

***Understanding The Migration Policy  
Institute's Data Resources and Their  
Uses for Adult Education Policymakers***

Jake Hofstetter, MPI NCIIP  
NASDAE National Training Institute—Baltimore, MD  
October 18<sup>th</sup>, 2023

# Presenter Biography

## **Jake Hofstetter, Policy Analyst, National Center on Immigrant Integration Policy**

Jake Hofstetter is a Policy Analyst at MPI's National Center on Immigrant Integration Policy, where he conducts research related to language access as well as educational and workforce programs for immigrant adults and youth. His work focuses on the civic, economic, and linguistic integration of immigrants and refugees in the United States. In his work related to adult education and workforce development, he researches programs that promote the integration of immigrants and examines the broader policies that govern adult skills systems.



# MPI's National Center on Immigrant Integration Policy

## NCIIP's Primary Areas of Work:

- Education and Training for Immigrants and their Children
  - Early Childhood Education and Care
  - K-12 Education
  - **Adult Education and Workforce Development**
- Language Access in Federal, State, and Local Settings
- The Governance of Immigrant Integration Policy

See more of our research at:

[www.migrationpolicy.org/integration](http://www.migrationpolicy.org/integration)



# Roadmap for Today's Session

- Guided tour of NCIIP's research on adult education policy and MPI's Data Hub (12 minutes)
- Introduction to [new data analysis from MPI](#) designed to inform adult skills policy at federal and state level (12 minutes)
- Q&A and Discussion (30 minutes)



@MigrationPolicy



@MigrationPolicyInstitute



Migration Policy Institute

# MPI Research on Adult Education and Immigrant Integration



## The Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (IELCE) Program

Understanding Its Design and Challenges in Meeting Immigrant Learners' Needs

Jacob Hofstetter  
Alexis Cherewka



## Leaving Money on the Table

The Persistence of Brain Waste among College-Educated Immigrants

Jeanne Batalova  
Michael Fix



## Policy Brief

### English Plus Integration

Shifting the Instructional Paradigm for Immigrant Adult Learners to Support Integration Success

By Margie McHugh and Catrina Doosee

October 2018

#### Executive Summary

While many aspects of immigration policy are hotly contested, few would disagree that once immigrants are admitted to the United States, it is in the country's—and immigrants'—best interest that they and their children successfully integrate into the civic, social, and economic life of their new communities and the nation as a whole. The country's formal expectations for immigrant integration are reflected in requirements that citizenship applicants demonstrate basic proficiency in English as well as knowledge of key aspects of U.S. history and government. However, both immigrants and native-born citizens recognize that successful long-term integration requires a broad understanding of U.S. life and systems, combined with strong English proficiency and other basic skills.

A robust body of research shows that to achieve successful integration, immigrants and refugees need to acquire knowledge related to a wide range of topics. These include the U.S. health care system (e.g., types of health-care providers and insurance options); money and family finance issues (e.g., building a credit history, paying taxes, and asset-building strategies); and how to navigate early childhood, K-12, and postsecondary education systems in order to guide their family's and their own success. Beyond studying to meet citizenship requirements, many immigrants also seek to continue advancing their English literacy, educational attainment, and workforce skills, given the relationships between these assets and their earning potential and ability to better support their family.

For the past 50 years, English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes provided via state adult education systems have been the default mechanism to meet immigrants' English acquisition—and, to a limited extent, integration—needs. However, this federal-state partnership system suffers from both a crisis of scale (adult education programs meet less than 4 percent of need nationally) and from serious flaws in the nature and design of instruction when viewed through an immigrant-integration lens. Leeway within the system to support successful integration has steadily narrowed in recent years through, for example, major reductions in support for English and family literacy programs that serve parents of young children.

This trend accelerated with passage in 2014 of the *Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act* (WIOA)—the federal law governing both workforce and adult education programs. While federal adult education provisions formerly allowed a more balanced approach to teaching English and meeting learners' needs in their roles as parents, workers, and citizens, WIOA instituted mandatory performance measures that focus mainly on employment outcomes and the attainment of postsecondary credentials, placing no value on other

# MPI's Data Hub

A photograph of the New York City skyline at sunset, with the Empire State Building prominently in the foreground.


