



New Americans in Missouri: The Political and Economic Power of Immigrants, Latinos, and Asians in the Show-Me State

Immigrants, Latinos, and Asians account for growing shares of the economy and population in Missouri. Immigrants (the foreign-born) make up 3.9% of the state's population, and 45.2% of them are naturalized U.S. citizens who are eligible to vote. "New Americans"—immigrants and the children of immigrants—account for 2.1% of registered voters in the state. Immigrants are not only integral to the state's economy as workers, but also account for billions of dollars in tax revenue and consumer purchasing power. Moreover, Latinos and Asians (both foreign-born and native-born) wield \$10.5 billion in consumer purchasing power, and the businesses they own had sales and receipts of \$5.1 billion and employed more than 34,000 people at last count. As the economy continues to grow, Missouri can ill-afford to alienate such a critical component of its labor force, tax base, and business community.

Immigrants and their children are growing shares of Missouri's population and electorate.

- The foreign-born share of Missouri's population rose from 1.6% in [1990](#),¹ to 2.7% in [2000](#),² to 3.9% in [2013](#),³ according to the U.S. Census Bureau. Missouri was home to 233,261 immigrants in [2013](#),⁴ which is almost the total population of [Winston-Salem, North Carolina](#).⁵
- From 2000 to 2010, [several cities](#) in Missouri saw their population increase in part due to immigration, according to the Chicago Council on Global Affairs: Columbia (11.1% change in population due to immigration), Joplin (17.2% change), Kansas City (22.6% change), St. Louis (37.9% change), and Springfield (9% change).⁶
- 45.2% of immigrants (or 105,387 people) in Missouri were naturalized U.S. citizens in [2013](#)⁷—meaning that they are eligible to vote.
- Unauthorized immigrants comprised roughly 1.1% of the state's population (or 65,000 people) in [2012](#), according to a report by the Pew Hispanic Center.⁸
- 2.1% (or 72,286) of registered voters in Missouri were "New Americans"—naturalized citizens or the U.S.-born children of immigrants who were raised during the current era of immigration from Latin America and Asia which began in 1965—according to an analysis of 2012 Census Bureau data by the [American Immigration Council](#).⁹

More than 5% of Missourians are Latino or Asian.

- The Latino share of Missouri's population grew from 1.2% in [1990](#),¹⁰ to 2.1% in [2000](#),¹¹ to 3.8% (or 229,748 people) in [2013](#).¹² The Asian share of the population grew from 0.8% in [1990](#),¹³ to 1.1% in [2000](#),¹⁴ to 1.7% (or 102,626 people) in [2013](#),¹⁵ according to the U.S. Census Bureau.
- Latinos accounted for 2.2% (or 63,000) of Missouri voters in the 2012 elections, and Asians 0.7% (20,000), according to the [U.S. Census Bureau](#).¹⁶
- In Missouri, 84% of children with immigrant parents were U.S. citizens in [2009](#), according to data from the Urban Institute.¹⁷
- In [2009](#), 88.7% of children in Asian families in Missouri were U.S. citizens, as were 91.2% of children in Latino families.¹⁸

Immigrant, Latino, and Asian entrepreneurs and consumers add billions of dollars and thousands of jobs to Missouri's economy.

- The 2014 purchasing power of Latinos in Missouri totaled \$5.4 billion—an increase of 639% since 1990. Asian buying power totaled \$5.1 billion—an increase of 712% since 1990, according to the [Selig Center for Economic Growth](#) at the University of Georgia.¹⁹
- Immigration boosts housing values in communities. From 2000 to 2010, according to the [Americas Society/Council of the Americas](#), the value added by immigration to the price of the average home was \$2,252 in St. Louis County; \$988 in Jackson County; \$718 in St. Charles County; \$664 in Kent County; and \$575 in Washtenaw County.²⁰
- Missouri's 9,752 Asian-owned businesses had sales and receipts of \$3.7 billion and employed 25,336 people in 2007, the last year for which data is available.²¹ The state's 6,178 Latino-owned businesses had sales and receipts of \$1.4 billion and employed 9,520 people in 2007, according to the [U.S. Census Bureau's Survey of Business Owners](#).²²
- From 2006 to 2010, there were [11,414](#) new immigrant business owners in Missouri who had total net business income of \$650 million (5% of all net business income in the state), according to Robert Fairlie of the University of California, Santa Cruz.²³
- In 2010, [5.8% of all business owners](#) in Missouri were foreign-born, according to the Fiscal Policy Institute.²⁴ In 2013, [7.6% of business owners](#) in the St. Louis metropolitan area and 6.2% in the Kansas City metropolitan area were foreign-born, according to the Fiscal Policy Institute and Americas Society/Council of the Americas.²⁵ Furthermore, 16.3% of "Main Street" business owners—owners of businesses in the retail, accommodation and food services, and neighborhood services sectors—in the St. Louis metro area and 13.2% of "Main Street" business owners in the Kansas City metro area were foreign-born in 2013.²⁶

