

New Americans in the Columbus Metro Area

The Demographic and Economic Contributions of Immigrants in the Columbus Metro Area¹

MAY 2021



Population

184,800

immigrants lived in the Columbus metropolitan area, Ohio, in 2019.

Immigrants made up **8.7%**

of the total population in the metro area in 2019.

Between 2014 and 2019, the population in the metro area increased by



The immigrant population grew by

+22.2%



of total population growth in the metro area was attributable to immigrants.

Demographics



of immigrants in metro Columbus are recent arrivals, with less than 5 years of residency in the United States, meaning

In the metro area, immigrants are

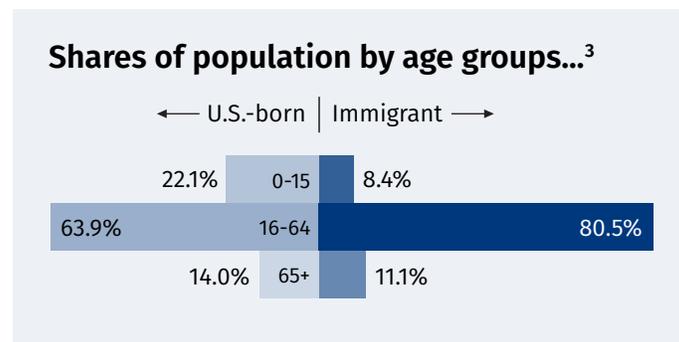
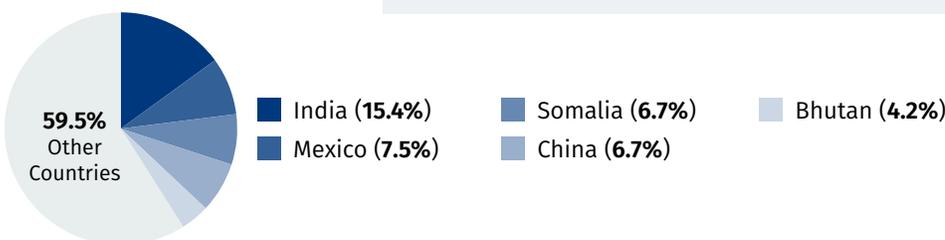


more likely to be of working-age than their U.S.-born counterparts, allowing them to actively participate in the labor force and contribute to the economy as taxpayers and consumers.²



of immigrants in metro Columbus have lived in the United States for more than 5 years.

The top five countries of origin for immigrants living in the metro area were



¹ Unless otherwise specified, data comes from 1-year samples of the American Community Survey from 2014 and 2019 and figures refer to the metropolitan statistical area of Columbus, Ohio.

² We define working age as 16-64 years of age.

³ Totals may not add up to 100 percent due to rounding.

Demographics *continued*

28,200

immigrants living in the metro area had limited English language proficiency, making up



of the immigrant population.

Among them, the top language spoken at home other than English was

Spanish

which made up **32.3%** of all non-English languages spoken at home by immigrants with limited English language proficiency.

Spending Power & Tax Contributions

Given their income, immigrants contributed significantly to state and local taxes, including property, sales, and excise taxes levied by state and local governments.

Foreign-born households held



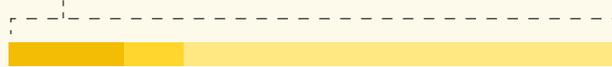
of all spending power in metro Columbus, more than their **8.7%** share of the population.

In 2019, foreign-born residents in the metro area contributed

\$15.4 billion

to the metro area's GDP, or **11.5%** of the total.⁶

In 2019, immigrant households in the metro area earned **\$7.4 billion**



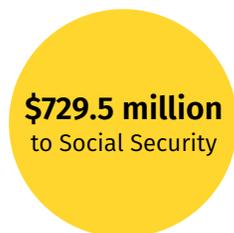
■ **\$1.4 billion**

went to federal taxes⁴

■ **\$712.4 million** went to state & local taxes⁵

■ **\$5.3 billion** left in spending power

Immigrants in the metro area also supported federal social programs. In 2019, they contributed



25.6%

of immigrants in the metro area received Medicare or Medicaid, compared with

31.3%

of U.S.-born residents in 2019.

⁴ U.S. Congressional Budget Office. 2020. "The Distribution of Household Income and Federal Taxes, 2017."

⁵ Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy. 2018. "Who Pays? A Distributional Analysis of the Tax Systems in All Fifty States."

