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**IMMIGRANTS
GROW OUR
COMMUNITIES:
THE IMPACT OF
IMMIGRANTS AND
IMMIGRATION IN
PENNSYLVANIA**

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Executive Summary

One of the most pressing issues facing Pennsylvanians in 2025 is the concerning decline in population size. As the median age surpasses the national average, labor shortages have worsened and the cost of living has increased, leaving residents across the Commonwealth in a state of professional and financial uncertainty. Although this decline and its consequences are dire, they present a unique opportunity for our elected leaders to take action on meaningful policies that will positively impact all residents. How we address this issue will have ripple effects for generations to come. It is thus imperative that we pursue humane, common-sense solutions that will transform the state landscape into a place where all are welcome and valued.

It has long been the case that immigrants are the economic engine of the nation, in many instances, quite literally building up the communities they reside in. This is also true for Pennsylvania, which has significantly benefited from immigration to the state over the last 20 years. As of 2024, there are 51.9 million foreign-born individuals living in the United States, according to the U.S. Census American Community Survey.¹ In Pennsylvania, the foreign-born population is just over one million people, with a count of 1,031,320 residents according to 2024 data.² Given their indispensable contributions and the state's current population decline, it is clear that Pennsylvania needs more immigrants. Here are the facts:

- 1. Pennsylvania's population is declining and aging. Immigration-driven growth in certain racial demographics has deterred the worst of the decline, but more immigration is needed given this trend.** The foreign-born population has an older population share³ of 15.9% and a workforce population⁴ share of 76.5%. In contrast, the Pennsylvania native-born population has a workforce population share of 58.3%.⁵ Population growth for foreign-born individuals increased by 60.5% from 2011-2021, far exceeding the state average of 0.6%⁶ and resulting in 277,061 new Pennsylvania residents. At the same time, the white population share declined by 5%.

¹ Geiger, A. (2025, August 21). *What the data says about immigrants in the U.S.* Pew Research Center. <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2025/08/21/key-findings-about-us-immigrants/>.

² U.S. Census Bureau. "Selected Population Profile in the United States." *American Community Survey, ACS 1-Year Estimates Selected Population Profiles, Table S0201*, <https://data.census.gov/table/ACSSPP1Y2024.S0201?q=foreign+born&g=040XX00US42>.

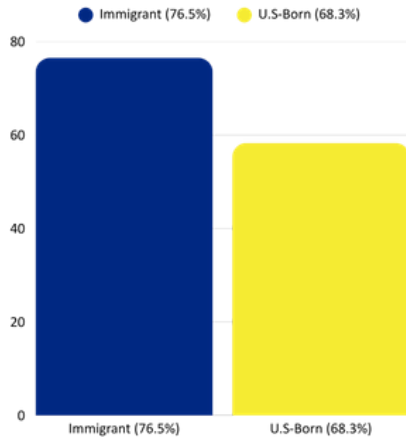
³ "Older population" is defined as 65 and older.

⁴ "Workforce population" defined as 18 to 64.

⁵ *State Demographics Data - PA*. (n.d.). *migrationpolicy.org*. <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/data/state-profiles/state/demographics/PA>

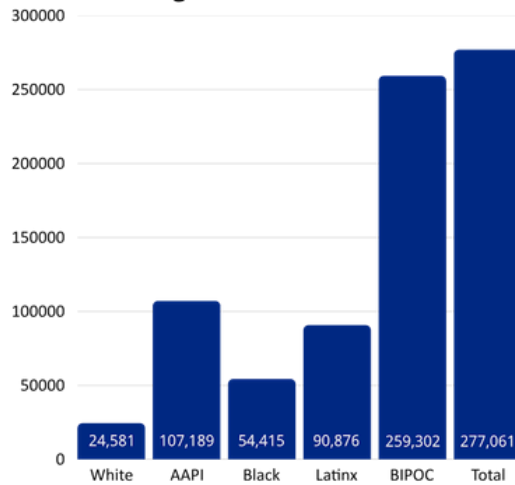
⁶ U.S. Census Bureau. (2013, 2023). *American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2009–2013 and 2019–2023*. U.S. Department of Commerce. Retrieved from <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs>

Workforce Population in Pennsylvania



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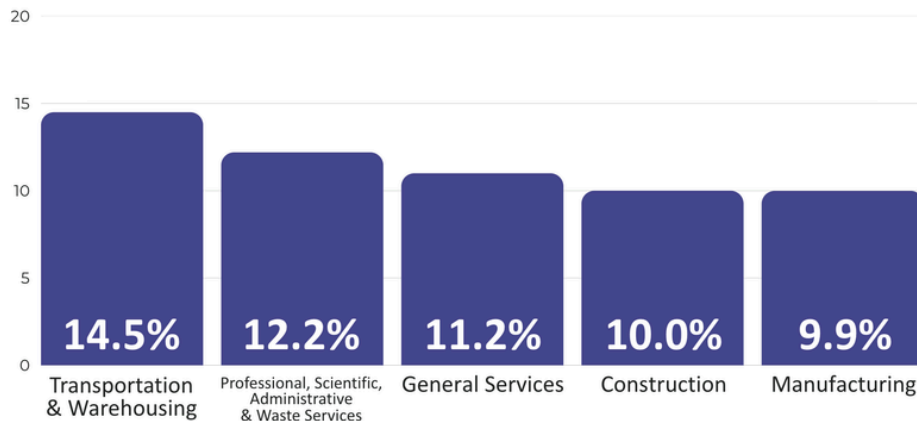
Immigrants Growth Since 2010



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2. Population decline is impacting every part of the state, especially rural areas. The Center for Rural Progress (CRP) reported that the population of Pennsylvania’s rural counties is projected to decline by 5.8% over the next 30 years, while the population of the state’s urban areas is projected to grow by 1.6%.⁹ The industries with a high representation of immigrant labor in Pennsylvania are transportation and warehousing; professional, scientific, administrative, and waste services; general services; construction; and manufacturing.¹⁰ Undocumented immigrants in particular helped Pennsylvania save \$6.4 billion in productivity loss in gross domestic product through their workforce participation in various sectors.¹¹

Immigrant Share of Workforce in Pennsylvania by Industry (2023)



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⁷ Lawful permanent residents and naturalized citizens. Data gathered from 2017-2021 ACS.

⁸ Pennsylvania Senate, Kopko, K. C., & Center for Rural Pennsylvania. (2021). *Pennsylvania Senate State Government Committee hearing*. <https://stategovernment.pasenategop.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/30/2021/05/CRP-Rural-Demographics-May-2021.pdf>

⁹ 2021 American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates; Data acquired with R and tidy census

¹⁰ Murtaza, M. M., Stephanie Frank, Kirstin Snow, Erica Freeman, Diana Polson, Claire Kovach, CASA, Make the Road PA, PICC, David Kallick, & New York Fiscal Policy Institute. (2021). *The economic contributions of Pennsylvania’s immigrants*.

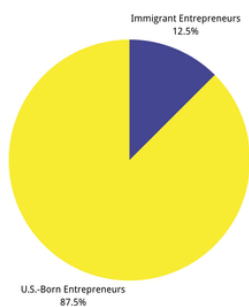
https://keystoneresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/20210516_ImmigrantContributionsReport.pdf

¹¹ *Take a look: How immigrants drive the economy in Pennsylvania*. (n.d.). American Immigration Council. <https://map.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/locations/pennsylvania/#>

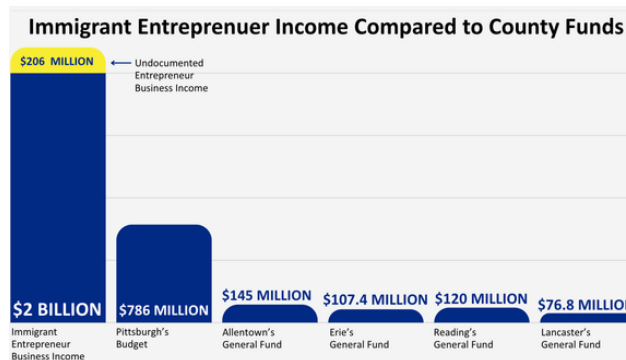
¹² *New Americans in Pennsylvania*. (2023). American Immigration Council. <https://map.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/locations/pennsylvania/#>

3. The state economy is dependent on immigrants as workers, taxpayers, consumers, and entrepreneurs. Immigrants in Pennsylvania had a spending power of \$35.9 billion and paid \$13.6 billion in taxes in 2023.¹³ Immigrants are also job creators, with 67,000 immigrant entrepreneurs generating \$2 billion in income in 2023.¹⁴ Put simply, the state will lose billions of dollars in revenue due to labor shortages and higher costs of goods and services without the growth of foreign-born workers.

Entrepreneurs in Pennsylvania (2023)



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4. Pennsylvania has one of the largest voting blocs of naturalized citizens in the country, and it will only keep growing. The needs of these voters must be centered. According to the New Partnership for New Americans (NPNA), “Since the last presidential election in November 2020, an estimated 96,155 people have become newly naturalized citizens in Pennsylvania.”¹⁷ As a whole, there are 614,120 naturalized citizens in Pennsylvania,¹⁸ which is nearly twice the amount in Pittsburgh, the second biggest city in the Commonwealth.

The bottom line is clear: to effectively address the increasing population decline, Pennsylvania must implement welcoming policies that attract immigrants. Welcoming policies like tuition equity, a teacher certification for individuals with DACA, and a doctor visa bill all have the potential to bring income into the state and generate revenue in the form of taxes. These initiatives can further fill critical labor shortages in teaching and medicine.

Immigrants will continue to play a critical role in elevating Pennsylvania as a leader in entrepreneurship and in economic revitalization. Policies that welcome immigrants—such as sanctuary city policies—not only help reduce crime for all Pennsylvania residents,¹⁹ but also result in increased economic development in cities struggling with economic stagnation. Welcoming policies can also ensure Pennsylvania remains competitive with other states. Without them, immigrants will continue to choose neighboring states like New Jersey or New York to live and work in, as these states already have many of these policies in place. Welcoming immigrants will ensure our state’s future success for generations to come.

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¹³New Americans in Pennsylvania. (2023). American Immigration Council. <https://map.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/locations/pennsylvania/#>

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵New Americans in Pennsylvania. (2023). American Immigration Council. <http://map.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/locations/pennsylvania/#>

¹⁶Ibid, County Budgets for Pittsburgh, Allentown, Erie, Reading, and Lancaster.

¹⁷NPNA. (2024, July). DEMOGRAPHICS of Newly Naturalized Citizens: Pennsylvania. National Partnership for New Americans. chrome-extension://efaidnbmninnibpcapjcgclcfndmkaj/https://newamericanvoters.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/NAV_Demographics_PA.pdf

¹⁸(2024 ACS 1-Year Data) U.S. Census Bureau. "Nativity and Citizenship Status in the United States." American Community Survey, ACS 1-Year Estimates Detailed Tables, Table B05001, <https://data.census.gov/table/ACSDT1Y2024.B05001?q=naturalized+citizens&g=040XX00US42>.

¹⁹Kortsha, M. (2022, August 25). Sanctuary practices lower counties' crime rates. UT News. <https://news.utexas.edu/2022/06/13/sanctuary-practices-lower-counties-crime-rates/#:~:text=Counties%20that%20don%27t%20cooperate,University%20of%20Texas%20at%20Austin>

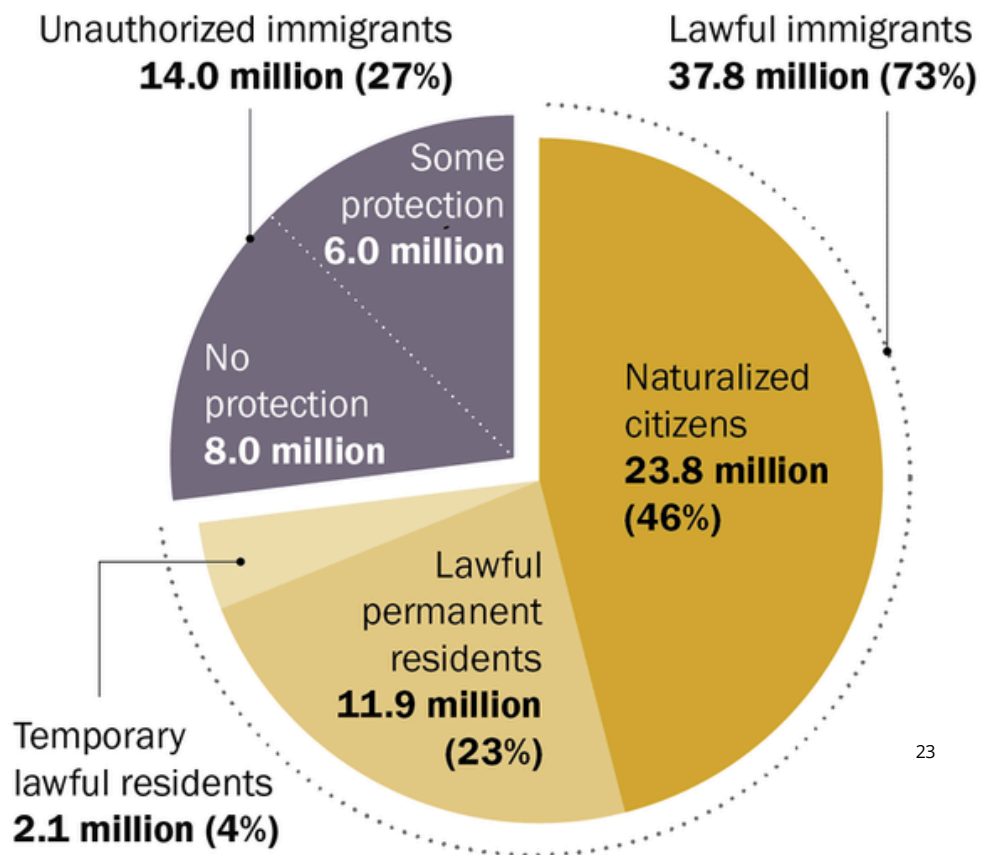
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National

Background: Who Are Immigrants?

