

New Americans in Mercer County

The Demographic and Economic Contributions of Immigrants in Mercer County¹

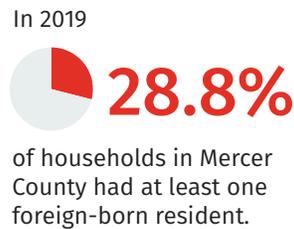
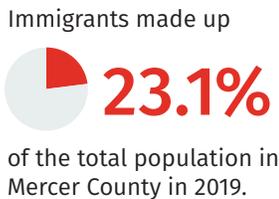
JULY 2021



Population

85,000

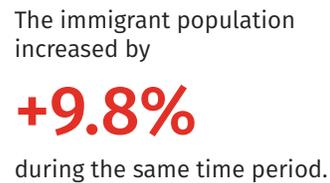
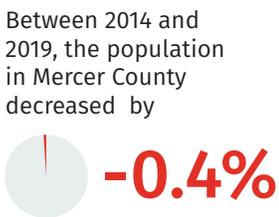
immigrants lived in Mercer County, New Jersey, in 2019.



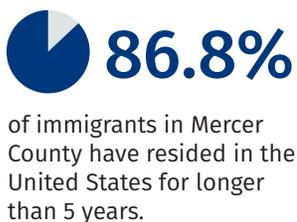
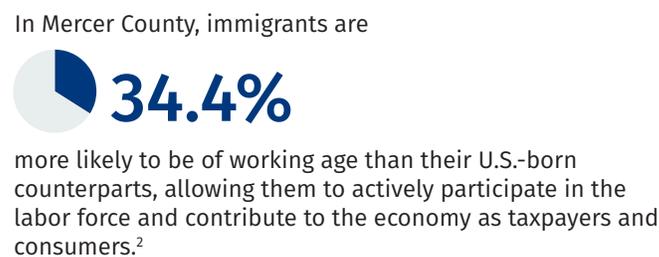
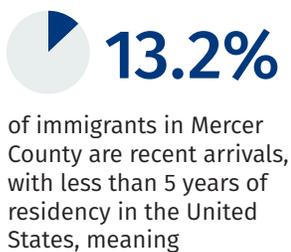
Without growth in the immigrant population, the total population in Mercer County would have decreased even more, by



or **9,200** people.



Demographics

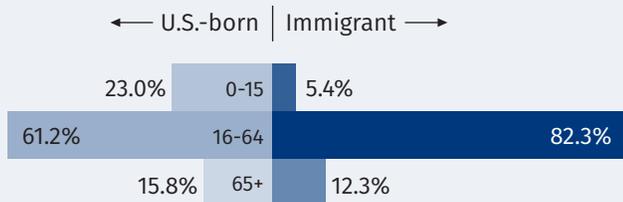


¹ Unless otherwise specified, data comes from 5-year samples of the American Community Survey from 2014 and 2019 and figures refer to Mercer County, New Jersey.

² We define working age as 16-64 years of age.

Demographics *continued*

Shares of population by age groups:³



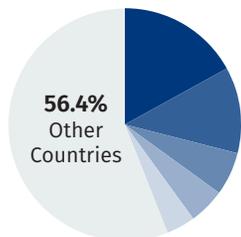
In 2019,

229,700

commuters worked in Mercer County. Of these,



or **54,600** commuters, were foreign-born.



The top five countries of origin for immigrants living in Mercer County were

- India (16.6%)
- China (6.4%)
- Ecuador (3.7%)
- Guatemala (12.0%)
- Haiti (4.9%)

20,600

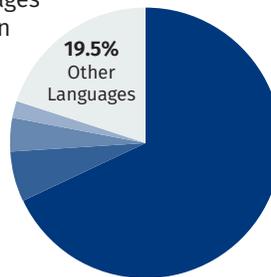
immigrants living in Mercer County had limited English language proficiency, making up



of the immigrant population.

Among the limited English language proficiency population, the top languages spoken at home other than English were:

- Spanish (68.5%)
- Chinese (6.0%)
- Polish (3.6%)
- Gujarati (2.4%)



Spending Power & Tax Contributions

Given their income, immigrants contributed significantly to state and local taxes, including property, sales, and excise taxes.

Foreign-born households held



of all spending power in Mercer County.

