



## Immigrants in Kentucky

Kentucky has a small but growing immigrant community. While nearly 4 percent of the state's population was born in another country, foreign-born residents make up a vital, educated share of the labor force. Over a third of immigrants in Kentucky possess a college or higher degree, and 73 percent report speaking English well. The state benefits from the various ways immigrants participate in the economy—from working in arts, design, entertainment, sports, and media professions to accounting for nearly 30 percent of Kentucky's fishing, farming, and forestry employees. As workers, business owners, taxpayers, and neighbors, immigrants are an integral part of Kentucky's diverse and thriving communities and make extensive contributions that benefit all.

### **Nearly 4 percent of Kentucky residents are immigrants, while nearly 3 percent are native-born U.S. citizens who have at least one immigrant parent.**

- In 2015, 157,336 immigrants (foreign-born individuals) comprised 3.6 percent of the state's population.<sup>1</sup>
- Kentucky was home to 68,802 women, 70,300 men, and 18,234 children who were immigrants.<sup>2</sup>
- The top countries of origin for immigrants were Mexico (19.2 percent of immigrants), India (6.9 percent), Cuba (5.1 percent), China (4.5 percent), and Guatemala (3.7 percent).<sup>3</sup>
- In 2016, 115,969 people in Kentucky (2.7 percent of the state's population) were native-born Americans who had at least [one immigrant parent](#).<sup>4</sup>

### **More than a third of immigrants in Kentucky are naturalized U.S. citizens.**

- 58,196 immigrants (37 percent) had naturalized as of 2015,<sup>5</sup> and 36,841 immigrants were eligible to become [naturalized U.S. citizens](#) in 2015.<sup>6</sup>
- More than three-quarters of immigrants (78.2 percent) reported speaking English "well" or "very well."<sup>7</sup>

### **Immigrants in Kentucky are concentrated at both ends of the educational spectrum.**

- More than a third of all adult immigrants had a college degree or more education in 2015, while one-quarter had less than a high school diploma.<sup>8</sup>

Education Level	Share (%) of All Immigrants	Share (%) of All Natives
College degree or more	34.3	22.8
Some college	17.4	28.8
High school diploma only	23.2	34.0
Less than a high-school diploma	25.2	14.4

**Over 24,000 U.S. citizens in Kentucky live with at least one family member who is undocumented.**

- 50,000 [undocumented immigrants](#) comprised 30 percent of the immigrant population and 1.1 percent of the total state population in 2014.<sup>9</sup>
- 56,157 people in Kentucky, including 22,262 born in the United States, lived with at least one [undocumented family member](#) between 2010 and 2014.<sup>10</sup>
- During the same period, 2 percent of children in the state were U.S. citizens living with at least one undocumented family member (19,713 children in total).<sup>11</sup>

**Nearly 3,000 Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) recipients live in Kentucky.**<sup>12</sup>

- As of 2016, 59 percent of [DACA-eligible immigrants](#) in Kentucky, or 3,448 people, had applied for DACA.<sup>13</sup>
- An additional 2,000 residents of the state satisfied all but the educational requirements for DACA, and up to 2,000 others would be additionally eligible as they grew older.<sup>14</sup>

**Immigrants are vital members of Kentucky’s labor force across industries.**

- 99,838 immigrant workers comprised 4.8 percent of the labor force in 2015.<sup>15</sup>
- Immigrant workers were most numerous in the following industries:

Industry	Number of Immigrant Workers
Manufacturing	19,023
Accommodation and Food Services	13,719
Health Care and Social Assistance	13,236
Retail Trade	10,816
Educational Services	10,368

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)
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	18.5
Accommodation and Food Services	6.7
Manufacturing	5.5
Administrative & Support; Waste Management; and Remediation Services	5.4
Construction	4.9

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

**Immigrants are a significant part of the Kentucky 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
Production	10,815
Food Preparation and Serving Related	10,029
Sales and Related	9,511
Office and Administrative Support	9,416
Management	8,790

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)
Farming, Fishing, and Forestry	29.3
Architecture and Engineering	7.7
Life, Physical, and Social Sciences	7.0
Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media	6.8
Building and Grounds Cleaning & Maintenance	6.7

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

- Undocumented immigrants comprised 1.7 percent of the state's workforce in 2014.<sup>19</sup>

### **Immigrants in Kentucky contribute a billion dollars in taxes every year.**

- [Immigrant-led households in the state paid](#) \$719.3 million in federal taxes and \$343.1 million in state and local taxes in 2014.<sup>20</sup>
- Undocumented immigrants in Kentucky paid an estimated \$36.6 million in [state and local taxes](#) in 2014. Their contribution would rise to \$52.7 million if they could receive legal status.<sup>21</sup>
- [DACA recipients](#) in Kentucky paid an estimated \$9.1 million in state and local taxes in 2016.<sup>22</sup>

### **As consumers, immigrants add billions of dollars to Kentucky's economy.**

- Kentucky residents in immigrant-led households had \$2.8 billion in [spending power](#) (after-tax income) in 2014.<sup>23</sup>

### **Immigrant entrepreneurs in Kentucky generate hundreds of millions of dollars in business revenue.**

- 8,690 immigrant business owners accounted for 4.6 percent of all self-employed Kentucky residents in 2015 and generated \$283.5 million in business income.<sup>24</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 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 ACS 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 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>.

<sup>13</sup> “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](http://www.migrationpolicy.org/programs/data-hub/deferred-action-childhood-arrivals-daca-profiles).

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<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 Kentucky* (New York, NY: August 2016), 5, [www.newamericaneconomy.org/research/the-contributions-of-new-americans-in-kentucky/](http://www.newamericaneconomy.org/research/the-contributions-of-new-americans-in-kentucky/).

<sup>21</sup> 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/>.

<sup>22</sup> 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>23</sup> New American Economy, *The Contributions of New Americans in Kentucky*, 5.

<sup>24</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.