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# Biggest metro Detroit immigrant group is from India, report shows

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By **Niraj Warikoo**  
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A major report on metro Detroit's immigrants released this week reveals a foreign-born population that's diverse, spread across the region and helping the area grow.

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"The foreign-born are a boon to the regional economy, demonstrating tremendous economic earning and job creation power," said the [86-page report](#) done by Global Detroit and Data Driven Detroit.

The report says there are almost 400,000 immigrants in the four-county region — Wayne, Oakland, Macomb and Washentaw. On average, they have higher incomes, greater levels of education and are more likely to be married compared with native-born metro Detroiters, the report said.

The biggest immigrant group in metro Detroit is from India, which makes southeastern Michigan unique. Nationally, immigrants from Mexico are by far the biggest immigrant group.

Overall, the immigrant population in metro Detroit is lower than in other parts of the U.S. About 8% of residents in the region are foreign-born, lower than the national rate of about 13%. In Detroit, the percentage is even smaller: only 5% of residents are immigrants, the lowest among the 25 biggest cities in the U.S. The cities of Hamtramck (41%), Dearborn (27%), Troy (26%) and Sterling Heights (23%) have the highest percentage of immigrants among local communities.

The report hopes to persuade officials of the importance of boosting immigration to help the region. Michigan was the only state in the nation to have lost population between 2000 and 2010.

"This is an issue that the city of Detroit must consider if they are serious about stabilizing population loss," said Kurt Metzger, director of Data Driven Detroit.

After India, the most popular nationalities among metro Detroit's immigrant population are Mexico, Iraq, Canada and Lebanon.

Steve Tobocman, director of Global Detroit and a former state

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representative whose district included immigrant-heavy southwest Detroit, said the report can help nonprofits, school districts and other groups understand and help diverse communities.

"Immigrants can create jobs for all of us and help everyone's economic future," Tobocman said.

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