

The Foreign-Born Labor Force in the United States: 2007

Issued December 2009

American Community Survey Reports

ACS-10

By
Eric Newburger
and
Thomas Gryn

INTRODUCTION

Economic opportunity is a primary attraction for many immigrants to the United States. In 2007, labor force participation among the foreign born was higher than that among natives (Table 1).¹ Foreign-

born workers have historically made up a sizeable part of the labor force (Figure 1).

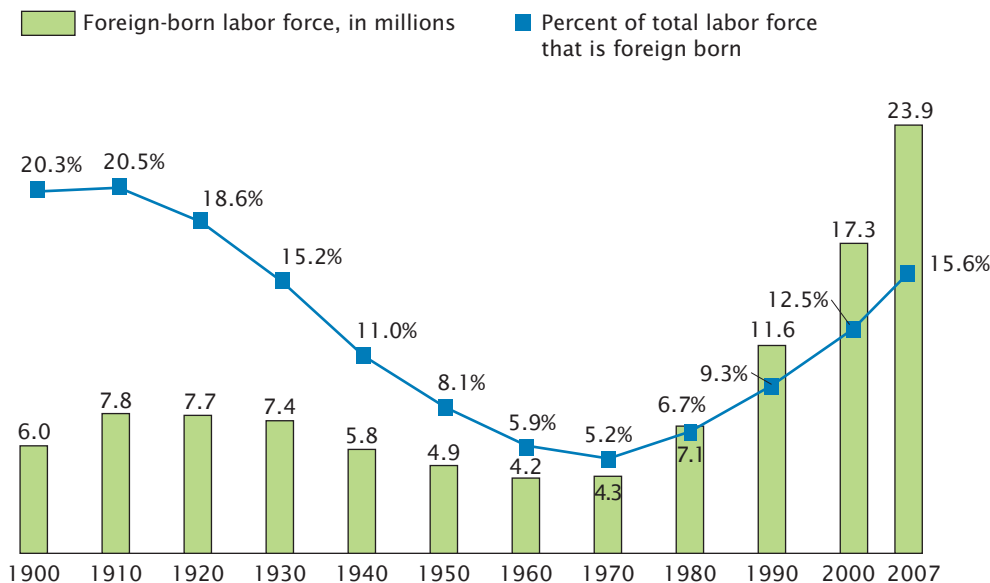
In 1900, about 20 percent of the employed labor force had been born outside the United States.² More restrictive

¹ The terms "native" and "native born" are used interchangeably in this report.

² The definitions of "foreign born" and "labor force" have changed over time. In 1900, the foreign-born labor force included all foreign born 10 years old and over employed in gainful occupations,

Figure 1.
Number and Percent Foreign Born in the Labor Force in the United States: 1900 to 2007

(For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, and definitions, see www.census.gov/acs/www/)



Notes: 1900, 1910, 1920, 1930: "Labor force" included those 10 years and over employed in gainful occupations.
1940, 1950, 1960: "Labor force" included those 14 years and over employed or seeking employment.
1970, 1980, 1990, 2000, 2007: "Labor force" included those 16 years and over employed or seeking employment.
Tabulations of foreign born in 1910, 1920, 1930, 1940, 1950, and 1960 included only Whites. In all other years, figures for the foreign-born population included all races.
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Censuses, 1900 to 2000, and the American Community Survey, 2007.

U.S. CENSUS BUREAU

Helping You Make Informed Decisions

U.S. Department of Commerce
Economics and Statistics Administration
U.S. CENSUS BUREAU

Table 1.

Labor Force Participation in the United States by Nativity: 2007

(Numbers in thousands. For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, and definitions, see www.census.gov/acs/www/)

Characteristic	Total		Native		Foreign born	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Population 16 years and over . . .	236,417	100.0	200,723	100.0	35,694	100.0
In labor force	153,213	64.8	129,322	64.4	23,891	66.9
In civilian labor force	152,211	64.4	128,373	64.0	23,838	66.8
Employed	142,588	60.3	120,050	59.8	22,538	63.1
Armed Forces	1,001	0.4	949	0.5	53	0.1
Not in labor force	83,204	35.2	71,401	35.6	11,803	33.1

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2007.

Terms and Definitions

Native born—Anyone who was a U.S. citizen or U.S. national at birth. This includes respondents who indicated they were born in the United States, Puerto Rico, a U.S. Island Area (such as Guam), or abroad of a U.S. citizen parent or parents.

Foreign born—Anyone who was not a U.S. citizen or U.S. national at birth. This includes those who have become U.S. citizens through naturalization and those who are not U.S. citizens. The American Community Survey questionnaires do not ask about immigrant status. People who are not U.S. citizens may be legal permanent residents (immigrants), temporary migrants (e.g., foreign students), humanitarian migrants (e.g., refugees), and unauthorized migrants (people present in the United States without legal documentation).

Civilian employed—Civilians 16 years old and over who either (1) were “at work”—those who did any work at all during the previous week as paid employees, worked in their own business or profession, worked on their own farm, or worked 15 hours or more as unpaid workers on a family farm or in a family business or (2) were “with a job but not at work”—those who did not work during the previous week but had jobs or businesses from which they were temporarily absent due to illness, bad weather, industrial dispute, vacation, or other personal reasons.

Unemployed—Civilians 16 years old and over are classified as unemployed if they (1) were neither “at work” nor “with a job but not at work” during the

reference week, and (2) were looking for work during the last 4 weeks, and (3) were available to start a job.

Civilian labor force—Anyone classified as either employed or unemployed in accordance with the criteria described above.

Not in labor force—Anyone 16 years old and over who is neither employed nor seeking employment, nor in the military. This category consists mainly of students, housewives, retired workers, seasonal workers interviewed in an off season who were not looking for other work, institutionalized people, and people doing only incidental unpaid family work (fewer than 15 hours during the previous week).

Industry and occupation—Industry is the type of activity at a person’s place of work, and occupation is the kind of work a person does to earn a living. For employed people, the data refer to the person’s job during the previous week. For those who worked at two or more jobs, the data refer to the job where the person worked the largest number of hours. For unemployed people, the data refer to their last job in the last 5 years. Respondent-provided descriptions of their industries or occupations were coded into standard classifications based on the detailed classification systems developed for Census 2000 and modified in 2002.

For more information on any of these definitions, see “American Community Survey 2007 Subject Definitions” at www.census.gov/acs/www/Downloads/2007/usedata/Subject_Definitions.pdf.

immigration polices instituted in the 1920s reduced the size of the foreign-born labor force until, in

including those in the armed forces. Later decades saw increases in the minimum age of workers, exclusion of non-White foreign born from tabulations, later reinclusion of all foreign born, and inclusion of those who were unemployed but looking for work. The present definition of the foreign-born labor force has remained unchanged since 1970 and includes all foreign born 16 years old and over who are employed or looking for work or are in the military.

1970, only about 5.2 percent of U.S. workers were foreign born. However, changes in immigration policies in the 1960s and later decades have led to a new wave of immigration.³

³ Schmidley, D., 2001, U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Reports, Series P23-206, *Profile of the Foreign-Born Population in the United States: 2000*, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, DC.

Today, there are greater numbers of foreign-born workers in the United States than ever before—23.9 million in 2007.⁴ They represented about 16 percent of the total labor force—lower than the equivalent proportion at the

⁴ All comparative statements in this report have undergone statistical testing and are significant at the 90-percent confidence level unless otherwise noted.

Table 2.

