

# NAE Cities Index

Tracking integration policies and outcomes in the top 100 U.S. cities

---

NOVEMBER 22, 2019



---

## **What is the NAE Cities Index?**

First launched in 2018, the NAE Cities Index is the first nationwide comprehensive assessment of immigration policies and socioeconomic outcomes for U.S. cities.

The Cities Index uses 51 unique measures to answer two of the questions at the heart of the immigration debate: How well are immigrants integrating into American society, and what role do cities play in that process?

---

## **Why an integration index: What works in local innovation?**

**In the past 5 years, a proliferation of local initiatives:**

- 35+ cities now have offices on immigrant integration (e.g., Office of Immigrant Affairs) or published integration plans
- Multiple cities created new programs and public-private partnerships to:
  - Support immigrant entrepreneurs
  - Assist eligible immigrants to become US citizens
  - Facilitate language access
  - Expand access to identification documents (e.g., for banking)
- New networks like Cities for Citizenship, Cities for Action, Welcoming Cities, and Gateways for Growth launched to scale these successes



Limited evaluation of specific initiatives, and **no comprehensive comparison of integration policies + outcomes across cities**

---

## Benchmarking success: What we want to measure

A municipal index, updated annually, that will track the performance of the largest 100 U.S. cities across two primary areas:



**Policy:** This sub-score looks at support for immigrant integration across **30 unique measures** within the categories of: government leadership; economic empowerment; equitable access; community engagement; and legal environment



**Outcomes:** This sub-score looks at immigrant socioeconomic outcomes relative to the U.S.-born across **21 unique measures** within the categories of: labor force participation; economic outcomes; housing, healthcare and education; and civic participation

---

## Research design

Starting in April 2017, we convened a committee of integration experts:

### NEW AMERICAN ECONOMY

**Andrew Lim, MSc**  
Director of Quantitative Research

**Nan Wu, MPP**  
Deputy Director, Research

**Laura Limonic, PhD**  
Sociologist

**Steven Hubbard, PhD**  
Data Scientist

**Szilvia Altorjal, PhD**  
Demographer

### OUTSIDE EXPERTS

**Audrey Singer, PhD**  
Congressional Research Service  
(formerly Brookings Institution,  
Urban Institute)

**Hamutal Bernstein, PhD**  
Urban Institute

**Manuel Pastor, PhD**  
USC-CSII

**Meg Shoemaker Little**  
Welcoming America

**Els de Graauw, PhD**  
Baruch College, CUNY

**Justin P. Lowry, PhD**  
SUNY Plattsburgh

**Tom K. Wong, PhD**  
UCSD

**Xi Huang, PhD**  
UCF

**Abigail Williamson, PhD**  
Trinity College

**James Witte, PhD**  
George Mason University

---

## Scope and Metrics

The NAE Cities Index looks at the 100 largest cities in the United States by total population.

As of 2017, the demographic features of these cities include:

- Total population is more than 200,000 people.
- Foreign-born population is more than 10,000 people.
- The share of total population that is foreign-born is more than 3.6 percent.

An overall score out of 5, evenly comprised of two sides:

- Policy Sub-Score, comprised up of 30 individual indicators, using a qualitative survey (largely based on the Municipal Responses to Immigrants Survey).
- Socioeconomic (Outcome) Sub-Score, incorporating data covering 21 different metrics, using data from the 5-year sample of the American Community Survey downloaded from IPUMS.org.

# Scope and Metrics

## 31 Policy Metrics, including:

### Government Leadership

- Establish or maintain a local office for immigrant services
- Hire immigrants or members of immigrant ethnic groups as municipal employees

### Economic Empowerment

- Entrepreneurship support programs targeting immigrants
- Vocational training programs targeting immigrants

### Inclusivity

- Materials being translated into non-English languages at municipal centers

**Community** Partner with local organizations to provide services or information to immigrants

### Legal Support

- Accept consular ID or other foreign IDs as forms of identification

## 20 Outcome Metrics for US-born and foreign-born, including:

### Job Opportunities

- Labor force participation rate
- Employment rate
- Share of entrepreneurs

### Economic Prosperity

- Median income
- Median business income
- Poverty rate

### Livability

- Home ownership rate
- Educational attainment

### Civic Participation

- Naturalization rate
- Share immigrants with veteran or active military status

## Scoring: Overall Scores

To generate an overall score for each city, we calculate the average of the scores of the socioeconomic section and the policy section so that each city's overall score fall between the range of 1 to 5.

