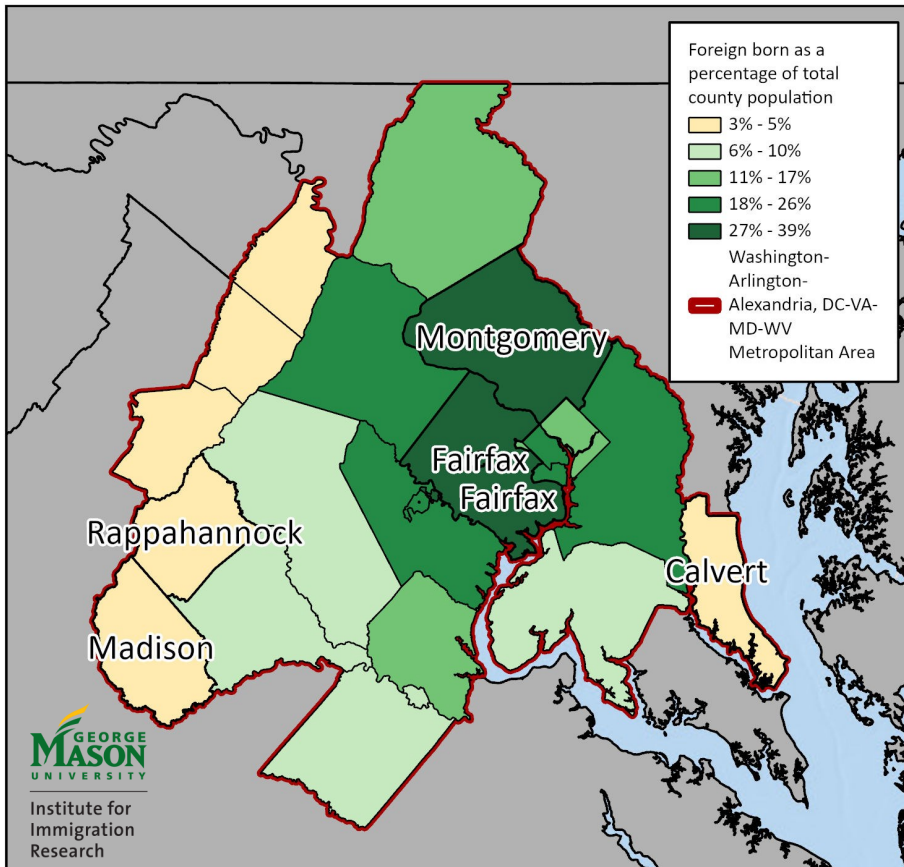


Immigrants in the Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV Metropolitan Area

Figure 1. Foreign Born in the Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV Metropolitan Area



2020 NUMBERS AT A GLANCE

- **44,411,750:** Approximate number of immigrants living in the United States (14% of the population)
- **1,425,110:** Approximate number of immigrants in the Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV metropolitan area (23% of the metropolitan area’s population)
- **17th:** Rank of the Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV metropolitan area among the 260 identified U.S. metropolitan areas in terms of immigrants as a percentage of the metropolitan area’s population
- **15%:** Estimated increase in the number of immigrants in the Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV metropolitan area between 2010 and 2020.

Note: This data was prepared by the George Mason University Institute for Immigration Research (IIR). 2023. This data is displayed at the county level. Maps are based on IPUMS National Historical Geographic Information System: Version 16.0. ACS 2016-2020 dataset. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota. 2022.

Distribution of Immigrants

Figure 1 shows the distribution of immigrants, as a percentage of the total county population, throughout the Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV metropolitan area (hereafter referred to as the D.C. metropolitan area). The counties with the highest shares of immigrants tend to be closest to the District of Columbia, while counties with lower shares of immigrants are clustered on the western and eastern edges of the metropolitan area. The three counties with the highest shares of immigrants are Montgomery County, MD (32%), Fairfax County, VA (31%), and Fairfax City County, VA (29%). The counties with the lowest shares of immigrants in the D.C. metropolitan area are Rappahannock County, VA (4%), Madison County, VA (3%), and Calvert County, MD (3%).

