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

Population

15,500
immigrants lived in Ottawa County, Michigan, in 2019.

Between 2014 and 2019, the total population in the county increased by 6.4%.

1% of the total population growth in the county was attributable to immigrants.

5.4% of the total population in the county in 2019.

Demographics

11.1% of immigrants in Ottawa County are recent arrivals, with no more than 5 years of residency in the United States, meaning

88.9% of immigrants in the county have resided in the United States for longer than 5 years.

In the county, immigrants are 28.2% 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:

The top five countries of origin for immigrants living in the county:
- Mexico (32.4%)
- Laos (9%)
- Vietnam (6%)
- Canada (3.9%)
- Netherlands (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 Ottawa County, Michigan.
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

3,800 immigrants living in the county had limited English language proficiency, making up 24.9% of the immigrant population.

The top language spoken at home other than English was Spanish (68.3%).

136,200 commuters worked in the county in 2019.

8.4% or 11,400 commuters, were foreign-born.

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 the county earned $446.9 million

- $72.9 million went to federal taxes
- $38.7 million went to state & local taxes
- $335.3 million left in spending power

This means that foreign-born households held 5.1% of all spending power in the county.

Spending Power & Tax Contributions continued

In 2019, foreign-born residents in the county contributed

$958.6 million to the county's GDP, or 6.4% of the total.6

25.9% of immigrants in the county received Medicare or Medicaid, compared with 27.3% of U.S.-born residents in 2019.

About 82% of U.S.-born had private healthcare coverage, while 27.8% had public healthcare coverage.7

About 73.6% of immigrants had private healthcare coverage, while 26% had public healthcare coverage.

Given their household incomes, 17.4% of immigrants live at or below 150% of the federal poverty threshold as compared to 15.4% of U.S.-born residents.

Given their household incomes, 27.4% of immigrants live at or below 200% of the federal poverty threshold as compared to 23.1% of U.S.-born residents.

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

- $51.5 million to Social Security
- $13.1 million to Medicare

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.
Workforce

Although the foreign-born made up 5.4% of the county’s overall population, they represented 6.8% of its working-age population, 6.6% of its employed labor force, and 8.1% of its STEM workers in 2019.8

Immigrant shares of the...

Population

Working-age Population

Employed Population

STEM Workers

Immigrants in the county are 28.2% more likely to be working age than their U.S.-born counterparts.

The immigrant working-age population was 52.4% female and 47.6% male.

The employed immigrant population was 47% female and 53% male.

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

Agriculture 28.7%
Manufacturing 13.2%
Hospitality 4.7%
Healthcare and Social Assistance 3.2%

Immigrants made up 29.3% of the country's Agriculture (crop production, animal production and aquaculture) workforce.

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 on the frontlines and in essential industries.

8 STEM refers to occupations that require background or expertise in Science, Technology, Engineering, and/or Math.
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 700 manufacturing jobs that would have otherwise vanished or moved elsewhere by 2019.9

**Spotlight on Job Demand In Ottawa 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, 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:**10

1. Health Care & Social Assistance
2. Information
3. Finance and Insurance
4. Retail Trade
5. Manufacturing

**Education**

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

- **34.5%** of U.S.-born
- **26.1%** of immigrants

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<th>Female</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>U.S.-born</td>
<td>50.2%</td>
<td>49.8%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Immigrants</td>
<td>47.5%</td>
<td>52.5%</td>
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Share of the county’s population aged 25 or above that held an advanced degree in 2019:

- **11%** of U.S.-born
- **12.6%** of immigrants

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3.1% of K-12 students in the county were foreign-born in 2019.

9.7% of K-12 students in the county were children of immigrants in 2019.


10 Data is obtained from Burning Glass Technologies for the time period between April 1, 2020 and March 31, 2021.
New Americans in Ottawa County

Education (continued)

SPOTLIGHT ON University Population

472 students enrolled in colleges and universities in Ottawa County in fall 2019 were temporary residents.11

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

International students supported 77 jobs and contributed $15 million in the 2019-20 academic year.12

Other degrees for international students:

1. Business, Management, Marketing, and Related Support Services (38)
2. Health Professions and Related Programs (11)
3. Education (8)
4. Journalism and Communication (7)
5. Psychology (6)
6. Visual and Performing Arts (5)
7. Public Administration and Social Service Professions (4)
8. Social Sciences (4)
9. Foreign Languages, Literatures, and Linguistics (3)
10. Parks, Recreation, Leisure, and Fitness Studies (3)
11. Area, Ethnic, Cultural, General, and Group Studies (2)
12. Multi/Interdisciplinary Studies (2)

Housing

In 2019, 70.4% of immigrant households in Ottawa County owned their own homes, compared to 77.9% of U.S.-born households.

Immigrant  U.S.-born

29.6% of immigrant households were renters. Their total annual rent paid was $15.1 million.

Immigrant  U.S.-born

The total property value of immigrant households was $649.6 million.

Immigrant  U.S.-born

10.7% of households in the county were multigenerational. 88.3% of immigrant households in the county had access to broadband connection in their homes as compared to 84.6% of U.S.-born households.

Immigrant  U.S.-born

11 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.

12 Economic data is derived from the International Student Economic Value Tool maintained by NAFSA, the association of international educators.
New Americans in Ottawa County

Naturalization

- **58.1%** Naturalized Citizens (9,000)
- **14.7%** Likely Eligible to Naturalize (2,300)
- **27.2%** Not Eligible to Naturalize (4,200)

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

- **8.5%** of households in Ottawa 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

- **2,300** refugees, or **14.9%** of the foreign-born population in Ottawa County, were likely refugees.

Undocumented Immigrants

- **2,500** undocumented immigrants in Ottawa County, 2019. They made up **15.9%** of the immigrant population.


New Americans in Ottawa County (East)¹⁵

Population

4,200
immigrants lived in East Ottawa County, Michigan in 2019.

Immigrants made up 3.1% of the total population in the region in 2019.

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 the region earned $82.1 million.

- $13 million went to federal taxes¹⁶
- $7.3 million went to state & local taxes¹⁷
- $61.8 million left in spending power

This means that foreign-born households held 2.1% of all spending power in the region.

¹⁵ Unless otherwise specified, East Ottawa County data comes from 5-year samples of the American Community Survey from 2014 and 2019, and figures refers to a region defined in the 2010 Census: https://www2.census.gov/geo/maps/dc10map/PUMA_RefMap/st26_mi/puma2600802/DC10PUMA2600802_001.pdf


New Americans in Ottawa County (West)18

Population

11,300
Immigrants made up 7.6% of the total population in the region in 2019.

The top countries of origin for immigrants living in the region were Mexico (38.2%) and Laos (10.2%).

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 region earned

$364.8 million

- $60 million went to federal taxes19
- $31.3 million went to state & local taxes20
- $273.5 million left in spending power

This means that foreign-born households held 7.7% of all spending power in the region.

18 Unless otherwise specified, West Ottawa County data comes from 5-year samples of the American Community Survey from 2014 and 2019, and figures refers to a region defined in the 2010 Census: https://www2.census.gov/geo/maps/dc10map/PUMA_RefMap/st26_mi/puma2600801/DC10PUMA2600801_001.pdf
