

U.S. NEWS AND WORLD REPORT

#3 in Best Places to Live

U.S. CONFERENCE OF MAYORS

Fastest Growing Economy through 2020

THRILLIST

Bentonville: 25 Best Small U.S. Cities to Spend the Weekend

U.S. CONFERENCE OF MAYORS

#7 in Most Economic Growth in 2016

FORBES

Best Midsize Cities for Jobs

FORBES & NEWGEOGRAPHY.COM

Best Cities for White-Collar Job Growth

THE MILKEN INSTITUTE

Best-Performing Cities

OUTSIDE MAGAZINE

Bentonville: 28 Best Trips of 2016

MONEY MAGAZINE

Best Places to Retire

LONELY PLANET

Best in the U.S.

NEW GEOGRAPHY

Best Cities for Job Growth

U.S. NEWS AND WORLD REPORT

Best Affordable Places to Live

FORBES

Best Places for Business and Careers

FAST COMPANY & NERDWALLET

Best Places for Minority-Owned Businesses in 2016

RESEARCHERS PUT NORTHWEST ARKANSAS...

3rd in Future Economic Growth

REALTOR MAGAZINE

Best Suburb to Purchase a Home

GLOBAL TALENT: THE ECONOMIC ENGINE OF NORTHWEST ARKANSAS



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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ABOUT THE PARTNERSHIP FOR A NEW AMERICAN ECONOMY

The Partnership for a **New American Economy** brings together more than 500 Republican, Democratic, and Independent mayors and business leaders who support sensible immigration reforms that will help create jobs for Americans today. Visit www.renewoureconomy.org to learn more.

ABOUT ENGAGENWA

The EngageNWA Partnership was launched in April 2013 as a joint partnership between The Jones Trust and the Northwest Arkansas Council to help newcomers and residents become more integrated and engaged in the Northwest Arkansas community. In addition to the founding partners, Walmart, Tysons, and a variety of educational, municipal, consultancy, nonprofit and supplier partners from throughout the region support the partnership. The impact of these efforts will strengthen the regional economy and position Northwest Arkansas as a community of engaged global talent. For more information please visit www.engagenwa.com.

ABOUT THE WINTHROP ROCKEFELLER FOUNDATION

For more than 40 years, the Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation has worked to make a difference by helping to build and sustain the organizations that serve and strengthen Arkansas. Through grantmaking and strategic partnerships, WRF is working even harder to help close the economic and educational gaps that leave too many Arkansas families in persistent poverty. Working together, the needle can and must move from poverty to prosperity for all Arkansans. For more information on the Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation, go to: www.wrfoundation.org.

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INTRODUCTION

In pursuit of better lives for themselves and their families, immigrants from around the world have come to settle in the metro area of Northwest Arkansas.¹ By starting new businesses that create local jobs, supporting the workforce of the region's key industries, buying homes, and paying taxes, these new Americans are making significant contributions to the region's economy, as well as its cultural diversity. This report highlights how immigrants play a critical role in the future success of Northwest Arkansas.²

KEY FINDINGS

Immigrants accounted for **42 percent of the region's population growth** between 2009 and 2014.

Immigrants contributed **\$3.1 billion to the metro area's GDP** in 2014 and held **\$1 billion in spending power**.

Immigrants contributed **\$131 million in state and local taxes** in 2014.

Immigrants in the region contributed **\$698.1 million to Social Security** and **\$163.3 million to Medicare** during the period from 2009 to 2014.

Between 2000 and 2014, immigration to the region **increased the total housing value by \$759 million**.

While 11.1 percent of the population, immigrants are 15.4 percent of the region's employed labor force, and helped to **create or preserve 2,569 manufacturing jobs**.

Immigrants who own their own businesses generated **\$35 million in business income** in 2014.

