



Building Capacity for ESL, Legal Services, and Citizenship



A GUIDE FOR PHILANTHROPIC INVESTMENT AND PARTNERSHIPS

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GRANTMAKERS
CONCERNED
WITH IMMIGRANTS
AND REFUGEES

Commissioned by Zellerbach Family Foundation

About GCIR

Since 1990, Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees (GCIR) has been providing resources that foundations need to address the challenges facing newcomers and their host communities and to strengthen society as a whole. Our mission is to influence the philanthropic field to advance the contributions and address the needs of the country's growing and increasingly diverse immigrant and refugee populations.

As a nationwide network, GCIR involves grantmakers who work on a range of community issues and who fund in traditional immigrant strongholds and new immigrant destinations. Demographic trends, combined with today's complex social, economic, and political environments, make understanding immigration-related issues critically important to all grantmakers, regardless of their geographic focus or issue priorities. In response, GCIR helps funders connect immigrant issues to their funding priorities by serving as a forum to:

- **Learn** about current issues through in-depth analyses, research reports, and online data, tools, and resources tailored specifically for grantmakers
- **Connect** with other funders through programs, briefings, and conferences that examine major immigration trends and how they impact diverse communities
- **Collaborate** with grantmaking colleagues on strategies that strengthen immigrant-related funding locally and nationally

For more information, visit www.gcir.org or call 707.824.4374.

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Additional resources on the topics discussed in this guide are available online at www.gcir.org.



1 The Need for Philanthropic Investment and Partnerships



JEFF CHENOWETH

Introduction

To continue thriving, American communities must be intentional about weaving newcomers into the fabric of society. Local and regional foundations are well-positioned to contribute to—and play a leadership role in—such efforts, and the time is ripe for them to do so.

Today, more than 8.5 million lawful permanent residents (LPRs) are eligible to become citizens, and another 2.8 million will soon gain eligibility.¹ In addition, potentially up to 12 million undocumented immigrants may come into the pipeline in the future, should Congress adopt federal immigration legislation that creates a pathway to legalization and U.S. citizenship for them.

The integration of immigrants and refugees reaps many benefits for local communities and U.S. society as a whole. English acquisition, for example, increases immigrants' earnings and tax payments, while naturalization strengthens the ties that immigrants have to their communities and increases opportunities for them to participate in and contribute to the democratic process.

In today's social, economic, and political environment, immigrant integration cannot happen without investing in a strong infrastructure of services, including English instruction, legal services, naturalization outreach and assistance, and civic participation. The need for these services far exceeds the available supply in virtually every community across the country, from regions that have long had a large foreign-born population to areas that have only seen relatively recent increases.

The profile of today's sizable immigrant population underscores the need to expand services. Fifty-five percent of LPRs need to improve their English skills to pass the citizenship test, and a similar percentage of undocumented immigrants will need to increase their English proficiency to take advantage of any future opportunity to legalize their status.² Moreover, 24 percent of naturalization-eligible immigrants live below 100 percent of the federal poverty threshold, and 38 percent have less than a high-school education.³

About This Guide

The field of immigrant civic integration offers numerous and wide-ranging funding opportunities for foundations in traditional immigrant strongholds and those working in new immigrant destinations.

Grantmakers can make a critical difference in strengthening the immigrant integration infrastructure in communities across the country. A stronger infrastructure will, in turn, lay the groundwork for cohesive immigrant integration policies at the local, state, and federal levels.

Researched and written specifically for funders, this guide identifies barriers to and opportunities for building and strengthening an immigrant civic integration infrastructure in local communities. The guide's content was designed to be relevant to funders who are new to immigrant integration as well as those with significant experience in this field. Each chapter lays out steps for mounting a deliberate strategy to promote immigrant civic integration and strengthen the broader society.

- **“Map Community Needs and Resources”** provides an overview of how foundations might begin: by identifying community needs and resources and assessing challenges and opportunities for immigrant integration. This chapter is most relevant to funders who need to lay the groundwork for funding in this field.

Meet the Need Now, Prepare for the Future

Anticipating the prospect of federal immigration reform in 2007, GCIR embarked on an effort to produce a guide to inform a coordinated philanthropic response to the implementation of large-scale legalization that would have provided upwards of 12 million undocumented immigrants with the opportunity to earn legal status and work toward U.S. citizenship. Broad immigration reform did not come to fruition then, and it now appears unlikely for at least a few years. The delay, however, gives funders and communities time to build the capacity needed to respond to any future reform measures, including incremental ones that may grant earned legal status to specific populations such as agricultural workers and college-age students. Recognizing the need to prepare for such reform, this guide identifies areas where capacity building is needed.

As importantly, however, the guide is a timely and relevant resource for addressing immediate needs: helping millions of LPRs learn English, become U.S. citizens, and participate fully in civic life. Doing so through philanthropic collaboration and coordination with other sectors will increase capacity to assist immigrants who are currently or will soon become eligible for U.S. citizenship—while putting in place a stronger infrastructure to address the needs of undocumented immigrants should a path to earned legal status be granted to them in the future.

¹ Passel, Jeffrey S. 2007. *Growing Share of Immigrants Choosing Naturalization*. Washington, D.C.: Pew Hispanic Center. Appendix B, Table 6, 29.

² McHugh, Margie, Julia Gelatt, and Michael Fix. 2007. *Adult English Language Instruction in the United States: Determining Need and Investing Wisely*. Washington, DC: Migration Policy Institute. Federal immigration reform legislation proposed in 2007 that would have created a pathway to earned legal status for undocumented immigrants required a level of English proficiency similar to what is required in the naturalization process.

³ Passel, Jeffrey S. 2007. *Growing Share of Immigrants Choosing Naturalization*. Washington, D.C.: Pew Hispanic Center.

- **“Increase English Proficiency”** describes high-quality, ESL programs and discusses strategies for how foundations can support improved and expanded English acquisition programs in their communities. Its content is useful for those considering investing in demonstration projects that apply promising practices or in broader efforts to improve how state and local adult education systems provide English instruction.
- **“Pave the Path to Citizenship”** provides an overview of the citizenship application process, describes the barriers and challenges, delineates the elements of good naturalization programs, and recommends strategies for foundations wishing to support citizenship-related efforts.⁴ This chapter not only orients newer funders but offers experienced ones new insights on naturalization issues and funding strategies.
- **“Collaborate for Leverage, Influence, and Impact”** focuses on funder collaboration as a key strategy for increasing the availability of English instruction, legal services, and efforts to promote naturalization. This section discusses the pros and cons of collaboration and the components of various local and regional collaborative grantmaking models. It also provides a road map for developing funding collaboratives.

English acquisition is central to reducing poverty, improving job opportunities among immigrants, and increasing civic participation.

As a complement to this guide, www.gcir.org offers a wide range of additional resources, including websites and research reports, to guide community assessment efforts, as well as grantmaking in the areas of English acquisition, legal services, and naturalization. These resources are useful for funders wishing to delve deeper into a specific issue, identify trends, or learn more about the field.

Foundations can begin exploring funding opportunities in this field where it makes the most sense for their institutions and communities. In pursuing a grantmaking strategy, they may want to consider capacity-building work through the integration lens of mutual responsibility and mutual benefits. How well communities integrate immigrants has far-reaching implications for—and is inextricably linked to—their current and future vitality.

⁴ This handbook does not provide models on immigrant civic and electoral participation because such models have been featured in other GCIR publications. See *New Americans Vote! Advancing Social Change in Strengthening U.S. Democracy* (2006), *Investing in Our Communities: Strategies for Immigrant Integration* (2006), and *Pursuing Democracy's Promise: Newcomer Civic Participation in America* (2004).

2 Map Community Needs and Resources

Having a solid understanding of the characteristics of immigrant populations—from who they are and where they came from to their immigration status and how well they speak English—is fundamental to any effort to promote immigrant integration. Equally important is assessing the broader community’s perceptions of immigrants and identifying community resources and key stakeholders in the nonprofit, public, and private sectors that can contribute to the immigrant integration process. Information on the expertise, capacity, and interest of these stakeholders can help funders determine possible partners for a wide range of efforts to help newcomers become part of the social, economic, and civic fabric of their community.

This chapter provides an overview of how foundations might proceed with mapping community needs and resources and assessing challenges and opportunities for immigrant integration.

Conduct a Demographic Analysis

A good demographic analysis of immigrants in the region will help foundations understand the needs, strengths, challenges, and opportunities facing immigrants in their communities. Depending on the goals and resources, this analysis can be simple, e.g., a basic review of Census data augmented by interviews with a handful of stakeholders, or it can provide a much broader and deeper examination of the impact of immigration on local communities. Demographic analysis can be done strictly to inform the grantmaking strategies of one foundation. However, such analysis is typically disseminated widely to help other key actors in their communities—policymakers, business and nonprofit leaders, and journalists—understand the economic and social impact of recent newcomer population growth and why it is important for them to play a role in immigrant integration.

At a minimum, funders interested in promoting immigrant integration should conduct basic demographic research to identify characteristics of the newcomer

community that they are seeking to integrate. This analysis should include information about:

- The total number of foreign-born residents in the target geographic area, broken down by country of origin and/or ethnicity, and how this population has changed over a period of time.
- A geographic mapping of the immigrant population and where these individuals and families reside in the community.
- The demographic characteristics of the primary immigrant groups in the community, e.g., ethnicity, country of origin, age, education attainment, workforce participation, poverty rate, English-language proficiency, and immigration status (i.e., naturalized, lawful permanent residents, and undocumented).
- Analysis of the characteristics of children of immigrants, who often have a different immigration or citizenship status from their parents and are more likely to be acculturated into U.S. society.
- If available, information about immigrants’ impact on the regional economy. This information would be especially helpful for funders interested in addressing poverty and economic development issues.

Because immigrant communities are usually very diverse, any meaningful quantitative analysis requires disaggregating data and analyzing the information by country of origin and other categories. For instance, there are significant differences in immigration patterns, education attainment, and English proficiency among Asian immigrants. Some, such as Vietnamese and Hmong immigrants, came as refugees to escape wars or political oppression, while other Asians came primarily as economic migrants seeking better education or job opportunities. Even when immigrants share the same



language, as those from Latin American nations, there are significant differences in the conditions of their native countries that led to them to migrate. In particular, education and economic opportunities can vary greatly depending on the country of origin, and these differences often influence newcomers’ ability to integrate.

Web-Based Resources

Most of the demographic information described above is available at the U.S. Census Bureau’s website (www.census.gov) through its *American Fact Finder* tool.¹ But the amount of data at this site can be overwhelming, making it difficult for those unfamiliar with the Census Bureau’s terminology and data set to find specific

¹ The one exception is data about the immigration status of newcomers, including information about the number of undocumented immigrants in a particular community. This latter group consists of individuals who (1) entered the country without valid documents or (2) entered legally but overstayed or violated the terms of their visas. Demographers have developed methods of estimating this population based on the Census Bureau’s Current Population Survey. But these estimates are accurate only in relatively large geographic regions (at the state or large metropolitan areas). This methodology is described in Passel, Jeffrey S. 2006. *Size and Characteristics of the Undocumented Migrant Population in U.S.* Washington D.C.: Pew Hispanic Center. Mr. Passel helped develop this methodology while at the Urban Institute.

information.² One way to make good use of this website is to start by obtaining summary information about foreign-born residents and their characteristics. This information is readily available at the city, state, or county levels.

In addition to the U.S. Census Bureau, several other organizations offer information for funders interested in learning more about the demographic characteristics of immigrants.

- Migration Policy Institute's data hub, www.migrationinformation.org/datahub, provides extensive foreign-born data at the state level.
- Sponsored by the Fannie Mae Foundation, www.dataplace.org contains data from the 1990 and 2000 Census, along with additional demographic, economic, and housing information from other sources. This site offers a number of tools to create charts, tables, and maps from demographic data available on the site, or you can upload your own data and use the various mapping tools.
- The Census Bureau's State Data Centers, www.census.gov/sdc/www/, provide detailed state and local demographic data analysis through partnerships with state universities, libraries, and public agencies. If the information you are seeking is not available, research may be commissioned for a fee.
- The Annie E. Casey Foundation's www.kidscount.org offers state- and city-level data on poverty, education, English proficiency, employment, and other indicators relating to children in immigrant families.

Other Research Options

If you are unable to obtain needed information from the web, consider the following options:

- 1 Hire a research-savvy contractor—a university researcher, graduate student or consultant—to conduct the needed research.
- 2 Collaborate with other funders that share an interest in addressing immigrant-related issues. A growing number of foundations are pooling resources to commission research to inform grantmaking. Several examples of these research projects are described in this chapter and throughout the guide. These examples show that the findings from collaborative studies often can help funders develop frameworks and strategies for more coordinated grantmaking.
- 3 Commission your own research when a more detailed analysis in specific issues areas is needed. For instance, funders interested in supporting citizenship programs should, at a minimum, have estimates of the total number of immigrants who are eligible to naturalize in their region, e.g., adults who have been lawful permanent residents for at least five years. Disaggregating Census Bureau information—by country of origin, language proficiency, education attainment, or age—provides a nuanced picture of the challenges subgroups face in preparing for the citizenship application process.³ More specific research recommendations on citizenship and English acquisition are discussed in the following chapters.

Demographic Studies of Immigrant Communities

A number of foundations have funded studies that provide their own foundations, the broader philanthropic community, and other stakeholders with information about emerging immigrant populations and how

to support their integration. These analyses range from relatively simple profiles to sophisticated demographic and economic analysis.

New Hampshire:

Ten Stories to Move a Community www.nhcf.org

Concerned about public survey results indicating that some New Hampshire residents were developing less positive attitudes toward communities of color and immigrants, the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation and the Endowment for Health decided to partner with Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees in 2007 to publish profiles of ten immigrant and refugee leaders in the state. *Immigrants and Refugees: Ten Profiles of Leadership* features the varied backgrounds of newcomers, the challenges that led them to leave their homelands, and the skills and experiences they bring to their new community. The goal of this award-winning publication was to help the philanthropic community better understand the emerging newcomer population and to illustrate the fact that people within newcomer communities are at the forefront of knowing needs and leading change. *Ten Profiles of Leadership* was released at a successful funder briefing, and subsequently, the Charitable Foundation mailed it to over 3,500 board members, donors, and prospective donors, and the Endowment disseminated the report widely at conferences, through grantmaker affinity groups, and to its board and advisory council members. The profiles permeated the community in unexpected

² For states, cities, counties, and other jurisdictions with populations larger than 65,000 residents, updated demographic data are available annually from the Bureau's American Community Survey and the decennial Census. Smaller jurisdictions need to rely on data from the decennial Census. Depending on the size of your jurisdiction and the immigrant population, demographic characteristics about newcomers may be available all the way down to the census-tract level.

³ See, e.g., Rob Paral & Associates. 2008. *Integration Potential of California's Immigrants and Their Children: New Estimates of Potential New Voters at the State, County, and Legislative District Levels*. Sebastopol, CA: Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees.

Map Community Assets and Needs

In addition to demographic research, grantmakers can fund or commission reports that detail immigrant assets and needs and map the resources and opportunities in the broader community to support immigrant integration. Community mapping and assessment can provide important baseline data that can be used by the foundation and immigrant groups to educate philanthropy and the wider community.

ways, generating kudos and requests for additional copies. The two foundations will continue working together and with other colleagues to develop a strategy for regional dissemination with the goals of informing the broader community and raising funds for immigrant-led organizations. As follow-up to *Ten Profiles of Leadership* and the funder briefing, the Carsey Institute at the University of New Hampshire produced a report on the demographic characteristics of New Hampshire's foreign-born population to further inform community discussion, planning, and response.

Arkansas: Document Newcomers' Economic Contributions
www.wrfoundation.org

Arkansas is home to one of the fastest growing immigrant populations in the United States. To help policymakers, business and nonprofit sector leaders, and educators understand demographic trends and the economic impact of the growing newcomer population, the Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation commissioned a three-volume study: *A Profile of Immigrants in Arkansas: Immigrant Workers, Families, and Their Children*. Investigators from two research institutions and two universities collaborated to write the report. Published in 2007, the study provides a demographic overview of immigrants in the state, information about their participation in the workforce, specific data about immigrant families and their children, and analysis of

newcomers' economic impact at the state and county levels. The study documents the sizable economic contributions immigrants make to Arkansas: almost three billion dollars annually to the state's economy and a positive net impact on the state budget. "One of our goals was to dispel some of the misunderstandings of how the growing immigrant community affects the state," said Bill Rahn, senior program manager at the Foundation. "The report provides information that policymakers and community leaders can use to promote newcomer integration, as well as help Arkansas adjust to and reap the benefits of this growing population." To make the report more accessible, the foundation commissioned the production of a DVD with a nine-minute video presentation of the findings. The DVD also contains stories of five immigrants and their families that puts a human face on the report's analysis and illustrates how immigration is affecting local communities.

New York: Getting the Facts Right to Help Immigrants
www.fiscalpolicy.org

Working for a Better Life: A Profile of Immigrants in the New York State Economy, a study funded by the Carnegie Corporation of New York, The New York Community Trust, and the Hagedorn Foundation, provides a detailed profile of immigrants in the State of New York. Researched and published by the Fiscal Policy Institute, the study divides the state into three regions and offers detailed information about the characteristics of immigrant residents, including their race, ethnicity, country of origin, education levels, the size of undocumented immigrant populations, English proficiency, home ownership, participation in the workforce, and economic impact on the broader community.

Several other recent studies have provided demographic analysis of ethnic groups with large immigrant populations. These include a study funded primarily by the North Carolina Bankers Association that examined the economic impact of the growing

Hispanic population on the state,⁴ and a local study, supported by the Hagedorn Foundation, that analyzed the growth of the Hispanic population in two Long Island counties and the effect on the local economy.⁵ Others, such as the Community Foundation for the National Capital Region, have looked at specific population segments, e.g., day laborers, or specific issues, e.g., workforce English.⁶ Funder collaboratives have been an important source of such studies. The Four Freedoms Fund, The New York Community Trust, and other pooled grantmaking initiatives have published practical studies to guide their funding and to inform the efforts of other stakeholders. See the chapter on funder collaboration for more information.

