

Nativity Status and Citizenship in the United States: 2009

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INTRODUCTION

This report presents data on nativity status and citizenship at the national and state levels based on the 2009 American Community Survey (ACS). During the last four decades, both the native and foreign-born populations have increased in size.¹ While the native-born population has remained the majority during this period, the foreign-born population has come to represent a greater share of the total population, increasing from 9.6 million or 4.7 percent in 1970, to 31.1 million or 11.1 percent in 2000.² According to the 2009 ACS, 38.5 million of the 307 million residents in the United States were foreign-born, representing 12.5 percent of the total population (see Table 1).

NATIVITY STATUS AND CITIZENSHIP

Historically, the majority of the population of the United States have been citizens—either native-born or naturalized—and this has remained unchanged in recent decades. Since 1920, over 92 percent of the total population have been citizens.³ However, as the size of the foreign-born population has increased, the citizenship composition of this population has changed. In 1970, 64 percent of the foreign-born population were naturalized citizens; by 2000, the percent naturalized had declined to 40 percent. In 2009, 44 percent of

¹ The terms native and native born are used interchangeably in this report.

² Gibson, Campbell and Kay Jung. 2006. "Historical Census Statistics on the Foreign-Born Population in the United States: 1850 to 2000." U.S. Census Bureau: Population Division Working Paper, Number 81. Available on the U.S. Census Bureau's Web site at <www.census.gov/population/www/techpap.html>.

³ Note that information on citizenship was not collected in the 1960 census.

Defining Nativity Status: Who Is Foreign Born?

Nativity status refers to whether a person is native or foreign born. The native-born population includes anyone who was a U.S. citizen or U.S. national at birth. Respondents who were born in the United States, Puerto Rico, a U.S. Island Area (U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, or the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands), or abroad of a U.S. citizen parent or parents, are defined as native. The foreign-born population includes anyone who was not a U.S. citizen at birth, including those who have become U.S. citizens through naturalization.

the foreign born were naturalized (see Figure 1). Of the 16.8 million naturalized U.S. citizens, 41 percent reported being naturalized in 2000 or later, while 59 percent reported naturalizing before 2000.

Considerable variation in citizenship status is evident by region and country of birth (see Figure 2), as more recent migrants are less likely to be naturalized. For example, over 55 percent of the foreign born from Europe and Asia were naturalized citizens, while only 32 percent of the foreign born from Latin America (including Mexico and other Central American countries) were naturalized citizens. Similarly, less than one-fourth of the foreign born from Mexico were naturalized.

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Table 1.

Population by Nativity Status and Citizenship: 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)

Characteristic	Number	Margin of error ¹ (±)	Percent	Margin of error ¹ (±)
Total	307,007	(X)	100.0	(X)
Native	268,489	116	87.5	—
U.S. citizen, born in the United States	264,367	119	86.1	—
U.S. citizen, born in Puerto Rico or U.S. Island Areas	1,704	30	0.6	—
U.S. citizen, born abroad of American parent(s)	2,418	28	0.8	—
Foreign born	38,517	116	12.5	—
U.S. citizen by naturalization	16,846	68	5.5	—
Not a U.S. citizen	21,671	120	7.1	—

(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 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.

The states also exhibited notable differences in the percent of their foreign-born populations who have naturalized. States with the highest percent naturalized included Hawaii (58 percent), Vermont (57 percent), and Maine (55 percent), while states having among the lowest percent naturalized included Nebraska (30 percent), Mississippi (31 percent), North Carolina (31 percent), and Alabama (30 percent) (see Figure 3).^{4,5} In general, states in the Northeast and Midwest regions tend to have higher proportions of naturalized citizens in their foreign-born populations than states in the South.⁶ Texas had the lowest proportion naturalized (32 percent) among the four states with the largest foreign-born populations: California (9.9 million), New York (4.2 million), Texas (4.0 million), and Florida (3.5 million).

California was the state with the largest foreign-born population, at almost 10 million, and also had the largest percent of any state's total population who were foreign born, at 27 percent (see Table 2). Because of its large foreign-born population, California had the largest percentage of naturalized citizens in its total population (12 percent) of all states, as well as the highest proportion of noncitizens (15 percent). Other states with high proportions of naturalized citizens were New York (11 percent) and New Jersey (10 percent).

