

A Diminished Future?

The Consequences of Immigration Restrictions for North Carolina’s Economy and Population

Heather Hunt

July 2026

Poverty Research Project
The Justice Institute
NC Central University School of Law

Table of Contents

<i>Introduction</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Key Findings</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Immigration Enforcement and North Carolina’s Vanishing Immigrant Workforce</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>The Rapid Decline in Immigration to North Carolina</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>The Stakes for Rural North Carolina</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>Conclusion</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>Note on Methodology and Data Reliability</i>	<i>12</i>
<i>Endnotes</i>	<i>13</i>

Introduction

Last fall, we published a report describing how North Carolina's increasingly diverse population, including people who have come here from other countries, has helped to drive the state's population growth and economic vitality. We also cautioned that increasingly restrictive immigration policies could undermine that growth, with serious, counterproductive and costly consequences for the state.

Signs of those consequences are now emerging. Heightened immigration enforcement has dramatically reduced the number of non-naturalized immigrants working or looking for work, disrupting the labor force, imperiling small businesses and creating more uncertainty for employers. At the same time, declining immigration is beginning to slow the population growth that has helped make North Carolina one of the fastest-growing states in the nation.

While the new data tell the story of a transformation unfolding in real time, they also reveal something broader. North Carolina's prospects—its population growth, jobs and economy—have become increasingly tied to its immigrant communities. What happens when the number of immigrants living and working in North Carolina is sharply reduced? The next few years will begin to answer that question, and, in the process, we might learn how connected the fortunes of all North Carolinians have become.

Key Findings

Labor force:

- After reaching a high of roughly 644,000 in December 2024, the number of non-citizen immigrant workers in the labor force fell through 2025 and then plummeted in spring 2026—a period coinciding with escalating immigration enforcement in North Carolina.
- In March 2026, the number of non-citizen workers fell to about 227,000, down 65% from the December 2024 peak. Two-thirds of non-citizen workers had withdrawn from the labor force.

A Diminished Future?

- Only non-citizen workers experienced these severe disruptions. This outcome was not the result of a broader economic downturn, but conditions that affected this one group alone.
- The unemployment rate for non-citizen immigrants spiked to 12.4% in April 2026, compared to 3.3% for US-born workers and 2.0% for naturalized workers. This suggests that some jobseekers were reentering the labor force but having a hard time finding work.

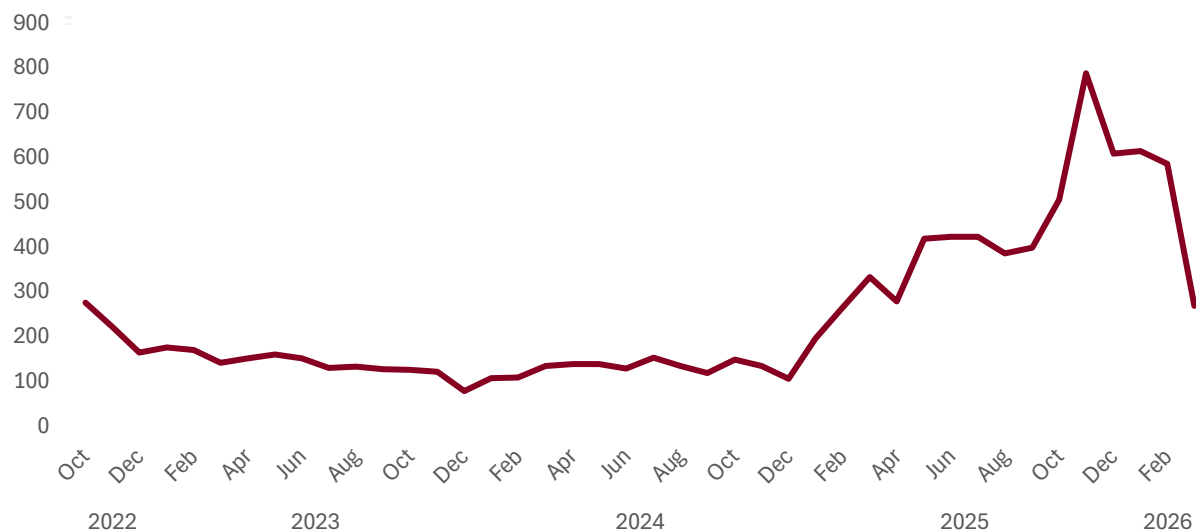
Immigration:

- In 2025, declining immigration to North Carolina led to slower population growth, breaking with the trend in recent years.
- Every county in the state saw a drop—or a net negative—in the number of immigrants moving in.
- 2025 is a preview of a much larger immigration slowdown projected for 2026 and 2027 that will affect employers, communities, and local and state governments.

