

# Empowering Texas: Immigrants' Contributions to the Healthcare Industry



The Demographic and Economic Contributions of Immigrants<sup>1</sup> in the State's<sup>2</sup> Healthcare Industry

The healthcare sector has long played a crucial role in the Texas economy, providing the care and support needed to sustain the daily lives of residents of the state. The industry attracts a variety of workers – including many immigrants – whose unique experiences, knowledge, and skills contribute to a vibrant economy.

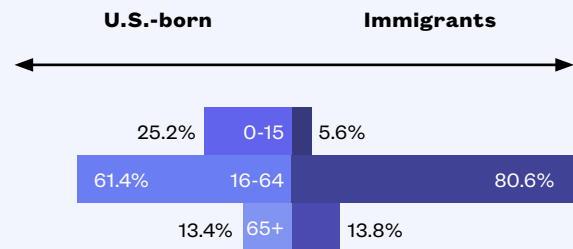
## DEMOGRAPHICS

In 2022, 5.2 million immigrants called the Lone Star State home, making up 17.2 percent of the state's total population. Immigrants have bolstered the state's healthcare workforce, bringing multicultural perspectives, multilingual skills, and talent across the skills spectrum.<sup>3</sup>



Immigrant share of the Texas population in 2022. This represented a total of **5.2 million** immigrants living in the state at that time.

Share of population by age:



2022 immigrant shares of the state's:



**DEMOGRAPHICS (CONTINUED)**

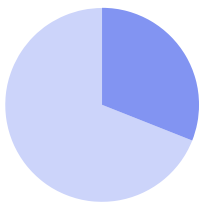
In 2022, immigrants in Texas were

**31.3%** A bar chart with two bars. The first bar is dark blue and represents 31.3%. The second bar is a lighter blue and is significantly shorter, representing the U.S.-born counterparts.

more likely to be of working age than their U.S.-born counterparts.

Immigrants in Texas had a labor force participation rate of **75.5%**, further demonstrating their invaluable contributions to the state's labor force and economy.

In 2022, 1,700 degrees were awarded to international students in biological and biomedical sciences, health professions and related programs, or psychology in Texas.<sup>5</sup> This is important because the state will need professionals in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) fields like these if it is to advance research and development in healthcare. As companies move to Texas, they will look to fill skilled positions. Attracting talent to Texas colleges and universities will be as important as ever.



In 2022, **30.6%** of the immigrant population in Texas reported that they did not speak English well. Of those, the top languages spoken at home other than English were:

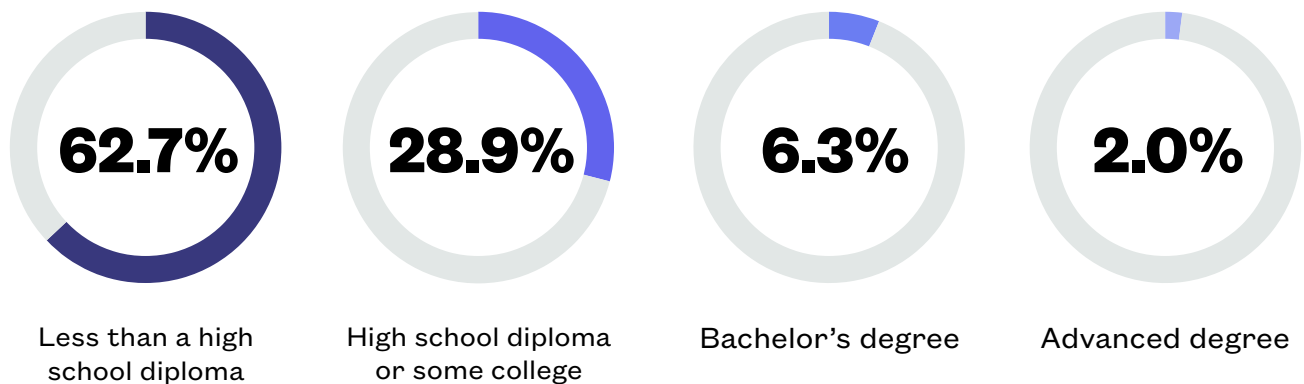
- Spanish - **87.6%**
- Vietnamese - **3.7%**
- Chinese - **1.4%**
- Korean - **0.8%**
- Arabic - **0.6%**
- Other - **5.9%**

**87.6%**

Share of immigrants that did not speak English well who spoke Spanish at home.

