New Americans in Washoe County
The Demographic and Economic Contributions of Immigrants in the County

Population

63,400
immigrants lived in Washoe County, Nevada, in 2019.

Between 2014 and 2019, the population in the county increased by 6.2% of the total population growth in the county was attributable to immigrants.

3.1%

The immigrant population increased by +1.3% during the same time period.

Demographics

7.6%
of immigrants in Washoe County are recent arrivals, with no more than 5 years of residency in the United States, meaning

92.4%
of immigrants in the county have resided in the United States for longer than 5 years.

In the county, immigrants are 34.8% more likely to be of working-age than their U.S.-born counterparts, allowing them to actively participate in the labor force and contribute to the economy as taxpayers and consumers.

Shares of population by age groups:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>U.S.-born</th>
<th>Immigrant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-15</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-64</td>
<td>61.7%</td>
<td>83.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65+</td>
<td>16.4%</td>
<td>13.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The top five countries of origin for immigrants living in the county:
- Mexico (43.3%)
- El Salvador (6.2%)
- Philippines (12.7%)
- India (3.5%)
- Guatemala (3.7%)

1 Unless otherwise specified, data comes from 5-year samples of the American Community Survey from 2014 and 2019 and figures refer to Washoe County, Nevada.
2 We define working age as 16-64 years of age.
3 Totals may not add up to 100 percent due to rounding.
Demographics continued

13,700
immigrants living in the county had limited English language proficiency, making up
21.6%
of the immigrant population.

230,300
commuters\(^4\) worked in the county.

18.4%
or 42,500 commuters, were foreign-born.

Spending Power & Tax Contributions

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

In 2019, immigrant households in the county earned

$2 billion
$321.6 million went to federal taxes\(^5\)
$125.3 million went to state & local taxes\(^6\)
$1.5 billion left in spending power

This means that foreign-born households held

12.9%
of all spending power in the county.

Given their household incomes, 24.3\% of immigrants live at or below 150\% of the federal poverty threshold as compared to 20.2\% of U.S.-born residents.

Immigrants U.S.-born

\(^4\) Commuter refers to a person that works for an employer located within Washoe County, regardless of their place of residence.


Spending Power & Tax Contributions continued

In 2019, foreign-born residents in the county contributed $4.1 billion to the county’s GDP, or 14.5% of the total.7

**Immigrants in the county also supported federal social programs. In 2019, they contributed**

- $206.3 million to Social Security
- $51.6 million to Medicare

**About 21.7% of immigrants in the county received Medicare or Medicaid, compared with 32.6% of U.S.-born residents in 2019.**

About 70.7% of U.S.-born had private healthcare coverage, while 34.2% had public healthcare coverage.8

About 63.3% of immigrants had private healthcare coverage, while 22.3% had public healthcare coverage.

**Workforce**

Although the foreign-born made up 13.9% of the county’s overall population, they represented 17.8% of its working-age population, 18.6% of its employed labor force, and 12.4% of its STEM workers in 2019.9

**Immigrants in the county are 34.8% more likely to be working age than their U.S.-born counterparts.**

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 2019 and the statistics of GDP from the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis.

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

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

The immigrant working-age population was 50.2% female and 49.8% male.

The employed immigrant population was 44% female and 56% male.

### Top Occupations for Female Workers:

- Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners: 9.6%
- Janitors and Building Cleaners: 4.4%
- Cashiers: 3.7%

### Top Occupations for Male Workers:

- Construction Laborers: 5.1%
- Cooks: 5%
- Laborers and Hand Movers: 4.5%

Immigrants tended to work in these occupations in the county in 2019:

- Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners (5%)
- Cooks (4.1%)
- Janitors and Building Cleaners (3.7%)
- Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand (3.6%)
- Cashiers (3%)

- Construction Laborers (2.8%)
- Landscaping and Groundskeeping Workers (2.4%)
- Stockers and Order Fillers (2.2%)
- Carpenters (2%)
- Food Preparation Workers (2%)

Due to the role immigrants play in the workforce helping companies keep jobs on U.S. soil, we estimate that immigrants living in the county had helped create or preserve 2,900 manufacturing jobs that would have otherwise vanished or moved elsewhere by 2019.

