

*Prepared for the Rockefeller Foundation-Aspen Institute Diaspora Program (RAD)*

## The Pakistani Diaspora in the United States

June 2015 Revised

### Summary

Approximately 453,000 Pakistani immigrants and their children (the first and second generations) live in the United States, and Pakistan-born individuals account for about 0.8 percent of the United States' total foreign-born population. The size of the Pakistani immigrant population in the United States has grown from a small base since 1980, when an estimated 30,000 immigrants from Pakistan were U.S. residents. The majority of the Pakistan-born population arrived in the United States before 2000. Sixty-three percent of all Pakistani immigrants are U.S. citizens, giving them the third-highest naturalization rate of the 15 groups studied in the Rockefeller Foundation-Aspen Institute Diaspora Program (RAD) diaspora series.<sup>1</sup>

Educational attainment levels are, on average, higher in the Pakistani diaspora than in the general U.S. population, as is its household income. A far greater share of the Pakistani first and second generations earned undergraduate degrees than the U.S. population overall, and individuals in this population are more than twice as likely to hold advanced degrees. Roughly equal shares of the Pakistani diaspora and the general U.S. population participate in the labor force, and they are equally likely to work in professional or managerial occupations. Households headed by a member of the Pakistani diaspora have a median annual income of \$60,000, or \$10,000 above the median for all U.S. households, and fully 18 percent of Pakistani diaspora households are in the top 10 percent of the U.S. household income distribution. Pakistani immigrants in the United States have a median age of 40, and the vast majority of the population is working age (91 percent). The median age among the children of Pakistani immigrants (the second generation) is 9. Sixty-one percent of the second generation has a mother and father who were born in Pakistan.

Although Pakistani immigrants are widely dispersed across the United States, the largest numbers live in the states of New York, Texas, and California. Among all U.S. metropolitan areas, the Pakistani immigrant population is more heavily concentrated in New York City; while the Houston; Washington, DC; and Chicago areas are also significant Pakistani immigrant population centers.

<sup>1</sup> All Rights Reserved. © 2015 Migration Policy Institute. Information for reproducing excerpts from this report can be found at [www.migrationpolicy.org/about/copyright-policy](http://www.migrationpolicy.org/about/copyright-policy). The RAD Diaspora Profile series covers U.S.-based Bangladeshi, Colombian, Egyptian, Ethiopian, Filipino, Ghanaian, Haitian, Indian, Kenyan, Mexican, Moroccan, Nigerian, Pakistani, Salvadoran, and Vietnamese diaspora populations. This updates the initial July 2014 diaspora profile to correct an error.

The Pakistani diaspora in the United States has established numerous, well-funded, and professionally managed organizations throughout the country. These groups take a broad range of forms, including professional and business networks, advocacy organizations, societies that raise money in support of particular Pakistan-based universities or hospitals, and organizations contributing to economic and human development programs in the homeland. Among the 79 Pakistani diaspora organizations identified for the RAD study, five had annual revenues exceeding \$1 million and two others reported revenues over \$200,000 during their most recent fiscal year. The Citizens Foundation, the Association of Physicians of Pakistani Descent of North America (APPNA), and the Organization of Pakistani Entrepreneurs of North America (OPEN Pakistan) are among the most influential Pakistani American organizations. Other notable groups include the American Pakistan Foundation, the Imran Khan Cancer Foundation, and the Human Development Foundation of North America. In September 2012, then U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton helped launch the U.S.-Pakistan Women's Council to support economic opportunities and entrepreneurship in Pakistan. Given the close cultural ties between Pakistanis and Indians, it is also common for members of the Pakistani diaspora to participate in South Asian or Indian diaspora organizations, particularly those groups that promote the region's performing arts traditions.

