

# New Americans in the City of Gainesville

The Demographic and Economic Contributions of Immigrants in the City<sup>1,2</sup>

OCTOBER 2021



City of Gainesville



## Population

**14,800**

immigrants lived in Gainesville, Florida, in 2019.

Immigrants made up



of the total population in the city in 2019.

Between 2014 and 2019, the total population in the city increased by



The immigrant population increased by

**+6.2%**

during the same time period.



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

## Demographics



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



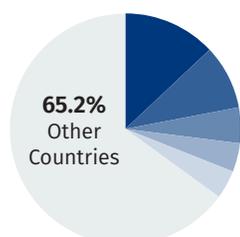
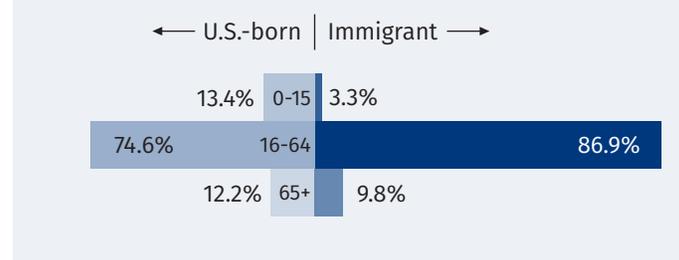
of immigrants in the city have resided in the United States for longer than 5 years.

In the city, 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.<sup>3</sup>

### Shares of population by age groups:<sup>4</sup>



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

- China (12.5%)
- Venezuela (4.7%)
- Cuba (4.1%)
- India (9.1%)
- Philippines (4.4%)

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

2 Estimates provided in this report may slightly undercount the immigrant population. The American Community Survey historically undersamples the foreign-born population, especially among lower income, more recently arrived, and less English-fluent immigrant populations. The Pew Research Center estimates the undercount as 5% to 7% for undocumented immigrants and 2% to 3% for the overall immigrant population.

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

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

## Demographics *continued*

**1,800**

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



of the immigrant population.

## Spending Power & Tax Contributions

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

In 2019, immigrant households in Gainesville earned **\$317.7 million**

■ **\$53.8 million**

went to federal taxes<sup>5</sup>

■ **\$22.2 million** went to state & local taxes<sup>6</sup>

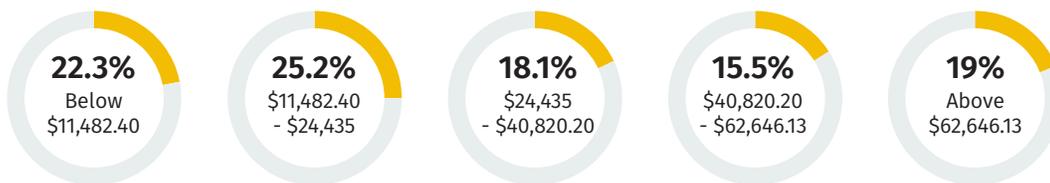
■ **\$241.7 million** was left in spending power

This means that foreign-born households held



of all spending power in the city.

Share of foreign-born households in each income group:



Given their incomes,



of immigrants live at or below 150% of the federal poverty threshold as compared to **37.9%** of U.S.-born households

<sup>5</sup> U.S. Congressional Budget Office. 2020. "The Distribution of Household Income and Federal Taxes, 2017."

<sup>6</sup> 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*

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

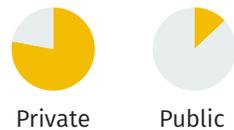


**13%** of immigrants in the city received Medicare or Medicaid, compared with **25%** of U.S.-born residents in 2019.

About **73.9%** of U.S.-born had private healthcare coverage, while **26.4%** had public healthcare coverage.<sup>7</sup>



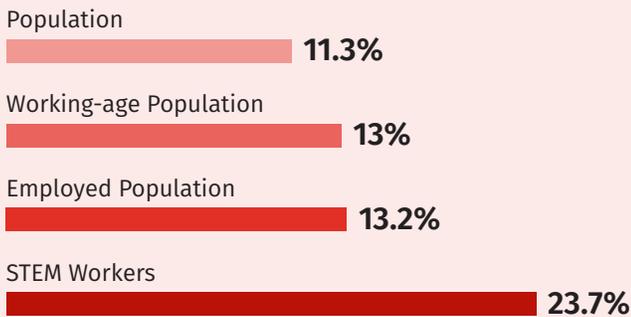
About **77.6%** of immigrants had private healthcare coverage, while **13.4%** had public healthcare coverage.



