

Immigrants and U.S.-born citizens:

Shared American dreams but different struggles in achieving them

An unprecedented survey reveals a need for more accessible products and services that will level the playing field and benefit both populations.





03 About the Author



04 About the Survey



06 Executive Summary



08 Insights & Supporting Data



14 Conclusion



15 Appendix



One Percent for America is a nationwide community of supporters and borrowers investing in citizenship. Our mission is to build a community of Americans and future citizens working together toward the greater good of our country.

One Percent for America (OPA) operates as a nonprofit with an innovative, affordable, scalable, and self-sustaining approach to lending. Immigrants can apply for a 1% interest loan to exclusively pay for USCIS fees. Borrowers repay their loan over a one-year period and the money repaid allows another immigrant to receive a 1% loan, creating a cycle of trust and accountability for new citizens.

With origins in Massachusetts, OPA is sponsored by BlueHub Capital, a national, mission-driven, nonprofit community development financial institution focused on building healthy communities where low-income people live and work. BlueHub Capital uses innovative financial tools and has deployed over \$2.4 billion (and leveraged over \$12 billion) in capital to support projects that make communities more vibrant places to live. BlueHub Capital has four distinct programs: BlueHub Loan Fund (community development financing), BlueHub SUN (foreclosure relief), BlueHub Energy (clean energy access) and One Percent for America (citizenship financing).

OPA invites supporters from across the country to help remove financial barriers to citizenship by investing through a loan, donation, or corporate sponsorship.

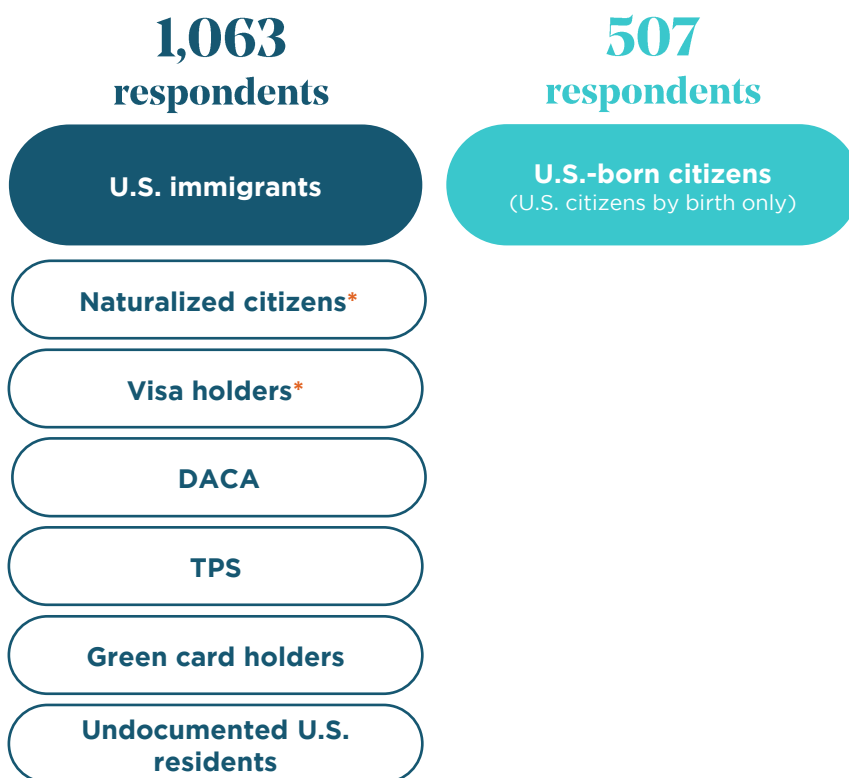
To learn more about OPA, visit www.onepercentforamerica.org



One Percent for America (OPA) conducted a national survey of U.S. immigrants and U.S.-born citizens. OPA sought to evaluate if these two populations share the same financial goals and to compare their needs and challenges in achieving these goals. This survey expands on OPA's findings from Fall 2021, when OPA performed a first-of-its-kind national survey to learn what the barriers to citizenship were for immigrants across the country.

In OPA's [last survey](#), immigrants across demographics reported that funding was a significant obstacle to immediately pursuing their goal of becoming U.S. citizens. In this subsequent survey, **OPA uncovered what other financial and consumer challenges immigrants face along their naturalization journey and in building a life in the U.S.**

In the month of February 2022, OPA went live with our second survey through the Qualtrics online survey platform. The pool of survey-takers was inclusive of two main respondent types – U.S. immigrants and U.S.-born citizens. More specifically, the immigrant respondent pool was inclusive of six subgroups defined by immigration status.



