

A report from



THE PEW CHARITABLE TRUSTS

| June 2018



# Philadelphia's Immigrants

Who they are and how they are changing the city

## Contents

- 1 Overview
- 2 A historic period
- 8 Profile of foreign-born Philadelphians
  - Origins and destinations 8
  - Children, family, and home 13
  - Education and English-language proficiency 14
  - Employment 17
  - Income and poverty 20
  - Legal status and naturalization 23
- 26 Attitudes of immigrants and natives
- 28 Conclusion
- 29 Methodology
- 33 Appendix A
- 34 Endnotes

## About this report

This report was researched and written by Thomas Ginsberg, manager with The Pew Charitable Trusts' Philadelphia research initiative. It was edited by Larry Eichel, director of the initiative, along with Elizabeth Lowe and Erika Compart.

## Acknowledgments

We wish to thank the following individuals for their insights as we developed this report: Rona Buchalter, HIAS-Pennsylvania; Leigh Chapman, formerly with the commonwealth of Pennsylvania; Howard F. Chang and Alberto Ciancio, University of Pennsylvania; Deborah Diamond, Campus Philly; Miriam Enriquez, city of Philadelphia; Peter Gonzales, Welcoming Center for New Pennsylvanians; Els de Graauw, City University of New York; David Dyssegaard Kallick, Fiscal Policy Institute; Kim Reuben and Audrey Singer, Urban Institute; and Jan Ting, Temple University. We are grateful to our current and former Pew colleagues Casey Ehrlich, Alan van der Hilst, Adam Hunter, Mark Hugo Lopez, Jeff Passel, and Cliff Zukin, as well as our independent reviewers, James D. Bachmeier, assistant professor of sociology at Temple University's College of Liberal Arts, and Mary J. Osirim, provost and professor of sociology at Bryn Mawr College. The final report does not necessarily reflect their views.

## About the Philadelphia research initiative

Pew's Philadelphia research initiative provides timely, impartial research and analysis on key issues facing Philadelphia for the benefit of the city's residents and leaders.

**Contact:** Elizabeth Lowe, communications officer

**Email:** [elowe@pewtrusts.org](mailto:elowe@pewtrusts.org)

**Project website:** [pewtrusts.org/philaresearch](http://pewtrusts.org/philaresearch)

---

**The Pew Charitable Trusts** is driven by the power of knowledge to solve today's most challenging problems. Pew applies a rigorous, analytical approach to improve public policy, inform the public, and invigorate civic life.



## Overview

Immigration has become a major driver of population growth in Philadelphia in recent years, with long-term demographic and economic implications for the city and the region.

In 2016, the last year for which census data were available for this report, the city had more than 232,000 residents who were born abroad, an increase of 69 percent since 2000. These immigrants represented nearly 15 percent of all city residents, 19 percent of workers, and 14 percent of those living in poverty.

More than a quarter of all Philadelphians in recent years—estimated at around 390,000 residents—were either immigrants or U.S. natives with immigrant parents, together comprising a population with significant potential to shape the city. They included nearly 76,000 children under age 18, or about 1 in 4 city children.

The degree to which immigrants have fueled the city's population resurgence is striking. From 2000 to 2016, a period in which the city's population grew for the first time in half a century, the number of foreign-born residents rose by roughly 95,000 while the number of U.S.-born Philadelphians fell by 44,500.

This statistical portrait of immigrants in Philadelphia was compiled with the goal of informing discussion about their impact on the city. The report looks at the economic and social characteristics of immigrants—including their countries of origin, income, level of education, and work status—and examines how those characteristics have changed in recent years, while also making comparisons with the nation, the Philadelphia suburbs, and nine other major cities: Baltimore; Boston; Denver; Minneapolis; New York; Portland, Oregon; San Jose, California; Seattle; and Washington.

The study relies primarily on census data and includes results of a public opinion survey taken by The Pew Charitable Trusts in 2016. In that survey, immigrants were overwhelmingly upbeat about the city's future and more positive than U.S.-born Philadelphians about certain elements of city life, such as public schools. Most U.S.-born Philadelphians, for their part, had positive things to say about immigration, and nearly two-thirds described themselves as “sympathetic” or “very sympathetic” to unauthorized immigrants in the city.

Among the other key findings about Philadelphia's immigrants:

- Nearly 1 in 5 Philadelphians in the labor force in 2016 was an immigrant, with the biggest number working in service jobs in the health care and education, hospitality, and retail sectors. The number of immigrants in the labor force grew by nearly 66,000 from 2000 to 2016, more than double the increase attributable to U.S.-born workers over the same period.
- Immigrants' median household income was about \$39,700, close to that of U.S.-born Philadelphians. The poverty rate among immigrants was 24 percent, which was slightly below the rate for natives. In recent years, however, the number of immigrants living in poverty has been growing at a faster rate than among natives.
- About 3 in 10 adult immigrants had college degrees, a slightly higher share than for U.S.-born residents. Nearly another 3 in 10 immigrants had little schooling, a significantly higher share than among natives.
- The fastest-growing group of foreign-born Philadelphians from 2000 to 2016 came from Africa, and the largest groups hailed from Asia and the Americas—the latter mostly from Latin America and the Caribbean. Europeans had their lowest share in recorded history.
- In the Philadelphia region, roughly two immigrants lived outside the city for every one living in the city. Starting in the 1970s, the immigrant population has grown faster in the suburbs than in the city, although in recent years both locales have been growing at similar rates.

Taken together, the data show the demographic impact immigrants are having on Philadelphia. They are largely responsible for the city's growth in residents and workers, and they have boosted the number of children and entrepreneurs. But at the same time, they've added to the city's already large number of poor and less-educated residents—and to the number of people who have limited English proficiency—thereby putting demands on local services and schools.

In the past decade, local government leaders and nonprofit organizations have encouraged immigration, considering it a way to increase the population, rejuvenate neighborhoods, and grow the economy. The precise degree to which their efforts contribute to the demographic changes that have taken place is not clear. This report presents just the data that tell the immigration story in Philadelphia.

## A historic period

Since 1990, Philadelphia has become a growing U.S. destination for immigrants, a status it had not had since the early 20th century.

At its peak in the 1850s, the foreign-born share of the city's population was 30 percent—more than double the share nationally at that time—and the city was home to 1 out of 20 immigrants nationwide.<sup>1</sup> After the federal government restricted immigration in the 1920s, the foreign-born population fell steadily in Philadelphia, as in most cities.

Then, starting in the 1970s, the immigrant share surged in many older gateway cities like Chicago and newer ones like Houston, where it quadrupled by 1990.

But not in Philadelphia; its foreign-born share fell to a low of 6.4 percent in 1980 and stayed low. Scholars tagged Philadelphia a “low immigration” city compared with its big-city peers, a condition partly attributed to the region's slow-growing economy.<sup>2</sup>

### Describing and Counting Immigrants

This report uses the terms “immigrant,” “foreign-born,” and “born abroad” interchangeably to refer to U.S. residents who were born as citizens or nationals of other countries. It uses the terms “U.S.-born” and “native” to refer to people who were born in this country; in its overseas territories, such as Puerto Rico and Guam; and in foreign countries to parents who were U.S. citizens. The foreign-born population includes international students, temporary foreign workers, refugees, and anyone else who had an ongoing U.S. residence here, regardless of the type of visa they used to enter the country or whether they were unauthorized residents.

*Continued on next page*

Except where noted, all figures in this report pertain to the city of Philadelphia. For comparison purposes, the report also cites figures for nine other major cities. Four were chosen because they, like Philadelphia, are located in the Northeast corridor: Baltimore, Boston, New York, and Washington. Five others were chosen because they, also like Philadelphia, sit at the core of metro regions identified by The Brookings Institution in a 2008 report as “re-emerging immigrant gateway” regions: Denver; Minneapolis; Portland, Oregon; San Jose, California; and Seattle.<sup>3</sup>

In a few instances where noted, this report cites figures for the Philadelphia “suburbs,” referring to the 10 counties other than Philadelphia that make up the census-defined metropolitan region: Bucks, Chester, Delaware, and Montgomery in Pennsylvania; Cecil in Maryland; New Castle in Delaware; and Burlington, Camden, Gloucester, and Salem in New Jersey.

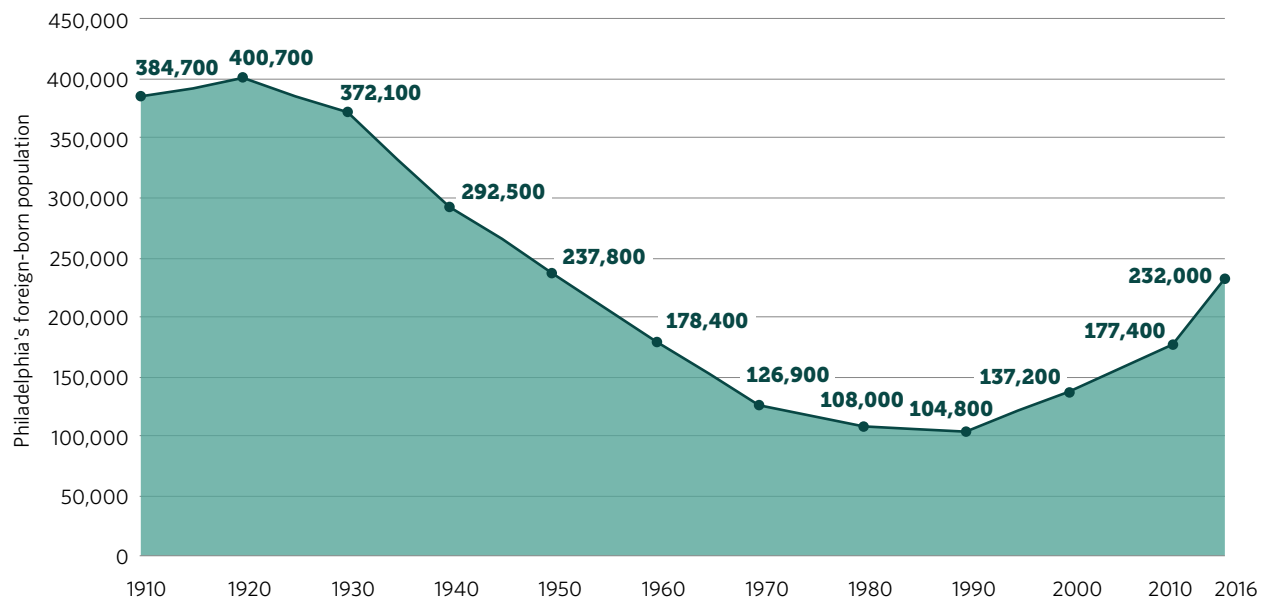
Most figures in this report come from the U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey and decennial census, some of which has been analyzed in the form of public use microdata obtained from the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMS) program at the University of Minnesota. Unless otherwise noted, data cited for 2016 come from the American Community Survey’s 2016 one-year sample. Data for 2000 come from the decennial census’ “long form” survey.

While census surveys are the most comprehensive data source available, they have been shown by researchers to miss, or undercount, certain immigrants.<sup>4</sup> In addition, surveys have a standard sampling error that produces larger inaccuracies in less-populated geographic areas. In the course of collecting data for this report, Pew selected the most accurate samples available, or used approximations or ranges when necessary. Details on sampling error can be found in the methodology.

Then a turnaround started in the 1990s. By 2010, immigrants were coming to Philadelphia in large numbers, with their total presence surpassing 232,000 by 2016, the highest total since 1950. (See Figure 1.)

From 2000 to 2016, the city’s foreign-born population grew by roughly 95,000, or 69 percent, compared with 41 percent nationally and 27 percent in the comparison cities. The number of immigrants in the labor force increased by about 89 percent, faster than in the nation as a whole (52 percent) and in the comparison cities (36 percent, on average).

Figure 1  
Philadelphia's Foreign-Born Population, 1910-2016



Immigration was a prime driver of Philadelphia's population growth from the 19th century through the early 20th century. In the 1920s, it began a long period of decline. Then, in the 1990s, immigration started to rise again and became a central force in driving the city's growth.

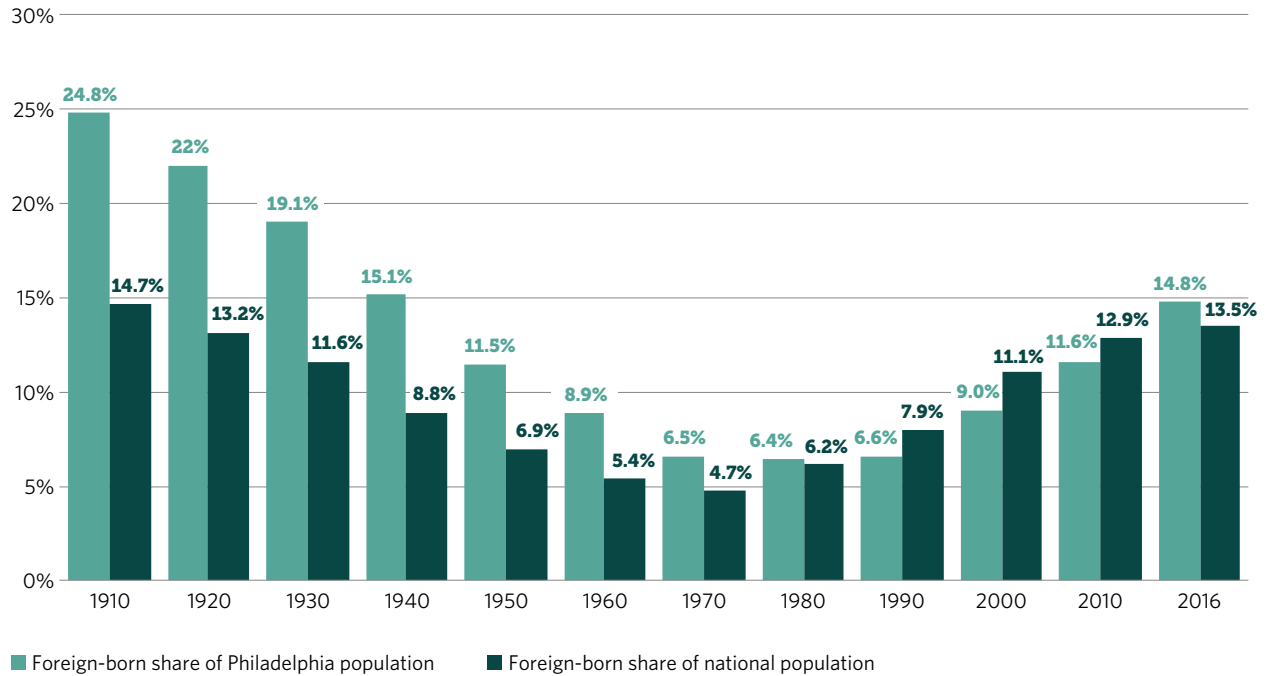
Note: Figures are rounded to nearest hundred.

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, decennial censuses and American Community Survey, one-year estimates, 2016

© 2018 The Pew Charitable Trusts

Consequently, Philadelphia's status as a low-immigration big city has begun to change. The foreign-born represented 14.8 percent of the population in 2016, the highest percentage since 1940 and greater than the nation as a whole (13.5 percent) for the first time in decades. (See Figure 2.) However, the foreign-born share remained below the average of 21 percent in the comparison cities. (See Figure 3.)

