

# The Foreign-Born Population From Africa: 2008–2012

## American Community Survey Briefs

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### INTRODUCTION

According to the 2008–2012 American Community Survey (ACS), 39.8 million foreign-born people resided in the United States, including 1.6 million from Africa, or about 4 percent of the total foreign-born population. In 1970, there were about 80,000 African foreign born, representing less than 1 percent of the total foreign-born population (Figure 1). During the following four decades, the number of foreign born from Africa grew rapidly, roughly doubling each decade.

About three-fourths of the foreign-born population from Africa came to live in the United States after 1990.<sup>1</sup> The timing of this movement was driven in part by historical changes. Outmigration from Africa increased rapidly after World War II, as migrants responded to the pull of educational opportunities and jobs abroad.<sup>2</sup> While the first waves of postwar migrants went to other African countries and former colonial powers of Europe, migration to the United States increased in the 1970s as economies faltered and new restrictions were placed upon immigration in Western Europe.<sup>3</sup> More immigrants from Africa were admitted to the United States after the U.S. Immigration Act of 1965, which replaced the national origin quota system favoring immigration from Europe with a new law prioritizing skilled labor, family

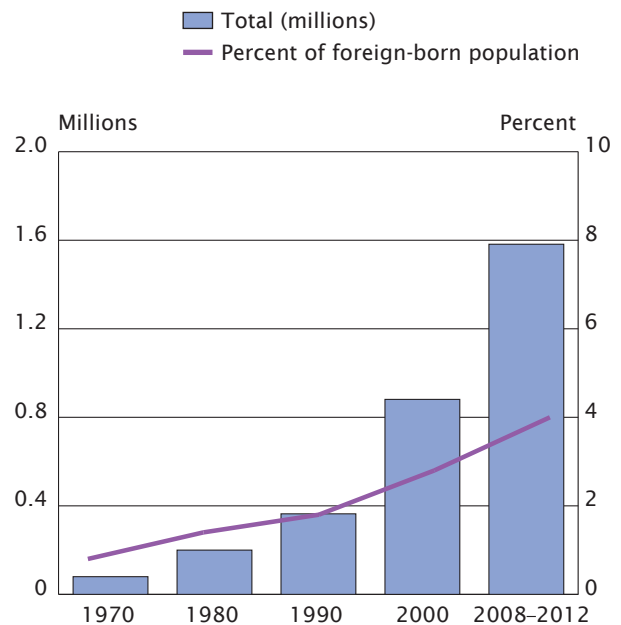
<sup>1</sup> Elizabeth M. Grieco, et al., *The Foreign-Born Population in the United States: 2010*, American Community Survey Reports, U.S. Census Bureau, May 2012, page 10, <[www.census.gov/prod/2012pubs/acs-19.pdf](http://www.census.gov/prod/2012pubs/acs-19.pdf)>, accessed on August 15, 2014.

<sup>2</sup> John A. Arthur, *Invisible Sojourners: African Immigrant Diaspora in the United States*, Praeger Publishers, 2000, pp. 20–26.

<sup>3</sup> April Gordon, "The New Diaspora: African Immigration to the United States," *Journal of Third World Studies*, 1998, 15(1): 81–87, <[www.inmotionaame.org/texts/viewer.cfm?id=13\\_011T&page=79](http://www.inmotionaame.org/texts/viewer.cfm?id=13_011T&page=79)>, accessed on August 15, 2014.

Figure 1.  
**The Foreign-Born Population From Africa: 1970 to 2008–2012**

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



Source: U. S. Census Bureau, Decennial Censuses, 1970 to 2000 and 2008–2012 American Community Survey, 5-year estimates.

unification, and humanitarianism.<sup>4</sup> In addition, nearly a quarter of all immigrants from Africa to the United States in 2010 entered as refugees or received asylum as a result of ethnic conflict or civil war, particularly in countries such as Somalia, Liberia, and Sudan.<sup>5</sup> The rate of African-born immigrants arriving and staying in the United States accelerated further as immigrant networks grew and pathways were established.<sup>6</sup>

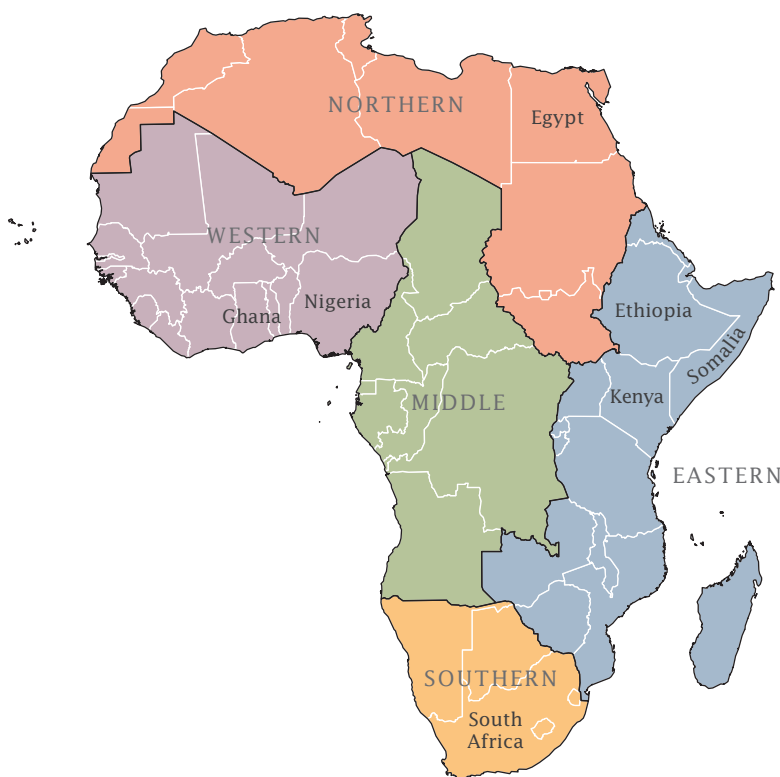
This brief discusses the size, place of birth, geographical distribution, and educational attainment of the foreign born from Africa. Data are presented at the national, state, and metropolitan levels based on the 2008–2012 ACS 5-year file.

