

# New Americans in Salt Lake County

A Qualitative Study of Service  
Providers to Immigrants and Refugees

A Demographic Profile of  
Utah's Gateway Region

March 2020



# Overview

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Salt Lake County is home to over half of Utah’s new Americans. This population is ever-changing; the number of arrivals, major country or region of origin, and reason for moving to Utah can fluctuate in any given year. There is no monolithic population of new Americans in Salt Lake County – Salt Lake City’s foreign-born population has different characteristics and needs than that of West Valley, South Salt Lake, or Herriman. The diversity in these communities continues to grow, change, and impact the entire county as people place roots and grow their families.

Those organizations serving Salt Lake County new Americans are continuously striving to adapt to these dynamics. However, they are also seriously constrained by funding restrictions and requirements. Because the new American population tends to earn lower than average incomes, challenges that affect the wider population often impact new Americans more acutely. One example is the current affordable housing shortage, which then worsens transportation accessibility as the population moves farther from services and employment. Growing anti-immigration sentiment is compounding the challenges that hamper the success of service providers as immigrants do not seek services due to fear.

The Salt Lake County Office for New Americans and The Community Foundation of Utah contracted with the Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute to better understand the needs and demographic profile of Salt Lake County’s immigrant and refugee populations and the organizations that serve them.

Through demographic and qualitative research approaches, the Gardner Institute learned that an ever-shifting new American population necessitates fluidity from providers and the county in meeting their needs.

- Utilizing available American Community Survey data, the demographic report details the changing patterns and varying social and economic characteristics of Salt Lake County’s foreign-born population.
- In-depth interviews of service providers to immigrants and refugees detail how they are meeting clients’ needs in Salt Lake County, and any noted areas of improvement. The qualitative report includes verbatim comments from service providers to illustrate common findings.

By pursuing this research, Salt Lake County is taking a proactive step toward understanding the current and future needs of its new American residents.

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# New Americans in Salt Lake County

## A Qualitative Study of Service Providers to Immigrants and Refugees

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# New American Services in Salt Lake County

## A Qualitative Study of Service Providers to Immigrants and Refugees

### Analysis in Brief

Utah, and particularly the populous Salt Lake County, is known as a welcoming place for new arrivals to the United States. Thousands of new Americans arrive in Utah each year, with most settling in Salt Lake County. New Americans often come to the United States needing to adjust to a new language, culture, and economy. Therefore, it is not uncommon for a new American to be lower-income and face similar challenges of other low-income residents like unaffordable housing, lack of economic opportunities, and inaccessible transportation options. These challenges are exacerbated for new Americans who also face language barriers, unfamiliar communities, and foreign cultural expectations.

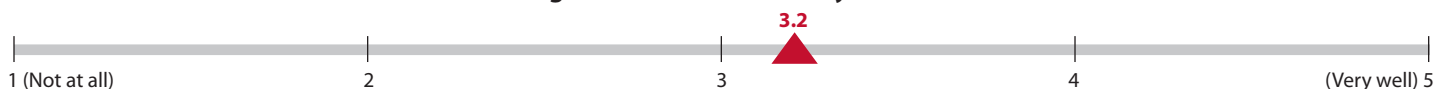
This study assesses the success of meeting the needs of these new Americans. It includes results from interviews with 43 service providers to understand how needs are met, what barriers remain, and what additional support could help providers more effectively serve this population.

These service providers are confident in their ability to meet the needs of their clients, yet know there are likely more residents in need who are unaware of their services. Providers also suggest additional services they could offer with the necessary resources. Gaps in services for this population are identified as well as barriers in accessing any service. Organizing coordination among service providers and the need for a comprehensive, maintained online resource were offered as ways the county could better serve new Americans.

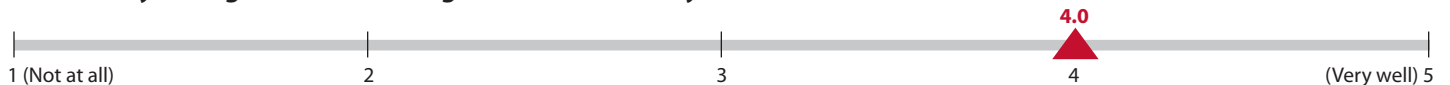
### Key Findings

- **Services still needed** - Service providers believe Utah does a good job welcoming new Americans, but services are still needed to help new Americans best thrive in their new home. Those needs include affordable housing, transportation accessibility, employment and training opportunities, education and language learning assistance, health care access, including mental health, improved translation and interpretation services, food security, after-school programs, and civic and service engagement.
- **Barriers** - Language barriers, difficulty navigating complex systems to access services, lack of information, and fear, particularly for immigrants due to an increased focus on immigration, are barriers that prevent new Americans from initially seeking service.
- **Support for providers** - Better coordination with other service providers was often mentioned as a way to improve the referral process and broaden resource options for new Americans, along with cultural competency training for staff, translation assistance, and additional resources.
- **Three ideas for Salt Lake County** - Providers suggested that Salt Lake County can help by being a convener of coordination among providers, house a one-stop-shop resource, and conduct cultural competency training.

### How well are the needs of new Americans being met in Salt Lake County?



### How well is your organization meeting the needs of those you serve?



Note: These ratings are an average of the answers provided by 43 service providers.

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The Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute thanks Casey Mullen, graduate assistant, for her assistance with this report.

# Introduction

*“Utah has a better focus and opinion of new Americans than other places. In general, Utah is open-hearted.”*

Utah, and particularly the populous Salt Lake County, is known as a welcoming place to new arrivals to the United States with many service providers invested in meeting their needs. The Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute contracted with the Salt Lake County Office for New Americans and the Community Foundation of Utah to conduct qualitative research with service providers of immigrants and refugees (referred to as “new Americans”) in Salt Lake County. The objectives of this research are to understand how the needs of new Americans are being met, discover barriers to seeking services, and to identify where additional support could help service providers more effectively serve this population.

The Gardner Policy Institute conducted 43 in-depth interviews with service providers of new Americans. Interviews were analyzed to uncover themes and helpful, relevant verbatim comments are provided to illustrate the findings.

Organization for this report follows two questions which asked providers to rate both how the needs of new Americans are being served in Salt Lake County generally, and how well they feel their organization is meeting the needs of those they serve specifically. This report documents opportunities for the county and service providers to improve services to new Americans in Utah.

## Methodology

The Gardner Institute conducted 43 in-depth interviews with service providers to new Americans from non-profit, education, government, and religious sectors. These interviews took place between September 24 through November 26, 2019. Interviews were conducted over the phone and in person depending on participant preference. The client provided a list of 80 service providers to include in the study, with a goal of 60 interviews. Salt Lake County Mayor Jenny Wilson sent an introductory email to the targeted participants describing the importance and purpose of the research. While best efforts were made, not all possible service providers participated. Participation from all sectors was achieved, but not equally.

The questionnaire was jointly developed by Gardner Institute researchers, the Office for New Americans, and the Community Foundation of Utah, as well as feedback from national experts and state partners like Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees, the New York City Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Affairs, and the city of Houston’s Office for New Americans and Immigrant Communities. The questionnaire can be found in Appendix B.

All interviews were analyzed to find common themes.

## Limitations

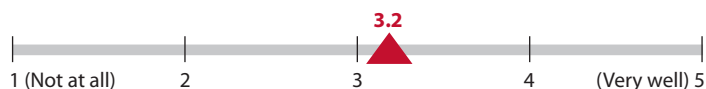
By design, qualitative research findings are not generalizable to all those that serve the new American population. Instead, it allows for nuance, depth, and personalized context. These findings should be treated as directional in nature.

Study findings suggested additional sector perspectives would further strengthen the report, but multiple attempts to interview additional sector representatives were not fruitful.

# Service Landscape for New Americans in Salt Lake County

Service providers believe Salt Lake County is very welcoming to new Americans, and feel the county is a good partner to their organization. However, providers notice needs that, if filled, would allow new Americans to thrive even better in their new home. In some cases, they would like to fill these gaps but lack the necessary resources. In other cases, meeting particular needs would require action elsewhere.

## How well are the needs of new Americans being met in Salt Lake County?



Participants were asked to rate how the needs of new Americans are being met in Salt Lake County. The mean rating of 3.2 speaks to the investment these providers have in the new American community as is explained by select comments below. Providers know some new Americans are not aware of existing services, experience barriers to accessing services, or altogether need better service provision depending on need.

### The county is doing a great job:

*"They (the county) are really trying to do a lot."*

*"The county does better than the state. The money we get from the state can only be used for legal residents."*

*"New Americans are being welcomed more."*

*"Overall I think the county has come a long way and they are a very good partner, and especially the mayor's office does really great work."*

*"Because they are doing stuff like this study."*

### Despite barriers that are hard to break through:

*"Persistent barriers for low income people like the cost of living. Overall, there is difficulty meeting their needs despite adequate work and support from the county and LDS church."*

*"County services for new Americans is great but some of the populations are a bit siloed and tight knit; breaking in can be a challenge and people don't go beyond the culture. County services are crosscutting and welcoming but it's hard for the county to break into the culture and group."*

### More could be served:

*"I will say 2, because resources aren't there to be able to just find that population and assure they have the services they need. Because of culture and language and fear, they don't know where to go or are afraid to try to find out where to go."*

*"People that come to the places get good services, but those that aren't going or accessing services are missing out and it's hard to know who they are and why they aren't coming. I think we serve a third. I think there are two-thirds out there that could totally benefit. I think if people knew about all of the services they would be utilized."*

*"The people who know about services are being served very well. Others have had to move so far out because of the cost of housing, so now they are nowhere near services. We need to get a lot further out in Salt Lake County because that's where a lot of people live right now."*

### Or served better:

*"Alignment through different agencies, manpower to follow up, and knowledge of all available resources could be improved."*

### There is a gap in services:

*"There are not enough services out there, for the youth for example, also mental health services and substance abuse services have disappeared."*

*"[New Americans] get stuck with the housing for those who are seriously mentally ill and people they are trying to keep out of jail. We are competing entities for that type of housing."*

### There are barriers:

*"Forms for government programs and services ask unnecessary questions and create barriers for new Americans. There are issues with intake processes, language accessibilities, and unwelcoming environments at government office locations."*

### Depends on the population:

*"For refugees, I think they are doing really well, I would give them a 4. Immigrants, I would give it a 1, because the focus seems to have always been on refugees."*

*"I would say a 2 for broader new American community, and a 4 for refugees. The average is 3. They are being served well for the refugee community but there is just too much happening and too many people doing the same thing that prevents us from narrowing down what is truly impactful and what is not."*



## Opportunities to Better Serve New Americans in Salt Lake County

Providers have noticed certain areas where additional services are needed, or where existing services could be enhanced. The most oft-cited services are affordable housing, better transportation, employment opportunities, education, and health care (including mental health). These needs are magnified for low-income individuals and families or those earning the minimum wage.

