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

Immigrants, Latinos, and Asians account for large and growing shares of the economy and population in the electoral swing state of Ohio. Immigrants (the foreign-born) make up 4.1% of the state's population, and almost half of them are naturalized U.S. citizens eligible to vote. "New Americans"—immigrants and the children of immigrants—account for 3.1% of all registered voters in the state. Latinos and Asians (both foreign-born and native-born) account for nearly 1 in 20 Ohioans and wield \$15 billion in consumer purchasing power. At last count, businesses owned by Latinos and Asians had sales and receipts of \$9.1 billion and employed more than 63,000 people. Ohio is also home to the nation's second largest Somali population, whose many businesses contribute to the state's economy. At a time of budget deficits and high unemployment, Ohio can ill-afford to alienate such an important component of its labor force, tax base, and business community.

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

- **The foreign-born share** of Ohio's population rose from 2.4% in [1990](#),¹ to 3.0% in [2000](#),² to 4.1% in [2010](#),³ according to the U.S. Census Bureau. Ohio was home to 469,748 immigrants in [2010](#),⁴ which is more than the total population of [Atlanta, Georgia](#).⁵
- **48.8% of immigrants (or 229,049 people) in Ohio were naturalized U.S. citizens in [2010](#)**⁶—meaning that they are eligible to vote.
- **3.1% (or 189,363) of all registered voters** in Ohio are "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 analysis of 2008 Census Bureau by [Rob Paral & Associates](#).⁷

Nearly 1 in 20 Ohioans are Latino or Asian.

- The **Latino share of Ohio's population** grew from 1.3% in [1990](#),⁸ to 1.9% in [2000](#),⁹ to 3.1% (or 357,622 people) in [2010](#).¹⁰ The **Asian share of the population** grew from 0.8% in [1990](#),¹¹ to 1.2% in [2000](#),¹² to 1.7% (or 196,115 people) in [2010](#),¹³ according to the U.S. Census Bureau.
- **Latinos comprised 1.3% (or 74,000) of Ohio voters** in the 2008 elections, and **Asians just under 1% (or 51,000)**, according to the [U.S. Census Bureau](#).¹⁴ Although the numbers of Latino and Asian voters were relatively small, they were equivalent to nearly half of the narrow margin of victory ([258,897 votes](#)) by which Barack Obama won this key battleground state.¹⁵

- In Ohio, **4 in 5 (or 84% of) children with immigrant parents were U.S. citizens** in [2007](#),¹⁶ according to the Center for Social and Demographic Analysis at the University of Albany.
- In Ohio, **85.3% of children with immigrant parents were U.S. citizens** in [2009](#), according to data from the Urban Institute.¹⁷
- In [2009](#), **85.1% of children in Asian families** in Ohio were U.S. citizens, as were **94% of children in Latino families**.¹⁸

Franklin County is home to roughly a quarter of Ohio's foreign-born population—especially the Somali refugee community—and they contribute to the state's political and economic landscape.

- **The share of Franklin County's foreign-born population** increased from 3.4% in [1990](#),¹⁹ to 6.0% in [2000](#),²⁰ to 9.6% (or 111,686 people) in [2010](#),²¹ according to the U.S. Census Bureau.
- **Columbus, Ohio, ranked 2nd in percent of new foreign-born residents** (those who came to the United States since 2000) compared to other major metropolitan areas, according to a study by [Community Research Partners](#).²²
- The Somali Community Access Network estimates that Central Ohio was home to **more than 45,000 Somali Americans** in [2009](#)—making it the second largest Somali population in the United States; second only to Minneapolis, Minnesota.²³
- Somalis own **more than 400 small businesses** in Columbus, Ohio, which contribute revenue to the local economy.²⁴
- Somali community leaders estimate that as **much as 30% of the Somali population** in Central Ohio (roughly 14,000 people) has now gained U.S. citizenship—and they vote, according to [news reports](#).²⁵

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

- **The 2010 purchasing power of Ohio's Latinos totaled \$7.7 billion**—an increase of 394.9% since 1990. **Asian buying power totaled \$7.3 billion**—an increase of 292.7% since 1990, according to the [Selig Center for Economic Growth](#) at the University of Georgia.²⁶
- Ohio's 18,198 **Asian-owned businesses had sales and receipts of \$6.8 billion and employed 51,478 people** in 2007, the last year for which data is available.²⁷ The state's 9,722 **Latino-owned businesses had sales and receipts of \$2.3 billion and employed 11,562 people** in 2007, according to the U.S. Census Bureau's Survey of Business Owners.²⁸

Immigrants are essential to Ohio's economy as workers and taxpayers.