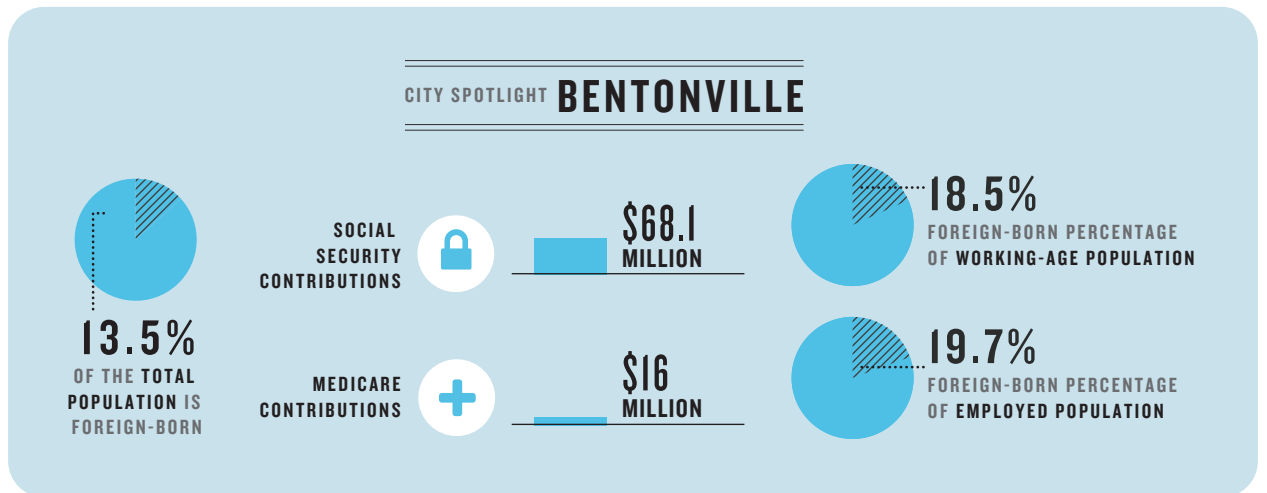
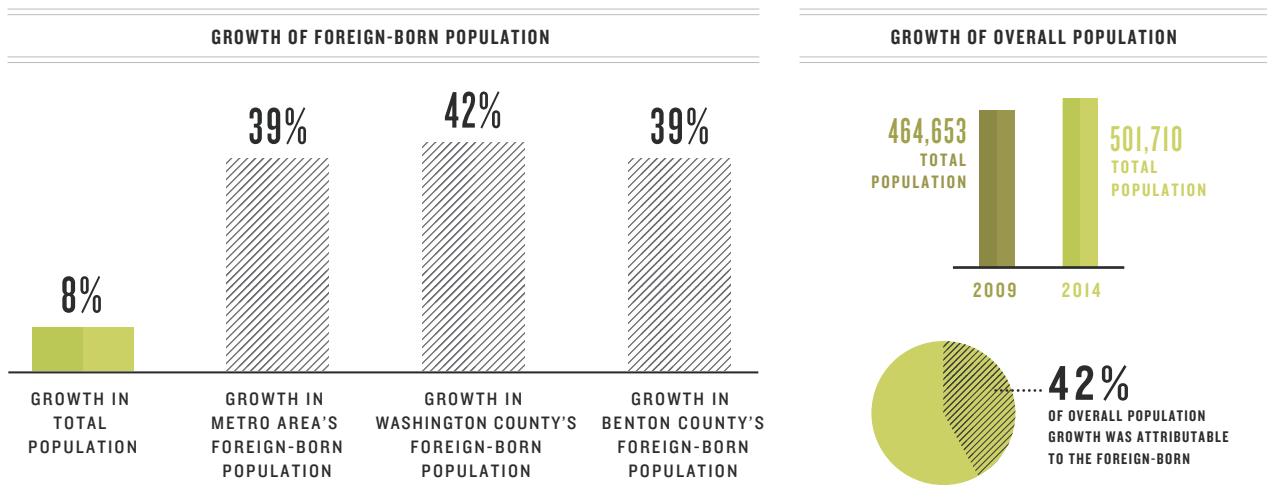
International students attending institutions of higher education in the region **support 522 local jobs and contributed more than \$46 million** to the local economy in 2014.

1. We define the Northwest Arkansas metropolitan area using the Office of Management and Budget definition of the Fayetteville-Springdale-Rogers Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), which includes Washington, Benton, Madison and McDonald (MO) counties.

2. Unless otherwise specified, data comes from one-year samples of the American Community Survey from 2000, 2009, 2012, 2013, and 2014, and figures refer to Northwest Arkansas metro area.

IMMIGRANTS SUPPORT REGIONAL POPULATION GROWTH

Immigration to Northwest Arkansas has greatly supported the region's population growth and diversity. Between 2009 and 2014, the total population of Northwest Arkansas grew by 8 percent, from 464,653 to 501,710. U.S.-born residents made up 58 percent of the overall population growth, and foreign-born people accounted for 42 percent. During this period, the metro area's foreign-born population grew by 39 percent, from 40,146 to 55,838. In Washington County alone, the number of immigrants increased by 42 percent to 26,512, and in Benton County by 39 percent to 28,144.





After moving from India to the United States at the age of 15, Zakir Syed washed dishes at an Italian restaurant for 30-35 hours a week to support his family while he attended high school. Inspired by his cousins who went to medical school, Zakir pursued a college degree at Purdue University and moved to Northwest Arkansas after he graduated in 2004. Now the Director of Category and Modular Development at Walmart, Zakir owns two homes in the region.

Born in south India in 1979, Zakir thinks of his journey to the United States as a pursuit of happiness for his family. In his home state of Karnataka, his father worked as a sanitary inspector in the municipal office, but raising a family with eight children was not easy. The ten of them could only afford living in a two-bedroom apartment, which didn't have running water or a gas stove.

In 1983, his uncle, who had lived in the United States for years, began the application process of bringing his extended family to the country. Twelve years later, the sponsorship application was approved. At first, Zakir was excited. He would travel in an airplane for the first time and move to a new country. But as the time for them to leave approached in 1995, he realized that not all of his family would be able to come together. His family couldn't afford the airfare and living expenses for all ten of them in the United States, so Zakir had to leave first with his mother and his elder brother.

Zakir was only 15 years old and his brother 19 when they arrived in Jeffersonville, Indiana to stay with his uncle. Within four months of arriving, Zakir had found a dish-washing job at a local Italian restaurant where he worked three days after school and on the weekends. He worked 30 to 35 hours each week, earning \$4.25 per hour. His brother took two full-time jobs, working 70 to 80 hours each week. A year and a half after they arrived, they earned enough money to bring over other family members.

In 2000, Zakir became a citizen. This was also the year he started as a freshman at Purdue University and saw the first Matrix movie. He became fascinated with computer graphics and special effects in movies and decided to pursue the major of animation and multimedia. Zakir became a naturalized citizen in 2000 and after graduating college in 2004, he took a job as an e-learning developer at Walmart's headquarters and moved to Bentonville. A year later, he bought his first home. While working at Walmart, he completed his MBA from Webster University, graduating with honors. After getting married and having kids, he bought another home in Rogers in 2012. Now Director of Category and Modular Development, he manages an 11-person team, and is in charge of analysis and design of how products are assorted and displayed in the entertainment and electronics section of Walmart stores.

With this growth, the region's population is becoming more diverse. Between 2009 and 2014, the share of the foreign-born population in the metro area grew from 8.6 to 11.1 percent. Among its major cities, immigrants made up 25 percent of the total population in Springdale, 19.5 percent in Rogers, 13.5 percent in Bentonville, and 7.4 percent in Fayetteville in 2014. Between 2012 and 2014, the Marshallese population in the region grew by 41 percent, from 2,875 to 4,038.

