

# WISCONSIN STATE PROFILE

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## NEWAMERICAN VOTERS 2020



**VOCES**  
DE LA FRONTERA



**NPNA**  
NATIONAL PARTNERSHIP  
for NEW AMERICANS

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Wisconsin will be one of the most critical states during the 2020 presidential elections and can sway the outcome and the future of the United States. One of the critical voices and votes here are those of newly naturalized citizens in the state, including the large numbers of new voters who are from Asian and Pacific Island countries as well as those who are originally from Latin America.

New citizens' ultimate impact will depend on Voces de la Frontera and others' grassroots campaigns that directly and specifically speak to the newly naturalized and encourage them to vote, despite language access issues, despite the limitations placed by the coronavirus pandemic and need for social distancing, despite the increased need for absentee ballots, and despite ongoing efforts to limit access to the ballot. New citizens are only a portion of those who are eligible and who have applied for citizenship, as U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) continues to have large numbers of citizenship application backlogs, including 2,974 applications in Wisconsin, as of March 31.<sup>1</sup> Processing delays at USCIS' Milwaukee's office is longer than the national average and ranges from 8 to 11.5 months.<sup>2</sup> The backlogs and processing delays serve as a form of voter suppression that will prevent those who have applied, in some cases last year, and who are eligible to naturalize and subsequently register to vote, from exercising the fundamental right to vote.

Nevertheless, those who have naturalized in Wisconsin, if they vote, can have an enormous and outsized role in determining who will sit in the White House in 2021. They are largely represented by immigrants from Mexico, India, Thailand, and Laos, relatively young (two-thirds were under 45 years of age when they naturalized), and slightly majority women. Approximately one-quarter of all naturalized citizens in the state have naturalized since 2014. And while large concentrations of all naturalized citizens are found in the larger cities of Milwaukee and Madison, they have significant numbers in places like Green Bay, Waukesha, Racine, and Appleton, and naturalized citizens are dispersed throughout the state in rural and less populated regions.

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<sup>1</sup> Number of Form N-400, Application for Naturalization By Category of Naturalization, Case Status, and USCIS Field Office Location, January 1 - March 31, 2020," U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, accessed August 13, 2020, [https://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/document/data/N400\\_performancedata\\_fy2020\\_qtr2.pdf](https://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/document/data/N400_performancedata_fy2020_qtr2.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> "Check Case Processing Times," U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, accessed August 13, 2020, <https://egov.uscis.gov/processing-times/>; "Historical National Average Processing Time (in Months) for All USCIS Offices for Select Forms By Fiscal Year," U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, accessed August 13, 2020, <https://egov.uscis.gov/processing-times/historic-pt>.

# WHY WISCONSIN IS SO IMPORTANT IN 2020

Wisconsin's recently naturalized citizens will play a critical role in the November presidential election. Wisconsin ranks ninth as the state in which new citizens can have the greatest influence, according to the New American Voters Impact Model, created by the National Partnership for New Americans (NPNA) and based on factors like the 2016 presidential election margin of victory; the margin of victory average during the last three presidential elections; the number and concentration of new citizens in the state; and the occurrence of a senatorial, gubernatorial, or state legislative election and their competitiveness.<sup>3</sup>

From 2014-2020 in Wisconsin, there will be an anticipated 29,639 new citizens naturalized, which is more than the 2016 margin of victory for president (22,748)<sup>4</sup> The numbers of new citizens are based on USCIS data on naturalizations that occurred from Fiscal Year (FY) 2014 through FY 2018 and naturalization applications that the agency approved in FY 2019.<sup>5</sup> The estimates for naturalizations during FY 2020 is based on previous spikes in naturalizations in FY 2016, before that calendar year's presidential election.<sup>6</sup> "Newly naturalized citizens" or "recently naturalized citizens" are defined as those who have naturalized since FY 2014. "New American Voters" are defined as those who have naturalized since FY 2014 and can subsequently register to vote.

