



Children of Immigrants

2013 State Trends Update

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This brief uses data from the 2013 American Community Survey to update “Children of Immigrants: 2011 State Trends Update” (Hanson and Simms 2014). All of these statistics can be found on the Children of Immigrants Data Tool website,¹ and interactive maps displaying this data over time and by state can be found on the Children of Immigrants Interactive Maps website.²

There Are More Children of Immigrants Than Ever Living in the United States

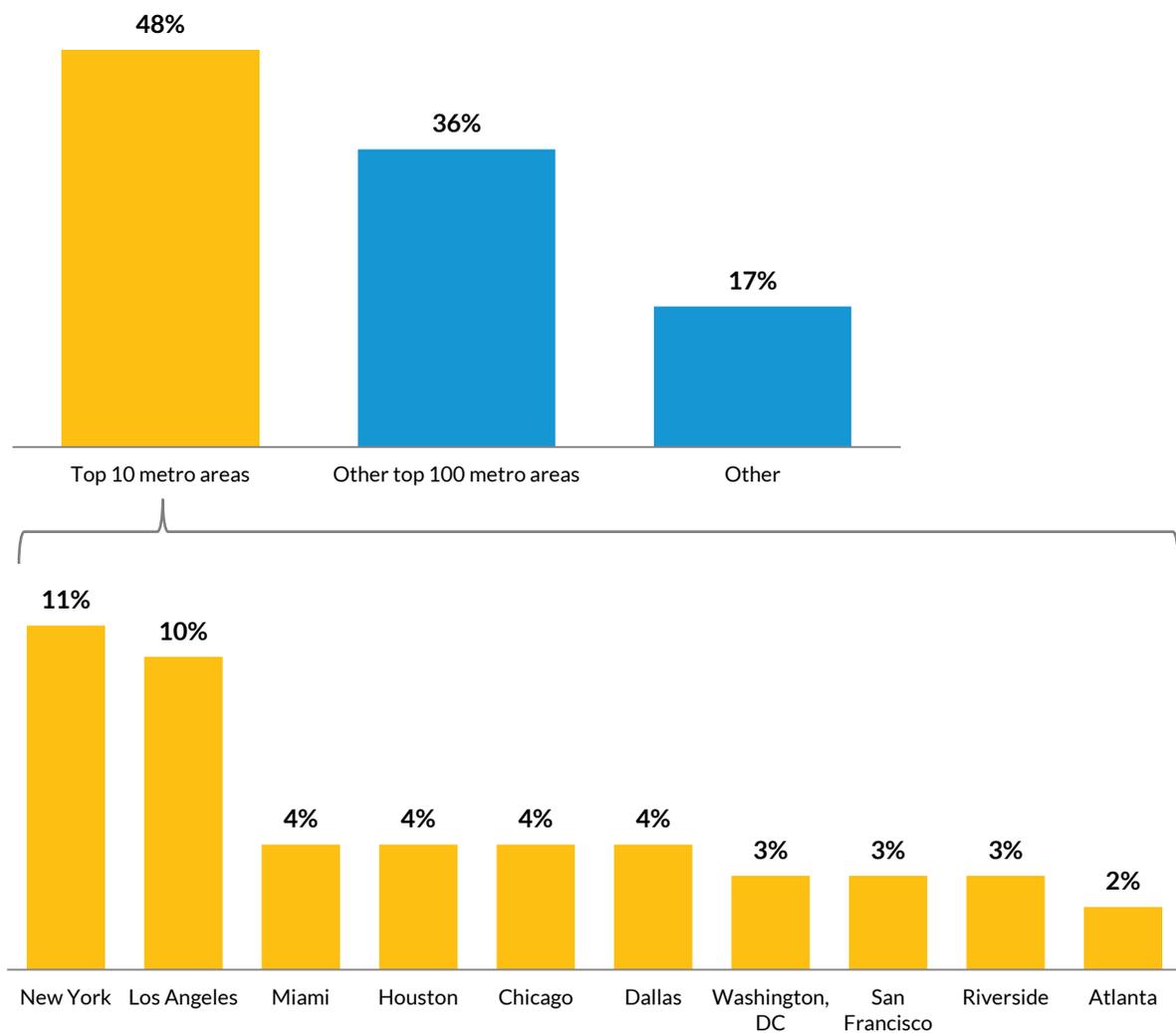
- From 2006 to 2013, the number of children of immigrants (defined as children with at least one foreign-born parent) in the United States grew 12 percent, from 15.7 million to 17.6 million. In the United States, 24 percent of children have at least one immigrant parent.
- Over that same period, children of immigrants accounted for all growth in the US population of children under age 18. The number of children of native-born parents fell 1.3 million, while the number of children with at least one immigrant parent increased 1.9 million.

