

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Release #4-99

November 8, 1999

**THE DEPARTMENT OF CITY PLANNING RELEASE NEWEST NEW YORKERS 1995-1996: AN UPDATE OF IMMIGRATION TO THE CITY IN THE MID '90's**

**Update Provides Details on Over 231,000 Immigrants Who Settled in New York City Between 1995-1996**

The New York City Department of City Planning today released *The Newest New Yorkers: 1995-1996: An Update of Immigration to NYC in the Mid '90s*. The detailed document prepared by the Population Division of the Department, provides an extensive description of the more than 231,000 immigrants who came to New York City during 1995-1996. The report serves as a supplement to *The Newest New Yorkers: 1990-1994* released in 1996 which was an across-the-board study of the nearly 563,000 immigrants who came to the City in the first five years of this decade.

The immigration data show that the top sources over the last two years were: the former Soviet Union, the Dominican Republic, China, Jamaica and Guyana. While the Caribbean, Europe and Asia remain major sources of immigrants to the City, New York's status as the pre-eminent global city, with links to all corners of the world, is reflected in its changing immigrant base. Countries such as Bangladesh, Ghana, Nigeria, and Egypt have now emerged as major sources of immigrants to the City.

Joseph B. Rose, Chairman of the City Planning Commission, said, "New York continues to draw record numbers of immigrants -- numbers not seen since the early decades of this century. This continuing strong influx of human capital into New York City is a key ingredient of our economic strength and of the revitalization of many neighborhoods. New York City's continued welcome to immigrants has allowed it to thrive while many other older cities have not."

The *Newest New Yorkers* series focuses on key shifts in the country mix of immigrants and their settlement patterns. Data on the size, country of birth, class of admission and settlement patterns of immigrants are examined. The document also analyzes emerging immigrant groups in the City and some of the key demographic and housing impacts of immigration. The update shows that more than ever, the character of New York is shaped by the increasingly diverse group of immigrants who settle in the five boroughs.

The report includes the following key findings:

- During the two year period 1995-96, over 231,000 immigrants settled in New York City, for an annual average of 115,700. This was a 2.7 percent increase from the average in the early 1990s.
- The increase in immigration was primarily due to the growth in refugee flows and a surge in those entering under the "diversity" provisions of immigration law, which were enacted to increase the flow of groups underrepresented in the immigration stream to the U.S.
- Europe accounted for over 25 percent of the flow, up from 20 percent in the early 1990s. Africa more than doubled its share of immigrants to over five percent, from two percent, in 1995-96. The Caribbean accounted for the largest share of immigrants (29 percent), Asia accounted for 25 percent of immigration, and South America for 11 percent.
- The top senders of immigrants to NYC were the former Soviet Union (accounting for 18 percent of all immigrants to the city), the Dominican Republic with 17 percent, China with 10 percent, Jamaica and Guyana at five percent each.
- The former Soviet Union was the number one source of immigrants, eclipsing the Dominican Republic which has been the number one sender to the city since the early 1970s. In the 1995-1996 period, flows averaged over 20,000 annually, an increase of over 50 percent since the early 1990s.
- Sixty-one percent of immigrants to the city entered under the family reunification provisions of the law. Over 11 percent of immigrants entered under the employment preferences and over 10 percent entered annually under the "diversity program." Refugees accounted for 17 percent of all immigrants to the city.

New Sources of Immigration are as follows:

- Immigration from Bangladesh nearly doubled from 1,900 annually in the early 1990s to 3,900 in 1995-1996. Close to one-half of Bangladeshis entered under the diversity visa program. Bangladesh is now the sixth largest source of immigrants to the city, up from 14<sup>th</sup> place in the early 1990s.

- As a result of diversity legislation, for the first time, African countries — Ghana, Nigeria, and Egypt — emerged as major players in New York's immigration tableau.
- While legal flows directly from Mexico to the city have been relatively small, the Mexican population in the city has grown dramatically, primarily through very high fertility and through internal migration — flows originating in other parts of the U.S. Between 1990 and 1996, there were nearly 29,000 births to Mexican-born mothers, or over three percent of all births in the city. Among foreign-born mothers, births to Mexicans were exceeded by only Dominicans and Jamaicans. Current estimates prepared by the Population Division place New York City's Mexican population in the range of 200,000 persons, making it the third largest Hispanic group in the city, after Puerto Ricans and Dominicans.

*The Newest New Yorkers: 1995-1996: An Update of Immigration to NYC in the Mid '90s* is available for purchase at the Department of City Planning Bookstore, located at 22 Reade Street, ground floor. For further information, please call (212) 720-3667.