Immigrants in the United States are individuals who were not born in the U.S. and are commonly referred to as foreign-born individuals. This group encompasses naturalized U.S. citizens, legal permanent residents (i.e., green card holders), refugees and asylees, people on certain temporary visas, and the undocumented. There were 51.9 million foreign-born individuals living in the United States in June 2025.²⁰ Immigrants in the U.S. primarily come from Mexico (22%), Asia (27%), Europe (10%), the Middle East and North Africa (4%), and Canada and Greater North America (2%).²¹ According to 2023 estimates by the Pew Research Center,²² 46% of all immigrants residing in the U.S. are naturalized citizens, 23% are lawful permanent residents, 4% are temporary lawful residents, and 27% are undocumented.



²⁰What the data says about immigrants in the U.S. (2025, August 21). Pew Research Center. <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2025/08/21/key-findings-about-us-immigrants/>

²¹ Ibid.

²² Passel, J., Krogstad, J., Mark, D., Lopez, H., & Ardit, E. (2025). U.S. Unauthorized Immigrant Population Reached a Record 14 Million in 2023. https://www.pewresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/20/2025/08/RE_2025.08.21_Unauthorized-Immigrants_REPORT.pdf

²³ Passel, Jeffrey, and Jens Manuel Krogstad. "U.S. Unauthorized Immigrant Population Reached a Record 14 Million in 2023." Pew Research Center. August 21, 2025.

Various immigration statuses are utilized throughout this paper to capture the wide spectrum of immigrants in the U.S. These distinctions are listed below and provide background on the limitations and affordances of these statuses, such as who can and cannot work legally and what additional barriers immigrants face due to immigration status.

Immigration Statuses

- **A naturalized citizen** “is [one who has gone through] the process by which U.S. citizenship is granted to a lawful permanent resident after meeting the requirements established by Congress in the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA).”²⁴ Naturalized citizens are the only foreign-born individuals who can vote in U.S. elections.
- **Lawful permanent residents** “are foreign nationals who have been granted the right to reside permanently in the United States. LPRs are often referred to simply as ‘immigrants,’ but they are also known as ‘permanent resident aliens,’ and ‘green card holders.’”²⁵
- **Temporary Protected Status (TPS)** is a designation from the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) that prohibits removal from the U.S. and allows the individual to apply for employment authorization. TPS is “granted due to conditions in the country that temporarily prevent the country’s nationals from returning safely, or in certain circumstances, where the country is unable to handle the return of its nationals adequately. USCIS may grant TPS to eligible nationals of certain countries (or parts of countries), who are already in the United States.”²⁶
- **An Asylum Petitioner** is a foreign-born individual seeking protection in the U.S. because they have suffered persecution or fear they will suffer persecution due to race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion. Applications for asylum may be filed only if one is physically present in the United States and not a U.S. citizen. After 180 days of asylum application, the applicant may apply for work authorization. A successful asylum application can lead to permanent residency.²⁷
- **A Refugee** is someone located outside of the United States who is of special humanitarian concern to the United States and who demonstrates that they were persecuted or fear persecution due to race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or membership in a particular social group. They are also not firmly resettled in another country, are admissible to the United States, and can begin working as soon as they arrive in the U.S.²⁸
- **Deferred Action Childhood Arrival (DACA)** is a designation from DHS for certain people who came to the United States as children and who meet several guidelines that allow them to request consideration of deferred action for a period of 2 years, subject to renewal. They are also eligible to request work authorization. Deferred action is an exercise of prosecutorial discretion to defer removal action against an individual for a certain period. Deferred action does not provide lawful status.²⁹ At the time this report was created, the legality of DACA was under review in federal court, and DHS was not taking new DACA applications.

²⁴ *Citizenship and Naturalization* | USCIS. (2020, July 5). USCIS.

<https://www.uscis.gov/citizenship/learn-about-citizenship/citizenship-and-naturalization>

²⁵ *Profiles on Lawful Permanent Residents* | Homeland Security. (n.d.). U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

<https://www.dhs.gov/ohss/topics/immigration/lpr/profiles>

²⁶ *Temporary Protected Status* | USCIS. (2024, February 8). USCIS. <https://www.uscis.gov/humanitarian/temporary-protected-status>

²⁷ *Asylum* | USCIS. (2024, February 12). USCIS. <https://www.uscis.gov/humanitarian/refugees-and-asylum/asylum>

²⁸ *Refugees* | USCIS. (2024, March 12). USCIS. <https://www.uscis.gov/humanitarian/refugees-and-asylum/refugees>

²⁹ *Consideration of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA)* | USCIS. (2023, September 18). USCIS.

<https://www.uscis.gov/DACA>

- **An Undocumented Immigrant** is an immigrant who resides in the United States without legal status.³⁰
- **A Student Visa Holder** is a foreign-born student who has been approved to study in the U.S. full-time. The most common visa type under this designation is the F1, which allows the individual to study at an accredited college, university, seminary, conservatory, academic high school, elementary school, or other academic institution or language training program that culminates in a degree, diploma, or certificate. The educational institution must be authorized by the U.S. government to accept international students.³¹
- **An HB1 Visa Holder** is a foreign-born individual who is granted employment authorization to “help employers who cannot otherwise obtain needed business skills and abilities from the U.S. workforce by authorizing the temporary employment of qualified individuals who are not otherwise authorized to work in the United States.”³²

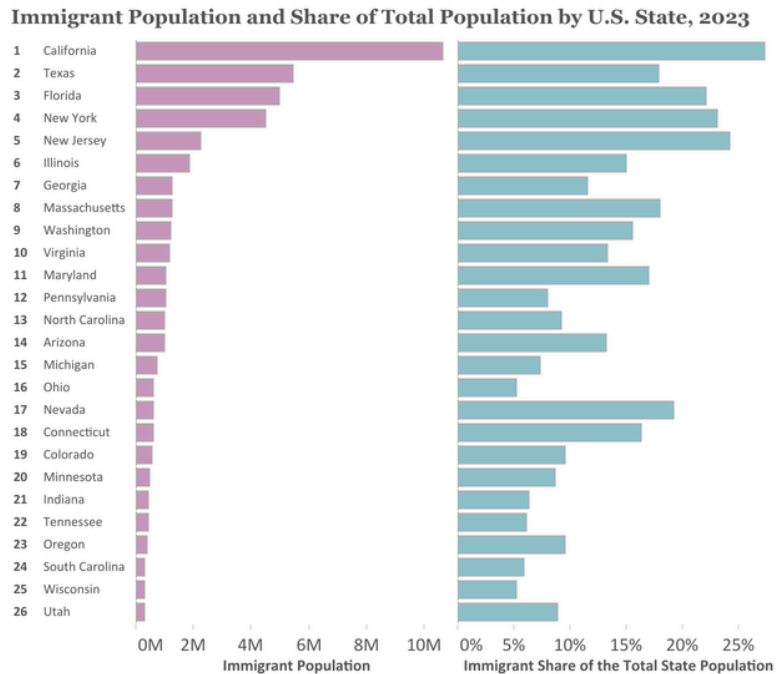
³⁰Defining undocumented. (n.d.). IMMIGRANTS RISING. <https://immigrantsrising.org/resource/defining-undocumented/>

³¹Students and Employment | USCIS. (2023, March 31). USCIS. <https://www.uscis.gov/working-in-the-united-states/students-and-exchange-visitors/students-and-employment>

³²H-1B program. (n.d.). DOL. <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/immigration/h1b>

Immigrant Population

Distribution of the immigrant population is widespread across the U.S. Of states with the fastest immigrant population growth, Pennsylvania ranks 7th in the nation.³³ Pennsylvania also ranks 12th among the top 20 states with the highest total immigrant population.³⁴



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Immigrants' Contributions to Population Growth

In March of 2024, the Wall Street Journal reported “the latest census figures have unveiled a promising trend for America’s largest metropolitan areas, showcasing a significant uptick in population growth driven by a 15% increase in immigration in 2023.”³⁶ According to the Brookings Institute, the U.S. is projected to lose nearly 100 million people between 2022 and 2100 if there were zero immigration in the U.S.—a projection driven by the current low birth rate and the existing death rate.³⁷

³³Batalova, J. B. J. (2024, March 22). Frequently Requested Statistics on Immigrants and Immigration in the. migrationpolicy.org. <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/frequently-requested-statistics-immigrants-and-immigration-united-states>

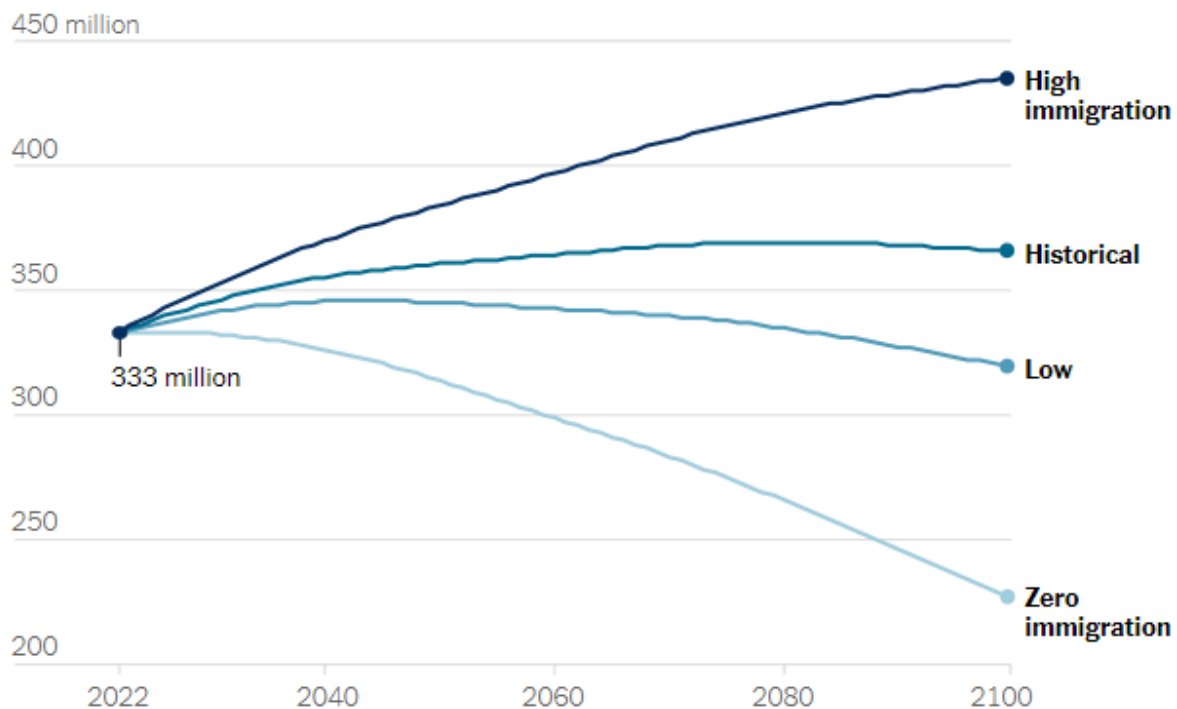
³⁴Immigrant population by state, 1990-Present. (2023, October 16). migrationpolicy.org. <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/programs/data-hub/charts/immigrant-population-state-1990-present?width=1000&height=850&iframe=true>

³⁵Migration Policy Institute (MPI) tabulation of data from U.S. Census Bureau, 2010-2023 American Community Surveys (ACS), and 1990 and 2000 Decennial Census.