In 2019, immigrant households in Mercer County earned **\$4.2 billion**

\$916.4 million

went to federal taxes⁴

\$415.9 million went to state & local taxes⁵

\$2.8 billion left in spending power

³ Totals may not add up to 100 percent due to rounding.

⁴ U.S. Congressional Budget Office. 2020. "The Distribution of Household Income and Federal Taxes, 2017."

⁵ Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy. 2018. "Who Pays? A Distributional Analysis of the Tax Systems in All Fifty States."

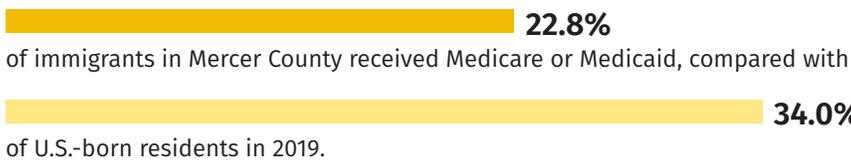
Spending Power & Tax Contributions *continued*

In 2019, foreign-born residents in Mercer County contributed

\$11.5 billion

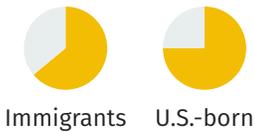
to the county's GDP, or **31.8%** of the total.⁶

Immigrants in Mercer County also supported federal social programs. In 2019, they contributed



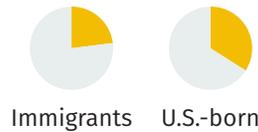
Private Healthcare Coverage

About **64.4%** of immigrants had private healthcare coverage, while **75.1%** of U.S.-born had private healthcare coverage.⁷



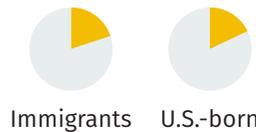
Public Healthcare Coverage

About **22.8%** of immigrants had public healthcare coverage, while **34.3%** of U.S.-born had public healthcare coverage.



Poverty Threshold

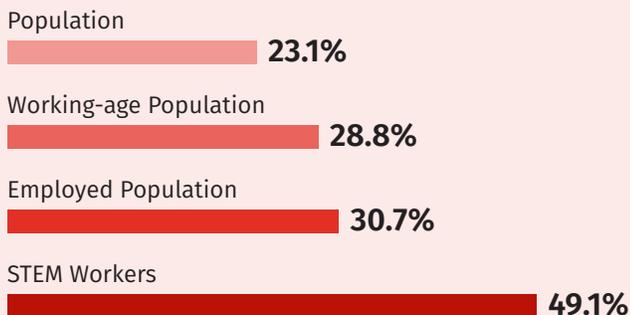
Looking at their household incomes, **19.9%** of immigrants live at or below 150% of the federal poverty threshold as compared to **18.4%** of U.S.-born residents.



Workforce

Although the foreign-born made up **23.1%** of Mercer County's overall population, they represented **28.8%** of its working-age population, **30.7%** of its employed labor force, and **49.1%** of its STEM workers in 2019.⁸

Immigrant shares of the...



The immigrant working-age population was **49.3%** female and **50.7%** male.



The employed immigrant population was **41.7%** female and **58.3%** male.



⁶ These figures derive from our calculations based on immigrants' share of wage income and self-employment income in the 5-year ACS sample from 2019 and the statistics of GDP from the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis.

⁷ Including people who have both public and private healthcare coverage.

⁸ STEM refers to occupations that require background or expertise in Science, Technology, Engineering, and/or Math.

Workforce *continued*

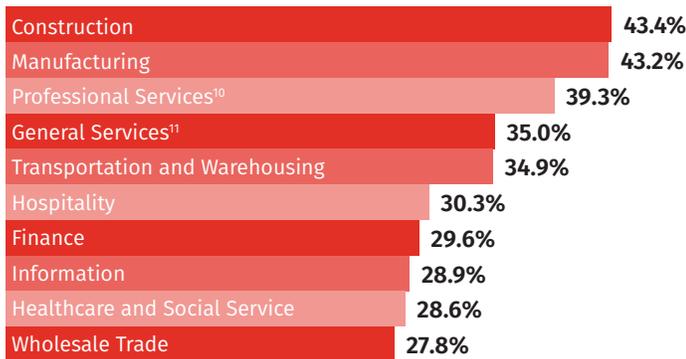
In 2019, there were

17 open STEM job postings

for every available unemployed STEM worker in Mercer County.⁹



Immigrants played a critical role in several key industries in Mercer County. Here are the percentages of immigrant workers in these industries:



⁹ Data of job postings comes from Burning Glass Technologies.

