

# Citizen Gain: The Economic Benefits of Naturalization for Immigrants and the Economy – State-Level Results

Manuel Pastor & Justin Scoggins  
USC Center for the Study of Immigrant Integration



University of Southern California

## California

### Why the gain?

Naturalized immigrants differ in educational levels, language ability, and a number of other factors. But research suggests that there is an independent effect of citizenship: with citizenship comes more U.S.-specific investments in job preparation, better matching between employers and employees, and an enhanced ability to shift between jobs.

### What's the gain?

Using data from the U.S. Census Bureau and Office of Immigration Statistics, our estimates suggest

- an average **11-14% boost** in individual earnings with citizenship
- the potential for a **\$4.6 to \$5.8 billion** increase, annually, in earnings of immigrants under a full naturalization scenario (i.e. assuming that all who are eligible to naturalize did so).
- an even **larger impact on GDP** taking into account the secondary effects of higher incomes on spending and demand.

### Impact on Annual Immigrant Citizen Earnings Full Naturalization Scenario, California

Eligible-to-Naturalize Workers		
Total Eligible to Naturalize	2,440,000	
x Share of Non-Citizens in Regression Sample	61.8%	
= Eligible to Naturalize Workers	<b>1,508,526</b>	
Increase in Earned Income from Naturalization (per worker)		Including Industry/Occupation Effect
	From Naturalization Alone	
Average Earnings for Non-Citizens in Regression Sample	\$27,749	\$27,749
x Returns to Naturalization	10.9%	13.9%
= Increase in Earned Income from Naturalization (per worker)	<b>\$3,027.96</b>	<b>\$3,855.66</b>
Increase in Immigrant Earnings		
Eligible-to-Naturalize Workers	1,508,526	1,508,526
x Increase in Earned Income from Naturalization (per worker)	\$3,027.96	\$3,855.66
= Aggregate Increase in Earned income	<b>\$4,567,758,887</b>	<b>\$5,816,363,358</b>

Encouraging naturalization is not just the right thing to do; it is an economic imperative in a nation still working to emerge from the shadow of recession. With the children of immigrants now totaling nearly one quarter of our overall youth population, it's an investment in their future and the future of America.

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## Florida

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Naturalized immigrants differ in educational levels, language ability, and a number of other factors. But research suggests that there is an independent effect of citizenship: with citizenship comes more U.S.-specific investments in job preparation, better matching between employers and employees, and an enhanced ability to shift between jobs.

### What's the gain?

Using data from the U.S. Census Bureau and Office of Immigration Statistics, our estimates suggest

- an average **8-14% boost** in individual earnings with citizenship
- the potential for a **\$0.9 to \$1.5 billion** increase, annually, in earnings of immigrants under a full naturalization scenario (i.e. assuming that all who are eligible to naturalize did so).
- an even **larger impact on GDP** taking into account the secondary effects of higher incomes on spending and demand.

### Impact on Annual Immigrant Citizen Earnings Full Naturalization Scenario, Florida

<b>Eligible-to-Naturalize Workers</b>		
Total Eligible to Naturalize	790,000	
x Share of Non-Citizens in Regression Sample	57.0%	
= Eligible to Naturalize Workers	<b>450,573</b>	
<b>Increase in Earned Income from Naturalization (per worker)</b>		
	<i>From Naturalization Alone</i>	<i>Including Industry/Occupation Effect</i>
Average Earnings for Non-Citizens in Regression Sample	\$25,177	\$25,177
x Returns to Naturalization	8.1%	13.6%
= Increase in Earned Income from Naturalization (per worker)	<b>\$2,050.47</b>	<b>\$3,427.68</b>
<b>Increase in Immigrant Earnings</b>		
Eligible-to-Naturalize Workers	450,573	450,573
x Increase in Earned Income from Naturalization (per worker)	\$2,050.47	\$3,427.68
= Aggregate Increase in Earned income	<b>\$923,883,946</b>	<b>\$1,544,418,431</b>

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## Illinois

### Why the gain?

Naturalized immigrants differ in educational levels, language ability, and a number of other factors. But research suggests that there is an independent effect of citizenship: with citizenship comes more U.S.-specific investments in job preparation, better matching between employers and employees, and an enhanced ability to shift between jobs.

