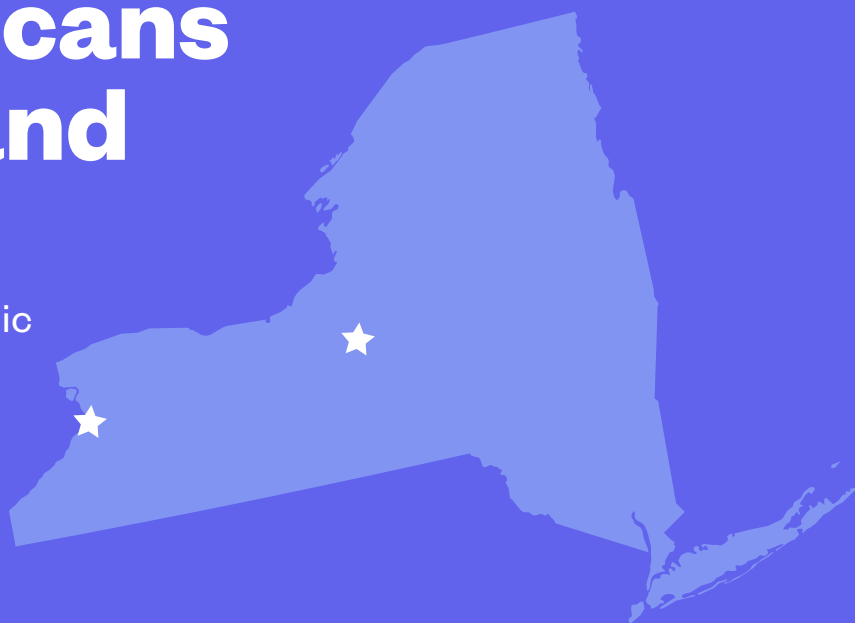


# New Americans in Buffalo and Syracuse

A Snapshot of the Demographic  
and Economic Contributions  
of Foreign-Born Residents  
in the Metropolitan Areas<sup>1</sup>



**A**cross Upstate New York, New Americans are driving economic growth through regenerating the population,<sup>2</sup> supporting the workforce, starting small businesses, and revitalizing Main Street. In Buffalo and Syracuse, the growing foreign-born community is contributing to the local economy in important—yet distinct—ways. In both metros the immigrant population is diverse, has long-standing ties to the community, and is highly entrepreneurial. Thousands of international students support local jobs and contribute millions in spending.

These strengths allow the immigrant communities of the greater Buffalo and Syracuse metro areas to contribute more than \$2 billion in combined spending power to the region's economy. This brief details the myriad ways in which new Americans are shaping the economic future of the region in two distinct contexts.



# New Americans in Buffalo

## SPENDING POWER AND TAX CONTRIBUTIONS



In 2014, foreign-born residents **contributed greatly** to federal, state, and local taxes, including property, income, sales, and excise taxes levied by either the State of New York or by municipal governments.

**\$223.3M** — State & local tax contributions<sup>3</sup>

**\$408.7M** — Federal tax contributions<sup>4</sup>

Leaving them with more than **\$1.4B** in remaining spending power, which supports small businesses and creates local jobs.

