“When I ran for Mayor, you often heard me say that I wanted Houston to be a city with no limits, which acted responsibly, where government works for the people and is held to a higher standard – a city of hope, opportunity, and inspiration. That is the city I, along with your help, hope to continue to build.

Houston is a city of immigrants and refugees, and they have a long and deep-rooted history in making Houston the great city it is today. As the nation’s fourth largest city, and most diverse metropolitan area in America, Houston is home to people from all over the world. One in four Houstonians is foreign-born, over 140 languages are spoken in our neighborhoods, and 90 countries are officially represented in the consular corps.

This plan will help us develop best practices on how to better integrate and assist newly arrived Houstonians into our city. Immigrants and refugees are our neighbors. They are the families at our schools, churches, temples and mosques. They contribute to Houston’s vibrant economy, running many small businesses and working in all of Houston’s diverse industries. Regardless of where you come from, what you look like, your disability, what you believe, or who you love, we stand together as Houstonians.

Houston always has been and always will be a Welcoming City.”

– Mayor Sylvester Turner, December 12, 2016
Executive Summary

Welcoming Houston is an initiative based on the belief that immigrant communities and receiving communities share many common goals and priorities and, by working together, can forge a stronger, richer democracy. The mission of Welcoming Houston is to recommend and implement policies and programs that foster the integration of immigrants and refugees into the civic, social, and economic fabric of Houston. This document represents the first step in this mission. The strategic plan and detailed recommendations below call upon public, private, and nonprofit stakeholders to work collaboratively to ensure that Houston is not merely diverse, but pluralistic and committed to equity.

Welcoming Houston presents an opportunity to build on immigrants’ assets and ability to enhance their experiences in Houston, and to enrich our city to include, elevate, and celebrate all peoples, regardless of race, creed, religion, or orientation. Foreign-born residents contributed more than $116 billion to Houston’s economy in 2014, with $31.8 billion in spending power and $2.9 billion in local and state taxes paid. While immigrants carry significant economic weight in the city, average immigrant incomes are much lower than those of the U.S.-born in Houston, and immigrants often face significant barriers to economic, social, and environmental well-being. Thus, we hope to further establish Houston as a city that creates opportunities for equitable and system-wide civic participation for all immigrants and refugees, as well as enhances the economic power of foreign-born residents.

This document was created with the input of more than 100 individuals, including a 39-member Task Force, 50+ community members and civic leaders across committees covering six different topic areas, a Project Team, and several volunteers. Welcoming Houston participants include immigrant and native-born voices, refugees, documented and undocumented individuals. It also includes those who work with asylees and asylum seekers as well as victims of human trafficking, the LGBTQI community, faith leaders, persons of all abilities, academics and researchers, civil servants, and individuals from the private sector and the education sector. We also administered a web- and paper-based survey and focus groups to garner ground-level input from immigrant community members. In addition, national experts from various organizations—including Welcoming America and New American Economy—provided input and advice based on their work with other cities undertaking similar projects.

The success of Welcoming Houston will require ongoing collaboration and communication among all stakeholders, accountability measures, transparent metrics, and direct engagement with immigrant individuals and families across Houston. Immigrant Houstonians are already powerful contributors to our community. This plan simply seeks to provide information, remove barriers, and help create opportunities to further enhance and showcase those contributions.
Summary of Recommendations

❖ Local Government and Civic Engagement

More Effective Government Engagement with Immigrant Houstonians
Recommendation 1: Appoint a Special Advisor to the Mayor on Immigration and expand the capacity of the Office of New Americans and Immigrant Communities

Including Immigrants in Decision Making
Recommendation 2: Increase immigrant representation on City Boards and Commissions
Recommendation 3: Explore and potentially implement a participatory budgeting process

❖ Well-Being and Security

Ensuring Confidentiality
Recommendation 4: Ensure local resources are not used to gather and disseminate sensitive information, including immigration status, for immigration enforcement purposes

Making Our City Safe for All Houstonians
Recommendation 5: Avoid police involvement in the enforcement of civil immigration laws
Recommendation 6: Enhance the safety and due process rights of Houston's immigrant residents in partnership with Harris County
Recommendation 7: Reduce and address hate crimes, bias, and hate incidents, and provide resources to victims
Recommendation 8: Create and implement a community-oriented policing strategy and expand the community relations department within the Houston Police Department
Recommendation 9: Enhance legal support systems for immigrant survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, and other violent crimes
Recommendation 10: Evaluate whether a Municipal ID would benefit residents of Houston, and if a Municipal ID is found to have net positive projected impact, implement an ID program that will have the most benefits while fully protecting ID holders’ private information and safety
Recommendation 11: Create a City Immigrant Legal Fund to provide representation to indigent immigrants in removal proceedings

Additional Legal and Public Safety Recommendations
Recommendation 12: Improve judicial access and fairness for immigrants
Recommendation 13: Enhance access to state court protection for abused, abandoned, and neglected children and immigrants with disabilities
Recommendation 14: Expand citizenship assistance to multiple languages
Recommendation 15: Evaluate law enforcement’s ability to effectively respond to and investigate crimes in immigrant neighborhoods
Recommendation 16: Improve and simplify the experience of finding high-quality legal advice and information regarding complex immigration laws and procedures

Health
Recommendation 17: Increase the capacity of the City of Houston and Harris County to address the healthcare needs of the immigrant community in a more informed and effective manner
Recommendation 18: Convene a coalition of mental health experts to coordinate and support culturally competent mental health services provided to the diverse Houston population
Environment
Recommendation 19: Address companies’ noncompliance with environmental regulations
Recommendation 20: Incentivize fenceline facilities to continuously monitor emissions and health hazards and communicate effectively with impacted communities
Recommendation 21: Prevent the construction of new or expanded industrial facilities near homes and schools and, conversely, the siting of new homes and schools near industrial facilities plants
Recommendation 22: Create and implement a “Community Environmental Tour” for all area public servants
Recommendation 23: Establish a “Clean Houston” grant awarded annually to an innovative project addressing environmental issues

Housing
Recommendation 24: Increase access to stable housing and prevent housing discrimination by offering information and workshops on buying, renting, and the Fair Housing Act
Recommendation 25: Augment the capacity of the Inspections & Public Service Division to inspect rental properties throughout the city

Economic Stability and Growth
Entrepreneurship
Recommendation 26: Establish a program to help current and potential immigrant entrepreneurs establish and improve their credit
Recommendation 27: Convene a coalition of business support programs to better understand the needs of Houston’s immigrant business community and enhance capacity and impact
Recommendation 28: Expand the successful LiftOff! Houston small business pitch competition to reach non-English speakers
Recommendation 29: Attract and retain entrepreneurs by developing Global Entrepreneur-in-Residence programs at local universities

Workforce Development
Recommendation 30: Facilitate immigrant Houstonians’ transition into careers by streamlining credential recognition and re-certification processes and offering other career pathways
Recommendation 31: Create a collaborative marketing and communications strategy to promote Houston as a destination for foreign workers
Recommendation 32: Establish a “construction careers approach” to public infrastructure construction projects and ensure that this approach includes immigrants
Recommendation 33: Attach local hire and family-sustaining wage conditions to economic development subsidies

Inclusive Community
Access to Services and Spaces
Recommendation 34: Create Welcome Stations across the city to provide access to comprehensive information, resources, and services for immigrant Houstonians
Recommendation 35: Continue improving multilingual and multicultural capacities of public-facing employees at public offices and general public institutions to better understand and respond to the needs of immigrants
Recommendation 36: Ensure immigrants are aware of, have access to, and feel welcome in parks, green spaces, museums, public libraries and other public venues and activities across Houston
 Welcoming Schools

Recommendation 37: Be more welcoming of and sensitive to immigrant students via training in trauma, cultural, and religious curricula

Recommendation 38: Help immigrant students to transition into the U.S. school system, enabling them to engage with the appropriate curricula and succeed academically

Recommendation 39: Support the mitigation of targeted bullying, social isolation, and differential discipline in schools

Recommendation 40: Include and integrate immigrant parents into their children’s education

Recommendation 41: Ensure the effective support of Dual Language Learners and English Language Learners to foster their integration and accelerate their English Language acquisition

Recommendation 42: Advocate for the Texas DREAM Act to ensure affordable higher education for immigrant youth

Cultural Competency

Recommendation 43: Create a training curriculum for the Houston community concerning the immigrant experience in Houston

Recommendation 44: Develop a Welcoming Houston imprint or accreditation to incentivize businesses and nonprofits to meet standards of welcoming and equitable services for immigrant Houstonians

Amplifying the Immigrant Voice

Recommendation 45: Build a multi-agency program to increase the inclusion of immigrants and cultural diversity in existing and new forums

Recommendation 46: Generate opportunities for immigrants to tell their stories, celebrate traditions, and enhance cultural understanding through existing events and decentralized local and regional collaborations

❖ Leveraging Data and Evidence

Recommendation 47: Collect data to conduct equity analyses that should be made available to the public and taken into account for decision making purposes

Recommendation 48: Document the challenges and opportunities immigrants face and map the existing inventory of resources and assets

Recommendation 49: Conduct an analysis of best ways to communicate with and reach immigrants, and pilot the most promising approaches

Recommendation 50: Create, track, and publicly share Key Performance Indicators that will allow the City and community to confirm progress on the recommendations outlined in this document
INTRODUCTION
Mission

The mission of Welcoming Houston is to recommend and implement policies and programs that support the inclusion and civic, cultural, and economic integration of immigrants and refugees in Houston. This document represents the first step in this mission: a strategic plan and roadmap of detailed recommendations that are built upon a belief that immigrant communities and receiving communities share many common goals and priorities. Successful implementation of these recommendations is the responsibility of public, private, and nonprofit stakeholders throughout Houston.

Every day, Houston demonstrates its capacity for inclusivity and aspires to be a Welcoming City for all its residents. As a diverse city with countless agencies working in humanitarian spheres, Houston extends its hospitality to people from all over the world every day. Welcoming Houston presents an opportunity to build on the assets and abilities of immigrants to enhance their experiences in Houston and enrich our city as a whole.

We hope to further establish Houston as a city that creates opportunities for equitable and system-wide civic participation for all immigrants and refugees, as well as one that implements strategies to include, elevate, and celebrate all races and ethnicities. Welcoming Houston aims to ensure that Houston is a vibrant and inclusive community where immigrants are able to lead safe, healthy, and productive lives. Houston should be a place where everyone recognizes and appreciates the cultural, economic, and many other contributions of its immigrant neighbors.

Houston offers a glimpse into the future for other American cities experiencing increasing diversity through immigration. As a microcosm of a changing America, Houston’s ability to create a Welcoming City can set a precedent for cities around the country.¹ The Welcoming Houston initiative’s goal is to ensure that immigrants are meaningfully and intentionally integrated into the social and economic fabric of Houston. The recommendations in this plan will ensure that Houston is not merely diverse, but inclusive and committed to equity.
Background

Immigration is the key reason Houston is the most diverse, rapidly growing major U.S. metropolitan area. The greater Houston region is home to approximately 1.4 million foreign-born individuals, making up nearly a quarter of the population.

The foreign-born population has increased by nearly 60 percent since 2000, nearly twice the national rate from 2000 to 2013. Over the past three decades, Houston’s population growth has been driven largely by the influx of Asians, Latinos, and African-Americans. As of the 2010 Census, no one racial or ethnic group formed a significant majority of Houston’s population. The substantial representation of three major racial and ethnic groups alongside a significant Asian population makes Houston the most diverse of the ten largest U.S. metro areas, surpassing even New York City.

Diversity fortifies our city both culturally and economically. Houston has one of the strongest labor markets in the country, and foreign-born residents contributed more than $116 billion to Houston’s economy in 2014, with $31.8 billion in spending power and $2.9 billion in local and state taxes paid.

Foreign-born residents contributed more than $116 billion to Houston’s economy in 2014, with $31.8 billion in spending power and $2.9 billion in local and state taxes paid.

Despite Houston’s much-celebrated diversity and the economic success of many foreign-born Houstonians, immigrants often face significant barriers to economic, social, and environmental well-being. For example, average immigrant incomes are significantly lower than those of the U.S.-born in Houston, and 20 percent of Houston’s immigrants live below the poverty line. As noted by the Migration Policy Institute, “the low incomes of Houston's immigrants...may present barriers to their integration and access to legal assistance, health care, and other needed services.” The Welcoming Houston Task Force is committed to ensuring equity for Houston’s immigrants, regardless of the length of time spent in the country, immigration status, or country of birth. In addition, 37 percent of the Houston region’s foreign-born residents report speaking English “not well” or “not at all,” putting them in a category of Limited English Proficient (LEP). Houston’s immigrants are also less likely to be U.S. citizens than immigrants nationally (34 percent compared to 44 percent), greatly reducing their political power and civic participation. Forty-one percent of Houston’s foreign-born adults lack a high-school diploma compared to 11 percent of U.S.-born adults. All of these factors contribute to the fact that Houston’s immigrant families earn $0.74 to every $1.00 earned by a U.S.-born family and 47 percent of immigrants in the Houston region live below 200 percent of the federal poverty level. This inequality is a key motivator for the Welcoming Houston initiative.

Process Summary and Methodology

The groundwork for this plan began in March 2016, when Houston was selected as one of 20 cities for the Gateways for Growth (G4G) Challenge. The G4G Challenge was implemented by Welcoming America and New American Economy (NAE) with a goal of increasing the number of official “Welcoming Cities” in the United States. The Welcoming Cities initiative seeks to “institutionalize strategies that ensure the ongoing inclusion and long-term economic and social integration of newcomers.” Los Angeles, Atlanta, Chicago, New York City, and many other U.S. cities have obtained this status.
This document was created with the input of a 39-member Task Force, formed by Mayor Sylvester Turner in August 2016. The Task Force mobilized six committees of an additional 50+ community members. Members of the Welcoming Houston Task Force and committees included immigrant and native-born voices, refugees, individuals that work with asylees and asylum seekers as well as victims of human trafficking, the LGBTQI community, various faith leaders, persons of all abilities, documented and undocumented individuals, academics and other researchers, civil servants, and individuals from the private sector and the education sector. Welcoming Houston sought to obtain even more input from immigrant community members with the use of a survey, which was distributed at various public events and spaces, through an online version of the survey, and in focus groups in different settings. The goal of this initiative has been to create recommendations with the input of a diverse sample of Houstonians. In addition, national experts from various organizations—including Welcoming America and New American Economy—provided input and advice based on their work with other cities undertaking similar projects. The Task Force delegated the drafting of the plan to the Welcoming Houston Project Team, which also managed the Task Force meetings. Lastly, several volunteers helped with the operational details of drafting this document and processing survey data.

Survey respondents touted many of Houston’s strengths, such as programs for low-income children, availability of information, good schools, and job opportunities. Areas for improvement included help obtaining documents, more civic classes, improved healthcare and insurance access, language access for City services, and safety.

An important note on terminology: The term used for foreign-born individuals throughout this plan is “immigrants,” a decision made in part based on its definition according to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, which defines the word “immigrant” as a “person who comes to live permanently in a foreign country.” All Welcoming Houston participants recognize that there are important distinctions among immigrant groups, such as refugees, parolees, asylees, asylum seekers, human trafficking victims, unaccompanied minors, and many others. Many recommendations in this plan make specific reference to some of these individual groups. The term “immigrant” serves as a catch-all term that we believe includes, rather than excludes, these various groups. Furthermore, this terminology is the precedent set in language used nationally and by many other cities’ “ Welcoming” plans.

It is also worth noting that, while this document clearly focuses on immigrant Houstonians, all involved in the Welcoming Houston initiative recognize that Houston is only a “Welcoming City” to the extent that it also welcomes visitors who are here for business, pleasure, family reasons, or medical needs; native-born newcomers from other parts of the state and country; and communities of color, LGBTQI individuals, and members of all faith communities. This plan makes note of some of these groups in certain recommendations, and Welcoming Houston stands for the values associated with welcoming all to and in Houston. Additional details regarding participants and the survey can be found in Appendix A and B.

Implementation

Welcoming Houston stakeholders cannot act alone to be effective. Successful implementation and process improvement require ongoing collaboration and communication. Success will also depend on the extent to which stakeholders hold each other accountable, an important point that motivates this document’s call for transparent metrics. Most importantly, success will depend greatly on the City and other institutional stakeholders’ continued direct engagement, communication, and collaboration with immigrant individuals and families across Houston. Immigrant Houstonians are already powerful contributors to our community. This plan seeks to provide information, remove barriers, and help create opportunities to further enhance and showcase those contributions.
The “Measuring Success” section of each recommendation lists Key Performance Indicators that are either outputs or outcomes. Outcomes track performance (e.g., improved HPD response time for immigrant crime victims), while outputs drive toward the outcomes (e.g., the creation and implementation of a response plan by HPD). For each recommendation, this report suggests outputs, outcomes, or a combination of both. These are meant to be used as a starting point for the implementing party and may require additional examination and expertise prior to finalization.

In addition, the plan as a whole should be considered a living document to be improved and refined over time. We welcome feedback on these recommendations and invite the community to contact us with suggestions and comments at WelcomingHouston@gmail.com.

What is one thing you’d like Houstonians to know about immigrants?

Selected responses from the Welcoming Houston Community Survey:

“Immigrants are hardworking, religious, responsible, honest, and compassionate.”

“Immigrants are [a] source of manpower, knowledge and skills.”

“We just want an opportunity to have a good life, a chance at a better life.”

“We are human too. We are not harming people, we are here because we want to be safe.”

“That we want the best for this City”
WELCOMING HOUSTON
RECOMMENDATIONS
Local Government and Civic Engagement

Immigrant Houstonians should be more engaged with government agencies, more involved in government decision making, and more connected to our government through voting and understanding of civic processes.

By achieving these goals, our city will be benefit from engagement and representation that is much more reflective of our demographics. Accordingly, we can expect more just, inclusive policymaking that should lead to better outcomes for the community as a whole.
More Effective Government Engagement with Immigrant Houstonians

Recommendation 1: Appoint a Special Advisor to the Mayor on Immigration and expand the capacity of the Office of New Americans and Immigrant Communities

Type of Recommendation: Expanded Program
Responsible Party: Mayor’s Office, Chief of Staff to the Mayor, Office of New Americans and Immigrant Communities

The City department most directly involved with immigrant affairs is the Office of New Americans and Immigrant Communities (formerly the Office of International Communities), housed within the Department of Neighborhoods. The Office has a staff of two, one downtown and one in southwest Houston. The Office’s current activities include citizenship programs in partnership with local non-profits; annual Citizenship Month and Human Rights Day celebrations; resources about citizenship housed at public libraries and a related "Citizenship Corner" website; the creation and distribution of a resource guide for local English classes, language access, and other immigrant resources; and iSpeakHouston, a language access program to facilitate the delivery of city services. In addition, the Office distributes email updates occasionally throughout the year. In addition, the Office has an email list of approximately 150 recipients, including 17 City of Houston departments that work with the Office, Mayor’s Advisory Council of International Communities (MACIC) members, and organizations working on immigrant-related issues. The Office also has a larger list of approximately 3,000 recipients and previously sent a periodic newsletter. The Office’s work has been a priority for both former Mayor Annise Parker and current Mayor Sylvester Turner, as seen by their support of and partnership in the creation of the Welcoming Houston initiative.

To lead the implementation of many of these recommendations, the Office of New Americans Immigrant Communities (ONAIC) should be given additional resources, authority, and leadership. With a new Special Advisor to the Mayor on Immigration, the ONAIC would be able to refine existing efforts, research best practices in other cities, and develop new ideas, while also anticipating and responding to emerging trends in migration, demographic shifts, and state and federal policies that affect immigrants. An expanded and more visible Office could more effectively apply existing best practices across the Houston area, leverage public-private partnerships to a greater degree, and further showcase the city’s diversity and welcoming approach.

The Office should ensure alignment of Welcoming Houston with other City initiatives, such as Plan Houston and Complete Communities, and ensure that the City is working to incorporate Welcoming strategies in all applicable citywide initiatives. For example, the office should ensure that the Plan Houston goal of “A Diverse, Welcoming Culture That Is Celebrated and Respected” is aligned with the specific needs of immigrants and what “Welcoming Houston” means.

The City should reshape the Office of New Americans and Immigrant Communities to:

- Lead the implementation of Welcoming Houston recommendations pertaining directly to the Office, while providing support to and coordination for other City entities implementing Welcoming Houston recommendations
- Track the implementation and impact of Welcoming Houston and continue to adjust the evolving Welcoming Houston document with the input of relevant stakeholders
- Publicize Welcoming Houston and the implementation of its recommendations through a two-way communication strategy to inform and empower immigrants to engage with the process
- Create communication systems that empower immigrants to exercise personal and collective agency in civic engagement and responsibility
● Advocate for immigrants to have a voice and be included in community forums and other contexts and take up issues relating to justice and equity relating to immigrants
● Promote opportunities for immigrant Houstonians to participate in civic life
● Focus on and incorporate best practices for immigrant integration
● Ensure that up-to-date information is communicated to relevant stakeholders regarding emerging issues that affect immigrants (see Appendix C)
● Continue celebrating immigrant Houstonians through events and other efforts
● Create and institutionalize a mechanism for immigrant Houstonians to voice their equal access concerns regarding public services online, via text, using 311, and in person, and for the City to address these concerns in a timely manner
● Engage and convene relevant stakeholders (e.g., funders, nonprofit organizations and advocates who directly engage with or support immigrant and refugee communities) on a regular basis to track Welcoming Houston progress

Carrying out this expanded scope of efforts will require even more communication by the Office with both City agencies and community stakeholders. Given this increased scope, the City should add at least one additional leadership position. The Task Force strongly recommends that this position be a Special Advisor to the Mayor on Immigration, similar to the Special Advisor to the Mayor on Human Trafficking. It is also recommended that the office add one administrative staffer who can help coordinate communications, events, and other operational activities. These additions would complement two Project Managers, whose role would be to lead the day-to-day implementation of Welcoming Houston recommendations and other goals over time.

