

A Profile of the Growing Black Immigrant Population in the United States

FEBRUARY 2026

BY VALERIE LACARTE

Executive Summary

Black immigrants are a fast-growing group within both the overall immigrant population in the United States and the country's overall Black population. Long comprised predominantly of Caribbean immigrants, the Black foreign-born population is changing demographically and growing in diversity, in part due to increased arrivals from a range of African countries. This fact sheet uses the most recent data available from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey to explore these trends and how Black immigrants have fared in terms of integration. Key findings include:

Population Growth and Shifting Origins

- ▶ The Black immigrant population numbered nearly 4.7 million in 2024, having grown faster since 1990 than the overall immigrant population (221 percent versus 155 percent). As of 2020–24, Black immigrants comprised 9 percent of all immigrants and 11 percent of all Black people in the United States.
- ▶ There are now about as many Black immigrants from Africa as there are Black immigrants from Latin America and the Caribbean (nearly 2.1 million each in 2020–24). The top five origin countries are: Jamaica, Haiti, Nigeria, Ethiopia, and Ghana.

- ▶ Black Caribbean immigrants are relatively concentrated in New York State and Florida, while African immigrants are more evenly dispersed across many states. The top metropolitan areas of residence for Black immigrants overall are New York, Miami, Washington, DC, and Atlanta.
- ▶ The vast majority—81 percent—of Black immigrants held a secure, long-term immigration status in 2023, either as naturalized U.S. citizens or lawful permanent residents (also known as green-card holders), and another 3 percent were temporary visa holders. An estimated 15 percent were unauthorized immigrants.

Workplace, Education, and Language

- ▶ The employment rates of Black immigrant men (72 percent) and women (65 percent) in 2020–24 exceeded those of U.S.-born workers (62 percent for men and 56 percent for women).
- ▶ About 36 percent of Black immigrant women worked in health care in 2020–24, with the next largest numbers employed in education and retail. For Black immigrant men, the top industry of employment was transportation (17 percent), followed by professional

services, health care, manufacturing, and retail.

- ▶ Though they earned less than their non-Black peers (both U.S. and foreign born), Black immigrants' wages and household income were generally higher than those of U.S.-born Black individuals.
- ▶ About 36 percent of Black immigrant men and 33 percent of Black immigrant women held a university degree in 2020–24, shares similar to those of the U.S.-born population. And the majority of Black immigrants spoke English proficiently, either as their only language (41 percent; a much higher share than among non-Black immigrants) or along with another home language (36 percent).

Households and Family

- ▶ Black immigrants were more likely to be married than the U.S. born, and about three-quarters of those who were married had a spouse who was a U.S. citizen (by birth or naturalization).
- ▶ Approximately 1.8 million Black children were either immigrants themselves or the U.S.-born children of immigrants. Thus, of the 9.6 million Black children in the United States, nearly one in five had at least one immigrant parent.
- ▶ Despite their strong workforce participation, Black immigrants faced certain economic challenges, including a relatively low rate of homeownership (49 percent).

In the context of hardening immigration policies and confusion about immigrants and their role in U.S. communities, these data paint a picture of a Black immigrant population that is generally highly educated, English speaking, and made up of significant contributors to the U.S. economy. Such informa-

tion, and data on the challenges faced by segments of this population, can help support policies and investments that promote the well-being not only of these immigrants but entire communities.

1 Introduction

Black immigrants are sometimes overlooked in U.S. immigration policy discourse, given they make up a relatively small slice of the total immigrant population—about 4.7 million out of 50.3 million, or 9 percent, in 2024.¹ Yet for good or bad, certain Black immigrant groups, notably Haitians and Somalis, are sometimes thrust into national headlines. Such moments of heightened attention call for greater understanding of these groups, as do shifting immigration patterns in recent decades that have increased the size and diversity of the overall Black immigrant population, which has its origins in dozens of countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, Africa, and beyond.

Such moments of heightened attention call for greater understanding of these groups, as do shifting immigration patterns in recent decades that have increased the size and diversity of the overall Black immigrant population.

Immigration policy changes since the start of the second Trump administration are likely to disrupt these immigration trends by narrowing legal pathways for admission, and they have brought uncertainty for many immigrants already in the country, including by revoking certain immigration statuses that protected large numbers from deportation and provided work authorization.² Actions that have had

a sizeable impact on Black immigrant communities include:

- ▶ the scaling back of refugee resettlement,³ reopening for review of the cases of people granted refugee status under the Biden administration, and pause on deciding asylum applications;
- ▶ the end of Temporary Protected Status (TPS) designations⁴ for Cameroonians, Ethiopians, Haitians, Somalis, South Sudanese, and Venezuelans;
- ▶ the end of humanitarian parole programs such as those for Cubans, Haitians, Nicaraguans, and Venezuelans (CHNV)⁵ and of family reunification parole programs⁶ for nationals of Colombia, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, and Honduras; and
- ▶ full travel bans⁷ for nationals from Haiti, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Sudan, and other countries, and partial travel bans for nationals of Antigua and Barbuda, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Nigeria, Senegal, Togo, and others.

As a result of these policy changes, an increasing number of Black immigrants are now without legal status and subject to potential deportation. Wide-reaching operations by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and massive investments in the immigrant detention system threaten the stability of well-established and integrated immigrant communities. And in a high-enforcement era where physical appearance can be cause for suspicion by law enforcement, Black immigrants—even those with secure legal status—are at risk of being caught up in the immigration enforcement system.

This fact sheet presents a national profile of Black immigrants, defined as all foreign-born individuals who self-identified as “Black or African American”

(alone or in combination with another race or ethnicity) in the U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey (ACS).⁸ By examining Black immigrants’ origins, demographic and household characteristics, contributions to the workforce, and indicators of socioeconomic integration, this fact sheet offers data that can be used by local governments and organizations as they work to support their communities as well as by other stakeholders seeking to better understand this diverse and growing population.

