Naturalization in the United States
Key Facts

Access to naturalization is important for healthy, connected, and strong community life. Becoming a naturalized U.S. citizen brings benefits to individuals and families by conferring protection from deportation, enabling greater economic security, and supporting active civic engagement in democratic activities such as voting and serving in elected office. More than 3 out of every 4 immigrants in the United States are naturalized citizens,[1] and in several key states, the number of immigrants likely eligible to naturalize outnumbered those states' margins of victory in the 2020 presidential election.[2] Obtaining citizenship – and the right to vote – not only ensures that immigrant voices are heard in U.S. policymaking but also promotes a sense of belonging among immigrants in the United States.

31.6M
Number of immigrants who are naturalized or likely eligible to do so

7.4M
Likely eligible to naturalize (**23.4%**)[3]

24.4M
Already U.S. citizens (**76.6%**)

14.5M
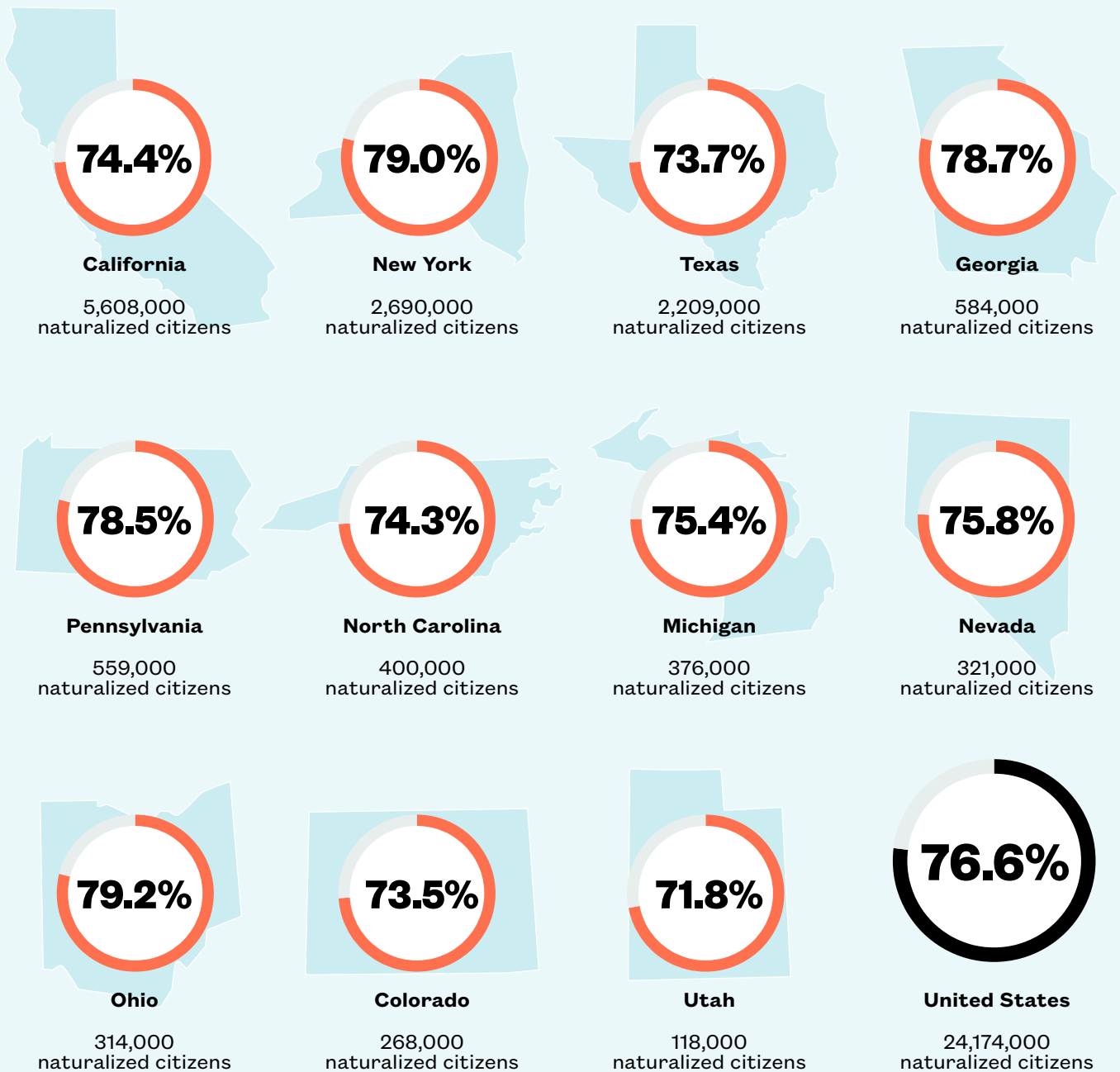Approximate number of immigrants who are not eligible for naturalization*

9.9M
Undocumented immigrants (**68.2%**)[4]

*Immigrants are not eligible for naturalization when they do not meet the requirements to become U.S. citizens, such as age, English proficiency, length of stay in the country, or legal status.

