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- [Funding](#)
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- [Programming](#)
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Preparing Staff to Work with Immigrant Youth

Preparing Staff to Work with Immigrant Youth provides the context of the immigrant youth experience and practical tips for hiring, developing and retaining staff to work with this population. Youth organizations have both an opportunity and a responsibility to encourage and support the healthy development of the growing numbers of immigrant youth. This publication is based on hands-on experience by national and local youth organizations who do this work effectively. Download for free and be sure to share with others!

[Acknowledgments and Introduction](#)

[Understanding the Context](#)

[Identifying Ideal Staff Characteristics](#)

[Recruiting and Selecting Staff](#)

[Retaining Staff](#)

[Providing Professional Development](#)

[Begin With Leadership and Vision](#)

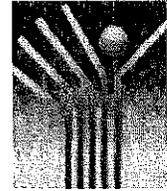
[Appendices: User-Friendly Checklists](#)

[Resources, Methodology, Advisory Group](#)

[Surveyed Organizations](#)

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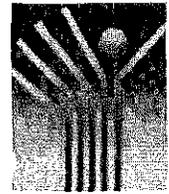
- Amy Scharff and Jimena Quiroga from California Tomorrow who conducted the interviews and wrote up their learning for us all to use.
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I am grateful to this excellent team of people. Together I hope we have been able to provide you with useful information and tools to better prepare your staff to work with immigrant youth.

With much appreciation,

Pam Garza
National Youth Development Learning Network
National Collaboration for Youth

INTRODUCTION



Because first and second generation immigrant youth currently constitute 20 percent of the children growing up in the United States, their healthy development has fundamental long-term implications for our society.¹

By definition, youth development is the provision of services and opportunities to support all young people in developing a sense of competence, usefulness, belonging, and empowerment. In today's society, youth organizations have both an opportunity and a responsibility to encourage and support healthy development for the growing numbers of immigrant youth in communities throughout the U.S.

There is also a business case to be made for encouraging youth organizations to proactively include immigrant youth in their services. Consider this example from parks and recreation described by Washington Post writer, Annie Gowen²:

One chilly April morning two years ago (2005), manager Jill Vanden Heuvel was at her desk at Algonhian Regional Park expecting a quiet Sunday when the cars started to arrive. Hundreds at first, then more than a thousand, bringing scores of Iranian families toting blankets, coolers and small grills.

Picnickers without reservations plunked down in areas reserved by others. Toilets overflowed. Cars were parked haphazardly on the grass. Tempers flared. When Vanden Heuvel tried to get the crowd to disperse, they accused her of racial discrimination.

As the crowd quickly grew to 3,000 people, more than twice what the park could handle, Vanden Heuvel called her boss in a panic. They decided to shut down the park to cars—a rare move for the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority. Feeling helpless, park employees turned to their computers, Googling such terms as “Persian” and “holiday” and “spring.” That’s how they learned that on Sizdeh Bedar, a popular celebration in Iran, it’s considered unlucky to stay indoors. Now each April, the park is ready with extra staff.

1 Suarez-Orozco, C. Todorova, I. 2003. Understanding the social worlds of immigrant youth. New Directions for Youth Development. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

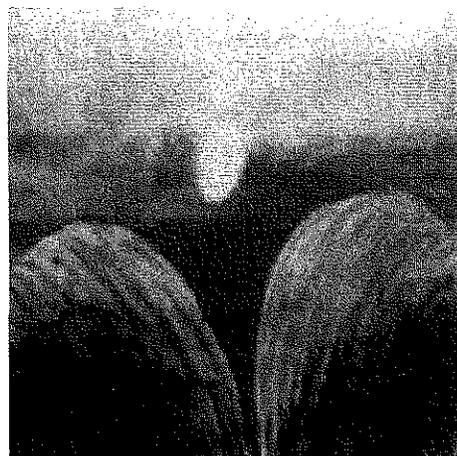
2 Gowen, A. 2007. Picnic, games and culture shock: Parks work to tailor services while educating immigrants on rules. Washington Post. July 1.

While the mission of U.S. parks and recreation facilities is broader than just youth development, there is a definite commitment to enrich the lives of young people. Gowan reports that facilities throughout the country are changing to respond to the needs of the growing numbers of immigrants. Most are hiring multilingual staffers who target immigrants seeking to build connections, learn, and educate rather than enforce rules. Some are broadening their services, e.g., building cricket fields for Jamaican and Indian populations; serving kimchi alongside hot dogs to appeal to Koreans; and building bigger picnic pavilions to accommodate large Latino families that include youth of all ages. Parks and recreation expert Robert Burns of West Virginia University says, "Parks and recreation programs have to remain or become relevant to the changing demographics of America if they're going to be used and funded." Clearly, the area of parks and recreation is not alone; all youth-serving organizations must do the same if they are to remain relevant and viable.

Some youth organizations have an already proven track record of working with immigrant youth, others are just getting started, and still others are not sure when, how, or whether to get involved. As the example above illustrates, it's challenging to provide accessible and relevant services to immigrant youth and families. Youth and families new to the U.S. have much to learn and navigate. They face cultural differences, language barriers, unfamiliar systems and rules, prejudice, and political controversy. Add to that the fact that many immigrants are unfamiliar with the basic concept of youth programming. This can lead to lack of interest, distrust, and/or fear. On the organizational side, leaders and administrators must find the funding they need to broaden their efforts while simultaneously making the organization visible in immigrant communities, building relationships, recruiting and preparing staff, and promoting inclusive environments. Many organizations will need to change and grow to remain vital and relevant, not only for today's youth, but for generations to come.

Designed for program directors and other managers who are responsible for preparing staff to work with immigrant youth, this report provides:

- A context for understanding the diversity of today's immigrant youth and families as well as issues involved in serving them;
- Ideal characteristics of staff hired to serve immigrant youth;

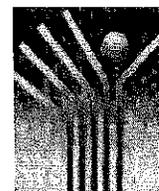


- Strategies for recruiting and retaining staff;
- Professional development strategies;
- An overview of the leadership and vision required to make these efforts successful.

Making the commitment to serve immigrant youth affects every dimension of an organization—outreach, programming, curriculum, environment, relationship building, and community collaboration. A key ingredient is staff. Youth organizations must recruit, prepare, and hold on to staff who can understand, respect, and work successfully with immigrants. Frontline youth workers who are appropriately prepared will be able to build connections, provide opportunities, earn trust, ensure safety, and provide the hope and support needed by immigrant youth and their families. Likewise, organizational leaders will have a clearer idea of staff requirements and be better able to craft a plan to recruit, hire, prepare, and retain caring and qualified workers.

Interspersed throughout the report are quotes and case studies from experienced youth workers representing more than 20 local and national youth organizations that have been pioneers in serving a diverse mix of immigrant youth. There is also a set of user-friendly checklists located in the Appendix.

As the information, recommendations, and case studies in this publication demonstrate, there is much work to be done. There are hard questions to ask, conversations to open, bridges to build, and longstanding practices to change. The effort, however, is essential if youth organizations want to truly reflect a core commitment to serving all communities, including populations of immigrant youth.



The Diversity of Immigrant Youth

Immigrants make their way to the U.S. from every corner of the globe. Latinos, the largest group, come from approximately 25 countries as varied as Mexico, Colombia, Cuba, El Salvador, and Peru. Other immigrant groups come from a similarly wide range of Asian, African, European, Middle Eastern, and Pacific Island nations. Even when they come from the same region, immigrants will differ with respect to education, social class, and urban versus rural backgrounds.

While many immigrants continue to settle in historically “high-immigrant” states like California, New York, Texas and Florida, large numbers are also moving to other parts of the country.⁴ Currently, there are 35.7 million immigrants living in the U.S., an increase of 16% in just the last five years and an 80% increase since 1990.⁵ According to the last Census, one in five children in this country today is an immigrant or the child of an immigrant, and the number is rising.⁶

Families migrate to the U.S. for many different reasons and through a variety of avenues. Some leave their families and everything they know behind in search of a better life, education, or financial opportunities. Others come to escape war, poverty, famine or persecution. Immigrants reside in the U.S. in one of the following capacities:



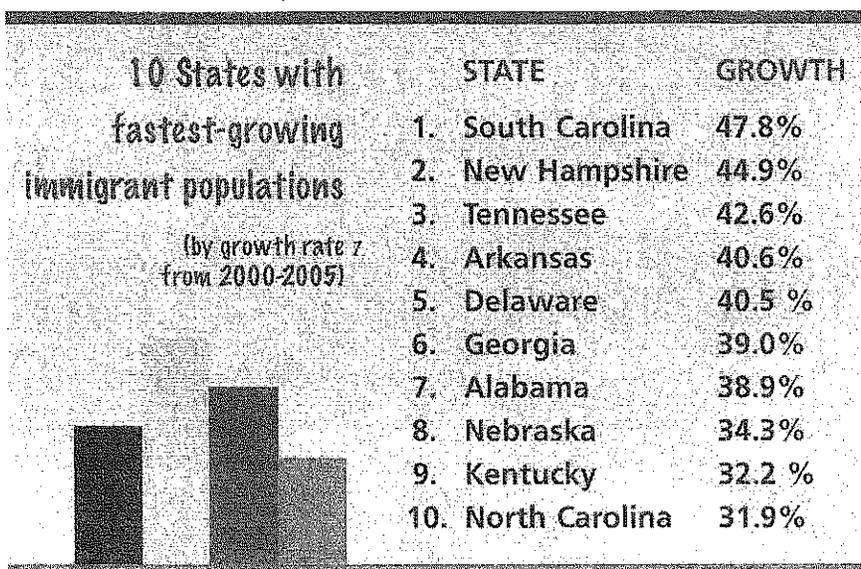
³ Gelatt, J. and Meyers, D. 2005. Fact sheet #12: Legal migration to US up from last year. Washington, DC: Migration Policy Institute.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ U.S. Census Bureau. 2006. American community survey.

