

# County-level Distribution of Recent Foreign-Born Immigrants

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For submission as a poster presentation to the annual meeting of the Population  
Association of America, San Francisco, CA May 3-5, 2012

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## **Short Abstract**

*The geographic distribution of foreign-born migrants entering the United States each year is not constant over time. For the 2010 series of population estimates, the Census Bureau used information from Census 2000 to determine the county-level distribution of foreign-born immigrants to the United States. The distribution was based on the county of residence of the foreign-born population who entered the United States in the last five years. However, the Census 2000-based distribution does not reflect geographic shifts that have taken place over time. This poster describes results from an evaluation of the American Community Survey (ACS) 2005-2009 five-year file as a source of information on the county-level distribution of recent immigrants to the United States. It describes how the county distribution has changed from 2000 to 2005-2009 for recent foreign-born immigrants by demographic characteristics.*

## **Extended Abstract**

The destinations of foreign-born immigrants entering the United States do not stay constant over time. Research suggests that immigrants are now more likely to settle into areas that historically have not had large immigrant populations (Singer, 2004). For the 2010 series of population estimates, the Census Bureau's Population Estimates Program used information from Census 2000 to estimate the county-level distribution of foreign-born immigrants to the United States. At that time, Census 2000 was the most current data source available robust enough to provide detailed information at the county level. The geographic distribution of the estimates of foreign-born immigration was based on the county of residence of the foreign-born population in Census 2000 who entered the United States in the last five years, a proxy for the distribution of recent immigrants.

A limitation of using information from Census 2000 to distribute immigrants to counties is that it does not reflect geographic shifts that have taken place since 2000. The American Community Survey (ACS) provides annual data on the foreign-born population that can be used to inform estimates of net international immigration. Information from

the three-year data file are currently used in the estimates methodology at the state and national level. Beginning in 2010, multi-year data files became available that combine data collected over a five-year period. The large sample size of this file relative to the single- and three- year data files allows for more detailed use in the production of estimates.

This poster will present results of an evaluation of the county-level distributions of recent foreign-born immigrants, defined as those who entered the United States within five years of the ACS survey year, from ACS 2005-2009. It will highlight differences in the distributions between Census 2000 and ACS 2005-2009, noting which counties have seen a large increase or decrease in their share of the nation's recent foreign-born immigrants. Additionally, it will discuss county distributions by demographic characteristics including race and Hispanic origin. Overall, the poster will describe how information from ACS 2005-2009 may be used to inform the county-level distribution of foreign-born immigrants in the Census Bureau's population estimates.

## **References**

Singer, Audrey. 2004. "The Rise of New Immigrant Gateways". Washington: Brookings Institution.