



## 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 7.6% of 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 \$15.6 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. Immigrant, Latino, and Asian workers, consumers, and entrepreneurs are integral to Oregon’s economy and tax base—and they are an electoral force with which every politician must reckon.

### 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](#),<sup>1</sup> to 8.5% in [2000](#),<sup>2</sup> to 10% in [2013](#),<sup>3</sup> according to the U.S. Census Bureau. Oregon was home to 391,206 immigrants in [2013](#),<sup>4</sup> which is nearly the total population of [Wichita, Kansas](#).<sup>5</sup>
- 39.7% of immigrants (or 155,415 people) in Oregon were naturalized U.S. citizens in [2013](#)<sup>6</sup>—meaning that they are eligible to vote.
- Unauthorized immigrants comprised roughly 3.1% of the state’s population (or 120,000 people) in [2012](#), according to a report by the Pew Hispanic Center.<sup>7</sup>
- 7.6% (or 158,800) 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 2012 Census Bureau data by the [American Immigration Council](#).<sup>8</sup>

### 1 in 6 Oregonians are Latino or Asian.

- The Latino share of Oregon’s population grew from 4.0% in [1990](#),<sup>9</sup> to 8.0% in [2000](#),<sup>10</sup> to 12.3% (or 483,761 people) in [2013](#).<sup>11</sup> The Asian share of the population grew from 2.3% in [1990](#),<sup>12</sup> to 3.0% in [2000](#),<sup>13</sup> to 3.9% (or 152,271 people) in [2013](#),<sup>14</sup> according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

- Latinos comprised 3.2% (or 60,000) of Oregon voters in the 2012 elections, and Asians 1.2% (or 23,000), according to the [U.S. Census Bureau](#).<sup>15</sup>
- In Oregon, 87.1% of children with immigrant parents were U.S. citizens in [2009](#), according to data from the Urban Institute.<sup>16</sup>
- In [2009](#), 92.9% of children in Asian families in Oregon were U.S. citizens, as were 91.3% of children in Latino families.<sup>17</sup>

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

- The 2014 purchasing power of Latinos in Oregon totaled nearly \$9.2 billion—an increase of 900% since 1990. Asian buying power totaled \$6.4 billion—an increase of 615% since 1990, according to the [Selig Center for Economic Growth](#) at the University of Georgia.<sup>18</sup>
- 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 \$1,605 in Multnomah County and \$2,688 in Washington County.<sup>19</sup>
- 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.<sup>20</sup> 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.<sup>21</sup>
- From 2006 to 2010, there were [22,216](#) new immigrant business owners in Oregon, and they had total net business income of \$1.1 billion, which makes up 9.8% of all net business income in the state, according to Robert Fairlie of the University of California, Santa Cruz.<sup>22</sup>
- In 2010, [9.2% of all business owners](#) in Oregon were foreign-born, according to the Fiscal Policy Institute.<sup>23</sup> In 2013, [14.4% of business owners](#) in the Portland-Vancouver-Hillsboro metropolitan area were foreign-born, according to the Fiscal Policy Institute and Americas Society/Council of the Americas.<sup>24</sup> Furthermore, 27.5% of "Main Street" business owners—owners of businesses in the retail, accommodation and food services, and neighborhood services sectors—in the Portland-Vancouver-Hillsboro metro area were foreign-born in 2013.<sup>25</sup>

### **Immigrants are essential to Oregon's economy as workers and taxpayers.**

- Immigrants comprised 13.3% of the state's workforce in [2013](#) (or 261,352 workers), according to the U.S. Census Bureau.<sup>26</sup>
- 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](#).<sup>27</sup>

- Latinos in Oregon paid \$966 million in federal taxes and \$468 million in state/local taxes in 2013, according to the [Partnership for a New American Economy](#). In particular, foreign-born Latinos paid \$471 million in federal taxes and \$251 million in state/local taxes.<sup>28</sup>
- The federal tax contribution of Oregon's Latino population included \$762 million to Social Security and \$178 million to Medicare in 2013. Foreign-born Latinos contributed \$406 million to Social Security and \$95 million to Medicare that year.<sup>29</sup>

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

- Unauthorized immigrants comprised roughly 4.6% of the state's workforce (or 90,000 workers) in [2012](#), according to a report by the Pew Hispanic Center.<sup>30</sup>
- Unauthorized immigrants in Oregon paid \$83.1 million in state and local taxes in [2012](#), according to data from the Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy, which includes \$15.6 million in excise taxes, \$30 million in personal income taxes, and \$37.6 million in property taxes.<sup>31</sup>
- Were unauthorized immigrants in Oregon to have lawful permanent residence, they would pay \$122 million in state and local taxes, including \$17.2 million in excise taxes, \$63.5 million in personal income taxes, and \$41.3 million in property taxes.<sup>32</sup>
- 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](#).<sup>33</sup>

### **Immigrants are integral to Oregon's economy as students.**

- Oregon's 13,360 foreign students contributed \$439.1 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](#).<sup>34</sup>
- Foreign students contribute to Illinois' metropolitan areas. From 2008 to 2012, according to the [Brookings Institution](#), 4,930 foreign students paid \$99 million in tuition and \$57 million in living costs in the Portland-Vancouver-Hillsboro metropolitan area. In the Eugene-Springfield metro area, 4,637 foreign students paid \$110 million in tuition and \$62 million in living costs. In the Corvallis metro area, 2,731 foreign students paid \$55 million in tuition and \$23 million in living costs.<sup>35</sup>
- Foreign students also contribute to innovation in Oregon. In 2009, "non-resident aliens" comprised 33.8% of master's degrees and 30.4% of doctorate degrees in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields, according to the [Partnership for a New American Economy](#).<sup>36</sup>

## 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.<sup>37</sup>
- 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.<sup>38</sup>
- In Oregon, 79.8% of children with immigrant parents were considered “English proficient” as of [2009](#), according to data from the Urban Institute.<sup>39</sup>
- The English proficiency rate among Asian children in Oregon was 90.4%, while for Latino children it was 80.8%, as of [2009](#).<sup>40</sup>

## Endnotes

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4. Ibid.
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6. Ibid.
7. 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. 30.
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10. Ibid.
11. 2013 American Community Survey (1-Year Estimates).
12. U.S. Census Bureau, [The Asian Population: 2000](#), February 2002.
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15. 2012 Current Population Survey, [Table 4b. Reported Voting and Registration, by Sex, Race and Hispanic Origin, for States: November 2012](#).
16. [The Urban Institute](#), data from the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series datasets drawn from the 2005 - 2009 American Community Survey.
17. Ibid.
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19. Jacob Vigdor, [Immigration and the Revival of American Cities: From Preserving Manufacturing Jobs to Strengthening the Housing Market](#) (New York, NY: Americas Society/Council of the Americas, 2013).
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25. Ibid.
26. 2013 American Community Survey (1-Year Estimates).
27. 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.
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31. Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy, [\*Undocumented Immigrants' State and Local Tax Contributions\*](#) (Washington, DC: April 2015).
32. Ibid.
33. 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.
34. NAFSA: Association of International Educators, [\*The Economic Benefits of International Education to the United States for the 2013-2014 Academic Year: A Statistical Analysis\*](#) (Washington, DC: NAFSA: Association of International Educators, 2014).
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