

## New Americans in the Sooner State

The Political and Economic Power of Immigrants, Latinos, and Asians in Oklahoma.

### ***Immigrants and their children are growing shares of Oklahoma's population and electorate.***

- **The foreign-born share** of Oklahoma's population rose from 2.1% in [1990](#) [1], to 3.8% in [2000](#) [1], to 5.0% in [2008](#) [2], according to the U.S. Census Bureau. Oklahoma was home to 183,249 immigrants in [2008](#) [2], which is more than the total population of [Salt Lake City, Utah](#) [3].
- **33.3% of immigrants (or 61,025 people) in Oklahoma were naturalized U.S. citizens** in [2008](#) [2]—meaning that they are eligible to vote.
- **2.6% (or 46,175) of registered voters** in Oklahoma were “New Americans”—naturalized citizens or the U.S.-born children of immigrants who were raised during the current era of immigration from Latin America and Asia which began in 1965—according to an analysis of 2006 Census Bureau data by [Rob Paral & Associates](#) [4].

### ***Nearly one-in-eleven Oklahomans are Latino or Asian.***

- The **Latino share of Oklahoma's population** grew from 2.7% in [1990](#) [5], to 5.2% in [2000](#) [5], to 7.7% (or 280,462 people) in [2008](#) [2]. The **Asian share of the population** grew from 1.0% in [1990](#) [6], to 1.4% in [2000](#) [6], to 1.7% (or 61,920 people) in [2008](#) [2], according to the U.S. Census Bureau.
- **Latinos accounted for 2.2%** (or 33,000) **of Oklahoma voters** in the 2008 elections, according to the [U.S. Census Bureau](#) [7].
- In Oklahoma, **more than four-in-five (or 85% of) children in immigrant families were U.S. citizens** in [2007](#) [8], according to the Center for Social and Demographic Analysis at the University of Albany.

### ***Latino and Asian entrepreneurs and consumers add billions of dollars and tens of thousands of jobs to Oklahoma's economy.***

- **The 2009 purchasing power of Latinos in Oklahoma totaled \$5.8 billion**—an increase of 708.2% since 1990. **Asian buying power totaled \$2.1 billion**—an increase of 386.9% since 1990, according to the [Selig Center for Economic Growth](#) [9] at the University of Georgia.
- Oklahoma's 5,442 **Latino-owned** [10] **businesses** had sales and receipts of \$1.1 billion and employed 8,161 people in 2002, the last year for which data is available. The state's 4,583 **Asian-owned** [11] **businesses** had sales and receipts of \$929.1 million and employed 9,452 people in 2002, according to the U.S. Census Bureau's Survey of Business Owners.

### ***Immigrants are integral to Oklahoma's economy as workers and taxpayers.***

- Immigrants comprised **6.7% of the state's workforce** in [2008](#) [2] (or 121,218 workers), according to the U.S. Census Bureau.
- Unauthorized immigrants comprised roughly **2.2% of the state's workforce** (or 40,000 workers) in [2008](#) [12], according to a report by the Pew Hispanic Center.
- If one-half (roughly 50,000 people) of all the state's immigrant labor force was removed, Oklahoma's economy would be reduced by **1.32% in the short run—a reduction of nearly \$1.8 billion** relative to 2006 production levels, according to a 2008 study by the [Economic Impact Group](#) [13].
- If all unauthorized immigrants were removed from Oklahoma, **the state would lose \$580.3 million in economic activity, \$257.8 million in gross state product, and approximately 4,680 jobs**, even accounting for adequate market adjustment time, according to a report by the [Perryman Group](#) [14].

### ***Immigrants are integral to Oklahoma's economy as students.***

- Oklahoma's 8,460 **foreign students contributed \$178 million** to the state's economy in tuition, fees, and living expenses for the 2008-2009 academic year, according to [NAFSA: Association of International Educators](#) [15].

### ***Naturalized citizens excel educationally.***

- In **Oklahoma, 27.7% of foreign-born persons who were naturalized U.S. citizens in 2008** [16] **had a bachelor's or higher degree, compared to 19.3% of noncitizens.** At the same time, only 26.2% of naturalized citizens lacked a high-school diploma, compared to 48.4% of noncitizens.
- The number of immigrants in Oklahoma with a college degree **increased by 51.1%** between 2000 and 2008, according to [data](#) [16] from the Migration Policy Institute.
- In Oklahoma, **77.3% of all children** between the ages of 5 and 17 in families that spoke a language other than English at home also spoke English "very well" as of [2008](#) [16].

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- [Just the Facts](#)

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#### **Links:**

[1] <http://www.census.gov/prod/2003pubs/c2kbr-34.pdf#page=3>

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- [2] [http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/STTable?\\_bm=y&-context=st&-qr\\_name=ACS\\_2008\\_1YR\\_G00\\_S0501&-ds\\_name=ACS\\_2008\\_1YR\\_G00\\_&-CONTEXT=st&-tree\\_id=307&-redoLog=false&-geo\\_id=04000US40&-format=&-\\_lang=en](http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/STTable?_bm=y&-context=st&-qr_name=ACS_2008_1YR_G00_S0501&-ds_name=ACS_2008_1YR_G00_&-CONTEXT=st&-tree_id=307&-redoLog=false&-geo_id=04000US40&-format=&-_lang=en)
- [3] <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/49/4967000.html>
- [4] <http://www.immigrationpolicy.org/../../default/files/docs/NewCitizenVotersWEBversion.pdf%2523page%3D24>
- [5] <http://www.census.gov/prod/2001pubs/c2kbr01-3.pdf#page=4>
- [6] <http://www.census.gov/prod/2002pubs/c2kbr01-16.pdf#page=5>
- [7] [http://www.census.gov/population/socdemo/voting/cps2008/Table\\_4b.xls](http://www.census.gov/population/socdemo/voting/cps2008/Table_4b.xls)
- [8] [http://mumford.albany.edu/children/reports/DataBriefs/AECF\\_immigrant\\_families\\_brief\\_oklahoma.pdf](http://mumford.albany.edu/children/reports/DataBriefs/AECF_immigrant_families_brief_oklahoma.pdf)
- [9] <http://www.terry.uga.edu/selig/docs/GBEC0903q.pdf>
- [10] <http://www.census.gov/prod/ec02/sb0200cshisp.pdf#page=27>
- [11] <http://www.census.gov/prod/ec02/sb0200csasian.pdf#page=27>
- [12] <http://pewhispanic.org/files/reports/107.pdf#page=40>
- [13] [http://economicimpactgroup.com/Resources/HB\\_1804\\_Impact\\_Analysis\\_Rep.pdf#page=17](http://economicimpactgroup.com/Resources/HB_1804_Impact_Analysis_Rep.pdf#page=17)
- [14] [http://americansforimmigrationreform.com/files/Impact\\_of\\_the\\_Undocumented\\_Workforce.pdf#page=69](http://americansforimmigrationreform.com/files/Impact_of_the_Undocumented_Workforce.pdf#page=69)
- [15] [http://www.nafsa.org/\\_/File/\\_eis09/oklahoma.pdf#page=2](http://www.nafsa.org/_/File/_eis09/oklahoma.pdf#page=2)
- [16] <http://www.migrationinformation.org/datahub/state2.cfm?ID=ok#5>
- [17] [http://www.immigrationpolicy.org/sites/default/files/docs/New\\_Americans\\_in\\_the\\_Sooner\\_State\\_2010\\_0.pdf](http://www.immigrationpolicy.org/sites/default/files/docs/New_Americans_in_the_Sooner_State_2010_0.pdf)