

THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT FOR INTEGRATION

Immigration is one of the United States' most distinguishing characteristics, helping drive economic growth and defining national identity since the country's founding. Immigrants across the generations have made America the land of opportunity: a nation that values self-reliance, freedom, and democracy and welcomes those willing to work hard for a better future.

Although the United States has a strong and unique heritage as a nation of immigrants, the integration of newcomers has always presented serious challenges for both the newcomers and the communities that receive them.

Historically, when Americans view the present and future with confidence and optimism, immigrants and the benefits they bring are valued and celebrated. But when faced with economic downturns, national-security concerns, and high-volume immigration, U.S. society often becomes less welcoming and even hostile to immigrants. Our national ambivalence about immigrants and their role in American society creates formidable barriers to immigrant integration and community cohesion.

"We are the land of opportunity. Our streets may not be paved with gold, but they are paved with the promise that men and women who live here—even strangers and newcomers—can rise as fast, as far as their skills will allow."

—Senator Edward M. Kennedy, D-MA, 1965

Yet immigrants and their descendants, throughout the course of U.S. history, have overcome these barriers and have made substantial contributions to our country. Indeed, the quintessential American narrative as a nation of immigrants derives its power from the many generations of newcomers who have successfully pursued the American Dream, bettered their lives and those of their children, and enriched American society in the process. Similarly, other groups, such as Native Americans and African-Americans, have contributed significantly to the nation's prosperity despite enduring enormous hardship.

At the dawn of the twenty-first century, the unprecedented level of migration around the world, the high volume of immigration to the United States, and immigrants' expanding role in American society create imperatives for immigrant integration. To continue thriving as a nation, we must be intentional about weaving newcomers into the fabric of society. How well we integrate immigrants and provide opportunities for all community members has far-reaching implications for—and is inextricable from—our current and future vitality.



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WHY NOW: THE IMPERATIVES FOR INTEGRATION

DVD

Watch the DVD *The New Americans: A Grandfather's Story*

Native-born Americans rarely get to see how economic conditions compel many families to make the difficult decision to leave their homelands in search of a decent life. Listen in as a Mexican farmer explains to his young grandson about a once-fertile land that can no longer produce crops and a government that restricts water rights.

"This country has benefited immensely from the fact that we draw from people from all over the world. And the average immigrant comes from a less benign environment, and indeed that's the reason they've come here.

And I think they appreciate the benefits of this country more than those of us who were born here. And it shows in their entrepreneurship, their enterprise and their willingness to do the types of work that makes this economy function."

—Alan Greenspan, Chairman, Federal Reserve Board, before the House Financial Services Committee, July 2001



Despite benefiting greatly from immigration since its founding, the United States has no national immigrant integration policies to help newcomers establish a foothold and become full members of society. Given current demographic, economic, and social realities, the development and implementation of such policies—and the widespread and informed involvement of newcomers in civic life—are essential to the future prosperity of American communities.

GLOBAL MIGRATION IS A GROWING PHENOMENON

The global migration phenomenon shows no signs of abating. An estimated 185 to 192 million people live outside their countries of birth, up from 82 million in 1970.¹ The quest for improved economic prospects is a prime driver of migration. Demographic imbalances also play a role: While the developed world's populations are shrinking and their average age is rising, the developing world is still young, and its population is growing. Meanwhile, internal conflicts and persecution based on ethnic, religious, or social grounds create millions of refugees. These global migration trends have a significant impact on the United States, which is home to 20 percent of the world's migrant population.

GROWTH, DIVERSITY, AND DISPERSION OF NEWCOMERS CREATE OPPORTUNITIES

The growth, diversity, and dispersion of newcomer populations create opportunities to address longstanding social issues, improve racial and ethnic equity and cohesion, and strengthen our democratic traditions.

- **The volume of immigrants to the United States is at an all-time high.** As a result of global economic and political factors, the foreign-born population in the United States tripled in the past four decades and currently totals about 37 million or nearly 12 percent of the overall population.

By 2010, this figure is expected to increase to 43 million, or 13.5 percent of the total population.² By joining forces with native-born residents who share common concerns, immigrants can help move longstanding social issues like poverty and racial inequities to the forefront of the nation's public policy agenda.

- **Today's immigrants come from every corner of the globe.** Mexico (38 percent) and Latin America (20 percent) account for more than half of newcomers to the United States. The remainder comes from Asia (23 percent), Europe and Canada (12 percent), and Africa,

1. United Nations Population Division. 2003. *Trends in Total Migrant Stock: The 2003 Revision*. New York, NY: United Nations.