Immigrants played a critical role in several key industries in the county:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>29.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hospitality</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>25.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail Trade</td>
<td>17.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wholesale Trade</td>
<td>17.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Services*</td>
<td>16.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Services*</td>
<td>16.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Care and Social Assistance</td>
<td>15.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation and Warehousing</td>
<td>13.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>10.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance</td>
<td>10.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Administration</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

11 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.

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

**SPOTLIGHT ON Immigrant Essential Workers**

Immigrants have helped fill many of these roles, especially as the need for bilingual and culturally competent public services and healthcare increases.

Not only are immigrants more likely to be of working age in the county, but they are also a crucial part of the county’s economy, and could help us meet the needs of its fastest growing and most in-demand fields. Immigrants have helped fill many of these roles, especially as the need for bilingual and culturally competent public services and healthcare increases.

**Job Demand In Washoe County In 2021**

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The top 5 industries with the highest demand for bilingual workers: 13

1. Health Care & Social Assistance
2. Finance & Insurance
3. Retail Trade
4. Information
5. Administrative & Support & Waste Management & Remediation Services

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

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

Immigrants made up 14.1% of the business owners in the county in 2019.

2,800 immigrant entrepreneurs generated $78.1 million in business income for Washoe County.

Immigrant entrepreneurs self-identified as 36.8% female and 63.2% male.

Immigrant entrepreneurs tended to work in Professional Services (26.2%).

Immigrant entrepreneurs by race and ethnicity:

- Hispanic: 52.4%
- White: 27.8%
- Asian American or Pacific Islander: 14.8%
- Other: 5%

While 9% of the U.S.-born population were entrepreneurs, 6.5% of foreign-born residents worked for their own businesses.

Education

Share of the county’s population aged 25 or above that held a bachelor’s degree or higher in 2019:

- 33.1% of U.S.-born
- 21.8% of immigrants

- 50.1% female, 49.9% male
- 53.1% female, 46.9% male

Share of the county’s population aged 25 or above that held an advanced degree in 2019:

- 12.5% of U.S.-born
- 8.6% of immigrants

- 50.6% female, 46.9% male
- 51.2% female, 48.8% male

4.4% of K-12 students in the county were foreign-born in 2019.

31.1% of K-12 students in the county were children of immigrants in 2019.

University Population

699 students enrolled in colleges and universities in Washoe County in fall 2019 were temporary residents.

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

International students supported 246 jobs and contributed $24.1 million million in the 2019-20 academic year.
New Americans in Washoe County

Housing

In 2019, 50.7% of immigrant households in Washoe County owned their own homes, compared to 59.1% of U.S.-born households.

- 49.3% of immigrant households were renters. Their total annual rent paid was $141.9 million.
- The total property value of immigrant households was $4.4 billion.
- 81.4% of immigrant households in the county had access to broadband connection in their place of residence as compared to 86.2% of U.S.-born households in 2019.

Naturalization

- 47.6% Naturalized Citizens (30,100)
- 17.2% Likely Eligible to Naturalize (10,900)
- 35.4% Not Eligible to Naturalize (22,400)

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

- 19.8% of households in Washoe County had at least one foreign-born resident.

If all immigrants who are eligible to naturalize became U.S. citizens, their earning potential would increase by +8.9%.

Refugees

1,100 refugees, or 1.8% of the foreign-born population in Washoe County, were likely refugees.


DACA-Eligible Population

2,300
DACA-eligible people lived in Washoe County in 2019.

They made up 3.7% of the immigrant population.

In 2019, DACA-eligible households earned
$42.6 million

- $4.8 million went to federal taxes
- $3.7 million went to state & local taxes
- $34.1 million left in spending power

Undocumented Immigrants

18,600
undocumented immigrants in Washoe County, 2019. They made up 29.4% of the immigrant population.

Undocumented immigrants are highly active in the labor force.

91% are of working-age in the county.

Undocumented immigrants by age groups:
- 0-15: 6.9%
- 16-64: 91%
- 65+: 2%

In 2019, undocumented immigrant households earned
$395.9 million

- $22.7 million went to federal taxes
- $14.3 million went to state & local taxes
- $358.9 million left in spending power

Top countries of origin for the undocumented in the county:
- Mexico (65.8%)
- El Salvador (5.9%)
- Philippines (5.8%)
- Guatemala (4.1%)
- India (3.5%)

Undocumented immigrants played a critical role in several key industries in the county.