⁶ Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees. Immigration fact sheet: Demographics. Sebastopol, CA. Available at: www.GCIR.org

- Naturalized U.S. citizens
- Lawful permanent residents (LPR)—individuals granted an immigrant visa through sponsorship by a family member who is a U.S. citizen or LPR, by a U.S. employer, or via the annual Diversity Visa Lottery, which admits a small number of individuals from countries with low rates of immigration over the past five years. ⁸



- Individuals with temporary visas—students and temporary workers who have legal status to enter the U.S. for a limited time and specific purpose
- Undocumented immigrants—those individuals who enter the U.S. without required documents or authorization, or those who were admitted on a temporary basis and have overstayed their visas

Immigrant Youth Needs

The transition from childhood to adolescence presents challenges for all youth, as they seek to define who they are by weaving multiple and often disparate strands of themselves into a coherent sense of self. For youth of color, ethnic and racial identity is an inherently important part of this development process. Adolescent development gets even more complicated for newcomer youth who must simultaneously integrate their migration and national origin experience into their ethnic identity. It is a testament to their strength and resilience that they find many different and creative ways to do so. Nonetheless, there is a need for programs and environments that actively affirm newcomer youths' original ethnic identities, while also supporting their ongoing self-exploration and transformation. ⁹

⁷ Paral, R. 2006. Immigration policy brief. American Immigration Law Foundation.

⁸ National Immigration Forum. 2005. Diversity visas. Washington, D.C.

⁹ Delgado, M., Jones, K., and Rohani, M. 2005. Social work practice with refugee and immigrant youth in the United States. Pearson Education, Inc.

Youth organizations must strive to understand the specific needs of each young immigrant. Some youth may be refugees from war-torn regions who need to heal after leaving an environment of violence; while others may be undocumented immigrants who are fearful that their families may be deported. Although individual cases may vary, there are needs that are shared by most immigrant youth.

- **A New Country and a New Language**

All young people who are recent arrivals to the United States have a series of adjustments to make. They must learn a new language, adapt to different societal norms, and determine how to navigate a whole new set of social systems and institutions.

With U.S. immigrants speaking 176 different languages, there is a large and diverse population who face the challenges of learning English.¹⁰ For children and youth, these challenges frequently affect their academic lives, creating difficult and discouraging learning environments and experiences. At the same time, especially for young children, the pressure to learn English can drive newcomers away from their home language. This weakens their connections to their family and culture and limits their ability to develop valuable bilingual and biliteracy skills.

- **Cultural Identity, Family & Community**

Immigrant youth struggle to find their place in American society, often straddling the fence between their home culture and the new culture in which they are living. These young people need encouragement to value and affirm their heritage and language while clarifying their identity as Americans.

Family and community connections, which can provide a crucial element of support, are extremely varied for immigrants. Although some leave their close relatives behind, the majority of immigrants (7 out of 10) move to the U.S. to join close family members.¹¹ An important role of youth organizations is to support youth in maintaining strong ties to family and extended community both here in the U.S. and back home. Youth workers must be able to earn the trust of participants' families and communities, and to connect programs and services directly to parents and families whenever possible.

10 Fix, M. and Zimmermann, W. 2000. The integration of immigrant families. Washington, D.C.: The Urban Institute.

11 National Immigration Forum, 2000.

Political Context

Fear and mistrust of immigrants runs high in communities throughout the U.S. for a variety of reasons. There are three key issues to consider:

1. Changing Demographics

Many long-time residents have never explored beyond their own cultural experience before, or dealt with people who are different from themselves. –Agency Director

In regions such as the South, the Northwest, and the Midwest, the recent influx of immigrant populations is transforming the culture and character of many cities and neighborhoods. Community members may be uncomfortable with these changing demographics because they fear that immigrants are “taking all the jobs.” Another source of discomfort involves a resistance to cultural or linguistic differences.¹²

2. National Political and Policy Debate on Undocumented Immigration

The national debate on immigration continues to be very divisive. It has fueled widespread anti-immigrant attitudes directed largely at Latinos, regardless of their documentation status or country of origin.

3. War on Terrorism

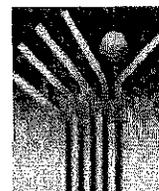
They feel like we look at them all as terrorists and killers and all this kind of thing, and that really puts them on edge. And for all I know, some of the people here do feel that way about it. –Program Director, working with Somali Muslim staff and youth

In the post 9/11 context, the “war on terrorism,” the war in Iraq, and other conflicts around the world have engendered widespread anti-Muslim fear and prejudice. These negative attitudes have escalated to a broader backlash against any persons who look non-Christian and non-white, but particularly if they are Middle Eastern.



¹² Jensen, L. 2006. New Settlements in rural America: Problems, prospects and policies. Reports on Rural America, 13. Durham, NH: University of New Hampshire, Carsey Institute.

IDENTIFYING IDEAL STAFF CHARACTERISTICS



The transition to a new country and different culture becomes even more traumatic in this current political atmosphere. So many immigrant youth face social exclusion, marginalization, and other forms of discrimination. Some youth confront real physical danger or the threat of family separation, harassment, or deportation.

What does it take to work effectively with immigrant youth? The first and most basic requirement applies to all youth work—the staff member must be open minded, empathetic, resourceful, have good networking skills and a positive view of all youth. However, there are additional qualities and skills that are needed to be effective with immigrant children and youth.

Knowledge of Community and Immigrants' Experience

It's critical to identify staff who understand the cultural, historical and economic experience of immigrants. —Local Organization Director

The ideal staff person:

- Is aware of changing population demographics in the local community.
- Knows the specific circumstances and conditions in the home countries of immigrant participants.
- Understands the cultural customs, norms, and family structures of local immigrant communities. Youth workers can gain this knowledge in a number of ways—for example, by reviewing the literature or even reading novels written by authors within the target immigrant group. One of the most important methods of gaining knowledge is by learning directly from immigrant youth, parents, and community leaders. Ask questions, hold dialogue sessions, and most importantly listen.
- Understands the legal and political context of immigration in the U.S. at both the national and local level.

Cultural Competence

One has to be aware of things, like noise levels in homes, family backgrounds, and the importance of family—not just the father/mother but grandparents, other family members, other people who are close to the family. There are different attitudes towards what is respectful and what is not respectful—one child might raise his or her hand all the time, while that's not going to happen with another child even though they both might know the same kind of information. —Agency Director

The ideal staff person:

- Can relate to individuals who come from a wide variety of cultural backgrounds.
- Understands and respects the fact that immigrants' basic values, traditions, and beliefs may vary from those prevailing in the dominant culture.
- Avoids pre-judging participants on the basis of cultural backgrounds or treating individuals unjustly. It's important to see each young person as an individual and set high expectations. People often underestimate the potential of immigrant youth because of language or cultural differences.
- Engages immigrant youth and families to get their buy-in, ownership, and input when designing programs and services for them.



Language Proficiency

The language, of course, makes a huge difference. And since most of our immigrants are from Sonora, most of our staff is able to converse with them very nicely. Sometimes we have folks come in from the Caribbean or from somewhere else where the Spanish is different. Then we really have to listen hard because of the regional differences, and then the cultural issues. —Agency Director

The ideal staff person:

- Provides services in the participants' language. This helps build trust and makes organizational environments more comfortable and welcoming. Since languages can vary by region (e.g. Mexican Spanish, Puerto Rican Spanish, Cantonese from Mainland China, and Cantonese from Hong Kong), regional fluency may be needed to ensure accurate and meaningful communication.
- Ensures that written materials are translated or adapted so they are accessible to diverse immigrant groups.
- Recognizes that nonverbal communication cues and styles (eye-contact, gestures, etc.) can have different meanings in different cultures.

Ability to Relate to Immigrant Populations

It's beneficial to have some commonality—otherwise the distance between our staff and the people we're trying to serve is too great. My teen director is not an immigrant but she has fantastic international experience and has worked with all different types of groups. Because of her work and her interests, she's decreased that distance. It's not absolutely necessary to hire someone exactly from that group, but it has to be someone participants can relate to. —Agency Director

The ideal staff person:

- Reflects the immigrant population being served. Staff who have immigrated from the same country as participants have a deep understanding of the home culture, speak the same language, and have had the experience of transitioning to U.S. culture. These staff members are often able to gain trust from the participants, family, and the community.
- Shares the experience of being an immigrant. Staff who were born outside of the U.S., although not in the country that program participants come from, may also bring strong skills
- Is bicultural and bilingual, though not necessarily an immigrant.
- Has international experience. Staff who have lived in other countries, speak additional languages, and have cultural and international experience can also be particularly effective in working with immigrant youth and their families.

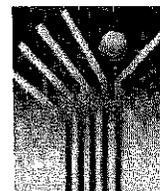
Connections with Families and Communities

One thing that we've learned is that you cannot build trust and respect with a community if you can't win over the parents. That just runs counter-culture for us— and when I say us, I mean Latinos. To send our kids to strangers to develop them or raise them, it's just not something that's done in Latin American countries. Well, I know the Catholic Church, for example, has youth services in Mexico and South America, but it's not something in the fabric of many Latin American countries. –Agency Director

- Accepts immigrant youth and families as participants who have a right to be here and receive services. Youth workers must be able to help foster an environment of acceptance within the organization, because immigrant participants, their families, and even immigrant staff can be subjected to overt and subtle anti-immigrant sentiment.
- Can make initial connections and build trust with participants' parents or caregivers. This is especially important, because many immigrants come from an experience where youth programs are not a part of their cultural tradition. Staff members who are able to speak in the family's native language will have an easier time building trusting connections. Having bilingual and bicultural immigrant staff who can do outreach in immigrant communities helps form a critical bridge between the youth organization and newcomer families.
- Networks effectively with members of the immigrant community. This includes activities such as becoming a visible entity in the specific community; meeting and building relationships with clergy members and other local leaders; attending and supporting events in the community; collaborating with schools to help immigrant youth and their families make a successful transition.

