STATE OF METROPOLITAN AMERICA

The Geography of Immigrant Skills:
Educational Profiles of Metropolitan Areas

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"The new geography of immigration raises many questions about the stock and flow of high- and low-skilled immigrants and how local and state governments can respond."

Findings

An analysis of educational attainment among foreign-born adults in the nation's 100 largest metropolitan areas reveals that:

■ **The share of working-age immigrants in the United States who have a bachelor's degree has risen considerably since 1980, and now exceeds the share without a high school diploma.** In 1980, just 19 percent of immigrants aged 25 to 64 held a bachelor's degree, and nearly 40 percent had not completed high school. By 2010, 30 percent of working-age immigrants had at least a college degree and 28 percent lacked a high school diploma.

■ **Forty-four (44) of the nation's 100 largest metropolitan areas are *high-skill immigrant destinations*, in which college-educated immigrants outnumber immigrants without high school diplomas by at least 25 percent.** These destinations include large coastal metro areas like San Francisco and Washington, D.C. The 30 low-skill destinations, in which the relative sizes of these immigrant skill groups are reversed, include many in the border states of the West and Southwest, as well as in the Great Plains.

■ **Immigrants' skill levels vary by metropolitan area due to historical settlement patterns and economic structures.** In former immigration destinations, or "gateways," with low levels of contemporary immigration such as Detroit, and re-emerging gateways such as Philadelphia, immigrants have high levels of educational attainment. In established post-World War II immigration gateways such as Houston, and minor-continuous gateways along the U.S.-Mexico border and in interior California, low-skilled immigrants predominate.

■ **Recent immigrants to metro areas with the fastest-growing immigrant populations have markedly lower educational attainment than immigrants settling elsewhere.** Low-skilled immigrants are much more likely to hail from Mexico, less likely to speak English proficiently, more likely to be male, and less likely to be naturalized U.S. citizens than high-skilled immigrants.

■ **Compared with their U.S.-born counterparts, low-skilled immigrants have higher rates of employment and lower rates of household poverty, but also have lower individual earnings, in all types of metro areas.** Almost half of immigrants with a bachelor's degree, across all destinations, appear to be over-qualified for their jobs.

The Great Recession at the tail of the last decade, combined with rapid demographic changes across metropolitan America, has reshaped and intensified the debate about the economic value of immigrants and their importance in the U.S. labor market. A pragmatic approach to immigration—one that considers the economic advantages of the new arrivals—should include a more flexible admissions system to respond to labor market changes. With the United States at a critical point in both immigration policy and economic trajectory, policymakers should carefully weigh options to provide support for immigrant workers at all skill levels to keep the United States globally competitive.

Introduction

Since Congress last debated comprehensive immigration reform in 2007, the United States has experienced the Great Recession and now faces a slow recovery. Throughout, the highly-charged public debate on immigration has focused on illegal immigration and its costs. Often lost in this discussion is the vital role of immigrants in the U.S. labor market. Immigrants are now one-in-seven U.S. residents and almost one-in-six workers.[2] They are a significant presence in various sectors of the economy such as construction and hospitality on the low-skill end, and information technology and health care on the high-skill end.[3] While border enforcement and illegal immigration are a focal point, longer-term U.S. global competitiveness rests on the ability of immigrants and their children to thrive economically and to contribute to the nation's productivity.

The Great Recession has slowed migration worldwide and abruptly curtailed foreign arrivals to the United States since 2007. Even with the recent pause in immigration, the United States has experienced extraordinary growth in its foreign-born population for several decades.[4] There are more immigrants now than ever before in the nation's history (38.5 million in 2009) and their share of the American population (12.5 percent) is approaching levels not witnessed since the height of the industrial era.

The majority of immigrants admitted to the United States for permanent residence are selected by their family ties without regard to skill level or employability, while a much smaller share are admitted for work-related purposes. In addition, a large proportion of annual entries are temporary workers and their families, such as H-1B and L-1 visa holders.[5] Therefore, the metropolitan settlement of immigrants is largely a market-driven algorithm of immigrant supply and demand based on a number of factors including employer recruitment, hiring practices, visa availability, and immigrant networks.

Shifts in the settlement patterns of the foreign-born population, first identified in Census 2000, have motivated a new research and policy agenda. Previous immigration research had focused primarily on the five largest immigrant-receiving metropolitan destinations (New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Houston, and Miami); this new geography of immigration has garnered great attention among policy-makers, business leaders, academics, service providers, and journalists.[6] Of particular interest have been the newest and fast-growing locales where conflict between immigrant and native-born interests has erupted.[7] Chief among these are Great Plains and Southeastern destinations, which have attracted many low-skilled Latin American workers and their families. While this group's contribution to the foreign-born population is substantial and its migration patterns have undoubtedly had a dramatic effect on U.S. communities, the broader foreign-born population is diverse in both origins and skill levels. Nonetheless, new state and local policies and practices aimed at unauthorized immigrants have gained traction in areas with mushrooming immigrant populations. Most notably, Arizona adopted a law intended to crack down on illegal immigration in April 2010, setting off debates and inspiring copy-cat legislation.

Contentious arguments about job competition and wage effects between U.S.-born workers and immigrant workers play out in many ways across metropolitan areas. Different metropolitan economic structures create variation in the industrial and occupational demand for workers across regional labor markets, yielding an uneven geographic distribution of low- and high-skilled immigrants (like their native-born counterparts). Some areas draw on immigrants to fill vacancies in low-skill sectors, where they work as builders, groundskeepers, farm hands, and cooks. Others attract immigrants with highly educated backgrounds to work in computing, engineering, and health care. The metropolitan areas that house highly educated native populations, however, may not correspond to those that attract high-skilled immigrants if these workers are not perfect substitutes for high-skill native talent. Instead, high-skilled immigrants may be tapped as replacements for high-skilled natives or to fill industrial demands not met by the native-born population.

America's newest arrivals have profound implications for metropolitan populations and municipal governance. As the global economy becomes increasingly competitive—in both high- and low-skill sectors—pressure mounts for sources of cheap labor.[8] While low-skilled immigrants are not exclusively confined to peripheral jobs, they have been the targets of hostile, nativist sentiments; often work in dangerous, and arguably exploitative, settings; and often cluster in isolated residential enclaves.[9] The challenges that low-skilled immigrants face are clearly linked to the fact that many of them are not

authorized to work or live in the United States. Recent estimates indicate that more than one-fifth of all U.S. residents lacking a high school diploma are unauthorized immigrants.[10] While evidence on the labor market impacts of low-skilled and illegal immigration is not entirely conclusive, most researchers agree that new immigration has at least a small negative effect on wages and employment for other low-skilled immigrants and some low-wage native workers (especially minority men).[11] In addition, the local impacts of low-skill immigration are often intertwined with social tension. Recent media reports and academic studies have noted that inter-group tensions often ensue after low-skilled, largely Latino, immigrants enter ethnically homogenous communities.[12]

Underutilized labor and talent is a major challenge confronting areas with large high-skilled immigrant populations. Because these migrants tend to enter this country through the front door—as legal permanent residents or via work and educational visas—they are less likely than the low-skilled foreign born to suffer from exploitative work conditions. However, they are also less likely than their highly-skilled native counterparts to hold jobs that are commensurate with their education and more likely to be unemployed.[13]

Recognizing how immigrant skills influence local economic and social outcomes for both foreign- and native-born populations, this report examines the variation in immigrant educational attainment across the 100 largest U.S. metropolitan areas, which house more than two-thirds of the U.S. population and 85 percent of immigrants nationwide. Using data from the U.S. Census Bureau, the report primarily documents trends in immigrant residents as of 2009, when the Great Recession was underway. As such, it primarily captures changes already in motion during the years prior to the recession. After documenting trends in immigrant educational attainment at the national level, the report demonstrates how foreign-born skill profiles vary across metropolitan destinations that have distinct economic structures and immigrant settlement histories. It also separately profiles new immigrants to understand the most recently arrived U.S. immigrant workers. Finally, the report compares characteristics of immigrant and native-born workers by skill and settlement area to illuminate how these groups relate to one another within regional labor markets.

Geographically distinct immigrant skill profiles raise important policy questions examined in the discussion section of this report. These include exploring the merits of a national commission on labor and immigration that could facilitate more timely adjustments to immigration policy, particularly around admissions. We explore low-cost, politically-neutral ways to support immigrant workers and their families as well as strategies to invest in high-skilled immigrants, especially those that are having trouble finding jobs that match their training. The findings are relevant for discussions around U.S. competitiveness, future labor supply, and state and municipal benefits of immigrant integration.

Methodology

About the Data

Most data for this report come from metropolitan-level summary tables of the 2009 American Community Survey (ACS) and county-level tables from the 1900 to 2000 decennial censuses.[14] Historical decennial census data used in this study are based on full enumerations (between 1900 and 1930) or large samples of the U.S. population (i.e., the "long" form between 1940 and 2000). Summary tables and questionnaire wording vary across census years, particularly during the early part of the 20th century, however, foreign-born and total populations can be identified at the start of each decade between 1900 and 2000, and in 2009. For metropolitan areas, the educational attainment of immigrants and natives is extracted from the 2009 ACS, which is based on a smaller sample than previous decennial censuses, but still offers a representative portrait of immigrants in metro areas.[15] More detailed analysis of immigrant characteristics within metropolitan areas, including country of birth, language ability, entry period, citizenship status, employment, earnings, and poverty status, are derived from ACS 3-year estimates, 2006 to 2008, a period largely before the height of the Great Recession.[16] Annual national estimates on the share of low- and high-skilled immigrant and U.S.-born workers annually come from the Current Population Survey (CPS).

Both the ACS and decennial census seek to enumerate the full population, but fail to fully cover certain hard-to-reach populations. Unauthorized immigrants are a particularly vulnerable group that

is likely reluctant to respond to government officials. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) reports pin the undercount of the unauthorized in the ACS at somewhere between 10 and 20 percent of the total foreign-born population.[17]

Terminology

We use the terms *skills* and *human capital* interchangeably to refer to the educational attainment of foreign- and native-born working-age adults between ages 25 and 64 (regardless of employment status). This captures adults who have likely completed their schooling and are still in the labor market. To be sure, educational attainment is not a perfect measure of occupational skill, particularly among the foreign-born, for whom the quality of educational degrees received abroad may vary substantially.[18] Nor is educational attainment the only measure of human capital, which can include labor market experience and job- and sector-specific knowledge and training. Yet educational attainment itself remains a strong predictor of employment, job stability, and wages—especially for workers at the high and low ends of the educational distribution.[19]

Immigrant and foreign-born are also used interchangeably throughout this report to refer to persons born outside the United States, excluding those born abroad to American citizens.[20] Immigrant status is determined by a question on birthplace in the census questionnaire; however, legal status is not specified except whether a person has become a naturalized U.S. citizen. In this analysis, we are unable to distinguish immigrants who are legally authorized to work in the United States from those who are not. Thus, the data analyzed in this report for the foreign born include naturalized U.S. citizens, legal permanent residents, temporary immigrants, refugees, asylum seekers, and to the extent to which they are counted, unauthorized immigrants.

Measuring the Distribution of Immigrant Skills

This report measures immigrant skill by educational attainment as reported in U.S. Census Bureau questionnaires. "Low-skilled" immigrants are defined as those lacking a high school diploma, and "high-skilled" immigrants are those with a college degree or more.[21] To evaluate the representation of these groups in metropolitan areas, we calculate the ratio of high- to low-skilled adult immigrants, and multiply by 100.[22] We have elected to exclude the "middle" portion of the educational distribution (those with a high school diploma or some college but no degree) in our key measure because the relative size of this group varies little across the 100 largest metro areas.[23] The middle-skilled group is larger than either the high- or low-skilled groups for both the foreign-born and U.S.-born populations, but a focus on high- and low-skilled immigrants correlates with contemporary policy debates on the value of these foreign-born workers to critical sectors of the slowly recovering U.S. economy.

This metropolitan *immigrant skill ratio* ranges from a low of 13.3 (Bakersfield, CA), indicating a very low-skilled immigrant population, to a high of 391.3 (Pittsburgh, PA), where high-skilled immigrants outnumber low-skilled immigrants by nearly 4 to 1. (A skill ratio of 100 indicates an equal number of high- and low-skilled immigrants.) The skill ratio for all immigrants living in the 100 largest metro areas is 101.6.

Each of the 100 metropolitan areas in the study are assigned to one of three categories according to their immigrant skill ratios: *low-skill, balanced-skill*, or *high-skill destination*. Low-skill destinations are metro areas with an immigrant skill ratio below 75 (i.e., fewer than 75 high-skilled immigrants for every 100 low-skilled immigrants); balanced-skill destinations have ratios between 75 and 125 (i.e., relatively comparable numbers of high- and low-skilled immigrants); and high-skill destinations have immigrant skill ratios greater than 125 (i.e., more than 125 high-skilled for every 100 low-skilled immigrants). While these groupings could be defined statistically or distributionally (e.g., breaking the metro areas into thirds, or based on standard deviations from the mean), we believe that these groups should be qualitatively different. Most importantly, low- and high-skill destinations should be clearly defined as places where low- and high- skilled immigrants, respectively, predominate. Similarly, "balanced" skill destinations should demonstrate an approximate equilibrium in the educational distribution of immigrant workers. Nonetheless, readers should be aware that different groupings may be defensible for different purposes and that altering these skill-group definitions would shift the metro areas that fall under each category.

