

# New Americans in Ottawa County

The Demographic and Economic Contributions of Immigrants in the County<sup>1</sup>

OCTOBER 2021



New American Economy | State & Local



Ottawa County  
Where You Belong.

## Population

**15,500**

immigrants lived in Ottawa County, Michigan, 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

**+1.1%**

during the same time period.



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

## Demographics



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



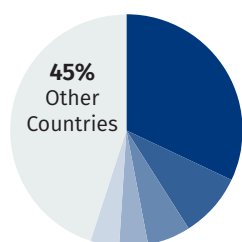
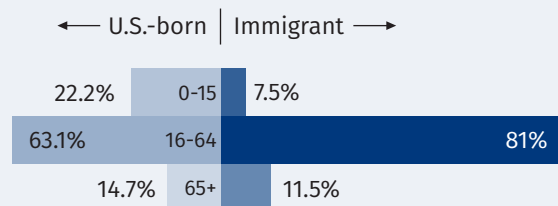
of immigrants in the county have resided in the United States for longer than 5 years.

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.<sup>2</sup>

### Shares of population by age groups:<sup>3</sup>



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

- Mexico (32.4%)
- Vietnam (6%)
- Netherlands (3.7%)
- Laos (9%)
- Canada (3.9%)

<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>2</sup> We define working age as 16-64 years of age.

<sup>3</sup> Totals may not add up to 100 percent due to rounding.

## Demographics *continued*

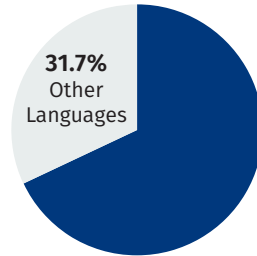
**3,800**

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



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.



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<sup>4</sup>

■ **\$38.7 million** went to state & local taxes<sup>5</sup>

■ **\$335.3 million** left in spending power

This means that foreign-born households held



of all spending power in the county.

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

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

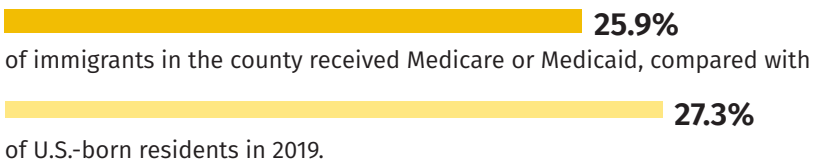
## Spending Power & Tax Contributions *continued*

In 2019, foreign-born residents in the county contributed

**\$958.6 million**

to the county's GDP, or **6.4%** of the total.<sup>6</sup>

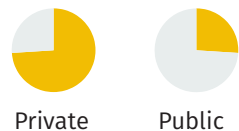
Immigrants in the county also supported federal social programs. In 2019, they contributed



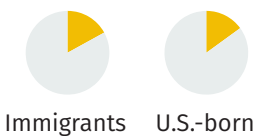
About **82%** of U.S.-born had private healthcare coverage, while **27.8%** had public healthcare coverage.<sup>7</sup>



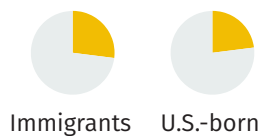
About **73.6%** of immigrants had private healthcare coverage, while **26%** had public healthcare coverage.



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.



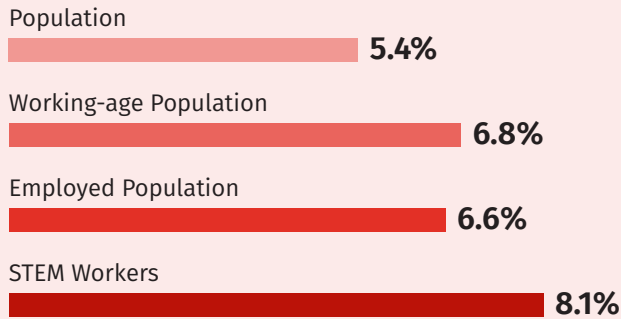
<sup>6</sup> These figures derive from our calculations based on immigrants' share of wage income and self-employment income in the 5-year ACS sample from 2019 and the statistics of GDP from the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis.

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

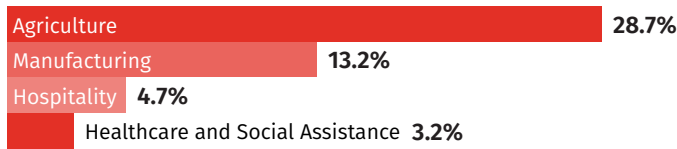
## Workforce

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.<sup>8</sup>

### Immigrant shares of the...



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



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.



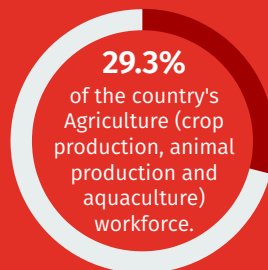
The employed immigrant population was **47%** female and **53%** male.



