



THE CENTER ON
IMMIGRATION
AND CHILD WELFARE



RESEARCH BRIEFING ON SERVICES FOR IMMIGRANT FAMILIES WITH YOUNG CHILDREN IN DOÑA ANA COUNTY

July 19, 2021

INTRODUCTIONS



THE CENTER ON
IMMIGRATION
AND CHILD WELFARE

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OVERVIEW

- **Strengthening Border Families Research Project: Key Findings, Recommendation and Implications**
- **Data Resources on NM's Immigrant-Background and Dual Language Learner (DLL) Children: Potential Uses and Policy Implications**

STRENGTHENING BORDER FAMILIES: COMMUNITY & POLICY RESPONSES

MULTIPHASE STUDY:

PHASE I Community and government agency representative Zoom interviews to examine perceptions of accessibility and quality of services for immigrant families before and during the COVID-19 pandemic.

- **PHASE II** Online survey of frontline workers about the accessibility and quality of services for immigrant families.

STUDY GOALS:

1. **Understand** community perceptions of accessibility and quality of their services for immigrant families with young children;
2. **Identify** barriers and facilitators for immigrant families accessing services;
3. **Develop** policy and practice solutions to improve supports for immigrant families with young children in the NM borderlands and throughout the state.

Funded by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation & CHSS Early Investigators Initiative

COMMUNITY-BASED PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH (CBPR)

- Aims to reduce the *historical distrust* between minoritized peoples and the researcher (Minkler & Wallerstein, 2003)
- Collaborative, inclusive, and culturally relevant (Ahmed & Palermo, 2010; Sandoval et al., 2012)
- Partnership between community stakeholders and the academic researchers and a combination of research and social action (Springer & Skolarus, 2019)

COMMUNITY LEADER INTERVIEWS

Sample

- 5 local government representatives
- 10 state government representatives
 - 8 NM Early Childhood Education and Care Department (ECECD)
- 14 community/agency leaders

Data Collection

- 60-minute one-on-one interviews with government officials/agency leaders
- Focus group with state early childhood representatives



KEY FINDINGS

**RELATED TO EARLY
CHILDHOOD SERVICE ACCESS
FOR IMMIGRANT FAMILIES**

1. BARRIERS TO SERVICE RECEIPT

2. EXISTING NEEDS EXACERBATED

3. STATE EARLY CHILDHOOD NEEDS
& RESPONSES

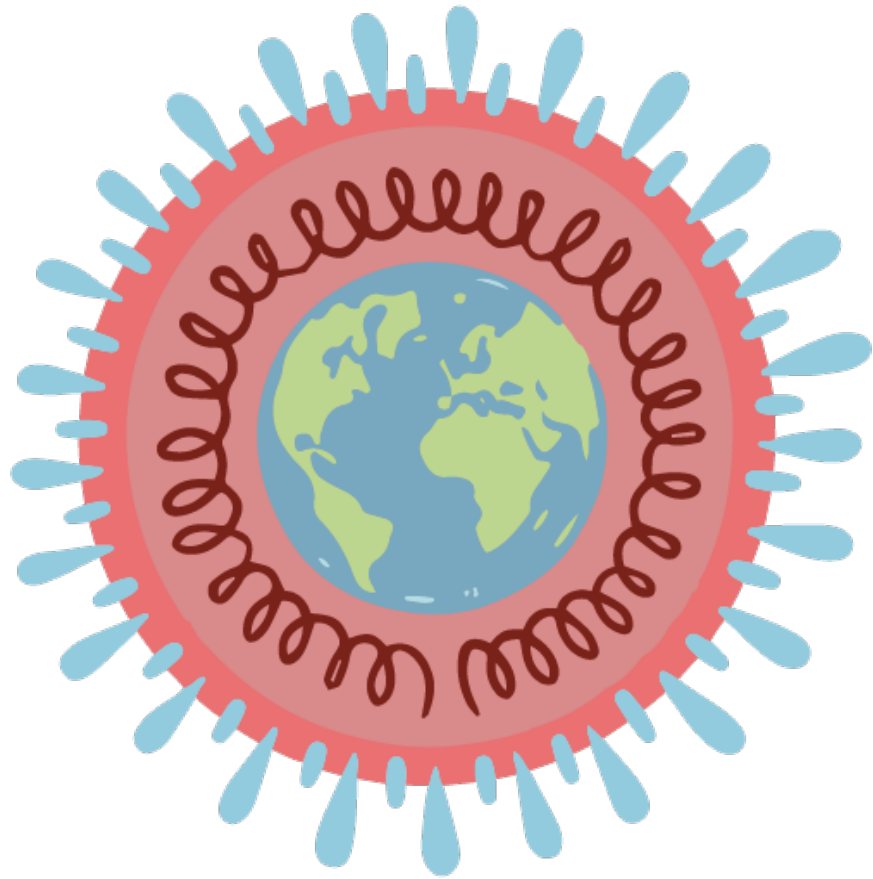


BARRIERS TO SERVICE RECEIPT

- **Language issues**
 - Availability of services in other languages
 - More bilingual staff needed
- **Eligibility issues**
 - Confusion about eligibility for services
- **Lack of information and misinformation** about available services
- **Mistrust** of government agencies
- **Fear** of immigration consequences when accessing services

COVID-19 EXACERBATES EXISTING NEEDS

RELATED TO...