**DEMOGRAPHICS (CONTINUED)**

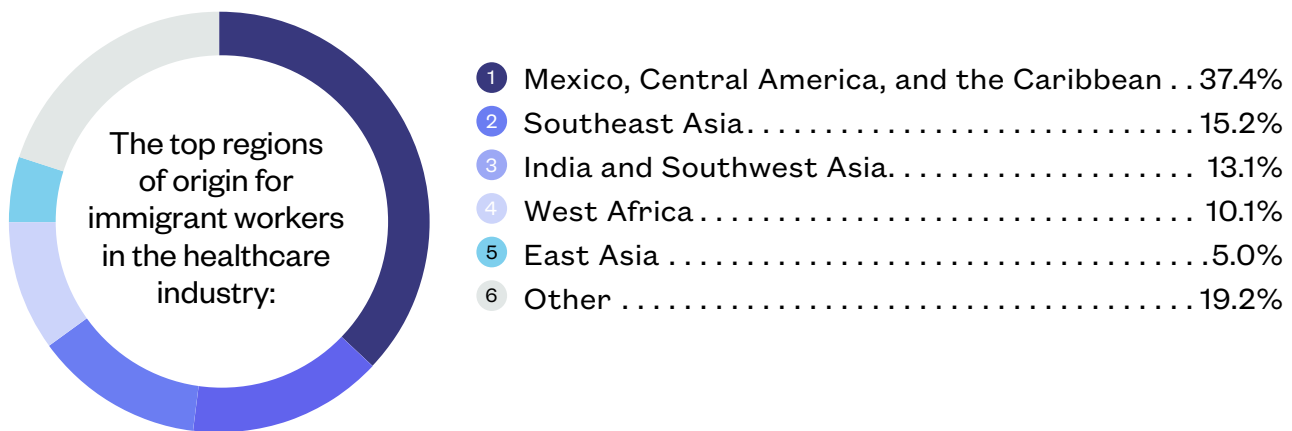
The educational level of immigrants who said they did not speak English well was:



**LABOR FORCE**

As the Texas population continues to grow, it will bring growing businesses and jobs to the state that will require a bolstered healthcare workforce to provide quality and timely care to all families. The state needs to leverage both U.S.-born and immigrant talent to fill healthcare jobs.

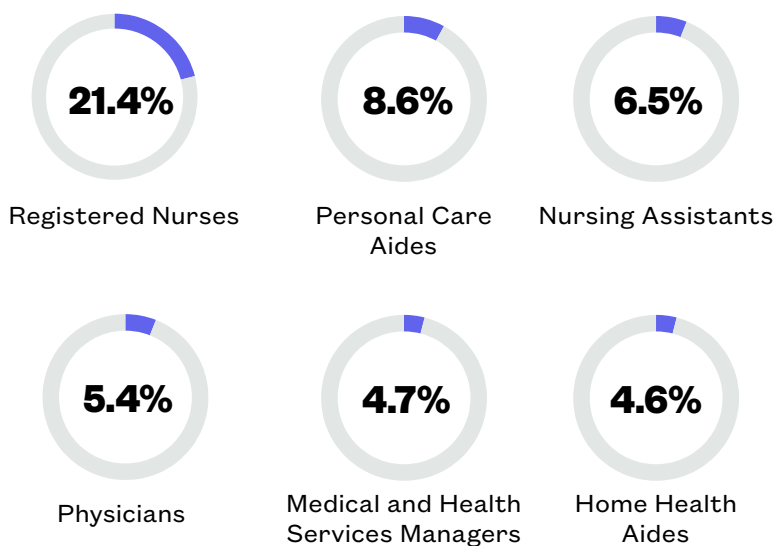
Immigrants play a critical role in the Texas healthcare industry. In 2022, more than 258,200 immigrants worked in healthcare, representing 19.4 percent of all employees in the sector. Of these workers, approximately 31,500 were undocumented, representing 2.4% percent of all employed workers in the industry.



