

## Immigrants in California

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➤ **California has more immigrants than any other state.**

California is home to more than 10 million immigrants—about a quarter of the foreign-born population nationwide. In 2016, the most current year of data, 27% of California's population was foreign born, about twice the US percentage. Foreign-born residents represented more than 30% of the population in seven California counties; in descending order, these counties are Santa Clara, San Francisco, Los Angeles, San Mateo, Alameda, Monterey, and Orange. Half of California children have at least one immigrant parent.

➤ **Most immigrants in California are documented residents.**

About half (49%) of California's immigrants are naturalized US citizens, and another 26% have some other legal status (including green cards and visas). According to the Center for Migration Studies, about 25% of immigrants in California are undocumented.

➤ **Net immigration to California has slowed.**

In the 1990s, California's immigrant population grew by 37% (2.4 million). But in the first decade of the 2000s, that growth slowed to 15% (1.3 million), and in the past 10 years, the increase was 8% (about three-quarters of a million). The decline in international immigration has contributed to the slowdown of California's overall population growth.

➤ **The majority of recent arrivals are from Asia.**

The vast majority of California's immigrants were born in Latin America (51%) or Asia (39%). California has sizable populations of immigrants from dozens of countries; the leading countries of origin are Mexico (4.2 million), China (936,000), the Philippines (813,000), Vietnam (534,000), and India (482,000). However, most (58%) of those arriving between 2012 and 2016 came from Asia; only 28% came from Latin America.

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

About eight in every ten immigrants (79%) in California are working-age adults (age 18 to 64), compared to less than six in ten (57%) US-born California residents. This means that more than a third (34%) of working-age adults in the state are immigrants.

➤ **California's immigrants have both very low and very high levels of education.**

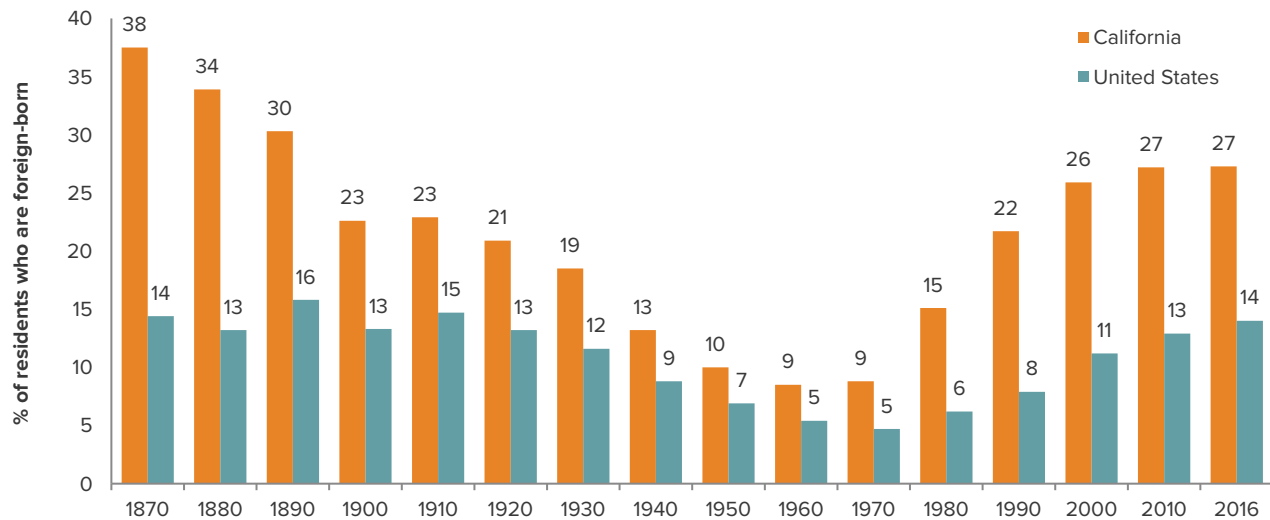
In 2016, 34% of California's immigrants age 25 and older had not completed high school, compared with 8% of US-born California residents. Twenty-eight percent of California's foreign-born residents had attained at least a bachelor's degree, compared to 36% of US-born residents. Foreign-born residents accounted for 72% of state residents without a high school diploma and 31% of college-educated residents. But recent immigrants and immigrants from Asia tend to have very high levels of educational attainment. About half (49%) of foreign-born residents who came to the state between 2012 and 2016—and 56% of those who came from Asia—have at least a bachelor's degree.

