A Typology of Immigrant Gateways, 2014

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This document describes a typology of immigrant gateways for the 104 largest U.S. metropolitan areas using the Census Bureau's 2014 American Community Survey (ACS) and 2013 metropolitan area delineations. It was first developed with Census 2000 data in " The Rise of New Immigrant Gateways," then revised and expanded with 2009 ACS data in "The Geography of Immigrant Skills."

Taking into account historical and contemporary metropolitan settlement trends, the typology classifies the 104 largest metro areas into seven destination types described below. Together, 86 percent of all immigrants live in the 104 largest metro areas; 80 percent live in the 57 named gateways.

Former gateways were once major immigrant ports of entry, and are mostly found in old manufacturing areas in the Northeast or Midwest. These destinations 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.

Buffalo, NY	Pittsburgh, PA
Cleveland, OH	Providence, RI-MA
Detroit, MI	St. Louis, MO-IL
Milwaukee, WI	

Major-continuous gateways 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 often serve 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 almost one-quarter of all immigrants nationwide.

Boston, MA-NH	New York, NY-NJ-PA
Chicago, IL-IN-WI	San Francisco, CA

Minor-continuous gateways 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 2014. They include two distinct sets of metro areas. One group of metros, primarily in New England, historically served as suburban-like destinations for early 20th century European immigrants. The other group, primarily located in the Southwest along the U.S.-Mexico border and California's Central Valley, has long been home to Mexican labor migrants.

Bakersfield, CA	Oxnard, CA
Bridgeport, CT	Rochester, NY
El Paso, TX	San Antonio, TX
Fresno, CA	Stockton, CA
Hartford, CT	Tucson, AZ
McAllen, TX	Urban Honolulu, HI
Modesto, CA	Worcester, MA-CT
New Haven, CT	

Post-World War II gateways became large immigrant hubs during the mid-20th century. These destinations 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 the major-continuous gateways. Combined, 30 percent of immigrants nationwide reside in the seven post-World War II gateways.

Dallas, TX	Riverside, CA
Houston, TX	San Diego, CA
Los Angeles, CA	Washington, DC-VA-MD-WV
Miami, FL	

Re-emerging gateways 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 21st century, thus re-emerging as sizeable immigrant gateways.

Baltimore, MD	Sacramento, CA
Denver, CO	San Jose, CA
Minneapolis, MN	Seattle, WA
Philadelphia, PA-NJ-DE-MD	Tampa, FL
Portland, OR-WA	

Major-emerging gateways have only relatively 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 typically exceeded the national average since 1990.

Atlanta, GA	Las Vegas, NV
Austin, TX	Orlando, FL
Charlotte, NC	Phoenix, AZ

Minor-emerging gateways have little historical record of receiving immigrants, but in recent decades have experienced extraordinary growth in their foreign-born populations. These destinations 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 rate in either the 1990s or 2000-2014 period.

Cape Coral, FL	Lakeland, FL
Columbus, OH	Nashville, TN
Durham, NC	Raleigh, NC
Greensboro, NC	Salt Lake City, UT
Indianapolis, IN	

Low immigration metro areas do not meet any of the above criteria and their percent foreign-born is smaller than the national rate. There is considerable variation in the size and growth patterns of the immigrant population in these metro areas. Some have small, but fast-growing foreign-born populations, such as Birmingham and Scranton, and others have sizable, but slower-growing immigrant populations, like New Orleans. Still others have very low numbers of immigrants.

Table 1. Foreign-born Population by Gateway Type, 104 Metro Areas, 2014

Gateway Type

■ Former　■ Major-continuous　■ Minor-continuous　■ Post-World War II　■ Re-emerging　■ Major-emerging　□ Minor-emerging　□ Low Immigration metro areas

