

The Contributions of New Americans in Alaska

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Demographics

While only 7.6 percent of Alaska’s population is foreign-born, the state has been attracting many more immigrants in recent years. Between 2010 and 2014, the foreign-born population in Alaska grew by more than 9,000 people, increasing in size by 19.4 percent. In percentage terms, that made Alaska an outlier compared to other states. Only two other states in the country, North Dakota and Wyoming, saw faster increases in the size of their foreign-born populations. In the country as a whole, the immigrant population increased by only 5.8 percent during the same period.

Today Alaska is home to almost 56,000 new Americans. These immigrants are most commonly from Asian nations, a reality that reflects the far West location of this state. In 2014, the top three countries of origin of Alaska’s immigrants were the Philippines, Korea, and Thailand. The ties of these immigrants to their communities back home help bolster trade and international business relations in this state. The immigrants living in Alaska today also make broader contributions to the workforce. They often serve as everything from chief executives to registered nurses, making them critical contributors to Alaska’s economic success overall.

55,724

Alaska residents were born abroad.



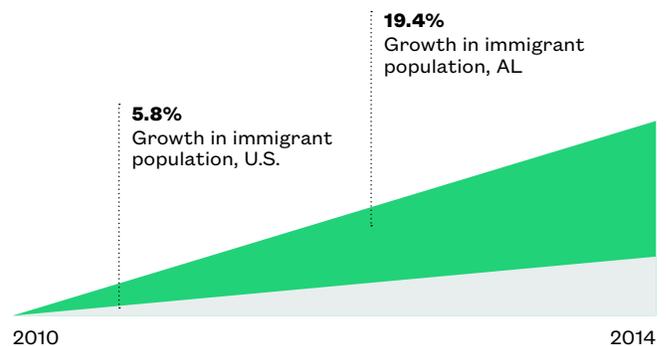
Share of Alaska residents born abroad



Share of U.S. residents born abroad

9,073

people immigrated to Alaska between 2010 and 2014.



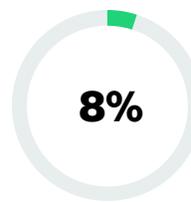
Philippines Korea Thailand are the top three countries of origin.

The Role of Immigrants as Entrepreneurs

2,993

immigrants in Alaska are self-employed

Immigrant-owned businesses generated **\$58.5M** in business income in 2014.



Share of entrepreneurs in Alaska who are immigrants

15,512 number of people in Alaska and Wyoming combined are employed at firms owned by immigrants.

* This is a conservative estimate that excludes large, publicly owned firms. Data on Alaska alone is not available for confidentiality reasons.

Given that the act of picking up and moving to another country is inherently brave and risky, it should be little surprise that immigrants have repeatedly been found to be more entrepreneurial than the U.S. population as a whole.¹ According to The Kauffman Foundation, a nonprofit group that studies entrepreneurship, immigrants were almost twice as likely to start a new business in 2015 than the native-born population.² The companies they founded ranged from small businesses on Main Street to large firms responsible for thousands of American jobs. Recent studies, for instance, have indicated that immigrants own more than half of the grocery stores in America and 48 percent of nail salons.³ Foreign-born entrepreneurs are also behind 51 percent of our country's billion dollar startups,⁴ and more than 40 percent of Fortune 500 firms.

The super-charged entrepreneurial activity of immigrants provides real and meaningful benefits to everyday Americans. In 2010, roughly one in 10 American workers with jobs at private firms were employed at immigrant-founded companies. Such businesses also generated more than \$775 billion in annual business revenue that year.⁵ Alaska is currently home to almost 3,000 foreign-born entrepreneurs. Such business owners are creating real and meaningful economic opportunities to local, U.S.-born workers. Their firms generated \$58.5 million in business income in 2014. Alaska and Wyoming firms with at least one immigrant founder provided jobs to roughly 15,500 Americans in 2007.

Currently, there is no visa to come to America, start a company, and create jobs for U.S. workers—even if an entrepreneur already has a business plan and has raised

hundreds of thousands of dollars to support his or her idea. Trying to exploit that flaw in our system, countries around the world—from Canada to Singapore, Australia to Chile—have enacted startup visas, often with the explicit purpose of luring away entrepreneurs who want to build a U.S. business but cannot get a visa to do so.⁶ Here in the United States, many individuals have gone to great lengths to circumnavigate the visa hurdles. Many entrepreneurs sell a majority stake in their company and then apply for a visa as a high-skilled worker, rather than the owner of their firm. And a few enterprising venture capitalists, led by Jeff Busgang in Boston and Brad Feld in Colorado, have launched programs that bring over foreign-born entrepreneurs to serve as “entrepreneurs in residence” at colleges and universities. Because nonprofit academic institutions are exempt from the H-1B cap, such entrepreneurs can secure their visas by working as mentors at a school, and then build their startups in their free time.

Foreign-born entrepreneurs are also behind **51%** of our country’s billion dollar startups, and more than **40%** of Fortune 500 firms.

These innovative programs, which are currently available at 13 colleges and universities across the country, are already resulting in meaningful economic contributions. As of mid-2016, 23 entrepreneurs had secured visas through these programs nationally. The companies they founded had created 261 jobs and raised almost \$120 million in funding.⁷

NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES AT IMMIGRANT-OWNED FIRMS

15,512

people in Alaska and Wyoming were employed at firms owned by immigrants in 2007.



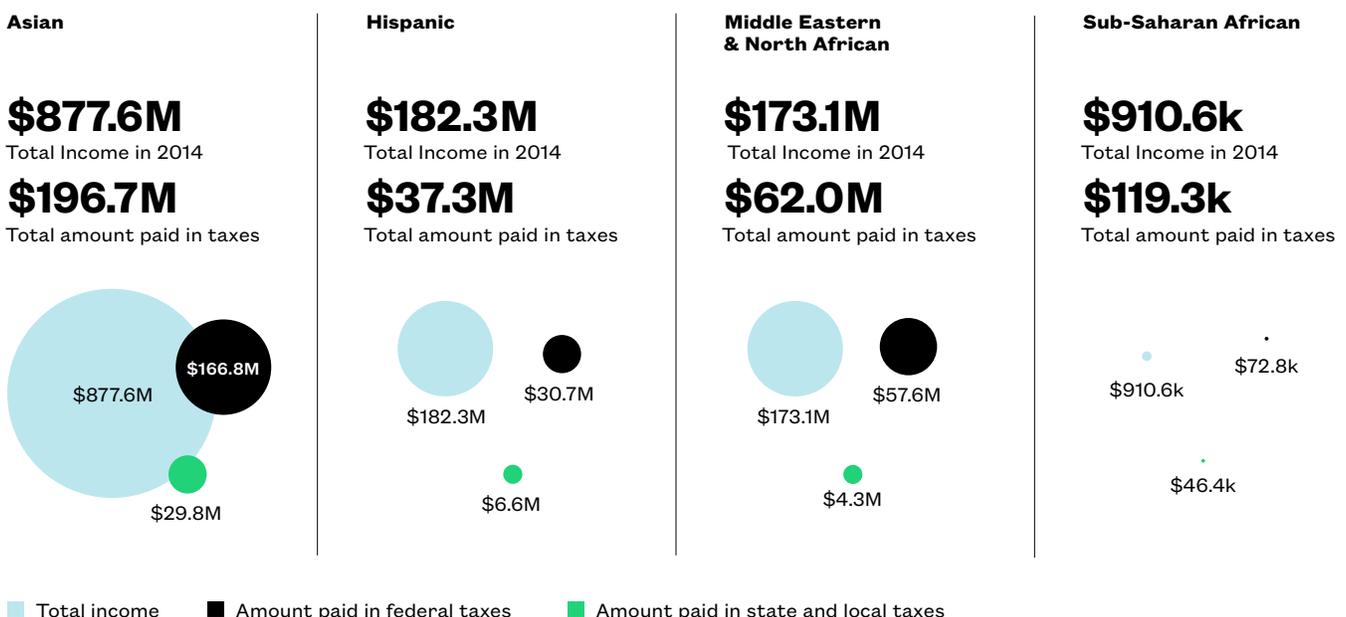
* = 100 people

Income and Tax Contributions

Immigrants in Alaska play an important role contributing to the state as both taxpayers and consumers. In 2014, immigrant-led households in Alaska earned \$1.8 billion dollars—or 8.2 percent of all income earned by Alaskans that year. With those earnings, the state’s foreign-born households were able to contribute more than one in every 13 dollars paid by Alaska residents in state and local tax revenues, payments that support important public services such as public schools and police. Through their individual wage contributions, immigrants also paid almost \$246 million into the Social Security and Medicare programs that year.

By spending the money they earn at businesses such as hair salons, grocery stores, and coffee shops, immigrants also support small business owners and job creation in the communities where they live. In Alaska immigrants held \$1.4 billion in spending power in 2014, defined in this brief as the net income available to a family after paying federal, state, and local taxes. We highlight the spending power and tax contributions of several subsets of Alaska’s foreign-born population below, including Hispanics and immigrants from Northern Africa or the Middle East.

