Metropolitan Washington
A New Immigrant Gateway

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Overall, the foreign-born population of the Washington region is characterized by:

- **Fast growth**
- **Global origins**
- **Suburban residence**
Metropolitan Washington’s foreign-born population grew by 1 million immigrants between 1990 and 2010.

Foreign-born population by decade, 1970-2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Share</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1970</td>
<td>132,641</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>255,439</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>488,283</td>
<td>11.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>829,310</td>
<td>17.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>1,223,159</td>
<td>21.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Geographies standardized to 2010 MSA definitions. Source: Census Bureau decennial censuses and 2010 ACS 1-year estimates.
At the turn of the 20th century, Eastern and Midwestern places had large shares of immigrants...

- Boston: 30%
- Chicago: 32%
- Cleveland: 28%
- Detroit: 28%
- New York: 33%
- Philadelphia: 18%
- Washington, DC: 1.2%

Note: Geographies standardized to 2010 MSA definitions.
Source: 1900 Decennial Census accessed via NHGIS.org
...by 2010, the immigrant presence in some places have dwindled, while Washington’s has increased

- Boston: 17%
- Chicago: 18%
- Cleveland: 6%
- Detroit: 9%
- New York: 29%
- Philadelphia: 10%
- Washington, DC: 22%

Source: 2010 ACS 1-year estimates
With the exception of San Francisco, the 20 largest immigrant destinations in 1900 were in the Midwest or Northeast.
By 2010, the immigration map has been redrawn with metros in the South and West rising as major destinations.

Note: Geographies standardized to 2010 MSA definitions.
Source: 1900 Decennial Census accessed via NHGIS.org, 2006-2010 ACS 5-year estimates.
Washington now has the 7th largest concentration of immigrants among all large metropolitan areas.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metro Area</th>
<th>Number of Immigrants</th>
<th>% Foreign-born</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 New York</td>
<td>5,447,131</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Los Angeles</td>
<td>4,407,398</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Miami</td>
<td>2,167,215</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Chicago</td>
<td>1,669,752</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Houston</td>
<td>1,331,684</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 San Francisco</td>
<td>1,303,159</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Washington</td>
<td>1,223,159</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Dallas-Fort Worth</td>
<td>1,123,191</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Riverside</td>
<td>932,571</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Boston</td>
<td>767,845</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: 2010 ACS 1-year estimates
Metropolitan Washington’s foreign-born population grew by 1 million immigrants between 1990 and 2010.
The immigrant population in the Washington region is diverse: no one nationality has a majority.

Country of birth for Washington region foreign born, 2010

- Other: 39%
- El Salvador: 14%
- India: 6%
- Korea: 5%
- Mexico: 4%
- Vietnam: 4%
- Philippines: 4%
- China: 4%
- Guatemala: 3%
- Peru: 3%
- Honduras: 3%
- Bolivia: 3%
- Iran: 2%
- Pakistan: 2%
- Nigeria: 2%

Note: China excludes Hong Kong and Taiwan
Source: 2010 ACS 1-year estimates
Region of Origin, 2010

- Latin America: 40%
- Asia: 35%
- Africa: 14%
- Europe: 9%
- Northern America: 1%
- Oceania: 1%

- El Salvador: 34%
- Other: 16%
- Mexico: 10%
- Guatemala: 8%
- Honduras: 8%
- Bolivia: 7%
- Jamaica: 3%
- Colombia: 3%
- Nicaragua: 2%
- Brazil: 2%
Washington is home to 3.1% of all immigrants in the US. It is home to larger proportions of many immigrants, especially from Latin America.

Source: 2010 ACS 1-year estimates
Since the 1970s, immigrants have shifted to the outer suburbs

Foreign-born distribution by jurisdiction, 1970 and 2010

Note: Fairfax calculations include Fairfax City and Falls Church, Prince William calculations include Manassas and Manassas Park.
Source: US Census Bureau 1970 decennial census, 2010 ACS 1-year estimates
Percent foreign born, selected places, Washington metropolitan area, 1990

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990 Decennial Census, Geolytics normalized Neighborhood Change Database, Neighborhood Info USA.
Percent foreign born, selected places, Washington metropolitan area, 2005-2009

Source: Author's analysis of U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 5-year estimates, 2005-2009, Neighborhood Info USA.