

**EMBARGOED until 12:01 a.m.,
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Immigrants Boost Portland's Economy in Proportion to Their Numbers, Study Finds

(Silverton) — As is the case throughout the nation's largest cities, immigrants contribute to Portland's economy roughly in proportion to their share of the population, according to a study released today by the Fiscal Policy Institute.

"The study should be required reading for all Oregonians, as it makes clear just how much of the economic growth of the state's largest metropolitan area is due to immigrants," said Joy Margheim, policy analyst with the Oregon Center for Public Policy, who examined the Fiscal Policy Institute's study.

The New York-based research institute examined the economic impact of all foreign-born workers, including undocumented immigrants, in the nation's 25 largest metropolitan areas. They concluded that "immigration and economic growth go hand in hand."

In the Portland metro area, immigrants constitute about 12 percent of the population and generate about 12 percent of the economic output, according to the study. That roughly one-to-one ratio appeared fairly consistently throughout the 25 large metro areas studied.

The Fiscal Policy Institute shared with OCPP additional data concerning the Portland metro area not included in their report. That data offer a more detailed picture of Portland's immigrant labor force, which spans the full range of occupations.

Immigrants make up a substantial share of Portland's workers in well-paying occupations, where they typically earn more than their U.S.-born counterparts, according to Margheim. They constitute 13 percent of professional specialists such as doctors and lawyers and 13.8 percent of technicians in areas such as health care, engineering and science.

At the same time, immigrants disproportionately fill Portland's low-paying jobs, Margheim said. She noted, for example, that while immigrants make up 14

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Page 2

percent of Portland's labor force, they constitute 27.3 percent of workers in food preparation services and 49.7 percent of workers in farming, forestry and agriculture.

In these lower-paying occupations, immigrants earn less than U.S.-born workers in the same occupation, the Fiscal Policy Institute's data for Portland showed. In 2005-07 immigrants working full-time in Portland's food service industry, for instance, had median annual earnings of \$15,786, compared to \$20,556 for U.S.-born workers.

Those numbers speak in favor of comprehensive immigration reform, according to Francisco Lopez, executive director of CAUSA, Oregon's immigrant rights coalition.

"A path to citizenship for undocumented workers would allow them to contribute even more to Portland and Oregon's economy," he said. "It would make undocumented immigrants less vulnerable to exploitation, lifting the bar for all workers, and provide the security needed to start a business. Everyone would win."

The Fiscal Policy Institute report, *Immigrants and the Economy: Contribution of Immigrant Workers to the Country's 25 Largest Metropolitan Areas*, is available online.

The Oregon Center for Public Policy is a non-partisan research institute that does in-depth research and analysis on budget, tax and economic issues. The Center's goal is to improve decision making and generate more opportunities for all Oregonians.

