



1-2015

Cleveland: A High-Skilled Immigrant Destination

Richey Piiparinen

Cleveland State University, r.piiparinen@csuohio.edu

Jim Russell

How does access to this work benefit you? Let us know!

Follow this and additional works at: http://engagedscholarship.csuohio.edu/urban_facpub

 Part of the [Urban Studies and Planning Commons](#)

Repository Citation

Piiparinen, Richey and Russell, Jim, "Cleveland: A High-Skilled Immigrant Destination" (2015). *Urban Publications*. 0 1 2 3 1264.
http://engagedscholarship.csuohio.edu/urban_facpub/1264

This Report is brought to you for free and open access by the Maxine Goodman Levin College of Urban Affairs at EngagedScholarship@CSU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Urban Publications by an authorized administrator of EngagedScholarship@CSU. For more information, please contact library.es@csuohio.edu.



Cleveland: A High-Skilled Immigrant Destination

A Report Brief

January 2015

By Richey Piiparinen and Jim Russell

The Center for Population Dynamics at Cleveland State University's Maxine Goodman Levin College of Urban Affairs aims to help partner organizations competitively position the region for economic and community development. It will do so through the lens of migration, applied demography, macroeconomics, and culture.

Contact: Richey Piiparinen, email: r.piiparinen@csuohio.edu

Executive Summary: The Cleveland metro ranks 44th out of the nation's 50 largest metros in the concentration of population who are foreign born, at 5.5%. However, in measuring the skill level of each metro, Cleveland has the 7th largest concentration of college-educated immigrants, at 40%. Also, 21.2% of the region's immigrants have graduate or professional degrees, ranking Cleveland 5th in the nation. It is suggested that Cleveland's "eds and meds" sector, which ranks 11th in total employment in the nation, is driving a higher proportion of high- compared to low-skilled immigrants. Implications are discussed.

Introduction

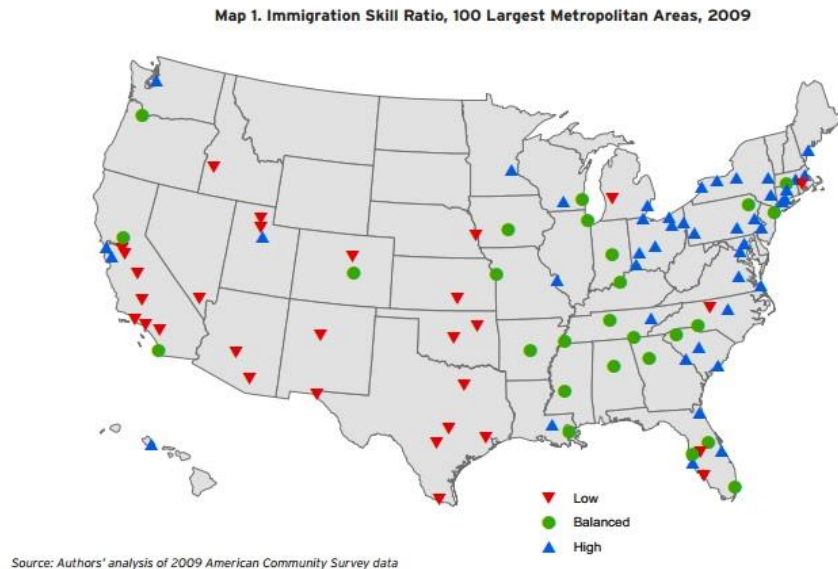
Contrary to popular belief, the United States, as a whole, is not being inundated with low-skill immigrants. According to a 2011 Brookings' report entitled "The Geography of Immigrant Skills: Educational Profiles of Metropolitan Areas"¹, the percentage of foreign born without a high school diploma has declined from 39.5% in 1980 to 27.8% in 2010. Meanwhile, the percentage of "high-skilled" immigrants, or those with at least a bachelor's degree, has increased, going from 19% in 1980 to 29.6% in 2010.