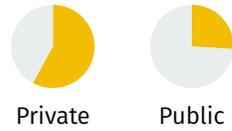
⁶ These figures derive from our calculations based on immigrants' share of wage income and self-employment income in the 1-year ACS sample from 2019 and the statistics of GDP from the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis.

Spending Power & Tax Contributions *continued*

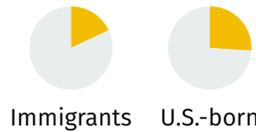
About **72.2%** of immigrants had private healthcare coverage, while **32.0%** had public healthcare coverage.⁷



About **58.2%** of U.S.-born had private healthcare coverage, while **25.9%** had public healthcare coverage.



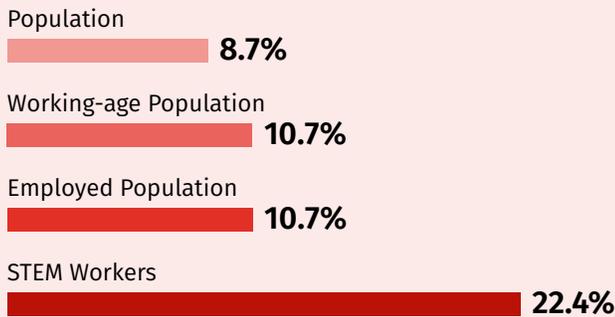
Given their household incomes, **17.5%** of immigrants lived at or below 150% of the federal poverty threshold as compared to **26.1%** of U.S.-born residents.



Workforce

Although the foreign-born population made up **8.7%** of the metro area's overall population, they represented **10.7%** of its working-age population, **10.7%** of its employed labor force, and **22.4%** of its STEM workers in 2019.⁸

Immigrant shares of the...



The immigrant working-age population was **49.9%** female and **50.1%** male.



The employed immigrant population was **43.2%** female and **56.8%** male.



Immigrants in the metro area are

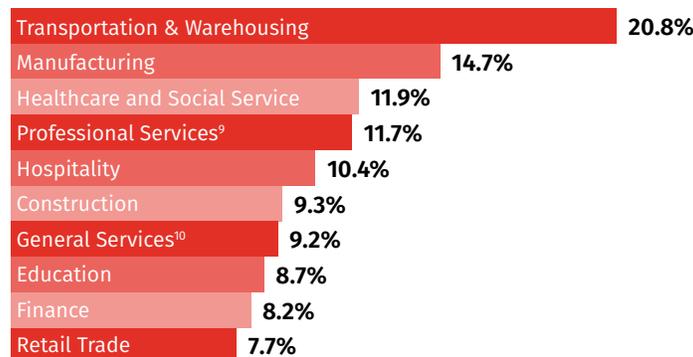
25.9%

more likely to be working age or employed than their U.S.-born counterparts.

Immigrants played a critical role in several key industries in the metro area.



of workers in the Transportation & Warehousing industry were foreign-born in 2019.



⁷ Including people who have both public and private healthcare coverage.

⁸ STEM refers to occupations that require background or expertise in Science, Technology, Engineering, and/or Math.

⁹ Professional services: Most of these industries include professions that require a degree or a license, such as legal services, accounting, scientific research, consulting services, etc.

¹⁰ General services include personal services (e.g. laundry services, barber shops, and repair and maintenance), religious organizations, social services, and labor unions.

Workforce *continued*

SPOTLIGHT ON Immigrant Essential Workers

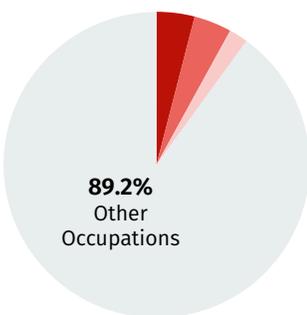
Immigrants have also been playing vital roles in critical industries that have kept the country functioning throughout the Covid-19 crisis. Immigrants in the metro area continue working in these frontline and essential industries:



SPOTLIGHT ON Job Demand In Metro Columbus In 2021

Not only are immigrants more likely to be of working age in the metro area, but they are also a crucial part of the city's economy, and could help us meet the needs of its fastest growing and most in-demand fields, especially as the need for bilingual and culturally competent public services and healthcare increases. **The top 5 industries with the highest demand for bilingual workers:**¹²

1. Retail Trade
2. Finance & Insurance
3. Healthcare & Social Assistance
4. Transportation & Warehousing
5. Professional, Scientific, & Technical Services



Immigrants tended to work in these occupations in the metro area in 2019.

