

## Many new immigrants to Onondaga County lack job skills, report says

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A report issued today by Cornell University found that many of the latest immigrants to Onondaga County speak little English, are illiterate in their own language and have no job skills when compared with previous immigrants.

At the same time, many employers are ill-equipped to handle those needs, according to the report "Bridging the Gap: Training Needs Assessment of the Immigrant Workforce in Onondaga County, N.Y."

The report looked only at workers at the lower end of the economy. It states that it is not a random survey, which may have affected its conclusions.

The report's conclusions are bad news for those who believe an immigrant workforce could ease a looming labor shortage.

"For the most part, these immigrants, refugees and migrants from Puerto Rico will not be able to satisfy the demands for the higher-level skills that will fuel what regional planners expect to be a knowledge-based economy," the report said.

The county's Department of Economic Development commissioned Maralyn Edid of Cornell University's

Industrial and Labor Relations School to write the report.

Edid, a senior extension associate at Cornell, met with immigrants and refugees from Burma, Somalia, Burundi, Liberia and Mexico, as well as ethnic Russian Turks, beginning in January. She also interviewed people who moved to the area from Puerto Rico. Most of those interviewed were unemployed women.

She also interviewed employers and agencies who provide services to immigrants and refugees.

To read the report, go [here](#).