

NEWS

# Immigrants take part in workforce at higher rate than native-born in NJ, report states

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Immigrant workers participate in New Jersey's labor force at a higher rate than native-born workers, according to a new report from Stockton University.

The labor participation rate among foreign-born workers was 69.9%, compared to the 64.7% rate by native-born workers in New Jersey, says the study from the William J. Hughes Center for Public Policy at Stockton University, in Galloway Township near Atlantic City.

In New Jersey, foreign workers account for 30% of the New Jersey workforce, compared to 18.1% of the national workforce, the study states.

## ***Story continues below photo gallery***

“Contrary to the negative perceptions around immigration and its impact on the economy, actual labor market trends suggest it’s a boon,” said one of the study’s authors, Stockton economist Ramya Devan.

“The data shows that immigrant workers are vital to the New Jersey workforce.”

## **What's a labor participation rate?**

According to the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis, the labor participation rate is the "percentage of the population that is either working or actively looking for work."

In April, a separate report said that every thousand immigrants entering the New Jersey labor market earn a combined \$21 million in wages in the first year and pay \$1.8 million in

state and local taxes.

And in five years, that same group of people will likely earn a combined \$33 million in wages and contribute \$2.9 million in state and local taxes.

That report was prepared jointly by New Jersey Policy Perspective, a progressive think tank, and the New York City-based Immigration Research Initiative, a nonpartisan think tank.

Both studies come as immigration more broadly becomes a hot-button issue going into the 2024 presidential election.

Both former President Donald Trump, a Republican, and President Joe Biden, a Democrat, visited the southern border with Mexico over the winter to tout their immigration agendas.

Trump, for example, claimed that many migrants are dangerous and “coming from prisons,” despite research that shows the contrary to be true.

Earlier this month, Biden signed an executive order that will cap entry and prevent migrants from seeking asylum if they cross into the U.S. illegally — a move which sparked intense backlash from immigrant rights organizations, including several across New Jersey.

The move “effectively closes the border to thousands of immigrant families seeking asylum,” said Raquel Morsy, a member of the progressive activist group Make the Road New Jersey.

“Most Americans support a fair and legal asylum system that does not penalize vulnerable families seeking protection at our southern border,” Morsy continued.

## **Stockton's study by the numbers**

The Stockton study found that a large portion of foreign-born workers were software developers, especially in Hudson, Hunterdon and Middlesex counties. Software development was the second-most common occupation in Bergen and Somerset counties among immigrant workers, the study stated.

In those five counties, there were about 35,000 foreign-born software developers. Additionally, across New Jersey, there were more than 26,000 foreign-born nurses and nursing assistants, according to the study.

## County breakdown

Foreign-born workers made up double-digit percentages of the workforce across North Jersey.

Bergen County: 38.2%

Essex County: 35.9%

Morris County: 21.6%

Passaic County: 39.2%

Sussex County: 10.9%

Nurses were the most common occupation for foreign-born workers in Bergen County. In Essex County, immigrants most typically were construction laborers.

In Morris County, immigrants were most typically managers, while in Passaic County they were production workers and in Sussex County they were most typically secondary school teachers.

The study relied on data from the 2022 American Community Survey, which is compiled by the U.S Census Bureau.

*This article contains information from USA TODAY.*

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