

New Americans in Utah



According to the 2020 Census, Utah was the fastest-growing state in the country over the previous decade.¹ New Americans are helping to fuel this growth, while making contributions as participants in the state's workforce, and as taxpayers, consumers, entrepreneurs, and more. This brief shows the demographic and economic contributions that new Americans are making across the state of Utah.² Unless otherwise specified, the data in this brief comes from the 2000 and 2019 American Community Surveys.³ We define an immigrant or new American as anyone born outside the country to non-U.S. citizen parents who is a resident of the United States.

Demographics

Utah has experienced rapid growth in its foreign-born population in recent years, attracting 100,700 immigrants to the state from abroad or other U.S. states between 2000 and 2019. During this time period, 11.6 percent of the state's population growth was attributable to immigrants.

In 2019, nearly 258,800 immigrants lived in Utah. While immigrants made up a smaller share of Utah's population (8.4 percent) than the U.S. population (14.5 percent), those demographics are changing rapidly.

258,800

immigrants lived in Utah in 2019.

+100,700

increase in number of immigrants in Utah between 2000 and 2019.

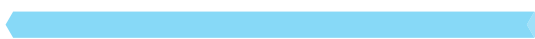
11.6%

of the state's population growth was attributable to immigrants during the same period.

FOREIGN-BORN SHARE OF THE POPULATION IN 2019

8.4%

UTAH



14.5%

UNITED STATES



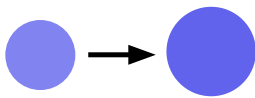
Utah's total population is growing at a faster rate than the U.S. population, and its immigrant population is growing even faster.

Between 2000 and 2019, the number of immigrants in Utah increased by 63.7 percent, while the U.S.-born population grew by 36.9 percent. During this same period, Utah's total population increased by 38.8 percent, or 866,000 people.

POPULATION GROWTH IN UTAH

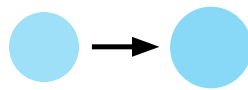
+63.7%

growth in the foreign-born population in Utah between 2000 and 2019.



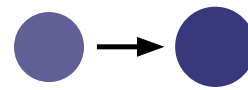
+36.9%

growth in the U.S.-born population in Utah between 2000 and 2019.



+38.8%

growth in Utah's total population between 2000 and 2019.

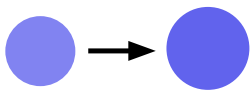


In comparison, nationally, the immigrant population increased by 41.4 percent between 2000 and 2019, while the U.S.-born population grew by 12.1 percent. During the same period, the overall U.S. population increased by 15.4 percent, or 43.3 million people.

POPULATION GROWTH IN THE UNITED STATES

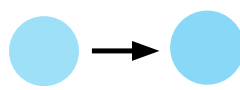
+41.4%

growth in the national foreign-born population between 2000 and 2019.



+12.1%

growth in the national U.S.-born population between 2000 and 2019.



+15.4%

growth in the overall U.S. population between 2000 and 2019.



In 2019, 39.2 percent of Utah's immigrants were naturalized U.S. citizens. This represents a total of 101,500 immigrants. Nationally, 48.7 percent of immigrants are naturalized citizens.

SHARE OF IMMIGRANTS WHO ARE NATURALIZED CITIZENS

39.2%

UTAH



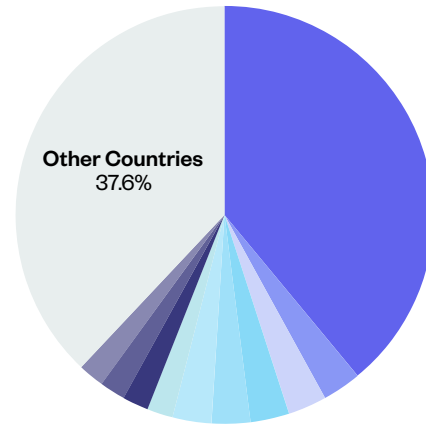
48.7%

UNITED STATES



Nearly two-fifths of immigrants in Utah came from Mexico. The top 10 countries of origin for immigrants living in Utah are:

■	1. MEXICO	39.1%
■	2. INDIA	3.3%
■	3. CANADA	3.0%
■	4. EL SALVADOR	2.9%
■	5. CHINA	2.5%
■	6. PERU.....	2.5%
■	7. VENEZUELA.....	2.3%
■	8. BRAZIL	2.3%
■	9. VIETNAM.....	2.3%
■	10. PHILIPPINES.....	2.2%

