

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

## **The Moroccan Diaspora in the United States**

June 2015 Revised

### **Summary**

Approximately 84,000 Moroccan immigrants and their children (the first and second generations) live in the United States. Morocco is not a significant source of migration to the United States, with Moroccan-born individuals accounting for about 0.2 percent of the total U.S. foreign-born population. Moroccans represent the smallest diaspora in the 15-group Rockefeller Foundation-Aspen Institute Diaspora Program (RAD) analysis.<sup>1</sup>

About half of Moroccan immigrants arrived to the United States during or after 2000—a higher proportion than is found among U.S. immigrants overall—and the majority are U.S. citizens. The Moroccan immigrant population's relatively high naturalization rate suggests that many in this population applied for U.S. citizenship shortly after they became eligible. Most Moroccan immigrants are working age, and few among them are minors or senior citizens. The majority of the children of Moroccan immigrants (the second generation) are below age 18. Only 37 percent of those in the Moroccan second generation have a mother and father who were born in Morocco—the lowest proportion with both parents born in the country of origin among the 15 population groups studied in the RAD analysis.

Moroccan diaspora members who are in the labor force are about as likely as the general U.S. population overall to be employed, and their educational attainment is similar. However, the median annual income for Moroccan diaspora households is \$45,000, about \$5,000 below the median for all U.S. households, and only 18 percent of Moroccan diaspora households have annual incomes above \$90,000, the threshold for the top 25 percent of U.S. households. The income disparity between the Moroccan diaspora and the U.S. population may be related to the Moroccan diaspora's low labor force participation level (particularly among women), and the lower rate at which Moroccan diaspora members work in managerial or professional occupations.

The Moroccan immigrant population is widely scattered across the United States, with the highest numbers in the states of New York, Florida, Massachusetts, California, and Virginia. The Moroccan immigrant population is more highly concentrated in New York City and its surrounding communities than anywhere else in the country, although the metropolitan areas of Boston and Washington, DC also serve as significant Moroccan immigrant popula-

<sup>1</sup> All Rights Reserved. © 2015 Migration Policy Institute. Information for reproducing excerpts from this report can be found at [www.migrationpolicy.org/about/copyright-policy](http://www.migrationpolicy.org/about/copyright-policy). The RAD Diaspora Profile series covers U.S.-based Bangladeshi, Colombian, Egyptian, Ethiopian, Filipino, Ghanaian, Haitian, Indian, Kenyan, Mexican, Moroccan, Nigerian, Pakistani, Salvadoran, and Vietnamese diaspora populations. This updates the initial July 2014 diaspora profile to correct an error.

tion centers. In no major metropolitan area does the Moroccan immigrant population make up more than 0.1 percent of the population.

The Moroccan diaspora in the United States has begun to establish a network of organizations. Among the 38 U.S.-based Moroccan diaspora organizations identified for the RAD analysis, three groups reported having annual revenues over \$1 million in their most recent fiscal year and one other organization had revenue exceeding \$200,000. In the past, the Moroccan government closely monitored the activities of its overseas citizens and discouraged them from establishing or building diaspora groups, fearing that the emigrant population would challenge the government's authority. Over the past two decades, however, the Moroccan government has shifted its diaspora engagement strategy, embracing the potential of diaspora members to promote economic and human development in Morocco, and creating Moroccan institutions in the diaspora.<sup>2</sup> At least five of the Moroccan diaspora organizations identified for this study were established by the government of Morocco and continue to receive its formal support; some of these groups are among the most prominent and best-resourced groups serving the Moroccan diaspora in the United States, including the Moroccan-American Cultural Center, the Moroccan American Center for Policy, and the Moroccan American Trade and Investment Center. Notable diaspora organizations in the United States that do not appear to operate under the auspices of the Moroccan government include the Association of Moroccan Professionals in America, the High Atlas Foundation, and the Moroccan American Association of California.

The United States is the eighth most common destination country for Morocco-born international migrants and the eighth-largest source of Morocco's remittance inflows. The diaspora in the United States transferred approximately \$214 million in remittances to Morocco during 2012. France, Spain, and Italy are home to the highest numbers of Moroccan international migrants, and Morocco's remittance inflows principally originate in those three countries. Morocco's total remittance receipts during 2012 were valued at \$6.5 billion, representing 6.8 percent of the country's \$96 billion gross domestic product (GDP).

### Detailed Demographic and Socioeconomic Characteristics<sup>3</sup>

Analysis of data from 2009-13 reveals a Moroccan diaspora in the United States of approximately 84,000 individuals, counting immigrants born in Morocco and U.S.-born individuals with at least one parent who was born in Morocco.

