

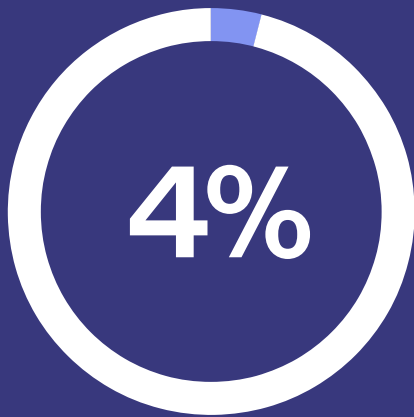
New Americans in Little Rock

A Snapshot of the Demographic and Economic Contributions of Immigrants in the Metro Area¹



State & Local

POPULATION



Immigrant share of the population, 2016

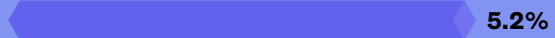
29,267

Number of immigrants living in the Little Rock metro area, 2016

Between 2011 and 2016, the population in the region grew by 5.2%. The immigrant population increased by 5.8%.

Total population

690,572 → 726,696



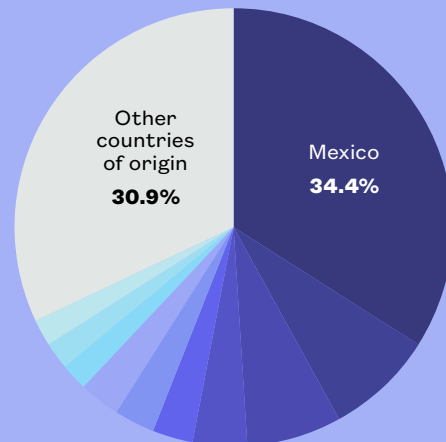
Immigrant population

27,664 → 29,267



Top ten countries of origin for immigrants living in the region:

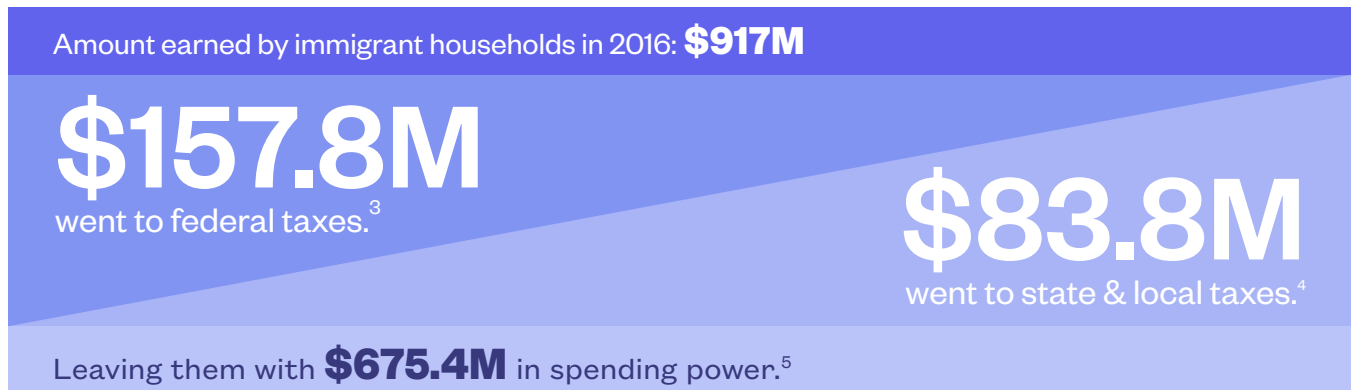
1	Mexico	34.4%
2	India	8.1%
3	China	7.2%
4	Guatemala	4.4%
5	Philippines	3.3%
6	El Salvador	2.9%
7	Korea	2.7%
8	Vietnam	2.2%
9	Germany	2.0%
10	Honduras	1.9%



