

New Americans in Passaic County

The Demographic and Economic Contributions of Immigrants in the County^{1,2,3}

FEBRUARY 2022



PASSAIC COUNTY DIVISION OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



WILLIAM PATERSON UNIVERSITY SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CENTER

Population

157,100

immigrants lived in Passaic County, New Jersey, in 2019.

Immigrants made up



of the total population in the county in 2019.

Between 2014 and 2019, the total population in the county decreased by



The immigrant population increased by

+10.1%

during the same time period.

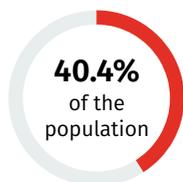
Without the growth in the immigrant population, the drop in the overall population would have been greater, falling by



Population by region:

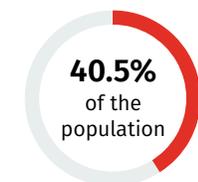
Passaic County (Southeast) -- Paterson City

58,800 immigrants made up



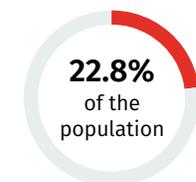
Passaic County (South) -- Passaic and Clifton (Southeast) Cities

56,100 immigrants made up



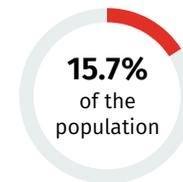
Passaic County (Central) -- Hawthorne Borough and Clifton City (Northwest)

25,200 immigrants made up



Passaic County (North) -- Ringwood, Wanaque and Pompton Lakes Boroughs

17,000 immigrants made up



Between 2010 and 2020, the overall population in Passaic County increased from ...

501,226 in 2010

524,118⁴ in 2020 (4.6% increase)

- 1 Unless otherwise specified, data comes from 5-year samples of the American Community Survey from 2014 and 2019 and figures refer to Passaic County, New Jersey.
- 2 Estimates provided in this report may slightly undercount the immigrant population. The American Community Survey historically undersamples the foreign-born population, especially among lower income, more recently arrived, and less English-fluent immigrant populations.
- 3 We define "immigrant" as any non-citizen or any naturalized U.S. citizen. They include naturalized citizens, green card holders, temporary visa holders, refugees, asylees, and undocumented immigrants, among others.
- 4 The 2020 U.S. Census, U.S. Census Bureau

Demographics



of immigrants in Passaic County are recent arrivals, with no more than 5 years of residency in the United States.

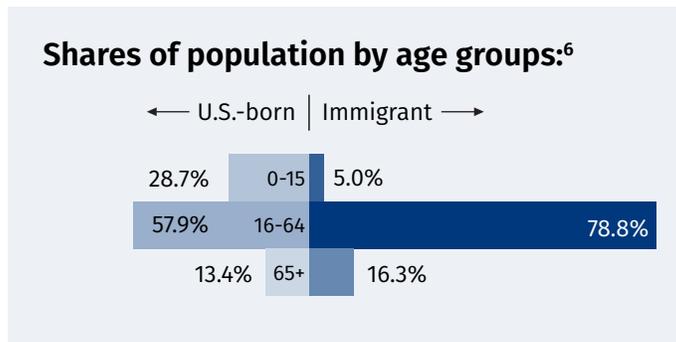


of immigrants in the county have resided in the United States for longer than 5 years.

In the county, immigrants are



more likely to be of working-age than their U.S.-born counterparts, allowing them to actively participate in the labor force and contribute to the economy as taxpayers and consumers.⁵



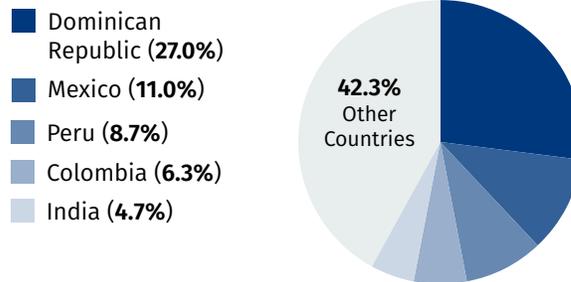
186,000

commuters worked in the county in 2019.



or **76,400** commuters, were foreign-born.