To complement the work of this bolstered staff, Mayor Turner should establish a Welcoming Houston Implementation Committee to encourage progress while also helping to address challenges as they arise.15

Finally, the City of Houston is to be commended for creating many informal partnerships with nonprofits, media, and other organizations over the years to enhance voter registration efforts and naturalization workshops. The Houston Immigration Legal Services Collaborative is one key partnership of information distribution on immigration legal issues. The Collaborative maintains an active listserv of more than 300 attorneys and staff members of immigrant-serving nonprofit organizations. Collaboration with these types of entities is paramount to the City’s success and should be continued and expanded.

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<tr>
<th>BEST PRACTICES</th>
<th>POTENTIAL PARTNERS</th>
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<tr>
<td>New York City’s Office of Immigrant Affairs</td>
<td>Houston Immigration Legal Services Collaborative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The City of Chicago’s Office of New Americans</td>
<td>Various City of Houston departments and divisions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The City of Atlanta’s Office of Immigrant Affairs</td>
<td>Mayor’s Advisory Council of International Communities</td>
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<tr>
<td>NY State Division of Human Rights</td>
<td>Special Advisor to the Mayor on Human Trafficking</td>
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<tr>
<td>The City of Boston’s Office of Immigrant Advancement</td>
<td>Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees</td>
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<td>Welcoming America</td>
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<td>New American Economy</td>
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<td>Houston Refugee Consortium</td>
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<td>New Americans Campaign - Houston chapter</td>
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Including Immigrants in Decision Making

Recommendation 2: Increase immigrant representation on City Boards and Commissions

Type of Recommendation: New Program
Responsible Party: Director of Boards and Commissions, Office of New Americans and Immigrant Communities

One key avenue for Houstonians to engage in the City’s decision-making processes is through City Boards and Commissions, which advise City departments and the Mayor’s Office on a wide range of topics and issues. Increased participation on Boards and Commissions would give immigrants a larger voice for their community and help guide policies set by boards, commissions, committees, councils, and various departments and elected officials.

Currently, the Office of New Americans and Immigrant Communities (ONAIC) convenes a robust but limited set of stakeholders through the Mayor’s Advisory Council of International Communities (MACIC). The goal of the MACIC is to promote the well-being and connectedness of Houston’s international community of immigrants, expatriates, and refugees by supporting their civic and cultural integration. The MACIC meets monthly and has a number of committees working on issues around immigrant integration, health and education, civic engagement and public safety. Most of the members of MACIC are themselves immigrants and/or represent key immigrant communities and constituents.

Issues of immigrant integration affect the work of nearly every board and commission, not only the MACIC. The ONAIC and other community stakeholders should work with the Mayor’s Director of Boards and Commissions to ensure that immigrants actively serve as members on other City of Houston boards, commissions, and task forces advising on issues directly related to their communities and issues affecting Houston more broadly. This will give immigrants a direct voice in the City and ensure that immigrant integration is incorporated into the discussions of all relevant boards and commissions. As examples, to the extent that they are not already involved, immigrants should be included in the Independent Police Oversight Board, the Equitable Economic Development Committee, and the Complete Communities Committee, among many other groups.

In addition, boards and commissions should be encouraged to include immigrant integration into their advisory framework and priority areas. In particular, relevant boards under the Mayor should address issues affecting especially vulnerable immigrant groups, such as refugees. Another effective way to increase the number of
immigrants in decision making spaces would be for boards and commissions to review the City’s hiring practices, including for management positions, to ensure that multilingual skills are acknowledged and rewarded.

## Measuring Success

Output:

Increased immigrant participation on City boards, commissions, and task forces (as an absolute number and as a percentage of total participants)

### Recommendation 3: Explore and potentially implement a participatory budgeting process

**Type of Recommendation:** New Program  
**Responsible Party:** Mayor’s Office, Houston City Council

Participatory budgeting "is a process through which citizens present their demands and priorities for civic improvement and influence through discussions and negotiations the budget allocations made by their municipalities." It has been recognized by the United Nations as a best practice of democratic governance, and the process of making Houston a more welcoming city for immigrant and refugees can benefit greatly from this proven method.

The Mayor’s Office should work with Houston City Council Members to establish a working group to assess current conditions in Houston regarding feasibility of a participatory budgeting process by identifying resources and obstacles and developing a work plan to move forward.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Best Practices</th>
<th>Potential Partners</th>
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<tr>
<td>In Porto Alegre, Brazil, community participatory budgeting has led to improved facilities and the spreading of community participatory budgeting to more than 5,000 municipalities in Brazil</td>
<td>The Great Cities Institute (University of Illinois at Chicago) and the Kinder Institute could potentially provide design and process input during the planning process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PB Chicago work[s] with residents, public officials, and partner organizations to democratically determine how to spend millions of dollars to benefit their communities</td>
<td>Local nonprofits can help gather community members to provide budgeting input</td>
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## Measuring Success

Output:

Implementation of a participatory budgeting process that involves immigrants
Well-being and Safety

Physical, emotional, and economic safety are basic human needs that are often difficult for immigrants to achieve for a variety of complex reasons. As a result of challenges like economic inequality, language barriers, and legal status, many immigrants are unable to achieve a sufficient and stable level of safety and well-being. Immigrant Houstonians must feel safe and enjoy a sufficient level of well-being in order to contribute further to the community. As such, we must create an environment in which immigrants can reasonably reconcile their legal status, enjoy good mental and physical health, live in safe and sound homes and neighborhoods, and have the ability to take part in society to the fullest extent possible.
Ensuring Confidentiality

Recommendation 4: Ensure local resources are not used to gather and disseminate sensitive information, including immigration status, for immigration enforcement purposes

Type of Recommendation: Improved Program
Responsible Party: HPD, Mayor, City Council

During its regular interactions with residents, the City may acquire sensitive information about Houston residents, including immigration status. While important for service delivery, collecting and sharing such sensitive information with federal immigration authorities for purposes of civil immigration enforcement threatens the safety of immigrants and their families as it may facilitate their apprehension and deportation. This increases mistrust between the community and city government.

Major cities across the country have adopted policies not to inquire about immigration status when individuals are accessing city services. Since 2006, law enforcement organizations have consistently held that local officers should not enforce federal immigration law—including inquiring into immigration status or arresting individuals based on civil immigration offenses—as this takes away local resources, undermines community policing efforts, harms victims and witnesses, and further marginalizes communities on the periphery by creating a chilling effect on the reporting of crime. The sharing of other personal information, including custody status, can have a similar effect.

The City of Houston should adopt a citywide policy to ensure the protection of residents’ sensitive information. These provisions shall include the following:

- To protect its residents from discrimination, the City shall protect the private information of residents, including but not limited to LGBTQ status and sexual orientation, immigration or citizenship status, religion, ethnicity, and/or disabilities
- No department, agency, commission, officer, or employee, or their designees or agents, of the City of Houston shall use City funds or other resources to assist in the enforcement of federal civil immigration law
- Except for the purposes of tracking compliance with its racial profiling policy, HPD should not gather or maintain personal information about sexual orientation, religion, ethnicity, national origin, medical condition, disability, or pregnancy of individuals contacted, stopped, or arrested by the department
- HPD and other law enforcement entities should never inquire about immigration status unless the officer has a reasonable suspicion that the individual with whom the officer is interacting is a victim of human trafficking

Due to the particular importance of healthcare services, the City should take additional steps to ensure immigrants understand their rights as a patient to protect their data when they use any mental or physical health service provider. To do so the City should pass an ordinance that does the following:

- Requires all public mental and physical health service providers to provide the Patients’ Bill of Rights in the top ten languages spoken in Houston
- Ensures that patients’ private information will not be shared with any third parties, including other government agencies, without the patient’s express written consent within 24 hours’ of release of data
- Organizations that serve immigrants and refugees, including resettlement agencies, should have a clear and direct process outlined in the ordinance to document and report instances of a lack of provision of linguistically appropriate services for their clients to the Office of Civil Rights of the Department of Health and Human Services
Making Our City Safe for All Houstonians

Recommendation 5: Avoid police involvement in the enforcement of civil immigration laws

Type of Recommendation: Improved Program
Responsible Party: HPD, Mayor

The enforcement of immigration law is a federal priority that can unnecessarily cost localities money when delegated, taking away from local law enforcement resources that would be better utilized protecting local communities. Furthermore, the enforcement of federal immigration law by police officers harms community policing efforts and makes communities less safe, since it diminishes trust between immigrant communities and the police. That can lead to a reduction in the reporting of crimes, as victims and witnesses may themselves be undocumented or may live in mixed-status households. Immigration status is not relevant to criminality, nor is it relevant to the enforcement of local criminal laws and public safety.

Harris County deports more people than any other locality in the country, and the Houston Police Department is the largest arresting agency in the County. Enforcement of federal immigration laws is the responsibility of the federal government, and local governments are under no obligation to enforce these laws. In fact, the U.S. Supreme Court has held that there is no basis for local law enforcement to arrest on suspicion that an individual is unlawfully
present or in violation of other civil immigration laws, and even brief detention due to immigration status based on a lawful stop or arrest may be illegal. In addition, federal courts have held that Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) “holds” or “detainers”—requests to local law enforcement from ICE to hold immigrants in local custody beyond the disposition of their criminal cases—are unconstitutional, illegal, and not enforceable. Furthermore, localities that try to enforce them can be held liable for damages. Both Dallas County and Bexar County Sheriff's Departments currently face lawsuits for unlawfully detaining immigrants.

Aside from legal issues, the use of city resources to enforce civil immigration laws for the federal government has economic consequences. For instance, holding immigrants on detainers in Travis County cost an estimated $7.3 million over two years while not increasing safety or meeting federal enforcement priorities, since over 70 percent of individuals with ICE detainers were arrested on misdemeanor charges. Other costs include the time and resources police officers use coordinating and working with ICE, as well as the costs of deportation to the City, which results in family separation, often leading to an increased demand for social services.

Finally, public safety costs affect the entire Houston community. The use of local law enforcement resources to enforce federal immigration laws depletes local resources and undermines community policing efforts. The Law Enforcement Immigration Task Force—which includes leadership from the three most populated cities in the country as well as Dallas, San Antonio, and Austin—clearly states that immigration enforcement is a federal responsibility.

HPD currently participates in ICE raids and arrest warrants only where a criminal arrest warrant also exists. Police officers are prohibited from asking anyone about their immigration status or citizenship. If an officer does not comply with this prohibition, that officer may be investigated by Internal Affairs, but only if the individual whose immigration status is questioned lodges a formal complaint. Such a complaint may be filed with LULAC or the NAACP, where it will be notarized and sent to Internal Affairs.

Houston currently has an Independent Police Oversight Board (IPOB) to address allegations of excessive force and review disciplinary cases. The Mayor should expand the IPOB's mandate to include monitoring compliance with and potentially enhancing HPD's immigration policy. The Mayor should appoint at least three individuals from the Welcoming Houston Task Force to sit on the IPOB. The Mayor and Chief of Police should also welcome community leaders to voice any issues between HPD and immigrant communities, and communicate the findings of the IPOB to the public. The IPOB should have the authority to initiate investigations, as well as access to paid independent staff and subpoena power to pursue investigations, following the example of many independent police review boards across the country.

HPD and other entities in the Houston area with law enforcement authority should adopt written guidance and implement training for all officers on immigration policies, protocols, and procedures that limit involvement in the enforcement of civil immigration laws. This guidance should include the following:

- HPD and other law enforcement entities shall not provide assistance to ICE for civil immigration enforcement, including the use of agency monies, equipment, or personnel for the purposes of holding, transferring, or arresting immigrants to support the efforts or otherwise coordinate with ICE for deportation or other immigration enforcement purposes
- HPD and other law enforcement entities shall not identify, investigate, arrest, or detain any person solely on the basis of a suspected civil immigration violation, or based on immigration warrants, detainers, or any other civil immigration document or removal order, including an administrative immigration warrant provided with a detainer or appearing in the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) database
- HPD and other law enforcement entities shall not inquire about a person’s civil immigration status unless in an extraordinary situation where such information is necessary to the ongoing investigation of a criminal offense (Note: Personal characteristics are not a reason to ask about civil immigration status)
- HPD and other law enforcement entities should simplify and make public the procedures whereby police officers who ask for immigration status are investigated and disciplined
● Local law enforcement entities shall not honor any civil immigration detainer, ICE administrative warrant, or request to interview, nor should HPD detain, transfer, or notify federal immigration authorities about the release of any individual from local custody, without a valid judicial warrant

● Local law enforcement entities shall prevent ICE agents from entering law enforcement facilities and from questioning, apprehending, or holding individuals within or from law enforcement facilities without a valid criminal warrant

● Law enforcement entities should not sub-contract with facilities that unlawfully hold individuals for any period of time after local law jurisdiction ends (i.e., facilities that use immigration detainers)

● Houston Police Department General Order No. 600-42 (Subject: Racial Profiling Prohibited) should be expanded to address biased policing that incorporates other personal characteristics that may motivate an arrest or investigation. These personal characteristics extend beyond race, ethnicity, and national origin to include color, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status, mental or physical disability, age, religion, immigration status, and socio-economic status

● Houston Police Department General Order No. 500-05 (Subject: Immigration) should be re-circulated to all police officers at least twice per year as a reminder of HPD’s Immigration Policy

● HPD should ensure its officers are aware that the Mexican Consulate Identification (“Matricula Consular”) is recognized as an official form of identification

● The City shall ensure that the adopted policies relating to these specific recommendations are disseminated and appropriate training is provided to HPD officers or other relevant employees and agents of the City. The City should also establish a commission or task force composed of community members to advise the City on implementation and monitoring of these policies

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**BEST PRACTICES**

Other cities in Texas have withdrawn from local enforcement programs because of concerns that it was making communities less safe due to a "chilling effect" on communication between police officers and community members. For example:

The El Paso Police Department halted joint operations with Customs and Border Protection due to a troubling decrease in domestic violence reports.

The Austin Sheriff’s Department recently adopted a policy limiting their Department’s involvement in immigration enforcement

Opting out of local enforcement will not cost Harris County or Houston any money; rather it will result in savings to both the City and County. For instance, it is estimated that the use of detainers in Travis County between 2012 and 2014 cost taxpayers between $4 and $7 million. Other cost savings include the time and resources law enforcement agencies use in coordinating with ICE as well as potential services and benefits that may be needed for families as a result of a family member’s deportation.

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**MEASURING SUCCESS**

**Outputs:**

Creation or confirmation of the HPD policies and training listed above by January 2017

Oversight of implementation of these recommendations by an appropriate mix of members of the Welcoming Houston Task Force and members of the Mayor’s Advisory Council of Immigrant Communities

Continued tracking of data related to these policies
Recommendation 6: Take actions to enhance the safety and due process rights of Houston's immigrant residents in partnership with Harris County

Type of Recommendation: New Policy
Responsible Party: Mayor's Office, Harris County Sheriff's Office, Harris County District Attorney

Pursuant to a memoranda of agreement, the Harris County Sheriff’s Office participates in the 287(g) program, a federal immigration enforcement program that authorizes agreements between the federal government and local law enforcement agencies to allow designated local law enforcement officers to perform immigration law enforcement functions. This program has committed local law enforcement agents to act as immigration agents at local expense and has led to Harris County’s having one of the nation’s highest deportation rates. Another significant cost is jail time: Houstonians who are in County jail and cannot pay bail spend long periods in jail at significant cost to the taxpayer. Houstonians who have immigration detainers are more likely than their citizen counterparts to spend time in jail without being able to pay bond because their bonds are typically set higher than those for citizens arrested on similar charges.

To ensure that the City’s improved policies on the topic of immigrant safety are complemented by similar changes by Harris County, the City of Houston and other stakeholders should encourage the County to take the following actions:

- The Harris County Sheriff's Office should terminate its 287(g) agreement with ICE as soon as possible, and all County law enforcement agencies should end all other involvement with ICE that relates to the enforcement of civil immigration laws
- The Harris County District Attorney and Judges should adjust the bail schedule to eliminate an automatic and increased bail amount for those individuals perceived to lack immigration status
- The Harris County District Attorney should adopt immigration policies/practices that require prosecutors to consider immigration consequences of criminal charges to mitigate or avoid deportation and thus reduce family separation, especially when criminal charges relate to non-violent offenses

MEASURING SUCCESS

Outputs:
End of 287(g) program
Creation of the new bail schedule
Adoption by the Harris County District Attorney of the immigration policies/practices described above

Recommendation 7: Reduce and address hate crimes, bias, and hate incidents, and provide resources to victims

Type of Recommendation: New Policy
Responsible Party: Mayor, City Council

Background:
- In the wake of the presidential election, hate crimes are increasing across the country
- Immigration status is not currently a consideration under the national definition of hate crimes
- The Transgender community is also vulnerable, as “LBG” is accounted for under Texas hate crime law, but not “T”
- The Texas Attorney General does not prosecute “minor” hate crimes
- The Houston Police Department has a Hate Crime Hotline and a Hate Crime Coordinator (located in its Criminal Intelligence Division), and its website includes information about addressing hate crimes

"Making Our City Safe for All Houstonians"
Some 27 hate crimes were reported in Houston in 2015, a small number that may be a result of the narrow definition of hate crimes but could also be due to underreporting.

To address these and related issues, the City should:

- Pass an ordinance (or enhance the HPD hate crime program) to implement the following:
  - The City shall not enforce any discriminatory policies from any level of government that target any community member based on gender, religion, ethnicity, national origin, or sexual orientation.
  - The definition of a hate crime should be expanded to include the targeting of an individual due to immigration status, or provide a definition of “national origin” in the current hate crime ordinance to account for immigration status.
- Encourage the Texas Legislature to include Transgender individuals as a protected class under the hate crime designation, in part to further protect the particularly vulnerable immigrant transgender community.
- Encourage Harris County family court judges to issue protective orders when a person is threatened based on race, religion, disability, sexual orientation, ethnicity, gender, or gender identity.
- Support and promote community organizations and media in their efforts to reinforce that Houston is a safe place and that mechanisms exist to respond to instances of hate.

### Best Practices

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<tr>
<th>Potential Partners</th>
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<tr>
<td>Open Society Foundation is offering funding on this issue.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community partners include but are not limited to the Anti-Defamation League, Asia Society, Council of American-Islamic Relations, Holocaust Museum Houston, NAACP, Houston Area Urban League, LULAC, MALDEF, Asian/Pacific American Heritage Association, OCA Houston, Japanese American Citizens League, ACLU of Texas, Houston Immigration Legal Services Collaborative, and refugee resettlement organizations.</td>
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### Measuring Success

**Outputs:**
Creation of the ordinance and/or expansion of the HPD hate crime program as described above.

Establishment of a citywide communications campaign.

**Recommendation 8:** Create and implement a community-oriented policing strategy and expand the community relations department within the Houston Police Department

*Type of Recommendation: Improved Program*

*Responsible Party: HPD, Office of New Americans and Immigrant Communities*

HPD should build more trust between law enforcement and the community by:

- Promoting a community-oriented policing strategy that takes into account immigrant communities’ specific needs, including, but not limited to, language access and cultural competency, and that is developed in collaboration with members of the community.
- Adopting guidelines and policies, as outlined in the [Mayor Turner Criminal Justice Transition Report](#), to improve community relations and reduce incidents of biased policing of immigrant and other vulnerable communities.
Continuing its Community Dialogues, in which the Chief of Police meets with a group of community leaders from different community groups on a quarterly basis to keep the community updated about crime statistics, new programs (e.g., body cameras), and policies and protocols and the Mayor and City Council should participate in some of these Community Dialogues as well.

- Conducting regular phone banks with Univision and other local media and radio outlets to inform community members about HPD’s Immigration Policy and answer immigrants’ questions.
- Issuing regular PSAs to emphasize that wage theft is a crime, to avoid notario fraud, and to announce that Houston’s Welcoming Stations will be available at various HPD storefronts.
- Encouraging police officers to interact with community members outside of an emergency context so they can create relationships and develop a shared sense of accountability.
- Expanding community relations staff to ensure that more people are being reached and engaged; ensuring Mental Health Division staff receive cultural competency training and have access to language support.
- Encouraging the use of interpreters by placing stickers on all police cars and issuing circulars on an annual or bi-annual basis reminding officers to call interpreters.
- Creating a volunteer program of bilingual community members who would ride-along with HPD officers to provide translation in immigrant neighborhoods.

In addition, the Office of New Americans and Immigrant Communities should regularly engage HPD and other law enforcement agencies regarding immigrant affairs to ensure that they are familiar with the immigrant experience in Houston.

Lastly, HPD, the Harris County Sheriff’s Office, and the Harris County District Attorney’s Office should coordinate with members of the Houston Immigration Legal Services Collaborative and BIA-recognized legal service providers to ensure that persons charged with crimes and survivors of crimes have access to qualified immigration services by making referrals and sharing relevant printed materials about these service providers.

**Potential Partners**

- **Houston Police Foundation**
  The Police and Clergy Alliance could be expanded with a focus on immigrant faith communities (e.g., Muslim, Ethiopian Orthodox Church)
  Nonprofits and service providers (e.g., Neighborhood Centers and United We Dream)

**Measuring Success**

**Outcomes:**
- No reports of racial profiling
- Improved reporting by immigrants regarding interactions with law enforcement
- Improved understanding by immigrants of HPD’s role in community policing rather than enforcing civil immigration laws
Recommendation 9: Enhance legal support systems for immigrant survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, and other violent crimes

*Type of Recommendation: Improved Program*
*Responsible Party: HPD, Houston Municipal Courts*

Community safety is enhanced when individuals are confident in the availability of protective measures that support victim recovery. When immigrant survivors fear deportation due to past interactions with the courts and law enforcement, referrals to immigration legal services providers can enhance community safety.

