



Immigrants in Utah

Utah has a sizable immigrant community, much of which emigrated from Mexico. Over 8 percent of Utah's population was born in another country, and a similar proportion of residents are native-born Americans with at least one immigrant parent. Across sectors, foreign-born residents are a significant share of the labor force and support the state's economy. For example, immigrants represent 16 percent of residents working in the hotel and food services industry, while Utah's construction industry relies on immigrants for 20 percent of its employees. As workers, business owners, taxpayers, and neighbors, immigrants are an integral part of Utah's diverse and thriving communities and make extensive contributions that benefit all.

One in 12 Utah residents is an immigrant, and another 1 in 12 residents is a native-born U.S. citizen with at least one immigrant parent.

- In 2015, 244,467 immigrants (foreign-born individuals) comprised 8.2 percent of the state's population.¹
- Utah was home to 119,563 women, 110,113 men, and 14,791 children who were immigrants.²
- The top countries of origin for immigrants were Mexico (43.2 percent of immigrants), El Salvador (4.1 percent), Canada (3.5 percent), Vietnam (2.9 percent), and the Philippines (2.9 percent).³
- In 2016, 255,740 people in Utah (8.5 percent of the state's population) were native-born Americans who had at least [one immigrant parent](#).⁴

Nearly two in five immigrants in Utah are naturalized U.S. citizens.

- 95,513 immigrants (39.1 percent) had naturalized as of 2015,⁵ and 41,322 immigrants were eligible to become [naturalized U.S. citizens](#) in 2015.⁶
- More than three in four immigrants (77.2 percent) reported speaking English "well" or "very well."⁷

Immigrants in Utah are found across the educational spectrum.

- More than a fifth of adult immigrants had a college degree or more education in 2015, while almost 3 in 10 had less than a high school diploma.⁸

Education Level	Share (%) of All Immigrants	Share (%) of All Natives
College degree or more	22.8	33.1
Some college	19.6	37.6
High school diploma only	27.7	23.7
Less than a high-school diploma	29.8	5.6

Over 70,000 U.S. citizens in Utah live with at least one family member who is undocumented.

- 100,000 [undocumented immigrants](#) comprised 39 percent of the immigrant population and 3.5 percent of the total state population in 2014.⁹
- 140,517 people in Utah, including 64,128 born in the United States, lived with at least one [undocumented family member](#) between 2010 and 2014.¹⁰
- During the same period, 6 percent of children in the state were U.S. citizens living with at least one undocumented family member (55,516 children in total).¹¹

Nearly 9,000 Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) recipients live in Utah.¹²

- As of 2016, 92 percent of [DACA-eligible immigrants](#) in Utah, or 10,512 people, had applied for DACA.¹³
- An additional 3,000 residents of the state satisfied all but the educational requirements for DACA, and another 3,000 would be additionally eligible as they grew older.¹⁴

Immigrants are vital to Utah's labor force across industries, accounting for more than one in nine workers.

- 166,872 immigrant workers comprised 11.3 percent of the labor force in 2015.¹⁵

- Immigrant workers were most numerous in the following industries:

Industry	Number of Immigrant Workers
Manufacturing	31,771
Construction	23,174
Accommodation and Food Services	21,255
Retail Trade	19,180
Administration and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	16,969

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	20.0
Administrative & Support; Waste Management; and Remediation Services	18.6
Manufacturing	17.9
Accommodation and Food Services	16.0
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	15.4

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

Immigrants are an integral part of the Utah 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
Production	25,889
Construction and Extraction	20,058
Office and Administrative Support	19,041
Building and Grounds Cleaning & Maintenance	18,156
Sales and Related	16,188

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	27.4
Farming, Fishing, and Forestry	25.9
Construction and Extraction	22.2
Production	21.8
Food Preparation and Serving Related	14.7
Analysis of the U.S. Census Bureau's 2015 American Community Survey 1-year PUMS data by the American Immigration Council.	

- Undocumented immigrants comprised 5.4 percent of the state's workforce in 2014.¹⁹

Immigrants in Utah contribute over a billion dollars in yearly taxes.

- [Immigrant-led households in the state paid](#) \$784.8 million in federal taxes and \$410.3 million in state and local taxes in 2014.²⁰
- Undocumented immigrants in Utah paid an estimated \$69.8 million in [state and local taxes](#) in 2014. Their contribution would rise to \$91.3 million if they could receive legal status.²¹
- [DACA recipients](#) in Utah paid an estimated \$18.8 million in state and local taxes in 2016.²²

As consumers, immigrants add billions of dollars to Utah's economy every year.

- Utah residents in immigrant-led households had \$4 billion in [spending power](#) (after-tax income) in 2014.²³

Immigrant entrepreneurs represent more than one in nine business owners in Utah, generating hundreds of millions of dollars in annual business revenue.

- 15,793 immigrant business owners accounted for 11.6 percent of all self-employed Utah residents in 2015 and generated \$453.1 million in business income.²⁴
- In 2015, immigrants accounted for 9.9 percent of business owners in the Salt Lake City 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 Utah* (New York, NY: August 2016), 6, <http://www.newamericaneconomy.org/research/the-contributions-of-new-americans-in-utah/>.
- 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 Utah*, 6.
- 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.