Since the 1970s there has been a revival of immigration to levels last seen in the early 1920s. In the past thirty years the U.S. has seen an increase in the number of people born overseas but now living in the States. Just over 1 out of every 10 people in the US was born in another country. Megalopolis is one of the major destination points for the foreign born, along with California, the Southwest, and Florida.

High levels of foreign-born population are often found in the dynamic urban economies. The three primary areas of foreign-born population are the New York metro area, the suburbs of the Washington DC and Boston. New York in particular continues to act as a magnet for the foreign. In Queens with a rate of almost 46.1% (315% above the national mean [NM]), almost 1 out of every 2 people are foreign born. Compare that with the state of Kentucky where only 1 out of every 50 was born overseas. Other New York areas counties such as Bronx and Kings have rates of 29% (161.3 above NM) and 37.8% (240.5% above the NM) respectively. The suburban counties surrounding the nation’s capital are also major sites of immigration from overseas. Montgomery MD has 26.7% (140.5% above the NM) foreign born while Fairfax VA has 24.5% (120.7% above NM).

In contrast the more rural, less economically dynamic counties have low levels; such as Franklin MA with only 3.6% (67.6% below NM), York ME 2.8% (74.8% below NM) and the lowest rate of 0.9% (91.9% below NM) in Perry PA. Also somewhat surprising, the growth counties in northern Virginia such as Stafford and King George have only 4% (64% below NM) and 1.3% (88.3% below NM). Growth in the suburbs of northern Virginia is fuelled by the immigration of the native born rather than the foreign-born.