A REPORT OF
THE NEW AFRICAN IMMIGRANTS COMMISSION OF OHIO
PRESENTED TO
OHIO GOVERNOR MIKE DEWINE
AND THE OHIO STATE LEGISLATURE
Presented June 2020
Adopted Officially at a Special Commission Meeting on Saturday, June 27, 2020
Contents

A. MISSION ................................................................................................................................................. 4

B. STATUTORY AUTHORITY OF THE COMMISSION .................................................................................. 4

  ORC 4112.31: Duties of New African Immigrants Commission ................................................................. 4

  ORC 4112.32: [Creation of the] New African Immigrants Commission ....................................................... 5

  Proposed Legislation HB 624: NAIC Grant and Gift Fund ..................................................................... 6

C. LETTER FROM THE CHAIR .................................................................................................................. 7

D. INTRODUCTION, HISTORY, AND OVERVIEW OF NAIC ..................................................................... 8

E. 2018-2019 BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS AND OFFICER ROLES ....................................................... 9

F. STANDING COMMITTEES ....................................................................................................................... 14

  (a) Education and Cultural Affairs Committee .......................................................................................... 14

  (b) Social Services and Outreach Committee ......................................................................................... 15

  (c) Health and Wellness Committee ........................................................................................................ 15

  (d) Workforce and Business Development Committee .......................................................................... 15

  (e) Legal Services Committee ................................................................................................................. 16

G. A PLANNED APPROACH TO SUCCESS: OUR GOAL FRAMEWORK .................................................. 16

H. OUR SERVICE MATRIX ......................................................................................................................... 17

I. PORTRAIT OF AFRICAN IMMIGRANTS IN OHIO .................................................................................... 18

  (a) Where Do African Immigrants in Ohio Come From? ......................................................................... 19

  (b) Where Do African Immigrants Live in Ohio? ..................................................................................... 20

  (c) Social Characteristics .......................................................................................................................... 28

  (d) Educational Characteristics ............................................................................................................... 29

  (e) Economic Characteristics ................................................................................................................... 29

  (f) Housing ............................................................................................................................................... 30

J. THE DEVELOPMENT SERVICE AGENCY OF OHIO - PORTRAIT OF AFRICAN AMERICANS IN OHIO ....... 34

K. AFRICAN IMMIGRANT BUSINESSES IN OHIO .................................................................................... 35

L. MAJOR ISSUES IDENTIFIED AND DISCUSSED AT NAIC LISTENING TOURS IN 2018 (GROUPED TO COMMITTEES) ...................................................................................................................... 41

  (a) Education and Cultural Affairs Committee ......................................................................................... 41

  (b) Workforce and Business Development Committee .......................................................................... 41

  (c) Health and Wellness Committee ...................................................................................................... 41

  (d) Social Services and Outreach Committee ......................................................................................... 41

  (e) Legal Services Committee ................................................................................................................. 42

  Commission as a Whole ........................................................................................................................... 42

M. BEYOND 2019 NAIC GOALS ................................................................................................................. 42

N. TRANSITIONING INTO 2020 ................................................................................................................ 43
O. NAIC IN THE MEDIA

P. NAIC 2019 SNAPSHOTS OF ACHIEVEMENTS AND MILESTONES

Q. NAIC BY THE NUMBERS - 2019

R. 2019 NAIC COMMITTEE REPORTS

(a) Education Committee

(b) Health and Wellness Committee

(c) Social Services and Outreach Committee

(d) Workforce Development and Business Committee

(e) Legal Services Committee

S. NAIC COLLABORATIONS AND CONNECTIONS

T. PICTORIAL OVERVIEW OF NAIC’S WORK IN 2019

U. REFERENCES

List of Tables
Table 1: Ohio’s African Foreign Born Population, 2016 – 2018
Table 2: Distribution of Ohio’s African Immigrants by County
Table 3: National Origin of the Largest African Immigrant Groups in Ohio & their Main Counties of Residence
Table 4: Selected Characteristics of the U.S. Native, Total Foreign-Born, African Foreign-Born Populations

List of Figures
Figure 1: Regional Origin of African Immigrants in Ohio, 2016 and 2018
Figure 2: Absolute Change in Regional Origin of African Immigrants in Ohio, 2016 and 2018
Figure 3: Percent Change in Regional Origin of African Immigrants in Ohio, 2016 and 2018
Figure 4: Major Countries of Origin for African Immigrants in Ohio
Figure 5: Distribution of African Immigrants in Ohio by Top County
Figure 6: African Immigrants in Ohio by County and Census Tract
Figure 7a: African Immigrants in Columbus by Census Tract
Figure 7b: The Distribution of African Immigrants in Columbus is Coterminous with that of the City’s Black Population
Figure 8: African Immigrants in Cleveland by Census Tract
Figure 9: African Immigrants in Cincinnati and Dayton by Census Tract
Figure 10: African Immigrants in Toledo by Census Tract
Figure 11: East and West African Immigrant Community Shops in Forrest Park East, Columbus, OH
Figure 12: This Strip Mall on the Eastern Edge of Forest Park (Columbus) has Several Ghanaian Businesses
Figure 13a: African Immigrant Restaurants North Linden and Forest Park Neighborhoods, Columbus
Figure 13b: African Immigrant Food Markets in Forest Park and Southeast Columbus
Figure 14: African Immigrant Businesses mostly locate in Black Neighborhoods

Boxes
Box 1: African Restaurants in Columbus

Acknowledgements
Many thanks to Commissioners Dr Kefa M Otiso and Dr Rosaire Ifedi for compiling this report.
A. MISSION

The mission of the New African Immigrants Commission is to advocate for the self-sufficiency of sub-Saharan African people in Ohio.

B. STATUTORY AUTHORITY OF THE COMMISSION

The Ohio New African Immigrants Commission is hereby created by the Ohio General Assembly and exercises powers and responsibilities in accordance with the provisions of the Ohio Revised Code 4112.31 & 4112.32.

ORC 4112.31: Duties of New African Immigrants Commission

The New African Immigrants Commission shall do all of the following:

(A) Gather and disseminate information and conduct hearings, conferences, investigations, and special studies on problems and programs concerning sub-Saharan African people;

(B) Secure appropriate recognition of the accomplishments and contributions of sub-Saharan African people to this state;

(C) Stimulate public awareness of the problems of sub-Saharan African people by conducting a program of public education;

(D) Develop, coordinate, and assist other public and private organizations that serve sub-Saharan African people, including the conducting of training programs for community leadership and service project staff;

(E) Advise the governor, general assembly, and state departments and agencies of the nature, magnitude, and priorities of the problems of sub-Saharan African people;

(F) Advise the governor, general assembly, and state departments and agencies on, and assist in the development and implementation of, comprehensive and coordinated policies, programs, and procedures focusing on the special problems and needs of sub-Saharan African people, especially in the fields of education, employment, energy, health, housing, welfare, and recreation;

(G) Propose new programs concerning sub-Saharan African people to public and private agencies and evaluate for such agencies existing programs or prospective legislation concerning sub-Saharan African people;

(H) Review and approve grants to be made from federal, state, or private funds that are administered or subcontracted by the commission;

(I) Prepare, review, and approve an annual report;

(J) Serve as a clearinghouse to review and comment on all proposals to meet the needs of sub-Saharan African people that are submitted to it by public and private agencies;
(K) Apply for and accept grants and gifts from governmental and private sources to be administered by the commission or subcontracted to local agencies;

(L) Monitor and evaluate all programs subcontracted to local agencies by the commission;

(M) Endeavour to assure that sub-Saharan African people have access to decision-making bodies in all state and local governmental departments and agencies;

(N) Establish advisory committees on special subjects as needed to facilitate and maximize community participation in the operation of the commission;

(O) Establish with state and local governments and private business and industry relationships that promote and assure equal opportunity for sub-Saharan African people in government, education, and employment.

(P) Create an interagency council consisting of the following persons or their authorized representatives: one member of the senate appointed by the president of the senate; one member of the house of representatives appointed by the speaker of the house of representatives; the directors of administrative services, agriculture, education, development services, health, highway safety, job and family services, liquor control, mental health and addiction services, and developmental disabilities, natural resources, rehabilitation and correction, youth services, transportation, environmental protection, and budget and management; the chairperson of the Ohio civil rights commission, the administrator of the bureau of workers’ compensation, the executive director of the opportunities for Ohioans with disabilities agency, and an additional member of the governor’s cabinet appointed by the governor. The new African immigrants commission, by rule, may designate other state officers or their representatives to be members of the council. The director of the commission shall be the chairperson of the council.

The interagency council shall provide and coordinate the exchange of information relative to the needs of sub-Saharan African people and promote the delivery of state services to such people. The council shall meet at the call of the chairperson.

Advisory committees shall be composed of persons representing community organizations and charitable institutions, public officials, and such other persons as the commission determines.

Amended by 130th General Assembly File No. 25, HB 59, §101.01, eff. 9/29/2013.

Effective Date: 2008 HB500 04-07-2009


ORC 4112.32: [Creation of the] New African Immigrants Commission
There is hereby created the new African immigrants commission consisting of eleven members appointed by the governor with the advice and consent of the senate. The speaker of the house of representatives shall recommend to the governor two persons for appointment to the commission, the president of the senate shall recommend to the governor two such persons, and the minority leaders of the house and senate shall each recommend to the governor one such person. The governor shall make initial appointments to the commission. Of the initial appointments made to
the commission, three shall be for a term ending October 7, 2009, four shall be for a term ending October 7, 2010, and four shall be for a term ending October 7, 2011. Thereafter, terms of office shall be for three years, each term ending on the same day of the same month of the year as did the term which it succeeds. Each member shall hold office from the date of appointment until the end of the term for which the member was appointed. Vacancies shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointment. Any member appointed to fill a vacancy occurring prior to the expiration of the term for which the member’s predecessor was appointed shall hold office for the remainder of such term. Any member shall continue in office subsequent to the expiration date of the member’s term until the member’s successor takes office, or until a period of sixty days has elapsed, whichever occurs first. At the first organizational meeting of the commission, the original eleven members shall draw lots to determine the length of the term each member shall serve.

All members of the commission shall be of sub-Saharan African origin, and shall be American citizens or lawful, permanent, resident aliens. Members shall be from urban, suburban, and rural geographical areas representative of sub-Saharan African people with a numerical and geographical balance of the sub-Saharan African population throughout the state.

The commission shall elect a chairperson, vice-chairperson, and other officers from among its members as it considers advisable. Six members constitute a quorum. The commission shall adopt rules governing its procedures. No action of the commission is valid without the concurrence of six members.

Members shall not be compensated for work as members of the commission.

Effective Date: 2008 HB500 04-07-2009.


Proposed Legislation HB 624: NAIC Grant and Gift Fund

HB 624 [NAIC Funding was introduced by Rep. Bernadine Kent in early spring 2018. It was heard and subsequently passed out of State and Local Government Committee (Chairwoman Marlene Anielski). NAIC Chairwoman Rosaire Ifedi and Commissioner Ibrahima Sow offered testimonies on June 13, 2018 in support of the bill which is to create an account with the State Treasurer’s Office, to make functional parts of ORC 4112.31.]
C. LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

The Ohio New African Immigrants Commission (NAIC) hereby presents its second report per ORC 4112.32. We acknowledge Governor Mike DeWine for supporting NAIC by reappointing three seating commissioners and for appointing a replacement commissioner. Not only that, when approached by NAIC to support CRIS in refugee settlement issues, Gov. DeWine signed on and ultimately declared Ohio a welcoming state for refugees. Equally, the NAIC thanks Ohio Senate and House leaders for supporting the reappointment and appointment of NAIC commissioners in 2019: Senate President Larry Obhof, Speaker Larry Householder, and Minority Leader Emily Sykes. The year 2019 was filled with activities connecting the NAIC to its constituents and providing information and support services to Africans in many parts of Ohio. It was also a year in which the Commission tried but failed again to get necessary personnel and funding to implement statutorily mandated initiatives. However, NAIC’s baby steps are turning into more stable strides as she tenaciously goes into her third year with a leadership change and a very mindful and dedicated board of commissioners.

