

# border kids

THE ANNIE E. CASEY  
FOUNDATION

## count

POCKET GUIDE

A SNAPSHOT OF CHILDREN  
LIVING ON THE  
SOUTHWEST  
BORDER



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KIDS COUNT, a project of the Annie E. Casey Foundation, is a national and state-by-state effort to track the status of children in the United States. By providing policymakers and citizens with benchmarks of child well-being, KIDS COUNT seeks to enrich local, state, and national discussions concerning ways to secure better futures for all children. At the national level, the principal activity of the initiative is the publication of the annual *KIDS COUNT Data Book*, which uses the best available data to measure the educational, social, economic, and physical well-being of children. The Foundation also funds a nationwide network of state-level KIDS COUNT projects that provide a more detailed, community-by-community picture of the condition of children.

# Introduction

In presenting this first-ever *Southwest Border KIDS COUNT Pocket Guide*, the Annie E. Casey Foundation hopes to provide a set of benchmarks of child well-being that will illuminate the challenges and opportunities facing the families raising 1.8 million children along the Southwest border. By focusing on the Arizona, California, New Mexico, and Texas counties that border Mexico and the disparities that impact children who live there, we hope to raise awareness of the problems these families face and to identify new investments that will improve child well-being in this region. It is important to focus on children in border counties because state-level analyses of child well-being can mask problems and issues that are concentrated on the U.S.-Mexico border.

**This Pocket Guide presents the characteristics of the border population state-by-state and county-by-county, including information on:**

- Population and demographic characteristics
- Health
- Parental employment
- Education
- Language fluency
- Foreign-born status and time of arrival
- Poverty rates

Because of the significant differences between Latinos and non-Latino whites for most of the indicators presented here, we provide separate data about these two groups whenever the data permit us to do so.

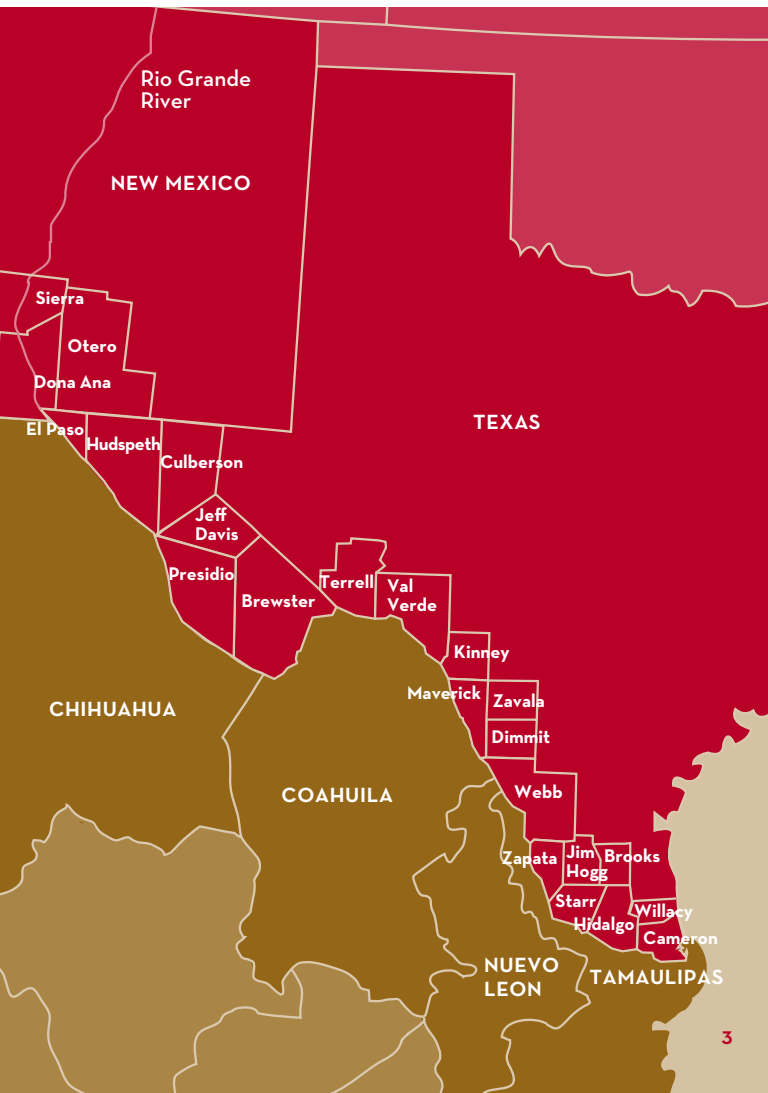
We hope that this publication leads to additional investment in the children and youth of the Southwest border region. Most importantly, we hope these findings will play a role in creating a broad consensus among policymakers, business leaders, educators, and health professionals on the importance of investing in plans and programs that will enable all children in this region of the country to reach their full potential.

