

Foreign-Born Alaskans

Where they originated and how immigration has shaped the state

By **ERIC SANDBERG**

More than 60 percent of Alaskans were born outside the state — that’s more than all other states except retiree-heavy Florida, Arizona, and Nevada. While many Alaskans were born elsewhere in the country, an increasing number were born outside the United States.

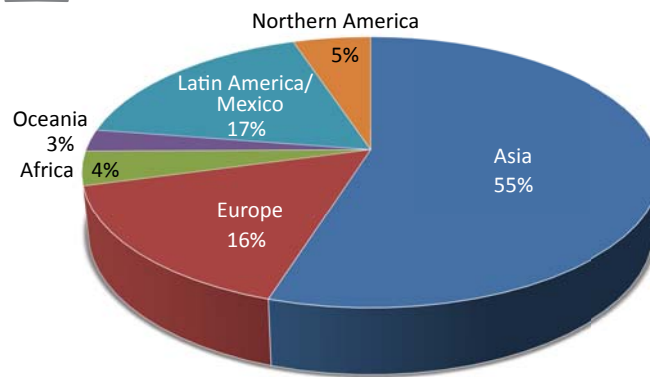
More than 50,000 Alaskans were born abroad, representing around 7 percent of the total population. Of those, 55 percent were born in Asia. (See Exhibit 1.) Asia became the largest source of foreign-born Alaskans in 1980 and the majority in 2000. Only Hawaii has a higher percentage of Asian immigrants.

Latin America and Mexico, the largest source of immigrants nationwide, recently moved into second place in Alaska at 17 percent, surpassing Europe at 16 percent. Northern America, which is almost entirely Canada, is fourth at 5 percent. Africa comes in last at 4 percent, but its numbers have grown dramatically in the last decade.

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Most Foreign-Born Alaskans from Asia

PERCENT BY CONTINENT OF ORIGIN



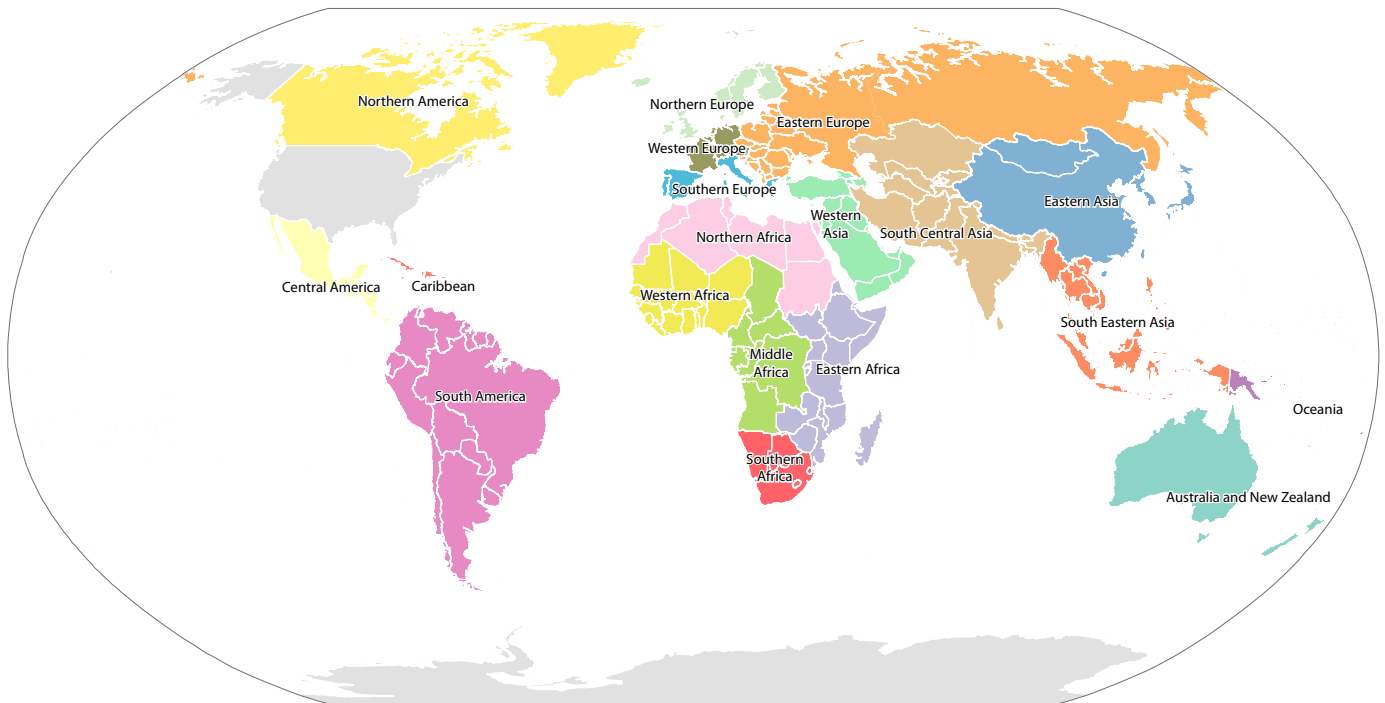
The geographic labels used in this article are from the U.S. Census Bureau and United Nations Statistics Division. “Northern America” includes Canada, Greenland, and Bermuda.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2009 to 2013 American Community Survey

The history of immigration

The proportion of Alaska’s population that’s foreign-born and its composition have changed greatly over the state’s history. (See exhibits 2 and 3.) Few outsiders ventured into the territory in the early years of Ameri-

Census Bureau Geographic Labeling



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

can possession. The 1880 Census counted just 430 people who weren't Alaska Native or Alaska-born descendants of Russian settlers, or a little over 1 percent of the population.