Characteristics of the Civilian Labor Force in the United States by Nativity and Citizenship Status: 2007

(Numbers in thousands. For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, and definitions, see www.census.gov/acs/www/)

Characteristic	Total		Native		Foreign born					
					Total		Naturalized citizen		Not a citizen	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
16 years and over and in labor force	152,211	100.0	128,373	100.0	23,838	100.0	10,108	100.0	13,730	100.0
Age										
16 to 19 years	7,673	5.0	7,127	5.6	546	2.3	129	1.3	417	3.0
20 to 24 years	15,375	10.1	13,497	10.5	1,878	7.9	423	4.2	1,455	10.6
25 to 34 years	32,375	21.3	26,265	20.5	6,111	25.6	1,626	16.1	4,484	32.7
35 to 44 years	35,407	23.3	28,551	22.2	6,857	28.8	2,838	28.1	4,019	29.3
45 to 54 years	35,268	23.2	30,112	23.5	5,156	21.6	2,865	28.3	2,292	16.7
55 to 64 years	20,448	13.4	17,815	13.9	2,633	11.0	1,748	17.3	886	6.4
65 years and over	5,664	3.7	5,007	3.9	657	2.8	480	4.7	178	1.3
Sex										
Female	70,902	46.6	61,191	47.7	9,711	40.7	4,738	46.9	4,973	36.2
Male	81,310	53.4	67,182	52.3	14,127	59.3	5,371	53.1	8,757	63.8
Educational attainment¹										
Less than high school diploma	18,959	12.5	12,148	9.5	6,811	28.6	1,599	15.8	5,212	38.0
High school graduate or GED	43,464	28.6	37,581	29.3	5,883	24.7	2,318	22.9	3,565	26.0
Some college, no degree	33,692	22.1	30,566	23.8	3,126	13.1	1,658	16.4	1,468	10.7
Associate's degree	12,324	8.1	10,942	8.5	1,382	5.8	841	8.3	541	3.9
Bachelor's degree	28,254	18.6	24,354	19.0	3,900	16.4	2,213	21.9	1,687	12.3
Master's degree	10,742	7.1	9,004	7.0	1,738	7.3	918	9.1	820	6.0
Professional degree	3,054	2.0	2,533	2.0	521	2.2	324	3.2	197	1.4
Doctoral degree	1,722	1.1	1,246	1.0	477	2.0	237	2.3	239	1.7
High school graduate or more	133,253	87.5	116,225	90.5	17,027	71.4	8,509	84.2	8,518	62.0
Bachelor's degree or more	43,773	28.8	37,137	28.9	6,636	27.8	3,692	36.5	2,943	21.4
Language ability										
Speaks only English at home	121,979	80.1	118,406	92.2	3,573	15.0	2,073	20.5	1,500	10.9
Speaks a language other than English at home	30,232	19.9	9,967	7.8	20,265	85.0	8,036	79.5	12,229	89.1
Speaks English very well	16,454	10.8	8,403	6.5	8,050	33.8	4,528	44.8	3,522	25.7
Speaks English less than very well	13,779	9.1	1,564	1.2	12,215	51.2	3,508	34.7	8,707	63.4
Region										
Northeast	28,226	18.5	23,027	17.9	5,199	21.8	2,617	25.9	2,583	18.8
Midwest	34,596	22.7	31,918	24.9	2,678	11.2	1,133	11.2	1,544	11.2
South	54,294	35.7	46,990	36.6	7,305	30.6	2,733	27.0	4,571	33.3
West	35,095	23.1	26,439	20.6	8,656	36.3	3,625	35.9	5,032	36.6

¹ Analyses focused on educational attainment usually consider only those 25 years old or over. However, this table explores the characteristics of the civilian labor force as a whole. Thus, it includes all civilian labor force participants, some of whom may be as young as 16 years old.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2007.

turn of the last century, but still a notable part of the U.S. economy.

This report uses data from the 2007 American Community Survey to describe the foreign-born labor force in the United States.⁵ It focuses on the civilian labor force, which included more than 99 percent of both foreign-born and native-born workers.

FINDINGS

Groups with diverse characteristics make up the foreign-born labor force.

Foreign-born workers, when considered as a single group, were more likely to be male than native-born workers, more often less educated, and included higher proportions of workers in their late twenties and early thirties (Table 2). However, the foreign-born labor force is composed of distinct subgroups, with characteristics that can differ substantially from one another.⁶

One characteristic that distinguishes segments of the foreign-born population is citizenship. Foreign-born labor force participants who have attained U.S. citizenship through naturalization, which can take several years, are more likely to be older than either noncitizens or natives in the labor

⁵ This report discusses the U.S. labor force at the national level. However, there may be geographic variations. Appendix Tables A and B provide data on the foreign-born labor force by state.

⁶ This report sometimes uses the shortened "labor force" to denote the civilian labor force.

force. Twenty-eight percent of naturalized citizens in the labor force were 45 to 54 years old in 2007, compared with only 17 percent of those who were not citizens (Figure 2). About 24 percent of natives were 45 to 54 years old. The net result of these distributions is that nearly 1 in 5 labor force participants 25 to 44 years old were foreign born (Figure 3).

Naturalized citizens in the labor force were about as likely to be male as natives in the labor force (53 percent and 52 percent, respectively). However, foreign-born labor force participants who were not citizens were more likely to be male (64 percent) than either naturalized citizens or natives.

Naturalized citizens in the labor force were less likely than natives to have attained at least a high school diploma (84 percent and 91 percent, respectively), though more likely than people who were not citizens (62 percent). However, naturalized citizen labor force participants were more likely to have a bachelor's degree or more education (37 percent) than either natives (29 percent) or noncitizens (21 percent).

Naturalized citizens in the labor force were more likely than their noncitizen counterparts to speak only English (21 percent and 11 percent, respectively) or to speak English very well in addition to another language they spoke at

home (45 percent and 26 percent, respectively).

The foreign-born labor force contributes both highly skilled and low-skilled workers to the U.S. economy.

Educational attainment provides a useful indicator of human capital.⁷ Foreign-born workers made up large proportions of the U.S. labor force at the top and bottom of the skills spectrum, as indicated by educational attainment (Figure 4). While the foreign born made up about 16 percent of the total civilian labor force in 2007, 28 percent of the labor force with doctoral degrees were foreign born. Seventeen percent of people with professional degrees in the U.S. labor force were foreign born, as well as 16 percent of those with a master's degree. Among low-skilled workers, the foreign born made up 36 percent of the labor force with less than a high school diploma.

Citizenship among the foreign born correlates with educational attainment. Half (50 percent) of foreign born with a doctorate in the labor force were naturalized citizens, and

⁷ Human capital is that group of individual characteristics, both tangible and intangible, that translates into productivity in the workplace. Examples of tangible characteristics include educational attainment, specific skills accumulated on the job, or unique expertise of a particular field. Intangibles include such difficult-to-measure characteristics as motivation and work ethic. For more, see Gary S. Becker, *Human Capital, A Theoretical and Empirical Analysis, with Special Reference to Education*, 3d ed., National Bureau of Economic Research, 1993.

62 percent of those with a professional degree were naturalized citizens. Only about one-quarter (24 percent) of foreign born in the labor force with less than a high school diploma were naturalized citizens.

Immigrant groups from different parts of the world contribute different skill sets to the U.S. economy.