- Immigrants comprised **4.7 % of the state's workforce** in [2010](#) (or 277,781 workers), according to the U.S. Census Bureau.²⁹
- Unauthorized immigrants comprised **1.2% of the state's workforce** (or 70,000 workers) in [2010](#), according to a report by the Pew Hispanic Center.³⁰

- Immigrants accounted for **7% of total economic output** in the Cleveland metropolitan area and **5% of economic output** in the Cincinnati metropolitan area as of 2007, according to a study by the [Fiscal Policy Institute](#).³¹
- If all unauthorized immigrants were removed from Ohio, **the state would lose \$4.0 billion in economic activity, \$1.8 billion in gross state product, and approximately 25,019 jobs**, even accounting for adequate market adjustment time, according to a report by the [Perryman Group](#).³²

Unauthorized immigrants pay taxes.

- Unauthorized immigrants in Ohio paid **\$103.9 million** in state and local taxes in **2010**, according to data from the Institute for Taxation and Economic Policy,³³ which includes:
 - \$7.5 million in property taxes.
 - \$71.3 million in sales taxes.
 - \$25.1 million in personal income tax

Immigrants are integral to Ohio's economy as students.

- Ohio's **22,370 foreign students contributed \$583.9 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](#).³⁴

Immigrants in Ohio excel educationally.

- The number of immigrants in Ohio with a college degree **increased by 31.5% between 2000 and 2009**, according to [data](#) from the Migration Policy Institute.³⁵
- **38.6% of Ohio's foreign-born population age 25 and older had a bachelor's or higher degree in 2009**, compared to 23.4% of native-born persons age 25 and older.³⁶
- In Ohio, **87.1% of children with immigrant parents** were considered "English proficient" as of **2009**, according to data from the Urban Institute.³⁷
- The English proficiency rate among **Asian children in Ohio was 88.7%**, while for **Latino children it was 87.8%**, as of **2009**.³⁸

Endnotes

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

² Ibid.

³ 2009 American Community Survey (1-Year Estimates).

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Immigration Policy Center, [The New American Electorate: The Growing Power of Immigrants and their Children](#) (Washington, DC: American Immigration Council, October 2010), p. 22.

⁸ U.S. Census Bureau, [The Hispanic Population: 2000](#), May 2001.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ 2009 American Community Survey (1-Year Estimates).

¹¹ U.S. Census Bureau, [The Asian Population: 2000](#), February 2002.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ 2009 American Community Survey (1-Year Estimates).

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- 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 Center for Social and Demographic Analysis, [*Children in Immigrant Families in Ohio*](#) (Albany, NY: University of Albany, SUNY, September 2009).
- ¹⁷ [The Urban Institute](#), data from the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series datasets drawn from the 2005-2009 American Community Survey.
- ¹⁸ Ibid.
- ¹⁹ U.S. Census Bureau, [*Franklin County Estimates*](#), 1990.
- ²⁰ U.S. Census Bureau, [*Franklin County Estimates*](#), 2000.
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- ²² Community Research Partners, [*Benchmarking Central Ohio 2009*](#) (Columbus, OH: Community Research Partners, March 2009).
- ²³ Jibril Hirsi, "[The Somali Community is a Promising Economic Powerhouse in Ohio Source](#)," *SomaliCAN Outreach Newsletter*, August 2009.
- ²⁴ Ibid.
- ²⁵ Tom Bergerding, "[Columbus Somalis Gain U.S. Citizenship, Head For The Polls](#)," WOSU News, October 29, 2008.
- ²⁶ Jeffrey M. Humphreys, [*The Multicultural Economy 2010*](#) (Athens, GA: Selig Center for Economic Growth, University of Arkansas, August 2010).
- ²⁷ U.S. Census Bureau, [*2007 Survey of Business Owners*](#), Statistics for All U.S. Firms by Geographic Area, Industry, Gender, Ethnicity, and Race: 2007.
- ²⁸ Ibid.
- ²⁹ 2009 American Community Survey (1-Year Estimates).
- ³⁰ 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.
- ³¹ 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.
- ³² 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).
- ³³ The Immigration Policy Center, [*Unauthorized Immigrants Pay Taxes, Too*](#) (Washington, DC: April 2011).
- ³⁴ 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).
- ³⁵ Migration Policy Institute Data Hub, [Ohio: Language & Education](#).
- ³⁶ Ibid.
- ³⁷ [The Urban Institute](#), data from the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series datasets drawn from the 2005-2009 American Community Survey.
- ³⁸ Ibid.