

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

The Haitian Diaspora in the United States

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Summary

Approximately 915,000 Haitian immigrants and their children (the first and second generations) live in the United States, and Haiti-born individuals account for 1.5 percent of the total U.S. foreign-born population. The U.S. government has gone to extraordinary lengths to block illegal immigration from Haiti, but Haitians have benefited from several special programs that have permitted entry or temporary residence, as well as the normal channel of family sponsorship. The size of the Haiti-born population in the United States has grown rapidly in recent decades; in 1980, about 90,000 Haitian immigrants resided in the United States. The majority of the Haitian immigrant population arrived in the United States before 2000, as is true for the U.S. immigrant population overall. Haitian immigrants in the United States have a median age of 45, the third-oldest immigrant population of the 15 groups in the Rockefeller Foundation-Aspen Institute Diaspora Program (RAD) analysis (after the Philippines and Colombia).¹

As a result of the 2010 earthquake in Haiti, the U.S. government offered Temporary Protected Status (TPS) to approximately 58,000 qualifying Haitian immigrants who could otherwise face deportation from the United States. TPS beneficiaries are given a temporary reprieve from deportation and granted work authorization until their TPS designation expires (July 22, 2014, in the case of Haiti) or is extended. The Cuban-Haitian Entrant Program provides refugee resettlement services, such as assistance obtaining employment, housing, and basic necessities, to eligible groups of Haitian immigrants.

Relative to the U.S. population as a whole, the Haitian diaspora has lower incomes, employment rates, and is less educated, but there have been gains between generations. Haitian diaspora households reported a median annual income of \$37,000, or \$13,000 below the median for all U.S. households and among the lowest of the 15 groups in the RAD analysis. However, the Haitian second generation has a higher median household income than the first. Members of the Haitian diaspora participate in the labor force at the same rate as the general U.S. population yet had the lowest employment rate of the 15 groups in the RAD analysis, and are among the least likely to be employed in managerial or professional occupations. The Haitian diaspora is not as well educated as the general U.S. population, but children of Haitian immigrants (the second generation) have made significant educational advances, graduating from college and earning advanced degrees at rates above the general U.S. population.

¹ All Rights Reserved. © 2014 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.

Seventy-six percent of the children of Haitian immigrants have a mother and father who were born in Haiti, one of the highest proportions to have both parents born in the country of origin among the 15 groups in the RAD analysis. Another distinguishing characteristic of the Haitian second generation is its median age of 15, which makes it among the oldest second-generation populations of the 15 groups studied

The largest numbers of Haitian immigrants live in the states of Florida and New York. Haitian immigrants are more heavily concentrated in Miami and its surrounding communities than anywhere else in the country. The New York metropolitan area also serves as a major population center for Haitian immigrants.

The Haitian diaspora in the United States has established large and well-funded organizations throughout the country, although these groups are most heavily concentrated in the states of Florida, Massachusetts, and New York. Among the 106 Haitian diaspora organizations identified for the RAD analysis, five reported annual revenues above \$1 million in their most recent tax filings, and ten other groups had more than \$200,000 in annual revenues. These organizations focus on a wide array of interests, including development in Haiti, professional networking, and the celebration of Haitian culture. After the 2010 earthquake struck Haiti, some diaspora groups shifted their primary focus to rebuilding damaged infrastructure and providing relief to affected populations. Some of the most prominent Haitian organizations in the United States include the Yéle Haiti Foundation, the Haitian Education and Leadership Program, Haitian-Americans United for Progress, and the Haitian Centers Council.

The United States is the most popular destination for Haitian emigrants and the top source of Haiti's remittances. The diaspora in the United States transferred \$1.1 billion in remittances to Haiti during 2012. The Dominican Republic and Canada were other common countries of settlement for Haitian emigrants, and the diaspora in these countries were Haiti's second- and third-largest sources of remittances, respectively. In 2012 remittances to Haiti totaled \$1.6 billion and represented 20.6 percent of the country's annual gross domestic product (GDP) of \$7.9 billion. Among the 15 countries in the RAD analysis, Haiti relied most heavily on remittances (as a share of GDP). Small island nations such as Haiti tend to be among the world's most remittance-dependent countries.

Detailed Demographic and Socioeconomic Characteristics²

Analysis of data from 2009-13 reveals a Haitian diaspora in the United States of approximately 915,000 individuals, counting immigrants born in Haiti and U.S.-born individuals with at least one parent who was born in Haiti.

