



District of Columbia

# STATE DATA CENTER MONTHLY BRIEF

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By  
Minwuyelet Azimeraw

These indicators were derived from data produced by the U.S. Census Bureau and may differ from data produced by other entities.

## An Historic View of DC's Foreign-born Population With a Focus on Africa

### Introduction

This report presents an historic view of the foreign-born population in the District of Columbia with a focus on those born in Africa. The African population is viewed for its demographic and socioeconomic characteristics, country of origin, and geographic distribution. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, "foreign-born" refers to anyone who is not a U.S. citizen at birth. This includes naturalized U.S. citizens, lawful permanent residents (immigrants), temporary migrants (such as foreign students), humanitarian migrants (such as refugees and asylees), and persons illegally present in the United States. "Native" refers to anyone born in the United States, Puerto Rico, a U.S. Island Area (American Samoa, Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, or the U.S. Virgin Islands), or abroad of a U.S. citizen parent or parents.

### Total Population Trends by Nativity

Questions about place of birth or citizenship have been asked since the 1850 Census, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. These questions were included when the American Community Survey (ACS) was implemented nationwide in 2005.

In 1850, there were 4,918 foreign-born residents in the District of Columbia, representing 9.5 percent of the total population. In 1860, the District's foreign-born population increased to 12,484 and its share of the total population rose to 16.6 percent.

The District's foreign-born population continued to grow in each decade between 1860 and 1950 but its share of the total population declined from 16.6 percent in 1860 to 5.3 percent in 1950. Between 1960 and 1970, the foreign-born population declined in number and percent of the total District population.

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### Where was this person born?

In the United States - Print name of state.

Outside the United States - Print name of foreign country, or Puerto Rico, Guam, etc.

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### Is this person a citizen of the United States?

Yes, born in the United States - SKIP to question 10a.

Yes, born in Puerto Rico, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, or Northern Marianas.

Yes, born abroad of U.S. citizen parent or parents.

Yes, U.S. citizen by naturalization - Print year of naturalization.

No, not a U.S. citizen.

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### When did this person come to live in the United States? Print numbers in box.

Year

In 1970 there were 33,562 foreign-born residents representing 4.4 percent of the District's total population. During the 1980 to 2009-2013 period, however, both the numbers and percentages of foreign-born population showed increasing trends. By the 2009-2013 period, there were 85,229 foreign-born residents representing 13.8 percent of the District's total population (Table 1).

Note: The American Community Survey (ACS) 2009-2013 5-year data is the most current data available on the selected indicators used in this report.

Table 1. District of Columbia Population by Nativity: 1850 to 2009-2013								
Year	Total		Native			Foreign-Born		
	Number	Percent Change	Number	% of Total Population	Percent Change	Number	% of Total Population	Percent Change
2009-2013	619,371	8.2	534,142	86.2	7.2	85,229	13.8	15.9
2000	572,059	-5.7	498,498	87.1	-9.0	73,561	12.9	24.9
1990	606,900	-4.9	548,013	90.3	-8.3	58,887	9.7	45.2
1980	638,333	-15.6	597,774	93.6	-17.3	40,559	6.4	20.8
1970	756,510	-1.0	722,948	95.6	-0.3	33,562	4.4	-13.9
1960	763,956	-4.8	724,985	94.9	-4.5	38,971	5.1	-8.8
1950	802,178	21.0	759,438	94.7	20.9	42,740	5.3	22.4
1940	663,091	36.2	628,175	94.7	37.7	34,916	5.3	13.6
1930	486,869	11.3	456,136	93.7	11.7	30,733	6.3	4.7
1920	437,571	32.2	408,206	93.3	33.3	29,365	6.7	17.9
1910	331,069	18.8	306,167	92.5	18.4	24,902	7.5	23.8
1900	278,718	21.0	258,599	92.8	22.2	20,119	7.2	7.2
1890	230,392	29.7	211,622	91.9	31.9	18,770	8.1	9.6
1880	177,624	34.9	160,502	90.4	39.0	17,122	9.6	5.3
1870	131,700	75.4	115,446	87.7	84.4	16,254	12.3	30.2
1860	75,080	45.3	62,596	83.4	33.8	12,484	16.6	153.8
1850	51,687	(X)	46,769	90.5	(X)	4,918	9.5	(X)

X = Not applicable

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1850 to 2000 Censuses and 2009-2013 ACS (5-Year Estimates)

