

New Americans in Genesee County

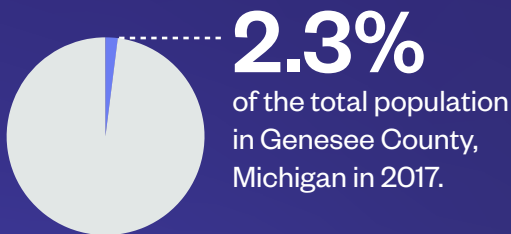
The Demographic and Economic Contributions of Immigrants in the County¹



State & Local

Population Growth

Immigrants made up



9,461
immigrants lived in the county in 2017.

Between 2012 and 2017, the immigrant population in the county increased by:

6.5%.

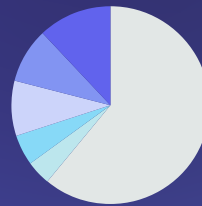
The overall population decreased by:

2.1%.

Without growth in the immigrant population, the decline in the city's population would have been even greater, falling by **2.2%.**

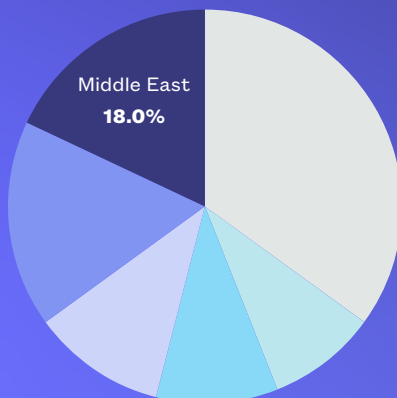
The top five countries of origin for immigrants were:

1. Mexico 11.5%
2. India 8.9%
3. Canada 8.8%
4. Germany 5.3%
5. Lebanon 3.8%



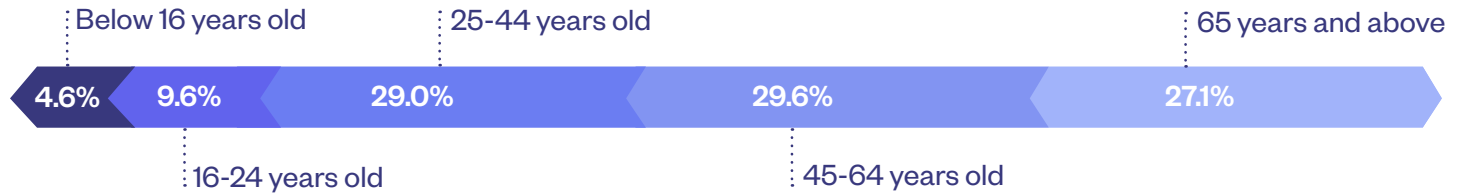
The top five regions of origin for immigrants were:

1. Middle East 18.0%
2. Latin America and the Caribbean 17.0%
3. Central and Eastern Europe 10.8%
4. South Asia 10.3%
5. Other Northern America 8.8%



Population Growth cont.

Immigrants living in the county by **age group**:



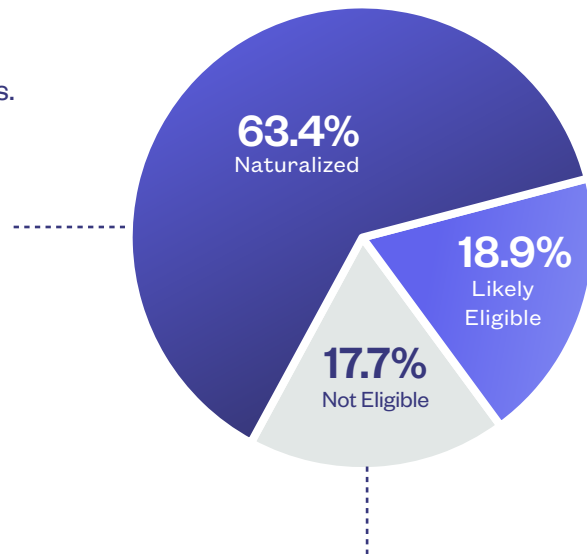
Naturalization

Share of immigrants who were naturalized U.S. citizens. This represents a total of

6,000

immigrants.

Nationally, **49.4%** of immigrants are naturalized citizens.



