State and Local Policy Responses to Immigration in Minnesota

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Executive Summary

Minnesotans are fascinated with immigration. The frequency of newspaper, radio and television reports on this topic is matched only by the number of public forums and debates. Some of the attention derives from national events and political changes that affect immigrants, such as federal welfare reform, the attacks of September 11, 2001 and resulting calls for increased border security. Additional attention has been stimulated by rapid increases in the numbers and percentages of immigrants in Minnesota communities, and a few high profile crimes committed by foreign-born residents of the state. Political changes have also influenced policies and attitudes—in particular, the elections of a Republican governor and senator, increased conservatism in the suburbs, and a parallel increase in immigrants leaving the central cities. We examine each of these phenomena in the present report, along with supporting demographic data, interviews with key policymakers and immigrant leaders, and highlights of surveys with native-born residents of the state.

Findings:

- Although only 6% of the population is foreign-born, the concentration of immigrants in particular cities and towns and the presence of large numbers of refugees feeds a perception that Minnesota has large numbers of immigrants.

- State policies toward immigrants have traditionally been liberal, but national concern over social spending, undocumented immigrants and national security issues have influenced local politicians and eroded support for a number of educational, health and social service programs.
• A number of philanthropic and non-profit organizations and individual community leaders and organizations continue to lobby for needed services for immigrants in an increasingly political environment.

• Reports on the economic contributions of immigrants to the state have been mixed, and reflecting differing partisan views.

• Like the political parties, the attitudes of Minnesota voters toward immigrants are deeply split. About half have positive views of immigrants, and half believe that they are a drain on society, do not assimilate, or get too many government handouts.

• Several educational programs for foreign-born youth in the Twin Cities have been lauded as models worthy of replication, but high dropout rates among Latino youth remain a major concern. Furthermore, budget cuts and program time limits have put even some award-winning programs in jeopardy.

• In 2000, for the first time there were more immigrants living in Minnesota suburbs than in central cities. Like the central cities, suburban schools and neighborhoods in the suburbs are growing increasingly segregated by race/ethnicity. As a result, African and Latino immigrants are being concentrated in poor, segregated areas that offer fewer resources and opportunities.

• Minnesota has been a leader in a health and social service programs for diverse populations over the years, but large health disparities remain between US- and foreign-born low income residents. These disparities are increase with time in the US, and have been exacerbated by cuts in eligibility for needed services.

• There is a severe shortage of affordable housing in Minnesota that disproportionately affects low income immigrants.
• Disagreements over increased surveillance of immigrants and changes to drivers’ licenses to note visa status have led to strong partisan disagreements between the Republican Governor and House and the Democratic-led State Senate.
Introduction

Minnesota is a low immigration state; only 6% of the population is foreign born, compared to 12% nation-wide. Yet several factors contribute to exaggerated perceptions of the size of the immigrant population. The first is an uneven dispersal of immigrants across the state. Large concentrations of immigrants live in the Twin Cities, in particular suburbs, and in rural communities with food processing plants that attract immigrant workers. In these towns a proliferation of languages and cultures and the rapid increase from few to many non-European origin residents, feeds the perception that Minnesota is, in the words of one anti-immigrant researcher, “a new Ellis Island.” Furthermore, since 25 to 40% of immigrants in the state enter as refugees (see Figure 1), their national origins differ markedly from those of immigrants in other parts of the country—with higher percentages of Africans, Asians and residents from the former Soviet countries. In 2004 just under a quarter of the foreign-born population of Minnesota was composed of Latinos of any race. Most of these individuals were from Mexico and Central America. Asians represent the largest foreign-born population in the state—principally Hmong, Vietnamese, Laotians and Cambodians. Africans (predominantly Somalis) represented a smaller percentage of the total foreign-born population in that year, but the largest group of new immigrants in 2004. In rural and suburban communities that have had no history of ethnic or racial diversity, the presence of new African and Asian refugees and Latino immigrants, is another cause of the heightened visibility of immigration to the state.
Minnesota has a reputation for welcoming immigrants and refugees as part of its tradition of strong social programs and progressive politics. The state can boast of long and distinguished list of state councils, non-profits, foundations, advocacy and mutual assistance groups that serve the foreign-born. Nevertheless, some of this support appears to have eroded in recent years, as Minnesota voters have moved noticeably to the right, both in political party affiliation, and in attitudes toward immigrants. As of this writing, the state of Harold Stassen, Hubert Humphrey, Walter Mondale and Paul Wellstone has a House of Representatives with a Republican majority, and a conservative Republican governor who has made a punitive response to ‘illegal immigration’ a major theme of his administration.

In the following sections we describe the growing partisan divide over immigration in Minnesota, and provide detail on initiatives related to education, health, social service, housing, labor and security policies. Some of the data and quotes for this discussion come from key informant interviews. Between February and April, 2006 we conducted 34 interviews with US- and foreign-born policy-makers familiar with issues of importance to immigrants and refugees in
Minnesota. The persons interviewed included several state agency directors, managers and directors of immigrant-serving organizations, foundation program officers, and elected state and county officials. Everyone was asked how the state of Minnesota has responded to increases in the numbers of immigrants and refugees over the past ten years, and what policy changes they had observed. Depending upon their areas of expertise, respondents were then asked for specific comments about changes in state policies related to health, education, housing or public safety (see questionnaire in Appendix B).

**Partisan Views of Immigration Policy in Minnesota**

In January of 2004 Republican Governor Pawlenty issued a multi-pronged proposal to ‘curb illegal immigration’, incurring the wrath of immigrant-serving groups and many non-profit agencies. Ironically it was a *pro-immigrant* letter from the mayor of Worthington, Minnesota (a town with a large pork processing plant and a largely immigrant work force) that purportedly motivated Governor Pawlenty’s public statements on the costs of ‘illegal immigration’. The mayor of Worthington had written a letter to the Governor requesting his help securing legal identification for undocumented immigrants in his city. According to an article in *USA Today*,\(^{vii}\) it was the mayor’s letter that stimulated the Governor to commission a report by the Minnesota
Department of Administration on the ‘costs of illegal immigration’\textsuperscript{viii}. The resulting report, issued in December of 2005, was widely criticized for relying upon data from the Center for Immigration Studies, an anti-immigrant ‘think tank’, and for employing broad estimates to tally costs, while claiming that benefits in the form of taxes paid by immigrants could not be included because the “exact dollar amount attributable to illegal immigrants is unknown.”\textsuperscript{ix}

As a counterpoint, members of the Democratic Farm Labor (DFL) legislative caucus referred to an independent research report that estimated that undocumented laborers had had a substantial and positive impact on the Minnesota economy.\textsuperscript{x} They charged that the Governor was ‘playing to racism’\textsuperscript{xi} and using immigration as a “wedge issue” to gain support for his national political ambitions.

Later in 2006 the Office of the Minnesota Legislative Auditor issued a more positive, if cautious report on the economic impacts of immigration, concluding that “immigration probably has positive economic impacts overall, although certain workers and levels of government might experience adverse impacts.”\textsuperscript{xii} The authors referred to the shortcomings of the 2005 report, noting that “a study by the Minnesota Department of Administration estimated the additional public costs due to illegal immigrants, but did not estimate the additional tax revenues they generate.”

The Governor’s January, 2004 proposal included the following strategies.\textsuperscript{xiii} Establish a 10-member Minnesota Illegal Immigration Enforcement Team that would be federally trained and authorized to question, detain and arrest suspected illegal immigrants.
• Override city ordinances in Minneapolis and St. Paul that prohibit police officers from taking action against illegal immigrants unless they are arrested for a separate crime. Pawlenty said the ordinances violate federal law.

• Put into law a 2002 state administrative rule that prominently marks driver’s licenses of legal foreign visitors with their visa expiration dates. That proposal was a central theme of the Republican governor’s 2002 election campaign, but it was blocked by the DFL-controlled Senate. The Department of Public Safety under Gov. Jesse Ventura implemented the license designation by administrative rule and it continues in force.

• Toughen and add penalties for possession, creation and sale of false IDs. Currently, it is not a crime in Minnesota to possess a false ID unless intent to commit a crime can be proven.

• Require officers to note the citizenship and immigration status of all arrestees at booking.

• Increase felony penalties for human trafficking when minors are exploited to up to 20 years in prison. In addition, a task force would be set up to seek ways to combat human trafficking.

• Add a state fine of as much as $5,000 to a current federal penalty of $11,000 for employers who knowingly hire or recruit illegal immigrants. In addition, state contracts would prohibit the use of illegal immigrants to perform contracted services.