While foreign born of every educational attainment level come from all over the world, some regions

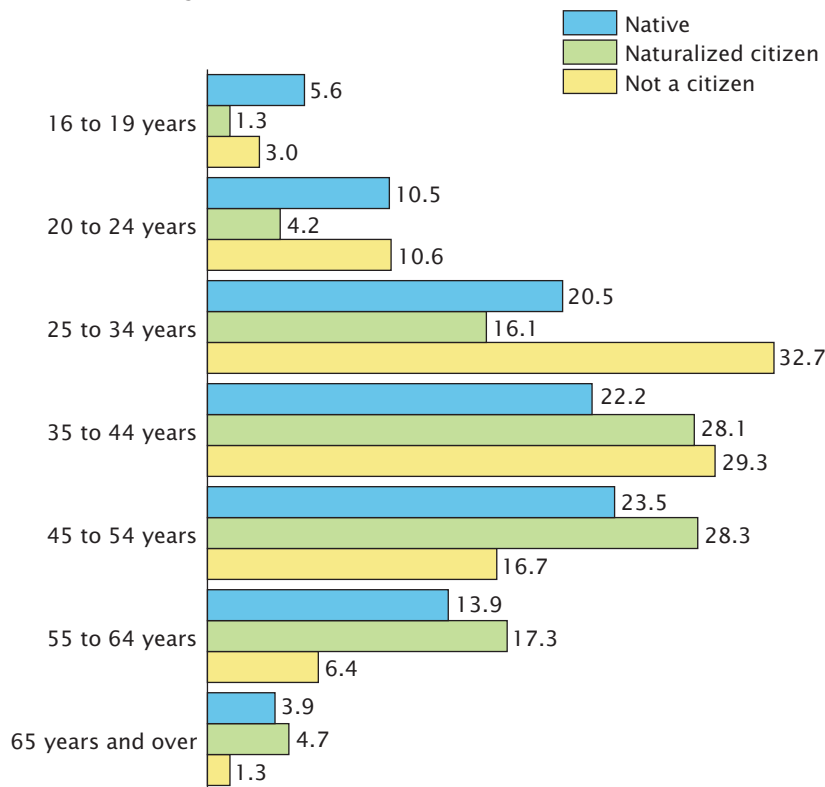
contribute higher proportions of workers with particular educational attainments to the U.S. labor force (Table 3). For example, in 2007, while people born in Asia made up about a quarter of all foreign-born labor force participants (26 percent), they made up more than half of those with a doctoral degree (55 percent). People born in Europe (11 percent of the foreign-born labor force) made up about another quarter of those with a doctorate (24 percent); about 1 in 11 (9.3 percent) of foreign-born labor force participants with a doctorate came from Latin America. Fifty-six percent of all foreign-born labor force participants were born in Latin America.

Among the 6.8 million foreign-born labor force participants with less than a high school diploma in 2007, about 6 in 10 were born in Mexico (62 percent), with another 23 percent coming from the remainder of Latin America. Foreign born from Asia made up about 9.4 percent of foreign-born labor force participants with less than a high school diploma.

Every sector of the United States economy employs foreign-born workers.

Though native-born individuals make up the great bulk of workers, the foreign born have found employment in every industry group (Figure 5). Some industries employ a higher proportion of foreign-born

Figure 2.
Age Distribution of the Civilian Labor Force by Nativity and Citizenship Status: 2007
(Percent of labor force in age group. For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, and definitions, see www.census.gov/acs/www/)

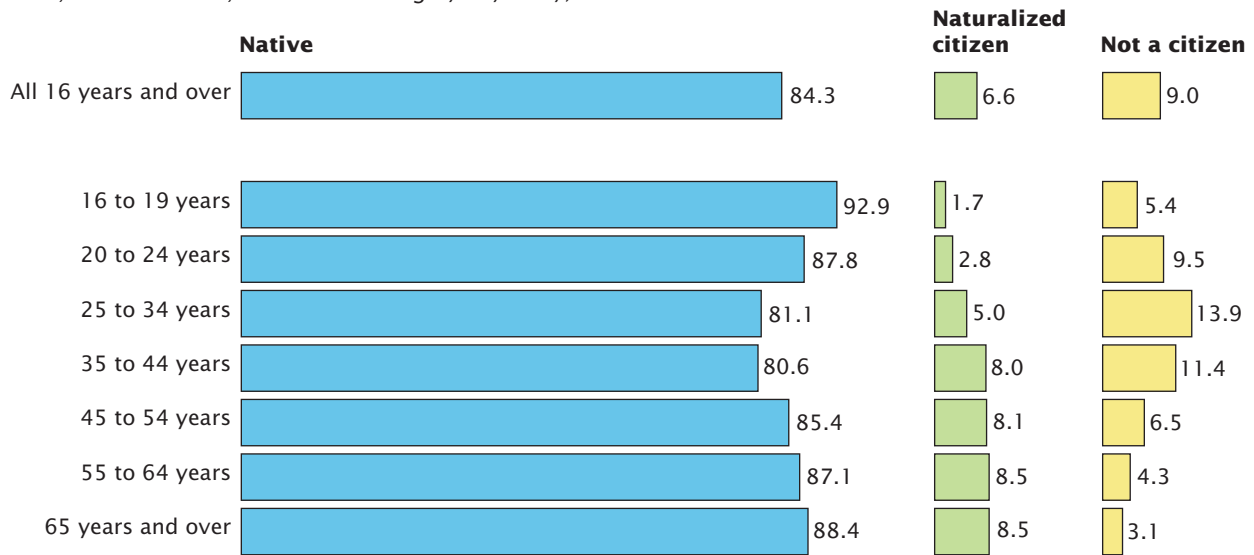


Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2007.

Figure 3.

Civilian Labor Force by Age, Nativity, and Citizenship Status: 2007

(Percent distribution. For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, and definitions, see www.census.gov/acs/www/)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2007.

laborers than others, often those with lower median earnings.

For example, in 2007 about 26 percent of workers in the agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting industry were foreign born, as were about 24 percent of workers in the accommodation and food service industry group. Median earnings of workers in both these industries, about \$21,400 and \$13,400, respectively, were well below the median earnings for all workers in the nation, about \$31,500 per year. Workers in administrative, support, and waste management services—24 percent of whom were foreign born—also had low median earnings, about \$22,800. Workers in construction industries (23 percent foreign born) had earnings of about \$32,300, slightly above the national median.⁸

⁸ The percent foreign born in administrative support and waste management services did not differ statistically from the percent foreign born in construction.

Many industries with the highest median earnings employ lower proportions of foreign-born workers. In 2007, workers from the foreign-born labor force made up only about 6 percent of employees in the utilities industry, which had median earnings of about \$54,200. Eleven percent of workers in management of companies and enterprises (median earnings \$53,900) were foreign born; 7 percent of workers in the mining (median earnings \$51,300) and public administration (median earnings \$46,000) industries were foreign born.

The professional, scientific, and technical services industry (median earnings \$51,900) was a notable exception, with 14 percent foreign born. This reflected the large segment of the foreign born who have advanced degrees. A majority of foreign born in this industry group were naturalized citizens.

