

# New Americans in Ada County

A Snapshot of the Demographic and Economic Contributions of Immigrants in the County<sup>1</sup>



State & Local

## POPULATION GROWTH



Immigrant share of the population, 2016

Between 2011 and 2016, the population in the county grew 8.1%.

The immigrant population increased 9.9%.

### Total population

388,962 → 420,522



### Immigrant population

24,037 → 26,412



**7.5%**

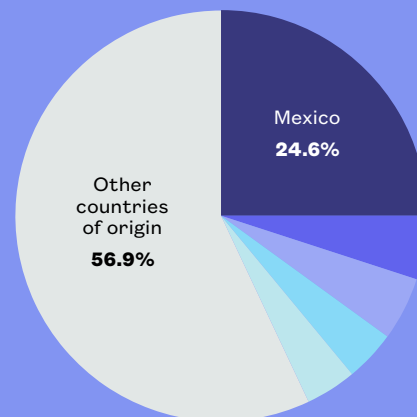
Number of immigrants living in Ada County in 2016:

**26,412**

Contribution to overall growth by the foreign-born population

Top five countries of origin for immigrants living in Ada County:

- 1 Mexico ..... 24.6%
- 2 China ..... 5.3%
- 3 Canada ..... 5.0%
- 4 Bosnia ..... 4.3%
- 5 India ..... 3.9%



## SPENDING POWER & TAX CONTRIBUTIONS

In 2016, foreign-born residents in Ada County contributed **\$1.8B** to the county's GDP.<sup>2</sup>

Given their income, immigrants contributed significantly to state and local taxes, including property, sales, and excise taxes levied by state or municipal governments.

Amount earned by immigrant households in 2016: **\$637.5M**

**\$109M**  
went to federal taxes.<sup>3</sup>

**\$49.6M**  
went to state and local taxes.<sup>4</sup>

Leaving them with **\$478.8M** in spending power.

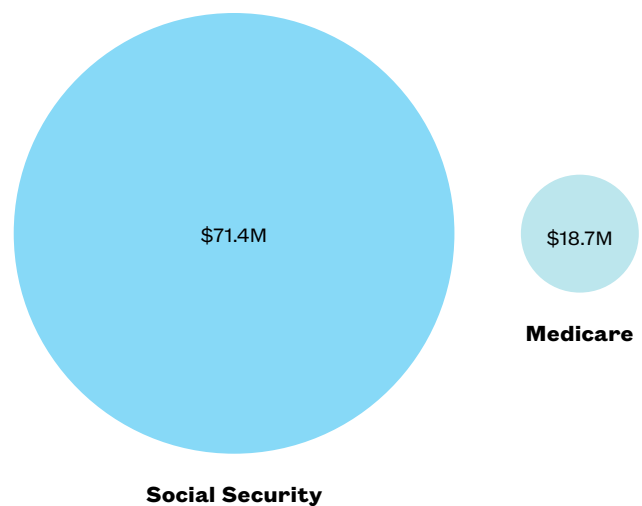
**23.1%** of immigrants in the region received Medicare or Medicaid, compared with **24.9%** of the U.S.-born residents in 2016.



About **55.4%** of immigrants had private healthcare coverage, while **23.2%** had public healthcare coverage.



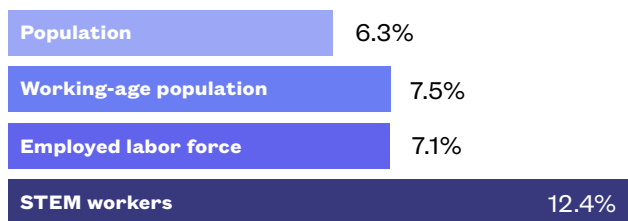
Immigrants also support federal social programs. In 2016, they contributed **\$71.4M** to Social Security and **\$18.7M** to Medicare.