*subgroup capped at 15% to ensure a diverse distribution of immigrant participants



1,570

survey
respondents

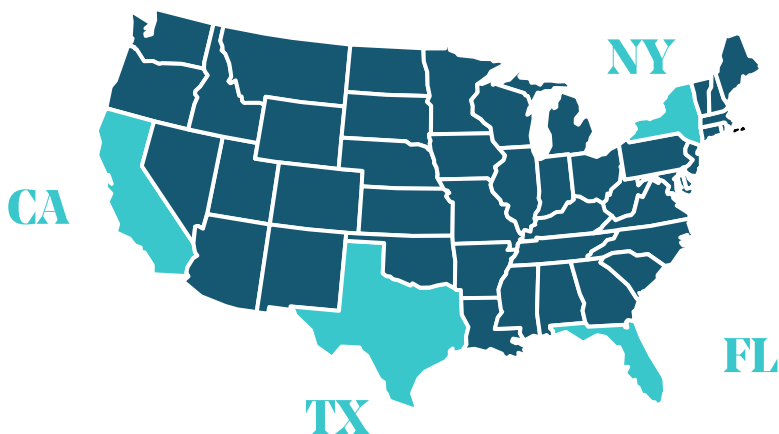
47

U.S. states
represented

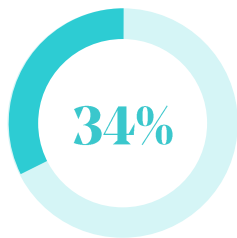
110

birth countries
represented

Respondents in both groups represented **a diverse set of demographics**, suggesting that the findings are prevalent across the U.S. immigrant population. Additionally, there are **significant demographic similarities** between the immigrant and U.S.-born respondent groups. These similarities strengthened the validity of our comparison of the two respondent groups.

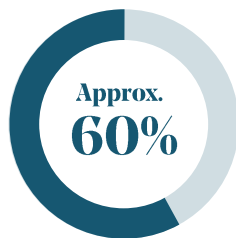


The **most common states of residency** for respondents in each population overlapped

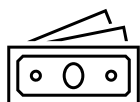


34%

The greatest percent of immigrants and U.S.-born citizens (34%) were in the **30 to 39-year-old** age group

Approx.
60%

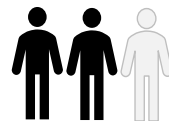
Approximately 60% of both populations are within the **18 - 39 age** range



A majority (49% - 58%) of immigrants and U.S.-born citizens reported a household income of

\$49,999 or lower

Close to
50%



of immigrants and U.S.-born citizens live in **2 - 3 person households**



New data reveals a high commonality in financial goals between immigrants and U.S.-born citizens, but a higher need among immigrants for financial and consumer products and services.

Why is this important?

Strength. Prosperity. Opportunity. Innovation. This is the immigrant story. For over two centuries, this story has been proven time and time again. From the cities we've built, to the technologies we've developed, immigrants have played a key role in building our nation. Immigrants continue to make our country stronger. In 2020, 77% of Americans across political parties agreed that immigration is a good thing for our country.

In a post-pandemic world and with a new set of geopolitical issues, our country is facing major economic challenges that undoubtedly depend on this population. National studies are predicting dangerous declines in population, shortages in labor, and rising costs. Without progressive reforms in immigration policy and for the existing U.S. immigrant population, and with other countries competing for immigrants, our country stands to weaken its sociocultural fabric and fall behind economically; this is a reality many other countries are already facing.

For U.S.-born citizens and immigrants alike, achieving common American goals such as financial security and growth can be an undeniably complicated and costly process.

For immigrants, the naturalization journey adds a layer of complication that can make navigating U.S. systems doubly challenging. Behind common American goals such as buying a home or car, obtaining secondary education, and building wealth, there are essential systems and institutions that assist in accessing these goals, including U.S. banking, credit, and labor markets. These American systems tend to have a higher bar for eligibility for immigrants that are not yet naturalized. A contributing factor is that immigrants' credentials and assets from their home countries may not transfer easily to these U.S. systems. Ultimately, the naturalization and consumer journeys of immigrants are in many ways linked. This unnecessarily results in an undue burden on immigrants in accessing the same financial goals that are key to building a full life in the U.S.

OPA aimed to compare the financial and consumer goals, needs, and challenges of U.S.-born citizens and immigrants and uncovered the following:

- ▶ Both populations share the same fundamental financial goals, but there is a disparity in reported needs and challenges that unequally impacts immigrants.
- ▶ Improving immigration status was a main priority and integral to achieving the common American goals that immigrants, like their counterparts, aspired towards.
- ▶ Increased access to certain products and services would result in higher utilization by both populations, but even more so within the immigrant population.



