

Call for Papers Special Issue of the *CENTRO Journal*

Pathways to Economic Opportunity: Puerto Ricans in Low Wage Jobs and Workforce Development

Deadline for Submissions: January 15, 2010

Guest Editors: Edwin Meléndez, Andres Torres and Hector Cordero

There are two Puerto Rican communities--one is well integrated into economic sectors that promise opportunities for advancement and another is embedded in a sector where low wages and scant economic mobility are the norm. This pattern of labor market insertion, which leads to high rates of poverty, is similar whether you consider Puerto Ricans in Puerto Rico or on the United States mainland. This special issue of *CENTRO Journal* seeks to promote an understanding of the conditions Puerto Ricans face in low wage labor markets whether they reside in the island or stateside, the structural factors that contribute to their insertion in these markets, how migration flows influence opportunities, how health disparities and other community characteristics affect social and economic advancement, and how the workforce development system and community responses to economic conditions influence the barriers that impede full access to economic opportunities.

In particular, we invite original research that focus on:

- Structural factors that propel the growth of the low wage labor force in Puerto Rico and the United States, and how have the occupations and skills demanded by industry for low-wage workers changed as a result of structural industrial changes.
- How migration selectivity processes influence the dynamics of the low wage labor markets in both the United States and Puerto Rico, and reflective of the integration of the low wage labor markets of the two regions.
- How publicly funded employment and training institutions provide opportunities for youth to transition into the labor force, and more generally provide occupational advancement opportunities for low wage workers.
- How is gender and family composition a factor when understanding insertion in labor markets, occupational mobility, and access to workforce development services?
- Cases of successful community career ladder programs in key industries (such as social services, education, and health) with a disproportionate number of low wage workers that illustrate practical models for replication in other regions where Puerto Ricans are concentrated.
- Policies and community strategies to promote the career advancement of Puerto Ricans concentrated in low wage labor markets.
- To what extent are demographic and neighborhood changes, residential location and geographic mobility contributing factors to limiting economic opportunity and career advancement?
- What is the impact of the public education system and industry on the transition to school to work of Puerto Rican youth?
- What is the impact of a criminal record on the prospects for Puerto Rican youth of employment and career advancement opportunities?
- What is the impact of existing health disparities on the prospects for employment and advancement of Puerto Ricans?
 - a. How have labor market conditions contributed to the rising levels of disability among Puerto Ricans?
 - b. What limitations do Puerto Rican workers or former workers face in accessing health and social services?

As part of this initiative, Centro will sponsor a conference at Hunter College in mid November, 2009. We will cover travel expenses for authors with invited papers. Submission of a letter of intent is required by September 1, 2009, and a paper draft is due by October 1, 2009. Participation in the conference does not imply that papers will be included in the journal, but it is our intent that presentation at the conference will improve the quality of the papers submitted to the referees of the journal.

Papers should be no longer than 35 double-spaced pages, including notes and references. For submission guidelines consult www.centropr.org. For information and submissions contact: Xavier F. Totti, Managing Editor, CENTRO: Journal of the Center for Puerto Rican Studies, Hunter College, 695 Park Avenue, Room E-1401, New

York, NY 10021 (centro-journal@hunter.cuny.edu) (tel.: 212.772.5690; fax: 212.650.3673).