

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

The Nigerian Diaspora in the United States

June 2015 Revised

Summary

Approximately 376,000 Nigerian immigrants and their children (the first and second generations) live in the United States, and Nigeria is the largest source of African immigration to the United States. The size of the Nigeria-born population in the United States has grown from a small base since 1980, when an estimated 25,000 Nigerian immigrants were U.S. residents. Today, Nigerian immigrants account for about 0.6 percent of the United States' overall foreign-born population, about half of whom arrived before 2000. A similar proportion of Nigerian immigrants are naturalized U.S. citizens.

The Nigerian diaspora is the best educated of the 15 groups in the Rockefeller Foundation-Aspen Institute Diaspora Program (RAD) analysis.¹ A far greater share of the Nigerian first and second generation earned undergraduate degrees than the U.S. population overall (37 percent versus 20 percent), and members of this population are more than twice as likely to have secured an advanced degree (29 percent versus 11 percent). Members of the Nigerian diaspora are also substantially more likely than the general U.S. population to be in the labor force and to work in professional or managerial occupations. Despite such educational and professional advantages, households headed by a member of the Nigerian diaspora have only a slightly higher median annual income than the general U.S. population (\$52,000 versus \$50,000), and Nigerian households are no more likely than other U.S. households to be in the highest quartile or decile of the U.S. income distribution.

The largest numbers of Nigerian immigrants in the United States reside in Texas, Maryland, and New York. By metropolitan area, New York City has the largest Nigerian immigrant population, followed by Houston and Washington, DC. In no major metropolitan area do Nigerian immigrants make up more than 0.3 percent of the population.

The Nigerian diaspora has begun to build a network of organizations in the United States. Reflecting the relatively small and recently arrived nature of the Nigerian immigrant population, U.S.-based Nigerian diaspora groups tend to be volunteer-led organizations with modest revenue streams. Among the 67 U.S.-based Nigerian organizations identified for the RAD analysis, none reported annual revenues above \$200,000. Nigerian diaspora organiza-

¹ All Rights Reserved. © 2015 Migration Policy Institute. Information for reproducing excerpts from this report can be found at 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.

tions take a number of forms, including societies that promote the development of Nigeria, the arts and culture of the homeland, women's empowerment, or the provision of health and other social services to Nigeria's most vulnerable populations. Many of these groups focus on a shared subnational ethnic identity, such as Yoruba or Igbo, a testament to Nigeria's wealth of linguistic and cultural traditions. The People's Club of Nigeria, the Foundation for Democracy in Africa, the Anambra State Association, and the Elegba Folklore Society are among the United States' most prominent Nigerian diaspora groups. The Nigerian in Diaspora Organization (NIDO), founded by diaspora members at the urging of the Nigerian government, also has several chapters in the United States under the umbrella of NIDO Americas, and collaborates closely with the Nigerian Embassy and other government structures.

The United States is the primary destination country for Nigeria-born international migrants and the top source of Nigeria's remittances. The Nigerian diaspora in the United States transferred approximately \$6.1 billion in remittances to Nigeria during 2012. Nigeria's remittances totaled \$20.6 billion and represented 7.9 percent of the country's \$262.2 billion gross domestic product (GDP).

Detailed Demographic and Socioeconomic Characteristics²

Analysis of data from 2009-13 reveals a Nigerian diaspora in the United States of approximately 376,000 individuals, counting immigrants born in Nigeria and U.S.-born individuals with at least one parent who was born in Nigeria.

