BLACK IMMIGRANTS IN OHIO

A Demographic Data Brief

OHIO IMMIGRANT
ALLIANCE

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October 2024

Ohio Immigrant Alliance

For *Edmund "Kwame" Botchway,*

forever in our hearts, hopes, and actions

Contents

Introduction

The state of Ohio has a long and rich history as a destination for Black migrants, both domestic and foreign-born. Since the Great Migration in the early 20th century, Ohio's urban centers and agricultural heartland have attracted African Americans from Southern states seeking new economic opportunities and social freedoms[1]. Over the decades, the foreign-born Black population from across Africa[2], as well as the Caribbean, Latin America, and beyond, has steadily risen, creating a diverse tapestry of cultures and experiences.

Ohio is home to an estimated 90,000[3] foreign-born Black residents, representing about 6% of the Black population in Ohio in 2021 (ACS 5-Year Estimates, 2021). The last decade has seen substantial growth within this demographic, spurring new community formations, cultural influences, and economic impacts. Black immigrants now live and work across Ohio — as nurses in Cleveland hospitals, production workers in Dayton factories, professors at Columbus universities, and entrepreneurs opening restaurants in Cincinnati. They are part of the social fabric that makes Ohio the diverse state that it is. In fact, the State of Ohio is one of the only states in the nation to have a New African Immigrants Commission, which was established by the legislature in 2008.

This demographic report provides a statistical profile of Ohio's foreign-born Black population, based on data from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey. It analyzes key indicators such as countries of origin, geographic settlement patterns, educational attainment, occupations, housing status, language diversity, public assistance participation and more. Five-year ACS data was utilized as it provides a larger sample size, capturing a broader range of demographic variations and minimizing the impact of annual fluctuations, thereby offering a more robust and comprehensive understanding of long-term demographic trends and patterns.

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[1] Giffin, W. W. (2005). *African Americans and the color line in Ohio, 1915-1930*. Ohio State University Press.

[2] New African Immigrants Commission. (2018). Inaugural report of the Ohio New African Immigrants Commission. Presented to Ohio Governor John R. Kasich and the Ohio State Legislature. Retrieved from https://dam.assets.ohio.gov/image/upload/naic.ohio.gov/NAIC-inaugural-report-2018.pdf.

[3] It is important to note that these estimates from the Census Bureau tend to undercount populations, especially those that are marginalized. This undercounting can obscure the true scale of demographic changes and the specific needs of these populations, highlighting the necessity for more accurate data collection methods and greater attention to marginalized communities in demographic reporting. See Stempowski, D. (2023, October 6). Understanding hard-to-count and historically undercounted populations. U.S. Census Bureau. Retrieved from https://www.census.gov/newsroom/blogs/random-samplings/2023/10/understanding-undercounted-populations.html.

The report also highlights the contributions, accomplishments, and remaining challenges facing this community. It intends to equip lawmakers, service providers and immigrant advocates with actionable insights to better understand and support Ohio's growing, vibrant, and multicultural Black immigrant population.

The report begins with historical context about early 20th century immigration trends, followed by analyses of contemporary demographic data, organized thematically. It concludes with a summary of key findings and recommendations for further research. This fact-based examination of Census statistics will advance public discourse and policies to fully welcome and empower Black immigrants as indispensable members of Ohio's diverse communities.

Key Findings

Ohio's Black immigrant population has grown remarkably in recent years, increasing by over 100% between 2009-2021 to nearly 90,000 residents. Black immigrants now account for 6% of Ohio's total Black population. The population is relatively balanced in terms of gender, and includes a sizable number of children.

Naturalization rates have risen substantially, with over 49,000 Black immigrants currently residing in Ohio as U.S. citizens. However, a large non-citizen population remains, with over 40,000 still non-naturalized.

Disability rates have remained steady at 5-6% over the years. In 2021, a little over 4,600 Black immigrants in Ohio were living with disabilities.

Black immigrants in Ohio originate from over 50 countries, especially Somalia, Ethiopia, Ghana, Nigeria, Kenya, and Cameroon from Africa, and Jamaica, Haiti, and Trinidad from the Caribbean. Ohio is also home to the largest population of Black Mauritanians in the United States.

Black immigrants' settlement is concentrated in Columbus, but sizable populations exist across Cincinnati, the Cleveland suburbs, Dayton, and some smaller towns. Most rural areas show an absence of Black immigrant residents.

Education levels vary greatly, with the largest numbers holding high school diplomas (approximately 29%). A significant number of Black immigrants have bachelor's degrees (approximately 17%), while approximately 9% hold associate's degrees and 8% have master's degrees.

Homeownership is rising steadily, both with and without mortgages. Rental rates remain relatively stable. About 33% of households led by Black immigrants are cost-burdened by rents.

The Black immigrant workforce is diverse across occupations, featuring prominently in healthcare, transportation, education, and services. Remote work is also emerging.

Uninsured rates are disproportionately high for Black immigrants compared to general Ohio averages, indicating gaps in healthcare access.

English dominates linguistically, followed by Somali, Swahili, and French. Other languages like Haitian Creole, Twi, Yoruba, Igbo, and Amharic retain high numbers of speakers, showcasing origins.

Historical Context

Ohio has a rich and unique history as home and host to Black migrants, both historically and contemporarily. The United States Census captures the Black foreign-born population in Ohio as early as 1900, with additional estimates on the foreign-born population from Africa and the West Indies from 1890. However, this data has significant limitations.

Black Population in Ohio: Total and Foreign Born from West Indies and Africa, 1890-2000				
Year	Total - Black	Foreign Born - West Indies	Foreign Born - Africa	Foreign Born - Black
1890	50,078	128	60	--
1900	96,901	154	--	483
1910	111,452	245	83	555
1920	186,187	865	--	951
1930	309,304	705	248	1,077
1940	339,461	--	--	923
1950	513,072	404	76	--
1960	786,097	--	--	--

1970	969,903	--	--	2,179
1980	1,076,742	--	--	9,537
1990	1,154,826	--	--	--
2000	1,301,307	--	--	20,769

Source: United States Census
*-- data unavailable

From 1890 to 1950, Census data provided partial insights into the early demographic trends of Black migrants in Ohio. During this period, the total Black population in the state steadily rose, indicating the major influx of African Americans arriving during the Great Migration. Concurrently, the number of foreign-born Black individuals from the West Indies and Africa also saw gradual growth, suggesting steady streams of immigration from these regions.

However, the data accuracy is questionable and suffers from disaggregation issues. Data points are sporadically missing or unspecified, reflecting the historical tendency of the Census and immigration systems to underreport and overlook Black migrant demographics. This likely stemmed from a lack of resources, interest, and capacity to accurately document this population.

To fully understand Black immigration patterns in this era, incomplete Census data must be considered within the broader historical context. Major events such as the colonization of Africa and the Caribbean, the Great Migration's pull northward, and evolving U.S. immigration policies influenced the motivations and barriers for Black migrants entering Ohio. Additionally, the establishment of community networks and enclaves provided support systems and shaped settlement patterns.
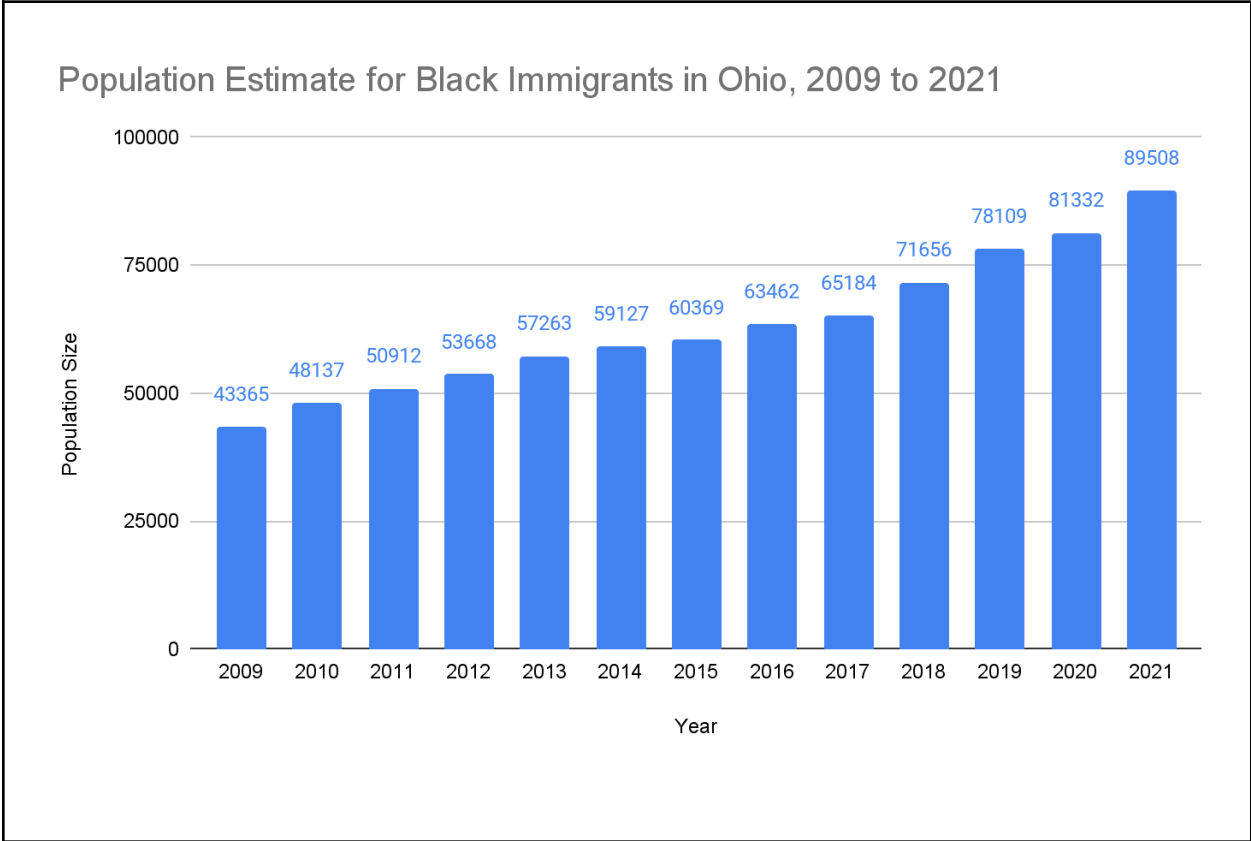
While the Census provides a partial quantitative view, qualitative sources like newspapers, letters, and organizational records may fill gaps to uncover the complex circumstances, reception, and contributions of Black immigrants during this critical period. Their impact on Ohio's cultural, social, and economic landscape also deserves examination. Overall, this early period set precedents for the continued growth of Black immigration in the state across the 20th century.

READ MORE - "Quilts and 'Word Pictures,' A Necessary Retelling," an interview with Gloria Kellon. ([Everything Is Cells and Bodies, Ohio Migration Anthology, Vol. 2](#))

Contemporary Demographic Trends

The last few decades have seen a remarkable rise in Ohio's foreign-born Black population. From 2009 to 2021, the number of Black immigrants in the state grew from around 43,000 to nearly 90,000, representing an increase of over 100%. This section analyzes the key characteristics and patterns within this population boom.

Total Population Growth

Population Estimate for Black Immigrants in Ohio, 2009 to 2021

| Year	Population Size
2009	43365
2010	48137
2011	50912
2012	53668
2013	57263
2014	59127
2015	60369
2016	63462
2017	65184
2018	71656
2019	78109
2020	81332
2021	89508

The Black immigrant population in Ohio exhibited consistent growth from 2009 to 2021. The rate of increase grew more rapidly after 2014, with the total population rising from 60,000 in 2015 to over 80,000 by 2020. The years 2020 and 2021 saw particularly high growth, with the population reaching 89,508 by 2021.

Age and Gender

Analyzing the population by age and sex reveals a balanced distribution. Both the male and female populations grew steadily between 2009-2021 across all age groups. The age groups between 31-45 years and 46-60 years represented the largest segments. While the male population was slightly higher in most years, the female population growth kept pace.