Identify Stakeholders and Assess Current Capacity and Opportunities to Advance Immigrant Integration

Immigrant integration is a two-way process, so it is important not only to learn about the newcomers but to reach out to and build relationships with other stakeholders within both the immigrant and the broader community. These stakeholders—from service providers to government officials to foundation colleagues—can provide information that fleshes out quantitative demographic findings and help funders and others gain a better understanding of existing efforts and programs. As importantly, they can illuminate barriers and opportunities, identify other key actors and potential allies, and pinpoint strategies for engaging the broader community in the integration efforts. More than providing information, these stakeholders often become valuable sources of ongoing insight and information that funders can turn to in the future.

⁴ Kasarda, John D. & James H. Johnson. 2006. *The Economic Impact of the Hispanic Population on the State of North Carolina*. Chapel Hill, NC: Frank Hawkins Kenan Institute of Private Enterprise.

⁵ Torras, Mariano & Curt Skinner. 2007. *The Economic Impact of the Hispanic Population on Long Island, New York*. Port Washington, NY: the Hagedorn Foundation.

⁶ Community Foundation for the National Capital Region. 2006. *Workforce English*. Washington, DC: Community Foundation for the National Capital Region.

Consult with Key Stakeholders

Identifying a manageable set of interviewees can be challenging. Whereas previous waves of immigrants depended largely on organizations in their ethnic or religious community to help with their transition, immigrants today interact with many institutions that can facilitate their integration. It is important to seek out a range of viewpoints and informants who can speak to the experience of the full array of immigrants – various nationality and ethnic groups, but also youth and elders, women and girls, LGBT⁷ immigrants, and more. Below is a list of organizations and individuals who could provide information to inform grantmaking:

- Immigrant or ethnic organizations, including mutual aid associations and coalitions.
- Immigrant community, civic, and business leaders.
- Public and private agencies that help settle or provide services to immigrants and refugees.
- Worker centers or unions that have sizable immigrant memberships.
- Faith leaders whose congregations or organizations have large numbers of immigrants.
- Ethnic media outlets, including smaller radio stations and community newspapers.
- Adult education service providers (e.g., community colleges).
- Libraries and community centers that offer ESL or citizenship courses.
- K-12 public school officials who oversee schools or programs serving immigrant children and other family members.
- Legal services programs and immigration law attorneys serving low-income populations.
- Businesses or business leaders who benefit from having immigrants in the local workforce.
- Local U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services offices.

⁷ Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender.

Although local conditions vary, questions that most funders will want to pose and consider include:

- Which actors—in both the immigrant and the receiving community—are interested in helping to integrate newcomers? Who is currently doing this work, and who are potential allies?
- What do the primary stakeholders see as the most pressing needs in response to the growth of the immigrant population?
- What immigrant integration programs are available, and what challenges are associated with existing programs?
- Which programs engage the receiving community in their immigrant integration work? What are additional ways for receiving community members to become involved?
- What are existing sources of funding for these programs? Might some of these funders have an interest in partnering with another foundation?
- Which community needs and issues are not being addressed by existing programs? Beyond expanding services, what are other opportunities for funders to help advance immigrant integration?
- What is the extent of collaboration among the key actors? Are there ways to facilitate better coordination?
- Are there well-regarded organizations that can lead efforts to increase English acquisition, naturalization, and immigrant civic participation? What is their current capacity to engage in this area of work, and can it be significantly increased with additional funding?
- What strategic opportunities exist or are on the horizon that additional funding might capitalize?

Complement and Leverage Funding Resources

In almost every community, including localities that have only recently experienced large immigrant population increases, there are existing programs that help immigrants integrate into the community. For example, adult-education providers or community colleges may offer ESL, citizenship, and other adult basic education classes to newcomers. Similarly, many states and localities provide funding to community-based organizations for a range of services to help immigrants transition to the United States.

Funders entering this arena should consider how they can complement, leverage, and build upon existing funding. By positioning their funding to expand what is currently available or to address gaps and unmet needs, new funders can add significant value, amplifying their own and others' investments.

3 Increase English Proficiency

Introduction

For new immigrants, learning English is a critical step to fulfilling their aspirations for coming to the United States. English proficiency is an important prerequisite to many civic engagement activities—from passing the citizenship test to working with neighbors to address community concerns. It helps newcomers secure higher-paying jobs, better educational opportunities, and a brighter future for their children and family members. It also helps them navigate the challenges of living in the United States, including learning about and understanding U.S. customs and values.

Helping immigrants learn English also has many benefits to the larger society. English acquisition allows immigrants to become more economically productive. It raises their income, increases their tax payments, and improves their capacity to address this country's increasing demand for skilled workers. When immigrants can communicate with their co-workers, children's teachers, neighbors, and government agencies, they are likely to be more self-sufficient and take a more active part in community life.

Immigrant communities are diverse, and large numbers of newcomers arrive with high levels of education and good English skills. But nationally, the majority of recent immigrants have only limited to moderate English skills, and their formal education usually consists of a high-school diploma or less.¹ While many people assume that immigrants can learn English simply through daily life activities, education experts estimate that limited-English proficient (LEP) adults generally need between 500 and 1,000 hours of instruction before they master basic English verbal and literacy skills; those with limited education or literacy skills in their native language are likely to need additional instruction.²

As described in Chapter One, current resources fall woefully short of meeting the high demand for English classes. State-administered English as a Second Language (ESL) programs serve only a fraction of the estimated 12.4 million LEP adults who need

English acquisition is not only a prerequisite to citizenship and civic engagement, but is critical to improving immigrants' income, educational attainment, and ability to access health and human services. Helping newcomers learn English is fundamental to advancing immigrant integration.



language instruction.³ The underfunding of ESL programs means that large numbers of immigrant adults who wish to learn English are unable to enroll in classes. In many localities, immigrants face long waiting lists and overcrowded classrooms.⁴ Of the available programs, many do not have professionally trained instructors, adequate resources for curriculum development, or computers and other technology to advance students' learning beyond the classroom.⁵

The shortage of high-quality ESL programs poses one of the most difficult challenges for foundations interested in improving the economic and social well-being of communities with sizable or growing newcomer populations. Funders who have prioritized broader goals such as better health and education outcomes may want to consider addressing ESL needs as part of their grantmaking strategy.

Given the sheer number of LEP immigrants, private philanthropy alone cannot—and should not—address the large demand for more high-quality ESL instruction. However, foundations are well-positioned to leverage increased interest in English-acquisition programs among different sectors, including policymakers, business leaders, unions, and educators. With immigrants expected to account for nearly all of the U.S. workforce growth over the next several decades, many institutions are developing job-related educational programs for newcomers. At the same time, key stakeholders within the ESL field—educators, adult literacy experts, service providers, researchers, and advocates—are increasingly collaborating to improve programs and develop projects to share promising practices and strategies.⁶ In this environment, foundations can help spur the adoption of good practices at the regional level, the development of innovative models, and policy changes to expedite the learning of English among immigrant adults.

This chapter focuses on the emerging consensus on the qualities of effective ESL programs and discusses strategies for how

¹ Asian American Justice Center. 2007. *Adult Literacy Education in Immigrant Communities: Identifying Policy and Program Priorities for Helping Newcomers Learn English*. Washington, DC: Asian American Justice Center. 6-8.

² National Center for ESL Literacy Education. 2003. *Adult English Language Instruction in the 21st Century*. Washington, DC: Center for Applied Linguistics.

³ McHugh, Margie, Julia Gelatt, and Michael Fix. 2007. *Adult English Language Instruction in the United States: Determining Need and Investing Wisely*. Washington, DC: Migration Policy Institute.

⁴ For example, a 2006 study of 184 ESL providers in 22 cities found that 57 percent maintained waiting lists. Tucker, James Thomas. 2006. *Waiting Times for Adult ESL Classes and the Impact on English Learners*. Los Angeles, CA: NALAO Educational Fund. The National Council of State Directors of Adult Education estimates that as of January 2007, there may be as many as 125,000 students on waiting lists for adult-education classes, including ESL programs.

⁵ See generally National Center for ESL Literacy Education. 2003. *Adult English Language Instruction in the 21st Century*. Washington, DC: Center for Applied Linguistics.

⁶ Asian American Justice Center, 2007, 22-34.

foundations can enhance and expand English-acquisition programs in their communities. Preparing immigrants for the English portion of the citizenship test is discussed in the following chapter on naturalization.⁷

Emerging Consensus on Promising ESL Practices

With limited funding, most adult-education systems and other ESL providers face considerable challenges in providing quality English-acquisition programs. Studies of ESL programs show that non-credit ESL classes generally do not achieve substantial gains in their students' language proficiency over the short term. Only about one-third of ESL students enrolled in programs receiving federal funds improve their English proficiency by one or more levels each year, and the typical ESL student rarely takes classes for more than a year or two at most.⁸ Because more than half of the students enrolled in ESL classes have the lowest levels of English proficiency, minimal learning gains, combined with an insufficient rate of persistence, mean that relatively few LEP adults are able to significantly improve their English through traditional classes.

Recent evaluative research of ESL programs, however, suggests that there are a number of successful strategies to motivate immigrants to enroll in classes, persist in their studies, and improve their English skills. These findings, which come from studies of both community college and community-based ESL programs, suggest that practitioners largely agree on how to make ESL programs and systems more effective, but many service providers lack resources to put this knowledge into practice. Funders might consider addressing gaps in their regional ESL delivery systems so that more programs can have the qualities discussed below.

Promising Practices in ESL Programs

Effective ESL programs and systems have the following characteristics:

“[I]t is very easy for ESL students to define themselves not by what they can do, but rather than what they can't do: speak English well, write in English, or 'know computers.'”

Heide Spruck Wrigley,
LiteracyWork International⁹

- *Integrated instructional systems that offer a range of ESL courses to address different language skill level and learning goals.* In many regions, the system for providing ESL is sometimes highly fragmented. In addition to the adult-education system, some localities may have unions, community-based organizations (CBOs), and employers that sponsor ESL programs. However, these programs will not fully address the needs of immigrant adults if they are not coordinated or provide English learners the opportunity to advance to higher-level classes as their English skills improve.

Too often, programs primarily offer lower-level ESL classes and do not provide an educational pathway for LEP adults to significantly improve their English or vocational skills. Rather than offering higher-level ESL courses that address immigrants' needs or interests—e.g., vocational ESL, family literacy for parents, college-credit ESL classes, or co-enrollment programs that allow adults to learn English and other skills simultaneously (e.g., vocational or GED classes)—the content of many programs focuses primarily on “everyday” English or grammar and writing assignments on subjects far removed from real life. Even among programs that offer different levels of ESL instruction, many do not link the content of the beginning and more advanced classes, making it difficult for ESL learners to transition to higher level of studies. This situation, in part, may explain why large numbers of LEP adults do not persist in their studies.

- *Curricula that address topics related to students' interest and lives.* Studies have found that instructional methods which address students' interests and needs can increase English proficiency. For example, a large-scale study of 38 ESL classes in seven states found that those using curricula that connect English teaching with real-life experiences were highly effective in improving the reading skills of low-level LEP adults.¹⁰ Similarly, a recent study of community college, non-credit ESL programs found that ESL classes incorporating learners' interests are especially effective with those who have low levels of English proficiency and formal education. For example, Yakima Valley Community College's ESL instructors develop curriculum for each class by soliciting topics from their students and integrating them into lesson plans. This approach works because the subject matter engages students, who in turn “develop responsibility for their own learning.”¹² The college's English-acquisition gains and retention rate exceed those for the state as a whole.¹³

- *Learning English outside of the classroom.* Many ESL programs try to motivate students to practice English in real-life situations. Working with materials or topics that are familiar to most students, instructors develop exercises around taking a trip to the

⁷ This topic is addressed separately because most citizenship ESL courses are designed to help immigrants pass the naturalization test rather than improving their overall English skills.

⁸ Chisman, Forest P. & JoAnn Crandall. 2007. *Passing the Torch: Strategies for Innovations in Community College ESL*. New York, NY: Council for the Advancement of Adult Literacy.

⁹ Wrigley, Heide Spruck. 2004. “Research in Action: Teachers, Projects and Technology.” *Literacy Link*, Vol. 8, No. 3. June. College Station, TX: Texas Adult Literacy Clearinghouse.

¹⁰ Condelli, Larry, Heide Spruck Wrigley, Kwang Yoon, Stephanie Cronen, and Mary Seburn. 2006. “*What Works*” Study for Adult ESL Literacy Students. Washington, DC: American Institutes for Research.

¹¹ Chisman & Crandall, 2007.

¹² Yakima Valley Community College faculty member Pamela Ferguson, as quoted in Chisman & Crandall, 36.

¹³ *Ibid* 36-7.

library and learning how to find books and materials, or studying menus and learning how to order food at a restaurant. Other programs use a “project-based learning” approach, where students take an issue they care about, develop a research project, and present their findings orally.¹⁴ Proponents believe that when done well, this method is highly effective in motivating students to learn and practice English. A growing number of effective programs also complement classroom instruction with tutoring or computer labs.

- *Increased intensity of instruction and managed enrollment.* Most general ESL programs offer three to six hours of instruction a week and have “open entry/open exit” policies to accommodate busy schedules and to increase attendance. In this traditional approach, it takes years for LEP adults to undertake the estimated 500 to 1,000 hours of instruction needed to master basic English.

An alternative model combines high-intensity ESL courses (typically 12 to 20 hours of instruction per week) and managed enrollment (in which students can only join a class at the beginning of the course and must regularly attend). A study of five community colleges found this approach to be more effective in improving the English skills of both well-educated students and those with limited formal education. Contrary to expectations and despite the challenges of juggling work and family responsibilities, many students favored these classes over traditional ones.¹⁵

- *Instructional methods that allow teachers to use learners’ native language to explain classroom tasks.* The limited use of a native language can help low-level ESL students better understand classroom instructions and tasks (e.g., “write your name and date on the upper right hand side of the paper”). Students who are enrolled in such classes show greater growth in

reading comprehension and oral English skills.¹⁶ Researchers believe that the limited use of native language can help reduce students’ anxiety or confusion, allowing them to focus on developing better English skills.

- *Well-qualified ESL instructors who have opportunities for professional development.* High-quality programs usually employ full-time, experienced teachers and offer professional development options. Teaching ESL is highly challenging, and most experienced trainers find that one-time trainings rarely are effective in changing teaching practices. Instead, good training programs usually require a combination of providing appropriate curriculum materials (including online support documents), face-to-face workshops, and classroom support from mentors or experienced teachers.¹⁷
- *Co-enrollment or integration of ESL within broader education and training programs.* In most adult-education systems, LEP individuals are expected to first learn English before they are eligible to take classes to improve their vocational skills or enroll in a GED program. However, a growing number of adult educators and workforce development experts believe it is better to integrate ESL instruction with programs that provide vocational training, basic adult education, or employment soft-skill training. More adult-education providers have started to offer vocational ESL (VESL) classes that integrate learning English with training for entry-level jobs in construction or health care. Studies have found that well-designed VESL and other co-enrollment programs are highly successful in increasing student retention, helping them obtain college or other relevant vocational certifications, and improving their incomes.¹⁸
- *Support services.* Most immigrants who take ESL classes face a number of economic and social barriers that

prevent them from improving their language skills. Because they are new to the United States, most are not familiar with public programs that can help stabilize their lives; many also are unfamiliar with how to find work outside of their ethnic enclaves. Most high-quality ESL programs try to address these challenges by offering counseling and other support services. Some ESL programs have relationships with immigrant-serving CBOs and refer their students to health care, housing, or child care services. Some instructors also collaborate with workforce development programs that offer employment counseling and prepare students for job interviews.¹⁹

Grantmaking Strategies for Supporting ESL Projects

In anticipation that the demand for ESL programs will continue to increase, especially if Congress adopts future legislation to allow undocumented immigrants to legalize their status, the remainder of this chapter examines different ways in which foundations can help local communities expand capacity to provide ESL programs, incorporate best practices in the field, and change policies at the state or local levels to address the educational needs of adult English learners.

¹⁴ For background information about this approach, see Wrigley, Heide Spruck. 1998. “Knowledge in Action: The Promise of Project-Based Learning.” *Focus on Basics*, Vol. 2, Issue D. December. Boston, MA: National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy.

¹⁵ An example of an effective high-intensity ESL program for low-income immigrants is San Francisco’s VIP program for welfare recipients. This joint project between the San Francisco Human Services Agency and City College of San Francisco is described in Martinez & Wang, 2005, 20. The success of high-intensity learning programs for low-level ESL learners is consistent with studies showing that higher hours of classroom instruction per week and attendance rates are associated with gains in reading comprehension and oral proficiency. See, e.g., Condelli et al. 2006.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ Telephone interview with James Powrie, May 19, 2008.

¹⁸ See, e.g., Chisman & Crandall, 2007; Martinez & Wang, 2005.

¹⁹ Asian American Justice Center, 2007.

Demonstration Projects

To help ESL providers implement effective instructional practices, foundations should consider supporting innovative demonstration projects that allow them to test options, determine what works best, familiarize teachers and administrators with new programs and procedures, and ultimately improve classroom instruction on a large scale. Funders must provide such demonstration projects with sufficient resources to collect and analyze data and document outcomes. Below are several promising areas for demonstration ESL projects:

English Literacy and Civics

From the settlement houses of the previous century to modern-day ESL classes, adult-education programs for immigrants have long combined English literacy with civics. These programs try to address newcomers' interest in learning English as well as the history, customs, and values of the United States. When classes are conducted well, students not only learn about civics through contemporary issues but also develop critical thinking skills, learn new vocabulary, and have opportunities to practice and improve their speaking, reading, and writing skills.

Interest in this area has grown since the U.S. Department of Education launched its English Literacy and Civics Education initiative in 1999, providing federal funds to support innovative programs. Most English literacy and civics (EL/Civics) programs cover relatively narrow subject areas, with a focus on (1) providing information to help immigrants pass the citizenship test or (2) teaching civic life skills, such as understanding how to interact with government agencies (e.g., schools, immigration agencies, or the Department of Motor Vehicles).²⁰ Many practitioners believe that EL/Civics education can facilitate immigrant integration in broader ways by helping newcomers learn how to play an active role on issues affecting their families and communities.

The Border Civics Project**www.bordercivics.org**

The Border Civics Project integrates civics and technology into family literacy and ESL courses. Operated by the Socorro Independent School District in a suburb of El Paso near the Texas-Mexico border, it serves largely LEP adult students who are native Spanish speakers. Funding comes from multiple public sources, including a U.S. Department of Education demonstration grant.

