Immigrant Economic Contributions to the United States

David Dyssegaard Kallick
Director of Immigration Research
Fiscal Policy Institute
ddkallick@fiscalpolicy.org
Unauthorized Population Highest in 2007
Lower in 2015 than in 2009

In millions

Immigration to America is **More Diverse** than Most People Realize

- **Asian, 27%**
- **White, 18%**
- **Black, 8%**
- **Hispanic/Latino, 45%**

A Big Part of America’s Economy Relies on Immigrants

Fiscal Policy Institute analysis of American Community Survey (ACS) 2015. Share of GDP is gauged by share of total wage and salary earnings plus proprietor’s income.
How Can Immigrant Share of GDP Be that Big?
1. Immigrants Are Young Adults

Immigrant share of:

- Population: 13%
- Working-Age Population: 17%
- Labor Force: 17%

Immigrants Work in Jobs Across the Spectrum of Occupations

- **Computer and Mathematical**
- **Architecture and Engineering**
- **Life, Physical and Soc. Science**
- **Business Operations Specialists**
- **Financial Specialists**
- **Community and Social Services**
- **Legal Occupations**
- **Education, Training, and Library**
- **Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media**
- **Healthcare Practitioners and Technical**
- **Healthcare Support**
- **Protective Service**
- **Food Preparation and Serving**
- **Building & Grounds Maintenance**
- **Personal Care & Service**
- **Sales and Related**
- **Office and Administrative Support**
- **Farming**
- **Construction**
- **Extraction**
- **Production**
- **Installation, Maintenance, and Repair**
- **Transportation and Material Moving**

Fiscal Policy Institute analysis of 2015 ACS.
3. Immigrants Are Entrepreneurial

Immigrant share of:

- Population: 13%
- Labor Force: 17%
- Business Owners: 19%
- Main Street Business Owners: 30%

“Main Street” Businesses

- Grocery stores
- Restaurants
- Dry cleaners
- Beauty salons
- Retail shops

For detail, see Bringing Vitality to Main Street, Fiscal Policy Institute and Americas Society/Council of the Americas, 2015.
Different Economic Contexts

Immigrant Share of Population by County

## Cities with Declining Population 1960 to 1980

(29 of the 50 Largest Cities saw a mid-20\textsuperscript{th} Century population decline)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Decline (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>St. Louis</td>
<td>-40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cleveland</td>
<td>-34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buffalo</td>
<td>-33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pittsburgh</td>
<td>-30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detroit</td>
<td>-28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rochester</td>
<td>-24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louisville</td>
<td>-24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cincinnati</td>
<td>-23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minneapolis</td>
<td>-23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boston</td>
<td>-19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newark</td>
<td>-19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birmingham</td>
<td>-17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington, DC</td>
<td>-16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baltimore</td>
<td>-16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philadelphia</td>
<td>-16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicago</td>
<td>-15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milwaukee</td>
<td>-14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Paul</td>
<td>-14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atlanta</td>
<td>-13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norfolk</td>
<td>-13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seattle</td>
<td>-11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Orleans</td>
<td>-11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York City</td>
<td>-9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Francisco</td>
<td>-8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oakland</td>
<td>-8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kansas City</td>
<td>-6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portland, OR</td>
<td>-2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tampa</td>
<td>-1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denver</td>
<td>-0.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Fiscal Policy Institute analysis of Census and ACS data.
Of the 29 Declining Cities, 14 Rebounded with an Increase in Population since 1980

Source: Fiscal Policy Institute Analysis of Census and ACS data. See Bringing Vitality to Main Street.
Here are the Cities that Rebounded with an Increase in the Immigrant Population

Here are the Cities that Rebounded *Without* an Increase in Immigrant Population
There are none
There are none

The only cities that rebounded from mid-20th century population loss did so with a net increase in immigrant population.

This doesn’t prove that immigrants cause growth. It may also be that immigrants are drawn to growth.

But if your city’s plan is to grow *without* immigrants, it is useful to keep in mind that there are *no examples* of that among major cities in the United States over the past four decades.

Source: Fiscal Policy Institute analysis of Census and ACS data.