INCOME AND TAX CONTRIBUTIONS OF KEY GROUPS WITHIN ALASKA'S IMMIGRANT POPULATION, 2014



In 2014, immigrants in Alaska earned **\$1.8B.**

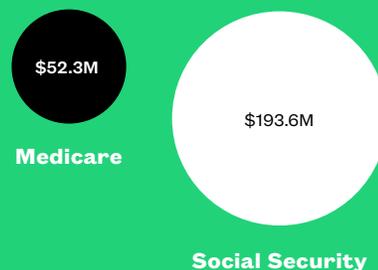


\$60.7M—went to state and local taxes
\$375.7M—went to federal taxes

Leaving them with **\$1.4B** in remaining spending power.

ENTITLEMENT CONTRIBUTIONS

Alaskan immigrants also contribute to our country's entitlement programs. In 2014, through taxes on their individual wages, immigrants contributed **\$52.3M** to Medicare and **\$193.6M** to Social Security.



The Role of Immigrants in the Broader Workforce



Because they tended to be working-age,

Immigrants were **39%** more likely to work than native-born Alaskans.



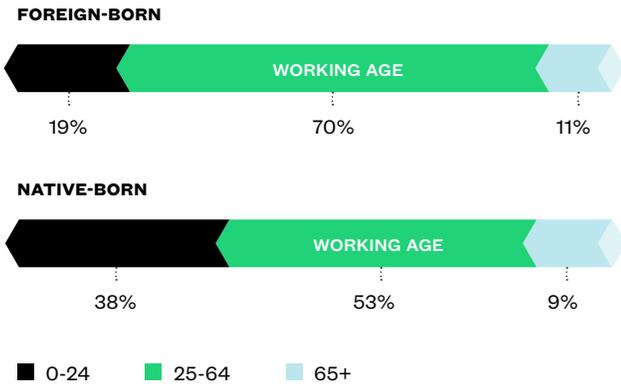
People who come to the United States often come here to work. Because of that, they often have skills that make them a good fit for our labor force—and a strong complement to American workers already here. In the country as a whole, immigrants are much more likely to be working-age than the U.S.-born. They also have a notably different educational profile. The vast majority of Americans – more than 79 percent of the U.S.-born population – fall into the middle of the education spectrum by holding a high school or bachelor’s degree. Immigrants, by contrast, are more likely to gravitate toward either end of the skill spectrum. They are more likely to lack a high school diploma than the native-born, but also more likely to have an advanced degree. This makes them good candidates for labor-intensive positions, such as housekeeping, that many more educated U.S.-born

workers are less interested in pursuing, as well as high-level positions that allow innovation-driven firms to expand and add jobs for Americans at all skill levels.

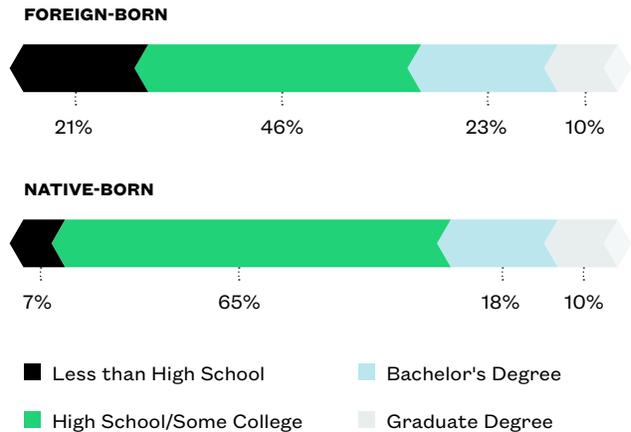
In Alaska **69.9%** of the foreign-born population is working aged, defined in this brief as falling between the ages 25 and 64, while only **52.9%** of the native-born population is.

Immigrants in Alaska in many ways resemble the trend in the country as whole. In Alaska 69.9 percent of the foreign-born population is working aged, defined in this brief as falling between the ages 25 and 64, while

AGE BREAKDOWN OF ALASKA'S FOREIGN-BORN AND NATIVE-BORN POPULATIONS, 2014



EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF ALASKA'S FOREIGN-BORN AND NATIVE-BORN POPULATION (AGES 25+), 2014



only 52.9 percent of the native-born population is. That 17.1-percentage point gap has major implications for the state’s workforce. In 2014, immigrants in the state were 38.5 percent more likely to be actively employed than the state’s native-born residents—a reality driven largely by the fact that a larger than average portion of the native-born population was under the age of 25. Foreign-born individuals punched above their weight class as workers in the state as well: In 2014, they made up 10.2 percent of all employed individuals in the state, despite accounting for 7.6 percent of the Alaska’s population overall.

When it comes to education, however, Alaska differs from the national pattern. Although immigrants here are more likely to have a bachelor degree than natives, they are slightly less likely to have graduate level training. However, they are considerably more likely to have less than a high-school education: More than one in five of the state’s immigrants fall into that category, compared to 6.7 percent of natives.

The immigrants who are working in Alaska contribute to a wide range of different industries in the state—many of which are growing and important parts of the local economy. Foreign-born residents make up more than one in four employees at the state’s colleges, universities, and professional schools. They also account

for 74.3 percent of the state’s workers in the seafood industry, contributing to Alaska’s sizeable agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting industry, which has been the fastest growing industry in the state in the years since the recession.⁸ Immigrants also frequently gravitate toward sectors where employers may struggle to find enough interested U.S.-born workers. Immigrants in Alaska, for instance, make up 18.4 percent of workers in waste management, an industry that includes trash collection and transport.

The almost **46,700** immigrants who were living in the state in 2010 were responsible for creating or preserving more than **2,100** manufacturing jobs.

In recent decades, immigrants have also played an important role in Alaska’s manufacturing industry. Studies have found that the arrival of immigrants to a community can have a powerful impact creating or preserving manufacturing jobs. This is because foreign-born workers give employers access to a large and relatively affordable pool of laborers, making it less attractive for firms to move work to cheaper

locations offshore. One study by the Partnership for a New American Economy and the Americas Society/Council of the Americas, for instance, found that every time 1,000 immigrants arrive in a given U.S. county, 46 manufacturing jobs are preserved that would otherwise not exist or have moved elsewhere.⁹ The almost 46,700 immigrants who were living in the state in 2010 were responsible for creating or preserving more than 2,100 manufacturing jobs.

particularly labor-intensive positions. While foreign-born workers make up 10.2 percent of the state’s employed population, they account for 93.8 percent of food processing workers. They also make up 33.4 percent of the states chief executives and legislators and 41.2 percent of maids and housekeepers.

Aside from just looking at overarching industry groups, our work also examines the share of workers that are foreign-born in specific occupations and jobs. Immigrants in Alaska, like the country as a whole, are often overrepresented in either high-skilled or

INDUSTRIES WITH LARGEST SHARE OF FOREIGN-BORN WORKERS, 2014

■ Share of workers who are immigrants



OCCUPATIONS WITH LARGEST SHARE OF FOREIGN-BORN WORKERS, 2014

1
Food Processing Workers



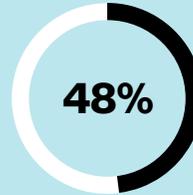
2,056 immigrant workers
2,191 total workers

2
Butchers and Other Meat, Poultry, and Fish Processing Workers



844 immigrant workers
1,233 total workers

3
Inspectors Testers, Sorters, Samplers, and Weighers



1,371 immigrant workers
2,841 total workers

4
Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners



2,246 immigrant workers
5,445 total workers

5
Taxi Drivers and Chauffeurs



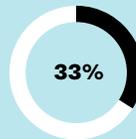
714 immigrant workers
2,094 total workers

6
Chief Executives and Legislators



818 immigrant workers
2,446 total workers

7
Preschool and Kindergarten Teachers



460 immigrant workers
1,386 total workers

8
Data Entry Workers



503 immigrant workers
1,521 total workers

9
Registered Nurses



1,975 immigrant workers
6,816 total workers

10
Payroll and Timekeeping Clerks



278 immigrant workers
1,091 total workers

■ Share of workers who are immigrants

SPOTLIGHT ON

Xi Cui

Planning and Zoning Technician, Haines Borough

The year that Xi Cui received her Masters degree from the University of Florida was a bad one to be unemployed. It was 2010 and the United States was still struggling from the recession. Cui, who had come from China to study urban planning, couldn't find a Florida-based company that could afford to sponsor her work visa. Then she learned about a planning and zoning job with a small community called Haines Borough. "It perfectly matched my skill set," says Cui. But there was a catch. The job was in Southeast Alaska: more than 3,000 miles away in the opposite climate zone.

It wasn't long, however, before Cui was on a plane across the country. The Haines Borough Planning and Zoning Department was so impressed with Cui that they offered her the job without ever meeting her in person. They also agreed to pay the \$10,000 necessary to secure her work visa. "It was a miracle," she says. And her supervisors have not been disappointed. "Even now, they say 'The value and revenue you bring this community is way more than the money we spent on your visa.'"

