A Community that Welcomes, is a Community that Thrives

Letter from the Director

Think of a time when you felt truly welcomed into a new or foreign environment... were you greeted by positivity, did you feel you had opportunities to learn and ultimately a place to contribute your ideas and values?

A welcoming community sees the economic, social and cultural potential in giving the diversity of ideas, skills, creativity and identity a place to grow.

A common characteristic of Denver residents is that we quickly develop deep personal connections to our community. We identify with the neighborhood we grew up in, live in and work in because they contain a bit of our personal history and journey. They reflect back to us our roots, generations old or recently planted. Immigrants are trying to plant the very same roots.

Denver is home to immigrants from six continents; they make up one-sixth of our City population and speak over 140 languages and dialects. They look for welcoming communities at their church or mosque, in their neighborhood, apartment building and workplace.

Immigrants embody the American entrepreneurial spirit, they are risk-takers, they are willing to try whatever it takes to succeed, and they are willing to put in the work to get there.

We are working to support and capitalize upon this energy and spirit to make Denver a better city for all residents.
INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

DENVER: A GLOBAL CITY
Denver Mayor Michael B. Hancock’s vision for Denver includes fostering its identity as a globally competing city with inclusive government institutions and strong non-profit networks for foreign visitors and immigrant & refugee residents. Immigrant integration is an essential piece of Denver’s developmental goals. Integration requires that newcomers are woven into the social, economic, cultural, and political fabric of their new communities.¹ This is a process in which both the immigrant and the receiving community share equal responsibility. Understanding where Denver’s foreign-born residents live, their countries of origin, languages spoken, and other key characteristics are vital to the City’s effort to build a more connected, collaborative and welcoming community.

BUILDING A STRONGER ECONOMY
Foreign-born residents contribute their skills, values, and culture to the community when they are effectively integrated into society. In return, integration requires that the community share its laws, customs, services and opportunities with its foreign born residents. An influx of immigrants into an economy has shown to positively affect the income rates of native-born individuals.² Immigrants are far more likely to start new businesses, despite any language and cultural barriers they may face.³ Denver can benefit tremendously from the hard-working cultures that exist in immigrant populations. Supporting these individuals and families through immigrant integration proves beneficial for the City’s economy.

THE PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT
Understanding our foreign-born residents, the adversities they face, and the opportunities that they create for our city is vital to our overall effort to build a cohesive and more connected community. This report seeks to contribute to our understanding of our immigrant community members and to develop strategies for outreach and building bridges.

DATA SOURCES
The data in this report largely come from The Piton Foundation, the U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey (ACS), Denver Public Schools (DPS) and the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE).

NEIGHBORHOOD ASSETS
For the purposes of this report we have mapped four indicators of neighborhood assets. The first are the immigrants themselves, indicated by the % of foreign born in a given neighborhood and census tract. The remaining three assets are schools, institutions of faith and nonprofits that serve or work directly with immigrant and refugee residents.
DENVER’S NEIGHBORHOODS

There are 75 unique neighborhoods in Denver. Depending on its size, a neighborhood may be divided into more than one “census tract.” A census tract is a small, relatively permanent subdivision of a county used to collect and tabulate U.S. Census data. Tract data is useful in seeing the differences that may exist within a neighborhood. While foreign-born individuals and families live across the city, some neighborhoods (and census tracts) have higher populations.
Foreign-Born Populations in Denver

This report highlights the Denver neighborhoods with the highest populations of foreign-born individuals, highest levels of non-English speakers, and the characteristics of these neighborhoods. The map below shows the density of Denver’s foreign-born populations by census tracts, with the darker shades of pink depicting higher percentages of foreign-born populations.
DENVER’S FOREIGN-BORN POPULATIONS

Immigration in the United States has traditionally been localized to large metropolitan cities like Los Angeles, New York and Miami. But mid-size cities like Denver have emerged in the past two decades as highly desirable cities for both immigrants and refugees. Newcomers choose Denver as their home based on differing circumstances. Denver has been categorized as one of eight “re-emerging gateway cities” by the Brookings Institution. This identifier refers to metro areas that are entry points “absorbing a record number” of immigrants.

Denver’s foreign-born populations arrive from a wide-array of countries. The U.S. Census Bureau estimates there are 97,358 individuals living in Denver who were born outside of the U.S. This is approximately 16% of Denver’s total population (604,356). The largest segment of foreign-born population in Denver (and the United States) arrive from Mexico, yet the chart below shows the great diversity of areas of origins for Denver’s foreign-born population.

