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# Study: Half The Kids In The Bay Area Have An Immigrant Parent

by [Bay City News](#)

January 26, 2010 11:50 AM

[Bay City News](#)

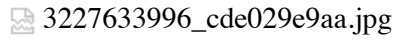


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**6:32 PM:** The Bay Area's immigrant population makes significant contributions to the local economy and its members are more likely to be self-employed than native-born citizens, according to a report released today by an immigrant advocacy group.

retweet The California Immigration Policy Center's "Looking Forward: Immigrant Contributions to the Golden State" examines U.S. Census data to develop a long-term picture of how foreign-born residents adapt and contribute to the state.

"There's always a sense that immigrants are a drain rather than contributing," said Manuel Pastor, director of the Center for the Study of Immigrant Integration at the University of Southern California, who helped produce the report.

California is home to a higher rate of immigrants than any other state in the nation. The survey pools data from the U.S. Census' American Community Survey from 2005 through 2007. The American Community Survey is a 1 percent sample of the population taken each year.

Combining this information produces a larger sample size, and lets researchers gain deeper insight into the immigrant experience, Pastor said this morning during a news conference on the report.



ed the region into two sections-a Bay Area category that includes San Francisco, Alameda,

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Immigrants make up 30 percent of Bay Area residents, and 37 percent of South Bay dwellers, compared with 27 percent statewide. Roughly one-third of the population in both regions is of Latino heritage, but Pastor said that the Bay Area, including the South Bay, differs from other regions in its higher-than-average Asian population. More than half the region's immigrants are of Asian heritage - 59 percent in Santa Clara County and 53 percent in other Bay Area counties.

Much like the rest of California, about half of children in the Bay Area have at least one immigrant parent. That number jumps to 59 percent of children in Santa Clara County.

"How immigrants do will determine really how the state does and, by extension, how the children do," Pastor said.

Immigrants in both the Bay Area and the South Bay are extremely entrepreneurial, Pastor said, and are more likely to create their own jobs, own their own businesses or be self-employed than native-born workers.

Immigrant labor is a major part of the food service, maintenance, cleaning and sewing industries, according to the report.

In the Bay Area, about 62 percent of immigrants older than 16 participate in the labor force--the same rate as non-immigrants, according to the report. Immigrants comprise more than one-third of the region's labor force and contribute about 22 percent of the Bay Area's gross domestic product.

Further south in Santa Clara County, 64 percent of immigrants older than 16 are employed, and immigrants comprise 46 percent of the county's labor force, contributing 44 percent of its gross domestic product.

Because the numbers are based on census data, there is no distinction between legal and illegal immigrants, Pastor said. The report includes both.

Overall, immigrants tend to participate strongly in the labor force, have younger heads of household, and have higher rates of home ownership, Pastor said.

As federal lawmakers consider immigration reform, "it's important to ensure the debate is informed and based on data," said CIPC director Reshma Shamasunder.

**11:50 AM:** A report released today by an immigrant advocacy group examines the contributions of immigrants to California and its regions, including the Bay Area.

The California Immigration Policy Center's "Looking Forward: Immigrant Contributions to the Golden State" examines U.S. Census data to develop a long-term picture of how foreign-born residents adapt and contribute to the state.

"There's always a sense that immigrants are a drain rather than contributing," said Manuel Pastor, director of the Center for the Study of Immigrant Integration at the University of Southern California, who helped produce the report.

**30 percent of residents in San Francisco are immigrants, compared to 27 percent statewide.**



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Pastor said this morning during a news conference on the report. Additional conferences are being held today across the state, including in San Francisco and San Jose, to discuss regional specifics from the report.

In the Bay Area, 30 percent of residents in San Francisco, Alameda, Contra Costa and San Mateo counties are immigrants, compared to 27 percent statewide. Roughly one-third of this population is of Latino heritage, but Pastor said that the Bay Area differs from other regions in its higher-than-average Asian population. More than half the region's immigrants are of Asian heritage.

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"How immigrants do will determine really how the state does and, by extension, how the children do," Pastor said.

Immigrant labor is a major part of the food service, maintenance, cleaning and sewing industries, according to the report.

Three-quarters of cooks in the region are immigrants, as are 58 percent of chefs and head cooks, and 68 percent of dishwashers. Foreign-born workers make up 84 percent of maids and house cleaners, and more than 90 percent of the Bay Area's tailors, dressmakers and sewing machine operators.

About 62 percent of immigrants older than 16 participate in the labor force--the same rate as non-immigrants, according to the report. Immigrants comprise more than one-third of the region's labor force and contribute about 22 percent of the Bay Area's gross domestic product.

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