

New Americans in San Mateo County

The Demographic and Economic Contributions of Immigrants in the County¹

SEPTEMBER 2021



Population

269,900

immigrants² lived in San Mateo County, California, in 2019.

Immigrants made up



of the total population in the county in 2019.

Between 2014 and 2019, the population in the county increased by



The immigrant population increased by



during the same time period.



of the total population growth in the county was attributable to immigrants.

Demographics



of immigrants in San Mateo County are recent arrivals, with no more than 5 years of residency in the United States, meaning



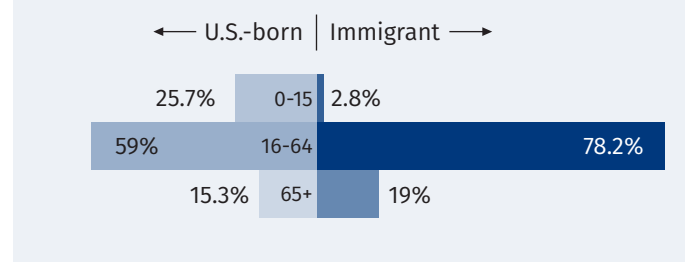
of immigrants in the county have resided in the United States for longer than 5 years.

In the county, immigrants are

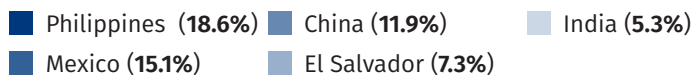


more likely to be of working-age than their U.S.-born counterparts, allowing them to actively participate in the labor force and contribute to the economy as taxpayers and consumers.³

Shares of population by age groups:⁴



The top five countries of origin for immigrants living in the county:



0.6% of immigrants in the county, or **1,600** people, were Tongans, and **0.5%** were Fijians.⁵

1 Unless otherwise specified, data comes from 1-year samples of the American Community Survey from 2014 and 2019 and figures refer to San Mateo County, California.

2 We define immigrant as anyone born outside the country to non-U.S. citizen parents who is a resident of the United States, including naturalized citizens, green card holders, temporary visa holders, undocumented residents, and refugees, among others.

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

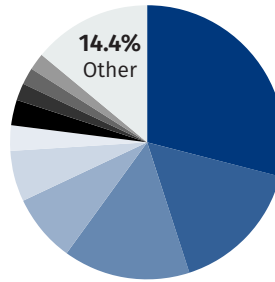
4 Totals may not add up to 100 percent due to rounding.

5 NAE analysis of the 5-year 2019 American Community Survey

Demographics *continued*

Residents of San Mateo County speak a variety of languages at home, including:

- Spanish (28.7%)
- Filipino, Tagalog (16.1%)
- English (15.3%)
- Chinese, Other⁶ (8.3%)
- Cantonese (6.1%)
- Hindi (2.8%)
- Mandarin (2.8%)
- Russian (2.2%)
- Portuguese (1.8%)
- Japanese (1.5%)



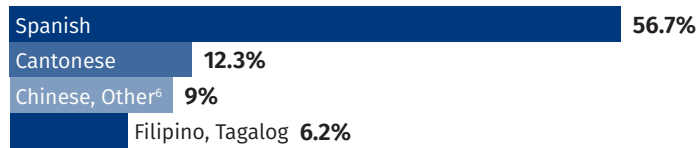
44,900

immigrants living in the county had limited English language proficiency, making up



of the immigrant population.

The top languages spoken at home were:

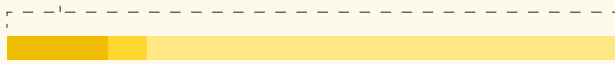


Spending Power & Tax Contributions

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

\$19.1 billion



\$4.6 billion

went to federal taxes⁷

\$1.9 billion went to state & local taxes⁸

\$12.7 billion left in spending power

This means that foreign-born households held



of all spending power in the county.

⁶ This includes the diverse group of Chinese dialects that are not Mandarin or Cantonese.

⁷ U.S. Congressional Budget Office. 2020. "The Distribution of Household Income and Federal Taxes, 2017."

⁸ Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy. 2018. "Who Pays? A Distributional Analysis of the Tax Systems in All Fifty States."

