

Economic Integration of the Most Vulnerable Immigrant Population in New York State

The most vulnerable group of foreign born residents of New York State are those who are faced with a double disadvantage; a low human capital and Limited English Proficiency (LEP). In this Brief, we provide policy implications emerging from a study that looked at the economic outcomes of foreign born residents of New York State who are disadvantaged by lack of high school completion, and are identified as LEP. In this study, we compared the economic outcomes of this group in each region of the state. The study painted a portrait of the ten geographic regions the state, and analyzed regions where members of the group are most marginalized compared to the state average reported for this population. The focus on this group is deemed critical since they are the group most in need of policy interventions to harness their productive potential and address their possible exploitation and deprivation. The study used 2014 American Community Survey data and focused on the 25-64 years old cohort. Eight indicators were used to determine economic outcomes: Income; unemployment, poverty, full-time employment, working poor, naturalization, rent burden and homeownership.

A Regional Portrait of Economic Outcomes

Income (State Average: \$24,309)

In the Upstate regions of Central NY (\$11,580), Mohawk Valley (\$12,812) and Western NY (\$21,780), this segment of the populations is faring worse than the state average. In the Downstate region, New York City (\$23,042) also reports slightly below state average income levels.

Unemployment (State Average: 6.99%)

Rates of unemployment for this segment of the population are higher than state average in the upstate regions of North Country (57.95%), Mohawk Valley (41.74%), Capital Region (12.09%), Finger Lakes (18.22%) and Western NY (7.13%). While in the

Region	Foreign Born without High School Diploma and without English Proficiency (25-64 years old)	% of LEP with no high school diploma of all Foreign Born (25-62) years old)
NYS State Overall	413,189	13%
Capital Region	2,493	6%
Central NY	2,200	9%
Finger Lakes	3,160	7%
Long Island	48,865	13%
Mid-Hudson	34,998	11%
Mohawk Valley	1,556	11%
New York City	314,947	14%
North Country	706	6%
Southern Tier	517	2%
Western NY	3,747	10%

Poverty (State Average: 50.78%)

North Country (76.22%), Capital Region (65.90%), Southern Tier (78.77%), Central NY (78.30%), Western NY (66.61%) are Upstate regions reporting higher than state average poverty rates for this segment of the population. Again, New York City (53.67%) reports slightly above state average rates.

Full time Employment (State Average: 76.45%)

Members of this population have lower than state average full time employment rates in the Upstate regions of the Capital District (49.14%), Western NY (60.50%), and Finger Lakes (73.08%). New York City (76.20%) records slightly lower than state average as well.

Working Poor (State Average: 38.03%)

North Country (51.22%), Capital District (65.26%), Central NY (73.38%) and Southern Tier (51.61%) report higher than state average in the number of people in this population group who are identified as working poor. New York City (41.70%) in the downstate region reports close to state average numbers.

Naturalization (State Average: 24.46%)

Naturalization rates in the Upstate regions of the Capital District are the worst in the state (2.25%), followed by North Country (4.39%), Western NY (17.19%) and the Southern Tier (19.92%). In the Downstate regions of Mid Hudson (16.26%) and Long Island (18.73%), naturalization rates are also lower than State average.

Rent Burden (State Average: 36.94%)

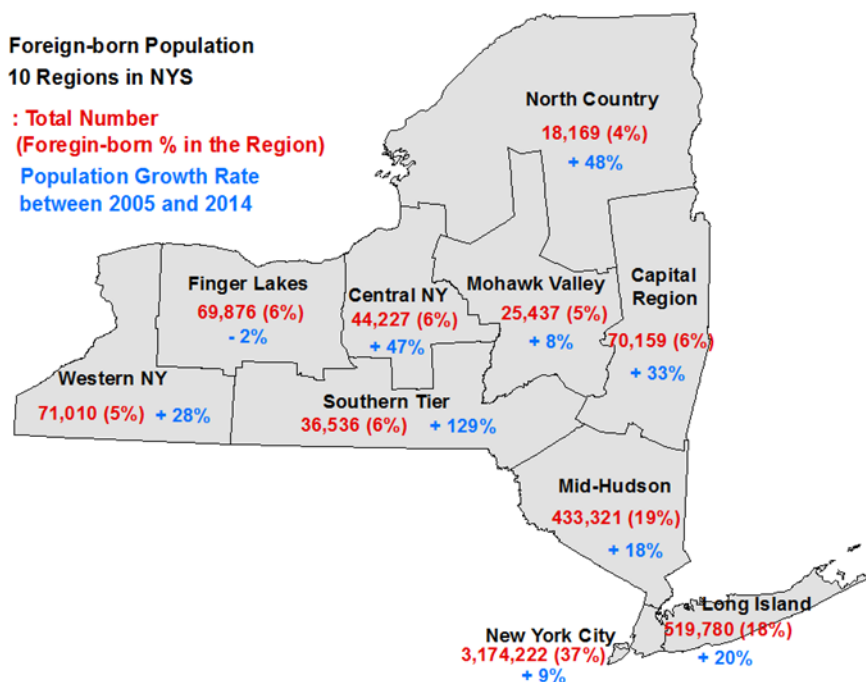
Rent burden is an acute problem for members of the population in the Upstate regions of North Country (76.97%), Capital District (63.83%), Southern Tier (58.54%), Finger Lakes (56.46%) and Central NY (62.46%). In the downstate region, it is close to State average.