## State Immigration Data Profiles

A photograph of three white paper cutouts of human figures holding hands, set against a green background.

## Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) Data Tools

A close-up photograph of the American flag, showing the stars and stripes.

## U.S. Immigration Trends

A photograph of the classical columns of a large building, likely a government or institutional structure.

## Unauthorized Immigrant Population Profiles

# State Immigration Data Profiles



## Demographics

- Size of population
- Age
- Country of birth
- Naturalization trends
- Children in immigrant families

## Language and Education

- Rates of limited English proficiency
- Levels of educational attainment
- Languages spoken at home by English proficiency

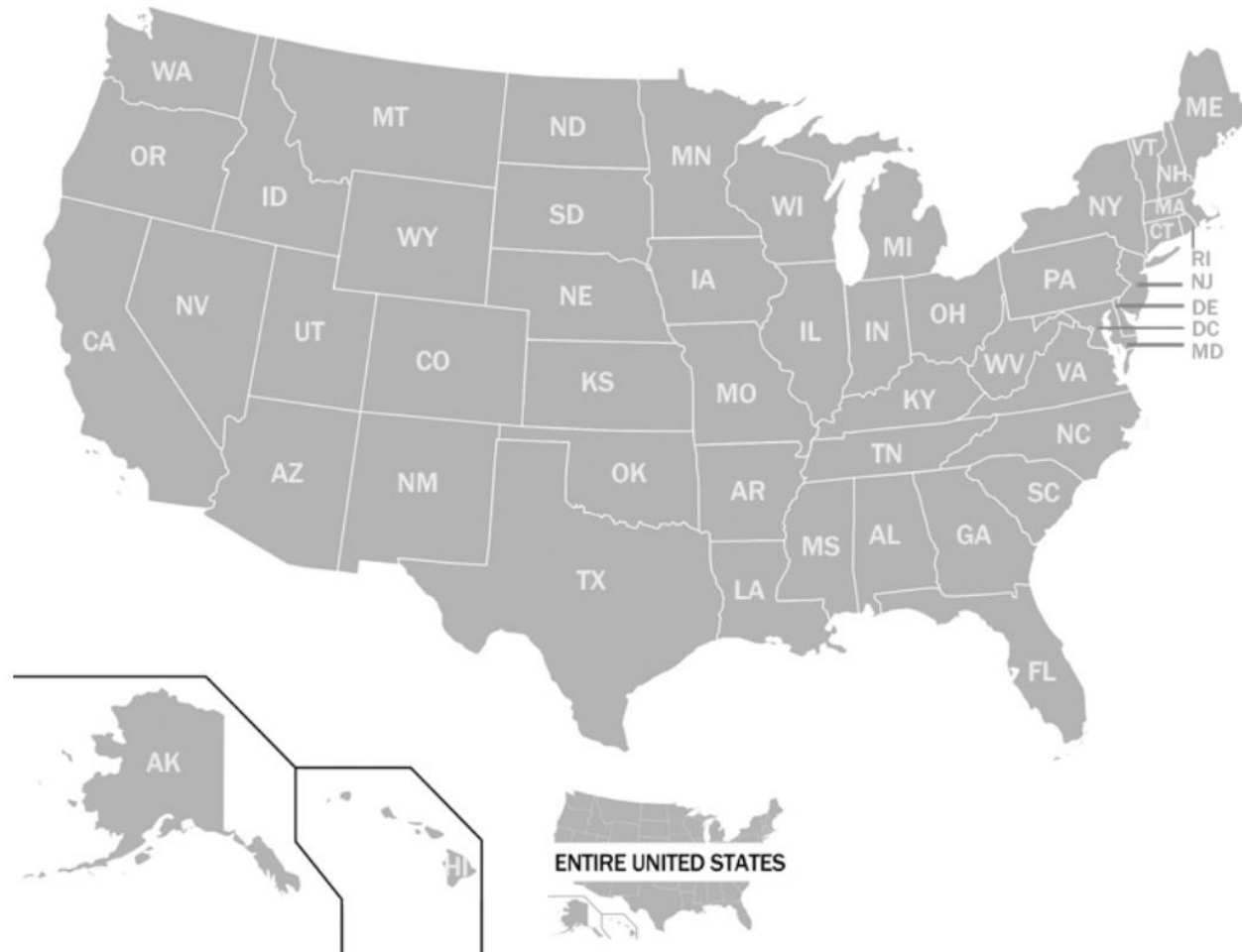
## Workforce

- Immigrants' share among all workers
- Top occupations and industries
- Skill underutilization of college-educated immigrants