Geography

Consistent with other work in the *State of Metropolitan America* series, this report focuses on the 100 largest metropolitan areas as defined by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) in 2009 and based on U.S. Census Bureau population estimates for that year. Metropolitan areas and their constituent counties have expanded (and occasionally contracted) over the course of the 20th century. In order to maintain geographic consistency in these units over time, Geographical Information Systems (GIS) tools are used to apply current metropolitan boundaries to historical county-level data.[24] Counties that fall completely within the boundaries of a metropolitan area are assigned to the corresponding metro area; for the rare case when a county crosses a metropolitan boundary or boundaries, it is included in the metropolitan area in which its geometric centroid lies.[25]

We use an expanded typology of metropolitan immigrant gateways to analyze the 100 metropolitan areas, adding historical depth and significance to geographical settlement patterns (see Box on page 11).[26]

Findings

A. The share of working-age immigrants in the United States who have a bachelor's degree has risen considerably since 1980, and now exceeds the share without a high school diploma.

During a period of the highest immigration levels on record, the skill levels of immigrant workers converged. The share of immigrants with college degrees has been increasing; the share without a high school education, declining. In 1980, there were more than twice as many low-skilled immigrants residing in the United States as high-skilled ones, and their respective shares of the working-age immigrant population differed by 20 percentage points (**Table 1**). Over the next 30 years, the low-skilled immigrant share dropped by more than 10 percentage points, while the high-skilled share increased by more than 10 percentage points. Those with "middle" skills (a high school diploma, some college, or an associate's degree) grew in absolute terms, but remained a stable proportion of the working-age immigrant population between 1980 and 2010.

Table 1. Percent Low, Middle, and High-Skilled Immigrants in the United States, 1980–2010
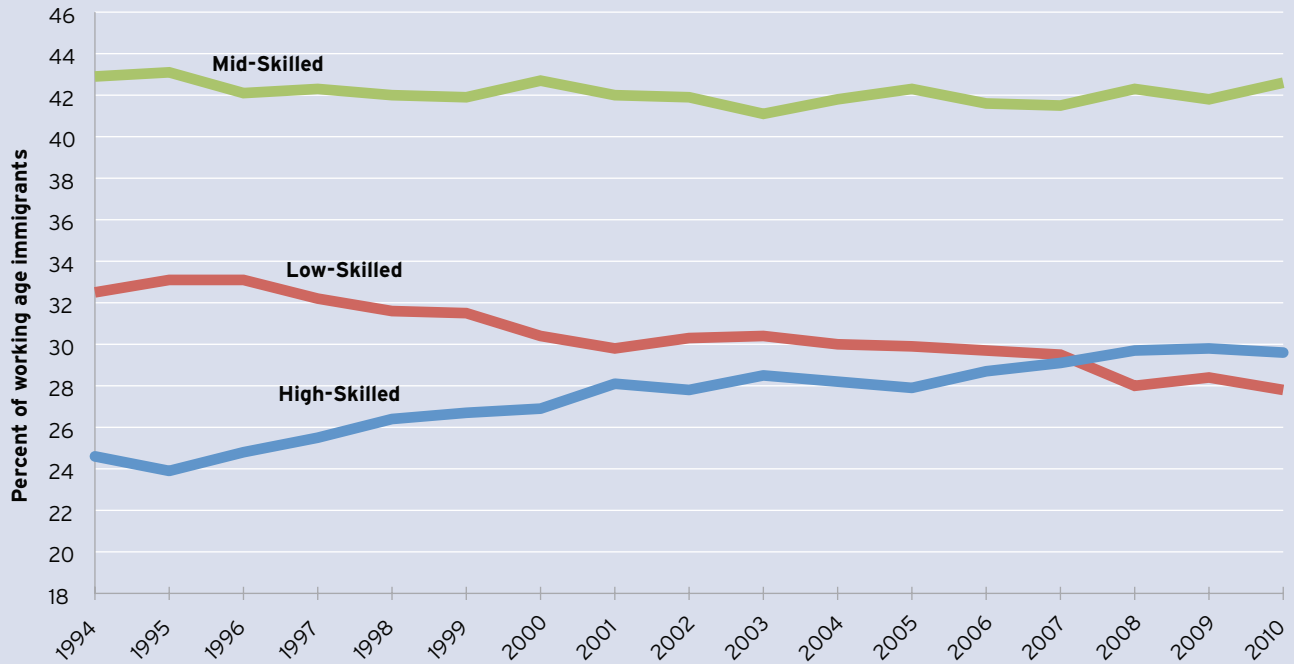
	Low Skilled	Middle Skilled	High Skilled
1980	39.5	41.5	19.0
1990	36.8	40.7	22.5
2000	30.4	42.7	26.9
2010	27.8	42.6	29.6

Source: Authors' analysis of 1980, 1990 and 2000 decennial census data and 2010 Current Population Survey

Despite the public perception of immigrants as being poorly educated, the high-skilled U.S. immigrant population today outnumbers the low-skilled population.[27] As recently as 1994 (the earliest available annual data from the CPS), the low-skilled share of all working-age immigrants was about 8 percentage points higher than the high-skilled share (**Figure 1A**). By 2010, however, high-skilled immigrants constituted 30 percent, and low-skilled immigrants 28 percent, of the total working-age immigrant population. Even more dramatically, this shift in the distribution of immigrant skills occurred during a period in which the working-age foreign-born population more than doubled – from 14.6 million to 29.7 million.

Similar shifts in skills are evident among the working-age, U.S.-born population, though the proportion of that population without a high school diploma is much smaller than for immigrants. Between 1994 and 2010, the proportion considered low-skilled dropped from about 12 percent to 7 percent,

Figure 1A. Share of Low, Middle, and High-Skilled immigrants, 1994–2010

Mid-Skilled

Low-Skilled

High-Skilled

Note: Author's analysis of weighted 1994-2010 Current Population Surveys

Figure 1B. Share of Low, Middle, and High-Skilled Natives, 1994–2010

Mid-Skilled

High-Skilled

Low-Skilled
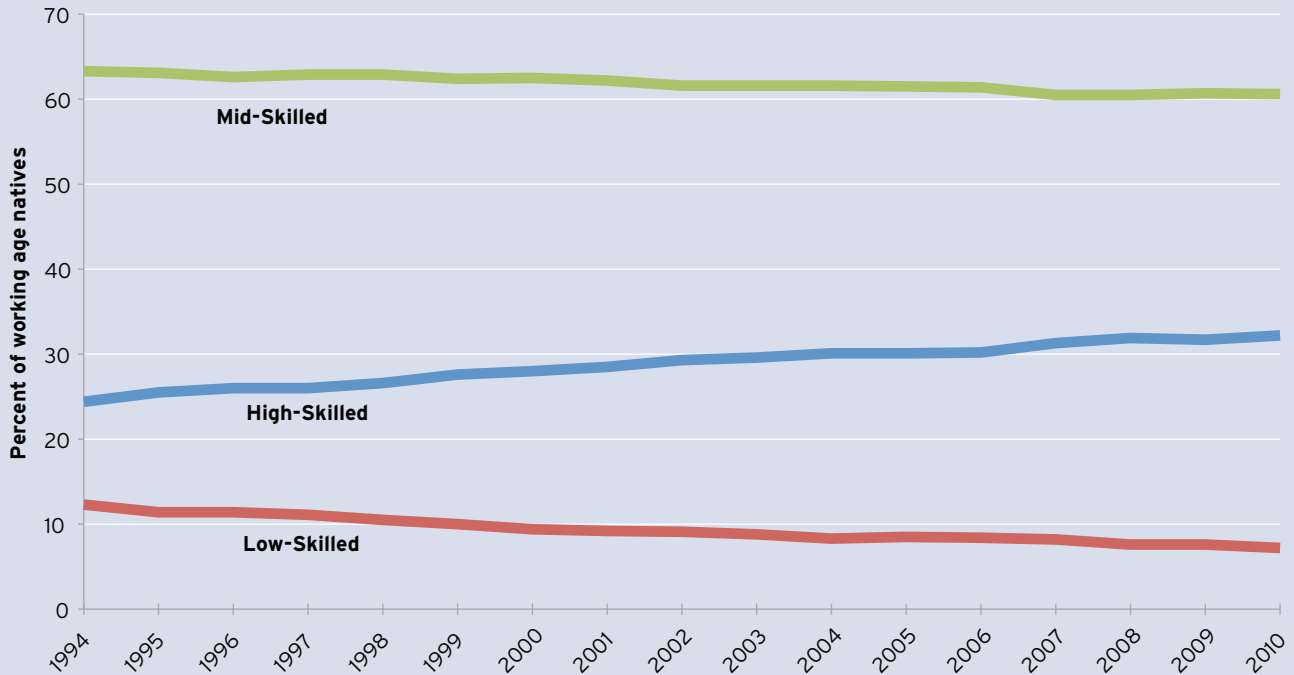
Note: Author's analysis of weighted 1994-2010 Current Population Surveys

those with a college degree or more increased from 24 percent to 32 percent, and the middle-skilled segment decreased slightly from 63 percent to 61 percent (**Figure 1B**).
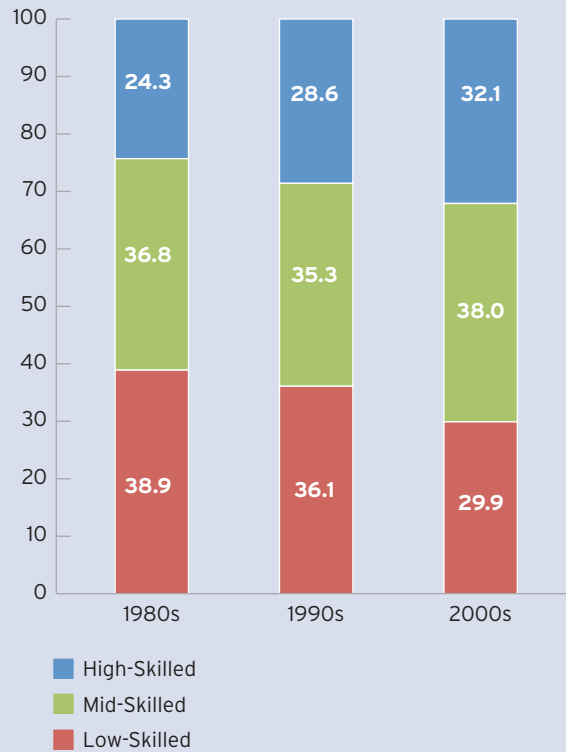
This shift toward higher-skilled immigrants accelerated in the past decade. Among the 7.9 million working-age immigrants reported in the 2009 ACS who arrived in the United States during the 2000s, nearly a third of them were high-skilled, more than the number of low-skilled immigrants who arrived during the same period (**Figure 2**). By contrast, new immigrants recorded in Census 2000 as arriving during the 1990s were considerably more likely to be low- than high-skilled. Similarly, among those arriving in the 1980s, low-skilled immigrants outnumbered high-skilled immigrants by 60 percent.

What accounts for the rise in the skill level of the foreign born entering U.S. borders? While the absolute size of the high- and low-skilled immigrant populations has increased over time, the high-skilled population is growing faster than the low-skilled population. Part of this shift simply reflects rising demand for high-skilled workers, both foreign- and native-born, resulting from the long-term restructuring of the U.S. economy in response to technological advancement and global trade.

Figure 2. Distribution of Skill Levels of New Immigrants, by Period of Arrival

	1980s	1990s	2000s
High-Skilled	24.3	28.6	32.1
Mid-Skilled	36.8	35.3	38.0
Low-Skilled	38.9	36.1	29.9

Source: 1990 and 2000 Census PUMS, and 2009 ACS PUMS

At the same time that demand for high-skilled workers spiked, policy changes augmented the supply of high-skilled immigrants. The temporary H-1B visa for workers in "specialty occupations" has boosted the number of immigrants in the United States with a college degree or more since the 1990s. A bachelor's degree or its equivalent is typically the minimum requirement for this visa, and exemptions from the cap are given to 20,000 immigrants with degrees from a U.S. institution. Yet, those petitioned for, or employed at, an institution of higher education, a nonprofit research organization, or a government research organization are exempt from the numerical cap. During the 2000s, approximately 200,000 to 331,000 H-1B petitions were approved annually.[28]

The number of international students in the United States has steadily increased during the past several decades, rising from 250,000 in 1978–79, to half a million in 1998–99, to close to 700,000 in 2009–10.[29] The upward trend in the international student population at American colleges and universities increases the number of high-skilled immigrants as some of them are able to adjust to a visa status that allows them to live and work in the United States after graduation. Some proportion of the temporary workers and international students become legal permanent residents, putting them on the pathway to U.S. citizenship.[30]

Map 1. Immigration Skill Ratio, 100 Largest Metropolitan Areas, 2009

▼ Low

● Balanced
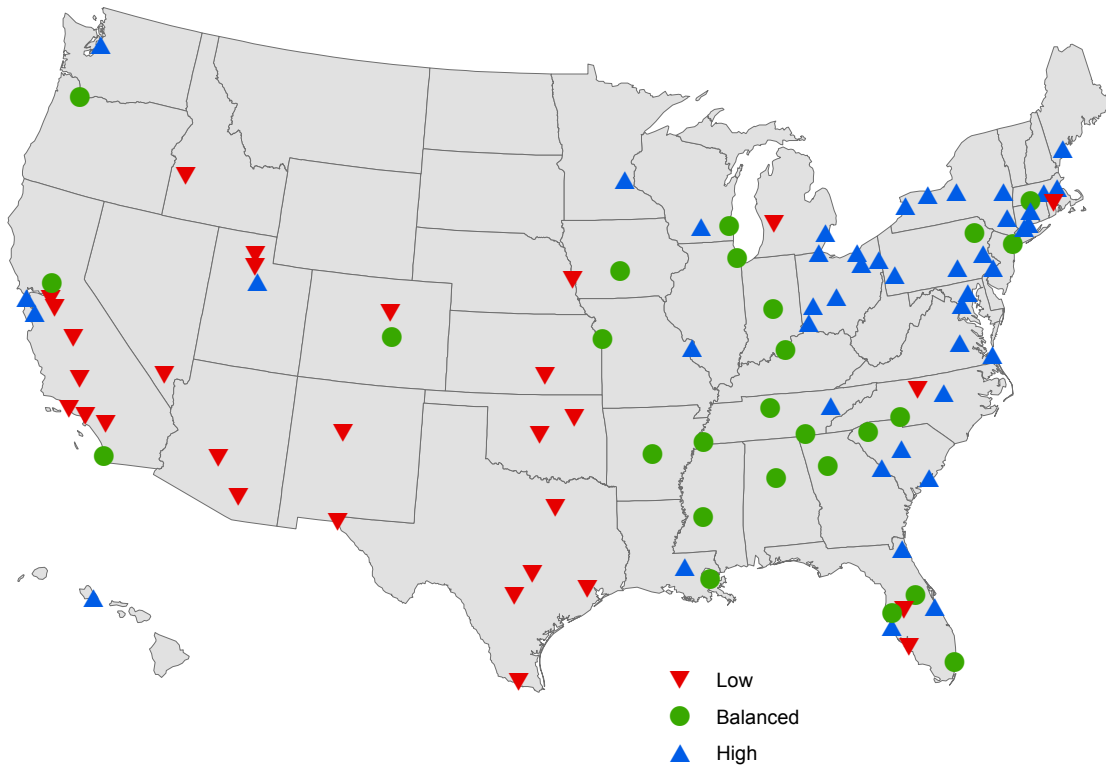
▲ High

Source: Authors' analysis of 2009 American Community Survey data

B. Forty-four (44) of the nation's 100 largest metropolitan areas are high-skill immigrant destinations, in which college-educated immigrants outnumber immigrants without high school diplomas by at least 25 percent.