BOX 1

Data on Black Immigrants in the United States

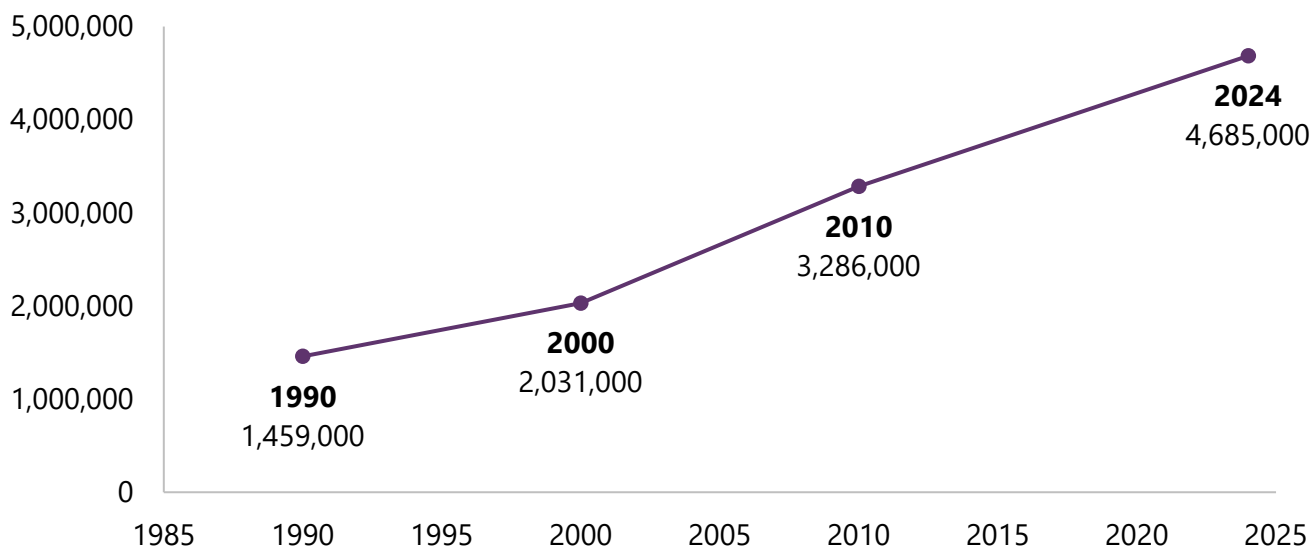
The primary source of data analyzed in this fact sheet is the U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey (ACS). Topline population numbers discussed at the start of Section 2 are from the 2024 ACS and from decennial censuses. The rest of the analysis largely uses pooled ACS data from 2020–24 to ensure large enough sample sizes to accurately examine the characteristics of smaller populations. This is the most recent nationally representative dataset that is publicly available.

Additional data on Black immigrants in the top 20 states of residence can be found on the Migration Policy Institute website: www.migrationpolicy.org/research/black-immigrants

2 Black Immigrant Population Size and Origins

The total number of foreign-born Black individuals living in the United States was 4,685,000 in 2024, according to the ACS (see Figure 1). The Black immigrant population grew by 221 percent between 1990 and 2024, exceeding the growth rate of the overall immigrant population (155 percent) during the same period.

FIGURE 1
Black Immigrants in the United States, 1990 to 2024



Note: This figure uses single-year 2024 data from U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey (ACS). The rest of the fact sheet largely uses pooled 2020–24 ACS data to ensure large enough sample sizes to accurately examine the characteristics of smaller populations. As a result, the size of the total Black immigrant population described here—4,685,000 in 2024—is different to the population’s size based on pooled 2020–24 data: 4,269,000.

Source: Migration Policy Institute (MPI) analysis of single-year ACS data from 2024 and decennial census data for 1990, 2000, and 2010.

In the 2020–24 period, Black immigrants represented 11 percent of all Black people in the country, 9 percent of all immigrants, and just 1 percent of the total U.S. population.

The origins of the country’s Black immigrant population have shifted from majority Latin American and Caribbean (heavily Caribbean) to, very recently, equal shares born in Latin America and the Caribbean and in Africa (49 percent each in 2020–24), as shown in Table 1. Black immigrants from Latin America and the Caribbean still outnumbered those from Africa, but by fewer than 15,000 people. Moreover, the number of Black immigrants from Africa (2,077,000) exceeded the number from the Caribbean subregion (1,941,000), a community with a longer history of post-1965 immigration to the United States.

TABLE 1
Regions of Birth for Black Immigrants in the United States, 2020–24

Region	Number	Percentage
Latin America and the Caribbean	2,090,000	49%
<i>Caribbean</i>	1,941,000	45%
<i>South America</i>	88,000	2%
<i>Mexico and Central America</i>	60,000	1%
Africa	2,077,000	49%
Europe	58,000	1%
Asia	26,000	1%
Northern America	16,000	0.4%
Oceania	2,000	0.05%

Notes: Northern America includes Canada, Bermuda, Greenland, and St. Pierre and Miquelon. Percentages may not add to 100 percent due to rounding.

Source: MPI analysis of 2020–24 ACS data, pooled.

That said, the top two individual countries of origin for Black immigrants are still Caribbean countries: Jamaica (766,000) and Haiti (714,000), as shown in Table 2. In 2020–24, no other country had more than 500,000 Black immigrants living in the United States. Of the remaining eight origin countries in the top ten, seven were in Africa: Nigeria, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Liberia, Somalia, and Cameroon (all but Trinidad and Tobago).

Black immigrants also come, albeit in smaller numbers, from countries in other world regions. These

TABLE 2
Top 20 Origin Countries for Black Immigrants in the United States, 2020–24

	Country	Number of Black Immigrants	% of All Black Immigrants
1	Jamaica	766,000	18%
2	Haiti	714,000	17%
3	Nigeria	452,000	11%
4	Ethiopia	284,000	7%
5	Ghana	205,000	5%
6	Trinidad and Tobago	164,000	4%
7	Kenya	147,000	3%
8	Liberia	91,000	2%
9	Somalia	90,000	2%
10	Cameroon	84,000	2%
11	Guyana	59,000	1%
12	Democratic Republic of the Congo	59,000	1%
13	Dominican Republic	58,000	1%
14	Sudan	52,000	1%
15	Eritrea	48,000	1%
16	Barbados	44,000	1%
17	Sierra Leone	44,000	1%
18	Republic of the Congo	39,000	1%
19	Togo	35,000	1%
20	Uganda	35,000	1%

Source: MPI analysis of 2020–24 ACS data, pooled.

include Europe (mainly from the United Kingdom, Germany, and France); Asia (Saudi Arabia, Japan, and the Philippines); Northern America (Canada); and Oceania.