This constituted **6.1%** of the metro area's total spending power.<sup>5</sup>

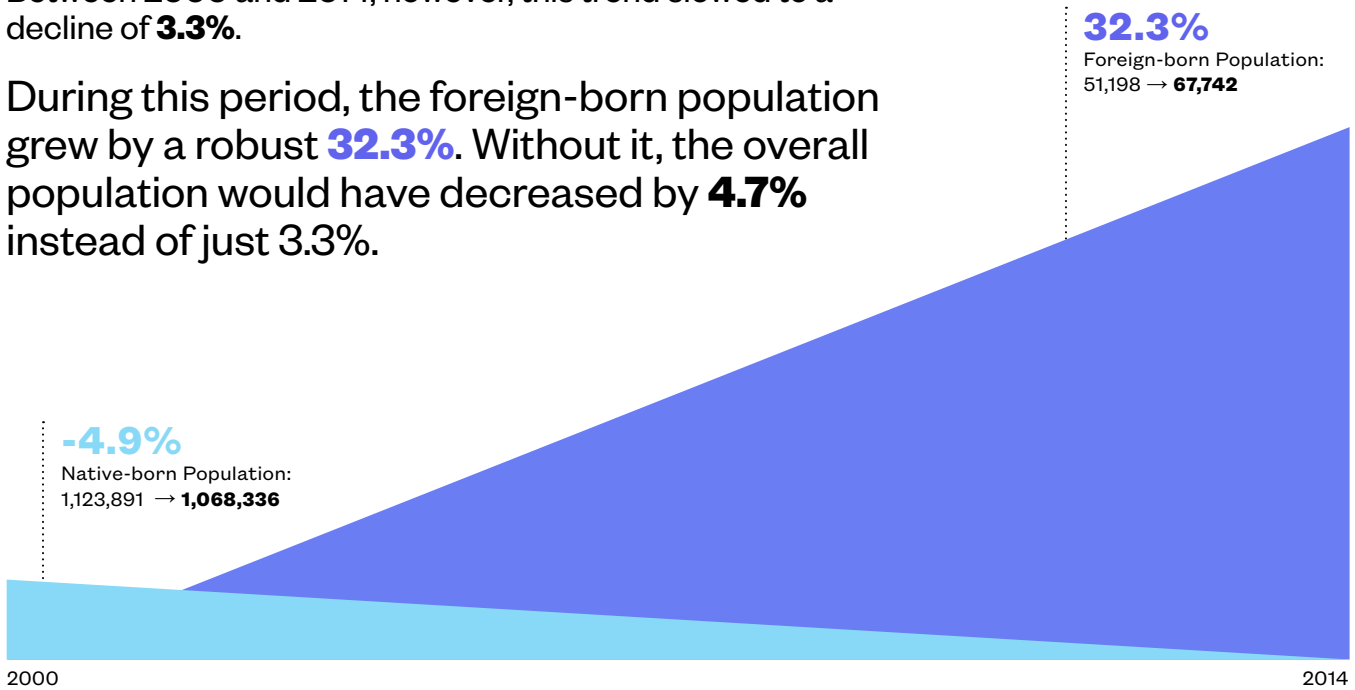
In 2014,  
foreign-born residents contributed **\$3.1B**  
to the GDP of the metro area.<sup>6</sup>

Foreign-born residents also support federal social programs. That same year, immigrants in the area contributed **\$146.4M** to Social Security and **\$42.1M** to Medicare.

POPULATION

Metro Buffalo has experienced depopulation for decades. Between 2000 and 2014, however, this trend slowed to a decline of **3.3%**.

During this period, the foreign-born population grew by a robust **32.3%**. Without it, the overall population would have decreased by **4.7%** instead of just 3.3%.



On refugees...

**7,734**

refugees resettled in the Buffalo metro area between 2009 and 2014.<sup>7</sup>

**22.9%**

of metro Buffalo's foreign-born—or **15,530** people—were refugees in 2014.

As a result of the new immigrants who came between 2000 and 2014,

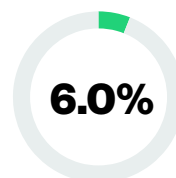
**4,467**

U.S.-born residents were attracted to the metro area.<sup>8</sup>

On undocumented immigrants...

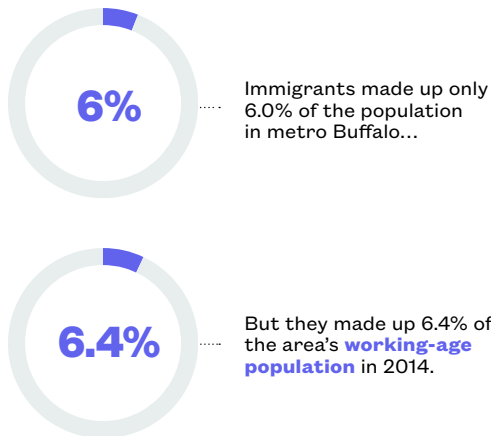
**0.6%**

of residents—or **6,900** people—were undocumented in the Buffalo metro area.

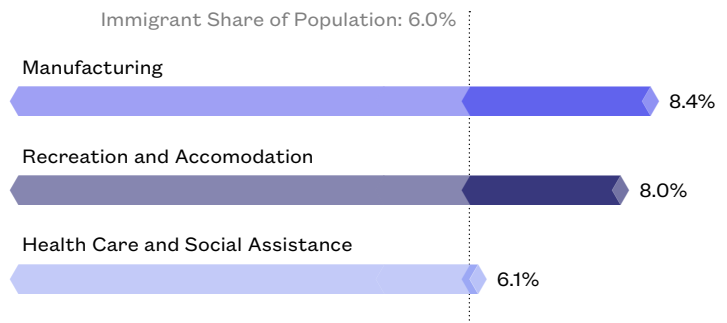


Share of immigrants in metro Buffalo, 2014

## LABOR FORCE



In fact, immigrants are overrepresented in key industries in metro Buffalo.<sup>9</sup> This includes:



Immigrants living in metro Buffalo in 2014 have helped companies fill their workforce needs and keep jobs on U.S. soil, creating or preserving an estimated...