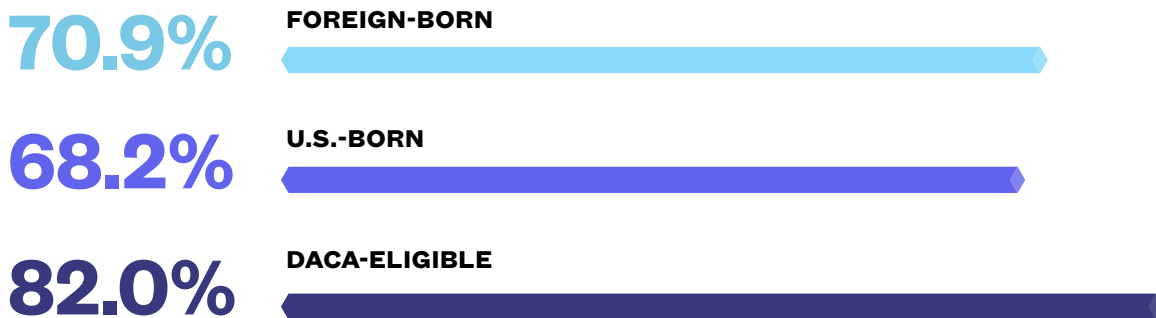


Workforce and Entrepreneurship

The growth in the immigrant population has strengthened Utah’s labor force. Immigrants play vital roles in some of the state’s fastest-growing and most in-demand fields, even though some immigrants face barriers to finding jobs that match their skill levels.

Utah’s immigrants have a slightly higher labor force participation rate than U.S.-born residents. In 2019, 70.9 percent of immigrants were in the labor force, compared with 68.2 percent of U.S-born residents. Individuals eligible for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) in Utah are even more active—82.0 percent of them were in Utah’s labor force in 2019.

SHARE OF POPULATION ACTIVE IN UTAH'S WORKFORCE IN 2019



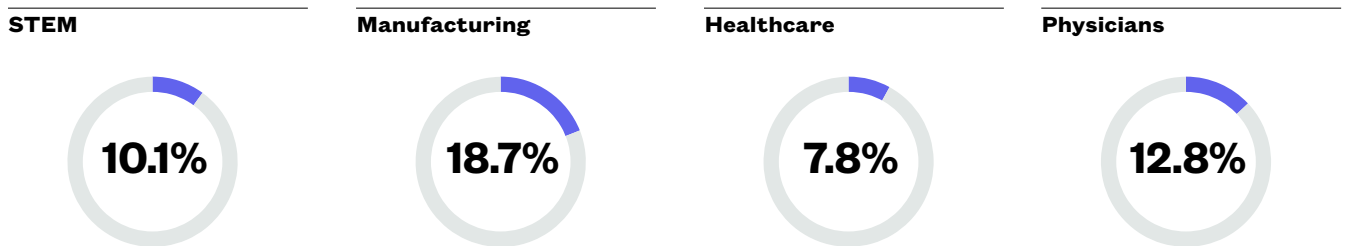
In Utah’s workforce, immigrants are also more likely to be of prime working age (25-54) than U.S.-born workers, allowing them to participate more actively in the labor force and contribute to the economy as taxpayers and consumers. In 2019, 73.5 percent of immigrants in the Utah labor force were in their prime working years, compared to 61.4 percent of U.S.-born workers.

AGE BREAKDOWN OF UTAH'S LABOR FORCE

Age Group	Immigrants	U.S.-born
16-24	11.1%	21.2%
25-34	23.1%	23.7%
35-44	27.4%	21.7%
45-54	23.0%	16.0%
55-64	12.5%	13.0%
65+	2.9%	4.3%

While immigrants made up 8.4 percent of the state’s overall population, they represented 10.1 percent of its Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) workers, 18.7 percent of its manufacturing workers, and 7.8 percent of its healthcare workers in 2019.⁴ Within the healthcare industry, new Americans in Utah make up 12.8 percent of the state’s physicians.⁵

FOREIGN-BORN SHARE OF WORKERS IN UTAH IN 2019



Although many new Americans have brought their professional skills and experience to Utah, a significant number of them may face a potential mismatch between skills and job requirements.⁶ In 2019, 43.6 percent of college-educated immigrants, or 18,000 people, worked in jobs that didn’t require a bachelor’s degree, while 29.6 percent of U.S.-born residents with a college degree worked in those jobs.⁷

UTAH'S COLLEGE-EDUCATED WORKERS WHO WORKED IN JOBS THAT DIDN'T REQUIRE A BACHELOR'S DEGREE IN 2019



When looking at entrepreneurship in Utah, there were 14,000 immigrants who owned their own business in 2019, creating job opportunities for all Utah’s workers. However, Utah’s immigrants are starting businesses at lower rates than their U.S.-born counterparts, which indicates supporting immigrant entrepreneurs is an area of opportunity for the state. In 2019, 8.3 percent of immigrants were entrepreneurs, while 9.2 percent of U.S.-born residents worked for their own business.