For the purposes of this report, foreign-born individuals are divided into two categories: refugees and non-refugee immigrants. The primary distinctions between these groups are the ways individuals arrive in Denver and the State, Federal, and City resources available to them upon arrival.

**Immigrants**

The vast majority of Denver’s foreign-born population are non-refugee immigrants. Non-refugee immigrants are individuals who were not born in the U.S. and come to reside permanently or temporarily and who do not arrive via the refugee process. Immigrants come to Colorado for a variety of reasons including to join family, find economic opportunity, and build careers.

Although they may not have refugee status, many immigrants are similarly escaping difficult situations in their home country. Non-refugee immigrants who are living in the U.S. with legal status are unable to apply for public benefits for the first five years of their residency.
Refugees

A refugee is a person who has left their country of origin and is unable or unwilling to return due to a "well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable to or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country."

Refugee resettlement is a planned process. Individuals apply to be resettled and through cooperation between the United Nations and resettlement countries, enter into a process that can take years, often decades, before resettlement actually takes place. The United States resettles more refugees from around the world than all other countries combined. In 2012, the U.S. resettled just over 58,000 refugees. In 2013, the U.S. resettled 69,730 refugees.

In 2013, 2199 refugees, asylees and secondary migrants were resettled in Colorado. In 2012, 1,797 refugees were resettled in Colorado, the majority of whom were resettled in the Denver-metro area. The United States resettles refugees from different countries each year depending on changes in other countries’ political climates and the Presidential Determination set forth by the White House. The chart to the right shows where refugees in Colorado were resettled from in 2012.

The Colorado State Department’s Colorado Refugee Service Program (CRSP) collaborates with some 130 non-governmental organizations across Colorado to assist with education, legal, citizenship, health, training, employment and financial services for resettled refugees. There are four Voluntary Agencies (refugee resettlement agencies) within Denver, along with countless partners. Upon arrival, resettlement agencies assist with all of the services necessary for get established in a new community including arrival at the airport, housing, home orientation, assistance enrolling children in school, connecting to local services, community orientation, medical screening, ESL classes, employment assistance and ongoing assistance. Refugees then have approximately 8 months of cash assistance and early employment and self-sufficiency is a goal of refugee resettlement.
Foreign-Born Residents by Neighborhood

The Brookings Institute has categorized Denver as one of nine re-emerging gateway cities for immigrants. Alongside Minneapolis-St. Paul, Oakland, Phoenix, Portland, Sacramento, San Jose, Seattle, and Tampa, Denver is absorbing a record number of immigrants each year. The figure below shows the percentage of immigrants in each of Denver’s neighborhoods and census tracts. It is important to note that immigrants live in every neighborhood in Denver.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NEIGHBORHOOD</th>
<th>Largest census tract %</th>
<th>Neighborhood average</th>
<th>NEIGHBORHOOD</th>
<th>Largest census tract %</th>
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<th>NEIGHBORHOOD</th>
<th>Largest census tract %</th>
<th>Neighborhood average</th>
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<td>Globeville</td>
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<td>Ruby Hill</td>
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<td>Skyland</td>
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<td>34%</td>
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<td>Hale</td>
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<td>Sloans Lake</td>
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<td>Barnum West</td>
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<td>21%</td>
<td>Hampden</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>18.25%</td>
<td>South Park Hill</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
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<td>Bear Valley</td>
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<td>27.5%</td>
<td>Hampden South</td>
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<td>Mar Lee</td>
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<td>29%</td>
<td>Villa Park</td>
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<td>25.5%</td>
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<td>College View/South</td>
<td>31%</td>
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<td>Marston</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>8.5%</td>
<td>Virginia Village</td>
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<td>22.5%</td>
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<td>Congress Park</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
<td>Montbello</td>
<td>37%</td>
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<td>North Capitol hill</td>
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<td>7%</td>
<td>Washington Virginia Vale</td>
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<td>Wellshire</td>
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<td>36%</td>
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<td>Northeast Park Hill</td>
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<td>West Colfax</td>
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<td>Westwood</td>
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<td>Regis</td>
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<td>Rosedale</td>
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<td>Windsor</td>
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## Neighborhoods with Highest Concentrations of Foreign Born

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<tr>
<th>NEIGHBORHOOD</th>
<th>Largest census tract %</th>
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<tr>
<td>Kennedy</td>
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<td>Elyria Swansea</td>
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<td>College View/South Platte</td>
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<td>Mar Lee</td>
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<td>Ruby Hill</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Windsor</td>
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<td>22.7%</td>
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The above charts depict the neighborhoods and census tracts with the highest concentration of foreign-born residents. Both provide valuable insight into the concentration of these populations.