Children of Immigrants Are Concentrated in 10 Large Metropolitan Areas, Most of Which Are Traditional Immigrant Destinations

- Around 48 percent of all children of immigrants reside in just 10 major metropolitan areas: New York, NY; Los Angeles, CA; Chicago, IL; Houston, TX; Miami, FL; Dallas, TX; Washington, DC;

Riverside, CA; San Francisco, CA; and Atlanta, GA (figure 1).³ Each of these metropolitan areas, except Atlanta and Washington, DC, is located in one of the six traditional immigrant destination states (California, New York, New Jersey, Florida, Illinois, and Texas). Children of immigrants are much more likely to live in large metropolitan areas than children of native-born parents, with 83 percent of all children of immigrants residing in one of the top 100 metropolitan areas⁴ compared with 62 percent of children of native-born parents.

FIGURE 1
Distribution of Children of Immigrants across Metropolitan Areas, 2013



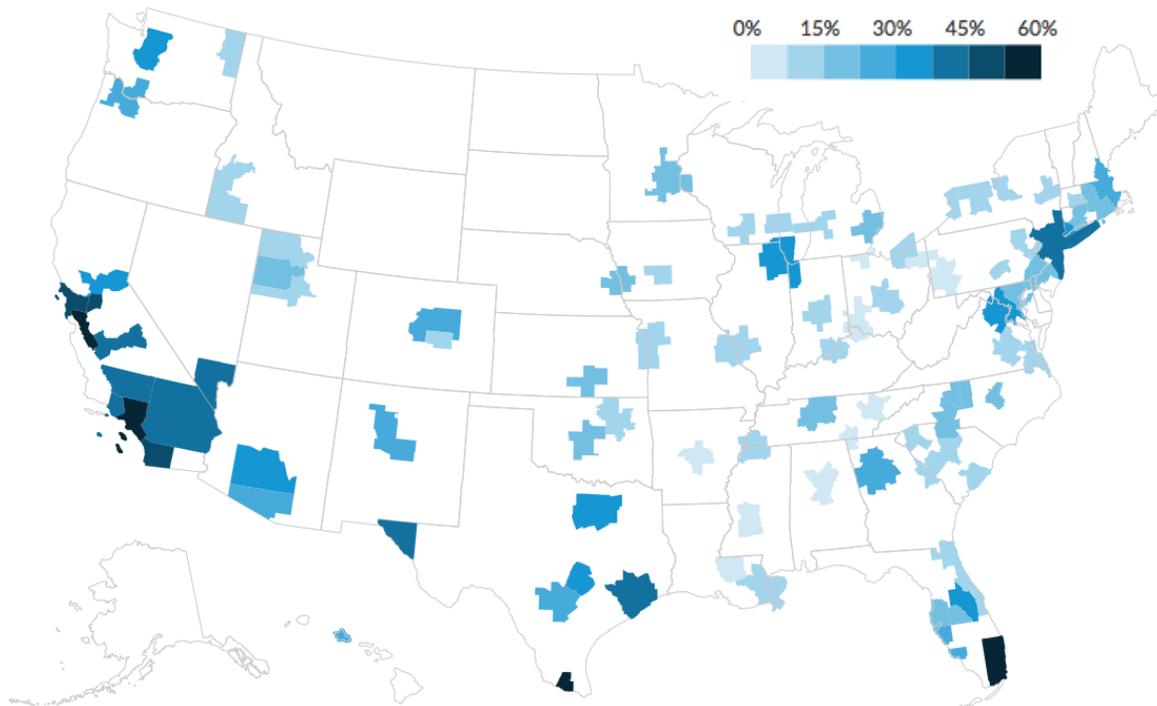
Source: Urban Institute tabulations from the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series datasets drawn from the 2012 and 2013 American Community Surveys.

Note: “Other” refers to all geographic areas outside the top 100 metropolitan areas, including both metropolitan and rural areas.

