

BRIDGING DIVIDES, CREATING COMMUNITY ARTS, CULTURE, AND IMMIGRATION



About ArtPlace America

ARTPLACE AMERICA (ArtPlace) is a ten-year collaboration among a number of foundations, federal agencies, and financial institutions that supports and strengthens the field of creative placemaking – the intentional integration of arts, culture, and community-engaged design strategies into the process of equitable community planning and development. We work to enlist artists as allies in creating equitable, healthy, and sustainable communities in which everyone has a voice and agency. To this end, we've invested over \$100 million to grow the field of creative placemaking through demonstration projects, in-depth investments in organizational change, research, and convenings – embedding knowledge and resources within existing networks and supporting local ecosystems to own and evolve the practice.

About Welcoming America

LAUNCHED IN 2009, Welcoming America is a nonprofit organization that has spurred a growing movement across the United States, with one in eight Americans living in a Welcoming Community. Our award-winning, social entrepreneurship model supports the diverse communities and partners leading efforts to make their communities more vibrant places for all, in the U.S. and abroad. Welcoming America provides the roadmap and support they need to become more inclusive toward immigrants and all residents.

About the Author

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ARTPLACE AMERICA is a ten-year collaboration of foundations, federal agencies, and banks that is working to position arts and culture as a core sector of community planning and development in order to help strengthen the social, physical, and economic fabric of communities.

ArtPlace focuses its work on “creative placemaking,” which describes projects in which art plays an intentional and integrated role in place-based community planning and development. The “creative” simply invites artists and arts organizations to join their neighbors as collaborators into the suite of placemaking strategies pioneered by Jane Jacobs and her colleagues, who believed that community development must be locally informed, human-centered, and holistic.

In looking, systemically, at who does community planning and development work in America’s communities, we have found that our colleagues may generally be organized into ten sectors: Agriculture & Food, Economic Development, Education & Youth, Environment & Energy, Health, Housing, Immigration, Public Safety, Transportation, and Workforce Development. As a core part of ArtPlace’s research agenda, we are exploring how arts and cultural practitioners have long been and may increasingly be partners in helping to achieve each of these sector’s goals.

The document that follows is one of ten “field scans” that we have commissioned as a part of this work. This field scan seeks to illuminate key priorities within the immigration sector, and to provide a framework for understanding the ways that arts and culture contributes to local, place-based immigration related outcomes.

Each field scan serves as a framing document for a working group tasked with taking the analysis and findings one step further, helping ArtPlace identify the best practices that warrant formal case studies, key methods for evaluating success, and strategic framing of the material in a way that resonates with people most likely to take up creative placemaking practice in a given sector. The field scan is not an end in itself, but an initial inquiry that, together with other field scans, informs ArtPlace’s knowledge and network building work as well as those working at the intersection of art and community development more broadly.

The field scans have two primary audiences: artists and other arts and cultural stakeholders seeking to better understand and collaborate with a particular community development sector; and community development practitioners, policymakers, and funders who are interested in how arts and culture partners might further their work.

Our ultimate goal is for these two audiences to develop a shared language and a set of mutual goals, so that communities across the country will ultimately benefit from these powerful, cross-sector collaborations and synergies.



JAMIE HAND
DIRECTOR OF RESEARCH STRATEGIES, ARTPLACE AMERICA

AS A YOUNG GIRL, I would often find myself sitting in my grandmother's kitchen, the aroma of cooking onions and various confections filling the room. A storyteller to her core, my grandmother would, in that small and intimate world, bring to life a past that could not have been more foreign to a little girl whose chief concerns did not include those my grandmother faced in her own youth – losing her family and home, surviving a genocide, emigrating to the U.S. to find safety and a new sense of belonging.

In those moments, my grandmother – just as humans have for all time – deployed the tools of culture: stories, food, and later, art – to achieve something both utterly common and absolutely extraordinary: to make the foreign become familiar, the frightening become safe, the “other” become “us.”

Today, I lead an organization working to create a world where all people, including immigrants like my grandmother – and the 2.5 million people on the move today – can find belonging, opportunity and a place to call home. After a decade of work, and in a moment of growing polarization, I am more convinced than ever that to create such a world, we need to summon this power – the power of arts and culture to shape the way we understand and are bound to one another, across even our largest divides.

Amidst all the policy debates, white papers, and legal solutions, it can be easy to miss the simple things we are searching for today, and which either drive the “othering” that fuels immigrant backlash, or offer the solution to it – the desire among all of us, immigrant or not, to be seen, to be heard, to belong, and to find a sense of home and safety amidst so much uprooting.

Despite our national climate, many communities have addressed these deeper needs – and are

successfully making themselves places that feel like home to everyone who lives there – whether they just arrived or have lived there for generations. Where these welcoming efforts have been successful, artists, cultural organizations, and creative placemakers have not been at the periphery but at the center of such efforts. They are using their talents and assets to shape policies that weave newcomers into the civic, social, and economic fabric of communities. They are helping neighbors understand why such work is vitally important by coming to see one another not as “us” and “them,” but as “we.” And they are also reaping the benefits of inclusion as they attract more diverse audiences, become more reflective of their changing communities, and contribute more to the vibrancy of communities.

These examples – while on the rise – are not yet the norm. If they were, our country would be in a very different place than it is today when it comes to our frayed civic fabric, patterns of exclusion and segregation, and experiences of racism and othering.

For all these reasons, Welcoming America is deeply grateful to be partnering with ArtPlace to make the arts absolutely core to the work of creating an America where everyone – including immigrants and refugees – can belong and thrive. It is vital work, and we hope this scan, thanks to John Arroyo's insightful research, sparks new ideas for every institution who cares about community and a sense of home for all Americans, to take up this call.



RACHEL PERIĆ
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, WELCOMING AMERICA

ARTS AND CULTURE

broadly defined to include many forms of creative expression, including: craft & culinary arts, dance, design and architecture, film and media, folk and traditional arts, literature, music, visual arts, theater and performance, and other formal and informal creative practices

ASYLEE

a person who is seeking or has been granted asylum, often times due to the threat of political, religious, or other minoritized persecution

EMIGRATION

the process of looking at mobility from the perspective of leaving a point of origin (as opposed to arriving to a new host community)

FOODWAYS

the cultural, traditional, and historical practices relating to the production, preparation, and consumption of food

HOME (SENDING) COMMUNITY

a newcomer's point of origin (often native country)

ASSIMILATION

a process newcomers undergo when they replace their cultural customs and traits to adapt to traditional standards of American society. In an immigration context, the term implies newcomers are unable to maintain aspects of their native culture while simultaneously adopting new ones in the U.S.

CREATIVE PLACEMAKING

the intentional integration of arts, culture, and community-engaged design strategies into the process of equitable community planning and development

FOLKWAYS

the traditional, often informal customs, conventions, learned behaviors, and overall way of life common to a particular community or group of people

HOST (RECEIVING) COMMUNITY

the place where newcomers settle

IMMIGRANT

a person living outside their country of origin, having moved to a new community for safety, economic opportunity, family reunification, or other purposes

IMMIGRATION SECTOR

the wide array of community leaders, service providers, practitioners, municipal staff, and advocates who work to help immigrants become integral parts of their new home communities

INTEGRATION

a dynamic, two-way process in which newcomers and receiving communities work together to build a secure, vibrant, and cohesive society. As an intentional effort, integration engages and transforms all community members, reaping shared benefits and creating a new whole that is greater than the sum of its parts. Because integration has come to be confused with assimilation, we are choosing to use the word “inclusion” to describe this concept

REFUGEE

although “refugee” has a technical legal definition, for the purposes of this scan refugee will be used to refer to a person who has been forced to leave their country due to hostile circumstances including war, persecution, or climate-related emergency

U.S.-BORN RESIDENT

a person who is a citizen of the U.S. by birth

INCLUSION

see below: “integration”

LONGER-TERM POPULATIONS

people who have settled and resided in a community for a long period (including second- and third-generation immigrants)

NEWCOMER/NEW AMERICAN

any person born outside of the United States who is new to a host community, regardless of migration experience (immigrant, refugee, asylee)

RESOURCE ENVIRONMENT

considers all of the available protections to an individual, drawn from various sources (states, markets, nonprofit sector, and social networks)

WELCOMING

the act of putting in place policies, systems, and environments that support immigrant inclusion. This includes bridging experiences and resources between newcomers and longer-term populations, and creating a local culture that values diversity and equity

INTRODUCTION

AMERICA IS CHANGING. People across the globe have come to its shores seeking refuge, opportunity, and a chance to reunify with loved ones. Among them are more than 44 million foreign-born individuals, nearly three million refugees, and approximately 12 million undocumented immigrants, many of which migrated with their families as children. While immigration has always been a hallmark of the American experience and a backbone to the nation's prosperity, change is not always easy for immigrants, the communities they settle in, and long-term residents. Artists and arts organizations have an opportunity to support the challenges they experience as well as to celebrate the ties that bind us together.

New Americans positively influence the American understanding of the world and our place within it. They support local economies as employers, consumers, and entrepreneurs. They fortify and grow civil society to be more inclusive and equitable. The cultures of their home countries, as well as the conditions that led them to emigrate, are an inherent part of immigrants' and refugees' identities and something that can add complexity to their sense of belonging – how they feel welcomed, valued, and/or excluded in the U.S. The history and continued legacy of systemic racism in the U.S. has meant that different ethnic and racial groups have experienced vastly different welcomes to the U.S., and continue to experience inequitable access to resources. From job opportunities and home-loans to thoughtful green spaces, from healthy food to multi-modal transportation, people of color rarely benefit from equitable services. While these disparities plague all aspects of community development, they are often pronounced in areas with exponential growth of immigrants and refugees, where municipal infrastructure and social services remain scarce.¹

The immigration sector is in search of new and novel ways to organize and develop basic resources to support immigrant and refugee constituents both because of the real needs faced by many newcomers but also to ensure that communities can benefit from the significant contributions immigrants and refugees make to the economic, civic, and social vitality of their local communities. The arts and cultural sector often celebrates – and co-creates with – diverse ethnic communities across the U.S. The advent of a formal creative placemaking movement has furthered the synergy between the two, inviting deeper exploration and collaborative momentum for addressing the challenges that lie ahead. The result is the ability for arts and culture to be a platform that helps immigration policy expand beyond a singular focus on border security to one that embraces a broader national vision of inclusive economic development, community connection and cohesion, and welcoming communities in which all people can thrive. For new Americans, forms of creative expression instill joy and optimism about their new lives; they also provide a creative outlet for working through the often-difficult experiences that required them to emigrate from their native country. Arts and culture also create unique opportunities for communities and residents to imagine and build a shared future where all residents can contribute, belong, and thrive.

Local youth participate in a 2018 Sustainable Little Tokyo event created by +Lab Artists-in-Residence Tina Takemoto and Susu Attar. Credit: Photo by Rudy Espinoza, courtesy of Little Tokyo Service Center



ARTPLACE AMERICA DEFINES creative placemaking as “the intentional integration of arts, culture, and community-engaged design strategies into the process of equitable community planning and development. It’s about artists, culture-bearers, and designers acting as allies to creatively address challenges and opportunities... contributing to community-defined social, physical, and economic outcomes and honoring a sense of place.”

It is important to acknowledge that the term “arts and culture” is often defined, by default, by traditional museums and performance halls whose collections and programs feature predominantly white artists, excluding underrepresented perspectives from ethnic, racial, and other minoritized populations rooted in the immigrant

or refugee experience. In contrast, the use of “culture” in this research is intentionally inclusive. Here, “culture” seeks to highlight local traditions and activities that move beyond the standard forms of white cultural dominance in an effort to assert a broader and more accurate definition of cultural and creative life in America. For the purposes of this scan, arts and culture are broadly defined to include both formal and informal arts and cultural practices, as well as those more traditionally understood as discrete artistic disciplines: Craft and Culinary Arts, Dance, Design and Architecture, Film and Media, Folk and Traditional Arts, Literature, Music, Theater and Performance, Visual Arts. All of these creative practices and more are represented in the growing field of creative placemaking.²

METHODS AND METHODOLOGY

Scope and Process

THE PURPOSE OF this scan was to identify current and future ways in which arts and culture can drive local, place-based outcomes for the immigration sector. Our research identified four key goals in the immigration sector, each of which is paired with an arts and cultural strategy that reflects the impact of creative placemaking projects, and specifically its ability to align with that immigration sector goal. Taken together, these four strategies can be understood as a typology for ‘what the arts can do’ in the context of immigration work. Each strategy is further illustrated by short case studies. Case studies are based on interviews and consultation with the artists and partners involved, as well as secondary research where available through academic and technical literature. Finally, a conclusion reiterates the immigration sector’s goals in order to lay the groundwork for future and sustained integration of these sectors or approaches.

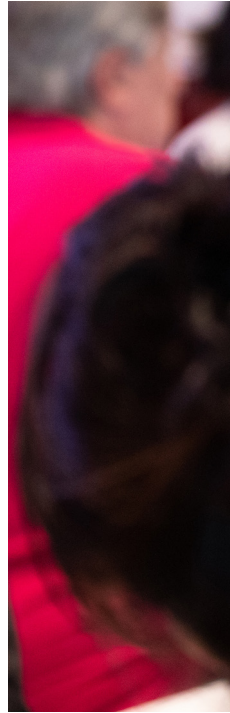
This scan illustrates that the fields of creative placemaking and immigration share similar goals. While not fully comprehensive of every theme facing the arts and immigration sectors, the scope of this scan relies on the experiences of applied practitioners. My research generated patterns about the issues, trends, and challenges each sector faces independently, and in working with each other. Some immigration sector organizations are already employing arts and cultural strategies in their work. Some arts and cultural projects are already aligned with organizations in the

immigration sector network. This study highlights lessons to sustain current or spark future collaborations between professionals in both fields. The fact that many cases already exist is a strong sign of their potential to build common goals.

