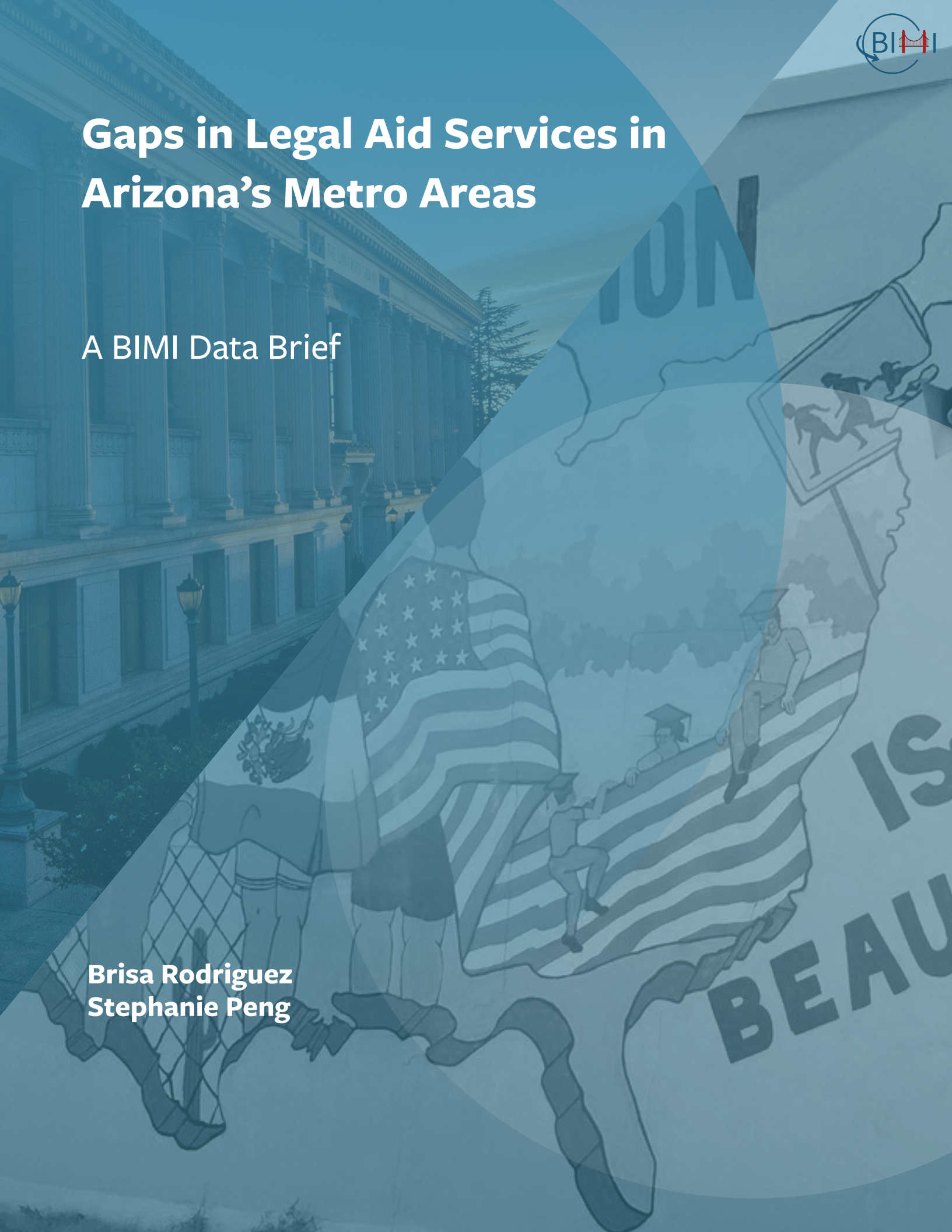


Gaps in Legal Aid Services in Arizona's Metro Areas

A BIMI Data Brief

Brisa Rodriguez
Stephanie Peng



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The two largest counties in Arizona, Maricopa and Pima, are home to 75% of the state's total population, including 530,908 noncitizens.¹ On average, non-citizens make up 7.5% of the total state population. Phoenix, the most populous city in the state, is home to over 200,000 noncitizens (13% of the city's population). The second largest city, Tucson has over 47,000 noncitizens (9% of the city's population). Non-citizens often require assistance navigating the complicated, time-consuming, and costly immigration legal system in order to obtain work permits, seek counsel in removal proceedings, apply for residency or citizenship and more. Lack of accessible legal services therefore impacts immigrant populations' social and civic inclusion, as well as the wellbeing of families and communities as a whole. Furthermore, among immigrants with limited English language skills and limited economic resources, accessing services becomes more difficult. In terms of limited English language skills, over 500,000 of total residents, or 8.6% of the state population identified as "speaking English less than very well." Additionally, about 300,00 foreign-born residents live below 150% of the federal poverty level.

Our research found that Arizona lacks sufficient access to legal services despite high immigrant demand for such services. On average, Arizona's two most populous counties have 0.8 legal service providers per 10,000 low-income foreign-born residents. This means that, on average, there is less than one legal clinic per 10,000 low-income foreign born residents – a lower per capita ratio than both California's Bay Area and the Central Valley regions, at 2.1 and 1.03 legal clinics per 10,000 low-income residents, respectively.