### Foreign-Born Population Trends by Region of Birth

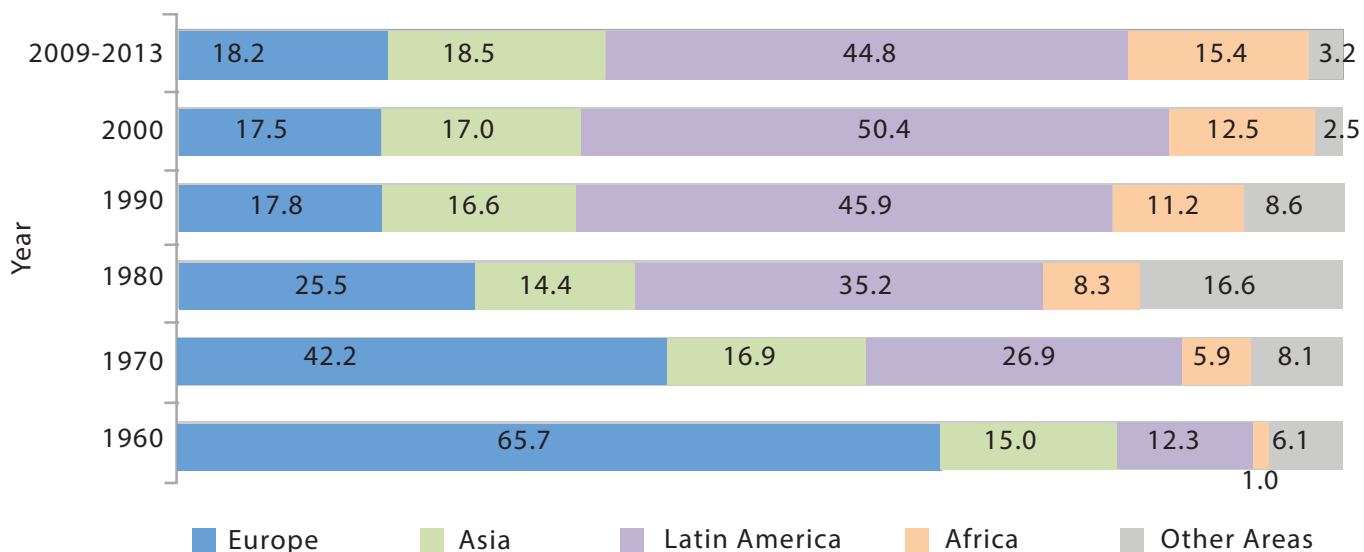
Each region's contribution to the District's foreign-born population has changed during the 1960 to 2009-2013 period. In 1960, of the total 38,971 foreign-born residents, nearly two-thirds or 65.7 percent were from Europe, 15 percent from Asia, 12.3 percent from Latin America, 4.9 percent from North America, and 1.2 percent from Oceania. Foreign-born from Africa represented only one percent of the District's total foreign-born population in 1960 (Table 2).

Table 2: District of Columbia Population by Nativity and by Region of Birth for the Foreign-Born Population: 1960 to 2009 - 2013												
Region of Birth	1960		1970		1980		1990		2000		2009-2013	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Total Foreign-Born	38,971	100.0	33,562	100.0	40,559	100.0	58,887	100.0	73,561	100.0	85,229	100.0
Europe	25,590	65.7	14,171	42.2	10,349	25.5	10,483	17.8	12,909	17.5	15,475	18.2
Asia	5,827	15.0	5,672	16.9	5,828	14.4	9,760	16.6	12,503	17.0	15,750	18.5
Latin America	4,804	12.3	9,037	26.9	14,288	35.2	27,015	45.9	37,079	50.4	38,188	44.8
North America	1,902	4.9	1,087	3.2	1,029	2.5	1,130	1.9	1,271	1.7	1,694	2.0
Oceania	473	1.2	1,627	4.8	5,686	14.0	3,928	6.7	585	0.8	992	1.2
Africa	375	1.0	1,968	5.9	3,379	8.3	6,571	11.2	9,208	12.5	13,130	15.4

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1960 to 2000 Decennial Censuses and 2009-2013 ACS (5-Year Estimates)

However, the number of foreign-born residents from Europe to the District declined significantly over the 50-year period, while the number coming from Latin America and Africa increased. During the 1960 to 2009-2013 period, the proportion of foreign-born District residents from Europe declined from 65.7 percent to 18.2 percent. The foreign-born residents from Latin America increased from 12.3 percent in 1960 to 44.8 percent in the 2009-2013 period, after peaking at 50.4 percent in 2000. The foreign-born residents from Africa increased steadily from one percent in 1960 to 15.4 percent in the 2009-2013 period. The number of foreign-born District residents from North America and Oceania accounted for 3.2 percent in 2009-2013. (Table 2 and Figure 1).

