# SCORECARD OVERVIEW

WHAT IS IMMIGRANT INTEGRATION?

Immigrants have played an integral role in California ever since the state was incorporated into the Union. In the 1860s, nearly 40% of the population were immigrants; currently, immigrants comprise about 27%. Immigrants have played roles as varied as the state itself, but ones vital to the Golden State's economic stability and growth.

Regions like San Francisco and Santa Clara have experienced relatively high flows of immigrants since the 1860s. Other regions like the Inland Empire (Riverside and San Bernardino) and Sacramento only began to see high growth rates in the last two decades. In between, Los Angeles and Orange counties have experienced high immigration since World War II, while regions like San Diego and Fresno have never been destination locales compared to other regions in the state (although both have more immigrants than most places in the U.S.). So while the state as a whole is characterized by a significant immigrant presence, these regional differences have led to varied local responses.

Measures of immigrant integration need to acknowledge this variation – by going beyond the more uniform policies at our borders and focusing on how immigrants are being incorporated within regions. We define immigrant integration as improved economic mobility for, enhanced civic participation by, and receiving society openness to immigrants. Integration requires an intentional process that incorporates the needs of immigrants, their families, and their communities into policies governing our cities, regions, and states. Because immigrants make significant contributions to their regions, we see immigrant integration as a dynamic, two-way process in which newcomers and the receiving society both have a responsibility for integration, and both benefit as they work together to build secure, vibrant, and cohesive communities.

IMMIGRANT SHARE OF CA POPULATION
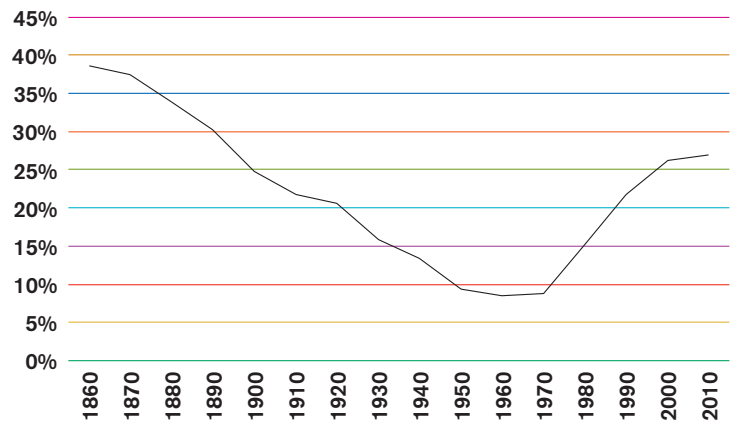
WHY SCORE IT?

Historically, issues related to immigration have been dealt with at the national level. But recent inaction by the federal government on these issues has pushed policy action down to a more local level – where immigrants and their families live their everyday lives. Moreover, our research has shown that immigrants contribute to their communities and that places that are able to excel at immigrant integration are more resilient and better able to adapt to economic, social, and other shifts.

The *California Immigrant Integration Scorecard* is intended to point to regions that are successfully integrating immigrants and to offer examples for other regions seeking to improve. We recognize that each region has a particular context in terms of political climate, waves of migration, labor markets, and other issues that lend to certain policies over others. However, we hope that this *Scorecard* will serve at least two purposes: one, for policymakers and organizers to find promising policies and actions to model in their regions and, two, to highlight a common agenda across regions throughout the state.

HOW DID WE DO IT?

To score immigrant integration, we took our three-part definition and developed a variety of "indicators" to capture different aspects of immigrant integration. These indicators were grouped into four categories: Economic Snapshot, Economic Trajectory, Warmth of Welcome, and Civic Engagement. Why two economic categories? To underscore the difference between the current economic status (a "snapshot" of what is) and how that status has improved over time (a "trajectory" of what has been).

Then, each indicator was compared across the ten regions, considered and scored from one to five (where five is good) then averaged with the others in its category. The category scores were then averaged to get an overall score for the region. It is important to note that all economic indicator scores are based on how immigrants are doing relative to U.S.-born non-Hispanic whites in their region – a group that we argue has experienced integration, as most white families track their migration to an earlier century. This approach dampens the effect of regional cost-of-living and income differences, as well as broad regional differences in economic mobility. For our snapshot scores, for example, it ensures that regions where immigrants and U.S.-born non-Hispanic whites both make $30,000 per year (higher immigrant integration) will not score lower than regions where immigrants make $35,000 per year and U.S.-born non-Hispanic whites make $90,000 per year (lower immigrant integration). For our trajectory scores, it ensures that a region with gains in immigrant homeownership that outperform those of U.S.-born non-Hispanic whites will score higher than one in which they lag behind – even if the annual increase in homeownership for immigrants is higher in the latter region.