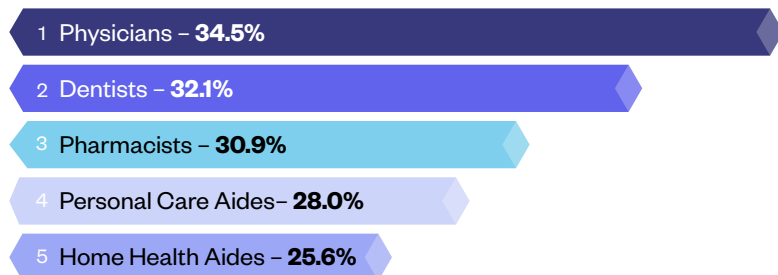
**LABOR FORCE (CONTINUED)**

In 2022, there were 20,700 immigrant entrepreneurs in the healthcare industry in Texas, comprising 24.9% of all entrepreneurs in the sector<sup>6</sup>.

The healthcare industry needs workers with different skills to fill a variety of occupations. The top occupations in the healthcare industry in Texas are:



Immigrant workers made up significant shares of the workforce in the following occupations<sup>7</sup>:



**SPOTLIGHT**

**Dr. Esmaeil Porsa**

*CEO of Harris Health System*

By age 7, Esmaeil Porsa wanted to be a doctor. By his early teens, he aimed to study in the United States. High ambitions for a poor kid in Iran. This was a child whose father had dropped out of second grade to work in a factory to support six orphaned siblings. His mother also hadn't finished school. She had the first of seven children at age 17, and the family moved into a one-room house, built of mud and hay, with an outhouse.

But Porsa was smart, and, he would say, fortunate to meet good people. Iran administered a national aptitude test, and every year the 500 high school graduates with the highest scores could leave without serving in the military. Porsa got to Zurich, where an American consular officer, impressed with his grades, issued him a student visa.

"I arrived in San Antonio with \$75, but I had heard that I should not get into a taxi," Porsa says. "So I waited at the bus stop."

Except there were no busses. After some time, an Iranian taxi driver stopped. That driver put Porsa up at his apartment, feeding and taxiing him to school, for a month.

"That man really, really changed the trajectory of my life," Porsa says. "I keep thinking, what if he hadn't shown up? What would have happened to me?"

Today Porsa is a doctor of internal medicine and the CEO of Harris Health System, the largest safety net system in Texas and the fourth largest in the country. Harris operates some three dozen clinics and two hospitals, including Ben Taub Hospital, one of only two Level 1 trauma centers in Houston. Chances are that anyone who is severely injured, regardless of their insurance status, is taken to Harris Health's Ben Taub Hospital.

As such, Harris Health serves as a major training ground for Baylor College of Medicine and University of Texas McGovern Medical School. About half of Harris Health patients are under- or uninsured, meaning they may have put off medical care. By the time they reach an emergency room, they need advanced care.

"People choose those medical schools in order to get training at our hospitals," Porsa says. "You become a good doctor by taking care of really sick patients."

Almost half of practicing doctors in Houston completed their medical training at Harris Health.

Porsa used to treat patients in the Harris and Dallas County jails, and he volunteered at a clinic treating homeless people. Now he runs a health network that treats more than 250,000 Texans a year, with more than 1.5 million visits. Harris Health has a significant economic impact, as well. One in every 70 jobs in Harris County is either directly or indirectly associated with Harris Health, and for every county tax dollar received, Harris Health returns almost six dollars. "Last year that was almost a \$5 billion impact," Porsa says.

## JOB DEMAND IN HEALTHCARE

From 2018 to 2023, there were

# 3,370,700

unique healthcare job postings in Texas. During the same time, the median advertised annual salary **rose** by 28.2%<sup>8</sup> from