Nurturing Community Champions

Camp Fire USA, Central Puget Sound in Seattle, WA partnered with a national research organization to identify immigrant populations living in their community, and to determine the needs of those diverse groups. The study also sought to identify individual community leaders with strong community connections who could serve as "community champions." This initiative has been critical in helping Camp Fire USA, Central Puget Sound in Seattle build relationships and connect with community resources. For example, the community champions have helped the organization find and hire qualified staff members.



For generations, youth organizations have found it challenging to recruit youth workers because of the low salaries, limited benefits and limited career opportunities being offered, as well as the small number of full-time positions available. These ongoing challenges become intensified when the organization seeks staff members who have the additional skill sets that are needed to work effectively with immigrant youth and their families. The following recruitment and hiring strategies can help focus and streamline this important process.

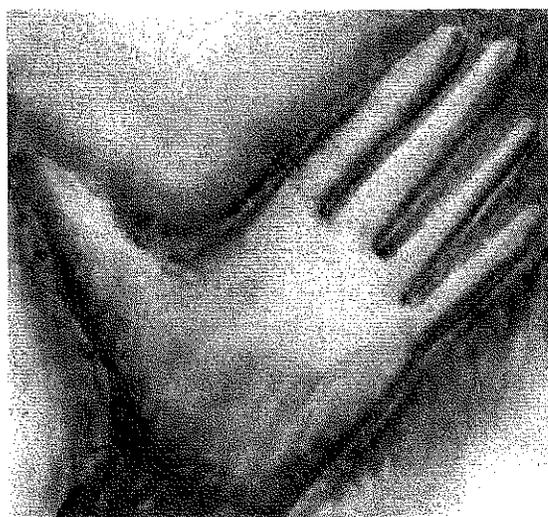
Identify the Needs

- **Conduct research to identify target immigrant populations and their specific needs.** Consider partnering with national, state, and local research organizations as well as local universities and community colleges to collect this valuable data. Some cities and counties have conducted immigrant assessments that can be very useful to any organization that wants to be inclusive. For example, the Travis County Health and Human Services & Veterans Service, Research & Planning Division, along with four community partners, published a 2006-2007 Immigrant Assessment because the county experienced a 230% increase in its foreign-born population between 1990 and 2005. The assessment covers issues such as immigrant profile, immigration policy, process and legal rights, public safety, housing, health, and education. For more information visit: www.co.travis.tx.us/health_human_services/research_planning/.
- **Engage in organizational dialogue about how to best respond to the needs of immigrant populations.** Make an agency-wide commitment to explore these issues and discuss staffing needs. Make sure the topic is on the table at board meetings and strategic planning sessions at the management level.
- **Determine the specific skills staff will need to work with immigrant youth.** Prioritize this set of required skills and use them as a guide to determine whether prospective employees fit the qualifications. The Staff Characteristics Checklist located in the Appendix provides a framework you can adapt to your needs.

Advertise and Make Use of Traditional and Nontraditional Networks

You want to have a good relationship with the Spanish-speaking media in your community. And if you have a Univision or Telemundo affiliate in your market, then you definitely want to be in with them so they can help you post stuff—newspapers, radio, all of that. —Agency Director

- **Advertise in culture-specific media.** Many immigrant communities have their own newspaper(s), gathering places, and radio and television stations. Find out how specific immigrant communities communicate with each other and make sure your organization engages with their media.
- **Enhance your reputation as an organization that serves immigrant populations.** People often assume that an agency does not serve immigrant youth, based on its history and the populations it has served in the past. By taking steps such as including different languages on your website, launching culture-specific programs, and co-sponsoring programs of interest to the target population, you can revise your image and place your organization on the radar screen of potential highly-qualified candidates.
- **Utilize community contacts and networks to identify candidates.** Once you have established networks within immigrant communities, it becomes easier to “cast a wider net” in identifying potential staff members.
- **Arrange college credit for interns and volunteers.** Enlist institutions of higher learning to offer college credit to students who will work part time in your youth organization. Contact such departments as Asian American Studies, Latino or Chicano Studies, or foreign languages. Receiving college credit makes it feasible for volunteers to continue working with a program for many semesters.



Recruit from Within the Organization

The formal way is to advertise in the right places and to try to partner. The informal way works probably just as well, and that's recruiting from friends. Find a good worker and tell that person you're advertising a new position. This will usually pull up five good candidates. Put a lot of energy into existing staff with positive characteristics...work hard to develop them and say "Okay, this is what we're doing here. Now that you understand the bigger context, do you know other people that could help us with this?" –Agency Director

- **Cultivate and hire past program participants.** One organizational leader who has hired several former participants refers to these individuals as “lifers.” These staff tend to be deeply committed to both the work and the organization. And as immigrants and former participants themselves, they are often able to relate exceptionally well to the experiences of the youth they are serving.
- **Recruit effective staff members’ friends.** Word of mouth is often one of the best staff recruitment strategies. One program director whose organization serves a large Somali population uses a “friends recruit friends” process to increase his complement of Somali-born staff members.

Interview Creatively and Sensitive

I've learned that some qualified people just don't interview well. The candidate might not have the same sense of humor or respond to the questions in the manner we would expect (coming from a white Caucasian perspective). And then we decide whether to hire the person based primarily on the interview, which is irresponsible. Regardless of how well candidates do in the interview, they are going to need to be trained anyway. –Agency Director

- **Create a sensitive and thoughtful interview process.** Ensure that your interview process does not involve intimidating dynamics. Then get input from different perspectives to gauge whether the potential candidate brings the necessary skills and attitudes to the position. Consider interview questions such as:
 - Was there ever a time in your life when you felt challenged to provide a service to a young person or family member because of a cultural difference?

- How did you approach that challenge?
- How did things turn out and how did you feel about it?
- **Use creative alternative strategies to discover a candidate's qualifications**, rather than relying solely on a traditional interview format.

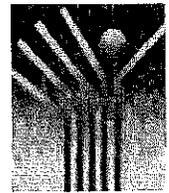
Offer Incentives

- **Market professional development opportunities as career incentives.** The idea of having opportunities to grow and develop professionally, or to perhaps gain a mentor, can be a huge incentive for taking a new job. Camp Fire USA, Central Puget Sound in Seattle partnered with a national research firm to gather data about local immigrant populations and their needs. This research led to a fundable action plan that laid out specific professional development strategies for working with Latino immigrant populations.
- **Offer incentives to recruit qualified staff who are also bilingual.** Incentive pay makes working for a youth organization more attractive to bilingual individuals, who might have broader options for employment as a result of their language expertise.

Recognizing Bilingualism as an Asset

Often, bilingual employees are asked to do extra tasks without being compensated accordingly. Girls Incorporated of Alameda County corrects this inequity by providing an extra salary stipend for staff whose bilingual skills are used on the job. Prospective employees who speak the languages of the organization's participant populations must first qualify through an outside assessment of their language skills. Once their skills have been verified, the stipend is added to their base salary. The agency has found that this type of incentive and validation is helpful in the recruitment, as well as retention, of bilingual staff. The policy also enables the organization to build "extra tasks" into the jobs of those who speak multiple languages. Tasks such as translating, communicating with non-English speaking parents or youth, and supporting non-bilingual staff are now an explicit part of bilingual staff members' job descriptions, rather than an uncompensated "add on."

RETAINING STAFF

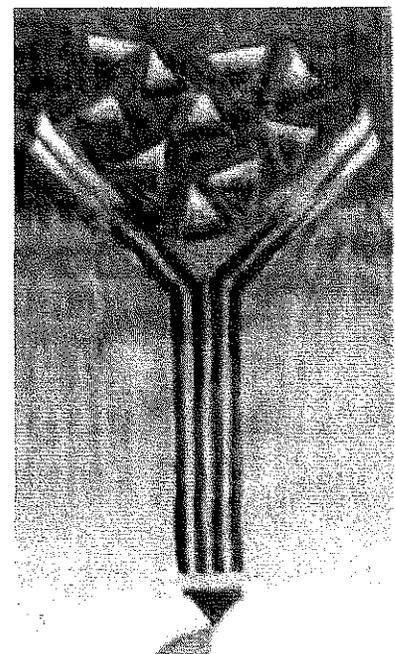


As with recruitment, retaining qualified staff is an ongoing challenge for youth organizations. Although many staff enjoy the work they do with youth, they end up moving on to new jobs because of low salaries, poor benefits, and limited opportunities to move up the career ladder. These typical staff retention challenges become more complex when an agency tries to hold on to staff members who have demonstrated an ability to work effectively with immigrant youth and their families.

When youth organizations undertake the process of redefining themselves to serve immigrant populations, staff continuity is critical for maintaining the momentum. Staff members who reach out and network in immigrant communities often nurture meaningful and trusting partnerships. If those individuals leave, trust can be weakened and relationships can be neglected. Yet when those staff members remain over time, they often amass important information about the organization's history and its commitment to immigrant or cultural outreach. They play a valuable role in linking current work with past experiences and lessons learned. Long-term staff members typically take on increased responsibilities and grow into leadership positions. This kind of staff continuity deepens the links between specific work with immigrant youth and the organization as a whole.

You get a staff member who's got the heart, which is what you need, the heart and the dedication to do it—because what wins over any immigrant community is finding a worker they trust, who is reliable. And then that staff person leaves. Every time you bring in another person, it requires a whole other trust-building process. So instead of being able to move on to other levels of your work, you're starting again at the trust level. -Director

Youth workers experienced with immigrant populations recommend the following strategies for retaining qualified staff.