² Unless otherwise noted, estimates for the diaspora population and its characteristics are based on Migration Policy Institute 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/>.

First Generation (Haitian immigrants in the United States)

- An estimated 576,000 immigrants from Haiti resided in the United States.
- Haitian immigrants accounted for a small share of the U.S. foreign-born population overall—1.5 percent in 2012. The size of the Haiti-born population in the United States has grown in recent decades; in 1980, approximately 90,000 Haitian immigrants resided in the United States.³
- Sixty-one percent of immigrants from Haiti came to the United States before 2000, similar to the overall U.S. immigrant population (64 percent).
- Immigrants from Haiti were more likely to be U.S. citizens than the U.S. foreign-born population overall: 50 percent versus 44 percent.
- In the wake of the 2010 earthquake, the U.S. government approved TPS for approximately 58,000 qualifying Haitian immigrants who were residing in the United States at the time of the disaster.⁴ The TPS designation is based on conditions in the origin country that prevent its nationals from returning safely. Immigrants who qualify for TPS are granted work authorization and protection against deportation and detention.⁵
- Eighty percent of Haitian immigrants were working age (18 to 64), although a sizable share of the population was 65 and older (12 percent). The median age of Haitian immigrants in the United States was 45.

Second Generation (U.S. born with at least one Haiti-born parent)⁶

- The second-generation Haitian population consisted of approximately 339,000 U.S.-born individuals with at least one parent born in Haiti.
- Seventy-six percent of the children of Haitian immigrants reported that both parents were born in Haiti, the third-highest proportion with both parents born in the country of origin among the 15 populations in the RAD analysis, behind India and Bangladesh. Fourteen percent of the Haitian second generation population said that they had one U.S.-born parent.
- The median age among the second generation of Haitians in the United States was 15, tied with Colombia as the second-oldest second-generation in the 15-group RAD analysis (after the Philippines). Still, the majority of this second generation Haitian population—58 percent—was under age 18, and 42 percent was working age (18 to 64).

3 These estimates are based on MPI analysis of the U.S. Census Bureau's 2012 American Community Survey (ACS) and the 1980 Census.

4 "Extension of the Designation of Haiti for Temporary Protected Status," 79 *Federal Register* 41 (3 March 2014), 11808-814, www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2014-03-03/html/2014-04593.htm.

5 U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, "Temporary Protected Status" (last reviewed/updated March 3, 2014), www.uscis.gov/humanitarian/temporary-protected-status-deferred-enforced-departure/temporary-protected-status.

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

Educational Attainment

- Members of the Haitian diaspora in the United States had slightly lower educational attainment than the general U.S. population, though the second generation made significant educational advances relative to the first generation.
- Overall, 22 percent of Haitian diaspora members age 25 and older had less than a high school education, compared to 13 percent of the general U.S. population. About a quarter (24 percent) of Haitian immigrants did not have a high school diploma, but the proportion was far smaller (4 percent) for the second generation age 25 and older.
- Fifteen percent of Haitian diaspora members age 25 and older had a bachelor's degree as their highest credential versus 20 percent of the total U.S. population in this age range. Thirteen percent of the Haitian first generation and 29 percent of the second generation had completed their education at this level.
- Seven percent of the Haitian diaspora held a master's degree, PhD, or an advanced professional degree compared to 11 percent of the U.S. population overall. The share of second-generation Haitians 25 and older holding advanced degrees was more than double that of the first generation: 14 percent versus 6 percent.

Household Income

- Households headed by members of the Haitian diaspora had a substantially lower median annual income than U.S. households overall: \$37,000 versus \$50,000. Among the 15 groups in the RAD analysis, Haitian, Mexican, and Ethiopian diaspora households had the lowest median incomes.
- Fourteen percent of Haitian diaspora households reported annual incomes above \$90,000, the threshold for the top 25 percent of U.S. households.
- Four percent of Haitian diaspora households had annual incomes exceeding \$140,000, the threshold for the top 10 percent of U.S. households.