The top five countries of origin for immigrants living in the county:



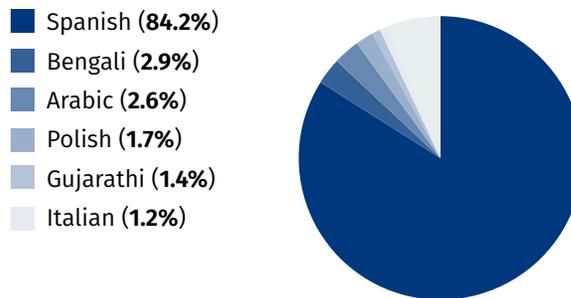
58,700

immigrants living in the county had limited English language proficiency, making up



of the immigrant population.⁷

Among the limited English language proficiency population, the top languages spoken at home other than English were⁸:



⁵ We define working age as 16-64 years of age.

⁶ Totals may not add up to 100 percent due to rounding.

⁷ For the purpose of this report, we define people with limited English language proficiency as the ones who do not speak English at all or do not speak English well.

⁸ Due to small sample size, we are unable to release our estimates of immigrants with limited English proficiency who spoke other languages at home, including Korean, Turkish, Albanian, Hindi, and Russian.

Demographics *continued*

Share of population by ethnic groups⁹:

2010 2020

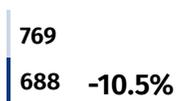
Hispanic



Black



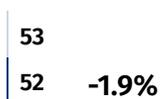
American Indian and Alaska Native



Asian



Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander



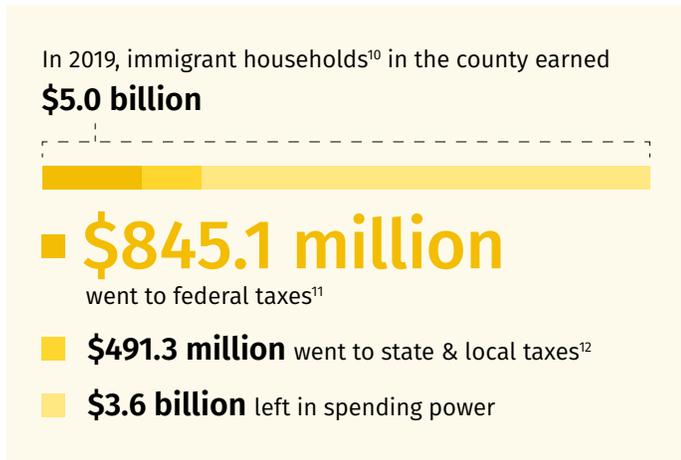
Other/Mixed



⁹ The 2020 U.S. Census, U.S. Census Bureau

Spending Power & Tax Contributions

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



This means that foreign-born households held



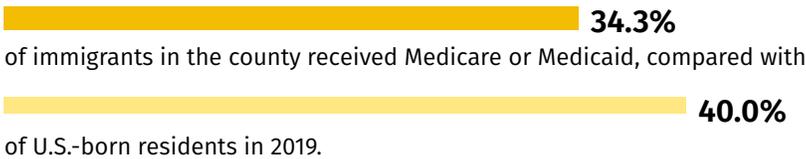
of all spending power in the county.

In 2019, foreign-born residents in the county contributed



to the county's GDP, or **33.2%** of the total.¹³

Immigrants in the county also supported federal social programs. In 2019, they contributed



About **62.4%** of U.S.-born had private healthcare coverage, while **40.2%** had public healthcare coverage.¹⁴



Private Public

About **43.7%** of immigrants had private healthcare coverage, while **34.4%** had public healthcare coverage.



Private Public

Given their household incomes, **28.5%** of immigrants live at or below 150% of the federal poverty threshold as compared to **22.3%** of U.S.-born residents.



