

OCTOBER 2020



NEWAMERICAN VOTERS 2020

OHIO

STATE PROFILE



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Newly naturalized citizens in Ohio, including large numbers of immigrants who are originally from Bhutan, India, China, and Somalia, can sway the outcome of this year's presidential election.

Whether these new citizens in Ohio realize this potential and vote largely depends on Global Cleveland and other grassroots efforts to connect with this rising electorate in culturally and linguistically relevant ways. Enormous challenges exist for voter engagement efforts, including a lack of language access for new citizens, the need for immigrant rights organizations to adapt their work due to the coronavirus pandemic, and the Trump administration's threats to politicize the Post Office during a time when large amounts of Americans are preparing to vote by mail. Over the last few years, an emerging form of voter suppression has emerged with over 700,000 citizenship applications in the backlog before U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), including 7,245 applicants in Ohio.¹ Processing delays exceed the national average in USCIS offices throughout Ohio, including 11 to 19.5 months in both Cincinnati and Columbus and 6.5 to 10.5 months in Cleveland.² This backlog and processing delays threaten to effectively disenfranchise would-be citizens by delaying the naturalization for which they are eligible, even, in some cases, when they applied over a year ago.

Despite these challenges, Ohio can be a state where a unique and diverse group of newly naturalized citizens impacts the national electoral outcome. Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders represent 40% of this group, with the next largest representation coming from those who are originally from Africa at 22 percent, with the largest groups coming from Bhutan, India, China, Somalia, Mexico, and Ghana. Recently naturalized citizens (those who have naturalized since Fiscal Year 2014) represent one-quarter of all naturalized citizens in Ohio, are slightly majority women, and are generally older than recently naturalized citizens in other parts of the country (45% are 35-54 years old). If they go out to vote or send in their absentee ballots, they can have an enormous impact this year.

WHY OHIO IS SO IMPORTANT IN 2020

Ohio's recently naturalized citizens will play a critical role in the November presidential election. In the New American Voters Impact Model, Ohio ranks 21st 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

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 8, 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 8, 2020, <https://egov.uscis.gov/processing-times/>; "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 8, 2020, <https://egov.uscis.gov/processing-times/historic-pt>.

concentration of new citizens in the state; and the occurrence of a senatorial, gubernatorial, or state legislative election and their competitiveness.³

From 2014 to 2018 in Ohio, 54,818 new citizens naturalized, with 62,764 new citizens expected to naturalize through 2020. 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 2019.⁴ The estimates for naturalizations during FY 2020 is based on previous spikes in naturalizations in FY 2016, before that calendar year’s presidential election.⁵ “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.⁶ Nevertheless, USCIS mismanagement will not hold back the approximately 5 million new citizens, including their large numbers in Ohio.

Of the more than 267,000 naturalized citizens in Ohio, just under one quarter are new citizens. As of 2018, over half (53 percent) of all immigrants in Ohio were naturalized, and as of 2017, there were 84,885 immigrants in Ohio who were eligible to become citizens.⁷ 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
11,641,879	6,062,000	267,363	62,764

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 "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>.

⁵ 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.

⁶ 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/>.

⁷ "Immigrants in Ohio," American Immigration Council, August 6, 2020, <https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/research/immigrants-ohio>; "State-Level Unauthorized Population and Eligible-to-Naturalize Estimates," Center for Migration Studies, accessed September 8, 2020, data.cmsny.org/state.html.

⁸ "Nativity and Citizenship Status in the United States," United States Census Bureau, accessed September 11, 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>.

WHO ARE OHIO'S NEW AMERICAN VOTERS

Asian Americans & Pacific Islanders represent 40% of new citizens, 22% are African, 15% are European, 11% are Latin American, 10% are Middle Eastern, and 2% Caribbean. The chart below provides totals for 2014-2018.

ASIAN AMERICAN & PACIFIC ISLANDER	21,848	40%
AFRICAN	11,910	22%
EUROPEAN	8,174	15%
LATIN AMERICAN	6,257	11%
MIDDLE EASTERN & NORTH AFRICAN	5,710	10%
CARIBBEAN	919	2%
TOTAL 2014-2018	19,003	
TOTAL 2014-2020	29,639	

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



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RANK	COUNTRY	TOTAL
1	BHUTAN	5,402
2	INDIA	5,312
3	CHINA	2,433
4	SOMALIA	2,417
5	MEXICO	2,205
6	GHANA	2,080
7	PHILIPPINES	1,808
8	ETHIOPIA	1,191
9	UKRAINE	1,172
10	IRAQ	1,122
11	VIETNAM	1,047
12	NEPAL	1,036
13	CANADA	986
14	JORDAN	898
15	UNITED KINGDOM	872
16	NIGERIA	844
17	PAKISTAN	747
18	SOUTH KOREA	735
19	BURMA	659
20	DOMINICAN REPUBLIC	649

Two-thirds of newly naturalized citizens in Ohio 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	2,563	2,403	4,966	9%
25-34 YEARS	8,205	7,286	15,491	28%
35-44 YEARS	8,118	7,535	15,653	28%
45-54 YEARS	4,955	4,639	9,594	17%
55-64 YEARS	2,892	2,497	5,389	10%
65 YEARS AND OLDER	2,133	1,844	3,977	7%
TOTAL	28,866	26,204	55,070	