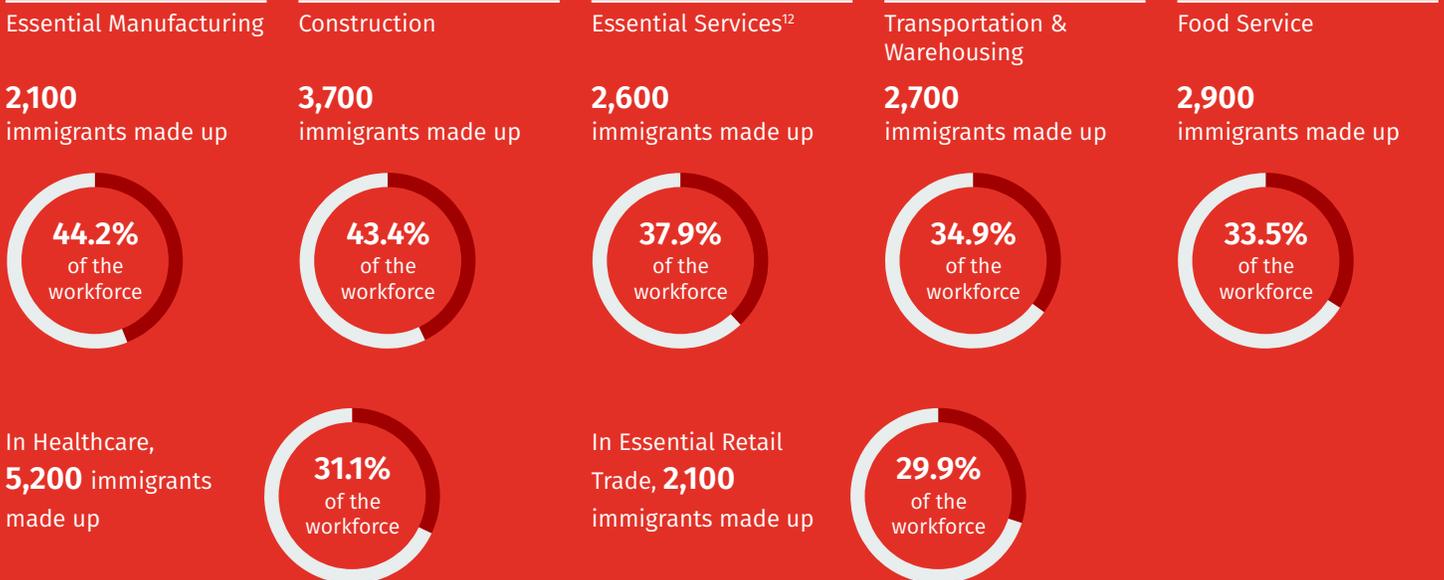
¹⁰ Professional services: Most of these industries include professions that require a degree or a license, such as legal services, accounting, scientific research, consulting services, etc.

¹¹ General services include personal services (e.g. laundry services, barber shops, and repair and maintenance), religious organizations, social services, and labor unions.

¹² These include services essential for daily living, such as building cleaning, waste management, auto repair, and veterinary services.

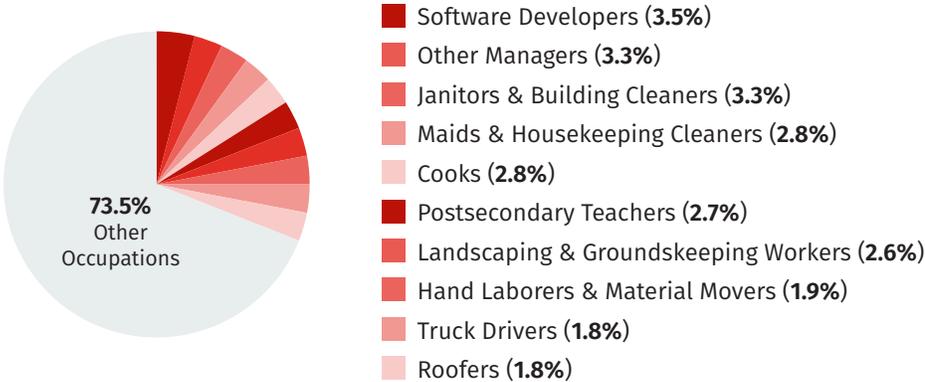
SPOTLIGHT ON Immigrant Essential Workers

