

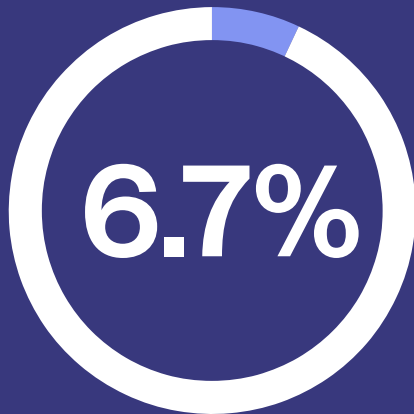
New Americans in Tulsa

A Snapshot of the Demographic and Economic Contributions of Immigrants in the Metropolitan Area¹



State & Local

IMMIGRANTS AS ECONOMIC DRIVERS



Immigrant share of the population, 2015

The increase in the immigrant population raised the total housing value in the metro area by:

\$600M

between 2010 and 2015²



Share of overall population growth attributed to immigrants

Amount contributed by immigrants to the Tulsa metro area's GDP:

\$3.8B³

Given their income, immigrants contributed significantly to state and local taxes, including property, income, sales, and excise taxes levied by the State of Oklahoma or by municipal governments.⁴

Amount earned by immigrant households in 2015:

\$1.6B

\$252.1M went to federal taxes.

\$135.2M went to state and local taxes.

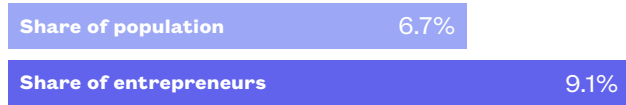
This leaves them with

\$1.2B

in spending power.⁵

ENTREPRENEURSHIP

In 2015, while accounting for 6.7% of the metro area's total population, immigrants made up 9.1% of its self-employed population.



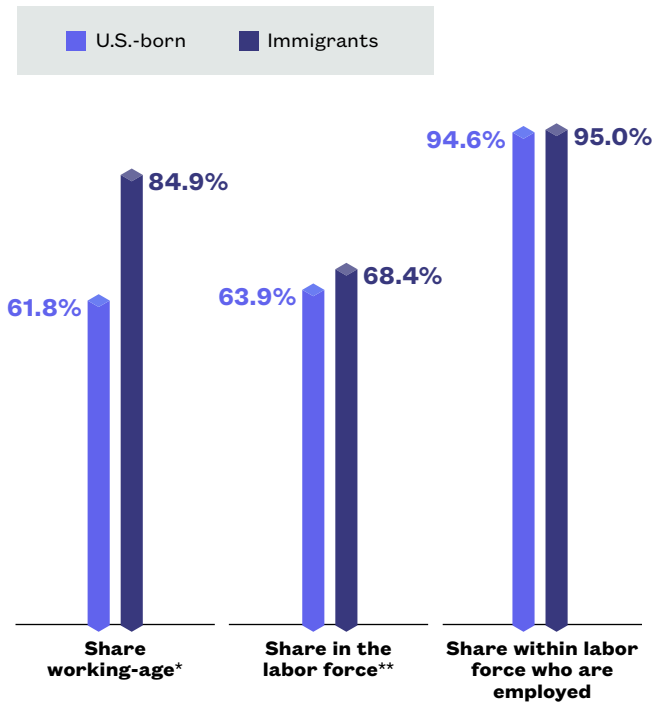
4,047 immigrant entrepreneurs generated

\$55M

in business income for the metro area.

LABOR FORCE

In 2015, foreign-born residents in Tulsa played an outsized role in the labor force.



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

** Labor force refers to people who are employed or looking for work.

SPOTLIGHT ON

Paul Her

Restaurant Owner

Paul Her was born in a refugee camp in Thailand—one of several camps that sprung up along the Mekong River after the U.S. pulled out of the fighting in Indochina in 1975.⁶ Her's family had assisted the CIA in the Secret War against the Communist-backed Pathet Lao. When the Pathet Lao assumed power, Her's people—the Hmong, or Free people—became the victims of a targeted campaign by the new communist government of Laos.