## Income

- Median incomes
- Income distributions
- Poverty rates

# Select Your State and Explore the Data!



# Sample Data from “Language and Education” Category



## Pennsylvania

### Language & Education

2021

2000

1990

| English Proficiency <sup>i</sup>          | Foreign Born <sup>i</sup> | U.S. Born <sup>i</sup> | Foreign Born | U.S. Born  | Foreign Born | U.S. Born  |
|---|---------------------------|------------------------|--------------|------------|--------------|------------|
| English Proficiency (age 5 and older) (%) | 930,617                   | 11,355,361             | 501,106      | 11,054,432 | 362,500      | 10,699,620 |
| Speak only English                        | 20.7%                     | 93.8%                  | 25.9%        | 94.6%      | 32.4%        | 94.8%      |
| Speak English "very well"                 | 37.2%                     | 4.6%                   | 36.0%        | 3.8%       | 35.1%        | 3.6%       |
| Speak English less than "very well" (LEP) | 42.1%                     | 1.6%                   | 38.2%        | 1.6%       | 32.5%        | 1.6%       |

| Educational Attainment             | Foreign Born | U.S. Born | Foreign Born | U.S. Born | Foreign Born | U.S. Born |
|------------------------------------|--------------|-----------|--------------|-----------|--------------|-----------|
| Population (age 25 and older)      | 801,719      | 8,360,226 | 407,550      | 7,851,701 | 308,481      | 7,547,328 |
| Less than high school diploma      | 19.2%        | 7.1%      | 26.0%        | 17.8%     | 37.1%        | 24.8%     |
| High school diploma or GED         | 22.1%        | 34.3%     | 23.0%        | 38.8%     | 23.1%        | 39.3%     |
| Some college or associate's degree | 18.1%        | 24.6%     | 17.0%        | 21.8%     | 14.6%        | 18.2%     |
| Bachelor's degree                  | 20.2%        | 20.6%     | 16.8%        | 13.8%     | 11.6%        | 11.3%     |
| Graduate or professional degree    | 20.4%        | 13.3%     | 17.2%        | 7.9%      | 13.6%        | 6.4%      |
| % Foreign Born among Adults with   |              |           |              |           |              |           |
| Less than high school diploma      | 20.7%        |           | 7.1%         |           | 5.8%         |           |
| Bachelor's degree or higher        | 10.3%        |           | 7.5%         |           | 5.5%         |           |

# New MPI Analysis Designed to Inform Adult Education Policy

---

## Leveraging Data to Ensure Equitable and Effective Adult Skills Programming for Immigrants

OCTOBER 2023

BY JACOB HOFSTETTER AND MARGIE MCHUGH

### Executive Summary

Immigrants in the United States—who comprise one in every six adults in the country—contribute greatly to the vitality of the country's economy and local communities. At the same time, many immigrant adults face multiple, often compounding barriers to economic mobility and broader integration into American society. Common challenges include limited proficiency in English, persistent employment in low-wage jobs, lack of permanent legal status, low levels of formal education, and unfamiliarity with American society, culture, and institutions. Adult skills programs operating within both workforce development and adult education systems offer services that are intended to address or reduce many of these barriers. Too often, however, the policy and program designs at the heart of these systems fail to account for important differences in the characteristics of the country's immigrant and U.S.-born adult populations, which can lead to programming that does not effectively and equitably meet the needs of immigrant adults.

To aid policymakers and other system actors in understanding these differences and their implications for efforts to improve effectiveness and equity in adult skills programs, Migration Policy Institute researchers analyzed pooled 2015–19 data from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey,

comparing foreign- and U.S.-born adults across a variety of sociodemographic indicators. The analysis demonstrates that large shares of the immigrant population face barriers to their economic mobility and integration, and it identifies disparities between immigrant and U.S.-born adults in income, levels of formal education, and employment in middle- and high-skill jobs. The scale of this challenge is also evident from the data: roughly 10.8 million immigrant adults have less than a high school diploma or equivalent, and approximately 20.4 million have limited proficiency in English. Such findings underscore that immigrants are a significant target population for adult skills systems, in many states comprising a large minority or even majority of the adults such programs are intended to serve, such as those without a high school diploma or equivalent.

