



Immigrants in Texas

Texas has a long history of immigration, with the majority of immigrants hailing from Mexico. Immigrants now account for 17 percent of the state's total population and support the local economy in a growing number of industries. Construction—one of the state's largest and fastest growing industries—pulls nearly 40 percent of its workers from immigrants in the community. As workers, business owners, taxpayers, and neighbors, immigrants are an integral part of Texas' diverse and thriving communities and make extensive contributions that benefit all.

One in six Texas residents is an immigrant, while 15 percent of residents are native-born U.S. citizens with at least one immigrant parent.

- As of 2015, 4.7 million immigrants (foreign-born individuals) comprised 17 percent of the population.¹
- Texas was home to 2.2 million women, 2.2 million men, and 317,104 children who were immigrants.²
- The top countries of origin for immigrants were Mexico (55.1 percent of immigrants), India (5 percent), El Salvador (4.3 percent), Vietnam (3.7 percent), and China (2.3 percent).³
- In 2016, 4.1 million people in Texas (15 percent of the state's population) were native-born Americans who had at least [one immigrant parent](#).⁴

Over a third of all immigrants in Texas are naturalized U.S. citizens.

- 1.7 million immigrants (35.8 percent) had naturalized as of 2015,⁵ and 982,471 immigrants were eligible to become [naturalized U.S. citizens](#) in 2015.⁶
- The majority of immigrants (62.6 percent) reported speaking English 'well' or "very well."⁷

Immigrants in Texas are found across the educational spectrum.

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

Education Level	Share (%) of All Immigrants	Share (%) of All Natives
College degree or more	23.5	29.8
Some college	15.4	32.7
High school diploma only	20.6	26.7
Less than a high-school diploma	40.5	10.8

More than 1 million U.S. citizens in Texas live with at least one family member who is undocumented.

- 1.7 million [undocumented immigrants](#) comprised 35 percent of the immigrant population and 6.1 percent of the total state population in 2014.⁹
- 2.7 million people in Texas, including 1.2 million born in the United States, lived with at least one [undocumented family member](#) between 2010 and 2014.¹⁰
- During the same period, one in seven children in the state was a U.S.-citizen child living with at least one undocumented family member (1 million children in total).¹¹

Nearly 125,000 Texas residents have been approved for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA).¹²

- As of 2016, 80 percent of [DACA-eligible immigrants](#) in Texas, or 140,688 people, had applied for DACA.¹³
- An additional 57,000 residents of the state satisfied all but the educational requirements for DACA, and another 37,000 would be eligible as they grew older.¹⁴

Immigrants make up more than a fifth of the labor force in Texas and are integral to a range of industries.

- 2.9 million immigrant workers comprised 21.6 percent of the labor force in 2015.¹⁵

- Immigrant workers were most numerous in the following industries:

Industry	Number of Immigrant Workers
Construction	467,292
Manufacturing	343,237
Accommodation and Food Services	342,030
Retail Trade	324,093
Health Care and Social Assistance	315,292

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)
Construction	38.3
Administrative & Support; Waste Management; and Remediation Services	28.8
Other Services (except Public Administration)	28.6
Accommodation and Food Services	26.9
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	26.1

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 Texas 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	446,103
Building and Grounds Cleaning & Maintenance	291,294
Production	282,715
Food Preparation and Serving Related	273,636
Sales and Related	267,191

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)
Building and Grounds Cleaning & Maintenance	45.4
Construction and Extraction	42.6
Farming, Fishing, and Forestry	40.0
Production	33.4
Food Preparation and Serving Related	28.4

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

- Undocumented immigrants comprised 8.5 percent of the state's workforce in 2014.¹⁹

Immigrants in Texas have contributed tens of billions of dollars in taxes.

- [Immigrant-led households in the state paid](#) \$20.4 billion in federal taxes and \$8.7 billion in state and local taxes in 2014.²⁰
- Undocumented immigrants in Texas paid \$1.6 billion in [state and local taxes](#) in 2014. Their contribution would rise to \$1.7 billion if they could receive legal status.²¹
- Undocumented immigrants who were [enrolled in the DACA program](#) in 2016 paid \$313.1 million in state and local taxes.²²

As consumers, immigrants add tens of billions of dollars to Texas' economy.

- Texans in immigrant-led households had \$89.6 billion in [spending power](#) (after-tax income) in 2014.²³

Immigrant entrepreneurs in Texas generate billions of dollars in business revenue.

- 361,493 immigrant business owners accounted for 27.5 percent of all self-employed Texas residents in 2015 and generated \$8.1 billion in business income.²⁴
- In 2015, immigrants accounted for 42.2 percent of business owners in the Houston/Baytown/Sugar Land metropolitan area, 22.6 percent in the Dallas/Fort Worth/Arlington metro area, 19.3 percent in San Antonio, and 11.8 percent in the Austin/Round Rock metro 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. Ibid.
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, 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. U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, “Number of Form I-821D, Consideration of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals” Fiscal Year 2012-2017, March 31, 2017, https://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/USCIS/Resources/Reports%20and%20Studies/Immigration%20Forms%20Data/All%20Form%20Types/DACA/daca_performancedata_fy2017_qtr2.pdf.
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 Texas* (New York, NY: August 2016), 5, <http://www.newamericaneconomy.org/research/the-contributions-of-new-americans-in-texas/>.
21. Institute on Taxation & Economic Policy (ITEP), *Undocumented Immigrants’ State & Local Tax Contributions* (Washington, DC: March 2017), 3, www.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, www.itep.org/state-local-tax-contributions-of-young-undocumented-immigrants/.
23. New American Economy, *The Contributions of New Americans in Texas*, 5.
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.