For some of these needs, service providers offered ways they would help if necessary resources were available. There are some needs where service providers do not offer specific ideas on how they would help. This is usually a case where they see the need in the community, but it is not the specialty of their organization.

### Affordable housing

The inability to find affordable housing was often mentioned as the most critical need. Families are moving farther away from services to where housing is more affordable, and often multiple families are living together in one apartment or house in order to afford housing. The latter can be in violation of rental agreements and result in eviction.

*"When new Americans arrive, they start working, and it will take them a while to climb up the ladder by improving their English, getting the certifications they need or getting the education they need. That is a crucial time for those individuals to get housing because they work and maybe they have two jobs, or two or three members of the family work. But they spend more than 80% on housing. Imagine that! The families don't have anything left for other things that they need like insurance, cars, education or other things."*

*"Refugees are given housing assistance when they first arrive, but after assistance stops they cannot afford the living conditions they were used to and have to downgrade."*

#### Providers would like to offer:

- The building of affordable housing specifically for large families.

*"New American families are larger, it's harder for them to find safe and affordable housing. They get denied application because they are a large family."*

- The building of more transitional housing
- Rental assistance as "it is badly needed."

### Transportation

Transportation was listed as both a need and a barrier to accessing services. Participants noted that convenient bus routes do not reach where new Americans tend to live and/or work, that language barriers can prevent new Americans from navigating the public transportation system, and obtaining drivers licenses is not easy for English language learners; immigrants are especially negatively impacted, as refugees are able to take the Utah knowledge test in their native language with the assistance of an interpreter. "

*"It's hard to get from east to west. Any time you are crossing over the center line you are taking at least 2 or 3 buses and service is very slow in many areas. It can take 2 hours to a destination in Salt Lake. New Americans feel this need more than others."*

Additionally, applying for a driver's license may not feel like a safe option for immigrants due to the personal data required (see p. 9 regarding barriers to accessing services).

### Employment and training opportunities

*"They are motivated and hard workers."*

New Americans come to the United States with a broad range of skillsets. Participants noted the convention to encourage an education alone is short-sighted; new Americans should also be encouraged into trade training, as some might already have the training from their home country and trades can provide good incomes.

*"Focus more on technical skills training or trade school for employment opportunities like carpentry and plumbing, rather than push for all new American children to seek high education. Labor and technical jobs pay good wages."*

They also stressed a need for a pathway to transition their training from their home country to the United States, including the ability to earn what they deserve based on the training they already have. Often their only option is to start over for U.S. accreditation, which can be expensive and requires literacy, which takes time. These barriers often incentivize a new American to opt for lower-wage, less-skilled work.

*"Refugees and immigrants are filling an employment gap we have in hospitality and food service; traditional low-wage jobs, but we need to help them move to that next pathway."*

*"If you have an education and skills and you come from another country, I think it's hard to take what you have and find an equitable job here."*

*"It's wasted talent."*

## Education

Whether they are adults learning English and other skills, or children being placed in the K-12 system, new Americans find they have a lot of catching up to do and service providers often see them falling behind. School-aged new American children are usually placed in the grade that accommodates their age rather than ability. This is particularly tough for high school-aged new American students:

*"They may learn to converse in English, but they are at a 3<sup>rd</sup> grade reading level and keep being promoted to the next grade, and then they graduate. They can talk and converse, but they aren't ready to work, they can't read or write. Conversely, if they happen to be ready for college, culturally their parents will require them to stay at home and take care of the family."*

Service providers stress the importance of providing extra help in the form of tutoring and mentoring:

*"Support those students who need to catch up with their American peers, because when they get here,*

*the children are placed in a grade based on their age, regardless of whether they had prior formal education or not. So it is up to the community to make sure those kids receive the support that they need."*

*"Traditionally, a child that doesn't speak English will take six years to catch up with their peers and be proficient. We focus on greater than one year's worth of growth every year, so it will happen eventually, but that also means there is improvement to be made."*

Adults are also dependent on the community for education services like learning English and other skills. Providers believe that while there are many organizations that provide English language learning classes, there could be improvements in how they are administered, like moving classes out of formal centers and into community spaces or workplaces.

*"We need to be working and advocating with employers to offer on-site ESL. We had an [expert] helping us look for a tax incentive program for employers to offer ESL. I would love to see that get through."*

### Providers would like to offer:

- *"We would love to look at expanding ESL and GED programs to be more accessible to that population, but geared towards the elementary language base. It's too challenging for some."*
- Better transition from when a student goes from their 2-week, 1-room American school familiarity training into a school of 3,200 people *"where it is easy to get lost. These students need more direct mentoring and more translation help."*
- Tutoring and help via after school programs, which participants noted are losing funding and disappearing even though after-school programs offer crucial supports. After-school programs are further discussed in the next section.
- Education-system navigation for parents.
- Scholarships.
- Help new Americans navigate into professional fields that can benefit other new Americans (social work, counseling, etc.).
- *"We have a gap between community education programs and community colleges. A lot of students will jump to community college and use their PELL Grants on classes they aren't passing because they aren't prepped for that level."*

#### **ESL-specific ideas:**

- Increase ESL services in other areas of the city.
- ESL at religious centers, which are often trusted community entities. Engage refugees at resettlement agency-orientation about the different mosques (for example) in the area and the programs they offer.

*"[This mosque] is where you get educational programs, where you have the interfaith programs, where you host the media, where you have adult education programs, workshops, seminars, services, social services, free health clinics, you know, all of that takes place in the mosque. So, they probably think 'Eh, mosque, it's just for the Friday prayers.'"*

- More interpretation services, or a better system that incentivizes independent contractor interpreters to consider non-profit clients as equal to private clients. Currently, these interpreters are incentivized to take jobs that pay the best, which are often not service providers.
- Translate printed materials into all needed languages.
- *"Overall adult ESL; there are gaps for those who have high oral proficiency, but no literacy. Classes tend to be designed for emergent readers while there isn't really curriculum for people who are almost fluent but can't read and write."*
- English and computer classes for the next level, not just basics. *"What we are finding is our clients will open up a business but lack the ability to understand business language."*

## Health care access

Support utilizing and navigating the health care system was often mentioned as a needed service:

*"Utah has one of the largest percentages of uninsured Latino children in the country. They are not getting enrolled in programs they are qualified for."*

*"Getting them to the dentist. I can get them access to healthcare through numerous clinics, vision with our*

*partnership with 1-800-CONTACTS, but when it comes to dental issues, I'm lost. There's not a lot offered to them."*

Access to mental health care services could be improved, especially after the two-year case management runs its course for refugees when trauma is more likely to resurface:

*"Trauma doesn't tend to start to emerge until after things are settled down."*

### Providers would like to offer:

#### General health care:

- Health care system navigation and insurance enrollment assistance
- Better prevention and educating
- Health navigators focused only on helping them access insurance. *"It's a huge cost on the system but we have so many who don't know how to navigate it and have a fear of applying."*
- More screenings
- Expansion of immunization services and STD treatment

#### Mental health:

- *"It would be nice to have an in-house therapist at each resettlement agency; imagine what they could do."*
- Mental health option rather than punitive approaches for youth. *"We see that most of the time, kids being punished [are those] who need help, that [punishment] does not serve the purpose."*
- More mental health screenings and referrals for all children.
- *"I would like to see us do a better job recruiting individuals whose first language is some other language into master's*

*level mental health training program. A barrier there is funding to get into both grad school and into college in general. Once we've got folks into college, we could do a better job recruiting people."*

- More work around mental health and the social adjustment around post-arrival and post-two year case management time period. *"We get funding for mental health, but the way the funding is structured is not as flexible as it could be."*
- Help meet the need for bi-lingual mental health providers. They are paid more in the hospital system, which makes it harder for non-profits to recruit them. In the same vein, help create a path for new Americans to obtain mental health degrees rather than technical degrees.

#### Dental:

- *"We have dental, but it's backed out quite a bit. Most new American's have never seen a dentist, and their treatment plans are huge. We would love to expand dental services to help more people, like mobile dental. But we don't have funding for that."*

## Translation/interpretation

*"It's hard to serve those with limited English, but you find a way."*

All providers were asked how they accommodate those who do not speak English. If they don't have interpreters on staff, they often have a contract with a service that offers 24-hour translation of any language needed. If they don't have that sort of contract, they have relationships with providers who do. However, participants still see translation and interpreter services as both a need and a barrier to accessing services. While service providers have the means by which to translate for new Americans, not all new Americans know that service provider

exists. Additionally, interpreters who speak rare languages and dialects are in high demand, and often take the higher-paying, stable work than the last-minute emergency needs of a non-profit agency.

Using an "outsider" translation service is viewed by new Americans as the safest option. *"There is a safety concern of using a local interpreter and so then we will use a telephonic interpreter where we verify that somebody is out of state just to increase the sense of safety."* An "inside-outsider," or someone they don't know but who is from the local community, begets the most unease. The "outside-outsider" is accepted because new Americans feel more protected from having their privacy

violated or identity exposed. They also feel safe with “inside-insiders,” or interpreters housed within a trusted agency.

*“If a translator comes onsite, patients don’t really like that because their communities are fairly small and they feel like somebody is going to find out. So we talk to them a lot about how this person isn’t local, we are not giving them your name. And that seems to help a lot.”*

There is also the concern of referring a new American to an agency the provider knows struggles to accommodate languages other than English or Spanish, especially if it is a health-related service including mental health and substance abuse treatment clinics.

*“Most refugees speak some English but service providers need to slow down and pay attention. I have found that taking someone to apply for something people kind of freak out because of the heavy accent. There is an unrecognized prejudice for non-English speakers.”*

### Food security

*“We have some families where if they don’t eat here [at school] they don’t eat.”*

Food insecurity was another oft-mentioned need, and not just affording food, but quality, nutritious options. Some new Americans may not be aware they are eligible for food stamps, and others might not access food pantries due to fear of accepting help from the public and being targeted for deportation even though most food pantries don’t document who received services (see p. 9 for more about barriers). In a similar vein, one provider recommended that undocumented residents should be eligible for food stamps.

### After school programs

Participants lamented after-school programs have continually lost funding even though they are crucial for tutoring, mentoring, socializing, and as a child care option for new American families often working two or more jobs. In some cases, reduced funding has resulted in after-school programs closing their doors.

*“The state has poor funding for out-of-school programs. We would like to be able to provide 100% of our students after school and summer school services, but we can only provide it to 25-35% of kids, so we have to choose the neediest kids and that’s really tough.”*

*“After-school programs are often part of a community school so they are offering classes like ESL, American education system, and GED, and tend to focus on the whole family. If we could do that for every school and community that would be awesome, a community school model.”*

*“Follow what communities do in other places in Salt Lake County, like Magna United. They come together and get things done. Law enforcement, social work, medical, after-school programs, clothing, a community room; they come together.”*

### Civic and service engagement

Some providers mentioned the need for new Americans to be represented by people like them, and to have a voice in decisions that affect them. Helping them engage through voter registration, running for office, or joining the boards of non-profits that serve their communities are some of the methods providers believe crucial to proper representation.