**3,116** local manufacturing jobs that would have vanished or moved elsewhere.<sup>10</sup>

## HOUSING WEALTH



Between 2000 and 2014, immigration to metro Buffalo increased the total housing value in the region by **\$964.5M**.

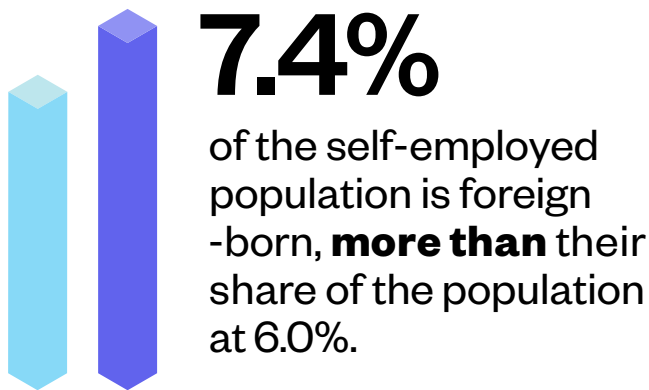
Looking at just the period after the Great Recession, 2009 to 2014, immigrants raised the total housing value in the region by **\$61.2M**.<sup>11</sup>

ENTREPRENEURSHIP

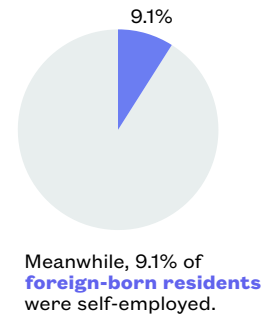
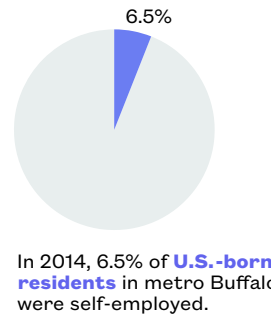
**2,691**

immigrants in Buffalo metro area are self-employed.

Their businesses generated **\$121M** in business income in 2014.<sup>12</sup>



Foreign-born residents are **more likely** than U.S.-born residents to start their own businesses.



	Number of Businesses Owned, 2012 <sup>13</sup>	Sales Revenue, 2012	Number of Paid Employees, 2012
Asian Residents in metro Buffalo <sup>14</sup>	2,615	<b>\$783M</b>	5,741
Hispanic Residents in metro Buffalo	1,487	<b>\$444M</b>	3,681

## EDUCATIONAL AND LONG-TERM ECONOMIC IMPACTS

Foreign-born residents tend to have **higher levels** of education than U.S.-born citizens in Buffalo metro area.

### BACHELOR'S DEGREE OR HIGHER

Foreign-Born

30.1%

U.S.-Born

22.7%

### ADVANCED DEGREE

Foreign-Born

15.3%

U.S.-Born

9.6%

# 8,506

Number of students with temporary resident visas in the area enrolled in higher education during fall of 2014.<sup>15</sup>

**\$200.5M** Spending that academic year.<sup>16</sup>

**2,382** Local jobs they supported.

# 921 STEM

degrees earned by international students graduating from higher education in 2014.

If metro Buffalo retains one-half of its international students after graduation with bachelor's degrees or higher, **1,632 local jobs** will be created within six years,<sup>17</sup> boosting the area's real GDP by **\$321.2M** in 2014 terms within the next 30 years,<sup>18</sup> and increasing its population by **12,823** people within the next 50 years.<sup>19</sup>

## LANGUAGE

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Share of metro Buffalo residents speaking a language **other than English** at home in 2014:

### YOUTH UNDER 18

---

**9.5%**

Share of Youth



**79.2%**

of them were citizens

### ADULTS

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**8.9%**

Share of Adults



**69.2%**

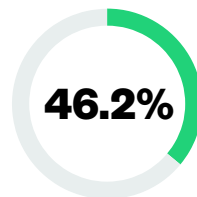
of them were citizens

## NATURALIZATION

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**31,302**

Number of naturalized immigrants as of 2014.