¹ All demographic and population information is from the American Community Survey 2019 5-Year Estimates, U.S. Census Bureau.

This is not to say that the Bay Area and the Central Valley do not face service access issues, but instead, highlights the even more stark access issues in Arizona.

The Berkeley Interdisciplinary Migration Initiative (BIMI) mapped immigrant-serving legal aid providers in relation to immigrant demand for legal aid across Arizona to identify the most pressing gaps in access. To identify demand, we used American Community Survey data from the U.S. Census Bureau to map where low-income foreign-born residents live.² The map in Figure 1 shows the 8 cities in Maricopa and Pima Counties with more than 3,000 low-income foreign-born residents. The size of each circle indicates the number of low-income foreign-born residents in each city: a larger circle indicates a higher demand for legal service providers. The accessibility of legal services in the city is shown by the color, which corresponds to the number of legal service providers per 10,000 low-income foreign-born residents. Dark blue circles are cities with a higher ratio of legal service providers per low-income foreign-born residents; bright orange circles are those with very few legal service providers in proportion to the number of low-income and foreign-born residents. The larger bright orange circles, like Mesa, are therefore the places with larger gaps in available services and many potentially underserved residents. Figure 2 ranks cities by the prevalence of offices per 10,000 low-income foreign-born residents. With this information, local stakeholders, including policymakers and philanthropists, can work to better meet the needs of these underserved communities.

² We define "low-income" as below 150% of the federal poverty line.



