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# ISSUE BRIEF SERIES

*The IIH supports the production and dissemination of rigorous, non-partisan, and non-ideological research on immigration issues across a broad diversity of disciplines and perspectives, and the application of this research to local, regional, and national policy issues.*

## KEY FACTS

- In an immigration raid, dozens to hundreds of workers may be arrested in a single day.
- The raids tend to take place in rural areas in the heartland of the U.S. which are host to significant mixed-status Latino communities.
- The raids cause lasting emotional, psychological, and financial harm to the arrested workers, their families and the community.
- Responders in the aftermath of a raid include faith communities, educators, legal professionals, advocates, and families.
- Raid responses often resemble humanitarian disaster responses, including coordination to identify the missing; providing safe shelter, food and basic household goods to those left behind; and organizing to heal individual and communal trauma.

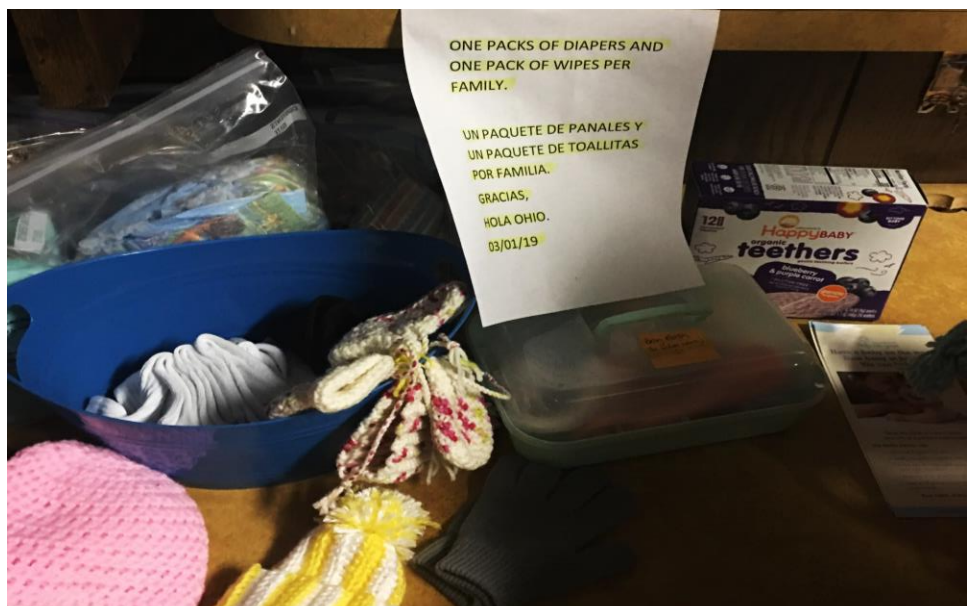
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# An Unnatural Disaster: The Impact of Immigration Raids on Latino Communities

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Immigration Initiative at Harvard Policy Brief 3.



*Some items collected by HOLA Ohio, a nonprofit organization, in response to the raid of a gardening company in Sandusky, OH on June of 2018."*

## Background

The abuses, deaths, and family separations occurring on the U.S.-Mexico border have captured both media attention and public discussion about immigration enforcement. Certainly, the crises—including deaths in detention,<sup>1</sup> family separation,<sup>2</sup> and white supremacist leanings<sup>3</sup> of employees—merit all the attention they have received. But the crises at the border can overshadow the everyday, equally insidious acts of immigration enforcement that take place in the interior of the United States. The steep increase<sup>4</sup> in interior immigration enforcement has taken place in the cities, towns, and communities throughout the American heartland.<sup>5</sup>

And like immigration law enforcement along the U.S.-Mexico border, immigration enforcement in the interior of the United States separates families, damages psychologic and physical health, and sows chaos, confusion, and fear throughout the community.

