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**NEW AMERICANS IN UTAH:
The Political and Economic Power of Immigrants, Latinos, and Asians
in the Beehive State**

Immigrants, Latinos, and Asians account for large and growing shares of the economy and population in Utah. Immigrants (the foreign-born) make up 8.0% of the state's population, and more than one-third of them are naturalized U.S. citizens who are eligible to vote. "New Americans"—immigrants and the children of immigrants—account for 5.4% of registered voters in the state. Immigrants are not only integral to the state's economy as workers, but also account for tens of millions of dollars in tax revenue and consumer purchasing power. Moreover, Latinos and Asians (both foreign-born and native-born) wield \$8.3 billion in consumer purchasing power, and the businesses they own had sales and receipts of \$2.6 billion and employed more than 20,000 people at last count. At a time when the economy is in a slump, Utah can ill-afford to alienate such a critical component of its labor force, tax base, and business community.

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

- **The foreign-born share** of Utah's population rose from 3.4% in [1990](#),¹ to 7.1% in [2000](#),² to 8.0% in [2010](#),³ according to the U.S. Census Bureau. Utah was home to 222,638 immigrants in [2010](#),⁴ which nearly the total population of [Winston-Salem, North Carolina](#).⁵
- **33.6% of immigrants (or 74,756 people) in Utah were naturalized U.S. citizens in [2010](#)**⁶—meaning that they are eligible to vote.
- **5.4% (or 57,018) of registered voters** in Utah 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 2008 Census Bureau data by [Rob Paral & Associates](#).⁷

Roughly 1 in 7 Utahns are Latino or Asian—and they vote.

- **The Latino share of Utah's population** grew from 4.9% in [1990](#),⁸ to 9.0% in [2000](#),⁹ to 13.0% (or 360,941 people) in [2010](#).¹⁰ **The Asian share of the population** grew from 1.5% in [1990](#),¹¹ to 1.7% in [2000](#),¹² to 1.9% (or 52,753 people) in [2010](#),¹³ according to the U.S. Census Bureau.
- **Latinos accounted for 2.2% (or 21,000) of Utah voters** in the 2008 elections, and Asians 1.2% (11,000) according to the [U.S. Census Bureau](#).
- In Utah, **87.1% of children with immigrant parents were U.S. citizens** in [2009](#), according to data from the Urban Institute.¹⁴

- In [2009](#), **94% of children in Asian families** in Utah were U.S. citizens, as were **90% of children in Latino families**.¹⁵

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

- **The 2010 purchasing power of Latinos in Utah totaled \$6.4 billion**—an increase of 765.5% since 1990. **Asian buying power totaled \$1.9 billion**—an increase of 459.8% since 1990, according to the [Selig Center for Economic Growth](#) at the University of Georgia.¹⁶
- Utah's 4,646 **Asian-owned businesses had sales and receipts of \$1.3 billion and employed 12,561 people** in 2007, the last year for which data is available.¹⁷ The state's 9,238 **Latino-owned businesses had sales and receipts of \$1.3 billion and employed 7,850 people** in 2007, according to the U.S. Census Bureau's Survey of Business Owners.¹⁸

Mexican immigrants are integral to Utah's economy as taxpayers.

- Mexican immigrants in Utah “**own property valued at \$984 million,**” have more than **\$1.0 billion in purchasing power**, and paid more than **\$67 million in state and local taxes** in [2000](#), according to a report by the Institute of Public and International Affairs at the University of Utah,¹⁹ including:
 - \$7.5 million in income tax;
 - \$52.2 million in sales tax; and
 - \$7.6 million in property tax.

Immigrants are integral to Utah's economy as workers.

- Immigrants comprised **11.0% of the state's workforce** in [2010](#) (or 149,321 workers), according to the U.S. Census Bureau.²⁰
- Unauthorized immigrants comprised **5.4% of the state's workforce** (or 75,000 workers) in [2010](#), according to a report by the Pew Hispanic Center.²¹
- If all unauthorized immigrants were removed from Utah, **the state would lose \$2.3 billion in economic activity, \$1.0 billion in gross state product, and approximately 14,219 jobs**, even accounting for adequate market adjustment time, according to a report by the [Perryman Group](#).²²

Unauthorized immigrants pay taxes.