Critical findings:

6 out of 7

top **financial goals** **shared** by immigrant and U.S.-born respondents

38%

 of immigrants

reported **saving money** monthly compared to

24%

 of U.S.-born citizens

24%

 of U.S.-born citizens

reported their **debt increases** every month compared to

14%

 of immigrants

‘Completing the immigration process’

was the **highest ranked financial goal** for immigrants

Top 3 areas immigrants want more support in

Career development

Immigration assistance

Accessing exclusive / discounted products and services

Most needed financial and consumer products and services among immigrants

Health insurance

Education loans

401(k) plans

Auto loans

These findings cut across immigrants of all immigration statuses and across immigrants with different residency periods (number of years lived in the U.S.).

The overlap in goals and the disparities in needs reveal a large-scale opportunity to tap into an underserved immigrant market. Providing immigrants with more accessible financial and consumer products and services to achieve common financial goals ensures they can better integrate as future citizens and economically benefits the U.S.

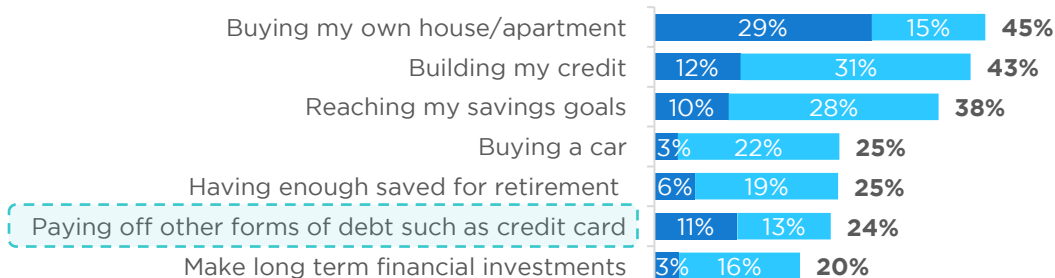
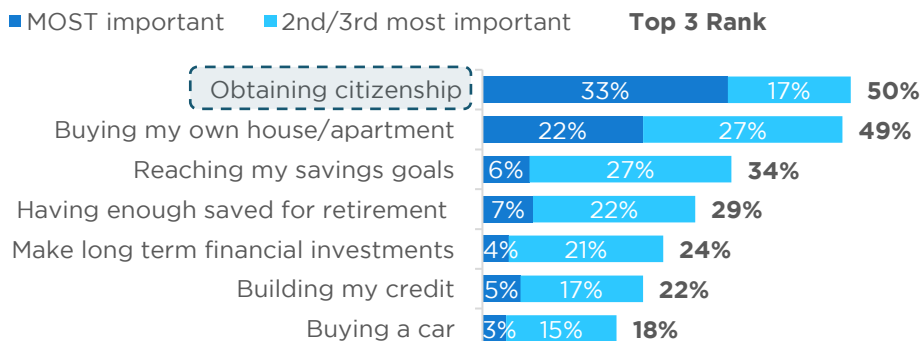


Financial Goals:

Immigrants and U.S.-born citizens are significantly more alike than different when it comes to their main financial goals. However, the few differences between them point to priorities that are population specific.

Q: Which of the following financial goals are most important to you within the next 5-10 years? Rank up to 3.

Top 7 Financial Goals Among Each Group



6 out of the 7 top ranked financial goals were shared by respondent populations. Immigrants included “achieving citizenship” in their top seven goals. Whereas U.S.-born citizens included “paying off other forms of debt” in their top seven goals. For immigrants, “obtaining citizenship” was the highest ranked financial priority with one in three respondents prioritizing this choice first. For citizens, their highest ranked priority was “buying a home”. When comparing percent of total rankings across U.S. immigrants and U.S.-born citizens, the most statistically significant differences are:

- Make long term financial investments (5% higher among Immigrants)
- Building my credit (21% higher among citizens)
- Paying off my student loan debt (10% higher among citizens)
- Buying a car (7% higher among citizens)