Research for this project was drawn from a comprehensive literature review; an analysis of 140 creative placemaking projects; and semi-structured, in-depth interviews with 30 practitioners working in the immigration sector and/or in the arts and cultural sector. A full list of interviewees is included in Appendix B.

Research design was informed by the following elements:

1. Identification of key trends in the immigration sector through a literature review of nearly 200 popular news media, academic sources, and gray literature;³
2. Identification and analysis (in collaboration with senior staff at ArtPlace) of 140 arts and culture projects across the U.S., including projects funded by ArtPlace’s National Creative Placemaking Fund,⁴ lead and partner organizations participating in the Community Development Investments (CDI) program,⁵ creative placemaking projects funded by ArtPlace partners (e.g., National Endowment for the Arts, Surdna Foundation, Irvine Foundation), and independent creative placemaking projects not funded by any initiative at the present time;
3. Systematic, semi-structured interviews (30)



Gaps

This research focuses specifically on the subset of the immigration sector concerned with immigrant inclusion at the local level. This scan's research does not include interviews with elected officials at the state or federal level, representatives from border infrastructure or security enforcement (e.g. U.S. Department of Homeland Security or its subordinate agencies such as U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, U.S. Customs and Border Protection, or U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement), first responders, or humanitarian aid providers. Another element not included in the scan are case studies related to states or territories outside of the continental U.S. While the majority of the scan does focus on urbanized areas, efforts were made to include issues facing suburban and rural locations.

Strategic Collaboration

This field scan is the first step in ArtPlace's three-phase research strategy to understand the intersection between arts and culture and the immigration sector in the U.S. The scan served as a launching pad to generate further discussion in a working group assembled from members of both the immigration sector and the arts and culture sector. Together with the working group recommendations, this research will inform future resource development and collaboration.

ArtPlace selected Welcoming America in 2018 as a strategic partner to co-convene the working group and to lead future creative placemaking work in the immigration sector. Welcoming America is an international membership organization of 200 nonprofits and local governments working



Left: The Arts, Culture and Immigration Working Group was held in May 2019 at the City of Asylum Pittsburgh's Alphabet City space. Credit: Renee Rosensteel

Right: Working group participants Carolina Rubio MacWright and Christino Patiño Houle were among the artists who shared their work with the group. Credit: Renee Rosensteel

to promote immigrant inclusion and welcoming communities for all.¹⁰ “Our work has always been rooted in the idea of helping bring together long-term residents and immigrants and helping them recognize their shared values. This is more important than ever in these polarizing times, so that we can have less ‘othering’ and more ‘belonging,’” stated Rachel Perić, Welcoming America’s Executive Director.

Welcoming America has set a national standard that outlines the policies and programs at the core of welcoming and acts as a road map for communities working to become welcoming. The Welcoming Standard also serves as a backbone to Welcoming America’s formal certification program – Certified Welcoming – that aims to recognize, and hold accountable, welcoming places.¹¹ Welcoming America’s deep, national and local knowledge of

immigration and refugee technical assistance, policy advocacy, and convening makes them a natural fit for this collaboration.

As the conveners and facilitators of the Arts, Culture, and Immigration Working Group in May 2019 at City of Asylum, Alloy Studios, and the Kelly Strayhorn Theater in Pittsburgh, PA, ArtPlace America and Welcoming America brought together over 30 national experts in arts and culture (artists and cultural experts, arts managers) and the immigration sector (non-profit advocacy, technical assistance, and community development practitioners) to discuss intersecting strategies for advancing existing knowledge and practice between both groups (see Appendix C for a list of participants).

THE IMMIGRATION SECTOR: AN OVERVIEW

IMMIGRATION HAS ALWAYS been debated in the U.S., but at the writing of this paper it is seemingly one of the most polarizing contemporary topics. Specific debates include the moral and cost/benefit basis of accepting refugees, the legality of “sanctuary cities,” the increase of raids and deportations, the future of undocumented immigrants, country-specific travel bans, the construction of a wall on the U.S.’s southern border with Mexico, systemic concerns about integrating consecutive generations, and displacement due to uneven development in the traditional ethnic enclaves built by immigrants and refugees.¹² The context of these debates is changing on a day-to-day basis under the seemingly extraordinary current political era, which is playing out differently in different localities. Because immigration policy is set at the federal level, the effects of those policies have a critical impact on newcomer communities and what states and municipalities are able to do to support them at the local level. All immigration is local, and cities and towns are fertile sites to support humane immigration policies and circumvent unwelcoming federal policies.

Broadly speaking, the immigration sector can be divided into two key areas: advocacy and social service. Whereas the advocacy area focuses on organizing, movement building, and mobilizing to fight anti-immigrant policy and support pro-immigrant reform, the social service area provides basic quality of life and civic services such as housing, employment, language education, healthcare, and legal representation. Supplementing these efforts is the public sector

(federal, state, and local municipal) which develops and implements policy, and the private sector which provides funding. The advocacy and social service arms of the immigration sector serve a spectrum of new Americans (voluntary immigrants and resettled refugees) at various levels of immigrant readiness (new arrivals, long-term residents, or the children of immigrants and refugees).

Responding to the political environment has put enormous pressure on both areas of the immigration sector and the entities that work to help immigrants meet basic human needs and adjust to everyday life. The inherently reactive nature of working in the immigration sector makes long-term strategic planning a luxury and less relevant in a rapidly shifting time. This approach to advocacy or service provision politicizes the immigration sector and robs it of a space for longer-term thinking. This politicization has both engaged new allies in immigrant inclusion and made engaging on immigration seem riskier to other potential allies.

The inherently reactive nature of working in the immigration sector makes long-term strategic planning a luxury and less relevant in a rapidly shifting time.

FOUR GOALS, FOUR STRATEGIES

FOUR KEY PRIORITIES for the immigration sector were uncovered during qualitative field scan research. These emerged from interviews with sector professionals at several levels (social service, advocacy, and municipal/public sector), and they reveal sector-wide goals or outcomes that may be even more salient and attainable through collaboration with arts and cultural work. Typically, arts and culture have been part of immigration sector work either through one-time programming or events, or in a space that is seen as separate from achieving inclusion and service goals. Manifesting in the form of a cultural parade in an ethnic neighborhood, a local food vendor at a night market, or a community film night, arts and culture have not been embedded at the core of immigrant support services and inclusive community development.

Arts and cultural leaders interviewed for this research, however, saw a stronger, collaborative

platform for welcoming work that influences new Americans and longer-term populations with the same intensity. While some of the overarching trends and contextual information about the immigration sector offered here may be familiar to people working in the immigration sector, they have been included to offer a launching pad for arts and cultural workers. The same is true for the inclusion of arts and cultural information that may be familiar to some readers, but may provide context for immigration professionals new to cross-sector work.

There are many ways for arts and culture to support the immigration sector. Strategies included in this field scan are not intended to limit the support for arts and culture in these or other immigration-oriented priorities. Instead, they are intended to begin – and in some cases, continue – dialogue about collaborating between practitioners, policymakers, and funders in both sectors.

Visitors to Philadelphia's City Center are invited to write a message in their native language. Credit: Al-Bustan Seeds of Culture





IMMIGRATION GOAL

BUILD
WELCOMING
AND
INCLUSIVE
COMMUNITIES

ARTS AND CULTURE STRATEGY

BRIDGE
NEWCOMERS
AND LONGER-TERM
POPULATIONS

IMMIGRATION GOAL

BUILD WELCOMING AND INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES

Strengthening Connections Between New and Longer-Term Populations

IN COMMUNITIES WITHOUT a long history of immigration, and even in traditional gateways, the arrival of newcomers can lead to fear and suspicion in established populations about real or perceived changes in the community. At worst, tensions can lead to aggressive anti-immigrant policies and acts of violence; at minimum, tensions limit the resources, support, and connections available to immigrants and refugees and create barriers for them to fully participate in the economic, civic, and social fabric of their host communities. In areas previously unfamiliar with migrant settlement, the arrival of newcomers is typically a shock for longer-term residents.

For these often U.S.-born residents, the presence of newcomers can foment fear, anger, and mistrust of populations whom they believe compete for their jobs, deplete government benefits, and bring crime. These fears are further compounded when newcomers work to preserve elements of their heritage such as languages other than English, or the construction of non-Western religious architecture. While these elements may help immigrants and refugees adjust to U.S. society, they may also embolden an anti-immigrant sentiment among host societies unwilling to have their traditions uprooted. Calls for integration or assimilation are coded strategies for ethnic and racial othering – a concern about people who are different than ourselves. “Native groups don’t feel that immigration is the answer to the woes of the city, but there is a big opportunity to bring these

communities together,” stated Audrey Singer, Senior Fellow at the Urban Institute.

Diffusing the tension between new and established populations requires communication strategies and programmatic efforts that show how immigrants, refugees, and long-term residents are interconnected and share common values about family, work, and economic security.¹³ This work, often known as “welcoming” work in the sector, goes well beyond providing new Americans with basic skills provision such as English as a Second Language (ESL) training or learning how to open a business – it must also include outreach and education to the host society, or “receiving community,” to understand, engage, and grow from knowing their new neighbors.¹⁴

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and economic security.

While the presence of newcomers may generate initial surprise and concern, local communities across the country are heeding the call to build bridges. In 2011, Kim Snyder and the BeCause Foundation in association with Active Voice

Students recite the Pledge of Allegiance during ESL class. Credit: Greg Poschman, courtesy of Welcome to Shelbyville



produced *Welcome to Shelbyville*, a documentary about a small, rural town in Tennessee undergoing rapid immigrant and refugee growth.¹⁵ Developing a unified message was the City of Shelbyville's first step in connecting with its new Muslim population, the growing Latinx population, and the native White and African-American populations. The city installed billboards and worked with local media to try to show how immigrants and long-time residents share the same values. They also brought individuals together to build strong connections and grow a shared sense of belonging. These communications and contact strategies were so successful that other cities began to replicate this work, which ultimately led to the creation of Welcoming America.

The changing demographics in the U.S. make welcoming strategies particularly important. This is especially necessary in parts of the country where economic restructuring and population decline has adversely affected the livelihoods of all community members, regardless of citizenship status. The opportunity that this dynamic provides has set in motion institutional efforts that focus on social cohesion and belonging for local government leaders – for example, municipalities are creating new divisions, often within the mayor's offices, such as an Office of New Americans or an Office of Immigrant Affairs.¹⁶ A new series of papers on social cohesion by Welcoming America provides guidance for how to engage local leaders to foster welcoming communities.¹⁷



Creating a Welcoming Agenda

In the last twenty years, the immigrant inclusion sphere has transformed from isolated efforts largely in traditional gateways, to widespread immigrant inclusion efforts that engage cross-sector partners in changing policies and fostering a welcoming culture. More and more communities have realized that they need a comprehensive agenda for ensuring they have a welcoming community for all. A recent effort in Salt Lake County, Utah, demonstrates how a comprehensive and transparent process can improve welcoming service delivery and set the tone for an inclusive environment. For many local governments, one step towards creating a welcoming environment is institutionalizing an Office of New Americans (or a similarly titled office) in the municipal

government. In Salt Lake County, a welcoming committee convened 80 business and community leaders, residents, and individuals from both immigrant and U.S.-born populations. They met for about six months and co-created a list of tangible, actionable, and short-term strategies, including the creation of a local county office to bring all welcoming programs under one roof. “The gaps that we saw at the local level came after we thought immigrants had integrated. We realized that self-efficacy, like people finding a job, doesn’t necessarily mean that they are being accepted fully as a member of a community. People have to feel welcomed and appreciated” stated Ze Min Xiao, Director, Salt Lake County Mayor’s Office for New Americans. Other cities like St. Louis, Missouri; Atlanta, Georgia; Dayton, Ohio; Charlotte, North Carolina; Boise, Idaho; San Jose, California; and Lancaster, Pennsylvania, are leading coordinated



Left: Community members perform during a Welcoming Week event in Nebraska. Credit: Welcoming America

Right: Dance programming at Center City Philadelphia's Thomas Paine Plaza during the exhibition of "An Immigrant Alphabet." Credit: Chip Colson, courtesy of Al-Bustan Seeds of Culture

welcoming efforts that provide additional models for policies and systems that strengthen immigrant access to local social, civic, and economic spaces.¹⁸

U.S.-born, longer-term populations' attitudes towards immigrants have steadily improved over the last decade in communities that have initiated welcoming strategies. For example, Boise, Idaho saw a strong backlash against the refugee population comprised of mostly women and children from Southeast Asia and Eastern Europe, many whom relocated to Idaho to flee oppressive political regimes.²⁰ The city worked with residents to create a collaborative plan to change the conversation about new refugee communities from one about a scarcity of resources to an abundance of benefits. Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and San Diego, California are two other cities that have crafted a comprehensive agenda for welcoming

work driven by deep engagement with the community.²¹ A national, systematic, and sector-wide approach is needed to ensure the success of immigrants and refugees (and their children) in a 21st century U.S.²²

The gaps that we saw at the local level came after we thought immigrants had integrated. We realized that self-efficacy, like people finding a job, doesn't necessarily mean that they are being accepted fully as a member of a community. People have to feel welcomed and appreciated.

