

## Diversity Comes to Maine from Abroad

Of all places for immigrants from the tropical climate of Southeast Asia to settle, the snowy landscape of Maine isn't the first place that comes to mind. But drive through Portland and signs of south meets north are readily abundant in the aromas of Thai and Vietnamese restaurants intermingling with the city's traditional lobster fare.

Much of the state remains racially homogenous – Maine ties with Vermont for having the largest percentage of white residents in the U.S. at 95 percent each – but Portland is leading a small but noticeable population trend: The city is a primary resettlement region for Catholic Charities, which, during the past 30 years, has brought some 5,000 refugees to this once all-white city of 63,000.

During that time, according to the U.S. Census Bureau (<http://www.census.gov/population/www/documentation/twps0076/MEtab.pdf>), Portland's non-white population has grown from 1 percent to 9 percent. Schools hear the change as much as they see it. There are now about 100 languages spoken by students. This chart from the State Department of Education shows the new voices in public schools.

### Oct 2009

	Language	Number of Students	Percentage
1	Somali	1420	34.51%
2	Spanish	461	11.20%
3	French	320	7.78%
4	Chinese	237	5.76%
5	Khmer	207	5.03%
6	Arabic	197	4.79%
7	English	186	4.52%
8	Vietnamese	167	4.06%
9	Passamaquoddy	101	2.45%
10	Russian	94	2.28%
11	Acholi	93	2.26%
12	Tagalog	52	1.26%
13	Dinka	42	1.02%
14	Korean	40	0.97%
15	Persian	37	0.90%
16	Amharic	35	0.85%
17	Kinyarwanda	31	0.75%

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18	Serbo-Croatian (Roman)	29	0.70%
19	Swahili	29	0.70%
20	Thai	22	0.53%
21	German	20	0.49%
22	Pushto	20	0.49%
23	Portuguese	15	0.36%
24	Japanese	14	0.34%
25	Creoles and Pidgins, French-ba	13	0.32%
26	Lingala	10	0.24%
27	Albanian	9	0.22%
28	American Sign Language	9	0.22%
29	Lao	9	0.22%
30	Sudanese	9	0.22%
31	Romanian	8	0.19%
32	Hindi	7	0.17%
33	Bengali	6	0.15%
34	Bulgarian	6	0.15%
35	Cebuano	6	0.15%
36	Greek, Modern (1453- )	6	0.15%
37	Gujarati	6	0.15%
38	Icelandic	6	0.15%
39	Polish	6	0.15%
40	Telugu	6	0.15%
41	Twi	6	0.15%
42	Ukrainian	6	0.15%
43	Burmese	5	0.12%
44	Norwegian	5	0.12%
45	Tigrinya	5	0.12%
46	Urdu	5	0.12%
47	Dutch	4	0.10%
48	Faroese	4	0.10%
49	Indonesian	4	0.10%
50	Kurdish	4	0.10%
51	Miscellaneous (Other)	4	0.10%
52	Iranian (Other)	3	0.07%
53	Italian	3	0.07%
54	Malayalam	3	0.07%
55	Panjabi	3	0.07%
56	Shona	3	0.07%
57	Sinhalese	3	0.07%
58	Swedish	3	0.07%
59	Armenian	2	0.05%

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60	Creoles and Pidgins (Other)	2	0.05%
61	Creoles and Pidgins, English-b	2	0.05%
62	Czech	2	0.05%
63	Estonian	2	0.05%
64	Ganda	2	0.05%
65	Georgian	2	0.05%
66	Hawaiian	2	0.05%
67	Nepali	2	0.05%
68	Niger-Kordofanian (Other)	2	0.05%
69	Pampanga	2	0.05%
70	Salishan languages	2	0.05%
71	Tamil	2	0.05%
72	Turkish	2	0.05%
73	Apache languages	1	0.02%
74	Azerbaijani	1	0.02%
75	Bambara	1	0.02%
76	Chinook jargon	1	0.02%
77	Cree	1	0.02%
78	Creoles and Pidgins, Portugues	1	0.02%
79	Ethiopic	1	0.02%
80	Ewondo	1	0.02%
81	Gp	1	0.02%
82	Hebrew	1	0.02%
83	Hungarian	1	0.02%
84	Javanese	1	0.02%
85	Kazakh	1	0.02%
86	Kusaie	1	0.02%
87	Latvian	1	0.02%
88	Mandingo	1	0.02%
89	Marathi	1	0.02%
90	Mayan languages	1	0.02%
91	Mende	1	0.02%
92	Mon-Khmer (Other)	1	0.02%
93	Serbo-Croatian (Cyrillic)	1	0.02%
94	Slovak	1	0.02%
95	Tahitian	1	0.02%
	Total Oct 2009	4115	100.00%

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