asae foresightWORKS

# Immigration-Driven Demography

UPDATED JANUARY 2018

**SUMMARY:** Immigration has become the central driver of American population growth—and will reshape not only demographics but also values and attitudes in the decades ahead. For associations, this will result in a more diverse membership with new ideas, expectations, and needs.

## Forecasts

- Immigration could bring cultural and political shifts as new citizens add their cultural diversity to American society. This could lead to new cultural influencers as immigrants move into U.S. media.
- The fluctuating intensity of immigration could affect all levels of the workforce, from unskilled labor (farms, factories) to highly skilled medical and technology workers.
- Polarization around immigration and resulting diversity issues will continue, though this will likely shift over time as younger generations with a more accepting view of immigration become more influential.
- The nature of the immigration debate could shift as people grasp that immigrants to the United States are increasingly from Asia.

## *Key Uncertainties*

*Immigration policy on numbers of immigrants and how they qualify for admission*

•

*Organic levels of immigration, as the demography of countries of origin changes*

•

*Immigrant fertility changes*

•

*How fast millennial influence drives changing attitudes about immigration*

•

*Immigrants' values and how they are expressed*



2018© ASAE Foundation

## Supporting Trends

- **Population growth driver.** In the next 50 years, immigration could add more than 100 million new Americans.
- **Asians now the largest share of new U.S. immigrants.** China and India have replaced Latin American countries as the largest sources of arriving U.S. immigrants.
- **Diverse millennials.** Diversity may be the millennial generation's core characteristic: In 2015, the millennial generation was 56 percent white and nearly 30 percent "new minorities" (Hispanic, Asian, and those identifying as multiracial). African-Americans were 11.5 percent of this generation in 2015, slightly less than their share of the American population as a whole (12.5 percent).
- **Coming soon: America's non-white majority.** Pew Research Center projects that the United States will be majority non-white by 2043. At the same time, the proportion of the minority population that is African-American will shrink steadily.
- **Immigration: millennial numbers-booster.** The millennial generation contains more immigrants than any other living U.S. generation. Most of the current working-age immigrants who arrived in the United States between 2000 and 2015 are millennials.

### Related Drivers of Change

- Declining Trust
- Empowered Women
- The Stagnation Economy
- American Inequality
- Diversity and Inclusion

## Notable Data Points

### IMMIGRATION AND POPULATION GROWTH

From 1965 to 2015,
**immigration accounted for more than 55%**
of U.S. population growth.

*Source: Pew Research Center*

### NON-WHITE MAJORITY

The U.S. population will be
**47% white, 28% Hispanic, 13% black, 8% Asian, and 4% other by 2050.**

*Source: Pew Research Center*

### MILLENNIALS AND IMMIGRATION

According to a White House report,
**15% of Americans aged 20–34 in 2014 were foreign-born.**

### ASIAN IMMIGRANTS

The overall **Asian-American population surged by 46%**
from 2002 to 2014, reaching 19 million.

*Source: Nielsen*

2018© ASAE Foundation

## Strategic Insights

- Immigration will bring greater diversity to association membership, requiring leadership to adjust for cultural differences. Immigrants and even first-generation offspring of immigrants will often come to associations with different life experiences from those of the non-immigrant membership.
- Even though it is a hot-button issue, many associations will need to engage in the debate around immigration and will need to have a coherent policy. A deeper awareness of how immigration intersects with the interests and activities of members will be important.
- A change in federal policy could have serious repercussions and create disruptions across both skilled and unskilled workforces. In some cases, uncertain—not just more restrictive—immigration policies could result in sought-after workers going to other, more welcoming countries.
- Associations have direct roles vis-à-vis immigration and immigrants. For example, associations could help immigrant professionals (including students) integrate professionally. This would also give associations access to new sources of members.
- For many associations, new immigrant members could provide new connections to emerging markets of interest.

### Timing

- **Stage:** Growing scale and impact
- **Speed:** Medium speed, though policy change could move faster than demographic effects

### Potential Alternative Futures

- **Demography is *not* destiny:** Unsettled issues around legal status and economic stress result in lower rates of immigrant fertility.
- **Less diverse, and thus older:** A drop in immigration results in a demographic acceleration of the aging of the American population as there are fewer young arrivals and fewer children of immigrants to offset the older population.
- **"Deserving" immigrants:** New U.S. regulations and lists of desired requirements result in immigration policy becoming more "merit-based," skewed to those with needed skills or abilities.

2018© ASAE Foundation

## Take Action

- **Examine your own demographic shifts and resulting needs.** Some professions and trade groups are experiencing a strong influx of immigrant participation. They may have different cultural needs and priorities and expect a different value proposition to even become members. Immigrants from countries without a strong association culture may not understand and appreciate what can be gained from joining.
- **Think local first, then global.** Who the immigrants are will vary at the community level. Chapters and local affiliates may have specific immediate priorities not shared nationally or globally. Urban organizations may experience more immigration than rural or suburban groups. Their frontline experience and relationships with local partners could help others learn faster how to serve specific populations.
- **Increase your cultural competency.** Aware of these demographic shifts, many associations now offer their members education and training in cultural competency. This is especially important for frontline workers in health and life skills fields, and valuable knowledge for anyone involved in designing and managing access to programs, including association executives responsible for membership and education.
- **Get outside a U.S.-centric perspective.** Associations aspiring to a global presence should be aware that migration is a global phenomenon offering real opportunities. Members who migrate are bridge builders connecting networks in their country of origin with their receiving country. U.S.-based members may appreciate assistance as they relocate and assimilate into new cultures. Members can cultivate a common language of terms and concepts that define their field and overcome other language barriers. Non-U.S. members may find greater prestige in their affiliation than their U.S. counterparts.

## Keyword Search

To continue researching this change driver, use these search terms:
***immigrants, immigration, birth rate, fertility, demography, diversity, population growth, migration, refugees, chain migration, family reunification, Hispanic, Asian American***

### Who Will Be Affected

Demography sets the baseline context for all organizations and businesses. With immigration projected to drive population growth for the next few decades in the United States, people will have to look to these newcomers as potential customers, clients, and members.

### About ASAE ForesightWorks

ASAE ForesightWorks is a deliberate, evidence-based research program and emerging line of products to provide association professionals with a continual stream of intelligence about the changes facing the association industry, including:

- regularly updated action briefs;
- tools for applying insights from the research in your association;
- guidance in performing environmental scans; and
- opportunities to engage with peers around the research.

Ultimately, the program's mission is to empower association leaders to create a culture of foresight.

Check **asaecenter.org/ForesightWorks** and follow **@ASAEfdn** on Twitter for updates on new findings and events.

2018© ASAE Foundation