In this research-based model, students identify specific issues to address through classroom projects. They work in small groups and are encouraged to negotiate among themselves on how to develop and complete their projects. At the end of the course, members of each project make presentations to fellow students and often to an outside audience (e.g., people whom they interviewed, policymakers, or interested community members).

Teachers use limited Spanish in the classroom to explain complicated concepts related to U.S. history, culture, or the use of technology, but students are asked to use English in most classroom discussions and in their communications with each other. Students also have access to computers, as well as digital and video cameras. These technology tools are designed to help students develop confidence in communicating with English-speaking audiences. Learning how to use technology builds students' skills and "offer[s] success in ways that, while related to language and literacy growth, was nevertheless not entirely dependent on one's proficiency in speaking or writing English."²¹

Students in the Socorro EL/civics program have produced short documentary films about life in the local community, personal books, brochures, and multimedia presentations on community issues such as domestic violence, the rights of undocumented workers, and public education to improve family health. Other projects have promoted active civic participation, including petitioning the government to respond to community problems. For example, one student produced a video to

convince a local public agency to improve road conditions in neighborhoods ridden with large potholes.

Test results show that students in the Socorro program expanded their knowledge of civics and consistently improved their English. According to teacher observations, students strengthened their English skills through their research projects and their presentations, with many spending substantially more time practicing English than they would have in comparable ESL classes.²²

The New England Literacy Resource Center²³**www.nelrc.org**

A project of World Education, NELRC provides resources to help ESL teachers develop curricula that encourage immigrant civic participation. Bringing a social justice perspective to its work, NELRC supports adult educators to explore issues of interest to their students and engage these students in examining governmental decisions and their impact on ordinary people's lives. It provides assistance in developing curriculum and class projects that help adult learners develop civic participation skills (including English proficiency and literacy). NELRC's current projects and publications include:

- **Voter Education, Registration and Action (VERA)** is a nonpartisan campaign to help adult students in the six New England states learn about voting and electoral issues—and to motivate them to vote. Prior to every presidential election, participating adult and family literacy programs expand their curriculum to include lessons and

²⁰ Nash, Andy. 2005. *Integrating Civic Participation and Adult ESOL*. Boston, MA: New England Literacy Resource Center/World Education. June. (Conclusions are based on a review of EL/Civics websites, curricula, and national online discussion listservs.)

²¹ Wrigley, 2004.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ NELRC's primary mission is to work with practitioners and policymakers to strengthen adult literacy services in six New England states: Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont.

“So many of our English learners feel disconnected from the system. It’s not difficult for teachers to help them identify their concerns and then use these issues to help them learn. The more they care about the outcome of their communication, the more English they will learn.”

Sidney Storey, *Somerville Center for Adult Learning Experiences*, who regularly uses NELRC’s materials for her ESL class

activities related to the electoral system. Those eligible to vote have an opportunity to register and receive ballot-related information. With support from the Nellie Mae Education Foundation, VERA plans to reach over 10,000 adult learners during the 2008 presidential campaign. In 2004, an impressive 80 percent of eligible voters from the VERA project voted; two-thirds were first-time voters.

- *The Civic Participation and Community Action Sourcebook* helps adult educators develop lesson plans to increase civic engagement. It outlines three kinds of citizenship—personally responsible, participatory, and justice-oriented—and describes skills-building activities for fostering civic engagement among students of all levels of English proficiency.
- *The Change Agent*, a popular adult-education magazine, provides teaching materials to address social justice issues. Using news articles, lesson descriptions, student writings, cartoons, and other genres, each issue focuses on a different theme, such as democracy and immigration. *Through the Lens of Social Justice* is a compilation of the *The Change Agent*’s best practices and includes suggested exercises and activities.

Vocational ESL and Co-Enrollment Programs

Another promising area for demonstration projects is VESL and related co-enrollment programs. Funders interested in supporting such programs should review GCIR’s *Supporting English Language Acquisition* report, which provides background information, recommended grantmaking strategies, a resource list, and program examples in this area.²⁴ As discussed in that report, some key questions should guide VESL-related grantmaking:

- *What is the target population’s education background?* Immigrants tend to be either disproportionately well-educated or have little education, and the design of VESL or other co-enrollment programs must take this factor into account.
- *What are the economic and employment trends in a locality, and what opportunities exist for LEP job seekers?* Effective VESL programs, especially those serving immigrants with limited formal education, must address local economic and employment conditions. They should identify the types of jobs potentially available to LEP workers, job sectors expected to have future growth, and entry-level jobs with opportunities for advancement.
- *How does the proposed VESL program address the target population’s educational and job skill needs?* Identifying specific skills that participants need to become competitive in the local job market is a critical step in designing a good VESL program. For some, the primary barriers are English and an understanding of U.S. workplace culture. Others may need additional education in basic math and literacy, along with specific vocational training, before they are likely to find employment in an English-speaking environment.

Blending Technology and a Telenovela: A Promising Practice²⁵ www.ceowomen.org

C.E.O. Women, a business-development program for low-income immigrant and refugee women, utilizes a telenovela-based curriculum, entitled the Grand Café, to teach English language and business skills. A blended learning program, the Grand Café consists of 18, 30-minute episodes that combine a soap opera drama set around four immigrant women who decide to pursue their dreams of starting a business. Every episode features a ten-minute continuing story, followed by coaching, real-life stories, vocabulary and grammar practice, and suggestions for how participants can practice what they have learned in real-life situations. Participants also receive a workbook that includes language exercises and explains business concepts introduced in the video.

Immigrant women who participate in this program receive each episode on a DVD, which they can watch from home or on an office computer. The program also brings the participants together from time to time to provide classroom-based instruction to supplement the distance-learning component. At the end of the training, each participant is paired with a volunteer coach for one-on-one support and given access to C.E.O. Women’s loan and grant programs to help start a new business.

Recently launched at the time of this writing, the project anticipates serving 1,400 women in its first two years of operation (2008 and 2009) followed by plans to scale up the program to multiple locations. A trailer of the educational telenovela series is available at www.youtube.com/watch?v=zduSIbby_s.

²⁴ Martinez and Wang, 2005.

²⁵ *Telenovela* is the Spanish term for soap opera.

- *In addition to English and vocational training, what types of services are needed to ensure positive employment outcomes?* Ancillary services, such as job counseling and placement, can play an important role in improving employment prospects for LEP adults. Funders also should evaluate whether case management, child care, and other family-based services are needed to help participants complete the training and find better employment. In addition, some LEP adults may need continued support after they obtain employment to help with job retention and to identify opportunities for career advancement.

While VESL and other co-enrollment programs are not “magic bullets” for helping newcomers overcome language and employment barriers, they can enhance the motivation for learning and expedite

ESL Provider-CBO Collaboration

The closure of numerous garment factories during the early 2000s resulted in the layoffs of hundreds of older LEP women who had few employment options. In response to community and union advocates, local and state government agencies created a Garment Worker Re-Training Initiative in 2005 to provide 100 of these displaced workers with up to 18 months of unemployment insurance, income support, intensive VESL and job training, and other related services. City College of San Francisco, an institution that provides ESL services to almost 25,000 students annually, agreed to provide the VESL and vocational training after it identified two community organizations, Chinese for Affirmative Action and Chinese Progressive Association, to handle case management and employment services. The partnerships allowed City College to focus on its strength—providing high-quality classroom instruction—while the experienced community organizations concentrated on ESL learners to overcome other challenges.

the process by allowing LEP adults to learn and develop important vocational skills while improving their English.

Distance and Blended Learning ESL Models

Given the current shortage of ESL programs and the expected future growth in the U.S. immigrant population, most ESL experts agree that distance or “blended” learning programs are needed to augment traditional classroom education. Distance learning takes place outside the classroom through the use of the Internet, DVDs, video, audio, or other technologies. Blended learning is a limited version of distance learning, with some classroom instruction. Expansion of these types of programs could increase English-learning opportunities to LEP adults living in remote areas or who have time constraints. It also could offer an educational alternative to students who are comfortable with self-directed learning and significantly reduce the per-student costs of ESL courses.

However, very few ESL programs have tried to use instructional technology as a substitute for classroom time. Beyond the large up-front costs, there has been a lack of research, and only a handful of demonstration projects have examined how distance learning can effectively teach ESL.²⁶ Many unanswered questions about the efficacy of this approach remain. For example, what are the best instructional methods for providing ESL instruction via DVD or the Internet? What type of supplemental activity or support will ESL learners need if they do not attend regular classes? Which LEP populations are most likely to acquire English skills through this approach? What are the best and most efficient delivery systems? A project funded by the U.S. Department of Education tried to answer some of these questions in the late 1990s and provided principles and indicators to guide the future development of technology-based instructional programs.²⁷ But only limited new work has occurred in recent years.

The rising demand for ESL instruction makes it imperative that funders consider how technology can play a larger role in

making English instruction more available to LEP adults. Support for strategic demonstration projects in this area could help transform the design of future ESL programs.

Collaboration with Community-Based Organizations

The vast majority of ESL courses occur in adult-education systems, e.g., community colleges, which have very limited support services. While CBOs can help address these service gaps, collaboration between adult-education providers and immigrant-serving CBOs remains limited, and there is little research to guide the development of these partnerships in ways that maximize benefits to LEP immigrants.²⁸

Demonstration projects in this area can address specific supportive service needs and provide opportunities to learn more about how and under what conditions partnerships between adult-education providers and immigrant-serving organizations can improve LEP adults’ educational or employment outcomes. Many seasoned practitioners believe that these partnerships can be especially productive in two areas:

- *Employment counseling and workforce services.* Most ESL programs offer limited employment-related services even though they are especially important for immigrant students. In fact, research suggests that even after immigrants improve their English skills, they often continue to work in low-wage jobs in part because they do not know how to enter the mainstream job market.²⁹

²⁶ Central Piedmont Community College in North Carolina is one of the few that has been using distance learning to teach some of its ESL courses. Background information on the project can be found at www1.cpcc.edu/esl/distance-learning/lead.

²⁷ See www.cyberstep.org for an overview of this project, including a proposed framework and recommendations for creating web-based instruction courses for LEP and other low-literacy adults. The website also lists innovative distance-learning projects for adult learners.

²⁸ Telephone interview with Forrest Chisman, Council for the Advancement of Adult Literacy, April 25, 2008.

Partnerships with community organizations can give LEP immigrants access to job counseling (to identify employment options and develop education and employment goals), guidance on how to conduct job searches (including the use of online resources), interview preparation, and information about appropriate behavior in the U.S. workplace. Collaborations between VESL programs and community organizations with expertise or contacts with targeted industries are especially promising.

- **Case management services.** CBOs can provide case management services to ESL students who face significant learning challenges in classroom settings, including those with very limited education, people with disabilities, older displaced workers, recently arrived refugees, or welfare recipients. CBOs can also help these individuals address challenges outside of the classroom—such as obtaining social services, health care, transportation, or child care—that affect their classroom learning.

Changing Policies and Practices in Response to Demographic Changes

Philanthropic support of policy and program reforms at the state or local levels can improve the responsiveness of adult-education systems to the needs of all students, including ESL learners who currently make up about 40 percent of those enrolled in adult-education programs nationally.³⁰ As the U.S. immigrant population expands to new gateways, more adult-education systems will need to examine whether their programs serve the needs of all constituents. In particular, they should determine whether there are pathways for LEP adults, from beginning-level ESL courses to more advanced studies, to improve their educational and vocational skills. Integrating the ESL programs offered by different departments or programs also should be a priority.

Funders can support advocacy to highlight the need for reform and to

develop policy strategies for improving ESL instruction. They can fund efforts by researchers, policy advocates, or community organizations to document the need for better ESL and adult-education programs. As immigrants comprise an increasingly larger share of the U.S. workforce, providing appropriate ESL and related educational programs not only benefits newcomers but is critical to producing skilled workers that make local economies competitive. Educating policymakers and the public about these benefits can create a climate that is more receptive to proposed reforms.

Foundations should also consider supporting organizations that are capable of forming and leading broad coalitions—including educators, businesses, immigrant groups, unions, and other allies—to advocate for reforms. These advocacy campaigns can push for a general increase in ESL funding, as well as specific policy and programmatic changes that address educational needs of LEP adults.

Funders interested in supporting policy reform should consider whether LEP issues can be folded into broader efforts to improve adult-education systems or programs. A more comprehensive approach that integrates the various priorities of vulnerable populations may be preferable for a number of reasons. First, even though LEP adults face unique challenges in learning English, many share similar educational needs with other populations that utilize adult education, and their priorities can be incorporated with those of other constituents. Second, if different communities collaborate in developing a comprehensive proposal, there is less likely to be competition for resources and public disagreements that can undermine reform efforts. Third, a campaign whose primary message is to improve education for low-income and low-literate adults may be more persuasive than one that addresses only ESL issues. Given the large percentage of ESL learners in this population, many will benefit from broad efforts to strengthen adult-education programs.

Funders can work directly with large ESL or adult-education providers to support

strategic planning or systems reform. Constrained by limited resources, these institutions do not have the resources to plan for large-scale, strategic changes. In fact, research from the community college context indicates that even large ESL programs usually do not have resources to engage in systemic planning.³¹

As illustrated by the work of the Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (see sidebar on page 15), funders can play an important role in helping adult-education institutions modify or transform their programs to better serve new constituents. With additional resources, motivated adult-education institutions can analyze data from their current programs to determine not only whether they are providing sufficient numbers of ESL-related classes but also examine their quality and whether they are responsive to LEP adults' education goals. Basic questions that should be addressed in an analysis of current services include:

- What are the characteristics of students enrolled in the various ESL classes?
- Does the institution offer a range of ESL-related classes beyond entry-level classes to address LEP adults' various learning goals?
- Are students enrolled in ESL classes achieving significant learning gains? Are some classes more effective than others? If so, what are the reasons for the different outcomes?
- What are the characteristics of ESL students who are doing well, and which students need more support?

²⁹ Martinez and Wang, 2005.

³⁰ 2004-05 data from the U.S. Department of Education Office of Vocational and Adult Education, www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ovae/pi/AdultEd/aedatatables.html (accessed May 29, 2008).

³¹ Chisman and Crandall, 2007.

- Do ESL students transition to other courses, including vocational training or college credit classes? If the transition rate is low, what can be done to help these students develop the skills to help them succeed in the workplace?
- Other than ESL classes, what other educational or vocational courses are available to LEP adults? For example, are VESL or co-enrollment classes available to students who have yet to complete advanced ESL classes?
- Is the level of support services provided to ESL students sufficient? If not, is it possible to form partnerships with community organizations to address these gaps?
- What level of training or professional development is offered to ESL teachers and how can they be improved?
- How can the institution create educational pathways to success for LEP adults, especially with respect to improving their employment prospects?

Depending on their situations, adult-education institutions are likely to require various resources to answer these questions and develop more responsive programs. Some will need to improve their data collection on student characteristics and performance.³² Others will need staff or consultants to analyze the information and provide planning recommendations. If these institutions decide to engage in a full strategic planning process, they will likely require resources to engage a broad range of stakeholders through focus groups, surveys, or interviews, and incorporate their observations and recommendations into the process.

Beyond compiling and analyzing information, successful planning requires strong managerial oversight and a decision-making process that ensures (1) meaningful recommendations, (2) a plan of action, and (3) a mechanism to monitor progress and make changes as needed. Based on the experiences of adult educators, funding is vital during the implementation stage for activities such as retraining and mentoring teachers, data collection and analysis, and the development of reform measures. As illustrated by the example below, data analysis capacity is not only important for identifying what works during the implementation phase, but the information also can be used to build support among policymakers to provide more funding for successful new programs.

³² For example, researchers have observed that longitudinal data (beyond a semester or school year) is often needed to assess the effectiveness of ESL programs and whether they increase learning gains, retention, or transition to other study programs. Yet, most institutions do not collect this information. Chisman and Crandall, 2007.

I-BEST: Increasing the Achievement of Low-Literacy Students

Almost a decade ago, staff at the Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) began noticing that few students enrolled in ESL or adult basic education (ABE) classes transitioned to vocational training or college-level classes. Only about 10 percent of ESL students took workforce training programs within three years of starting an ESL class, and only two percent went on to earn certificates or degrees within five years.³³

As the state's changing economy required an increasingly skilled workforce, most limited-English-speaking adults had few job options. In fact, research funded by the Ford Foundation suggested that the "tipping point"—the amount of education and training students needed to succeed in mainstream workplaces—was at least one year of college-level credit classes combined with a vocational credential or certificate. ESL students who reached this tipping point made \$7,000 more per year than those who did not.³⁴

With this information in hand, SBCTC policymakers decided to re-think how to improve instruction. Support from the Ford Foundation's Bridges to Opportunity Project allowed SBCTC to seek feedback from instructors and administrators on possible changes and to hold two focus groups with other stakeholders.

This planning process helped create SBCTC's Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training program, or I-BEST. Before I-BEST, ESL courses were taught almost completely separately from vocational training classes. But SBCTC learned that ESL and other low-literacy students were highly interested in learning more vocational skills, and many of its own instructors believed this was possible if students simultaneously were taught workforce English. SBCTC's leaders decided to develop a program to combine ESL and adult literacy with college-credit vocational training. ESL and ABE instructors would work together with technical instructors to provide both literacy and vocational education through a single course.

"Our goal was not just to address the needs of ESL students," said Tina Bloomer, SBCTC's Director of Student Achievement Projects, who oversees the I-BEST program at the state level. "We knew that our student population was changing but whatever we adopted, it had to work for other students as well."

The I-BEST program was designed to serve both ESL and ABE students, with each class providing appropriate literacy instruction based on its students' proficiency in English and

other basic skills. SBCTC started I-BEST in 2004 with five demonstration projects that integrated ESL with vocational training, expanding to ten projects in 2005. According to Bloomer, the Ford grants continued to be important in the implementation phase. Although the funding for the demonstration projects came from other state system funds, Ford's grants helped pay for salaries of staff members who coordinated the project at the state level; funded the research and analysis to increase the project's scale; allowed SBCTC to bring demonstration project instructors and administrators together to discuss lessons learned; and supported professional development for I-BEST instructors, staff, and administrators.