Immigrants are integral to Missouri's economy as workers and taxpayers.

- Immigrants comprised 4.7% of the state's workforce in [2013](#) (or 143,974 workers), according to the U.S. Census Bureau.²⁷
- Immigrants accounted for 5% of total economic output in the St. Louis metropolitan area as of 2007, according to a study by the [Fiscal Policy Institute](#).²⁸ In fact, "immigrants contribute to the economy in direct relation to their share of the population. The economy of metro areas grows in tandem with the immigrant share of the labor force."²⁹
- Latinos in Missouri paid \$498 million in federal taxes and \$245 million in state/local taxes in 2013, according to the [Partnership for a New American Economy](#). In particular, foreign-born Latinos paid \$154 million in federal taxes and \$85 million in state/local taxes.³⁰
 - The federal tax contribution of Missouri's Latino population included \$366 million to Social Security and \$86 million to Medicare in 2013. Foreign-born Latinos contributed \$124 million to Social Security and \$29 million to Medicare that year.³¹
- Unauthorized immigrants comprised roughly 1.4% of the state's workforce (or 45,000 workers) in [2012](#), according to a report by the Pew Hispanic Center.³²
- If all unauthorized immigrants were removed from Missouri, the state would lose \$2.3 billion in economic activity, \$1.0 billion in gross state product, and approximately 13,859 jobs, even accounting for adequate market adjustment time, according to a report by the [Perryman Group](#).³³

Unauthorized immigrants pay taxes.

- Unauthorized immigrants in Missouri paid \$44 million in state and local taxes in [2010](#), according to data from the Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy, which includes \$8.3 million in state income taxes, \$4.1 million in property taxes, and \$31.7 million in sales taxes.³⁴
- Were unauthorized immigrants in Missouri to have legal status, they would pay \$57.2 million in state and local taxes, including \$33.5 million in sales taxes, \$19.4 million in state income taxes, and \$4.3 million in property taxes.³⁵

Immigrants are integral to Missouri's economy as students.

- Missouri's 18,205 foreign students contributed \$509.3 million to the state's economy in tuition, fees, and living expenses for the 2013-2014 academic year, according to [NAFSA: Association of International Educators](#).³⁶
- Foreign students contribute to Missouri's metropolitan areas. From 2008 to 2012, according to the [Brookings Institution](#), 3,285 foreign students paid \$50.5 million in tuition and \$38.8 million in living costs in

the Columbia metropolitan area. In the Kansas City metro area, 4,147 foreign students paid \$52.5 million in tuition and \$41.4 million in living costs. In the St. Louis metro area, 8,856 foreign students paid \$238.2 million in tuition and \$118.3 million in living costs. In the Springfield metro area, 2,542 foreign students paid \$27.4 million in tuition and \$27.2 million in living costs.³⁷

- Foreign students also contribute to innovation in Missouri. In 2009, “non-resident aliens” comprised 40.2% of master’s degrees and 51% of doctorate degrees in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields, according to the [Partnership for a New American Economy](#).³⁸

Immigrants excel educationally.

- In [2011](#), 34% of Missouri’s foreign-born population age 25 and older had a bachelor's or higher degree, compared to 25.7% of native-born persons.³⁹
- The number of immigrants in Missouri with a college degree increased by 61.5% between 2000 and 2011, according to [data](#) from the Migration Policy Institute.⁴⁰
- In Missouri, 83% of children with immigrant parents were considered “English proficient” as of [2009](#), according to data from the Urban Institute.⁴¹
- The English proficiency rate among Asian children in Missouri was 85.5%, while for Latino children it was 90%, as of [2009](#).⁴²

Endnotes

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