The nearly equal shares of low- and high-skilled immigrants nationally are not reflected uniformly across the metropolitan areas where immigrants live and work. Rather, low-skilled immigrants cluster in some areas while high-skilled immigrants gather in others, producing an uneven map of metropolitan immigrant skill profiles (**Map 1**). (See Appendix A for skills ratios for each of the 100 metropolitan areas).

Low-skill destinations (denoted by downward-facing triangles) are strongly represented in the border states of California, Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas. In fact, of the 20 metropolitan areas in these four states, all but four of them are classified as low-skill, and 8 of the 10 metropolitan areas with the lowest immigrant skill ratios are located in these states.

Low-skilled immigrants also concentrate in the major metropolitan areas of the Great Plains. Oklahoma City, Omaha, Tulsa, and Wichita, for example, are all low-skilled immigrant destinations, as are areas just west of the Plains like Boise and Ogden. Despite being at least mid-sized metro areas, many of the labor markets in these areas boast prominent agricultural and/or food processing industries; this coupled with their relatively close proximity to border states serves to attract low-skilled laborers. There are 30 low-skilled destinations in total; only five of them—Cape Coral, Lakeland, Grand Rapids, Greensboro, and Providence—are located east of the Mississippi River.

High-skill destinations (denoted by upward-facing triangles) have grown strongly along the coasts. Many of these areas, such as Seattle, San Francisco, and Washington, D.C., have reputations as cultural, knowledge, and technology centers. Metropolitan areas centered around large college towns such as Columbus, Knoxville, and Madison have highly skilled immigrant populations in part because they draw students from abroad, many of whom stay in the United States for extended periods of time.

Perhaps most notable is the very high concentration of high-skilled immigrants in older industrial metro areas in the Midwest and Northeast such as Albany, Buffalo, Cleveland, Pittsburgh, St. Louis, and Syracuse. Detroit, for instance, has 144 high-skilled immigrants for every 100 low-skilled immigrants. Immigrants in these metropolitan areas tilt toward high-skill because they blend earlier arriving cohorts who have had time to complete higher education with newcomers entering who can fit into the labor market because of their high educational attainment. Several of the cities in these metropolitan areas also campaign to attract and retain immigrants, signaling appreciation for the small number of high-skilled immigrants they do have.[31] In total, there are 44 high-skilled destinations; the majority in the Northeast and Midwest.
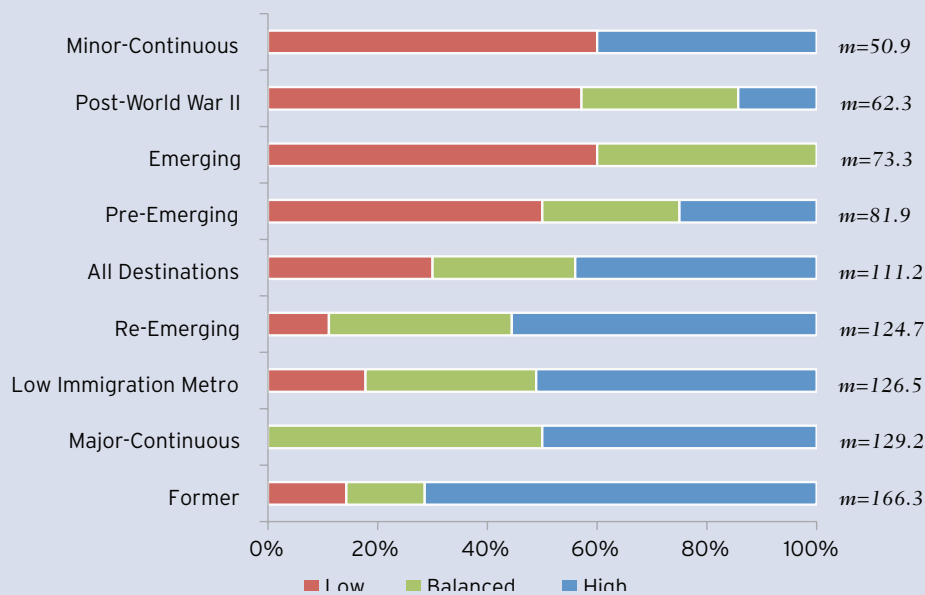
Balanced-skill destinations (denoted by circles) are most prominently found in Eastern and Southern states. Many metropolitan areas in Southeastern states, the newest destination region for immigrants, are surprisingly diverse in their skill profiles. Atlanta, Birmingham, Charlotte, and Nashville, for instance, have attracted roughly equal numbers of high- and low-skilled immigrants. Metropolitan areas such as Des Moines, Kansas City, Milwaukee and Chicago in the Midwest and Great Plains also have balanced skill levels among their immigrant populations, as do New York, Scranton and Springfield in the Northeast, and Portland, Sacramento and San Diego in the West.

C. Immigrants' skill levels vary by metropolitan area due to historical settlement patterns and economic structures.

To further explore this, we expand and update a typology of immigrant destinations that classified 45 metro areas based on the size and change in their foreign-born populations from 1900 to 2000, to include all 100 largest metro areas using the most current census data and metropolitan boundaries. This revision yields eight metropolitan destination types for the 100 largest metropolitan areas in 2009.[32] Grouping by destination type allows us to generalize, beyond geographic location and, more broadly by historical settlement trends. **Table 2** shows the updated categorization and the metropolitan areas that fall into each skill-grouping.

Each of the eight "gateway" types features a distinct mix of low-, balanced-, and high-skill destinations (**Figure 3**). This reflects differences in their industrial history and contemporary economic

Figure 3. Distribution of Immigrant Skill Ratio, by Gateway Type, 2009

Gateway Type	median
Minor-Continuous	m=50.9
Post-World War II	m=62.3
Emerging	m=73.3
Pre-Emerging	m=81.9
All Destinations	m=111.2
Re-Emerging	m=124.7
Low Immigration Metro	m=126.5
Major-Continuous	m=129.2
Former	m=166.3

Low Balanced High

Note: m refers to median immigrant skill ratio by gateway type (higher values indicate more highly-skilled immigrant populations)

Source: Authors' analysis of 2009 American Community Survey data

structure, their proximity to immigrants' home countries, and in the social networks on which their immigrant populations draw. This section describes the metropolitan immigrant skill profiles in each of the gateway types, with the highest-skilled gateway types listed first.

Former gateways—These largely older industrial metro areas have the most highly skilled immigrant populations, with a median skill ratio of 166. This indicates that immigrants with college degrees typically outnumber those without high school diplomas by 66 percent. More than two-thirds of destinations in this group are classified as high-skill. Several of the most highly educated immigrant populations nationwide (e.g., Pittsburgh and St. Louis) are located in former gateways that have transitioned, at least partially, into concentrations such as science, health care, and education. It is widely recognized that many of these "old" destinations suffer from native out-migration—particularly among adults with high levels of education. One factor attracting highly educated immigrants to former destinations may thus be a demand for the skilled labor they can provide. Demographer William Frey has noted that "immigration tends to compensate, to some degree, for the 'brain drain'" in these metropolitan areas."[34] Nonetheless, the demand for low-skilled immigrant workers in these destinations remains low.

Major-continuous gateways—These metro areas have, in the aggregate, quite skilled immigrant populations. Possibly attesting to the size and diversity of their economies, as well as to the diverse origins of the immigrants they attract, two of these four metro areas (Chicago and New York) have immigrant populations fairly balanced in education levels. The other two metro areas (San Francisco and Boston) house more high- than low-skilled immigrants, reflecting markets oriented toward high technology, professional services and finance. Importantly, none of the major-continuous gateways are classified as low skill. The layering of newer flows on top of long-settled streams likely accounts for the relative equity in their skill distributions.

Low-immigration metro areas—These metro areas contain, on average, more high- than low-skilled immigrants (median skill ratio 126). As previously noted, they include several "college towns" with high rates of immigrant educational attainment, like Knoxville and Madison. Others share more in common with the former gateways. Areas such as Akron, Cincinnati, Dayton, and Syracuse have long-established manufacturing industries that continue to employ small but very highly-skilled immigrant populations. Other high-skill areas with few immigrants, such as Augusta, have emerging high-skill industries such as medicine and biotechnology.

Re-emerging gateways—Some re-emerging gateways such as Baltimore, the Twin Cities, Sacramento, Portland and Seattle have had considerable refugee resettlement in the past few decades. Depending on origin country conditions, some refugees arrive with little in the way of formal education, while others possess a wide range of skills, experience, and education. The net effect on metro areas that have a high proportion of a diverse set of refugees among their foreign-born populations is a likely boost to both ends of the skills spectrum.[35]

Pre-emerging and emerging gateways—On average, pre-emerging and emerging gateways tend to have more low- than high-skilled immigrants (median skill ratios of 82 and 73, respectively). The tendency for these metros to attract relatively low-skilled immigrant populations is consistent with the mainstream perception of new settlement areas. Notably, Mountain West metro areas such as Phoenix, Las Vegas, and Salt Lake City align with this "new and low-skilled" characterization. While a majority of metro areas in these gateway types are low-skilled destinations, several balanced- and high-skilled destinations can be found in the Southeast. New settlement areas such as Atlanta, Orlando, and Raleigh contain at least as many high- than low-skilled immigrants. These metros attracted high-skilled immigrants in a range of jobs in sectors including health care, professional services, and technology. However, many of these metro areas were fast-growing, housing market-dominant economies before the economic downturn. Immigrants were drawn to these metros by the abundance of lower-skilled construction, housing and real estate industry jobs, as well as by the relatively low cost of living.

Post-World War II gateways—These metro areas also exhibit low-skill immigrant profiles (median skill ratio of 62). They rely much less heavily on agricultural industries than the minor-continuous destinations (see below), but more than half of them are in border states, and they house a large portion of the U.S. undocumented population.[36] The main exception is the Washington, D.C. region, whose skill ratio of 189 reflects an economy dominated by the federal government and associated high-level services, headquarters of international organizations, and embassies.[37]

Eight Immigration Destination Types—A Typology of 'Gateways' (Guide to Table 2)

In order to better understand the relationship between contemporary metropolitan immigrant skill profiles and historical patterns of immigrant settlement, this report updates and extends a typology of metropolitan immigrant "gateways," classifying the 100 largest metro areas into the eight destination types described below.

Former gateways (seven metro areas) were once major immigrant ports of entry, and are mostly found in old manufacturing areas in the Northeast or Midwest. These destinations, such as Cleveland, Milwaukee, and St. Louis, had populations with a higher immigrant share than the national average from 1900 to 1930, followed by a foreign born share lower than the national average in every decade to the present.

Major-continuous gateways (four metro areas), New York, Boston, San Francisco, and Chicago are the quintessential immigrant destinations, having large and sustained immigrant populations over the course of the 20th century. The proportion of their foreign-born populations has exceeded the national average for every decade of the past century. More recently, however, these cities are serving as way stations for new arrivals that may eventually head to other destinations. Nonetheless, the four metro areas classified as major-continuous gateways continue to house about one-quarter of all immigrants nationwide.

Minor-continuous gateways (15 metro areas), are more modest versions of the major-continuous gateways, with long histories of immigrant settlement. These destinations had an above-average immigrant population share from 1900-1950, and an immigrant population share above or near the national average in 2009. They include two distinct sets of metro areas. One group, including places like New Haven and Worcester, historically served as suburban-like destinations for early 20th century European immigrants. The other group, including areas such as McAllen and Stockton, is located in border states and has long been home to Mexican labor migrants. Several are located in California's Central Valley, arguably the most productive agricultural center in the country.

Post-World War II gateways (seven metro areas) emerged as large immigrant hubs during the mid-20th century. These destinations, like Los Angeles and Houston, had comparatively small immigrant populations until the 1950s, but grew rapidly thereafter. Metropolitan areas in this category are now major immigrant destinations, in some cases rivaling the status of a few of the major-continuous gateways. Combined, nearly one-third of all immigrants nationwide reside in the seven post-World War II gateways.

Collectively, the next three destination types form what is typically referred to as the "new destinations" or "21st century gateways."[33]

Emerging gateways (five metro areas) have only recently become major destinations for immigrants. These metropolitan areas had small immigrant populations for most of the 20th century, but their foreign born populations grew faster than the national rate during one of the last three decades of the 20th century, and their immigrant population share has exceeded the national average since 1990. Atlanta and Phoenix are prime examples of emerging gateways, with foreign-born populations that have grown very rapidly in the past two decades, and are now quite large in size.

