Year of Entry of the Foreign-Born Population: 2009

American Community Survey Briefs

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INTRODUCTION

This report presents data on the year of entry of the foreign-born population at the national and state levels based on the 2009 American Community Survey (ACS).[1] In 2009, an estimated 38.5 million foreign-born people lived in the United States, representing roughly 12.5 percent of the total population. The foreign-born population includes anyone who was not a U.S. citizen at birth.

Data on year of entry is important because it can be used as an indicator of time spent in the United States by the foreign born. For example, in 2009, 14 percent of the foreign-born population reported having lived in the country less than 5 years. Additional information about the foreign born can be gained when year of entry is analyzed with other variables. For example, combining year of entry with data on place of birth shows that 83 percent of the foreign-born population who reported entering the United States in 2000 or later were from Asian or Latin American countries compared with 68 percent of those who reported entering prior to 1980. Also, data showing year of entry by state of residence can provide information on the proportion of recent entrants in each state. For example, the foreign-born population in North Dakota represents less than 1 percent of the total foreign born; however, one-third of this state's foreign-born population entered the country within the past 5 years. By comparison, over one-fourth of all foreign born lived in California, but only 10 percent had entered in the past 5 years. This report examines differences in the size, place of birth, and geographic distribution of foreign-born year of entry cohorts.[2]

SIZE, PLACE OF BIRTH, AND GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION OF FOREIGN-BORN YEAR OF ENTRY COHORTS

Among the 38.5 million foreign-born U.S. residents in 2009, 21 percent reported a year of entry prior to 1980, compared with 32 percent who reported entering in 2000 or later (Table 1). Over half (59 percent) of the foreign-born population entered the United States during the last two decades.

The distribution of the foreign-born population by world region of birth varies considerably across entry cohorts. For example, 13 percent of the total foreign-born population was born in Europe (Table 2). However, 1 in 4 who entered prior to 1980 was born in Europe compared with less than 1 in 10 (8.9 percent) who entered in 2000 or later. When compared to Europe, the foreign born from Latin America show a different pattern. Over half (53 percent) of all foreign born were from Latin America. Of the foreign born who entered prior to 1980, 45 percent were born in Latin America, compared with 54 percent of those who

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[1] Data on the year of entry of the foreign-born population are derived from the question: "When did this person come to live in the United States?" The year respondents report that they "came to live" is considered their "year of entry." Respondents who "came to live" in the United States more than once were asked to report their most recent year of entry.

[2] In this report the term "year of entry cohorts" refers to individuals who reported coming to live in the United States during specific periods of time: prior to 1980, 1980 to 1989, 1990 to 1999, and 2000 or later.

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Table 1.
Foreign-Born Population by Period of Entry: 2009

(Numbers in thousands. Data based on sample. For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, and definitions, see *www.census.gov/acs/www*)

Period of entry	Number	Margin of error[1] (±)	Percent	Margin of error[1] (±)
Total	38,517	116	100.0	(X)
Prior to 1980	8,041	54	20.9	0.2
1980 to 1989	7,577	60	19.7	0.1
1990 to 1999	10,736	74	27.9	0.2
2000 or later	12,163	97	31.6	0.2

(X) Not applicable.

[1]Data are based on a sample and are subject to sampling variability. A margin of error is a measure of an estimate's variability. The larger the margin of error in relation to the size of the estimates, the less reliable the estimate. When added to and subtracted from the estimate, the margin of error forms the 90 percent confidence interval.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2009.

entered in 2000 or later. This trend has been driven especially by those born in Central American countries, representing 37 percent of the total foreign-born population, 28 percent of those who entered before 1980, and 39 percent of those who entered in 2000 or later. The foreign born from Asia, when examined by entry cohort, also show a noteworthy pattern. Over one-fourth (28 percent) of the total foreign-born population was from Asia, and the Asian foreign born represented approximately one-fourth or more of each entry cohort, peaking at 31 percent of all foreign born who entered between 1980 and 1989.