The data reflect a longstanding shift in the nation's positioning in the global economy. America's comparative advantage is in the production of knowledge, and so the nation's skillset has gone from less "brawn" to more "brain"—meaning job demand is increasingly for college-educated workers². Hence, the increase of high-skilled immigrants, and the decrease of low-skilled immigrants.

Still, the geography of high- and low-skilled immigrants in the United States is not even. Certain areas have a larger proportion of college-educated immigrants than others. For instance, the aforementioned Brookings report found that Greater Cleveland is one of 44 (out of 100) metros classified as "high-skill immigrant destinations", in which college-educated immigrants outnumber immigrants without high school diplomas by at least 25 percent.

As shown in Figure 1, high-skill immigrant destinations are clustered in the Northeast and the Rust Belt. While much ink and angst has been spilled on Rust Belt cities lacking a number of immigrants, less attention is paid to the impact a concentration of high-skill immigrants can have on these cities. This omission has led to a poor understanding of how immigrants are—or are not—aiding in the economic rebuilding of the Rust Belt. The current brief aims to plug this gap, with a focus on Cleveland.

Figure 1: Map of High- and Low-Skill Immigrant Destinations (Courtesy of Brookings)



¹ Hall, Matthew, et al. "The geography of immigrant skills: Educational profiles of metropolitan areas." State of Metropolitan America Series (2011).

² See: <http://www.collegespark.org/files/CollegeAdvantage.ExecutiveSummary.081412.pdf>

A Profile of Immigrants in Cleveland

The five-county Cleveland metropolitan statistical area (MSA) has approximately 114,500 foreign-born residents, which is 5.5% of the regional population—ranking the metro **44th** out of the nation’s largest **50** metros in the percent of foreign-born residents³. The only metros with less of a concentration of immigrants are Memphis, Louisville, Cincinnati, St. Louis, Pittsburgh, and Birmingham, AL. Conversely, Miami, San Jose, Los Angeles, San Francisco, and New York lead the nation in concentration of immigrants, each with over 28% of their residents being foreign born. A cursory takeaway of these findings suggests that Greater Cleveland lacks the birthplace diversity found in the nation’s largest urban areas.

But a slice of the aggregate numbers paint a different picture, particularly related to the skill-level of each metro’s immigrant populations. Forty-percent (40%) of Cleveland’s immigrants have a bachelor’s degree or higher, ranking the metro **7th** in the nation in the concentration of college-educated immigrants, just behind Washington, D.C. (see Table 1 and Appendix A). As well, the region’s immigrants are more educated than native-born Clevelanders. Only twenty-nine percent (29%) of natives have at least a bachelor’s degree, ranking the region 39th.

Moreover, the Cleveland metro ranks **5th** in the nation in the percentage of foreign born residents with an advanced or professional degree (21.2%), just ahead of Boston (See Table 2 and Appendix B). By contrast, only 10.7% of native-born Clevelanders have a graduate degree, ranking the metro 35th.

Taken together, what Cleveland—and several other Rust Belt metros, particularly Pittsburgh and St. Louis—lack in the quantity of foreign born, they make up for in quality. Explanations and implications for these findings follows.

What’s Behind Cleveland’s High-Skilled Migration?

Why does Cleveland have a higher concentration of college-educated immigrants? Put simply, because opportunities in the regional knowledge economy— particularly in the “eds and meds” sector—are attracting higher-skilled immigrants.

