

Data Shows More than a Third of New Jersey Entrepreneurs are Foreign Born

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NOTE TO MEDIA: Stockton University Professor of Economics Ramya Vijaya is available for interviews about this report. Please contact Mark Melhorn, associate director of News and Media Relations, at mark.melhorn@stockton.edu or 609-350-3099 to schedule.

Galloway, N.J. – Foreign-born workers make up 35% of New Jersey’s entrepreneurs and in some counties more than 50% of self-employed workers are immigrants, according to a report released today by the William J. Hughes Center for Public Policy at Stockton University.

Stockton Professor of Economics Ramya Vijaya and Stockton Economics undergraduate student Tatiana Shukovsky analyzed the latest available county-level U.S. Census data to assess immigrants’ contributions to the New Jersey workforce. They evaluated labor force participation, entrepreneurship rates, the top occupations among immigrants, and more.

Some of the key findings include:

- Foreign-born workers accounted for 30% of the New Jersey labor force, an increase of 1.1 percentage points from the previous year.
- Foreign-born workers made up 35% of New Jersey’s entrepreneurs. In counties like Hudson and Union, more than 50% of self-employed workers were immigrants.
- More than 40% of the labor force in Hudson, Middlesex, Passaic and Union counties is composed of foreign-born workers.
- Foreign-born workers maintain a higher labor force participation rate (70.96%) than native-born workers (65.24%).
- Labor force participation rates for foreign-born workers were higher than native-born workers in 16 out of the 18 counties for which data was available.
- Some of the most common occupations among immigrant workers are in vital sectors like software engineering, truck driving, nursing, construction and janitorial or housekeeping services.

In their report, they also compiled and addressed some common misconceptions about immigrants in the labor market. This year's report is a follow-up to last year's analysis released by the Hughes Center in June 2024.

"I encourage people to think about the various myths floating around and always come back to the data to investigate. Each time we put out these updates, we hope to offer new perspectives for thought," Vijaya said. "In terms of the economy, there is in fact consensus that immigrants are good for the economic system and help expand the dynamism of the U.S. economy."

The data is from the 2023 Census Bureau American Community Survey (ACS) Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS). Foreign-born refers to anyone who is not a U.S. citizen at birth, including naturalized citizens, lawful permanent residents, temporary migrants or refugees, and unauthorized migrants.

You can read the full report and [view the interactive data dashboard](#) illustrating the various measures included in the analysis [here](#).

Listen to the latest "[Hughes Center Conversations](#)" [podcast episode with Vijaya](#) discussing this research and the broader debates about immigrants in the workforce [here](#).

About the Hughes Center

The William J. Hughes Center for Public Policy at Stockton University serves as a catalyst for research, analysis and innovative policy solutions on the economic, social and cultural issues facing New Jersey, and promotes civic life through engagement, education and research. The nonpartisan center is named for the late William J. Hughes, whose distinguished career includes service in the U.S. House of Representatives, Ambassador to Panama, and as a Distinguished Visiting Professor at Stockton. The Hughes Public Policy Center can be found on [YouTube @StocktonPublicPolicyCenter](#), and can be followed on [Instagram @hughespublicpolicycenter](#), [Facebook @StocktonHughesCenter](#), and [X @HughesCenter](#).

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