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**NEW AMERICANS IN THE GREEN MOUNTAIN STATE:
The Political and Economic Power of Immigrants, Latinos, and Asians in Vermont**

Immigrants, Latinos, and Asians account for growing shares of the economy and electorate in Vermont. Immigrants make up 2.5% of the state's population, and well over half of them are naturalized U.S. citizens who are eligible to vote. "New Americans"—immigrants and the children of immigrants—account for 4.3% of registered voters in the state. Immigrants are not only important to the state's economy as workers, but also account for millions of dollars in tax revenue and consumer purchasing power. Moreover, Latinos and Asians wield \$430.3 million in consumer purchasing power, and the businesses they own had sales and receipts of more than \$100 million at last count. At a time of economic recession, Vermont can ill-afford to alienate such a significant component of its labor force, tax base, and business community.

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

- **The foreign-born share** of Vermont's population rose from 3.1% in [1990](#)¹ to 3.5% in [2007](#),² according to the U.S. Census Bureau. Vermont was home to 21,410 immigrants in [2007](#).
- **56.0% of immigrants (or 11,999 people) in Vermont were naturalized U.S. citizens in [2007](#)**³—meaning that they are eligible to vote.
- **4.3% (or 14,818) of registered voters** in Vermont 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 2.5% Vermonters are Latino or Asian.

- The **Latino share of Vermont's population** grew from 0.7% in [1990](#),⁵ to 0.9% in [2000](#),⁶ to 1.3% (or 8,076 people) in [2007](#).⁷ The **Asian share of the population** grew from 0.6% in [1990](#),⁸ to 0.9% in [2000](#),⁹ to 1.1% (or 6,834 people) in [2007](#),¹⁰ according to the U.S. Census Bureau.
- In Vermont, **more than nine-in-ten (or 94% of) children in immigrant families were U.S. citizens** in [2009](#),¹¹ according to the Center for Social and Demographic Analysis at the University of Albany.

Latino and Asian entrepreneurs and consumers add millions of dollars and hundreds of jobs to Vermont's economy.

- **The 2009 purchasing power of Latinos totaled \$251.6 million**—an increase of 441.7% since 1990. **Asian buying power totaled \$178.7 million**—an increase of 402.8% since 1990, according to the [Selig Center for Economic Growth](#) at the University of Georgia.¹²
- Vermont's 434 **Asian-owned businesses** had sales and receipts of \$67 million in 2002, the last year for which data is available.¹³ The state's 452 **Latino-owned businesses** had sales and receipts of \$38 million and employed 229 people in 2002, according to the U.S. Census Bureau's Survey of Business Owners.¹⁴

Immigrants are important to Vermont's economy as workers and taxpayers.

- Immigrants comprised **3.4% of the state's workforce** in [2007](#) (or 12,000 workers), according to the U.S. Census Bureau.¹⁵
- Unauthorized immigrants comprised less than **0.5% of the state's workforce** (or fewer than 10,000 workers) in [2008](#), according to a report by the Pew Hispanic Center.¹⁶
- More than half of the milk produced in the state comes from the **roughly 2,000 Hispanic migrant farm workers living and working in Vermont**, according to a [survey](#) by the Vermont Farm Bureau.¹⁷
- If all unauthorized immigrants were removed from Vermont, **the state would lose \$794.8 million in economic activity, \$294.6 million in gross state product, and approximately 5,143 jobs**, even accounting for adequate market adjustment time, according to a report by the [Perryman Group](#).¹⁸

Immigrants are important to Vermont's economy as students.

- Vermont's 1,022 **foreign students contributed \$28.9 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](#).¹⁹

Naturalized citizens excel educationally.

- In Vermont, **34.4% of foreign-born persons** who were naturalized U.S. citizens in [2007](#) **had a bachelor's or higher degree**.²⁰
- **36.4% of Vermont's foreign-born population age 25 and older** had a bachelor's or higher degree in [2007](#), compared to 31.9% of native-born persons age 25 and older.²¹
- In Vermont, **82.7% 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 [2007](#).²²

Endnotes

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- ¹ U.S. Census Bureau, [*The Foreign-Born Population: 2000*](#), December 2003.
- ² 2007 American Community Survey (1-Year Estimates).
- ³ Ibid.
- ⁴ 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 2008).
- ⁵ U.S. Census Bureau, [*The Hispanic Population: 2000*](#), May 2001.
- ⁶ Ibid.
- ⁷ 2007 American Community Survey (1-Year Estimates).
- ⁸ U.S. Census Bureau, [*The Asian Population: 2000*](#), February 2002.
- ⁹ Ibid.
- ¹⁰ 2007 American Community Survey (1-Year Estimates).
- ¹¹ Center for Social and Demographic Analysis, [*Children in Immigrant Families in Vermont*](#) (Albany, NY: University of Albany, SUNY, September 2009).
- ¹² Jeffrey M. Humphreys, [*The Multicultural Economy 2008*](#) (Athens, GA: Selig Center for Economic Growth, University of Georgia, 2008), p. 64.
- ¹³ U.S. Census Bureau, [*Hispanic-Owned Firms: 2002*](#), August 2006.
- ¹⁴ U.S. Census Bureau, [*Asian-Owned Firms: 2002*](#), August 2006.
- ¹⁵ 2007 American Community Survey (1-Year Estimates).
- ¹⁶ Jeffrey S. Passel and D’Vera Cohn, [*A Portrait of Unauthorized Immigrants in the United States*](#) (Washington, DC: The Pew Charitable Trusts, April 14, 2009), p. 30.
- ¹⁷ Chris Urban and Sky Barsch, “[Helping Hands: Migrant labor provides essential help for dairy farms](#),” *Vermont Life Magazine*, Summer 2008.
- ¹⁸ 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.
- ¹⁹ Association of International Educators, [*The Economic Benefits of International Education to the United States for the 2008-2009 Academic Year: A Statistical Analysis*](#) (Washington, DC: National Association of Foreign Student Advisors, 2009).
- ²⁰ Migration Policy Institute Data Hub, [Vermont: Language & Education](#).
- ²¹ Ibid.
- ²² Ibid.