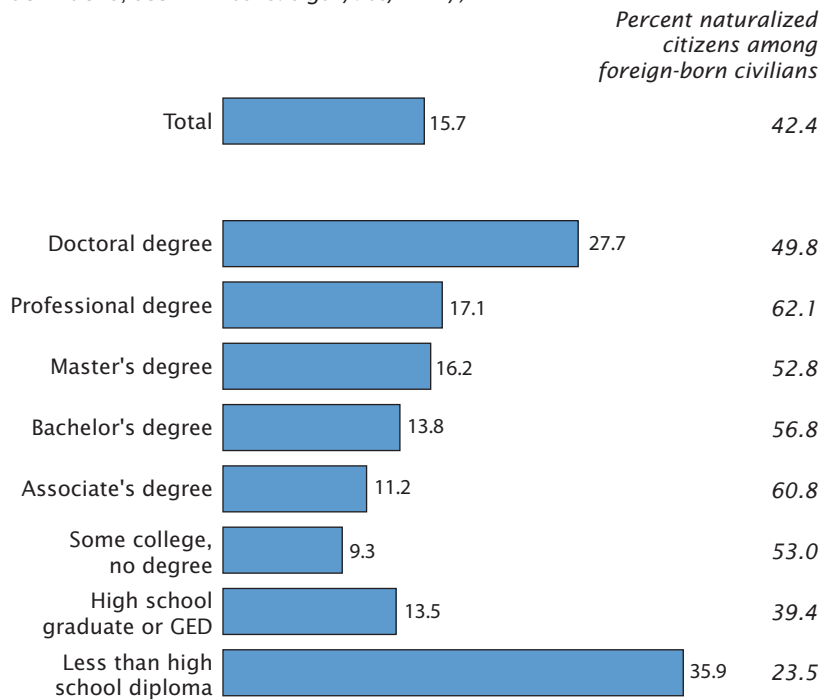
Lower-wage industries tend to employ more noncitizens from the foreign-born labor force than naturalized citizens.

When an industry group employs a relatively large proportion of foreign-born workers, noncitizens often make up the majority of that labor. For example, 17 percent of workers in the accommodation and food services industry group were foreign born and not citizens, while naturalized citizens made up only 7.2 percent of that workforce. In the agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting industry, 22 percent of employees were noncitizens, compared with only 3.8 percent naturalized citizens. The net result of these differences is that noncitizen workers are somewhat more prevalent in lower wage industries, while foreign born who have achieved citizenship are more evenly spread throughout U.S. industries.

Figure 4.

Foreign Born as a Percent of the Civilian Labor Force by Educational Attainment: 2007

(Percent of labor force who were foreign born. For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, and definitions, see www.census.gov/acs/www/)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2007.

The mix of occupations among naturalized citizens is more similar to that among natives than noncitizens

While industry is the type of activity pursued at a person's place of work, occupation is the kind of work a person does to earn a living. Thirty-seven percent of employed naturalized citizens and 36 percent of native-born workers earned their livings in management, professional, and related occupations in 2007, compared with 20 percent of workers who were not citizens (Table 4). Naturalized citizens were far less likely than noncitizens to work in service occupations (19 percent and 27 percent, respectively), though somewhat more likely than natives (16 percent). All occupational groupings showed greater similarity in occupational distribution between naturalized citizens and natives than between naturalized citizens and noncitizens.

Table 3.

Place of Birth of the Foreign-Born Civilian Labor Force by Educational Attainment: 2007

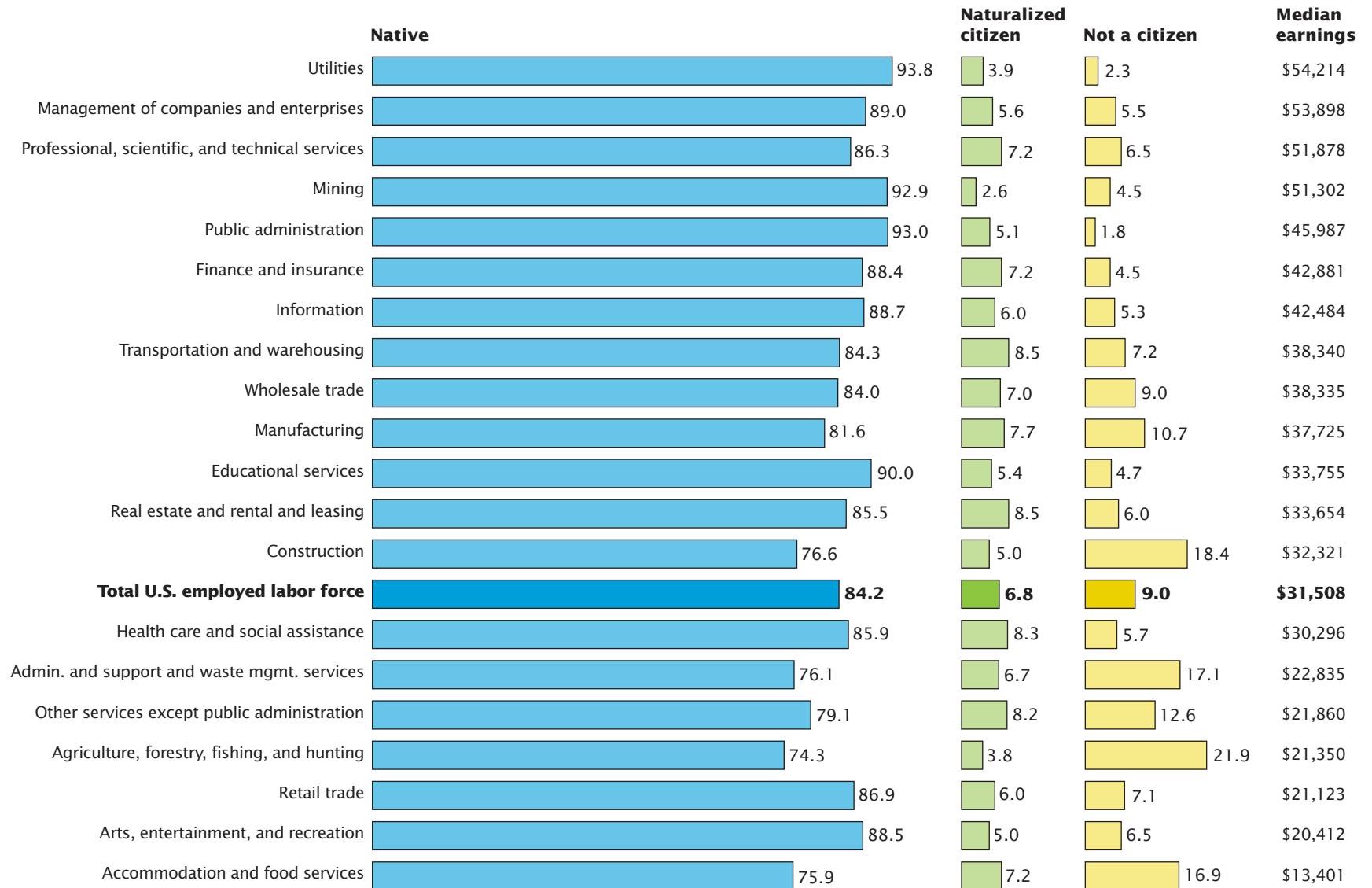
(For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, and definitions, see www.census.gov/acs/www/)

Educational attainment	Place of birth									
	Total	Africa	Asia	Europe	Latin America					Other regions ¹
					Total	Caribbean	Central America		South America	
							Mexico	Other		
Total	100.0	4.1	26.1	11.2	56.2	9.0	31.9	8.1	7.2	2.5
Less than high school diploma	100.0	1.3	9.4	3.5	85.2	6.0	61.9	13.4	3.8	0.6
High school graduate or GED	100.0	3.5	18.4	10.7	65.5	11.6	36.1	8.9	8.9	1.9
Some college, no degree	100.0	6.0	25.6	13.8	50.8	12.2	21.6	7.2	9.7	3.8
Associate's degree	100.0	6.2	30.7	16.3	42.9	14.4	13.5	5.8	9.2	3.9
Bachelor's degree	100.0	6.0	47.7	14.8	27.7	8.1	7.4	3.7	8.4	3.8
Master's degree	100.0	5.7	51.7	21.0	17.5	5.7	3.5	1.9	6.4	4.0
Professional degree	100.0	6.7	46.1	16.9	24.9	7.7	6.1	2.0	9.1	5.4
Doctoral degree	100.0	6.9	55.2	23.8	9.3	2.4	2.0	0.9	4.0	4.7
High school graduate or more	100.0	5.2	32.7	14.3	44.6	10.2	19.8	6.0	8.6	3.2
Bachelor's degree or more	100.0	6.0	49.2	17.3	23.5	7.1	5.9	2.9	7.6	4.1

¹ Includes Northern America and Oceania.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2007.