Immigrants U.S.-born

¹⁰ Immigrant households refer to people living in a housing unit with an immigrant being the head of their unit.

¹¹ U.S. Congressional Budget Office. 2020. "The Distribution of Household Income and Federal Taxes, 2017."

¹² Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy. 2018. "Who Pays? A Distributional Analysis of the Tax Systems in All Fifty States."

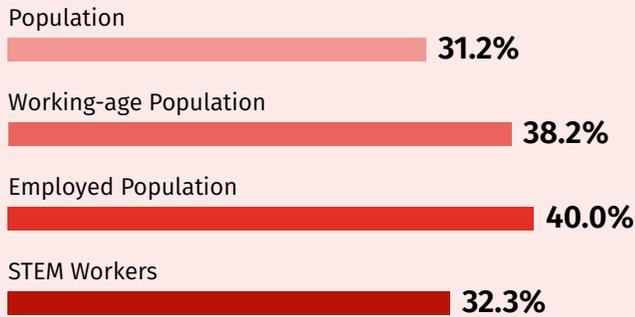
¹³ These figures derive from our calculations based on immigrants' share of wage income and self-employment income in the 5-year ACS sample from 2019 and the statistics of GDP from the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis.

¹⁴ Including people who have both public and private healthcare coverage.

Workforce

Although the foreign-born made up **31.2%** of the county's overall population, they represented **38.2%** of its working-age population, **40.0%** of its employed labor force, and **32.3%** of its STEM¹⁵ workers in 2019.

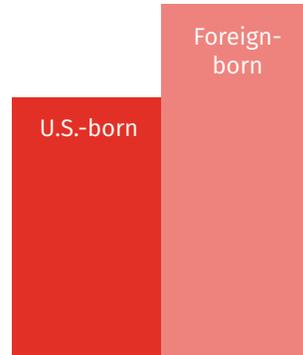
Immigrant shares of the...



Immigrants in the county are

36.0%

more likely to be working age than their U.S.-born counterparts.



The immigrant working-age population was **50.9%** female and **49.1%** male.



The employed immigrant population was **44.2%** female and **55.8%** male.



Top Occupations for Female Workers:

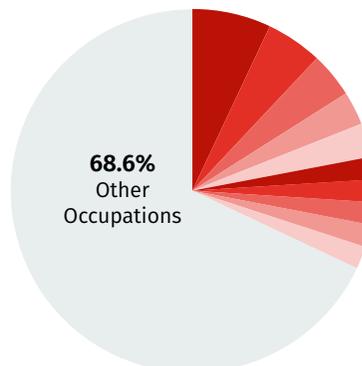
Laborers and Hand Movers.....	6.7%
Nursing Assistants.....	3.8%
Cashiers.....	3.8%

Top Occupations for Male Workers:

Truck Drivers.....	7.8%
Laborers and Hand Movers.....	6.5%
Construction Laborers.....	6.1%

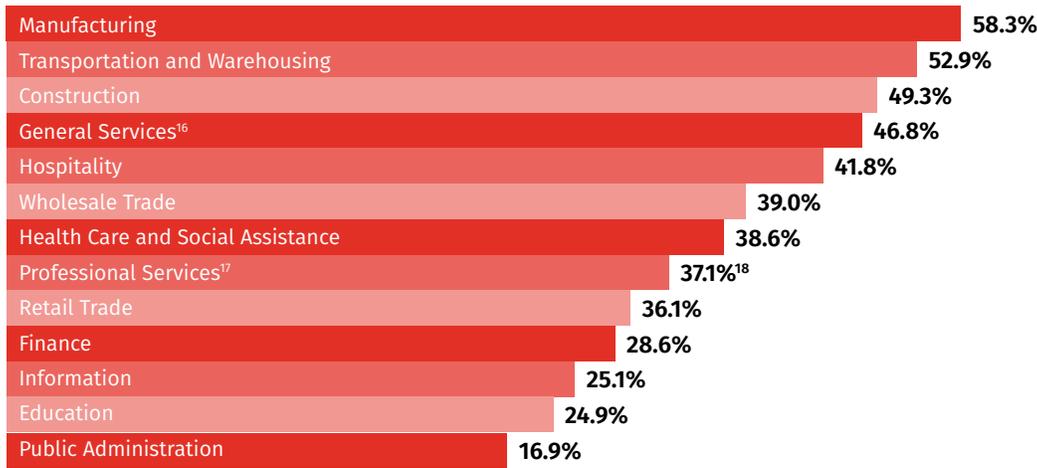
Immigrants tended to work in these occupations in the county in 2019:

- Laborers and Hand Movers (6.6%)
- Retail Salespersons (2.3%)
- Truck Drivers (4.5%)
- Cashiers (2.3%)
- Miscellaneous Production Workers (3.5%)
- Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners (1.9%)
- Construction Laborers (3.4%)
- Cooks (1.9%)
- Janitors and Building Cleaners (3.1%)
- Nursing Assistants (1.9%)



¹⁵ STEM refers to occupations that require background or expertise in Science, Technology, Engineering, and/or Math.

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



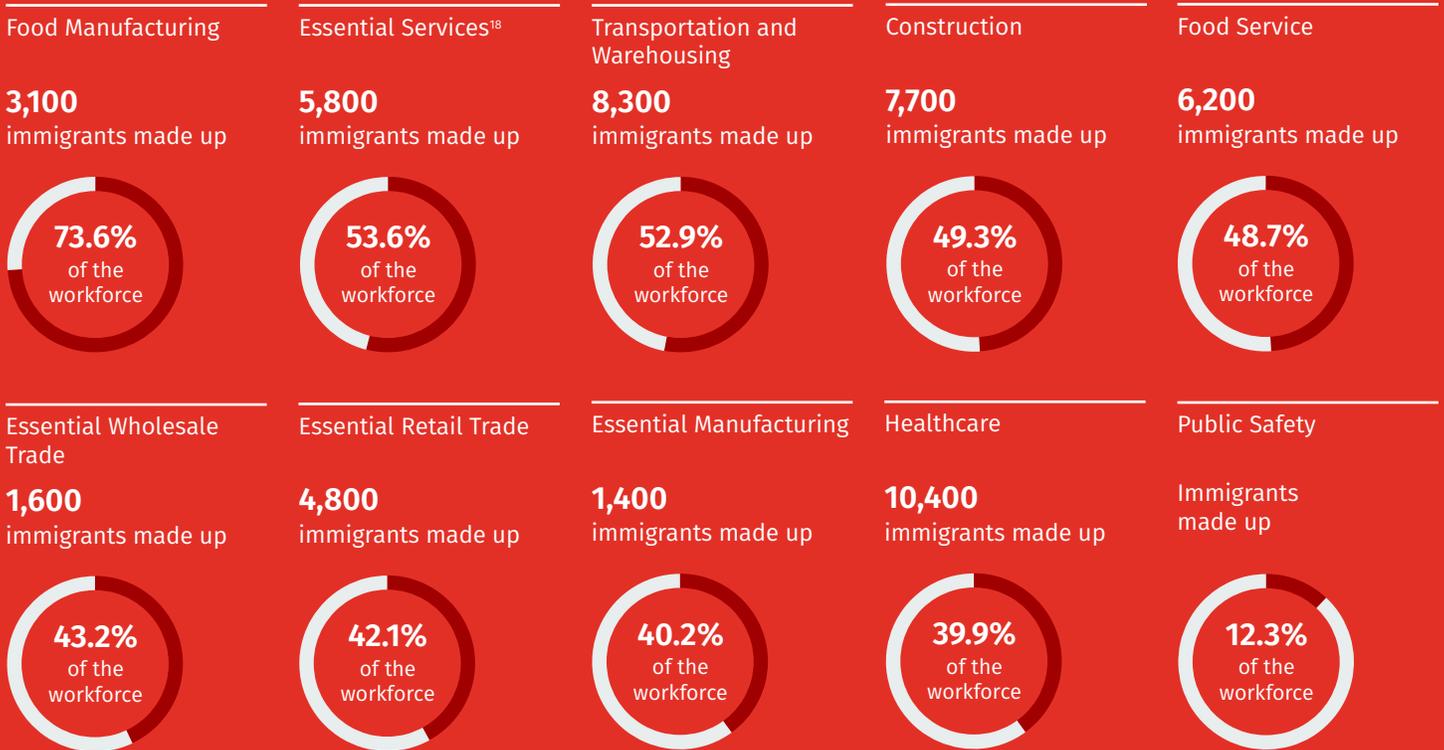
¹⁶ General services include personal services (e.g. laundry services, barber shops, and repair and maintenance), religious organizations, social services, and labor unions.