⁴ The percents for Hawaii, Vermont, and Maine are not statistically different.

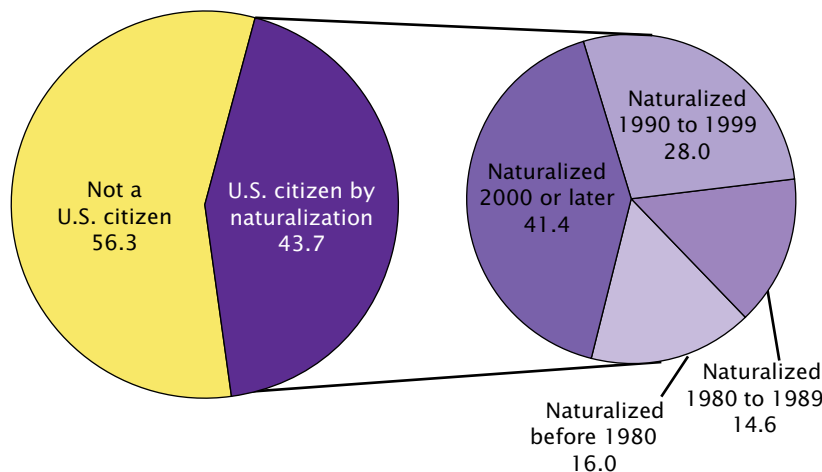
⁵ The percents for Nebraska, Mississippi, North Carolina, and Alabama are not statistically different.

⁶ The Northeast region includes Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Vermont. The South region includes Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, the District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, and West Virginia. The West region includes Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming. The Midwest region includes Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin.

Figure 1.

The Foreign-Born Population by Citizenship Status, Showing Year of Naturalization for Naturalized Citizens: 2009

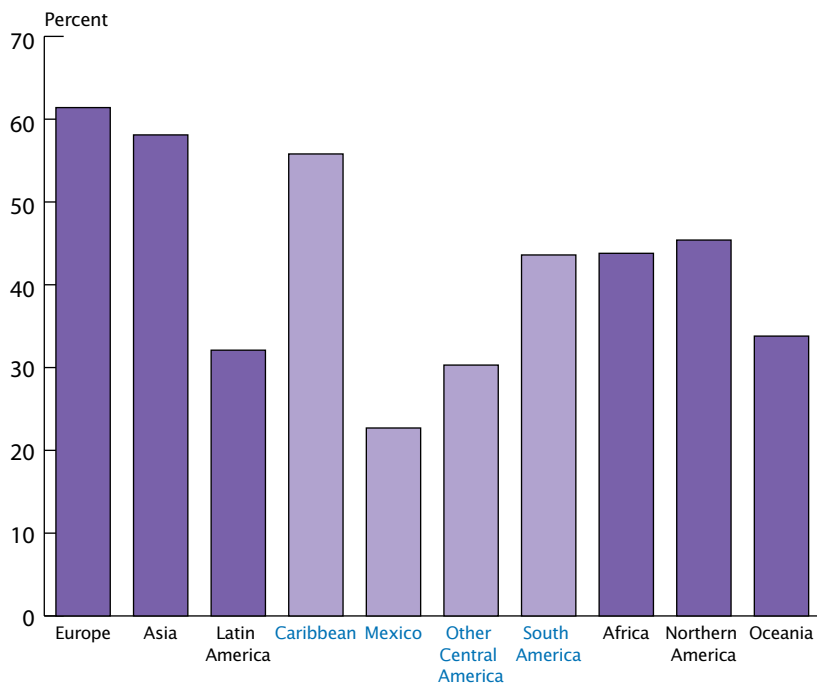
(Percent distribution. Data based on sample. For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, and definitions, see www.census.gov/acs/www)



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

Figure 2.
**Percentage of the Foreign-Born Population
 Who Are Naturalized by 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)



Note: Latin America consists of the subcategories Caribbean, Mexico, Other Central America, and South America.

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

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, 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?