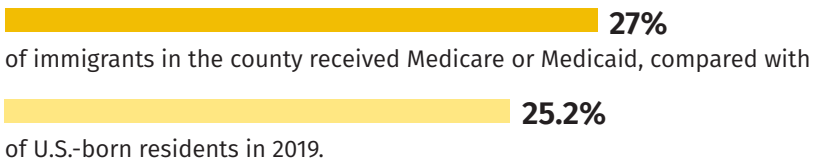
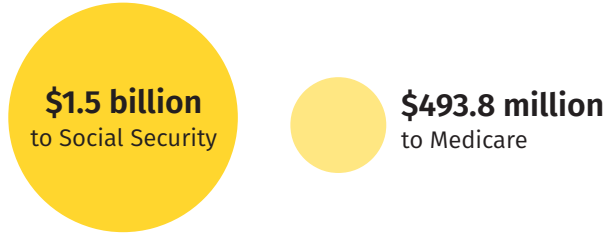
Spending Power & Tax Contributions *continued*

In 2019, foreign-born residents in the county contributed

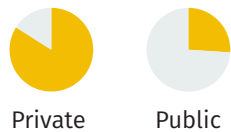
\$53.8 billion

to the county's GDP, or **40%** of the total.⁹

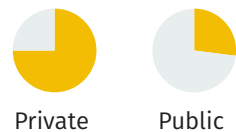
Immigrants in the county also supported federal social programs. In 2019, they contributed



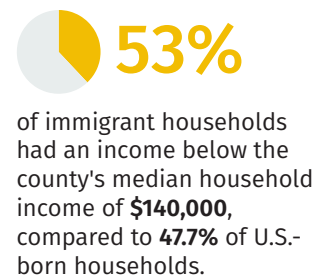
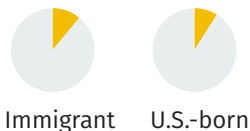
About **83.7%** of U.S.-born had private healthcare coverage, while **25.6%** had public healthcare coverage.¹⁰



About **74.9%** of immigrants had private healthcare coverage, while **27.2%** had public healthcare coverage.



Given their household incomes, **10.9%** of immigrants live at or below 150% of the federal poverty threshold as compared to **9%** of U.S.-born residents.



⁹ 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.

¹⁰ Including people who have both public and private healthcare coverage.

SPOTLIGHT ON

Edith Arias

As a teen in the late 1980s, Edith Arias moved from México to San Francisco with her mother and two siblings. Her mother was fleeing domestic violence and economic insecurity; in San Francisco she had family to lean on.

But the transition wasn't easy. Arias struggled to learn English and had trouble adjusting to campus life at the University of California, Santa Barbara. She came back to San Francisco, but her plans changed after Arias married and gave birth to a baby with special needs.

"This was the hardest time in my life," she says. "I was 20, still new to this country and learning English." That made navigating the health care system, communicating with doctors and finding the right resources challenging. As her son grew older and fell behind in school, she needed to constantly advocate for him. Doctors and teachers rarely seemed to understand her son's real needs. It wasn't until fourth grade that a psychologist recommended him for separate special education classes.

Arias eventually settled in South San Francisco, where she felt truly at home. A municipal partnership with Habitat for Humanity allowed Arias to purchase her first home in 2008. "Because the city agreed to this partnership, we finally had the stability we needed," she says. The local parks and recreation department offered one accessible activity that allowed them to feel included. "We felt welcome in South San Francisco," she added.

With this stability, Arias poured herself into the community. She volunteered with educational access groups, planned a special needs resource fair and co-founded a support group for Latino families with children with special needs. In 2013, she enrolled at San Francisco State University and is now a special education teacher at Thurgood Marshall High School in San Francisco.

Arias knows she's making a difference, but she believes system-wide attention is vital to reaching families in need. This is especially true in the educational system. "They still lack the resources to fully support non-English speaking families with special needs children," she says. "We can and should meet the needs of our most vulnerable right here."

SPOTLIGHT ON

Althea Avice de Guzman

Althea Avice de Guzman grew up in the Philippines with her father and siblings. Shortly after she was born, her mother left the Philippines and emigrated to carve out a slice of the American Dream.

In Chicago, Althea's mom worked odd jobs from gift-wrapping at the department store to caregiving elderly and being a nanny. She raised American children to save up enough money to bring her own children from the Philippines. In 1997, Althea and her siblings finally joined her. The transition wasn't easy; they moved and switched schools frequently, lived with friends and later shared a small apartment with another family. For years, Althea was hidden away in the one-bedroom of her mother's caregiving job just to attend a better school system.

Ultimately, Althea received her bachelor's from American University and her master's from The University of Chicago. Althea now works as an Emergency Management Professional with over nine years of combined experience in business continuity, healthcare and biotechnology, and project management.