3 States and Metropolitan Areas of Residence

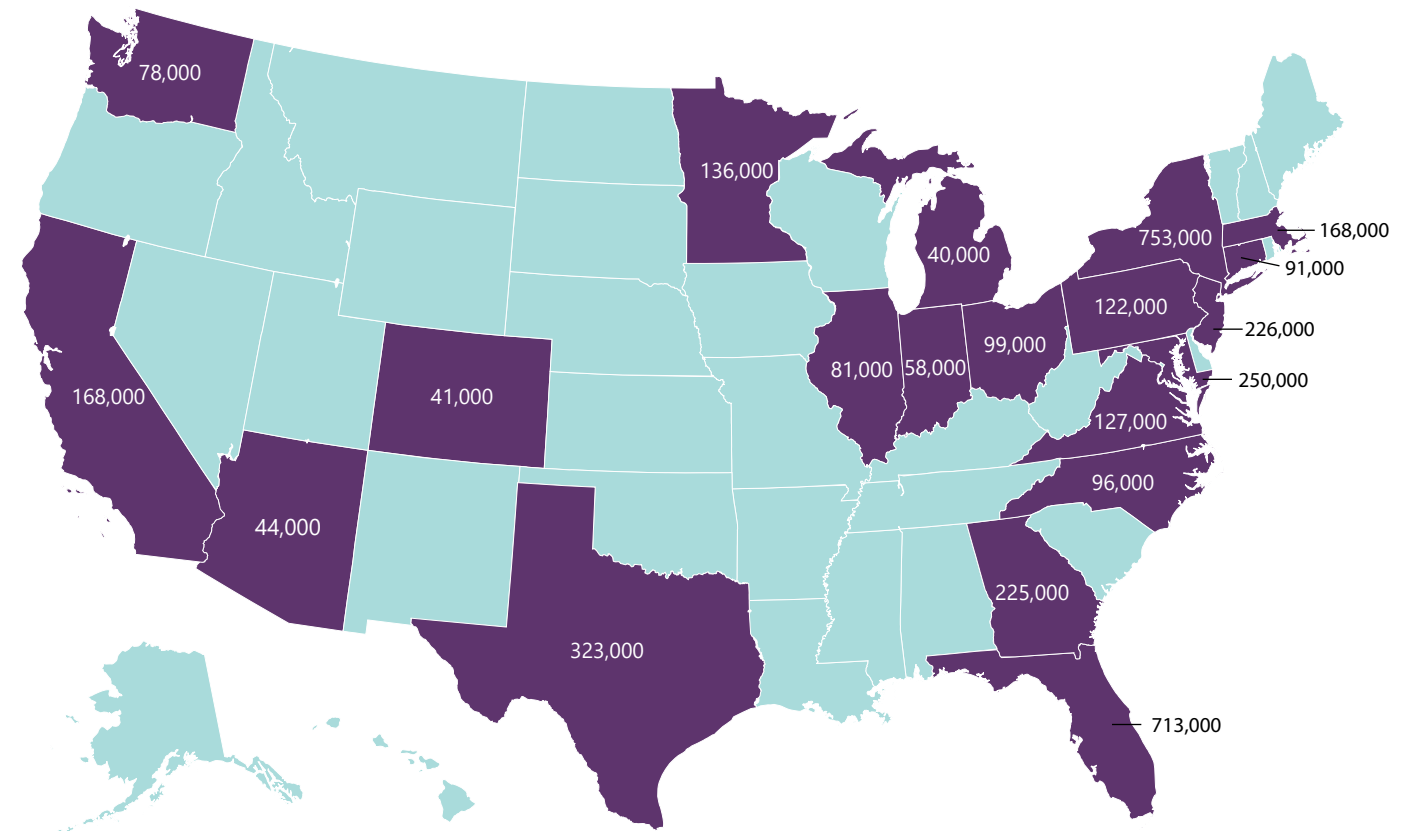
Black immigrants live in states and communities across the country, with a few notable geographic hubs. Almost equal shares of the Black immigrant population lived in New York State (18 percent, or 753,000 people) and Florida (17 percent, or 713,000 people) in 2020–24 (see Figure 2). Smaller shares of the country’s Black immigrants lived in the next 18 states: Texas (8 percent); Maryland (6 percent); New Jersey and Georgia (each 5 percent); Massachusetts and California (each 4 percent); Minnesota, Virginia, and Pennsylvania (each 3 percent); Ohio, North Carolina, Connecticut, Illinois, and Washington State (each 2 percent); and Indiana, Arizona, Colorado, and Michigan (each 1 percent).

Among these top 20 states of residence in 2020–24, Caribbean immigrants made up the majority of Black immigrants in the two states with the largest Black immigrant populations—New York State (70 percent) and Florida (90 percent)—and in Connecticut (74 percent). Africans, meanwhile, were in the majority in the other 17 states. The African share of the Black immigrant population was especially high in Texas (81 percent), Minnesota (95 percent), Ohio (83 percent), Washington State (88 percent), and Colorado (86 percent).

Compared to the nation overall, where 9 percent of all immigrants in 2020–24 were Black, the share was much higher in some states. For example, Black immigrants were 29 percent of the total immigrant population in North Dakota, 28 percent in Minnesota, 25 percent in Maryland, 24 percent in the District of Columbia, and 23 percent in Delaware.

FIGURE 2

Top 20 States of Residence for Black Immigrants in the United States, 2020–24



Notes: Population estimates are shown for the 20 states with the largest Black immigrant populations. Additional data on the regions and countries of birth for Black immigrants in these states are available on the MPI website: www.migrationpolicy.org/research/black-immigrants.

Source: MPI analysis of 2020–24 ACS data, pooled.

In some (mostly smaller) states, Black immigrants made up notable shares of all Black residents. This was the case in Maine, where 55 percent of Black residents were immigrants in 2020–24, and in North Dakota (41 percent), Vermont (38 percent), New Hampshire (36 percent), and Massachusetts (35 percent). By comparison, 11 percent of the Black population nationwide was foreign born as of 2020–24.

Top Metro Areas of Residence

Like immigrants overall, Black immigrants primarily live in urban areas. Only 5 percent of Black immigrants lived in rural areas in 2020–24, compared to 23 percent of the U.S.-born population. The greater

New York metropolitan area was the top metro area of residence for Black immigrants and home to 21 percent of Black immigrants nationwide, followed by the greater Miami (10 percent), Washington, DC (6 percent), and Atlanta (5 percent) metro areas (see Table 3).

In certain metro areas—Boston, Miami, Minneapolis, New York, Seattle, and Hartford—at least one-quarter of all Black residents were immigrants. And in the greater Miami area, Black immigrants also made up a notably high share of the total population (7 percent), a larger share than in other metropolitan areas and most states.

TABLE 3

Top 20 Metropolitan Areas of Residence for Black Immigrants in the United States, 2020–24

	Number	Black Immigrants as a Share of...		
		All Black Immigrants in the United States	Total Black Population in the Metro Area	Total Population in the Metro Area
1 New York-Newark-Jersey City, NY-NJ-PA	890,000	21%	28%	4%
2 Miami-Fort Lauderdale-West Palm Beach, FL	420,000	10%	34%	7%
3 Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV	276,000	6%	18%	4%
4 Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Roswell, GA	202,000	5%	10%	3%
5 Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington, TX	137,000	3%	11%	2%
6 Boston-Cambridge-Newton, MA-NH	129,000	3%	36%	3%
7 Houston-The Woodlands-Sugar Land, TX	128,000	3%	10%	2%
8 Philadelphia-Camden-Wilmington, PA-NJ-DE-MD	114,000	3%	9%	2%
9 Minneapolis-St. Paul-Bloomington, MN-WI	113,000	3%	33%	3%
10 Orlando-Kissimmee-Sanford, FL	96,000	2%	22%	3%
11 Baltimore-Columbia-Towson, MD	76,000	2%	9%	3%
12 Seattle-Tacoma-Bellevue, WA	68,000	2%	27%	2%
13 Chicago-Naperville-Elgin, IL-IN-WI	66,000	2%	4%	1%
14 Los Angeles-Long Beach-Anaheim, CA	59,000	1%	7%	0%
15 Columbus, OH	58,000	1%	17%	3%
16 Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater, FL	46,000	1%	12%	1%
17 Indianapolis-Carmel-Anderson, IN	44,000	1%	14%	2%
18 Phoenix-Mesa-Scottsdale, AZ	35,000	1%	12%	1%
19 Charlotte-Concord-Gastonia, NC-SC	34,000	1%	5%	1%
20 Hartford-West Hartford-East Hartford, CT	33,000	1%	25%	3%

Note: This table shows metropolitan areas as designated by the U.S. Census Bureau, using 2013 delimitations.

