



***Crossroads of
the World: New
Americans in
Middlesex County,
New Jersey***

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RUTGERS

Eggleton Institute of Politics

PROGRAM ON IMMIGRATION AND DEMOCRACY

Crossroads of the World: New Americans in Middlesex County, New Jersey

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Prologue

On the streets of Greater Budapest, a gritty neighborhood in the city of Perth Amboy, the language of choice is Spanish. Local restaurants offer arroz y frijoles, papusas and chicharrón. According to the latest U.S. Census data, 75 percent of residents speak a foreign language at home. That a neighborhood of native Puerto Ricans, Dominicans, Columbians, Mexicans and other Latinos bears the name of an Eastern European city some 10,000 miles away hints at the complex, continuous history of immigrants in New Jersey.

Hungarians initially settled Perth Amboy around the turn of the 20th century, during a period now known as the “Golden Age” of immigration. Another cohort arrived in en masse in 1957. Refugees from the Hungarian Revolution, they were detained by the CIA at Camp Kilmer, on the banks of the Raritan Bay.

Today most of these families and their descendants have dispersed across the U.S. The Greater Budapest neighborhood, like the area of central New Jersey that surrounds it, stands at a cross-section of time, culture and language.¹

THANKS TO ITS IMMIGRANTS, MIDDLESEX COUNTY'S POPULATION IS LARGE, GROWING AND EXTRAORDINARILY DIVERSE. According to census data, about 1 in 3 Middlesex County residents was born outside of the United States. It wasn't always so. From 9 percent of the County's population in 1980, immigrants have tripled their share of the total population over three decades to account for 29 percent in 2009. This far exceeds the growth rate of native-born residents.

Middlesex County stands as a dense immigrant hub at the center of a state where significant numbers of immigrants have always made their homes. With a population that is 20 percent foreign-born, New Jersey ranks third, behind only New York (22 percent) and California (27 percent) for the relative size of its immigrant population.

MIDDLESEX COUNTY AS EMBLEMATIC

Aspects of Middlesex County's immigrant profile mirror those of New Jersey and other states and regions:

- From colonial times to the present day, immigrants have always had a presence.
- Unlike previous arrivals who came largely from Europe, today's newcomers arrive largely from Asia and Latin America and, to a lesser extent, from Eastern Europe, the Middle East, Africa and the Caribbean. *See figure 1.*
- Newcomers create cosmopolitan destinations, enlivening existing culture and institutions.
- Today, immigrants are more likely to live in suburbs than in cities.
- Education levels among immigrants tend to exceed or fall short of those of native-born citizens.
- Foreign-born workers generally earn less than comparably skilled native-born workers.
- All immigrants pay taxes: As workers, consumers, and employers, newcomers add to federal, state, county and local revenues.
- Entrepreneurship flourishes among immigrants.
- Most immigrants reside in the U.S. legally.
- By their youth, their culture, and their spending, new immigrants revive neighborhoods that seemed headed for decline.
- Generally immigrants are in better physical health and have lower incarceration rates than natives.
- Marriage rates are higher among immigrants than among non-immigrants.

Economic growth is one direct result of this surge in foreign-born residents. Newcomers deliver a boon to Middlesex County. Technology, communications, higher education, pharmaceuticals and healthcare – by far the most vibrant sectors of New Jersey's economy – have blossomed in the heart of the state. Thanks are due in large part to recent newcomers. Their success has nourished the growth of the County's service sector. Demand for landscaping, restaurants,

nail salons, construction, and domestic work exists because of the professional class that can afford to pay for these services.

The following pages paint a portrait of the immigrant communities central to Middlesex County, highlighting the tremendous and dynamic global diversity of the region's newcomers, showing the range in their education, earnings and legal status, and gauging their impact on local institutions. Local government and non-profits, in turn, have a large impact on how these dynamic components play out.

After a brief historical overview, the report situates Middlesex County in a statewide context and nationally, examining where immigrants come from, the languages they speak, and the households they live in.

Because most immigrants come to the U.S. to work, significant space is devoted to their labor market participation. Attention is also paid to subgroups such as students, youth, women and the undocumented. With the broad outlines of an immigrant profile in place, focus shifts to the community-based sector of service provision. What pressure has the current economic downturn exerted on an already overburdened system? In particular, how does the sizable undocumented population fit into the local economy and institutions?

An Historic Cycle

BETWEEN 1990 AND 2000, MORE IMMIGRANTS ARRIVED IN THE U.S.

than during any previous period in American history. Over ten years, the immigrant population in the nation grew by one million people per year, rising from 20 million to 31 million.² By 2005, these foreign-born workers accounted for 14 percent of the total civilian labor force.

This recent surge calls to mind an earlier historical moment. Between 1880-1920, New Jersey experienced its first immigrant heyday. Newcomers numbered 1 in 4 people statewide. Driven by the prospect of economic opportunity and the appeal of a fresh start, or escaping persecution in their native lands, these mostly-

FIGURE 1. TOP TWELVE COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN OF IMMIGRANTS TO NEW JERSEY*

COUNTRY	NUMBER OF IMMIGRANTS*	SHARE OF NJ IMMIGRANT POPULATION
India	169,000	10%
Mexico	114,000	7%
Dominican Republic	98,000	6%
Philippines	84,000	5%
Colombia	69,000	4%
Korea	66,000	4%
Ecuador	66,000	4%
Peru	55,000	3%
China**	52,000	3%
Poland	51,000	3%
Cuba	48,000	3%
Italy	48,000	3%

Source: 2005-2009 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. *Rounded to the nearest thousand. **Excluding Hong Kong and Taiwan.

European immigrants dramatically changed the landscape that they found. (Without them, most readers of this report would not be in the U.S. today.)

Similar factors have led new immigrants to put down roots in New Jersey since the 1980s. Shifts in the global market for labor, combined with famine and political strife as well as the desire to secure opportunities for one's children, continues to compel individuals worldwide to leave behind what they know. Immigrants tend to be strivers.

Significantly, during the "Golden Age" of immigration, the newcomers were almost all Caucasians who had made their way to the U.S. from Europe. By contrast, today's immigrants come from Latin America, the Caribbean, Asia and, to a lesser extent, Africa.

Integration

WHERE THEY LAND, NEWCOMERS BUILD NEW LIVES. IN SOME CASES, they have helped turn around neighborhoods so dramatically that those who were raised in them no longer recognize the places they grew up. Blocks rebound from blight. Business cater to the new inhabitants. Sometime friction arises. Yet native residents and newer arrivals have often found ways to communicate across differences, identifying shared concerns and ways to work together. Schools, churches, political groups and other community-based organizations have adjusted their own ways.

This give-and-take process, whereby immigrants adapt to their new home, while established communities make their own ac-

commodations to new arrivals, is known as immigrant integration. For immigrants and settled residents it presents challenges as well as opportunities.

While the arrival of immigrants has energized the central part of the state – economically as well as culturally and socially – it has also strained the civic infrastructure, tested local government and sparked discrimination and even violence. Dramatic growth over a short period of time has left county and local governments, and nonprofits and businesses grasping for data on which to base sound policy.

A Policy Lapse

ONLY THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT HAS THE POWER TO REGULATE WHO IMMIGRATES TO THE U.S. These powers are exercised by the Department of Homeland Security. Absent sensible federal immigration policy attuned to the need for labor and to the global movement of humanity, individuals and communities are scrambling.

GLOSSARY OF IMMIGRATION STATUS

- **Non-immigrant/visa holder:** An alien who seeks temporary entry to the U.S. for a specific purpose. Nonimmigrant classifications include: foreign government officials, visitors for business and for pleasure, treaty traders and investors, students, temporary workers, exchange visitors, fiance(e)s of U.S. citizens, religious workers, and some others. Most nonimmigrants can be accompanied or joined by spouses and unmarried minor (or dependent) children.
- **Cuban/Haitian Entrant (granted Temporary Protective Status):** Applies to 1) Cubans who entered illegally or were paroled into the United States during a six-month period in 1980 2) Haitians who entered illegally or were paroled into the country before January 1, 1981. Cubans and Haitians meeting these and other criteria may adjust to permanent residence.
- **Derivative Citizenship:** Citizenship conveyed to children through the naturalization of parents or, under certain circumstances, to foreign-born children adopted by U.S. citizen parents.
- **Undocumented Immigrant/Deportable Alien:** Any individual illegally in the United States, regardless of whether the alien entered the country by fraud or misrepresentation or entered legally but subsequently violated the terms of his or her nonimmigrant classification or status.
- **Refugee:** Any person who is unable or unwilling to return to his or her country because of persecution or a well-founded fear of persecution based on race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group, or political opinion. Refugees are eligible to adjust to lawful permanent resident status after one year of continuous presence in the United States.

