

US and Illinois Immigrants by the Numbers

Introduction

Immigrants are a growing and increasingly important part of our nation's and our state's population. Our nation was built and settled with the labor of immigrant workers. As our native population ages, and as our economy becomes more closely bound to the rest of the world, the skills and energy that immigrants contribute are becoming ever more crucial to wealth and vibrancy of our country.

Immigration has emerged as a heated issue in our nation's political debate. All too often, immigrant communities are targeted for vitriol by elected officials, media figures, and others who lack understanding of the experience of immigrants and of immigration law and policy.

As our nation considers the future of our immigration policies, we face a key choice: Do we embrace immigrants as our new neighbors and work to bring them into our community, or do we spurn and demonize them?

Our nation must realize that our future prosperity is inextricably linked with the success of immigrants. The Chicago Council on Global Affairs, the Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights, and the Notre Dame Institute for Latino Studies have all recently issued reports recognizing the "shared future" that immigrants and natives must face together.¹ Understanding how immigrants can further contribute to our nation and our state will only further benefit the entire community.

How many immigrants live in the US and in Illinois?²

- **One of every eight Americans is an immigrant** (38.5 million out of 307 million total). Of the 38.5 million immigrants, 16.8 million are naturalized US citizens.
- **Nearly one of every seven Illinois residents is an immigrant** (1.74 million out of 12.9 million). Of these, 783,000 are naturalized citizens.
- 91.4% of Illinois immigrants (1.59 million) live in the seven-county Chicago metropolitan area (Cook, Lake, McHenry, DuPage, Kane, Kendall, and Will). 62.5% of the state's foreign-born (1.09 million) live in Cook County.
- Chicago is home to 588,000 immigrants, 33.8% of the state's total. Suburban Cook County is home to 503,000 immigrants, 28.9% of Illinois' foreign-born population, with almost as many (490,000, or 28.2%) living in the surrounding six collar counties.

¹ Chicago Council on Foreign Relations (n/k/a Chicago Council on Global Affairs), "Keeping the Promise: Immigration Proposals from the Heartland" (2004) (http://www.thechicagocouncil.org/taskforce_details.php?taskforce_id=6); Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights, "For the Benefit of All: Strategic Recommendations to Enhance the State's Role in the Integration of Immigrants in Illinois" (December 2006) (<http://www.icirr.org/naeo/docs/pcreport.pdf>); University of Notre Dame Institute for Latino Studies and Metropolitan Mayors Caucus, "Forging the Tools for Unity: A Report on Metro Chicago's Mayors Roundtables on Latino Integration" (November 2007) (http://latinostudies.nd.edu/pubs/pubs/Roundtables_WEB.pdf).

² US Census Bureau 2009 American Community Survey, Table [B05002. Place of Birth by Citizenship Status - Universe: Total Population](#)

	Total foreign-born population	Percentage of total population who were born outside US	Percentage of foreign-born who are naturalized citizens
US	38.5 million	12.5	43.7
Illinois	1.74 million	13.5	45.0
7-county Chicago area	1.59 million	18.6	45.2
Cook	1.09 million	20.6	44.6
DuPage	171,600	18.4	56.0
Lake	127,300	17.9	42.2
Kane	83,600	16.3	33.9
Will	75,500	11.0	48.9
Chicago	588,000	20.6	40.7
Elgin	27,300	25.5	26.1
Schaumburg	17,600	25.2	51.0

Where do immigrants come from?³

	US	Illinois	Metro Chicago*	Cook County	Chicago
Latin America	53.1%	47.6%	48.5%	48.0%	56.2%
Mexico	29.8%	39.8%	40.7%	39.4%	45.0%
Asia	27.7%	25.8%	24.7%	23.8%	20.4%
Europe	12.7%	22.7%	23.1%	24.4%	18.9%
Poland	1.2%	8.2%	8.6%	10.2%	8.0%
Africa	3.9%	2.6%	2.5%	2.8%	3.4%
other	2.7%	1.3%	1.2%	1.0%	1.1%

*includes areas in Indiana and Wisconsin

Top ten countries of origin

	US	Illinois	Metro Chicago*	Cook County	Chicago
1	Mexico	Mexico	Mexico	Mexico	Mexico
2	Philippines	Poland	Poland	Poland	Poland
3	India	India	India	India	China**
4	China**	Philippines	Philippines	Philippines	Philippines
5	Vietnam	China**	China**	China**	India
6	El Salvador	Korea	Korea	Korea	Ecuador
7	Korea	Germany	Germany	Guatemala	Guatemala
8	Cuba	Guatemala	Guatemala	Ukraine	Ukraine
9	Canada	Ukraine	Ukraine	Ecuador	Korea
10	Guatemala	Pakistan	Italy	Iraq	Iraq