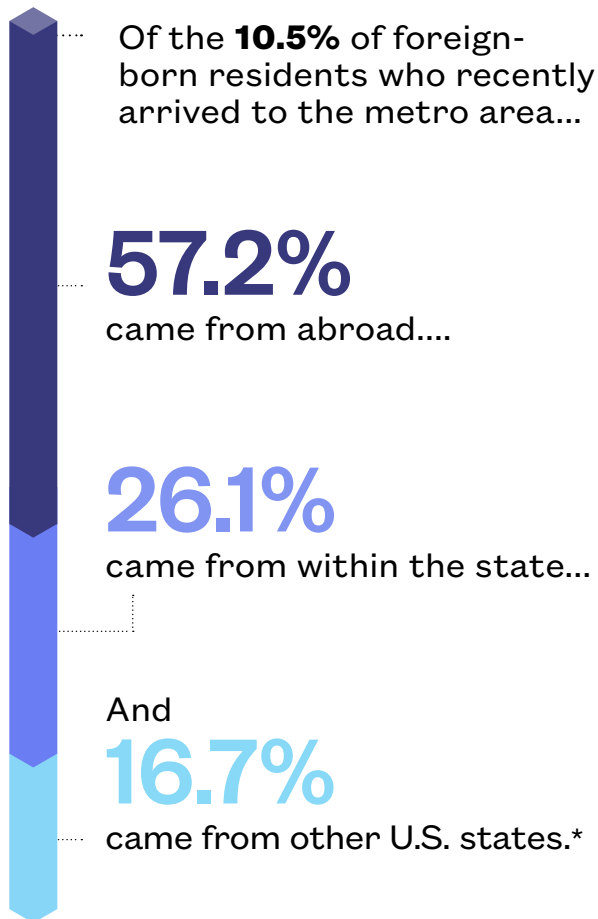


Share of foreign-born residents who had naturalized as of 2014

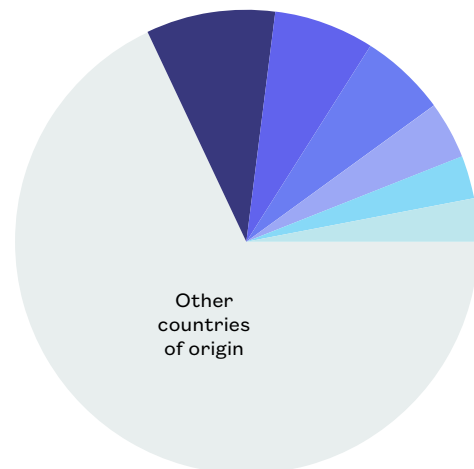
Among the residents who were non-citizens, **39%**, or **14,240** people, were eligible to naturalize.

MIGRATION

In 2014, a vast majority, **89.5%**, of the foreign-born had lived in metro Buffalo for more than a year.



**Top Six Countries of Origin of the Foreign-Born Population:**



1	Canada	9.1%
2	India*	7.1%
3	China	6.6%
4	Germany*	3.9%
5	Italy*	3.3%
6	Burma*	3.0%

\* Number of unweighted observations within the sample is below 50.





# New Americans in Syracuse

## SPENDING POWER AND TAX CONTRIBUTIONS



In 2014, foreign-born residents **contributed greatly** to federal, state, and local taxes, including property, income, sales, and excise taxes levied by either the State of New York or by municipal governments.

**\$93.9M** — State & local tax contributions<sup>20</sup>

**\$140.4M** — Federal tax contributions<sup>21</sup>

Leaving them with more than **\$607.8M** in remaining spending power, which supports small businesses and creates local jobs.