Cui's job is extensive. As the only planner on staff, she's responsible for economic development, land use, and capital budgeting. She serves as an intermediary between business owners and the borough assembly. And she works with developers and business owners on budgets and design. In the last four years, she has helped bring 20 new businesses to Haines, including a new hotel and a brewing company. Cui is adamant that she has accomplished all of this as part of a team effort. Yet, without her, none of this development could have taken place. The previous staffer in her position had no educational background in urban planning.

And Cui is contributing to her community in other ways. Within a year, she'd fallen in love with Alaska and wanted to speed up her green card application—which she was told could take up to a decade to process. So Cui joined the U.S. Military through the MAVNI program, or Military Accessions Vital to the National Interest, an initiative that lets temporary residents with needed skills join the military and receive an expedited path to citizenship. Cui enlisted in the U.S. Army Reserves, where she currently serves as a construction engineer.

"The value and revenue you bring this community is way more than the money we spent on your visa," Cui's supervisors tell her even now.

"I like spirit of the Army," she says. "We all work as a team to accomplish missions on time. I'm trained to be physically and mentally tough." After basic training, Cui met an Army major who was so impressed by her education, that he put her on a fast track to officer status. Best of all though, Cui finally became a U.S. citizen. "After training, the first thing I did was register to vote," she says. "I was so excited."

Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math

Between 2014 and 2024, science, technology, engineering, and math—or “STEM”—fields are projected to play a key role in U.S. economic growth, adding almost 800,000 new jobs and growing 37.0 percent faster than the U.S. economy as a whole.¹⁰ Immigrants are already playing a huge part ensuring that Alaska remains a leading innovator in STEM fields like the life sciences and oil and gas engineering. Despite making up 7.6 percent of the state’s population, foreign-born Alaskans represented 10.6 percent of STEM workers in the state in 2014. Our outdated immigration system, however, makes it difficult for STEM employers to sponsor the high-skilled workers they need to fill critical positions. This is problematic because it can slow the ability of firms to expand and add jobs for U.S.-born workers. It also makes little sense, given the country’s ongoing shortage of STEM talent—an issue that heavily impacts employers here. In 2014, 20.3 STEM jobs were advertised online in Alaska for every one unemployed STEM worker in the state.

Despite making up **7.6%** of Alaska's population, immigrants represented **10.6%** of all STEM workers in the state in 2014.

Immigrants, however, are not just a crucial piece of Alaska’s STEM workforce now—they are also likely to power it in the future. In 2014 students on temporary visas made up more than one out of every 7 students earning a STEM Master’s degree at Alaska’s universities, and 28.9 percent of students earning a PhD-level degree in STEM. Even after America’s universities invest in their

8,835

available STEM jobs were advertised online in 2014, compared to **436** unemployed STEM workers.

The resulting ratio of open jobs to available workers was

20.3 to 1

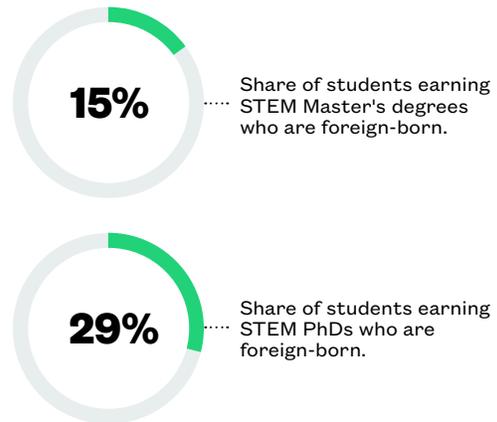


2,069

number of foreign-born STEM workers in Alaska.

education, however, many of those students struggle to remain in the country after graduation. Creating visa pathways that would make it easier for them to stay would have a major economic benefit to Alaska. A study by the Partnership for a New American Economy and the American Enterprise Institute found that every time a state gains 100 foreign-born STEM workers with graduate-level STEM training from a U.S. school, 262 more jobs are created for U.S.-born workers there in the seven years that follow."

SHARE OF STEM STUDENTS WHO WERE INTERNATIONAL IN 2014



Healthcare

In the coming years, the American healthcare industry is projected to see incredibly rapid growth—adding more new positions from 2014 to 2024 than any other industry in our economy.¹² Already, caregivers are facing near unprecedented levels of demand. Between 2013 and 2015, the number of Americans with health insurance rose by almost 17 million,¹³ opening the door for many patients to receive more regular care. The country’s 76.4 million baby boomers are also aging rapidly—at a major cost to our healthcare system. Studies have found that elderly Americans spend three

times more on healthcare services than those of working age each year.¹⁴

In Alaska, a state where more than **one out of every 11** people is currently elderly, finding enough healthcare workers remains a challenge—and one that will likely worsen in the future.

ALASKA HAS A SHORTAGE OF HEALTHCARE WORKERS

15,347

available healthcare jobs were advertised online in 2014, compared to 588 unemployed healthcare workers.

The resulting ratio of open jobs to available workers was

26.1 to 1



Shortage of occupational therapists by 2030: **178**



Shortage of licensed professional nurses projected by 2025: **890**

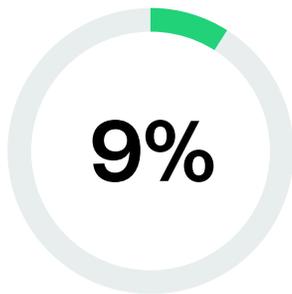


FOREIGN-BORN AND FOREIGN-EDUCATED PROFESSIONALS HELP FILL HEALTHCARE LABOR GAPS

Foreign-Educated

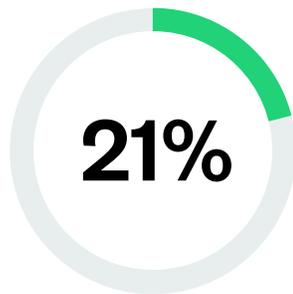
Doctors

159 graduates of foreign medical schools



Psychiatrists

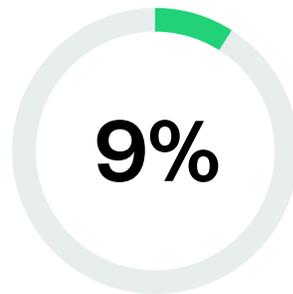
21 graduates of foreign medical schools



Foreign-Born

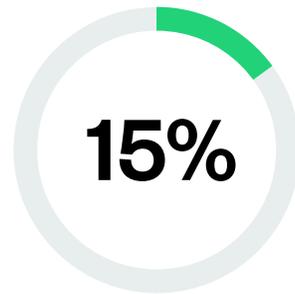
Nurses

641 foreign-born workers



Nursing, Psychiatric, and Home Health Aides

812 foreign-born workers



In Alaska, a state where more than one out of every 11 people is currently elderly, finding enough healthcare workers remains a challenge—and one that will likely worsen in the future. Currently the state has 242 practicing physicians per 100,000 people—a figure that ranks it 36th in the country in terms of physician coverage relative to other states. All this comes on top of shortages already impacting the state across the entire healthcare workforce. In 2014, 26.1 healthcare jobs were listed online in Alaska for every one unemployed healthcare worker in the state. As baby boomers age a variety of other healthcare professions that cater largely to seniors, such as occupational therapists, will feel additional strain.

Immigrants are already playing a valuable role helping Alaska meet some of its healthcare workforce gaps. In 2016 nearly one in 11 physicians in Alaska graduated from a foreign medical school, a likely sign they were born elsewhere. Immigrant healthcare practitioners also made 8.9 percent of the state’s nurses in 2013, as well as 15.2 percent of those working as nursing, psychiatric, or home health aides.

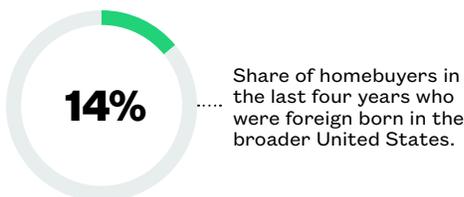
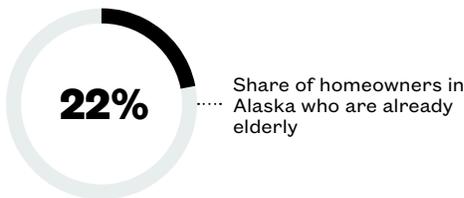
Housing

Immigrant families have long played an important role helping to build housing wealth in the United States. One study released by the Partnership for a New American Economy and Americas Society/Council of the Americas, for instance, found that in recent decades the country's more than 40 million immigrants collectively raised U.S. housing wealth by \$3.7 trillion. Much of this was possible because immigrants moved into neighborhoods once in decline, helping to revitalize communities and make them more attractive to U.S.-born residents.¹⁵

In Alaska, immigrants are actively strengthening the state's housing market. The almost 10,000 foreign-

born homeowners in the state held more than \$2 billion in housing wealth in 2014. Immigrant-led households also generated 9 percent of the state's rental income that year, even though they led only 7.3 percent of Alaska's households. Because Alaska's immigrants are more likely to be working age, they also help address another major concern of housing experts— that the large wave of baby boomers retiring in the coming years could result in more homes going up for sale than there are buyers to purchase them. In Alaska, where seniors already make up 21.7 percent of homeowners, young immigrants may play a particularly large role buying homes and maintaining housing values in the future.