Share of immigrants who were likely eligible to naturalize. This represents a total of

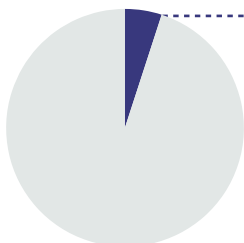
1,792

immigrants.

Nationally, **15.9%** of immigrants are likely eligible to naturalize.

Share of immigrants ineligible for naturalization for various reasons including: temporary visas, residency requirements, and undocumented.

Refugees

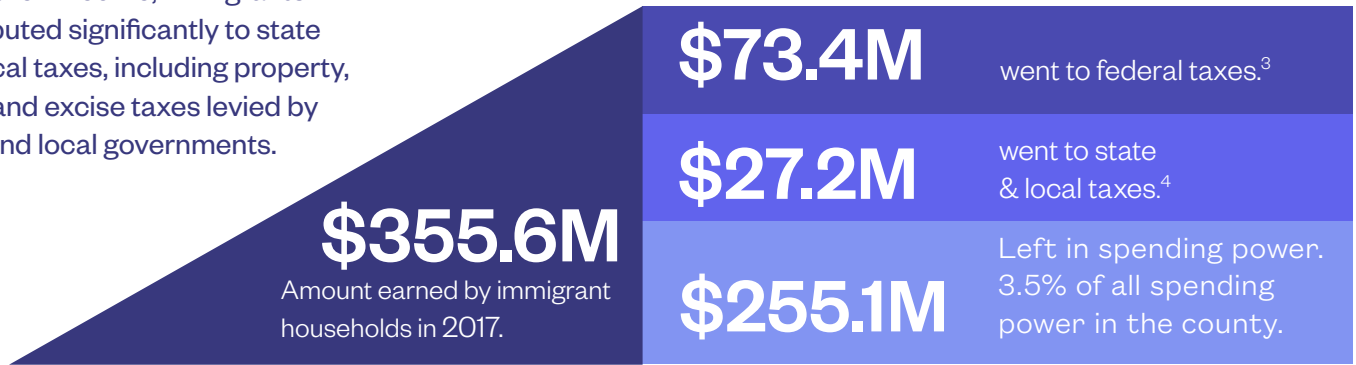


5.1%

of the foreign-born population were likely refugees.²

Spending Power & Tax Contributions

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

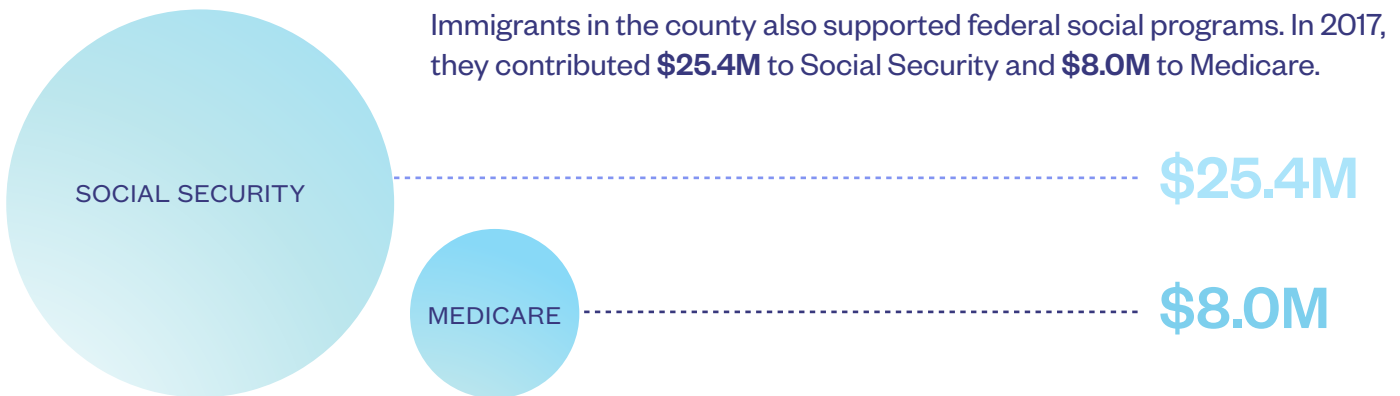


\$617.7M

Amount that foreign-born residents contributed to the county's GDP in 2017.