One of the priorities of the NAIC has always been to get a more accurate picture and count of Africans in Ohio. Towards the end of last year, that goal came closer to fruition as I took on the role of chairing the subcommittee on African Immigrants in Mayor Andrew Ginther’s and Commissioner Kevin Boyce’s Columbus City and Franklin County 2020 Census Complete Count Committee. Needless to say, the work of that subcommittee was extended to the state-wide reach of the Commission. Much work has gone into providing Ohio’s African immigrants with accurate information, creating awareness, and dispelling fears that had been elicited by the defeated proposal to include a citizenship question in the 2020 Census. Community and country-based associations, civic groups and festivals were visited to ensure grassroots involvement. With the rest of the state and the country, NAIC awaits the full implementation of the 2020 U S Census as well as the results coming out at the end of the year. The anticipated Census numbers and demographics cannot be overemphasized because of their impact on the growth of the Ohio economy, the recognition of the depth of diversity within the borders of the great State of Ohio, and all the implications pertaining thereof. Not only do we expect to see changes in the actual numbers and percentages, but we also expect to see an augmentation and diversity in the countries of origin represented in Ohio’s African immigrant population. The rich cultural, educational, and economic tapestry of African immigrants in Ohio can only promise beneficial prospects for the State. The New American Economy has studied and presented the highly significant contributions of immigrants in the growth of Ohio cities such as Dayton, Akron and Cincinnati. Again, the NAIC makes a strong case that the State of Ohio is set to harness the economic power and potential of its new African immigrant populations, traversing all fields of endeavour.

Thank you,
Rosaire Ifedi
Rosaire Ifedi, Ed.D.
NAIC Chair, 2017 -2019

D. INTRODUCTION, HISTORY, AND OVERVIEW OF NAIC

The creation of the New African Immigrants Commission (NAIC) ultimately was the result of collaborative and bipartisan work by community leaders, legislators, and the executive branch in Ohio. It can be said that the presence of the second largest settlement of Somalis in the U.S. (in the Columbus area of the state) was a catalyst to the process. The NAIC came about due to the vision of the Somali-born publisher and entrepreneur, Mahdi Taakilo, assisted by African American community advocate, Ms. Kay Wilson, the legislative leadership from Senator Kevin Bacon, and the leadership of then Gov. Ted Strickland, Rep. Steve Stivers, and then Treasurer Richard Cordray. This bipartisan effort resulted in the establishment of the Commission through ORC 4112.31 and 4112.32 in 2008. In the absence of further legal action, African community leaders in Ohio meanwhile organized around needs, particularly the Ebola crisis of 2014. Supported by Gov. John R. Kasich’s administration as represented by Lyn Stevens, they initiated partnerships with the Health Departments of their cities and counties to provide funds and educational awareness to assure the safety of Ohio/Franklin County residents. Leaders in Dayton and Columbus—including many of the Ebola Task force members -- Dr. Leroy Boikai, Dr. Seleshi Asfaw, Ibrahima Sow, Dr. Rosaire Ifedi, Comfort Cole-Kenneh, Dr. Migwe Kimemia and Eugenie Kirenga -- kept the needs of the African community highlighted.

With legislative leadership from State Senator Charleta Tavares and the Ohio Board of Commissions Dir. Blair Cathcart, work commenced to seat qualified sub-Saharan Africans on the Commission. Gov. John R. Kasich eventually announced the first six appointments in July 2017 followed by the seventh appointment in October 2017. Ohio House and Senate leaders -- Speaker of the House Ryan Smith (R), Senate President Larry Obhof (R), and Minority Leader Fred Strahorn (D) - completed their nominations for the remaining four seats, which were announced by Gov. Kasich in September 2018 to make for a fully seated Commission.

The establishment of the Commission triggered a number of obvious questions such as why a Commission for Africans, why sub-Saharan Africa only, why new Africans, and much more. While Latinos represent more than 50% of the foreign-born population in the US, foreign-born Blacks from Africa constitute only 4.4%. This numerical “insignificance” belies the very point the Commission seeks to address. Many extrapolations and anecdotes supplement the limited census data on African blacks to, at least partially, answer these questions. In sum, Ohio’s foreign-born black population has much to contribute to Ohio’s socioeconomic development despite its small numbers. This is because, for instance, 41% of the state’s foreign-born blacks have higher education degrees compared to 28% of the general U.S. population.

The mandate for the NAIC is unfunded. Moreover, while ORC 4112.31, Section K allows the Commission to receive and award grants for programs, legislative action was needed for the Treasurer’s Office to even open an account for NAIC to hold such monies/grants. To solve this problem, Rep. Bernadine Kent introduced HB 642 (NAIC Grant & Gift Fund) to allow the Ohio Treasurer to open such an account for NAIC which is yet to be adopted by the full house.
Meanwhile, all of the work that NAIC continues to do has been fully volunteered by commissioners, interns, and committee members with not so much as travel reimbursement. Yet, as much of the data presented here shows, it will greatly benefit the state’s many stakeholders in the areas of education, social welfare, health, workforce and development if Ohio both attends to the needs of and facilitates the success of Africans who have made Ohio their home. These new Ohioans are committed to the state and are naturalizing as U.S. citizens at a rate of 54.4% compared to 49.3% for the Total U.S. Foreign Born population (See Table 4 on page 30). Moreover, the state’s new African population consists of highly educated voluntary migrants and under-resourced refugees who were resettled in the state by the US government. NAIC seeks to help the highly educated segments of this population to enhance their already substantial contributions to Ohio’s socioeconomic development. Simultaneously, NAIC seeks to help the refugee segments of this population to address their special needs (e.g., lack of English skills) in order to become productive citizens in the shortest time possible. For all these reasons, the State of Ohio is right to establish the New African Immigrants Commission. Thank you for reading, engaging with, and providing feedback on the work of the NAIC.

E. 2018-2019 BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS AND OFFICER ROLES

Abass Bangura (Reynoldsburg, Franklin County) Commissioner Bangura is an IT Systems Administrator Lead at American Electric Power (AEP) where he has been working since 2001. Prior to joining AEP, he worked in Software engineering teams to develop and release new client software for America Online and CompuServe. He is also the President of the Sierra Leone Club of Columbus, Ohio, a community organization which represents the Sierra Leone Immigrant Community in Central Ohio. Abass is an immigrant community resource person who reaches across communities to solve problems. He has volunteered participated and facilitated mediation programs for African immigrants and refugees. Governor John Kasich appointed him to serve as a member of the New African Immigrant Commission in October 2018. Abass is married to Isatu Bangura with whom they have 3 children, Abass Jr, Abu and Fatima Bangura. He is also a New American Leadership Academy Scholar (City of Columbus).
Glory Brissett  (Cleveland, Cuyahoga County)  Social Services & Outreach Committee

Commissioner Brissett is Executive Director and founder of Les Anges Gardien LLC International based in Cleveland, Ohio and three different countries in Africa. Les Anges Gardien is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization that strives to improve the quality of life for children, widows, and the needy who are facing life threatening and terminal diseases worldwide. The organization focuses on humanitarian aid, disaster relief, education, and hunger abatement. It also supports a number of motherless babies’ homes and schools for handicapped children in Africa. Glory worked with five different refugee agencies, and in 2012 received a recognition award from Refugee Families Services in Atlanta GA for stopping children trafficking in refugee communities. Glory partnered with Global Cleveland for Immigrants Heritage Year 2016 and 2017. Glory was a panelist for Freedom from Fear and shared the struggle of learning to trust again after fleeing the trauma of war. In 2017, Glory was selected by OHIO Channel Radio Cleveland, on The Sound of Ideas for Cleveland, for helping with primary elections results and analysis. Glory is a 2007 graduate of UNILAC and is pursuing a degree in Business at Cleveland State University. Glory Brissett is a Woman Leader in Glory be to God Ministries International. She is originally from the Democratic Republic of Congo, is married with three children, and speaks nine languages from seven countries in Africa.

Mariame Diabate  (Columbus, Franklin County)  Health & Wellness Committee

Commissioner Diabate is first generation Guinean-American college graduate from The Ohio State University. She has served as two-time president of the African Youth League and has received various honours and accolades as a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Inc., Theta Chapter. She holds a Bachelor’s of Science in Biology, with a minor in Global Public Health from the Ohio State with research distinction. Her research and work focus on unrepresentative communities in Columbus, Ohio in regards to the high infant mortality rate and its association with socioeconomic and environmental variables. With a goal to become a physician-scientist to conduct transnational research in high-risk communities, Mariame’s current post-baccalaureate work at Ohio State involves conducting computational analysis that will be used to calculate and determine the statistical significance of Breast and Ovarian Cancer (BRCA1) mutations in DNA-repair assays. This project's ultimate goal is to assess one's cancer risk and to aid physicians in the creation of care regime and preventative treatment course for their patients with unknown variants of BRCA1.
Dr. Prince Ellis  
(Cincinnati, Clermont County)  
Workforce & Business Development Committee

Commissioner Ellis is a Ghanaian American with diverse educational background. He holds a bachelor’s degree in Finance and a master’s degree in Information Systems, both from Northern Kentucky University. He also completed a second master’s degree in Applied Economics from the University of Cincinnati’s Lindner College of Business. Dr. Ellis completed his doctorate degree in Business Administration with a concentration in International Business from Argosy University. His dissertation focused on the impact of corporate eLearning on employees. He also holds various certifications and licenses in business and technology. His professional experience includes higher education, information technology, and financial services. He previously served as Program Chair and Professor of Business and Information Technology at Brown Mackie College. Currently, Dr. Ellis is an Associate Professor of Economics and Finance at the University of Cincinnati Clermont and an adjunct faculty in Management at UC Lindner College of Business. His research areas include eLearning, International Business, and Technology. He authored a book focusing on “Corporate eLearning: Impact on Employees”. He believes in service to his community. In 2018, he was appointed by Governor Kasich to the Board of the Ohio New African Immigrants Commission (NAIC). He is co-founder/board president for African Professionals Network (APNET), president/owner of PERN Learning Consulting LLC, and a partner with BROAM Consulting LLC. LinkedIn: https://www.linkedin.com/in/princefellis

Dr. Rosaire Ifedi, Chair (2017-2019)  
(Columbus, Franklin County)

Commissioner Ifedi is Associate Professor of Education at Ashland University where she teaches mostly graduate courses in qualitative inquiry and curriculum, and TESOL classes. Her teaching and school leadership career span over 40 years at all levels in both Nigeria and the U.S. She has authored books, book chapters, and articles and has made presentations at national and international professional conferences. She holds a B.A. Ed. English & M.A. (ESL) degrees from the University of Nigeria Nsukka (U.N.N.) and ED.D. from Ashland University, Ashland, Ohio. Dr. Ifedi is passionate to educate, elevate, and empower others through her leadership and mentoring roles in academic, non-profit, and faith-based organizations including the Ohio TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages), the Weavers of Nigeria; Nigerians in the Diaspora Organization (NIDO-Ohio), African Christian Fellowship (ACFUSA), Christ International Community Church (CICC), Central Ohio Parent Leadership Institute, 4OurHelpers, FWD.US and In Support of Public Education (ISOPEF) in Nigeria. More recently, she led efforts towards a complete count of African immigrant populations in Ohio as part of the City of Columbus/Franklin County 2020 U.S. Census Complete Count Committee. In 2016, she chaired the Main Event Planning for the Central Ohio End Ebola Taskforce which facilitated education and collaboration efforts to fight the epidemic and raised more than $10,000 in donations to Doctors Without Borders. Rosaire Ifedi is an ordained pastor who feels truly blessed to serve all God’s children. She is married with four adult children.
Comfort Kenneh, Vice-Chair (Gahanna, Franklin County) Social Services & Outreach Committee

Commissioner Kenneh works for the Franklin County Department of Job and Family Services. She serves as the Deputy Executive Director for External Affairs for the Union of Liberian Associations in the Americas (ULAA) and as Liaison to the Women Empowerment Committee (Ohio). She has also served as the President of Liberians in Columbus Incorporated (LICI) and as Treasurer for the Federation of Liberian Associations in Ohio (FOLAO). She has been actively involved in educational and cultural organizations in Ohio for more than a decade. She was the 1st Vice National Chairman, Treasurer and Financial Secretary of The B.W. Harris Alumni Association USA. She headed the Scholarship committee of this organization where she was able to obtain scholarships for deserving students. She has received several awards for her dedication and service here in Columbus.

Eugenie Kirenga (Kettering, Green County) Social Services & Outreach Committee

Commissioner Kirenga is an Immigrant Resource Specialist with the City of Dayton, Department of Human Relations Council/Welcome Dayton Program a position she began in 2014. Prior to that she worked for Catholic Social Services. She graduated in 2012 with an MBA - Healthcare Management from Indiana Wesleyan University. Eugenie is very active in fostering positive outcomes for immigrants in the Dayton community. She is from Rwanda and is married with three children.