Black Immigrant Population by Age and Sex, 2021
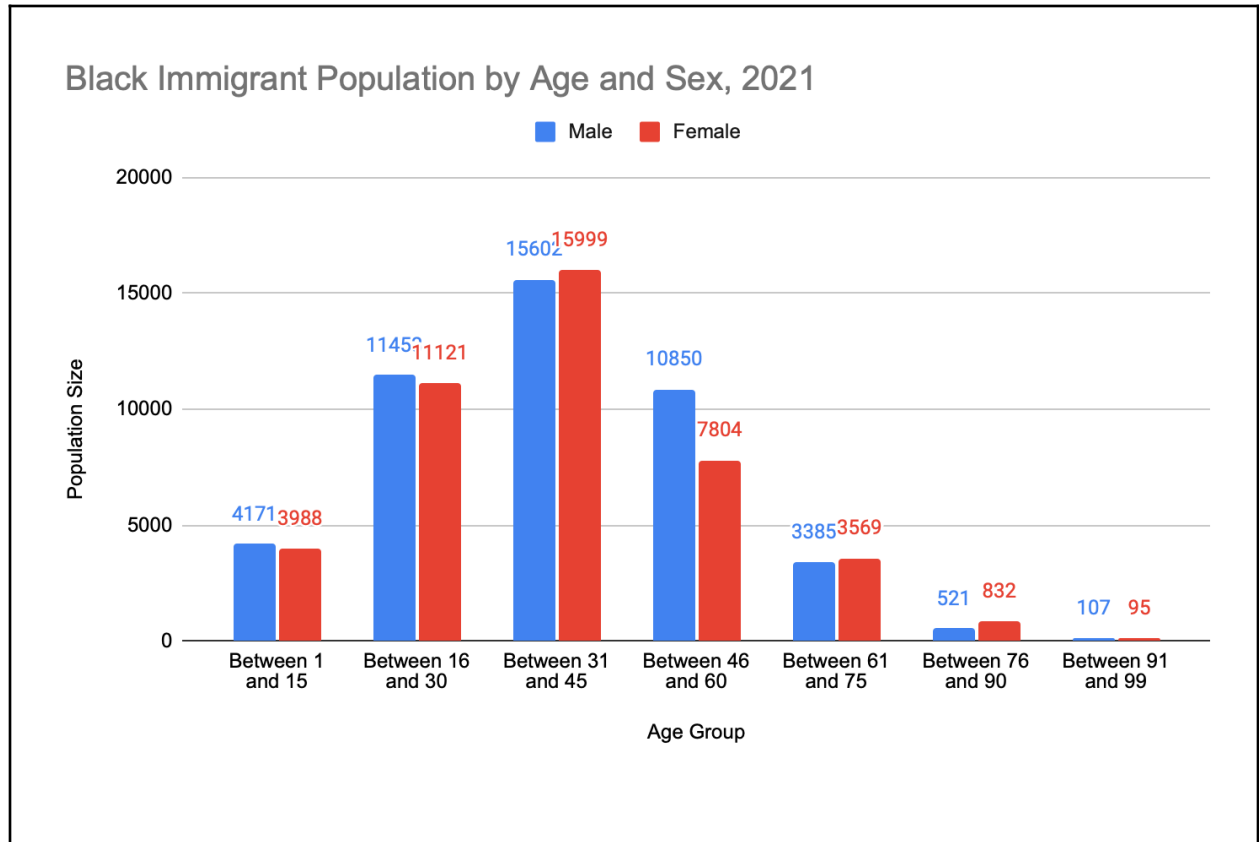
Children

The number of Black immigrants with their own children[4] in Ohio declined from 2009 to 2016 but rebounded after 2017, peaking at 8,454 in 2021. Those with related children in their households followed a similar trend, rising to over 9,000 by 2021. This indicates dynamic family structures within the community.

Black Immigrant Children in Ohio, Own Child and Related Child

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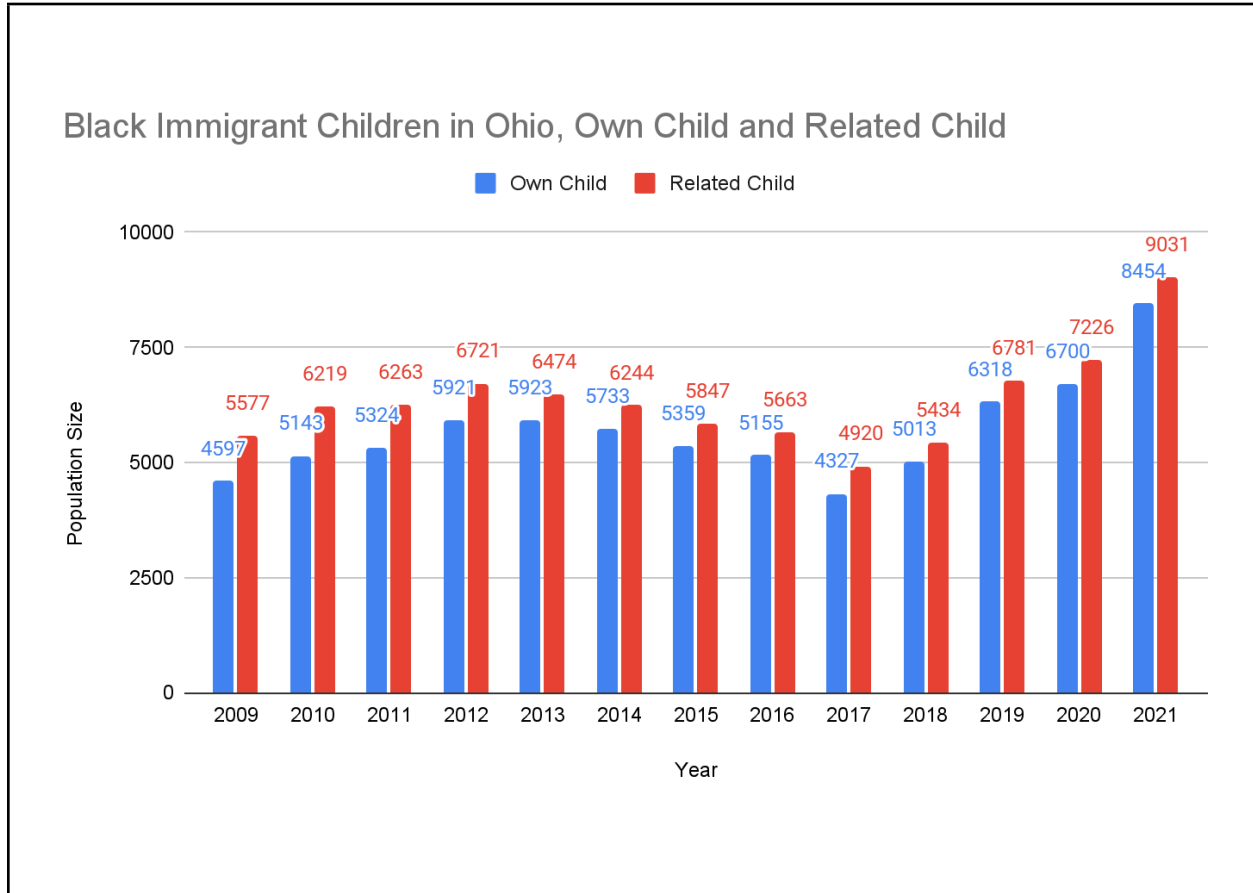
[4] As defined by the Census, "own children in a family are sons and daughters, including stepchildren and adopted children, of the householder…"own" children in a subfamily are sons and daughters of the married couple or parent in the subfamily." Similarly, "Related children in a family include own children and all other children under 18 years old in the household who are related to the householder by birth, marriage, or adoption. Source: U.S. Census Bureau. (n.d.). *Subject definitions: Current Population Survey (CPS)*. U.S. Census Bureau. https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/cps/technical-documentation/subject-definitions.html.

Citizenship Status

The number of Black naturalized citizens in Ohio grew substantially from 2009 to 2021. In 2009, around 13,500 had become citizens, increasing to over 49,000 by 2021. Census data shows this trend held across male and female residents.
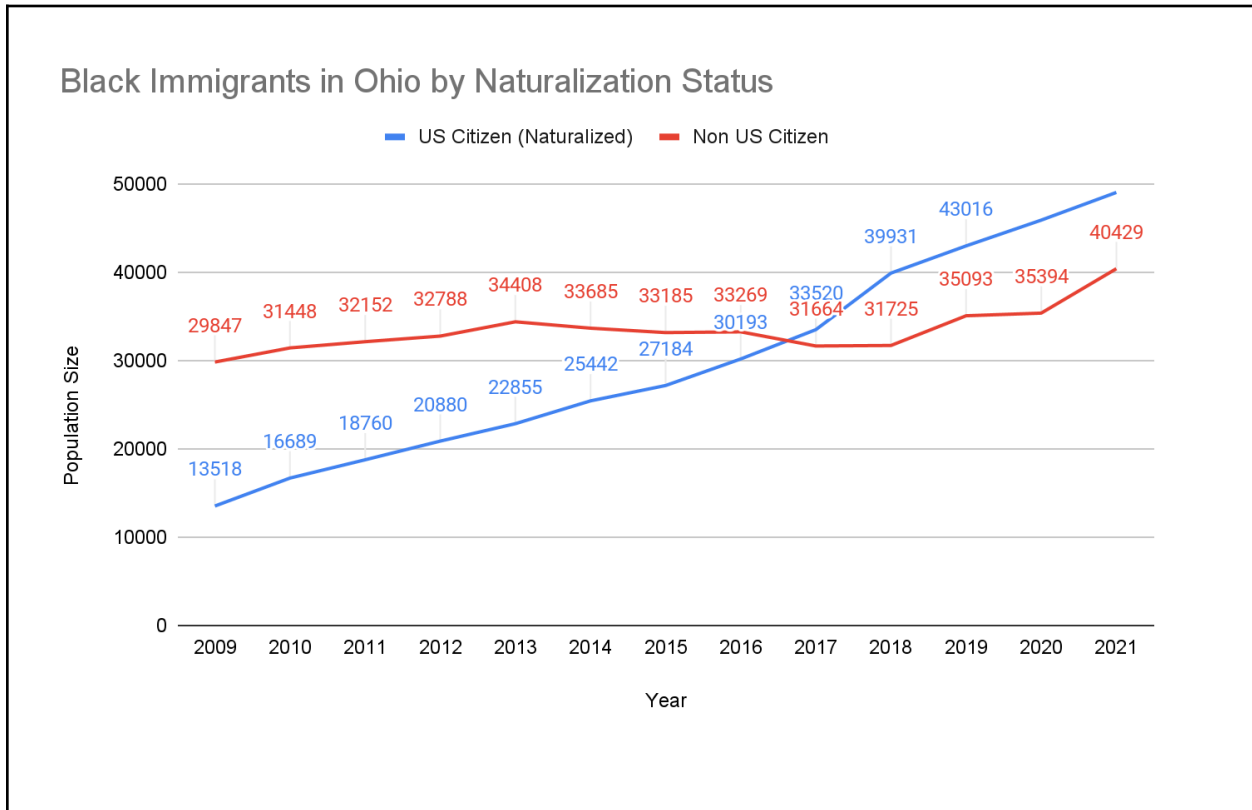
Despite naturalization increases, there remains a sizable population of non-citizens in Ohio. In 2021, over 40,000 Black immigrants, or 45% of the Black immigrant population in Ohio, were non-citizens. The non-citizen totals also rose steadily for both genders during this period as the population increased.

Black Immigrants in Ohio by Citizenship and Gender/Sex

Legend:
- Female - Citizen by Naturalization
- Female - Non-citizen
- Male - Citizen by Naturalization
- Male - Non-citizen

Y-axis: Population Size (0, 10000, 20000, 30000)
X-axis: Year (2010, 2012, 2014, 2016, 2018, 2020)

Data labels visible:
- 15880, 16689, 16723, 16974, 17611, 17662
- 13967, 14759, 15429, 15814, 16797, 16023, 16692, 16585, 17488
- 13068, 14350, 15732, 15910, 15981
- 7106, 7903, 8786, 9710, 9050, 10009, 10871, 11164, 11161, 12374, 12834, 14461
- 6412
- 21221, 22043, 24209, 23449, 20973, 21729, 18710, 17184, 17909, 17610, 20459

According to [MPI tabulations and analysis](#)[5], 11% (10,000) and 2% (1,000) Ohio's undocumented population are originally from Africa and the Caribbean, respectively.

[5] See Migration Policy Institute. (2024). Profile of the unauthorized population: Ohio. Retrieved from https://www.migrationpolicy.org/data/unauthorized-immigrant-population/state/OH.

