

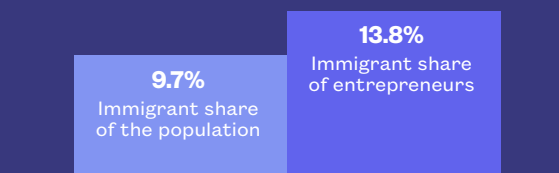
# New Americans in the Harrisonburg MSA

A Snapshot of the Demographic and Economic Contributions of Immigrants<sup>1</sup> in Rockingham County/ the Harrisonburg Metro Area<sup>2</sup>

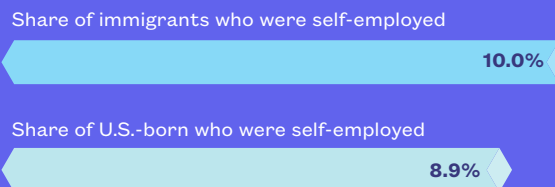


## ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Despite making up **9.7%** of the overall population, immigrants represented **13.8%** of the entrepreneurs in the Harrisonburg metro area in 2016.



This makes the foreign-born **12.6%** more likely than the U.S.-born to be entrepreneurs.



### Harrisonburg Metro Area Businesses, 2012

### Sales Revenue, 2012<sup>3</sup>

Asian-owned

**\$107.0M**

Hispanic-owned

**\$11.9M**

## LABOR FORCE

Although the foreign-born made up **9.7%** of the metro's overall population, they represented **12.1%** of its working-age\* population, **12.5%** of its employed labor force, and **9.9%** of STEM\*\* workers in 2016.

### Immigrant shares of the...

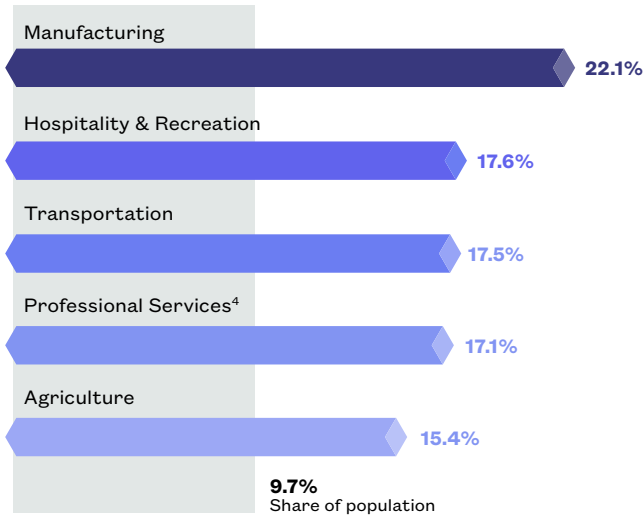


\* Working-age refers to people ages 16-64 years old.

\*\* Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math.

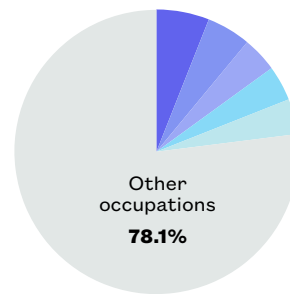
## LABOR FORCE CONT.

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



Immigrants tend to concentrate in these **occupations** in the metro area in 2016:

- 1 Maids & Housekeepers . . . . . 5.7%
- 2 Packaging Machine Operators. . . . . 4.6%
- 3 Grounds Maintenance Workers . . . . . 4.2%
- 4 Cooks. . . . . 3.8%
- 5 Truck Drivers . . . . . 3.6%



## POPULATION GROWTH

# 12,599

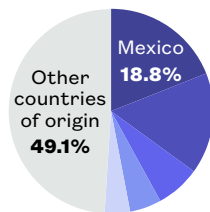
immigrants lived in the Harrisonburg metro area in 2016. They made up **9.7%** of the total population.

# 68,477

people worked in Harrisonburg, either commuting into or within the metro area. Of these, **11.9%**—or **8,132**—were immigrants.