Figure 2  
 Foreign-Born Share of the Population, 1910-2016  
 Philadelphia compared with the U.S.



In 2016, immigrants' percentage of Philadelphia's total population reached its highest level since the 1940s. The city's immigrant share also surpassed the national average for the first time since 1980.

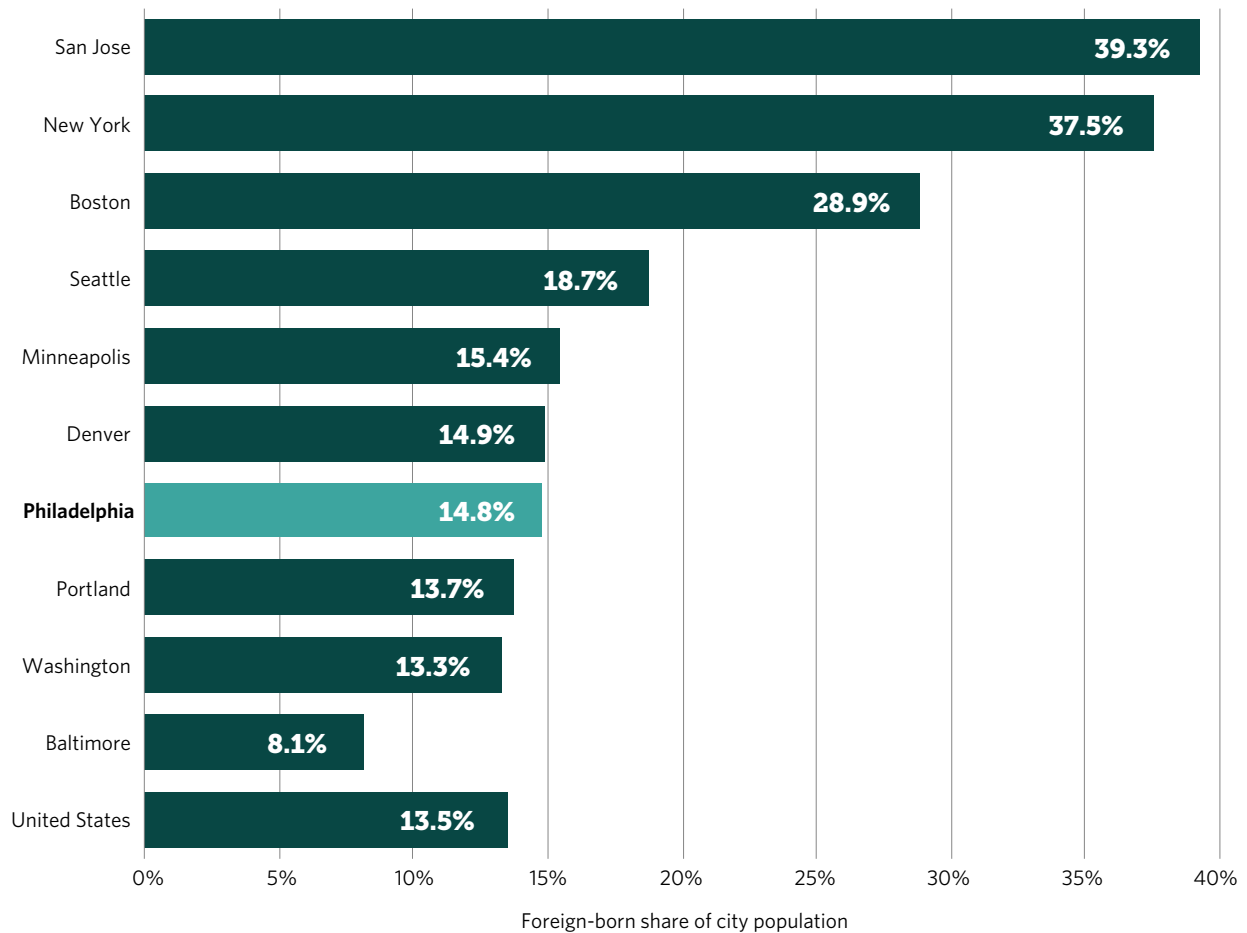
Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, decennial censuses and American Community Survey, one-year estimates, 2016

© 2018 The Pew Charitable Trusts



Figure 3

## Percentage of Foreign-Born Residents in Philadelphia Compared With Other Cities, 2016



The foreign-born share of residents in Philadelphia was smaller than in most comparison cities in this study, although it surpassed the national average in 2016 for the first time since the 1980s.

Note: Cities ranked by foreign-born share.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, one-year estimates, 2016

© 2018 The Pew Charitable Trusts

A confluence of factors over many years enabled Philadelphia—the city and the metropolitan area—to belatedly join other big cities and metro areas in the immigrant influx. The number of low-skilled and unskilled job opportunities grew in sectors in which immigrants typically have found work, such as consumer and health care services. And as immigrants became more numerous, they established support networks and organizations, making the region more attractive to their relatives and compatriots, according to Alexis R. Santos, director of the graduate program in applied demography at Pennsylvania State University.

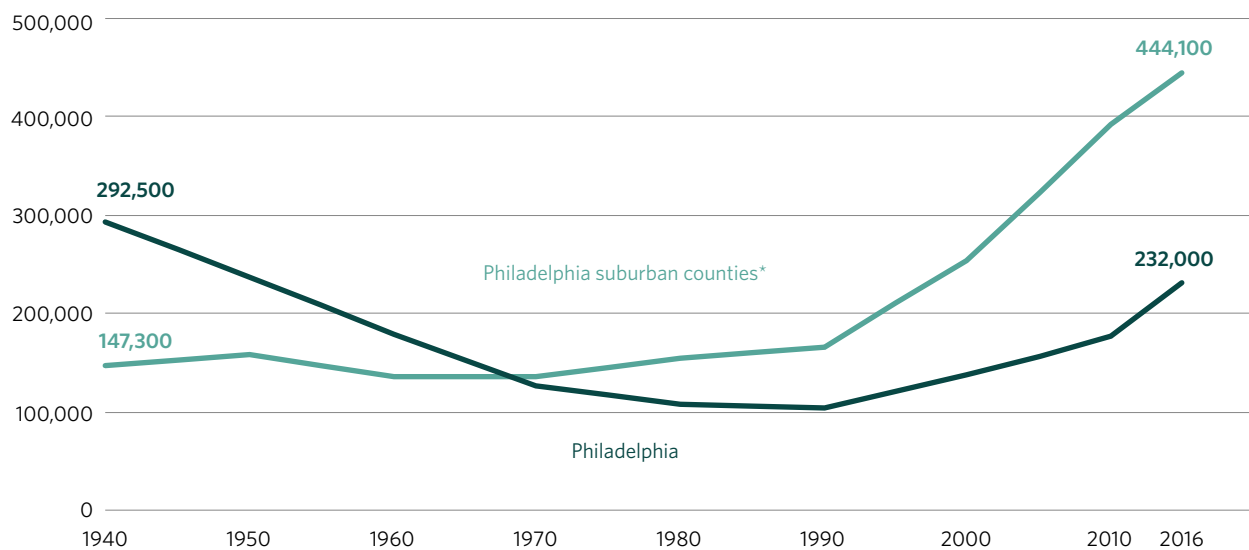
At the federal level, immigration laws allowed a significant flow of newcomers into the country for most of the period studied. At the city level, government and nonprofit organizations adopted policies and tailored services to make the city more accessible and welcoming to foreign-born residents.

At the same time, the Philadelphia region began to attract more immigrants directly from abroad, in contrast to “internal migrants” from other U.S. gateway cities where they had landed first, a shift that experts found in other re-emerging gateways too. “Around 2000 and onward, the migration [from overseas] became more direct to places like Philadelphia, Denver, Seattle, places that had been secondary destinations in the 1990s,” said Gary Dean Painter, a professor at the University of Southern California and an expert on internal migration.

The precise degree to which each factor played a role in the influx, or will continue to do so in the future, is unclear. Emilio A. Parrado, chair of the University of Pennsylvania’s sociology department, contrasted Philadelphia with other historic gateways like nearby New York City and Boston: “What is unique about Philadelphia is not only that it was late to the game but that it was one of the few [early 1900s] gateway cities that was late. It is still not at the level of those cities in absolute numbers. But now it is participating.”

In the Philadelphia metropolitan region in 2016, nearly twice as many immigrants lived outside the city as inside, a pattern found in many metro regions. In the suburban counties, there were at least 444,000 foreign-born residents, about 10 percent of the population there. The 10 counties surrounding the city, collectively, experienced about 74 percent growth in foreign-born residents and 63 percent growth in foreign-born workers from 2000 to 2016. (See Figure 4.)

Figure 4  
**Number of Immigrants in Philadelphia and Its Surrounding Counties, 1940-2016**



In the 1970s, for the first time, the number of foreign-born residents in Philadelphia fell behind the number in the 10 surrounding counties that also are part of the metropolitan area. In recent years, immigrant totals have grown both in the city and in the rest of the region.

\* The 10 counties are Bucks, Chester, Delaware, and Montgomery in Pennsylvania; Burlington, Camden, Gloucester, and Salem in New Jersey; New Castle in Delaware; and Cecil in Maryland.

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, decennial censuses and American Community Survey, one-year estimates, 2016, and IPUMS for years prior to 2000

© 2018 The Pew Charitable Trusts

This pattern is not new or unique to Philadelphia. Starting in the 1970s, immigrants began settling in the suburbs rather than in city neighborhoods as prior generations had, according to census data. The main reason was that jobs were increasingly found in the suburbs, according to immigration expert Audrey Singer.<sup>5</sup> In 2016, about 66 percent of the Philadelphia region’s immigrants lived outside the city, up from 43 percent in 1960, just before a change in federal law triggered increased immigration nationwide. Other regions experienced a similar shift: Boston’s suburban immigrant share went from 66 to 78 percent; Minneapolis’ from 51 to 83 percent; and New York’s from 33 to 46 percent.

“Unlike more traditional ethnic enclaves of the past that were located downtown, the majority of these newcomers [were] building their new lives in the suburbs,” Singer has written.

As a group, foreign-born suburbanites differ from foreign-born city dwellers in ways similar to the differences between suburbanites and city dwellers generally. Immigrants in the Philadelphia suburbs are more likely than those in the city to have college educations and high incomes. As for jobs, foreign-born suburbanites are more likely than immigrants in the city to work in the financial, professional, and agricultural sectors, and less likely to be in construction, education, or health care, according to census data.

Even so, immigrants are more concentrated in the city than are natives: About one-third of the region’s immigrants live in the city, compared with a quarter of its natives. In addition, immigrants have been responsible for a higher share of population growth in the city than in the suburban counties. From 2000 to 2016, a period in which Philadelphia’s overall population grew for the first time in half a century, the city’s foreign-born population increased by around 95,000 while its U.S.-born population fell by about 44,500, suggesting that the overall population might have shrunk if not for immigrants.<sup>6</sup>

## **Profile of foreign-born Philadelphians**

### Origins and destinations

The city of Philadelphia’s immigrant population is relatively diverse, with no single nationality constituting anything close to a majority. That said, a few groups have dominated the inflow in recent years, and particular nationalities have been redefining some neighborhoods.

According to the Census Bureau’s American Community Survey five-year estimates for 2012-16, China was the country of origin for about 11 percent of the city’s immigrants—about 22,100—the single-largest group by country of origin.<sup>7</sup> India, Vietnam, and the Dominican Republic each accounted for between 6 and 7 percent. Mexico, Ukraine, Haiti, and Jamaica each had around 3 or 4 percent, and all the other countries were represented at lower rates. Sixteen years earlier, Russia, Korea, and Italy were among city immigrants’ top countries of origin, but no longer. (See Table 1.)

Table 1

## Number of Foreign-Born Philadelphia Residents by National Origin Top home countries, 2000 and 2016

2000		2016	
Vietnam	11,500	China	22,100
China	10,400	Vietnam	13,700
Ukraine	8,300	Dominican Republic	13,200
India	7,600	India	11,900
Jamaica	7,000	Haiti	8,800
Italy	6,100	Mexico	8,100
Russia	5,300	Jamaica	7,900
Korea	5,200	Ukraine	6,900

Asia and the Americas were the leading regions of origin for Philadelphia immigrants in the most recent data, a shift from 2000.

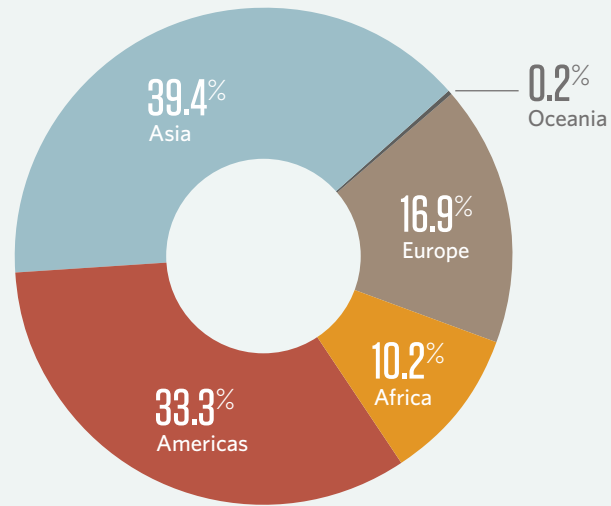
Note: Numbers for 2016 represent the annual average for the 2012-16 period. All figures are rounded to the nearest hundred.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, decennial census and American Community Survey, five-year estimates, 2012-16

© 2018 The Pew Charitable Trusts

By continent, Asia and the Americas (encompassing South and Central America, the Caribbean, and North America, excluding the United States) were the places of origin for the greatest number of foreign-born Philadelphians, together accounting for more than 7 in 10 foreign-born Philadelphians. They were followed by Europe and Africa, with very small percentages from Oceania.<sup>8</sup> (See Figure 5.)