Tariq Mohamed (New Albany, Franklin County) Workforce & Business Development Committee

Commissioner Mohamed is a documentary photographer, skilled in both still photography and video, who specializes in refugee affairs. In July of 2006, Tariq’s show, Forlorn in Ohio, which documented the plight of Somali refugees, appeared at the Kiaaca Gallery in Columbus. Forlorn in Ohio also travelled to Wright State University, in 2007. Several images from that show are now part of the permanent collection of the Columbus Museum of Art. In recognition of his important work on the plight of refugees, Tariq has received several awards including: The South Side Settlement House’s prestigious Arts Freedom Award (2006), the Ohio Art Council’s Individual Artist Award, and the Individual Artist Award by the Greater Columbus Arts Council (2008). Tariq has directed several documentaries and films, “Emergency Living: Somalia in the Aftermath of Famine”, “Women, War and Resettlement: Nasro’s Journey” which was aired on WOSU Public Television (2012), “The Darien Gap,” shown during the 2nd United States Conference

Dr. Kefa M. Otiso (Bowling Green, Wood County) Education & Cultural Affairs Committee

Commissioner Otiso is Professor of Geography and Director of the Global Village at Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green, Ohio. He has a PhD in Urban and Economic Geography from the University of Minnesota - Twin Cities, USA, an MA from Ohio University, USA, and a B. Ed from Kenyatta University, Kenya. His research interests are in urbanization, globalization, international migration, development, governance, and cultural change in the context of Africa and North America. He is co-author of Population Geography: Problems, Concepts, and Prospects, 10th Edition (Kendall Hunt Publishing, Dubuque, IA, 2013) and author of Culture and Customs of Tanzania (Greenwood Press, 2013), Culture and Customs of Uganda (Greenwood Press, 2006) and many refereed journal articles, book chapters, and editorials. He is a past editor of the African Geographical Review and he has also presented papers in many national and international conferences. He is a frequent media commentator on many US, Kenyan, and other international news outlets and is the founding/former president of the US-based Kenya Scholars and Studies Association (KESSA). In 2008, President Mwai Kibaki of Kenya awarded him the Elder of the Order of the Burning Spear (EBS) national honor “in recognition of outstanding or distinguished services rendered to the nation in various capacities and responsibilities.” Subsequently, Bowling Green State University named him a Professor of Service Excellence on April 13, 2017 in recognition of “his dedication to his discipline, the profession, the University and the larger community.” He was first appointed to the commission on September 7, 2018 by Governor John R. Kasich and reappointed by Governor Mike DeWine on January 14, 2020.

Dr. Ademola Solaru (Cleveland Heights, Cuyahoga County) Health & Wellness Committee

Commissioner Solaru is the CEO of Parthenon GlobalSystems, LLC, a Cleveland, Ohio based firm that operates the ProviderGateway network, a system for managing contractual relationships and payments between providers of service and public-sector payers. Dr. Solaru has a Bachelor of Science in Computer Science, Purdue University, Indiana; MS Information Systems, Eastern Michigan University; and Doctor of Management (DM) from Case Western Reserve University. His doctoral thesis identified and confirmed sixteen (16) flow dimensions that predict repeat use of search engines and shopping sites by online consumers. Recent certifications include Big Data and Social Physics Certificate from MIT Experimental Learning and the Post Graduate Diploma in Digital Business from the Emeritus Institute. He is a results-oriented management consulting and technology professional with a 30+ year career in industry and teaching that spans Healthcare, Health Insurance, Social Services Management and Technology Training. His consulting engagements have included change management services in government and in the private sector. He teaches the Strategy for
Business Analytics course at Cleveland State University. He has convened, facilitated, and keynoted numerous sessions at professional meetings including “Technology Megatrends” (2013); “Globalization, Capacity Building and BDPA” (2012); “Ten things You Didn’t Know About Africa” (2013); “The future of Technology is Now” (2014); “Big Data and Politics” (2014); “The role of big data in politics with reference to the 2008 Obama Campaign”; and on “Net Neutrality” (2016) or the tension between corporate profits, the rights of access to broadband for the consuming public and the role of law and government.

Ibrahima Sow, Recorder  (Reynoldsburg, Franklin County)  Education & Cultural Affairs Committee

Commissioner Sow was born in Senegal, West Africa, and is a longtime resident of Central Ohio. He attended Independence High School and Centennial High School before attending The Ohio State University. Upon receiving a B.A in both Political Science and International Studies, Sow continued serving his state as Page, Constituent Aide, and Policy staff for former Speaker Batchelder of the Ohio House of Representatives. Informed by his mother’s story – from a refugee with no English skills to a Columbus small business owner – Sow was inspired to run for Columbus City Council on a platform of safe sidewalks for children and small business support. Ultimately unsuccessful, Sow became the first foreign-born to make a Columbus general election, opening the door for future New American electoral victories. Upon obtaining a Masters of Business Administration from Ashland University, Sow was appointed by former Governor Kasich to the 11-member New African Immigrants Commission, which advocates for Africans across Ohio. Currently, Sow is Project Director for ENACT (Emerging New American Community Team), a federally funded project that aims to uplift refugee and immigrant communities through leadership training. He also co-founded Baobab Cultural Consulting with a mission to provide cross-cultural training and experience-based understanding for organizations and institutions across Central Ohio. Believing that one should always ask how ‘I can be of service?’ Sow charges everyone to look beyond themselves to inspire, be inspired, and serve. He urges everyone to engage with the Commission.

F. STANDING COMMITTEES

(a) Education and Cultural Affairs Committee

I. Plans, organizes, schedules, and implements cultural programs and events;
II. Provides staff assistance to commissions, committees and other organizations;
III. Prepares recommendations on cultural program development and implements programs through liaison with community groups, educational organization/ institutions, libraries and governmental agencies;
IV. Develops and coordinates a wide variety of cultural programs and events to increase community interest and involvement;
V. Works with Commissioners, African immigrant organizations, volunteers and others to develop, promote and implement cultural exhibits, activities and programs;
VI. Facilitates and organizes events, dialogues, and discussions that explore the identity of African peoples, intended to support community-building and showcasing the value of multiculturalism;
VII. Promote appreciation and awareness for the rich multiculturalism of the African Immigrant community;

VIII. Coordinates workshops in cooperation with local artists, educational organizations and community groups;

(b) Social Services and Outreach Committee
   I. Implements outreach and awareness programs through partnerships and collaboration with other community organizations, service providers and human service agencies.
   II. Informs African community organizations and new African immigrant individuals and families of available resources
   III. Conducts field research to assist in establishing goals and activities;
   IV. Coordinates and/or performs various public relation activities prepares speeches, scripts, exhibits, films, newsletters, and press releases to publicize programs and activities of the commission
   V. Works with African immigrants - individuals and families- along with other service providers to ensure access to basic needs of food, shelter, and clothing.

(c) Health and Wellness Committee
   I. Promotes a culture of physical, psychological, and emotional well-being for members of the African Immigrant Community by providing activities and support that will result in healthier lifestyles.
   II. Facilitates wellness communication through various online resources, workshops, and events.
   III. Offers program that encourage physical activity, emotional well-being, mental health, and healthy eating habits.
   IV. Recommends to the Commissioners possible community events that the New African Immigrant Commission should consider promoting/participating in

(d) Workforce and Business Development Committee
   I. Works with the Ohio Job and Family Services- Office of Workforce Development.
   II. Provides the community more information on the Workforce Investment Act and local administrative contacts.
   III. Encourages and engages African youth in programs for employment, civic engagement and participation, leadership, and social integration, while providing the platform for interactive discourse on issues pertaining to African immigrant youth.
   IV. Educates and inspires African immigrant youth about government activities, entrepreneurship, community engagement services.
(e) Legal Services Committee

I. Assists the African immigrant community with access to free or/and affordable legal support by creating a legal liaison board that provides answers and redirects to legal questions, information on individual's legal rights and responsibilities, and describing available options.

II. Promotes conflict resolution and conflict prevention programs in the community.

III. Encourages African immigrants to enroll in affordable legal plans as well as seek out legal aid volunteers that can provide free legal counselling to community members.

IV. Suggests to African immigrant community members to seek the assistance of an attorney for representation in courtroom appearances and suggesting resources for finding an attorney.

V. Organizes programs and speakers on legal issues of interest to the African Immigrant community. This may include bringing members of the legal profession to speak at community events, conducting workshops, and disseminating brochures on common legal problems.

**G. A PLANNED APPROACH TO SUCCESS: OUR GOAL FRAMEWORK**

The goals of the NAIC revolve around three core objectives to **Advocate**, **Impact**, and **Connect**.

In line with its statutory responsibilities, NAIC’s objectives are as follows:

**Advocate** for the sub-Saharan African people in Ohio to decision-makers such as the Governor, general assembly, state agencies, and local governments on matters that impact sub-Saharan African people by proposing and reviewing legislation, reprioritizing existing programs, creating programs, and issuing reports.
Connect sub-Saharan African people with state agencies and programs, sub-Saharan African community organizations, organizations serving sub-Saharan Africans, and entrepreneurs across the state by hosting meetings and events, ensuring access to decision-making bodies, and promoting state-wide communication.

Impact sub-Saharan African communities and businesses positively by applying and accepting grants, monitoring and evaluating subcontracted programs, conducting trainings, highlighting successes, and engaging in meaningful partnerships to increase the quality of life for all sub-Saharan African people in Ohio.

To these ends and to increase the efficiency of the Commission, NAIC’s goals are encapsulated in the work done in the following areas:

(i) Economic Impact: Maximizing the economic contributions of African immigrants to the State of Ohio and beyond.

(ii) Ohio African Resource: Ensuring Ohio African immigrants’ access and linkages to various resources.

(iii) Public Policy & Education Bureau: Facilitating social, educational, and civic stability and integration for African immigrants in Ohio.

H. OUR SERVICE MATRIX
I. PORTRAIT OF AFRICAN IMMIGRANTS IN OHIO

According to the US Census (2019), Ohio has an estimated population of 11,689,100 people. The racial breakdown of Ohio is: non-Hispanic White (81.9%), Black (13%), American Indian (0.3%), Asian (2.5%), Native Hawaiian (0.1%), Biracial (2.3%), and Hispanic/Latino (3.9%). In 2018, about 4.5 percent of Ohio’s population, that is, 526,000 people, was foreign born (US Census, 2019; Migration Policy Institute, 2018). In the same year, 17% (or 88,669 people) of Ohio’s foreign born population was from Africa (Table 1), with most of this population being from Western, Eastern, and Northern Africa.

Legally, Ohio’s New African Immigrants Commission (NAIC) excludes immigrants from Northern Africa. Thus, it serves African immigrants from Sub-Saharan Africa which covers Eastern, Western, Middle, and Southern Africa. NAIC is therefore responsible for slightly over 89% -- that is, 79,059 -- of the 88,669 immigrants in Table 1 and Figure 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region of Birth</th>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2018</th>
<th>2016-2018 Change</th>
<th>2016%</th>
<th>2018%</th>
<th>2016-2018 Change%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eastern Africa</td>
<td>24,117</td>
<td>32,190</td>
<td>8,073</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Africa</td>
<td>11,219</td>
<td>9,610</td>
<td>-1,609</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>-14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Africa</td>
<td>24,626</td>
<td>33,505</td>
<td>8,879</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>-14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle and Southern Africa</td>
<td>5,968</td>
<td>5,624</td>
<td>-344</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Africa</td>
<td>2,929</td>
<td>7,740</td>
<td>4,811</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Africa Total</td>
<td>68,859</td>
<td>88,669</td>
<td>19,810</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(a) Where Do African Immigrants in Ohio Come From?
Together, the Eastern and Western African regions account for nearly three-quarters (74 percent or 65,695 out 88,669) of all new African immigrants in Ohio (Table 1). These two regions are also the key drivers of the dynamics of the African immigrant population in Ohio (Figures 2 and 3). Ohio’s African immigrant populations are attracted to the state by its attractive job markets and by the social support systems that they receive from friends and family who are already here. These supports greatly ease the entry and settlement of new African immigrants in Ohio’s cities and communities.

