

Mexican undocumented workers have grown to play a pivotal role in supporting the dairy farming industry of Vermont due to plummeting milk prices and a dwindling workforce. However, with no current pathways to legal status they live in isolation and fear of deportation impeding their access to basic needs and rights. This study looks at the effectiveness of community organization around bias-free policing initiatives; one Vermont wide effort that employs local and state policing policy change as a vehicle for positive social change through the reduction of discrimination based on legal status. This study seeks to determine whether activism on the part of community organizers has had an influence on community awareness and concern surrounding the issue. It also seeks to answer whether or not growing concern has influenced positive policy changes. It will compare quantitative and qualitative data from Franklin and Addison County that has been gathered through a triangulation of methods. The two counties were chosen due to their importance to the dairy industry and unique political environments that offer a strong basis for comparison. Twelve key stakeholders in the issue were interviewed including Vermont law enforcement agencies, leaders of active organizations and state legislators. A second set of fourteen interviews (seven per county) were conducted with leaders within the ecumenical community, an effort in conjunction with Professor Dan Baker. Finally a set of surveys was distributed community wide within each county with responses still returning. The data will be analyzed employing the mixed methods model throughout March with a complete report submitted the first of April.