



Bright Spots in Welcoming and Integration

A Report by White House Task Force on New Americans

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



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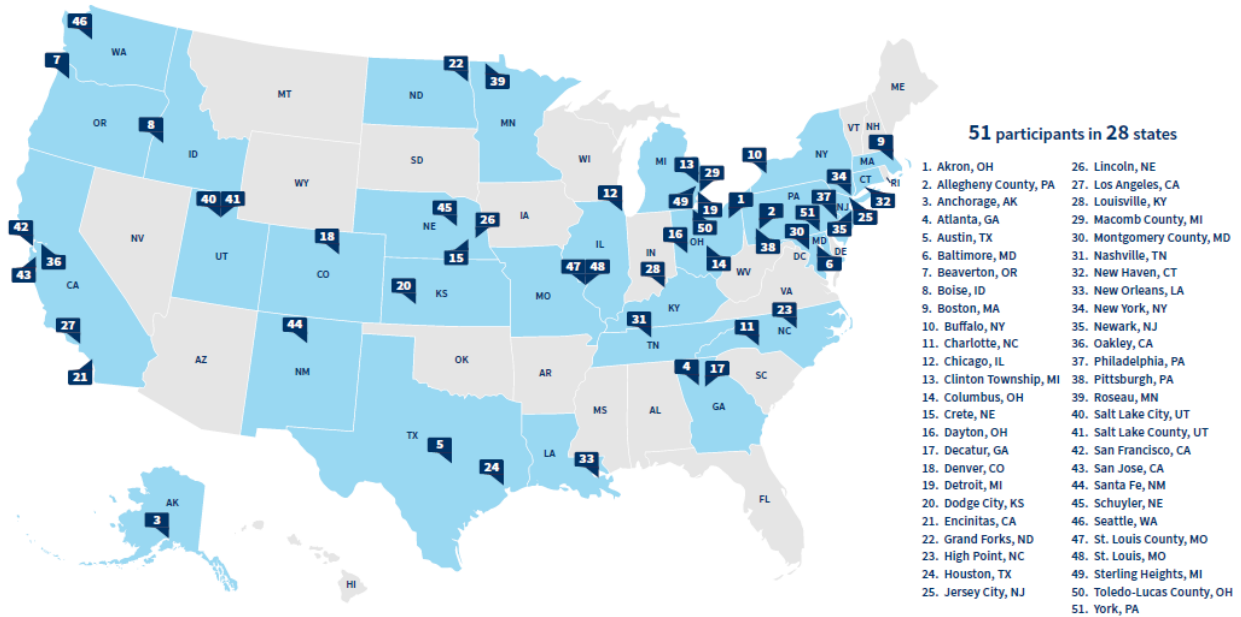
Immigrants and refugees have always been a source of our Nation's strength. By extending a welcoming hand, the United States has continually tapped new sources of economic and cultural vitality. Integrating and welcoming immigrants and refugees is the right thing to do; it's also vital to our economic future. Immigrants and refugees are entrepreneurial and more likely than U.S.-born individuals to start businesses. According to the latest estimates, one in six individuals in the U.S. workforce is foreign born. And over the next 20 years, immigrants and their children will account for 85 percent of the net growth in the U.S. labor force.

In November 2014, President Obama established the [White House Task Force on New Americans](#), a government-wide effort tasked with developing a coordinated federal strategy to better integrate immigrants and refugees into local communities and to lift up best practices at the state and local level to help immigrants and their U.S.-born neighbors connect and succeed together. Since then, the Task Force has released a [strategic action plan](#) that outlines 16 core goals and 48 recommendations to enhance civic, economic, and linguistic integration and build welcoming communities. Agencies have acted on many of these recommendations, as highlighted in our [One-Year Progress Report](#), but the federal government knows we cannot do this work alone.