At times, scoring by comparing across the regions can give the impression that a region is doing well when it is just the best performer of a bad lot. Among our snapshot measures, for example, English learners across the regions are falling far behind their U.S.-born non-Hispanic white (and English proficient) peers, but the region falling the least behind (Sacramento) scores well. The same goes for most other snapshot measures, with homeownership and full-time work being the only measures for which immigrant levels actually surpass those of U.S.-born non-Hispanic whites in some regions. Similarly, a high score for our trajectory measures does not (necessarily) mean that, say, immigrant income growth has kept pace with the U.S.-born non-Hispanic white comparison cohort – it only means that the gap between them has closed more (or widened less) than in other regions. Thus, it is important to keep the relative nature of the scoring in mind when viewing the regional scores. For more, see the technical report.
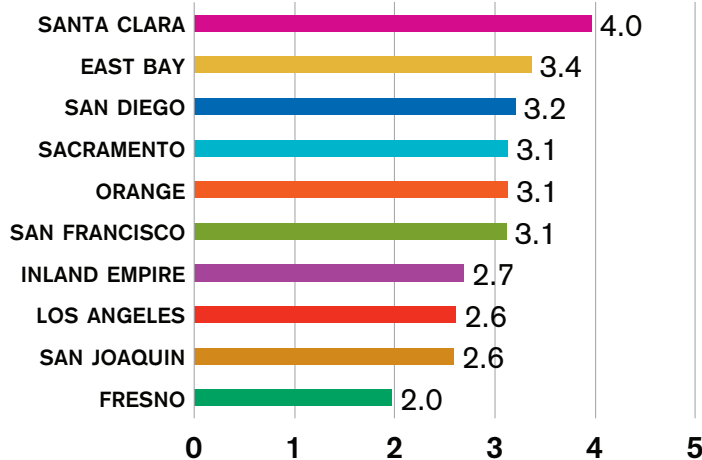
THREE-PART DEFINITION / INDICATOR CATEGORIES

THREE-PART DEFINITION	INDICATOR CATEGORIES
IMPROVED ECONOMIC MOBILITY	ECONOMIC SNAPSHOT / ECONOMIC TRAJECTORY
RECEIVING SOCIETY OPENNESS	WARMTH OF WELCOME
ENHANCED CIVIC PARTICIPATION	CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

STATEWIDE OUTLOOK: OVERALL

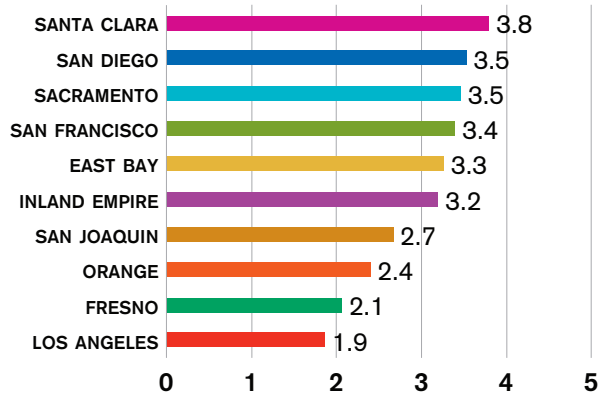| Region	Score
SANTA CLARA	4.0
EAST BAY	3.4
SAN DIEGO	3.2
SACRAMENTO	3.1
ORANGE	3.1
SAN FRANCISCO	3.1
INLAND EMPIRE	2.7
LOS ANGELES	2.6
SAN JOAQUIN	2.6
FRESNO	2.0

We applied this methodology to ten regions across California, choosing a mix in which there are both many immigrants and at least some actors working towards their integration. The regions can be seen in the graph to the left. They are generally counties, but combining Alameda and Contra Costa as the East Bay and Riverside and San Bernardino as the Inland Empire.