Figure 5.

Nativity, Citizenship, and Median Earnings of Employed Civilian Workers by Industry: 2007(Percent distribution. For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, and definitions, see www.census.gov/acs/www/)

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2007, and American FactFinder Table B24031.

Table 4.

Employed Civilian Labor Force by Occupation, Nativity, and Citizenship Status: 2007

(Numbers in thousands. For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, and definitions, see www.census.gov/acs/www/)

Occupation	Total		Native		Foreign born					
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Total		Naturalized citizen		Not a citizen	
					Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total employed workers	142,588	100.0	120,050	100.0	22,538	100.0	9,657	100.0	12,880	100.0
Management, professional, and related	49,291	34.6	43,159	36.0	6,132	27.2	3,555	36.8	2,577	20.0
Service	23,883	16.7	18,673	15.6	5,210	23.1	1,800	18.6	3,410	26.5
Sales and office	36,471	25.6	32,422	27.0	4,049	18.0	2,179	22.6	1,870	14.5
Production, transportation, and material moving	18,151	12.7	14,462	12.0	3,689	16.4	1,335	13.8	2,354	18.3
Construction, extraction, maintenance, and repair	13,796	9.7	10,781	9.0	3,015	13.4	736	7.6	2,279	17.7
Farming, fishing, and forestry	996	0.7	553	0.5	443	2.0	53	0.5	390	3.0

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2007.

Occupations of the foreign born vary by place of birth.

Foreign born from different parts of the world tend to work in different occupations, in patterns that reflect their different educational attainment (Figure 6).

For example, in 2007, workers born in Asia were more likely than natives to work in management, professional, and related fields (46 percent compared with 36 percent), as were workers from Europe (43 percent). Only 13 percent of workers from Latin America were employed in management, professional, and related fields.

Workers born in Latin America were far more likely than natives to work in construction, extraction, maintenance, and repair occupations (20 percent and 9 percent, respectively). Workers from Asia or Africa were far less likely than those from Latin America to work in these occupations (both about 4 percent).

Furthermore, labor force participants born in different parts of Latin America tended to enter

different occupations. For example, 24 percent of U.S. workers born in Mexico, and 21 percent from other Central American countries, were employed in construction, extraction, maintenance, and repair occupations in 2007, compared with about 13 percent of workers born in South America, and 9.1 percent of those from the Caribbean.

Seven percent of U.S. workers born in Mexico, and 12 percent from other Central American countries, were in management, professional, and related occupations, while 25 percent of workers born in the Caribbean and 26 percent from South America were in these occupations.⁹

Farming, fishing, and forestry occupations employed relatively few foreign-born workers from any country. However, those born in Mexico were about ten times more likely than native-born workers to find employment in these occupations in 2007 (5.5 percent and 0.5

⁹ The percentages of workers from the Caribbean or South America in management, professional, and related occupations were not statistically different.

percent, respectively), about four times more likely than workers born in the rest of Central America (1.2 percent), and about 25 times more likely than workers born in the Caribbean or South America (0.2 percent).

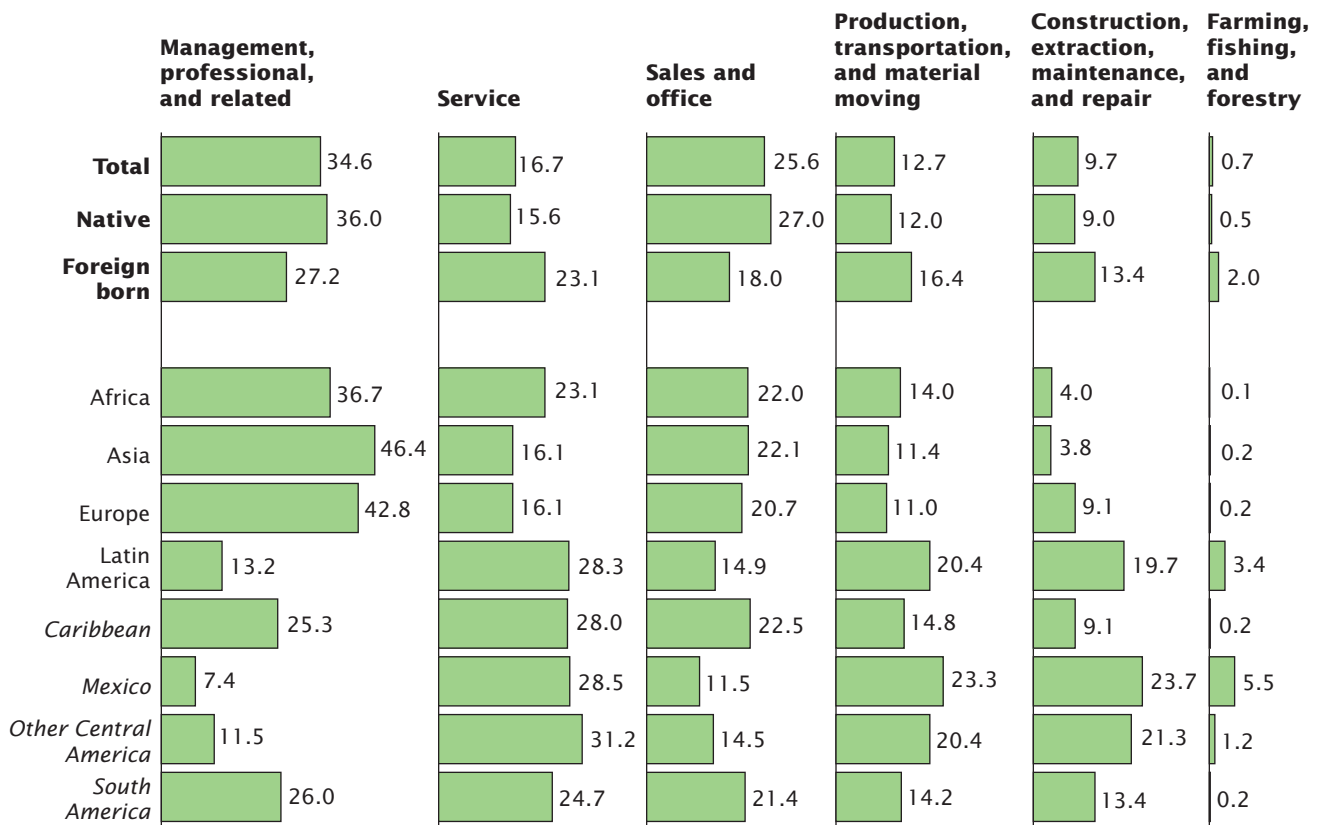
CONCLUSION

The labor force in the United States included proportionately fewer foreign-born people in 2007 than in 1900, despite recent increases. Less than 1 worker in 6 was foreign born in 2007, compared to more than 1 in 5 at the beginning of the last century. Yet if their relative numbers are lower then they have been historically, the foreign born still contribute an important portion of labor to the U.S. economy. Every industry group employs the foreign born. Some employ higher proportions of foreign-born labor; typically those offering lower median wages, but also scientific and technical fields requiring high educational attainment. However, despite these variations, native-born workers fill the overwhelming majority of positions in every industry group.