This brief considers a particularly traumatic method of immigration enforcement: immigration raids. We began our research studying

**“ Like immigration law enforcement along the U.S.-Mexico border, immigration enforcement in the interior of the United States separates families, damages psychologic and physical health, and sows chaos, confusion, and fear throughout the community. ”**

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raids that occurred under Presidents George W. Bush and Barack Obama using a variety of data sources and analytic methods to better understand the multi-level health impacts of these raids. Analysis of birth records found that children born to Latina mothers the year following the Postville, IA, raid in 2008 were more likely to be low birth weight<sup>6</sup> than white infants born at the same time. How do teachers, counselors, administrators and other school personnel perceive the effects of the new immigration enforcement regime? Using data from a community health survey,<sup>7</sup> our analysis suggested that an immigration raid predicted lower self-rated health scores and increased anxiety about immigration enforcement. Analyzing the interviews of four community members who were in an apartment when ICE and the police used a “no-knock warrant” to raid and detain the men in the apartment, we found that individuals expressed symptoms aligned with PTSD diagnostic criteria.<sup>8</sup> In the only book to focus specifically on the impact of an immigration raid, Lopez details individual trauma, family separation, and increased fear of accessing government resources following a raid of an apartment in Southeast Michigan.<sup>9</sup>

The United States has recently returned to large-scale immigration work-site raids, an enforcement tactic scarcely used since the George W. Bush presidential administration. In 2018, six small communities experienced these large-scale raids (we define “large-scale” as raids in which over 30 people are detained<sup>10, 11</sup>). Drawing on our previous research on immigration raids, our current work asked the following questions:

1. What are the health impacts of immigration work-site raids? How do the relationships among those in targeted communities influence how these impacts unfold?
2. How can we best translate the multi-level and lasting impacts of immigration work-raids to a public that is unfamiliar with their tactics?
3. How do community members mitigate the damage of these raids, and what do they recommend to other communities who may find themselves the targets of these enforcement tactics?

### **What Is an Immigration Raid?**

Currently, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) refers to its raids as “operations”<sup>12</sup> or as “worksite enforcement.”<sup>13</sup> Organizers and community members generally consider a raid to be instances in which ICE agents enter into any non-public space, whether or not consent has been granted. Generally, immigration officers tend to conduct raids at either private residences (“home raids”) or places of employment (“worksite raids”). Worksite raids can range in size and scale. For example, a notorious single-site raid, mentioned above, occurred in Postville, IA, in 2008, resulting in the arrest of 398 employees.<sup>14</sup> Other worksite raids may concentrate on one particular chain of businesses, such as the coordinated raids across 98 7-Eleven stores<sup>15</sup> in January of 2018.

Legal scholars have detailed a “typical”<sup>16</sup> home raid based on client testimonies<sup>17</sup> and other government documents. Home raids may involve between five and twenty-five agents and often occur in predawn hours when occupants are sleeping. Generally, immigration



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raids are conducted under administrative warrants, which require consent of those in the targeted residence before agents can enter. If consent is granted, agents enter the home and corral residents into a central location for questioning (though studies<sup>18</sup> argue<sup>19</sup> that deceptive practices to gain consent to enter are common). If ICE is collaborating with another law enforcement organization, that organization may take the lead in the raid. This entails a different type of warrant that may or may not require consent to enter. If the targeted individual is present during the raid, he or she is then arrested. If other individuals present are suspected of being undocumented, they are interrogated and may also be arrested. Advocates and scholars have argued that these collateral arrests amount to legalized racial profiling, as those who fit the alleged (racial) image of a possible undocumented immigrant are asked to prove their immigration status. Documents, such as passports and immigration paperwork, may be requested, and are sometimes not returned. Because immigrants rarely live alone, these arrests frequently include witnesses, often children.

Worksite raids are similar to home raids in many aspects listed above, including the militarized tactics (armed officers and armored vehicles), the corralling of those present, and the interrogation and arrest of others on the premises besides the targets of the operation. As with home raids, ICE agents must generally gain consent to enter private areas, seize documents, or question those present. However, ICE agents can freely enter public areas without permission. This may include parking lots, lobbies, and waiting areas.

## Research Methodology

As researchers and activists who collaborate with multiple community-based organizations and advocacy groups, our understanding of the impact of immigration raids is informed by a range of projects, data sources, analytic methods, and advocacy experiences. The organizations with whom we have collaborated include the Washtenaw Interfaith Coalition for Immigrant Rights,<sup>20</sup> the Eastern Iowa Community Bond Project,<sup>21</sup> the Center for Worker Justice of Eastern Iowa,<sup>22</sup> and the Washtenaw ID Project.<sup>23</sup> The multi-level analysis that considers the impacts of raids on individual, families, and communities as described in the book, *Separated: Family and Community in the Aftermath of an Immigration Raid*,<sup>24</sup> provides our primary analytic framework.