Nurture Passion

I do this work for the kids. I want the program to be the best, because I want the kids to be the best. A lot of the young people don't understand English that well, so it's hard for them in school. They're just getting passed through because they don't make any trouble, but there are so many stories I can tell you from my work, so many great things they can do. I'm dedicating the rest of my life to them—they give me back so much. –Director

- **Connect staff to the organizational mission.** When staff members believe strongly in a program and its goals, they typically increase their commitment. Passion for the work is often the most important key in the retention of youth workers.
- **Support healthy caring relationships between youth and staff.** Many individuals enter the field of youth work because they care about young people and enjoy working with them. Deep attachment to participants, families, and communities can motivate staff to continue their career in youth work even when they are frustrated by organizational issues. At the same time, having a relationship with a caring adult outside the family is a protective factor in the life of any young person, and this is especially so for immigrant youth.

Provide Leadership Development

- **Identify and nurture individual staff strengths.** Talk with each staff member to find out his or her interests and goals within the field of youth development. Offer support in areas in which individuals want to grow or are perhaps experiencing some difficulty. Sometimes it is necessary to shift staff positions in order to best utilize each employee's skills and talents.
- **Create pathways for gaining increased responsibility.** For example, you might encourage and support staff members to design a new program or to participate in national dialogues or other initiatives relating to immigrant youth topics. Structures such as site-to-site mentorship programs or regional strategy-sharing groups provide opportunities for staff working with immigrant children and youth to share their expertise and to be recognized as leaders in their work. This kind of recognition can enhance staff members' professional self esteem and their community and national reputation.
- **Foster development.** Not all organizations are large enough or command sufficient resources to provide job mobility to their staff. Even in those cases, it is important to foster leadership development. This can prove effective in encouraging employees to stay with the organization for a few years, and has the added benefit of persuading those staffers the skills to work with immigrants to remain in the field as a whole.

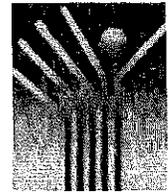
The "Human Touch"

In the small town of Willimantic, Connecticut, Bill Stover, Director of the CT Migratory Children's Program, has been very successful in retaining staff who work with immigrant youth. He attributes much of his success to the simple practice of establishing personal connections with staff and "giving them a pat on the shoulder" for a job well done. Bill has also created an organizational culture that is open and egalitarian in its decision-making process. He notes: "I want staff to feel like they have ownership in the programs so I don't mandate anything. We make decisions as a group, so there's a lot of buy-in from everyone. Since many of the staff are immigrants themselves and face issues and challenges that I don't have in my own life, I try to listen carefully and respond to their needs. As a leader, I've found that it's the human touch, personal communication - being as open as possible - that has inspired staff to want to return year after year."

Create a Culture of Appreciation

- **Express appreciation to individual workers on a regular basis.** This helps those who are rising to the challenge of working with a new and underserved population to feel valued and integral to the work of the organization.
- **Hold "appreciation events."** Offer award ceremonies and recognition dinners to publicly thank staff for their efforts. Encourage workers to invite family and friends to these events.
- **Incorporate into your program the perspectives and cultural traditions of staff members.** This can include promoting staff-wide engagement of everyday communication (greetings, phrases and other expressions) used by immigrant staff and participants and recognizing and incorporating cultural traditions, rituals and holidays.
- **View immigrant staff and participants as assets, and tap into their strengths.** Create forums for acquiring staff input on the needs of youth, and make changes in response to criticisms of organizational dynamics or environmental issues.

PROVIDING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT



Very few youth workers begin the job with 100% of the knowledge, attitudes, comfort, skills, and experience they need to be effective with immigrant youth, families, and communities. By recognizing this at the outset, leaders of youth organizations can create an overall plan to help staff develop professionally and gain increasing levels of awareness and competence in an organized and coherent fashion.

Although many youth organizations think of training as a primary vehicle for preparing staff, it can be more helpful to view professional development as a larger comprehensive system of staff preparation, of which training is only one component. Professional development involves designing, implementing, and evaluating a series of learning strategies that will enable staff to gain the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors necessary to work effectively with immigrant populations.

Some organizations have established a “diversity” or immigrant youth task force that designs and coordinates the following professional development activities.

Incorporate a Focus on Immigrant Youth in the Orientation Process

- **Incorporate services to immigrants into the organization’s mission, goals, standards, and practices.** Right from the start, when you orient new staff to the organization, you can establish work with immigrant youth as an organizational norm. This kind of introduction to the issue will have a lasting effect.
- **Inform new staff about specific immigrant populations being served.** An orientation for staff can also be a great opportunity for new staff to begin to learn about the specific community they will be working with, and to expand their strategies for working with immigrant participants and families.

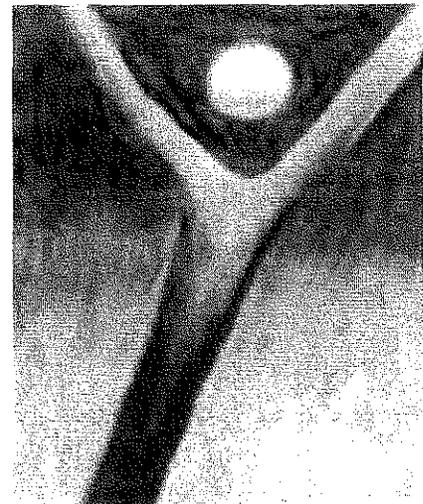
Introducing Immigrant Issues Upfront

Setting the tone at a staff orientation can say a lot about what an organization's priorities are when it comes to serving immigrant children and youth. At the beginning of each school year, Oakland Asian Students Educational Services (OASES) offers all tutors and coordinators a two-day training orientation. The session begins with an examination of participant and community demographics designed to help workers understand the variety of ethnicities, countries of origin, languages, and socioeconomic backgrounds represented in OASES programs. Since most participants live in Oakland's Chinatown, staff also explore the differing needs of first-and-second generation Chinese youth.

- Communicate organizational values. One organization used its staff training orientation to address issues of diversity and promote an environment that accepting of all groups, including immigrant cultures. Dealing with these issues up front enabled staff to have a clear understanding about the policies of inclusion.

Encourage Individual Learning and Self-Reflection

- Communicate the expectation that staff members will make a personal effort to learn about the agency's immigrant participants, and to do whatever is necessary to become comfortable serving diverse populations.
- Provide staff with resources such as books, culture-specific newspapers, field trips, and other relevant resources. Sometimes this requires developing your own tools and materials.
- Design your own planning tools and curricula to meet specific needs. Tools can be especially useful in gauging which skills staff already have in order to determine the amount of additional professional development they need. It is especially helpful when national organizations develop tools that their member organizations around the country can use and adapt.



Tools Developed by National Organizations

We actually started this out because local associations were calling us interested in partnering with YMCAs in Mexico or with other Latino YMCAs as an intervention or as a tool for reaching their immigrant communities. So that's when we put this together. –YMCA of the USA National

The International Group from the YMCA of the USA has developed a manual called *“Engaging Newcomer and Immigrant Communities in Your YMCA”* that contains vast knowledge from their work and relationships with local YMCA's all over the world. This practical guide for local YMCAs includes:

- Tips for serving immigrant children and youth,
- Strategies for understanding immigrant communities,
- Assessment checklists on topics such as outreach, cultural and linguistic competency, and inclusive environments, and
- Step-by-step planning guides.

Girls Incorporated is developing a set of resources as part of their national Latina Initiative. The materials described below will be made available to local Girls Inc. sites throughout the country:

- Fact sheets on issues related to Latina demographics, education, health and sexuality,
- Tools for recruiting and retaining diverse staff and board members to serve Latina populations, and
- Resource lists for youth workers.

As part of their Latino Outreach Initiative, Boys and Girls Clubs of America is developing two publications:

- *New Horizons, Reaching Out to and Serving Latino Youth and Families*
- *New Horizons 2, Recruiting, Developing and Retaining Latino Staff in the BGCA Movement*

Implement Training Sessions

- **Incorporate immigrant issues into “cultural competence trainings.”** Many youth organizations have begun to institutionalize training for staff on the issue of cultural competence and incorporating immigrant issues. These trainings provide an appropriate venue for addressing immigrant issues.

Learning First-Hand

Laurie Melrood, Director of Arizona Kinship, Adoption, Resource and Education (KARE) Center, feels it is important for her staff to have a deep understanding of the large percentage (43%) of program participants who are a diverse mix of U.S.-born and immigrant Latinos: “I think the staff’s identification with the cultural, historical and economic experience of these immigrants is critical.” Even though more than half of the staff is Latino, Laurie believes strongly that everyone benefits from continuous learning. She notes that there may be differences in the level of knowledge of the immigrant experience between Latino staff members who are not immigrants and those who have just recently come to the United States.

Each year the KARE Center staff travels to a nearby border town to get an up-close look at the political, economic, and cultural realities of immigrant youth. Staff gets to talk in-depth with a variety of individuals to explore the context from which participants emerge. Laurie says, “It’s an unforgettable experience for folks”—one that they process both formally and informally for many days after the trip.”

- **Offer specific training on working with immigrant youth.** Only a few organizations are offering specific training on this issue. Much more needs to be done to develop training content and activities on topics such as legal concerns, inclusive environments, coping with family separations, cultural and linguistic competency, and negotiating unfamiliar institutions.