- Unauthorized immigrants in Utah paid **\$105.4 million** in state and local taxes in [2010](#), according to data from the Institute for Taxation and Economic Policy,²³ which includes:
 - \$22.3 million in state income taxes.
 - \$5.5 million in property taxes.
 - \$77.6 million in sales taxes.

Immigrants are integral to Utah's economy as students.

- Utah's 7,562 **foreign students contributed \$145.5 million** to the state's economy in tuition, fees and living expenses for the 2009-2010 academic year, according to the [NAFSA: Association of International Educators](#).²⁴

Latinos are one of the fastest growing groups of new converts to the Mormon Church.

- Mormons now make up **58% percent of Utah's population**, according to the [Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life](#).²⁵
- Hispanics are now **more than half** of the 14 million Mormons claimed by the church worldwide and will make up the **majority by 2025**, according to some estimates.²⁶

Naturalized citizens excel educationally.

- In Utah, **27% of foreign-born persons** who were naturalized U.S. citizens in [2009](#) **had a bachelor's or higher degree**, compared to 15.4% of noncitizens. At the same time, only 21.6% of naturalized citizens lacked a high-school diploma, compared to 44.6% of noncitizens.²⁷
- The number of immigrants in Utah with a college degree **increased by 43.1%** between 2000 and 2009, according to [data](#) from the Migration Policy Institute.²⁸
- In Utah, **85.3% of children with immigrant parents** were considered "English proficient" as of [2009](#), to data from the Urban Institute.²⁹
- The English proficiency rate among **Asian children in Utah was 93.3%**, while for **Latino children it was 87.4%**, as of [2009](#).³⁰

Endnotes

¹ U.S. Census Bureau, [The Foreign-Born Population: 2000](#), December 2003.

² Ibid.

³ 2010 American Community Survey (1-Year Estimates).

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Rob Paral and Associates, [The New American Electorate: The Growing Political Power of Immigrants and Their Children](#) (Washington, DC: Immigration Policy Center, American Immigration Law Foundation, October 2010).

⁸ U.S. Census Bureau, [The Hispanic Population: 2000](#), May 2001.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ 2010 American Community Survey (1-Year Estimates).

¹¹ U.S. Census Bureau, [The Asian Population: 2000](#), February 2002.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ 2010 American Community Survey (1-Year Estimates).

¹⁴ [The Urban Institute](#), data from the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series datasets drawn from the 2005 - 2009 American Community Survey.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Jeffrey M. Humphreys, [The Multicultural Economy 2010](#) (Athens, GA: Selig Center for Economic Growth, University of Georgia, 2010).

¹⁷ U.S. Census Bureau, [Estimates of Business Ownership by Gender, Ethnicity, Race, and Veteran Status: 2007](#), June, 2011..

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Institute of Public and International Affairs, [Mexico and Utah: A Complex Economic Relationship](#) (Salt Lake City, UT: University of Utah, 2005), xi-xii.

²⁰ 2010 American Community Survey (1-Year Estimates).

²¹ Jeffrey S. Passel and D’Vera Cohn, [*Unauthorized Immigrant Population: National and State Trends, 2010*](#) (Washington, DC: Pew Hispanic Center, February 1, 2011), p. 24.

²² The Perryman Group, [*An Essential Resource: An Analysis of the Economic Impact of Undocumented Workers on Business Activity in the US with Estimated Effects by State and by Industry*](#) (Waco, TX: April 2008), p. 69.

²³ The Immigration Policy Center, [*Unauthorized Immigrants Pay Taxes, Too*](#) (Washington, DC: April 2011).

²⁴ Association of International Educators, [*The Economic Benefits of International Education to the United States for the 2009-2010 Academic Year: A Statistical Analysis*](#) (Washington, DC: National Association of Foreign Student Advisors, 2010).

²⁵ Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life, [*U.S. Religious Landscape Survey: Utah*](#) (Washington, DC: Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life, November 24, 2009).

²⁶ Fernando Peinado, “[Will Hispanic Mormons support Romney in 2012?](#),” *BBC News*, October 26, 2011.

²⁷ Migration Policy Institute Data Hub, [Utah: Language & Education](#).

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ [The Urban Institute](#), data from the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series datasets drawn from the 2005 - 2009 American Community Survey.

³⁰ Ibid.