Immigrants have also been playing vital roles in critical industries that have kept the country functioning throughout the COVID-19 crisis. Immigrants in Mercer County continue working in these frontline and essential industries:



Workforce *continued*

Immigrants tended to work in these below occupations in Mercer County in 2019. Here are the percentages of immigrants who work in these occupations:



Below lists the top occupations for female workers, and the percentages of female immigrants who work in these occupations:

Top Occupations for Female Workers	Share of Workforce, Immigrant Female
Maids & Housekeeping Cleaners	5.6%
Janitors & Building Cleaners	3.6%
Home Health Aides	2.6%

Below lists the top occupations for male workers, and the percentages of male immigrants who work in these occupations:

Top Occupations for Male Workers	Share of Workforce, Immigrant Male
Software Developers	4.7%
Landscaping & Groundskeeping Workers	4.4%
Other Managers	4.1%

Due to the role immigrants play in the workforce helping companies keep jobs on U.S. soil, we estimate that immigrants living in Mercer County had helped create or preserve

3,900

manufacturing jobs that would have otherwise vanished or moved elsewhere by 2019.¹³

¹³ Vigdor, Jacob. 2013. "Immigration and the Revival of American Cities: From Preserving Manufacturing Jobs to Strengthening the Housing Market." *New American Economy*.

¹⁴ Data is obtained from Burning Glass Technologies for the time period between April 1, 2020 and March 31, 2021.

SPOTLIGHT ON Job Demand In Mercer County In 2021

Not only are immigrants more likely to be of working age in Mercer County, but they are also a crucial part of the county's economy, and could help meet the needs of its fastest growing and most in-demand fields, especially as the need for bilingual and culturally competent public services and healthcare increases.

The top 5 industries with the highest demand for bilingual workers:¹⁴

1. Health Care & Social Assistance

2. Finance & Insurance

3. Retail Trade

4. General Services

5. Administrative Support

Entrepreneurship

Despite making up



of the population, immigrants made up **37.5%** of the business owners in Mercer County in 2019.

Immigrant entrepreneurs self-identified as **44.6%** female and **55.4%** male.



While **6.3%** of the U.S.-born population were entrepreneurs, **8.6%** of foreign-born residents worked for their own businesses.



4,700

immigrant entrepreneurs generated

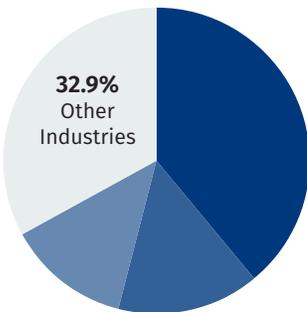
\$144.2 million

in business income for Mercer County in 2019.

Immigrant entrepreneurs by race and ethnicity:

Hispanic	38.6%
White	29.0%
Asian American or Pacific Islander	24.8%
Other Groups	7.6%¹⁵

Immigrant entrepreneurs tended to work in these **key industries**:



- Professional Services (**38.6%**)
- General Services (**15.1%**)
- Construction (**13.4%**)

¹⁵ Because of limitations with small sample size, we are unable to provide estimates for other racial and ethnic groups, including Black or African American, mixed race, and other races and ethnicities.

SPOTLIGHT ON

Small Business Recovery from the Pandemic

While all Americans are struggling to adapt to their new reality in a time of economic shutdown, entrepreneurs within particularly vulnerable industries in the metro area face severe challenges posed by the COVID-19 crisis.

4,100

entrepreneurs in professional and business services,

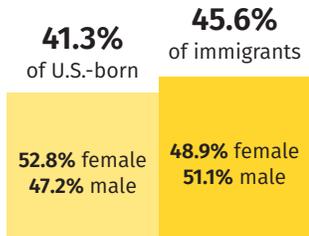


being immigrants

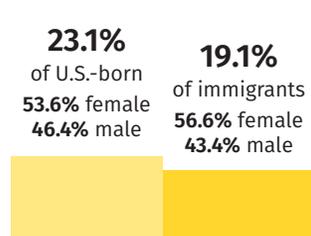
Education

The share of immigrants with post-secondary education has increased in recent years.