## Counties on the Southwest Border

- The 32 border counties are home to 6.5 million people of which 1.8 million are children.
- Among the 100 poorest counties in the nation 13 are border counties.
- There are half-a-million poor children living in border counties, 83 percent of them are Latino.
- The child poverty rate for Latino children living along the border (37 percent) is more than twice the national child poverty rate (17 percent).



- The Latino high school drop out rate (15 percent) is three times higher than the non-Latino white rate (5 percent) along the border.
- 80 percent of Latino children living along the border live in families where parent(s) work.
- The infant mortality rate in border counties (5.7 infant deaths per 1,000 births) is significantly lower than the national rate (6.9 infant deaths per 1,000 births)
- The percent of births that are low birthweight in border counties (6.6 percent) is significantly lower than the national rate (7.6 percent).



## Source of Data

Most of the statistics in this publication come from the 2000 U.S. Decennial Census. The Decennial Census has the major advantage of using the same methodology across the country, so that data are collected and measures are calculated consistently from one state to the next. We use standard Census Bureau definitions and all the data shown here are taken from standard Census Bureau tables. For detailed information on the definitions used to produce the figures shown in this publication, go to the online version of this report that is available as a PDF at [www.kidscount.org](http://www.kidscount.org).

In addition to the data from the Decennial Census, information for vital events (births and deaths) are also used for three indicators; 1) Percent of Births to Teenagers, 2) Percent Low-Birthweight Babies, and 3) Infant Mortality Rate. Vital events data are comparable across states and counties, but the small number of events in some of the smaller counties means rates for those counties should be viewed cautiously.

It is also important to note that in a few of the smaller counties shown in this report (such as Terrell and Jeff Davis in Texas), the numbers involved in estimating percentages for some measures are so small that the estimates may be unreliable. For example, the high school dropout rate for Terrell County is based on only a handful of individuals. We provide the figures here because they are the best data available consistently across all the counties, but we urge readers to use them cautiously.

While the U.S. Census Bureau uses the term “Hispanic” in its materials, we use the term “Latino” in this Pocket Guide to refer collectively to persons of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Dominican, Central American and Spanish descent.

For additional information on children and families from the 2000 Census, please visit the KIDS COUNT website at [www.kidscount.org/census](http://www.kidscount.org/census) where measures of child well being are provided for states, counties, large cities, Metropolitan Areas, Congressional Districts, Indian Reservations, and New England Towns.

## Identifying Border Counties

For the data included in this Pocket Guide, the Southwest border area consists of 32 counties that are on, or very close to, the U.S.- Mexican border. Counties were selected as the geographic unit to use in this report because they are generally small enough to reflect relatively local areas but large enough to produce reliable data. Moreover, counties are consistent units in all four states included in this study. It is important to note that in some of the larger counties, for example San Diego, California, the overall county figures mask the reality faced by children and families living on the border. In these situations, we hope that subsequent studies can delineate the border area more precisely.

The 32 border counties used in this report include 24 counties located directly on the U.S.-Mexico border, plus 5 counties in Texas and 3 in New Mexico that are not directly on the border, but are located very close to the border and have socio-demographic profiles that are very similar to counties that border on Mexico.

The Southwest border counties include 20 in Texas, 6 in New Mexico, 4 in Arizona, and only 2 in California. These 32 counties are home to 6.5 million people of which 1.8 million are children. Close to two-thirds (62 percent) of the 1.8 million children living on the border are Latinos.

Despite commonalities in terms of geographic proximity to Mexico, high concentrations of Latinos, and higher than average rates of childhood poverty, substantial differences can be found along the border. For example, San Diego County, California, is a major metropolitan area of 2.8 million people, while Terrell County, Texas, barely has a thousand people. Furthermore, the child poverty rate in Starr County, Texas (60 percent) is three times that found in Pima County, Arizona (20 percent).