These estimates of new citizens were made in NPNA's report, *The Power of Newly Naturalized Citizens in the 2020 Elections*, released in June 2020. The report calculated that from FY 2014 through FY 2020, there would be 5.3 million new citizens who naturalized, the majority of which, 3.1 million, naturalized since the election of Donald Trump to President. Since the report's release, USCIS has released data indicating that around 290,000 naturalization applicants awaiting their interview will not be naturalized in time to register to vote, meaning that NPNA's original estimates of 5.3 million will be reduced to around 5 million new citizens.<sup>7</sup> Nevertheless, USCIS mismanagement will not hold back the approximately 5 million new citizens, including their large numbers in Wisconsin.

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<sup>3</sup> Iñiguez-López, Diego, "The Power of Newly Naturalized Citizens in the 2020 Elections," National Partnership for New Americans, June 2020, [newamericanvoters2020.org/assets/2020/06/NAV-REPORT-2020-UPDATED.pdf](https://newamericanvoters2020.org/assets/2020/06/NAV-REPORT-2020-UPDATED.pdf).

<sup>4</sup> "Wisconsin Results," New York Times, August 1, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/elections/2016/results/wisconsin>.

<sup>5</sup> See "Naturalizations," U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, accessed August 12, 2020, <https://www.dhs.gov/immigration-statistics/naturalizations>; "Immigration and Citizenship Data," U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, accessed August 12, 2020, <https://www.uscis.gov/tools/reports-and-studies/immigration-and-citizenship-data>.

<sup>6</sup> See Iñiguez-López, Diego, "Naturalize Now, Vote Tomorrow: New Americans Vote 2020," National Partnership for New Americans, February 2020, [https://partnershipfornewamericans.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Naturalize\\_Now\\_Vote\\_Tomorrow\\_FINAL.pdf](https://partnershipfornewamericans.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Naturalize_Now_Vote_Tomorrow_FINAL.pdf).

<sup>7</sup> See Rampell, Catherine, "The 'Missing' Immigrant Voters Whose Absence Might Swing the Election," Washington Post, August 27, 2020, [https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/the-missing-immigrant-voters-whose-absence-might-swing-the-election/2020/08/27/db144c16-e897-11ea-97e0-94d2e46e759b\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/the-missing-immigrant-voters-whose-absence-might-swing-the-election/2020/08/27/db144c16-e897-11ea-97e0-94d2e46e759b_story.html); "The Fix Is In — Nearly 300,000 Immigrants Won't Become U.S. Citizens In Time For the 2020 Election," Boundless, September 3, 2020, <https://www.boundless.com/blog/immigrants-citizenship-vote-2020/>.

Of the more than 125,000 naturalized citizens in Wisconsin, approximately one quarter are new citizens. Since the release of NPNA's June 2020 report, which utilized American Community Survey (ACS) data from 2017, ACS released 2018 data, which this report uses.<sup>8</sup>

TOTAL POPULATION	REGISTERED VOTERS	ALL NATURALIZED	NATURALIZED 2014-2020
5,763,217	125,644	130,648	29,639

## WHO ARE WISCONSIN'S NEW AMERICAN VOTERS

Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders represent 39% of new citizens, 28% are Latin American, 17% are European, 8% are African, 6% are Middle Eastern and North African, and 1% Caribbean. The chart below provides totals for 2014-2018.

ASIAN AMERICAN & PACIFIC ISLANDER	7,380	39%
LATIN AMERICAN	5,398	28%
EUROPEAN	3,259	17%
AFRICAN	1,562	8%
MIDDLE EASTERN & NORTH AFRICAN	1,189	6%
CARIBBEAN	215	1%
TOTAL 2014-2018	19,003	
TOTAL 2014-2020	29,639	

Like many states in the country, naturalized citizens in Wisconsin are mostly represented by immigrants originally from Mexico, followed by Asian American and Pacific Islanders. Unlike most states in the country, those Asian and Pacific Island countries represented in Wisconsin are countries like Thailand and Laos.