The community is safer when immigrants have the tools and support systems to exercise their rights as victims, including the right for victims to understand the nature of the proceedings, the right to have proceedings translated into a language that they understand, and the right to provide victim impact statements. Houston Municipal Courts staff should develop partnerships with immigrant-focused legal and other organizations to support immigrant survivors of crime and ensure immigrants understand the role that courts play in safeguarding our community. As part of these outreach efforts, Municipal Courts staff should create and distribute (in several languages) information about types of immigration relief that may be available and a list of organizations that work with immigrant domestic violence victims.

In addition, HPD should ensure that Victims Services staff members are able to facilitate U Visa certification effectively. As part of this effort, HPD should create a U Visa certification policy that establishes a presumption of helpfulness on the part of victims in their interactions with police investigators.

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<tr>
<th>BEST PRACTICES</th>
<th>POTENTIAL PARTNERS</th>
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<tr>
<td>In New York City, the Commission on Human Rights recently announced it would certify U visas related to its investigations.</td>
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<td>American Bar Association</td>
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<td>Houston Immigrant Legal Services Collaborative</td>
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<td>Government partners, such as the Department of Homeland Security</td>
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<td>Special Advisor to the Mayor on Human Trafficking</td>
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<th>MEASURING SUCCESS</th>
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<tr>
<td>Outputs:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Establishment of written policies regarding U Visa certifications</td>
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<td>Creation of a reporting mechanism for lawyers and victims to register issues of failure to comply with the relevant written policies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Creation of a system of supervisory review of U Visa certification decisions when advocates report egregious errors or systematic issues</td>
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**Recommendation 10: Evaluate whether a Municipal ID would benefit residents of Houston, and if a Municipal ID is found to have net positive projected impact, implement an ID program that will have the most benefits while fully protecting ID holders’ private information and safety**

*Type of Recommendation: New Committee*

*Responsible Party: Office of New Americans and Immigrant Communities*

Many immigrants do not have a form of identification that confirms their identity and residence in Houston. Without an ID, immigrants are unable to access services that are essential to their daily lives. IDs are required for many situations, such as entering government buildings, receiving medical services, accessing a homeless shelter, interacting with law enforcement, opening a bank account, or picking up children from school. While many immigrants have access to a form of ID issued by their home country, these IDs usually do not include a local address and may not be accepted in all instances.

A municipal ID card program would increase immigrants’ ability to rent or buy a home, open a bank account, interact with law enforcement in a safe manner, access city services, access a food bank or housing shelter, and pick up children from school. For most individuals, the lack of an ID is not merely an inconvenience, but a barrier to safety and full participation in the community. A Houston municipal ID would alleviate many of those issues, empowering all residents to contribute to Houston’s safety and prosperity.

The [Office of New Americans and Immigrant Communities](#) should convene a group of community organizations to create a business plan for a municipal ID. The plan would evaluate the benefits, risks, and costs of the ID. The group would then advise the Office of New Americans and Immigrant Communities whether to proceed with an ID program. To date, partners for the committee to research this concept include Neighborhood Centers, TOP, SEIU, City Councilmembers and their staff, HPD, and other local agencies.

In the event that the group determines that an ID program would be a net benefit to the immigrant community in Houston, it will provide details on implementation to ensure the program cannot be used for immigration enforcement purposes. The program should be implemented in part by the City (providing the technical backbone in technological and legal matters), with outreach done as a combined effort between the City and community organizations.

### BEST PRACTICES

New York’s [IDNYC](#) gives cardholders access to city services and programs and is a recognized form of ID for the New York Police Department. The card is underpinned by high-tech security and has the backing of the City’s legal team. The card also provides free access to cultural institutions, leading to an approximate 10-percent sign-up rate in New York City.  

The [San Francisco ID Card](#) is also considered an exemplary model, and the program does not retain the information of cardholders.

Based on research conducted by Welcoming Houston participants to date, best practices include a program that is run by the city, does not include a debit card component (or link to any private corporation), does not grant law enforcement or other government agencies access to data, and is accepted as a valid ID by local law enforcement and City agencies.
**MEASURING SUCCESS**

**Outputs:**

Conclusive evaluation of whether a Houston municipal ID would have a net positive impact and, if so, a final plan for implementation by the end of 2017

Commitment by the City to move forward with the plan set forth by the committee if it finds the municipal ID program to have a net positive impact

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**Providing Quality Legal Representation**

**Recommendation 11:** Create a City Immigrant Legal Fund to provide representation to indigent immigrants in removal proceedings

*Type of Recommendation: New Policy*

*Responsible Party: Mayor’s Office*

More than 7,000 U.S. citizen children, including many in Houston, lost a parent to deportation between 2005 and 2010.\(^6\) When a detainee has attorney representation, his/her successful defense in immigration court rises from 1.5 to 26.3 percent.\(^6\) By providing legal counsel to detained immigrants, Houston will increase court effectiveness, save tax dollars, and maximize due process, while keeping families united and increasing social and economic stability.

The City of Houston should create a program funded by joint private and public monies that provides counsel to detained indigent immigrants in deportation proceedings. Every detained immigrant in Houston whose income does not exceed 200 percent of the federal poverty guidelines and who is not otherwise represented should have access to free immigration counsel provided either by an attorney from an immigrant legal services nonprofit or by a private attorney with experience in this area. A system modeled after the court-appointed approach would be most effective in ensuring that as many individuals as possible receive quality deportation defense assistance.

This effort could also involve a partnership with local and federal public defenders’ offices to coordinate with immigration attorneys while the individuals are in criminal custody, as well as with court-appointed criminal lawyers to monitor how immigrants are criminally defended in court.

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### BEST PRACTICES

- City and County officials in Los Angeles announced a $10 million fund to provide legal assistance to immigrants facing removal proceedings by as early as January 2017.\(^6\)
- The Mayor of Chicago announced that the City would create a $1 million legal fund to help those fighting deportation.\(^6\)
- New York City has funded a program to provide universal representation to New York City residents in immigration detention, receiving $4.9 million from the city.\(^6\)
- Austin’s city council recently voted to fund legal

### POTENTIAL PARTNERS

- American Immigration Legal Association
- Houston Immigration Legal Services Collaborative
- Houston Volunteer Lawyers
- Local and federal public defender offices
- Local and national foundations that support immigration legal services
representation for an additional 100 immigration cases per month above providers’ current capacity.

In 2016, San Francisco granted $1.8 million to a collaborative of immigration providers to fund legal services for unaccompanied minors.

### MEASURING SUCCESS

**Outcomes:**
Increase in detainees represented, both as an absolute number and percentage of total detainees, on an annual basis starting in 2018 at the latest

Success rate of representation (versus without representation)

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### Additional Legal and Public Safety Recommendations

#### Recommendation 12: Improve judicial access and fairness for immigrants

*Type of Recommendation: Improved Program*  
*Responsible Party: Houston Municipal Courts, Mayor’s Office, HPD*

Immigrants have less access to justice due to a lack of understanding of the judicial process, as well as language and cultural barriers. As a result, they are more susceptible to unnecessary obstacles in the judicial system. Immigrants should have full access to the court and justice systems to the same degree as all other Houstonians. The [Office of New Americans and Immigrant Communities](#) and the Houston Municipal Courts should partner with the [Houston Immigration Legal Services Collaborative](#) and [Houston Volunteer Lawyers](#) to achieve the following:

- Enhance language judicial access programs by expanding the type and number of municipal court documents available in major languages spoken in Houston
- Develop coordinated trainings and resources to inform family and juvenile court attorneys, judges, and others on the family-immigration law intersection
- In municipal courts, allow individuals to reschedule administrative violation hearings with an appropriate interpreter, rather than waiving the right to an interpreter if a written request is not submitted five days in advance of the hearing

In addition, the Municipal Court System should be reformed to reflect a more fair and just system for immigrants and other communities. For details, please see the [Mayor Turner Criminal Justice Transition Report](#).

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### BEST PRACTICES

In January 2015, the California courts commissioned a statewide Language Access Plan (LAP) Report to ensure language access, and those recommendations are being implemented under the Language Access Implementation Task Force.

Dayton, Ohio coordinated with Dayton Municipal Courts, the City Prosecutor’s Office and other groups to translate vital documents into five commonly spoken languages.
**Outcomes:**
Fewer missed court appearances by immigrants
Faster processing of matters involving immigrants
Increased reported satisfaction with the judicial system by immigrants

**Recommendation 13: Enhance access to state court protection for abused, abandoned, and neglected children and immigrants with disabilities**

*Type of Recommendation: Improved Program*
*Responsible Party: Houston Immigration Legal Services Collaborative*

Houston is one of several cities where the issue of unrepresented children in immigration court is most prevalent. In fact, Houston had the highest number of unaccompanied minor *in absentia* (i.e., no attorney representation) cases in 2015. Lack of representation limits children's ability to request humanitarian-based relief, especially Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS), which requires representation in two different court settings. Immigrant children and disabled immigrants often must obtain a legal guardianship to appear in court, but the cost is prohibitive for low-income families.

The [Houston Immigration Legal Services Collaborative](#) should provide trainings to juvenile and family court judges on guardianship issues relating to immigrants and also help to coordinate a communications campaign so that stakeholders can better understand the experience of unaccompanied minors in Houston.

**Potential Partners**

Nonprofit legal services organizations present the bulk of SIJS cases before the state and federal authorities. Support from local bar associations, legal aid, and law firms is also crucial to helping vulnerable children in need of the state court's intervention.

**Outcomes:**
Increased number of immigrant children who are eligible for SIJS who are able to present their claim in a fair hearing before the family and juvenile courts
Increased ability of potential legal guardians to be able to obtain guardianships regardless of legal status

**Recommendation 14: Expand citizenship assistance to multiple languages**

*Type of Recommendation: Improved Program*
*Responsible Party: Office of New Americans and Immigrant Communities, New Americans Campaign, New American Workforce*

For immigrant Houstonians, citizenship is the final step of integration into American society. When lawful permanent residents have access to attorney assistance, they can reach their goal of having the right to vote and other benefits more quickly and reliably. Houston is stronger when members of our community have the full rights and responsibilities of citizenship. Increased citizenship also benefits Houston economically. But while Houston is
home to an estimated 290,000 lawful permanent residents who are eligible to naturalize, more than half of those eligible do not have information about how to become a citizen.

The City of Houston’s Office of New Americans and International Communities currently partners with some nonprofit organizations to provide citizenship application assistance, primarily in Spanish. The Office should partner with community organizations to offer naturalization application assistance and citizenship classes in additional languages.

In addition, the Office should partner with the National Immigration Forum’s New American Workforce program to provide citizenship services for City employees, with language assistance provided for all non-English speakers.

**POTENTIAL PARTNERS**

- Houston Immigration Legal Services Collaborative and its members, such as Chinese Community Center, Boat People SOS, and OCA Houston
- Houston Public Library
- U.S. Citizenship & Immigration Services
- Various language media including television and radio

**MEASURING SUCCESS**

**Outcomes:**
- Increased number of naturalization application assistance events, categorized by primary language of each event
- Increased number of individuals assisted with the naturalization application, categorized by language of applicants

**Recommendation 15: Evaluate law enforcement’s ability to effectively respond to and investigate crimes in immigrant neighborhoods**

*Type of Recommendation: New Analysis*

*Responsible Party: HPD*

No data currently exist to assess whether immigrant victims report crimes as frequently as native-born victims. Anecdotally (but in great numbers), immigrant community members describe waiting at the scene of violent crimes for extended periods of time for a police officer to arrive. In addition, community members’ experiences with law enforcement in this context typically involve limited investigation and follow-up by law enforcement. The impression that there is a lack of responsiveness and follow-through by law enforcement leaves community members feeling vulnerable and contributes to a lack of trust in law enforcement in these communities.

The Houston Police Department and other law enforcement entities in the city should assess their responsiveness and investigative success regarding immigrant sexual assault victims as well as other violent crime victims, including domestic violence. HPD should use existing data to (1) determine any disparity between 911 response times in immigrant neighborhoods versus non-immigrant neighborhoods and (2) investigate if clearance rates of violent crimes are lower in immigrant neighborhoods. The results of this assessment should be shared publicly.
Several cities, such as New York, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Baltimore, and Seattle have made their 911 call data available online. In Chicago, civil rights groups sued the city over unequal response times and obtained data showing a disparity in 911 response times in Latino and Black neighborhoods.

HPD should partner with Mayor Turner’s criminal justice transition team and immigrant advocate groups to develop the parameters of this assessment and create a plan for improvement as needed. Possible funder: Office of Violence Against Women (OVW) at the U.S. Department of Justice, which has already funded training for HPD officers.

### MEASURING SUCCESS

**Outputs**
- Assessment of the responsiveness of HPD and other law enforcement agencies and the clearance rates of violent crimes in different neighborhoods
- Publication of the assessment
- Development and implementation of a response plan (if applicable)

**Outcomes (if applicable)**
- Improved response time for immigrant crime victims
- Improved investigative success for immigrant crime victims
- Response time for immigrant crime victims equal or similar to that of other victims
- Investigative success for immigrant crime victims equal or similar to that of other victims

### Recommendation 16: Improve and simplify the experience of finding high-quality legal advice and information regarding complex immigration laws and procedures

**Type of Recommendation:** New Program  
**Responsible Party:** Houston Immigration Legal Services Collaborative

Immigrant laws and procedures are vastly complex. Finding reliable information is a significant barrier to immigration relief for many Houstonians. For example, while many non-profit organizations in Houston offer high-quality, low-cost legal services, navigating the web of interconnected agencies that with similar services can be confusing and time consuming. As a result, many immigrants seek services from notarios who charge high fees for low-quality services that often involve the unauthorized practice of law. Similarly, when an immigrant is detained by law enforcement or another government agency, confusion among agencies about jurisdiction and custody of the detainee, makes it difficult for friends and family to track the individual’s location and status. As a result, families are unable to help their relatives navigate the complex system of detention and immigration courts.

The Houston Immigration Legal Services Collaborative should coordinate the creation of one or more single-point-of-contact tools to make it easier for immigrants to get accurate information about the immigration system. Key partners for this work include the local immigration law clinics at Texas Southern University, University of Houston, and South Texas College of Law Houston. The Collaborative should explore the possibility of one or more hotlines manned by trained volunteers, BIA accredited representatives, and/or law students under the supervision of one or more experienced immigration attorneys. Areas of focus for one or more hotlines could include:

### BEST PRACTICES

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### MEASURING SUCCESS

**Outputs**
- Assessment of the responsiveness of HPD and other law enforcement agencies and the clearance rates of violent crimes in different neighborhoods
- Publication of the assessment
- Development and implementation of a response plan (if applicable)

**Outcomes (if applicable)**
- Improved response time for immigrant crime victims
- Improved investigative success for immigrant crime victims
- Response time for immigrant crime victims equal or similar to that of other victims
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**Responsible Party:** Houston Immigration Legal Services Collaborative

Immigrant laws and procedures are vastly complex. Finding reliable information is a significant barrier to immigration relief for many Houstonians. For example, while many non-profit organizations in Houston offer high-quality, low-cost legal services, navigating the web of interconnected agencies that with similar services can be confusing and time consuming. As a result, many immigrants seek services from notarios who charge high fees for low-quality services that often involve the unauthorized practice of law. Similarly, when an immigrant is detained by law enforcement or another government agency, confusion among agencies about jurisdiction and custody of the detainee, makes it difficult for friends and family to track the individual’s location and status. As a result, families are unable to help their relatives navigate the complex system of detention and immigration courts.

The Houston Immigration Legal Services Collaborative should coordinate the creation of one or more single-point-of-contact tools to make it easier for immigrants to get accurate information about the immigration system. Key partners for this work include the local immigration law clinics at Texas Southern University, University of Houston, and South Texas College of Law Houston. The Collaborative should explore the possibility of one or more hotlines manned by trained volunteers, BIA accredited representatives, and/or law students under the supervision of one or more experienced immigration attorneys. Areas of focus for one or more hotlines could include:
• Providing basic information about detention, including telephone numbers of agencies, addresses of
  detention facilities, an explanation of the bonding system, and names of trusted bonding agencies,
  nonprofit organizations, and for-profit attorneys
• A standardized screening and referral process for immigrants seeking high-quality, low-cost legal services
  that would ultimately reduce the time and resources clients spend completing multiple intake and screening
  processes for multiple organizations

Significant research will be required for these projects, and the clients’ best interests should be at the forefront of
every decision. The tools should be easy to access, navigate, and promote. Actual implementation could involve
one or more phone-based hotlines, but could also be complemented by online tools.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>BEST PRACTICES</th>
<th>POTENTIAL PARTNERS</th>
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| University of Denver and University of Colorado in Boulder maintain hotline for the Denver area  
  Nebraska Immigration Legal Assistance Hotline  
  Texas Legal Services Center’s Sexual Assault Survivor’s Hotline  
  Innovation Law Lab  
  Various online screening and referral tools including IMMI, CitizenshipWorks, and Own The Dream  
  Houston Volunteer Lawyers’ robust intake and referral system for connecting clients to pro-bono attorneys | Immigration clinics at the three law schools in Houston (Texas Southern University, University of Houston, and South Texas College of Law Houston)  
 Houston Immigration Legal Services Collaborative  
 American Immigration Lawyers Association - Houston chapter  
 Houston Volunteer Lawyers  
 Asian American Bar Association  
 Mexican American Bar Association  
 Hispanic Bar Association of Houston  
 NALEO Education Fund  
 Catholic Charities  
 The 211 and 311 Hotlines |

**MEASURING SUCCESS**

**Output:**
One or more hotlines with accurate, high quality information relevant to Houston area immigrants operating full-time

**Outcomes:**
Immigrants report positive experiences seeking and finding accurate advice and information
Attorneys spend less time fielding questions and screenings and have more time to spend on cases, resulting in more immigrants helped in Houston
Recommendation 17: Increase the capacity of the City of Houston and Harris County to address the healthcare needs of the immigrant community in a more informed and effective manner

Type of Recommendation: Expanded Program
Responsible Party: COH Health and Human Services, Harris Health System

Houston boasts the largest medical center in the world. However, Harris County has a staggering uninsured rate of over 25 percent, or nearly 750,000 people. Inadequate access to integrated healthcare can lead to extreme suffering, family bankruptcy, and reduction of life expectancy for immigrants in Houston. According to the Migration Policy Institute, noncitizen immigrants are three times more likely to be uninsured than native-born citizens, leading to much higher personal costs related to healthcare. In Houston, low-income immigrants are among the most vulnerable populations affected by rising costs of services, medication, and transportation, in addition to longer waiting periods when receiving services. Furthermore, many immigrants do not have health plans or stable healthcare providers, leading to postponement of health decisions. This issue is particularly pertinent for Limited English Proficient community members, who face increased barriers to healthcare access.

Even when immigrants are able to access services, many healthcare providers do not have appropriate language resources to meet the needs of Houston’s diverse immigrant community. This is particularly concerning for groups that have heightened vulnerability, such as the LGBTQI immigrant community or refugees. To improve health outcomes for immigrants, the City’s Department of Health and Human Services should increase its capacity to provide information and healthcare to immigrants across three areas: assessment, service provision, and community education.

The City of Houston Health Department should first conduct an immigrant-specific assessment complying with the Public Health Accreditation standards to determine key needs and opportunities for improving immigrant health outcomes. This assessment should include the following topics:

- Access of particularly vulnerable populations, such as people with disabilities, the elderly, and survivors of trafficking and violence
- Inability to pay for visits (with or without insurance)
- Lack of healthcare professionals who speak languages other than English, or lack of trained interpreters
- Lack of transportation to visit healthcare providers
- Concern about being asked for identification at the appointment
- Limited access to the Financial Assistance Program (previously known as the Gold Card) because of the photo ID and/or pay stub requirement
- Inability to benefit from the Affordable Care Act because of immigration status
- Use of the emergency room as the only form of healthcare
- Lack of preventative or integrated healthcare
- Immigrant workers’ vulnerability to accidents and workplace injury due to lack of training or enforcement of OSHA standards

The assessment should be completed by December 2017. The Health and Human Services Department should then develop and implement a set of policies based on this healthcare assessment, to be implemented no later than December 2018. As part of implementation, the Department should also increase culturally relevant education and outreach to immigrant communities through:

- The promotion of the Harris Health Financial Assistance Program (formerly Gold Card)
- Increased support to community-based organizations to offer health fairs, screenings, workshops, and information about different health challenges
Partnerships with refugee resettlement agencies to help with the transition to sustainable healthcare after the initial six-month resettlement support period

Development of a series of how-to videos (in various languages) aimed at answering questions regarding enrollment in health-related programs

**BEST PRACTICES**

**Health and Wellbeing (Salud y Bienestar)** is a health control and prevention program that raises awareness about prevention and early detection of diseases within the Hispanic community to prolong and save lives while reducing overall healthcare costs.

The **World Health Organization** has created a strategic framework for creating integrated people-centered health services.

The City of Houston and the Harris Health System collaborate to manage access points to assist with applying for the Harris Health System Financial Assistance Program at City-run Multi-Service Centers, expanding the reach into the community beyond the few existing Harris Health System Eligibility Centers.

The Harris Health System has partnered with local nonprofits to make it easier for immigrants and refugees to apply for its Financial Assistance Program, with outreach staff assisting with the collection of applications on a regular rotating schedule to address linguistic and transportation barriers.