Re-emerging gateways (nine metro areas), such as Minneapolis and Seattle, had an early 20th century settlement pattern very similar to the former gateways. These metro areas attracted immigrants in great numbers in the early part of the 20th century but during the rest of the century experienced low levels of immigration. In a turnaround, they saw fast immigrant growth at the tail end of the 20th century and into the last decade, thus re-emerging as major immigrant gateways.

Pre-emerging gateways (eight metro areas) have little historical record of receiving immigrants, but in recent decades have experienced extraordinary growth in their foreign-born populations. These destinations, like Greensboro and Nashville, have smaller immigrant populations than the other 21st century gateways and immigrant growth has occurred more recently (since 1990). But immigrant growth has been much faster—at least three times the national average.

Low-immigration metro areas (45 metro areas) include places with modest immigrant inflows or small foreign-born populations. There is considerable variation in the size and growth patterns of the immigrant population in these metro areas. Some have very small, but growing foreign-born populations, such as Jackson and Scranton, and others have sizable, but slow-growing immigrant populations, like Indianapolis and Kansas City. If the growth trajectories of some of these low- immigration metro areas—including Boise, Birmingham and Greenville—continue, they are poised to become "pre-emerging gateways" within the next few years.

Table 2. Metro Immigrant Skill Ratios, 2009

Former Gateways

Buffalo-Niagara Falls, NY	High
Cleveland-Elyria-Mentor, OH	High
Detroit-Warren-Livonia, MI	High
Milwaukee-Waukesha-West Allis, WI	Balanced
Pittsburgh, PA	High
Providence-New Bedford, RI-MA*	Low
St. Louis, MO-IL	High

Post-World War II Gateways

Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington, TX	Low
Houston-Sugar Land-Baytown, TX	Low
Los Angeles-Long Beach, CA*	Low
Miami-Fort Lauderdale, FL*	Balanced
Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario, CA	Low
San Diego-Carlsbad-San Marcos, CA	Balanced
Washington, DC-VA-MD-WV*	High

Emerging Gateways

Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Marietta, GA	Balanced
Austin-Round Rock, TX	Low
Las Vegas-Paradise, NV	Low
Orlando-Kissimmee, FL	Balanced
Phoenix-Mesa-Scottsdale, AZ	Low

Major-Continuous Gateways

Boston-Cambridge-Quincy, MA-NH	High
Chicago-Naperville-Joliet, IL-IN-WI	Balanced
New York, NY-NJ-PA*	Balanced
San Francisco-Oakland-Fremont, CA	High

Re-Emerging Gateways

Baltimore-Towson, MD	High
Denver-Aurora, CO	Low
Minneapolis-St. Paul, MN-WI*	High
Philadelphia-Camden, PA-NJ-DE-MD*	High
Portland-Vancouver, OR-WA*	Balanced
Sacramento--Arden-Arcade, CA*	Balanced
San Jose-Sunnyvale-Santa Clara, CA	High
Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue, WA	High
Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater, FL	Balanced

Minor-Continuous Gateways

Bakersfield, CA	Low
Bridgeport-Stamford-Norwalk, CT	High
El Paso, TX	Low
Fresno, CA	Low
Hartford-West Hartford, CT*	High
Honolulu, HI	High
McAllen-Edinburg-Mission, TX	Low
Modesto, CA	Low
New Haven-Milford, CT	High
Oxnard-Thousand Oaks-Ventura, CA	Low
Rochester, NY	High
San Antonio, TX	Low
Stockton, CA	Low
Tucson, AZ	Low
Worcester, MA	High

Pre-Emerging Gateways

Cape Coral-Fort Myers, FL	Low
Charlotte-Gastonia-Concord, NC-SC	Balanced
Columbus, OH	High
Greensboro-High Point, NC	Low
Lakeland-Winter Haven, FL	Low
Nashville-Davidson, TN*	Balanced
Raleigh-Cary, NC	High
Salt Lake City, UT	Low

Low Immigration Metros

Akron, OH	High	Des Moines-West Des Moines, IA	Balanced	Oklahoma City, OK	Low
Albany-Schenectady-Troy, NY	High	Grand Rapids-Wyoming, MI	Low	Omaha-Council Bluffs, NE-IA	Low
Albuquerque, NM	Low	Greenville-Mauldin-Easley, SC	Balanced	Palm Bay-Melbourne-Titusville, FL	High
Allentown-Bethlehem-Easton, PA-NJ	High	Harrisburg-Carlisle, PA	High	Portland-South Portland-Biddeford, ME	High
Augusta-Richmond County, GA-SC	High	Indianapolis-Carmel, IN	Balanced	Poughkeepsie-Newburgh, NY*	High
Baton Rouge, LA	High	Jackson, MS	Balanced	Provo-Orem, UT	High
Birmingham-Hoover, AL	Balanced	Jacksonville, FL	High	Richmond, VA	High
Boise City-Nampa, ID	Low	Kansas City, MO-KS	Balanced	Scranton--Wilkes-Barre, PA	Balanced
Bradenton-Sarasota-Venice, FL	High	Knoxville, TN	High	Springfield, MA	Balanced
Charleston-North Charleston, SC*	High	Little Rock-North Little Rock, AR*	Balanced	Syracuse, NY	High
Chattanooga, TN-GA	Balanced	Louisville-Jefferson County, KY-IN	Balanced	Toledo, OH	High
Cincinnati-Middletown, OH-KY-IN	High	Madison, WI	High	Tulsa, OK	Low
Colorado Springs, CO	Balanced	Memphis, TN-MS-AR	Balanced	Virginia Beach-Norfolk, VA-NC*	High
Columbia, SC	High	New Orleans-Metairie-Kenner, LA	Balanced	Wichita, KS	Low
Dayton, OH	High	Ogden-Clearfield, UT	Low	Youngstown-Warren, OH-PA*	High

Note: Full name and skill ratios are shown in the Appendix

Minor-continuous gateways—With a median immigrant skill ratio of 51, implying nearly twice as many low- as high-skilled immigrants, minor-continuous destinations house the least-educated immigrant populations. Several of these metros are longstanding agricultural centers or are a short distance from Mexico. In many, the histories of Mexican migration stretches back to the early part of the 20th century, when farmhands from rural Mexico were brought in via the Bracero Program to harvest beets, tomatoes, and other crops in the American West. Not all minor-continuous gateways are low-skill destinations; about one-third are classified as high skill, mostly extended suburban regions of the New York-Boston corridor, including four Connecticut metropolitan areas.
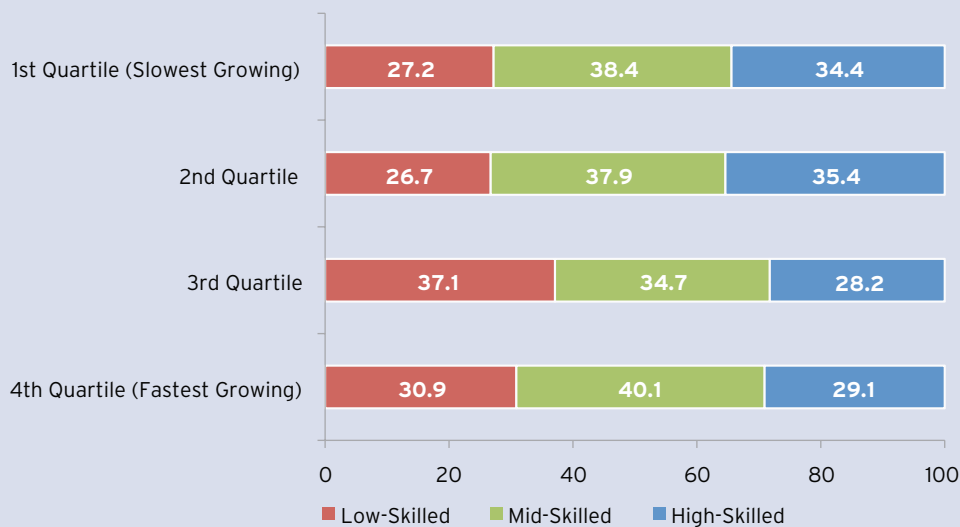
D. Recent immigrants to metro areas with the fastest-growing immigrant populations have markedly lower educational attainment than immigrants settling elsewhere.

Among immigrants arriving during the 2000s, high-skilled immigrants outnumbered low-skilled immigrants nationwide. However, as the other findings demonstrate, metropolitan areas are receiving each of these groups in very different numbers and proportions.

Low-skilled immigrants dominate recent inflows in fast-growing destinations (**Figure 4**). Among metropolitan areas with above-average growth in their foreign-born populations since 2000, larger shares of those recent arrivals were low- than high-skilled. For example, in Omaha, where the immigrant population grew by two-thirds between 2000 and 2009, 41.1 percent of new arrivals were low-skilled versus 29.4 percent who were high-skilled. Similar trends in immigrant skills characterize other metro areas with fast-growing foreign-born populations, such as Charlotte, Dallas-Ft. Worth, Phoenix, and Las Vegas.

Conversely, in areas with slower-growing immigrant populations, high-skilled immigrants tend to constitute a larger share of the newest cohort. Cleveland illustrates this phenomenon well: its foreign-born population grew by just 2.8 percent during the 2000s. Among recent arrivals, however, 50 percent were high skilled, compared to 10.4 percent who were low skilled. In Pittsburgh, the most extreme example, the immigrant population grew by 13 percent between 2000 and 2009, and 76.4 percent of these new arrivals were college-educated, while just 6.1 percent lacked a high school diploma. This tilt toward higher-skilled immigrants in the 2000s characterizes other slow-growing former gateways such as Buffalo, Detroit, and St. Louis.

Figure 4. New Immigrant Arrivals by Skill Type, by Metropolitan Growth in the Immigrant Population in the 2000s

	Low-Skilled	Mid-Skilled	High-Skilled
1st Quartile (Slowest Growing)	27.2	38.4	34.4
2nd Quartile	26.7	37.9	35.4
3rd Quartile	37.1	34.7	28.2
4th Quartile (Fastest Growing)	30.9	40.1	29.1

Source: Authors' analysis of 2009 American Community Survey data

Table 3. Demographic Characteristics of Low- and High-Skilled Immigrants, by Gateway Type, 2006-2008

Low-Skilled Immigrants

	Arrived during 2000s	Mexican	Naturalized	English Proficient	Age	Male
100 Largest Metro Areas	**18.2%**	**57.3%**	**26.2%**	**16.4%**	**42.3**	**53.5%**
Gateway Type						
Former	16.8%	27.6%	38.9%	22.3%	44.4	51.8%
Major-Continuous	17.8%	32.8%	33.7%	20.1%	43.9	51.8%
Minor-Continuous	15.4%	77.9%	24.2%	15.5%	43.4	51.1%
Post World War II	15.0%	64.8%	24.4%	13.9%	42.3	53.2%
Emerging	25.7%	73.8%	17.4%	15.7%	39.5	58.9%
Re-Emerging	22.5%	54.6%	27.4%	16.0%	41.6	52.9%
Pre-Emerging	29.3%	60.9%	17.6%	18.3%	38.7	60.4%
Low Immigration Metro	26.6%	56.6%	23.2%	20.1%	40.3	56.5%

High-Skilled Immigrants

	Arrived during 2000s	Mexican	Naturalized	English Proficient	Age	Male
100 Largest Metro Areas	**21.7%**	**5.5%**	**54.0%**	**71.5%**	**42.1**	**50.8%**
Gateway Type						
Former	26.0%	1.9%	50.1%	76.1%	41.7	55.1%
Major-Continuous	19.6%	2.5%	57.0%	71.5%	42.1	49.6%
Minor-Continuous	22.8%	16.4%	52.6%	72.4%	42.1	49.3%
Post-World War II	20.3%	7.8%	55.6%	68.1%	42.8	50.3%
Emerging	24.8%	8.2%	47.9%	73.0%	41.6	52.3%
Re-Emerging	22.9%	3.5%	52.2%	74.2%	41.3	52.1%
Pre-Emerging	29.5%	5.4%	41.5%	73.2%	41.0	53.5%
Low Immigration Metro	26.7%	4.3%	48.7%	76.7%	41.7	53.3%

Source: Authors' analysis of ACS three-year estimates, 2006-2008

We shift focus now to the individual characteristics of immigrants that vary by skill level (**Table 3**) and offer insights into their U.S. labor market potential.[38] Across the 100 largest metro areas, low-skilled immigrants are much more likely than high-skilled immigrants to hail from Mexico (57.3 percent versus 5.5 percent), about half as likely to be naturalized, only one-fifth as likely to speak English proficiently, and slightly more likely to be male.[39] For their part, a greater share of high- than low-skilled immigrants arrived during the last decade (21.7 percent vs. 18.2 percent, respectively).

Key characteristics of high- and low-skilled immigrants vary across the metropolitan gateway types. Take, for example, Mexican origin of low-skilled immigrants. In former and major-continuous gateways—destinations that have not largely drawn Mexican immigrants—low-skilled immigrants are considerably less likely to be from Mexico than they are in any other gateway type. Mexicans constitute just 6.2 percent of the low-skilled immigrant population in Buffalo, and just 13.8 percent in the New York area, despite rapid growth in its Mexican population in recent years.[40] By contrast, in minor-continuous gateways such as Fresno, Bakersfield, El Paso, and San Antonio—which have long-standing Mexican immigrant populations—greater than 75 percent of low-skilled immigrants are from Mexico. A similar pattern prevails in many newer settlement areas such as Las Vegas (75.2 percent), Salt Lake City (79.7 percent), and Austin (85.8 percent).