¹⁷ Professional services: Most of these industries include professions that require a degree or a license, such as legal services, accounting, scientific research, consulting services, etc.

¹⁸ These include services essential for daily living, such as building cleaning, waste management, auto repair, and veterinary services.

SPOTLIGHT ON Immigrant Essential Workers

Immigrants have also been playing vital roles in critical industries that have kept the country functioning throughout the Covid-19 crisis. Immigrants in the county continue working in these frontline and essential industries:



Workforce *continued*

Due to 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

7,200 manufacturing jobs

that would have otherwise vanished or moved elsewhere by 2019.¹⁹

SPOTLIGHT ON Job Demand In Passaic County In 2021

Not only are immigrants more likely to be of working age in the county, but they are also a crucial part of the county's economy, and could help us meet the needs of its fastest growing and most in-demand fields, especially as the need for bilingual and culturally competent public services and healthcare increases.

The top 5 industries with the highest demand for bilingual workers:²⁰

- | | | |
|------------------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Health Care & Social Assistance | 2. Information | 3. Finance and Insurance |
| 4. Educational Services | 5. Retail Trade | |

Entrepreneurship

Despite making up **31.2%** of the population, immigrants made up



of the business owners in the county in 2019.

Immigrants in Passaic County are



more likely to be an entrepreneur than their counterparts.

Immigrant entrepreneurs self-identified as **23.5%** female and **76.5%** male.



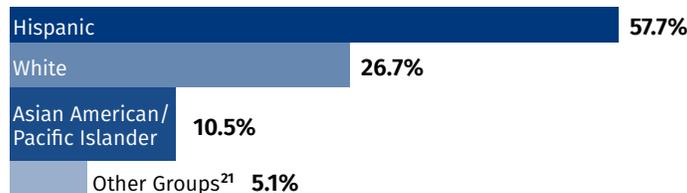
8,800

immigrant entrepreneurs generated

\$214.2 million

in business income for Passaic County.

Immigrant entrepreneurs by race and ethnicity:



¹⁹ Vigdor, Jacob. 2013. "Immigration and the Revival of American Cities: From Preserving Manufacturing Jobs to Strengthening the Housing Market." *New American Economy*.

²⁰ Data is obtained from Burning Glass Technologies for the time period between April 1, 2020 and March 31, 2021.

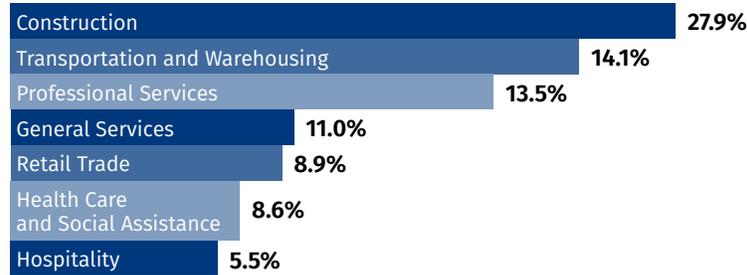
²¹ Because of limitations with small sample size, we are unable to provide estimates for other racial and ethnic groups, including Black or African American, Native American, mixed race, and other races and ethnicities.

Entrepreneurship (continued)

While **6.8%** of the U.S.-born population were entrepreneurs, **9.0%** of foreign-born residents worked for their own businesses.