Source: MPI analysis of 2020–24 ACS data, pooled.

4 Time in the United States

On average, Black immigrants have been in the United States for less time than other immigrants (see Table 4). As of 2020–24, 26 percent of Black immigrants had been in the country for 20 years or more, compared to 55 percent of non-Black immigrants. Still, 71 percent of Black immigrants had been in the country for at least ten years.

TABLE 4

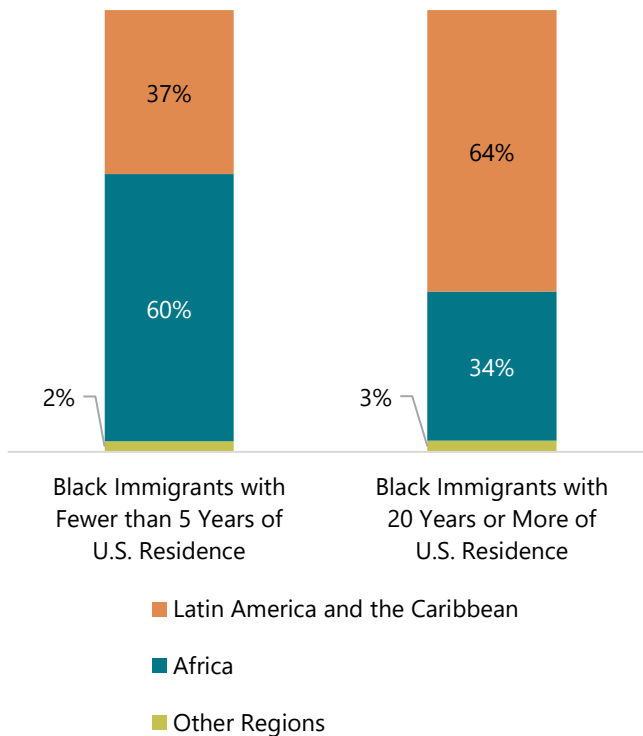
Length of U.S. Residence of Black Immigrants in the United States, 2020–24

	Black Immigrants	Non-Black Immigrants
Fewer than 5 years	12%	13%
5 to 9 years	17%	12%
10 to 14 years	28%	9%
15 to 19 years	17%	10%
20 years of more	26%	55%

Notes: Length of residence in ACS data is self-reported, with survey respondents asked to describe how long they have been present in the United States, regardless of legal status. Percentages may not add to 100 percent due to rounding. Source: MPI analysis of 2020–24 ACS data, pooled.

Africans were overrepresented among more recently arrived Black immigrants (see Figure 3). Of Black immigrants who had been in the United States for fewer than five years in 2020–24, 60 percent were born in Africa and 37 percent in Latin America and the Caribbean. The top countries of origin for recent Black Africans included Nigeria, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Cameroon, Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Republic of the Congo. The regions of origin were reversed among Black immigrants who were long-term residents: Of those with 20 or more years of U.S. residence, 64 percent were from Latin America and the Caribbean and 34 percent from Africa.

FIGURE 3
Region of Birth of Recently Arrived and Longer-Term Black Immigrants in the United States, 2020–24

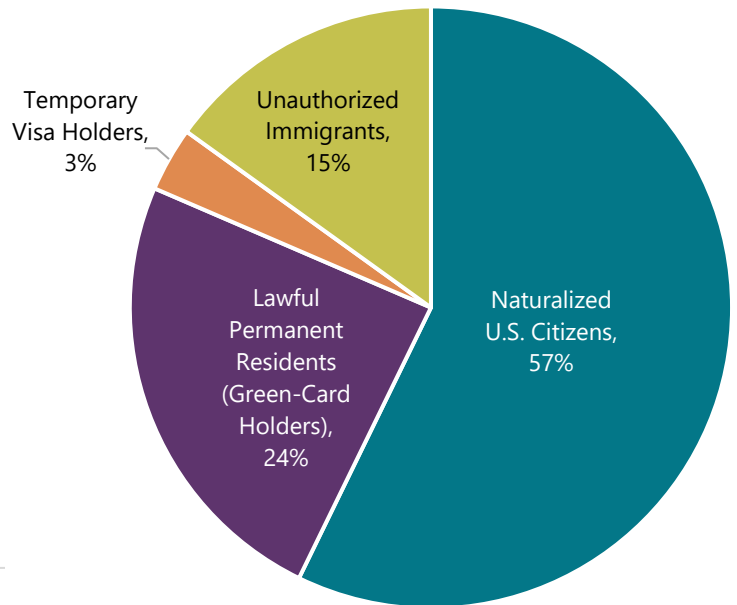


Notes: Length of residence in ACS data is self-reported, with survey respondents asked to describe how long they have been present in the United States, regardless of legal status. Percentages may not add to 100 percent due to rounding. Source: MPI analysis of 2020–24 ACS data, pooled.

5 Immigration Status

Leveraging a methodology developed by Migration Policy Institute (MPI) researchers in partnership with demographers at The Pennsylvania State University and Temple University for assigning legal status in U.S. Census Bureau data,⁹ MPI estimates that in 2023, more than half of all Black immigrants in the country were naturalized U.S. citizens and another one-quarter were lawful permanent residents (often called green-card holders), as shown in Figure 4.

FIGURE 4
Immigration Status of Black Immigrants in the United States, 2023



Notes: Temporary visa holders include international students, H-1B high-skilled workers, and H-2A low-skilled agricultural workers, among others, and a small number of refugees and people granted asylum who have not yet obtained a green card for lawful permanent residence; short-term visitors such as tourists are not included. Unauthorized immigrants include Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) recipients, Temporary Protected Status (TPS) holders, holders of humanitarian parole, and asylum applicants. Percentages may not add to 100 percent due to rounding. Source: These 2023 estimates result from MPI analysis of U.S. Census Bureau data from the pooled 2019–23 ACS and the 2023, 2022, and 2008 Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP), weighted to 2023 unauthorized immigrant population estimates provided by Jennifer Van Hook of The Pennsylvania State University.

