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Impact of Immigration and the Construction Industry Significant
*New Research Outlines Need to Continue
to Utilize Immigrants in Construction Industry*

[Falls Church, VA] The latest publication in the Foundation of the Wall and Ceiling Industry's *Foundation Research Series*, *Immigration and Construction*, reports on the vital role— as approximately 20 percent of the workforce— immigrants workers play in the construction industry and the need to maintain current work force levels in the industry.

The industry has exploded in the last two decades and while there has been a slight decline recently in the residential market, owners and contractors have had to work to stay competitive. Part of this cost-effective business strategy has included the use of immigrant labor— legal and illegal. In the last two decades, 36.2 million immigrants arriving in the United States from 1985 and 2005, primarily unskilled labor from Latin America.

“With the attempted immigration reform legislation stalled at the national level, and with states and localities creating their own laws in its absence, there was a need to educate members of our industry in a balanced, factual and research-oriented manner,” says Steven A. Etkin, executive vice president of the Foundation. “*Immigration and Construction* was published to assist our community in examining the role of immigration in our industry.”

Today, companies in the construction industry struggle to find available, affordable employees. Today, it is estimated that approximately 14 percent of the construction work force is undocumented. Between 2002 and 2012, unskilled laborers are expected to account for 84 percent of the total projected employment growth. Vice President Mikel Poellinger, president of Poellinger Inc. in La Crosse, Wisc. says, “*Immigration and Construction* provides our industry with the background information they need to get involved in the immigration debate. Our industry needs immigrant workers, and we also need to be able to work with everyone legally.”

The Foundation of the Wall and Ceiling Industry is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization formed in 1977 as an active, unbiased source of information and education to support the wall and ceiling industry. The Foundation maintains the largest independent library in the industry, publishes the *Foundation Research Series* and provides financial assistance, through the AWCI Cares program, to members of our industry in times of financial crisis. For more information on the Foundation or to download *Immigration and Construction*, please visit www.awci.org/foundation.

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