The United States is the fifth most common destination country for Pakistan-born international migrants and the sixth-largest source of remittances to Pakistan. The diaspora in the United States transferred approximately \$1.1 billion in remittances to Pakistan during 2012. Saudi Arabia, India, and the United Arab Emirates are home to the largest numbers of international migrants from Pakistan, and are the principal sources of remittances to the country. Total remittances to Pakistan during 2012 were valued at \$14.0 billion, representing 6.1 percent of the country's \$225.1 billion gross domestic product (GDP).

## Detailed Demographic and Socioeconomic Characteristics<sup>2</sup>

Analysis of data from 2009-13 reveals a Pakistani diaspora in the United States of approximately 453,000 individuals, counting immigrants born in Pakistan and U.S.-born individuals with at least one parent who was born in Pakistan.

### First Generation (Pakistani immigrants in the United States)

- Approximately 273,000 immigrants from Pakistan resided in the United States.
- Pakistani immigrants accounted for a small share of the U.S. foreign-born population overall: 0.8 percent in 2012. The size of the Pakistan-born population in the United States has grown from a small base since 1980, when approximately 30,000 Pakistani immigrants resided in the United States.<sup>3</sup>
- Sixty-four percent of immigrants from Pakistan came to the United States before 2000,

2 Unless otherwise noted, estimates for the diaspora population and its characteristics are based on Migration Policy Institute (MPI) analysis of the U.S. Census Bureau's Current Population Surveys (CPS), using five years of pooled data (2009 through 2013) collected in March of each year. All Census Bureau data were accessed from Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMS), Steven Ruggles, J. Trent Alexander, Katie Genadek, Ronald Goeken, Matthew B. Schroeder, and Matthew Sobek, Integrated Public Use Microdata Series: Version 5.0 [Machine-readable database], Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2010), <http://usa.ipums.org/usa/>.

3 These estimates are based on MPI analysis of the U.S. Census Bureau's 2012 American Community Survey (ACS) and the 1980 Census.

a rate identical to the U.S. foreign-born population overall.

- Pakistani immigrants were substantially more likely to be U.S. citizens than the U.S. foreign-born population overall: 63 percent versus 44 percent. Of the 15 groups in the RAD analysis, only immigrants born in Vietnam and the Philippines became U.S. citizens at higher rates than immigrants from Pakistan.
- Ninety-one percent of first-generation Pakistani immigrants were working age (18 to 64), and only a small share was age 65 and older (5 percent). The median age of Pakistani immigrants in the United States was 40.

### **Second Generation (U.S. born with at least one Pakistan-born parent)<sup>4</sup>**

- The second-generation Pakistani population consisted of approximately 180,000 U.S.-born individuals who had at least one parent who was born in Pakistan.
- Sixty-one percent of second-generation individuals reported that both of their parents were born in Pakistan, and 14 percent said that one of their parents was U.S. born.
- The Pakistani second generation in the United States had a median age of 9. Seventy-seven percent of the second generation was below age 18, and 23 percent was working age (18 to 64).

### **Educational Attainment**

- The Pakistani diaspora population in the United States was better educated than the general U.S. population.
- Thirty-three percent of Pakistani diaspora members age 25 years and older had a bachelor's degree as their highest educational credential versus 20 percent of the general U.S. population.
- Twenty-three percent of the Pakistani diaspora age 25 and older had a master's degree, an advanced professional degree, or a PhD, compared to 11 percent of the U.S. population overall.

### **Household Income**

- Households headed by a member of the Pakistani diaspora had a substantially higher median annual income than U.S. households overall. The median annual income of Pakistani diaspora households was about \$60,000 versus \$50,000 for all U.S. households.
- Thirty-three percent of Pakistani diaspora households reported annual incomes above \$90,000, the threshold for the top 25 percent of all U.S. households.
- Eighteen percent of Pakistani diaspora households had annual incomes exceeding \$140,000, the threshold for the top 10 percent of U.S. households. After India, Pakistan and the Philippines tied for having the second-highest proportion of households in the top decile of the U.S. household income distribution among the 15 groups in the RAD analysis.