2. Capps, Randy, et al. 2005. *The New Demography of America's Schools: Immigration and the No Child Left Behind Act*. Washington, D.C.: Urban Institute. September.

HISTORICAL AND CONTEMPORARY IMMIGRATION: A SNAPSHOT

KEY CHARACTERISTICS	EARLY 20TH CENTURY IMMIGRATION 1880-1914	CONTEMPORARY IMMIGRATION 1965-PRESENT
New arrivals as percent of U.S. population	From 1900-1910, new arrivals equaled 11.6 percent of the population	From 1990-2000, new arrivals equaled 3.7 percent of the population
Total foreign-born as percent of U.S. population	14.7 percent in 1910	12 percent in 2004
Immigrants as percent of U.S. workforce	24 percent in 1910	14.5 percent in 2004
Percent of U.S.-citizen children living in immigrant families	28 percent in 1910	20 percent in 2000
Settlement patterns	Urban gateway cities in East and North, with smaller numbers in West	Traditional gateways, with new dispersion to suburbs; also high growth in the South, Mountain, and Plains states
Shift in the economy	From frontier to industrialization	From manufacturing to knowledge and service economy
Industries with high concentrations of immigrant workers	Mining, steel, and meatpacking	—Sciences, engineering, and medicine —Construction, services, meatpacking, and agriculture
Shift in countries of origin	In 1882, 87 percent from northern and western Europe By 1907, 81 percent from southern and eastern Europe	Before 1960, 66 percent of legal immigrants from Europe and Canada, 32 percent from Latin American and Asia By 2004, 12 percent from Europe and Canada, 81 percent from Latin America and Asia

SOURCES:

Martin, Philip and Elizabeth Midgley. 2003. "Immigration: Shaping and Reshaping America," Population Bulletin 58, No. 2. Washington, D.C.: Population Reference Bureau; Congressional Budget Office. 2004. *A Description of the Immigrant Population*. Washington, D.C.: Congressional Budget Office November; Congressional Budget Office. 2005. The Role of Immigrants in the U.S. Labor Market. Washington, D.C.: Congressional Budget Office. November; and Hernandez, Donald J. "A Demographic Portrait of Children in Immigrant Families." Presented at the Brookings Institution, Washington, D.C., December 16, 2004.

the Middle East, and other regions (8 percent).³ In contrast, seven of the top-ten sending countries in 1960 were European. The diversity of today's immigrants challenges our society to respond to linguistic and cultural differences and to promote positive intergroup understanding and relations.

- **Newcomers are settling in urban, suburban, and rural communities across America.** Many immigrants are now living, working, and going to school in communities well beyond the six traditional gateway states (California, New York, Texas, Florida, New Jersey, and

Illinois). In the 37 states never before considered immigrant destinations, the foreign-born population during the 1990s grew at twice the rate of these six states. States that experienced the highest growth rate include North Carolina (274 percent), Georgia (233 percent), Nevada (202 percent), Arkansas (196 percent), and Utah (171 percent).⁴ Given the geographic dispersion of immigrants, few communities across the country can afford to ignore the imperative to develop immigrant integration strategies.

3. Passel, Jeffrey S. and Roberto Suro. 2005. *Rise, Peak, and Decline: Trends in U.S. Immigration 1992–2004*. Washington, D.C.: Pew Hispanic Center. September. (Note: Due to rounding the percentage breakdown does not total 100 percent.)

4. Passel, Jeffrey S. and Wendy Zimmermann. 2001. *Are Immigrants Leaving California?* Washington, D.C.: Urban Institute. April.

CURRENT AND FUTURE U.S. ECONOMIC GROWTH AND STABILITY DEPEND ON IMMIGRANTS

DVD Watch the DVD Hasta La Vista, Baby!

Immigrants who arrive in the United States without documentation are often reluctant to defend their basic human and legal rights. One community group, Somos Mayfair in San Jose, California, creates popular theater based on residents' own stories as a dynamic way to break through the isolation and build understanding. Find out more on the DVD and at www.mayfairneighborhood.org.

"Pittsburgh is like a lot of former industrial centers in the Northeast—too much infrastructure for too few residents. That's why a policy of encouraging more immigration is so important to revitalizing these older urban areas. Otherwise, the alternative is to start tearing them down."

—Maxwell King, President
The Heinz Endowments
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

In some declining communities, immigrants are contributing to the revitalization of local economies. They are filling jobs, starting new businesses, buying homes, and sending their children to public schools. Many leaders in once-thriving metropolises like Pittsburgh and depopulating rural states like Nebraska and Iowa view immigrants as critical to rebuilding their communities.