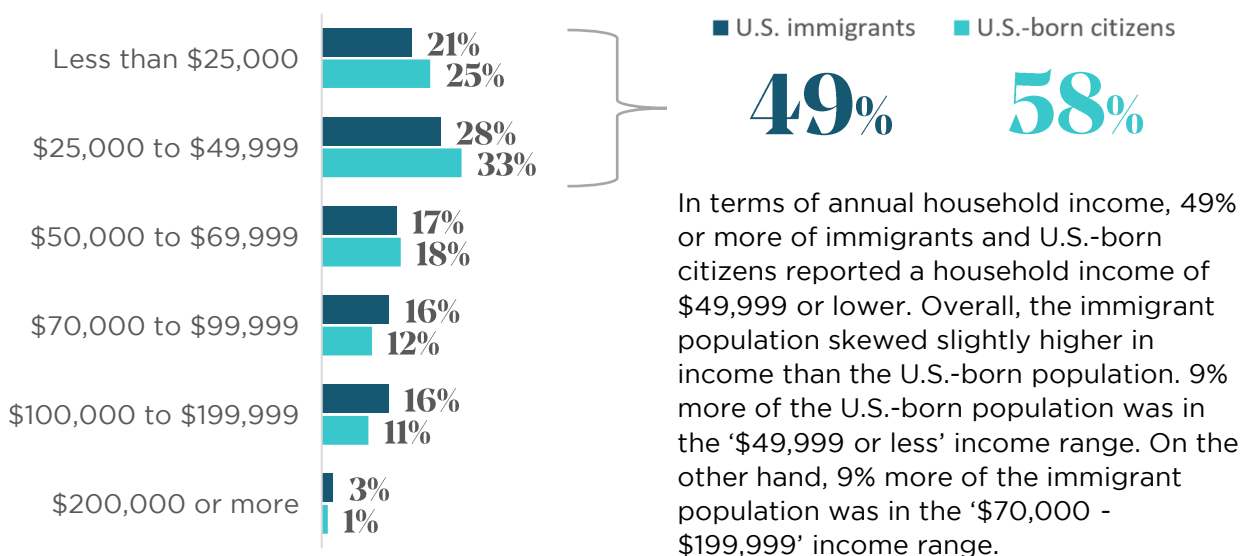
Overall, the data shows that immigrant respondents are most concerned about improving their immigration status and long-term investments. On the other hand, U.S.-born respondents are most concerned about managing their debt, whether good or bad.



Financial Status:

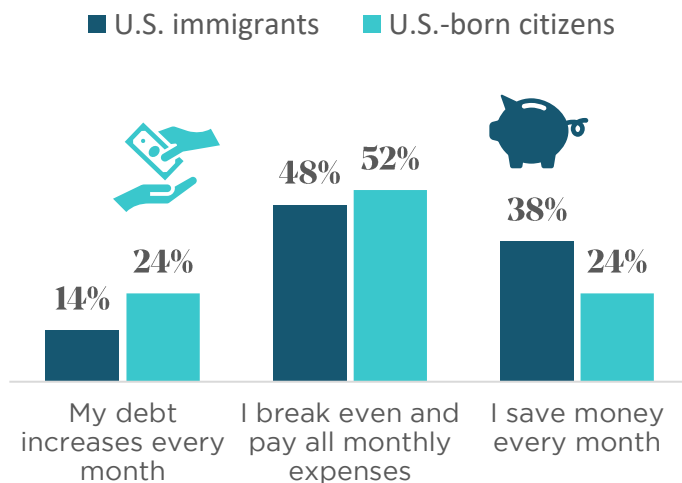
Immigrants skewed slightly higher in household income and were more likely to report saving money monthly. Whereas U.S.-born citizens were more likely to report that their debt increases every month.

Q: What is your combined annual household income (before taxes)?



Q: Which of the following financial descriptions best describes your current situation?

In terms of the populations' relationship to savings versus debt, the percent of respondents reporting savings was higher in the immigrant population and the percent of respondents reporting increasing debt was higher in the U.S.-born population. 38% of immigrants reported saving money monthly compared to 24% of U.S.-born. Whereas 24% of U.S.-born reported their debt increases every month compared to 14% of immigrants.





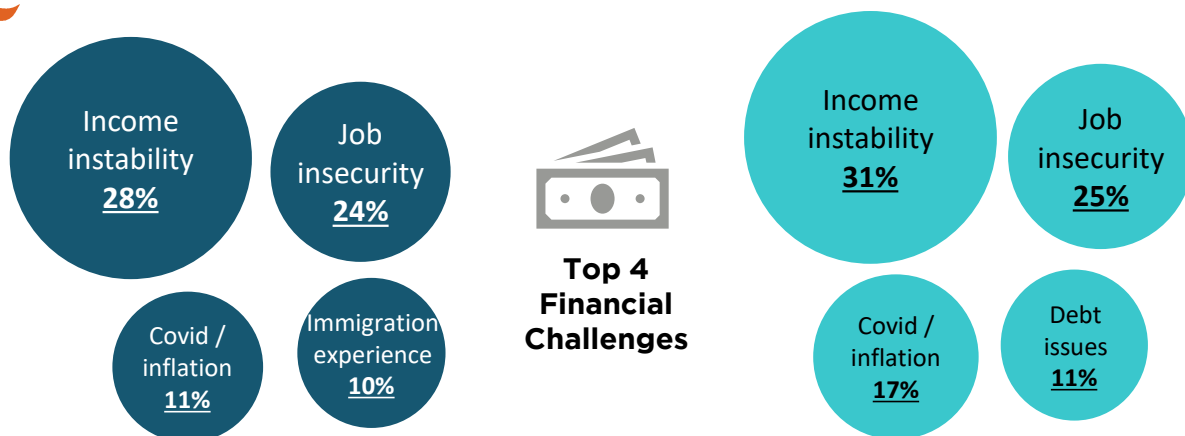
Financial & Career Challenges:

Immigrants and U.S.-born citizens face common financial and career challenges. However, immigrants emphasize immigration status challenges whereas U.S.-born emphasize debt issues.

■ U.S. immigrants ■ U.S.-born citizens

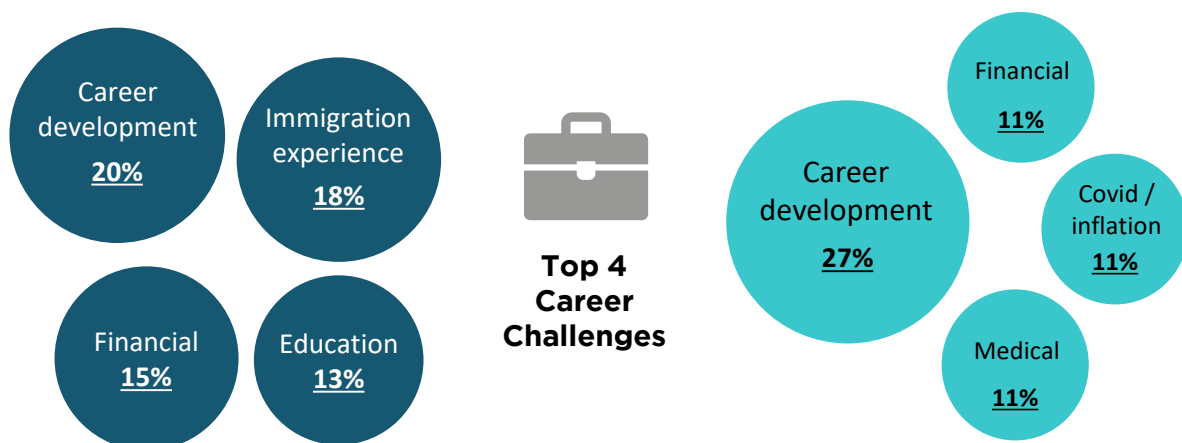
Base sizes vary (the analysis excluded “None” or “N/A”)

Q: What challenges, if any, are preventing you from achieving your financial goals?



Both populations reported ‘Income instability’, ‘Job insecurity’, and ‘Covid/Inflation’ as their top three challenges. However, in fourth place, immigrants reported their ‘immigration experience’ as a main challenge and U.S.-born respondents reported ‘debt issues’ as their main challenge. These population specific differences continue to expose that both populations have shared goals and challenges, but that immigrants’ main hurdle is their immigration status and for U.S.-born citizens debt is the main challenge.

Q: What challenges, if any, are preventing you from achieving your career goals?



OPA dug deeper into financial challenges by looking into career challenges, more specifically. The results further emphasized that immigration hurdles were a main challenge for immigrants.



Consumer Products and Services Needed:

Both populations report needs across specific categories. Immigrants report significantly higher needs in comparison to U.S.-born in education loans and health insurance.

Q: Do you currently utilize or need these products or services?

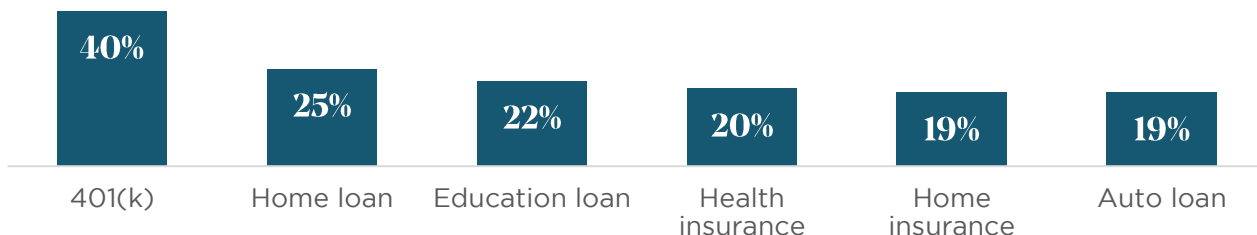
■ U.S. immigrants ■ U.S.-born citizens

Delta = % U.S. immigrants - % U.S.-born citizens

Bold and underlined denotes statistically significant deltas at the 95% confidence level

