



**The Importance of Skills and Qualifications for College-Educated
Immigrants' Economic Integration**

Jeanne Batalova and Michael Fix

December 15th, 2022 | 12:30 PM – 1:45 PM EST



Why this study?

- To better understand immigrant college graduates' economic integration in the United States this study examines their economic progress, probes for the first time their cognitive skills, and explores the interrelationships between skills and several economic outcomes, including skill underutilization and workers' job quality.

What are the research questions?

- What are the demographic, educational characteristics, cognitive skills, and labor market outcomes of immigrant adults with at least a bachelor's degree in the United States, and how do they differ from those of their native-born counterparts?
- What is the relationship between the economic integration outcomes of college-educated immigrants and their cognitive skills? How does this relationship differ from U.S.-born college graduates?
- How do the relationships between the skills and economic integration outcomes vary for immigrants depending on English proficiency, degree majors, and other characteristics associated with labor market outcomes?

What are the key findings?

- College-educated immigrants are more racially and ethnically diverse than their U.S.-born counterparts.
- College-educated immigrants are more likely to have advanced degrees and to major in the science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) fields.
- The literacy, numeracy, and digital skills of immigrant college graduates lag those of the U.S. born.
- College-educated immigrants' economic outcomes, such as labor force participation, monthly earnings, skill underutilization, and self-assessed job quality, approximate or even exceed those of U.S.-born graduates.
- College graduates with higher literacy, numeracy, and digital skill levels have better economic outcomes.
- About one-fifth of immigrant and U.S.-born college graduates see their skills underutilized.

What are the policy implications?

- This study highlights the need for policymakers across the United States to focus on the often-overlooked issue of underemployment among college graduates, immigrant and U.S.-born workers alike.