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## TODAY'S IMMIGRANT WOMAN ENTREPRENEUR



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# TODAY'S IMMIGRANT WOMAN ENTREPRENEUR

## by Susan C. Pearce, PhD

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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Immigrant women entrepreneurs are rapidly making their mark in the U.S. business sector, in every region of the country and across a large range of industries. Today, immigrant women of the post-1960s wave of immigration comprise one of the fastest growing groups of business owners in the United States. This study examines the rise of immigrant women entrepreneurs and profiles them as a group using data from the 2000 Decennial Census and other sources.

Among the findings in this report:

- In 2000, 8.3 percent of employed immigrant women were business owners, compared to 6.2 percent of employed native-born women.
- The number of immigrant women business owners has increased nearly 190 percent since 1990 and 468 percent since 1980.
- The largest group of immigrant women entrepreneurs in the United States – 234,454 or 41.6 percent of the total – comes from the nations of Latin America and the Caribbean. The second largest group – 165,483 or 29.4 percent of the total – comes from Asia and the Pacific Islands.
- Among the top ten countries from which immigrant women entrepreneurs in the United States originate, three are in Latin America (Mexico, El Salvador and Cuba), five in Asia and the Pacific Islands (Korea, Vietnam, Philippines, China and India), and the remaining two are Germany and Canada.
- The top industry for immigrant women business owners is work in private households, followed by child day care centers, and restaurants and other food services. Nineteen of the top twenty industries in which these entrepreneurs work are service industries.
- Two of the top service industries for immigrant women business owners—1) real estate and 2) management, scientific and technical consulting services—are professions where the potential for earnings is much higher than in many other service industries.
- In addition to the 563,814 immigrant women business owners, 1,054 immigrant women across the United States are CEOs of not-for-profit organizations.
- The top ten cities where immigrant women business owners work are distributed across the U.S. Northeast, Midwest, Mid-Atlantic, Southeast, Southwest, and Northwest. The most popular destination is the Los Angeles-Riverside-Orange County metropolitan area, which hosts 74,134 immigrant women entrepreneurs, or 13 percent of all immigrant women entrepreneurs in the nation.

## INTRODUCTION

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One of the driving forces in the U.S. economy during the past decade has been the increasing rate of business ownership among women.<sup>1</sup> Although business entrepreneurship is on the rise among women of all ethnic groups, foreign-born women of the post-1960s wave of immigration are notable contributors to this trend. Today, immigrant women comprise one of the fastest growing groups of business owners in the United States. Although they represent a small portion of women's business ownership overall, immigrant women are more likely than non-immigrant women to own their own businesses. According to the 2000 Decennial Census, 8.3 percent of all employed immigrant women were business owners, in contrast to 6.2 percent of employed native-born women.<sup>2</sup> This represents a nearly 190 percent increase in immigrant women business owners since 1990, and a 468 percent increase since 1980. Immigrant women entrepreneurs represent a potential source of continued new business growth that brings a broad range of international skills to the work force.

This study examines the rise of immigrant women entrepreneurs and profiles them as a group. Who are they? From what parts of the world do they hail? Where are their businesses located, and what types of businesses are they starting? How are they contributing to the U.S. economy? The report follows the definition of "entrepreneur" offered by Andrea Smith-Hunter as "an individual who perceives an opportunity and partakes in the necessary functions, activities, and actions associated with the creation of an organization to pursue that opportunity."<sup>3</sup> Although there are distinctions between the concepts of "entrepreneur" and "business owner," the two are used interchangeably here to describe an individual who owns and operates an enterprise that she founded or co-founded.

The national profile of immigrant women business owners is based upon data from the U.S. Census Bureau and other sources. Completing this profile is information from interviews with twenty immigrant women entrepreneurs in the Baltimore, Maryland – Washington, DC corridor. Eight of those women were interviewed in-depth. These eight women hailed from Ecuador, Gabon, Ghana, India, Jamaica, Peru, Poland (via Germany), and

Vietnam. They represent the industries of hair-braiding, import fashion retail, real estate, health care, fashion design, restaurants, and law.<sup>4</sup> The Baltimore-Washington corridor is the fourth most popular place of work for immigrant women entrepreneurs in the country<sup>5</sup> and has the highest proportion of immigrant workers hailing from Africa of any major metropolitan area in the country.<sup>6</sup> In addition, Washington, DC currently represents one of the top emerging gateways for new immigrants to the United States.<sup>7</sup>

The data in this report are confined to business owners who are employed at least 15 hours per week and 20 weeks per year. This eliminates entrepreneurs in the most informal and least steady businesses. Although many women in this study may be the sole employee of their firms, it is important to include these single-employee entrepreneurs because 1) they are potential employers in the future and 2) they contribute to the economy by renting space, paying sales taxes and interest on loans, and purchasing raw materials. Note that immigrants are one of the most undercounted groups in the U.S. Decennial Census due to high mobility, language barriers, and other factors. Thus the actual figures reported for immigrants throughout this report may be 10 percent higher.<sup>8</sup>

## BACKGROUND

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In urban areas across the country, growing numbers of immigrant women are establishing and operating their own businesses. A case in point is a suburban strip mall near Baltimore, Maryland, that hosts an intimate two-story emporium full of restaurants and small shops. Among these establishments are a Korean dressmaking shop, a cosmetic counter, a bridal dress shop, and an Asian carryout restaurant—all owned and operated by Asian women. A few miles north of this shopping center, a woman from India runs a highly successful immigration law firm with a national clientele. These women are representative of the "new" immigration since the 1960s—those hailing mostly from Asia, Africa, the Middle East, the Caribbean, and Latin America. Many have been born and raised in societies where options for women's employment and public participation are much more limited than in the United States.

Stories of immigrant women entrepreneurs are found across the country as increasing numbers of women make their marks in the business world, breaking barriers along with stereotypes. Yolanda Zambrano, a Colombian immigrant in Worcester, Massachusetts, bought a \$100,000-per-year travel reservations office and in ten years developed it into a \$5 million travel agency. Ilya Talman is a Chicago resident from the former Soviet Union who, after two decades in the United States, owns a \$3.5 million tech recruiting firm.<sup>9</sup> Nikki Olyaim moved to the United States from Iran at age 17 and went on to found Innovision Technologies, an IT consulting firm in Detroit. In 1999, her firm received a ranking of 195 on the *Inc.* 500 list of fastest growing privately held companies in the country.<sup>10</sup> As these examples illustrate, immigrant women are swiftly moving beyond their roles as small store owners and unpaid workers in their husbands' businesses. They are making in-roads into fields—and positions in those fields—outside of the traditional “feminine” occupations.

“Immigrants” and “entrepreneurs” are words often uttered in the same breath. In fact, every decennial census taken in the United States since 1880 has reported a higher level of self-employment among immigrants than among the native-born.<sup>11</sup> Among the many reasons for this entrepreneurial spirit is that the immigrant is likely to have many of the same qualities as the entrepreneur, such as a willingness to take risks. One foreign-born woman entrepreneur explained, “For the immigrant woman, it is an even greater risk to leave one’s home and culture.” Many immigrants start businesses after a discouraging experience in the traditional labor market, where they confront language barriers, low wages, racial or ethnic discrimination, and sometimes exploitation.