**Mental Health America of Greater Houston Integrated Healthcare Initiative**

Private Health Care clinics (e.g., Hillcroft Physicians)

**Harris County Public Health (HCPH) Refugee Health Screening Program (RHSP)**

Universities and medical systems, including **Baylor College of Medicine, UTHealth, Texas Children's**

Local FQHCs (e.g., **Legacy Community Health, Bee Busy Wellness Center, Hope Clinic**)

**Special Advisor to the Mayor on Human Trafficking**

**ECHOS-Houston (Epiphany Community Health Outreach Services)**

**Patient Care Innovation Center** provides “coordinated care” in Harris County to disproportionate users of the healthcare system (i.e., “Super Utilizers”)

**Gateway to Care** helps residents of Houston and Harris County access healthcare by empowering individuals to “achieve health literacy and sustain better health”.

**The Center for Integrated Health Solutions, SAMHSA-HRSA**

**Philadelphia Refugee Health Collaborative (PRHC)**

**MEASURING SUCCESS**

**Outputs:**
Creation of a committee of City representatives, public health experts, and community advocates to oversee the assessment and development of policies

The creation of Key Performance Indicators after the initial assessment
Recommendation 18: Convene a coalition of mental health experts to coordinate and support culturally competent mental health services provided to the diverse Houston population

Type of Recommendation: New Committee
Responsible Party: COH Department of Health and Human Services, Harris Health System

Mental health care for immigrants is primarily provided by the public sector, e.g., federally qualified health centers (FQHCs) such as Legacy Community Health, County health clinics (Harris Health System, the Harris Center), community- and school-based clinics (Memorial Hermann Sharpstown Health Center and Texas Children’s Gulfton Pediatrics), and nonprofit clinics such as the Houston Galveston Institute. Even with this range of options, mental health care for immigrant clients is often disjointed and needs are not adequately met. Due to the limited collaboration among agencies and lack of specialized knowledge regarding the unique needs of immigrants, mental health services for immigrant populations needs improvement.

While not every immigrant has experienced trauma, the rates within the population are substantially higher than in the average population. Clinicians and teachers may often not be aware of immigrants’ unique needs and resources without additional training or experience. Currently too few services are available for immigrants in their native languages. Translated written materials are sometimes available; however, immigrants may not be literate in their native language. In addition, trained public health interpreters are lacking. Mental health conceptions also vary from culture to culture, making translation of mental health concepts and terms challenging. As a result, it is difficult to provide meaningful written materials or assessments in different languages.

To improve the quantity and quality of mental health services available to immigrant Houstonians, the City’s Health and Human Services Department should convene a coalition of mental health experts to:

- Serve as a clearinghouse for mental health support, information, and assistance for immigrant community members
- Contact state and national mental health organizations with a presence in Houston (such as the American Psychological Association and the National Association of Social Workers) and request their assistance in recruiting pro-bono mental health services and psychological evaluations for court cases (when needed) for the most vulnerable immigrant clients
- Organize and offer continuing education and updated trainings—possibly in the form of both Continuing Education Unit (CEU) opportunities and updates for the field—covering topics such as trauma, immigrant trauma needs, legal implications, immigrant 101, and accessible services
- Design a certificate program to educate clinicians on the unique needs and aspects of mental health in the immigrant community, with certified clinicians listed in a resource directory of trusted and culturally competent providers
- Have coalition members provide community trainings to school staff, nurses, community social workers, and others on trauma and mental health issues affecting the immigrant population
- Contemplate opportunities to further integrate legal, medical, and mental health support to advance holistic advocacy and care for this population
- Partner with Harris County Public Health (HCPH) Refugee Health Screening Program (RHSP), refugee resettlement agencies, PAIR Houston, health agencies and other organizations to identify and initiate culturally appropriate and validated screening tools for trauma, mental health, and other issues. The goal would be to use using the screening tools to identify mental health needs, connect clients to the appropriate services, and gather anonymous data on the prevalence of mental health needs in the community for future programs.
**BEST PRACTICES**

**Houston-area examples:**
HISD offers [Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports](#) and [CHAMPS (Conversation, Help, Activity, Movement, Participation, Success)](#), and is developing a curriculum for training teachers on instructing immigrants.

At HISD’s [Las Americas Newcomer School](#), a social worker uses a trauma-informed curriculum for refugee and immigrant students and trains teachers on trauma.

Harris County’s [“Safe Talk” model](#) trains teacher on recognizing and addressing trauma.

The [Texan French Alliance for the Arts](#) offers art therapy, stress/trauma management, and social/emotional learning to immigrant and other youth.

One of the clinics within the Harris Health System includes [Psychiatry residents in International Trauma](#).

**Refugee mental health:**
[Minnesota Council of Churches (MCC)](#) offers a training for refugee mental health, cultural competence, and trauma-informed work; participants may be listed in a resource database and receive refugee client referrals.

[Harvard Program in Refugee Trauma](#) (HPRT) offers an in-depth certification program for mental health clinicians in refugee trauma.

[bridging Refugee Youth & Children’s Services](#) (BRYCS) offers webinars and other materials on new and existing research regarding the needs of refugee youth.

[Center for Empowering Refugees and Immigrants](#) (CERI) is a collaborative effort to address the mental health needs of refugees in Oakland, CA.

[Refugee Health Technical Assistance Center](#) provides mental health tools, resources, online trainings, calls and guidance to help address refugee mental health needs.

**Mental health coalition:**
Mental Health America Houston’s School Behavioral Health Initiative–convening school district administrators, behavioral health providers, child- and education-focused agencies, and parents–hosts trainings, and conducts meetings, public awareness efforts, and advocacy.

Central American Minors (CAM) working group is an example of stakeholders who come together regularly to discuss these issues.

The [Houston-Galveston Trauma Institute](#) provides training, education and consultations for mental health professionals, agencies, and the general public on trauma and traumatic stress disorders.

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**POTENTIAL PARTNERS**

[Harris County Public Health Refugee Health Screening Program](#)

[Special Advisor to the Mayor on Human Trafficking](#)

[Boniuk Institute for Religious Tolerance](#)

Houston’s refugee resettlement agencies: [Interfaith Ministries](#), [Refugee Services of Texas](#), [Alliance for Multicultural Community Services](#), [Catholic Charities](#), [YMCA International Services](#)

Mental Health providers: FQHCs (e.g., [Legacy Community Health](#), [El Centro de Corazon](#), [Hope Clinic](#), [Harris County Health System](#), the [Harris Center](#), Catholic Charities’ [mental health services](#)

Public and private mental health providers

[Mental Health America of Greater Houston](#)

Mental health licensing bodies and professional organizations: [American Psychological Association](#), [National Association of Social Workers](#), etc.

Local universities with graduate programs in mental health that could incorporate work with immigrant populations as part of internship commitments.

Local Medical Schools that train mental health professionals (Baylor College of Medicine, UT Health)

[Houston-Galveston Trauma Institute](#)
**MEASURING SUCCESS**

**Outputs:**
Formation of a coalition

The creation of Key Performance Indicators to set goals and track progress once the coalition is formed

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**Environment**

**Recommendation 19: Address companies’ noncompliance with environmental regulations**

_Type of Recommendation: New Committee  
Responsible Party: Harris County District Attorney’s Office_

Houston’s immigrants are one of the groups most affected by environmental issues. Houston is home to some of the largest petrochemicals facilities in the world as well as numerous smaller facilities. A lack of zoning laws means industrial facilities are located near homes and schools, creating “fenceline” communities that are exposed to toxic and carcinogenic chemicals. Many immigrants live in these communities because they are affordable, but they suffer health and economic consequences.

The prevalence of more than 150 hazardous air pollutants in the Houston area increases health risks in many fenceline communities, which have higher instances of chronic illnesses such as asthma and other respiratory illnesses, and often have higher rates of deadly and costly diseases such as cancer. Fenceline communities also suffer direct, short-term impacts when a facility has a planned or unplanned emission above standard levels. Such emissions events often result in flu-like symptoms which prevent children from attending school and adults from going to work. Some of the short-term impacts could be mitigated with clear communication from industrial facilities about planned emissions events and accidents, as well as safety actions that fenceline communities could take (such as sheltering in place). Currently, communication is inconsistent across different facilities and comprehensive communication efforts in multiple languages are lacking.

Local authorities prosecuting regulatory noncompliance in Houston include the Harris County District Attorney’s Office, Harris County Pollution Control Services, and Harris County Public Health and Environmental Services. These entities usually target companies and facilities based on complaints from residents, but issues often go unreported in underserved areas because residents do not know how to formally report emissions events. The process of selecting which companies to target could be improved with the input of local scientists, who have access to data that can help determine which companies cause the most environmental damage, rather than solely relying on resident complaints.

A recent Texas Supreme Court decision affirmed the right of cities to civilly litigate Texas Clean Air Act violations. Litigation usually occurs through the use of nuisance and stormwater violations. The City is not allowed to pursue criminal enforcement or collect a registration fee from permitted entities, and the state has preemptive jurisdiction in cases where jurisdiction is unclear. State regulators may continue to erode local authority over environmental practices, as was suggested by the passing of Texas House Bill 40 in 2015, which restricts the ability of cities to regulate oil and gas drilling.

The Harris County District Attorney’s Office should create an Environmental Task Force to prosecute companies that are not in compliance with environmental regulations. The Task Force should be led by the District Attorney’s Office and would likely require close collaboration with Harris County Pollution Control Services and Harris County
Public Health. It should focus on individual facilities with a record of noncompliance and also carry out targeted reviews of smaller industries with pervasive noncompliance issues. The Environmental Task Force should create a prioritized, regularly updated list of companies and industries, taking into account:

- A rolling review of the worst noncompliance events and industries with pervasive noncompliance, using the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) permitting information and the Environmental Justice Screening and Mapping Tool (EJSCREEN) to determine where facilities are clustered in low-income or minority communities
- Scientific data and research at the local, state, and federal level from academic and nonprofit sources
- Individual citizen complaints and trends in complaints (i.e., complaint clusters)
- Quarterly consultations with public health and environmental advocates, regulatory agencies at all levels of government, and the public

As part of its activities, the Task Force should send inspectors to investigate target facilities and record violations of local, state, and federal regulations and formally report violations to the relevant agencies, working with state and federal prosecutors when possible. The Task Force should also consider lobbying at the state level to further expand the ability of local regulators to prosecute environmental violations and protect their communities.

**Potential Partners**

**Partnerships for the Task Force’s investigations include:**
- Harris County Pollution Control Services
- Texas Commission on Environmental Quality
- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

**Experts that the Task Force should leverage include:**

**Environment focused Organizations:**
- Houston Air Alliance [http://airalliancehouston.org/](http://airalliancehouston.org/)
- Texas Environmental Justice Advocacy Services (TEJAS) and the community members they represent
- Clean Air Act Advisory Committee (CAAAC)
- Clean Air Scientific Advisory Committee (CASAC)
- Office of Environmental Justice

**Health-focused Nonprofits and Agencies:**
- City Health Department [http://www.houstontx.gov/health/](http://www.houstontx.gov/health/)
- City Bureau of Pollution Control and Prevention [http://www.houstontx.gov/health/Environmental/bpcp.html](http://www.houstontx.gov/health/Environmental/bpcp.html)
- Harris County Public Health

**Academic Groups:**
- Energy and Environment Initiative (EEI) at Rice University
**Outputs:**
Creation of an Environmental Task Force within the Harris County District Attorney's office by the end of 2017
Establishment of procedures for inspectors working with the Task Force, and how they will communicate with state and federal regulators

**Outcomes:**
Decrease in the number of malfunction and maintenance incidents occurring in Houston
Increase in compliance from target facilities investigated by the Task Force

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**Recommendation 20: Incentivize fenceline facilities to continuously monitor emissions and health hazards and communicate effectively with impacted communities**

*Type of Recommendation: New Program*

*Responsible Party: Bureau of Pollution Control and Prevention, in coordination with Harris County Public Health*

Communities would benefit from continuous, up-to-date information regarding fenceline emissions and the publication of existing information that companies submit to state and federal regulators. In most cases, companies are not currently required to conduct ongoing fenceline monitoring. The EPA is currently finalizing new rules pertaining to the implementation of the Clean Air Act\textsuperscript{109} to address the issue of monitoring and reporting of fenceline emissions. The new rules may require all chemical facilities to monitor and report fenceline emissions, or they may create exemptions for facilities that have not had any reported accidents in the last two years. However, a clean record is not a guarantee of a continued lack of emissions, and, by definition, are unexpected events. Additionally, unplanned smaller releases of toxic chemicals often indicate that a larger incident will follow, and a lack of continuous monitoring would fail to alert the community of a potential future threat.\textsuperscript{110}

The City of Houston should pass an ordinance with the following language, and work with Harris County and any other relevant government organizations to expand these requirements to all facilities operating in the Greater Houston Area:

- Continuous monitoring and reporting of all fenceline emissions
- Publishing emissions data shared with state and federal regulators, emergency response plans, and all permits related to facilities
- Implementing a timely and inclusive communication strategy regarding incidents with elevated emissions and the safety measures that community members should take

Local environmental experts should be consulted on the proper creation of such regulations to ensure that they are comprehensive and provide usable data for residents, regulators, and researchers. In addition, the City of Houston’s Director of Environmental Policy should lead a campaign to incentivize companies to do this work voluntarily.
**Best Practices**

**Best practices for cross-media communication strategies:**

- Emergency Alert System (EAS) and FEMA’s communication system for state and local agencies
- Reverse 911 for landlines
- Emergency responders to communicate with local TV and radio media outlets as necessary
- Social media (especially Twitter) is an excellent source for minute-to-minute updates

In 2008, Mayor Bill White and the Houston Chronicle targeted TCP Group as a source of 1,3-Butadiene to the Milby Park neighborhood. The company signed a Voluntary Emissions Reduction Agreement that included fenceline monitoring and projects to reduce emissions. This agreement serves as a good model for voluntary compliance.111

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**Potential Partners**

Input into any regulation should be solicited from environmental and community experts, at least half of which should be local. Potential organizations include:

**Organizations focused on the environment**

- **Texas Environmental Justice Advocacy Services (TEJAS)**, and the community members they represent
- **Houston-Galveston Area Council** and their **Regional Air Quality Planning Advisory Committee**
- **City Office of Sustainability**
- **Clean Air Act Advisory Committee (CAAAC)**
- **Clean Air Scientific Advisory Committee (CASAC)**
- **Office of Environmental Justice**

**Organizations focused on communities and communication**

- **Texas Association of Broadcasters** to implement Emergency Alert Systems
- **Texas Organizing Project**
- **Neighborhood Centers**

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**Measuring Success**

**Outputs:**

- 75 percent of fenceline facilities conduct continuous fenceline monitoring (and publication of this data in an easily accessible format) by 2020
- 75 percent of all industrial facilities publish emissions data shared with state and federal regulators by 2020
- 75 percent of fenceline facilities implement cross-media communications systems to alert residents regarding emissions events by 2018

**Outcome:**

- Increased number of individuals in fenceline communities reporting that they feel sufficiently informed of emissions events and safety precautions
Recommendation 21: Prevent the construction of new or expanded industrial facilities near homes and schools and, conversely, the siting of new homes and schools near industrial facilities plants

Type of Recommendation: New Policy  
Responsible Party: Houston City Council and the City Planning Department

As Houston continues to expand, residential areas also expand near existing chemical facilities, creating new fenceline communities. A key way to minimize the impact of air pollution is to prevent the creation of these high-risk communities. New zoning policy may be the best approach, since cities already have this authority from the State. Further measures might be challenged in court by the State, based on the precedent of the Texas Supreme Court case of Southern Crushed Concrete v. City of Houston.

Reducing the encroachment of polluting industries into residential areas and school zones requires zoning law that would prevent construction of new or expanded chemical facilities in residential areas and prevent residential areas from expanding into areas with chemical plants. If zoning is not feasible, City Council should pass an ordinance that would prevent the construction of new or expanded chemical facilities near homes and schools and, conversely, the siting of new homes and schools near dangerous chemical plants.

Output:
Passage of an ordinance or zoning rule limiting the additional creation of fenceline communities

MEASURING SUCCESS

Recommendation 22: Create and implement a “Community Environmental Tour” for all area public servants

Type of Recommendation: New Program  
Responsible Party: The Mayor’s Office and Office of New Americans and Immigrant Communities

To give policymakers a deeper understanding of risks faced by immigrants and other fenceline residents on a daily basis, City Council should adopt a resolution stating that upon election, re-election, appointment, or hiring, the Mayor, Controller, City Councilmembers, and all other civil servants working on issues related to immigration, low-income communities, public health, and the environment should take a “Community Environmental Tour.” This tour could be based on existing environmental tours offered by several nonprofits, and expanded to include additional information regarding the communities visited during the tour. The County should also adopt a similar resolution for its environmental regulators and policymakers.

POTENTIAL PARTNERS

Texas Environmental Justice Advocacy Services (TEJAS)
Houston Air Alliance
Output:
100 percent of applicable individuals take this tour by end of 2018

Outcome:
Improved (anonymized) survey responses indicating increased knowledge regarding local environmental issues from those who have attended the tour

**Recommendation 23: Establish a “Clean Houston” grant awarded annually to an innovative project addressing environmental issues**

*Type of Recommendation: New Program*
*Responsible Party: City of Houston’s Administration & Regulatory Affairs Department*

The City of Houston’s Director of Environmental Policy should collaborate with one or more local funding organizations to create a grant that will be awarded annually to a team working on an innovative environmental project to create a new communication strategy for affected communities, map pollution in Houston, or otherwise address local environmental issues.

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<th>BEST PRACTICES</th>
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<td>Houston currently has a <a href="#">Bright Ideas grant</a> for City employees to come up with cost-saving ideas for the City, awarding $5,000 for any employees who come up with feasible and measurable improvements.</td>
<td>The city could partner with January Advisors and Sketch City, two organizations involved in performance improvement and “civic tech” improvements at the City. Sketch City hosts an annual Civic Hackathon in Houston.</td>
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Output:
Creation and award of this grant on an annual basis starting in 2018

**Housing**

**Recommendation 24: Increase access to stable housing and prevent housing discrimination by offering information and workshops on buying, renting, and the Fair Housing Act**

*Type of Recommendation: Expanded Program*
*Responsible Party: Houston Housing Authority and the Housing and Community Development Department*

Immigrants disproportionately face discrimination in housing because of a lack of awareness of renters’ rights resulting from language and cultural barriers. Due to those barriers and limited enforcement of renters’ rights, immigrants often deal with abusive landlords, which can cause frequent moves. More oversight and enforcement on the local level is needed to protect the rights of immigrants seeking housing. In addition to facing barriers in housing
assistance, immigrants lag behind their native-born counterparts in homeownership rates nationally, trailing by 15 percentage points.¹¹⁴

HUD recently released new guidance on how Fair Housing Laws apply to limited English proficient (LEP) populations: “The Fair Housing Act prohibits both intentional housing discrimination and housing practices that have an unjustified discriminatory effect. People with limited English proficiency are not a protected class under the Fair Housing Act. However, the Fair Housing Act prohibits discrimination on seven protected bases, including national origin, which is closely linked to the ability to communicate proficiently in English.”¹¹⁵

Currently, information about the rights of homeowners and renters is not available online, and the Houston Housing Authority does not hold workshops on these topics. Those who are new to Houston and/or have limited English proficiency would benefit from a greater availability of information on how to find stable, well-maintained housing, and on their rights as a homeowner or renter.

The Houston Housing Authority should collaborate with community organizations to create written materials available in the most frequently spoken languages in Houston. Physical copies should be available upon intake at any subsidized housing agency, at Welcome Stations, and virtually on the Houston Housing Authority and Welcoming Houston websites. Documents should be revised once per year for accuracy and should include:

- A clear explanation of housing discrimination and information on whom to contact if discrimination occurs
- An explanation of the steps required to rent a home and what documents and other items a landlord can require of a tenant
- The Houston Housing Authority’s Inspection Checklist¹¹⁶
- Standard rental contract and house sale contract
- Explanation of affordable housing options in Houston and a list of programs and organizations that can provide assistance¹¹⁷
- Information on foreclosures, evictions, and services available to help with such issues

The Houston Housing Authority should also develop two workshops: one for immigrant and LEP populations, and the other for landlords and sellers who frequently interact with these populations. For immigrant and LEP populations, the workshops should cover housing options, steps for renting or buying in Houston, housing discrimination and recourse, and information on foreclosures and evictions. For landlords and sellers, the workshops should focus on the Fair Housing Act and penalties for noncompliance.

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<td>Boston and New York both have staffed, language access divisions in their respective housing authorities which coordinate in-language assistance and translation services for LEP tenants</td>
<td>Houston Housing Authority</td>
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<tr>
<td>NALCAB’s recent fair housing campaign targeting immigrants</td>
<td>Private Section 8 developers (AHEPA, Penelope VNTeamwork, etc.)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>HUD-certified counseling agencies: Chinese Community Center, Tejano Center, Houston Area Urban League, LISC, Easter Seals, Gulf Coast Community Services, Catholic Charities, Avenue CDC, etc.</td>
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**Measuring Success**

**Outputs:**
Creation of the listed documents in the most common languages, and their physical and virtual dissemination at Welcome Stations throughout the city

Several workshops per quarter, with total attendees tracked as well
Recommendation 25: Augment the capacity of the Inspections & Public Service Division to inspect rental properties throughout the city

Type of Recommendation: Expanded Program
Responsible Party: COH Inspections & Public Service

Immigrants are likelier to rent rather than own a home,\textsuperscript{118} which means they are more vulnerable to landlords who may exploit their precarious position. Landlords may not invest in their properties to meet adequate standards since immigrants may be less likely to report them to the relevant authorities. Ensuring that Houston rental apartments meet minimum health and safety standards, particularly those serving populations least able to advocate for themselves, requires an increase in the ability of the Inspections & Public Service Division to:

- Respond to tenant complaints
- Target landlords with multiple properties and repeated complaints against them
- Hold landlords accountable through fines

Thus, the City should increase the capacity of the Inspections & Public Service Division with the intention of increasing the number of inspections carried out, particularly in response to tenant complaints.