At the same time, 686,000 unauthorized immigrants were Black, making up 15 percent of all Black immigrants in the United States in 2023 and about 5 percent of the country’s 13.7 million unauthorized immigrants. These estimates of unauthorized immigrants include individuals with liminal statuses that are temporary, grant work authorization, and protect from deportation such as TPS holders, Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) recipients, asylum applicants, and humanitarian parolees.

The immigration status breakdown varies across Black immigrants from different world regions. The share who had become naturalized U.S. citizens was significantly higher among Black immigrants born in Latin America and the Caribbean (61 percent) compared to those born in Africa (53 percent) and Northern America (44 percent). This likely reflects, at least in part, the fact that Latin American and Caribbean Black immigrants have spent more time on average in the United States.

MPI estimates that in 2023, nearly one-fifth of Black immigrants from Northern America and Europe were unauthorized immigrants, the highest shares of Black immigrants from all regions (though rela-

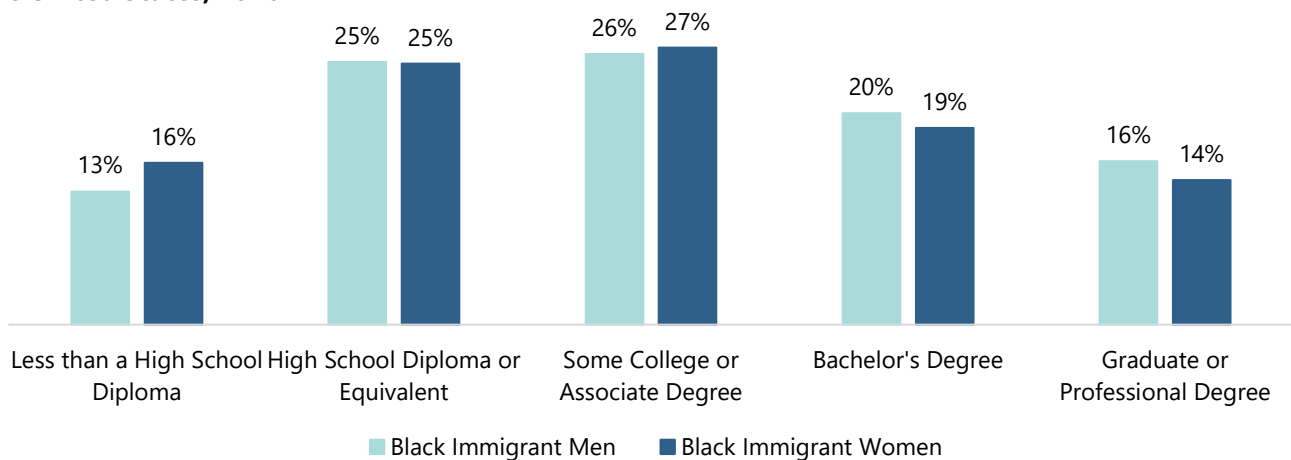
tively small in absolute numbers). This may be due to the relatively low entry requirements for Northern Americans and Europeans seeking to travel to the United States, with many having likely entered with a tourist visa and then overstayed it.

6 Education and Language Skills

About one-third of Black immigrants ages 25 and older (34 percent) held a university degree—either a bachelor’s, master’s, or PhD—as of 2020–24, a share similar to the overall immigrant population (36 percent). This was the case for both Black immigrant men and women (36 percent and 33 percent, respectively; see Figure 5). These rates of higher education were similar to those of the U.S. born: 35 percent of U.S.-born men and 37 percent for U.S.-born women had a university degree in 2020–24.

For one-quarter of Black immigrant men and women, a high school diploma was their highest level of educational achievement. Smaller shares of Black immigrants (13 percent of men and 16 percent of women) had less than a high school diploma in

FIGURE 5
Highest Level of Educational Attainment for Black Immigrant Men and Women (ages 25 and older) in the United States, 2020–24



Note: Percentages may not add to 100 percent due to rounding.
 Source: MPI analysis of 2020–24 ACS data, pooled.

2020–24, shares higher than those for the U.S.-born population (8 percent of men and 6 percent of women) but lower than for immigrants overall (26 percent of men and 24 percent of women).

Educational attainment varies significantly by region of origin. Among Black immigrant men from Africa and those from Northern America, 48 percent had a university degree, as did 47 percent of those from Europe, compared to 38 percent of those from Asia and 23 percent of those from Latin America and the Caribbean.

Black immigrant women from certain world regions had higher education levels than Black immigrant men from those same regions. The shares of Black immigrant women with a university degree were especially high among those born in Northern America (62 percent), Europe (54 percent), and Asia (48 percent). Black immigrant women from Africa and from Latin America and the Caribbean were less likely to have university degrees (38 percent and 28 percent, respectively)—though the university-educated share of Black immigrant women from Latin America

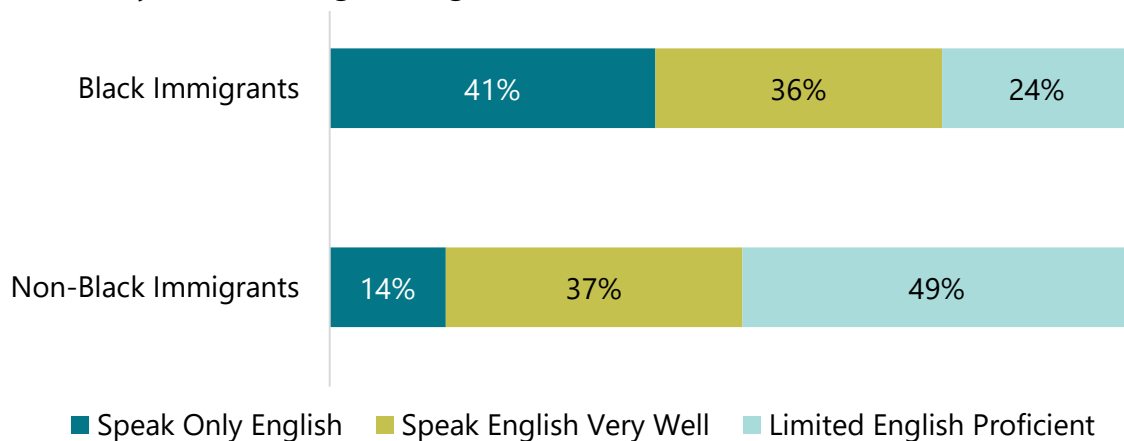
and the Caribbean was still higher than the share of Black immigrant men from the region.

English Proficiency and Other Languages

Many Black immigrants speak only English at home, with 41 percent reporting doing so in 2020–24 (see Figure 6). This is a much larger share than the 14 percent of non-Black immigrants who spoke only English. Another 36 percent of Black immigrants reported speaking another language at home but also speaking English very well. Slightly less than one-quarter of Black immigrants (24 percent) were Limited English Proficient, meaning they spoke English less than very well.