Currently, we are conducting the multi-site study, “ICE in the Heartland: Impacts and Responses to Immigrant

Worksite Raids.” With the support of community organizations at each site and study teams at the University of Michigan School of Public Health and University of Iowa College of Public Health, we have visited the six locations in which a large-scale immigration work-site raid occurred in 2018. In total, 77 respondents from Bean Station, TN, Sandusky and Salem, OH, Sumner, TX, O’Neill, NE, and Mt. Pleasant Iowa, shared with us: 1) narrative accounts of the ways in which the raids in each location unfolded; 2) the impact of the raid on the community in which it occurred; and 3) strategies used to mitigate the damage of the raid. Each participant self-identified as having responded to the raid. For the purposes of our research, we consider “large” worksite raids to be raids of worksites in which at least 30 individuals were detained in a single day. Interviews were conducted in Spanish and English in the churches, schools, restaurants, and coffee shops of participants’ choosing in each local community. Extensive field notes were taken at each location before and after each interview to guide analysis.



Respondents belong to five major categories: educators (including teachers, principals, and superintendents); members of faith communities (including pastors of local churches); legal professionals (including lawyers), advocates (including immigrant rights organizations) and other respondents (including medical professionals, among others).

## The Impacts of Immigration Worksite Raids

The health impacts of immigration raids, no matter the size of the raid, are multi-level and long lasting, affecting health and well-being of individuals, families, and communities for months or even years after raids occur.

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In order to understand the impact of immigration raids, it is essential to consider the social fabric of the communities in which they occur. Raids occur in mixed-status communities, or communities composed of “mixed-status families.”<sup>25</sup> A mixed-status family is one in which members have different immigration statuses, often an undocumented parent or parents and citizen children. Thus, deportation fundamentally involves removing an individual intimately connected in myriad ways to a family unit and community.

In our work across the six towns that experienced immigration work raids in 2018, residents have consistently compared the raids to natural disasters,<sup>26</sup> with a sudden and unpredictable moment resulting in chaos and widespread confusion followed by an influx of humanitarian needs like diapers, food, water, and soap. As one participant in Mt. Pleasant, IA, where 32 workers were arrested, recalled, “I take this, as a community member, as very analogous to a tornado coming down and taking out 30 houses on the edge of town.” Another participant, who responded after the raid in Bean Station, TN where 97 workers were detained, similarly shared, “We support everybody. I mean, we’ve gathered clothes and school supplies and food for families when they’ve had house fires... this is much bigger.” Certainly, the natural disaster metaphor is apt, as it reflects an event that is multi-level and community-wide in scale and indiscriminate in its impact. That is, like tornadoes, raids can throw one’s life into turmoil regardless of age, gender, or immigration status.

#### *Family-level impacts*

Many working-age undocumented immigrants have families and children. Thus, worksite raids often mean that dozens to hundreds of parents are detained in a single day. In the aftermath, children across the



community must cope with the sudden disappearance of a parent. Spouses, older children, and extended family members scramble, selling and pawning what they can to pay for attorneys or exorbitant bond costs. Often, when fathers are detained, mothers become what Sociologist Joanna Dreby describes as “suddenly single mothers.”<sup>27</sup> When the arrested individual is not detained, he or she is unable to return to work, resulting in a sudden drop in household income. Spouses, in-laws or older children may take on more wage-earning roles, and families will make childcare arrangements and stretch incomes to cover more people. These family rearrangements can impact the educational trajectories of school-age children, who may be forced to choose between school and providing income after the removal of the family’s primary provider (see previous IIH issue brief on the impact of immigration enforcement on the nation’s schools).

#### *Community-level impacts*

Immigration worksite raids occur—by definition—when those who are the targets of the enforcement action are at work. Thus, with few exceptions, children of detained parents are at school when these raids occur. When parents are removed, teachers, counselors and school systems scramble to make decisions about how to tell children what happened and how to support families. One elementary school principal in our study described assigning school staff to ride school buses home and make sure no children were dropped off at empty homes.<sup>28</sup> Throughout many communities, children did not show up to school the next day. One participant in Mt. Pleasant described the necessity of the food pantries that developed specifically to serve immigrant families impacted by the raid: “[E]ven though we have two other food pantries in town, these families won’t go there. They’re afraid of using those services and showing their names or their addresses.”

