



New Americans in Vermont: The Political and Economic Power of Immigrants, Latinos, and Asians in the Green Mountain State

Immigrants, Latinos, and Asians account for growing shares of the economy and population in Vermont. Immigrants (the foreign-born) make up 4.2% of the state's population, and well over half of them are naturalized U.S. citizens who are eligible to vote. "New Americans"—immigrants and the children of immigrants—account for 5.7% of registered voters in the state. Immigrants are not only important to the state's economy as workers, but also account for millions of dollars in tax revenue and consumer purchasing power. Moreover, Latinos and Asians (both foreign-born and native-born) wield \$627 million in consumer purchasing power, and the businesses they own had sales and receipts of more than \$450 million and employed more than 2,400 people at last count. Immigrant, Latino, and Asian workers, consumers, and entrepreneurs are integral to Vermont'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 Vermont's population and electorate.

- The foreign-born share of Vermont's population rose from 3.1% in [1990](#)¹ to 4.2% in [2013](#),² according to the U.S. Census Bureau. Vermont was home to 26,156 immigrants in [2013](#).
- 59.5% of immigrants (or 15,556 people) in Vermont were naturalized U.S. citizens in [2013](#)³—meaning that they are eligible to vote.
- 5.7% (or 20,403) of registered voters in Vermont 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](#).⁴
- Unauthorized immigrants comprised 0.4% of the state's population (or fewer than 5,000 people) in [2012](#), according to a report by the Pew Hispanic Center.⁵

Roughly 2.7% of Vermonters are Latino or Asian.

- The Latino share of Vermont's population grew from 0.7% in [1990](#),⁶ to 0.9% in [2000](#),⁷ to 1.5% (or 9,546 people) in [2013](#).⁸ The Asian share of the population grew from 0.6% in [1990](#),⁹ to 0.9% in [2000](#),¹⁰ to 1.2% (or 7,640 people) in [2013](#),¹¹ according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

- In Vermont, 87.8% of children with immigrant parents were U.S. citizens in [2009](#), according to data from the Urban Institute.¹²

Immigrant, Latino, and Asian entrepreneurs and consumers add millions of dollars and hundreds of jobs to Vermont's economy.

- The 2014 purchasing power of Latinos totaled \$349 million—an increase of 659% since 1990. Asian buying power totaled \$278 million—an increase of 694% since 1990, according to the [Selig Center for Economic Growth](#) at the University of Georgia.¹³
- Vermont's 649 [Asian-owned](#) businesses had sales and receipts of \$265.5 million and employed 2,084 people in 2007, the last year for which data is available.¹⁴ The state's 470 [Latino-owned](#) businesses had sales and receipts of \$184.9 million and employed 323 people in 2007, according to the U.S. Census Bureau's Survey of Business Owners.¹⁵
- From 2006 to 2010, there were [1,700](#) new immigrant business owners in Vermont who had total net business income of \$84 million (3.8% of all net business income in the state), according to Robert Fairlie of the University of California, Santa Cruz.¹⁶
- In 2010, [4.2% of all business owners](#) in Vermont were foreign-born, according to the Fiscal Policy Institute.¹⁷

Immigrants are important to Vermont's economy as workers and taxpayers.

- Immigrants comprised 4.4% of the state's workforce in [2013](#) (or 15,426 workers), according to the U.S. Census Bureau.¹⁸
- Latinos in Vermont paid \$49.9 million in federal taxes and \$20.7 million in state/local taxes in 2013, according to the [Partnership for a New American Economy](#). In particular, foreign-born Latinos paid \$31.1 million in federal taxes and \$11.8 million in state/local taxes.¹⁹
 - The federal tax contribution of Vermont's Latino population included \$29.4 million to Social Security and \$6.9 million to Medicare in 2013. Foreign-born Latinos contributed \$16.9 million to Social Security and \$3.9 million to Medicare that year.²⁰
- More than half of the milk produced in the state comes from the roughly 2,000 Hispanic migrant farm workers living and working in Vermont, according to a [survey](#) by the Vermont Farm Bureau.²¹
- Unauthorized immigrants comprised less than 0.5% of the state's workforce (or fewer than 5,000 workers) in [2012](#), according to a report by the Pew Hispanic Center.²²

- If all unauthorized immigrants were removed from Vermont, the state would lose \$249.4 million in economic activity, \$110.8 million in gross state product, and approximately 1,800 jobs, even accounting for adequate market adjustment time, according to a report by the [Perryman Group](#).²³

Unauthorized immigrants pay taxes.