Immigrants are **bolstering the housing market** by buying the wave of homes coming on the market as the baby boomers retire.



9,583

Number of immigrant homeowners in Alaska in 2014

\$2.4B

Amount of housing wealth held by immigrant households in Alaska



\$9.7M

Amount paid by immigrant-led households in rent in Alaska



Visa Demand

One key measure of the demand for immigrant workers involves the number of visas requested by employers in a given state. Before an employer can formally apply for many types of visas, however, it must first obtain “certification” from the Department of Labor—essentially a go-ahead from the DOL that the employer can apply for a visa to fill a given job or role. For the H-1B visa, which is used to sponsor high-skilled workers, an employer gains certification by filing what’s known as a Labor Condition Application, or LCA. In the LCA the employer must detail

the position the foreign national would fill, the salary he would be paid, and the geographic location of the job. Firms must also attest that hiring an immigrant will not adversely impact similarly situated American workers. For two other large work visa categories—the H-2A for agricultural laborers and the H-2B for seasonal or temporary needs—employers file what is known as a Labor Certification application, or a “labor cert” for short. To get a labor cert approved, the employer must demonstrate that it is unable to locate an American worker that is available, willing, and able to fill the job.

H-1B

Number of positions:

301

Top jobs:

Computer Systems Analysts
Computer Occupations, All Others
Software Developers, Systems

GREEN CARD

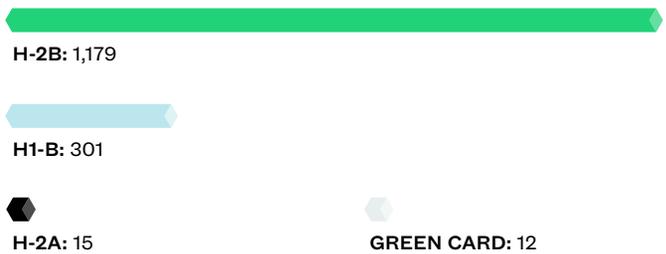
Number of positions:

12

Top jobs:

Economics Teachers, Postsecondary
Zoologists and Wildlife Ecologists
Software Developers, Applications

CERTIFIED POSITIONS BY VISA TYPE, 2014



* This includes only employment-based green cards

H-2A

Number of positions:

15

Top crops or jobs:

Tomatoes

H-2B

Number of positions:

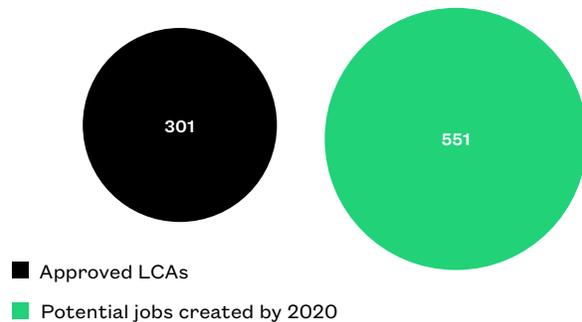
1,179

Top jobs:

Meat, Poultry, and Fish Cutters and Trimmers
Retail Salespersons
Food Batchmakers

IF ALL APPROVED LCAs HAD TURNED INTO VISAS...

301 LCAs for H-1B workers could have created 551 jobs.



In fiscal year 2014, Alaska employers received DOL certification for over 1,500 positions, including jobs across a wide variety of occupations and geographies within the state. They included 300 positions for potential workers on H-1B visas, as well as 15 for H-2A workers. Federal officials also issued almost 1,200 certifications for H-2B visas, which are frequently used to staff places like hotels, fisheries, and stables during the high season. Given that it is expensive and cumbersome for employers to obtain labor certs—and similarly daunting to formally apply for an H-1B visa—the large interest in all these visa categories indicates Alaska employers likely were having real trouble finding the workers they needed on U.S. soil.

Applying for a certification, however, is not the same as receiving a visa. The H-1B program is currently capped at 85,000 visas a year for private sector employers. In the country as a whole, this resulted in almost half of all such applications being rejected in fiscal year 2014 alone. The H-2B program is similarly limited to just 66,000 visas per year. Even permanent immigrants get ensnared in the limitations of our outdated immigration system. Only seven percent of all green cards can go to nationals of any one country in a given year—resulting in backlogs lasting years for many Indian, Chinese, Mexican, and Filipino workers.¹⁶

When companies are denied the visas they need, company expansion is commonly slowed—often at a real and meaningful cost to the U.S.-born population. One study by the Partnership for a New American Economy and the American Enterprise Institute estimated that when a state receives 100 H-2B visas, 464 jobs are created for U.S.-born workers in the seven years that follow.¹⁷ The fact that H-1B visa holders actually create—not take away—jobs from Americans has also been widely supported in the literature. A 2013 paper written by professors at Harvard University looking at the 1995 to 2008 period found that 1 additional young, high-skilled immigrant worker hired by a firm created 3.1 jobs for U.S.-born workers at that same company during the period studied.¹⁸ Other academics have tied each H-1B visa award or labor request with the creation of four¹⁹ or five²⁰ American jobs in the immediate years that follow.

In this brief, we rely on a more conservative estimate of the impact of the H-1B program on the American workforce. Specifically, we use the estimate that every 1 additional H-1B visa awarded to a state was associated with the creation of 1.83 more jobs for U.S.-born workers there in the following seven years.²¹ On the first page of this section, we show the number of jobs that would have been created for U.S.-born workers in Alaska by 2020 if all the fiscal year 2014 LCAs for H-1Bs had turned into actual visas.

CITIES ARE DEMANDING VISAS ALL OVER THE STATE

H-1B

Top cities:

- 1 Anchorage
- 2 Fairbanks
- 3 Juneau

H-2B

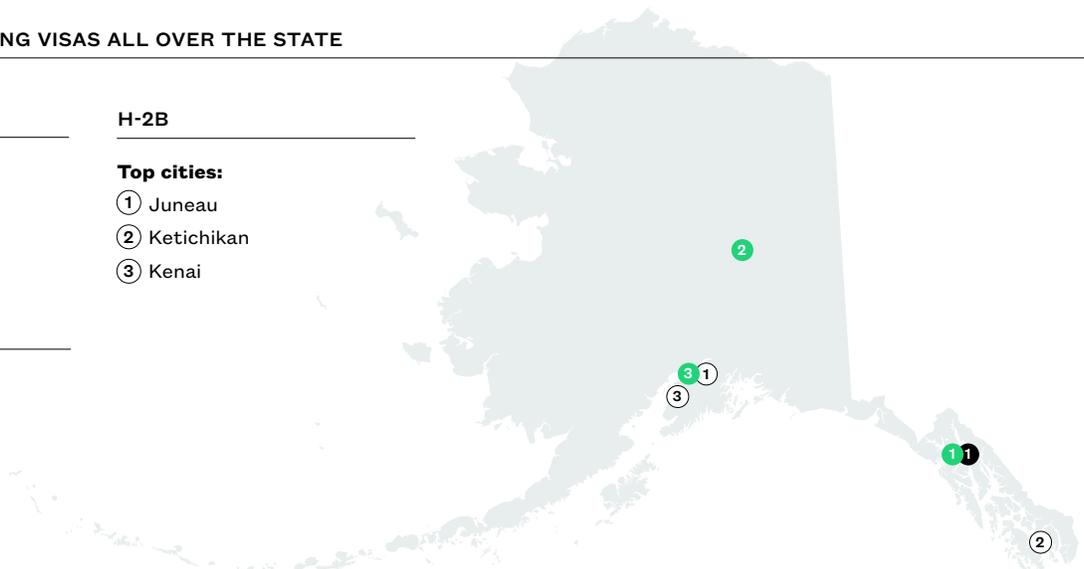
Top cities:

- 1 Juneau
- 2 Ketichikan
- 3 Kenai

H-2A

Top cities:

- 1 Anchorage



Naturalization

Alaska’s immigrants are not only living in the state, they are also laying down roots in the state as well. Our analysis found that immigrants in Alaska are naturalizing, or becoming citizens, at considerably higher rates than they are in the country overall. In 2014, 56.1 percent immigrants in Alaska were already U.S. citizens. Nationally, the equivalent figure was 47.3 percent.

Like almost all parts of the country, however, Alaska is also home to a population of immigrants who are eligible to naturalize, but haven’t yet done so. Embracing public policies that would help those individuals navigate the naturalization process could have an important economic impact on the state. Studies have found that immigrants who become citizens seek out higher

education at greater rates than non-citizens.²² Because citizenship allows immigrants to pursue a greater range of positions, including public and private sector jobs requiring a security clearance, it also has been found to raise a person’s annual wages. One study by researchers at the University of Southern California pegged the size of that wage increase at 8 to 11 percent.²³ If the average non-citizen in Alaska saw a wage boost at the low end of that range, or 8 percent, she would earn almost \$2,500 more per year— money that could be reinvested in the state’s economy through her spending at local businesses. Multiplied by the roughly 14,000 non-citizens in Alaska currently eligible to naturalize, such policy initiatives could collectively boost wages in the state by more than \$31 million.