Nationally, immigrants constitute a growing share of the labor force. Although immigrants make up one in nine U.S. residents, they comprise one in seven workers. During the 1990s, one out of every two new entries into the workforce was foreign-born.⁵ Assuming that immigration levels will remain constant, newcomers will account for half of the growth of the working-age population between now and 2015 and for all the growth between 2016 and 2035.⁶

Immigrants play an important role in many sectors of the U.S. economy, but they are most concentrated in jobs at the high and low end of the labor market. For example, one in three doctors, dentists, and nurses is foreign-born, and one in three building and maintenance workers is foreign-born.⁷



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Undocumented immigrants constitute a large percentage of low-wage workers in a number of industries, many of which would suffer great economic hardship without them. In March 2005, they were 24 percent of all workers employed in farming occupations, 17 percent in cleaning, 14 percent in construction, and 12 percent in food preparation.⁸

The U.S. Department of Labor projects that, by 2010, the United States will create 22 million new jobs—nine million more jobs than the estimated number of new workers entering the job market. As native birth rates continue to decline and as the Baby Boom generation begins to retire, immigrants and their children—as workers, taxpayers, consumers, and entrepreneurs—will become even more critical to U.S. economic vitality and global competitiveness.

6. Research and Policy Committee of the Committee for Economic Development. 2001. *Reforming Immigration. Helping Meet America's Need for a Skilled Workforce*. New York, NY: Committee for Economic Development.

7. Bureau of Labor Statistics. "2004-2014 Projections, Occupational Employment," *Occupational Outlook Quarterly*, Winter 2005-06. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics; Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, News Release: "Labor Force Characteristics of Foreign-Born Workers in 2003," December 1, 2004—Table 4. National Science Board, Science and Engineering Indicators 2004. Arlington, VA: National Science Foundation, 2004.

8. Passel, Jeffrey S. 2006. *Size and Characteristics of the Unauthorized Migrant Population in the U.S. Estimates*. Washington, D.C.: Pew Hispanic Center. March.



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IMMIGRANT CONTRIBUTIONS AS TAXPAYERS, CONSUMERS, AND ENTREPRENEURS

- The average immigrant, over a lifetime, pays \$80,000 more in taxes than she and her immediate descendants receive in local, state, and federal benefits.⁹
- Latino and Asian purchasing power, in 1994, constituted nearly \$1 trillion, or 12 percent of the U.S. total. Between 1990 and 2009, it is expected to grow 347 percent, compared to an increase of 158 percent in total U.S. buying power.¹⁰
- Between 1997 and 2002, the number of Asian American businesses grew 24 percent, and the number of Hispanic firms grew 31 percent, compared to 10 percent for all U.S. businesses.¹¹

9. Smith, James P., and Barry Edmunston, ed. 1997. *The New Americans: Economic, Demographic, and Fiscal Effects of Immigration*. Washington, D.C.: National Research Council.

10. Humphreys, Jeffrey. "The Multicultural Economy 2004: America's Minority Buying Power." 2004. Georgia Business and Economic Conditions, Vol. 64, No. 3. (pp. 5-6). www.selig.uga.edu/forecast/GBEC/GBECO43Q.pdf. See also Singer, Audrey, and Anna Paulson. 2004. "Financial Access for Immigrants: Learning from Diverse Perspectives," Brookings Institution Policy Brief. October. www.brookings.edu.

11. Humphreys, Jeffrey M. "The Multicultural Economy 2004: America's Minority Buying Power." 2004. Georgia Business and Economic Conditions, Vol. 64, No. 3, Third Quarter. Athens, GA: University of Georgia Selig Center for Economic Growth; Minority Business Development Agency. 2005. State of Minority Business Enterprises. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Dept. of Commerce. September.

POLICIES INTENDED TO AFFECT ONLY IMMIGRANTS HAVE A DIRECT IMPACT ON MANY COMMUNITIES

Regardless of immigration status, newcomers are woven into the fabric of American communities. Eighty-five percent of immigrant families have mixed immigration status, and 75 percent of children in immigrant families are U.S. citizens. More than three million U.S. citizen children have undocumented parents.¹² The growing phenomenon of mixed-status families makes it difficult to isolate the effects of policies directed towards immigrants without having a negative impact on their citizen children. For example, when legal non-citizens lost eligibility for federal safety-net programs as a result of the 1996 welfare law, many citizen children stopped participating in public-benefit programs even though they were still eligible.

Increasingly, many of the estimated 11.5 to 12 million undocumented immigrants¹³ are becoming part of our

society. In addition to staffing our businesses, they go to our schools, belong to our churches, and engage in community life. Yet their lack of legal status creates a significant barrier to integration. Concentrated in low-wage jobs, undocumented immigrants have little opportunity to improve their family's economic well-being. Their access to higher education is limited, even if they came to this country as young children and graduated from an American high school. Exploitation and discrimination in the workplace, restricted access to drivers' licenses, and fears of deportation are some of the other factors that marginalize undocumented immigrants in our society.

