



THE
COLORADO
TRUST

ACHIEVING ACCESS TO HEALTH FOR ALL COLORADANS

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EVALUATION *Findings*

INTEGRATING IMMIGRANTS
IN COLORADO:
*Accomplishments, Challenges and
Lessons Learned*

A REPORT BASED ON THE EVALUATION OF THE COLORADO TRUST'S
SUPPORTING IMMIGRANT AND REFUGEE FAMILIES INITIATIVE

» EVALUATION HIGHLIGHTS

Highlights of this evaluation are available in the companion report, *Evaluation Highlights: Supporting Immigrant and Refugee Families – A Grantmaking Initiative of The Colorado Trust*, in print format or as a PDF at www.coloradotrust.org.

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» INTRODUCTION

Colorado is considered a 21st Century gateway state for immigrants.¹ In response to the growing number of immigrants throughout the state, The Colorado Trust developed the Supporting Immigrant and Refugee Families Initiative (SIRFI) in 2000. The aim of this initiative was to strengthen the ability of immigrant-serving organizations to provide mental health and cultural adjustment services to immigrants. The Colorado Trust is a statewide grantmaking foundation with a mission of advancing the health and well-being of the people of Colorado.

By the end of this initiative, The Colorado Trust (“The Trust”) recognized that further effort was required to help immigrants become part of the communities in which they settled. The Trust subsequently developed a funding initiative to address immigrant integration, which it defined as a “two-way street that involves adaptation on the part of immigrants themselves and on the part of the broader or receiving community. This process allows immigrants to adjust to a new lifestyle without losing their own identity, while the community, including private and public institutions, is welcoming and responsive. Immigrant integration serves to strengthen community cohesion and is beneficial to both sides.” The funding mechanism required grantees to apply this definition, while tailoring the integration strategies and activities to their communities; this mechanism assumed that the grantees knew best what their communities needed.

In October 2004, The Trust awarded grants to 10 organizations throughout Colorado, from the Western slope to rural agricultural communities on the Eastern plains, to support the development and implementation of immigrant integration projects. The logic model created by The Trust for the Immigrant Integration Initiative is illustrated in Figure 1. These 10 grantees were referred to as Cycle 1 grantees as The Trust funded an additional nine organizations in the subsequent year (Cycle 2). Specifically, Cycle 1 grants were intended to support:

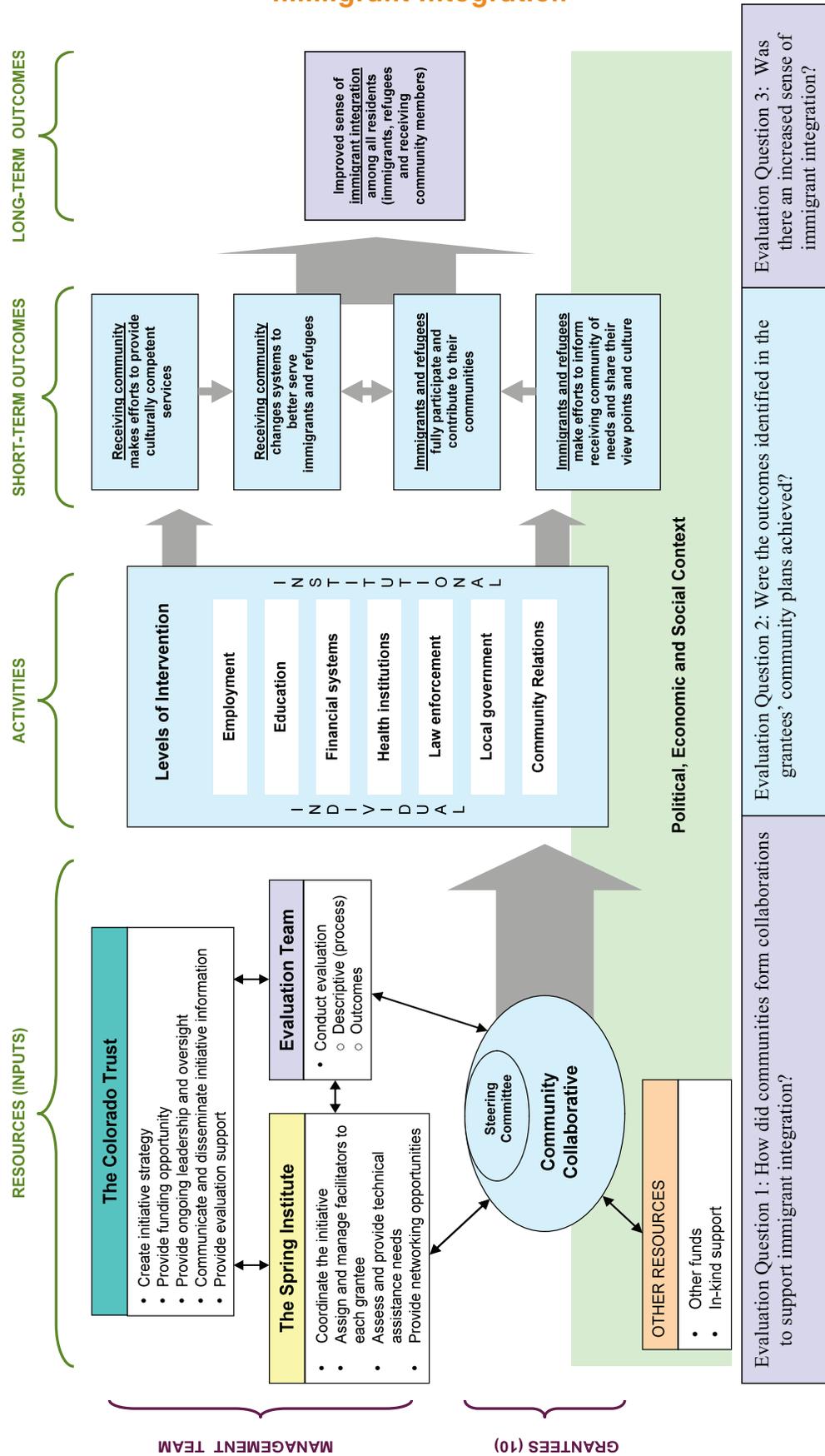
- Community collaboratives comprised of immigrants and receiving community members from a wide range of community sectors, organizations and agencies to plan and implement the immigrant integration projects
- A six-month planning process, for which \$5,000 was available, to identify integration needs and pathways, and to develop a comprehensive immigrant integration work plan
- Implementation of the work plan (or parts of it), for which \$300,000 was available over a four-year period
- Facilitation and technical assistance available to grantees from the Spring Institute for Intercultural Learning
- An initiative evaluation by Community Science to answer the following questions:
 - How did communities form collaborations to support immigrant integration?
 - Were the outcomes in the community plans achieved?
 - Was there an increased sense of immigrant integration among community residents of each community?

This report was developed to answer the above evaluation questions using data collected from Cycle 1 grantees over the course of the Immigrant Integration Initiative (“Initiative”). It includes many tips and lessons generated from the grantees’ experiences; these tips and lessons are shared throughout the report. It also cites some key publications and efforts related to immigrant integration to highlight how this Initiative’s results and lessons contribute to the current body of knowledge on the subject.

To arrive at the findings and conclusions included in this report, steering committee members were interviewed and surveyed, a sample of community residents were surveyed about their sense of integration, and grantee progress reports and supporting materials (e.g., newspaper articles) were reviewed.

Section 2 of this report synthesizes the implementation process that the 10 grantees undertook and the factors and conditions that affected the process over the course of their work. The findings shared in this

Figure 1
**Logic Model for Supporting Immigrant & Refugee Families Initiative (SIRFI):
 Immigrant Integration**



section will help community leaders, foundations and technical assistance providers anticipate the capacity building support needed for an immigrant integration initiative. In Section 3, we summarize the grantees' major accomplishments, demonstrating what types of outcomes were possible to achieve through a strategy such as this Initiative. An analysis of what has been established and is being sustained by the 10 grantees is included in Section 4. This is followed, in Section 5, by a few more lessons learned from the Initiative, in addition to the ones shared in preceding sections. Section 6 contains the conclusions. Since the concept and implementation of immigrant integration were new to all the grantees, first-time and significant integration-related events are highlighted throughout the report.