Technology & education

Health & mental health services

Language services

Legal services

Transportation

Income, food, mortgage/rent

Childcare

FRONTLINE WORKER SURVEY: PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

- **80 participants**
 - Management & Administration
 - Caseworkers/Social Workers
 - Clinicians (e.g., health, mental health practitioners)
 - Community Outreach Workers/Promotoras
 - Educators
 - Legal Services Providers
- Average of **9.2 years** working with immigrants
- About **50% of work is with immigrants**

Sectors	
Multi-Service/Social Services	13
K-12 Education	11
Healthcare Services	11
Early Intervention	10
Early Childhood Education	10
Advocacy/Community Organizing	6
Legal Services	5
Mental Health Services	5
College/Adult Education	3
Food Services	3
Housing Services	2
Churches	1

Communities Served	
Las Cruces	54
Anthony	36
Vado	32
Chaparral	31
Hatch	28
Mesquite	28
Berino	26
Santa Teresa	26
Sunland Park	25
La Union	23
Outside Dona Ana	7
La Mesa	4
Chamberino	3
San Miguel	3
Radium Springs	1
Rincon	1

AGENCY CHALLENGES & BARRIERS TO ENGAGING FAMILIES

- **Fear (13)**
- **Language barriers (10)**
- **Trust/mistrust (9)**
- **Eligibility issues (8)**
- **Families lack of financial resources (5)**
- **Families don't want to share info or expose their situation (5)**
- **Transportation (4)**

How often have you experienced challenges or barriers engaging with the immigrant community?	n	%
Never	4	5.0%
Rarely	8	10.0%
Sometimes	42	52.5%
Often	19	23.8%
Always	7	8.8%

AGENCY STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS THESE BARRIERS

COLLABORATION

- **Collaboration & referrals to/with other agencies (13)**
- **Building trust & making families feel welcome (12)**
- **Education & information sharing (10)**
- **Providing services in families' language (8)**

FACTORS THAT BUILD TRUST WITH FAMILIES

- Relationship and rapport building (20)
- Bilingual services and/or staff (9)
- Education & information sharing (7)
- Service providers with relatable experiences (e.g., are immigrants themselves) (6)
- Consistent contact & follow up with clients (6)

To what extent do you think immigrants trust you or the services your agency provides?	N	%
A great deal	25	31.3%
A lot	39	48.8%
A moderate amount	10	12.5%
A little	5	6.3%
Not at all	1	1.3%

LANGUAGE ACCESS CHALLENGES

- Lack of bilingual providers/staff (10)
- Lack of resources for languages other than Spanish (7)
- Lack of funding/costs (4)

To what extent does your agency experience challenges in providing services to immigrants in their preferred language?

	n	%
A great deal	3	3.8%
A lot	4	5.0%
A moderate amount	19	23.8%
A little	24	30.0%
Not at all	30	37.5%



BIGGEST NEEDS OF FAMILIES

- Employment opportunities (11)
- Immigration-related needs or services (8)
- Financial needs/problems (8)
- Health services (8)
- Housing (6)
- Education (5)
- Health insurance (5)

REASONS FAMILIES DON'T GET SERVICES

Fear (e.g., deportation, repercussions to legal status, etc.) (19)

Lack of awareness/info about services (15)

Cost (5)

Lack of awareness about eligibility/qualification (5)

Legal status/Not eligible (4)

Time (3)

Transportation (3)

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Increase **service provider awareness** and knowledge of complexity of the situation
- **Contract with trusted** immigrant-serving organizations or other trusted community partners, including churches.
- Establish “**one-stop-service shop**” and/or **mobile or satellite locations**
- Utilize local school districts and head start programs to reach parents of 3–4-year-olds.
- Ensure **inclusion** of immigrant families in **COVID recovery** initiatives