³⁶Overberg, P., & Hackman, M. (2024, March 15). Immigration drove America’s postpandemic urban growth. Wall Street Journal. Retrieved March 22, 2024, from <https://www.wsj.com/us-news/us-census-immigration-population-growth-cities-db007d64>

³⁷Lopez, G. (2024, March 20). An American slowdown. The New York Times. <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/03/20/briefing/american-population-slowdown-immigration.html>

Projected U.S. population size by immigration scenarios



Source: William H. Frey, Brookings • By The New York Times

New York Times (2024)³⁸

Growing at less than 1%, U.S. population growth has been stagnant since 2009 and would be far lower if not for immigration.³⁹ An immediate negative consequence of population decline is labor shortages that in turn result in lower income taxes and less revenue for municipal budgets to fund critical services.⁴⁰ Labor shortages also typically result in a rise in inflation. Increased inflation and a smaller workforce especially affect the spending power of those who rely on social security income and the solvency of social security.⁴¹ In such cases, social security recipients find themselves in vulnerable situations, unable to afford the basic necessities to live.

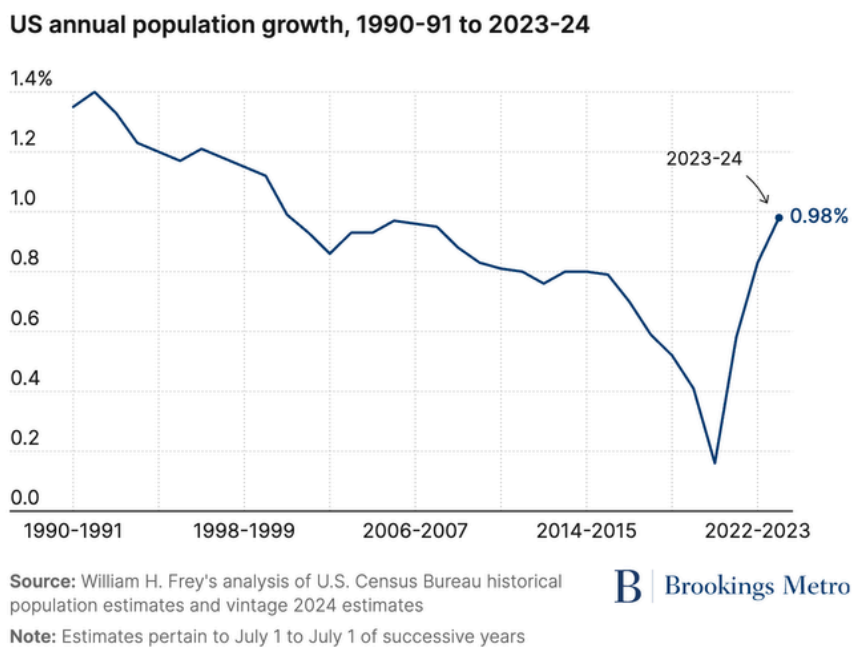
³⁸ *Ibid*

³⁹ Frey, W. H. (2023, January 4). *New census estimates show a tepid rise in U.S. population growth, buoyed by immigration*. Brookings. <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/new-census-estimates-show-a-tepid-rise-in-u-s-population-growth-buoyed-by-immigration/>

⁴⁰ Trusts, P. C. (2022, December 5). *The Long-Term decline in fertility—and what it means for state budgets*. The Pew Charitable Trusts. <https://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/issue-briefs/2022/12/the-long-term-decline-in-fertility-and-what-it-means-for-state-budgets>

⁴¹ *Inflation Is Making Social Security's Solvency Problem Worse*. (2022, October 13). Bipartisan Policy Center. Retrieved March 27, 2024, from <https://bipartisanpolicy.org/blog/inflation-solvency-problem/>

National immigration rates and the number of immigrants in the U.S. are greatly determined by policies set by the federal government. According to the Brookings Institute, immigration growth experienced a slowdown under President Trump due to restrictions put in place by the administration.⁴² Recent news suggests that recent mass deportations are already impacting U.S. population growth. In fact, the Congressional Budget Office’s projection of the 2035 population has already dropped by 4.5 million people since it was initially published in January 2025.⁴³ The graph below breaks down population growth from 1900 to 2023. However, local government policies also play a role in where immigrant communities ultimately settle and grow, which will be reviewed in-depth later in the report.



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Population in Rural and Suburban Areas

More than three-quarters (77%) of U.S. rural counties have fewer working-age people (ages 15 to 64) than 20 years ago.⁴⁵ Immigration has been shown to help reverse population loss in nearly two-thirds (62%) of rural counties nationwide and would ensure larger working-age populations in 2040 than in 2000 if just 100 new immigrants settled in these counties each year.⁴⁶ This share would rise to nearly three-quarters (71%) of counties if 200 new immigrants were welcomed each year.⁴⁷

⁴² Frey, W. H. (2023, January 4). New census estimates show a tepid rise in U.S. population growth, buoyed by immigration. Brookings. <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/new-census-estimates-show-a-tepid-rise-in-u-s-population-growth-buoyed-by-immigration/>.

⁴³ Groves, Stephen. "Trump's Immigration Policies to Slow US Growth, CBO Says." *AP News*, 10 Sept. 2025, apnews.com/article/trump-tax-bill-immigration-cbo-population-growth-82e63cade97b64849991c6b65232ce71.

⁴⁴ Frey, William H. "Growing Diverse and Immigrant Populations Drove the Nation's Post-Pandemic Demographic Rebound, New Census Data Show." *Brookings*, 31 July 2025, www.brookings.edu/articles/growing-diverse-and-immigrant-populations-drove-the-nations-post-pandemic-demographic-rebound-new-census-data-show/.

⁴⁵ Immigration can reverse rural population decline. (2023, August 22). FWD.us. <https://www.fwd.us/news/rural-decline/#citation1>

⁴⁶ *Ibid*

⁴⁷ *Ibid*

Immigrants and the Economy

According to the Department of Labor, in 2024 the foreign-born population accounted for 19.2% of the U.S. civilian labor force, up from 18.6% in 2023.⁴⁸ Of employed foreign-born men, the industry with the largest share of immigrant workers nationally was management, professional, and related occupations, with 22.7% of foreign-born men working in the industry as compared to 14.1% native-born workers.⁴⁹ In the service industry, 30.6% of the foreign-born women worked in this sector compared with 17.8% of native-born women.⁵⁰

In a 2023 interview with NPR, Zeke Hernandez, a professor at the University of Pennsylvania Wharton Business School, shared the following statistics regarding the share of immigrants in the labor force and their makeup in specific sectors. Immigrants are 18% of the national labor force, yet they constitute large portions of the following sectors:⁵¹

- **45% of workers in household services**
- **36% of workers in clothing manufacturing**
- **33% of workers in agriculture**
- **32% of workers in hospitality**
- **29% of workers in food production**
- **27% of workers in electronics manufacturing**

The Migration Policy Institute, an independent, nonpartisan think tank that seeks to improve immigration and integration policies, reported that specialized skilled foreign-born workers accounted for approximately 29% of physicians in the U.S. and 23.1% of direct care workers, including nursing assistants.⁵² The American Immigration Council further found 23.1% of all workers in STEM fields are foreign-born individuals.⁵³

⁴⁵ *Immigration can reverse rural population decline.* (2023, August 22). FWD.us. <https://www.fwd.us/news/rural-decline/#citation1>

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Bureau of Labor Statistics. "FOREIGN-BORN WORKERS: LABOR FORCE CHARACTERISTICS — 2024." U.S. Department of Labor, May 20, 2025.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ben-Achour, S., & Schroeder, A. (2023, December 19). What immigration actually does to jobs, wages and more. Marketplace. <https://www.marketplace.org/2023/12/12/what-immigration-actually-does-to-jobs-wages-and-more/>

⁵² Gelatt, J. (2020, October 29). Immigrant workers: vital to the U.S. COVID-19 response. migrationpolicy.org. <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/immigrant-workers-us-covid-19-response>

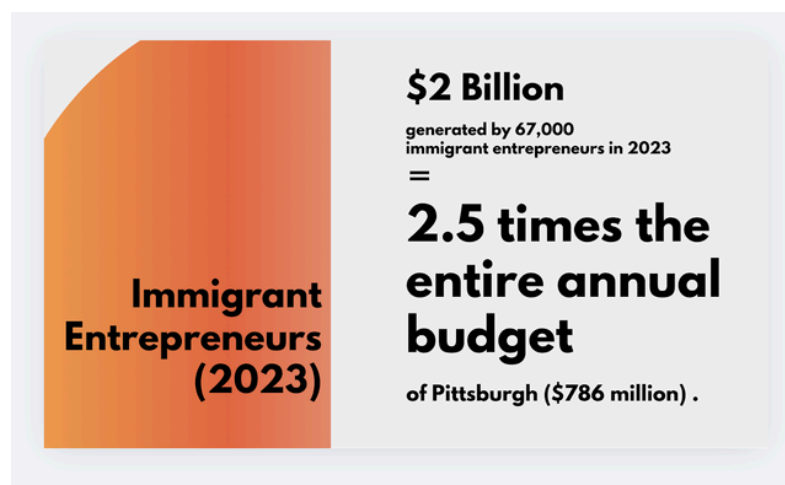
⁵³ Foreign-Born STEM workers in the United States. (2022, June). American Immigration Council. Retrieved March 22, 2024, from https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/sites/default/files/research/foreign-born_stem_workers_in_the_united_states_final_0.pdf

Diversity and Workforce Sustainability

Immigrants are racially diverse and comprise a higher percentage of adult-aged workers than native-born individuals. According to the American Immigration Council, foreign-born individuals are more likely to be working-age (16- to 64-year-olds) than their U.S.-born counterparts, with 77.5% of foreign-born individuals being working-age compared to 60.9% of native-born individuals.⁵⁴ From a diversity standpoint, almost half (48.7%) of the foreign-born labor force is Latino, while nearly one-quarter (24.6%) is Asian, 10.6% is Black, and 15% is White.⁵⁵

Entrepreneurship and Job Creation

According to the American Immigration Council, immigrants have a spending power of \$1.7 trillion (2023) and pay \$651.9 billion in annual state, local, and federal taxes.⁵⁶ Immigrants notably play a major role in entrepreneurship, accounting for 3.8 million business owners in the U.S.⁵⁷ Various studies found immigrants in the U.S. workforce to be substantial job creators with an 80% higher entrance rate into entrepreneurship compared to native-born individuals.⁵⁸ Contributions to the tech and patent sector for foreign-born individuals are also significant, as 36% of all patents produced in the U.S. are from immigrants,⁵⁹ 25% of all startup founders are immigrants,⁶⁰ and over 50% of all high-tech, high-growth startups that achieve a valuation of a billion dollars or more are from foreign-born immigrants.⁶¹



⁵⁴New Americans in Pennsylvania. (2023). American Immigration Council. <https://map.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/locations/pennsylvania/#>

⁵⁵Bureau of Labor Statistics. "FOREIGN-BORN WORKERS: LABOR FORCE CHARACTERISTICS — 2024 ." U.S. Department of Labor, May 20, 2025.

⁵⁶"Map the Impact: How Immigrants Drive the Economy in United States of America." American Immigration Council, 2023, map.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/locations/national/#.

⁵⁷Ibid.

⁵⁸Iacurci, G. (2024, March 2). Immigration is "taking pressure off" the job market and U.S. economy, expert says. CNBC. <https://www.cnn.com/2024/03/02/immigration-taking-pressure-off-the-job-market-us-economy-expert.html>

⁵⁹Anderson, S. (2023, January 16). Highly skilled immigrants drive U.S. innovation, report shows. Forbes.

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/stuartanderson/2023/01/12/highly-inventive-immigrants-also-make-natives-more-innovative/?sh=2b241963324b>

⁶⁰ Entrepreneurship: How immigration plays a critical role. (n.d.). New American Economy.

<https://www.newamericaneconomy.org/issues/entrepreneurship/#:~:text=Immigrants%20start%20more%20than%2025,1%20and%20high%20tech%20firms.>

⁶¹ Anderson, S. (2022, July 27). Most Billion-Dollar startups in the U.S. founded by immigrants. Forbes.

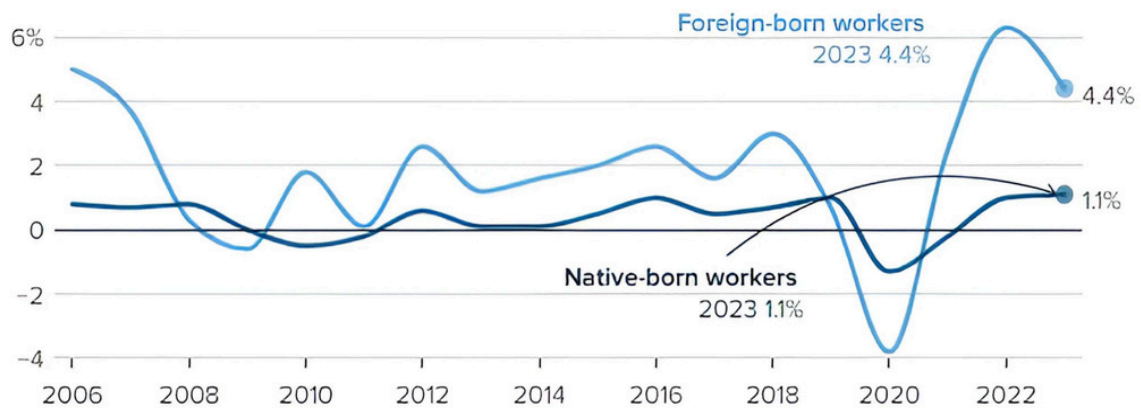
<https://www.forbes.com/sites/stuartanderson/2022/07/26/most-us-billion-dollar-startups-have-an-immigrant-founder/?sh=47285b366f3a>

Labor Shortage

According to the U.S. Department of Labor, the U.S. labor participation rate is 62.3%.⁶² Contrary to the false narrative of immigrants taking jobs, immigration can play a key role in increasing labor participation and reducing unemployment, given that immigrant workers take jobs in a variety of sectors as well as open new businesses.⁶³ Current immigration trends have demonstrated that immigrants have a higher percentage change in the number of workers entering the U.S. labor workforce, with native-born workers at 1.1% and foreign-born workers at 4.4%.⁶⁴

Foreign-born vs. Native-born workers from 2006 to 2023

Annual percent change of workers in the U.S. labor force.