Some analysts suggest that the Governor was unprepared for the pro-immigrant backlash that followed the issuance of his first set of proposals. One administration official described a rash of gubernatorial staff phone calls to agency heads asking how they could engage in ‘damage
control’. Another confirmed that the Governor “got in huge trouble and within weeks he was calling up agencies asking what could be done that would be ‘pro’ immigrant.” A few weeks later Pawlenty announced a series of proposals designed to ‘support legal immigration’. These included:

- A tax credit of $300 per family to encourage immigrants to become citizens by offsetting the costs of English language classes and citizenship application fees
- Provision of basic ‘financial literacy’ information on income tax credits, home ownership and business start-up opportunities
- Pressure on the federal government to grant more visas to graduates of US colleges and universities and green cards to immigrants with high-tech skills
- Establishment of ‘foreign investor visas’ for foreign investors who invest at least $500,000 in new or existing Minnesota businesses, create at least ten new jobs or maintain the current level of employment at a struggling business
- Establish a three million dollar grant program for employers to provide English language instruction for their employees
- Expand the number of foreign physicians working in underserved areas in Minnesota
- Increase in immunizations for immigrants

In 2004 former Vice President Mondale was so concerned over partisan bickering, and what he has described as the loss of “civic engagement and shared vision” in Minnesota that he commissioned a study on the topic. The authors of the final report attributed the political shift to changes in the economy, growing political polarization, and to “increasingly racially diverse
immigration into the state.”\textsuperscript{xv} In spite of this interpretation, it is unclear whether increased immigration has led changes in the social and economic views of Minnesota voters, or whether conservatives have merely been given greater visibility and political clout that has brought restrictionist views to the fore. In any case, disagreements over immigration policies have further widened an already large divide between Democrats and Republicans in the state.

During the 2006 legislative session Representatives in the Republican-controlled Minnesota House put forward a number of bills incorporating items from Governor Pawlenty’s proposals, but support from the DFL/Democratic Party that controls the Senate kept most of the restrictive measures from becoming law.

In response to the Governor’s proposals on immigration DFL legislators in the Senate sponsored their own proposals to expand English language classes, give tax credits to businesses offering English and citizenship instruction, penalties for employers who exploit immigrants, and the formation of a Governor’s Commission on New Minnesotans.\textsuperscript{xvi}

In a rare bipartisan effort, Democrats and Republicans joined forces to support the Minnesota DREAM Act, a bill that would grant in-state tuition to undocumented students. On April 19, 2006 the bill passed the House Ways and Means Committee by a vote of 26-8. It appeared poised to pass both Houses until the Governor voiced his opposition, and wrote a personal letter to each member of the Higher Education Committee asking them to remove the provision from the Higher Education bill\textsuperscript{xvii}.
Positive Responses to Immigration

Not all of the local responses to increased numbers of immigrants in Minnesota have been negative. A number of individual cities and towns in Minnesota have taken steps to demonstrate support for foreign-born residents. One of many examples is the institution of Spanish language instruction for police officers in Apple Valley. Other police departments use the AT&T Language Line, and some routinely call the Border Patrol to interpret, but the Public Safety Director of Apple Valley explained that “I saw all of the Spanish-speaking officers in Worthington and it all just kind of connected for us; it was just the right thing to do.” The police chief added “If you are going to provide good public service, you have to be willing to adapt.”

A foundation officer whom we interviewed described the variation among communities in terms of attitudes of elected and appointed officials.

*Austin, for example, has a mayor and employers and local businesses that are very supportive of new immigrants; they understand the benefits and want to help them acculturate…It all depends on leadership—if you have a mayor talking about viewing the population as criminals, then people start talking about not wanting immigrants. For example, the mayor in Montgomery decided that there were too many Mexicans downtown. He decided to evict people and to tear down houses to make opportunities for potential buyers, even when the buyers did not exist.*
Minnesotan’s views on immigrants and immigration are complex and contradictory. Adults in the state demonstrate both marked support for programs and policies supporting immigrants and refugees, and considerable xenophobia. Minnesota is home to a long and distinguished list of state councils, foundations and community development groups sponsoring projects for the foreign-born, as well as immigrant-serving organizations with international reputations, such as Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights, the Center for Victims of Torture, the American Refugee Committee, the International Institute, and the Human Rights Center at the University of Minnesota. One active advocacy group ‘AFFIRM’ (Alliance for Fair Federal Immigration Reforms in Minnesota) is a coalition of forty religious, labor and civil rights groups lobbying for immigration reforms that promote family reunification, protection of human, civil and worker rights, and the creation of a pathway to citizenship” (state agencies, such as the Council on Asian Pacific Minnesotans and the Chicano Latino Affairs Council).

Support for immigrant and refugee services by local foundations has also been impressive; between 1994 and 2005 forty-seven Minnesota foundations made over 340 grants supporting work with immigrants and refugees. According to the Minnesota Council on Foundations, these philanthropic efforts have not required a change in focus because most of the issues faced by immigrants and refugees are the same as those often faced by low income groups: housing, employment, education and health care.

As a result, grant makers have generally incorporated support for immigrants into a broad and growing focus on diverse populations. The political clout of immigrants in Minnesota is growing, as evidenced by the election of Hmong and Latino state representatives, and, in January
of 2002, the election of Mee Moua as the first Hmong state senator in the nation. Senator Moua’s story of fleeing repression in Laos as a child, entering the country as a refugee and later becoming an attorney and the first Hmong state senator during the 2006 Legislative session captured for many the immigrant dream of success in the United States. Another example is the multi-denominational Joint Religious Legislative Coalition that galvanized a thousand clergy and constituents to convene at the Minnesota Legislature to push for rights for the poor, the homeless and undocumented immigrants.

An official in the Minnesota Department of Human Services gave a recent example of how multiple organizations in the state have come together to support new immigrants and refugees:

_We recently had to deal with the influx of 4,000 people of Hmong origin from Thailand._

_We were able to do that with Mutual Assistance Associations, and voluntary organizations—large ones like Lutheran Social Services. They have a direct relationship with the federal government in placing refugees. They are very helpful in helping refugees have access to state programs. They help families get into MFIP (Minnesota Family Investment Program) through the various agencies. We are working with local organizations…and foundations that provided emergency support for groups, like the recent Hmong community, and we maximize our work through help from our Congressional delegation._

In concert with media attention to anti-immigrant groups, the 2003 resettlement of 5,000 new Hmong refugees in Minnesota generated some negative backlash. State Senator Mee Moua
described some of the negative comments called in to her office when the resettlement was announced: “I feel terrible for my staffers because they really take the brunt of it. We’ll hear things like, ‘I’m a white man, and this is my country and we don’t need any more of your kind.’ Or, ‘Our state is burdened enough and we don’t need more of your kind to take our welfare.’

Recently, national furor over the size of the undocumented population of immigrants has reached Minnesota. The Governor used demographic estimates that there may be as many as 85,000 unauthorized immigrants in Minnesota as justification for proposals to crack down on this population. His stance and parallel federal debates on undocumented immigration have polarized the public. With urging from church leaders, union officials, and Latino radio hosts, an unprecedented 35,000-40,000 Minnesotans marched in favor of immigrant rights in St. Paul in March of this year, and immigrant advocacy groups marshaled support for petitions, public statements and visits to legislators.

The current divide in the Minnesota legislature over programs and policies for immigrants mimics the sentiments of voters in the state. In 2004 researchers from the Minnesota Community Project \textsuperscript{xxi} surveyed 700 likely Minnesota voters across the state, and asked them to select \textit{two} statements that described their feelings:

“Immigrants…

- take jobs nobody else wants
- contribute to cultural diversity
- are a drain on public schools
- are hardworking and make a valuable contribution
do not assimilate

get too many government handouts”

The attitudes of respondents were equally divided between those who selected two positive statements from the list, and those who selected either two positive, or one positive and one negative statement (see Figure 2).

Further analysis of the data revealed a strong partisan split, with statistically significant differences in the attitudes of individuals who identified themselves with the DFL/Democratic Party, the Republican Party, or said that they were Independents (see Figure 3). Sixty percent of Democrats supported two positive statements about immigrants, compared with just over half of ‘Independent’ voters, and only thirty-four percent of Republicans.
Policies Related to K-12 Education

At a time when enrollment of non-Hispanic white youth has been stagnant or declining in many districts, enrollment of Limited English Proficiency (LEP) students has increased dramatically (see Figure 4) xxii Some anti-immigrant groups point to these increases as a major economic drain on the state. Yet, school programs are funded by property taxes paid by immigrants and non-immigrants alike. Furthermore, the enrollment boosts attributed to the children of immigrants are a crucial source of state revenue for many schools.
In Minnesota (and a majority of other states) funds are allocated to schools based upon a per-pupil enrollment formula. On the one hand, this means that it is formula funds corresponding to increased enrollments of immigrant youth and the US-born children of immigrants that keep many Midwestern schools from closing or consolidating. On the other hand, other than a modest amount of additional funds for students in English Language Learning (ELL) programs, the formula does not take into account additional responsibilities assumed by administrators and teachers in schools with large immigrant populations.