ARTS AND CULTURE STRATEGY
 BRIDGE NEWCOMERS
 AND LONGER-TERM POPULATIONS

AS DESCRIBED ABOVE, one of the biggest challenges for communities undergoing rapid ethnic demographic shifts is finding generative, collaborative ways to explore commonalities and encourage “contact building” between new and existing groups. Contact building strategies create opportunities for leadership engagement, inspire positive communications, and build meaningful contact across difference.²³ Contact building is inspired by Gordon Allport, an influential psychologist who developed “contact theory” as a way to explain how a focused, common goal reduces prejudice across different people.²⁴ For newcomers and longer-term populations, contact building works to position both groups with more frequent and deeper contact, especially at the individual level.

Contact building works best when individuals identify each other as peers working towards a common goal – a two-way dynamic – rather than as a form of charity initiated solely by longer-term populations. This is especially critical as language differences and cultural barriers typically get in the way of bridging groups across difference. Many longer-term residents do not have regular contact with people from different backgrounds. For those that do, not knowing more about the other may lead to fears, concerns, and other tensions. Because those connections do not happen organically, many community leaders recognize there must be intentional efforts to bring people together and establish bonds that shift perceptions from “us vs. them” to a collective “us.”

For many under-resourced immigrant-serving organizations, there is little time and capacity for

bridge building work. It also requires a different set of skills and an approach that not everyone is inherently comfortable with. In addition, the absence of opportunities for community members to foster meaningful connections with each other – regardless of their nationality, ethnicity, race, or length of time in the U.S. – may generate tension. It also obfuscates the need for civic services that serve the needs of the entire community (not just for new Americans) regardless of migration experience to the U.S. Any other strategy that prioritizes one group over the other (newcomers and longer-term populations) risks a backlash due to unbalanced service provision.

Arts and culture can generate inter-ethnic bridges between new Americans and longer-term populations by increasing empathy and building connections. Place-based arts and cultural activities that embrace the plurality of the human experience, regardless of origin, can bring people together for shared experiences. Often times many of these bonds remain concealed or go unnoticed because new and established populations overlook or disregard their connections to each other. Cultural anthropologist Alaka Wali, Ph.D.’s seminal research report, *Informal Arts: Finding Cohesion, Capacity and Other Cultural Benefits in Unexpected Places*, engages with these concepts to understand how bridging differences, building capacity, and strengthening community networks through artistic activities can integrate creative people in a symbiotic relationship without forcing assimilation.²⁵

Opportunities for communities to comfortably engage across multiple types of difference are rare. What might otherwise be a tense encounter can

*As part of
The Quilted
Conscience
project, quilter
Ruth Campbell
checks Nyakuoth
Lual's work
while Yomaz Dau
concentrates
on her sewing.
Credit: The
Grand Island
Independent/
Scott Kingsley*



be defused in a creative space, where people share, learn, and celebrate the arts and cultural traditions of their neighbors.²⁶ This requires time-consuming hands-on work to develop relationships with each individual group before relationships can develop between them. “Immigrants and refugees may have a different sense of time and communication. It takes time to be more patient, but engaging them is also what makes our program work,” said Rachel Strutt, Cultural Director, Somerville Arts Council (producer of **Nibble**), an ethnic foodways and workforce program featured in greater detail in a case study.

In Grand Island, Nebraska, **The Quilted Conscience** is a quilt-based, inter-generational cultural exchange program that forms cross-cultural bonds between immigrant and refugee children and native-born U.S. families. John Sorensen, filmmaker and founder of the program, said that successful creative bridge building between new Americans and existing populations

ensures lessons are learned by both groups, especially for adults. “One day during the workshop, a young refugee from Sudan was creating a fabric-art ‘memory’ block. She described walking three miles each day to get fresh water. A quilter from Nebraska, who was participating in the workshop, told the student that she had grown up in Appalachia, and had a similar experience there,” said Sorensen. “When the young woman from Sudan did not believe her, the woman responded, ‘You know, not only did I have to walk a couple of miles to get fresh water, but we had no toilet, no running water, and no electricity.’ It was a telling moment for both of them.” The Quilted Conscience went beyond developing cultural bridges to closing distances between the Sudanese refugee population and the local school district, and continues to host inter-generational quilting workshops, produced a documentary film broadcast on Public Broadcasting Service across the U.S., and developed a “how to” handbook to expand program reach beyond Nebraska.

CITY OF ASYLUM

PITTSBURGH, PA

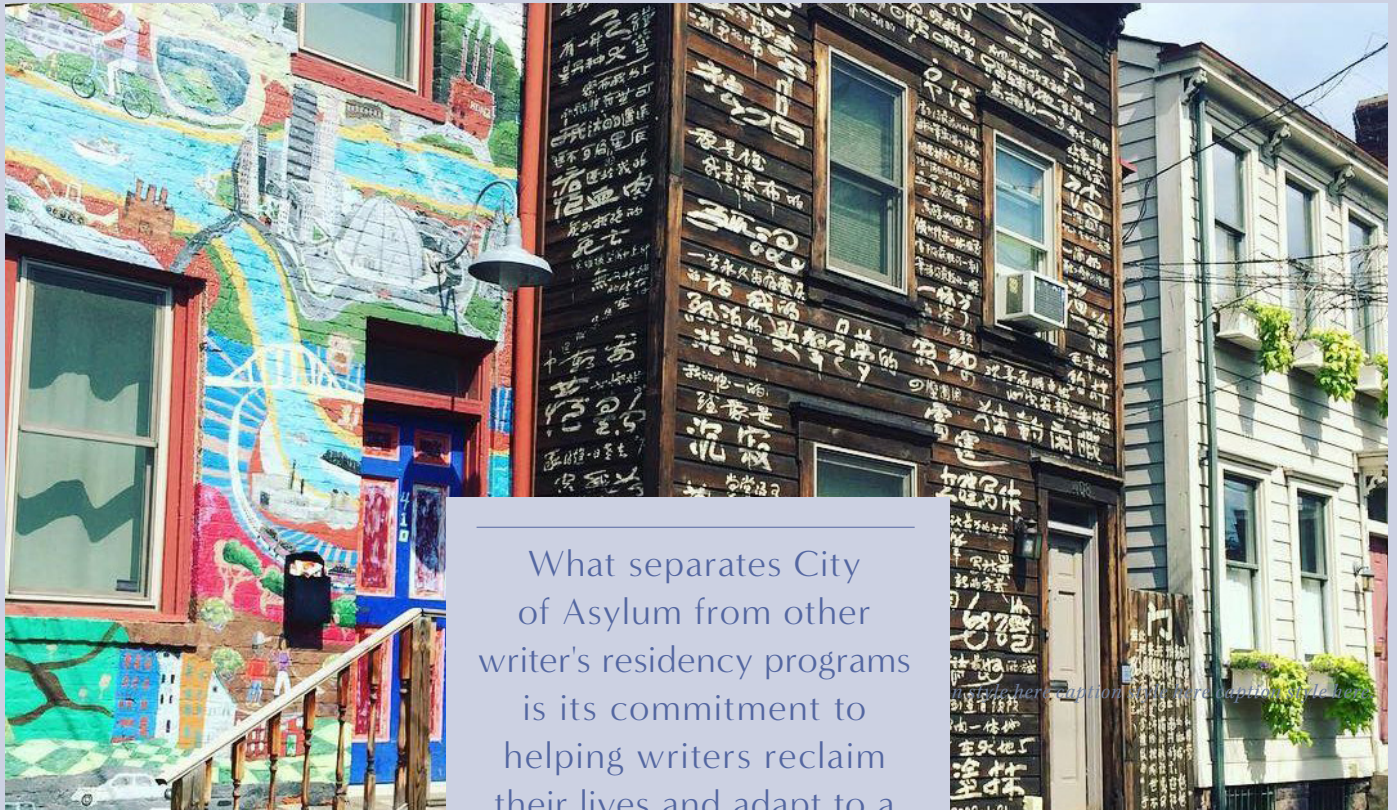
CITY OF ASYLUM Pittsburgh is a cross-cultural literary arts organization that provides sanctuary to network of creative writers who have previously been silenced through the threat of persecution, imprisonment, or death in their native countries. It was opened in 2004 by co-founders Henry Reese, a businessman, and Diane Samuels, an artist. City of Asylum @ Alphabet City, its cultural center, bridges newcomers and longer-term populations by using the literary arts as a vehicle to highlight the stories of exiled writers among longstanding groups interested in broader cultural exchange. In addition to literary events, City of Asylum hosts 60 jazz concerts and screens over 30 film events annually.

City of Asylum Pittsburgh is currently one of the only U.S. branches of the 60-city International Cities of Refuge Network (ICORN). Writers and their families are provided tailored support services that include a restored house on Sampsonia Way, a stipend, medical benefits, travel expenses to the U.S., legal services, and direct support of their specific literary creative endeavors (commissioning translations, identifying publishers, or providing adaptation support for family members).

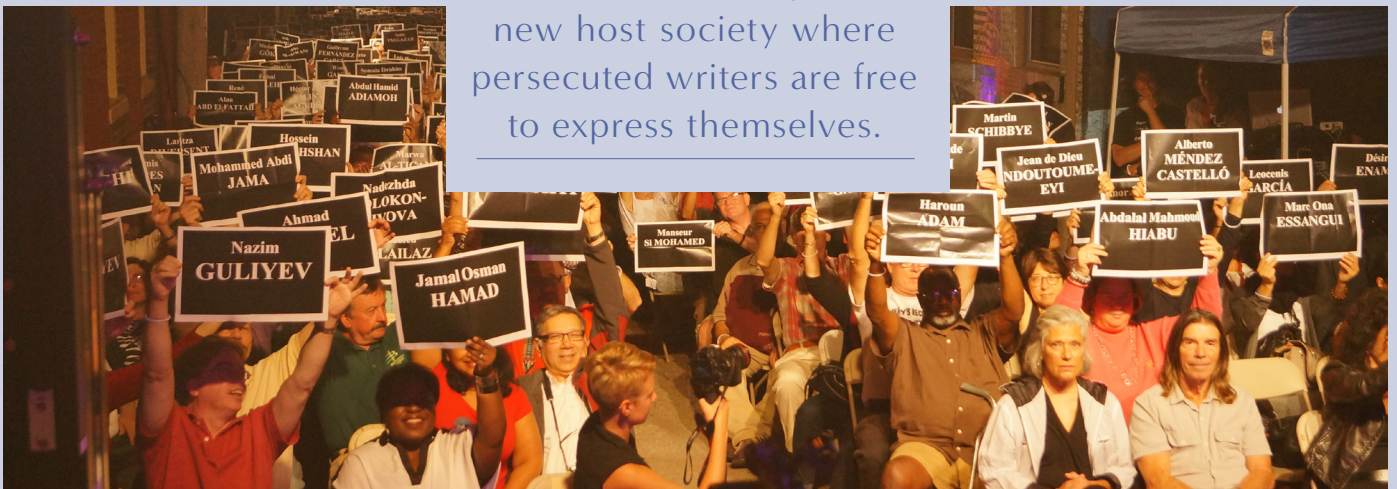
Apart from cross-cultural exchange, City of Asylum acts as a driver of local economic development by transforming abandoned and neglected homes in Pittsburgh's Northside neighborhood into creative cultural spaces with text-based public art. What separates City of Asylum from other writer's residency programs is its commitment to helping writers reclaim their lives and adapt to a new host society where persecuted writers are free to express

themselves. Long-term support continues after a writer's two-year residency has concluded with, for example, rent-free housing that has no term limit. City of Asylum's first program launched when Chinese poet Huang Xiang covered his Sampsonia Way residence with Chinese calligraphy of his poems – soon to be known as “house publications.” The project came to be known as “House Poem,” and elicited an overwhelming response from neighbors and visitors who began to exchange poems with Xiang or attended Xiang's poetry readings. “House Poem” set the stage for the future of City of Asylum: a street-wide network of multiple restored homes on Sampsonia Way, simultaneous artists in residence, and a growing series of house publications that transformed neighborhood facades into a public library. In 2005, a year after opening, City of Asylum added their Jazz Poetry Concert as a way to pair music with the literary arts. In 2006, City of Asylum added monthly readings with non-resident international authors. In 2007, more programs flourished under the Writers in the Gardens program, and short-term Visiting Writer Residencies. Other programs include the Sampsonia Way publication, an online journal of free speech, and a Sister Cities exchange program with Belgium.

In 2016, City of Asylum developed Alphabet City, a permanent home for small-scale literary and jazz programs, offices, a bookstore, and an affordable restaurant. In 2013, the organization completed Garden to Garden Artway, two distinct pathways programmed with a new series of temporary and community-based residencies in renovated vacant properties, including the Alphabet Reading Garden.



What separates City of Asylum from other writer's residency programs is its commitment to helping writers reclaim their lives and adapt to a new host society where persecuted writers are free to express themselves.



The Artway has launched new partnerships for City of Asylum, including with Cave Canem Poets and Greater Pittsburgh Art Council's Office of Public Art. "Culture doesn't have to be intimidating. Writers lose their identity when they come [to the U.S.]," commented Reese. "They're alienated from their language, their country. In addition to establishing your career path as a writer, you're also trying to re-establish your identity. City of Asylum helps them access this."