	POPULATION			NUMBER OF CHILDREN UNDER 18			PERCENT OF POPULATION THAT IS LATINO		PERCENT OF POPULATION UNDER 18		PERCENT OF BIRTHS TO TEENAGERS	PERCENT OF CHILDREN LIVING WITH TWO MARRIED PARENTS		PERCENT OF LATINO CHILDREN WHO		PERCENT OF	
	Total	Latino	Non-Latino White	Total	Latino	Non-Latino White	Total	Under 18	Latino	Non-Latino White	Total	Latino	Non-Latino White	Speak a Second Language	Speak English Fluently	LATINO ADULTS WHO Speak English Fluently	
<b>UNITED STATES</b>	281,421,906	35,305,818	194,552,774	72,293,812	12,342,259	44,027,087	13	17	35	23	12	60	75	70	73	54	<b>UNITED STATES</b>
<b>46 Non-Border States</b>	219,748,760	15,608,593	163,714,918	55,281,703	5,152,720	37,453,107	7	9	33	23	11	57	76	68	75	53	<b>46 Non-Border States</b>
<b>4 Border States</b>	61,673,146	19,697,225	30,837,856	17,012,109	7,189,539	6,573,980	32	42	37	21	13	63	73	71	72	55	<b>4 Border States</b>
32 Border Counties	6,448,006	3,123,552	2,636,996	1,840,459	1,137,709	502,171	48	62	36	19	14	62	72	80	69	56	32 Border Counties
Non-Border Counties	55,225,140	16,573,673	28,200,860	15,171,650	6,051,830	6,071,809	30	40	37	22	13	63	73	69	72	55	Non-Border Counties
<b>TEXAS</b>	20,851,820	6,669,666	10,933,313	5,886,759	2,386,765	2,507,147	32	41	36	23	15	64	75	71	73	57	<b>TEXAS</b>
<b>Non-Border Counties</b>	18,832,116	4,962,456	10,669,456	5,203,230	1,768,162	2,456,496	26	34	36	23	15	64	76	65	75	59	<b>Non-Border Counties</b>
<b>Border Counties</b>	2,019,704	1,707,210	263,857	683,529	618,603	50,651	85	91	36	19	17	64	72	86	66	54	<b>Border Counties</b>
Brewster	8,866	3,867	4,710	1,964	1,151	753	44	59	30	16	15	59	73	63	78	72	Brewster
Brooks	7,976	7,304	633	2,517	2,391	117	92	95	33	18	28	57	62	56	80	67	Brooks
Cameron	335,227	282,736	48,679	113,295	103,716	8,407	84	92	37	17	17	62	70	86	68	55	Cameron
Culberson	2,975	2,149	733	957	793	139	72	83	37	19	19	65	68	82	75	61	Culberson
Dimmit	10,248	8,708	1,350	3,401	3,039	290	85	89	35	21	27	60	71	71	79	62	Dimmit
El Paso	679,622	531,654	115,535	217,423	183,696	24,095	78	84	35	21	17	61	72	82	67	57	El Paso
Hidalgo	569,463	503,100	59,423	201,002	189,718	9,421	88	94	38	16	16	66	74	88	66	53	Hidalgo
Hudspeth	3,344	2,509	770	1,141	947	180	75	83	38	23	19	71	83	88	62	41	Hudspeth
Jeff Davis	2,207	783	1,376	539	231	288	35	43	30	21	21	62	74	83	72	54	Jeff Davis
Jim Hogg	5,281	4,752	474	1,668	1,536	117	90	92	32	25	24	65	68	64	83	66	Jim Hogg
Kinney	3,379	1,707	1,587	868	593	260	51	68	35	16	30	65	84	75	79	57	Kinney
Maverick	47,297	44,938	1,610	17,459	16,771	402	95	96	37	25	19	69	71	93	66	45	Maverick
Presidio	7,304	6,162	1,079	2,389	2,177	197	84	91	35	18	21	65	71	90	54	44	Presidio
Starr	53,597	52,278	1,082	20,042	19,639	321	98	98	38	30	22	67	63	93	52	46	Starr
