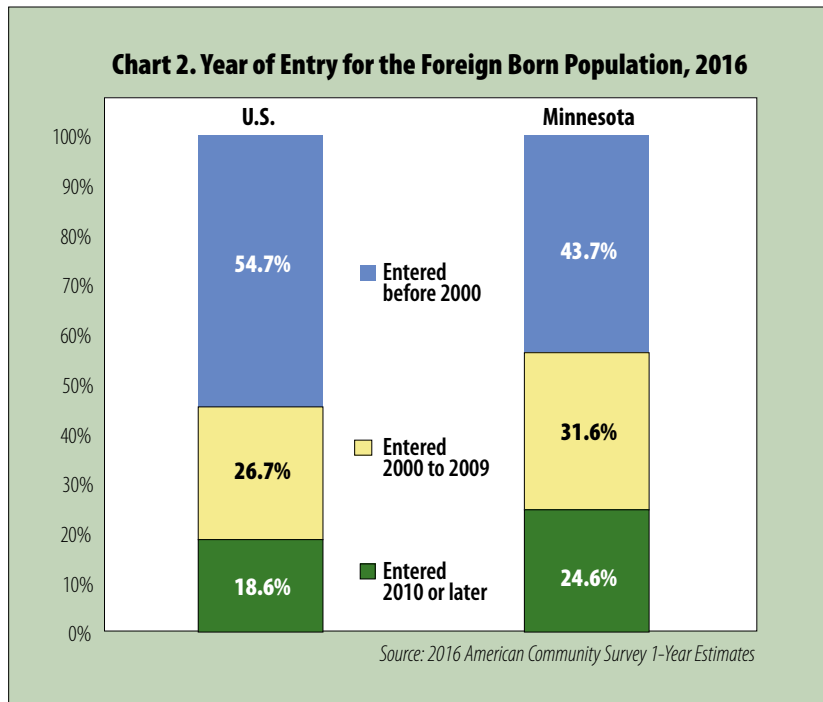


native-born Minnesotans (35 percent). In each case, Minnesota was above the comparable educational attainment levels for both foreign- (30 percent) and native- (31.6 percent) born residents nationwide.

It is equally important, however, to note that nearly half (45.8 percent) of foreign-born Minnesotans have a high school diploma or less, including 27.1 percent that are not high school graduates. That compared with just 30.8 and 4.9 percent of natives, respectively.

For foreign-born residents who were not U.S. citizens, this jumps to 52.7 percent with a high school diploma or less, including 34.4 percent without a high school diploma. This is a sizeable number and shows that many immigrants need access to education to be prepared for the workforce, where jobs for high school graduates are increasingly difficult to fill.

Another big gap between native-born and foreign-born is in the percentage of residents who have attended some college or earned an associate degree. Just over 34 percent of native-born Minnesotans have some college or an associate degree, compared with just 21.6 percent of foreign-born Minnesotans and just 15.5 percent of foreign-born non-citizens.



Service Specialization

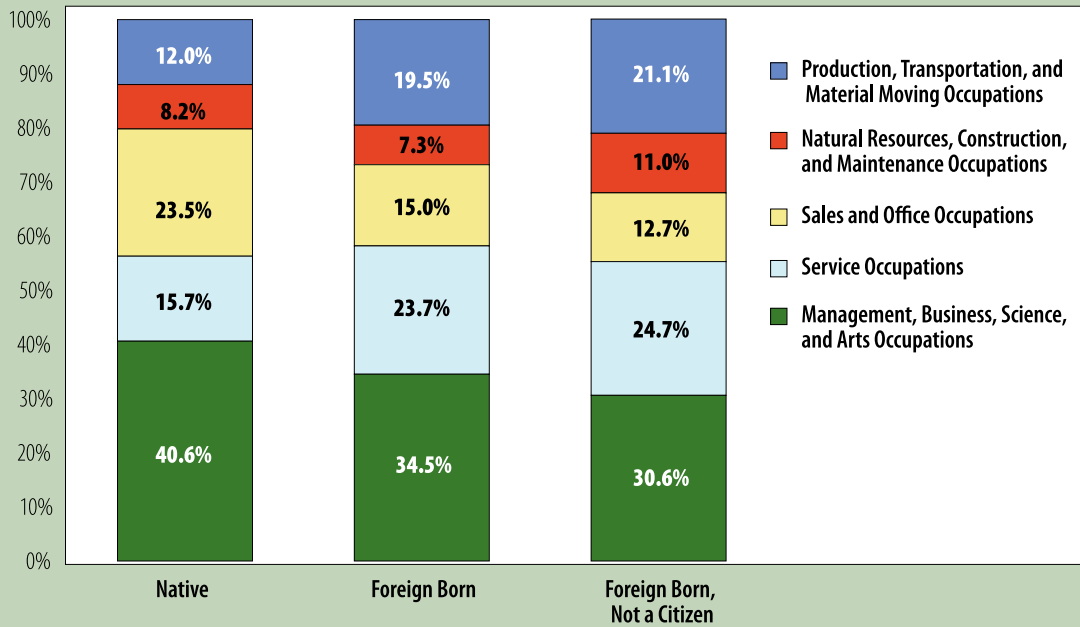
Perhaps in part due to the language and educational barriers described, foreign-born workers were much more likely to work in certain occupational and industry groups than native-born workers. For example, native-born workers were 8.5 percentage points more likely to work in sales and office occupations than foreign-born workers, and 6.1 percentage points more concentrated in management, business, science and arts occupations.