We were helping Americans during the Vietnam War," Her explains. "Once the Americans left, we had to go because we were getting exterminated." Because an aunt lived in Minnesota, the Hers were granted asylum in the U.S. Her was 7 years old and had never known life outside a refugee camp. "I don't have much recollection of Thailand," he says.

Her's father got a job in Lansing, Michigan, at a company manufacturing car parts while Her studied engineering and business administration at a Catholic university. For three years after graduation, he operated an Avis car rental outlet.

Then the Great Recession hit. Her's sales fell. His father lost his job. But, like many refugees and immigrants, the family did not hesitate to relocate.

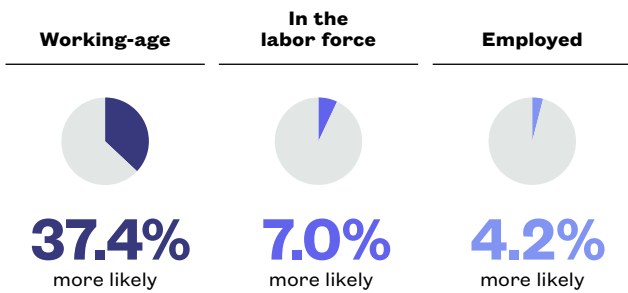
His parents chose Tulsa, where Her's father found a job. Her followed a year later, and opened a restaurant. Thai Village, in Tulsa Hills, is in its tenth year and looking to expand.

"When we moved here I always had a vision that I had to have a business and create jobs," he says. Her's mother prepares food, and his wife helps when she can. Most of the other seven workers, however, were born in America. "I want to employ people who can't find jobs," Her says. "I want to have that opportunity."

Her doesn't make much profit, which he says is just fine. "As long as I can pay the employees, that's the most important thing," he says. "Because everybody is there to make a paycheck, to support their families."

LABOR FORCE CONT.

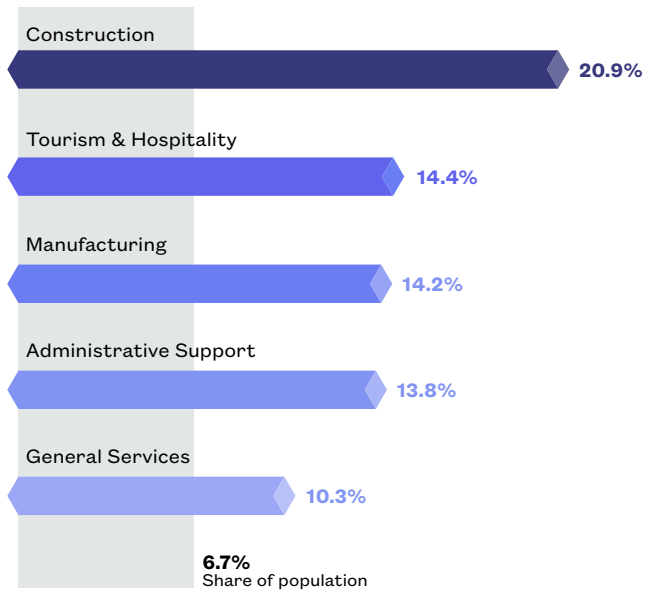
This makes the foreign-born more likely than the U.S.-born to be...



Because of the role they play in the workforce helping companies keep jobs on U.S. soil, we estimate that by 2015 immigrants living in Tulsa helped create or preserve

3,029 local manufacturing jobs that would have otherwise vanished or moved elsewhere.⁷

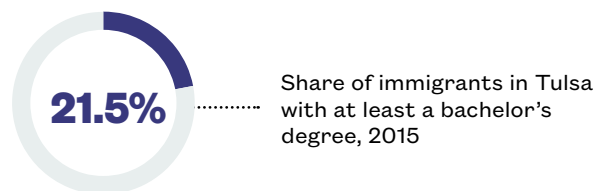
Immigrants are punching above their weight in several key industries in the metro area, making up significant shares of the workforce.



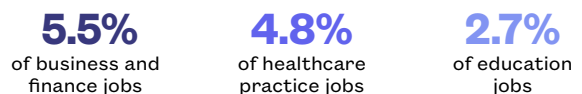
SKILLED LABOR FORCE

1,934 students who were enrolled in Tulsa colleges and universities during the fall of 2015 held temporary resident visas.⁸ They supported...