Disability

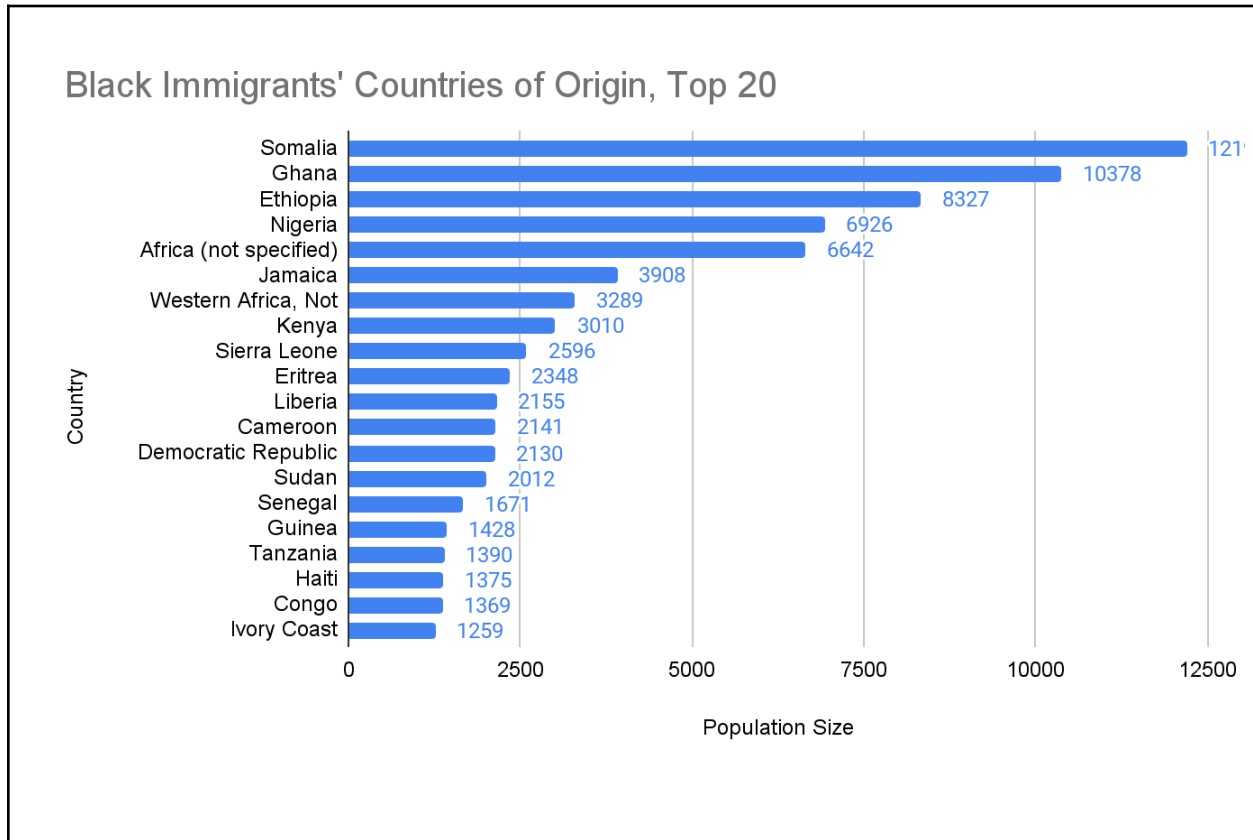Disability Estimates for Black Immigrants in Ohio
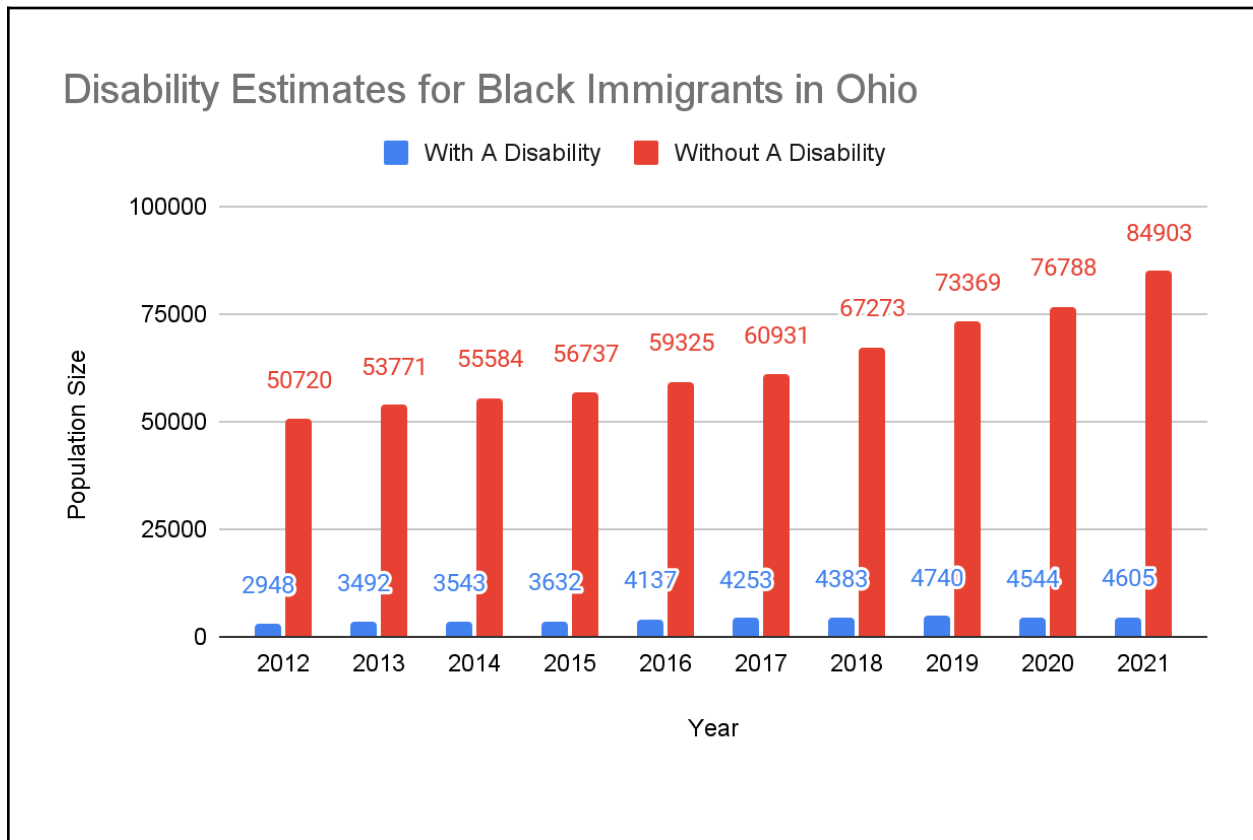
The percentage of Black foreign-born individuals self-reporting a disability remained relatively stable from 2012 to 2021, fluctuating between 5-6%. In 2021, the disability rate was 5.1%. While the rate was steady, the total number of Black immigrants living with disabilities noticeably increased over the decade, reflecting population growth. In 2021, 4,605 Black immigrants in Ohio were living with disabilities, up from under 3,000 in 2012.

Disability rates among Black immigrants highlight the ongoing need for inclusive and equitable health services, assistive technologies, workplace accommodations, accessible housing, and disability benefits. These services must be specifically tailored to the cultural and linguistic needs of Black immigrant communities to ensure accessibility and effectiveness.

It is essential to recognize and address the unique barriers faced by Black immigrants with disabilities, ensuring they receive the necessary support to thrive in society, and for their contributions to be recognized. Although a smaller demographic, their experiences and needs are crucial to fostering a truly inclusive community.

Countries of Origin

Black Immigrants' Countries of Origin, Top 20

| Country	Population Size
Somalia	121...
Ghana	10378
Ethiopia	8327
Nigeria	6926
Africa (not specified)	6642
Jamaica	3908
Western Africa, Not	3289
Kenya	3010
Sierra Leone	2596
Eritrea	2348
Liberia	2155
Cameroon	2141
Democratic Republic	2130
Sudan	2012
Senegal	1671
Guinea	1428
Tanzania	1390
Haiti	1375
Congo	1369
Ivory Coast	1259

Ohio's Black immigrants originate from over 50 countries spanning Africa, the Caribbean, Europe, South America, and beyond. However, a few nations are most prominently represented. Somalia accounts for the largest group in Census data, comprising almost 11% (12,196 in total) of Black immigrants. Ethiopia, Ghana, Nigeria, and Kenya combined make up over 28% of the population. Outside of Africa, Jamaica, Haiti, and Trinidad and Tobago are also leading countries of origin. This demonstrates the diversity of origins that contribute to Ohio's Black immigrant mosaic.

READ MORE - "In Ohio, Black Mauritanians Rev Up the Cycle of Mutual Aid and Community Support." ([Medium](#))

Geographic Distribution in Ohio

Analyzing the settlement patterns of Black immigrants across Ohio reveals geographic dispersal throughout urban and suburban areas, with less dominance in rural communities. Certain cities and regions demonstrate higher concentrations of this population than others, with notable populations in greater Columbus, Cincinnati, and Cleveland.
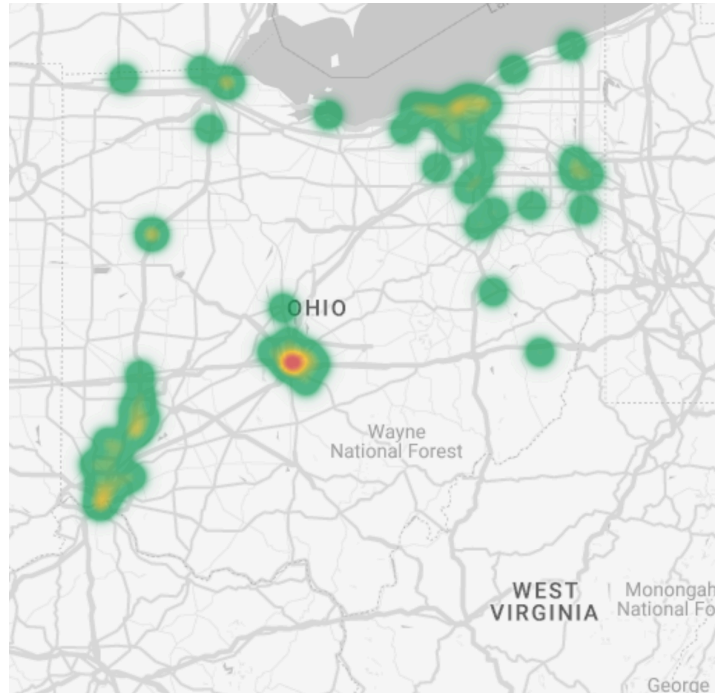
Columbus Dominance

The data clearly illustrates the dominance of the Columbus metro region as a leading destination for Black immigrants in Ohio. Nearly all Public Use Microdata Areas (PUMAs) within Columbus, including the downtown, surrounding neighborhoods, and suburbs, show sizable Black immigrant populations, several with over 10,000 residents.[6] This overwhelming concentration in the state capital highlights the area's attractiveness for Black migrants.

Cincinnati Presence

After Columbus, Cincinnati ranks second in its share of Black immigrants, with notable populations in western, eastern, and central PUMAs within the city limits. While Cincinnati's totals are significantly lower than Columbus, the consistent presence across PUMAs underscores the city's importance for this demographic.

Cleveland Distribution

The Cleveland metro region exhibits a more decentralized distribution of Black immigrants compared to Columbus or Cincinnati. However, collectively, Cleveland's PUMAs account for a substantial Black immigrant constituency, highlighting the area's draw for this population.

Suburban Enclaves

In addition to Ohio's urban cores, suburban communities across the state host sizable Black immigrant populations. Towns such as Gahanna, Hilliard, Dublin, Westerville,

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[6] See U.S. Census Bureau, https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/geography/guidance/geo-areas/pumas.html.

and New Albany in suburban Columbus and cities in Montgomery County, near Dayton, exhibit significant numbers and shares of Black migrant residents.

According to the data, there are 1,977 Black immigrants living in the Montgomery County (East Central)-Dayton and Riverside Cities PUMA area. This makes it the PUMA with the 10th largest Black foreign-born population in Ohio.

Rural Underrepresentation

Ohio's rural counties show a near total absence of Black immigrant populations, based on the PUMA data. This indicates a heavy skew toward major urban and suburban areas for settlement among this group.
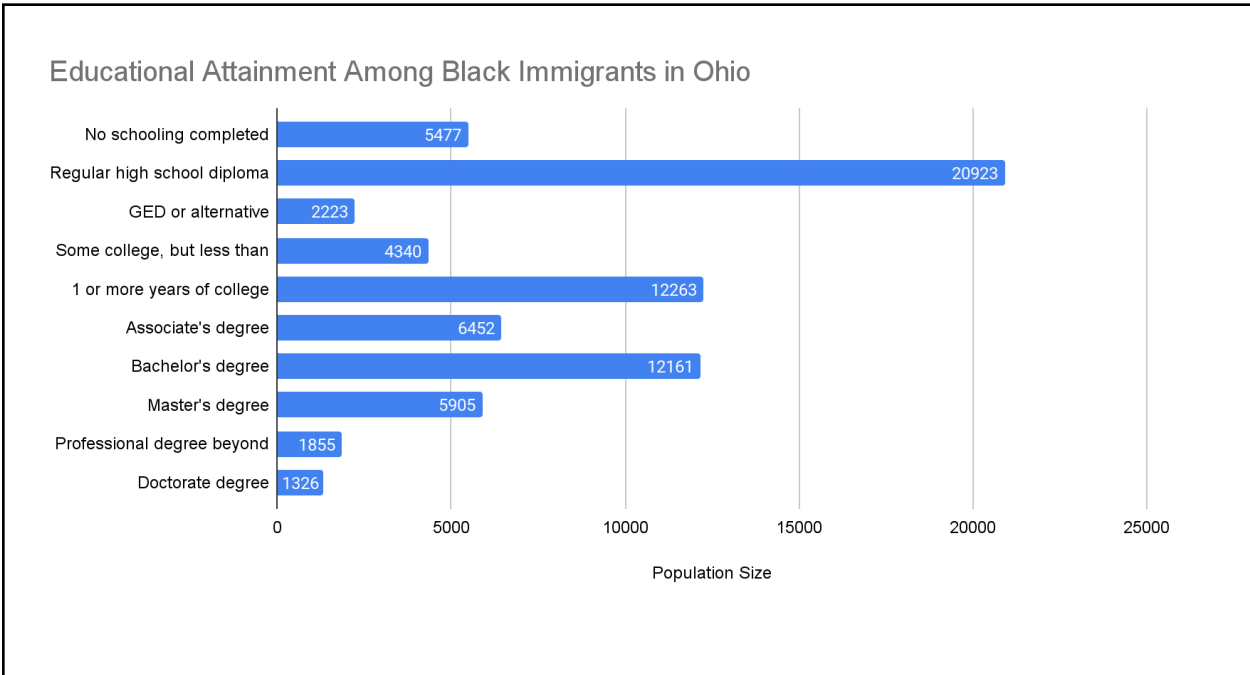
Ohio's Black immigrants have broadly dispersed across the state to access education, employment, and social opportunities. However, the data reveals a high concentration in the Columbus metro region along with significant representations in other urban centers and suburbs. Targeted development initiatives in these areas can help strengthen Black immigrant integration and advancement.