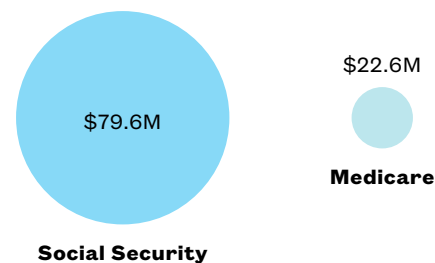
ECONOMIC CONTRIBUTIONS

In 2016, foreign-born residents contributed **\$2B** to the GDP of Little Rock.²

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



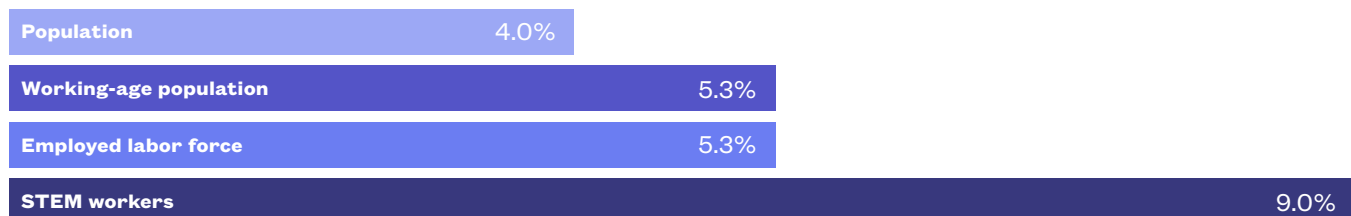
Immigrants in Little Rock also support federal social programs. In 2016, they contributed **\$79.6M** to Social Security and **\$22.6M** to Medicare.



LABOR FORCE GROWTH

Although the foreign-born made up **4.0%** of the metro's overall population, they represented **5.3%** of its working-age* population, **5.3%** of its employed labor force, and **9.0%** of STEM** workers in 2015.

Immigrant shares of the...



* Working-age refers to people ages 16-64 years old.

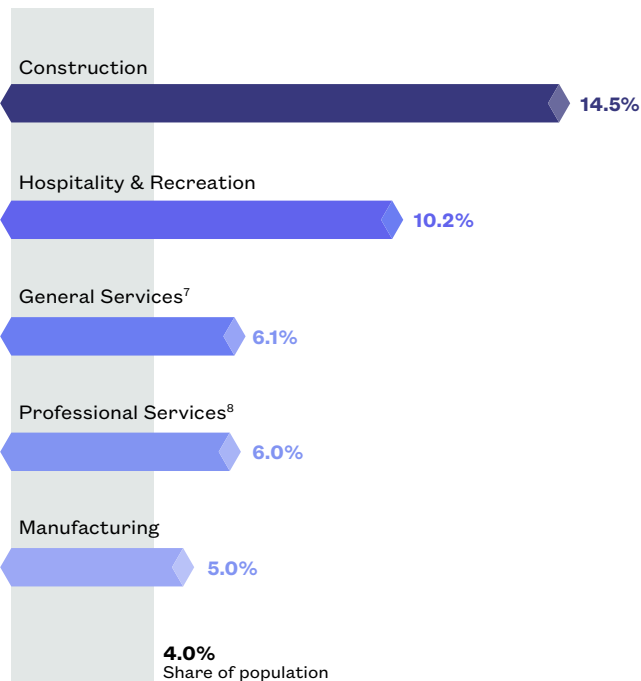
** Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math.

LABOR FORCE GROWTH CONT.

Because of the role immigrants play in the workforce helping companies keep jobs on U.S. soil, by 2016, immigrants living in the region helped create or preserve:

1,346
local manufacturing jobs
that would have otherwise
vanished or moved elsewhere.⁶

Immigrants play a critical role in several key industries in the region, making up significant shares of the workforce in 2016:



SPOTLIGHT ON

Rajesh Chokhani

Chief Operating Officer at Welspun

Indian native Rajesh Chokhani spent 13 years with Indian steel and textiles giant Welspun, before the company gave him an important new project: to open a \$150 million pipe plant in the United States.

Chokhani came to America and traveled the country looking for the ideal spot. In 2006, he chose Little Rock for the city's central location, its rail and waterway connections, and its welcoming business community. "Everyone was very, very welcoming, and eager to help, going out of their way to see that we were comfortable and happy," he says.

In the last decade, Welspun has invested more than \$100 million to expand its Little Rock location, where Chokhani is now Chief Operating Officer. The site employs more than 1,000 people—most of whom are U.S.-born. The plant generates revenues of up to \$650 million a year.

"It's a multiplier," Chokhani says. "Any business that comes in creates lots of indirect jobs, and taxes, and revenues for the state and the city." Chokhani believes Welspun has helped attract a host of new businesses as well. "When we came here, Little Rock wasn't known," he says. "We started a manufacturing revolution in the area."

