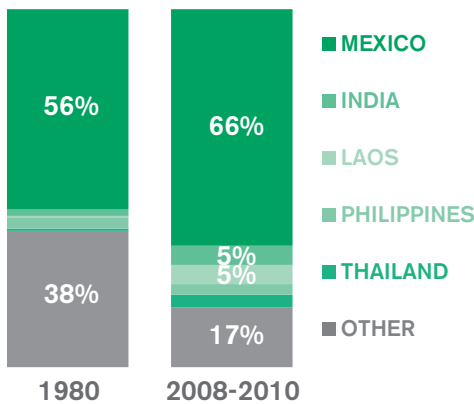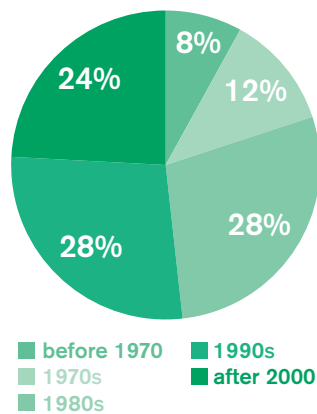# FRESNO

The immigrant share of the population in Fresno County has gradually increased since hitting the region's most recent low in 1970; approximately 200,000 immigrants currently live in this region, comprising 22% of the population. 80% of all immigrants have arrived since 1980, with nearly a quarter arriving in the last decade. Among the 10 California regions we examined, Fresno has the largest share of immigrants hailing from Mexico (66%) when compared to other immigrant groups.

Immigrants are highly connected to the region's children and citizenry. While only 1 in 16 children is an immigrant, 42% have at least one immigrant parent, and 26% of households are headed by an immigrant. Further, our estimates suggest that 70% of unauthorized residents (which we can only estimate for adult Latinos) are living with citizens, and 41% are living with their own citizen children. Linguistic isolation – the proportion of immigrant-headed households in which no person over 13 speaks English only, or very well – is high (34%).
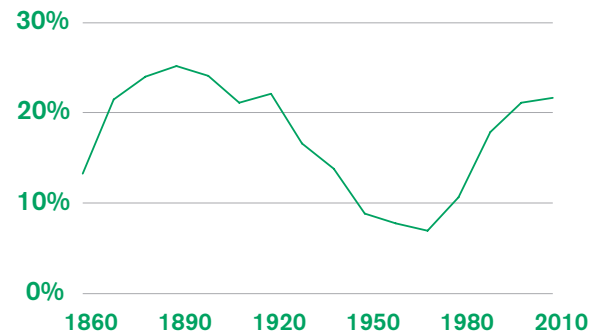
IMMIGRANTS BY COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

1980
- 56% MEXICO
- 38% OTHER

2008-2010
- 66% MEXICO
- 5% INDIA
- 5% LAOS
- 17% OTHER

Legend:
- ■ MEXICO
- ■ INDIA
- ■ LAOS
- ■ PHILIPPINES
- ■ THAILAND
- ■ OTHER

IMMIGRANTS BY RECENCY OF ARRIVAL, 2008-2010

- 8%
- 12%
- 24%
- 28%
- 28%

Legend:
- ■ before 1970
- ■ 1970s
- ■ 1980s
- ■ 1990s
- ■ after 2000

IMMIGRANTS AS A PROPORTION OF THE TOTAL POPULATION BY DECADE, 1860-2010

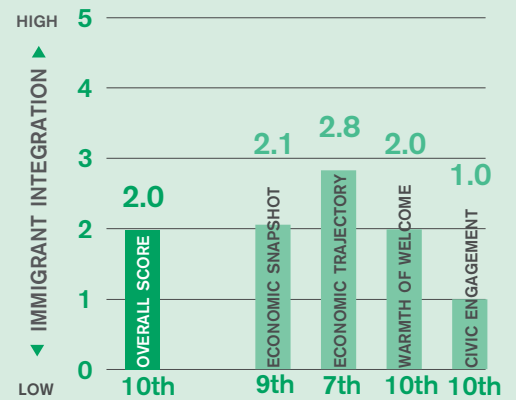(line chart: 30%, 20%, 10%, 0% over years 1860, 1890, 1920, 1950, 1980, 2010)