4.2%

Share of the county's total GDP contributed by foreign-born residents in 2017.⁵



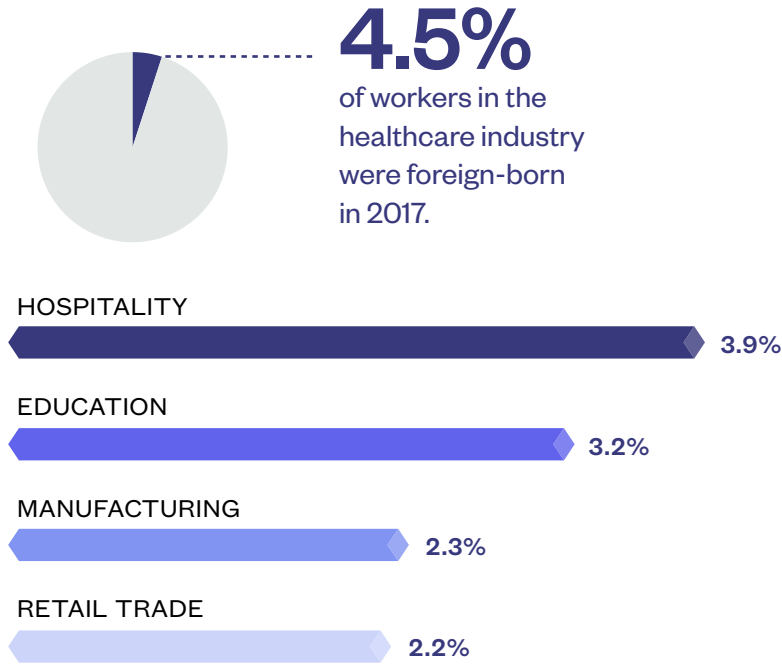
Workforce

Although the foreign-born made up **2.3%** of the county's overall population, they represented **2.5%** of its working-age⁶ population, **2.8%** of its employed labor force, and **3.6%** of its STEM⁷ workers in 2017.



Workforce cont.

Immigrants played a critical role in several **key industries** in the county. This included:



Because of the role immigrants play in the workforce helping companies keep jobs on U.S. soil, we estimate that:

*Immigrants living in the county had **helped create or preserve 435 local manufacturing jobs** that would have otherwise vanished or moved elsewhere by 2017.⁸*

Entrepreneurship

12.0%

of foreign-born residents worked for their own businesses, compared with

8.1%

of the U.S.-born residents in 2017.

IMMIGRANTS



U.S.-BORN



In the county, immigrants were **48.6% more likely** to be entrepreneurs than their U.S.-born counterparts.

*Nationally, immigrants are **30.1%** more likely to be entrepreneurs than their U.S.-born counterparts.*

Despite making up **2.3%** of the population, immigrants made up **4.1%** of the business owners in the county in 2017.

IMMIGRANT SHARE OF POPULATION IN THE COUNTY:

2.3%

IMMIGRANT SHARE OF ENTREPRENEURS IN THE COUNTY:

4.1%

Education

893

students who were enrolled in colleges and universities in the county during the fall of 2015 were temporary residents.⁹

129

local jobs were supported by international students.

\$22.9M

was spent by international students in the 2017-18 academic year.¹⁰

Share of the county's population aged 25 or above that held a **bachelor's degree or higher** in 2017:



Share of the county's population aged 25 or above that held an **advanced degree** in 2017:



Housing Wealth



In 2017,

68.8%

of immigrant households in the county owned their own homes, compared to

70.3%

of U.S.-born households.

Total property value of immigrant households:

\$457.2M or 3.3%

of the total housing value in the county.

Amount of immigrants who rent:

31.2%

Their total annual rent paid:

\$110.3M

SPOTLIGHT ON

Qamar Ahsan

OWNER, AEROTRAIN CORP.

Qamar Ahsan first came to Flint when his wife was interviewing for medical residency programs in 1993. The couple, both from Pakistan, liked the idea of living in a smaller city, and she accepted an internship in internal medicine at McLaren Regional Hospital. It was a wise choice. The family moved to Flint in 1994 and, 25 years on, has no plans to leave. “We have felt welcome here,” says Ahsan.