# \$52,700 to \$67,500

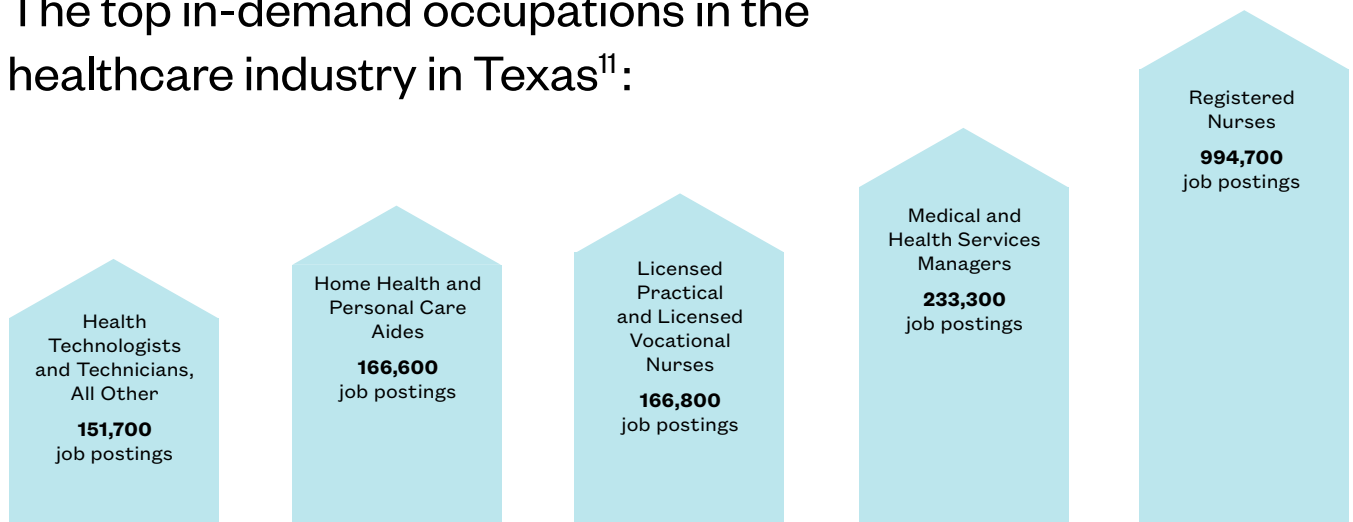
Between 2018 and 2023, the top Texas employers that listed job postings in the healthcare industry<sup>9</sup> were:

- **HCA Healthcare** (101,800 job postings)
- **Baylor Scott & White Health** (88,200)
- **CHRISTUS Health** (57,800)
- **Houston Methodist** (57,000)
- **Medical City Healthcare** (43,000)

The share of job postings by type<sup>10</sup>:



The top in-demand occupations in the healthcare industry in Texas<sup>11</sup>:



**JOB DEMAND IN HEALTHCARE (CONTINUED)**

The increase in job postings for nursing occupations were:



Immigrants across the skills spectrum are needed to fill jobs in the growing healthcare industry in Texas.<sup>12</sup> These roles require a variety of educational levels and on-the-job training for competency. The top in-demand occupations in the healthcare industry in Texas required the qualifications:

- Registered Nurses**  
 Bachelor’s Degree • No on-the-job training<sup>13</sup>
- Medical and Health Services Managers**  
 Bachelor’s degree • No on-the-job training
- Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses**  
 Postsecondary nondegree award • No on-the-job training
- Home Health and Personal Care Aides**  
 High school diploma or equivalent • Short-term on-the-job training<sup>14</sup>
- Health Technologists and Technicians, All Other**  
 Postsecondary nondegree award • No on-the-job training

**BILINGUAL SKILLS**

From 2018 to 2023,

**156,500**

unique job postings in the healthcare industry, or **4.6%**, listed knowledge of at least one other language as a desired skill.<sup>15</sup>

The top listed skills in job postings for the healthcare industry were <sup>16</sup> :	Registered Nurse (RN)
	Nursing
	Communication
	Basic Life Support (BLS) Certification
	Management

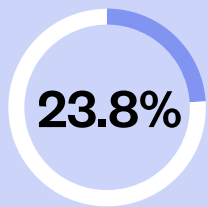
SPOTLIGHT

# Houston Metro Area

## DEMOGRAPHICS

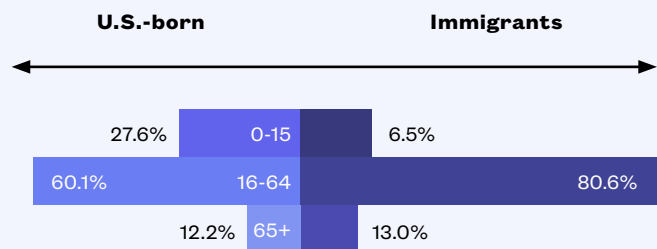
# 1.8M+

Number of immigrants living in the Houston Metro Area in 2022.<sup>17</sup>



Immigrant share of the metro area's total population in 2022

Share of population by age:<sup>18</sup>



In 2022, **31.6%** of the immigrant population in the Houston metro area reported they did not speak English well. Of those, the top languages spoken at home other than English were:

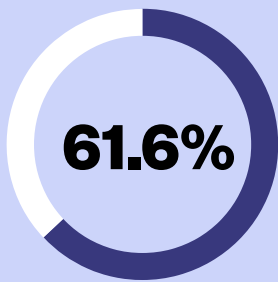
- Spanish - **84.8%**
- Vietnamese - **5.3%**
- Chinese - **2.2%**
- Urdu - **0.9%**
- Korean - **0.8%**
- Other - **6.0%**

# 84.8%

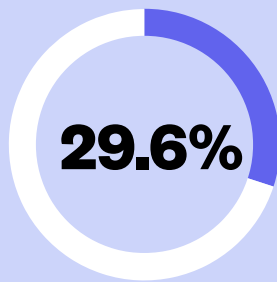
Share of immigrants that did not speak English well who spoke Spanish at home.

**DEMOGRAPHICS** (CONTINUED)

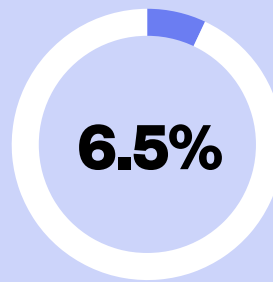
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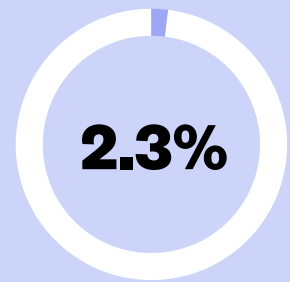
Less than a high school diploma



High school diploma or some college

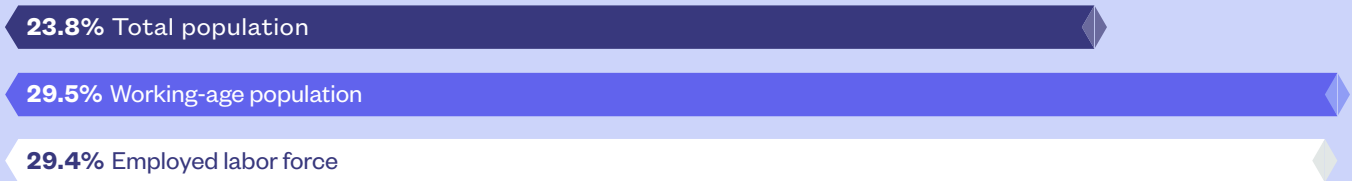


Bachelor's degree



Advanced degree

2022 immigrant shares of the metro area's:



In 2022, immigrants in the Houston metro area were



more likely to be of working-age than their U.S.-born counterparts.

Immigrants in Houston metro area had a labor force participation rate of **74.9%**.



## LABOR FORCE

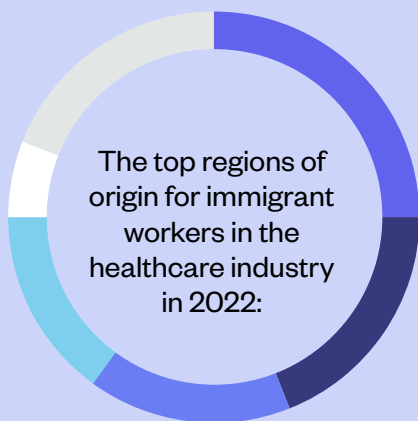
Immigrants played a critical role in the metro area's healthcare industry.

# 89,800

immigrants were employed in the healthcare industry in 2022, representing **27.4%** of all employed workers in the industry.