### SPOTLIGHT ON Immigrant Essential Workers

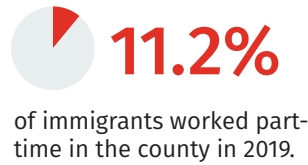
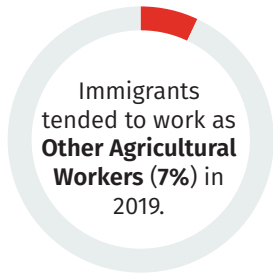
Immigrants have also been playing vital roles in critical industries that have kept the country functioning throughout the COVID-19 crisis. Immigrants in the county continue working on the frontlines and in essential industries.

Immigrants made up



<sup>8</sup> 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

## 700 manufacturing jobs

that would have otherwise vanished or moved elsewhere by 2019.<sup>9</sup>

### SPOTLIGHT ON Job Demand In Ottawa County In 2021

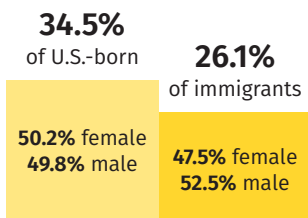
Not only are immigrants more likely to be of working age in the county, but they are also a crucial part of the county's economy, and could help us meet the needs of its fastest growing and most in-demand fields, especially as the need for bilingual and culturally competent public services and healthcare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

#### The top 5 industries with the highest demand for bilingual workers:<sup>10</sup>

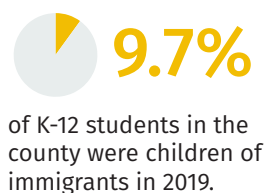
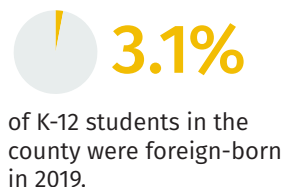
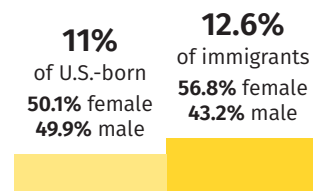
- |                                    |                  |                          |
|------------------------------------|------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Health Care & Social Assistance | 2. Information   | 3. Finance and Insurance |
| 4. Retail Trade                    | 5. Manufacturing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

## Education

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



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



<sup>9</sup> Vigdor, Jacob. 2013. "Immigration and the Revival of American Cities: From Preserving Manufacturing Jobs to Strengthening the Housing Market." *New American Economy*.

<sup>10</sup> Data is obtained from Burning Glass Technologies for the time period between April 1, 2020 and March 31, 2021.

## Education *(continued)*

### SPOTLIGHT ON University Population

**472**

students enrolled in colleges and universities in Ottawa County in fall 2019 were temporary residents.<sup>11</sup>

**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.<sup>12</sup>

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

The total property value of immigrant households was

**\$649.6 million**



- Lived in Houses **61.7%**
- Lived in Apartments **22.1%**
- Lived in Other Types of Housing **16.2%**



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

**\$15.1 million**



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

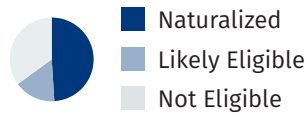
<sup>11</sup> Data on total student enrollment in the city is derived from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System maintained by the National Center for Education Statistics. Temporary residents refer to people who are not U.S. citizens or permanent residents.

<sup>12</sup> Economic data is derived from the International Student Economic Value Tool maintained by NAFSA, the association of international educators.

## 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.



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%**<sup>13</sup>

## Refugees

**2,300**

refugees, or **14.9%** of the foreign-born population in Ottawa County, were likely refugees.<sup>14</sup>

## Undocumented Immigrants

**2,500**

undocumented immigrants in Ottawa County, 2019. They made up



of the immigrant population.

<sup>13</sup> Enchautegui, Maria E. and Linda Giannarelli. 2015. "The Economic Impact of Naturalization on Immigrants and Cities." Urban Institute.

<sup>14</sup> New American Economy. 2017. "From Struggle to Resilience: The Economic Impact of Refugees in America."

# New Americans in Ottawa County (East)<sup>15</sup>

## Population

**4,200**

immigrants lived in East  
Ottawa County, Michigan in  
2019.

Immigrants made up



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 taxes<sup>16</sup>

■ **\$7.3 million** went to state & local taxes<sup>17</sup>

■ **\$61.8 million** left in spending power

This means that foreign-  
born households held



of all spending power in the  
region.

<sup>15</sup> 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](https://www2.census.gov/geo/maps/dc10map/PUMA_RefMap/st26_mi/puma2600802/DC10PUMA2600802_001.pdf)

<sup>16</sup> U.S. Congressional Budget Office. 2020. "The Distribution of Household Income and Federal Taxes, 2017."

<sup>17</sup> Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy. 2018. "Who Pays? A Distributional Analysis of the Tax Systems in All Fifty States."



# New Americans in Ottawa County (West)<sup>18</sup>

## Population

**11,300**

immigrants lived in West Ottawa County, Michigan in 2019.

Immigrants made up



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 taxes<sup>19</sup>

■ **\$31.3 million** went to state & local taxes<sup>20</sup>

■ **\$273.5 million** left in spending power

This means that foreign-born households held



of all spending power in the region.

<sup>18</sup> 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](https://www2.census.gov/geo/maps/dc10map/PUMA_RefMap/st26_mi/puma2600801/DC10PUMA2600801_001.pdf)

<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."