

OCTOBER 2020



EL CENTRO
De Igualdad Y Derechos

NEW MEXICO

STATE PROFILE



NEWAMERICAN
VOTERS 2020

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

New Mexico is one of the most politically important and consequential states in 2020. In this state, new American voters, largely originally from Mexico, followed by those who are from the Philippines, Vietnam, and Cuba can sway the outcome of national elections.

The impact that these voters will have, however, will largely depend on their turnout and the voter engagement work conducted by Somos un Pueblo Unido, El Centro de Igualdad y Derechos, and other grassroots efforts. This year presents unique as well as consistent challenges, including the coronavirus pandemic and the need to adapt civic engagement; language access issues in voter registration and absentee ballot processes; the threat of the Trump administration to limit access to the ballot; and ongoing voter suppression tactics. One emerging form of voter suppression is the backlog of citizenship applications and processing delays before U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). There are, according to USCIS' latest data, over 1,000 citizenship applications pending before the agency in New Mexico and over 700,000 nationwide.¹ And processing delays in USCIS' Albuquerque office reach as high as ten months.² This means that, because of USCIS' mismanagement and political unwillingness to reduce the backlogs and processing delays, immigrants in New Mexico who are eligible for naturalization and who applied in early 2020 will still not be able to become naturalized and vote in this year's election. Despite this form of voter suppression, around 18,000 newly naturalized citizens in New Mexico will be able to cast their ballot and join around five million new American voters in 2020.

New American voters in New Mexico are overwhelmingly from Mexico, they're around 57% women, and around half of them were under the age of 45 years old when they naturalized. And while naturalized citizens largely reside in Bernalillo and Doña Ana county, they also have large concentrations in more rural counties like Chaves, Lea, Otero, Curry, Luna, Los Alamos, and Taos.

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 September 28, 2020, https://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/document/data/N400_performancedata_fy2020_qtr2.pdf.

² "Check Case Processing Times," U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, accessed September 28, 2020, <https://egov.uscis.gov/processing-times/>.

WHY NEW MEXICO IS SO IMPORTANT IN 2020

New Mexico's recently naturalized citizens will play a critical role in the November presidential election. New Mexico ranks 15th 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.³

In New Mexico, 13,966 citizens naturalized from 2014 to 2018. From 2014 to 2020, an estimated 18,292 new citizens will have naturalized, which is nearly 30% of the 2016 margin of victory for president.⁴ 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 2019.⁵ The estimates for naturalizations during FY 2020 is based on previous spikes in naturalizations in FY 2016, before that calendar year's presidential election.⁶ "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

³ 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.

⁴ See "New Mexico Results," New York Times, August 1, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/elections/2016/results/new-mexico>.

⁵ See "Naturalizations," U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, accessed September 28, 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>.

⁶ 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.

reduced to around 5 million new citizens.⁷ Nevertheless, USCIS mismanagement will not hold back the approximately 5 million new citizens, including their large numbers in New Mexico.

Of the more than 78,000 naturalized citizens in New Mexico, approximately one-quarter are new citizens. 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.⁸

TOTAL POPULATION	REGISTERED VOTERS	ALL NATURALIZED	NATURALIZED 2014-2020
2,092,434	1,310,739	78,111	18,292

WHO ARE NEW MEXICO'S NEW AMERICAN VOTERS

Latin Americans represent 72% of new citizens, 15% are Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, 7% are Europeans, 3% are Middle Eastern and North African, and 2% are African. The chart below provides totals for 2014-2018.

LATIN AMERICAN	10,037	72%
ASIAN AMERICAN & PACIFIC ISLANDER	2,056	15%
EUROPEAN	1,027	7%
MIDDLE EASTERN & NORTH AFRICAN	482	3%
AFRICAN	324	2%
CARIBBEAN	40	0%
TOTAL 2014-2018	13,966	
TOTAL 2014-2020	18,292	

⁷ 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/>.

⁸ "Nativity and Citizenship Status in the United States," United States Census Bureau, accessed September 28, 2020, <https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?q=B05001%3A%20NATIVITY%20AND%20CITIZENSHIP%20STATUS%20IN%20THE%20UNITED%20STATES&g=0400000US39&tid=ACSDT5Y2018.B05001&moe=false&tp=false&hidePreview=true>.

The following map represents the top 20 countries of origin for newly naturalized citizens.