### What's the gain?

Using data from the U.S. Census Bureau and Office of Immigration Statistics, our estimates suggest

- an average **6-7% boost** in individual earnings with citizenship
- the potential for a **\$400 to \$500 million** increase, annually, in earnings of immigrants under a full naturalization scenario (i.e. assuming that all who are eligible to naturalize did so).
- an even **larger impact on GDP** taking into account the secondary effects of higher incomes on spending and demand.

### Impact on Annual Immigrant Citizen Earnings Full Naturalization Scenario, Illinois

Eligible-to-Naturalize Workers		
Total Eligible to Naturalize	370,000	
x Share of Non-Citizens in Regression Sample	63.1%	
= Eligible to Naturalize Workers	<b>233,587</b>	
Increase in Earned Income from Naturalization (per worker)		
	<i>From Naturalization Alone</i>	<i>Including Industry/Occupation Effect</i>
Average Earnings for Non-Citizens in Regression Sample	\$29,196	\$29,196
x Returns to Naturalization	5.8%	7.4%
= Increase in Earned Income from Naturalization (per worker)	<b>\$1,703.36</b>	<b>\$2,155.21</b>
Increase in Immigrant Earnings		
Eligible-to-Naturalize Workers	233,587	233,587
x Increase in Earned Income from Naturalization (per worker)	\$1,703.36	\$2,155.21
= Aggregate Increase in Earned income	<b>\$397,884,066</b>	<b>\$503,428,963</b>

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## Michigan

### Why the gain?

Naturalized immigrants differ in educational levels, language ability, and a number of other factors. But research suggests that there is an independent effect of citizenship: with citizenship comes more U.S.-specific investments in job preparation, better matching between employers and employees, and an enhanced ability to shift between jobs.

### What's the gain?

Using data from the U.S. Census Bureau and Office of Immigration Statistics, our estimates suggest

- an average **8-11% boost** in individual earnings with citizenship
- the potential for a **\$190 to \$270 million** increase, annually, in earnings of immigrants under a full naturalization scenario (i.e. assuming that all who are eligible to naturalize did so).
- an even **larger impact on GDP** taking into account the secondary effects of higher incomes on spending and demand.

### Impact on Annual Immigrant Citizen Earnings Full Naturalization Scenario, Michigan

<b>Eligible-to-Naturalize Workers</b>		
Total Eligible to Naturalize	130,000	
x Share of Non-Citizens in Regression Sample	52.2%	
= Eligible to Naturalize Workers	<b>67,816</b>	
<b>Increase in Earned Income from Naturalization (per worker)</b>	<i>From Naturalization Alone</i>	<i>Including Industry/Occupation Effect</i>
Average Earnings for Non-Citizens in Regression Sample	\$35,169	\$35,169
x Returns to Naturalization	7.9%	11.2%
= Increase in Earned Income from Naturalization (per worker)	<b>\$2,788.91</b>	<b>\$3,945.97</b>
<b>Increase in Immigrant Earnings</b>		
Eligible-to-Naturalize Workers	67,816	67,816
x Increase in Earned Income from Naturalization (per worker)	\$2,788.91	\$3,945.97
= Aggregate Increase in Earned income	<b>\$189,133,168</b>	<b>\$267,600,775</b>

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## New York

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### What's the gain?

Using data from the U.S. Census Bureau and Office of Immigration Statistics, our estimates suggest

- an average **8-12% boost** in individual earnings with citizenship
- the potential for a **\$1.5 to \$2.2 billion** increase, annually, in earnings of immigrants under a full naturalization scenario (i.e. assuming that all who are eligible to naturalize did so).
- an even **larger impact on GDP** taking into account the secondary effects of higher incomes on spending and demand.