<sup>8</sup> "Nativity and Citizenship Status in the United States," United States Census Bureau, accessed September 11, 2020, <https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?q=B05001%3A%20NATIVITY%20AND%20CITIZENSHIP%20STATUS%20IN%20THE%20UNITED%20STATES&g=0400000US39&tid=ACSDT5Y2018.B05001&moe=false&tp=false&hidePreview=true>.

The following map represents the top 20 countries of origin for newly naturalized citizens.



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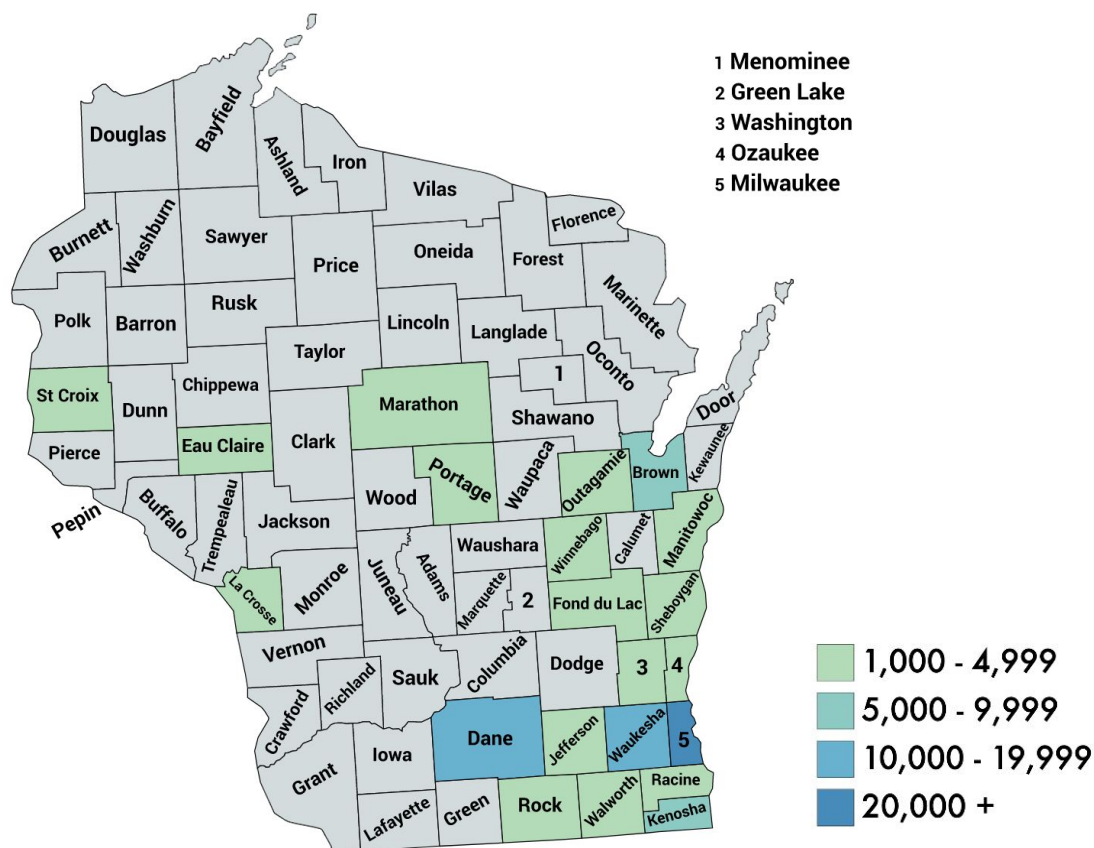
RANK	COUNTRY	TOTAL
1	MEXICO	3,704
2	INDIA	1,643
3	THAILAND	1,054
4	LAOS	1,004
5	CHINA	863
6	PHILIPPINES	713
7	BURMA	549
8	CANADA	389
9	IRAQ	344
10	UNITED KINGDOM	336
11	VIETNAM	326
12	PAKISTAN	319
13	SOMALIA	269
14	NIGERIA	247
15	UKRAINE	244
16	RUSSIA	239
17	GERMANY	233
18	POLAND	228
19	COLOMBIA	223
20	PERU	203