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### Policy Recommendations and Avenues for Action

With no sign that the current patterns of interior enforcement will slow down<sup>29,30</sup>, advocates and communities, more generally, are taking steps to prepare and respond to immigration raids of any type and scale.

Below, we provide suggestions in which community organizations can engage to prepare for the possibility of future large-scale worksite raids:

1. The Tennessee Immigrant and Refugee Rights Coalition has developed a toolkit<sup>31</sup> for raid response based on their experience following the raid in Bean Station, TN in April of 2018. Iowa Welcomes its Immigrant Neighbors (Iowa WINS), the local community organization that responded to the raid in Mt. Pleasant, IA also created a workbook<sup>32</sup> for small communities aiming to welcome and support immigrant residents. Both organizations stress that their ability to respond to needs in the week of the raid was grounded in the relationships and trust they built long before ICE arrived.
1. Because immigration home raids generally require consent before ICE can enter a residence, Know Your Rights (KYR) workshops continue to be imperative. Workers and managers should be aware of their rights as well. The National Immigration Law Center has developed a guide<sup>33</sup> to prepare for worksite raids. The Michigan Immigrant Rights Center has helpful Know Your Rights videos<sup>34</sup> in both Spanish and English as well as documents<sup>35</sup> to prepare one family in case of removal.

3. Schools in rural districts that serve a high proportion of students from mixed-status families should develop age-appropriate protocols to care for students whose parents are detained. These protocols could include educators at every level, including teachers, counselors, administrations, counselors, and others.
4. Sheriff's departments could decrease the number of deportations in their jurisdiction by refusing to honor ICE detainer requests (requests that undocumented immigrants be held in jail for 48 hours longer than necessary so ICE may detain them); law enforcement departments of all types could refrain from engaging in immigration raids whenever possible, as their cooperation with ICE decreases trust in local police .

### Conclusions

This brief has explored how communities respond in the aftermath of large-scale immigration worksite raids. The description of raids as natural disasters provides guidance in development of our response. Just as disaster responses must address a range of humanitarian, health, and financial needs, so must responses to immigration raids be robust, flexible, and long-term.

<sup>1</sup> NBC News (2019, June 9). 24 Immigrants Have Died in ICE Custody during the Trump Administration. Retrieved April 7, 2020. <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/immigration/24-immigrants-have-died-ice-custody-during-trump-administration-n1015291>.

<sup>2</sup> Time (2019, October 25). Here's What to Know About the Status of Family Separation at the U.S. Border, Which Isn't Nearly Over. Retrieved April 7, 2020. <https://time.com/5678313/trump-administration-family-separation-lawsuits/>.

<sup>3</sup> The Hill (2020, January 24). ICE Detention Center Employee Fired for White Supremacist Beliefs. Retrieved April 7, 2020. <https://thehill.com/changing-america/respect/equality/479800-ice-detention-center-employee-fired-for-white-supremacist>

<sup>4</sup> Cantor, G., Ryo, E., & Humphrey, R. (2019). Changing Patterns of Interior Immigration Enforcement in the United States, 2016 - 2018. Washington, D. C. Retrieved April 7, 2020. <https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/research/interior-immigration-enforcement-united-states-2016-2018>

<sup>5</sup> Kanstroom, D. (2012). *Aftermath: Deportation Law and the New American Diaspora*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

<sup>6</sup> Novak, N.L., Geronimus, A.T., & Martinez-Cardoso, A.M. (2017). Change in Birth Outcomes among Infants Born to Latina Mothers after a Major Immigration Raid. *International Journal of Epidemiology*, 46(3), 839–849.

<sup>7</sup> Lopez, W.D., et al. (2017). Health Implications of an Immigration Raid: Findings from a Latino Community in the Midwestern United States. *Journal of Immigrant and Minority Health*, 19(3), 702–708, DOI: [10.1007/s10903-016-0390-6](https://doi.org/10.1007/s10903-016-0390-6)

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<sup>8</sup> Lopez, W.D., et al. (2018). The Traumatogenic Potential of Law Enforcement Home Raids: An Exploratory Report. *Journal of Traumatology*, 24(3), 193–199.

<sup>9</sup> This policy brief is based on the research book, *Separated: Family and Community in the Aftermath of an Immigration Raid*, published on September 24, 2019 by the Johns Hopkins University Press. Please refer to the original book for more details about this study.