That shifted over the next 20 years as huge numbers of foreigners and residents of other states moved to Alaska. Many were Europeans involved in the mining boom that started in Juneau in the 1880s and took off with gold strikes on the Klondike and the Seward Peninsula. In addition, many workers from China and other Asian countries were hired to work in salmon canneries. By 1900, about 20 percent of people in the territory were foreign-born, a share that continued to rise until the start of World War I.

The foreign-born percentage peaked for both Alaska (32 percent) and the U.S. (15 percent) in the 1910 Census, but both declined after the war. Tighter immigration restrictions enacted in the 1920s limited immigration from Europe and essentially barred migrants from anywhere else.

Though many foreign-born residents of Alaska remained — the territory had a higher percentage than the rest of the U.S. up until World War II — their numbers dwindled. In 1950, despite the growth in the territory's population, the number of immigrants fell to about 35 percent of what it had been in 1910. By statehood in 1959, Alaska's foreign-born share had dropped below 4 percent.

Who qualifies as 'foreign-born'

The U.S. Census Bureau uses the term "foreign-born" to refer to anyone who is not a U.S. citizen at birth. This includes naturalized citizens, lawful permanent residents, temporary migrants (such as foreign students), humanitarian migrants (such as refugees), and undocumented migrants. The term "native-born" refers to anyone born in the United States, Puerto Rico, or a U.S. island area, or those born abroad of at least one American parent. This article uses the terms "foreign-born" and "immigrant" interchangeably.

In the 1960s, two developments turned a half-century of decline for foreign-born Alaskans into a half-century of growth. The first was a change in law spurred by the 1965 Immigration Act. The act repealed the proportional immigration quotas from the 1920s that favored Europeans and opened the doors to people from more regions. Then, discovery of oil at Prudhoe Bay in 1968 ushered in economic growth with construction of the Trans-Alaska Oil Pipeline and arrival of the oil economy.

In the 1970 Census, taken just five years after the new immigration laws were passed, foreign-born residency reached its lowest recorded point for both Alaska and the U.S. at 3 percent and 5 percent respectively. These numbers have climbed steadily since, with every subsequent census documenting an increase, albeit smaller increases for Alaska.

Different countries of origin for Alaska

Throughout the 20th century, the largest immigrant groups in Alaska differed widely from the largest nationwide. (See Exhibit 3.)

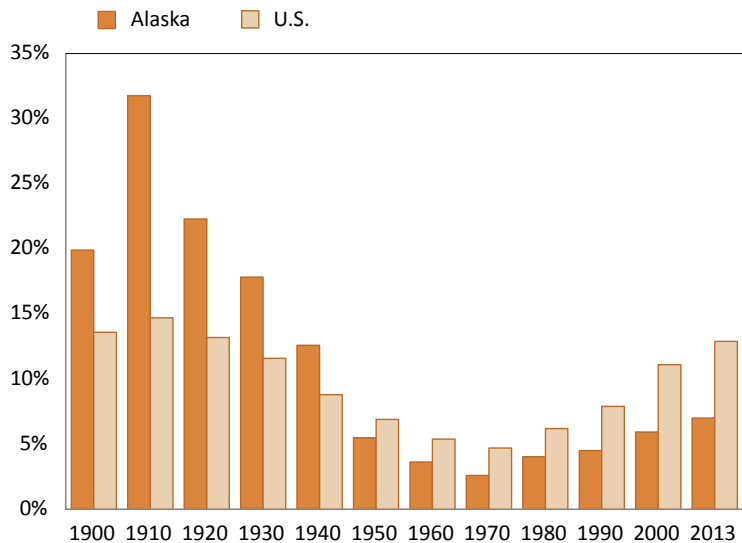
In the early decades, Scandinavian countries dominated in Alaska. From 1920 through the middle of the century, Norwegians were the most numerous foreign-born residents in the territory, even though they didn't crack the top 10 nationally over that period. Meanwhile, immigrants from Italy were the largest group nationally for much of the century, but only made the top 10 in Alaska in 1900.

With the removal of quotas in 1965, non-European countries began to dominate the top 10. The Philippines and Korea were first and second in Alaska during the 1990s and 2000s. Mexico, which has topped the national list since 1980 and also leads in 34 other states, has slowly moved up

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Foreign-Born Share of Population

ALASKA AND U.S., 1900 TO 2013



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

the Alaska list to overtake Korea as No. 2. People born in China or India, while forming a large cohort nationally, haven't ranked higher than ninth in Alaska in recent years.

