



# *News from the* Fiscal Policy Institute

For immediate release: December 15, 2009

Contact:

David Dyssegaard Kallick

Director of Fiscal Policy Institute's Immigration Research Initiative

212-721-7164 (desk), 646-284-1240 (mobile)

New report: <http://www.fiscalspolicy.org/immigration.html#nysregions>

## New report shows robust economic contribution of immigrants on Long Island

*Immigrants' economic output is in proportion to their share of population*

Immigrants on Long Island contribute to the local economy in direct proportion to their share of the population. Immigrants make up 16 percent of the combined population of Nassau and Suffolk counties, and are responsible for 18 percent of total economic output.

"Immigrants are an important part of the Long Island economy, working in jobs across the entire economic spectrum," says David Dyssegaard Kallick, director of the Fiscal Policy Institute's Immigration Research Initiative. "There is no job category that is only immigrant, and there is none without significant numbers of immigrants."

Although it is true that immigrants are more likely than U.S.-born workers to be in lower-wage occupations, that is far from the whole story. On Long Island, immigrants make up 22 percent of professionals such as doctors and engineers. And immigrants make up 26 percent of all registered nurses, pharmacists, and health therapists. In addition, immigrants also play a significant role as entrepreneurs and business owners.

Immigrants are also more likely than U.S.-born workers to be in prime working age. Immigrants on Long Island make up 21 percent of the labor force—five percentage points more than their share of the population.

"I hope that all Long Islanders pay attention to this report," says Matthew T. Crosson, president of the Long Island Association. "The Island's population is changing, and it's changing quickly. About 85 percent of Long Island's population growth in the 1990s resulted from immigrants coming here directly from their country of origin. The 2010 census likely will find a similar pattern. Immigrants have become a crucial component of Long Island's economic and social foundation. The sooner all Long Islanders understand

that and help integrate immigrants into the mainstream of Long Island life, the better for all of us.”

This report looks at all immigrants—from all countries, documented and undocumented, recent arrivals, long-term residents, and naturalized citizens. Although we cannot separate undocumented immigrants in this data, it is estimated that roughly one in five immigrants in the downstate suburbs (including Long Island and Westchester) are undocumented, as are about 16 percent of immigrants statewide.

“This report should help people see Long Island’s immigrant communities for who they are: a diverse mix of ethnic groups, documented and undocumented, working in a diverse range of professions,” says Maryann Sinclair Slutsky, campaign director of Long Island Wins. In addition to making cultural and social contributions, immigrants are a powerful economic force on Long Island.”

*The Fiscal Policy Institute (FPI) is a nonpartisan research and education organization that focuses on tax, budget, and economic public policy issues that affect the quality of life and the economic well being of New York State residents.*

####