Entrepreneurship warrants particular attention because it has long been viewed as a significant contributor to economic development. Many entrepreneurial ventures become the small- and medium-sized businesses that form the bedrock of the U.S. economy and employ the majority of Americans. New and small businesses are more likely to grow than older, established businesses.<sup>12</sup> Such businesses are vital to compensate for the economic dislocations of globalization by keeping jobs and profits circulating in local economies. Although women’s busi-

ness ownership has grown at unprecedented rates recently, entrepreneurship is not new among immigrant and native-born women in the United States. Throughout American history, entrepreneurial women have been present at every stage of the economy’s evolution.<sup>13</sup>

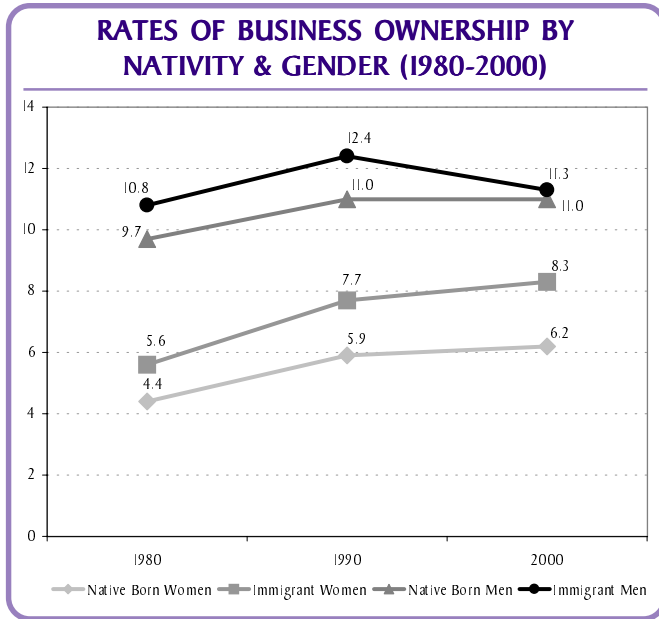
## THE EMERGENCE OF THE IMMIGRANT WOMAN ENTREPRENEUR

The important role and growing potential of immigrant women entrepreneurs stems in part from the fact that more women than men immigrate to the United States every year. In 2003, for example, 287,958 immigrant women were admitted, in contrast to 219,882 immigrant men. Thus, women comprised 56.7 percent of all arriving immigrants.<sup>14</sup> This represents a substantial increase from 1985, when 49.8 percent of entering immigrants were women.<sup>15</sup> Yet the stereotype of the immigrant entrepreneur is likely to be that of a man—the family breadwinner who opens a small storefront shop or restaurant, drives a taxi, or hawks his wares in the streets, often establishing his business before bringing his family to join him. Although immigrant men continue to have the highest rates of business ownership, today the rates of ownership among immigrant women are moving closer to those of their male counterparts. In 2000, immigrant and native-born men were self-employed in their own businesses at roughly the same rates: 11.3 percent of employed immigrant men and 11 percent of employed native-born men. Immigrant women were business owners at a rate of 8.3 percent, compared to 6.2 percent among native-born women.

Clearly, a strong entrepreneurial trend is growing among immigrant women. In 1980, only 120,600 immigrant women reported that they were self-employed in their own businesses. In 1990, 294,164 immigrant women were self-employed, and by 2000 the number had grown to 563,814—a 190 percent increase in the last ten years. Immigrant men experienced a somewhat smaller but substantial growth rate of 160 percent from 1990 to 2000 (from 685,931 in 1990 to 1,099,721 in 2000).<sup>16</sup> Viewed across two decades (1980 to 2000), women are outpacing their male counterparts by an even wider margin. Immigrant women’s entrepreneurship has increased by 468

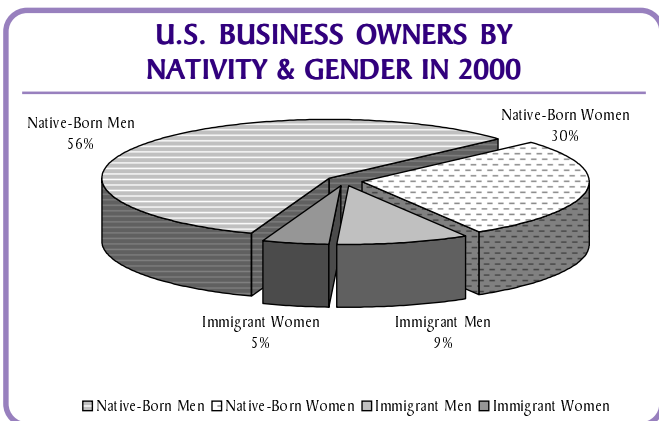
percent in twenty years, while the number of entrepreneurial ventures among immigrant men has increased by 300 percent during the same period. Clearly, the higher rate of increase among women reflects their smaller numbers relative to men. Nevertheless, the number of immigrant women entrepreneurs in the year 2000 approached the total number of immigrant men entrepreneurs in 1990.

**Table 1**



As illustrated in Table 2, the growth in business ownership among immigrant women in recent years has increased their share of total business ownership to 5 percent. This is up from the 3 percent share they commanded in 1990.

**Table 2**



Across the board, entrepreneurship in the United States declined from 2000 to 2001, reflecting—and affected by—the general economic decline across the country. Yet this trend has now reversed, and between 2001 and 2002, U.S. entrepreneurship was again on the rise.<sup>17</sup> It is probable that rates of entrepreneurship among immigrant women have continued to rise since 2000, whether through new immigration or established immigrants going into business for themselves. This growth is suggested by data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics, which indicates that self-employment among Latino men and women (40 percent of whom are foreign-born) increased from 845,000 to 935,000 nationally between 2002 and 2003.<sup>18</sup> The Current Population Survey indicates that immigrant entrepreneurship across ethnicities was on the rise between 2002 and 2003.<sup>19</sup>

### ETHNICITY, NATIONALITY, AND AGE

The largest group of immigrant women entrepreneurs in the United States – 234,454 or 41.6 percent of the total – comes from the nations of Latin America and the Caribbean. In this region, Mexico is by far the largest sender at 93,122, accounting for 39.7 percent of immigrant women entrepreneurs from the region and 16.5 percent of all immigrant women entrepreneurs in the country. The other major sending countries in the region include El Salvador (21,039), Cuba (16,563), Colombia (13,185), and Brazil (11,008). The second largest group – 165,483 or 29.4 percent of the total – comes from Asia and the Pacific Islands, with the largest numbers hailing from Korea (34,437), Vietnam (27,721), Philippines (22,742), China (16,313), and India (16,187).<sup>20</sup> Among the top ten countries from which immigrant women entrepreneurs in the United States originate, three are in Latin America, five in Asia and the Pacific Islands, and the remaining two are Germany and Canada. Altogether, the women represent 157 countries (See Appendix).