Figure 5  
Shares of Immigrants in  
Philadelphia by Continent  
of Origin, 2012-16



Note: Shares represent the annual average for the 2012-16 period. The Americas comprise the Caribbean, Central and South America, Mexico, and Canada.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, five-year estimates, 2012-16

© 2018 The Pew Charitable Trusts

Between 2000 and the 2012-16 period, the number of immigrants from every continent except Europe grew in Philadelphia. Africans increased at the fastest rate, more than doubling in number. The number of European-born immigrants in the city declined; they accounted for their smallest share of the overall foreign-born population in city history, according to data going back to the early 1700s.<sup>9</sup>

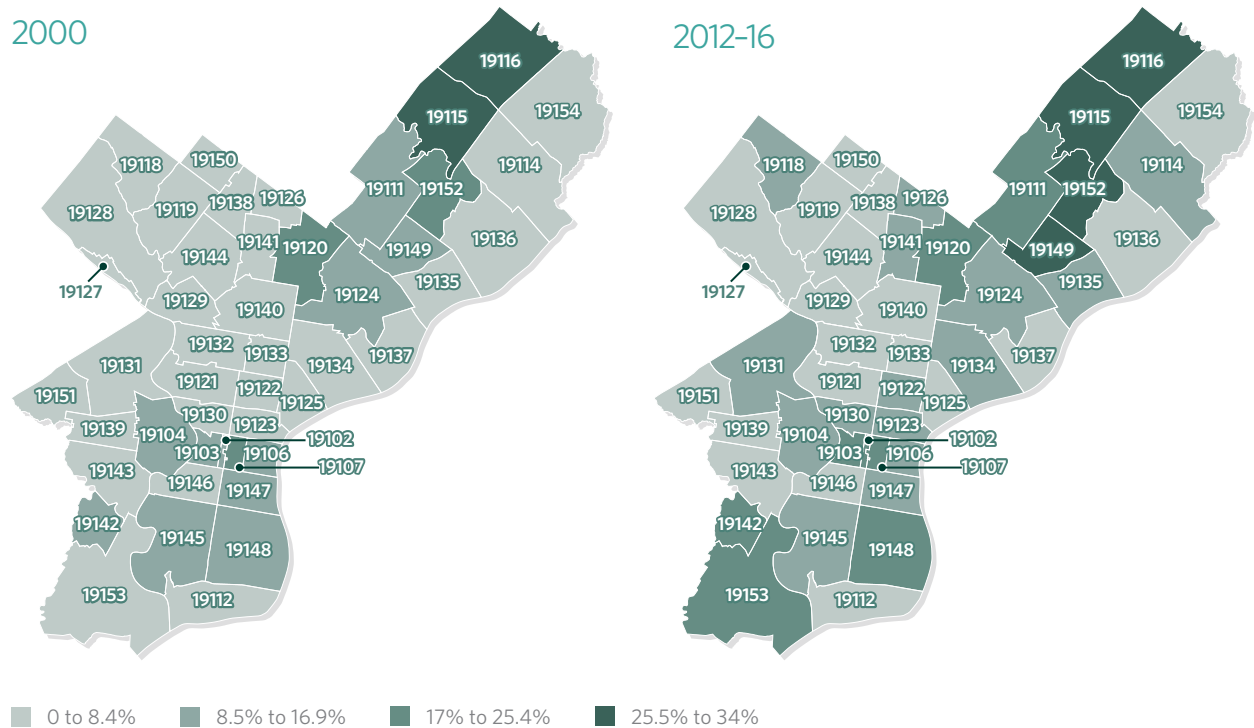
These estimates come from census data collected from 2012 through 2016. More current data for 2016 alone, estimates the Census Bureau considers less reliable, indicate that immigrants from the Americas may have matched or overtaken Asia as the largest group and that African immigrants may be nearly as numerous as Europeans.

Both sets of figures show that Philadelphia has one of the most diverse immigrant communities among the cities studied and has a much different profile than the country as a whole, where Latin American immigrants are in the majority.

Latin Americans arriving in Philadelphia from Central and South American countries came on top of an already large and growing number of U.S.-born Hispanics of Puerto Rican heritage. Combined, immigrant and native members of Philadelphia's pan-Latino community, in the words of historian Victor Vazquez-Hernandez,<sup>10</sup> have grown to account for about 14 percent of the city's population in 2016, more than any other national or ethnic group. Americans of Puerto Rican descent accounted for 59 percent of the city's Latino population, down from 71 percent in 2000.<sup>11</sup>

Northeast and South Philadelphia were the city's top areas for immigrants, as they had been in years past, thanks to the availability of relatively affordable housing and the presence of established foreign-born communities. But these groups also grew significantly in parts of Southwest and lower Northeast Philadelphia. (See Figure 6.) In the most recent data, 23 of the city's 372 residential census tracts had at least a third of their residents born abroad, up from three in 2000; two tracts in Bustleton and Somerton in the Northeast had foreign-born shares of nearly 60 percent.

Figure 6  
 Foreign-Born Share of Philadelphia's Population by ZIP Code,  
 2000 and 2012-16



While Northeast and South Philadelphia have remained centers of the foreign-born population, immigrants have also increased their presence throughout other areas of the city in recent years. In this chart, ZIP code areas are shown in quartiles shaded according to the foreign-born percentage of that area's population.

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, decennial census and American Community Survey, five-year estimates, 2012-16

© 2018 The Pew Charitable Trusts

Looking at immigrants' countries of origin, a sizable number of East Asians, including Chinese and Koreans, were living in the Oxford Circle/Castor section of lower Northeast Philadelphia (ZIP code 19149), West Philadelphia (19104), and Chinatown (19106). Southeast Asians, including Vietnamese and Cambodians, had large concentrations in South Philadelphia (19145 and 19148) and Olney (19120).

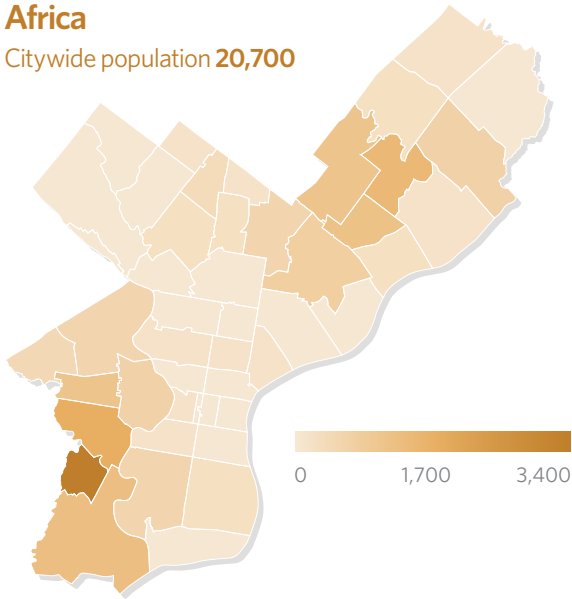
Caribbean immigrants—among them, Dominicans and Haitians—were most concentrated in the Olney and Juniata areas (19120 and 19111). South Asians, including many Indians and Pakistanis, lived in Somerton (19115 and 19116). Many Mexicans, Guatemalans, and other natives of the Americas lived in the southeast part of South Philadelphia (19148). Eastern Europeans, including Russians and Ukrainians, were found in Somerton (19116). (See Figure 7.)



Figure 7  
 Concentration of Immigrant Groups in Philadelphia by ZIP Code, 2012-16

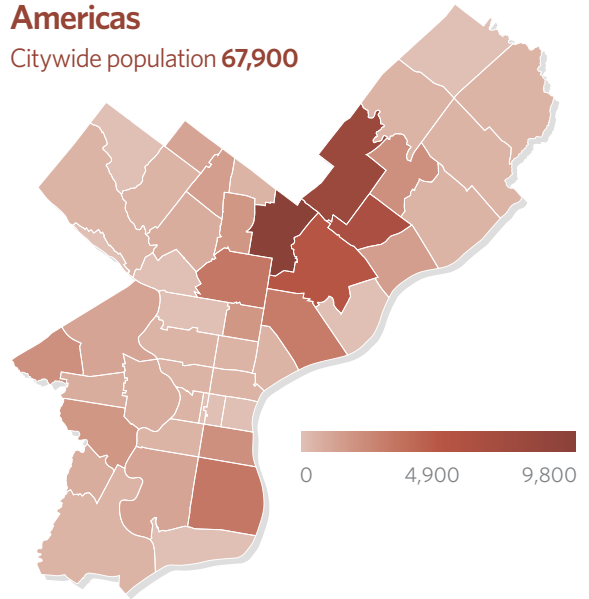
**Africa**

Citywide population **20,700**



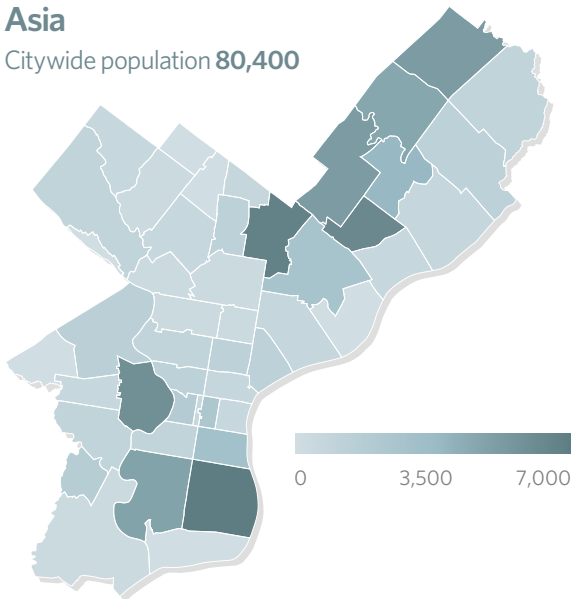
**Americas**

Citywide population **67,900**



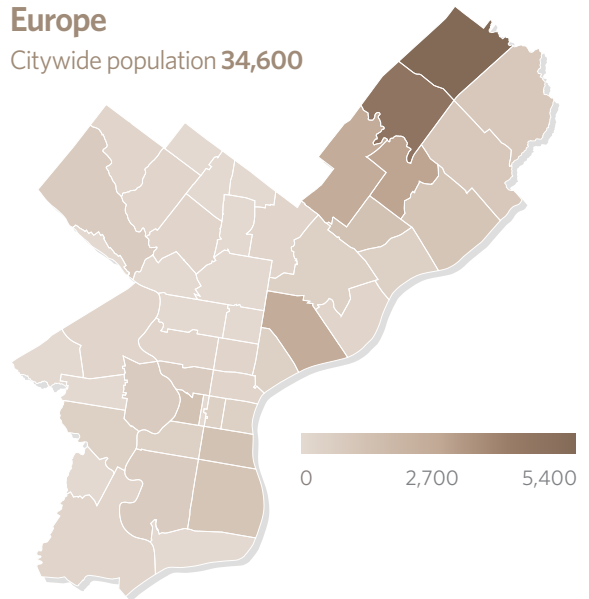
**Asia**

Citywide population **80,400**



**Europe**

Citywide population **34,600**



Philadelphia's major foreign-born groups are concentrated in different areas of the city. In each group's map above, ZIP code areas are shaded according to the number of people from that group living there. As the shading illustrates, immigrants from the Americas have their biggest numbers around Olney and the Near Northeast; Europeans are concentrated in the Far Northeast; many Africans live in Southwest Philadelphia; and Asians have several sizable concentrations citywide.

Note: Data on Oceania immigrants were insufficient for detailed analysis.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, five-year estimates, 2012-16

© 2018 The Pew Charitable Trusts

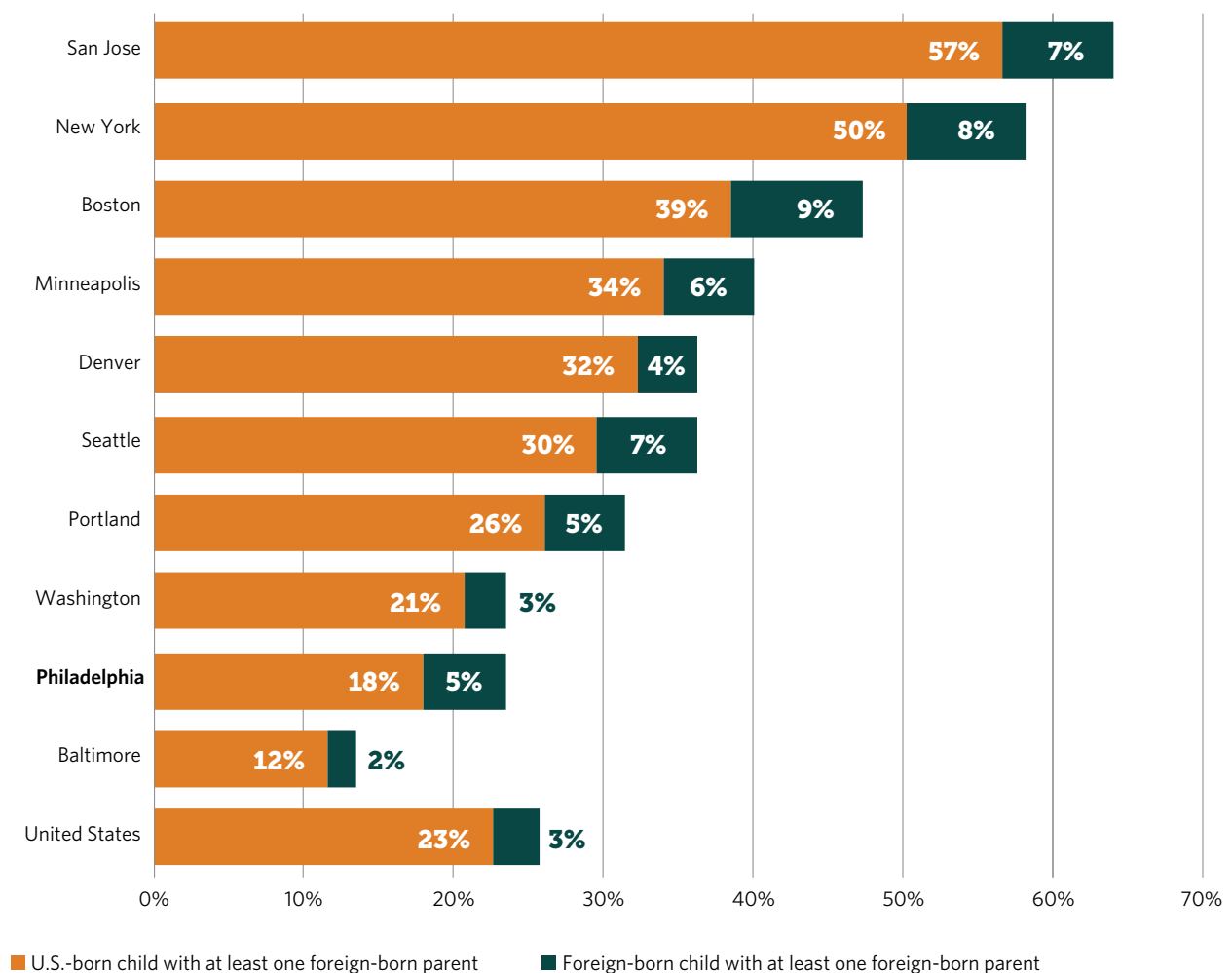
## Children, family, and home

Compared with native Philadelphians, immigrants were more likely to have children, be married, and live with other relatives, and just as likely to own their homes.

In 2016, immigrants' children under age 18 numbered roughly 75,800 in Philadelphia, with about three-quarters of them born in the U.S., making them U.S. citizens. They represented around 23 percent of all 322,200 Philadelphia children under age 18, a sizable increase from an estimated 16 percent in 2000. Still, Philadelphia's percentages remained below the average for the country and for most other cities in this study.<sup>12</sup> (See Figure 8.)