Both low- and high-skilled immigrants are more likely to be citizens and speak English proficiently in destinations where the share of recent arrivals is smaller, such as former and major-continuous gateways, as well as low-immigration metro areas. This reflects the fact that English ability and naturalization rates increase with time in the United States. For immigrants of both skill types, however, the

lowest English proficiency levels are observed in post-World War II gateways, despite large numbers of immigrants who have resided in the country for decades. These gateways, such as Los Angeles, Riverside-San Bernardino, Miami, Dallas-Fort Worth, Houston, and Washington, D.C., have some of the largest immigrant populations nationwide. Immigrant populations of that size, especially predominantly Spanish-speaking ones, may create linguistic and cultural markets that reduce the need for immigrants to obtain English proficiency.[41]

Newer destination areas also tend to have slightly younger immigrants, and higher shares of male immigrants, than more-established destinations among low-skilled immigrants. In Nashville, for instance, nearly two-thirds (63.8 percent) of low-skilled immigrants are male, and their average age is 38. Atlanta, Austin, Birmingham, Cape Coral, Charlotte, Greenville, Indianapolis, and Raleigh show similar trends among low-skilled immigrants of about two-thirds male and several years younger than the average across all metro areas in the analysis. Notably, New Orleans's low-skilled immigrant population is nearly one-third more male than female, likely reflecting the in-flow of immigrant workers involved in the demolition, clean-up, and reconstruction during the recovery period after Hurricane Katrina struck in 2005.

E. Compared with their U.S.-born counterparts, low-skilled immigrants have higher rates of employment and lower rates of household poverty, but also have lower individual earnings, in all types of metro areas.

Given a U.S. economy that increasingly rewards knowledge-based skills over physical ones, it is natural that high-skilled immigrants are considerably more likely than low-skilled immigrants to be employed, earn more personal income, and live in households above the poverty line. More revealing are comparisons between the economic characteristics of low/high-skilled immigrants and their native-born counterparts. These relationships, too, vary in important ways across metropolitan gateway types.

Across the 100 largest metro areas, low-skilled immigrants are more likely to be employed than low-skilled natives (**Table 4**) but their incomes are lower.[42] While about two-thirds (66.9 percent) of all working-age, low-skilled immigrants were employed, just half (49 percent) of low-skilled natives were. As a result, low-skilled immigrants live in households that are much less likely to fall beneath the poverty line (22.9 percent) than low-skilled natives (30.9 percent). However, among the employed, low-skilled natives earned over $5,000 more than low-skilled immigrants on average.

These economic differences between immigrant and native-born low-skilled adults do not hold across all gateway types. In particular, employment among low-skilled immigrants tends to be highest in newer settlement metros, which typically have expanding economies. In the emerging, pre-emerging and low-immigration metros, low-skilled immigrant workers are at least one-third more likely to be employed than their U.S.-born counterparts, and in the major-continuous gateways, immigrant employment rates are 52 percent higher. Low-skilled immigrants in minor-continuous gateways—mostly border cities and agricultural centers—have the lowest levels of employment and earnings and the highest poverty rates among all types, a reflection of regional economies where more than one-third of the U.S.-born live in poverty. Strikingly, however, poverty rates for the low-skilled are higher among U.S.-born than foreign-born adults across all gateway types. Only in the minor-continuous and pre-emerging gateways are these rates close (and relatively high). In the minor-continuous gateways, many of the native born are just one or two generations away from their immigrant parents or grandparents.

High-skilled immigrants are somewhat less likely to be employed than high-skilled natives across the 100 largest metro areas (80.2 percent versus 84.3 percent).[43] However, the native earnings advantage is considerable, an average difference in annual earnings of about $8,150.[44] Poverty levels are low among the high-skilled, regardless of nativity; however, households headed by high-skilled immigrants are twice as likely as those headed by high-skilled natives to live in poverty.

The economic characteristics of high-skilled immigrants vary less across gateway types than among their low-skilled counterparts. Employment rates are similar across destination types for foreign-born workers and relative to native-born workers. High-skilled immigrants in former, re-emerging, and major-continuous metropolitan areas earn substantially more than high-skilled immigrants in other areas (a pattern that, with the exception of major-continuous areas, is not true for high-skilled natives). In Detroit, for example, high-skilled immigrants earn, on average, $76,654—nearly 8 percent

Table 4. Economic Characteristics of Low- and High-Skilled Immigrants and Natives, by Gateway Type, 2006-2008

Low-Skilled Immigrants and Natives

	% Employed		Individual Earnings		% in Poverty	
	Immigrant	**Native**	**Immigrant**	**Native**	**Immigrant**	**Native**
100 largest metro areas	**66.9%**	**49.0%**	**$24,598**	**$29,751**	**22.9%**	**30.9%**
Former	59.6%	44.9%	$25,878	$28,575	22.8%	33.3%
Major-Continuous	66.1%	43.5%	$26,292	$32,707	20.4%	34.3%
Minor-Continuous	60.3%	46.8%	$22,489	$28,177	31.4%	35.4%
Post-World War II	67.8%	51.7%	$24,283	$30,993	22.1%	28.3%
Emerging	71.0%	52.7%	$24,583	$30,647	22.6%	28.0%
Re-Emerging	66.8%	50.5%	$24,840	$31,774	23.2%	28.8%
Pre-Emerging	71.5%	53.1%	$22,680	$27,969	25.1%	27.8%
Low Immigration Metro	69.3%	49.4%	$23,361	$27,517	25.5%	31.2%

High-Skilled Immigrants and Natives

	% Employed		Individual Earnings		% in Poverty	
	Immigrant	**Native**	**Immigrant**	**Native**	**Immigrant**	**Native**
100 largest metro areas	**80.2%**	**84.3%**	**$71,121**	**$79,270**	**6.2%**	**3.0%**
Former	78.4%	84.9%	$75,691	$70,926	6.4%	2.9%
Major-Continuous	80.9%	84.4%	$75,905	$92,068	5.8%	3.0%
Minor-Continuous	78.9%	83.6%	$68,648	$78,207	7.2%	3.1%
Post-World War II	80.4%	84.4%	$67,324	$86,498	6.2%	3.0%
Emerging	80.2%	83.7%	$62,682	$75,158	6.5%	3.2%
Re-Emerging	80.2%	84.5%	$76,093	$78,127	5.4%	3.0%
Pre-Emerging	79.1%	84.7%	$63,897	$72,184	7.6%	2.8%
Low Immigration Metro	78.7%	84.4%	$66,024	$67,364	7.3%	3.2%

Note: % Employed is the percentage of all working-age, low- or high-skilled immigrants/natives currently working (i.e., the denominator includes those both in and out of the labor force); Individual Earnings is annual earned income for employed individuals; % in Poverty in the percentage of individuals living in households that are below the official federal poverty line.

Source: Authors' analysis of ACS three-year estimates, 2006-2008

more than the average across all areas. By contrast, high-skilled immigrants in newer immigrant gateways (emerging and pre-emerging gateways), such as Atlanta, Cape Coral, Las Vegas, Orlando, and Salt Lake, earn more than $10,000 less than high-skilled immigrants in most other areas. In Greensboro, for example, the typical high-skilled immigrant is paid just $52,833 annually.

More than their native-born counterparts, many high-skilled immigrants labor in jobs for which they are over-credentialed and/or overqualified. Some empirical research bears out anecdotal stories of immigrant taxi drivers with doctorates or computer engineers laboring in restaurant kitchens.[45] Using a simple and widely-used measure of overqualification that takes into consideration the average level of schooling for specific occupations, nearly half (49 percent) of high-skilled immigrants in the 100 largest metros are overqualified for their jobs (i.e., their educational attainment is at least one standard deviation above the mean attainment for their occupation).[46] About one in nine (11.3 percent) is greatly overqualified (i.e., two or more standard deviation above the mean) (**Table 5**). These figures are substantially lower for native-born high-skilled workers, about one-third of whom (36.1 percent) are overqualified, and 6.1 percent greatly overqualified.[47]

High-skilled immigrants are more likely to be underemployed than high-skilled natives across all metropolitan gateway types. The greatest discrepancies between natives and foreign-born are observed in newer settlement areas (emerging and pre-emerging gateways). The least discrepancies are found

Table 5. Overqualification of High-Skilled Immigrants and Natives, by Metropolitan Gateway Type, 2006-2008

	Overqualified		Greatly Overqualified	
	Foreign-Born	Native-Born	Foreign-Born	Native-Born
100 largest metro areas	**49.0%**	**36.1%**	**11.3%**	**6.1%**
Former	46.6%	36.3%	10.6%	5.9%
Major-Continuous	49.6%	36.8%	11.0%	6.2%
Minor-Continuous	48.2%	35.6%	11.8%	6.2%
Post-World War II	50.0%	35.2%	11.6%	6.2%
Emerging	53.1%	37.1%	13.5%	6.3%
Re-Emerging	45.2%	35.7%	10.8%	8.9%
Pre-Emerging	50.3%	35.6%	12.3%	5.3%
Low Immigration Metro	46.0%	36.1%	10.4%	6.0%

Note: See endnote #46.

Source: Authors' analysis of ACS three-year estimates, 2006-2008

in former and major-continuous gateways, as well as low-immigrant metro areas. These differences may reflect underlying variation in other characteristics of high-skilled immigrants across places. In their study of college-educated immigrants in the United States, Jeanne Batalova and Michael Fix find that limited English-proficient, high-skilled immigrants were twice as likely to work in unskilled jobs as their proficient counterparts. They also found that having a U.S. degree is highly associated with immigrants securing a job that matches their skills. In addition, legal status matters, but only partially explains the underutilization of skills among Latin American and African immigrants, in particular.[48]

Discussion

In recent decades, Americans have witnessed a demographic transformation, in large part through immigration, which has brought tens of millions of new faces to their communities and substantially reshaped social, economic, and political institutions. This report finds that, despite popular perceptions, there are just as many high-skilled as low-skilled working-age immigrants currently living in the United States, and the growth rate of more educated arrivals to the United States now outpaces that of immigrants with little education. Where these new immigrants settle, as well as their skill sets, have greatly influenced the national debate on immigration reform.

The analysis presented here reveals three important features of the distribution of immigrant skills across metropolitan America: (1) variation in metropolitan economic structure and historical settlement patterns yields an uneven distribution of high- and low-skilled immigrants across the country; (2) metropolitan areas with slow-growing, foreign-born populations tend to attract many more high- than low-skilled immigrants, while faster-growing destinations draw larger shares of low-skilled immigrants; (3) low- and high-skilled immigrants have different labor market positions compared with their U.S.-born counterparts, and almost half of immigrants with a bachelor's degree or more are overqualified for their current jobs.

This report provides a snapshot of the "new geography of immigration," especially as it relates to the education levels of immigrants, at a moment when historically high levels of immigration have coincided with a particularly turbulent economic period.

Our findings offer important insights into both how to reshape national immigration policy and how to invest in and support immigrants already residing in the United States.

The swift demographic changes across metropolitan America intensify the debate on the economic value of immigrants and their role in the U.S. labor market, especially as the number of unauthorized

immigrants has grown in the past decade. Without confronting this in a constructive manner, explosive anti-immigrant rhetoric will continue to dominate national, state, and local discussions.

The passage of several high-profile state and local laws aimed at punishing and deflecting unauthorized immigrants resonates with an economically vulnerable, and understandably anxious, public. This context complicates legislative consideration of changes to U.S. immigration policy, as politicians may be loath to exert political capital for such a charged issue. Moreover, the strain of unsuccessful attempts in recent years has made the politics of immigration reform particularly toxic.

Without action at the federal level, states and local governments have emerged as the key players on immigration policy. According to the National Conference of State Legislatures, states enacted a record number of bills and resolutions on immigration issues during the 2010 sessions.[49] While many of the proposed laws were restrictive, punitive or related to law enforcement, others—likely more— were inclusive or protective, such as those that allocate funding for language learning, educational programs, or worker training.[50] The year 2010 also included Arizona's SB 1070, a law that expands the power of police and, among other actions, requires police to ask people during arrests and routine stops to verify their residency, and makes it a state crime to be present without documentation. The intent of the law is to push unauthorized immigrants from the state; however, the most controversial parts of the law are blocked from enforcement by a preliminary injunction ordered by a federal judge in July 2010. At this writing at least a dozen other states have considered similar bills, and two states, Utah and Georgia, have passed slightly watered down enforcement measures into law. Although Utah's HB 497 passed as part of a package of broader comprehensive immigration bills it was still blocked by a federal court injunction on the day that it went into effect, May 13, 2011- the same day that Georgia Governor Nathan Deal signed HB 87 into law. This is likely a sign of things to come for Georgia's law.

New provisions by local jurisdictions, including cities, counties and towns, are also on the rise. However, these are much more difficult to track than state action. Some of the earliest restrictive proposals occurred at the city or county level, serving as models for places looking for ways to discourage immigrants from settling down, including Hazleton, PA and Prince William County, VA.[51] However, as many states and local governments consider restrictive legislation, they must also weigh the costs of new technology or the potential costs of expensive lawsuits. Jurisdictions facing budget deficits may not be well positioned to take on added expenses that often come with major policy changes.

Our report confirms what some industries, employers and municipalities have already begun to recognize: that the new arrivals to this country should be viewed as a positive and skilled addition to the labor force rather than as a strain on society. By examining the new geography of immigrant skills across the 100 top metropolitan areas, we have also provided the data necessary for beginning to explore more inclusive immigration policies at the local, state and regional levels.

Traditionally, the role of the federal government has been to set admissions policy and to secure the border. The role of states, cities, and other local municipalities has largely been to deal with the policies that affect immigrants' social, economic, and civic integration.