For example, one of Washington Virginia Vale’s census tracts consists of 32% foreign-born individuals, yet it’s neighborhood average isn’t even in the top 10 in Denver. This shows that there is a high population of foreign-born residents concentrated in a smaller geographic area within the Washington Virginia Vale neighborhood. This can be useful in determining where to develop and promote immigrant and refugee services and integration strategies.

LANGUAGES SPOKEN IN DENVER

Denver Public Schools has accounted for 145 languages spoken by their students’ families. English and Spanish account for nearly 94% of those languages spoken [English 55% and Spanish 39%]. The remaining 6% is made up of 143 different languages and dialects. This 6% includes top languages: Vietnamese, Arabic and Somali with several hundred families each, as well as languages such as Zuni, Norwegian, Lakota and 31 other languages indicated by only one family each. The maps below reflect the most frequent non-English languages spoken by families in Denver.

Downloadable maps can be found at www.denvergov.org/community_support

Source: Maps produced April 2013, Denver GIS. These maps depict languages spoken at home as indicated by registration forms of Denver Public Schools Families.
Source: Maps produced April 2013, Denver GIS. These maps depict languages spoken at home as indicated by registration forms of Denver Public Schools Families.
ATHMAR PARK NEIGHBORHOOD

SNAPSHOT
Neighborhood population: 8,898 (2010 Census)
Childhood poverty rate: 45.1% (2007-2011 ACS)
Free & reduced lunch rate: 91.7% (2011 DPS)
Avg. median household income: $40,284 (2007-2011 ACS)

Immigrant statistics:
Children born to foreign born moms: 53.8% (CDPHE 2008)
Foreign born: 29% (2006-2010 ACS), 27.3% (2000 Census)

Top non-English languages spoken: Spanish, Vietnamese, Khmer, Chinese/Mandarin, French (DPS)

Top countries of origin (non USA): Mexico, Venezuela, El Salvador, Vietnam, Cambodia, Germany (2011 ACS Census)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SCHOOLS</th>
<th>AGENCIES</th>
<th>PLACES OF WORSHIP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Goldrick Elementary, Math and Science Leadership Academy, Valverde Elementary</td>
<td>Athmar Park Branch Library, Caring Hands Ministries, Colorado Immigrant Right Coalition (CIRC), Denver Coalition for Integration</td>
<td>Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, Denver Buddhist Culture, Inc., Denver Grace Brethren Church, Iglesia Vida Abundante, New Life Fellowship, St Rose of Lima Catholic Parish, Word Song</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
BARNUM NEIGHBORHOOD

SNAPSHOT
Neighborhood population: 6,111 (2010 Census)
Childhood poverty rate: 55.8% (2007-2011 ACS)
Free & reduced lunch rate: 92.2% (2011 DPS)
Median household income: $32,462 (2007-2011 ACS)

Immigrant statistics:
Children born to foreign born moms: 47.6% (CDPHE 2008)
Foreign born: 36% (2006-2010 ACS), ; 30.1% (2000 Census)

Top non-English languages spoken: Spanish, Vietnamese, Akan, Polish, Russian (DPS)

Top countries of origin (non USA): Mexico, Kenya, Vietnam, Thailand (2011 ACS Census)

SCHOOLS
Barnum Elementary School

AGENCIES
Barnum Recreation Center, Mental Health Center of Denver—El Centro de las Familias, Ross-Barnum Branch Library

PLACES OF WORSHIP
Alameda Heights United Methodist Church, Deliverance Tabernacle, Denver Chinese Evangelical Free Church, Mountain View Baptist Church
EAST COLFAX NEIGHBORHOOD

SNAPSHOT
Neighborhood population: 10,191 (2010 Census)
Childhood poverty rate: 50.90% (2007-2011 ACS)
Free & reduced lunch rate: 86.8% (2011 DPS)

Immigrant statistics:
Children born to foreign born moms: 47.8% (CDPHE 2008)
Foreign born: 25% (2006-2010 ACS); 27.5% (2000 Census)

Top non-English languages spoken: Spanish, Burmese, Karen, Nepali, Arabic, Amharic, Somali, Oromo, Tigigna, French, Rundi, Maay, Swahili, Bangli, Twi (DPS)