All analysis in this fact sheet is based on source data from the U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey, 2016-2020 distributed through IPUMS-USA, University of Minnesota, www.ipums.org, unless otherwise noted.

Please note that percentages may not always add up to 100% due to rounding of the individual percentages.

Please note that the terms “immigrant” and “foreign born” are used interchangeably throughout this fact sheet. Foreign born refers to individuals who are not a U.S. citizen at birth or who were born outside the U.S., Puerto Rico or other U.S. territories and whose parents are not U.S. citizens. The foreign born may include naturalized U.S. citizens, Legal Permanent Residents, temporary residents, refugees and asylees, and others. Additionally, native born includes those who are U.S. citizens at birth, those born in the United States, Puerto Rico, or other U.S. territories, and those born abroad to a parent who is a U.S. citizen.

Immigrants in the Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV Metropolitan Area

Figure 2. Year of Immigration

Immigrants in the DC-VA-MD-WV Metro Area
(Est. Pop.= 1,401,737)



■ 1930-1959 ■ 1960-1979 ■ 1980-1989 ■ 1990-1999 ■ 2000-2009 ■ 2010-2018

As shown in Figure 2, over half (54%) of immigrants in the D.C. metropolitan area arrived to the United States from 2000 to 2018. By comparison, less than half (47%) of all other immigrants in the United States arrived during this time period. The median year of immigration for immigrants in the D.C. metro area is 2000, compared to 1999 for all other immigrants in the United States. Overall, the data shows that immigrants in the D.C. metropolitan area are slightly more recent arrivals to the United States than their counterparts in the rest of the country.

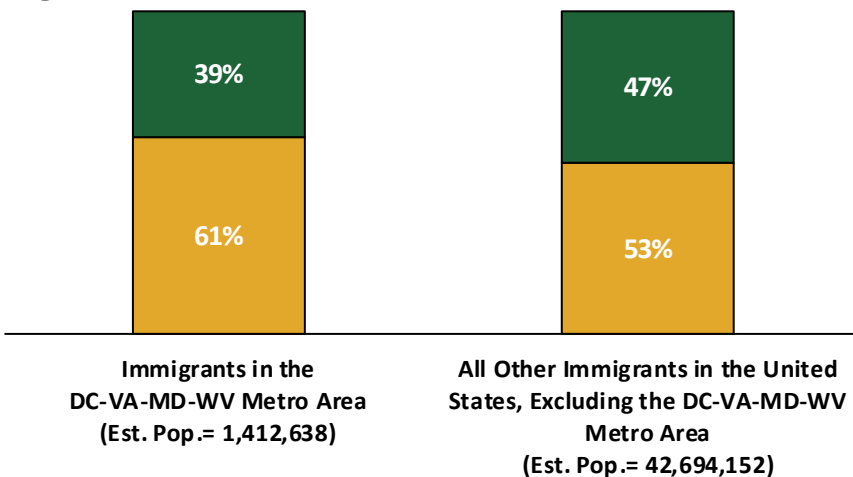
Figure 3. Top Five Countries of Birth

Immigrants in the DC-VA-MD-WV Metro Area		All Other Immigrants in the United States, Excluding the DC-VA-MD-WV Metro Area	
El Salvador	14%	Mexico	26%
India	8%	India	6%
Korea	4%	China	5%
China	4%	Philippines	5%
Guatemala	4%	Cuba	3%
160 Other Countries	66%	161 Other Countries	55%
Estimated Immigrant Population	1,425,106	Estimated Immigrant Population	42,986,645

Figure 3 demonstrates that the top countries of birth among immigrants in the D.C. metropolitan area are different than the top countries of birth for immigrants in the rest of the United States. Unlike elsewhere in the United States, El Salvador is the top country of birth for immigrants in the D.C. metropolitan area (14%). The percentage of immigrants in the D.C. metropolitan born in India (8%) and China (4%) are similar to percentages in the rest of the United States (respectively 6% and 5%).