The figure shows four distinct groupings, with Santa Clara having made the most progress towards integration and Fresno having the furthest to catch-up. The observant reader will note in scanning through this data, that these cumulative scores reflect a great deal of variation in the four categories. For example, San Francisco does quite poorly on Economic Trajectory, but is a model when it comes to Warmth of Welcome; San Joaquin is nearly the polar opposite. Regions that scored at a more constant rate across all four categories include: Santa Clara, the East Bay, and Fresno – for better or for worse.
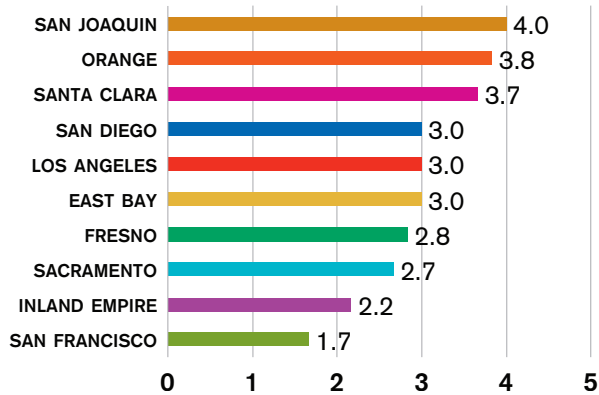
STATEWIDE OUTLOOK: CATEGORY-BY-CATEGORY

ECONOMIC SNAPSHOT

Region	Score
SANTA CLARA	3.8
SAN DIEGO	3.5
SACRAMENTO	3.5
SAN FRANCISCO	3.4
EAST BAY	3.3
INLAND EMPIRE	3.2
SAN JOAQUIN	2.7
ORANGE	2.4
FRESNO	2.1
LOS ANGELES	1.9

WARMTH OF WELCOME

Region	Score
SAN FRANCISCO	4.4
LOS ANGELES	3.6
SANTA CLARA	3.4
SACRAMENTO	3.4
EAST BAY	3.2
SAN DIEGO	2.8
ORANGE	2.8
INLAND EMPIRE	2.4
SAN JOAQUIN	2.2
FRESNO	2.0

In the **Economic Snapshot** category, Santa Clara performed well, followed closely by five regions, before the precipitous drop-off down to Los Angeles. Five groupings make up this category: Housing, Workforce Preparation, Workforce Strength, Income, and Access (see regional inserts for specific indicators). These scores are based on the gaps between immigrants and U.S.-born non-Hispanic whites.
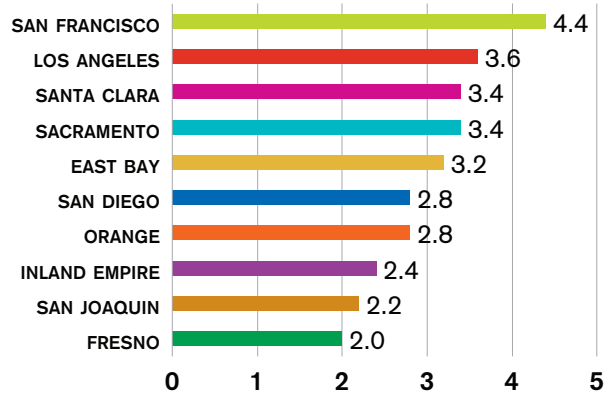
The **Warmth of Welcome** category quantifies how open the region is to newcomers. This category takes into account media messaging, the ability of high schools to prepare their English learners for life in the U.S., the coverage of immigrant-serving organizations, the civic infrastructure for naturalization (determined with a statistical model that estimates the progress made in naturalizing those immigrants who are eligible to do so), and the supply of English language learning (ELL) courses. San Francisco is the frontrunner, while rural California and Orange County have the furthest to go.

ECONOMIC TRAJECTORY

Region	Score
SAN JOAQUIN	4.0
ORANGE	3.8
SANTA CLARA	3.7
SAN DIEGO	3.0
LOS ANGELES	3.0
EAST BAY	3.0
FRESNO	2.8
SACRAMENTO	2.7
INLAND EMPIRE	2.2
SAN FRANCISCO	1.7