SHARE OF ENTREPRENEURS IN UTAH IN 2019



Nationally, immigrants are more likely to be business owners than U.S.-born residents. In 2019, 11.8 percent of immigrants were entrepreneurs, while 9.0 percent of U.S.-born residents worked for their own business.

SHARE OF ENTREPRENEURS IN THE UNITED STATES IN 2019



Spending Power and Tax Contributions

Immigrant households contribute billions of dollars in federal, state, and local taxes and hold a significant amount of spending power. This gives them economic clout, and the ability to support local communities as consumers and taxpayers.

In 2019, immigrant households in Utah earned \$7.2 billion, contributing \$1.1 billion in federal taxes⁸ and \$572.7 million in state and local taxes.⁹ This leaves them with \$5.4 billion in spending power, or 8.4 percent of all spending power in the state, similar to their share of the overall population.



International Students

International students in Utah contribute millions of dollars to the state and the U.S. economy every year and support a significant number of U.S. jobs through their tuition payments and day-to-day spending.

In the 2020-21 school year, 8,533 international students were enrolled in colleges and universities in Utah,¹⁰ contributing \$207.5 million in spending to the U.S. economy and supporting 2,191 jobs.¹¹

8,533

International students enrolled at Utah colleges and universities during the 2020-21 school year.

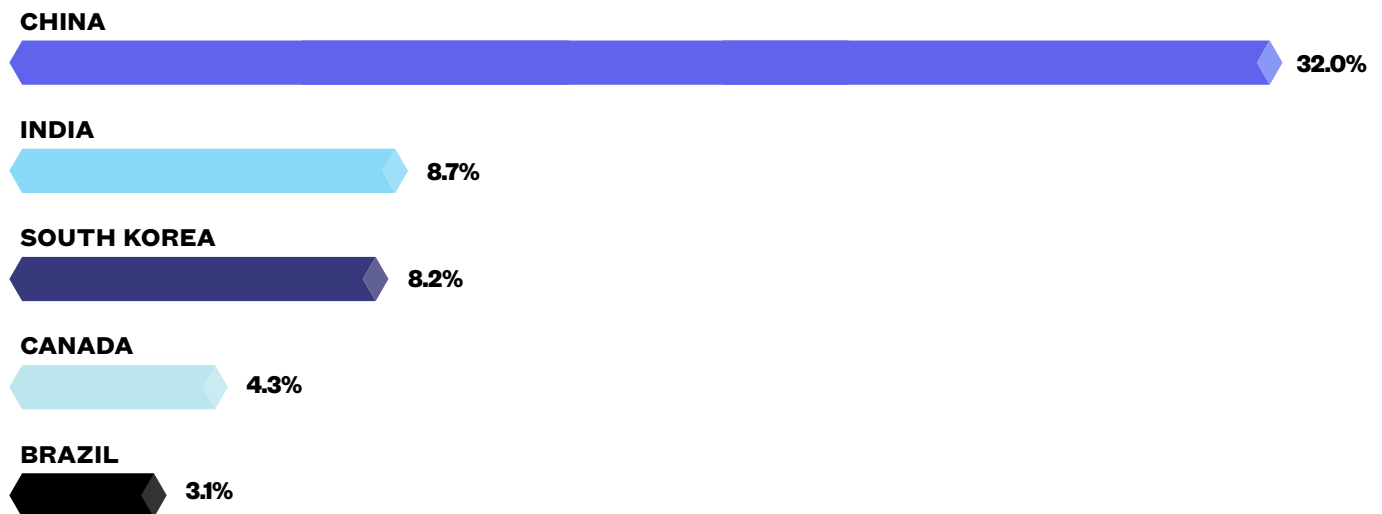
\$207.5M

was contributed to the U.S. economy by international students during the 2020-21 school year.

2,191

jobs were supported by international students during the 2020-21 school year.