Top five countries of origin for immigrants living in the metro area:

- 1 Mexico . . . . . 18.8%
- 2 Honduras . . . . . 15.9%
- 3 El Salvador. . . . . 6.9%
- 4 Iraq . . . . . 4.9%
- 5 China. . . . . 4.4%



Between 2011 and 2016, the population in the metro area grew by **3.3%**. The immigrant population grew by **73.2%**.

# -0.9%

How much the overall population in the metro area would have shrunk without growth in the foreign-born population.

**Total population:** 126,233 → **130,359**



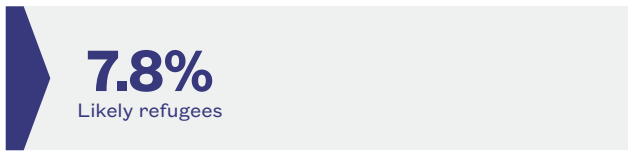
**Immigrant population:** 7,274 → **12,599**



**U.S.-born population:** 118,959 → **117,760**

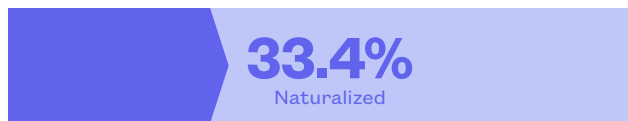


## REFUGEES



Share of immigrants in the metro area who were likely refugees in 2016.<sup>5</sup>

## NATURALIZATION



Share of immigrants and refugees who were naturalized citizens in 2016. This constitutes **4,207** immigrants and refugees.



Share of non-citizen immigrants and refugees who were potentially eligible for naturalization. This constitutes **1,376** immigrants and refugees among 8,392 non-citizens.

## UNDOCUMENTED IMMIGRANTS



Share of immigrants who are likely undocumented, including those eligible for TPS or DACA. This constitutes **5,455** individuals living in the metro area in 2016.

## SPOTLIGHT ON

# Kenia Lopez

## Aspiring ESL Teacher

**A**t seven, Kenia Lopez came to Harrisonburg from El Salvador—and met her father for the first time. He had left before Lopez was born to help provide for the family. “We had no money to eat, or buy milk,” she said. “He wanted to give me a better future.”

In 2005, Lopez joined him in Virginia. Today, her father works at a soup factory and her mother has spent 18 years at a poultry plant. Lopez is deeply involved in the community. She volunteers with her church’s #KidsForChrist program and is a certified medical interpreter at Sentara RMH Medical Center. She also enrolls preschoolers and kindergarteners for Harrisonburg City Public Schools.

As an immigrant, Lopez knows how much anxiety comes with starting a new school, so she brings a unique empathy to her HCPS position. “I feel like I can help parents a lot,” she says. “If they ever have any questions, I tell them to call me.”

Eventually, Lopez wants to make similar contributions in the classroom. She is a part-time student at Blue Ridge Community College but hopes to transfer to a four-year college, and get a degree in education. She would love to teach ESL. “An ESL teacher helped me when I was new to this country and was very scared,” she says. “I want to help other students in the same way.”