**BEST PRACTICES**

In 2015, the City of Portland, Oregon Bureau of Development Services created an online customer inspection notification system to streamline the process of informing customers of inspections, increasing inspection capacity to four more per day\textsuperscript{119}

Twin Cities Rental housing inspectors implemented a three-tier program that increased the frequency of inspections of properties with more code violations\textsuperscript{120}

**MEASURING SUCCESS**

**Outputs:**
Number of inspections carried out per year – Increase of 20 percent by 2018

Percentage of complaints resulting in an inspection – Increase of 20 percent by 2018
Economic Stability and Growth

Houston’s economy works best when it leverages the drive and helps facilitate the success of all Houstonians. The City’s economic stability and growth is driven in large part by individual immigrants’ economic stability and growth. We see this because Houston’s foreign-born residents made up 32 percent of its employed labor force in 2014 (but only 25 percent of its population), and 42 percent of its self-employed population, generating nearly $2.5 billion in business income. We also know this because of the substantial spending power and tax contributions of our immigrant population. In 2014, foreign-born residents in Houston contributed $116.5 billion to the area’s GDP, and held $31.8 billion in spending power (disposable income available to a family after paying taxes). Further, the foreign-born population contributed $2.9 billion in state and local taxes, including property, income, sales, and excise taxes.

Yet despite its increasing, diverse population and growth in high-wage sectors, Houston ranks as the 15th most unequal among the nation’s 50 largest cities. Of the nearly 2.4 million residents in the City of Houston, almost one-fourth of the population lives at or below the poverty guideline, and just under one-third of Houstonians live in economic distress. These inequality issues apply in the immigrant context as well. In Houston, foreign-born families earn $0.74 to every U.S.-born $1.00, an income gap that is greater than the U.S. average, and 20 percent of immigrants live below the poverty line.

We should aim to further enhance the ways that immigrants contribute to our economy while ensuring that immigrants have access to the information, opportunities, and resources that will give them a chance to thrive. Accordingly, this section focuses on recommendations that will enhance financial stability and support the pursuit of opportunities so that immigrant Houstonians can lead productive, creative lives in our city and so that the city can continue to benefit from immigrants’ immensely valuable contributions.
Entrepreneurship

Recommendation 26: Establish a program to help current and potential immigrant entrepreneurs establish and improve their credit

*Type of Recommendation: New Program*
*Responsible Party: COH Office of Business Opportunity, United Way*

We recommend that the City of Houston’s Office of Business Opportunity leverage resources from existing community programs to better serve the credit-development needs of immigrant entrepreneurs. In addition, the OBO should consider and potentially develop new partnerships with organizations that assist with credit development to leverage the OBO’s broad reach across Houston to ensure that more immigrant and other entrepreneurs are aware of available credit-building opportunities.

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<tr>
<th>BEST PRACTICES</th>
<th>POTENTIAL PARTNERS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bank on Houston and United Way THRIVE provide educational information about ways that individuals can establish and improve their credit score</td>
<td>Bank on Houston, Promise Credit Union, Bayou Microfund, Chase Bank, City of Houston OBO, Neighborhood Centers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promise Credit Union (an affiliate of Neighborhood Centers) offers a credit-development loan and Mission Asset Fund uses Lending Circles (in partnership with Chinese Community Center and other Houston organizations) to help immigrants build and improve their credit</td>
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</table>

**Measuring Success**

**Outcome:**
Improved reported “soft pull” credit scores of immigrant entrepreneurs

Recommendation 27: Convene a coalition of business support programs to better understand the needs of Houston’s immigrant business community and enhance capacity and impact

*Type of Recommendation: New Committee*
*Responsible Party: Mayor’s Office of Trade and International Affairs, COH Office of Business Opportunity*

Immigrant Houstonians start their own businesses and form niche markets designed to serve their own and other communities. In 2014, while 7.5% of Houston’s U.S.-born population was self-employed, 11.7% of immigrant residents worked for their own businesses. The city has an economic interest in advancing the economic development of immigrant communities and supporting and enhancing the work of local businesses. A critical element of both goals is the success of immigrant entrepreneurs, through education regarding potential business markets, access to business development resources, and information on export opportunities. For immigrant entrepreneurs who may be faced with additional cultural and language barriers, learning about, understanding, and navigating business support services can be difficult. Challenges may include access to financing, understanding of the permitting process, and establishing hiring standards, among many others.
To facilitate the development of immigrant entrepreneurs, the City should start by documenting and consolidating information regarding existing research, programs, and services across a variety of topic areas (e.g., product, marketing, financing, operations, and licensing) in the Houston area. The inventory should include existing resource guides for small and minority-owned businesses, as well as training and advising opportunities offered to assist these audiences. The City should also collaborate with the Greater Houston Partnership and other entities to design and carry out a survey of potentially underserved communities to assess their business needs and determine gaps in training and resources needed to fulfill market demands. During this process, the City should identify and promote successful models for supporting immigrant entrepreneurs. To enhance these efforts, the City should work with Neighborhood Centers’ small business program and other organizations that are already connected to various immigrant communities across the city.

In addition, the City should create an international council involving chambers of commerce and community leaders in the small business and nonprofit sectors. The council could:

- Increase collaboration and partnerships, resulting in increased efficiencies, more opportunities to leverage funding, and sharing of knowledge and information;
- Encourage other existing business support programs to provide services that cater to immigrant entrepreneurs (e.g., bilingual services, cultural competency training for staff);
- Help connect entrepreneurs to the services provided by various organizations, increase the reach and impact of member organizations, help map the resources and services available, and link immigrant investors to specialized resources (e.g., the federal EB-5 visa and the Immigrant Investor Regional Centers);
- Facilitate the maintenance and exchange of data, accounting for whether a business is immigrant- or refugee-owned; and
- Using information gathered from the Greater Houston Partnership, the aforementioned survey, and other sources, create a short “menu” of key services that are specific to the needs of entrepreneurs (including immigrants) to provide access to key resources and services.

The City of Houston should also work in partnership with commerce-focused organizations to increase knowledge of export and trade processes and regulations among immigrant-owned business, facilitate their access to foreign markets, and promote exports. The Greater Houston Partnership’s Metropolitan Export Plan can serve as a platform to promote and support exports of Houston-based, immigrant-owned businesses.

Lastly, the City should examine the potential for redistributing funds to international chambers of commerce to ensure that valuable resources are made available to all entrepreneurs across the city.

### Best Practices

| The Houston Immigration Legal Services Collaborative is a strong example of a successful coalition in the Houston area. |
| Other strong models include Early Matters and the Houston Coalition for the Homeless locally and the National Association for Latino Community Asset Builders nationally. |
| In New York, the Department of Small Business Services partnered with Citi Community Development (which contributed $250,000) to create the Immigrant Business Initiative, which convened five organizations that work with immigrant small business owners to implement tailored solutions to immigrant entrepreneurs’ needs. |

### Potential Partners

| Potential member organizations: |
| Bayou Microfund |
| Neighborhood Center’s Entrepreneur Connection program |
| SCORE |
| Stimulating Urban Renewal through Entrepreneurship (SURE) |
| Houston Area Urban League’s small business program |
| Mayor’s Office of Trade and International Affairs |
### BEST PRACTICES

**The Global Cities Initiative**, a Brookings Institution and JPMorgan Chase joint project

**Houston Gateway to the Americas Conference**

### POTENTIAL PARTNERS

- City of Houston’s Office of Business Opportunity
- Minority Business Development Agency – Business Center Houston (operated by Houston Community College/HCC)
- University of Houston’s SBDC
- Small Business Administration
- LiftFund
- People Fund
- The Greater Houston Partnership
- Minority Supplier Development Council
- Affiliate private sector stakeholders/supporters
  - Amegy Bank
  - Capital One
  - Comerica Bank
  - Iberia Bank
  - Immigrant Investor Regional Centers (under the EB-5 visa program)

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### MEASURING SUCCESS

**Output:**
Formation of the coalition

**Outcomes:**
- Number of DBAs issued to immigrants
- Number of immigrant-owned businesses that successfully raise capital
- Amount of capital raised by immigrant-owned businesses
- Referrals between member organizations
- Satisfaction reported by immigrant entrepreneur coalition program participants

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**Recommendation 28: Expand the successful LiftOff! Houston small business pitch competition to reach non-English speakers**

*Type of Recommendation: Expanded Program
Responsible Party: COH Office of Business Opportunity, nonprofits providing small business services*

Since 2013, the City of Houston has partnered with Capital One to implement the LiftOff! Houston program, which includes a series of small business workshops and culminates in a pitch competition. To date, LiftOff! Houston has
involved more than 2,000 entrepreneurs and awarded more than $120,000 to a total of 12 winning Houstonian entrepreneurs. The program currently includes a small-scale mentorship component for Spanish-speaking participants.

The Office of Business Opportunity (OBO) should create LiftOff! Houston documents and materials in all of the officially adopted languages from the City’s Language Access ordinance. These materials can be included at Welcome Stations and marketed on the City of Houston website, via local media partners, and through local nonprofits that provide small business services.

In addition, the OBO should create and co-host a Spanish-language version of the annual pitch competition with local nonprofits that currently serve Spanish-speaking current and aspiring entrepreneurs. A Spanish version of the event will need its own branding, Spanish-speaking mentors and judges, and additional sponsorship.

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<th>BEST PRACTICES</th>
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<tr>
<td>New York City holds an immigrant entrepreneur business plan competition in partnership with the Deutsche Bank Americas Foundation. Five winners receive up to $25,000 each, with the most scalable idea receiving up to $100,000.</td>
<td>Partners:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York City has created a network of entities offering small business courses in various languages, aiming to serve hundreds of immigrant entrepreneurs per year.</td>
<td>City of Houston’s Office of Business Opportunity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In California, the Latino Startup Alliance created the “Soy Empresaria Business Plan Competition,” which was sponsored by Square and Xoom and awarded $10,000 to three entrepreneurs.</td>
<td>Neighborhood Center’s Entrepreneur Connection program (for mentorship, sourcing entrepreneurs for the Spanish-language version of the competition, and co-hosting the competition)</td>
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Potential funders/sponsors:
- International chambers of commerce
- Local banks

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<th>MEASURING SUCCESS</th>
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**Outputs:**
Number of foreign-born participants per year (with a goal of increasing participation by at least 75 percent by 2019)
Number of non-English speaking participants (with a goal of increasing participation by at least 50 percent by 2019)

**Outcome:**
Amount of capital deployed to immigrant participants (with a goal of at least $10,000 by 2018)
Recommendation 29: Local universities should attract and retain entrepreneurs by developing Global Entrepreneur in Residence programs

Type of Recommendation: New Program

Responsible Party: Office of New Americans and Immigrant Communities, one or more local higher-education institute

Due to the cap on H-1B visas issued in the United States each year, many foreign-born college graduates only have a one-in-three chance of staying in the United States after graduation should they choose to enter the workforce rather than pursue graduate studies. This limitation leads to a loss of talent at the local level in Houston and other cities.

Given that all nonprofit universities are exempt from the H-1B visa cap, one or more Houston institutions of higher education should partner with the Global EIR Coalition to develop a program that keeps college graduate immigrants who want to start a business in Houston while also allowing universities to benefit from these entrepreneurs’ knowledge of entrepreneurship by hiring them as mentors to current students.

The process of developing this program should be coordinated by the Office of New Americans and Immigrant Communities in partnership with three key partners: at least one local institute of higher education, a local immigration attorney with the relevant experience, and a local champion of immigrant entrepreneurs. Once initial coordination and development is complete, the three key partners should shape the program as they see fit.

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<tr>
<td>This program can be modeled after the Global Entrepreneur in Residence Program in Boston. Through this program, 10 entrepreneurs have received H-1B visas and “nine companies they created locally have collectively raised over $50 million in venture funding while creating 150 jobs.” Several other examples of such programs have also been developed through the Global EIR Coalition, including in Anchorage, Alaska; Boulder, Colorado, and St. Louis, Missouri.</td>
<td>Three key partners:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Global EIR Coalition supports universities to implement Global Entrepreneur In Residence (GIR) mentor programs. The Coalition offers a variety of resources, including guidebooks for universities and a legal framework for establishing a GIR program.</td>
<td>Local immigration attorney with business and employment visa experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local institute of higher education</td>
<td>Local champion of immigrant entrepreneurs</td>
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Output:
Creation of additional program-specific KPIs upon creation of program

Outcomes:
Increase in number of H1B visa holders in Houston via this program – 5+ in 2018 and 10+ by 2019
Increase in number of new high-tech (or other high-growth) businesses in Houston – 3+ in 2018 and 5+ by 2019
Increased satisfaction of foreign-born university graduates at the one or more partner universities
Increased interest in the one or more partner universities from international students, in part due to this program
Increased interest in partner universities from entrepreneurship-focused students, in part due to this program

Entrepreneurship
Workforce Development

Recommendation 30: Facilitate immigrant Houstonians’ transition into careers by streamlining credential recognition and re-certification processes and offering other career pathways

Type of Recommendation: New Program
Responsible Party: Mayor’s Office, COH Office of Business Opportunity

Houston’s diverse economy is experiencing a shortage of skilled workers across a variety of key industries, including petrochemicals, industrial and commercial construction, healthcare, advanced manufacturing, ports and maritime, utilities, and oil and gas sectors. Of Houston’s 3.6 million jobs, a sizeable 41 percent (1.4 million) are considered “middle-skill,” so job openings require more education or training relative to other metro areas. Local employers in key industries report that they are struggling to fill higher-paying, middle-skill jobs.

Of the 7 million college-educated immigrants, over half obtained their degree abroad. However, about one in four (1.7 million) foreign-trained immigrants are unemployed or underemployed and working in jobs below their skill level. Verifying foreign credentials and degrees can be a difficult and lengthy process, with access to information virtually nonexistent for institutions in war or conflict zones. In addition, complex regulations governing professional licensure vary from state to state, creating barriers to continuing a career in the United States.

Targeted outreach to immigrants and immigrant-serving organizations relaying critical information to enhance career success is very important. Recent analysis of survey data provided by over 4,000 educated immigrant professionals in six major cities showed that career success is highly correlated with a few key factors: building social capital, speaking English “very well” (i.e., speaking English “well” is not enough), having foreign academic credentials at least partially recognized, and supplementing foreign education with some kind of U.S. credential. This is critical information to relay to educated immigrants who are attempting to establish careers in the United States.

Immigrants can contribute more to Houston’s economy if they are supported in bringing all of their skills, education, and experience to the labor force. Thus, efforts should be made to identify and implement strategies that reduce barriers to translating foreign education, credentials, and experience. Potential approaches might include:

- The Mayor should ask the Employer Services Division of Workforce Solutions to implement creative employer-based strategies to open doors for skilled immigrants. One potential model to consider would be to work with Upwardly Global, a national nonprofit, to connect skilled immigrants with employers, which is currently taking place in Dallas through the Forced Migration Upward Mobility Project.

- Given that professional licensure is typically guided by state laws, the Mayor could propose to the Legislature that the Texas Workforce Commission lead an initiative to address barriers to gaining U.S. licensure for foreign-trained Houstonians. State licensure entities, industry associations, employers, workforce leadership, education leaders, and immigrant-serving nonprofits could collaborate to identify opportunities to map out career pathways for licensed occupations in key industries and replicate policies and practices that ease entry into licensed professions while still applying the same standards that apply to U.S.-educated professionals.

- UpSkill Houston, a collective impact initiative led by the Greater Houston Partnership, is currently developing a marketing and communication strategy to attract individuals to middle-skill career opportunities. As part of this campaign, an appreciative, strengths-based message that emphasizes the talent of Houstonians, including immigrants, as well as the employment opportunities potentially available to them, would be well received by both employers and residents. The Mayor should hold conversations with the Greater Houston Partnership and immigrant-serving organizations to provide input on UpSkill Houston’s marketing and communications strategy to ensure that the construction careers framework in Houston is inclusive of immigrants.
In Minnesota, International Medical Graduate Assistance Program integrates immigrant medical graduates into the physician workforce to address healthcare disparities and workforce shortages.\(^{144}\)

The nonprofit Welcome Back Initiative has 10 locations nationwide (most based at community colleges) to help immigrant health professionals return to their fields.\(^{145}\)

IMPRINT has a map of programs serving immigrant professionals nationwide.

Upwardly Global has helped more than 8,000 work-authorized, skilled immigrants and refugees to rebuild their professional careers through job search training and employer connections.\(^{145}\)

The St. Louis Mosaic Professional Connectors Program partners with the St. Louis Regional Chamber to join skilled immigrants with “connectors” who can make career referrals for immigrants in the area.\(^{146}\)

Global Talent Idaho “provides job seekers with career counseling, training, cultural orientation, and opportunities for mentoring, networking and internships.”\(^{147}\)

World Education Services (WES) offers re-certification pathways and employment support, which could greatly benefit adults who held skilled jobs in their home country but whose degrees or certificates are not recognized in the United States.

**Measuring Success**

**Outcomes:**

- Number or foreign-educated immigrants trained in the Houston area – suggested goal of 20 percentage-point increase by 2018, with sustained or increased level in subsequent years

- Number or foreign-educated immigrants in the Houston-area who return to the career field of their home country – suggested goal of 10 percentage-point increase by 2018, with sustained or increased level in subsequent years

- Number of professional and vocational certificates issued to immigrants – suggested goal of 5 percentage-point increase by 2018, with sustained or increased level in subsequent years

- Increased positive responses by immigrants when surveyed regarding whether they are in a job that reflects their education, training, skill levels, and experience
Recommendation 31: Create a collaborative marketing and communications strategy to promote Houston as a destination for foreign workers

Type of Recommendation: New Program
Responsible Party: Mayor’s Office of Trade and International Affairs

In many ways, Houston is a mecca for international businesses and foreign-born workers. Indeed, although the foreign-born make up just below 25 percent of Houston’s overall population, they made up 32 percent of its employed labor force in 2014. Although the foreign-born make up just below 25 percent of Houston’s overall population, they made up 32 percent of its employed labor force in 2014. Houston is home to more than 90 consulate offices, 21 foreign banks (representing 12 nations), 750 foreign-owned firms, and more than 430 companies with branches in 144 countries. Additionally, the Greater Houston Partnership estimates that there are more than 3,440 firms, foreign government offices, and non-profit organizations involved in Houston’s international business activity. Stakeholders could be more strategic, however, in pursuing collaborative efforts to promote Houston as a destination for foreign workers.

The Mayor’s Office for Trade and International Affairs, in partnership with the many internationally focused chambers of commerce and the Greater Houston Partnership, should work collaboratively to create a shared vision for promoting Houston as an economic destination. This collaboration should result in a creative and bold communications and marketing strategy that all stakeholders can use. While each of these entities currently engages in these efforts independently through trade missions and other activities, more impact could be achieved if agencies worked together and prioritized certain global regions. In addition, efforts should be made to educate the foreign press about Houston in order to highlight the city in newspapers and other publications across the world.

Houston’s work as a member of the Global Cities Initiative Exchange has created a solid foundation for this recommendation. The Exchange, launched by the Brookings Institution in 2012, is a network of metro areas that develop and implement regional strategies to boost global trade and investment, forge partnerships between U.S. and international metropolitan areas, and advocate for state and national policy changes. Houston has already created a comprehensive Houston Metro Export Plan and is in the final stages of a foreign direct investment plan.

The Gateways to the Americas Conference is another building block for this recommendation. The conference represents the collaborative efforts of the University of Houston, the U.S.-Mexico Chamber of Commerce, Greater Houston Partnership, Visit Houston, U.S.-Panama Business Council and The Colombia Texas Chamber of Commerce. The goal of the conference is to strengthen the connection between Houston and the Americas, to expand on existing trade, and lead to additional transfer of technology, education, tourism, and other benefits.

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<th>BEST PRACTICES</th>
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<tr>
<td>Houston Metro Export Plan</td>
<td>Greater Houston Partnership</td>
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<td>Gateways to America Conference</td>
<td>Houston’s international chambers of commerce</td>
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<td>Houston’s International Sister Cities</td>
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<td>DCI (place-based marketing firm)</td>
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Outcome: Increase in the number of foreign workers, foreign direct investment, and international trade
Recommendation 32: Establish a “construction careers approach” to public infrastructure construction projects and ensure that this approach includes immigrants

Type of Recommendation: New Program
Responsible Party: COH Public Works and Engineering

Hispanic individuals make up 55 percent of construction workers in Texas, and a large percentage of these workers are immigrants. Construction workers tend to receive pay that is below or just above the minimum wage, work in unsafe environments, receive limited or no benefits, and face limited opportunities for advancement. In addition, wage theft, job misclassification, and low wages are endemic problems in a wide segment of the construction industry, and these issues can often arise in the context of Public Works projects.

The City of Houston is a large purchaser in the construction market. In many regional markets, public sector construction accounts for one-fourth to one-third of all construction. By establishing job quality and job access criteria in its procurement decision-making, the City of Houston can utilize its economic leverage in the construction market to improve economic opportunity for immigrant and other construction workers. Opening career pathways on city infrastructure projects to immigrant workers will help create more high quality jobs in construction; ensure that various growing industries in the Houston region have access to skilled construction workers; and protect taxpayers’ investments in such projects by preventing delays, maintaining workplace safety, and ensuring high-quality construction.

