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

Immigrants, Latinos, and Asians account for growing shares of the economy and electorate in Washington. Immigrants (the foreign-born) make up 1 in 8 Washingtonians, and 45.9% of them are naturalized U.S. citizens who are eligible to vote. “New Americans”—immigrants and the children of immigrants—account for 9.4% 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 \$42.2 billion in consumer purchasing power, and the businesses they own had sales and receipts of \$22 billion and employed more than 94,000 people at last count. At a time when the economy is still recovering, Washington 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 Washington’s population and electorate.

- **The foreign-born share** of Washington’s population rose from 6.6% in [1990](#),¹ to 10.4% in [2000](#),² to 13.3% in [2011](#),³ according to the U.S. Census Bureau. Washington was home to 909,312 immigrants in [2011](#),⁴ which is more than the total population of Jacksonville, Florida.⁵
- **45.9% of immigrants (or 417,019 people) in Washington were naturalized U.S. citizens in [2011](#)**⁶—meaning that they are eligible to vote.
- Unauthorized immigrants comprised roughly **3.4% of the state’s population** (or 230,000 people) in [2010](#), according to a report by the Pew Hispanic Center.⁷
- **9.4% (or 310,067) of registered voters** in Washington 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 5 Washingtonians are Latino or Asian—and they vote.

- The **Latino share of Washington’s population** grew from 4.4% in [1990](#),⁹ to 7.5% in [2000](#),¹⁰ to 11.6% (or 789,060 people) in [2011](#).¹¹ The **Asian share of the population** grew from 4.0% in [1990](#),¹² to 5.5% in [2000](#),¹³ to 7.3% (or 501,712 people) in [2011](#),¹⁴ according to the U.S. Census Bureau.
- **Latinos accounted for 4.8% (or 148,000) of Washington voters** in the 2008 elections, and **Asians 4.3% (132,000)**, according to the [U.S. Census Bureau](#).¹⁵

- In Washington, **86.5% of children with immigrant parents** were U.S. citizens in [2009](#), according to data from the Urban Institute.¹⁶
- In [2009](#), **89.8% of children in Asian families** in Washington were U.S. citizens, as were **92% of children in Latino families**.¹⁷

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

- **The 2012 purchasing power of Asians in Washington totaled \$24.7 billion**—an increase of 734% since 1990. **Latino buying power totaled \$17.5 billion**—an increase of 764% since 1990, according to the [Selig Center for Economic Growth](#) at the University of Georgia.¹⁸
- Washington's 37,373 **Asian-owned** businesses had sales and receipts of **\$12.3 billion and employed 71,421 people** in 2007, the last year for which data is available.¹⁹ The state's 17,795 **Latino-owned** businesses had sales and receipts of **\$9.7 billion and employed 23,051 people** in 2007, according to the U.S. Census Bureau's Survey of Business Owners.²⁰

Immigrants are integral to Washington's economy as workers and taxpayers.

- Immigrants comprised **16.2% of the state's workforce** in [2011](#) (or 572,207 workers), according to the U.S. Census Bureau.²¹
- Immigrants contributed **\$1.5 billion in tax revenue** to the Washington state economy in [2007](#), accounting for 13.2% of all taxes paid in the state, according to a 2009 study by OneAmerica.²²
- Immigrants accounted for **16% of total economic output** in the Seattle metropolitan area as of [2007](#), according to a study by the Fiscal Policy Institute.²³
- Unauthorized immigrants comprised roughly **5.1% of the state's workforce** (or 190,000 workers) in [2010](#), according to a report by the Pew Hispanic Center.²⁴
- If all unauthorized immigrants were removed from Washington, **the state would lose \$14.5 billion in economic activity, \$6.4 billion in gross state product, and approximately 71,197 jobs**, even accounting for adequate market adjustment time, according to a report by the [Perryman Group](#).²⁵

Unauthorized immigrants pay taxes.

- Unauthorized immigrants in Washington paid **\$327.7 million** in state and local taxes in [2010](#), according to data from the Institute for Taxation and Economic Policy,²⁶ which includes:
 - \$22.7 million in property taxes.
 - \$305 million in sales taxes.

Immigrants are integral to Washington's economy as students.

- Washington's 20,198 **foreign students contributed \$533.8 million** to the state's economy in tuition, fees, and living expenses for the 2011-2012 academic year, according to the [NAFSA: Association of International Educators](#) (NAFSA).²⁷

Naturalized citizens excel educationally.

- In Washington, **33.4% of foreign-born persons** who were naturalized U.S. citizens in [2011](#) **had a bachelor's or higher degree**, compared to 26.3% of noncitizens. At the same time, only 18.2% of naturalized citizens lacked a high-school diploma, compared to 35.6% of noncitizens.²⁸
- The number of immigrants in Washington with a college degree **increased by 78.3%** between 2000 and 2011, according to [data](#) from the Migration Policy Institute.²⁹
- In Washington, **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 Washington was 87.9%**, while for **Latino children it was 79.2%**, 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).

²² Pramila Jayapal and Sarah Curry, [Building Washington's Future: Immigrant Workers' Contributions to Our State Economy](#) (Seattle, WA: OneAmerica, April 2009), p. 29.

²³ 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.

²⁴ 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.

²⁵ 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.

²⁶ The Immigration Policy Center, [Unauthorized Immigrants Pay Taxes, Too](#) (Washington, DC: April 2011).

²⁷ NAFSA: Association of International Educators, [*The Economic Benefits of International Students to the U.S. Economy: Academic Year 2011-2012*](#) (Washington, DC: 2012).

²⁸ Migration Policy Institute Data Hub, [Washington: 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.