Addressing Legal Concerns

Staff want to know why it is so hard for someone to become a citizen of the U.S. Some of them don't understand the distinction between legal resident and U.S. citizen. Other folks get very frustrated because they are under the impression that you could just come over and become a resident or a citizen—that the path to citizenship is easy. —Agency Director

Staff and family members often want to know:

- *What types of services are immigrants with different citizenship or residency statuses eligible for?*
- *What types of legal documentation should we ask immigrant parents and families to provide, and for what purposes?*
- *Can staff "get in trouble" for serving undocumented youth?*

There are no easy answers to these questions. The current immigration system is complex, challenging to understand, and even more challenging to navigate. Although the federal government determines the overall immigration policy, state and local governments are responsible for responding to and meeting the needs of immigrant residents. The best approach for youth organizations is to research the following:

- Your organization's policies and procedures
- Funder's regulations and recommendations
- State and local laws
- The Immigration/Nationality Act

Some agencies bring in an attorney with expertise on immigrant issues to serve as a resource to staff and participants or you can contact Jonathan Blazer (blazer@nilc-dc.org) at the National Immigration Law Center.

Thanks to Irena Lieberman, American Bar Association, Commission on Immigration, for her help with this.

- **Ask staff to design and implement training.** One organization convened a staff affinity group that planned information sessions for the rest of the youth workers on content areas in which they had personal experience or specific expertise. The agency provided the staff trainers with the resources and support they needed to make this happen.

We have learned so much from the individuals we have hired who are Latino; they do an excellent job at helping us to understand the families we serve. –Agency Director

- **Invite leaders, elders, and others from the immigrant community to educate staff.** Inviting the participation of the leaders and elders speaks to your belief that the community really does have something to offer your organization. It sends a strong message of respect and honor, and can build strong bridges to future relationships and work.

Learning From the Immigrant Community

When the YMCA in Minneapolis began serving increasing numbers of Somali immigrants, tensions began to arise between staff and participants. As it turned out, staff were misunderstanding and reacting to certain cultural gestures and mannerisms. To address this problem, Executive Director Michael Melstad began holding discussion sessions during which Somali elders from the community would come and educate staff about the specific behaviors and gestures in question as well as many other aspects of Somali culture. Michael says, "The most helpful thing we've done is have these sessions... They (the Somali elders) would say 'Here's what this means,' or 'When you do this we feel like this,' and it's made a big difference." Michael feels that the elders have given the YMCA staff great insight into Somali culture; he feels that much of the positive change he has seen in the relationships between the staff and the Somali participants is attributed to these dialogues.

Set Up Staff Dialogues

There are some common issues that this client population shares, but they're articulated differently depending on the experience and the culture, the context and the history of individual families, where they come from, what they've done, what the economic picture has been or is now, whether they're underground or not. –Agency Director

- **Hold a dialogue session in response to a specific issue or challenge.** Providing services to immigrant youth and their families can be rewarding and also challenging. Organizations typically have to change the way they do business—often a difficult and tense process. Putting the issues on the table can be a great way to address concerns and questions related to the work with immigrant participants. It is critical, however, to first establish a group contract to ensure there will be safe space for open and honest dialogue.

Addressing Political and Anti-Immigrant Issues-

Youth workers need safe space to air their assumptions and challenge their own stereotypes. They also need to brainstorm ideas and share concrete strategies for taking action on difficult political realities, such as helping youth learn how to respond when assumptions or stereotypes come up, or dealing with community tensions.

Beyond understanding how to support youth in these areas, staff members themselves, especially those from immigrant or diverse backgrounds, may need support while dealing with troubling social and political realities in their own lives.

Staff is aware of the anti-immigrant sentiment. They feel it and they experience it. That's why some of them feel like they have to work harder - and not just in the agency, but with everyone who is associated with us.

Providing support on these issues at the organizational level will ensure that staff feels valued, accepted and comfortable. It will open spaces for dialogue.

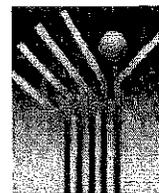
- **Use regularly scheduled events for staff dialogue.** Use a segment of staff meetings as a regular opportunity for staff to discuss an issue, ask questions or brainstorm ideas and solutions. One local director initiated conversations in meetings by voicing questions such as, “What about the kids whose parents don’t speak English—how are you all dealing with this?”

National Organizations Create Networking Opportunities

Our affiliates are stand-alone organizations, and although they are deeply alike in terms of their mission and philosophy and approach, they are widely varied in terms of their history and who they serve. And so a national effort, like the Latina Initiative, is more complex than one might think. You need to “think globally, and act locally” to create a set of national behaviors or activities that at the same time can also be customized so that local affiliates can do what they need to do. –National Organization Staff Member

- **Create a nationwide professional affinity group.** The goal of this group is to engage in strategic planning to support local organizations in their efforts to include immigrants and to share staff development methods.
- **Offer local-to-local mentoring and conference calls.** Local staff can visit programs that have demonstrated success in serving immigrant youth, and spend focused time with their counterparts. This kind of support and mentoring enables staff to share their expertise on working with immigrant youth. One national organization had “regional affiliations” that helped forge local multi-site groups to share best practices and support each other in working with the community’s Latino population. These are examples where national organizations have seen the importance of helping local staff learn from and network with each other. Similar networking opportunities can be created on the local, state and regional levels.

BEGIN WITH LEADERSHIP AND VISION



The commitment to work with immigrant youth needs to start from the top! Lots of staff don't have a clear understanding of where the organization is going on all this stuff; so even if there's training, people say 'Why do I have to take this if I'm not sure of the bigger direction? What do you want us to do?' –Local Outreach Coordinator

Much has been described here about hiring, preparing, and retaining youth workers who will work directly with immigrant youth. Yet this work is next to impossible unless there is strong leadership and vision to determine the direction of an organization and prioritize necessary resources. The leader sets the tone by creating an organizational climate that supports and honors this work. When the right internal environment gets established, the organization's image shifts accordingly and it becomes easier to attract and retain qualified staff. The next few pages outline ways in which an organization can think through what changes it might need to make to work successfully with immigrant children and youth.

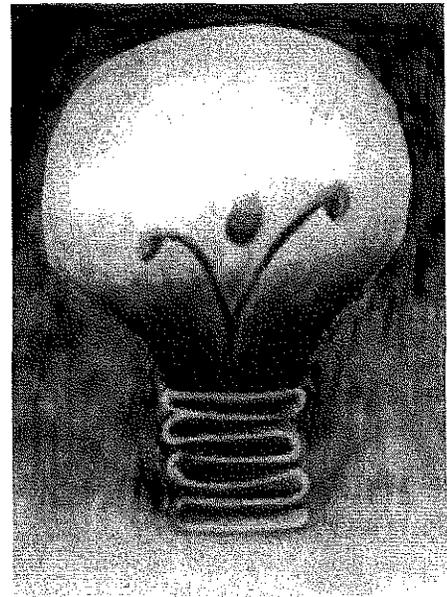
Be Proactive

Leaders must create an expectation that immigrant children and youth are an integral part of the organization. They can:

- **Communicate expectations clearly and affirmatively within the organization.** When leaders consistently share their beliefs and expectations at orientations, staff meetings and trainings, they impress upon staff the importance of understanding and learning to work with newcomers. In contrast, some leaders send double messages:
 - "Everyone is welcome here, but it's not a priority to reach out to immigrants."
 - "I'd love to see us do this work, but it's just too hard to find bilingual staff."
 - "We want to include these kids, but it's not our job to help them hold on to their language or customs."

These kinds of comments signal ambivalence and don't provide a clear direction for staff who are working with immigrant youth.

- **Be a spokesperson in the community.** Communicate organizational goals, philosophy, services, staffing needs, and opportunities to important stakeholders outside the organization. Speak at community events, join local coalitions, dialogue and strategize with other organizations.



Tap into Leaders' Strengths

I grew up in the Chinatown community where the organization is located. Being Chinese and from the community has helped me establish neighborhood trust and credibility. It's provided me with an irreplaceable "second nature" about the culture and traditions of many of the youth and staff with whom I work. It has also served to keep me emotionally grounded and committed to the mission of serving Asian immigrant populations. –Local Agency Director

Maximize your strengths. Leaders from a wide variety of backgrounds bring specific strengths to this endeavor. Those who come from the same immigrant communities they are serving bring assets such as increased awareness, empathy, language expertise, and a head start at being able to build trusting relationships with families. Those leaders who are not immigrants might be able to intentionally reach out to immigrant children and youth, especially in communities where there is social, economic, or political resistance. The non-immigrant voice can bring important credibility to the issue. These leaders can open the dialogue about community views of immigrants or anti-immigrant prejudice, in ways that might not be available to immigrant leaders.

Represent the broad diversity. Immigrants come from all countries and speak hundreds of different languages. Given the changing demographics across the United States, organizational leaders, including boards of directors, need to represent the different races, cultures, and languages of both immigrant and non-immigrant populations.

Be Explicit

I hired the Latina Project Manager and we sat down to map out everything. The visioning is really critical, so it's important to identify your outcomes and put together a strategic plan for reaching them. –Local Agency Director

Convey intent. Something as simple as using the word “immigrant” in the title of a new initiative conveys an organization’s explicit intent to reach out to immigrant youth and provide key services. Several large national organizations have implemented comprehensive outreach initiatives designed to promote inclusion and build effective services for underserved cultural and immigrant groups. Such initiatives:

- Bring an explicit focus and intentionality to immigrant-related staffing efforts and connect them with outreach to immigrant youth and families.
- Establish the organization’s credibility with immigrant communities.
- Provide an anchor for building partnerships with ethnic groups and other immigrant-serving organizations.
- Attract funding, including pass-through funding from national organizations to support local outreach staff.
- Attract strong immigrant workers and staff who are passionate about working with immigrants.
- Provide a roadmap for the development of staff tools and resources related to serving immigrants.
- Guide the expansion of staff development and training agendas.

