

News Release

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Latina Immigrants in Phoenix Face Vulnerabilities at a Crucial Time

A fact sheet released by the Institute for Women's Policy Research reveals that Latino/a immigrants in Phoenix face a range of social and economic vulnerabilities that often affect women more than men. According to IWPR's original analysis of the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey, nearly three in ten Latina immigrants live below the federal poverty line compared with approximately two in ten Latino immigrants, and the median income of Latina immigrants working full-time is substantially lower than their male counterparts' (\$20,979 compared with \$25,460). Latina immigrants are also much less likely than their male counterparts to be in the labor force (48 percent of women compared with 84 percent of men).

In addition, the fact sheet indicates that Latina immigrants in Phoenix are significantly more likely than comparable men to be caring for children. Fifty-nine percent of Latina immigrants have at least one child in their household compared with 42 percent of Latino immigrants.

The fact sheet is part of a larger IWPR project on the roles of religious congregations and nonprofit organizations in advancing the rights, economic standing, and general well-being of Latina immigrants in Phoenix, Atlanta, and Northern Virginia. Its preliminary findings come at a crucial time for immigrants in Arizona. The state recently passed legislation that religious leaders, advocates, and others claim will dramatically increase the challenges faced by immigrants who live and work in this region. The new law, SB 1070, says that law enforcement officials in Arizona must attempt to determine the immigration status of people they lawfully stop, detain, or arrest if there is reason to suspect these individuals are in the country illegally. Opponents of the legislation argue that its lack of guidance about what constitutes "reasonable suspicion" will lead to racial profiling.

At a recent strategy forum IWPR and Arizona State University held on policies affecting Latina immigrants in Arizona, participants voiced alarm about how the new law might make conditions even worse for Latina immigrants. Several individuals worried that it will increase immigrant communities' distrust of law enforcement officials, making women in these communities who experience abuse at work or at home less likely to seek help when they need it. IWPR Study Director Cynthia Hess said, "We must pay attention to the specific needs of Latina immigrants in Arizona and elsewhere. The social and economic vulnerabilities they face increase the likelihood that laws like SB 1070 will have devastating effects on their lives."

The Fact Sheet can be viewed here: <http://www.iwpr.org/pdf/R346Phoenix.pdf>

The Institute for Women's Policy Research (IWPR) conducts rigorous research and disseminates its findings to address the needs of women, promote public dialogue, and strengthen families, communities, and societies. IWPR's work is supported by foundation grants, government grants and contracts,

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