**Figure 1- Percent of Foreign-born Population in the District of Columbia by Region of Birth: 1960-2013**



### Characteristics of the District's Foreign-Born Population from Africa

In 2009-2013, of the 85,229 foreign-born residents in the District, 13,130 or 15.4 percent were foreign-born from Africa, according to the U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey (5-Year Estimates) (Table 3).

- **Age, Sex, and Race** - Of the total 13,130 foreign-born District residents from Africa, 55.3 percent were males and 44.7 percent were females. About 7.6 percent were aged 65 years and over, 85.6 percent were between the ages of 18 and 64, and 6.9 percent were under the age of 18. Their median age was 39.5 years. About 8 percent identified their race as White, 90.6 percent reported Black and 1.4 percent reported other races.
- **Period of Entry and Citizenship Status** - More than half (54 percent) entered the United States in the year 2000 or later, while 46 percent entered before the year 2000. About 45.3 percent were naturalized U.S. citizens.
- **Educational Attainment** - Of the foreign-born residents from Africa aged 25 years and over, 88.9 percent were high school graduates or higher. About 21.5 percent had a bachelor's degree and 17 percent had a graduate or professional degree.
- **Language Spoken at Home** - Among the foreign-born residents from Africa aged 5 years and over, 21.1 percent spoke only English at home, while 78.9 percent spoke a language other than English at home. About 30.5 percent spoke English less than "very well".
- **Employment Status** - Among the foreign-born residents from Africa aged 16 years and over, 77.1 percent were in the labor force, 66.4 percent were employed, while 9.5 percent were unemployed.
- **Household Income and Poverty Status** - The median household income for foreign-born residents from Africa was \$47,481, and 13.6 percent lived below poverty level.
- **Marital Status** - Among the foreign-born residents from Africa aged 15 years and over, 47 percent were married, 36 percent were never married, 12.9 percent were separated and divorced, and 3.8 percent were widowed.
- **Occupation** - Of the total civilian employed foreign-born residents from Africa, 35 percent worked in management, business, science, and arts occupation; 32.3 percent worked in service occupations; 17.5 percent worked in sales and office occupations; 13.1 percent worked in production, transportation, and material moving occupations; and 1.7 percent worked in natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations.
- **Homeownership** - Of the total foreign-born residents from Africa, 70.3 percent lived in renter-occupied housing units, while 29.7 percent lived in owner-occupied housing units.

<b>Table 3. Selected Demographic and Socioeconomic Characteristics of Foreign-Born Residents from Africa in the District: 2009-2013 ACS (5-Year Estimates)</b>		
Subject	Foreign-Born from Africa	
	Estimate	Margin of Error
Foreign-born population	13,130	+/-1,121
<b>CITIZENSHIP AND PERIOD OF ENTRY</b>		
Naturalized citizen	45.3%	+/-4.1
Entered 2010 or later	0.8%	+/-0.6
Entered 2000 to 2009	12.7%	+/-2.9
Entered before 2000	31.8%	+/-3.5
Not a citizen	54.7%	+/-4.1
Entered 2010 or later	6.1%	+/-1.7
Entered 2000 to 2009	34.4%	+/-4.3
Entered before 2000	14.3%	+/-2.4
<b>EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT</b>		
Population 25 years and over	11,240	+/-987
Less than high school graduate	11.1%	+/-2.3
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	25.7%	+/-3.3
Some college or associate's degree	24.6%	+/-3.7
Bachelor's degree	21.5%	+/-3.6
Graduate or professional degree	17.0%	+/-2.7
<b>LANGUAGE SPOKEN AT HOME AND ABILITY TO SPEAK ENGLISH</b>		
Population 5 years and over	12,978	+/-1,117
English only	21.1%	+/-4.0
Language other than English	78.9%	+/-4.0
Speak English less than "very well"	30.5%	+/-3.8
<b>EMPLOYMENT STATUS</b>		
Population 16 years and over	12,367	+/-1,058
In labor force	77.1%	+/-2.9
Civilian labor force	76.9%	+/-2.9
Employed	67.4%	+/-3.3
Unemployed	9.5%	+/-2.1
Percent of civilian labor force	12.4%	+/-2.7
Armed Forces	0.2%	+/-0.3
Not in labor force	22.9%	+/-2.9
Median Household income (dollars)	47,481	+/-8,464
<b>POVERTY STATUS IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS</b>		
Population for whom poverty status is determined	12,833	+/-1,121
Below 100 percent of the poverty level	13.6%	+/-3.1
100 to 199 percent of the poverty level	24.2%	+/-4.4
At or above 200 percent of the poverty level	62.2%	+/-4.6
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2009-2013 ACS (5-Year Estimates)		