- Children of immigrants are the majority of children in 5 of the top 100 metropolitan areas in the United States, including San Jose, CA; Los Angeles, CA; McAllen, TX; Miami, FL; and San Francisco, CA (figure 2). In another 19 of the top 100 metro areas, 7 of which are in California, over 30 percent of all children are children of immigrants. In the remaining top 100 metro areas, an average of 14 percent of children are children of immigrants.

FIGURE 2

Share of Children of Immigrants in Top 100 Metropolitan Areas, 2013



Source: Urban Institute tabulations from the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series datasets drawn from the 2012 and 2013 American Community Surveys.

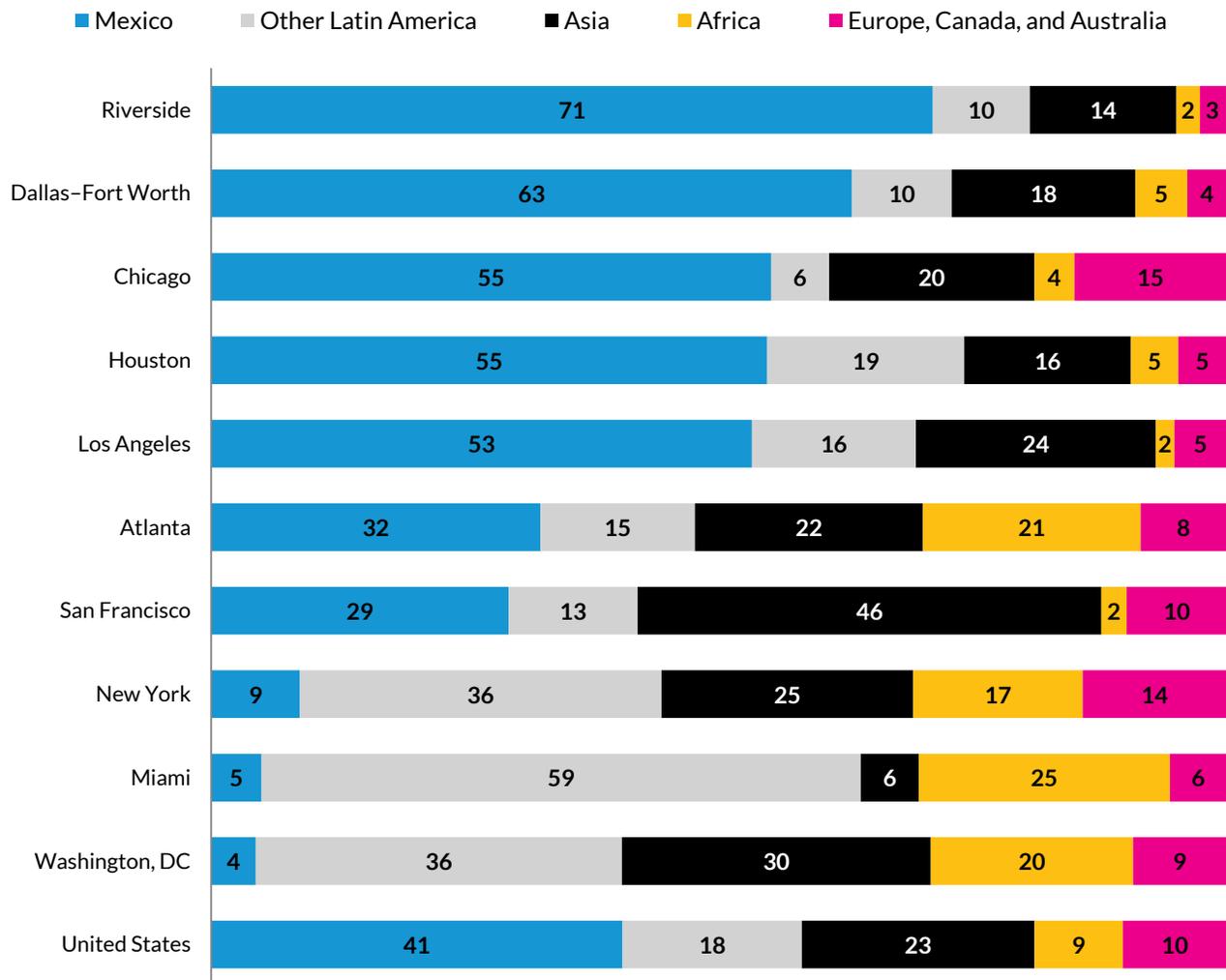
Immigrant Parents' Region of Origin Varies Substantially by State

- Children of immigrants parents' region of origin varies widely based on US geographic region (figure 3). In many states on the West Coast and in the Southwest, the most common country of origin is Mexico, with New Mexico having the highest share of children with Mexican immigrant parents (83 percent). No state on the East Coast has a majority of children with parents from Mexico.