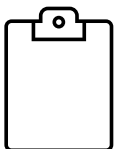
*Immigrants are a significant target population for adult skills systems, in many states comprising a large minority or even majority of the adults such programs are intended to serve.*

With a potential reauthorization of the federal law governing adult skills programs (the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, or WIOA) on the horizon, the data highlighted in this analysis carry important

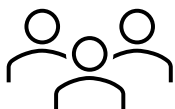




# *Leveraging Data to Ensure Equitable and Effective Adult Skills Programming for Immigrants*



Analysis of American Community Survey (ACS) data



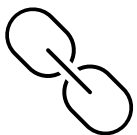
Demographics of adults broken out by nativity (foreign-born vs U.S.-born) and by race and ethnicity (Latino, Black, White, and AAPI adults)

- Allows for comparisons of different groups, e.g. foreign-born Latino adults vs U.S.-born White adults



Categories detailed in analysis include:

- Levels of formal education, including breakdown of “less than a high school diploma or equivalent”
- English proficiency
- Employment status and type of employment (low, middle, or high skill job)
- Digital access

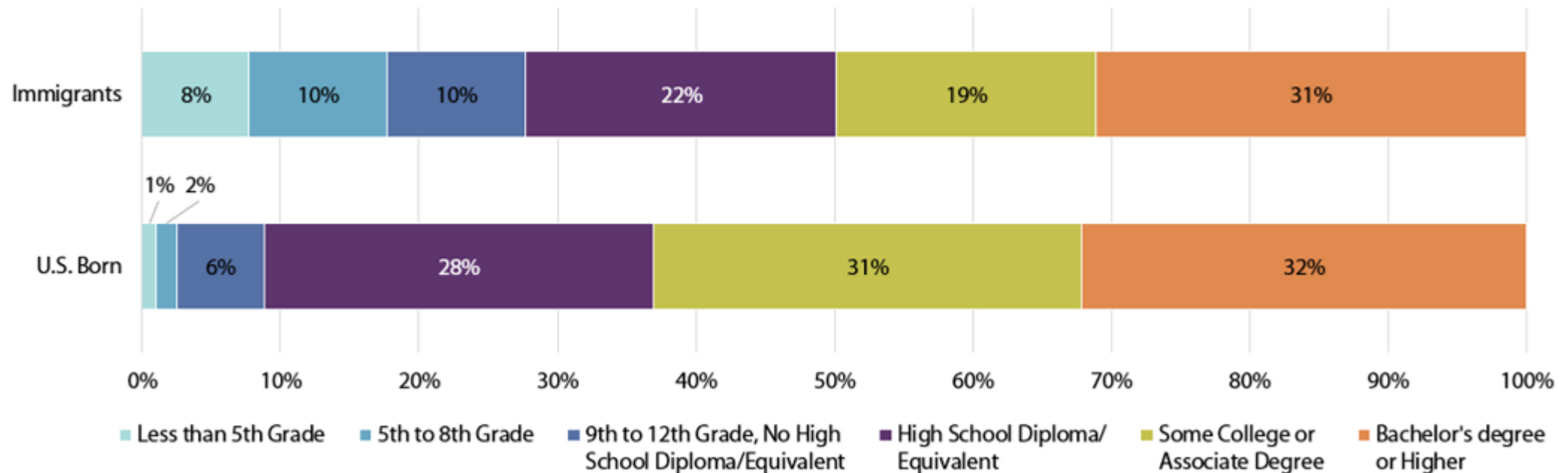


Unique crosstabulations designed to inform adult education policy

- LEP plus levels of formal education
- Digital access plus levels of education and LEP