## Workforce

Although the foreign-born made up **11.3%** of the city's overall population, they represented **13%** of its working-age population, **13.2%** of its employed labor force, and **23.7%** of its STEM workers in 2019.<sup>8</sup>

### Immigrant shares of the...



Immigrants in the city are

**16.7%**

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

The immigrant working-age population was **51.4%** female and **48.6%** male.



The employed immigrant population was **45.7%** female and **54.3%** male.



<sup>7</sup> Including people who have both public and private healthcare coverage.

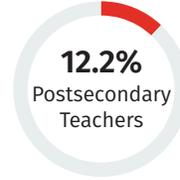
<sup>8</sup> STEM refers to occupations that require background or expertise in Science, Technology, Engineering, and/or Math.

## Workforce *continued*

Immigrants played a critical role in several key industries in the city. This included:



Immigrants tended to work in this occupation:



### 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 city continue working in these frontline and essential industries:

Health Care

Food Service

Immigrants made up

Immigrants made up



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

## 700 manufacturing jobs

that would have otherwise vanished or moved elsewhere by 2019.<sup>11</sup>

### SPOTLIGHT ON Job Demand In the City In 2021

Not only are immigrants more likely to be of working age in the city, but they are also a crucial part of the city's economy, and could help us 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:<sup>12</sup>

- |                                      |                                    |   |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|---|
| 1. Information                       | 2. Accommodation and Food Services | 3. Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services |
| 4. Health Care and Social Assistance | 5. Transportation and Warehousing  |   |

<sup>9</sup> General services include personal services (e.g. laundry services, barber shops, and repair and maintenance), religious organizations, social services, and labor unions.

<sup>10</sup> 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.

<sup>11</sup> Vigdor, Jacob. 2013. "Immigration and the Revival of American Cities: From Preserving Manufacturing Jobs to Strengthening the Housing Market." *New American Economy*.

<sup>12</sup> Data is obtained from Burning Glass Technologies for the time period between April 1, 2020 and March 31, 2021.

SPOTLIGHT ON

## Saeed Khan

*Retired Professor, University of Florida -  
Department of Urology*

Growing up in his native India, Saeed Khan's parents were adamant their eight children attend college. Khan was always impressed with textbooks—especially the references. “It became my dream to become a researcher so I could be cited at the end of textbooks,” he said.

He made good on that dream. He studied biology, completed his master's in botany and received a Fulbright to pursue his PhD in the same subject at the University of Florida in Gainesville. There, he met and married his wife, before taking a post-doc in Australia. When the program ended, the couple quickly returned to Florida. Besides the perk of being closer to his in-laws, Khan jokes, “I hate cold weather.”

The University of Florida Department of Urology hired Khan in 1978. He worked full time until his semi-retirement in 2018 (he is now an emeritus professor). He is also associate editor at *Urolithiasis*, a quarterly journal dedicated to researching kidney stones. In 2016, UF and The American Urological Association awarded him lifetime achievement awards for his research trying to understand and stop the formation of kidney stones. “Kidney stones affect approximately [1 in 11 people](#) in U.S. and is a recurrent disease,” he says.

Today Khan sits on the board for the Alachua Habitat for Humanity chapter. “Once you give the key to the new home owner and you look at their face, that is the most amazing feeling you get,” he says. He serves as a board member for the local United Nations chapter, Welcoming Gainesville and several City of Gainesville departments, and was previously president of the Muslims Association of North Central Florida. He says the city could be doing more to address economic disparity, like pegging the local minimum wage to inflation and investing in more affordable housing options. But he applauds them for establishing a \$15 minimum wage and launching the GRACE Marketplace nonprofit to reduce homelessness.

Khan credits his parents for his drive to give back. “We grew up knowing you were supposed to help those who need it,” he says. “And that's something almost everybody—whether you are a Christian, a Jew, a Muslim, a Hindu, a Sikh, or have no faith at all—has in us. It brings us together for the common good.”

SPOTLIGHT ON

## Yennifer Molina

*Coordinator, Madres Sin Fronteras*

In Honduras, Yennifer Molina's mother worked around the clock at the family restaurant to fund private school tuition for her daughters. “We wanted to go to regular school with our cousins and friends,” recalls Molina. “But my mom was thinking ahead. She insisted we learn English.”