- Software Developers (4.3%)
- Truck Drivers (4.2%)
- Postsecondary Teachers (2.3%)

Due to the role immigrants play in the workforce helping companies keep jobs on U.S. soil, we estimate that immigrants living in the metro area had helped create or preserve

8,500

manufacturing jobs that would have otherwise vanished or moved elsewhere by 2019.¹³

In 2019, about



of college-educated immigrants were underemployed, working in occupations not requiring a bachelor's degree.¹⁴

¹¹ These include services essential for daily living, such as building cleaning, waste management, auto repair, and veterinary services.

¹² Data is obtained from Burning Glass Technologies for the time period between April 1, 2020 and March 31, 2021.

¹³ Vigdor, Jacob. 2013. "Immigration and the Revival of American Cities: From Preserving Manufacturing Jobs to Strengthening the Housing Market." *New American Economy*.

¹⁴ Information of entry-level education for occupations is obtained from the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Entrepreneurship

9,800

immigrant entrepreneurs lived in metro Columbus in 2019, making up



of the business owners in the metro area despite making up **8.7%** of the population.

Immigrant entrepreneurs in metro Columbus generated

\$289.6 million

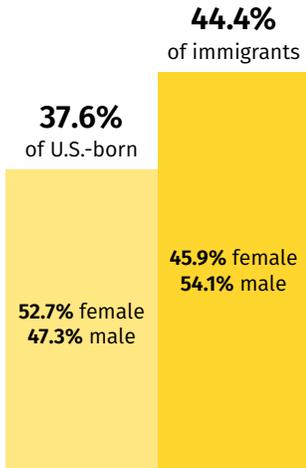
in business income in 2019.

While **7.5%** of the U.S.-born population were entrepreneurs, **8.2%** of foreign-born residents worked for their own businesses.

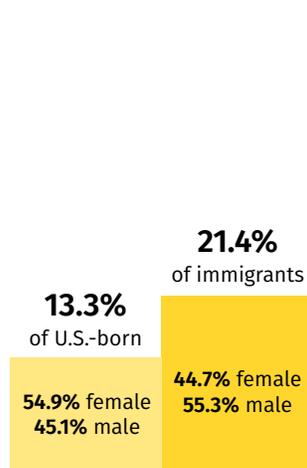


Education

Share of the metro area's population aged 25 or above that held a **bachelor's degree or higher** in 2019:



Share of the metro area's population aged 25 or above that held an **advanced degree** in 2019:



of K-12 students in the metro area were foreign-born in 2019.



of K-12 students in the metro area were the children of immigrants in 2019.

¹⁵ Data on total student enrollment is derived from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System maintained by the National Center for Education Statistics. Temporary residents refer to people who are not U.S. citizens or permanent residents.

¹⁶ Economic data is derived from the International Student Economic Value Tool maintained by NAFSA, the association of international educators.

SPOTLIGHT ON

University Population

7,900

students enrolled in colleges and universities in metro Columbus in fall 2019 were temporary residents.¹⁵

1,000

international students graduated with STEM degrees from colleges and universities in the metro area in the 2018-19 academic year.

3,900

local jobs were supported by international students in the 2019-20 academic year.

\$342.5 million

was spent by international students in the 2019-20 academic year.¹⁶

SPOTLIGHT ON

Antoinette Wilson

CEO, Triumph Communications

As a first-generation American growing up in Toledo, Ohio, Antoinette Wilson watched her parents make a tangible difference in their community. Her father was a pediatric physician from the Philippines. Her mother was a pediatric nurse from Panama. Over three decades, the family helped over 30,000 patients at their practice. "Every time we were out in the community we'd run into a patient," Antoinette says. "The community embraced us."

When her parents weren't working, they threw themselves into community service, volunteering at underresourced hospitals, charity events and Filipino cultural engagements. "I grew up in a family where our parents were always working hard and always giving back," Antoinette says. "This is the kind of work ethic and altruism many immigrants bring to Ohio."

Today, Antoinette and her three siblings all continue to live in Ohio, where they've built thriving careers. One brother is the CEO of a hospital, another an entrepreneur and her sister works for an international consulting group. Antoinette has run Triumph Communications from Columbus for nearly two decades. She was also appointed as the first woman Assistant Secretary of State in 2008. Throughout it all, she has volunteered on projects to help the homeless and assist immigrant organizations with ESL training. She also mentors women interested in running for public office.

