

Truths, Facts, “Alternative Facts,” and Outright Falsehoods Relating to Undocumented Immigrants Living in the Walla Walla Area and/or in Washington State or the United States More Generallyⁱ

True or False: Undocumented immigrants in Washington State actually represent a small and statistically insignificant portion of the entire state population.

Here are the facts:

- There are estimated to be a total of 250,000 undocumented immigrants currently living in the state of Washington. This represents 3.6% of the entire population of the state.ⁱⁱ
- The great majority of the undocumented immigrants in Washington state are of Mexican descent (64%).ⁱⁱⁱ
- In a total state population of slightly more than 6.9 million persons, just over 350,000 within the state of Washington live in “mixed-status” families, in which the place of residence is shared with at least one family member who is an unauthorized person. This represents approximately 5% of the total state population. Relatedly, just under 160,000 children within the state have at least one unauthorized family member, most often a parent.^{iv} These are all current residents of Washington state who are potentially at risk of federal programs targeting undocumented citizens.

True or False: Undocumented immigrants – and immigrants more generally – in Washington State tend to represent an economic drain upon the state’s resources, and contribute very little to the economic base or economic productivity of our state.

Here are the facts:

- Washington state is currently home to more than 940,000 immigrants in total.^v 46.3% of the immigrants living in Washington state are naturalized citizens.^{vi}
- Immigrants, broadly defined, make up 13 percent of the total population of the state of Washington. They represent 17% of the total labor force in the state, and their share of the total annual economic output of the state is 14 percent.^{vii}
- Eight out of every ten immigrants (80 percent) in Washington state are of prime working age (between 18 and 64), compared to six of every

10 U.S.-born Washington state residents (62 percent).^{viii} The fact that immigrants are more likely to be of prime working age positively impacts their contribution to the state economy, because they are more likely to be participating in the labor force.

- Just over one in seven small businesses (15 percent) in Washington state is owned by an immigrant. Immigrant-owned businesses account for more than \$1 billion a year in economic activity for the state of Washington.^{ix}
- Approximately 5% of the total workforce in Washington state is not legally entitled to work in the United States.^x However, approximately (a) 33% of Washington state’s agricultural workers, (b) 8% of those who work in the leisure and hospitality industries, and (c) 6% of those who work in construction are undocumented immigrants who are working here illegally.^{xi}
- On average, an estimated 10.8% of the incomes paid to undocumented immigrants go to state and local taxes (this is in contrast to the 8.9 percentage share paid by the average Washington state resident more generally).^{xii} In total, undocumented immigrants pay over 300 million dollars (\$301.9 million total) in Washington state and local taxes each year.^{xiii}
- It is estimated that the state of Washington would lose \$14.5 billion in economic activity, \$6.4 billion in gross state product, and more than 72,000 jobs if all undocumented immigrants were to suddenly be removed from the country.^{xiv}

True or False: Undocumented immigrants in Washington State – and in the nation more generally – are more likely to be arrested for criminal activity, especially violent and other particularly serious crimes, and to thus constitute both an additional (and unnecessary) criminal threat to the American public and a serious drain upon criminal police and criminal justice resources.

Here are the facts:

- Between January 22 and April 29 of the past year, more than 41,000 illegal immigrants were arrested in the United States. Almost three quarters of these arrested persons (30,473) had been previously convicted of committing one or more criminal offenses. These arrests mark a significant increase (of almost 20%) compared to the same three-month period in the previous year (2016), when 25,786 “convicted criminal aliens” were arrested. Approximately 10% of these

convictions (2700) were for such serious criminal offenses as homicide, rape and kidnapping.^{xv}