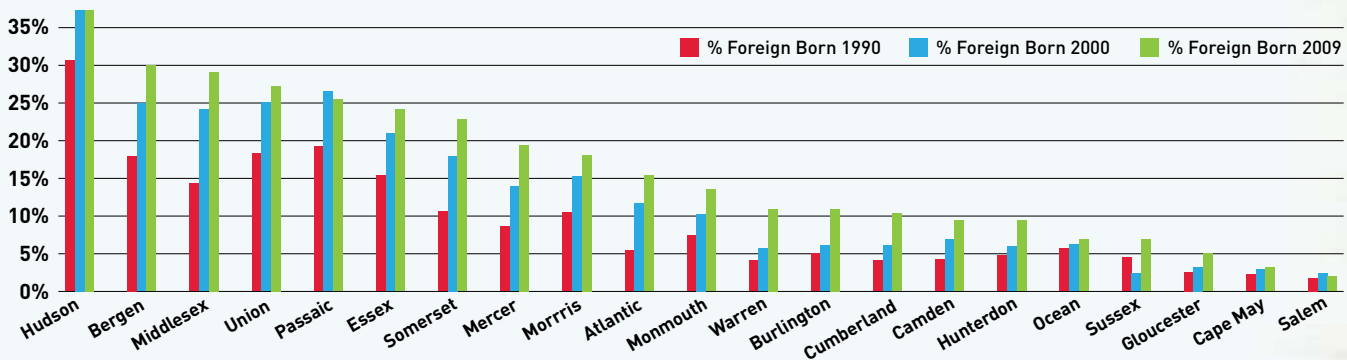
Source: Adapted from U.S. Department of Homeland Security

FIGURE 2. MIDDLESEX COUNTY IS ONE OF THREE NEW JERSEY COUNTIES TO RANK AMONG THE TOP IMMIGRANT DESTINATIONS NATIONALLY

COUNTY	STATE	% FOREIGN BORN
Miami-Dade	FL	49%
Queens	NY	47%
Hudson	NJ	39%
Santa Clara	CA	37%
Kings	NY	37%
Los Angeles	CA	36%
Maverick	TX	35%
San Francisco	CA	34%
San Mateo	CA	34%
Bronx	NY	32%
Alameda	CA	30%
Montgomery	MD	30%
Imperia	CA	30%
Orange	CA	30%
Santa Cruz	AZ	30%
Broward	FL	30%
Monterey	CA	30%
Bergen	NJ	29%
Hidalgo	TX	29%
Seward	KS	29%
Middlesex	NJ	28%

Source: 2007-2009 American Community Survey

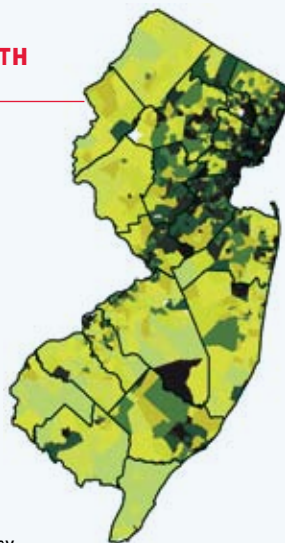
FIGURE 3. NEW JERSEY COUNTIES: PERCENTAGE OF FOREIGN-BORN POPULATION



Source: 1990 Census, 2000 Census, 2009 ACS

FIGURE 4. NEWCOMERS ARE CONCENTRATED IN THE NORTH AND CENTER OF THE STATE

MIDDLESEX COUNTY



Source: NJ Department of Education, 2005-2009 American Community Survey

A map highlights where immigrants are concentrated statewide and within Middlesex County. *See figure 4.* Today, the share of the immigrant population statewide hovers at 20 percent. Concentrations are heaviest in the northern counties. With the share of immigrants increasing in almost every county, integration is a priority for every significant sector and institution in the region.

Enormous Diversity

IN MOST STATES THE MAJORITY OF THE IMMIGRANT POPULATION COMES FROM A SINGLE NATION OR TWO. By contrast, New Jersey, and Middlesex County in particular, are home to significant numbers of people from all over the world. *See figure 5.*

ASIANS

Part of what distinguishes Middlesex County’s immigrant population from the rest of New Jersey and the nation is its high proportion of Asian residents. Of course Asian immigrants have a long history in the U.S. East Asian migrants first made their mark in Hawaii and California in the early 19th century. Today these two states retain the largest concentrations of Asians residents. New Jersey, with a population that is 8 percent Asian, falls in a somewhat distant third place. *See figure 6.*

Arguably, in New Jersey and throughout the mid-Atlantic, a comparable migration from South Asia is now underway. Nearly half of New Jersey’s Asian immigrants come from India and the Philippines. *See figure 7.* Middlesex County is at the center of this phenomenon. South Asians account for nearly 1 in 3 residents. Relative to other newcomer populations, Asian Indians have arrived recently. Between 1990 and 2000 alone, this population grew by 113 percent. In fact, of the 185,000 South Asians who make their homes in the Garden State today, more than 3 in 4 were born outside the United States.

According to the U.S. Census, Middlesex County tops the state for its number of Asian residents. *See figure 8.* Of these, more than half, (84,000) hail from India and 25,000 come from China. In Bergen County, by contrast, the majority of Asian residents (50,000) trace their origins to Korea, while the second largest group (25,000) identify as Indian.

Dramatic Growth

MIDDLESEX COUNTY, NEW JERSEY IS A MICROCOSM OF THE STATE IN WHICH IT IS LOCATED. Spanning tony suburbs, industrial parks, small urban centers, post-industrial no-man’s lands, agricultural outposts and middle-class bedroom communities, Middlesex County encompasses the diversity that is New Jersey. Mirroring national trends, immigrants make their homes in each of these distinct geographies.

Middlesex County is one of three New Jersey counties to rank among the top immigrant destinations in the nation. *See figure 2.* Since 2000, recent newcomers have settled in the state’s southern and central counties as never before. *See figure 3.*

Within the 27 municipalities that constitute the service area of the *United Way of Central Jersey*, there is a dramatic range in the profile and concentration of immigrant settlement. From provincial Milltown, where barely 8 in 100 residents are foreign born, to Edison, New Brunswick, and Perth Amboy, where 36 percent of the population was born outside the U.S., the area presents tremendous variation within an immigrant patchwork.

LATINOS

New Jersey is also notable for the size of its Latino population, which accounts for 15 percent of the total state population. See figure 9. During and after World War II, Puerto Ricans settled in New Jersey in significant numbers, where their labor power helped drive the postwar economic boom. Though not immigrants, this influx of Spanish speakers laid the groundwork for subsequent arrivals, entering existing institutions and building their own. Subsequent waves of Cubans, Dominicans and arrivals from other Central and South American nations have made their own distinct marks. Today no single nation accounts for more than 15 percent of Latinos living in New Jersey. See figure 10.

Language

NEW JERSEY'S COSMOPOLITAN MIX OF NEWCOMERS IS ENVIABLE in many respects. Immigrants carry with them distinct cultures and languages, strengths and interests. At the same time, this heterogeneity can complicate the task of immigrant integration.

Language offers a case in point. Natives of India may speak Hindi, Gujarati, Urdu, Bengali, Punjabi, Telugu and Tamil, to name only some of the possibilities. Those with origins in Latin America most likely speak Spanish, but may speak any of a host of indigenous languages. Factor in native Chinese, Filipinos and others, and the possibilities multiply.

Linguistic diversity can pose challenges for institutions. At the *Puerto Rican Action Board* (PRAB), a multi-service agency in New Brunswick where clients find assistance with everything from heating and rental assistance to childcare and health screenings, almost all of the communication is conducted in Spanish. Clients come from Mexico, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador and elsewhere. However at *Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Metuchen*, legal advocate Jarreau Israel, himself a native of Haiti, assists clients speaking a wide range of mother tongues. Maneesha Kelkar, Executive Director of *Manavi*, a non-profit organization that works to counter all forms of domestic violence, notes that the mix of South Asians (Indonesians, Pakistanis, Filipinas and others) who seek out Manavi's services makes it imperative that staff speak several languages. Likewise,

according to Yvette Molina, Director of Community Services at *Elijah's Promise*, a soup kitchen that offers a range of training options, many Mexicans arrive speaking only mestizo languages. For them, mastering Spanish is itself a step toward integration.

Education

NEWCOMERS OFTEN PUT DOWN ROOTS WHERE THEY HAVE FAMILY, FRIENDS OR CONNECTIONS FROM THEIR COUNTRY OF ORIGIN.

Immigrant enclaves develop when such a cohort accumulates. Like nationalities, language groups sometimes cluster in one place. Data from the New Jersey Department of Education shed light on this phenomenon at the municipal level. Analysis of the 25 school districts within Middlesex County reveals the extent to which central New Jersey represents a true global microcosm.

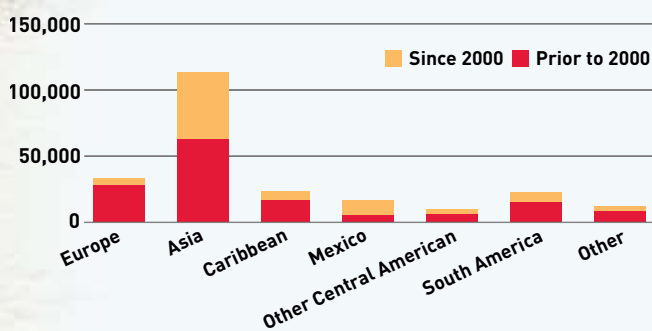
LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY IN MIDDLESEX COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICTS

- English speakers are the majority in every school district except Perth Amboy, where Spanish speakers dominate.
- In 14 of the 25 districts Spanish ranks 2nd, after English.
- In 11 districts, 2nd place goes not to a single language group but to an assortment of other languages. The two exceptions are Milltown, where Arabic ranks 2nd and South River, where Portuguese holds 2nd place.
- After Spanish, dominant languages include those spoken in Europe (Polish, Ukrainian and Portuguese), Asia (Chinese and Tagalog) and the Middle East (Arabic and Hebrew).
- Only two Indian languages, Hindi and Gujarati, rank among the top four in any district. Between Hindi and Gujarati, the latter dominates among school age children. (Because Asian Indians may speak any one of several different languages, their prevalence in the school-age population is not clearly reflected in the language data.)
- Native speakers of Russian, Hebrew, Yiddish, Korean, Hungarian, Vietnamese, Urdu, French and Italian, all rank among the top four languages in districts throughout Middlesex County.