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Top 10 Countries of Origin by Decade

FOREIGN-BORN ALASKANS AND AMERICANS, 1900 TO 2013

	1900		1910		1920		1930		1940		1950	
	Alaska	U.S.	Alaska	U.S.	Alaska	U.S.	Alaska	U.S.	Alaska	U.S.	Alaska	U.S.
1	China	Germany	Sweden	Germany	Norway	Germany	Norway	Italy	Norway	Italy	Norway	Italy
2	U.K.	Ireland	Norway	Russia	Canada	Italy	Canada	Germany	Sweden	Germany	Canada	Canada
3	Canada	Canada	Canada	Ireland	Sweden	Russia	Sweden	Canada	Canada	Canada	Sweden	Germany
4	Sweden	U.K.	U.K.	Italy	U.K.	Poland	U.K.	Poland	Finland	Russia	U.K.	Russia
5	Norway	Sweden	Germany	U.K.	Germany	Canada	Germany	U.K.	U.K.	Poland	Germany	Poland
6	Germany	Italy	Ireland	Canada	Finland	U.K.	Ireland	Russia	Germany	U.K.	Finland	U.K.
7	Finland	Russia	China	Poland	Ireland	Ireland	Finland	Ireland	Denmark	Ireland	Russia	Ireland
8	Italy	Poland	Finland	Austria	Yugoslavia	Sweden	Denmark	Mexico	Russia	Austria	Denmark	Mexico
9	Japan	Norway	Austria	Sweden	Russia	Austria	Russia	Sweden	Yugoslavia	Sweden	Yugoslavia	Austria
10	Denmark	Austria	Japan	Hungary	Denmark	Mexico	Austria	Czech	Austria	Mexico	Ireland	Sweden
	1960		1970		1980		1990		2000		2013	
	Alaska	U.S.	Alaska	U.S.	Alaska	U.S.	Alaska	U.S.	Alaska	U.S.	Alaska	U.S.
1	Canada	Italy	Canada	Italy	Canada	Mexico	Philippines	Mexico	Philippines	Mexico	Philippines	Mexico
2	Germany	Germany	Germany	Germany	Philippines	Germany	Korea	Philippines	Korea	Philippines	Mexico	India
3	Norway	Canada	U.K.	Canada	Germany	Canada	Canada	Canada	Canada	India	Korea	Philippines
4	U.K.	U.K.	Philippines	Mexico	Korea	Italy	Germany	Cuba	Mexico	China	Canada	China
5	Philippines	Poland	Norway	U.K.	U.K.	U.K.	Mexico	Germany	Germany	Vietnam	Thailand	Vietnam
6	Sweden	Russia	Japan	Poland	Japan	Cuba	U.K.	U.K.	U.K.	Cuba	Laos	El Salvador
7	Japan	Mexico	Sweden	Russia	Mexico	Philippines	Japan	Italy	Laos	Korea	Germany	Cuba
8	Finland	Ireland	Mexico	Cuba	Norway	Poland	Yugoslavia	Korea	Thailand	Canada	Russia	Korea
9	Denmark	Austria	Korea	Ireland	Vietnam	Russia	China	China	Russia	El Salvador	China	Dominican R
10	Russia	Hungary	France	Austria	France	Korea	Vietnam	El Salvador	China	Germany	Ukraine	Guatemala

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

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Numbers of Foreign-Born by Country