Beyond their nation of origin, gender, and age, naturalized citizens are part of the larger group of immigrants in Ohio. Immigrants in this larger group represent six percent of all entrepreneurs in Ohio and generate over \$891 million annually.⁹ Immigrant households have \$14 billion in spending power and pay \$1.9 billion in state and local taxes.¹⁰ Immigrants are six percent of the workforce in Ohio and are overrepresented in architecture and engineering occupations (making up ten percent of workers in those fields).¹¹ And immigrants are most numerous in production, transportation and material moving, and office and administrative support occupations, and overrepresented in computer and mathematical (16% of all workers), life physical, and social science (12 percent), and farming, fishing, and forestry (11 percent) occupations.¹²

⁹ "Immigrants in Ohio," American Immigration Council, August 6, 2020, <https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/research/immigrants-ohio>.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

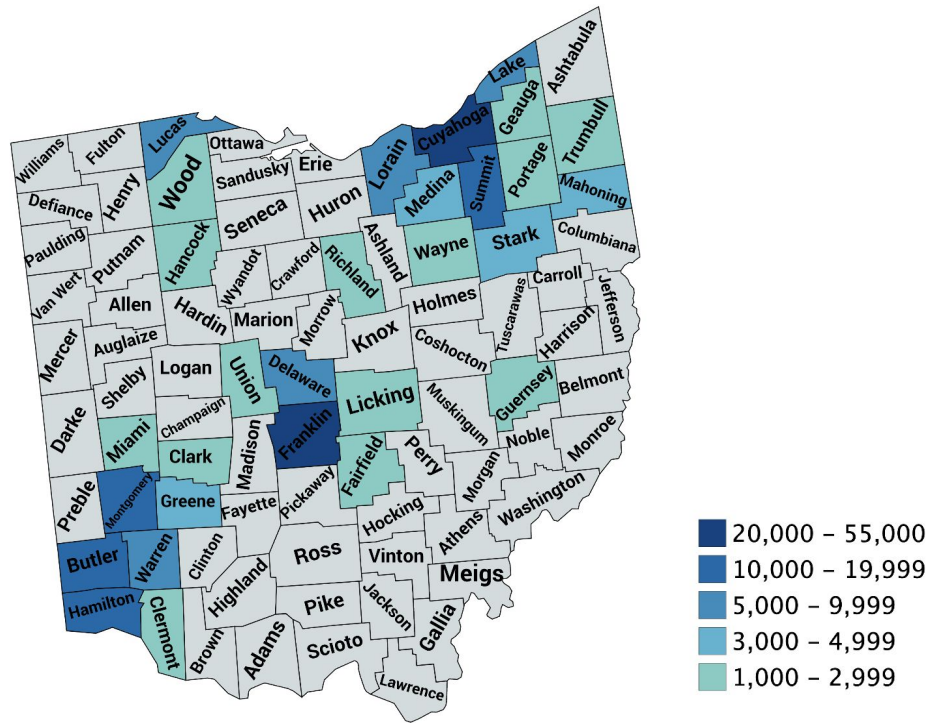
¹² Ibid.

WHERE ARE OHIO'S NATURALIZED VOTERS

Compared to all other states, Ohio ranks 9th for African new citizens, 11th Middle Eastern and North African, 7th for Asian American & Pacific Islander, and 15th for European and Caribbean.

TOP 15 STATES BY REGION								
LATIN AMERICA			AAPI			EUROPE		
Rank	State	Total	Rank	State	Total	Rank	State	Total
1	California	314,645	1	California	302,467	1	California	69,325
2	Florida	266,187	2	New York	131,603	2	New York	55,372
3	Texas	155,321	3	Texas	80,503	3	Florida	34,438
4	New York	138,284	4	New Jersey	57,651	4	Illinois	31,056
5	New Jersey	69,942	5	Illinois	41,225	5	New Jersey	23,112
6	Illinois	36,444	6	Virginia	37,600	6	Massachusetts	20,328
7	Massachusetts	34,288	7	Florida	34,613	7	Washington	17,473
8	Arizona	32,893	8	Washington	32,572	8	Texas	16,685
9	Virginia	24,555	9	Pennsylvania	31,916	9	Pennsylvania	13,261
10	Georgia	23,826	10	Massachusetts	30,770	10	Michigan	12,689
11	North Carolina	19,581	11	Georgia	29,527	11	Connecticut	10,017
12	Nevada	18,049	12	Maryland	24,857	12	Virginia	9,860
13	Maryland	17,432	13	Ohio	21,848	13	Georgia	9,586
14	Washington	15,954	14	North Carolina	20,613	14	North Carolina	8,515
15	Pennsylvania	15,907	15	Michigan	19,099	15	Ohio	8,174
AFRICA			MENA			CARIBBEAN		
Rank	State	Total	Rank	State	Total	Rank	State	Total
1	Texas	25,907	1	California	62,108	1	Florida	62,494
2	New York	25,509	2	Michigan	21,860	2	New York	57,642
3	Maryland	24,438	3	New York	20,615	3	New Jersey	12,599
4	California	17,151	4	Texas	15,726	4	Massachusetts	12,447
5	Minnesota	15,555	5	New Jersey	13,128	5	Georgia	6,862
6	Massachusetts	15,493	6	Florida	11,709	6	Connecticut	6,477
7	Georgia	14,124	7	Illinois	10,536	7	Pennsylvania	5,088
8	Virginia	14,120	8	Virginia	10,007	8	Maryland	4,680
9	Ohio	11,910	9	Massachusetts	8,746	9	Texas	3,169
10	New Jersey	10,177	10	Pennsylvania	6,280	10	California	2,441
11	Pennsylvania	9,600	11	Ohio	5,710	11	Virginia	2,193
12	Washington	8,522	12	Arizona	4,917	12	North Carolina	1,912
13	Illinois	8,263	13	Tennessee	4,104	13	Illinois	1,653
14	North Carolina	7,879	14	North Carolina	4,055	14	South Carolina	1,448
15	Florida	6,027	15	Maryland	4,034	15	Ohio	919