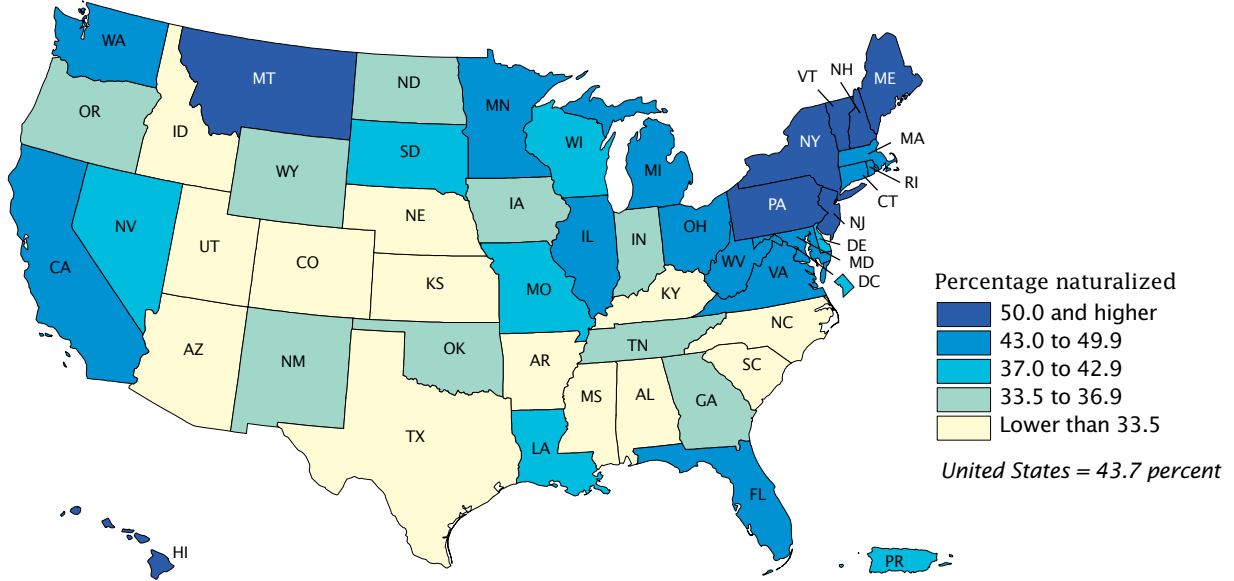
The American Community Survey (ACS) is a nationwide survey designed to provide communities with reliable and timely demographic, social, economic, and housing data for the nation, states, congressional districts, counties, places, and other localities every year. It has an annual sample size of about 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.



**Figure 3.
Percentage of the Foreign-Born Population Who Are
Naturalized, by State: 2009**

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



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

Table 2.