It has been a good choice for Flint, as well. His wife, Dr. Lubna Ahsan, has remained at McLaren as an internist; all three of the couple’s children are entering the medical field — one is a new doctor, one is an aspiring dentist, and one is studying pharmacology — and plan to stay in the area; and Qamar started a business that now adds some \$2.5 million to Flint area payrolls.

Ahsan’s business is AeroTrain Corp., an aeronautical engineering firm that creates functional airplane mockups used to train aircraft mechanics. An avionics engineer, Ahsan came up with the idea in 1994 as a way to stay home with their young child when his wife began her residency.

“During my career I had also taught pilots, engineers, and technicians, so I knew what was required and what the instructors are looking for that they cannot find,” he says. “This is where I thought my knowledge could be useful.”

Ahsan’s first project began as an idea from a school. Ahsan worked around the clock for months to create a design, then found manufacturers in Flint to build the prototype: an autopilot system attached to a 12-foot wide model airplane. When students adjust the mechanics, the plane responds. “Students should be able to understand how the autopilot works,” says Ahsan.

Today AeroTrain produces more than 88 different training programs and has customers in 33 countries. It has 16 full-time employees in its Industrial Park office, and contracts upwards of one million dollars annually to area fabricators. Anticipating continued growth, the company recently purchased 6.6 acres to build a new Flint office.

“I call this city my home and I want to make a positive impact here,” Ahsan says.

SPOTLIGHT ON

Marie Ronise

OWNER, UNIQUE CHILDREN'S CENTER

Marie Ronise was 15 years old when she received “a strange phone call.” She had moved to the United States from Haiti at age 12, and had been left with cousins in Miami after her mother passed away. Her brother had been sent to live with family in Williamston, 45 miles south of Flint.

The woman’s voice on the phone that day sounded unfamiliar. “She kept saying Michigan. We want you to come to Michigan so you can visit your brother,” Ronise recalls.

Ronise ended up staying in the state, although it was not easy at first. The only black student at her Williamston high school, she spent a year being teased, bullied, and excluded. “To me, some situations I just look at them and I keep moving,” she says. “My best medicine is to keep my head up and keep smiling. That’s what I live by.” Her strategy has served her well. Ronise moved to Lansing to live with a pastor’s family, graduating in 1994, and two years later married a man from Flint, where she has lived since. “I feel pretty welcome here,” she says.

Her actions alone show her gratitude. After earning an associate’s degree in childcare and caring for children in her home, Ronise leased a building in 2010 and opened Unique Children’s Center, a daycare committed to helping what she calls “the whole family.” She has five full-time employees and one part-time assistant, all of whom were born in the United States.

If families are genuinely struggling to pay their childcare bills, Ronise does not kick the child out of daycare; she helps the family, at times even forgiving their childcare debt. She buys diapers, food, gas. Once a year, she and her husband give a used car to a family without transportation. “I tell my daycare parents, the mission is not just about your child. It’s about the family as a whole,” she says.

“I believe that God has placed the opportunity to help in my hands,” Ronise says. “You just try to help because that’s how the community will be better.”

- 1 Unless otherwise specified, data comes from 5-year samples of the American Community Survey from 2012 and 2017 and figures refer to Genesee County, Michigan.
- 2 New American Economy. 2017. "From Struggle to Resilience: The Economic Impact of Refugees in America."
- 3 U.S. Congressional Budget Office. 2018. "The Distribution of Household Income and Federal Taxes, 2015."
- 4 Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy. 2015. "Who Pays? A Distributional Analysis of the Tax Systems in All Fifty States."
- 5 These figures derive from our calculations based on immigrants' share of wage income and self-employment income in the 5-year ACS sample from 2017 and the statistics of GDP from the National Association of Counties.
- 6 We define working age as 16-64 years of age.
- 7 Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math.
- 8 Vigdor, Jacob. 2013. "Immigration and the Revival of American Cities: From Preserving Manufacturing Jobs to Strengthening the Housing Market." New American Economy.
- 9 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.
- 10 Economic data is derived from the International Student Economic Value Tool maintained by NAFSA, the association of international educators.