Immigration Enforcement and North Carolina's Vanishing Immigrant Workforce

Immigration enforcement in North Carolina, and around the country, is already painting a picture of what happens to immigrant workers—and the larger economy—when ICE comes to town. ICE arrests in North Carolina rose steadily through the summer and fall of 2025, after holding steady in 2023 and 2024 (Figure 1). They surged in November, when ICE conducted highly publicized enforcement actions in Charlotte and the Raleigh-Durham area. Although arrests fell slightly between December and February 2025, they remained well above previous years' levels. Even after falling again in March 2026, monthly arrests were still roughly double those recorded in 2024.¹

Figure 1. Number of Immigration Arrests in North Carolina

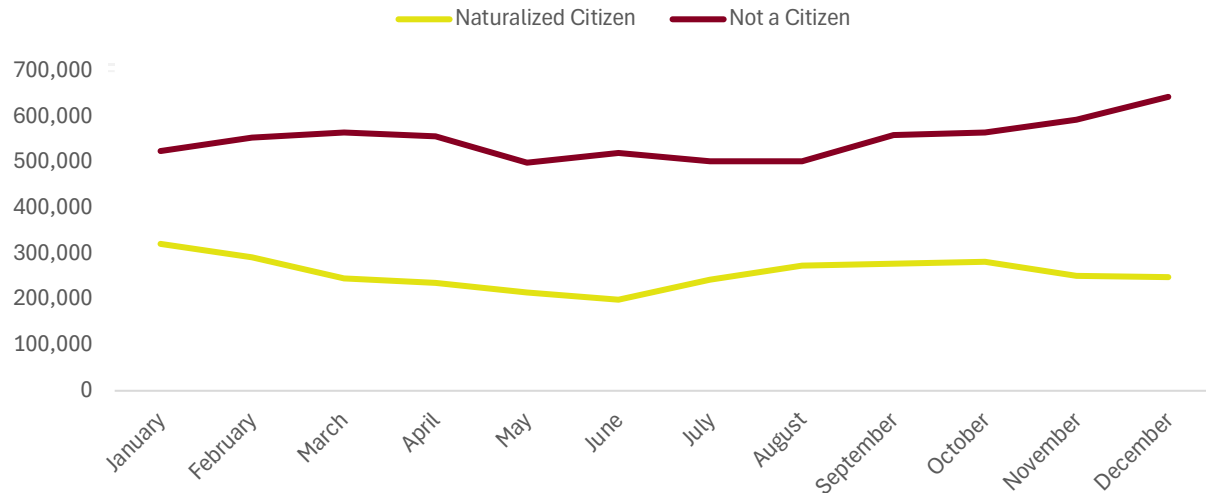


Source: Poverty Research Project analysis of Deportation Data Project data, <https://ice-arrests.apps.deportationdata.org/>.

Nationally, the tactics used by ICE also shifted. Most arrests in 2023 and 2024 were for people with criminal convictions. These arrests were often conducted in coordination with law enforcement agencies, out of the public eye. In 2025, as ICE activity intensified, it increasingly turned to community arrests, which occur in workplaces, hospitals and courthouses, on the street, near schools and in other public spaces. This new “shock and awe” approach increased the visibility of arrests and led to the detention of more people without criminal convictions.²

Many immigrant workers responded to increased enforcement by choosing to stay home from work. Data on the labor force—the number of people working or actively looking for work—show this disruption clearly. Before enforcement activity intensified, the number of immigrant workers in North Carolina’s labor force who were not naturalized citizens (“non-citizen” workers) had been growing steadily.³ Between January and December 2024, the non-citizen labor force increased by about 119,000, or 23%, climbing from under 525,000 in January to about 644,000 in December (Figure 2).

Figure 2. North Carolina's Naturalized Citizen and Non-Citizen Labor Force, 2024

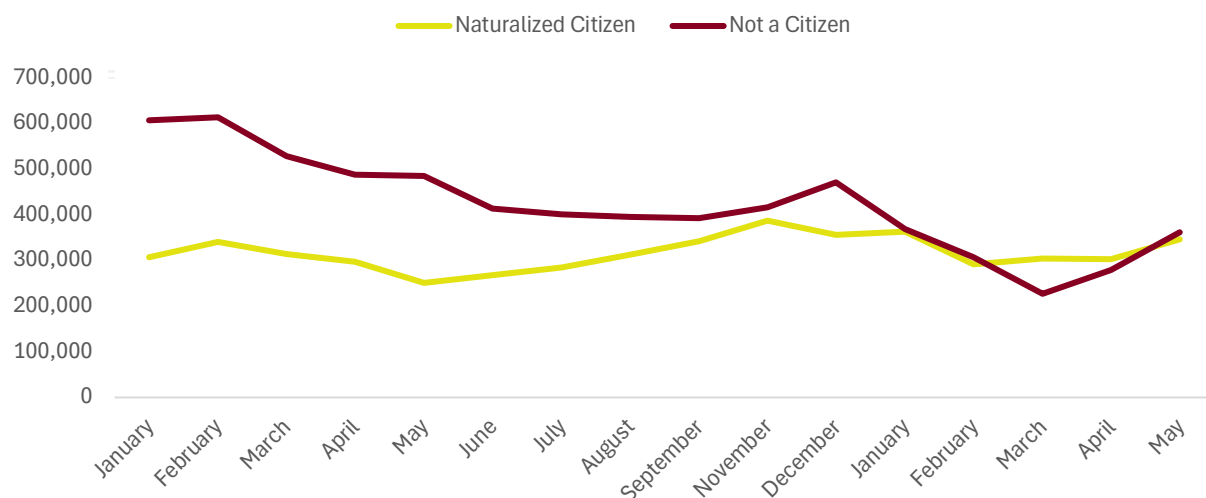


Note: Single-month estimates carry meaningful sampling variability, see Methodology section.