State and local governments have important choices about how to welcome immigrants. While states and localities have little control over where immigrants choose to live, they play an integral role in the management of immigrants once they are living within their jurisdictions. In recent years, many state and local leaders have come to recognize the benefits of a proactively welcoming approach to immigrants, despite the challenges of integrating newcomers. New immigrants have injected new life into struggling areas, reinvigorating declining commercial districts, and rejuvenating dilapidated neighborhoods. They have contributed to economic growth through entrepreneurship and business growth and supplied labor during moments of expansion. Yet immigrants have variable skill sets and legal statuses and tension around immigrants, particularly those from Mexico and Central America, is percolating below the surface in some places, while in others, hostility from state and local leaders is voiced openly. Within this mix of opportunity and challenge, there are basic programs and policy changes that state and municipal governments can do to capitalize on the many strengths of the low-, middle- and high-skilled immigrants living in the United States today.

We offer and expand on several ideas to strengthen economic competitiveness and immigrant integration for metropolitan areas, state governments, as well as the federal government.

1. A Standing Commission on Labor and Immigration

Repairing U.S. immigration policy has proven to be neither a simple nor speedy process. Since the Immigration and Nationality Act was passed in 1965, there have been only a few major reforms that have overhauled admissions policy or set new policies in place.[52] For example, the current thresholds for employment-based admissions for legal permanent residence were established in 1990. Temporary worker programs for those in specialty occupations, such as the H-1B program begun in 1992, have had adjustments to the number of immigrants admitted annually, largely through political pressure and lobbying by various constituents.

Although President Barack Obama has called for comprehensive immigration reform as recently as his 2011 State of the Union speech and again in a major address in El Paso in May 2011, Congress has been deadlocked on the issue and will likely remain that way for some time. However, we argue here that as the United States goes through an anticipated industrial restructuring over the medium term, what is needed is a more informed, strategic, and nimble system for implementing changes to immigration policy. Congressional debates around immigration policy reform often span years; some policies appear outdated as soon as they are implemented. In other cases, adjustments to existing policies, if applied in a timely manner, could improve their functions. However, often there is no mechanism to make the changes.

One way to create policies that more closely hew to current realities is to have a dedicated body of experts analyze and make recommendations to Congress in a timely and systematic way. Several proposals have been offered by organizations such as the Migration Policy Institute, the Economic Policy Institute, and the Council on Foreign Relations as well as the Brookings-Duke Roundtable on Immigration Policy to create a federal-level standing commission on labor and immigration.[53] These proposals call for a bipartisan, independent body to be composed of economists, demographers, and other experts to analyze labor and immigration trends and to make policy recommendations to Congress. The goal would be to have more flexible, swift, and responsive policy changes to short- and long-term labor needs, global and national structural shifts, and potentially, spatial mismatches and labor patterns. Such a system would boost U.S. competitiveness in a globalized economy where workers can ostensibly compete for jobs in their choice of countries.

The model of the Standing Commission, as proposed by the Migration Policy Institute, would be required by statue to submit an annual report and recommendations simultaneously to the president and Congress. The process would then include congressional consultation, and unless Congress acted to maintain existing labor market-related immigration visa levels, the president would make a numerical and preferential adjustment to the annual visas allocated.

Currently such a mechanism does not exist. Nor do we have a large body of research to draw on to understand how immigration policy and U.S. labor markets are related, especially how particular visas impact both immigrant flows and economic growth. Thus, a major component of the duties of the Standing Commission would be to analyze these trends and to manage the collection of new data on the relationship between immigrants, admissions policy, and the U.S. labor market. Some of this could be done administratively, for example, by keeping track of temporary workers and their propensities to change status, leave this country, stay in this country, and so forth. The Standing Commission would then be able to formulate recommendations based on evidence from the markets, immigrant behavior, and immigration policy instead of the current process, which is contentious, political, and often driven more by emotion than fact.

The analysis presented here shows that immigrant skills are anything but evenly distributed across metropolitan areas. Therefore we propose that a Standing Commission on Labor and Immigration should be extended to include state-level affiliates. State-level commissions could be created that would be similarly structured, but serve an advisory role to the federal commission. Thus, we envision they would have two primary missions. First, the creation of bipartisan teams of experts who would get input and data from state, metropolitan and local business, government, nonprofit, and university officials to make connections between immigrant workers and local labor gaps. In addition, they would help identify local avenues for potential economic development and entrepreneurial activities. Ultimately state-level commissions would provide analyses and findings to the national Standing Commission. In this way, regional needs would be identified from the source and, as each state works toward building their own robust local economies, the federal Standing Commission would benefit from these resources too.

Some states already have commissions or partnerships that could be tasked with analyzing regional needs. For example, the short-term Commission to Study the Impact of Immigrants in Maryland was authorized by that state in 2008 to "study the demographic profile of immigrants and their impact on Maryland" and includes assessments of economic and fiscal impacts, budget implications of immigrants and their children, and constraints on immigrants and their businesses, among other issues.[54] Another model, the Utah Compact, was designed to come up with state legislation that would have widespread support among law enforcement, business, community, and religious leaders. More of a political process than an economic assessment, the Compact proposed legislation that was largely an alternative response to the Arizona legislation, and ultimately may provoke as much as it provides. While neither of these models are necessarily the right ones for state-level commissions as envisioned above, they do establish that there is a need to understand immigration processes better and a desire to manage immigration at the state and local level.

2. Investing in Low-Skilled Immigrants

The challenges in low-skill destinations are undoubtedly plentiful, but are far from insurmountable. Local governments can implement simple, politically-neutral, and cost-effective policy changes that can improve the lives of low-skilled immigrants and those that interact with them.

We focus first on the most fundamental: English language access and training. Large shares of immigrants in low-skilled destination areas struggle linguistically, limiting employment and educational opportunities, narrowing housing options, and potentially straining the formation of relationships with U.S.-born residents. Poor language skills also complicate the delivery of public goods and services, which research shows is effective at helping to lift immigrants out of poverty.[55] It is crucial then that regional leaders, particularly those in areas where low-skill immigrants predominate, work not only to craft policies that aid and encourage the formation of strong English language skills, but that they simultaneously promote service programs that reach out to immigrants in their mother tongue.

While some localities have reacted to growing immigrant populations by declaring English as the official language and mandating that all government activities and publications use English only, others, such as Montgomery County, MD in suburban Washington have developed policies to better communicate and serve the population with limited English skills. Examples of successful programs include requiring government employees to attend language-sensitivity training, offering interpreter and translation services for public programs and services, and providing multilingual information resources and program applications.

In the digital era, a simple step state and local governments can take to assist immigrants with limited English skills is to create and maintain websites in languages other than English. Some major immigrant gateways, such as New York City (see http://www.nyc.gov/html/lg/) have successfully done this, but few other local governments have custom translated pages on their websites. Basic civic responsibilities that are now frequently completed online—such as registering a car, applying for business permits, paying utility bills and traffic infractions, communicating with public officials, or requesting building or remodeling permits—can be pain-staking endeavors for those with limited English abilities. Offering these online services in multiple languages not only assist immigrants, but it fosters opportunities for immigrants to become civically engaged, and is potentially financially advantageous for local governments if they can save resources in collecting fees and dues or dedicating funds to costly translators for basic services.

The link between English ability and economic success is well established: immigrants who speak English proficiently have higher wages, more stable jobs, and greater leverage in bargaining than those with limited English skills. Local governments should therefore be active in developing language abilities for the benefit of all. Public-private partnerships, such as the Montgomery Coalition for Adult English Literacy that promotes the idea that employers deserve to have workforces that are literate in English by providing resources for employers who offer on-the-job linguistic training, are an additional model local governments could consider.[56]

Policymakers are frequently concerned about the potential for job competition between immigrant and native low-skilled workers. While these anxieties will undoubtedly continue, local governments may be able to develop programs to manage direct labor force competition, by having programs that are inclusive of both immigrants and U.S.-born workers. Some examples are local governments playing

a more proactive role in matching low-skilled workers, regardless of nativity status, with employer demands. Potential areas of consideration include electronic portals that offer listings of employment opportunities, as well as social networking-style summaries of workers' skills and job histories accessible by employers. Authorizing or even sponsoring day laborer work locations can also be effective at connecting employers and employees in a manner that promotes fair wages, safe work sites, and contractual agreements between parties. Some day labor sites run by local governments and nonprofits offer English language instruction and other workforce training to potential workers in addition to matching employers and workers.

Investing in High-Skilled Immigrants

Immigrant integration in high-skill destinations is also complicated by language barriers, and immigrants with college and graduate degrees often are unable to work in their fields due to lack of English language proficiency.[57] Thus, the initiatives and programs described above are likely relevant to the needs of high-skilled immigrants with limited English skills. But, as we demonstrate in this report, high-skilled immigrants could use assistance in transferring their skills to the U.S. labor markets.

We view states and local governments as being natural sources of support in facilitating better job matches for high-skilled immigrants. The types of programs we envision include training workshops on how to navigate local job markets, and resume and interview assistance. Even better would be programs that, as the Migration Policy Institute's Jeanne Batalova and Michael Fix argue, "bridge" deficiencies in foreign-trained workers skills with the needs of U.S. employers.[58] These could include a mix of language, educational, and business training targeted specifically at skilled immigrants.

These types of programs exist currently, targeting professionals and partnering with local governments, non-profits, universities, and private businesses. One good example is the organization Upwardly Global, which brings together employers and workers in Chicago, New York and San Francisco. They work with immigrants to integrate them into the mainstream workforce by preparing them for the specifics of their job markets and helping them develop networks. And, they work with employers who value immigrant workers to reach into this labor pool. Similarly, the Welcome Back Initiative works with immigrant health professionals on licensing, language and marketing information to find jobs in U.S. communities.

In addition, non-profits such as Global Detroit and Global Pittsburgh aim to attract high-skilled immigrant workers. Using strategies to internationalize those metro areas, such as marketing the regions as immigrant-friendly, retaining international university students, and boosting foreign direct investment, allow local areas to reach out to immigrants in an effort to grow their international communities, their economies and their resident populations.

Conclusion

The new geography of immigration raises many questions about the stock and flow of high- and low-skilled immigrants and how local and state governments can respond. The human capital that immigrants offer, including what they gain while living in the United States, is an important dimension of contemporary immigration. And while low-skilled immigration has grown steeply over the last several decades, research has all but overlooked the fact that high-skilled immigration has grown dramatically.

Our findings point to several reasons why the perception persists that most immigrants are low-skilled. They make up an increasing share of the low-skilled labor force as the share of U.S.-born workers with no high school degree dwindles. In 1994, 73 percent of working-age adults without a high school degree were born in the United States; 15 years later, U.S.-born residents made up only 53 percent of those without a high school degree. In addition, lower- skilled immigrants dominate flows into new destinations, and the visibility of these newcomers changes the dynamic in areas that have never dealt with immigration. This group of new immigrants is more likely to be from Latin America, less likely to speak English well, and more likely to be unauthorized These prominent features have received a lot of attention from local leaders and media alike, and usually not the favorable kind. These popular depictions add to the pressure that elected officials face—compounded in recessionary times with diminishing

resources and budgets cuts–to reduce spending. Expenses associated with immigrants, frequently couched as illegal immigrants, is often one of the first places that local leaders look for savings.

Immigrants and the role they will play in the future U.S. labor force are ultimately linked to demographic transformations currently underway. Recent numbers released by the U.S. Census Bureau for 2010 show how fast the U.S. racial and ethnic composition is changing due to the rapid growth of Latino and Asian populations, through both immigration and natural increase. One-in-six U.S. residents is now Latino, and that group represented one half of the population growth during the 2000s when nearly 15 million Hispanics were added to the population. Asians make up less than 5 percent of the population, but grew by 43 percent between 2000 and 2010, the same pace as Latinos. Contrast those rates with growth rates for whites (1.2 percent) and blacks (11 percent).

The acceleration of ethnic diversity is even more striking in the child population, where one-in-four children are Latino. Indeed, population projections put the Hispanic population as the major source of growth over the next several decades, so that by 2050, nearly one-third of the total U.S. population will be Latino.[59] These statistics underscore the need to ensure that this generation of immigrants succeeds so that their children will be well prepared to participate in the U.S. labor market, which is tied to the increasingly competitive globalized market. With a large and aging native population, the educational attainment of the children of immigrants is one of the most pressing issues of the moment.

Understanding what the future holds for different metropolitan areas due to compositional differences is also of central importance. Immigrant networks and chain migration may reinforce existing skill profiles. But professional and high-tech industrial growth may create demand not only for high-skill immigrants, but also for cheap, low-skill immigrant labor in construction and service-oriented work, ultimately leading to a convergence in skill ratios across destinations over time and the array of service needs that come with that mix.

Anti-immigrant rhetoric dominates political and policy discussions around immigration. As metropolitan areas begin recovering from the recession and local economies begin to grow, immigrants will continue to be in the spotlight. We urge policymakers to address this important issue pragmatically and rationally to ensure that local economies and the U.S. economy prosper.