- Hospitality: 27.8%
- Construction: 20.4%
- Professional Services: 13%
- Retail Trade: 11.7%
- General Services: 10.3%

Eugene Nduwimana

Refugee

I learned that Reno would be my new home 30 days before my flight was scheduled to leave Nairobi, Kenya. In fact, I didn’t even know that I, my wife and two sons would be coming to America. That’s something many people don’t know about refugees: you apply through a resettlement agency, and your host country offers to accept you and then assigns you to a city.

I’d never even heard of Reno because there are few refugees here. But my family was very lucky. The kind people of the Northern Nevada International Center picked us up from the airport carrying flowers. They helped us find housing and furniture and everything we needed. They showed us how to take the city bus and call 911 during an emergency.

We took English classes at Truckee Meadows Community College, and all of us had jobs within four months. My wife works in a hospital as a housekeeper. One son works in a company that makes ventilators. The other works with me at a company that makes herbal supplements. There I was quickly promoted from assistant machine operator to the processing department.

Today, we are homeowners and will be eligible to apply for citizenship within five years. I’m still surprised how our lives could change so dramatically after leaving our embattled lives in Kenya. That’s where we had lived for nine years after fleeing the war in the Democratic Republic of Congo. I had managed to support us with a small barber and wig shop, but our family was targeted because we were refugees. After my business was looted and I was attacked, I began to fear for all our safety and applied for resettlement.

Living in Reno wasn’t easy at first, especially learning to live with winter. But now we can’t imagine living anywhere else. I’m glad the city will be accepting more refugees in the future, and I hope they will have access to the same generosity and services that we received. They helped us quickly transform from nervous and anxious refugees to proud and confident Renoites.

Gustavo Velasco

Owner, GUsTO Catering and Meals

Gustavo Velasco had just graduated from Reed High School when a family friend asked him what he wanted to study in college. As a recent immigrant who’d moved to Reno from Mexico with his mother in 1999 at age 14, Velasco assumed he should focus on making money.

“I like to eat!” he joked. So she pushed him to study at the culinary arts program at Truckee Meadows Community College, while he worked in catering at the convention center.

A year after graduation, Velasco became the lead chef for the Chocolate Bar franchise. Although he loved the work, he hated the industry’s reputation for high stress, low pay, burnout and alcohol abuse.

Velasco worked as a bartender for the next several years, but he missed cooking. “I love the way food brings people together,” he says. During this time, he also became eligible for the DACA program that gives young immigrants the right to work and live in the United States. His new status gave him the confidence to put down roots, and Velasco decided to start his own business. He named it GUsTO Catering, in a play of words on his first name Gustavo.

Although he had a binder of recipes, Velasco wanted guidance to make sure he was approaching his startup wisely. In 2016, he contacted the Northern Nevada SCORE chapter, a nonprofit organization that offered classes to help entrepreneurs. He was also connected to Sandra Rentas who worked for the Nevada Small Business Development Center. “She told me I that I had the right mentality of starting slowly,” he says. Today, he works as a personal chef hosting dinner parties in clients’ homes and offering corporate cooking classes via Zoom.

Velasco appreciates Reno’s business resources and surging growth, especially as more high-profile companies, including Tesla and Microsoft, set up shop. “They create jobs and giving me opportunities to cook.” Although he’s still part of the DACA program, he’d like to see reform that gives immigrants like him a pathway to citizenship. “I’ve been here 22 years now. All I want to do is be a part of Reno’s success story.”
New Americans in Reno
The Demographic and Economic Contributions of Immigrants in the City.

**Population**

36,400
immigrants lived in the City of Reno, Nevada in 2019, making up
15% of the total population.

Between 2014 and 2019, the total population in the city increased by +5.3%.
The immigrant population decreased by -1.4% during the same time period.

**Demographics**
The top five countries of origin for immigrants living in the city:
- Mexico (41%)
- Philippines (13.8%)
- El Salvador (5.8%)
- India (4.4%)
- Guatemala (3.5%)

**Spending Power & Tax Contributions**
Given their income, immigrants contributed significantly to state and local taxes, including property, sales, and excise taxes levied by state and local governments.

In 2019, immigrant households in the county earned
$1.1 billion
$185.6 million went to federal taxes
$71.2 million went to state & local taxes
$877.6 million left in spending power

This means that foreign-born households held 13.7% of all spending power in the city.

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