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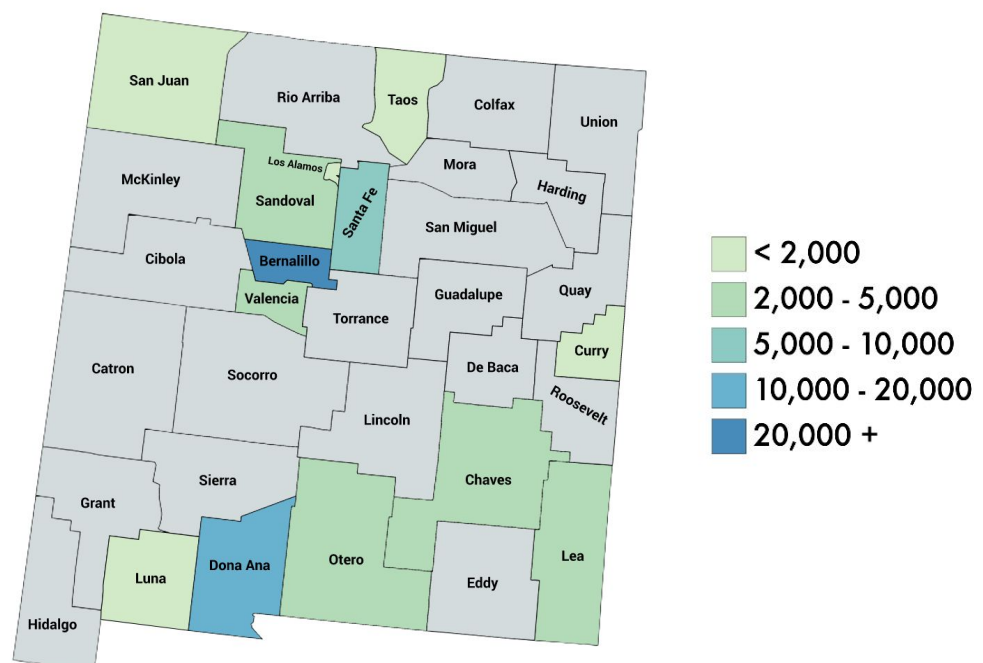
RANK	COUNTRY	TOTAL
1	MEXICO	8,780
2	PHILIPPINES	574
3	VIETNAM	414
4	CUBA	341
5	INDIA	292
6	CHINA	276
7	IRAQ	194
8	GERMANY	172
9	UNITED KINGDOM	165
10	CANADA	157
11	GUATEMALA	126
12	EL SALVADOR	124
13	COLOMBIA	113
14	PERU	107
15	SOUTH KOREA	100
16	PAKISTAN	81
17	IRAN	77
18	FRANCE	74
19	BRAZIL	73
20	NIGERIA	73

More than half of newly naturalized citizens in New Mexico 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:

NEW MEXICO 2014-2018 NATURALIZED BY AGE				
AGE	FEMALE	MALE	TOTAL	%
18-24 YEARS	576	487	1,063	7%
25-34 YEARS	1,834	1,327	3,161	22%
35-44 YEARS	1,928	1,416	3,345	23%
45-54 YEARS	1,633	1,184	2,817	20%
55-64 YEARS	1,285	940	2,225	16%
65 YEARS AND OVER	915	768	1,683	12%
TOTAL	8,171	6,122	14,294	

WHERE ARE NEW MEXICO'S NATURALIZED VOTERS

The following table shows counties with 1,000 or more naturalized citizens. Bernalillo has over 27,000, Doña Ana has nearly 13,000, and Santa Fe and Sandoval counties each have approximately 6,000 and 5,000, respectively. However, counties that include rural populations, including Chaves, Lea, Otero, Curry, Luna, Los Alamos, and Taos collectively have nearly 14,000 naturalized citizens.



COUNTY	TOTAL	LATIN AMERICAN	ASIAN	AFRICAN	EUROPEAN	OCEANIA	NORTH AMERICAN
Bernalillo	27,040	13,810	8,314	878	3,536	47	455
Doña Ana	12,950	11,385	806	53	573	42	91
Santa Fe	5,953	3,218	914	69	1,486	57	209
Sandoval	4,790	2,795	911	103	732	0	249
Chaves	3,260	2,878	183	43	146	0	10
Lea	3,040	2,923	18	52	38	0	9
Valencia	2,586	2,041	209	29	250	10	47
Otero	2,340	1,430	466	0	344	0	100
Curry	1,759	1,301	288	0	138	10	22
Luna	1,325	1,229	85	6	5	0	0
San Juan	1,147	708	173	29	210	6	21
Los Alamos	1,107	134	432	8	475	7	51
Taos	1,090	449	53	0	401	15	172

TESTIMONIALS



ELISA PEREZ: Santa Fe, NM

My name is Elisa Perez, I'm originally from Chihuahua Mexico. I moved to Santa Fe, New Mexico in 1998 leaving behind my home in Mexico. I came because my three children had come over here to work and they stayed. When my oldest son became a citizen he applied for me and my late husband. I became a resident in 2000 and I became a citizen in March of this year. I had applied before in 2010 but I had some issues with the language. I really wanted to become a citizen especially because I wanted to secure my stay in this country and I wanted to vote. I wanted to have a voice in my community. The citizenship meant completing the final step that was missing after so many years of being part of this community. I will vote for the first time this November in the General election, for me, for my family, and for my community.

