

# Pathways to the Middle Class

- [1]

## Puerto Ricans in Low Wage Labor Markets and Workforce Development

The purpose of this study is to gain an understanding of Puerto Ricans in low wage labor markets on the island or stateside, the structural factors that contribute to the workers' participation in these markets, how migration flows may play a contributing role in limiting opportunities, and the workforce development system and community responses to the barriers impeding economic opportunities. The commission a series of papers addressing critical aspects of and institutional responses to these problems of limited economic opportunities for low wage workers. We intend to use these papers as the basis for a national conference on the topic, with the proceedings to be published as a special issue of the Centro Journal.

Ford Foundation Funded our grant (\$275,000) to

Finally, we will produce a policy briefing targeting each of the two populations (island and stateside) under examination. The papers to be commissioned as part of this grant will include the following:

Introduction	Puerto Ricans in Low Wage Labor Markets	Edwin Meléndez
Part I  Low Wage Labor Markets in Puerto Rico	1.  Structural Economic Changes and the Demand for Low Wage Workers	Angel Ruiz with Angel Rivera
	2.  What Skills Do Employers Want from Low Wage Workers?	Marta Enchebaga
	3.  Changes in the Structure of Low Wage Labor Markets and Migration Selectivity	Edwin Meléndez and Howard Carr-Legere
Part II  Low Wage Labor Markets and Stateside Puerto Ricans	4.  Structural Changes in Low Wage Labor Market and Puerto Rican Workers	Joseph Perera

	<p>5.</p> <p><small>A Leader Pipeline: Public Education and the Transition to Work</small></p>	<p><small>William Velaz</small></p>
<p>Part II</p> <p>System Responses</p>	<p>6.</p> <p><small>The Second Chance System in Puerto Rico</small></p>	<p><small>Ramon Borges</small></p>
	<p>7.</p> <p><small>The Statewide Second Chance System for Puerto Ricans</small></p>	<p><small>Ramon Borges</small></p>
<p>Part IV Community Responses</p>	<p>8.</p> <p><small>Career Ladders in the Education Industry</small></p>	<p><small>Carman Norzola</small></p>
	<p>9.</p> <p><small>Community-Based Career Ladders in the Health Industries</small></p>	<p><small>Abdela Torres</small></p>
	<p>10.</p> <p><small>Community-Based Career Ladders in the Social Services Industry</small></p>	<p><small>Anthony De Jesús</small></p>
<p>Conclusions</p>	<p><small>Where do we go from here?</small></p>	<p><small>Edwin Meléndez</small></p>

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