Note: Data represents annual averages

Chart: Ana Teresa Solá

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and FRED



US Bureau of Labor Statistics and FRED (CNBC) ⁶⁵

The Congressional Budget Office estimates the U.S. labor force will grow by 5.2 million people from 2024 to 2034, largely due to an increase in immigration that began in 2022 and will continue through 2026.⁶⁶ As a result, gross domestic product will be \$8.9 trillion higher and federal revenues \$1.2 trillion larger than they would have been otherwise.⁶⁷

⁶²Bureau of Labor Statistics. "FOREIGN-BORN WORKERS: LABOR FORCE CHARACTERISTICS — 2024 ." U.S. Department of Labor, May 20, 2025.

⁶³Anderson, S. (2023b, May 23). *New immigration data point to larger U.S. workforce issues.* Forbes.

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/stuartanderson/2023/05/22/new-immigration-data-point-to-larger-us-workforce-issues/?sh=12da99061a91>

⁶⁴Iacurci, G. (2024c, March 2). *Immigration is "taking pressure off" the job market and U.S. economy, expert says.* CNBC.

<https://www.cnbc.com/2024/03/02/immigration-taking-pressure-off-the-job-market-us-economy-expert.html>

⁶⁵Ibid.

⁶⁶Swagel, Phill. "Director's Statement on the Budget and Economic Outlook for 2024 to 2034 | Congressional Budget Office." Congressional Budget Office (CBO), February 7, 2024, www.cbo.gov/publication/59933.

⁶⁷Ibid.

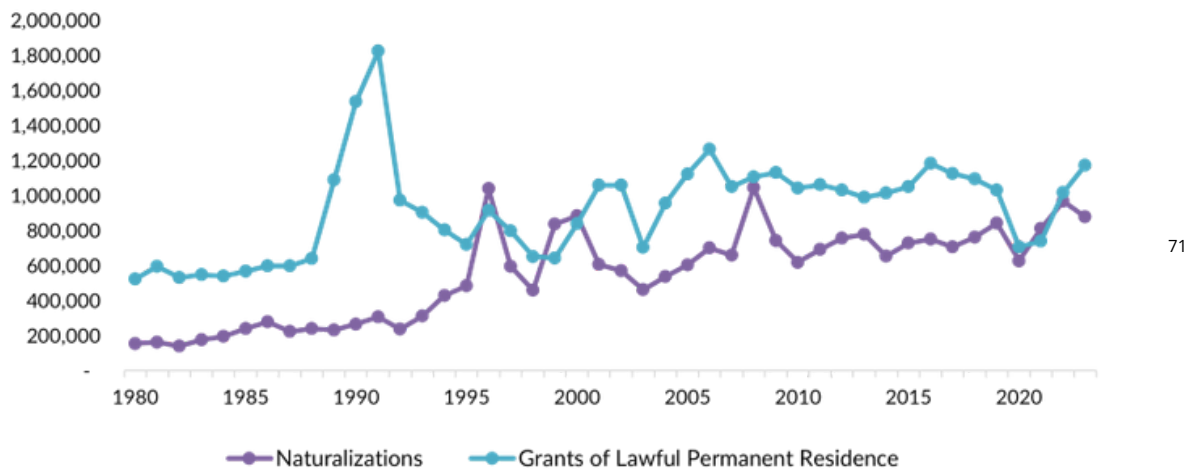
Immigrant Voting Power

Millions of naturalized citizens have substantial voting power in the United States:

- According to the Migration Policy Institute, there were 24.5 million naturalized U.S. citizens in 2022, making up 53% of the total immigrant population.⁶⁸
- In the fiscal year 2023, nearly 880,000 immigrants became U.S. citizens around the country.⁶⁹
- In Pennsylvania specifically, over 96,000 individuals have become naturalized citizens since the November 2020 presidential election.⁷⁰

This is important because, according to the Census Bureau, naturalized citizens' voter turnout is not far behind that of native-born individuals.

New Naturalizations and Grants of Lawful Permanent Residence, FY 1980-2023



⁶⁸Batalova, Jeanne, and Brandon Marrow. "Naturalization Trends in the United States." Migration Policy Institute, 10 July 2024, www.migrationpolicy.org/article/naturalization-trends-united-states.

⁶⁹*Ibid.*

⁷⁰"DEMOGRAPHICS of Newly Naturalized Citizens: Pennsylvania." National Partnership for New Americans, July 2024, newamericanvoters.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/NAV_Demographics_PA.pdf.

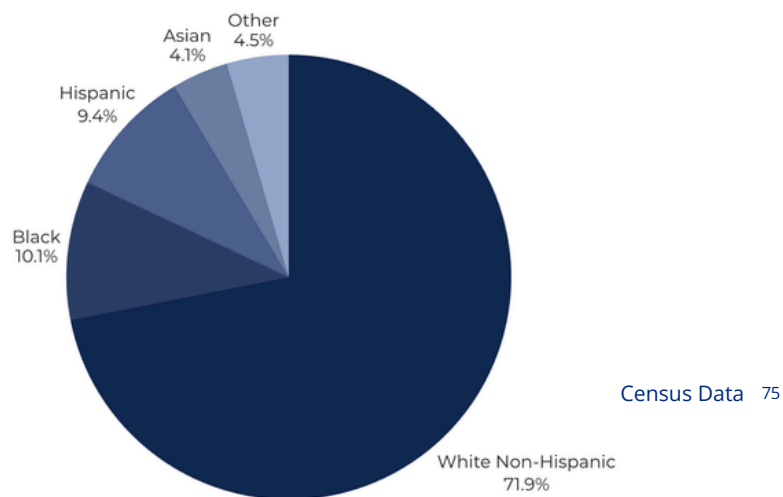
⁷¹Batalova, Jeanne, and Brandon Marrow. "Naturalization Trends in the United States." Migration Policy Institute, 10 July 2024, www.migrationpolicy.org/article/naturalization-trends-united-states.

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

Demographics and Population Changes in Pennsylvania

There are over 13 million residents in Pennsylvania, with the Census Bureau reporting 71.9% as White Non-Hispanic, 10.1% as Black, 9.4% as Hispanic, and 4.1% as Asian American according to the 2024 American Community Survey.⁷² From 2020 to 2024, the population of Black, Hispanic, Asian, Pacific Islander, and other races, commonly referred to as BIPOC (an umbrella term for all people of color),⁷³ grew by 299,371, while the white population fell by 223,500.⁷⁴

Residents in Pennsylvania



Foreign-Born Population

The foreign-born population makes up nearly 10% of Pennsylvania's total population,⁷⁶ totaling 1,090,675 people.⁷⁷ For the immigrant community, the Census Bureau ACS dataset for 2019-2023 reported racial demographics to be 24% White, 13% Black, 25% Hispanic, and 34% Asian American or Pacific Islander, which is a dramatically different population share percentage compared to the total population.⁷⁸

⁷²Quick Facts, Pennsylvania. (n.d.). US Census. Retrieved November 10, 2025, from <https://data.census.gov/table/ACSDP1Y2024.DP05?q=residents+in+Pennsylvania+in+2024>

⁷³BIPOC. (n.d.). In Merriam-Webster Dictionary. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/BIPOC>

⁷⁴"State and County Detailed Populations 2020 to 2024" Pennsylvania State Data Center, July 2025, pasdc.hbg.psu.edu/data/resources/state-and-county-detailed-populations-2020-2024.

⁷⁵(n.d.) U.S. Census Data. Retrieved January 30, 2026, <https://data.census.gov/table/ACSDP1Y2024.DP05?q=residents+in+Pennsylvania+in+2024>

⁷⁶Quick Facts, Pennsylvania. (n.d.). US Census. Retrieved January 30, 2026, from <https://data.census.gov/profile/Pennsylvania?g=040XX00US42>

⁷⁷Immigrant population by state, 1990-Present. (2023b, October 16). migrationpolicy.org. <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/programs/data-hub/charts/immigrant-population-state-1990-present?width=1000&height=850&iframe=true>

⁷⁸U.S. Census Bureau. (2013, 2023). American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, 2009–2013 and 2019–2023. U.S. Department of Commerce. Retrieved from <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs>.

Population growth for foreign-born individuals increased by 60.5% from 2011-2021, far exceeding the state average of 0.6%.⁷⁹

It is important to note that immigration has been the top driver of overall BIPOC population growth in the state. This growth equated to 277,061 new residents from 2010 to 2020 (see below) who are regular contributors to the tax base. The BIPOC immigrant population is grouped on its own to represent the large size of this bloc.

From a percentage basis, growth by race from 2010 to 2020 for foreign-born individuals in Pennsylvania was led by Black immigrants, followed by Latinx, and AAPI.

- **Black: 72.52%**
- **Latinx: 69.01%**
- **BIPOC: 60.83%**
- **AAPI: 50.9%**
- **White: 11.5%**⁸⁰

Geographically, the counties with the largest total population of immigrant communities are as follows:

County	Number of Immigrants
Philadelphia	253,261
Montgomery	106,885
Alleghany	83,862
Bucks	69,587
Delaware	64,424

2020-2024 ACS⁸¹

The rural counties in Pennsylvania where migration offset population loss post-pandemic are as follows:⁸²

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ U.S. Census Bureau. "Selected Population Profile in the United States." American Community Survey, ACS 1-Year Estimates Selected Population Profiles, Table S0201, [https://data.census.gov/table/ACSSPP1Y2024.S0201?t=601:Foreign-Born&g=040XX00US42\\$0500000](https://data.census.gov/table/ACSSPP1Y2024.S0201?t=601:Foreign-Born&g=040XX00US42$0500000). Accessed on 31 Jan 2026.

⁸² "Post-Pandemic Migration Has Reshaped Rural Population Change | Joint Center for Housing Studies." Harvard.edu, 12 Nov. 2025, www.jchs.harvard.edu/blog/post-pandemic-migration-has-reshaped-rural-population-change.

County	Immigration	Domestic Migration
Bedford County	+220	+662
Clinton County	+76	+661
Columbia County	+342	+1,936
Pike County	+502	+4,153
Schuylkill County	+720	+4,350
Sullivan County	+40	+292
Wayne County	+51	+1,540

Without immigration and domestic migration, these rural counties would have faced deep population decline, but instead they reported post-pandemic growth.

Several Mayors in Pennsylvania have publicly turned to immigration to reverse population loss. Mayor of Erie City, Joe Schember, and Pittsburgh Mayor, Ed Gainey, have openly called for immigrants to choose their cities as their arrival destinations.⁸³ According to City and State Pennsylvania, in August 2023, both Schember and Gainey signed a letter from six Democratic Pennsylvania mayors to Biden asking him to extend legal protections to undocumented immigrants.⁸⁴

Population Loss in Pennsylvania

One of the most significant challenges Pennsylvania faces is population loss, as the population grew by only 0.6% between 2020 and 2024.⁸⁵ Specifically, from 2020 to 2024, the Black, Hispanic, Asian, and other races, commonly referred to as BIPOC⁸⁶, grew by 299,371, while the white population fell by 223,500.⁸⁷ Major cities, such as Philadelphia, have also begun to experience population loss, with nearly 54,000 residents leaving between April 2020 and December 2023. Such loss reverberates throughout the state, with the number of counties experiencing population loss exceeding those that have experienced gains.⁸⁸

⁸³ Prose, J. (2024, January 4). Amid heated national debate, two Pa. mayors are asking immigrants to help reinvigorate their cities. Pennlive. <https://www.pennlive.com/news/2024/01/amid-heated-national-debate-two-pa-mayors-are-asking-immigrants-to-help-reinvigorate-their-cities.html>

⁸⁴ Sweitzer, J. (2023, August 24). In letter to Biden, PA mayors push president to act on immigration. City & State PA. <https://www.cityandstatepa.com/politics/2023/08/letter-biden-pa-mayors-push-president-act-immigration/389681/>

⁸⁵ Pennsylvania State Data Center. "State and County Detailed Populations 2020 to 2024 | Pennsylvania State Data Center (ISRA." Penn State, July 2025, pasdc.hbg.psu.edu/data/resources/state-and-county-detailed-populations-2020-2024.