TOP COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS IN UTAH¹²



Research has also found that increases in the number of international students at U.S. universities boost innovation and patent creation. When universities increase their share of international students, they often receive more patents—boosting revenue and creating more opportunities for all students. A study finds that a 10 percent increase in the number of international graduate students studying at U.S. institutions of higher education would raise U.S. university patent grants by 5.3 percent.¹³

International students tend to concentrate in metropolitan areas, with a significant share choosing to stay and work in the region after they graduate. In the Salt Lake City metropolitan area, 40.7 percent of foreign student graduates were able to extend their visas to work in the metro area, while 39.9 percent of foreign students in the Provo-Orem metropolitan area stayed after their graduation to work in the area, based on data aggregated across the 2008-2012 period.¹⁴ Nationally, the retention rate for international graduates was about 45 percent.

40.7%

of international students in the Salt Lake City metropolitan area were able to extend their visas to work in the metro area after graduation between 2008 and

39.9%

of foreign-born students in the Provo-Orem metropolitan area remained in the metro area after graduation to work between 2008 and 2012.

45.0%

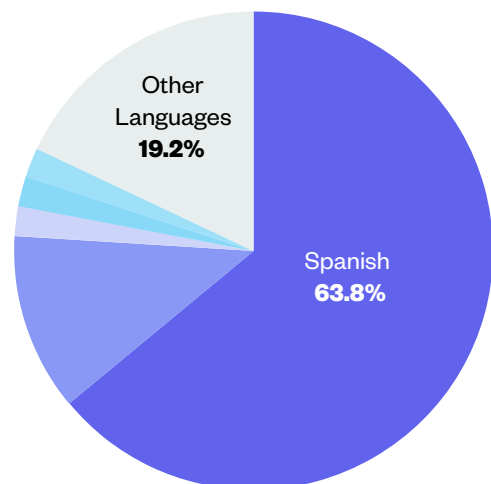
of international students in the U.S. remained in the country after graduation during the same period.

Education

Utah’s growing immigrant population is also reflected in an increasingly diverse student population in K-12 schools. In 2019, 128,100 immigrants or children of immigrants under the age of 18 were enrolled in local schools, making up 16.5 percent of the student body in this age group. These students will bring additional global perspective and language capability to Utah’s expanding talent pool.

TOP LANGUAGES SPOKEN IN IMMIGRANT HOUSEHOLDS WITH CHILDREN

■ SPANISH.....	63.8%
■ ENGLISH.....	11.8%
■ PORTUGUESE.....	1.9%
■ VIETNAMESE.....	1.7%
■ CHINESE.....	1.6%



ENDNOTES

- 1** U.S. Census Bureau, “2020 Census: Percent Change in Resident Population for the 50 States, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico: 2010 to 2020,” April 27, 2021, <https://www.census.gov/library/visualizations/2021/dec/2020-percent-change-map.html>.
- 2** Except where otherwise noted (e.g., “DACA-eligible”), we define an immigrant or new American as anyone born outside the country to non-U.S. citizen parents who is a resident of the United States. This includes naturalized citizens, green card holders, temporary visa holders, refugees, asylees, and undocumented immigrants, among others.
- 3** Unless otherwise specified, data comes from the 5-year sample of the 2019 American Community Survey and the 5-percent sample of the 2000 American Community Survey.
- 4** STEM refers to occupations that require background or expertise in Science, Technology, Engineering, or Math.
- 5** This figure is 12.4 percent when measuring the immigrant share of all physicians in Utah—people who reported physician as their most recent occupation in the American Community Survey, regardless of their employment or labor force status.
- 6** Jeanne Batalova, Michael Fix, and James D. Bachmeier, *Untapped Talent: The Costs of Brain Waste among Highly Skilled Immigrants in the United States* (Migration Policy Institute, New American Economy, and World Education Services, 2016).
- 7** The occupations that don’t require a college degree are identified using the Occupation Finder developed by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.
- 8** U.S. Congressional Budget Office, “The Distribution of Household Income and Federal Taxes, 2017,” last updated 2020.
- 9** Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy, “Who Pays? A Distributional Analysis of the Tax Systems in All Fifty States,” 2018.
- 10** Institute of International Education, “Open Doors 2021,” November 15, 2021.
- 11** Economic data is derived from the International Student Economic Value Tool maintained by NAFSA, the association of international educators.
- 12** Institute of International Education, “Open Doors 2021,” November 15, 2021.
- 13** Gnanaraj Chellaraj, Keith E. Maskus, and Aaditya Mattoo, “The Contribution of Skilled Immigration and International Graduate Students to U.S. Innovation,” World Bank Publications, vol. 4, 2005.
- 14** Neil G. Ruiz, “The Geography of Foreign Students in U.S. Higher Education: Origins and Destinations,” Brookings Institution, August 29, 2014.