

New Hampshire: Immigrant Entrepreneurs and Welcoming Initiatives in the Granite State

In New Hampshire, there is no doubt that immigrant entrepreneurs and innovators play an important role. Immigrant entrepreneurs bring in additional revenue, create jobs, and contribute significantly to the state's economy. Highly skilled immigrants are vital to the state's innovation industries, and to the metropolitan areas within the state, helping to boost local economies. Furthermore, local government, business, and non-profit leaders recognize the importance of immigrants in their communities and support immigration through local "welcoming" and integration initiatives.

Immigrant entrepreneurs contribute to New Hampshire's economy.

- From 2006 to 2010, there were 4,253 new immigrant business [owners](#) [1] in New Hampshire, and in 2010, [5.7 percent](#) [1] of all business owners in New Hampshire were foreign-born.
- In 2010, new immigrant business owners had a total net business [income](#) [1] of \$252 million, which is 5.8 percent of all net business income in the state.
- New Hampshire is home to many successful companies with at least one founder who was an immigrant or child of an immigrant, [including](#) [2] well-known companies such as the footwear company Timberland. Based in Stratham, Timberland currently employs more than 5,800 people and has over \$1.5 billion in annual revenue.

Highly skilled immigrants are vital to New Hampshire's innovation industries, which in turn helps lead American innovation and creates jobs.

- Immigrants contribute to New Hampshire's economic growth and competitiveness by earning degrees in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields from the state's research universities. In 2009, almost [30.6 percent](#) [2] of STEM graduates from the state's research-intensive universities were foreign-born, and almost 68.1 percent of graduates earning PhDs in engineering in New Hampshire were not born in the U.S.
- In 2011, the U.S. Department of Labor certified 1,067 H-1B labor certification [applications](#) [3] in New Hampshire, with an average annual wage of \$67,810, which is higher than both New Hampshire's median household [income](#) [4] of \$64,925 and its per capita income of \$32,758.
- An [expansion](#) [5] of the high-skilled visa program would create an estimated 2,000 new jobs in New Hampshire by 2020. By 2045, this expansion would [add](#) [5] around \$717 million to Gross State Product and increase personal income by more than \$706 million. The following is an [example](#) [6] of metropolitan area demand for high-skilled foreign-born workers:
 - The Manchester-Nashua metropolitan area had 462 H-1B high-skilled visa [requests](#) [7] in 2010-2011, with 63.1 percent of H-1B visa-holders working in STEM occupations. A major employer with a need for H-1B high-skilled workers includes the Universal Software Corporation.

While the numbers are compelling, they don't tell the whole story.

- Sonny Vu, originally from Vietnam, and Sridhar Iyengar, the son of immigrants from India, [founded](#) [8] AgaMatrix in 2001. Based in Salem, New Hampshire, their [company](#) [9] distributes what Vu and Iyengar call the "next generation" of blood glucose monitoring

products for diabetes. AgaMatrix invented and in 2012 began producing the [first](#) [10] FDA approved blood glucose meter that directly connects to the iPhone and iPod Touch.

- Immigrant entrepreneurs not only contribute to large innovative companies, but to small business formation in local communities. In towns across New Hampshire, immigrant family-owned small businesses contribute to the vitality of their local communities. Although initially aimed at other immigrant customers, many businesses quickly see an expansion of their clientele to include a diverse array of immigrant and native-born customers alike.
- In Manchester, refugees from Bhutan [opened](#) [11] a market in July 2013. Himalayas General Store provides familiar products from Bhutan to refugees, but also markets a wider variety of goods to other under-served ethnic groups.
- Also in Manchester, Fernando Hilarion, originally from Colombia, started Two Guys Food Market on Union Street with his wife Alba Lucia Hilarion. The store caters to a wide range of immigrants.
 - Hilarion noted that different people from different places have different tastes when it comes to food, and that opens up a broader market for their food products. Also, Two Guys Food Market is part of a city [effort](#) [12] to encourage healthy food sales in under-served neighborhoods.

In New Hampshire, some localities have begun recognizing and supporting immigration through local “welcoming” and integration initiatives.

- Based in Manchester, **Welcoming New Hampshire**, an affiliate of [Welcoming America](#) [13], [seeks to](#) [14] bring newcomers and the native-born together “to achieve a positive integration of immigrants and refugees into the social fabric of their recipient communities.”
- Welcoming New Hampshire works to meet its [goals](#) [14] by conducting “education and cultural activities directed mainly to non-immigrant audiences” with the intention “to build a sensible understanding of the immigrant community that will lead to acceptance and undermine the anti-immigrant sentiment that has been spread throughout the country by divisive parties.”
- In 2012, the Governor of New Hampshire [issued](#) [14] a commendation to the leaders of Welcoming New Hampshire, recognizing their work to encourage communities in which the native-born and immigrants are welcoming of one another.

Immigrant Entrepreneurs in:

New Hampshire

*In 2010, new immigrant
business owners generated*

**\$250
million**

*in total net
business income*



5.7%

*of business owners in
New Hampshire are
immigrants*

[Read more at ImmigrationPolicy.org](http://ImmigrationPolicy.org)



4,253

*immigrants became new business
owners in New Hampshire
between 2006-2010*

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Links:

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- [2] <http://www.maptheimpact.org/state/new-hampshire/>
- [3] http://www.foreignlaborcert.doleta.gov/pdf/2011AR_FINAL.pdf
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