Immigrants have traditionally been concentrated in the metro area, and there are large differences between programs in Minneapolis/St. Paul, and in other parts of the state. According to a study by the Council of Great City Schools, the St. Paul School District is among the best in the nation at improving the achievement of English Language Learners, and bringing their reading scores closer to those of native-born youth. The report attributes this success to bilingual instruction programs that bring extra language teachers into subject matter classrooms,
rather than removing students for English Language Learning. In the program ELL teachers develop models of training for mainstream teachers and work as coaches to support them.

In general, the policymakers whom we interviewed gave high marks to the ways in which Minnesota schools have responded to the needs of immigrants and refugees over the past ten years. A Somali Muslim cleric who works as an English Language Learning (ELL) teacher in a St. Paul school described accommodations made by the schools that included giving staff the necessary training for cultural and English proficiency instruction, embedding cultural studies into the curriculum, and hiring people from the community as community specialists to work in the schools. He noted that:

*At least from the Somali perspective, I do feel Minnesota has been very welcoming—especially when we came in large numbers—the school system responded with overwhelming support and accommodation. One of the main factors that attracted the Somalis to Minnesota was this welcoming.*

This teacher gave the St. Paul school district a “B” report card grade for its response to the educational needs of immigrant youth because of the diversity of programs and options, the acquisition of culturally specific books and materials, and strong collaboration between ELL and mainstream teachers.

The Minneapolis District uses several different models of language instruction. In one called the ‘Kindergarten Language Development Model’ (KDLM), students are taught in their native languages for part of the day, and in English during another part. For some new students,
such as Hmong children who have recently arrived from refugee camps in Thailand, there is a ‘Transitional Language Center’ (TLC). Minneapolis has used this model with bilingual teachers who teach content matter to students clustered by national origin group in order to give them more support.

A foundation officer confirms that some schools have done “extraordinary work in creating a climate of respect for students who are from other faiths, traditions, and cultures,” but she also laments cutbacks in funding, and gives the state only a C minus on meeting the educational needs of immigrant youth:

*For one thing, we have seen major disinvestments in after school programs, which are very important in young people’s identity and social support, considering that their parents are pretty much employed. You have to have consistency, you have to challenge young people, and we are not doing that with after school programs. You have success stories, but if you look at the graduation rate, we are losing ground with immigrants and refugees, just as we have with African-Americans and Native Americans.*

In 2000, for the first time there were more immigrants living in Minnesota suburbs than in central cities. Like the central cities, suburban schools and neighborhoods in the suburbs are growing increasingly segregated by race/ethnicity. As a result, African and Latino immigrants are being concentrated in poor, segregated schools that offer fewer resources, weaker educational preparation, and substantially lower achievement levels.
Some districts have responded well to the children of immigrants. Eden Prairie schools, for example have sponsored intensive training to help staff learn how to serve new refugee children, and the LEAP Academy in St. Paul has an excellent program of intensive English for Hmong students. However, there are marked differences across schools, and the legislator quoted earlier gives K-12 programs “a failing grade for the state, and a C in the metro area; the results don’t lie—immigrant youth have high drop-out rates.”

A number of federal initiatives have had a deleterious effect on educational programs for diverse youth, as noted by a foundation officer who has worked with immigrant and refugee programs for eighteen years:

the 1996 Welfare Reform Act put a great deal more stress on the states to get people to work in hurry, sometimes bypassing or shortcutting English language programs. There has been a philosophical shift toward ‘work first’, rather than education. (At the same time) we see a greater diversification of populations of refugees who come here—many more immigrants for whom services are very difficult to secure or pay for.

According to several policymakers, the federal ‘No Child Left Behind Program’ (NCLB) and its emphasis on standardized tests is a problem for many immigrant children. Although a change in policies exempting them from testing for the first few years has helped, once they are required to be tested, both the youth and the schools feel extra pressure. One individual commented that “what makes mainstream kids struggle is increased exponentially for immigrant children who don’t necessarily speak English at home.” Others mentioned that teachers
complain about the stress created by the large number of required tests, and the instruction time taken up ‘teaching to the test’.

The head of a Latino organization believes that the temporary NCLB testing exemption for ELL children may actually be deleterious if it results in a reduced commitment to that population. He asks whether Minnesota schools have a commitment to help those children achieve positive learning outcomes, and notes that it took a class action suit in the 1970s (the ‘Latino Consent Decree’) to force the St. Paul schools to pay more attention to the needs of Latino youth. The need for further improvement is dramatically evidenced by the high dropout rates among Latino students. “For every 100 Latino youth -- only 9 will have completed some level of college by their mid-twenties, and the dropout rate is far beyond 50 percent.” He emphasized the urgency of this problem for the state as a whole, given the increase in diverse populations, and the likelihood of losing qualified applicants for thousands of jobs that require baccalaureate degrees.

There is also a large gap between the graduation rates of non-Latino immigrants and US-born students, and a need for better counseling for college admissions. The Somali ELL instructor we interviewed commented that “the parents don’t have those skills, so students don’t have information to navigate the forms and process to get into college. A lot of times they are on their own, and may not make good choices.” Another individual added:

Parents need help making the bridge to the school. Many cultures see their teachers/schools as assuming responsibility for education of children. Many immigrant children are from families working multiple jobs, so parents aren’t around, and some
families are quite impoverished. Young children are not really ready for school, because the parents/grandparents do not speak English and do not have access to bilingual preschool programs.

Other problems include a state-mandated five-year limit on ELL instruction, and policies prohibiting older immigrant students from continuing in regular high schools. The state requires that students over the age of 21 enter GED programs or qualify for adult basic education. They are referred to “Area Learning Centers’ that rely upon independent learning and don’t have sports or programs that help new students with limited English proficiency become socialized and integrated. Older immigrant students need more intensive instruction and assistance rather than less, and many drop out because of a lack of support and attention. The State Commissioner of Education describes the challenges related to educating older immigrant youth.

One area we really grapple with is a student who comes to this country at, lets say 16 years of age – who doesn’t have more than 3-4 years before they’re out of school – that student doesn’t have enough time for all the education they need. You know, we can educate kids until they’re 21, but what do we do with those over-21 year old students? We have ABE programs where it’s a few hours a day or a few days a week but it’s not full blown school in the same way. I think there’s a real question of how to best use our ABE programs – when it’s not appropriate anymore for a student to be in High School classes – we should be able to expand ABE for those who are not done with their high school diploma yet – an expanded, more intense version of that. Because probably by that point, if students are that old, they’re working and don’t have as much time, we have to
think about that. At that age, they’re probably already more mature and don’t really need a 6-hour school day. There is a group of students like that who would probably benefit from some other model besides the 6-hour school day.

In sum, although Minnesota has many innovative programs for immigrant youth, budget cutbacks, rapid diversification and concentrations of low income youth in inner city schools have led to poor outcomes for many foreign-born students. Refugee students, for example, have special needs that are not adequately recognized in many K-12 schools, such as high rates of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) resulting from exposure to war and violence. First and second generation Latino youth have very alarming high school dropout rates. Ironically, Minnesota ranked seventh out of the 50 states in high school graduation rates for White students in 2000, while recording one of the lowest graduation rates in the country for Latinos (53%).

Policies Related to Post-secondary Programs, Adult Basic Education, and English Language Programs

Minnesota has had a very good record in the provision of high quality Adult Basic Education (ABE) programs, including GED and adult diplomas, ESL, workforce preparation, family literacy, basic skills enhancement and citizenship/civics education. In fact, the state spends eight times the federal allocation for adult immigrant education. In a recent federal audit Minnesota received five commendations for ABE programming. On the other hand, ABE funding has been frozen at a time when demand is increasing exponentially.
In 2006 both legislative houses in Minnesota addressed Governor Pawlenty’s proposals to create to provide additional funding for English language classes for legal immigrants, although the latter have been criticized as modest, non-recurring funds that will not replace previous cuts in program budgets for Adult Basic Education (ABE). By the end of the 2006 session, the Legislature voted to provide the first inflationary increase in four years to state ABE programs. They also appropriated $1.25 million for one-time grants in 2007 and 2008 to provide additional adult literacy services to newly arrived immigrants.