The relative prominence of immigrant women entrepreneurs from Vietnam supports the findings of a recent survey of Vietnamese businesses in Los Angeles-Orange County, California. According to the survey, 32 percent of these businesses are owned by women. Among the Vietnamese business owners throughout that metropolitan area,

99 percent are foreign-born.<sup>21</sup> Generally speaking, 63 percent of the Asian and Pacific Islander population in the United States is foreign-born, and 72 percent of Asian-blooded immigrant women entrepreneurs are foreign-born.<sup>22</sup>

**Table 3**

**TOP TEN COUNTRIES OF BIRTH FOR IMMIGRANT WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS IN 2000**

Country	Number of Immigrant Women Entrepreneurs	Percent of Immigrant Women Entrepreneurs
Mexico	93,122	16.5%
Korea	34,437	6.1%
Vietnam	27,721	4.9%
Philippines	22,742	4.0%
El Salvador	21,039	3.7%
Germany	20,149	3.6%
Canada	18,414	3.3%
Cuba	16,563	2.9%
China*	16,313	2.9%
India	16,187	2.9%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>286,687</b>	<b>50.8%</b>

\* Does not include Taiwan or Hong Kong

**Source:** U.S. Decennial Census 2000.

In 2000, immigrant women entrepreneurs had roughly the same age distribution as immigrant men entrepreneurs. Approximately 33 percent of women entrepreneurs were between the ages of 36 and 45, compared to 32 percent of men. Another 26 percent of the women were between the ages of 46 and 55, compared to 27 percent of the men.<sup>23</sup> Twenty-seven percent of immigrant women business owners entered the United States between 1971 and 1980, another 32 percent entered between 1981 and 1990, and 21 percent were recent entrants who arrived between 1991 and 2000.<sup>24</sup>

**THE INDUSTRIES OF IMMIGRANT WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS**

Immigrant women entrepreneurs can be found in all states and across all industries.<sup>25</sup> Today, the top industry for immigrant women business owners is work in private households, followed by child day care centers,

and restaurants and other food services. Nineteen of the top twenty industries in which these entrepreneurs work are service industries—the arena in which women entrepreneurs in general are concentrated. These include nail salons, services to buildings and dwellings, and home health services. Two of the top service industries for immigrant women business owners —1) real estate and 2) management, scientific and technical consulting services—are professions where the potential for earnings is much higher than in many other service industries.<sup>26</sup>

**Table 4**

**TOP 20 INDUSTRIES OF IMMIGRANT WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS IN 2000**

Industry	Number of Immigrant Women Entrepreneurs	Percent of Immigrant Women Entrepreneurs
1 Private households	77,239	13.7%
2 Child day care services	51,807	9.2%
3 Restaurants and other food services	46,519	8.3%
4 Beauty salons	34,043	6.0%
5 Services to buildings and dwellings	21,732	3.9%
6 Real estate	19,236	3.4%
7 Grocery stores	12,412	2.2%
8 Nail salons and other personal care services	11,806	2.1%
9 Offices of physicians	11,729	2.1%
10 Dry cleaning and laundry services	10,624	1.9%
11 Construction	10,329	1.8%
12 Home health care services	9,818	1.7%
13 Clothing and accessories, except shoe stores	9,616	1.7%
14 Independent artists*	9,019	1.6%
15 Unspecified retail trade	8,143	1.4%
16 Personal and household goods repair and maintenance	7,914	1.4%
17 Management, scientific and technical consulting services	6,965	1.2%
18 Specialized design services	6,210	1.1%
19 Offices of dentists	6,092	1.1%
20 Employment services	5,754	1.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>377,007</b>	<b>66.9%</b>

\* includes performing arts, spectator sports, and related industries.

**Source:** U.S. Decennial Census 2000. Note that percentages do not add up to 100%, because there are 182 industries in which immigrant women own businesses.

The higher concentration of entrepreneurial women in service industries reflects a number of factors: they enter fields related to services they already know (health care, cooking, cleaning, beauty care); they often do not have access to the amounts of start-up capital needed for many industries; and they may not be trained in the particular expertise needed for other fields.<sup>27</sup> Another possible explanation is that entrepreneurial women stimulate or help incubate the businesses of other women. African hairbraider Martine Divahe, for example, learned hairbraiding from a salon owner in the United States.<sup>28</sup>

The field of construction bears special mention given that it is not a traditional field for women, yet ranks eleventh on the list of top industries for immigrant women entrepreneurs. This field has more immigrant women business owners than industries such as retail bakeries and travel arrangement and reservation services. Women have entered construction fields in gradually increasing numbers since the Presidential Executive Order #11246 of 1978 amended the 1964 Civil Rights Act to establish goals and timetables to expand the role of women in non-traditional industries such as construction. The rate of business ownership by women in the construction field

increased 36 percent between 1997 and 2002.<sup>29</sup> A number of national organizations have been established to support the successful entry of women into the construction trades. It is highly possible that more and more immigrant women are arriving in the United States with skills in these trades, since women are much more visible in such trades in parts of Asia than in the United States.<sup>30</sup> Among U.S. immigrant women business owners in the construction industry, 23 percent are Asian.<sup>31</sup> There have been setbacks, however. California's Proposition 209, which banned affirmative action, resulted in a drop of one-third in women's participation in construction in that state.<sup>32</sup>

In addition to the 563,814 immigrant women business owners, 1,054 immigrant women across the United States are CEOs of not-for-profit organizations.<sup>33</sup> Many are founders of such organizations, contributing to entrepreneurship in the fields of philanthropy and community development. For instance, Cuban immigrant Lourdes Lopez, Executive Director of the George Ballanchine Foundation in New York, was one of the founders of the Cuban Artists Fund, an organization dedicated to nurturing Cuban artistic vitality and spirit.<sup>34</sup>

### DRIVEN BY A MISSION

**S**onia Pressman-Fuentes moved to the United States as a child during World War II. Her Polish-Jewish family escaped Nazi Germany and settled in New York. From the age of ten, Ms. Pressman-Fuentes felt that her life had been saved from the Holocaust for a purpose. In the 1950s and early 1960s, she pursued her education to become a lawyer, at a time when very few women were doing so. In 1965, she began her legal career in the General Counsel office of the newly established Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). At that time, the EEOC was mainly focused on race-based discrimination.

Concerned about sex discrimination in the workplace, in June of 1966, she and 25 other people met to start what would become the National Organization for Women (NOW). NOW members started to pressure the EEOC and picket the White House in support of equalizing opportunities for all women.

Ms. Pressman-Fuentes worked as an attorney at the EEOC as she simultaneously helped to develop NOW. She got statutes

changed to interpret the Civil Rights Act for women and drafted some of the early guidelines. Among her successes at the EEOC was her work to draft the policy that was voted into law as the Pregnancy Discrimination Act of 1978. She wrote the regulations that broke down sex discrimination in a number of fields, including that of flight attendants. In the 1960s, female flight attendants were terminated when they were in their early to mid thirties, and were prohibited from getting married. Now, this entrepreneur remarks, "Every time I see a flight attendant today, I am proud of the opportunities we made available to her."

In addition to NOW, Ms. Pressman-Fuentes helped to found WEAL (Women Equity Action League) and FEW (Federally Employed Women), which fought for women in the federal government. In retirement, Ms. Pressman-Fuentes writes and speaks to audiences about her experiences as an immigrant and on the progress that has been made by women. She remarks, "The whole world is different. We have totally changed the face of this nation."