Source: Poverty Research Project analysis of Current Population Survey (CPS) basic monthly files, accessed via IPUMS CPS, University of Minnesota, www.ipums.org.

The non-citizen labor force remained stable through January and February 2025 but started sliding in March amid escalating immigration enforcement, and the attendant rise in political rhetoric and media attention. By August 2025, the non-citizen labor force had fallen below 400,000, a 39.1% drop from its December 2024 peak (Figure 3).

Figure 3. North Carolina's Naturalized Citizen and Non-Citizen Labor Force, 2025-May 2026



Note: Single-month estimates are subject to meaningful sampling variability, see Methodology section. CPS data are unavailable for October 2025 due to the government shutdown.

Source: Poverty Research Project analysis of Current Population Survey (CPS) basic monthly files, accessed via IPUMS CPS, University of Minnesota, www.ipums.org.

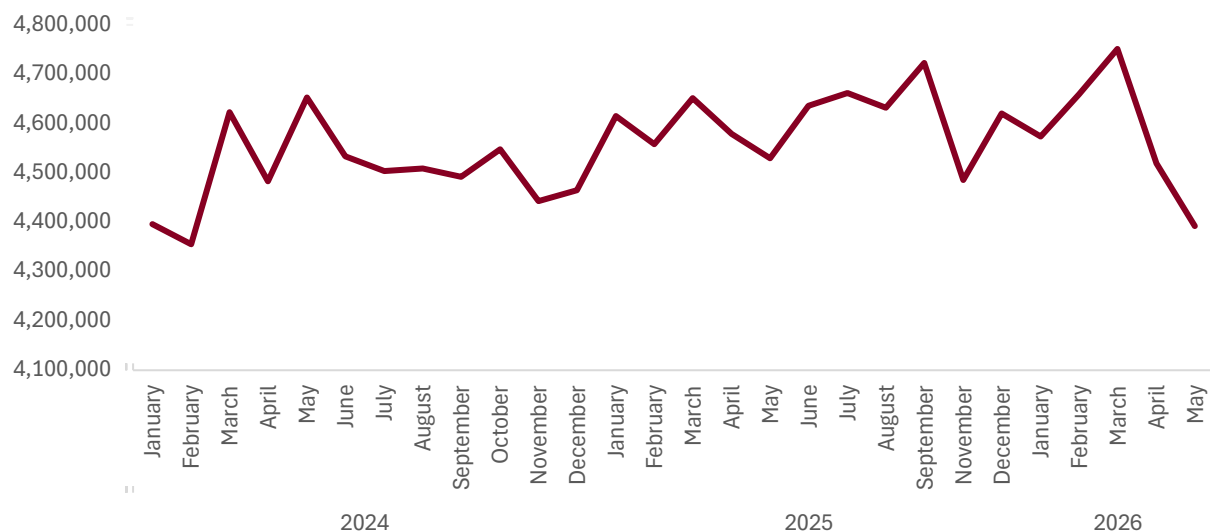
A Diminished Future?

The heightened enforcement actions in November 2025—the crackdown in Charlotte occurred mid-month—didn’t produce an immediate decline in the labor force. The number of non-citizen workers increased slightly in November and December—a small change that could be “noise” in the data—before falling to a new low in January 2026. By March 2026, approximately 227,000 non-citizen workers remained in North Carolina’s labor force, nearly 417,000 fewer than at the December 2024 peak. **Two out of every three non-citizen workers had vanished from the state’s labor force.**

Notably, throughout this period, neither the US-born nor the naturalized labor force showed anything resembling such a precipitous drop. The withdrawal of non-citizens from North Carolina’s labor force was not the result of broader weakening in the economy, but conditions that applied to this group only.

While the disappearance of hundreds of thousands of non-citizen workers from the state’s labor force is clear, its effect on US-born workers is harder to tease out. The absence of non-citizen workers certainly did not lead to a boom in employment for US-born workers. While the US-born labor force in February and March 2026 was 2.2% higher than the previous year, both April and May were lower—by 1.3% and 3.0%, respectively (Figure 4). Considering research showing enforcement-related job loss for both immigrant and US-born workers, these data warrant monitoring.⁴

Figure 4. North Carolina’s US-Born Labor Force, 2024-May 2026



Source: Poverty Research Project analysis of Current Population Survey (CPS) basic monthly files, accessed via IPUMS CPS, University of Minnesota, www.ipums.org.

