

BUILDING INTEGRATED COMMUNITIES

INNOVATIVE INCORPORATION STRATEGIES FOR NEW IMMIGRANT DESTINATIONS

BLUEPRINT



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Building Integrated Communities is a statewide pilot project of The Institute for the Study of the Americas at the UNC School of Government at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. The intent of this project is to help North Carolina city governments successfully engage with immigrants and refugee populations in order to improve public safety, promote economic development, enhance communication, and improve relationships. The expectation is that city governments and diverse community stakeholders will generate locally-relevant strategies to strengthen outcomes. The program is made possible by a grant from the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation.

The BIC BLUEPRINT was created from best practices and lessons learned from three pilot municipalities in North Carolina that have been developing comprehensive immigrant integration strategies since 2010. The BIC process is offered as a guide to help communities plan similar initiatives. It takes into account the fact that integration outcomes are context-dependent, shaped by a receiving communities' history, politics, economy and demographic factors. Integral to this process at every step along the way is a collaborative partnership between local academic institutions, immigrant leaders, the non-profit sector, and municipal governments.

<http://isa.unc.edu/latino-migration-project/building-integrated-communities>



PROCESS SUMMARY

PLANNING

1. Assemble a team of with the skills and expertise that would be useful to communities. Helpful skills for this work include group facilitation and experience in Appreciative Inquiry methods, Qualitative and quantitative research methods, expertise in immigration/refugee issues, city and regional planning, and administrative assistance.
2. Clarify the services to be provided, the desired outcomes, a timeline of the effort, the characteristics of the desired communities to work in. Use that information to build a budget and design a process to identify the communities.
3. Secure funding for project.

IDENTIFYING COMMUNITIES FOR COLLABORATION

1. Convene a series of informational meetings with immigrant leaders, immigrant service and advocacy organizations, and municipal government leaders to inform about process and gauge interest. Publicize Building Integrated Communities RFP to the managers of municipal governments.
2. Assess whether sponsoring partners and/or community is ready for the project (see readiness guidelines document).
3. Accept municipal partners based on pledges of commitment, letters of support from city leaders and immigrant leaders. Sign MOAs with partners outlining mutual responsibilities (see template).

BACKGROUND RESEARCH

1. Create evaluation plan.
2. Academic partners will research the demographic profile of municipality, conduct needs assessments and map assets in immigrant communities through surveys, interviews, and focus groups. Research existing data.
3. Convene planning meeting with small committee comprised of diverse community stakeholders and municipal partners. Share research. Identify possible themes of interest.
4. Conduct baseline evaluations.

COMING TOGETHER

1. Convene a series of large group immigrant stakeholder meetings and



1BIC Collaborators in Greenville, NC

community meals over several months. Objectives:

- Build relationships through casual interactions.
- Share best practices in immigrant integration.
- Share research.
- Facilitate conversation about community needs.
- Consider all the possibilities and narrow focus on the target populations, services, and organizations.
- Invite proposals for possible projects

2. Committees explore feasibility of proposals, and report back to larger group.

3. Convene the planning group (with any interested participants from large group meetings) to make final decisions.

4. Create implementation plan for integration initiatives. Assign specific tasks to individuals.

5. Conduct BIC process surveys for one year evaluation.

6. Submit recommendations to appropriate decision makers (note: many kinds of activities would not necessarily require the approval or resources of elected officials. Other organizations might need to make key decisions. Definitely all elected officials of the governmental partners should be kept informed on progress, but that might not take the form of formal presentations. These activities will be reported on in other ways, too, such as work progress reports by staff to their supervisors.)

IMPLEMENTATION

1. Implement integration plans.
2. Report progress to collaborators.
3. Conduct evaluations in year 3.



Students in High Point discuss challenges that immigrants face in their schools.