



# Who Are the Skilled Immigrants in Your Community?

## Gathering the Data

**Note:** This overview captures select elements of a 60-minute webinar. To see the full slide presentation, including step-by-step diagrams of data queries, visit [www.imprintproject.org](http://www.imprintproject.org)

### Options for Finding Data

There are three main ways to obtain data on the demographics and economic status of skilled immigrants:

1. Existing raw datasets such as the US Census
2. Existing studies and analyses of skilled immigrant data
3. Original data collection by your organization

Each of these options is explored in more detail below.

### Existing Datasets

The most comprehensive datasets are produced by the US Census Bureau. They include both Census data itself (released every 10 years) and American Community Survey data (released every year).

Both can be accessed using the Census Bureau's **American FactFinder** tool:

<http://factfinder2.census.gov>

*Step-by-step search instructions are available on the Census website or in the slides on IMPRINT's website mentioned above.*

Using American FactFinder, choose the geographic area you are interested in and then select from pre-existing tables to answer questions such as:

- What percentage of the immigrants in my [city/county] have a college education?  
**See:** *Place of Birth by Educational Attainment*
- What region of the world do college-educated immigrants come from?  
**See:** *Selected Characteristics of the Foreign Born by Region of Birth*
- What percentage of college-educated immigrants speak only English?  
**See:** *Educational Attainment and Employment Status by Language Spoken at Home*



## For More Advanced Users

To conduct more sophisticated analyses of Census data, use the **Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMS)**: <http://usa.ipums.org/usa>.

IPUMS is a *microdata* set of anonymized data that allows flexible queries to create your own tables. Combine microdata variables such as education, citizenship, gender, and age to determine information such as the number of college-educated immigrant men age 25 and older.

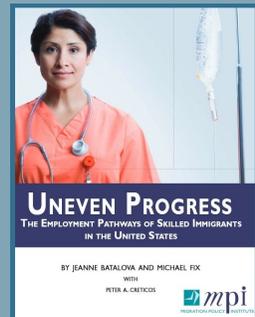
Other sources containing information on immigrants include:

- US Department of Homeland Security's *Yearbook of Immigration Statistics*  
<https://www.dhs.gov/yearbook-immigration-statistics>
- Population Reference Bureau, STEM worker data sources:  
[www.prb.org/Reports/2010/stemworkers.aspx](http://www.prb.org/Reports/2010/stemworkers.aspx)
- NSF, National Survey of College Graduates:  
[www.nsf.gov/statistics/srvygrads/](http://www.nsf.gov/statistics/srvygrads/)
- Finally, MPI's Data Guide contains links to still more datasets:  
[www.migrationpolicy.org/pubs/2008DataGuide.pdf](http://www.migrationpolicy.org/pubs/2008DataGuide.pdf)

## Existing Studies on Skilled Immigrants

**Organizations such as the Migration Policy Institute (MPI)** draw on the Census data and other sources to produce independent analyses and reports. Below we highlight select examples.

- MPI's American Community Survey-based profiles of immigrants nationwide and by state:  
[www.migrationinformation.org/datahub/acscensus.cfm](http://www.migrationinformation.org/datahub/acscensus.cfm)
- MPI's *Uneven Progress* report on skilled immigrants (see sidebar):  
[www.migrationpolicy.org/pubs/brainwasteoct08.pdf](http://www.migrationpolicy.org/pubs/brainwasteoct08.pdf)
- Paul Harrington & Neeta Fogg's (Center for Labor Markets & Policy at Drexel University) series on college-educated immigrants:  
[www.imprintproject.org/resources/additional-research](http://www.imprintproject.org/resources/additional-research)



**Uneven Progress:**  
*The Employment Pathways of Skilled Immigrants*  
documents skilled immigrant issues at the national level.

## Gathering Original Data

You may find that existing datasets and analyses are insufficient to answer the questions you have. In those instances you may choose to collect original data.

### Questions to Answer:

- What data do you truly need to know?
- Is it best to gather it via a one-time event or as part of ongoing client intake?
- What medium is likely to garner the most useful results (paper form, online survey, oral interview)?

### Tips for Gathering Data You Can Use

- Use precise phrasing ("In what country did you earn your degree?" rather than "Where did you get your degree?")
- Be succinct ("Do you have a job now?")
- Don't make assumptions ("Do you want to work in the field of your degree?")
- Make sure answers can be aggregated (e.g. ask for year of graduation rather than "How long ago did you get your degree?")
- Before you start to gather data, have your plan and tools reviewed by an outside eye, preferably an evaluator
- Do a test run of your data collection with a sample of the target population and your staff