* includes areas in Indiana and Wisconsin

** does not include Hong Kong or Taiwan

³ US Census Bureau, 2009 American Community Survey, Table [B05006. Place of Birth for the Foreign-Born Population – Universe: Foreign-Born Population Excluding Population Born at Sea](#)

How has the US and Illinois immigrant population changed?⁴

The US immigrant population nearly doubled from 1990 to 2009, from 19.8 million to 38.5 million. The share of the US population who were born abroad rose from 7.9% to 12.5%. Nearly a third (31.6%) of all immigrants to the US arrived in 2000 or after; over half (59.5%) came in 1990 or after.

In all, **approximately 1.8 million new immigrants arrive in the US each year**, including new permanent residents (green card holders), people entering on temporary visas who will likely eventually seek green cards, and undocumented immigrants.⁵

Immigrants accounted for 29% of the total population growth of the US from 2000 to 2009, and 32.2% of the growth from 1990 to 2009.

While the number of immigrants in the US is at an all-time high, the **percentage of immigrants among the total population is lower than the historical peaks of a century ago**. The share of immigrants among the total population consistently exceeded 13% in each Census from 1860 through 1920, peaking at 14.4% in the 1870 Census, 14.8% in the 1890 Census, and 14.7% in the 1910 Census.⁶

The foreign-born population in Illinois rose 83% from 1990 to 2009, from 952,000 to 1.74 million. The immigrant portion of Illinois' population rose from 8.3% to 13.5%. Over one quarter (28.4%) arrived in 2000 or after; 59.9% arrived in 1990 or after.

Immigrants accounted for 43% of the growth of Illinois from 2000 to 2009, and 55% of the growth from 1990 to 2009.

Illinois generally ranks among the top six receiving states for new immigrants, following California, New York, Florida, Texas, and New Jersey.⁷

	United States	Illinois
Foreign-born population, 2009	38.5 million	1.74 million
Foreign-born population, 1990	19.8 million	952,000
Increase in foreign-born population from 1990 to 2009	94.9%	82.8%
Share of population born abroad, 2009	12.5%	13.8%
Share of population born abroad, 1990	7.9%	8.3%
Percentage of immigrants who arrived in 1990 or after	59.5%	59.9%
Percentage of immigrants who arrived in 2000 or after	31.6%	28.5%

⁴ Jeanne Batalova, Migration Policy Institute Data Hub. Estimates for 1990 and 2000 are from the US Census Bureau, Summary File 3, 1990 and 2000 US Decennial Censuses; 2009 estimates are from the US Census Bureau, 2009 American Community Survey (<http://www.migrationinformation.org/datahub/>).

⁵ Migration Policy Institute, "The United States: Social and Demographic Characteristics" (2011) (<http://www.migrationinformation.org/datahub/state.cfm?ID=US>).

⁶ US Census Bureau, "Profile of the Foreign-Born Population in the United States: 2000" (December 2001) (<http://www.census.gov/prod/2002pubs/p23-206.pdf>).

⁷ Department of Homeland Security, Office of Immigration Statistics, *2009 Yearbook of Immigration Statistics*, Table 4. Persons Obtaining Legal Permanent Resident Status by State of Residence: Fiscal Years 2000 to 2009 (http://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/statistics/yearbook/2009/ois_yb_2009.pdf).

Illinois immigrants are moving beyond Chicago

As the numbers above indicate, as of 2009 only one-third of all Illinois immigrants live in the city of Chicago, compared to 49% in 1990. In contrast to previous immigrants, **many recent immigrants are bypassing Chicago** and moving directly to the suburbs and rural areas.

In Illinois, **30 out of 102 counties saw their immigrant populations double between the 1990 and 2000 Census**. Most dramatically, Cass County saw an increase in its foreign-born population of 1141%, driven mainly by demand for workers at local food processing plants.⁸

How many undocumented immigrants live in the US and in Illinois?