The portrait of high-achieving, high-powered, professional entrepreneurial women in fields such as technology, law, and communications must be balanced against the reality that many self-employed women work in service industries. These women can be found operating food catering businesses, nail salons, and cleaning businesses. The concentration of women in traditional service professions may change in the near future, however. In 2003, the top profession for women who immigrated to the United States legally was “professional and technical fields.”<sup>35</sup>

## WHERE THEY DO BUSINESS

Immigrant entrepreneurial women are opening their businesses in every region of the country. In fact, the top ten cities where these women do business are distributed across the U.S. Northeast, Midwest, Mid-Atlantic, Southeast, Southwest, and Northwest. The most popular destination is the Los Angeles-Riverside-Orange County metropolitan area, which hosts 74,134 immigrant women entrepreneurs, or 13 percent of all immigrant women entrepreneurs in the nation.<sup>36</sup>

**Table 5A**

### TOP TEN U.S. METROPOLITAN AREAS FOR IMMIGRANT WOMEN BUSINESS OWNERS IN 2000

Metropolitan Area	Number of Immigrant Women Owners	Percent of Immigrant Women Owners	Ethnicity	
			Percent Latina	Percent Asian
1 Los Angeles-Riverside-Orange County	74,134	13.1%	41.4%	37.6%
2 New York-Northern New Jersey-Long Island	66,903	11.9%	30.1%	21.8%
3 San Francisco-Oakland-San Jose	32,129	5.7%	26.3%	45.4%
4 Washington-Baltimore	19,407	3.4%	32.3%	30.7%
5 Chicago-Gary-Kenosha	17,630	3.1%	21.7%	23.1%
6 San Diego	13,663	2.4%	48.8%	21.9%
7 Houston-Galveston-Brazoria	12,794	2.3%	46.7%	35.1%
8 Dallas-Fort Worth	9,487	1.7%	44.2%	36.3%
9 Boston-Worcester-Lawrence	8,998	1.6%	10.6%	11.9%
10 Atlanta	7,025	1.2%	8.4%	48.7%

**Table 5B**

### TOP TEN U.S. METROPOLITAN AREAS FOR IMMIGRANT MEN BUSINESS OWNERS IN 2000

Metropolitan Area	Number of Immigrant Men Owners	Percent of Immigrant Men Owners	Ethnicity	
			Percent Latino	Percent Asian
1 Los Angeles-Riverside-Orange County	161,669	14.7%	41.0%	31.3%
2 New York-Northern New Jersey-Long Island	159,647	14.5%	19.2%	26.4%
3 San Francisco-Oakland-San Jose	50,765	4.6%	13.5%	41.7%
4 Chicago-Gary-Kenosha	39,770	3.6%	17.3%	24.0%
5 Washington-Baltimore	27,362	2.5%	21.4%	33.7%
6 Houston-Galveston-Brazoria	23,883	2.2%	51.8%	26.3%
7 Dallas-Fort Worth	20,690	1.9%	43.7%	31.5%
8 San Diego	19,552	1.8%	41.8%	26.7%
9 Philadelphia-Wilmington-Atlantic City	14,283	1.3%	10.3%	36.5%
10 Boston-Worcester-Lawrence	14,255	1.3%	8.2%	17.1%

**Source:** U.S. Decennial Census 2000. Consists of Consolidated Metropolitan Statistical Areas and Metropolitan Statistical Areas. An additional 92,692 women and 34,864 men have businesses located in mixed metropolitan statistical areas or nonmetropolitan areas. Percentages do not add up to 100% because there are a total of 81 metropolitan areas where immigrant women entrepreneurs do business and 83 metropolitan areas where immigrant men entrepreneurs do business.

San Francisco, Chicago, Boston, and Atlanta have higher numbers of Asian than Latina women business owners, while the remaining six cities have higher numbers of Latinas than Asians. Boston has lower percentages of Latina and Asian women entrepreneurs than the other nine cities. The country sending the greatest number of women entrepreneurs to Boston is Brazil.<sup>37</sup>

Close behind the top ten destinations for immigrant women entrepreneurs are the metropolitan areas of Miami-Fort Lauderdale, Seattle-Takoma, and Philadelphia-Wilmington-Atlantic City. Twenty-nine of the eighty-one metropolitan areas where these women work are in the Southern states—a region that had not until recently been a major magnet for large populations of immigrants, with the exceptions of Texas and Florida.

The top ten cities for immigrant men entrepreneurs include most of the same cities as those where women's businesses are located, with the Los Angeles and New York areas again placing first and second. There are several differences between the areas where women and men are concentrated, however. Washington, DC-Baltimore, MD ranks higher on the list for women, and Chicago ranks lower on the list for men. Additionally, the tenth city for men's entrepreneurship is Philadelphia, rather than Atlanta, which is tenth on the list for women.<sup>38</sup>

It should be noted that the highest growth rates of the Latino population are in nontraditional immigrant gateways: Raleigh, Atlanta, Greensboro, Charlotte, Orlando, and Las Vegas. This suggests that the geographic distribution of immigrant entrepreneurs may undergo further shifts in future years.<sup>39</sup>

## MOTIVATIONS AND START-UP CAPITAL

Immigrants, women, and people of color tend to start their own businesses for different reasons than white men. White men usually become entrepreneurs when an opportunity arises, and at a time when they have the resources to follow through on this opportunity. Women and people of color do so primarily after discouraging experiences in the conventional labor market. Immigrants start businesses after similarly discouraging experiences, compounded by

cultural and language difficulties.<sup>40</sup> In addition, women, immigrants, and people of color may draw from different resources than those which white native-born men tap.

Among immigrant women entrepreneurs, motivations for business ownership display varying patterns according to national origin. In Southern California, for example, some research suggests that Chinese and Vietnamese women open their businesses in response to "pull factors": these women tended to have a life-long interest in owning their own businesses. Korean women state that business ownership was their only option to survive economically. However, Latinas are more likely to point to "push factors," saying that they needed or desired to leave the conventional workplace.<sup>41</sup> Ethnic differences among entrepreneurs' motivations can vary from one location to another, and depend on social class differences, opportunity structures, and ethnic group relations in a particular location.

Women interviewed in the Baltimore-Washington, DC corridor expressed a range of motivations for starting their businesses. An Ecuadorian woman and a Jamaican woman spoke about childhood dreams of having their own businesses, making them more similar to Chinese and Vietnamese women entrepreneurs. As children, both had observed and admired strong women in their families who ran their own enterprises. African hairbraiding salon owner Martine Divahe was motivated by the push factor of exploitation in the workplaces where she had been employed, including low wages (such as \$100 per week for full-time work). She knew that she would do significantly better on her own. Sonia Pressman-Fuentes, founder of nonprofit women's organizations, was influenced by even larger historical forces. As a child who escaped the Holocaust, she believed that she had been saved for a purpose. Thus she spent her career pursuing a mission to equalize opportunities for women—particularly employment opportunities.

A study comparing Latina and non-Latina white women entrepreneurs found that Latinas were more likely to start a business as a result of family concerns, including the flexibility needed to start a family and the desire to start a business partnership with a family member. Latinas were also more likely than non-Latina white women to have started their business after a layoff from work.<sup>42</sup>

## CONTRIBUTING TO HEALTH CARE

Shirley Nathan-Pulliam is an immigrant entrepreneur who started more than one enterprise in Baltimore, Maryland. Her home country, Jamaica, is ranked 19<sup>th</sup> among all countries from which U.S. immigrant women entrepreneurs originate. Ms. Nathan-Pulliam owns and operates two health-care businesses: Nathan Networks, Inc. and Extended Family Adult Day Care. Nathan Networks Inc. offers education, consultation, promotion, and personal care services for the elderly population. Her motivation came from the fact that she always wanted to start her own business. In Jamaica, she observed her aunt, a successful restaurant owner who raised her during several years of her childhood. Ms. Nathan-Pulliam's mother managed a large department store, which she had started by selling clothing from a stall.

Ms. Nathan-Pulliam was originally a nurse, and was doing part-time and private-duty nursing when she decided to start her business. She earned her Masters degree at Johns Hopkins in 1987 in Administrative Science with an emphasis on business manage-

ment. With the business plan for Nathan Networks that she wrote during her coursework, she opened her first business. She had observed other health care facilities that were unpleasant places for their clients, and was determined to open a place that people would find enjoyable.