Figure 4. English Proficiency Among Immigrants

Age 5+



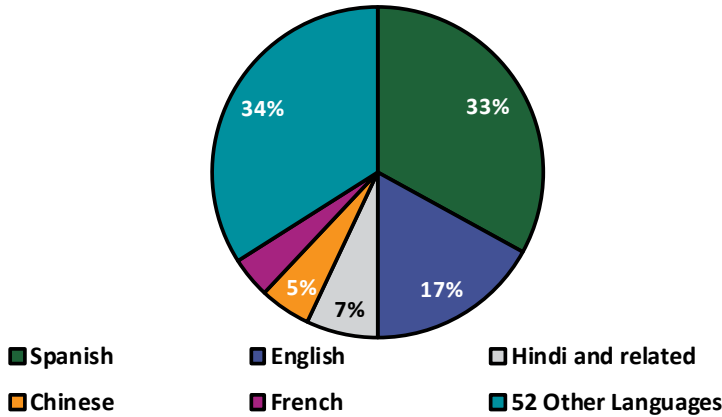
■ Proficient in English ■ Not Proficient in English

Figure 4 highlights that immigrants in the D.C. metropolitan area are more likely to be proficient in English (61%) compared with immigrants in the rest of the United States (53%). This trend persists even though immigrants in the D.C. metropolitan area tend to be more recent arrivals to the United States (see Figure 2) and are equally likely to be speaking English at home (17%) compared with immigrants in the rest of the nation (see Figure 5).

Immigrants in the Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV Metropolitan Area

Figure 5. Top Five Languages Spoken at Home Among Immigrants
Age 5+

Immigrants in the DC-VA-MD-WV Metro Area
(Est. Pop.= 1,412,638)



As shown in Figure 5, an estimated one-third of immigrants in the D.C. metropolitan area speak Spanish at home (33%). Compared to immigrants in the D.C. metropolitan area, immigrants in the rest of the United States are more likely to speak Spanish at home (42%, figure not shown). Immigrants in the D.C. metropolitan area are equally likely to speak English at home (17%) when compared to immigrants in the rest of the United States (17%, figure not shown).

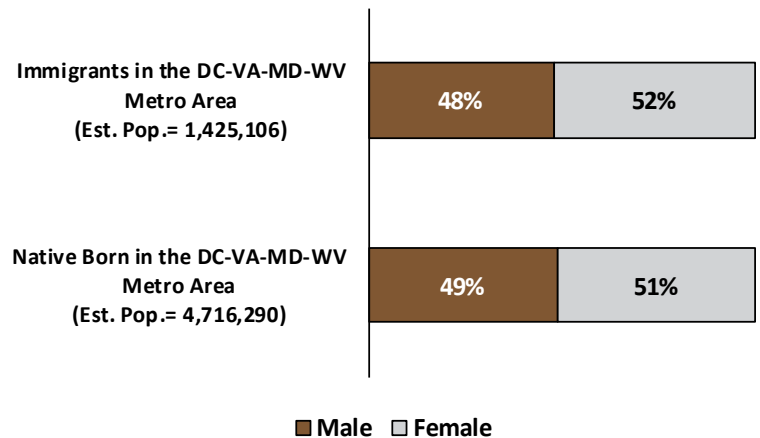
Figure 6. Race and Hispanic Origin

	Immigrants in the DC-VA-MD-WV Metro Area	Native Born in the DC-VA-MD-WV Metro Area
White	29%	58%
Asian	31%	4%
Black	18%	28%
Other Race	17%	4%
Two or More Races	5%	6%
Not Hispanic	65%	90%
Hispanic	35%	10%
Estimated Population	1,425,106	4,716,290

Figure 6 details that immigrants in the D.C. metropolitan area are significantly more likely to identify as Asian than the native born (31% to 4%). This makes sense given that India, Korea, and China are three of the five top countries of birth for immigrants in the area (see Figure 3). In contrast, the native born are considerably more likely to identify as Black (28% to 18%) or White (58% to 29%). However, immigrants in the D.C. metropolitan area are about three times as likely to identify as Hispanic compared to the native born (35% to 10%).

Figure 7. Sex Distribution

Figure 7 demonstrates that the sex distribution of immigrants and the native born in the D.C. metropolitan area is very similar. For both the foreign and native born in the metropolitan area, females are a slight majority (52% and 51%, respectively). This distribution by nativity is the same at the national level, excluding the D.C. metropolitan area (not shown).