### AFRICAN REGIONS AND COUNTRIES OF BIRTH

Of the 1.6 million foreign born from Africa in the United States, 36 percent were from Western Africa, 29 percent were from Eastern Africa, and 17 percent were from Northern Africa, followed by Southern Africa (5 percent), Middle Africa (5 percent), and other Africa (7 percent)

Figure 2.

### Regions of Africa, Showing Countries With Largest African-Born Populations in the United States: 2008–2012



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2008–2012 American Community Survey, 5-year estimates.

(Figure 2, Table 1).<sup>7</sup> Since 2000, the foreign born from Africa increased

<sup>7</sup> African subregional geographic divisions are the same as defined by the United Nations prior to the independence of South Sudan in 2011. Western Africa includes Benin, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Cote d'Ivoire, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, St. Helena, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Togo. Eastern Africa includes the British Indian Ocean Territory, Burundi, Comoros, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mayotte, Mozambique, Reunion, Rwanda, Seychelles, Somalia, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. Northern Africa includes Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Morocco, Sudan (includes South Sudan), Tunisia, and Western Sahara. Southern Africa includes Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia, South Africa, and Swaziland. Middle Africa includes Angola, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Republic of the Congo (Congo-Brazzaville), Democratic Republic of the Congo (Congo-Kinshasa), Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, and Sao Tome and Principe. The "Other Africa" category in Table 1 mostly includes persons who reported "Africa" as their country of birth.

by over 700,000 persons, up from a total of 881,300. Over 490,000, or about 70 percent of that growth, has been from countries in Western and Eastern Africa.

The largest African-born populations were from Nigeria and Ghana in Western Africa; Ethiopia, Kenya, and Somalia in Eastern Africa; Egypt in Northern Africa; and South Africa in Southern Africa. Of these seven, the four largest were Nigeria (221,000 or 14 percent of the African-born population), Ethiopia (164,000 or 10 percent), Egypt (143,000 or 9 percent), and Ghana (121,000 or 8 percent), together constituting 41 percent of the African-born total.

<sup>4</sup> Congressional Budget Office, *Immigration Policy in the United States*, Washington, DC, 2006, <[www.cbo.gov/ftpdocs/70xx/doc7051/02-28-Immigration.pdf](http://www.cbo.gov/ftpdocs/70xx/doc7051/02-28-Immigration.pdf)>, accessed on August 15, 2014.

<sup>5</sup> Randy Capps, Kristen McCabe, and Michael Fix, *Diverse Streams: African Migration to the United States*, Migration Policy Institute, 2012, pp. 8–9, <[www.migrationpolicy.org/sites/default/files/publications/CBI-AfricanMigration.pdf](http://www.migrationpolicy.org/sites/default/files/publications/CBI-AfricanMigration.pdf)>, accessed on August 15, 2014.

<sup>6</sup> John A. Arthur, "Transnational African Immigrant Lives and Identities," *African Diaspora Identities*, Lexington Books, 2010, pp. 79–87.

Table 1.

### Percentage Distribution of the Foreign-Born Population From Africa by African Region and Country of Birth: 2008–2012

(Numbers in thousands. Country-of-birth groups with a population of 5,000 or more are shown. Data based on sample. For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, and definitions, see [www.census.gov/acs/www/](http://www.census.gov/acs/www/))