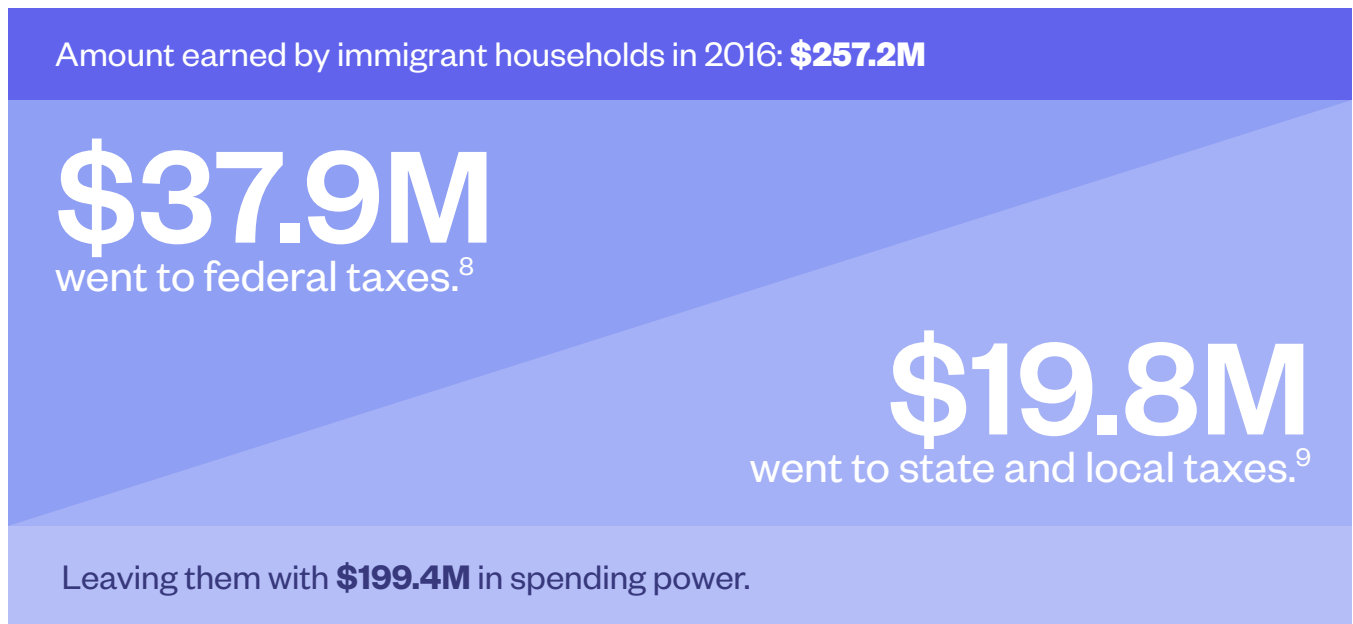
The Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program allows Lopez to work legally. But if the current administration succeeds in cancelling DACA, she would face a difficult road. She would be forced to quit her jobs and would not be able to pay tuition. She would also be subject to deportation. Harrisonburg could lose a talented, giving young woman.

“All of us with DACA are working and striving to help people of all races in our communities,” she says. “We want to give back.”

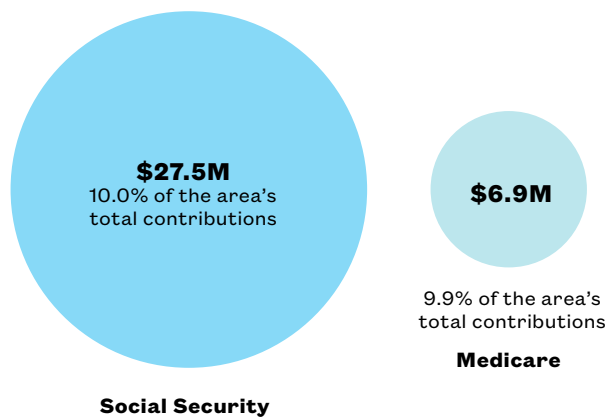
## SPENDING POWER & TAX CONTRIBUTIONS

In 2016, foreign-born residents contributed **\$780.5M**—or **10.0%**—to the GDP of the Harrisonburg metro area.<sup>7</sup>

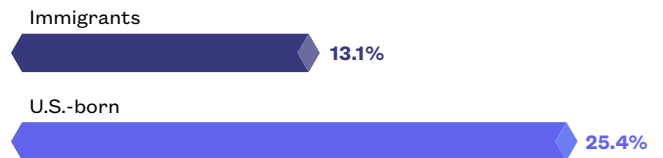
Given their income, immigrants contributed significantly to state and local taxes, including property, sales, and excise taxes levied by state or municipal governments.



Immigrants in Harrisonburg also support federal social programs. In 2016, they contributed **\$27.5M** to Social Security and **\$6.9M** to Medicare.



**13.1%** of immigrants in the metro area received Medicare or Medicaid, compared with **25.4%** of the U.S.-born residents in 2016.