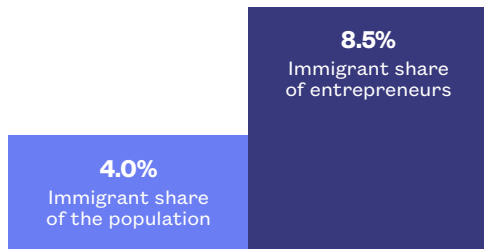
In 2015, Chokhani was proud to become a United States citizen. "I'm as American as other Americans are, except that I wasn't born here," he says. "We're an American company, run in an American way."

In addition to the jobs he has helped create, Chokhani has found other ways of giving back to his adopted city. He has raised hundreds of thousands of dollars for local healthcare clinics, and serves on the boards of Pulaski Technical College, the Museum of Discovery, and the Harmony Clinic, which extends free medical treatment to underserved and homeless. He is also on Executive Committee of the Chamber of Commerce, where he frequently meets with investors and entrepreneurs who are interested in relocating to Arkansas.

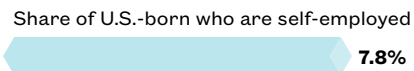
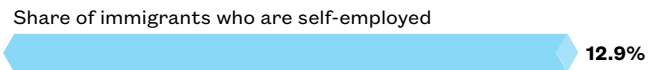
"Whenever business prospects come in, I tell them about my experiences, and how well we were treated," Chokhani says. "I try to be an advocate for the economic development of Little Rock."

ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Despite making up **4.0%** of the overall population, immigrants represented **8.5%** of the entrepreneurs in the Little Rock metro area in 2016.



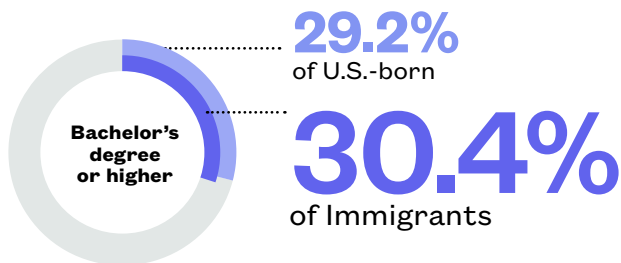
This makes the foreign-born **66.4%** more likely than the U.S.-born to be entrepreneurs.



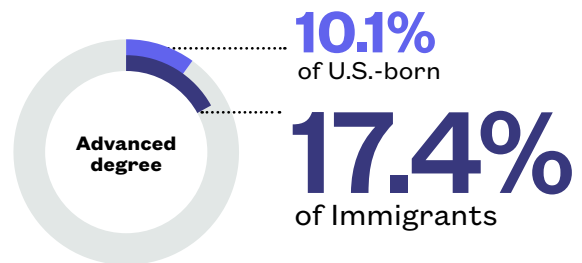
EDUCATION

Immigrants were more likely to have a bachelor's degree or higher in 2016.

Share of population over age 25 with a **bachelor's degree or higher**:



Share of population over age 25 with an **advanced degree**:



1,290 students who were enrolled in Little Rock colleges and universities during the fall of 2015 were temporary residents.¹⁰ International students supported...

113 local jobs...

And spent **\$20.4M** in the 2016-17 academic year.¹¹

Immigrants make up

1.9%

of students under age 18 who attended public schools in the metro area in 2016.

SPOTLIGHT ON

Miguel Fuentevilla

Founder of Imprenta Printing and Signs

In 1997, at the age of 18, Miguel Fuentevilla left the limited opportunities of his native Mexico and came to America. He arrived in Little Rock and quickly found work in a cookie factory—the first of many tough, low-paying jobs. Over the next six years, he worked at a dry-cleaners, a grocery distributor, a car wash, a waffle factory, and finally at a gas station, where he sometimes did two eight-hour shifts back-to-back.

At every job, Fuentevilla strove to improve himself. When a co-worker at the gas station lent him a self-help cassette, he got hooked. Soon he was devouring every personal improvement and, eventually, every business book he could find. “That helped me develop a lot, and realize that you never stop growing,” he says.

In 2003, six years after Fuentevilla arrived in the United States, he’d saved enough money to open a printing business in Little Rock. Imprenta Printing and Signs, which Fuentevilla runs with his brother and father, quickly won a loyal following among the city’s Hispanic businesses. “Latinos started coming out of nowhere—lawn-care businesses, house cleaning, construction, even the Mexican consulate,” he says.