Figure 8

### Immigrants' Children as a Share of All Children Under Age 18, 2016 Philadelphia compared with other big cities



Note: Cities are ranked by U.S.-born rate.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, one-year estimates, 2016

© 2018 The Pew Charitable Trusts

Among these children, an estimated 19,000 were born abroad and were enrolled in the city's many primary and secondary schools, which researchers have found to be key institutions for integrating immigrants into American society.<sup>13</sup> Since 2000, the School District of Philadelphia has significantly increased its English-language learner courses, coped with tensions between natives and immigrants, and sought to add student/family services and teacher training.<sup>14</sup>

Analysts often refer to immigrants as first-generation residents and their U.S.-born offspring of any age as second generation. During the 2012-16 period, these two generations combined made up an estimated 27 percent of Philadelphia's population. Nationally, the estimate was 26 percent in 2015.<sup>15</sup>

These combined generations have the potential to reshape the city demographically and economically, depending on the degree to which the children stay in the city. A Pew Research Center analysis at the national level has projected that first- and second-generation Americans will account for most of the increase in the U.S. working-age population in coming decades if recent migration trends continue.<sup>16</sup>

Around 51 percent of foreign-born adults age 15 and older in 2016 were married, much higher than the rate among natives, a pattern also found in the comparison cities and in the country overall.<sup>17</sup>

On housing, Philadelphia stands out from other cities in at least one respect: Fifty-two percent of its immigrants were homeowners in 2016, compared with an average of 37 percent across the other cities. Philadelphians overall had a higher homeownership rate than did residents of many other major cities, partly because of a relative abundance of low-priced homes.<sup>18</sup>

## Education and English-language proficiency

Nearly a third of adult immigrants have bachelor's or graduate degrees, and that has boosted the city's overall college attainment rate. At the same time, nearly as many adult immigrants do not have high school diplomas.

In 2016, about 57,900 foreign-born adults over age 25 in Philadelphia had bachelor's degrees or higher, attained in the U.S. or abroad, an increase of almost 28,000 since 2000. That raised the college attainment rate of the city's immigrants from 27 to 31 percent.

Over the same period, the number of U.S.-born Philadelphians with college degrees nearly doubled to roughly 244,800, boosting their college attainment rate from 17 to 28 percent. (See Figure 9.) Together, immigrants and natives raised Philadelphia's overall college attainment rate to about 29 percent.

Both groups, however, still lagged behind their counterparts in the comparison cities, where an average 38 percent of foreign-born and 51 percent of U.S.-born residents had at least a bachelor's degree.

At the other end of the educational spectrum, about 50,300 foreign-born adults—27 percent of all adult immigrants—did not have high school diplomas in 2016. That was up 12,200 since 2000.

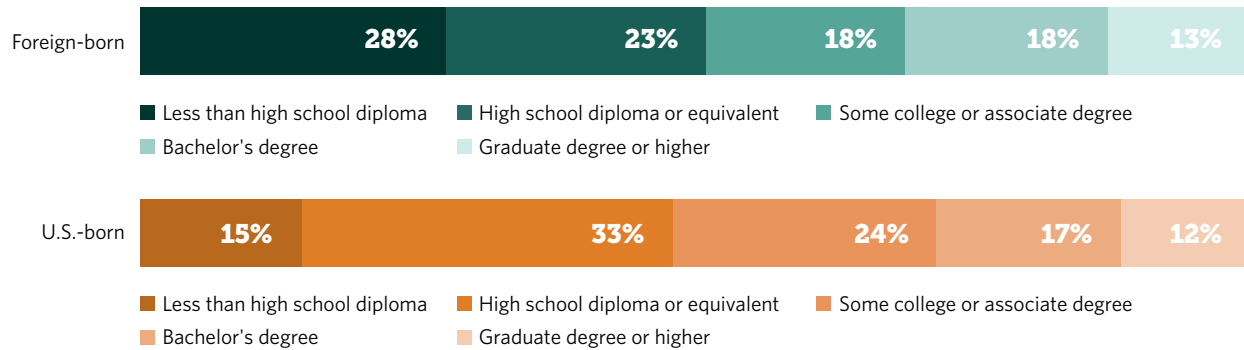
The number of natives without high school educations, on the other hand, fell to 126,800, which represented 15 percent of all native adults, down from 28 percent in 2000. When this number is combined with the increase in immigrants without diplomas, the city's overall share of residents with less than a high school diploma stood at just below 17 percent in 2016.

Immigrants' educational attainment rates vary substantially by continent of origin. Those born in Africa and Europe were most likely—more so than natives—to have college degrees; those born in the Americas were least likely; and Asian immigrants were evenly divided between high and low attainment. (See Figure 10.)

Figure 9

## Educational Attainment for Immigrant and Native Philadelphians, 2016

Adults age 25 or older



About 31 percent of Philadelphia’s immigrants had bachelor’s degrees or higher in 2016, and nearly the same percentage had less than a high school diploma. Percentages are rounded.

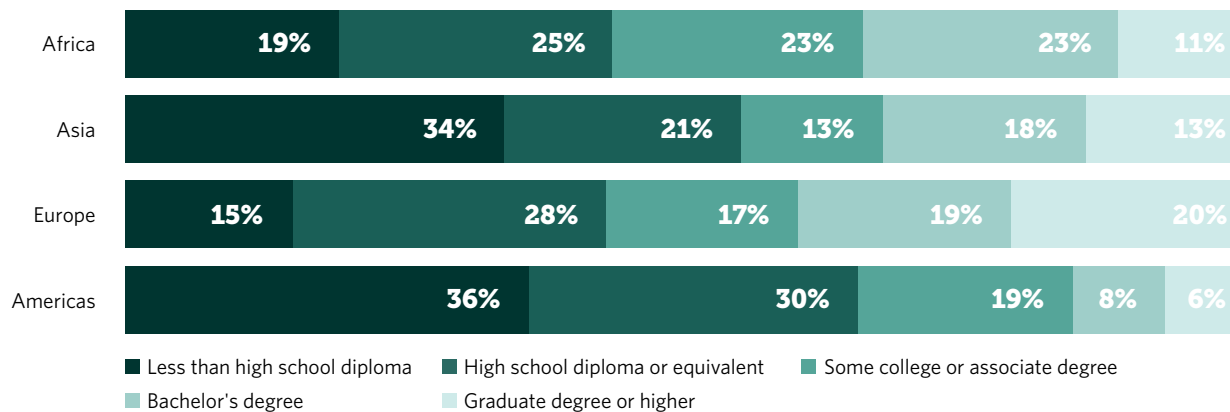
Note: Some figures do not equal 100 percent due to rounding.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, one-year estimates, 2016

© 2018 The Pew Charitable Trusts

Figure 10

## Educational Attainment of Major Immigrant Groups in Philadelphia by Continent of Origin, 2012-16



Immigrants born in Africa and Europe were most likely to have college degrees; those born in the Americas (mostly Latin America and the Caribbean) were least likely.

Note: Oceania omitted due to insufficient data. Some figures do not equal 100 percent due to rounding.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, five-year estimates, 2012-16 (IPUMS)

© 2018 The Pew Charitable Trusts

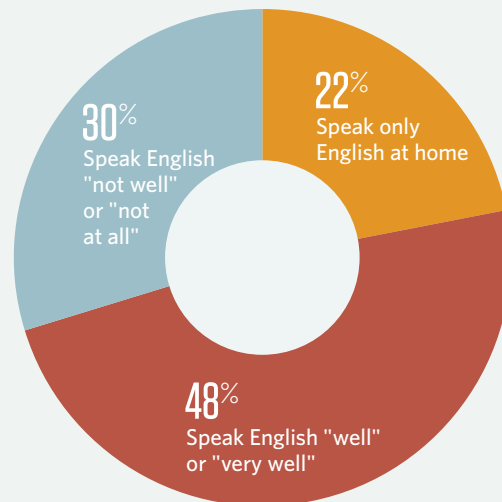
One reason that educational differences between newcomers and natives are important is economic: Research has found that newly arrived immigrants who lack much formal education tend to do certain jobs—such as physical labor or work not requiring English ability—at lower pay or for longer hours than similarly educated natives and earlier immigrants, sometimes resulting in lower wages for all. Conversely, highly educated immigrants tend to complement similarly educated natives without bringing down the pay of either group. In both cases, the whole economy may grow, but educated workers—both immigrants and natives—tend to benefit more than less-educated ones do.<sup>19</sup>

Immigrants' level of education also is related to entrepreneurship. Studies have shown that immigrants who do not have much formal education, or whose foreign degrees are not recognized in the U.S., have relatively high rates of business creation, especially small mom and pop businesses.<sup>20</sup> "Academic credentials give [immigrants] access to jobs. Without them, you're locked out of big jobs, so you start a business or become self-employed," said Domenic Vitiello, a professor at the University of Pennsylvania who focuses on immigration.

Another key factor in immigrant integration is English proficiency. Research has shown that speaking only a foreign language or even speaking foreign-accented English is linked to lower income, limited housing choices, and inadequate health care, although it is not clear the degree to which other factors also contribute to those disparities.<sup>21</sup>

In 2016, about 30 percent of Philadelphia immigrants who primarily used a foreign language at home said they spoke English "not well" or "not at all," while 48 percent spoke it "well" or "very well." (See Figure 11.) The latter figure was below the percentages nationwide and in most of the comparison cities in this study.

Figure 11  
English-Language Proficiency of Philadelphia Immigrants, 2016  
Among individuals ages 5 and older who speak a foreign language at home



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, one-year estimates, 2016

© 2018 The Pew Charitable Trusts

Since 2000, the combination of a much larger immigrant population and a higher percentage of immigrants having trouble with English has caused the number of immigrants in Philadelphia with limited English proficiency to nearly double to around 68,000, with the largest growth among Spanish speakers.

There also was a 56 percent growth in the number of “linguistically isolated” households, meaning they lacked anyone over 14 who could speak English proficiently. In 2016, they accounted for a third of the city’s immigrant-led households.<sup>22</sup>

English proficiency varied widely by national origin and mother tongue in Philadelphia, as it did nationally. Foreign-born speakers of European and some Middle Eastern languages were most likely to speak English well; speakers of Spanish and some East Asian languages less so.

## Employment

For two centuries, immigrant labor has been crucial in the Philadelphia area for various industries at different times. A century ago, the biggest employers of foreign-born workers were manufacturing and construction.<sup>23</sup> Today, they are educational, health, and social services; hospitality; and retail.

In 2016, the number of Philadelphia’s foreign-born residents in the civilian labor force—those age 16 and older, employed or looking for jobs, working in the city or elsewhere—numbered around 140,000, or about 19 percent of the civilian labor force, up from 11 percent in 2000. In the suburban counties, immigrants in the labor force numbered more than 289,000, about 12 percent of the total.

Immigrants accounted for most of the labor force growth from 2000 to 2016 in both the city and its suburban counties. In Philadelphia, they increased by around 66,000, or 89 percent, while natives in the labor force rose by around 28,000, or just 5 percent. In the suburbs, immigrant workers grew at a similar pace while natives in the labor force actually decreased in number.

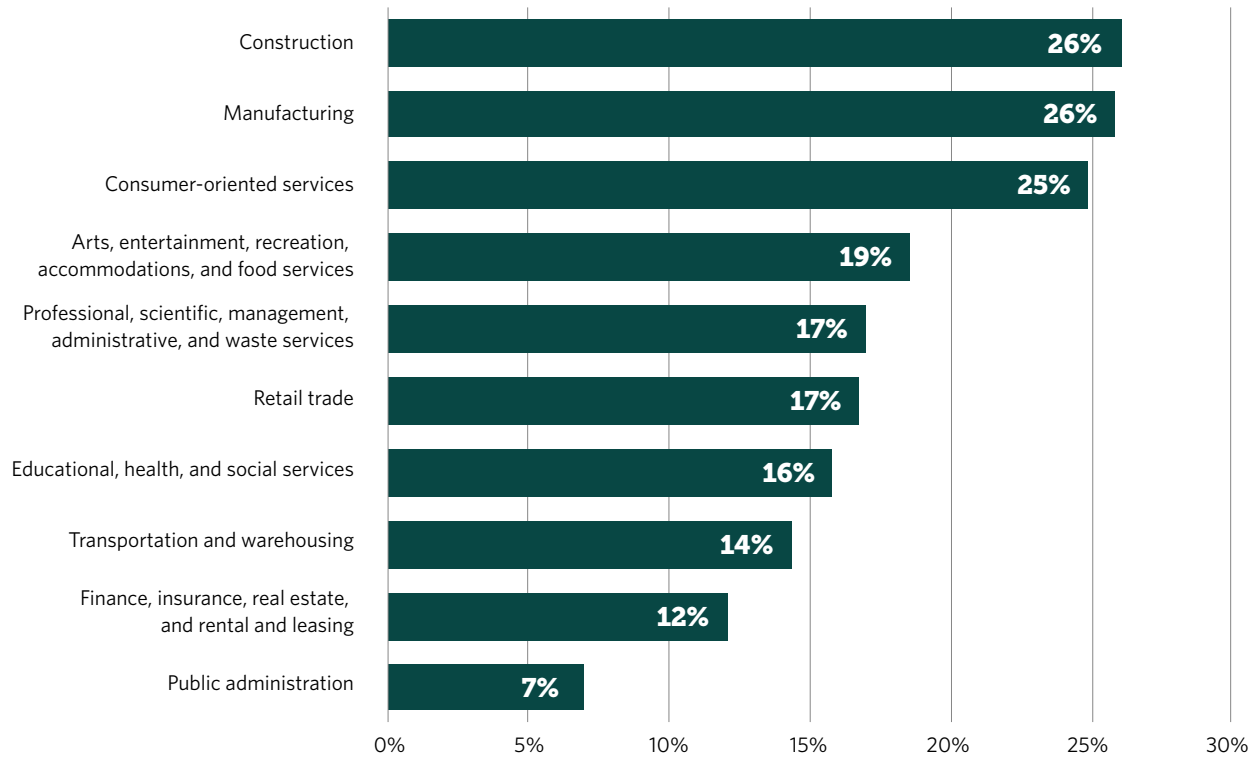
The city’s biggest sector comprises educational, health, and social service facilities, often referred to as “eds and meds.” It employed the most immigrants, about 39,000.

But some sectors relied on foreign-born workers more than others: About 26 percent of Philadelphians working in manufacturing and construction were born abroad, compared with 19 percent in the hospitality sector and just 7 percent in government jobs. The foreign-born share of workers in each of the 10 largest sectors is shown in Figure 12.



Figure 12

## Foreign-Born Percentage of Philadelphia Workers by Sector, 2012-16



The importance of immigrant labor varies among different employment sectors in Philadelphia. This chart shows the 10 biggest sectors by total employment in the city, ranked by share of workers who were born abroad.

Note: Sectors with at least 35,000 workers, ranked by the share of workers who are foreign-born. Percentages are rounded. Consumer-oriented services are labeled “other services” by the government and cover a wide variety of establishments, from dry cleaning to beauty shops to religious organizations.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, five-year estimates, 2012-16 (IPUMS)

© 2018 The Pew Charitable Trusts

Another way of looking at the role of immigrants in the workplace is to examine the actual jobs they perform. For Latin American immigrants in Philadelphia, housekeeping and nursing care jobs were the most numerous; for Asian immigrants, jobs as cashiers and cooks or chefs were most prevalent. (See Table 2.)

Table 2

## Prevalent Jobs by Continent of Origin in Philadelphia, 2012-16

Born in the Americas	Born in Asia	Born in Africa	Born in Europe	Born in the United States
Maids and housekeeping	Cashiers	Personal care aides	Postsecondary teachers	Cashiers
Nursing, psychiatric, and home health aides	Chefs and cooks	Nursing, psychiatric, and home health aides	Maids and housekeeping	Nursing, psychiatric, and home health aides
Chefs and cooks	Postsecondary teachers	Registered nurses	Drivers/sales workers	Secretaries and administrative assistants
Janitors and building cleaners	Personal appearance workers	Cashiers	Secretaries and administrative assistants	Retail salespeople
Carpenters	Registered nurses	Social workers	Nursing, psychiatric, and home health aides	First-line supervisors of sales
Construction laborers	Waiters and waitresses	Drivers/sales workers	Janitors and building cleaners	Janitors and building cleaners

Note: Insufficient data for Oceania. Each list is drawn from 463 occupations defined by the federal government. See methodology for details.