Region and country of birth	Number		Percent	
	Estimate	Margin of error ( $\pm$ ) <sup>1</sup>	Estimate	Margin of error ( $\pm$ ) <sup>1</sup>
<b>Africa</b> .....	<b>1,582</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>X</b>
Eastern Africa .....	458	8	28.9	0.4
Burundi .....	6	1	0.4	0.1
Eritrea .....	27	2	1.7	0.1
Ethiopia .....	164	5	10.4	0.3
Kenya .....	95	4	6.0	0.2
Rwanda .....	7	1	0.4	0.1
Somalia .....	76	3	4.8	0.2
Tanzania .....	20	1	1.3	0.1
Uganda .....	20	2	1.3	0.1
Zambia .....	12	1	0.8	0.1
Zimbabwe .....	19	2	1.2	0.1
Other Eastern Africa .....	12	1	0.8	0.1
Middle Africa .....	76	3	4.8	0.2
Angola .....	6	1	0.4	0.1
Cameroon .....	36	2	2.3	0.1
Republic of the Congo (Congo-Brazzaville) .....	10	1	0.6	0.1
Democratic Republic of the Congo (Congo-Kinshasa) .....	15	2	0.9	0.1
Other Middle Africa .....	9	1	0.6	0.1
Northern Africa .....	276	6	17.4	0.3
Algeria .....	16	1	1.0	0.1
Egypt .....	143	4	9.0	0.3
Libya .....	9	1	0.6	0.1
Morocco .....	59	2	3.7	0.1
Sudan <sup>2</sup> .....	41	2	2.6	0.1
Tunisia .....	7	1	0.4	Z
Other Northern Africa .....	Z	Z	Z	Z
Southern Africa .....	86	3	5.5	0.2
South Africa .....	83	3	5.3	0.2
Other Southern Africa .....	3	1	0.2	Z
Western Africa .....	574	8	36.3	0.4
Cabo Verde (Cape Verde) .....	35	2	2.2	0.1
Gambia, The .....	11	1	0.7	0.1
Ghana .....	121	4	7.6	0.2
Guinea .....	11	1	0.7	0.1
Cote d'Ivoire (Ivory Coast) .....	15	1	1.0	0.1
Liberia .....	71	3	4.5	0.2
Mali .....	6	1	0.4	0.1
Nigeria .....	221	5	14.0	0.3
Senegal .....	18	1	1.1	0.1
Sierra Leone .....	35	2	2.2	0.1
Togo .....	16	1	1.0	0.1
Other Western Africa .....	15	1	1.0	0.1
Other Africa <sup>3</sup> .....	113	4	7.1	0.3

X Not applicable.

Z Rounds to zero.

<sup>1</sup> Data are based on a sample and are subject to sampling variability. A margin of error is a measure of an estimate's variability. The larger the margin of error is in relation to the size of the estimate, the less reliable the estimate. When added to and subtracted from the estimate, the margin of error forms the 90 percent confidence interval.

<sup>2</sup> Sudan includes South Sudan, as South Sudan was not independent for most of the data collection period in 2008 to 2012.

<sup>3</sup> The "Other Africa" category is equivalent to Other Africa—not specified, and mostly includes persons who reported "Africa" as their country of birth.

Source: U. S. Census Bureau, 2008–2012 American Community Survey, 5-year estimates.

Table 2.

## Percentage Distribution of the Foreign-Born Population From Africa by Region of Birth and Selected States: 2008–2012

(Numbers in thousands. Ten states with the largest African-born populations are shown. Data based on sample. For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, and definitions, see [www.census.gov/acs/www/](http://www.census.gov/acs/www/))

State	Africa		Eastern Africa		Middle Africa		Northern Africa		Southern Africa		Western Africa		Other Africa <sup>1</sup>	
	Number	Margin of error (±) <sup>2</sup>	Percent	Margin of error (±) <sup>2</sup>	Percent	Margin of error (±) <sup>2</sup>	Percent	Margin of error (±) <sup>2</sup>	Percent	Margin of error (±) <sup>2</sup>	Percent	Margin of error (±) <sup>2</sup>	Percent	Margin of error (±) <sup>2</sup>
<b>United States...</b>	<b>1,582</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>28.9</b>	<b>0.4</b>	<b>4.8</b>	<b>0.2</b>	<b>17.4</b>	<b>0.3</b>	<b>5.5</b>	<b>0.2</b>	<b>36.3</b>	<b>0.4</b>	<b>7.1</b>	<b>0.3</b>
New York .....	164	4	10.9	0.9	3.0	0.5	21.6	1.0	3.7	0.4	52.3	1.5	8.4	0.7
California .....	155	4	31.8	1.3	2.9	0.4	29.2	1.2	10.3	0.6	19.9	1.1	5.9	0.7
Texas .....	134	5	29.1	1.6	7.0	0.9	10.9	1.1	5.0	0.6	39.2	1.7	8.8	0.9
Maryland .....	120	3	25.7	1.6	12.5	1.0	4.9	0.7	1.9	0.4	48.7	1.7	6.3	0.9
New Jersey .....	86	3	10.1	0.9	3.4	0.7	32.9	1.7	3.7	0.6	43.9	1.7	6.1	1.0
Virginia .....	81	3	35.2	2.4	4.0	0.9	21.0	1.8	2.7	0.5	31.8	2.2	5.4	1.0
Massachusetts .....	80	3	21.7	1.5	4.0	0.7	14.6	1.4	3.4	0.5	52.5	1.9	3.8	0.8
Georgia .....	75	3	28.7	2.1	4.4	1.1	5.5	1.0	5.9	0.8	47.5	2.2	8.0	1.3
Minnesota .....	73	2	60.8	2.0	2.3	0.7	7.0	1.0	1.3	0.4	25.0	1.9	3.7	0.8
Florida .....	60	3	19.1	1.8	3.0	0.7	33.1	1.8	16.4	1.6	22.4	2.0	6.0	1.0
All other states .....	554	8	34.0	0.7	4.7	0.3	15.9	0.5	5.8	0.3	31.4	0.6	8.2	0.5

<sup>1</sup> The "Other Africa" category is equivalent to Other Africa—not specified, and mostly includes persons who reported "Africa" as their country of birth.

<sup>2</sup> Data are based on a sample and are subject to sampling variability. A margin of error is a measure of an estimate's variability. The larger the margin of error is in relation to the size of the estimate, the less reliable the estimate. When added to and subtracted from the estimate, the margin of error forms the 90 percent confidence interval.