Given the high number of undocumented immigrants, Congress has been debating various policy solutions, including increased border enforcement to stem the tide; guest-worker programs to address labor demands; and earned legalization and a path to citizenship for those who are already here and contributing to the economy. Each of these proposals will clearly have a different impact on the well-being of undocumented immigrants and their families.

Notwithstanding changes in federal immigration law, many U.S. communities are increasingly recognizing that undocumented immigrants, regardless of their immigration status, are vital to local economies and are part of the social and cultural fabric. These communities are undertaking integration efforts of varying scale to address the needs and tap the contributions of this population.

RECENT POLICY CHANGES ERODE CORE AMERICAN VALUES AND AFFECT IMMIGRANTS' ABILITY TO INTEGRATE

Three acts of Congress in 1996—welfare reform, immigration reform, and anti-terrorism legislation—curtailed rights for immigrants and limited their eligibility for federally funded health and social service programs. In addition, policies enacted in response to domestic security concerns since September 11, 2001—from the USA PATRIOT Act to the REAL ID Act—have weakened civil rights protections for citizens and non-citizens alike, particularly those who are of Arab, Muslim, Middle Eastern, or South Asian descent.

Beyond the Beltway, in 2005, more than 150 pieces of anti-immigrant legislation were introduced in city councils and state legislatures in 30 different states. Most state bills and ballot initiatives aimed to reduce undocumented immigrants' access to drivers' licenses, health care, and other public services. Some municipalities are using existing local housing ordinances that govern overcrowding to evict undocumented renters, and others are introducing new ordinances to restrict day laborers' ability to solicit work.

While most receiving communities welcome immigrants, anti-immigrant activities are on the rise, with local groups cropping up in as many as 40 states in 2005 alone. Such activities, which can

12. Fix, Michael, Wendy Zimmerman, and Jeffrey S. Passel. 2001. *The Integration of Immigrant Families in the U.S.* The Integration of Immigrant Families in the U.S. Washington, D.C.: Urban Institute.

13. Passel, Jeffrey S. 2006. *Size and Characteristics of the Unauthorized Migrant Population in the U.S. Estimates.* Washington, D.C.: Pew Hispanic Center. March.

WHY THE RISE IN THE UNDOCUMENTED POPULATION

U.S. demand for labor, combined with lack of opportunity in home countries, is the primary force driving immigration, both authorized and unauthorized. But many experts say U.S. immigration laws and policies have also contributed to the rise in the undocumented population.

First, immigration policy experts note that very few legal avenues exist for the foreign-born to enter the United States to fill current and future demand for low-skilled workers. This fact has immediate and long-term implications for the U.S. economy: Over the next ten years, low-skilled jobs will constitute two-thirds of all new jobs created.¹⁴

Second, heightened border enforcement has unintentionally kept many undocumented Mexican workers in the United States. In the early 1980s, about half of all undocumented

Mexicans returned home within 12 months of entry, but by 2000, the rate of return migration was only 25 percent.¹⁵

As Princeton University researcher Douglas S. Massey points out, "The United States is now locked into a perverse cycle whereby additional border enforcement further decreases the rate of return migration, which accelerates undocumented population growth, which brings calls for harsher enforcement."¹⁶

14. Smith Nightingale, Demetra and Michael Fix. 2004. "Economic and Labor Market Trends" Children of Immigrant Families, The Future of Children, Vol.14, Issue 2, Princeton-Brookings: 49-52.

15. Massey, Douglas S., Jorge Durand, and Nolan J. Malone. 2003. Beyond Smoke and Mirrors: Mexican Immigration in an Age of Economic Integration. New York, NY: Russell Sage Foundation Publications.

16. Massey, Douglas S. 2006. "The Wall That Keeps Illegal Workers in." *The New York Times*, April 4, sec. A.

"The truth is that the challenges we face as a nation have not been imported by our immigrants, nor would they disappear if we could only succeed in sealing our borders for good—even if that were possible. In fact, there is good reason to believe that some of the problems we should take most seriously as a people—from the decline in our economic competitiveness to the decay of our community values—are problems that the new immigrants can help us solve."

—Mario Cuomo
former Governor of New York

MOVING FORWARD

Efforts to integrate immigrants must respond to contemporary demographic, economic, and social realities, while tackling overarching concerns about immigration, race, and national security. These factors compound the challenges newcomers face in trying to build new lives in the United States, particularly in new gateway communities that lack a service infrastructure, are not accustomed to racial and ethnic diversity, and have no recent experience with integrating immigrants.

