

Non-Citizen Workers in the San Joaquin Valley

Summary

The federal stimulus bill will provide some economic relief to millions of American households, but not all. Roughly 112,000 San Joaquin Valley workers (or 1 in 14) and their families will not be eligible for federal stimulus payments.¹ Local elected officials can respond to the COVID-related economic crisis afflicting many valley households by responding with measures--such as setting up emergency funds--to extend direct payments to working families that do not qualify for federal stimulus payments.

Background

Federal lawmakers recently passed a historic \$2.0 trillion stimulus package, in light of the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent economic downturn. While the bill will provide economic relief to millions of American households, the bill will not provide direct payments to households in which any member lacked a social security number.

Key Findings

1. More than a quarter million (266,747) San Joaquin Valley workers are non-citizen immigrants (see table 1). It is unclear exactly how many San Joaquin Valley workers are undocumented, but national estimates suggest that 42% of non-citizen immigrants are undocumented.² As a result, a reasonable estimate would indicate that about 112,034 immigrants and their families in the valley will not qualify for the federal stimulus check.
2. Non-citizen immigrants form a substantial share of the San Joaquin Valley workforce. One in six valley workers are non-citizen immigrants, or 17.7% (see table 1). Approximately one in three (31.5%) of the valley's non-citizen immigrants are agricultural workers (analysis not shown).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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¹ An earlier version of this brief indicated the figure may be close to 1 in 12.

² See Pew Research Center, "Key findings about U.S. Immigrants." Accessed on April 6, 2020 at: <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/06/17/key-findings-about-u-s-immigrants/>

3. Fresno County has the largest number of non-citizen immigrant workers (61,836) in the valley. One in six Fresno County workers are non-citizen immigrants. Among Fresno's non-citizen immigrants, one in three (33.3%) are agricultural workers (analysis not shown).

4. Non-citizen immigrant workers contribute significantly to the valley's economy. On average, valley non-citizen immigrants annually earned \$28,241 between 2014 and 2018 (see table 2); they collectively earned \$7.5 billion annually (see table 1). In Fresno County, non-citizen immigrants earned an average annual income of \$26,622 between 2014 and 2018; they collectively earned \$1.6 billion.

Table 1. Non-citizen workers and earnings, by San Joaquin Valley county

County	Non-citizen workers	% of all county workers	Average wages	Total earnings
Fresno	61,836	16.9%	\$26,622	\$1,646,223,345
Kern	56,887	18.5%	\$27,423	\$1,560,026,992
San Joaquin	45,937	16.7%	\$32,435	\$1,489,973,945
Tulare	31,125	23.2%	\$24,212	\$753,586,673
Stanislaus	28,602	23.1%	\$32,171	\$920,146,647
Merced	21,737	19.7%	\$28,805	\$626,138,850
Madera	12,002	16.5%	\$26,477	\$317,776,234
Kings	8,621	14.3%	\$25,439	\$219,308,757
San Joaquin Valley	266,747	17.7%	\$28,241	\$7,533,180,687

Source: CCRI Analysis of American Community Survey 2014-2018

Recommendation

Local elected officials can respond to the economic crisis afflicting many valley households by responding with measures—such as setting up emergency funds—to extend direct payments to working families that do not qualify for federal stimulus payments.

CCRI Mission Statement

The Civic Capacity Research Initiative is located at the University of California Merced. It uses research and education to build civic capacity among the San Joaquin Valley community-based and labor organizations serving workers and residents furthest on the margins.