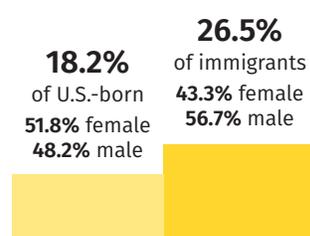
Share of Mercer County's population aged 25 or above that held a **bachelor's degree or higher** in 2019:



Share of Mercer County's population aged 25 or above that held **only a bachelor's degree** in 2019:



Share of Mercer County's population aged 25 or above that held an **advanced degree** in 2019:



¹⁶ Data on total student enrollment in the county is derived from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System maintained by the National Center for Education Statistics.

¹⁷ Among U.S. colleges and universities that participate in federal aid programs.

SPOTLIGHT ON University Population

2,594

students enrolled in colleges and universities in Mercer County in fall 2019 were not U.S. citizens or permanent residents.¹⁶

1,227

students were undergraduates, with



being female.

1,367

students were graduate students, with



being female.



88.9% of students studied full-time

11.1% of students studied part-time

Institution Name	Fall Enrollment
Princeton University	1,942
Mercer County Community College	307
Rider University	156
Thomas Edison State University	108
The College of New Jersey	43
Princeton Theological Seminary	38

International students made up



of the student body at Princeton University, which ranked 131st nationally when it comes to the share of international students.¹⁷

Education *continued*

SPOTLIGHT ON University Population *Continued*

367

international students graduated with STEM degrees from colleges and universities in Mercer County in the 2018-19 academic year.

1,753

jobs in higher education and other areas including accommodations, food, and transportation were supported by international students.

\$142.5 million

was spent by international students in the 2019-20 academic year.¹⁸

Immigrants made up



of all workers in colleges, universities, and professional schools in 2019.

Housing

In 2019, **56.1%** of immigrant households in Mercer County owned their own homes, compared to **65.0%** of U.S.-born households.



Immigrant U.S.-born



- Lived in Houses **23,300** or **67.6%**
- Lived in Apartments **11,000** or **32.0%**
- Lived in Other Types of Housing **0.4%**

The total property value of immigrant households was

\$8.5 billion

43.9% of immigrant households were renters. Their total annual rent paid was

\$218.3 million



of immigrant households in Mercer County had access to broadband connection in their place of residence as compared to **90.2%** of U.S.-born households in 2019.

Naturalization



- **45.5%** Naturalized Citizens (38,700)
- **15.8%** Likely Eligible to Naturalize (13,400)
- **38.7%** Not Eligible to Naturalize (32,900)

Immigrants who were not eligible to become naturalized U.S. citizens are either because they have not met certain requirements such as residency, English proficiency, or age, or because they are undocumented.

¹⁸ Economic data is derived from the International Student Economic Value Tool maintained by NAFSA, the association of international educators.

Naturalization *continued*



Nationally, **48.7%** of immigrants are naturalized citizens, **15.9%** are likely eligible to naturalize, and **35.4%** are not yet eligible.

If all immigrants who are eligible to naturalize became U.S. citizens, their earning potential would increase by

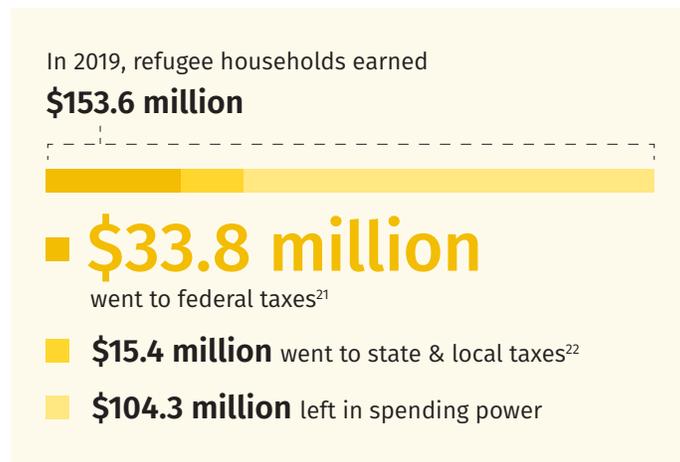
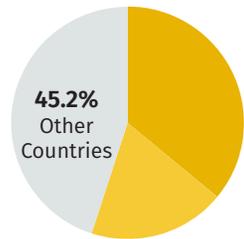
+8.9%¹⁹

Refugees

2,900

refugees, or **3.5%** of the foreign-born population, were likely refugees.²⁰

Top countries of origin for the refugee population in Mercer County were Liberia (**35.8%**) and Poland (**19.0%**).