In contrast, foreign-born workers were found more often in service occupations, which include health care support, protective service, food preparation and serving, building and grounds cleaning, and personal care occupations. They were also much more concentrated in production, transportation and material moving occupations. These gaps are even more pronounced for foreign-born workers who are not citizens, who presumably have entered more recently (see Chart 3).

By industry, foreign-born workers were much more likely to be found working in manufacturing, administrative support and waste management services – which includes temporary staffing services – and leisure and hospitality. In contrast, immigrants were less likely to be employed in retail trade, public administration, construction, and finance, insurance and real estate.

Not surprisingly, some detailed occupations have very high shares of foreign-born workers

Chart 3. Occupation of Employment for Minnesota Workers by Place of Birth and Citizenship Status, 2016



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2016 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

(see Table 2). Some of these occupations are already showing critical workforce shortages in Minnesota, including nursing, psychiatric, home health and personal care aides, as well as computer and construction-related occupations. Understanding which industries and occupations our foreign-born workers disproportionately support becomes even more crucial with recent overtures to restrict immigration.

Wherever they work, these new Minnesotans are a vital part of the state's economy, providing rapid growth to an otherwise aging and slowing labor force. In the years ahead, it is likely that labor force constraints will require that every employer consider our young and growing immigrant population as a source of the workforce they will need.

Diminished labor force growth has been obvious in recent years, and it is expected to fall further in the years ahead. Job growth will be constrained by the lack of an available workforce, especially in areas of Greater Minnesota that also have a lower share of both immigrants and minorities. And even with success in attracting new workers, we might not have all the workers that employers will need. Hence, we should also take steps to ensure that we're making the most of

Table 2.
Top Occupations Employing Foreign Born Workers in Minnesota, 2015

Occupation	Foreign Born Employment	Foreign Born Share of Employment
Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	10,880	16.7%
Cooks	10,272	18.8%
Miscellaneous Assemblers and Fabricators	9,624	26.4%
Nursing, Psychiatric and Home Health Aides	8,710	15.4%
Personal Care Aides	7,930	18.4%
Software Developers, Applications and Systems Software	7,622	30.3%
Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	7,064	26.2%
Postsecondary Teachers	6,261	19.3%
Miscellaneous Agricultural Workers	4,949	17.9%
Biomedical Engineers	4,847	22.3%
Hand Packers and Packagers	4,546	35.8%
Physicians and Surgeons	3,929	22.0%
Packaging and Filling Machine Operators and Tenders	3,249	38.0%
Computer Programmers	2,942	23.0%
Miscellaneous Media and Communication Workers	2,835	63.6%
Miscellaneous Personal Appearance Workers	2,726	64.2%
Butchers and Other Meat, Poultry, and Fish Processing Workers	2,646	39.5%
Computer and Information Systems Managers	2,598	16.8%
Computer Systems Analysts	2,498	17.8%
Taxi Drivers and Chauffeurs	2,093	31.3%
Roofers	1,775	30.7%

Source: 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

the workers we have by removing frequent impediments to work.

Minnesota's immigrant population has been a crucial source of the workforce our state needs to continue to grow, and this is only expected to intensify in the years ahead. It is critically important, therefore, that we

take steps to reduce any barriers that our foreign-born residents face in fully participating in our labor markets. Only by doing so can we hope to continue the economic success that our state has been known for. ■