## LABOR FORCE GROWTH

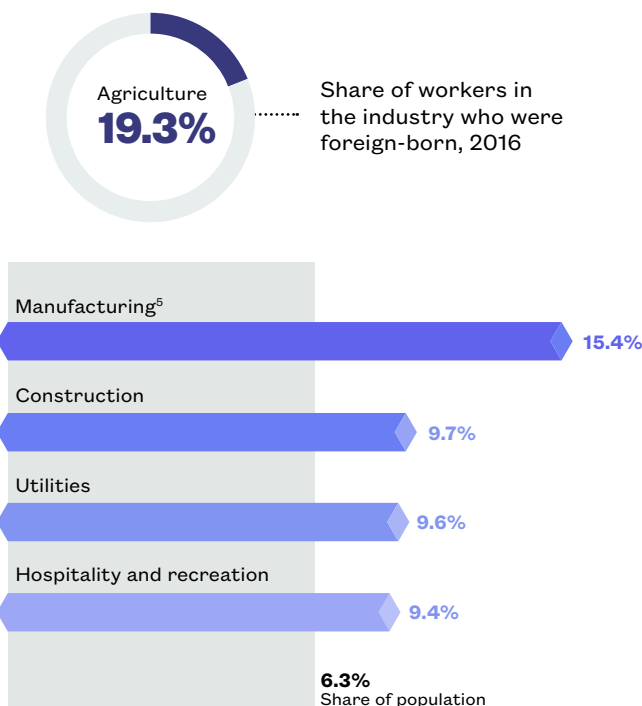
Although the foreign-born made up **6.3%** of the county's overall population, they represented **7.5%** of its working-age\* population, **7.1%** of its employed labor force, and **12.4%** of its STEM workers in 2016.

### Immigrant shares of the...



\* Working-age refers to people ages 16-64 years old.

Immigrants are significantly overrepresented in several **key industries** in the county. This includes:



## SPOTLIGHT ON

# Joaquin Cordero

Owner, 27<sup>th</sup> St. Automotive

**J**oaquin Cordero met his wife while working in Cancun, and moved with her in 1998 to Boise, her hometown. He had earned a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering in Mexico, but did not have U.S. licensure and spoke only Spanish. So he went to work as an auto technician.

"When I arrived, I knew no English. I went to the university here, it had ESL classes. I took those for a few years, twice a week," he says. "Then I took some formal English classes at the university." Later, he entered a master's degree program in engineering.

When the recession hit his company in 2008, Cordero volunteered for the first round of layoffs.

"I thought it was time to look for something else. Since I like to work on cars and work on mechanical stuff, I decided to open my own shop," he says. "It was my first business. But my dad was an instructor mechanic in my hometown, and he has his own shop. So I knew some things. And I also worked in a dealership."

"I was pretty confident about how to fix cars, but I didn't know anything about how to present it to the customer, about having a web site, how much money to have, that kind of stuff," he says. "It was a little crazy."

Cordero may not have known what he didn't know when he started, but when it became apparent, he sought out management seminars and attended industry conferences to learn. Steadily, the business grew. Now, 10 years later, 27th St. Automotive has seven employees, four of whom were born in the United States, has expanded to five bays, and serves almost 2,000 customers a year. He donates thousands of dollars annually to the Boise public school his sons attend.

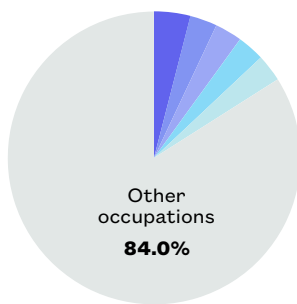
"To be honest, at the beginning it was a rough transition," he says of his move to a new country. "But there are always challenges. It's just part of life."

"Now I like Boise more. It is my home," he adds. "I got lucky that when I asked people, they helped me."