Top countries of origin (non USA): Mexico, Ethiopia, Kenya, Sudan, Burma, Thailand, China, Korea (2011 ACS Census)

SCHOOLS
Ashley Elementary School

AGENCIES
ESL for Refugee Women, Grace Apartments, Mercy Housing

PLACES OF WORSHIP
Eritrean Orthodox Church, Greater St John Baptist Church, Greater Union Baptist Church, Zion Temple Church
ELYRIA SWANSEA NEIGHBORHOOD

SNAPSHOT
Neighborhood population: 6,401 (2010 Census)
Childhood poverty rate: 49.8% (2007-2011 ACS)
Free & reduced lunch rate: 94.2% (2011 DPS)

Immigrant statistics:
Children born to foreign born moms: 61.4% (CDPHE 2008)
Foreign born: 32% (2006-2010 ACS); 39.3% (2000 Census)

Top non-English languages spoken: Spanish, Arabic, Maay, Japanese, Amharic, Chinese (DPS)

Top countries of origin (non USA): Mexico, Korea, Philippines (2011 ACS Census)

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<tr>
<th>SCHOOLS</th>
<th>AGENCIES</th>
<th>PLACES OF WORSHIP</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Swansea Elementary</td>
<td>Swansea Recreation Center, Valdez- Perry Branch Library</td>
<td>Church of Christ, Iglesia Del Dios Vivo, Pilgrim Church Congregational, Shiloh Temple, Apostolic Pentecostal Church</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
MAR LEE NEIGHBORHOOD

SNAPSHOT
Neighborhood population: 12,452 (2010 Census)
Childhood poverty rate: 29.2% (2007-2011 ACS)
Free & reduced lunch rate: 91.2% (2011 DPS)
Avg. median household income: $40,197 (2007-2011 ACS)

Immigrant statistics:
Children born to foreign born moms: 51.5% (CDPHE 2008)
Foreign born: 29% (2006-2010 ACS); 26.3% (2000 Census)

Top non-English languages spoken: Spanish, Vietnamese, Arabic, Chinese/Mandarin, Somali (DPS)

Top countries of origin (non USA): Mexico, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Colombia, Vietnam, Korea, Laos, Philippines, Thailand (2011 ACS Census)

SCHOOLS
CMS Community School, Denison Montessori, Force Elementary, Johnson Elementary, STRIVE Prep Lake Campus

AGENCIES
Denver Housing Authority, Hadley Branch Library, Head Start Bright Stars, Mountain View Child Care Center, Volunteers of America

PLACES OF WORSHIP
Confluence Ministries, Denver First Wesleyan Church, Fundamental Baptist Church, Mikvah of Denver, Praise Center Church, Pearl at West Side Christian Church
MONTBELLO NEIGHBORHOOD

SNAPSHOT:
Neighborhood population: 30,348 (2010 Census)
Childhood poverty rate: 33.9% (2007-2011 ACS)
Free & reduced lunch rate : 90.63% (2011 DPS)

Immigrant statistics:
Children born to Foreign Born moms: 55.5% (CDPHE 2008)
Foreign Born: 33% (2006-2010 ACS); 23% (2000 Census)

Top non-English languages spoken: Spanish, Vietnamese, French (DPS)

Top countries of origin (non USA): Mexico, Cuba, Honduras, Cambodia, Eritrea, Nigeria, Sudan (2011 ACS Census)

SCHOOLS
Amesse Elementary, Collegiate
DCIA at Ford, Farrell B. Howell K-8
Greenwood K-8, Maxwell Elementary
McGlone Elementary, SOAR Oakland Elementary, St. Andrew Lutheran School

AGENCIES
Denver Human Services: Montbello, Food Bank of the Rockies, Kiddie Cat Daycare, Lowry Family Center, Montbello Branch Library, Montbello Recreation Center

PLACES OF WORSHIP
Immersion Ministries, Life By Design Ministries, Light of Christ Anglican, Love Christian Fellowship, Montbello Catholic Parish of The Ascension, Montbello Cooperative Ministries, Newsong Fellowship, Northeast Church of Christ, Power of His Word, St. Andrew Lutheran Church, True-light Baptist Church, United Church of Montbello, Vietnamese Community Baptist Church
RUBY HILL NEIGHBORHOOD

SNAPSHOT
Neighborhood population: 9,820 (2010 Census)
Childhood poverty rate: 35.4% (2007-2011 ACS)
Free & reduced lunch rate: 91.9% (2011 DPS)
Avg. median household income: $34,971 (2007-2011 ACS)