OVERALL SCORE

2.0

Fresno County scored only a 2.0, the lowest overall score across the 10 regions. The County did not perform significantly well in a single area, doing the best in Economic Trajectory, although that simply means that progress is being made from a very low base. Fresno's 1.0 on Civic Engagement is likely due to its large unauthorized and seasonal migrant population and lack of infrastructure for naturalization. Given all the possibilities for improvement in this region, Fresno can look to other regions in the state for new approaches, particularly Sacramento, a Central Valley region that scored well.

RANK ACROSS 10 REGIONS

◄ IMMIGRANT INTEGRATION ► (HIGH / LOW)

	OVERALL SCORE	ECONOMIC SNAPSHOT	ECONOMIC TRAJECTORY	WARMTH OF WELCOME	CIVIC ENGAGEMENT
Score	2.0	2.1	2.8	2.0	1.0
Rank	10th	9th	7th	10th	10th

IMPLICATIONS

Although Fresno employs immigrants in its large agricultural industry, these economic opportunities are not translating into immigrant integration. These seasonal, low-paying jobs do not lift immigrants out of poverty and keep them constantly on the move. The challenge, then, is how to support a population that is so dynamic – both in terms of workforce development and civic engagement.
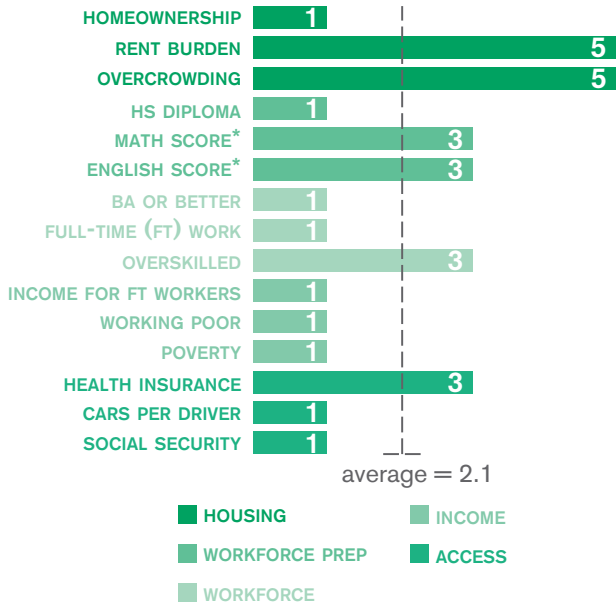
For more stable immigrants, the relatively low cost of living is a saving grace in places where most other measures are bleak. Challenges moving forward include: highlighting how the diverse immigrant population contributes to the region, building up a core of immigrant-serving organizations, and continuing the momentum around more inclusive regional politics.

THE ECONOMY

Fresno County sits in the heart of California's Central Valley, and is the number-one agricultural producing county in the nation. And yet agriculture is not the number one industry for the region: the top three industries for all workers (ages 25-64) are professional services (30%), retail trade (13%) and then agriculture (11%). On the other hand, immigrants are more likely to be employed in agriculture (29%) with lower shares in other industries – professional services (19%) and retail trade (13%). This indicates high labor market segmentation between immigrants and U.S.-born non-Hispanic residents, a conclusion backed up by the high proportion of spare overskilled immigrants (26%) – that is, immigrant workers with a bachelor's degree or higher in unskilled jobs. About 11% of immigrants in Fresno are self-employed.

ECONOMIC SNAPSHOT

2.1

	Score
HOMEOWNERSHIP	1
RENT BURDEN	5
OVERCROWDING	5
HS DIPLOMA	1
MATH SCORE*	3
ENGLISH SCORE*	3
BA OR BETTER	1
FULL-TIME (FT) WORK	1
OVERSKILLED	3
INCOME FOR FT WORKERS	1
WORKING POOR	1
POVERTY	1
HEALTH INSURANCE	3
CARS PER DRIVER	1
SOCIAL SECURITY	1

average = 2.1

- ■ HOUSING
- ■ WORKFORCE PREP
- ■ WORKFORCE
- ■ INCOME
- ■ ACCESS

*Score based on English language learners (ELLs) relative to non-Hispanic white students.

