

New Americans in the Bluegrass State

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

Immigrants and their children are growing shares of Kentucky's population and electorate.

- **The foreign-born share** of Kentucky's population rose from 0.9% in [1990](#) [1], to 2.0% in [2000](#) [1], to 2.8% in [2008](#) [2], according to the U.S. Census Bureau. Kentucky was home to 119,503 immigrants in [2008](#) [2], which is more than the total population of [Springfield, Illinois](#) [3].
- **34.0% of immigrants (or 40,613 people) in Kentucky were naturalized U.S. citizens** in [2008](#) [2]—meaning that they are eligible to vote.
- **1.0% (or 22,399) of registered voters** in Kentucky 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].

Latinos and Asians make up 3.3% of Kentucky's population.

- The **Latino share of Kentucky's population** grew from 0.6% in [1990](#) [5], to 1.5% in [2000](#) [5], to 2.3% (or 98,193 people) in [2008](#) [2]. The **Asian share of the population** grew from 0.5% in [1990](#) [6], to 0.7% in [2000](#) [6], to 1.0% (or 42,692 people) in [2008](#) [2], according to the U.S. Census Bureau.
- In Kentucky, **nearly four-in-five (or 79% of) children in immigrant families were U.S. citizens** in [2007](#) [7], 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 thousands of jobs to Kentucky's economy.

- **The 2009 purchasing power of Latinos in Kentucky totaled \$2.1 billion**—an increase of 837% since 1990. **Asian buying power totaled \$1.8 billion**—an increase of 495% since 1990, according to the [Selig Center for Economic Growth](#) [8] at the University of Georgia.
- Kentucky's 3,236 **Asian-owned** [9] **businesses** had sales and receipts of \$1.4 billion and employed 11,966 people in 2002, the last year for which data is available. The state's 2,094 **Latino-owned** [10] **businesses** had sales and receipts of \$769.6 million in 2002, according to the U.S. Census Bureau's Survey of Business Owners.

Immigrants contribute to Kentucky's economy as workers and taxpayers.

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Immigrants comprised **3.8% of the state's workforce** in [2008](#) [2] (or 77,770 workers), according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

- Immigrants contributed more than \$30 million in state sales and excise taxes to Kentucky in [2000](#) [11], according a 2002 report by the Legislative Research Commission.

Unauthorized immigrants contribute to Kentucky's economy as workers and consumers.

- Unauthorized immigrants comprised roughly **1.3% of the state's workforce** (or 25,000 workers) in [2008](#) [12], according to a report by the Pew Hispanic Center.
- If all unauthorized immigrants were removed from Kentucky, **the state would lose \$1.7 billion in economic activity, \$756.8 million in gross state product, and approximately 12,059 jobs**, even accounting for adequate market adjustment time, according to a report by the [Perryman Group](#) [13].

Immigrants contribute to Kentucky's economy as students.

- Kentucky's 4,760 **foreign students contributed \$92.5 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](#) [14].

Naturalized citizens excel educationally.

- In **Kentucky, 39.4% of foreign-born persons who were naturalized U.S. citizens in 2008 [15] had a bachelor's or higher degree, compared to 28.3% of noncitizens.** At the same time, only 15.0% of naturalized citizens lacked a high-school diploma, compared to 30.6% of noncitizens.
- The number of immigrants in Kentucky with a college degree **increased by 54.6%** between 2000 and 2008, according to [data](#) [15] from the Migration Policy Institute.
- In Kentucky, **64.4% 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](#) [15].

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Links:

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

[2]

http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/STTable?_bm=y&-context=st&-qr_name=ACS_2008_1

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[3] <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/17/1772000.html>
[4] <http://immigrationpolicy.org/sites/default/files/docs/NewCitizenVotersWEBversion.pdf#page=24>
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