Antoinette believes Columbus is an ideal city for immigrant families. "When people come here, they feel the energy," she says. "They see the opportunities. They sense that it's inviting and inclusive." She said the city is good about showcasing its global diversity, including frequent festivals and cultural events that connect immigrants and native-born Americans. She's sad to see such opportunities for exchange put on hold during the pandemic, and she hopes the city will prioritize them as it reopens.

"The better we understand each other, the better we work together. And that makes Columbus stronger for all of us," she said.

SPOTLIGHT ON

Deba Uwadiae

Editor-in-Chief, New Americans Magazine

In 2010, Deba Uwadiae, his wife and three children were selected to receive visas through the U.S. Diversity Visa Lottery, allowing them to move from their native Nigeria to Columbus, Ohio.

Their transition wasn't easy. In Nigeria, Deba had risen from political reporter to editor-in-chief and publisher, but Columbus news outlets overlooked him. His wife had studied physics and managed the family travel agency in Nigeria, but she, too, couldn't break into the professional job market. They suspected their accents created a barrier. Receptionists would sometimes offer them Spanish interpretation. "I speak fluent English; I don't speak Spanish," Deba says with a laugh.

While working with his wife at Cheryl's Cookies to make ends meet, Deba was determined to make the most of their American opportunity. He started his own publications, the *New Americans* and *New Americans Business* magazines, which cover subjects relevant to the Ohio immigrant community. The *New Americans* magazine currently trains 10 interns from the Ohio Media School, employs four part-time contributors and works in partnership with Apex 1 Radio. Deba's wife returned to school and now works as a nurse on the front lines of the pandemic. Two of their children are college educated and their third just graduated from high school.

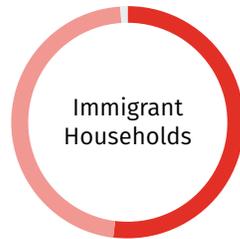
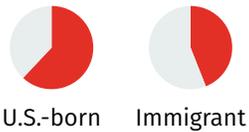
Deba feels welcomed by the people of Columbus and loves the life that he and his family have built here. In 2018, he joined a City Council-sponsored leadership and professional development program, which helps new immigrants become active community stakeholders. However, he also recognizes that the City could do more to support new arrivals. "We need ads and outreach to connect them to resources," he says. "After the pandemic, we need events that bring them face to face with social services organizations, employers seeking workers and others who can help them acclimate to the City."

In the meantime, Deba is stepping up. In response to the global pandemic, he started the New American Community Information Center (NACIC) to connect local immigrants to life-saving social services. NACIC has also helped immigrants apply for citizenship and assisted new citizens with voter registration.

Deba believes his news outlets and nonprofit work can help foster a more welcoming community. "When immigrants are seen, when our accents are heard, we are normalized," he says. "It's not that people don't want our talents; many simply aren't exposed to us. Once they are, they'll see everything we have to offer."

Housing

In 2019, **62.3%** of U.S.-born households in metro Columbus owned their own homes, compared to **44.1%** of immigrant households.



- Lived in Houses **42,200** or **51.8%**
- Lived in Apartments **37,900** or **46.5%**
- Lived in Other Types of Housing **1,400** or **1.7%**

The total property value of immigrant households was

\$10.1 billion

55.9% of immigrant households were renters. Their total annual rent paid was

\$450.5 million



of immigrant households in the metro area had access to broadband connection in their place of residence as compared to **85.7%** of U.S.-born households in 2019.

Naturalization



- **49.4%** Naturalized Citizens (91,200)
- **14.9%** Likely Eligible to Naturalize (27,500)
- **35.8%** Not Eligible to Naturalize¹⁷ (66,100)



Nationally, **48.7%** of immigrants are naturalized citizens, **15.9%** are likely eligible to naturalize, and **35.4%** are not yet eligible.



of households in metro Columbus had at least one foreign-born resident in 2019.

If all immigrants who are eligible to naturalize became U.S. citizens, their earning potential would increase by

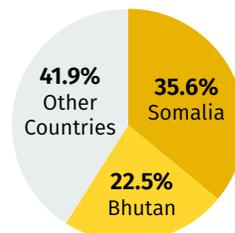
+8.9%¹⁸

Refugees

32,700

refugees, or **17.7%** of the foreign-born population in metro Columbus, were likely refugees.¹⁹

The top countries of origin for the refugee population in the metro area were:



¹⁷ Immigrants were not eligible to become naturalized U.S. citizens either because they have not met certain criteria for naturalization, such as residency requirements, age, and English proficiency, or because they are undocumented.

