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Study: NJ reliant on immigrant work force

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TRENTON, N.J. (AP) _ Immigrants make up 28 percent of New Jersey's work force, account for nearly a quarter of all earnings, and represent one-fifth of the state's business owners, according to a new report by Rutgers University.

An analysis by the Eagleton Institute Program on Immigration and Democracy says that New Jersey's 1.7 million foreign-born population has no negative impact on the Garden State's economy overall.

Immigrants account for 20 percent of the state's population, but make up a higher percentage of the work force because more of them are of working age.

The New Jersey Business and Industry Association's Chris Biddle says Garden State employers have long been dependent on the immigrant work force. He says many jobs would remain unfilled without immigrant labor.

The study finds immigrants contributing at both the highest and lowest ends of the economic spectrum. The foreign-born account for 40 percent of all advanced degree holders in New Jersey, and immigrants also occupy some of the lowest-earning jobs in the state.

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