Using Language Acquisition to Promote Inclusivity

A key part of creating an inclusive organizational culture is the use of participants’ home languages. At the Boys and Girls Club of West Georgia, Director Wally West has seen a 30% increase among Latino participants in just three years. Wally’s vision for serving this new population is to “make sure the entire organization changes with the times.” He has instituted free weekly Spanish classes for his staff and the community, an effort that he knows won’t make his staff fluent in Spanish, but that nevertheless sends a message to immigrant participants and families that the agency and staff are committed to communicating more effectively with them. Since the classes began, immigrants at the Club recognize that staff is trying to reach out to them and want to meet them half way. This effort has proven extremely encouraging to families who often feel like they are out there treading water alone. The program, which has been in place for three years now, also publicize a “Spanish phrase of the week,” which all staff and participants are encouraged to learn and use. All of this is adding up to a warmer and more welcoming environment for an increasingly diverse community.

Create an Inclusive Organizational Culture

We have 20 staff members, and of those, about 65 percent have been here five or more years. I think that has something to do with the fact that I'm Latina. A lot of our staff has faced many of the same challenges and struggles as the kids that we serve. I'm first-generation, so I grew up with Spanish as my first language. And I struggled to attain education and move up the ladder. It has been motivating for staff to learn about my story. I believe that my ability to be culturally sensitive has been very important for the organization. –Local Agency Executive Director

It is not uncommon for any organization, including youth organizations, to experience the challenging dynamic in which staff who are themselves immigrants, or people of color, feel marginalized and isolated within larger staff or programming environments. Affected staff and their allies typically feel frustrated, offended, and angry at a personal and professional level. It's hard to believe that the organization is committed to inclusion of immigrants when this kind of marginalization can be observed in staff interactions.

Model openness to learning. It is crucial for leaders to create an organizational culture that encourages learning and open dialogue. Leaders must model inclusiveness if they are to discover their own biases and identify their “growing edges.” When they show themselves to be open to change, willing to address mistakes and ask for help, it encourages other staff to do the same and creates opportunities for staff experienced with immigrant populations to share their insight and expertise.

Value staff. Often, employees decide to commit to an organization because they feel like valued members of the work team. Creating an inclusive organizational culture where all youth and staff feel welcomed, valued, respected and supported by the organizational leadership has the benefit of:

- Attracting the best and brightest employees
- Increasing staff members' commitment to the agency
- Building effective teamwork
- Encouraging the kinds of conversations that lead to attitude change and the development of new skills.

Create supportive policies and structures. Leaders can also nurture inclusiveness by creating such organizational structures and policies such as a diversity task force, language classes for all staff members, translation or re-branding of organizational materials, anti-bias training, or release time for staff to attend local immigrant rights events.

APPENDIX A

Organizational Assessment of Staff Characteristics

Directions: Use this checklist to assess your overall staffing needs. Engage organizational leaders and existing staff in dialogue about characteristics needed to work effectively with immigrant youth, families, and communities. Tailor the following list of skills, attitudes, and knowledge areas so they meet the specific needs of your agency and community. In the second column, record skill areas that specific staff already possesses and in the third column, note any areas that need further development.

Skills, Attitudes, Knowledge	Already Strong in this Area	Needs Further Attention
<p>KNOWLEDGE OF COMMUNITY AND IMMIGRANT EXPERIENCE</p> <p>Is aware of changing population demographics in the local community</p>		
Knows circumstances and conditions in home countries of immigrant participants		
Understands the cultural customs, norms, and family structures of local immigrant communities		
Understands the legal and political context of immigration		
<p>CULTURAL COMPETENCE</p> <p>Has a positive outlook about demographics in local community</p>		
Can relate to individuals from a wide variety of cultural backgrounds		
Understands diversity within specific ethnic and immigrant populations		
Respects the fact that immigrants' basic values, traditions, and beliefs may vary from those in the dominant culture		
Avoids pre-judging participants on the basis of cultural background and does not treat individuals unfairly or unjustly		
Communicates in culturally inclusive and respectful ways		

Skills, Attitudes, Knowledge	Already Strong in this Area	Needs Further Attention
<p>LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY</p> <p>Provides services in the language(s) of participants, including regional proficiency</p>		
<p>Ensures that written materials are translated or adapted so they are accessible to diverse immigrant groups</p>		
<p>Understands that nonverbal cues may have different meanings for different cultures</p>		
<p>ABILITY TO RELATE TO IMMIGRANT YOUTH AND FAMILIES</p> <p>Reflects the immigrant population (current and/or proposed)</p>		
<p>Shares the experience of being an immigrant</p>		
<p>Is bicultural and/or bilingual</p>		
<p>Has international experience</p>		
<p>CONNECTIONS WITH FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES</p> <p>Accepts immigrant youth and families as participants who have a right to be here and receive services</p>		
<p>Can make initial connections and build trust with participants' parents or caregivers</p>		
<p>Networks effectively with members of the immigrant community</p>		

APPENDIX B

Staff Recruitment Checklist

Directions: Use this checklist to organize your efforts to recruit and hire staff who can work effectively with immigrant youth. Make notes about additional tasks that need to be taken to accomplish any relevant action steps. Assign the tasks to a staff member, along with a completion date.

Action Steps	Additional Tasks	By When	Person Responsible
IDENTIFY THE NEEDS Conduct research to identify target immigrant populations and their specific needs			
Engage in organizational dialogue about how to respond to the needs of immigrant populations			
Determine the specific skills staff will need to work with immigrant youth			
ADVERTISE & MAKE USE OF NETWORKS Advertise in culture-specific media			
Enhance your reputation as an organization that serves immigrant populations			
Utilize community contacts and networks to identify candidates			
Arrange college credit for interns and volunteers			
RECRUIT FROM WITHIN Cultivate and hire past program participants			
Recruit staff members' friends			
INTERVIEW CREATIVELY AND SENSITIVELY Create a sensitive and thoughtful interview process			
Use creative alternative strategies to discover a candidate's qualifications			
OFFER INCENTIVES Market professional development opportunities as career incentives			
Offer incentives to recruit qualified staff who are also bilingual			

APPENDIX C

Staff Retention Checklist

Directions: Use this checklist to organize your efforts to retain staff who are working effectively with immigrant youth. Make notes about additional tasks that need to be taken to accomplish any relevant action steps. Assign the tasks to a staff member, along with a completion date.

Action Steps	Additional Tasks	Date to Accomplish	Person Responsible
<p>NURTURE PASSION</p> <p>Connect staff to the organizational mission</p>			
<p>Support healthy caring relationships between youth and staff.</p>			
<p>PROVIDE LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT</p> <p>Identify and nurture individual staff strengths</p>			
<p>Create pathways for gaining increased responsibility</p>			
<p>Foster development</p>			
<p>CREATE A CULTURE OF APPRECIATION</p> <p>Express appreciation to individual workers on a regular basis</p>			
<p>Hold "appreciation events"</p>			
<p>Create a sensitive and thoughtful interview process</p>			
<p>Incorporate and appreciate the perspectives and cultural traditions of staff members</p>			
<p>View immigrant staff and participants as assets and tap into their strengths</p>			

APPENDIX D

Professional Development Checklist

Directions: Use this checklist to organize your efforts to prepare and support staff who are working with immigrant youth. Make notes about additional tasks that need to be undertaken to accomplish any relevant action steps. Assign the tasks to a staff member with a completion date.

Action Steps	Additional Tasks	By When	Person Responsible
<p>INCORPORATE A FOCUS ON IMMIGRANT YOUTH INTO THE ORIENTATION PROCESS</p> <p>Incorporate services to immigrants into the organization's mission, goals, standards, and practices</p>			
<p>Inform new staff about specific immigrant populations being served</p>			
<p>Communicate organizational values</p> <p>ENCOURAGE INDIVIDUAL LEARNING AND SELF-REFLECTION</p> <p>Communicate the expectation that staff members do individual work to learn about immigrant participants</p>			
<p>Provide staff with resources such as books, culture-specific newspapers and field trips</p>			
<p>Design your own planning tools and curricula to meet specific needs</p>			

Action Steps	Additional Tasks	By When	Person Responsible
<p>IMPLEMENT TRAINING SESSIONS</p> <p>Incorporate immigrant issues into "cultural competence" trainings</p>			
Offer specific training on working with immigrant youth			
Ask staff to design and implement training			
<p>Invite leaders, elders, and others from the immigrant community to educate staff</p> <p>SET UP STAFF DIALOGUES</p> <p>Hold a dialogue session in response to a specific issue or challenge</p>			
<p>Use regularly scheduled events to promote staff dialogue</p> <p>NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS CREATE NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES</p> <p>Create a nationwide professional affinity group</p>			
Offer local-to-local mentoring and conference calls			

■ APPENDIX E

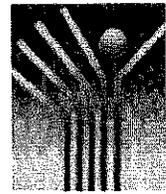
Creating an Inclusive Environment Checklist*

Directions: Place a check in the column beside each item that your organization already has in place.

<input type="checkbox"/>	Policies and procedures are available to guide our services to individuals with limited or no English. Individuals' English proficiency is documented and known to staff, volunteers, and leaders. Procedures address how to determine an individual's or family's need for language-access services, and the best way to address communication problems.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Resources are allocated to ensure that our organization provides language-access services (bilingual staff, volunteer translators, brochures translated into community languages, etc.)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Procedures for addressing complaints about bias or discrimination are documented and accessible to staff, volunteers, leaders, and youth. Such information enables newcomers and immigrants to advocate on their own behalf, should they experience discrimination in their interaction with our organization.
<input type="checkbox"/>	The demographic makeup of the community we serve is reviewed regularly to determine whether additional or new language services are required, or whether modifications to policies and practices are needed to address new and emerging populations.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Basic cross-cultural communication training is provided to staff, volunteers and leaders.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Organizational policies and procedures include efforts to recruit and retain staff members who reflect and respect the cultural and linguistic diversity of the communities we serve.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Job descriptions and recruiting notices include skill sets and areas of knowledge related to cultural and linguistic competence.
<input type="checkbox"/>	All staff, volunteers, and leaders are encouraged to participate in professional development and training in the area of cultural and linguistic competence.