#### First Generation (Moroccan immigrants in the United States)

- Approximately 51,000 immigrants from Morocco resided in the United States.
- Moroccans accounted for a small fraction of all immigrants in the United States—0.2

2 Maria Vincenza Desiderio and Agnieszka Weinar, *The Governance of Immigrant Integration as a Multi-Stakeholder and Multi-Level Process: Institutional Actors in Destination and Origin Countries* (Brussels: Migration Policy Institute Europe and European Union Institute, forthcoming 2014).

3 Unless otherwise noted, estimates for the diaspora population and its characteristics are based on Migration Policy Institute (MPI) analysis of the U.S. Census Bureau's Current Population Surveys (CPS), using five years of pooled data (2009 through 2013) collected in March of each year. All Census Bureau data were accessed from Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMS), Steven Ruggles, J. Trent Alexander, Katie Genadek, Ronald Goeken, Matthew B. Schroeder, and Matthew Sobek, *Integrated Public Use Microdata Series: Version 5.0 [Machine-readable database]*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 2010), <http://usa.ipums.org/usa/>.

percent in 2012. The size of the Morocco-born population in the United States has grown from an even smaller base; in 1980 fewer than 10,000 Moroccan immigrants resided in the United States.<sup>4</sup>

- The majority of Moroccan migrants to the United States arrived during or after 2000 (55 percent). By comparison, 36 percent of the overall U.S. foreign-born population arrived during this period.
- Moroccan immigrants were more likely to be U.S. citizens than the U.S. immigrant population overall: 52 percent versus 44 percent. Considering that the majority of Moroccan immigrants arrived in the United States during or after 2000, their relatively high naturalization rate suggests that many Moroccan immigrants applied for U.S. citizenship shortly after they became eligible.
- Ninety-one percent of first-generation Moroccan immigrants were working age (18 to 64), and a small share was 65 and older (6 percent). The median age of first-generation Moroccan immigrants in the United States was 38.

## Second Generation (U.S.-born with at least one Morocco-born parent)<sup>5</sup>

- The second-generation Moroccan population in the United States includes approximately 37,000 U.S.-born individuals who have at least one Morocco-born parent.
- Thirty-seven percent of second-generation individuals reported that both of their parents were born in Morocco, the lowest proportion with both parents born in the country of origin among the 15 groups in the RAD analysis. Thirty-two percent of the second generation said that one of their parents was U.S.-born.
- The Moroccan second generation population in the United States was young, with a median age of 8. Sixty-nine percent of the second generation was below age 18, and 31 percent was of working age (18 to 64).

## Educational Attainment

- The Moroccan diaspora in the United States had educational attainment similar to the general U.S. population.
- Twenty-three percent of Moroccan diaspora members age 25 and older held a bachelor's degree as their highest educational credential, compared to 20 percent of the U.S. population overall.
- Eleven percent of the Moroccan population 25 and older held a master's degree, PhD, or an advanced professional degree, a rate equal to the U.S. average.

## Household Income

- Households headed by a member of the Moroccan diaspora had a lower median annual income than U.S. households overall: \$45,000 versus \$50,000.
- Eighteen percent of Moroccan diaspora households reported annual incomes above

<sup>4</sup> These estimates are based on MPI analysis of the U.S. Census Bureau's 2012 American Community Survey (ACS) and the 1980 Census.

<sup>5</sup> U.S. born is defined as born in the United States or born abroad to a U.S.-citizen parent.

\$90,000, the threshold for the top 25 percent of U.S. households.

- Eight percent of Moroccan diaspora households had annual incomes exceeding \$140,000, the threshold for the top 10 percent of U.S. households.

### Employment

- Moroccan diaspora members age 16 and older were more likely than the general U.S. population to be in the labor force: 67 percent versus 64 percent. Moroccan diaspora women had lower labor force participation compared to U.S. women overall: 44 percent versus 58 percent.
- The employment rate among those in the labor force was the same for the Moroccan diaspora as the general U.S. population: 91 percent.
- Members of the Moroccan diaspora were in professional or managerial occupations at a lower rate than the general U.S. population: 20 percent versus 31 percent.<sup>6</sup> These occupations include specialized fields (e.g. engineering, science, law, or education) as well as administrative and managerial jobs (e.g. finance or human resources).

### Geographic Distribution<sup>7</sup>

- The New York City metropolitan area had a population of approximately 10,000 Moroccan immigrants, making it the largest population center for Morocco-born people in the United States. The metropolitan areas of Boston and Washington, DC each had about 5,000 Morocco-born residents.
- By state, the largest numbers of Moroccan immigrants resided in New York, Florida, and Massachusetts. Each of these states had between 5,000 and 10,000 Moroccan-immigrant residents.