# How can this new data be used?

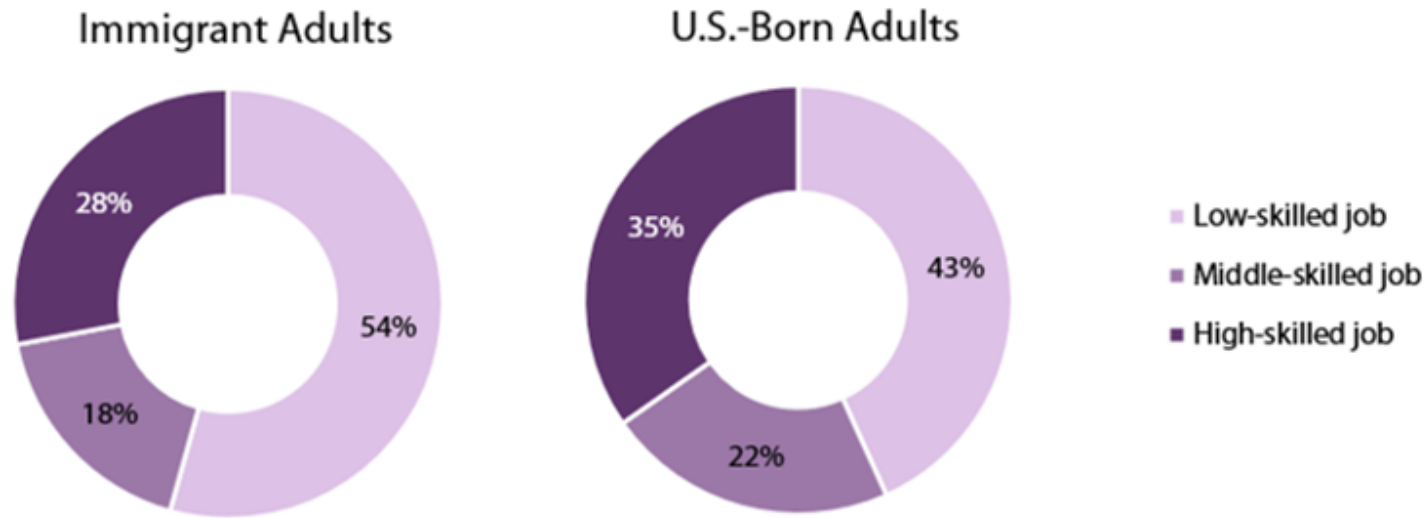
**Educational Attainment of Immigrant and U.S.-Born Adults (ages 25 and older) in the United States, 2015–19**



Note: All educational attainment statistics in this brief are for adults ages 25 and older and not enrolled in school or college, meaning they had not attended at any time in the three months before the data were collected.

Source: MPI tabulation of 2015–19 pooled ACS data.