Non-credit English language instruction is an important component of ABE that is administered by the Department of Education with federal funding. In 2005 the programs served 48,000 ESL learners, and programming in the state has increased ten-fold since 1989 (see Figure 5). This dramatic increase has resulted in long waiting lists. Although community colleges have been open to accommodating immigrant students for non-credit classes with Pell grant funding, they have not kept up with the demand.
The state director of ABE programs cited several exemplary programs, such as one at the International Institute that combines ESL, GED and job training. Other outstanding programs include one operated through a contract with the Hmong American Partnership, and others in the suburban communities of Anoka and Robbinsdale. Assessments of the quality of these programs are based upon the results of standardized testing and comparisons with target goals that are negotiated with the federal funders. The director commented that:

*Needs are increasing – there are more immigrants and refugees to serve and more high school dropouts. As we put more standards on high school students, they look for options and go to work, so they check out of the educational system just to come back later. Minnesota, like other states has terrible graduation rates, especially for minority students, but as ABE alone we’re not able to deal with this huge demand – between these dropout statistics and the increase in immigrants – it’s simply overwhelming our system. You can see this in our impact report.*
Recent state funding cuts in ABE programs have had a negative impact on services for immigrants seeking to learn English. In order to stem backlash from his initial speeches regarding penalties for undocumented immigrants, Governor Pawlenty announced a series of initiatives that included one-time, supplemental funding for ESL programs for immigrants and refugees. An official engaged in administering an ABE program commented that “this allows for very limited programming because it won’t be there the next year, so the issue is: how do we sustain grant-driven programs like that?”

**Policies Related to Health Care, Social Services and Public Assistance**

Minnesota has been a leader in a health and social service programs for diverse populations over the years. In 2002 the Minnesota Legislature passed a bill to allocate $350,000 toward the elimination of health disparities between white and minority populations, including the foreign-born. The funding was inadequate to address the large disparities, but it demonstrated recognition of the problem. In spite of these efforts, racial and ethnic groups in Minnesota face significant barriers to care and high levels of adverse health outcomes. In 2003 the Department of Human Services surveyed 4,902 enrollees in the Minnesota Health Care Program (MHCP) for low income families. They found that “among the racial and ethnic populations included in the study, the groups most likely to be immigrants (Hispanic/Latino, Hmong and Somali) generally report the greatest number of barriers.” xxvii

In 2002 the Commissioners of Health and Human Services called for the creation of an Immigrant Health Task Force to make recommendations regarding the health needs of the foreign-born. Among other things, the report xxviii focused on the need for education of
providers, funding of interpreters, preparation of immigrant health providers and public policy changes regarding the collection of data on the foreign-born.

In Hennepin County (which includes Minneapolis), the Office of Multicultural Services runs a variety of educational programs and health services with workers who speak 32 different languages. A health care provider who directs an international medicine program echoes the compliments of other policymakers when she says: “I have been proud to be a part of Minnesota, taking care of refugees and immigrants over the past 23 years. It is my impression that Minnesota has done a pretty good job in reaching out to new arrivals…working with non-profit organizations to provide orientation, education and support.”

In spite of a history of progressive health and human service programs, federal cuts in benefits to immigrants have had a significant impact in Minnesota as legislators have mimicked Congressional steps to restrict benefits for immigrants by insuring that individuals who are not documented do not receive any public assistance, including MFIP (Minnesota Family Investment Program), food stamps or health care. One foundation officer commented on the politicization of immigration policy discussions in the State:

As this big debate begins this week on the immigration legislation, the tendency of so many politicians to use immigration as a wedge issue is just horrifying. They talk about the ‘drain on classrooms, educations and welfare.

A state senator representing large numbers of immigrants describes the change: “the state has historically done a good job in responding to immigrants and refugees coming to Minnesota, but in the last four years our state has fallen short of its obligation to meet
immigrants’ needs. We have systematically taken away state money that supports programs such as adult basic education, community education, English Language Learning, and other programs that directly benefit immigrants in the state.” The executive director of the Jay and Rose Phillips Family Foundation described the ways in which foundations have tried to respond to the funding shortfalls by strengthening the leadership and management practices of existing non-profits, and their efforts to collaborate:

Unfortunately, the increase in our immigrant populations has corresponded with a downturn in government support. We are increasing our payout, not as a way to replace federal dollars, but in recognition that these are hard times, especially for new organizations. And hard times are when you need to invest in new thinking and in strengthening organizational effectiveness. xxix

The impetus for many of these cuts was federal welfare reform that severely curtailed the access of many foreign-born residents to needed services. In August 1996, the Personal Responsibility Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (P.L.104-193) was signed into law, ending a 60-year federal entitlement guaranteeing families some basic level of assistance during periods of economic hardship. The federal government permitted states to deny assistance to some immigrant groups under Welfare Reform, but Minnesota did not elect that option. With the denial of federal funds for cash assistance and food stamps, state funds were used to make up the difference. However, in 2003 the state legislature stripped most health coverage from undocumented immigrants. The institution of co-payments for health services created another barrier for low income immigrants, as did restrictions on the breadth of coverage of Minnesota Carexxx
Several components of welfare reform negatively impacted the health and well-being of foreign-born residents. Even when legal immigrants meet eligibility requirements, mandated verification of legal status has had what one policymaker calls “a chilling effect” because immigrants are worried that they might jeopardize their immigration status. Furthermore, there has been little accommodation of services to meet the needs of immigrants. The Executive Director of a non-profit coalition notes that “diversionary work programs and MFIP offer the same services to immigrants as to residents, but are not tailored to their special needs. Culturally appropriate and bilingual programs are essential.

Eligibility for benefits depends upon individuals’ immigration status and date of arrival in the United States. Those who entered the country after December of 1997 have generally been excluded from all benefits except emergency care. As explained by an attorney at an organization serving Latino clients,

A pregnant woman who is undocumented can only get health benefits for labor and delivery if she arrived after 1998... Another example is SSI, a federal program for low income seniors and the disabled; eligibility depends upon status and arrival time... the state has responded to federal budget cuts by providing some benefits, but it has also cut back benefits to immigrants... other state funded benefits have time limits; I don’t know what will happen to those immigrants when the benefits sunset. In July of 2003 there was new legislation passed that got rid of the Emergency General Assistance medical Care program (EGAMC). As a result, lawful permanent residents (LPRs) have no safety net coverage for emergencies. Similarly, undocumented immigrants between 18 and 64 who
can’t meet the categorical eligibility requirements for Medical Assistance have no safety net medical coverage. Before elimination of the EGAMC program they could have gotten health care coverage for ‘emergencies’ and for chronic health conditions, such as diabetes, heart problems and mental health problems.

An elected official noted that after welfare reform “Minnesota tried to bridge the gap, but because it is so large and the budget is constrained, we cannot make up the federal budget cuts and we cannot even sustain our own in-state programs that are currently in place.” Others criticized the state for stringent budget cuts that disadvantaged all low income residents. In fact, between 1996 and 2004 Minnesota was one of only nine states where the percentage of low income children without health insurance increased by eleven percent, rather declining. An editorial in the Minneapolis Star Tribune attributed the increase to the “no new taxes” policies of the Governor and the Legislature.

By insisting that Minnesota fix its budget deficit without raising taxes, they had to make dramatic cuts in the state’s health care system—chiefly Medical Assistance for poor families and Minnesota Care for the working poor—and, in so doing, they whittled away steadily at a system that had made Minnesota a national leader.xxxii

The director of a legal center dealing with the needs of children added “I don’t think we’ve done a good job at all responding to federal budget cuts that affect low income individuals)…the last cuts were not very good to low income people, including refugees and immigrants. She added that “not enough attention is paid to mental health and long-term stress. This is a huge piece—especially for children.
The complexity of categories of immigration status makes questions of eligibility even more difficult. A recent study conducted by the State Legislative Auditor’s Office found over 70 percent of the health benefit determination cases contained errors, and 18 percent of these affected eligibility for benefits. These errors have serious repercussions for refugees, asylees and permanent residents who account for 80 percent of the non-citizen recipients of Medical Assistance (MA), General Assistance Medical Care (GAMC) and Refugee Medical Assistance in fiscal year 2005. The auditors were careful to attribute the errors to the difficulty of determining whether non-citizens are eligible for public health care, rather than to deliberate error. They recommended that the Department of Human services designate a specialist in eligibility designation, and provide updated guides and training on eligibility and how to validate immigration status and assess sponsor income. Access to health and social services varies greatly depending upon immigrant status.

Refugees are eligible for entitlement programs for eight months. After that, they may or may not be eligible to continue to receive medical assistance; if they are employed; their coverage depends upon the availability employer-based programs.

The manager of a county cultural service program described the plight of asylees who receive no food or cash support, and individuals under federal ‘Temporary Protective Status’ (TPS) who are ineligible for benefits, and who must reapply annually to stay in the country. People with developmental delays and many elderly immigrants are ineligible for social security, at a time when many resources for mental health disability have dried up.
The international clinic director quoted earlier calls the cuts in health services for refugees and immigrants “part of a totally dysfunctional system of health care for citizens.” She adds that the state has not responded to the health needs of immigrants, and that eligibility is so complicated that

*I don’t even know how to describe now awful it is to express these miserable situations that people get into. “The trends are not good. There is an increase in the uninsured population. Resources are dwindling. This has been overwhelming to the community clinics that are available. Millions of dollars absorbed by hospitals are not getting reimbursed."