- As seen in figure 3, of the 10 metropolitan areas with the most children of immigrants, those with the largest share of children of Mexican origin include Riverside, CA (71 percent); Dallas, TX (63 percent); Chicago, IL (55 percent); and Houston, TX (55 percent). In San Francisco, CA, 46 percent of children of immigrants are of Asian origin. In Miami, FL, 59 percent of children of immigrants have parents from countries in Latin America and the Spanish Caribbean other than Mexico. Both Miami, FL, and Atlanta, GA, have the highest shares of children of African immigrants (25 percent and 21 percent, respectively), among these 10 metropolitan areas.

FIGURE 3

Children of Immigrants from Birth to Age 17 by Parents' Region of Origin, 2013



Source: Urban Institute tabulations from the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series datasets drawn from the 2012 and 2013 American Community Surveys.

Note: This figure only presents the data for the US overall and the 10 metropolitan areas with the highest population of children of immigrants.

Nearly All Children of Immigrants Are US Citizens

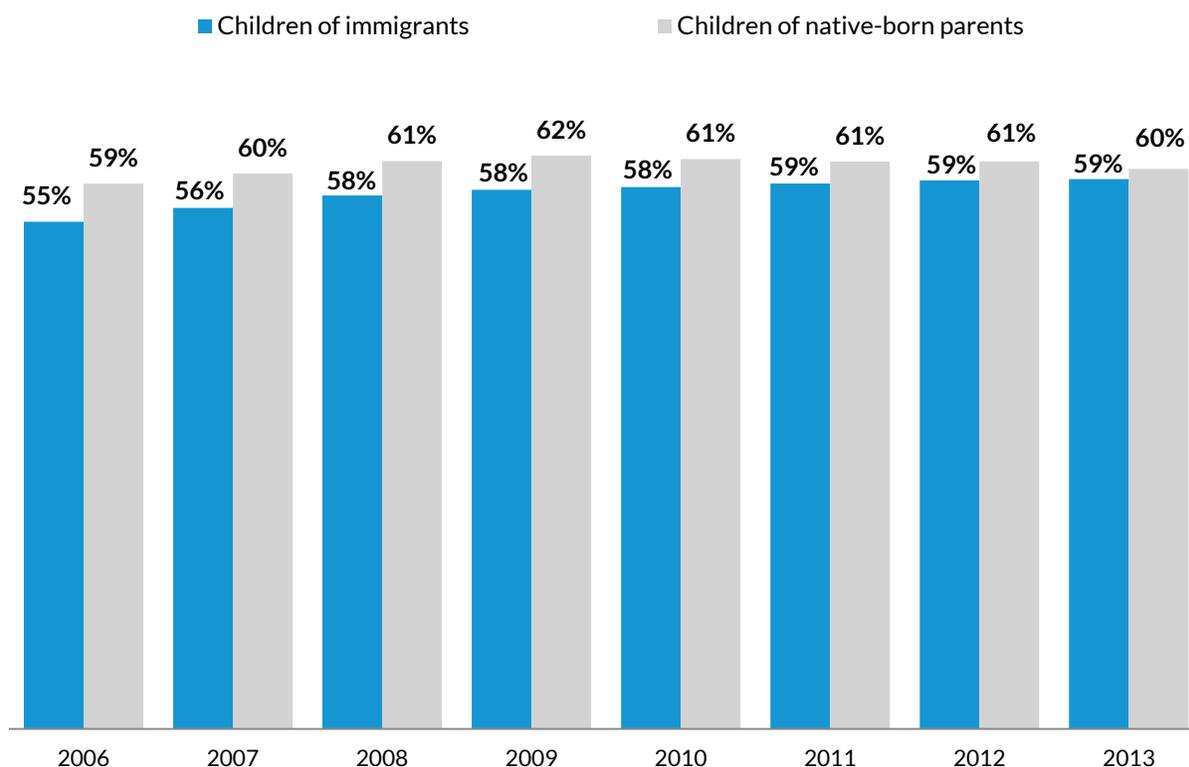
- In 2013, 90 percent of all children of immigrants were US citizens, up from 86 percent in 2006. Over that same period, the share of children of immigrants with at least one US citizen parent increased slightly from 57 percent to 58 percent. The share of children of immigrants who were born in the United States increased from 83 percent to 88 percent from 2006 to 2013.