*“I know that the County does really great in reaching out to new Americans to get involved and engage civically but I think that is another area that we need to do more. To make sure that people that get their citizenship get registered to vote and be a part of the community. I think we are not doing great until we see a refugee elected into office, then we can say refugees are very successfully integrated into the community. I think there is only one refugee so far that has become a city councilor in West Valley.”*

*“Allow new Americans to have a voice in the services we’re offering. That is overlooked. Making decisions for people because they can’t speak up. When we give people the ability to communicate, they can say ‘I don’t want that or need that.’ They have an opinion.”*

*“Barriers are not knowing how to look up ballot issues, not feeling confident going to the polls or filling in mail-in ballots, not knowing if the thing they are voting for is the right thing or how to research it in a language that is accessible and understandable, really basic things.”*

### Providers would like to offer:

- Integrate more ongoing civic engagement education throughout case management to enhance what they (refugees) learn at orientation.
- Encourage voter registration and voting while helping clients obtain citizenship. The 2020 Census is a great opportunity for providers to educate their clients.

### Different needs of immigrants and refugees

Participants noted that gaps in services depend on whether the new American is a refugee or an immigrant, especially due to the process by which they arrive to the United States. Instead, “we are lumping refugees and immigrants into similar categories when their needs can be so different.”

*“Refugees are better accepted than immigrants, and have case managers to help them.”*



*"I think they have done really well with their refugee population but the immigrant population is completely different. There isn't a case manager with everyone and also there are completely different issues in terms of legality and immigration status, language, culture, et cetera."*

*"Refugees are more saturated, and I don't think there is enough resources or support for Latino and undocumented immigrants. I think they are the unseen part of the immigrant population."*

## Other

Other gaps in services include addressing the specific needs of aging new Americans who may have come to a new country without learning the language and been taken care of by their families, or who are wholly new to Utah but now need full-time care. It is more challenging for this age group to understand new cultural expectations, and to find full-time caregiving without an established community or tie to a religious network. One service provider of older Utah residents mentioned that navigating a new language and culture while possibly experiencing trauma is especially challenging for older new Americans. They expressed the need for more support and new American-specific programming such as ESL in senior centers; grants to provide ESL in senior centers no longer exist and it has been a challenge finding a partner to fill that gap.

Additionally, participants mentioned family-focused services like child care, parenting services, and general life skills on subjects such as how to pay bills as still-needed services.

Establishing services and opportunities to learn in their own communities is seen as a need. Place-making and community centers, like Sunnyvale (see p. 13), are seen as an important community resource that helps new Americans, specifically refugees, feel at home and supported.

Other providers said, despite the wrap-around care provided by resettlement agencies, new Americans, specifically refugees, need more help navigating the American system and cultural expectations.

*"Acclimation assistance; many patients we see who are new Americans say their case managers or volunteer mentors are overworked and spread thin, and they often feel left alone to figure things out on their own when it comes to learning about the legal system, paying bills, navigating the health care system."*

*"The biggest barrier to a program we had was understanding the nuances we take for granted every day, how to flush the toilet, that children have to wear shoes to school, that children have to be on time to school, how to take out the trash."*

Legal services could be expanded, with one service provider hoping to be able to offer the following services in the future:

- Legal assistance instead of just legal advice.
- More racial justice and know-your-rights trainings.
- Be available as technical resource for good policy.

## Barriers for New Americans Seeking Services

While there are service gaps, it is important to consider the barriers for new Americans seeking any service in the first place. The lack of transportation, lack of translation or interpreter services, lack of child care, and long waiting lists for services like mental health care are among the many barriers cited by providers. A few others topped the list and are detailed below.

### Fear

*"They are trying to become less visible. They are not seeking services they should."*

Service providers have noticed immigrants are fearful of accessing services due to an increasing anti-immigration climate in the United States, and many have noticed a drop in service requests internally. Mostly government services are avoided because of record keeping and distrust of how that information will be used, but some are even fearful of seeking services from churches and food pantries.

*"One policy that recently went into effect a couple of days ago, the Public Charge, is one thing that immigrants and refugees worry about. If they receive benefits, how is that going to impact their status or perspective family members' status? So people are scared."*

*"We are thinking about safety a lot more often because of we are mainly Latino. So with all of the things that you have seen with the shootings in Texas, things like that, we have noticed is there has been a decrease in community-based attendance by the Latino community. They don't want to feel targeted. We are [seeing] a little less [clients] than usual. We had packed classes and now it's about half."*

Immigrants are keeping a low profile so as to avoid notice which is a serious barrier for those who are in need of physical and mental health care services, assistance affording food, and those experiencing domestic violence.

*"We have noticed a decline in patients willing to apply for services such as emergency Medicaid. A large chunk of our program are deliveries. Undocumented women can apply for emergency Medicaid and we have seen a notable decline in applications. Even with expanded Medicaid, there is anxiety about applying especially in*

*mixed status households. There has also been an increase in people requesting to have children taken off Medicaid."*

*"They feel like pariahs in the country under this political climate."*

*"Resistance within the community is very real which can snowball into a larger health and safety issue, like not calling 911 when hurt."*

Some providers lamented perceived cooperation between the Salt Lake County Sheriff and ICE, which supports a "deportation pipeline" and legitimizes the fear of seeking services from this community.

### Lack of resource awareness

Not being aware of available services is seen as another major barrier (as well as a theme throughout this report). A provider noted this can be especially true for second migration families, or those who initially migrated to another state before they came to Utah. Ideas to improve outreach and coordination is discussed on page 11.

*"It would be helpful if everyone knew about 211."*

### Language

Obviously, not understanding English is a deterrent to accessing resources in Utah, especially if one is experiencing the previously mentioned barrier of not being aware of service

providers who can help with translation services. In addition, if something is translated, it is usually translated into Spanish and no other languages.

### It's overwhelming

Navigating a new culture is overwhelming, as "new Americans are often so focused on taking care of their basic needs that other things can fall by the wayside."

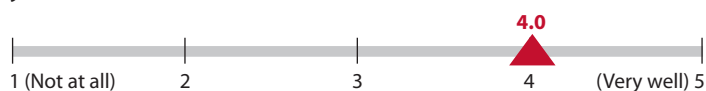
*"The process of accessing services can be very cumbersome and confusing, even for those of us who grew up here! And new Americans are just trying to take care of bare necessities. Like, what is the difference between county and state services? Then they go and there is a policeman at the door. It is not a friendly or inviting environment. Even hospitals, new people are a little wary of going somewhere new and asking for help. They like coming to us because we look like them. Also, every service provider has their own enrollment requirements, so a universal application would be great, otherwise its overwhelming."*

Other barriers include cultural norms, for example in some cultures, it is not appropriate for a female to be seen by a male physician, and a majority of physicians in Utah are male.

## Needs of New American Service Providers

Interviews reflect that Salt Lake County is home to passionate and committed service providers who strive to meet the needs of those they serve. Almost every organization rated themselves as a "4" (and that was the mean achieved) when asked "how well do you feel you are meeting the needs of those you serve?" A perfect score (5) was usually not given because providers know they are doing their best with what they have, but are well aware that more needs could be met if they had the resources necessary to meet them. Specifics are provided in comments below.

### How well is your organization meeting the needs of those you serve?



### Outreach constraints: "They don't know what they don't know."

Providers are aware that not everyone who might need their services know they exist. Overwhelmingly, new Americans find out about services through "word-of-mouth," usually as a referral from other service providers or friends and family.<sup>1</sup> The success of most referrals is dependent on the trust and relationship built between the two services and the client.

Given the importance of word-of-mouth in locating needing services, some participants were asked how outreach efforts could be improved for those word-of-mouth may not reach. Most providers knew exactly what they would do if they had the necessary resources, whether it be hiring specific outreach staff or funding for innovative and expanded outreach efforts, like ads on buses or Spanish radio stations. Other providers are at-capacity or have months-long waiting lists so additional outreach would attract clients they couldn't accommodate.

*"Currently we don't have a marketing budget."*

*"We don't advertise because we have always been able to do without it."*

*"Absolutely, we could be more out there, but it would be, do we have the capacity?"*

*"We would love to have our printed materials translated into different languages and distributed at resettlement agencies."*

*"They need education around what services they are entitled to as residents of the US, things like Head Start, or free immunizations or food stamps, health-promoting resources."*

*"People could be cross-trained to help in understanding services available."*

There is worry that despite additional outreach efforts, undocumented residents will be harder to reach due to increased fear surrounding recent immigration policies. The importance of utilizing trusted providers and community leaders to get the word out about available services was stressed.

*"One thing we struggle with is connecting with the asylum population. People are afraid to seek services and so they are not coming. They are probably getting resources from other places and so I think some strategic outreach initiatives would be helpful."*

*"When we (a medical provider) first started, we advertised we were coming to a low-income neighborhood and zero people showed up. I talked to the community and asked 'why didn't you come?' They said, 'you guys are offering free care, you are up to something.' They were worried about an ICE bait and switch. So we switched the whole model to work with leaders who have established trust. No more advertising."*

*"We need more people for outreach, to get feet on the ground and to build that trust."*

#### **Lack of coordination: "We don't know what we don't know."**

While this study included service providers who solely serve the new American population, especially refugees, the majority of the service providers serve this population along with anyone else who is eligible or in need. These providers would benefit from partnering and coordinating with other new American service providers and agencies to help expand and streamline services and the referral process. Some organizations that offer necessary services – for example, mental health – rely on partnerships with other more community-embedded

organizations, but wonder if they have a gap in knowledge of other providers they could refer new Americans to as several admitted "we don't know what we don't know."

*"We are the best kept secret in the world. If they knew everything we do, they'd break down our doors. I would love to talk to other providers to tell them what we offer."*

Better coordination among providers would expand the trusted provider network. Being included as a word-of-mouth referral helps establish trustworthiness from already-trusted service providers for services new Americans might need, especially those whose biggest barrier to receiving services is fear.

*"Having a trusted individual and community partner makes all the difference for us."*

*"We need staff that understands the resources available to new Americans as well as the barriers."*

### **Specific Support Providers Need to be Most Impactful**

Support needed differs from provider to provider, specifically based on size, service, and model, but the most oft-mentioned are described in order here.

#### **Resources**

As might be expected, the majority of providers mentioned being limited by resources and funding. Examples of services they could provide if extra resources and funding were available was detailed in the previous section, but include:

- Interpreters
- Translation for printed and other materials
- Prevention and education
- Database to track numbers
- Build affordable housing
- Not to serve more, but to serve better
- In-house therapists
- Outreach
- Expand services
- Rental assistance
- Providing ESL across the board instead of specific needs

Although smaller organizations may have more trust built with certain communities, they tend to get less funding. It was suggested that funding be broken up "into smaller chunks" across a span of many organizations as opposed to one large lump sum for one big organization. Some participants believe giving more funding to trusted, smaller organizations would have a bigger impact on the new American community.

