

Jobs Americans Won't Do?

Americans are doing all of them

by Ed Rubenstein

Recent data (2003) on U.S.-born and foreign-born employment for 22 broad occupations show that the maximum foreign-born penetration ranges from a high of 38.8 percent of workers in labor-intensive “farming, fishing, and forestry,” to a low of just 5.2 percent in “legal occupations.” “Building and grounds cleaning,” which includes many menial jobs, is second, with 32.3 percent of its workers born abroad. Foreign-born workers accounted for 14.2 percent of all employment in 2003. The chart below ranks all 22 occupations on foreign worker share. [Edwin S. Rubenstein is president of ESR Research, Inc., a research organization focusing on public policy and economic trends. He was formerly Director of Research at the Hudson Institute.]

Employment by Occupation and Nativity Status, 2003				
(Thousands; 16 years and over)				
Occupation	Total	Native Born	Foreign Born	Percent Foreign born
Farming, fishing and forestry	1,050	643	407	38.8%
Building and grounds cleaning	4,947	3,350	1,597	32.3%
Production occupations	9,700	7,467	2,233	23.0%
Construction and extraction	8,114	6,343	1,771	21.8%
Food preparation and serving	7,254	5,675	1,579	21.8%
Computer and mathematical	3,122	2,539	583	18.7%
Life, physical, and social science	1,375	1,137	238	17.3%
Healthcare support occupations	2,926	2,425	501	17.1%
Transportation and material moving	8,320	6,943	1,377	16.6%
Personal care and service	4,232	3,567	665	15.7%
Architecture and related	2,727	2,326	401	14.7%
All occupations	137,736	118,005	19,731	14.3%
Healthcare practitioner and technical	6,648	5,766	882	13.3%
Installation, maintenance and repair	5,041	4,432	609	12.1%
Sales and related occupations	15,960	14,100	1,860	11.7%
Arts, design, entertainment, sports and media	2,663	2,375	288	10.8%
Business and financial operations	5,465	4,910	555	10.2%
Management	14,468	13,135	1,333	9.2%
Office and administrative support	19,536	17,767	1,769	9.1%
Community and social services	2,184	1,993	191	8.7%
Education, training and library	7,768	7,124	644	8.3%
Protective Service Occupations	2,727	2,560	167	6.1%
Legal occupations	1,508	1,430	78	5.2%

Source: Current Population Survey, Table 6, unpublished. Sent to Ed Rubenstein by Mr. Abraham Mosisa of BLS. (202) 691-6346.