



Immigrants in Georgia

Georgia has a sizeable immigrant community, much of which hails from Mexico. Ten percent of the state's population was born in another country, while 1 in 13 Georgians is a native-born U.S. citizen with at least one immigrant parent. The state benefits from the various ways foreign-born residents participate in the economy and labor force, with immigrants accounting for nearly 40 percent of all farmers, fishers, and foresters in the state and almost 25 percent of computer and math science employees. As workers, business owners, taxpayers, and neighbors, immigrants are an integral part of Georgia's diverse and thriving communities and make extensive contributions that benefit all.

One in ten Georgia residents is an immigrant, while nearly 8 percent of residents are native-born U.S. citizens who have at least one immigrant parent.

- In 2015, 1 million immigrants (foreign-born individuals) comprised 10 percent of the state's population.¹
- Georgia was home to 473,617 women, 480,242 men, and 69,858 children who were immigrants.²
- The top countries of origin for immigrants were Mexico (25.7 percent of immigrants), India (8.6 percent), Korea (4.1 percent), Vietnam (3.5 percent), and Jamaica (3.2 percent).³
- In 2016, 787,941 people in Georgia (7.8 percent of the state's population) were native-born Americans who had at least [one immigrant parent](#).⁴

More than two in five immigrants in Georgia are naturalized U.S. citizens.

- 428,570 immigrants (41.9 percent) had naturalized as of 2015,⁵ and 174,413 immigrants were eligible to become [naturalized U.S. citizens](#) in 2015.⁶
- Three in four immigrants (74.9 percent) reported speaking English "well" or "very well."⁷

Immigrants in Georgia are concentrated at both ends of the educational spectrum.

- Nearly one in three adult immigrants had a college degree or more education in 2015, while more than one in four had less than a high school diploma.⁸

Education Level	Share (%) of All Immigrants	Share (%) of All Natives
College degree or more	31.6	29.7
Some college	18.0	29.6
High school diploma only	23.1	28.9
Less than a high-school diploma	27.3	11.8

More than 200,000 U.S. citizens in Georgia live with at least one family member who is undocumented.

- 375,000 [undocumented immigrants](#) comprised 36 percent of the immigrant population and 3.6 percent of the total state population in 2014.⁹
- 503,155 people in Georgia, including 211,239 born in the United States, lived with at least one [undocumented family member](#) between 2010 and 2014.¹⁰
- During the same period, 1 in 13 children in the state was a U.S. citizen living with at least one undocumented family member (186,822 children in total).¹¹

Nearly 22,000 Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) recipients live in Georgia.¹²

- As of 2016, 60 percent of [DACA-eligible immigrants](#) in Georgia, or 28,589 people, had applied for DACA.¹³
- An additional 17,000 residents of the state satisfied all but the educational requirements for DACA, and another 8,000 would be eligible as they grew older.¹⁴

Nearly one in seven workers in Georgia is an immigrant, together making up a critical share of the labor force across industries.

- 684,887 immigrant workers comprised 13.8 percent of the labor force in 2015.¹⁵
- Immigrant workers were most numerous in the following industries:

Industry	Number of Immigrant Workers
Manufacturing	95,176
Construction	91,924
Retail Trade	76,249
Accommodation and Food Services	73,083
Health Care and Social Assistance	65,197

Analysis of the U.S. Census Bureau’s 2015 American Community Survey 1-year PUMS data by the American Immigration Council.

- The largest shares of immigrant workers were in the following industries:¹⁶

Industry	Immigrant Share (%) (of all industry workers)
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	26.3
Construction	24.9
Other Services (except Public Administration)	17.4
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	17.0
Manufacturing	15.8

Analysis of the U.S. Census Bureau's 2015 American Community Survey 1-year PUMS data by the American Immigration Council.

Immigrants are an integral part of the Georgia workforce in a range of occupations.

- In 2015, immigrant workers were most numerous in the following occupation groups:¹⁷

Occupation Category	Number of Immigrant Workers
Construction and Extraction	79,630
Sales and Related	66,883
Production	66,573
Office and Administrative Support	65,703
Management	63,565

Analysis of the U.S. Census Bureau's 2015 American Community Survey 1-year PUMS data by the American Immigration Council.

- The largest shares of immigrant workers were in the following occupation groups:¹⁸

Occupation Category	Immigrant Share (%) (of all workers in occupation)
Farming, Fishing, and Forestry	38.5
Construction and Extraction	27.4
Computer and Mathematical Sciences	24.5
Building and Grounds Cleaning & Maintenance	23.1
Production	18.4

Analysis of the U.S. Census Bureau's 2015 American Community Survey 1-year PUMS data by the American Immigration Council.

- Undocumented immigrants comprised 5.2 percent of the state's workforce in 2014.¹⁹

Immigrants in Georgia have contributed billions of dollars in taxes.

- [Immigrant-led households in the state paid](#) \$4.7 billion in federal taxes and \$2.2 billion in state and local taxes in 2014.²⁰
- Undocumented immigrants in Georgia paid an estimated \$351.7 million in [state and local taxes](#) in 2014. Their contribution would rise to \$455.6 million if they could receive legal status.²¹
- [DACA recipients](#) in Georgia paid an estimated \$71.7 million in state and local taxes in 2016.²²

As consumers, immigrants add billions of dollars to Georgia's economy.

- Georgia residents in immigrant-led households had \$19.2 billion in [spending power](#) (after-tax income) in 2014.²³

Nearly one in five self-employed business owners in Georgia is an immigrant.

