New Americans in Omaha-Council Bluffs
A Snapshot of the Demographic and Economic Contributions of Immigrants in the Metro Area

The foreign-born population in the metro area holds considerable economic power. In 2019, foreign-born residents in the metro area contributed $5.1 billion to the metro area's GDP.

- Amount earned by immigrant households in 2019:
  - $1.9B

- $301.8M went to federal taxes.
- $182.0M went to state & local taxes.

Leaving them with $1.4B in spending power, or 6.4% of all spending power for the metro area.

Top countries of origin for immigrants living in the metro area:
1. Mexico .......... 33.2%
2. India .............. 6.5%
3. Guatemala .......... 4.3%
4. Myanmar .......... 3.6%
5. El Salvador .......... 3.4%

Between 2014 and 2019, the overall population in the metro area increased from 836,500 to 929,200, or 11.1%.
During the same period, the foreign-born population increased from 58,900 to 73,900, or 25.4%.
Growth in the foreign born population accounted for 16.1% of the overall population growth during that period.
SPENDING POWER & TAX CONTRIBUTIONS (CONTINUED)

Foreign-born residents also supported federal social programs. In 2019, immigrants in the metro area contributed $211.6M to Social Security and $55.8M to Medicare.

- Share of immigrants receiving Medicare or Medicaid in 2019: 17.4%
- Share of U.S.-born receiving Medicare or Medicaid in 2019: 27.4%
- Share of immigrants with private healthcare coverage: 56.3%
- Share of immigrants with public healthcare coverage: 17.8%

About 29.8% of the foreign-born population was uninsured in 2019.

WORKFORCE

Although the foreign-born population made up 8.0% of the metro area's overall population, they represented 10.6% of its working-age population, 9.4% of its employed labor force, and 11.9% of its STEM workers in 2019.

Immigrants played a critical role in these key industries in the metro area:

- Manufacturing: 22.1%
- Construction: 15.9%
- Hospitality: 12.2%
- Professional Services: 10.9%
- Transportation and Warehousing: 8.7%

Immigrants tend to concentrate in these occupations in the metro area:

- Construction Laborers: 4.1%
- Butchers and Other Meat, Poultry, and Fish Processing Workers: 4.0%
- Janitors and Building Cleaners: 3.2%
- Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners: 3.2%
- Packaging and Filling Machine Operators and Tenders: 3.1%

Because of the role immigrants play in the workforce helping companies keep jobs on U.S. soil, we estimate that, by 2019, immigrants living in the metro area had helped create or preserve 3,400 local manufacturing jobs that would have otherwise vanished or moved elsewhere.³
In fall 2019, 1,732 students enrolled in colleges and universities in the metro area were temporary residents. These students supported 400 local jobs and contributed $50.2M in spending in the 2019 academic year. 

The number one industry for foreign-born entrepreneurs was construction, where 30.0% of entrepreneurs were foreign-born. 

Despite making up 8.0% of the overall population, immigrants made up 9.1% of the entrepreneurs in the metro area in 2019. 

About 3,500 immigrants worked for their own businesses, generating $79.9M in business income. 

The share of the population who were self-employed in the metro area in 2019: 

- U.S.-born: 8.0% 
- Foreign-born: 7.6% 

The share of entrepreneurs who were foreign-born in 2019: 9.1% 

About 4.4% of public school students under 18 who were born abroad were enrolled in the metro area in 2019. 

In 2019, 45.6% of immigrant households in the metro area owned their homes, compared to 66.6% of U.S.-born households. 

54.4% of immigrant households were renters. 

60.2% of immigrant households lived in houses, while 35.5% lived in apartments. 

The total property value of immigrant households was $2.5B. 

The total annual rent paid by immigrant households was $132.6M.
**Share of immigrants who were naturalized U.S. citizens**

33.3%

This represents a total of 24,600 immigrants.

**Share among the 49,000 non-citizen immigrants who were likely eligible to naturalize**

9.4%

This represents a total of 7,000 immigrants.

**Refugees**

- **31.5%** of refugees in the metro area were naturalized U.S. citizens, or 3,100.
- **15.8%** of refugees ages 25 and above held a bachelor’s degree or higher.
- **$35,000** The median household income of the refugees in the metro area in 2019.
- **40.6%** of refugees worked in the manufacturing industry.

**Undocumented Immigrants**

- Estimated number of undocumented immigrants in 2019, or **33.8%** of the immigrant population.
- Top countries of origin for the undocumented immigrants in the metro area:
  - Mexico 52.7%
  - Guatemala 10.2%
  - El Salvador 6.3%
  - India 5.3%
  - Other 25.2%

- **25,000** people, or **13.3%** of the foreign-born population, were likely refugees in 2019.
UNDOCUMENTED IMMIGRANTS (CONTINUED)

Amount earned by undocumented immigrant households in 2019:

- **$29.3M** went to federal taxes.\(^6\)
- **$22.8M** went to state & local taxes.\(^7\)

Leaving them with **$400M** in spending power.

Undocumented immigrants tend to concentrate in these industries in the metro area:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>20.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>18.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hospitality</td>
<td>15.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Services</td>
<td>14.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail Trade</td>
<td>10.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ENDNOTES

1. Unless otherwise specified, data comes from 5-year samples of the American Community Survey from 2014 and 2019 and figures refer to the metropolitan statistical area of Omaha-Council Bluffs, NE-IA.
2. 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 Bureau of Economic Analysis, U.S.
5. 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.
7. Data on total student enrollment in the metro area 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.
8. Economic data is derived from the International Student Economic Value Tool maintained by NAFSA, the associations of international educators.