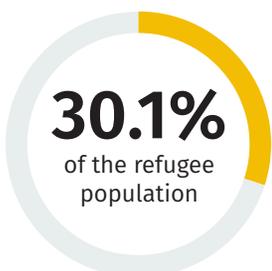


About **34.4%** of refugees held at least a bachelor's degree...



...and about **16.2%** held an advanced degree.

Refugees tended to work in Healthcare & Social Assistance:



About



of refugees in the area were naturalized U.S. citizens.

¹⁹ Enchautegui, Maria E. and Linda Giannarelli. 2015. "The Economic Impact of Naturalization on Immigrants and Cities." Urban Institute.

²⁰ New American Economy. 2017. "From Struggle to Resilience: The Economic Impact of Refugees in America."

²¹ U.S. Congressional Budget Office. 2020. "The Distribution of Household Income and Federal Taxes, 2017."

²² Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy. 2018. "Who Pays? A Distributional Analysis of the Tax Systems in All Fifty States."

SPOTLIGHT ON

Shing-Fu Hsueh

Former Mayor of West Windsor

Shing-Fu Hsueh (pronounced "Shay") came to New Jersey from Taiwan in 1969 with \$300 in his pocket and a heavy accent that required help from a speech therapist. Despite these challenges, he went on to become a successful environmental engineer, professor, and a four-term Mayor of West Windsor. "The United States gave me opportunities I would never have imagined," he says. "Our country truly allowed me to fulfill my American Dream."

Hsueh graduated from Rutgers in 1975 with two master's degrees and a PhD in chemical engineering. He married his longtime sweetheart, Sue, in Taiwan and then returned to begin a 28-year career as an engineer at the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection. At the NJDEP, Hsueh helped forge the state's first clean-water initiatives, and helped tackle flooding and pollution all across the state. "I was fresh out of school, but I had a PhD so they assumed I could deal with anything," he recalls.

After growing up under martial law in Taiwan, Hsueh loved America's vibrant democracy, and relished the chance to get involved in public service. He was elected to the West Windsor Council in 1993, swiftly becoming Council President, then elected Mayor in 2001, retiring from the NJDEP the following year to throw himself into his theoretically part-time leadership role.

As Mayor, Hsueh created West Windsor's first art center in 2009, and raised over \$900,000 to double the size of the town's senior center. He worked with nonprofit groups to create new sporting fields and Little League facilities. Hsueh helped restore hundreds of acres of local parkland and scenic waterways, preserved 1,000 acres of local farmland, and established West Windsor's farmer's market, now one of the country's top-ranked markets.

Over the years, West Windsor has grown more diverse: the Asian population has risen to over 40%, up from 15% when Hsueh first took office. As one of New Jersey's first elected officials of Asian descent, Hsueh hopes his example will inspire other immigrants to serve their communities. "When I was a kid in Taiwan, I dreamed of having this sort of opportunity," he says. "It's been such an honor to spend my career trying to help the people of West Windsor."

SPOTLIGHT ON

Al Maghazehe

President & CEO, Capital Health

Al Maghazehe came to the United States as an international student in 1977, but when the Iranian Revolution broke out a year later, he realized he couldn't safely return home.

Raised in a tight-knit family, Maghazehe struggled with loneliness at first, but finished a master's degree in health administration at Wagner College, got a PhD in business administration, and secured an administrative position at Trenton's Helene Fuld Medical Center. In Mercer County, he received support from his employer as he obtained his green card, and found the local community incredibly welcoming. "I feel like I grew up in Trenton," he says. "Mercer County has given me everything I have."

Maghazehe went on to become a citizen, and has brought his parents and in-laws to Mercer County too. "Having to leave Iran was a very difficult situation, and I went through some very tough times," he recalls. "But I found amazing opportunities here, and got the help I needed to reunite my family."