Terrell	1,081	525	529	287	153	123	49	53	29	23	14	76	76	68	87	69	Terrell
Val Verde	44,856	33,849	9,734	14,382	11,937	2,074	75	83	35	21	17	64	78	85	73	56	Val Verde
Webb	193,117	182,070	9,508	69,862	66,707	2,661	94	95	37	28	17	65	70	93	62	51	Webb
Willacy	20,082	17,209	2,350	6,352	5,890	400	86	93	34	17	20	65	77	78	73	59	Willacy
Zapata	12,182	10,328	1,771	4,025	3,821	184	85	95	37	10	22	70	66	91	68	53	Zapata
Zavala	11,600	10,582	924	3,956	3,697	222	91	93	35	24	23	59	45	87	64	51	Zavala
<b>NEW MEXICO</b>	1,819,046	765,386	813,495	508,574	258,806	165,301	42	51	34	20	17	58	71	47	85	76	<b>NEW MEXICO</b>
<b>Non-Border Counties</b>	1,506,846	598,315	685,222	418,130	198,272	140,606	40	47	33	21	17	58	72	41	88	78	<b>Non-Border Counties</b>
<b>Border Counties</b>	312,200	167,071	128,273	90,444	60,534	24,695	54	67	36	19	19	59	70	66	75	65	<b>Border Counties</b>
Doña Ana	174,682	110,665	56,688	51,901	39,606	10,328	63	76	36	18	19	58	70	72	72	63	Doña Ana
Grant	31,002	15,126	15,048	8,138	4,934	2,956	49	61	33	20	18	57	67	37	91	79	Grant
Hidalgo	5,932	3,324	2,532	1,882	1,210	650	56	64	36	26	13	56	76	44	82	69	Hidalgo
Luna	25,016	14,435	9,921	7,505	5,757	1,553	58	77	40	16	23	59	67	73	73	57	Luna
Otero	62,298	20,033	34,728	18,352	7,818	7,849	32	43	39	23	17	64	73	54	80	70	Otero
Sierra	13,270	3,488	9,356	2,666	1,209	1,359	26	45	35	15	19	61	62	53	83	74	Sierra
<b>ARIZONA</b>	5,130,632	1,295,617	3,274,258	1,366,947	493,143	678,674	25	36	38	21	14	59	71	64	74	59	<b>ARIZONA</b>
<b>Non-Border Counties</b>	3,970,724	900,128	2,606,993	1,068,868	346,664	556,747	23	32	39	21	14	60	72	62	73	57	<b>Non-Border Counties</b>
<b>Border Counties</b>	1,159,908	395,489	667,265	298,079	146,479	121,927	34	49	37	18	15	59	69	68	76	64	<b>Border Counties</b>
Cochise	117,755	36,134	70,754	30,999	13,154	14,507	31	42	36	21	17	58	70	67	80	67	Cochise
Pima	843,746	247,578	518,720	207,896	89,163	95,081	29	43	36	18	15	56	69	59	81	69	Pima
Santa Cruz	38,381	31,005	6,835	12,913	11,571	1,181	81	90	37	17	16	65	76	94	62	46	Santa Cruz
Yuma	160,026	80,772	70,956	46,271	32,591	11,158	50	70	40	16	17	66	69	83	65	51	Yuma
<b>CALIFORNIA</b>	33,871,648	10,966,556	15,816,790	9,249,829	4,050,825	3,222,858	32	44	37	20	11	62	72	73	70	52	<b>CALIFORNIA</b>
<b>Non-Border Counties</b>	30,915,454	10,112,774	14,239,189	8,481,422	3,738,732	2,917,960	33	44	37	20	11	62	72	73	70	51	<b>Non-Border Counties</b>
<b>Border Counties</b>	2,956,194	853,782	1,577,601	768,407	312,093	304,898	29	41	37	19	10	61	74	76	69	56	<b>Border Counties</b>
Imperial	142,361	102,817	28,768	44,746	36,647	5,697	72	82	36	20	17	60	69	85	63	51	Imperial
San Diego	2,813,833	750,965	1,548,833	723,661	275,446	299,201	27	38	37	19	9	62	74	74	70	57	San Diego