Specifically, when it comes to regional employment in hospitals, colleges, and universities, the Cleveland metro ranks **11th** in the nation in total jobs, followed by Pittsburgh and St. Louis at 14th and 15th place, respectively (See Table 3 next page). Given that the “eds and meds” sector is a magnet for human capital

Table 1: Metro Rankings in Percent of Immigrants with a 4-Year Degree or Higher

| Rank | Metro | % w/ BA or higher |
|------|------------------|-------------------|
| 1 | Pittsburgh | 56.9% |
| 2 | San Jose | 47.0% |
| 3 | Baltimore | 46.0% |
| 4 | St. Louis | 42.6% |
| 5 | Cincinnati | 42.1% |
| 6 | Washington, D.C. | 41.3% |
| 7 | Cleveland | 40.0% |
| 8 | Raleigh, NC | 39.9% |
| 9 | Philadelphia | 39.5% |
| 10 | Seattle | 39.2% |

Source: American Community Survey, 2013

Table 2: Metro Rankings in Percent of Immigrants with Advanced or Professional Degree

| Rank | Metro | % w/ Advanced Degree |
|------|------------------|----------------------|
| 1 | Pittsburgh | 34.9% |
| 2 | San Jose | 24.4% |
| 3 | Baltimore | 24.0% |
| 4 | St. Louis | 22.5% |
| 5 | Cleveland | 21.2% |
| 6 | Boston | 20.5% |
| 7 | Buffalo | 20.1% |
| 8 | Washington, D.C. | 19.7% |
| 9 | Raleigh, NC | 19.6% |
| 10 | Cincinnati | 18.9% |

Source: American Community Survey, 2013

³ Source: American Community Survey, 2013

demand, especially for those with graduate or professional degrees—combined with that the fact that immigrants are overrepresented in occupations requiring an advanced degree, especially physicians and medical researchers⁴—then it follows that Cleveland is gaining a faster share of high- compared to low-skilled immigrants.

Elaborating, the Association of American Medical Colleges projects a shortage of 130,600 physicians in the United States by 2025⁵, which means the demand for doctors has no borders. “High-skilled immigrants tend to complement high-skilled native-born workers by flowing into fast growing fields where native labor supply cannot keep up,” echoes the Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas⁶. This is what is occurring in Cleveland. Cleveland’s health care industry is both growing and globalizing. Concomitantly, so is its workforce, out of necessity.

Does this mean Cleveland is a place *only* for high-skilled immigrants? No. It is only to say that the dynamics undergirding Cleveland’s birth place diversification are currently one of professional opportunities in the knowledge economy, as opposed to lower-skilled immigrants who migrate into established ethnic communities via word of mouth.

While this dynamic has not led to a population boom, what it has done is significantly increase the human capital level of the region, contributing to a rise in per capita income. In fact, from 2009 to 2012, Cleveland’s metro income, when adjusted for inflation and cost of living, increased from \$44,109 to \$47,631—the fifth biggest increase in the nation⁷. This increase has coincided with a parallel rise in Cleveland’s concentration of high-skilled immigrants across time. The region’s percentage of immigrants with an advanced degree grew by nearly 3% from 2009 to 2013 (18.4% versus 21.2%)⁸.

Perhaps more importantly, the high-skilled migration has also deepened the region’s “knowledge bank” related to health innovation. “Immigrants may embody knowledge and skills that are not otherwise readily accessible locally, and they often have access to a different set of personal and business networks from those of non-immigrant residents,” notes the paper “Immigration and Innovation”⁹. “These differences have the potential to raise the productivity and creativity of local interactions, and to promote knowledge spillovers and innovation.”

Table 3: Top Metros for Total Employment in Hospitals, Colleges, and Universities

| Rank | Metro | Total Employment 2012 |
|------|----------------|-----------------------|
| 1 | New York | 581,389 |
| 2 | Chicago | 272,730 |
| 3 | Los Angeles | 269,203 |
| 4 | Boston | 262,442 |
| 5 | Philadelphia | 239,213 |
| 6 | Houston | 137,285 |
| 7 | Washington, DC | 122,987 |
| 8 | Miami | 117,466 |
| 9 | Dallas | 113,630 |
| 10 | Baltimore | 112,696 |
| 11 | Cleveland | 108,675 |
| 12 | Phoenix | 107,817 |
| 13 | Pittsburgh | 104,923 |
| 14 | St. Louis | 104,083 |
| 15 | Atlanta | 99,409 |

Source: U.S. Cluster Mapping Project

⁴ See: Orrenius, Pia, and Madeline Zavodny. "From Brawn to Brains: How Immigration Works for America." Annual Report (2010).