This constituted **4.9%** of the metro area's total spending power.<sup>22</sup>

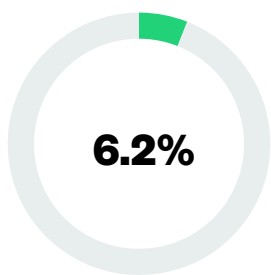
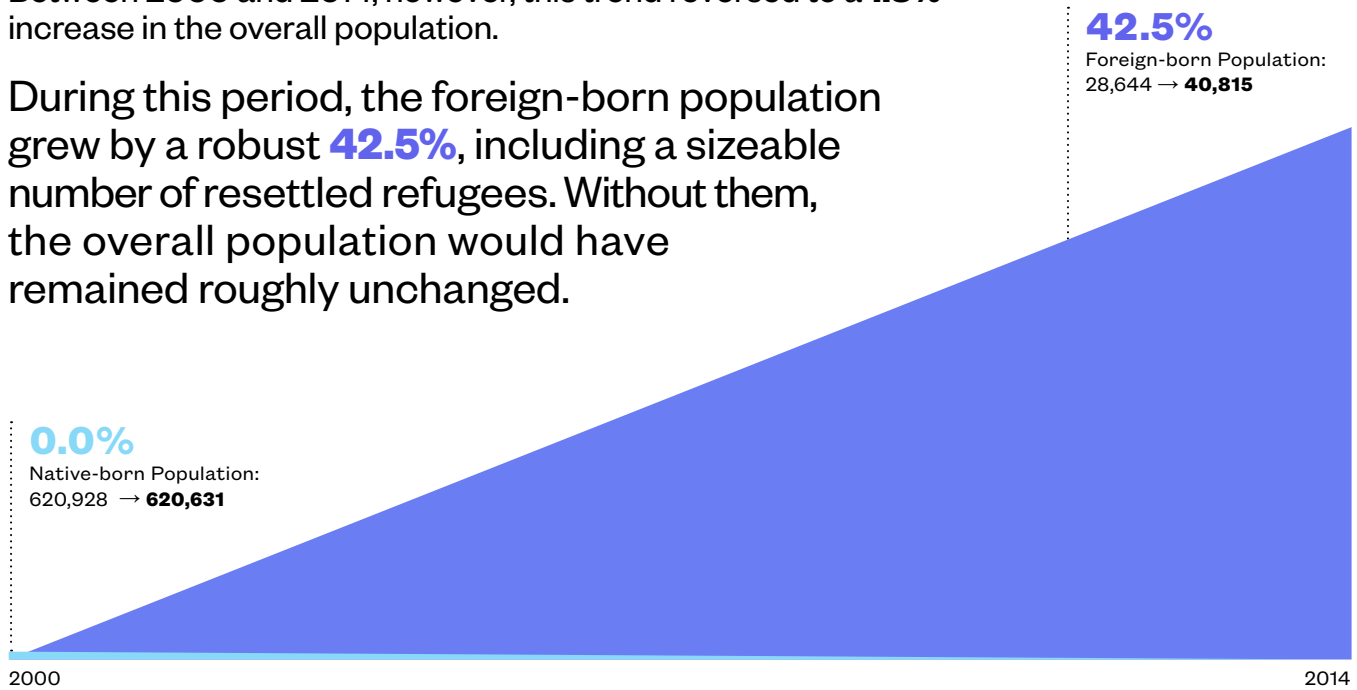
In 2014,  
foreign-born residents contributed **\$1.7B**  
to the GDP of the metro area.<sup>23</sup>

Foreign-born residents also support federal social programs. That same year, immigrants in the area contributed **\$89.2M** to Social Security and **\$22.4M** to Medicare.

## POPULATION

Metro Syracuse has experienced depopulation for decades. Between 2000 and 2014, however, this trend reversed to a **1.8%** increase in the overall population.

During this period, the foreign-born population grew by a robust **42.5%**, including a sizeable number of resettled refugees. Without them, the overall population would have remained roughly unchanged.



Share of immigrants in metro Syracuse, 2014

On undocumented immigrants...

**0.4%**

of residents—or **2,449** people—were undocumented in the Syracuse metro area.

On refugees...

