

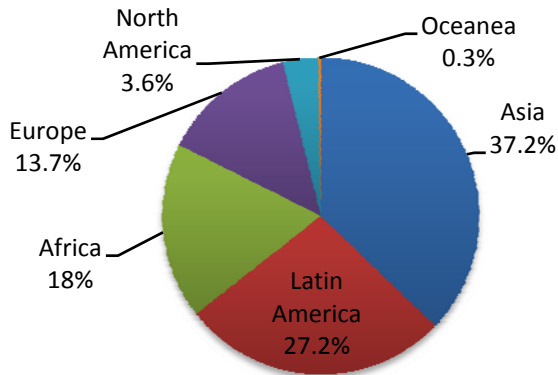


**CLAC Fact Sheets Series  
IMMIGRATION/SUMMER 2009**

**Minnesota’s Immigrant Population**

Minnesota’s immigrant population does not follow the pattern set by other states. Immigrants from Latin America make up only 27% of the foreign-born population – much less than the national figure of 53%. Asian and African immigrant communities, in turn, are much more prominent in Minnesota than they are nationwide. In 2007, immigrants represented 6.6 percent of Minnesota’s population, compared with 5.3 percent in 2000 and 2.6 percent in 1990. The national rate is 12%. The top three countries of birth of the foreign-born in Minnesota were Mexico, India, and Vietnam.<sup>1</sup> Chart 1 shows regional origins of Minnesota’s foreign-born population.

**Chart 1: Origins of Foreign-Born Minnesotans**



Source: CLAC with 2007 American Community Survey data.

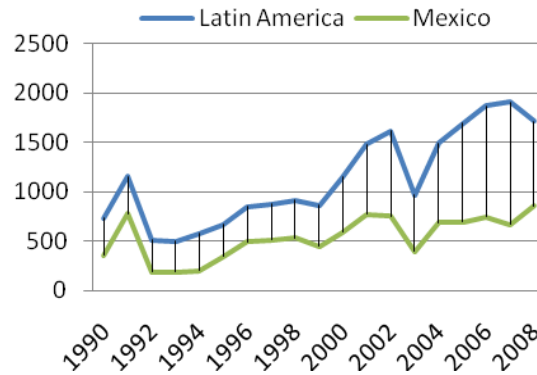
The Migration Policy Institute calculates that Minnesota’s foreign born population changed by 30.2 percent between 2000 and 2006 (from 260,463 to 339,236 new residents). However, the foreign-born percentage of Minnesota’s population has decreased 2 points since 2006, from 35% to 33%.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 2007 American Community Survey. *Minnesota: Selected Population Profiles*. [www.factfinder.census.gov](http://www.factfinder.census.gov)

<sup>2</sup> Migration Policy Institute. (2008). *Fact sheet on the foreign born. Demographics and Social Characteristics*. [www.migrationinformation.org/datahub/acscensus.cfm#](http://www.migrationinformation.org/datahub/acscensus.cfm#)

Data from the Department of Homeland Security and the Immigration and Nationalization Service shows that the flow of Latino immigrants to Minnesota has continued to rise, although immigration totals have fallen between 2007 and 2008. This decrease is likely due to the recent economic downturn, perhaps mirroring the decrease in immigration seen in 2003-2003 during the market downturn of 2002. While Mexico remains the largest single country of origin for Latin American immigrants, immigration from other Latin American countries has grown in recent years. Of particular note are the influx of immigrants from Guatemala and Ecuador, which have increased substantially since 2000.<sup>3</sup>

**Chart 2: Immigrants Admitted to Minnesota per Year**



Source: CLAC with data from the Office of the State Demographer

**Population Growth**

Although the Latino population has grown in the previous decades because of migration, current population growth is more complex. Minnesota’s Latino population is expected to nearly double between 2010 and 2030, reaching nearly half a million inhabitants. This increase is not solely a result of immigration, but also caused by high

