

NIGERIAN COMMUNITY IN NORTH TEXAS

QUICK OBSERVATIONS

Country/region of origin	Nigeria
Population (community leaders)	15,000
Population (Census 2000)	7,342
Main reasons for migration	Economic hardship, came to study and stayed
Years in this region	10-20-years
Primary areas of residence	Widely dispersed
General level of education	Bachelor's degree
Employment	Professional, health care, retail management, taxi driver
Principal religions	Christianity
Languages	Igbo, Yoruba, Edo, Ishiang
Media (newspaper or radio)	
Community newsletter	
Cultural organizations	45

Like most other African immigrants, Nigerians were drawn to the United States by its promise of opportunities and financial betterment. They are well educated, most holding college degrees. Many are part of the African brain drain that has fled political instability, coming here to pursue a college degree and subsequently joining the U.S. labor force after graduation. They are a community of young and middle-aged adults with their children.

While Chicago is believed to be the U.S. center for Nigerians from Yoruba tribe, North Texas is the Mecca for Igbos, with the national Igbo convention being held here each Labor Day Weekend. There are also a smaller number of Yoruba, Edo and Ishiang residing in this region. Local social and cultural associations are divided along these tribal lines and the local Organization of Nigerian Nationals is said to be constituted of 40 different tribal societies, 28 of which are Igbo. Unfortunately, many of the Nigerian immigrant leaders focus their considerable organizational talents on Nigerian internal politics, tribal power struggles and dreams of returning to the motherland, rather than on developing a strong cultural or educational program for their children or a definitive presents in North Texas. Many parents express fear that their rich heritage is being lost.

While new arrivals may begin their employment by driving a cab, especially at the FEW Airport, subsequently they tend to find employment in a retail or professional field. Nigerians also find pride and self-fulfillment as small business owners. Sixty-three percent of all Nigerian college students ultimately have remained in the United States (The Economist, September, 2002).

Nigerians tend to be a tightly knit and supportive community. This may be due to their high educational level, their willingness to preserve their traditions in the face of a public that does not differentiate between African Americans and Africa immigrants, and the fact that as legal residents, they do not fear having a visible presence.

OTHER SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS

Age Distribution	Primarily children, young adults, and middle-aged
Percentage of men and women	50% men, 50% women
Ties to country of origin	Nuclear family remains
Frequency of travel to country of origin	Once a year to every 2-5 years
Estimate of undocumented	Less than 5%

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OUTREACH STRATEGIES

Sports and day camp activities for children and youth

Make friendships – Nigerians are warm and friendly and respond positively to genuine offers of friendship

Join in celebrations of Nigerian holidays

Invite a Nigerian church choir to sing at your church and invite the Nigerians in your community to attend or do a pulpit swap

College student ministry

Business owners group

HOW DO YOU OPEN THE DOOR TO CONVERSATIONS ABOUT FAITH?

Share your everyday relationship with God...answered prayers, Scriptures that comfort

Ask about how needs are met through their faith...loneliness, courage, direction

Offer to pray for their needs

Give books/videos that tell a faith story

Discover their interests and find Christians in that field to share their story

Look for Bible stories or principles that teach a value they respect.