There is increasing diversity among those born in the United States as well. During this period, the Asian American population increased by 29.8 percent to 6,910 and the U.S.-born Hispanic population grew by 21.9 percent to 41,336, while the American Indian population grew by 5.4 percent to 6,278, and the African American population increased by 2.3 percent to 11,826.

As a result of the increase in the immigrant population — and the increased economic opportunity and job creation associated with this rise — it is estimated that an additional 9,109 U.S.-born residents were attracted to the area between 2000 and 2014.³

GROWTH IN FOREIGN-BORN SHARE OF OVERALL METRO AREA POPULATION



FOREIGN-BORN SHARE OF TOTAL POPULATIONS IN MAJOR CITIES



**AS A RESULT OF THE INCREASE IN THE IMMIGRANT POPULATION,
IT IS ESTIMATED THAT AN ADDITIONAL 9,109 U.S.-BORN RESIDENTS
WERE ATTRACTED TO THE AREA BETWEEN 2000 AND 2014.**

3. Vigdor, Jacob. "Immigration and the Revival of American Cities: From Preserving Manufacturing Jobs to Strengthening the Housing Market." Partnership for a New American Economy (2013). A national calculation developed by Jacob Vigdor estimates that for every 1,000 immigrants that move to a county, 270 U.S.-born residents move there in response within the next decade.

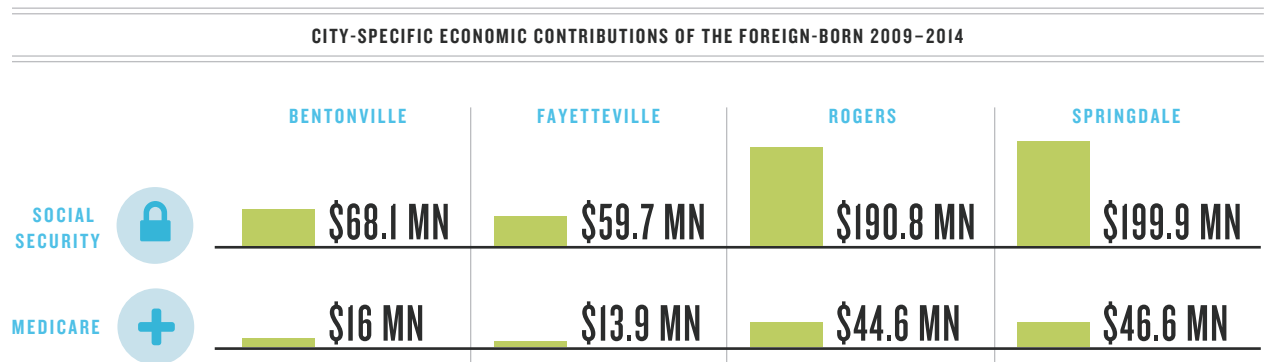
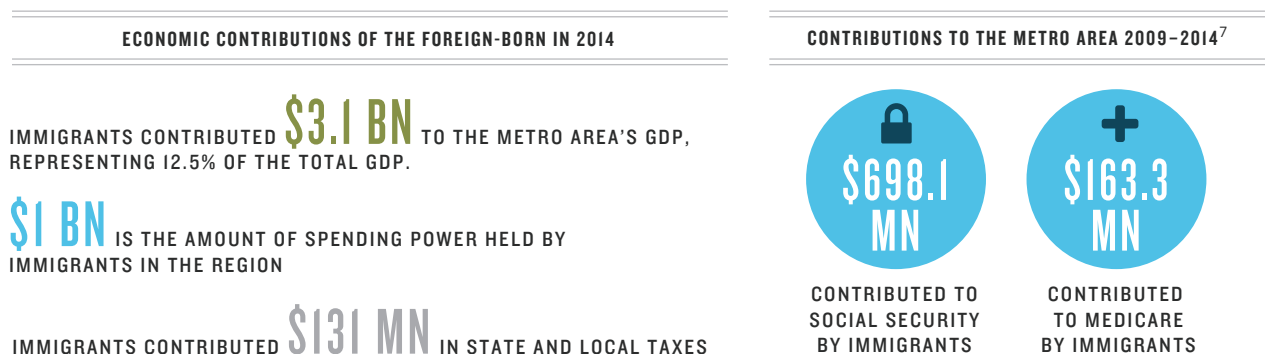
IMMIGRANT EARNINGS BOOST THE REGION'S ECONOMY

As business owners, workers, consumers, and homebuyers, immigrants play an indispensable role in the region's economy. In 2014, immigrants in Northwest Arkansas contributed \$3.1 billion to the metro area's GDP. This represents 12.5 percent of the total GDP for the region.⁴

Immigrants in the region wield considerable economic power. In 2014, immigrants held \$1 billion in spending power, defined as the net household income available to a family after paying federal, state, and local taxes — the disposable income of a given household. Hispanic immigrants accounted for 47 percent of this amount and Asian immigrants accounted for 34 percent.⁵

Given their income, we estimate that the foreign-born population contributed \$131 million in state and local taxes in 2014, including property, income, sales, and excise taxes levied by either the State of Arkansas or by municipal governments.⁶

Foreign-born households also support federal social programs. From 2009 to 2014, immigrant households in the metro area contributed \$698.1 million to Social Security and \$163.3 million to Medicare.



