



# ACCORDING TO CENSUS ESTIMATES, MORE THAN ONE IN TEN VIRGINIA RESIDENTS WAS BORN IN A COUNTRY OTHER THAN THE U.S.

**Of the 24,163 learners served by Virginia adult education programs in Program Year 2012-2013, 46% (11,163) were enrolled in English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes.** With the growing importance of foreign born individuals to Virginia's education system, economy, and communities, it is vital that regional leaders can access accurate information about the foreign born population within their localities.

With this in mind, the Virginia Adult Learning Resource Center (VALRC), a division of The Literacy Institute at Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU), contracted with VCU's Survey and Evaluation Research Laboratory (SERL) to research Virginia's foreign born population, emphasizing educational and naturalization trends. SERL mined data collected in 2009 and 2011 by the U.S. Census Bureau and the American Community Survey in an effort to address questions such as: *How is Virginia's foreign born population distributed across the state? Is the foreign born population growing? What are the characteristics of the foreign born in Virginia (education level, origin, citizenship status, etc.) across regions? For each of the 22 adult education regions and for Virginia as a whole, SERL looked at:*

- Percentage of overall population that is foreign born
- Foreign born population by region of birth
- Period of entry
- Percentage naturalized
- English-speaking ability and language spoken at home
- Educational attainment
- Labor force participation
- Occupations
- Percentage with health insurance coverage
- Age groups and median age
- Marital status
- House type

Information on all variables was not available for all regions. (For more detail on data collection, see the appendix. Additional documents prepared by SERL, including spreadsheets, can be accessed with the online version of this publication at [www.valrc.org](http://www.valrc.org).) Using the reports and the wealth of information gathered by SERL, the Resource Center worked to create reader-friendly,

region-specific guides that collect the most complete and pertinent statistics on foreign born population numbers, education level, citizenship status, and language speaking ability for each area of the state.

Most Virginia adult education programs are already serving their foreign born residents with classes including English language instruction, civics education, and citizenship preparation. It is our hope that this information will help regional program managers better allocate resources, schedule course offerings, target recruitment efforts, and evaluate their progress in meeting regional educational needs. In regions with new or growing foreign born populations, we hope this data will help focus efforts to expand adult education services. Additionally, we hope that these reports provide valuable information that can be shared with regional service agencies and with partners in the business, higher education, and nonprofit communities. With more than 870,000 foreign born individuals statewide, 74% of them in the workforce, it is clear that Virginia's foreign born population is both a significant target audience for education services and a tremendous asset to Virginia's economic present and future. Adult education has a vital role to play in preparing for that future, and the Resource Center is committed to supporting adult education practitioners as they continue to assist adult learners in developing the language, life, and academic skills to positively impact their own lives and their communities.

Sincerely,



Barbara E. Gibson  
Manager, VALRC