![Figure 2: Absolute Change in Regional Origin of African Immigrants in Ohio, 2016 and 2018](image)

![Figure 3: Percent Change in Regional Origin of African Immigrants in Ohio, 2016 and 2018](image)
Most of the African immigrants in Ohio are from 14 of the 54 African countries, namely, Somalia, Ghana, Ethiopia, Kenya, Nigeria, Egypt, Morocco, Cameroon, Liberia, South Africa, Sierra Leone, Eritrea, Sudan (now split into Sudan and South Sudan), and Cabo Verde (Figure 4). Collectively, these 14 countries accounted for 43,019 of the 68,859 African immigrants in Ohio in 2016. Of these 43,019 individuals, the NAIC legal mandate covered the majority or 37,650 immigrants (88%) in Figure 4 who are from Sub-Saharan Africa excluding the 3,573 and 1,796 African immigrants in Ohio from Egypt and Morocco, respectively.

Figure 4: Major Countries of Origin for African Immigrants in Ohio

Ohio’s African immigrant population lives in 65 of its 88 counties, with 23 having none of them. Nevertheless, as Table 2 shows, 83% of Ohio’s African immigrants live in the five counties that individually had more than 2,048 of these immigrants in 2016, namely, Franklin (31,795), Hamilton (6,761), Cuyahoga (4,645), Montgomery (3,111) and Butler (2,048). These counties are home to the three major metropolitan cities shown in Figure 5, that is, Columbus (Franklin County), Cleveland (Cuyahoga County), and Cincinnati (Hamilton, Montgomery, and Butler Counties).
Table 2: Distribution of Ohio’s African Immigrants by County

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No of African Immigrants</th>
<th>Number of Counties</th>
<th>Percent of Counties</th>
<th>Total African Immigrants</th>
<th>Percent of African Immigrants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>25.8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-9</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14.6</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13-84</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>30.3</td>
<td>1,135</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>102-649</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>18.0</td>
<td>4,274</td>
<td>7.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,030-1,264</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>4,531</td>
<td>7.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2,048-4,645</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>9,804</td>
<td>16.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6,761</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>6,761</td>
<td>11.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31,795</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>31,795</td>
<td>54.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>58,359</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An overwhelming 91 percent of African immigrants in Ohio live in only 9 Ohio counties (column 2 in Table 2); with Franklin County alone being home to 31,795 (55 percent) of them (Figure 5). Even among the 9 counties that are home to most of Ohio’s African immigrants, Franklin County alone accounts for 63 percent of the African immigrants in these counties (Table 3). These nine counties -- that is, Franklin, Hamilton, Cuyahoga, Montgomery, Butler, Summit, Lucas, Delaware, and Fairfield (Figure 5) -- have most of the African immigrant population in Ohio because they contain most of the large cities that have the bulk of the opportunities that attract these immigrants to Ohio (Figures 6-10). It is also evident from Table 3 that the dominant African immigrant groups in Ohio vary by county even though Franklin County has the largest concentrations of many African groups.

Figure 5: Distribution of African Immigrants in Ohio by Top County
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>Franklin</th>
<th>Hamilton</th>
<th>Cuyahoga</th>
<th>Montgomery</th>
<th>Butler</th>
<th>Summit</th>
<th>Lucas</th>
<th>Delaware</th>
<th>Fairfield</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eritrea</td>
<td>602</td>
<td>267</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1,043</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethiopia</td>
<td>2,561</td>
<td>893</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>582</td>
<td>4,603</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenya</td>
<td>2,592</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>385</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>210</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3,634</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somalia</td>
<td>8,739</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>9,185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cameroon</td>
<td>951</td>
<td>248</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1,615</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>759</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>1,146</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>292</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>2,705</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morocco</td>
<td>908</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>263</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1,560</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sudan</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>577</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>261</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>977</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghana</td>
<td>4,268</td>
<td>237</td>
<td>350</td>
<td>315</td>
<td>517</td>
<td>394</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>6,357</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberia</td>
<td>711</td>
<td>216</td>
<td>357</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>1,414</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nigeria</td>
<td>993</td>
<td>557</td>
<td>476</td>
<td>276</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>255</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>2,958</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sierra Leone</td>
<td>1,389</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1,735</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Africa</td>
<td>3,324</td>
<td>1,909</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>5,763</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Africa, n.e.c.</td>
<td>1,654</td>
<td>703</td>
<td>230</td>
<td>247</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>3,265</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>29,887</td>
<td>5,640</td>
<td>4,152</td>
<td>2,081</td>
<td>1,622</td>
<td>1,185</td>
<td>1,007</td>
<td>787</td>
<td>1,030</td>
<td>47,391</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates (B05006 Place of Birth for the Foreign-Born Population in the United States)
As Figure 6 above shows, most African immigrants in Ohio live in or near the state’s major metro areas. Those who live in smaller towns and rural areas of the state are attracted by their educational (universities) and work opportunities (e.g., hospitals).

Within the state’s metro areas, African immigrants’ choice of an inner or outer suburb depends largely on their socioeconomic status (Figures 7a, 7b, 8, 9, and 10). Because many African immigrants are highly educated, they have the financial resources to live in the suburbs (see Table 4: vii, xiii and xiv) alongside much of the larger US population (Gee, 2018).

The distribution of African immigrants in Columbus metro deserves greater attention because of the large Somali refugee population that lives there especially in the inner suburbs of Woodward Park, Forest Park East, Brandywine, Hyde Park, and Clinton Estates (Figure 7a and b). Across Ohio,
these immigrants have helped to grow or stabilize their neighborhoods and metro areas’ populations.

African immigrants in Columbus are widely scattered in the metro area (Figure 7a). Nevertheless, there are higher pockets of them in the eastern sections of Columbus that also tend to have more African Americans (Figure 7b). This suggests that African immigrants are, to an extent, sensitive to race in their choice of residential location more so if their income and class do not permit them to live in the wealthier suburbs.

Figure 7a: African Immigrants in Columbus by Census Tract
Figure 7b: The Distribution of African Immigrants in Columbus is Coterminous with that of the City’s Black Population

Figure 8: African Immigrants in Cleveland by Census Tract
Figure 9: African Immigrants in Cincinnati and Dayton by Census Tract
African immigrants in the U.S. (and by extension in Ohio\(^1\)) consist of more males (52%) than the general U.S. population (49%), have a slightly higher median age (39.3 years) than the general U.S. population (38.1 years), and are mostly (81%) in the productive age groups (18-64 years old) than the general U.S. population (52%) (Table 4). These immigrants’ concentration in the productive years is partly because of U.S. immigration policy’s preference for productive immigrants. Unlike the general U.S. population, African immigrants in the U.S. are overwhelmingly (77%) black, 18% white, and only 2.2% Asian compared to nearly 6% for the U.S. (Table 4: iii). Moreover, they have a higher marriage rate of 55% compared to 48% for the general U.S. population (Table 4: v). They are also more multi-lingual -- only 24% speak English only at home – than majority of the general U.S. population (78%) that mainly speaks English only (Table 4: viii).

\(^1\) Ohio specific data on African Immigrants is not available in the 2017 American Community Survey.
(d) Educational Characteristics

African immigrants have lower educational enrolment and attainment rates at P-12 grades – most likely because the child population in this group is small. On the other hand, African immigrants in the U.S. are twice as likely (57%) to be enrolled in college or graduate school compared to the general U.S. population whose rate is only 27% (Table 4: vi). Consequently, these immigrants are more likely to have undergraduate and graduate degrees than the general U.S. population (Table v: vii). Among the most educated African immigrants in Ohio are Nigerians and Kenyans and many of them are well represented in the state’s education, medical, and other professional fields (Table 4: xii). They thus help to keep Ohio economically competitive. Some of these professionals, more so those in the medical profession, are also playing a critical role in meeting the health needs of Ohio’s underserved rural and urban areas.

(e) Economic Characteristics

African immigrants in the U.S. are more likely to be in the labor force, employed (Table 4: ix), and to work as private wage and salary workers (Table 4: x) in service and production, transportation, and material moving occupations (Table 4: xi). Because of their higher educational qualifications, African immigrants are more likely than Americans to be educational services, and health care and social assistance professionals (Table 4: xii). Proportionally, more of these immigrants than Americans, earn anywhere from $1 to $34,999 in annual income, and slightly fewer of them earn above $35,000 a year than Americans (Table 4: xiii). Like their American male counterparts, African immigrant males earn more than their female counterparts though their pay is about $6,000 less than their American counterparts. Conversely, the pay gap between African immigrant females is about $3,000 less than American females (Table 4: xiii).

At the household level, African immigrants earn about $8,000 less than their American counterparts (Table 4: xiv) despite being more educated (Table 4: vii) and having a slightly higher average number of workers per household (Table 4: xiv). Because nearly twice as many African immigrant families (17%) are in poverty compared to American families (10%), near similar proportions of households from both groups have food stamp/SNAP benefits (Table 4: xiv). In assessing the proportion of African immigrants in poverty, one must be cognizant of the fact that this group is quite diverse in socioeconomic terms. For example, many of those who entered the U.S. as refugees and asylees from war torn countries (e.g., Somalia, Liberia and Ethiopia) in the last two decades have had a hard time getting established in the U.S. because of inadequate English language skills and transportation. At the other end of the spectrum are voluntary African immigrants from countries such as Nigeria, Kenya, and Ghana, that are highly educated (Table 4: vii) and integrated into Ohio’s labor force in industries such as educational services, and health care and social assistance (Table 4: xii).
(f) Housing

Because of their recent arrival in the US, only slightly more than one-third (38%) of African immigrants in the US are homeowners compared to 64% of the general US population and 52% of the total US foreign-born (Table 4: xvii). Conversely, the overwhelming majority of African immigrants in the US (62%) live in rented units (Table 4: vii). African immigrant vehicle ownership rates are also comparable to those of the general and total US foreign born population (Table 4: xvii).

Table 4: Selected Characteristics of the U.S. Native, Total Foreign-Born, African Foreign-Born Populations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total U.S. Foreign Born</th>
<th>African Foreign Born</th>
<th>General U.S. Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Foreign-born population</td>
<td>44,525,855</td>
<td>2,293,028</td>
<td>325,719,178</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(i) CITIZENSHIP AND PERIOD OF ENTRY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total U.S. Foreign Born</th>
<th>African Foreign Born</th>
<th>General U.S. Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Naturalized citizen</td>
<td>49.30%</td>
<td>54.40%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entered 2010 or later</td>
<td>2.40%</td>
<td>5.80%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entered 2000 to 2009</td>
<td>10.40%</td>
<td>22.00%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entered before 2000</td>
<td>36.50%</td>
<td>26.50%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total U.S. Foreign Born</th>
<th>African Foreign Born</th>
<th>General U.S. Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Naturalized citizen</td>
<td>50.70%</td>
<td>45.60%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entered 2010 or later</td>
<td>18.90%</td>
<td>29.90%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entered 2000 to 2009</td>
<td>15.30%</td>
<td>10.60%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entered before 2000</td>
<td>16.50%</td>
<td>5.10%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(ii) SEX AND AGE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total U.S. Foreign Born</th>
<th>African Foreign Born</th>
<th>General U.S. Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>48.40%</td>
<td>51.70%</td>
<td>49.20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>51.60%</td>
<td>48.30%</td>
<td>50.80%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total U.S. Foreign Born</th>
<th>African Foreign Born</th>
<th>General U.S. Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 5 years</td>
<td>0.70%</td>
<td>1.40%</td>
<td>6.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 to 17 years</td>
<td>5.10%</td>
<td>9.40%</td>
<td>16.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 to 24 years</td>
<td>6.70%</td>
<td>9.30%</td>
<td>9.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 to 44 years</td>
<td>37.90%</td>
<td>42.60%</td>
<td>26.40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45 to 54 years</td>
<td>19.40%</td>
<td>17.60%</td>
<td>13.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55 to 64 years</td>
<td>14.60%</td>
<td>11.80%</td>
<td>12.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65 to 74 years</td>
<td>9.10%</td>
<td>5.50%</td>
<td>9.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75 to 84 years</td>
<td>4.80%</td>
<td>1.80%</td>
<td>4.60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85 years and over</td>
<td>1.80%</td>
<td>0.60%</td>
<td>1.90%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total U.S. Foreign Born</th>
<th>African Foreign Born</th>
<th>General U.S. Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Median age (years)</td>
<td>44.8</td>
<td>39.3</td>
<td>38.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(iii) RACE AND HISPANIC OR LATINO ORIGIN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total U.S. Foreign Born</th>
<th>African Foreign Born</th>
<th>General U.S. Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One race</td>
<td>97.80%</td>
<td>98.80%</td>
<td>96.70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>45.50%</td>
<td>18.00%</td>
<td>72.30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black or African American</td>
<td>9.30%</td>
<td>77.30%</td>
<td>12.70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian and Alaska Native</td>
<td>0.40%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0.80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>27.10%</td>
<td>2.20%</td>
<td>5.60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander</td>
<td>0.30%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0.20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some other race</td>
<td>15.20%</td>
<td>1.20%</td>
<td>5.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two or more races</td>
<td>2.20%</td>
<td>1.20%</td>
<td>3.30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Hispanic or Latino origin (of any race)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Origin</th>
<th>Total U.S. Population</th>
<th>Foreign Born</th>
<th>African Born</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic or Latino</td>
<td>44.30%</td>
<td>0.40%</td>
<td>18.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White alone, not Hispanic or Latino</td>
<td>17.90%</td>
<td>17.80%</td>
<td>60.60%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### HOUSEHOLD TYPE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Household Type</th>
<th>Total U.S. Population</th>
<th>Foreign Born</th>
<th>African Born</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In married-couple family</td>
<td>63.50%</td>
<td>57.70%</td>
<td>58.40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In other households</td>
<td>35.00%</td>
<td>40.40%</td>
<td>39.10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Average household size