"I've lived all over the country, from Chicago to D.C. to St. Louis," she says. "These places all have diversity, but when I got to San Mateo County, the extent of the diversity was startling. For the first time, I did not feel out of place."

The county had welcoming features she wished her family had access to as new immigrants: signage in multiple languages, interpreters at the DMV, police officers who reflected the diversity of its community, access to healthy food options, and public spaces filled with Filipino people and their language.

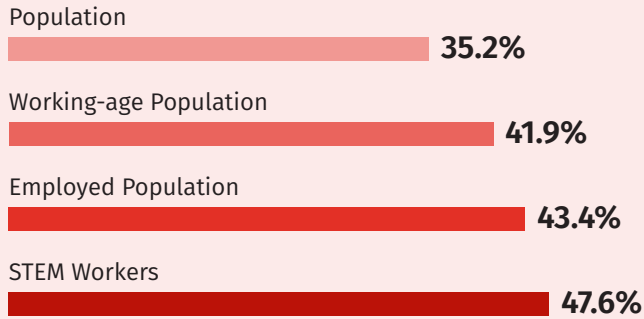
"These are the things that make you feel safer," she says. That's why she's raising her son here. "I never have to worry about him feeling like he doesn't belong."

Althea works with the Immigrant Community Engagement Team to capture concerns of immigrants and to recommend how San Mateo County can leverage existing community programs and partner with trusted immigrant leaders. Althea is proud that San Mateo County has prioritized immigrant communities and their needs and believes this will strengthen the county and drive its economy.

Workforce

Although the foreign-born made up **35.2%** of the county's overall population, they represented **41.9%** of its working-age population, **43.4%** of its employed labor force, and **47.6%** of its STEM workers in 2019.¹¹

Immigrant shares of the...



Immigrants in the county are

32.6%

more likely to be working age than their U.S.-born counterparts.

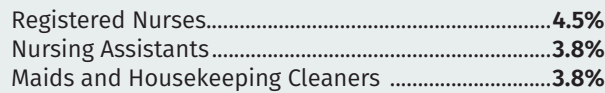
The immigrant working-age population was **51% female** and **49% male**.



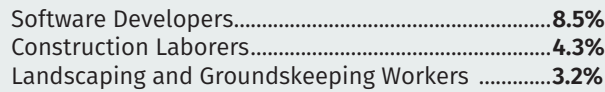
The employed immigrant population was **45.4% female** and **54.6% male**.



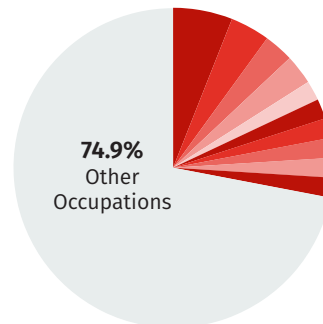
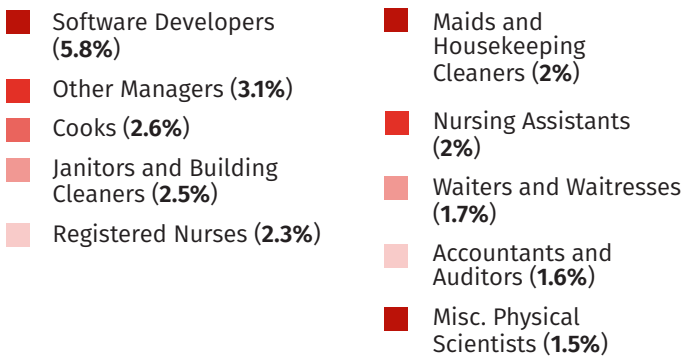
Top Occupations for Female Workers:



Top Occupations for Male Workers:



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



¹¹ STEM refers to occupations that require background or expertise in Science, Technology, Engineering, and/or Math.