Immigrants statistics:
Children born to foreign born moms: 54.8% (CDPHE 2008)
Foreign born: 28% (2006-2010 ACS); 27.32% (2000 Census)

Top non-English languages spoken: Spanish, Vietnamese, Somali, Khmer (DPS)

Top countries of origin (non USA): Mexico, Guatemala, Dominican Republic, Eritrea, Vietnam (2011 ACS Census)

SCHOOLS
Goldsman Elementary, Schmitt Elementary

AGENCIES
Athmar Recreation Center, Caring Hands Ministries, Denver Housing Authority

PLACES OF WORSHIP
Denver Family Church, Garden Park Mennonite Brethren, Iglesia I Cristo Church of Christ, Iglesia Vida Abundante, New Life Fellowship, Praise Center Church, Pearl at West Side Christian Church, Victory Baptist Church
WESTWOOD NEIGHBORHOOD
SNAPSHOT
Neighborhood population: 15,486 (2010 Census)
Childhood poverty rate: 46.1% (2007-2011 ACS)
Free & reduced lunch rate: 95.1% (2011 DPS)

Immigrant statistics:
Children born to Foreign Born moms: 57% (CDPHE 2008)
Foreign Born: 47% (2006-2010 ACS); 34.9% (2000 Census)

Top non-English languages spoken: Spanish, Vietnamese, Somali, Arabic, Khmer, Navajo (DPS)

Top countries of origin (non USA): Mexico, Vietnam, Burma, Syria, Nigeria, El Salvador, Guatemala (2011 ACS Census)

SCHOOLS
Castro Elementary, Kepner Middle School, Knapp Elementary, Munroe Elementary

AGENCIES
Catholic Charities Kentucky Head Start, Denver Indian Family Resource Center, Southwest Improvement Council, Westwood Branch Library

PLACES OF WORSHIP
Alameda Heights United Methodist Church, Calvary Indian Church, Cornerstone Baptist, Church of Greater Denver, Denver Grace Brethren Church, Eternal Life Temple, GraceLife Church, Lily of the Valley Church, Redeemer Lutheran Church, Setfree Church, St. Anthony of Padua, Victory Out Reach
GLOSSARY

Census-tract
A small, relatively permanent subdivision of a county used to collect and tabulate U.S. Census data. Depending on its size, a neighborhood can be composed of several census tracts. A Census Tract generally contains between 1,500 and 8,000 people with an optimal size of 4,000 people, and is designed to be relatively homogeneous with respect to population characteristics, economic status, and living conditions.20

Child poverty rate
Number of children less than 18 years of age living in related families with total cash incomes below federal poverty levels for same size families as a percent of all children less than 18 living in related families.21

Immigrant
An individual who was not born in the U.S. but came to the U.S. to reside permanently or temporarily. Immigrants migrate to the U.S. for a variety of reasons including, but not limited to, join family, find economic opportunity, jobs, or to escape difficult situations in their native country.

Immigrant Integration
A dynamic, two-way process in which newcomers and members of the receiving community work together to integrate new members and ensure their equal treatment in society.22

Foreign Born
Individuals born outside of the U.S. This includes both immigrants and refugees.

Free & reduced lunch
Number of students grades K-12 receiving free school lunches as a percent of total student enrollment grades K-12. Note that because some kindergartners receive free lunches but are not included in the enrollment data for grades K-12, the percent of students receiving free school lunch can exceed 100% in some neighborhoods. To qualify for the federal Free School Lunch Program, family income must not exceed 130% of federal poverty guidelines.23

Native
Born in a place or country indicated.

Naturalization
The process by which U.S. citizenship is granted to a foreign citizen or national after he or she fulfills the requirements established by Congress in the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA).24

Refugee
A person who "owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable to or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country." This definition comes from the Refugee Act of 1980 which takes its definition of refugee from the 1951 United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 protocol.25

Secondary Migrant
A refugee who moves/relocates from the state or country of first or primary residence to another state
ENDNOTES


3 Ibid.


6 Ibid.


8 Ibid.

9 Ibid.


14 Ibid.


16 Ibid.

17 Ibid.

18 Ibid.

19 Denver Public Schools

20 Ibid.


23 Ibid.


25 Ibid.
Foreign-Born Population Percentage by Neighborhood

Denver Office of Community Support

City and County of Denver

City-wide Assets by Neighborhood with Foreign-Born Population
The Denver Office of Community Support (DOCS) is an office of The Agency for Human Rights & Community Partnerships (HRCP)

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