- Nonetheless, evidence suggests that neither high levels nor increasing amounts of immigration into the U.S. have been found to be associated with high or increasing crime rates. Since 1990, the percentage of foreign-born individuals in the United States has increased from 7.9% to 13.1%, while the number of unauthorized immigrants has tripled from 3.5 million to 11.2 million. During this same period, however, FBI crime data suggests that both the violent and property crime rates in the U.S. have declined significantly (by 48% and 41%, respectively).^{xvi}
- A report released a decade ago suggests that crime rates are actually lower in states demonstrating the highest immigration growth rates. To be more specific, the 10 states with the highest increases in immigration in 2006 demonstrated the lowest rates of crime in general, and of violent crime in particular.^{xvii}
- In summarizing the substantial empirical data which exists on this topic, the American Immigration Council states the following: “A variety of different studies using different methodologies have found that [a] immigrants are less likely than the native-born [American citizen] to engage in either violent or nonviolent ‘antisocial’ behaviors; [b] that immigrants are less likely than the native-born to be repeat offenders among ‘high risk’ adolescents; and that [c] immigrant youth who were students in U.S. middle and high schools in the mid-1990s and are now young adults have among the lowest delinquency rates of all young people.”^{xviii}
- Thomas Homan, the Acting Director of ICE, has been quoted as saying that, “ICE agents and officers have been given clear direction to focus on threats to public safety and national security, which has resulted in a substantial increase in the arrest of convicted criminal aliens. However, when we encounter others who are in the country unlawfully, we will execute our sworn duty and enforce the law.” As a result of the strict adherence to this policy, the arrest of undocumented immigrants who have not ever been found guilty of having violated U.S. criminal law between January 22 and April 29 of last year as compared to the same three-month period in 2016 has more than doubled – 10,800 in 2017 as compared to 4200 in 2016 (this is a 157% increase).^{xix}
- To this point, there has been relatively little ICE enforcement activity in Walla Walla County. However, there has been some, especially of late. In addition, ICE has been quite active in other parts of the northwest, as evidenced in particularly dramatic fashion by a targeted operation that took place in the states of Washington, Oregon and Alaska on March 25-27 of last year. A total of 84 undocumented immigrants

were arrested in this three-day “sweep” operation, sixty of whom had had prior criminal histories in the U.S. (criminal histories which were presumably the reason for their being targeted by ICE officials at this time), but twenty-four of whom did not appear to have any such criminal histories. Sixty-five of those arrested were originally from Mexico, eight were from Guatemala, two from Honduras and the other nine from assorted other nations throughout the world. The most common criminal offense for which individuals had been arrested and convicted in the past was Driving Under the Influence (just under one third of those who were caught up in this sweep). Other detainees had had criminal convictions for a multitude of other crimes including assault (7), larceny (4), domestic violence (3), sexual assault (2) and a variety of different drug-related offenses (10 total). All of those arrested were to face federal trial and possible imprisonment in the U.S. or processing for deportation.^{xx}

- In addition to those sources specifically cited above, a variety of other documents were consulted in composing this Immigration Fact Sheet. These include the following.^{xxi}