Source: U. S. Census Bureau, 2008–2012 American Community Survey, 5-year estimates.

### GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION OF THE FOREIGN-BORN POPULATION FROM AFRICA

Four states had more than 100,000 foreign born from Africa: New York (164,000), California (155,000), Texas (134,000), and Maryland (120,000) (Table 2). When combined, these four states represented over one-third (36 percent) of the foreign born from Africa.

Among states with at least 2,500 foreign born from Africa, Rhode Island had the highest percentage of the African born from Western Africa (82 percent), while over half of the African born in Massachusetts and New York (each 52 percent) were from this region. Over half of the foreign born from Africa in three states—Minnesota, Nevada, and Washington—were from Eastern Africa. Minnesota's

Eastern African born represented 61 percent of its African-born population, over double the national percentage and included a Somali-born population of 21,000. Florida and New Jersey (each 33 percent) and Iowa (30 percent) were among the states with the highest percentage of their African-born populations from Northern Africa. California's large Egyptian-born population (31,000) contributed to its Northern African representation (29 percent), notably higher than the national percentage (17 percent).<sup>8</sup>

The states with the highest percentage foreign born from Africa in their foreign-born populations

<sup>8</sup> The Northern African percentage of California's African-born population (29 percent) was not statistically different from the Northern African percentage of Iowa's African-born population (30 percent).

included North Dakota and Minnesota (both 19 percent), South Dakota (17 percent), Maryland and the District of Columbia (both 15 percent) (Figure 3).<sup>9</sup> Arkansas, California, Florida, Hawaii, and New Mexico each had less than 2 percent foreign born from Africa in their foreign-born populations.

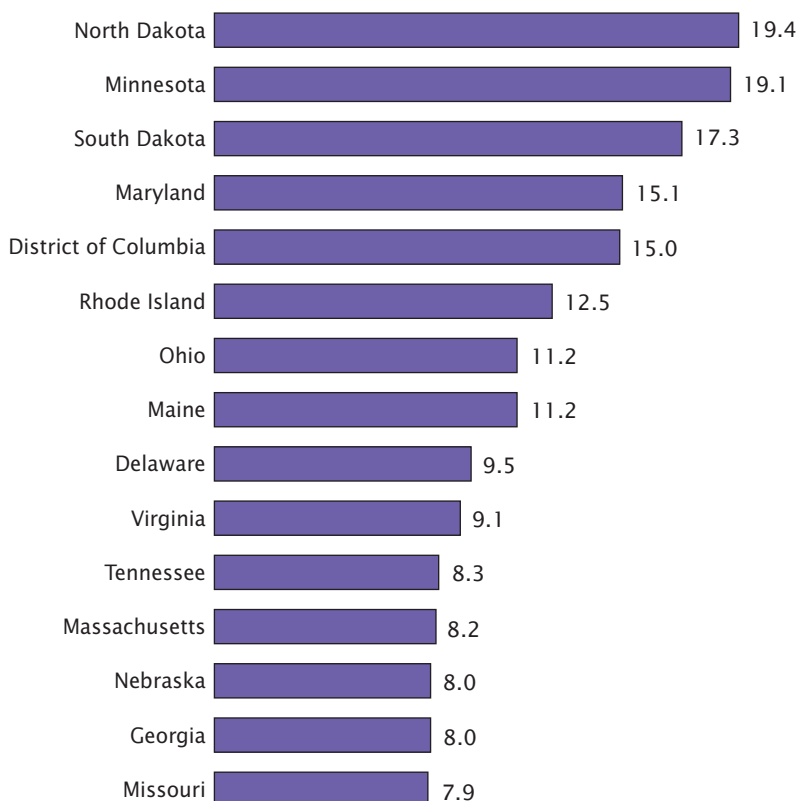
Of the ten states with the largest African-born populations, five had percentages of African born in their foreign-born populations that were at least twice the national percentage: Minnesota (19 percent), Maryland (15 percent), Virginia (9 percent), and Georgia and Massachusetts (both 8 percent).

<sup>9</sup> The African-born percentage of South Dakota's foreign-born population (17 percent) was not statistically different from the African-born percentages of North Dakota's and Minnesota's foreign-born populations (both 19 percent).

Figure 3.

### Foreign-Born Population From Africa as a Percentage of State Foreign-Born Population for Selected States: 2008–2012

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



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2008–2012 American Community Survey, 5-year estimates.

### DISTRIBUTION BY METROPOLITAN STATISTICAL AREA

Metropolitan areas with the largest African-born population included New York, NY (212,000); Washington, DC (161,000); Atlanta, GA (68,000); Los Angeles, CA (68,000); and Minneapolis-St. Paul,

MN (64,000) (Table 3).<sup>10</sup> In addition to having a high number of African born, the percentage of the foreign-born population from Africa

<sup>10</sup> Metropolitan statistical areas are referred to here by the names of their largest principal cities. Complete metropolitan area names for the 15 metropolitan areas with the largest African-born populations can be found in Table 3. Otherwise, see [www.census.gov/population/metro/files/lists/2009/List2.txt](http://www.census.gov/population/metro/files/lists/2009/List2.txt), accessed on August 15, 2014.

in the Washington, DC, metro area (13 percent) was more than three times the national percentage (4 percent), and Minneapolis-St. Paul, MN (20 percent), was five times the national percentage.