<sup>4</sup> U.S. born is defined as born in the United States or born abroad to a U.S.-citizen parent.

## Employment

- Members of the U.S.-based Pakistani diaspora age 16 and older were about as likely as individuals in the general U.S. population to participate in the labor force: 63 percent versus 64 percent.
- The employment rate among those in the labor force was nearly the same for the Pakistani diaspora as the U.S. population overall: 90 versus 91 percent.
- Nearly the same share of the Pakistani diaspora was in a professional or managerial occupation as the general U.S. population: 32 percent versus 31 percent.<sup>5</sup> These occupations include specialized fields (e.g. engineering, science, law, or education) as well as administrative and managerial jobs (e.g. finance or human resources).

## Geographic Distribution<sup>6</sup>

- The states of New York, Texas, and California were home to the country's largest numbers of Pakistani immigrants, with estimated populations of 60,000, 50,000, and 40,000 respectively.
- An estimated 70,000 Pakistani immigrants lived in the New York metropolitan area and about 25,000 each in the Houston; Washington, DC; and Chicago areas. No major metropolitan area had more than 0.4 percent of its population composed of immigrants from Pakistan.

## Remittance Volume<sup>7</sup>

- In 2012, remittances to Pakistan totaled \$14.0 billion and represented 6.1 percent of the country's \$225.1 billion GDP. Remittances to Pakistan have surged since 2001, when they were valued at \$1.5 billion.
- The Pakistani diaspora in the United States transferred about \$1.1 billion in remittances to Pakistan during 2012, making the U.S.-based population Pakistan's sixth-largest source of remittances.
- Pakistani migrants in Saudi Arabia were Pakistan's principle source of remittances. Saudi Arabia was also home to the largest number of Pakistan-born immigrants, followed by India and the United Arab Emirates.

5 This rate is calculated based on the share of all individuals reporting an occupation for their primary job at the time the CPS was administered, or their most recent primary job.

6 Analysis based on the U.S. Census Bureau's 2008-12 ACS. Note that geographic distribution is only analyzed for the immigrant population. Second generation Pakistani diaspora members are not included in this section due to data limitations.

7 Remittance data are taken from World Bank Prospects Group tables for annual remittance inflows and outflows (October 2013 update) and the 2012 Bilateral Remittance Matrix (both available here: <http://go.worldbank.org/092X1CHHD0>). GDP estimates are from World Bank World Development Indicators data. Population estimates are from the United Nations Population Division mid-2013 matrix of total migrant stock by origin and destination.

## Tables, Maps, and Graphs

### Characteristics of the Pakistani Diaspora in the United States, 2009-13

	Pakistani Diaspora in the United States*	Total U.S. Population
<b>Household Income</b>		
<b>Median household income</b>	\$60,000	\$50,000
Average household size	3.6	2.5
Share of households with high incomes (\$90,000+)	33%	25%
Share of households with very high incomes (\$140,000+)	18%	10%
<b>Employment</b>		
<b>Total population age 16 and older</b>	306,000	239,386,000
Share in the labor force	63%	64%
... that was employed	90%	91%
... that was in a professional occupation <sup>+</sup>	32%	31%
<b>Educational Attainment **</b>		
<b>Total population age 25 and older</b>	252,000	201,925,000
... with less than high school education	10%	13%
... with high school or some college education	34%	57%
... with a bachelor's degree	33%	20%
... with an advanced degree	23%	11%
<b>Population Characteristics by Generation</b>		
<b>First- and Second-Generation Immigrant Population</b>	453,000	73,140,000
<b>First-generation immigrant population***</b>	273,000	38,468,000
... that was working age (18-64)	91%	81%
... that entered the United States before 2000	64%	64%
... naturalized as U.S. citizens	63%	44%
<b>Second-generation population****</b>	180,000	34,672,000
... that was under age 18	77%	46%
... that was working age (18-64)	23%	43%
... with only one parent from Pakistan	39%	