NATURALIZATION RATES IN SELECT STATES

74.4%
California
5,608,000
naturalized citizens

79.0%
New York
2,690,000
naturalized citizens

73.7%
Texas
2,209,000
naturalized citizens

78.7%
Georgia
584,000
naturalized citizens

78.5%
Pennsylvania
559,000
naturalized citizens

74.3%
North Carolina
400,000
naturalized citizens

75.4%
Michigan
376,000
naturalized citizens

75.8%
Nevada
321,000
naturalized citizens

79.2%
Ohio
314,000
naturalized citizens

73.5%
Colorado
268,000
naturalized citizens

71.8%
Utah
118,000
naturalized citizens

76.6%
United States
24,174,000
naturalized citizens

States with the *highest* naturalization rates include **Florida** (82.7%), **West Virginia** (82.1%), **Vermont** (81.8%), and **New Jersey** (81.7%).

States with the *lowest* naturalization rates include **Arkansas** (65.3%), **New Mexico** (66.4%), **Indiana** (70.1%), and **Kansas** (70.2%).

| Lebanon 93.3% | Hong Kong 92.8% | Yugoslavia 92.3% | Bulgaria 90.5% | Taiwan 90.2% | Cambodia 90.1% | Republic of the Congo 58.4% | Australia 57.5% | Mongolia 56.7% | Japan 52.2% |

Demographics

7.4M

Number of immigrants in the United States who are likely eligible to naturalize but have not yet done so. This represents **33.6%** of the noncitizen population.

TOP LANGUAGES SPOKEN AMONG NATURALIZATION-ELIGIBLE IMMIGRANTS
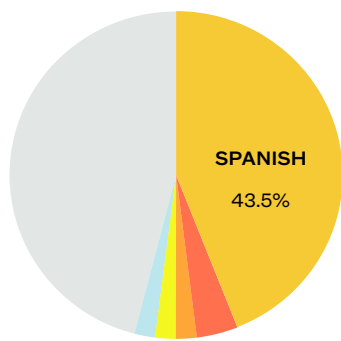
SPANISH 43.5%

▮	SPANISH	43.5%
▮	CHINESE	4.0%
▮	FILIPINO/TAGALOG	2.4%
▮	HINDI	2.2%
▮	KOREAN	1.9%
▮	OTHER	46.0%

STATES WITH LARGEST POPULATIONS OF IMMIGRANTS WHO ARE LIKELY ELIGIBLE TO NATURALIZE

TX 789,500

FL 574,800

CA 1.9M

IL 290,800

NY 714,200
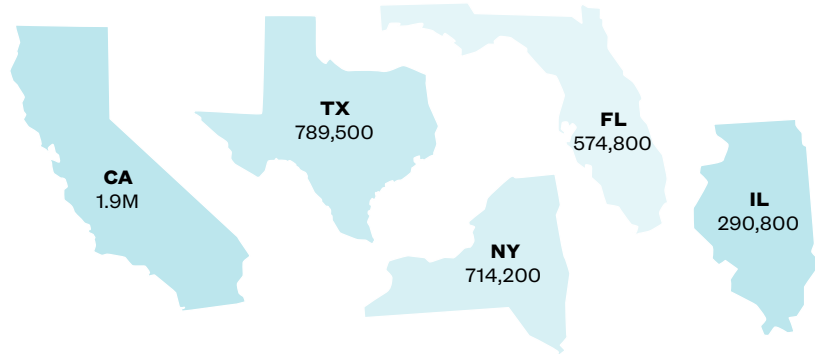
TOP COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN FOR NATURALIZATION-ELIGIBLE IMMIGRANTS

1 in 4

Naturalization-eligible individuals are Mexican immigrants.