In several metropolitan areas with relatively small African-born populations, the African born nevertheless represented a high proportion of the total foreign born. These included Columbus, OH (23 percent); Baltimore, MD (13 percent); and Providence, RI (11 percent), with between 20,000 and 35,000 African foreign born.<sup>11</sup> Most metropolitan areas with a high percentage of African born in their foreign-born populations were in the Midwest and Northeast regions in states such as Minnesota, Ohio, and Maine (Figure 4). It is notable that in many metropolitan areas in the western half of the country, the concentrations of African born were well below the national average. These included Los Angeles (1.5 percent), San Francisco (1.8 percent), and San Diego (2.2 percent).<sup>12</sup>

<sup>11</sup> The African-born percentage of the Baltimore, MD, metropolitan statistical area's foreign-born population (13 percent) was not statistically different from the African-born percentage of the Providence, RI, metropolitan statistical area's foreign-born population (11 percent).

<sup>12</sup> For a more detailed list of the African born by country of birth in metropolitan statistical areas with the largest African born populations, see Supplemental Table 1. Alternatively, see Supplemental Table 2 for a list of metropolitan statistical areas in which the largest African country-of-birth populations reside. Supplemental Table 3 gives the number of foreign born, number of African born, and the percentage of the foreign-born population that is African born, for selected metropolitan statistical areas. For all three supplemental tables, see [www.census.gov/population/foreign/data/acs.html](http://www.census.gov/population/foreign/data/acs.html).

Table 3.

### Fifteen Metropolitan Statistical Areas With the Largest Foreign-Born Populations From Africa: 2008–2012

(Numbers in thousands. Data based on sample. For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, and definitions, see [www.census.gov/acs/www/](http://www.census.gov/acs/www/))

Area <sup>1</sup>	Foreign-born population		African-born population		Percent of foreign-born population	
	Number	Margin of error (±) <sup>2</sup>	Number	Margin of error (±) <sup>2</sup>	Percent	Margin of error (±) <sup>2</sup>
<b>United States</b> .....	<b>39,784</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>1,582</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>4.0</b>	<b>Z</b>
New York-Northern New Jersey-Long Island, NY-NJ-PA.....	5,413	18	212	5	3.9	0.1
Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV.....	1,205	7	161	3	13.3	0.2
Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Marietta, GA.....	714	6	68	3	9.5	0.4
Los Angeles-Long Beach-Santa Ana, CA.....	4,396	16	67	3	1.5	0.1
Minneapolis-St. Paul-Bloomington, MN-WI.....	314	4	64	2	20.3	0.6
Dallas-Ft. Worth-Arlington, TX.....	1,114	8	61	3	5.5	0.3
Boston-Cambridge-Quincy, MA-NH.....	756	7	60	3	7.9	0.3
Houston-Sugar Land-Baytown, TX.....	1,319	9	50	3	3.8	0.2
Philadelphia-Camden-Wilmington, PA-NJ-DE-MD.....	571	6	48	3	8.3	0.4
Chicago-Joliet-Naperville, IL-IN-WI.....	1,666	11	43	3	2.6	0.2
Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue, WA.....	574	6	39	2	6.7	0.4
Baltimore-Towson, MD.....	248	4	31	2	12.5	0.8
Columbus, OH.....	127	3	29	2	22.9	1.3
San Francisco-Oakland-Fremont, CA.....	1,296	8	23	1	1.8	0.1
Providence-New Bedford-Fall River, RI-MA.....	201	3	22	1	11.1	0.6
Remainder of the United States.....	19,870	61	604	9	3.0	Z

Z Rounds to zero.

<sup>1</sup> United States refers to the total population living in metropolitan and nonmetropolitan areas. Metropolitan statistical areas are defined by the Office of Management and Budget as of December 2009. See <[www.census.gov/population/metro/files/lists/2009/List1.txt](http://www.census.gov/population/metro/files/lists/2009/List1.txt)>.

<sup>2</sup> Data are based on a sample and are subject to sampling variability. A margin of error is a measure of an estimate's variability. The larger the margin of error is in relation to the size of the estimate, the less reliable the estimate. When added to and subtracted from the estimate, the margin of error forms the 90 percent confidence interval.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2008–2012 American Community Survey, 5-year estimates.

With the exception of Nigeria, there was considerable variation in the top countries of birth in metropolitan areas with the largest African-born populations (Figure 5). For example, both Dallas-Ft. Worth and Houston showed large numbers of Nigerians and Ethiopians. Chicago, Columbus, and New York had significant Ghanaian populations, while foreign born from Cabo Verde

figured prominently in Boston and Providence (half of the African born in Providence). The largest African-origin countries for Washington, DC, were Ethiopia and Nigeria. The largest African-born populations in Minneapolis-St. Paul were from Somalia and Ethiopia. In Los Angeles and San Francisco, leading African countries of birth included Egypt, Nigeria, and Ethiopia. The

largest African-origin countries in the New York metropolitan area were Egypt and Ghana, each composing just under 20 percent of the total African born.<sup>13</sup>

