Populations change in two ways: through migration and natural increase (births minus deaths). Migration is of particular interest to planners in NYC, as the flows of different groups drive the changing composition of the City’s population. This Info Brief analyzes historical migration to and from NYC to show how its dynamism shapes the size and characteristics of the population, and how it relates to larger socioeconomic trends.

**Historical Migration Flows to and from NYC**

- Since 1975, out-migration from NYC has remained consistently high whereas in-migration has increased steadily, resulting in large net outflows of the 1970s turning to net inflows in 2010-2014.
- During 1975-80, amidst NYC’s fiscal crisis, 1.1M people migrated out and only 671k migrated in, resulting in a net migration loss of 429k that shrank NYC’s total population.
- By the 1980s and 90s, increasing in-migration helped NYC grow again. The majority of in-migrants during this period came from abroad, a cumulative effect of the 1965 Immigration Act. Today, national reurbanization trends are evident in the record numbers of domestic migrants coming to NYC.
- Following decades of suburbanization, flows between NYC and the rest of the metro region are beginning to equalize. During 1975-80, 453k NYC residents migrated out to the region and were replaced by only 130k in-migrants from the region, resulting in a net loss of 322k. Today the net loss to the region is only 99k, a historic low.

**Migration Flows by Race and Hispanic Origin**

- Each race/Hispanic group shows unique migration patterns since 1975, which has significant impacts on the City’s ethnic composition. Natural increase (not shown) mitigates migration losses for all groups, particularly blacks and Hispanics.
- The 1970s saw a dramatic net outflow of whites, but this outflow ebbed in subsequent decades, with net migration turning sharply positive today.
- The black population has shown consistent net outflows since the 1970s, a reversal of the earlier 20th century trend that saw a surge in net inflows, especially from the south. Today, blacks are the only group with meaningful migration losses from NYC.
- Hispanics have also experienced net migration losses since the 1970s, but losses have been pared back and were close to zero in 2010-2014.
- Asians are the only major group to have positive net migration since the 1970s, due primarily to immigration.

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1 Data are available for all in-migrants entering NYC and for all NYC out-migrants who settle in the US or PR. Out-migrants to the rest of the world cannot be estimated.

2 2010 - 2014 ACS migration data has been adjusted to be comparable to historic migration data derived from the long form census.
Migration Flows by Age and Worker Earnings

- Throughout the last 40 years, migrants have been disproportionately young adults, unmarried, and holding high-skilled jobs (not illustrated in this Brief), reflecting that these groups often have more flexibility and resources to move.

- Age is one of the best predictors of migration. NYC consistently attracts large numbers of people in their 20s, and generally sees net migration losses of people in all other age groups. This is tied to a common pattern whereby young single people move to the City, and some residents move out after family formation.

- The net inflow of people in their 20s has dramatically increased since 1975. Moreover, the most recent period has seen a reduction in net outflows of other age groups due to the overall increase of in-migrants.

- Following the 2009 recession, NYC has captured a large portion of the region’s job growth, which is reflected in worker migration. For the first time since 1975, NYC now has net migration gains of workers in all earnings groups, particularly in the $25k to $49k range.

- Current data show historically high net migration gains for workers making $75k and over. Higher earners are coming to the City in larger numbers than previously and are likelier to stay.

Gateway Neighborhoods for In-migrants

- At the neighborhood level, the Manhattan CBD and surrounding areas are far more affected by in-migration than others.

- In some Manhattan neighborhoods 1 in 7 residents is a new arrival. Residents in these areas tend to subsequently settle deeper into the boroughs.

3 In constant 2014 US dollars. Earnings may change considerably when a person migrates, and these data represent only the amount a worker earns at their destination.

Sources: IPUMS-USA: 1940 1% Sample, 1980 5% State, 1990 5%, 2000 5%, 2010-14 American Community Survey; U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-15 ACS Summary Files.