READ MORE - "#BlackLivesMatter in Ohio Towns and Villages, Too." ([Medium](#))

Socioeconomic Indicators

Examining key socioeconomic factors provides important insights into the integration trajectory of Black immigrants in Ohio across fundamental areas such as education, employment, housing, and healthcare access.
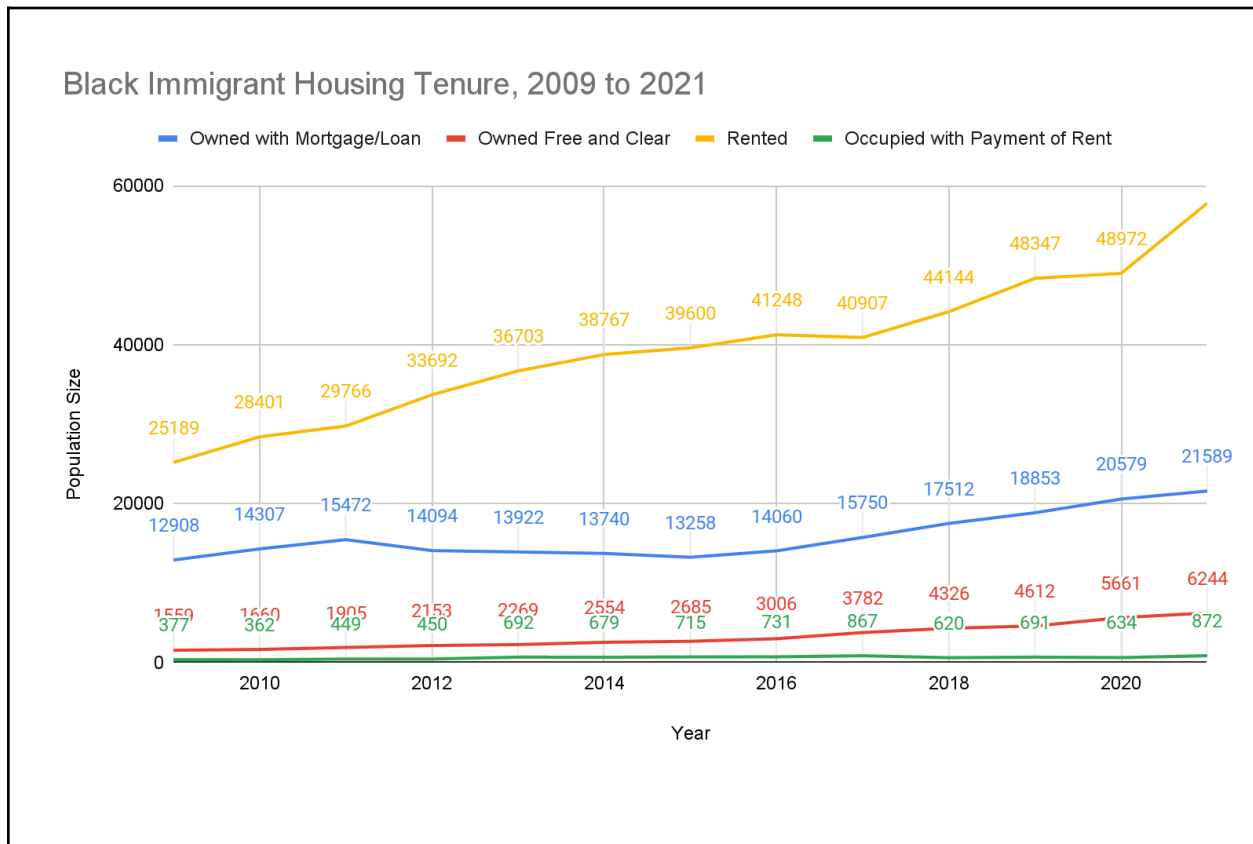
Education

Educational Attainment Among Black Immigrants in Ohio

Category	Population Size
No schooling completed	5477
Regular high school diploma	20923
GED or alternative	2223
Some college, but less than	4340
1 or more years of college	12263
Associate's degree	6452
Bachelor's degree	12161
Master's degree	5905
Professional degree beyond	1855
Doctorate degree	1326

There's a significant representation across various education levels, showcasing a diverse educational attainment spectrum within the Black immigrant population in Ohio. The highest numbers are seen in the categories of Regular High School Diploma, Associate's Degree, One or More Years of College Credit (No Degree), Bachelor's Degree, and Master's Degree. The lower numbers in Doctorate Degrees and Professional Degrees beyond a Bachelor's Degree suggest that a smaller fraction of this population pursues higher education at these advanced levels.

The data reflects a positive trend overall, showcasing a sizable portion of the Black immigrant population in Ohio with high school diplomas and various levels of college education.

Housing

Black Immigrant Housing Tenure, 2009 to 2021

Legend: Owned with Mortgage/Loan — Owned Free and Clear — Rented — Occupied with Payment of Rent

Rented: 25189, 28401, 29766, 33692, 36703, 38767, 39600, 41248, 40907, 44144, 48347, 48972

Owned with Mortgage/Loan: 12908, 14307, 15472, 14094, 13922, 13740, 13258, 14060, 15750, 17512, 18853, 20579, 21589

Owned Free and Clear: 1559, 1660, 1905, 2153, 2269, 2554, 2685, 3006, 3782, 4326, 4612, 5661, 6244

Occupied with Payment of Rent: 377, 362, 449, 450, 692, 679, 715, 731, 867, 620, 691, 634, 872

X-axis: Year (2010, 2012, 2014, 2016, 2018, 2020)
Y-axis: Population Size (0, 20000, 40000, 60000)

The housing tenure of Black immigrants in Ohio, assessed between 2009 and 2021, demonstrates discernible trends across various categories.

Firstly, there has been a consistent and notable increase in the number of Black immigrants owning homes with mortgages or loans over these years. This trend showcases a growing inclination towards homeownership, often facilitated by financial loans, indicating an upward trajectory in Black immigrants' ability to access housing through this means.

Simultaneously, the data reveals a gradual but steady rise in the number of Black immigrants who own homes outright, without any mortgage or lien. While this trend is less pronounced compared to those with mortgages, it still signifies a positive shift towards homeownership, a key factor for building generational wealth and advancement.

Regarding rental properties, the numbers portray a fluctuating pattern. Although there was a general increase from 2009 to 2014, the subsequent years display oscillations, yet the overall count of renters has remained relatively stable. This

indicates a consistent preference for renting among Black immigrants, with a tendency towards stability in this housing category.

Furthermore, the data pertaining to individuals occupying rental housing exhibits varied trends. From 2009 to 2017, there was a downward trajectory, followed by a slight increase in 2018, and subsequent fluctuations. This reflects a consistent but somewhat decreasing trend, hinting at a potential shift towards homeownership or maintaining stable rental arrangements among this demographic.
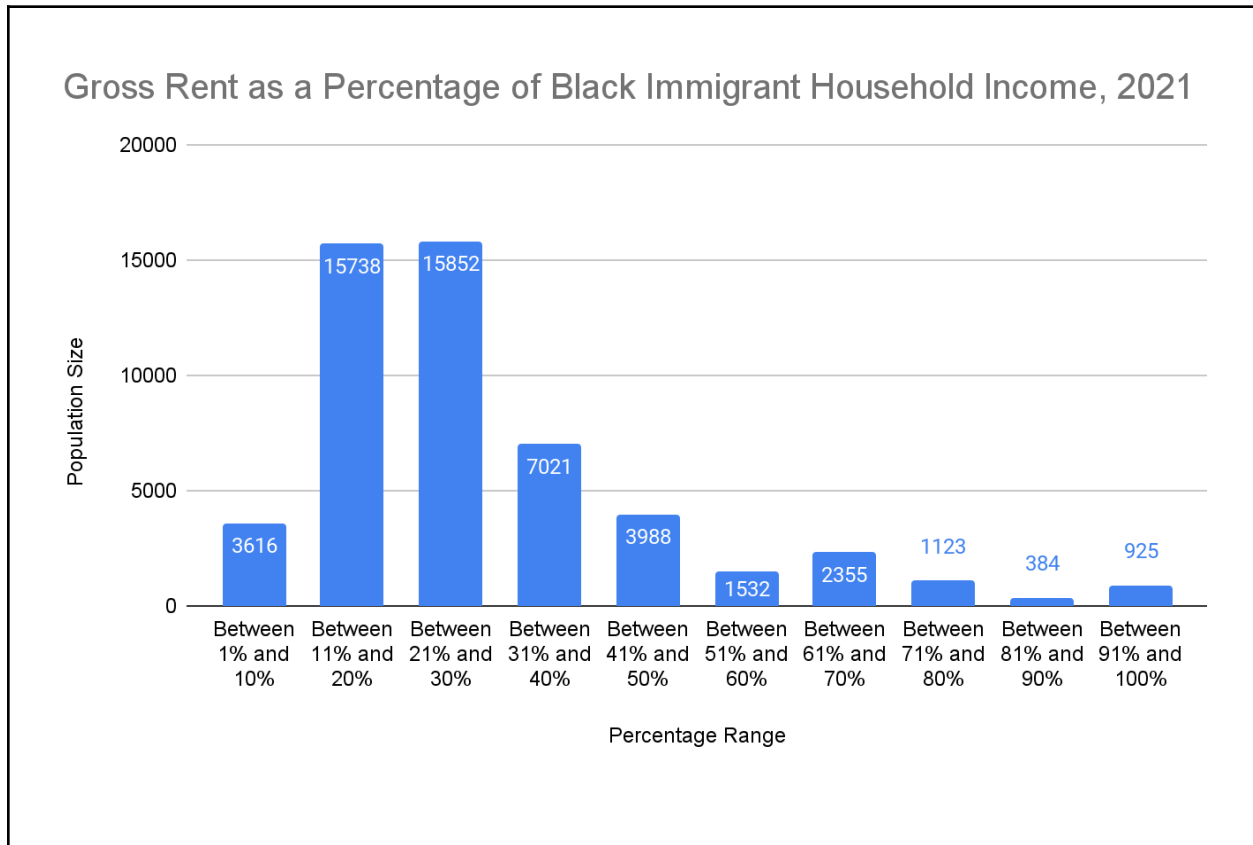
The analysis of gross rent as a percentage of household income for Black immigrants in Ohio reveals significant insights into housing cost burdens. Based on HUD's definitions[7] and the Ohio Housing Finance Agency's report on housing burden[8] — which classify "cost-burdened families" as those paying over 30% of their income on

[7] See U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, https://www.huduser.gov/portal/pdredge/pdr_edge_featd_article_092214.html#:~:text=HUD%20defines%20cost%2Dburdened%20families,of%20one%27s%20income%20on%20rent.

[8] See Ohio Housing Finance Agency, https://ohiohome.org/news/documents/2020-HNA-ExecutiveSummary.pdf.

housing, and "severe rent burden" as paying more than 50% of their income on rent — the data sheds light on the financial challenges faced by these households.

Out of the total 53,554 Black immigrants who reported to be renters, approximately 33% are categorized as cost-burdened. This finding underscores a prevalent issue among Black immigrant households in Ohio, where a significant majority grapple with the burden of high housing costs, potentially affecting their ability to afford other essentials such as food, transportation, and medical care.

