



# Immigrants in Laredo

A Snapshot of the Demographic and Economic Contributions of Immigrants in the Metro Area<sup>1</sup>

## POPULATION

# 72,200

immigrants<sup>2</sup> lived in the Laredo metro area in 2019.

Immigrants made up **26.4%**

of the total population of the metro area in 2019.

# 106,500

people worked in the Laredo metro area in 2019. Of these,

**34.1%**

or 36,300 workers in the metro area were immigrants.

# 5.1%

of the overall population growth between 2014 and 2019 was attributed to immigrants.

Top countries of origin for immigrants living in the metro area:

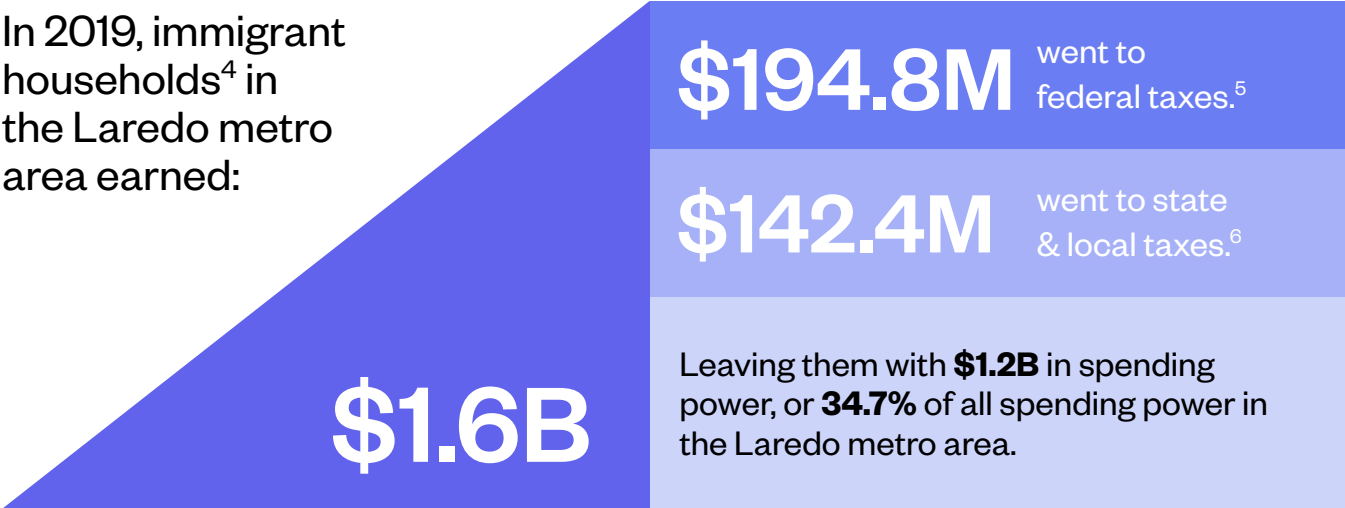
- 1 Mexico .....94.8%
- 2 El Salvador .....1.1%
- 3 Cuba .....0.5%

Between 2014 and 2019, the overall population in the metro area grew from **259,300** to **273,400**, or **5.4%**. During the same period, the immigrant population in the metro area decreased from **71,500** to **72,200**, or **1.0%**.

## SPENDING POWER AND TAX CONTRIBUTIONS

Immigrants in the metro area hold considerable **economic power**. In 2019, immigrant residents in the Laredo metro area contributed **\$3.6B** to the metro area's GDP.<sup>3</sup>

In 2019, immigrant households<sup>4</sup> in the Laredo metro area earned:



### SPENDING POWER AND TAX CONTRIBUTIONS (CONTINUED)

In 2019, immigrants in the metro area contributed:

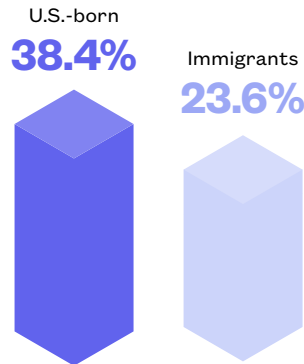
**\$154.0M**

to Social Security and

**\$37.9M**

to Medicare.