⁵ See: https://www.aamc.org/advocacy/campaigns_and_coalitions/fixdocshortage/

⁶ Ibid

⁷ Source: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis

⁸ Source: American Community Survey, 2009, 2013

⁹ Maré, David C., Richard Fabling, and Steven Stillman. Immigration and innovation. No. 5686. Discussion paper series//Forschungsinstitut zur Zukunft der Arbeit, 2011.

Cleveland High-Skilled Immigrant Destination, Piiparinen and Russell (2015)

In other words, a dynamic has evolved in Cleveland in which a critical mass of health services and research requires high-skilled immigrants who, in turn, further deepen the regional knowledge base, sending off successive waves of innovation, job growth, and high-skilled demand. This dynamic is arguably *the* key driver in Greater Cleveland's resurgence going forward.

Appendix A: Metro Rankings, Percent with Bachelor's or Higher for Foreign- and Native- Born Residents

| Geography | % Foreign-Born w/ BA or higher | Rank % Foreign-Born BA or higher | Total Foreign-Born BA or higher | % Native-Born w/ BA or higher | Rank % Native-Born BA or higher | Total Native-Born BA or higher |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------------|---|--|--------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| Pittsburgh | 56.9% | 1 | 41,475 | 31.2% | 33 | 504,712 |
| San Jose | 47.0% | 2 | 302,660 | 46.3% | 4 | 302,747 |
| Baltimore | 46.0% | 3 | 99,006 | 35.7% | 17 | 597,189 |
| St. Louis | 42.6% | 4 | 43,013 | 32.0% | 30 | 576,343 |
| Cincinnati | 42.1% | 5 | 30,895 | 30.5% | 35 | 408,220 |
| Washington, DC | 41.3% | 6 | 465,954 | 51.5% | 1 | 1,486,182 |
| Cleveland | 40.0% | 7 | 40,248 | 29.0% | 39 | 384,489 |
| Raleigh, NC | 39.9% | 8 | 46,081 | 44.3% | 5 | 300,030 |
| Philadelphia | 39.5% | 9 | 204,175 | 33.8% | 21 | 1,207,525 |
| Seattle | 39.2% | 10 | 209,338 | 39.5% | 10 | 768,553 |
| San Francisco | 38.8% | 11 | 467,543 | 49.0% | 2 | 978,889 |
| Detroit | 38.8% | 12 | 131,352 | 27.7% | 42 | 712,866 |
| Boston | 38.7% | 13 | 270,479 | 46.4% | 3 | 1,175,383 |
| Columbus, OH | 38.3% | 14 | 43,981 | 33.3% | 23 | 394,622 |
| Buffalo | 38.1% | 15 | 20,085 | 29.6% | 37 | 216,177 |
| Richmond, VA | 36.3% | 16 | 26,552 | 32.1% | 29 | 248,190 |
| Hartford, CT | 34.9% | 17 | 46,719 | 36.9% | 13 | 257,972 |
| Virginia Beach | 33.9% | 18 | 31,055 | 29.2% | 38 | 299,591 |
| Jacksonville | 33.1% | 19 | 33,029 | 27.7% | 43 | 234,518 |
| Minneapolis | 32.8% | 20 | 88,628 | 40.2% | 9 | 820,985 |
| Indianapolis | 32.8% | 21 | 33,265 | 30.6% | 34 | 361,669 |
| Memphis | 31.3% | 22 | 17,951 | 26.0% | 46 | 209,657 |
| New York | 31.1% | 23 | 1,563,533 | 41.1% | 8 | 3,544,329 |
| Austin | 31.0% | 24 | 72,100 | 43.9% | 6 | 434,425 |
| Atlanta | 30.9% | 25 | 191,108 | 36.0% | 16 | 1,067,541 |
| Milwaukee | 30.9% | 26 | 28,384 | 33.4% | 22 | 319,562 |
| Charlotte | 30.5% | 27 | 56,910 | 32.3% | 28 | 438,262 |
| Chicago | 29.5% | 28 | 439,852 | 36.8% | 14 | 1,782,471 |
| Kansas City | 29.1% | 29 | 31,217 | 34.1% | 19 | 429,250 |
| Portland | 28.8% | 30 | 70,713 | 36.3% | 15 | 488,153 |
| Nashville | 28.0% | 31 | 29,107 | 32.7% | 25 | 347,194 |
| Tampa | 27.6% | 32 | 87,714 | 27.6% | 44 | 474,089 |
| San Diego | 27.5% | 33 | 183,347 | 37.8% | 11 | 548,751 |
| New Orleans | 26.1% | 34 | 20,657 | 27.6% | 45 | 211,740 |
| Denver | 26.0% | 35 | 70,420 | 42.7% | 7 | 661,606 |
| Houston | 25.9% | 36 | 313,981 | 33.1% | 24 | 917,719 |