- 90,458 immigrant business owners accounted for 18.3 percent of all self-employed Georgia residents in 2015 and generated \$1.8 billion in business income.²⁴
- In 2015, immigrants accounted for 18.1 percent of business owners in the Atlanta/Sandy Springs/Marietta metropolitan area.²⁵

Endnotes

¹ “Foreign born” does not include people born in Puerto Rico or U.S. island areas or U.S. citizens born abroad of American parent(s). U.S. Census Bureau, 2015 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates. The American Immigration Council elected to use data from the 2015 ACS 1-Year estimates wherever possible to provide the most current information available. Since these estimates are based on a smaller sample size than the ACS 5-year, however, they are more sensitive to fluctuations and may result in greater margins of error (compared to 5-year estimates).

² Children are defined as people age 17 or younger. Men and women do not include children. Ibid.

³ Analysis of the U.S. Census Bureau’s 2015 American Community Survey 1-year PUMS data by the American Immigration Council.

⁴ Analysis of data from the 2016 Current Population Survey by the American Immigration Council, using IPUMS-CPS. Sarah Flood, Miriam King, Steven Ruggles, and J. Robert Warren, *Integrated Public Use Microdata Series, Current Population Survey: Version 5.0* [dataset] (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota, 2017).

⁵ 2015 ACS 1-Year Estimates.

⁶ Augmented IPUMS-ACS data, as published in “State-Level Unauthorized Population and Eligible-to-Naturalize Estimates,” Center for Migration Studies data tool, accessed August 2017, data.cmsny.org/state.html.

⁷ Figure includes immigrants who speak only English. Data based on survey respondents age 5 and over. Analysis of 2015 ACS 1-Year Estimates by the American Immigration Council.

⁸ Data based on survey respondents age 25 and older. 2015 ACS 1-Year Estimates.

⁹ Pew Research Center, “U.S. unauthorized immigration population estimates,” November 3, 2016, www.pewhispanic.org/interactives/unauthorized-immigrants/.

¹⁰ Silva Mathema, “State-by-State Estimates of the Family Members of Unauthorized Immigrants,” University of Southern California’s Center for the Study of Immigrant Integration and the Center for American Progress, March 2017, <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/immigration/news/2017/03/16/427868/state-state-estimates-family-members-unauthorized-immigrants/>.

¹¹ American Immigration Council analysis of data from the 2010-2014 ACS 5-Year, using Silva Mathema’s “State-by-State Estimates of the Family Members of Unauthorized Immigrants” and IPUMS-USA. Steven Ruggles, Katie Genadek, Ronald Goeken, Josiah Grover, and Matthew Sobek, *Integrated Public Use Microdata Series: Version 7.0* [dataset] (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota, 2017).

¹² The “Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals” (DACA) initiative began in 2012 and provides certain immigrants (those who were brought to the United States as children and meet specific requirements) with temporary relief from deportation, or deferred action. American Immigration Council, “Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals: A Q&A Guide,” August 17, 2012, www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/research/deferred-action-childhood-arrivals-qa-guide. The number of DACA recipients reflects USCIS’ estimate of those with active DACA grants as of September 4, 2017. U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services CLAIMS3 and ELIS Systems, *Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals: Population Data* (Washington, DC: Dept. of Homeland Security, September 20, 2017), Approximate Active DACA Recipients: State of Residence as of September 4, 2017 [dataset], <https://www.uscis.gov/daca2017>.

¹³ “DACA-eligible” refers to immigrants who were immediately eligible to apply for DACA as of 2016. Migration Policy Institute analysis of U.S. Census Bureau data from the 2014 American Community Survey (ACS), 2010-14 ACS pooled, and the 2008 Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP), as cited in “Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) Data Tools,” accessed June 2017, www.migrationpolicy.org/programs/data-hub/deferred-action-childhood-arrivals-daca-profiles.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Analysis of 2015 ACS 1-year PUMS data by the American Immigration Council. Categories are based on the 2012 North American Industry Classification System (NAICS), www.census.gov/eos/www/naics/index.html.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Analysis of 2015 ACS 1-year PUMS data by the American Immigration Council. Categories are based on the 2010 Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) system, www.bls.gov/soc/major_groups.htm.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Pew Research Center, “U.S. unauthorized immigration population estimates,” 2016.

²⁰ New American Economy, *The Contributions of New Americans in Georgia* (New York, NY: August 2016), 7, <http://www.newamericaneconomy.org/research/the-contributions-of-new-americans-in-georgia/>.

²¹ Institute on Taxation & Economic Policy (ITEP), *Undocumented Immigrants’ State & Local Tax Contributions* (Washington, DC: March 2017), 3, <https://itep.org/undocumented-immigrants-state-local-tax-contributions-2/>.

²² ITEP, *State & Local Tax Contributions of Young Undocumented Immigrants* (Washington, DC: April 2017), Appendix 1, <https://itep.org/state-local-tax-contributions-of-young-undocumented-immigrants/>.

²³ New American Economy, *The Contributions of New Americans in Georgia*, 7.

²⁴ “Business owners” include people who are self-employed, at least 18 years old, and work at least 15 hours per week at their businesses. Analysis of 2015 ACS 1-year PUMS data by the American Immigration Council.

²⁵ American Immigration Council analysis of 2016 CPS data. Flood, King, Ruggles, and Warren, *IPUMS CPS* dataset.