Communities play a vital role in welcoming immigrants and refugees. That's why the President called on local governments—representing big cities and small towns—to commit to making their communities places that welcome all residents, through the [Building Welcoming Communities Campaign \(BWCC\)](#). In partnership with the Department of Homeland Security's U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) and [Welcoming America](#), the Administration launched the

BWCC to encourage local communities to create welcoming environments that advance integration. To date, more than 50 cities and counties have joined this effort. Working with federal agencies and national organizations, the Task Force has hosted technical assistance webinars in core areas of need identified by BWCC cities and counties and helped institutionalize relationships between BWCC participants and federal agencies.

Building Welcoming Communities Cities and Counties



At the beginning of 2016, the Task Force also launched a series of [Regional Convenings on New Americans](#) to strengthen federal-local partnerships, learn from local leaders, and deepen multisector partnerships to advance integration efforts. Working with [USCIS](#), the [White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders](#), the [White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanics](#), and BWCC cities and counties, the Task Force hosted 10 Regional Convenings that brought together more than 850 state and local leaders. Convenings took place in Los Angeles, CA; Houston, TX, Miami, FL; Atlanta, GA; San José, CA; Boston, MA; Dearborn, MI; Denver, CO; Santa Fe, NM; and Seattle, WA.

The Task Force is inspired by the innovative work taking place in communities and the deep commitment to welcoming and integration demonstrated by a broad spectrum of leaders. This *Bright Spots in Welcoming and Integration* report recognizes and celebrates local initiatives that BWCC cities and counties are actively pursuing. There is no singular approach to integration. Each community has unique circumstances and opportunities. However, we hope that communities can learn from these promising practices as they develop and implement their own integration initiatives.

BUILDING WELCOMING COMMUNITIES



President Barack Obama greets audience members after making remarks on immigration at Del Sol High School in Las Vegas, Nev., Nov. 21, 2014. (Official White House Photo by Pete Souza)

Welcoming environments help ensure successful outcomes that benefit local communities as well as our nation. While there are steps that immigrants and refugees can take to better integrate, their new communities also have a role to play. Indeed, community strategy and action are just as important to new Americans' success and help foster their growth as they learn English, navigate the job market, and become civically engaged. Like any relationship, the one between immigrants and refugees and their new communities must be a two-way process with shared opportunities and responsibilities. A growing number of communities have recognized the potential benefits of pursuing a welcoming approach, including the more than 50 BWCC cities and counties.

In addition to launching the BWCC, the Task Force has been providing participating cities and counties with additional tools and resources. Following the launch of the BWCC, the Task Force hosted the White House Building Welcoming Communities Convening in October 2015, and created a [*Roadmap to Success*](#), which provides a menu of options and helpful resources for communities to transform the BWCC principles into action. Additionally, the [Corporation for National and Community Service \(CNCS\)](#) has committed to place over 150 AmeriCorps VISTA members over three years at Catholic Charities and YMCA affiliates in approximately 40 communities to strengthen local integration efforts. Through a more than \$8.5 million partnership with the Department of Health and Human Services' Office of Refugee Resettlement, nearly 300 AmeriCorps members over the next three years will be placed at eight refugee resettlement agencies across the country to expand support for refugees, including volunteer capacity building and assisting with education, job readiness, and financial literacy training. In partnership with Public

Allies and Welcoming America, CNCS will soon launch a new Welcoming Communities AmeriCorps VISTA program that will place members in up to 10 cities or communities to support immigrant inclusion at the municipal level and provide leadership opportunities for diverse new leaders.

BWCC participants have embraced welcoming strategies across the country by assessing and addressing community needs, sharing success stories of immigrants and refugees, finding creative ways to highlight the contributions of all community members, and educating immigrants and refugees about their new community and local government.