The **Economic Snapshot** indicates the economic well-being of immigrants, now, as compared to U.S.-born non-Hispanic whites; it reveals their socio-economic standing by measuring the fundamentals – housing, education, work, income and access.
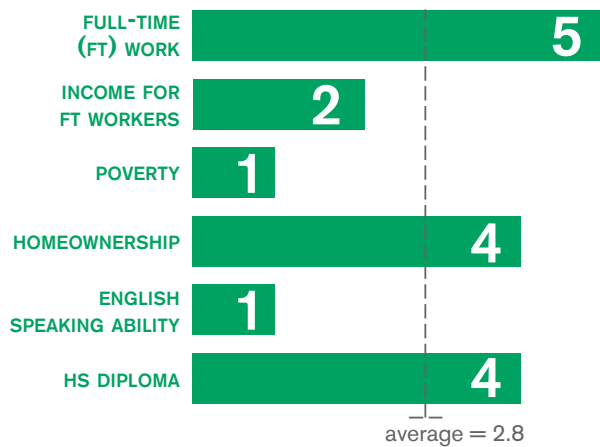
Fresno County ranks ninth in this category with a score of 2.1. Rent burden and overcrowding are not major issues, likely due to the relative affordability of the region. While better than some regions, English learners are testing poorly on the high school exit exam as 10th graders, 30 percentage points or more below non-Hispanic white peers. Health insurance access is middling – a measure with persistently wide statewide gaps between immigrants and U.S.-born non-Hispanic whites.

The high concentration of immigrants in the agricultural sector has translated into a workforce without traditional markers of success. Workers need full-time employment as well as higher levels of education – not surprising given the nature of this industry.

Much progress is needed in the areas of poverty and wages, homeownership, and job access – as private vehicles remain the only means to reach remote and changing job sites (unlike in urban areas with high population densities and major transit systems).

ECONOMIC TRAJECTORY

2.8

	Score
FULL-TIME (FT) WORK	5
INCOME FOR FT WORKERS	2
POVERTY	1
HOMEOWNERSHIP	4
ENGLISH SPEAKING ABILITY	1
HS DIPLOMA	4

average = 2.8

Debunking the image of immigrants as static newcomers, **Economic Trajectory** measures how immigrants have fared, economically, over time. This score was generated by tracking immigrants' outcomes over time, starting in 1980.

The Economic Trajectory is better in Fresno than the Economic Snapshot, although it still ranks seventh in this category.

Over time, immigrants' rates of full-time employment have improved more than in any other region, and immigrants have had better than average gains in attaining a high school diploma.

Nonetheless, progress when it comes to immigrants' ability to speak English, income of full-time workers and poverty rates has been slow – areas needing more attention.

To generate snapshot and trajectory scores, immigrants are compared against U.S.-born non-Hispanic whites, who – it could be argued – are the most "integrated" population in the U.S.
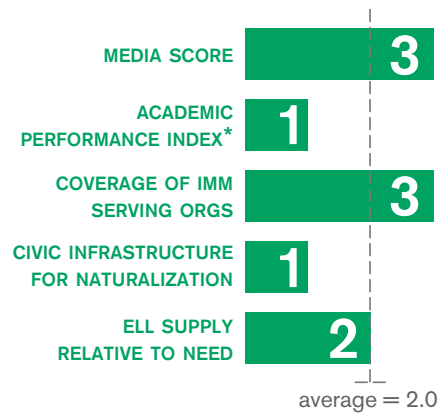
An agricultural core of California, Fresno is a destination for many immigrant laborers. This includes a large share of undocumented workers (37% of Latino immigrant adults in Fresno are without documentation), which makes them more vulnerable to lower wages, labor abuses, and other social instability. Rates of naturalization among those who are eligible remain low; suggesting that the region may not see the vital contributions of its immigrant population and so has not built the infrastructure needed to facilitate immigrants' naturalization. As in other places where the immigrant population is less diverse, the mainstream (and often negative, racialized) images of Latino immigrants slows integration. Fresno both accepts immigrants as necessary to its economic success and stops short of fully welcoming them to the region. The exception here is the Hmong refugee population; Fresno is home to a large number of Hmong residents who have built a strong network of organizations trying to address their needs as they integrate into the area. In Fresno, there may be more hope for an open and inclusive culture than other places in the Central Valley; political leaders have often focused on strategies to reduce inequality and elements of the business community are committed, as well. And while the data shows that it is tough to be an immigrant here, Fresno is one of the few Sanctuary Cities in California.