The unemployment rate adds another dimension to this story. In 2024 and 2025, unemployment remained low and relatively flat regardless of citizenship status. The annual unemployment rate for US-born workers was 3.6% in 2024 and 3.7% in 2025; for non-citizen workers it was 3.6% and 2.7%, respectively. Month to month variation was modest and likely reflected seasonal patterns or sampling error.

In April 2026, that changed abruptly. **The unemployment rate for non-citizen workers spiked to 12.4% and remained high at 8.1% in May.⁵ No comparable increase occurred among US-born or naturalized workers, whose unemployment rates in April were 3.3% and 2.0%, respectively.⁶** This sudden increase suggests that many non-citizen workers who had withdrawn from work were reentering the job market but struggling to find employment, possibly due to broken hiring networks, cautious employers, or reduced opportunities.

North Carolina's recent experience demonstrates that immigration enforcement can lead to large-scale disruptions in the labor force that extend far beyond the number of people arrested. The enforcement campaigns in 2025 produced widespread fear, contributing to workers' decisions to stop going to work.⁷ A national survey in November 2025 reported that 75% of undocumented immigrants, half of lawfully present immigrants and nearly a third of naturalized citizens worried that they or a family member could be detained or deported.⁸

As the survey results indicate, the risk of detention and deportation reaches beyond undocumented immigrants. Many North Carolinians reside in mixed-status households, where a threat to one family member is a threat to the whole household. The Trump administration has revoked or narrowed legal protections for an increasing number of immigrants, exposing more individuals.⁹ Immigrants with legal status may not trust their documents to protect them, especially since ICE has indiscriminately detained US citizens and other individuals with legal status.¹⁰

The consequences of immigration enforcement can spread through the broader economy as well. ICE activity in Charlotte and other parts of the state was not on the scale seen in cities like Minneapolis or Los Angeles, but it still inflicted wide economic damage. Across the country, cities—like Charlotte—that experienced a surge in ICE enforcement saw employment fall by an average of .73%, relative to what employment would have been without the surge. Applying this figure to employment in the Charlotte metro area translates into a loss of roughly 10,000 jobs.¹¹

A Diminished Future?

Despite claims to the contrary, immigration crackdowns lead to employment losses for both US-born and immigrant workers.¹² Employers without enough workers are forced to reduce production, delay projects or shut down entirely, affecting a range of jobs held by both immigrant and US-born workers.¹³ A drop in the number of immigrant workers doesn't increase employment for US-born workers. Instead, the pie gets smaller for everyone.¹⁴

Enforcement campaigns also suppress consumer demand. Workers who stay home lose wages and cut back on spending. Families go into hiding. Other residents not personally affected by enforcement activity avoid public areas.¹⁵ Purchases of everything from groceries to gas to incidentals like dinner out slow and foot traffic drops.¹⁶ Studies of other surge cities estimate that crackdowns have led to hundreds of millions of dollars lost in business revenue and wages alone.¹⁷

News reports from Charlotte vividly reflect these broader economic effects. The immigrant community was already on edge before November's crackdown. "Latino residents, regardless of status, have been adjusting their daily lives," noted an article from September 2025. "Many have reduced shopping, gathering and other public activities."¹⁸ When ICE and Border Patrol appeared, businesses closed to protect themselves, their employees and their clientele.¹⁹ Local employers lost thousands of dollars a day.²⁰ After agents left, reports described "uncharacteristically quiet" streets and "shuttered businesses."²¹ "It's like a hurricane came through," observed the chair of the local Board of Education.²² While Charlotte was the epicenter of enforcement activity, similar scenes played out in Durham, Raleigh, Lenoir and other locations.²³

As North Carolina's population ages and the number of US-born workers shrinks, immigrant workers are increasingly essential.²⁴ Immigrants account for most of the state's employment growth in recent years.²⁵ Foreign-born North Carolinians generate billions of dollars in economic activity and are one in five Main Street business owners.²⁶ The conservative Cato Institute estimated that nationally immigrants paid **\$10.6 trillion** more in taxes than they received in benefits between 1994 and 2023, and the fiscal surplus they generated cut the federal deficit by a third.²⁷ In North Carolina, undocumented immigrants alone contribute more than \$692 million annually in state and local taxes.²⁸

Going forward, continued enforcement will destroy jobs, destabilize an already unpredictable business climate, slow economic growth, reduce tax revenues and weaken consumer spending.²⁹ The economic toll however should not overshadow the pain inflicted on immigrant families and communities across the state.