Source: U.S. Census American Community Survey, five-year estimates, 2012-16 (IPUMS)

© 2018 The Pew Charitable Trusts

Among working immigrants living in Philadelphia in 2016, about 11 percent reported being “self-employed” or employed by their own incorporated businesses—the latter considered by researchers to be a reliable approximation of small “Main Street”-type business ownership.<sup>24</sup> Half as many natives reported being self-employed.

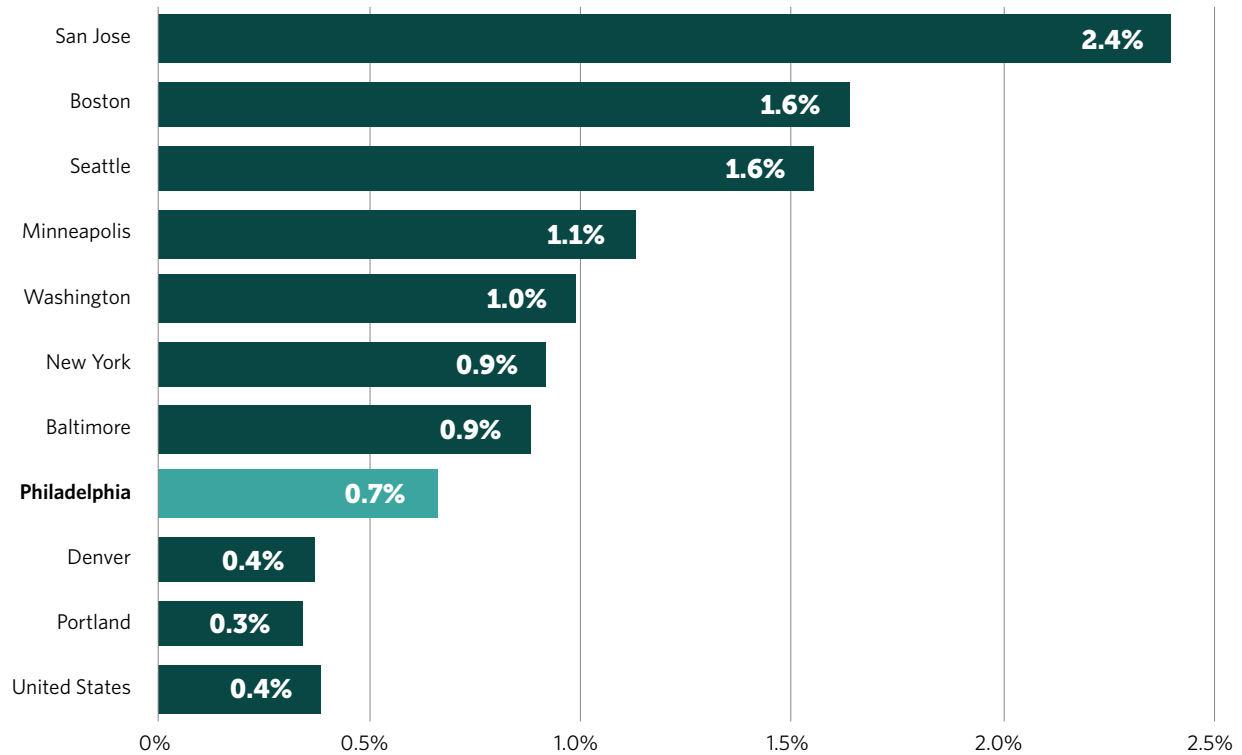
Immigrant-owned small businesses “are part of a bigger thing happening,” said the University of Pennsylvania’s Vitiello. “It’s about revitalization of neighborhoods. It’s not a story of dramatic wealth creation. But they complement the larger economy and services.”

There also are educated immigrants working in high-skill, high-paying jobs, often associated with economic growth and expansion. Federal data on work visas, including H-1B visas, show that nearly 5,000 specialized foreign workers received permission in the year ending Sept. 30, 2016, to work in Philadelphia, although a lower number actually arrived for jobs.<sup>25</sup> That was equivalent to about 0.7 percent of all Philadelphians in the labor force, a ratio above the national average but below most of the comparison cities. The vast majority were for technology-related positions, which helps explain why certain cities in this study—tech-heavy San Jose, Boston, and Seattle—lead in this category. (See Figure 13.)

Figure 13

## Specialized Visa Approvals for Foreign Workers, 2015-16

Number of approved visas as share of labor force in Philadelphia and comparison cities



Sources: U.S. Department of Labor and myvisajobs.com

© 2018 The Pew Charitable Trusts

### Income and poverty

In Philadelphia, immigrants as a group have a relatively low median income and a relatively high poverty rate. But so do native Philadelphians, making the populations similar economically and distinct from their counterparts in the comparison cities and in the country as a whole.

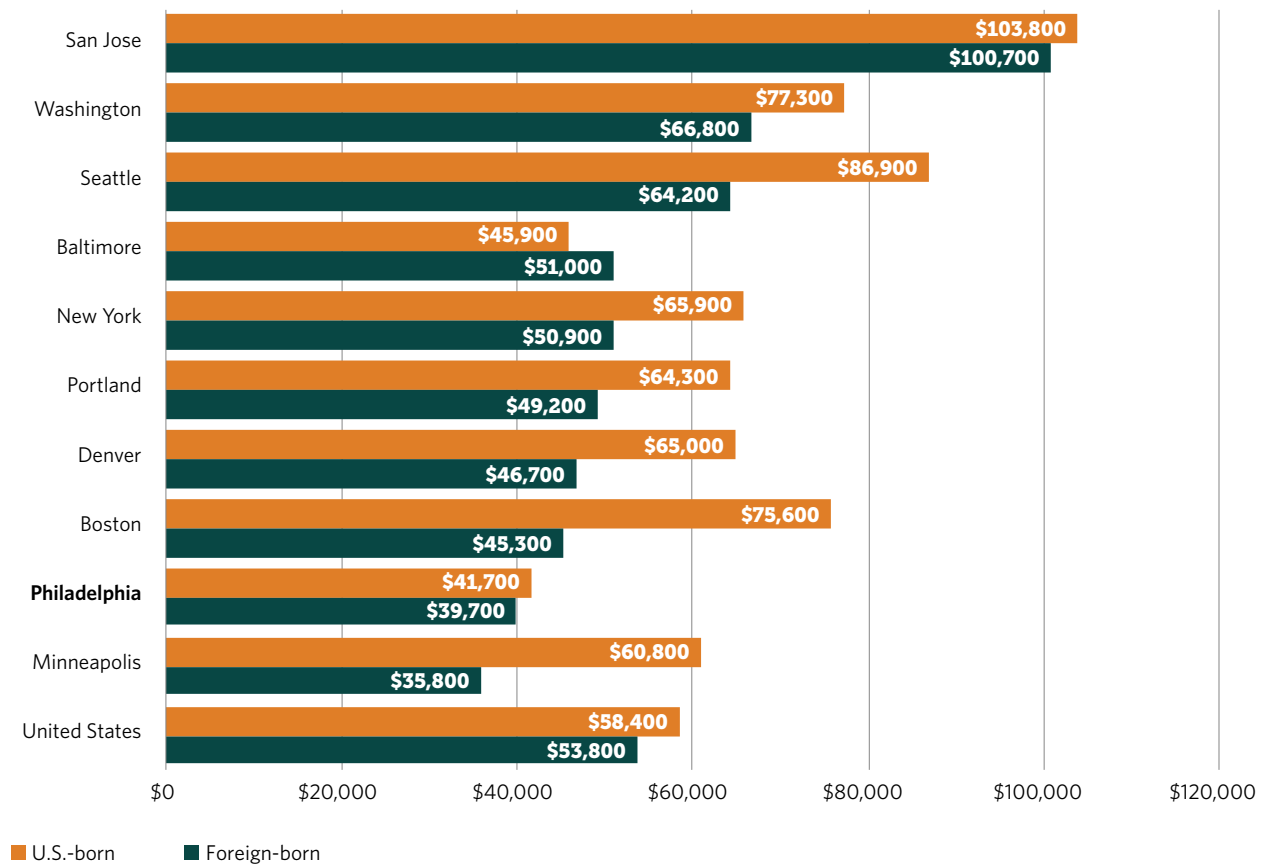
In 2016, foreign-born Philadelphians' median household income was about \$39,700, close to natives' \$41,700. It rose in recent years but was barely changed from 2000, when immigrants' inflation-adjusted household income was roughly \$40,200.

Both immigrants and natives in Philadelphia had lower median household incomes than their counterparts elsewhere, and the gap between the groups' incomes was narrower, too. In the comparison cities, natives' median income was 21 percent higher on average; nationwide, it was 8 percent higher than immigrants'. (See Figure 14.)

Figure 14

## Median Household Income of Immigrants and U.S.-Born Residents, 2016

In Philadelphia and other big cities



Immigrant-led households had a lower median income in Philadelphia than in most of the other cities in this study, continuing a long-term pattern and mirroring the native population.

Note: Cities ranked by foreign-born income. All figures are rounded.

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, one-year estimates, 2016; figures for Baltimore and Minneapolis come from IPUMS

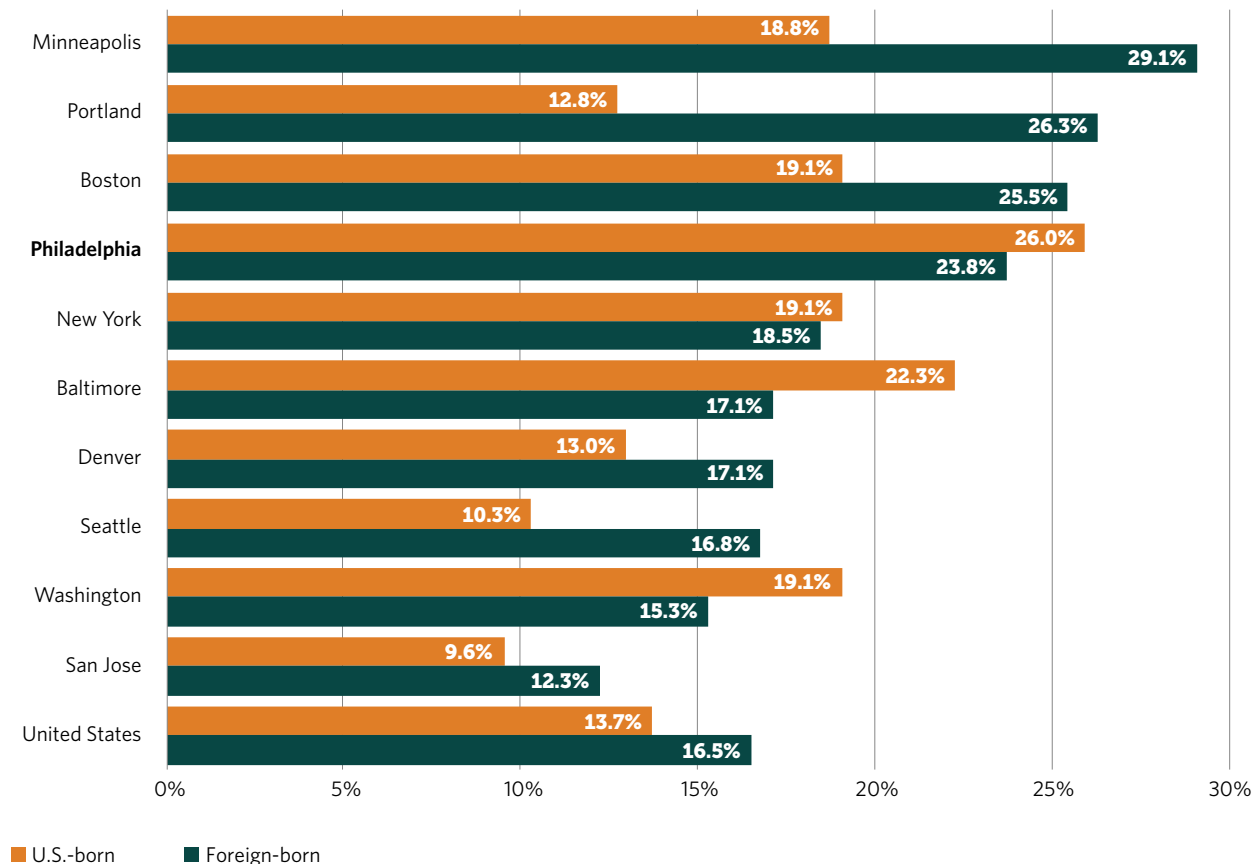
© 2018 The Pew Charitable Trusts

Census numbers indicated that immigrants' average annual wages during the 2012-16 period were about 7 percent lower than the wages of U.S.-born residents across all employment sectors. In some industries, such as manufacturing, they were much lower, while in a few—including eds and meds and hospitality—they were a little higher. Reliable citywide data were not available for particular occupations.<sup>26</sup>

More than 54,000 immigrants in Philadelphia lived in households with earnings below the federal poverty line in 2016, representing around 24 percent of immigrants and 14 percent of all poor Philadelphians. Immigrants accounted for an estimated 23,000 more Philadelphians in poverty than in 2000, a much faster pace of growth than that of natives.

Poverty among both immigrants and natives was more prevalent in Philadelphia than in most of the comparison cities and in the country as a whole. And, as with their incomes, the groups' poverty rates were closer to each other in Philadelphia than in many other places, where immigrants tended to have higher poverty rates than natives. (See Figure 15.)

Figure 15  
**Poverty Rate of Immigrants and U.S.-Born Residents, 2016**  
 In Philadelphia and other big cities



Both immigrants and natives in Philadelphia had relatively high poverty rates in 2016 compared with other cities in this study and the nation as a whole. The lowest rates for both populations were in San Jose. The biggest gap in rates between the two groups was in Portland.