13,889

Number of non-citizens eligible to naturalize in 2014

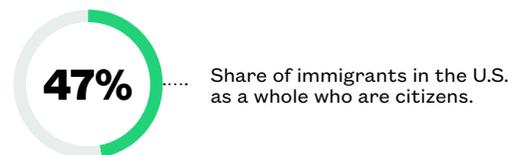
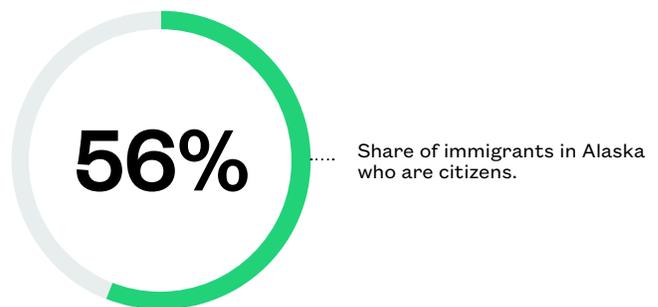


The average non-citizen in Alaska earns **\$28,100** per year. If they naturalized, they each could earn an average of **\$2,248 more** per year.

\$31.2M

Aggregate additional earnings if eligible non-citizens naturalized.

NATURALIZATION RATES IN ALASKA



International Students

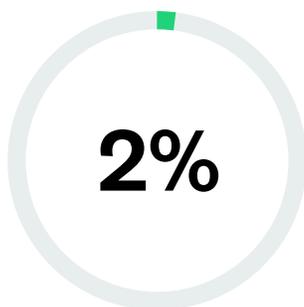
Policymakers are increasingly realizing that international students provide huge benefits to the communities where they live and study. The World Bank has found that an increase in the number of international graduate students studying at American schools leads to large boosts in the number of patents awarded to local research universities in the years that follow.²⁴ Through their tuition payments and day-to-day spending, international students in the broader United States also contributed more than \$30.5 billion to the U.S. economy in the 2014-2015 school year and supported more than 370,000 jobs.²⁵

In Alaska, the roughly 600 international college students studying on temporary visas make up just 1.8 percent of all college students in the state. Still, their

economic contribution is meaningful. They support more than 160 jobs in the state, including positions in transportation, health insurance, and retail.

International students in the broader United States also contributed more than **\$30.5B** to the U.S. economy in the 2014-2015 school year and supported more than **370,000** jobs.

International students represent a very small portion of all students in Alaska, but they make a big impact...



International students make up only **2%** of all students in Alaska.

\$17.6M

Economic contribution of international students to the state, 2015.

162

Jobs supported by international students, 2015.

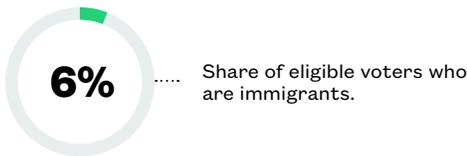
Voting Power

Immigrants in Alaska do not only make a difference to the state's economy, they also play a role at the voting booth. In 2014, Alaska was home to almost 28,000 foreign-born residents who were eligible to vote, including an estimated 18,000 foreign-born residents who had formally registered. Those numbers are unlikely to sway a presidential election in this relatively safe Republican state, where Republican Presidential candidate Mitt Romney won by roughly 42,000 votes in 2012. Still, it can make a difference in closer statewide contests and primaries.

Going forward, immigrants will likely continue to gain voting power in Alaska. Based on voting participation patterns in recent years, we would expect more than 14,000 foreign-born voters to cast formal ballots in the presidential election this year. An additional 6,000 more immigrants will either naturalize or turn 18 by 2020, expanding the pool of eligible new American voters in Alaska to almost 32,000 people.

27,750

Number of immigrants eligible to vote.



17,528

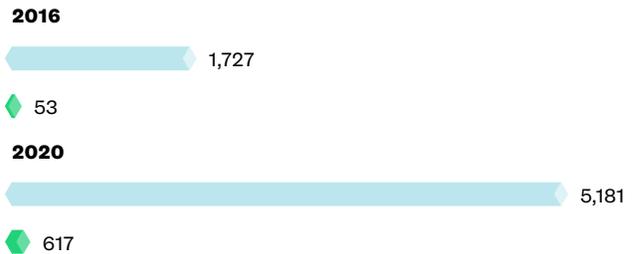
Number of immigrants registered to vote.

42,036

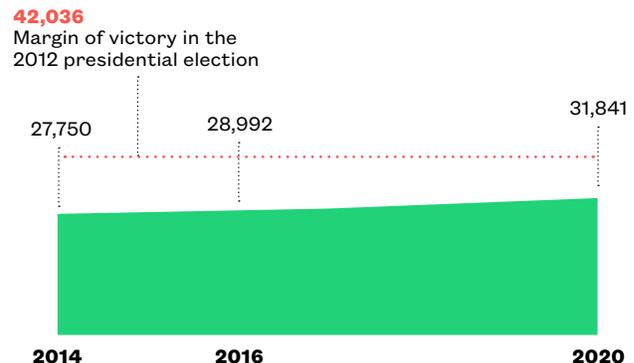
Margin of victory in the 2012 presidential election.

THE GROWING POWER OF THE IMMIGRANT VOTE

- Immigrants who will become eligible to vote by turning 18
- Immigrants who will become eligible to vote through naturalization



PROJECTED POOL OF ELIGIBLE IMMIGRANT VOTERS, 2014-2020



Undocumented Population

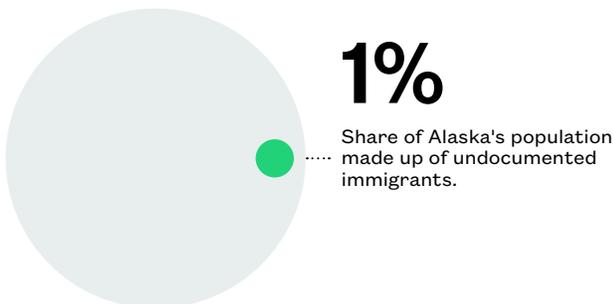
The United States is currently home to an estimated 11.4 million undocumented immigrants, the vast majority of whom have lived in the United States for more than five years. The presence of so many undocumented immigrants in our country for such a long time presents many legal and political challenges that are beyond the scope of this report. But while politicians continue to debate what to do about illegal immigration without any resolution, millions of undocumented immigrants are actively working across the country, and collectively, these immigrants have a large impact on the U.S. economy. One recent study found that 86.6 percent of undocumented males in the country were employed in 2012 and 2013, suggesting that most immigrants who come here illegally do so because of work opportunities.²⁶ And because employers are required by law to gather Social Security numbers for all their hires,

many undocumented individuals are paying into our tax system as well—often under falsified or incorrect Social Security numbers.²⁷ These undocumented immigrants generally lack access to federal aid programs such as Medicaid, food stamps, and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, so they also draw down far less than from these programs than their native-born counterparts.²⁸

One recent study found that **86.6%** of undocumented males in the country were employed in 2012 and 2013, suggesting that most immigrants who come here illegally do so because of work opportunities.

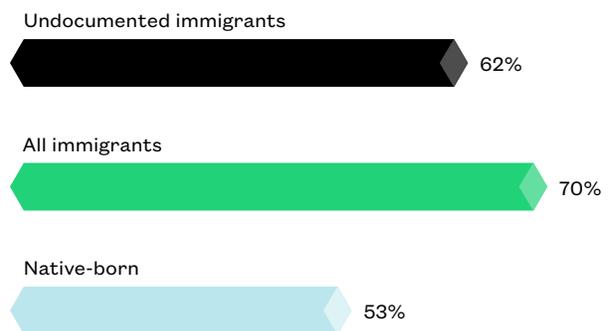
7,891

Estimated number of undocumented immigrants in Alaska.



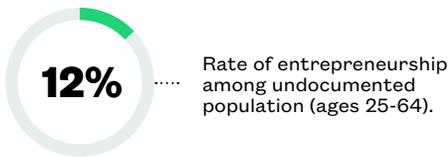
SHARE OF WORKING AGE POPULATION AMONG IMMIGRANTS, UNDOCUMENTED IMMIGRANTS, AND NATIVES, 2014

Share of population ages 25-64, 2014



593

Estimated number of undocumented entrepreneurs in Alaska.