After high school, Molina completed two years of college. But she worried about the long hours her mother worked to cover tuition. “I kept saying, ‘Let me go to work in the U.S. and provide for you for a little while.’” At 17, Molina moved to South Carolina to live with her uncle and cousin. “Like any typical immigrant, I wanted to conquer the world,” she says. Her English proficiency gave her a real advantage, and she was able to secure multiple jobs in customer service as a Claim Department Specialist, Translator and Quality Inspection professional.

She eventually earned enough to help fund her sister's medical school in Cuba and help her mom hire more staff at the restaurant and eventually retire. In 2010, after the birth of her son, Zachary, Molina's partner was offered a construction job in Gainesville and the family relocated to Florida. Molina fell in love with the city, but things changed after Donald Trump's election. “People felt more entitled to be cruel and racist because of the things he was saying about us, that we are criminals bringing drugs, rapists and stealing jobs,” she says. One day, the secretary at her son's school refused to let Molina check her son out early, because Molina only had her Honduran passport, not a state-issued ID. It wasn't a school policy, and the women already knew each other. “I think she just felt entitled to refuse me because she could,” Molina says.

In 2017 Molina, with other community organizers, launched Madres Sin Fronteras to advocate for equal rights and protections for immigrants. She's also Vice President of the Human Rights Coalition of Alachua County. Their Community ID program provides Alachua County residents—regardless of their immigration status—with a reliable form of identification to be used as a tool for interactions with the local police department, utilities company, schools and healthcare centers. “That was a big win for us,” says Molina. They're now lobbying for all city officials and offices, including the sheriff to recognize the identification card. “We want to build greater understanding, trust and cooperation between local public services and our diverse community,” says Molina.

## Entrepreneurship

Despite making up **11.3%** of the population, immigrants made up



of the business owners in the city in 2019.

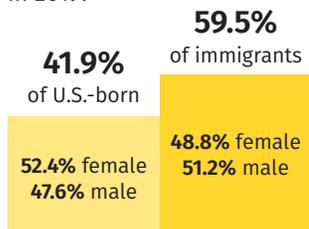
While **6.8%** of the U.S.-born population were entrepreneurs, **8.4%** of foreign-born residents worked for their own businesses.



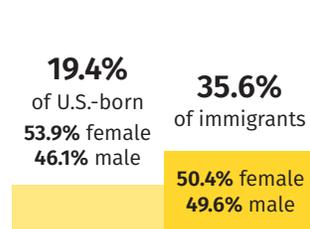
U.S.-Born Foreign-Born

## Education

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



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



of K-12 students in the city were foreign-born in 2019.



of K-12 students in the city were children of immigrants in 2019.

### SPOTLIGHT ON

### University Population

**5,001**

students enrolled in colleges and universities in Gainesville, including University of Florida and Santa Fe College, in fall 2019 were temporary residents.<sup>13</sup>

**907**

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

International graduate students contributed

**\$104.6 million**

in estimated revenue from tuition and international undergraduate students contributed

**\$23.2 million**

in estimated revenue from tuition in 2018.<sup>14</sup>

The top countries of origin for international students (undergraduate and graduate) at the University of Florida:

1. China (**35.6%**)
2. India (**19.1%**)
3. South Korea (**4.1%**)
4. Brazil (**3.2%**)
5. Venezuela (**2.3%**)

International students supported

**2,299 jobs**

and contributed

**\$181.7 million**

in the 2019-2020 academic year.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>13</sup> 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.

<sup>14</sup> Data was collected and calculated from the University of Florida's reporting on international students and tuition costs.

<sup>15</sup> Economic data is derived from the International Student Economic Value Tool maintained by NAFSA, the association of international educators.

## Housing

In 2019, **32.2%** of immigrant households in Gainesville owned their own homes, compared to **41.7%** of U.S.-born households.



Immigrant U.S.-born

The total property value of immigrant households was

**\$366.5 million**



- Lived in Houses **2,500** or **42.8%**
- Lived in Apartments **3,300** or **56.6%**
- Lived in Other Types of Housing **0.7%**



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

**\$43.8 million**

**48.4%** of immigrants were rent overburdened, meaning they spent more than 30% of their income on rent, compared to **52.6%** of U.S.-born residents.