First Generation (Nigerian immigrants in the United States)

- An estimated 213,000 immigrants from Nigeria resided in the United States.
- Nigerian immigrants accounted for a small share of the U.S. foreign-born population overall—0.6 percent in 2012. The size of the Nigeria-born population in the United States grew from a small base in recent decades; in 1980, about 25,000 Nigerian immigrants resided in the United States.³
- A relatively high proportion of the Nigerian immigrant population arrived in the United States recently: 49 percent arrived in 2000 or later versus 36 percent of the U.S. foreign-born population overall.
- Nigerians were more likely to be naturalized U.S. citizens than the U.S. foreign-born population overall: 52 percent versus 44 percent. Considering that about half of Nigerian immigrants arrived in the United States in 2000 or later, their relatively high naturalization rate suggests that many Nigerian immigrants applied for U.S. citizenship shortly after they became eligible.
- Eighty-three percent of first-generation Nigerian immigrants were working age (18 to 64), and only a small share was 65 and older (5 percent). The median age of Nigerian

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.

immigrants in the United States was 42.

Second Generation (U.S. born with at least one Nigeria-born parent)⁴

- The second-generation Nigerian population consisted of approximately 163,000 U.S.-born individuals with at least one Nigeria-born parent.
- Sixty-two percent of second-generation individuals reported that both parents were born in Nigeria, and 25 percent said that one of their parents was U.S.-born.
- The Nigerian second-generation population in the United States tends to be young, with a median age of 13. Sixty-three percent of the second generation was below age 18, and 37 percent was working age (18 to 64).

Educational Attainment

- The Nigerian diaspora in the United States was highly educated, with a large proportion of Nigerian diaspora members holding bachelor's or advanced degrees.
- Thirty-seven percent age 25 and older had a bachelor's degree as their highest educational credential, compared to 20 percent of the general U.S. population.
- Twenty-nine percent of the Nigerian diaspora age 25 and older held a master's degree, PhD, or an advanced professional degree compared to 11 percent of the U.S. population overall.

Household Income

- Households headed by a member of the Nigerian diaspora had a slightly higher median annual income than U.S. households overall. The median annual income of Nigerian diaspora households was about \$52,000 versus \$50,000 for all U.S. households.
- Nigerian diaspora households and U.S. households were equally likely to be in the higher income brackets. Twenty-five percent of households in both of these groups reported annual incomes greater than \$90,000, and 10 percent reported annual income exceeding \$140,000.

Employment

- Nigerian diaspora members age 16 and older were more likely than the general U.S. population to be in the labor force: 73 percent versus 64 percent.
- The employment rate among those in the labor force was nearly the same for the Nigerian diaspora as the U.S. population overall: 88 percent versus 91 percent.
- Members of the Nigerian diaspora were employed in professional or managerial occupations at a higher rate than the general U.S. labor force: 46 percent versus 31 percent.⁵ The highest proportion of the Nigerian and Indian diaspora populations

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

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.

worked in professional or managerial occupations of the 15 groups in the RAD analysis. 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 Distribution⁶

- With about 40,000 Nigeria-born residents, Texas had the largest population of Nigerian immigrants of any state in the country. New York and Maryland each had about 25,000 first-generation Nigerian residents.
- About 35,000 Nigerian immigrants lived in the New York City metropolitan area. The Houston; Washington, DC; and Atlanta areas each had Nigeria-born populations of approximately 20,000.

Remittance Volume⁷

- Remittance receipts to Nigeria in 2012 were valued at \$20.6 billion, representing a 7.9 percent share of the country's \$263 billion GDP.
- Both Nigeria's GDP and remittance receipts have grown rapidly in recent years. In 2003, the country's remittance receipts were \$2.3 billion, and GDP was \$67.7 billion.
- The Nigerian diaspora in the United States transferred about \$6.1 billion in remittances to Nigeria in 2012, making this U.S.-based population Nigeria's largest source of remittance inflows. The United States is home to the largest number of Nigerian-born immigrants of any country in the world, followed by the United Kingdom and Cameroon.