## Share of Employed Immigrant and U.S.-Born Adults by Job Skill Level, 2015–19

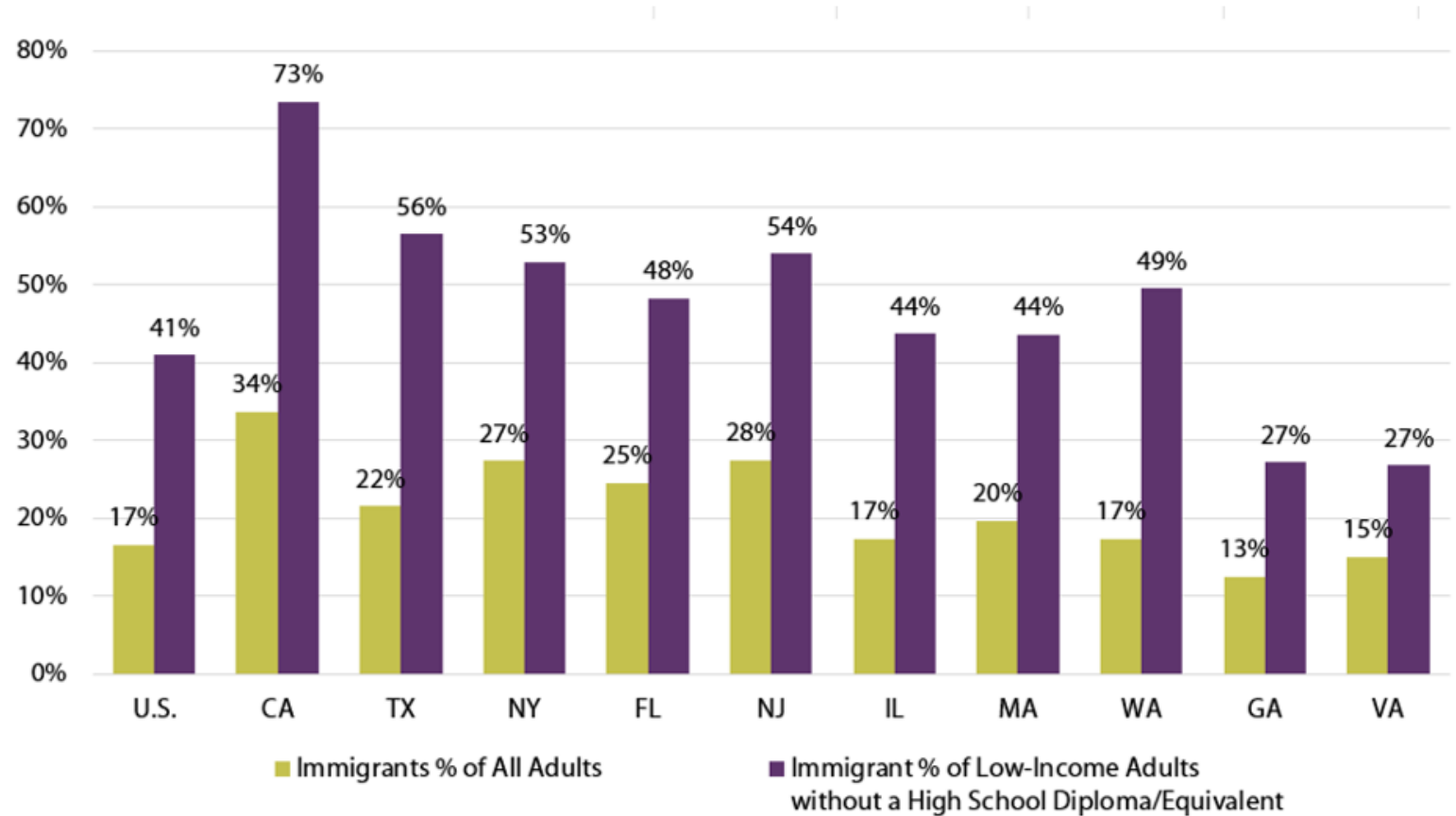


Source: MPI tabulation of 2015–19 pooled ACS data.

How can  
this new  
data be  
used?

# How can this new data be used?

**Immigrant Share of All Adults and Low-Income Adults (ages 25 and older) with No High School Diploma or Equivalent in United States and the Top Ten States by Immigrant Population Size, 2015–19**

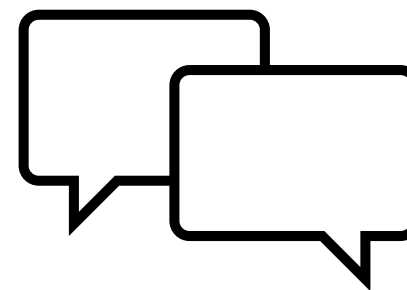


Note: All educational attainment statistics in this fact sheet are for parents who were not enrolled in school or college, meaning they had not attended at any time in the three months before the data were collected. In this analysis, “low income” refers to individuals with a family income below 200 percent of the federal poverty level.

Source: MPI tabulation of 2015–19 pooled ACS data.

# Questions, Comments, and Discussion

---



# Discussion Questions



What uses do you see for these data sources? How can they be used in WIOA implementation in your state?



What additional data do you need that was not mentioned here?



What data related to ELLs and immigrants would be useful for you to have in the coming years?

# Thank you—let's stay in touch!

**Jake Hofstetter, Policy Analyst**  
**MPI National Center on Immigrant**  
**Integration Policy**

[jhofstetter@migrationpolicy.org](mailto:jhofstetter@migrationpolicy.org)

**Find data, reports and other analysis by**  
**state and for the nation at:**

[www.migrationpolicy.org](http://www.migrationpolicy.org)



Sign up for updates from our  
Center and the rest of MPI  
from this QR code or at [this](#)  
[link](#).



@MigrationPolicy



@MigrationPolicyInstitute



Migration Policy Institute