

## **A Profile of Immigrants in Napa County**

*A Report Commissioned by the Napa Valley Community Foundation*

Throughout the U.S., the conversation about immigration has become polarizing and unproductive. Communities are becoming more and more divided because residents are unable to discuss immigration in a civil, thoughtful and solutions-oriented way.

The Napa Valley Community Foundation (NVCF) believes that Napa County can do better if residents are given the facts about immigration and are brought together to openly discuss challenges and opportunities, as well as to work towards pragmatic solutions. For this reason, we are pleased to share a new report that examines the fiscal and economic impact of immigrants in the region.

The *Profile of Immigrants in Napa County* report, created by the Migration Policy Institute and commissioned by NVCF, includes new data on the important contributions immigrants make to the local economy, and discusses some of the challenges and opportunities that stem from the region's significant demographic changes over the last twenty years. The report uses U.S. Census Bureau data to provide a first-of-its-kind profile of current immigrant demographics in Napa County.

### **Immigrant Fiscal, Economic and Demographic Impacts**

**Fiscal and Economic Impact:** Immigrants are an important part of Napa County's economy and annually account for as much as **\$1 billion**<sup>1</sup> of the region's Gross Domestic Product. Although Latino immigrant households earn approximately \$30,000 less than non-immigrant households, they pay into state and local tax coffers at a rate that is proportional to their share of the County's population. Twenty-one percent of local tax receipts in 2008/09 came from immigrants, who represented 21% of the population in those years and 23% of the County's population today. Immigrants pay an estimated \$117 million in state and local taxes versus \$23 million in monies sent back to their countries of origin. Spending on public services for immigrants is also nearly proportional to their share of population, with the exception of public education.

**Demographic Changes:** The region is being transformed as a result of immigration. Approximately 32,000 individuals, or 23% of Napa County's population, are foreign-born. This is slightly below the statewide average of 27%. Two-thirds of Napa County's immigrants are from Mexico or Latin America, but the fastest-growing immigrant population is Filipinos in American Canyon. Additionally, two-thirds of Napa County's immigrants have been in the Napa Valley for 10 to 20 years or more, and two-thirds are naturalized citizens or Legal Permanent Residents.

**Declining Numbers:** Immigrants are coming to Napa County in sharply lower numbers than they were 10-20 years ago. From 1990 to 2000, the Latino immigrant population grew by 123%. From 2000 to 2010, the Latino immigrant population grew by only 21%. The recession, increased border security and demographic changes in Mexico are the primary drivers of this decline.

### **Immigrants in Napa County Share Traits with Past Waves of Immigrants**

Napa County and the U.S. have been shaped by various waves of immigration, and the report suggests that immigrants in Napa County share traits in common with those who have migrated to the U.S. in the past.

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<sup>1</sup> *This estimate is approximately 15 percent of the county's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), and is based on the county's total GDP, labor's share of national GDP, the number of immigrants working in Napa County, and the relative earnings of immigrants versus all workers.*

**The Workforce:** Researchers found that immigrants are over-represented in the Napa Valley workforce. While immigrants are only 23% of the population, they account for 33% of the region's workforce. Additionally, 89% of Latino immigrant men in Napa County are working. Immigrants represent a very significant part of the workforce in various sectors, accounting for 73% of the agricultural workforce; 39% of the manufacturing workforce; 37% of the construction workforce; and, 29% of the hospitality workforce.

**Augmenting the Aging Native Population:** Immigrants in Napa Valley are generally younger than other demographic groups and are augmenting Napa Valley's aging population. In fact, 48% of the children enrolled in Napa County's K-12 public education system are the children of immigrants, though the overwhelming majority of these children are themselves U.S.-born citizens. At the same time, the native-born, non-Latino community is aging rapidly in place, with this group remaining roughly the same size as it was in 1990 (95,000).

**Laying Down Roots and Upwardly Mobile:** Immigrants in Napa County are building assets and seeking to build a better life for themselves. The poverty rate among Latino immigrants in the region has fallen by almost 60% since 1990, and 55% of immigrants own their own homes. Immigrants in the region have also been more successful than their statewide peers in economic terms, as can be seen in the fact that household earnings of Latino immigrants are nearly 10% higher in Napa County than in the rest of California. Additionally, poverty rates for Latino immigrants in the region are 10% compared to the statewide average of 21%.

Another contributor to the upward mobility of immigrants is the fact that private health insurance coverage for Latino immigrants is much higher in Napa County than it is statewide (61% vs. 36%).

#### **Opportunities and Challenges:**

The changing demographics are creating important challenges and opportunities for Napa County that we, as a community, must discuss openly if we are to ensure a bright future for all.

**Education:** The report uncovered an achievement gap in education that may affect the productivity of Napa Valley's future workforce. In Napa County, 46% of immigrant adults have less than a high school education and 60% speak limited English. These factors combined may limit their children's readiness for school. The gap in pre-school enrollment rates for Latino kids (41%) and Anglo kids (70%) may also be a limiting factor with respect to school preparedness.

School preparedness is particularly important because nearly half (48%) of all students in Napa County are the children of immigrants and/or Latino (46%). Despite these challenges, we are seeing some opportunities in public education, particularly in relation to bilingual education. While 23% of students are considered English Language Learners (ELLs), the numbers of bilingual proficient students (or former ELLs) has risen dramatically since 2008 (from 1,173 to 4,504). This may be a sign that the education system is better addressing the needs of these children.

**Housing:** In the current economic climate, many households in Napa County are struggling to pay housing costs, and immigrants are also feeling the burden. Sixty-four percent of immigrant homeowners spend more than 30% of their income on housing, and thirty-five percent spend more than half of their income on housing. Latino immigrants live in crowded conditions at a rate nearly 15 times greater than U.S.-born non-Latinos. Additionally, many immigrants cannot afford to live in Napa County, as can be seen in the fact that 39% of immigrant workers in the Napa Valley commute from less expensive neighboring counties.

**Civic Life:** The report also identified opportunities to help eligible immigrants participate more fully in the civic and economic life of the Napa Valley community while acknowledging that more aggressive Federal

enforcement of immigration rules in the County Jail signals an increasingly unwelcome environment for unauthorized residents. There are 12,000 Legal Permanent Residents (or green card holders) living in Napa County, and many may be eligible for citizenship. However, immigrants in the region are less likely to be naturalized citizens than their statewide or nation-wide counterparts (30% in Napa County vs. 37% statewide and 36% nationally). The report also estimates that 10,000 to 11,000 residents in Napa County are unauthorized, and cites Immigrations and Customs Enforcement data stating that 239 unauthorized immigrants were deported from the Napa County Jail between August of 2010 and November of 2011. Most (189) with a misdemeanor conviction or no conviction at all.

### **The Unique Role of the Napa Valley Community Foundation**

NVCF's mission is to mobilize resources, inspire giving, build knowledge and provide leadership on vital community issues to improve the quality of life for all in Napa County. By funding the study and convening community members to talk about the results, NVCF hopes to encourage a civil, fact-based, County-wide community dialogue that might lead towards pragmatic solutions for the continued success and prosperity of Napa County.

The Foundation knows that in the Napa Valley, residents can discuss even the most contentious issues in a respectful, thoughtful manner. We can be a model for other communities in how we discuss this issue.