Immigrants in the Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV Metropolitan Area

Figure 8. Age Distribution

	Immigrants in the DC-VA-MD-WV Metro Area	Native Born in the DC-VA-MD-WV Metro Area
0 to 4 years old	1%	8%
5 to 15 years old	4%	17%
16 to 24 years old	7%	12%
25 to 34 years old	17%	14%
35 to 44 years old	24%	12%
45 to 54 years old	20%	12%
55 to 64 years old	14%	12%
65 years and older	13%	13%
Estimated Population	1,425,106	4,716,290
Median Age	43 years old	33 years old

Figure 8 shows that immigrants tend to be older than the native born in the D.C. metropolitan area. The higher median age for immigrants than the native born in the D.C. metropolitan area underscores this trend (43 to 33 years old, respectively). Furthermore, immigrants in the D.C. metro area are markedly more likely to be 25 to 54 years old than the native born in the area (61% to 38%).

Figure 9. Grade Attending In School

Figure 9 demonstrates that over half of immigrants currently in school or higher education in the D.C. metropolitan area are in undergraduate or graduate school (55%). Conversely, only one quarter of the native born currently in school in the area are enrolled in undergraduate or graduate school (26%). Given the age distribution of immigrants compared to the native born illustrated in Figure 8, the higher percentage of natives enrolled in secondary school or below compared to immigrants is not surprising.

Immigrants in the DC-VA-MD-WV Metro Area (Est. Pop.= 201,285) **Native Born in the DC-VA-MD-WV Metro Area (Est. Pop.= 1,377,184)**

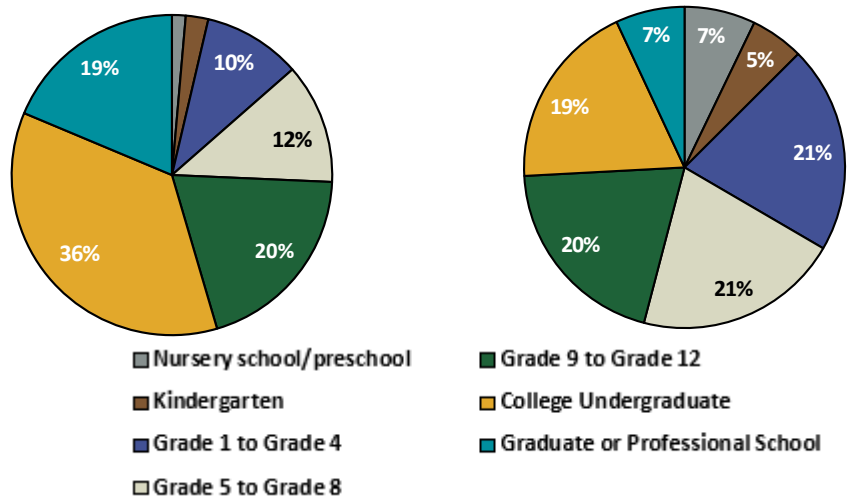
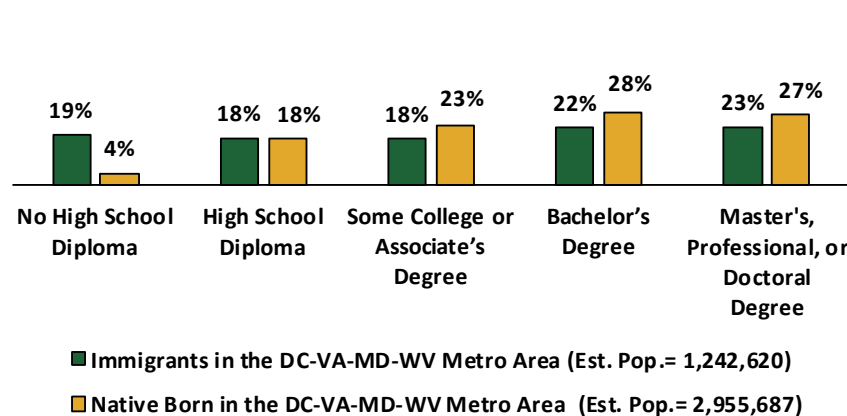


Figure 10. Educational Attainment Age 25+



As shown in Figure 10, immigrants are equally as likely to complete high school as the native born in the D.C. metropolitan area (18%). However, a much higher percentage of immigrants do not have a high school diploma (19%) compared to the native born (4%). Immigrants are less likely to complete an associate's degree or higher compared to the native born in the area (63% to 78%, respectively). Yet, immigrants in the D.C. metropolitan area are considerably more likely to attain a postsecondary degree compared to all immigrants in the rest of the United States (63% to 51%, respectively, not shown).