Some non-native speakers of English devour tomes by Shakespeare and Chaucer or capture National Merit Scholarships. Yet others are classified as Limited English Proficient (LEP). Throughout Middlesex County, school districts range widely in the number of students they classify as LEP. Perth Amboy tops the charts with 1,972 students (at 20 percent of the total), followed by New Brunswick with 1,243 students (18 percent). At the low end of the spectrum, Spotswood has just nine LEP students (.5 percent). More surprisingly, Middlesex County Vocational District, situated in several locations throughout the County, classifies just 25 of its students, (1 percent of the student population), as LEP.³

Across Middlesex County districts there is dramatic variation in the share of LEP students. See figure 11. Children from racial and ethnic minorities have been seen to perform less well academically than their peers, and to have higher dropout rates. Analysts

FIGURE 5. MUCH OF MIDDLESEX COUNTY'S IMMIGRANT POPULATION HAS ARRIVED SINCE 2000



Source: 2009 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

offer various explanations for these gaps, including socioeconomic class, historical racism, and tracking. Effects include “push outs” (which occur when school personnel encourage students to leave), drop outs, low graduation levels, and lower college attendance rates.

Middlesex County is hardly immune. Overall, the dropout rate is low (just 486 of the state’s 8,100 total dropouts per year), but a racial and ethnic gap is evident. *See figure 12.* The epidemic is focused in a few districts, populations and grades. For example, of the 210 students who left New Brunswick High School prematurely during 2008-2009, 85 were Latino, with the highest incidence occurring in 9th grade. If the issue were simply one of language, Latino students would dominate the Advanced Placement Spanish classes. That this is not the case is cause for concern.

Citizenship

IF LANGUAGE IS ONE POTENTIAL HURDLE FOR NEWCOMERS TO SURMOUNT, CITIZENSHIP IS ANOTHER. Among Middlesex County’s 216,000 immigrants, almost half (103,000) are U.S. citizens. The remaining 112,000 are divided among Legal Permanent Residents (i.e. green-card holders), visa holders (some of whom will eventually become eligible to become citizens) and undocumented immigrants. This means that the overwhelming majority of the foreign-born residents of Middlesex County have legal status – either as residents as visa holders, or as citizens. *See figure 13.*

Chances that an immigrant will become a U.S. citizen increase with time spent in the U.S. It follows that those who arrived in the 1980s are more likely to be U.S. citizens than more recent arrivals. *See figure 14.*

The U.S. has always depended on immigrants to grow its economy, enrich its culture and strengthen its democracy. One way they do so is by becoming full citizens under the law. New Jersey ranks among the top ten states in the nation for the number of immigrants eligible to naturalize. Roughly 400,000 immigrants living in the state qualify to become citizens but have yet to take this step.

From a political perspective, democracy depends on eligible immigrants naturalizing to preserve the link between taxation and representation. Recent research has shown that in Edison Township, which has one of the highest concentrations of Asian Indians in the nation, Asians make up only 15 percent of eligible voters.⁴ Commentators offer various explanations, includ-

FIGURE 6. NEW JERSEY HAS AMONG THE LARGEST SHARE OF ASIAN RESIDENTS NATIONALLY

Hawaii	39%
California	13%
New Jersey	8%
New York	7%
Washington	7%

Source: Statistical Abstract U.S., 2008

FIGURE 8. MIDDLESEX COUNTY HAS THE LARGEST ASIAN POPULATION IN NEW JERSEY

Middlesex	143,591
Bergen	124,711
Hudson	66,331
Morris	40,611
Somerset	39,357
Essex	33,267
Monmouth	32,487
Mercer	28,546
Camden	23,529
Union	23,498
Passaic	22,479
Burlington	17,922
Atlantic	17,392
Ocean	9,903
Gloucester	6,362
Hunterdon	4,153
Sussex	2,937
Warren	2,868
Cumberland	1,820
Salem	405
Cape May	267

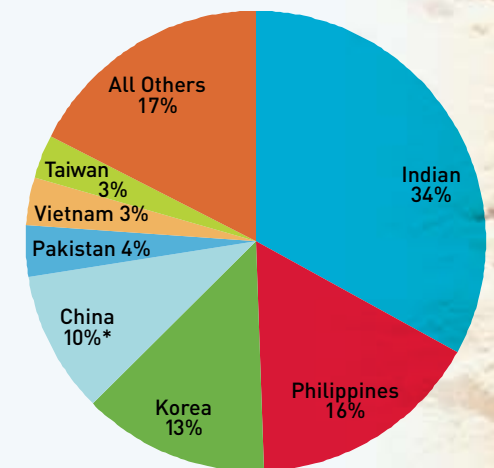
Source: 2005-2009 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

FIGURE 9. NEW JERSEY HAS ONE OF THE NATION’S LARGEST LATINO POPULATIONS

New Mexico	45%
California	37%
Texas	37%
Arizona	30%
Nevada	26%
Florida	21%
Colorado	20%
New York	17%
New Jersey	16%
Illinois	15%

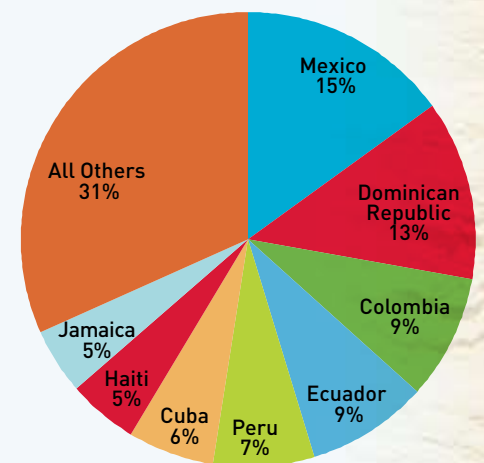
Source: Statistical Abstract U.S., 2008

FIGURE 7. NJ’S ASIAN IMMIGRANTS ARE MAINLY INDIAN AND FILIPINO



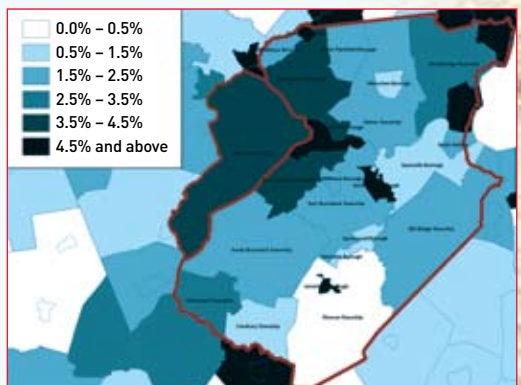
Source: ACS 2006-2008 *Excluding Hong Kong and Taiwan.

FIGURE 10. NJ’S LATINO AND CARIBBEAN IMMIGRANTS COME FROM MANY NATIONS



Source: ACS 2006-2008

FIGURE 11. DRAMATIC VARIATION IN LEP POPULATIONS WITHIN MIDDLESEX COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICTS



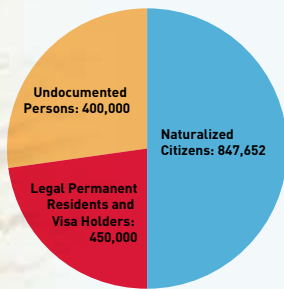
Source: NJ Department of Education

FIGURE 12. LATINO STUDENTS ARE MORE LIKELY TO DROPOUT OF HIGH SCHOOL*

White Males	58
White Females	40
Black Males	59
Black Females	47
Hispanic Males	136
Hispanic Females	120
Asian Males	18
Asian Females	3
Hawaiian Native Males	1
Two or More Races Males	2
Two or More Races Females	2
Total	486

Source: NJ Department of Education, 2008-2009. *Data for Middlesex County Districts

FIGURE 13. ALMOST 75 PERCENT OF MIDDLESEX NEWCOMERS ARE LEGALLY DOCUMENTED



Source: Author's calculations based on 2009 ACS

ing the fact that many Asian Indians enter the U.S. on H1-B visas, which do not allow them to vote. Others never give up hope of returning to their country of origin.

Low levels of voting mean that elected officials can afford to pay less attention to a particular community's interests than their presence or prominence might suggest. Some Asian Indian Middlesex residents express frustration with this state of affairs. Politicians, they say, regard them as "ATMs," neglecting their views on the issues, but relying on their economic support.

Citizenship appears to carry both economic and political significance. Middlesex County's approximately 104,000 immigrant citizens are less likely to be poor than their non-citizen neighbors. Of local immigrants with incomes below the poverty level, two thirds are non-citizens.

The Undocumented

CHANGES IN THE GLOBAL AND DOMESTIC economy mean labor market opportunities have beckoned to immigrant labor. But federal policy has failed to offer a reasonable path to legitimacy. Demographers estimate that approximately 11 million undocumented immigrants reside in the U.S.