Top 15 Cities Overall	Overall Score	Policy Sub-Score	Outcomes Score
1. Chicago, IL	4.38	5.00	3.75
2. Chula Vista, CA	4.33	4.40	4.25
3. Jersey City, NJ	4.30	4.60	4.00
4. San Francisco, CA	4.25	5.00	3.50
5. Baltimore, MD	4.23	4.20	4.25
6. New York, NY	4.03	4.80	3.25
7. Anaheim, CA	3.93	4.60	3.25
8. Newark, NJ	3.93	3.60	4.25
9. San Jose, CA	3.93	4.60	3.25
10. Los Angeles, CA	3.90	4.80	3.00
11. Portland, OR	3.90	4.80	3.00
12. Philadelphia, PA	3.88	4.00	3.75
13. Washington, D.C.	3.83	4.40	3.25
14. Cleveland, OH	3.78	3.80	3.75
15. Cincinnati, OH	3.73	4.20	3.25

---

## General Trends

**Traditional immigrant gateway cities lead in overall **policy scores** because of their well-established institutions for immigrant integration.**

- The policy environment is more supportive for immigrants in cities with higher percentage of foreign-born.
- Cities with large, sustained immigrant populations over the past century have the most welcoming policies (e.g. SF, NYC, Boston, and Chicago)
- Cities in states with Democratic-controlled legislatures have more supportive policies than cities in states with Republican-controlled legislatures
- Among geographic regions, cities in New England have the most welcoming policies, while those in the South Atlantic (e.g. GA, SC, NC) have the least supportive policies.

**Small to mid-size cities score highly on **socioeconomic outcomes**, potentially due to less inequality and lower cost of living.**

- Cities re-emerging as sizeable immigrant gateways in recent years show the smallest disparities in socioeconomic outcomes between immigrants and the U.S.-born (e.g. Denver and Minneapolis).

## Emerging Themes

### Cities in the Midwest are pulling ahead of the curve:

- Among the 10 cities with the biggest jump in overall score, four are in the Midwest: Cleveland, OH, Milwaukee, WI, Toledo, OH, and Chicago, IL—more than any other region in the United States.

<b>City</b>	<b>State</b>	<b>Region</b>	<b>Overall Score, 2019</b>	<b>Overall Score, 2018</b>
<b>Cleveland</b>	OH	Midwest	3.78	2.78
<b>Milwaukee</b>	WI	Midwest	3.48	2.63
<b>Albuquerque</b>	NM	Mountain	3.48	2.63
<b>Oklahoma City</b>	OK	South Central	3.35	2.50
<b>Jersey City</b>	NJ	Northeast	4.30	3.45
<b>Toledo</b>	OH	Midwest	3.38	2.58
<b>Anaheim</b>	CA	Pacific	3.93	3.28
<b>San Antonio</b>	TX	South Central	3.43	2.83
<b>Chicago</b>	IL	Midwest	4.38	3.80
<b>Santa Ana</b>	CA	Pacific	3.25	2.73

## Emerging Themes

**Do higher Index scores matter?** Cities that do well in the Index tend to also have higher measures of well-being for all their residents, regardless of their immigration status.

		Average of the Top 25 Index Cities	Average of All 100 Index Cities
Median Business Income of Entrepreneurs	U.S.-Born	\$25,818	\$24,142
	Immigrants	\$20,952	\$20,740
Share of Population, College-Educated	U.S.-Born	37.6%	35.2%
	Immigrants	33.1%	29.2%
Naturalization Rate		77.4%	75.8%

Cities are increasingly adopting a wide range of policy measures

Policy Indicator	Number of Index Cities that Have Such a Policy
Establish or maintain a local office for immigrant affairs	36
Run or provide support for entrepreneurship programs that target immigrants	54
Issue a municipal ID to all residents, regardless of immigration status	11
Have legal defense fund available to immigrants facing deportation	24
Run or provide support for programs that encourage or guide eligible immigrants through the naturalization process	62

---

## Ongoing Challenges and Limitations

### Ongoing Challenges

- Continued survey participation from city government officials
- Checking for continued relevancy of policy indicators
- Tension between different levels of governance (Federal, State, Municipal)

### Data Limitations: What are we missing?

- Sentiment and local public opinion – How do immigrants feel about their cities/towns?
- Thoroughness of application/execution of policies and practices on paper
- Feelings of belonging among immigrant populations
- Other topics not covered in the American Community Survey (health outcomes, volunteering, community engagement)