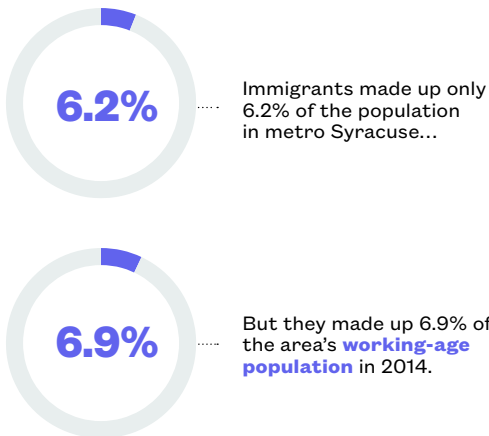
**5,658**

refugees resettled in metro Syracuse between 2009 and 2014.<sup>24</sup>

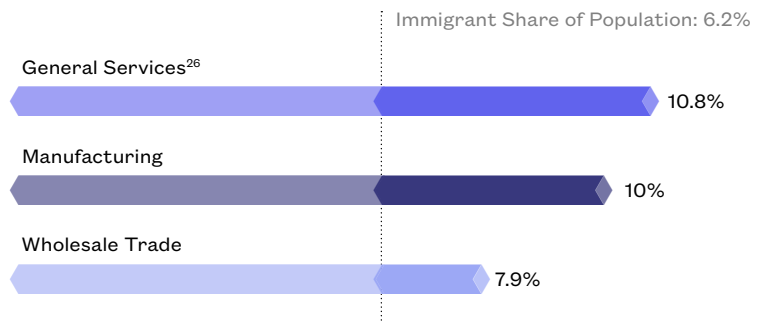
**26.2%**

of metro Syracuse's foreign-born residents—or **10,707** people—were refugees in 2014.

## LABOR FORCE



In fact, immigrants are overrepresented in key industries in metro Syracuse.<sup>25</sup> This includes:



Immigrants living in metro Syracuse in 2014 have helped companies fill their workforce needs and keep jobs on U.S. soil, creating or preserving an estimated....

**1,877** local manufacturing jobs that would have vanished or moved elsewhere.<sup>27</sup>

## HOUSING WEALTH



Between 2000 and 2014, immigration to metro Syracuse increased the total housing value in the region by **\$406.5M**.

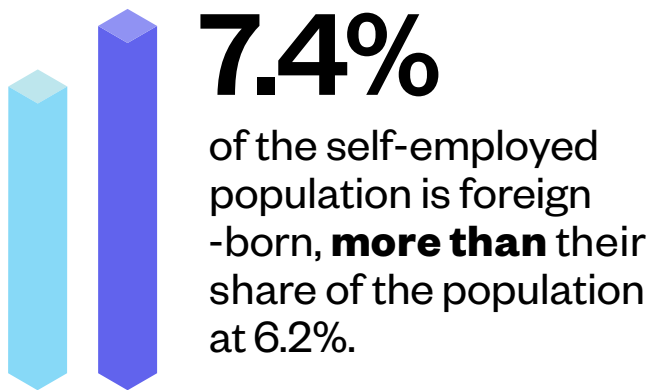
Looking at just the period after the Great Recession, 2009 to 2014, immigrants raised the total housing value in the region by **\$233.5M**.<sup>28</sup>

ENTREPRENEURSHIP

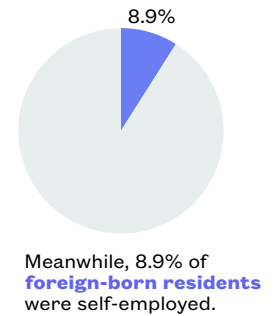
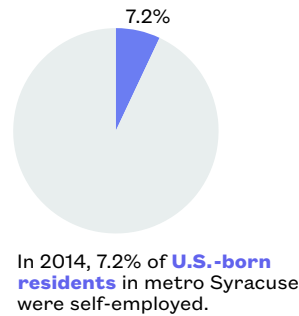
**1,681**

immigrants in Syracuse metro area are self-employed.

Their businesses generated **\$22.3M** in business income in 2014.<sup>29</sup>



Foreign-born residents are **more likely** than U.S.-born residents to start their own businesses.



	Number of Businesses Owned, 2012 <sup>30</sup>	Sales Revenue, 2012	Number of Paid Employees, 2012
<b>Asian Residents in metro Syracuse</b>	1,411	<b>\$301.6M</b>	2,228
<b>Hispanic Residents in metro Syracuse</b>	971	<b>\$95.1M</b>	509

## EDUCATIONAL AND LONG-TERM ECONOMIC IMPACTS

Foreign-born residents tend to have **higher levels** of education than U.S.-born citizens in Syracuse metro area.

### BACHELOR'S DEGREE OR HIGHER

Foreign-Born

30.1%

U.S.-Born

22.4%

### ADVANCED DEGREE

Foreign-Born

12.4%

U.S.-Born

8.8%

# 4,801

Number of students with temporary resident visas in the area enrolled in higher education during fall of 2014.<sup>31</sup>

**\$209.5M** Spending that academic year.<sup>32</sup>

**2,815** Local jobs the supported.

# 640 STEM

degrees earned by international students graduating from higher education in 2014.