Geographic Area	Percent Foreign Born			Percent Born in Mexico	Percent of Children in Poverty			Percent of Children with No Parent in Labor Force		Percent Low-Birthweight Babies	Infant Mortality Rate	Percent of Teens who are High School Dropouts		Percent of Teens who are Not Working and Not in School		Data Source
	Of All Residents	Who Arrived Since 1990	Who are Citizens	Of All Residents	Total	Latino	Non-Latino White	Latino	Non-Latino White	(weighing less than 5.5 lbs)	(deaths per 1,000 live births)	Latino	Non-Latino White	Latino	Non-Latino White	
	<b>United States</b>	11	42	40	3	17	28	9	20	6	7.6	6.9	21	7	15	
<b>46 Non-Border States</b>	8	44	43	1	16	26	9	20	5	7.9	7.3	23	7	16	6	<b>46 Non-Border States</b>
<b>4 Border States</b>	20	40	37	10	20	29	9	20	6	6.7	5.7	19	6	15	7	<b>4 Border States</b>
32 Border Counties	22	35	38	16	28	37	10	20	6	6.6	5.7	15	5	14	6	32 Border Counties
Non-Border Counties	20	40	37	10	19	27	9	20	6	6.8	5.7	20	6	15	7	Non-Border Counties
<b>TEXAS</b>	14	46	32	9	21	31	8	19	5	7.4	5.8	21	7	16	7	<b>TEXAS</b>
<b>Non-Border Counties</b>	12	49	31	7	18	27	8	19	5	7.5	5.9	23	7	16	7	<b>Non-Border Counties</b>
<b>Border Counties</b>	28	33	35	26	40	43	14	20	10	6.7	5.3	13	5	14	9	<b>Border Counties</b>
Brewster	7	46	29	5	21	28	11	14	7	8.3	16.5	7	2	13	0	Brewster
Brooks	6	14	49	5	52	52	43	22	7	6.6	0.0	20	9	21	22	Brooks
Cameron	26	34	34	24	43	46	15	21	11	6.0	3.6	12	5	13	8	Cameron
Culberson	16	16	64	14	31	36	10	10	13	8.3	0.0	15	5	12	5	Culberson
Dimmit	8	22	54	7	40	43	16	15	10	7.3	6.1	7	1	12	1	Dimmit
El Paso	27	31	42	25	32	35	11	19	9	7.1	4.8	10	6	11	9	El Paso
Hidalgo	30	37	29	28	46	47	17	19	10	6.3	5.3	16	5	15	8	Hidalgo
Hudspeth	33	38	28	33	41	46	20	21	3	3.2	32.3	11	0	13	0	Hudspeth
Jeff Davis	11	53	27	9	18	26	11	10	2	0.0	0.0	17	4	7	0	Jeff Davis
Jim Hogg	5	21	47	5	30	32	6	20	0	14.7	26.7	3	31	2	62	Jim Hogg
Kinney	12	24	48	10	34	36	25	16	11	10.8	27.0	7	2	5	0	Kinney
Maverick	38	27	40	37	41	41	19	20	19	6.6	6.0	17	20	19	20	Maverick
Presidio	36	46	22	35	43	46	14	15	3	6.6	0.0	16	5	19	0	Presidio
Starr	37	30	32	36	60	60	59	25	36	6.4	6.9	16	19	17	37	Starr
Terrell	10	24	28	9	33	41	22	2	3	14.3	0.0	4	0	9	6	Terrell
Val Verde	23	25	39	22	34	39	6	18	10	7.5	5.6	16	1	16	10	Val Verde
Webb	29	38	34	28	40	40	28	24	16	7.0	8.0	15	10	14	12	Webb
Willacy	13	24	45	13	42	43	29	20	9	6.9	4.9	16	3	20	13	Willacy
Zapata	24	32	36	24	46	46	49	22	0	9.4	4.1	20	0	25	0	Zapata
Zavala	14	25	51	13	49	51	17	21	6	12.3	4.9	17	0	17	13	Zavala
<b>NEW MEXICO</b>	8	39	35	6	25	30	12	16	6	8.0	6.6	16	7	14	8	<b>NEW MEXICO</b>
<b>Non-Border Counties</b>	7	41	35	4	23	26	12	15	6	8.1	6.6	16	7	14	8	<b>Non-Border Counties</b>
<b>Border Counties</b>	15	34	33	13	34	40	17	19	8	7.4	6.8	15	6	13	8	<b>Border Counties</b>
Doña Ana	19	31	34	17	35	40	16	19	8	7.3	5.0	14	4	11	5	Doña Ana
Grant	3	18	61	2	26	29	20	16	11	7.4	9.5	12	5	16	9	Grant
Hidalgo	11	35	37	11	39	51	17	26	7	10.4	13.0	11	2	11	5	Hidalgo
Luna	20	41	25	19	47	52	28	22	15	10.0	21.0	19	13	19	14	Luna
Otero	11	44	30	7	28	41	15	15	6	6.6	3.5	15	10	19	13	Otero
Sierra	7	43	32	5	32	39	25	10	10	4.0	20.0	20	11	16	5	Sierra
<b>ARIZONA</b>	13	48	30	8	19	29	9	20	6	7.0	6.7	26	8	19	7	<b>ARIZONA</b>
<b>Non-Border Counties</b>	12	53	27	8	18	28	8	20	5	6.9	6.9	30	9	20	7	<b>Non-Border Counties</b>
<b>Border Counties</b>	14	36	38	10	22	31	11	18	6	7.5	5.9	16	7	15	6	<b>Border Counties</b>
Cochise	12	28	49	9	26	39	17	19	8	6.6	6.3	15	4	16	6	Cochise
Pima	12	39	40	7	20	29	10	18	5	8.2	6.1	18	7	15	5	Pima
Santa Cruz	38	28	46	36	30	32	8	20	13	6.4	3.8	12	2	15	6	Santa Cruz
Yuma	24	35	27	22	28	35	11	18	6	5.8	5.3	14	12	13	13	Yuma
<b>CALIFORNIA</b>	26	37	39	12	19	27	9	21	7	6.2	5.4	18	5	14	6	<b>CALIFORNIA</b>
<b>Non-Border Counties</b>	27	37	39	12	20	27	9	21	7	6.2	5.4	18	5	14	6	<b>Non-Border Counties</b>
<b>Border Counties</b>	22	35	41	11	18	28	7	19	6	6.0	5.9	16	4	13	5	<b>Border Counties</b>
Imperial	32	31	39	30	29	32	14	20	12	4.9	4.7	9	9	12	13	Imperial
San Diego	22	36	41	10	17	27	7	19	6	6.0	5.9	17	4	13	5	San Diego