Warmth of Welcome takes seriously the understanding that immigrants contribute to the strength of their region – and so measures if the region views them favorably and *worth the investment.*

Fresno scored 2.0 in this category – a moderate score for the media and immigrant-serving organization coverage. There are approximately 18 immigrant-serving organizations for the region's some 133,000 non-citizen immigrants.

Practical areas for growth may include boosting the supply of English language classes, strengthening K-12 education for English language learners, and building the civic infrastructure for naturalization.

MEDIA SCORE **3**
ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE INDEX* **1**
COVERAGE OF IMM SERVING ORGS **3**
CIVIC INFRASTRUCTURE FOR NATURALIZATION **1**
ELL SUPPLY RELATIVE TO NEED **2**
average = 2.0

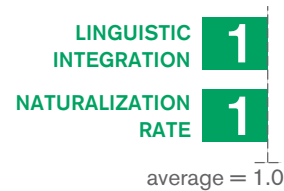*Score based on English language learners (ELLs) relative to non-Hispanic white students.*

WARMTH OF WELCOME 2.0

Civic Engagement captures the extent to which immigrants are able to engage in government processes that affect both their personal and community-wide well-being.

Fresno scores 1.0 on both indicators – linguistic integration (measured by the proportion of households where at least one person over the age of 13 speaks English very well or exclusively) and the percentage of immigrants eligible to naturalize who have done so.

Fresno ranks last in Civic Engagement – and overall – when compared to the other 10 regions. Having a heavily transitory immigrant population of farm workers presents a different type of challenge to integration than in more urban centers.

LINGUISTIC INTEGRATION **1**
NATURALIZATION RATE **1**
average = 1.0

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT 1.0

For a full explanation of the methodology used to score regions, see the technical report at: csii.usc.edu.

2008-2010 DATA PROFILE: FRESNO

			Imm	U.S.-born
Total Population		919,485		
Comparison Population for Scoring				
U.S.-born non-Hispanic white	298,786	32%		
Immigrant	199,484	22%		

Income and Poverty (2010 $s)

	Imm	U.S.-born
Avg. Household Income	$36,000	$48,804
Avg. Income (Full-time Workers)	$25,313	$42,000
Pop. Below 150% of poverty level	49%	32%
Working Poor*	27%	7%

Language Skills Among Immigrants

Linguistically Isolated Households	34%
Top Languages Spoken in Immigrant Households	
Spanish	67%
English	7%
Tibetan	5%
Hindi and related	5%
Tagalog	2%

Labor Force Participation Rates §

	Imm	U.S.-born
In the Labor Force	79%	81%
Employed	85%	84%
Unemployed	15%	16%

Self Employment ±

	Imm	U.S.-born
Non-Hispanic white	N/A	13%
Non-Hispanic Black	N/A	N/A
Latino	9%	7%
Asian/Pacific Islander	15%	N/A

Household and Family Structure

Children		
Immigrant		6%
With an immigrant parent		42%
Adults		
Immigrant		29%
Naturalized Immigrant		9%
Immigrant in the Household (Incl. Self)		38%

Households	Imm.	U.S.-born
Single, no kids	20%	36%
Single, with kids	22%	18%
Married, no kids	10%	21%
Married, with kids	48%	25%

Top 5 Industries by Immigrant Share¥

	Imm	U.S.-born
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	29%	3%
Professional and Related Services	19%	35%
Retail Trade	13%	13%
Manufacturing	8%	7%
Wholesale Trade	6%	4%