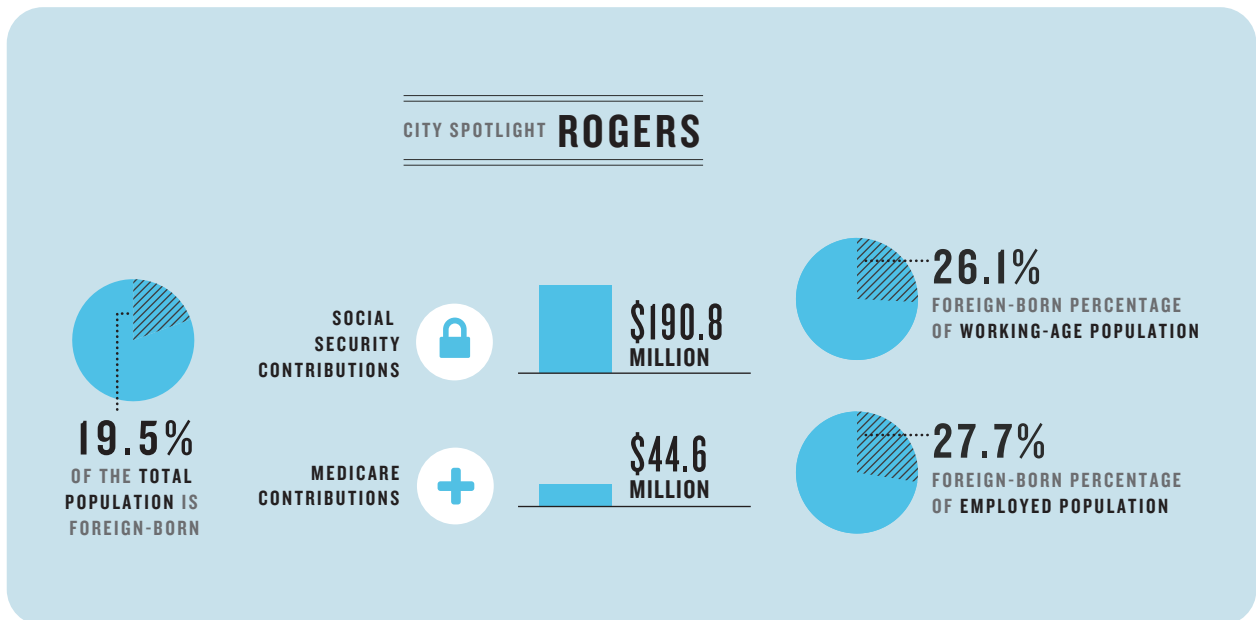
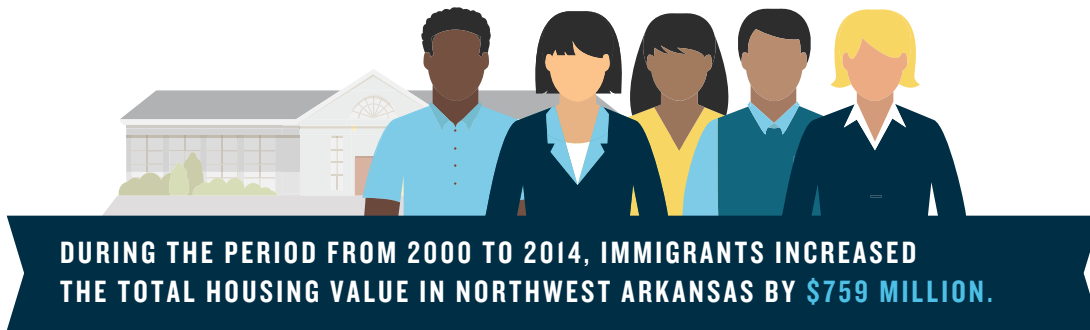
4. These figures derive from our calculations based on immigrants' share of wage income and self-employment income in the one-year ACS sample from 2014 and the statistics of GDP by Metropolitan Area from the Bureau of Economic Analysis.

5. Based on tax rates from Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy (2015) "Who Pays? A Distributional Analysis of the Tax Systems in All Fifty States."

6. Ibid.

7. Estimates for Social Security and Medicare contributions are aggregates of annual wage income totals calculated from the American Community Survey, 1 Year Sample for all years between 2009 and 2014, inclusive. IPUMS-USA, University of Minnesota, www.ipums.org.

As immigrants settle in the region, they push up the demand for local houses and boost property values. During the period from 2000 to 2014, immigrants increased the total housing value in Northwest Arkansas by \$759 million. Looking at just the period after the Great Recession, between 2009 and 2014, immigrants increased the total housing value in the metro area by \$353 million.⁸



8. Vigdor, Jacob. "Immigration and the Revival of American Cities: From Preserving Manufacturing Jobs to Strengthening the Housing Market." Partnership for a New American Economy (2013).



When Barbara Barroso was five years old, her family brought her from Mexico to Springdale, where her father had worked in the poultry industry for years. After finishing her associate’s program, Barbara started to work serving the Hispanic community as a bilingual consultant at a weight-loss center. She plans to pursue a bachelor’s degree in communication this fall or next spring. For her, higher education is not only about increasing her income after graduation, but also making a difference in her community.

From an early age, Barbara excelled in the classroom. In kindergarten, she quickly learned English with the help from a friend. In second grade, she found confidence in small math competitions. When she got to ninth grade, she began her involvement with student council.

Barbara managed her schooling without much help from her parents, who didn’t speak English or understand the school system in the United States very well. When the time came to think about her plan after high school, tension rose between her and her parents. She wanted to go to college, but they wanted her to get a job. “To them, it was like... you come to the States, you go to school, and then you work [after high school],” Barbara said. Her parents would provide her with housing, food, and other necessities, but they couldn’t help much with her school payments while taking care of her five siblings.