The following map and table show counties with 1,000 or more naturalized citizens. Cuyahoga and Franklin counties have over 50,000 total naturalized citizens. Hamilton, Summit, Montgomery, and Butler each have more than 10,000 naturalized citizens.



COUNTY	TOTAL	LATIN AMERICAN	ASIAN	AFRICAN	EUROPEAN	OCEANIA	NORTH AMERICAN
Cuyahoga	54,121	6,792	17,766	2,692	25,681	102	1,088
Franklin	53,970	6,284	20,782	18,958	6,986	115	845
Hamilton	19,034	3,276	7,490	2,989	4,580	104	595
Summit	13,257	1,230	5,745	640	5,116	44	482
Montgomery	12,759	1,631	6,347	1,869	2,554	15	343
Butler	10,347	1,946	5,010	1,465	1,637	27	262
Lucas	8,623	1,267	4,254	633	2,092	19	358
Delaware	7,570	971	4,056	695	1,642	12	194
Warren	7,365	792	4,742	289	1,177	35	330
Lake	7,166	1,210	1,291	147	4,300	0	218
Lorain	5,544	931	1,464	286	2,576	26	261
Stark	4,451	646	1,361	201	2,048	14	181
Greene	3,957	539	2,096	289	889	13	131
Medina	3,725	525	866	17	2,085	18	214
Mahoning	3,532	519	981	51	1,800	8	173
Clermont	2,715	643	1,079	48	802	23	120
Fairfield	2,514	267	1,081	758	376	0	32
Trumbull	2,240	192	711	63	1,215	23	36

Portage	2,090	109	639	79	1,134	37	92
Licking	1,955	299	939	152	475	0	90
Wood	1,919	447	881	43	419	19	110
Geauga	1,763	121	498	57	1,051	0	36
Clark	1,339	400	495	105	294	15	30
Wayne	1,285	298	525	25	354	0	83
Union	1,200	104	824	14	208	0	50
Hancock	1,147	208	642	0	287	0	10
Richland	1,138	196	426	87	373	10	46
Miami	1,056	140	452	18	330	0	116

TESTIMONIAL



Jenika Gonzales,
Ohio

"My Citizenship means validation and peace of mind, not only for me but for my mother, who has sacrificed her whole life to build my family a better one.

It means an opportunity to shape a future my mother only dreamed of so that those opportunities can extend to the rest of my family.

A piece of paper can hold so much emotion, and for me, it means freedom, permanency, and courage to speak my mind, to fight for others, to vote, and to get a seat at the table."

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GLOBAL CLEVELAND



RESOURCES

ASIAN SERVICES IN ACTION

- Immigration and Citizenship Resources in Greater Cleveland
- asiaohio.org

SAFE TO VOTE AT HOME

- Voter Resources for Greater Cincinnati including resources for new voters
- safetovoteathome.org

CATHOLIC CHARITIES DIOCESE OF CLEVELAND IMMIGRATION LEGAL SERVICES

- Serves Northeast Ohio
- ccdacle.org/programs/immigration-legal-services

CATHOLIC CHARITIES OF SOUTHWEST OHIO

- Serves Greater Cincinnati
- ccswoh.org

ASIAN AMERICAN COMMUNITY SERVICES

- Social Programs and other Assistance for Central Ohio
- aacsohio.org

HOLA OHIO

- Spanish Language voting and social resources in Northeast Ohio
- holatoday.org

LEGAL AID SOCIETY OF CLEVELAND

- lasclev.org
- Page with phone numbers for different languages: lasclev.org/contact/

LEGAL AID SOCIETY OF COLUMBUS:

- Legal Resources in Columbus Ohio
- columbuslegalaid.org

INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF AKRON:

- Legal and Translation Services for Greater Akron
- iiakron.org

INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF TOLEDO:

- Legal and Translation Services for Greater Toledo
- internationalinstituteoftoledo.org