	Currently use	Delta	Don't use yet, but need	Delta	Don't need	Delta
Health insurance	U.S. immigrants: 71% U.S.-born citizens: 81%	<u>-11%</u>	U.S. immigrants: 20% U.S.-born citizens: 12%	<u>8%</u>	U.S. immigrants: 9% U.S.-born citizens: 6%	<u>3%</u>
Home insurance	U.S. immigrants: 46% U.S.-born citizens: 44%	3%	U.S. immigrants: 19% U.S.-born citizens: 19%	0%	U.S. immigrants: 35% U.S.-born citizens: 37%	-3%
Auto insurance	U.S. immigrants: 72% U.S.-born citizens: 75%	-3%	U.S. immigrants: 9% U.S.-born citizens: 8%	1%	U.S. immigrants: 18% U.S.-born citizens: 17%	2%
Credit Cards	U.S. immigrants: 70% U.S.-born citizens: 62%	<u>9%</u>	U.S. immigrants: 16% U.S.-born citizens: 17%	-1%	U.S. immigrants: 14% U.S.-born citizens: 22%	<u>-8%</u>
Phone plan	U.S. immigrants: 87% U.S.-born citizens: 88%	0%	U.S. immigrants: 6% U.S.-born citizens: 6%	-1%	U.S. immigrants: 7% U.S.-born citizens: 6%	1%
401(k)	U.S. immigrants: 31% U.S.-born citizens: 36%	-4%	U.S. immigrants: 40% U.S.-born citizens: 36%	4%	U.S. immigrants: 29% U.S.-born citizens: 28%	1%
Home loan	U.S. immigrants: 24% U.S.-born citizens: 22%	2%	U.S. immigrants: 25% U.S.-born citizens: 22%	3%	U.S. immigrants: 51% U.S.-born citizens: 56%	<u>-5%</u>
Auto loan	U.S. immigrants: 27% U.S.-born citizens: 30%	-3%	U.S. immigrants: 19% U.S.-born citizens: 15%	4%	U.S. immigrants: 54% U.S.-born citizens: 55%	-1%
Education loan	U.S. immigrants: 9% U.S.-born citizens: 18%	<u>-9%</u>	U.S. immigrants: 22% U.S.-born citizens: 14%	<u>9%</u>	U.S. immigrants: 69% U.S.-born citizens: 68%	0%

The top categories with the highest percentage of reported **need** (“do not use yet, but need”), within the immigrant population were:





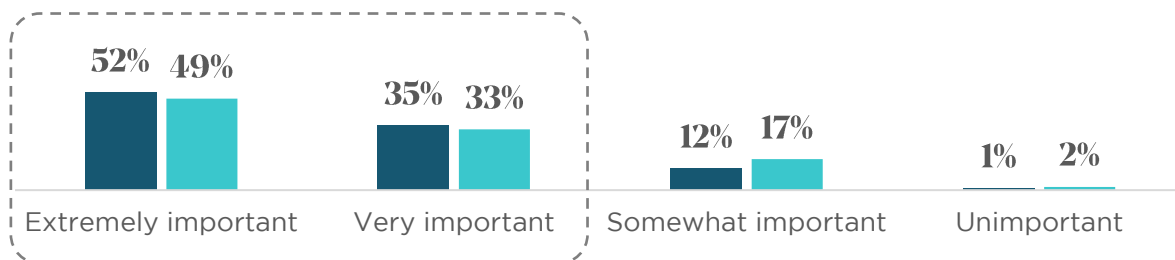
Increased Affordability:

Increasing the affordability of specific products and services would result in higher utilization by both populations, but even more so within the immigrant population.

■ U.S. immigrants ■ U.S.-born citizens

Q: How important are discounts on services and/or products to you?

A majority of both populations reported that discounts, in general, are “extremely important”.



Q: What is your level of interest in discounts within the following industries?

