



New York by the Numbers

Economic snapshots of the five boroughs

Center for an
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The Center for an Urban Future is New York City's home for independent research and analysis, thinking about key issues affecting the five boroughs.

In this issue:

Low-Wage Jobs: Nearly a third of all adult workers in New York City are employed in low-wage jobs, but the Bronx is in a league of its own

After opposing several other mega-developments like the Willets Point redevelop-
ment and the proposed New York University's proposed new campus in West Bronx, the Mayor and City Council have now bowed to developer pressure and reached a proposal to build a shopping mall inside the Kingsbridge Armory in the Bronx. Although Mayor Bloomberg and other proponents of the plan said the mall would bring new jobs and retail opportunities, community advocates and labor unions have argued that the mall did not guarantee wages of at least \$10 an hour for the retail workers there.

It's not hard to see why the mega mall would prove to be such a striking point in the Bronx. As the poorest area of New York City, the Bronx, the Center for an Urban Future's periodic economic snapshot of the five boroughs, is whipping 42 percent of Bronx workers over the age of 18 are employed in "low-wage" jobs. The data, compiled for us by the Population Reference Bureau using Census data from 2007, shows that while the percentage of low-wage workers in high-income areas, the Bronx is by far and away the leader.

In two other boroughs, more than 30 percent of residents over the age of 18 work in low-wage jobs: Brooklyn (34 percent). The Bronx follows, with 32 percent—those making less than \$11.54 an hour or \$24,603 a year—is slightly lower in Staten Island (23 percent) and Manhattan (22 percent). Bronx, low-wage workers make up 31 percent of the city's adult workforce. As one moves out to the outer boroughs, the percentage of low-income workers in the Bronx's low-wage workers drops off somewhat. According to our data, 26 percent of adult workers in the New York metro area qualify as "low-wage." The percentage jumps back up to 37 percent for the whole state of New York. In fact, only two other states have a higher percentage of adult workers in low-wage jobs (Rhode Island and Hawaii).

The shift underscores how prevailing trends in both the local and national economy: manufacturing jobs that once provided a ticket to the middle class have largely disappeared, and the service sector, which has been growing, and the city's share of low-middle-income jobs today require recipients to have an associate's or bachelor's degree, and un-credentialed workers are increasingly forced into low-paying jobs in the service sector as a result.

Population Reference Bureau, 2008, *Snapshot of the Census Bureau's 2007 Basic Monthly Current Population Survey (BPCPS)*. The PRR data are collected for us by the Mobility Project, a foundation-funded research entity that works with PRR to expand opportunities in strengthen low-income families. ©2009 PRR. All rights reserved. No portion of this project or its work may be reproduced without written permission from the Mobility Project.

For more information on this project in New York State, please contact: Tom Robbins, Director of the Mobility Project, at (212) 542-2600, ext. 220, or via email at tom@mobility-project.org.

Report - December 2009

Low-Wage Jobs

This edition of New York by the Numbers reveals that nearly a third of all adult workers in New York City are employed in low-wage jobs. While the percentage of low-wage workers is high across the city, the Bronx is in a league of its own, with 42 percent of the borough's workers in low-wage jobs.

by Jonathan Bowles and David Giles

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