Table 2.
Foreign-Born Population by Period of Entry and Place of Birth: 2009

(Percent distribution. Data based on sample. For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, and definitions, see *www.census.gov/acs/www*)

Place of birth	Total Percent	Total Margin of error[1] (±)	Prior to 1980 Percent	Prior to 1980 Margin of error[1] (±)	1980 to 1989 Percent	1980 to 1989 Margin of error[1] (±)	1990 to 1999 Percent	1990 to 1999 Margin of error[1] (±)	2000 or later Percent	2000 or later Margin of error[1] (±)
Total	100.0	(X)	100.0	(X)	100.0	(X)	100.0	(X)	100.0	(X)
Africa	3.9	0.1	1.8	0.1	2.8	0.1	3.9	0.1	5.9	0.2
Americas	55.2	0.1	49.1	0.3	57.6	0.4	57.8	0.3	55.6	0.4
Latin America	53.1	0.1	44.6	0.3	56.3	0.3	56.2	0.4	54.0	0.4
Caribbean	9.0	0.1	11.6	0.2	10.1	0.3	8.3	0.2	7.2	0.2
Central America	37.4	0.2	27.7	0.2	39.7	0.4	41.4	0.3	38.8	0.4
South America	6.7	0.1	5.3	0.2	6.5	0.2	6.5	0.2	8.1	0.2
Northern America	2.1	–	4.5	0.1	1.2	0.1	1.6	0.1	1.6	0.1
Asia	27.7	0.1	23.7	0.3	31.5	0.3	26.6	0.3	28.8	0.4
Europe	12.7	0.1	24.9	0.3	7.7	0.2	11.3	0.2	8.9	0.2
Oceania	0.5	–	0.5	–	0.4	–	0.5	–	0.7	0.1
Total	100.0	(X)	100.0	(X)	100.0	(X)	100.0	(X)	100.0	(X)
Eight largest countries of birth[2]	54.9	0.2	46.4	0.3	58.3	0.4	58.3	0.4	55.5	0.4
China[3]	5.2	0.1	4.1	0.1	5.7	0.2	5.4	0.1	5.3	0.1
Cuba	2.6	0.1	4.8	0.1	1.9	0.1	1.8	0.1	2.2	0.1
El Salvador	3.0	0.1	1.5	0.1	4.4	0.2	3.1	0.1	3.0	0.1
India	4.3	0.1	2.3	0.1	3.2	0.1	4.4	0.1	6.3	0.2
Korea[4]	2.6	0.1	2.9	0.1	3.4	0.1	2.1	0.1	2.4	0.1
Mexico	29.8	0.2	23.5	0.2	30.0	0.3	33.7	0.3	30.3	0.4
Philippines	4.5	0.1	4.8	0.1	5.6	0.2	4.0	0.1	4.0	0.1
Vietnam	3.0	0.1	2.5	0.1	4.1	0.2	3.8	0.1	1.9	0.1
All other countries	45.1	0.2	53.6	0.3	41.7	0.4	41.7	0.4	44.5	0.4

(X) Not applicable.

– Represents or rounds to zero.

[1]Data are based on a sample and are subject to sampling variability. A margin of error is a measure of an estimate's variability. The larger the margin of error in relation to the size of the estimate, the less reliable the estimate. When added to and subtracted from the estimate, the margin of error forms the 90 percent confidence interval.

[2]Eight largest countries of birth determined for total foreign-born population. Countries listed alphabetically.

[3]Includes respondents who reported their country of birth as China, Hong Kong, Macau, Paracel Islands, or Taiwan.

[4]Includes respondents who reported their country of birth as Korea, North Korea, or South Korea.

Note: Data exclude population born at sea.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2009.