- Total U.S. Population: 3.33
- Foreign Born: 3.28
- African Born: 2.65

### Average family size

- Total U.S. Population: 3.82
- Foreign Born: 3.95
- African Born: 3.26

### MARITAL STATUS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Total U.S. Population</th>
<th>Foreign Born</th>
<th>African Born</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population 15 years and over</td>
<td>42,722,544</td>
<td>2,107,908</td>
<td>264,697,304</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never married</td>
<td>24.00%</td>
<td>29.40%</td>
<td>33.70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Now married, except separated</td>
<td>59.70%</td>
<td>54.90%</td>
<td>47.80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divorced or separated</td>
<td>11.10%</td>
<td>12.00%</td>
<td>12.80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widowed</td>
<td>5.30%</td>
<td>3.70%</td>
<td>5.70%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### SCHOOL ENROLLMENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Total U.S. Population</th>
<th>Foreign Born</th>
<th>African Born</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nursery school, preschool</td>
<td>5,686,528</td>
<td>559,813</td>
<td>81,273,337</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elementary school (grades K-8)</td>
<td>23.00%</td>
<td>24.60%</td>
<td>45.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school (grades 9-12)</td>
<td>20.00%</td>
<td>16.10%</td>
<td>21.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College or graduate school</td>
<td>55.10%</td>
<td>57.40%</td>
<td>27.40%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attainment</th>
<th>Total U.S. Population</th>
<th>Foreign Born</th>
<th>African Born</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population 25 years and over</td>
<td>38,945,226</td>
<td>1,832,048</td>
<td>221,250,083</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than high school graduate</td>
<td>27.50%</td>
<td>11.50%</td>
<td>12.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school graduate (includes equivalency)</td>
<td>22.70%</td>
<td>20.40%</td>
<td>27.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some college or associate's degree</td>
<td>18.80%</td>
<td>26.30%</td>
<td>28.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor's degree</td>
<td>17.60%</td>
<td>24.50%</td>
<td>19.70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate or professional degree</td>
<td>13.40%</td>
<td>17.30%</td>
<td>12.30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### LANGUAGE SPOKEN AT HOME AND ABILITY TO SPEAK ENGLISH

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Total U.S. Population</th>
<th>Foreign Born</th>
<th>African Born</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population 5 years and over</td>
<td>44,203,957</td>
<td>2,260,534</td>
<td>305,924,019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English only</td>
<td>16.30%</td>
<td>24.20%</td>
<td>78.20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language other than English</td>
<td>83.70%</td>
<td>75.80%</td>
<td>21.80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speak English less than &quot;very well&quot;</td>
<td>47.90%</td>
<td>28.80%</td>
<td>8.50%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### EMPLOYMENT STATUS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Total U.S. Population</th>
<th>Foreign Born</th>
<th>African Born</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population 16 years and over</td>
<td>42,497,774</td>
<td>2,089,213</td>
<td>260,564,248</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In labor force</td>
<td>66.10%</td>
<td>73.70%</td>
<td>63.20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civilian labor force</td>
<td>66.00%</td>
<td>73.50%</td>
<td>62.80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employed</td>
<td>63.00%</td>
<td>69.00%</td>
<td>59.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>3.00%</td>
<td>4.50%</td>
<td>3.30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of civilian labor force</td>
<td>4.50%</td>
<td>6.10%</td>
<td>5.30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armed Forces</td>
<td>0.10%</td>
<td>0.20%</td>
<td>0.40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not in labor force</td>
<td>33.90%</td>
<td>26.30%</td>
<td>36.80%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### CLASS OF WORKER

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class of Worker</th>
<th>Total U.S. Population</th>
<th>Foreign Born</th>
<th>African Born</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Private wage and salary workers</td>
<td>83.60%</td>
<td>82.40%</td>
<td>80.30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government workers</td>
<td>8.50%</td>
<td>11.60%</td>
<td>13.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-employed workers in own not incorporated business</td>
<td>7.70%</td>
<td>5.90%</td>
<td>6.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unpaid family workers</td>
<td>0.20%</td>
<td>0.10%</td>
<td>0.20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### (xi) OCCUPATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2018</th>
<th>2019</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Management, business, science, and arts occupations</td>
<td>32.40%</td>
<td>37.70%</td>
<td>38.20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service occupations</td>
<td>23.40%</td>
<td>24.00%</td>
<td>17.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales and office occupations</td>
<td>16.40%</td>
<td>17.00%</td>
<td>22.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations</td>
<td>12.80%</td>
<td>3.50%</td>
<td>8.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Production, transportation, and material moving occupations</td>
<td>15.00%</td>
<td>17.90%</td>
<td>12.20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### (xii) INDUSTRY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2018</th>
<th>2019</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining</td>
<td>2.30%</td>
<td>0.40%</td>
<td>1.70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>9.60%</td>
<td>2.10%</td>
<td>6.60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>11.10%</td>
<td>8.40%</td>
<td>10.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wholesale trade</td>
<td>2.60%</td>
<td>2.00%</td>
<td>2.60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail trade</td>
<td>9.10%</td>
<td>10.40%</td>
<td>11.20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation and warehousing, and utilities</td>
<td>5.80%</td>
<td>10.70%</td>
<td>5.40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information</td>
<td>1.60%</td>
<td>1.60%</td>
<td>2.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing</td>
<td>5.50%</td>
<td>4.70%</td>
<td>6.60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services</td>
<td>13.20%</td>
<td>16.00%</td>
<td>11.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational services, and health care and social assistance</td>
<td>19.40%</td>
<td>33.00%</td>
<td>23.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services</td>
<td>11.30%</td>
<td>8.00%</td>
<td>9.70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other services (except public administration)</td>
<td>6.20%</td>
<td>4.20%</td>
<td>4.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public administration</td>
<td>2.30%</td>
<td>3.80%</td>
<td>4.60%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### (xiii) EARNINGS IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS (IN 2017 INFLATION-ADJUSTED DOLLARS) FOR FULL-TIME, YEAR-ROUND WORKERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Earnings Range</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2018</th>
<th>2019</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$1 to $9,999 or loss</td>
<td>1.70%</td>
<td>1.60%</td>
<td>1.60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$10,000 to $14,999</td>
<td>4.10%</td>
<td>3.40%</td>
<td>3.10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$15,000 to $24,999</td>
<td>17.90%</td>
<td>15.70%</td>
<td>12.60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$25,000 to $34,999</td>
<td>18.00%</td>
<td>18.00%</td>
<td>15.70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$35,000 to $49,999</td>
<td>18.20%</td>
<td>18.80%</td>
<td>19.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$50,000 to $74,999</td>
<td>17.10%</td>
<td>19.30%</td>
<td>22.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$75,000 or more</td>
<td>23.00%</td>
<td>23.30%</td>
<td>25.10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Median earnings (dollars) for full-time, year-round workers:
- Male: 42,085
- Female: 36,625

### (xiv) INCOME IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS (IN 2017 INFLATION-ADJUSTED DOLLARS)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2018</th>
<th>2019</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Households</td>
<td>18,203,621</td>
<td>959,673</td>
<td>120,062,818</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With earnings</td>
<td>85.80%</td>
<td>91.00%</td>
<td>77.60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean earnings (dollars)</td>
<td>86,365</td>
<td>79,932</td>
<td>86,721</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With Social Security income</td>
<td>20.90%</td>
<td>11.10%</td>
<td>31.20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean Social Security income (dollars)</td>
<td>16,463</td>
<td>15,417</td>
<td>19,052</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With Supplemental Security Income</td>
<td>5.10%</td>
<td>3.70%</td>
<td>5.30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean Supplemental Security Income (dollars)</td>
<td>8,832</td>
<td>8,739</td>
<td>9,719</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With cash public assistance income</td>
<td>2.60%</td>
<td>3.80%</td>
<td>2.30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean cash public assistance income (dollars)</td>
<td>3,384</td>
<td>3,068</td>
<td>3,032</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>With retirement income</td>
<td>Mean retirement income (dollars)</td>
<td>With Food Stamp/SNAP benefits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median Household income (dollars)</td>
<td>56,743</td>
<td>52,429</td>
<td>60,336</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average number of workers per household</td>
<td>1.55</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(xv) **POVERTY STATUS IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS**

Population for whom poverty status is determined | 43,963,291 | 2,256,927 | 317,741,588 |

Below 100 percent of the poverty level | 15.30% | 19.10% | 13.40% |

100 to 199 percent of the poverty level | 21.70% | 22.10% | 17.60% |

At or above 200 percent of the poverty level | 63.00% | 58.70% | 69.00% |

(xvi) **POVERTY RATES FOR FAMILIES FOR WHOM POVERTY STATUS IS DETERMINED**

All families | 14.00% | 17.10% | 9.50% |

With related children of the householder under 18 years | 18.70% | 22.00% | 15.00% |

With related children of the householder under 5 years only | 14.10% | 22.10% | 14.20% |

Married-couple family | 10.00% | 12.10% | 4.80% |

With related children of the householder under 18 years | 12.40% | 15.30% | 6.60% |

With related children of the householder under 5 years only | 8.90% | 15.30% | 5.10% |

Female householder, no husband present, family | 29.30% | 33.80% | 26.20% |

With related children of the householder under 18 years | 40.00% | 43.80% | 35.70% |

With related children of the householder under 5 years only | 37.20% | 49.90% | 40.20% |

(xvii) **HOUSING**

Occupied housing units | 18,203,621 | 959,673 | 120,062,818 |

Owner-occupied housing units | 52.40% | 37.70% | 63.90% |

Renter-occupied housing units | 47.60% | 62.30% | 36.10% |

Average household size of owner-occupied unit | 3.49 | 3.75 | 2.72 |

Average household size of renter-occupied unit | 3.16 | 3 | 2.51 |

Rooms

1 room | 3.50% | 4.10% | 2.10% |

2 or 3 rooms | 16.80% | 19.50% | 11.00% |

4 or 5 rooms | 40.80% | 41.10% | 34.60% |

6 or 7 rooms | 25.30% | 21.30% | 30.90% |

8 or more rooms | 13.70% | 14.00% | 21.50% |

Median number of rooms | 4.9 | 4.6 | 5.6 |

1.01 or more occupants per room | 10.90% | 10.90% | 3.40% |

Vehicles Available

None | 11.90% | 13.30% | 8.60% |

1 or more | 88.10% | 86.70% | 91.40% |

Selected Characteristics

No telephone service available | 1.60% | 1.80% | 1.50% |

Limited English Speaking Households | 25.20% | 16.50% | 4.40% |

Owner-occupied housing units | 9,534,956 | 361,434 | 76,684,018 |

Selected Monthly Owner Costs As A Percentage Of Household Income In The Past 12 Months: Less than 30 percent | 69.10% | 67.00% | 77.90% |
Selected Monthly Owner Costs As A Percentage Of Household Income In The Past 12 Months: 30 percent or more

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>30.90%</th>
<th>33.00%</th>
<th>22.10%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Renter-occupied housing units

| Gross Rent As A Percentage Of Household Income In The Past 12 Months: Less than 30 percent | 49.10% | 50.50% | 54.00% |
| Gross Rent As A Percentage Of Household Income In The Past 12 Months: 30 percent or more | 50.90% | 49.50% | 46.00% |

Sources:


J. THE DEVELOPMENT SERVICE AGENCY OF OHIO - PORTRAIT OF AFRICAN AMERICANS IN OHIO

The Development Service Agency of Ohio notes that of the 1,661,333 African Americans in Ohio (making up 14.2% of Ohio’s population), 74,000 are foreign born. While this includes foreign borns from other places, it is acknowledged that most of the growth comes from African immigrants.²

Many African immigrants have qualified in terms of education and skills, but they face higher unemployment rates of 4.5% compared to those of the total U.S. foreign born population at 3% and the U.S. general population at 3.3% (Table 4.ix), raising the need for more targeted workforce development. African immigrants tend to be underrepresented both in individual and employer-provided training. Additionally, adding to employment issues is access to the English language. While bilingualism may be an untapped strength of African immigrants (with 75.8% speaking a language other than English at home compared to 21.8% in the general U.S. population — Table 4.xiii), a higher percentage (28.8%) equally lacks English proficiency. Some of the areas of workforce development needs, therefore, include:

1. **Language training programs for immigrant/ESL** - general; for higher education; and industry specific (health care, hospitality, construction, business, etc.)
2. **Diploma and transcript evaluation** - of foreign earned degrees and certificates
3. **Licensure and credentialing navigation** - information on how to navigate the licensure and credentialing pathways in Ohio (in areas like nursing, engineering, teaching, etc.)
4. **Career development programs** to connect Africans to resourced and highly skilled jobs. These programs will provide Africans with tools for personal/professional development, provide them opportunities for career advancement, and help them develop business relationships.