Moreover, within this group, about 12% are severely rent-burdened, allocating more than 50% of their income exclusively to rent payments. This subset of individuals faces an even greater financial strain, with a substantial portion of their earnings dedicated solely to housing costs. The implications of such severe rent burdens extend beyond housing insecurity, impacting their overall financial stability and quality of life.

Employment

Labor force data for Black immigrants in Ohio in 2021 reveals valuable insights into their employment, occupations, and commuting habits. Employment status varies: 57,102 individuals are employed, constituting approximately 63.8% of the working-age population, while 3,396 individuals, approximately 3.8%, are unemployed. A significant proportion, approximately 21.6%, is not part of the labor force.
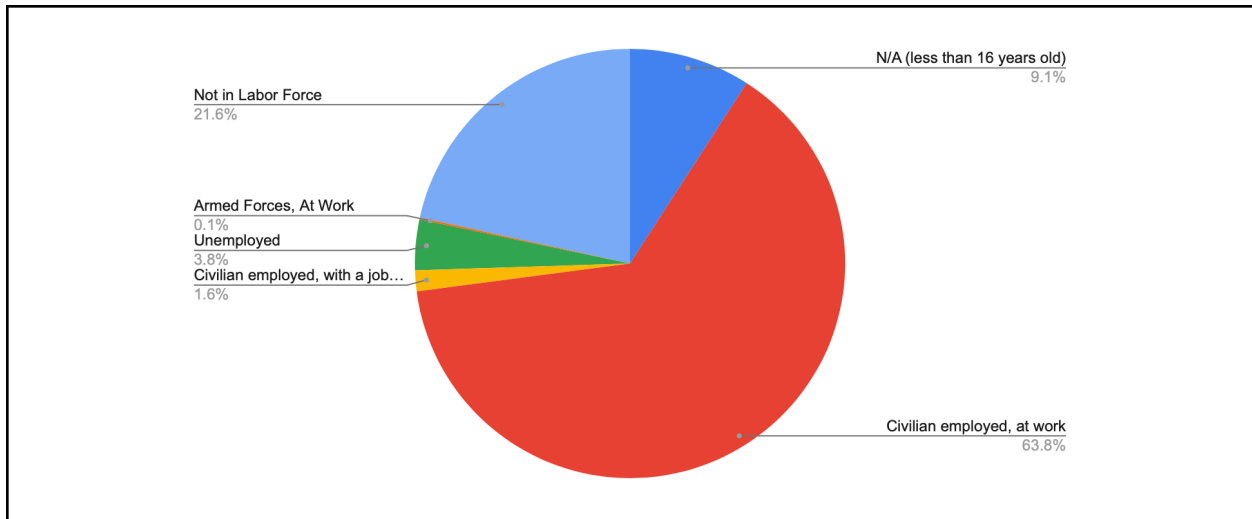

Occupationally, the Black immigrant community in Ohio holds diverse roles across healthcare, transportation, education, and service industries. Prominent occupations include 4,346 Driver/Sales Workers and Truck Drivers (4.9%); 3,647 Packers and Packagers, Hand (4.1%); 3,026 Registered Nurses (3.4%); 2,827 Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand (3.2%); and 2,439 Miscellaneous Production Workers, including Equipment Operators and Tenders (2.8%).
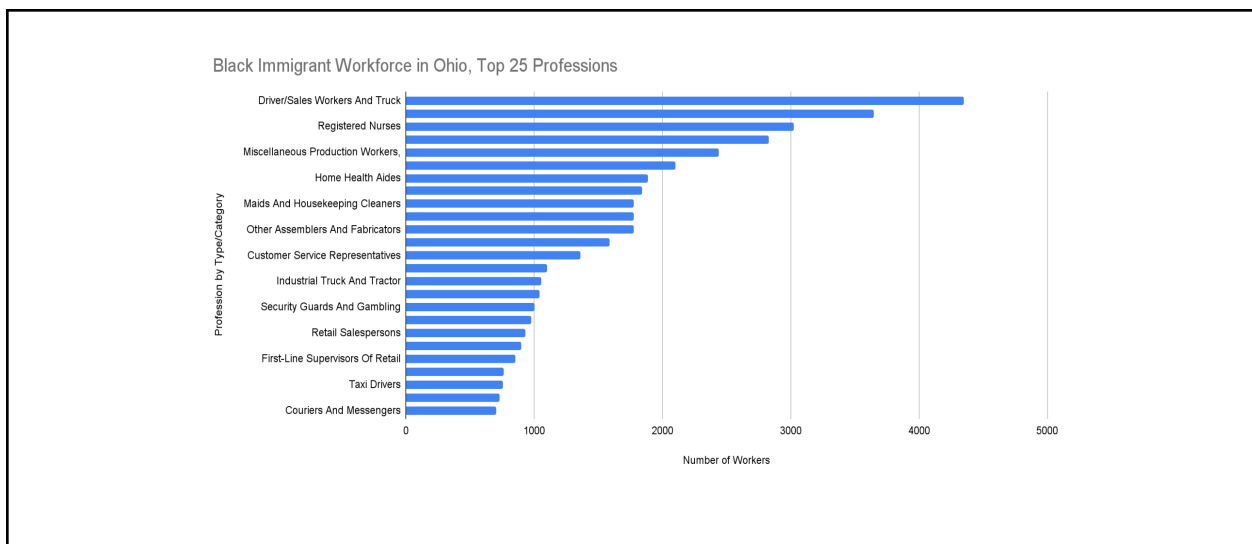
Regarding commuting methods, around 50,824 Black immigrants in Ohio (88.8%) use private vehicles; 3,426 individuals (6%) work from home; 1,521 individuals (2.7%) use buses; and 587 individuals (1%) walk. Other commuting methods include subway or elevated rail, bicycles, and long-distance train or commuter rail.

This data highlights the active participation of Black immigrants in Ohio's workforce, showcasing their employment diversity across various sectors and their adaptability in commuting preferences, including a notable shift towards remote work practices.

Health Insurance
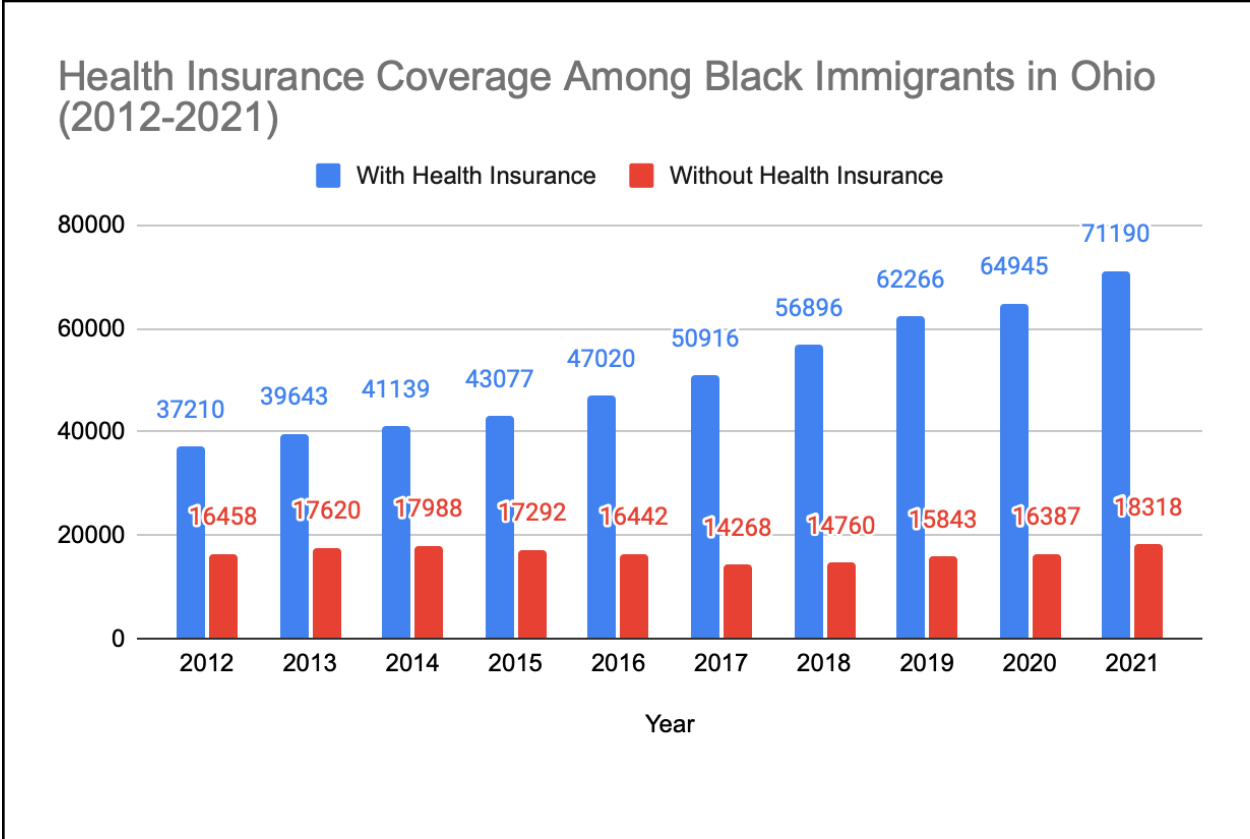
The data from 2012 to 2021 sheds light on the health insurance status of Black immigrants in Ohio, revealing distinct patterns when compared to general uninsured rates for Ohioans. In 2021, while the overall uninsured rate for Ohioans stood at 7%,[9] Black immigrants faced a notably higher uninsured rate of 20%, indicating a significant discrepancy in insurance coverage as compared to the general population.
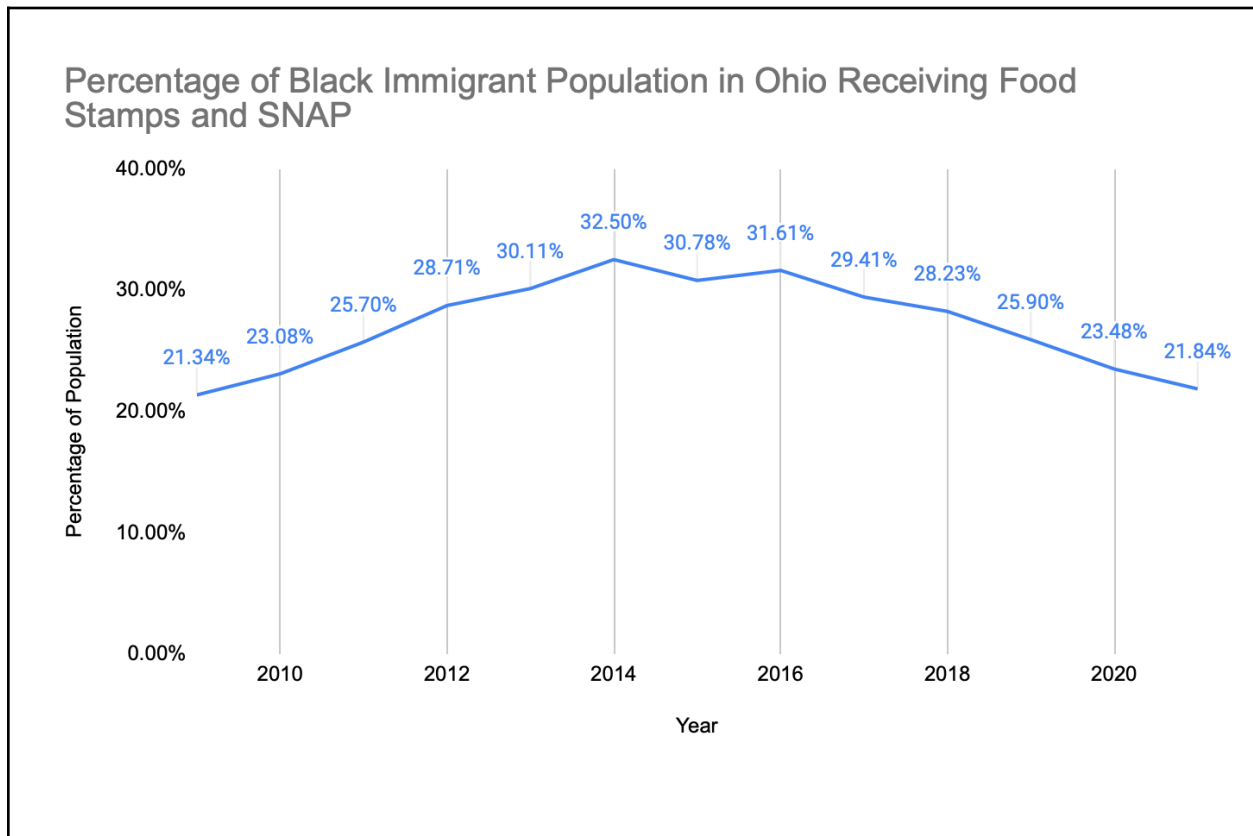
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[9] See U.S. Census Bureau, https://data.census.gov/mdat/#/search?ds=ACSPUMS5Y2021&cv=HICOV&rv=ucgid&wt=PWGTP&g=0400000US39.

