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NEW AMERICANS IN NEW YORK: The Political and Economic Power of Immigrants, Latinos, and Asians in the Empire State

Immigrants, Latinos and Asians account for large and growing shares of the economy and the electorate in New York. Immigrants (the foreign-born) account for more than 1 in 5 New Yorkers—and more than half of them are U.S. citizens eligible to vote. “New Americans”—immigrants and the children of immigrants—account for 17.5% of all registered voters in the state. Latinos and Asians (both foreign-born and native-born) account for one quarter of New Yorkers and wield \$148.5 billion in consumer purchasing power. At last count, the sales and receipts of businesses owned by Latinos and Asians totaled more than \$68.7 billion and employed more than 310,000 people. New York’s immigrants are responsible for \$229 billion in economic output. Not only is New York one of the most ethnically diverse states in the nation, but it is also a historic gateway for immigrants from virtually every part of the world. Immigrants, Latinos, and Asians are a political and economic powerhouse in New York.

Immigrants account for more than 1 in 5 New Yorkers.

- **The foreign-born share** of New York’s population rose from 15.9% in [1990](#),¹ to 20.4% in [2000](#),² to 22.2% in [2011](#),³ according to the U.S. Census Bureau. New York was home to 4,317,715 immigrants in [2011](#),⁴ which is more than the total population of [Los Angeles, California](#).⁵
- **51.8% of immigrants (or 2,236,307 people) in New York were naturalized U.S. citizens** in [2011](#)⁶—meaning that they are eligible to vote.
- Unauthorized immigrants comprised roughly **3.2% of the state’s population** (or 625,000 people) in [2010](#), according to a report by the Pew Hispanic Center.⁷
- **17.5% (or 1,480,072) of all registered voters** in New York 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

Latinos and Asians comprise a powerful share of the New York electorate.

- The **Latino share of New York’s population** grew from 12.3% in [1990](#),⁹ to 15.1% in [2000](#),¹⁰ to 18% (or 3,496,401 people) in [2011](#).¹¹ The **Asian share of the population** grew from 3.8% in [1990](#),¹² to 5.5% in [2000](#),¹³ to 7.4% (or 1,447,760 people) in [2011](#),¹⁴ according to the U.S. Census Bureau.
- **Latinos comprised 9.8% (or 743,000) of New York voters** in the 2008 elections, and **Asians 3.3% (or 248,000)**, according to the [U.S. Census Bureau](#).¹⁵

- In New York, **89.7% of children with immigrant parents were U.S. citizens** in [2009](#), according to data from the Urban Institute.¹⁶
- In [2009](#), **87.3% of children in Asian families** in New York were U.S. citizens, as were **93.6% of children in Latino families**.¹⁷

Immigrants are essential to New York's economy as workers and consumers.

- Immigrants comprised **27.3% of the state's workforce** in [2011](#) (or 2,712,129 workers), according to the U.S. Census Bureau.¹⁸
- "New York's immigrants are responsible for **\$229 billion in economic output** in New York State," or 22.4% of the total New York State GDP as of [2006](#), according to a study by the Fiscal Policy Institute.¹⁹
- Immigrants accounted for **28% of total economic output in the New York metropolitan area** as of [2007](#), according to another study by the Fiscal Policy Institute.²⁰
- If all unauthorized immigrants were removed from New York in 2008, **the state would lose \$28.7 billion in economic activity, \$12.7 billion in gross state product, and approximately 137,013 jobs**, even accounting for adequate market adjustment time, according to a report by the [Perryman Group](#).²¹

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

- **The 2012 purchasing power of New York's Latinos totaled \$85.2 billion**—an increase of 258.6% since 1990. **Asian buying power totaled \$63.3 billion**—an increase of 417.3% since 1990, according to the [Selig Center for Economic Growth](#) at the University of Georgia.²²
- New York's 196,825 **Asian-owned** businesses had sales and receipts of **\$50.5 billion and employed 224,576 people** in 2007,²³ the last year for which data is available. The state's 193,183 **Latino-owned** businesses had sales and receipts of **\$18.2 billion and employed 86,329 people** in 2007,²⁴ according to the U.S. Census Bureau's Survey of Business Owners.

Unauthorized immigrants pay taxes.

- Unauthorized immigrants in New York paid **\$662.4 million** in state and local taxes in [2010](#), according to data from the Institute for Taxation and Economic Policy,²⁵ which includes:
 - \$104.4 million in state income taxes.
 - \$94.9 million in property taxes.
 - \$463.1 million in sales taxes.

Immigrants are integral to New York's economy as students.

- New York's 82,391 **foreign students contributed \$2.6 billion** to the state's economy in tuition, fees, and living expenses for the 2011-2012 academic year, according to [NAFSA: Association of International Educators](#).²⁶

Naturalized citizens excel educationally.

- In New York, **32.7% of foreign-born persons** who were naturalized U.S. citizens in [2011](#) had a bachelor's or higher degree, compared to 24.4% of noncitizens.
- The number of immigrants in New York with a college degree **increased by 41.9% between 2000 and 2011**, according to [data](#) from the Migration Policy Institute.²⁷
- In New York, **85.7% of children with immigrant parents** were considered "English proficient" as of [2009](#), according to data from the Urban Institute.²⁸
- The English proficiency rate among **Asian children in New York was 80.9%**, while for **Latino children it was 85.4%**, as of [2009](#).²⁹

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

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ 2011 American Community Survey (1-Year Estimates).

¹⁹ Fiscal Policy Institute, [Working for a Better Life: A Profile of Immigrants in the New York State Economy](#) (New York, NY: November 2007)

²⁰ 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.

²¹ 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).

²² Jeffrey M. Humphreys, [The Multicultural Economy 2012](#) (Athens, GA: Selig Center for Economic Growth, University of Georgia, 2012).

²³ U.S. Census Bureau, [Estimates of Business Ownership by Gender, Ethnicity, Race, and Veteran Status: 2007](#), June 2011.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ The Immigration Policy Center, [Unauthorized Immigrants Pay Taxes, Too](#) (Washington, DC: April 2011).

²⁶ NAFSA: Association of International Educators, [The Economic Benefits of International Students to the U.S. Economy: Academic Year 2011-2012](#) (Washington, DC: 2012).

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ [The Urban Institute](#), data from the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series datasets drawn from the 2005 - 2009 American Community Survey.

²⁹ Ibid.