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

Immigrants, Latinos, and Asians account for large and growing shares of the economy and electorate in the swing state of Colorado. Nearly 1 in 10 Coloradans is an immigrant (foreign-born), and 1 in 5 is Latino. Nearly one-third of immigrants in Colorado are naturalized U.S. citizens who are eligible to vote. “New Americans”—immigrants and the children of immigrants—account for 5.9% of all registered voters in the state. Moreover, Latinos and Asians (both foreign-born and native-born) wield \$26.9 billion in consumer purchasing power. At last count, businesses owned by Latinos and Asians had sales and receipts of \$10 billion and employed more than 65,000 people. Immigrant, Latino, and Asian workers, consumers, and entrepreneurs are integral to Colorado’s economy and tax base—and they are an electoral force with which every politician must reckon.

Immigrants and their children are growing shares of Colorado’s population and electorate.

- **The foreign-born share** of Colorado’s population rose from 4.3% in [1990](#),¹ to 8.6% in [2000](#),² to 9.8% in [2010](#),³ according to the U.S. Census Bureau. Colorado was home to 497,105 immigrants in [2010](#),⁴ which is more than the total population of [Sacramento, California](#).⁵
- **35.7% of immigrants (or 177,346 people) in Colorado were naturalized U.S. citizens in [2010](#)**⁶—meaning that they are eligible to vote.
- **5.9% (or 143,765) of all registered voters** in Colorado 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

1 in 5 Coloradans are Latino—and they vote.

- **The Latino share of Colorado’s population** grew from 12.9% in [1990](#),⁸ to 17.1% in [2000](#),⁹ to 20.8% (or 1.1 million people) in [2010](#).¹⁰ **The Asian share of the population** grew from 1.7% in [1990](#),¹¹ to 2.2% in [2000](#),¹² to 2.6% (or 131,276 people) in [2010](#),¹³ according to the U.S. Census Bureau.
- **Latinos comprised 8.4% (or 195,000) of Colorado voters in the 2008 elections, and Asians 2.1% (or 48,000)**, according to the [U.S. Census Bureau](#).¹⁴ The number of Latino and Asian voters exceeds the margin of victory ([214,987 votes](#)) by which Barack Obama defeated John McCain.¹⁵

- In Colorado, **87% of children with immigrant parents were U.S. citizens** in [2009](#), according to data from the Urban Institute.¹⁶
- In [2009](#), **90.5% of children in Asian families** in Colorado were U.S. citizens, as were **92.6% of children in Latino families**.¹⁷

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

- **The 2009 purchasing power of Colorado's Latinos totaled \$21.9 billion**—an increase of 456.8% since 1990. **Asian buying power totaled \$5 billion**—an increase of 557.1% since 1990, according to the [Selig Center for Economic Growth](#) at the University of Georgia.¹⁸
- Colorado's 33,762 **Latino-owned** businesses had sales and receipts of **\$6.6 billion and employed 37,629 people** in 2007, the last year for which data is available.¹⁹ The state's 14,482 **Asian-owned** businesses had sales and receipts of **\$3.4 billion and employed 27,393 people** in 2007, according to the U.S. Census Bureau's Survey of Business Owners.²⁰

Immigrants are integral to Colorado's economy as workers.

- Immigrants comprised **11.7% of the state's workforce** in [2010](#) (or 322,253 workers), according to the U.S. Census Bureau.²¹
- **Immigrants accounted for 10% of total economic output** in the Denver metropolitan area as of 2007, according to a study by the [Fiscal Policy Institute](#).²²
- Unauthorized immigrants comprised **4.6% of the state's workforce** (or 120,000 workers) in [2010](#), according to a report by the Pew Hispanic Center.²³
- If all unauthorized immigrants were removed from Colorado, **the state would lose \$8 billion in economic activity, \$3.6 billion in gross state product, and approximately 39,738 jobs**, even accounting for adequate market adjustment time, according to a report by the [Perryman Group](#).²⁴

Unauthorized immigrants pay taxes.

- Unauthorized immigrants in Colorado paid **\$167.5 million** in state and local taxes in [2010](#), according to data from the Institute for Taxation and Economic Policy,²⁵ which includes:
 - \$30.9 million in state income taxes.
 - \$22 million in property taxes.
 - \$114.6 million in sales taxes.
- **Colorado employers paid between \$12 million and \$15 million in unemployment insurance taxes** to the state on behalf of unauthorized workers in 2005, according to a [study](#) by the Bell Policy Center. Unauthorized workers are prohibited by state law from collecting unemployment insurance benefits.²⁶

Immigrants are integral to Colorado's economy as students.

- Colorado's 6,980 **foreign students contributed \$202.1 million** to the state's economy in tuition, fees, and living expenses for the 2009-2010 academic year, according to [NAFSA: Association of International Educators](#).²⁷

Naturalized citizens excel educationally.

- In Colorado, **34.5% of foreign-born persons** who were naturalized U.S. citizens in [2009 had a bachelor's or higher degree](#), compared to 18.4% of noncitizens. At the same time, only 19.4% of naturalized citizens lacked a high-school diploma, compared to 49.9% of noncitizens.²⁸
- The number of immigrants in Colorado with a college degree **increased by 45.8%** between 2000 and 2009, according to [data](#) from the Migration Policy Institute.²⁹
- In Colorado, **78.8% of children with immigrant parents** were considered "English proficient" as of [2009](#), according to data from the Urban Institute.³⁰
- The English proficiency rate among **Asian children in Colorado was 88.2%**, while for **Latino children it was 85.9%**, as of [2009](#).³¹

Endnotes

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

² Ibid.

³ 2008 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 2008 Current Population Survey, [Table 4b: Reported Voting and Registration of the Voting-Age Population, by Sex, Race and Hispanic Origin, for States: November 2008](#).

¹⁵ U.S. Electoral College, [2008 Presidential Election: Popular Vote Totals](#).

¹⁶ [The Urban Institute](#), data from the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series datasets drawn from the 2005 - 2009 American Community Survey.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Jeffrey M. Humphreys, [The Multicultural Economy 2009](#) (Athens, GA: Selig Center for Economic Growth, University of Georgia, 2009).

¹⁹ U.S. Census Bureau, [Estimates of Business Ownership by Gender, Ethnicity, Race, and Veteran Status: 2007](#), June, 2011.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ 2010 American Community Survey (1-Year Estimates).

²² David Dyssegaard Kallick, [Immigrants in the Economy: Contribution of Immigrant Workers to the Country's 25 Largest Metropolitan Areas](#) (New York, NY: Fiscal Policy Institute, December 2009), p. 11.

²³ Jeffrey S. Passel and D'Vera Cohn, [Unauthorized Immigrant Population: National and State Trends, 2010](#) (Washington, DC: Pew Hispanic Center, February 1, 2011).

²⁴ 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).

²⁵ The Immigration Policy Center, [Unauthorized Immigrants Pay Taxes, Too](#) (Washington, DC: April 2011).

²⁶ Robin Baker and Rich Jones, [State and Local Taxes Paid in Colorado by Undocumented Immigrants](#) (Denver, CO: The Bell Policy Center, 2006).

²⁷ NAFSA: 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: NAFSA: Association of International Educators, 2010).

²⁸ Migration Policy Institute Data Hub, [Colorado: Language & Education](#).

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ [The Urban Institute](#), data from the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series datasets drawn from the 2005 - 2009 American Community Survey.

³¹ Ibid.