Examining the trend over the past decade, it's evident that the number of insured Black immigrants in Ohio has consistently risen. However, a widening gap between insured and uninsured individuals becomes apparent, especially noticeable in recent years.

When considering percentages, the disproportionate rate of uninsured Black immigrants compared to the general uninsured rate in Ohio is stark. This discrepancy highlights a pressing issue regarding healthcare access within the Black immigrant community, demanding urgent attention.

READ MORE - "Northeast Ohio Mayors Seek Solutions to Help Black Mauritanians Settle In." ([Medium](#))

Public Assistance

Percentage of Black Immigrant Population in Ohio Receiving Food
Stamps and SNAP

Percentage of Population

40.00%

30.00%

20.00%

10.00%

0.00%

21.34%   23.08%   25.70%   28.71%   30.11%   32.50%   30.78%   31.61%   29.41%   28.23%   25.90%   23.48%   21.84%

2010   2012   2014   2016   2018   2020

Year

The data spanning 2009-2021 illustrates changes in the total number of FS/SNAP
(Food Stamps/Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) recipients in Ohio over
time, with a peak of 20,241 recipients in 2019 and a low of 9,253 recipients in 2009.

A noteworthy aspect of the data is the percentage of the Black immigrant population
in Ohio receiving FS/SNAP benefits. This percentage increased steadily from 2009,
reaching a peak of 32.50% in 2014. However, after 2014, the percentage began to
decrease gradually, reaching a low of 21.84% in 2021, despite the overall growth of the
Black immigrant population during this time.

Throughout this period, while the Black immigrant population in Ohio steadily grew,
the percentage of FS/SNAP recipients among this group initially rose, peaking in 2014,
followed by a steady decline through 2021. Further analysis into the drivers behind
these trends could provide valuable insights. Factors such as immigration and/or
public benefits policy changes, socio-economic conditions, access to alternative
support systems, or outreach programs may shed light on the reasons behind the
decrease in FS/SNAP participation rates among Black immigrants, even as their
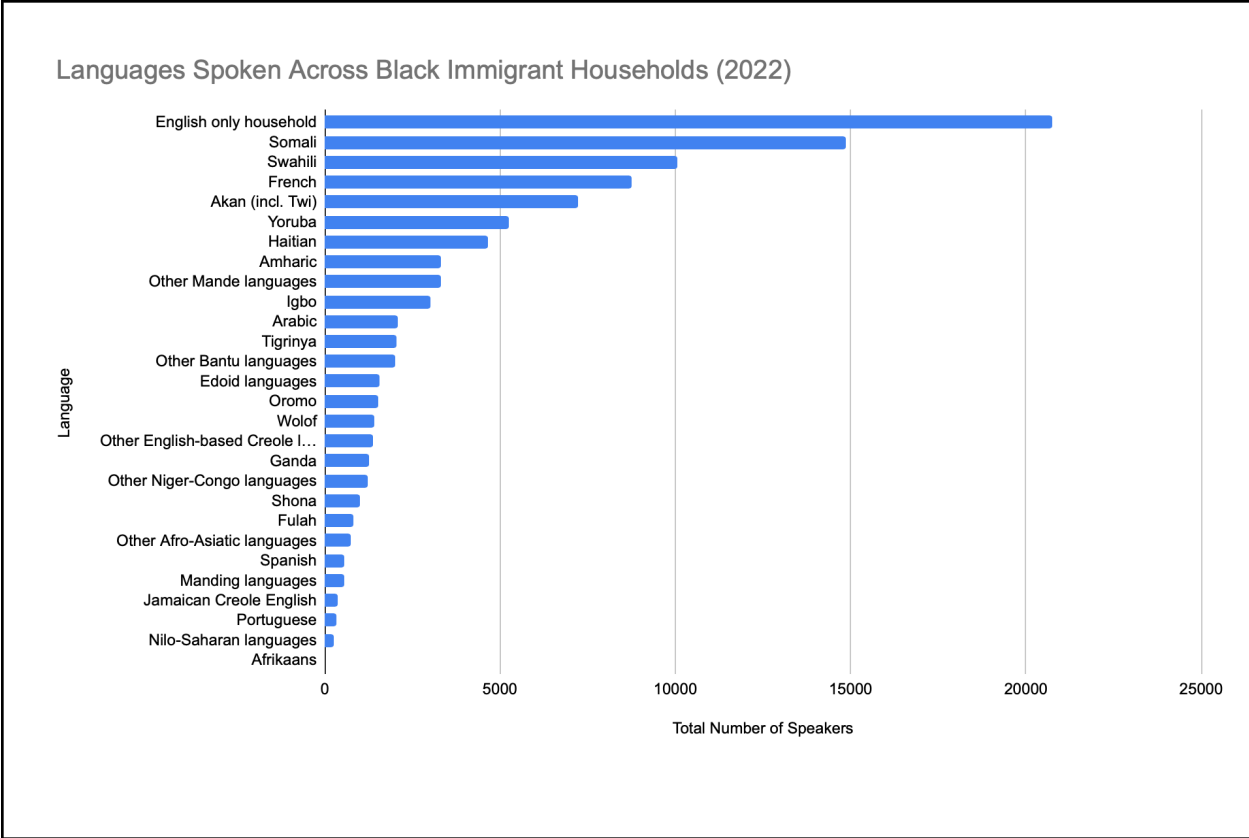population grew.

Linguistic Diversity

Ohio's Black immigrants speak a rich array of languages,[10] with English, Somali, Swahili, French, and Akan languages being most common. While English dominates day-to-day life, Ohio's Black immigrants retain impressive linguistic diversity stemming from African and Caribbean origins, with certain communities more firmly established than others.

The data reveals a diverse range of languages, highlighting the multicultural nature of Black immigrant communities. The data demonstrates that in addition to speaking English, Black immigrant households are multilingual. English-only households dominate the list, with 20,755 households exclusively using English. Somali is the second most common language, spoken by 14,878 individuals. Swahili is also widely spoken, with 10,048 speakers. French is prevalent among 8,741 speakers, followed closely by Akan (including Twi), which is spoken by 7,231 individuals.

Yoruba and Haitian Creole follow, spoken by 5,236 and 4,660 people, respectively. Other languages include Amharic (3,326), Other Mande languages (3,303), and Igbo (3,002). Smaller language groups reflect the rich linguistic diversity, such as Arabic (2,069), Tigrinya (2,040), and Other Bantu languages (2,020). Less commonly spoken languages include Wolof (1,396), Shona (994), and Jamaican Creole English (351).

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[10] 2022 ACS 1 year estimates were utilized for Language Use data.

Languages Spoken Across Black Immigrant Households (2022)

Language	Total Number of Speakers
English only household	~20700
Somali	~14800
Swahili	~10100
French	~8700
Akan (incl. Twi)	~7200
Yoruba	~5300
Haitian	~4600
Amharic	~3300
Other Mande languages	~3300
Igbo	~3000
Arabic	~2100
Tigrinya	~2000
Other Bantu languages	~2000
Edoid languages	~1600
Oromo	~1500
Wolof	~1500
Other English-based Creole l...	~1500
Ganda	~1200
Other Niger-Congo languages	~1200
Shona	~1000
Fulah	~800
Other Afro-Asiatic languages	~600
Spanish	~600
Manding languages	~600
Jamaican Creole English	~400
Portuguese	~300
Nilo-Saharan languages	~300
Afrikaans	~100

Underrepresented Languages

The Census broadly groups some languages, such as "Other Bantu Languages," "Other Afro-Asiatic languages," "Other Niger-Congo languages," "Other Mande languages," and "Other English-based Creole languages," obscure specific linguistic groups. Smaller communities can become invisible and underrepresented when data collection is insufficient.

> **READ MORE -** "My Accent," Houleye Thiam. ([Far From Their Eyes: Ohio Migration Anthology, Vol. 1](#))

A Note on Biased and Partial Knowledge on African Languages and People

The use of broad categories in Census data fails to adequately capture the diversity within African and indigenous languages, resulting in various limitations and risks.

Underrepresentation: Employing catch-all terms like "Other Bantu languages" or "Other Mande languages" may obscure specific linguistic and ethnic groups among African immigrants. This lack of granularity can lead to these groups being overlooked in policy-making and resource allocation — including immigration court interpretation, among other vital services.

Erosion of Cultural and Linguistic Identity: These overarching categories undermine the rich cultural and linguistic tapestry of African immigrant communities. Individuals might feel pressured to fit into generalized classifications that do not authentically reflect their backgrounds, potentially eroding their sense of cultural and linguistic identity.

Insufficient Services: A dearth of specific language data impedes the provision of tailored services, educational initiatives, and social support systems for African immigrant communities. This gap between community needs and available services can hinder integration and support.

Limitations in Research and Analysis: The utilization of broad categories restricts the ability of researchers, policymakers, and social scientists to conduct nuanced studies. This limitation inhibits a comprehensive understanding of the unique characteristics and requirements of distinct African immigrant groups.

Cultural Insensitivity: Overlooking specific languages and ethnicities within African immigrant communities can be perceived as culturally insensitive and dismissive. It perpetuates the misconception that these communities are homogenous, disregarding their vibrant diversity.

Inaccurate Demographic Profiles: Census data forms the basis for community demographic profiles. When intricate linguistic and ethnic details are overlooked, these profiles become inaccurate, leading to ill-informed policy decisions.

To tackle these challenges, it is imperative for the Census to employ more specific and disaggregated categories when collecting data, particularly concerning languages and ethnicities. This approach ensures a more precise representation of the diverse backgrounds within the African immigrant population, enabling better-informed policies, targeted services, and enhanced community engagement.

Additionally, the Census Bureau should consider hiring culturally competent advisors and Census takers to evaluate and refine these categories, ensuring they are inclusive and appropriate for Black immigrants.

> **READ MORE -** "Scarred, Then Barred: U.S. Immigration Courts Harm Black Mauritanian Refugees." ([Behind Closed Doors](#))

Conclusion

The data provides a multi-dimensional profile of Ohio's rapidly growing and socioeconomically diverse Black immigrant population. Several key factors emerge that demand focused planning and resource allocation from policymakers and community stakeholders.

Settlement Patterns: The intense geographic concentration in Columbus and select suburbs contrasts with the absence in rural communities. Targeted immigrant integration initiatives should be launched in Columbus and other major gateways across the state.

Housing Needs: Homeownership increases are positive, yet cost burdens affect a third of households. Expanded affordable housing access via financial assistance programs and public-private partnerships can ease these stresses.

Healthcare Access: Stark uninsured rate disparities compared to statewide averages reflect coverage gaps. Medicaid eligibility expansion, ACA enrollment drives, and culturally-competent, multilingual outreach can connect more individuals to care.

Occupational Spread: Workforce diversity across industries highlights Black immigrants' integral economic contributions. Targeted vocational training, credential recognition, and small business funding can support their professional mobility and entrepreneurship.

Linguistic Assets and Language Access: Proficiency in African languages despite English dominance signifies strong cultural identity retention. The linguistic diversity of the Black immigrant community should be leveraged for business, education, and cultural exchange via heritage language schools, multilingual institutions, and more. Expanded interpretation services, multilingual communication, and translated materials, especially in social services, healthcare, legal, and other vital needs should also be prioritized and can drive greater equity and inclusion.

Additionally, the aggregation of ethnic and linguistic categories in Census and other data presents a key limitation. Granular, disaggregated data collection and community-led research must capture the complete diversity of backgrounds.

Overall, Black immigrants are valued contributors to Ohio's social fabric, necessitating comprehensive investments into affordable housing, healthcare access, economic development, education and linguistic heritage preservation across all geographies to facilitate their full inclusion and empowerment.

Additional Reading

This is the fifth installment in a series by the Ohio Immigrant Alliance (OHIA) entitled, "Behind Closed Doors: Black Migrants and the Hidden Injustices of U.S. Immigration Courts." Find this and prior publications at illusionofjustice.org or on the Ohio Immigrant Alliance website.[11]

"Dystopia, Then Deportation" summarizes insights and recommendations from a strategy session co-hosted by OHIA, the Mauritanian Network for Human Rights in US, and Cameroon Advocacy Network at the Ford Foundation Center for Social Justice.

"Diaspora Dynamics" is an annotated bibliography of over eighty studies into the lives of Black migrants in the U.S., published between 1925 and 2023.

"The System Works As Designed: Immigration Law, Courts, and Consequences" illuminates how the quasi-judicial structure of U.S. immigration courts, and the laws they implement, were built on a foundation of white supremacy, power imbalance, and coercive control.