Bright Spots in Building Welcoming Communities:

- The **City of Baltimore (MD)** has developed and will be releasing its inaugural *Welcome to Baltimore City* guide with the help of over 100 community partners. This guide is geared toward enhancing awareness about services, resources, and programs in Baltimore for new Americans.
- The **City of Boise (ID)** Department of Arts and History supported a photojournalism project on refugees, the [Stronger Shines the Light Inside Project](#). This nationally recognized work by Angie Smith gathered photographs and stories from refugee communities and will be exhibited in downtown Boise in September 2016. The project will give the community the opportunity to promote diversity and inclusion through public art.
- The **City of Columbus (OH)**, in collaboration with Us Together, Community Refugee and Immigration Services, and World Relief-Columbus, released [The Impact of Refugees in Central Ohio](#) report that outlines the positive social, cultural, and economic impact that refugees are having on their communities in central Ohio. The report surveyed over 350 families to obtain the necessary data and includes the stories of 15 immigrants who now call central Ohio home. Columbus has released and presented the report to multisector stakeholders, elected officials from all levels of government, corporate leaders, and social service agencies. Additionally, the Columbus City Council passed a resolution declaring that the city embraces diversity and welcomes refugees from all over the world. The city is also working with a coalition of Ohio leaders on a [bill](#) that would establish a State Office of New Americans.
- The **City of Dayton (OH)** recently established its [Welcome Dayton Ambassador Program](#) which is open to community residents interested in fostering a more welcoming and inclusive community. The ambassadors give presentations, network with U.S.- and foreign-born Dayton residents, share information and resources, assist with multicultural events, and contribute their time and talents to making Dayton a more immigrant-friendly community. Since launching the program in the fall of 2015, more than 75 individuals have signed up to become a Welcome Dayton Ambassador.
- The **City of Decatur (GA)** engaged hundreds of residents to create the [Better Together Community Action Plan for Equity, Inclusion, and Engagement](#). This plan has 60 action items that the newly created Better Together Advisory Board is tasked with implementing. These action items are focused on how to make Decatur a more just, welcoming, inclusive, equitable, and compassionate community for all those who live in, work in, and visit the city.

- The **City of Detroit (MI)** convened a working group of community stakeholders and resettlement agencies to develop a strategy to welcome refugees. This strategy—which includes ensuring and enhancing access to housing, job opportunities, education, transportation, and health services—is now being implemented. As of last fall, Detroit has resettled approximately 25 new refugee families.
- The **County of Lucas and City of Toledo (OH)** is focused on humanizing the stories of immigrants and refugees as a major component to building welcoming communities. Lucas County’s initiative in partnership with Toledo Local Initiatives Support Corporation, *Welcome Toledo-Lucas County (TLC)* partnered with [Spoken Toledo](#) and the local Arts Commission of Greater Toledo for an evening of migration stories. They also partnered with a popular local blog, [Love Letters to Toledo](#), on four immigrant stories for Immigrant Heritage Month. In February, *Welcome TLC* partnered with the revitalized neighborhood theatre, Ohio Theatre and Event Center, for the Toledo International Film Festival, to host a three-night celebration of international and culturally diverse films with dialogue, performing arts from around the world, and food from local ethnic and immigrant-owned restaurants.
- This fall, the **City of Philadelphia (PA)** will be launching the first annual [International Unity Cup](#), a 32-team World Cup-style soccer tournament made up of the many diverse immigrant groups across Philadelphia. The tournament is a cooperative effort between the City of Philadelphia Office of Immigrant Affairs and the Philadelphia Department of Parks and Recreation, with the purpose of celebrating the rich cultural diversity of Philadelphia through the worldwide appeal of soccer. The final championship game will take place in Citizens Bank Park, home of the Philadelphia Phillies.
- Since releasing its [Welcoming Pittsburgh Plan](#), the **City of Pittsburgh (PA)** has been implementing its 37 actionable strategies to build a city where all people have the opportunity to achieve meaningful success. It launched [30 Neighbors-30 Days](#), a storytelling campaign to raise awareness of the city’s growing diversity and its positive impact on communities, and partnered with the Greater Pittsburgh Arts Council’s Office of Public Art to host language walking tours for their immigrant and refugee communities. Additionally, the city partnered with local biking groups and nonprofits to connect immigrants to new opportunities by holding a [Welcoming Bike Ride](#) for immigrant, refugee, and Latino communities.
- The **City of York (PA)** in collaboration with YMCA of York County hosted its first Welcoming Week, which included a two-day event with an international dinner celebration and a moderated discussion on innovative practices in becoming a welcoming community. The city also held a Cultural Lenses workshop with YMCA USA, which enhanced cross-cultural understanding, relationships, and engagement among all community members. Recently, the city also collaborated with CASA, the largest immigrant rights organization in Maryland and Virginia, to provide a one-stop center for new Americans in their York City Hall offices two days a week to assist immigrants and refugees. The collaboration provides systems navigation and referrals, legal consultations, and assistance applying for naturalization.

