

New Americans in the Pelican State

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

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

- **The foreign-born share** of Louisiana's population rose from 2.1% in [1990](#) [1], to 2.6% in [2000](#) [1], to 3.1% in [2008](#) [2], according to the U.S. Census Bureau. Louisiana was home to 134,704 immigrants in [2008](#) [2], which is more than the population of [Syracuse, New York](#) [3].
- **44.9% of immigrants (or 60,591 people) in Louisiana were naturalized U.S. citizens** in [2008](#) [2]—meaning that they are eligible to vote.
- **1.7% (or 37,048) of registered voters** in Louisiana 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].

Roughly 1 in 20 Louisianans are Latino or Asian.

- The **Latino share of Louisiana's population** grew from 2.2% in [1990](#) [5], to 2.4% in [2000](#) [5], to 3.4% (or 149,967 people) in [2008](#) [2]. The **Asian share of the population** grew from 1.0% in [1990](#) [6], to 1.2% in [2000](#) [6], to 1.5% (or 66,162 people) in [2008](#) [2], according to the U.S. Census Bureau.
- **Latinos accounted for 1.5% (or 32,000) of Louisiana voters** in the 2008 elections, according to the [U.S. Census Bureau](#) [7].
- In Louisiana, **nearly nine-in-ten (or 88% 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 Louisiana's economy.

- **The 2009 purchasing power of Latinos in Louisiana totaled \$4.7 billion**—an increase of 295.1% since 1990. **Asian buying power totaled \$2.3 billion**—an increase of 378.8% since 1990, according to the [Selig Center for Economic Growth](#) [9] at the University of Georgia.
- Louisiana's 8,218 **Asian-owned [10] businesses** had sales and receipts of \$1.8 billion and employed 17,376 people in 2002, the last year for which data is available. The state's 7,645 **Latino-owned [11] businesses** had sales and receipts of \$1.9 billion and employed 16,319 people in 2002, according to the U.S. Census Bureau's Survey of Business Owners.

Immigrants are integral to Louisiana's economy as workers and consumers.

- Immigrants comprised **4.0% of the state's workforce** in [2008](#) [2] (or 85,457 workers), according to the U.S. Census Bureau.
- Unauthorized immigrants comprised **3.1% of the state's workforce** (or 60,000 workers) in [2008](#) [12], according to a report by the Pew Hispanic Center.
- If all unauthorized immigrants were removed from Louisiana, **the state would lose \$947 million in economic activity, \$421 million in gross state product, and approximately 6,660 jobs**, even accounting for adequate market adjustment time, according to a report by the [Perryman Group](#) [13].

Latino workers have been essential to rebuilding the Gulf Coast region after Hurricane Katrina.

- The number of Latino workers in New Orleans' reconstruction zone (Jefferson and Orleans Parishes) **more than doubled from 60,000 in 2006 to 150,000 in 2008**, according to a [study](#) [14] by the Americas Society and Council of the Americas.
- Latino workers contributed to **making 86.9% of households habitable** after Hurricane Katrina in six parishes surrounding New Orleans in 2008, according to the [same study](#) [15].

Immigrants contribute to Louisiana's economy as students.

- Louisiana's 6,213 **foreign students contributed \$118.9 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](#) [16].

Naturalized citizens excel educationally.

- In **Louisiana, 29.3% of foreign-born persons** who were naturalized U.S. citizens in [2008](#) [17] **had a bachelor's or higher degree**, compared to 22.5% of noncitizens. At the same time, 26.4% of naturalized citizens lacked a high-school diploma, compared to 34.4% of noncitizens.
- **25.9% of Louisiana's foreign-born population** age 25 and older **had a bachelor's or higher degree** in [2008](#) [17], compared to 20.0% of native-born persons age 25 and older.
- In Louisiana, **75.2% 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](#) [18].

UPDATED: JULY 2010

Published On: **Mon, Oct 26, 2009** | [Download File](#) [19]

- [Just the Facts](#)

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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_1YR_G00_S0501&-ds_name=ACS_2008_1YR_G00_&-CONTEXT=st&-tree_id=307&-redoLog=false&-geo_id=04000US22&-format=&-_lang=en
- [3] <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/36/3673000.html>
- [4] <http://immigrationpolicy.org/images/File/specialreport/NewCitizenVotersWEBversion.pdf#page=24>
- [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
- [8] http://mumford.albany.edu/children/reports/DataBriefs/AECF_immigrant_families_brief_louisiana.pdf
- [9] <http://www.terry.uga.edu/selig/docs/GBEC0903q.pdf>
- [10] <http://www.census.gov/prod/ec02/sb0200csasian.pdf#page=22>
- [11] <http://www.census.gov/prod/ec02/sb0200cshisp.pdf#page=22>
- [12] <http://pewhispanic.org/files/reports/107.pdf#page=40>
- [13] http://americansforimmigrationreform.com/files/Impact_of_the_Undocumented_Workforce.pdf#page=69
- [14] <http://www.as-coa.org/files/editor/image/IntegrationWhitePaper.pdf#page=38>
- [15] <http://www.as-coa.org/files/editor/image/IntegrationWhitePaper.pdf#page=40>
- [16] http://www.nafsa.org/_/File/_/eis09/louisiana.pdf#page=2
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