² DSA: Ohio African Americans
Programs will bring diverse speaker from the business community to facilitate dialogue and build mutually beneficial relationships. Participants will receive information about career development and entrepreneurship opportunities that help improve and develop their talents, leadership, and professional abilities. Through workshops, trainings, seminars, coaching and mentoring, these programs will facilitate conversations on issues that affect Africans in Ohio. NAIC is currently working with APNET to strengthen this initiative.

5. **Career Development/Mentorship Program**: This program will target high school students and college students, in partnership with local schools to provide advice on life issues. It will also provide career coaching and connect Africans to career opportunities and help them develop leadership skills through assignment of special duties, training and development.

6. **Issues around small business development** will target areas such as:
   i. *Understanding how to start a business in the US* - business plan; zoning and permits; taxes; legal; funding. NAIC is working with APNET & COMPASS to create incubator programs and African Business Consortium (Chamber) for the African community in Ohio. NAIC is to be a catalyst for new business start-ups and mentor existing businesses in the African diaspora community
   ii. *Access to capital and financing* - this also includes financial literacy and credit scores education
   iii. *The need for specialized employment and training programs for African immigrants* – such programs would be tailor made to address their strengths and weaknesses.

**K. AFRICAN IMMIGRANT BUSINESSES IN OHIO**

African immigrants in Ohio are contributing to Ohio’s economy. Moreover, they are helping to revitalize sections of their metro areas through their businesses – restaurants, food markets, child and health care providers, civil engineering firms, hair salons, used car lots, and auto repair shops including those on Morse Road and Cleveland Avenue in Columbus (Walker and Schemenauer, 2014; Figures 11-13). The [Columbus African Businesses and Events Directory](https://www.columbusafricanbusinessevents.com/) offers convenient information on some of these businesses and African immigrant events.

As Figures 13 and 14 show, most African immigrant businesses in Columbus Metro are in Black neighbourhoods on the East Side (Cartwright, 2018). This pattern likely holds true in other major Ohio metros like Cleveland and Cincinnati. This suggests that these businesses have crossover market appeal in Ohio’s black population which includes Africans, African-Americans, and Afro-Caribbeans.

With specific reference to Ghanaian businesses in Columbus, Agbemabiese (nd: 3-4) argues that: “Ghanaians have created businesses that cater to their needs as well as those of other Africans and the wider Ghanaian community. Some of these enterprises include Ghanaian restaurants, travel agencies, construction companies, lawyers and doctors’ offices, beauty salons and newspaper production. Other small businesses are in the retail sector (such as groceries, apparel sales), and ... in high order services (such as accountants, insurance sales, and real estate...
agents that require professional skills and college education). [Others are] ... in the low-order services (such as cleaning companies and automobile mechanics) ... Several Ghanaian churches have predominantly Ghanaian congregations, and they hold services in English and Twi, one of the spoken Ghanaian languages. Given this background, the question becomes, what are the experiences/challenges of Ghanaian immigrants and those who are engaged in small businesses in Columbus, Ohio?"

In response to his own question, Agbemabiese notes that Ghanaian businesses in Columbus have many “concerns [including] ... sources of finance, labor, markets, social networks, and competition. The lack of research [on these enterprises] accounts for the neglect in the growth of African and for that matter Ghanaian entrepreneurship, lack of patronization and appreciation of their goods and services and the non-availability of resource facilities to convert the retail shops into global produce markets” (ibid. 4). Other African immigrant businesses in Ohio face many of these same challenges.

Figure 11: East and West African Immigrant Community Shops in Forrest Park East Neighborhood of Columbus, OH
(Forrest Park East is bounded by Morse Road, Cleveland Ave., and Dublin Granville Rd)
Figure 12: This Strip Mall on the Eastern Edge of Forest Park (5266 Cleveland Ave, Columbus, OH 43231) Has Several Ghanaian Businesses Including Accra African International Market

(Source: Google Maps, 2020)

Figure 13a: African Immigrant Restaurants are Mostly in the Area that Runs North from North Linden to Forest Park Neighborhoods of Columbus

(Source: Google Maps, 2020)
Figure 13b: African Immigrant Food Markets are Mostly Concentrated in Forest Park and Southeast Columbus

(Source: Google Maps, 2020)
As is often the case, when new immigrant groups first come to the US, their first businesses tend to be restaurants and grocery stores or food markets. African immigrants in Ohio are no exception to this trend. More than many other businesses, restaurants are perhaps any immigrant community’s best bridge to the host society. African immigrant restaurants in Columbus are increasingly playing this role and are as diverse as their owners. Nevertheless, because most African immigrants in the city are from Western and Eastern Africa (Table 3, Figure 5), their restaurants are therefore dominant with the most notable ones being Ethiopian, Somali, Nigerian, Ghanaian and Kenyan. Many of these are well established and have even been featured in Columbus Experience blog (see box 1 below).
Box 1: African Restaurants in Columbus
Nick Dekker, Columbus Experience Blog, June 12, 2015.

Columbus offers no shortage of world cuisines to explore, and we’d like to highlight some African eateries making a big impact on the community. Our city is home to the second largest Somali population outside of Somalia itself, and the cuisine is well represented around the city. Hoyo’s Kitchen seeks to be accessible to everyone. Easy entry points include sambusas (pastries filled with meat and vegetables) and combo plates that let you mix and match dishes. And if you’ve never tried goat, Hoyo’s is a perfect place to experience it.

Likewise, African Paradise and Ginevra Cafe both offer dinners that will seem familiar to those new to Somali cuisine. Start with simple dishes like lamb, beef, or chicken paired with rice or pasta. The meals will be served with a variety of breads like the sour injera or the sweeter canjero; you can tear pieces of the bread to scoop up bites to eat.

There are many similarities between Somali and Ethiopian cuisine, and to explore Ethiopian fare, diners have a couple restaurants to turn to. Both Lalibela Ethiopian Restaurant and Addis Restaurant offer comfortable and welcoming atmospheres. Many dishes are made with familiar meats – chicken, beef, lamb, fish – mixed with vegetables and very well-seasoned. Spice levels can be adjusted to taste; one easy way to sample many dishes is to ask for a shareable platter. You can then tear pieces of injera to try smaller bites.

Wycliff’s Kitchen serves a Kenyan menu. Wycliff himself serves beef and goat stews, with meat that falls off the bone. The stews are often served with sides of rice and vegetables. The meals are accompanied by chapati flatbreads.

Although the menu at Dabakh Restaurant includes American staples like burgers and sandwiches, the Senegalese items are the better choice. Dishes range from pastries filled with beef or fish to stewed meats like lamb or beef served with rice.

Intercontinental Restaurant focuses on Nigerian cuisine, beginning with easy entryways like the jollof a rice dish that can be topped with different meats. The menu also explores different stews and soups made with okra, spinach, or fufu (yam dumplings).

L’Appat Patisserie & Cafe cycles through a variety of cuisines, African and non. Owner Didier Alapani originates from Benin, and his menu rotates to reflect various African countries, from Benin to the Cote d’Ivoire and beyond. Two things are worth noting about L’Appat: 1. They host a monthly Pan-African Day menu, which features food from across the continent, and 2. Their beautiful pastries are well worth seeking out, too.

Now you’ve got a good starting point, you should go out and explore! Remember to feel free to ask questions of your servers about dishes and ingredients. These restaurant owners are excited to introduce you to their countries’ cuisines.
L. MAJOR ISSUES IDENTIFIED AND DISCUSSED AT NAIC LISTENING TOURS IN 2018 (GROUPED TO COMMITTEES)

(a) Education and Cultural Affairs Committee
- Language barriers
- Lack of education
- Understand how race works in America
- Students raised in the U.S. with refugee and immigrant parents occasionally have to deal with questioning their identity
- Youth homelessness (Suggested Solution: Provide homeless shelter)
- Students need academic support
- Incarceration and crime as well as learning about one’s rights
- Building awareness of diversity & working to better welcome families
- Advocate for policy change to make English classes more accessible long term (Solution: NBCTC-Aspire: is an English language program for refugees that also assists in job placement and skills training)
- Women immigrants and refugees lack independence and education to be more resilient, English is a barrier
- Outreach work to represent all Africans
- Enable foreign professional degree holders working in low skill jobs
- Diaspora recognition and talent
- Showcasing diversity through festival or conference

(b) Workforce and Business Development Committee
- Transportation Challenges
- Language barriers
- Understand how race works in America
- Refugee priority is jobs before learning English – Policy advocacy must keep in mind
- Enable foreign professional degree holders working in low skill jobs
- Connecting Diaspora & African countries through trade & communication
- Diaspora connected opportunities abroad by utilizing state resource for international resource exchange (Bridge to Business Community)
- Job fairs at State level

(c) Health and Wellness Committee
- Students raised in the U.S. with refugee and immigrant parents occasionally have to deal with questioning their identity
- Depression is common among refugees (Homesickness)

(d) Social Services and Outreach Committee
- Transportation Challenges
- Scattered and separated families
Youth homelessness (Suggested Solution: Provide homeless shelter)

Inability of refugees to be self-sufficient within timeframe given by resettlement agencies (Suggested Solution: Making classes more accessible and not stopping at housing attainment)

Create metric to gauge the openness and policies of municipalities on how welcoming they are to African immigrants and refugees

Refugee Women in Action (RWA) has conducted qualitative research about Burundi, Congo, Somalia, and Nepali.

Follow up with resettlement agencies

Outreach work to represent all Africans

Connect with Amadia Muslim Center, ETSS, CRIS, US Together, Houses of Worship that serve community through food pantry and programming

(e) Legal Services Committee

How to reunite scattered and separated families

Inability of refugees to be self-sufficient within time frame given by resettlement agencies (Suggested Solution: Making classes more accessible and not stopping at housing attainment)

Conflict resolution training in community programming

Incarceration and crime as well as learning about one’s rights

Advocate for policy change to make English classes more accessible long term (Solution: NBCTC-Aspire-English language program for refugees that also assists in job placement and skills training)

Consumer protection issues

Create Civic engagement Committee

Unjust Mauritanian deportations

Commission as a Whole

Commission to serve as a facilitator for support among African refugee communities

Lack of information and resources

Reach communities outside Central Ohio

Commission to serve as a facilitator of support among African refugee communities

Collaboration with Ohio Latino Commission

More outreach to different communities

Creating directory of community organizations/members

Decentralize meeting locations to accommodate communities outside central Ohio

M. BEYOND 2019 NAIC GOALS

a) Define, gather, and energize its African immigrant constituents in Ohio

b) Establish NAIC presence, awareness, and input

c) Conduct Listening Tours throughout Ohio
d) Use social media to coalesce the tangible presence and work of African immigrants in Ohio.

e) Assess and develop unique solutions to meet the unique circumstances of African immigrants in Ohio.

f) Develop strong linkages with decision makers and influencers.

NAIC seeks to be a fully functioning commission in all its roles of advocacy, empowerment, and ensuring the growth and contribution of African immigrants to the fabric and success of the great State of Ohio. In this regard, NAIC seeks to:

I. Sponsor Summits and Conferences that bring together the best minds to solve the issues of our times that affect African immigrants and all our neighbours in Ohio.