The manager of a large public health program confirmed the negative impacts of budget cuts on immigrant health:

*The trend over the past decade has been a reduction in the core public health infrastructure funds that come through the Department of Health to county health agencies. Although there are funds to help new refugee arrivals, there are no funds for immigrants or for longer-term help for refugees. Furthermore, there is no system in place to track the health needs of non-refugees. As a result access to needed health and social services is “a huge issue. Particular needs include high quality interpreter services, advocacy, and transportation to medical appointments.”*

When asked how the state has responded to federal budget cuts that affect access to services for low income individuals, she commented:
We have not responded; our state governor has not taken leadership. Local collaborations between neighborhood-based organizations and health care organizations are where the leadership is coming from—the state departments of health and human services have been at the table, but more leadership has come from nonprofit and private collaborations. If you are looking for positive examples of what the state government has done, there really are no examples.

In spite of recent cuts, some policymakers believe that health programs for immigrants in Minnesota are still better than those in many other states. There are many excellent individuals and agencies working in this area, but the future is not promising because, as one state official complained, the health needs of the foreign-born are ‘not on the radar screen’ of state government. Of particular concern is the lack of health insurance, especially among lower income immigrants and the undocumented. Another program director called the state response to the needs of immigrants ‘one of inactiveness’. He noted that, unlike undocumented residents,

Refugees get some assistance, but not undocumented immigrants, and the legislature only looks at short-term costs of care. There is some state funding for diverse communities, but it is insufficient, and cut-backs in federal programs and the lack of work-based insurance exacerbate the problem. Needs are particularly acute outside of the metropolitan area. Although community organizations do what they can, the needs outweigh their ability to offer services.

The need for additional trained and competent interpreters in Minnesota is acute. The Department of Human Services has made more translated materials available as the result of a
law suit and –unlike programs in many other states--Medical Assistance in Minnesota reimburses interpreter services. However, there is little information in other languages about benefits or choices among health plans, and lack of bilingual staff makes many individuals reluctant to attend services. The state response to this problem has been minimal, although some important documents have been translated into Spanish, Hmong and Somali. Counties have been asked by the state to submit a “limited English plan” to make services accessible, but there has been little enforcement of the regulation.

Editors of the Minneapolis Star Tribune recently cited another budget cut that negatively impacts low income immigrants—the reduction in eligibility for subsidized childcare programs. “Since 2003, Minnesota has cut just over $200 million from child-care assistance programs. Those reductions prompted eligibility changes that denied more poor families child-care help. Lawmakers also increased parent co-pays and froze reimbursement rates for providers -- despite the fact that their costs have gone up.

In sum, the Minnesota Legislature has cut health care and social service eligibility for immigrants, making it difficult to qualify for Medical Assistance. Although federal cuts were the drive behind for these changes, many of the policymakers interviewed for this report directly implicated the Governor in further curtailing services for immigrants.
Concern over national security has served as the impetus—and in some cases the guise—for a number of restrictive immigration measures in Minnesota, including color-coding immigrants’ drivers licenses and denying licenses to undocumented residents. After the inauguration of Governor Tim Pawlenty in January of 2003, his first bill before the legislature was a proposal to stamp visa expiration dates on drivers’ licenses. When the legislature failed to pass the measure, Pawlenty’s chief of Public Safety used administrative discretion to mandate the changes.xxxiii A Latino community organizer commented on this policy:

*We have enough support from senators and legislators, but everything gets blocked by the Governor. This is getting worse after September 11th. He is denying access to Minnesota ID, and it’s really hurting illegal immigrants. If they don’t have it, they don’t have access to many services.*

A policymaker working on programming for children compared the Pawlenty response to previous administrations:

*When Perpich was governor the Tiananmen Square events occurred in China. ... Perpich made a very clear statement that the Chinese could stay in Minnesota—he was very welcoming to Chinese students—they would not have been able to go back to the country and feel safe. When the state (welcomed) Hmong resettlement—that was also a very clear statement... However, more recently, with Pawlenty’s statements about illegal immigration—it makes it very confusing, since many don’t distinguish between legal and*
illegal immigrants. These statements make you feel that you are not welcomed—regardless of immigrant status.

In addition to the Governor and the Legislature, some other state officeholders have taken controversial public positions directly or indirectly related to immigration. Just before the 2004 election, Republican Secretary of State, Mary Kiffmeyer, was criticized for distributing flyers that suggested that voters be wary of people coming to voting precincts with “shaved heads or short hair who smell of unusual herbal/flower water or perfume… wear baggy clothing or appear to be whispering to themselves, as they might be ‘homicide bombers’. “ Some local election officials refused to distribute the posters, suggesting that they could lead to harassment of particular racial, ethnic or religious groups.

Some of the anti-immigrant rhetoric in Minnesota has been exacerbated by high profile crimes and security threats. A month before the World Trade Center attacks Zacarias Moussaouï, the so-called “20th hijacker” was arrested on immigration charges in the state, as a result of alerts from a flight-school instructor. A few months later a number of Somali money-transfer services were raided and accused by the federal government of unwittingly providing a source of funding to the Al Qaeda terrorist network. The Minneapolis Star Tribune reported that soon thereafter an audience member at a town meeting in the Minneapolis suburb of Bloomington was applauded when he questioned the loyalty of Somali immigrants.

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1 On the other hand, a few years earlier, in 2001 Kiffmeyer went to the state legislature to propose that election ballots be printed in multiple languages to reduce errors on the part on voters with limited English proficiency.
Widely reported crimes that may have increased fear of immigrants have included purported Mexican gang involvement in methamphetamine distribution in the state, and the highly publicized arrest of Alfonso Rodriguez, Jr., a Latino resident from Minnesota charged with the kidnapping, rape and murder of North Dakota student Dru Sjodin. In neighboring Wisconsin Chai Soua Vang, a Hmong resident of St. Paul, was convicted of murdering six deer hunters and wounding two others during a confrontation over trespassing in the Wisconsin woods. No studies are available to gauge the impact of these highly publicized stories, but fear of crime is one concern frequently cited by some anti-immigrant groups in the state.

Policies at the federal level have fueled many of the changes in the local immigration policies aimed at promoting public security. Many undocumented immigrants in Minnesota have been intimidated by a wave of anti-immigrant rhetoric and by the threat of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) raids. In Faribault, Minnesota, for example, the annual Cinco de Mayo celebration was not held this year—in part because Latino community members have been keeping a ‘low profile’. Similarly, members of a local group that has scheduled ‘Talking Circles’ with foreign-born community members reports that attendance has dropped off since the ICE raids. In May of 2006, federal raids reached Minnesota, as ICE agents in the state began to aggressively pursue individuals with previous deportation orders. In response to reports that the agents were falsely representing themselves as police, Minneapolis mayor R.T. Rybak joined the city police chief and the City Council to protest the practice, charging that it undermined the credibility of local law enforcement.\textsuperscript{xxxvi}
On the other hand, Governor Pawlenty has been a major proponent of collaboration between local and federal officials to identify undocumented immigrants. A state official working with the Governor defended his policies as a necessary response to the threat of terrorism:

"There is a perception that our borders are porous; illegal immigration the way we deal with it is haphazard and lacks consistency. Therefore people involved with homeland security see it as problematic that people are coming and going and contraband is being smuggled in carloads across the border, figuratively I mean, and it doesn’t bode well for security and for potential terrorists if that kind of coming and going can take place."

"Approximately a year ago we rolled out a new MN driver’s license and ID card with multiple features, security features, on the card and in the card. At the time we were of the belief that this was of the most secure license in the country but in the last 12-14 months other states may have caught up with us. We were at the front end of security for licenses, and we felt that was a good way to secure the state ID card, which is a gateway document for a lot of other documents. The new ID card was an anti-fraud anti-theft preventative measure. Certainly there is some overlap with the terrorist/homeland security areas and probably will continue to be that way."

A legal advocate for immigrants described some of the negative impact of these measures on refugees and asylees:

"The most important thing I’ve observed from my clients is that it’s very difficult to manage the bureaucracy of identification documents, work permits, green cards. Adults who come from another state have a problem because ID from other states is not acceptable in Minnesota. Most of the asylees and refugees don’t have their work
documents up to date; they are not required to because they are asylees and refugees.

Juveniles run into problems when they get old enough to want a driver’s license. My clients talk to me about that problem a lot.

One proposal that has been particularly controversial is the banning of ‘sanctuary ordinances’—policies passed by the City Councils of Minneapolis and St. Paul prohibiting law enforcement officers from asking residents for proof of visa status unless it is related to a criminal charge or investigation. Both the police chiefs of St. Paul and Minneapolis have spoken out in favor of sanctuary ordinances, and against the ban, on the grounds that it would erode hard-won trust in immigrant communities and make it less likely that foreign-born residents would report crimes. Nevertheless, the banning of sanctuary ordinances and tougher penalties for creating and using fake IDs were included in a House Omnibus Public Safety Bill that was approved 94 to 37. Other provisions of the Governor’s proposals to stiffen penalties for using false identification and to deputize law enforcement officials to enforce federal immigration laws have been incorporated into the House Public Safety bill (HF3308). No equivalent bills passed the Democratic (DFL)-controlled State Senate.