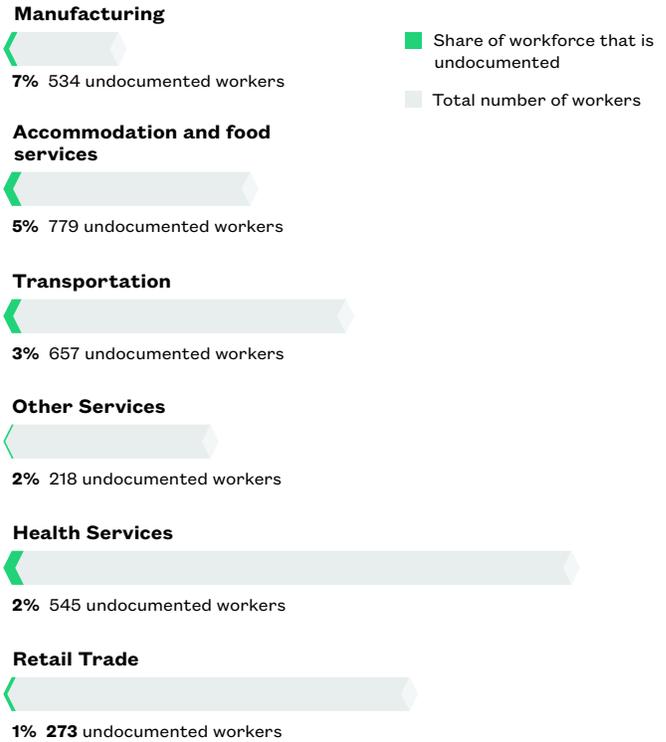
\$6.8M

Total business income of self-employed entrepreneurs.

1.6%

Share of all working-age entrepreneurs in Alaska who are undocumented immigrants.

THE ALASKA INDUSTRIES WHERE UNDOCUMENTED IMMIGRANTS MAKE UP THE LARGEST SHARE OF THE WORKFORCE, 2014



Of course, there are many compelling reasons that having a large undocumented population is a problem for a society. It undermines law and order, permits a shadow economy that is far harder to regulate, and is simply unfair to the millions of people who have come here legally. But as the undocumented immigration problem has gone largely unaddressed for the past 30 years, undocumented workers in the country have begun to play an increasingly integral role in many U.S. industries. In some sectors, such as agriculture, undocumented immigrants account for 50 percent of all hired crop workers, making them a critical reason why the industry is able to thrive on U.S. soil.²⁶ Many studies have also indicated that these undocumented workers are not displacing the U.S.-born, but rather, taking jobs few Americans are interested in pursuing.

Economists have found that low-skilled immigrants, the group that most undocumented immigrants fall into, tend to pursue different jobs than less-skilled natives. While U.S.-born workers without a high school degree are often overrepresented in forward-facing roles like cashiers, receptionists, and coffee shop attendants, many less-skilled immigrants pursue more labor-intensive work requiring less human interaction, filling jobs as meat processors, sewing machine operators, or nail salon workers.³⁰ This phenomenon exists within industries as well. In construction, for instance, less-skilled immigrants often work as painters and drywall installers, allowing natives to move into higher paying positions requiring more training, such as electricians, contractors, and plumbers.³¹

The challenge of undocumented immigration is becoming increasingly apparent in places like Alaska, which have not historically been home to a large number of such immigrants. But just as with the nation as a whole, as these immigrants spend years and decades in America, they get further integrated into our economy. In Alaska, there is evidence that undocumented immigrants are playing a small but important role in the workforce. In this section, we estimate the size and the characteristics of the undocumented population in Alaska by conducting a close analysis of the American Community Survey from the U.S. Census. This work uses a series of variables to identify immigrants in the survey who are likely to lack legal status—a method that has recently emerged in the academic literature on immigration.³² (See the Methodology Appendix for more details.)

Using this technique, we estimate that Alaska is home to almost 7,900 undocumented immigrants. These individuals contribute to a range of industries that could not thrive without a pool of workers willing to take on highly labor-intensive roles. In 2014, for instance, undocumented immigrants made up 5.1 percent of all employees in Alaska’s accommodation and food services

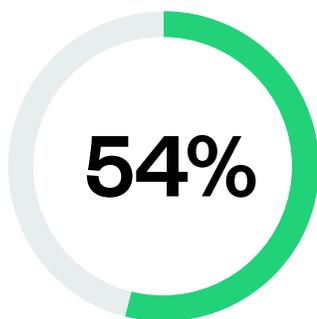
industry, a sector that includes dishwashers and some meatpacking roles. They also made up 7.4 percent of workers employed in the manufacturing sector, as well as 3.1 percent of workers in the transportation industry.

Alaska was one of roughly two dozen states where unauthorized immigrants boasted higher rates of entrepreneurship than either legal permanent residents or immigrant citizens of the same age group.

Large numbers of undocumented immigrants in Alaska have also managed to overcome licensing and financing obstacles to start small businesses. In 2014, an estimated 12.1 percent of the state’s working-age undocumented immigrants were self-employed—meaning Alaska was one of roughly two dozen states where unauthorized immigrants boasted higher rates of entrepreneurship than either legal permanent residents or immigrant citizens of the same age group. Almost 600 undocumented immigrants in Alaska

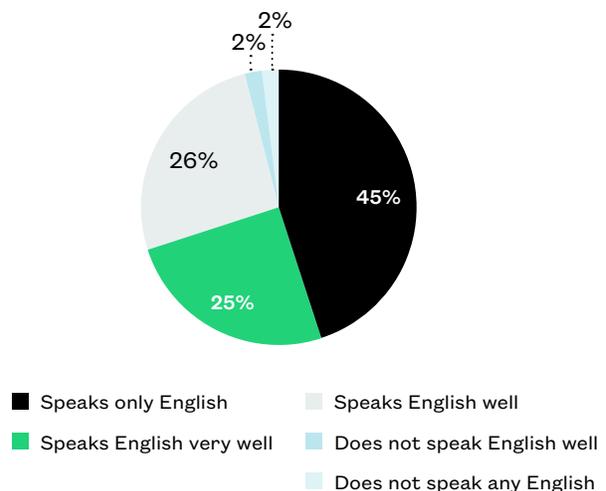
MEASURES OF ASSIMILATION AMONG ALASKA'S UNDOCUMENTED POPULATION, 2014

Time in the United States



Share of undocumented immigrants who have been in the U.S. for five years or more.

English Proficiency (population ages 5+)



were self-employed in 2014, many providing jobs and economic opportunities to others in their community. Undocumented entrepreneurs in the state also earned an estimated \$6.8 million in business income that year.

The larger political debate around the economic cost or benefits of undocumented immigration tends to focus on the expense of educating immigrant children or the healthcare costs associated with increased use of emergency rooms and other services. These costs are real and can be substantial, but taken alone they paint an incomplete picture of the impact of undocumented immigration. This is because the debate infrequently recognizes that since most undocumented immigrants are working, they make large federal and state tax contributions and frequently are net contributors to many of our most important—and most imperiled—benefits programs. Social Security’s Chief Actuary, for example, has credited unauthorized immigrants with contributing \$100 billion more to Social Security than they drew down in benefits during the last decade.³³ Another study found that in 2011 alone unauthorized immigrants contributed \$3.5 billion more to Medicare than they utilized in care.³⁴

Alaska is home to so few undocumented immigrants that it is unfortunately impossible for us to estimate with any degree of reliability the amount such immigrants earn in income each year or what they pay in taxes. There is no reason to believe, however, that Alaska’s undocumented population would differ from the pattern in other states. Several in-depth studies have come to the conclusion that undocumented immigrants represent a net benefit to the states in which they live. One paper, from researchers at Arizona State University, estimated

that undocumented immigrants in Arizona pay \$2.4 billion in taxes each year—a figure far eclipsing the \$1.4 billion spent on the law enforcement, education, and healthcare resources they use.³⁵ Another study estimated that, on a per capita basis, Florida’s undocumented immigrants pay \$1,500 more in taxes than they draw down in public benefits each year.³⁶

If undocumented immigrants are ultimately legalized, of course, such calculations are likely to change. On the one hand, giving unauthorized immigrants legal status would open the door for them to collect more public benefits. On the other, legalization is expected to increase their wages—as well as the amount they pay in taxes—by giving undocumented immigrants access to a greater range of jobs and educational opportunities than they have now.³⁷ Provisions within immigration reform requiring that undocumented immigrants pay any back taxes before normalizing their status would temporarily boost U.S. tax revenues still further.

But while the debate over legalization continues without resolution, the data suggests that the undocumented immigrants in Alaska have largely assimilated into the United States, making it less likely that mass deportation will ever be a realistic option. We estimate that 53.7 percent of the state’s undocumented population has been in the United States for five or more years. More than 72.2 percent speak English well, very well, or fluently. Studies show that when immigrants with limited English proficiency learn the language, they see a substantial wage benefit and become less isolated in their communities.³⁸ The labor market outcomes and educational levels of their children increase with time as well.³⁹

Methodology

The vast majority of data that appears in this brief was calculated by the Partnership for a New American Economy research team, using a variety of publicly available data sources. Our work relied most heavily on the 2014 American Community Survey (ACS) 1-year sample using the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMS) database.¹ Unless otherwise noted this data is weighted using the person weight for analysis at the individual level, and is weighted using the household weight for analysis at the household level.

Demographics

The data points on the foreign-born population in the demographics section are calculated using both the 2010 and 2014 ACS 1-year sample.

Entrepreneurship

The data on self-employed immigrants and the business income generated by immigrant entrepreneurs come from the 2014 ACS 1-year sample. We define immigrants as foreign-born individuals (excluding those that are children of U.S. citizens or born on U.S. territories).