The US Department of Homeland Security has estimated that as of January 2010, **10.8 million undocumented immigrants were in the United States**. This compares to 8.5 million in 2000. Of the 10.8 million, 6.6 million are from Mexico, 2 million from elsewhere in North America (including the Caribbean and Central America), 800,000 from South America, 1.0 million from Asia, 300,000 from Europe, and 200,000 from other nations. DHS estimates that 490,000 undocumented immigrants live in Illinois, compared to 440,000 in 2000.⁹

The Pew Hispanic Center offers slightly different figures. Pew estimates that 11.2 million undocumented immigrants were in the United States as of March 2010, compared to 8.4 million in 2000. Of the 11.2 million, 6.5 million are from Mexico, 2.6 million are from elsewhere in Latin America, 1.3 million from Asia, 500,000 from Europe and Canada, and 400,000 from Africa and other nations. Illinois is home to between 425,000 and 625,000 undocumented immigrants, according to Pew.¹⁰

The immigrant population in the US and in Illinois thus breaks roughly into thirds: more than 1/3 naturalized citizens, less than 1/3 undocumented, the remaining 1/3 lawful permanent resident or with some other lawful status (such as refugee or asylee).

Children of immigrants¹¹

About 31 million Americans have at least one parent who is foreign-born, including 16.9 million children under 18 and 6.1 million under age 6. Minor children of immigrants make up at least 23.8% of the total population of minor children in the US, and 25.2% of the total population of children under age 6. Between 2000 and 2009, the number of children of immigrants under 6 grew by 37.2 percent nationally, from 4.5 to 6.1 million.

⁸ Louise Cainkar and Moushumi Beltangady, Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights, "The Changing Face of Illinois" (2002) (<http://www.icirr.org/publications/changingface.pdf>).

⁹ Office of Immigration Statistics, US Department of Homeland Security, "Estimates of the Unauthorized Immigrant Population Residing in the United States: January 2010" (February 2011) (http://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/statistics/publications/ois_ill_pe_2010.pdf).

¹⁰ Jeffrey Passel, Pew Hispanic Center, "Unauthorized Immigrant Population: National and State Trends, 2010" (February 1, 2011) (<http://pewhispanic.org/files/reports/133.pdf>).

¹¹ Migration Policy Institute, "The Second Generation in the United States" (October 2006) (<http://www.migrationinformation.org/USfocus/display.cfm?ID=446>); US Census Bureau, 2009 American Community Survey, Table [B05009. Age and Citizenship of Own Children Under 18 Years in Families and Subfamilies by Living Arrangements and Nativity of Parents - Universe: Own Children Under 18 Years in Families and Subfamilies](#); Jeffrey Passel, Pew Hispanic Center, "Unauthorized Immigrant Population: National and State Trends, 2010" (February 1, 2011) (<http://pewhispanic.org/files/reports/133.pdf>); Urban Institute, "Children of Immigrants: Facts and Figures" (May 2006) (<http://www.urban.org/url.cfm?ID=900955>); Urban Institute, "The Health and Well-Being of Young Children of Immigrants" (February 2005) (<http://www.urban.org/url.cfm?ID=311182>).

Approximately 86% of all children of immigrants under 18, and 95.6% of those under 6, were born in the US and are therefore citizens. Approximately 3.1 million US citizen minor children live in families with at least one undocumented parent or sibling. Twenty-nine percent of children of immigrants under 6 live in families with at least one undocumented parent.

Illinois is home to 777,000 minor children of immigrants, including 282,000 under age 6.

Approximately 90.5% of all Illinois children of immigrants, and 95.4% of those under 6, were born in the US and are therefore citizens.

	Share of children who are children of immigrants	Share of children under 6 who are children of immigrants
United States	23.8%	25.2%
Illinois	25.5%	27.5%
Metro Chicago*	31.6%	33.7%
Cook County	37.0%	38.4%
Chicago	36.6%	36.4%
Kane County	36.6%	42.1%
Elgin	62.2%	67.3%

* includes areas in Indiana and Wisconsin

Beyond the numbers

It is crucial to remember that immigrants and their children are not just numbers. **Each statistic represents a personal story**, in many cases involving personal struggle, separation from home and family, and adjustment to a new language, culture, and way of life. **Each statistic also represents a whole array of family and social connections** that link the immigrant not only with her present home but also with her native country. These networks are strong threads in the web of our increasingly globalized society. The ties that bind local communities in US to communities abroad make immigrants that much more important: the language skills, cultural sensitivity and diverse perspective that immigrants bring help us communicate with the rest of the world.

The choice is clear: As the share of immigrants among our nation’s population increases, do we try to isolate and reject them, or do we make the most of the gifts they bring us and bring them into the broader community?