II. Make Ohio a model of America’s rich diversity Present Africa’s cultural richness festival in Ohio to showcase the best of African culture and to showcase our diversity in all fields – careers, businesses, and innovation. Connect Ohio globally to Africa in mutually beneficial ways.

III. Follow and Advise on Legislation to benefit and facilitate the contributions of African Immigrants in Ohio.

IV. Continue to Implement, Facilitate and Coordinate Programs and Services in all areas- Legal, i.e. Mauritanians & Others Needing legal aid; Social, Health, Education, Workforce

V. Develop and Align NAIC Performance Metrics at Commission and Committee Levels
   o Financial
   o Operational
   o Social Impact
   o Economic Impact

VI. Create Directory/Catalogue of all African communities and organizations at granular / ethnicity level

VII. Maintain Collaboration and Network of Partners; Capture and Report Data with /by partner organizations

N. TRANSITIONING INTO 2020

(i) Submission of Annual Report – December 2019

(ii) NAIC Retreat – Commissioners and Committee Members

(iii) African Immigrants Census Subcommittee – Community Leaders Training – January 2020
Hold Night of Excellence and Awards - May - September 2020
Hold Africans in Ohio Conference - May - September 2020
Hold Speakers Panel – For School Districts’ Professional Development
New American Economy – Collaboration with NAIC
Explore Credentialing, Licensure Pathways – Collaboration with Welcoming City and World Education Service (WES)

O. NAIC IN THE MEDIA


As Census Count Nears, Columbus Confronts Fear Among African Immigrants, Ghana Diaspora PAC, February 20, 2020, https://ghanadiasporapac.org/2020/02/20/censuscountohio/

Houleye Thiam, a Mauritanian immigrant, is working to educate Columbus’ African community about the 2020 Census.

Roaire Ifedi, a professor at Ashland University, is leading Columbus’ census outreach efforts among African immigrants.
P. NAIC 2019 SNAPSHOTS OF ACHIEVEMENTS AND MILESTONES

I. Successfully defended the LISC review given to all boards and commissions.
II. Successfully presented first ever workshop by a state commission at the Ohio TESOL conference.
III. NAIC presence & media awareness: Columbus dispatch full coverage of Africans in Ohio, NAIC Inaugural Report, Hannah report, New Americans magazine, National Public Radio.
IV. Maintaining NAIC communication via Facebook and google group messaging.
V. Data gathering: health surveys, economic needs survey conducted by committees of NAIC.
VI. Addition of more collaborating partners: African Festival in Columbus, Africans in Ohio, Columbus Public Health, Ohio TESOL organization, Columbus Foundation, college of social work (the Ohio State University), East Side Healthcare, FPC Mauritania, City of Columbus, Franklin County, US Census Bureau - Office of Partnerships, Ghana Council, Welcoming City - Columbus, African Community Association -Kent State University; Ashland University, Bowling Green State University.
VII. Commissioners’ presentations -Columbus, Bowling Green, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Kent.
VIII. Attendance and participation in community events; representation at refugees presentations and census panels.
IX. Election of new officers.
X. Reappointment of three seating commissioners and appointment of a new commissioner.
XI. Created and sustained effective education, awareness, and recruitment drives for the US Census 2020 campaigns across the state including identifying about 20 languages (Arabic, Edo, Efik, Ewe, Hausa, Ga, Twi, Luganda, Burmese, Zomi, Kinyarwanda, Kirundi, Lingala, Igbo, Yoruba, Wolof, Fulani, French, Somali, Swahili) that could be used by the 2020 Census’s Hard-to-Reach (HTR) effort to count African immigrant communities in Ohio. This HTR Census committee transitioned into COVID-19 work in 2020.
Q. NAIC BY THE NUMBERS - 2019

60 - Number of Ohioans participating/working in NAIC’s five committees.

30 - Number of countries represented in the work of NAIC.

40 - Number of volunteers working in the African immigrants subcommittee of the City of Columbus/Franklin County 2020 US census complete count committee.

6 - All six statutory meetings held -February, April, June, August, December.

25 - Average attendance at NAIC commission meetings.

R. 2019 NAIC COMMITTEE REPORTS

(a) Education Committee

2019 Committee Members:
Dr. Benjamin Odita, Chair (Franklin)
Dr. Awatif Elnour, Vice-Chair (Franklin)
Raymond Yeboah (Franklin)
Ibrahima Sow, NAIC Commissioner/Recorder (Franklin)
Dr. Kefa Otiso, NAIC Commissioner (Wood)
Harrison Poku-Yeboah (Franklin)
Olaoye Bukola (Franklin)
Dr. Barth Shepkong (Franklin)
Dr. Naomy Ndungu (Madison)
Dr. Rosaire Ifedi, NAIC Commissioner/Chair

In 2019 this committee:
- Created and oversaw the creation of the TESOL 2019 Workshop
- Supported annual African Festivals and other events in multiple counties
- Connected with school districts state-wide and plans to conduct a study of African immigrant students resource accessibility in school districts in 2021

Put in motion strategies to be a repository for community events & programs, be resource for ESL school programs, & offer competency workshops and speakers starting in 2021.

(b) Health and Wellness Committee

2019 Committee Members:
Stellah Asiimwe (Uganda)
Norah Bagirinka (Rwanda)
Ernestine Minani (Burundi)
Musa Yogoub (Sudan)
Miriam Tesfai
The Health and Wellness committee convened early in 2019 to determine its objectives in support of NAIC goals. It was determined that the committee would:

- Identify clear cut objectives and ideas that complement or improve on the aid structures already available in the communities
- Attend to the concern of the refugee class of immigrants and their medical needs
- Identify preventive care options and harness available resources
- Attend to special needs of African immigrants such as cultural and language barriers, as well as those adjusting from war-torn locations.

In order to assure that actions would be data-driven, a survey was devised to gather data on presumptive factors that affect health and wellness in any community, administered specifically to the African Immigrant population. The survey was concerned with:

- Personal and family priorities for health and wellness
- Access to Care
- Potential hindrances to Health and Wellness
- Promising practices towards wellness, in African communities
- Knowledge, attitude, and practices that need to be addressed
- Legal issues

The administration of the survey was via NAIC member networks and African organizations who contacted their members and constituents online and throughout Ohio.

While education of the African immigrant communities on available options emerged as a key priority to be addressed, the committee recognized that other NAIC committees (e.g., Social, Legal) would be involved in a more effective response to issues identified as a result of this survey. However, to ensure that there would be positive momentum, the Health and Wellness Committee would start initiatives wherever advantageous and responsive to do so.

To that end, the Committee was represented at the Community Health Fair held in Columbus on April 13, 2019, the Somali Health Fair on April 27, 2019 and the TESOL (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages) conference on September 19, 2019. At the Health fairs, interaction was directly with potential beneficiaries of services and information from NAIC with significant interest in services. At TESOL, interaction was with Teachers who need support to address the needs of parents and students, and to encourage their willingness to be allies of NAIC out in the field.

Continuing efforts include the engagement of students at Ohio State University who are interested in working with NAIC on the data results of the survey in addition to other emergent concerns. NAIC was able to successfully establish an ongoing collaboration with Ohio State’s Eminence Fellows Program. Through this collaboration for four years, 25 students will be able to establish a sustainable health project geared towards improving the quality of life for African Immigrants in the State of Ohio.

(c) Social Services and Outreach Committee
2019 Committee Members:
Khamis Yahya (Sudan)
Florence Anyabuonwu (Nigeria)
The Social Service committee worked with our various communities to inform them of the work of NAIC and to collaborate with government agencies and other organizations to ensure access to services and to improve the lives of new African immigrants. Some of the work done by this committee are listed below:

- Worked with the Ohio Department of Public Safety/Ohio Bureau of Motor Vehicle in Cleveland to identify strategies to fulfil agency mission in preserving the safety and well-being of all citizen with the most cost-effective and service-oriented methods. Discussion was held on how the Department can make available BMV handbooks in languages spoken by African immigrants. One of the suggested languages is Swahili. This is a recommendation state wide. Currently, new immigrants can use qualified or certified interpreters to help translate the BMV hand book.

- Commissioner Brissett met with the Congolese immigrants at a community event on 05/12/19 where she shared information about the mission and purposes of NAIC as well as information on accessing needed services.

- Commissioner Kirenga attended the World Refugee Day in Dayton on June 20th 2019 where she shared information regarding NAIC. World Refugee Day is dedicated to raising awareness of the situation of refugees throughout the world.

- Commissioner Eugenie Kirenga participated in various events in the city of Dayton where she shared the work of NAIC and advocated for immigrants in that city. She also collaborated and shared information about the NAIC with the City of Dayton through the Welcome Dayton Office as they host various events to include Immigration Relief Clinics, Challenges facing immigrants and refugees.

- Commissioner Brissett worked with various organizations in Cleveland to share information about the purpose of NAIC and how this commission can advocate for them to include the following organizations:
  1. The Public library in Cleveland Heights where 62 immigrant families attended.
  2. US Together
  3. Midwife Nurse @Neighborhood Family Practices where discussions were held regarding African women, child birth difficulties and barriers to accessing appropriate services.

- Social Services Committee participated in the TESOL workshop held on October 12th in Columbus. At this workshop information was given on how the NAIC can collaborate with teachers in helping students and parents
(d) Workforce Development and Business Committee

2019 Committee Members:
Commissioner Dr. Prince Ellis
Brian Thomas
Cedric Kwuimy
Colleen Chavi
Edouard Tende
Harriet Nannyonga
Isaac Nyenaweh
Pegmankro Thio
Songane Ndiaye
Commissioner Tariq Tarey

The members of the committee engaged in several activities during 2019 to include:

(a) Survey

- Created a survey of workforce development issues of priority to African immigrants
- Survey was in two forms examining the:
  i. Type and amount of resources that are potentially available in private entities and institutions/organizations at all levels, for African Immigrants community;
  ii. Communication methods/platforms that African immigrants use to learn about these resources available to them from private and government entities.
- Two approaches are being explored on how to administer the survey and these are through:
  i. Committee-led: The committee would directly distribute the survey to potential respondents. Answers to the questionnaires would be compiled and analyzed and the preliminary results conveyed to other committees of NAIC;
  ii. Commission-led: Add this committee’s survey to a comprehensive survey generated by other NAIC committees. Joint administration of survey would be more effective with a higher response rate.
- The Workforce Development Committee and NAIC plan to use the results of these surveys to work with public and private partners to formulate policies and programs that improve the lives of the African immigrants.

(b) Census 2020

- NAIC and the committee are actively involved in the 2020 Census as part of the Census Complete Count Sub-committee on African Immigrants;
- Dr. Prince Ellis was appointed on the Complete Count, Cincinnati;
- Committee members attended community events and participated in activities that were focused on promoting the Census 2020. The goals of the participation included alerting and educating the African immigrants about
  o What a census is/mean, who administers it, and separating facts from fiction (dispelling myths and fears that have been shared during public discourse);
  o Importance of and need for ensuring a “complete count” and how this relates to the daily lives of the community;
The privacy laws and restrictions associated with its administration/implementation and emphasized that members of the community should not fear participate in the census;

- Pending calendar of activities, and the varying ways that individuals could be directly involved (taking the census, and getting jobs to work on the census);
- Reminders that a significant part of the Census 2020 will be conducted online but this will be completed by a face-to-face, door-to-door activities of enumerator;

- Committee has contributed to NAIC’s connect to Census 2020 and will remain engaged in the activities for the duration of the Census.

(c) Community outreach

Members of the committee collaborated with other organizations/institutions and participated in community outreach activities that advance the goals of NAIC.

