

BUILDING NEW JERSEY'S FUTURE

Immigrant Contributions to New Jersey

A Compilation of Recent Census and Research Findings on Immigrants in New Jersey

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The following information about immigrants in New Jersey was drawn from census and other government data, as well as several published reports. This summary presents a snapshot of key facts about our state's newcomer population.

Immigrants are a vibrant force in New Jersey's changing demographics:

- One-fifth (20.1%) of all New Jersey residents are foreign-born - the third highest rate in the United States. According to the 2006 American Community Survey, 1,754,253 New Jersey residents are immigrants.¹
- 48% of New Jersey's foreign-born immigrants are U.S. citizens.²
- Immigrants and their children comprise approximately 37% of our state's population and live in all of New Jersey's 21 counties.³
- The decentralization of immigrants in New Jersey is unusual. In 2000, only 30% of the state's foreign-born population lived in the state's top ten municipalities, a percentage far lower than in other large immigrant destination states, where one or more "super-cities" tend to attract the bulk of new arrivals from abroad.⁴
- The number of immigrants choosing New Jersey as their destination remains high. Over an eight-year period beginning in the year 2000, an average of more than 53,000 new legal immigrants per year has designated New Jersey as their state of intended residence.⁵
- Immigrants in New Jersey are highly diverse and come from virtually every region and country of the world. 46% are from Latin America, 30% from Asia, 19% from Europe, and 5% from Africa.⁶

- There are an estimated 550,000 unauthorized immigrants in New Jersey. They make up 9.2% of the state's workforce.⁷ Approximately, one out of every 16 state residents is unauthorized.
- 27.6% of New Jersey residents age 5 or older speak a language other than English at home. Throughout New Jersey, immigrants speak more than 200 languages.⁸
- 962,993 New Jersey residents age 5 or older, of whom 806,631 are immigrants, have difficulty speaking English. Of the immigrants, 54% speak Spanish and 46% speak other languages.⁹

Immigrants fuel New Jersey's economy through their labor and entrepreneurship

- Immigrants have high labor force participation rates. For the United States as a whole, 91.2% of foreign-born men and 79.4% of foreign-born women between the ages of 25 and 54 are working.¹⁰
- At nearly 38%, New Jersey ranks second in the country in the percentage of engineering and technology companies with immigrant founders.¹¹
- Without immigrants, New Jersey's population would have remained static or shrunk over the last 10 years.

Data compiled by Dr. Nicholas V. Montalto, Diversity Dynamics, LLC, Cranford, New Jersey.

¹ U.S. Census Bureau, 2006 American Community Survey, Data Profile Highlights.

² U.S. Census Bureau, 2006 American Community Survey, Selected Social Characteristics: 2006.

³ The figure of 37% is an estimate derived from national data. Based on the 2006 Current Population Survey, the foreign-born constituted 12% and the second generation were 11% of the total U.S. population. If this proportion holds for New Jersey, the second generation would comprise 17.9% of New Jersey's population. For more information, see David Dixon, "The Second Generation in the United States," *Migration Information Source*, Migration Policy Institute, October, 2006

⁴ Katherine Hempstead, "Location of Recent Immigrants: Lessons from New Jersey," Unpublished Paper, September 23, 2004, 3-4, 22 August 2007, <http://paa2005.princeton.edu/download.aspx?submissionId=51113>

⁵ U.S. CIS, 2007 Yearbook of Immigration Statistics.

⁶ U.S. Census Bureau, 2006 American Community Survey, Selected Social Characteristics: 2006.

⁷ Pew Hispanic Center, A Portrait of Unauthorized Immigrants in the United States, April 14, 2009, 29-30.

⁸ U.S. Census Bureau, 2006 American Community Survey, Selected Social Characteristics: 2006.

⁹ U.S. Census Bureau, 2006 American Community Survey, Selected Social Characteristics: 2006.

¹⁰ Rutgers University, John J. Heldrich Center for Workforce Development, The Status of Immigrants in New Jersey, 19.

¹¹ At nearly 38%, NJ ranked only slightly lower than California at nearly 39% of engineering and technology companies with at least one immigrant founder. The Record, January 4, 2007.