<sup>10</sup> NILC (2019, April 11). Worksite Immigration Raids Terrorize Workers and Communities Now, and Their Devastating Consequences Are Long Term. Retrieved April 7, 2020. <https://www.nilc.org/2019/04/11/worksite-immigration-raids-terrorize-workers-and-communities/>

<sup>11</sup> Des Moines Register (2018, May 10). Dozens Rally in Mount Pleasant Day after ICE Arrested 32, Mourning Families Torn Apart and Demanding Answers from Local Police. Retrieved April 7, 2020. <https://www.desmoinesregister.com/story/news/2018/05/10/mount-pleasant-immigration-raid-illegal-immigration-iowa-raid/598598002/>

<sup>12</sup> Immigration and Customs Enforcement. (2019). “Press Conference: HSI Worksite Enforcement in Mississippi.” Retrieved April 7, 2020. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=80ebM2LEM4Q>

<sup>13</sup> NYU Review of Law & Social Change. (2009). The ICE Storm in U.S. Homes: An Urgent Call for Policy Change. 33, 561–611.

<sup>14</sup> Saulny, S. (2008). Hundreds Are Arrested in U.S. Sweep of Meat Plant. *New York Times*, May 13. Retrieved April 7, 2020. <https://www.nytimes.com/2008/05/13/us/13immig.html>

<sup>15</sup> NPR. (2018, January 11). ICE Targets 7-Eleven Stores In Nationwide Immigration Raids. Retrieved April 7, 2020. <https://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2018/01/11/577271488/ice-targets-7-eleven-stores-in-nationwide-immigration-raids>

<sup>16</sup> Wishnie, M., Mendelson, M., & Strom, S. (2009). Collateral Damage: An Examination of ICE’s Fugitive Operations Program. Washington DC: Migration Policy Institute.

<sup>17</sup> Evans, K. (2009). The ICE Storm in U.S. Homes: An Urgent Call for Policy Change. SSRN. Retrieved April 7, 2020. [https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=2884863](https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2884863)

<sup>18</sup> Adler, R.H. (2006). ‘But They Claimed to Be Police, Not La Migra!’: The Interaction of Residency Status, Class, and Ethnicity in a (PostPATRIOT Act) New Jersey Neighborhood. *American Behavioral Scientist*. 50(1), 48–69, DOI: [10.1177/0002764206289654](https://doi.org/10.1177/0002764206289654)

<sup>19</sup> Evans, K. (2009). The ICE Storm in U.S. Homes: An Urgent Call for Policy Change. SSRN. Retrieved April 7, 2020. [https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=2884863](https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2884863)

<sup>20</sup> Washtenaw Interfaith Coalition for Immigrant Rights. Retrieved: March 7, 2020: <http://wicir.org/>

<sup>21</sup> Eastern Iowa Community Bond Project. Retrieved: March 7, 2020: <https://communitybondproject.org/>

<sup>22</sup> Center for Worker Justice of Eastern Iowa. Retrieved: March 7, 2020: <https://cwjiowa.org/>

<sup>23</sup> Washtenaw ID. Retrieved March 7, 2020: <http://www.washtenawid.com/>

<sup>24</sup> Lopez, W.D. (2019). *Separated: Family and Community in the Aftermath of an Immigration Raid*. Baltimore, MA: Johns Hopkins University Press.

<sup>25</sup> Castañeda, H. (2019). *Borders of Belonging: Struggle and Solidarity in Mixed-Status Immigrant Families*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

<sup>26</sup> Des Moines Register. (2018, May 8). Immigration Raids Are Human-Made Disasters – and Iowans Know How to Respond. Retrieved April 7, 2020. <https://www.desmoinesregister.com/story/opinion/columnists/iowa-view/2019/05/08/mt-pleasant-ice-raid-disaster-but-many-stepped-up-help-immigration-recovery/1139465001/>

<sup>27</sup> Dreby, J. (2015). *Everyday Illegal*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

<sup>28</sup> Capps, R., et al. (2007). Paying the Price: The Impact of Immigration Raids on America’s Children. Washington, D.C. Retrieved April 7, 2020. <http://www.urban.org/publications/411566.html>

<sup>29</sup> The Washington Post. (2019, June 17). Trump Vows Mass Immigration Arrests, Removals of ‘Millions of Illegal Aliens’ Starting next Week. Retrieved April 7, 2020. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/immigration/trump-vows-mass-immigration-arrests-removals-of-millions-of-illegal-aliens-starting-next-week/>