Misconceptions about undocumented immigrants abound. A hostile public and media spin scenarios about hordes crossing the border from Mexico, plotting to game the system, bankrupt the nation, and hijack its culture. Research, however, reveals a different reality: Between 25 and 40 percent of those in U.S. without legal authorization entered the country legally as tourists or students and then

stayed beyond the period allowed.

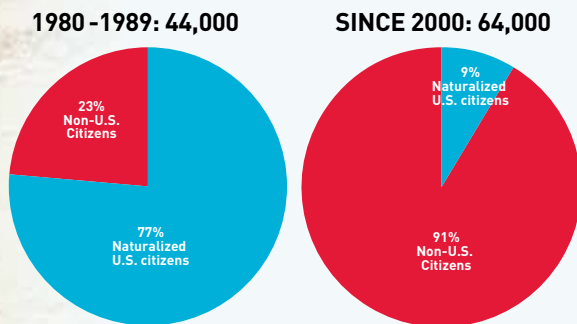
In 2005, demographers estimated the undocumented population in every Congressional district in the country and measured the rate of growth since 2000. They concluded that the nation's undocumented population had increased 23 percent. Middlesex County was found to contain the variation one might expect, with certain areas falling far below the national average and others far exceeding it. Today New Jersey ranks 5th for the number of undocumented residents living and working in the state.⁵ See figure 15.

College Students

IF THE UNDOCUMENTED ATTRACT A DISPROPORTIONATE SHARE of the public's attention, other newcomers tend to get ignored. Central New Jersey is a magnet for a talented pool of international students, almost 3,000 of whom flock to Rutgers University's flagship New Brunswick campus each year. International students enter on student visas, complete a course of study, and then typically return home. Statewide, more than 60 percent of New Jersey's international students come from just three Asian nations: 28 percent from India, 21 percent from China, and 11 percent from South Korea. Paying tuition almost double that of state residents, international students boost the fortunes of U.S. colleges and universities. With state support declining as a share of costs, Rutgers University is reportedly now actively seeking out international students who, in recent years, have brought in more than \$400 million in additional tuition statewide.⁶

For Middlesex County's undocumented

FIGURE 14. THE LONGER PEOPLE STAY IN THE U.S., THE MORE LIKELY THEY ARE TO NATURALIZE



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2005-2009 American Community Survey. Data for Middlesex County.

FIGURE 15. ONLY FOUR STATES HAVE LARGER UNDOCUMENTED POPULATIONS THAN NEW JERSEY*

	POPULATION	ESTIMATED RANGE
California	2,550	2,350-1,850
Texas	1,650	1,450-1,850
Florida	825	725-950
New York	625	525-725
New Jersey	550	425-650
U.S. Total	11,200	10,700-11,700

Source: Pew Research Center. *Data in thousands.

students, college is a remote possibility. Unlike at least 11 states around the nation, New Jersey has not passed legislation affirming their right to pay the discounted tuition rates reserved for state residents, which cost about half of full tuition rates.

New Jersey's immigrant students and their allies have campaigned unsuccessfully for action at the state level, most recently in January 2010. Middlesex County students have organized in support of the federal DREAM Act that would establish a path to citizenship for undocumented students. So far, to no avail. While Rutgers University is generally mum on in-state tuition at the state level, University President Richard McCormick recently became the first college president in New Jersey to endorse the federal DREAM Act.

Supporters of in-state tuition for undocumented students note that besides being morally compelling, the policy is economically sound: College graduates pay higher taxes, have lower levels of incarceration, use fewer social services and are more civically engaged. As long as tuition is prohibitively expensive, undocumented youth may see less incentive to graduate from high school. Critics counter that admitting undocumented students under any circumstances sanctions law breaking. They rightly point out that as long as the students remain undocumented, they cannot legally work for pay.⁷

Other college students are Legal Permanent Residents (LPRs), eligible to become citizens under U.S. law. On Rutgers University's flagship Middlesex County campus alone, there are nearly 3,000 such immigrant students. Add in Camden and Newark and the number climbs to almost 4,500. Having underwritten their education, advocates say that New Jersey would be well served by supporting naturalization efforts that would encourage these upwardly mobile students to participate in the privileges and responsibilities of citizenship.

April 2011 marked the launch of *Citizenship Rutgers*, an initiative designed to bring free citizenship application assistance to students, staff, and faculty plus their friends, family and neighbors. That single day drew more than 100 legal permanent residents onto campus. A Costa Rican engineering student brought five members of his family, including his grandmother. At least one department chair took advantage of the opportunity to have his photo taken, make copies, meet with an immigration lawyer, and fill out the naturalization application. With technical assistance from *Citizenship Now!*, the project at the City University of New York, which has been offering free immigration legal assistance for over 14 years, Rutgers plans to grow this initiative over the years to come.

Family

IMMIGRANTS ARE AMBITIOUS STUDENTS. THEY ARE ALSO SPOUSES AND PARENTS. MOST WANT ONLY VERY BASIC RIGHTS: to attend school, work, earn a living, get married, worship, enjoy leisure time. In Middlesex County, as elsewhere, marriage correlates with higher incomes. Married households with children earn median incomes exceeding \$106,000. According to the most recent U.S. Census data, single men earn less than

Immigrants' incomes tend to rise over generations. Like the Europeans before them, today's newcomers embody the American dream.

\$50,000 and single women just over \$38,000. If marriage is a proxy for economic stability, then Middlesex County immigrants are in comparatively good shape since they are more likely than their native-born counterparts to live in two-parent households. Data from 2009 show that 2 in 3 immigrants (67 percent) in Middlesex County are married, as opposed to fewer than half (45 percent) of native citizens. Statewide, 1 in 3 children lives in a household with an immigrant parent. In Middlesex County, where the concentration of immigrants exceeds the statewide average, this ratio is likely to be even higher. Both at the high and the low ends of the income and education spectrum, immigrants are more likely to establish two-parent households.⁸

In some immigrant families multigenerational households are the norm. For example, in many Chinese, Asian Indian and Latino families, grandparents live with their children and grandchildren, helping with homework and chores. Area senior service organizations note that many of their Chinese participants, so active throughout the school year, cease to appear during the summer school vacation when they are needed to care for their grandchildren. Some argue that these multi-generational household arrangements allow income earners to work longer hours and achieve higher status than their counterparts who are more likely to live in traditional nuclear families.

Immigrant Workers: Brains and Brawn

GIVEN THEIR WIDE RANGE IN SKILLS AND EDUCATION, IT COMES as no surprise that immigrants work in every conceivable niche in the economy. Statewide, the share of immigrants in the workforce is 26 percent. In Middlesex County it is even higher: More than 1 in 3 workers (37 percent or 140,000 individuals) is foreign born. This is due mainly to immigrants' being generally younger than the native population. All told, 150,000 foreign-born individuals work in Middlesex County and Franklin Township. Some contribute primarily their sweat; others their ideas.

Every year, the U.S. Department of Labor grants approximately 85,000 visas to highly skilled professionals with college degrees or higher. Physicians, engineers, computer programmers: they staff the technology, software, pharmaceutical and communication companies, as well as the universities and hospitals the state relies on.

New Jersey ranks third, behind only California and New York,

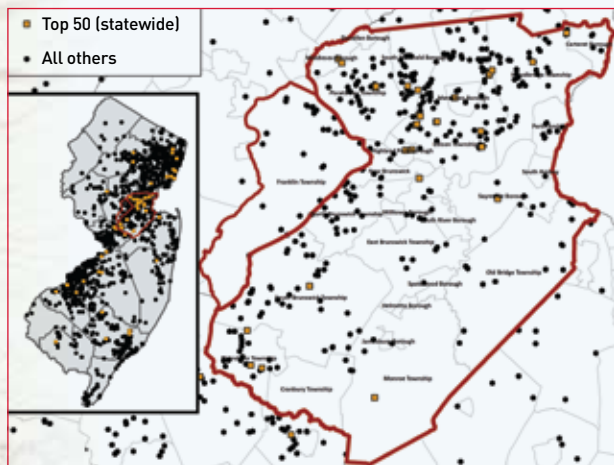
A large share of Middlesex County's immigrants arrive equipped with skills to leverage the assets they find in the state: access to capital, a highly skilled workforce, a steady supply of labor, and a robust market for goods and services.

FIGURE 16. NUMBER OF H1-B VISAS ISSUED

	NUMBER OF H1-B VISAS	TOTAL POPULATION	NUMBER OF H1-B VISA HOLDERS*
California	184,567	36,553,215	.05%
New York	105,621	19,297,729	.05%
New Jersey	79,707	8,685,920	.09%

Source: Statistics by State, H1-B visa resource. *Based on 1,000 residents.

FIGURE 17. COMPANIES EMPLOYING HIGH SKILLED FOREIGN-BORN WORKERS CLUSTER IN CENTRAL NEW JERSEY



Source: RIIM, NJ Transit

FIGURE 18. IMMIGRANTS WORK IN EVERY FIELD

OCCUPATION	PERCENT OF TOTAL
Management, professional, and related occupations	45%
Sales and office support	25%
Construction, extraction, maintenance, and repair	6%
Production, transportation, and material moving	11%

Source: Author's calculations from 2009 ACS 1-year estimates

for the number of high-skilled visa employers. See figure 16. However, New Jersey's smaller population size means that, its share of H1-B visas per capita is much larger. As the map shows, nearly half of the top employers sponsoring H1-B visas state-wide maintain headquarters in central New Jersey. See figure 17.

