Immigrants are our Commonwealth

The world comes to Massachusetts¹

- More than one-sixth of Massachusetts residents are foreign-born: almost 1.2 million people, or 16.9% of the population; another one-seventh are U.S.-born but have at least one foreign-born parent.
- 53.3% of our state’s immigrants and refugees have arrived since 2000 – and 28.2% since 2010.
- More than half (52.4%) are naturalized U.S. citizens. Of those who aren’t, almost a third (173,000) are undocumented.
- 29.3% of children in Massachusetts have at least one immigrant parent, and 84% of children of immigrants under 18 are U.S.-born.
- Massachusetts’ foreign-born population is particularly diverse, with no nationality making up even 10% of the total. The top countries of origin for immigrants here include China, India, Brazil, Portugal, Haiti, Cape Verde, the Dominican Republic, Vietnam, El Salvador and Canada.
- The most immigrant-rich communities in Massachusetts are Chelsea (44%), Malden (43%), Everett (41%), Lawrence (37%), Revere (35%), Lynn (32%), and Randolph (30%).

Immigrants and refugees strengthen our economy²

- Immigrants and refugees in Massachusetts are likelier to be of working age than U.S.-born residents – 80% vs. 64%.
- They’re a significant part of our workforce: 1 in 5 workers in the Commonwealth was born in another country.
- Immigrants and refugees living in Massachusetts have over $31 billion in spending power each year.
- Mass. immigrant and refugee households earn $42.9 billion a year and pay $8.4 billion in federal and $3.5 billion in local and state taxes, plus Social Security and Medicare.
- 68,700 entrepreneurs in Massachusetts, or one-fifth of the total, are foreign-born; they employ over 134,000 people and generate $1.9 billion in business income. In addition, 58% of Massachusetts-based Fortune 500 businesses were founded by immigrants or their children.
- 28% of science, technology, engineering and medicine (STEM) jobs in Massachusetts are held by immigrants; in addition, 33% of STEM master’s students and 36% of STEM Ph.D. students are foreign nationals.
- Immigrants play a key role in a wide range of occupations: they’re 59% of medical and life scientists, 49% of cooks, and 48% of nursing, psychiatric and home health aides.

Find more facts about immigrants and refugees in Massachusetts:
www.miracoalition.org/facts

The world’s inventors thrive in Mass.

MIT (the Massachusetts Institute of Technology) leads the U.S. in patents, with 168 in 2011 alone – and 72% of those were by foreign-born inventors.
Immigrants and refugees strengthen our society

Even as the U.S. population ages, immigrants are keeping Boston and Massachusetts young and growing. The median age in Boston is only 32, compared with 38 for the U.S. and 39 for Massachusetts. Three quarters (76%) of the state’s net population growth in 2000–2016 was due to foreign-born people. Immigrants and refugees also keep our knowledge-based economy thriving; without them, there would be an ever bigger shortage of STEM and healthcare professionals in the Commonwealth.

Undocumented immigrants are a vital part of our economy

Most undocumented immigrants are in the U.S. to work and support their families. They very often pay taxes, but are barred from obtaining public benefits such as Social Security and Medicare.

Undocumented immigrants work throughout our economic sectors, including high-skilled and STEM jobs, and own thousands of businesses in our state. If all unauthorized immigrants went away, our economy would lose $9 billion, or 2% of our GDP, and about 55,000 jobs.

Immigrants with Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) and Temporary Protected Status (TPS) are integral parts of our economy. Nearly 20,000 Massachusetts residents stand to lose their work permits and face deportation with the end of DACA and TPS.

Immigrants are law-abiding people

Several studies have shown that immigration is associated with lower crime rates in major U.S. cities.

Immigrants also have significantly lower rates of incarceration than U.S. citizens: 0.47% for documented immigrants vs. 1.53% for U.S. citizens; the rate for undocumented immigrants is 0.85%, or 0.5% if immigration-related detentions are excluded.

Immigrants make our Commonwealth stronger!

Note: This factsheet was last updated on January 17, 2018.

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4 Migration Policy Institute, http://www.migrationpolicy.org/data/state-profiles/state/demographics/MA.