TO ALASKA AND THE U.S., 2009 TO 2013

	Alaska	United States		Alaska	United States
Total Foreign-Born	50,367 (±1,264)	40,341,744 (±95,590)	Asia	27,628 (±940)	11,624,956 (±33,250)
Europe	8,007 (±878)	4,820,496 (±18,143)	Eastern Asia	6,215 (±725)	3,662,914 (±14,532)
Northern Europe	1,549 (±232)	941,327 (±8,027)	China	1,633 (±400)	2,241,422 (±10,879)
United Kingdom	842 (±159)	688,624 (±6,825)	China	1,207 (±294)	1,659,141 (±9,671)
Ireland	154 (±76)	127,401 (±2,375)	Hong Kong	84 (±47)	215,467 (±4,050)
Denmark	88 (±57)	29,374 (±1,178)	Taiwan	342 (±239)	366,814 (±5,725)
Norway	187 (±112)	26,813 (±1,282)	Japan	914 (±239)	332,299 (±5,605)
Sweden	121 (±50)	45,189 (±1,844)	Korea	3,616 (±612)	1,078,279 (±9,806)
Other Northern Europe	157 (±118)	23,926 (±1,211)	Other Eastern Asia	52 (±74)	10,914 (±1,247)
Western Europe	2,240 (±339)	971,186 (±7,638)	South Central Asia	1,472 (±430)	3,046,004 (±20,543)
Austria	103 (±69)	47,871 (±1,462)	Afghanistan	0 (±22)	60,922 (±2,947)
Belgium	18 (±19)	31,694 (±1,386)	Bangladesh	77 (±87)	179,166 (±4,564)
France	166 (±66)	160,579 (±3,102)	India	531 (±196)	1,896,642 (±13,048)
Germany	1,549 (±288)	604,346 (±5,698)	Iran	78 (±65)	358,176 (±6,779)
Netherlands	99 (±55)	84,679 (±1,935)	Kazakhstan	28 (±25)	24,371 (±1,465)
Switzerland	293 (±99)	39,698 (±1,238)	Nepal	121 (±129)	72,141 (±3,564)
Other Western Europe	12 (±14)	2,319 (±333)	Pakistan	297 (±251)	313,415 (±7,502)
Southern Europe	303 (±105)	785,523 (±8,094)	Sri Lanka	75 (±72)	46,301 (±2,221)
Greece	49 (±41)	136,047 (±3,353)	Uzbekistan	56 (±43)	50,555 (±2,566)
Italy	146 (±82)	362,256 (±4,814)	Other South Central Asia	209 (±177)	44,315 (±2,510)
Portugal	3 (±6)	189,072 (±3,775)	South Eastern Asia	19,658 (±1,072)	3,947,167 (±18,855)
Spain	98 (±58)	90,884 (±3,050)	Cambodia	74 (±47)	160,878 (±4,689)
Other Southern Europe	7 (±13)	7,264 (±510)	Indonesia	96 (±57)	93,166 (±3,175)
Eastern Europe	3,890 (±733)	2,112,531 (±16,436)	Laos	1,741 (±409)	193,036 (±4,168)
Albania	136 (±135)	78,201 (±4,162)	Malaysia	110 (±72)	61,222 (±2,154)
Belarus	41 (±32)	54,610 (±2,513)	Burma	25 (±50)	99,481 (±3,517)
Bulgaria	44 (±37)	62,786 (±2,371)	Philippines	14,704 (±1,131)	1,826,090 (±13,188)
Croatia	0 (±22)	42,953 (±1,755)	Singapore	7 (±10)	30,148 (±1,361)
Czechoslovakia	137 (±67)	68,301 (±2,344)	Thailand	1,886 (±502)	227,468 (±4,373)
Hungary	88 (±52)	74,805 (±2,346)	Vietnam	1,015 (±265)	1,254,810 (±12,648)
Latvia	23 (±24)	23,734 (±1,106)	Other South Eastern Asia	0 (±22)	868 (±231)
Lithuania	34 (±35)	35,368 (±1,851)	Western Asia	221 (±116)	926,332 (±12,962)
Macedonia	222 (±193)	24,383 (±1,650)	Iraq	1 (±3)	169,090 (±5,969)
Moldova	82 (±75)	36,107 (±1,794)	Israel	4 (±8)	130,948 (±3,034)
Poland	432 (±154)	446,626 (±6,320)	Jordan	27 (±40)	62,476 (±2,983)
Romania	208 (±114)	160,970 (±3,658)	Kuwait	23 (±35)	24,496 (±1,499)
Russia	1,246 (±320)	387,724 (±6,333)	Lebanon	30 (±32)	118,788 (±3,748)
Ukraine	1,034 (±543)	333,028 (±6,580)	Saudi Arabia	0 (±22)	60,191 (±3,269)
Bosnia	16 (±22)	117,683 (±4,133)	Syria	3 (±4)	66,897 (±2,952)
Serbia	28 (±42)	32,366 (±1,830)	Yemen	18 (±29)	39,354 (±2,741)
Other Eastern Europe	119 (±64)	132,886 (±3,722)	Turkey	81 (±76)	103,657 (±2,704)
Europe Unknown	25 (±28)	9,929 (±981)	Armenia	11 (±16)	81,820 (±2,903)
			Other Western Asia	23 (±27)	68,615 (±2,726)
			Asia Unknown	62 (±102)	42,539 (±2,171)
North America	9,476 (±808)	19,276,316 (±64,138)	Africa	2,048 (±385)	1,663,907 (±15,730)
Northern America	2,572 (±357)	818,984 (±6,969)	Eastern Africa	881 (±232)	487,375 (±7,208)
Canada	2,569 (±358)	811,109 (±6,834)	Eritrea	72 (±74)	29,188 (±1,800)
Other Northern America	3 (±4)	7,875 (±895)	Ethiopia	299 (±135)	177,234 (±5,493)
Caribbean	1,675 (±433)	3,771,342 (±18,023)	Kenya	4 (±7)	101,577 (±3,124)
Bahamas	2 (±4)	32,377 (±1,499)	Other Eastern Africa	506 (±165)	179,376 (±4,233)
Barbados	0 (±22)	52,760 (±2,165)	Middle Africa	162 (±140)	86,475 (±3,632)
Cuba	93 (±84)	1,089,553 (±9,776)	Cameroon	124 (±133)	39,721 (±2,454)
Dominica	172 (±134)	28,488 (±1,816)	Other Middle Africa	38 (±36)	46,754 (±2,641)
Dominican Republic	943 (±348)	906,167 (±9,390)	Northern Africa	231 (±120)	289,995 (±5,882)
Grenada	77 (±68)	31,263 (±1,769)	Egypt	39 (±44)	153,676 (±4,245)
Haiti	110 (±76)	581,724 (±8,710)	Morocco	12 (±12)	60,205 (±2,683)
Jamaica	135 (±85)	686,535 (±7,608)	Sudan	157 (±111)	40,746 (±2,265)
St. Vincent	0 (±22)	21,967 (±1,635)	Other Northern Africa	23 (±38)	35,368 (±1,657)
Trinidad and Tobago	63 (±68)	232,060 (±4,803)	Southern Africa	136 (±67)	88,682 (±2,645)
West Indies	46 (±69)	32,466 (±1,771)	South Africa	136 (±67)	85,628 (±2,677)
Other Caribbean	34 (±28)	75,982 (±3,018)			

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Numbers of Foreign-Born by Country (continued)