If metro Syracuse retains one-half of its international students after graduation with bachelor's degrees or higher, **912 local jobs** will be created within six years,<sup>33</sup> boosting the area's real GDP by **\$180.6M** in 2014 terms within the next 30 years,<sup>34</sup> and increasing its population by **7,311** people within the next 50 years.<sup>35</sup>

## LANGUAGE

Share of metro Syracuse residents speaking a language **other than English** at home in 2014:

### YOUTH UNDER 18

**8.9%**  
Share of Youth



**75.7%**  
of them were citizens

### ADULTS

**8.3%**  
Share of Adults

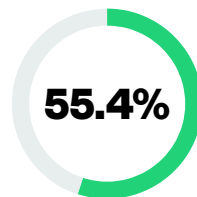


**71.1%**  
of them were citizens

## NATURALIZATION

**22,606**

Number of naturalized immigrants as of 2014.

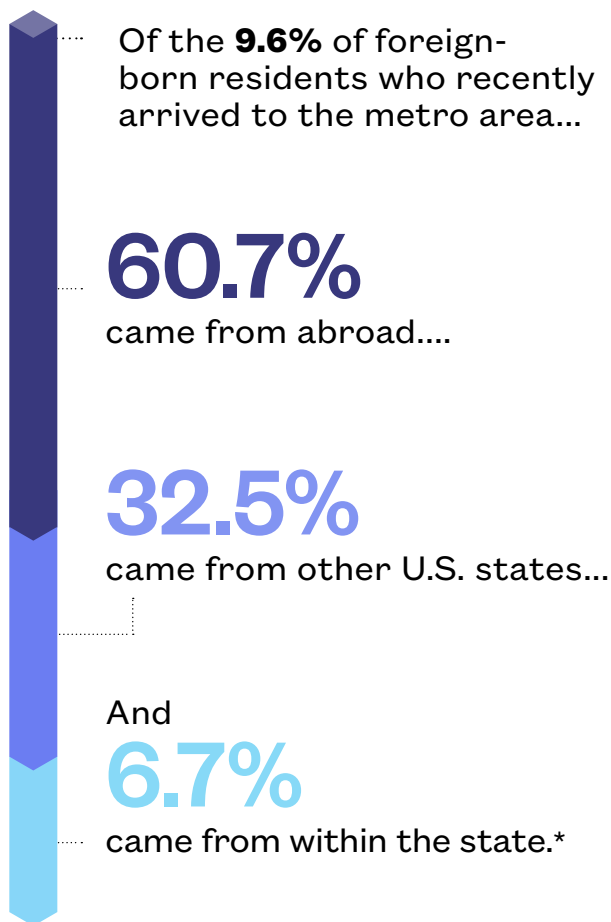


Share of foreign-born residents who had naturalized as of 2014

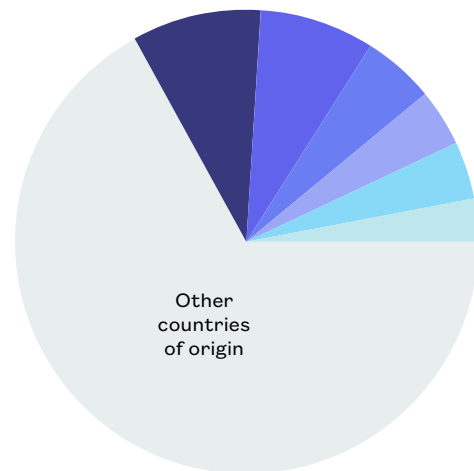
Among the residents who were non-citizens, **41.8%**, or **18,209** people, were eligible to naturalize.

MIGRATION

In 2014, a vast majority, **90.4%**, of the foreign-born had lived in metro Syracuse for more than a year.



**Top Six Countries of Origin of the Foreign-Born Population:**



1	China*	8.2%
2	Canada*	7.8%
3	Cuba*	5.1%
4	India*	4.3%
5	Ukraine*	4.2%
6	Italy*	3.7%

\* Number of unweighted observations within the sample is below 50.