Employees with H1-B visas drive the economy with the services they use (everything from taxis to babysitters, gym memberships and dry cleaners), the goods they consume (restaurants, movie theaters, food), and the taxes they pay (which support schools, parks and hospitals, to name just a few). Eventually, some will transition to permanent residency, and perhaps eventually full citizenship. Others will complete their contracts and return to their countries of origin.

Earnings: High to Low

DEPENDING ON THEIR SKILLS AND EDUCATION, IMMIGRANTS SKEW TOWARDS THE HIGH AND LOW ENDS OF THE EARNINGS SPECTRUM. Despite their high levels of labor market participation and the fact that they are more likely than natives to work in low-wage jobs, their poverty rates are comparable. A larger share of immigrants than natives earns above \$75,000. Likewise, among those earning less than \$35,000 per year, immigrants are overrepresented. See figure 18.

For their part, undocumented workers earn substantially less than U.S. citizens. While 1 in 3 workers earns less than twice the minimum wage, this is true for 2 in 3 undocumented workers.¹⁰ And although they pay taxes and their wages are often withheld for social security and unemployment insurance, they are prohibited under federal law from receiving any income supports and most other public benefits.

If many immigrants start out as low earners, subsequent generations even the playing field, as we see when we examine the income data by race/ethnicity rather than nativity show. More than half (54 percent) of all Latino households (immigrant and non-immigrant) in Middlesex County earn incomes in excess of \$50,000 per year. Like the Europeans before them, today's immigrants embody the American dream. See figure 19.

More than two-thirds (67 percent) of Middlesex County's immigrant workers hold white-collar jobs; about 1 in 5 (21 percent) labor in blue-collar industries and 13 percent hold traditional service sector employment. (This is likely an undercount because chances are greater that a service worker will be undocumented.) Immigrants are less likely than workers born in the U.S. to work in government, but they are more likely to start their own businesses. See figure 20.

Examined by industry, it is not surprising to find that Middlesex County's immigrants make up almost half of workers in manufacturing, 45 percent of management professionals, and more than 1 in 4 sales and office workers. They comprise nearly half of all service workers, and more than 1 in 3 of those working in finance, insurance, and real estate. Just about 1 in 3 teachers, doctors and social services workers is an immigrant. Retail workers are foreign born in roughly the same proportions.

Immigrants as Entrepreneurs

LARGE NUMBERS OF NEWCOMERS WITH HIGH LEVELS OF SKILL

and education partly explain why Middlesex County fares well above the national average in terms of its minority business participation rate (BPR). According to the Minority Business Development Agency of the U.S. Department of Commerce, for every 1,000 business owners in Middlesex County, 148 are Asian, as compared to a national rate of 90. But while Asians are generally thriving, other minorities are faring much less well. Latinos (immigrant and native) have less than half the national business ownership rates. African-American rates (immigrant and native) are somewhat better, but still lag national levels by about half.¹¹

A 1996 report titled, "Invented in the USA: Immigrants, Patents, and Jobs," found that across the country more than 1 in 4 patents were obtained by immigrants – either working alone or in collaboration with native-born colleagues. More recent data suggest that this effect has intensified. In 2009 and again in 2010, the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office awarded 51 percent of all new patents to foreign firms.

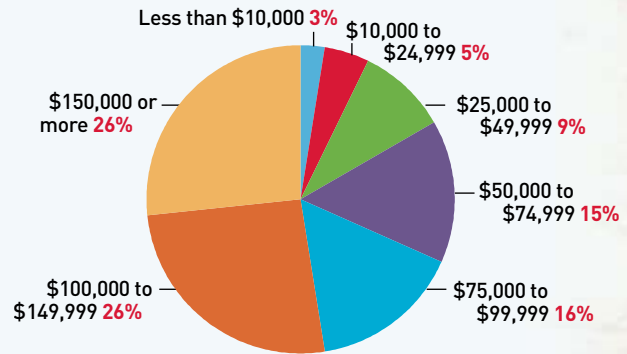
Entrepreneurs stimulate the economy in ways that ripple outward. They hire workers who pay taxes, spend their paychecks and stimulate the economy. Their businesses pay rent or mortgages; they purchase materials and services, and pay taxes. They generate growth directly. Data from the 2000 decennial census show that foreign-born business owners generated \$67 billion of the \$577 billion in U.S. business income, a share that is likely to have risen significantly since.¹²

Around the nation, immigrant businesses tend to cluster in a few states. After California, (where nearly 30 percent of all business owners are foreign born), and New York, (25 percent), New Jersey finds itself on par with Florida and Hawaii, where more than 20 percent of business owners are immigrants.

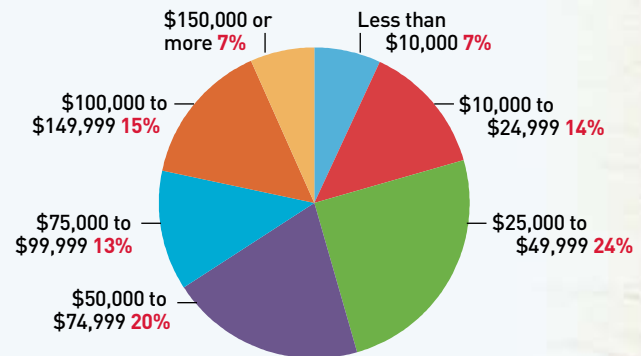
By any measure, Middlesex County attracts more than its share of this entrepreneurial activity. Today, near the boyhood home of inventor Thomas Alva Edison, the traditions of immigrants and entrepreneurship continue to come together. A large share of Middlesex County's immigrants arrive equipped with skills to leverage the assets they find in the state: access to capital, a highly-skilled workforce, a steady supply of labor, and a robust market for goods and services. Indeed, immigrant entrepreneurs have launched so many start-ups that the region is quickly gaining a reputation as "Silicon Valley East."

Entrepreneurs find in Middlesex County an extensive infrastructure to nurture fledgling business efforts and help established businesses stay connected. In addition to its generic chamber of commerce, Middlesex County is home to an *Hispanic Chamber of Commerce*, an *Asian Indian Chamber of Commerce* and an *Indian Business Association*. Hubs for networking, these ethnic chambers also spur economic activity. The Indian Chamber led an Indo-American business delegation, including U.S. Congressman Frank Pallone, to India. Chambers host regular networking initiatives, business expos, holiday events and meetings with elected officials and media representatives.

FIGURE 19. MORE THAN HALF OF ASIANS IN MIDDLESEX COUNTY EARN ABOVE \$100K PER YEAR



ALMOST HALF OF LATINO HOUSEHOLDS IN MIDDLESEX COUNTY EARN \$50K OR MORE PER YEAR



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2005-2009 American Community Survey

FIGURE 20. IMMIGRANT WORKERS HOLD AT LEAST 40 PERCENT OF THE JOBS IN MANY OCCUPATIONS

LOW EARNINGS:

Construction laborers	\$36,000
Janitors and cleaners	28,000
Cashiers	26,000
Groundskeepers and gardeners	27,000
Nursing aides, orderlies, and attendants	24,000
Cooks and chefs	29,000
Housekeepers	19,000
Hand packers and packagers	21,000
Taxicab drivers	33,000
Food preparation occupations	20,000
Machine operators	33,000

HIGH EARNINGS:

Chemists	76,000
Computer programmers	85,000
Computer scientists	75,000
Physicians	179,000

Source: "Destination, New Jersey: How Immigrants Benefit the New Jersey Economy."⁹ Earnings rounded to the nearest \$1,000.

Immigrants are less likely than workers born in the U.S. to work in government, but they are more likely to start their own businesses.

Based in Iselin, the *Indian Business Association* (IBA) was founded in 1991 just as the Asian Indian population of central New Jersey began to take off. Since then, the group has grown to include more than 100 members and engage in a full range of activities – from Get out the Vote efforts to Small Business Assistance and the Annual India Day Parade every August. Business is conducted principally in Hindi, but also in Gujarati. Not all of the IBA's agenda is explicitly business-oriented. Members have worked with community partners such as the local police force to improve parking and public safety on Oak Tree Road, the main artery of the Indian business district in Iselin.

For established immigrant businesses looking to extend their market share and address issues of shared concern, the chambers of commerce and business associations play a significant role. But with minority business ownership lagging national levels, there is unmet opportunity. Into this breach has moved the *Intersect Fund*. A nonprofit organization founded by Rutgers classmates, Joseph Shure and Rohan Mathew in 2008, Intersect cultivates the entrepreneurial aspirations of its diverse client base according to the organization's model, "Dream. Plan. Grow."

Intersect's services to budding entrepreneurs include "Entrepreneur University," an intensive primer on business fundamentals. Also available are credit counseling, microloans ranging from \$500 to \$5,000, basic accounting and tax preparation, as well as periodic vending events that allow clients to showcase their work. Training workshops, like the organization's website, are available in Spanish. Housecleaners, seamstresses, caterers as well as purveyors of a variety of goods, have all found support for their entrepreneurial aspirations at Intersect. More than 80 percent of clients are people of color. Almost one third of trainees or vendors are foreign born; and 65 percent of Intersect borrowers are immigrants.