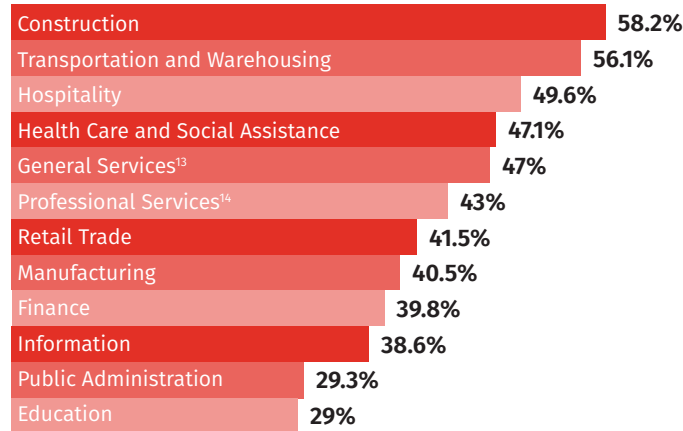
Workforce *continued*

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

12,400
manufacturing jobs

that would have otherwise vanished or moved elsewhere by 2019.¹²

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



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 the county continue working in these frontline and essential industries:

Essential Retail Trade

8,300
immigrants made up



Construction

15,000
immigrants made up



Transportation and Warehousing

11,900
immigrants made up



Food Service

11,800
immigrants made up



Essential Services

6,600
immigrants made up



Healthcare

19,300
immigrants made up



¹² Vigdor, Jacob. 2013. "Immigration and the Revival of American Cities: From Preserving Manufacturing Jobs to Strengthening the Housing Market." *New American Economy*.

¹³ General services include personal services (e.g. laundry services, barber shops, and repair and maintenance), religious organizations, social services, and labor unions.

¹⁴ 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.

¹⁵ These include services essential for daily living, such as building cleaning, waste management, auto repair, and veterinary services.

Workforce *continued*

SPOTLIGHT ON Job Demand In San Mateo County In 2021

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.

The top 5 industries with the highest demand for bilingual workers: ¹⁶

- | | | |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Health Care & Social Assistance | 2. Educational Services | 3. Finance and Insurance |
| 4. Information | 5. Retail Trade | |

Entrepreneurship

Despite making up **35.2%** of the population, immigrants made up



of the business owners in the county in 2019.

17,800

immigrant entrepreneurs generated

\$946.3 million

in business income for San Mateo County.

Immigrant entrepreneurs self-identified as **40.6%** female and **59.4%** male.



Immigrant entrepreneurs tended to work in **Professional Services (26.4%)** and **Construction (19.4%)**

Immigrant entrepreneurs by race and ethnicity:



While **9.3%** of the U.S.-born population were entrepreneurs, **9.7%** of foreign-born residents worked for their own businesses.



¹⁶ Data is obtained from Burning Glass Technologies for the time period between April 1, 2020 and March 31, 2021.

¹⁷ 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.

Entrepreneurship *(continued)*

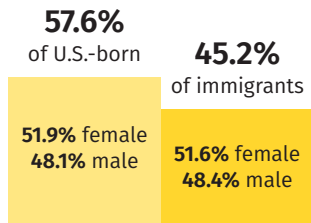
SPOTLIGHT ON Small Business Recovery from the Pandemic

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.

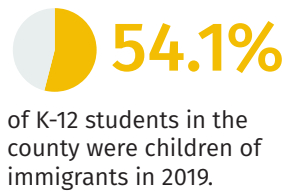
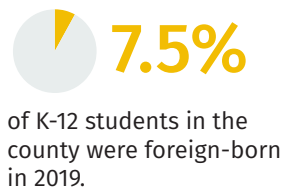
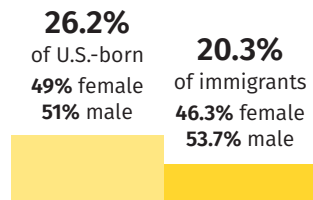


Education

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



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



SPOTLIGHT ON University Population

1,587
students enrolled in colleges and universities in San Mateo in fall 2019 were temporary residents.¹⁸

57
international students graduated with STEM degrees from colleges and universities in the county in the 2018-19 academic year.

International students supported

213
jobs and contributed
\$40.2 million
in the 2019-20 academic year.¹⁹

¹⁸ Data on total student enrollment in the city 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.

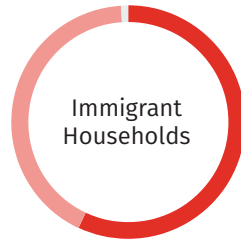
¹⁹ Economic data is derived from the International Student Economic Value Tool maintained by NAFSA, the association of international educators.

Housing

In 2019, **51.8%** of immigrant households in San Mateo County owned their own homes, compared to **64.4%** of U.S.-born households.