Today, Nathan Networks and Extended Family Adult Day Care bring in one-half million dollars per year. Between the two businesses, Ms. Nathan-Pulliam employs five nurses, an executive director, a program director, an activities coordinator, an activities consultant, a nutrition consultant, a part-time social worker, independent contractors, and a part-time assistant. She hires two drivers to deliver clients to her Extended Family Adult Day Care business. In addition, she contracts with cleaners, computer companies, people who pick up medical waste, and caterers. She provides stipends to a medical director and assistant medical director. On top of her busy schedule, she is a delegate to the Maryland State Assembly, a position in which she employs staff aides and assistants.

The increasing availability of micro-credit programs from the Small Business Administration and other similar private and public sources has helped to stimulate the growth of women- and minority-owned enterprises across the United States. Such programs have had mixed results for immigrants, with some groups benefiting more than others. Federal set-aside programs that award a percentage of government contracts to women and minorities have been more beneficial than loan programs.<sup>43</sup> The most widely available loan programs target companies with fewer than five employees that require less than \$50,000 in start-up funds.<sup>44</sup> As more women move into nontraditional industries that require larger amounts of start-up capital, however, they will need to look beyond such small-scale loan programs. Women today still do not receive venture capital at the same rates as men. In 2000, for example, only four percent of the \$48 billion in venture capital that was raised went to women.<sup>45</sup>

When it comes to raising capital for start-up, more Latina than non-Latina white women were found to have gone to family outside their household to help with financing. Most women in both of these groups used a combination of personal savings and credit to start their firms, with more non-Latina white than Latina women using this combination of sources. Nationally, women

are more likely than men to use credit cards as sources of start-up capital.<sup>46</sup>

Rotating credit associations were a traditional source of business capital for U.S. immigrants and were particularly useful for Japanese and Chinese immigrants earlier in U.S. history. These associations consisted of ethnic community groups that pooled their funds and loaned to new business owners on a rotating basis. Although the practice has continued since 1965, especially among Koreans, it is much less frequently used than in the past. Present studies indicate that immigrant entrepreneurs bring funds from their home countries or accumulate savings in the United States.<sup>47</sup>

Among the 20 immigrant entrepreneurs interviewed for this report, the majority received their start-up capital through family and friends. Several women borrowed from commercial banks, one supplemented the loans from family and friends with a credit card, and two used their savings. One was able to save \$45,000 by working simultaneously at a number of low-wage jobs in which she also learned business skills. At least two women capitalize their businesses as they go and were not in need of start-up capital. Although these immigrant women experience greater difficulty in tapping large sources of capital

than white native-born men, they are nevertheless paying interest on their loans and credit cards. Thus, at the inception of their businesses, these entrepreneurs already have begun to stimulate economic growth.

## JOB CREATION AND REVENUES

Immigrant women are not only creating jobs for themselves, they stimulate job creation by hiring other employees. The majority of the twenty women interviewed for this report employ at least one other worker. One firm hires fifty individuals and has opened a new branch in India employing an additional seven individuals. A Baltimore restaurant owner has watched her former employees move on to establish their own businesses after their apprenticeships in her restaurant.

The women interviewed in this report who hired multiple employees have created jobs both for the native-born and immigrants, with the majority going to the native-born. Sheela Murthy's law firm is comprised entirely of the native-born. Shirley Nathan-Pulliam hires predominantly native-born employees in her health-care businesses. The owner of a technology firm employs 34 individuals, of whom 22 are native-born men. The immigrant women who hire a predominantly foreign-born staff include a Vietnamese restaurant owner, most of whose

employees are Vietnamese. Repeatedly, and without prompting, several interviewed women insisted that they are committed to treating their employees very well and creating a "great place to work." A number of women were quite passionate in their accounts of how their respect for their employees contrasts with the ways they had been treated in previous jobs.

These entrepreneurial immigrant women support job development in other ways—through contracting for cleaning services, maintenance and construction, transportation, catering, and computer services. Five women also create opportunities for interns in their businesses. In addition, it is not uncommon for immigrant entrepreneurs to own more than one business.<sup>48</sup> Of the eight women interviewed in-depth here, two had opened two businesses each, and a third had co-founded at least three nonprofit organizations.

Hard data on the total number of jobs created by immigrant entrepreneurs nationally are not available.<sup>49</sup> Speaking generally, however, businesses owned by women across nationalities in the U.S. today provide 12 million jobs, which is slightly higher than the 11.7 million that the Fortune 500 firms employ. These firms generate over \$3.6 trillion in sales.<sup>50</sup> And firms owned by women of color were estimated to generate \$147 billion in sales for 2004.

### CREATING JOBS

Sheela Murthy founded and operates a successful immigration law firm in Baltimore County that serves a national clientele. Her firm concentrates on business immigration, primarily for employers who are interested in temporary workers from the Indian subcontinent.

Ms. Murthy, who herself is from southern India, came to the United States in 1986 to earn her law degree from Harvard University. After finishing law school, she worked with large law firms in New York City, one of which eventually moved her to Baltimore. Finding herself working 10 to 15 hour days, she realized that she could accomplish just as much, and have financial independence, if she opened her own firm. In 1994, the internet was just beginning to explode and her husband encouraged her to give immigration legal advice on-line. This proved to be a successful experiment. By the late 1990s, her firm was listed by the *Baltimore Business Jour-*

*nal* as one of the top 25 women-owned businesses in the region. Ms. Murthy had started the firm in an incubation cubicle space in the building where she is now located, in an office park near a large mall. The company now occupies 11,000-12,000 square feet, employs a staff of 50, and hires five or six independent contractors. Her firm is two to three times the size of most other immigration law firms. Recently, Ms. Murthy opened an office in India with seven employees.

She portrays her law firm as a great place to work. It is important to her that she treats employees well. All her employees are native-born, and most are women. She insists, "I wanted to give back to *this* country. I wanted to help create jobs."

*(Note: Ms. Murthy is a member of the Board of Trustees of the American Immigration Law Foundation.)*

The most profitable sector for firms owned by women of color is the services field, which represented \$54 billion in sales for 2004, followed by the retail and wholesale trades (\$26 billion for each sector).<sup>51</sup> The majority of businesses owned by people of color have no employees.<sup>52</sup>

One service that immigrant-owned businesses provide is to open opportunities for upward mobility for other immigrants. A study of Cuban immigrants in the 1970s, for instance, found that a key determinant of Cuban self-employment was a business owner's experience as an employee of a Cuban-owned enterprise three or more years earlier. These companies offered both apprenticeship and a sense of community important to immigrants, especially those relatively new to the country.<sup>53</sup>

## OTHER CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE ECONOMY

Immigrant women are known for sending a larger portion of their wage earnings to their home countries than men. This prompts some Third World governments to create formal programs to encourage women to emigrate. For instance, the Sri Lankan government offers a program to teach emigrating women how to operate appliances such as microwave ovens and vacuum cleaners.<sup>54</sup> However, immigrant entrepreneurs do not contribute only to the economies of their home countries. As a woman entrepreneur from Africa commented: "Perhaps we con-

tribute more to the economies of our home countries, but we also buy here. We need TV sets and cable television. As long as we have a job, we like the finer things in life."