Top 5 Countries by Share of LPRs & LPR Naturalization Rates +

Mexico	26%
India	62%
Philippines	64%
El Salvador	27%
Vietnam	73%

Unauthorized Status (Latino Immigrant Adults Only)#

Unauthorized	37%
Of unauthorized, living with a citizen	70%
Of unauthorized, living with own citizen child	41%

LPRs and Voting Population

Voting Eligible Population	521,995
Adult LPRs Eligible for Naturalization	63,149

Sanctuary City Present in Region   Yes

Note: All racial/ethnic groups other than Latino are "non-Hispanic" groups. "API" refers to Asian/Pacific Islanders. "N/A" indicates the sample size was too small to report.
Unauthorized status could only be estimated for Latino adults. In this table, "living with" means residing in the same household.
* Share of labor force, ages 25-64, who worked full-time last year (at least 50 weeks and 35 hours per week) and had income below 150% of the Federal poverty level.
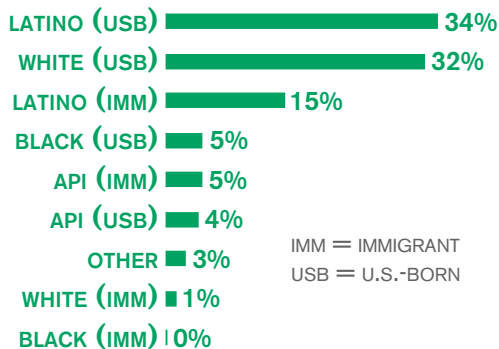§ Universe is all people ages 25-64, not in group quarters.
± Rates represent the percent of all employed people ages 25-64 in the racial/ethnic/nativity group that are self-employed.
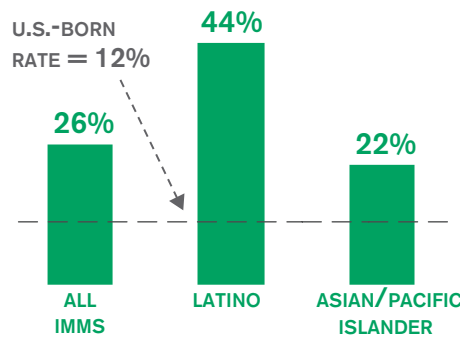¥ Share of all employed people ages 25-64, not in group quarters, that are in each specified industry.
+ LPRs are Legal Permanent Residents. Rates are estimates as of 2010, based on CSII analysis of data on the Office of Immigration Statistics (OIS) on all LPRs attaining status between 1985 and 2005. List of top countries of origin is based on a set of 30 countries detailed in the OIS data (the top 30 countries for the U.S. overall) and thus may not be entirely consistent with the top five countries of origin for the region.

RACE, ETHNICITY, AND NATIVITY
(TOTAL POPULATION)

LATINO (USB)	34%
WHITE (USB)	32%
LATINO (IMM)	15%
BLACK (USB)	5%
API (IMM)	5%
API (USB)	4%
OTHER	3%
WHITE (IMM)	1%
BLACK (IMM)	0%

IMM = IMMIGRANT
USB = U.S.-BORN

OVERSKILLED IMMIGRANT WORKERS
(OF WORKERS WITH BA OR BETTER, THOSE IN AN UNSKILLED JOB)

U.S.-BORN RATE = 12%

ALL IMMS	LATINO	ASIAN/PACIFIC ISLANDER
26%	44%	22%

Note: Only immigrant racial/ethnic groups with sufficient sample size are included.

IMMIGRANT ENGLISH SKILLS BY RECENCY OF ARRIVAL

% SPEAKING ENGLISH

- VERY WELL OR ONLY ENGLISH
- WELL
- NOT WELL OR NONE

Arrived in the U.S.	VERY WELL OR ONLY ENGLISH	WELL	NOT WELL OR NONE
since 2000	28%	13%	59%
1990s	37%	14%	49%
1980s	35%	17%	47%
before 1980	46%	15%	39%