Table 3.
Foreign-Born Population by Period of Entry by State and Puerto Rico: 2009

(Numbers in thousands. Data based on sample. For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, and definitions, see *www.census.gov/acs/www*)

Area	Total Number	Total Margin of error[1] (±)	Prior to 1980 Percent of total	Prior to 1980 Margin of error[1] (±)	1980 to 1989 Percent of total	1980 to 1989 Margin of error[1] (±)	1990 to 1999 Percent of total	1990 to 1999 Margin of error[1] (±)	2000 or later Percent of total	2000 or later Margin of error[1] (±)
United States	**38,517**	**116**	**20.9**	**0.2**	**19.7**	**0.1**	**27.9**	**0.2**	**31.6**	**0.2**
Alabama	147	4	14.7	1.6	11.4	1.3	26.3	2.4	47.6	2.6
Alaska	49	3	18.3	3.5	21.0	3.1	24.9	3.3	35.7	5.5
Arizona	925	20	19.2	0.8	18.9	1.1	29.2	1.2	32.7	1.3
Arkansas	120	5	13.8	1.8	16.6	2.2	31.7	3.2	37.8	3.8
California	9,947	47	23.4	0.3	25.2	0.3	26.5	0.3	24.9	0.4
Colorado	487	15	16.3	0.9	13.9	1.1	33.8	1.7	36.0	2.1
Connecticut	460	12	24.3	1.2	15.8	1.1	25.4	1.1	34.5	1.6
Delaware	74	5	16.0	2.3	12.0	1.8	27.7	3.7	44.3	4.1
District of Columbia	72	5	19.1	2.9	17.8	2.7	23.5	2.5	39.6	3.8
Florida	3,484	37	24.0	0.5	18.7	0.5	25.5	0.5	31.8	0.6
Georgia	920	17	12.0	0.6	14.9	0.8	31.7	1.2	41.4	1.4
Hawaii	224	9	30.2	1.9	19.1	1.5	24.3	1.6	26.4	2.4
Idaho	98	6	20.9	2.2	16.9	2.6	28.0	3.1	34.1	4.0
Illinois.	1,741	24	22.6	0.7	17.7	0.6	31.4	0.9	28.4	0.9
Indiana.	281	9	16.2	1.2	11.7	1.1	27.2	1.9	44.8	2.3
Iowa	116	4	12.5	1.4	14.0	2.0	33.6	2.8	39.8	3.0
Kansas.	171	6	13.6	1.4	15.3	1.7	31.1	2.0	39.9	2.3
Kentucky	128	6	11.5	1.4	7.7	1.5	26.8	2.6	54.0	3.1
Louisiana	152	7	24.0	2.2	15.3	1.9	21.1	1.9	39.5	2.9
Maine.	44	4	37.4	4.5	11.1	2.3	17.6	4.3	33.9	5.2
Maryland	730	14	16.6	0.7	18.7	1.0	28.4	1.2	36.4	1.5
Massachusetts.	943	19	21.6	0.7	18.0	0.9	26.2	1.1	34.2	1.2
Michigan	614	15	22.3	1.0	13.3	0.8	27.8	1.2	36.5	1.4
Minnesota	358	10	12.4	1.0	15.8	1.1	30.0	1.7	41.8	2.0
Mississippi	60	5	16.0	2.9	12.4	2.6	23.5	3.7	48.1	4.9
Missouri	213	8	16.8	1.2	12.8	1.2	28.3	1.7	42.2	2.3
Montana.	19	2	35.1	5.1	15.2	4.1	19.4	4.2	30.3	6.1
Nebraska	106	4	11.2	1.5	12.7	2.1	31.7	2.7	44.4	3.5
Nevada	507	11	19.2	1.1	20.2	1.4	28.6	1.6	32.1	1.6
New Hampshire.	68	5	31.5	2.8	14.6	2.8	23.1	3.2	30.8	3.9
New Jersey	1,759	24	21.1	0.6	19.1	0.6	27.7	0.7	32.1	0.8
New Mexico	196	10	24.1	2.1	20.7	1.9	25.3	2.5	29.9	2.6
New York	4,178	36	22.9	0.4	20.9	0.4	28.1	0.4	28.2	0.6
North Carolina	665	14	11.4	0.6	13.0	0.9	31.3	1.1	44.2	1.6
North Dakota	15	2	19.5	4.6	9.2	4.1	18.2	5.3	53.1	7.5
Ohio.	433	11	24.5	1.0	12.6	1.1	25.5	1.3	37.4	1.4
Oklahoma	190	7	16.7	1.3	15.6	1.7	27.7	2.2	40.0	2.3
Oregon.	367	12	16.9	1.0	17.8	1.1	29.8	1.6	35.5	1.7
Pennsylvania	691	16	21.7	0.8	16.1	0.9	26.7	1.1	35.5	1.4
Rhode Island	133	7	26.8	2.0	20.8	2.1	25.4	2.6	27.0	3.1
South Carolina.	205	8	18.0	1.5	12.3	1.4	24.0	2.0	45.7	2.3
South Dakota.	22	3	16.0	3.9	14.3	4.5	27.6	8.1	42.2	7.3
Tennessee	266	10	12.8	1.3	12.1	1.4	32.5	2.5	42.6	2.6
Texas	3,985	37	17.5	0.4	19.1	0.4	29.8	0.6	33.5	0.7
Utah.	218	7	14.2	1.1	16.6	1.5	31.1	2.0	38.1	2.3
Vermont	21	2	38.5	5.3	11.1	2.8	30.2	6.2	20.2	4.3
Virginia.	806	15	16.1	0.7	16.7	0.8	29.4	1.1	37.8	1.5
Washington	811	15	19.5	0.9	18.3	0.9	29.0	1.1	33.2	1.3
West Virginia	23	2	26.6	4.5	14.6	4.1	21.5	4.5	37.2	6.1
Wisconsin	256	9	21.8	1.4	14.3	1.3	27.3	2.0	36.6	2.1
Wyoming	17	2	26.7	7.3	12.4	4.4	19.8	6.0	41.1	8.9
Puerto Rico	108	7	25.3	2.3	15.8	1.9	29.8	2.8	29.2	2.0