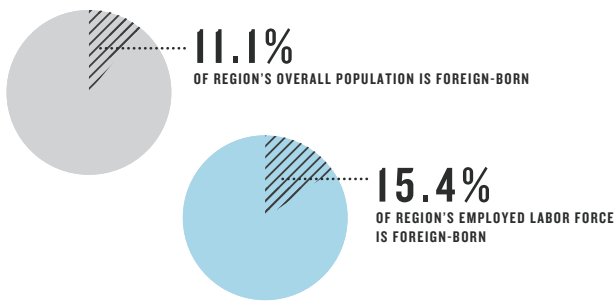
During her senior year of high school in 2010, Barbara realized that being undocumented would make it difficult for her to attend college, especially without sufficient financial support. Because she was part of the IT academy at school, which offered her classes in marketing and web design as well as credit hours, she continued her education through an associate’s program at Northwest Arkansas Community College in Bentonville in 2012. While studying part-time in the program, she worked as a waitress at a restaurant to pay for her schooling.

In the first year of her associate’s program, her successful application for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) brought back hope for higher education. By that time, many of her friends had gone to colleges and universities. “If they can do it, I can do it too,” Barbara thought. Her scholarship in the last semester made her life easier, but finances continue to be a significant challenge. After finishing her associate’s program in 2015, Barbara decided to take a year off school. With her bilingual skills, she found a job at the Metabolic Research Center, where she specializes in providing weight-loss services to the Hispanic community. Planning to start her bachelor’s program within a year, she is looking into different scholarships. “I have younger siblings,” she said. “I want to encourage and motivate them to go above and beyond.”

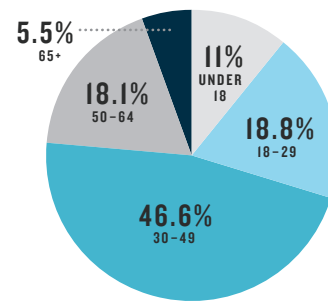
THE ROLE OF IMMIGRANTS IN THE LABOR FORCE AND AS ENTREPRENEURS

Across the United States, baby boomers are retiring at a pace of 10,000 people per day, contributing to an aging population and a need for more young workers. In Northwest Arkansas, the foreign-born population helps keep the region's labor force young and active. Immigrants are largely clustered within the working age range, with 83.5 percent falling between the ages of 18 and 64.

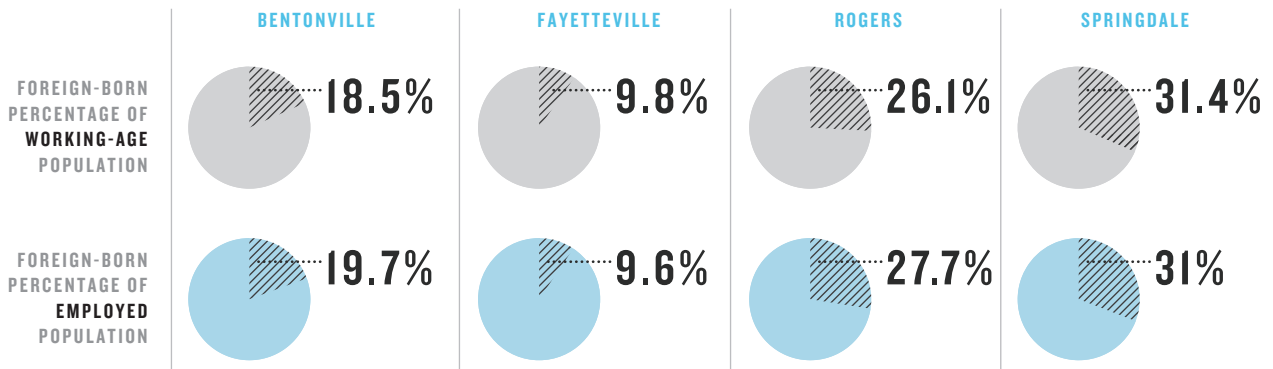
IMMIGRANTS IN THE LABOR FORCE



BREAKDOWN OF IMMIGRANTS BY AGE GROUP



THE ROLE OF FOREIGN-BORN RESIDENTS IN THE LABOR MARKETS IN MAJOR CITIES



Immigrants play an outsize role in several of Northwest Arkansas' top industries. In 2014, immigrants represented 36.4 percent of the workers in construction; 22.2 percent in manufacturing; 21 percent in general services;⁹ 20.6 percent in transportation and warehousing; 18.3 percent in information and communication; 15.8 percent in wholesale trade; 15.4 percent in professional, scientific, and management services;¹⁰ 13.4 percent in retail trade; and 13.3 percent in finance and real estate. Immigrants also represent 8.1 percent of workers in healthcare and social assistance, and 8 percent in agriculture. The unemployment rate of the foreign-born in the region was 5 percent, on par with unemployment rate of the U.S.-born (4.8 percent).