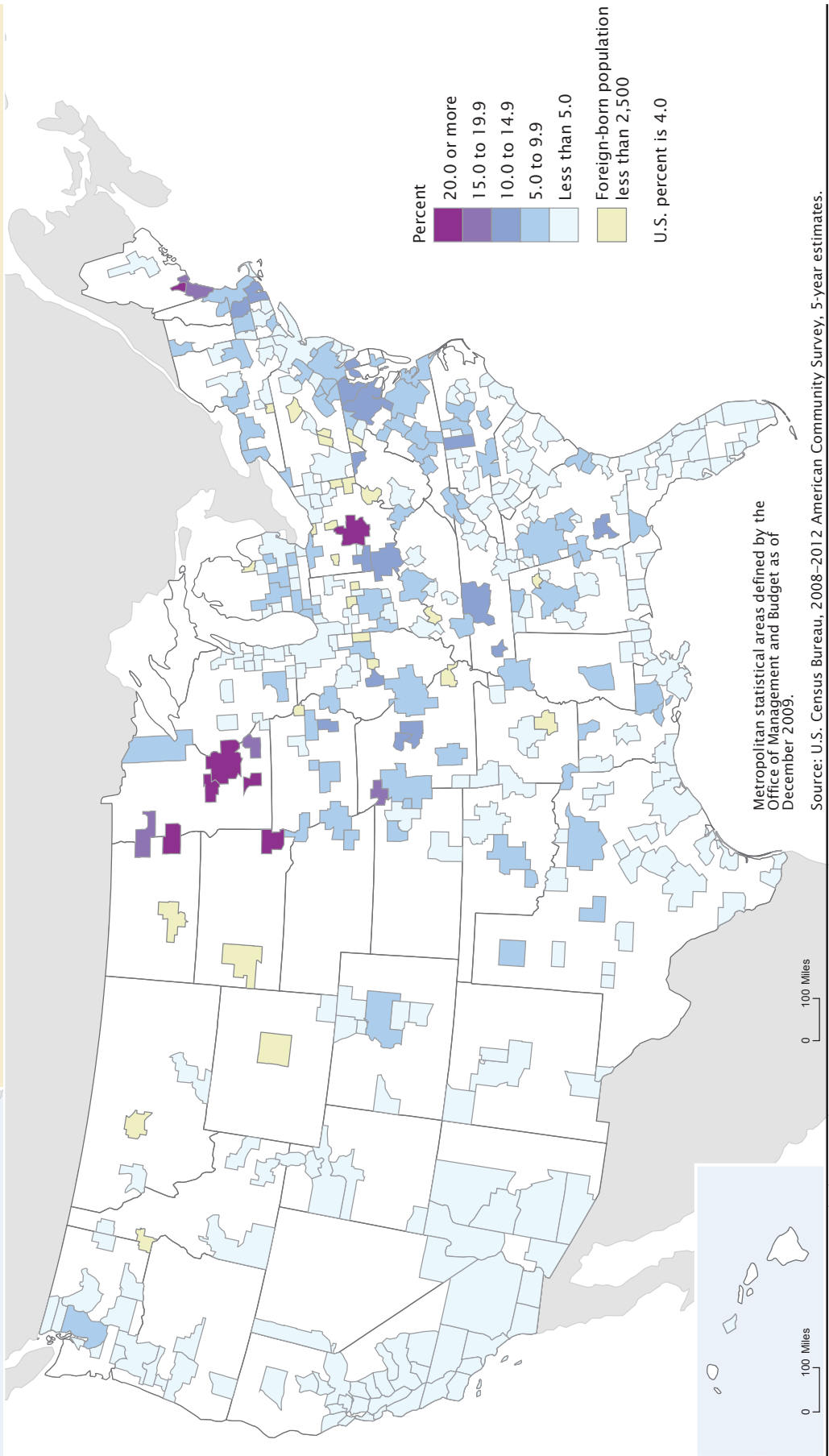
<sup>13</sup> In the New York metropolitan statistical area, the percentage of the African-born population born in Ghana (17.0) was not statistically different from the percentage of the African-born population born in Nigeria (16.4).



Figure 4.