There are a few noteworthy points about the Initiative before we proceed to the next section.

Immigrants are persons born outside of the United States. Children of U.S. citizens born abroad are not considered immigrants. People born in the United States are considered *receiving community members*, regardless of their ancestry. The distinction between immigrants and receiving community members was sometimes blurred based on race and ethnicity, and the children or grandchildren of immigrants were labeled immigrants in some places. Perceptions about who is and is not an immigrant complicated group dynamics, especially in places where second- and third-generation Americans of Mexican ancestry have a strong presence, such as in Pueblo County. Discomfort in dealing with these perceptions, which inevitably touches on topics like racial prejudice, racism and classism hindered deeper discussions about immigrant integration in some of the communities.

The term *immigrant* in this report includes refugees and asylees. Most of the grantee communities did not have large populations of refugees or asylees. Morgan County experienced growing numbers of Somalis during the grant period, and having a collaborative that was dealing with immigrant integration helped mobilize the resources needed to prepare for these newcomers.

The Trust made it clear to grantees that it is prohibited from supporting lobbying. As well, at the time this Initiative began, The Trust did not support advocacy efforts (though it has since become an avid supporter of advocacy work). As discussed later, this position impacted the engagement and retention of immigrant participants in the collaboratives' steering committees. The 10 immigrant integration projects stayed clear of lobbying or advocating and focused instead on making their communities more welcoming, vibrant places for everyone living there. Four grantees intentionally used the words *community integration* instead of *immigrant integration* in their project names to be explicitly

This report refers to the grantees by their names as well as the below-noted acronyms. The communities, organizations that received the grants ("grantee agencies") and immigrant integration projects were:

1. Aspen to Parachute: Family Visitors Program, Community Integration Initiative (CII)
2. Boulder County: City of Longmont, Dialogues on Immigrant Integration (DII) Initiative
3. El Paso County: Colorado College and later, Catholic Charities, Pikes Peak Immigrant and Refugee Collaborative (PPIRC)
4. Gunnison County: Department of Health and Human Services, Gunnison Immigrant Integration Initiative
5. Lake County: Full Circle, Community Integration Collaborative (CIC)
6. Littleton: City of Littleton, Littleton Immigrant Integration Initiative (LI3)
7. Mesa County: Hilltop Community Resources, Project Common Ground
8. Morgan County: Morgan Community College, OneMorgan County
9. Pueblo County: Catholic Charities, Center for Immigrant and Community Integration (CICI)
10. Summit County: Family and Intercultural Resource Center, Global Summit

inclusive of receiving community members and to make their projects' missions more acceptable to elected officials and other leaders who were less inclined to support immigration and immigrants.

» GRANTEES' FIRST STEPS TOWARD INTEGRATION

Grantees were required during the planning phase of the Initiative to conduct community forums, small discussion groups and interviews to inform their immigrant integration plans. Each plan, therefore, was based on the immediate needs expressed by the immigrants and receiving community members who participated in these planning activities.

The Trust expected the planning phase to last six months; however, it took all the grantees longer to complete their planning (see Section 2.3 for further explanation).

Overview of Grantees' Implementation Plans

Types of issues. Even though each community was unique, some of the grantees selected similar issues to address in their immigrant integration efforts. These issues included:

- Negative attitudes among some receiving community members toward immigrants
- Insufficient opportunities for immigrants and receiving community members to interact with and get to know one another
- Inadequate capacity of organizations (e.g., health clinics, police department, schools) to serve immigrants
- Lack of knowledge among immigrants about laws and norms (e.g., parent involvement in schools) in the United States
- Poor English language proficiency among immigrants.

The grantees developed strategies to address the above issues; however, the way they implemented these strategies varied (see Section 2.2 for further explanation).

