employed more than 45,000 people at last count. 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.

Nearly 1 in 5 Nevadans are immigrants.

- The foreign-born share of Nevada's population rose from 8.7% in [1990](#),¹ to 15.8% in [2000](#),² to 19% in [2013](#),³ according to the U.S. Census Bureau. Nevada was home to 529,164 immigrants in [2013](#),⁴ which greater than the total population of [Tucson, Arizona](#).⁵
- 47.4% of immigrants in Nevada (or 250,949 people) were naturalized U.S. citizens in [2013](#)—meaning that they are eligible to vote.⁶
- Unauthorized immigrants comprised 7.6% of the state's population (or 210,000 people) in [2012](#), according to a report by the Pew Hispanic Center.⁷
- 20.8% (or 244,551) 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 2012 Census Bureau data by the [American Immigration Council](#).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 27.5% (or 767,054 people) in [2013](#).¹¹ The Asian share of the population grew from 2.9% in [1990](#),¹² to 4.5% in [2000](#),¹³ to 7.7% (or 215,121 people) in [2013](#),¹⁴ according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

- Latinos comprised 14.9% (or 157,000) of Nevada voters in the 2012 elections, and Asians 6.4% (or 67,000), according to the [U.S. Census Bureau](#).¹⁵
- In Nevada, 86.8% of children with immigrant parents were U.S. citizens in [2009](#), according to data from the Urban Institute.¹⁶
- In [2009](#), 90.6% of children in Asian families in Nevada were U.S. citizens, as were 90.2% 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 Nevada's economy.

- The 2014 purchasing power of Nevada's Latinos totaled \$15.7 billion—an increase of 1,076% since 1990. Asian buying power totaled \$9.3 billion—an increase of 1,575% 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 \$19,800 in Clark County.¹⁹
- 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.²⁰ 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.²¹
- From 2006 to 2010, there were [20,000](#) new immigrant business owners in Nevada, and they had total net business income of \$1.1 billion, which makes up 16.8% of all net business income in the state, according to Robert Fairlie of the University of California, Santa Cruz.²²
- In 2010, [20.2% of all business owners](#) in Nevada were foreign-born, according to the Fiscal Policy Institute.²³ In 2013, [25.9% of business owners](#) in the Las Vegas-Paradise metropolitan area were foreign-born, according to the Fiscal Policy Institute and Americas Society/Council of the Americas.²⁴ Furthermore, 37.4% of "Main Street" business owners—owners of businesses in the retail, accommodation and food services, and neighborhood services sectors—in the Las Vegas-Paradise metro area were foreign-born in 2013.²⁵

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

- Immigrants comprised 24.4% of the state's workforce in [2013](#) (or 347,008 workers), according to the U.S. Census Bureau.²⁶

- Latinos in Nevada paid \$1.7 billion in federal taxes and \$627 million in state/local taxes in 2013, according to the [Partnership for a New American Economy](#). In particular, foreign-born Latinos paid \$914 million in federal taxes and \$358 million in state/local taxes.²⁷
 - The federal tax contribution of Illinois' Latino population included \$1.3 billion to Social Security and \$302 million to Medicare in 2013. Foreign-born Latinos contributed \$723 million to Social Security and \$169 million to Medicare that year.²⁸
- 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.²⁹

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

- Unauthorized immigrants comprised 10.2% of the state's workforce in [2012](#) (or 150,000 workers), according to a report by the Pew Hispanic Center.³⁰
- 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](#).³¹

Unauthorized immigrants pay taxes.

- Unauthorized immigrants in Nevada paid \$93.9 million in state and local taxes in [2012](#), according to data from the Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy, which includes \$71.9 million in sales taxes and \$22 million in property taxes.³²
- Were unauthorized immigrants in Nevada to have lawful permanent residence, they would pay almost \$103.3 million in state and local taxes, including \$79 million in sales taxes and \$24.2 million in property taxes.³³

Immigrants are important to Nevada's economy as students.

- Nevada's 2,336 foreign students contributed over \$60 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](#).³⁴
- Foreign students contribute to Nevada's metropolitan areas. From 2008 to 2012, according to the [Brookings Institution](#), 2,850 foreign students paid \$48 million in tuition and \$41 million in living costs in the Las Vegas-Paradise metropolitan area.³⁵
- Foreign students also contribute to innovation in Illinois. In 2009, "non-resident aliens" comprised 29.1%

of master's degrees and 44.4% of doctorate degrees in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields, according to the [Partnership for a New American Economy](#).³⁶

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.³⁷
- 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.³⁸
- In Nevada, 79.8% of children with immigrant parents were considered "English proficient" as of [2009](#), according to data from the Urban Institute.³⁹
- The English proficiency rate among Asian children in Nevada was 90.6%, while for Latino children it was 81.3%, as of [2009](#).⁴⁰

Endnotes

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29. Ibid.
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33. Ibid.
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