

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 20, 2018

MEDIA ALERT

First Ever Report of Economic Contributions of Immigrants to be Released in Memphis

Immigrants in Memphis contributed \$4.2 Billion to GDP in 2015

WHAT: On Tuesday, February 20th, Latino Memphis and New American Economy will release “New Americans in Memphis: A Snapshot of the Demographic and Economic Contributions of Immigrants in the Metro Area” at a reception with Mayor Jim Strickland celebrating Barrier Free, an art installation honoring diversity, by Yancy Villa.

“Memphis is a city made better by the diversity of its people and the information in this report shows that,” said Mayor Jim Strickland.

Immigrants not only contributed \$4.2 billion to the area’s GDP in 2015 but contributed 481.8M in taxes as well. They also contributed \$191.0 million to Social Security and 46.9M to Medicare. Despite only making up 5.2 percent of the area’s overall population, immigrants in Memphis represent 7.1 percent of the employed labor force and 14.4 percent of its STEM workers in 2015.

“Today, facts matter more than ever, and this report sheds light on the contributions that new and aspiring Americans bring into our local economy. The report also shows some of our opportunities for growth, particularly around education. Memphis needs to consider immigrants, refugees and the US born generations that follow them as part of our smart growth strategy.” said Mauricio Calvo, Executive Director at Latino Memphis.

Gina John, Advocacy Coordinator at Latino Memphis says, “As we commemorate MLK50 in Memphis, his words “injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere...whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly” ring true today. I am hopeful that the information in this report will help honor his legacy by helping eradicate the injustices that immigrants are facing This brief comes at a time where political tensions paint immigrants in a certain negative light, but it is clear from this report that as a whole, all immigrants, regardless of status, are actively contributing to this economy.”

The report by New American Economy finds:

- **Immigrants contributed \$4.2 billion to the Memphis metro area’s GDP in 2015**
- **Immigrant households earned \$1.6 billion in 2015.** Of that, immigrant households contributed \$372.1 million in federal taxes and \$109.7 million in state and local taxes, leaving them with \$1.1 billion in spending power.
- **Immigrant households support federal social programs.** The foreign-born contributed \$191 million to Social Security and \$46.9 million to Medicare.
- **Immigrants in Memphis are more likely to be entrepreneurs.** While just over 5 percent of the population, immigrants make up nearly 9 percent of the metro area’s business owners. They are 26.7 percent more likely to be entrepreneurs than people born in the United States.

- **Immigrants account for more than 14 percent of the metro area’s Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) workers.** Despite making up just 5.2 percent of the overall population, immigrants represented 14.4 percent of the metro area’s STEM workforce. They also represented nearly a quarter—24.5 percent—of construction workers in Memphis in 2015.
- **Immigrants helped to preserve 3,210 local manufacturing jobs in 2015.** Because of the role immigrants play in the workforce helping companies keep jobs local, by 2015 immigrants living in Memphis had helped create or preserve more than 3,210 manufacturing jobs that would have otherwise vanished or moved elsewhere.
- **Immigrant households own homes.** 51.3 percent of immigrant households are homeowners making their property value \$2.4 billion.
- **The undocumented population in Memphis contributed \$61.5 million in taxes and held nearly \$353.2 million in spending power.** In 2015, undocumented immigrant households earned a total of \$414.8 million.

WHO: Latino Memphis in collaboration with the City of Memphis and New American Economy

WHEN: Tuesday, February 20th, 3-4 PM

WHERE: Hall of Mayors, Memphis City Hall, 125 N Main St, Memphis, TN, 38103

VISUALS: *Barrier Free* art exhibition and reception, spoken word performance by local DACA recipient, Roberto “Boro” Alfaro

ON-SITE MEDIA CONTACT: Gina John, Advocacy Coordinator, Latino Memphis 901.366.5882 x 126 or gina@latinomemphis.org

###