**LABOR FORCE GROWTH CONT.**

Immigrants tended to concentrate in these **occupations** in the county in 2016:

- 1 Janitors ..... 4.3%
- 2 Maids & Housekeepers ..... 3.2%
- 3 Cooks. .... 2.9%
- 4 Engineers ..... 2.8%
- 5 Agricultural Workers..... 2.8%



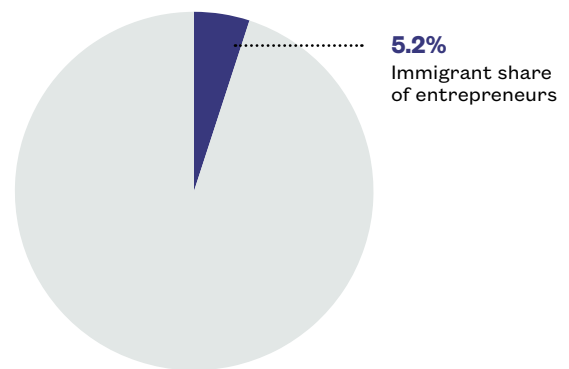
Because of the role immigrants play in the workforce helping companies keep jobs on U.S. soil, we estimate that by 2016, immigrants living in the county helped create or preserve

**1,215**  
**local manufacturing jobs**  
 that would have otherwise vanished or moved elsewhere.<sup>6</sup>

**ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

Immigrants represented **5.2%** of the entrepreneurs in Ada County in 2016.

**1,163** foreign-born people worked for their own businesses, generating **\$37M** in business income.



Ada County Businesses, 2012	Sales Revenue, 2012	Number of Paid Employees, 2012 <sup>7</sup>
Asian-owned	<b>\$187.7M</b>	<b>1,938</b>
Hispanic-owned	<b>\$150.5M</b>	<b>1,088</b>

SPOTLIGHT ON

# Palina Louangketh

## Owner, Sapphire Unicorn Consulting

**W**hen Palina Louangketh was three years old, her mother walked her and her brother into a field after a family dinner and kept going. They were escaping Laos, and would walk for two and a half weeks, always at night to evade communist patrols. During the day they hid or posed as farm workers.

“We would climb into the trees to sleep for 15 minutes. We were so exhausted,” recalls Louangketh. Corpses along the way served as a reminder of the danger. In one of Louangketh’s earliest memories, she awoke from a nap behind a bush to hear a group of soldiers.

“I knew we were scared because my mom kept telling me, Be quiet, be quiet, be quiet,” she says.

At the banks of the Mekong River, her terrified mother prayed that the escape guides would not tip the rowboat and leave them to drown halfway across, a common practice to hasten a guide’s return to safety.

After eight months in refugee camps in Thailand and the Philippines, the family was resettled in Boise, with help from International Christian Aid.

“For five years my mom was so grateful that we went to five different churches every week,” she says. “She wanted to show them she was appreciative.”

Parishioners took turns housing the three until a small garage apartment was found. Louangketh’s mother took a seamstress job making a few dollars per hour and eventually saved \$10,000 for a down payment on a house.

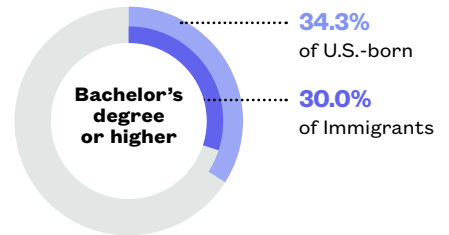
Today Louangketh directs Sapphire Unicorn Consulting, a leadership consultancy for management across industries, and teaches at Boise State University. She is pursuing a doctorate in strategic leadership at Regent University, and volunteers as an advisor in the Idaho Lao community in partnership with the Idaho Office for Refugees. Her brother served two combat tours in Iraq with the U.S. Army, was injured in combat, and retired with honors. He also runs his own company and is pursuing a PhD.