- 30 -

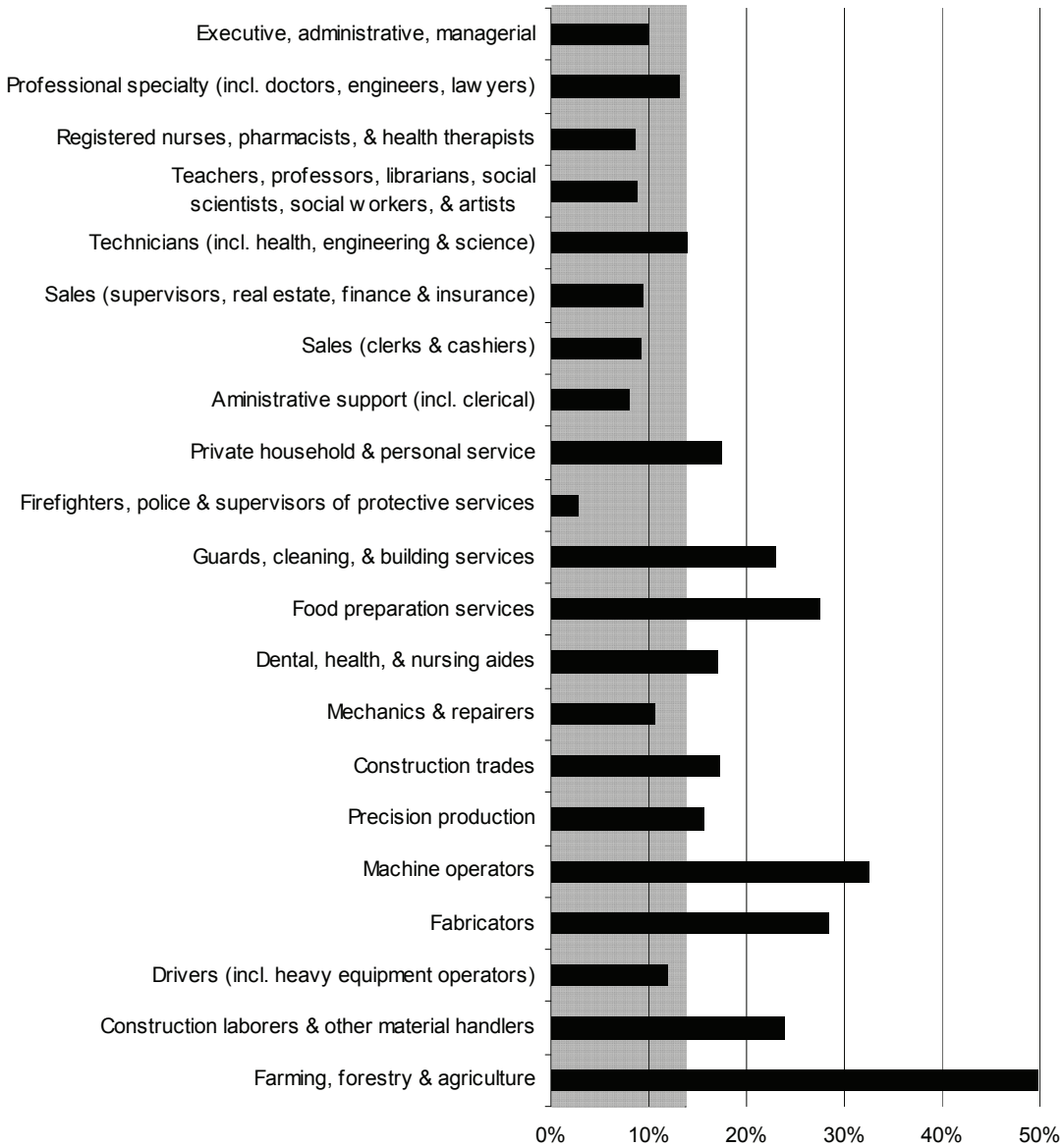
NOTE TO REPORTERS AND EDITORS:

The Fiscal Policy Institute report, *Immigrants and the Economy: Contribution of Immigrant Workers to the Country's 25 Largest Metropolitan Areas*, is available at www.ocpp.org/2009/ImmigrantsIn25MetroAreas_EmbargoedFor20091130.pdf. Three charts with additional data for the Portland metro area follow below.

Immigrant share of occupations in Portland metro area

2005-07

Gray area represents immigrant share of labor force in Portland metro area: 14 percent.



Source: Fiscal Policy Institute analysis of American Community Survey 3-year data, 2005-07.
Universe: people 16 years of age or older, who were employed in the civilian labor force.