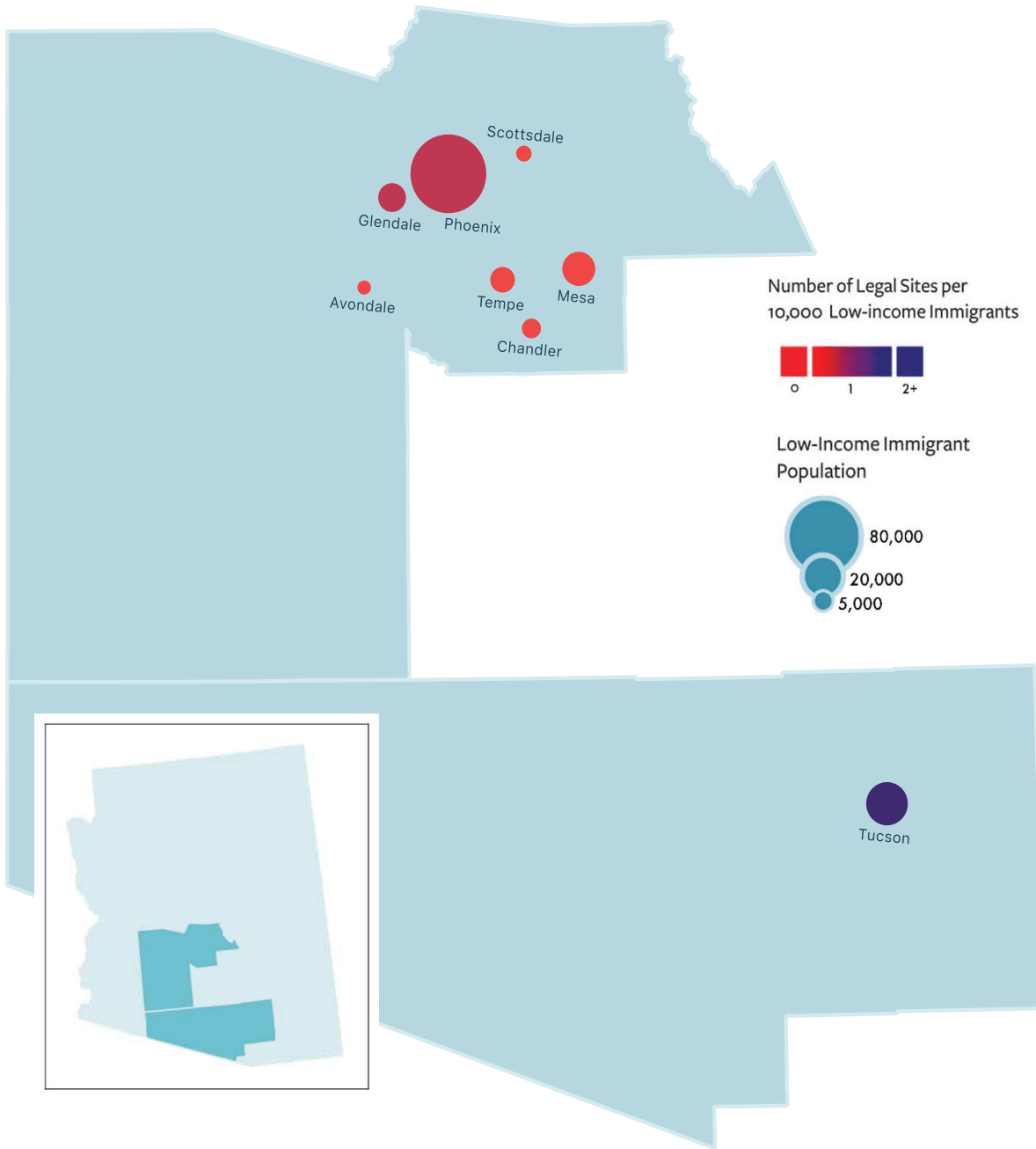


Figure 1: Legal Aid Services Accessibility in Arizona’s Metro Areas

This map shows 8 cities in Arizona’s metro areas with at least 3,000 foreign-born residents living below 150% of the poverty line. The circle sizes are proportional to the total low-income immigrant population, and the colors correspond to the number of legal clinics per 10,000 low-income immigrant residents.

Data Sources: American Community Survey 2019 5-Year Estimates, the Immigration Advocates Network Nonprofit Resource Center, the Catholic Legal Immigration Network, and The United States Department of Justice Executive Office for Immigration Review.