Top 3 Industry-Specific Discounts

Based on % selected “Extremely interested”

1. Food and restaurants (38%)
2. Health & wellness, and Travel (36% tied)
3. Education, and Immigration services (35% tied)

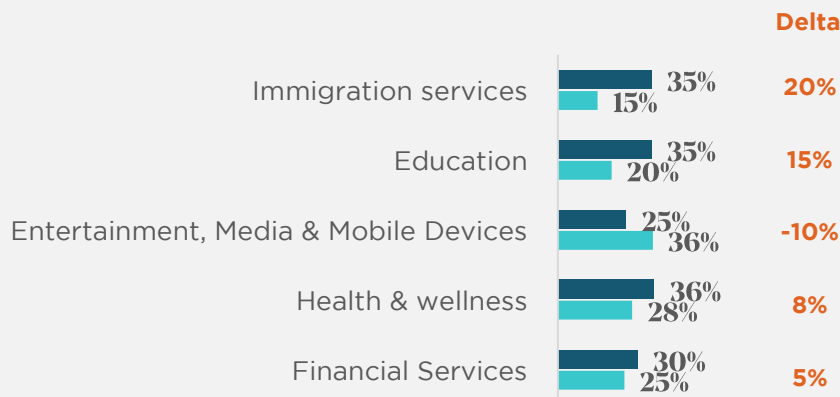
1. Food and restaurants (41%)
2. Entertainment, media, mobile devices (36%)
3. Travel (33%)

Both U.S.-born and immigrant respondents rated “Food and restaurants” the highest, with close to 40% of each group selecting “extremely interested”. Both populations also valued “Travel...” However, the two populations’ extreme interest in industry-specific discounts differed in several ways.



Most Notable Differences

Statistically significant deltas at the 95% CI





Additional Support Services:

Top 3 areas immigrants want more support in are career development, immigration assistance, and accessing exclusive/discounted products and services.

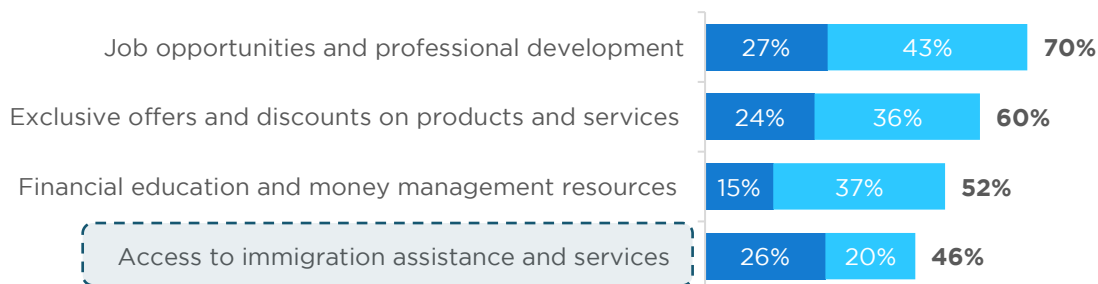
Q: Which of these programs would be most beneficial to you? Rank up to 3.

Top 4 Most Beneficial Programs

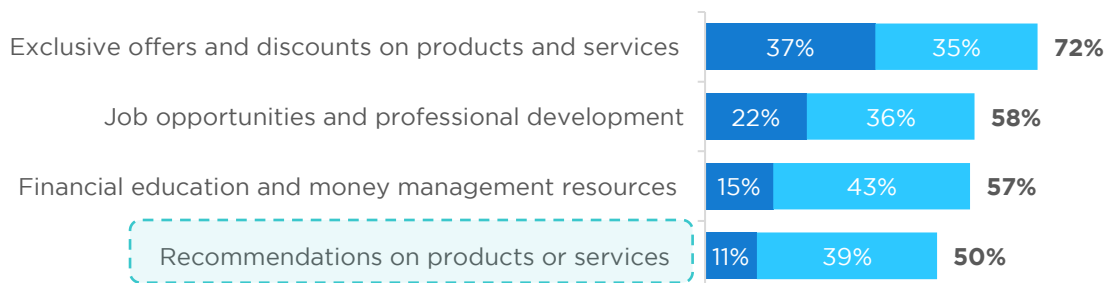
■ MOST important ■ 2nd/3rd most important

Top 3 Rank

U.S. immigrants



U.S.-born citizens



To get a clearer picture of what type of support services would help respondents most in the pursuit of their financial goals, OPA had them rank their preferred programs. For both immigrants and U.S.-born, “Job opportunities and professional development” and “Exclusive offers and discounts” were the top two program types. However, what each population had ranked in third position was tellingly different. Immigrants prioritized “access to immigration assistance” and the U.S.-born prioritized “Financial education and money management”. These results underscore the common theme throughout the survey that for immigrants, improving their immigration status is integral to their financial progress whereas for U.S.-born, managing debt is the priority.