### Remittance Volume<sup>8</sup>

- In 2012 remittances to Morocco totaled \$6.5 billion and represented 6.8 percent of the country's \$96 billion GDP.
- The Moroccan diaspora in the United States transferred \$214 million in remittances to Morocco in 2012, making this U.S.-based population the eighth-largest source of Morocco's remittances. Moroccan migrants in France were Morocco's principle source of remittances, and France was also home to the largest Morocco-born population, followed by Spain and Italy.

<sup>6</sup> 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.

<sup>7</sup> 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 Moroccan diaspora members are not included in this section.

<sup>8</sup> 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 Moroccan Diaspora in the United States, 2009-13

	Moroccan Diaspora in the United States*	Total U.S. Population
<b>Household Income</b>		
Median household income	\$45,000	\$50,000
Average household size	3.1	2.5
Share of households with high incomes (\$90,000+)	18%	25%
Share of households with very high incomes (\$140,000+)	8%	10%
<b>Employment</b>		
Total population age 16 and older	59,000	239,386,000
Share in the labor force	67%	64%
... that was employed	91%	91%
... that was in a professional occupation <sup>+</sup>	20%	31%
<b>Educational Attainment **</b>		
Total population age 25 and older	51,000	201,925,000
... with less than high school education	8%	13%
... with high school or some college education	59%	57%
... with a bachelor's degree	23%	20%
... with an advanced degree	11%	11%
<b>Population Characteristics by Generation</b>		
First- and Second-Generation Immigrant Population	84,000	73,140,000
First-generation immigrant population***	47,000	38,468,000
... that was working age (18-64)	91%	81%
... that entered the United States before 2000	45%	64%
... naturalized as U.S. citizens	52%	44%
Second-generation population****	37,000	34,672,000
... that was under age 18	69%	46%
... that was working age (18-64)	31%	43%
... with only one parent from Morocco	63%	

\* defined as all first and second generation

\*\* highest level reported

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

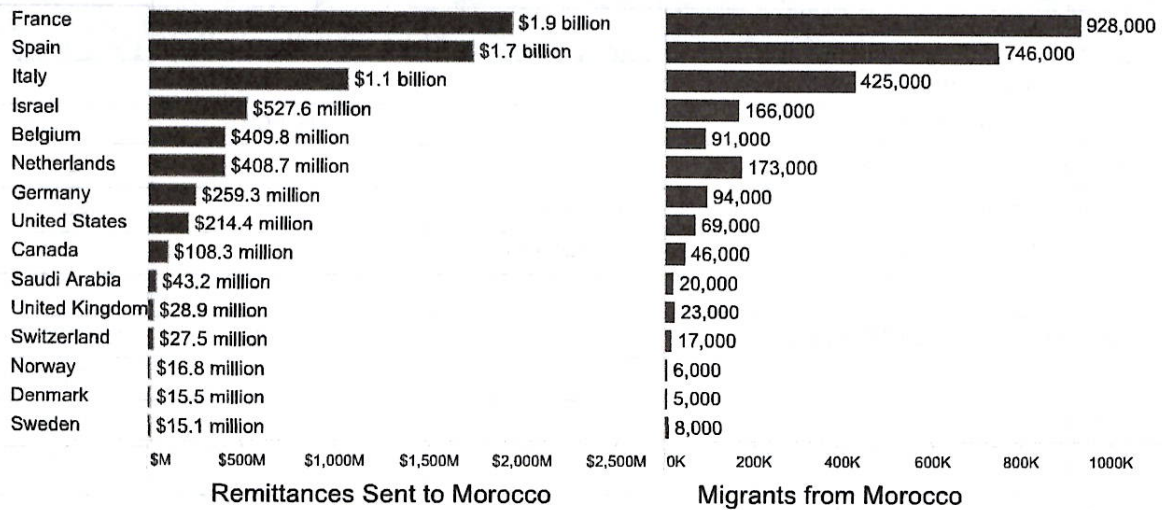
\*\*\*\* all individuals who report having at least one parent born in Morocco

<sup>+</sup>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.