Immigrant U.S.-born

On average, immigrant households had to spend **7.2%** of their household income on utilities, including gas, electricity, water, and home heating fuel, while the ratio was **9.5%** for U.S.-born households.



Immigrant U.S.-born

**89.7%** of immigrant households in the city had access to broadband connection in their homes as compared to **88.1%** of U.S.-born households.



Immigrant U.S.-born

## Naturalization



- **43.1%** Naturalized Citizens (6,400)
- **12.2%** Likely Eligible to Naturalize (1,800)
- **44.7%** Not Eligible to Naturalize (6,600)



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 Gainesville had at least one foreign-born resident in 2019.

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

**+8.9%<sup>16</sup>**

<sup>16</sup> Enchautegui, Maria E. and Linda Giannarelli. 2015. "The Economic Impact of Naturalization on Immigrants and Cities." Urban Institute.

## DACA-Eligible Population

In 2019, the DACA-eligible population made up:



of the immigrant population in Gainesville.

## Undocumented Immigrants

**2,700**

undocumented immigrants in Gainesville in 2019.

They made up



of the immigrant population.

Undocumented immigrants are highly active in the labor force. About



are working-age in the city.

In 2019, undocumented immigrant households earned **\$34.3 million**



■ **\$2.9 million**

went to federal taxes<sup>17</sup>

■ **\$1.2 million** went to state & local taxes<sup>18</sup>

■ **\$30.2 million** was left in spending power

<sup>17</sup> U.S. Congressional Budget Office. 2020. "The Distribution of Household Income and Federal Taxes, 2017."

<sup>18</sup> Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy. 2018. "Who Pays? A Distributional Analysis of the Tax Systems in All Fifty States."

# New Americans in Alachua County

The Demographic and Economic Contributions of Immigrants in the County

## Population

**28,900**

immigrants lived in Alachua County, Florida, in 2019.

Immigrants made up



of the total population in the county in 2019.

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



The immigrant population increased by

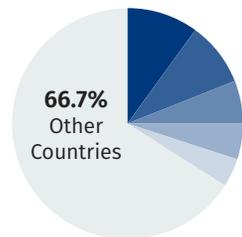
**+13.4%**

during the same time period.



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

## Demographics



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

- China (9.7%)
- Korea (6%)
- Vietnam (4.4%)
- India (8.6%)
- Philippines (4.6%)

## Spending Power & Tax Contributions

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

In 2019, immigrant households in Alachua County earned

**\$940 million**

■ **\$186.8 million**

went to federal taxes<sup>19</sup>

■ **\$57.1 million** went to state & local taxes<sup>20</sup>

■ **\$696.1 million** was left in spending power

This means that foreign-born households held



of all spending power in the county.

<sup>19</sup> U.S. Congressional Budget Office. 2020. "The Distribution of Household Income and Federal Taxes, 2017."

<sup>20</sup> 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

**\$2.4 billion**

to the county's GDP, or

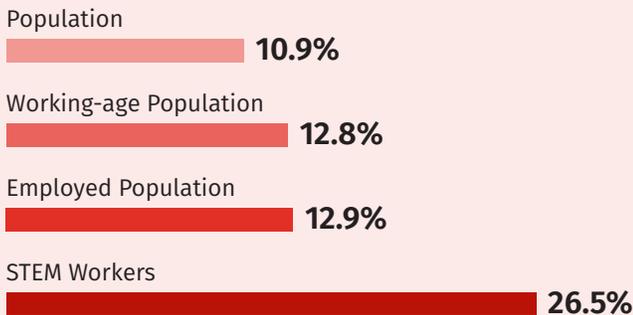


of the total.<sup>21</sup>

## Workforce

Although the foreign-born made up **10.9%** of Alachua County's overall population, they represented **12.8%** of its working-age population, **12.9%** of its employed labor force, and **26.5%** of its STEM workers in 2019.<sup>22</sup>

### Immigrant shares of the...



In 2019 alone, a total of

**1,017**  
immigrant  
agricultural  
workers

were certified to work in Alachua County with an H-2A visa.<sup>23</sup>

In 2017, the production value of watermelons harvested in the county was

**\$10.4**  
million

and the county made

**\$21.5**  
million

in berry sales.<sup>24</sup>

Immigrants in the county are

**20.2%**

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

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



The employed immigrant population was **53.6%** female and **46.4%** male.