Population by Nativity and Citizenship Status for States 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 population	Native		Foreign born					
		Percent	Margin of error ¹ (±)	Total		Naturalized U.S. citizen		Not a U.S. citizen	
				Percent	Margin of error ¹ (±)	Percent	Margin of error ¹ (±)	Percent	Margin of error ¹ (±)
United States . . .	307,007	87.5	–	12.5	–	5.5	–	7.1	–
Alabama	4,709	96.9	0.1	3.1	0.1	0.9	0.1	2.2	0.1
Alaska	698	93.0	0.5	7.0	0.5	3.7	0.4	3.3	0.5
Arizona	6,596	86.0	0.3	14.0	0.3	4.5	0.2	9.5	0.3
Arkansas	2,889	95.8	0.2	4.2	0.2	1.3	0.1	2.9	0.2
California	36,962	73.1	0.1	26.9	0.1	12.3	0.1	14.6	0.1
Colorado	5,025	90.3	0.3	9.7	0.3	3.2	0.1	6.5	0.3
Connecticut	3,518	86.9	0.3	13.1	0.3	6.0	0.2	7.1	0.3
Delaware	885	91.6	0.6	8.4	0.6	3.5	0.4	4.8	0.5
District of Columbia	600	88.0	0.8	12.0	0.8	4.6	0.4	7.4	0.7
Florida	18,538	81.2	0.2	18.8	0.2	9.1	0.1	9.7	0.2
Georgia	9,829	90.6	0.2	9.4	0.2	3.2	0.1	6.1	0.2
Hawaii	1,295	82.7	0.7	17.3	0.7	10.0	0.5	7.3	0.5
Idaho	1,546	93.7	0.4	6.3	0.4	2.1	0.2	4.2	0.3
Illinois	12,910	86.5	0.2	13.5	0.2	6.1	0.1	7.4	0.2
Indiana	6,423	95.6	0.1	4.4	0.1	1.5	0.1	2.8	0.1
Iowa	3,008	96.1	0.1	3.9	0.1	1.4	0.1	2.5	0.2
Kansas	2,819	93.9	0.2	6.1	0.2	1.9	0.1	4.2	0.2
Kentucky	4,314	97.0	0.1	3.0	0.1	0.9	0.1	2.0	0.2
Louisiana	4,492	96.6	0.2	3.4	0.2	1.5	0.1	1.9	0.2
Maine	1,318	96.7	0.3	3.3	0.3	1.8	0.2	1.5	0.2
Maryland	5,699	87.2	0.2	12.8	0.2	5.8	0.2	7.0	0.2
Massachusetts	6,594	85.7	0.3	14.3	0.3	7.0	0.2	7.3	0.2
Michigan	9,970	93.8	0.1	6.2	0.1	3.0	0.1	3.2	0.1
Minnesota	5,266	93.2	0.2	6.8	0.2	3.0	0.1	3.8	0.2
Mississippi	2,952	98.0	0.2	2.0	0.2	0.6	0.1	1.4	0.2
Missouri	5,988	96.4	0.1	3.6	0.1	1.5	0.1	2.0	0.1
Montana	975	98.0	0.3	2.0	0.3	1.0	0.1	0.9	0.2
Nebraska	1,797	94.1	0.2	5.9	0.2	1.8	0.2	4.1	0.2
Nevada	2,643	80.8	0.4	19.2	0.4	7.6	0.3	11.6	0.5
New Hampshire	1,325	94.8	0.4	5.2	0.4	2.7	0.3	2.5	0.2
New Jersey	8,708	79.8	0.3	20.2	0.3	10.1	0.2	10.1	0.2
New Mexico	2,010	90.2	0.5	9.8	0.5	3.3	0.2	6.4	0.4
New York	19,541	78.6	0.2	21.4	0.2	11.2	0.1	10.2	0.2
North Carolina	9,381	92.9	0.1	7.1	0.1	2.2	0.1	4.9	0.1
North Dakota	647	97.6	0.3	2.4	0.3	0.9	0.2	1.5	0.3
Ohio	11,543	96.2	0.1	3.8	0.1	1.9	0.1	1.9	0.1
Oklahoma	3,687	94.9	0.2	5.1	0.2	1.8	0.1	3.4	0.2
Oregon	3,826	90.4	0.3	9.6	0.3	3.5	0.2	6.1	0.3
Pennsylvania	12,605	94.5	0.1	5.5	0.1	2.8	0.1	2.7	0.1
Rhode Island	1,053	87.3	0.7	12.7	0.7	6.0	0.4	6.6	0.6
South Carolina	4,561	95.5	0.2	4.5	0.2	1.5	0.1	3.0	0.2
South Dakota	812	97.3	0.4	2.7	0.4	1.0	0.2	1.6	0.3
Tennessee	6,296	95.8	0.2	4.2	0.2	1.5	0.1	2.7	0.1
Texas	24,782	83.9	0.1	16.1	0.1	5.1	0.1	10.9	0.1
Utah	2,785	92.2	0.3	7.8	0.3	2.6	0.2	5.2	0.2
Vermont	622	96.7	0.4	3.3	0.4	1.9	0.2	1.4	0.3
Virginia	7,883	89.8	0.2	10.2	0.2	4.6	0.1	5.6	0.2
Washington	6,664	87.8	0.2	12.2	0.2	5.4	0.2	6.7	0.2
West Virginia	1,820	98.7	0.1	1.3	0.1	0.6	0.1	0.7	0.1
Wisconsin	5,655	95.5	0.2	4.5	0.2	1.9	0.1	2.6	0.1
Wyoming	544	96.9	0.4	3.1	0.4	1.1	0.2	2.0	0.4
Puerto Rico	3,967	97.3	0.2	2.7	0.2	1.0	0.1	1.7	0.1

– Represents or rounds to zero.

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