Cleveland High-Skilled Immigrant Destination, Piiparinen and Russell (2015)

| | | | | | | |
|-----------------------|-------|----|---------|-------|----|-----------|
| Orlando | 25.8% | 37 | 81,016 | 30.5% | 36 | 366,371 |
| Sacramento | 25.6% | 38 | 88,923 | 32.4% | 26 | 359,602 |
| Salt Lake City | 25.2% | 39 | 27,834 | 32.3% | 27 | 189,881 |
| Dallas | 24.9% | 40 | 250,951 | 35.0% | 18 | 1,163,598 |
| Los Angeles | 24.7% | 41 | 983,546 | 37.7% | 12 | 1,776,900 |
| Miami | 24.7% | 42 | 497,036 | 33.9% | 20 | 704,601 |
| Oklahoma City | 21.5% | 43 | 18,757 | 28.5% | 40 | 217,926 |
| Phoenix | 20.9% | 44 | 113,980 | 31.3% | 32 | 725,296 |
| San Antonio | 20.7% | 45 | 46,649 | 27.9% | 41 | 340,056 |
| Providence, RI | 19.8% | 46 | 35,434 | 31.5% | 31 | 290,007 |
| Las Vegas | 19.4% | 47 | 76,155 | 23.2% | 47 | 222,854 |
| Riverside, CA | 17.0% | 48 | 143,003 | 21.5% | 48 | 400,498 |

Source: American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates, 2013

Appendix B: Metro Rankings, Percent with Advanced Degree for Foreign- and Native- Born Residents