Immigrants in the Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV Metropolitan Area

Figure 11. Employment Status
In the Labor Force, Ages 16-65

	Immigrants in the DC-VA-MD-WV Metro Area	Native Born in the DC-VA-MD-WV Metro Area
Employed	96%	95%
Unemployed	4%	5%
Estimated Population	964,200	2,355,157

Figure 11 shows that immigrants and the native born in the D.C. metropolitan area have comparable rates of employment. However, immigrants are most likely to be employed in service occupations (22%), while the native born are most likely to be working in management, business, and financial occupations (25%; see Figure 13).

Figure 12. Self-Employment
In the Labor Force, Employed, Ages 16-65

Figure 12 demonstrates that the majority of immigrants and native born in the D.C. metropolitan area work for wages (90% to 93%, respectively). Although not significantly different, immigrants are slightly more likely to be self employed than the native born in the D.C. metro area (10% to 7%, respectively). Many self-employed immigrants in the D.C. metropolitan area are small business owners; Learn more about these entrepreneurs' stories through the [IIR's Immigrant Stories](#) project.

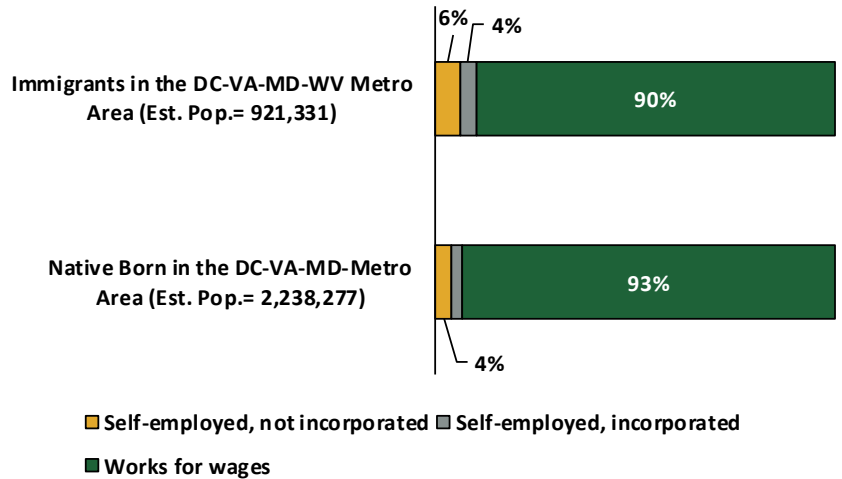


Figure 13. Occupation
In the Labor Force, Employed, Ages 16-65

Immigrants in the DC-VA-MD-WV Metro Area		Native Born in the DC-VA-MD-WV Metro Area	
Service Occupations	22%	Management, Business, and Financial Occupations	25%
Management, Business, and Financial Occupations	16%	Education, Legal, Community Service, Arts, and Media Occupations	16%
Computer, Engineering, and Science Occupations	13%	Service Occupations	13%
Construction and Extraction Occupations	10%	Computer, Engineering, and Science Occupations	13%
Education, Legal, Community Service, Arts, and Media Occupations	8%	Office and Administrative Support Occupations	10%
8 Other Occupational Groups	31%	8 Other Occupational Groups	23%
Estimated Population	921,331	Estimated Population	2,238,277

As detailed in Figure 13, the top five occupations in which immigrants and the native born in the D.C. metropolitan area work are generally similar, although the distribution across occupations is different. For example, although both groups are employed in service occupations, more than 1 in 5 (22%) immigrants work in these jobs compared to 13% of the native born. Notably, immigrants in the D.C. metropolitan area are employed in construction and extraction occupations (10%) at much higher rates than the native born (3%).