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 Nigerian 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 Nigerian Diaspora in the United States, 2009-13

	Nigerian Diaspora in the United States*	Total U.S. Population
Household Income		
Median household income	\$52,000	\$50,000
Average household size	3.0	2.5
Share of households with high incomes (\$90,000+)	25%	25%
Share of households with very high incomes (\$140,000+)	10%	10%
Employment		
Total population age 16 and older	262,000	239,386,000
Share in the labor force	73%	64%
... that was employed	88%	91%
... that was in a professional occupation [†]	46%	31%
Educational Attainment **		
Total population age 25 and older	207,000	201,925,000
... with less than high school education	3%	13%
... with high school or some college education	31%	57%
... with a bachelor's degree	37%	20%
... with an advanced degree	29%	11%
Population Characteristics by Generation		
First- and Second-Generation Immigrant Population	376,000	73,140,000
First-generation immigrant population***	213,000	38,468,000
... that was working age (18-64)	83%	81%
... that entered the United States before 2000	51%	64%
... naturalized as U.S. citizens	52%	44%
Second-generation population****	163,000	34,672,000
... that was under age 18	63%	46%
... that was working age (18-64)	37%	43%
... with only one parent from Nigeria	38%	

* defined as all first and second generation

** highest level reported

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

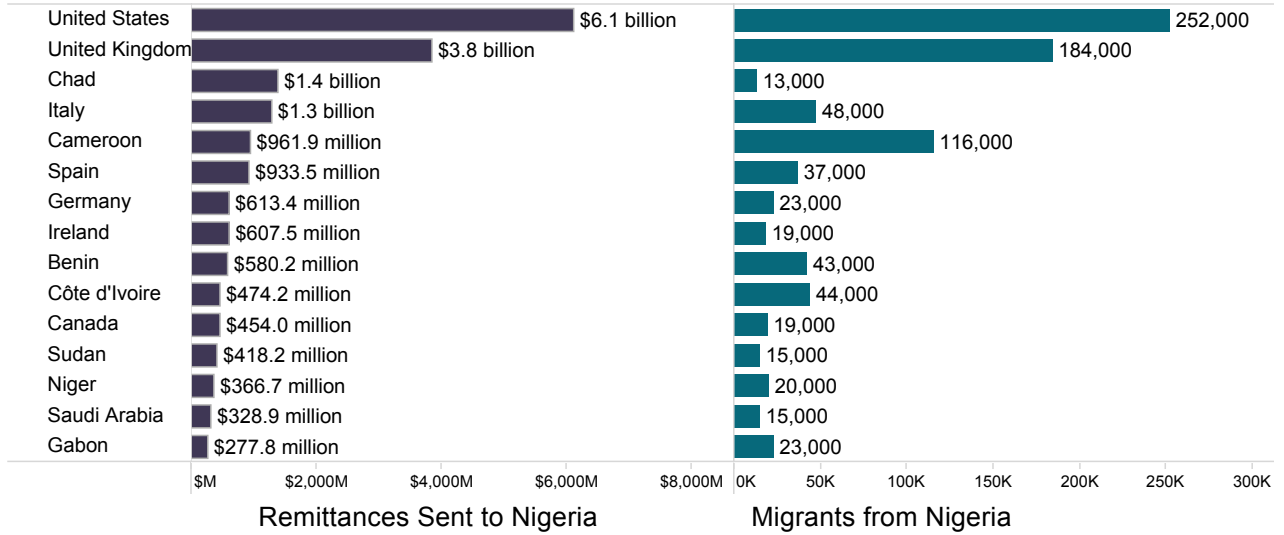
**** all individuals who report having at least one parent born in Nigeria

[†]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 CPS pooled 2009-13 data.

