



News Release

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IMMIGRATION RAIDS CREATE ECONOMIC DISTRESS AND EMOTIONAL TRAUMA FOR CHILDREN, NEW REPORT FINDS

Washington, DC— A new report released today by the National Council of La Raza (NCLR) and the Urban Institute found that for every two people detained in immigration enforcement operations, one child is left behind. Two-thirds of these children are U.S. citizens and a similar share is under age ten.

The report, [*Paying the Price: The Impact of Immigration Raids on America's Children*](#), details the consequences of immigration enforcement operations on children's psychological, educational, economic, and social well-being. It also outlines the heavy burden that workplace raids are placing on communities, school systems, social service providers, and religious institutions, which have acted as first responders for families in these incidents.

"The local governments and communities we studied did not have adequate resources to deal with children's needs in the aftermath of the raids," said Randy Capps, a demographer with the nonpartisan Urban Institute. "At the same time, the federal government did not have in place policies and procedures that explicitly consider the protection of children."

A team of researchers from the nonpartisan Urban Institute studied three communities that experienced large-scale worksite raids by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents within the past year: Greeley, Colorado; Grand Island, Nebraska; and New Bedford, Massachusetts. A total of 912 people were arrested and 506 children were directly affected.

NCLR funded the study to obtain an independent, objective assessment of how recent immigration actions have affected the children of immigrants.

"That we are putting the youngest, most vulnerable members of our society at profound risk is something that must be taken into consideration in any policy decision. This report clearly demonstrates that it may be years before we know the full effect of the worksite raids on these children and the long-term costs to our society," stated Janet Murguía, NCLR President and CEO.

The study found that the raids forced schools, child care providers, and extended families to act swiftly as important safety nets for children. On the day of the raids in all three sites, for example, the school districts made sure that children were not dropped off to empty homes or left at school overnight.

"Strong extended networks of families and friends took on significant caregiving and economic support responsibilities for children with parents arrested in the raids," said Urban Institute

researcher Rosa Maria Castañeda. “These resourceful networks were effective in ensuring that no children were left alone or taken into the custody of the state.”

Additional findings from the report include:

ICE’s processing and detention procedures – especially the lack of telephone access and the holding of many detainees outside their home states – made it difficult for detainees to contact their families or other caregivers to arrange for child care.

The vast majority of children remained with a second parent, but some were without their single parent or both parents following the raid. For example, in Grand Island, 17% of children affected had both parents arrested.

The resources of extended families and friends were depleted quickly, and support from the nonprofit sector generally lasted for only three or four months. Yet, some parents remained in detention for up to six months, and it took even longer for some parents to have their immigration cases adjudicated.

Children experienced the emotional trauma of their parents’ sudden absence, often personalizing the cause of the separation and feeling abandoned or fearful that their parents could be abruptly taken away from them.

In all three cities, affected families hid in their houses and were reluctant to open the door to visitors offering assistance for weeks after the initial raid.

Mental health experts noted that children’s and parents’ fears and the events surrounding the raids led to depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, separation anxiety, and suicidal thoughts in children.

The report makes a series of recommendations for policy-makers, local officials and service providers, and Immigration and Customs Enforcement to ensure that children are protected when raids occur. These recommendations include:

ICE should assume that children will be affected whenever adults are arrested in worksite enforcement operations and should develop a consistent policy for handling detained parents.

Congress should provide oversight of immigration enforcement activities to ensure that children are protected and should also consider providing resources to school systems and local agencies that respond to children’s needs.

Schools should develop systems to ensure that children have a safe place to go in the event of a school-hours raid.

Social services and other public agencies should prepare plans to respond to immigration raids and develop outreach strategies to assure parents and other caregivers that it is safe to seek emergency assistance and support for children under such circumstances.

In light of the report, NCLR has asked Congress to hold hearings as soon as possible regarding the status of children in the aftermath of raids.

[Paying the Price: The Impact of Immigration Raids on America’s Children](#), by the Urban Institute’s Randy Capps, Rosa Maria Castañeda, Ajay Chaudry, and Robert Santos, can be downloaded from NCLR’s website at www.nclr.org/payingtheprice or from the Urban Institute’s website at www.urban.org.

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The National Council of La Raza (NCLR) – the largest national Hispanic civil rights and advocacy organization in the United States – works to improve opportunities for Hispanic

Americans. Through its network of nearly 300 affiliated community-based organizations (CBOs), NCLR reaches millions of Hispanics each year in 41 states, Puerto Rico, and the District of Columbia.

The Urban Institute is a nonprofit, nonpartisan policy research and educational organization that examines the social, economic, and governance challenges facing the nation.