



PRESS RELEASE

May 18, 2007

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Gerry Bradley, Research Director, New Mexico Voices for Children
505-244-9505 ext. 23 (p), 505-264-0074 (c), gbradley@nmvoices.org

Kids Count Data Shows Greater Hardships for NM's Hispanic Children

ALBUQUERQUE—While New Mexico enjoys a rich Hispanic heritage and cultural traditions, our young Hispanic population does not fare as well as it should. A new Hispanic Kids Count report, released today by New Mexico Voices for Children, shows that the state's Hispanic children suffer from a number of hardships more than their white, non-Hispanic counterparts.

More than half of all children in New Mexico are Hispanic, yet the percentage of Hispanic children living in poverty is higher than for New Mexico children in general. The percentage of Hispanic children with no parents in the workforce is also higher than the state average. Things don't seem to improve as these children enter adulthood, as fewer 18- to 24-year-old Hispanics have at least a high school diploma, and a higher percentage is idle (meaning they are not in school, working, or enlisted in the military).

"The Hispanic population is the fastest growing population here in the U.S.," said Juan A. Delgadillo, Chair of the Hispanic Statement of Cooperation. "So we have to ask ourselves, what do we want that population to look like in ten, twenty, even thirty years? Do we want a population of successful people who make valuable contributions to society? Or do we want an underclass of disenfranchised souls who grew up being shown that they were not worth much investment?"

"The Hispanic culture is one of honoring tradition, working hard, taking pride in that work, and family values," said Ralph Arellanes, District I Director of LULAC and Executive Board member to the Hispano Round Table of New Mexico. "Unfortunately, hard work alone is no longer the key to the American Dream that it once was. New Mexico's children need a better support system if they are to succeed."

"Today's children are tomorrow's doctors, teachers, business leaders and politicians. How they'll take care of us in our old age will be a direct reflection of how we take care of them now," said State Representative Rick Miera, Chair of the House Education Committee.

New Mexico Voices for Children believes that inequitable outcomes for racial minorities cannot be overcome unless they are intentionally addressed.

This report is available online as a pdf at www.nmvoices.org.

The Kids Count program is made possible by a grant from the Annie E. Casey Foundation.

###

New Mexico Voices for Children is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization advocating for policies to improve the health and well-being of New Mexico's children, families and communities.

2340 Alamo SE, Suite 120, Albuquerque, NM 87106; 505-244-9505 (p); www.nmvoices.org