Throughout her work and studies, Louangketh has chosen to stay in Boise. “Boise is home. It’s where I grew up,” she says. “I’m very fond of Boise.”

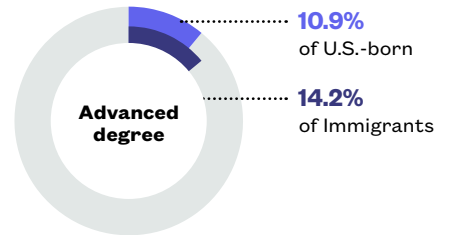
### EDUCATION

Immigrants are more likely to have an **advanced degree**.

Share of population over age 25 with a **bachelor’s degree or higher** in 2016:



Share of population over age 25 with an **advanced degree** in 2016



# 961

students who were enrolled in colleges and universities in the county during the fall of 2015 were temporary residents.<sup>8</sup> International students supported...

# 296

local jobs and spent...

# \$24.7M

in the 2016-2017 academic year.<sup>9</sup>

EDUCATION CONT.

3.9%

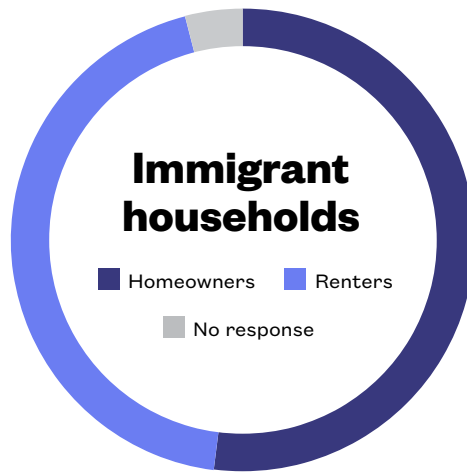
Share of immigrant students under age 18 who attended public schools in the county in 2016.

HOUSING WEALTH

In 2016,

51.5%

of immigrants in Ada County owned their own homes, compared to 68.2% of the U.S-born.



The total property value of immigrant households was

\$1.0B.

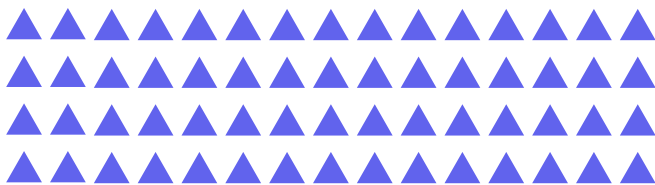
Their total annual rent was

\$36.9M.

43.8%

of the immigrants were renters.

In 2016, 62.0% of immigrant households lived in houses...



62.0% in houses

And 25.4% lived in apartments.

