

## State welcomes immigrants; undocumented laborers are vulnerable

Vermont has a reputation as a welcome haven for immigrants. The state has accepted and supported thousands of refugees from troubled regions.

Vermont's farms are powered, in part, by the labor of Latino immigrants. But these workers, some of whom have immigrated without legal documentation, fear racial profiling and deportation.



### the FACTS

#### *Refugee welcome*

- In the last two decades, more than 4,000 refugees and asylum seekers from at least two dozen countries have made Vermont their home. Each year, an average of 250 refugees settle in Vermont, many of the latest arriving from countries in Africa and the former Soviet Union.<sup>91</sup>
- Vermont has helped nearly 40 refugees from Africa, Vietnam and Bosnia start their own businesses through the Vermont Refugee Micro Enterprise program. An additional 60 refugees have received business educations funded through a Federal Office of Refugee Resettlement grant.

#### *Immigrant labor*

- The Vermont Agency of Agriculture recognizes the critical role of immigrant labor in the Vermont farm economy, estimating that immigrant workers contribute to half of the state's milk production.
- As many as one-third of full-time farm workers in Vermont are Latino. There are an estimated 2,500 migrant workers in Vermont.<sup>92</sup>
- Latino farm laborers are ill at ease in Vermont. Some avoid leaving the confines of private property for fear that they will be targeted by police, detained and deported. According to several reports, police have detained migrant workers without cause until they can find them to be undocumented and make an arrest.<sup>93</sup>