Enrollment of Children of Immigrants in Early Education Has Risen

- The share of children of immigrants ages 3 to 5 who are enrolled in school, typically either preschool or kindergarten, has risen to 59 percent in 2013, up from 55 percent in 2006 (figure 4). The share of children of native-born parents ages 3 to 5 who are enrolled in school has increased only slightly, from 59 percent in 2006 to 60 percent in 2013.

FIGURE 4

School Enrollment among Children Ages 3 to 5 by Nativity of Parents



Source: Urban Institute tabulations from the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series datasets drawn from the American Community Survey.

English Proficiency among Children of Immigrants Continues to Increase

- English proficiency among children of immigrants has steadily increased from 81 percent in 2006 to 85 percent in 2013. The share of children of immigrants who have at least one parent with English proficiency also increased from 55 percent to 59 percent over that same period. This means that a full 41 percent of children of immigrants have no English-proficient parent.
- The share of children of immigrants living in linguistically isolated households (those in which there are no English-proficient family members age 14 or older)⁵ declined from 28 percent in 2006 to 22 percent in 2013. Such households may face difficulties learning about and accessing government support services and sending their children to early education programs, among others.
- The percentage of children of immigrants that are bilingual⁶ continues to increase, growing from 53 percent in 2006 to 56 percent in 2013. Substantially more children of immigrants are bilingual than children of native-born parents: in 2013, only 5 percent of children of native-born parents were bilingual.

Children of Immigrants Are More Likely to Live in Two-Parent Households Than Children of Native-Born Parents

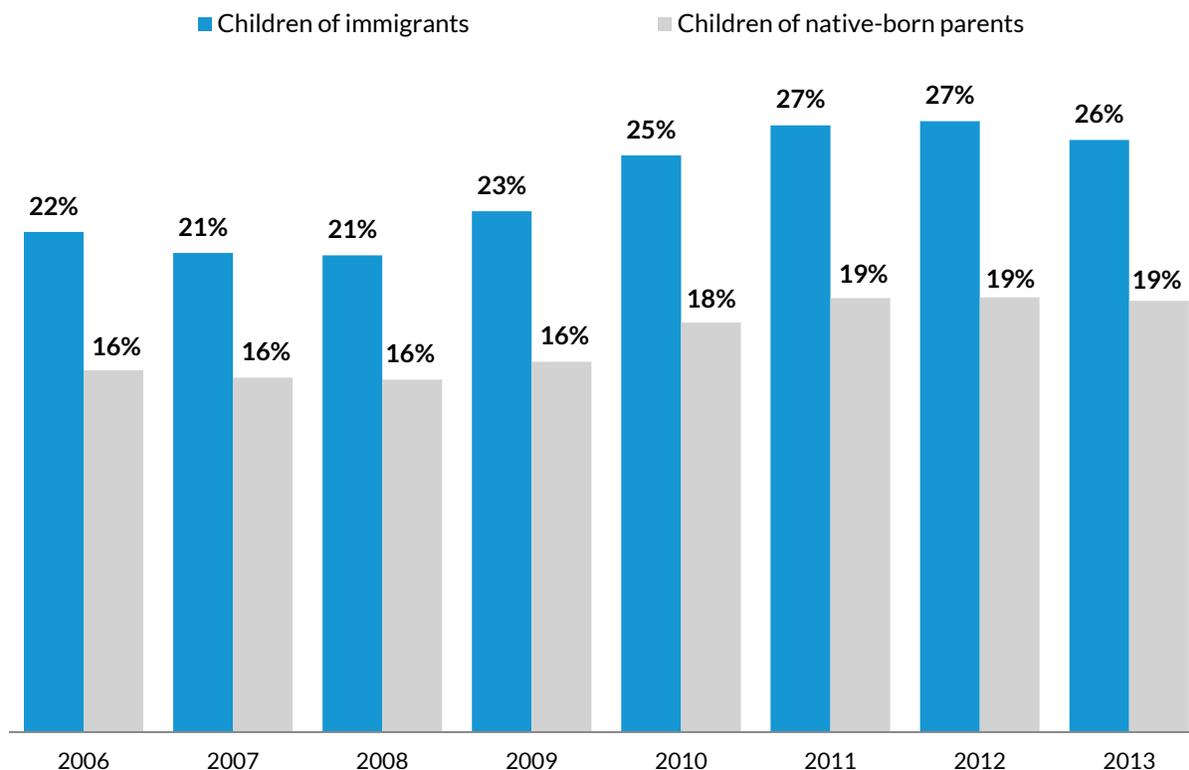
- The share of children of immigrants living in two-parent families remains high at 81 percent, compared with 68 percent of children of native-born parents.
- Children of immigrants are less likely than children of native-born parents to live in households with just one child: 20 percent of children of immigrants are the only child in the household compared with 24 percent of children of native-born parents. Children of immigrants are also more likely to live in households with three or more children: 42 percent of children of immigrants live in such households compared with 37 percent of children of native-born parents.
- Children of immigrants are more likely to live in households with a greater number of adult family members: 27 percent of children of immigrants live in households with three or more related adults, compared with 16 percent of children of native-born parents.

