

Immigrants Pull Weight In Economy, Study Finds

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Byline: By PATRICK MCGEEHAN

Body

Immigrants contribute nearly one-fourth of the **economic** output of New York State, and outside of New York City, they are overrepresented in some of the most critical occupations, including higher education and health care, according to a **study** to be released today.

In the suburbs north and east of the city, about 4 of every 10 doctors and more than one-fourth of college professors were foreign-born, the **study** by the private Fiscal Policy Institute **found**. In upstate New York, where just 5 percent of residents are foreign-born, **immigrants** accounted for about one-fifth of the professors and more than one-third of the doctors, according to the **study**.

The **study**, conducted over the past year, concluded that the contributions of people born outside the country have spread far beyond the low-wage, low-skill work often associated with **immigrants**. Most **immigrants** meld into New York communities, learn to speak English and buy homes, it **found**. The institute is an independent research organization that focuses on public policy in New York State.

"We just felt like there was such a deep misunderstanding about who **immigrants** were that the political discourse often got far afield from any factual basis of what's really going on here," said David D. Kallick, a senior fellow at the institute and the principal author of the **study**, "Working for a Better Life."

The **study** included foreign-born New York residents who have lived in the country for decades, as well as new arrivals, and included legal and illegal **immigrants** to capture the full **immigrant** experience, Mr. Kallick said.

According to the **study**, there were 4.1 million **immigrants** in New York State, three million of whom lived in New York City. It estimated that about one of every six **immigrants** in the state -- about 16 percent -- were here illegally. About 535,000 of those lived in the city, the **study found**.

Advocates of stricter immigration policies have argued that illegal **immigrants** are a drain on the United States **economy** because they receive more in health care, education and other social services than they contribute to the **economy**. A recent report from the Federation for American Immigration Reform cited **studies** that estimated the cost of immigration -- legal and illegal -- at \$15 billion to \$20 billion a year and the benefit at no more than \$10 billion a year.

Mr. Kallick said that Texas and other states had disputed the federation's reports and determined that immigration had a positive **economic** effect.

Statewide, **immigrants** made up 21 percent of all residents and contributed 22.4 percent of the gross domestic product of the state, or a total **economic** output of \$229 billion, in 2005, the **study** said. They also were overrepresented in the work force, accounting for 26 percent of the state's residents who were working or looking for work, the **study found**. In New York City, the contribution of **immigrants** was even greater, according to the

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study. **Immigrants**, who make up 37 percent of the city's population, earned 37 percent of all wages and salaries in the city, the **study found**. Although **immigrants** form a large majority of the city's taxi drivers, housekeepers and home-health aides, the **study found** that they also made up one-fourth of the city's chief executives.

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