- Unauthorized immigrants in Vermont paid \$5.8 million in state and local taxes in [2012](#), including \$2.9 million in sales taxes, \$633,000 in personal income taxes, and \$2.2 million in property taxes, according to data from the Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy.²⁴
- Were unauthorized immigrants in Vermont to have lawful permanent residence, they would pay \$6.7 million in state and local taxes, including \$3.2 million in sales taxes, \$1 million in personal income taxes, and \$2.4 million in property taxes.²⁵

Immigrants are important to Vermont's economy as students.

- Vermont's 1,241 foreign students contributed \$48.2 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](#).²⁶
- Foreign students also contribute to innovation in Vermont. In 2009, "non-resident aliens" comprised 5.8% of master's degrees and 26.7% of doctorate degrees in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields, according to the [Partnership for a New American Economy](#).²⁷

Immigrants excel educationally.

- 38.8% of Vermont's foreign-born population age 25 and older had a bachelor's or higher degree in [2011](#), compared to 35.2% of native-born persons age 25 and older.²⁸
- In Vermont, 95.8% of children with immigrant parents were considered "English proficient" as of [2009](#), according to data from the Urban Institute.²⁹

Endnotes

1. U.S. Census Bureau, *The Foreign-Born Population: 2000*, December 2003.
2. 2013 American Community Survey (3-Year Estimates).
3. Ibid.
4. Walter A. Ewing and Guillermo Cantor, *New Americans in the Voting Booth: The Growing Electoral Power of Immigrant Communities* (Washington, DC: American Immigration Council, October 2014), p. 25.
5. 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.
6. U.S. Census Bureau, *The Hispanic Population: 2000*, May 2001.
7. Ibid.
8. 2013 American Community Survey (1-Year Estimates).
9. U.S. Census Bureau, *The Asian Population: 2000*, February 2002.
10. Ibid.
11. 2013 American Community Survey (1-Year Estimates).
12. [The Urban Institute](#), data from the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series datasets drawn from the 2005 - 2009 American Community Survey.
13. Jeffrey M. Humphreys, *The Multicultural Economy 2014* (Athens, GA: Selig Center for Economic Growth, University of Georgia, 2014), pp. 22, 24.
14. U.S. Census Bureau, *Estimates of Business Ownership by Gender, Ethnicity, Race, and Veteran Status: 2007*, June 2011.
15. Ibid.
16. Robert W. Fairlie, *Open for Business: How Immigrants are Driving Small Business Creation in the United States* (New York, NY: Partnership for a New American Economy, 2012), p. 32.
17. David Dyssegaard Kallick, *Immigrant Small Business Owners: A Significant and Growing Part of the Economy* (New York, NY: Fiscal Policy Institute, 2012), p. 24.
18. 2013 American Community Survey (3-Year Estimates).
19. Partnership for a New American Economy, *The Power of the Purse: The Contributions of Hispanics to America's Spending Power and Tax Revenues in 2013* (New York, NY: Partnership for a New American Economy, 2014).
20. Ibid.
21. Chris Urban and Sky Barsch, "[Helping Hands: Migrant labor provides essential help for dairy farms](#)," Vermont Life Magazine, Summer 2008.
22. 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.
23. 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.
24. Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy, *Undocumented Immigrants' State and Local Tax Contributions* (Washington, DC: April 2015).
25. Ibid.
26. NAFSA: Association of International Educators, *The Economic Benefits of International Students to the U.S. Economy: Academic Year 2013-2014* (Washington, DC: 2014).
27. Partnership for a New American Economy, *Help Wanted: The Role of Foreign Workers in the Innovation Economy* (New York, NY: 2013), p. 21.
28. Migration Policy Institute Data Hub, [Vermont: Language & Education](#).
29. [The Urban Institute](#), data from the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series datasets drawn from the 2005 - 2009 American Community Survey.