Note: Cities ranked by poverty rate for foreign-born individuals.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, one-year estimates, 2016

© 2018 The Pew Charitable Trusts

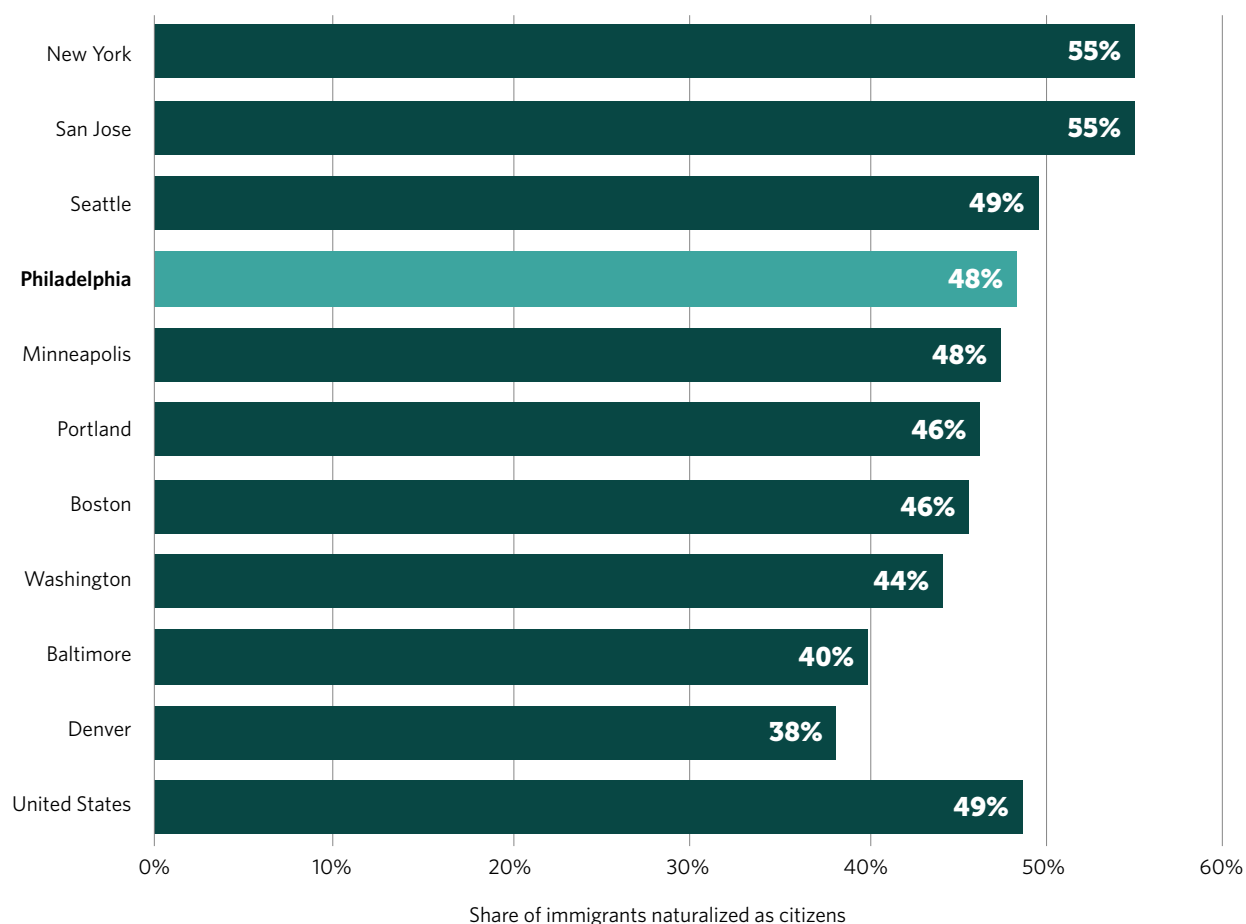
Incomes and poverty differed by national origin in Philadelphia, just as in the other cities: Latin American and Caribbean immigrants' median household income was \$35,400 and their poverty rate was 24 percent in 2016. Foreign-born Asians' median income was \$46,200 and their poverty rate was about 23 percent. (Other groups were not large enough to obtain reliable figures.)

## Legal status and naturalization

Around half of foreign-born Philadelphians—an estimated 112,000 people—were naturalized citizens in 2016, and the rest were divided between unauthorized and lawful immigrants, the latter including relatives of prior immigrants, foreign students, specialized workers, and refugees. This proportion was in line with most of the comparison cities and the country as a whole. (See Figure 16.)

Figure 16

### Immigrant Naturalization Rates in Philadelphia and Other Big Cities, 2016



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, one-year estimates, 2016

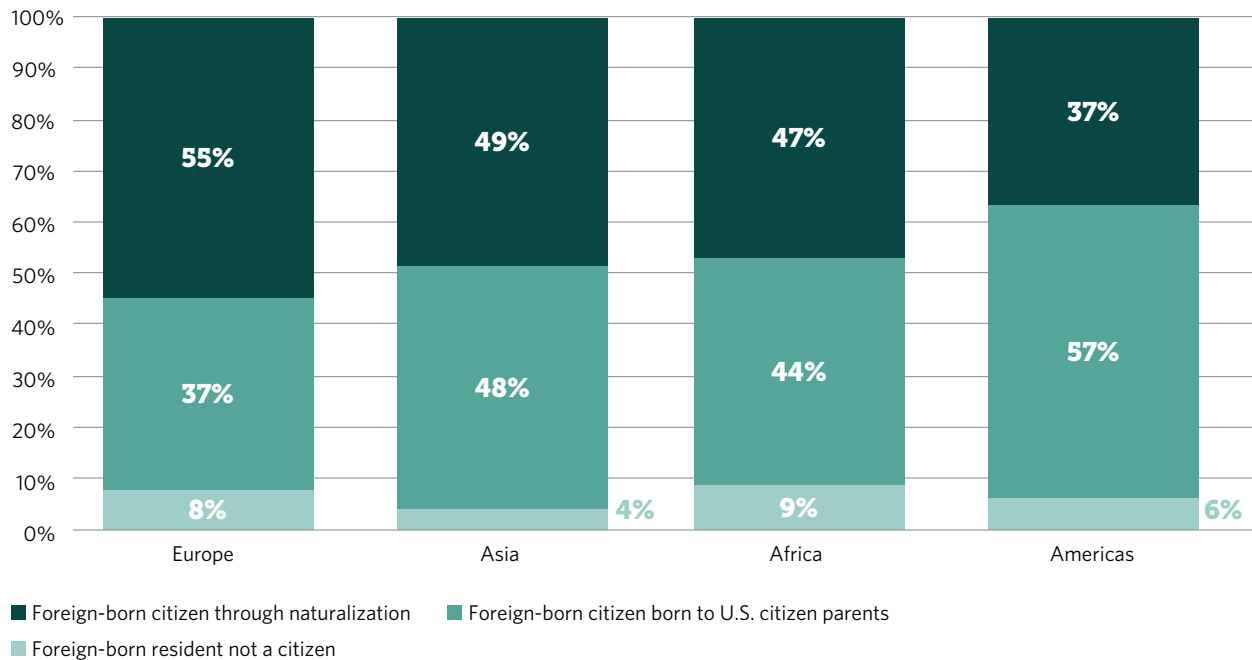
© 2018 The Pew Charitable Trusts

Naturalization for adults can be an arduous process; the application fee alone—\$725, with some exceptions<sup>27</sup>—may be daunting for low-income individuals. In Philadelphia, immigrants with the highest naturalization rates came from Europe (55 percent), followed by Asia and Africa. Those from Latin America and the Caribbean had the lowest rates (37 percent). (See Figure 17.)



Figure 17

## National Origin and Citizenship Status in Philadelphia, 2016



Note: Figures for Oceania and Canada insufficient for analysis.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, one-year estimates, 2016 (IPUMS)

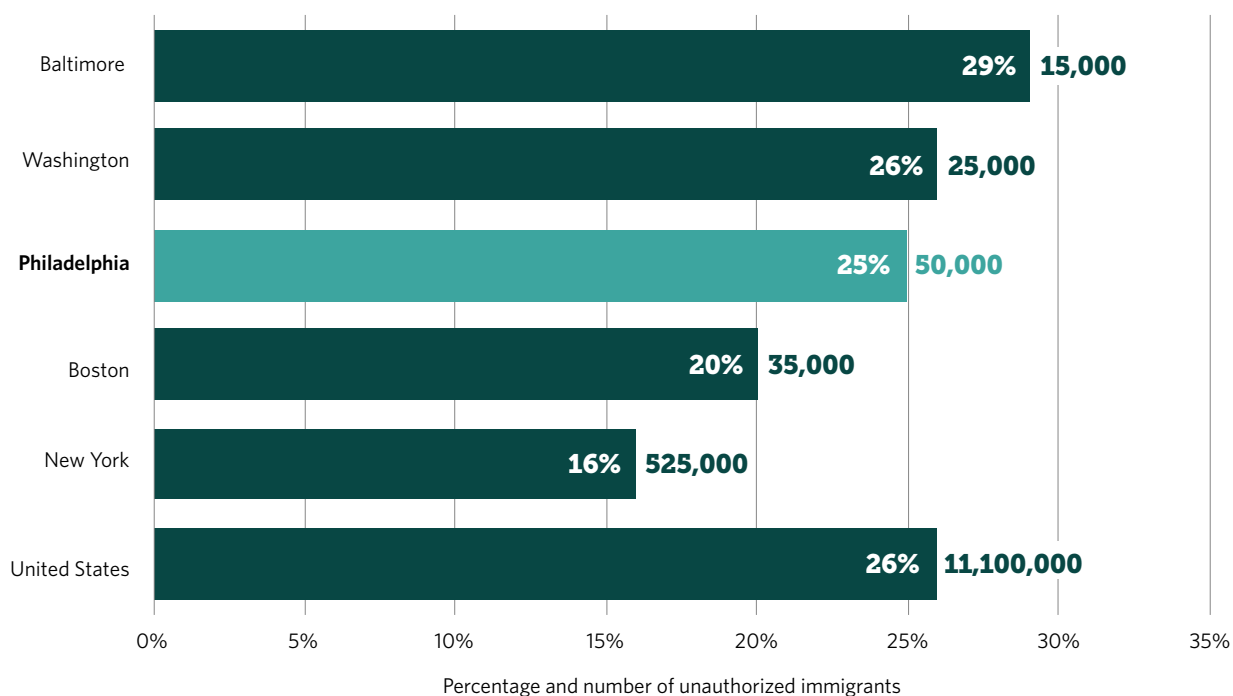
© 2018 The Pew Charitable Trusts

Research at the national level shows that naturalized citizens tend to be better educated and have higher incomes than non-naturalized lawful immigrants, a gap that widens the longer individuals live in the country. Naturalization also confers the right to vote, although research has found that new citizens are less likely to be registered voters than are natives.<sup>28</sup>

A county-by-county analysis of 2010-14 census data by the University of Southern California's Center for the Study of Immigrant Integration estimated that 18 percent of foreign-born Philadelphians were noncitizens eligible for naturalization, a share close to that of the country overall.<sup>29</sup> Eligibility for adults is based mainly on having lived legally in the United States a minimum of five years and passing tests on English language and civics knowledge; dependent children under 18 automatically become citizens when at least one parent does.

About 25 percent of foreign-born Philadelphians were residing in the country without legal authorization, according to a Pew Research Center analysis of 2014 data. That amounted to about 50,000 people. (See Figure 18.) Ten years earlier, the estimate was around 27 percent, or 45,000 individuals.

Figure 18  
 Unauthorized Immigrants, 2014  
 In Philadelphia and other Northeast cities



Approximately 25 percent of foreign-born Philadelphians were unauthorized in 2014, the latest time frame studied at the city level. (Estimates were available only for comparison cities in the Northeast.)

Note: Cities ranked by share of unauthorized immigrants. See methodology for details.

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, one-year estimate, 2014, and analysis by Pew Research Center

© 2018 The Pew Charitable Trusts

Across the 11-county metropolitan region, including the city, unauthorized immigrants numbered an estimated 160,000. Among them were an estimated 4,700 individuals ages 15-34 who had been brought to the country as children and had been granted temporary legal status (as of 2017) under a federal program known as Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, or DACA, according to the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services.<sup>30</sup> (A comparable figure for the city alone was not available.)

A related group consists of U.S.-born children of unauthorized immigrants. The number of these lawful residents could not be estimated for Philadelphia. Across Pennsylvania, an estimated 2.6 percent of U.S.-born children had at least one unauthorized immigrant parent in 2014. At the national level, the figure was an estimated 7.3 percent.<sup>31</sup>

Two other legal categories that represent many foreign-born individuals who come to the region are highly skilled workers and international students. The first group was discussed earlier in this report. As for international students, 15,253 were in city-based colleges or universities in fiscal 2014-15, according to data collected by the Institute of International Education (IIE). They accounted for about 11 percent of all students enrolled at those institutions, slightly below the average in the comparison cities. Another 7,721 were enrolled at colleges and universities in Philadelphia's suburban counties.<sup>32</sup>

Finally, there are refugees, admitted to the United States by the federal government after certifying that they face “persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion.”<sup>33</sup> They are resettled in certain U.S. cities selected for their support networks, affordability, and other factors. In 2016, some 794 refugees were resettled in Philadelphia, the highest number since at least 2002, a reflection of federal resettlement policies more than individual refugee preferences.<sup>34</sup> The most refugees in 2016 came from Syria (245); during the entire 2002-16 period, the largest numbers were from Bhutan (1,446), Liberia (1,355), Myanmar (1,256), and Iraq (1,148).

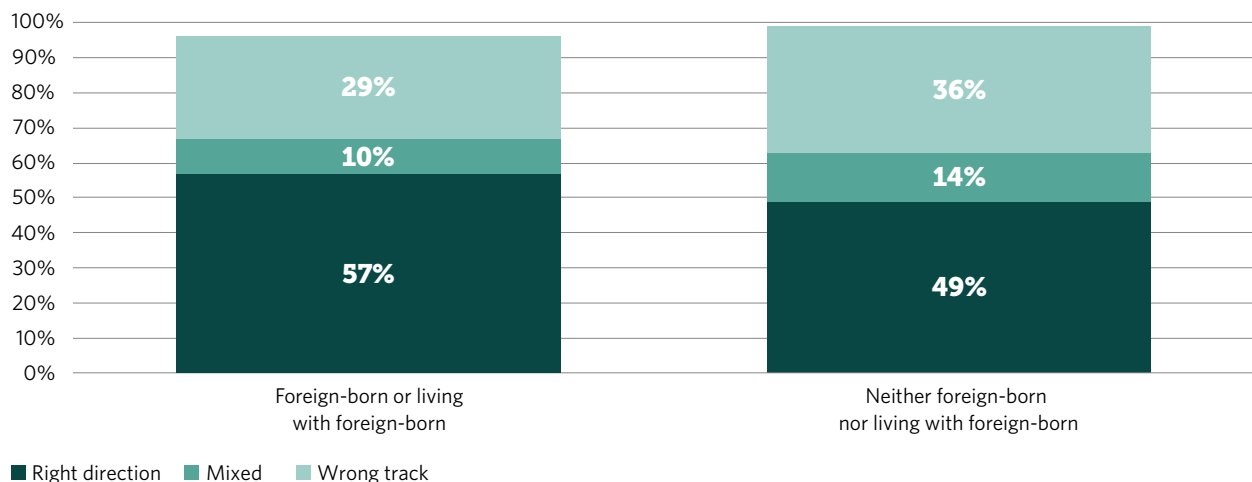
Refugees must apply for asylum or permanent residence after one year, and they may stay in the city or move out if they choose. The number of foreign-born Philadelphians who originally came to the United States as refugees was not available, nor was the number of people with asylum status in the city.

## Attitudes of immigrants and natives

Pew has polled Philadelphia residents since 2009 about local issues and trends, including immigration. In August 2016, for the first time, the survey asked respondents whether they were foreign-born or living with a foreign-born resident. In the data presented below, “members of immigrant households” refers to individuals who said either description applied to them. The survey was conducted during a presidential campaign in which immigration was a prominent issue.

The survey found that members of immigrant households were upbeat about Philadelphia, sometimes more so than those from nonimmigrant households. Asked whether conditions in Philadelphia were “generally headed in the right direction or pretty seriously off on the wrong track,” 57 percent of immigrant-household members chose “right direction”; among nonimmigrants, 49 percent did.<sup>35</sup> (See Figure 19.)

Figure 19  
**Pew Poll: Is Philadelphia Headed in the Right Direction or on the Wrong Track?**



Note: Percentages are subject to sampling error; see methodology. Percentages do not include respondents who had no opinion.

