

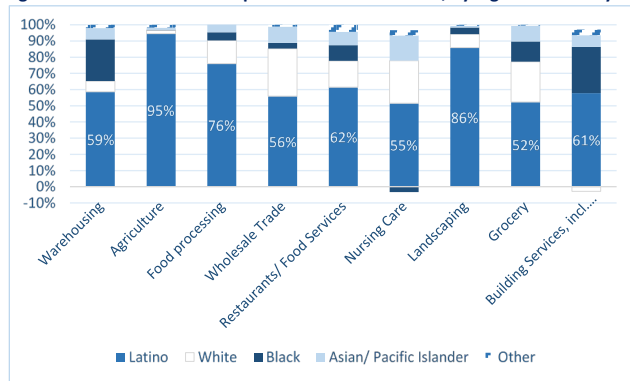
MAY 2021

FACT SHEET: Latino and Immigrant Workers At Highest Risk of Death

Immigrants and Latinos comprised the majority of workers in California’s industries at highest risk of pandemic-related deaths.

A UC Merced Community and Labor Center analysis of state public health data finds that, during the first ten months of the pandemic, a majority of pandemic-related deaths (among workers aged 18-65) in California’s highest-risk industries were Latino (68%) and immigrant (58%).

Figure 1. Latinos as a share of pandemic-related deaths, by high-risk industry



Source: UC Merced Community and Labor Center analysis of California Department of Public Health- California Comprehensive Death File, March-December 2019-2020

Table 1. Latinos as a share of pandemic-related deaths, by high-risk industry

Industry	Latino %	Latino	Non-Latino	Total
Warehousing	59%	196	138	334
Agriculture	95%	534	31	565
Food processing	76%	165	52	217
Wholesale Trade	56%	145	114	259
Restaurants/ Food Services	62%	652	408	1,060
Nursing Care	55%	63	51	114
Landscaping	86%	256	42	298
Grocery	52%	193	176	369
Building Services, incl. Security	61%	259	163	422
Highest-risk industries	68%	2,463	1,175	3,638

Source: UC Merced Community and Labor Center analysis of California Department of Public Health- California Comprehensive Death File, March-December 2019-2020

A previous analysis identified California's ten highest-risk industries—those with the highest increase in deaths between 2019 and 2020.¹

This analysis examined the race and nativity of pandemic-related worker deaths in such highest-risk industries—with the exception of bars.²

Latinos Workers at High-Risk. In March-December 2020, Latinos accounted for more than two of three (68%) pandemic-related worker deaths in the state's nine highest-risk industries (see table 1).

A Majority of Deaths in Each High-Risk Industry. Latinos accounted for the majority of pandemic-related deaths in each of the nine highest-risk

industries: warehousing (59%), agriculture (95%), food processing (76%), wholesale trade (56%), restaurants/ food services (62%), nursing care (55%), landscaping (86%), grocery (including liquor and convenience stores) (52%), and building services (61%).

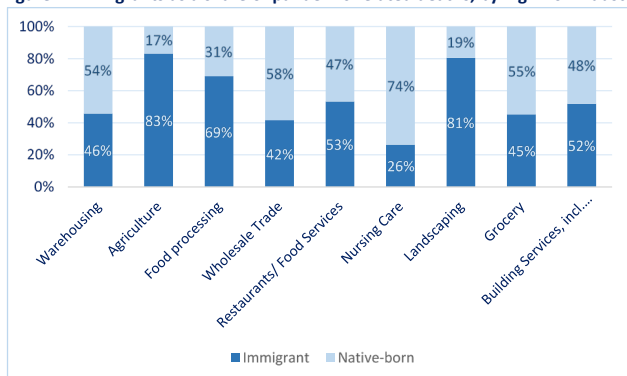
A Majority of All Worker Deaths. Latinos were also the majority of pandemic-related deaths among workers in all other industries (56%) (analysis not shown).

While Latinos comprised 53% of deaths among persons (aged 18-65) not in the labor force, they accounted for three in five (60%) of all California worker deaths (analysis not shown).

¹ See UC Merced Community and Labor Center (2021).

² Bars were included with "all other industries" due to small cell sizes (some with less than 10 cases).

Figure 2. Immigrants as a share of pandemic-related deaths, by high-risk industry



Source: UC Merced Community and Labor Center analysis of California Department of Public Health- California Comprehensive Death File, March-December 2019-2020

Immigrant Workers at Highest Risk. Immigrants accounted for most (58%) pandemic-related worker deaths in California's highest-risk industries (see table 2). Of the estimated 3,638 pandemic-related worker deaths in the state's highest-risk industries, 1,536 were immigrant (analysis not shown).

A Majority of Deaths in Five Highest-Risk Industries. Immigrants accounted for the majority of pandemic-related deaths in agriculture (83%), food processing (69%), restaurants/ food services (53%), landscaping (81%), and building services (52%) (see table 2).

Nearly Half of Deaths in Three Highest-Risk Industries. Immigrants comprised nearly half of pandemic-related deaths in warehousing (46%), grocery (45%), and wholesale trade (42%).

Nearly Half of All Worker Deaths. Immigrants accounted for 43% of pandemic-related worker deaths in all other industries (analysis not shown). While immigrants comprised 35% of deaths among persons (aged 18-65) not in the labor force, they accounted for nearly half (48%) of all California worker deaths (analysis not shown).

Implications. This analysis on industry-level, pandemic-related deaths indicates vulnerable workers are at higher risk of pandemic-related death. One study on California pandemic-related deaths found Latinos to have the highest risk of death—particularly those foreign born and in

Table 2. Immigrants as a share of pandemic-related deaths, by high-risk industry

Industry	Immigrant %	Native-born		Total
		Immigrant	Native-born	
Warehousing	46%	153	181	334
Agriculture	83%	470	95	565
Food processing	69%	150	67	217
Wholesale Trade	42%	108	151	259
Restaurants/ Food Services	53%	565	495	1,060
Nursing Care	26%	30	84	114
Landscaping	81%	240	58	298
Grocery	45%	167	202	369
Building Services, incl. Security	52%	219	203	422
Highest-risk industries	58%	2,102	1,536	3,638

Source: UC Merced Community and Labor Center analysis of California Department of Public Health- California Comprehensive Death File, March-December 2019-2020

essential jobs (Riley et al. 2021). Another found California workers in high-risk industries were more likely to not speak English; earn low-wages; and live in poverty (Macias et al. 2021) .

Public education and outreach to low-wage, immigrant, non-citizen workers should emphasize worker rights, and workplace health and safety hazards and protections.

Additionally, **public agencies regulating workplace health and safety** should be adequately funded and staffed to ensure robust enforcement of standards across all industries, particularly those continuing to pose a high risk of COVID-19 spread. Staffing should reflect the many languages spoken by high-risk industry workers.

References

Macias, Elsa, Ana Padilla, Ellen Widess, and Edward Flores. 2021. "Demographic Analysis of Workers in High-Risk Industries: Central Valley Data." Presentation to the California Labor & Workforce Development Agency. January 6.

Riley, Alicia, Ellicott C. Matthay, Jacqueline M. Torres, and Kristen Bibbins-Domingo. 2021. Excess Death among Latino People in California During the COVID-19 Pandemic. medRxiv [PrePrint]. January 25, 2021 [cited May 10, 2021]. Available from: <https://www.medrxiv.org/content/10.1101/2020.12.18.20248434v2>

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Mission Statement

The UC Merced Community and Labor Center conducts research and education on issues of community, labor and employment, in the San Joaquin Valley and beyond.