Immigrant entrepreneurs tended to work in these key industries:



SPOTLIGHT ON Small Business Recovery from the Pandemic

While all Americans are struggling to adapt to their new reality in a time of economic shutdown, entrepreneurs within particularly vulnerable industries in the county face severe challenges posed by the COVID-19 crisis.

Construction

Of the **4,000** entrepreneurs, immigrants made up



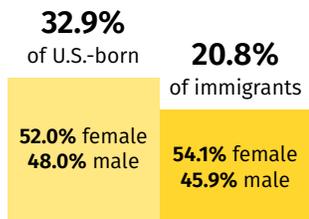
Professional and Business Services

Of the **3,800** entrepreneurs, immigrants made up

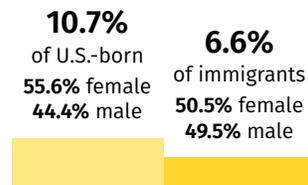


Education

Share of the county's population aged 25 or above that held a **bachelor's degree or higher** in 2019:



Share of the county's population aged 25 or above that held an **advanced degree** in 2019:



of K-12 students in the county were foreign-born in 2019.



of K-12 students in the county were children of immigrants in 2019.

Education (continued)

SPOTLIGHT ON University Population

648

students enrolled in colleges and universities in Passaic County in fall 2019 were temporary residents.²²

40

international students graduated with STEM degrees from colleges and universities in the county in the 2018-19 academic year.

232

jobs in higher education and other areas including accommodations, food, and transportation were supported by international students.

\$24.1 million

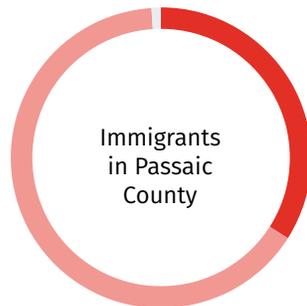
was spent by international students in the 2019-20 academic year.²³

Housing

In 2019, **40.3%** of immigrant households in Passaic County owned their own homes, compared to **59.4%** of U.S.-born households.



Immigrant U.S.-born



- Lived in Houses **21,700**, or **34.2%**
- Lived in Apartments **41,700**, or **65.6%**
- Lived in Other Types of Housing **0.3%**

The total property value of immigrant households was

\$8.9 billion

59.7%

of immigrant households were renters. Their total annual rent paid was

\$506.0 million

82.6% of immigrant households in the county had access to broadband connection in their homes as compared to **88.4%** of U.S.-born households.²⁴



Immigrant U.S.-born

²² 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. The colleges and universities where international students were enrolled in Passaic County included Montclair State University, William Paterson University of New Jersey, Berkeley College - Woodland Park, Passaic County Community College, and Capri Institute of Hair Design - Clifton.

²³ Economic data is derived from the International Student Economic Value Tool maintained by NAFSA, the association of international educators.

²⁴ This data point reports whether the respondent or any member of their household subscribed to the Internet using broadband (high speed) Internet service such as cable, fiber optic, or DSL service.

SPOTLIGHT ON

Alia Suqi

Owner, Nextwave Web

Growing up in Jordan as one of 14 siblings, Alia Suqi always knew she'd have to work hard to find her own way. Her parents were supportive, but there weren't many opportunities for a young woman in Jordan — so after finishing high school in 1986, Alia moved to New Jersey. "It was always my dream to come here," Suqi says. "Coming from a humble background, I saw this as my chance to make a better life for myself and my family."

Alia arrived on a student visa and earned a degree in computer science. She met her husband, Isa, a Jordanian-American electrical engineer, and gained a green card through marriage. After 10 years working as a computer programmer for a risk-management company, Alia started out on her own, and she and Isa launched a printing company called Nextwave Web.

They started in the basement of their home and gradually expanded. Today, Nextwave Web is a successful company with eight employees and revenues of over \$2 million a year. The pandemic made life difficult, but Alia and Isa took out loans to avoid laying off workers. "We have wonderful employees, and we didn't want a single person to go without a paycheck," Alia explains.