## Coordination

Better coordination would avoid duplication of services, assist the new American population in finding services they need, help providers better understand what is available in the community for their clients, and uncover community-trusted resources. Connecting with these trusted organizations is particularly powerful as it was intimated some isolate themselves by design in order to be “safe and culturally responsive places.”

*“We struggle to connect with that population. It’s hard to gain entry into those communities.”*

One participant mentioned a list of service providers they had compiled over 14 years, and knows it’s still not comprehensive enough nor up-to-date.

While a regular meeting of service providers exists, many participants didn’t know it existed and were enthusiastic to learn more. Several others suggested the Office for New Americans would be the ideal convener of a more broad, bi-annual meeting including both refugee and immigrant service providers. An additional idea is a regularly updated one-stop-shop resource website for both providers and new Americans.

*“The county could help, twice a year, bring together all hub groups from all municipalities within the county.”*

*“We need stronger partnerships and a better understanding of what is available.”*

*“Having them [service providers] be more coordinated – have more community organizations come together rather than running from place to place.”*

*“I think collaboration, getting resources; and one thing that we don’t want is different providers who are already providing services, we don’t want duplication.”*

*“They don’t want to come to you; figuring out where they are at, how to go into their communities, and understand what their needs are, like a liaison. Are we missing the boat because I’m not sure where they are?”*

*“I’ve worked a little in the refugee community, they create their own nonprofit to serve people with a similar path they had, language, similar culture; which is so needed but duplicative. The role for the county government could be to have some of those organizations partner with existing organizations.”*

*“We know there are fewer refugee arrivals and are seeing more asylum seekers. I’ve seen increased fear in the Latin community in accessing resources from a trusted source. They are less likely to access resources if they don’t trust them. Maybe if these communities could see better alignment between agencies, that we all trust each other and work together. We have agencies who will meet together and refer to each other, but it doesn’t happen with all agencies, and maybe we don’t know if others do that. There needs to be a better system for interagency referrals and community to know we all work together and trust each other.”*

## Cultural competency

Another major response to how providers could better serve new Americans is cultural competency training for their staff, especially for those providers who serve that community amongst the broader population. It was noted that this is a big area of improvement as various cultures can have very different societal norms, so competency training should be regularly updated depending on who is coming to Utah.

*“Our staff need training on the cultures of the new American children and families we’re serving to better understand where they are coming from and to interact with them appropriately.”*

*“[Not being culturally competent] can have a detrimental effect on somebody wanting to come back for services.”*

Another way to be ‘culturally competent’ is to offer services in a way that account for different cultural norms. For example, seeking out mental health care will not be a priority for some cultures even if they’ve experienced significant trauma. One service provider recommended a “promotores de salud” approach, or community health workers. These are trusted community friends from the same culture that do home visits and checkups.

## Translation assistance for materials

Several participants noted they have marketing and service materials that would better serve new Americans if they were translated, yet they lack the resources.

*“I find it pretty challenging to get things translated. Even when have tried to translate for Spanish, often multiple [Spanish speakers] don’t agree on the translation. So any help with that because we have some materials.”*



## Suggested Action Steps for Salt Lake County

Service providers offered specific ways the Salt Lake County Office for New Americans could better help new Americans and those that serve them. These ideas are listed by how often they were mentioned.

- **Convene coordination:** Participants noted the Salt Lake County Office for New Americans would be the ideal convener of a bi-annual meeting of service providers to new Americans. A coalition that everyone knows about and includes service providers of both immigrants and refugees.
- **House a one-stop-shop resource,** like a regularly-maintained website.

*"There needs to be a central informational portal where they can get all of the information they need in one spot and I don't think that exists."*

*"A one-stop type of resource has been talked about ever since I've been here. If it happens, it easily gets outdated."*

- **Offer translation services** (like for printed materials) and support a better in-person interpretation service system (described in services needed section).
- **Spearhead cultural competency**
  - Trainings for providers.
  - Information campaigns to the general public.
- **Define what constitutes a "new American."**
- **Lead out on "placemaking,"** like Sunnyvale.

*"One thing that I think Salt Lake County could do more of is have more intentional conversations about place-making like we have done with the Sunnyvale neighborhood and having things that are available there that make it a vibrant neighborhood."*

*"[Sunnyvale] included a park revitalization project, New Roots runs the farm stand there and started doing an emergency food pantry through the summer months so that people could purchase produce and then go get rice and beans and staples, no processed food was allowed. We had Kids Cafe Lunch, where lunch was brought to kids and did workshops with them there. It became a Saturday event for people. There is no reason that we can't do more ongoing things like that that are focused on life skills and English Language acquisition in neighborhoods where refugees are residing. Place-making is a national initiative and I would like to see some training come to Salt Lake City so that we can identify and understand what it means to truly be a part of a place-making conversation."*

- **Model own efforts:** Model the outreach the county is doing for Census 2020 to spread the word to the new American community about available services.

*"The planning and implementation of those resources to educate the community about the 2020 Census, how do we get that same focus and do it across the board for new American programs?"*
- **Conduct policy and advocacy training** for new Americans and providers
- **Conduct leadership development** for new Americans.

*"We need pipelines or pathways to move new American community members into positions of leadership and power."*
- **Address disparities** in east versus west neighborhoods, and white versus minority schools.

*"More resources and political will and power are needed to make a difference. West Valley City is the most diverse yet their polices don't reflect the diversity or how to involve communities of color in decision making process."*

# Ideas for Future Research

## Discussion groups

There were many ideas and issues expressed in interviews not included in this report as only common themes are reported here. The county would benefit from conducting discussion groups with service providers, using this report as a topic guide, to uncover the nuanced needs and concerns based on service area, and discuss details of ideas expressed. For example, is competing for funding leading to inefficient housing assistance, or are health care and social services out of sync and leading to new Americans falling through the cracks?

Discussion groups with providers could also aid in establishing:

- a future coordination effort that includes their feedback and buy-in
- a data collective, as most participants are willing to contribute to a consolidated, de-identified data effort.
- feasibility of a one-stop-shop resource website

## In-depth interviews with new Americans

*"We are not as mindful for the services they may need, we think they acclimate faster than they do."*

Several participants noted the necessity of getting feedback about services provided in Salt Lake County by the recipients of those services, new Americans. This is especially important

as one provider noted how a community leader adapted to the barriers their community faces by becoming the community's trusted resource, where they are driving community members to appointments and referring them to services. This "leadership role out of necessity" indicates there may be more service gaps not uncovered from talking to service providers alone.

*"I think they get most of their help from others in the community who have learned how to navigate."*

*"Our agency identified a top-down approach to providing services to new American's as a barrier and so we adapted and rely on a bottom-up, community-based approach to provide services."*

## Further research into the needs of immigrants and undocumented residents

It was noted by several participants that local focus has tended to fall on refugees over immigrants and undocumented residents. The needs and concerns of both populations are very different. Immigrants and undocumented residents face considerable scrutiny and are not receiving the services they need due to fear. Research could include a concerted qualitative effort of trusted service providers and community leaders of this specific population.

# Conclusion

Service providers to new Americans paint Salt Lake County as a landscape dedicated to meeting the needs of this population. As one participant mentioned, it is apparent Salt Lake County is committed because "they are doing stuff like this study."

The commitment of these providers is apparent in the opportunities they suggest that would remove barriers and help new Americans not simply survive, but thrive. While the county and providers strive to meet current and future needs of

new Americans, some service gaps will require the coordination of multiple entities including state, local, and non-profit sectors. Service providers are confident in their and the county's willingness to make that happen.

Utah is lucky to be home to people from around the world that settled here, and to these dedicated community leaders that serve them.

## Appendix A: Interview Questionnaire

- 1) What services do you provide New Americans?
    - a) Do you provide services to New Americans specifically, or as part of a larger program?
    - b) Are your services limited based on household income or other eligibility requirements?
      - i) If yes, what are the requirements?
      - ii) How are services provided for those who need interpretation?
      - iii) How often does a lack of an interpreter negatively impact service provision?  
(Frequently, Occasionally, Seldom, Never)
      - iv) How many interpreters do you have on staff?  
Which languages?
    - c) Have you observed differences in service requests and/or service provision that may be related to an increased national focus on immigration?
      - i) If yes, how?
  - 2) What are the primary ways New Americans learn about your services?
    - a) How could the methods by which they learn about your service be improved?
  - 3) How often are you referring services elsewhere? Please provide a numerical value, i.e., per month, per week, etc.
    - a) What services do you refer to other providers?
    - b) What are the most common reasons for referral?
      - i) If applicable: because they offer a different service, or an inability to meet the demand for service?
    - c) What does the referral process generally look like?
  - 4) Are there additional programs and services you would like to offer new Americans?
    - a) If yes, what?
    - b) If yes, what are the barriers to offering these services? (i.e., additional staff, languages, funding, people with a specific educational or training background, cost)
  - 5) What services do New Americans still need in Salt Lake County?
  - 6) What are barriers for New Americans seeking services?
  - 7) On a scale of 1-5, how well do you feel you are meeting the needs of those you serve? 1 being not at all, and 5 being very well.
    - a) Why?
  - 8) On a scale from 1-5, how well do you feel the needs of New Americans are being served in Salt Lake County?
    - a) Why?
  - 9) What assistance/support do service providers need to effectively serve New Americans?
  - 10) What is your perception of local government policies regarding New Americans? (i.e., transportation, law enforcement, housing)
  - 11) What data do you collect? (For example, number of unique/repeat clients served per month, Average length of time client receives; languages offered? Clients' country of origin; client demographics such as income level, education level, year of arrival, family size.)
  - 12) Would you be willing to be a part of a cooperative that shares information and allows for comprehensive data collection?
- Helpful data:**
- 13) How long have you been a service provider?
  - 14) Caseload/Clients per month
    - a) Unique v. repeat
  - 15) Average length of service per client
  - 16) Languages spoken and served
  - 17) Countries of origin of clients
  - 18) Coverage map
  - 19) Number of full time and part time staff
    - a) Number of volunteer staff
  - 20) What is your annual budget?
  - 21) Anything else you'd like to share with the county that I didn't ask?

## Appendix B: List Of Participants

### Non-Profits

YWCA  
ACLU  
First Step House  
Utah Community Action  
Guadalupe School  
Boys and Girls Club Salt Lake  
Boys and Girls Club Capitol West  
Housing Authority Salt Lake County  
Project Reality  
Asian Association of Utah  
University of Utah UNI  
English Skills Learning Center  
Utah Cancer Control  
International Rescue Committee  
AAA Fair Credit  
Comunidades Unidas  
People's Health Clinic  
Suazo Center  
Utah Health and Human Rights Project  
Maliheh Free Clinic  
Utah After School Network  
Health Clinics of Utah/Utah Department of Health  
United Way  
Big Brother/Sister Utah

### Government

Promise South Salt Lake  
Refugee Services Office  
Salt Lake County Aging and Adult services  
Salt Lake County Health Department  
Salt Lake County Public Library  
Assoc for Utah Community Health  
Midtown Community Health Center  
Salt Lake Youth Services  
Law Enforcement

### K-12 Education

Granite School District  
Guadalupe Center Education Programs Inc  
Horizonte  
Utah International Charter School

### Faith-based

Utah International Charter School  
Catholic Community Services  
Holy Cross Ministries  
Utah Islamic Center  
LDS Community Support services  
Calvary Baptist Church

### Higher Education

University Neighborhood Partners

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### Endnote

- 1 Every service provider was asked about their referral process. Most personally make the connection for their client, or what they refer to as a “warm hand off.” This seems to be the gold standard method for case management and can go as far as driving a client to the referral or helping them with paperwork. If a phone number is simply given out, often the reason is lack of organizational capacity or the encouragement of self-sufficiency.