A construction careers approach establishes a set of job quality standards to ensure that public infrastructure projects create high-quality jobs, coupled with a targeted hiring program to help low-income people—including immigrants—get better access to those jobs. The City should develop job quality standards for general contractors and subcontractors that seek to bid on public infrastructure projects to be considered a responsible bidder, such as:

- Evidence of participation in Department of Labor–certified apprenticeship programs, and confirmation of the use of apprentices for a certain portion of work performed
- A 5-year track record of no violations of prevailing wage requirements, the Houston Wage Theft Ordinance, Texas Labor Code Chapter, etc.
- Disclosure of any claims of unpaid compensation, tax liens, or tax delinquencies against the contractor
- Confirmation that all individuals who will work on the project are properly classified as employees vs. independent contractors based on certified payroll
- Proof that all employees are covered under a workers’ compensation insurance policy and that workers have access to a fair grievance/dispute resolution process

Only general contractors and subcontractors that meet requirements should be permitted to bid on public infrastructure projects. In addition, preference should be given to employers that provide good jobs in the contractor selection process by applying credit toward the bid of any bidder that can show it provides living wages, health benefits, and paid sick days.

In addition, the City should centralize the collection of contractor responsibility data into a single or relatively small number of databases, require contracting officers to consult such databases when evaluating bids, and allow the public to access this information online so that it can note when data is incorrectly recorded and raise concerns regarding irresponsible bidders.

Lastly, the City should establish a Construction Advisory Oversight Committee to promote cooperation and collaboration between all parties, prevent disputes and misunderstandings, and monitor and enforce compliance with these and related standards.
### BEST PRACTICES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Puerto Rico</th>
<th>Gulf Coast Workforce Board</th>
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<tr>
<td>In Madison, Wisconsin, the <strong>Latino Academy of Workforce Development</strong> offers a construction apprenticeship program to Latino construction workers.</td>
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<tr>
<td>In Chicago, Mayor Rahm Emanuel, World Business Chicago, and Chicago Federation of Labor created the “1,000 Jobs for Chicagoland Manufacturing” initiative.</td>
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<tr>
<td>In Los Angeles, government departments and local government units have adopted community workforce agreements that include targeted hiring provisions and strong job quality provisions on infrastructure projects.</td>
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<td>The Port of Oakland’s seven-year modernization plan includes best practices.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority uses a responsible bidder prequalification process.</td>
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<td>The City of Milwaukee has added prevailing wage requirements to downtown redevelopment agreements.</td>
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### POTENTIAL PARTNERS

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<tr>
<td><strong>Gulf Coast Workforce Board</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Houston Gulf Coast Building and Construction Trades Council Joint Apprenticeship &amp; Training Committee and Signatory Partners</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>US Department of Labor</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Texas Gulf Coast Area Labor Federation, AFL-CIO</strong></td>
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### MEASURING SUCCESS

**Output:** Establishment of the “construction careers” approach described above.

### Recommendation 33: Attach local hire and family-sustaining wage conditions to economic development subsidies

**Type of Recommendation: Improved Policy**

**Responsible Party: COH Economic Development Division, COH Office of Business Opportunity**

To ensure the Houston area’s continued growth and prosperity, the City of Houston should strengthen economic opportunity for marginalized communities and neighborhoods. Living Wage and Local Hire policies are a concrete way to lift Houstonians, including immigrants, out of poverty. This creates a double benefit to the City: the City spends less on caring for people in high need, and those same families contribute more to our local economy by earning income, paying taxes, and generating revenue for local companies through purchases.

Any tax subsidy or incentive from the City of Houston for a development project should come with a requirement that the project hire at least 25% of its workforce from zip codes with higher-than-average poverty and unemployment. In addition, all employees project-wide must be paid a family-sustaining wage.

To ensure compliance, the City should:

- Require developers receiving assistance to disclose before, during, and after the project the number of quality jobs, local jobs, and other community benefits in connection with a City contract;
- Require transparency regarding high-quality jobs and accountability in incentive or subsidy agreements;
- Include meaningful consequences for developers and contractors who do not comply with agreements, including clawbacks and additional penalties;
- Involve other city departments or agencies in expanding the consequences of non-compliance by revoking or suspending business licenses, permits, or registration certificates until a violation is remedied; and
- Invest or reallocate resources for City staff to visit and audit sites rather than solely depending on reports from developers and contractors themselves.

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<tr>
<td>The following are examples of models that combine different elements of the aforementioned recommended living wage, community benefits and targeted hire policies:</td>
<td>These incentives and subsidies already represent a use or a foregoing of City revenue. A more rigorous approach to the awarding of incentives and subsidies would ensure that the City receives a greater return on its investment for the incentives and subsidies that it provides.</td>
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<tr>
<td>San Marcos, TX requires incentive-receiving companies to pay a $15/hour living wage.</td>
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<td>Austin, TX requires all companies entering into 380 agreements to provide employees with $11/hour or prevailing wage, OSHA training, health insurance, and workers’ compensation. Austin also established a “Firm Based Incentive Matrix” that takes into consideration multiple facets of potential benefits to the City from the proposed project and sets standards for assessing a points-based evaluation and accompanying benefits scale. In addition, project owners are given incentives to hire from “disadvantaged” worker populations (those that are low-income, have a criminal record, and do not have a high school diploma), and are evaluated on additional criteria.</td>
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<tr>
<td>San Jose, CA evaluates a host of bidders’ labor practices in its evaluation, from living wages, to paid leave, to labor peace agreements.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Seattle, WA provides a strong example of targeted and local hire policy.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Los Angeles, CA offers a good example of post-award enforcement via its Joint Labor Compliance Monitoring System.</td>
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### MEASURING SUCCESS

**Outputs:**
- Passage of an ordinance that would attach local hire and family-sustaining wage conditions to economic development subsidies
- Define areas that have high concentrations of poverty and under- and unemployment
- Incentive dollars awarded
- Projects exempted from the hiring and living wage requirements
- Percent of projects in compliance with the hiring and living wage requirements
- Percent of employees receiving living wage or higher
- Number and percent of low-income employees hired for these projects
In Houston, we pride ourselves on our diversity, but we can bring out the best of our diversity and reach our full potential as a city if we are inclusive. In the case of immigrants, Houston can be more inclusive by creating a network of “Welcome Stations” across the city proudly championed by various welcoming stakeholders; making immigrants feel invited to enjoy our many wonderful public amenities; ensuring language access across city services; interacting with immigrants in a culturally competent way; and amplifying the voice of immigrants so that we can all learn from and benefit from what our immigrant neighbors can share with all of us.
Access to Services and Spaces

**Recommendation 34: Create Welcome Stations across the city to provide access to comprehensive information, resources, and services for immigrant Houstonians**

**Type of Recommendation: New Program**

**Responsible Party: Office of New Americans and Immigrant Communities, Houston Public Library**

Currently, immigrants face challenges accessing a comprehensive and concise set of updated information, resources, and services. Often, individuals navigate across numerous organizations providing services in Houston before finding the assistance they need. For certain immigrant groups – such as victims of trafficking or domestic violence – repeating their story while seeking services can cause emotional trauma beyond the original abuse. For new immigrants without a network of support in Houston, knowing where to start to seek services can be very challenging. For certain types of services, such as immigration legal services, there is a significant risk of falling victim to fraud. Finally, services are not evenly distributed throughout the city – some areas lack any services at all.

The most comprehensive referral system for Houstonians seeking social services is the United Way’s 2-1-1 hotline. The hotline is an excellent resource, but is often not vetted for the quality of service providers listed. The hotline also has limitations in terms of language access – online searches are currently only available in English, Spanish, German, French, Korean, and Vietnamese. Phone assistance is available in English, Spanish and six other languages. Overall, immigrant community members have disparate access to what the City and other organizations can offer and thus may not fully benefit from the services available to them.

The **Office of New Americans and Immigrant Communities** and **Houston Public Library** should jointly develop and implement a plan for creating **Welcome Stations** that serve as a decentralized network of locations across the city that:

- Disseminate information on services for immigrants, e.g. community health, school, housing, immigration, transportation, finance, jobs, language learning materials
- Provide language interpretation services and translated material of services and resources offered by local government agencies and community organizations
- Potentially serve as an area for mentorship and peer exchange
- Feature videos, exhibits and displays on international culture, design, and business

Various stakeholders, many of which are mentioned in this document, should be invited to apply to join the Welcome Station network. Potential physical and virtual locations could include:

- **Houston Public Library**
- Houston Police Department’s **Storefronts**
- Schools
- Nonprofit service providers
- International chambers of commerce

To ensure quality and comprehensive information at each Welcome Station site, the City should oversee the development of a “Welcome Houston Resource Guide” that consolidates information regarding key services impacting immigrants in Houston. The Guide should be available in print and on the web and should be accessible in different languages as well as via 2-1-1. Examples of content at Welcome Stations might include:

- Information about emergency shelters
- Information, connection to resources, and an avenue for reporting discrimination/abuse for LGBTQI immigrants and their allies
- Information about cultural and ethnic arts activities as well as a repository for immigrant and refugee stories
- Information on how to avoid *notario* fraud
- List of legal services provider members of the Houston Immigration Legal Services Collaborative
- Reporting and care guide for crime victims
- Information from the Health and Human Services Department
- Connections to individuals and groups interested in mentoring immigrants
- Details about how to start a self-led beautification project
- A medium or set of media for immigrants to tell their stories
- Voter registration resources
- Sign-up or resume drop-off for immigrants interested in joining a City board or commission
- Information regarding a hotline for people to call to report toxic fumes, illegal dumping, or other environmental concerns
- Information on buying, renting, and the Fair Housing Act
- Small business resources and pop-up City services
- Information about career transitions and job opportunities
- Information about parks and green spaces
- Information for immigrants to learn about civic institutions and processes
- Information for volunteers interested in working with immigrants

Potential participating organizations and stakeholders will apply to host Welcome Stations by sending staff and/or volunteers to a training and committing to managing and deploying a uniform set of information. These Welcome Station hosts will be acknowledged on the Office of New Americans and Immigrant Communities and City of Houston websites.\(^{171}\)

### BEST PRACTICES

The Chicago New Americans Plan included a plan for the City of Chicago’s Office of New Americans to partner with Chicago Public Schools, Chicago Public Libraries, and other city entities to create Welcome Stations throughout the city.\(^{172}\)

### MEASURING SUCCESS

**Outputs:**
Number of immigrant interactions per Welcome Station site per year, organized by category of inquiry and by language of immigrant

Number of updates to the available information and resources per year

Revisiting of the categories of information yearly

**Outcomes:**
Strong survey responses regarding "user experience"

Increased reported satisfaction with availability of information from the City

Growth over time in the use of the Welcome Stations

Immigrant volunteer involvement at the Welcome Stations (which might indicate satisfaction and trust)
**Recommendation 35: Continue improving multilingual and multicultural capacities of public-facing employees at public offices and general public institutions to better understand and respond to the needs of immigrants**

*Type of Recommendation: Expanded Program*

*Responsible Party: Office of New Americans and Immigrant Communities, HPD, HFD, METRO*

Immigrants and refugees in Houston encounter significant challenges in accessing available public safety, justice, and health services, and are particularly vulnerable to crime due to language barriers and lack of information. In the area of public safety, immigrants often feel intimidated, cannot communicate, or do not know how to report instances of crime. Language access and availability of public transportation are also critical to immigrants’ ability to utilize City services and public spaces, as well as interact with their local communities.

The City of Houston has implemented a Language Access Plan called the [iSpeak Houston](#) initiative, promoting “public access to essential information and services in languages other than English.” This effort includes a telephone line providing access to live interpretation in over 60 languages. However, a majority of the City’s websites and informative printed materials are still available only in English. Emergency public safety and public health information is rarely available in non-English languages. Translated materials are often difficult to read or electronically share due to format (e.g., PDF).

The language and cultural profiles of many City departments are not representative of the City’s diversity. Public safety departments, such as the Houston Police and Houston Fire Departments, lack live interpretation tools, hindering their ability to respond effectively in critical situations. Limited English proficient Houstonians need increased access to City services related to emergency and health services, among other areas.

To address these issues, the City should:

- Ensure compliance across all City departments for providing service and information to all Houston residents and visitors, regardless of immigration status
- Strengthen the [iSpeak Houston](#) initiative to ensure accessibility of information and include tools for effective in-person, print, signage and online communication
- Establish partnerships with ethnic media, digital formats, and other platforms to quickly share or forward vital information, especially in emergency public health and safety situations
- Develop communications practices that focus on content clarity and simplicity, considering the range of reading levels
- Hire and train public-facing employees to serve LEP individuals, including Police, Fire, METRO, and Health and Human Services
- Hire and train supervisors who are multilingual and culturally competent, especially in positions related to customer service and conflict resolution
- Establish a process to translate vital public safety and public health materials into key languages, and include such translated materials on department websites as well as in public safety and public service announcements, informational videos, and pamphlets
- Develop a culture of language diversity and service orientation among METRO’s employees to respond to the needs of immigrant riders
- Create a partnership with community organizations and refugee resettlement agencies to conduct targeted recruitment of immigrant and refugee candidates who speak multiple foreign languages or at least one foreign language not well represented by current City and METRO employees, potentially leveraging funding sources accessed by resettlement agencies and other nonprofits that focus on workforce development
- Encourage community outreach, education, and other engagement by all departments to raise public awareness of available services, especially for immigrants and LEP individuals
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<tr>
<th>BEST PRACTICES</th>
<th>POTENTIAL PARTNERS</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Houston Language Bank</strong> (HLB) is a nonprofit that has helped to solve language access and other information equity challenges in Houston drawing on more than 30 years of experience. HLB and <strong>Houston International Network</strong> recently published a report on communications challenges. The official website of New York City government is available in 103 languages. <strong>Gobierno.USA.gov</strong> is the Spanish version of USA.gov, providing an official guide to government information and services nationally, with a unique Spanish URL. The American Public Transportation Association has developed a thorough diversity plan. The Federal Transit Administration has a “Innovative Public Transportation Workforce Development Program”. New York City has created a list of best practices for implementing language access policies. MD Anderson Cancer Center provides language interpretation through iPads that connect directly to an interpreter via Skype on every hospital floor. The City could seek federal funding for efforts that comply with federal Language Access requirements (e.g., Federal Transit Administration, Community Oriented Policing grants). The City could partner with community centers and ethnic organizations around Houston to create a “Volunteer Language Corps,” a database of volunteers and City employees that can provide language interpretation and translation services.</td>
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**MEASURING SUCCESS**

**Outputs:**
Development of City Language Access policy directives that give all departments clear guidance on their obligations for compliance

Include language access and cultural competency as critical components of the City’s leadership training and vision for customer service excellence

Defined “plain-language” principles for City communications, allowing information to be understood by individuals with a wide range of reading levels, as well as LEP individuals

Increased number of City employees that offer services in a foreign language

Increased number of multilingual and culturally-competent City employees in management positions

Increased number of total foreign languages spoken by City and METRO employees

Number of neighborhood communities reached through outreach and public awareness campaigns by City departments

Development of a Volunteer Language Corps

**Outcomes:**
Positive results in language accessibility through random ‘undercover’ tests across all City departments.

Strong survey responses regarding “user experience”

Increase in reported satisfaction with access to public services and information from the City

Increase in reported satisfaction with customer services complaints or appeals of decisions made by City programs
Recommendation 36: Ensure immigrants are aware of, have access to, and feel welcome in parks, green spaces, museums, public libraries and other public venues and activities across Houston

Type of Recommendation: Expanded Program
Responsible Party: COH Parks and Recreation Department, Mayor’s Office of Cultural Affairs, Houston Public Library, METRO

Houston has made strong commitments and investments to transform its parks, public spaces, and cultural amenities. One of the goals of Plan Houston includes the provision of “[i]nviting and accessible parks and public spaces that provide recreation experiences, respect the environment, and connect people and places.” These plans should include immigrant engagement and integration in the designing and programming of public spaces. In order for immigrants to develop a sense of ownership and connectedness with Houston as their community and home, public spaces should be places where they can co-create and participate as equals with other community members. The spaces should also be inviting and comprehensible from a language access perspective.

The Office of New Americans and Immigrant Communities should work with the Cultural Affairs Office, the Parks and Recreation Department, and the Houston Public Library to determine the best ways to build immigrant engagement and ownership of museums, parks, green spaces, and other public venues. The following components should be considered:

- Offerings such as social services, English classes, arts programming, and town halls should be held regularly in these spaces
- The Parks and Recreation Department should continue to examine park accessibility for all Houston neighborhoods and the City’s Land Assemblage Redevelopment Authority (LARA) should consider the development of a program for supporting and developing pocket parks in “greenspace deserts”
- Metro should continue to promote the public places its service reaches, and all departments should highlight how to reach public venues or events using public transportation, with more frequency or an extended schedule arranged (e.g., the City’s efforts in hosting the upcoming Super Bowl LI) for special occasions
- A plan should be developed to increase the frequency of festivals, block parties, public markets, and sport competitions that showcase the value of parks and green spaces for all Houstonians

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<th>BEST PRACTICES</th>
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<tr>
<td>New York has developed strategies to engage immigrant communities in parks and museums, highlighting examples of building participation, co-creation, and a sense of ownership among immigrant communities</td>
<td>Foundations that focus on parks and green spaces, on arts &amp; culture, or sports</td>
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The New York City Department of Youth and Community organizes the Teen PASS after-school program, a free service that focuses on involving 6th-8th graders in activities at city parks.
MEASURING SUCCESS

Outputs:
Increase in park visitors in immigrant-dense neighborhoods
Increase in immigrant visits to museums and other cultural institutions

Outcomes:
Increase in Houston’s Park Score, as measured by the Trust for Public Land, tracked and compared annually both as a “raw” score and for the purposes of comparing Houston’s progress vis-a-vis other large U.S. cities
Reported satisfaction among immigrants regarding park access and enjoyment
Reported satisfaction (through community organization surveys) among immigrants regarding accessibility and enjoyment of public spaces and museums

Welcoming Schools

Recommendation 37: Be more welcoming of and sensitive to immigrant students via training in trauma, cultural, and religious literacy curricula

Type of Recommendation: New Program
Responsible Party: Mayor’s Office, Director of Education, Office of New Americans and Immigrant Communities

Immigrant children and youth are also often over-diagnosed with special needs and placed in special education programs due to cultural misunderstandings and limited English proficiency. Teachers often categorize students as special needs students simply because they cannot grasp the English language well or because they have a different understanding of what is expected of them as a student. In addition, immigrant children are sometimes assumed to be misbehaving when they simply need to process moments of trauma that they have previously faced. When teachers and administrators place students in special education programs they fail to address the root of the problem and ignore other serious issues that immigrant children face. To address this issue, teachers should learn to differentiate learning based on students’ cultural and trauma realities.

In recent years, the Texas public educational system, specifically Houston Independent School District, has attempted to create support groups targeted at immigrant children and youth. HISD has recognized that immigrant children and youth are often at a disadvantage when entering the public educational system because they face difficult social and cognitive adjustment periods when adapting to their new environment. HISD now provides many services through the Multilingual Education program and shows a dedication to these children through the creation of immigrant schools, such as Las Americas Immigrant School and Liberty High School.190 Alief ISD, Aldine ISD, Spring Branch and Waller ISD have also created newcomer programs as their immigrant student populations have grown.

The Office of New Americans and Immigrant Communities should lead the development of resources and supports for trauma-informed immigrant education in social-emotional concepts as well as cultural and religious literacies.191 Through such opportunities for professional development in these literacies, teachers and administrators will become more aware, comfortable, and confident in teaching within these sensitive arenas, leading other students to welcome immigrants in a safe and respectful manner.
In the Houston area, each district campus’s action or improvement plan serve as the venue for expanding the possibilities for more curricular programming in cultural and religious literacies.

Fort Bend ISD conducts Global Studies Academies, which may be a favorable venue for cultural and religion curricular expansion.

Trauma literacy and cultural orientation lessons for teachers and staff is in the pilot stage at Las Americas Newcomer School within HISD.

HISD’s program on trauma literacy trainings

The Boniuk Institute could assist with religious and cultural literacy curricula.

PAIR Houston provides after-school programming for refugee youth and could be a site of cultural and religious curricular expansion.

Interfaith religious communities and local libraries could serve as partners for sponsorship, support, and programming venues.

**MEASURING SUCCESS**

**Outputs:**
The number of teachers, educators, and administrators participating in professional development in the three literacies.

Number of children and parents participating in training.

**Outcome:**
Positive feedback regarding the applicable trainings from participating teachers, educators, administrators, children, and parents.

**Recommendation 38:** Help immigrant students to transition into the U.S. school system, enabling them to engage with the appropriate curricula and succeed academically.

*Type of Recommendation: Expanded Program*

*Responsible Party: COH Director of Education, Houston-area school districts*

Immigrants often face several challenges with respect to their transition into the U.S. school system. Foreign-born children may struggle to secure documents that prove completion of courses or credits in their home countries. Many immigrants, such as refugees and asylees, flee their home countries due to persecution and war, making it difficult to attain original transcripts. Some schools accept a letter from the Ministry of Education from their country of origin in lieu of transcripts; however, securing documents can be burdensome for some students.\(^{192}\)

The City of Houston Director of Education should work with area educational institutions to ensure increased access to resources and programming that affirm inclusive, safe, and welcoming educational environments for immigrants, including both youth and adults. Receiving credits for previous school completion, proper identification of ELL needs, and school-based immigrant programs should be part of these efforts. In addition, the Office of New Americans and Immigrant Communities and Director of Education should work with other governmental agencies, nonprofits, school districts, higher education institutions, and Consul Generals to help students obtain accurate credit transfers for primary, secondary, and post-secondary institutions.
World Education Services (WES) is approved by the Texas Education Agency.

The "Every Campus a Refuge" program is a pledge to provide at least one refugee family with a space to stay through campus-provided housing.

The U.S. Department of Education’s Equity Assistance Centers "provide assistance in the areas of race, gender, national origin, and religion to public school districts to promote equal educational opportunities"; the designated Region II Center for Texas is Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA/SCCE).