TO ALASKA AND THE U.S., 2009 TO 2013

	Alaska	United States		Alaska	United States
North America, continued			Africa, continued		
Central America	5,229 (±582)	14,685,990 (±61,158)	Other Southern Africa	0 (±22)	3,054 (±429)
Mexico	3,854 (±497)	11,605,524 (±50,182)	Western Africa	563 (±227)	599,146 (±9,973)
Belize	68 (±63)	47,930 (±2,310)	Cape Verde	0 (±22)	33,929 (±1,890)
Costa Rica	15 (±15)	82,755 (±2,982)	Ghana	51 (±49)	129,383 (±4,430)
El Salvador	449 (±155)	1,229,402 (±14,951)	Liberia	4 (±8)	72,627 (±2,881)
Guatemala	412 (±238)	848,686 (±11,071)	Nigeria	275 (±126)	228,471 (±6,406)
Honduras	205 (±118)	511,071 (±10,732)	Sierra Leone	0 (±22)	35,213 (±2,654)
Nicaragua	72 (±66)	247,931 (±6,091)	Other Western Africa	233 (±206)	99,523 (±3,488)
Panama	154 (±87)	103,874 (±3,291)	Africa Unknown	75 (±85)	112,234 (±4,058)
Other Central America	0 (±22)	8,817 (±1,102)			
South America			Oceania		
	1,897 (±467)	2,730,598 (±16,894)	Australia and New Zealand	1,311 (±315)	225,471 (±4,725)
Argentina	230 (±258)	173,013 (±4,399)	Australia	359 (±96)	104,903 (±3,050)
Bolivia	29 (±23)	77,120 (±3,785)	Other Subregion	250 (±80)	74,974 (±2,364)
Brazil	271 (±99)	335,132 (±6,818)	Fiji	109 (±67)	29,929 (±1,320)
Chile	175 (±102)	94,290 (±3,176)	Oceania Unknown	0 (±22)	39,235 (±2,060)
Colombia	536 (±228)	662,328 (±9,543)		952 (±279)	81,333 (±3,408)
Ecuador	40 (±39)	426,363 (±8,358)			
Guyana	0 (±22)	259,827 (±5,345)			
Peru	457 (±199)	426,288 (±7,066)			
Uruguay	24 (±23)	45,906 (±2,464)			
Venezuela	81 (±65)	189,898 (±4,471)			
Other South America	54 (±38)	40,433 (±2,375)			

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2009 to 2013 American Community Survey

Alaska's foreign-born population today

The most current statistics on the place of birth for foreign-born Alaskans give a more detailed breakdown by country and continental subregion. (See Exhibit 4.) South Eastern Asia is easily the largest subregion of origin for foreign-born Alaskans at about 39 percent, followed by Eastern Asia at 12 percent.

By country, the Philippines is by far the largest place of birth for immigrants in Alaska, higher than the next five largest national immigrant groups combined. Only four other states (Hawaii, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, and New Jersey) have an Asian country as the largest country of origin, and Hawaii is the only other state where Filipinos form the largest immigrant group.

While Canadians and Mexicans have a large presence in Alaska, other groups that are less numerous nationwide also have fair-sized populations within the state. Though Alaska's total population is just 0.2 percent of the United States, Laotian and Thai-born Alaska residents represent about 1 percent of their groups' nationwide population.

German-born immigrants have been the largest European group in Alaska since around statehood, but

Eastern European groups have been growing, mostly in the last two decades since the fall of communism. Russian and Ukrainian immigrants now number more than 1,000. Russians are concentrated in Anchorage, and the largest numbers of Ukrainian immigrants live in the Matanuska-Susitna Borough and the Southeast Fairbanks Census Area.

