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**NEW AMERICANS IN WYOMING:
The Economic Power of Immigrants, Latinos, and Asians in the Equality State**

Immigrants, Latinos, and Asians account for growing shares of Wyoming's population and economy. Immigrants (the foreign-born) make up 3.2% of the state's population, and roughly one-third of them are naturalized U.S. citizens who are eligible to vote. Immigrants not only contribute 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 \$2 billion in consumer purchasing power, and the businesses they own had sales and receipts of \$319.5 million and employed nearly 4,000 people at last count. At a time when the economy is still recovering, Wyoming would be ill-advised to alienate a significant component of its tax base and business community.

Immigrants and their children are growing shares of Wyoming's population.

- **The foreign-born share** of Wyoming's population rose from 1.7% in [1990](#)¹ to 3.2% in [2011](#),² according to the U.S. Census Bureau. Wyoming was home to 18,390 immigrants in [2011](#).³
- **32.5% of immigrants (or 5,973 people) in Wyoming were naturalized U.S. citizens in [2011](#)**⁴—meaning that they are eligible to vote.
- Unauthorized immigrants comprised less than **1.5% of the state's population** (or fewer than 10,000 people) in [2010](#), according to a report by the Pew Hispanic Center.⁵
- **1.8% (or 4,854) of registered voters** in Wyoming 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](#).⁶

Roughly 1 in 10 Wyomans are Latino or Asian.

- The **Latino share of Wyoming's population** grew from 5.7% in [1990](#),⁷ to 6.4% in [2000](#),⁸ to 9.1% (or 51,758 people) in [2011](#).⁹ The **Asian share of the population** grew 0.6% in [1990](#)¹⁰ to 0.9% (or 4,833 people) in [2011](#),¹¹ according to the U.S. Census Bureau.
- **Latinos accounted for 2.8% (or 7,000) of Wyoming voters** in the 2008 elections, according to the [U.S. Census Bureau](#).¹²
- In Wyoming, **89.7% of children with immigrant parents** were U.S. citizens in [2009](#), according to data from the Urban Institute.¹³

- In [2009](#), **96.2% of children in Latino families** in Wyoming were U.S. citizens.¹⁴

Latino and Asian entrepreneurs and consumers add hundreds of millions of dollars and thousands of jobs to Wyoming's economy.

- **The 2012 purchasing power of Latinos in Wyoming totaled \$1.6 billion**—an increase of 507.2% since 1990. **Asian buying power totaled \$365 million**—an increase of 1,158.6% since 1990, according to the [Selig Center for Economic Growth](#) at the University of Georgia.¹⁵
- Wyoming's 1,728 **Latino-owned businesses had sales and receipts of \$192.3 million and employed 2,227 people** in 2007, the last year for which data is available.¹⁶ The state's 398 **Asian-owned businesses had sales and receipts of \$127.2 million and employed 1,623 people** in 2007, according to the U.S. Census Bureau's Survey of Business Owners.¹⁷

Immigrants contribute to Wyoming's economy as workers.

- Immigrants comprised **3.6% of the state's workforce** in [2011](#) (or 10,984 workers), according to the U.S. Census Bureau.¹⁸

Unauthorized immigrants are important to Wyoming's economy as workers and consumers.

- Unauthorized immigrants comprised less than **1.5% of the state's workforce** (or fewer than 10,000 workers) in [2010](#), according to a report by the Pew Hispanic Center.¹⁹
- If all unauthorized immigrants were removed from Wyoming, **the state would lose \$194.3 million in economic activity, \$86.3 million in gross state product, and approximately 1,260 jobs**, even accounting for adequate market adjustment time, according to a report by the [Perryman Group](#).²⁰

Immigrants are important to Wyoming's economy as students.

- Wyoming's 1,072 **foreign students contributed \$20.3 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](#).²¹

Naturalized citizens advance educationally.

- In Wyoming, **25.7% of foreign-born persons** who were naturalized U.S. citizens in [2011](#) **had a bachelor's or higher degree**, compared 22.1% of noncitizens. At the same time, 17.7% of naturalized citizens lacked a high-school diploma, compared to 37% of noncitizens.²²
- The number of immigrants in Wyoming with a college degree **increased by 100.7%** between 2000 and 2011.²³
- In Wyoming, **88.1% of children with immigrant parents** were considered "English proficient" as of [2009](#), according to data from the Urban Institute.²⁴
- The English proficiency rate among **Latino children in Wyoming was 96.2%** as of [2009](#).²⁵

Endnotes

- ¹ U.S. Census Bureau, [*The Foreign-Born Population: 2000*](#), December 2003.
- ² 2011 American Community Survey (1-Year Estimates).
- ³ Ibid.
- ⁴ Ibid.
- ⁵ 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.
- ⁶ 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).
- ⁷ U.S. Census Bureau, [*The Hispanic Population: 2000*](#), May 2001.
- ⁸ Ibid.
- ⁹ 2011 American Community Survey (1-Year Estimates).
- ¹⁰ U.S. Census Bureau, [*The Asian Population: 2000*](#), February 2002.
- ¹¹ 2011 American Community Survey (1-Year Estimates).
- ¹² U.S. Electoral College, [*2008 Presidential Election: Popular Vote Totals*](#).
- ¹³ [The Urban Institute](#), data from the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series datasets drawn from the 2005 - 2009 American Community Survey.
- ¹⁴ Ibid.
- ¹⁵ Jeffrey M. Humphreys, [*The Multicultural Economy 2012*](#) (Athens, GA: Selig Center for Economic Growth, University of Georgia, 2012).
- ¹⁶ U.S. Census Bureau, [*Estimates of Business Ownership by Gender, Ethnicity, Race, and Veteran Status: 2007*](#), June 2011.
- ¹⁷ Ibid.
- ¹⁸ 2011 American Community Survey (5-Year Estimates).
- ¹⁹ 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.
- ²⁰ 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.
- ²¹ NAFSA: Association of International Educators, [*The Economic Benefits of International Students to the U.S. Economy: Academic Year 2011-2012*](#) (Washington, DC: 2012).
- ²² Migration Policy Institute Data Hub, [Wyoming: Language & Education](#).
- ²³ Ibid.
- ²⁴ [The Urban Institute](#), data from the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series datasets drawn from the 2005 - 2009 American Community Survey.
- ²⁵ Ibid.