ANGELICA TROCHET: Somos Lea County, NM

My name is Angelica Trochet, I'm from Juarez, Chihuahua, Mexico. I have lived in the United States since 1992. I moved here because my children are American citizens and that is why I decided to move. I was a lawful permanent resident for 18 years and finally, with the support from Somos Un Pueblo Unido, I became a citizen this year. I have four children that encouraged me to become a citizen. I became a citizen mainly for the right to vote.

ROSA ISELA PÉREZ: Somos Santa Fe, NM

My name is Rosa Isela Perez. I arrived in the United States in 1983 to join my husband when we were newlyweds. We got our residency through the amnesty. I had my three daughters in Santa Fe, New Mexico and we have lived here since 1983. I'm from Juarez Chihuahua. I have lived more years in the US than in my home town in Mexico. I became a citizen because we have more benefits, it gives one more security and you can vote. I got my citizenship in March of this year and I will vote for the first time in the upcoming general election. I'm registered and ready to vote. It's very important that we as immigrants vote because our vote can make a difference in the election. We have a very important mission and that mission is for our voice to be heard.



ELIZABETH HERNANDEZ: Somos Santa Fe, NM

My name is Elizabeth Hernandez, I'm from Cuauhtémoc Chihuahua. I came to the United States, in 1991 with my husband, when we got married. I got my residency card in 1995 when my husband became a citizen. I was afraid to apply for citizenship because I didn't feel confident speaking English but I found Somos Un Pueblo Unido and they supported me through their program Citizenship Now! and then I finally applied after 25 years of being a resident and one year before being eligible to do my interview in Spanish I did it in English! I'm a citizen now, I became a citizen this past June. I had the opportunity to vote in the primary elections in New Mexico and I will vote for the first time in a general election this coming November. I want to vote

because we need leaders that represent the interests of our immigrant community.



FABIOLA LANDEROS: El CENTRO, Albuquerque, NM

My name is Fabiola Landeros. I am the proud mother of 3 children (Santiago, Sebastian, and Triana), I am a new citizen voter, and today I am here as a community organizer with El CENTRO Poder y Acción, the new political, 501c4 arm and sister organization of El CENTRO de Igualdad y Derechos.

I found El CENTRO after I experienced the heartbreak that deportation causes in one's family --- and since then, I have dedicated my life to growing the power of our communities-- through El CENTRO's leadership development, voter engagement, organizing, and policy advocacy.

I am excited that, along with the other 18,000 newly naturalized citizens in New Mexico, 57% of whom are women (que vivan las mujeres!), and the estimated 5.3 million new citizens, I will be casting my vote for the first time in a presidential general election. One of the main reasons I was motivated to become a citizen during the Trump era is so that I can vote. I take this responsibility seriously, as I know that I am not only voting for myself and my family, but for my community. Our community has lived first-hand the difference an election can make in our lives. Over the past four years under the Trump administration, our communities have been criminalized, persecuted, and targeted.

We are proud that in New Mexico, we have collectively built a legacy of supporting immigrants' rights. Immigrant leaders at El CENTRO have successfully fought for and won sanctuary policies, a raise in the minimum wage, protections for domestic workers, and the state's first paid sick leave policy. We are excited that we have added a new tool to grow our power through El CENTRO Poder y Accion and to be joining other immigrant-led organizations, such as Somos Accion and NM CAFE Accion, across the state to continue to build our statewide movement.

As this report demonstrates: our communities have power in the ballot box that we need to use to ensure that all our communities in New Mexico can thrive and that we elect elected officials that reflect our New Mexico values.

The already existing social, racial, and economic inequities have been exacerbated under the Trump administration and by the pandemic. Although immigrant workers have been on the frontline of this pandemic and deemed essential, we are still being treated as if we were dispensable and not being afforded the worker protections, dignified wages, and economic relief commensurate to our communities' vast contributions. Ya Basta!

We must vote so that we can elect elected officials, at the federal, state, and local levels who support what is important to our communities right now: from economic relief for mixed-status families, paid sick leave, dignified wages, access to healthcare for all, to keeping our families together. The future of our nation is at stake: those of us who have the privilege and responsibility to vote, need to heed the call, get involved, and take action!

RESOURCES

SOMOS UN PUEBLO UNIDO



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