Most live in urban areas

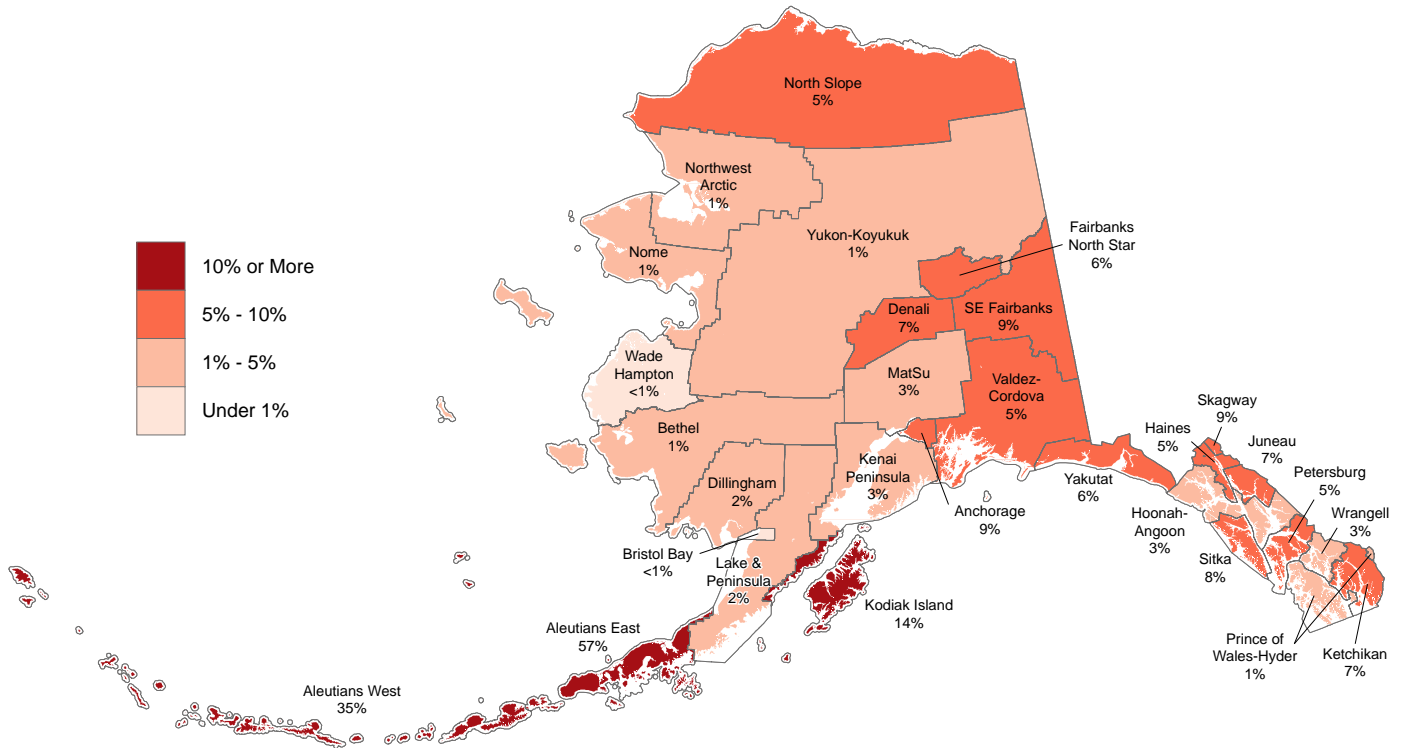
Over half (55 percent) of Alaska's foreign-born population lives in Anchorage, which is home to about 41 percent of the state's population. Anchorage's share of the immigrant population has remained about the same since 1980, and immigrants are about 9 percent of the city's population — highest among Alaska's five big population centers (Anchorage, Mat-Su, Fairbanks, Kenai Peninsula, and Juneau). Exhibit 5 shows the percentage of immigrants by borough or census area.

The Aleutian Islands, with their large populations of seasonal seafood processing workers, have some of the highest foreign-born percentages in the U.S. Aleutians East Borough has the highest of any county-equivalent in the United States at 57 percent. (Miami-Dade County in Florida is the only other above 50 percent.) Aleutians West Census Area is 10th highest in the country at 35 percent.

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Percent Foreign-Born Around the State

ALASKA



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2009 to 2013 American Community Survey

Kodiak Island Borough, which also has a large seafood processing industry, is Alaska's only other borough or census area whose population is over 10 percent foreign-born at 14 percent.

Nearly 40 percent have been here for more than 20 years

About 38 percent of immigrants in Alaska have been in the country for more than 20 years, 25 percent between 10 and 20 years, and 37 percent moved here in the last decade. (See Exhibit 6.) These numbers don't vary widely from the national rates.

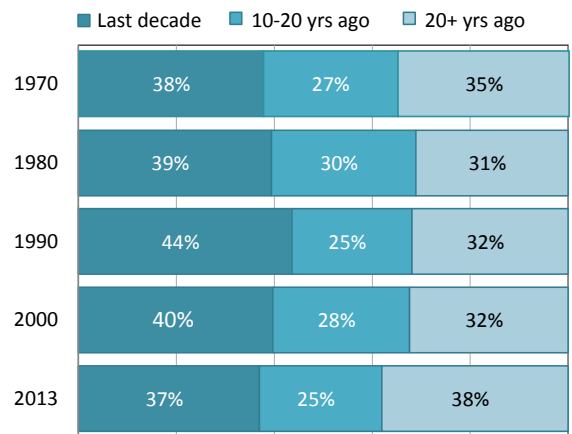
For the last four decades, the trend toward more recent immigrants rose and fell in Alaska as well as the country. In 1970, just after the 1965 Immigration Act, 35 percent of all foreign-born in Alaska had been in the country at least 20 years. After an increase in immigration over the next two decades, that number fell to 32 percent.

Alaskan immigrants who had been in the country less than a decade hit a peak in 1990 at 44 percent. That

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When They Came to the U.S.