[1]Data are based on a sample and are subject to sampling variability. A margin of error is a measure of an estimate's variability. The larger the margin of error in relation to the size of the estimates, the less reliable the estimate. When added to and subtracted from the estimate, the margin of error forms the 90 percent confidence interval.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2009.

Immigration from Africa shows a pattern similar to the foreign born from Latin America, albeit on a smaller scale. The proportion born in Africa increased in each subsequent entry cohort from a low of 1.8 percent of those who entered prior to 1980 to 5.9 percent of those who entered in 2000 or later.
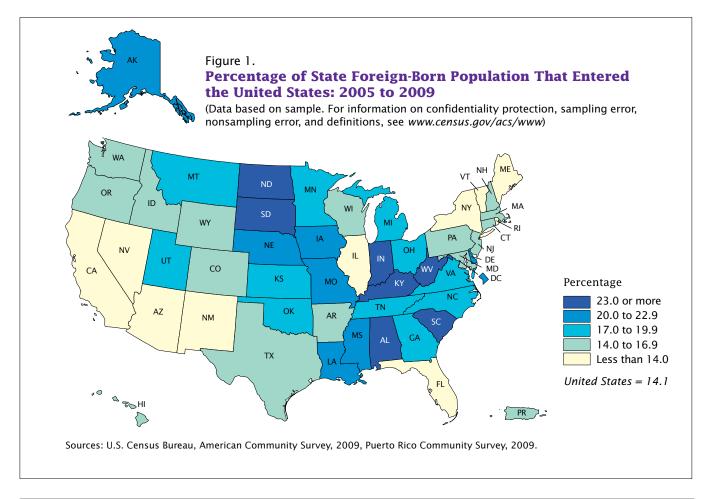
There are some interesting differences by country across each entry cohort. For example, Mexico accounted for the largest share of foreign-born residents (30 percent). Less than one-fourth of all foreign born who entered prior to 1980 were from Mexico; however, there were 30 percent or more in each subsequent period. The foreign born from China represented 4.1 percent of those who entered the United States prior to 1980 and 5.7 percent of those entering between 1980 and 1989. The

foreign born from India represented a comparatively small percentage—2.3 percent—of the cohort entering before 1980. However, this proportion almost tripled for those who entered after 2000, increasing to 6.3 percent.