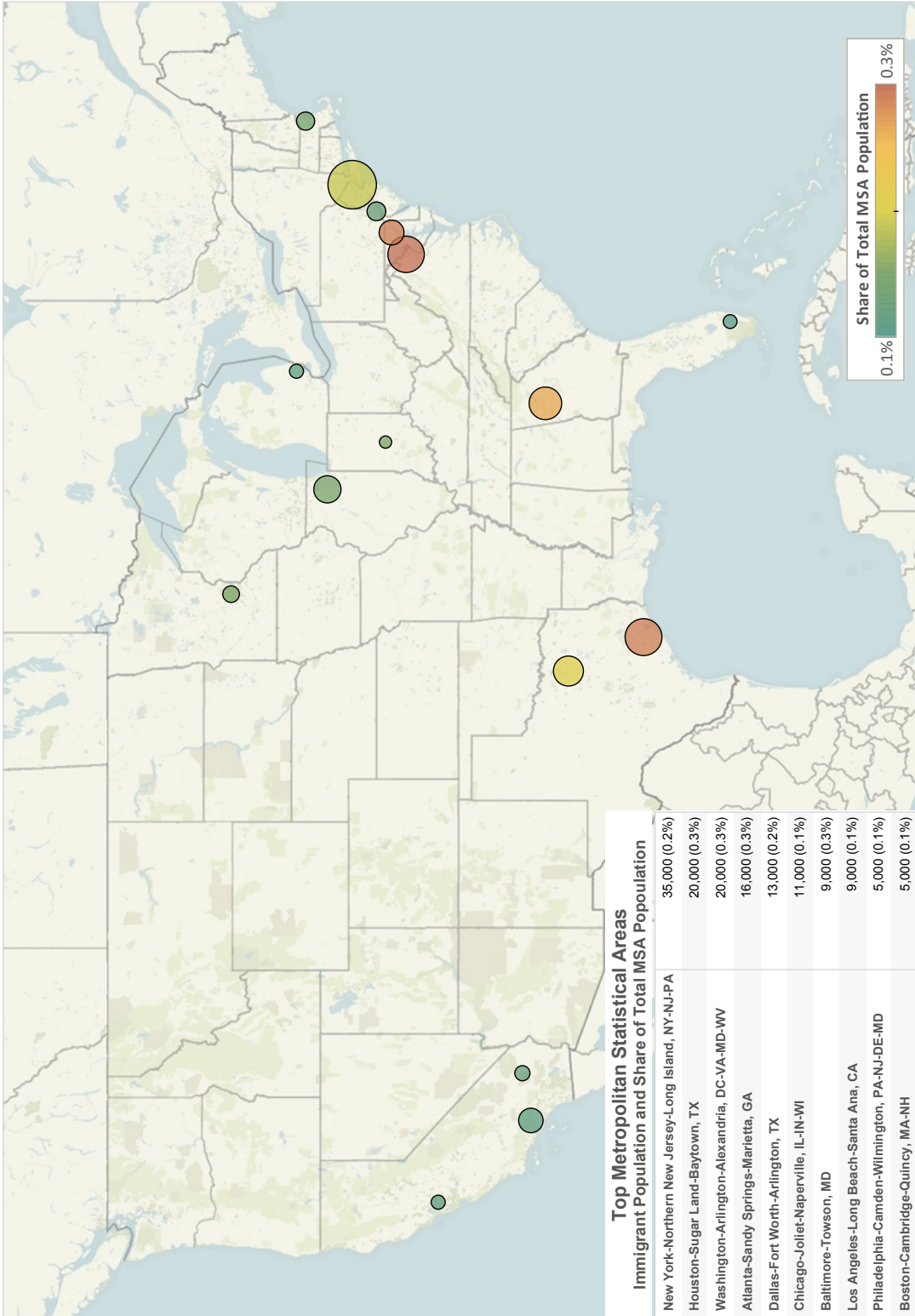
Source: All Census Bureau data were accessed from Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMS), Steven Ruggles, J. Trent Alexander, Katie Genadek, Ronald Goeken, Matthew B. Schroeder, and Matthew Sobek, Integrated Public Use Microdata Series: Version 5.0 [Machine-readable database], Minneapolis: University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

Remittance Inflows to Nigeria by Sending Country and the Nigerian 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 Nigeria
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.