Endnotes

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- ⁱ Last updated May 24, 2017.
- ⁱⁱ “6 things to know about the immigrants Donald Trump wants to kick out,” Liz Jones and Bond Huberman, *KUOW: Seattle News & Information*, January 24, 2017.
- ⁱⁱⁱ “6 things to know about the immigrants Donald Trump wants to kick out,” Liz Jones and Bond Huberman, *KUOW: Seattle News & Information*, January 24, 2017.
- ^{iv} “State-by-State Estimates of the Family Members of Unauthorized Immigrants,” Silva Mathema, *Center for American Progress*, March 16, 2017.
- ^v “FACT SHEET: New Americans in Washington: The Political and Economic Power of Immigrants, Latinos, and Asians in the Evergreen State,” *American Immigration Council*, January 1, 2015.
- ^{vi} “FACT SHEET: New Americans in Washington: The Political and Economic Power of Immigrants, Latinos, and Asians in the Evergreen State,” *American Immigration Council*, January 1, 2015.
- ^{vii} “The Economic Contributions of Immigrants in Washington State,” posted by Elena Hernandez, *Washington State Budget & Policy Center*, March 03, 2015.
- ^{viii} “The Economic Contributions of Immigrants in Washington State,” posted by Elena Hernandez, *Washington State Budget & Policy Center*, March 03, 2015.
- ^{ix} “The Economic Contributions of Immigrants in Washington State,” posted by Elena Hernandez, *Washington State Budget & Policy Center*, March 03, 2015.
- ^x “6 things to know about the immigrants Donald Trump wants to kick out,” Liz Jones and Bond Huberman, *KUOW: Seattle News & Information*, January 24, 2017.
- ^{xi} “6 things to know about the immigrants Donald Trump wants to kick out,” Liz Jones and Bond Huberman, *KUOW: Seattle News & Information*, January 24, 2017.
- ^{xii} “6 things to know about the immigrants Donald Trump wants to kick out,” Liz Jones and Bond Huberman, *KUOW: Seattle News & Information*, January 24, 2017.
- ^{xiii} “FACT SHEET: New Americans in Washington: The Political and Economic Power of Immigrants, Latinos, and Asians in the Evergreen State,” *American Immigration Council*, January 1, 2015.
- ^{xiv} “FACT SHEET: New Americans in Washington: The Political and Economic Power of Immigrants, Latinos, and Asians in the Evergreen State,” *American Immigration Council*, January 1, 2015.
- ^{xv} “ICE releases data on immigrants arrested so far in Trump’s presidency,” Miriam Valverde, *PolitiFact Trump-O-Meter: Remove criminal undocumented immigrants*, May 19, 2017.
- “The Criminalization of Immigration in the United States,” Walter A. Ewing, Daniel E. Martínez and Rubén G. Rumbaut, http://immigrationpolicy.org/sites/default/files/docs/the_criminalization_of_immigration_in_the_United_states_final.pdf, American Immigration Council, July, 2015.
- ^{xvi} “Immigration Myths and Facts,” https://www.uschamber.com/sites/default/files/documents/files/022851_mythsfacts_2016_report_final.pdf, *U.S. Chamber of Commerce*, April 14, 2016.
- ^{xvii} “Immigration and the Wealth of States,” Richard Nadler, *Americas Majority Foundation*, January, 2008.
- ^{xviii} “The Criminalization of Immigration in the United States,” Walter A. Ewing, Daniel E. Martínez and Rubén G. Rumbaut, http://immigrationpolicy.org/sites/default/files/docs/the_criminalization_of_immigration_in_the_United_states_final.pdf, American Immigration Council, July, 2015.
- ^{xix} “ICE releases data on immigrants arrested so far in Trump’s presidency,” Miriam Valverde, *PolitiFact Trump-O-Meter: Remove criminal undocumented immigrants*, May 19, 2017.
- ^{xx} “ICE arrests 84 people during 3-day sweep of Pacific Northwest,” Sarah Roth, *KCW.com*, March, 2017.
- ^{xxi} Other sources consulted in constructing this Immigration Fact Sheet:
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 - Washington State Budget & Policy Center, 2015, “The Economic Contributions of Immigrants in Washington State”
<http://budgetandpolicy.org/schmudget/the-economic-contributions-of-immigrants-in-washington-state>

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 - Center for American Progress, 2016, "Removing Unauthorized Workers Harms States and Industries Across the Country" <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/immigration/news/2017/03/07/427438/how-much-funding-for-sanctuary-jurisdictions-could-be-at-risk/>
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- Center for American Progress, 2017, "10 Ways President Trump's Agenda Will Harm His Supporters in Rural and Small-Town America" <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/poverty/news/2017/03/16/428315/10-ways-president-trumps-agenda-will-harm-supporters-rural-small-town-america/>
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<http://www.latintimes.com/canadian-immigrants-lead-world-illegal-us-visa-overstays-according-first-ever-dhs-367906>