Two-thirds of newly naturalized citizens in Wisconsin were below the age of 45 when they naturalized, representing a younger voting bloc compared to new citizens nationwide. The full breakdown by age and gender for Wisconsin is shown in the following table:

AGE	FEMALE	MALE	TOTAL	%
18-24 YEARS	833	757	1,590	8%
25-34 YEARS	2,773	2,470	5,243	27%
35-44 YEARS	2,925	2,953	5,878	31%
45-54 YEARS	1,778	1,679	3,457	18%
55-64 YEARS	996	888	1,884	10%
65 YEARS AND OLDER	623	538	1,161	6%
TOTAL	9,928	9,285	19,213	

## WHERE ARE WISCONSIN'S NATURALIZED VOTERS

The following map shows counties with 1,000 or more naturalized citizens.



The following table shows counties with 1,000 or more naturalized citizens. Milwaukee has over 34,000 naturalized citizens, followed by Dane with 17,127. Waukesha, Kenosha, and Brown counties each have more than 5,000 naturalized citizens.

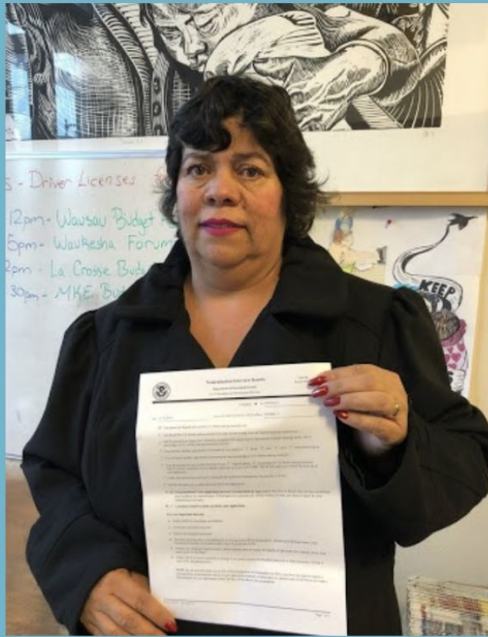
COUNTY	TOTAL	LATIN AMERICAN	ASIAN	AFRICAN	EUROPEAN	OCEANIA	NORTH AMERICAN
Milwaukee	34,498	9,306	13,917	2,398	8,244	80	553
Dane	17,128	3,345	8,687	1,484	2,988	156	468
Waukesha	11,215	1,755	5,069	254	3,826	23	288
Kenosha	5,699	2,254	1,539	91	1,671	0	144
Brown	5,239	2,065	2,034	277	792	0	71
Racine	4,164	1,716	1,094	139	1,029	9	177
Outagamie	3,608	760	2,021	48	548	23	208
Sheboygan	3,588	520	1,861	239	920	0	48
Marathon	3,512	226	2,669	26	511	7	73
Winnebago	3,101	533	1,639	82	660	12	175
Rock	2,748	1,078	833	80	626	18	113
Walworth	2,505	1,128	357	29	954	0	37
Ozaukee	2,370	329	715	125	1,076	38	87
La Crosse	2,358	142	1,926	44	195	47	4
Washington	2,306	401	882	137	801	15	70
Eau Claire	1,960	119	1,471	89	184	0	97
St. Croix	1,311	224	616	163	248	0	60
Jefferson	1,189	513	236	20	395	7	18
Portage	1,036	136	552	23	265	31	29
Manitowoc	1,028	247	519	9	244	3	6
Fond du Lac	1,017	333	324	12	304	2	42

The following table shows selected cities with the total number of naturalized citizens.

