



## Immigrants in West Virginia

West Virginia has a small but vital immigrant population, much of which hails from Germany. While immigrants account for less than 2 percent of the state's total population, they help support West Virginia's economy. Nearly 48 percent of immigrants in West Virginia possess a college degree or higher. Many of the state's immigrants have chosen to transfer those skills into the education field, with immigrants comprising nearly 8 percent of all residents working in education, training, and library services. As workers, business owners, taxpayers, and neighbors, immigrants are an important part of West Virginia's diverse and thriving communities and make notable contributions that benefit all.

**Almost 2 percent of West Virginia residents are immigrants, while an additional 2 percent are native-born U.S. citizens with at least one immigrant parent.**

- In 2015, 29,522 immigrants (foreign-born individuals) comprised 1.6 percent of the state's population.<sup>1</sup>
- West Virginia was home to 13,878 women, 14,062 men, and 1,582 children who were immigrants.<sup>2</sup>
- The top countries of origin for immigrants were Germany (10.5 percent of immigrants), India (8.7 percent), China (8.5 percent), Iran (7.6 percent), and the Philippines (4.8 percent).<sup>3</sup>
- In 2016, 38,740 people in West Virginia (2.2 percent of the state's population) were native-born Americans who had at least [one immigrant parent](#).<sup>4</sup>

**Over half of all immigrants in West Virginia are naturalized U.S. citizens.**

- 15,430 immigrants (52.3 percent) had naturalized as of 2015,<sup>5</sup> and 5,681 immigrants were eligible to become [naturalized U.S. citizens](#) in 2015.<sup>6</sup>
- Nine in ten immigrants (90.5 percent) reported speaking English "well" or "very well."<sup>7</sup>

**Immigrants in West Virginia tend to be college-educated.**

- Nearly half of adult immigrants had a college degree or more education in 2015, while 1 in 10 had less than a high school diploma.<sup>8</sup>

Education Level	Share (%) of All Immigrants	Share (%) of All Natives
College degree or more	47.6	19.0
Some college	24.7	25.7
High school diploma only	17.3	41.2
Less than a high-school diploma	10.5	14.1

### Nearly 2,000 U.S. citizens in West Virginia live with at least one family member who is undocumented.

- Fewer than 5,000 [undocumented immigrants](#) comprised 15 percent of the immigrant population and 0.2 percent of the total state population in 2014.<sup>9</sup>
- 4,941 people in West Virginia, including 1,682 born in the United States, lived with at least one [undocumented family member](#) between 2010 and 2014.<sup>10</sup>
- During the same period, less than 1 percent of children in the state were U.S. citizens living with at least one undocumented family member (1,296 children in total).<sup>11</sup>

### Approximately 100 Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) recipients live in West Virginia.<sup>12</sup>

- As of 2017, 152 people in West Virginia had applied for DACA.<sup>13</sup>
- [DACA recipients](#) in West Virginia paid an estimated \$283,000 in state and local taxes in 2016.<sup>14</sup>

### Immigrants are an important part of the West Virginia workforce in a range of industries.

- 17,745 immigrant workers comprised 2.2 percent of the labor force in 2015.<sup>15</sup>
- Immigrant workers were most numerous in the following industries:

Industry	Number of Immigrant Workers
Educational Services	5,422
Health Care and Social Assistance	3,478
Retail Trade	2,222
Accommodation and Food Services	1,917
Other Services (except Public Administration)	1,282
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:<sup>16</sup>

Industry	Immigrant Share (%) (of all industry workers)
Educational Services	6.1
Other Services (except Public Administration)	3.2
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	3.0
Accommodation and Food Services	2.5
Administrative & Support; Waste Management; and Remediation Services	2.4
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 West Virginia workforce in a range of occupations.

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

Occupation Category	Number of Immigrant Workers
Education, Training, and Library Services	3,985
Healthcare Practitioners, Technologists, and Technicians	2,426
Sales and Related	2,136
Office and Administrative Support	1,427
Management	1,354
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:<sup>18</sup>

Occupation Category	Immigrant Share (%) (of all workers in occupation)
Life, Physical, and Social Sciences	9.1
Education, Training, and Library Services	7.5
Computer and Mathematical Sciences	6.4
Architecture and Engineering	4.3
Healthcare Practitioners, Technologists, and Technicians	3.6
Analysis of the U.S. Census Bureau's 2015 American Community Survey 1-year PUMS data by the American Immigration Council.	

- Undocumented immigrants comprised 0.2 percent of the state's workforce in 2014.<sup>19</sup>

### **Immigrants in West Virginia have contributed hundreds of millions of dollars in taxes.**

- [Immigrant-led households in the state paid](#) \$125 million in federal taxes and \$51.9 million in state and local taxes in 2014.<sup>20</sup>
- Undocumented immigrants in West Virginia paid an estimated \$5.1 million in [state and local taxes](#) in 2014. Their contribution would rise to \$6.8 million if they could receive legal status.<sup>21</sup>

### **As consumers, immigrants add hundreds of millions of dollars to West Virginia's economy.**

- West Virginia residents in immigrant-led households had \$478.2 million in [spending power](#) (after-tax income) in 2014.<sup>22</sup>

### **Immigrant entrepreneurs in West Virginia generate millions of dollars in business revenue.**

- In 2015, 2,565 immigrant business owners accounted for 4.5 percent of all self-employed West Virginia residents and generated \$47.6 million in business income.<sup>23</sup>

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> “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 (ACS) 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).

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

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

<sup>4</sup> 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).

<sup>5</sup> 2015 ACS 1-Year Estimates.

<sup>6</sup> 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](http://data.cmsny.org/state.html).

<sup>7</sup> 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.

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

<sup>9</sup> Pew Research Center, “U.S. unauthorized immigration population estimates,” November 3, 2016, [www.pewhispanic.org/interactives/unauthorized-immigrants/](http://www.pewhispanic.org/interactives/unauthorized-immigrants/).

<sup>10</sup> 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/>.

<sup>11</sup> 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).

<sup>12</sup> 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](http://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/research/deferred-action-childhood-arrivals-qa-guide). The number of DACA recipients reflects U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services’ (USCIS) estimate of those with active DACA grants as of September 4, 2017. USCIS 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>.

<sup>13</sup> 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>.

<sup>14</sup> 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/>.

<sup>15</sup> 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](http://www.census.gov/eos/www/naics/index.html).

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> 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](http://www.bls.gov/soc/major_groups.htm).

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Pew Research Center, “U.S. unauthorized immigration population estimates,” 2016.

<sup>20</sup> New American Economy, *The Contributions of New Americans in West Virginia* (New York, NY: August 2016), 5, <http://www.newamericaneconomy.org/research/the-contributions-of-new-americans-in-west-virginia/>.

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

<sup>22</sup> New American Economy, *The Contributions of New Americans in West Virginia*, 5.

<sup>23</sup> “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.