Homeownership provides a more substantial indicator of these business owners' investment of their earnings in the U.S. economy. The homeowner not only pays interest on a mortgage, but purchases appliances, furnishings, and decorations, as well as investing in lawn maintenance, renovations, and repairs. Nationally, 56 percent of all immigrant women entrepreneurs live in a household that has a mortgage or is under contract to buy. Of the remaining women who are renters, 25 percent live in households that pay between \$400 and \$699 monthly for rent, 17 percent pay between \$700 and \$999, and 7 percent pay between \$1000 and \$1,699.<sup>55</sup>

An indicator of both economic and social contributions to U.S. society is charitable giving. Women and immigrants are known for their higher levels of giving to their communities than men and the native-born. Women of all ethnicities who have a high net financial worth are known for generous philanthropic giving. More than half of high net-worth women business owners and executives contribute more than \$25,000 annually to charity, including 19 percent who contribute \$1,000,000 or more.<sup>56</sup> Attorney Sheila Murthy has established a charitable foundation that supports projects both in her home country and the United States. She feels compelled to leave a legacy

### GIVING BACK

Yolanda Voss is president of her own fashion design studio and showroom in Columbia, Maryland. She came to the United States from Ecuador in 1962 with the dream of becoming a fashion designer. After years of schooling and apprenticeships, Ms. Voss started holding classes for students in the basement of her home during the 1970s. She was encouraged when then First Lady Betty Ford bought one of her coat designs. She incorporated her business in 1980 and opened a New York City showroom in the mid-1980s. Eventually, she moved her business back to Maryland, to the location where her studio still operates almost 20 years later. Ms. Voss has become a highly regarded member of her community, has received numerous awards, and regularly attracts press coverage.

With her specialization in *haute couture* fashion, Ms. Voss's business is particularly vulnerable to economic swings. Although she is seeing a 15-20 percent increase in her revenues every year, she has learned to be cautious since the 1980s stock market crash. Despite economic highs and lows, Ms. Voss is proudly determined to continue her business and is insistent that she "give back" to her adopted home country, which she calls her "passion." One of the key ways she contributes is through her educational ventures, to which she refers as "my tribute to America." Every year, she offers 12 internships in design and merchandising to high school and college students. She opened an educational institute for fashion, which has now provided over 200 student scholarships. Her community commitment extends to local charities, such as a medical clinic, for which she organizes and underwrites benefit fashion shows.

that lives beyond her. Her firm has donated hundreds of chairs to schools in India. She updates her company's computers every two years and donates all of the old computers to Baltimore area schools. Fashion designer Yolanda Voss regularly organizes fashion shows for local charities and offers classes for budding fashion designers. A Baltimore restaurant owner gives annually to a dental school for impoverished people in the city. One female entrepreneur, whose business is not yet turning a profit, nevertheless is known for responding to requests for small donations.

## CHALLENGES

**I**mmigrant women entrepreneurs—particularly women of color—confront a host of challenges in starting and running their businesses. These include learning about permit regulations at city and state levels, overcoming language and cultural barriers, confronting stereotypes, amassing capital, and accessing the right networks. Moreover, in order to achieve the highest level of success, immigrant entrepreneurs must move beyond the ethnic markets that have long been a mainstay of immigrant businesses and tap into broader American consumer markets.

Immigrant entrepreneurship among women does not exist in a social vacuum. Its development, successes, and failures are all connected to the values and norms of the larger society, as well as the general economic and business environment. Several women interviewed reflected on their status and opportunities in U.S. society as immigrants, women, and people of color. One African entrepreneur remarked, "There is always the problem of racism. Even if it's subtle, it's there." Yet another asserted that she saw these three qualities as sources of strength in her professional performance: "People say I have three strikes against me. But those three are my strengths. As a woman, I have more empathy for clients; as an immigrant, I am more sensitive than the native-born to immigrants' needs; and I understand what it feels like to be a minority, so I can empathize with other minorities."

As in the workplace, self-employment is not as easy for women as it is for men. The garment industry, for example, has stimulated the development of many inde-

pendent contractors. Women who become contractors or factory owners have found that they have more difficulty than men enforcing their contracts and disciplining employees.<sup>57</sup> Thus, traditional stereotypes continue to impede women's progress.

"Social capital," or the networks of relationships that are key to business success, are particularly vital for immigrants. Immigrants with a client base from their own ethnic groups benefit greatly from advertising by word-of-mouth. Two women interviewed stressed the value of such relationships in getting them through difficult financial times. Yet both women, who are from Africa, are not benefiting from more formalized networks that have sprung up among other groups, such as Chinese business owners. African immigrants in the Baltimore-Washington DC corridor represent a diverse range of cultures and languages, which hinders strong network-building between African business owners.

Most of the interviewed women have a native-born client base. The African clothing store, for example, is frequented by African-Americans, particularly during Black History Month. The store does not attract a large African clientele, because many are able to buy the goods directly from friends and family in Africa at a lower price. The African hairbraider also serves a clientele that is 95 percent native-born.

The entrepreneurs interviewed enjoy and appreciate their autonomy and are no strangers to hard work. The restaurant owner arrives each morning before her establishment opens at 11:00 a.m. and is there after it closes at 11:00 p.m., seven days per week. She worries about having too little time for her two young children. Shirley Nathan-Pulliam, who owns two health care businesses and is a delegate to the Maryland State Assembly, has a packed daily calendar. She remarked that she used to give workshops on stress reduction for women, and could now use such workshops herself. Two women immigrant entrepreneurs mentioned that they regretted having to drop their English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes because they could no longer afford the time and expense.

## THE SINGLE-EMPLOYEE ENTERPRISE AND THE ECONOMY

**E**sther Armstrong owns and operates a two-room store in a busy residential area of Baltimore, Maryland, that sells African fashions and crafts. Racks of vibrantly colored clothes for men and women fill the floor space. Ms. Armstrong moved to the United States from her home country of Ghana. After disappointments with her first employers, she trained herself in new skills and entered the corporate world. On the side, she started her own business by selling Ghanaian wares at a local flea market to support cottage industries in her home country. Recently, she took advantage of early retirement and now concentrates on her business.

Ms. Armstrong's contributions to the United States can be described as both economic and cultural. African Americans consti-

tute her major clientele. Her most profitable month is February, Black History Month, because local churches declare a Black Heritage Day and request that parishioners attend in traditional African clothes. Although she currently does not have employees, she has employed immigrant and native-born employees in the past. Despite the fact that she operates her business alone, her work supports both Ghanaian workers in her home country and the vendors in the United States who import the clothing and crafts. Ms. Armstrong uses a range of contractors to support her business, including people who hang decorations, install shelves, and clean windows. She credits many friends with the support that helped her get her business going. In turn, she supports many other entrepreneurs through personal loans, business investments, and business advice.

## ENTREPRENEURSHIP AS A PATH OUT OF POVERTY

**N**ongovernmental organizations around the world are now creating and implementing projects to encourage entrepreneurship as a pathway out of poverty. Many programs specifically target women in Third World countries. Similar projects are in place throughout the United States as well. Cooperative Economics for Women (CEW), for example, located in the Boston area, works with immigrant and refugee women. This organization has helped dozens of low-income women start their own businesses and design them based on the principle of cooperative ownership. CEW provides technical assistance and access to capital, as well as other support services such as ESOL, basic literacy classes, and child care. Among the businesses that have benefited from CEW is Sagla Eritrean Restaurant and Catering Cooperative, co-owned by Mehert Risom and Alemash Hailu.<sup>58</sup>

In 2004, the International Rescue Committee in Baltimore, Maryland initiated an entrepreneurship training program for refugee women to help them start micro-enterprises by utilizing skills they already possessed, such as craft-making and sewing. Many of the recent refugees hail from countries or regions where women are not accustomed to wage-earning work. This project, along with CEW and other similar programs, addresses some of the challenges that women entrepreneurs often face: access to capital, networking, training, and support services.