Children of Immigrants Are More Likely to Live in Poor or Low-Income Families Than Children of Native-Born Parents

- More children of immigrants live in poor families (those with income below the federal poverty level) than do children of native-born parents, and this percentage has been rising (figure 5). In 2013, 26 percent of children of immigrants lived in poor families, compared with 19 percent of children of native-born parents. These numbers have increased since 2006, when 22 percent of children of immigrants and 16 percent of children of native-born parents lived in poor families.
- The poverty rates of children of immigrants' families also vary geographically (figure 6). Notably, 56 percent of children of immigrants in McAllen, TX, live in poor families, and 47 percent of children of immigrants in both Fresno, CA, and Winston-Salem, NC, live in poor families. In other areas, the share of children of immigrants living in poor families is much lower: only 11 percent in the Washington, DC, metropolitan area and 8 percent in Akron, OH.

FIGURE 5

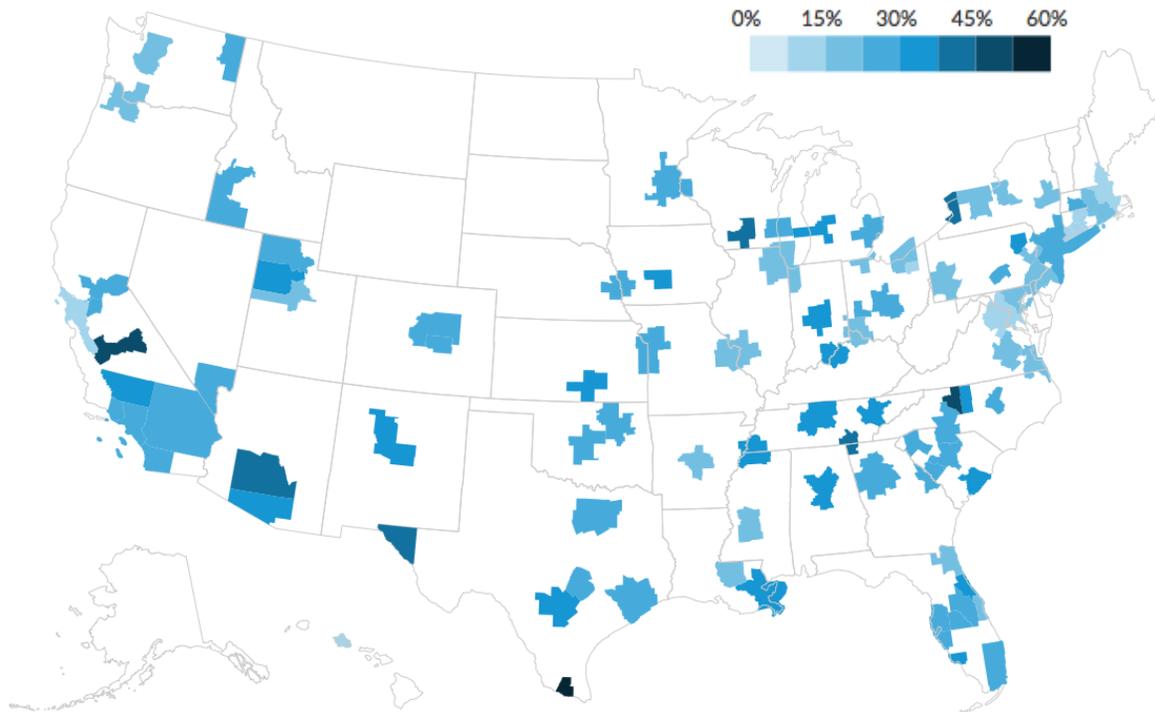
Share of Children below the Federal Poverty Level by Nativity of Parents



