

May 2013

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

Immigrants, Latinos, and Asians account for growing shares of the economy and electorate in Oregon. Immigrants (the foreign-born) make up 1 in 10 Oregonians, and more than one-third of them are naturalized U.S. citizens who are eligible to vote. “New Americans”—immigrants and the children of immigrants—account for 5.8% of 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 \$14.5 billion in consumer purchasing power, and the businesses they own had sales and receipts of \$4.9 billion and employed more than 40,000 people at last count. At a time when the economy is still recovering, Oregon can ill-afford to alienate such a critical component of its labor force, tax base, and business community.

Immigrants and their children are growing shares of Oregon’s population and electorate.

- **The foreign-born share** of Oregon’s population rose from 4.9% in [1990](#),¹ to 8.5% in [2000](#),² to 9.8% in [2011](#),³ according to the U.S. Census Bureau. Oregon was home to 377,613 immigrants in [2011](#),⁴ which is nearly the total population of [Wichita, Kansas](#).⁵
- **38% of immigrants (or 143,433 people) in Oregon were naturalized U.S. citizens in [2011](#)**⁶—meaning that they are eligible to vote.
- Unauthorized immigrants comprised roughly **4.3% of the state’s population** (or 160,000 people) in [2010](#), according to a report by the Pew Hispanic Center.⁷
- **5.8% (or 113,715) of registered voters** in Oregon 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 2008 Census Bureau data by [Rob Paral & Associates](#).⁸

Nearly 1 in 6 Oregonians are Latino or Asian.

- The **Latino share of Oregon’s population** grew from 4.0% in [1990](#),⁹ to 8.0% in [2000](#),¹⁰ to 12% (or 466,071 people) in [2011](#).¹¹ The **Asian share of the population** grew from 2.3% in [1990](#),¹² to 3.0% in [2000](#),¹³ to 3.9% (or 152,909 people) in [2011](#),¹⁴ according to the U.S. Census Bureau.
- **Latinos accounted for 2.1% (or 39,000) of Oregon voters** in the 2008 elections, and **Asians 1.8% (33,000)** according to the [U.S. Census Bureau](#).¹⁵

- In Oregon, **87.1% of children with immigrant parents were U.S. citizens** in [2009](#), according to data from the Urban Institute.¹⁶
- In [2009](#), **92.9% of children in Asian families** in Oregon were U.S. citizens, as were **91.3% of children in Latino families**.¹⁷

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

- **The 2012 purchasing power of Latinos in Oregon totaled \$8.4 billion**—an increase of 821% since 1990. **Asian buying power totaled \$6.1 billion**—an increase of 574% since 1990, according to the [Selig Center for Economic Growth](#) at the University of Georgia.¹⁸
- Oregon's 11,338 **Latino-owned** businesses had sales and receipts of **\$1.7 billion and employed 13,916 people** in 2007, the last year for which data is available.¹⁹ The state's 12,647 **Asian-owned** businesses had sales and receipts of **\$3.2 billion and employed 26,779 people** in 2007, according to the U.S. Census Bureau's Survey of Business Owners.²⁰

Immigrants are essential to Oregon's economy as workers.

- Immigrants comprised **12.4% of the state's workforce** in [2011](#) (or 241,614 workers), according to the U.S. Census Bureau.²¹

Unauthorized immigrants are integral to Oregon's economy as workers and taxpayers.

- Immigrants accounted for **12% of total economic output** in the Portland metropolitan area as of 2007, according to a study by the [Fiscal Policy Institute](#).²²
- Unauthorized immigrants comprised roughly **5.3% of the state's workforce** (or 110,000 workers) in [2010](#), according to a report by the Pew Hispanic Center.²³
- Unauthorized immigrants in Oregon paid **\$99.1 million** in state and local taxes in [2010](#), according to data from the Institute for Taxation and Economic Policy,²⁴ which includes:
 - \$54.4 million in state income taxes.
 - \$19.8 million in property taxes.
 - \$24.9 million in sales taxes.
- Oregon employers paid **between \$97 million and \$136 million** in taxes on behalf of unauthorized workers in [2005](#),²⁵ including:
 - \$56 million to \$79 million in Social Security taxes.
 - \$13 million to \$18 million in Medicare taxes.
 - \$28 million to \$39 million in state unemployment insurance taxes.

- If all unauthorized immigrants were removed from Oregon, **the state would lose \$3.4 billion in economic activity, \$1.5 billion in gross state product, and approximately 19,259 jobs**, even accounting for adequate market adjustment time, according to a report by the [Perryman Group](#).²⁶

Immigrants are integral to Oregon's economy as students.

- Oregon's 9,896 **foreign students contributed \$304.9 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](#).²⁷

Naturalized citizens excel educationally.

- In Oregon, **34.9% of foreign-born persons** who were naturalized U.S. citizens in [2011](#) **had a bachelor's or higher degree**, compared to 18% of noncitizens. At the same time, only 17.2% of naturalized citizens lacked a high-school diploma, compared to 44.5% of noncitizens.²⁸
- The number of immigrants in Oregon with a college degree **increased by 61.4%** between 2000 and 2011, according to [data](#) from the Migration Policy Institute.²⁹
- In Oregon, **79.8% of children with immigrant parents** were considered "English proficient" as of [2009](#), according to data from the Urban Institute.³⁰
- The English proficiency rate among **Asian children in Oregon was 90.4%**, while for **Latino children it was 80.8%**, as of [2009](#).³¹

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 U.S. Census Bureau, [2008 Annual Estimates of the Resident Population for Counties](#), May 13, 2009.

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

¹⁶ [The Urban Institute](#), data from the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series datasets drawn from the 2005 - 2009 American Community Survey.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Jeffrey M. Humphreys, [The Multicultural Economy 2012](#) (Athens, GA: Selig Center for Economic Growth, University of Georgia, 2012).

¹⁹ U.S. Census Bureau, [Estimates of Business Ownership by Gender, Ethnicity, Race, and Veteran Status: 2007](#), June 2011.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ 2011 American Community Survey (1-Year Estimates).

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- ²² 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.
- ²³ 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.
- ²⁴ The Immigration Policy Center, [*Unauthorized Immigrants Pay Taxes, Too*](#) (Washington, DC: April 2011).
- ²⁵ Ibid.
- ²⁶ 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.
- ²⁷ NAFSA: Association of International Educators, [*The Economic Benefits of International Education to the United States for the 2011-2012 Academic Year: A Statistical Analysis*](#) (Washington, DC: NAFSA: Association of International Educators, 2012).
- ²⁸ Migration Policy Institute Data Hub, [*Oregon: Language & Education*](#).
- ²⁹ Ibid.
- ³⁰ [*The Urban Institute*](#), data from the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series datasets drawn from the 2005 - 2009 American Community Survey.
- ³¹ Ibid.