<sup>30</sup> The Washington Post. (2019, June 4). New ICE Chief Says Agency Plans to Target More Families for Deportation. Retrieved April 7, 2020. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/immigration/new-ice-chief-says-agency-plans-to-target-more-families-for-deportation/>

<sup>31</sup> Tennessee Immigrant and Refugee Rights Coalition. (2019, May 13). Lessons from East Tennessee: A Toolkit for Organizations Responding to Mass Worksite Immigration Raids. Retrieved April 7, 2020. <https://www.tnimmigrant.org/news/worksiteaidresponsetoolkit>

<sup>32</sup> Iowa WINS. (2018) Iowa WINS Community Organization Workbook. Retrieved April 7, 2020. [http://www.iowawins.net/uploads/1/2/5/1/125141897/iowa\\_wins\\_workbook\\_1.pdf](http://www.iowawins.net/uploads/1/2/5/1/125141897/iowa_wins_workbook_1.pdf)

<sup>33</sup> National Employment Law Project and National Immigration Law Center. What to Do If Immigration Comes to Your Workplace. Retrieved April 7, 2020. <https://www.nilc.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/EmployerGuide-NELP-NILC-2017-07.pdf>

<sup>34</sup> Michigan Immigrant Rights Center, Conozca Sus Derechos / Know Your Rights,” Retrieved March 8, 2020. <https://michiganimmigrant.org/>

<sup>35</sup> Michigan Immigrant Rights Center. Michigan Immigrant Rights Center: Advocate Library.

<sup>36</sup> Theodore, N. (2013). *Insecure Communities: Latino Perceptions of Police Involvement in Immigration Enforcement*. University of Illinois Chicago; Khashu, A. (2009). The Role of Local Police: Striking a Balance between Immigration Enforcement and Civil Liberties. Washington, D. C. <https://www.ncjrs.gov/App/Publications/abstract.aspx?ID=250600>

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### About the Authors

William Lopez is the child of a Mexican immigrant mother, a clinical assistant professor at the University of Michigan School of Public Health, and author of the book, "Separated: Family and Community in the Aftermath of an Immigration Raid." His community-based research uses mixed-methods to investigate the impacts of immigration raids while centering the voices of community members who survive and thrive under targeted government surveillance and removal efforts. He teaches a public health course on the intersection of immigration enforcement and police violence on Latinx, Black, and Muslim and Arab communities. He lives with his partner and two children in Ann Arbor, MI.

Nicole Novak is an assistant research scientist at the University of Iowa College of Public Health. She uses epidemiologic and community-engaged research methods to examine historical, structural and policy influences on the health of immigrants, Latinos and rural residents. She has partnered with multiple community-based organizations addressing issues related to health equity in Iowa, including the Center for Worker Justice of Eastern Iowa, the Iowa Harm Reduction Coalition, and the Eastern Iowa Community Bond Project.

## ABOUT IIH

The Immigration Initiative at Harvard (IIH) was created to advance and promote interdisciplinary scholarship, original research, and intellectual exchange among stakeholders interested in immigration policy and immigrant communities. The IIH serves as a place of convening for scholars, students, and policy leaders working on issues of immigration—and a clearinghouse for rapid-response, non-partisan research and usable knowledge relevant to the media, policymakers, and community practitioners.



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### Under Siege: The Disturbing Impact of Immigration Enforcement on the Nation's Schools

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Immigration Initiative at Harvard Policy Brief 2.



#### Background

A great deal has been written recently on the topic of immigration enforcement and its impact on families and communities. The outcry over family separations at the border was frontpage news for weeks in the early summer of 2018. But little attention has been focused on how extensive the effects are or how they are experienced by the schools that enroll immigrant students.

Immigration was a central pillar of Donald Trump's campaign for the presidency. In an effort to send a message to would-be immigrants, as well as those already here, he has ordered random raids and arrests of people who have lived here peacefully for years, and even decades. The current administration's immigration enforcement makes no distinction between someone with a felony conviction, and someone who has simply committed the crime of crossing the border without documentation.<sup>1-3</sup> Thus, when in July of 2017 a man who had lived in the Los Angeles area for more than 20 years and raised his U.S. born children there was arrested as he dropped off one of his daughters for school, it sent shock waves through the immigrant community. Now, seemingly, no one and no place is safe. In this context, the present study sought to answer the following questions:<sup>4</sup>

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