



## **PRESS RELEASE**

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### **New Report: Immigrants contribute to, not drain NM's economy**

ALBUQUERQUE—Immigrants living in New Mexico contribute significantly to the state's economy and receive very little in the way of government safety-net programs such as Social Security and Medicare, according to a new report by New Mexico Voices for Children. The report, "Immigrants and the New Mexico Economy: Working Hard for Low Wages," shows that immigrants are represented in the state's labor force in higher percentages than are native-born New Mexicans. The report also shows that immigrants receive so-called transfer payments – Medicare, Social Security, unemployment benefits, etc. – at roughly half the rate as native-born Americans.

"There is a lot of anti-immigrant rhetoric out there about the presumed reasons foreign nationals come to the United States, but the data shows us a very clear picture: they're here to work," said Gerry Bradley, Research Director for child advocacy organization. "What's more, they are more likely to take low-wage private-sector jobs," he added.

The report also points out that naturalized citizens earn more on average than non-citizens. "This is a clear argument for immigration reform that includes a path to citizenship," Bradley said. Immigrants are also more likely than U.S.-born New Mexicans to be self-employed.

Although immigrants are less likely than native-born citizens to have employer-sponsored health insurance, the report shows that they receive less health care over all and are less likely to seek emergency-room care.

Because the data are from the U.S. Census Bureau, the report does not differentiate between immigrants who have legal residency status and those who do not. The Census Bureau tracks only whether respondents are U.S.-born citizens, naturalized citizens or non-citizens.

"Immigrants and the New Mexico Economy" is a product of NM Voices for Children's Fiscal Policy Project. The executive summary is attached separately as a pdf. The full report is available online at: [www.nmvoices.org](http://www.nmvoices.org)

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