Addressable Challenges and Next Steps:

Both immigrants and U.S.-born citizens stand to gain from increased accessibility of certain products and services, which in turn can have a positive impact nationally.

When it comes to common American aspirations, immigrants and U.S.-born citizens are significantly more alike than different. Not only did the data directly support this finding, but the survey also revealed that 50% of immigrant respondents have been living in the U.S. for 9+ years. This demographic finding indicates that immigrants have been rooted in their American life for a long time and that their needs are closer to U.S.-born citizens. Portrayals of immigrants as all newcomers and hiding in the shadows is far from the truth; on the contrary, just like U.S.-born citizens they aspire to integrate, earn a living, and build a life. However, despite sharing much of the same financial goals, it is evident from these survey results that each population struggles with a different set of challenges.

OPA's survey findings indicate that the differences in struggles is not a difference in motivation but rather because immigrants' starting points and access to tools are different from their U.S.-born counterparts. Immigrants reported a higher need than U.S.-born in key areas of products and services that are integral to financial progress in America. The biggest reported hurdle in their pursuit of common American goals was completing the naturalization process. Moreover, immigrant respondents confirmed that increased affordability would improve their utilization. On the other hand, for the U.S.-born, the biggest reported hurdle was that their pursuit of the same dreams leads to accumulation of debt and the burden of managing it.

Understanding the aspirations and challenges from both populations first-hand reveals a market opportunity and ethical call-to-action to create products and services that level the playing field. Our findings strongly support that both immigrants and U.S.-citizens will engage in and benefit from products and services that are accessible to immigrants and that mitigate the financial burden on current and future citizens.

OPA believes that supporting the underserved immigrant market at a larger-scale will not only advance immigrants within America's financial, labor, and consumer markets, but also economically benefit all Americans. OPA is leveraging these findings to identify partners in creating a marketplace aimed at the immigrant community with much needed services and products that will bridge the present market gaps and lift individuals, families, communities, and our nation.





■ U.S. immigrants ■ U.S.-born citizens

Gender

Male	28%	50%
Female	71%	50%
Other	1%	1%

Age

18-29	29%	28%
30-39	34%	34%
40-49	23%	28%
50-59	11%	7%
60-64	3%	4%

Average Number of People Living in Household (Including Self)

3.2	2.9
-----	-----

Top 5 U.S. States

CA	15%	TX	11%
FL	11%	FL	10%
TX	10%	NY	6%
NY	9%	CA	6%
NJ	4%	PA	5%

Years of Residency (U.S.)

Less than 3 years	19%
3 - 5 years	17%
6 - 8 years	15%
9 - 15 years	16%
16 years or more	33%

Citizenship / immigration Status

US citizen through naturalization	14%
Visa holder	14%
Green card holder	54%
Temporary Protected Status (TPS)	4%
Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA)	5%
Undocumented	9%

immigration Statuses of Household Members

US citizen through naturalization	36%
Visa holder	4%
Green card holder	3%
Temporary Protected Status (TPS)	1%
Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA)	1%
Undocumented	1%
No, none of the above	60%

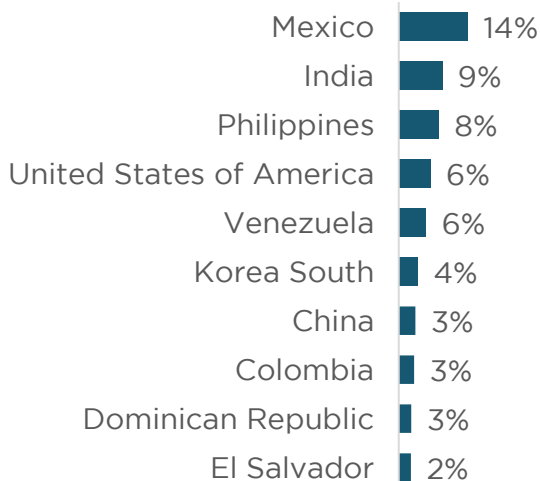


■ U.S. immigrants ■ U.S.-born citizens

Industries Working In

Retail	10%	10%
Health care/Social care	8%	7%
Self-employed/Business owner	6%	10%
Construction	5%	8%
Full-time student	7%	6%
Business/Finance/Insurance	6%	5%
Manufacturing/Order fulfillment/Warehouse services	4%	6%
Caregiver to dependents	6%	4%
Public sector/Education	5%	4%
Hospitality/Catering/Leisure services	3%	4%
Agriculture/Food production	2%	3%
Transport	2%	2%
Unemployed	26%	25%
Other	18%	19%

Top 10 Countries of Origin



Spanish, Hispanic, or Latino