# New Americans in Salt Lake County

## A Demographic Profile of Utah's Gateway Region

Mallory Bateman, Senior Research Analyst

March 2020





# New Americans in Salt Lake County

## A Demographic Profile of Utah's Gateway Region

### Analysis in Brief

For numerous economic, cultural, social, and political reasons, Salt Lake County has become a twenty-first century gateway community for new Americans. Home to one-third of the state's population and over half of Utah's quarter of a million new Americans, the communities of Salt Lake County provide both new and long-standing enclaves for these newcomers. Changing economic, educational, and political factors have impacted the regions of birth for the foreign-born population within the county. Since the 2000 Census, an increasing share of the state's Asian-born populations and decreasing shares of the European-born and Latin American-born populations live in Salt Lake County. There is also geographic diversity in where these populations are living. South Salt Lake, West Valley City, and Salt Lake City have the highest shares of foreign-born population. While this identifies the first generation new Americans, it does not include their American born children.

#### Demographic Summary:

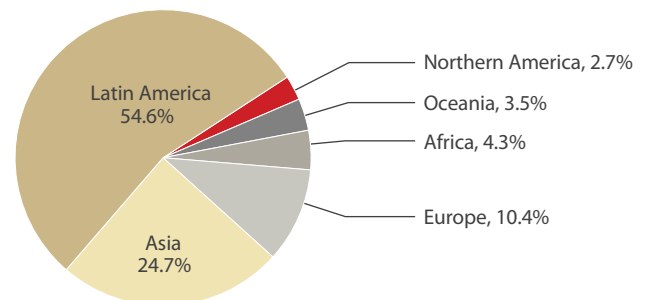
- One hundred twenty-five languages are spoken at home by students in the school districts within Salt Lake County.
- The foreign-born population in Salt Lake County represents over 12% of the countywide population.
- Like the county as a whole, the total foreign-born population increased between the two ACS estimate periods. The overall population grew by just over 7% while the foreign-born population grew by over 9%.
- The majority of Utah's foreign-born population comes from Latin America (54.6%) and Asia (24.7%). European-born residents comprise just over 10% of the foreign-born population. For those arriving in the United States since 2010, Asia is the largest share for country of origin.
- Salt Lake County is home to nearly two-thirds of the state's Asian-born population. Over 80% of the state's South Central Asian born population and nearly three-quarters of the Western Asian born population live in Salt Lake County.

#### Foreign-Born Share of Population, Salt Lake County and Selected Cities

Area	Foreign-Born Population, Share of Total Population
Salt Lake County	12.4%
Salt Lake City	16.4%
Sandy	7.5%
Taylorsville	13.8%
West Jordan	10.6%
West Valley City	22.4%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

#### Share of Foreign-Born Population of Salt Lake County by Region of Birth



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

- Although the share of the foreign-born population without a high school degree is significantly higher than the native-born population, the foreign-born population has a higher share with a bachelor's degree or higher than the native population.
- The foreign-born population is older than the native population. The largest gap between the native and foreign-born was in West Valley, where the median age of the foreign-born population was over 15 years higher than the native-born population.

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# Introduction

The foreign-born population in Utah and the nation has grown significantly since the 1970s, with 1 in 12 Utahns being new Americans or “foreign-born” in the terminology of the Census Bureau in recent data.<sup>1,2</sup> Salt Lake County has a lot to offer any population - economic and academic opportunities, existing ethnic enclaves, cultural institutions, the state capital, and the Salt Lake City International airport. These factors, combined with a broad set of shared values reflected in the Utah Compact, have made Salt Lake County the epicenter for new Americans starting their lives in Utah. These factors have drawn thousands of people to Salt Lake County in recent decades, making it a twenty-first century gateway region for both domestic and international migrants moving to the state.<sup>3</sup>

The influences of these institutions and economic drivers in Salt Lake County still play a significant role, despite a dispersal of the foreign-born population to other parts of the state. Although Salt Lake County is still home to the majority of the state’s foreign-born population, a larger share of the statewide foreign-born population is living in Utah County than in 2000. There have also been shifts in regions of birth within the county. An increasing share of the state’s Asian-born populations and decreasing shares of the European-born and Latin American-born populations live in Salt Lake County since the 2000 Census.

Salt Lake County has the highest share of the foreign-born population of the six counties where data on foreign-born population is available, with 12.4%. This share has increased from the 2000 Census when 10.4% of the population identified as foreign-born. This diversity appears across language, culture, and communities.

Within the county, South Salt Lake, West Valley City, and Salt Lake City have the highest shares of foreign-born population. While this identifies the first generation new Americans, it does not include their larger networks and communities, including American born children. Some of these extended networks are visible in race and ethnicity data. For example, the minority share of the population (those who identify as a race other than White or those who identify as Hispanic), provides a broader picture. West Valley City, a community full of well-established ethnic enclaves, has become the first large city in the state with a minority-majority population in recent years. In Copperton, Kearns, and Salt Lake City, over one in three residents identify as a minority race or of Hispanic origin.

## Data Notes

The primary source for this paper is the American Community Survey (ACS). The ACS is a sample-based survey from the U.S. Census Bureau, which aims to provide insights into the characteristics of the population. For populations of 65,000 or more, there are annual updates to the data. For smaller populations, 5-year estimate periods are available. All variables are not available across all breakouts of geography or population, so available resources are noted in each section. Analysis conducted via the Statistical Testing Tool provided by the Census Bureau determined statistically significant changes or differences. More detail can be found in “Sources and Notes” at the end of this paper.

## Refugee Arrivals, 2010-2018

Since 2010, 8,279 refugees have arrived in Utah from 46 countries according to data from the Office of Admissions at the Refugee Processing Center.<sup>4</sup> The countries with the largest populations arriving in Utah are Somalia, Burma, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Iraq. Although further characteristics for some of these populations are available from the 2015 ACS 5-year Selected Population Tables, the margins of error are very high and therefore are not included in this discussion.

## Languages Spoken by Students

In 2019, 125 languages were spoken by students across the five school districts in Salt Lake County. Spanish was the dominant language spoken, with over 20,000 students speaking the language. All other languages spoken have significantly fewer students. Three other languages had over 500 student speakers - Arabic, Somali, and Vietnamese.

**Table 1: Languages with more than 100 Student Speakers, School Districts in Salt Lake County**

Over 20,000 speakers	200 to 499 speakers
Spanish	Portuguese
	Tongan
500 to 1,000 speakers	Swahili
Arabic	Samoan
Somali	Karen
Vietnamese	Burmese
	Nepali
	Chinese (other than Cantonese or Mandarin)

Source: Utah State Board of Education

# Basics

## Current estimates (2013-2017 5-Year Estimates)

The most recent ACS estimates indicate 137,383 foreign-born individuals living in Salt Lake County during 2013-2017, or 12.4% of the total population countywide.

Due to population limitations, city-level data for the 2013-2017 estimate period was only available for Salt Lake City, Sandy, Taylorsville, West Jordan, and West Valley. While Salt Lake City is the largest city in this group, the size of the foreign-born population in Salt Lake City (31,835) was only slightly larger than that of West Valley City (30,298). Nearly one-quarter of West Valley City's population (22.4%) is foreign-born – the largest share of the cities where data is available.

By looking at census tracts, we can get a more detailed look at where the foreign-born population lives throughout the county. The west side of the county stands out, with an additional population located at the University of Utah.

Salt Lake County's foreign-born population is well established, with over half of the population arriving in the country prior to 2000. Just over 30% (31.2) entered between 2000 and 2009, and the remaining 17.8% entered the United States after 2010.

The ACS asks for United States citizenship status. Those who are non-citizens could include individuals here on student visas, work visas, or those without documentation. The most recent estimates indicate that 62% of Salt Lake County's foreign-born population are non-citizens. The three entry periods have different profiles of citizenship. Residency requirements for naturalization and current wait times for the naturalization process could lend themselves to these differences.<sup>5</sup>

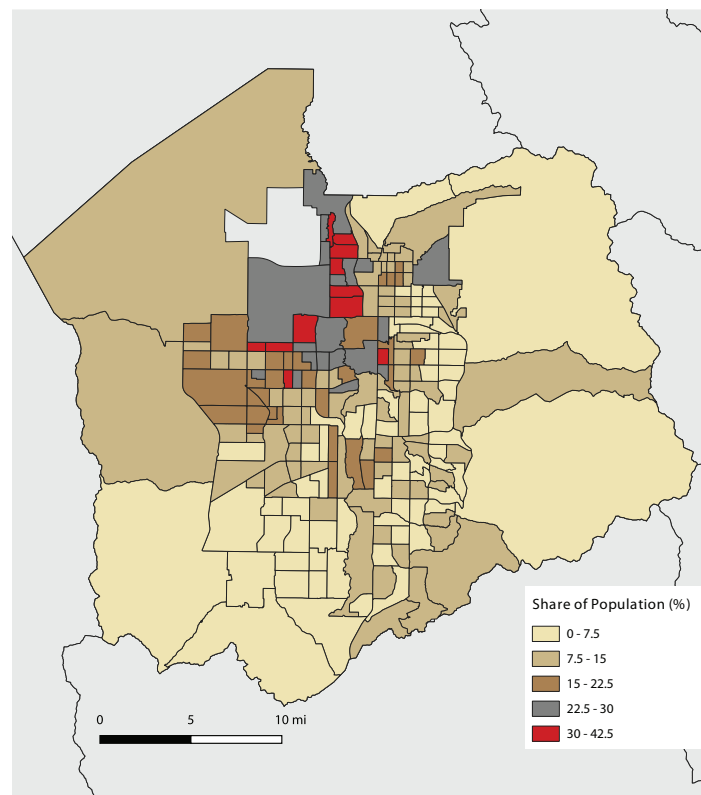
Recent research indicates that in 2017 an estimated 110,000 undocumented people were living in the state.<sup>6</sup> An additional source estimates that in 2016, about 10.4% of Utah households had at least one undocumented member.<sup>7</sup> The Migration Policy Institute estimates that 43,000 undocumented individuals are living in Salt Lake County, which would be nearly 40% of the overall state estimate from the Pew Research Center.<sup>8</sup>