Employment

- The Haitian diaspora population age 16 and over and the general U.S. population participated in the labor force at nearly the same rate: 63 percent versus 64 percent.
- Within the labor force, the Haitian diaspora's employment rate was lower than that of the U.S. population overall: 87 percent versus 91 percent. Members of the Haitian diaspora had the lowest employment rate of the 15 groups in the RAD analysis, closely followed by Mexico.
- Members of the Haitian diaspora were in professional or managerial occupations at a lower rate than the general U.S. labor force: 20 percent versus 31 percent.⁷ The Haitian diaspora had the third-lowest share in professional or managerial occupations of the 15 groups in the RAD analysis (after El Salvador and Mexico). 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).

⁷ 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.

Geographic Distribution⁸

- The greatest numbers of Haitian immigrants lived in the states of Florida and New York: 275,000 and 130,000 respectively.
- Haitian immigrants lived in the Miami metropolitan area in greater numbers (200,000) and at a higher concentration (3.5 percent of the area's population) than any other U.S. metropolitan area.
- The New York metropolitan area was also a population center for Haitian immigrants, with about 160,000 residing there; approximately 40,000 Haitian immigrants reside in Boston and its surrounding communities.

Remittance Volume⁹

- In 2012, remittances to Haiti totaled \$1.6 billion and represented an important share—20.6 percent—of the country's \$7.9 billion GDP. Among the 15 RAD analysis countries, Haiti was the most heavily reliant on remittances (as a share of GDP).
- The diaspora in the United States transferred \$1.1 billion in remittances to Haiti during 2012. The United States was the most common destination for Haitian emigrants and the top source for Haiti's international remittances.
- The Dominican Republic and Canada were other common countries of settlement for Haitian emigrants, and the diaspora in these countries were Haiti's second- and third-largest sources of remittances respectively.

⁸ 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 Haitian diaspora members are not included in this section due to data limitations.

⁹ 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 Haitian Diaspora in the United States, 2009-13

	Haitian Diaspora in the United States*	Total U.S. Population
Household Income		
Median household income	\$37,000	\$50,000
Average household size	2.9	2.5
Share of households with high incomes (\$90,000+)	14%	25%
Share of households with very high incomes (\$140,000+)	4%	10%
Employment		
Total population age 16 and older	708,000	239,386,000
Share in the labor force	63%	64%
... that was employed	87%	91%
... that was in a professional occupation ⁺	20%	31%
Educational Attainment **		
Total population age 25 and older	554,000	201,925,000
... with less than high school education	22%	13%
... with high school or some college education	56%	57%
... with a bachelor's degree	15%	20%
... with an advanced degree	7%	11%
Population Characteristics by Generation		
First- and Second-Generation Immigrant Population	915,000	73,140,000
First-generation immigrant population***	576,000	38,468,000
... that was working age (18-64)	80%	81%
... that entered the United States before 2000	61%	64%
... naturalized as U.S. citizens	50%	44%
Second-generation population****	339,000	34,672,000
... that was under age 18	58%	46%
... that was working age (18-64)	42%	43%
... with only one parent from Haiti	24%	

* defined as all first and second generation

** highest level reported

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

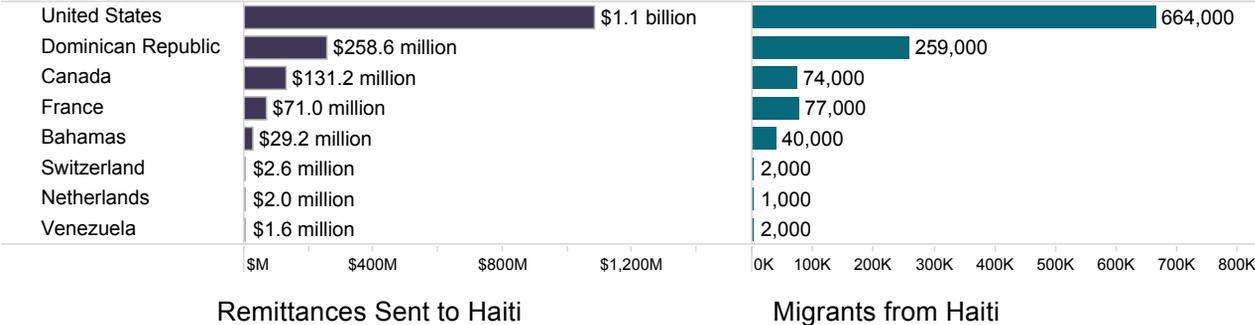
**** all individuals who report having at least one parent born in Haiti

+ 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.

