

## New Americans in the Volunteer State

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

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

- **The foreign-born share** of Tennessee's population rose from 1.2% in [1990](#) [1], to 2.8% in [2000](#) [1], to 4.0% in [2008](#) [2], according to the U.S. Census Bureau. Tennessee was home to 248,483 immigrants in [2008](#) [2], which is roughly equal to the total population of [Lincoln, Nebraska](#) [3].
- **32.3% of immigrants (or 80,145 people) in Tennessee were naturalized U.S. citizens** in [2008](#) [2]—meaning that they are eligible to vote.
- **1.3% (or 36,764) of all registered voters** in Tennessee are “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].

### ***One-in-twenty Tennesseans are Latino or Asian—and they vote.***

- The **Latino share of Tennessee's population** grew from 0.7% in [1990](#) [5], to 2.2% in [2000](#) [5], to 3.7% (or 229,951 people) in [2008](#) [2]. The **Asian share of the population** grew from 0.6% in [1990](#) [6], to 1.0% in [2000](#) [6], to 1.3% (or 80,794 people) in [2008](#) [2], according to the U.S. Census Bureau.
- Latinos comprised 1.4% (or 34,000) of Tennessee voters in the 2008 elections, and Asians 0.7% (or 18,000), according to the [U.S. Census Bureau](#) [7].
- In Tennessee, **more than four-in-five (or 82% 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.

### ***The Memphis metropolitan area has the largest proportion of Latinos in the state, and they contribute to the economy.***

- **The Latino share of the population in the Memphis metropolitan area** rose from 0.75% in [1990](#) [9], to 2.4% in [2000](#) [10], to 3.6% (or 46,291 people) in [2007](#) [11], according to the U.S. Census Bureau.
- Latino workers had a **total economic impact of \$1.02 billion** in the Memphis area, according to a 2001 report from the [University of Memphis](#) [12].

Latino workers in the Memphis area earned **\$570.8 million in wages and salaries** in 2000, paid at least **\$85.6 million in payroll and income taxes**, and generated approximately **\$12.3 million in local and state sales tax**, according to the [same study](#) [13].

- Latinos spent more than **\$359 million in the local Memphis area economy** in [2000](#) [13], including:
  - \$45 million in local grocery stores
  - \$20.2 million in restaurants
  - \$74.8 million for housing
  - \$49.4 million for utilities, furnishings and household supplies
  - \$23.1 million for clothing
  - \$69.0 million for transportation or car operation
  - \$14.2 million for health care services
  - \$38.1 million for other consumption items
  - \$26.0 million for savings in local banks

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

- The 2009 **purchasing power of Tennessee's Latinos totaled \$5.1 billion**—an increase of 1,186.1% since 1990. **Asian buying power totaled \$3.1 billion**—an increase of 544.9% since 1990, according to the [Selig Center for Economic Growth](#) [14] at the University of Georgia.
- Tennessee's 7,241 **Asian-owned [15] businesses** had sales and receipts of \$2.2 billion and employed 21,971 people in 2002, the last year for which data is available. The state's 4,301 **Latino-owned [16] businesses** had sales and receipts of \$1.0 billion and employed 7,995 people in 2002, according to the U.S. Census Bureau's Survey of Business Owners.

### ***Immigrants are essential to Tennessee's economy as workers.***

- Immigrants comprised **5.2% of the state's workforce** in [2008](#) [2] (or 164,029 workers), according to the U.S. Census Bureau.
- Unauthorized immigrants comprised **3.6% of the state's workforce** in [2008](#) [17] (or 110,000 workers), according to a report by the Pew Hispanic Center.
- If all unauthorized immigrants were removed from Tennessee, **the state would lose \$3.8 billion in economic activity, \$1.7 billion in gross state product, and approximately 25,919 jobs**, even accounting for adequate market adjustment time, according to a report by the [Perryman Group](#) [18].

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

- Tennessee's 5,690 **foreign students contributed \$139.5 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](#) [19].

- In **Tennessee, 37.3% of foreign-born persons** who were naturalized U.S. citizens in [2008](#) [20] **had a bachelor's or higher degree**, compared to 24.5% of noncitizens. Only 15.0% of naturalized citizens lacked a high-school diploma, compared to 37.4% of noncitizens.
- The number of immigrants in Tennessee with a college degree **increased by 55.4%** between 2000 and 2008, according to [data](#) [20] from the Migration Policy Institute.
- 29.0% of Tennessee's foreign-born population age 25 and older **had a bachelor's or higher degree** in [2008](#) [20], compared to 22.6% of native-born persons age 25 and older.
- In Tennessee, **73.8% 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](#) [21].

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- Just the Facts

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[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\\_1YR\\_G00\\_S0501&-ds\\_name=ACS\\_2008\\_1YR\\_G00\\_&-CONTEXT=st&-tree\\_id=307&-redoLog=false&-geo\\_id=04000US47&-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=04000US47&-format=&-_lang=en)  
[3] <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/31/3128000.html>  
[4] <http://www.immigrationpolicy.org/.../images/File/specialreport/NewCitizenVotersWEBversion.pdf%2523page%3D25>  
[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\\_tennessee.pdf](http://mumford.albany.edu/children/reports/DataBriefs/AECF_immigrant_families_brief_tennessee.pdf)  
[9] <http://bit.ly/eYN5y>  
[10] <http://bit.ly/mwTw9>  
[11] <http://bit.ly/7W5tf>  
[12] <http://www.memphis.edu/crow/pdfs/crowlatino.pdf#page=9>  
[13] <http://www.memphis.edu/crow/pdfs/crowlatino.pdf#page=10>  
[14] <http://www.terry.uga.edu/selig/docs/GBEC0903q.pdf>  
[15] <http://www.census.gov/prod/ec02/sb0200csasian.pdf#page=29>  
[16] <http://www.census.gov/prod/ec02/sb0200cshisp.pdf#page=29>  
[17] <http://pewhispanic.org/files/reports/107.pdf#page=40>  
[18] [http://americansforimmigrationreform.com/files/Impact\\_of\\_the\\_Undocumented\\_Workforce.pdf#page=69](http://americansforimmigrationreform.com/files/Impact_of_the_Undocumented_Workforce.pdf#page=69)  
[19] <http://www.nafsa.org/ /File/ /eis09/tennessee.pdf#page=2>

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[20] <http://www.migrationinformation.org/datahub/state2.cfm?ID=TN#5>

[21] <http://www.migrationinformation.org/datahub/state2.cfm?ID=TN#1>

[22]

[http://www.immigrationpolicy.org/sites/default/files/docs/New\\_Americans\\_in\\_the\\_Volunteer\\_State\\_2010.pdf](http://www.immigrationpolicy.org/sites/default/files/docs/New_Americans_in_the_Volunteer_State_2010.pdf)