- Festival of Faiths, “Celebrating our Community’s Religious Diversity - Building Community” (September 8, 2020 in Cincinnati)
- US Together “45th International Taste of Columbus” (August 16th 2019 in Columbus)
- OSU, College of Social Work: “Community Engagement Action Conference” (September 22, 2019 in Columbus)
- APNET 8th Annual Symposium: “Unlocking Africa’s Potential” (Nov/2/2019 in Cincinnati)
- Inaugural Columbus African Festival: “Building the Fabric of Africa - Bringing Africa Together” (August 26, 2019 in Columbus)
- Northland Community Bazaar: “Elevate Northland”, (October 23 2019, in Columbus)

(d) Presentation

- Committee members presented about the role of NAIC in activities during forums arranged by partnering organizations or by NAIC
  - Festival of Faiths, “Celebrating our Community’s Religious Diversity - Building Community” (September 8, 2020 in Cincinnati)
  - TESOL, The Ohio TESOL Conference, (October, 12, 2019; Columbus)

2020 - Workforce Development and Business Committee, NAIC Meeting Planning for 2020

- Goal of Workforce Development and Business Committee is to “do something very tangible” and involve/engage people on the committee.
- Dr. Cedric Kwuimy suggested that committee should seek out the goals of the commission (NAIC) for 2020 and then explore how committee should design and implement its activities to fit in these NAIC goals. The committee should then implement these activities and tell the NAIC about them as they progress.
- After review of NAIC publications, discussion, and minutes of meetings, the committee members decided that the focus should be on three activities
  - Administer the Workforce Development Survey;
  - Credentialing Hub: Research and streamline the availability of the organizations providing credentialing;
  - African Business Census and Needs Assessment Research;
- The committee recognizes that implementing these will require resources and necessitate collaboration with other partners. These are included in the plans that follow below.
Survey
- Will focus on which and how public and private organizations serve African Immigrants.
- It was noted that the cities of Ohio have a lot of resources which can be useful for African Immigrants. Other public and private organizations/institutions also have resources that can be tapped to improve the socio-economic status of African immigrants. Currently, the main problem is that most of the members in the African immigrant community are not aware of and have not used these resources.
- Goal of the committee is to make these resources more known to the members of the African immigrant community. In addition, the committee should determine ways in which it can facilitate NAIC to tap into these resources to fund the implementation of some of its activities.
- Other

Credentialing of African Immigrants

African immigrants possess varying levels of professional qualifications and experiences working in an environment existing in the Ohio economy. While some African immigrants have no or very limited professional qualifications, others possess very high professional experience gained in their countries of ancestry but that is not applied in Ohio.
- A number of African immigrants find it very hard to find a job even though they are highly qualified.
- Others are not as highly qualified but seek to build skills and knowledge to improve their potential to be hired in the job market or their competitiveness as owners of new or growing businesses.
- Focus of the Workforce Development and Business committee is on finding resources and partners (third-party organizations) that can streamline credentialing:
  - Translation of documents (transcripts) and prescribing services
  - Transfer of credit hours
  - Institutional access: connect them to academic institutions/schools (guidance to schools that are more vested in immigrants ("immigrant friendly") e.g. can facilitate the translation of transcripts within a reasonable time calendar
  - Funding of the credentialing services
- Identify and mobilize organizations and resources to build the professional skills and experience of African immigrants seeking professional development:
  - Remedial courses
  - Language classes (especially English as a second language)
  - Entrepreneurial skills
- State, city, local certification and licensing
  - Skills acquired over time are then converted into equivalent academic qualifications
  - Legal requirements and desired licensing
- These efforts should avoid re-inventing the wheel or making the same mistakes and instead learn from the experience of others in the same line or facing similar circumstances.
- Programs to streamline the credentialing process will assist African immigrants. The nature of this help will depend on how they answer the following questions:
  - Are you looking for a job?
  - Are interested in opening a new or expanding your existing business?
  - Are you looking to get into a school?
In practical terms, the credentialing program will involve designing a platform or database (which can be accessed online and by other means) that guides:
  - African immigrants how they can
    - get the appropriate credentials
    - get into the workforce
  - Credentialing service providers on how they can better serve this portion of the population.
    - Outreach approach should be refined
    - Promotion of the available service

Experience of the African immigrant community indicates that once an individual starts to work in a job, it becomes even harder to get out and take advantage of the opportunities to improve themselves by filing in the skills that they need for better jobs.

Language (e.g. ESL) and developing communication skills must be included in this program.

**Action Items**
- Continue participating in completion of the Census 2020
- Survey:
  - Dr. Cedric Kwuimy will share the links to the survey with the committee
  - Survey should be distributed as soon as the committee gives the go-ahead.
- Credentialing hub: Committee should research and decide on the resources.
  - Dr. Harriet Nannyonga should work with Mr. Collen Chavi to draft a short plan of actionable items for the next year (2020), list the tasks.
  - Dr. Harriet Nannyonga should work with Dr. Prince Ellis on offline a 2020 schedule of actions, set deadlines, and assign committee members to specific tasks depending on what people think they can and prefer to do
  - See what other communities are doing to support their people.
  - Reach out to organizations that are doing similar things to what the committee is proposing.
  - Meetings should be more regular and better attended.

(e) **Legal Services Committee**

*2019 Committee Members:*
Commissioner Abass Bangura (Chair)
Mr. Mohamed Salim
Commissioner Dr. Rosaire Ifedi
Attorneys Mark Nesbit, Brittnee Pankey Qualls, Inna Simakovksy, Emmanuel Olawale, Victor Chukwudelunzu.

The main areas of focus are Immigration, Conflict Resolution, Political and Legislative issues, and advocacy for issues affecting the New African Immigrant Community (NAIC).

**Objectives**
- To assist the African immigrant community with access to free and/or/ affordable legal support by creating a legal liaison board that provides direct answers to legal questions,
information on legal rights and responsibilities, and available options and resources to assist the individual in solving legal problems.

- To promote conflict resolution and conflict prevention programs in the community.
- To encourage African immigrants to enroll in affordable legal plans as well as seek out legal aid volunteers that can provide free legal counseling to community members.
- To provide resources to assist the African immigrant community in finding an attorney for representation in courtroom appearances.
- To organize programs and speakers on legal issues of interest to the African immigrant community. This may include bringing members of the legal profession to speak at community events, conducting workshops, and disseminating brochures on common legal problems.

During the 2019 year, the Legal Services Committee worked on putting together a list of reputable attorneys, leveraging lists that have been created by other organizations. The committee prepared a list of survey questions sent to American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA) for their inclusion. The final list will include a price range for immigration services as well as free legal aid services on a sliding scale. The legal committee will also be developing a brochure on fraudulent attorneys.

The legal committee discussed preparing a “Know Your Right’ presentation to be used for community outreach in 2020 and beyond. Potential areas of focus will include: general training on how the law will impact the community, education on what government benefits to apply for, consumer fraud training, business law education to the community, and inviting IRS/Social Security personnel to talk to the community. The legal committee planned to train lawyers and defendants on diversion programs and about options to plead in criminal cases. It will also work with schools on disciplinary issues affecting New African immigrant children.

The committee will be scheduling outreach sessions and will also be looking for opportunities to partner with other community events.
S. NAIC COLLABORATIONS AND CONNECTIONS

Africans in Columbus
African Youth League
African Professionals Network (APNET)
Aspire
Azza Sudanese School
Azza Women & children Development Organization
Central Ohio ESL Collaborative
Cincinnati Compass
Columbus Council of World Affairs (CCWA)
Kenyan Association
Global Cleveland
Noor Islamic Cultural Center
Weavers of Nigeria
Welcome Dayton
4OurHelpers

Advocates for Basic Legal (ABLE)
AFSC, Dayton
Catholic Social Services
Central Ohio Parent Leadership Training Institute (COPLTI)
Community Refugee Integration Services (CRIS)
ECDI
Ethiopia Tewahedo Social Services (ETSS)
Elevate Northland
FPC Mauritania
Foundation for Sustainable Development of Africa (FOSDAF)
New American Economy
Nigerians in Diaspora-Ohio
Ohio Commission on Hispanic & Latino Affairs
Refugee Women in Action
SON Ministries
Ugandan Association of Ohio
US Together
T. PICTORIAL OVERVIEW OF NAIC’S WORK IN 2019

Commissioner Dr Solaru at the Eastside Health Summit held in Columbus.

Commissioner Comfort Kenneh (C) with the *Nasaba ya Kifalme* (Royal Dynasty) Dance Troup, May 14 2019
Discussions centered on "State and Community Immigrant Initiatives."

Ifedi’s keynote address “Philanthropy: Giving back to the community” encouraged attendees to engage in civic volunteerism including participation in 2020 Census activities.
NAIC Commissioner Rosaire Ifedi welcomed Cameroonian-born, Belgium-based filmmaker, Rosine Mbakam whose *Chez Jolie Coiffure* movie was screened at The Wexner, Ohio State University on October 19, 2019. The movie is a deeply moving documentary on Immigrant Women in Belgium.
Commissioner Dr. Ifedi – panellist; Houleyee Thiam, the Convener and Member of the African Immigrants Subcommittee for the 2020 US Census

FPC – Mauritania – Role of Women in Africa’s Development – October 12th.
(From Left) Comm. Sow, Dr. Naomy Ndungu, Dr. Solaru, Vice-Chair Kenneh, Dr. Harriet Nannyonga, Chair Dr. Ifedi, Comm. Bangura, Dr. Otiso co-presented at the Ohio TESOL Conference on October 12, 2019. NAIC’s presentation was entitled “English Learners in the Classroom and Community: Responding with Best Practices.”

Commissioner Kefa M. Otiso addressed a BG Chamber of Commerce, Welcome BG, & Bowling Green Economic Development luncheon on “Importance of Diversity in Our Community and Workforce,” on October 2, 2019 (Bowling Green, Ohio)

Mayor Andrew Ginther was enstooled and former Mayor Michael Coleman honored by the Ghana Council for their leadership in strengthening US-Ghana relations. This took place at a colorful Columbus Sister Cities Ceremony on September 27, 2019 at Columbus Hilton Downtown. Representing NAIC were Chair Rosaire Ifedi, Recorder Ibrahima Sow, NAIC committee member, Ms. Cynthia Engmann, Hostess and President of Ghana Council.
Co-chaired by Mayor Andrew Ginther and County Commissioner Kevin Boyce, the 2020 Census Complete Count Committee of the City of Columbus and Franklin County was inaugurated in May 2019. NAIC’s representation in the African Immigrants Subcommittee, chaired by Rosaire Ifedi, has been instrumental in numerous community education and awareness campaigns. The subcommittee produced multilingual audio and video recordings to reach the diverse and growing African immigrant populations in Central Ohio and across the State of Ohio. Commissioner Sow is pictured in the middle.
Dr. Ifedi with other panelists, including Rose Simmons (Director, U.S. Census Bureau, East Region) on “Preparing for the Census 2020”, the Community Engagement & Action Conference hosted by the College of Social Work, the Ohio State University, Fawcett Center, Sept. 20, 2019

Commissioner Dr. Ellis Prince represented NAIC at the Festival of Faiths in Cincinnati on September 10, 2019
Houleyee Thiam, Mrs. Ali, Chairwoman Ifedi, and Mr. Al Bangura of the US Census worked a Census Information booth at the 1st Columbus African Festival.

Commissioners Rosaire Ifedi, Ibrahim Sow, and Kefa M Otiso represented NAIC at the Inaugural Columbus African Festival on August 26, 2019 as well as presented information about the 2020 US Census.
Census awareness, training and recruitment held at Ashland University-Columbus Center.
Harriet Nannyonga supporting NAIC’s Census 2020 Complete Count outreach

Census awareness, training and recruitment held at Ashland University-Columbus Center
The African Immigrants Subcommittee on Census presented information on the 2020 Census at this event.
Chair Rosaire Ifedi, Mohammed Salim, Dr. Harriet Nannyonga, Houleyee Thiam, all members of the African Immigrant Subcommittee, taking a break from working at the Census Information Table at US Together’s 45th International Taste of Columbus. The event also featured East African cuisine, August 21, 2019.

U.S. Congresswoman Joyce Beatty (C), just back from the Year of Return trip to Ghana (as part of US Congressional team led by Speaker Nancy Pelosi) poses with NAIC Commissioner Rosaire Ifedi (L), and Cynthia Engmann, President of Ghana Council, at the Ghana Picnic (August 12, 2019).
NAIC Commissioners Kefa Otiso, Rosaire Ifedi, Prince Ellis, and Comfort Kenneh at Governor Mike DeWine’s Inaugural Ball, in Columbus, Ohio, on Monday, January 14, 2019.

Mrs. Prince Ellis (L) and NAIC Commissioners Rosaire Ifedi, Kefa Otiso, Prince Ellis, and Comfort Kenneh at Governor Mike DeWine’s Inaugural Ball.
Commissioner Dr. Kefa M. Otiso (L) with Mr. Ron Todd II (R), Ohio Governor Mike DeWine’s Minority Affairs Liaison. By virtue of his position, Mr. Todd II is the New African Immigrants Commission’s liaison or “bridge” to Governor DeWine.
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