Immigrants in the Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV Metropolitan Area

Figure 14. Industry

In the Labor Force, Employed, Ages 16-65

Immigrants in the DC-VA-MD-WV Metro Area		Native Born in the DC-VA-MD-WV Metro Area	
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	14%	Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	18%
Health Care and Social Assistance	12%	Public Administration	15%
Construction	12%	Educational Services	10%
Accommodation and Food Services	9%	Health Care and Social Assistance	9%
Retail Trade	8%	Retail Trade	8%
15 Other Industry Groups	45%	15 Other Industry Groups	40%
Estimated Population	921,331	Estimated Population	2,238,277

Overall, Figure 14 shows that immigrants and native born in the D.C. metropolitan area have three of five top industries in common (i.e., professional, scientific, and technical services; healthcare and social assistance; and, retail trade). In fact, both of these groups have the same top industry, although the native born are slightly more likely to work in it than immigrants in the area (18% to 14%, respectively).

Figure 15. Personal Income

In the Labor Force, Employed Full-Time, Ages 16-65

	Immigrants in the DC-VA-MD-WV Metro Area	Native Born in the DC-VA-MD-WV Metro Area
Less than \$40,000	34%	18%
\$40,000 to \$74,999	30%	31%
\$75,000 and greater	36%	51%
Estimated Population	686,879	1,707,915
Median Income	\$53,933	\$76,000

Among full-time workers in the D.C. metropolitan area who are between the ages of 16 and 65, Figure 15 demonstrates that immigrants on average earn lower personal annual incomes than the native born. While the median income among immigrants in the D.C. metropolitan area is approximately \$54,000, it is \$76,000 among the native born. Moreover, while nearly two thirds (64%) of immigrants earn less than \$75,000 for their annual personal income, almost half (49%) of the native born do so.

Figure 16. Health Insurance

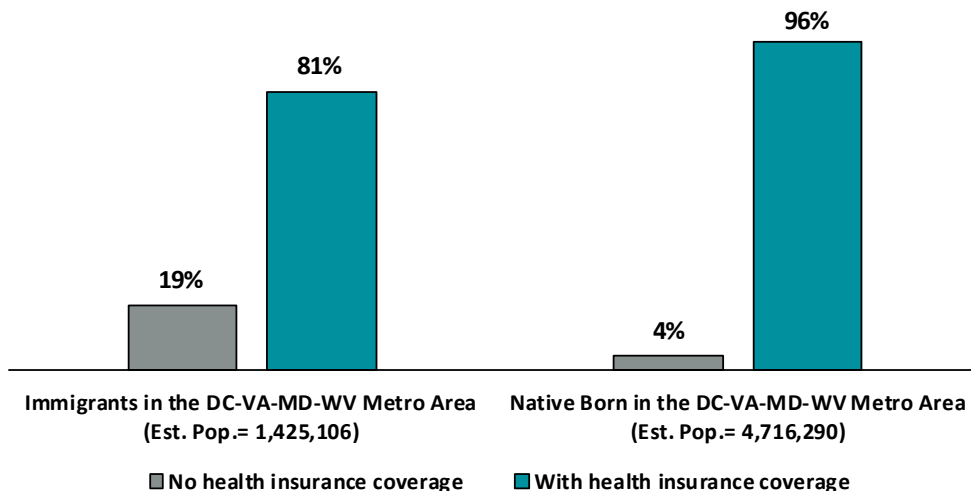


Figure 16 shows that immigrants are less likely to have health insurance than native born in the D.C. metropolitan area (81% to 96%, respectively). The fact that immigrants tend to have lower personal annual incomes than the native born (see Figure 15) may partially explain why a larger share of immigrants are uninsured (19%) than native born (4%) in the D.C. metropolitan area.

Immigrants in the Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV Metropolitan Area

Figure 17. Household Income
Household head, Age 15+

	Immigrants in the DC-VA-MD-WV Metro Area	Native Born in the DC-VA-MD-WV Metro Area
Less than \$40,000	20%	16%
\$40,000 to \$74,999	22%	17%
\$75,000 and greater	58%	67%
Estimated Household Head Population	561,578	1,643,116
Median Income	\$88,700	\$111,329

As shown in Figure 17, immigrant-headed households, on average, have lower annual household incomes than households headed by the native born. While immigrant-headed households have an approximate median household income of \$89,000, households headed by the native born earn a notably higher median household income of approximately \$111,000. Furthermore, immigrant-headed households are less likely to earn \$75,000 or more compared to households headed by the native born in the D.C. metropolitan area (58% to 67%, respectively).