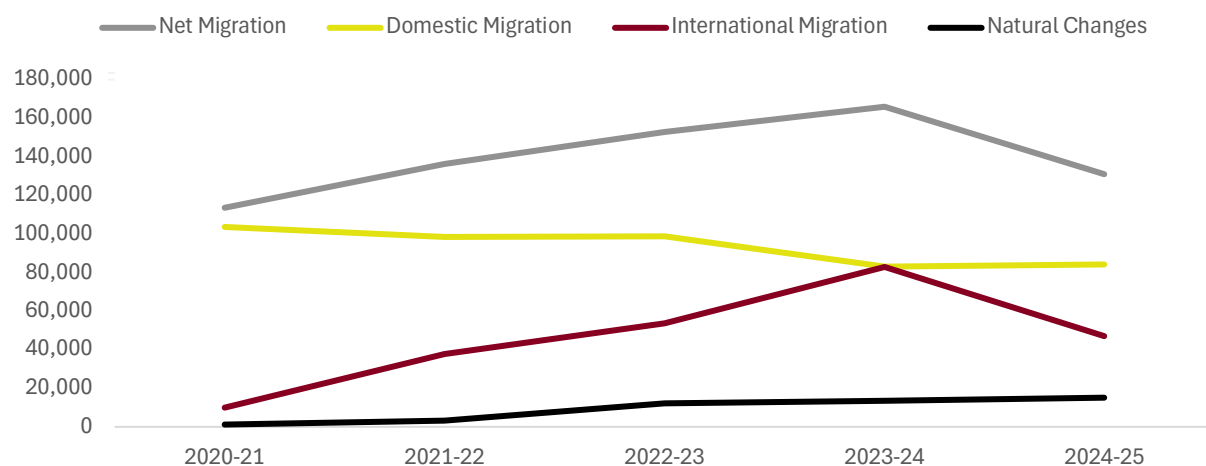
The Rapid Decline in Immigration to North Carolina

Anti-immigrant practices don't only target people who are already our neighbors, they disrupt the flow of immigration. As a result, North Carolina will soon have to grapple with a steep decline in the number of immigrants moving here in the first place.

As our report from last fall detailed, North Carolina's recent population growth has been propelled by immigration. In 2024, domestic and international migration (or immigration) accounted for 92% of population growth in the state. Immigrants represented 46% of all people moving to North Carolina. In that same report, we warned that a clampdown on immigration could dramatically stunt this growth, to the detriment of communities across the state. Newly released Census estimates suggest that process has begun.

Population estimates for the 12-month period ending July 1, 2025, show a sharp break from the growth seen in the previous year (Figure 5). Declining international migration explains all of the slowdown: total population growth fell by 34,305, while immigration fell by 36,009.

Figure 5. Annual Change in Components of Population Growth in North Carolina



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2025 Annual Population Estimates

A Diminished Future?

Other sources of population growth were unable to fill the gap left by the drop in immigration and are unlikely to provide a substantial boost in the future. Domestic migration peaked in 2021 and has been flat the past two years. Growth through natural changes—the number of births minus deaths—remains small compared to migration and is projected to turn negative by 2033.³⁰

The 2025 estimates likely represent the start of a broader collapse in immigration that could have serious consequences for North Carolina, not just in terms of population growth but for jobs, businesses, and local and state governments. The Census Bureau has projected that *national* immigration for the period from July 1, 2025, to June 30, 2026, could be as low as 321,000 people, down from 2.7 million in 2024.³¹ If the number of immigrants coming to North Carolina declines at the same rate, it could fall to fewer than 10,000 people this year. Immigration is expected to remain low for years to come.³²

North Carolina as a whole will continue to attract new residents from other states. It is on track to become the nation's seventh-largest state by population in the early 2030s. However, the state's urban counties are expected to absorb 80% of this growth.³³ Thirty-four of the state's 78 rural counties are projected to lose population by 2030—continuing a multi-decade trend and affecting communities across broad swaths of eastern and western North Carolina.³⁴

Every one of North Carolina's 100 counties experienced slower growth—or net loss—in the immigrant population during the twelve months preceding July 1, 2025. According to an analysis by UNC's Kenan Institute, some sectors in the state's metro areas—particularly manufacturing, construction, and leisure and hospitality—are already experiencing labor shortages as immigration declines.³⁵

The Stakes for Rural North Carolina

Smaller rural counties are especially vulnerable to the disruptions in employment and population discussed here. Unlike larger urban counties that sustain a wider range of industries and a deep pool of prospective employees, rural counties often feature a few key employers who draw on a much smaller workforce. As a result, a small reduction in the number of available workers, a few employers forced to limit operations, or a handful of businesses closing their doors can have a more profound effect in rural communities than in the state's urban centers.

A Diminished Future?

Although important across the state, industries like construction and manufacturing, which employ a disproportionate share of immigrant workers, play an especially prominent role in North Carolina's rural counties.³⁶ Agriculture employs a small share of rural residents but relies heavily on immigrant labor and contributes more than \$111 billion to the state's economy.³⁷

Likewise, small changes in population are magnified in counties with fewer people. As our previous report described, population decline presents multiple challenges for counties already struggling to retain residents, especially those with aging populations and higher poverty rates.³⁸ The presence of new neighbors, new taxpayers, new business owners—even at a small scale—has a greater impact in rural counties, helping to stem population loss, stabilize the population and build communities back up.

Conclusion

Over the past thirty years, the remarkable growth in North Carolina's population and economy have taken place alongside rapid growth in its immigrant population. During that time, immigrants have become woven into the fabric of the state's communities, workforce and economy. How North Carolina responds to the challenges and pressures facing its immigrant communities will shape the kind of place it will be in the future.

