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**NEW AMERICANS IN NEW MEXICO:
The Political and Economic Power of Immigrants, Latinos, and Asians
in the Land of Enchantment State**

Immigrants, Latinos, and Asians account for growing shares of the economy and electorate in New Mexico. Immigrants (the foreign-born) make up nearly 1 in 10 New Mexicans, 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 8.7% of registered voters in the state. Immigrants are not only integral to the state’s economy as workers, but also account for billions of dollars in tax revenue and consumer purchasing power. Moreover, Latinos and Asians (both foreign-born and native-born) wield \$21.3 billion in consumer purchasing power, and the businesses they own had sales and receipts of \$7.6 billion and employed more than 60,000 people at last count. At a time when the economy is in a slump, New Mexico 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 New Mexico’s population and electorate.

- **The foreign-born share** of New Mexico’s population rose from 5.3% in [1990](#),¹ to 8.2% in [2000](#),² to 9.9% in [2010](#),³ according to the U.S. Census Bureau. New Mexico was home to 205,141 immigrants in [2010](#),⁴ which is nearly the total population of [Montgomery, Alabama](#).⁵
- **33.9% of immigrants (or 69,511 people) in New Mexico were naturalized U.S. citizens in [2010](#)**⁶—meaning that they are eligible to vote.
- **8.7% (or 81,494) of registered voters** in New Mexico 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

Nearly half of all New Mexicans are Latino or Asian.

- The **Latino share of New Mexico’s population** grew from 38.2% in [1990](#),⁸ to 42.1% in [2000](#),⁹ to 46.4% (or 958,592 people) in [2010](#).¹⁰ The **Asian share of the population** grew from 0.9% in [1990](#),¹¹ to 1.1% in [2000](#),¹² to 1.2% (or 24,791 people) in [2010](#),¹³ according to the U.S. Census Bureau.
- **Latinos accounted for 34.2%** (or 289,000) **of New Mexico voters** in the 2008 elections, and **Asians 1.7%** (14,000), according to the [U.S. Census Bureau](#).¹⁴ The number of Latino and Asian voters was more than double the margin of victory ([125,590 votes](#)) by which Barack Obama defeated John McCain in New Mexico.

- In New Mexico, **85.2% of children with immigrant parents were U.S. citizens** in [2009](#), according to data from the Urban Institute.¹⁵
- In [2009](#), **90.7% of children in Asian families** in New Mexico were U.S. citizens, as were **94.7% of children in Latino families**.¹⁶

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

- **The 2010 purchasing power of Latinos in New Mexico totaled \$20 billion**—an increase of 305.2% since 1990. **Asian buying power totaled \$1.3 billion**—an increase of 607.1% since 1990, according to the [Selig Center for Economic Growth](#) at the University of Georgia.¹⁷
- New Mexico's 37,195 **Latino-owned businesses had sales and receipts of \$6.5 billion and employed 50,021 people** in 2007, the last year for which data is available.¹⁸ The state's 3,321 **Asian-owned businesses had sales and receipts of \$1.1 billion and employed 10,739 people** in 2007, according to the U.S. Census Bureau's Survey of Business Owners.¹⁹

Immigrants are integral to New Mexico's economy as workers and taxpayers.

- Immigrants comprised **12.2% of the state's workforce** in [2010](#) (or 118,037 workers), according to the U.S. Census Bureau.²⁰
- Unauthorized immigrants in New Mexico paid **\$101.5 million** in state and local taxes in [2010](#), according to data from the Institute for Taxation and Economic Policy,²¹ which includes:
 - \$8.7 million in state income taxes.
 - \$8.7 million in property taxes.
 - \$84.2 million in sales taxes.
- Unauthorized immigrants comprised roughly **5.6% of the state's workforce** (or 50,000 workers) in [2010](#), according to a report by the Pew Hispanic Center.²²
- If all unauthorized immigrants were removed from New Mexico, **the state would lose \$1.8 billion in economic activity, \$809.1 million in gross state product, and approximately 12,239 jobs**, even accounting for adequate market adjustment time, according to a report by the [Perryman Group](#).²³

Immigrants are integral to New Mexico's economy as students.

- New Mexico's 2,898 **foreign students contributed \$57.9 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](#).²⁴

Naturalized citizens excel educationally.

- In New Mexico, **21.5% of foreign-born persons** who were naturalized U.S. citizens in [2009](#) **had a bachelor's or higher degree**, compared to 11.5% of noncitizens.

- The number of immigrants in New Mexico with a college degree **increased by 53.9%** between 2000 and 2009, according to [data](#) from the Migration Policy Institute.²⁵
- In New Mexico, **79% of children with immigrant parents** were considered “English proficient” as of [2009](#), according to data from the Urban Institute.²⁶
- The English proficiency rate among **Asian children in New Mexico was 88.1%**, while for **Latino children it was 91.1%**, as of [2009](#).²⁷

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 U.S. Census Bureau, [2008 Annual Estimates of the Resident Population for Counties](#), May 13, 2009.

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

¹⁵ [The Urban Institute](#), data from the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series datasets drawn from the 2005 - 2009 American Community Survey.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Jeffrey M. Humphreys, [The Multicultural Economy 2010](#) (Athens, GA: Selig Center for Economic Growth, University of Georgia, 2010).

¹⁸ U.S. Census Bureau, [Estimates of Business Ownership by Gender, Ethnicity, Race, and Veteran Status: 2007](#), June, 2011.

¹⁹ Ibid.

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

²¹ The Immigration Policy Center, [Unauthorized Immigrants Pay Taxes, Too](#) (Washington, DC: April 2011).

²² 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.

²³ 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.

²⁴ 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).

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ [The Urban Institute](#), data from the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series datasets drawn from the 2005 - 2009 American Community Survey.

²⁷ Ibid.