Immigrant U.S.-born



- Lived in Houses **60,600** or **57%**
- Lived in Apartments **45,200** or **42.5%**
- Lived in Other Types of Housing **0.5%**

The total property value of immigrant households was

\$77.8 billion

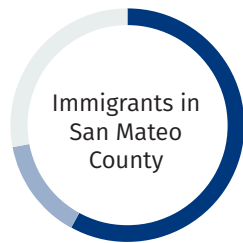
48.2% of immigrant households were renters. Their total annual rent paid was

\$1.4 billion



of immigrant households in the county had access to broadband connection in their place of residence as compared to **91.1%** of U.S.-born households in 2019.

Naturalization



- **58.2%** Naturalized Citizens (157,100)
- **14.4%** Likely Eligible to Naturalize (39,000)
- **27.3%** Not Eligible to Naturalize (73,800)



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



of households in San Mateo 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%²⁰

²⁰Enchautegui, Maria E. and Linda Giannarelli. 2015. "The Economic Impact of Naturalization on Immigrants and Cities." Urban Institute.

Refugees

7,200

refugees, or **2.7%** of the foreign-born population in San Mateo County, were likely refugees.²¹

In 2019, refugee households earned

\$610.4 million

■ \$149.6 million

went to federal taxes²²

■ \$60.7 million

 went to state & local taxes²³

■ \$400.1 million

 left in spending power

DACA-Eligible Population

In 2019, DACA-eligible population made up



of the immigrant population in San Mateo County.

Undocumented Immigrants

50,000

undocumented immigrants in San Mateo County, 2019 made up



of the immigrant population, and



of the overall population.

In 2019, undocumented immigrant households earned

\$2.4 billion

■ \$261.2 million

went to federal taxes²⁴

■ \$114.9 million

 went to state & local taxes²⁵

■ \$2 billion

 left in spending power

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

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

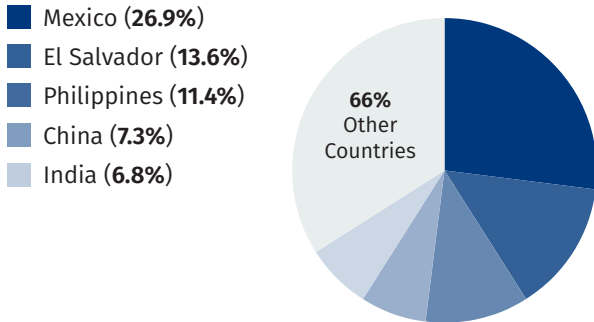
23 *Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy*. 2018. "Who Pays? A Distributional Analysis of the Tax Systems in All Fifty States."

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

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

Undocumented Immigrants *(continued)*

Top countries of origin for the undocumented in the county:

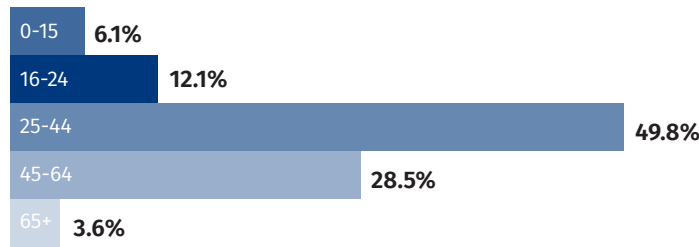


Undocumented immigrants are highly active in the labor force.

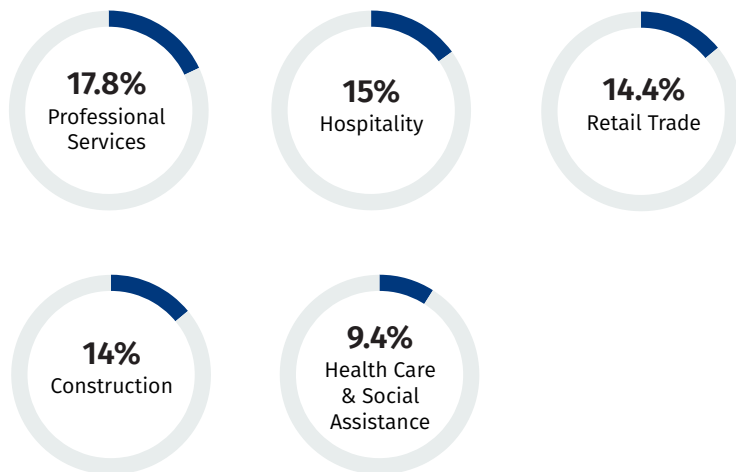


are of working-age in the county.

Undocumented immigrants by age group:



Undocumented immigrants tended to work in these key industries:²⁶



²⁶Due to sample size limitation, we are unable to include estimates for various industries, including agriculture and wholesale trade.