Share of residents receiving Medicare or Medicaid in 2019:



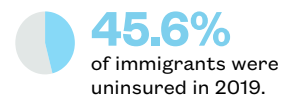
Share of immigrant residents in the Laredo metro area with...

Only private healthcare coverage: **30.6%**

Only public healthcare coverage: **19.7%**

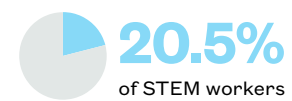
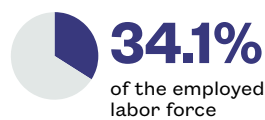
Both private and public healthcare coverage: **4.1%**

...in 2019.

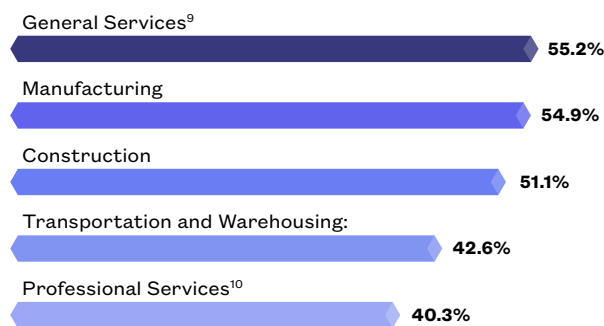


### WORKFORCE

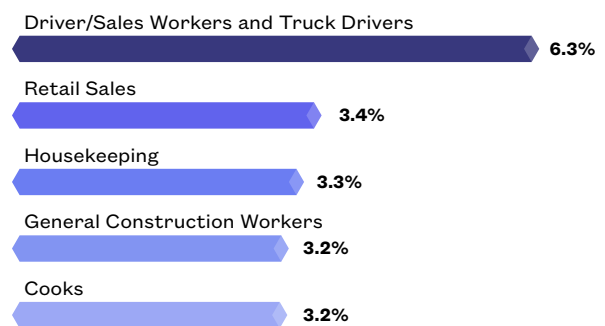
In 2019, immigrants in the Laredo metro area comprised...



The industries with the highest share of workers that are immigrants were:<sup>8</sup>



The occupations with the largest number of immigrant workers were:<sup>11</sup>



Immigrants play a critical role in our workforce by helping companies keep jobs on U.S. soil. Our research shows that immigrants living in the metro area helped create or preserve **3,300 local manufacturing jobs** that would have otherwise been eliminated or moved elsewhere by 2019.<sup>12</sup>

### ENTREPRENEURSHIP

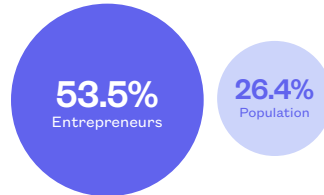
**6,200**

immigrant entrepreneurs in the Laredo metro area generated

**\$150.5M**

in business income in the metro area.<sup>13</sup>

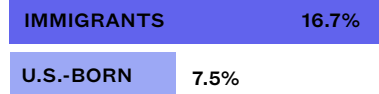
Immigrants represented **53.5%** of the business owners in the metro area despite making up **26.4%** of the population.



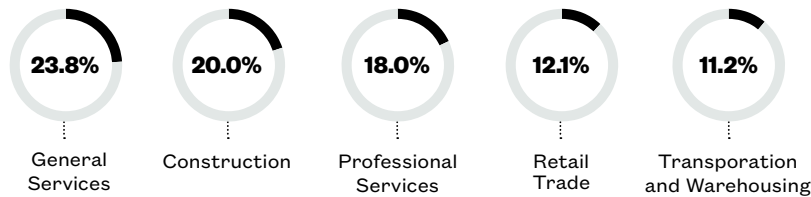
In the metro area, immigrants were

**121.9%**

more likely to be entrepreneurs than their U.S.-born counterparts. **16.7%** of immigrants were entrepreneurs, while **7.5%** of the U.S.-born were entrepreneurs.