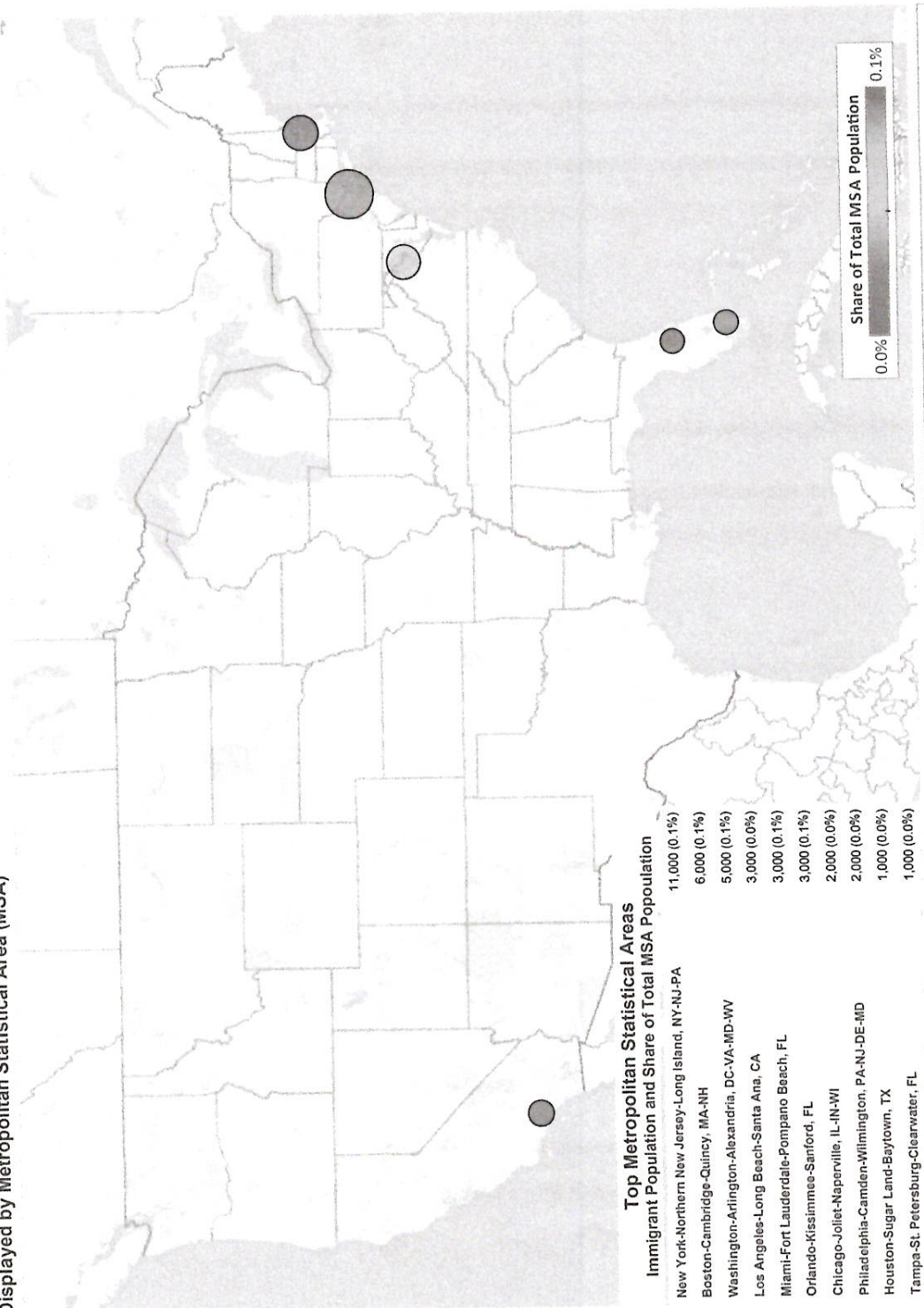
Source: All Census Bureau data were accessed from Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMS), Steven Ruggles, J. Trent Alexander, Katie Genadek, Ronald Goeken, Matthew B. Schroeder, and Matthew Sobek, Integrated Public Use Microdata Series: Version 5.0 [Machine-readable database], Minneapolis: University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

### Remittance Inflows to Morocco by Sending Country and the Moroccan 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 Morocco**  
 Displayed by Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA)



**Top Metropolitan Statistical Areas**  
 Immigrant Population and Share of Total MSA Population

New York-Northern New Jersey-Long Island, NY-NJ-PA	11,000 (0.1%)
Boston-Cambridge-Quincy, MA-NH	6,000 (0.1%)
Washington-Arlington-Alexandria, DC-VA-MD-WV	5,000 (0.1%)
Los Angeles-Long Beach-Santa Ana, CA	3,000 (0.0%)
Miami-Fort Lauderdale-Pompano Beach, FL	3,000 (0.1%)
Orlando-Kissimmee-Sanford, FL	3,000 (0.1%)
Chicago-Joliet-Naperville, IL-IN-WI	2,000 (0.0%)
Philadelphia-Camden-Wilmington, PA-NJ-DE-MD	2,000 (0.0%)
Houston-Sugar Land-Baytown, TX	1,000 (0.0%)
Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater, FL	1,000 (0.0%)

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.