## CONCLUSION: POLICY IMPLICATIONS

**I**mmigrant women entrepreneurs are rapidly making their mark in the U.S. business sector, in every region of the country and across a large range of industries. The growing presence of these women in the ranks of the self-employed suggests that we are in the midst of a new era. The historic changes in roles and opportunities for women in the United States and abroad are reflected in the examples of women entrepreneurs in nontraditional and professional-level positions. Yet, many women begin their businesses in less advantageous positions and with lower skill levels than men. Policies to support business ownership by immigrant women must be designed with a complex profile in mind: the entrepreneur may be a nail salon owner with limited English proficiency or a highly trained professional in the technology field. Policies and programs must begin to move beyond the concept of "micro-enterprise" to open paths to larger amounts of start-up capital. In addition, a continuation of set-aside programs would be greatly beneficial to women across a range of industries—particularly nontraditional ones.

Immigrant women entrepreneurs are poised to forge an even stronger presence at all levels of the U.S. economy if their current growth rates continue. Their economic contributions include job development for both immigrants and the native born; interest paid on loans; purchases of raw materials and wholesale goods; contracts for ancillary services; education and training for young

entrepreneurs through internships and mentoring; purchase or leasing of business space; homeownership and rent for residences; and charitable contributions. Investment in such enterprises is bound to result in a multiplication of capital resources and opportunities for workers.

Recent national level advances on the policy and legal fronts are helping to reduce barriers to immigrant women's empowerment and integration into U.S. society. These include the immigrant provisions of the Violence Against Women Act and the Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000. While such advances help immigrant women escape from violence and exploitation, these women also need sustainable and dignified employment if they are to move forward in providing for themselves and their families. More are choosing business ownership as a means of self-sufficiency. Immigrant women as well as immigrant men need ESOL, literacy, and job-training programs. All immigrant entrepreneurs with limited English proficiency bring home lower earnings than those with greater proficiency.<sup>59</sup> The multiple licensing and regulation requirements at local, state, and federal levels pose major challenges to small business survival.<sup>60</sup> New immigrants need clear and accessible guidelines to navigate this relatively alien regulatory world. In addition, creative approaches to streamlining regulations, reducing or consolidating fees, and providing technical assistance would be welcomed by immigrant women business owners.

Immigrant women entrepreneurs add to the economic development potential of local communities. Their presence and success can help counter the negative impact of multinational businesses that do not remain, employ, or invest in local communities. Ironically, some immigrant women entrepreneurs were "pushed" to emigrate precisely because of low-wage or exploitative positions in multinational businesses in their home countries. Federal and local policies can support small business development for such women by continuing anti-trust and other measures to control the growth of corporate monopolies. Although large industries support immigrant enterprises by subcontracting to smaller companies, this can facilitate the proliferation of sweatshops in the absence of effective regulation.<sup>61</sup>

Entrepreneurship among women is on the rise worldwide, due in part to the many micro-enterprise and micro-lending programs now available. This increases the likelihood that new immigrant women will arrive in the United States with some entrepreneurial experience, giving them a head start. Thus there is reason to expect that the numbers of immigrant women entrepreneurs in the United States will continue to rise and that their economic contributions will continue to be of benefit not only to themselves, but to the entire U.S. economy and society.



**APPENDIX: IMMIGRANT WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS IN THE U.S.  
BY REGION AND COUNTRY OF BIRTH IN 2000**

<u>LATIN AMERICA - CARRIBEAN</u>		
Argentina	3,574	
Aruba	189	
Bahamas	466	
Barbados	308	
Belize	739	
Bolivia	3,019	
Brazil	11,008	
Central America	110	
Chile	2,951	
Colombia	13,185	
Costa Rica	1,419	
Cuba	16,563	
Dominican Republic	10,411	
Ecuador	4,811	
El Salvador	21,039	
Grenada	375	
Guadeloupe	66	
Guatemala	9,390	
Guyana	1,944	
Haiti	4,229	
Honduras	4,872	
Jamaica	8,565	
Martinique	118	
Mexico	93,122	
Nicaragua	4,949	
Panama	2,124	
Paraguay	482	
Peru	6,377	
South America	471	
St kittsnevis	162	
St Vincent & The Grenadines	118	
Suriname	336	
Trinidad & Tobago	4,821	
Uruguay	721	
Venezuela	1,342	
West Indies	78	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>234,454</b>	<b>41.6%</b>

<u>ASIA - PACIFIC ISLANDS</u>		
Afghanistan	928	
Asia	1,058	
Bangladesh	1,152	
Cambodia	2,793	
China	16,313	
Fiji	501	
Hong Kong	4,285	
India	16,187	
Indonesia	1,468	
Japan	6,382	
Kazakhstan	211	
Kiribati	27	
Korea	34,437	
Laos	2,324	
Macau	53	
Malaysia	905	
Marshall Islands	45	
Micronesia	56	
Mongolia	45	
Myanmar (Burma)	787	

Nepal	147	
New Caledonia	92	
Pakistan	2,034	
Philippines	22,742	
Singapore	890	
South Korea	8,673	
Sri Lanka	288	
Taiwan	9,391	
Thailand	3,821	
Tonga	292	
Uzbekistan	448	
Vietnam	27,721	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>166,496</b>	<b>29.5%</b>

<u>WESTERN EUROPE</u>		
Austria	1,402	
Azores Islands	254	
Belgium	777	
Denmark	562	
England	12,385	
Finland	1,056	
France	3,488	
Germany	20,149	
Greece	5,577	
Guernsey	103	
Iceland	238	
Ireland	2,849	
Italy	7,175	
Luxembourg	173	
Malta	104	
Netherlands	1,656	
Northern Ireland	513	
Norway	1,269	
Portugal	4,728	
Scotland	2,867	
Spain	1,488	
Sweden	1,507	
Switzerland	694	
United Kingdom	3,394	
Wales	232	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>74,640</b>	<b>13.2%</b>

<u>EASTERN EUROPE</u>		
Albania	156	
Armenia	765	
Azerbaijan	280	
Belarus	443	
Bosnia and Herzegovina	95	
Bulgaria	890	
Croatia	1,393	
Czechoslovakia	1,696	
Czech Republic	479	
Georgia	404	
Hungary	2,187	
Latvia	850	
Lithuania	506	
Macedonia	489	
Moldova	540	
Poland	14,314	
Romania	3,199	
Russia	4,181	

Serbia	201	
Slovakia	533	
Slovenia	305	
Ukraine	3,928	
USSR	733	
Yugoslavia	1,599	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>40,166</b>	<b>7.1%</b>

<u>MIDDLE EAST - NORTH AFRICA</u>		
Cyprus	427	
Egypt	1,353	
Iran	6,772	
Iraq	1,848	
Israel	2,346	
Jordan	662	
Kuwait	181	
Lebanon	1,900	
Libya	99	
Morocco	500	
Syria	1,042	
Tunisia	348	
Turkey	1,031	
Yemen	117	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>18,626</b>	<b>3.3%</b>

<u>NORTH AMERICA</u>		
Canada	18,414	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>18,414</b>	<b>3.3%</b>

<u>AFRICA</u>		
Africa	134	
Cameroon	90	
Cape Verde	199	
Comoros	132	
Democratic Republic of Congo (Zaire)	173	
Ethiopia	619	
Ghana	362	
Guinea	81	
Ivory Coast	58	
Kenya	946	
Liberia	725	
Mauritius	149	
Nigeria	1,409	
Rwanda	121	
Senegal	218	
Sierra Leone	299	
Somalia	124	
South Africa	1,941	
Tanzania	68	
Togo	83	
Uganda	166	
Zambia	527	
Zimbabwe	105	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>8,729</b>	<b>1.5%</b>