Appendix Table 1. Immigrant Population, Gateway Type, and Immigrant Skill Profiles in 100 Largest Metropolitan Areas, 2009

Metropolitan area	Gateway Type	Immigrant Population	Percent Immigrant	Immigrant Skills				
				Low Skill	Mid Skill	High Skill	Skill Ratio	Skill Type
Akron, OH	Low Immigration Metro	25,167	3.6	4,548	9,076	6,289	138	High
Albany-Schenectady-Troy, NY	Low Immigration Metro	59,321	6.9	8,605	19,584	19,087	222	High
Albuquerque, NM	Low Immigration Metro	82,986	9.7	30,904	25,410	11,997	39	Low
Allentown-Bethlehem-Easton, PA-NJ	Low Immigration Metro	63,174	7.7	11,800	24,468	17,859	151	High
Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Marietta, GA	Emerging	713,333	13.0	152,799	238,983	182,534	119	Balanced
Augusta-Richmond County, GA-SC	Low Immigration Metro	18,490	3.4	3,360	5,517	6,124	182	High
Austin-Round Rock, TX	Emerging	249,240	14.6	81,210	63,559	59,523	73	Low
Bakersfield, CA	Minor-Continuous	159,218	19.7	76,512	43,611	10,176	13	Low
Baltimore-Towson, MD	Re-Emerging	222,678	8.3	31,546	66,729	87,965	279	High
Baton Rouge, LA	Low Immigration Metro	24,979	3.2	5,712	6,830	7,275	127	High
Birmingham-Hoover, AL	Low Immigration Metro	45,320	4.0	9,695	14,335	11,866	122	Balanced
Boise City-Nampa, ID	Low Immigration Metro	44,829	7.5	13,548	14,030	7,277	54	Low
Boston-Cambridge-Quincy, MA-NH	Major-Continuous	726,536	15.8	140,770	251,697	226,802	161	High
Bradenton-Sarasota-Venice, FL	Low Immigration Metro	83,398	12.1	15,036	36,973	20,063	133	High
Bridgeport-Stamford-Norwalk, CT	Minor-Continuous	177,767	19.7	35,511	66,433	46,762	132	High
Buffalo-Niagara Falls, NY	Former	64,115	5.7	11,246	21,735	18,698	166	High
Cape Coral-Fort Myers, FL	Pre-Emerging	84,957	14.5	19,901	35,401	14,421	72	Low
Charleston-North Charleston-Summerville, SC	Low Immigration Metro	32,501	4.9	5,807	11,604	8,625	149	High
Charlotte-Gastonia-Concord, NC-SC	Pre-Emerging	167,423	9.6	42,762	52,874	39,059	91	Balanced
Chattanooga, TN-GA	Low Immigration Metro	17,599	3.4	3,939	5,754	4,235	108	Balanced
Chicago-Naperville-Joliet, IL-IN-WI	Major-Continuous	1,645,920	17.2	437,833	590,265	386,882	88	Balanced
Cincinnati-Middletown, OH-KY-IN	Low Immigration Metro	81,693	3.8	11,155	23,286	30,663	275	High
Cleveland-Elyria-Mentor, OH	Former	116,192	5.6	20,646	45,966	34,820	169	High
Colorado Springs, CO	Low Immigration Metro	43,359	6.9	9,143	18,786	8,347	91	Balanced
Columbia, SC	Low Immigration Metro	32,514	4.4	6,397	8,673	10,114	158	High
Columbus, OH	Pre-Emerging	124,083	6.9	18,105	40,868	39,727	219	High
Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington, TX	Post-WWII	1,142,122	17.7	421,771	308,663	201,605	48	Low
Dayton, OH	Low Immigration Metro	25,247	3.0	2,846	8,819	9,398	330	High
Denver-Aurora, CO	Re-Emerging	301,668	11.8	94,872	90,404	58,869	62	Low
Des Moines-West Des Moines, IA	Low Immigration Metro	37,400	6.6	8,872	12,478	8,548	96	Balanced
Detroit-Warren-Livonia, MI	Former	393,499	8.9	83,226	124,954	119,657	144	High
El Paso, TX	Minor-Continuous	190,465	25.4	84,792	63,233	22,279	26	Low
Fresno, CA	Minor-Continuous	196,120	21.4	94,510	46,116	21,293	23	Low
Grand Rapids-Wyoming, MI	Low Immigration Metro	48,723	6.3	15,847	14,268	8,108	51	Low
Greensboro-High Point, NC	Pre-Emerging	56,393	7.9	15,959	17,531	9,120	57	Low
Greenville-Mauldin-Easley, SC	Low Immigration Metro	43,199	6.8	12,157	12,645	9,807	81	Balanced
Harrisburg-Carlisle, PA	Low Immigration Metro	24,125	4.5	3,550	8,784	8,189	231	High
Hartford-West Hartford-East Hartford, CT	Minor-Continuous	148,507	12.4	26,527	60,688	36,582	138	High

Appendix Table 1. Immigrant Population, Gateway Type, and Immigrant Skill Profiles in 100 Largest Metropolitan Areas, 2009 (continued)

Metropolitan area	Gateway Type	Immigrant Population	Percent Immigrant	Immigrant Skills				
				Low Skill	Mid Skill	High Skill	Skill Ratio	Skill Type
Honolulu, HI	Minor-Continuous	174,124	19.2	29,585	83,791	40,464	137	High
Houston-Sugar Land-Baytown, TX	Post-WWII	1,278,413	21.8	448,877	370,177	235,140	52	Low
Indianapolis-Carmel, IN	Low Immigration Metro	101,281	5.8	27,034	24,730	23,997	89	Balanced
Jackson, MS	Low Immigration Metro	12,707	2.3	3,273	2,586	3,860	118	Balanced
Jacksonville, FL	Low Immigration Metro	106,029	8.0	13,473	44,935	30,103	223	High
Kansas City, MO-KS	Low Immigration Metro	119,152	5.8	30,619	38,096	26,063	85	Balanced
Knoxville, TN	Low Immigration Metro	22,249	3.2	4,404	5,475	7,562	172	High
Lakeland-Winter Haven, FL	Pre-Emerging	59,791	10.2	19,343	23,264	7,154	37	Low
Las Vegas-Paradise, NV	Emerging	416,214	21.9	130,096	157,276	63,367	49	Low
Little Rock-North Little Rock-Conway, AR	Low Immigration Metro	23,884	3.5	6,768	6,516	6,091	90	Balanced
Los Angeles-Long Beach-Santa Ana, CA	Post-WWII	4,434,012	34.4	1,477,201	1,507,441	919,667	62	Low
Louisville-Jefferson County, KY-IN	Low Immigration Metro	51,995	4.1	9,294	17,319	11,058	119	Balanced
Madison, WI	Low Immigration Metro	35,673	6.3	4,726	10,381	12,243	259	High
McAllen-Edinburg-Mission, TX	Minor-Continuous	214,758	29.0	106,343	51,252	19,218	18	Low
Memphis, TN-MS-AR	Low Immigration Metro	61,458	4.7	15,410	17,798	15,850	103	Balanced
Miami-Fort Lauderdale-Pompano Beach, FL	Post-WWII	2,059,170	37.1	458,837	926,746	422,811	92	Balanced
Milwaukee-Waukesha-West Allis, WI	Former	107,640	6.9	27,797	34,079	26,654	96	Balanced
Minneapolis-St. Paul-Bloomington, MN-WI	Re-Emerging	296,932	9.1	61,813	89,425	77,103	125	High
Modesto, CA	Minor-Continuous	106,684	20.9	44,962	31,753	9,584	21	Low
Nashville-Davidson--Murfreesboro--Franklin, TN	Pre-Emerging	113,418	7.2	25,132	37,358	24,926	99	Balanced
New Haven-Milford, CT	Minor-Continuous	93,907	11.1	16,963	36,654	27,535	162	High
New Orleans-Metairie-Kenner, LA	Low Immigration Metro	83,394	7.0	19,988	35,544	15,891	80	Balanced
New York-Northern New Jersey-Long Island, NY-NJ-PA	Major-Continuous	5,271,238	27.6	1,200,047	2,029,319	1,378,929	115	Balanced
Ogden-Clearfield, UT	Low Immigration Metro	31,136	5.7	9,529	11,548	4,048	42	Low
Oklahoma City, OK	Low Immigration Metro	88,693	7.2	28,307	26,406	16,743	59	Low
Omaha-Council Bluffs, NE-IA	Low Immigration Metro	56,429	6.6	17,652	15,077	10,205	58	Low
Orlando-Kissimmee, FL	Emerging	328,499	15.8	58,869	147,867	68,447	116	Balanced
Oxnard-Thousand Oaks-Ventura, CA	Minor-Continuous	183,444	22.8	65,454	59,396	33,321	51	Low
Palm Bay-Melbourne-Titusville, FL	Low Immigration Metro	45,384	8.5	5,013	25,248	9,450	189	High
Philadelphia-Camden-Wilmington, PA-NJ-DE-MD	Re-Emerging	553,921	9.3	100,345	186,612	174,278	174	High
Phoenix-Mesa-Scottsdale, AZ	Emerging	671,817	15.4	225,558	227,481	105,230	47	Low
Pittsburgh, PA	Former	70,918	3.0	7,806	18,596	30,542	391	High
Portland-South Portland-Biddeford, ME	Low Immigration Metro	20,384	3.9	2,405	8,414	4,979	207	High
Portland-Vancouver-Beaverton, OR-WA	Re-Emerging	270,099	12.0	63,971	93,105	63,471	99	Balanced
Poughkeepsie-Newburgh-Middletown, NY	Low Immigration Metro	75,227	11.1	15,653	28,363	19,793	126	High
Providence-New Bedford-Fall River, RI-MA	Former	200,641	12.5	69,120	77,929	29,109	42	Low
Provo-Orem, UT	Low Immigration Metro	36,409	6.6	6,052	11,268	7,786	129	High

Appendix Table 1. Immigrant Population, Gateway Type, and Immigrant Skill Profiles in 100 Largest Metropolitan Areas, 2009 (continued)

Metropolitan area	Gateway Type	Immigrant Population	Percent Immigrant	Immigrant Skills				
				Low Skill	Mid Skill	High Skill	Skill Ratio	Skill Type
Raleigh-Cary, NC	Pre-Emerging	125,920	11.2	29,063	32,993	40,347	139	High
Richmond, VA	Low Immigration Metro	76,347	6.2	15,260	24,599	22,200	145	High
Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario, CA	Post-WWII	883,150	21.3	323,273	325,415	124,624	39	Low
Rochester, NY	Minor-Continuous	65,141	6.3	12,396	24,583	17,404	140	High
Sacramento--Arden-Arcade--Roseville, CA	Re-Emerging	361,596	17.0	97,198	129,637	75,964	78	Balanced
St. Louis, MO-IL	Former	113,742	4.0	13,307	34,217	40,573	305	High
Salt Lake City, UT	Pre-Emerging	123,044	10.9	34,877	44,410	18,521	53	Low
San Antonio, TX	Minor-Continuous	233,560	11.3	82,256	78,846	36,661	45	Low
San Diego-Carlsbad-San Marcos, CA	Post-WWII	694,238	22.7	201,436	236,473	160,775	80	Balanced
San Francisco-Oakland-Fremont, CA	Major-Continuous	1,273,780	29.5	289,406	433,327	415,036	143	High
San Jose-Sunnyvale-Santa Clara, CA	Re-Emerging	653,236	35.5	132,140	187,790	254,532	193	High
Scranton--Wilkes-Barre, PA	Low Immigration Metro	20,310	3.7	5,319	6,679	3,985	75	Balanced
Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue, WA	Re-Emerging	535,481	15.7	93,206	182,633	169,901	182	High
Springfield, MA	Low Immigration Metro	56,504	8.1	11,279	24,090	10,990	97	Balanced
Stockton, CA	Minor-Continuous	160,216	23.7	64,041	50,755	20,854	33	Low
Syracuse, NY	Low Immigration Metro	34,044	5.3	4,985	12,243	9,949	200	High
Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater, FL	Re-Emerging	319,052	11.6	66,210	139,491	70,268	106	Balanced
Toledo, OH	Low Immigration Metro	20,642	3.1	3,767	6,629	5,828	155	High
Tucson, AZ	Minor-Continuous	137,214	13.4	38,641	50,648	22,536	58	Low
Tulsa, OK	Low Immigration Metro	49,894	5.4	15,107	15,822	7,862	52	Low
Virginia Beach-Norfolk-Newport News, VA-NC	Low Immigration Metro	97,853	5.8	11,345	44,351	26,287	232	High
Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV	Post-WWII	1,103,271	20.1	198,944	349,705	375,164	189	High
Wichita, KS	Low Immigration Metro	37,732	6.1	11,118	14,112	6,737	61	Low
Worcester, MA	Minor-Continuous	90,140	11.2	14,834	33,412	27,775	187	High
Youngstown-Warren-Boardman, OH-PA	Low Immigration Metro	12,363	2.2	2,296	5,464	3,033	132	High

Notes: Data from 2009 American Community Survey; "Skill Ratio" is the ratio of high-skilled to low-skilled immigrants (multiplied by 100)

Endnotes

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2. U.S. Congressional Budget Office, "The role of Immigrants in the U.S. Labor Market: An Update" (2010).

3. Randy Capps, Michael Fix and Serena Yi-Ying Lin, 2010, "Still an Hourglass?: Immigrant Workers in Middle-Skilled Jobs," Washington D.C.: Migration Policy Institute.

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5. Among the 463,042 immigrants who arrived to the United States in 2009 with legal permanent resident (LPR) status, only 3.6% were granted for employment-based reasons vs. 86.1% of new LPRs being based on family reasons (family sponsorship or being the immediate relative of a U.S. citizen). Of the nearly 3.5 million short-term visas allotted in 2009, half (49.6%) were to temporary workers and their families (for more information see, U.S. Department of Homeland Security. 2009. Yearbook of Immigration Statistics: 2009. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Homeland Security.)

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13. Jeanne Batalova and Michael Fix. 2008. *Uneven Progress: The Employment Pathways of Skilled immigrants in the United States.* Washington DC: Migration Policy Institute.

14. The 2010 Census did not include a question on birthplace, which is where immigrant status is derived in previous decennial census years. Therefore, we rely on the ACS for the most recent estimates of the foreign-born.

15. The 2009 ACS surveyed about 3 million households nationwide and reports estimates for geographic areas with populations of 65,000 or more.

16. These 3-year estimates from the American Community Survey allow for examination of smaller populations (i.e. the foreign-born). They are pooled data collected over a 36-month period, during 2006, 2007 and 2008.