"Scarred, Then Barred: U.S. Immigration Laws and Courts Harm Black Mauritanian Refugees" is a case study outlining specious reasons why Black Mauritanians who meet the definition of a "refugee" under international and U.S. law have been denied protection in the U.S. immigration courts. The experiences of Mauritanians and other African, Muslim, and Black immigrants are juxtaposed with solutions from the Mauritania TPS Working Group, Ohio Immigrant Alliance, Asylum Seeker Advocacy Project, and Peter L. Markowitz' paper "A New Paradigm for Humane and Effective Immigration Enforcement."

For further discussion about racism in immigration law, policy, and structures, as well as firsthand accounts, read or listen to **"Broken Hope: Deportation and the Road Home"[12]** by Lynn Tramonte and Suma Setty, with research by Maryam Sy.

Additional Reading (Haitian Creole)

Lekti Adisyonèl , Sa a se senkyèm pati nan yon seri atik ke Ohio Immigrant Alliance (OHIA) ki rele " Fèmen Dèyè Pòt : Migran Nwa yo ak Enjistis ki Kache nan Tribinal Imigrasyon Etazini yo." Jwenn piblikasyon sa a ak lòt sa ki te deja pibliye yo nan **illusionofjustice.org**.

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[11] See Ohio Immigrant Alliance,
https://ohioimmigrant.org/2024/10/08/behind-closed-doors-report-roundup.

[12] See Ohio Immigrant Alliance, https://www.reunite.us/read and https://www.reunite.us/listen.

"Dystopia, Apre sa Depòtasyon" rezime konsèy ak rekòmandasyon ki soti nan yon sesyon estrateji ki te òganize ansanm ak OHIA, Rezo Mowritaniyen pou Dwa Moun, nan Ozetazini, ak Cameroon Advocacy Network nan Ford Foundation Center for Social Justice.

"Dinamik Dyaspora" se yon bibliyografi ak anotasyon ki genyen plis pase katreven etid sou lavi migran Nwa Etazini, ki te pibliye antre 1925 ak 2023.

"Sistèm nan Travay Kòm Li te Planifye: Lwa Imigrasyon, Tribinal yo, ak Konsekans yo" fè we klè kijan estrikti kazye-jidisyè nan tribinal imigrasyon Etazini yo, ak lwa yo aplike, te bati sou yon fondasyon sipremasi blan, inegalite pouvwa, ak Fos kontwòl

"La Pe, Apre sa Entèdi: Lwa Imigrasyon Etazini yo ak Tribinal yo Fè Mal ak Refijye Nwa Mowritaniyen yo" se yon etid ki dekri yon fo rezon poukisa Nwa Mowritaniyen ki satisfè definisyon yon "refijye" anba lwa entènasyonal ak lwa Etazini yo te refize pwoteksyon nan tribinal imigrasyon Etazini yo. Eksperyans Mowritaniyen ak lòt Afriken, Mizilman, ak imigran Nwa yo ap konpare avèk solisyon ki soti nan **Mauritania TPS Working Group**, Ohio Immigrant Alliance, Asylum Seeker Advocacy Project, ak papye Peter L. Markowitz "Yon Nouvo Paradigm pou yon Imigrasyon Moun ak Efektif."

Pou plis diskisyon sou rasis nan lwa imigrasyon, politik, ak estrikti, ansanm ak temwayaj pèsonèl, li oswa koute **"Broken Hope: Depòtasyon ak Chemen pou Retounen Lakay"** pa Lynn Tramonte ak Suma Setty, ak rechèch Maryam Sy te fè.

Translations and Oral Summaries

French

L'État de l'Ohio a une longue et riche histoire en tant que destination des migrants noirs, qu'ils soient nationaux ou nés à l'étranger. Depuis la Grande Migration au début du XXe siècle, les centres urbains et le cœur agricole de l'Ohio ont attiré des Afro-Américains des États du Sud à la recherche de nouvelles opportunités économiques et de libertés sociales. Au fil des décennies, la population noire née à l'étranger, originaire de toute l'Afrique, ainsi que des Caraïbes, d'Amérique latine et d'ailleurs, n'a cessé d'augmenter, créant une mosaïque diversifiée de cultures et d'expériences.

L'Ohio abrite environ 90 000 résidents noirs nés à l'étranger, ce qui représente environ 6 % de la population noire de l'Ohio en 2021. La dernière décennie a vu une croissance substantielle au sein de cette population, stimulant de nouvelles formations communautaires, des influences culturelles et des impacts économiques. Les immigrants noirs vivent et travaillent désormais dans tout l'Ohio - en tant qu'infirmières dans les hôpitaux de Cleveland, ouvrières de production dans les usines de Dayton, professeurs dans les universités de Columbus et entrepreneurs ouvrant des restaurants à Cincinnati. Ils font partie du tissu social qui fait de l'Ohio l'État diversifié qu'il est. En fait, l'État de l'Ohio est l'un des seuls États du pays à disposer d'une Commission des nouveaux immigrants africains, créée par la législature en 2008.

Ce rapport fournit un profil statistique de la population noire née à l'étranger de l'Ohio, basé sur les données de l'American Community Survey du Bureau du recensement des États-Unis. Il met en évidence les contributions, les réalisations et les défis auxquels cette communauté est confrontée. Il vise à fournir aux législateurs, aux prestataires de services et aux défenseurs des immigrants des informations exploitables pour mieux comprendre et soutenir la population immigrée noire croissante, dynamique et multiculturelle de l'Ohio.

Voici les principales conclusions du rapport.

La population immigrée noire de l'Ohio a augmenté ces dernières années, augmentant de plus de 100 % entre 2009 et 2021 pour atteindre près de 90 000 résidents. Les immigrants noirs représentent désormais 6 % de la population noire totale de l'Ohio.

Les taux de naturalisation ont augmenté, avec plus de 49 000 immigrants noirs résidant actuellement dans l'Ohio en tant que citoyens américains.

Les taux d'invalidité sont restés stables à 5-6 % au fil des ans. En 2021, un peu plus de 4 600 immigrants noirs dans l'Ohio vivaient avec un handicap.

Les immigrants noirs de l'Ohio sont originaires de plus de 50 pays, en particulier de Somalie, d'Éthiopie, du Ghana, du Nigéria, du Kenya et du Cameroun d'Afrique, et de Jamaïque, d'Haïti et de Trinidad des Caraïbes. L'Ohio abrite également la plus grande population de Mauritaniens noirs des États-Unis.

L'implantation des immigrants noirs est concentrée à Columbus, mais des populations importantes existent à Cincinnati, dans les banlieues de Cleveland, à Dayton et dans certaines petites villes. La plupart des zones rurales affichent une absence de résidents immigrants noirs.

Les niveaux d'éducation varient considérablement, le plus grand nombre d'entre eux détenant un diplôme d'études secondaires (environ 29 %). Un nombre important d'immigrants noirs sont titulaires d'une licence (environ 17 %), tandis qu'environ 9 % détiennent un diplôme d'associé et 8 % une maîtrise.

L'accession à la propriété augmente régulièrement, avec ou sans hypothèque. Les taux de location restent relativement stables. Environ 33 % des ménages dirigés par des immigrants noirs sont accablés par les loyers.

La main-d'œuvre immigrée noire est diversifiée selon les professions, notamment dans les domaines de la santé, des transports, de l'éducation et des services. Le travail à distance fait également son apparition.

Les taux de personnes non assurées sont disproportionnellement élevés pour les immigrants noirs par rapport aux moyennes générales de l'Ohio, ce qui indique des lacunes dans l'accès aux soins de santé.

L'anglais domine linguistiquement, suivi du somali, du swahili et du français. D'autres langues comme le créole haïtien, le twi, le yoruba, l'igbo et l'amharique conservent un grand nombre de locuteurs, mettant en valeur les origines.

Les immigrants noirs contribuent grandement au tissu social de l'Ohio, ce qui nécessite des investissements importants dans le logement abordable, l'accès aux soins de santé, le développement économique, l'éducation et la préservation du patrimoine linguistique dans toutes les régions géographiques pour faciliter leur pleine inclusion et leur autonomisation.

Cependant, la manière dont les catégories ethniques et linguistiques sont utilisées dans le recensement et d'autres données présente une limite majeure. La collecte de données détaillées et désagrégées et la recherche menée par la communauté doivent saisir toute la diversité des origines.

Fulani

Leydi Ohio ena jogi taarix boydo kono kadi bado faayda.

Leydi ndi ko kucam daniyankoobe baleebe woni jibinaabe toon wola jibinaabe cagal keeri.

Gila 20 siècle saanga ferngo,gure teeru e gure tokoose di Ohio ngoni nokuji di daniyankoobe afro amerikeen en umibe e leydele keedide bange worgo ngam daň ngalu wondude e ndimaagu.

Balde e bandum ,baleebe be lasli mumene umi afric ,americ latin , karayib e nokuji godi ena beydo no hanirini.

Dum woni sabaabu leji di naatnatondiri ha jibini pine gode.

E 2021,Ohio ena bismi kena abo e 90.000 baleebe jibinaabe cagal keeri.

Duubi sapo benudi ,ena teska besguji di beydima .Dum jibini leji godi Daniyankoobe baleebe ena ngolo e wertango Ohio :be ko safroobe e opitaluji mo Cleveland wola goloobe e isinaaji mo Dayton ,be ko janginoobe e dude jaati hatirde mo Colombos ,be ko jom restoranji to Sinsiniti.Hande ko been doon besnguuji ngoni sabaabu sifa leydi Ohio .Wade hande ko Ohio tan woni leydi jogiido gomu tambiido gede daniyankoobe hesbe taw sosi dum ko sardiyankoobe hitande 2008.

Ciimtol badaangol o holirtu ko sifa besngu baleebe wone be to Ohio. Kabruji kalaadi di ndaňa ko e suudu binditaagol besnguji amerik.Ciimtol ngol haalat ko gole e bale daniyankoobe baleebe ha e cadeele mumen .Kabruji di noon mbeeb nat ko gole hohobe ,ardibe golorde kono kadi yoltoobe huja ji baleebe.

Ko dum tonga e ciimtol he:

*daniyankoobe baleebe to Ohio beydiima no feewi e nder dubi sapo benudi di (e heen 100 fof beydiima 100 hakunde 2009 e 2021)
*hande e ner 100 nedo besngu Ohio Kobe heen 6
*baleebe rokaabe kayit leydi ndi ena faydodini sabu 49000 daniyankoobe wurbe to Ohio keptinaama wonde ko be jibinande USA
Ngaku be terde mumen hay so tawi ustaani beydaani kam sabu e nder 100 fof kobe 5 wola 6

E 2021 ,4600 daniyankoobe baleebe teskama ko be waasbe terde moumen

Been doon daniyankoobe baleebe ngumi ko e ena bura 50 leydele ena jeya heen Somali, Ecopi , Gaana,Nigeriya to bange Afric, jamayik, Ayiti,Tirinidad to bange Karayib.Besnguji baleebe moritanihnaabe ena teska to Ohio

Heewbe e been doon daniyankoobe ngoni ko to kolomɓus kono kadi won won be to Sin sinaati ,to diwaan mo Keleveland , to diwaan mo Dayton e yoga e gure tokose.Gure dowri di ngala daniyankoobe baleebe

To bate jangde ,tolno o wona gotum:
dañ be seedatangal to jangde hakundere ko 29 e nder 100
dañ be lisens moumen ko 17 e nder 100
dañ metris ko 8 e nder 100
Taabe teskama to bate senaare

To bate kot ki waylo waylo teskama heen .E nder 100 fof ko 33 tampina e oon doon fane.

Diloobe to bate fitram gole ena ngoodi moni kala e fanu mum:be ndilat ko e safara ,be ko ya ngarta ,be ko jangde ,be ko serwisaaji

Daniyankoobe baleebe be ngala kayit ndeen ka ena heewi so yerondirama e oon doon fanu leydi ndi.Doum saabi cadele teskeede e ko faati e safara

Demngal burdo haleede ko Engle rewi heen ko Somali rewi heen Suwahili,rewi heen Faranse.Demde gode bado no kerewol mo Hayiti ,Tiwi,Yuruba,Igbo e Amharic ena kaale toon.kadi dum wurtinini aada e pine mabe

Hande daniyankoobe baleebe be npewni no feewi sifa e ngonka leydi Ohio. Ko dum saabi gole keewde ena npoti wadeede ngam kodorde de nbeeba, moni fof safro no fotirini ,jangde nde kadi waya noon.

Kono yo en ngadu cadele na ngoodi no leji di e demde de nkuutorte ta bate binditaagol. Wade kaabruji laabtudi celudi npoti rokeede mbela moni kala yiita heen hore mum

Español

[Listen here](#)

El estado de Ohio ha tenido una historia larga y rica como destino para migrantes negros, tanto domésticos como internacionales. Desde la Gran Migración en el principio del siglo XX, los centros urbanos y campesinos de Ohio han atraído a afroamericanos desde el sur de los Estados Unidos, buscando nuevas oportunidades económicas y libertades sociales. Tras las décadas, la población negra internacional

de alrededor de África, el Caribe, América Latina y más ha crecido, creando una tapiz diverso de culturas y experiencias.