Homeownership (State Average: 22.97%)

Homeownership is seriously below average in the North Country (0.97%) and below average in the Mid Hudson (19.74%) and New York City (16.90%).

Foreign-born Population 10 Regions in NYS

Total Number
(Foreign-born % in the Region)
Population Growth Rate
between 2005 and 2014



A Tale of Two Worlds: Downstate Versus Upstate

As a traditional continuous gateway, the downstate region has had a long history of receiving immigrants and absorbing them into its social, economic and political landscape. The Upstate regions do not have the institutional knowledge, culture or organizational richness that exist in the downstate regions. Granted, more than 70% of foreign-born New Yorkers reside in the downstate regions and the regions receive the lion's share of public investments. The picture that emerges from this study, however, points to extreme vulnerability in the Upstate regions, particularly the North Country, Capital Region, and Western New York for this group along the indicators of poverty, unemployment, homeownership, rent burden and naturalization. Other Upstate regions including Central NY, Mohawk Valley, Southern Tier, Finger Lakes are also among the poor performing regions. The Downstate region of New York City on the other hand, recorded slightly worse than state average along most indicators, but was not among the bottom of the performance spectrum compared to Upstate regions. Long Island reported the lowest poverty rates, and with the exception of lower naturalization rates than state average, it fared well on most indicators. Mid Hudson also fared worse than state average on naturalization and homeownership, the region was not among the poor performing regions on other indicators.

The foreign-born population's growth rate in the 7 upstate regions between 2005-2014, is 22%. In the 3 Downstate regions, the growth rate was 10% in the same period.

Policy Implications

Public policy and community interventions can mitigate the impacts of the intersections of nativity status, lack of educational attainment and lack of linguistic proficiency for foreign-born New Yorkers.

English language proficiency

Previous studies have confirmed a strong correlation between lack of English Language proficiency and poor economic outcomes. This makes English language programs a key to increasing economic wellbeing of this population.

Workforce development and career explorations

Regions with below state average rates in full time employment, and above state average in unemployment need to strengthen outreach to this population and the provision of intensive workforce development and career exploration. Career & Technical Education programs provide underutilized career pathways for this segment of the population. These are occupations that are in great demand in today's economy. It is a win-win situation.

Affordable housing programs and homeownership incentivizing programs

Regions with above state average rates of rent burden and below state average rate of homeownership need to invest in outreach to this population to provide them with resources on affordable housing and homeownership that strategically connect members of the population with available vacancies and advance the objective of urban revitalization and ending urban blight.

Labor rights and exploitation

Cases where members of this population are working full time yet suffering extreme poverty rates may raise red flags and point to the possibilities of labor exploitation and lack of labor protections. A closer look at labor conditions in these regions are warranted to ensure that there are protection mechanisms against labor exploitation and wage theft.

Naturalization Programs

Naturalization assistance programs could help those eligible for naturalization take this step, which is proven in the research literature to improve economic outcomes and the range of employment opportunities available.

