

OCTOBER 2020



WELCOME TO
COLORFUL
COLORADO

COLORADO STATE PROFILE

NEWAMERICAN VOTERS 2020



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Newly naturalized citizens in Colorado, including those who are originally from Mexico, Ethiopia, and India, can sway the outcome of the 2020 presidential election and determine who will control the White House for the next four years.

Whether these newly naturalized citizens realize this potential and vote, however, largely depends on the Colorado Immigrant Rights Coalition and other grassroots efforts to reach this rising demographic in languages and cultural ways that connect. There are enormous challenges in reaching new citizens in Colorado and throughout the nation, including language access barriers, the need for nonprofit organizations to adapt their voter registration work in the coronavirus pandemic, the Trump administration's threats to limit absentee ballots, and ongoing efforts to limit access to the ballot. One emerging form of voter suppression is the backlog of over 700,000 citizenship applications before U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), including 6,912 applications in Colorado.¹ And while the national average processing delay is around nine months, in USCIS' Denver office the processing delays range from 8.5 to 12.5 months.² The backlogs and processing delays at USCIS will effectively prevent immigrants who are eligible for citizenship from naturalizing in time to register to vote in November, despite in some cases immigrants applying over a year prior to the elections.

Despite these challenges and forms of voter suppression, newly naturalized citizens have the opportunity this year to display their electoral influence. For example, from 2014 to 2018, 37,938 citizens naturalized in Colorado and by 2020, that number is estimated to reach as high as 59,806 new citizens. This means that newly naturalized citizens who can vote this year exceed the margin of victory for the Senate seat (49,729 votes) that is up for reelection this year.³ This represents a multicultural and multiracial, potential voting bloc that is most represented by immigrants who are originally from Mexico, Ethiopia, India, Vietnam, China, and the Philippines, and, if they vote, can shape the national, state, and local electoral outcomes.

¹ Number of Form N-400, Application for Naturalization By Category of Naturalization, Case Status, and USCIS Field Office Location, January 1 - March 31, 2020," U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, accessed August 13, 2020, https://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/document/data/N400_performancedata_fy2020_qtr2.pdf.

² "Historical National Average Processing Time (in Months) for All USCIS Offices for Select Forms By Fiscal Year," U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, accessed September 10, 2020, <https://egov.uscis.gov/processing-times/historic-pt>; "Check Case Processing Times," U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, accessed September 10, 2020, <https://egov.uscis.gov/processing-times/>.

³ See Nilsen, Ella, "Democrats Suddenly Have a Much Better Chance of Retaking the Senate in 2020," Vox, May 18, 2020, <https://www.vox.com/2020/5/18/21243174/most-competitive-senate-races-2020>.

WHY COLORADO IS SO IMPORTANT IN 2020

Colorado's recently naturalized citizens will play a critical role in the November presidential and most specifically Senatorial elections. Colorado ranks 12th as the state in which new citizens can have the greatest influence, according to the New American Voters Impact Model, created by the National Partnership for New Americans (NPNA) and based on factors like the 2016 presidential election margin of victory; the margin of victory average during the last three presidential elections; the number and concentration of new citizens in the state; and the occurrence of a senatorial, gubernatorial, or state legislative election and their competitiveness.⁴

From 2014 to 2018, 37,938 citizens naturalized and through 2020, an estimated 59,806 will have naturalized, which would exceed the margin of victory for the Senate seat (49,729 votes) that is up for reelection this year.⁵ The numbers of new citizens are based on USCIS data on naturalizations that occurred from Fiscal Year (FY) 2014 through FY 2018 and naturalization applications that the agency approved in FY 2019.⁶ The estimates for naturalizations during FY 2020 is based on previous spikes in naturalizations in FY 2016, before that calendar year's presidential election.⁷ "Newly naturalized citizens" or "recently naturalized citizens" are defined as those who have naturalized since FY 2014. "New American Voters" are defined as those who have naturalized since FY 2014 and can subsequently register to vote.

These estimates of new citizens were made in NPNA's report, *The Power of Newly Naturalized Citizens in the 2020 Elections*, released in June 2020. The report calculated that from FY 2014 through FY 2020, there would be 5.3 million new citizens who naturalized, the majority of which, 3.1 million, naturalized since the election of Donald Trump to President. Since the report's release, USCIS has released data indicating that around 290,000 naturalization applicants awaiting their interview will not be naturalized in time to register to vote, meaning that NPNA's original estimates of 5.3 million will be reduced to around 5 million new citizens.⁸ Nevertheless, USCIS mismanagement will not hold back the approximately 5 million new citizens, including their large numbers in Colorado.

⁴ Iñiguez-López, Diego, "The Power of Newly Naturalized Citizens in the 2020 Elections," National Partnership for New Americans, June 2020, newamericanvoters2020.org/assets/2020/06/NAV-REPORT-2020-UPDATED.pdf.

⁵ Nilsen, Ella, "Democrats Suddenly Have a Much Better Chance of Retaking the Senate in 2020," Vox, May 18, 2020, <https://www.vox.com/2020/5/18/21243174/most-competitive-senate-races-2020>.

⁶ See "Naturalizations," U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, accessed August 12, 2020, <https://www.dhs.gov/immigration-statistics/naturalizations>; "Immigration and Citizenship Data," U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, accessed August 12, 2020, <https://www.uscis.gov/tools/reports-and-studies/immigration-and-citizenship-data>.