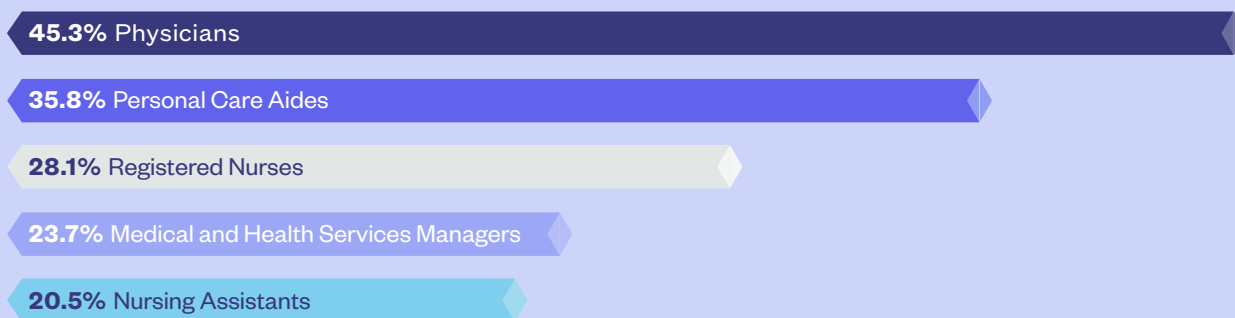
# 9,500

employed immigrants in the Houston metro area were undocumented, representing **2.9%** of all employed workers in the industry.



- 1 Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean . . . 25.2%
- 2 Southeast Asia . . . . . 18.9%
- 3 West Africa . . . . . 15.7%
- 4 India and Southwest Asia . . . . . 14.9%
- 5 East Asia . . . . . 6.4%
- 6 Other . . . . . 18.9%

Immigrant workers made up significant shares of the following occupation<sup>19</sup>:



## ENDNOTES

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- 1** Estimates provided in this report may slightly undercount the immigrant population. The American Community Survey (ACS) historically undersamples the immigrant population, especially among lower income, more recently arrived, and less English-fluent immigrant populations.
- 2** Unless otherwise specified, data comes from 1-year sample of the American Community Survey from 2022, downloaded from IPUMS USA, University of Minnesota, [www.ipums.org](http://www.ipums.org), and figures refer to the state of Texas.
- 3** We define “immigrant” as any non-citizen or any naturalized U.S. citizen. They include naturalized citizens, green card holders, temporary visa holders, refugees, asylees, and undocumented immigrants, among others.
- 4** We define working age as 16-64 years of age.
- 5** Data on degrees awarded to international students is derived from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System maintained by the National Center for Education Statistics.
- 6** Data obtained from the ACS may not capture those who work in informal jobs and businesses, and as a result, may not capture immigrants' full entrepreneurial contributions within the state.
- 7** American Immigration Council analysis of the IPUMS microdata from the 2022 American Community Survey, 1-Year sample. IPUMS USA, University of Minnesota, [www.ipums.org](http://www.ipums.org).
- 8** Data is obtained from Lightcast Technologies for the time period between January 1, 2018, and December 31, 2023. Accessed on April 14, 2024.
- 9** Data is obtained from Lightcast Technologies for the time period between January 1, 2018, and December 31, 2023. Accessed on April 14, 2024.
- 10** Data is obtained from Lightcast Technologies for the time period between January 1, 2018, and December 31, 2023. Accessed on August 5th, 2024.
- 11** Data is obtained from Lightcast Technologies for the time period between January 1, 2018, and December 31, 2023. Accessed on August 5th, 2024.
- 12** On-the-job training: training or preparation that is typically needed for a worker, once employed in an occupation, to attain competency in the occupation. Training is occupation specific rather than job specific; skills learned can be transferred to another job in the same occupation.
- 13** No-on-the-job training entails no additional occupation-specific training or preparation typically required for the worker to attain competency in the occupation.
- 14** Short-term-on-the-job training entails 1 month or less of combined on-the-job experience and informal training that is needed for the worker to develop the skills to attain competency in the occupation; this on-the-job training category also includes employer-sponsored training programs.
- 15** Data is obtained from Lightcast Technologies for the time period between January 1, 2018, and December 31, 2023. Accessed on April 14, 2024.
- 16** Data is obtained from Lightcast Technologies for the time period between January 1, 2018, and December 31, 2023. Accessed on April 14, 2024.
- 17** Unless otherwise specified, data comes from the 1-year sample of the American Community Survey (ACS) from 2022, downloaded from IPUMS USA, University of Minnesota, [www.ipums.org](http://www.ipums.org), and figures refer to the Houston-The Woodlands-Sugar Land, Texas, Metropolitan Statistical Area.
- 18** Totals may not add up to 100 percent due to rounding.
- 19** American Immigration Council analysis of the IPUMS microdata from the 2022 American Community Survey, 1-Year sample. IPUMS USA, University of Minnesota, [www.ipums.org](http://www.ipums.org).



# Acknowledgements

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The American Immigration Council would like to thank the following organizations for their partnership and support in the release of this report.