Source: The Pew Charitable Trusts’ Philadelphia Poll, August 2016

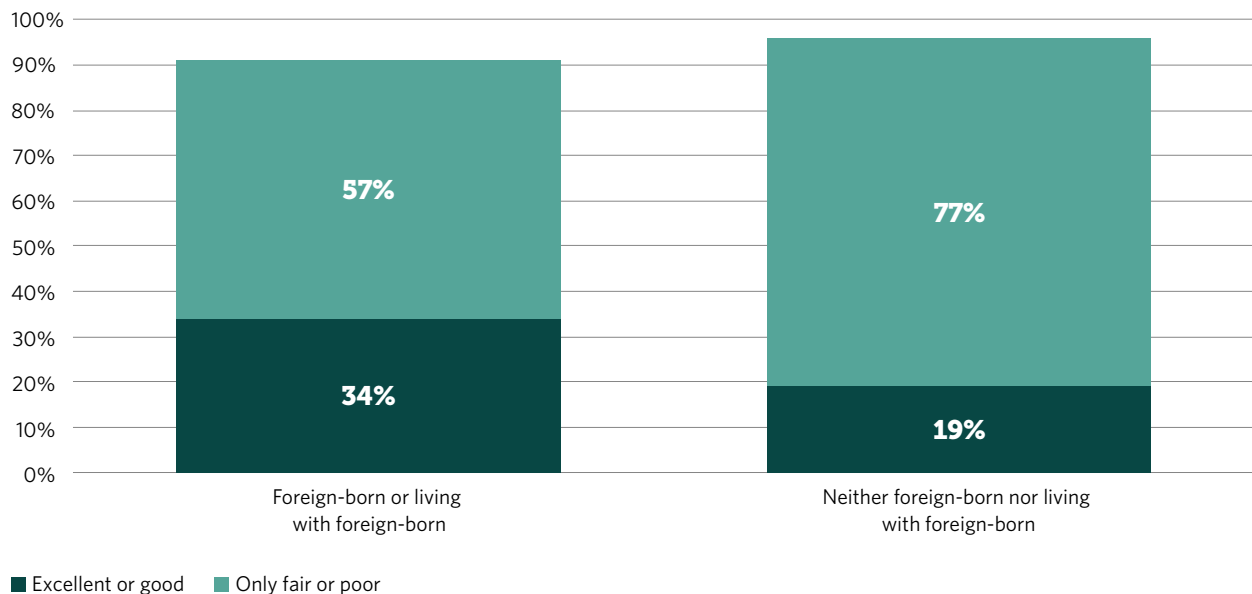
© 2018 The Pew Charitable Trusts

Asked how they would rate Philadelphia, around two-thirds of both immigrant and nonimmigrant household members answered “excellent” or “good.” Likewise, members of immigrant households, by a similar margin, said they were “likely” to still be living in Philadelphia in five or 10 years.

On specific issues, Philadelphia adults in both immigrant and nonimmigrant households were in sync. When asked to rank the most important problems facing the city in mid-2016, both groups listed crime, schools, and jobs on top, in that order, and in similar proportions.

When it came to attitudes about the city’s schools, immigrant-household members had a generally negative view, but far less so than those in nonimmigrant households, with only 57 percent saying the public schools were doing a “poor” or “only fair” job, compared with 77 percent of those in nonimmigrant households. (See Figure 20.)

Figure 20  
Pew Poll: Feelings About Philadelphia Public Schools



Note: Percentages are subject to sampling error; see methodology. Percentages do not include respondents who had no opinion.

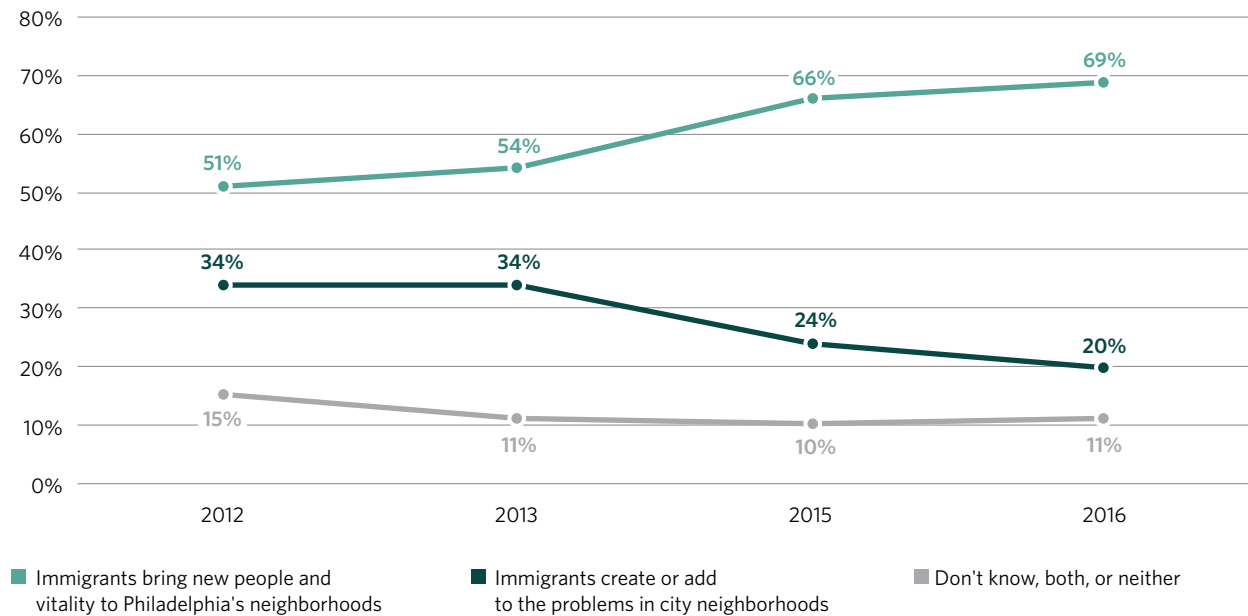
Source: The Pew Charitable Trusts’ Philadelphia Poll, August 2016

© 2018 The Pew Charitable Trusts

On the so-called sanctuary city policy for unauthorized immigrants, the survey asked all respondents whether they agreed or disagreed with Mayor Jim Kenney’s policy of instructing police not to help deport such immigrants unless they are found guilty of a serious crime. People from immigrant households were strongly in agreement, at 74 percent; and 54 percent of nonimmigrant households agreed.

On other immigration-related issues, 69 percent of all respondents—including 78 percent of people from immigrant households and 65 percent from nonimmigrant households—said the influx of foreign-born individuals to Philadelphia had been “a good thing.” By similar margins, both groups endorsed the statement that immigrants “bring new people and vitality to Philadelphia neighborhoods” and rejected a statement that they “create or add to” problems. (See Figure 21.) Philadelphians’ attitudes about immigrants were more positive in 2016 than at any time since 2012, when Pew started polling on the subject.

Figure 21  
**Pew Poll: Philadelphians' Views of Immigrants**  
 All residents



Note: Percentages are subject to sampling error; see methodology. No poll was conducted in 2014.

Source: The Pew Charitable Trusts' Philadelphia Poll, August 2016

© 2018 The Pew Charitable Trusts

Asked how they “feel about undocumented immigrants in Philadelphia,” about 70 percent of people from immigrant households and 63 percent from nonimmigrant households said they felt “very sympathetic” or “somewhat sympathetic” to them.

## Conclusion

Immigrants, who represent about 15 percent of the city’s population, have become a major demographic force in Philadelphia in recent years, helping drive its population growth and altering the economic and social landscape in ways that pose both opportunities and challenges for the city. An estimated 27 percent of all Philadelphians either were born abroad or have at least one foreign-born parent. That group is projected to drive growth in the population and in the labor force for years to come.

Nearly 40 percent of the city’s immigrant community has Asian origins, while another third came from the Americas. Many of the new arrivals have settled in Northeast Philadelphia and the southern parts of South Philadelphia, although other neighborhoods also have experienced immigrant growth.

In recent years, immigrants have accounted for much of the growth in the city’s working population and have expanded its roster of entrepreneurs, but they also have increased the number of poor and less educated.

For city services and schools, the doubling since 2000 of residents with limited English proficiency—a number that stands at 68,000—has increased the demand for translation and English-learning services. Compared with years past, schools are serving thousands more students who have foreign-born parents or are immigrants themselves.

Long considered a low-immigration city and region, Philadelphia now has a higher foreign-born proportion of its population than the nation as a whole for the first time since the 1980s. Scholars believe that immigrants have come because of the availability of service jobs, expanded networks of expatriates, an increase in direct migration, and perhaps local efforts to attract the foreign-born—all combined with federal policies that have allowed them to enter the country. Along with the growth of this population has come greater focus by city officials on policies of concern to immigrants, such as “sanctuary city” status and a proposed city-issued identification card.

Whether those factors remain on the same trajectory or shift in some way could determine whether the influx continues.

## Methodology

This statistical portrait of Philadelphia immigrants uses data tabulated mostly from the U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey (ACS), which was first taken in 2005, and the decennial census long-form survey, which was last used in 2000. It also uses data from the Census Bureau’s Current Population Survey, the U.S. Labor Department’s Office of Foreign Labor Certifications, and the U.S. State Department’s Refugee Processing Center. Additional data come from the nonprofit Institute of International Education’s (IIE’s) Open Doors data set and from Pew’s 2016 poll of Philadelphia residents. This section explains the method of analysis for each source.

**The Census Bureau’s American Community Survey.** The ACS is the largest and most authoritative source of annual data about the U.S. resident population. Each year, for the ACS, the Census Bureau surveys about 1 percent of the population. Most of the figures in this report were taken from the one-year estimates based on the 2016 survey. In cases where a larger sample was needed to view subsets of the population, the report used the ACS 2012-16 five-year estimates, which combine five years of survey results. Figures for 2000 and earlier were taken from the decennial census’ long-form surveys, which sampled 10 to 16 percent of the population in a given year. In most cases, these data were downloaded from Census Bureau’s official website, [factfinder.census.gov](https://factfinder.census.gov).

In cases in which data could not be found in the census tables, this report used the University of Minnesota’s Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMS), found at [usa.ipums.org](https://usa.ipums.org). The IPUMS format allows researchers to cross-tabulate characteristics and pool several years of ACS data, if necessary, to obtain a reliable estimate. For a variety of reasons, the figures in IPUMS sometimes differ from those in the census tables; in cases where there was a significant discrepancy, this report adjusts the IPUMS figures to conform with those in the census tables.

All surveys have sampling errors, which this report computes at a standard 95 percent confidence interval, meaning the actual figure will fall within the given margin of error 95 percent of the time. With immigrants, surveys also have been shown to miss, or undercount, particularly people who are unauthorized. This report does not apply statistical adjustments to compensate for these errors.



Margins of error are computed for the total population and subsets of the population. In cases where there were a small number of large subsets, such as nativity by work status or nativity by sex, the estimates in this report had a margin of error of less than  $\pm 2$  percentage points. In other cases, such as nativity by age by educational attainment, or nativity by industry of employment, the margin of error was generally between  $\pm 2$  and  $\pm 5$  percentage points. When there were a large number of possible subsets—such as nativity by sex by country of origin, or nativity by origin by occupation or neighborhood—the margin of error was greater than  $\pm 5$  percentage points.

**The Census Bureau’s Current Population Survey, Annual Social and Economic Supplement (CPS).** The CPS is a household survey that contains more detailed income and family data than the ACS, including the birthplace of each parent of every household member (parental nativity). Researchers consider this CPS variable the best source for estimating the population of immigrants’ U.S.-born offspring.

CPS single-year samples are too small to produce reliable findings at the city or county level for individual years. To overcome this limitation, we obtained IPUMS CPS data on Philadelphia ([cps.ipums.org](https://cps.ipums.org)) and pooled single-year samples to create a multiyear sample large enough for an estimate.

To produce the 2000 estimate of the number of immigrants’ children under age 18, we pooled CPS data for five years, 1998-2002, straddling the year 2000. We found the number of native- and foreign-born children under 18 and their respective percentages of the total under-18 population. We compared those percentages with the same measurements in the more reliable 2000 census long form and weighted the CPS numbers so that the CPS percentages matched the long form percentages. Then, using the newly weighted CPS numbers, we computed the number of children under 18 with one, both, or neither parent born abroad using the parental nativity percentages found in the CPS. The resulting estimate of children under 18 with at least one foreign-born parent has a margin of error of plus or minus 3 percentage points.

For the estimate of immigrants plus their native children, we performed a similar process as above using CPS data, except we counted residents of all ages, not just those under 18, by parental nativity. We pooled five years of CPS data from 2012 to 2016 and found the number and percentage who were native versus foreign-born. We compared those percentages with the same figures in the more reliable 2012-16 ACS and weighted the CPS numbers so that the CPS percentages matched the ACS percentages. Then, using the newly weighted CPS numbers, we computed the number of residents with one, both, or neither parent born abroad using the parental nativity percentages found in the CPS. The resulting estimate of natives with at least one foreign-born parent (second generation) was added to the estimated number of immigrants (first generation), and that number was divided into the total city population. The resulting percentage has a margin of error of plus or minus 1.9 percentage points.

**U.S. Labor Department Office of Foreign Labor Certification.** This report used historical fiscal year 2015-16 data found at [fldatacenter.com](https://fldatacenter.com), including the department’s reported number of “approvals” of H-1B and work-related green card visas by work site city. For verification, the figures then were compared with data published by the employment website [myvisajobs.com](https://myvisajobs.com), which produces a well-regarded index and analysis of the same federal data.

**Institute of International Education’s Open Doors database.** This repository of information on foreign students and scholars is compiled and maintained by IIE with support from the U.S. State Department’s Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. At Pew’s request, IIE provided its count of visa holders enrolled for the 2015-16 school year at institutions located in Philadelphia and in the comparison cities, based on the schools’ primary

address ZIP codes, as reported to the U.S. Department of Education’s Center for Education Statistics. The data include students who are part time, full time, or recently graduated but still within their visa’s time limit. The data also reflect the number of students enrolled, not whether they lived in the city or region. The ratio of foreign students to all college students was computed using ACS 2015 one-year data Table B14001.

**Industry sector names.** In Figure 12, this report used shortened descriptions of the North American Industry Classification System sectors, the standard used by federal statistical agencies. Here are the full names:

Sector name
Construction
Manufacturing
Wholesale trade
Retail trade
Transportation and warehousing
Information and communications
Finance, insurance, real estate, and rental and leasing
Professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services
Educational, health, and social services
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodations, and food services
Other services (except public administration)
Public administration

**Comparison cities.** This report selected four other nearby Northeastern U.S. cities and five cities located in metropolitan regions that had been labeled by The Brookings Institution in 2008 as “major re-emerging gateways,” including the Philadelphia region. The full Brookings group contained nine metropolitan areas and was based on immigration figures in 2000 along with their longer-term immigration histories. This report omitted the core cities in two of those regions—Tampa, Florida, and Sacramento, California—because census data for them was limited. The Brookings methodology can be found at [brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Gateways-2014-update-1.pdf](http://brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Gateways-2014-update-1.pdf).

