



## FPI releases detailed data on immigrants' contribution to New York metro economy

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NEW YORK: Fiscal Policy Institute, a nonpartisan research and education organization, released detailed findings for well over two dozen immigrant communities in New York in its latest study on the economic contribution of immigrants in metro New York, at press briefing organized by New York Community Media Alliance, in collaboration with SEIU 32BJ, held on January 21, 2010.

David Kallick, the director of the Immigration Research Initiative at the Fiscal Policy Institute, released the data before numerous representatives from the ethnic and community media. The report – titled “Immigrants in the New York Metro Area Economy: Detail by Country of Origin” – found that the ratio of economic contribution to population in the New York Metro Area was exactly 1.00, meaning that the contribution of immigrants, which was measured in terms of wages and proprietors earnings, is equivalent to the portion of the New York population that is foreign born.

Kallick suggested that this was in large part due to the fact that more immigrants are of working age and tend to work in a wider range of jobs than is expected. He also presented the report's findings on occupational share of foreign-born workers, discussing the Dominican Republic, Mexico, Colombia, India, Jamaica, Haiti and China in great detail. The occupational share data gives an interesting picture of the job preferences and economic performance of immigrants from 21 countries. These included Dominican Republic, Mexico, India, China, Jamaica, Ecuador, Colombia, Guyana/British Guiana, Philippines, Haiti, El Salvador, Korea, Trinidad and Tobago, Poland, Peru, Italy, Russia/Other USSR, Ukraine, Pakistan, Cuba and Puerto Rico.

According to the newly released data, immigrants make up 35 percent of employed residents in the New York metropolitan area even though they are 28 percent of the total population.

Peter Kwong, Professor of Urban Affairs at Hunter College, spoke about “the tremendous contribution of immigrants” to the New York economy and the split among Chinese immigrants between high-paying jobs in administrative and professional fields and low-paying jobs in fields such as food service.

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Jaime Contreras, Area Leader, SEIU, 32BJ, also addressed the press over telephone. He praised the FPI for producing a report that confirmed the benefits of immigration. He said SEIU would continue to strive for fair immigration reform.

In response to questions from the press, Kallick discussed his findings as they pertained to the issues of illegal immigration, immigration reform and the significant correlation between immigration and economic growth.

When asked how he would respond to those who said it's not a good time for immigration reform while the economy is in recession and employment is in the double digits, he said: "Some people are of the view that's its not a good time. The history of immigration tells us that it is responsive to economic conditions. However, at this time reform does not mean to add more people but it means to bring the already existing immigrants in the United States into the system and control."

Commenting on the unemployment figures, Peter Kwong said the unemployment rate in immigrant communities was lower than others. He also brushed aside fears that immigrants legalized under any reform will take away locals' jobs.