



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 3.5% 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. As the economy continues to grow, Wyoming can ill-afford to alienate a component of its labor force, 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 3.5% in [2013](#),² according to the U.S. Census Bureau. Wyoming was home to 20,081 immigrants in [2013](#).³
- 35.3% of immigrants (or 7,091 people) in Wyoming were naturalized U.S. citizens in [2013](#)⁴—meaning that they are eligible to vote.
- Unauthorized immigrants comprised less than 1% of the state's population (or 5,000 people) in [2012](#), according to a report by the Pew Hispanic Center.⁵
- 2.3% (or 6,272) 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 2012 Census Bureau data by the [American Immigration Council](#).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 8.9% (or 51,736 people) in [2013](#).⁹ The Asian share of the population grew 0.6% in [1990](#)¹⁰ to 1% (or 5,729 people) in [2013](#),¹¹ according to the U.S. Census Bureau.
- Latinos accounted for 3.2% (or 8,000) of Wyoming voters in the 2012 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

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

- The 2014 purchasing power of Latinos in Wyoming totaled \$1.7 billion—an increase of 554% since 1990. Asian buying power totaled \$286 million—an increase of 886% 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
- From 2006 to 2010, there were [809](#) new immigrant business owners in Wyoming who had total net business income of \$59.6 million (3.3% of all net business income in the state), according to Robert Fairlie of the University of California, Santa Cruz.¹⁸
- In 2010, [2.9% of all business owners](#) in Wyoming were foreign-born, according to the Fiscal Policy Institute.¹⁹

Immigrants contribute to Wyoming's economy as workers and taxpayers.

- Immigrants comprised 4.1% of the state's workforce in [2013](#) (or 12,651 workers), according to the U.S. Census Bureau.²⁰
- Latinos in Wyoming paid \$105.9 million in federal taxes and \$38.5 million in state/local taxes in 2013, according to the [Partnership for a New American Economy](#). In particular, foreign-born Latinos paid \$22.7 million in federal taxes and \$7.7 million in state/local taxes.²¹
 - The federal tax contribution of Wyoming's Latino population included \$86.4 million to Social Security and \$20.2 million to Medicare in 2013. Foreign-born Latinos contributed \$17.7 million to Social Security and \$4.1 million to Medicare that year.²²

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

- Unauthorized immigrants comprised less than 1.3% of the state's workforce (or fewer than 5,000 workers) in [2012](#), according to a report by the Pew Hispanic Center.²³

- 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](#).²⁴

Unauthorized immigrants pay taxes.

- Unauthorized immigrants in Wyoming paid \$3.6 million in state and local taxes in [2012](#), including \$2.9 million in sales taxes and \$668,000 in property taxes, according to data from the Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy.²⁵
- Were unauthorized immigrants in Wyoming to have lawful permanent residence, they would pay \$3.9 million in state and local taxes, including \$3.2 million in sales taxes and \$735,000 in property taxes.²⁶

Immigrants are important to Wyoming's economy as students.

- Wyoming's 1,124 foreign students contributed \$20.7 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](#).²⁷
- Foreign students also contribute to innovation in Wyoming. In 2009, "non-resident aliens" comprised 19.5% of master's degrees and 42.9% of doctorate degrees in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields, according to the [Partnership for a New American Economy](#).²⁸

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 to 22.1% of noncitizens. At the same time, 17.7% of naturalized citizens lacked a high-school diploma, compared to 37% of noncitizens.²⁹
- The number of immigrants in Wyoming with a college degree increased by 100.7% between 2000 and 2011.³⁰
- In Wyoming, 88.1% of children with immigrant parents were considered "English proficient" as of [2009](#), according to data from the Urban Institute.³¹
- The English proficiency rate among Latino children in Wyoming was 96.2% as of [2009](#).³²

Endnotes

1. U.S. Census Bureau, [*The Foreign-Born Population: 2000*](#), December 2003.
2. 2013 American Community Survey (3-Year Estimates).
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
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. 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.
7. U.S. Census Bureau, [*The Hispanic Population: 2000*](#), May 2001.
8. Ibid.
9. 2013 American Community Survey (1-Year Estimates).
10. U.S. Census Bureau, [*The Asian Population: 2000*](#), February 2002.
11. 2013 American Community Survey (1-Year Estimates).
12. 2012 Current Population Survey, [*Table 4b. Reported Voting and Registration, by Sex, Race and Hispanic Origin, for States: November 2012*](#).
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 2014*](#) (Athens, GA: Selig Center for Economic Growth, University of Georgia, 2014), pp. 22, 24.
16. U.S. Census Bureau, [*Estimates of Business Ownership by Gender, Ethnicity, Race, and Veteran Status: 2007*](#), June 2011.
17. Ibid.
18. 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.
19. David Dyssegaard Kallick, [*Immigrant Small Business Owners: A Significant and Growing Part of the Economy*](#) (New York, NY: Fiscal Policy Institute, 2012), p. 24.
20. 2013 American Community Survey (3-Year Estimates).
21. 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: 2014).
22. Ibid.
23. 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.
24. 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.
25. Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy, [*Undocumented Immigrants' State and Local Tax Contributions*](#) (Washington, DC: April 2015).
26. Ibid.
27. NAFSA: Association of International Educators, [*The Economic Benefits of International Students to the U.S. Economy: Academic Year 2013-2014*](#) (Washington, DC: 2014).
28. Partnership for a New American Economy, [*Help Wanted: The Role of Foreign Workers in the Innovation Economy*](#) (New York, NY: 2013), p. 21.
29. Migration Policy Institute Data Hub, [*Wyoming: Language & Education*](#).
30. Ibid.
31. [The Urban Institute](#), data from the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series datasets drawn from the 2005 - 2009 American Community Survey.
32. Ibid.