Other immigrant-run businesses also flocked to Imprenta and, today, the thriving company has two locations, six employees, and annual revenues of over \$250,000. About half of Imprenta’s business comes from American-born residents of Little Rock. The other half comes from the city’s many Hispanic, Arab, Asian and Indian-run firms. This has given Fuentevilla a good look at how immigrants help support the local economy.

“You can see it in immigrants in general, in our customers and our friends,” he says. “No one leaves their country and travels so far to be lazy or get any handouts.”

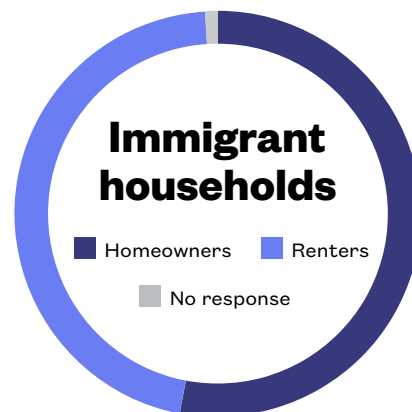
Now, Fuentevilla says he’s focused on making his business more efficient and opening new locations. He’s also teaching his 14-year-old son the importance of a strong work ethic.

“I let him know that I’m an immigrant, and things weren’t just given to me,” he says. “There have been times that things have been challenging, but we don’t let that stop us. We’re always pushing forwards.”

HOUSING WEALTH

In 2016,
52.9%
of immigrants in
the metro area owned
their own homes,
compared to **64.2%**
of the U.S-born.

45.6%
of immigrants
were renters.



The total property
value of immigrant
households was
\$1.1B.

Their total annual
rent was **\$40.5M.**

CITY OF LITTLE ROCK

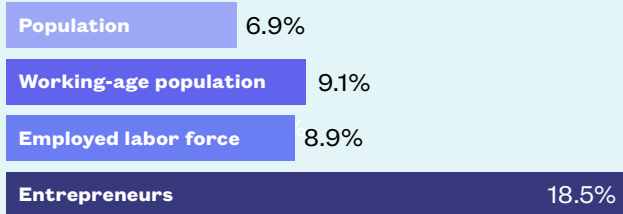
Number of immigrants living in the City of Little Rock in 2016:

13,536

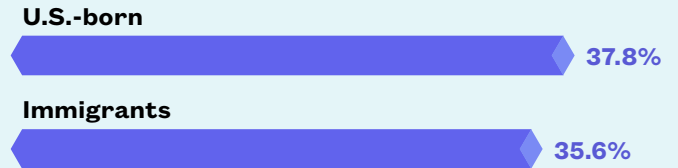
Immigrant share of the city's population in 2016:

6.9%

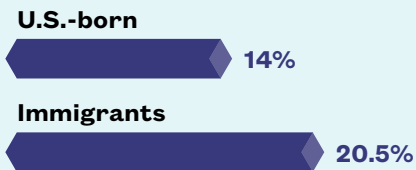
Immigrant shares of...



Share of population over age 25 with a **bachelor's degree or higher** in 2016:



Share of population over age 25 with an **advanced degree** in 2016:



For more city, district, and state-level data, visit MapTheImpact.org and explore our interactive map.



- 1 Unless otherwise specified, data comes from 5-year samples of the American Community Survey from 2011 and 2016 and figures refer to Little Rock-North Little Rock-Conway, AR Metropolitan Statistical Area.
- 2 These figures derive from our calculations based on immigrants' share of wage income and self-employment income in the 5-year ACS sample from 2016 and the statistics of GDP from the Bureau of Economic Analysis, U.S. Department of Commerce.
- 3 U.S. Congressional Budget Office. 2016. "The Distribution of Household Income and Federal Taxes, 2013."
- 4 Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy. 2015. "Who Pays? A Distributional Analysis of the Tax Systems in All Fifty States."
- 5 Estimates are based on federal tax rates from the U.S. Congressional Budget Office, and state and local tax rates are from the Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy.
- 6 Vigdor, Jacob. 2013. "Immigration and the Revival of American Cities: From Preserving Manufacturing Jobs to Strengthening the Housing Market." New American Economy.
- 7 General services include personal services (e.g. laundry services, barber shops, and repair and maintenance), religious organizations, social services, and labor unions.
- 8 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.
- 9 2012 Survey of Business Owners, U.S. Census Bureau. These numbers reflect all business owners. They do not account for country of origin.
- 10 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. Temporary residents refer to people who are not U.S. citizens or permanent residents.
- 11 Economic data is derived from the International Student Economic Value Tool maintained by NAFSA, the association of international educators.