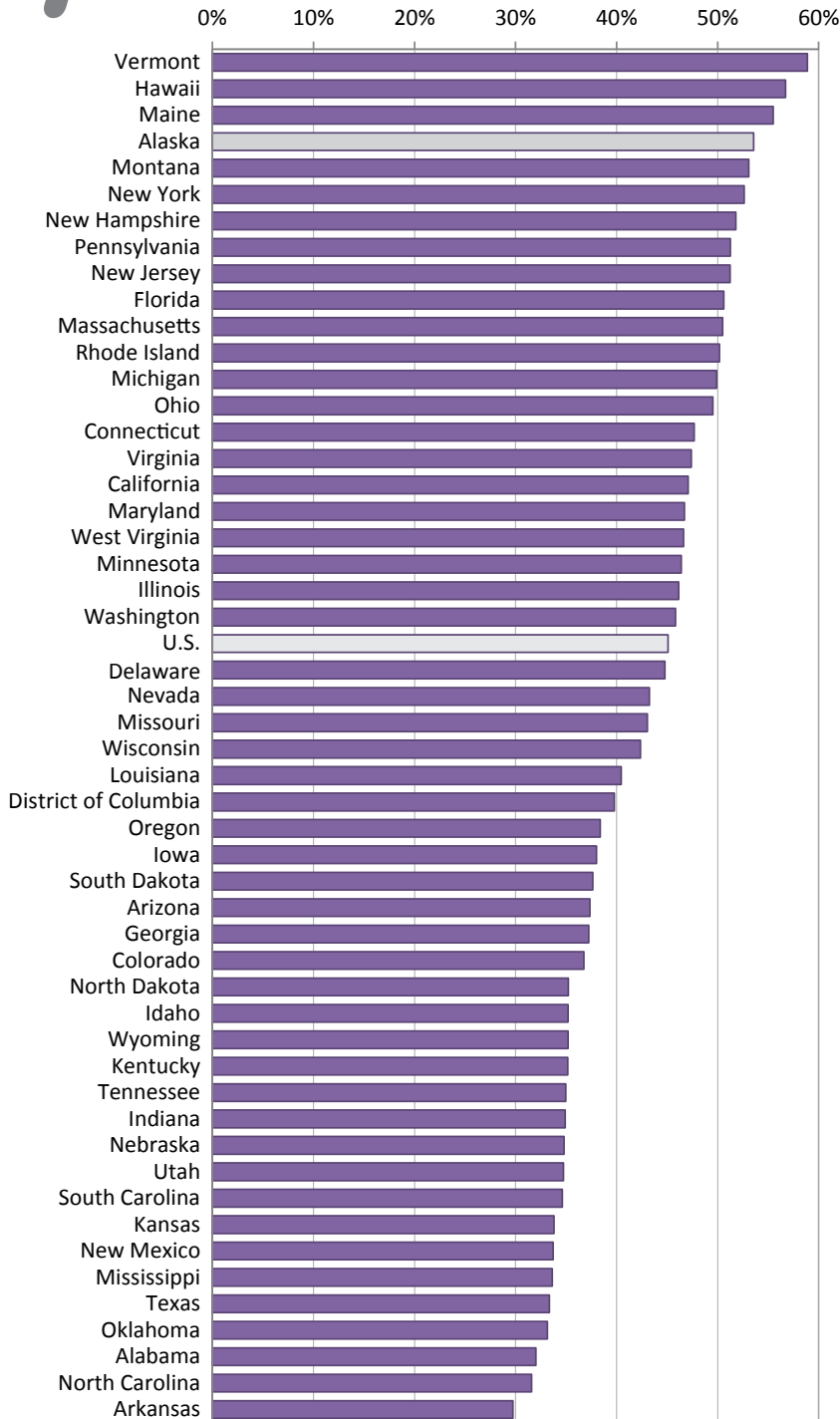
FOREIGN-BORN ALASKANS, 1970 TO 2013



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2009 to 2013 American Community Survey

7 Percent Naturalized by State

UNITED STATES



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2009 to 2013 American Community Survey

number has fallen since, and now the period-of-entry breakdown is starting to resemble 1970.

The pattern varies in Alaska according to source region, though. Just under half of Alaskans from Mexico and Central America have been in the U.S. at least 20 years, the highest share among any group. Immigrants from Europe also trend toward earlier emigration, with 44 percent having moved at least 20 years ago. Asian immigrants tend to have moved more recently, with 38 percent settling in the U.S. within the last decade.

More Alaskans are naturalized

Alaska ranks fourth among all states for the percentage of foreign-born residents who have become citizens. (See Exhibit 7.) A majority (54 percent) of immigrants who now live in Alaska are U.S. citizens, considerably higher than the national rate of 45 percent. However, the Alaska percentage has declined slightly over the past 30 years, down from 58 percent in 1980, while the national percentage has risen from 40 percent in 1990.

The rates of naturalized citizens are generally higher in urban areas. In Anchorage, 56 percent have become American citizens. The highest rate is in the Kenai area at 64 percent, followed by Juneau (61 percent), Mat-Su (59 percent), and Fairbanks (49 percent). Outside these five urban areas, 46 percent have become citizens. In the Aleutians, where immigrants make up a large chunk of the population, only one-third are citizens.

Rates of marriage and education

Foreign-born Alaskans tend to have higher educational levels than U.S. immigrants overall. (See Exhibit 8.) Four out of five immigrants in Alaska have at least a high-school diploma, in contrast to 69 percent nationwide.

It's a different story for college, though. Slightly more than half of Alaskan immigrants attended college, but 24 percent