Figure 6.

Employed Civilian Labor Force by Occupation, Nativity, and Area of Birth of the Foreign Born: 2007

(Percent distribution. For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, and definitions, see www.census.gov/acs/www/)



Note: Latin America includes the Caribbean, Mexico, Other Central America, and South America.
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2007.

SOURCE OF THE DATA AND ACCURACY OF THE ESTIMATES

American Community Survey

Many of the findings presented in this report were based on the American Community Survey (ACS) data collected in 2007. These data were based on the population living in either households or group quarters (which include correctional facilities, nursing homes, college dormitories, group homes, and overnight shelters) that were included in the ACS sample. The Census Bureau is both the sponsor and the collector of the ACS.

The 2007 ACS is based on a sample of just under 3 million housing unit addresses and a separate sample of just under 200,000 people living in group quarters. ACS figures are estimates based on this sample and approximate the actual figures that would have been obtained by interviewing the entire household and group quarters populations using the same methodology. The estimates from the 2007 ACS sample may also differ from estimates based on other samples of housing units and group quarters and people within those housing units and group quarter.

The Decennial Census

Other findings presented in this report that were not derived from the 2007 ACS were collected from previously published findings based on data from each decennial census conducted by the Census Bureau since 1900. Because the structure of the decennial census has changed over time, some of the data were based on complete censuses (100 percent of the population, from 1900 to 1930) and some were based on sample populations of various sizes (ranging from 5 percent to 20 percent, from 1940 to 2000). In general, the decennial

censuses collected data from the population living in households as well as those living in group quarters such as those described above. For more information about the source and accuracy details of the decennial censuses, refer to Working Paper No. 81, “Historical Census Statistics on the Foreign-Born Population of the United States: 1850–2000,” available at <www.census.gov/population/www/documentation/twps0081/twps0081.html>.

Sampling and Nonsampling Error

Sampling error occurs when the characteristics of a sample are measured instead of those of the entire population (as from a census). Note that sample-based estimates will vary depending on the particular sample selected from the population, but all attempt to approximate the actual figures. Measures of the magnitude of sampling error reflect the variation in the estimates over all possible samples that could have been selected from the population using the same sampling, data collection, and processing methods.

Estimates of the magnitude of sampling errors are provided in the form of margins of error for all key ACS estimates included in this report. The Census Bureau recommends that data users incorporate this information into their analyses, as sampling error in survey estimates could impact the conclusions drawn from the results. All comparative statements in this report have undergone statistical testing, and comparisons are significant at the 90-percent confidence level unless noted otherwise. This means the

90-percent confidence interval for the difference between the estimates being compared does not include zero.

In addition to sampling error, nonsampling errors may be introduced during any phase of data collection or processing. For example, operations such as editing, reviewing, or keying data from questionnaires may introduce error into the estimates. The primary sources of nonsampling error and the processes instituted to control error in the 2007 ACS are described in further detail in the “2007 ACS Accuracy of the Data” document (see link below).

Title 13, U.S. Code, Section 9, prohibits the Census Bureau from publishing results from which the identity of an individual survey respondent could be determined. For more information on how the Census Bureau protects the confidentiality of data, see the “2007 ACS Accuracy of the Data” document <www.census.gov/acs/www/Downloads/ACS/accuracy2007.pdf>.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Further information from the 2007 ACS is available from the American FactFinder on the Census Bureau’s Web site. The Internet address is <<http://factfinder.census.gov/>>.

A copy of the 2007 ACS questionnaire is available at <www.census.gov/acs/www/Downloads/SQuest07.pdf>.

Definitions of specific terminology used in this report and in the ACS questionnaire are available at <www.census.gov/acs/www/Downloads/2007/usedata/Subject_Definitions.pdf>.

<www.census.gov/acs/www/UseData/sse/index.htm>.

Measures of ACS quality—including sample size and number of interviews, response and nonresponse rates, coverage rates, and item allocation rates—are available at <www.census.gov/acs/www/UseData/sse/index.htm>.

Additional information about the foreign-born population is available on the Census Bureau’s Web site at <www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/foreign/index.html>. For more information about labor force statistics, visit <www.census.gov/hhes/www/laborfor/laborforce.html>.

CONTACTS

For additional information on these topics, please call 1-866-758-1060 (toll free) or visit <www.census.gov>.

SUGGESTED CITATION

Newburger, Eric and Thomas Gryn. 2009. *The Foreign-Born Labor Force in the United States: 2007*, American Community Survey Reports, ACS-10, U.S. Census Bureau, Washington, DC.

USER COMMENTS

The Census Bureau welcomes the comments and advice of users of our data and reports. Please send suggestions or comments to:

Chief, Population Division
U.S. Census Bureau
Washington, DC 20233-8800

Appendix Table A.

Employed Civilian Foreign-Born Labor Force by State: 2007

(Numbers in thousands. For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, and definitions, see www.census.gov/acs/www/)

State	Total 16 and over		Foreign born		Percent foreign born	
	Estimate	Margin of error	Estimate	Margin of error	Estimate	Margin of error
California	16,860	43	5,886	38	34.9	0.2
New York	9,091	29	2,454	26	27.0	0.3
New Jersey	4,253	19	1,089	16	25.6	0.4
Nevada	1,247	9	315	8	25.2	0.6
Florida	8,375	31	1,994	22	23.8	0.2
Hawaii	607	7	125	6	20.6	0.9
Texas	10,966	30	2,257	22	20.6	0.2
Arizona	2,840	17	555	14	19.5	0.5
Illinois	6,184	20	1,101	17	17.8	0.3
Massachusetts	3,277	16	556	14	17.0	0.4
District of Columbia	292	5	49	4	16.9	1.4
Connecticut	1,768	11	281	10	15.9	0.5
United States	142,588	110	22,538	81	15.8	0.1
Maryland	2,848	14	448	10	15.7	0.3
Rhode Island	522	7	81	4	15.5	0.8
Washington	3,138	15	449	10	14.3	0.3
Virginia	3,791	15	515	10	13.6	0.3
Oregon	1,808	14	223	9	12.3	0.5
Georgia	4,422	19	535	12	12.1	0.3
New Mexico	885	10	104	6	11.7	0.6
Colorado	2,489	14	289	11	11.6	0.5
Utah	1,273	9	131	5	10.3	0.4
Delaware	416	7	40	3	9.5	0.7
Alaska	330	5	31	3	9.5	0.8
North Carolina	4,228	20	385	9	9.1	0.2
Minnesota	2,748	11	206	7	7.5	0.2
Kansas	1,400	10	104	4	7.4	0.3
Idaho	714	6	52	3	7.2	0.4
Michigan	4,534	19	322	10	7.1	0.2
Oklahoma	1,661	12	111	5	6.7	0.3
Nebraska	925	6	59	4	6.4	0.4
Pennsylvania	5,916	21	373	12	6.3	0.2
New Hampshire	700	7	39	4	5.6	0.5
South Carolina	1,994	16	109	5	5.5	0.3
Arkansas	1,239	11	67	4	5.4	0.3
Tennessee	2,848	13	151	7	5.3	0.2
Wisconsin	2,875	12	146	6	5.1	0.2
Indiana	3,033	14	150	5	4.9	0.2
Iowa	1,548	9	70	4	4.5	0.3
Missouri	2,811	15	120	6	4.3	0.2
Ohio	5,440	21	231	8	4.2	0.1
Louisiana	1,892	15	80	5	4.2	0.3
Alabama	2,028	16	78	4	3.9	0.2
Vermont	336	4	12	2	3.5	0.5
Maine	662	6	23	3	3.5	0.4
Wyoming	279	5	10	2	3.4	0.7
Kentucky	1,905	14	64	4	3.4	0.2
Mississippi	1,207	13	32	4	2.6	0.3
North Dakota	340	4	8	2	2.4	0.5
South Dakota	414	5	8	1	1.9	0.3
West Virginia	759	10	13	2	1.8	0.3
Montana	470	6	8	2	1.7	0.3