Entrepreneurs with more established credit can access assistance through the *Small Business Development Center*, part of a national non-profit network based on a federal-state-educational partnership, hosted at the Rutgers School of Business. At 22 satellite centers around the state, personnel help entrepreneurs "expand their operations, manage their growth or start new ventures." With the help of a microloan, Aminata Dukuray, a native of Sierra Leone, recently developed a cosmetics line using minerals from her native country. One indication of her success: Wal-Mart stores statewide now carry the line.¹⁴

In 2010 unauthorized immigrants in New Jersey paid almost ... \$450 million in state and local tax revenues.

FIGURE 21. NUMBER OF TAX RETURNS FILED USING ITINS

	2000	2006	% INCREASE
Perth Amboy	256	1,685	558%
New Brunswick	152	2,723	1,691%
Iselin	480	531	11%
Plainsboro	63	101	60%
Sayerville	389	567	46%

Source: Brookings Institution

Taxes

ESPECIALLY WHEN MONEY IS TIGHT, THE ARGUMENT GETS REPEATED that undocumented immigrants drain public resources without paying their share. Myriad economic analyses from the Congressional Budget Office, more than 20 states, and several counties soundly refute these claims.

As doctors or drivers, professors or painters, nannies or nurses, all immigrants pay taxes. Even for the those who may not pay federal and state income tax, property tax gets folded into their rent if they do not own homes. The federal government withholds payroll taxes from their paychecks. Sales – and other consumption taxes – get tacked on at cash registers statewide. Federal, state and local spending are funded by the revenues collected. In 2005, the U.S. Social Security Administration estimated that 3 in 4 undocumented immigrants paid payroll taxes, a contribution of more than \$6 billion to the nation's Social Security coffers, funds used for unemployment insurance, workers' compensation and various entitlements.¹⁵

The Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy (ITEP) ranks New Jersey among the top ten states receiving tax revenues from households headed by undocumented immigrants. In 2010, ITEP reports, unauthorized immigrants in New Jersey paid almost \$40 million dollars in personal income tax; more than \$81 million in property tax, and almost \$325 million in sales tax, for a total of almost \$450 million in state and local tax revenues alone.¹⁶

In 2006 the IRS Commissioner told Congress: "If someone is working without authorization in this country, he/she is not absolved of tax liability." Some undocumented workers will take great measures in order to remit income taxes. Lacking social security numbers, they file for Individual Taxpayer Identification Numbers (ITINs) from the U.S. Department of the Treasury. See figure 21.

Recent data suggest that after increasing over the past six years, applications for ITINs dropped from 2009 to 2010.¹⁷ One explanation is that undocumented people fear that the federal government might identify those living in the country without authorization. Another possible explanation concerns the gen-

eral despondency over the failure of federal lawmakers to enact comprehensive immigration reform. To facilitate taxpaying by low-wage earning immigrants, area nonprofits periodically offer free tax clinics. *Volunteer Income Tax Assistance* (VITA) is a partnership of nonprofits including *Middlesex County College*, the *United Way Central Jersey* and *Magyar Bank*. Last year VITA helped residents claim more than \$600,000 in refunds.¹⁸

Social Service Support

INDIVIDUALS COME TO THE U.S. FOR ANY OF A HOST OF REASONS.

Family reunification, health, economic gain, political freedom, physical safety, professional aspirations and intellectual drive are only a handful. Whatever their origins, attributes or aspirations, immigrants are no different than their native neighbors in terms of their basic needs. All across central New Jersey, community-based organizations are working alongside government and in some cases the private sector to help first and second generation immigrants satisfy these needs.

Over a period that roughly corresponds to the current wave of immigration, federal, state and local government funding has not kept up with demand for assistance. Private non-profit organizations fill some of the resulting gaps. Immigrants may seek healthcare, housing, food or education. But nonprofits also serve as cultural beacons that strengthen traditions from their nations of origin and help introduce immigrants to U.S.

From 2005 to 2010 funding dollars from Middlesex County Human Services increased only 7 percent.

norms. Other groups make sure that new arrivals know what their rights are and how they can exercise them. Still others operate more proactively, connecting new arrivals with jobs, housing or cultural networks. Finally, a cadre of organizations is geared to leisure, to culture or to spiritual identities.

Three years into a grinding economic recession, the social safety net of Middlesex County shows signs of strain. Funding has stayed more or less flat as the need for services has exploded. The result: Individuals and families scrambling to meet minimum payments on phone and utility bills, lapsed insurance and, houses foreclosed, all exacerbated by the psychological distress that economic strain can induce.

Nonprofits in Middlesex County confront unprecedented need every day. Former denizens of Wall Street now turn to *Jewish Renaissance Foundation* looking for a meal, a diagnosis, or help finding a job. Chinese restaurant workers let go from area kitchens have become regulars at *Elijah's Promise* where they are among the 350 locals who show up for a healthy meal each day. At the *Puerto Rican Association for Human Development* in Perth Amboy, demand for service (from daycare

to housing assistance) is up dramatically since just last year, though staff is down to half its size from three years ago.

EVIDENCE FROM AROUND MIDDLESEX REVEALS THE GAP BETWEEN COMMUNITY NEEDS AND THE SOCIAL SAFETY NET.

- A jolt of American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds boosted some service providers temporarily, but that has now dissipated. In 2009, Middlesex County used ARRA dollars to fund a summer employment program that paid area youth to work in a local municipal or non-profit setting. Community leaders and families praised the program as a ringing success. But in 2010, it was cancelled due to a lack of funds. Local organizations such as PRAHD, which had hired a participant, suffered the loss in services.
- With funding drying up, organizations are turning to already strapped nonprofits and government sources to meet the basic needs of their communities. Thomas Seilheimer, Executive Director of the Middlesex County Human Services Department, notes nonprofits are being pinched due to three co-occurring events: diminished tax receipts; flat budgeting; and exploding applications for funding. From 2005 to 2010, during the worst economic recession in decades, funding dollars from Middlesex County Human Services increased only 7 percent.
- Cuts to existing programs may mean that clients lose eligibility for services entirely. In 2010 the state shed 12,000 formerly eligible legal immigrants from *New Jersey Family Care*; raised the income threshold for access to free and discounted HIV medication; and eradicated funding for women's reproductive healthcare. Increasingly, those affected are turning to federally qualified healthcare programs like those at *Eric B. Chandler Healthcare Center* and *Jewish Renaissance Foundation* (JRF), to periodic clinics like the one hosted at *Elijah's Promise*, as well as to mobile units such as *Hyacinth's* HIV counseling and testing van and JRF's dental office.
- Services that were free until recently may now come with a price tag. At certain *Planned Parenthood* sites, the sliding scale for preventive treatment – from cancer screenings to birth control – no longer slides to zero.

Access to Civil Legal Assistance

THE JOB OF THE COURTS IS TO PROTECT THE RIGHTS OF INDIVIDUALS. Yet a 2009 study by *Legal Services of New Jersey* (LSNJ) discovered evidence of a severe "civil justice gap," affecting those below 200 percent of the poverty level. While LSNJ did not make distinctions based on immigration status, immigrants are more likely to fall into this gap since they are disproportionately poor. Approximately one-third of respondents with lower incomes experienced a civil legal problem during the course of a year, but

only 1 in 5 of these secured the assistance of a lawyer.¹⁹

Waits are longer everywhere, as fewer staff attempt to see more clients. LSNJ offices provide representation and assistance to low-income individuals on a broad range of civil cases. From its base in Edison, LSNJ conducts outreach to detainees (whose numbers have risen markedly under the Obama Administration), and provides other types of civil legal assistance. Immigrants constitute approximately half of the organization's caseload, with Spanish clients being the largest language group.

Since 1948 *Central Jersey Legal Services* (CJLS), one of several LSNJ affiliates statewide, has been making general civil legal assistance primarily related to housing and family issues, available to low-income clients. In 2010, CJLS's approximately 59 paid staff served more than 1,000 clients, thanks to its roster of 340 volunteer attorneys. At offices of the CJLS in New Brunswick and Perth Amboy, caseloads tend to be heavily tipped toward immigrants. Staff members speak Arabic, Hebrew, Spanish, French, Hindi and Krio.

Faced with the crackdown on Arab, Muslim and South Asian communities since 2002, LSNJ has seen overwhelming demand for its services and expanded its representation of and outreach to detainees. Meanwhile the regular caseload of housing, welfare, domestic violence and other legal matters remains steady. The result, says Timothy Block, Senior Attorney at LSNJ, is "hard choices in terms of who you are able to represent."

Elsewhere around Middlesex County other agencies struggle to meet this demand. Haitian native Jarteau Israel directs the legal services program of Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Metuchen. Certified by the Bureau of Immigration Appeals, Israel assists clients from all over the world. Sometimes working 80-hour weeks, Israel's clientele is a mix of trafficking victims, laborers, newlyweds, domestic workers and survivors of violence. Likewise, in relatively tiny Milltown, Debby Alter, Director of Immigrant and Refugee Services at the Jewish Family and Vocational Services echoes the need for affordable legal assistance to immigrants. With 300 cases open at any given point in time, JFVS recently received a grant from United States Citizenship Immigration Service to expand their own outreach and naturalization work.