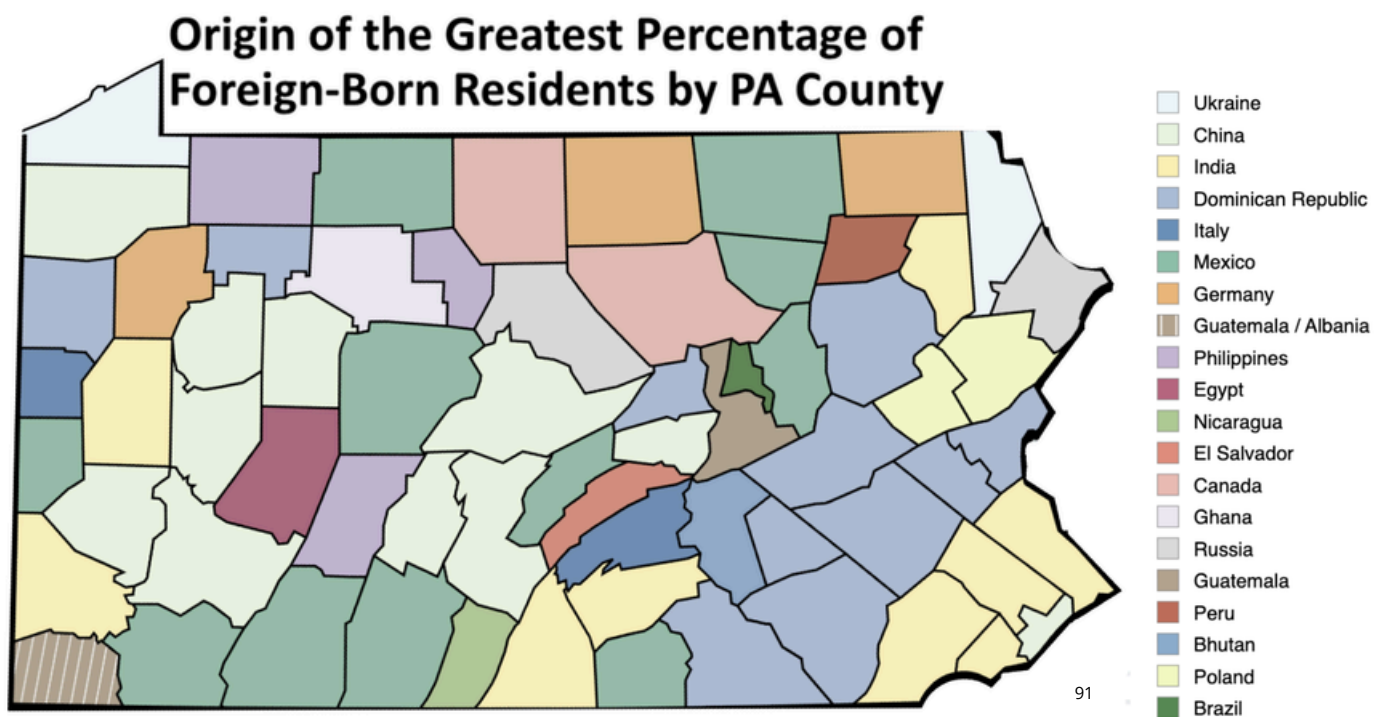
⁸⁶ BIPOC. (n.d.). In Merriam-Webster Dictionary. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/BIPOC>

⁸⁷ Pennsylvania State Data Center. "State and County Detailed Populations 2020 to 2024 | Pennsylvania State Data Center (ISRA." Penn State, July 2025, pasdc.hbg.psu.edu/data/resources/state-and-county-detailed-populations-2020-2024.

⁸⁸ Vadala, N., & Duchneskie, J. (2024, March 14). Philadelphia lost more than 50,000 residents during the pandemic, census data show.

https://www.inquirer.com/news/philadelphia/census-philadelphia-population-data-2023-pennsylvania-counties-20240314.html?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=mnl_3_13_2024&clickText=53-000-lost-residents-according-to-the-latest-census-data&clickHeader=what-you-should-know-today&int_promo=newsletter&utm_term=Morning%20Newsletter

It is important to note that BIPOC individuals outpace population loss for non-Hispanic White people. For every 10 non-Hispanic White people lost in Pennsylvania from 2020 to 2024, the state gained roughly 13 persons of color, with the most substantial growth occurring in the Hispanic or Latino (17.7%), non-Hispanic Asian (16%), and non-Hispanic multiracial (12.3%) populations.⁸⁹ Additionally, on the national level, 19% of Black foreign-born individuals accounted for population growth between 1980-2019, with the Philadelphia metro area alone being home to 120,000 black immigrants from Liberia, Nigeria, Ethiopia, and Ghana.⁹⁰



Immigration, as well as migration from Puerto Rico, to Pennsylvania, has helped curb further population loss, with the biggest contributor to population loss being the birth rate, as evidenced below.⁹² According to research from the Brookings Institute, more than four-fifths of the nation's recent population growth is a result of immigration.⁹³

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Edi, E., & Thompson, L. (2023, February 28). More detentions, deportations, abuse: The challenges Black immigrants face. <https://www.inquirer.com/opinion/commentary/black-history-month-immigrants-philadelphia-20230228.html#loaded>

⁹¹ Zhang, M. (2026). *Origin of Foreign-Born Residents by County* Data from: Census Reporter. Retrieved January 31, 2026 from <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/17YZvXklZRgrHpovUvrBxokMb12hhHFgqM6hQQ4BzXAk/edit?usp=sharing>

⁹² Frey, W. H. (2024, January 4). Immigration is driving the nation's modest post-pandemic population growth, new census data shows. Brookings. <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/immigration-is-driving-the-nations-modest-post-pandemic-population-growth-new-census-data-shows/>

⁹³ Frey, William H. "Immigration Drives the Nation's Healthy Post-Pandemic Population Growth, New Census Data Show." Brookings, 6 Jan. 2025, www.brookings.edu/articles/immigration-drives-the-nations-healthy-post-pandemic-population-growth-new-census-data-show/.

Natural Increase (Births minus Deaths)				
2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023
830	-9,543	-25,416	-23,462	-11,079
Net International Migration				
2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023
14,722	14,523	10,199	25,721	25,776

Moreover, Pennsylvania is an aging state, with 20.4% of residents being 65 years or older,⁹⁴ compared to the U.S. average of 18.0%.⁹⁵ Foreign-born residents notably have a lower older population (i.e., 65 years-old and above), with a rate of 15.8%. The immigrant population in Pennsylvania also has an overall younger workforce (i.e., people aged 18 to 64 years), with 76.5% in the workforce population, contrasted with 58.3% of native-born individuals in Pennsylvania.⁹⁶ These are important numbers to keep in mind, given the contributions of a larger workforce that can curb labor shortages and bolster safety net programs such as Social Security and Medicare.

PA Native-Born ⁹⁷	PA Foreign-Born ⁹⁸	U.S. Average ⁹⁹
40.5 Median Age	44.1 Median Age	39.9 Median Age
18 to 64 years of age: 58.8%	18 to 64 years of age: 77.7%	-
65 years or older: 20.4%	65 years or older: 15.8%	65 years or older: 18.0%

Pennsylvania’s population decline is significantly impacting rural areas. According to the Center for Rural Pennsylvania (CRP), 3.37 million rural residents represent almost 26% of the state’s population. Geographically, rural Pennsylvania comprises 75% of the state’s land area, making it the third largest rural population in the nation.¹⁰⁰ The CRP further reported Pennsylvania’s rural county population is projected to decline by 5.8% over the next 30 years, with the state projected to grow by 1.6% based on increases in urban populations.¹⁰¹ A large part of the population decline in rural areas is due to a lack of affordable and accessible average salaries, as well as issues with childcare, which is resulting in individuals moving out of the state.¹⁰²

⁹⁴ Migration Policy Institute. “State Demographics Data - PA.” Migrationpolicy.org, 2025, www.migrationpolicy.org/data/state-profiles/state/demographics/PA/. Accessed 30 Oct. 2025.

⁹⁵ U.S. Census Bureau. (n.d.). Explore Census data. <https://data.census.gov/profile/Pennsylvania?g=040XX00US42#populations-and-people>

⁹⁶ State Demographics Data - PA. (n.d.). migrationpolicy.org. <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/data/state-profiles/state/demographics/PA>

⁹⁷ *ibid.*

⁹⁸ *ibid.*

⁹⁹ U.S. Census Bureau. (n.d.). Explore Census data. <https://data.census.gov/profile/Pennsylvania?g=040XX00US42#populations-and-people>

¹⁰⁰ Center for Rural Pennsylvania. “Rural Quick Facts - Center for Rural PA.” www.rural.pa.gov, 2023, www.rural.pa.gov/data/rural-quick-facts.

¹⁰¹ Miller, C. (2023, October 4). Population projections highlight need for long-term solutions to sustain rural Pa. • Pennsylvania Capital-Star. Pennsylvania Capital-Star. <https://penncapital-star.com/briefs/population-projections-highlight-need-for-long-term-solutions-to-sustain-rural-pa/#:~:text=The%20population%20of%20Pennsylvania's%20rural,Dr>

¹⁰² Danahy, A. (2023, May 30). As rural Pennsylvania ages and population shrinks, in-migration could bring growth. WPSU. <https://radio.wpsu.org/2023-05-30/rural-pennsylvania-ages-population-shrinks-in-migration-could-bring-growth>

The CRP also stated that population growth will likely continue to concentrate in the southeast of the commonwealth, with counties farther north and west witnessing more population decline.¹⁰³The following counties are expected to see the highest population loss between 2020 and 2050;¹⁰⁴

- **Westmoreland: loss of 56,857 residents**
- **Washington: loss of 21,028 residents**
- **Schuylkill: loss of 15,069 residents**
- **Cambria: loss of 12,310 residents**
- **Northumberland: loss of 7,716 residents**

Federal Immigration Enforcement Impact in Pennsylvania

Background: At the national level, federal policies and immigration restrictions have led to significant declines in immigration. From 2020 to 2023, the U.S. government implemented Title 42, an emergency federal measure under health law, which restricted asylum to the U.S. to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Title 42 permitted immediate expulsion of migrants without an opportunity for asylum screening, and resulted in the turning away of 2.8 million asylum seekers. After ending Title 42 in May 2023, the Biden administration implemented a range of ad hoc policies that restricted access to asylum claims and reduced immigration.¹⁰⁵ This included measures such as the Circumvention of Lawful Pathways rule, which presumes any migrants who do not use the CBP One app when arriving at the border as ineligible for asylum, and the Securing the Border rule, which withheld asylum when the number of border encounters exceeded an average of 1,500 per day for 28 days.¹⁰⁷

Today, the Trump administration has doubled down on anti-immigration legislation, quickly reshaping the policy landscape. According to the Brookings Institute, these changes include increased detention, mass deportations, and an overall “climate of fear” for undocumented residents, international students, and citizens with legal protections.¹⁰⁸ The administration is also restricting access to asylum claims. In October 2025, President Trump announced a historically low 7,500-person cap on asylum admissions for fiscal year 2026, with priority given to white South African migrants.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Pennsylvania Population Projections 2050: A First Look. (2023, October). Center for Rural Pennsylvania. Retrieved March 22, 2024, from https://www.rural.pa.gov/getfile.cfm?file=Resources/PDFs/Access%20PASS%20Final%20Population%20Projections%20Fact%20Sheet_.pdf&view=true

¹⁰⁵ Long, C. (2023, June 23). What is Title 42 and how has the US used it to curb migration? | AP News. AP News. <https://apnews.com/article/immigration-biden-border-title-42-mexico-asylum-be4e0b15b27adb9bede87b9bbefb798d>

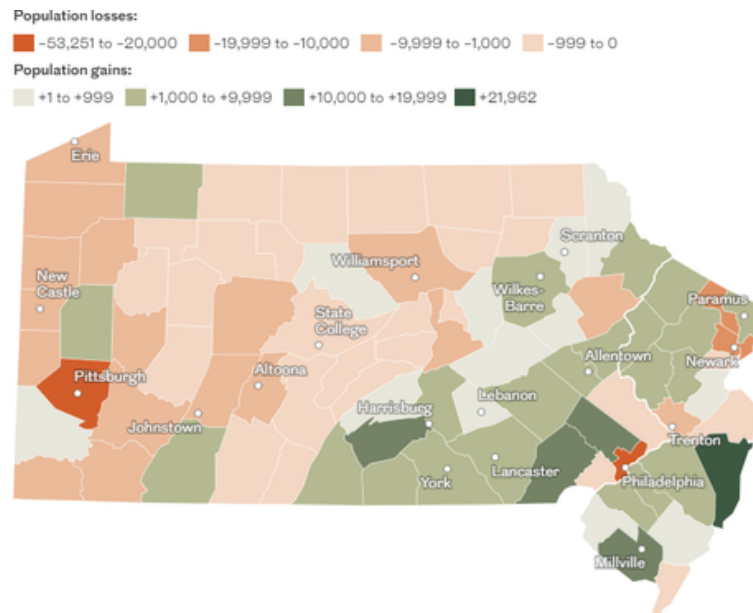
¹⁰⁶ Bush-Joseph, Kathleen. “Biden’s Mixed Immigration Legacy: Border Challenges Overshadowed Modernization Advances.” Migration Policy Institute. December 4, 2024, www.migrationpolicy.org/article/biden-immigration-legacy.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid. consider when assessing the recent population decline in Philadelphia is the lack of competitive welcoming policies in Pennsylvania

¹⁰⁸ Zars, Jonathon, and Tara Watson. “100 Days of Immigration under the Second Trump Administration.” Brookings, 29 Apr. 2025, www.brookings.edu/articles/100-days-of-immigration-under-the-second-trump-administration/.