Social Characteristics of Immigrants

HOW ALASKA AND THE UNITED STATES COMPARE

	Alaska			United States		
	Total	Foreign-born	Native-born*	Total	Foreign-born	Native-born*
Marital Status						
Population age 15-plus	563,759 (±233)	47,857 (±1,116)	515,902 (±1,068)	250,402,813 (±7,374)	38,509,499 (±92,914)	211,893,314 (±98,722)
Never married	33% (±0)	23% (±2)	34% (±0)	32% (±0)	25% (±0)	34% (±0)
Married	50% (±1)	58% (±2)	49% (±1)	49% (±0)	59% (±0)	47% (±0)
Divorced or separated	14% (±0)	13% (±1)	14% (±0)	13% (±0)	11% (±0)	14% (±0)
Widowed	4% (±0)	6% (±1)	4% (±0)	6% (±0)	5% (±0)	6% (±0)
Educational Attainment						
Population age 25-plus	454,301 (±374)	41,770 (±1,101)	412,531 (±1,082)	206,587,852 (±15,585)	34,323,207 (±76,068)	172,264,645 (±88,885)
Less than HS grad	8% (±0)	21% (±2)	7% (±0)	14% (±0)	31% (±0)	11% (±0)
HS grad	27% (±1)	27% (±2)	27% (±1)	28% (±0)	22% (±0)	29% (±0)
Some college/associate	37% (±0)	27% (±1)	38% (±0)	29% (±0)	19% (±0)	31% (±0)
Bachelor's degree	18% (±0)	16% (±1)	18% (±0)	18% (±0)	16% (±0)	18% (±0)
Grad/professional degree	10% (±0)	8% (±1)	10% (±0)	11% (±0)	12% (±0)	11% (±0)
Language at home						
Population age 5-plus	665,954 (±168)	50,158 (±1,259)	615,796 (±1,239)	291,484,482 (±3,346)	40,094,100 (±95,211)	251,390,382 (±96,693)
Speak only English	84% (±0)	20% (±2)	89% (±0)	79% (±0)	16% (±0)	89% (±0)
Speak another language	16% (±0)	80% (±4)	11% (±0)	21% (±0)	84% (±0)	11% (±0)
Speak English "very well"	67% (±2)	44% (±3)	81% (±3)	58% (±0)	40% (±0)	82% (±0)
Speak English "well"	22% (±1)	34% (±3)	15% (±1)	19% (±0)	25% (±0)	12% (±0)
Speak English "not well"	9% (±1)	18% (±2)	4% (±0)	15% (±0)	23% (±0)	5% (±0)
Speak English "not at all"	2% (±0)	4% (±1)	0% (±0)	7% (±0)	12% (±0)	1% (±0)

*Native-born refers to those who were U.S. citizens at birth. For more information on how this is determined, see the sidebar on page 5.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2009 to 2013 American Community Survey

have college degrees compared to 28 percent nationally. Those who moved to Alaska more recently are more likely to have college degrees than those who came earlier. Of those who immigrated after 2000, about a third are college graduates. For those who came before 2000, it's 22 percent.

Immigrants nationwide are more likely than native-born adults to be married. Less than 50 percent of native-born Americans are married in Alaska and nationwide, but 58 percent of Alaskan immigrants and 59 percent of U.S. immigrants are married.

Alaskans more English-proficient

Immigrants also have higher English proficiency in Alaska than immigrants in the nation as a whole, though about four out of five over the age of five speak a language other than English at home. While this is lower than the national rate of 84 percent, it still represents more than 40,000 people statewide. Of this group, about 60 percent speak an Asian or Pacific Island language and around 18 percent speak Spanish.

Still, even those who speak a non-English language at home in Alaska are more proficient in English than im-

migrants nationally. In Alaska, around 82 percent say they speak English at least "well," while nationally the rate is around 70 percent. Only 4 percent of Alaskan immigrants speak no English, while 10 percent of immigrants nationally do not. Of the large statewide Asian and Pacific Island language group, about 76 percent speak English "well" or better, and only 4 percent speak no English at all.

More immigrants in the workforce

Among those 16 and older, more foreign-born in Alaska are part of the labor force than the native-born, and immigrants also have lower unemployment. About 78 percent of immigrant workers work in private industry compared to two-thirds of native-born workers. Though fewer foreign-born Alaskans work in government occupations (16 percent), this is double the national rate.

Three industries employ a lot of foreign-born workers: manufacturing (includes seafood processors), educational services and social assistance, and food services. (See Exhibit 9.) Nearly three-quarters of recent immigrants who have a job are in these industries.

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FOREIGN-BORN

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Immigrants tend to branch out into other fields of employment as their time in the U.S. increases, and the percentage in these three industries drops below 50. For those who have been in the U.S. at least 10 years, employment in industries such as retail trade, public administration, and construction becomes increasingly common.

Immigrants' median earnings

Median earnings for Alaska's foreign-born are roughly equivalent to immigrant earnings nationally but trail Alaskans in general. For men, immigrants earn about 62 percent of what native-born men earn in Alaska (\$37,081 to \$60,261). The gap is smaller for foreign-born women at 77 percent (\$34,218 to \$44,276).

Newly arrived immigrants predictably earn far less

than more established immigrants. Around 73 percent earn less than \$35,000 a year, but only about 41 percent who have been in the U.S. more than 10 years earn that little.

The gap between naturalized citizens and noncitizens is evident in their poverty status, both in Alaska and nationwide. About 10 percent of all Alaskans live below the poverty line, which is not adjusted for local cost of living. It's slightly higher than that for all foreign-born Alaskans, but for those who have become U.S. citizens, it falls below 7 percent, even lower than the rate for U.S.-born Alaskans. Meanwhile, noncitizens' poverty rate is over 14 percent.

Naturalized Alaskans are also more likely than native citizens to live above 200 percent of the poverty line, the common threshold for what's considered "low income," at 78 percent to 74 percent. Just 61 percent of the nonnaturalized live at or above that level.

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