



Immigrants in Alaska

Alaska has a sizable immigrant community, much of which hails from the Philippines. Nearly 8 percent of Alaskans were born in another country, while 9 percent are native-born Americans who have at least one immigrant parent. Foreign-born residents also represent vital shares of the state's labor force in various sectors: 25 percent of workers in the manufacturing industry are immigrants, as are 21 percent in the finance and insurance industry. As workers, business owners, taxpayers, and neighbors, immigrants are an integral part of Alaska's diverse and thriving communities and make extensive contributions that benefit all.

Nearly 8 percent of Alaska residents are immigrants, while more than 9 percent are native-born U.S. citizens with at least one immigrant parent.

- In 2015, 58,544 immigrants (foreign-born individuals) comprised 7.9 percent of the state's population.¹
- Alaska was home to 30,118 women, 24,299 men, and 4,127 children who were immigrants.²
- The top countries of origin for immigrants were the Philippines (35.1 percent of immigrants), Mexico (7 percent), Korea (6.9 percent), Ukraine (4.2 percent), and Russia (4.1 percent).³
- In 2016, 65,150 people in Alaska (9.2 percent of the state's population) were native-born Americans who had at least [one immigrant parent](#).⁴

Over half of all immigrants in Alaska are naturalized U.S. citizens.

- 32,367 immigrants (55.3 percent) had naturalized as of 2015,⁵ and 14,457 immigrants were eligible to become [naturalized U.S. citizens](#) in 2015.⁶
- The vast majority of immigrants (84.2 percent) reported speaking English "well" or "very well."⁷

The majority of immigrants in Alaska have pursued education at or above the college level.

- More than a quarter of adult immigrants had a college degree or more education in 2015, while less than a fifth had less than a high school diploma.⁸

Education Level	Share (%) of All Immigrants	Share (%) of All Natives
College degree or more	26.6	30.1
Some college	32.9	36.0
High school diploma only	22.0	27.9
Less than a high-school diploma	18.6	6.1

Thousands of U.S. citizens in Alaska live with at least one family member who is undocumented.

- 10,000 [undocumented immigrants](#) comprised 17 percent of the immigrant population and 1.3 percent of the total state population in 2014.⁹
- 9,353 people in Alaska, including 3,351 born in the United States, lived with at least one [undocumented family member](#) between 2010 and 2014.¹⁰
- During the same period, 1 percent of children in the state were U.S. citizens living with at least one undocumented family member (2,064 children in total).¹¹

Fewer than 100 Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) recipients live in Alaska.¹²

- 205 people in Alaska had applied for DACA as of 2017.¹³
- [DACA recipients](#) in Alaska paid an estimated \$966,000 in state and local taxes in 2016.¹⁴

Immigrants are vital to Alaska’s labor force across industries, accounting for more than one in nine workers in the state.

- 43,041 immigrant workers comprised 11.4 percent of the labor force in 2015.¹⁵
- Immigrant workers were most numerous in the following industries:

Industry	Number of Immigrant Workers
Health Care and Social Assistance	8,973
Retail Trade	5,720
Accommodation and Food Services	5,103
Public Administration	4,931
Manufacturing	3,739

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)
Manufacturing	25.6
Wholesale Trade	21.7
Finance and Insurance	20.9
Health Care and Social Assistance	14.7
Other Services (except Public Administration)	14.4

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

Immigrants are an important part of the Alaska 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
Office and Administrative Support	7,944
Building and Grounds Cleaning & Maintenance	4,989
Production	4,272
Food Preparation and Serving Related	3,771
Sales and Related	3,721

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)
Production	26.5
Building and Grounds Cleaning & Maintenance	24.9
Healthcare Support	24.0
Food Preparation and Serving Related	14.8
Personal Care and Service	14.6

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

- Undocumented immigrants comprised 1.9 percent of the state's workforce in 2014.¹⁹

Immigrants in Alaska have contributed hundreds of millions of dollars in taxes.

- [Immigrant-led households in the state paid](#) \$375.7 million in federal taxes and \$60.7 million in state and local taxes in 2014.²⁰
- Undocumented immigrants in Alaska paid an estimated \$4 million in [state and local taxes](#) in 2014. Their contribution would rise to \$4.4 million if they could receive legal status.²¹

As consumers, immigrants add more than a billion dollars to Alaska's economy each year.

- Alaskans in immigrant-led households had \$1.4 billion in [spending power](#) (after-tax income) in 2014.²²

Immigrant entrepreneurs represent more than 1 in 12 Alaskan business owners, generating millions of dollars in combined annual business revenue.

- 3,510 immigrant business owners accounted for 8.3 percent of all self-employed Alaska residents in 2015 and generated \$71.5 million in business income.²³

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 Number represents total initial requests for deferred action received by USCIS as of June 30, 2017. USCIS, *Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals Process Through Fiscal Year 2017, 3rd Qtr* (Washington, DC: Dept. of Homeland Security, September 20, 2017), Number of Form I-821D: Consideration of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals by Fiscal Year Quarter [dataset], <https://www.uscis.gov/tools/reports-studies/immigration-forms-data/data-set-form-i-821d-deferred-action-childhood-arrivals>.

¹⁴ Institute on Taxation & Economic Policy (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/>.

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 Alaska* (New York, NY: August 2016), 5, <http://www.newamericaneconomy.org/research/the-contributions-of-new-americans-in-alaska/>.

²¹ ITEP, *Undocumented Immigrants’ State & Local Tax Contributions* (Washington, DC: March 2017), Appendix 1, <https://itep.org/undocumented-immigrants-state-local-tax-contributions-2/>.

²² New American Economy, *The Contributions of New Americans in Alaska*, 5.

²³ “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.