Top: Chinese poet Huang Xiang covered his residence with Chinese calligraphy of his poems – setting the stage for a growing series of "house publications" on Sampsonia Way that transformed neighborhood facades into a public library. Credit: City of Asylum

Bottom: City of Asylum's Jazz Poetry concert on Sampsonia Way. Credit: Photo by Renee Rosensteel, courtesy of City of Asylum



IMMIGRATION GOAL

EMPOWER
NEW AMERICANS
THROUGH
RELEVANT SERVICE
PROVISION

ARTS AND CULTURE STRATEGY

ELEVATE
CULTURAL TRADITIONS
AS ASSETS

IMMIGRATION GOAL

EMPOWER NEW AMERICANS THROUGH RELEVANT SERVICE PROVISION

MIGRANTS IN THE U.S. face numerous barriers that affect their ability to engage with society in the U.S. These include linguistic barriers to learning English; challenges to secure employment and a living wage; access to education, healthcare, and housing; as well as potential precarious legal issues relating to their documentation status.²⁷ Core to immigrant inclusion is developing and executing programs that expand skills and leadership in new immigrant communities. At the same time, skills building and service provision programs face challenges in meeting the needs of immigrant communities.

Traditional basic skills programs, such as those focused on ESL and job training, are often developed to serve a universal immigrant audience. This approach ignores the dimensions of diversity and different levels of “immigrant readiness,” an immigrant’s ability to access services and successfully adapt to their host society.²⁸ Dimensions of diversity within immigrant population subgroups include socio-economic status, professional skill set, historical and physical context of the region of their home country, generational status, survivorship of torture or trauma, and length of time in the U.S. Many within these subgroups struggle to access mainstream immigrant services. “The experience of new arrivals before they get to the U.S. has a profound effect on how well they do one they arrive,” commented Audrey Singer of the Urban Institute. The constantly changing landscape of federal immigration policies and migration patterns makes it difficult for “mainstream” and immigrant social service organizations to step-back and reassess

the changing context their populations are dealing with. While on one hand they are responsive to the needs of their clients, the increasing number and needs of clients they are supporting make it harder to always supply niche programming.

Developing Asset-Based Approaches to Comprehensive Programs

While professionals and scholars in the immigration sector broadly agree about the importance of service provision, the sector also recognizes that support must move beyond the provision of basic skills toward more comprehensive, asset-based approaches.²⁹ This asset-based approach builds off of pre-existing strengths in immigrant and refugee communities while simultaneously highlighting unidentified core strengths that help new Americans adapt to the U.S.

Local governments like that of Montgomery County, Maryland rely on an asset-based approach to program development as a starting point for developing multi-level programs that go beyond basic skill service provision. Instead of focusing on the deficiencies of immigrants, they highlight the assets immigrant and refugee communities bring to their host community during their stay in that community. “Language obviously is incredibly important, so English classes and similar basic support systems are top of the line. But also important is understanding things immigrant communities can teach us with regard to new ways of living and building communities,” commented

Bruce Adams, formerly of Montgomery County's Office of Community Partnerships (OCP). "Some of these lessons have informed how we help with providing housing – and how these needs change over time and over generations as immigrants move in and out of this county according to their social networks." Other ways to support immigrants include establishing tiered programs; an immigrant may begin with the first "tier" upon new arrival and then continue to further "tiers" for more in-depth programming. Programs like these may be tailored to suit the needs of immigrants who stay for many years, or to the children of immigrants who may need different support than their parents.

In Salt Lake County, the Office of New Americans supported **New Roots**, a farm incubation program that elevates the traditional cultural assets and foodways of the Bhutanese refugees on a two-and-a-half-acre farm.³⁰ More than 150 farming families participate in the program hosted by the International Rescue Committee. Through New Roots, longer-term Utahans are learning new farming skills from their neighbors and new Americans are growing products (okras and bitter melons) different than what Utahans traditionally grow. An excellent example of contact building, the New Roots program resulted in a growth of both immigrant and non-immigrant owned restaurants that depend of these unique crops. "The New Roots program helped refugees enter into agriculture in the U.S. by providing them an opportunity to garden, training them to become market farmers so they develop a business plan and earn income, and offering health benefits by diversifying their diet to combat processed food," stated Ze Min Xiao of Salt

Lake County Mayor's Office for New Americans. These examples also show how immigrant-serving institutions can harness the innate cultural and economic power of immigrants. Exchanges such as these position immigrant and refugee communities as both the beneficiaries and co-creator of services.

Supporting Newcomer Entrepreneurs

Immigrants have long helped fuel the nation's economic growth and competitiveness. While many have started an outsized-share of small businesses, others face the same challenges that all entrepreneurial ventures do, including unmet needs in business planning, access to capital, regulation information, and networking. Ensuring that economic development efforts are truly inclusive and meet the needs of immigrant and refugee entrepreneurs is critically important. When funding is allocated to support small business development through general municipal programs, rarely are portions of those funds set aside to help the unique needs of new American entrepreneurs. While it may be tempting to cite the high rates of entrepreneurship within the immigrant community when advocating for welcoming efforts, narratives that suggest immigrant exceptionalism may inadvertently pit people against each other and can be detrimental to building genuine connections between newcomer entrepreneurs and the communities where they are based.³¹

ARTS AND CULTURE STRATEGY

ELEVATE CULTURAL TRADITIONS AS ASSETS

AMONG IMMIGRANTS’ greatest strengths are their unique cultural assets. These cultural assets are common threads that link new Americans to their homelands through food, medicinal remedies, religious expression, athletic traditions, and arts and culture.³² Traditions such as these form the foundation for a shared cultural experience – a necessary bind amidst multi-dimensional migration experiences. They also strengthen generational connections within immigrant groups, many of which are fortified by longstanding presence in one place.³³ The ability to create in place prioritizes creative process over outcome, and allows immigrant communities to have agency in the future of their community. Immigrants without a venue to express their culture feel less integrated into the wider spectrum of their communities. The cultural norms of society have made them believe creativity is confined to formally trained artists or institutional presenters of cultural production.³⁴ Furthermore, the inherent and tacit nature of these expressive forms makes them difficult to identify, elevate, and ultimately preserve.

The arts and culture sector can help by expanding public perceptions of “art” to include everyday creativity and heritage. Immigrants and refugees may come from societies where their cultural identities are more integrated into daily life than they are in mainstream U.S. culture. The dynamics of those conditions contain added meaning, for they reflect how new immigrants feel welcomed, integrated, or excluded in the U.S. Identifying – and celebrating – how receiving communities are shaped by the immigrant cultures that inhabit them is important for creating inclusive

community-building environments. While formal artistic disciplines – dance, music, theater, visual arts, etc. – remain relevant in the realm of immigrant creativity, so, too, is the outgrowth of artisan microeconomies and the preservation of intangible cultural heritage.³⁵ These forms of cultural heritage comprise the everyday creativity that can transfer immigrant readiness into new business opportunities, or inspire coordinated municipal efforts to engage a new population of cultural leaders. Those seeking to engage immigrants or refugees in arts and cultural projects would benefit from understanding how varying levels of immigrant readiness affect an immigrant’s or refugee’s approach to creativity.

In the Twin Cities, the Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) is supporting the development of an artist business center in the **Little Mekong Asian Business & Cultural District**, a retail and cultural corridor in St. Paul, Minnesota launched in 2012 by the Asian Economic Development Association and predominantly comprised of people from Southeast Asian nations. The center will be part of a larger maker space: part gallery, part community space, and part retail space, with rear offices for smaller Asian-focused community organizations. Projects like these are testament to how ethnic communities are valuing the work of immigrant artists, as well as their understanding of how to start working with artists as businesses. “In communities like Little Mekong, there is an understanding that artists and cultural traditions are a critical component of the corridor’s success,” said Kathy Mouacheupao, former Program Director, Creative Placemaking, LISC Twin Cities. “When

*A community member contributes to participatory public art at the Little Mekong Night Market in St. Paul, MN.
Credit: Asian Economic Development Association*



we talk about art in immigrant communities we're talking about an expression of culture beyond the western canon, which is key to sustaining the cultural identity of these places.”

In Oakland, California, migrant spaces are emerging as new centers of social life in response to continuous uneven real estate development. “Everything from food culture, to new music traditions, to just new ways of being, are emerging in historic immigrant communities in Oakland. I think the best way you retain those kinds of places is through placemaking strategies: to shine a light on that place and help them figure out ways to retain their culture, in all of its forms,” said artist Favianna Rodriguez, Executive Director and Cultural Strategist at CultureStrike, and Co-Founder of Presente.org.

In **Banglatown**, a once predominantly Polish but now Bangladeshi, Pakistani, and Eastern European district straddling Detroit and Hamtramck, the Bangladeshi community has drawn attention for creating Bandhu Gardens (Bangla for Friendship Gardens), an intricate network of hanging backyard gardens. These gardens act as informal forms of public art and create a naturally occurring cultural district.³⁶ While some of Banglatown’s community members would like to formalize a garden initiative, others feel a formal Bangladeshi cultural district would change their relationship with the area. Lessons from the Twin Cities, Oakland, and Banglatown show that many residents are curious about the traditional, place-based cultural expressions of immigrants and refugees – what is often missing is an opportunity and public space to showcase them.

NIBBLE

SOMERVILLE, MA

NIBBLE IS THE CULINARY entrepreneurship arm of the Somerville Arts Council. Through food tourism in the form of cooking classes, international market tours, pop-up restaurants, and a blog, the program celebrates the diverse food and cultural landscape of the Union Square neighborhood of Somerville. Nibble elevates cultural traditions by helping educate and empower immigrant and refugee culinary entrepreneurs to share their diverse foodways and establish economic empowerment in the local restaurant industry.

Union Square is an evolving area, and is currently experiencing intense urban development due to the planned extension of the Massachusetts Bay Transit Authority (MBTA)'s Green Line. It is also a populous immigrant and refugee area that is home to international markets and ethnic restaurants ranging from Brazilian to Bengali; from Peruvian to Portuguese. These restaurants ground visitors and tourists in an experience of the area's diverse communities, while also serving as a touchstone to convene and preserve the culinary traditions of local immigrant communities. Because every culture has culinary traditions, food can be a place-based platform for common ground.

Nibble is one component of a larger cultural development initiative. Its signature element is the Nibble Entrepreneurship Program (NEP), an eight-week program that provides emerging immigrant culinary entrepreneurs training to launch their culinary careers. Launched in 2015, the program's inaugural participants included cooks from Brazil, Mexico, Colombia, Venezuela, India, and Somalia. The program distinguishes itself from other culinary entrepreneurship programs because it provides skills training while allowing members to

share their stories and talents with each other and through cooking classes with the public (demos at festivals, pop-ups). Culinary entrepreneurs learn about price points, permitting, employee training, business development, restaurant hospitality, and restaurant safety (through ServSafe certification).³⁷ The fee is \$100 and new participants may join on a rolling basis. To curb uneven development in Union Square, the NEP works to rotate graduates in temporary (pop-up) or permanent (restaurant) spaces in the neighborhood.

Nibble promotes inter-cultural exchange by helping communities understand the inherent assets that immigrants and refugees bring with them, while helping sustain their economic well-being in the process.

Nibble has recently embarked on Nibble Catering as another revenue-generating element, and in October 2019 a fixed Nibble Kitchen opened in Union Square, complete with rotating cuisines including Brazilian, Ethiopian, Bolivian, and more. "Our Nibble community has become this tight-knit community. I think they're so proud that we're asking them to share their culture, and they're excited to have an opportunity to share their culture through food," commented Rachel Strutt of the Somerville Arts Council. The book *Nibble: Exploring Food, Art & Culture in Union Square* includes over 25 recipes and cultural stories from many of the culinary entrepreneurs that have participated in the program.



Scenes from the Nibble Kitchen Grand Opening. Credit: Photos by Maria Merbanda Martinez, courtesy of Somerville Arts Council

Programs such as Nibble have been successful in revealing the needs of immigrants and refugees in transitory communities. For example, the NEP has revealed that ethnic entrepreneurs struggle with speaking English, which makes it difficult to communicate between customers and kitchen incubators. As a result, participants in the NEP must be enrolled in an ESL class or program. Access to transportation was surfaced as another issue. When students do not have a car, the burden of driving students to meetings or transporting their cooking supplies fall on Nibble staff. In order to empower participants to support themselves, Nibble factors the cost of taxis into business plans. As more generations go through the program, Nibble staff will pair alumni with new participants for peer-learning and mentoring sessions.

Funded by the Somerville Arts Council (ArtsUnion), the Massachusetts Cultural Council, City of Somerville, and ArtPlace America, other key partners for Nibble include SomerViva (the city's multi-lingual communications department) and Accion (the city's multi-lingual communications department). Nibble promotes inter-cultural exchange by helping communities understand the inherent assets that immigrants and refugees bring with them, while helping sustain their economic well-being in the process.

Because every culture has culinary traditions, food can be a place-based platform for common ground.



IMMIGRATION GOAL

EXPAND
ALLIANCES
TO BUILD
COLLECTIVE
CAPACITY

ARTS AND CULTURE STRATEGY

ENGAGE
NEWCOMERS
AND OTHER ALLIES
IN CIVIC PROCESSES

IMMIGRATION GOAL

EXPAND ALLIANCES TO BUILD
COLLECTIVE CAPACITY**Building Cross-Sector Coalitions**

Success in the immigration sector requires cross-sector strategies and support. Allies have always existed, but distinct connections between groups that have traditionally served one ethnic population or type of new American with larger local cultural institutions has proven to be a powerful base for building new coalitions. “We are in a moment in which people are deciding to break out of the traditional styles of immigration work and showing up for each other in ways they hadn’t before,” said Adey Fisseha, U.S. Senior Program Officer, Unbound Philanthropy.