* Adapted from the YMCA 's *Engaging Newcomer and Immigrant Communities in Your YMCA*

SAMPLE RESOURCES



"A Look at Immigrant Youth: Prospects and Promising Practices," Ann Morse, March 2005, National Conference of State Legislatures, Children's Policy Initiative, www.ncsl.org/print/health/CPlimmigranyouth.pdf

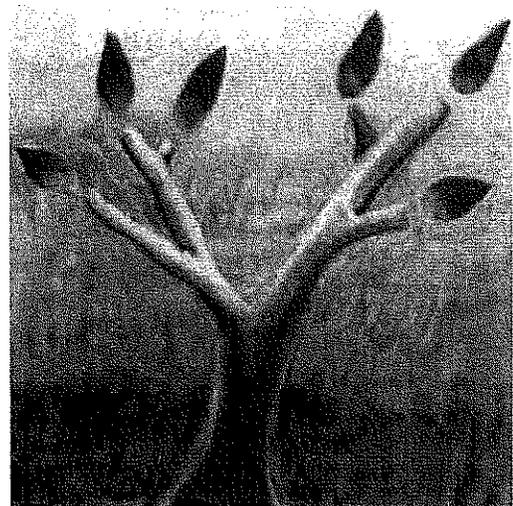
"Facilitating Positive Development in Immigrant Youth," Teleconference with Carola Suárez-Orozco, National Center for Mental Health Promotion and Violence Prevention, February 28th, 2005, www.promoteprevent.org/documents/Latino%20Immigrant%20Youth%20TC%202.28.05.doc

"Latino Youth: Immigration, Education, and the Future," Pedro A. Noguera, In Motion Magazine, NYC, New York, March 5, 2006 http://www.inmotionmagazine.com/er/pn_lyief.html

"Mentoring Immigrant and Refugee Youth," a section of the toolkit *How to Build a Successful Mentoring Program Using the Elements of Effective Practice*. Mentor/National Mentoring Partnership, Alexandria, VA www.mentoring.org/program_staff/eep/toolkit/immigrant_youth.php

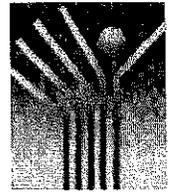
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METHODOLOGY

Field Survey



In order to determine what youth service organizations are doing to recruit and retain staff members qualified to work with immigrant children and youth, The National Collaboration for Youth asked its members and their affiliates to complete a short web-based survey. Forty-four national and local organizations responded, providing detailed information in the following subject categories:

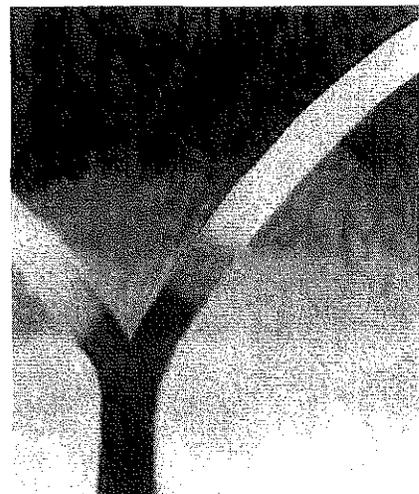
- Overall demographic composition of staff and young people served
- Areas where support is needed
- Ongoing service and new initiatives
- Technical assistance being provided, and what technical assistance is needed

The survey was also used as a basis for developing a list of what organizations would be interviewed to collect additional information.

Organization Interviews

The second phase of the project involved identifying a select number of national and local organizations for case study interviews. In order to ensure that the research encompassed a diverse range of programs and perspectives, the National Collaboration for Youth staff and consultants chose organizations to be interviewed based on geographic location, immigrant populations served, and types of programming offered.

Staff members at five national organizations and twenty local sites, most of which participated in the initial survey, were interviewed. The agencies worked with immigrant



populations from places such as: Somalia, Mexico, Laos, Ethiopia, Guatemala, China, Peru, Portugal, Eritrea, and Cambodia. We spoke with leaders from national organizations about:

- National-level goals, vision, policies, and initiatives they had in place to support their efforts for recruiting and retaining youth workers to work with immigrant youth
- Specific resources, materials, and technical assistance they needed
- Identifying local affiliates currently performing quality work in this area

Interviews with local organizations included the following topics:

- The needs of recruiting and retaining youth workers to work with immigrant youth
- Local policies and practices related to working with immigrants
- How national initiatives are being implemented at the local level

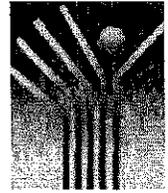
Organization Survey

To complement the phone interviews, staff asked all interviewees to complete a background questionnaire. This instrument allowed the interviewers to get a deeper understanding of the work that each national organization or local affiliate was doing and to determine the level of support they needed in the relevant areas of staff recruitment and retention. The in-depth questionnaire inquired about:

- Population served and staff composition
- Current initiatives and the technical assistance and support needed for these efforts
- Skills and qualities required in the case of those staff members who aspire to work with immigrant youth
- Retention strategies employed to maintain a diverse workforce
- Policies and structures that apply to the organization's work with immigrant youth and families
- Professional development and training being implemented



ADVISORY GROUP



National Collaboration for Youth
Preparing Staff to Work with Immigrant Youth
ADVISORY GROUP

Nhi Chau

Oakland Asian Students Educational Services

Linda Gonzales-Chavez

YMCA of the USA

Sean Hassan

Shia Imami Ismaili Council for the USA

Santiago Marquez

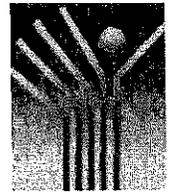
Boys & Girls Clubs of America

Wally West

Boys & Girls Clubs of West Georgia



SURVEYED ORGANIZATIONS



NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Boys & Girls Clubs of America

Latino Outreach Initiative

The Boys & Girls Clubs of America Latino Outreach Initiative is a comprehensive national effort that was launched in 2004 that focuses on bringing Latino youth into Clubs, including providing transportation; hiring and developing talented bilingual/bicultural staff; offering interest-based programs to attract Latino youth and parents; and ensuring sustainability by integrating the initiative into all levels of Club organizations, especially boards. The initiative was piloted in three Georgia Clubs and has since been expanded to six additional cities around the country.

Camp Fire USA

Camp Fire USA is inclusive and open to every person in the community, as described in one of our organization's 12 core values: "We are inclusive, welcoming children, youth and adults regardless of race, religion, socioeconomic status, disability, sexual orientation or other aspect of diversity." Camp Fire USA supports this value with an official inclusiveness statement: "Camp Fire USA works to realize the dignity and worth of each individual and to eliminate human barriers based on all assumptions which prejudice individuals."

Girls Incorporated®

Latina Initiative

The Girls Inc. Latina Initiative is a three-year national initiative to address the needs of Latinas aged 6 to 18, with the goal of increasing the number of Latina girls served by Girls Inc. affiliates. Based on information gathered from internal and external sources, including Latina girls and their parents, the initiative seeks to: provide Girls Inc. affiliates with the tools, training, technical assistance and support needed to effectively serve Latina girls in their communities; enhance and supplement the Girls Inc.

identity programs to more specifically address the needs and issues of the Latina population; increase the awareness and heighten the understanding of Girls Inc., its programs, messages and philosophy, among the Latina community nationwide; educate Girls Inc. National staff and board; and adapt the strategic approach to reaching other new populations of girls.

Girl Scouts of the USA

Multicultural Initiatives

The Girl Scouts of the USA's Hispanic Initiative was launched in 2000 to promote the recruitment and retention of Latina girls and adults. Since then it has grown into a national priority with staff dedicated to this initiative at the national and local levels. Efforts are geared around building lasting relationships in this community, and, providing staff and volunteers the resources and training necessary to better serve Latina girls and volunteers. In addition to this initiative, Girl Scouts of the USA also has dedicated initiatives to serve other multicultural communities including the Asian and African American communities.

Shia Imami Ismaili Council for the USA

International Adolescent Education Program

The International Adolescent Education Program (IAEP) equips community leaders with tools and knowledge to strategically harness the resources of a community for the purpose of youth development. IAEP works to introduce leaders to the most advanced youth development research, practical approaches to infusing faith perspectives into youth programs, and best practices on topics ranging from program evaluation to pedagogy. IAEP embraces the "asset-based" approach to youth development, and although the framework is based upon research conducted in the United States, it has resonated with participants in the Ismaili Community at conferences in Canada, Europe, East Africa, the Gulf States, and South Asia.

YMCA of the USA

National Diversity Initiative

The YMCA of the USA International Group coordinates global relationships and programs on behalf of YMCA of the USA and works towards building strong YMCAs in the United States and internationally through global education and training, resource development, partnership development, strategic planning, volunteer and board development and financial development. A priority of the International Group is to support local YMCAs to better reach and serve immigrants and newcomers in their communities. Developed with the input of local YMCAs and experts in the field, resources provide strategies for engaging and serving immigrant communities, foster diversity and aim to increase cultural competencies.

LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS

Boys & Girls Clubs of Metro Atlanta

Boys & Girls Clubs of Metro Atlanta (BGCMA) is in the forefront of youth development, working with young people from disadvantaged economic, social, and family circumstances. Last year, BYCMA served more than 15,000 young people through its Clubs, summer sites and outreach programs. BGCMA has also served as a pilot site for the Boys & Girls Clubs of America national Latino Outreach Initiative.

