

OCTOBER 2020



MINNESOTA STATE PROFILE

NEWAMERICAN VOTERS 2020



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Minnesota is one of the most politically important states in the 2020 presidential elections. There, newly naturalized citizens can play a critical role and can be one of the states where Black immigrants, specifically those originally from African countries, have the most impact in deciding who will occupy the White House in 2021. The largest numbers of newly naturalized citizens in the state are immigrants originally from African countries like Somalia and Ethiopia, followed by Mexico, and then Burma and India.

Their impact will, however, largely depend on grassroots efforts that specifically speak to new citizens and encourage them to vote despite the limitations on campaigns placed by the coronavirus pandemic, language access issues, the need for education around absentee ballots, and the general process for voting, and ongoing voter suppression efforts. A new form of voter suppression that has emerged is the backlog of citizenship applications before U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), which serves to prevent immigrants who would-be citizens from naturalizing and being eligible to vote. According to USCIS' latest data, there are over 700,000 citizenship applications nationwide and 13,743 applications at the agency's St. Paul, Minnesota office.¹ And while the national average processing delay is over nine months, for the St. Paul office, it ranges from ten to 21 months.² The backlog and persistent political unwillingness of USCIS to address this issue will result in the inability for immigrants, who are eligible to become citizens, from exercising the fundamental right to vote in 2020.

Still, the larger number of those who have naturalized can play a decisive electoral role in 2020. In Minnesota, the number of new citizens who naturalized from 2014 to 2018 is 41,256 and nears the 2016 presidential election margin of victory (44,594 votes). New citizens who naturalized from 2014 through 2020 are expected to exceed that margin at 76,058; almost doubling it.³ This means that this potential bloc of voters who are mostly from African, Latin American, and Asian and Pacific Island countries, who are mostly women (55 percent) and young (67% were younger than 45 years old when they naturalized), can sway the outcome of the presidential election in 2020.

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 October 26, 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 October 26, 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 October 26, 2020, <https://egov.uscis.gov/processing-times/historic-pt>.

³ "Minnesota Results," New York Times, August 17, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/elections/2016/results/minnesota>.

WHY MINNESOTA IS SO IMPORTANT IN 2020

Minnesota is the seventh most politically important state where 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

Between 2014 to 2018, 41,256 immigrants naturalized, nearing the 2016 presidential election margin of victory (44,594 votes) and by the end of 2020, that number is expected to reach 76,058 new citizens, which nearly doubles the 2016 margin. 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 reduced to around 5 million new citizens.⁷ Nevertheless, USCIS mismanagement will not

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 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>.

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.

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-e8>

hold back the approximately 5 million new citizens, including their large numbers in Minnesota.

Of more than 230,000 naturalized citizens in Minnesota, one-third 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
5,527,358	3,537,003	233,645	76,058

WHO ARE MINNESOTA’S NEW AMERICAN VOTERS

Naturalized citizens who are originally from African countries represent 38% of new citizens in Minnesota, 35% are from Asian and Pacific Island countries, 13% are from Latin America, ten percent are from Europe, four percent are from the Middle East or North Africa, and one percent are from the Caribbean. The chart below provides totals for 2014 to 2018.

AFRICAN	15,555	38%
ASIAN AMERICAN & PACIFIC ISLANDER	14,411	35%
LATIN AMERICAN	5,275	13%
EUROPEAN	3,943	10%
MIDDLE EASTERN & NORTH AFRICAN	1,820	4%
CARIBBEAN	252	1%
TOTAL 2014-2018	41,256	
TOTAL 2014-2020	76,058	

97-11ea-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 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>.

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



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

RANK	COUNTRY	TOTAL
1	SOMALIA	5,992
2	ETHIOPIA	2,828
3	MEXICO	2,601
4	BURMA	2,436
5	INDIA	2,032
6	LAOS	1,863
7	VIETNAM	1,695
8	LIBERIA	1,666
9	KENYA	1,596
10	THAILAND	1,548
11	CHINA	1,298
12	PHILIPPINES	893
13	NIGERIA	829
14	CANADA	591
15	CAMBODIA	558
16	IRAQ	552
17	CAMEROON	456
18	UNITED KINGDOM	437
19	UKRAINE	432
20	GHANA	404

Sixty-seven percent of newly naturalized citizens in Minnesota from 2014 to 2018 were below the age of 45 when they naturalized. Around 55% of all newly naturalized citizens are women. The full breakdown by age and gender is shown in the following table:

MINNESOTA 2014-2018 NATURALIZED BY AGE				
AGE	FEMALE	MALE	TOTAL	%
18-24 YEARS	2,113	1,736	3,849	9%
25-34 YEARS	7,185	5,343	12,528	30%
35-44 YEARS	6,105	5,581	11,687	28%
45-54 YEARS	3,552	3,358	6,910	17%
55-64 YEARS	2,104	1,579	3,683	9%
65 YEARS AND OVER	1,694	1,113	2,807	7%
TOTAL	22,753	18,710	41,464	

Compared to all other states, Minnesota ranks fifth for new citizens who are originally from African countries and can make the state one of the most electorally impactful ones for Black immigrants, specifically those who are from Africa.