Note on Methodology and Data Reliability

The data source for labor force by citizenship status is from the Current Population Survey (CPS) monthly basic files, accessed via IPUMS CPS (University of Minnesota). Analysis covers January 2020 through May 2026. For this analysis, citizenship groups are defined using the IPUMS CITIZEN variable. “US-born” includes those born in the United States, born in US territories, and born abroad to US citizen parents. Naturalized citizens and non-citizens are separate categories. Employment status is defined using the EMPSTAT variable. The labor force includes all employed and unemployed persons; those not in the labor force are excluded. The unemployment rate is calculated as weighted unemployed divided by weighted labor force, consistent with the BLS U-3 methodology. All estimates use the WTFINL person weight.

Annual figures represent averages across available months. Data are not seasonally adjusted. Year-over-year comparisons of equivalent months are used where appropriate to control for seasonal variation. The 2026 figures cover January through May only and are not directly comparable to full-year estimates. Data for October 2025 are not available due to the shutdown of the federal government.

Sample-based estimates like the Current Population Survey (CPS) are subject to sampling error. Sampling error usually increases with smaller groups. Because this analysis examines subgroups at the state level, the error for any given month might be high. Additionally, the survey response rate among foreign-born immigrants has been declining. This report addresses that limitation by prioritizing year-over-year, same-month comparisons over single-month levels, when possible, since this approach better isolates genuine shifts in labor market conditions.³⁹

The term “workers” is used as shorthand for people participating in the labor force—that is, people with jobs and people looking for a job.

Endnotes

¹ As of the publication of this report, ICE arrests were again surging nationally. See, Hamed Aleaziz, “Immigrant Arrests Surge to 10,000 in 5 Days as ICE Clamps Down,” U.S., *The New York Times*, July 1, 2026, <https://www.nytimes.com/2026/07/01/us/politics/ice-immigrant-arrests-surge.html>.

² Chloe N. East et al., *ICE Arrests Across Trump’s First and Second Terms: Variation in Targeting, Method, and Geography*, Working Paper no. 34794 (National Bureau of Economic Research, 2026), https://www.nber.org/system/files/working_papers/w34794/w34794.pdf; Marcela Escobari et al., *Shock, Awe, and Economic Fallout: The Employment Effects of ICE Enforcement in US Cities* (2026), <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/ice-enforcement-employment-effects-us-cities/>.

³ Immigrants who are not naturalized citizens include legal permanent residents, visa holders, asylum seekers and DACA recipients as well as undocumented individuals. Although their status may shield some immigrants, the legality of their presence is contingent and potentially revocable, as shown by the Trump administration’s move to de-document people granted protective status. See, for example, Dara Lind, “Supreme Court ‘De-Documents’ 350,000 Venezuelans – And Keeps Everyone In The Dark About What’s Next,” *American Immigration Council*, May 21, 2025, <https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/blog/supreme-court-de-documents-350000-venezuelans/>; Robert Tait, “Trump Ends Deportation Protections for People from Honduras and Nicaragua,” US News, *The Guardian*, July 7, 2025, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2025/jul/07/trump-tps-honduras-nicaragua>.

⁴ Daniel Costa and Ben Zipperer, “Unemployment Has Increased for U.S.-Born Workers in the Face of Mass Deportations: Trump’s Draconian Immigration Enforcement Is Harming All Workers,” *Economic Policy Institute*, April 3, 2026, <https://www.epi.org/blog/unemployment-has-increased-for-u-s-born-workers-in-the-face-of-mass-deportations-trumps-draconian-immigration-enforcement-is-harming-all-workers/>.

⁵ As with other monthly, subgroup-level estimates in this report, these figures are subject to sampling variability; see Note on Methodology and Data Reliability. That these numbers represent a genuine shift is corroborated by the magnitude and persistence of the change from previous months, the labor force decline at that time, and contemporaneous reporting from Charlotte and elsewhere.

⁶ Sarah Flood et al., “IPUMS CPS,” Basic Monthly Survey, version 13.0, Minneapolis, MN, 2025, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.18128/D030.V13.0>.

⁷ Jesse Bogan, “‘To Scare People to Death’: Former ICE Director Reviews Trump’s Immigration Tactics,” *The Marshall Project*, October 29, 2025, <https://www.themarshallproject.org/2025/10/29/ice-immigration-tactics-obama-trump>.

⁸ Shannon Schumacher et al., “KFF/New York Times 2025 Survey of Immigrants: Worries and Experiences Amid Increased Immigration Enforcement,” *KFF*, November 18, 2025, <https://www.kff.org/racial-equity-and-health-policy/kff-new-york-times-2025-survey-of-immigrants-worries-and-experiences-amid-increased-immigration-enforcement/>.

⁹ Aaron Reichlin-Melnick, “Supreme Court Allows Trump to Strip TPS, Turn Away Asylum Seekers Arriving at the Border in Pair of New Immigration Rulings,” *American Immigration Council*, June 25, 2026, <https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/blog/supreme-court-immigration-ruling-tps-asylum-seekers/>.

