



IMMIGRANT YOUTH LANDSCAPE STUDY SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

SUMMER 2023



Immigrant **Welcome** Center

A legacy of Albert G. and Sara I. Reuben

GROWING IMMIGRANT YOUTH POPULATION

BACKGROUND

In Spring 2022, Immigrant Welcome Center (IWC) assessed the landscape of immigrant youth in **Marion County**, their needs, and the capacity of organizations that serve them. Immigrant youth are defined as **foreign-born** (those who are born outside the United States to non-U.S. citizen parents) children, youth, and young adults (pre-kindergarten through 25 years old).

DATA COLLECTION METHODS

Thirteen quantitative data sources informed the demographic landscape of immigrants and refugees in Marion County, including:

- U.S. Census Bureau
- KIDS Count Data Center
- Migration Policy Institute
- American Immigration Council
- Indiana Youth Institute

Additional data were collected through:

- 96 online survey responses
- 18 interviews
- 3 focus groups with 29 organizations

IWC acknowledges there are gaps and deficiencies in the publicly available data pertaining to immigrants and refugees, including time lags and likely undercounting, particularly for census data.



Where we are
TODAY

ASSESSMENT CONCLUSIONS

The following conclusions provided confirmation of the considerable challenges immigrants face in pursuit of an enhanced quality of life in the United States.

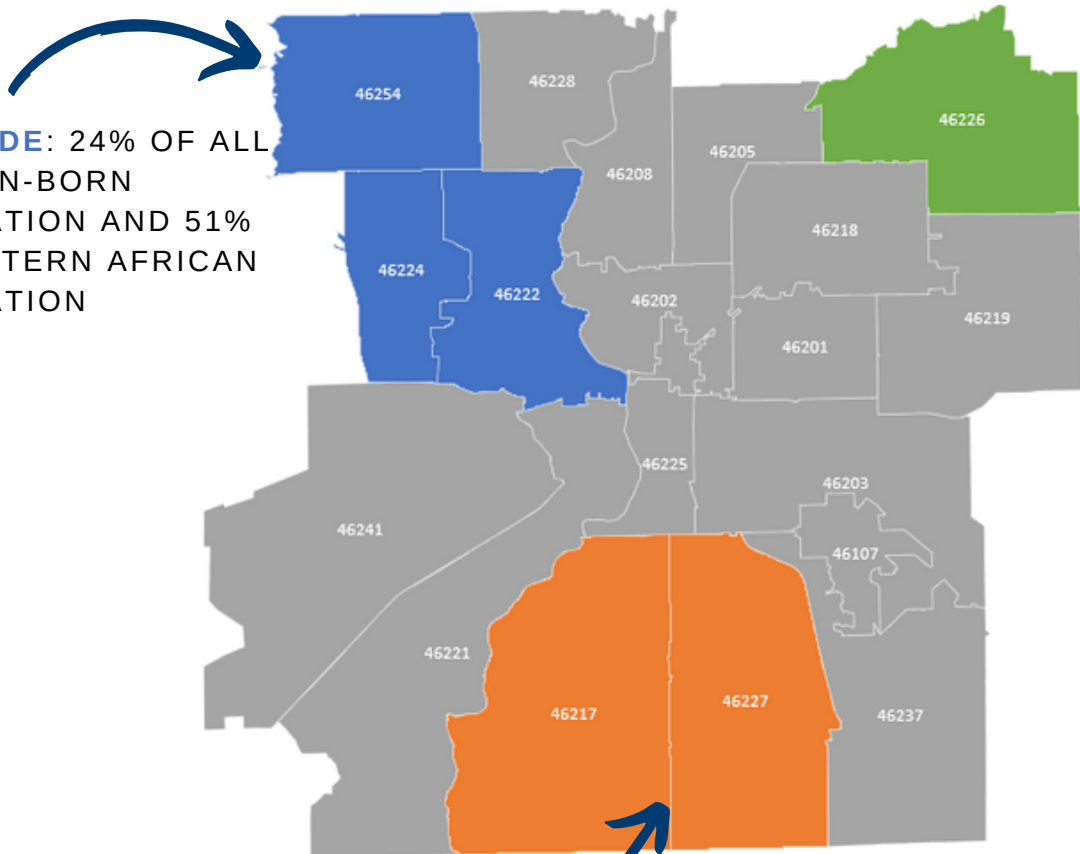
I. Demographic Information

- Public data indicate **significant growth of immigrant populations in Marion County and increasing diversity in the county's immigrant population over the past 10 years**. The largest immigrant population growth is from Southeast Asia and West Africa, although immigrants from Mexico and Central America continue to make up the largest portion of the county's foreign-born population.
- Of the census-counted population, the largest populations of youth under age 25 are immigrants from **Asia and Latin America**.