About **51.6%** of immigrants had private healthcare coverage, while **13.4%** had public healthcare coverage.



SPOTLIGHT ON

# Usman Chaudhri

Engineer, *Merck*

Usman Chaudhri dreamed of becoming an engineer, and by 23, he had more than achieved his goal. He had received bachelor's and master's degrees in mechanical engineering from Pakistan's National University of Sciences and Technology and had his research on synthetic engine fuel published in journals around the world. Riding high on his accomplishments, he moved to Texas in 2010 to pursue his PhD at Lamar University.

After completing his doctorate, Chaudhri held several engineering positions at Texas-based refineries and chemical plants. Then, unexpectedly, a recruiter contacted him about a senior utilities engineering position at Merck. It was a different field in a different state, but Chaudhri took a chance. He moved to Harrisonburg with his wife. "I think I have the ability to fit in everywhere, and being an immigrant plays a role in that," he says. "When immigrants come from overseas, especially developing countries, we are eager to explore opportunities that were not available back home."

Chaudhri, who welcomed a U.S.-born daughter with his wife in January 2018, ensures that operations at Merck's 700-plus employee facility in Elkton, VA run smoothly. Under his management, the company produces drugs like the Human Papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine and Keytruda, which prevents various cancers. "I get a lot of job satisfaction, because what I do matters," Chaudhri says. "We make medicine that saves the lives of people around the globe."

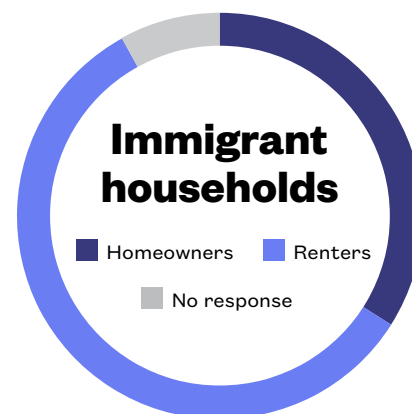
To grow his career in Harrisonburg, Chaudhri is now pursuing his MBA in executive leadership at James Madison University. In addition to school and his full-time job, he also volunteers with immigrant and refugee communities through his local church. His goal is to help other newcomers acclimate to life in Virginia, so that they too can contribute to Harrisonburg's economy and civic life.

"I love helping people," says Chaudhri. "America is the land of opportunity. A lot of people who come to the U.S. just need a little push. If I can give them that through leading as an example, that's good for the whole community."

## HOUSING WEALTH

In 2016,  
**34.4%**  
of immigrants in  
the metro area owned  
their own homes,  
compared to **52.6%**  
of the U.S-born.

**58.1%**  
of immigrants  
were renters.



The total property  
value of immigrant  
households was  
**\$335.0M.**

Their total annual  
rent was **\$24.1M.**



For more city, district, and state-level data, visit [MapTheImpact.org](http://MapTheImpact.org) and explore our interactive map.



- 1 For the purpose of this report, we refer to immigrants and foreign-born as individuals living in the United States who were born outside of the country to parents who were not U.S. citizens.
- 2 Unless otherwise specified, data comes from 5-year samples of the American Community Survey from 2011 and 2016 and figures refer to the Harrisonburg, Virginia, Metropolitan Statistical Area, including Rockingham County and the City of Harrisonburg.
- 3 2012 Survey of Business Owners, U.S. Census Bureau
- 4 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.
- 5 New American Economy. 2017. "From Struggle to Resilience: The Economic Impact of Refugees in America."
- 6 We apply the methodological approach outlined by Harvard University economist George Borjas to arrive at an estimate of the undocumented immigrant population. George J. Borjas, "The Labor Supply of Undocumented Immigrants," NBER Working Paper (National Bureau of Economic Research, Inc, 2016).
- 7 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.
- 8 U.S. Congressional Budget Office. 2016. "The Distribution of Household Income and Federal Taxes, 2013."
- 9 Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy. 2015. "Who Pays? A Distributional Analysis of the Tax Systems in All Fifty States."
- 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.