➤ **Immigrants and US-born residents are equally likely to work—but immigrants make less money.**

California's foreign-born residents are about as likely to be in the labor force—either working or looking for work—as US-born residents: in 2016, 64% of immigrants were in the labor force, compared to 63% of US-born residents. Immigrants are also slightly more likely to be employed (61% compared to 58%). However, among families with foreign-born heads of household, the median income in 2016 was 24% lower than that of families with US-born heads of household (\$60,100 compared to \$79,000). Foreign-born residents are about as likely as US-born residents to live in poverty (17% and 16%, respectively).

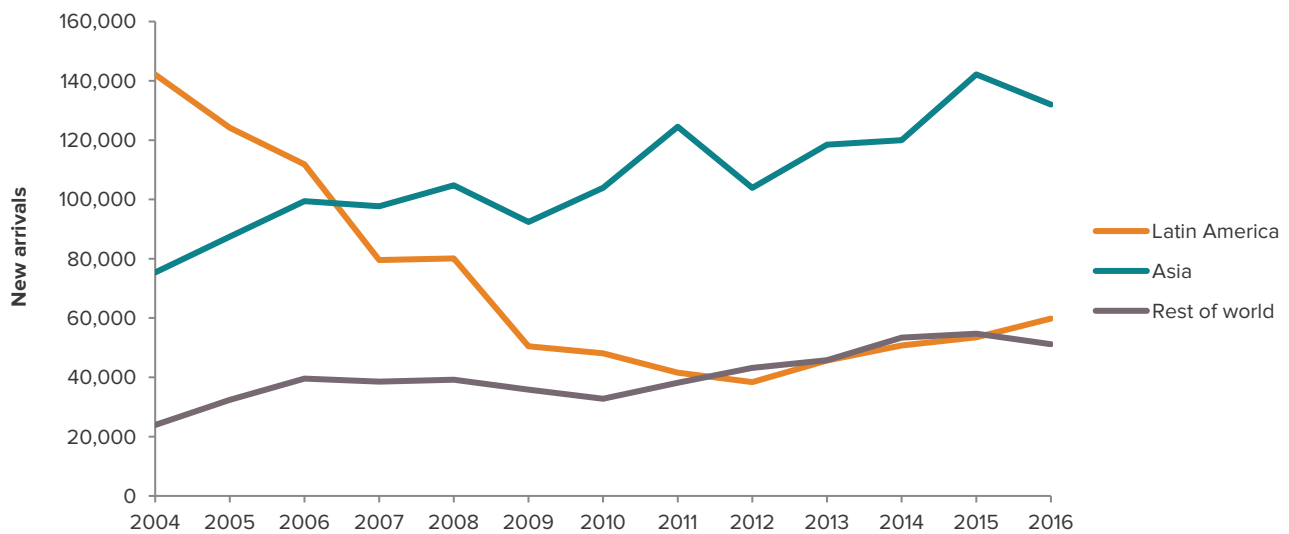


## California has had high shares of foreign-born residents for decades



Source: US Census Bureau, decennial censuses and the American Community Survey.

## Asia has surpassed Latin America as the leading source of recent immigrants to California



Source: American Community Survey.

Note: New arrivals are based on the place of residence one year prior to the survey (excluding US-born citizens).

Sources: American Community Survey and decennial census data from the [US Census Bureau](#) and [IPUMS](#); Ruggles, Steven, Katie Genadek, Ronald Goeken, Josiah Grover, and Matthew Sobek, [Integrated Public Use Microdata Series: Version 6.0](#) (University of Minnesota 2015); [State-Level Unauthorized Population and Eligible-to-Naturalize Estimates](#) (Center for Migration Studies 2016).

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