The industries with the highest share of immigrant entrepreneurs:



### EDUCATION AND LONG-TERM ECONOMIC IMPACTS

In 2020,

**129**

students enrolled in colleges and universities in the Laredo metro area were temporary U.S. residents.<sup>14</sup> These students supported

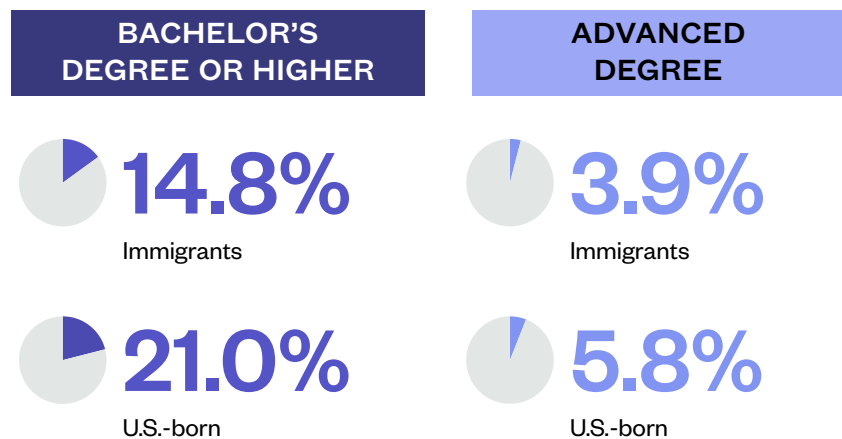
**23**

local jobs and contributed

**\$4.1M**

in spending in the 2020-21 academic year.<sup>15</sup>

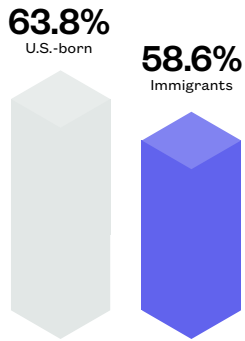
Share of the metro area's population aged 25 or older that held a:



**5.9%** of K-12 students in the metro area were immigrants in 2019.

### HOUSING WEALTH

Share of residents in the Laredo metro area who owned their homes in 2019:

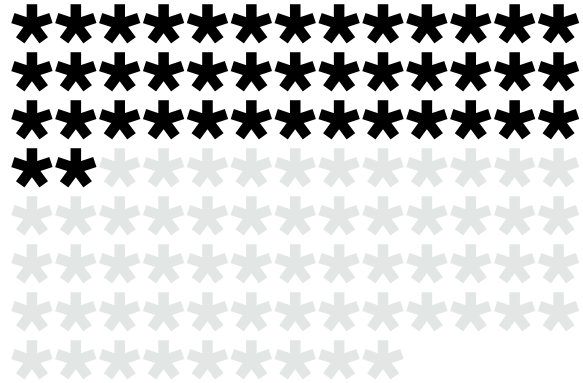


The total property value of immigrant households in 2019 was

**\$2.3B**

Share of immigrant residents in the Laredo metro area who were renters in 2019:

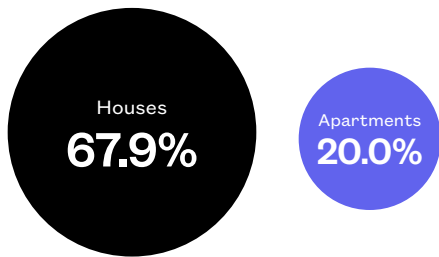
**41.4%**



The total annual rent paid by immigrant households in 2019<sup>16</sup> was

**\$91.2M**

Share of immigrants living in:



### NATURALIZATION

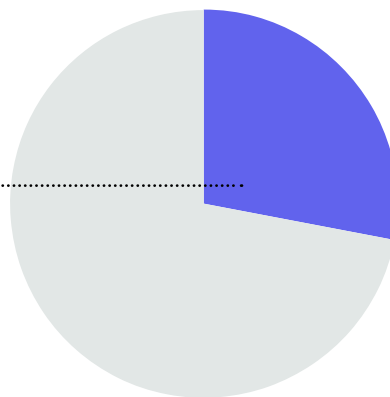
In 2019,

**20,100**

immigrants, or

**27.9%**

of the immigrant population in the Laredo metro area, were naturalized<sup>17</sup> citizens.