**Table 2: Total and Foreign-Born Population, Salt Lake County and Selected Cities**

Area	Total Population Estimate	Foreign-Born Population Estimate	MOE (+/-)	Foreign-Born Population, Share of Total Population
Salt Lake County	1,106,700	137,383	3,253	12.4%
Salt Lake City	194,188	31,835	1,832	16.4%
Sandy	94,556	7,088	763	7.5%
Taylorsville	60,377	8,344	1,083	13.8%
West Jordan	111,937	11,872	1,015	10.6%
West Valley City	135,546	30,298	1,624	22.4%

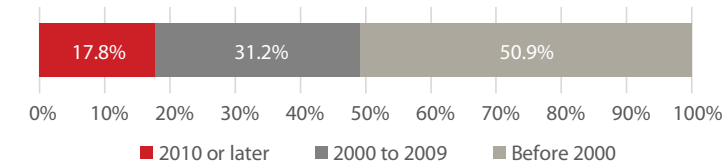
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2017 5-Year American Community Survey Estimates

**Figure 1: Foreign-Born Population by Census Tract, Salt Lake County**



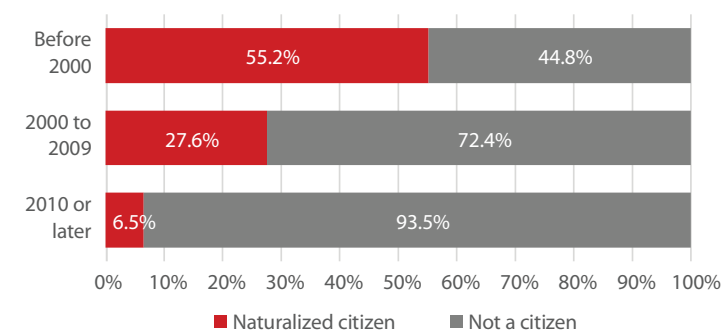
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2017 5-Year American Community Survey Estimates

**Figure 2: Foreign-Born Population by Period of Entry, Salt Lake County**



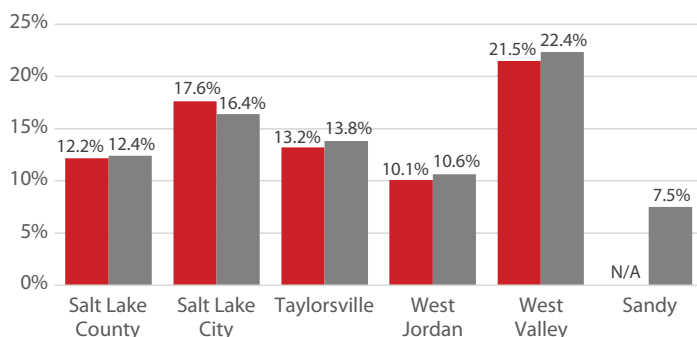
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2017 5-Year American Community Survey Estimates

**Figure 3: Foreign-Born Population by Citizenship, Salt Lake County**



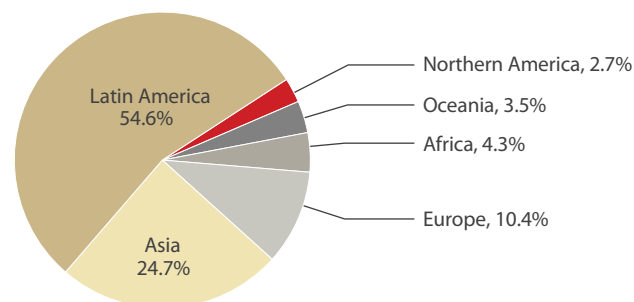
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2017 5-Year American Community Survey Estimates

**Figure 4: Foreign-Born Share of Total Population, Salt Lake County and Selected Cities**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2017 5-Year American Community Survey Estimates

**Figure 5: Share of Foreign-Born Population by Region of Birth, Salt Lake County**



U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2017 5-Year American Community Survey Estimates

### Comparison of ACS Estimates

Countywide, the foreign-born share of the population has increased from 12.1% to 12.4% across the two estimate periods. This equates to an increase of nearly 12,000 people (11,677). This growth was not universal across the large cities in the county. While the foreign-born share of the population increased in Taylorsville, West Jordan, and West Valley City, the share in Salt Lake City decreased slightly.

### Region of origin

The Census Bureau utilizes six geographic regions of birth for the foreign-born population: Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America, Northern America, and Oceania. Three regions, Europe, Asia, and Latin America, have breakout information for both the state and county. Salt Lake County is home to nearly two-thirds of the state's Asian-born population and over half of the European-born and Latin American-born populations. Over

80% of the state's South Central Asian born population and nearly three-quarters (72.1%) of the Western Asian born population live in Salt Lake County.

In Salt Lake County, Latin America and Asia are the region of origin for the majority of foreign-born residents. The four cities experienced similar trends – Latin American-born is the largest portion of the foreign-born population, and Asian-born came in second. West Valley had the largest share of Latin American-born residents at 70.6% of the foreign-born population, and Salt Lake City had the lowest at 51.5%. Salt Lake and Taylorsville had the largest Asian-born shares of the foreign-born population, at 26.3% and 23.4%, respectively.

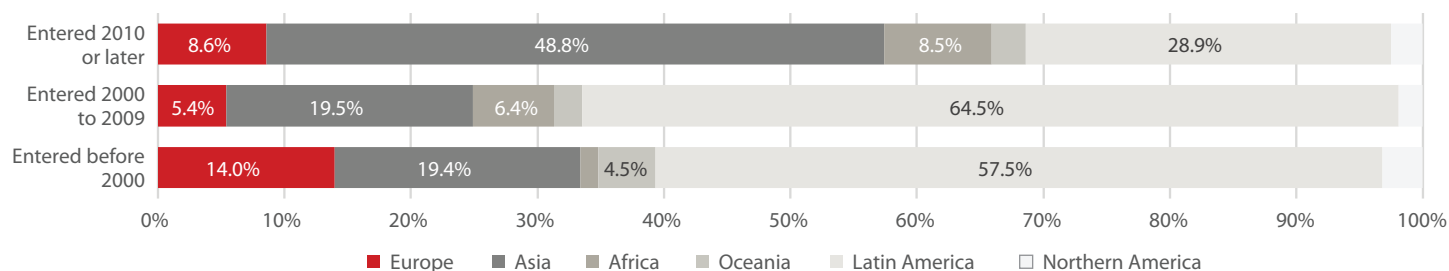
Salt Lake County's foreign-born population is following national trends, with an increase in Asian born migrants and a decrease in Latin American born in the past decade.<sup>9</sup> In the 1990s and the first decade of the 2000s, immigration from Latin America was the major region of origin of Salt Lake County's

**Table 3: Region of Origin for Foreign-Born Population, Utah and Salt Lake County**

	Utah		Salt Lake County		Salt Lake County share of State Total
	Estimate	Margin of Error	Estimate	Margin of Error	
<b>Europe</b>	<b>25,723</b>	<b>1,207</b>	<b>14,230</b>	<b>979</b>	<b>55.3%</b>
Northern and Western	15,099	823	6,938	629	46.0%
Southern and Eastern	10,589	932	7,281	756	68.8%
<b>Asia</b>	<b>51,616</b>	<b>1,458</b>	<b>33,900</b>	<b>1,211</b>	<b>65.7%</b>
Eastern Asia	16,316	1,165	8,801	835	53.9%
South Central Asia	12,378	1,178	10,014	1,114	80.9%
South Eastern Asia	18,478	1,236	11,897	1,002	64.4%
Western Asia	4,393	622	3,168	593	72.1%
<b>Latin America</b>	<b>145,771</b>	<b>2,995</b>	<b>74,969</b>	<b>2,421</b>	<b>51.4%</b>
Mexico	102,064	2,600	53,930	2,016	52.8%
Central America	15,979	1,248	6,991	989	43.8%
Caribbean	2,650	467	1,462	382	55.2%
South America	25,078	1,759	12,580	1,601	50.2%

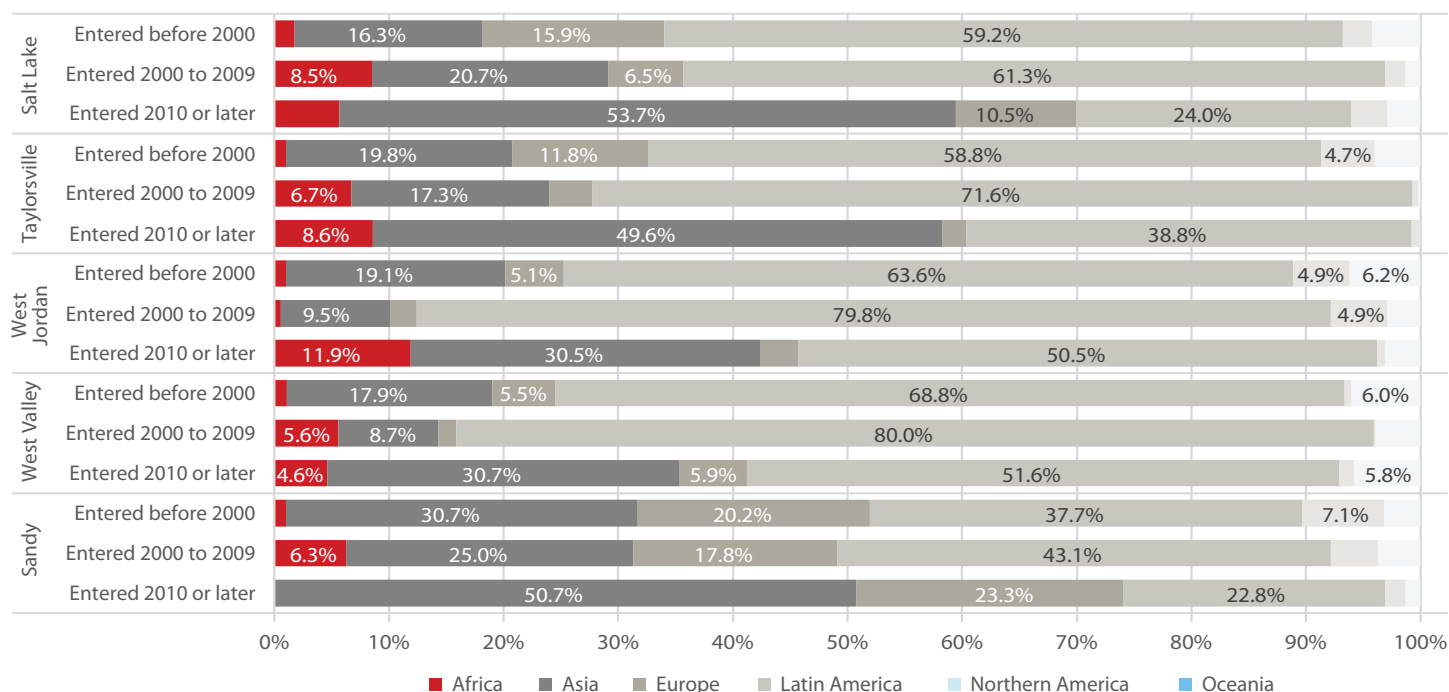
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2017 5-Year American Community Survey Estimates

**Figure 6: Region of Birth of Foreign-Born Population, Salt Lake County**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2017 5-Year American Community Survey Estimates

**Figure 7: Region of Birth of Foreign-Born Population, Selected Cities in Salt Lake County**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2017 5-Year American Community Survey Estimates

foreign-born population. There has been a significant shift within the population who entered the U.S. in the last decade, with Asian-born residents becoming the majority, and the Latin American-born population is about 29%.