The initial results showed significant improvement in student achievement. The I-BEST students earned five times more college credits on average and were *15 times* more likely to complete workforce training than other ESL students during the study period. Not surprisingly, the study found that the program worked best with higher-level ESL students, suggesting that additional approaches are still needed to support other English learners.

Because I-BEST classes require both an ESL/ABE and a vocational instructor, they are more expensive to operate. Nevertheless, their success has fueled interest in the program. In 2006, SBCTC modified the funding formula for I-BEST to allow these classes to receive 75 percent more funds per enrolled student than other comparable courses. In 2007, the state legislature provided funding for the growth and expansion of I-BEST programs by \$4.9 million. As of 2008, the I-BEST program had expanded to all of Washington's 34 community and technology colleges, with 107 training courses.

While there are many reasons for the program's success, private philanthropy played an important role. The Ford grants, said Bloomer, "allowed SBCTC to be more deliberate and strategic in its planning and implementation. It provided resources to identify and overcome barriers that result in better outcomes for many students."

³³ Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges. 2005. *I-BEST: A Program Integrating Adult Basic Education and Workforce Training*. Olympia, WA: Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges Research Report No. 05-2. December.

³⁴ Prince, David & Davis Jenkins. 2005. *Building Pathways to Success for Low-Skill Adult Students: Lessons for Community College Policy and Practice from a Statewide Longitudinal Tracking Study*. New York, NY: Community College Research Center Teachers College, Columbia University.

4 Pave the Path to Citizenship: Outreach, Education, Legal Services, and Naturalization Assistance

Introduction

The promotion of citizenship is a key tool for integrating immigrants. Since its founding, the United States has attracted newcomers from around the globe who have sought inclusion in the American mosaic, pledging to work with other Americans to build a stronger nation. This trend continues as naturalization rates in recent years have reached historically high levels. Yet many eligible immigrants—8.5 million as of 2005¹—face barriers that prevent them from naturalizing and becoming full participants in American democracy.

Funders who have prioritized immigrant integration should consider addressing these barriers and supporting citizenship assistance as part of their grantmaking strategy. Helping newcomers become citizens not only furthers an essential aspect of immigrant integration but is critical to strengthening American democracy. Citizenship assistance programs can help build community infrastructure and institutions to foster civic engagement of immigrants. They also can increase the capacity of participating organizations—such as community-based groups, immigration legal services providers, adult education institutions, and libraries—to help implement future immigration reforms, including the possibility that Congress will eventually adopt legislation to legalize the status of many undocumented immigrants.

This chapter describes the breadth of programs that foundations can support to successfully reach, prepare, and help eligible immigrants become U.S. citizens. It provides an overview of the application process, describes the barriers and challenges, delineates the elements of good naturalization programs, and recommends strategies for funders interested in starting new grantmaking in this area.



The Benefits of Investing in Naturalization

Support for naturalization programs is a long-term investment with high rates of return and tangible lifelong benefits for individuals and communities. The immediate benefits include the security of citizenship and the right to vote, the ability to travel with a U.S. passport, sponsorship of relatives for immigration, and eligibility for public benefits unavailable to non-citizens. The range of employment opportunities also expands for citizens; in fact, naturalized citizens earn higher wages than those who are not.² They also gain the opportunity to participate in the democratic process, particularly if naturalization assistance programs include elements that build the foundation for ongoing civic engagement.

Citizenship reaps many benefits for the broader society. The act of naturalization demonstrates stronger community ties and often leads to a higher level of engagement.³ Studies indicate that newcomers are naturalizing in greater numbers and exercising their new right to vote. Between 1990 and 2005, the number of newcomers who naturalized increased 15 percent.⁴ Although there is little difference in the voter-registration rates among naturalized citizens and natives, naturalized citizens are “substantially more likely to vote” once they are registered.⁵

A Large Pool of Potential New Citizens

The historic rise in immigration over the last 30 years has been matched by a comparable increase in naturalization.⁶ As of 2006, there were 37.5 million foreign-born individuals in the United States, of which 15.7 million were naturalized citizens.⁷ From an annual average of less than 120,000 during the 1960s, naturalizations spiked to over 700,000 in the 2006 fiscal year.⁸ This rise reflects an increase in immigration generally as well as increased interest in naturalization. The proportion of all eligible foreign-born residents who have become U.S. citizens rose to 59 percent in 2005, compared to 48 percent in 1995.⁹

However, many immigrants who are eligible to become citizens have not done so. In 2005, there were approximately 8.5 million eligible lawful permanent residents (LPRs) who had yet to naturalize. An additional 2.8 million will soon be eligible, once they meet age or length of residency requirements.¹⁰ Increasingly, those who are eligible but who have not naturalized are the more vulnerable populations who face the most barriers to citizenship. Fifty-five percent of those eligible to naturalize are limited English proficient (LEP), compared to 38 percent

¹ Passel, Jeffrey S. 2007. *Growing Share of Immigrants Choosing Naturalization*. Washington, D.C.: Pew Hispanic Center. Appendix B, Table 6, 29.

² Chenoweth, Jeff and Laura Burdick. 2007. *A More Perfect Union: A National Citizenship Plan*. Washington, DC: Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc. January.1 (citing, Bratsberg, B., Ragan, J. F., Nasir, Z. M. 2002. “The Effect of Naturalization on Wage Growth: A Panel Study of Young Male Immigrants.” *Journal of Labor Economics* 20, issue 3, pp. 589-590. July).

³ Chenoweth and Burdick, *A More Perfect Union* 1-3, 14-16.

⁴ Passel, *Growing Share* (noting that the number of immigrants who become naturalized tends to track the number admitted six years earlier, as immigrants become eligible).

⁵ Passel, Jeffrey S. 2004. *Latino and Asian Voters in the 2004 Election and Beyond*. Washington, DC: The Urban Institute. November.

⁶ Passel, *Growing Share* 4.

⁷ Simanski, John. 2007. *Naturalizations in the United States: 2006*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Office of Immigration Statistics. May.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ Passel, *Growing Share* 14.

¹⁰ Passel, *Growing Share* Appendix B, Table 6, 29.

General Eligibility Criteria

To be eligible for naturalization, an immigrant must:

- be at least 18 years of age;
- have lawful permanent residence (i.e., have a green card) for at least five continuous years, or three continuous years if the individual is married to a U.S. citizen;
- demonstrate good moral character;
- be able to read, write, and speak English; and
- know and understand American history and U.S. government principles.

Applicants are exempted from the English-language portion of the test if they are (1) over 50 and have been a lawful permanent resident (LPR) for more than 20 years or (2) are over 55 and have been an LPR for more than 15 years.

of those who already have naturalized; 38 percent of those eligible have less than a high school education, compared to 15 percent for naturalized citizens; and 24 percent of those eligible are below 100 percent of the federal poverty threshold, compared to 14 percent for naturalized citizens.¹¹

Naturalization 101

Lawful permanent residents wishing to naturalize must first determine whether they are eligible for citizenship. (See text box.) Eligible immigrants must complete an application for naturalization, known as the N-400. This ten-page form requests contact information, grounds for eligibility, basic background information, residence and employment history for the previous five years, travel and marital history, and information about family members. The N-400 also seeks information that may disqualify an applicant, including a series of questions on criminal history, affiliation with the Communist party, and moral character. The current application fee is \$675 for applicants under 75 years of age.

The N-400 is filed with the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

(USCIS). USCIS' stated goal is to complete the application review in six months, but delays can stretch to 18 months or longer.¹² Since 2002, applicants also must go through an extensive background check by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). A policy adopted after 9/11 requires checking applicants' names against a list of individuals under investigation by the FBI as well as a list of anyone named in investigative files for any reason. A decentralized, paper-based record system adds to the complexity and delay.¹³ The FBI checks for records of criminal activity that could be a bar to naturalization. Even if the activity itself is not a bar, when an applicant fails to disclose a criminal record, the USCIS can also deny the applicant as lacking good moral character.¹⁴

Once the FBI background check is completed, USCIS sends a letter to schedule an interview regarding the application as well as to test the applicant's English competency and familiarity with American history and government. The citizenship test, which consists of an in-person

A Redesigned Citizenship Test

In response to criticism that the test is out-of-date and consists mostly of memorizing historical information, the USCIS undertook a six-year review process, working with historians, adult literacy experts, immigrant representatives, and research organizations to revise the questions. USCIS' stated goal has been to develop a test that is more meaningful and would require applicants to demonstrate an understanding of the structure of government, U.S. history, and geography. The revised test, in which applicants will be asked 10 questions from a list of 100, will be implemented October 1, 2008.¹⁵ The test will be administered in a similar manner to how immigration officers currently conduct interviews. A comparison of the current questions with those on the revised test shows there is significant overlap between the two. See <http://www.uscis.gov/files/nativedocuments/Comparison.pdf>.

interview with a USCIS officer, assesses whether the applicant (1) has the ability to read, write, and speak basic English; and (2) possesses sufficient knowledge of U.S. history and civics.¹⁵ The English test consists of the officer's assessment of an applicant's oral English skills—based on how she or he answers questions during the interview—followed by a short reading and writing test. The civics test is drawn from a list of questions developed by the USCIS. The officer asks questions of varying degrees of difficulty from the list, and the applicant must answer six of the ten questions correctly.

If the applicant successfully passes both the English and civics components, the USCIS officer can approve the application at the end of the interview, pending the completion of a background check. However, the officer also can request additional documentation if materials are found lacking. If the applicant fails the English or history and civics tests, s/he can have a second opportunity to retake the test, typically within 60 to 90 days after the first appointment. Failure of the test the second time will lead to denial of the application. If the applicant passes the interview and background test, he or she will be sworn in and receive an official certificate.

¹¹ Passel, *Growing Share* 10-13.

¹² Migration Policy Institute Fact Sheet # 21. 2008. *Behind the Naturalization Backlog: Causes, Context, and Concerns*. Washington, D.C.: Migration Policy Institute. February.

¹³ Hsu, Spencer S. and N.C. Aizenman. 2007. "FBI Name Check Cited in Naturalization Delays." *The Washington Post*. June 17.

¹⁴ Chenoweth and Burdick, *A More Perfect Union* 37.

¹⁵ Immigration and Naturalization Act § 312. The English requirement is waived for applicants who are either age 50 or older and a lawful permanent resident for 20 years or more, or are over 55 years of age and have lived in the United States as a lawful permanent resident for periods totaling at least 15 years; for these applicants, the civics test can be taken in the language of the applicant's choice. Applicants over 65 years who have lived in the United States as a lawful permanent resident for periods totaling at least 20 years do not have to take the English test, but must take a simpler version of the civics test in the language of choice.

¹⁶ See www.uscis.gov/natzpilot/.

For most applicants, the worst that can occur in the application process is that they fail the citizenship test, lose their application fee and their preparation time, and must reapply if they wish to take the test again. But for those who provide inaccurate information on the N-400 or do not realize that they are ineligible for citizenship, the consequences can be severe, including the possibility of being separated from their families, detained, and deported to their native country. (See “Barriers to Naturalization” below.) Because eligibility requirements have become extremely complicated, it is important that immigration attorneys be available to conduct a final review of documents.

Barriers to Naturalization

The naturalization process is far from user-friendly. The lack of a national immigrant integration policy in the United States has largely left the promotion and facilitation of naturalization to charitable organizations with limited resources.¹⁷ As a result, challenges exist at every stage of the process. These barriers can deter potential citizens from applying or completing the process if they encounter problems.

Lack of Information about Citizenship

Immigrant community leaders often point out that an initial barrier is the lack of accurate information about the naturalization process and the benefits of citizenship, especially in languages that immigrants can understand. The federal government currently provides only limited information about citizenship opportunities and does not have any large-scale, proactive programs to reach newcomers who are eligible to naturalize.¹⁸ Although citizenship applications have surged in recent years, the current polarized climate on immigration issues—with many politicians calling for more immigration enforcement actions and other punitive measures at the local and state levels—can also inhibit citizenship applications. Such actions have added to the fear and uncertainty experienced in many mixed-status families. In this climate, eligible

individuals may be afraid to start the process out of concern over failing the test and exposing undocumented family members to federal immigration agencies.

Confusing Eligibility Standards

These concerns are exacerbated by confusion over eligibility standards, e.g., how the requirements of “continuous” residence in the United States and “good moral character” are defined.¹⁹ Even worse, applicants who have been convicted of aggravated felonies may not only be barred from naturalization but are subject to mandatory detention and deportation. Given these concerns, all immigrants should have their applications reviewed by an immigration attorney for potential red flags. However, immigration legal advice is not readily available to low-income immigrants due to limited availability of affordable nonprofit legal services and the prohibitively high cost of retaining a private immigration attorney. Consequently, many immigrants fall victim to unscrupulous immigration consultants, notaries public, or attorneys.

Demonstrating English Skills and Civics Knowledge

By far, the greatest challenges are the English and civics requirements. The majority of eligible immigrants have limited English proficiency;²⁰ many have less than a high-school degree and may not be familiar with testing procedures. As discussed earlier in the guidebook, experts estimate that most limited English proficient immigrants need between 500 and 1,000 hours of classroom instruction before they master basic English verbal and literacy skills; this translates into an average of 10 hours a week for one to two years. The combination of a shortage of good ESL programs in many localities and the busy schedules of most immigrant adults, who often have more than one job, makes English acquisition a challenging task. Consequently, lack of English skills is the primary reason for citizenship denials.²¹ Many immigrant advocates are concerned that the revised naturalization test,

Aggravated Felonies

The original concept of aggravated felony included only the crimes of murder, drug trafficking, and firearms trafficking. But under the 1996 immigration law, even misdemeanors such as shoplifting and other offenses with a sentence of at least 365 days may be considered aggravated felonies, and immigration officials apply such convictions *retroactively*. This means a legal immigrant may be deported for a minor offense committed 25 years ago even if the offense was not classified as an aggravated felony at the time.

scheduled to begin on October 1, 2008, could be even more challenging for limited English speakers. Given its goal of requiring a deeper understanding of U.S. history and civics than the previous test, advocates fear that it may require applicants to comprehend and use more complex English vocabulary.

¹⁷ Chenoweth and Burdick, *A More Perfect Union* 16.

¹⁸ On June 6, 2006, President George W. Bush issued an executive order that established a presidential Task Force on New Americans. Its mission is to strengthen the public sector’s efforts “to help legal immigrants embrace the common core of American civic culture, learn our common language, and fully become Americans...” The Task Force has yet to issue a final report, and it remains to be seen whether it will propose new initiatives to promote citizenship. The USCIS recently developed a number of new materials to help immigrants, libraries, community organizations, and other stakeholders who are interested in assisting naturalization efforts. These materials are described in the Resources section of this report.

¹⁹ For example, applicants may fail to demonstrate good moral character if they have a history of criminal activity; failed to pay required family support; been involved in illegal gambling or prostitution; failed to pay their taxes; failed to register with Selective Service; or lied to government officials for the purpose of gaining immigration benefits. See also Preston, Julia. 2008. “Perfectly Legal Immigrants Until They Applied for Citizenship.” *New York Times*. April 12. (Among other examples, three applicants in Florida who believed their green cards allowed them to vote in elections and voluntarily disclosed this information on their citizenship applications were deported.)

²⁰ Passel, *Growing Share* 11.

²¹ Chenoweth and Burdick, *A More Perfect Union* 60.

High Costs, Low Incomes

The increasingly high cost of the application fee has also become a major barrier. The processing of citizenship applications is supposed to be self-financing, and fee increases are meant to support improvements in service. The application fee has risen from \$95 in 1998 to \$595, plus an \$80 fee for fingerprinting. At a total of \$675, the fee is a substantial burden, especially for low-income families and families with more than one applicant. As noted earlier, the limited availability of reliable and affordable legal services compounds the financial barrier to naturalization.

Long Delays

Long delays in application processing, exacerbated by a surge in applications, can also discourage immigrants from seeking citizenship. Nearly 1.4 million applications were filed in fiscal year 2007, almost twice as many as during the previous year. By the end of December 2007, there were nearly one million cases pending adjudication, with an estimated nationwide processing time of 18 months. Despite the stated goal of processing applications within six months, USCIS has been slowed by the sheer number of applications, as well as insufficient staff and a paper-based processing system. Another cause of delay is the FBI security check backlog; it can take months to process documents because a manual review of FBI records is required.²² For many of the individuals who filed applications in 2006 and 2007, these delays will likely prevent them from voting in the 2008 presidential elections.

Difficulty Obtaining Disability Waivers

Exemptions from the English, history, and civics testing requirements are available for individuals with a physical, developmental disability, or mental impairment that affects their ability to understand or take these tests. Such conditions could include Alzheimer's disease, severe depression, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), stroke, and Down Syndrome. In practice, these waivers have been difficult to obtain. The disability waiver form (N-648) requires

that applicants have doctors fill out certain information; the complexity of the information requested often requires several visits to the doctor, often with substantial cost to the applicant. In addition, USCIS has viewed disability-waiver applications with suspicion, suspecting certain applicants and doctors of fraud; this, in turn, has resulted in burdensome new requirements for applicants, especially those with mental impairments.

Fulfilling the Promise of Citizenship: Attributes of High-Quality Programs

Successful programs require a wide range of skills, and because there are relatively few organizations capable of operating all-inclusive programs by themselves, funders should consider how their grantmaking strategies can encourage collaboration between key community institutions that provide essential services.

Experience with Target Populations

At the heart of any successful naturalization assistance programs are organizations that are trusted by and have experience serving the targeted community, with the potential to provide citizenship assistance either alone or in collaboration with other groups. Ideally, these organizations should have:

- Familiarity with the culture of the eligible newcomer population in the community and be able to communicate in the languages spoken by the primary immigrant groups.
- Existing capacity to provide some of the essential services of a good citizenship assistance program, including ESL or ESL/civics classes.
- The ability to screen and complete citizenship application forms, and refer complicated cases to immigration attorneys.
- Immigrant-related social services that help newcomers gain stability and become self-sufficient, including

facilitating access to education, employment, and health services; and programs to help immigrants engage in civic activities, prior to and after gaining citizenship, that address issues of concern to their community.

Univisión alone reaches 80 percent of Spanish-language TV viewers in the United States—about 25 million viewers a week.