STRENGTHENING EXISTING PATHWAYS TO NATURALIZATION AND PROMOTING CIVIC ENGAGEMENT



President Barack Obama participates in a naturalization ceremony at the National Archives in Washington, D.C., Dec. 15, 2015. Next to the President from left, Deputy Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas, Department of Homeland Security; Leon Rodriguez, Director, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services; Chief Judge Richard Roberts, U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia, and David S. Ferriero, Archivist of the United States. (Official White House Photo by Pete Souza)

The benefits of citizenship run deep for individuals and communities, and for the nation as a whole. In recognition of the importance of citizenship, the White House launched its [Stand Stronger Citizenship Awareness Campaign](#) in September 2015, with the help of many partners, including local governments. Cities and counties across the country have recognized the importance of citizenship and its ability to play a direct role in the successful integration of immigrants and refugees in the United States. Citizenship also creates a sense of belonging and provides for equal treatment under the law and the ability to vote, among other important rights. With approximately 8.8 million permanent residents living in the United States who are eligible to apply for naturalization, many localities have strengthened and expanded support for citizenship promotion and assistance efforts.

While several BWCC participants have [formal partnerships](#) with [USCIS](#) to promote [citizenship education and awareness](#), others are working with USCIS and other local partners on a more informal basis to reach out and assist aspiring citizens. Through [resources](#) such as localized training offerings for newcomers, the establishment of [citizenship corners](#) or other dedicated information spaces in libraries and other community venues, mini-grants to community organizations, and service referrals, BWCC participants are working to address many of the barriers immigrants often cite for not applying for naturalization and seeking to promote engagement in civic institutions.

Bright Spots in Naturalization and Civic Engagement:

- The **City of Baltimore (MD)** helped to establish the [Baltimore Citizenship Coalition](#), bringing together naturalization service providers to increase collaboration and resources. This coalition includes a local community development financial institution (CDFI) that assists with lending services, allowing service providers to refer clients to them and helping more individuals pay application fees. This coalition has also developed educational materials in six languages.
- For years, the **City of Columbus (OH)** has been working to welcome immigrants and refugees into their communities, including through civic orientation workshops and bilingual classes at community centers, churches, schools, and apartment complexes. The city partners with a refugee resettlement organization to hold civic orientation and citizenship classes, and also recently began including naturalization ceremonies as a part of community events, such as the Welcome Week Luncheon and International Festival, so that increasing numbers of community members are aware of the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.
- The **City and County of Denver (CO)** is working to connect immigrants and refugees with reliable and legitimate legal assistance and increase organizational capacity to meet the need. In partnership with CLINIC and the Colorado Immigrant Rights Coalition, Denver is holding sessions to educate service providers about the U.S. Department of Justice's [Recognition and Accreditation Program](#), which allows entities to represent individuals in immigration courts and with USCIS, so that these organizations can assist individuals with immigration claims, and conduct related trainings. Denver's work also includes efforts to regulate the unlawful practice of immigration law, such as *notario* fraud, and raise awareness about avoiding immigration scams.
- The **City of Los Angeles (CA)** partnered with more than 20 direct service providers, 10 ethnic media partners, and several local elected officials to launch two major citizenship campaigns—[Step Forward LA](#) and [¡Protégete!...¡Ciudadanía Ya!](#)—that target Asian American and Pacific Islander and Latino communities locally. The city also hosted a mega citizenship workshop and resource fair in April 2016, reaching more than 3,000 people, of whom over 1,000 received direct citizenship assistance.
- The **City of New Orleans (LA)** created a [Civic Leadership Academy](#) through which community members can learn how city government operates. This semi-annual eight-week academy provides tours, hands-on demonstrations, and presentations that provide participants with the tools to help advance neighborhood and resident quality of life.
- The **City of New York (NY)** is working to increase access to and awareness of citizenship through [NYCitizenship](#), which provides citizenship information and resources; free, safe legal help with citizenship applications; and free, confidential financial counseling—all at select public library branches. This program builds on a partnership between USCIS, NYC, and the city's three public library systems to establish New Americans Corners in all 217 library branches. The city also recently announced findings from new research by the Urban Institute, supported by Citi Community Development and the NYC Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs, which identified the powerful economic effects of naturalization on