### Impact on Annual Immigrant Citizen Earnings Full Naturalization Scenario, New York

Eligible-to-Naturalize Workers		
Total Eligible to Naturalize	1,000,000	
x Share of Non-Citizens in Regression Sample	59.5%	
= Eligible to Naturalize Workers	<b>594,681</b>	
Increase in Earned Income from Naturalization (per worker)		Including Industry/Occupation Effect
Average Earnings for Non-Citizens in Regression Sample	\$31,675	\$31,675
x Returns to Naturalization	7.7%	11.9%
= Increase in Earned Income from Naturalization (per worker)	<b>\$2,439.65</b>	<b>\$3,765.60</b>
Increase in Immigrant Earnings		
Eligible-to-Naturalize Workers	594,681	594,681
x Increase in Earned Income from Naturalization (per worker)	\$2,439.65	\$3,765.60
= Aggregate Increase in Earned income	<b>\$1,450,811,660</b>	<b>\$2,239,330,591</b>

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## North Carolina

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### What's the gain?

Using data from the U.S. Census Bureau and Office of Immigration Statistics, our estimates suggest

- an average **11-12% boost** in individual earnings with citizenship
- the potential for a **\$130 to \$150 million** increase, annually, in earnings of immigrants under a full naturalization scenario (i.e. assuming that all who are eligible to naturalize did so).
- an even **larger impact on GDP** taking into account the secondary effects of higher incomes on spending and demand.

### Impact on Annual Immigrant Citizen Earnings Full Naturalization Scenario, North Carolina

Eligible-to-Naturalize Workers		
Total Eligible to Naturalize	80,000	
x Share of Non-Citizens in Regression Sample	63.8%	
= Eligible to Naturalize Workers	<b>51,075</b>	
Increase in Earned Income from Naturalization (per worker)		Including Industry/Occupation Effect
Average Earnings for Non-Citizens in Regression Sample	\$24,450	\$24,450
x Returns to Naturalization	10.6%	12.4%
= Increase in Earned Income from Naturalization (per worker)	<b>\$2,586.14</b>	<b>\$3,020.64</b>
Increase in Immigrant Earnings		
Eligible-to-Naturalize Workers	51,075	51,075
x Increase in Earned Income from Naturalization (per worker)	\$2,586.14	\$3,020.64
= Aggregate Increase in Earned income	<b>\$132,087,798</b>	<b>\$154,280,122</b>

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## Texas

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### What's the gain?

Using data from the U.S. Census Bureau and Office of Immigration Statistics, our estimates suggest

- an average **10-14% boost** in individual earnings with citizenship
- the potential for a **\$1.5 to \$2.0 billion** increase, annually, in earnings of immigrants under a full naturalization scenario (i.e. assuming that all who are eligible to naturalize did so).
- an even **larger impact on GDP** taking into account the secondary effects of higher incomes on spending and demand.

### Impact on Annual Immigrant Citizen Earnings Full Naturalization Scenario, Texas

<b>Eligible-to-Naturalize Workers</b>		
Total Eligible to Naturalize	920,000	
x Share of Non-Citizens in Regression Sample	64.7%	
= Eligible to Naturalize Workers	<b>594,809</b>	
<b>Increase in Earned Income from Naturalization (per worker)</b>		
	<i>From Naturalization Alone</i>	<i>Including Industry/Occupation Effect</i>
Average Earnings for Non-Citizens in Regression Sample	\$25,060	\$25,060
x Returns to Naturalization	10.1%	13.6%
= Increase in Earned Income from Naturalization (per worker)	<b>\$2,523.94</b>	<b>\$3,419.74</b>
<b>Increase in Immigrant Earnings</b>		
Eligible-to-Naturalize Workers	594,809	594,809
x Increase in Earned Income from Naturalization (per worker)	\$2,523.94	\$3,419.74
= Aggregate Increase in Earned income	<b>\$1,501,263,390</b>	<b>\$2,034,093,007</b>

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