In March of 2006 HF 3308 was introduced into the Minnesota House of Representatives. The bill included provisions based upon several of the public security proposals put forward by Governor Pawlenty in December, 2005. These included the creation of a human trafficking task force, increased penalties for ‘labor trafficking’, and for developing or using fraudulent documents. The bill also gave the Commissioner of Public Safety the authority to enter into memoranda of understanding with federal immigration and justice officials to verify citizenship and immigration data of individuals who are arrested.
As noted earlier in this report, a number of immigrant rights, religious and human rights organizations in the state, as well as the police chiefs of St. Paul and Minneapolis made public statements against HF 3308, arguing that the provisions would stigmatize immigrants and make them less likely to cooperate with law enforcement officials. Some legislators were surprised by the opposition from law enforcement agencies; their concern appears to have led to the suppression of a companion bill in the Minnesota Senate.

The Governor's stance and the House Public Safety bill alienated many immigrant advocacy groups. At one hearing for HF3308 there were over twenty individuals testifying in opposition, and only one testifying in favor. In spite of this, when asked which groups have been advocating for less restrictive policies, a member of the Governor's staff responded “none that I’m aware of; No one is advocating for less than what we have now. There are groups concerned about adding more restrictive policies, but I don’t think that anyone believes we should have less than we do now.” He went on to defend Governor Pawlenty’s stance on immigration, saying:

*We need to do more on illegal immigration than just protect the borders and fight illegal immigration. We need to find ways to regulate immigration to make it legal for people to come here. The Governor is not just enforcement and anti-theft oriented. He has a balanced approach to this. He’s met with members of the immigrant community and gotten their input. He is not anti-immigrant, and I think it’s important to point that out.*

At the same time, a Latino law enforcement officer gave a different perspective:

*For the past four years there have been a series of bills and rules enacted by the Department of Public Safety. There has been a lot of focus on homeland security, and*
what disturbs the community is that the bills seem to be directed mainly at immigrants and immigrant drivers. They use homeland security to address immigrant policy. Most of the bills are targeted and focused on immigrants.

Policies Related to Racial Profiling

A 2005 research study by HACER and the Council on Crime and Justice xxxviii found that Hispanic youth in Minnesota were overrepresented by 92% in apprehensions in the year 2000, although they were less likely than non-Hispanic White youth to be charged with a felony or with drug or property offenses. The authors of the report suggest that prejudgments and stereotypes play a role in these figures. They cite a probation officer in Kandiyohi County, Minnesota who stated:

I think there might be some prejudice on the part of the community—you know, I think a lot of the old timers, you know, tend to say ‘He’s a Hispanic kid. He’s gonna steal your car. He’s gonna, you know, he’s sellin’ drugs. He’s doin this.’ I think maybe they would tend to give a White kid a little break that they wouldn’t give the Hispanic kid.

In 2001, the Minnesota legislature enacted a statute calling for a study of racial profiling across the state. Sixty-five law enforcement agencies elected to participate by collecting and analyzing traffic stop data from January 1 to December 31, 2002. Analysis of the resulting 194,189 traffic stops demonstrated that Latinos (and African Americans) were much more likely than non-Hispanic whites to have their vehicles stopped and searched, but also less likely to be
found with contraband. The authors of the report concluded that there was “a strong likelihood that racial/ethnic bias plays a role in search policies and practices in Minnesota.”

Students in the author’s seminar on Immigration and Social Justice analyzed reports from the racial profiling studies from the perspective of the Constitutional rights of immigrants. They concluded that racial profiling constitutes “a violation of the 14th Amendment’s provision for equal treatment under the law, the 4th Amendment’s provision for search and seizure based on probable cause and the Civil Rights Act’s prohibition of discrimination based on national origin by agencies receiving federal funds.” In the course of their research they also uncovered a disturbing and apparently widespread practice in the state and the region, whereby Border Patrol agents are routinely called as ‘interpreters’ for Latinos with limited English proficiency. In many of these cases the individuals pulled over were not informed of the alleged traffic violation. In cases where the Border Patrol investigated Latino drivers’ or passengers’ immigration status and found they were undocumented, they could then revert to their roles as government agents authorized to detain them for deportation proceedings. Professional interpreters should be individuals who are impartial; the use of Border Patrol agents as interpreters who then initiate questioning beyond the scope of the alleged traffic infraction violates this standard, and is a perverse means of implementing federal guidelines mandating the use of interpreters for individuals charged with offenses. The students concluded that:

*Since part of the Border Patrol’s official mandate is to enforce the Immigration and Nationality Act,* questioning [individuals with limited English proficiency] during routine traffic stops ... is a clear misuse of the circumstantial overlap of the roles of local law enforcement and Border Patrol. Given the established prevalence of racial profiling
Racial profiling is a state-wide problem in Minnesota, but there has been more attention to the problem in the Twin Cities than in other parts of the state. Some of this may be due to a racial profiling law suit brought by the NAACP against the St. Paul Police Department in 2001. As a result of the suit, the St. Paul police department initiated a series of community meetings and police training sessions. One policymaker we interviewed described community-police relations in the Twin Cities as tenuous: “Law enforcement in the Twin Cities has far more to lose when it comes to racial profiling issues, as the spotlight has been on them for so long.” She added that police practices regarding questioning of immigrants may not always conform to publicly stated policies.

There’s an implication in the tone of casual questioning that occurs when a Latino is pulled over by the police: ‘Where are you from?’ (answer: ‘St. Paul’). ‘No, where are you really from?’ This is widespread. One way that the police department got around racial profiling is how the police would report the race of the person stopped. The line of questioning would include nationality and citizenship, but then ‘race’ is marked as ‘White’.

Policies Related to Labor Force Issues

Jobs in manufacturing, the hospitality industry, construction, food processing and agriculture have been a strong magnet for immigrants, who constitute about 40% of the Latino
population in Minnesota. Food processing jobs have been a particularly important lure for Mexican immigrants from rural states of the Mexican Central Plateau, who have a long history of migration to the Midwest as seasonal agricultural workers. As a result, Mexicans are now the largest foreign-born group in the state (16 percent).

Minnesota has the highest Latino labor force participation rate in the nation. As an example. Seventy percent of Latinos in Minnesota were employed in 1999, compared with 61 percent nationally.

Unlike some other states, Minnesota has had few sites where day laborers congregate to find daily work, perhaps because the economy is strong and full-time jobs have been available for immigrants. The weather in Minnesota may also limit the practice, since during many months of the year the temperature is too low to make outdoor day laborer solicitation feasible.

**Policies Related to Housing**

There is a severe shortage of affordable housing in Minnesota. The state has a well-established program of emergency housing and housing finance programs, but as one official noted; it doesn’t come close to meeting the needs. He attributes much of the problem to serious cuts in federal funding for housing, and asked “Should you give a low report card grade to a state that is trying to fill a hole it did not create? I think we are doing some of our best work. The state cannot fill in all the gaps that the federal government created.”
Federal cuts have affected Section 8 housing for low income families, and as one advocate for children and family services described it, “there are really, really long waits for that rental assistance…What I observe is that the immigrant community struggles with lack of affordable housing, low incomes, low cash available and the realities of the high cost of health care. I just read something about the significant Hmong population living at ‘Mary’s Place’. That’s the first time I’ve learned of an immigration population living in a homeless shelter.”

Between 2002-3 students in a University of Minnesota graduate class on Immigrant Health Issues conducted in-depth interviews with 62 health and social service providers working with immigrants in the state of Minnesota. In spite of the fact that many of the providers worked with immigrants and refugees with severe health problems, the lack of affordable housing was one of the most frequently mentioned issues facing their clients.

The cost of housing is so high that many immigrants need to work 80 hours a week in order to pay the rent. Limits to the number of occupants in a unit cause also problems because it makes it difficult for low income workers to share the rent. The Coordinator of a Latino organization in the Twin Cities commented that, while there are successful housing programs for some groups, there are none for undocumented Latinos, one of the most marginalized groups. Many landlords are requiring social security numbers and drivers licenses that make it difficult for Latinos to find housing. Others are exploited by unscrupulous landlords.

Documents are written in English, not in Spanish, so they sign whatever. They need somebody to look after them. There are no advocates or mediators. They are by themselves...Sometimes they lose their jobs because immigration starts following them
and then they miss work and can’t pay rent, and then they get evicted and then …no one will rent to you again.

