

# MAKING FACTS MATTER: Immigrants, the Economy and Words that Work

## Narratives that Reshape the Conversation

- **Facts by themselves are not convincing.** Although the data on immigrants and the economy is powerful, we can not let it speak for itself if we want to change minds.
- **Instead, start with a moral argument.** Appeal to American values about shared prosperity, hardworking families and trying to provide for your children. Then follow with the facts.
- **Offer solutions.** In order to combat a fatalistic outlook on immigration, end with practical suggestions. For example, “We need better policies to make sure our economy prospers. One thing we could do is offer permanent work authorization to DREAMers.”



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## How Immigration Benefits All Americans

- **Immigrants are key to our economy.** Although immigrants are only 13% of our population, they constitute 17% of the labor force and 16% of all GDP contributions. They are highly over-represented in fields such as computing, engineering, farming and healthcare.
- **Our communities have been revitalized.** 28% of main street business owners are immigrants. They run our beauty salons, dry cleaners, restaurants and grocery stores.
- **Growth cannot happen without immigrants.** Of all the big cities that experienced population decline since the 1960s, none rebounded without the help of immigrants.



Linda Fleener  
Illinois Business  
Immigration Coalition

## Compelling Stories to Advance Change

- **Stories can be a great way to change minds if done correctly.** Don't focus on one person, as that will only generate empathy for one individual and not others facing the same conditions.
- **Create context through communities.** Use storytelling as an opportunity to talk about immigrants as your neighbors, as fellow parents or people who work at a local store.
- **A place can be your protagonist too.** Focus on somewhere that has prospered because of immigrants, or a main street that has come back to life. These are very accessible narratives.



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