Portland metro area earnings by occupation

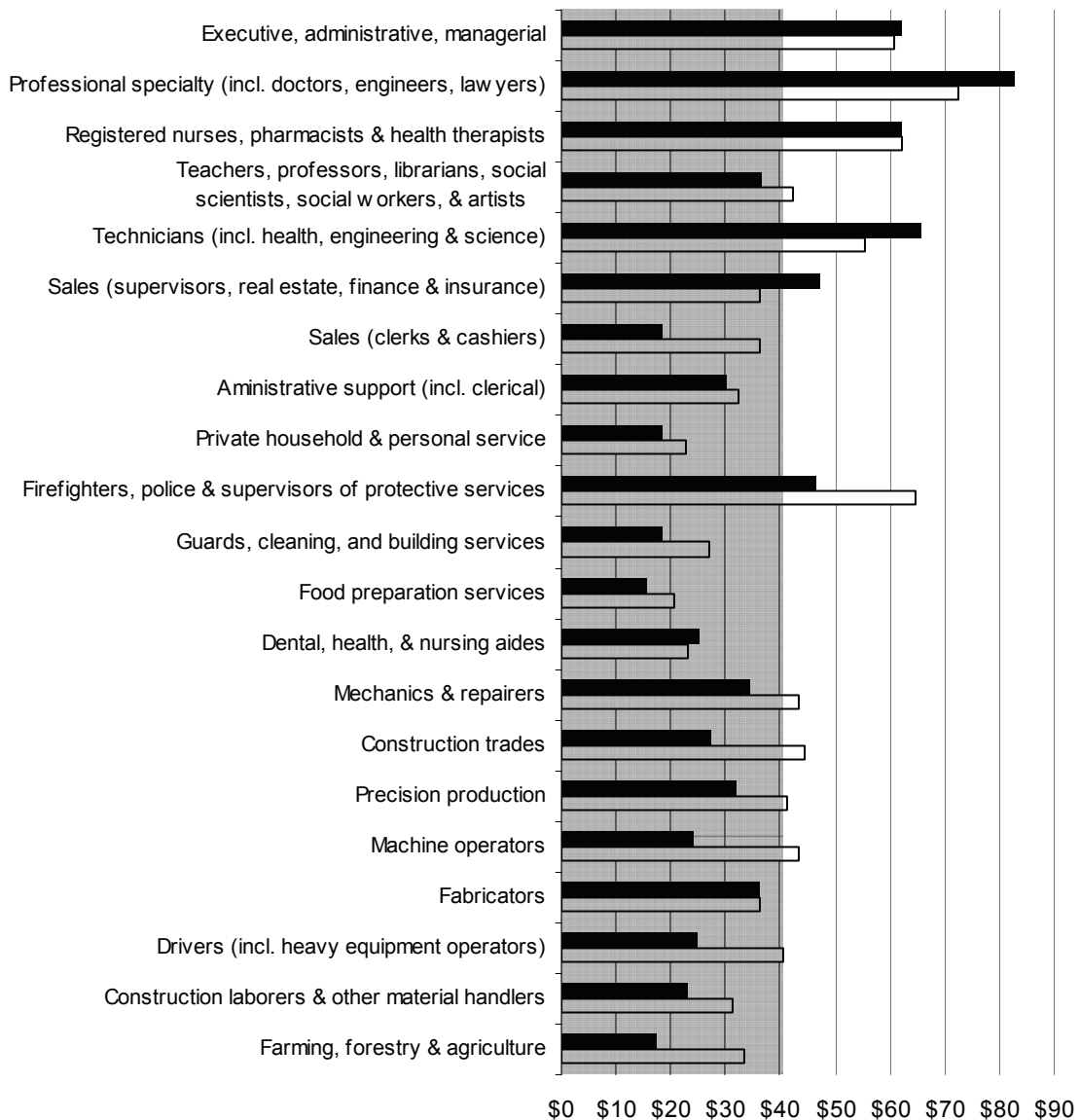
Median annual earnings (in thousands)

2005-07

■ Foreign-born full-time workers

□ US-born full-time workers

Gray area represents overall median annual earnings of \$40,000 for full-time workers in the Portland metro area.



Source: Fiscal Policy Institute analysis of American Community Survey 3-year data, 2005-07.
 Universe: people 16 years of age or older who were employed in the civilian labor force, worked at least 1,500 hours last year, and made at least \$100 a year in wage and salary income. Income is in CPI-U 2007 dollars.

Portland metro area Top countries of birth for immigrants

Country of birth	Number of immigrants in metro area	Share of all immigrants in metro area
Mexico	82,004	31.8%
Vietnam	16,426	6.4%
Ukraine	12,498	4.8%
Korea	11,981	4.6%
China (excluding Hong Kong and Taiwan)	11,112	4.3%
Canada	10,609	4.1%
Philippines	8,939	3.5%
India	7,825	3.0%
Russia	7,560	2.9%
United Kingdom	6,112	2.4%
Germany	5,228	2.0%
Romania	5,068	2.0%
Japan	4,634	1.8%
Guatemala	4,021	1.6%
Laos	3,329	1.3%
El Salvador	3,148	1.2%
Iran	2,667	1.0%
Taiwan	2,110	0.8%
Thailand	2,004	0.8%
Cuba	1,876	0.7%
All other	48,678	18.9%
Total immigrants in metro area	257,829	100.0%

Fiscal Policy Institute analysis of data from American Factfinder, American Community Survey 2005-07.