Conduct outreach and education to **combat the "chilling effect"**

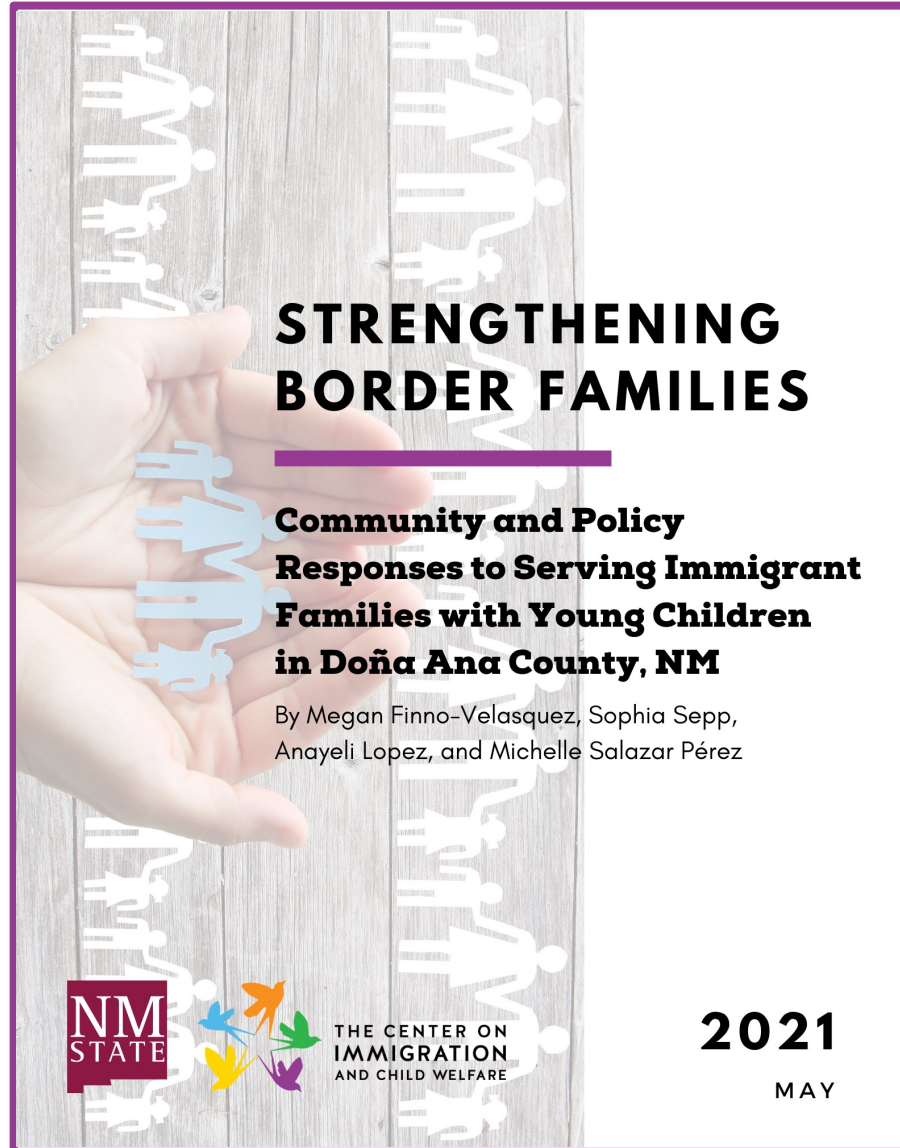
- Target **parent engagement** programs with immigrant families
- Increase understanding of the **value of early childhood programming**
- Combat the perception that outside agencies are coming in and trying to **take children away** or tell parents that they're parenting wrong
- Include parent education and literacy **in their native language**
- Include a **parent navigator** to build systems knowledge among parents
- Begin **engagement at childbirth.**

STATE GOVERNMENT SOLUTIONS

- Ensure **language access**
- Establish a statewide **Immigrant Resource Coordinator**
- Appoint a local **Equity Access Coordinator**
- Improve **data measures**
- Prioritize targeted **outreach and education** around
 - The **public charge** rule
 - **Sensitive locations** & vaccine distribution
 - The **American Rescue Plan**
- Revise **benefits policy**
- Leverage **funding**

FULL REPORT & RESEARCH BRIEF

WWW.CIMMCW.ORG



STRENGTHENING BORDER FAMILIES

Community and Policy Responses to Serving Immigrant Families with Young Children in Doña Ana County, NM

By Megan Finno-Velasquez, Sophia Sepp,
Anayeli Lopez, and Michelle Salazar Pérez

NM STATE THE CENTER ON
IMMIGRATION
AND CHILD WELFARE

2021
MAY

JULY 2021 • RESEARCH BRIEF



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Families with Young Children in Doña Ana County, NM



BY SOPHIA SEPP, MEGAN FINNO-VELASQUEZ, &
VANESSA MENDOZA

DATA HIGHLIGHTS

Three key themes emerged from interviews with local community agency leaders and city and county government representatives around (1) barriers to service receipt, (2) immigrant family needs, and (3) local responses to meet the needs of immigrant families.

BARRIERS TO SERVICE RECEIPT

Common barriers preventing or hindering immigrant families from accessing needed services include:

- **Fear** due to anti-immigrant rhetoric & policy
- Lack of **eligibility** for government programs
- **Language** barriers & lack of bilingual resources
- Lack of **information** and misinformation about available services
- Lack of **funding** and funding restrictions on serving immigrants
- **Policy** barriers (e.g., public charge rule)
- Reluctance and **mistrust** of government agencies
- **Bias** among government employees
- **Siloed** service structure
- Unique **border** area barriers
- Government office **closures**
- **COVID** safety issues

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BACKGROUND

This brief highlights the findings and recommendations from a community-based participatory research study conducted in Doña Ana County, New Mexico during the latter half of 2020. Through interviews with community organization leaders, local government representatives, and state government representatives, researchers aimed to gain insight into the accessibility and quality of community services for immigrant families with young children; identify barriers and facilitators to service access; and develop community-based policy and practice solutions to improve supports to this population.

QUESTIONS?



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