While service provision and advocacy efforts may differ, core values such as a quest for a more just and inclusive society also resonate with the target affinities of other sectors including women’s rights groups, the labor and workers’ rights sector, human rights, and the LGBTQ advocacy movement. “We’re working to make sure our communities aren’t being pitted against each other. We need to acknowledge what we have in common – Black Lives Matter and the Civil Rights movement, the LGBTQ movement and women’s movements and more – and also understand what each of our communities are bringing to the table on a range of issues impacting our communities,” commented Rich Stolz, Executive Director, One America, a community-based immigrant advocacy group that works at the local, state, and federal level to advocate for humane immigration policy and provides services to immigrants and refugees in Washington State. Local groups such as One America simply do not have the capacity to take

on every civic issue, yet they recognize how larger aspects of civic infrastructure significantly affect the immigrant communities they serve. For this reason, organizations such as the YMCA of America, an organization typically known for promoting youth and family empowerment through athletic facilities and humanitarian work, launched the New American Welcome Center Project in 2015. Modeled after a 10-year old program at the YMCA of Greater New York, New American Welcome Centers fully align to the general menu of services available at each participating YMCA branch. Apart from improving the lives of newcomers, they also provide an opportunity to build cross-sector coalitions in existing community facilities that newcomers may already frequent.³⁸

**Training a New
Generation of Advocates**

The pressing need to connect within and across the boundaries of immigration work has given birth to a new generation of advocates.³⁹ Many of these new leaders are immigrant youth (documented and undocumented second or third-generation) who come from mixed-status families (families with individuals that vary in immigration status) that were previously disengaged from civic issues.⁴⁰ Their political agency and quest for representation are often born out of their first-hand and/or familial migration histories and from personal experiences with racism and xenophobia.

In Charlotte, North Carolina, projects such as the **Latino New South Project** at the Levine Museum of the New South have been instrumental in

*Participants
in a Latino
New South
listening session.
Credit: EMC Arts*



helping immigration organizations establish deeper engagement between a new generation of allies and civil society across the Southeast region – a fast-growing new immigrant destination.⁴¹ Beyond highlighting the Latinx experience in Charlotte, the Levine Museum partnered with the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute (BCRI) and the Atlanta History Center for a comprehensive, multi-year traveling exhibition. Such regional cultural partnerships are important for introducing immigration advocacy opportunities to new and different stakeholders.

We are in a moment in which people are deciding to break out of the traditional styles of immigration work and showing up for each other in ways they hadn't before.

In Detroit, Michigan, initiatives led by Global Detroit such as ProsperUs Detroit and Cultural Ambassadors work to connect Detroit's business community and investors with new generations of entrepreneurial immigrants and refugees.⁴² "When I see new immigrant families in my community I tell them 'I need you to show up,'" said Raquel Garcia, former Director of Housing and Special Projects, Global Detroit. "These populations want membership in civil society, and they need resources and new leaders to be successful in this work. Immigrant organizations — even established ones — need to engage new strategies for outreach." The birth of a new generation of advocates encourages immigrants to integrate into non-immigrant-focused spaces and build capacity across organizations that serve their communities.

Fundraising in New Circles

Apart from expanding alliances, the immigration sector also draws on various streams of funding to build collective resources for services, advocacy, and research: local and national community foundations, all levels of government, universities, local businesses, and independent support from the public through donations. Universities, in particular, can play a critical “bridging” role for funding as applied degree programs and projects have access to another set of research funds from state, federal, and private non-profit foundation initiatives seeking to gather more data to support policy change.

Despite persistent need, however, federal funding for the immigration sector has plummeted for both immigrant and refugee resettlement serving programs.⁴³ In addition, recent anti-immigration policies demand that many hours are now spent responding to these new dynamics, such as preparing “know your rights” documents and clinics in various languages. At a time when federal attention to immigration and refugee resettlement remains unclear, local level municipal agencies remain the catalyst for the new funding partnerships required to keep immigrant-serving efforts afloat.

In the absence of a reliable funding base within federal government, the immigration sector has spurred funders’ collaboratives with smaller, more risk-tolerant philanthropic foundations also interested in broadening support among non-profit organizations. Examples of these collaboratives

include the Illinois Immigration Funders Collaborative (a project of The Chicago Community Trust), the Oregon Immigrant and Refugee Funders Collaborative (a project of The Collins Foundation, MRG Foundation, Meyer Memorial Trust, Pride Foundation, and The Oregon Community Foundation), and The Immigration Strategic Funders Collaborative of Connecticut (a project of The Community Foundation for Greater New Haven). The regional nature of these collaboratives has many benefits: collaboratives streamline the funding process by developing shared grant criteria, a common application, and an expedited application review, all of which lead to more immediate funding options for pressing immigrant and refugee needs.

At a time when federal attention to immigration and refugee resettlement remains unclear, local level municipal agencies remain the catalyst for new funding partnerships.

Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees (GCIR), a national organization comprised of philanthropic members, recognized the need to organize funding initiatives around specific policies.⁴⁴ GCIR currently supports convenings, trainings, and advocacy around three pressing federal issues: the U.S. Census; ending family separation and detention; and protecting immigrants under recent changes to the public charge rule.⁴⁵ GCIR has also recently partnered with the EITC Funders Network (Earned Income Tax Credit) to jointly work on issues related to tax credit access, immigration status, and racial and ethnic equity.⁴⁶

ARTS AND CULTURE STRATEGY

ENGAGE NEWCOMERS AND OTHER ALLIES IN CIVIC PROCESSES

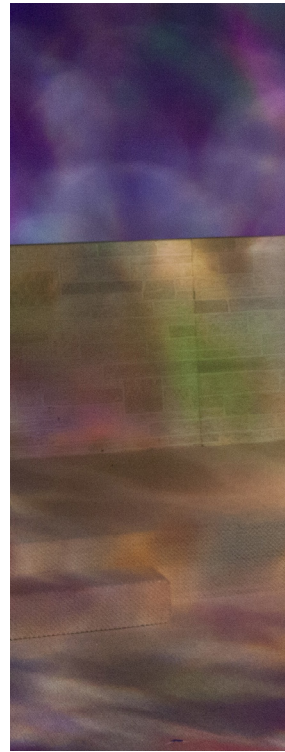
ARTS AND CULTURE can help to build collective capacity by recognizing and convening allied partners in other sectors that intersect with the immigrant community. They can also reframe policy issues in a creative and accessible manner and establish an inclusive, physical space that inspires immigrants to be more engaged in the local civic life of their communities. In some cases, arts and cultural practitioners find success in having built relationships with immigrants, policymakers, and elected officials more valuable than having a finished artistic product.

Arts and culture can also engage new Americans in civic issues by building trust and raising awareness through cultural programming that makes them feel safe and valued. The sheer act of convening in a casual, creative, and culturally familiar setting provides a space where immigrants and refugees reveal issues they are facing that may not otherwise be on the radar of elected officials or the social service sector. One of the places where immigrants feel most connected are their centers of worship or ethnic-specific centers that provide them access to services. While most immigrants visit these centers for brief and specific purposes, attending year-round arts and cultural programming at these centers has allowed new American communities to develop a new sense of pride and purpose in their geographic and ethnic communities.

In San Ysidro, California, a border town adjacent to San Diego, organizers with the **Casa Familiar** community development organization engaged local residents through cultural events to develop a strong *promotoras* network. A *promotora* is lay

person who provides basic health education to other Latinx community members. While they are not licensed medical professionals, they serve an important role as a liaison between communities and local institutions. During events at El Salon + Casa Patio, two of Casa Familiar's collective community gathering spaces, artists and organizers worked with *promotoras* to learn about the most pressing resource allocation issues facing the community. One key issue that surfaced from these activities was the lack of transportation access for getting children to and from school. Though a sidewalk had been promised since 2002, inadequate bus service from a local hillside community required parents to do a daily three-quarter mile hike up a sidewalk-less road to get to San Ysidro High School.

In 2014, Casa Familiar responded by working with *promotoras* to organize monthly *caminatas* that would call attention to the issue, and serve as a way to encourage exercise among the *promotoras* network and larger immigrant community.⁴⁷ Organizing for *caminatas* and recruitment of new *promotoras* primarily occurred during art and cultural programs. After four years of *caminatas*, in 2018 the City agreed to a \$17 million investment in construction of new sidewalks. "Walks continue today as a victory reminder every month," noted Casa Familiar CEO Lisa Cuestas. "There are other physical infrastructure projects we would like to activate in the same way — at various phases within the city process using arts and culture as an organizing tool," said David Flores, the Community Development Director of Casa Familiar.



Many newcomers, however, are coming from places that lack democratic processes or prevented them from interacting with local government officials. For some immigrants and refugees, rallying against the governments of their home country is what catalyzed their need to emigrate. Other immigrants and refugees maintain an inherent distrust of government and political authorities. When such fears manifest in the U.S., they translate to a lack of civic will and interest. Cultural organizing and engagement can make what might be a tenuous political process more accessible. The strength of the immigration sector relies on empowered and creative advocates, service providers, and policymakers — from within the immigration sector and from other sectors such as arts and culture – to ensure the longevity of this work.

In Chicago, **Silk Road Rising** creates live theater and online productions that share stories through the Asian-American and Middle Eastern American perspectives. In 2016, Silk Road Rising produced *Mosque Alert*, a play inspired by the “Ground Zero Mosque” controversy around building a mosque at the site of the 9/11 terrorist attacks in New York City.⁴⁸ *Mosque Alert* tells a fictional story about the ways zoning and Islamophobia challenge the construction of a proposed Islamic Center in suburban Chicago. Instead of viewing the local government as an obstacle, Silk Road Rising’s artistic team met with the Mayor of Naperville, Illinois to develop a character around him in the play. “The mayor said ‘Let me educate you on how things work so that your play reflects how things work in the real world,’” said Malik Gillani, Executive Director and Jamil Khoury, Artistic Director, Silk Road Rising. “Not only was he supportive of the project and numerous readings,



Left: Monthly 'caminatas' promoted exercise and drew attention to the lack of sidewalks in San Ysidro, CA. Credit: Casa Familiar

Right: Actors Sahar Dika and Frank Sawa performing in Jamil Khoury's "Mosque Alert." Credit: Photo by Airan Wright, courtesy of Silk Road Rising

Many newcomers are coming from places that lack democratic processes or prevented them from interacting with local government officials.

but he also helped us think through some of the conceptual ideas about planning and zoning. This takes time and work.”

Silk Road’s work to develop raise awareness about the growing Muslim community in Naperville and their need for sacred spaces was dependent on strong relationships within the city, which ultimately led to actual policy change. After seeing the play and meeting with the production team, the City of Naperville’s zoning board and mayor proposed a motion that would include

mosques as an element of the religious architecture ordinance. However, without Mosque Alert, the rift between Naperville’s Muslim community and other residents may have widened. “When you see yourself recognized in your city’s zoning laws, you feel included,” said Gillani. This was a tremendous win for Silk Road Rising and Naperville’s Muslim community – and a larger issue that could not have been highlighted or resolved through isolated arts and cultural work without informed elected officials at the table. This process also shed light on what it means to be an ally, and how the process of seeking, negotiating, and cultivating long-term relationships outside of the arts and immigration sectors is a difficult, but critical element in raising awareness about local issues.

KOUNKUEY DESIGN INITIATIVE

NORTH SHORE, CA

KOUNKUEY DESIGN INITIATIVE (KDI) is socially-engaged design and community development organization committed to supporting the physical and social improvement of underserved communities. Established in 2006 by six students at the Harvard Graduate School of Design, the founders of Kounkuey (the Thai word for “getting to know”) realized the future of design relied on community members as co-authors in the design process. Based in Los Angeles with an office in Kenya, KDI has worked on participatory planning projects in the U.S., Africa, and Latin America.⁴⁹ KDI draws on an arsenal of expertise from architects, landscape architects, engineers, urban planners, and community organizers to position the communities they serve at the center of their projects from start to finish. KDI increases access to resources and builds connections between public and private actors by using social design techniques to create “productive public spaces” in underserved areas – public spaces that address the economic and social conditions of the area.

One of KDI’s ongoing projects is located in California’s North Shore, an unincorporated area of Riverside County adjacent to the Salton Sea.⁵⁰ With a population of 3,500, the rural area is comprised of a predominantly seasonal Mexican agricultural community in the Eastern Coachella Valley. Once a popular tourist destination for boaters during the 1960s and 70s, the area fell into decline due to the high salinity in the Salton Sea and failed attempts to revive tourism. The negative perception of the area is pervasive; it is fueled by poverty and a lack of basic civic services and infrastructure, including schools, transportation, grocery stores, and parks.

In 2013, KDI began to work with residents and community activists to design the area’s first public space – a way to connect residential areas. Through the support of Riverside County’s Desert Recreation District, what was intended to be less than an acre soon became a five-acre public park. Multimedia designer Shannon Scrofano and artist Evelyn Serrano engaged community members by leading a cultural asset mapping exercise, one that would uncover local creativity and inform “situaciones” – site-specific cultural interventions for inter-generational outreach. Other programs include a teen-produced, DIY news program called the “The Salty Bottom Show”; a bi-monthly, bi-lingual print and online community newspaper about local history and community development titled *El Progreso*; support of Delicias Laguna Azul, a local women’s culinary entrepreneurship program connected to a new farmer’s market; and Desert Riderz, a bike co-op.