Local examples are listed and described in the “Possible Partnerships” section.

**Outputs:**
By 2020, youth programs specific to immigrants and refugees should increase by at least 20 percent.

The availability of ESL programs for all ages and skill levels should increase, with a goal of at least two options for ESL classes within a one-mile radius of each major hub of immigrant populations throughout the city.

**Outcome:**
By 2019, the percentage of accepted credits and transfers across high schools and higher educational institutions should increase by at least 10 percent.

**Recommendation 39: Support the mitigation of targeted bullying, social isolation, and differential discipline in schools**

*Type of Recommendation: New Program*
*Responsible Party: COH Director of Education*

The City should work with schools and educational nonprofits to offer trainings to school communities on anti-immigrant bullying. Such training should be offered to students, teachers, parents, staff, and administrators. Trainings should:

- Demonstrate the value of the diverse linguistic, cultural, and other backgrounds of all students
- Encourage students to express disagreement over ideas or beliefs in a respectful manner
- Communicate a clear message to students that harassment and bullying will not be tolerated and that schools are a safe place for all students
- Create opportunities for students to enhance their cultural competency by being exposed to various cultures and faiths, such as through co-curricular activities in which students work on service projects to discover commonalities and appreciate differences
- Encourage students, staff, and parents to report all incidents of harassment, bullying, and isolation so that the school can address issues before they escalate

The City should ensure that information about the steps outlined above is easily understandable for all students, families, and staff. Additionally, the City should encourage organizations such as the Interfaith Ministries Network,
Welcoming Schools

the City’s planned advisory board on extremism, and the City’s Department of Neighborhood’s Anti-Gang Unit to share information on hate crimes, bullying, and violence targeted at or by immigrants, as well as to share best practices on how to prevent these actions.

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<th>BEST PRACTICES</th>
<th>POTENTIAL PARTNERS</th>
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<tr>
<td>Orlando, San Bernardino, Charleston, and Minneapolis all provide examples of youth at risk and how communities have dealt with such challenges</td>
<td>Schools in the Greater Houston Area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minneapolis-St. Paul pilot projects offer great examples of “Countering Violent Extremism” efforts</td>
<td>Interfaith entities, such as the Boniuk Institute for Religious Tolerance and Interfaith Ministries</td>
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<tr>
<td>The department of Justice ran pilot programs to stop violent extremism before it starts in Boston and Los Angeles</td>
<td>Public and private mental health providers</td>
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<tr>
<td>DHS provides grant funding to cities and NGOs for pilot programs in this area</td>
<td>Local government, nonprofits, and other community leaders</td>
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MEASURING SUCCESS

Outputs:
The creation of a training program by the end of 2018
The setting of program-level Key Performance Indicators once a program is created

Recommendation 40: Include and integrate immigrant parents into their children’s education

Type of Recommendation: New Program
Responsible Party: Local school districts, other nonprofits, COH Director of Education

Due to barriers in language, time, finances, transportation, and culture, immigrant parents face constraints in navigating and understanding the American educational system for themselves and their children. In the 2014-2015 academic school year, more than 30 percent of HISD’s student population qualified as Limited English Proficiency (LEP) students. Alief ISD has a similar LEP ratio, and the number of LEP students in Spring Branch continues to grow steadily.

School districts are already becoming proactive in their outreach efforts to immigrant families by using coordinator-type staffers to connect schools and immigrant families. Local school districts should build on existing efforts by working with the City of Houston’s Director of Education to create a citywide system of knowledgeable, vetted volunteers who will mentor and advocate for immigrant families to better integrate into society. A family mentorship program could assist immigrants acculturate into the American education system and help ensure that appropriate religious and cultural accommodations and opportunities for inclusion are made in existing school programs.
Spring Branch ISD has implemented a version of this program at a smaller scale and with great success for its recently arrived Congolese and Syrian refugee populations.

Welcoming Chicago also recommended a parent mentoring program that would pair more established immigrants with new families.\(^{198}\)

The Institute for Canadian Citizenship created Ahlan Canada to welcome Syrian refugees.\(^ {199}\)

### Measuring Success

**Outputs:**
At least 100 families have mentors by 2018

By 2020, this number should grow to more than 300 families served

**Outcomes:**
School retention rates, enrollment in educational programming for older youth or unemployed adults in the family, and general progression of acquisition of English are some of the metrics that would allow us to understand whether or not families are benefiting from the program.

Program administrators can also measure qualitative benefits of the program through gauging students comfort levels, feelings of acceptance in the new school, and their overall understanding of educational expectations.

### Recommendation 41: Ensure the effective support of Dual Language Learners and English Language Learners to foster their integration and accelerate their English Language acquisition

*Type of Recommendation: New Program*

*Responsible Party: COH Director of Education, local school districts*

Dual Language Learners (DLLs) are students learning two (or more) languages at the same time, as well as those learning a second language while continuing to develop their first (or home) language through a formal program. English Language Learners (ELLs) are active learners of the English language who may benefit from various types of language support programs, which encompasses some DLL students. There is a lack of existing data on needs and gaps for DLLs and ELLs within the local population.

The Director of Education should work with area school districts to determine the needs of DLLs and ELLs in our community and gaps that may exist, and explore ways the City and other partners could support the districts in implementing the following best-practices from other localities:\(^ {202}\)

- Invest to expand DLL and ELL access to early childhood education programs (especially three-year-olds, who are currently eligible for state pre-K fund, but for whom funding is not being fully drawn down by HISD due to physical space constraints)
- Differentiate programs to meet the diverse needs of DLLs and ELLs
- Prepare all teachers to work effectively with DLLs and ELLs
- Explore strategies to increase collaboration among schools in this area
- Incorporate DLL and ELL needs at the outset of all policy formulation and reformulation
San Antonio is a leader in designing and implementing reforms and strategies to support the academic and linguistic development of DLLs, having adopted three key initiatives to better support its DLLs:

The city has made a significant investment in expanding access to high-quality pre-K through its new PreK4SA program.

Local school districts in San Antonio are also focusing on supporting DLLs’ home languages by updating their language instruction models. The Harlandale Independent School District and Northside Independent School District have launched dual immersion programs to help DLL students become fully bilingual in English and Spanish. DLLs enrolled in these programs demonstrate high academic achievement, especially when compared to DLLs not enrolled in dual immersion.

A variety of community organizations are coordinating with area schools to develop dual-generation and family engagement programs that support DLLs and their families. For example, the Eastside Promise Neighborhood launched a program that provides parents/caretakers of young children with the opportunity to pursue a post-secondary degree through tuition scholarships and by covering child care supports plus after-school and other costs.

The U.S. Department of Education and Department of Justice published a memo on effective ways to ensure that ELLs can participate meaningfully and equally in educational programs, with guidance on:

- Assessing and identifying ELLs
- Providing meaningful access to curriculum and extracurricular activities
- Evaluating the effectiveness of a district’s ELL program

**Recommendation 42: Advocate for the Texas DREAM Act to ensure affordable higher education for immigrant youth**

*Type of Recommendation: Continuation of Existing Program
Responsible Party: Mayor’s Office, City Council, Director of Education, nonprofits and businesses*

The Texas DREAM Act provides certain undocumented youth in Texas with in-state tuition at Texas public colleges and universities and provides access to some state scholarships and grants. Texas was the first state in the country to pass tuition equity laws allowing undocumented students to pay in-state tuition rates at colleges and universities and to allow undocumented students to apply for state financial aid. Undocumented immigrants are not eligible for federal financial aid, so the Texas DREAM Act serves an important function.
A broad-based coalition should encourage the Governor and state legislators to retain and expand the Texas DREAM Act. In addition, relevant stakeholders should create a uniform training for Houston educators, administrators, and institutions to ensure that educators and school administrators are knowledgeable about immigration policies, education equity, financial aid, and other help for immigrant families. The City of Houston should also host educational fairs and forums on these topics.

### BEST PRACTICES

**United We Dream’s Dream Educational Empowerment Program (DEEP)**  
United We Dream’s Dream Educational Empowerment Program (DEEP) informs educators about relevant needs and helps undocumented students identify supportive on-campus allies.

**UndocuPeers: Liberating Campus Climate**  
UndocuPeers: Liberating Campus Climate informs educators about relevant needs and helps undocumented students identify supportive on-campus allies.

**The Youth Empowerment Alliance** at the University of Houston hosts trainings each month at middle schools and high schools that serve undocumented students, discussing in-state tuition, state financial aid, and other higher education resources.

Chicago’s approach in this area is a good best-practice example.

### POTENTIAL PARTNERS

Many organizations throughout Texas support the Texas DREAM Act, including the Greater Houston Partnership, Central Houston Inc., the Archdiocese of Houston-Galveston, teachers, unions, and others.

### MEASURING SUCCESS

**Outputs:**

Preservation of the Texas DREAM Act

Creation and implementation of resources and trainings for undocumented students and staff and faculty at local schools, colleges, and universities

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**Cultural Competency**

**Recommendation 43: Create a training curriculum for the Houston community concerning the immigrant experience in Houston**

*Type of Recommendation: New Program*

*Responsible Party: Office of New Americans and Immigrant Communities*

A training program for city officials, law enforcement, public servants, and all other community members would help to create a more empathetic environment and a safe space for immigrants in Houston. A citywide training program focusing on the immigrant experience in Houston will enable more immigrants to feel comfortable accessing city services, interacting with law enforcement, and otherwise engaging with the broader Houston community. Cultural competence entails the knowledge and skills to communicate, serve, and work well with individuals, regardless of their cultural, economic, ethnic, or religious status.

The Office of New Americans and Immigrant Communities should partner with nonprofit and for-profit entities that already provide cultural competency trainings to identify best practices and co-develop a cultural competency training curriculum to train employees across the City of Houston’s various departments and agencies, with a focus on entities that interact frequently with immigrant and lower-income communities. This training should be developed with the input of cross-sectoral groups serving immigrants and other diverse communities within Houston.
A general training applicable to all relevant City entities should be complemented with a tailored training for specific entities where such specificity is appropriate and needed, such as training for healthcare providers who primarily serve immigrant and lower-income communities. For City employees and other public servants, these trainings should be combined with existing job orientation programs and held on a yearly basis. These trainings should also be offered to nonprofits, private companies, and the general Houston public to improve cultural competency in as many contexts as possible.

These trainings should be inclusive of all groups that could benefit from added cultural awareness, such as the LGBTQI+ community, refugees, people of all abilities, the elderly, and victims of abuse.

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<td>Jersey City, NJ, has implemented an LGBT training program for all new graduating police officers as part of their departmental training.</td>
<td>Partners for the creation of a training program:</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Mayor’s Office of Diversity affairs in Salt Lake City provides diversity training for city employees.</td>
<td>Texas Organizing Project</td>
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<td>The City of Columbus regularly provides cultural diversity and awareness training on the following topics: managing change, impacts of stereotyping, perception vs. reality, analysis of culture, increasing cross-cultural communication, gender issues, and legal compliance.</td>
<td>Houston Coalition for the Homeless</td>
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<td>The United Way and other organizations in Houston provide cultural competency trainings</td>
<td>Organización Latina de Trans de Texas (Organization of Texas Trans Latinas)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>The Montrose Center</td>
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<td>Special Advisor to the Mayor on Human Trafficking</td>
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<td>Living Hope Wheelchair Association</td>
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<td>Organizations receiving training:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Public-facing employees at all City offices</td>
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<td>All law enforcement agencies</td>
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<td>City and County healthcare providers (as well as private providers treating immigrant populations)</td>
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### Measuring Success

**Outputs:**

- Number of individuals trained
- Number of offices and organizations that receive the training

**Outcomes**

Change in knowledge and attitudes of City employees towards immigrants and other groups, based on surveys collected before cultural sensitivity training and six months after training

Immigrants’ reported increase in comfort levels and feelings of acceptance in the community
Recommendation 44: Develop a Welcoming Houston imprint or accreditation to incentivize businesses and nonprofits to meet standards of welcoming and equitable services for immigrant Houstonians

Type of Recommendation: New Program
Responsible Party: Office of New Americans and Immigrant Communities, Better Business Bureau of Houston and South Texas

Creating an accreditation program would help more business owners better serve immigrants from certain cultural groups. In turn, the accreditation program would help to foster a welcoming environment and reduce any potential discriminatory practices by businesses in Houston, helping immigrants feel more comfortable throughout the city. Thus, the Office of New Americans and Immigrant Communities should partner with the Better Business Bureau of Houston and South Texas and international chambers of commerce to develop a set of standards and best practices for businesses to follow to receive accreditation. Criteria/requirements might include the following:

- Language accessibility
- Activities that promote immigrant inclusion
- Immigrant hiring practices
- Participation in cultural competency training
- Attendance at periodic meetings with other accredited businesses and organizations that can provide relevant training

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<tr>
<td>Welcoming America</td>
<td>Better Business Bureau of Houston and South Texas</td>
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<td>Welcoming Communities Certification</td>
<td>Hispanic Chamber of Commerce</td>
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<td>program, which will certify municipalities that meet the highest standards of welcoming. Aspects of that program could be adapted and applied to a business certification concept in Houston.</td>
<td>Greater Houston Partnership</td>
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<td>Houston Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce</td>
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MEASURING SUCCESS

Outputs:
Number of businesses that seek accreditation
Number of businesses that obtain accreditation

Outcome:
Reported satisfaction by immigrant consumers that visit accredited businesses

Amplifying the Immigrant Voice

Recommendation 45: Build a multi-agency program to increase the inclusion of immigrants and cultural diversity in existing and new forums

Type of Recommendation: Expanded Program
Responsible Party: The Office of New Americans and Immigrant Communities and Mayor’s Office of Cultural Affairs

Houston’s internationally-renowned arts and cultural assets provide an opportunity for immigrants to be known and heard, and for the City’s visual and cultural landscapes to reflect our diversity. Houston’s existing cultural
Amplifying the Immigrant Voice

institutions can be leveraged to champion the immigrant voice, and to enhance understanding, inclusivity, and empathy across the Houston community.

The City has been working to build greater equity of access to opportunities in the arts, most notably through the Houston Arts and Cultural Plan created by the Mayor's Office of Cultural Affairs. The Plan seeks to foster an environment in which art and culture flourish "for the sharing and benefit of all residents and visitors." To further this goal, the Office of New Americans and Immigrant Communities should partner with the Office of Cultural Affairs to create a joint program to amplify the voice of diverse artists (including immigrant artists) in the community. These offices should collaborate with other City agencies as necessary.

This program should be built collaboratively, with consideration of the following potential components:

- Affordable production, studio, live-work, exhibition, and shared “maker” spaces for individual artists
- Affordable performance, exhibition, rehearsal and production space for cultural organizations
- Access to mentorship in the arts community
- Ongoing expansion of the Civic Art process to include diverse cultural representation and provide capacity support services for immigrant artists and makers to increase the breadth and quality of Civic Art participation
- Inclusion of diverse voices in relevant committees, press conferences, and events
- Marketing of cultural events, particularly of diverse voices’ arts and cultural contributions to Houston
- Review guidelines for funds, grants, and events to ensure inclusive evaluation practices

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>BEST PRACTICES</th>
<th>POTENTIAL PARTNERS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New York City conducted a survey of diversity in arts organizations and subsequently offered $2 million to promote diversity in theater management(^{212})</td>
<td>Mayor’s Office of Cultural Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York City has had a Diversity in Arts Leadership Internship Program for the past 25 years(^{213})</td>
<td>Museums and galleries across Houston</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Pitch NY(^{214}) event promotes diverse voices in the entertainment industry in New York City</td>
<td>Independent cultural and arts organizations that can provide space or mentorship</td>
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**MEASURING SUCCESS**

**Outputs:**
Creation of a collaborative program to promote diversity in the arts in Houston

The creation of of Key Performance Indicators once the program is created

**Recommendation 46: Generate opportunities for immigrants to tell their stories, celebrate traditions, and enhance cultural understanding through existing events and decentralized local and regional collaborations**

**Type of Recommendation:** Expanded Program

**Responsible Party:** Office of New Americans and Immigrant Communities, Cultural Affairs Office

Houston is rich in cultural diversity and offers arts and cultural events that highlight such diversity. The Office of New Americans and Immigrant Communities should expand its existing work celebrating immigrants and fostering cross-cultural understanding through events and publications focusing on immigrants in Houston. The expansion of existing work should be threefold:
The creation of a citywide festival focusing on diversity and multiculturalism, to be held in numerous locations throughout the city in a decentralized manner.

The continuation of individual events and initiatives held year-round across Houston to promote the immigrant voice. These events should be produced in collaboration with organizations across Houston focusing on the arts. Potential initiatives include:

- Inviting immigrants and refugees to produce place-based arts initiatives to improve their environment for the benefit of themselves and other community members.
- Creating an immigrant storytelling festival or poetry slam that celebrates Houston and unites diverse voices.
- Involving farmers from Plant It Forward to lead workshops for other immigrants on how to build or add to community gardens, farms, and smaller “plots” in apartments and other smaller spaces.
- Creating a multi-age, multi-language sidewalk poetry project focusing on the immigrant voice.
- Holding a citywide event inviting immigrant artists to present or perform at schools as part of the Arts Access Initiative (AAI).
- Creating a prize-oriented event, similar to the LiftOff! Houston small business pitch competition, with a focus on immigrants that submit art or other creative projects.

Publicizing the contribution of immigrants in Houston through the following methods:

- Creating a mechanism for immigrants to share their story on the Welcoming Houston website and at Welcome Stations throughout the city.
- Publicizing existing cultural events via Houston First Corporation and media outlets.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>BEST PRACTICES</th>
<th>POTENTIAL PARTNERS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>La Fête de la Musique in Paris, The Million Project, Houston Arts Alliance’s Folklife and Traditional Arts Project, Plant It Forward, HOPE Farm, Alley Theater, Writers in The Schools’ youth slam poetry, Houston in Motion, Immigrant Magazine Online, Made Into America</td>
<td>Existing arts and cultural organizations and institutions, Local businesses and chambers of commerce, Tourist agencies, Local news sources, including Houstonia Magazine, radio stations, and news outlets can help promote events, Organizations that host events such as HUE Mural Festival, Bayou City Poetry Slam Festival, and WorldFest, Local social service organizations that focus on providing services for immigrants, such as Interfaith Ministries, Catholic Charities, United We Dream, Tahiri Center for Justice, and Neighborhood Centers, Public Poetry</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**MEASURING SUCCESS**

**Outputs:**
Creation of a decentralized citywide event celebrating the diversity of Houston’s immigrants

Increase in the number of immigrant-focused events across Houston

Creation of a mechanism to publish immigrant stories on the Welcoming Houston website and at Welcome Stations

**Outcome:**
Positive feedback from immigrants and others about the educational and other elements of a citywide event.
Leveraging Data and Evidence

The efforts driven by and related to Welcoming Houston will be most effective when all stakeholders—including the City of Houston’s various relevant agencies, the many nonprofits that work with immigrants, businesses, researchers, and others—use data to drive our decisions, our priorities, our processes, and our actions. Thus, the following recommendations aim to guide and encourage the creation of the appropriate and necessary data-collection and -reporting frameworks where such a focus on data is needed.
**Recommendation 47: Collect data to conduct equity analyses that should be made available to the public and taken into account for decision making purposes**

*Type of Recommendation: New Analysis*  
*Responsible Party: COH Planning Department, Office of New Americans and Immigrant Communities*

Evaluating whether immigrants have equitable access to services and spaces provided by City agencies is difficult since there has been no comprehensive census conducted of immigrants in Houston and City agencies do not collect information on the demographics of the individuals they serve. Additionally, new programs are not subject to an equity analysis prior to implementation. An equity analysis is an evaluation of whether programs are equally serving those who can benefit from the programs, with an emphasis on marginalized communities. Collecting data and conducting equity analyses would establish a culture of transparency and accountability among institutions in Houston and empower agencies, stakeholders, and the public to monitor and advance equity in access and quality of services available to immigrant and all other Houstonians.

The Planning Department and **Office of New Americans and Immigrant Communities** should evaluate the feasibility of the following concepts that could significantly improve the quality and equity of City services:

- Conduct an initial study of immigrants in Houston by zip code (or other grouping identified by the City)
- Expand the current language access data collection program to include additional information about those being served by agencies (including gender, country of origin, age bracket, and other key metrics), developing these metrics with the input of community organizations and collecting information in a way that would allow individuals to remain anonymous
- Collect and publish anonymized information about the demographics (including English Language Proficiency) of individuals accessing services
- Work with key community groups and experts to establish guidelines for equity analysis during the pre-implementation phase of new City programs and policies
- Work with other City agencies to institutionalize equity analysis into all program implementation (particularly programs essential to immigrants), using the data collected by agencies to inform the analysis

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<th>BEST PRACTICES</th>
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| The **Newest New Yorkers** study is a comprehensive overview of immigrants in New York and could serve as a model for a demographics study in Houston | This idea ties in well with some of Plan Houston’s goals, particularly those relating to equal access and inclusiveness*216*
| **Pratt Center’s Equitable Innovation Economies Initiative** has examples of several cities’ equity-focused efforts*215* | Academic institutions such as University of Houston, Rice University, UH Downtown, UH Clear Lake, UT School of Public Health, Texas Southern University could help to develop an equity analysis framework and conduct equity assessments
| **World Health Organization and European Network of Healthy Cities** have developed a methodology that includes aspects of measuring inequality in access and outcomes and how to advance equity | The **Racial Equity Analysis Toolkit** is a good starting point for establishing the City’s protocols for equity analyses

**MEASURING SUCCESS**

*Outputs:*  
By end of 2017, agencies should collect data on 3-7 key metrics that allow for equity analysis and publish the data online in a consistent and searchable format

Development and use of an equity analysis protocol to applied in the pre-implementation phase for new City policies and programs by early 2018
Recommendation 48: Document the challenges and opportunities immigrants face and map the existing inventory of resources and assets

*Type of Recommendation: New Analysis*

*Responsible Party: Office of New Americans and Immigrant Communities, local nonprofits*

With a better understanding of the key challenges and the scope or quantity of immigrant Houstonians’ challenges and opportunities, coupled with a thorough mapping of existing resources and assets, organizations could work together to determine top priority areas and address them systematically and with a greater understanding of overall impact. Thus, the Office of New Americans and Immigrant Communities should collaborate with immigrant-focused nonprofits and other stakeholders to conduct an analysis of:

- The challenges and opportunities that immigrant Houstonians face
- The strengths, resources, and assets of the immigrant community
- The programs, services, resources, and other efforts of the City, nonprofits, educational institutions, faith organizations, and other entities that work with immigrants
- The schools and other research institutions, individuals, and groups conducting research or implementing interventions involving immigrants in Houston

**BEST PRACTICES**

The Asset-Based Community Development Institute has developed tools to help cities map local resident’s skills and supportive institutions to help build stronger, more sustainable communities, focusing on optimizing individuals’ strengths as assets for the community.