**11,300**

immigrants, or

**15.6%**

of immigrants in the Laredo metro area were likely eligible for naturalization in 2019.<sup>18</sup>



### UNDOCUMENTED IMMIGRANTS

In 2019, approximately

**26,500**

undocumented immigrants<sup>19</sup> lived in the metro area, making up



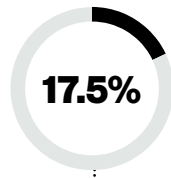
of the immigrant population.

Mexico was the most common country of origin for undocumented immigrants in the metro area.

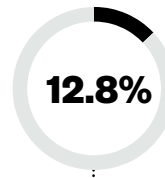


of the undocumented population was Mexican-born.

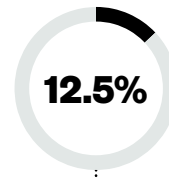
In 2019, the industries with the largest number of undocumented immigrant workers were:<sup>20</sup>



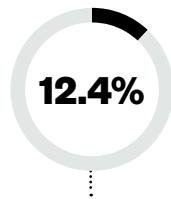
Transportation and Warehousing



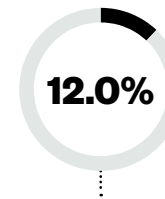
Retail Trade



Hospitality

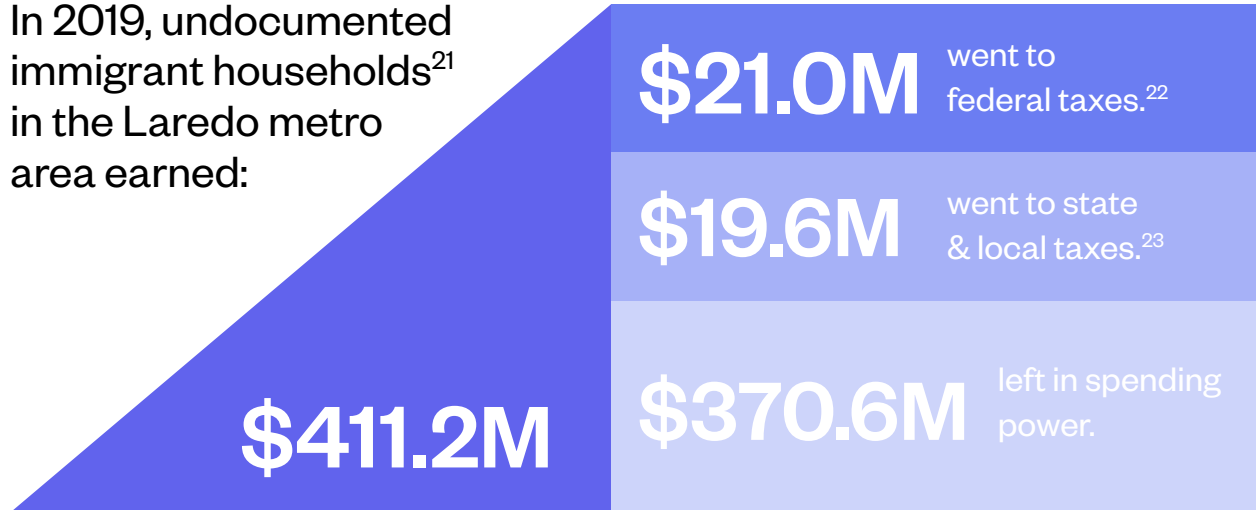


Construction



Professional Services

In 2019, undocumented immigrant households<sup>21</sup> in the Laredo metro area earned:



## ENDNOTES

1. Unless otherwise specified, data comes from 5-year samples of the American Community Survey (ACS) from 2014 and 2019 and figures refer to the Laredo, Texas, metropolitan statistical area.
2. Except where otherwise noted (e.g., “undocumented immigrant” or “DACA-eligible”), we define an immigrant as anyone born outside the country to non-U.S. citizen parents who resides in the United States. This includes naturalized citizens, green card holders, individuals with temporary immigration status, refugees, asylees, and undocumented immigrants, among others.
3. 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 on GDP from the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis.
4. Immigrant households refer to those with an immigrant as head of the unit.
5. U.S. Congressional Budget Office, *The Distribution of Household Income and Federal Taxes, 2019* (Washington, DC: 2022), <https://www.cbo.gov/publication/58353>.
6. Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy, *Who Pays? A Distributional Analysis of the Tax Systems in All Fifty States* (Washington, DC: 2018), <https://itep.org/whopays/>.
7. We define working age as 16-64 years of age.
8. The following are numerical estimates derived from the 5-year sample of the American Communities Survey from 2014 to 2019 and refer to the Laredo, TX, metropolitan statistical area. Immigrant workers in industries: General Services: 3,200 of 5,800; Manufacturing: 1,400 of 2,600; Construction: 3,200 of 6,300; Transportation and Warehousing: 6600 of 15,500.
9. General services include personal services (e.g., laundry services, barber shops, and repair and maintenance), religious organizations, social services, and labor unions.
10. 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.
11. The following are numerical estimates derived from the 5-year sample of the American Communities Survey from 2014 to 2019 and refer to the Laredo, TX, metropolitan statistical area. Immigrant workers in occupations: Driver/sales workers and truck drivers: 2,300; Retail salespersons: 1,300; Maids and housekeeping cleaners: 1,200; Construction laborers: 1,200; Cooks: 1,200.
12. Jacob Vigdor, *Immigration and the Revival of American Cities: From Preserving Manufacturing Jobs to Strengthening the Housing Market* (New York, NY: Americas Society/Council of the Americas and New American Economy, 2013), <http://www.newamericaneconomy.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/revival-of-american-cities.pdf>.
13. The total business income for immigrant entrepreneurs is calculated as the sum of the net pre-income-tax non-farm business and/or professional practice income for the previous calendar year (at the time of the survey) of self-employed immigrants age 16 or older.
14. Data on total student enrollment in the metro area 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.
15. Economic data is derived from the International Student Economic Value Tool maintained by NAFSA, the association of international educators.
16. The total rent paid by immigrant households is calculated as the sum of the total monthly rent (incl. utilities, fuels, etc., only if they were included in the rent contract), times 12, for immigrant households (we limit the data to one person per household to avoid double-counting rent where multiple respondents per household report the same rent).
17. Naturalization is the process through which one can become a U.S. citizen, dependent on certain eligibility requirements. Learn more here: <https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/research/how-unitedstates-immigration-systemworks>.
18. An 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.
19. Undocumented immigrants are identified by applying the methodological approach outlined by Harvard University economist George Borjas in his work: George Borjas, *The Labor Supply of Undocumented Immigrants* (Harvard University, Labour Economics, volume 46, pages 1-3, 2017), <https://scholar.harvard.edu/files/gborjas/files/le2017.pdf>. Immigrants who do not meet a set of criteria for legal status are identified as being undocumented. More on our methodology here: <https://map.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/methodology/>.
20. The following are numerical estimates derived from the 5-year sample of the American Communities Survey from 2014 to 2019 and refer to the Laredo, TX, metropolitan statistical area. Undocumented immigrant workers in industries: Transportation and Warehousing: 2,700; Retail Trade: 2,000; Hospitality: 1,900; Construction: 1,900; Professional Services: 1,800.
21. Undocumented immigrant households refer to people living in a housing unit with an undocumented immigrant being the head of their unit.
22. U.S. Congressional Budget Office, *The Distribution of Household Income and Federal Taxes, 2019* (Washington, DC: 2022), <https://www.cbo.gov/publication/58353>.
23. Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy, *Who Pays? A Distributional Analysis of the Tax Systems in All Fifty States* (Washington, DC: 2018), <https://itep.org/whopays/>.