The North Shore and communities like it are often times not credited for the work or the momentum they've established. Communities and individuals are not just waiting for someone to come solve the problem for them.

“The North Shore and communities like it are often times not credited for the work or the momentum they’ve established. Communities and individuals are not just waiting for someone to come solve the problem for them,” said Chelina Odbert, Co-founder and Executive Director, Kounkuey Design Initiative. “They are actively trying to solve the problem in the best way that they know how. We are just trying to



North Shore community members were co-authors in the park's design process from start to finish. Credit: Kounkuey Design Initiative

help them reach whatever goal they have.” The park broke ground in spring 2016 and opened in September 2016. The park includes kiosks for vendors, picnic areas, a skate park, shaded pavilions for gathering, community-designed artwork, and the area’s first athletic (soccer) fields. Apart from community-informed civic improvements, another one of Nuestro Lugar’s key benefits has been its ability to bring critical resources and funding to the North Shore. With grants from The California Endowment, Surdna Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, and ArtPlace America, resources include new and expanded public space, a farmer’s market, place-based public art, transportation infrastructure in the form of a bicycle sharing program, and a resident-led cultural council called the North



Children playing at the park entrance. Credit: Studio Loz Feliz

KDI draws on an arsenal of expertise from architects, landscape architects, engineers, urban planners, and community organizers to position the communities they serve at the center of their projects from start to finish.

Shore Arts Committee. Perhaps the strongest sustained effort to creatively increase access to previously unavailable resources has been securing funding from the County of Riverside and State of California. Prior to Nuestro Lugar, the state and county had not committed any funds to support water and transportation infrastructure in the area. As the number of immigrants grew in the unincorporated area of the North Shore, the need for water and transportation infrastructure became essential to satisfy basic quality of life needs.⁵¹ Each of these elements has given shape to a new, empowered narrative for community members of North Shore.

PANGEA WORLD THEATRE

TWIN CITIES, MN

PANGEA WORLD THEATER was founded in 1995 to use theater to convene the diverse people and cultures of contemporary Minneapolis. Based in cross-cultural dialogue, Pangea collaborates with award-winning theater companies and independent artists to advance social justice, cultural difference, and human rights in American society. Since its inception, Pangea's programming has expanded to include other artistic disciplines such as visual arts, music, choreography, and performance. Pangea World Theater builds civic capacity by producing issue-based theater projects that inspire new generations of immigrants and refugees to engage in all aspects of civic life, most specifically local urban development issues in Minneapolis.

The spirit of Pangea is easily embodied in their Lake Street Arts! (LSA) Initiative. A four-year initiative, LSA is a community and leadership development program harnessed through the lens of multidisciplinary theater. As urban development changes the demographics and shape of ethnic Lake Street in south Minneapolis, Pangea has partnered with the Lake Street Council, a network of artists and businesses, to install creative interventions along the Lake Street corridor. What makes this partnership unique is its ability to reach such a broad range of cultures: Latinx, Asian, East African, and Native American/Indigenous (Dakota/Lakota/Ojibwe), both new and longstanding, in a concentrated space. Despite their adjacency, these communities are often quite separate. The goal of Lake Street Arts is to use artist-led interventions to bridge communal immigrant and refugee experiences across ethnic lines and geography. The initiative is informed by a set of artist values and a working agreement co-created with the Lake

Street corridor community, and is comprised of six components:⁵²

Home Performance Projects: focused on the concept of “home” held by Dakota, East African, and Latinx populations

Midday Theater Hour: dance and theater from students and emerging artists

LSA! at the Market: live theater and performance in the market square

Colors of Lake Street: a drop-in and create art program/workshop that celebrates difference and skin color

Emerging Artist Showcase: storytelling residencies from emerging artists

Community Learning Gather: conversations, immigration issue roundtables, and other storytelling program and community dialogues

LSA comes at a critical time for Minneapolis. An update to the City's Comprehensive Plan is currently underway; the resulting vision that will guide land use, transportation, housing, and economic development across the city. How the Lake Street Corridor develops will influence the future of similar immigrant and refugee corridors in Minneapolis. Alejandra Tobar Alatríz, former Arts Organizing and Community Engagement Director, reflected, “We're interested in making sure that whatever made us successful [at Lake Street] makes future engagement more meaningful and more powerful around a multi-sector conversation – one that centers creativity and art making to develop better, and one that is defined by more equitable and healthy communities.”



How the Lake Street Corridor develops will influence the future of similar immigrant and refugee corridors in Minneapolis.



Top: Indigenous Roots dancers perform as part of Lake Street Arts! at the Plaza. Credit: Jenny Zander

Left: A member of the local Somali community participates in Shaah Iyo Sheeko (Tea and Stories) by Salvadore Valli, where participants created six word stories about home. Credit: Meena Natarajan

Right: Artist Candida Gonzalez of Goodspace Murals speaks in front of the Lake Street mural that she and Greta McLain created in collaboration with Pangea World Theater. Credit: Jenny Zander



IMMIGRATION GOAL

ESTABLISH
INFRASTRUCTURE
IN
IMMIGRANT
DESTINATIONS

ARTS AND CULTURE STRATEGY

CO-CREATE
SPACES
THAT REFLECT
IDENTITY

IMMIGRATION GOAL

ESTABLISH INFRASTRUCTURE
IN IMMIGRANT DESTINATIONS

Changing Immigrant Mobility Patterns

WHERE IMMIGRANTS AND REFUGEES LIVE in the U.S. plays a critical role in how they engage in new communities – and how longer-term residents react to their presence. Beginning in the 1990s, rising costs and renewed attention to center-city redevelopment forced immigrants and refugees to bypass traditional gateways like New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles and move to “new immigrant designations” in smaller cities and towns. Regions of the U.S. that were previously unfamiliar with new Americans became the primary gateways for newcomer settlement.⁵³ For example, Latinx and Asian immigrant and refugee populations are leaving Seattle, Washington and urban Kings County to move south towards Kent or Renton, Washington, or further north towards Everett, Washington.⁵⁴ “In fast growing metropolitan regions, people are being driven to suburbs and smaller urban communities because they can’t afford to live in the traditional gateway communities, like Seattle,” stated Rich Stolz of One America. Immigrants seeking jobs are also being drawn to suburban, smaller urban, and rural communities, and as they do so they may encounter greater anti-immigration sentiment. Demographics are similarly changing in large portions of the South and Midwest. According to *The Integration of Immigrants into American Society* by Waters and Pineau (2015):

“National statistics sometimes hide or even obfuscate the nation’s spatially uneven patterns of immigrant integration from one place to another...What is different today from the past is that unprecedented numbers of

new immigrants and the foreign-born have diffused spatially from traditional areas of first settlement (e.g., in the Southwest or in large gateway cities) to so-called ‘new destinations’ in the Midwest and South, to suburbs previously populated largely by native-born Americans, to small but rapidly growing metropolitan areas, and even to rural communities.”

The suburban and exurban diffusion of contemporary migration has provoked new policy debates about the benefits and costs of migration, the regional settlement patterns of recent arrivals, and the ability to include migrants as valued members in a participatory society.⁵⁵ The geographic settlement patterns of immigrants are further complicated by internal migration within the U.S.⁵⁶ The continual movement of immigrants and refugees to new immigrant destinations requires immigrant services in areas where infrastructure are traditionally scant.

Built Environment

The success of newcomers connecting to local context requires more than interpretations of culture as a welcoming space. Physical spaces for immigrants and refugees are just as important in new immigrant destinations as they are in established ethnic enclaves. This is especially crucial in dense immigrant gateway communities where everyday practices influence how people self-initiate physical and social interactions within the built environment. For example, the **Southwest Minnesota Housing Partnership** (SWMHP) is



Audience members from Milan, MN watching a scene from "This Land is Milan," a community theater performance exploring common ground between Norwegian and Micronesian heritage, immigration stories, the concept of home, and Milan's history and hopes for the future. Credit: Photo by Robert Gaylord, courtesy of Placebase Productions

working to integrate the traditions of Hmong refugees and Mexican immigrants with the area's strong Norwegian heritage through community-theater productions, a new community-engaged art effort in downtown St. James, Minnesota, and community festivals in Worthington, Minnesota.⁵⁷ Efforts from the SWMHP and similar immigrant-serving organizations engaging in arts outreach to new Americans reveals the ability for institutions in these areas to respond to the needs of their community in creative ways.

In addition to needing basic services and allies, immigrants and refugees yearn for physical spaces and places that are ethnically resonant and can help groups better connect to themselves, to each other, and to their surrounding communities. Some of these spaces are intended to serve the broader community (cultural districts, religious

architecture, landscapes, parks, plazas, and ethnic commercial corridors), while others are iconic, site-specific markers (such as dragon gates to signify the boundaries of a local Chinatown). A new trend in many immigrant-serving organizations is to join efforts to construct a centralized facility that serves many of the needs of their newcomer constituency. The design and construction of these spaces may be formal (built through a targeted effort by a community organization or institution) or informal (built by members of the community to serve otherwise unserved needs). The process of how these spaces take form is critical to understanding the immigrant-focused activities that occur within them.⁵⁸ It also establishes a clear strategy for gathering first-hand data on newcomer's physical needs that would be otherwise muted.

ARTS AND CULTURE STRATEGY

CO-CREATE SPACES THAT REFLECT IDENTITY

AS MOBILITY PATTERNS shift and more and more gateway communities are working to integrate and serve new Americans, arts and culture can help by facilitating the multiple modes of collaboration between artists and between institutions. “Co-production” in this context is a dual process where artists of various backgrounds and disciplines work with each other as well as with service providers to create creative programs, events, or spaces for both new and existing communities at the same pace. Examples include installing culturally relevant visual arts elements in immigrant-serving social service centers, building ethnic-specific monuments or memorials to local leaders, creating an artisan craft or ethnic culinary night market, or starting a new arts festival or parade. How spaces are designed and for what kinds of uses has the potential to signify cultural understanding and mutual cooperation between new and long-

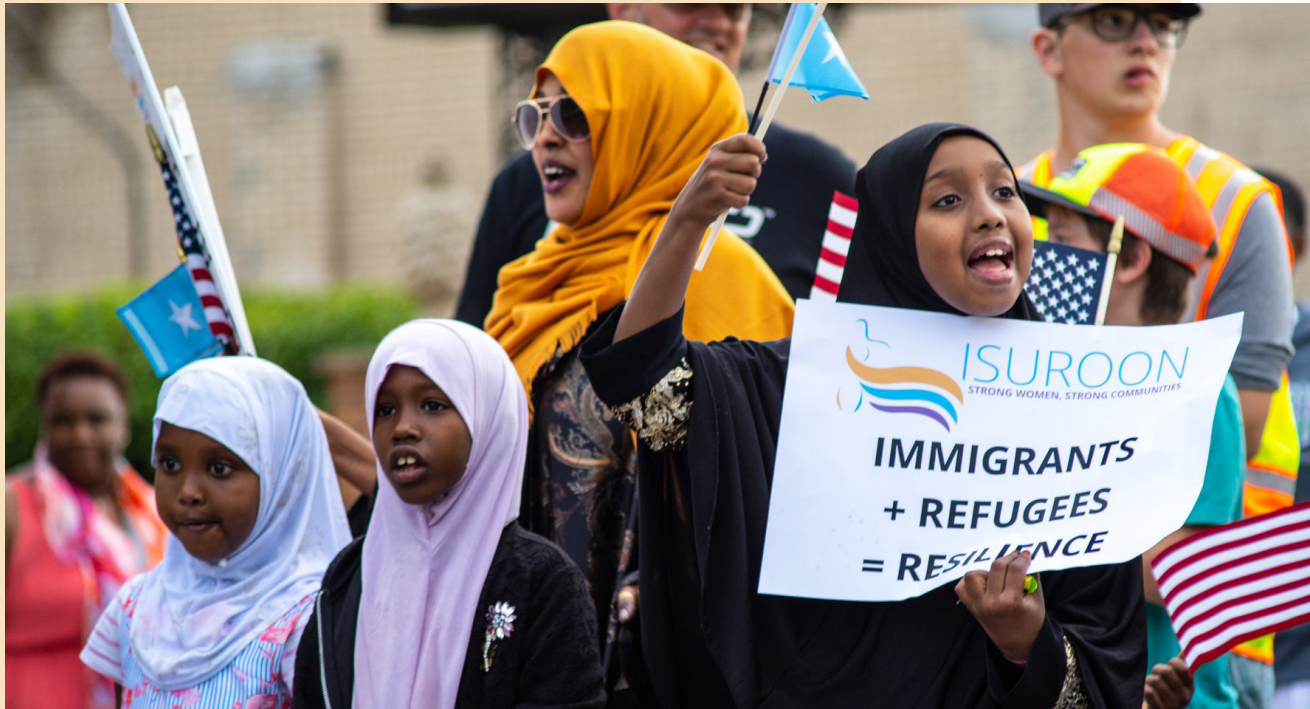
standing groups. Co-created spaces also have the ability to become a meeting point for passive socializing or organized strategy; the result may even lead to an informed cross-cultural aesthetic.