<sup>3</sup> Minnesota Office of Geographic and Demographic Analysis. *Immigrants to Minnesota by Region and Selected Country of Birth* (2009)

birth rates, as well as inter-state migration.<sup>4</sup> Natural (non-migratory) population increase is higher for nonwhite and Latinos because there is a high proportion of women in their child-bearing years. The nonwhite/Latino population records more than 9 births for each death. In the white/non-Hispanic population, there are 1.5 births per death.<sup>5</sup>

### **Undocumented Immigration in Minnesota**

While there is no recent measurement of the number of unauthorized immigrants in Minnesota, some estimate that as of 2005, Minnesota's undocumented population was between 80,000 and 85,000 people.<sup>6</sup>

New reports offer evidence that unauthorized immigration may be slowing down. According to a report published in July 2009 by the Center for Immigration Studies, the national undocumented population has declined by 13.7% from its peak in summer 2007 as the result of a decrease in arrivals and an increase in departures. This decline is likely caused by both the current recession and increased enforcement efforts.<sup>7</sup> This is corroborated by data from the Pew Hispanic Center, which shows that the number of legal Mexican immigrants has declined, while the number of Mexican nationals returning to their home country has remained steady.<sup>8</sup>

While increased immigration enforcement may play a role in the decrease of undocumented populations, the recent increase is rendered troubling by the issues that surround enforcement strategies. There is substantial evidence of widespread constitutional violations during

immigration raids,<sup>9</sup> and examples such as the still-controversial Swift plan raid in Willmar, MN show how raids can divide communities and result in a variety of negative consequences.

As a result, two important changes have occurred in 2009: the Obama administration will launch a review and overhaul of the nation's immigration-detention system to make it less reliant on prison-like facilities to hold noncriminal immigration offenders. Similarly, the Supreme Court ruled against prosecutors who used a federal identity theft law to inappropriately charge and convict undocumented workers of a crime not anticipated by Congress when they wrote the law.

However, the much anticipated comprehensive reform is still a promise and immigrant rights advocates are hoping to see a bill introduced and Congressional debate in September 2009. A 2009 Pew Research Center survey showed that 63% of Americans favor a path for citizenship for undocumented immigrants under certain requirements. While the current Democratic congressional majority provides favorable conditions for the passage of comprehensive reform, the current recession has shifted public perceptions of immigrants and immigration reform in a negative direction, which may drive contention and decrease the chance of passage for any truly comprehensive measures.<sup>10</sup>

The work of immigrant integration has fallen largely on local communities and the immigrants themselves. Luckily, Minnesota has a strong set of community resources available for this task in both the Twin Cities and Greater Minnesota. Prominent examples such as the Welcome Center in Austin, the Nobles County Integration Collaborative and the Faribault Diversity Coalition, all located in Greater Minnesota, have had significant successes in community integration.

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<sup>4</sup>McMurray, Martha. *Minnesota Population Projections by Race and Hispanic Origin, 2005-2030*. Minnesota State Demographic Center. (2009)

<sup>5</sup> McMurray, Martha. *Nonwhite and Latino Populations in Minnesota Continue to Grow Rapidly*. St. Paul, MN: State Demographic Center. (2006).

<sup>6</sup>Passel, Jeffery. *Estimates of the Size and Characteristics of the Undocumented Population*. Pew Hispanic Center. (2005)

<sup>7</sup> Camarota, Steven and Karen Jensenius. *A Shifting Tide: Recent Trends in the Illegal Immigrant Population*. The Center for Immigration Studies. (July 2009)

<sup>8</sup> Cohn, D'Vera and Jeffery Passel. *Mexican Immigrants: How Many Come? How Many Leave?* Pew Hispanic Center. (2009)

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<sup>9</sup> Chiu, Bess et. al. *Constitution on ICE: A Report on Immigration Home Raid Operations*.

<sup>10</sup> Mann, Thomas M and Darrell West. *Prospects for Immigration Reform in the New Political Climate*. The Brookings Institution. (2009)