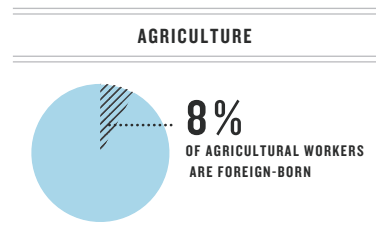
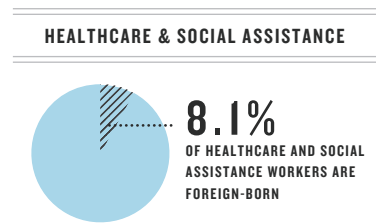
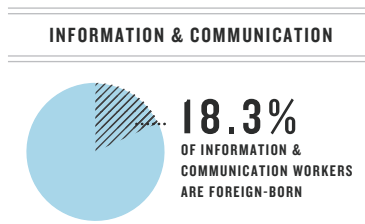
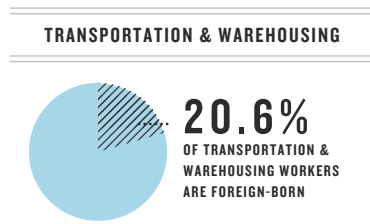
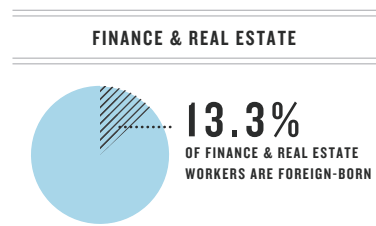
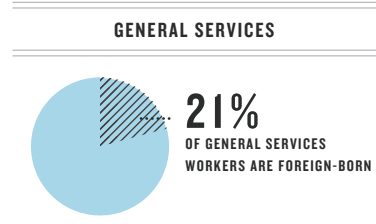
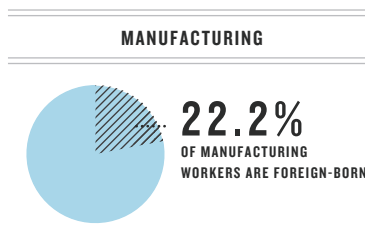
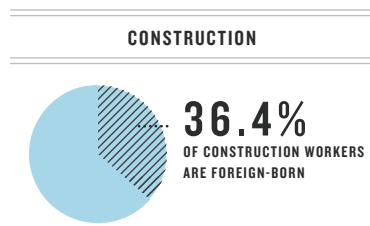
9. General services include personal services (e.g. laundry services, barber shops, and repair and maintenance), religious organizations, social services, and labor unions.

10. These industries include professions that require a degree or a license such as legal services, accounting, scientific research, consulting services, etc.

ROLE OF IMMIGRANTS IN KEY INDUSTRIES

Because of the role immigrants play in the workforce helping companies keep jobs on U.S. soil, we estimate that the foreign-born in Northwest Arkansas helped create or preserve 2,569 local manufacturing jobs that would have otherwise vanished or moved elsewhere.¹¹

In 2014, immigrants made up 10.7 percent of the region's self-employed population. This is slightly higher than the national average of 10 percent.¹² In the metro area, foreign-born people working for their own businesses generated \$35 million in business income.



JOBS CREATED



INCOME GENERATED



11. Vigdor, Jacob. "Immigration and the Revival of American Cities: From Preserving Manufacturing Jobs to Strengthening the Housing Market." Partnership for a New American Economy (2013).

12. Pew Research Center, "Three-in-Ten U.S. Jobs Are Held by the Self-Employed and the Workers They Hire." (2015)



After obtaining her doctorate degree in psychology in India, Dr. Swapnila Das moved to Rogers in 1996 when her husband was offered a software consultant job. It took Dr. Das, who had mostly foreign credentials, two years to get a professional license in the United States. Since then, she has worked at a private practice, a pediatric clinic, and a non-profit mental health center, while providing pro-bono service in psychology to the community.

In 1995, Dr. Das and her husband moved from India to Florida when her husband was offered a software consultant job. They wanted to try out something different in a different land, but their first week in the country was more challenging than they expected. Her husband's company placed them in a Holiday Inn and gave them his first month's salary of \$2,000. But they didn't know where to go for groceries or how to ask for food in the hotel. They mostly relied on the snacks Dr. Das brought from India until a friend brought them to a grocery store.

In 1996, Dr. Das went back to India to defend her Ph.D. thesis in psychology at the National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences, and later moved to Rogers where her husband got another job. In 1998, Dr. Das applied for professional license in psychology in Arkansas. It took two years to get the required paperwork from India, all of which needed to be translated and evaluated. Upon receiving the required permission to take the licensing tests in the United States, Dr. Das spent six months putting her newborn son to bed early so she could study from 8pm to midnight every night.

In 2000, Dr. Das passed the tests, got her license, and started a private practice. In 2006, she started to work as a part-time psychologist at DaySpring Behavioral Health Services, a nonprofit mental health center in Rogers.

Having lived in Northwest Arkansas for two decades, Dr. Das has noticed the growth in the region's population and diversity. In her spare time, she has been providing pro-bono psychology services to community members. "We'll continue to provide services to the people here," Dr. Das said, "because it's like a second home to us."

IMMIGRANTS BOOST THE REGION'S EDUCATIONAL PROFILE

Foreign-born residents in Northwest Arkansas tend to have high levels of educational attainment. In 2014, while 5.8 percent of the U.S.-born population in the area held advanced degrees (master's, professional, and doctorate degrees), 9.8 percent of the foreign-born population held such degrees. And while 19.8 percent of the U.S.-born population had at least a bachelor's degree, 20.4 percent of the foreign-born population was similarly educated.

In fall 2014, 1,782 students enrolled in the region's colleges and universities held temporary resident visas.¹³ These students supported at least 522 local jobs and contributed more than \$46 million in spending to the local economy that year.¹⁴

If Northwest Arkansas retains half of its international students after graduation with bachelor's degrees or higher, 342 local jobs will be created within six years,¹⁵ boosting the metro area's real GDP per capita by \$133 within the next 30 years,¹⁶ and increasing the population by 2,765 people within the next 50 years.¹⁷

POPULATIONS WITH ADVANCED DEGREES (MASTER'S, PROFESSIONAL, AND DOCTORATE)

U.S-BORN POPULATION WITH ADVANCED DEGREES



FOREIGN-BORN POPULATION WITH ADVANCED DEGREES



INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

IN 2014, **1,782** STUDENTS ENROLLED IN THE REGION'S COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES HELD TEMPORARY RESIDENT VISAS.

THESE STUDENTS SUPPORTED AT LEAST **522** LOCAL JOBS...

...AND CONTRIBUTED MORE THAN **\$46 MILLION** TO THE LOCAL ECONOMY THAT YEAR.

IF NORTHWEST ARKANSAS RETAINS **ONE HALF** OF ITS INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS AFTER GRADUATION WITH BACHELOR'S DEGREES OR HIGHER...