Mexico 2.2M

India 578,700

China 424,800

El Salvador 229,400

Cuba 216,000
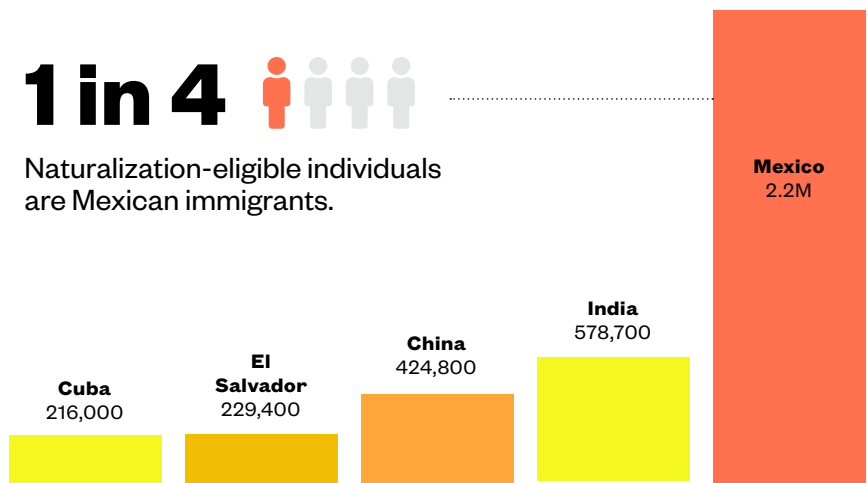
Importance of Becoming a Citizen

Becoming a naturalized citizen creates an opportunity to deepen the feeling of belonging among immigrants by enabling them to more actively participate in the country's community and civic affairs. U.S. citizenship comes with the right to vote in elections, and it also allows individuals to run for office and become eligible for certain government jobs.

Immigrants make up **13.8%** of the U.S. population, and **10.0%** of eligible voters.

13.8% Immigrant share of the U.S. population

10.0% Immigrant share of eligible voters.
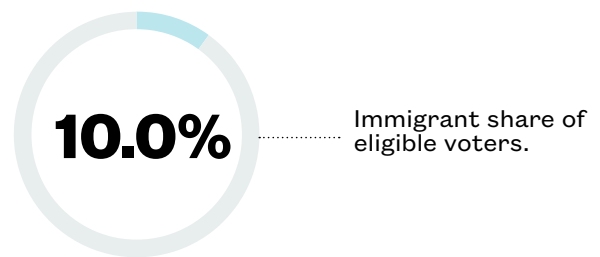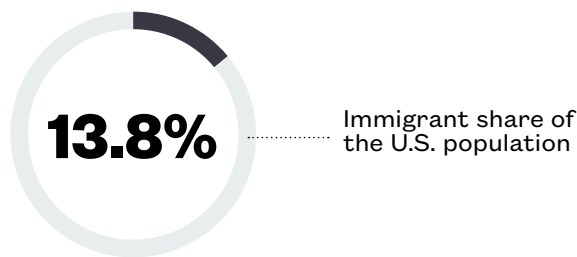
In eight states, including several battleground states such as Arizona, Georgia, and Pennsylvania, the number of non-citizens likely eligible to naturalize is larger than the margin of victory in the 2020 election.[5]

| State	Number of Immigrants Likely Eligible to Naturalize	Margin of Victory
Florida	574,800	371,686
Texas	789,500	631,221
Arizona	164,400	10,457
Georgia	158,000	11,779
Pennsylvania	153,300	80,555
Nevada	102,200	33,596
North Carolina	138,200	74,481
Wisconsin	47,000	20,682
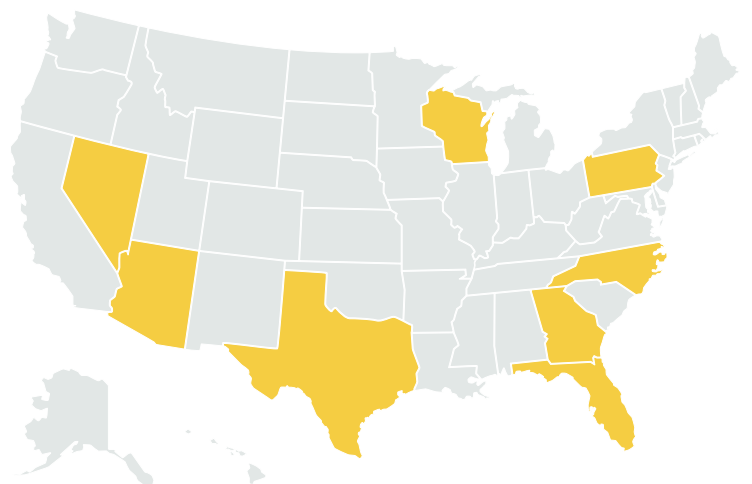
Economic Benefits of Naturalization