The large cities reflected similar shifts in the regions of birth, to varying degrees. Salt Lake, Taylorsville, and Sandy all have higher shares of Asian-born recent arrivals than the county overall. Although there have been recent increases in the Asian-born population in West Valley and West Jordan, their Latin American-born populations were still the majority share of those who arrived in the United States after 2010.

# Latin America

## Current estimates (2013-2017 5-Year Estimates)

The majority (54.6%) of the Salt Lake County foreign-born population was born in Latin America. Of this group, over 70% (71.9) were born in Mexico, with those born in South America being the next largest share (16.8%).

As mentioned in the previous section, the Latin American born population is the majority of the foreign-born population across the cities with available data. Breakouts for Latin American region of birth were available for three cities. Over three-quarters of the Latin American population in both Salt Lake (75.5%) and West Valley (79.2%) were born in Mexico. In West Jordan, the Mexican-born population was just over two-thirds of the Latin American-born population.

## Comparison of Estimates

The only area with a statistically significant change in the total Latin American-born population was West Valley City, where the population increased from 19,149 to 21,385 (about 12%). Neither the county nor the cities with available data experienced statistically significant changes in their Latin American-born populations.

Table 4: Latin America, Share of Foreign-Born Population and Areas of Origin, Salt Lake County and Selected Cities

	Salt Lake County	Salt Lake City	West Jordan	West Valley City
Foreign-Born Population Estimate	137,383	31,835	11,872	30,298
Share of Foreign-Born Population born in Latin America	54.6%	51.5%	67.0%	70.6%

Share of Latin American Born Population, by Region of Birth

Mexico	71.9%	75.5%	67.9%	79.2%
Other Central America	9.3%	7.6%	10.7%	10.4%
Caribbean	2.0%	2.9%	1.0%	0.4%
South American	16.8%	14.0%	20.4%	10.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2017 5-Year American Community Survey Estimates

Countywide, the share of Latin-American born as a share of the total foreign-born population experienced a statistically significant decrease, from 61.0% to 58.7%.

# Asia

## Current estimates (2013-2017 5-Year Estimates)

Nearly one in four (24.7%) foreign-born Salt Lake County residents were born in Asia. In the county, South Eastern Asian-born were the largest share of the foreign-born Asian population at 35.1%. Salt Lake City, the only city with breakout data available, had a higher share of people born in Eastern Asia than the County, with 39.2% compared to 26.0%.

## Comparison of Estimates

Salt Lake County’s Asian-born population increased as a share of the foreign-born population between the two estimate periods by 3.7%. Overall, the population grew from 26,404 to 33,900 (about 28.4%), with statistically significant growth seen in the four regions of origin. The largest increase was in those born in South Central Asia, growing by over 60% from 6,204 to 10,014. Western Asia came in second, with an increase of 1,011 individuals or 46.9%. Eastern and South Eastern Asia grew by 19.3% and 12.3%, respectively.

Table 5: Asia, Share of Foreign-Born Population and Areas of Origin, Salt Lake County and Salt Lake City

	Salt Lake County	Salt Lake City
Foreign-Born Population Estimate	137,383	31,835
Asia	24.7%	26.3%
Eastern Asia	26.0%	39.2%
South Central Asia	29.5%	26.7%
South Eastern Asia	35.1%	24.5%
Western Asia	9.3%	9.4%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2017 5-Year American Community Survey Estimates

At the city level, Salt Lake City was the only city that experienced an increase in Asian born residents as a share of the foreign-born population with an increase from 20.0% to 26.3%. Data by region of birth was only available for Salt Lake City in the most recent estimate period, so further comparisons are not available.

# Basic Characteristics of Population, Households, and Families

## Current estimates (2013-2017 5-Year Estimates)

The characteristics of the foreign-born population in Salt Lake County and the large cities vary from the native population. The foreign-born population is older than the native population, to a statistically significant degree. The largest gap between the native and foreign-born was in West Valley, where the median age of the foreign-born population was over 15 years higher than the native-born population. Salt Lake City had the lowest foreign-born median age, potentially influenced by the University of Utah and Westminster College.<sup>10</sup>

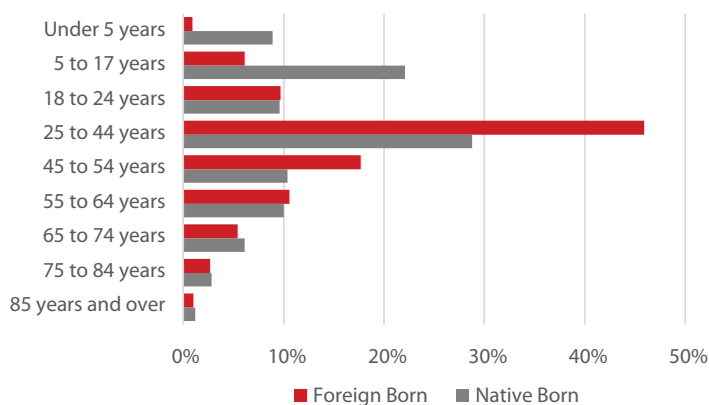
The average household and family sizes are larger for the foreign-born population than the native population. West Valley had the highest household and family size for the foreign-born population.

When considering the foreign-born population by period of entry, some fairly straightforward age structures and familial patterns emerge. Newer arrivals are younger and have smaller households and families than those who arrived earlier. Younger adults have a higher likelihood to migrate than older populations.<sup>11</sup> With this timing, people need time to establish themselves in their communities and start their households or families. Additionally, the total fertility rates in the 1990s and 2000s were higher than those in more recent years, which translates to smaller household sizes.<sup>12</sup>

## Age Changes

Both the native and foreign-born populations in Salt Lake County experienced increases in their median ages between the two estimate periods. The foreign-born population increased from 36.8 to 39.7 years, and the native population increased from 29.7 to 30.7 years. Statistically significant decreases in the share of the population aged 5 to 44, and increases in the share of 45 to 84 year olds drove the overall increase in median age for the foreign-born population.

**Figure 8: Age Groups by Share of Population, Native and Foreign-Born, Salt Lake County**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2017 5-Year American Community Survey Estimates

**Table 6: Median Age, Average Household Size, and Average Family Size for Native and Foreign-Born Residents, Salt Lake County and Selected Cities**

Variable	Median age	Average household size	Average family size
<b>Foreign-born</b>			
Salt Lake County	39.7 years	3.71	4.11
Salt Lake City	37.4 years	3.08	3.87
Sandy	45.1 years	3.61	3.84
Taylorsville	38.9 years	3.87	4.03
West Jordan	41.5 years	4.00	4.09
West Valley	40.1 years	4.61	4.72
<b>Native-born</b>			
Salt Lake County	30.7 years	2.89	3.47
Salt Lake City	30.5 years	2.32	3.06
Sandy	34.7 years	3.05	3.44
Taylorsville	32.0 years	2.84	3.41
West Jordan	28.5 years	3.33	3.71
West Valley	24.9 years	3.25	3.66

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2017 5-Year American Community Survey Estimates

**Table 7: Median Age, Average Household Size, and Average Family Size for Foreign-Born Residents by Period of Entry, Salt Lake County**

2013-2017	Entered before 2000	Entered 2000-2009	Entered after 2010
Median Age	46.5	34	28.6
Average Household size	3.70	3.95	3.19
Average family size	4.15	4.22	3.58

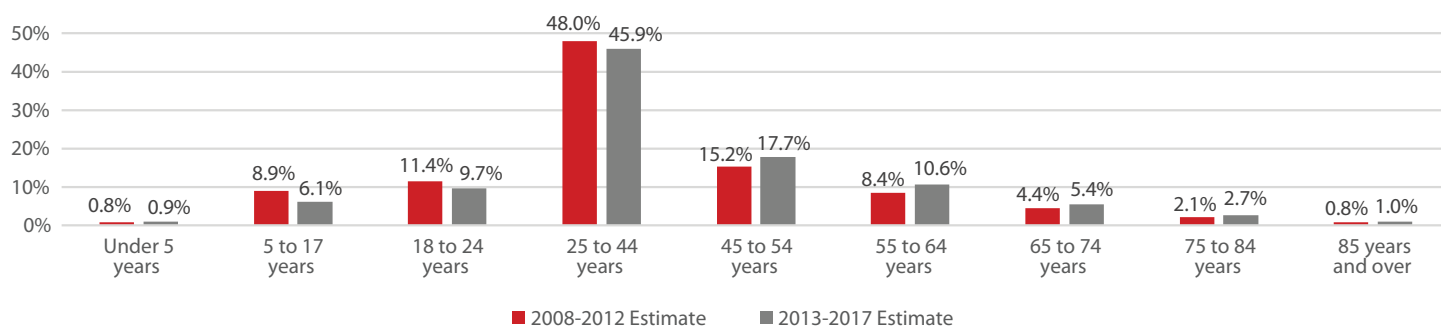
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2017 5-Year American Community Survey Estimates

At the city level, only the foreign-born populations of West Jordan and West Valley City experienced significant changes in median age. Both cities now have median ages of over 40 for their foreign-born population. Across all four cities, there were significant decreases in the 24 and younger age groups. Taylorsville, West Jordan, and West Valley all experienced increases in the shares of population 25 and over.

Median age increased across all three period of entry timeframes, with a statistically significant increase for those who entered before 2010. Both the populations of the pre-2000 and 2000 to 2009 entry periods experienced decreases in the share aged 5 to 24. The 65 to 74-year-old populations in all three entry timeframes increased. The 2000 to 2009 entry group also had increases in the 25 to 44-year-old share of the population.



**Figure 9: Share of Foreign-Born Population by Age Group Over Time, Salt Lake County**



Source: Census Bureau, 2008-2012 and 2013-2017 5-Year American Community Survey Estimates

## Household and Family Changes

At the county level, the average household size of owner-occupied units was the only significant change for foreign-born households, which decreased from 4.11 to 3.93 persons per household (pph). The only cities with significant changes in the average household size of foreign-born households were Salt Lake City (decrease, 3.31 to 3.08 pph) and West Valley City (increase, 4.29 to 4.61 pph).

Some cities experienced changes in family composition of foreign-born households. Married-couple households increased

from 53.2% to 61% for naturalized citizens in Salt Lake City. In Taylorsville, the overall share of foreign-born, married-couple households decreased from 73.5% to 59.4%. This decrease appears to be strongly influenced by a more significant drop in the non-citizen share of married-couple households. Non-citizen married-couple families also decreased in West Jordan, from 75.4% to 62.4%.