Boys & Girls Clubs of West Georgia

The Boys & Girls Clubs of West Georgia is one of the initial pilot sites for a national Latino Outreach Initiative. The Club has embraced the Latino Outreach Initiative into the fiber of their organization through: board development; membership recruitment; parent support programs; and community outreach special events. The success of their local Latino Outreach Initiative has led to the creation of a local Latino Task Team, a new unit with bi-lingual staff, and a local Latino Advisory Board. They have also begun the planning for a Korean Outreach Initiative to support the migration of South Koreans moving to our community because of a future Kia manufacturing plant being built. The Boys & Girls Clubs of West Georgia has 14 staff members and serves 1,000 youth.

Camp Fire USA, Central Puget Sound Seattle

As an affiliate of Camp Fire USA, the Camp Fire Central Puget Sound Council incorporates youth development into all of its programs including its summer and day camps, environmental education, and Teens in Action program. Like the national organization, Camp Fire Central Puget Sound Council focuses on the importance of providing inclusive programs that encourage participation from all youth populations in the region. Camp Fire USA Central Puget Sound Seattle has 44 staff and serves 12,175 youth.

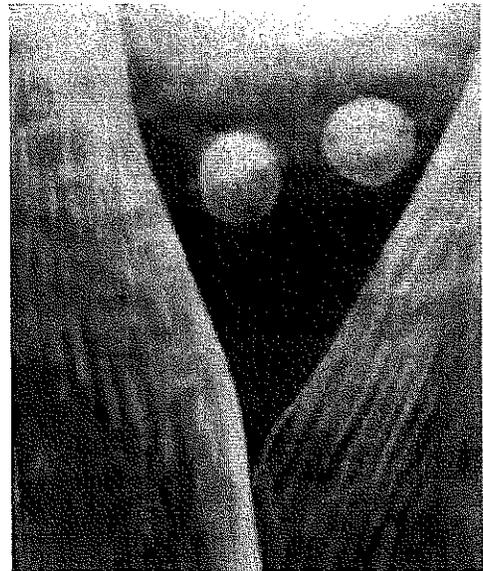
Girl Scouts, San Diego-Imperial Council

Girl Scouts, San Diego-Imperial Council empowers girls of all ages and backgrounds to develop self-esteem, self-confidence, and a sense of individuality within a fun and caring environment. They are committed to serving every girl, everywhere—building trust with migrant families in northern San Diego communities (Escondido, Vista, Oceanside, Fallbrook), the border region (Chula Vista, San Ysidro), and east to Imperial Valley. Girl Scouts, San Diego, Imperial Council has 115 staff members and serves 30,000 girls every year.

Girl Scouts of Greater South Texas

The Girl Scouts of Greater South Texas focuses on the Girl Scouting goals of developing self-potential, relating to others, developing values, and contributing to society by providing programs and camps that

support these goals. This council also implements the Girl Scouts of the USA Hispanic Initiative in order to better reach the Latina population of their region. The Hispanic Initiative has created a more inclusive environment and has created the opportunity to build diverse relationships throughout their community. The Girl Scouts of Greater South Texas has more than 20 staff and serves about 9,500 youth.



Girls Incorporated of Alameda County

In 1993, Girls Inc. developed and began to facilitate Latinas y Que (LYQ), a weekly culturally specific, leadership youth development program that provides cultural enhancement, college preparation, career exploration and community service for young Latinas. Girls Incorporated of Alameda County has implemented Latinas y Que and highlights from the program include cultural events, college overnight visits, women guest speakers, creative arts workshops and outdoor adventures. Activities are project based and chosen by the girls. Girls are encouraged to stay in the program for the duration of high school to receive support in applying for college and to mentor incoming program participants. Girls Incorporated of Alameda County has 83 staff and serves 7,000 youth.

Girls Incorporated of Orange County

Since 1954, Girls Incorporated of Orange County has been offering programs to the girls in our community that need them the most. Their efforts in working with the Latino community have proven to be effective mainly due to their diverse and culturally competent staff. Girls Incorporated of Orange County takes pride in their staff and does their best to equip them with the knowledge and training they need to be effective in furthering their mission of, "Inspiring all girls to be Strong, Smart & BoldSM".

Girls Incorporated of Greater Atlanta

In order to prepare staff to work with immigrant youth populations, Girls Incorporated of Greater Atlanta has hired bilingual staff that are culturally sensitive to the values of the community. Initially, the staff members did extensive research in the Atlanta area and readily partnered with other Latino serving organizations, churches, and schools. In just three short years, the initiative has become more well known in the community through outreach programs and marketing. As the program is becoming more prominent in the community, the Latina staff members have also assisted the center based programs by translating important documents in order to recruit more Latina girls and their parents to the center. Girls Incorporated of Greater Atlanta has 16 staff and serves 4,000 girls every year.

Girls Incorporated of Greater Lowell

Girls Incorporated of Greater Lowell serves a diverse population of girls, six to eighteen years old, through onsite after-school programs, vacation programs, and a menu of other activities at local elementary and middle schools. Their membership is currently 28% Latina and their goal is to reach more girls and families in their community by hiring a Latina staff member with extensive contacts in the Hispanic community; increasing marketing to large numbers of immigrants, and actively seeking staff members and volunteers who are Latina and/or fluent in Spanish. Girls Incorporated of Greater Lowell has 14 staff members and serves 400 and 500 youth.

Hispanic AIDS Forum

(Latino Youth in Action)

The Latino Youth In Action (LYIA) program of the Hispanic AIDS Forum is a peer-driven HIV prevention and training program serving Latino immigrant youth in New York City. Community-wide bilingual theatrical events are organized by the LYIA peers focusing on relevant issues such as stigma, HIV testing, homophobia, domestic violence and family relationships. The Hispanic AIDS Forum Latino LYIA program serves 50 youth directly and reaches over 1,000 with community engagement and outreach. This program staffs five bilingual youth counselors, supervisors, mental health workers and prevention coordinators.



KARE Family Center

The Kinship and Adoption Resource and Education (KARE) Family Center offers a one-stop support and services for relatives and family friends caring for youth under age 18. KARE serves about 1,500 families a year and over 3,000 youth, of these families, about 8-10% are monolingual or prefer speaking Spanish. A similar number of these families are new or recent immigrants, most from various parts of Mexico. The array of knowledge and supports provides greater stability and empowerment for immigrant children. The KARE Family Center has 13 full-time staff and 7 part-time staff.

Oakland Asian Students Educational Services

OASES programs promote youth development by enhancing participants' academic accomplishments, leadership, life-skills, self-esteem, civic responsibility, and cultural awareness through daily after-school programs. Our staff has over 20 years of combined experience working with immigrant youth and their families. OASES also recruits over 400 UC Berkeley volunteers each year to provide individualized tutoring and mentorship for their youth programs. OASES serves 300 youth has nine staff members and four AmeriCorps members.

Oregon 4-H

Begun in 1997, the Oregon Outreach Project is designed to increase the statewide capacity of Oregon State University Extension to support community-based programs for Latino children, youth, and families. In collaboration with Latino youth and families, culturally responsive educational programs are designed to meet their needs and interests. The Project provides ongoing staff development programs to 4-H staff statewide, to increase the capacity of staff to engage Latino audiences as part of ongoing county 4-H programs. Oregon 4-H directly serves 36,732 youth with approximately 70 staff.

University of Illinois Extension - 4-H Youth Development

The University of Illinois Extension offers educational programs to residents of all Illinois County focusing on healthy societies, food security and safety, environmental stewardship, and enhancing youth, family and community well-being. They have developed marketing and programming materials to reach Latino youth and their families and the piloting of programs for Latinos have been conducted in numerous counties in the state. Staff development is also conducted to increase cultural competence among staff. The University of Illinois Extension serves 290,000 youth with over 75 youth development staff.

Windham Public Schools

Connecticut Migratory Children's Program and Before/After School Programs

The Children's Migratory Program has been dedicated to providing supplemental educational services to children of migratory families in the school district. Over 240 students, Kindergarten through fourth grades, participate in these programs. At present, over 70% of their students are Latinos. Three of their four site coordinators and fourteen of their 18 paraprofessional and teacher assistants are Latinos as well. Windham Public Schools Migratory Children's Program serves over 300 youth with over 18 staff.

YMCA of the Greater Houston Area

YMCA International Service Center – Gulfton Outreach Project

The YMCA's Gulfton Outreach Project was established 13 years ago to address the needs of its predominantly Hispanic and immigrant populations. The focus of the initiative is to provide positive alternatives for youth in their neighborhoods. The center piece of the project is their Outreach Soccer League which engages over 1,300 youth ages six- to eighteen-years old in year round competition. They have been very successful in engaging parents and other caring adults as coaches and members of the League's Directiva (committee). YMCA Teen programs serve over 100 immigrant youth with educational and enrichment programs with a strong community service component.

YMCA of Metropolitan Minneapolis

The inner city branches of the YMCA of Metropolitan Minneapolis have worked with each wave of newcomers that enter the region. Today people from Somalia and Ethiopia as well as Mexico are the largest groups of newcomers. In order to work with newcomers, the YMCA of Metropolitan Minneapolis train existing staff, invite newcomers to be part of their governance structure and change their programs to fit newcomer interests and needs. The YMCA of Metropolitan Minneapolis serves approximately 5,000 youth each year and has 180 full and part-time staff.

YMCA of the Suncoast – High Point Branch

The YMCA of the Suncoast – High Point Branch offers quality programs and services for youth through sports activities, recreation, computer literacy education, and much more. They also emphasize the importance of diversity and reaching out to a variety of populations in their neighborhood. This work provides for a dynamic learning environment that benefits youth and the community as a whole. The YMCA of the Suncoast – High Point Branch serves 650 youth yearly with 10 staff members.