¹⁰ Heidi Altman, “ICE Is Detaining Indiscriminately. And Releasing Almost No One.,” *National Immigration Law Center*, October 21, 2025, <https://www.nilc.org/articles/ice-is-detaining-indiscriminately-and-releasing-almost-no-one/>; Nicole Foy and Maney, “More Than 170 U.S. Citizens Have Been Held by Immigration Agents. They’ve Been Kicked, Dragged and Detained for Days.,” *ProPublica*, October 16, 2025, <https://www.propublica.org/article/immigration-dhs-american-citizens-arrested-detained-against-will>.

¹¹ Escobari et al., *Shock, Awe, and Economic Fallout: The Employment Effects of ICE Enforcement in US Cities*, app. C.

¹² In addition to Escobari et al., see Elizabeth Cox and Chloe N. East, *Labor Market Impact of ICE Activity in Trump 2.0*, Working Paper no. 35129 (National Bureau of Economic Research, 2026), <https://www.frbsf.org/wp-content/uploads/el2026-05.pdf>; Daniel J. Wilson and Xiaoqing Zhou, “Unauthorized Immigration Effects on Local Labor Markets,” *FRBSF Economic Letter*, February 17, 2026, <https://www.frbsf.org/wp-content/uploads/el2026-05.pdf>; Ben Zipperer, *Trump’s Deportation Agenda Will Destroy Millions of Jobs: Both Immigrants and U.S.-Born Workers Would Suffer Job Losses, Particularly in Construction and Child Care* (Economic Policy Institute, 2025),

<https://www.epi.org/publication/trumps-deportation-agenda-will-destroy-millions-of-jobs-both-immigrants-and-u-s-born-workers-would-suffer-job-losses-particularly-in-construction-and-child-care/>.

¹³ Robert Lynch et al., *Warning Signs of the Economic Harms from Deportations* (SSRN, 2025), <https://doi.org/https://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.5384966>; Ben Zipperer, “Trump’s Deportation Agenda Will Destroy Millions of Jobs,” Economic Policy Institute, July 10, 2025, <https://www.epi.org/publication/trumps-deportation-agenda-will-destroy-millions-of-jobs-both-immigrants-and-u-s-born-workers-would-suffer-job-losses-particularly-in-construction-and-child-care/>. For news stories of the employment effects of deportation, see Nicolas Baintrub, “More Arrests, Fewer Jobs: Immigration Raids Destroyed Thousands of Jobs in North Carolina,” *Enlace Latino NC*, June 2, 2026, <https://enlacialatinonc.org/en/More-arrests--less-employment%3A-Immigration-raids-destroyed-thousands-of-jobs-in-North-Carolina/>; Ahmed Jallow, “Immigration Arrests Left NC Restaurants Short-Staffed and Job Sites Idle, Owners Say,” *NC Newsline*, February 20, 2026, <https://ncnewsline.com/2026/02/20/immigration-arrests-left-nc-restaurants-short-staffed-and-job-sites-idle-owners-say/>.

¹⁴ Wilson and Zhou, “Unauthorized Immigration Effects on Local Labor Markets.”

¹⁵ “Immigration Enforcement Fears Are Changing US Consumer Behavior,” YouGov, November 18, 2025, <https://yougov.com/en-us/articles/53408-immigration-enforcement-fears-are-changing-us-consumer-behavior>.

¹⁶ Exequiel Hernandez, *ICE-Ing the Economy: Immigration Enforcement Under Trump 2.0 and Local Economic Activity* (SSRN, 2026), <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.6759278>.

¹⁷ City of Minneapolis, Updated Impact Assessment & Recovery Needs Overview: Operation Metro Surge (2026), <https://www.minneapolismn.gov/media/-www-content-assets/documents/Updated-Impact-Assessment--Recovery-Needs-Overview---June-10-2026.pdf>; Shannon M. Sedgwick et al., Economic Impacts of Federal Immigration Enforcement in Los Angeles County (Los Angeles County Economic Development Corporation Institute for Applied Economics, 2026), <https://opportunity.lacounty.gov/wp-content/uploads/2026/02/LAEDCxDEO-Economic-Impacts-of-Federal-Immigration-Enforcement.pdf>.

¹⁸ Mavie Marcos, “Fallout: The Growing Economic Cost of a Disappearing Community,” *Race & Equity, WFAE*, September 15, 2025, <https://www.wfae.org/race-equity/2025-09-15/fallout-the-growing-economic-cost-of-a-disappearing-community>.

¹⁹ Adriano Florido, “Border Patrol Left Charlotte. The Damage Stayed Behind,” *Immigration, NPR*, December 10, 2025, <https://www.npr.org/2025/12/10/g-s1-101471/border-patrol-left-charlotte-the-damage-stayed-behind>.

²⁰ Vivian Chen, “Charlotte Retailers Pinched as Immigration Crackdown Slows Workers,” *Immigration, VisaVerge*, November 21, 2025, <https://www.visaverge.com/news/charlotte-retailers-pinched-as-immigration-crackdown-slows-workers/>.