Workers' Rights

INADEQUATE LEGAL RESOURCES FOR LOW-INCOME WORKERS OFFER a boon to 'bad apple' employers. Without enough state labor inspectors to enforce laws on the books, workplace violations are on

the rise, particularly in the low-wage industries such as landscaping, construction and domestic service where immigrants constitute a large share of the workforce. A 2011 study by *The Center for Social Justice at Seton Hall Law School* revealed rampant abuse of day laborers: Almost half (48 percent) had not been paid for work they had done (a crime known as "wage theft"). Of their sample, 94 percent had not been paid for overtime they had worked; 43 percent had not received required safety equipment; more than 1 in 4 had been seriously injured at work; and the same proportion had been assaulted by an employer.²⁰

Since 2000 *New Labor*, a membership organization based in New Brunswick, has been organizing low-wage workers around exactly these issues. Approximately 1,000 members pay an annual membership fee to participate in programming including workplace health and safety, ESL, computer literacy and "Know Your Rights" training.

Executive Director Marien Casillas-Pabellon, notes that in the current economic climate, where jobs are in demand and labor is plentiful, New Labor's efforts to win back wages are more needed than ever. To date, direct action by the organization has recouped more than \$275,000 from Middlesex County employers in industries from dry cleaning to meatpacking. *New Labor* is now crafting model legislation that will help municipalities to eliminate such practices, which indirectly harm native workers by driving down wages while stealing from undocumented workers.

New Labor is also forging alliances outside its low-wage earning Latino membership. A partnership with allies in Highland Park extends the network of activists working to counter wage theft. When New Labor announces an incident, volunteers from the Highland Park contingent receive an alert and can join the actions. These more established neighbors, almost all of whose families arrived in the U.S. during the 20th century, assist with fundraising for the relatively newer community.

For the moment New Labor's membership consists almost entirely of immigrant Latinos. They come from the Mexican states of Oaxaca, Puebla and District Federal, with others from El Salvador, Honduras, and the Dominican Republic. One challenge that lies ahead, according to Casillas-Pabellon, is to build solidarity among communities of low-wage workers across language and cultural differences, so that they are able to work together effectively. Currently, an employer caught exploiting Mexican workers need only shift to Eastern European or Asian workers.

With so much slack in the labor market, undocumented immi-

Faced with the crackdown on Arab, Muslim and South Asian communities since 2002, LSNJ has seen overwhelming demand for its services and expanded its representation of and outreach to detainees. Meanwhile the regular caseload of housing, welfare, domestic violence and other legal matters remains steady.

Due largely to recent immigration, the U.S. is the only Western nation in the enviable position of having a fertility rate that exceeds the 2.2 percent replacement rate. Economists read this as a promising forecast, predicting a fresh crop of workers and consumers.²¹

grants are especially vulnerable to economic exploitation – which makes access to legal representation that much more critical. Since 1996, federally funded legal clinics have been barred from representing undocumented clients except victims of domestic violence. Thus, when it comes to civil legal matters, among LSNJ's offices, only the Workers Legal Rights and Farmworker Projects can take on legal cases involving violations of the rights of undocumented workers. Community-based groups appear to exert a prophylactic effect: Researchers at Seton Hall found that communities with active grassroots community-based organizations had a lower incidence of wage theft and other abuses.

Women

WHILE THERE IS NO EVIDENCE THAT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IS MORE PREVALENT IN IMMIGRANT FAMILIES, transitions from a foreign culture to the U.S. often disrupt traditional roles and increase intra-family tensions, potentially igniting discord and even violence. A number of agencies working in immigrant communities throughout Middlesex focus their attention on this crime.

According to the New Jersey Coalition for Battered Women, the top four languages other than English spoken by clients of domestic violence agencies in recent years were Spanish, Hindi, Russian and Arabic. Under a 2000 state directive, every police department must have a domestic violence response team in place to assist police departments confronting domestic violence situations. Evidence suggests that many departments have not taken this step.

Language aside, outreach and intervention to immigrant communities on this highly sensitive subject requires culturally specific knowledge, sometimes known as cultural competency. Since 1985, South Asian women have looked to *Manavi* in Edison, for this expertise. Founded by a collective of women as an institutional response to individual abuse and discrimination, the organization has expanded to meet the needs of 402 women in 2009 alone. Over the years, clients have come from the South Asian nations of Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. At *Manavi* women find individual counseling, legal clinics and support groups. Staff may accompany clients to court and medical appointments. *Manavi* also maintains a transitional residence. Executive Director Maneesha Kelkhar notes that fundraising around an issue that many would prefer

to ignore remains a challenge. Over 25 years, *Manavi*'s work has won converts from in and outside the Asian community.

Further south, in New Brunswick, women threatened by violence seek assistance at *Women Aware*. Of the 1,800 women reached through the organization's efforts, about half tend to be Latina. Programming includes community education on issues such as teen dating violence prevention in high schools and colleges, and general domestic violence training and awareness to adults. *The Esperanza Project*, geared specifically to the language and cultural needs of Latinas, is run in collaboration with the *Puerto Rican Action Board*. A safe house sleeps 22 women and their children. Clients come from all over Middlesex County with a recent influx from Perth Amboy. To meet the need, *Women Aware* is always looking for more Spanish speaking volunteer attorneys.

Youth

WHETHER FOREIGN BORN OR SECOND GENERATION, IMMIGRANT YOUTH CAN FACE CONFOUNDING CIRCUMSTANCES. Generational rifts having to do with language, ethnicity and cultural heritage compound the stress typically associated with adolescence. Youth in communities of color may face extra scrutiny by law enforcement or threats from vigilantes that complicate an already challenging life stage.

Around Middlesex County, community-based organizations reach across the generations to help immigrant youth get the support they need. At the *Greater New Brunswick Day Care Council* (GNBDCC), veteran civil rights advocate David Harris and his staff care for the children of mostly Mexican immigrants, teaching them social skills as well as preliteracy. To accommodate the needs of the hardworking, low-income parents, staff members do laundry and provide meals. Graduates of GNBDCC have gone on to attend Rutgers Preparatory School, the U.S. military and 2- and 4-year colleges.

To meet the needs of school-age children, Teresa Vivar's *Lazos America Unida* has developed an innovative partnership with 4H. Traditionally associated with prize-winning pumpkins and rural life, the organization is adapting to the urban Latino context with programming that addresses the pressures young people face in the U.S., using tools like traditional Mexican folklore to learn about nutrition or leadership.

Perth Amboy's *Jewish Renaissance Foundation* hosts more than 400 young people in programs at *Boys and Girls Clubs*. According to Jorge Cruz, Director of Planning and Development, participants explore their cultural heritage while developing leadership skills. A partnership with *Rambler Academy*, a charter school in Carteret, has proved so successful that it is currently being expanded to a college-readiness program in partnership with *Upward Bound* based at Rutgers University.

Various immigrant communities develop distinct youth programming that reflects their language, heritage and culture. On Sunday afternoons, approximately 600 youth study at the *Huaxia Edison Chinese School* which meets at Edison High School.

At *Unity Square*, a 37 square block neighborhood in New

Brunswick where about 1 in 4 residents lives in poverty, and most are Latino, a grassroots revitalization project is underway. Program director, social worker, and activist, Lorena Gaibor manages a complement of services and outreach projects including many focused on youth.

Gaibor leads groups of middle and high school students, usually immigrants or the children of immigrants, many of them undocumented, on excursions throughout central New Jersey. On any given afternoon, they may attend a legislative session at the State House, host an Earth Day celebration, join a panel discussion with faculty and students at Rutgers, or simply do their homework together. Gaibor's goal: to expand students' hopes for the future.

In 2011-2012, Unity Square will use proceeds from a \$1 million tax credit from Johnson & Johnson to enhance their menu of programming. In addition to ESL, community gardens and 4H, partnerships with neighborhood groups will permit more community organizing, housing, health care services for residents without health insurance, and economic development including job training. A plan is even being developed for a profit-generating line of food products, in cooperation with *Elijah's Promise*, that will use locally-grown produce to help sustain other community-based initiatives.

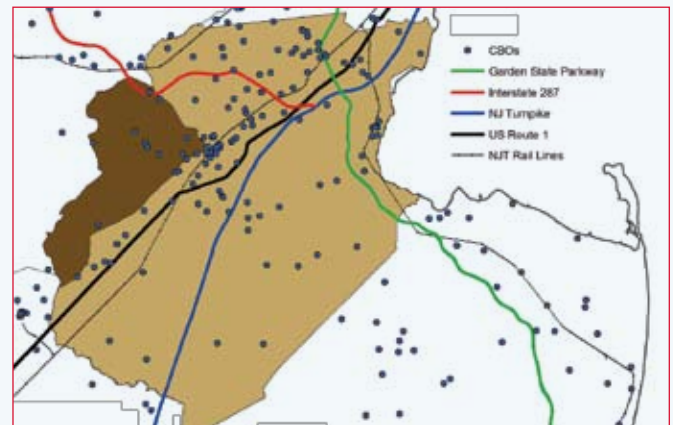
Elsewhere, an international non-profit called the *International Association of Human Values* runs its *Youth Empowerment Seminar*. Dr. Aparna Chawla, a practicing dentist, directs the project in New Jersey and serves as one of the volunteer teachers in youth-focused programs held in Middlesex County high schools. Topics include bullying and self-esteem. On the cultural front, *Marathi Vishwa*, an Asian Indian organization, promotes dance and cooking competitions, literary events, and programs for children and teens including college preparatory programming.

Gaps and Challenges in the Immigrant Infrastructure

IMMIGRANT DIVERSITY IS A DEFINING FEATURE OF MIDDLESEX County, as well as a critical engine of its economic development. It depends on a community-based infrastructure of private and public agencies. Yet it also poses challenges to that infrastructure, making the task of community-level organizing and social service delivery more complex.