## Selected Socioeconomic Characteristics

### Educational Attainment

Differences in educational attainment between the native and foreign-born populations are striking, as are differences within arrival and origin groups in the foreign-born population. Although the share of the foreign-born population without a high school degree is significantly higher than the native-born population, the foreign-born population has a higher share with a bachelor's degree or higher than the native population. The major driver in this difference in post-secondary educational attainment is higher attainment of bachelor's degrees for the foreign-born population than the native population (22.6% compared to 15.6%). Graduate degrees are separated by two percentage points between the two populations, with 10% of the foreign-born having a graduate degree compared to 12.6% of the native population.

Additionally, enrollment in college or graduate school is significantly higher for the foreign-born population than for the native-born population. Over half of the estimated 20,888 foreign-born residents over age three are enrolled in college or graduate school.

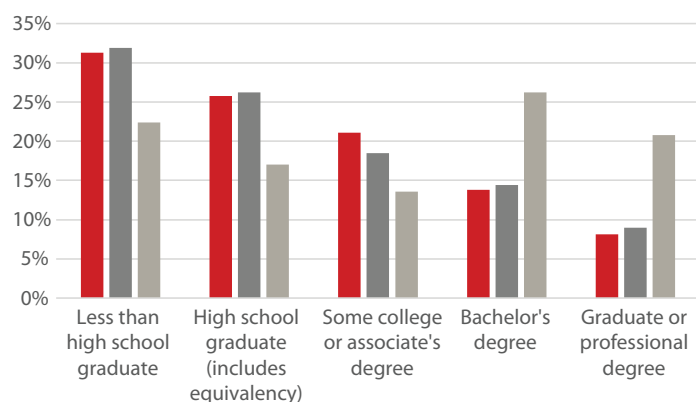
Sandy had the lowest share of the foreign-born population without a high school diploma and the highest share with a bachelor's degree. West Valley City had the largest discrepancy between the native and foreign-born population for those

**Table 8: Educational Attainment and Enrollment, Foreign-Born and Native-Born Populations, Salt Lake County and Selected Cities**

Variable	Less than high school graduate	Bachelor's degree	Graduate degree	Enrolled in college or graduate school
<b>Foreign-born</b>				
Salt Lake County	30.3%	22.6%	10.0%	52.7%
Salt Lake City	34.9%	15.2%	15.8%	70.4%
Taylorsville	24.1%	18.4%	6.4%	39.5%
West Jordan	26.7%	12.5%	4.4%	41.1%
West Valley	41.2%	7.7%	2.2%	45.4%
Sandy	16.5%	23.6%	15.7%	42.9%
<b>Native-born</b>				
Salt Lake County	5.7%	15.6%	12.6%	23.1%
Salt Lake City	5.7%	27.5%	21.1%	42.6%
Taylorsville	7.0%	15.6%	5.6%	21.2%
West Jordan	5.5%	17.5%	6.8%	18.0%
West Valley	11.2%	11.1%	4.0%	13.9%
Sandy	4.0%	26.0%	14.4%	21.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2013-2017 5-Year American Community Survey Estimates

**Figure 10: Educational Attainment of Foreign-Born Population by Period of Entry to United States, Salt Lake County**



Source: 2013-2017 5-Year American Community Survey Estimates

without a high school diploma - 41.2% of the foreign-born population and only 11.2% of the native-born population. Salt Lake City had the highest share of foreign-born with a graduate degree.

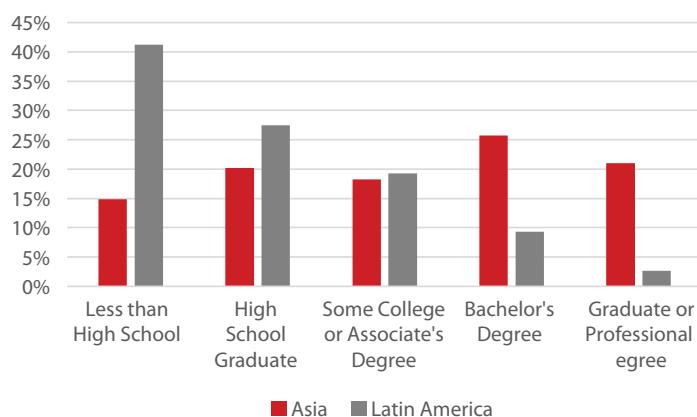
Although the foreign-born population who entered the United States since 2010 is a fraction of the size of the population who entered in 2009 or before, there are some significant differences in educational attainment. In Salt Lake County, 47% of the most recent foreign-born population has a Bachelor's degree or higher. For those who entered in the first decade of the 2000s, nearly one in four have the same educational attainment, and those who entered before 2000 are just over one in five. These variances in educational attainment follow national trends of large differences on either end of the attainment spectrum.<sup>13,14</sup>

Another way to frame the discussion around educational attainment in relation to period of entry is to examine who is in the population. As mentioned previously, the Asian-born population has increased significantly in recent years. The Latin-American born population, many of whom entered in earlier periods, have lower educational attainment than the Asian-born population, which has had significant increases since 2010.

### Educational Attainment Changes

Countywide, the share of foreign-born residents with bachelor's degrees and higher increased, while the share without a high school diploma decreased. Salt Lake City followed this pattern, as did Taylorsville, although only in the share with bachelor's degrees. West Valley City's foreign-born population also experienced increases in educational attainment, with a higher share of residents gaining a high school diploma.

**Figure 11: Educational Attainment of Foreign-Born Population by Region of Birth, Salt Lake County**



Source: 2013-2017 5-Year American Community Survey Estimates

### Income, Poverty, and Workers per Household

The difference between the median household incomes of the native and foreign-born populations is nearly \$20,000. The foreign-born population in Sandy has the highest median household income and the second-lowest number of workers per household. The cities with the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> highest household median income for the foreign-born population (West Jordan and West Valley) also have the highest number of foreign-born workers per household at 2.08. Salt Lake City's foreign-born population has the lowest number of workers per household but the highest share in poverty at nearly one-quarter of the population.

**Table 9: Median Household Income and Poverty, Foreign-Born and Native-Born Populations, Salt Lake County and Selected Cities**

Variable	Median Household Income	Workers per household	Below 100 percent of Poverty level (total population)
<b>Foreign-born</b>			
Salt Lake County	\$51,099	1.75	18.1%
Salt Lake City	\$39,711	1.47	23.5%
Taylorsville	\$49,659	1.97	14.5%
West Jordan	\$58,256	2.08	13.1%
West Valley	\$52,743	2.08	18.4%
Sandy	\$72,250	1.67	9.7%
<b>Native-born</b>			
Salt Lake County	\$71,057	1.49	9.4%
Salt Lake City	\$57,925	1.31	16.7%
Taylorsville	\$61,989	1.47	10.7%
West Jordan	\$74,147	1.69	6.9%
West Valley	\$63,430	1.63	12.5%
Sandy	\$87,893	1.55	5.3%

Source: 2013-2017 5-Year American Community Survey Estimates



Within the foreign-born population, median household incomes differ when considering citizenship. Those who are naturalized citizens make nearly \$14,000 more than the non-citizen population. Foreign-born households have more workers per household than native-born households, driven largely by the non-citizen households, who have 1.81 workers per household compared to 1.69 for the naturalized population. Like in educational attainment, income levels are also different when considering region of birth. The median household income for the Latin American-born population in Salt Lake County is \$45,654, while the same measure for the Asian-born population is \$63,841.

Income and Poverty-level Changes

None of the cities experienced significant changes in the median household income of the foreign-born population. The share of the foreign-born population below the poverty level decreased in Salt Lake from nearly 30% to 24%. In both West Jordan and West Valley, the average number of workers per household increased to just over two workers.

Conclusion

While there are data limitations to this analysis of new Americans in Salt Lake County, it provides some insights into who is living here and what constrains their lives. The socioeconomic picture of the foreign-born population is different than that of the native-born population. Additional differences within the foreign-born population relate to the period of entry, the region of origin, and citizenship status.

The foreign-born population of the county is older and has larger households and families than the native-born population. Those who have entered the United States more recently are younger and have smaller households and families than those who have been in the country longer.

While the foreign-born population has a higher share without high school diplomas, the share with bachelor’s degrees and the share enrolled in graduate school are higher than the

Table 10: Median Household Income and Poverty, Foreign-Born Population by Period of Entry, Salt Lake County

	Median Household Income	Workers per household	Below 100 percent of Poverty level (total population)
Entered before 2000	\$54,713	1.78	12.10%
Entered 2000-2009	\$46,266	1.8	19.90%
Entered after 2010	\$37,191	1.52	32.30%

Source: 2013-2017 5-Year American Community Survey Estimates

native-born population. Those who have entered the United States since 2010 made a significant contribution to this shift in educational attainment, including differences between Latin American and Asian-born populations.

While median household incomes can provide a glimpse into the economic situation of the population, the diversity across the foreign-born population warrants additional examination. Regions of birth or citizenship status provide two windows into the subpopulations of the foreign-born population. Higher shares people are living below the poverty line and more workers per household within the foreign-born population than the native-born. Recent entrants have a more difficult financial picture than those who have been here longer. These data points can provide some context to considerations for the new American population in Salt Lake County.

## Sources and Notes:

The Office for New Americans in the Salt Lake County Mayor's Office sponsored this research. While the work of the Office for New Americans targets the newest citizens of Salt Lake County, data limitations restrict our ability to analyze this population.

The best publicly available dataset for characteristics of the population is the American Community Survey (ACS), a sample-based survey conducted by the Census Bureau on an annual basis. Although there are questions about when people came to the United States, the data available from the summary tables limits our ability to understand the population. The nearest proxy we have (which has a large enough base population for characteristics) is the foreign-born population. While we recognize this encompasses a larger group than perhaps is served by the Office for New Americans, it can provide some insights into communities who were born outside the United States.

To assess statistical significance, we utilized a Statistical Testing Tool created and provided by the Census Bureau. The original form of this document can be accessed here: <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/guidance/statistical-testing-tool.html>

When possible, additional data sources were included to provide more context into what we can see from the ACS. Data available from the Refugee Processing Center at the United States Department of State provides some insights into the country of origin and location of refugees but lacks further details on the characteristics of the population. Additionally, data from the Utah State Board of Education can inform us about languages spoken and English-language-learners but is limited in other respects.

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### Endnotes

- 1 The most recent American Community Survey estimates indicate nearly 250,000 foreign-born residents, or about 8.3% of the statewide population, live in Utah.
- 2 Perlich, P. S. (2002). *Utah Minorities: The Story Told by 150 Years of Census Data*. Salt Lake City: Bureau of Economic and Business Research; David S. Eccles School of Business.
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- 6 Pew Research Center. (2019, June 12). Unauthorized immigrant population trends for states, birth countries and regions. Retrieved from Hispanic Trends: <https://www.pewresearch.org/hispanic/interactives/unauthorized-trends/>
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