# Endnotes

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- 1** We use the Office of Management and Budget definitions of the Buffalo-Cheektowaga-Niagara Falls Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) and the Syracuse MSA. Unless otherwise specified, data comes from one-year samples of the American Community Survey from 2009 and 2014, as well as the five-percent sample from 2000 census, and figures refer to these two metro areas.
- 2** For the purposes of this report, the terms “New American”, “foreign-born” and “immigrant” refer to anyone born outside of the United States residing in the metro areas of Buffalo and Syracuse. These terms are inclusive of refugee, documented and undocumented populations.
- 3** Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy. 2015. “Who Pays? A Distributional Analysis of the Tax Systems in All Fifty States.”
- 4** U.S. Congressional Budget Office. 2014. “The Distribution of Household Income and Federal Taxes, 2011.”
- 5** Estimates are based on federal tax rates from the U.S. Congressional Budget Office, and state and local tax rates from the Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy. Case counts for Hispanic foreign-born are lower than 50.
- 6** These figures derive from our calculations based on foreign-born residents’ share of wage income and self-employment income in the one-year ACS sample from 2014 and the statistics of GDP by the Bureau of Economic Analysis, U.S. Department of Commerce.
- 7** U.S. Department of State’s Worldwide Refugee Admissions Processing System.
- 8** Vigdor, Jacob. 2013. “Immigration and the Revival of American Cities: From Preserving Manufacturing Jobs to Strengthening the Housing Market.” Partnership for a New American Economy. Estimates of the increase in total housing value as a result of the rising immigrant population are derived from this report, which found that each immigrant moving in a county increased the value of each housing unit in that county by 11.6 cents. We apply this multiplier to the change in the foreign-born population between 2000 and 2014 and between 2009 and 2014 to produce our estimates.
- 9** These three industries have fewer than 50 cases observed in the sample.
- 10** Vigdor, Jacob. 2013. “Immigration and the Revival of American Cities: From Preserving Manufacturing Jobs to Strengthening the Housing Market.” Partnership for a New American Economy.
- 11** Vigdor, Jacob. 2013. “Immigration and the Revival of American Cities: From Preserving Manufacturing Jobs to Strengthening the Housing Market.” Partnership for a New American Economy.
- 12** Number of observations is below 50.
- 13** 2012 Survey of Business Owners, U.S. Census Bureau
- 14** Data on businesses owned by Asian and Hispanic residents are inclusive of foreign-born and native-born populations.
- 15** 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.



- 16** Economic data is derived from the International Student Economic Value Tool maintained by NAFSA, the association of international educators.
- 17** Curtis Simon. 1998. "Human Capital and Metropolitan Employment Growth." *Journal of Urban Economics* 43.
- 18** Rita Ray. 2014. "Effect of Education on Gross Domestic Product: A Case Study from US 'Mid-West'." *International Review of Business Research Papers*, Vol. 10-1.
- 19** Edward L. Glaeser, Giacomo A. M. Ponzetto, and Kristina Tobio. 2014. "Cities, Skills and Regional Change." *Regional Studies*, Vol. 48-1.
- 20** Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy. 2015. "Who Pays? A Distributional Analysis of the Tax Systems in All Fifty States."
- 21** U.S. Congressional Budget Office. 2014. "The Distribution of Household Income and Federal Taxes, 2011."
- 22** Estimates are based on federal tax rates from the U.S. Congressional Budget Office, and state and local tax rates from the Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy. Case counts for Asian foreign-born and Hispanic foreign-born are lower than 50.
- 23** These figures derive from our calculations based on foreign-born residents' share of wage income and self-employment income in the one-year ACS sample from 2014 and the statistics of GDP by the Bureau of Economic Analysis, U.S. Department of Commerce.
- 24** U.S. Department of State's Worldwide Refugee Admissions Processing System.
- 25** These three industries have fewer than 50 cases observed in the sample.
- 26** These industries include personal services (e.g. laundry services, barber shops, and repair and maintenance), religious organizations, social services, and labor unions.
- 27** Vigdor, Jacob. 2013. "Immigration and the Revival of American Cities: From Preserving Manufacturing Jobs to Strengthening the Housing Market." *Partnership for a New American Economy*.
- 28** Vigdor, Jacob. 2013. "Immigration and the Revival of American Cities: From Preserving Manufacturing Jobs to Strengthening the Housing Market." *Partnership for a New American Economy*.
- 29** Number of observations is below 50.
- 30** 2012 Survey of Business Owners, U.S. Census Bureau
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- 33** Curtis Simon. 1998. "Human Capital and Metropolitan Employment Growth." *Journal of Urban Economics* 43.
- 34** Rita Ray. 2014. "Effect of Education on Gross Domestic Product: A Case Study from US 'Mid-West'." *International Review of Business Research Papers*, Vol. 10-1.
- 35** Edward L. Glaeser, Giacomo A. M. Ponzetto, and Kristina Tobio. 2014. "Cities, Skills and Regional Change." *Regional Studies*, Vol. 48-1.

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Want more information about this region?  
See our report:

[The Contributions of  
New Americans in New York](#)

