



Immigrants in Montana

Montana has a small but growing immigrant community, much of which emigrated from Canada and Mexico. While only 2 percent of Montana's population was born in another country, foreign-born residents help support Montana's economy across sectors. Immigrants make up a vital, educated share of the state's labor force, with over a third holding a college or higher degree. Many of Montana's immigrants lend their expertise as architects and engineers, accounting for 10 percent of residents working in the field, and roughly 14 percent of all Montanans working in the extraction industry are immigrants. As workers, business owners, taxpayers, and neighbors, immigrants are an integral part of Montana's diverse and thriving communities and make extensive contributions that benefit all.

More than 2 percent of Montana residents are immigrants, while 4 percent are native-born U.S. citizens with at least one immigrant parent.

- In 2015, 21,356 immigrants (foreign-born individuals) comprised 2.1 percent of the state's population.¹
- Montana was home to 11,065 women, 9,033 men, and 1,258 children who were immigrants.²
- The top countries of origin for immigrants were Canada (26.7 percent of immigrants), Mexico (12.5 percent), Germany (7.2 percent), England (5.7 percent), and Korea (4.4 percent).³
- In 2016, 44,815 people in Montana (4.4 percent of the state's population) were native-born Americans who had at least [one immigrant parent](#).⁴

Over half of all immigrants in Montana are naturalized U.S. citizens.

- 11,373 immigrants (53.3 percent) had naturalized as of 2015,⁵ while 5,217 immigrants were eligible to become [naturalized U.S. citizens](#) in 2015.⁶
- More than 9 in 10 immigrants (93.3 percent) reported speaking English "well" or "very well."⁷

Most immigrants in Montana have pursued education at or above the college level.

- More than one-third of immigrants had a college degree or more education in 2015, while one in seven had less than a high school diploma.⁸

Education Level	Share (%) of All Immigrants	Share (%) of All Natives
College degree or more	35.2	30.5
Some college	21.1	31.7
High school diploma only	29.2	31.5
Less than a high-school diploma	14.5	6.2

Hundreds of U.S. citizens in Montana live with at least one family member who is undocumented.

- In 2014, fewer than 5,000 [undocumented immigrants](#) comprised 14 percent of the immigrant population, or a fraction of the total state population at 0.3 percent.⁹
- 1,715 people in Montana, including 764 born in the United States, lived with at least one [undocumented family member](#) between 2010 and 2014.¹⁰
- During the same period, 531 U.S. citizen children in the state were living with at least one undocumented family member.¹¹

Approximately 60 Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) recipients live in Montana.¹²

- As of 2017, 92 people in Montana had applied for DACA.¹³
- [DACA recipients](#) in Montana paid an estimated \$101,000 in state and local taxes in 2016.¹⁴

Immigrants are vital members of Montana’s labor force across a range of industries.

- 11,265 immigrant workers comprised 2.2 percent of the labor force in 2015.¹⁵
- Immigrant workers were most numerous in the following industries:

Industry	Number of Immigrant Workers
Educational Services	1,897
Accommodation and Food Services	1,855
Mining Quarry Oil and Gas Extract	1,784
Health Care and Social Assistance	1,551
Administrative & Support; Waste Management; and Remediation Services	1,290

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)
Mining, Quarry, Oil & Gas Extract	13.6
Administrative & Support; Waste Management; and Remediation Services	6.8
Information	6.2
Accommodation and Food Services	3.3
Educational Services	3.3

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

Immigrant workers are an important part of the Montana workforce in a variety of occupations.

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

Occupation Category	Number of Immigrant Workers
Management	1,648
Education, Training, and Library Services	1,637
Building and Grounds Cleaning & Maintenance	1,571
Transportation and Material Moving	1,569
Construction and Extraction	1,417

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)
Architecture and Engineering	9.7
Building and Grounds Cleaning & Maintenance	5.5
Transportation and Material Moving	4.6
Education, Training, and Library Services	4.6
Farming, Fishing, and Forestry	3.4

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

- Undocumented immigrants comprised a fraction of the state's workforce at 0.4 percent in 2014.¹⁹

Immigrants in Montana contribute hundreds of millions of dollars in yearly taxes.

- [Immigrant-led households in the state paid](#) \$118.5 million in federal taxes and \$36.1 million in state and local taxes in 2014.²⁰
- Undocumented immigrants in Montana paid \$548,000 in [state and local taxes](#) in 2014. Their contribution would rise to \$762,000 if they could receive legal status.²¹

As consumers, immigrants add nearly half a billion dollars to Montana's economy every year.

- Montanans in immigrant-led households had \$474.2 million in [spending power](#) (after-tax income) in 2014.²²

Immigrant entrepreneurs in Montana generate millions of dollars in annual business revenue.

- 1,891 immigrant business owners accounted for 2.1 percent of all self-employed Montana residents in 2015 and generated \$18 million in business income.²³

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 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.

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 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>.

¹³ 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>.

¹⁴ 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/>.

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 Montana* (New York, NY: August 2016), 5,

www.newamericaneconomy.org/research/the-contributions-of-new-americans-in-montana/.

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

²² New American Economy, *The Contributions of New Americans in Montana*, 5.

²³ “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.