17. Michael Hoefer, Nancy Rytina, and Christopher Campbell. 2007. "Estimates of the Unauthorized Immigrant Population Residing in the United States: January 2006." Population Estimates, Office of Immigration Statistics. Washington DC: Department of Homeland Security. In areas with a large unauthorized population, this undercoverage is thus problematic. Given the tendency for immigrants to co-reside, the undercount rate may be higher in areas with high unauthorized populations. While we are not able to correct our estimates for this lack of coverage, we reanalyzed our data excluding metro areas where this concern is particularly salient (e.g., the four "border cities" in our sample: El Paso, McAllen-Edinburg-Mission, San Diego-Carlsbad-San Marcos, and Tucson), and found no substantive differences with the results presented here. Nevertheless, readers should be aware that the undocumented population, most of whom are low-skilled, are likely underrepresented in our estimates of both the size and skill distribution of foreign-born populations.

18. Batalova and Fix 2008

19. Harry Holzer, Julia I. Lane, David B. Rosenblum, and Fredrik Andersson. 2011. *Where are all the Good Jobs Going? What National and Local Job Quality and Dynamics Mean for U.S. Workers.* New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

20. Puerto Ricans are U.S. citizens and are not considered immigrants.

21. While there is some unevenness with how other work has defined "low-skilled," we follow David Card's recent work that compellingly argues that immigrants lacking high school diplomas are substitutes for natives with no more than a high school education. See David Card, "Immigration and Inequality," NBER Working Paper 14683, Cambridge: National Bureau of Economic Research, 2009 http://www.nber.org/papers/w14683.pdf?new_window=1

22. The lower age bound of 25 is necessary to afford a reasonable time period for completing schooling. We are also constrained by the ACS data that tabulates education only for those 25 years and older. Using ACS PUMS and CPS data, the overall immigrant skill ratio is, as expected, lower when 18 to 24 year-olds are included in the calculations (1.01 for 25+ immigrants vs. 0.93 for 18+ immigrants) and, nationally, the percent of working-age immigrants who are low-skilled is slightly higher than the percent high-skilled when 18 to 24 years old are included (27.8 percent low-skilled for immigrants age 25 to 64 versus 28.7 percent low-skilled for immigrants age 18 to 64).

23. If high school graduates are included with the low-skilled, the overall skill ratio of immigrants in the largest 100 metros drops considerably to 55.3, meaning that there are nearly twice as many immigrants with a high school diploma or less to those with a college degree. Importantly, however, the general pattern of metropolitan variation observed by our preferred definition of low-skilled immigrants remains intact, with former gateways having the highest-skilled immigrant populations (skill ratio of 89.3) and minor-continuous gateways having the least-skilled ones (skill ratio of 40.3).

24. Historical county-level data come from Minnesota Population Center, National Historical Geographic Information System: Pre-release Version 0.1 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2004). For analyses relying on Census Public Use Microdata Samples (PUMS), the Census Public Use Microdata Areas (PUMAs) is the lowest level of geography identified. Spatial correspondence tools from the Missouri Data Center are used to link PUMAs to current metropolitan areas. For the most part, PUMAs do not cross metro boundaries (see www.census.gov/geo/puma/puma_guide.pdf), but for those that do, the metro area in which the greatest share of the PUMA population is located is assigned. Those PUMAs in which the assigned metro area

contains less than 25 percent of the PUMA population are excluded (N=85). After these restrictions, the mean share of the PUMA population located in the assigned metro is 95 percent.

25. This approach to assess the histories of immigration to metro areas differs from Singer's earlier approach (Audrey Singer, "The Rise of New Immigrant Gateways," Washington, DC: Brookings, 2004 which was based on historical data on major center cities (i.e., New York City rather than New York metropolitan area). Because the procedure used here includes area outside of the central cities, estimates of the foreign-born populations are larger, but percentage foreign-born smaller than those used in Singer's typology (e.g., in 1900 New York City had an estimated immigrant population of 1.27 million that comprised 37 percent of the total population, while our procedure based on current metro boundaries finds the New York metro area to have a 1900 foreign born population of 1.73 million and a 33 percent population share). Despite these differences, the two estimates are highly correlated (e.g., 1900 foreign born population, r = .98; 1900 percentage foreign born, r = .99) and result in identical destination typology characterization.

26. This typology was first developed in Audrey Singer, "The Rise of New Immigrant Gateways" (Washington D.C.: Brookings Institution, 2004).

27. In 2010, among working-aged adults, there were 8.80 million high-skilled immigrants, 12.68 million middle-skilled immigrants, and 8.26 million low-skilled immigrants.

28. U.S. Department of Homeland Security, United States Citizenship and Immigration Services, Report on H-1B Petitions, various years. http://www.uscis.gov/portal/site/ uscis/menuitem.eb1d4c2a3e5b9ac89243c6a7543f6d1a/?vg nextoid=9a1d9ddf801b3210VgnVCM100000b92ca60aRCRD &vgnextchannel=9a1d9ddf801b3210VgnVCM100000b92ca6 0aRCRD

29. Open Doors Data, "International Students: Enrollment Trends" Washington, D.C.: Institute of International Education, 2010. http://www.iie.org/en/Research-and-Publications/Open-Doors/Data/International-Students/ Enrollment-Trends/1948-2010

30. While data about such adjustments in status are not readily available, B. Lindsay Lowell has estimated that approximately 7% of foreign students adjusted to LPR status directly, and that an additional 7% to 8% of students adjusted to LPR status from an H visa. In addition, he estimated that about half of all H-1Bs became legal permanent residents. See B. Lindsay Lowell, "Foreign

Student Adjustment to Permanent Status in the United States," Presentation at the International Metropolis Conference, Toronto, 2005, and B. Lindsay Lowell, "H-1B Temporary Workers: Estimating the Population," University of California San Diego: The Center for Comparative Immigration Studies, 2000 http://www.ccis-ucsd.org/ PUBLICATIONS/wrkg12.PDF.

31. For example, Michigan's New Economy Initiative, aims to make the region more welcoming to high-skilled immigrants http://neweconomyinitiative.cfsem.org/blog/global-detroit-tapping-the-economic-potential-of-immigrants; Global Pittsburgh whose mission statement is "Actively marketing & promoting the Pittsburgh region and its many international connections around the world" http://www. globalpittsburgh.org/ and the Global Cleveland Initiative, which encourages people from all over the world to live and work in the area http://blog.cleveland.com/metro/2011/04/ welcome_center_opens_arms_to_n.html

32. See Singer, "The Rise of New Immigrant Gateways." The typology is based on various thresholds of the size and share of the immigrant population during the 20th century. Using metropolitan area definitions (the original was based on cities) and incorporating more recent data for the 2000s, we also update the status of metropolitan areas in the original typology. The extended time period of the typology results in a few metropolitan areas shifting from one category to another, reflecting the dynamic growth of immigrant populations at the metropolitan level. For example, several metro areas (Washington, Dallas-Fort Worth) were originally identified as emerging gateways are re-designated as post-WWII. In addition, Baltimore moved from former to re-emerging, Austin moved from pre-emerging to emerging, and several metros not in the original analysis due to population size appear in the former (Providence) and pre-emerging (Cape Coral, Columbus, Lakeland) lists. In addition, an altogether new category, the minor-continuous gateways was added to designate smaller but stable immigrant populations in 15 metro areas (as compared to their major continuous counterparts). Complete threshold criteria for all gateway types is available from the authors.

33. Singer, Hardwick, Brettell 2008.

34. Page 18 in William H. Frey, "Immigration and Domestic Migration in US Metro Areas: 2000 and 1990 Census Findings by Education and Race." Research Report 05-572, Population Studies Center, University of Michigan, 2005.

35. Audrey Singer and Jill H. Wilson, "From 'Here' to 'There:' Refugee Resettlement in Metropolitan America," Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 2006.

36. See Table 4 in Karina Fortuny, Randy Capps, and Jeffrey S. Passel. 2007. *The Characteristics of Unauthorized Immigrants in California, Los Angeles County, and the United States*. Urban Institute: Washington, D.C.

37. The original typology of immigrant gateways placed Washington in the category of emerging immigrant gateways. However, one decade later, it is clear from the size and rate of growth that metropolitan Washington (along with the Dallas-Fort Worth metropolex) has fully emerged as a gateway and now is classified as Post-WWII. See, Audrey Singer, "The Rise of Immigrants Gateways," Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 2004 and Audrey Singer, 2003, "At Home in the Nation's Capital: Immigrant Trends in Metropolitan Washington." Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution.

38. We use the 2006-2008 ACS 3- year estimates here.

39. Immigrants who respond to the ACS that they speak English "only" or "very well" are considered proficient.

40. Exceptions include Chicago with a long history of settling Mexican immigrants and nearby Milwaukee, as well as San Francisco and Los Angeles.

41. Barry R. Chiswick and Paul W. Miller. 2005. "Do Enclaves Matter in Immigrant Adjustment?" City & Community 4: 5-35; Sean-Shong Hwang and Juan Xi. 2008. "Structural and Individual Covariates of English Language Proficiency." *Social Forces* 86: 1079-104.

42. We use the 2006-2008 ACS three- year estimates here.

43. Excluding individuals out of the labor force from this calculation increases employment rates considerably: to 93.5% and 87.1% for low-skilled immigrants and natives, respectively, and to 96.6% and 97.4% for high-skilled immigrants and natives, respectively.

44. Summarizing earnings based on medians (rather than means) produce native-immigrant differences similar in size. Given the positive skew of the distribution, the median earnings of high-skilled workers are substantially lower than the reported means ($53,394 for immigrants; $59,190 for natives).

45. Batalova and Fix 2008.

46. Overqualification is measured by first finding the mean educational attainment, and its standard deviation, for all detailed occupations in the country, based on ACS data. Individual workers' level of education is compared to these occupation-specific means and if a worker's educational

attainment is one or more standard deviations above the mean education for their occupation, they are considered "overqualified." Workers with educational attainments 2 or more standard deviations above the mean are considered "greatly overqualified." Given the low level of education in the low-skilled immigrant population, no low-skilled immigrant workers in the ACS are overqualified, according to this operationalization.

47. These results are consistent with an analysis of occupational status of immigrant workers in Fiscal Policy Institute, "Across the Spectrum: the Wide Range of Job Immigrants Do," New York: Fiscal Policy Institute, 2010. http://www.fiscalpolicy.org/FPI_ImmigrantsAndOccupationalDiversity.pdf.

48. Batalova and Fix 2008.

49. National Conference of State Legislatures, "2010 Immigration-Related Laws and Resolutions in the States (January 1 - December 31, 2010)," http://www.ncsl.org/default.aspx?tabid=21857

50. *Progressive States Network, The Anti-Immigrant Movement that Failed,* 2008.

51. In 2006, Hazleton, PA passed the "Illegal Immigration Relief Act" designed to make Hazleton inhospitable to illegal immigrants and those who did business with them by making it illegal to rent or employ anyone without status, and in 2007 Prince William County, VA passed a resolution that ordered local police to check the residency status of lawbreakers if there was "probable cause" to believe they were present illegally among other provisions (see Singer, Hardwick and Brettell, 2008 and Singer, Wilson, and DeRenzis, "Immigrants, Politics, and Local Response in Suburban Washington," Washington, DC: Brookings, 2009.)

52. After the US Nationality Act was amended in 1965, admissions criteria switched from a national origins based system to a categorical preference based system. Admissions were modified again in 1976 (to include Western Hemisphere admissions under the preference system) and then in 1978 to create an annual worldwide numerical ceiling for admissions. The Immigration Act of 1990 raised the numerical ceiling and also created the "diversity" visa among other things. Other major acts to be adopted were the Refugee Act of 1980 that set up a system for admitting refugees in line with international protocols, giving the President (in consultation with Congress) the authority to set the annual ceiling for refugee entries. The 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act legalized over 3 million unauthorized immigrants and set in place several enforcement controls. In 1996, three consecutive acts intersected with immigration:

The Illegal Immigration Reform and Illegal Immigrant Responsibility Act, the Anti-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act, and the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (also known as "Welfare Reform").

53. See, Demetri Papdemetriou, Doris Meissner, Marc Rosenblum, and Madeleine Sumption, "Harnessing the Advantages of a 21st Century Economy: A Standing Commission on Labor Markets, Economic Competitiveness, and Immigration," Washington DC: Migration Policy Institute http://www.migrationpolicy.org/pubs/StandingCommission_May09.pdf; Ray Marshall, "Immigration for Shared Prosperity – A Framework for Comprehensive Reform," Washington, DC: Economic Policy Institute, 2009 http://www.epi.org/publications/entry/book_isp/; Council on Foreign Relations, "US Immigration Policy," Washington, DC: Council on Foreign Relations: 2009 http://www.cfr.org/immigration/us-immigration-policy/p20030; The Brookings-Duke Immigration Roundtable, "Breaking the Immigration Stalemate: From Deep Disagreements to Constructive Proposals, Washington, DC: Brookings, 2009, http://www.brookings.edu/reports/2009/1006_immigration_round-table.aspx

54. Commission To Study The Impact Of Immigrants In Maryland : http://www.msa.md.gov/msa/mdmanual/26excom/defunct/html/22immigrant.html

55. Matthew Hall, Deborah Graefe, and Gordon De Jong. 2010. "Economic Self-Sufficiency among Immigrant TANF-leavers: Welfare Eligibility as a Natural Experiment." Social Science Research 39: 78-91; Jennifer Van Hook and Kelly Stamper Balistreri. 2006. "Ineligible Parents, Eligible Children: Food Stamps Receipt, Allotments, and Food Insecurity among Children of Immigrants." *Social Science Research* 35: 228-51

56. Montgomery Coalition for Adult English Literacy http://www.mcael.org/Index.aspx

57. Batalova and Fix, 2008

58. Batalova and Fix, 2008.

59. Kenneth M. Johnson and Daniel T. Lichter. 2010. "Growing Diversity among America''s Children and Youth: Spatial and Temporal Dimensions." Population and Development Review 36: 151-175; Jeffrey S. Passel and D'Vera Cohn, "Immigration to Play Lead Role In Future U.S. Growth," Washington, DC: Pew Hispanic Center, 2008. http://pewresearch.org/pubs/729/united-states-population-projection

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