The diverse origins of Black immigrants are reflected in the wide range of language spoken within this population. Among Black immigrants who reported having a home language other than English, the most frequently spoken languages were Haitian Creole (26 percent), French (12 percent), and Amharic and other Ethiopian languages (10 percent). Many other (often African) languages were also spoken,

FIGURE 6
English Proficiency of Black Immigrants (ages 5 and older) in the United States, 2020–24



Notes: The U.S. Census Bureau asks ACS respondents if they speak a language other than English at home. For those who answer that they do, the survey then asks them to self-assess their spoken English proficiency. Limited English Proficient (LEP) refers to persons ages 5 and older who report speaking English less than “very well,” either “not at all,” “not well,” or “well.” Percentages may not add to 100 percent due to rounding.
Source: MPI analysis of 2020–24 ACS data, pooled.

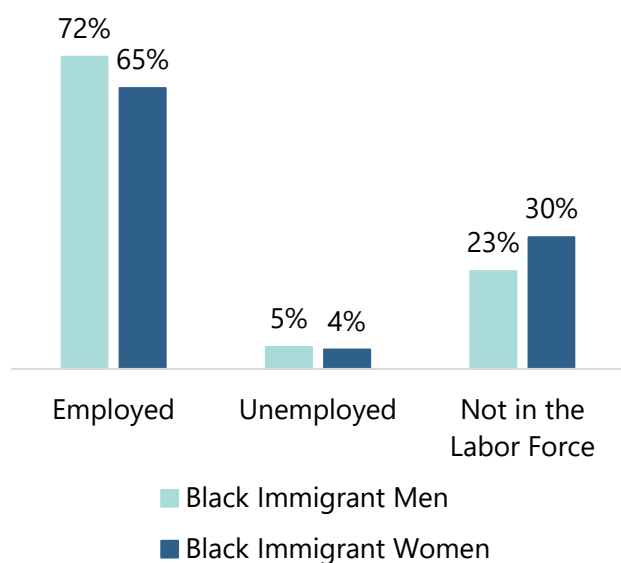
though in smaller proportions, including Spanish; Swahili; Beja, Somali, and other Cushitic languages; Bantu; Arabic; Mande; Portuguese; Fulani; and other unspecified African languages.¹⁰

7 Employment and Worker Characteristics

An estimated 2.9 million Black immigrants ages 16 and older were in the civilian labor force in 2020–24, either employed or seeking employment. Among Black immigrant men, 72 percent were employed, as were 65 percent of Black immigrant women (see Figure 7). In the same period, the shares of U.S.-born men and women who were employed were significantly lower (62 percent and 56 percent, respectively). Very small shares of Black immigrants—5 percent of men and 4 percent of women—were unemployed.

Slightly more than 1 million Black immigrants ages 16 and older were not in the labor force in 2020–24.

FIGURE 7
Employment Status of Black Immigrant Men and Women (ages 16 and older) in the United States, 2020–24



Notes: The shares shown are out of the total civilian population. Percentages may not add to 100 percent due to rounding.
Source: MPI analysis of 2020–24 ACS data, pooled.

This was the case for 23 percent of Black immigrant men and 30 percent of Black immigrant women in the civilian population. This group includes retirees, full-time students, people with caregiving responsibilities (such as child or elder care), discouraged workers (those who have stopped looking for a job), and people unable to work due to disabilities, among others. The shares of Black immigrants in this category were lower than for the U.S. born, among whom 34 percent of men and 41 percent of women were out of the labor force.

A. Industries of Employment

Black immigrants work in a wide range of industries. The top industry of employment in 2020–24, by some margin, was health care, in which 24 percent of employed Black immigrants worked (see Table 5). Black immigrant women were particularly concentrated in health care: 36 percent worked in health-care occupations, including as registered nurses, nursing assistants, and home health aides. The next top sectors of employment for Black immigrant women were education and retail (9 percent each).

The top sector of employment for Black immigrant men in 2020–24 was transportation (17 percent)—an industry where Black men in general have significantly increased their presence in recent decades.¹¹ The next four industries of employment for Black immigrant men were: professional services (12 percent), health care (12 percent), manufacturing (10 percent), and retail (10 percent).

Industries of employment also varied for Black immigrants from different world regions (see Table 5). Those from Africa were overrepresented as a share of all Black immigrant workers in mining, manufacturing, and transportation, while Latin American and Caribbean immigrants were especially overrepresented in construction, agriculture, and arts and entertainment.

TABLE 5

Black Immigrant Workers (ages 16 and older) in the United States, by Industry and Region of Birth, 2020–24

	Black Immigrant Workers		Share of Black Immigrant Workers Born in...		
	Total Number	As a % of All Black Immigrant Workers	Latin America and the Caribbean	Africa	Other Regions
All Industries	2,715,000	100%	47%	51%	2%
1 Health care	648,000	24%	46%	52%	1%
2 Transportation and warehousing	286,000	11%	42%	57%	1%
3 Professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste-management services	280,000	10%	44%	53%	3%
4 Retail trade	253,000	9%	49%	49%	2%
5 Educational services	202,000	7%	51%	46%	3%
6 Manufacturing	193,000	7%	34%	64%	2%
7 Accommodation and food services	141,000	5%	58%	40%	2%
8 Finance and insurance, real estate, and rental and leasing	139,000	5%	51%	45%	4%
9 Public administration	131,000	5%	47%	50%	3%
10 Other services	115,000	4%	48%	50%	2%
11 Social assistance	107,000	4%	44%	54%	2%
12 Construction	87,000	3%	70%	28%	2%
13 Wholesale trade	37,000	1%	50%	48%	2%
14 Information	37,000	1%	47%	48%	5%
15 Arts, entertainment, and recreation	35,000	1%	59%	38%	4%
16 Utilities	14,000	1%	57%	40%	4%
17 Agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting	8,000	0.3%	61%	36%	3%
18 Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction	3,000	0.1%	23%	77%	1%

Note: Numbers and percentages may not add up to the total due to rounding.

Source: MPI analysis of 2020–24 ACS data, pooled.