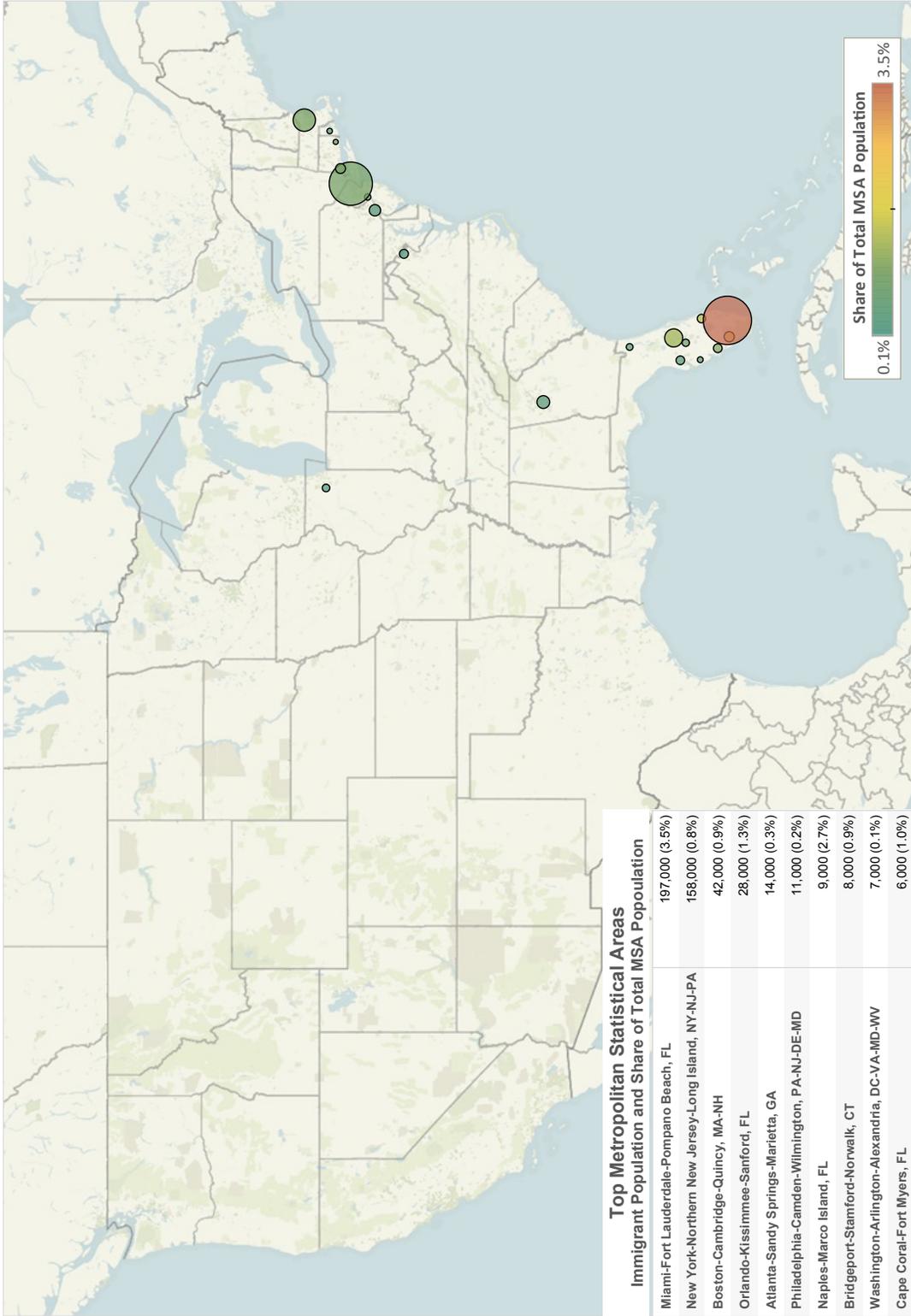
Source: All Census Bureau data were accessed from Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMS), Steven Ruggles, J. Trent Alexander, Katie Genadek, Ronald Goeken, Matthew B. Schroeder, and Matthew Sobek, Integrated Public Use Microdata Series: Version 5.0 [Machine-readable database], Minneapolis: University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

Remittance Inflows to Haiti by Sending Country and the Haitian 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 Haiti 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.