Strong Outreach and Education Component

Effective programs have a solid outreach and education component. Many immigrants may be unaware of eligibility criteria, the naturalization process, or resources available to assist them. Likewise, they may be unfamiliar with the potential benefits of citizenship. The lack of reliable information about naturalization can also be exacerbated by the anti-immigrant sentiment of recent years and workplace Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) raids, which can lead to reluctance to engage with the government, even if the immigrant is eligible for naturalization.

Ethnic media, in particular, is an important partner in an outreach campaign. Early outreach and education are also vital to ensure that eligible immigrants have enough time to prepare, particularly if they need to improve their English proficiency. Outreach efforts also should target those not currently eligible, in order to prepare them for future naturalization applications. With this advance knowledge, immigrants can ensure that

²² MPI Fact Sheet # 21. The USCIS Ombudsman notes that "FBI name checks, one of the security screening tools used by USCIS, continue to significantly delay adjudication of immigration benefits for many customers, hinder backlog reduction efforts, and may not achieve their intended national security objectives. FBI name checks may be the single biggest obstacle to the timely and efficient delivery of immigration benefits, and the problem of long-pending FBI name check cases worsened during the reporting period." U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services Ombudsman. 2007. *Annual Report 2007*. June 11. 37.

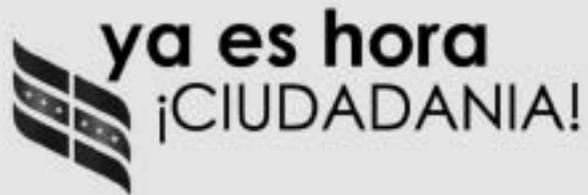
OUTREACH AND EDUCATION***Ya Es Hora ¡Ciudadania!***

“Ya Es Hora ¡Ciudadania!” (“It’s About Time, Citizenship!”), is a large-scale, national outreach campaign to encourage millions of eligible Latino U.S. residents to naturalize and vote.

The campaign started as a collaboration between the National Association of Latino Elected Officials Educational Fund (NALEO), the National Council of La Raza (NCLR), and Univisión Communications, Inc., the largest Spanish-language broadcast network in the United States. It began in early 2007 as immigrants and their supporters pondered how to build upon the energy of the massive immigrant rights demonstrations of the previous year and the rallying cry, “Today we march, tomorrow we vote!” Discussions convened by NALEO included representatives from the Spanish-language media, unions, and community groups. These discussions quickly led to the outline of the *Ya Es Hora* campaign. Its goals included creating a sense of urgency within the Latino community about naturalizing, and providing information and connecting eligible immigrants to organizations and other resources that can help with the application process.

The participation of large media partners has been an essential component of the *Ya Es Hora* campaign. Univisión alone reaches 80 percent of Spanish-language TV viewers in the United States—about 25 million viewers a week—mostly in major urban areas. Entravisión, another broadcast partner, reaches additional rural areas not served by Univisión. A third participant, ImpreMedia, is a conglomerate of Spanish-language print media that includes many major Spanish-language newspapers in the United States. The media campaign has included short spots with Latino celebrities encouraging viewers to naturalize. Each of the media partners have developed and incorporated citizenship content into their regular programming. For instance, Univisión integrates stories about the importance of citizenship into its news segments. All of the partners have developed longer programs or articles describing the eligibility requirements, the application process, and the actual exam.

Recognizing that media outreach would create a high demand for information about citizenship, the partner organizations created a national infrastructure to provide assistance. An existing toll free number, 888-ve-y-vota (“go and vote”) was expanded into a year-round resource, with a dedicated team of operators providing basic information and referrals to callers who had seen the number in the media campaign. They also created a website, www.yaeshora.info, with information and resources. Visitors to the bilingual website can order information packets developed by NALEO and the Service



Employees International Union to help newcomers start the application process.

Knowing that many immigrants would need direct assistance with their applications, the project developed partnerships with local groups that could provide in-person assistance. These included private immigration service groups, charitable legal services organizations, and community-based nonprofits identified through an extensive networking effort. To participate, each entity had to sign a memorandum of understanding (MOU) agreeing to certain terms for participation in the *Ya Es Hora* campaign, e.g., not charging more than a certain maximum fee for processing an application. In return, the groups are included in the database of partner organizations to which callers are referred.

The *Ya Es Hora* campaign successfully motivated immigrants to file more than one million new applications for citizenship in 2007. Its impact was especially large in regions with extensive Spanish-media presence and community organizations that could provide assistance. For example, the Los Angeles USCIS offices saw a doubling of citizenship applications in the first three months of 2007 compared with the same period in the previous year.²³ While the push for naturalization continues, the campaign for 2008 will expand to *Ya Es Hora: Ve Y Vota* (“It’s About Time: Go and Vote”), with the goal of having at least 9.2 million Latinos vote in the 2008 elections, a 20 percent increase from 2004.²⁴

Ya Es Hora: Ve Y Vota Campaign Strategy

The campaign is also being adapted to the requirements of communities in specific regions. SEIU Local 615, for example, with a membership that includes many immigrant building service workers, has been working with many immigrant communities in the Massachusetts area on the campaign. To embrace the diversity of the communities in the area, the logo for the local campaign has 10 different languages, and the campaign is called “It’s About Time” in addition to “Ya Es Hora.”

²³ Jordan, Miriam. 2007. “Univision Gives Citizenship Drive an Unusual Lift.” *The Wall Street Journal*. May 10.

²⁴ Interview with Erica Bernal, senior director of Civic Engagement, NALEO Educational Fund, April 14, 2008.

they maintain the appropriate documentation, as well as avoid activities that would render them ineligible.

Effective outreach programs not only describe the benefits of citizenship but also provide specific information about how to prepare for the application and test. Such programs should refer interested individuals to adult education institutions or community-based organizations that provide ESL and citizenship preparation classes; to websites and other resources with information about the naturalization process (ideally in the native language of the target population); and to naturalization-assistance organizations or scheduled citizenship workshops.

Application Assistance

Application assistance is needed to help immigrants determine whether they are eligible and what information they will need to complete the citizenship application. Depending on their personal circumstances, this can be a complicated process, and the consequences of misunderstanding one's eligibility or making mistakes in completing the application can be severe. In the last few years, the denial rates have been higher than at any time since the 1920s; approximately 12 percent of applications were denied in 2007.²⁵ The complexity of the process and the potential for error speaks to the importance of having well-qualified assistance to help immigrants decide whether, when, and how they should apply for citizenship.

Most citizenship assistance programs will help interested immigrants decide whether they should apply. Answering this question requires an initial determination of whether an individual is legally eligible for naturalization, and if so, whether there are any legal complications that need to be addressed. If there are special circumstances, most programs will refer the individual to an immigration attorney, either one who works with the program or who is in private practice.

Beyond the legal issues, citizenship assistance programs also assess whether an

immigrant's English skills are sufficient to pass the citizenship test. If an immigrant's English skills are not adequate, s/he will be referred to classes or tutoring. (See the "Test Preparation" section on page 22).

Such services can be provided through regular clinics. However, in response to the growing demand for naturalization and the limited availability of free or low-fee legal services in most communities, many organizations are using a larger-scale model known as the naturalization group application workshop. These are usually one-day community events that bring professionals, trained volunteers, and community members together to efficiently and effectively assist a large number of potential immigrants.

A well-run naturalization workshop requires planning and coordination, especially if it involves multiple organizations. Proper outreach and preparation for the event, as well as training of volunteers, is paramount to ensure that the event runs as smoothly as possible and avoids unnecessary errors in the application process. If at all possible, legal immigration experts—immigration attorneys or Board of Immigration Appeals (BIA) accredited representatives—should be included to do final reviews of applications, answer questions from volunteers, and consult in difficult cases. These workshops should also include information about classes and other resources to improve English skills and prepare for the civics test.

Experienced practitioners believe that naturalization workshops should be offered on a regular basis in targeted communities. Conducting workshops regularly allows assistance programs to build visibility and credibility, as well as sustain a base of expertise and a pool of experienced volunteers. Suggestions for organizing such events are detailed in greater length in publications from the Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc. (CLINIC).²⁶

Finally, good citizenship assistance programs should have a system for tracking applications in order to remind applicants of upcoming deadlines, scheduled interviews, or other tasks to complete the

BIA accreditation

BIA accreditation allows non-attorney advocates with a certain level of experience in and knowledge of immigration law to provide legal advice and representation on immigration matters. BIA-accredited individuals can only offer legal advice and services while working for a BIA-recognized organization, which must be a non-profit, charitable, or social service related. Once fully accredited, an individual can provide legal advice and represent clients before the Department of Homeland Security, USCIS, immigration courts, and the BIA.

process. Their data systems should be capable of tracking individual outcomes (e.g., number of applications filed, interviews completed, applications rejected and reasons why, etc.). This information allows providers to assess the effectiveness of their programs and to identify areas in which immigrants may need more assistance to pass the citizenship test.

Other than the most straightforward applications, the potential consequences of mistakes during the application process can be grave. Improperly filed applications can lead to delays; in some cases an applicant may need to reapply and pay the fees again. More severe consequences could be a finding of fraud, which would render the applicant ineligible. At worst, an application by an ineligible immigrant could lead to deportation proceedings.

These complexities underscore the importance of legal input. Of course, programs must balance limited resources. At a minimum, it is important to at least have well-qualified lawyers train staff. Lawyers should be present at group application workshops to sign off on applications, and complicated cases should

²⁵ Preston, Julia. 2008. "Perfectly Legal Immigrants Until They Applied for Citizenship." *New York Times*. April 12.

²⁶ Chenoweth and Burdick, *A More Perfect Union* 93-100 and Becker, Aliza. 2006. *Citizenship for Us: A Handbook on Naturalization and Citizenship*, 4th ed. Washington, D.C.: Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc.

Technology Greasing the Wheels

Technology is an increasingly important aspect of the naturalization process. Curricula, self-study guides, interactive modules, and video materials are available online at www.USCIS.gov and other websites. (See the Resources section of this guidebook available at www.gcir.org.) Likewise, various USCIS forms are available online, and some USCIS forms can be filed online. The use of online resources will only increase in the future, although the utility of these resources will depend on their accessibility to low-income and limited English proficient immigrants.

Laptops at naturalization workshops can speed up data entry into immigration forms and can reduce the possibility for errors or illegible handwriting. Portable photocopiers are helpful for workshops in the field to avoid the possibility of lost paperwork.

In addition, good databases are essential for organizations providing naturalization assistance, whether through clinics or group workshops. Data should be gathered to track applications and to remind applicants of upcoming deadlines, scheduled interviews, or other tasks to complete the process. Individual contact information is also crucial for ongoing outreach and support for a range of services beyond naturalization assistance. Data systems should be capable of tracking individual and aggregate outcomes (e.g., number of applications filed, interviews completed, applications rejected, and reasons why) in order to evaluate effectiveness and indicate areas of further need, both on the service and advocacy fronts. Ease of use and confidentiality are key concerns with these databases. These factors have driven the design and use of databases utilized by experienced naturalization services providers, such as those in the CLINIC network.

Other innovative uses of technology are still evolving. Text messaging, for example, can help providers stay in touch with immigrants who may maintain a more consistent cell phone number than a physical address.

be referred to immigration attorneys for individual consultation and/or representation. Organizations have found volunteer attorneys through the American Immigration Lawyers Association, which has sponsored naturalization workshops,²⁷ as well as through local bar associations. Similarly, lawyers from CLINIC help train volunteers and attend and support naturalization workshops.

Test Preparation

Preparing for the test and the interview is an essential component of the naturalization process. Fear of failing this test dissuades many eligible immigrants from applying. For those who do apply, English proficiency and civics are usually the major hurdles.

Assessing a Person's English and U.S. History Skills

The type of test assistance needed by each applicant varies greatly and depends on a number of factors, such as the person's oral English proficiency, literacy skills in both English and native language, and level of education.²⁸ An applicant may also have a disability or other issues that compromise her or his ability to properly prepare. Effective citizenship assistance programs usually assess whether an immigrant is ready to naturalize and the level of services needed. Given their limited resources, these programs often need to determine which applicants are most likely to benefit from a formal or structured citizenship course, while referring others to self-study or basic ESL classes.

While practitioners agree that an initial assessment is important, there is no widely used assessment tool. Many federally funded adult education institutions require potential ESL students to take a formal English proficiency test for placement purposes, and these tests are excellent for evaluating a potential applicant's English skills. However, most community-based citizenship programs do not have the resources or time to administer formal tests. Instead, their assessments often consist of (1) collecting relevant

background information about the applicant (e.g., age, education level, any disabilities); (2) conducting an informal assessment of a person's oral English skills through an interview process; and (3) presenting applicants with civics questions and dictation sentences taken from the USCIS study guide. Although such reviews may not be perfect, most practitioners believe they provide enough information upon which to base a recommendation on how an interested applicant should prepare for the test.

Study Options

Self-Study Activities. A number of immigrants will be able to pass the citizenship test with limited assistance. For example, individuals with at least a high-school education, who are capable of conversing in everyday subjects in English, and who can read and write simple narratives are good candidates for self-study programs.²⁹ In practice, many service providers offer these individuals an overview of the application process, help them complete the initial application, and provide them self-study materials. Some providers also offer limited tutoring to this group of applicants, largely to help them prepare for the interview. Given the large number of immigrants who prepare for the citizenship test without formal classes, it is surprising that there are relatively few distance-learning resources that offer Internet- or DVD-based learning tools.

²⁷ American Immigration Lawyers Association. "AILA Announces Citizenship Day 2008." AILA InfoNet Doc. No. 08040972 (posted Apr. 9)

²⁸ Weintraub, Lynne. 2007. "Different Learner, Different Services," in Chenoweth and Burdick, *A More Perfect Union* 59.

²⁹ These individuals' English skills often are described as "low advanced" or "high advanced" (levels 5 to 6) on the National Reporting System for Adult Education (NRS) for ESL students. The NRS is an outcome-based reporting system for the state-administered, federally funded, adult education programs developed by the U.S. Department of Education. The NRS divides educational functioning into six levels for ESL, with one being the lowest and six the highest. The ESL levels describe speaking and listening skills and basic reading and writing skills that can be expected from a person functioning at that level. For more information, see www.nrsweb.org.

Additional ESL Instruction. Some immigrants may not be ready to take the test due to their limited English skills. Immigrants who are at the beginning stages of learning oral English and have limited literacy skills are unlikely to pass the English components of the test,³⁰ and it will be difficult for them to learn the civics content. In some localities, citizenship programs designed for special populations, such as the elderly or refugees, may offer specific classes even for those with very limited English proficiency.

Preparatory Courses and Programs.

Applicants capable of understanding and responding to simple phrases and reading simple materials on familiar subjects as well as immigrants whose English skills are good but have limited formal education are most likely to benefit from a preparatory program. Citizenship classes vary greatly, and there is no one-size-fits-all approach. However, practitioners generally agree that good programs share these qualities:

- The content of the class needs to address the specific learning needs of the individuals being served. Most programs teach (1) civics vocabulary and concepts, including the specific questions on the USCIS list; (2) oral and written English skills, including the ability to write relevant sentences during the interview; (3) test-taking skills; and (4) general preparation for the interview. Depending on the skill level of the learners, citizenship classes typically range from 20 to 50 hours of class time. Courses that try to raise learners' English skills require more time.
- Ideally, citizenship classes should be taught or overseen by professionally trained adult educators or ESL teachers. While a number of community-based citizenship classes use volunteer teachers, practitioners report that without training or ongoing assistance from an experienced teacher, volunteer

A Project That Shines

The passage of the 1996 welfare reform law put at risk many legal immigrants' access to federally funded health care and social service programs. Among the most vulnerable populations were low-income, elderly immigrants. Many resided in the United States for years but had not naturalized because they did not think they could pass the citizenship test. At that time, most would have lost their eligibility for safety-net programs unless they naturalized. Out of this crisis emerged a highly innovative, service-learning project to help elderly immigrants overcome these barriers and engage more actively in their communities.

Founded by the Center for Intergenerational Learning at Temple University, Project SHINE (Students Helping in the Naturalization of Elders) recruits and trains college students to tutor older immigrants who are eligible to become citizens. The project started with higher-education partners in Philadelphia, Boston, Chicago, Miami, and San Francisco. While each site operated its own local program, all of them worked with community-based organizations, ESL and citizenship service providers, and adult-education schools. Student volunteers helped elderly immigrants through one-on-one tutoring or in small groups.

With support from various federal government grants, the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, and local funders, Project SHINE eventually expanded to 18 sites across the country. Over time, its focus encompassed other areas, including efforts by some local projects to provide health literacy instruction to the elderly. From 1997 to 2007, over 9,000 students provided services to 40,000 immigrants and refugees.

One of the most vibrant sites has been the service-learning program jointly operated by City College of San Francisco and San Francisco State University. Each year, the program provides over 200 volunteers with real-life experience to complement their academic studies. Volunteers become language "coaches" to more than 1,800 elderly ESL students.

Each coach receives a two-hour training session at the beginning of the project, as well as ongoing support through meetings and communications with peers and mentors. Participants are assigned to an ESL, citizenship, or literacy class to provide two hours of tutoring-related activities each week. In citizenship classes, these language coaches frequently work with elders to review civics questions, practice oral and written English, or conduct mock citizenship interviews.

Many volunteers report developing relationships with the elderly that extend beyond the classroom. Some have accompanied immigrants to citizenship interviews. Others have attended swearing-in ceremonies to celebrate the elders' journey to becoming U.S. citizens. Like many volunteers, project leader and volunteer Chong Hong is herself an immigrant who is committed to helping elderly residents gain a permanent foothold in the United States. "I feel a sense of pride when one of my elderly Chinese students returns to my class and informs me that he passed the exam and was successful in becoming a U.S. citizen," says Ms. Hong. "As a Chinese immigrant, I am very thankful for all that I can do to help my community."

³⁰ These individuals are usually described as "Beginning ESL Literacy" or "Beginning ESL," levels 1 to 2 on the NRS.

“We’re seeing thousands and thousands of people investing a year of their time to come to [English] class four hours a week. This paints a different image of who immigrants are in this country.”

Jared Rivera, LA Voice

teachers often have difficulty managing large classes and/or teaching individuals with varying backgrounds and skills.