Projects that have the most success put immigrant and refugee artists at the center of these co-production strategies. In Philadelphia, arts organization Al-Bustan Seeds of Culture produced **An Immigrant Alphabet**, a public art installation featuring the work of artist Wendy Ewald in collaboration with eighteen local high school students exploring their immigrant experiences. An Immigrant Alphabet was displayed at the Municipal Services Building in Center City Philadelphia for ten months beginning in September 2017, with a series of free participatory events held in public spaces and venues across the city.



Photographer Wendy Ewald works with a student from Northeast High School as part of "An Immigrant Alphabet" public art project. Credit: Photo by Chip Colson, courtesy of Al-Bustan Seeds of Culture

A family watches the 2019 African Day Parade in St. Paul, MN. Credit: Photo by Brad Sigal/ Sigal Photos, courtesy of African Economic Development Solutions



Including local immigrant and refugee artists is critical for local governments and arts service agencies because it helps to avoid overly-essentialized cultural forms (how immigrants can often be perceived from non-immigrant groups), while also supporting an entrepreneurial spirit. “One thing we try and do is to avoid pretending that we’re the cultural producers for the public. We try to invite the public to see themselves as cultural producers so we’re all doing it collectively. They are serving us as much as we’re serving them,” stated Rachel Strutt of the Somerville Arts Council.

Arts and culture can also help by catalyzing cultural districts that highlight the local population of immigrants and refugees. “Cultural districts like **Little Africa**, the cultural and retail heart of Minnesota’s African diaspora, provide one way to leverage the critical mass of immigrants and refugees that’s already growing

there. These districts give some cultural shape and form to their communities. They’ve helped ethnic businesses in these areas survive — and thrive,” commented Kathy Mouacheupao, former Program Officer for Creative Placemaking at LISC Twin Cities. The success of Little Africa lies in the early commitment by local ethnic businesses along the corridor to hire artists as staff, as opposed to the more common practice of conducting one-off arts and cultural programs. This staffing strategy prompted a sea change in thinking about the ways host communities in the Twin Cities physically welcome immigrant communities, the role of artists in these districts, and the ways that organizations views and collaborates with artists. According to Mouacheupao, “Every place has a different composition and how those groups interact with each other, and how they interact with U.S.-born residents, is a critical component to integration work.”

CASA AZAFRÁN

NASHVILLE, TN

CASA AZAFRÁN IS an immigrant services complex located in downtown Nashville, one of the fastest-growing urban centers of new immigration in the U.S. The complex is a one-stop shop for a network of leading immigrant-serving non-profit organizations, with education, legal, health care, and arts and culture services as well as an event space.⁵⁹ Opened in 2012, the complex was a project of Conexión Américas, one of Nashville’s largest immigrant social service centers. Today Casa Azafrán is credited with revitalizing its immediate neighborhood, increasing collaboration among like-minded non-profit organizations, and providing services for new and existing populations through education, health services, fitness, entrepreneurship training, culinary and artistic expression, community events, and financial services. Casa Azafrán employs arts and culture by hosting collective community arts projects that welcome and connect patrons to a network of critical immigration services benefitting Nashville’s new American community.

Conexión Américas purchased its 28,800 square-foot building in 2011 in South Nashville’s Nolensville Pike corridor – the gateway to Nashville’s most diverse district. The main entranceway to Casa Azafrán is enhanced by “Migration,” a 30-foot by 12-foot mosaic mural that includes more than 7,000 pieces of hand-cut tile, incorporating the work of over 350 volunteers over a two-year timeline. Migration was created by Jairo Prado (a Colombian native living in Nashville for over 35 years) and his wife, Susan Prado. Representing the migration

story of people across the world, the project was “built by Nashville, for Nashville” during open studio sessions in the Prados’ studio during which community members shared and illustrated their migration stories. The collaborative process allowed volunteers of all skill levels and ages to commemorate their experiences. According to Jairo Prado, “The success of the mosaic is its ability to engage – both immigrants and refugees embraced the idea, and the mosaic-making process helped immigrants carve a space of their own in the community, to become a larger part of the community. Each piece represents one unique story that contributes to the whole composition of the city. I feel that art is one of the best ways to strengthen the community.” When the project was finished, the mosaic was transported to Casa Azafrán, where it was re-assembled, hoisted up two stories, and installed on the façade of the Moorish and Spanish style building.

The project was funded in part by the Tennessee Arts Commission and the National Endowment for the Arts, as well as a local crowdfunding campaign for \$25,000. It has quickly become a Nashville landmark. “We’re the artists that are advocating for a bridge and for a way of shedding a positive light on the good attributes of what it is to be a diverse community – one that embraces the beauty and the richness of all of the cultures that are present here. We see that our mosaic has become the emblem of the work that the organization [Conexión Américas], and all the organizations who live there, are doing to advocate for people on an individual level,” said Susan Prado. To date the Prados have completed a variety of community-based projects



Top: Detail of "Migration," the mosaic mural installed at the main entrance of Casa Azafrán. Credit: Prado Studio

Bottom: Hands on Nashville and Workers Dignity staff members arrange tiles in the mosaic. Credit: Prado Studio



The success of the mosaic is its ability to engage — both immigrants and refugees embraced the idea, and the mosaic-making process helped immigrants carve a space of their own in the community.

in partnership with the organization over a 10-year period, including mixed media cultural/folk art installations, painted murals, and two large-scale mosaic tile murals (Camino y Raíces/Roots & Routes) – one of which incorporated coins from 99 international countries – for the newly opened public park adjacent to Casa Azafrán.

THE WING LUKE MUSEUM

SEATTLE, WA

THE WING LUKE MUSEUM (The Wing) chronicles the history and culture of the pan-Asian Pacific American experience. The community-based museum is named after Wing Luke, a boy who immigrated from China to the United States with his family when he was six. He eventually settled in Seattle, where he endured constant harassment in school for being Asian. Wing Luke would eventually earn a law degree from the University of Washington and would become the Assistant Attorney General for Washington State. He made history in 1962, when he became the first person of color on the Seattle City Council and simultaneously, the first Asian American to hold elected office in the Pacific Northwest. His commitment to social justice and quality of life issues was reflected in his housing work with Seattle's immigrant communities. Upon his early death at 40, the Wing Luke Memorial Foundation established a pan-Asian museum based on his principles.

The museum honors the legacy of Wing Luke, improving the surrounding neighborhood through the collective design and maintenance of formerly underutilized spaces. In addition to its exhibition space, The Wing provides convening space and programs to ground Asian American immigrants within the context of everyday life, both current and historical. The Wing's mission to serve as a physical home for Seattle's pan-Asian immigrants has afforded it a unique space as an inclusive arts-focused community center.

Located in Seattle's Chinatown-International District, the museum is a contributor to the local National Register District and became a National Park Service Affiliated Area in 2013. The original museum has

since expanded from its humble beginnings and now boasts over 60,000 square feet of exhibition space (permanent and temporary) that share unique, first-perspective inter-generational stories. The Wing's collections include over 35,000 items including artifacts, photographs, documents, books, and oral histories. Community Advisory Committees directly create exhibitions and related programs.

Two of The Wing's recent creative placemaking initiatives include "The Wing" and the Historic Higo Garden Club (now known as Chiyo's Garden). "Our work in establishing a physical presence is rooted in working hand-in-hand with our community members to co-create, to envision, and then to grow community capacity overall. It's very much what our moving into the space was built upon," said Cassie Chinn, Deputy Executive Director of the Wing Luke. "The Wing" was a year-round initiative that used arts and culture to attract residents and tourists to learn about the histories and issues facing Chinatown-International District. Four events comprised the sustainable neighborhood revitalization initiative:

JamFest: summer art and music series of traditional and contemporary pan-Asian Pacific American music

Mix It Up: a networking event for artists and cultural producers

Holiday Shop-O-Rama: a month of trunk shows and shopping incentives that promoted local artists and local stores that celebrate pan-Asian cultural traditions

Lunar New Year: a traditional celebration
Chiyo's Garden was an otherwise hidden parcel of land in the Nihonmanchi (Japantown) part of the Chinatown-International District.



Left: Visitors socialize at the opening celebration of Chiyo's Garden in Seattle's Japantown, with sculptures by Lead Artist Rumi Koshino in partnership with Lead Designer Yuko Kunugi. Credit: Wing Luke Museum



Right: Feeding the lion during Lunar New Year festivities in Seattle's Chinatown-International District. Credit: Photo by Alabastro Photography, courtesy of the Wing Luke Museum

Our work in establishing a physical presence is rooted in working hand-in-hand with our community members to co-create, to envision, and then to grow community capacity overall.

Staff at The Wing was made of aware of the parcel by a local business owner who had a vision to make it a public space. The space was refurbished with bespoke wooden sculptural forms made by Rumi Koshino, and a wooden deck for events like Nihomanchi Nite or other events produced by The Wing's YouthCAN program and The Wing's walking tours.

Now, Asian-American teens and elderly are using the space to gather – to socialize and share information about community events, play games, or have a respite from the dense community. Non Asian-American visitors have used the space to participate in Asian-American cultural festivals, learn about Asian-American woodworking techniques in the public artwork, and as a reference

point back to The Wing's core programming. For many residents in the Chinatown-International District, the Chiyo's Garden is a symbol of pride and progress. Like the Community Advisory Committee's role in exhibitions, the community-driven efforts behind the garden highlight the valuing of inter-generational exchange and representation in Asian-American culture. Projects such as the Chiyo's Garden externalize cultural symbols and embed points of reference outside of formal arts spaces, both for the ethnic communities they represent and for communities interested in learning more about how cultural symbols help communities adapt to their new host societies.

CONCLUSION

THE INTENTION of this field scan is to highlight several goals of the immigration sector, and ways that arts and cultural strategies can play a central role in those goals. This integrated approach lays the groundwork for cross-sector collaboration between immigration, arts and culture, and community development practitioners.

Given the current political climate, the union of the immigration and arts and culture sectors provides a window into local-level needs at multiple scales of service provision and policy reform. Furthermore, stark rifts in public attitudes towards immigration policy exemplify the critical need to understand changing ethnic demographics as a value — and not a threat —

to U.S. society. The nature of the migration experience has more to teach about unity and common bonds than about difference.

Synergy across the immigration sector trends and arts and culture typologies highlighted in this scan reinforces why local-level work remains the vanguard for testing immigrant and refugee incorporation strategies between new and existing populations. Lessons from these examples create a foundation for scaling this work across the regional, ethnic, and political domains from which they were developed.

To conclude, the four ways immigration sector goals are supported by arts and cultural activities are summarized on the following page.



Community members participate in the 2019 African Day Parade in St. Paul, MN. Credit: Photo by Brad Sigal/ Sigal Photos, courtesy of African Economic Development Solutions

IMMIGRATION GOAL:

BUILD WELCOMING AND INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES

Arts and culture can **bridge newcomers and longer-term populations** by unearthing compelling narratives, increasing opportunities for connection, building empathy and relationships, and diffusing or preventing future tension or “othering.”

IMMIGRATION GOAL:

EMPOWER NEW AMERICANS THROUGH RELEVANT SERVICE PROVISION

Arts and culture can **elevate cultural traditions as assets** by promoting appreciation of diverse cultural expression, creating new business opportunities rooted in heritage (foodways, folkways), and sustaining a new population of ethnic entrepreneurs.

IMMIGRATION GOAL:

EXPAND ALLIANCES TO BUILD COLLECTIVE CAPACITY

Arts and culture can **engage newcomers and other allies in civic processes** by recognizing and convening allied partners in other sectors, reframing policy issues in a creative and accessible manner, and providing safe and alternative forums for immigrant participation.

IMMIGRATION GOAL:

ESTABLISH INFRASTRUCTURE IN IMMIGRANT DESTINATIONS

Arts and culture can **co-create spaces that reflect identity**, signal belonging, and serve as entry points and pathways for immigrant services and action.