Along the way, Alia benefited from the support of William Paterson's Small Business Development Center, which helped her understand the nuts and bolts of running a company. "As a small business owner, you have to wear so many hats," Alia says. "Having somewhere to go for advice was very, very helpful."

Alia strongly believes in giving back to the community. She served on the boards of her Rotary Club chapter and the North Jersey Chamber of Commerce, and worked with the Women's Empowerment Democratic Organization to support female political candidates. As the mother of children with special needs, Alia also ran a support group for parents. She dreams of one day launching a nonprofit to advocate for children with special needs.

SPOTLIGHT ON

Mario Tommolillo

Owner, Mario's Classic Auto Body of Paterson

On the morning that Mario Tommolillo arrived in the United States from Italy, his parents woke him up at 5 a.m. to see the Statue of Liberty. It was 1967, and the family entered New York harbor on the SS United States, then a famous ocean liner. "It was so foggy we couldn't see our own noses," Mario laughs. "But the important thing is that we had so much anticipation — we were so excited to become part of the best country in the world."

The family settled in Bergen County, where Mario's father worked as a jeweler. Within a few days, Mario had started school and — despite being just 11 and speaking no English — also found evening work in a hardware store. "I've been working ever since," he says.

Mario's parents hoped he'd get a college education, and he attended Bergen County Community College, but in 1974, he left to work as a driver in an auto dealership. "I thought it would be a short-term thing, but almost 50 years later I'm still working with cars," he says.

In 1994, after saving for many years, Mario refinanced his home and bought the dealership's body shop. Today, it's a thriving business with 14 employees and annual revenues of over \$2 million. "It hasn't been easy," Mario says. "But I thank the Lord for giving me the strength to survive and keep all 14 of my guys working through the pandemic." He has also put his two daughters through college — something that would make his parents proud. "I'm continuing their dream through my own two girls," he says.

Mario is now a well-known figure in Passaic County. As an appointee to the Paterson Restoration Corporation and Urban Enterprise Zone, he supports local businesses. He also sits on the board of the local Boys & Girls Club, and is vice-president of The Columbians, an Italian-American group that has raised over \$3 million for local causes, and donates tens of thousands every year to local food pantries. "I'm compelled to give back to this community, because it's given me so much," Mario says. "I'm thankful every day for what I was able to achieve, and I want to pay something back."

Naturalization



■ **53.8%** Naturalized Citizens (84,500)
 ■ **10.7%** Likely Eligible to Naturalize²⁵ (16,800)
 ■ **35.5%** Not Eligible to Naturalize (55,800)



Nationally, **48.7%** of immigrants are naturalized citizens, **15.9%** are likely eligible to naturalize, and **35.4%** are not yet eligible.



of households in Passaic County had at least one foreign-born resident in 2019.

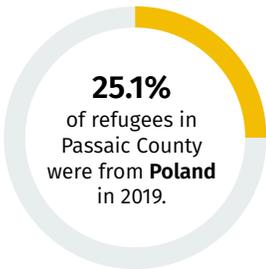
If all immigrants who are eligible to naturalize became U.S. citizens, their earning potential would increase by

+8.9%²⁶

Refugees

3,000

residents, or **1.9%** of the foreign-born population in Passaic County, were likely refugees.^{27, 28}



In 2019, refugee households²⁹ in the county earned **\$144.2 million**

■ **\$29.6 million**

went to federal taxes³⁰

■ **\$14.4 million** went to state & local taxes³¹

■ **\$100.2 million** left in spending power



of refugees in the area were **naturalized U.S. citizens.**



of refugees held at least a **bachelor's degree.**



of refugees held an **advanced degree.**

²⁵An immigrant is eligible to naturalize if they are documented, have resided in the United States for five years or more, and speak English well or fluently, as well as immigrants in military service who meet certain requirements such as speaking English well. Those who do not fit these criteria are deemed to be not eligible or currently ineligible to naturalize.