¹⁰⁹ Bustillo, Ximena. “Trump Administration Sets Lowest-Ever Cap on Refugee Admissions to U.S.” NPR, 30 Oct. 2025, www.npr.org/2025/10/30/g-s1-95823/trump-administration-sets-lowest-ever-cap-on-refugee-admissions.

The enforcement of these new policies contributes to a significant decline in immigration. Another factor to consider when assessing the recent population decline in Philadelphia is the lack of competitive welcoming policies in Pennsylvania as compared to neighboring states. New York, for example, banned private immigrant detention centers, and New York and New Jersey have successfully implemented driver's licenses for undocumented residents and in-state tuition equity for undocumented college students, providing prominent examples of welcoming policies.¹¹⁰ Furthermore, Pennsylvania's minimum wage of \$7.25 is the lowest of its adjacent states, and has resulted in fewer people choosing our state as a viable place to live.¹¹¹



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Map: John Duchneskie / Staff Artist • Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Anti-immigration legislation introduced in Harrisburg seeks to further pause immigration through proposed E-Verify legislation. Across Pennsylvania, the number of partnerships between police departments and ICE rose from 10 to 39 in recent months.¹¹³ This collaboration, combined with unnecessary requirements for government officials to share information with ICE not only risks tearing families apart and placing them into detention, but also creates a hostile environment for immigrants that stands in harsh contrast to states like New Jersey, New York, and Delaware, all of which have successfully passed welcoming policies.

¹¹⁰ States offering driver's licenses to immigrants. (2024, January 23). <https://www.ncsl.org/immigration/states-offering-drivers-licenses-to-immigrants>

¹¹¹ State minimum wage laws. (n.d.). DOL. <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/minimum-wage/state>

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Yerardi, Joe, and Jeff Gammage. "More and More Pennsylvania Police Agencies Are Partnering with ICE." *Inquirer.com, The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 14 Sept. 2025, www.inquirer.com/news/pennsylvania-police-ice-partnerships-immigration-20250914.html. Accessed 31 Oct. 2025.

Pennsylvania Immigrant Political Power

The immigrant population in Pennsylvania has grown 60.5% from 2010 to 2020, with 85,000 of whom became naturalized citizens. Both existing and new immigrant voters are thus having a larger impact on national and local elections. In the 2024 election, 392,422 Hispanic voters voted in Pennsylvania.¹¹⁴ While not all Hispanic voters are foreign-born, oftentimes one or both parents are immigrants, with 3.6% of U.S.-born residents in Pennsylvania having foreign-born parents.¹¹⁵ As immigration becomes more and more of a central issue for voters—given that more voters are children, spouses, or neighbors to immigrants—representing the needs of immigrant communities is more crucial than ever before.

Without continued immigration, Pennsylvania is on track to lose another seat in 2030 due to continued population decline. This is after Pennsylvania lost a congressional seat during the 2020/21 redistricting process, which resulted in a diminished presence in the Federal House. PoliticsPA, a media company focusing on political analysis at the federal and state levels, predicts Pennsylvania will lose another congressional seat, from 17 seats to 16, if population decline continues through 2030.¹¹⁶ Furthermore, population loss has severe financial implications for all Pennsylvanians, as federal funds are appropriated based on population. A report by the GW Institute of Public Policy found “Pennsylvania lost \$1,746 per person due to census undercounting.”¹¹⁷ The state is thus dependent on continued immigration to ensure that population loss does not result in an additional two seats lost come 2030.

Pennsylvania Naturalized Citizen Voters

According to the New Partnership for New Americans (NPNA), “Since the last presidential election in November 2020, an estimated 96,155 people have become newly naturalized citizens in Pennsylvania.”¹¹⁸ Newly naturalized citizens in Pennsylvania, like the state's overall immigrant population, are racially and ethnically diverse, with 45% from Asia, 27% from the Americas, 15% from the African continent, and 13% from Europe.¹¹⁹ Statewide, there are 614,120 naturalized citizens in Pennsylvania, which is nearly twice the population of Pittsburgh, the second biggest city in the state.¹²⁰

¹¹⁴ Televisa Univision. “Pennsylvania - Hispanic Vote.” September 25, 2024, hispanicvote.univision.com/states/pennsylvania/

¹¹⁵ Wong, T. K., Maya Lu, Lilly Amirjavadi, Nancy Flores, Deputy Director at the National Partnership for New Americans (NPNA), Diego Iñiguez-López, Associate Director of Policy and Campaigns at NPNA, Nicole Melaku, Executive Director at NPNA, Alexander Graphics, Diego Iñiguez-López, Abdelnasser Rashid, Tides Foundation, SEIU, USIPC, APIAVote, & National Partnership for New Americans (NPNA). (2022). *NEW*

¹¹⁶ Is Pennsylvania on pace to lose another congressional seat in 2030? (2023, December 20). PoliticsPA. <https://www.politicspa.com/is-pennsylvania-on-pace-to-lose-another-congressional-seat-in-2030/129075/>

¹¹⁷ Hirsch, A., & Gray, C. (2022, March 24). 4 ways that census undercounting could impact the health of Pennsylvanians | Opinion. <https://www.inquirer.com>. <https://www.inquirer.com/opinion/census-data-pennsylvania-2020-undercounting-health-20220324.html>

¹¹⁸ National Partnership for New Americans. “Demographics of Newly Naturalized Citizens: Pennsylvania.” US Immigration Policy Center, July 2024, newamericanvoters.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/NAV_Demographics_PA.pdf.

¹¹⁹ Wong, T. K., Maya Lu, Lilly Amirjavadi, Nancy Flores, Deputy Director at the National Partnership for New Americans (NPNA), Diego Iñiguez-López, Associate Director of Policy and Campaigns at NPNA, Nicole Melaku, Executive Director at NPNA, Alexander Graphics, Diego Iñiguez-López, Abdelnasser Rashid, Tides Foundation, SEIU, USIPC, APIAVote, & National Partnership for New Americans (NPNA). (2022). *NEW AMERICAN VOTERS 2022: Harnessing the power of Naturalized Citizens*. https://newamericanvoters.org/assets/2022/07/NPNA_2022-New-American-Voters-Report.pdf

¹²⁰ 2024 ACS 1-Year Data) U.S. Census Bureau. “Nativity and Citizenship Status in the United States.” American Community Survey, ACS 1-Year Estimates Detailed Tables, Table B05001, <https://data.census.gov/table/ACSDT1Y2024.B05001?q=naturalized+citizens&g=040XX00US42>.

Pennsylvania Immigrant Workforce

Immigrants help fill labor shortages. They pay local and federal taxes and support the economy by spending the money they've earned locally.¹²¹ While the national unemployment rate was 4.3% in August 2025, labor shortages exist in a range of sectors, specifically ones that require specialized education or training, and immigrants can help fill these roles.¹²² They also support smaller, rural markets, which are often hit hardest. One example is Pennsylvania's dairy industry, which is currently struggling due to vacancies. Take, for example, Sharon Bishop, a farmer in Bucks County, Pennsylvania, whose family has been farming for six generations.¹²³ Bishop must rely heavily on family labor due to vacancies in the farming labor market. To fill the gap, farms like Bishop's are turning to H-2A Immigrant Visas, which hire foreign workers for temporary agriculture jobs. Erie County, which has been a welcoming place for immigrants, has also reaped the benefits of leveraging immigration to diminish labor shortages, resulting in the saving of 500 manufacturing jobs and the meeting of rising labor demands in the STEM sector by immigrants, accounting for 8.2% of their STEM workforce.¹²⁴

The industries with high representations of immigrant labor in Pennsylvania are as follows.¹²⁵

- Transportation and Warehousing: 14.5%
- Professional, Scientific, Administrative, and Waste Services: 12.2%
- General Services: 11.2%
- Construction: 10.0%
- Manufacturing: 9.9%

Immigrants play a unique role in specialized workforces, making up 7.4% of nurses, 16.2% of health aides, and 17.2% of STEM workers.¹²⁶ According to recent data from the Center on Education and the Workforce at Georgetown University, the United States desperately needs more workers to fill positions in these specialized industries. By 2032, the center estimates that the United States economy will require 5.25 million more workers with education and training beyond high school.

¹²¹ Miller-Wilson, C. (2024, January 23). Guest commentary: Need workers? Hire a migrant. The Philadelphia Citizen.

<https://thephiladelphiacitizen.org/guest-commentary-need-workers-hire-a-migrant/>

¹²² Bureau of Labor Statistics. "The Employment Situation." Bureau Of Labor Statistics, 2025.

¹²³ Nauman, Sydney. "Family Farms Fight Worker Shortages amid Immigration Crackdown." Fox43.com, WPMT, 15 Sept. 2025, www.fox43.com/article/news/local/dauphin-county/family-farms-fight-worker-shortages-amid-immigration-crackdown/521-49b4d59e-28bf-44c6-a8b1-00d843c335a1.

¹²⁴ New Research Shows Immigrants in Erie are Playing an Outsize Role in Several Key Industries, including 8.2 Percent of STEM, 6.8 Percent of Professional Services, and 6.3 Percent of Manufacturing - New American Economy. (2021, June 17). New American Economy.

<https://www.newamericaneconomy.org/press-release/new-research-shows-immigrants-in-erie-are-playing-an-outsize-role-in-several-key-industries-including-8-2-percent-of-stem-6-8-percent-of-professional-services-and-6-3-percent-of-manufacturing/>

¹²⁵ Take a look: How immigrants drive the economy in Pennsylvania. (n.d.). American Immigration Council.

<https://map.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/locations/pennsylvania/#>

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*

The publication echoes the suggestions raised in this report, recommending that “less restrictive immigration policies—such as raising the annual cap on H-1B, EB-2, and EB-3 visas and reducing burdensome restrictions on wait times—could also alleviate shortages in occupations like nursing and encourage foreign-born healthcare workers to relocate to underserved rural areas that will bear the brunt of impending skills shortages.”¹²⁷

Immigrants in Pennsylvania—specifically undocumented immigrants who, contrary to popular belief, pay over \$523 million¹²⁸ in state and local taxes—are saving the state nearly \$6.4 billion in lost gross domestic product output through their participation in specific sectors in the workforce.¹²⁹ In simple terms, immigrants play critical roles in sustaining the workforce in various sectors. Without them, the state would lose billions of dollars in revenue through labor shortages, which would in turn result in higher costs of goods and services for all. It therefore comes as no surprise that the Shapiro administration recently created a new position dedicated to the recruitment and integration of immigrants in the Pennsylvania workforce.¹³⁰

Spending Power of Immigrants in Pennsylvania

According to the American Immigration Council, immigrants in Pennsylvania had an annual spending power of \$35.9 billion and paid \$13.6 billion in taxes, with 67,000 immigrant entrepreneurs supporting economic development by generating \$2 billion in income.¹³¹ At the local level, immigrants in Lancaster County paid \$182.2 million in taxes and had a spending power of \$499.8 million in 2018,¹³² both of which were major contributors to the county's \$306 million budget.¹³³ In Erie County, immigrants paid \$261 million in taxes and possessed a spending power of \$192 million in 2019, according to a report released by the county:¹³⁴

“Immigrants’ spending power has helped revitalize local businesses. Immigrants punch above their weight when it comes to their power as consumers. In 2019, they held \$192.3 million in disposable income that can go towards buying homes, supporting small businesses, and reinvigorating the local economy. At the city level, immigrants held \$88.3 million in spending power, making up 6 percent of all spending power in the city.”¹³⁵

¹²⁷Koo, Irene, et al. “Looming Skills Shortages Threaten Occupations Critical to Societal Well-Being - CEW Georgetown.” CEW Georgetown, 2025, cew.georgetown.edu/resource/cew-blog-looming-skills-shortages-threaten-occupations-critical-societal-well-being/

¹²⁸Porter, E., & Zhou, Y. (2024, February 14). Here’s which states could benefit most from migrant labor. *Washington Post*.

¹²⁹Stier, Marc. “Press Release – National ITEP Study: Undocumented Immigrants Contribute \$523,100,000 in PA Taxes per Year.” Pennsylvania Policy Center, 29 July 2024, pennpolicy.org/2024/07/29/press-release-national-itep-study-undocumented-immigrants-contribute-523100000-in-pa-taxes-per-year/.