To be successful, integration efforts must consider the needs of immigrants within the context of issues facing the broader community, including how immigration can affect economic opportunity for other community members and how it can influence race and inter-group relations. Keeping these considerations in mind can help expand resources to address longstanding social problems such as poverty and increase racial and ethnic equity and cohesion. Understanding the challenges of immigrant integration—and the role that philanthropy in partnership with other sectors can play—is critical to building secure, vibrant, and cohesive communities that benefit all members.



In March 2006, an estimated 300,000 rallied in Chicago for immigrant rights, kicking off a series of peaceful demonstrations across the country.

be expected during times of rapid demographic change, often use wedge issues to divide communities. For example, anti-immigrant forces frequently use competition for jobs and other resources to pit immigrants against African-Americans and other native-born groups. Such efforts exacerbate racial tensions, put core American values at risk, and make the need for conscious attention to integration more urgent.

RACE AND IMMIGRATION

Race has had—and continues to have—a profound impact on the well-being of the Native American and African-American communities. Although less well-known, race has also contributed to the shaping of immigration laws and policies since our nation's founding. The connection between race and immigration has significant implications for immigrant integration because how immigrants are perceived and treated affects how well they fare, integrate, and contribute to U.S. society.¹⁸

Race and ethnicity have stimulated fear and anxiety since the first wave of non-Anglo immigrants in the 1700s. Alarmed by the swelling number of Germans, Benjamin Franklin wrote in 1753, "Those who come hither are generally of the most ignorant stupid sort of their own nation... Few of their children in the country learn English."

Similarly, Italian and Irish immigrants faced ethnic stereotypes and discrimination in the late 1800s, while new arrivals from southern and eastern Europe in the early 1900s were castigated as racially inferior to those of Anglo-Saxon stock.¹⁹ But as these European immigrants incorporated into society, anxiety and fear about them faded over time.

DVD *Watch the DVD
Maid in America:
Intergroup Relations*

Meet a dedicated nanny who has worked in several African-American households since immigrating to this country. Hear from the African-American couple she now works for as they poignantly recount their own family's working-class beginnings and see parallels in today's immigrant experience.

This certainly was not the case for African-Americans and Native Americans—nor was it the case for Asian and Latino immigrants. As Native Americans and African-Americans endured legalized segregation and other forms of discrimination, Asian immigrants, in the late 1800s and early 1900s, were denied citizenship and other rights. U.S. laws during that time period also restricted new entries from Asian countries. During World War II, 120,000 Japanese Americans were interned. In the 1920s, thousands of Mexican workers, including U.S. citizens, were deported. And in 1954, Operation Wetback deported more than 1.1 million Mexican immigrants. These laws and policies undermined the ability of Latino and Asian immigrants to integrate fully into American society.

The Immigration Act of 1965, supported by civil rights leaders, eliminated the national-origins quota system that favored European immigrants and paved the way for expanded immigration from Asia, Africa, and Latin America. This law markedly changed the racial composition of immigrants to the United States: In 1960, seven of the top-ten sending countries were European; today, all of the top-ten sending countries are either Latin American or Asian.

In the twenty-first century, the diversity of immigrants—and their dispersed settlement pattern—make race a central issue, requiring U.S. society to consider how race affects the ability of immigrants to integrate. This is an especially critical concern for more homogenous new immigrant gateways and in communities where the black-white paradigm has long been the dominant frame.

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Housing segregation, employment discrimination, and educational inequities, though experienced by European immigrants at the turn of the nineteenth century, are even more daunting barriers to integration for today's increasingly Latino, Asian, and African immigrants. And they continue to limit opportunity for Native Americans and African-Americans as well.

How can receiving communities address these barriers, so that they do not impede immigrants' social and economic mobility? How can immigrants and native-born Americans find common ground and work together toward shared goals?

Within this context, the integration of immigrants must be a process that reaps clear benefits not only for immigrants but for society as a whole.

17. See "History of U.S. Immigration Law and Policy" in the "Additional Resources" section of this toolkit.

18. See: Alba, Richard and Victor Nee. 2003. *Remaking the American Mainstream: Assimilation and Contemporary Immigration*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press. Bean, Frank D. and Gillian Stevens. 2003. *America's Newcomers and the Dynamics of Diversity*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation. Portes, Alejandro and Ruben G. Rumbaut. 2001. *Legacies: The Story of the Immigrant Second Generation*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

19. Muller, Thomas. 1993. *Immigrants and the American City*. New York, NY: University Press.