The number of employees at immigrant-owned firms is estimated by using the 2007 Survey of Business Owners (SBO) Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS),² which is the most recent microdata on business owners currently available. The estimates are weighted using the tabulation weights provided in the dataset. We define immigrant-owned businesses as firms with at least one foreign-born owner. For confidentiality, the data exclude businesses classified as publicly owned firms because they can be easily identified in many states. Based on our own analysis, we believe that many of the publicly owned firms excluded from this data are companies with

500 employees or more. As a result, the final number of employees at immigrant-owned companies in this report is a conservative estimate, and is likely lower than the true value.

Fortune magazine ranks U.S. companies by revenue and publishes a list of top 500 companies and their annual revenue as well as their employment level each year. To produce our estimates, we use the 2015 Fortune 500 list.³ Our estimates in this section build on past work done by PNAE examining each of the Fortune 500 firms in the country in 2011, and determining who founded them.⁴ We then use publicly available data, including historical U.S. Census records and information obtained directly by the firms, to determine the background of each founder. In the rare cases where we could not determine a founder's background, we assumed that the individual was U.S.-born to be conservative in our estimates. Some firms created through the merger of a large number of smaller companies or public entities were also excluded from our analysis. These included all companies in the utilities sector and several in insurance.

To produce the Fortune 500 estimates for each state, we allocate firms to the states where their current headquarters are located. We then aggregate and report the annual revenue and employment of the firms in each state that we identify as "New American" Fortune 500 companies. These are firms with at least one founder who was an immigrant or the child of immigrants.

Income and Tax Contributions

Using the 2014 ACS 1-year data, we estimate the aggregate household income, tax contributions, and spending power of foreign-born households.

To produce these estimates, a foreign-born household is defined as a household with a foreign-born household head. Immigrant sub-groups are defined as follows: 1) Asian immigrants refer to the foreign-born persons who self identify as Chinese, Taiwanese, Japanese, Filipino, Asian Indian, Korean, Native Hawaiian, Vietnamese, Bhutanese, Mongolian, Nepalese, Cambodian, Hmong, Laotian, Thai, Bangladeshi, Burmese, Indonesian, Malaysian, Pakistani, Sri Lankan, Samoan, Tongan, Guamanian/Chamorro, Fijian, or other Pacific Islanders; 2) Hispanic immigrants include those foreign-born persons who report their ethnicity as Hispanic; 3) Immigrants grouped under Sub-Saharan Africa originate from African countries, excluding the North African countries of Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco; 4) Middle Eastern and North African immigrants are foreign-born persons from North Africa as well as the following Middle Eastern countries: Iran, Iraq, Bahrain, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arab, Syria, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen.

In this brief, mirroring past PNAE reports on this topic, we use the term “spending power.”⁵ Here and elsewhere we define spending power as the disposable income leftover after subtracting federal, state, and local taxes from household income. We estimate state and local taxes using the tax rates estimates produced by Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy by state income quintiles.⁶ For federal tax rate estimates, we use data released by the Congressional Budget Office in 2014 and calculate the federal tax based on the household income federal tax bracket.⁷

Social Security and Medicare contributions are drawn from taxes on an individual’s wage earnings.⁸ This is far different from a household’s overall income, which may include other revenue streams such as rental income and returns on investments. To account for this difference between overall federal taxes and Social Security and Medicare contributions, we estimate Medicare and Social Security contributions based on wage and salary data provided at the individual level in the ACS. For self-employed individuals, we use the self-employment income as the income base. The amount of earnings that can be taxed by the Social Security

program is capped at \$117,000, while there no such limit for the Medicare program.⁹ We use a flat tax rate of 12.4 percent to estimate Social Security contributions and 2.9 percent for to capture Medicare contributions. This estimates the total amount that immigrants and their employers contributed in 2014.¹⁰

It is also worth noting that half of the amount contributed to Social Security and Medicare (6.4 percent of Social Security tax rate and 1.45 percent of Medicare tax rate) comes from individual workers, while the other half comes directly from their employers. Self-employed workers have to pay the full tax themselves. When estimating Social Security and Medicare contributions, we include all individual wage earners in the households and aggregate the amount paid by state.

Workforce

We use the 2014 ACS 1-year sample to estimate all data points in the workforce segment of the report. We define the working age population as those 25 to 64 years old. When estimating how much more foreign-born persons are likely to be employed than native-born persons, however, we calculate the percentage of native-born and foreign-born residents of all ages who were employed in 2014. The reason why we choose a more inclusive population for that estimate is because we want to make the point that the increased likelihood of being working aged that we see among immigrants leads to higher employment in the vast majority of states.

Because the employment status of people who are 16 years old or younger is not available in the ACS, we assume that these young people are not employed. The employed population also does not include those in the Armed Forces.

To estimate how much more likely immigrants are to be employed than natives, we calculate the percent difference between the immigrant and native-born employment rates. Our estimates on the share of immigrants and natives of different education levels only take into consideration individuals aged 25 or older.

The North American Industry Classification System, or NAICS Industry code, is used to estimate the industries with the largest share of foreign-born workers. All individuals 16 years old and above are included in these calculations. The total number of workers for certain industries in some states is extremely small, thus skewing results. In order to avoid this, we calculate the percentile distribution of the total number of workers per industry per state and drop the industries in each state that fall below the lowest 25th percentile. Estimated occupations with the largest share of foreign-born workers per state also follow the same restrictions—the universe is restricted to workers age 16 and above, and the occupations per state that fall under the 25th percentile benchmark are not included.

Our estimates on the number of manufacturing jobs created or preserved by immigrants rely on a 2013 report by the Partnership for a New American Economy and the Americas Society/Council of the Americas. That report used instrumental variable (IV) strategy in regression analysis and found that every 1,000 immigrants living in a county in 2010 created or preserved 46 manufacturing jobs there.¹¹ We use that multiplier and apply it to the 2010 population data from the ACS to produce our estimates.

Agriculture

We access the agriculture GDP by state from Bureau of Economic Analysis, which includes GDP contributions from the agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting industry.¹² The share of foreign-born agricultural workers is estimated using 2014 ACS 1-year sample. Additional data on agriculture output, top three crops per state, and leading agricultural exports come from United State Department of Agriculture (USDA)'s state fact sheets.¹³ When displayed, data on sales receipts generated by the top fresh produce items in each state come the Farm and Wealth Statistics cash receipts by commodity tables available from the USDA's Economic Research Service.¹⁴

The agriculture section uses the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wage (QCEW) to estimate the

percentage of crop farms producing fresh fruits and vegetables, and change in real wage of agricultural workers between 2002 and 2014. The QCEW data uses the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) to assign establishments to different industries. We identify the following farms as fresh fruits and vegetable farms: other vegetable and melon farming, orange groves, citrus, apple orchards, grape vineyards, strawberry farming, berry farming, fruit and tree nut combination farming, other non-citrus fruit farming, mushroom production, other food crops grown under cover, and sugar beet farming.

The decline in the number of field and crop workers comes from the quarterly Farm Labor Survey (FLS) administered by USDA.¹⁵ Stephen Bronars, an economist with Edgeworth Economics, previously analyzed and produced these estimates for the PNAE report, "A Vanishing Breed: How the Decline in U.S. Farm Laborers Over the Last Decade has Hurt the U.S. Economy and Slowed Production on American Farms" published in 2015. Additional information on those calculations can be found in the methodology section of that paper.¹⁶

Finally, for a small number of states, we also produce estimates showing how growers in the state are losing market share for specific produce items consumed each year by Americans, such as avocados or strawberries. Those estimates originate in a 2014 report produced by PNAE and the Agriculture Coalition for Immigration Reform.¹⁷ The author used data from the USDA's annual "yearbook" for fresh fruits and vegetables, among other sources, to produce those estimates. More detail can be found in the methodology of that report.

Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math

We use the STEM occupation list released by U.S. Census Bureau to determine the number and share of foreign-born STEM workers as well as the number of unemployed STEM workers from 2014 ACS 1-year data.¹⁸ Per U.S. Census classification, healthcare workers such as physicians and dentists are not counted as working in

the STEM occupations. All unemployed workers who list their previous job as a STEM occupation are counted as unemployed STEM workers.

To capture the demand for STEM workers, we use the Labor Insight tool developed by Burning Glass Technologies, a leading labor market analytics firm. Burning Glass, which is used by policy researchers and academics, scours almost 40,000 online sources daily and compiles results on the number and types of jobs and skills being sought by U.S. employers. This search includes online job boards, individual employer sites, newspapers, and public agencies, among other sources. Burning Glass has an algorithm and artificial intelligence tool that identifies and eliminates duplicate listings—including ones posted to multiple job boards as part of a broad search.¹⁹

The data on STEM graduates are from the 2014 Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) completion survey.²⁰ A study by the Partnership for a New American Economy and the American Enterprise Institute found that every time a state gains 100 foreign-born STEM workers with graduate-level STEM training from a U.S. school, 262 more jobs are created for U.S.-born workers there in the seven years that follow.²¹ We use this multiplier and the number of STEM advanced level graduates on temporary visas to estimate the number of jobs created for U.S.-born workers.