¹³⁰Commonwealth of PA - Opportunities for all Job Seekers | Find your passion for public service! (n.d.). <https://www.governmentjobs.com/careers/pabureau/jobs/4270044/assistant-deputy-secretary-on-immigrant-and-re-entry-affairs-assistant-deputy-se?keywords=Assistant%20Deputy%20Secretary%20for%20Immigrant%20and%20Re-Entry%20Affairs&pagetype=jobOpportunitiesJobs>

¹³¹Take a look: How immigrants drive the economy in Pennsylvania. (n.d.). American Immigration Council.

<https://map.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/locations/pennsylvania/#>

¹³²Stuhldreher, T. (2023, August 15). Forum: Immigrants’ role in local economy continues to grow. One United Lancaster.

<https://oneunitedlancaster.com/community/forum-immigrants-role-in-local-economy-continues-to-grow/>

¹³³George Stockburger. (2023, December 21). Lancaster County passes budget; will there be a tax increase? ABC 27. Retrieved March 28, 2024, from <https://www.abc27.com/local-news/lancaster-county-passes-budget-will-there-be-a-tax-increase/>

¹³⁴Loncki, A. (2021, June 17). New Research Shows Immigrants in Erie are Playing an Outsize Role in Several Key Industries, including 8.2 Percent of STEM, 6.8 Percent of Professional Services, and 6.3 Percent of Manufacturing. Erie, PA. <https://cityof.erie.pa.us/2021/06/17/new-research-shows-immigrants-in-erie-are-playing-an-outsize-role-in-several-key-industries-including-8-2-percent-of-stem-6-8-percent-of-professional-services-and-6-3-percent-of-manufacturing/>

¹³⁵Ibid.

Similar to how cities across the U.S. have been affected by workers not returning to downtown business corridors due to remote work and hybrid work-from-home options, a reduction in spending power due to the loss of immigrants in a city can also result in property vacancies, reduce land and property value, and decrease or pause further development. Overall, this results in a loss of revenue, which in turn places additional strain on state and municipal budgets.¹³⁶

The Impact of Current Policy on the Immigrant Workforce

Immigration enforcement in Pennsylvania has increased dramatically. Between February 2025 and June 2025, there were 2008 arrests, which represents a 167.7% increase when compared to the same period last year (2024).¹³⁷ This is due to the systematic erosion of immigrant programs and mass targeting of all noncitizens for detention.

Termination of Programs with Deportation Protections & Work Authorization

The United States immigration system includes various temporary immigration statutes that allow individuals to remain in the United States without granting full citizenship. For example, Temporary Protected Status (TPS) provides work authorization and protection from deportation to noncitizens from specific countries.¹³⁸ Recently, the administration cancelled TPS for hundreds of thousands of immigrants, including those from Venezuela, Honduras, Syria, Nicaragua, Nepal, Afghanistan, and Cameroon.¹³⁹ Parole programs, another means of temporary protection, have also been targeted. In July 2025, the Department of Homeland Security issued a termination of paroled immigrants from Cuba, Haiti, Nicaragua, and Venezuela.¹⁴⁰

These restrictions also impact young immigrants. Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS), which lets undocumented immigrants under 21 who have been abused, neglected, or abandoned by parents apply for legal permanent residence, is no longer granting work authorization. Although the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) has deportation protections, DACA recipients have been detained, and the administration staff has instructed those with DACA protections to self-deport.¹⁴¹

Immigrants who have interacted with the criminal justice system are particularly vulnerable. The Constitution enshrines protections against unlawful search and seizure and due process, but these protections do not extend to noncitizens.

¹³⁶ Wheat, C. (n.d.). Downtown downturn: The Covid shock to Brick-and-Mortar retail. <https://www.jpmorganchase.com/institute/research/cities-local-communities/downtown-downturn-covid-shock-to-brick-and-mortar>

¹³⁷ Martinez, Emmanuel, et al. "ICE Increasingly Targets Undocumented Migrants with No Criminal Conviction." *The Washington Post*, 3 July 2025, www.washingtonpost.com/immigration/2025/07/03/ice-arrests-migrants-criminal-record-numbers/.

¹³⁸ "Temporary Protected Status: An Overview - American Immigration Council." American Immigration Council, 6 June 2025, www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/fact-sheet/temporary-protected-status-overview/.

¹³⁹ Gooding, Dan. "Map Shows Countries Where TPS Revoked—or Kept in Place—by Trump Admin." *Newsweek*, 8 Nov. 2025, www.newsweek.com/map-tps-status-revoked-active-homeland-security-trump-11013164. Accessed 13 Nov. 2025.

¹⁴⁰ "DHS Issues Notices of Termination for the CHNV Parole Program, Encourages Parolees to Self-Deport Immediately." 2025. <https://www.aila.org/dhs-announcement-on-issuing-notices-of-termination-for-the-chnv-parole-program>

¹⁴¹ Bustillo, Ximena. "DHS Is Urging DACA Recipients to Self-Deport." *NPR*, 29 July 2025, www.npr.org/2025/07/29/nx-s1-5482923/dhs-daca-recipients-self-deport.

District attorneys, sheriffs, and police departments are signing 287g agreements, paving the way for collaboration with ICE. In Pennsylvania specifically, the number of partnerships between police departments and ICE increased from 10 to 39 in recent months.¹⁴² Individuals reporting to criminal court hearings are detained before even entering the chambers, and parole and probation officers have begun sharing data with ICE officers. Additionally, the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections is allowing ICE to detain individuals after they have completed their state prison sentence.¹⁴³ Even immigrants who are simply interacting with the system through asylum or adjustment cases are being dismissed, and individuals are detained at their ICE check-ins.

In short, the ability for noncitizens to become citizens is being obliterated. The U.S. is creating hostile conditions where individuals are choosing deportation instead of staying in the U.S., since the U.S. is denying bond eligibility to all non-citizens who did not enter without a visa. The United States' use of deportation to third-party countries and the use of the Alien Enemies Act to disappear people to mega prisons is another factor why noncitizens, those with and without a pending immigration application, are being detained and are choosing deportation.

Impact on the Labor Market

Immigrant workers significantly contribute to the United States workforce. As such, it should come as no surprise that a decline in immigration would have a negative impact on the economy. As the current administration enacts policies that both curb the influx of migration into the United States and enforce the removal of thousands of noncitizens, it is important to understand how these actions will impact the economic contributions of immigrants.

The U.S. immigrant population fell by nearly 1.5 million from January to June 2025, largely due to mass deportations.¹⁴⁴ Due to their sizable presence in the workforce, this rapid decline in the immigration population will result in massive harm to state and national level labor markets. The Economic Policy Institute estimates that, at the current rate, the administration's deportation plans will result in the loss of approximately 5.9 million jobs by 2029.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴² Yerardi, Joe, and Jeff Gammage. "More and More Pennsylvania Police Agencies Are Partnering with ICE." *Inquirer.com, The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 14 Sept. 2025, www.inquirer.com/news/pennsylvania-police-ice-partnerships-immigration-20250914.html. Accessed 31 Oct. 2025.

¹⁴³ Martínez, Gabriela. "How Berks County Cooperates with ICE without Helping It Make Arrests." *Spotlight PA*, 24 July 2025, www.spotlightpa.org/berks/2025/07/justice-system-berks-county-ice-detainer-policy-immigration-detention/.

¹⁴³ Geiger, Abigail. "What the Data Says about Immigrants in the U.S." *Pew Research Center*, 21 Aug. 2025, www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2025/08/21/key-findings-about-us-immigrants/

¹⁴⁴ Zipperer, Ben. "Trump's Deportation Agenda Will Destroy Millions of Jobs: Both Immigrants and U.S.-Born Workers Would Suffer Job Losses, Particularly in Construction and Child Care." *Economic Policy Institute*, 2025, www.epi.org/publication/trumps-deportation-agenda-will-destroy-millions-of-jobs-both-immigrants-and-u-s-born-workers-would-suffer-job-losses-particularly-in-construction-and-child-care/

Trump's escalation of deportations could destroy nearly 6 million jobs

Employment losses caused by increasing deportations to 4,000,000 over four years

Sector	Immigrant	U.S.-born	Total	Percent fall in total employment
Overall	3,316,000	2,571,000	5,887,000	3.6%
Construction	1,405,000	861,000	2,266,000	18.8%
Child care	104,000	444,000	548,000	15.1%

Economic Policy Institute ¹⁴⁶

Pennsylvania, specifically, is expected to lose 115,000 jobs, with the most significant impact on key industries such as health and agriculture. The Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture estimates that nearly half of Pennsylvania farm workers are at risk of deportation¹⁴⁷, and 10% of the state's hospital workforce are immigrants.¹⁴⁸ Small businesses in Pennsylvania will also feel the strain, especially in cities like Philadelphia, where immigrants make up 20% of the city's labor force and 23% of local business income and tax revenue.¹⁴⁹ Local businesses should expect vacancies, wage spikes, and declining customer traffic in neighborhoods with high immigrant populations.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁶*Ibid.*

¹⁴⁷ Karbal, Ian. "The Labor Shortage Will Only Get Worse: Trump Deportation Plans Could Hit Pa. Agriculture Hard." *Pittsburgh's Public Source*, *Pittsburgh's Public Source*, 15 Jan. 2025, www.publicsource.org/labor-trump-immigration-agriculture-economy-pennsylvania-shapiro-fetterman/

¹⁴⁸ Suttles, Chrissy, et al. "Trump Deportation Plan Could Deepen Labor Gaps." *Axios*, *Axios Pittsburgh*, 28 Aug. 2025, www.axios.com/local/pittsburgh/2025/08/28/trump-deportation-immigration-pittsburgh-jobs.

¹⁴⁹ "How New Federal Immigration Policies and Practices Are Impacting Small Businesses in Greater Philadelphia | Economy League of Greater Philadelphia." *Economy League of Greater Philadelphia*, n.d., www.economyleague.org/resources/how-new-federal-immigration-policies-and-practices-are-impacting-small-businesses-greater.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

Welcoming Legislation

A total of nine welcoming state-level policies have been proposed in Harrisburg. If passed, these policies will address labor shortages in education and health and will support immigrant communities by increasing educational opportunities for undocumented students via in-state college tuition and scholarship eligibility.

These bills further foster safety for immigrant and non-immigrant Pennsylvanians by creating a pathway for non-citizens to obtain a driver's license so they can safely commute to and from work, school, medical appointments, and the grocery store. Another bill supporting safer communities is the U-Visa Bill, which will help victims of crime come forward to support police investigations and the prosecutions of those who have committed crimes. The U-Visa bill will give such victims a pathway to work and live safely through their participation in these proceedings.

Welcoming policies like these do the critical work of attracting more immigrants. Take states like New Jersey and New York, where undocumented immigrants can legally obtain driver's licenses. In New Jersey specifically, the attorney general issued a directive to end agreements with ICE that resulted in protections that prevent law enforcement from cooperating with ICE officials.¹⁵¹ These welcoming policies have resulted in immigrants comprising 25%¹⁵² of the state's population, while Pennsylvania's immigrant population comprises less than 8%.¹⁵³

As previously mentioned, immigrants play a critical role in filling labor shortages and reversing population decline. In New York, for example, immigrants have helped revitalize the cities of Rochester, Syracuse, and Utica through population and economic growth.¹⁵⁴ In Pennsylvania, the cities with welcoming policies for immigrants are not witnessing population loss at the rate of cities whose representatives are supporting or crafting anti-immigrant legislation. Two of these cities, Philadelphia and Pittsburgh, have "sanctuary city" policies that ban the enforcement of ICE holds, a nonbinding request to local police to cooperate with ICE. Sanctuary policies foster an environment for immigrants to not only seek services, employment, and access to care, but also to ensure immigrants can go to the police as victims or witnesses without being arrested by ICE. These policies thereby result in more immigrants choosing cities with welcoming policies as their destinations when migrating.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵¹Hernandez, J. (2019, September 28). Grewal blocks two N.J. counties from having immigration enforcement agreements with ICE. *WHYY*. <https://whyy.org/articles/cape-may-monmouth-ice-enforcement-agreements-blocked-why/>

¹⁵² "Take a Look: How Immigrants Drive the Economy in New Jersey." American Immigration Council, 2023, map.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/locations/new-jersey/.

¹⁵³ "Take a Look: How Immigrants Drive the Economy in New Jersey." American Immigration Council, 2023, map.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/locations/new-jersey/, City & State NY.

