



U.S. Skilled Immigrant Employment and Public Firms

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A B S T R A C T

Characteristics of skilled immigrant workers – age, educational attainment, and occupational skills – changed after the U.S. immigration policy shock of 2004 when the maximum number of new skilled immigrant visas was reduced to 90,000. We observe a higher (lower) probability of hiring younger (older) skilled immigrants after the policy shock. Larger firms, firms that are high growth, that have low financial distress risk, and that make large investment in R&D are more likely to hire skilled immigrants. Most of the demand for skilled immigrants is in computer-related occupations, in science and mathematics, and in engineering and architecture. Younger skilled immigrants seem to substitute older skilled immigrants, and skilled immigrant hiring is correlated with firm-level capital investment in research and innovation for occupations related to science and mathematics.

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