Source: Urban Institute tabulations from the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series datasets drawn from the American Community Survey.

FIGURE 6

Share of Children of Immigrants below the Federal Poverty Level for Top 100 Metropolitan Areas, 2013



Source: Urban Institute tabulations from the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series datasets drawn from the 2012 and 2012 American Community Surveys.

- In addition, the share of low-income families (those with income below 200 percent of the federal poverty level) increased for both children of immigrants and children of native-born parents. The share of children of immigrants in low-income families rose from 51 percent in 2006 to almost 55 percent in 2013, while the share of children of native-born parents in low-income families rose from 36 percent in 2006 to almost 40 percent in 2013.

Notes

1. “Children of Immigrants Data Tool,” Urban Institute, accessed February 4, 2016, <http://webapp.urban.org/charts/datatool/pages.cfm>.
2. Devlin Hanson, “Visualizing Trends for Children of Immigrants,” Urban Institute, February 2016, <http://apps.urban.org/features/children-of-immigrants/>.
3. Only 20 percent of children of native-born parents live in these 10 metropolitan areas.
4. Throughout the brief, the “top 100 metropolitan areas” refers to the 100 largest metropolitan areas in the United States by population. For a full list of metropolitan areas, see “The Urban Institute Children of

Immigrants Data Tool: Technical Appendix,” Urban Institute, accessed February 11, 2016, (<http://webapp.urban.org/charts/datatool/pages.cfm?p=technicalappendix>).

5. “Language Use – Frequently Asked Questions,” US Census Bureau, last revised June 18, 2013, <http://www.census.gov/hhes/socdemo/language/about/faqs.html>.
6. An individual is bilingual when he or she reports speaking a language other than English at home and is not limited English proficient.

About the Authors



Tyler Woods is a research assistant in the Center on Labor, Human Services, and Population at the Urban Institute, where he contributes to research on low-income and vulnerable populations, the US social safety net, and demographic change. Woods has experience in both quantitative and qualitative research methods, and his past research efforts have focused on the intersection of immigration, health, and gender and sexuality, specifically examining HIV risk and masculinity among Mexican men. Woods graduated magna cum laude with honors and distinction in research from Rice University, earning a BA in sociology with a minor in poverty, justice, and human capabilities.



Devlin Hanson is a research associate in the Center on Labor, Human Services, and Population at the Urban Institute; she is a labor economist whose research focuses on vulnerable children and families, including child welfare involved families and immigrant families. Hanson specializes in conducting analysis using large longitudinal and cross-sectional administrative and public-use micro data, including the American Community Survey and the decennial census. Hanson is the project lead for Urban’s Children of Immigrants data tool and interactive maps, and for a project that studied language access policies in Washington, DC. She is also project colead for an evaluability study of the United Services Military Apprenticeship Program and is working on two projects that will evaluate the impact of providing housing for families involved with the child welfare system.



Shane Saxton, a former research assistant, worked in the Center on Labor, Human Services, and Population at the Urban Institute under the supervision of Julia Gelatt. Saxton’s interests vary from education to poverty to racial disparities to labor economics. Before joining Urban, Saxton received his undergraduate degree at the University of Rochester, majoring in economics and English literature and minoring in mathematics. Saxton also worked as a research assistant in Rochester’s department of economics, studying social dynamics in New York City.



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employment and asset building. In 2005, Simms was elected to membership in the American Academy of Arts and Sciences; in 2008, she received the Samuel Z. Westerfield Award from the National Economic Association. She was awarded an honorary doctor of laws degree from Carleton College, Minnesota, in 2010. Simms holds a BA in economics from Carleton College and a PhD in economics from Stanford University.

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