¹⁵⁴ Brouk, S., & May, R. (2023, October 2). Opinion: How immigrants sparked an upstate resurgence. *City & State NY*. <https://www.cityandstateny.com/opinion/2023/10/opinion-how-immigrants-sparked-upstate-resurgence/390858/>

¹⁵⁵ Kortsha, M. (2022, August 25). Sanctuary practices lower counties' crime rates. *UT News*. <https://news.utexas.edu/2022/06/13/sanctuary-practices-lower-counties-crime-rates/#:~:text=Counties%20that%20don%27t%20cooperate,University%20of%20Texas%20at%20Austin>

Contrary to popular belief, immigrants and sanctuary city policies make all communities safer. According to a California State University publication, research has found immigration to be associated with lower crime rates, as immigrants are less likely to commit crimes than native-born individuals.¹⁵⁶ Another research study found that counties with sanctuary policies, as opposed to those without sanctuary policies, experienced decreases in property and violent crime after 2014, when many such policies were first implemented.¹⁵⁷ Research from the American Sociological Association reveals that cities with stronger punitive policies towards immigrants may experience *more* crime, because they decrease the potential benefits that immigration offers for neighborhood safety.¹⁵⁸

Pro-immigrant Proposals the Legislature

1. **Memo 47440** - A memo requiring school districts to adopt clear procedures for responding to immigration enforcement, protecting student safety, and affirming schools as welcoming places for all students.¹⁵⁹
2. **Memo 46908** - A memo to encourage legislation that establishes uniform procedures for Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS) visas, which would allow PA courts to better support immigrant youth.
3. **Memo 47248** - A memo prohibiting law enforcement agencies in Pennsylvania from partnering with federal immigration enforcement and terminating any partnerships that currently exist.
4. **Memo 47073** - A memo prohibiting state and local contracts with private prison corporations, ending the privatization of immigration detention in Pennsylvania.
5. **Memo 47860** - A memo introducing legislation that would restrict law enforcement from utilizing state funds for the enforcement of federal immigration laws. This action would also reaffirm the Pennsylvania State Police's policy of limited cooperation with federal immigration enforcement.
6. **Memo 47862** - A memo providing protection from civil immigration arrests on courthouse grounds and Commonwealth properties.
7. **Memo 47948** - A memo to authorize the Pennsylvania Human Relations Commission to receive complaints regarding civil liberties violations committed by ICE (or law enforcement agents working in collaboration with ICE).
8. **Memo 47614** - A memo to criminalize indiscriminate tactics of arrest and detainment.
9. **Memo 46139** - A memo to limit local collaborations with federal immigration enforcement.
10. **Memo 47968** - A memo to prohibit law enforcement agencies in Pennsylvania from using taxpayer dollars to conduct immigration enforcement on behalf of the federal government.

¹⁵⁹ Welcoming Schools: Ensuring PA Schools are Safe Places for All Students, Memo 47440, 2025-2026 Regular Session (2025).
<https://www.palegis.us/house/co-sponsorship/memo?memoID=47440>.

11. **Memo 47951** - A memo to reaffirm constitutional rights, ensure accountability across levels of government, and remedy federal abuses of power.
12. **HB 1113** - An Act, known as the Office of New Pennsylvanians Act, establishing new government offices and committees dedicated to improving the lives and economic prosperity of immigrants in Pennsylvania.¹⁶⁰
13. **HB 1281** - An Act ensuring a clearer, consistent, victim-centered approach to the U-Visa certification process, establishing requirements for certifying officials related to request processing, record keeping, language access, training, and victim notification.¹⁶¹
14. **HB 1518** - An Act, referred to as the Drivers Licenses for All Act, allowing individuals without a Social Security Number to apply for a driver's license or learner's permit.¹⁶²
15. **HB 1762** - An Act amending the Public School Code of 1949 to provide in-state tuition for Pennsylvania residents who have lived in the state for at least 12 months.¹⁶³
16. **HB 1880** - An act criminalizing the offense of impersonating a public servant, engaging in disorderly conduct, and identity concealment by federal immigration officials.
17. **HB 1968** - An act establishing a cause of action against anyone who interferes with a person's Constitutional rights and protections from the Commonwealth through unlawful detention, violence, threat, intimidation, or coercion.
18. **SB 24** - An Act establishing an "Office of New Americans" with the power to develop strategies which attract, retain, and incorporate immigrants into Pennsylvania communities.¹⁶⁴
19. **SB 86** - An Act, known as the Pennsylvania Dream Act, allowing in-state tuition for all students, regardless of immigration status, as long as they attend a public high school for at least two years.¹⁶⁵
20. **SB 1071** - An Act requiring law enforcement officers to wear clearly visible identification, prohibiting agents from masking (or using other garments that obscure their identity), and establishing criminal and civil penalties for the violation of these requirements.

¹⁶⁰The Office of New Pennsylvanians Act, HB 1113, 2025-2026 Regular Session (2025). <https://www.palegis.us/legislation/bills/2025/hb1113>.

¹⁶¹ Providing Clarity and Consistency for U Visa Applicants, HB 1281, 2025-2026 Regular Session (2025). <https://www.palegis.us/house/co-sponsorship/memo?memoID=45392>.

¹⁶² Driver's Licenses for All Act, HB 1518, 2025-2026 Regular Session (2025), <https://www.palegis.us/house/co-sponsorship/memo?memoID=46713>

¹⁶³ House Bill 1762, HB 1762, 2025-2026 Regular Session (2025), <https://www.palegis.us/legislation/bills/2025/hb1762>.

¹⁶⁴ Senate Bill 24, SB 24, 2025-2026 Regular Session (2025), <https://www.palegis.us/legislation/bills/2025/sb0024>.

¹⁶⁵ Pennsylvania Dream Act, SB 86, 2025-2026 Regular Session (2025), <https://www.palegis.us/legislation/bills/2025/sb0086>.

Anti-Immigrant Legislation

Anti-immigrant rhetoric at the national level has made its way to Pennsylvania in the form of four anti-immigrant bills and resolutions currently at play in Harrisburg, with more on the horizon. These proposed policies are serious attacks on the immigrant community and threaten to put people's rights on the line in our Commonwealth.

Not welcoming immigrants by way of these proposed bills will further population loss and thereby result in increased worker shortages, loss of gross domestic product (GDP), and a further reduction in political representation in Congress. Currently, Pennsylvania has the fourth-highest population loss, which has caused the state to lose \$106 billion in income from domestic outmigration from 1992 to 2019.¹⁶⁶ This population loss resulted in the state's GDP falling to 3.63% from 4.02% between 2010 and 2023 and the loss of one congressional seat.¹⁶⁷ The laws listed below will also create more financial burdens for local law enforcement and state agencies by requiring them to contact and cooperate with ICE. Doing so means that, instead of serving the constituents they were hired to serve, law enforcement and state agencies will instead have additional responsibilities, and taxpayers will pay more money via allocation for ICE's use. Furthermore, anti-immigrant legislation not only leads to an outmigration of immigrants but also directly impacts state economies. For example, the state of Florida lost \$12.6 billion after passing SB18 in 2023, which places strict penalties for the employment of immigrants.¹⁶⁸

Anti-immigrant Proposals in the Legislature

1. **HB 756** - An Act requiring prosecutors to notify Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) if they have "reasonable basis" to believe the defendant is undocumented.
2. **HB 805** - An Act requiring the Department of Labor to submit a report of underage child workers to the federal government and notify ICE if the minor is undocumented.
3. **HB 530** - An Act requiring law enforcement officers who evict tenants to notify ICE if they determine the individual to be an undocumented immigrant.
4. **HB 610** - An Act requiring E-Verify for public worker contractors and subcontractors.
5. **HB 903** - An Act mandating meatpacking and food preparation employers to use E-Verify.
6. **HB 905** - An Act requiring hotel and lodging industry employers to use E-Verify.

¹⁶⁶ Express-Times guest columnist & Express-Times Guest, lehighvalleylive@express-times.com. (2023, January 23). Pa.'s population loss 4th highest in nation. The reasons why and the solution. | Opinion. Lehighvalleylive. [https://www.lehighvalleylive.com/opinion/2023/01/pas-population-loss-4th-highest-in-nation-the-reasons-why-and-the-solution-opinion.html#:~:text=Internal%20Revenue%20Service%20\(IRS\)%20data,between%202019%20and%202020%20alone](https://www.lehighvalleylive.com/opinion/2023/01/pas-population-loss-4th-highest-in-nation-the-reasons-why-and-the-solution-opinion.html#:~:text=Internal%20Revenue%20Service%20(IRS)%20data,between%202019%20and%202020%20alone).

¹⁶⁷ D'Onofrio, M., & Avilucea, I. (2023, July 24). Pennsylvania's economic engine shrinks as people move out. Axios. <https://www.axios.com/local/philadelphia/2023/07/11/pennsylvania-economy-population-decline>

¹⁶⁸ Vilchez, A. (2023, June 25). "They don't want us here": Florida immigrants leave over DeSantis law. NBC News. <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/latino/florida-immigrants-leave-state-desantis-immigration-law-rcna90839>

7. **HB 975** - An Act creating a penalty for persons who encourage an individual to enter the United States and prevents detection of the individual from federal agents. These penalties also apply if the immigrant is a minor.
8. **HB 1693** - An Act establishing cause of action against government officials who disregard federal immigration law.
9. **HB 1661** - An Act requiring the reporting of healthcare costs for services provided to undocumented immigrants.
10. **HB 403** - An Act prohibiting governing bodies of municipalities or counties from adopting rules, orders, ordinances, or policies that disallow the enforcement of PA or federal laws pertaining to immigrants. This would also restrict local governments from establishing Sanctuary Cities.
11. **HB 927** - A resolution amending the Pennsylvania Constitution, prohibiting issuance of driver's licenses to undocumented immigrants.
12. **HB 621** - An Act creating a state felony penalty for undocumented immigrants who use a PA Access Card or Electronic Benefit Card.
13. **HB 896** - An Act requiring the imposition of the death penalty for undocumented immigrants charged with a murder conviction.
14. **HB 931** - An Act ensuring that undocumented immigrants are not eligible to receive public benefits.
15. **HB 284** - An Act requiring voters to provide evidence of their citizenship status when completing the voter registration process.
16. **SB 471** - An act requiring prosecutors in Pennsylvania to notify ICE when undocumented immigrants are charged with violating state law. This legislation was passed by the PA Senate in March 2025 and was then placed in the House Judiciary.
17. **SB 1021** - An Act enhancing the penalties for assault, threaten, or obstruct federal immigration enforcement officers operating within Pennsylvania.
18. **SB 218** - An Act prohibiting state housing authority from renting, leasing, or providing any programmatic services to undocumented immigrants.

These proposals, collectively, signal a hardline stance against immigration. It is crucial to consider the long-term implications of such policies on community relations, economic vitality, and the state’s values as a welcoming place for all. Effective immigration reform requires comprehensive federal action that balances enforcement with pathways to legalization and integration and respects human rights and the contributions of immigrants to our society.

These anti-immigrant bills pose serious danger to counties in Pennsylvania whose industries rely heavily on immigrant labor. The proportions of foreign-born immigrants, for example, make up nearly the entire manufacturing workforce in the following counties as of 2021:¹⁶⁹

County	Foreign-Born Population Living in County	Industry Population	Quantity of Foreign-Born Workers in Industry	Percentage of Foreign-Born Workers in Industry
Armstrong	401	4,932	4,928	1,229%
Elk	281	5,531	5,530	1,968%
Fulton	113	1,546	1,545	1,368%
Jefferson	201	3,796	3,796	1,889%
Mifflin	360	4,381	4,381	1,217%

Each bill, while varied in its specific focus, collectively reflects an intention to attack and ostracize the immigrant community, which goes directly against our societal values of inclusivity, fairness, and respect for human rights.

¹⁶⁹Source: 2021 American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates; Data acquired with R and tidycensus

Conclusion

In no uncertain terms, Pennsylvania is in need of more immigration. This is especially apparent given the last two decades of population trends and the resulting economic impacts. The state's total population has declined and is rapidly aging. We've seen time and time again that where there has been population growth, immigration has been the largest driver of that growth, thereby deterring the worst of the decline. However, more immigration to the Commonwealth is needed given the median age of the statewide population and the need for workforce-age labor. This is the trend throughout the state, especially in rural areas. Low wages and a lack of affordable housing and childcare are stunting population growth in these areas. Moreover, due to a lack of federal legislation enabling immigrants to work in agriculture, jobs remain unavailable and therefore unfilled.

The positive impact immigrants have on the state economy cannot be overstated. Immigrants in Pennsylvania had a spending power of \$35.9 billion and paid \$13.6 billion in taxes in 2023¹⁷⁰ and 67,000 immigrant entrepreneurs generated \$2 billion in income in 2023.¹⁷¹ Furthermore, as the immigrant community continues to grow and drive positive economic change, their influence as a voting bloc grows as well. Pennsylvania has one of the largest populations of naturalized citizens in the country and as these new members of the electorate are added to the voting rolls, the needs of these voters must be listened to.

Pennsylvania faces a key decision in 2026: on one hand, it can continue to ignore immigrants' contributions to the state and accept the looming population cliff and the economic losses that come with it, or the Commonwealth can embrace the immigrant community and champion welcoming legislation that will bring much-needed population and economic growth to the state. For a brighter future and a stronger state, welcoming immigrants to Pennsylvania is the common-sense choice.

¹⁷⁰*New Americans in Pennsylvania. (2023). American Immigration Council.*

<https://map.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/locations/pennsylvania/#>

¹⁷¹*Ibid.*



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