\* defined as all first and second generation

\*\* highest level reported

\*\*\* all individuals who report Pakistan as their place of birth, excluding U.S. births abroad

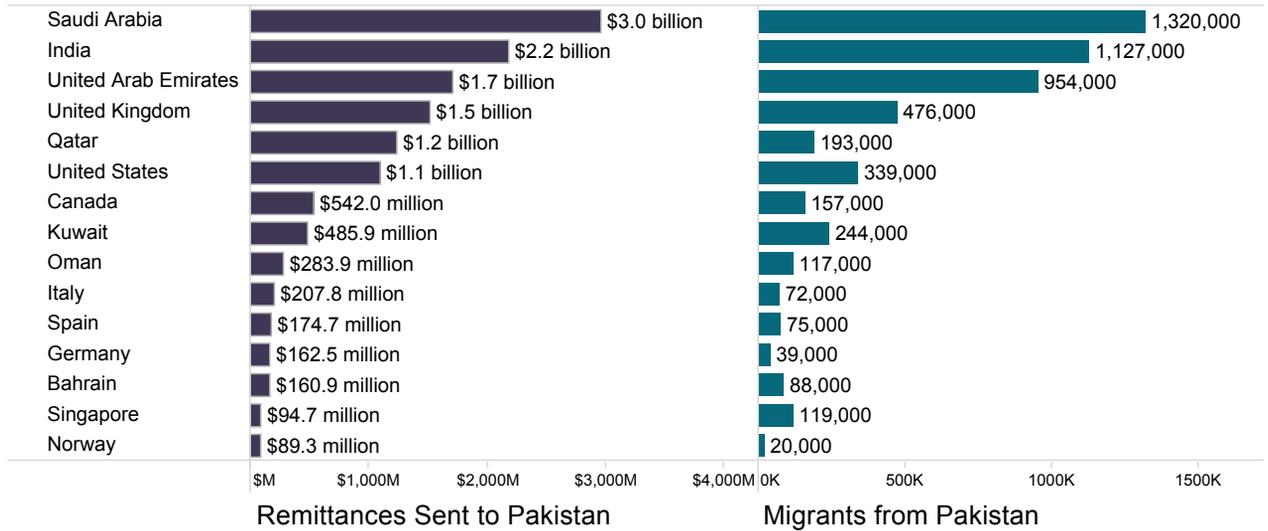
\*\*\*\* all individuals who report having at least one parent born in Pakistan

<sup>+</sup>calculated based on the share of all individuals reporting an occupation for their primary job at the time the Current Population Survey (CPS) was administered, or for their most recent primary job.

Note: Estimates are based on Migration Policy Institute analysis of U.S. Census Bureau Current Population Survey pooled 2009-13 data.