**10% FOREIGN-BORN
POPULATION
IN MARION COUNTY**

LAWRENCE: 5.4% OF ALL
FOREIGN-BORN
POPULATION



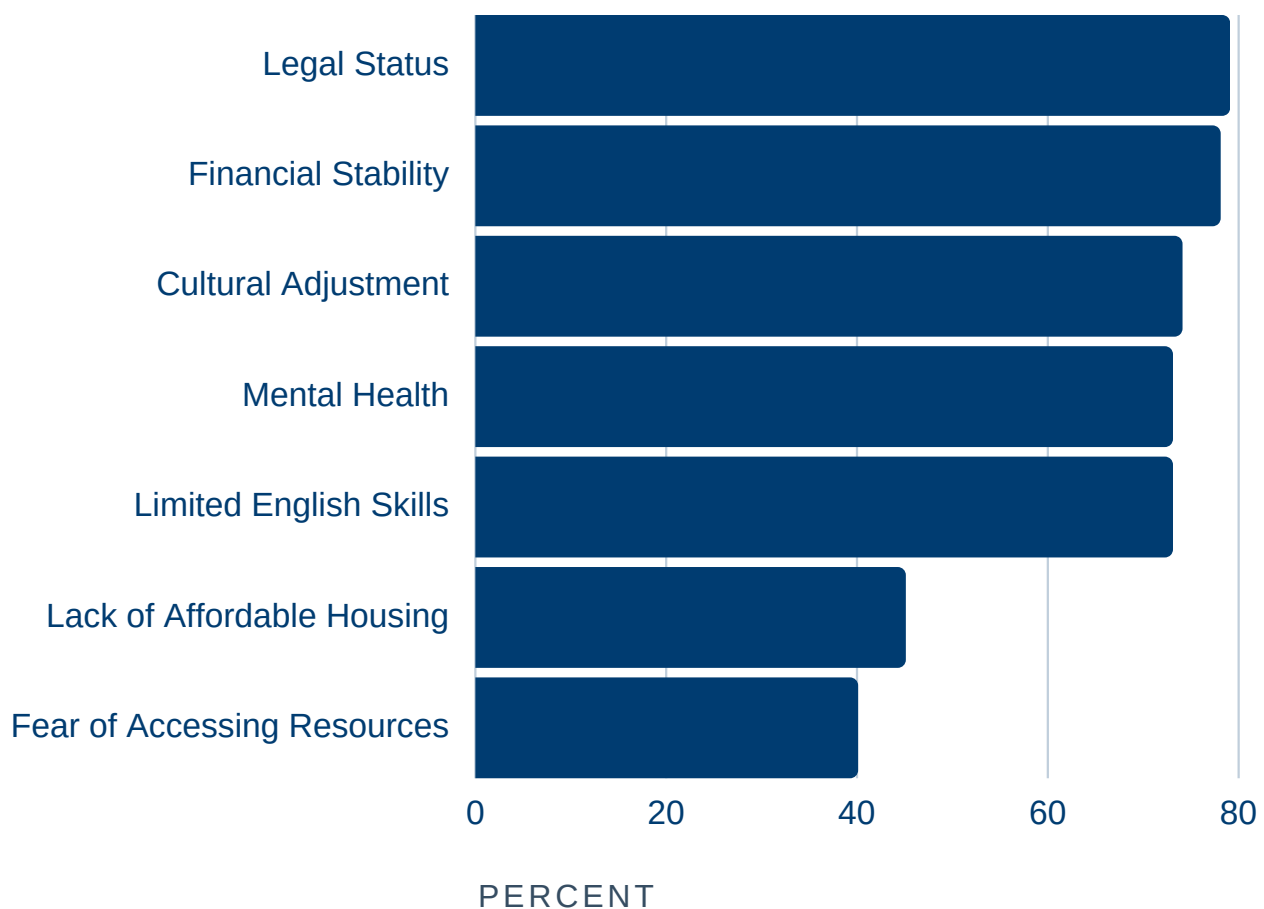
WESTSIDE: 24% OF ALL
FOREIGN-BORN
POPULATION AND 51%
OF WESTERN AFRICAN
POPULATION