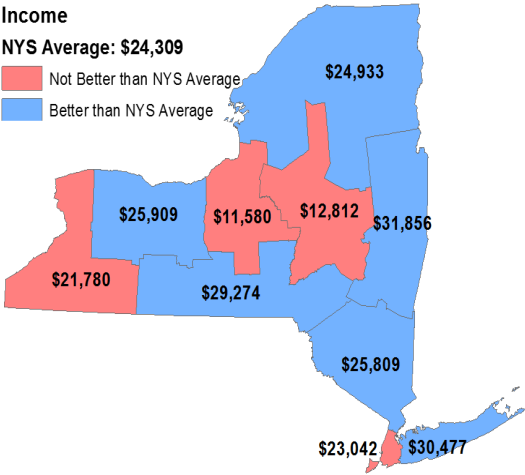
Economic Outcomes for Foreign-Born New Yorkers Who Do not Hold a High School Diploma and Lack English Proficiency

ECONOMIC INDICATOR	NEW YORK STATE REGIONS										
	NYS Average	Capital Region	Central NY	Finger Lakes	Long Island	Mid Hudson	Mohawk Valley	New York	North Country	Southern Tier	Western NY
Income	24,309	31,856	11,580	25,909	30,477	25,809	12,812*	23,042*	24,933	29,274	21,780*
Unemployment	6.99%	12.09%	0.00%	18.22%*	5.56%	5.24%	41.74%*	7.10%*	57.95%	0%	7.13%*
Poverty	50.78%	65.90%	78.30%	39.45%	32.52%	46.53%	42.29%	53.67%*	76.22%*	78.77%*	66.61%*
Full Time Employment	76.45%	49.14%	79.06%	73.08%*	78.73%	77.61%	97.85%	76.20%*	100.00%	82.67%	60.50%*
Working Poor	38.03%	65.26%	73.38%	23.23%	22.40%	31.96%	22.62%	41.70%*	51.22%*	51.61%*	35.98%
Naturalization	24.46%	2.25%	28.41%	48.04%	18.73%*	16.26%*	42.99%	26.22%	4.39%*	19.92%*	17.19%*
Rent Burden	36.94%	63.83%	62.46%	56.46%*	38.10%*	35.50%	10.86%	36.78%	76.97%*	58.54%*	20.92%
Homeownership	22.97%	30.24%	40.11%	65.12%	58.99%	19.74%*	30.78%	16.90%*	0.97%*	45.99%	38.14%

Income

NYS Average: \$24,309

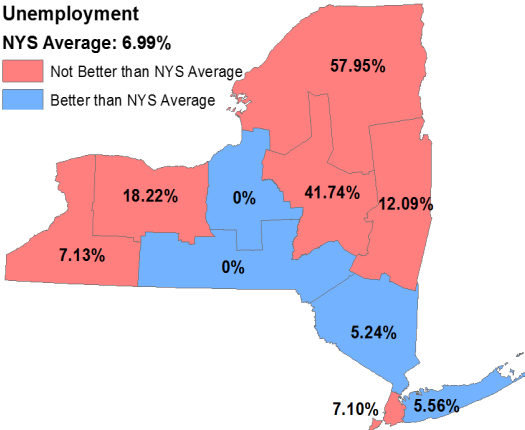
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- Better than NYS Average



Unemployment

NYS Average: 6.99%

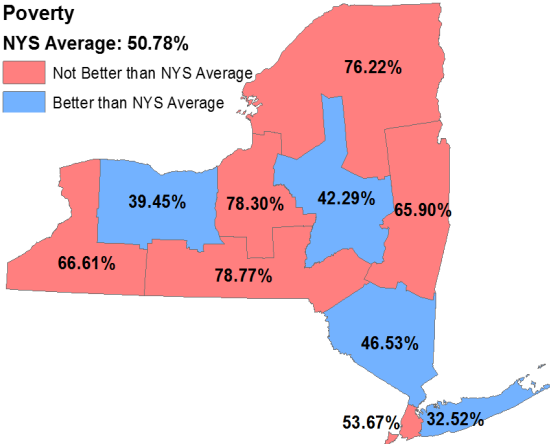
- Not Better than NYS Average
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Poverty

NYS Average: 50.78%

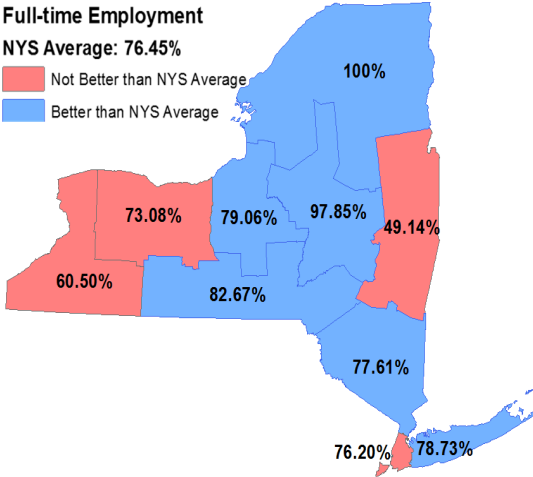
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Full-time Employment