Figure 18. Family Size
Household head, Age 16+

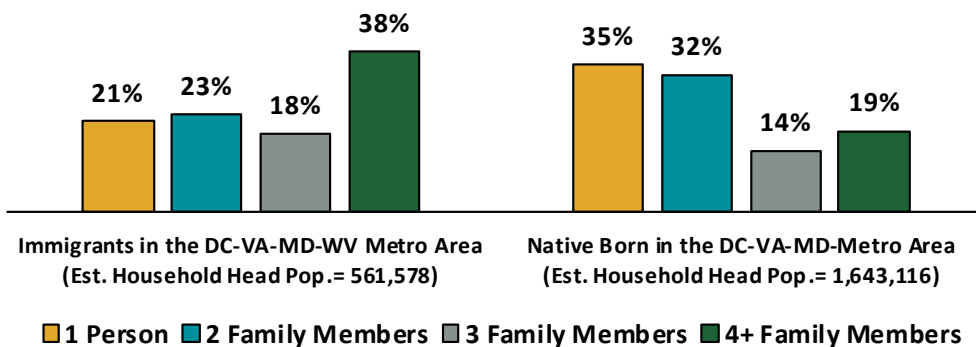


Figure 18 displays that immigrant-headed households tend to be larger than households headed by the native born in the D.C. metropolitan area. While over half (56%) of immigrant-headed households have 3 or more family members, only a third (33%) of households headed by the native born do so. The greater likelihood of children being present in immigrant versus native born headed households partially explains these trends (see Figure 19).

Figure 19. Number of Children in Household
Household head, Age 16+

Immigrants in the DC-VA-MD-WV Metro Area (Est. Household Head Pop.= 561,578) **Native Born in the DC-VA-MD-WV Metro Area (Est. Household Head Pop.= 1,643,116)**

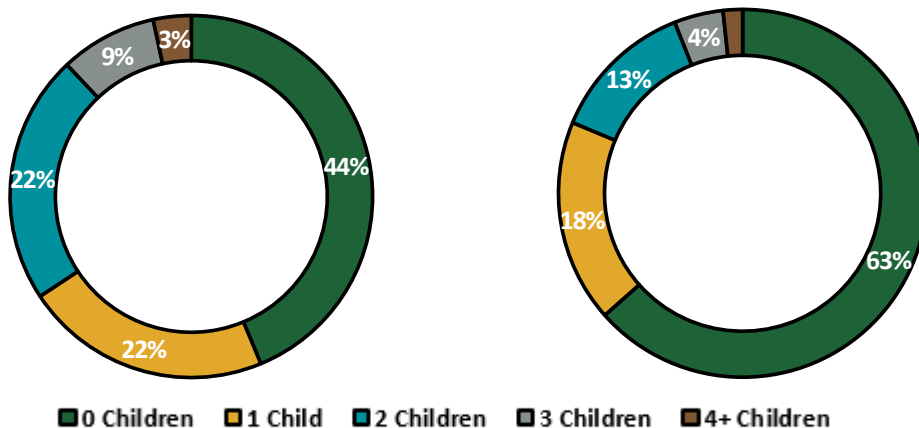


Figure 19 shows that immigrant-headed households in the D.C. metropolitan area are markedly more likely to have children living in the household than households headed by the native born. Whereas over half (56%) of immigrant-headed households have 1 or more children, a little over a third (37%) of households headed by native-born individuals do so.

Immigrants in the Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV Metropolitan Area

Figure 20. Home Ownership

Household head, Age 16+

Figure 20 shows that immigrants are less likely than the native born to own a home in the D.C. metropolitan area. Whereas almost 3 in 5 (58%) immigrants own their home, 65% of the native born do so. This discrepancy in home ownership rates may partially be attributed to the fact that the native born have higher median personal and household annual incomes (see Figures 15 and 17) than immigrants in the D.C. metropolitan area.