342 LOCAL JOBS WILL BE CREATED WITHIN SIX YEARS, BOOSTING THE METRO AREA'S REAL GDP PER CAPITA BY **\$133** WITHIN THE NEXT 30 YEARS, AND INCREASING THE POPULATION BY **2,765** PEOPLE WITHIN THE NEXT 50 YEARS

13. Data on total student enrollment in the metro area is derived from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System maintained by the National Center for Education Statistics.

14. Economic data is derived from The International Student Economic Value Tool maintained by NAFSA, the association of international educators.

15. Curtis Simon, "Human Capital and Metropolitan Employment Growth," Journal of Urban Economics 43, (1998).

16. Rita Ray, "Effect of Education on Gross Domestic Product: A Case Study from US 'Mid-West'," International Review of Business Research Papers, Vol. 10-1. (March, 2014).

17. Edward L. Glaeser, Giacomo A. M. Ponzetto, and Kristina Tobio, "Cities, Skills and Regional Change," Regional Studies, Vol. 48-1, (January, 2014).



In September 2015, Patrick Boaz started the first Marshallese newspaper in Springdale, Chikin Melele. The newspaper is written in Marshallese and English, as Patrick hopes it will foster mutual understanding between the Marshallese and other members in the local community.

After a severe illness as a child, Patrick wanted to become a doctor. The dream drove him to leave Marshall Islands to attend Brigham Young University's Hawaii campus to study biology in 1998. In his freshman year, he enlisted in the U.S. military and received training for the reserve. "You went in there as a kid and came back as a man," Patrick said.

In 2000, his daughter was born and Patrick had to quit college to support his family by taking jobs as a security guard and a certified nurse aid. In 2011, he moved to Springdale to be closer to his family in Missouri and Arkansas. "The cost of living is very affordable," said Patrick. "And there are many of our [Marshallese] people here."

The idea of starting the newspaper came from his nephew, Gomez Zackious, a Marshallese-Hawaiian who works at the Springdale Police Department. One day, an owner of a Hispanic newspaper asked Gomez whether there was a Marshallese newspaper. Gomez said no, but started asking around about people's interest in starting such a newspaper to inform the Marshallese community. When he told Patrick about this idea, he immediately came on board.

For the first issue, released in September 2015, Patrick had to use his own rent money for production. In addition to news, the newspaper publishes service information for the Marshallese community, such as free resources for entrepreneurs. They produce 500 copies of each issue, written by volunteers, and sell them at \$2 per copy at local Marshallese stores.

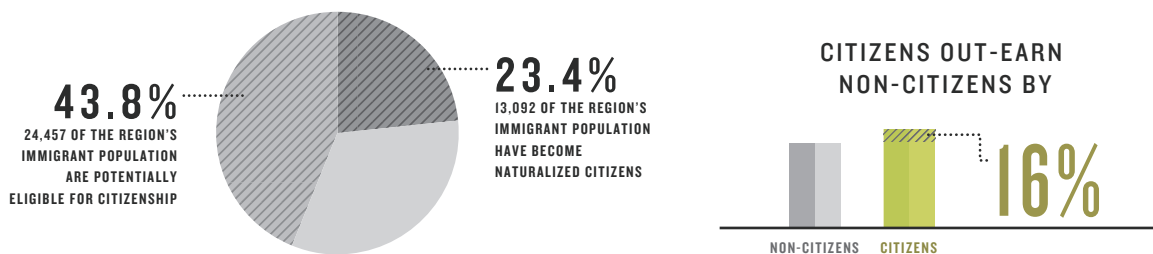
Since launching in the fall of 2015, they have published five issues. Now Patrick is rethinking his business strategy. His advertisers have included a car sales company, the local department of health, and some retail stores. For the upcoming issue, Patrick has decided to offer the newspaper free of charge, hoping it can reach a larger audience and attract more advertisement to cover the costs. "We're helping our community," said Patrick. "The more you know about your neighbors, the better you can cooperate."

THE PATH TO CITIZENSHIP

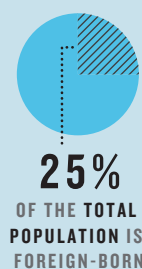
Numerous studies have documented that naturalized citizens out-earn non-citizens, in some cases by as much as 16 percent, giving them more income to contribute to taxes and to spend in the local economy.¹⁸ Naturalized citizens are also eligible to work in a number of occupations that require citizenship — most notably, government service positions or scientific research posts requiring a security clearance. And due to the increased ease with which they can apply for licenses and insurance, naturalized citizens are also more likely to establish U.S.-based businesses, creating jobs that support the local economy in the process.¹⁹

Northwest Arkansas and its foreign-born community are well positioned to capitalize on the economic benefits that come with obtaining citizenship. About 23.4 percent of the region's immigrant population (13,092 people) have become naturalized citizens. We estimate that an additional 43.8 percent (24,457 people) of the remaining non-citizen foreign-born residents in the region are potentially eligible for citizenship, but have yet to complete the naturalization process.