NYS Average: 76.45%

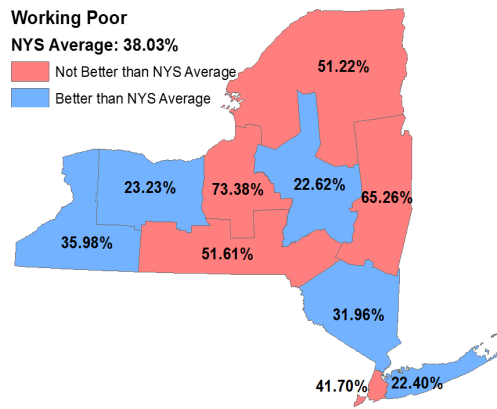
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Working Poor

NYS Average: 38.03%

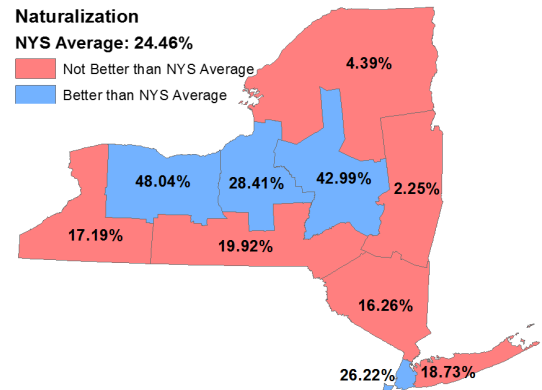
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Naturalization

NYS Average: 24.46%

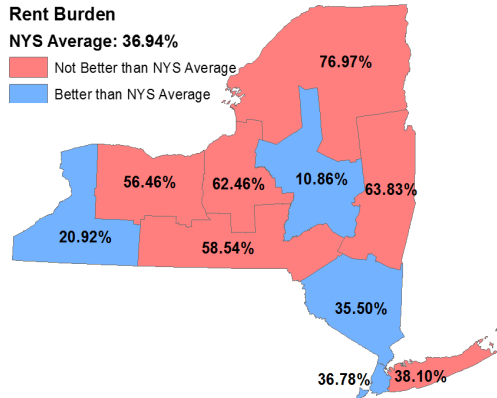
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Rent Burden

NYS Average: 36.94%

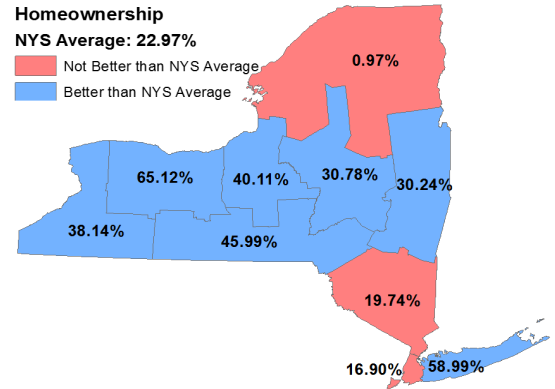
Not Better than NYS Average
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Homeownership

NYS Average: 22.97%

Not Better than NYS Average
Better than NYS Average



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About the Center for Women in Government & Civil Society (CWGCS)

CWGCS is part of Rockefeller College of Public Affairs & Policy, University at Albany, State & University of New York. CWGCS advances a vision of a society where people of all backgrounds participate equally in shaping the future. CWGCS seeks to deepen and broaden political access and economic opportunities for women and their families domestically and globally.

We do this by (a) strengthening the capacity of government and nonprofit sectors to implement gender-responsive, inclusive and equitable policies, practices and services; and (b) helping women position themselves in the pipeline of public policy leadership.

Our goals are (a) to conduct purposeful and applied research that fill the knowledge gaps in the areas of women's leadership, economic security, health disparities, safety and wellbeing; and (b) to provide transformational educational programs that advance women's leadership, economic security, responsive healthcare, safety and wellbeing.

Immigrant Women & State Policy advances the economic, political and social integration of foreign-born women and their families through research and education.