- Tutoring can be an effective way of preparing immigrants, such as the elderly or people with limited education, who have difficulty learning in classroom settings. For these individuals, one-on-one or small group preparation can be less intimidating and more conducive to their learning style. Practitioners agree that tutoring is an excellent role for volunteers, especially those who have gone through the naturalization process. These individuals can address concerns about the process. Many community-based citizenship courses frequently partner with local literacy councils to help identify people who can tutor or help with instruction.
- If possible, citizenship courses should also address the general barriers that keep many immigrants from participating in adult education classes. Examples include, providing child care options, helping with transportation, and scheduling classes so they are convenient for working adults.

Loan Programs and Fee Waivers

As noted previously, the high cost of the citizenship application, currently \$675, is a major deterrent to many otherwise eligible immigrants. Although uncommon, certain programs attempt to assist immigrants in paying the fee. The NALEO Educational Fund, for example, with support in 2000 from the Open Society Institute,

COLLABORATIVE PROJECTS

The Central Valley Project and Its Legacy

The Central Valley Partnership for Citizenship (CVP) is a seminal effort to empower immigrants through increased civic engagement, including naturalization support. Funded from 1996 to 2003 by the James Irvine Foundation, the project focused on California’s Central Valley, the most ethnically diverse rural region in the United States and home to several hundred thousand immigrants. It is the richest agricultural region in the world yet is also characterized by pervasive poverty.

The project involved a broad cohort of immigrant-serving Central Valley organizations across a broad geographic area. More established groups—such as the Immigrant Legal Resource Center, the California Rural Legal Assistance Foundation, and the American Friends Service Committee—worked in collaboration with smaller community-based organizations to promote citizenship, immigrant leadership development, and civic engagement on issues affecting local communities. The majority of participants in the CVP were Mexicans who had acquired LPR status as a result of the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1996; Hmong and other immigrant and refugee communities were also involved.

Helping eligible immigrants obtain citizenship was an important CVP goal. Individual application assistance by appointment was provided by several of the organizations, supported by the legal

expertise of the Immigrant Legal Resource Center and California Rural Legal Assistance. Naturalization workshops were also held; for the more remote communities without consistent access to legal immigration services, roving workshops went at least once to each county.³² An evaluation of the CVP found that it supported the filing of 10,000 naturalization applications and identified an additional 3,500 children who could potentially derive citizenship from a naturalized parent. The figures are quite an accomplishment given the challenges faced by the target population, which was largely low-income with limited English skills.

The CVP has scaled back substantially due to reduced funding, but it has left a significant legacy that speaks to the importance of engaging a range of groups in collaborations, including multi-ethnic and faith-based organizations. The work of organizations in the faith-based PICO network³³ is an example of current efforts that have roots in the CVP.

³² Chenoweth and Burdick, *A More Perfect Union* 108. Even though the CVP was relatively well funded, its attempts to create a one-stop center providing both application assistance and language training were limited by the degree of resources required for language training. As a result, combined ESL and citizenship instruction were regularly available in only two of the 17 counties covered.

³³ PICO is a national organization of faith-based community organizations working to create innovative solutions to problems facing urban, suburban, and rural communities.

administers an Emma Lazarus Loan Fund that provides low-cost loans to cover the application fee. Ninety percent of the loans are repaid, and these resources are then disbursed to other applicants. NALEO is currently attempting to engage banks and other corporate entities to support fee microloans. ICIRR’s New Americans Initiative also has connections to local

institutions that provide low-cost loans for application fees.

In addition, fee waivers are available at the discretion of USCIS if an applicant provides lengthy supporting documentation that s/he is unable to pay. The average approval rate is around 80 percent.³¹ USCIS has wide discretion over approval, and there is no standard

form that would make the application and adjudication process simpler. To facilitate applications for waivers, naturalization programs targeting low-income populations should also provide assistance in gathering supporting documents and for making a convincing case for the waiver.

“When people become citizens, they start to see this country as their own and they become more active in the community. Citizenship is a good way to build community leaders.”

Alberto Velázquez,
North Valley Sponsoring Committee

Regional Collaborations

Given the range of activities and resources required for successful naturalization efforts, model programs often involve collaboration among organizations with complementary skills and functions. Community-based organizations with ties to local immigrant groups can partner with a legal services provider, for example. These partnerships can have numerous potential benefits. They can pool resources across a wide geographic area and across a wide range of groups in different communities with varying degrees of capacity. Collaborations should also tap into national support organizations for training, technical support, news updates, advocacy support, and conference opportunities. Outreach efforts can likewise be leveraged to create an economy of scale for naturalization workshops. Support and training can be delivered in a cost-effective manner, and centralized data collection can help to evaluate the efficacy of the effort. In addition, regional collaborations can be an effective way to attract and leverage broader funding.

COLLABORATIVE PROJECTS

***PICO: Transforming Immigrants into Engaged Citizens*³⁴**

A campaign to naturalize and integrate immigrants, and give all marginalized groups a unified voice to effect local policy changes, began as many efforts do, with a modest first step. In this case, it began with a listening campaign that eventually included the voices of 1,000 immigrants living in the northern reaches of California. When these individuals were asked what their primary concern was, their resounding reply was the burdensome process of naturalization. The early success of this campaign would eventually reverberate down the state, ignite a similar effort in Los Angeles, and inspire seven PICO affiliates in five Bay Area counties to join forces as they now attempt to help immigrants achieve their dream of U.S. citizenship.

Momentum Began in Northern California

The painstaking one-on-one interviews conducted in 1999 mobilized immigrants in Sacramento and Yolo counties, two of the eight counties the North Valley Sponsoring Committee (NVSC) serves—and convinced them that they had a right to be heard. A year later, NVSC rallied 5,000 individuals to march on the Immigration and Naturalization Services building in Sacramento. As they passed in front of the office, they waved pictures of individuals for whom community members—both U.S. citizens and LPRs—had submitted immigration applications while they were children and who, as adults, were still waiting. A few months later, 3,000 gathered at the Sacramento Convention Center where they met with then-INS Director Susan Curda, who agreed to conduct all citizenship tests and interviews at local churches and allow translators, making the process less intimidating.

In 2001, NVSC issued announcements at three member churches in Sacramento and Yolo counties. An estimated 200

people attended a workshop during which attorneys from the California Rural Legal Assistance Foundation provided an orientation. Naturalization forms in Spanish were distributed, and one week later about 60 percent of the individuals returned. Volunteers from the University of California, Davis helped newcomers transfer the data from the Spanish forms onto the English N-400, which attorneys from CRLA and the Immigrant Legal Resource Center reviewed.

To prepare these newcomers for their tests, adult schools agreed to provide teachers at local churches to teach ESL and civics, with NVSC augmenting that instruction with half-hour sessions on the PICO organizing model. “I teach them that civic participation is a part of becoming a citizen,” Alberto Velázquez, NVSC executive director, explains. Volunteers from member congregations also tutored newcomers nervous about their English interviews. In counties where adult education wasn’t available, NVSC used volunteers or contracted with teachers and used the adult school system’s standard curriculum.

Velázquez says that the majority of the immigrants they worked with were low-income agricultural workers. Most migrated from countries with very little education, if any at all, and they were mostly Latino, Hmong, or Filipino. Their English proficiency varied from poor to advanced. For individuals with little to no formal education, the six to eight hours of weekly coursework they committed to was rigorous.

continued on next page

³¹ Chenoweth and Burdick, *A More Perfect Union* 40.

³⁴ Telephone interviews with Cathy Cha, Evelyn & Walter Haas, Jr. Fund; Adam Kruggel, Contra Costa Interfaith Supporting Community Organization; Jared Rivera, LA Voice; and Alberto Velázquez, North Valley Sponsoring Committee. A detailed profile of PICO’s work on the issues of naturalization and civic participation is available to GCIR members at www.gcir.org.

COLLABORATIVE PROJECTS**PICO** *continued from previous page*

Since 2001 when the effort began in earnest, more than 2,500 people have applied for citizenship and of that number, 1,800 have naturalized. With the help of each new group of citizens, the campaign has spread to Colusa, Yuba, Sutter, Tehama, Shasta, Butte, and Glenn counties. They have even helped some immigrants from the San Joaquin Valley.

LA Follows NVSC's Example

Disappointed by the collapse of reform and wanting to hold onto the excitement of the earlier marches, in January 2007, PICO affiliate LA Voice adopted the NVSC model. The organization partnered with Univisión's "Ya Es Hora ¡Ciudadanía!" ("It's About Time, Citizenship!") campaign for messaging to reach as wide a Hispanic audience as possible. Other partners included Los Angeles City College, Santa Monica City College, the National Association of Latino Elected Officials (NALEO), the Consejo de Federaciones Mexicana en Norteamérica (COFEM), and the Coalition for Human Rights of Los Angeles (CHIRLA). Members of LA Voice advertised the campaign through their member congregations in East Los Angeles. Their first orientation drew 200 people, many of whom waited six hours in line to have their papers reviewed. "I'd never seen anything like that before," says Jared Rivera, LA Voice executive director. Rivera says their constituents are 90 percent Latino and 10 percent "multi-ethnic," with the Asian community dominating.

Rivera estimates that 1,000 new citizenship applications have been filed so far. Similar to the NVSC strategy, classes are taught at church venues with LA Voice teaching the PICO organizing model and the congregations providing English tutors. Rivera says

immigrants' dedication to the coursework is a testament to the fact that newcomers want to become integrated. "We're seeing thousands and thousands of people investing a year of their time to come to class four hours a week. This paints a different image of who immigrants are in this country," he says.

Engaged Citizens

The NVSC and LA Voice efforts emboldened the Bay Area PICO affiliates to initiate their collaborative project in a region of California rich in diversity. It is an ambitious endeavor that hopes to assist 5,000 lawful permanent residents with the naturalization process and lead to the adoption of immigrant integration policies in two cities.

All three campaigns share one over-arching goal: to help immigrants integrate and be effective in addressing local policy issues. To prepare immigrants for this transition, Velázquez says that the organizing curriculum is critical. "At least they start to hear about organizing and realize that they have to become involved in their communities," he says. This is what attracted the support of the Evelyn and Walter Haas, Jr. Fund, says Program Officer Cathy Cha. "I like the way it seamlessly transitions to issues of importance to immigrant families." The Haas, Jr. Fund has funded PICO projects for the past 15 years and currently supports the LA Voice and Bay Area endeavors. Although the Bay Area campaign is nascent, Cha believes the precedent set in Northern California and LA demonstrate a successful track record.

"When people become citizens," Velázquez says, "they start to see this country as their own and they become more active in the community. Citizenship is a good way to build community leaders."

COLLABORATIVE PROJECTS

The New Americans Initiative

The New Americans Initiative (NAI) is a groundbreaking partnership between the State of Illinois and the Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights (ICIRR), bringing together a broad collaborative of community organizations to assist lawful permanent residents in pursuing citizenship and engagement in the civic life of Illinois.

Illinois is the fifth largest immigrant-receiving state in the United States. Approximately 26 percent of the population is either foreign-born or children of immigrants. Of Illinois' 1.6 million immigrants, only 600,000 are U.S. citizens. According to 2005 Census data, approximately 404,000 immigrants are currently eligible to become citizens, and over 140,000 will become eligible shortly as they meet residency or age requirements. In recognition of these trends, the NAI was started to encourage and help immigrants naturalize.

Following the release of a report by the state's Joint Legislative Task Force on Immigrants and Refugees, which examined the barriers to immigrant integration, Illinois Governor Rod Blagojevich proposed appropriating \$3 million in state funds each year to support NAI beginning fiscal year 2004-05. The Illinois Department of Human Services grants these funds to ICIRR, which in turn re-grants to other community-based organizations.

Through the NAI, community-based organizations are supported to provide coordinated services to support immigrants through each step in becoming a U.S. citizen, including application preparation, legal counseling, and English and civics training. It also targets immigrant communities that have greater educational needs and reaches out to communities that live in remote areas or are otherwise underserved.

As a first step, extensive demographic research was conducted on the number of LPRs statewide eligible to naturalize, their place of birth, year of entry, and degree of English proficiency. Maps were created reflecting the location of LPRs in Chicago neighborhoods, suburbs, and elsewhere in the state. Particular focus was given on reaching out to the ethnic groups with the lowest naturalization rate and English proficiency, as well as underserved geographic areas with significant populations of LPRs.

Community-based organizations can seek NAI funding through a competitive process. Each proposal is evaluated based on merit, geographic priorities, and the size of the population to be served. The first round of funding included support for 11 collaborations involving 51 organizations to provide outreach, civics education, and legal services for naturalization applicants. Staff of funded organizations attended meetings to coordinate the service delivery plan between groups and regions, learned about standardized data collection procedures and how to store information on a web-based database, and received outreach materials. Among other

areas, trainings also covered demographic research results, outreach, naturalization law, naturalization workshops, and volunteer recruitment and training methods.³⁵

An intensive public education campaign was conducted involving coordinated outreach regarding the benefits of citizenship. Television spots were aired prior to large group naturalization workshops, and a toll-free number, which provided information regarding eligibility requirements and other pertinent information, was publicized. Partner organizations also received materials so they could conduct targeted outreach in their own communities.

The response reflected the degree of unmet need. During the 2005-2008 fiscal years, the community-based organizations hosted 537 citizenship workshops throughout Illinois, recruited and trained 6,685 volunteers, and helped 32,411 LPRs apply for citizenship.³⁶ As the program continues its second round of funding, organizers cite the benefits of coordination, which leverages resources and outreach efforts and allows for a greater impact than otherwise would be possible. They are also adapting to lessons learned during the first round. In particular, there is a need to maintain flexibility and to remain sensitive to the nuances of different communities. Some newer communities, for example, are more challenging to reach. Their presence may not yet be reflected in demographic data; in addition, they may be uncomfortable with other communities, limiting their attendance at joint workshops. To better serve such isolated communities, jointly developed materials are being utilized in workshops that are specific to those populations. Rural areas are also an important focus with certain challenges. More outreach efforts may be required to build trust with those groups not familiar with mainstream immigrant-serving organizations. In addition, organizers note that efforts targeting populations in remote rural areas should take into account the potential for higher costs, including staff travel costs to those regions.³⁷

Another surprising discovery was that community members primarily tended to rely on word of mouth in deciding to participate in workshops and other programs. This finding will guide future outreach through an increased effort to engage ethnic media and trusted organizations within specific communities. It also implies that newly naturalized citizens can become the best spokespeople for naturalization.³⁸

³⁵ Chenoweth and Burdick, *A More Perfect Union* 115.

³⁶ Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights. 2008. *New Americans Report*. Chicago, IL: Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights. March.

³⁷ Telephone interview with Flavia Jimenez, director, New Americans Initiative; Luvia Quinones, assistant director, New Americans Initiative; and Fred Tsao, policy director, Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights, April 17, 2008.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

Quantity and Quality

High-volume citizenship workshops like ones supported by the New Americans Initiative point to a significant issue of which funders should be aware: the need to balance quantity with quality control. Attorneys specializing in immigration law should play a role in the development of such workshops. They can help devise screening tools to identify applications that may require individualized legal review, as well as train BIA-accredited advocates and paralegals to recognize and flag any application that could present legal problems. Given the complexity of the eligibility criteria and the potentially dire consequences of mistakes, experienced immigration attorneys should be available to provide final application reviews at the workshops. Even with screening tools, paralegals and other staff reviewing applications at the workshops may not be able to catch all red flags. Access to immigration legal expertise can be a challenge in rural areas and new immigrant destinations that have a limited immigration service infrastructure. Nevertheless, proper legal review is essential to ensure that applicants are not inadvertently placed in legal jeopardy and that their immigration status is not unintentionally compromised.

In Summary: Getting Started on Funding

Naturalization programs should be driven by the needs of the community and built upon and leverage available resources. Foundations considering funding naturalization efforts can take the following steps to get started:

Assess community needs and service capacity. The first steps are to understand current needs of immigrants in the community and identify organizations that are providing naturalization assistance services as well as those that have capacity or could develop capacity with additional

funding. This information is central to developing a funding strategy and may be available from experienced funders (private and public) and local immigrant networks or coalitions. In communities with less developed immigrant resources, it may be necessary to gather information through conversations, interviews, surveys, and analysis of census and other publicly available data.

Identify and cultivate funding partners.

Seek colleagues in public and private philanthropy to examine the critical need for and the importance of naturalization and its relevance to other issues of broader community concern. Explore ways for building or strengthening the service and advocacy infrastructure to promote naturalization now and also prepare for the implementation of immigration reform measures in the future. Encourage fellow grantmakers to consider funding naturalization and discuss with them the possibility of forming a funder collaborative to pool resources and leverage impact.

Develop a funding strategy. Consider multiple strategies to build a multidimensional naturalization infrastructure.

- Support various forms of naturalization services so that a network of services is available to immigrants.
- Fund naturalization services that reach various immigrant populations in your community. Consider how differences in language, ethnicity, age, gender, literacy level, employment, physical ability, and geography may need to be factored in to assure widespread access.
- Encourage organizations to seek BIA recognition and to have their staff accredited. Grants for legal library resources, paralegal training, and attorney oversight/consultation – all of which strengthen applications for BIA recognition and accreditation – help assure that the highest quality service is provided.

- Maximize the impact of finite resources by making grants that increase service capacity among individual organizations and promote coordination and collaboration among relevant immigrant-serving organizations.
- Fund programmatic approaches that engage immigrants in community problem solving and civic life. Programs that integrate voter education, registration, and civic participation as part of the naturalization process lay the groundwork for illustrating how naturalized immigrants can support and strengthen the broader community.
- Use the power of philanthropic leadership to engage elected officials and civic and business leaders in discussing how community resources can better support immigrant naturalization. For instance, community colleges, libraries, workplaces, and houses of worship are all potential sites for ESL and application workshops.
- Support the ability of advocates to monitor and address USCIS policies, processes, and procedures. Consider supporting a national independent task force to monitor policy development and implementation and to facilitate communication between citizenship stakeholders and USCIS. Fund national and local advocates to track application approval and denial rates and processing time, and to document the experiences of applicants. Support communications and advocacy efforts to publicize findings, educate elected officials and policymakers, and press for better service.

Share successes and lessons learned. Ask grantees to report on lessons learned about what works and what needs improvement, so that their experience informs future funding. Featuring them in public forums to educate other funders, civic leaders, and the media can exponentially increase the impact of funding.