NATURALIZATION AND CITIZENSHIP ELIGIBILITY



CITY SPOTLIGHT SPRINGDALE



SOCIAL SECURITY CONTRIBUTIONS



MEDICARE CONTRIBUTIONS



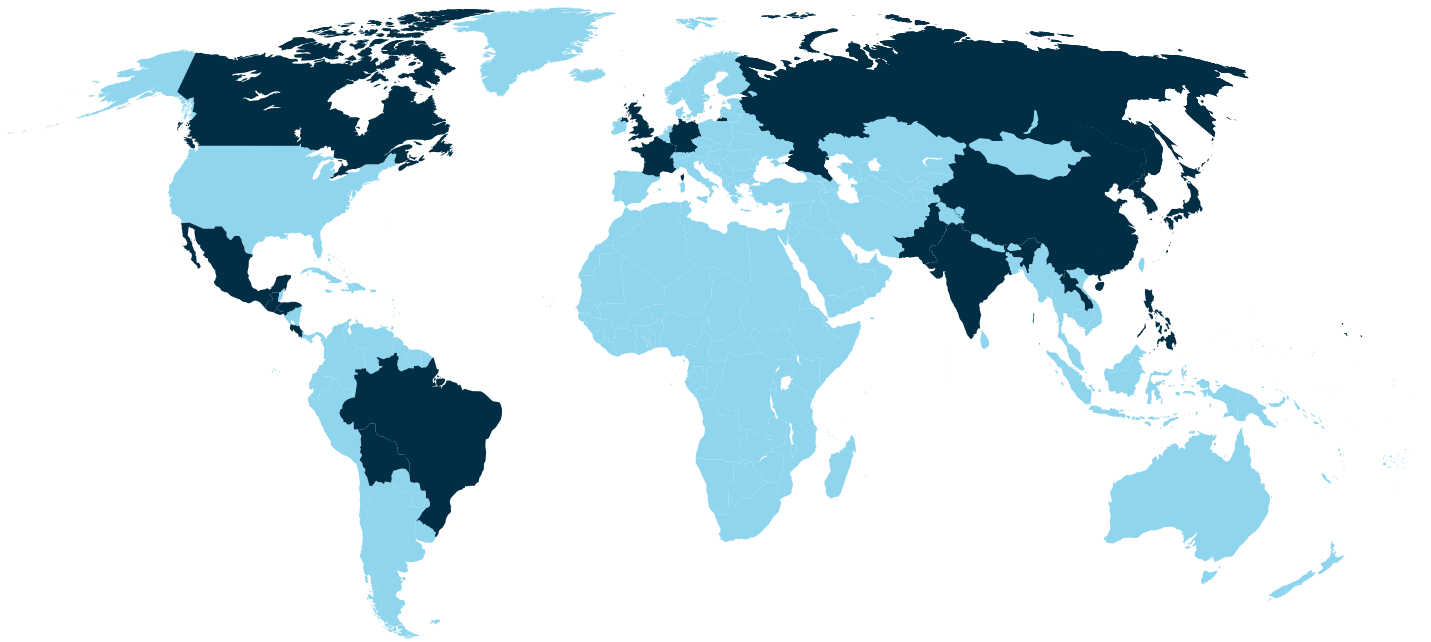
18. Lynch, Robert and Oakford, Patrick. 2013. "The Economic Effects of Granting Legal Status and Citizenship to Undocumented Immigrants," Center for American Progress, March 20.

19. Pastor, M. and Scoggins, J. 2012. "Citizen Gain: The Economic Benefits of Naturalization for Immigrants and the Economy," Center for the Study of Immigrant Integration, University of Southern California

MIGRATION PATTERNS

Immigrants living in Northwest Arkansas have come from around the country and all over the world, and the vast majority have called the region home for at least one year. The top 20 countries of origin, in descending order, are: Mexico, El Salvador, India, Marshall Islands, China, Korea, Germany, Laos, Philippines, Honduras, Pakistan, France, Japan, Costa Rica, United Kingdom, Brazil, Guatemala, Canada, Bolivia, and Russia/former USSR.

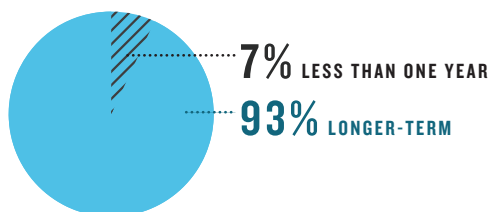
TOP COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN FOR ALL FOREIGN-BORN



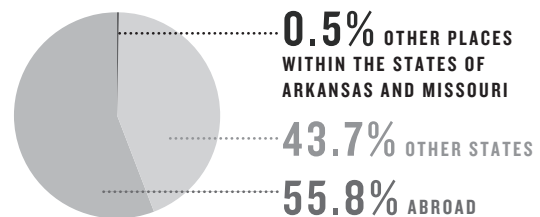
TOP SIX

51.5% MEXICO 8.5% EL SALVADOR 8% INDIA 7.2% MARSHALL ISLANDS 2.2% CHINA 1.8% KOREA

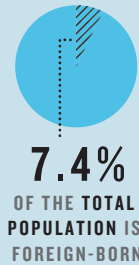
SHARE OF RECENTLY-ARRIVED FOREIGN-BORN



ORIGIN OF RECENT ARRIVALS (LESS THAN ONE YEAR)



CITY SPOTLIGHT FAYETTEVILLE



SOCIAL
SECURITY
CONTRIBUTIONS



\$59.7
MILLION

MEDICARE
CONTRIBUTIONS



\$13.9
MILLION



CONCLUSION

In Northwest Arkansas, foreign-born residents are supporting the region's prosperity in key ways. They are small business owners who create local jobs; consumers who support the local economy by spending on goods and services; homeowners who increase property values; and taxpayers who support various programs at federal, state, and local levels. They also play an outsized role in building an increasingly diverse culture in Northwest Arkansas, which will help to attract more families to settle down in the region and become building blocks for the region's future success.

METHODOLOGY

Throughout the report, the Northwest Arkansas metropolitan area is defined using the Office of Management and Budget definition of the Fayetteville-Springdale-Rogers Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), which includes Washington, Benton, Madison and McDonald (MO) counties. Unless otherwise specified, all data in the report come from one-year samples of the American Community Survey from 2000, 2009, 2012, 2013, and 2014, and figures refer to the defined Northwest Arkansas metro area.