Note: Data are based on a sample and are subject to sampling variability. The degree of uncertainty for an estimate arising from sampling variability is represented through the use of a margin of error. The value shown here is the 90 percent margin of error. The margin of error can be interpreted roughly as providing a 90 percent probability that the interval defined by the estimate minus the margin of error and the estimate plus the margin of error (the lower and upper confidence bounds) contains the true value. In addition to sampling variability, the ACS estimates are subject to nonsampling error (for a discussion of nonsampling variability, see "Accuracy of the Data" at <www.census.gov/acs/www/Downloads/ACS/accuracy2007.pdf>). The effect of nonsampling error is not represented in these tables.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2007.

Appendix Table B.

Percent Foreign Born of Employed Civilian Labor Force by Industry in the United States and Ten States With the Largest Foreign-Born Workforces: 2007

(For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, and definitions, see www.census.gov/acs/www/)

Industry	United States		California		New York		New Jersey		Florida		Texas		Arizona		Illinois		Massachusetts		Virginia		Georgia	
	Per- cent	Mar- gin of error	Per- cent	Mar- gin of error	Per- cent	Mar- gin of error	Per- cent	Mar- gin of error	Per- cent	Mar- gin of error	Per- cent	Mar- gin of error	Per- cent	Mar- gin of error	Per- cent	Mar- gin of error	Per- cent	Mar- gin of error	Per- cent	Mar- gin of error	Per- cent	Mar- gin of error
All industries	15.8	0.1	34.9	0.2	27.0	0.3	25.6	0.4	23.8	0.2	20.6	0.2	19.5	0.5	17.8	0.3	17.0	0.4	13.6	0.3	12.1	0.3
Agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting	25.7	0.7	72.1	1.5	8.8	3.2	38.3	6.1	51.1	4.1	25.8	2.3	52.5	7.8	7.7	2.3	21.0	7.4	13.0	3.1	14.0	3.3
Accommodation and food services	24.1	0.3	48.0	1.2	41.2	1.5	36.0	2.3	26.9	1.2	31.5	1.1	30.7	2.4	30.0	1.8	30.1	2.6	24.8	2.1	17.1	1.6
Administrative and support and waste management services	23.9	0.4	49.3	1.0	32.1	1.4	35.8	2.8	29.4	1.6	30.7	1.5	35.1	3.5	30.0	1.8	28.7	3.1	18.5	1.9	15.6	1.9
Construction	23.4	0.3	42.3	0.9	35.2	1.1	33.0	1.9	32.0	1.1	41.6	0.9	37.1	1.6	25.1	1.4	16.2	2.0	21.1	1.5	26.4	1.5
Other services, except public administration	20.9	0.3	45.0	1.0	40.7	1.2	36.0	2.3	30.5	1.3	29.3	1.1	26.6	2.6	21.8	1.3	21.5	2.3	18.4	1.6	14.3	1.5
Manufacturing	18.4	0.2	49.4	0.7	27.6	1.0	33.4	1.2	27.2	1.3	26.3	0.8	24.9	1.5	27.7	0.9	23.6	1.3	9.2	0.9	14.4	1.0
Wholesale trade	16.0	0.3	38.8	1.2	30.2	1.7	28.7	2.1	28.9	1.6	17.8	1.1	13.9	2.2	17.0	1.6	11.9	1.8	9.8	1.7	11.6	1.8
Transportation and warehousing	15.7	0.3	37.4	1.1	37.1	1.5	30.3	1.9	28.2	1.5	16.9	1.0	11.9	1.9	15.2	1.1	15.7	2.4	14.3	1.6	8.6	1.1
Real estate and rental and leasing	14.5	0.4	28.0	1.4	30.5	1.6	21.9	1.8	23.1	1.5	15.2	1.3	10.2	2.0	13.5	1.7	11.4	2.3	14.1	1.7	9.4	1.7
Health care and social assistance	14.1	0.1	33.0	0.6	29.9	0.7	26.1	1.2	23.9	0.8	15.3	0.5	15.0	1.3	14.9	0.7	17.4	1.0	12.1	1.0	8.1	0.7
Professional, scientific, and technical services	13.7	0.2	26.2	0.7	20.2	0.9	23.6	1.2	18.5	0.9	13.2	0.6	11.3	1.3	13.0	0.9	15.2	1.0	14.4	0.9	10.5	0.9
Retail trade	13.1	0.2	29.9	0.7	25.9	0.8	22.7	1.1	21.3	0.8	17.2	0.7	14.5	1.4	14.6	0.9	12.7	1.2	12.8	1.0	11.8	1.2
Finance and insurance . . .	11.6	0.2	24.1	0.9	23.5	1.0	22.0	1.2	18.7	1.0	10.1	0.7	8.7	1.6	11.1	1.0	14.6	1.7	12.2	1.2	7.6	1.0
Arts, entertainment, and recreation	11.5	0.4	21.0	1.4	15.8	1.7	15.8	2.1	18.8	1.7	13.4	1.8	12.2	2.4	10.7	1.8	8.9	1.9	6.9	1.8	4.8	1.5
Information	11.3	0.3	21.0	1.0	17.3	1.2	19.5	1.9	16.2	1.4	13.1	1.3	10.0	2.8	10.3	1.3	12.1	2.0	12.6	1.9	9.3	1.5
Management of companies and enterprises	11.0	1.2	20.5	4.7	16.2	5.2	19.1	8.7	15.1	5.8	12.2	4.1	7.0	5.7	10.9	3.8	17.1	13.8	22.7	10.0	8.0	4.4
Educational services	10.0	0.1	19.7	0.5	15.6	0.6	14.2	1.0	15.9	0.9	12.0	0.5	11.3	1.2	10.6	0.8	14.2	1.0	9.5	0.9	6.9	0.7
Mining	7.1	0.6	16.1	3.9	7.3	5.4	18.1	12.0	10.3	5.9	13.5	1.4	7.9	3.2	4.5	2.9	19.0	17.1	9.0	5.3	1.1	1.9
Public administration	7.0	0.1	16.5	0.6	14.1	0.9	10.9	1.2	10.6	0.7	6.2	0.5	7.1	1.1	5.3	0.7	6.4	1.1	8.0	0.8	4.2	0.8
Utilities	6.2	0.4	16.1	1.8	11.4	2.3	8.9	2.7	14.3	2.8	9.6	1.7	7.6	3.1	5.4	1.7	5.7	2.5	4.5	1.6	3.6	1.4

Note: Data are based on a sample and are subject to sampling variability. The degree of uncertainty for an estimate arising from sampling variability is represented through the use of a margin of error. The value shown here is the 90 percent margin of error. The margin of error can be interpreted roughly as providing a 90 percent probability that the interval defined by the estimate minus the margin of error and the estimate plus the margin of error (the lower and upper confidence bounds) contains the true value. In addition to sampling variability, the ACS estimates are subject to nonsampling error (for a discussion of nonsampling variability, see "Accuracy of the Data" at www.census.gov/acs/www/Downloads/ACS/accuracy2007.pdf). The effect of nonsampling error is not represented in these tables.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2007.

