

IMMIGRANTS IN CALIFORNIA

Hans Johnson

▶ **California's immigrant population has increased rapidly in recent decades.**

Between 1970 and 2009, the number of California residents born abroad increased more than fivefold, from 1.8 million to almost 10 million. Many of these foreign-born residents, also known as immigrants, have become naturalized U.S. citizens (46%).

▶ **California has a higher proportion of immigrants than any other state.**

The proportion of the state's population that is foreign-born has plateaued over the past few years at its highest level since 1890. California has a much higher share of immigrants in its population than the United States as a whole (27% vs. 13%) or any other state (New York, with 21%, has the second-highest share). Another 22% of Californians have at least one immigrant parent.

▶ **Most of California's immigrants are from Latin America or Asia.**

The vast majority of California's immigrants (90%) are from Latin America (55%) or Asia (35%). California has sizeable populations of immigrants from dozens of countries. The leading countries of origin are Mexico (4.3 million), the Philippines (783,000), and China (681,000).

▶ **California is still the primary destination for immigrants entering the United States.**

California is home to one in four of the nation's immigrants, compared to only one in ten of the nation's U.S.-born population. Although California is still the leading U.S. destination, its dominance has declined. Between 2008 and 2009, California received 17% of the immigrants arriving in the United States. In contrast, between 1985 and 1990 California received 31% of the nation's immigrants.

▶ **Three California cities have majority immigrant populations.**

Immigrants represent a majority of residents in three cities with populations of at least 60,000: Glendale, Daly City, and El Monte. Immigrants constitute at least 10% of the population in 33 of the state's 58 counties. The counties with the highest percentages are Santa Clara (36%), Los Angeles (36%), and San Francisco (34%).

▶ **Most immigrants in California are working-age adults.**

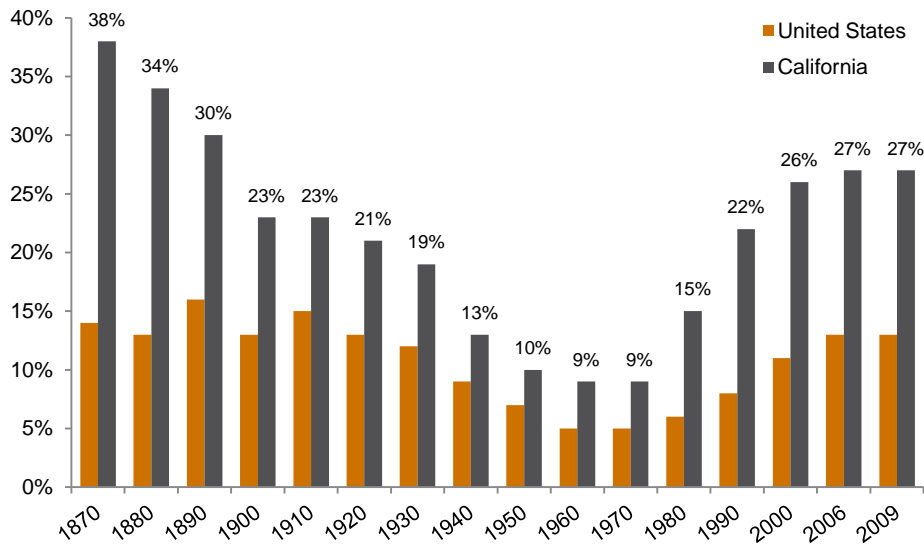
Three of every four immigrants in California are between the ages of 25 and 64, compared to less than half (45%) of U.S.-born residents in the state. Two of every five Californians between the ages of 25 and 44 are immigrants.

▶ **Immigrants account for a large share of California's population growth.**

Between 2000 and 2009, international migration accounted for 1.8 million new residents in California, compared to 2.9 million due to natural increase (more births than deaths). In 2009, 40% of births in the state were to immigrant mothers.



Percentage of the population that is foreign born, 1870–2009



Sources: Decennial C ensuses; 2009 American Community Survey.

California’s immigrant population by country of origin, 2009

Country	Number	Percent naturalized
Mexico	4,308,000	28
Philippines	783,000	68
China (including Taiwan)	681,000	68
Vietnam	457,000	82
El Salvador	413,000	37
India	319,000	46
Korea	307,000	55
Guatemala	261,000	28
Iran	214,000	76
Canada	132,000	49
United Kingdom	125,000	40
Japan	105,000	37
Germany	88,000	65
Armenia	72,000	57
Nicaragua	67,000	56
All other countries	1,615,000	60

Source: 2009 American Community Survey.

Sources: Decennial C ensuses. 2009 American Community Survey.

Contact: johnson@ppic.org