The **Economic Trajectory** category scores how immigrants have done over time. Perhaps unexpectedly, San Joaquin scores at the top and San Francisco falls to the bottom. Part of the reason may be that as immigrants gain a toe-hold they may move out of San Francisco to places like San Joaquin where homeownership is less costly. Of course, so might the comparison group – U.S.-born non-Hispanic whites. The relative lack of progress in San Francisco is not entirely surprising: immigrants who were already economically successful when they immigrated may stay in San Francisco (i.e., the Sunset District), as may poorer immigrants who get stuck in places like Chinatown or the Mission District where their economic standing is static.
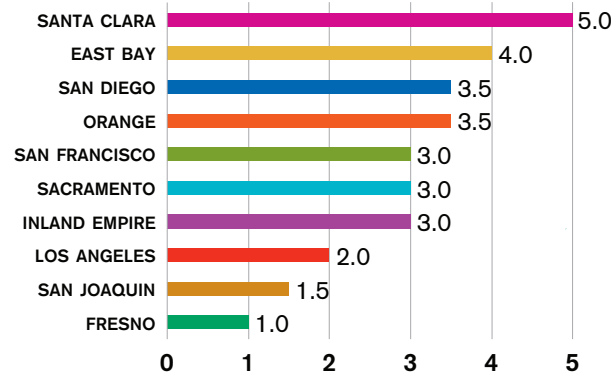
Elsewhere, education and ethnicity may play an important role. For example, in Orange and Santa Clara counties, the more heavily Asian immigrant community likely earns more degrees over time and so income increases. The novel approach we take is not always straight-forward in its interpretation and requires more detailed research, but the capacity to track change rather than just take a "snapshot" matters.

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Region	Score
SANTA CLARA	5.0
EAST BAY	4.0
SAN DIEGO	3.5
ORANGE	3.5
SAN FRANCISCO	3.0
SACRAMENTO	3.0
INLAND EMPIRE	3.0
LOS ANGELES	2.0
SAN JOAQUIN	1.5
FRESNO	1.0

Civic Engagement scores indicate the ability of immigrants to be a part of the civic and electoral fabric of the region. Data on this is scarce – we included language skills, which can affect an immigrant's ability to participate in civic processes, and citizenship rates of immigrants, which are a sign of civic initiative and enable participation in voting. Santa Clara scored a perfect 5.0 – a relative score, meaning there is still room for improvements in both sub-measures. No one is there, yet!

THE COMMON AGENDA

Similar regional areas have common agendas. In rural areas (with smaller urban centers) like San Joaquin County, Fresno, and the Inland Empire, scores were very low – especially around income, media messaging, and academic achievement. Increasing the reach of immigrant-serving organizations, providing more positive messaging about immigrants, and bolstering the infrastructure for naturalization may help. In suburban regions connected to strong economies, like Orange County, the East Bay, and San Diego, immigrants have achieved markers of economic success, sometimes in the face of anti-immigrant sentiment and more minimal immigrant-serving infrastructure. However, the foreclosure crisis may threaten progress. Urban regions – San Francisco and Los Angeles – are the most welcoming but also struggle to retain and support immigrants in the face of very high costs of living. Santa Clara stands out; while the unique urban center of high-tech, it clearly has best practices in each category.

Specific policy concerns emerged across the state. English language acquisition is a major issue facing both youth and adults, and may be a factor in the high rate of skilled workers in unskilled positions – a policy issue unto itself. The lack of affordable housing and its related effects are pervasive, and a special concern given the foreclosure crisis. Uneven health care access may be partially addressed as reform comes down from the federal government, but that will require strong advocacy by immigrant rights groups. And, of course, immigrant integration efforts must address the hostile tenor and treatment of immigrants by the media (and the police, although not covered in the data), as well as an overall economic development strategy that will, in turn, strengthen both immigrants and the U.S.-born. So then, a simple recommendation: form a statewide body to coordinate immigrant integration, with these cross-cutting issues in mind.

CONCLUSION

This is a start, not an end. The Scorecard is the first of its type and is heavily weighted towards economics, partly because of data availability and partly because it is such a key issue. Other data would be helpful – like voter data by nativity – but such a gap is expected when trying something new. As this tool is used, we hope it will draw feedback on how to make future scorecards more robust, particularly around Warmth of Welcome and Civic Engagement.

It is also a start because it is intended to be a tool for business leaders, community organizers, civic leaders, policy makers, philanthropists, and the like, to build consensus and funnel investments towards immigrant inclusion. Data is important but conversation and consensus are critical, particularly since research is showing that making progress on social equity, including immigrant integration, is actually good for regional economies. Moving forward, we need to identify best practices, regions needing special attention, and a common agenda for the Golden State.