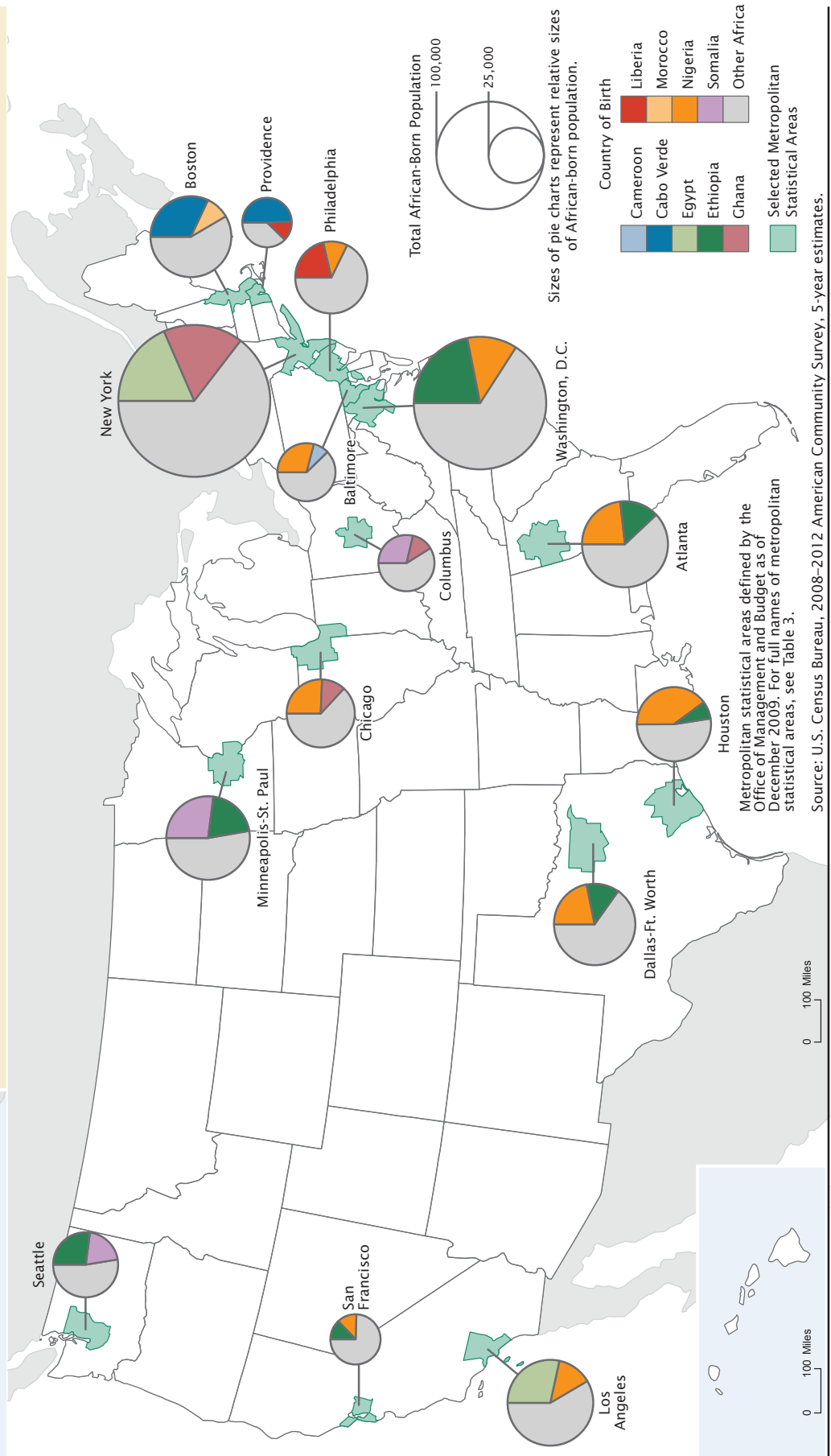
### Foreign-Born Population From Africa as a Percentage of Total Foreign-Born Population by Metropolitan Statistical Area: 2008–2012

(Data based on sample. For more information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, and definitions, see [www.census.gov/acs/www](http://www.census.gov/acs/www))



**Figure 5.**  
**Fifteen Metropolitan Statistical Areas With the Largest African-Born Populations and Selected Countries of Birth: 2008–2012**

(Data based on sample. For more information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, and definitions, see [www.census.gov/acs/www](http://www.census.gov/acs/www))





## EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

Compared with the overall foreign-born population, the foreign born from Africa had higher levels of educational attainment (Figure 6). High levels of educational attainment among the African born are in part due to the large number of educated Africans who have chosen to emigrate and to many who come to the United States to pursue academic studies.<sup>14,15</sup> Forty-one percent of the African-born population

<sup>14</sup> Amandu Jacky Kaba, "Africa's Migration Brain Drain: Factors Contributing to the Mass Emigration of Africa's Elite to the West," in Isidore Okpewho and Nzegwu Nkiru, Eds., *The New African Diaspora*, Indiana University Press, 2009, pp. 109–118.

<sup>15</sup> John A. Arthur, "Transnational African Immigrant Lives and Identities," *African Diaspora Identities*, Lexington Books, 2010, pp. 81–82.

had a bachelor's degree or higher in 2008–2012, compared with 28 percent of the overall foreign born. Egypt (64 percent) and Nigeria (61 percent) were among the African countries of birth with the highest proportion of bachelor's and higher degrees.

Nearly one-third of the overall foreign-born population (32 percent) had less than a high school education. This contrasts with only 12 percent for the African-born population, as represented by such countries as South Africa (3 percent), Nigeria (4 percent), and Egypt and Kenya (each 5 percent).<sup>16</sup>

<sup>16</sup> The percentage of the Nigerian born with less than a high school education (4 percent) was not statistically different from the percentage of the Egyptian born and Kenyan born with less than a high school education (each 5 percent).

The difference in educational attainment among the populations from different African countries in part reflects how they immigrated to the United States. A relatively high proportion of immigrants from Africa entered the United States on diversity visas (24 percent as compared with 5 percent of the overall foreign born), which require a high school diploma or equivalent work experience.<sup>17</sup> The foreign born from Somalia, who mostly entered the United States as refugees or asylees (82 percent in 2010), not as diversity migrants (1 percent in 2010), were an exception to this overall pattern.<sup>18</sup> Forty percent of the Somali born had less than a high school education.