¹⁸ Enchautegui, Maria E. and Linda Giannarelli. 2015. "The Economic Impact of Naturalization on Immigrants and Cities." Urban Institute.

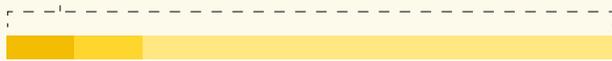
¹⁹ New American Economy. 2017. "From Struggle to Resilience: The Economic Impact of Refugees in America."

Refugees *continued*

About **17.5%** of refugees held at least a bachelor's degree.



In 2019, refugee households earned
\$737.9 million



■ **\$82.8 million**

went to federal taxes²⁰

■ **\$78.3 million** went to state & local taxes²¹

■ **\$576.7 million** left in spending power

In 2019, about



of refugees in the area were naturalized U.S. citizens.

DACA-Eligible Population

In 2019, DACA-eligible people made up



of the foreign-born population in metro Columbus.

Undocumented Immigrants

41,100

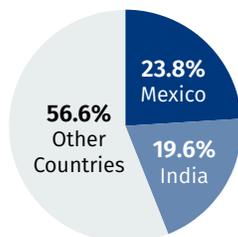
undocumented immigrants lived in metro Columbus in 2019.

They made up



of the foreign-born population in the metro area in 2019.

The top countries of origin for undocumented immigrants in the metro area were

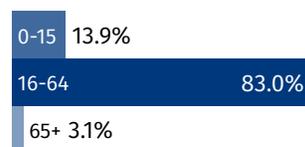


Undocumented immigrants are highly active in the labor force. More than



are of working-age in the metro area.

Undocumented immigrants by age groups:

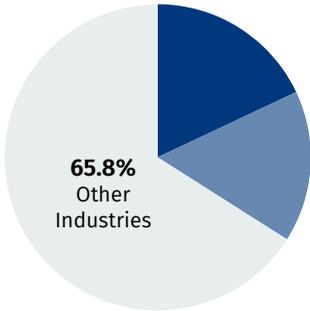


²⁰ U.S. Congressional Budget Office. 2020. "The Distribution of Household Income and Federal Taxes, 2017."

²¹ Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy. 2018. "Who Pays? A Distributional Analysis of the Tax Systems in All Fifty States."

Undocumented Immigrants *continued*

Undocumented immigrants tended to work in these key industries:



- Hospitality (18.3%)
- Manufacturing (15.9%)

In 2019, undocumented immigrant households earned

\$887.2 million



■ **\$66.9 million**

went to federal taxes²²

■ **\$44.7 million** went to state & local taxes²³

■ **\$775.6 million** left in spending power

²² U.S. Congressional Budget Office. 2020. "The Distribution of Household Income and Federal Taxes, 2017."

²³ Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy. 2018. "Who Pays? A Distributional Analysis of the Tax Systems in All Fifty States."

Continued on Next Page

Population in the City of Columbus

103,500

immigrants lived in the City of Columbus, Ohio, in 2019.

Immigrants made up



of the total population in the city in 2019.

Between 2014 and 2019, the total population in the city increased by

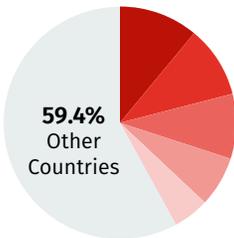


The immigrant population grew by

+19.8%



of total population growth in the city was attributable to immigrants.



The top five countries of origin for immigrants living in the city were

- India (**10.5%**)
- Mexico (**8.5%**)
- Ethiopia (**4.8%**)
- Somalia (**9.9%**)
- China (**6.9%**)

Spending Power & Tax Contributions in the City of Columbus

Given their income, immigrants contributed significantly to state and local taxes, including property, sales, and excise taxes levied by state and local governments.

Foreign-born households held



of all spending power in the city, more than their **11.7%** share of the population.

In 2019, immigrant households in the City of Columbus earned

\$3.6 billion

■ **\$656.2 million**

went to federal taxes²⁴

■ **\$353.0 million** went to state & local taxes²⁵

■ **\$2.6 billion** left in spending power

²⁴ U.S. Congressional Budget Office. 2020. "The Distribution of Household Income and Federal Taxes, 2017."

²⁵ Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy. 2018. "Who Pays? A Distributional Analysis of the Tax Systems in All Fifty States."