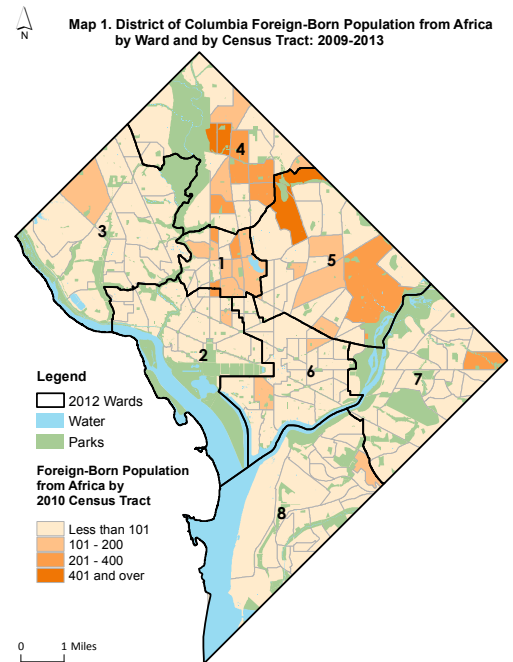
## Countries of Origin for Foreign-Born District Population from Africa

- Ethiopia, Nigeria, and Cameroon are the three largest birth countries for foreign-born residents from Africa in the District of Columbia.
- In 2009-2013, of the total foreign-born residents from Africa in the District, more than one-third or 37.3 percent were from Ethiopia, followed by Nigeria at 14.7 percent, and Cameroon at 11 percent (Table 4).

**Table 4. Top Ten Countries of Origin for the Foreign-Born Population from Africa: 2009-2013 ACS (5-Year Estimates)**

Country of Origin	Estimate	Percent
Total Foreign-Born from Africa	13,130	100.0
Ethiopia	4,901	37.3
Nigeria	1,933	14.7
Cameroon	1,442	11.0
Eritrea	511	3.9
Sierra Leone	490	3.7
Ghana	465	3.5
South Africa	350	2.7
Egypt	315	2.4
Kenya	268	2.0
Morocco	249	1.9
Other countries	2,206	16.8

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2009-2013 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates



## Geographic Distribution of Foreign-Born Population from Africa in the District

Foreign-born District residents from Africa live in all wards and neighborhoods across the District. However, they predominantly reside in Ward 4 (Brightwood, Brightwood Park, 16th Street Heights, and Petworth neighborhoods) and in Ward 5 (Fort Totten, Pleasant Hill, Queens Chapel, and Langdon neighborhoods)—see Map 1 & Table 5.

In 2009-2013, more than half or 53.6 percent of foreign-born residents from Africa lived in Wards 4 and 5—Ward 4 accounting for 31 percent and Ward 5 accounting for 22.6 percent, according to the 2009-2013 American Community Survey (5-Year Estimates).

Ward 1 (Mount Pleasant, Columbia Heights, Pleasant Plains, and Cardozo/Shaw neighborhoods) had the next highest proportion of foreign-born residents from Africa at 15.5 percent, while Ward 8 had the lowest proportion at 4.5 percent (Map 1 and Table 5).

**Table 5. District of Columbia Foreign-Born from Africa by Ward: 2009-2013 ACS (5-Year Estimates)**

Ward	Foreign-Born from Africa	
	Estimate	Percent
District total	13,130	100.0
Ward 1	2,030	15.5
Ward 2	826	6.3
Ward 3	683	5.2
Ward 4	4,073	31.0
Ward 5	2,968	22.6
Ward 6	1,001	7.6
Ward 7	959	7.3
Ward 8	590	4.5

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2009-2013 ACS (5-Year Estimates)

For more information contact:  
 D.C. Office of Planning State Data Center  
 1100 4th Street SW, Suite E650, Washington, DC 20024  
 202.442.7600 ph 202.442.7638 fax  
[www.planning.dc.gov](http://www.planning.dc.gov)