



December 5, 2016

The National Immigration Forum is one of the leading immigrant advocacy organizations in the country, with a mission to advocate for the value of immigrants and immigration to the nation. Founded in 1982, the Forum plays a leading role in the national debate about immigration, knitting together innovative alliances across diverse faith, labor, law enforcement, veterans and business constituencies in communities across the country. Leveraging our policy, advocacy and communications expertise, the Forum works to ensure that new Americans have the opportunities, skills, and status to reach their full potential.

For the better part of this past decade, as technology has come to play a greater role in society, a wide range of “peer to peer” businesses have developed that allow everyone to become an entrepreneur.

Today, we are releasing a new report, “Immigrants sharing homes: Opening doors to opportunity” which highlights how some immigrants are able to embrace opportunities provided by the sharing economy through platforms like Airbnb and provide an economic lifeline for themselves and their families and the communities they call home. Home sharing platforms like Airbnb can provide much-needed supplemental income for immigrants to this nation, a group making the transition to a new life in an unfamiliar place.

Additionally, a recent Airbnb report, “The Impact of Airbnb on Middle Class Income Stagnation” found that the majority of Airbnb hosts are working families who rent out their primary residence and earn approximately \$7,530 in supplemental income per year. That extra income represents a 14 percent annual raise and is the equivalent of real household income growing 0.5 percent over inflation for the past 15 years. According to Airbnb, throughout New York, Los Angeles, and Chicago, hosts in majority-immigrant neighborhoods have earned over \$24 million dollars hosting on Airbnb and have seen 65% growth in active Airbnb listings in the past year.

In our new report, we share the experiences of eight immigrants and their families participating as Airbnb hosts and the positive impact that experience has had on their ability to pursue the American dream. One of these people is America Lopez. America and her twin sister are 25 years old and have been helping their immigrant parents with hosting through Airbnb. The money they have earned through participating with Airbnb has allowed them to pay for college while competing in startup competitions and teaching kids how to code as a second language.

As your community continues to consider short-term rental rules and policies, we urge you to consider this report and the experiences of immigrants. We strongly believe that smart policies can regulate these new activities while ensuring immigrants across the country are still able to access opportunities afforded by the sharing economy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ali Noorani", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Ali Noorani
Executive Director