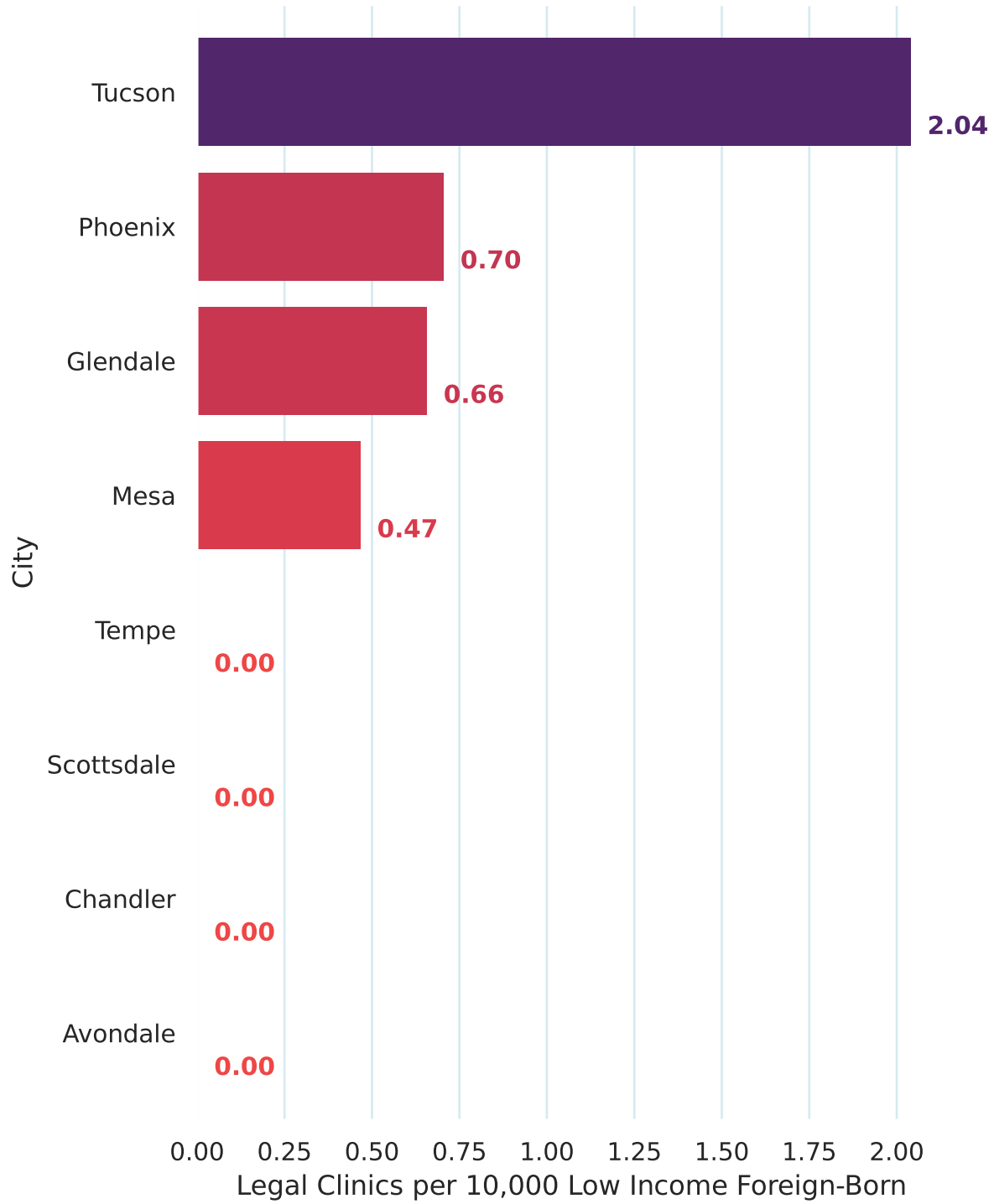


Figure 2: Ranking of Arizona Cities by Number of Legal Service Offices per 10,000 Low-Income Foreign-Born Residents

For each city, the number of legal clinics per 10,000 low-income foreign-born residents is shown.

Data Sources: American Community Survey 2019 5-Year Estimates, the Immigration Advocates Network Nonprofit Resource Center, the Catholic Legal Immigration Network, and The United States Department of Justice Executive Office for Immigration Review.

Key Findings

Cities with the most demand

- **Phoenix** is home to **110,00** low-income foreign-born residents.
- **Tucson** is home to **34,000** low-income foreign-born residents.

Highest access to legal services

- **Tucson provides the highest access** at 2.04 legal clinics per 10,000 low-income foreign-born residents. This number is far above the state average of 0.8 legal clinics per 10,000 low-income foreign-born residents.
- **Phoenix has the second largest number of legal service providers**, with 0.7 legal clinics per 10,000 low-income foreign-born residents.
- **Tucson residents in Pima County have almost three times the level of access to legal service providers compared to Phoenix residents in Maricopa County**, despite the demand being three times higher in Phoenix.

Lowest access to legal services

- **Mid-sized cities Glendale and Mesa provide the lowest access**, with 0.66 and 0.47 legal service providers per 10,000 low-income residents, respectively.
- **The suburban cities in Maricopa County contain no legal service providers.** These cities include Tempe, Scottsdale, Avondale, and Chandler. Although there is no access to legal aid services, these cities have a sizable population of low-income foreign-born residents.

0.00 legal service providers per 10,000 low-income immigrants in many suburban Arizonan cities



Explaining the Legal Services Gap Between Cities

Discrepancies in immigrants' access to legal aid providers across the suburbs, mid-sized cities and large cities in Arizona are visibly similar to discrepancies in immigrants' access to health clinics in the same region.³ We provide a descriptive analysis of the relationships between access to legal clinics and racial composition, poverty levels, and legacies of activism.