²⁶Enchautegui, Maria E. and Linda Giannarelli. 2015. "The Economic Impact of Naturalization on Immigrants and Cities." Urban Institute.

²⁷New American Economy. 2017. "From Struggle to Resilience: The Economic Impact of Refugees in America."

²⁸Refugees are identified through an imputation method, similar to the work of Kallick and Mathema, "Refugee Integration in the United States," and Capps, R. and Newland K., et al. "The Integration Outcomes of U.S. Refugees." More on our methodology here: <https://www.newamericaneconomy.org/methodology/>

²⁹Refugee households refer to people living in a housing unit with a refugee being the head of their unit.

³⁰U.S. Congressional Budget Office. 2020. "The Distribution of Household Income and Federal Taxes, 2017."

³¹Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy. 2018. "Who Pays? A Distributional Analysis of the Tax Systems in All Fifty States."

DACA-Eligible Population

3,300

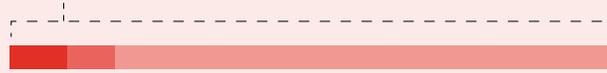
DACA-eligible people lived in Passaic County in 2019.

They made up



of the immigrant population.

In 2019, DACA-eligible households in the county earned **\$58.5 million**



■ **\$6.6 million**

went to federal taxes³²

■ **\$5.2 million** went to state & local taxes³³

■ **\$46.7 million** was left in spending power

Undocumented Immigrants

39,000

undocumented immigrants in Passaic County in 2019³⁴. They made up



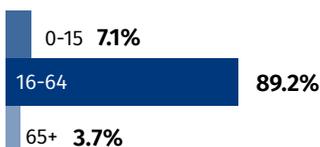
of the immigrant population.

Undocumented immigrants are highly active in the labor force. About

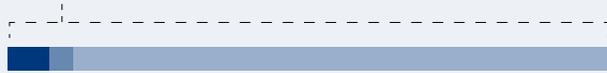


are of working-age in the county.

Undocumented immigrants by age groups:



In 2019, undocumented immigrant households³⁵ earned **\$711.5 million**



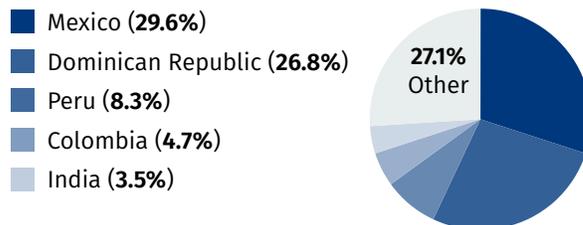
■ **\$49.5 million**

went to federal taxes³⁶

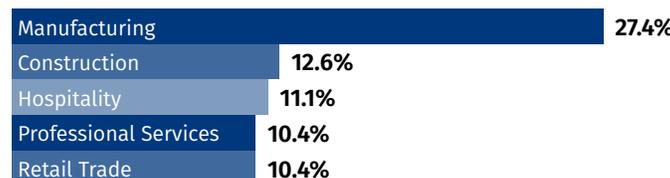
■ **\$34.6 million** went to state & local taxes³⁷

■ **\$627.4 million** was left in spending power

Top countries of origin for the undocumented in the county:



Undocumented immigrants played a critical role in several key industries in the county.



³² U.S. Congressional Budget Office. 2020. "The Distribution of Household Income and Federal Taxes, 2017."

³³ Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy. 2018. "Who Pays? A Distributional Analysis of the Tax Systems in All Fifty States."

³⁴ The Pew Research Center estimates the undercount as 5% to 7% for undocumented immigrants and 2% to 3% for the overall immigrant population.

³⁵ Undocumented immigrant households refer to people living in a housing unit with an undocumented immigrant being the head of their unit.

³⁶ U.S. Congressional Budget Office. 2020. "The Distribution of Household Income and Federal Taxes, 2017."

³⁷ Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy. 2018. "Who Pays? A Distributional Analysis of the Tax Systems in All Fifty States."