

# The Older Foreign-Born Population in the United States: 2000

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## Number of older foreign-born people remains stable.

As of March 2000, according to data collected in the Current Population Survey, the estimated number of foreign-born people in the United States age 65 and over was 3.1 million. While the number of older U.S.-born people climbed sharply between 1960 and 2000 (from 13.4 million to 29.5 million), the older foreign-born population generally remained stable.<sup>1</sup>

## Europe the single largest source of older foreign-born residents.

Historically, Europe has been the primary source of immigrants to this country, and the European-born were the single largest group among the older foreign-born population in 2000. In 2000, Europeans made up 54 percent of the older foreign-born who had entered the United States prior to 1970 and 39 percent of all older foreign-born people. Reflecting more recent immigration trends, people from Latin America and Asia combined now represent

<sup>1</sup>The Current Population Survey is limited to the civilian noninstitutionalized population. Data for years prior to 2000 are from the decennial censuses, which include armed forces in the United States and the institutionalized population.

about half (53 percent, or 31 percent and 22 percent, respectively) of the older foreign-born. (See Figure 1.)

## One-third of older foreign-born people live in the West.

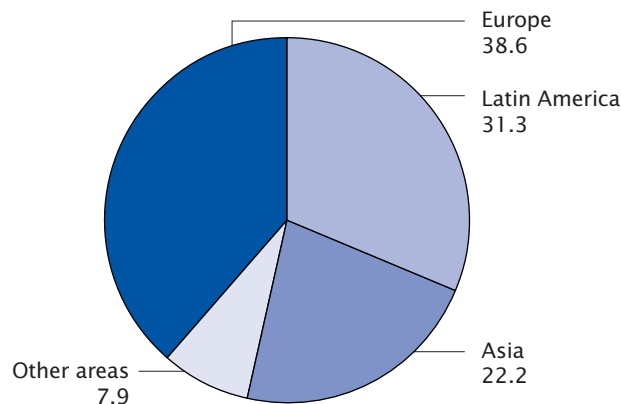
In 2000, about one-third (35 percent) of the older foreign-born resided in the West, 28 percent each lived in the Northeast and South, and only 10 percent lived in the Midwest.

## Almost two-thirds of older foreign-born people lived in the United States for more than 30 years.

Most older foreign-born residents in 2000 had lived in the United States for more

Figure 1.  
**Older Foreign-Born Population by Region of Birth: 2000**

(In percent)



Note: Other areas include Africa, Oceania, North America and region not reported. Older population includes those age 65 and over.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, March 2000.

than three decades, although the length of residence varied by their region of birth. The vast majority (86 percent) of the European-born older population came to the United States before 1970, while only a quarter (25 percent) of the Asian-born older population entered the country by then. Latin American-born older people ranked in between, with about half (55 percent) arriving in the United States prior to 1970.

### Majority of older foreign-born people are naturalized citizens.

About 7-in-10 older foreign-born people were naturalized citizens. The rates varied considerably by region of birth: 81 percent of the European-born older population had acquired U.S. citizenship by 2000, compared with 66 percent of the older Latin American-born, and 57 percent of the older Asian-born populations.

### Living arrangements of older foreign-born population both differ from and mimic those of older natives.

Whether for economic or cultural reasons, older foreign-born people tend to live with their families. Among the 1.7 million households maintained by an older foreign-born person in 2000, about 6-in-10 were family households. About half the households with an older U.S.-born householder were family households. Older foreign-born householders were more likely than their native counterparts to live in a family household with three or more people (20 percent versus 9 percent).

On the other hand, similarities also existed in the living arrangements of the two groups. For the older foreign-born and older native populations alike, women were

Figure 2.

### Older Foreign-Born Population at a Glance: 2000

Characteristic	Older foreign-born population	Older native population
<b>Total population (in millions)</b> .....	<b>3.1</b>	<b>29.5</b>
<b>Poverty</b>		
Poverty rate in 1999 .....	14	*9
<b>Educational attainment</b>		
Percent with:		
Less than high school .....	45	*29
High school only .....	37	*56
Bachelor's degree or more .....	19	*15
<b>Health insurance</b>		
Percent with coverage in 1999 .....	94	*99
<b>Program participation</b>		
Percent of households in 1999 participating in:		
Cash assistance programs .....	17	*5
Noncash assistance programs .....	29	*14

\*Difference from corresponding figure for older foreign-born population statistically significant at the 90-percent confidence level.

Note: Older population includes those age 65 or over.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, March 2000.

twice as likely to live alone as men. Additionally, most — a ratio of 8-in-10 — foreign-born older men were married, while nearly half the women were widowed. These ratios mirrored those of the older native population.

### Older foreign-born residents less well-off socioeconomically than native counterparts.

The older foreign-born population fares much differently socioeconomically than the older native population. (See Figure 2.)

### More information:

The information in this Census Brief is based on *The Older Foreign-Born Population in the United States: 2000*, Current Population Reports, Special Studies P23-211. The complete report may be found on the Internet at <[www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/age.html#elderly](http://www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/age.html#elderly)>.

Paper copies also may be ordered from the Census Bureau:  
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*The data in the report are from the March 2000 Current Population Survey and do not reflect the results of Census 2000. Data from 1990 and earlier censuses are included for comparison. Statistics from sample surveys are subject to sampling and non-sampling error. The Census Bureau's Population Estimates Program uses different methods to estimate population by nativity and may show slightly different estimates of foreign-born and native populations from those presented here.*