SOUTHSIDE: 87% OF
BURMESE POPULATION

II. Challenges

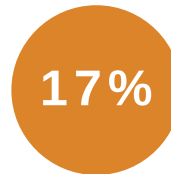
- **Focus group participants** shared that many issues affect immigrant youth because of the impact these issues have on the whole family, especially adult caregivers.
- Several **key informants** stated that **mental health issues, isolation,** and family violence had increased during the COVID-19 pandemic, and that these challenges persist.
- Interviewees noted their lack of knowledge regarding **where to find the right resources** and organizations that can provide support, with some fear of accessing resources.

TOP ISSUES IDENTIFIED AS SEVERELY AFFECTING IMMIGRANT YOUTH



III. Education and Health-specific Data

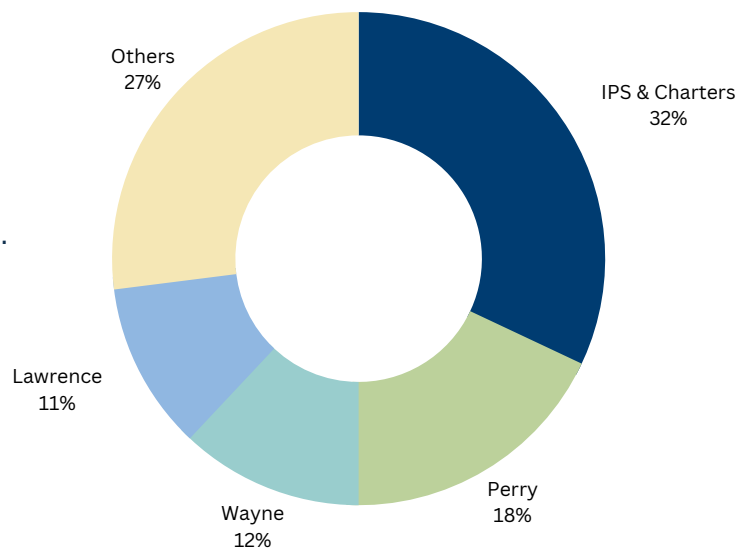
- **Challenges in educational attainment for the county’s foreign-born adults.** Many have not completed the equivalent of high-school and lack a college education.
- **Need for strategies should be developed to ensure that English Learners (EL) succeed academically.** The most recent data available from the Indiana Department of Education (2020-2021) show that standardized tests, ILEARN & IREAD-3, pass rates for EL students are 10 to 30 points lower than for non-EL students.
- Pre-kindergarten (pre-k) through 12th grade ELs are **concentrated in a few school corporations.** Among school corporations, **Perry Township** Schools had the highest concentration of EL students, followed by School Town of Speedway, Indianapolis Public Schools, and Wayne Township.
- **27 percent of Marion County’s foreign-born population lacks health insurance.**



OF PREK-12 PUBLIC-SCHOOL STUDENTS IN MARION COUNTY WERE ENGLISH LEARNERS (EL) IN 2020-2021



OF EL STUDENTS WERE AT 4 CORPORATIONS (AND CHARTERS LOCATED WITHIN THEIR BOUNDARIES)



IV. Organizational Capacity

Survey respondents, interviewees, and focus group participants state that **their organizations are undercapitalized for the scale of services that they provide to immigrants in the community.** Access to financial resources, time to implement programs and staff/volunteer training needs are among the named barriers to grow organizations’ capacities to serve immigrants.

CONCLUSION

IWC is grateful for the participants’ feedback that informed this assessment and looks forward to engaging with service providers to welcome the growing immigrant population in Central Indiana.

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