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**Report on NM Immigrant Oil & Gas Workers: Unsafe Conditions, Limited Access to Safety Net & Training Programs Will Undermine a Just Transition**

**Santa Fe, NM**—Plagued with injury, industry volatility, and limited pathways for advancement or training in the state’s oil and gas industry are some of the major findings within “Southeastern New Mexico Oil & Gas Workforce Study,” a first-of-its-kind report on the attitudes, experiences, and workplace conditions of Latino immigrant oil and gas workers and their families in southeastern New Mexico. The report, commissioned by Somos Un Pueblo Unido and conducted by the University of New Mexico Center for Social Research, was released on Tuesday.

Researchers from UNM, led by Dr. Gabriel R. Sanchez and Dr. Shannon Sanchez-Youngman, interviewed close to 100 oil and gas families through phone and in-person surveys and focus groups in Roswell, Hobbs, Carlsbad and Artesia. The interviews were conducted between January to December 2023.

The report also focused on barriers to workforce development and skills building opportunities in the region, particularly timely as New Mexican legislators and policy makers work to diversify the state’s economy, strengthen the workforce, and execute a transition to clean energy.

Latinos represent 46% of the energy workforce, according to New Mexico’s Bureau of Labor Statistics, many of whom are immigrants. 15% are women.

Salient findings include:

- **Dangerous working conditions and accidents are widespread for immigrant energy workers.** Eight out of 10 workers surveyed reported knowing someone who had an accident on the job and 28% said they knew someone who died due to a workplace accident in the industry.
- **Benefits and pay are inconsistent and workers report inadequate safety nets.** 57% do not have medical insurance. And because of immigration status, 78% do not have access to unemployment benefits, crucial in weathering the volatility of the industry.
- **78% of oil and gas workers do not want their children to work in the industry.**
- **Workers are worried about an energy transition.** 83% are concerned their jobs will not be replaced. 84% are worried they will have to move away from the region, and 88% do not believe new clean energy jobs will go to New Mexicans, but to people coming from outside of New Mexico.
- **Barriers and structural barriers to workforce development and skills building opportunities include:**
  - No access to child care services and providers.
  - Inadequate support services for immigrant families in the region.
  - Lack of knowledge in the Spanish-speaking community about resources available to them.
  - Lack of training programs in the emerging renewable energy sector in the region.
  - Undocumented immigrants do not have access to workforce development programs,

On the report's findings, Dr. Gabriel R. Sanchez, Executive Director UNM Center for Social Policy stated: "Latino members of the workforce want to remain in that region of the state and are interested in participating in re-training, including web-based training, to find employment in other sectors. Oil and gas workers are also willing to travel to other parts of the state for workforce development training. However, these workers will need to have some compensation for their time away from work to get trained and many expressed a need for childcare to allow them to get workforce training."

Francisco Martinez, 50, oil worker from Hobbs, New Mexico said:

"I work in the oil industry and had an accident. I had no medical insurance. I'm still recovering, which is why it is important for the state to listen to us and invest in more job sectors with training and benefits like health insurance for our communities."

Leonardo Botello, 64, former oil worker from Hobbs, New Mexico:

"I worked in the oil industry for 19 years, but I was never able to climb up within the job. I don't want my children to continue working in these dangerous jobs without opportunities for advancement. I have been stuck in the same risky job for years. That's why it's important for the state to invest in high quality, safe jobs with opportunities for growth, and most importantly, with training for our rural and underserved communities," Botello said.

Mara Delgado, 35, former oil worker from Hobbs, New Mexico:

"I would like to see more job opportunities for women like me who had no choice but to enter the dangerous oil industry. I would like to join a program that gives me access to training and helps me learn skills while supporting me with childcare so that I can pursue another career," she said.

Erick Saucedo, 21, oil worker from Hobbs, New Mexico:

"I have lived in Hobbs since I was one year old. I recently had an accident on the job and am still recovering. I am currently unemployed. The state needs to invest in our communities and young people so we can have more quality jobs and careers. It is not fair that our families have to pay with their health and safety and often their lives in order to have a job and provide for their families. We are the economic drivers of the state's economy, yet we are the most forgotten," Saudeco said.

*Somos Un Pueblo Unido* and other worker-based organizations have been actively advocating at the 2024 Legislature for a significant state investment in workforce development programs and support services for disengaged and "difficult-to-reach" workers, such as Spanish-speaking immigrants.

[Click here](#) for the full report.

[Click here](#) UNM's slide deck presented at virtual press conference.

[Click here](#) for video of virtual press conference.

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