eligible individuals as well as on their comment communities and economies. Additionally, the city coordinates free, community-based English conversation classes using the Emmy Award winning educational TV series [We Are New York](#) to help adult immigrants learn English and learn about city services.

- Through [Welcoming Pittsburgh](#), the **City of Pittsburgh (PA)** hosts a minimum of two Citizenship Days, which include free legal assistance, a presentation regarding naturalization interview preparation, and a service provider fair with English as a Second Language (ESL), citizenship, and financial empowerment resources for those interested in learning about citizenship. Welcoming Pittsburgh also partnered with the Pittsburgh Pirates and USCIS to host it's [first-ever naturalization ceremony](#) at PNC Park, allowing the 20 new citizens to attend a baseball game with family members following the ceremony.
- The **City and County of San Francisco (CA)** [announced](#) the additional funding of \$10 million for new Americans, strengthening citizenship and job training programs and launching a new partnership with the San Francisco Labor Council and SEIU Local 87. The We Rise SF Labor Center for Immigrant Justice also provides wraparound social services for immigrant union workers and their families, helping them gain access to a range of legal services, including naturalization.
- In 2016, the **City of Seattle (WA)** launched [Seattle Votes](#) to better understand the barriers to civic engagement faced by immigrants who are eligible to vote. This first-of-its-kind effort is reaching community members in a survey available in 13 languages. The survey results will be released with policy and program recommendations later this year.

SUPPORTING SKILL DEVELOPMENT, FOSTERING ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND SMALL-BUSINESS GROWTH, AND PROTECTING NEW AMERICAN WORKERS



President Obama, Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg, and three entrepreneurs—Mai Medhat, Jean Bosco Nzeyimana, and Mariana Costa Checa—sit on a panel at the Global Entrepreneurship Summit, held on June 22–24, 2016 at Stanford University in Palo Alto, California. (Photo by U.S. Department of State)

New Americans contribute significantly at all levels of our economy. While individuals who are foreign-born make up 13 percent of the U.S. population, they comprise 17 percent of the U.S. labor force. Immigrants and refugees are also more likely than U.S.-born individuals to start businesses. Like U.S.-born residents, immigrants and refugees aspire to obtain economic security and sustainability for themselves and their families. Through the efforts of several Task Force members, the Obama Administration is promoting the economic integration of immigrants and refugees. These efforts involve ensuring that receiving communities' workforce systems are equipped with resources and tools to bolster skill development, empowering immigrants and refugees by providing the tools to build and grow sustainable small businesses and unlock the doors to homeownership, and working with employers and immigrant workers so that they understand their workplace responsibilities and rights. Local communities around the country are also working to unlock the economic potential of new Americans.

The Task Force continues to support communities interested in promoting entrepreneurship among immigrant communities through the Small Business Administration's (SBA) [Made It In America](#) campaign and local workshops hosted by SBA in partnership with local governments, chambers of commerce, and community organizations. The Departments of Education, Labor, and Health and Human Services are also finalizing key regulations to implement the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, and the Department of Labor will release additional technical assistance guidance to provide local communities with best practices for workforce systems to better serve immigrants and refugees in the coming months. Additionally, these agencies partnered with the Task Force to

host the [National Skills and Credential Academy](#), a peer-learning forum that brought together 18 communities from 17 states who are seeking to facilitate licensing and credentialing for skilled immigrants.