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APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW LIST*

BRUCE ADAMS

Director of Montgomery County Executive Ike Leggett's Office of Community Partnerships (OCP)

ALEJANDRA TOBAR ALATRIZ

Arts Organizing and Community Engagement Director, Pangea World Theater

CASSIE CHINN

Deputy Executive Director, The Wing Luke Museum of the Asian Pacific American Experience

LISA CUESTAS

Executive Director, Casa Familiar

LORRAINE EILER

Vice Chair, International Sonoran Desert Alliance

DAVID FLORES

Community Development Director, Casa Familiar

ADEY FISSEHA

U.S. Senior Program Officer, Unbound Philanthropy

RAQUEL GARCIA

Director of Housing and Special Projects, Global Detroit

MALIK GILLANI

Executive Director, Silk Road Rising

COOPER GREEN

Direct Service, Ministry Development, Interfaith Mission Service

JAMIL KHOURY

Artistic Director, Silk Road Rising

KAREN MACK

Executive Director, LA Commons

SUZETTE BROOKS MASTERS

Im/migration Strategist

KATHY MOUACHEUPAO

Program Director, Creative Placemaking, LISC Twin Cities

CHELINA ODBERT

Co-Founder and Executive Director, Kounkuey Design Initiative

JAIRO PRADO

Artist, Migration

SUSAN PRADO

Artist, Migration

RACHEL PERIC

Executive Director, Welcoming America

BETH PETERSON

Community Programs Director, LA Commons

JOSEPHINE RAMIREZ

Executive Vice President, Music Center Arts, The Music Center/Performing Arts Center of Los Angeles County

R. HENRY REESE

Co-Founder and President, City of Asylum

FAVIANNA RODRIGUEZ

Artist; Executive Director and Cultural Strategist, CultureStrike; and Co-Founder of Presente.org

SHANNON SCROFANO

Artist, Kounkuey
Design Initiative

AUDREY SINGER

Specialist in Immigration Policy,
Congressional Research Service

JOHN SORENSEN

Filmmaker and Founder,
The Quilted Conscience

RICH STOLZ

Executive Director, One America

RACHEL STRUTT

Cultural Director,
Somerville Arts Council

TRANG TRUONG-HILL

Director, Newcomer Engagement
and Global Strategies, YMCA

GRACIE XAVIER

Director of Corporate and
Economic Development
Strategy, Global Detroit

ZE MIN XIAO

Director, Salt Lake County
Mayor's Office for New Americans

** Titles and affiliations listed
above are from the time of
interview; several interviewees
have taken on new positions within
their organizations or elsewhere.*

APPENDIX C: WORKING GROUP PARTICIPANT LIST

JOHN ARROYO, PH.D.
University of Oregon

JAMIE BENNETT
ArtPlace America

RYAN M. ELLER
Define American

DAVID FLORES
Casa Familiar

MALIK GILLANI
Silk Road Rising

COOPER GREEN
Interfaith Mission Service

LAURA MARCUS GREEN, PH.D.
South Carolina Arts Commission
and University of South Carolina

JAMIE HAND
ArtPlace America

ASHLEY HANSON
Department of Public
Transformation and
PlaceBase Productions

AMY HERZFELD-COPPLE
Western States Center

TARYN HIGASHI
Unbound Philanthropy

CHRISTINA PATIÑO HOULE
Las Imaginistas

MARA KIMMEL
Anchorage Museum

ISHA LEE
Welcoming America

MEG SHOEMAKER LITTLE
Welcoming America

CAROLINA RUBIO MACWRIGH
Touching Land.org

JENNIFER NOVAK-LEONARD
Northwestern University

ONYE OZUZU
College of the Arts,
University of Florida

VANJA PANTIC-OFLAZOGLU
Welcoming America

RACHEL PERIĆ
Welcoming America

R. HENRY REESE
City of Asylum Pittsburgh

HAZAMI SAYED
Al-Bustan Seeds of Culture

JANERA SOLOMON
Kelly Strayhorn Theater

RACHEL STRUTT
Somerville Arts Council

LYNNETTE TESSITORE
City of Chula Vista

NADIA EL-ZEIN TONOVA
ACCESS

DAN WALLACE
New American Economy

BRYAN WARREN
Office for Globalization,
Louisville Metro Government

SARAH WESTLAKE
ArtPlace America

CYNTHIA WOO
Pao Arts Center, Boston
Chinatown Neighborhood Center

CHRISTA YOAKUM
Nebraska Is Home

ZE MIN XIAO
Mayor's Office for New
Americans, Salt Lake County

END NOTES

1. de Graauw, Els, Shannon Gleeson, and Irene Bloemraad. (2013). "Funding Immigrant Organizations: Suburban Free Riding and Local Civic Presence." *American Journal of Sociology*, 119(1), 75-130.
2. This use of a broader definition of arts and culture in this report does not presuppose that every immigrant or refugee art or cultural practice will fall squarely within these disciplines.
3. Gray literature includes reports, white papers, working papers, and other such materials from non-profit foundations, think tanks, and the public sector; toolkits from local and national organization platforms; conference proceedings; and masters and doctoral level theses and dissertations.
4. <https://www.artplaceamerica.org/areas-of-work/national-creative-placemaking-fund/introduction>
5. <http://www.artplaceamerica.org/our-work/community-development-investments/introduction>
6. A total of 30 interviews were conducted: 16 interviews were conducted with individuals involved in creative placemaking projects; 13 interviews were conducted with professionals from the immigration sector.
7. Quotations are not intended to imply any statement about formal statistical distributions of these patterns in any group or population.
8. The unit of analysis was based on complete sentences (up to full paragraphs) to derive meaning and context. Charmaz, Kathy (2014). *Constructing Grounded Theory*. Great Britain: Sage. Glaser, Barney G., and Anselm L. Strauss (2009). *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research*. Transaction Publishers.
9. Mayring, Philip. (2004). *A Companion to Qualitative Research*. Great Britain: Sage.
10. Welcoming America toolkits include "Neighbors Together: Promising Practices to Strengthen Relations with Refugees and Muslims," "Stand Together: Messaging to Support Muslims and Refugees in Challenging Times," and "Receiving Communities Initiative Toolkit." <https://www.welcomingamerica.org/learn/resources>
11. Welcoming America. (2016). The Welcoming Standard & Certified Welcoming. <https://certifiedwelcoming.org/welcoming-standard/>
12. Uneven development is defined by the unequal distribution of resources and its consequential effect on people in exchange for capitalism. Smith, Neil. (2010). *Uneven Development: Nature, Capital, and the Production of Space*. Athens: University of Georgia Press.
13. Fairlie, Robert W. (2012). *Open for Business: How Immigrants Are Driving Small Business Creation in the United States*. The Partnership for a New American Economy.
14. Welcoming is the term that describes inclusive efforts to highlight the vital contributions of all members of society — including immigrants and native-born populations.
15. <https://itvs.org/films/welcome-to-shelbyville>
16. Gambetta, Ricardo, and Gedrimaite, Zivile. (2010). *Municipal Innovations in Immigrant Integration: 20 Cities, 20 Good Practices*. J. Durana (Ed.). National League of Cities.
17. Downs-Karkos, Susan. (2019b). *Engaging Local Leaders to Foster Welcoming Communities*. Social Cohesion Series. Welcoming America.
18. There are currently over 100 welcoming municipalities (cities and counties) as part of Welcoming America's national network.
19. Klineberg, Stephen L. (2017). *The Kinder Houston Area Survey: Thirty-Six Years of Measuring Responses to a Changing America*. Kinder Institute for Urban Research, Rice University.
20. Reeves, Jan A. (2015). *Learning from Boise's Comprehensive Plan: Community Planning Process Guide for Fostering Greater Refugee Welcome*. Welcoming America.
21. City of Pittsburgh. (2015). *The Welcome Pittsburgh Plan: A Roadmap for Change*.
City of San José (2016). *Welcoming San José: Plan for Civic, Economic, Linguistic, and Social Integration 2016-2019*. City of San José Office of Immigrant Affairs.
22. de Graauw, Els., and Irene Bloemraad. (2017). "Working Together: Building Successful Policy and Program Partnerships for Immigrant Integration." *Journal on Migration & Human Security*, 5(1), 105-123.
23. Downs-Karkos, Susan. (2019a). *Innovations in Building Meaningful Contact Across Difference*. Social Cohesion Series. Welcoming America.

END NOTES (CONTINUED)

24. Allport, Gordon W. (1954). *The Nature of Prejudice*. Cambridge, MA: Perseus Books.
25. Wali, Alaka. (2002). *Informal Arts: Finding Cohesion, Capacity and Other Cultural Benefits in Unexpected Places*. Chicago Center for Arts Policy, Columbia College Chicago.
26. Hirschman, Charles. (2013). "The Contributions of Immigrants to American Culture." *Daedalus*, 142(3), 26-47.
27. Jones-Correa, Michael. (2011). *All Immigration is Local: Receiving Communities and their Role in Successful Immigrant Integration*. Washington, D.C.: Center for American Progress.
28. Readiness is a term most often associated with the ability of immigrant children to attend school.
Lahaie, Claudia. (2008) "School Readiness of Children of Immigrants: Does Parental Involvement Play a Role?" *Social Science Quarterly*, 89(3), 684-705.
Recently, the term has come to describe immigrants' ability to benefit from basic quality of life services.
29. Waters, Mary C., and Marisa Gerstein Pineau (2015). *The Integration of Immigrants into American Society*. National Academy of Science.
30. <https://www.rescue.org/announcement/new-roots-salt-lake-city>
31. Stangler, Dane, and Jason Wiens. (2015). *The Economic Case for Welcoming Immigrant Entrepreneurs*. Kauffman Foundation.
32. Fernández-Kelly, María Patricia, and Paul DiMaggio (2010). *Art in the Lives of Immigrant Communities in the United States (The Public Life of the Arts)*. P. DiMaggio (Ed.). Rutgers University Press.
33. Novak, Jennifer L. (2016). *Considering Cultural Integration in the United States*. Diss. Pardee Rand Graduate School.
34. DiMaggio, Paul, and Patricia Fernandez-Kelly. "Immigration and the Arts: A Theoretical Inquiry." *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 38(8), 1236-1244.
35. Intangible cultural heritage (also known as living cultural heritage) are the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, and skills that define ethnic culture. The activities may include oral history, food heritage, and dance heritage. The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) began focusing on intangible heritage in 2001. The Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage was drafted in 2003.
36. Stern, Mark J., and Seifert, Susan C. (2007). *Cultivating "Natural" Cultural Districts*. Philadelphia: The Reinvestment Fund.
37. ServSafe is a food and beverage safety training and certificate program administered by the National Restaurant Association. The program is accredited by the American National Standards Institute and the Conference for Food Protection.
38. Original New American Welcome Center branches (2016) included Long Beach, Seattle, Minneapolis/St. Paul, Houston, New York, Austin, and Columbus, Ohio; a sampling of later branches include Champagne-Urbana, Illinois; Los Angeles; Charlotte, North Carolina; Portland, Maine; and Everett, Washington (with more growing by the year).
39. Nicholls, Walter J., and Uitermark, Justus. (2016). *Cities and Social Movements: Immigrant Rights Activism in the United States, France, and the Netherlands, 1970-2015*. John Wiley & Sons.
40. Nicholls, Walter. (2013). *The DREAMers: How the Undocumented Youth Movement Transformed the Immigrant Rights Debate*. Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press.
41. New immigrant destinations are new settlements for both new and longstanding immigrant populations. They are characterized as places that did not previously have immigrant populations. For more information, see: Singer, Audrey Singer (2004). *The Rise of New Immigrant Gateways*. Brookings Institution.
42. <http://www.globaldetroit.com/partner-initiatives/>
43. <http://fortune.com/2017/02/04/refugee-resettlement-funding/>
44. Other funders in this realm include Unbound Philanthropy and Welcome.Us (a branch of Forward.us), an organization known for their work on Immigrant Heritage Month.
45. Public charge describes an individual (in this case an immigrant or refugee) who is likely to depend on government assistance as their primary form of support. Individuals who have been a previous recipient of government support or are likely to need these services are considered a public charge. According to the U.S. Immigration and Nationality Act (INA), any public charge individual seeking initial admission to the U.S. or who is lawfully adjusting their status is inadmissible,
46. The EITC Funders Network is a funders platform for foundations committed to poverty-reduction tools of the EITC (Earned Income Tax Credit), asset building, and free- and low-cost tax preparation.

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47. *Caminatas* are community walks.
 48. Goldman, Russell and Jake Tapper. (2010). "Islamic Center 'Ground Zero Mosque' Heats Up." ABC News.
 49. KDI's first project was in Kibera (the world's largest slum) in Nairobi, Kenya.
 50. An unincorporated area is one that has no formal municipal level of incorporation. Unincorporated areas rely on services provided by the county where they are located
 51. KDI is a partner of the Coachella Valley initiative of Building Healthy Communities, a state-wide program from The California Endowment.
 52. For a list of the seven principles, please visit: <http://www.pangeaworldtheater.org/lsa-values-and-working-agreements>
 53. Glazer, Nathan, and Moynihan, Daniel P. (1963). *Beyond the Melting Pot: The Negroes, Puerto Ricans, Jews, Italians and Irish of New York City*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. Massey, Douglas. (2010). *New Faces in New Places: The Changing Geography of American Immigration*. Russell Sage Foundation.
 54. A gateway community is one that has a large population of a specific immigrant or refugee ethnic group or country. This community is a staging ground – a "gateway" into American society, regardless of whether they opt for long-term settlement in the area.
 55. Singer, Audrey, Susan W. Hardwick, and Caroline B. Brettell, eds. (2009). *Twenty-first Century Gateways: Immigrant Incorporation in Suburban America*. Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press.
 56. Portes, Alejandro, and Rumbaut, Ruben. (1996). "Moving: Patterns of Immigrants Settlement and Spatial Mobility." *Immigrant America*. Oakland, CA: UC Press.
 57. The Southwest Minnesota Housing Partnership (SWMHP) is one of six organizations that participated in ArtPlace's Community Development Initiative (CDI) from 2015-2018. CDI participants received funding and tailored technical assistance to conceive, execute, and finance equitable creative placemaking work in service of their missions. Visit www.communitydevelopment.art for more information.
 58. Micro-economic such as informal vending is a typical byproduct of informal spaces. Attempts to outlaw street vending has been uneven.
Morales, Alfonso. (2000). "Peddling Policy: Street Vending in Historical and Contemporary Contest." *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy*, 20(3/4), 76-98.
 59. Conexión Américas serves as the lead partner and building operator and is supported by nine other organizations including the American Center for Outreach, American Muslim Advisory Council, Family and Children's Services, Financial Empowerment Center, Global Education Center, Justice for Our Neighbors of Tennessee, Mesa Komal Commercial Kitchen and Culinary Incubator, Tennessee Immigrant and Refugee Rights Coalition, United Neighborhood Health Services, YMCA of Nashville and Middle Tennessee.



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