Researchers at CUNY in New York City, with the aid of the New York City Mayor’s Office of Immigrants Affairs and Language Services, developed The New York Immigrant Organizations Project (NYIOP) to create a descriptive database of organizations that provide resources to immigrants.

The City and County of Denver Office of Community Support published a resource guide of organizations serving immigrants and refugees in the area.

In Houston:
- Neighborhood Centers has used appreciative inquiry to build in-depth knowledge of several communities in the Houston area
- Houston in Motion is a database of resources available to immigrants in Houston

**POSSIBLE PARTNERS**

All organizations and stakeholders that work or otherwise interact with immigrants

- Office of New Americans and Immigrant Communities
- Houston Immigration Legal Services Collaborative
- Kinder Institute

**MEASURING SUCCESS**

**Outputs:**
Consolidation and organization of immigrant-related aggregate data from various stakeholders, building on the work of Houston in Motion and the Houston Immigration Legal Services Collaborative

Development of a system for assessing the current local immigration landscape and prioritizing issues and opportunities based on the system
Recommendation 49: Conduct an analysis of best ways to communicate with and reach immigrants, and pilot the most promising approaches

Type of Recommendation: New Analysis
Responsible Party: Office of New Americans and Immigrant Communities

Stakeholders currently use various methods—including public service announcements (PSAs), phone banks, flyer distribution at large-scale events, text messaging or email communication, social media, and informational sessions—to conduct outreach to immigrant communities in Houston. To our knowledge, limited information exists regarding the effectiveness of these different modes on a comparative basis. To ensure that resources for conducting outreach and otherwise communicating with immigrants are being used efficiently and effectively, the Office of New Americans and Immigrant Communities should work with communications and data experts to determine the most effective methods across different immigrant communities and age groups.

**BEST PRACTICES**
United We Dream Houston effectively uses text messages, emails, and social media to communicate with immigrant youth
Partnerships with media organizations such as Univision have been very helpful in reaching some immigrant groups

**POTENTIAL PARTNERS**
Local marketing/communications/data experts for their advice and help on how to determine the most effective methods

**MEASURING SUCCESS**

**Outputs:**
Assessment of various communication methods and identification of the most effective methods by immigrant group and age group
Implementation of the most effective methods and sharing of best practices with nonprofits across the city

Recommendation 50: Create, track, and publicly share Key Performance Indicators that will allow the City and community to confirm progress on the recommendations outlined in this document

Type of Recommendation: New Analysis
Responsible Party: Office of New Americans and Immigrant Communities

To track the progress of Welcoming Houston, the Office of New Americans and Immigrant Communities should create a system to track all Key Performance Indicators outlined in the “Measuring Success” sections of this document. Collaboration with the Planning Department can help link these goals to Plan Houston to ensure departments are not overwhelmed with varying sets of KPIs and that goals are aligned across different initiatives throughout Houston.

The Office of New Americans and Immigrant Communities should evaluate the best way to implement this system, considering the following options:
- Through the expansion of the current SAP Strategy Management system (which is used for the City’s Performance Insight operational report)
- Through the creation of a new system, potentially achieved with the input of a third party such as through a hackathon or contractor
The **Office of New Americans and Immigrant Communities** should then work with other offices and departments to implement the KPIs and have the other offices begin tracking their indicators. The City's Innovation and Performance team should be leveraged for their expertise in providing KPI training. The KPIs should be reported into a centralized database and published quarterly.

### BEST PRACTICES

| Plan Houston | already sets KPIs to be tracked across City departments |
| Houston’s Performance Insight program tracks key indicators across departments to determine whether they are meeting key performance benchmarks |
| Projects such as CityKeys and the ISO/TS 37151 are initiatives to help cities track key metrics and improve performance |

### POTENTIAL PARTNERS

| City of Houston Planning Department |
| City of Houston Innovation and Performance Team |
| All departments participating in the implementation of Welcoming Houston recommendations |

### MEASURING SUCCESS

**Output:**
The creation and implementation of a system to track KPIs for Welcoming Houston across departments by the end of 2017
Appendix A: Welcoming Houston Participants

Task Force

Ali Al Sudani, Interfaith Ministries for Greater Houston
Amanda Cloud, The Simmons Foundation
Ana Andrea Molina, Organización Latina de Trans in Texas
Angela Blanchard, Neighborhood Centers
Anne Whitlock,* Connect Community
Brenda Kirk, National Immigration Forum
Charles Foster, Foster LLP
Chi-Mei Lin, Chinese Community Center
Claudia Ortega-Hogue,* NALEO Educational Fund
Cynthia Colbert,* Catholic Charities
David Johnston, Houston Independent School District
Danielle Bartz, Office of Mayor Sylvester Turner
Diane McGehee, Texas Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church
Eva Thibaudeau-Graczyk, Houston Coalition for the Homeless
Frances Valdez, United We Dream
Francisco Arguelles,* Living Hope Wheelchair Association
Glenda Joe, Houston International Network
Gordon Quan,* Quan Law Group
Grace Olivares, Univision
Hany Khalil, Texas Gulf Coast Area Labor Federation
Jannette Diep, Boat People S.O.S.
Jodi Berger Cardoso,* UH Graduate College of Social Work
John Hernandez,* Amegy Bank
Lauren West,* PAIR Houston
Long Chu,* Houston Endowment
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Meghna Goswami, Houston Endowment
Minal Patel Davis, Special Advisor to Mayor Sylvester Turner on Human Trafficking
Oni Blair, Mayor’s Office of Trade and International Affairs
Oscar Hernandez, United We Dream
Rafael Pantoja, Houston Police Department
Resha Thomas,* SEIU Texas
Sarah Howell LMSW, Las Americas Newcomer School, HISD
Sergio Garza, Apache Corporation
Sineria Ordóñez, Houston Hispanic Forum
Stan Marek, Marek Brothers
Wafa Abdin, Catholic Charities
Willy Gonzalez,* UNITE HERE, Local 23
Zahra Jamal,* Boniuk Institute, Rice University

Additional Committee Members

Adrian Shelley, Houston Air Alliance
Alix CaDavid, Mental Health America of Greater Houston
Appendix A: Welcoming Houston Participants

Aly Arnold, Chinese Community Center
Gaby Conde, Neighborhood Centers
Amy Bishop, Houston Public Media
Anne Chandler Tahirh Amin Alehashem Texas Civil Rights Project
Bolivar Fraga, Neighborhood Centers
Bridget E. Canty, Department of Homeland Security/SEVP, Houston/Central Texas
Carolina Ramirez, United We Dream
Constance Luo, Texas Organizing Project
Dr. Christine Kovic, University of Houston-Clear Lake
Dalia Castillo-Granados, Children's Immigration Law Academy
Darlene Breaux, Harris County Department of Education
Debbie Chen, OCA Houston
Debbie McNulty, Mayor's Office of Cultural Affairs
Diana Zarzuelo, Neighborhood Centers
Eddie Miranda, METRO
Eghosa Edebor, African Business Council of Texas
Elizabeth Tran, Boat People SOS
Ellen Schwaller, Harris County Public Health
Estella Gonzalez, Neighborhood Centers
Dr. Gayle Pagnoni, Rice University
Gislaine Williams, Refugee Council USA
Hadia Mawlawi, Arab American Cultural Center
Jeff Reichman, Sketch City
Jesus Loera Carrillo, Consulate General of Mexico
Jill Campbell, Neighborhood Centers
Karen Baker, South Texas College of Law
Karla Perez, Youth Empowerment Alliance
Laura Perez-Boston, Texas Organizing Project
Laurette Canizares, community volunteer
Liz Werber, Community Cloth
Linda Morales, Texas Gulf Coast Area Labor Federation AFL-CIO
Melissa Noriega, Neighborhood Centers
Dr. Noel Bezette-Flores, Lone Star College
Juan Parras, TEJAS
Pat Jasper, Houston Arts Alliance
Patricia Economides, Spring Branch Independent School District
Pastor Paul Wembolenga, Christ Is The Answer International Church
Paula Harris, Schlumberger
Rachna Khare, Daya Houston
Sheri Suarez Foreman, Houston Center for Literacy
Shirin Herman, Houston Independent School District - Multilingual Department
Stephen Chao, OCA Houston
Stuart Nelson, Institute for Spirituality and Health
Sylvia Chicas, Texas Organizing Project
Dr. Virginia Elizondo, Houston Independent School District
Willa Friedman, University of Houston
Yan Digilov, The Firestarter Group
Dr. Yehuda Sharim, Rice University
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Benito Juarez, Office of New Americans and Immigrant Communities  
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Kate Vickery, Houston Immigration Legal Services Collaborative  
Marisol Valero, Neighborhood Centers  
Samantha Chapa, Neighborhood Centers  
Terence O’Neill, Office of New Americans and Immigrant Communities

**National Experts**

Amanda Bergson-Schilcock, National Skills Coalition  
Kate Brick, New American Economy  
Monica Fuentes, Welcoming America

**Volunteers**

Alex Muir  
Amira Abakar  
Erika Turcios  
Lauren Rice  
Lucas Masllorens  
Paula Gallien  
Paulette Graves  
Rolando Garcia  
Rosa Cedillos  
Tiffany Penner  
Virginia Bariera

*Special thanks to Chris Valdez and Rachel Flores at Primer Grey for assistance with the layout and design of this document.*
Appendix B: Welcoming Houston Community Survey

The Welcoming Houston Community Survey received more than 270 responses between November of 2016 and January of 2017. The survey was not meant to present a statistically robust analysis of immigrants in Houston or their demographics. Rather, it was meant to provide a sample of immigrant views and experiences of life in Houston. Those surveyed answered questions regarding many topics covered by this document, including community awareness, economic opportunity, quality of life, education and youth, legal barriers and public safety, and culture and civic engagement. Below are highlights of survey results and demographics of those completing the survey. The full results were used in the development and prioritization of recommendations. Welcoming Houston is grateful to all who completed the survey and helped in its administration, and we hope this effort can improve and expand in the future.

Ninety-nine percent of survey respondents said they would recommend living in Houston; however, 40 percent of those surveyed said they had experienced discrimination. Survey respondents recounted instances of discrimination at work (low pay), in stores, at school, and while trying to receive medical care. Others mentioned that not speaking English led to discrimination, or recounted times they felt unwelcome in public settings.

Many immigrants also told specific stories of feeling welcomed in Houston. They named many institutions and organizations in Houston that had helped them with English classes, immigration and citizenship documentation, and that had provided a sense of community and belonging. Many immigrants felt welcome in places of worship, while others mentioned block parties and opportunities to meet law enforcement and neighbors in a casual setting. Overall, 48 percent said they felt welcomed as an immigrant in Houston, 38 percent felt neutrally, and nine percent disagreed or strongly disagreed. Nearly 63 percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that Houstonians respected their cultural traditions and practices, 28 percent felt neutrally, and only five percent disagreed or strongly disagreed (five percent said they did not know). About half of all respondents felt the City provides them with services relevant to them, 32 percent felt neutrally, seven percent did not know, and 13 percent said they did not know.

About half of all respondents were 27-45 years old. Thirty-nine percent identified as male, 58 percent identified as female, and three percent preferred not to identify. Thirty countries were represented by survey respondents, with Mexico, China, Vietnam, and Syria most heavily represented.
Fifty-five percent of respondents had lived in Houston for over ten years, and eighty percent of them had moved to Houston looking for a better quality of life. Of those who had been here less than ten years, 35 percent were looking for a better quality of life, 21 percent were refugees, and 21 percent wanted to be closer to friends and family.

Eighty-four percent of respondents spoke some English, but only 56 percent said their level was sufficient to get around on a daily basis (or better).
The majority of respondents had not finished college, but only 6.5 percent of all survey respondents said they were unemployed. Of those working, 60 percent had full-time jobs, 17 percent worked part time, and 23 percent were self-employed.
Appendix C: Details on the Office of New Americans and Immigrant Communities Updates

Given the wide range of challenges, opportunities, and policy changes that immigrants face on an ongoing basis, coupled with the large and sprawling nature of Houston, the Office of New Americans and Immigrant Communities should serve as a central consolidator and distributor of up-to-date information regarding changes that could affect immigrants in Houston and how immigrants can benefit from or manage those changes. This concept can be implemented primarily through a periodic email update, with more urgent, off-schedule updates as needed.

The Office of New Americans and Immigrant Communities should identify key subject areas (e.g., health, legal, employment, education) for which updates should be provided. The Office should then identify reliable and credible sources of information for each of those areas to the extent that the Office does not already have expertise in those areas. Those sources should be asked to provide updates to the Office as issues and new information arise. An email update should be sent every 2-4 weeks and should include key updates by topic area. In addition, each email should also include a link to an email address for any individual or organization to contact should they have useful information to add to the Office’s periodic email.

It should be noted that, both the Office (as the central information hub) and immigrant-focused stakeholders across Houston (as the provider of expertise, receiver of information, and direct communicator of that information to immigrants) must take a proactive approach to ensure the success of this concept.

Lastly, the Office should consider developing an online platform where knowledge can be built, shared, and updated by various stakeholders. This structure could also incorporate input, feedback, and questions from the immigrant community directly.

The Office should partner with the Collaborative to gather legal updates and better understand its approach to consolidating and distributing information regarding legal immigration issues. National organizations such as the Immigrant Legal Resource Center, Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc. (CLINIC), and National Immigration Law Center can provide important informational updates. The Office should engage volunteers and interns to help with the organizing and sending of updates to alleviate the burden on Office staff and other stakeholders who will have limited time to contribute to and organize these updates.
Appendix D: Welcome Station Logistical Details

- **Branding:** Welcome Stations should be standardized in terms of “branding,” messaging, information, and other features.
- **Training:** Volunteers and staffers (1-2 people per location) should be trained to understand issues pertinent to new migrants, including settling into Houston and global affairs, as well as cultural competency knowledge and an understanding of how to use the City’s language access resources. In addition, staff/volunteer “location swaps” could be implemented to increase exposure to different communities.
- **Space requirements:** Stations should include display set-ups accommodating:
  - A limited set of handouts with updated information on health, education, jobs, legal and social services “curated” to summarize many organizations’ offerings
  - Where feasible by location, video screen showing different services available, with potential for the screening of international films and oral histories
  - Where feasible by location, wall display for community interaction, e.g. a world map for communities to mark and describe where they’re from, or to share stories about their time in Houston
  - Books and audio/video resources for learning English
  - Foreign language books and magazines
- **Resource and budget considerations:**
  - Welcoming Houston Resource Guide:
    - Identification of key organizations to provide content and updates for guide
    - Staff considerations for consolidating and updating information, translating and recording audio, and maintaining the website
  - Interpretation and translation services
  - Video and Display equipment
Endnotes


5 Id. at pp. 1-3.


7 “A Profile of Immigrants in Houston,” pp. 12, 13.

8 Id. at pp. 1-3.

9 “A Profile of Immigrants in Houston,” pp. 14, 15.

10 Id. at p. 14.

11 Id. at pp. 12, 13.


15 This approach is similar to the “Action Teams” coming out of the Welcoming Pittsburgh Plan. See “The Welcoming Pittsburgh Plan,” Welcoming Pittsburgh, available at https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B11Mo200dXHBdZwd0h5R0FFSnM/view.


23 Id.


In fact, even ICE warrants are not legally enforceable because they are not signed by a judge and are instead generally signed by an ICE agent.


The Applied Research Center conservatively estimated that more than 5000 children are in foster care because their parents have been detained or deported. Assistance to ICE from law enforcement increases the local impact on family services and child welfare programs. See “Shattered Families: The Perilous Intersection of Immigration Enforcement and the Child Welfare System,” Applied Research Center (Nov. 2011), available at http://www.asph.sc.edu/cl/word_pdf/ARC_Report_Nov2011.pdf.

National Immigration Forum, “Law Enforcement Immigration Task Force Principles” (Jan. 28, 2015), available at http://www.immigrationforum.org/blog/lifet-principles/; “(When state and local law enforcement agencies are required to enforce federal immigration laws, undocumented residents may become fearful that they or people they know will be exposed to immigration officials and are less likely to cooperate. We believe that we must work together with federal authorities to protect our communities and that we can best serve our communities by leaving the enforcement of immigration laws to the federal government.”).


“Texas counties have some of the highest deportation rates according to study,” Chron.com (May 18, 2015), available at http://blog.chron.com/lavoix/2015/05/texas-counties-have-some-of-the-highest-deportation-rates-acording-to-study/.


The definition of a hate crime currently used by HPD’s hate crime program can be found on the program’s website. See “Houston Police Department: Hate Crime Hotline,” The City of Houston, available at http://www.houstontx.gov/police/hatecrime/.


Information about the Open Society Foundations’ Communities Against Hate grant is available at https://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/grants/communities-against-hate-20161122.

See “Transition Committee on Criminal Justice,” pp. 5-7.

See id. at p. 7.

56 In multiple other cities, law enforcement entities produce and distribute materials to educate the public on their rights and the role of local law enforcement. See Vera Institute of Justice, “Engaging Police in Immigrant Communities (EPIC)” available at https://www.vera.org/projects/engaging-police-in-immigrant-communities-epic.


74 SJUS helps undocumented children who have been abused, abandoned, and neglected by one or both parents obtain lawful immigration status. See INA §101(a)(27)(J).


76 See id.

77 To access the various cities’ 911 call and response data, please visit the following:


Immigrants and refugees are sometimes told by health care entities to either bring family members to interpret for them, or they are not aware that they can ask for interpretation services. This occurs even in facilities that are aware of their obligation and have the capacity (for example, phone interpretation) to provide interpretation services under the Federal Guidance for Persons with Limited English Proficiency. Also, language access complaints filed with the Office of Civil Rights of the US Department of Health and Human Services are disproportionately low for this region, in comparison with other regions of the country with significant immigrant/refugee populations.


See id.


Other tools include the TCEQ's annual emissions inventory, the TCEQ Air Emissions Event Report Database (a.k.a. STEERS), and the EPA’s Toxic Release Inventory.

“Air Pollution 101.”


"New Americans in Houston," p. 4.

Id. at p. 1.

Id.


“A Profile of Immigrants in Houston,” pp. 10-11.

“New Americans in Houston,” p. 4.


See id. at p. 2.


Id.

Id.

Id.
Order 1-17, followed by Administrative Policy 2-11, which established policies for providing information about City of Houston services, programs and activities to LEP residents and visitors, available at http://www.houstontx.gov/adminpolicies/2-11.pdf. 'iSpeak Houston’ is the public name for the services implemented under the City’s Language Access Plan.

If possible, such materials should be translated into Spanish, Arabic, Farsi, Chinese, Vietnamese, Burmese, Hindi, and Urdu, among other languages.


ladders-opportunity.


The Houston Parks and Recreation Department (HPARD) Master Parks Plan, The Houston Park Board “Bayou Greenways 2020,” program, and Hermann Park Conservancy have all recommitted to this effort in the past few years. Plan Houston, Complete Communities, and the Mayor’s Office of Cultural Affairs also champion plans for public spaces to serve as critical assets for Houston neighborhoods, bringing communities together to share, express and celebrate.

recreation-experiences-respect.


The HISD Multilingual Education program can be found at: https://hisdmultilingual.wordpress.com/2015/10/29/houston-isd-
newcomer-program/.

Religious and cultural literacy curricula can be included in the social studies curricula, including World Cultures (6th grade), World Geography (9th grade), and World History (10th grade). Within social studies classrooms, religious and cultural literacies will depend upon each local district and the teacher, administration, and community demands and preferences.


“Pilot Programs are Key to Our Countering Violent Extremism Efforts,” The United States Department of Justice (Feb. 18, 2015), available at https://www.justice.gov/opa/blogs/pilot-programs-are-key-our-countering-violent-extremism-efforts.

“Pilot Programs are Key to Our Countering Violent Extremism Efforts,” The United States Department of Justice (Feb. 18, 2015), available at https://www.justice.gov/opa/blog/pilot-programs-are-key-our-countering-violent-extremism-efforts.


“The Chicago New Americans Plan” at p. 28.


“OHS Definition of Dual Language Learners,” Head Start - An Office for the Administration of Children and Families Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center (Jan. 22, 2016), available at https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/ita-system/cultural-
linguistic/Dual%20Language%20Learners/DLL_%20Resources/OHSDefinitionof.htm.

Many survey respondents did not complete the entire survey, and the data presented in this Appendix is based on smaller sample sizes for individual questions. An updated version of the survey can be accessed online: https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B_hVjQP1JXwFbVBScmF0ZW90WFE/view?ts=587d40ee.


220 Asterisk denotes Committee Co-Chair.

221 * denotes Project Team Co-Lead.