CITY	NATURALIZED CITIZENS
Milwaukee	20,676
Madison	10,703
Green Bay	3,132
Waukesha	2,040
Racine	2,135
Appleton	2,925
Kaukauna	190
Menasha	444
Neenah	574
Oshkosh	1,048



# TESTIMONIALS



**Meet Jacoba!**

She became a citizen in early December. Jacoba is from Mexico and came to the US after her husband died from cancer. Her husband's last wish was for Jacoba and their children to move to the US and make a better life for themselves. And Jacoba finally succeeded! She now is working to save up the funds for her children to apply for DACA so that they can have a better future, and is taking ESL classes so that she can go back to school and get a better job. Jacoba will be able to vote in the 2020 presidential elections!



**New citizen with support from HAWA in Milwaukee, WI.**

The Hmong American Women's Association (HAWA) educates our community on how to use their power through the civic process. We regularly distribute information around the voting process and the candidates who are running for election; we provide free citizenship services which prepare members of our community to earn their citizenship and become active voters; and on Election Day, we provide rides to the polls for our elders.

Civic education citizenship classes are available in Hmong, Chin, and Karen languages.



# VDLF RESOURCES | [vdlf.org](http://vdlf.org)

**Apply for citizenship today through Voces de la Frontera!**

To make an appointment for legal services contact our Caminos Legal Clinic  
(414) 491-5483.

FORM	CAMINOS FEE NON-MEMBER RATE	CAMINOS FEE VDLF MEMBER RATE	USCIS FEE ALL BELOW INCLUDE BIOMETRICS UNTIL OCT. 1   AFTER OCT. 2
GREEN CARD RENEWAL (I-90)	\$80	\$60	\$540   \$415 \$405 if online
REVISION OF I-90	\$35	\$25	
TOTAL FEES FOR GREEN CARD & TRAVEL & WORK PERMIT (I-485, I-765 & I-131)			\$1,225   \$2,270
NATURALIZATION APPLICATION (N-400)	\$225	\$200	\$725   \$1,170 \$1,160 if online
REVISION OF N-400	\$75	\$65	
DACA RENEWAL (I-821D/ I-765)	\$100	\$80	\$495
REVISION OF I-821D/ I-765	\$45	\$35	
CHANGE OF ADDRESS (AR-11)	\$15	\$10	
TRANSLATION OF A DOCUMENT (PRICE PER PAGE)	\$25	\$20	
ACCOMPANIMENT TO USCIS APPOINTMENT*	\$50	\$50	

### VIRTUAL CLASSES:

Thursday (general)	5:30 PM - 7:30 PM
Saturday (advanced)	9:00 AM - 10:00 AM
Saturday (general)	10:00 AM - 12:00 AM

### IN-PERSON CLASSES:

In-person with limit of 10 people to allow physical social distancing  
Wednesday 5:30 PM - 7 PM

Classes are free, the only cost is \$10.00 for materials

To talk to someone at Voces de la Frontera for any other matter contact our worker center  
**(414) 643-1620.**

## ABOUT US

THIS REPORT WAS CREATED BY NPNA AND VOCES DE LA FRONTERA



The National Partnership for New Americans is a national multiethnic, multiracial partnership. We represent the collective power of the country's 41 largest regional immigrant and refugee rights organizations in 37 states. Our members provide large-scale services—from Deferred

Action for Childhood Arrivals application processing to voter registration to health care enrollment—for their communities, and they combine service delivery with sophisticated organizing tactics to advance local and state policy. We exist to leverage their collective power and expertise for a national strategy.

To learn more about the National Partnership for New Americans, visit [partnershipfornewamericans.org](http://partnershipfornewamericans.org).



Voces de la Frontera is a membership-based community organization led by low-wage workers, immigrants and youth whose mission is to protect and expand civil rights and workers' rights through leadership development, community organizing, and empowerment.

To learn more about Voces de la Frontera, visit **[VDLF.org](http://VDLF.org)**