Appendix Table C.

Margins of Error for Characteristics of the Civilian Labor Force in the United States by Nativity and Citizenship Status: 2007

(Numbers in thousands. For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, and definitions, see www.census.gov/acs/www/)

Characteristic	Total		Native		Foreign born					
					Total		Naturalized citizen		Not a citizen	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
16 years and over and in labor force	113	(X)	146	(X)	83	(X)	56	(X)	80	(X)
Age										
16 to 19 years	37	0.1	39	0.1	13	0.1	6	0.1	12	0.1
20 to 24 years	44	0.1	47	0.1	27	0.1	12	0.1	24	0.2
25 to 34 years	45	0.1	59	0.1	43	0.1	22	0.2	41	0.2
35 to 44 years	51	0.1	60	0.1	39	0.1	32	0.3	36	0.2
45 to 54 years	50	0.1	55	0.1	35	0.1	28	0.2	28	0.2
55 to 64 years	46	0.1	44	0.1	24	0.1	20	0.2	17	0.1
65 years and over	30	0.1	30	0.1	12	0.1	12	0.1	7	0.1
Sex										
Female	79	0.1	86	0.1	43	0.1	35	0.2	35	0.2
Male	73	0.1	96	0.1	62	0.1	38	0.2	63	0.2
Educational attainment¹										
Less than high school diploma	87	0.1	63	0.1	53	0.2	23	0.2	50	0.3
High school graduate or GED	144	0.1	121	0.1	60	0.2	30	0.3	47	0.3
Some college, no degree	106	0.1	104	0.1	33	0.1	23	0.2	22	0.2
Associate's degree	68	0.1	63	0.1	24	0.1	17	0.2	15	0.1
Bachelor's degree	105	0.1	92	0.1	36	0.1	25	0.2	24	0.2
Master's degree	50	0.1	44	0.1	21	0.1	15	0.1	15	0.1
Professional degree	26	0.1	24	0.1	14	0.1	10	0.1	7	0.1
Doctoral degree	23	0.1	18	0.1	11	0.1	7	0.1	8	0.1
High school graduate or more	141	0.1	159	0.1	76	0.2	54	0.2	60	0.3
Bachelor's degree or more	133	0.1	118	0.1	42	0.2	31	0.3	27	0.2
Language ability										
Speaks only English at home	121	0.1	122	0.1	40	0.2	28	0.2	26	0.2
Speaks a language other than English at home	68	0.1	58	0.1	75	0.2	49	0.2	78	0.2
Speaks English very well	64	0.1	48	0.1	48	0.2	42	0.3	34	0.2
Speaks English less than very well	64	0.1	26	0.1	70	0.2	28	0.3	68	0.3
Region										
Northeast	44	0.1	51	0.1	38	0.1	30	0.3	33	0.2
Midwest	54	0.1	61	0.1	27	0.1	17	0.2	23	0.2
South	64	0.1	78	0.1	46	0.2	29	0.2	45	0.2
West	55	0.1	63	0.1	47	0.2	32	0.3	42	0.3

X Not applicable.

¹ Analyses focused on educational attainment usually consider only those 25 years old or over. However, this table explores the characteristics of the civilian labor force as a whole. Thus, it includes all civilian labor force participants, some of whom may be as young as 16 years old.

Note: Data are based on a sample and are subject to sampling variability. The degree of uncertainty for an estimate arising from sampling variability is represented through the use of a margin of error. The value shown here is the 90 percent margin of error. The margin of error can be interpreted roughly as providing a 90 percent probability that the interval defined by the estimate minus the margin of error and the estimate plus the margin of error (the lower and upper confidence bounds) contains the true value. In addition to sampling variability, the ACS estimates are subject to nonsampling error (for a discussion of nonsampling variability, see "Accuracy of the Data" at www.census.gov/acs/www/Downloads/ACS/accuracy2007.pdf). The effect of nonsampling error is not represented in these tables.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2007.

Appendix Table D.

Margins of Error for Place of Birth of the Foreign-Born Civilian Labor Force by Educational Attainment: 2007

(For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, and definitions, see www.census.gov/acs/www/)

Educational attainment	Place of birth									
	Total	Africa	Asia	Europe	Latin America					Other regions ¹
					Total	Carib-bean	Central America		South America	
							Mexico	Other		
Total	(X) 0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1
Less than high school diploma	(X) 0.1	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.2	0.5	0.3	0.2	0.1
High school graduate or GED	(X) 0.2	0.3	0.4	0.3	0.4	0.3	0.5	0.3	0.2	0.1
Some college, no degree	(X) 0.3	0.4	0.6	0.7	0.7	0.6	0.6	0.4	0.5	0.3
Associate's degree	(X) 0.3	0.5	0.7	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.3	0.2
Bachelor's degree	(X) 0.3	0.7	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.2
Master's degree	(X) 0.6	1.1	0.8	1.0	0.7	0.6	0.6	0.3	0.7	0.4
Professional degree	(X) 0.6	1.2	1.1	0.7	0.3	0.4	0.2	0.5	0.4	0.4
Doctoral degree	(X) 0.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1
High school graduate or more	(X) 0.2	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.1
Bachelor's degree or more	(X) 0.2	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.1

X Not applicable.

¹ Includes Northern America and Oceania.

Note: Data are based on a sample and are subject to sampling variability. The degree of uncertainty for an estimate arising from sampling variability is represented through the use of a margin of error. The value shown here is the 90 percent margin of error. The margin of error can be interpreted roughly as providing a 90 percent probability that the interval defined by the estimate minus the margin of error and the estimate plus the margin of error (the lower and upper confidence bounds) contains the true value. In addition to sampling variability, the ACS estimates are subject to nonsampling error (for a discussion of nonsampling variability, see "Accuracy of the Data" at www.census.gov/acs/www/Downloads/ACS/accuracy2007.pdf). The effect of nonsampling error is not represented in these tables.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2007.

Appendix Table E.

Margins of Error for Employed Civilian Labor Force by Occupation, Nativity, and Citizenship Status: 2007

(Numbers in thousands. For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, and definitions, see www.census.gov/acs/www/)

Occupation	Total		Native		Foreign born					
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Total		Naturalized citizen		Not a citizen	
					Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Total employed workers	110	(X) 0.1	141	(X) 0.1	81	(X) 0.2	54	(X) 0.3	80	(X) 0.2
Management, professional, and related	125	0.1	116	0.1	37	0.2	31	0.3	20	0.2
Service	84	0.1	72	0.1	47	0.2	22	0.2	42	0.3
Sales and office	85	0.1	84	0.1	33	0.1	23	0.2	22	0.2
Production, transportation, and material moving	66	0.1	58	0.1	37	0.1	21	0.2	33	0.2
Construction, extraction, maintenance, and repair	58	0.1	53	0.1	37	0.2	15	0.1	37	0.2
Farming, fishing, and forestry	19	0.1	11	0.1	17	0.1	4	0.1	16	0.1

X Not applicable.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2007.