Another immigrant advocate noted:

*There are tenant problems within buildings, and within individual units. Our organization does a lot of organizing, and we find things like unreasonable fees, unreasonable lack of improvements and conditions that are bad. Members of the immigrant community might not be as aware of their rights, might feel intimidated about questioning landlords. There are lots and lots of problems, and lots of lies dealing with property management. Unlawful detainers are a problem for many immigrants. When people get threatened with eviction, the eviction threat goes on their record, and it ends up being a problem getting housing in the future.*

Other housing problems have more to do with communication and cultural barriers than with availability. The manager of a large housing program described these barriers as ‘huge’, citing examples from Somali residents:

*Homes and housing in Somalia are different than here. They cook with a lot more oil, and there are fire and safety issues. Many landlords don’t want to deal with it. A recent issue came about when inspectors came in and looked at traditional drapes and said they had to get rid of them because they were creating mold. We need to do community building and help people understand what mold does… Things don’t translate easily… Laws and housing there are different. It can be a great pleasure, but as an owner, many people*
don’t want to have to deal with that or with food that is greasy and sticks to the walls or with the smells. To house the Somalis next to others isn’t always easy.

One group with particularly severe housing needs is Latino migrant farm-workers. In 2002 Centro Campesino published a report on Migrant Worker Housing, in which they reported severe shortages of adequate and affordable housing. Many families paid rents that were well above the standard affordability guideline of 39% of income allocated to housing, and 87% described the quality of their housing as ‘negative’. Over a fifth reported having experienced discrimination when searching for housing.

In spite of the obstacles, there are some examples of successful housing programs for documented immigrants and refugees. One expert cited a development in Eden Prairie that has ‘opened their doors to Somalis’, and the evolution of a large housing project by the University of Minnesota from predominantly Southeast Asian to Somali residents. Some other sites provide safe, affordable housing, but many more are needed.

Conclusions

Has the reception of immigrants cooled in Minnesota? A majority of the policymakers interviewed for this study feel that it has. In general they concurred that, because of its strong non-profit and philanthropic organizations, Minnesota has done a good job of responding to the changing demographics of the state, but that state funding reductions in the past five years have undercut important programs. Although there are still many examples of exemplary programs
for immigrants and refugees, service providers are finding it more difficult to keep programs intact, let alone to secure support to keep up with inflationary costs and rising demand.

Public attitudes toward immigrants and support for programs benefiting them also appear to be changing, as the result of several factors. These include concerns over social spending, the rising numbers of foreign-born residents, increases in unauthorized immigration, and fears regarding national security and cultural identity. Most of these issues mimic national debates, but some observers had thought that Minnesota’s ‘social compact’ would provide a degree of immunity to anti-immigrant discourse and to the pressure to cut health and social programs. Instead, as the state experiences a population shifts to conservative and highly segregated suburbs, many voters appear to have reduced their support for the state’s traditionally progressive political agenda.

This defection is particularly noteworthy because of the state’s pride in its historically liberal populist bent. Minnesota ranks first in the nation on voter turnout, first on six of the seven most recent evaluations of the United Way’s “State of Caring Index”\textsuperscript{xliv}, and second (after New Hampshire) as the ‘most livable state’ on the 2006 Morgan Quitno index.\textsuperscript{xlv} Yet social programs are expensive, and Minnesotans have joined voters in many other states protesting rising taxes. In a paper commissioned for the Minnesota Community Project John Farrell describes the end of an era of social liberalism in Minnesota, defined as activist government, high public investments and civic participation. He notes that recent elections have reversed the traditional dominance of the Democratic (DFL) party which controlled the House for two thirds of the past 32 years and dominated the Senate for all but two of those years\textsuperscript{xlvii}. 
Furthermore, there are cracks in Minnesota’s social success story. Income inequality is increasing in the state\textsuperscript{xlvi} and many of the leading social indicators mask deep disparities between the White majority and populations of color. Minnesota ranked seventh out of the 50 states in high school graduation rates for White students in 2000, while recording one of the lowest graduation rates in the country for Latinos (53%). When Barbara Ehrenreich tested her ability to live on a minimum wage salary in three American cities, it was Minneapolis that presented the biggest housing challenge.\textsuperscript{xlviii} While the state can still boast of myriad programs designed to improve the health and welfare of all residents, support for many of these programs is eroding as voters follow the national trend toward increasing conservatism and concern over social spending that contributes to rising taxes and budget deficits. To wit, over half of the savings that resulted from Welfare Reform in Minnesota came at the expense of benefits for immigrants.

When former Vice President Walter Mondale commissioned the ‘Minnesota Community Survey’ in 2004, he was startled by the depth of anger of a number of suburban and exurban residents toward what they perceived to be the ‘free ride’ received by immigrants in the state. In the words of a White woman in Anoka County:

\begin{quote}
These groups are getting very large and it seems when they come over here they are getting all the tax breaks. They get all this help. They get this, they get that...and those of us who have fought for this country, who have paid our taxes, who raise our children and who live in this country and in this state are the ones that are paying for all those people to get all those breaks and our children and our lifestyles are not increasing- they are staying stagnant. Some are still staying at poverty level because these people who
\end{quote}
are coming into Minnesota from other countries are getting what us, as Minnesotans or American citizens, ought to be having.

In the wake of welfare reform, the attacks on the World Trade Center in 2001 provided further rationale for individuals advocating for more restrictive immigration policies. As a result, views that would formerly have been called xenophobic, or even racist, have been cloaked in rhetoric regarding national security. In a state that has the largest Somali population in the United States, anti-Muslim sentiments have easily translated into anti-immigrant rhetoric.

The recent national furor over competing proposals for immigration reform has further polarized Minnesotans. The presence of 40,000 marchers supporting immigrant rights reflected strong support from non-profits, immigrant advocacy groups, unions and the Catholic Church. On the other hand, the constant barrage of media stories about ‘illegal immigrants’ has led many individuals to over-estimate the size of this population, and to incorrectly assume that the majority of immigrants in the state are unauthorized.

The irony of the controversy over immigration policy in Minnesota is that immigrants are vital to the future of the state’s economy. Over 94% of the population is US-born, and the vast majority is of European origin. By 2020 Minnesota will have more retirees than school children, and migration will become the largest source of new workers in the state. In spite of these realities, if current trends persist, it will be partisan politics at both national and state levels, rather than economic or social justice arguments that determine the course of future policies toward immigrants.
APPENDIX A: Op Ed Article in the Minneapolis Star Tribune

January 09, 2006

For good reasons, police aren't meant to be immigration agents. If they were, it would erode trust and interfere with duties of an already overburdened force.

By Katherine Fennelly

Gov. Tim Pawlenty's call for creation of a "Minnesota Illegal Immigration Enforcement Team" could undo years of gains in building trust among immigrant communities, police and service providers in Minnesota.

It is no accident that many police organizations across the United States have come out in opposition to the kind of policies that the governor is proposing. Minnesota has been a leader in community policing -- a strategy that depends upon the establishment of trust between law enforcement and community members. Deputizing state and local officials to seek out undocumented immigrants will immediately erode this hard-earned trust, with the result that immigrants who are victims of or witnesses to crime will be reluctant to come forward.

Policies that require police to seek out undocumented individuals and to check visa status and place of birth are also likely to reverse progress that has been made in preventing racial profiling. The Minnesota statute prohibiting racial profiling states that "the legislature finds that the reality or public perception of racial profiling alienates people from police, hinders community policing efforts, and causes law enforcement to lose credibility and trust among the people law enforcement is sworn to protect and serve."

Although the governor's proposal calls for police checks after persons have been pulled over or cited, it is one that casts aspersion and presumes guilt on the part of immigrants in general, and Latinos in particular.

The enforcement of immigration policy is a federal, not a state responsibility. This has been wisely recognized by both the Minneapolis and St. Paul city councils in ordinances that in no way limit officials' ability to investigate suspected criminal activity. In fact, one could argue that adding immigration responsibilities to an already overburdened police force will make it less likely that they will have time to identify and arrest criminals, regardless of where they were born.

Most undocumented residents come to Minnesota to work, or to join working family members who are cleaning our hotels, hospitals and offices, picking our crops, packaging our meat, assembling our consumer products, washing our dishes and building our houses.

Unfortunately, the federal government issues far fewer employment-based visas than are needed to meet the enormous demand for this type of labor. It is our policies of recruiting workers without issuing legal visas that turn law-abiding individuals into "illegal aliens." Rather than criminalizing them, the governor should be supporting the call for rational immigration reform that meets the country's economic and social needs.
APPENDIX B: Survey Form Used in Telephone Interviews with Individuals Knowledgeable about State Services and Policies for Immigrants in Minnesota

Name of respondent:

Title:

Date:

Name of interviewer:

I’m calling on behalf of Professor Katherine Fennelly at the Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs. As part of a national project we are preparing a report on state and local policy responses to recent increases in immigration in Minnesota. In order to do that, we plan to speak to people like you who are knowledgeable how Minnesota state policies affect immigrants and refugees.