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

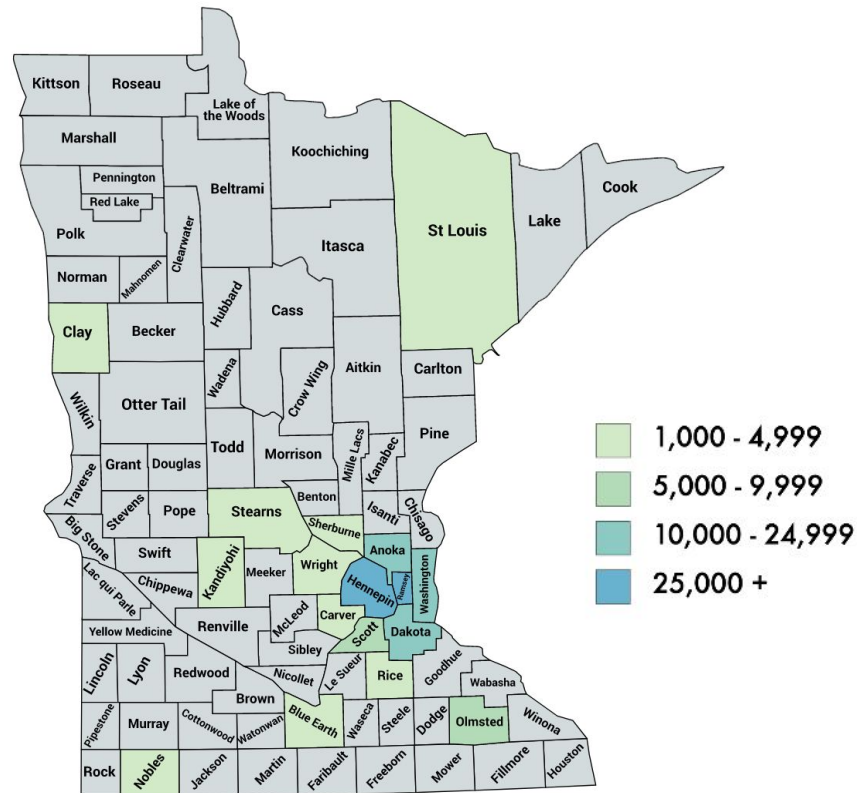
AFRICA		
Rank	State	Total
1	Texas	25,907
2	New York	25,509
3	Maryland	24,438
4	California	17,151
5	Minnesota	15,555
6	Massachusetts	15,493
7	Georgia	14,124
8	Virginia	14,120
9	Ohio	11,910
10	New Jersey	10,177
11	Pennsylvania	9,600
12	Washington	8,522
13	Illinois	8,263
14	North Carolina	7,879
15	Florida	6,027

MENA		
Rank	State	Total
1	California	62,108
2	Michigan	21,860
3	New York	20,615
4	Texas	15,726
5	New Jersey	13,128
6	Florida	11,709
7	Illinois	10,536
8	Virginia	10,007
9	Massachusetts	8,746
10	Pennsylvania	6,280
11	Ohio	5,710
12	Arizona	4,917
13	Tennessee	4,104
14	North Carolina	4,055
15	Maryland	4,034

CARIBBEAN		
Rank	State	Total
1	Florida	62,494
2	New York	57,642
3	New Jersey	12,599
4	Massachusetts	12,447
5	Georgia	6,862
6	Connecticut	6,477
7	Pennsylvania	5,088
8	Maryland	4,680
9	Texas	3,169
10	California	2,441
11	Virginia	2,193
12	North Carolina	1,912
13	Illinois	1,653
14	South Carolina	1,448
15	Ohio	919

WHERE ARE MINNESOTA'S NATURALIZED VOTERS

The following shows counties with 1,000 or more naturalized citizens.



COUNTY	TOTAL	LATIN AMERICAN	ASIAN	AFRICAN	EUROPEAN	OCEANIA	NORTH AMERICAN
Hennepin	83,944	10,765	31,841	28,231	11,298	172	1,637
Ramsey	42,913	3,684	24,949	10,300	3,556	68	356
Dakota	22,030	3,754	9,060	5,239	3,317	28	632
Anoka	16,328	2,173	6,310	4,502	2,980	14	349
Washington	10,656	1,620	5,220	2,092	1,400	60	264
Olmsted	7,907	794	3,407	2,104	1,358	36	208
Scott	7,004	1,157	3,936	749	913	83	166
Stearns	3,284	807	983	1,259	181	7	47
Carver	2,562	615	1,208	117	421	19	182
St. Louis	2,555	250	851	345	761	47	301
Wright	2,386	480	1,163	273	316	0	154
Sherburne	1,473	248	472	209	490	0	54
Rice	1,411	281	361	620	118	0	31
Nobles	1,253	628	402	194	29	0	0
Kandiyohi	1,140	628	219	219	58	11	5
Clay	1,118	118	649	217	86	0	48
Blue Earth	1,085	124	426	332	176	5	22

RESOURCES



ISUROON

ADDRESS: 1600 East Lake Street, Suite 1
Minneapolis, MN 55407

PHONE: 612-886-2731 | 612-886-2789

WEBSITE: www.isuroon.org



African Career and Education Resource (ACER)

WEBSITE: www.acerinc.org

ADDRESS: 6800 78th Avenue, Suite 101
Brooklyn Park, MN 55445

PHONE: 763-273-4217



Black Immigrant Collective

WEBSITE: www.blackimmigrantcollective.org