5 Collaborate for Leverage, Influence, and Impact

The Case for Collaborative Funding

Collaborative funding¹ is a proven approach to building an infrastructure to address the needs of immigrants, leverage their contributions, and promote their integration. Collaboratives offer ways for foundations to design and implement a coordinated strategy to address challenges that one foundation alone would not be able to do as effectively. Most funding collaboratives are formed to respond to a particular policy change or community opportunity, e.g., the passage of immigrant- or refugee-specific legislation. Most are established with a finite life span, yet some evolve to respond to ongoing issues, while others transform themselves to address new needs.

GCIR believes that funding collaboratives are central to increasing the availability of English instruction, legal services, and efforts to promote naturalization and civic participation. Such programmatic endeavors cannot be ramped up significantly through individual grants or philanthropic investment alone. Doing so requires deliberate planning and coordination. To this end, funding collaboratives can coordinate grantmaking and capacity-building strategies and position foundations to leverage both private and public dollars, engage multiple sectors, and play a much more visible leadership role. This approach can draw greater attention to the issues, increase the short- and long-term capacity of the field, and, ultimately, make a critical difference in expanding opportunities for immigrant integration. A collaborative funding approach is relevant to and offers many benefits for both funders in traditional immigrant strongholds and those working in new immigrant destinations.

A focused and concentrated effort has a greater chance of making a large-scale impact. By pooling resources, collaborating foundations can make many more dollars available for grantmaking than would be possible for most individual foundations. They can employ other available tools, such as data collection, research, briefings, technical assistance, and convenings that can add important and exciting value.



JEFF GREENBERG/ALAMY

Collaboratives provide opportunities for grantmakers to learn, think, and act strategically together. Many funders cite the benefits of learning about new issues and communities, tapping into the expertise of colleagues, and learning the value of considering and balancing factors that extend beyond the ones they typically consider. For instance, a direct service funder might learn about the importance of organizing as a strategy to increase services. Funders who have participated in collaboratives also attest to making smarter decisions as a result of thinking with colleagues, who often have different funding priorities and with whom they may have never worked. To be sure, selecting the most effective strategies for making change is more complicated for a group than for a single foundation, especially when trying to balance differing perspectives and approaches, but the selection may be wiser and more ambitious efforts may be fostered with a larger pool of resources. Not surprisingly, what funders learn in this joint planning process often helps inform or shape their individual grantmaking.

Funding collaboratively can reduce risk to any one foundation and allow greater flexibility in responding to community needs. Collaboratives can offer cover for supporting issues and strategies that may either be considered controversial or fall outside the normal funding parameters of the participating foundations. If funding partners agree to set aside at least some usual limits, collaboratives can develop guidelines that aim to address the most pressing needs, rather than meet the

interests of individual foundations. Collaboratives, for example, can elect to make grants in geographic areas that are not within the funding guidelines of individual participating foundations. They may also make it easier to be responsive to needs that have not been identified by the individual funding partners or that emerge among the way.

Collaboratives can create partnerships between local and national foundations, providing a rare opportunity to work together toward shared goals. Local communities benefit from national support and a national perspective, and national funders benefit from local expertise that informs the allocation of grant dollars.

The symbolic value of foundation collaboration cannot be overstated. Because it is rare that private funders band together to make grants, collaboratives signal the importance philanthropy places on immigrant integration to policymakers, the media, and communities. They also position foundations as visible leaders in addressing critical community issues.

Staff of collaboratives often develop a depth of expertise that makes them a go-to resource for local philanthropy. With immigrant integration cutting across almost all foundations' priorities, funders within and outside the collaborative, along with partners and community groups, may call on collaborative staff for information, ideas, and insight. This can increase the effectiveness and relevance of grantmaking and any other immigrant integration initiatives that may develop.

Creating a Funding Collaborative

The impetus for the formation of a collaborative is often either an immediate crisis or a timely opportunity. Given the

¹ While collaborative funding can take other forms, this guide focuses on pooled funds created by multiple institutional donors. In addition to foundations, government, and individual donors may also be involved.

Can collaboratives leverage funding?

Yes, but there are important cautions.

A foundation can have significant direct and indirect influence in a collaborative, resulting in more dollars being awarded to an issue, method, or community it highly values.

This may be most pronounced for funders who are able to make relatively smaller contributions to the collaborative. In Chicago, legal services funders' contributions to the Fund for Immigrants and Refugees (FIR) were modest (\$100,000), but the collaborative awarded more than \$1.2 million for legal services. Restricted grants for legal services, coupled with the fact that such services were undeniably a crucial component of naturalization and other immigrant integration funding, assured that legal services were considered early on as a central focus of funding. Less directly, legal service funding was also increased beyond the life of FIR when one partner from a foundation with multiple funding interests significantly increased its grants to legal services as a result of working closely with legal funders on FIR's steering committee.

The cautions for those considering participation in a collaborative to leverage are threefold.

Not every small restricted grant will disproportionately leverage funding in the same vein. Not every restriction can be met by a collaborative.

Joining in hopes of having disproportionate influence will likely violate the spirit of true collaboration. Instead, consider how your agenda aligns with the broader goals and interests of the collaborative—and push that agenda in a respectful way and with the collaborative's mission and vision in mind.

The funder giving the most to the collaborative will be perceived as having the opportunity to exercise more influence than others—whether or not that grantmaker seeks it. Be conscious of this power, so that it does not undo or block collaboration.

time-sensitive nature, early organizing is often fast and furious, carried out by a small group with a great deal of passion for the issue. Learning from the collaborative featured in these pages, and others that have demonstrated success, those considering forming a collaborative should take deliberate steps to lay a solid foundation and establish a clear focus and direction. Doing so will increase the chance of success.

Convene a leadership group to organize the collaborative. A core group of funders must step up as the initial leaders and organizers, whether the impetus for collaborating comes from a need to respond to an immediate crisis or significant public policy change, an opportunity to secure matching funds, or a moment of heightened interest among colleagues.

Creating a new collaborative is time consuming. No one funder alone can take the lead, but a few people with a common vision and the energy to seek other partners can stimulate a successful organizing effort. Foundations that are GCIR members are the most likely prospects, along with others already funding in immigrant communities.

The leadership group should articulate the need for the collaborative and why the time is ripe for it. It should discuss how a collaborative can add enough value to outweigh the additional costs of time, staffing, and other resources needed to run a separate entity. This is a basic test that must be passed at the outset.

The early leadership group should determine the guiding principles of the collaborative and agree on the basic requirements and expectations for members. Outline the kind of grantmaking the collaborative will do, usually in general terms, and set a corresponding minimum goal for fundraising. The organizers should be careful to distinguish between necessary early decisions and those that can and should wait until a fuller group of partners has come together. The larger group's engagement in later structure and process decisions will help assure a strong sense of collective ownership.

The early organizers will secure—through the foundations for which they work and from others—the initial contributions that make the collaboration a reality. The organizing group and/or the collaborative's early funders must include recognized leaders within philanthropy—people who are widely perceived as strategic, trustworthy, and knowledgeable—who will help make the case for its importance and timeliness and influence others to join.

Ideally, this group will also include funders with ties to immigrant communities, who can tap expertise to help shape the fledgling collaboration, assure that it is intelligently focused, and serve as the earliest form of outreach for good funding applications.

Is a funders' collaborative what is needed? In one instance, funders began a collaborative, only to realize that a community nonprofit could accomplish their purposes more effectively.

Recruit a mix of donor partners who agree to work together. At this stage, the first organizers are fundraisers—perhaps an unfamiliar role. They evaluate which colleagues are most likely to be interested, analyze the value of participation from the collaborative and the prospective partner foundation's perspectives, and decide how and who should ask prospects about possible interest.

Successful collaboratives include foundations that share a commitment to immigrant integration—but may do so for different reasons and may participate at varying levels. GCIR's immigrant integration framework suggests a variety of ways that conversations with many different funders can be crafted. Diverse donors will bring a range of styles, resources, expertise, knowledge, and funding goals. Thus, the collaborative should be structured to encompass a variety of interests and to tap a wealth of resources.

Organizers should be mindful also of the ways that differences may play out in participation and decision making. For instance, corporate-giving programs and community foundations may be more sensitive to controversy, while government funders may have difficulty acting and deciding nimbly. Large and small foundations will likely have very different levels of capacity to participate. Individual donors may require more staff support than institutional ones.

An early consideration will also be of what kinds of contributions to seek. Unless the focus of collaborative grants is narrow, having at least 50 percent of all contributions unrestricted or for broadly defined use is ideal.

Identify a host organization. A collaborative must make good use of limited administrative resources. None of the examples presented in this report was structured as a freestanding organization. Instead, each is or was a special project of an established, trusted entity with tested organizational capacity.

A host organization should have the capacity to rapidly respond to the needs of the emerging collaborative and effectively administer a new and possibly large special project. It should agree to endorse the collaborative's steering committee's decisions and provide the full range of financial and management services for

a reasonable fee. Look for a host that can offer added value, such as communications capacity and civic leadership that will help to establish the collaborative's immediate credibility and position it to draw more support.

Regional associations of grantmakers and community foundations have typically served as hosts that have the trust of prospective funding partners. A host organization will have self-interest in hosting, but this must be perceived as balanced by its interest in the well-being of the community.

Note that pooled funds cannot be hosted by private foundations if other private foundation support will be sought.

Hire staff or a consultant for the collaborative.

The timing of this step will vary according to when the organizers are able to raise sufficient funding to assure the collaborative will come to life. Early paid staffing facilitates what can become burdensome for even the most enthusiastic volunteers. Staffing assures proper coordination, implementation, and that lessons learned are reaped and plowed back into the grantmaking and other work of the collaborative.

Identify knowledgeable, respected candidates who can serve as conduits of information between nonprofits and funders, between immigrant organizations and communities, and among grantmakers. Group facilitation skills, comfort with ambiguity, and the ability to convert ideas into action are all important qualities. The most effective staff/consultant will be perceived as a colleague, not a subordinate of the partners.

How much staffing is needed will depend on a variety of factors: costs, goals, the capacity of the field to be funded, the intended life span of the collaborative, and prospective funding partners' interest in joining. Greater field capacity may allow lighter staffing, but greater staff capacity will enable the collaborative to take advantage of strategic opportunities. One-time funding or a very short life span of the collaborative, such as one round of funding,

How long should a collaborative last?

The answer depends on:

- Amount and duration (one year versus multi-year) of grants made by members.
- The confidence of prospective members. For instance, funders with collaborative experience who are asked to give by trusted colleagues are more likely to make a longer commitment than a newcomer to pooled funding or a representative of a new foundation.
- Local philanthropic culture. Are there many collaboratives opening and closing over time or only a few, lasting ones? Is collaborating as yet untested?
- Terms of any challenge or matching grants that kick off the collaborative.

As the collaborative examples featured suggest, lifespan varies and may change over time.

The most practical answer is: Collaboratives should last as long as work remains to be done and as long as funders continue to contribute enough to make the costs worthwhile.

Developing an exit strategy early on is vital if the increased capacity built with collaborative dollars is to be preserved.

may require no staffing or contractual support only.

Bringing the Collaborative to Life

Once a core of funders has coalesced and the minimum goal of fundraising is reached or within sight, the partners should make decisions about the operating and grantmaking processes. To function well, a collaborative requires a high degree of shared vision, mutual respect, curiosity, and overall agreement that makes room for divergent opinions.

Decide if there is to be a role for non-funders—policymakers, representatives of community organizations, or community members. Some collaboratives are

Our foundation doesn't re-grant. Is there any role for us in a collaborative?

Your foundation could provide important support of the collaborative with a grant for a special project (e.g., grantee technical assistance or training, a special report) or operating support of the collaborative itself.

By providing some form of support, your foundation signals its commitment to immigrant integration and will have access to the learning opportunities that a collaborative presents.

composed entirely of foundation representatives. Others have included outsiders with different kinds of expertise in all or some aspects of the collaborative's activities. What makes the difference? In part, the goals of the collaborative.

A collaborative that wants to make funding decisions more transparent and to build bridges between member foundations and grantee organizations may well include community group representatives. In a community in which funder knowledge about immigration is limited, having practitioners at the table can assure better grantmaking. Including people from groups that may apply for funding can be complicated by actual or perceived conflicts of interest, but if these are addressed, the addition of seasoned expertise is invaluable. Formal confidentiality agreements should exclude reviewers with a vested interest in an applicant organization from reviewing the proposal from that organization. Such agreements should also reserve all decision-making for the funding partners to assure integrity of the process. A collaborative that seeks to influence public policy may include leaders from government, business, or the civic community.

Local norms and culture also shape membership. In some areas, philanthropy regularly works with other sectors, while in others, grantmakers tend to work with their peers. Funders experimenting for the first time with collaboration may opt to keep it simple by including only funders.

Come to agreement about contribution size, degree of participation, and decision-making authority. Some collaboratives require a minimum contribution for participation and decision making; this can be a pragmatic approach to securing adequate funding from a manageable number of funding sources. Others provide equal representation and authority to all contributors; this more democratic approach encourages broader participation.

Most collaboratives are governed by steering committees, which may include representatives of some or all of the donor

partners. Steering committees that include policy makers and others who are not donors should be clear on the role these non-donors will play and the level of authority they will have, including decision-making.

Collaboratives may establish minimum standards for participation or may be more relaxed, allowing partners to participate as they see fit. There is no right or wrong answer, but clarity and consensus at the outset are necessary for smooth operations.

To function well, a grantmakers collaborative requires a high degree of shared vision, mutual respect, curiosity, and overall agreement that makes room for divergent opinions.

Establish leadership and grantmaking structures. For operating effectiveness and efficiency, participating funders should elect one or more of their own to serve as leaders of the group, select and oversee staff, and play a lead role in soliciting support from new members. Strong governing leadership that encourages amity, participation, and continuous learning, while providing oversight and consultation to staff, is invaluable.

Partner foundations may be represented by program officers, CEOs, or trustees (or their government counterparts). Each partner delegates decision-making authority to its representative; note that government bodies may require a lengthy approval process at multiple levels.

Collaborative leadership should decide who will be involved in the development of RFPs, meetings with community members about funding opportunities, review of letters of inquiry and/or proposals, and site visits. Decisions about these matters depend on the preferences of the group. To take advantage of the learning opportunities represented by a collaborative requires a greater degree of involvement,

while a foundation that simply wants to contribute may opt for minimal participation. Again, clarity and consensus at the beginning are important for understanding each partner's role.

Clearly articulate whether nonprofit organizations may request funding from collaborative partners only through the collaborative or also from a partner foundation. Keep in mind that a common anxiety among nonprofits is that collaboratives will simply represent a rearranging of available dollars, rather than more funding. This will be a major concern among immigrant organizations that already receive direct funding from many of the collaborative partners.

Get the word out—and in. Interest from community groups is likely to be high, and the collaborative should consider how to make its intentions and capacity clear. Broad outreach and group opportunities for nonprofits to comment on, draft RFPs, or funding guidelines increase the odds that

What kinds of organizations should be funded?

Because immigrant issues cut across all categories, and because immigrant integration is a two-way process, it is important to consider whether and how to fund organizations that are not immigrant-specific.

One strategy is to support work that engages multiple communities by addressing common challenges (such as inadequate public education or workforce development) that affect both newcomers and the native-born.

Building the capacity of immigrant-led nonprofits is essential to building community capacity, assuring culturally competent and linguistically accessible services, and preserving cultural heritage.

Funding alliance-building between immigrant and non-immigrant communities is another option. Funders are likely to experiment with various mixes of funding to accomplish their goals.

good applications will be submitted. This approach will also build good will as well as a degree of community accountability.

The collaborative's staff/consultant should be visible and learn from community and civic groups that promote immigrant integration. Attending immigrant coalition meetings and community events, and participating in grantmaker- and immigration-specific education, technical assistance, and gatherings will all be of value.

Plan to check the collaborative's work along the way and document what is being learned. Collaboratives have a striking history of evaluation; many have assessed more than one aspect of their processes, projects, or impact. Undoubtedly, this has something to do with the wish of funding partners to document the effectiveness of the collaboration in which their foundations have invested money and time. It also reflects the emphasis on learning that is a central feature of most collaboratives. Collaborative evaluations are rich with lessons learned and have informed funders within and far beyond each collaborative. Many collaboratives opt to evaluate at natural points in their lifespan: after one year of funding, as the close of the initial term of the collaborative approaches, as a grant focus ends, and as the collaborative winds up.

Funding Collaborative Models

Many of the how-tos in the previous section were culled from interviews with local funding collaboratives that have focused on immigrant and refugee issues. This section profiles four local immigrant-focused collaborative funding models that illustrate the many ways in which to apply the principles of collaboration and to offer a range of ideas on how to structure and operate a funding collaborative. All four models have distinct characteristics: different missions and vision, different funding partners, different scale, different host organizations, and different life spans. As their variety suggests, there are many ways and conditions under which to

What should prospective members be asked for? Lessons learned

- Asking for two-year commitments will provide time to attend to grantmaking and joint learning, as well as create an opportunity to test the value of the collaborative, before fundraising must begin again.
- Ask members what assets they would bring to the collaborative. Money is the obvious one, but so are networks, knowledge, and insight. An awareness of the array helps create a structure that values and is valued by all participants.
- Explore how prospective members' interests might intersect with the issues the collaborative is designed to address. Be creative but engage only those funders whose interests closely match the mission and vision of the collaborative.
- Ask members to accept a streamlined reporting process, such as a common report provided once or twice a year, in lieu of having to fulfill the specific reporting requirements of each individual foundation. For lightly staffed collaboratives, this will save considerable time and resources.

organize and manage an effective, pooled grantmaking fund to meet the particular interests, opportunities, and needs of any community. GCIR believes that these models not only provide insight into the nuts and bolts, but they also illuminate the potential impact of collaboration.

Fund for New Citizens

Originally created to respond to the legalization opportunities and new employer sanctions of the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1987, the Fund for New Citizens (FNC) at The New York Community Trust began as a short-term funding initiative but continues today as the longest-standing immigrant-focused funding collaborative. Its sustained focus

“Crisis begets passion, purpose, and strategic focus. While it is challenging for philanthropy to sustain a commitment when a crisis has abated and when other competing needs persist while new ones emerge, it is imperative for collaborative partners to weigh whether the gains from past investment may be squandered by cashing in too soon or by defining commitments only in terms of emergency response. Building a legacy is a different agenda, one that has a future focus.”