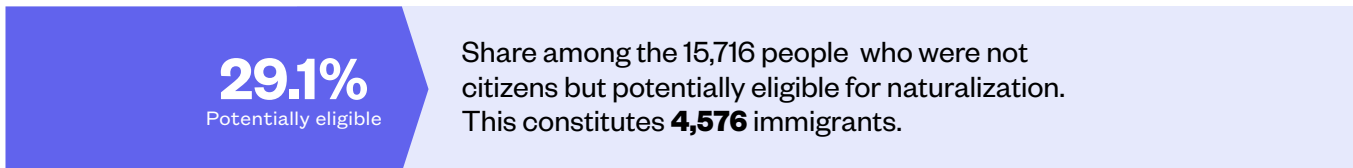


25.4% in apartments

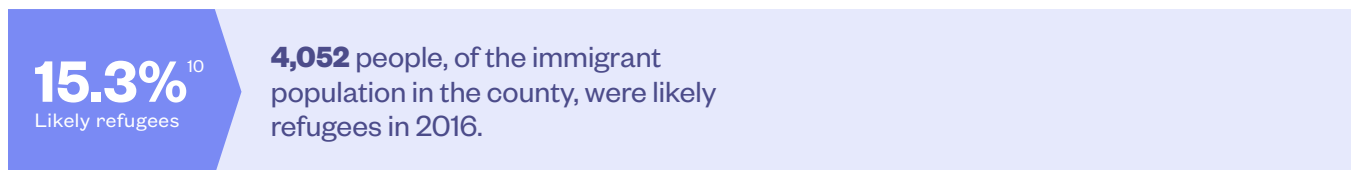


12.6% in other types of housing or no response

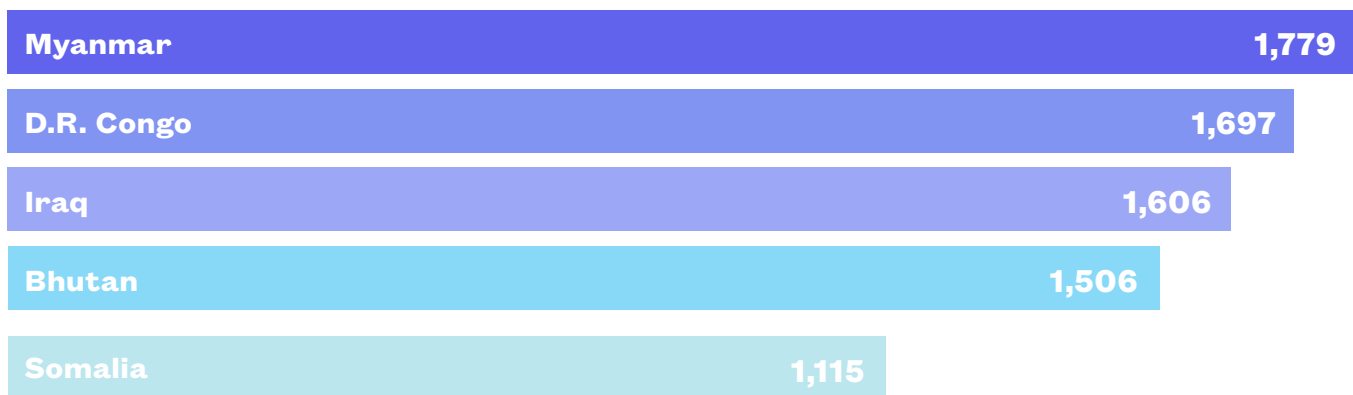
## NATURALIZATION



## REFUGEES



Between 2002 and 2016, 8,605 refugees settled in Ada County. Top 5 countries of origin:<sup>11</sup>



For more city, district, and state-level data, visit [MapTheImpact.org](https://MapTheImpact.org) and explore our interactive map.



- 1 Unless otherwise specified, data comes from 5-year samples of the American Community Survey from 2011 and 2016 and figures refer to Ada County, Idaho.
- 2 These figures derive from our calculations based on immigrants' share of wage income and self-employment income in the 5-year ACS sample from 2016 and the statistics of GDP from the National Association of Counties.
- 3 U.S. Congressional Budget Office. 2016. "The Distribution of Household Income and Federal Taxes, 2013."
- 4 Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy. 2015. "Who Pays? A Distributional Analysis of the Tax Systems in All Fifty States."
- 5 The manufacturing sector includes a wide range of industries such as electronic, machinery and food manufacturing.
- 6 Vigdor, Jacob. 2013. "Immigration and the Revival of American Cities: From Preserving Manufacturing Jobs to Strengthening the Housing Market." New American Economy.
- 7 2012 Survey of Business Owners, U.S. Census Bureau
- 8 Data on total student enrollment in the county is derived from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System maintained by the National Center for Education Statistics. Temporary residents refer to people who are not U.S. citizens or permanent residents.
- 9 Economic data is derived from the International Student Economic Value Tool maintained by NAFSA, the association of international educators.
- 10 New American Economy. 2017. "From Struggle to Resilience: The Economic Impact of Refugees in America."
- 11 Refugee Processing Center, U.S. Department of State.