860 local jobs... And spent **\$70.0M** in that academic year.⁹



The foreign-born are working in key occupations across the metro area. They hold...



52.8% The share of international students who found employment in the metro area after graduating in 2015.¹⁰

SPOTLIGHT ON

Ricardo Rivera

Youth Program Coordinator

When the recent recession hit Michigan, Ricardo Rivera took a church friend's advice and moved his wife and two sons to Tulsa. Rivera, who is originally from Mexico, secured a night janitorial job at the community college and a rental home in East Tulsa. Three weeks later, faulty, old wiring sparked a fire that burned the house down. No one was hurt, but the Riveras lost everything.

"Let me tell you something about this city: I feel like everybody, even those who don't know me, come and give me a hand. I don't even get a chance to feel sad," Rivera recalls. "I said, I thank so much this city, I have to find a way to pay back."

Rivera has since launched a local JUVENGAF, a youth program founded in Mexico that aims to instill discipline, loyalty, and perseverance in young people. Rivera doesn't have funding—other than the cash he pulls from his own pocket for the kids who forget their lunch—so he holds the weekly six-hour program in city parks on Saturdays. More than two dozen boys and girls between the ages of 8 and 12 show up in uniform for exercise, marching, cultural activities, ethical discussions, and homework and tutoring sessions. Rivera organizes field trips to meet professionals who got their jobs by pursuing their education.

"So they can see what's possible," Rivera says. "I try to put an idea in their heads that if you stay in school you will have everything you want. But you have to stay in school."

Rivera now works from 5 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., Monday through Thursday, on the factory floor at Ameristar Fence Products. During evenings, he attends classes to earn his GED. On weekends, he volunteers through his church, with the Volunteers in Police Service, and, of course, runs JUVENGAF to make sure the next generation sees the value of getting their education.

"If, when I'm old, some kid says, 'Because of you I went and got my Ph.D.,' That day, oh, boy, that will be my lottery," Rivera says. "That is my motivation."

TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCES

In 2015, while immigrants accounted for 6.7% of the metro area's total population, students with temporary resident visas made up 7.4% of all students graduating with STEM degrees.

Share of population 6.7%

Share of STEM graduates 7.4%

For more city, district, and state-level data, visit MapTheImpact.org and explore our interactive map.



- 1 Unless otherwise specified, data comes from one-year samples of the American Community Survey from 2010 and 2015.
- 2 Vigdor, Jacob. 2013. "Immigration and the Revival of American Cities: From Preserving Manufacturing Jobs to Strengthening the Housing Market." Partnership for a New American Economy.
- 3 GDP estimates are based on data from the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis.
- 4 Tax estimates are based on state and local tax rates from the Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy. Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy. 2015. "Who Pays? A Distributional Analysis of the Tax Systems in All Fifty States."
- 5 Estimates are based on federal tax rates from the U.S. Congressional Budget Office, and state and local tax rates from the Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy. U.S. Congressional Budget Office. 2014. "The Distribution of Household Income and Federal Taxes, 2011."
- 6 "Laotians Waiting in Thai Camps for Chance to Fight Again," The Washington Post, March 26, 1979. https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/1979/03/26/laotians-waiting-in-thai-camps-for-chance-to-fight-again/3bc9ffa1-2c8c-4836-a2a5-2bcbfed50e9d/?utm_term=.5443214d12ff.
- 7 Vigdor, Jacob. 2013. "Immigration and the Revival of American Cities: From Preserving Manufacturing Jobs to Strengthening the Housing Market." Partnership for a New American Economy.
- 8 Data on total student enrollment in the city is derived from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System maintained by the National Center for Education Statistics.
- 9 Economic data is derived from the International Student Economic Value Tool maintained by NAFSA, the association of international educators.
- 10 Share of students who found employment post-graduation through the U.S. government's Optional Practical Training (OPT) program. Ruiz, Neil G. 2014. "The Geography of Foreign Students in US Higher Education: Origins and Destinations." The Brookings Institution.