Ohio es el hogar para un estimado 90,000 inmigrantes residentes afrodescendientes, representando cerca de 6% de la población negra en Ohio en 2021. La última década ha visto un aumento sustancial en cuanto a esta demográfica, trayendo consigo nuevas formulaciones comunitarias, influencias culturales e impactos económicos. Inmigrantes negros ahora viven y trabajan a través de Ohio como enfermeras en hospitales de Cleveland, trabajadores de producción en fábricas de Dayton, profesores en universidades de Columbus y empresarios abriendo restaurantes en Cincinnati. Forman parte de la fábrica social que hace Ohio el estado diverso que es. De hecho, el Estado de Ohio es uno de los únicos estados que tiene una Comisión de Inmigrantes Nuevos Africanos, lo cual fue establecido por la legislatura en 2008.

Este informe ofrece un perfil estadístico de la población internacional afrodescendiente en Ohio, basado en datos de la U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey. Destaca las contribuciones, logros y desafíos que esta comunidad enfrenta. Su intención es equipar a los legisladores, proveedores de servicios y defensores de los inmigrantes con conocimientos prácticos para comprender y apoyar mejor a la creciente, vibrante y multicultural población de inmigrantes negros de Ohio.

Este informe destaca lo siguiente:

La población negra inmigrante en Ohio ha crecido en los últimos años, aumentando por más de 100% entre 2009-2021, a 90,000 residentes. Los inmigrantes afrodescendientes ahora conforman el 6% de la población negra total en Ohio.

Cifras de naturalización han crecido, con más de 49,000 inmigrantes negros en Ohio llegando a ser ciudadanos estadounidenses.

Las tasas de discapacidad se han mantenido estables entre el 5% y el 6% a lo largo de los años. En 2021, poco más de 4,600 inmigrantes negros en Ohio vivían con discapacidades.

Los inmigrantes negros en Ohio provienen de más de 50 países, especialmente Somalia, Etiopía, Ghana, Nigeria, Kenia y Camerún de África, y Jamaica, Haití y Trinidad del Caribe. Ohio también alberga la mayor población de mauritanos negros de los Estados Unidos.

El asentamiento de inmigrantes negros se concentra en Columbus, pero existen poblaciones considerables en Cincinnati, Cleveland, Dayton y algunas ciudades más pequeñas. La mayoría de las zonas rurales muestran una ausencia de residentes inmigrantes negros.

Los niveles de educación varían mucho, y la mayor parte tiene diplomas de escuela secundaria (aproximadamente el 29%). Un número significativo de inmigrantes afrodescendientes tiene títulos de licenciatura (aproximadamente el 17%), mientras que aproximadamente el 9% tiene títulos de asociado y el 8% tiene títulos de maestría.

La propiedad de viviendas está aumentando constantemente, tanto con hipotecas como sin ellas. Las tarifas de alquiler se mantienen relativamente estables. Alrededor del 33% de los hogares liderados por inmigrantes negros tienen que soportar los costos de los alquileres.

La fuerza laboral inmigrante negra es diversa en todas las ocupaciones y se destaca en la atención médica, el transporte, la educación y los servicios. El trabajo remoto también está surgiendo.

Las tasas de personas sin seguro son desproporcionadamente altas para los inmigrantes negros comparados con los promedios generales de Ohio, lo que indica brechas en el acceso a la atención médica.

El inglés domina lingüísticamente, seguido del somalí, el swahili y el francés. Otros idiomas como el criollo haitiano, el twi, el yoruba, el igbo y el amárico conservan un gran número de hablantes, lo que muestra sus orígenes.

Los inmigrantes negros son valiosos contribuyentes al tejido social de Ohio, lo que requiere inversiones integrales en viviendas asequibles, acceso a la atención médica, desarrollo económico, educación y preservación del patrimonio lingüístico en todas las geografías para facilitar su plena inclusión y empoderamiento.

Sin embargo, la forma en que se utilizan las categorías étnicas y lingüísticas en el censo y otros datos presenta una limitación clave. La recopilación de datos granulares y desglosados y la investigación dirigida por la comunidad deben capturar la diversidad completa de orígenes.

English

Listen here

The state of Ohio has a long and rich history as a destination for Black migrants, both domestic and foreign-born. Since the Great Migration in the early 20th century, Ohio's urban centers and agricultural heartland have attracted African Americans from Southern states seeking new economic opportunities and social freedoms. Over the decades, the foreign-born Black population from across Africa, as well as the Caribbean, Latin America, and beyond, has steadily risen, creating a diverse tapestry of cultures and experiences.

Ohio is home to an estimated 90,000 foreign-born Black residents, representing about 6% of the Black population in Ohio in 2021. The last decade has seen substantial growth within this demographic, spurring new community formations, cultural influences, and economic impacts. Black immigrants now live and work across Ohio — as nurses in Cleveland hospitals, production workers in Dayton factories, professors at Columbus universities, and entrepreneurs opening restaurants in Cincinnati. They are part of the social fabric that makes Ohio the diverse state that it is. In fact, the State of Ohio is one of the only states in the nation to have a New African Immigrants Commission, which was established by the legislature in 2008.

This report provides a statistical profile of Ohio's foreign-born Black population, based on data from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey. It highlights the contributions, accomplishments, and challenges facing this community. It intends to equip lawmakers, service providers, and immigrant advocates with actionable insights to better understand and support Ohio's growing, vibrant, and multicultural Black immigrant population.

Here are the report's key findings.

Ohio's Black immigrant population has grown in recent years, increasing by over 100% between 2009-2021 to nearly 90,000 residents. Black immigrants now account for 6% of Ohio's total Black population.

Naturalization rates have risen, with over 49,000 Black immigrants currently residing in Ohio as U.S. citizens.

Disability rates have remained steady at 5-6% over the years. In 2021, a little over 4,600 Black immigrants in Ohio were living with disabilities.

Black immigrants in Ohio originate from over 50 countries, especially Somalia, Ethiopia, Ghana, Nigeria, Kenya, and Cameroon from Africa, and Jamaica, Haiti, and Trinidad from the Caribbean. Ohio is also home to the largest population of Black Mauritanians in the United States.

Black immigrants' settlement is concentrated in Columbus, but sizable populations exist across Cincinnati, Cleveland, Dayton, and some smaller towns. Most rural areas show an absence of Black immigrant residents.

Education levels vary greatly, with the largest numbers holding high school diplomas (approximately 29%). A significant number of Black immigrants have bachelor's degrees (approximately 17%), while approximately 9% hold associate's degrees and 8% have master's degrees.

Homeownership is rising steadily, both with and without mortgages. Rental rates remain relatively stable. About 33% of households led by Black immigrants are cost-burdened by rents.

The Black immigrant workforce is diverse across occupations, featuring prominently in healthcare, transportation, education, and services. Remote work is also emerging.

Uninsured rates are disproportionately high for Black immigrants compared to general Ohio averages, indicating gaps in healthcare access.

English dominates linguistically, followed by Somali, Swahili, and French. Other languages like Haitian Creole, Twi, Yoruba, Igbo, and Amharic retain high numbers of speakers, showcasing origins.

Black immigrants are valued contributors to Ohio's social fabric, necessitating comprehensive investments into affordable housing, healthcare access, economic development, education and linguistic heritage preservation across all geographies to facilitate their full inclusion and empowerment.

However, the way ethnic and linguistic categories in Census and other data presents a key limitation. Granular, disaggregated data collection and community-led research must capture the complete diversity of backgrounds.

About

Ohio Immigrant Alliance

Ohio Immigrant Alliance is a group of Ohio immigrants and citizens working together to protect the dignity and rights of all individuals who choose to make Ohio their home–regardless of race, religion, gender expression, age, ability, and citizenship status. We engage in activism and volunteerism that connect communities across the state, expanding our voices and our collective power to hold our leaders accountable. Join us at ohioimmigrantalliance.org.
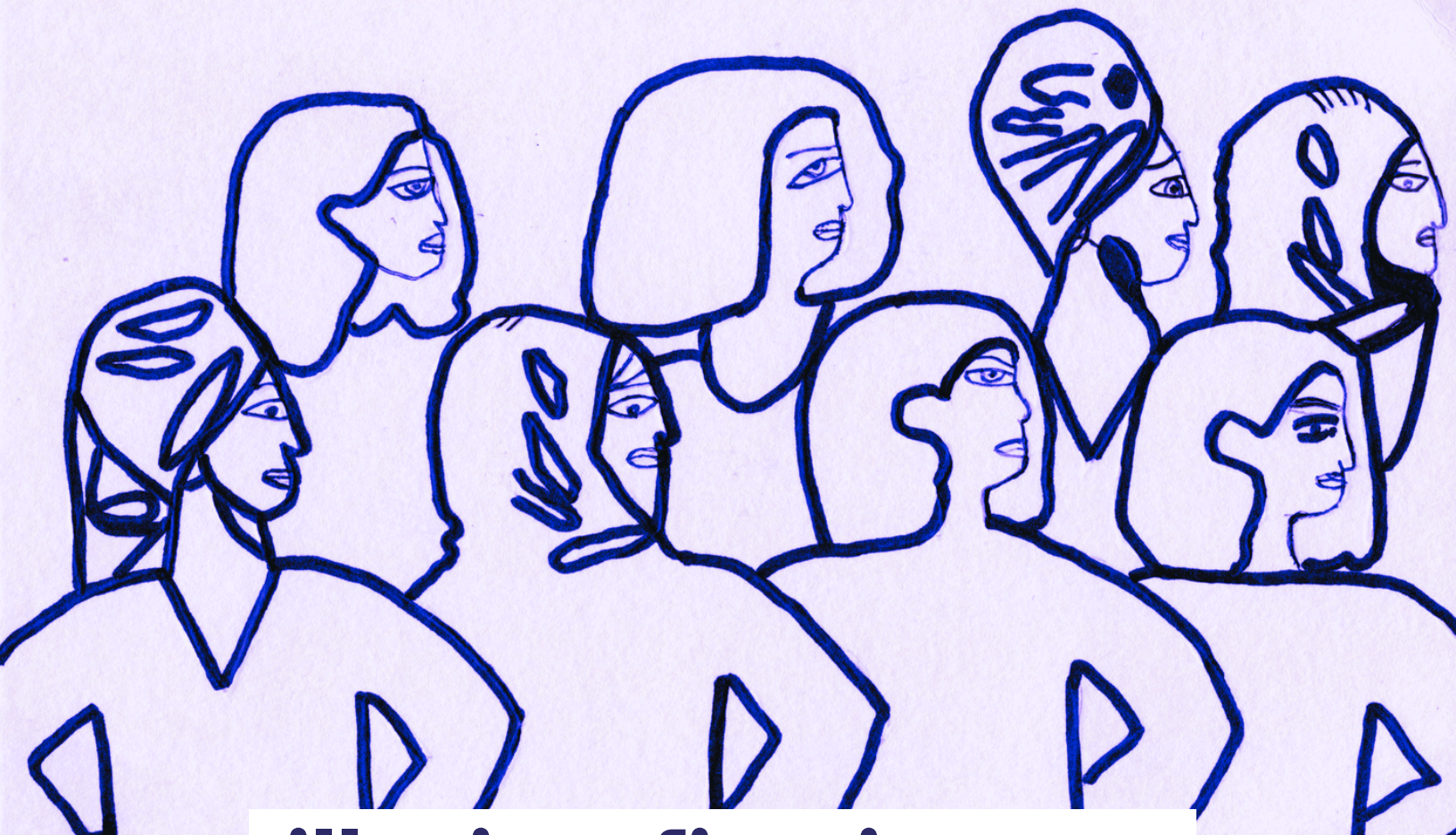
The Author

Diaspora Praxis Research Consultancy, founded and led by Dr. Nana Afua Y. Brantuo, is a distinguished interdisciplinary research consultancy committed to delivering actionable insights and strategic recommendations. Since its establishment in May 2022, Diaspora Praxis has provided comprehensive research, policy analysis, communication, and technical solutions to a diverse range of clients. Specializing in interdisciplinary and mixed methods research and analysis, Dr. Brantuo leverages demographic, socioeconomic, and public sector data to drive evidence-based decision-making processes. Learn more at diasporapraxis.com.

The Artist

Shema Asifiwe is an Ohio high school student whose work has been featured in the "Illustrated Memoirs" series by Maketank, a nonprofit working with students at Aiken HIgh School. His drawing "Friend Code" won the UNHCR Youth with Refugees Art Contest in 2023, and has been printed on t-shirts sold by the clothing brand UNIQLO. Find Asifiwe's illustrated memoir, "Unexpected Change," and more artwork by Ohio immigrant and refugee students at maketankinc.org.

The Translators

Thank you to Demba Ndiath, Mamadou Diaby, Sophia Pierrelus, and Lynn Tramonte for translating segments of this report into French, Fulani, Haitian Creole, and Spanish.

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