I’d like to speak to you for about 30 minutes to get your thoughts on this. Please note that this is a research study and that your participation is completely voluntary.

INSERT RELEVANT PAGE ACCORDING TO THE TOPIC OF YOUR INTERVIEW

PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION:

1. How has the state of Minnesota responded to increases in the numbers of immigrants and refugees over the past ten years? What policy changes have you observed?

2. How has the state responded to increases in enrollment of children from diverse cultures in primary and secondary schools?

3. What are some specific changes in programs or funding related to primary and secondary schooling?

4. In your opinion, what are examples of successful programs and policies related to the education of immigrant children? (BE SURE TO GET NAMES AND LOCATIONS)
5. Are there important unmet needs related to immigrant children in Minnesota schools?

(IF YES, GET DETAILS)

6. Has No Child Left Behind had a particular impact on immigrant youth? (IF YES, How?

PROBE FOR HOW MN HAS RESPONDED

7. (IF NOT MENTIONED): How would you describe state funding and programs for

Limited English Proficiency students?

8. What ‘report card grade’ would you give to the state of Minnesota in responding to the

educational needs of immigrant youth? A, B, C, D or F.

9. Are there particular reports that we should read that describe state policies related to this

topic? GET SPECIFIC INFORMATION ON HOW TO OBTAIN REPORTS

10. Are there any other comments you would like to add?

Thank you very much for your time!

ACCESS TO POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

1. How has the state of Minnesota responded to increases in the numbers of immigrants and

refugees over the past ten years? What policy changes have you observed?

2. Can you comment on issues related to financing and access to higher education on the part

of immigrant youth?

3. What are the prospects for passage of the DREAM Act in Minnesota?

4. How have colleges, universities and technical schools in Minnesota responded to the

educational needs of immigrant youth?

5. What are some examples of successful programs and policies? (BE SURE TO GET

NAMES AND LOCATIONS)
6. Are there important unmet needs related to education for immigrant children? (IF YES, GET DETAILS)

7. What ‘report card grade’ would you give to the state of Minnesota in responding to the post-secondary educational needs of immigrant youth? A, B, C, D or F

8. Are there particular reports that we should read that describe state policies related to this topic? Get specific info on how to obtain reports. GET SPECIFIC INFORMATION ON HOW TO OBTAIN REPORTS

9. Is there anyone else who is very knowledgeable about the topics we have just discussed whom you suggest we contact? IF YES:
   a. Name
   b. Title
   c. Agency
   d. Phone number
   e. Email

10. Are there any other comments you would like to add?

Thank you very much for your time!

HEALTH CARE:

1. How has the state of Minnesota responded to increases in the numbers of immigrants and refugees over the past ten years? What policy changes have you observed?

2. How much access do immigrants in Minnesota have to needed health and social services?

3. How has the state responded to these needs?
4. What are some specific changes in programs or funding related to access to health care for immigrants in Minnesota?

5. What are examples of successful programs or policies related to access to health services for immigrants? (BE SURE TO GET NAMES AND LOCATIONS)

6. Aside from access, what other health related needs are faced by immigrants in Minnesota?

7. How has Minnesota responded to federal budget cuts that affect the access of low income individuals to health care (and therefore also affect immigrants who are in low income categories)?

8. What ‘report card grade’ would you give to the state of Minnesota in responding to the health needs of immigrants? A, B, C, D, or F

9. Are there particular reports that we should read that describe state policies related to this topic? GET SPECIFIC INFORMATION ON HOW TO OBTAIN REPORTS

10. Are there any other comments you would like to add?

Thank you very much for your time!

DRIVER’S LICENSE, REAL ID, POLICE, AND DAY LABORERS

1. How has the state of Minnesota responded to increases in the numbers of immigrants and refugees over the past ten years? What policy changes have you observed?

2. How have US concerns over security and prevention of terrorism affected state policies toward immigrants in Minnesota?

3. IF NOT MENTIONED: How has Minnesota responded to the REAL ID Act and changes in regulations regarding identification documents that are accepted for driver’s licenses, bank accounts and credit? PROBE FOR SPECIFIC REGULATIONS
4. Which groups have been actively advocating for restrictive policies?

5. Which groups have been advocating for less restrictive policies?

6. How would you characterize relations between the police and major immigrant groups in Minnesota? Does this vary greatly from city to city and in rural areas?

7. Are you aware of calls for the police in Minnesota to be ‘deputized’ to identify and report undocumented immigrants in particular communities?
   IF YES: Where?
   How have the police themselves responded to these requests? PROBE FOR SUPPORT OR OPPOSITION FROM POLICE GROUPS

8. In some states there have been local controversies over groups of Latino day laborers seeking work. Has this occurred in Minnesota? (IF YES: Can you say more about this? PROBE FOR LOCATIONS AND INCIDENTS)

9. How have community members reacted in these communities? How have the police reacted?

10. Are there particular reports that we should read on any of the topics we have just discussed? GET SPECIFIC INFORMATION ON HOW TO OBTAIN REPORTS

11. Are there any other comments you would like to add?

Thank you very much for your time!

HOUSING:

1. How has the state of Minnesota responded to increases in the numbers of immigrants and refugees over the past ten years? What policy changes have you observed?
2. Can you comment on issues related to access to affordable housing for immigrants in Minnesota?

3. How has the state responded to these needs?

4. What are some specific changes in programs or funding related to access to housing for immigrants?

5. What are examples of successful housing programs and policies for immigrants in Minnesota? (BE SURE TO GET NAMES AND LOCATIONS)

6. How has Minnesota responded to federal budget cuts that affect the access of low-income individuals to housing (and therefore also affect immigrants who are in low income categories)?

7. Other than access to affordable housing, are there other housing problems faced by immigrants in Minnesota?

8. What ‘report card grade’ would you give to the state of Minnesota in responding to the health needs of immigrants? A, B, C, D, or F

9. Are there particular reports that we should read that describe state programs or policies on this topic? GET SPECIFIC INFORMATION ON HOW TO OBTAIN REPORTS.

10. Are there any other comments you would like to add?

Thank you very much for your time!

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**Endnotes**

I would like to acknowledge invaluable assistance from the immigrant advocates and public policy officials whom we interviewed (see Appendix A), and from the following outstanding graduate students: Mandy Bai, Brynja Gudjonsson, Niki Carlson, Shayerah Ilias, Clare
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Minnesota is the nation’s largest turkey producer, slaughtering over 46.5 million birds a year, and generating $516 million dollars in sales.ii

Steven A. Camarota and John Keely, Center for Immigration Studies. The New Ellis Islands: Examining Non-Traditional Areas of the Immigrant Settlement in the 1990s. (September 2001).


Judy Keen. USA Today, (March 25, 2005).


Dana B. Badgerow, Commissioner, Minnesota Department of Administration. Cover letter to report prepared by the Office of Strategic Planning and Results Management entitled “The Impact of Illegal Immigration on Minnesota.” December 8, 2005.


Quote attributed to Democratic State Representative Karen Clark.


Ibid.,
Although the DREAM Act did not pass as a separate measure, one legislative analyst noted that the final appropriations bill defines Minnesota residents without mentioning citizenship, and that it might take a court case to determine whether this language opens a path for undocumented students to be eligible for in-state tuition.

Grant Makers Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees (GCIR), report on grants classified in a database of the Minnesota Council on Foundations, 2005. The number of grants was determined by searching the database for ‘immigrant,’ ‘newcomers’ and ‘refugees.’ It is likely to be a significant undercount of grants made to organizations serving the foreign-born since many such grants were only coded for the subject focus, e.g. ‘health’ or ‘education,’ rather than for the target population. The foundations making the largest number of grants included the Otto Bremer Foundation (98 grants), the Minneapolis Foundation (36), the Jay and Rose Phillips Family Foundation (28), and the St. Paul Foundation (24).


Minnesota Department of Education, Adult Basic Education Report 2006


Deborah Schlick, Affirmative Options, Personal Communications, (May 22, 2006).

Immigrant Health: A Call to Action: Recommendations from the Minnesota Immigrant Health Task Force, July 2004. [www.health.state.mn.us/refugee]


State health insurance

Minnesota Family Investment Program—public assistance


The courts later rejected the implementation of these changes without legislative endorsement.


Judy Keen. USA Today, (March 25, 2005).


(see Fennelly, 2005 op ed article on this topic in Appendix A).


United States Code, Title 8.

Ann Ziebarth and Jaehyun Byun, “Migrant Worker Housing: Survey Results from South Central Minnesota,” HACER, 2002.

The most recent indices are for evaluations up to 2002.

The index combines measures of the health of the economy and the people, levels of crime and education, and government services. O’Leary and Morgan, 2006.

John Farrell, 2004