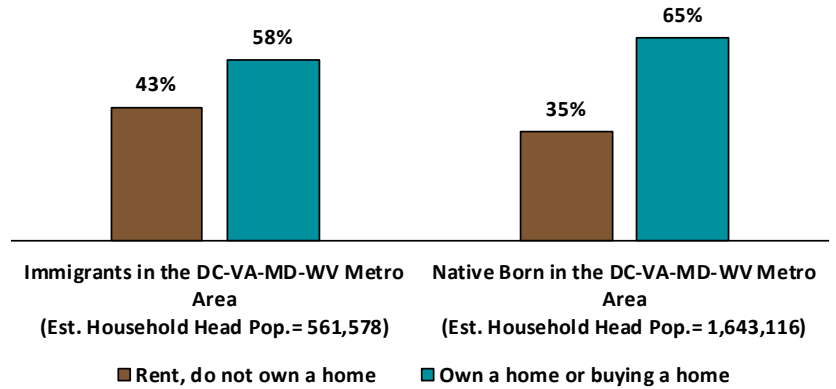


Figure 21. Poverty Status

As shown in Figure 21, immigrants and the native born in the D.C. metropolitan area are nearly equally as likely to be living below the federal poverty line (9% to 7%, respectively). Overall, the vast majority of people in each group are living above the federal poverty line, which makes sense in the context of previously discussed median personal and household annual incomes for each group (see Figures 15 and 17), along with employment trends (see Figure 11).

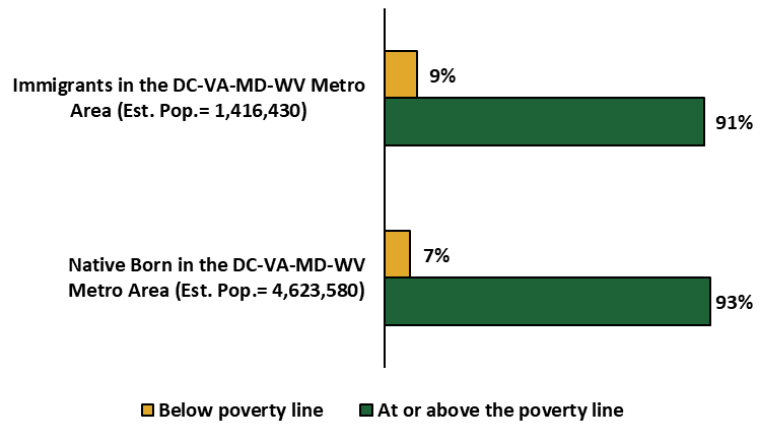


Figure 22. Naturalization Rates Among Immigrants

	Immigrants in the DC-VA-MD-WV Metro Area	All Other Immigrants in the United States, Excluding the DC-VA-MD-WV Metro Area
Naturalized Citizen	53%	50%
Not a Citizen	47%	50%
Estimated Immigrant Population	1,425,106	42,986,645

Figure 22 displays that immigrants in the D.C. metropolitan area have comparable naturalization rates to all other immigrants in the United States. About half of each group is a naturalized citizen (53% to 50%).

For fact sheets that examine populations at the household level, please note that a household includes all the people who occupy a housing unit. A native-born U.S. citizen household is defined as a household which is headed by a native-born U.S. citizen, regardless of the immigration status of the spouse. Conversely, an immigrant-headed household is defined as a household which is headed by a foreign-born individual, regardless of the immigration status of the spouse. For fact sheets that examine total household income, please note that the total annual income of all members in the household is included in the analysis. For fact sheets that examine personal income, personal income refers to total personal income earned on an annual basis.

For the purpose of this report, English proficiency is defined as individuals who speak only English or who can speak English very well.

For fact sheets that examine poverty status, please note that it excludes individuals who live in group quarters and those who are under the age of 18 with no family.

IIR fact sheets are created following standard definitions established by the U.S. Census Bureau. Please consult <https://www.census.gov/topics/> for clarification as to important distinctions such as those between industry and occupation.

Immigrants in the Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV Metropolitan Area



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