⁷ See Iñiguez-López, Diego, "Naturalize Now, Vote Tomorrow: New Americans Vote 2020," National Partnership for New Americans, February 2020, https://partnershipfornewamericans.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Naturalize_Now_Vote_Tomorrow_FINAL.pdf.

⁸ See Rampell, Catherine, "The 'Missing' Immigrant Voters Whose Absence Might Swing the Election," Washington Post, August 27, 2020, https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/the-missing-immigrant-voters-whose-absence-might-swing-the-election/2020/08/27/db144c16-e897-11ea-97e0-94d2e46e759b_story.html; "The Fix Is In — Nearly 300,000 Immigrants Won't Become U.S. Citizens In Time For the 2020 Election," Boundless, September 3, 2020, <https://www.boundless.com/blog/immigrants-citizenship-vote-2020/>.

Of the more than 224,000 naturalized citizens in Colorado, approximately one quarter are new citizens. All naturalized citizens are just under 3% of the total population in the state. Since the release of NPNA’s June 2020 report, which utilized American Community Survey (ACS) data from 2017, ACS released 2018 data, which this report uses.

TOTAL POPULATION	REGISTERED VOTERS	ALL NATURALIZED	NATURALIZED 2014-2020
5,758,736	3,469,126	224,034	59,806

WHO ARE COLORADO’S NEW AMERICAN VOTERS

Latin Americans represent 36% of new citizens Asian Americans & Pacific Islanders represent 27% of new citizens, 18% are European, 13% are African, 5% are Middle Eastern and North African and 1% are Caribbean. The chart below provides totals for 2014-2018.

LATIN AMERICAN	13,689	36%
ASIAN AMERICAN & PACIFIC ISLANDER	10,267	27%
EUROPEAN	6,862	18%
AFRICA	4,899	13%
MIDDLE EASTERN & NORTH AFRICAN	1,886	5%
CARIBBEAN	335	1%
TOTAL 2014-2018	37,938	
TOTAL 2014-2020	59,806	

The following chart represents the top 10 countries of origin for newly naturalized citizens.

RANK	COUNTRY	TOTAL
1	MEXICO	9,972
2	ETHIOPIA	1,514
3	INDIA	1,433
4	VIETNAM	1,400
5	CHINA	1,364
6	PHILIPPINES	1,129
7	UNITED KINGDOM	1,077
8	CANADA	948
9	SOUTH KOREA	895
10	NEPAL	837

Nearly two-thirds of newly naturalized citizens in Colorado from 2014-2018 were below the age of 45 when they naturalized. The full breakdown by age and gender is shown in the following table:

AGE	FEMALE	MALE	TOTAL	%
18-24 years	1,564	1,489	3,053	8%
25-34 years	5,674	4,619	10,293	27%
35-44 years	5,843	5,009	10,854	28%
45-54 years	3,561	3,229	6,790	18%
55-64 years	2,053	1,765	3,818	10%
65 years and over	1,911	1,425	3,336	9%
Total	20,606	17,536	38,144	

WHERE ARE COLORADO'S NATURALIZED VOTERS

The following map and table show counties with one thousand or more naturalized citizens. Arapahoe County has more than 39,000 naturalized citizens residing there, while Denver County has over 37,000. El Paso and Adams counties both have over 23,000. While the counties of Jefferson, Boulder, Douglas, Weld, and Larimer each have over 10,000 naturalized citizens.

ALL NATURALIZED CITIZENS BY COUNTY						
COUNTY	TOTAL	LATIN AMERICAN	ASIAN	AFRICAN	EUROPEAN	OCEANIA
Arapahoe	39,874	8,615	16,087	5,969	7,743	258
Denver	37,228	15,401	9,811	5,182	5,791	102
El Paso	23,991	5,877	8,305	1,131	7,450	202
Adams	23,116	12,171	7,145	760	2,799	102
Jefferson	19,088	4,335	6,835	815	5,929	200
Boulder	14,507	4,129	5,031	560	3,916	91
Douglas	12,609	2,192	5,956	462	3,083	83
Weld	8,493	6,086	1,224	298	737	38
Larimer	7,895	1,987	2,748	379	2,404	12
Broomfield	3,400	718	1,629	131	713	13
Mesa	2,649	1,178	572	74	686	39
Pueblo	2,609	1,123	772	96	528	9
Eagle	2,267	1,536	247	0	386	75
Garfield	2,041	1,402	268	0	279	0
Montrose	1,093	756	229	0	66	11

TESTIMONIALS

"I BECAME A CITIZEN FOR MY FAMILY, FOR A BETTER LIFE IN THE U.S., FOR THE ABILITY TO EXERCISE MY VOTE IN THIS COUNTRY.

I HAVE FAMILY MEMBERS WITHOUT LEGAL STATUS, AND THEY'RE AFRAID OF WHAT'S HAPPENING RIGHT NOW,

SO IF WITH MY VOTE I CAN HAVE AN IMPACT ON THE UPCOMING ELECTIONS, I WILL GLADLY DO IT."

HUGO RUIZ
DENVER, COLORADO
NEW AMERICAN VOTER



**HAZTE
CIUDADANO**

"ME HICE CIUDADANO POR MI FAMILIA Y PARA PODER VOTAR"

RESOURCES

COLORADO IMMIGRANT RIGHTS COALITION (CIRC)

- coloradoimmigrant.org/vote

COLORADO SECRETARY OF STATE'S GO VOTE COLORADO

- govotecolorado.com