²¹ Florido, “Border Patrol Left Charlotte. The Damage Stayed Behind”; Matthew Memrick, “Fear, Closed Doors and Lost Revenue for Charlotte Businesses,” *QCity Metro*, November 20, 2025, <https://www.qcitymetro.com/news-buzz/operation-charlottes-web-fear-closed-doors-and-lost-revenue-for-charlotte-businesses-711bf46>.

²² Florido, “Border Patrol Left Charlotte. The Damage Stayed Behind.”

²³ Dave Faherty, “Border Patrol Spreads from Charlotte to NC Foothills,” WSOC TV, November 19, 2025, <https://www.wsoc.tv/news/local/border-patrol-spreads-charlotte-nc-foothills/C33PQ3YGNZC6BF5TS4D7CDOH2A/>; Suzanne Gamboa and Julia Ainsley, “Immigration Arrests Reported in Raleigh-Durham Area, Though Large-Scale Operation Hasn’t Materialized,” *NBC News*, November 19, 2025, <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/immigration-arrests-reported-raleigh-durham-area-though-large-scale-op-rcna244584>; Shaun Gallagher, “Triangle Immigration Sweep: Videos Show Detentions as Durham Businesses Report Staffing Shortage,” *WRAL News*, November 20, 2025, 198, <https://www.wral.com/news/local/triangle-immigration-sweep-durham-detentions-businesses-report-staffing-shortage/>.

²⁴ “Demographic Outlook: North Carolina Top Destination of Domestic Migrants,” NC OSBM, April 7, 2026, <https://www.osbm.nc.gov/facts-figures/population-demographics/demographic-outlook>.

²⁵ Jonathan Guarine, “An Update on Immigration and North Carolina’s Labor Market,” March 3, 2026, <https://www.commerce.nc.gov/news/the-lead-feed/update-immigration-and-north-carolinas-labor-market>.

²⁶ Immigration Research Initiative et al., “Immigrants Are a Vital Part of North Carolina’s Future,” accessed July 20, 2026, https://immresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/IRI-EPI_One-Pager_NC.pdf.

²⁷ David J. Bier et al., *Immigrants’ Recent Effects on Government Budgets: 1994–2023* (Cato Institute, 2026), <https://www.cato.org/white-paper/immigrants-recent-effects-government-budgets-1994-2023>.

²⁸ Carl Davis et al., *Tax Payments by Undocumented Immigrants* (Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy, 2024), <https://itep.org/undocumented-immigrants-taxes-2024/>.

²⁹ William H. Frey, “America Is Turning 250. Here’s How Immigration May Shape Its Future,” *Brookings*, June 25, 2026, <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/how-immigration-may-shape-america-after-250/>.

³⁰ NC OSBM, “Demographic Outlook: North Carolina Top Destination of Domestic Migrants.”

³¹ US Census Bureau, “New Population Estimates Show Historic Decline in Net International Migration,” Census.Gov, January 27, 2026, <https://www.census.gov/newsroom/blogs/random-samplings/2026/01/historic-decline-in-net-international-migration.html>. Researchers from Brookings estimate that net immigration will turn negative in 2026. See, Tara Watson, *The Impact of Immigrants on the US Economy* (Brookings, 2026), <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/the-impact-of-immigrants-on-the-us-economy/>.

³² Congressional Budget Office, *An Update to the Demographic Outlook, 2025 to 2055* (Congressional Budget Office, 2025), <https://www.cbo.gov/publication/61735>.

³³ NC OSBM, “Demographic Outlook: North Carolina Top Destination of Domestic Migrants.”

³⁴ North Carolina Office of State Budget & Management, Vintage 2025 Population Projections

³⁵ Sarah Dickerson, “Addressing Immigrant Labor Declines in North Carolina,” *Kenan Institute of Private Enterprise*, May 28, 2026, <https://kenaninstitute.unc.edu/commentary/addressing-immigrant-labor-declines-in-north-carolina/>.

³⁶ Poverty Research Project analysis of 2024 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimate, S2404.

³⁷ Poverty Research Project analysis of 2024 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimate, S2404; Hannah Dankbar et al., “New North Carolina Local Farms and Food Profiles,” *Center for Environmental Farming Systems*, July 29, 2025, <https://cefs.ncsu.edu/2022-nc-local-farms-and-food-profiles/>.

³⁸ Heather Hunt, *Population Change, Immigration and the Future of Rural North Carolina* (NC Central University, The Justice Institute, 2025), <https://myeol.nccu.edu/sites/default/files/2026-02/Paper-of-Poverty-Research-Project.pdf>.

About the Poverty Research Project

The Poverty Research Project is part of The Justice Institute at North Carolina Central University School of Law. Its mission is to examine and document poverty and poverty-related issues in North Carolina, raise awareness of barriers to economic security, serve as a resource for individuals and groups interested in these topics, and provide training and mentorship for students at NCCU and elsewhere.

Website: <https://www.nccu.edu/law/academics/poverty-research-project>

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/nccu-poverty-research-project/about/>

Bluesky: <https://bsky.app/profile/nccupovresproject.bsky.social>