B. *Work Schedules and Wages*

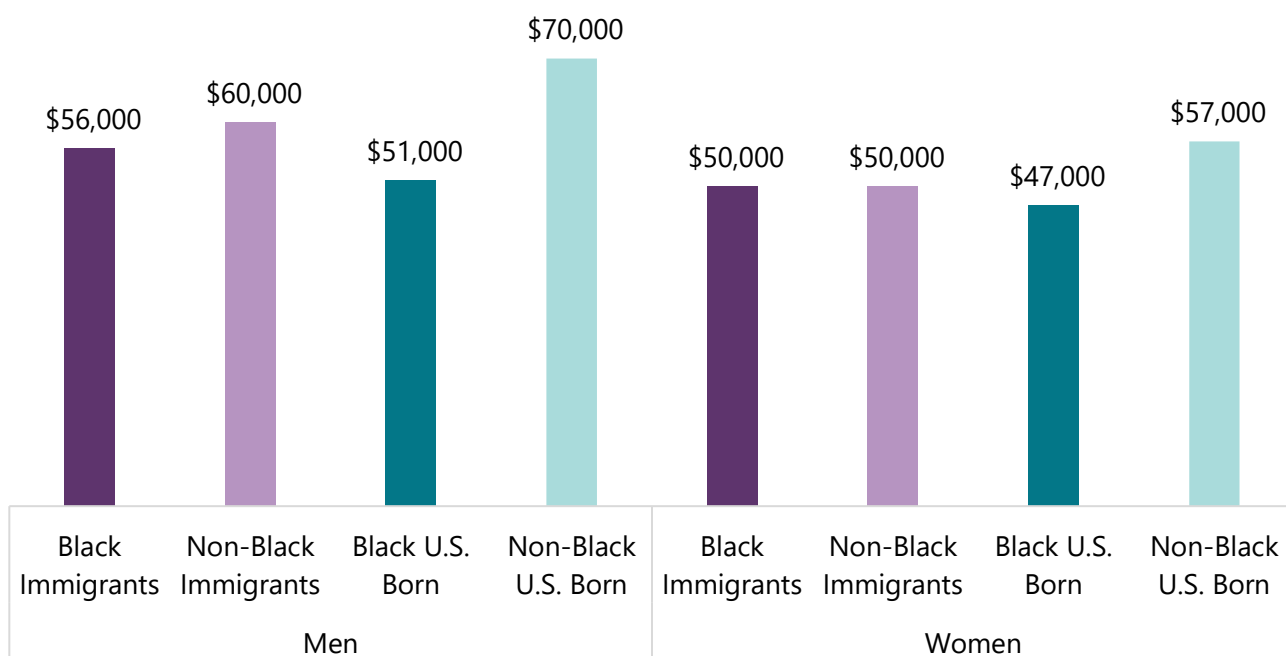
Differences in workers' schedules and working hours affect their wages and annual earnings. Of Black immigrants who had a job in 2020–24, 15 percent of men and 23 percent of women worked part time (fewer than 35 hours a week). In contrast, 76 percent of Black immigrant men and 69 percent of Black immigrant women worked full time, year round

(FTYR), which is usually associated with more stable employment and higher earnings. These shares were about the same in the U.S.-born population.

Examining FTYR workers' median earnings, Black immigrant men (\$56,000) earned less than non-Black U.S.-born men and non-Black immigrant men (\$70,000 and \$60,000, respectively; see Figure 8). They earned close to, but slightly more than, U.S.-born Black men working FTYR (\$51,000).

FIGURE 8

Median Earnings of Full-time, Year-Round Workers in the United States, by Gender, Race, and Nativity, 2020–24



Note: Full-time, year-round workers are defined as those who worked at least 35 hours per week and 42 weeks per year. Source: MPI analysis of 2019–23 ACS data, pooled.

Black immigrant women who were FTYR workers earned the same amount as non-Black immigrant women (\$50,000), and slightly more than U.S.-born Black women (\$47,000). Non-Black U.S.-born women had the highest earnings of all FTYR women workers, at \$57,000 annually.

8 Household Characteristics

The challenges and opportunities individuals encounter, and the options they have for acting on them, depend to some extent on the type of household they belong to. For Black immigrants, the presence of a spouse and/or children in the household, those family members’ nativity and immigration status, the household’s income, and homeownership

status can all have an impact on or reflect socioeconomic integration.

A. Marriage

Half of Black immigrants ages 15 and older were married in 2020–24, a share slightly higher than for the non-Black U.S.-born population (48 percent) and almost double the share among U.S.-born Black people (27 percent), as shown in Table 6. This is part of a broader pattern in which immigrant adults overall are more likely to be married than U.S.-born adults.

More than three-quarters of married Black immigrants had a spouse who was a U.S. citizen, either by birth or naturalization. And 91 percent of married Black immigrants had a spouse who also identified as Black.

TABLE 6
Marital Status of Immigrants and U.S. Born (ages 15 and older) in the United States, by Race, 2020–24

	Black Immigrants	Non-Black Immigrants	Black U.S. Born	Non-Black U.S. Born
Married	50%	61%	27%	48%
Divorced, separated, or widowed	20%	16%	20%	18%
Never married	30%	23%	53%	34%
<i>Among those married...</i>				
Spouse is a U.S. citizen (by birth or naturalization)	76%	65%	98%	98%
Spouse is a noncitizen	24%	35%	2%	2%

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100 percent due to rounding.
Source: MPI analysis of 2020–24 ACS data, pooled.

B. Children

In 2020–24, only 8 percent of Black immigrants were children under 18 years old—much lower than the child share of the U.S.-born population (25 percent). The majority of the 344,000 Black immigrant children (63 percent) were born in Africa, while 33 percent were born in Latin America or the Caribbean, reflecting the changing origins of Black immigrants overall, as discussed in Sections 2–4.

TABLE 7
Black Children (under age 18) in the United States, by Parental Nativity, 2020–24

	Number	Share
Total Black children under age 18 with parents in the home	9,608,000	100%
Children with U.S.-born parents only	7,797,000	81%
Children with at least one foreign-born parent	1,811,000	19%

Notes: Children without parents in the home are excluded from this analysis.
Source: MPI analysis of 2020–24 ACS data, pooled.

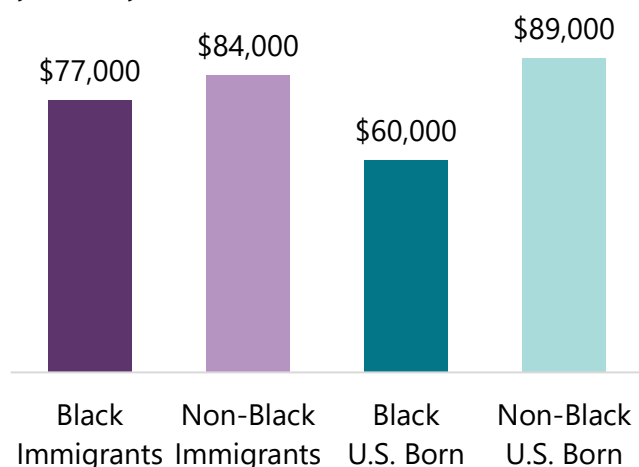
Taking into consideration both Black foreign-born children and Black U.S.-born children of immigrants, a total of 1.8 million Black children were living with at least one immigrant parent in 2020–24 (see Table 7). Therefore, of the 9.6 million Black children in the United States, nearly one out of every five had an

immigrant parent. Moreover, 89 percent of the 1.8 million Black children living with at least one immigrant parent were themselves U.S. citizens.