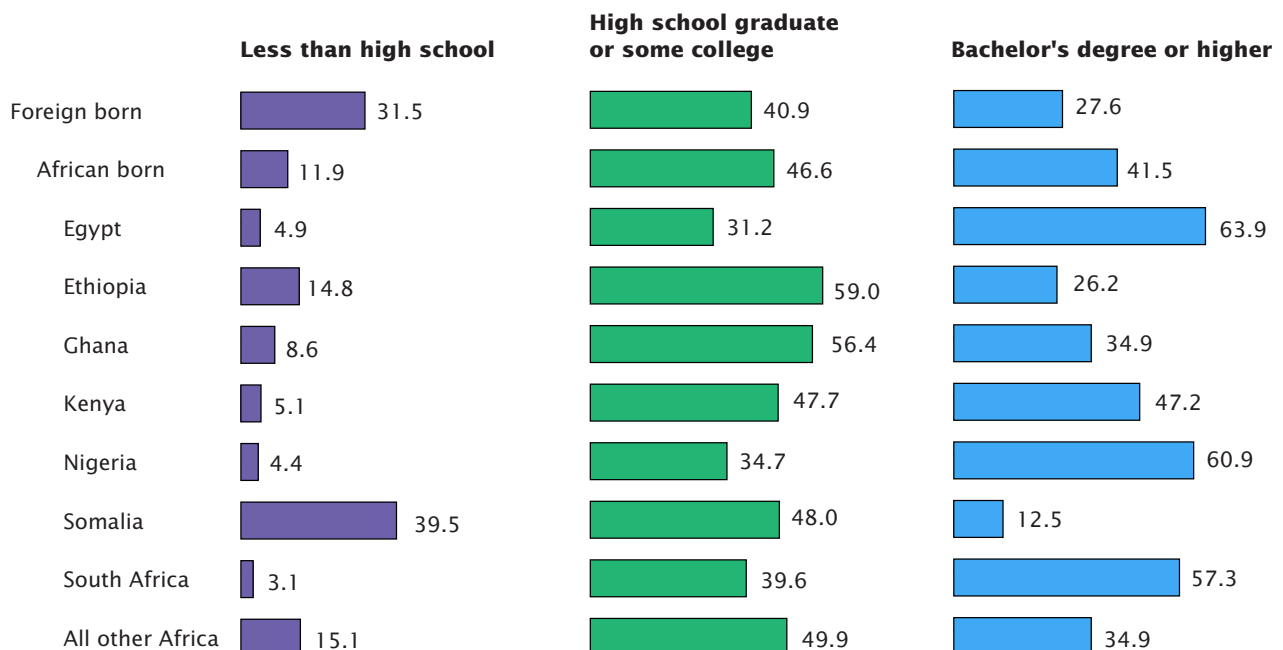
<sup>17</sup> Capps, op. cit., pp. 8–12.

<sup>18</sup> Capps, op. cit., p. 12.

Figure 6.

### Educational Attainment of the Foreign-Born Population From Africa by Selected Country of Birth: 2008–2012

(Percentage distribution of the population 25 and older. Percents may not add to 100 due to rounding. Data based on sample. For information on confidentiality protection, sampling error, nonsampling error, and definitions, see [www.census.gov/acs/www](http://www.census.gov/acs/www))



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2008–2012 American Community Survey, 5-year estimates.

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## SUMMARY

The foreign-born population from Africa is small relative to other foreign-born groups, but has experienced rapid growth in the last 40 years. Among the African-born population, the majority were born in Western Africa (36 percent), Eastern Africa (29 percent), or Northern Africa (17 percent). While traditional immigrant destinations such as New York and California have attracted the largest number of African immigrants, they account for a relatively small percentage of the total foreign born in those states. Higher concentrations of the African born in a state's total foreign-born population are instead found in North Dakota, Minnesota, South Dakota, Maryland, and the District of Columbia. Compared with the overall foreign-born population, a higher proportion of African born have completed a bachelor's degree or higher level of education.

## WHAT IS THE AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY?

The American Community Survey (ACS) is a nationwide survey

designed to provide communities with reliable and timely demographic, social, economic, and housing data for the nation, states, congressional districts, counties, places, and other localities every year. It has an annual sample size of about 3.5 million addresses across the United States and Puerto Rico and includes both housing units and group quarters (e.g., nursing facilities and prisons). The 5-year file of the ACS is designed to provide reliable statistics for small populations and small geographical areas of the United States. For information on the ACS sample design and other topics, visit [www.census.gov/acs/www/](http://www.census.gov/acs/www/).

## SOURCE AND ACCURACY

The data presented in this report are based on the ACS sample interviewed from January 2008 through December 2012. The estimates based on this sample describe the average values of person, household, and housing unit characteristics over this period of collection. Sampling error is the uncertainty between an estimate based on a sample and the corresponding value that would be

obtained if the estimate were based on the entire population (as from a census). Measures of sampling error are provided in the form of margins of error for key estimates included in this report. All comparative statements in this report have undergone statistical testing, and comparisons are significant at the 90 percent level unless otherwise noted. In addition to sampling error, nonsampling error may be introduced during any of the operations used to collect and process survey data such as editing, reviewing, or keying data from questionnaires. For more information on sampling and estimation methods, confidentiality protection, and sampling and nonsampling errors, please see the ACS Multiyear Accuracy of the Data document located at [www.census.gov/acs/www/Downloads/data\\_documentation/Accuracy/MultiyearACSAccuracyofData2012.pdf](http://www.census.gov/acs/www/Downloads/data_documentation/Accuracy/MultiyearACSAccuracyofData2012.pdf).