<u>OCEANIA</u>		
Australia	1,694	
New Zealand	595	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,289</b>	<b>0.4%</b>

## ENDNOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Smith-Hunter, Andrea, "Women Entrepreneurship Across Racial Lines: Current Status, Critical Issues, and Future Implications," *Journal of Hispanic Higher Education* 3 (4): 363-381, 2004, p. 366.
- <sup>2</sup> Included in these figures are those self-employed in nonagricultural industries who work at least 15 hours per week and at least 20 weeks per year, and are 16 years of age and older for the 50 states. Horticultural and veterinary services are included as nonagricultural industries. This selection of categories for immigrant self-employment follows the methodology of Robert W. Fairlie, Associate Professor of Economics at University of California, Santa Cruz. "Native-born" refers to U.S. citizens by birth, whether born in the U.S., abroad, or at sea, and includes those born in Puerto Rico. "Immigrant" refers to both naturalized U.S. citizens and noncitizens. Data are taken from the U.S. Decennial Census 2000, PUMS 1% sample, for individuals who are self-employed in their own incorporated or unincorporated businesses. The Economic Census, which is taken every five years, provides details about businesses, but data do not indicate the nativity of the owner. The Census figures reported here may be conservative. The Center for Women's Business Research estimates from the Economic Census that 973,411 firms are owned by Latinas and Asian and Pacific Islander Women. The proportion of these owners who are foreign-born is not known. The Center estimates that the rate of business ownership for women of color (both native-born and immigrant) is increasing at six times the rate of other firms (Center for Women's Business Research, *Minority Women-Owned Businesses in the United States, 2001: A Fact Sheet* (2004) {<http://www.womensbusinessresearch.org/minorityreports.html>} and *Privately-Held 50% or More Women-Owned Businesses in the US, 2004* {<http://womensbusinessresearch.org/nationalnumbers.html>}).
- <sup>3</sup> Smith-Hunter.
- <sup>4</sup> Interview participants were chosen through snowball sampling methods.
- <sup>5</sup> U.S. Decennial Census 2000.
- <sup>6</sup> Consolidated Metropolitan Statistical Area as defined by the U.S. Decennial Census 2000.
- <sup>7</sup> Singer, Audrey, *The Rise of New Immigrant Gateways*. Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution, February 2004 ([http://www.brookings.edu/metro/publications/20040301\\_gateways.htm](http://www.brookings.edu/metro/publications/20040301_gateways.htm)).
- <sup>8</sup> Conversation with undercount specialist, U.S. Census Bureau, December 2004.
- <sup>9</sup> Mangi, Naweena A., *The New Face of Immigration: How Foreign-Born Entrepreneurs Have Become a Driving Force in Small Business*, June 18, 2001 (<http://www.cdtech.org/pdf/cdtech-200209-mbewomen-sum.pdf>).
- <sup>10</sup> Coughlin, Jeanne Hallady with Andrew R. Thomas, *The Rise of Women Entrepreneurs: People, Processes, and Global Trends*. Westport, CT: Quorum Books, 2000, p. 63.
- <sup>11</sup> "Immigrant Entrepreneurs," *Research Perspectives on Migration* 1(2): 1-15, 1997.
- <sup>12</sup> Carre, M.A. & A.R. Thurik, "The Impact of Entrepreneurship on Economic Growth," in Zoltan J. Acs & David B. Audretsch, *Handbook of Entrepreneurship Research*. Boston: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2003.
- <sup>13</sup> Drachman, Virginia G., *Enterprising Women: 250 Years of American Business*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2000.
- <sup>14</sup> Males and females 21 years of age and older. From *2003 Yearbook of Immigration Statistics*, Office of Immigration Statistics, U.S. Department of Homeland Security. Numbers reflect legal immigrants and do not include refugees.
- <sup>15</sup> Zhou, Min, "Contemporary Female Immigration to the United States: A Demographic Profile," in Philippa Strum & Danielle Tarantolo, eds., *Women Immigrants in the United States*. Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, 2002.
- <sup>16</sup> U.S. Decennial Census 1990 and 2000.
- <sup>17</sup> Kauffman Foundation (<http://www.emkf.org>).
- <sup>18</sup> Bureau of Labor Statistics (<ftp://ftp.bls.gov/pub/special.requests/lf/aat13.txt>). Another indication that Census-derived estimates are conservative is the estimate by Center for Women's Business Research that there were 553,618 businesses owned by Latinas in 2004 and 419,793 firms owned by Asian women (<http://www.womensbusinessresearch.org/minorityreports.html>).
- <sup>19</sup> See "Self-Employment Rates by Immigrant Status" on the website of Robert W. Fairlie (<http://econ.ucsc.edu/~fairlie/serates/>).
- <sup>20</sup> U.S. Decennial Census 2000.
- <sup>21</sup> California Partnership for Economic Achievement, "Vietnamese-American Businesses" (<http://www.californiapartnership.ml.com/pdf/vietnamese.pdf>).
- <sup>22</sup> U.S. Decennial Census 2000.
- <sup>23</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>24</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>25</sup> Center for Women's Business Research.
- <sup>26</sup> U.S. Decennial Census 2000.
- <sup>27</sup> Smith-Hunter.

- <sup>28</sup> The businesses owned by immigrant and native-born women of color that have experienced the highest rate of growth are in the service industry, growing by 55.8 percent between 1997 and 2004. The second-highest growth rate of 43 percent was in transportation/communications/utilities. From Center for Women's Business Research.
- <sup>29</sup> Center for Women's Business Research.
- <sup>30</sup> Clarke, Linda, Elisabeth Michielsens, Elsebet Frydendal Pedersen, Barbara Susman & Christine Wall, eds., *Women in Construction*. Bruxelles, Belgium: Reed International/CLR Studies (European Institute for Construction Labour Research), 2004 (<http://www.wmin.ac.uk/etlm/wicbook>).
- <sup>31</sup> U.S. Decennial Census 2000.
- <sup>32</sup> <http://www.civilrights.org>.
- <sup>33</sup> U.S. Decennial Census 2000.
- <sup>34</sup> <http://balanchine.org/05/archive/2002llopez.html>.
- <sup>35</sup> *2003 Yearbook of Immigration Statistics*. Numbers reflect legal immigrants and do not include refugees.
- <sup>36</sup> California is a state with very high self-employment rates in comparison with other states. Los Angeles leads other areas of California in this regard. See Light, Ivan & Victoria P. Ojeda, "Los Angeles: Wearing Out Their Welcome," in Jan Rath, ed., *Unravelling the Rag Trade: Immigrant Entrepreneurship in Seven World Cities*. Oxford, UK: Berg, 2002.
- <sup>37</sup> U.S. Decennial Census 2000.
- <sup>38</sup> *ibid.*
- <sup>39</sup> Suro, Roberto & Audrey Singer, *Latino Growth in Metropolitan America: Changing Patterns, New Locations*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Center on Urban & Metropolitan Policy and Pew Hispanic Center, July 2002.
- <sup>40</sup> Smith-Hunter.
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## ABOUT THE FOUNDATION...

The American Immigration Law Foundation is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to increasing public understanding of immigration law and policy and the value of immigration to American society; to promoting public service and excellence in the practice of immigration law; and to advancing fundamental fairness and due process under the law for immigrants.



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