The last part of the STEM section presents data on patents with at least one foreign-born inventor. The data is originally from a study by Partnership for a New American Economy in 2012, which relied on data from U.S. Patent and Trademark Office's database as well as LinkedIn, direct correspondence, and online profiles to determine the nativity of individual inventors.²²

Healthcare

We estimate the number of unemployed healthcare workers using the 2014 ACS 1-year sample. Healthcare workers are healthcare practitioners and technical occupations, or healthcare support occupations as defined by U.S. Census Bureau.²³

Unemployed healthcare workers are individuals who report their previous job as a healthcare occupation, and their employment status as currently not working but looking for work. We took the number of job postings for healthcare workers from the Burning Glass Labor Insight tool, a database that scours online sources and identifies the number and types of job postings. We describe this resource in detail in the section on STEM methodology.

We then delve into specific occupations within the broader healthcare industry. To produce the figures on the total number of physicians and psychiatrists and the share born abroad, we use American Medical Association (AMA) Physician Masterfile data. To give a sense of the supply and demand of physicians and psychiatrists, we also calculate the physician and psychiatrist density in each state by dividing the total number of physicians or psychiatrists by the population estimates in 2015 for each state.²⁴ As for the share of foreign-born nurses and home health aides, we use the 2014 ACS 5-year sample data because data from the 1-year sample is too small to make reliable estimates.

We estimate the shortage of psychiatrists, dentists, and occupational therapists using data from the various U.S. government offices. For example, the shortage of psychiatrists refers to the current lack of psychiatrists per the U.S. government's official definition of a mental health shortage area (1/30,000 residents) in each county, aggregated within each state.²⁵ The shortage of dentists is from an analysis by U.S. Department of Health and Human Services,²⁶ and the shortage of occupational workers is from a journal article published by PM&R, the official scientific journal of the American Academy of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation.²⁷ For psychiatrists, we project future shortages by accounting for individuals in these occupations as they reach the retirement age of 65.

Housing

The data in the housing section comes from the 2014 ACS 1-year sample. Immigrant homeowners are defined as foreign-born householders who reported living in

their own home. We estimate the amount of housing wealth held by immigrant households by aggregating the total housing value of homes owned by immigrant-led households. We also estimate the amount of rent paid by immigrant-led households by aggregating the rent paid by such families. We then calculate the share of housing wealth and rent that immigrant households held or paid compared to the total population. For characteristics of homeowners, a foreign-born new homebuyer is defined as a household with a foreign-born household head who owned and moved to the current residence within the last five years.

Visa Demand

The data on visa demand are drawn primarily from the 2014 Annual Report produced by the Office of Foreign Labor Certification within the U.S. Department of Labor.²⁸ Our figures on the number of visa requests authorized for each state—as well as the occupations and cities those visas are tied to—originate directly from that report.

In this section, we also present estimates on the number of jobs that would have been created if all the visas authorized in 2014 had resulted in actual visa awards. The multipliers we use to produce these estimates originate in a 2011 report released by PNAE and the American Enterprise Institute. That report, written by the economist Madeline Zavodny, used a reduced-form model to examine the relationship between the share of each state’s population that was immigrant and the employment rate of U.S. natives. More detail on Zavodny’s calculations and the multipliers produced for each visa type can be found in the methodology appendix of that report.²⁹

For purposes of these briefs, we use Zavodny’s finding that the award of 100 additional H-1B visas in a state is tied to 183 additional jobs for natives there in the 7 years that follow. The award of 100 additional H-2B visas creates 464 additional jobs for natives in the state during that same time period. We apply these multipliers to the number of visas in those categories authorized for each state in 2014.

In many of the state reports, we also present figures showing how visa denials resulting from the 2007 and 2008 H-1B lotteries cost the tech sectors of metropolitan areas both employment and wage growth in the two years that followed. The economists Giovanni Peri, Kevin Shih, and Chad Sparber produced these estimates for a PNAE report on the H-1B visa system that was released in 2014. That report relied on Labor Condition Application and I-129 data that the authors obtained through a Freedom of Information Act request, as well as American Community Survey data from 2006 and 2011. The authors did regressions that examined the causal relationship between a “shock” in the supply of H-1B computer workers and computer employment in subsequent years for more than 200 metropolitan areas. More information on those estimates can be found in the methodology appendix of that report.³⁰

Naturalization

Using the ACS 2014 1-year sample, non-citizens eligible to naturalize are defined as non-citizens who are 18 years or above, can speak English, and have continuous residence in the United States for at least five years.

Researchers at the University of Southern California’s Center for the Study of Immigrant Integration published a report in 2012, “Citizen Gain: The Economic Benefits of Naturalization for Immigrants and the Economy,” which concluded that immigrants experience an 8 to 11 percent gain in their individual wages as a result of becoming naturalized. Because this earnings gain phases in over time—and we want to be conservative in our estimates—we model a wage increase of just 8 percent when discussing the possible gains that could accrue due to naturalization.³¹ We use this multiplier and the mean individual wages of non-citizens in each state to estimate the additional earnings that non-citizens would earn if they naturalized. Finally, we calculate the aggregate wage earnings boost by multiplying the total number of non-citizens who are eligible for naturalization by the average increase in wage income per person.

International Students

We obtain the size and share of postsecondary students who are international in each state from the 2014 Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) fall enrollment data. Those figures are then applied to preexisting work previously done by NAFSA, an organization representing professionals employed in the international offices of colleges and universities across the United States. NAFSA has developed an economic value tool and methodology that estimates the total economic benefit and jobs created or supported by international students and their dependents in each state.³² The economic contributions include the costs of higher education along with living expenses minus U.S.-based financial support that international students receive.

Because the enrollment data from IPEDS that we use in this brief is different from the underlying data used by NAFSA, our figures differ slightly from the NAFSA estimates of the economic contributions made by international students in the 2014-2015 school year.

Voting

The estimates for the number of registered and active voters who are foreign-born are calculated from the Voter Supplement in the Current Population Survey (CPS) for the years 2008, 2010, 2012, and 2014 using the IPUMS database. The sample in CPS includes civilian non-institutional persons only. Foreign-born individuals who stated having voted between 2008 and 2014 are termed active voters.

Using data from the 2014 ACS 1-year sample, we estimate the number and share of foreign-born eligible voters. We define them as naturalized citizens aged 18 or older who live in housing units. Persons living in institutional group quarters such as correctional facilities or non-institutional group quarters such as residential treatment facilities for adults are excluded from the estimation. We also estimate the number of new foreign-born voters who will become eligible to vote in 2016 and 2020, either by turning 18 or through

naturalization, as well as the total number of foreign-born voters in these years. The estimates of newly eligible voters for 2016 include naturalized citizens ages 16 and 17 as of 2014 (thereby becoming of voting age by 2016). Those eligible to vote in 2020 include all naturalized citizens ages 12-17 in 2014. Applicable mortality rates are also applied.³³ In addition, we estimate newly naturalized citizens using data from the Department of Homeland Security, which show the two-year average of new naturalized citizens by state.³⁴ We discount from these numbers the percentage of children below 18 in households with a naturalized householder by state. Estimates of total foreign-born voters include naturalized citizens aged 18 or older in 2014, discounted by average U.S. mortality rates by age brackets, summed to the pool of newly eligible foreign-born voters.

Margin of victory in 2012 refers to President Barack Obama's margin of victory over Republican candidate Mitt Romney in terms of popular vote. The margins are negative in states that Romney won in 2012.³⁵

Undocumented

Using data from the 2014 ACS, we applied the methodological approach outlined by Harvard University economist George Borjas³⁶ to arrive at an estimate of the undocumented immigrant population in the overall United States and individual states. The foreign-born population is adjusted for misreporting in two ways. Foreign-born individuals who reported naturalization are reclassified as non-naturalized if the individual had resided in the United States for less than six years (as of 2014) or, if married to a U.S. citizen, for less than three years. We use the following criteria to code foreign-born individuals as legal U.S. residents:

- Arrived in the U.S. before 1980
- Citizens and children less than 18 year old reporting that at least one parent is native-born
- Recipients of Social Security benefits, SSI, Medicaid, Medicare, Military insurance, or public assistance

- Households with at least one citizen that received SNAP
- People in the armed forces and veterans
- People attending college and graduate school
- Refugees
- Working in occupations requiring a license
- Government employees, and people working in the public administration sector
- Any of the above conditions applies to the householder's spouse

The remainder of the foreign-born population that do not meet this criteria is reclassified as undocumented. Estimates regarding the economic contribution of undocumented immigrants and the role they play in various industries, and tax contributions are made using the same methods used to capture this information for the broader immigrant population in the broader brief. When estimating the aggregate household income, spending power, and tax contributions, we are not able to make reliable estimates for undocumented-led households in Alaska, Maine, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Vermont, and West Virginia due to the small sample size of undocumented-led households in ACS. Finally, the variables giving a sense of the undocumented population's level of assimilation—including their English proficiency and time in the United States—are estimated by examining the traits of the undocumented population in the 1-year sample of the ACS.

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