Cities and counties participating in the BWCC are promoting entrepreneurship among immigrant and refugee communities, connecting new Americans with business opportunities to grow their small businesses, encouraging business leaders to support their immigrant and refugee workers, and tackling barriers skilled immigrants face in licensing and credentialing.

Bright Spots in Economic Integration:

- The **City of Boston (MA)** recently formed a [Task Force on Foreign-Trained Professionals](#) that is exploring how city government can support residents who have skills, credentials, and higher education from outside the country. This task force seeks to maximize the potential of immigrants and refugees with training and education obtained abroad.
- The **City of Charlotte's (NC)** Immigrant Integration Implementation Team is focused on executing the recommendations of its [Immigrant Integration Task Force](#). A key focus is engaging business leaders, educators, and the workforce system to strengthen the participation of immigrants and refugees in various worker training and small business efforts. For example, the city hosted a convening that showcased local companies with apprenticeship programs to discuss how to incorporate immigrant workers in these programs. The city also held an International Entrepreneur and Small Business Owners meeting with workshops and informational sessions focused on starting or growing businesses and providing networking opportunities.
- The **City of Chicago (IL)** has established the New Americans Small Business Series, which holds quarterly events to foster small business growth in immigrant communities in Chicago by providing temporary one-stop-shops in community settings that provide technical assistance to potential immigrant small business owners, including advice on navigating the licensing process, compliance with tax laws, and accessing capital.
- The **City of Detroit (MI)** is working to connect immigrant communities to existing programs and funding opportunities available to small businesses and entrepreneurs. For example, the Detroit Economic Growth Corporation has been working with Global Detroit and other community groups to educate immigrant communities about [Motor City Match](#), which connects new and expanding businesses with quality real estate opportunities, providing them with funding and tools to fuel the city's economy. This outreach has helped increase the number of applicants from immigrant communities, including, for example, members of the Bangladeshi community in "Banglatown" and members of the Hispanic community in "Mexicantown."
- Through the Global Louisville Initiative, the **City of Louisville (KY)** created a regional working group comprised of Louisville Metro Government, Greater Louisville, Inc. (Chamber of Commerce), and workforce, education, and immigrant and refugee service organizations to focus on skills and credentials for underemployed and unemployed skilled immigrant professionals. The group is focused on developing an asset map of services

provided by employment and job-readiness programs, organizing a “brain waste” summit, and piloting a program to increase participation rates of Latinos working toward health careers.

- In 2016, the **County of Salt Lake (UT)** launched the [Welcoming Salt Lake Initiative](#), which provides the platform to bring together business, government and community leaders to develop and implement a strategy designed (1) to make Salt Lake more attractive, welcoming and globally competitive for international talent and business and (2) to harness the economic potential of new Americans residing in the region. As a part of its efforts, the initiative is developing a Welcoming Salt Lake Certification Program to encourage, support, and recognize businesses, employers and government agencies for being welcoming. As part of the certification program, Welcoming Salt Lake is engaging and supporting employers by providing tools and resources to help create more welcoming workplaces. Through this partnership, Welcoming Salt Lake is working with employers to pilot onsite ESL classes for New American employees.
- The **City of San José (CA)** is working to support local immigrant and refugee entrepreneurs and engage the larger business community. Its Office of Immigrant Affairs ([OIA](#)) partnered with the Office of Economic Development to host 10 small business development workshops geared toward connecting immigrant and refugee entrepreneurs to local opportunities. Additionally, the OIA recently hosted a [Silicon Valley Business Roundtable](#) to educate local areas businesses about the economic contributions of immigrants and share opportunities for these businesses to support local integration efforts.
- The **City of St. Louis and St. Louis County** have long prioritized developing career pathways for high skilled immigrants and refugees to reach their full potential. In collaboration with the International Institute of St. Louis (IISTL), the City and County are helping to provide services to more than 7,500 immigrants from 80 countries annually, including English classes, refugee resettlement, job placement, business development, and career path services. Most recently, IISTL launched the International Institute Center for Career Advancement (IICCA), which serves as St. Louis' one-stop case management center for English and training services to refugees with professional backgrounds and skills. The IICCA offers a classroom curriculum for immigrants who hold bachelor's degrees or higher, seminars, trainings, consulting, and referral services. They are also engaging with public and private education institutions, working with St. Louis Community College, American Job Centers, and WIB of St. Louis County, and the St. Louis Mosaic Project.

EXPANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR LINGUISTIC INTEGRATION AND EDUCATION



President Barack Obama greets students after he delivers remarks to students in the gymnasium at the Islamic Society of Baltimore mosque and Al-Rahmah School in Baltimore, Maryland, Feb. 3, 2016. (Official White House Photo by Pete Souza)

English-language acquisition is vitally important for new Americans to integrate successfully into their communities. Though some new Americans come to the United States fluent in English, many do not. Even those who are fluent in the English language may find their skills faltering in unfamiliar or intimidating situations, such as in courtroom proceedings, when receiving a health care diagnosis, or in contacts with local, state, or federal government. Understanding and communicating in English has a significant impact on the ability of an immigrant or refugee to find a job, advance in a career, and become civically active in his or her community. Therefore, one of the most effective ways to help immigrants and refugees integrate is to support their acquisition of English language skills while also valuing and recognizing the importance of strengthening and maintaining native language proficiency. Valuing both-language development is especially important in young children, as research indicates that supporting native language development has many benefits.

Task Force members are striving to ensure that English learners have high-quality learning experiences, which include instruction that more broadly facilitates English language acquisition alongside learning and development, educators who are creating welcoming learning environments, and government at all levels providing in-language information and services. To assist educators and others who work directly with immigrant students—including asylees and refugees—and their families, the Department of Education developed a Newcomer Tool Kit that provides (1) discussion of topics relevant to understanding, supporting, and engaging newcomer students and their families; (2) tools, strategies, and examples of classroom and schoolwide practices in action, along with specific professional learning activities for use in staff meetings or professional learning

communities; and (3) selected resources for further information and assistance, most of which are available online at no cost. Recently, the U.S. Departments of Health and Human Services and Education issued a [policy statement](#) on more effectively supporting dual language learners in early childhood programs and a new dual language learner Electronic Toolkit for programs, early educators, child care providers, and families. Additionally, the General Services Administration created a portal to share Federal resources related to language access so that communities can create effective language plans without reinventing the wheel; these include [guiding policy](#), [tools and templates](#), and [instructional videos](#) on language services.

Local communities nationwide are working to ensure language needs are being met by leveraging partnerships with educational institutions, community-based and faith-based organizations, places of employment, and digital platforms. Additionally, communities are conducting language-needs assessments and enhancing strategies to provide effective services and resources in-language through language access plans.

Bright Spots on Linguistic Integration and Education:

- The **County of Allegheny (PA)** completed a department-wide assessment of its language needs. As a result, the county Department of Human Services shifted its strategies to provide more efficient and effective services and enhance linguistic integration through streamlined, accessible, immigrant-friendly services. These include securing interpretation and translation contracts department-wide through a competitive process, targeting staff training to ensure effective use of interpretation services, and ensuring that all county-contracted service providers have access to these services at the same rate as the department.
- The **City of Atlanta (GA)**, in partnership with Atlanta Information Management, organized the third Atlanta ConnectHome (HUD) event through which 55 families in immigrant-dense neighborhoods received free tablets and Internet service for 12 months, along with education on how to use technology to improve their educational outcomes. Atlanta also received an Innovation Grant of \$15,000 from the [DollarWise Financial Literacy Campaign](#), an educational initiative of the U.S. Conference of Mayors. This grant was used to integrate financial literacy into Atlanta Public Schools' adult ESL programs. Participants learned about household expenses, shopping, budgeting, banking, goal setting, credit and debit, loans, saving, and fraud.
- In February, the **City of Buffalo (NY)** adopted a new [Language Access Plan](#) for the Buffalo Police Department (BPD). The plan is based on a proposal submitted by various Buffalo ethnic communities, and represents a collaborative effort between the city and its growing immigrant communities. It establishes BPD policies to utilize a number of interpretation services, including a language line telephone service, bilingual BPD members, civilian interpreters, and professional contract services, including in-person interpretation. The Language Access Plan is a result of collaboration among Buffalo's ethnic communities, the City's Office of New Americans, and the BPD that dates back to November 2014.
- The **City of Dayton (OH)** launched its [Welcome Belmont Pilot Program](#) at Belmont High School, the most diverse school in its public school system where 17 languages are spoken. This program is geared toward assisting with the successful integration of new American

students into academic and social life by pairing 10 immigrant students and 10 U.S.-born students as cultural collaborators with a goal of creating a cultural and global environment.

- In the **City of Houston (TX)**, the Office of International Communities implemented [iSpeak Houston](#), the city's first language access plan, making it easier for non-English speakers to communicate with city employees when accessing city services. Through iSpeak Houston, the city has also trained city staff on how to assist non-English speakers and developed the city's first 24-hour language line for employees to use.
- In the **City of Lincoln (NE)**, Lincoln Public Schools (LPS) are focused on creating welcoming schools through a variety of programs and initiatives. For example, LPS hosts conversations with Arabic-speaking families to bridge the gap between the schools and families. LPS also prioritized the establishment of a [mental health care program](#) for refugee children in the 2015–2016 school year. Using more than \$150,000 in federal funding for this important effort, LPS hired several counselors with training on how to serve refugee children suffering from trauma.
- The **County of Macomb (MI)** is using Video Remote Interpreting Services in order to allow for convenient, on-demand language access services through live Internet video connection. This tool enhances the quality of interpretation by allowing the interpreter to read social cues and body language, and establish a rapport, among other things. The county is also enhancing language access by installing multi-language signage throughout county buildings and translating their brochures into numerous languages. Macomb has also prioritized multi-language-speaking employees, including Arabic, and works with their English language literacy partners to provide connections and information regarding literacy services locally.
- **Montgomery County (MD)** has increased its investment and support of adult ESL services by providing an additional \$100,000 for the Montgomery Coalition for Adult English Literacy to provide grants to organizations offering adult ESL classes, literacy services, and training and technical assistance.
- The **City of New Orleans (LA)** has made language access a priority in order to effectively serve limited-English proficient (LEP) individuals by making numerous improvements across government agencies. Some of these include partnering with Loyola's Certificate Program in Interpretation to offer translation and interpretation services to city departments, increasing usage of their information line in non-English languages by 21 percent in two years, creating a directory of over 40 city employees who volunteer as translators in a total of 18 languages, training emergency medical services staff in Spanish, providing online and printed information for emergency preparedness in Spanish and Vietnamese, and offering simultaneous interpretation of its annual budget community meetings in Spanish and Vietnamese. The New Orleans Police Department is also building its [first-ever team](#) of certified bilingual officers.
- The **City of Philadelphia (PA)** launched Language Access Philly, a city-wide program designed to bridge language access gaps by making it easier for LEP residents to obtain public information and services, which was established by a Mayoral Executive Order. This

program establishes a system to implement Philadelphia Home Rule Charter (new Charter Section 8-600 passed in 2015), which requires all city agencies, departments, offices, and commissions, whether within the city administration under the authority of the Mayor or not, to prepare and implement plans that promote access and participation with city services for LEP populations. Additionally, Philadelphia's [Office of Immigrant and Multicultural Affairs](#) is currently implementing the Immigration Assistance Services legislation, which regulates the practice of immigration service providers, in order to provide immigrants and refugees with information and knowledge to protect them from scams.