**69%**

of hired farm labor in the county were immigrants in 2017.<sup>25</sup>



<sup>21</sup> 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.

<sup>22</sup> STEM refers to occupations that require background or expertise in Science, Technology, Engineering, and/or Math.

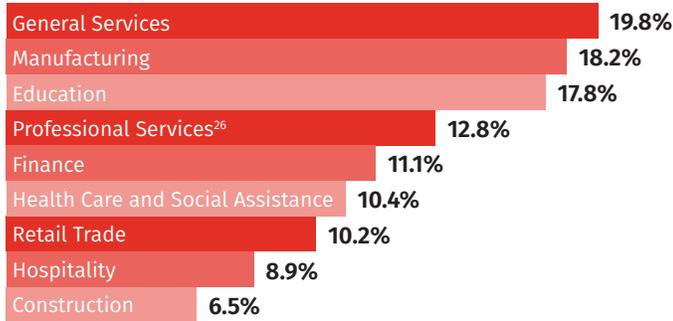
<sup>23</sup> The H-2A program allows U.S. employers to hire international workers to fill temporary/seasonal agricultural positions. H-2A visas make up roughly 10 percent of crop farmworkers in the United States. More here: <https://www.uscis.gov/working-in-the-united-states/temporary-workers/h-2a-temporary-agricultural-workers>

<sup>24</sup> Estimates are based on data from the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS).

<sup>25</sup> The estimated production value of watermelon sales is based on calculations using NASS data and unit prices.

## Workforce *continued*

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

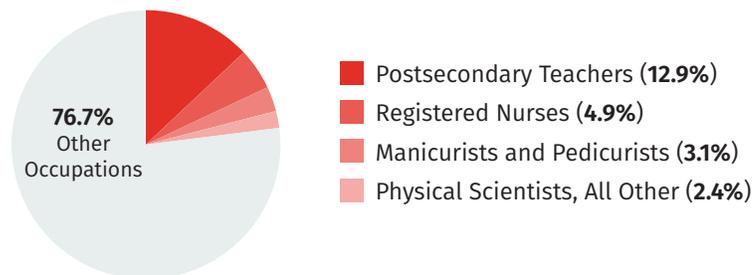


### SPOTLIGHT ON Immigrant Essential Workers

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



Immigrants and refugees tended to work in these occupations in the area in 2019:



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

# 1,300 manufacturing jobs

that would have otherwise vanished or moved elsewhere by 2019.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>26</sup> 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.

<sup>27</sup> Vigdor, Jacob. 2013. "Immigration and the Revival of American Cities: From Preserving Manufacturing Jobs to Strengthening the Housing Market." *New American Economy*.

## Entrepreneurship

**1,500**

immigrant entrepreneurs generated

**\$38.5 million**

in business income for Alachua County.

Immigrants made up



of the business owners in the county in 2019.

While **8.8%** of the U.S.-born population were entrepreneurs, **9.6%** of foreign-born residents worked for their own businesses.

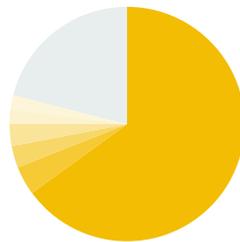
## Education

In the 2021-22 school year,

**845 students**

attended the ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) program in Alachua County's public schools.

Top languages these students spoke at home include:

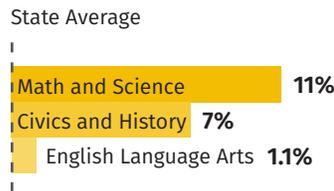


- Spanish: 546 (**64.6%**)
- Portuguese: 34 (**4%**)
- Chinese: 25 (**3%**)
- Arabic: 21 (**2.5%**)
- Vietnamese: 20 (**2.4%**)
- Korean: 15 (**1.8%**)
- Other languages: 181 (**21.4%**)<sup>28</sup>

**2.8%**

of students in the school district were considered active English Language Learners (ELL) in the 2018-19 school year.<sup>29</sup>

ELL students in the school district surpassed state averages proficiencies in the following subjects:



<sup>28</sup>There are 27 other languages that have fewer than 15 students speaking that language.

<sup>29</sup>ELL Report by the School Board of Alachua County