

Immigration from Africa ^[1]

North Carolina today is home to people from well over a hundred nations. This article summarizes the various communities of African immigrants living in Guilford County. Since the article was written a few years ago, Guilford has grown even more diverse, as new communities of African immigrants have established themselves in and around Greensboro.

There are close to 15,000 people from many of the 54 African nations living in Guilford County, but no official population numbers are available because the census categorizes these people as African-American or Black. They come from Christian, Muslim, and traditional religious orientations and represent numerous tribal affiliations. About 10 percent of Guilford County's African population are refugees. The African Services Coalition, a nonprofit organization composed of representatives from different African communities, seeks to foster cooperation between the various communities. Some communities have roots at NC A&T State University that go back to the sixties when the university was recognized as a valuable educational resource by developing countries.

Nigeria

The Nigerian population is an older, well-established community believed to be the largest African community in Guilford County with about 3,500 people, including second and third generations. This group reflects a variety of religious and tribal traditions. Many of the Nigerians in Guilford County first lived in New York, New Jersey or Washington D.C, and settled in Guilford County after obtaining official status.

Ghana

Guilford County has a long-term, multigenerational Ghanaian population consisting of approximately 450 people. The few new arrivals are mostly international students at area universities, or friends and family members of previous residents.

Sierra Leone

A well established population of 800 people of Sierra Leone ancestry has made Guilford County their home. This population has either stayed the same or decreased because the temporary protective status that used to be available to some immigrants from this area has been ended.

Sudan

The Sudanese population is a diverse population. Most Sudanese have come to Guilford County within the last five years and are currently more than 2,700 people. Many are fleeing the long-standing war in this largest country of Africa. A group of young Sudanese from the south, commonly referred to as the "Lost Boys," have been recently resettled as refugees. Most Sudanese, however, are Muslims from the north. In the last year, many have become citizens, which has allowed people to bring family members from Sudan, leading to a population increase of several hundred in the last year.

Niger

An estimated 3,000 people from Niger have arrived in the last few years. This is one of the newest and fastest growing African populations.

Somalia

There are approximately 400 refugees from Somalia who have arrived in the last six years, including Benadir from the city of Mogadishu and newly arriving refugees from the Bantu tribe. The population fluctuates because many Somalis have chosen to join family and friends in Minnesota, where they can receive more generous social services and have stronger social networks.

Liberia

There are an estimated 1,200 Liberians settled in Guilford County. This population includes some refugees who are recent arrivals, and others who have lived in Guilford County for many years. In the last couple of years, a few hundred Liberian refugees who had been living in refugee camps in the Ivory Coast and Ghana have been resettled in Guilford County.

Senegal, Cameroon, Ivory Coast, Togo, Burkinafaso, and Mali

Collectively, there are an estimated 700 people from French speaking nations in West Africa that have resettled in the Guilford County area. The population has decreased slightly because some West Africans have moved to New

York or Washington, DC, where they have a better chance of gaining asylum and not being deported.

Congo as well as Rwanda, Zambia, Uganda, Kenya, Burundi, and other Central African countries

These diverse communities represent a population of over 700, many of whom are recent arrivals from this troubled region of the world. Though many in this population have been here long enough to receive citizenship, the population has not increased because the conflicts in Central Africa have meant that the families of many Guilford residents have passed away or cannot be located.

Ethiopia

About 300 people from Ethiopia reside in the Guilford County area. The Triangle is home to a much larger Ethiopian population.

North Africa, particularly Morocco but also including Egypt, Algeria, and Tunisia

About 600 people from the North African countries close to the Mediterranean now reside here. The North African population has more than doubled, mostly because of an influx of Moroccan residents. Other people from this area have found it increasingly difficult to get necessary visas.

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