Fund for Immigrants and Refugees

on issues of immigrants' legal status—an area less likely to be supported by many foundations—has led to grantmaking on a range of issues and allowed it to rapidly respond to urgent changes in immigration law and policy. Funding priorities over the years have included legal representation for detainees, asylum seekers and others in proceedings at the Immigration Court, community-based immigration clinics, and city- and state-level advocacy.

FNC has also supported organizational and leadership capacity building of immigrant-serving organizations. Its 2007 Capacity Building Program made \$285,000 in grants to 13 organizations, eight of which received second-year funding, for strategic planning, fundraising, technology, and financial management.

Seeded with grants from The New York Community Trust and the Ford Foundation, FNC has received support from a wide range of national and local funders in New York. In its first 20 years, more than 25 foundations and individual funders have contributed \$13 million to FNC, which has made some 330 grants to address the needs of New York's immigrants and their children who make up 60 percent of the city's total residents.

FNC is staffed by a part-time consultant with extensive expertise on immigration laws and issues and receives oversight by an experienced program director at The New York Community Trust. Its grantmaker members value the collaborative staff's depth of knowledge about complex immigration policy and their extensive community contacts, who help identify and respond to emerging and evolving issues. Without set funding cycles, FNC is well positioned to act on time-sensitive crises, such as opportunities for Latin American immigrants to apply for Temporary Protected Status and support for Arab, Muslim, and South Asian men subjected to the Department of Homeland Security's 2002 Special Call-in Registration Program.

FNC's successes include:

- Establishing the Immigration Representation Project, a nationally recognized collaboration of legal agencies, which to date has represented more than 3,000 low-income, detained immigrants, asylum seekers, and others facing deportation.
- Creating the New York Immigration Coalition (NYIC). With more than 200 member organizations, the NYIC is now the leading voice for immigrants in the state and a major force in national advocacy efforts.
- Developing innovative legal services partnerships that bring high-quality immigration legal assistance at trusted community-based organizations to more than 1,800 people a year.
- Providing resources and technical assistance to build the capacity of 27 grassroots, immigrant-led organizations throughout the five boroughs.
- Informing the broader funding community of urgent immigrant concerns, including attending the Special Juvenile Docket at the Immigration Court in Manhattan where juveniles in removal proceedings are processed.

FNC invites funding requests from specific groups working on issues chosen for a particular focus and releases RFPs for specific initiatives.

To minimize time spent raising funds, annual contributions of at least \$25,000 are required for membership, though all gifts are welcome. Annual giving by FNC has increased from an annual average of \$300,000 to \$500,000 in its early years to about \$1 million annually in recent years. Jane Stern, who has directed FNC from its inception notes, "Fundraising is a huge job every year and happens year-round."

Because immigration and changing demography have such widespread impact, FNC involves contributing and other philanthropic groups in program design, grant review, site visits, and briefings to help other funders understand how immigrants are part of nearly every funding portfolio. Many contributing foundations have invited FNC grantees to seek direct support from their foundations. Housed and administered by The New York Community Trust, FNC also advises individual donors to The Trust, promoting their giving to many immigrant issues and organizations. FNC considers funder and donor education an integral component of its work.

FNC has sponsored studies of immigrant access to health, the availability of and demand for English language classes, and immigrants' access to legal services. It regularly consults with grantees and other immigrant rights groups to keep informed on longstanding issues and emerging trends. In light of its expertise on immigration issues and knowledge of immigrant organizations, FNC served as advisor to the September 11th Fund on the dispersal of funds to groups serving immigrants.

Fund for Immigrants and Refugees

The Fund for Immigrants and Refugees (FIR) was created as metropolitan Chicago philanthropy's response to the disproportionate impact of 1996 welfare reform on immigrants and refugees. Early organizers were persuaded of the importance of and

"Previously, the local immigrant and refugee community, with some exceptions, has had great difficulty getting the attention of private funders.... FIR has essentially enfranchised a whole additional segment of the Chicago area community."

Ruth Belzer, *Evaluation of the Grantmaking Process, 1999*

potential for effective local responses from the nonprofit service and advocacy community and accepted an invitation from the Emma Lazarus Fund² to apply for a national matching grant. A two-year grant of \$1.5 million from the Emma Lazarus Fund leveraged, over a five-year period, \$3.3 million in support from 23 local private and public foundations and the United Way of Chicago and nearly \$2 million from the State of Illinois. In all, FIR made 175 grants in 11 rounds of funding, investing a total of \$6.3 million in services and advocacy to address the needs of immigrants and refugees impacted by welfare reform.

Using an RFP process that reflected feedback from meetings with community groups, FIR first awarded grants for naturalization services, including ESL and civics instruction, application assistance, and legal review. In its second funding cycle, FIR added grants for legal services, advocacy, and organizing. RFPs were designed to be easy to understand and to create a reasonably level playing field for all applicants, from small, emerging immigrant-based groups to larger, multi-service organizations. Each funding focus was chosen to respond to critical issues

² A past initiative of the Open Society Institute, the Emma Lazarus Fund (1996-2000) focused on combating the unfair treatment of immigrants in the United States. The Emma Lazarus Fund awarded \$50 million, largely through re-granting to local funding collaboratives and community foundations. Grants supported naturalization preparation services and legal services, including impact litigation, as well as limited related advocacy.

confronting immigrant communities and reflected both the restrictions and interests of partner funders. Regardless of the amount of its grant award, each funding partner was entitled to a seat on the FIR steering committee, which was led by two co-chairs.

After not receiving health-related applications (to meet the grant restriction of a health conversion foundation member), FIR commissioned research in its third year about the status of immigrant health needs and access in metropolitan Chicago. The report helped recruit four other health-specific funders and initiated grants to increase language access and cultural competence in health services. Unlike other areas funded, there was relatively limited capacity among immigrant health nonprofits supported for this work. FIR enriched grants with underwriting for a facilitated learning circle—a peer education, professional development, and networking opportunity—for the staff of grantee organizations.

The study of health access was one of four research reports commissioned by FIR to inform its work, educate local policymakers and the community, and for use by immigrant advocates and service providers. *The Suburban Immigrant Communities Report* was the first to gather data about the then-new phenomenon of newcomers settling directly in the suburbs, completely bypassing Chicago's longtime immigrant neighborhoods. The report was accompanied by the first map of suburban immigrant resettlement.

FIR was staffed by 1.1 FTE: an executive director and a part-time assistant. It functioned as a special project of the Donors Forum of Chicago, the regional association of grantmakers, which provided fiscal sponsorship. A steering committee comprising representatives of contributing foundations provided oversight, direction, and approval of grant recommendations.

Washington Area Partnership for Immigrants

In contrast to the traditional gateways of Chicago and New York, half of all immigrants in the Washington D.C. area arrived between 1990 and 2000. The Washington Area Partnership for Immigrants (Partnership) of The Community Foundation for the National Capital Region is an example of a funders' collaborative that responded to the challenges and opportunities encountered in a region with little history of immigration. There were few nonprofits organized to represent and meet the needs of foreign-born newcomers. Funder expertise was limited. And public systems, such as education and health care, were unprepared to address the needs of immigrants.

The Partnership was established in 1997 with start-up funding from the Emma Lazarus Fund to support naturalization services. Committed to acknowledging problems and needs and promoting understanding about the opportunities that major demographic changes bring, the Partnership expanded its scope to address systemic integration issues facing immigrants in the areas of education, employment, English-language acquisition, leadership development, and civic participation.

The Partnership's Circuit Rider Technology Program offered technical assistance that focused on technology with the goal of helping a core group of four immigrant and refugee-led community-based organizations develop the capacity and systems needed to organize, serve, and advocate for their ethnic communities. These groups faced many challenges, but all expanded services, improved their internal and external communications, and succeeded in significantly building their capacity to use technology effectively to achieve their missions.

Like FIR and FNC, the Partnership augmented its giving with research that elucidated the dimensions, contributions, and challenges of immigrant populations. Among these was a report by the Urban

Institute, *The Tax Contributions of Immigrant Communities*, which received prominent coverage in *The Washington Post*. The report factually rebutted claims that immigrants do not pay their fair share of taxes, showing that foreign-born households paid a slightly higher percentage in taxes (17.7 percent) than their proportion of the region's population (17.4 percent). The report also powerfully demonstrated that English-language skills and legal status are important factors that boost family income and increase tax payments.

“When everyone grows closer to their dream, we all win because our overall community grows stronger.”

Terry Lee Freeman, Community Foundation for the National Capital Region

All 22 foundation partners were invited to participate on the Steering Committee, and nine opted to do so. Members included private independent and family foundations and corporate philanthropy, comprising both national and local funders. From its inception through late 2007, the Partnership awarded more than \$1.8 million in grants to 50 immigrant-serving organizations.

The Community Foundation for the National Capital Region viewed the Partnership's focus on immigrant and refugee issues as a strategy for building its larger goal of building a stronger, more vibrant region.

Capitalizing on the civic leadership role of the Community Foundation, the Partnership convened briefings and conferences for policymakers and business leaders to publicize its findings and engage the wider community. It also included representatives of local municipal governing bodies and unions on its Steering Committee, finding them effective allies and ambassadors within larger structures that had the potential to advance the Partnership's work.

Building Civic Participation Three Ways

Among the reports supported by the Washington Area Partnership was *Lessons Learned about Civic Engagement among Immigrants*. (Association for the Study & Development of Community, September 2002.)

It suggests six ways that civic participation among immigrants can be increased and supported:

- Social organization of immigrant communities is not a name, a building, or a structure that can be easily identified. It is the way relationships are structured based on cultural traditions and values. Identify, understand, and acknowledge the wide range of structures that preserve the social organization of immigrant communities. Use these structures for reaching large numbers of immigrants, especially those who tend not to use mainstream resources.
- Every immigrant community experiences tensions due to political, ethnic, socioeconomic, and generational differences. Have clear criteria and a process for identifying and engaging the appropriate leaders and structures for specific civic issues and don't be deviated by intra-group conflicts.
- Leadership in immigrant communities is issue-based and situational. There are various levels and types of leadership. Each leader has a specific function in the social organization of his/her community. Recognize the diversity of leadership and be clear about which type of leadership is most appropriate to engage.

In 2007, the Partnership for Immigrants merged with The Common Ground Fund to become The Partnership for Equity, an effort that involves representatives of philanthropic organizations and local governmental jurisdictions on the Steering Committee. The newer, \$1 million collaboration supports leadership development

efforts in immigrant communities and communities of color that strengthen their ability to advocate and organize for social justice. It addresses local debate about immigration, described by staff as “particularly vicious,” by making the case that immigrant communities and communities of color share social justice and equality concerns. The Partnership for Equity has drawn the involvement of some funders that otherwise would not have supported immigrant-specific work. By weaving immigrant issues into its core work, The Community Foundation has increased funding for immigrant community organizations threefold through its funding collaboratives: the Partnership for Equity, the Collaborative for Education Organizing, and Greater DC Works.

Northern California Citizenship Project

The Northern California Citizenship Project (NCCP), like the Fund for Immigrants and Refugees and the Washington Area Partnership for Immigrants, was formed in response to the disproportionate impact of welfare and immigration reforms on immigrants. Between May 1997 and December 1999, NCCP raised \$6.3 million from 12 foundations, including the Emma Lazarus Fund and eleven private California foundations. NCCP invested \$5.5 million in naturalization and related services in twelve Bay Area counties, five urban and seven rural. It also allocated \$800,000 to support regional coordination and activities. In addition, NCCP leveraged resources from 37 other foundations and community, city, county, state, and federal entities that provided technical assistance and funding directly to NCCP agencies. As a result of these coordinated investments, more than 45,000 immigrants received naturalization assistance, and the region markedly increased its immigrant integration capacity.

From the beginning, local private and community foundations, government entities, and immigrant community-based organizations worked together to shape the basic design of this broad-based, regional collaborative. They took into consideration

the most critical issues facing immigrants and the diverse needs, interests, and capacities of the stakeholders involved. The planning group envisioned NCCP's role as supporting regional coordination and made a critically important decision to fund rural communities, which are outside the geographic focus of the participating foundations. Guided by this broad vision, NCCP engaged 70 collaborating organizations as part of nine service networks.

A Consortium Coordinating Committee, comprising program officers from participating foundations, oversaw NCCP's activities and approved grant awards from the pooled fund. Committee members also coordinated the naturalization-related grantmaking of their respective foundations with the work of NCCP.

The NCCP network employed a two-tier system of resource allocation. Funding was allocated among counties by a Consortium Coordinating Committee that consisted of program officers from contributing foundations (Tier 1) and within counties by the community foundations (Tier 2). County-level allocation of Emma Lazarus Fund support was determined by a per-capita formula with supplemental funding allocated to rural counties from pooled matching dollars.

NCCP's two-person staff, a director and a support position, provided regional coordination, technical assistance, and training to the participating service networks. Northern California Grantmakers provided fiscal sponsorship and some administrative services, while NCCP staff were responsible for fundraising and grant reporting.

From its inception, NCCP aspired to not only assist immigrants on the path to U.S. citizenship, but to also support and promote their informed and active engagement in voting, volunteerism, and other types of civic participation. To this end, NCCP mounted a vigorous multi-media community education campaign designed to reach, educate, and galvanize eligible immigrants and refugees to begin the process toward citizenship. The campaign included striking graphic art comic books, posters, bus signs with tear-off info sheets,



Panels from a comic book produced by NCCP, "U.S. Citizenship Is for Everyone. It Benefits You and Your Family," written by Lina Avidan, Ernesto Ravetto, Emily Goldfarb, and Gino Squadrito. Artwork by Gino Squadrito. July 1998.

radio and television spots; feature articles and advertisements in the ethnic media; and a voter education curriculum in four languages. NCCP also produced an interactive voter education curriculum for nonprofits, *New Citizens Vote*, which received a great deal of positive response.

Having developed a good working relationship with the Immigration and Naturalization Service, NCCP staff helped troubleshoot a plethora of bottlenecks and administrative tangles and hosted quarterly meetings with INS that were well-attended by community service providers. In addition, NCCP advocacy was instrumental

Lessons Learned from NCCP

- Carefully consider how best to fund small, informal organizations representing single ethnic or national groups. Based on NCCP's experience, such groups may have difficulty sustaining the funded direct services, such as citizenship classes, beyond the life of the grant. However, they can play a useful outreach and convening role and can partner with well-established nonprofit organizations to deliver services. As trusted intermediaries, they can provide insight and practical information that will make work of the established groups more effective. In newer immigrant destinations where little infrastructure exists, small immigrant-based organizations may be the viable options. In such cases, funders should consider support.
- Establish local networks if the collaborative spans a large geographic area. In NCCP's case, the county networks had part-time coordinators, who met regularly. The network structure facilitated peer exchange, training, and technical assistance. It also allowed the collaborative to mount region-wide outreach campaigns, collect data on outreach and services, and document accomplishments.
- Designate community foundations as the point organization for local networks in large regional collaboratives. Doing so gives community foundations considerable leadership responsibilities, ensures a vested interest in proper implementation, and may create new relationships with immigrant-serving organizations.

in the establishment of a state fund for ESL and citizenship instruction, resulting in the allocation of \$7 million in the first year; the fund still exists today.

NCCP is the only funder collaborative featured in this funders' guide to have evolved from a funding entity into a community-based organization. This

evolution was driven by the recognition that most NCCP partner organizations were ill-equipped to support the transition of new citizens into informed, active community members and that there were few, if any, resources to assist them in doing so. Therefore, in January 2000, NCCP shifted focus to support civic and political participation of newly naturalized citizens and other immigrants and became what is now known as the Partnership for Immigrant Leadership and Action (PILA). As NCCP's evaluators noted in their report, this was a natural next step for the highly successful initiative, which helped launch and strengthen many immigrant civic organizations in the region.

Today, PILA provides training and technical assistance to Bay Area organizations and communities to support grassroots leadership development and movement-building electoral organizing. The organization has become a freestanding nonprofit, and funders have become supporters rather than partners in PILA.

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Alice Cottingham, a Chicago-based consultant, has worked in the nonprofit sector for 30 years. Alice provides project development and management, facilitation and coaching, research and writing, proposal review and analysis, and interim executive leadership. In addition to GCIR, her clients include Grantmakers for Effective Organizations, GrantCraft, Council on Foundations, and The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. Before developing her consulting practice, Alice served as executive director of Girl's Best Friend Foundation, the Fund for Immigrants and Refugees, and the Crossroads Fund. Her particular interests and areas of expertise include high-impact philanthropy, organizational change management, collaboration, and developing learning environments.

Daranee Petsod, executive director of GCIR, has worked on social and economic justice issues for the past 21 years. Prior to joining GCIR in 1999, she was a consultant working with foundations and nonprofits on program planning. She previously served as interim executive director and development director for the Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights and was a program officer for the Sophia Fund and the Field Foundation of Illinois, Inc. She has also worked as a policy analyst for the United Way, a social worker at a child-welfare agency, and an outreach worker for a refugee women's services program. Daranee has authored and co-authored a number of publications, most recently *Investing in Our Communities: Strategies for Immigrant Integration in 2006*.

Ted Wang provides public policy consulting services to foundations and nonprofit organizations on immigrant and civil rights issues. His areas of work include language access in public services, English acquisition, affirmative action, and voting and immigrant rights advocacy. Ted previously spent 14 years as a civil rights advocate, serving as the policy director of Chinese for Affirmative Action and a staff attorney at the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights of the San Francisco Bay Area. In these positions, he litigated affirmative action and voting rights cases, and drafted local and state laws promoting immigrant rights, racial justice, and economic development. He has published articles in law reviews, social science journals, and newspapers, as well as numerous reports for nonprofit and philanthropic organizations.

Robert C. Winn is a consultant and independent documentary filmmaker with a legal background in immigration, human rights, and international trade. Robert's current areas of interest include the intersection of immigration and health policy, language access, and social justice. Recent public television projects include *Grassroots Rising* about labor issues and the Asian Pacific Islander community in Los Angeles; and *Saigon, USA* about generational conflicts in the Vietnamese American community 25 years after the fall of Saigon. His current documentary project is *Childhood in Translation*, about language access issues through the eyes of immigrant children who are the linguistic and cultural brokers for their families.

Credits

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