## Why the Southwest Border?

Strengthening Southwest Border Families is an effort that reflects the central mission of the Annie E. Casey Foundation – to improve the lives of vulnerable kids and families, with a special emphasis on those who live in the most disadvantaged places. Several years ago the Foundation began to target increased attention on the region as it recognized both the needs and the opportunities shaped by this transnational border.

As this report illustrates, the needs are great – all of the 32 counties profiled in this report have childhood poverty rates higher than the national average. The resources are also significant – historical and cultural ties going back generations link families and have produced a vibrant and tightly integrated social and economic infrastructure. As a result, the region boasts a high rate of bilingualism and many bicultural traditions.

**By partnering with local foundations, community leaders, and indigenous scholars, the Foundation is accomplishing its mission in the Southwest border region through:**

- Promoting family strengthening and family economic success, linking families to tax help and asset-building opportunities;
- Influencing scholars and policymakers through data-based advocacy;
- Leveraging new resources and promoting more private and public investments in the border region;
- Developing strategic partnerships to recruit committed champions, influential allies and informed decision-makers; and
- Addressing problems and barriers facing especially vulnerable families in tough communities.

**The Southwest border can be viewed as a bellwether for the nation. The demographic, socioeconomic and cultural shifts in urban and rural America are all part of this region's story. The region is dynamic, fast-growing, and dense, with a relatively young population, as indicated in the following statistics:**

- The region experienced a double-digit population growth rate between 1990 and 2000.
- The 2,000 mile region is both urban and rural, with over 90 percent of the border population concentrated in or near 14 sister or twin cities on both sides of the border and vast isolated areas in between.
- A full 36 percent of the Latino border population is under the age of 18 compared to only 19 percent of non-Latinos.

### **Moving Forward**

The Foundation and its partners invite you to view this report as an important first step toward broader and deeper research efforts, especially those that include local scholars and increased collaboration with Mexican researchers. It should also prompt an evidence-based dialogue with community residents and grantmakers, so that informed decisions about how to promote strategies and approaches for well-being along the border can be made.

## KIDS COUNT Contacts in the Southwest Border States

### ARIZONA

**Children's Action Alliance**  
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### NEW MEXICO

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