Metropolitan Area	Number of foreign born, 2014	Percent of Total, 2014	FB % Change, 2000-14	Metropolitan Area	Number of foreign born, 2014	Percent of Total, 2014	FB % Change, 2000-14
Akron, OH	28,792	4.1	39	Memphis, TN-MS-AR	67,505	5.0	77
Albany-Schenectady-Troy, NY	61,494	7.0	55	Miami-Fort Lauderdale-West Palm Beach, FL	2,322,794	39.2	32
Albuquerque, NM	85,481	9.4	50	Milwaukee-Waukesha-West Allis, WI	110,974	7.1	36
Allentown-Bethlehem-Easton, PA-NJ	68,151	8.2	77	Minneapolis-St. Paul-Bloomington, MN-WI	352,254	10.1	67
Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Roswell, GA	751,859	13.4	77	Modesto, CA	113,014	21.2	38
Augusta-Richmond County, GA-SC	27,479	4.7	83	Nashville-Davidson--Murfreesboro--Franklin, TN	142,405	7.9	137
Austin-Round Rock, TX	288,627	14.9	89	New Haven-Milford, CT	98,473	11.4	32
Bakersfield, CA	169,730	19.4	52	New Orleans-Metairie, LA	96,475	7.7	50
Baltimore-Columbia-Towson, MD	281,972	10.1	93	New York-Newark-Jersey City, NY-NJ-PA	5,791,236	28.8	18
Baton Rouge, LA	30,850	3.7	67	North Port-Sarasota-Bradenton, FL	90,675	12.1	72
Birmingham-Hoover, AL	41,225	3.6	85	Ogden-Clearfield, UT	35,773	5.7	58
Boise City, ID	46,384	7.0	76	Oklahoma City, OK	112,636	8.4	82
Boston-Cambridge-Newton, MA-NH	832,708	17.6	38	Omaha-Council Bluffs, NE-IA	61,059	6.8	75
Bridgeport-Stamford-Norwalk, CT	199,364	21.1	34	Orlando-Kissimmee-Sanford, FL	390,653	16.8	98
Buffalo-Cheektowaga-Niagara Falls, NY	72,123	6.3	40	Oxnard-Thousand Oaks-Ventura, CA	193,650	22.9	24
Cape Coral-Fort Myers, FL	108,844	16.0	170	Palm Bay-Melbourne-Titusville, FL	46,916	8.4	51
Charleston-North Charleston, SC	34,547	4.7	89	Philadelphia-Camden-Wilmington, PA-NJ-DE-MD	620,158	10.2	58
Charlotte-Concord-Gastonia, NC-SC	221,370	9.3	110	Phoenix-Mesa-Scottsdale, AZ	652,266	14.5	43
Chattanooga, TN-GA	20,127	3.7	78	Pittsburgh, PA	84,219	3.6	34
Chicago-Naperville-Elgin, IL-IN-WI	1,685,654	17.6	15	Portland-South Portland, ME	27,314	5.2	69
Cincinnati, OH-KY-IN	93,552	4.4	82	Portland-Vancouver-Hillsboro, OR-WA	295,627	12.6	42
Cleveland-Elyria, OH	114,009	5.5	1*	Providence-Warwick, RI-MA	212,539	13.2	17
Colorado Springs, CO	45,399	6.6	35	Provo-Orem, UT	39,304	6.9	69
Columbia, SC	41,899	5.2	98	Raleigh, NC	145,192	11.7	109
Columbus, OH	146,259	7.3	102	Richmond, VA	96,503	7.7	111
Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington, TX	1,243,764	17.9	59	Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario, CA	974,210	21.9	59
Dayton, OH	31,959	4.0	57	Rochester, NY	71,977	6.6	16
Deltona-Daytona Beach-Ormond Beach, FL	56,349	9.2	69	Sacramento--Roseville--Arden-Arcade, CA	403,975	18.0	55
Denver-Aurora-Lakewood, CO	348,936	12.7	49	Salt Lake City, UT	139,500	12.1	47
Des Moines-West Des Moines, IA	47,228	7.7	93	San Antonio-New Braunfels, TX	273,420	11.8	63
Detroit-Warren-Dearborn, MI	401,917	9.4	19	San Diego-Carlsbad, CA	757,937	23.2	25
Durham-Chapel Hill, NC	67,925	12.5	71	San Francisco-Oakland-Hayward, CA	1,398,127	30.4	24
El Paso, TX	215,239	25.7	15	San Jose-Sunnyvale-Santa Clara, CA	736,326	37.7	26
Fresno, CA	205,967	21.3	22	Scranton--Wilkes-Barre--Hazleton, PA	30,279	5.4	167
Grand Rapids-Wyoming, MI	66,236	6.4	30	Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue, WA	630,389	17.2	64
Greensboro-High Point, NC	64,748	8.7	74	Spokane-Spokane Valley, WA	27,291	5.0	37
Greenville-Anderson-Mauldin, SC	45,525	5.3	81	Springfield, MA	50,750	8.1	18
Harrisburg-Carlisle, PA	36,254	6.5	107	St. Louis, MO-IL	118,936	4.2	46
Hartford-West Hartford-East Hartford, CT	152,255	12.5	29	Stockton-Lodi, CA	167,871	23.5	53
Houston-The Woodlands-Sugar Land, TX	1,498,072	23.1	67	Syracuse, NY	38,956	5.9	32
Indianapolis-Carmel-Anderson, IN	126,767	6.4	131	Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater, FL	380,338	13.0	63
Jackson, MS	16,173	2.8	121	Toledo, OH	21,848	3.6	22
Jacksonville, FL	123,791	8.7	107	Tucson, AZ	133,376	13.3	33
Kansas City, MO-KS	135,124	6.5	67	Tulsa, OK	60,006	6.2	79
Knoxville, TN	35,187	4.1	141	Urban Honolulu, HI	185,956	18.7	11
Lakeland-Winter Haven, FL	61,583	9.7	84	Virginia Beach-Norfolk-Newport News, VA-NC	111,629	6.5	58
Lancaster, PA	27,636	5.2	84	Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV	1,362,763	22.6	64
Las Vegas-Henderson-Paradise, NV	459,269	22.2	85	Wichita, KS	47,317	7.4	46
Little Rock-North Little Rock-Conway, AR	30,780	4.2	115	Winston-Salem, NC	48,298	7.4	69
Los Angeles-Long Beach-Anaheim, CA	4,473,597	33.7	4	Worcester, MA-CT	103,850	11.2	63
Louisville/Jefferson County, KY-IN	69,830	5.5	134	Youngstown-Warren-Boardman, OH-PA	13,063	2.4	8*
Madison, WI	44,077	7.0	57				
McAllen-Edinburg-Mission, TX	231,181	27.8	37	**United States**	**42,391,794**	**13.3**	**36**

Source: Brookings Institution analysis of 2000 decennial census data and 2014 American Community Survey 1-year estimates
*Indicates change is not significant at the 90% confidence interval