C. Household Income and Homeownership

Black immigrants’ median household income—that is, the sum of all income generated by household members—was \$77,000 in 2020–24 (see Figure 9). This was lower than the household income for both the non-Black U.S. born (\$89,000) and non-Black immigrants (\$84,000).

FIGURE 9
Median Household Incomes in the United States, by Nativity and Race, 2020–24



Source: MPI analysis of 2020–24 ACS data, pooled.

Black immigrants' median household income was significantly higher (\$17,000 more) than the household income of U.S.-born Black individuals. The higher share of Black immigrants who are married (and may thus have two income earners in the household), their higher individual earnings, and lower unemployment rates, especially for Black immigrant men, are likely factors in this difference in household incomes between immigrant and U.S.-born Black households.

Homeownership rates, an indicator of wealth, were similar for Black immigrants and Black U.S.-born individuals (49 percent and 48 percent of whom, respectively, lived in owned homes in 2020–24). Homeownership rates were higher among the non-Black U.S. born (73 percent) and non-Black immigrants (59 percent). Discrimination in bank lending practices, in real estate (including redlining), and policies that have increased wealth inequality to the detriment of Black households provide some context for these lower homeownership rates, especially among U.S.-born Black people.

9 Conclusion

The United States' Black immigrants, estimated at 4,685,000 people in 2024, are a highly diverse population that has grown at a faster pace than the over-

all immigrant population, in great part due to new arrivals from Africa. Black immigrants are now evenly split in their origins between those born in Africa and those from Latin America and the Caribbean. And while the latter group tends to be highly concentrated in New York State and Florida, Black African immigrants are more widely dispersed throughout the country.

Black immigrant workers, though present in a variety of industries, are concentrated in key growth sectors for the U.S. economy: health care, transportation, and professional services. To their workplaces and their communities, Black immigrants bring relatively high rates of English proficiency, educational attainment, and employment, and many have found well-paying work and become U.S. citizens through naturalization.

Understanding Black immigrants' assets and unique challenges, and the considerable diversity within this population, has never been more important. At a time when policies restricting immigration of all kinds are being implemented and misinformation about immigrant communities abounds, the fact remains—and the data in this fact sheet demonstrate—that Black immigrants are generally highly educated, English speaking, and significant contributors to the U.S. economy.

To their workplaces and their communities, Black immigrants bring relatively high rates of English proficiency, educational attainment, and employment, and many have found well-paying work and become U.S. citizens through naturalization.

Endnotes

- 1 Migration Policy Institute (MPI) analysis of 2024 single-year data from the U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey (ACS).
- 2 Muzaffar Chishti, Kathleen Bush-Joseph, and Colleen Putzel-Kavanaugh, “Unleashing Power in New Ways: Immigration in the First Year of Trump 2.0,” *Migration Information Source*, January 13, 2026.
- 3 The White House, “Realigning the United States Refugee Admission Program,” updated January 20, 2025.
- 4 U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), “Temporary Protected Status,” updated January 2026.
- 5 U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), “DHS Issues Notices of Termination for the CHNV Parole Program, Encourages Parolees to Self-Deport Immediately” (press release, June 12, 2025).
- 6 USCIS, “DHS Ends the Abuse of Humanitarian Parole and Terminates Family Reunification Parole Programs” (alert, December 12, 2025).
- 7 The White House, “Restricting the Entry of Foreign Nationals to Protect the United States from Foreign Terrorists and Other National Security and Public Safety Threats,” updated June 4, 2025.
- 8 This fact sheet defines as Black all individuals who self-identify as “Black or African American” in the ACS, either alone or in combination with any other ACS questionnaire option for race (White, American Indian or Alaska Native, Chinese, Japanese, or Other Asian or Pacific Islander) or ethnicity (Hispanic/Latino).
- 9 For information on this methodology, see MPI, “MPI Methodology for Assigning Legal Status to Noncitizen Respondents in U.S. Census Bureau Survey Data,” accessed January 26, 2025.
- 10 Each of the named language categories listed here was spoken by 1 percent to 6 percent of Black immigrants whose home language was a language other than English in 2020–24. About 23 percent spoke “other African languages,” an undefined category in the ACS data.
- 11 Valerie Lacarte, “Beyond the ‘Black Jobs’ Controversy: Immigrants and U.S.-Born Black Workers Share a Growing Jobs Pie” (short read, MPI, Washington, DC, August 2024).

About the Author



VALERIE LACARTE

Valerie Lacarte is a Senior Policy Analyst with the Migration Policy Institute (MPI) U.S. Immigration Policy Program, where she contributes to research design and conducts data analysis on a range of issues, including native-immigrant gaps in socioeconomic outcomes and access to public benefits for vulnerable immigrant and humanitarian populations. Previously, Dr. Lacarte worked at the Institute for Women’s Policy Research, the Inter-American Development Bank, and the Organization of American States, where she acquired expertise in economic research and regional integration policies.

Dr. Lacarte earned a PhD in economics from American University, an MSc in economics from Université de Montréal, and a BA in economics from Université du Québec à Montréal. For her PhD dissertation, she used a mixed-methods approach to study the integration of Caribbean immigrants into the U.S. labor market and the intersectionality of race, ethnicity, and cultural gender norms.

Acknowledgments

The author appreciates the Migration Policy Institute (MPI) Doris Meissner Innovation Fund support for this publication as well as MPI's broader research agenda on Black immigrants. The author also thanks her colleagues Michael Fix, Julia Gelatt, and Ariel G. Ruiz Soto for their peer review; Lauren Shaw for her thoughtful edits; Michelle Mittelstadt for her guidance on dissemination and outreach; and former intern Alejandro Urbina-Bernal for his research assistance.

MPI is an independent, nonpartisan policy research organization that adheres to the highest standard of rigor and integrity in its work. All analysis, recommendations, and policy ideas advanced by MPI are solely determined by its researchers.

© 2026 Migration Policy Institute.
All Rights Reserved.

Design: Sara Staedicke, MPI
Layout: Katie O'Hara

No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form by any means, electronic or mechanical, or included in any information storage and retrieval system without permission from Migration Policy Institute. A full-text PDF of this document is available for free download from www.migrationpolicy.org.

Information on reproducing excerpts from this publication can be found at www.migrationpolicy.org/about/copyright-policy. Inquiries can also be directed to communications@migrationpolicy.org.

Suggested citation: Lacarte, Valerie. 2026. *A Profile of the Growing Black Immigrant Population in the United States*. Washington, DC: Migration Policy Institute.



www.migrationpolicy.org

The Migration Policy Institute is an independent, nonpartisan think tank that seeks to improve immigration and integration policies through authoritative research and analysis, opportunities for learning and dialogue, and the development of new ideas to address complex policy questions.



1275 K St NW, Suite 800, Washington, DC 20005
202-266-1940