| Geography | % Foreign-born w/ Advanced Degree | Rank % Foreign-Born w/ Advanced Degree | Total Foreign-Born Advanced Degree | % Native-Born w/ Advanced Degree | Rank % Native-Born w/ Advanced Degree | Total Native-Born w/ Advanced Degree |
|-----------------------|--|---|---|---|--|---|
| Pittsburgh | 34.9% | 1 | 25,439 | 11.5% | 26 | 186,032 |
| San Jose | 24.4% | 2 | 157,126 | 18.3% | 4 | 119,660 |
| Baltimore | 24% | 3 | 51,655 | 15.4% | 7 | 257,611 |
| St. Louis | 22.5% | 4 | 22,718 | 11.8% | 22 | 212,527 |
| Cleveland | 21.2% | 5 | 21,331 | 10.7% | 35 | 141,863 |
| Boston | 20.5% | 6 | 143,277 | 19.6% | 2 | 496,498 |
| Buffalo | 20.1% | 7 | 10,596 | 13% | 18 | 94,943 |
| Washington, DC | 19.7% | 8 | 222,259 | 24.7% | 1 | 712,790 |
| Raleigh, NC | 19.6% | 9 | 22,636 | 15% | 8 | 101,590 |
| Cincinnati | 18.9% | 10 | 13,870 | 11.1% | 30 | 148,565 |
| Hartford, CT | 18.7% | 11 | 25,033 | 15.8% | 6 | 110,459 |
| Philadelphia | 18.4% | 12 | 95,109 | 13.2% | 15 | 471,578 |
| Columbus, OH | 18.4% | 13 | 21,129 | 11.5% | 25 | 136,281 |
| Detroit | 17.9% | 14 | 60,598 | 10.7% | 36 | 275,367 |
| Richmond, VA | 17.6% | 15 | 12,874 | 11.7% | 24 | 90,462 |
| Seattle | 16.4% | 16 | 87,580 | 13.6% | 13 | 264,616 |
| San Francisco | 15.8% | 17 | 190,391 | 19.6% | 3 | 391,555 |
| Milwaukee | 15.2% | 18 | 13,962 | 10.8% | 33 | 103,331 |
| Indianapolis | 15.1% | 19 | 15,314 | 10.7% | 37 | 126,466 |
| Austin | 13.6% | 20 | 31,631 | 14.5% | 10 | 143,489 |
| Minneapolis | 13.5% | 21 | 36,478 | 13.2% | 16 | 269,577 |
| Memphis | 13.2% | 22 | 7,570 | 9.4% | 43 | 75,799 |
| Kansas City | 12.9% | 23 | 13,839 | 12.2% | 21 | 153,573 |
| New York | 12.8% | 24 | 643,512 | 17.1% | 5 | 1,474,648 |
| New Orleans | 12.3% | 25 | 9,735 | 10.1% | 39 | 77,484 |
| Atlanta | 12.2% | 26 | 75,453 | 12.8% | 19 | 379,570 |
| Chicago | 12.2% | 27 | 181,905 | 14.2% | 12 | 687,801 |
| Portland | 12.2% | 28 | 29,955 | 13.1% | 17 | 176,165 |
| Charlotte | 12.2% | 29 | 22,764 | 9.9% | 40 | 134,328 |
| Jacksonville | 12% | 30 | 11,974 | 8.7% | 46 | 73,657 |
| Denver | 11.9% | 31 | 32,231 | 14.8% | 9 | 229,315 |
| Nashville | 11.9% | 32 | 12,371 | 11.2% | 29 | 118,916 |
| Virginia Beach | 11.8% | 33 | 10,810 | 10.8% | 34 | 110,808 |
| Houston | 11% | 34 | 133,351 | 10.7% | 38 | 296,665 |

Cleveland High-Skilled Immigrant Destination, Piiparinen and Russell (2015)

| | | | | | | |
|-----------------------|-------|----|---------|-------|----|---------|
| San Diego | 10.9% | 35 | 72,672 | 14.5% | 11 | 210,500 |
| Tampa | 10.8% | 36 | 34,323 | 9.5% | 42 | 163,183 |
| Dallas | 10.4% | 37 | 104,815 | 11.1% | 31 | 369,027 |
| Sacramento | 9.6% | 38 | 33,346 | 11.5% | 27 | 127,637 |
| Oklahoma City | 9.6% | 39 | 8,375 | 9.2% | 44 | 70,348 |
| Salt Lake City | 9.5% | 40 | 10,493 | 11.4% | 28 | 67,017 |
| Providence, RI | 9.3% | 41 | 16,643 | 11.8% | 23 | 108,638 |
| Phoenix | 8.6% | 42 | 46,901 | 11.1% | 32 | 257,214 |
| Orlando | 8.5% | 43 | 26,691 | 9.1% | 45 | 109,311 |
| Miami | 8.3% | 44 | 167,020 | 12.6% | 20 | 261,887 |
| Los Angeles | 8.2% | 45 | 326,521 | 13.4% | 14 | 631,577 |
| San Antonio | 8% | 46 | 18,029 | 9.6% | 41 | 117,008 |
| Las Vegas | 5.7% | 47 | 22,375 | 7.9% | 48 | 75,886 |
| Riverside, CA | 5.3% | 48 | 44,583 | 8% | 47 | 149,022 |

Source: American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates, 2013