

IMMIGRANTS IN SANTA BARBARA COUNTY:

According to the 2008-2010 American Community Survey, nearly one quarter (23%) of residents in Santa Barbara County are immigrants. This amounts to more than 94,000 immigrant residents in the County.¹

34% of immigrants in Santa Barbara County are citizens.

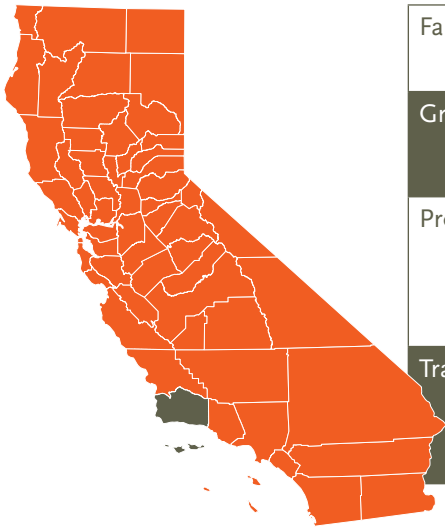
As immigrants remain in the Santa Barbara region, poverty rates decrease and homeownership rises. The poverty rate for immigrants drops to 7% when we consider only those who arrived before 1980 compared to 24% for those who arrived after 1990. Similarly, the homeownership rate for pre-1980 immigrant households (66%) is more than three-times as high as the rate for post-1990 immigrant households (20%).

Immigrants and their children make up 35% of the population in Santa Barbara County. Of all children in the region, 48% have at least one immigrant parent.²

Nearly three-quarters of non-citizens (74%) live in households that also have citizens. About 77% of non-citizen Latinos live in households with citizens and about 48% of Asian non-citizens live in mixed-status households.

Immigrants comprise nearly one-third of the labor force in Santa Barbara County (29%). They figure prominently in the agriculture, wholesale trade, and repair and personal services industries.

In terms of occupations, immigrants make up the majority of those involved in farming, fishing, and forestry (88%) and in grounds cleaning and maintenance jobs (59%). They also almost make up nearly half of those involved in production (47%) and transportation jobs (45%). Within these job sectors, several positions are held primarily by immigrants³:



Farming, Fishing, and Forestry:	Agricultural workers and animal breeders (91%)
Grounds cleaning and maintenance:	Maids and housekeeping cleaners (81%) Grounds maintenance workers (68%)
Production:	Miscellaneous assemblers and fabricators (59%) Other production workers including semiconductor processors (58%)
Transportation:	Packers and packagers (77%) Cleaners of vehicles and equipment (65%) Drivers/sales workers and truck drivers (47%)

Immigrants participate in the labor force at slightly higher rates than non-immigrants, with 63% of immigrants and 56% of non-immigrants over age 16 employed in Santa Barbara County. However, for Latino and Asian immigrant men, the difference is greater. About 83% of all Latino and Asian immigrant men of working age (25-64) are employed, compared with 75% of U.S. born Latino and Asian men.

In Santa Barbara County, immigrants are entrepreneurial and similarly likely to create their own jobs (or be self-employed) as native born workers. For the working age population (age 25 to 64) Asian immigrants are slightly more likely to be self-employed (12%) than non-immigrant Asians (11%), while Latino immigrants are slightly less likely to be self-employed (9%) than non-immigrant Latinos (10%).



Immigrant workers represent a source of untapped labor market potential. As a share of those over age 25 who are employed in Santa Barbara County, immigrants are more likely to be over-skilled (23%) than native born workers (15%) – that is, holding a Bachelor’s degree or higher and working in an unskilled job.

Immigrants account for 27% of all residents with a Ph.D degree.

Immigrant workers are important to the Santa Barbara County economy. They contribute about 25% of the region’s GDP.⁵

Immigrant households make up 20% of the total household income in Santa Barbara County, and thus represent a substantial share of all spending power.

There were almost 25,000 immigrants who were eligible to naturalize in Santa Barbara County as of 2010, and almost 8,000 that would be able to naturalize within the following 5 years, together making up a substantial share of the current voting-eligible population (13%).⁶ This will add to the base of the voting-eligible population who are naturalized immigrants (12%).

In Santa Barbara County, a full 18% of the voting-age population is non-citizen.

The top regions of origin for Santa Barbara County’s immigrants are Latin America (72%), Asia (14%), and Europe (10%).

39% of Santa Barbara County’s residents speak a language other than English at home. Throughout the region, immigrants speak more than 58 languages.

(Endnotes)

- 1 Unless noted otherwise, all figures reported in this document are based on tabulations made by the Center for the Study of Immigrant Integration (CSII), at the University of Southern California, of 2008-2010 pooled American Communities Survey data from the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMS). Steven Ruggles, J. Trent Alexander, Katie Genadek, Ronald Goeken, Matthew B. Schroeder, and Matthew Sobek. Integrated Public Use Microdata Series: Version 5.0 [Machine-readable database]. Minneapolis, MN: Minnesota Population Center [producer and distributor], 2010.
- 2 These figures are based on immigrants and children of immigrants who live in the same household, thus they likely understate the share of the overall population that is made up of first and second generation immigrants.
- 3 Only detailed occupations with a large enough sample size for reasonable statistical reliability are reported. Thus, there may be other detailed occupations in each sector in which immigrants are equally or, in some cases, more highly represented than those listed, but that were not reported on due to a small sample.
- 4 An unskilled job is defined as an occupation that requires no more than a high school diploma (or equivalent), no work experience in a related occupation, and no more than moderate on-the-job training as described by the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics. Retrieved from: http://www.bls.gov/emp/ep_table_112.htm
- 5 Information on contributions to the Santa Barbara regional GDP was determined using averaged industry-specific GDP information over 2008 and 2010 for the region from the Bureau of Economic Analysis. These figures were applied to the percentages of immigrant workforce in each industry as found using ACS data. After the immigrant contributions per sector were found, the figures were aggregated to the regional level. Bureau of Economic Analysis. (2011). Gross Domestic Product by Metropolitan Area. Retrieved from: <http://www.bea.gov/regional/index.htm>.
- 6 Numbers of immigrants eligible to naturalize are based on CSII analysis of data from the Office of Immigration Statistics on all Legal Permanent Residents (LPRs) attaining status between 1985 and 2010. All such LPRs that attained status in 2005 or earlier and had not naturalized as of 2010 are considered to be eligible to naturalize, while those attaining status between 2006 and 2010 are considered to be eligible to naturalize within five years. There are important limitations to these data such that they are more useful for making relative comparisons between counties and regions than for assessing absolute numbers.