In 2022, immigrant households earned $2.1 trillion in total income. If the eligible immigrants became naturalized, they would benefit, on average, from an 8.9 percent increase in their individual earnings.[6]

Immigrant households pay a significant amount in taxes, despite being underrepresented in voting power. They paid $382.8 billion in federal taxes and $196.3 billion in state and local taxes, making up 16.2% of all taxes paid by U.S. households in 2022. Obtaining U.S. citizenship — and the power to vote — gives immigrants a voice in how their tax dollars are spent.

16.2%

Immigrant share of all taxes paid by U.S. households in 2022
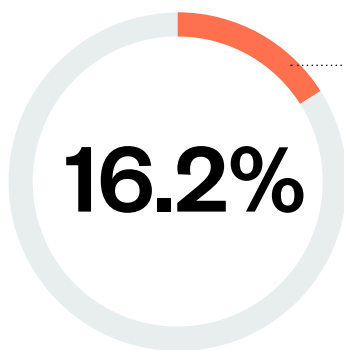
$382.8B
Paid in federal taxes

$196.3B
Paid in state and local taxes

ENDNOTES

1. Unless otherwise specified, data comes from the American Immigration Council analysis of the 1-year sample of the American Community Survey from 2022.

2. MIT Election Data and Science Lab. "U.S. President 1976–2020". Harvard Dataverse (2017). https://doi.org/10.7910/DVN/42MVDX.

3. American Immigration Council. "How the United States immigration system works." (2016). https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/research/how-united-states-immigration-system-works.

4. Undocumented immigrants are identified by applying the methodological approach outlined by Harvard University economist George Borjas in his work "The Labor Supply of Undocumented Immigrants (Harvard University, Labour Economics, volume 46, pages 1-3, 2017)", accessed at https:// scholar.harvard.edu/files/gborjas/ files/le2017.pdf.

5. MIT Election Data and Science Lab. "U.S. President 1976–2020."

6. Enchautegui, María E., and Linda Giannarelli. "The economic impact of naturalization on immigrants and cities." Urban Institute (2015). https://www.urban.org/research/publication/economic-impact-naturalization-immigrants-and-cities#:~:text=Using%20American%20Community%20Survey%20data,cities%20would%20increase%20%245.7%20billion.

Data Appendix - Select States

State	Number of Immigrants Likely Eligible to Naturalize	Top Language Spoken by Naturalization-Eligible Immigrants	Immigrant Share of Total Population	Immigrant Share of Eligible Voters	Total Taxes Paid by Immigrant Households (B$)	Share of All Taxes Paid by Immigrant Households
California	1,932,800	Spanish (34.1%), Chinese (7.8%), Filipino/Tagalog (3.9%)	26.7%	21.7%	$151.3	30.4%
New York	714,200	Spanish (34.1%), Chinese (7.8%), Bengali (2.8%)	22.8%	19.3%	$68.1	24.1%
Nevada	102,200	Spanish (59%), Filipino/Tagalog (8.4%), Japanese (1.5%)	19.0%	14.5%	$5.1	19.4%
Texas	789,500	Spanish (58.1%), Telugu (2.5%), Chinese (2.3%)	17.2%	11.0%	$50.3	18.2%
Georgia	158,000	Spanish (31.2%), Telugu (4.6%), Korean (3.8%)	10.8%	7.4%	$13.6	13.1%
Colorado	96,600	Spanish (46.2%), Chinese (2.7%), Filipino/Tagalog (2.6%)	9.5%	6.0%	$6.7	9.1%
Pennsylvania	153,300	Spanish (25.2%), Chinese (8.2%), Hindi (3.0%)	7.7%	5.6%	$13.1	9.4%
Utah	46,300	Spanish (49.6%), Chinese (4.5%)	8.9%	5.1%	$2.5	8.0%
North Carolina	138,200	Spanish (34.2%), Telugu (6.3%), Hindi (3.6%)	8.6%	5.0%	$9.8	9.8%
Michigan	122,700	Spanish (23.3%), Arabic (6.7%), Telugu (4.5%)	6.9%	4.8%	$8.1	8.8%
Ohio	82,800	Spanish (13.7%), Chinese (7.0%), Nepali (6.3%)	4.9%	3.4%	$7.0	6.2%