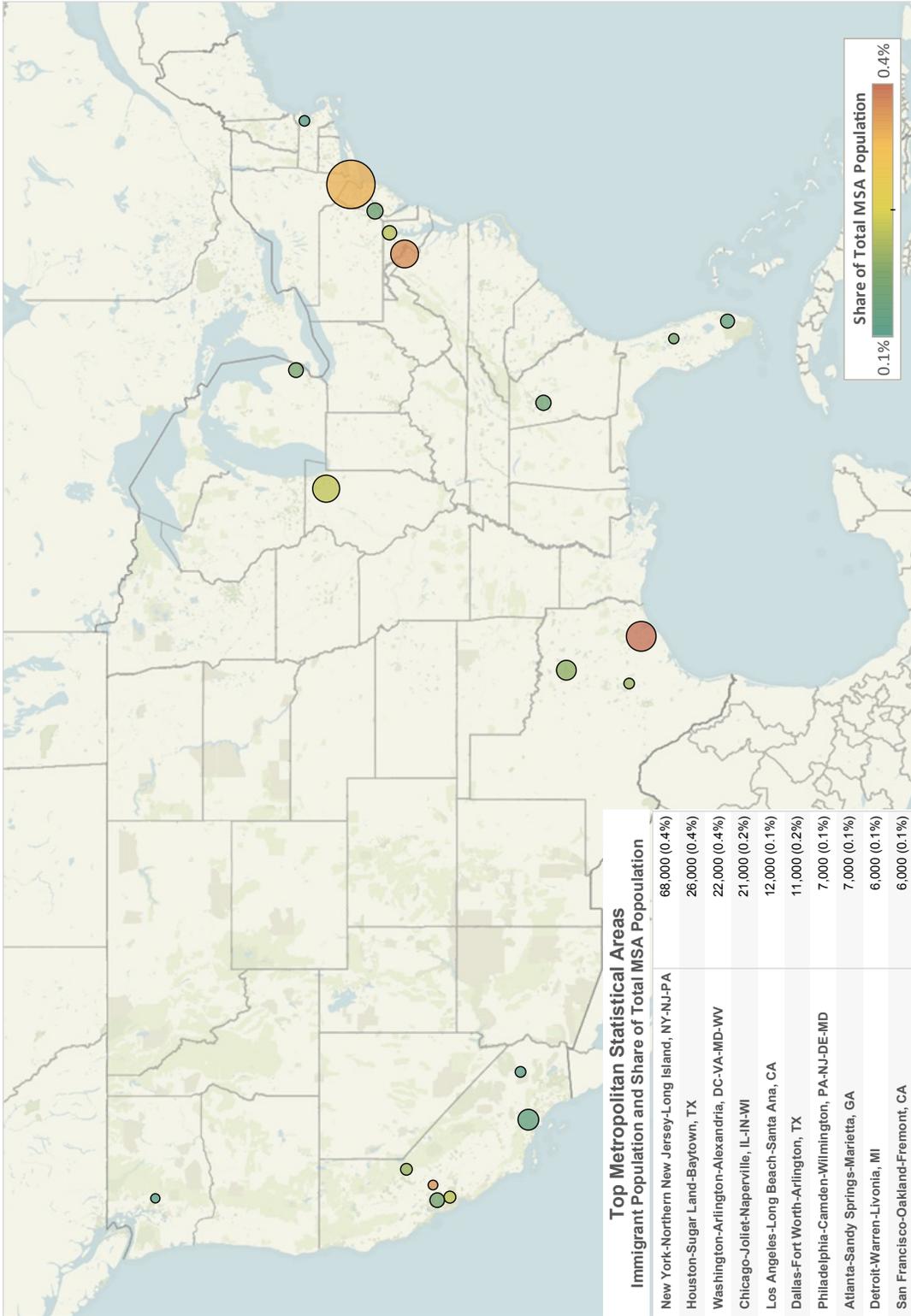
Source: All Census Bureau data were accessed from Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMS), Steven Ruggles, J. Trent Alexander, Katie Genadek, Ronald Goeken, Matthew B. Schroeder, and Matthew Sobek, Integrated Public Use Microdata Series: Version 5.0 [Machine-readable database], Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2010), <http://usa.ipums.org/usa/>.

### Remittance Inflows to Pakistan by Sending Country and the Pakistani Emigrant Population, 2012



Source: Migration Policy Institute analysis of World Bank Prospects Group tables for annual remittance inflows and outflows (October 2013 update) and the 2012 Bilateral Remittance Matrix, the World Bank's World Development Indicators, and the United Nations Population Division's Matrix of Total Migrant Stock by Origin and Destination (mid-2013).

**Immigrant Population from Pakistan**  
Displayed by Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA)



Map based on Migration Policy Institute tabulations of U.S. Census Bureau 2008-2012 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table B05006.

Source: MPI analysis of 2010-12 ACS, pooled.