Individual states differed considerably in terms of the year of entry to the United States of their foreign-born populations. California and New York, with large foreign-born populations, exhibited relatively consistent proportions of foreign-born individuals throughout their entry cohorts (Table 3). More interesting is the higher proportion of recent entrants in the foreign-born populations of several less populous states. For example, in five such states (Alabama, Indiana, Kentucky, Mississippi, and South Carolina) less than 20 percent of the foreign-born population in

those states entered prior to 1980, compared with 45 percent or more who entered in 2000 or later.

When focusing on the most recent immigrants, 14 percent of the foreign-born population entered the United States between 2005 and 2009. More than half of these new immigrants lived in just six states: California, Florida, Illinois, New Jersey, New York, and Texas. However, a slightly different picture emerges when considering the proportion of the foreign-born population within each state that entered the United States within the past 5 years. Of those states with more than 1.0 million foreign born, four states (California, Florida, Illinois, and New York) had a lower proportion of recent entrants than the national average (Figure 1). Several states beyond these traditional immigrant destinations had

Figure 1.
Percentage of State Foreign-Born Population That Entered the United States: 2005 to 2009
(Data based on sample. For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, and definitions, see *www.census.gov/acs/www*)

Percentage
- 23.0 or more
- 20.0 to 22.9
- 17.0 to 19.9
- 14.0 to 16.9
- Less than 14.0

United States = 14.1

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2009, Puerto Rico Community Survey, 2009.

considerably higher proportions of recent entrants. North Dakota (34 percent), Kentucky (28 percent), and South Dakota (26 percent) had among the largest proportions of foreign-born population entering between 2005 and 2009. An additional three states, including Alabama, Indiana, and South Carolina, had over 20 percent of their foreign born entering between 2005 and 2009.[3] Although these states account for a small percentage of the total foreign-born population, they illustrate the widening geographic distribution of the foreign born, particularly among more recent entrants.

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[3] The percentages for North Dakota, Kentucky, and South Dakota were not statistically different from each other. South Dakota's percentage was also not statistically different from 20 percent.

SOURCE AND ACCURACY

Data presented in this report are based on people and households that responded to the ACS in 2009. The resulting estimates are representative of the entire population. All comparisons presented in this report have taken sampling error into account and are significant at the 90 percent confidence level unless otherwise noted. Due to rounding, some details may not sum to totals. For information on sampling and estimation methods, confidentiality protection, and sampling and nonsampling errors, please see the "ACS Accuracy of the Data (2009)" document located at <www.census.gov/acs/www /Downloads/data_documentation/ Accuracy/ACS_Accuracy_of_Data _2009.pdf>.

WHAT IS THE AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY?

The American Community Survey (ACS) is a nationwide survey designed to provide communities with reliable and timely demographic, social, economic, and housing data for the nation, states, congressional districts, counties, places, and other localities every year. It has an annual sample size of about 3 million addresses across the United States and Puerto Rico and includes both housing units and group quarters (e.g. nursing facilities and prisons). The ACS is conducted in every county throughout the nation, and every municipio in Puerto Rico, where it is called the Puerto Rico Community Survey. Beginning in 2006, ACS data for 2005 were released for geographic areas with populations of 65,000 and greater. For information on the ACS sample design and other topics, visit <www.census.gov/acs .www>. Additional information about the foreign-born population is available on the Census Bureau's web site at <www.census.gov /population/www/socdemo/ foreign/index.html>.