In a healthy economy, economists interpret the presence of immigrants as signaling capacity for growth. However when social service funding lags behind need, this claim feels strained. Such is the case in Middlesex County and elsewhere around the U.S. today. Native or foreign born, the wealthiest mostly flourish. Meanwhile, widespread unemployment and underemployment exacerbate needs at the community level just when capacity for service and outreach is diminished. Compounded by cutbacks in federal, state and local services, the impact is palpable: reduced hours, higher fees, longer waits, and curtailed services.

FIGURE 22. MIDDLESEX COUNTY COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS AND MAJOR TRANSPORTATION ROUTES



Source: RIIM, NJ Transit

A map of the area's community-based infrastructure geared to immigrants shows that these organizations are clustered in population centers like New Brunswick and Perth Amboy. See figure 22.

In a best-case scenario, policymakers consult reliable data when they formulate policy. But sometimes, these data can lead them astray. It is true that most Asians in Middlesex County earn incomes above the median. Nevertheless, some Asians face food insecurity, but feel they have no where to go.

Organizations are often stronger than can reach broadly, beyond ethnic silos, to meet the needs of multiple populations. The benefits of such an approach are evident: to prevent exploitation; to encourage the mingling of cultures; and to increase an individuals' access to a range of services and opportunities. In fact, this mingling represents the very essence of integration and a step toward healthier, more dynamic and welcoming communities.

To cite just one example, *Middlesex County Senior Services* conducts programming geared to older residents in senior centers countywide. According to Assistant Executive Director Melyssa Lewis, over the past two decades this programming has evolved to meet the needs of new populations. While most speak Spanish, Gujarati or Hindi, outliers from Nigeria (who speak Yoruba) or Latvia (speakers of Latvian) mean that the organization takes a flexible approach to language, food, and cultural programming.

Thus, Jewish seniors in Highland Park now experiment with simple origami and sample the tastes of Indian cooking. Meals always include a vegetarian option preferred by many Asian seniors, in addition to the meat and potatoes favored by the Europeans. At other centers, ping-pong has become almost an obsession. Tournaments draw large, international crowds of seniors and caregivers.

When it comes to serving their immigrant clients, staff at community-based organizations throughout central New Jersey knows what works. In a recent effort to glean insights from those working with immigrant communities everyday, *Middlesex*

In 2009 and again in 2010, the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office awarded 51 percent of all new patents to foreign firms.

Immigrant diversity is a defining feature of Middlesex County, as well as a critical engine of its economic development.

County Human Service Department hosted a focus group with service providers. They discovered a remarkable unanimity of opinion. Topping the wish list: a single point of entry system to allow clients to access a variety of services; expanded language capacity; and increased funding to extend hours and ramp up staffing. To make universal access real, these experts say, adequate funding for staffing, facilities, materials and programming is necessary, as is a commitment to cultural competency and language accessibility. Finally, only rigorous outreach will draw in diverse constituencies.

Outreach takes many forms at community-based organizations around Middlesex County. To announce a new ESL course or a health and safety training, volunteers may knock on doors and leaflet neighborhoods. Churches and libraries, police departments and human service agencies are all major conduits for news about domestic violence services, day care, or emergency food. Youth services may be announced through schools, and word gets out about senior opportunities through newspaper announcements and traditional mailings. Increasingly, communication around workplace rights goes out through text messaging.

New Americans

MANY EXISTING SERVICES FOCUS ON THOSE AT THE LOWEST END of the socio-economic spectrum. This is where needs are greatest and challenges loom the largest. To alter that focus dramatically would be neither feasible nor recommendable. However Middlesex County's immigrant communities include middle-class individuals and families who need similar services but do not speak Spanish or qualify for income-tested opportunities.

It was into this void that in 2004, the *United Way of Central Jersey* launched its the *New Americans Program*. New Americans Program works collaboratively with the New Jersey and the Middlesex County Department of Health and Senior Services. Its mission: "to provide resources, guidance and educational

opportunities that will enable New Americans to become economically self sufficient members of and to make positive contributions to our communities."

Initiatives of the program include a resource handbook available on the internet and in hard copy in both English and Spanish. Families report that the resource is a useful tool. "Crossing the Bridge" cultural sensitivity training program provides cultural awareness workshops to social workers, counselors and psychologists. More than 200 professionals from various agencies have participated in the workshops. Conferences on successful aging have included, "Diabetes and its Complications." A similar conference is planned in 2011 for the Latino population in central New Jersey. For people with foreign degrees, the *New Americans* program has held seminars on job assistance to people in collaboration with *Upwardly Global*, a New York based 501c-3. Newly arrived immigrants have found a seminar on "Living in the USA" helpful.

What Lies Ahead

ECONOMISTS REST MANY OF THEIR HOPES FOR THE LONGTERM on the shoulders of immigrants. See figure 23. Younger and more likely to be in the workforce, most immigrants work hard. Many arrive with significant skills and family supports.

As anti-immigration legislation grabs headlines, the questions cannot be avoided: If the U.S. becomes unwelcoming to immigrants, where will that leave us? Who will foot the bill for baby boomers' Medicare and Social Security? According to the Pew Hispanic Center, Latinos currently represent 14 percent of the U.S. population but 25 percent of live births. Census data rank Asians as the second-fastest growing ethnic group nationally. As a share of the population, their numbers grew almost 3 percent over one year to almost 15.5 million nationally. Meanwhile, the African-American population increased just over 1 percent to top 41 million people. Due largely to recent immigration, the U.S. is the only Western nation in the enviable position of having a fertility rate that exceeds the 2.2 percent replacement rate. Economists read this as a promising forecast, predicting a fresh crop of workers and consumers.²¹

Frustration with the federal government's refusal to attend to its immigration policy is rampant. Some decry lax enforcement, while others worry about workers and their families living in the shadows.

Non-Caucasians Will Grow as a Proportion of Workers in Middlesex County's Workforce

FIGURE 23. PROJECTIONS OF COUNTY POPULATION BY RACE AND HISPANIC ORIGIN: NEW JERSEY, 2008 TO 2028

YEAR	AFRICAN AMERICAN	OTHER RACES	MULTIRACIAL	HISPANIC (ANY RACE)	NON-HISPANIC WHITE	WHITE
2000	559,173	73,454	108,731	8,804	101,940	469,167
2008	535,000	85,400	153,400	11,500	137,300	415,100
2013	524,300	90,800	176,600	13,100	156,000	388,800
2023	505,200	100,500	226,200	16,500	196,400	336,100
2028	495,400	104,900	255,000	18,500	217,700	309,200

Source: Projections of County Labor Force by Race and Hispanic Origin: New Jersey, 2000 to 2028. Note: Other Races include Asians, American Asian Indians, Alaska Natives, Hawaiians and others. *projected

Conclusion

FROM VEGETARIAN MEALS-ON-WHEELS to worker center collaborations with labor unions, residents throughout central New Jersey are adapting time-honored American institutions to meet newcomers halfway. Growing immigrant leadership in business, non-profits and government has already led to creative solutions and new partnerships.

Changing demographic and geographic

profiles pose new challenges and present new opportunities for arrivals and receiving communities alike. When individuals come together to air their concerns and talk about their hopes, that offers the strongest assurance that a basic standard of living can be met by all.

On the streets of Greater Budapest back in Perth Amboy, the Eastern European population is once again resurgent.

Hungarian and Ukranian parishioners turn out regularly for mass. Neighbors, they mingle with Dominicans and Asian Indians, as well as the children of Irish, Jewish and Italian migrants, and the great-great-grandchildren of slaves (those forced migrants) on the sidewalks, at the clinic, on the bus, and in the mall. Together they represent Middlesex County's best hope for the future.

Policies to Help Newcomers and Receiving Communities Alike

MANY ALREADY EXIST BUT ARE NOT ENFORCED

EDUCATION

- Implementation of state law mandating **Immigrant Parent Advisory Committees** in school districts with significant concentrations of LEP students.
- Concerted **"Stay in School"** campaigns focusing on poor and immigrant youth, especially at the critical 9th grade year.
- State legislation authorizing **resident tuition rates** for all New Jersey residents.
- **Promotion and extension of ESL and civics** through colleges, universities, community-based organizations and One-Stop centers.
- **Improved credentialing** for professionals trained outside the U.S.
- **Preschool expansion** for underserved communities including immigrants and children of immigrants.

LABOR

- **Fortified enforcement of state wage and hour law** especially in the low-wage industries where immigrants mainly work.
- **Municipal ordinances that empower victims of wage theft** to take their complaints directly to judges, bypassing local law enforcement.

LEGAL/SOCIAL SERVICE

- **A statewide resource geared to funders, policymakers, service-seekers and non profits** needing to navigate community-based organizations; with strong outreach to underserved immigrant communities.
- **Targeted immigrant outreach** around NJ 2-1-1 and any other service referral resources.
- Expanded support for **free civil legal services** to low-income clients.
- **Know Your Rights** presentations to communities of color including immigrants.

POLITICS/CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

- Creation of a **New Americans Commission at the county level**.
- **County identification card** available to anyone with proof of a local address.
- Expanded access to **free citizenship assistance** for eligible legal permanent residents.

GENERAL

- Opportunities for **community-based organizations** to meet administrators and elected officials at all levels to discuss shared opportunities and challenges.
- Increased attention from **local, state and national funders** to the service and advocacy needs of low-income populations in the state, with attention to newcomers.

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