**Occupation by national origin.** The data on each person in the IPUMS ACS carries one of 463 possible Standard Occupational Classification codes, a federal government designation. Using the ACS 2012-16 sample from IPUMS, we tabulated the data for Philadelphia residents by occupation, by age (16 and older), and by continent of birth (Asia, the Americas, Africa, and Europe). This resulted in counts of workers in each occupation for each continental birthplace group during the period. Each occupation count was divided back into each birthplace group’s total to generate a percentage for each job, and then each group’s job percentages were ranked from biggest to smallest, with the top six listed in Table 2.

**Pew Philadelphia survey.** This survey, conducted by Abt SRBI under contract with Pew, was based on telephone interviews with a representative sample of 1,601 adults living throughout Philadelphia; 560 respondents were interviewed on a landline telephone and 1,041 were interviewed on a cellphone. Interviews were conducted Aug. 3-19, 2016, in English or Spanish. Samples were drawn from landline and cellphone random digit dialing, as well as from a supplemental sample of Philadelphia residents who have out-of-area cellphone numbers, which were obtained by Survey Sampling International LLC from the Telcordia database according to Abt SRBI specifications.

Respondents in the landline sample were selected by randomly asking for the youngest adult male or female who was home at the time. Interviews in the cell sample were conducted with the person who answered the phone, if that person was 18 or older. Respondents in both the landline and cell samples were asked whether they or anybody living with them was born abroad; 284 respondents answered yes to either question and were combined into a single “members of immigrant households” group. The entire survey sample was weighted to match demographic parameters—including foreign-born status—from the American Community Survey. The weighting procedure also accounted for the fact that respondents with both landlines and cellphones had a greater probability of selection. The margin of sampling error is plus or minus 5.8 percentage points on the immigrant household sample and plus or minus 2.5 percentage points on the full population sample. In addition to sampling error, question wording and practical difficulties can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls.

## Appendix A

### Countries by continent

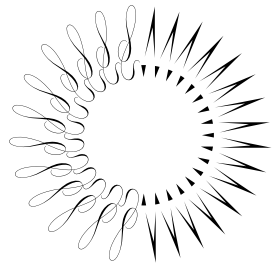
Throughout the report, immigrants' countries of birth are grouped by continent, which are defined by the Census Bureau as follows:

Africa	Americas	Asia	Europe	Oceania
Cameroon	Argentina	Afghanistan	Albania	Australia
Cape Verde	Bahamas	Armenia	Austria	Melanesia (Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands)
Egypt	Barbados	Bangladesh	Belarus	Micronesia (Guam, Palau)
Eritrea	Belize	Cambodia	Belgium	New Zealand
Ethiopia	Bermuda	China	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Polynesia (Fiji, Samoa) and others
Ghana	Bolivia	Hong Kong	Bulgaria	
Kenya	Brazil	India	Croatia	
Liberia	Canada	Indonesia	Czech Republic	
Morocco	Chile	Iran	Denmark	
Nigeria	Colombia	Iraq	England	
Sierra Leone	Costa Rica	Israel	France	
Somalia	Cuba	Japan	Germany	
South Africa	Dominica	Jordan	Greece	
Sudan	Dominican Republic	Kazakhstan	Hungary	
and others	Ecuador	Korea	Italy	
	El Salvador	Kuwait	Latvia	
	Greenland	Laos	Lithuania	
	Grenada	Lebanon	Macedonia	
	Guatemala	Malaysia	Moldova	
	Guyana	Myanmar	Netherlands	
	Haiti	Nepal	Norway	
	Honduras	Pakistan	Poland	
	Jamaica	Philippines	Portugal	
	Mexico	Saudi Arabia	Romania	
	Nicaragua	Singapore	Russia	
	Panama	Sri Lanka	Scotland	
	Peru	Syria	Serbia	
	St. Vincent and the Grenadines	Taiwan	Slovakia	
	Trinidad and Tobago	Thailand	Spain	
	Uruguay	Turkey	Sweden	
	Venezuela	Uzbekistan	Switzerland	
	West Indies and others	Vietnam	Ukraine and others	
		Yemen and others		

## Endnotes

- 1 James Bergquist, "Immigration (1790-1860)," The Encyclopedia of Greater Philadelphia (2013), <http://philadelphiaencyclopedia.org/archive/immigration-1790-1860>. The Census Bureau's archival foreign-born data can be found at <https://www.census.gov/population/www/documentation/twps0081/twps0081.pdf>.
- 2 Theodore M. Crone, "A Philadelphia Report Card," Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia (January 2001), <https://www.philadelphiafed.org/-/media/research-and-data/publications/regional-highlights/repcard01.pdf>. See also James G. Gimpel, *Separate Destinations: Migration, Immigration, and the Politics of Places* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1999).
- 3 Michael Katz et al., "Recent Immigration to Philadelphia: Regional Change in a Re-Emerging Gateway," The Brookings Institution (2008), <https://www.brookings.edu/research/recent-immigration-to-philadelphia-regional-change-in-a-re-emerging-gateway>. See also Audrey Singer, "The Rise of New Immigrant Gateways," The Brookings Institution (2004), <https://www.brookings.edu/research/the-rise-of-new-immigrant-gateways>; and Audrey Singer, "Metropolitan Immigrant Gateways Revisited, 2014," The Brookings Institution (2015), <https://www.brookings.edu/research/metropolitan-immigrant-gateways-revisited-2014>.
- 4 U.S. Census Bureau, "Census Bureau Releases Estimates of Undercount and Overcount in the 2010 Census," press release, May 22, 2012, [https://www.census.gov/newsroom/releases/archives/2010\\_census/cb12-95.html](https://www.census.gov/newsroom/releases/archives/2010_census/cb12-95.html). See also Pew Research Center, "Measuring Illegal Immigration: How Pew Research Center Counts Unauthorized Immigrants in the U.S.," Sept. 20, 2016, <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/09/20/measuring-illegal-immigration-how-pew-research-center-counts-unauthorized-immigrants-in-the-u-s>.
- 5 Audrey Singer et al., eds., "Twenty-First-Century Gateways: Immigrant Incorporation in Suburban America," The Brookings Institution (2008), [https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/twentyfirstcenturygateways\\_chapter.pdf](https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/twentyfirstcenturygateways_chapter.pdf).
- 6 In the Philadelphia suburbs, population growth occurred among both the U.S.-born (up 143,500) and the foreign-born (up 189,500) during the period, suggesting that total suburban population probably would have grown without immigrants, albeit more slowly. The native population included U.S.-born children of immigrants.
- 7 The China figure includes people born in Hong Kong and Taiwan. Even excluding those places, China remained the largest source.
- 8 Asia is the Census Bureau's broad term for areas extending from Japan to Turkey and including the Middle East. Africa includes Egypt and all other countries on the continent. Americas includes areas often called Latin America and the Caribbean as well as Canada, Greenland, Mexico, and Bermuda in North America. Europe covers countries from Iceland to Russia. Oceania is the Census Bureau's term for Australia, New Zealand, Micronesia (Guam, Palau, etc.), Polynesia (Fiji, Samoa, etc.), and Melanesia (Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, etc.).
- 9 Marie Basile McDaniel, "Immigration and Migration (Colonial Era)," The Encyclopedia of Greater Philadelphia (2013), <http://philadelphiaencyclopedia.org/archive/immigration-and-migration-colonial-era>.
- 10 Victor Vazquez-Hernandez, "Pan-Latino Enclaves in Philadelphia and the Formation of the Puerto Rican Community," in *Global Philadelphia: Immigrant Communities Old and New*, eds. Ayumi Takenaka and Mary Johnson Osirim (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2010).
- 11 The total Hispanic population of Philadelphia in 2016 was 226,320, of whom 133,971 (59 percent) were of Puerto Rican origin; in 2000, it was 128,928, of whom 91,527 (71 percent) were of Puerto Rican origin. Historical Latino figures can be found at <https://www.census.gov/population/www/documentation/twps0076/twps0076.pdf>.
- 12 The children of immigrants percentage for 2000 is based on Current Population Survey data pooled for five years, 1998 through 2002. See methodology for more information.
- 13 Mary C. Waters and Marisa Gerstein Pineau, eds., "The Integration of Immigrants Into American Society," The National Academy of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (2015), <http://convening.igeucla.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/NatAcSci-Integration-of-Immigrants-in-US-2015-Report.pdf>. Census data on local-level school enrollment is available only for foreign-born children, not U.S.-born children of immigrants. As a matter of policy, the School District of Philadelphia does not collect or release information on the immigration status of students or their families.
- 14 Joshua Lin et al., "Characteristics of English Language Learners in the School District of Philadelphia," Philadelphia Education Research Consortium (2016), <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED571769.pdf>. See also Kat Chow, "After a Racial Attack, a South Philly School Tries to Heal," *NPR*, Feb. 18, 2015, <https://www.npr.org/sections/codeswitch/2015/02/18/387298763/after-a-racial-attack-a-south-philly-school-tries-to-heal>; and Philadelphia School District, "Supporting Immigrant and Refugee Students and Families: A Toolkit for Administrators, Teachers and Staff" (2017), <https://mailimages.philasd.org/pub/Immigrant-Refugee-Toolkit.pdf>.
- 15 Philadelphia estimate is based on CPS survey data pooled and adjusted for 2012 through 2016. See methodology for more information. National estimate was generated by the Pew Research Center; see Pew Research Center, "Modern Immigration Wave Brings 59 Million to U.S., Driving Population Growth and Change Through 2065" (2015), [http://www.pewhispanic.org/files/2015/09/2015-09-28\\_modern-immigration-wave\\_REPORT.pdf](http://www.pewhispanic.org/files/2015/09/2015-09-28_modern-immigration-wave_REPORT.pdf).

- 16 Pew Research Center, “Second-Generation Americans: A Portrait of the Adult Children of Immigrants” (2013), <http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2013/02/07/second-generation-americans>. See also Francine D. Blau and Christopher Mackie, eds., “The Economic and Fiscal Consequences of Immigration,” The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (2017), <https://www.nap.edu/read/23550/chapter/1>. This major study of immigrants’ impact concluded: “On average, individuals in the first generation are more costly to governments, mainly at the state and local levels, than are the native-born generations; however, immigrants’ children—the second generation—are among the strongest economic and fiscal contributors in the population.”
- 17 See also Larry Eichel and Katie Martin, “Never Been Married? In Philadelphia, You’re Not Alone,” The Pew Charitable Trusts, Jan. 17, 2017, <http://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/analysis/2017/01/17/never-been-married-in-philadelphia-youre-not-alone>.
- 18 Katie Martin, “Homeownership in Philadelphia Appears to Have Steadied,” The Pew Charitable Trusts, Dec. 11, 2015, <http://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/analysis/2015/12/11/homeownership-in-philadelphia-appears-to-have-steadied>.
- 19 Blau and Mackie, eds., “The Economic and Fiscal Consequences of Immigration.” See also Ran Abramitzky and Leah Boustan, “Immigration in American Economic History,” *Journal of Economic Literature* 55, no. 4 (2017): 1–36, <http://www.law.columbia.edu/sites/default/files/microsites/hertog-program/boustan.pdf>. This summary of economic research concludes: “New arrivals created winners and losers in the native population and among existing immigrant workers, reducing the wages of low-skilled natives to some degree, encouraging some native-born to move away from immigrant gateway cities, and either spurring or delaying capital investment.”
- 20 Robert W. Fairlie and Magnus Lofstrom, “Immigration and Entrepreneurship,” Institute for the Study of Labor (2013), <http://ftp.iza.org/dp7669.pdf>. See also Jeanne Batalova, Michael Fix, and James D. Bachmeier, “Untapped Talent: The Costs of Brain Waste Among Highly Skilled Immigrants in the United States,” Migration Policy Institute (2016), <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/untapped-talent-costs-brain-waste-among-highly-skilled-immigrants-united-states>.
- 21 Waters and Gerstein Pineau, eds., “The Integration of Immigrants.”
- 22 An oft-cited census figure for limited English proficiency in Philadelphia, 7 percent, includes the city’s large Puerto Rican community. The figures used in this report cover only foreign-born residents.
- 23 Bergquist, “Immigration.”
- 24 David Dyssegaard Kallick, “Bringing Vitality to Main Street: How Immigrant Small Businesses Help Local Economies Grow,” Fiscal Policy Institute (2015), <http://fiscalspolicy.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/Bringing-Vitality-to-Main-Street.pdf>. Only some aspects of immigrant business ownership survey data are available at the local level, and that information is less detailed than data at the state or national level.
- 25 U.S. Department of Labor’s Office of Foreign Labor Certification data for work site location, as reported by visa sponsors and analyzed by <http://www.myvisajobs.com>. Visas include H-1B for temporary employment of professionals in specialty occupations, and employment-based green cards for permanent residence. For all cities, the number of approvals is estimated to be three times higher than the number of visas actually issued.
- 26 Due to sampling error at the local level, census data were sufficient only to identify sectors where immigrants were paid significantly more or less than natives but not the precise extent.
- 27 U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, “N-400, Application for Naturalization,” <https://www.uscis.gov/n-400>. Fee is as of Feb. 1, 2018.
- 28 Tova Andrea Wang and Youjin B. Kim, “From Citizenship to Voting: Improving Registration for New Americans,” Demos (2011), [http://www.demos.org/sites/default/files/publications/fromcitizenshiptovoting\\_demos\\_2.pdf](http://www.demos.org/sites/default/files/publications/fromcitizenshiptovoting_demos_2.pdf).
- 29 Center for Study of Immigrant Integration, University of Southern California, downloadable data, <https://dornsife.usc.edu/csii/eligible-to-naturalize-map>.
- 30 U.S. Department of Homeland Security, DACA population data as of Sept. 4, 2017, [https://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/USCIS/Resources/Reports%20and%20Studies/Immigration%20Forms%20Data/All%20Form%20Types/DACA/daca\\_population\\_data.pdf](https://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/USCIS/Resources/Reports%20and%20Studies/Immigration%20Forms%20Data/All%20Form%20Types/DACA/daca_population_data.pdf).
- 31 Jeffrey S. Passel and D’Vera Cohn, “Children of Unauthorized Immigrants Represent Rising Share of K-12 Students,” Pew Research Center (2016), <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/11/17/children-of-unauthorized-immigrants-represent-rising-share-of-k-12-students>. State-by-state estimates were found at <http://www.pewhispanic.org/interactives/unauthorized-immigrants/map/k-12-share>.
- 32 Special analysis conducted at Pew’s request by the Institute of International Education. The term “international students” refers only to foreign nationals admitted under a foreign student or foreign scholar visa and excludes other foreign-born students residing in the country.
- 33 U.S. State Department, Refugee Processing Center, “About Us,” accessed March 5, 2018, <http://www.wrapsnet.org/about-us/about>.
- 34 U.S. State Department, Refugee Processing Center, “Interactive Reporting: Admissions and Arrivals” data tool, accessed Jan. 18, 2018, <http://ireports.wrapsnet.org>. The earliest data available from this source are from 2002.
- 35 The Pew Charitable Trusts, Philadelphia Poll, Aug. 3-19, 2016, conducted in English and Spanish. Of 1,601 adults interviewed, 284 were either immigrants or living with an immigrant. The margin of error was plus or minus 5.8 percentage points on responses of immigrants or people living with immigrants and plus or minus 2.5 percentage points for responses of all Philadelphians.



THE  
**PEW**  
CHARITABLE TRUSTS