The racial composition of cities with low access to legal services varies widely and does not appear to predict access to legal services.

Tucson, the large city with the best access, is 44% Hispanic or Latino, which is similar to the 43% Hispanic or Latino population in Phoenix, the large city with comparatively worse access.

The two cities in Maricopa County that have low but non-zero access to legal service providers are Mesa (28% Hispanic) and Glendale (38% Hispanic).

Among the cities with zero legal service providers, the population of Hispanic or Latino residents is as follows: Avondale (52%), Chandler (21%), Tempe (22%), and Scottsdale (10%).

Poverty rates only somewhat explain variation in legal service access, with some of the wealthiest places having the least access.

Among the cities with no legal services, Avondale and Tempe also have a higher than average poverty rate (13.2% and 19.7% respectively, compared to the county average of 12.2%), but Chandler and Scottsdale are much wealthier, with a much lower poverty rate of 7.6%

Tucson, Phoenix, Mesa, and Glendale, the four places with non-zero access, have similar economic profiles, with slightly higher poverty rates than the county average.

Although Avondale and Tempe have comparable levels of poverty to Phoenix, it appears that low-income foreign-born residents in Avondale and Tempe are left with no other choice than to commute to the nearby city of Phoenix. The challenge also emerges among the small, but sizable low-income foreign-born population of Chandler and Scottsdale, who are tasked with a longer commute time to Phoenix for legal aid services.



Key Comparisons Between Health and Legal Service Access

- **The city of Tucson offers consistently higher access to both legal and health services compared to Phoenix, despite the two cities having similar racial and economic demographics.**
- High access to services may result from **a rich history as one of the first “sanctuary cities”** in the 80s. The legacies of immigration-related activism in Tucson may continue to the present day. For a more detailed discussion of this legacy, see BIMl’s related policy brief “Gaps in Health Services for Immigrants in Arizona’s Metro Areas.”
- A major difference in access to health and legal services was found in the city of Scottsdale. **Scottsdale had the highest access to health services**, with 1.79 clinics per 1,000 foreign-born uninsured residents. **However, it has zero legal service providers.** This suggests that the wealthier suburb distributes more resources and funding to health clinics compared to legal aid providers.

Tucson offers immigrants better access to both health and legal services compared to other Arizona cities, perhaps due to its legacy as a sanctuary city.

Areas for Further Study

Further research is needed. First, using cities as the unit of analysis, especially in larger cities, might overlook important variation in service capacity between neighborhoods within a large city. A provider near the edge of a city boundary might also serve residents in numerous cities.

Second, the presence of providers does not necessarily mean that they effectively reach low-income immigrant populations. This brief highlights the differences in possible capacity across place, not immigrants' actual use of services.

Last, when comparing larger and smaller cities, this analysis is unable to look at the variation in capacity of different providers. Possibly, in places with high demand, providers may have more staff, longer hours, and more services. Rather than increase the number of providers, some places might increase the capacity of existing providers. Our mapping of service accessibility is a first step to beginning these conversations on how to ensure the safety and well-being of our immigrant neighbors.

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Alexandra Gessesse, Dani Kim

Contact

Berkeley Interdisciplinary Migration Initiative
bimi@berkeley.edu
<https://bimi.berkeley.edu>

118 Philosophy Hall
Berkeley CA, 94720

About the Authors

Brisa Rodriguez is an undergraduate student at the University of California, Berkeley where she is currently double majoring in Psychology and Legal Studies (B.A.). She is an undergraduate research fellow at the Berkeley Interdisciplinary Migration Initiative, working on the Mapping Spatial Inequality Project. Through her work with BIMI, Brisa's objective is to increase the visibility and accessibility to resources for immigrant populations in the United States.

Stephanie Peng is a Political Science PhD student at the University of California, Berkeley. She is a graduate student researcher with the Berkeley Interdisciplinary Migration Initiative, working on the Mapping Spatial Inequality Project. Stephanie has previously worked at the U.S. Immigration Policy Center (USIPC) and her research interests are centered around the political representation and integration of immigrants.