Rising through the ranks, Maghazehe eventually became CEO and presided over the 1998 merger that created Capital Health, now a regional healthcare powerhouse with almost a billion dollars in annual revenue. In 2009, he secured \$756 million in federal support — the largest grant of its kind ever issued — to build a new state-of-the-art 233-bed hospital in Hopewell, transforming Capital Health into a major regional healthcare system. "I'm very proud of our accomplishments," he says.

Capital Health's headcount has more than doubled on Maghazehe's watch, and the organization now employs around 4,500 people. The system provides outpatient care for around 26,000 people each month, and admits around 2,400 patients, drawing both patients and specialists from across New Jersey and Pennsylvania.

Capital Health has also played a vital role during the pandemic, with COVID-19 patients filling hundreds of its hospital beds. Under Maghazehe's leadership, Capital Health established new COVID-19 treatment and testing facilities, and is now partnering with state officials to run the region's largest vaccination site at Trenton's Cure Insurance Arena

Helping central New Jersey to weather the pandemic is deeply meaningful to Maghazehe, who has never forgotten the way the region welcomed him and gave him a safe place to raise his children. "I don't have the words to say how grateful I am that I've been able to stay here and serve this community," he says. "I was given an incredible opportunity, and I've tried to do everything I can to give something back to my new home."

DACA-Eligible Population

2,500

DACA-eligible people lived in Mercer County, in 2019.

They made up



of the foreign-born population.

In 2019, DACA-eligible households earned

\$46.4 million

\$5.7 million

went to federal taxes²³

\$4.1 million went to state & local taxes²⁴

\$36.5 million left in spending power

Undocumented Immigrants

24,300

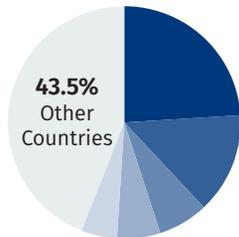
undocumented immigrants lived in Mercer County in 2019.

They made up



of the foreign-born population in Mercer County in 2019.

The top five countries of origin for undocumented immigrants were



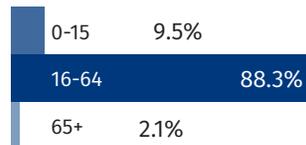
Guatemala (**24.1%**), India (**14.1%**), Mexico (**7.3%**), Ecuador (**5.6%**), Haiti (**5.4%**)

Undocumented immigrants are highly active in the labor force. More than



are of working-age in Mercer County.

Undocumented immigrants by age groups:



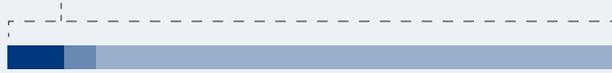
²³ U.S. Congressional Budget Office. 2020. "The Distribution of Household Income and Federal Taxes, 2017."

²⁴ Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy. 2018. "Who Pays? A Distributional Analysis of the Tax Systems in All Fifty States."

Undocumented Immigrants *continued*

In 2019, undocumented immigrant households earned

\$715.7 million



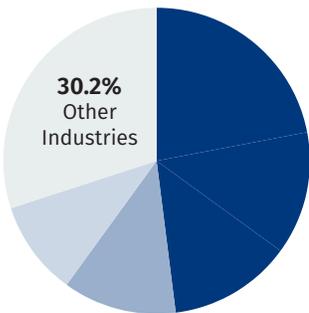
■ **\$67.2 million**

went to federal taxes²⁵

■ **\$35.5 million** went to state & local taxes²⁶

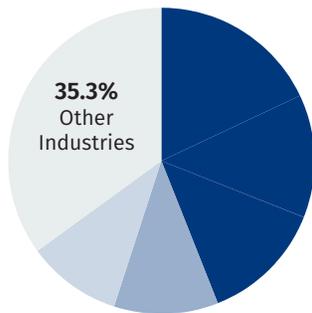
■ **\$613.1 million** left in spending power

Undocumented immigrants tended to work in these key industries:



- Professional Services (22.1%)
- Manufacturing (12.9%)
- Construction (12.9%)
- Hospitality (11.6%)
- Retail trade (10.3%)

Documented immigrants tended to work in these key industries:



- Professional Services (18.1%)
- Healthcare & Social Assistance (13.6%)
- Education (12.6%)
- Finance (10.7%)
- Manufacturing (9.7%)

²⁵ U.S. Congressional Budget Office. 2020. "The Distribution of Household Income and Federal Taxes, 2017."

²⁶ Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy. 2018. "Who Pays? A Distributional Analysis of the Tax Systems in All Fifty States."