Level of change. The grantees' plans supported what is currently known about immigrant integration at the individual and organizational or institutional (e.g., school, health clinic) levels.^{1,2,3} A subset of integration research asserts that in order to achieve integration and sustain the process, systems change would also have to occur.^{4,5,6} This means changing the performance of multiple institutions with similar or related goals to better support or serve the immigrant community. For instance, to increase immigrant youth's access to higher education, youth development and afterschool programs, high schools, community colleges and universities – all of which form a major part of the education system – have to develop or modify their policies and practices to achieve this goal. Some of the steering committee members interviewed at the end of this five-year Initiative referred to this type of change. According to them, their projects taught them that change has to occur at multiple levels, including the systemic-level, in order to support integration.

However, none of the grantees implemented strategies to effect systems change. There were two reasons for this:

- It was the first time an immigrant integration project had been conducted in the grantees' communities, according to the 115 people interviewed in the Initiative's first year. There had been previous efforts to help immigrants adjust and assimilate in to their new environment, but none that promoted immigrant integration as defined by The Trust (i.e., a two-way process involving immigrants and receiving community members). This meant that the initial capacity in these communities – the knowledge, skills, relationships and resources – required for promoting immigrant integration was inadequate. Changing systems was even more difficult.
- The Initiative was not framed by The Trust as a systems change effort specifically because grantees perceived systems change as immigration reform, and The Trust was prohibited from supporting lobbying efforts. The Trust repeatedly emphasized that the Initiative's focus was to

build and strengthen community since immigration policies were beyond the control of local governments. At the same time, many of the 10 communities traditionally had been unfriendly to newcomers, interviewees reported. To the grantees, this unfriendliness was more important to address than systemic problems.

The convergence of the above situations led to a strong focus on individual- and organizational-level changes. Some collaborative members reported disappointment that “real” change did not happen, referring to deeper and more sustainable systemic changes.

LESSON LEARNED: Funders of immigrant integration efforts have to recognize that immigration policies have a huge impact on integration. Funders might want to engage an expert to help them and their grantees understand the parameters of advocating for immigration reform, as opposed to lobbying, with a focus on strengthening the grantees’ advocacy skills to increase their likelihood for success.

Types of Integration Strategies and Activities Planned and Implemented by Grantees

Overall, the grantees’ strategies focused on cultivating an immigrant-friendly environment and increasing the ability of immigrants and receiving community members to participate in the integration process.

Grantees’ strategies (i.e., approach or plan of action) for immigrant integration were examined and categorized; the categories were:

- Creating opportunities for immigrants and receiving community members to interact and get to know one another (10 grantees)
- Helping receiving community members learn more about the cultures of the newcomers in their community (eight grantees)
- Assisting immigrants with their immediate needs and challenges (seven grantees)
- Making information about services and resources more accessible to immigrants (six grantees)
- Helping immigrants learn English (six grantees)
- Assisting immigrants develop their leadership skills and voice their concerns or to participate in mainstream organizations (five grantees)
- Establishing immigrant organizations and helping immigrants and receiving community leaders engage, or build multicultural coalitions (beyond the steering committees) (two grantees).

While grantees selected similar strategies, they differed in the types of activities that supported the above strategies. For example, creating opportunities for immigrants and receiving community members to interact and get to know each other was a strategy. Activities that supported this strategy included community dialogues; mentoring relationships between receiving community members and immigrants to help the latter prepare for their citizenship tests; and social hours for immigrant parents and their children’s teachers. The types of activities grantees supported depended on their knowledge of:

- Existing programs and tools they could adopt and adapt
- Organizations they could readily partner with to implement activities
- The community’s needs based on information gathered during the planning phase.

Creating opportunities for immigrants and receiving community members to interact with and get to know one another. All 10 grantees implemented this strategy using a variety of activities, including: interfaith community organizing by CII in Aspen to Parachute; dialogues by the DII Initiative and PPIRC; social hours focusing on a particular topic (e.g., immigrant parents, school teachers and staff getting together to discuss the needs of children in Lake County); citizenship

mentoring by LI3 in Littleton; and cultural celebrations and festivals and cultural awareness training by many of the grantees. These activities required immigrants and receiving community members to talk to one another about general topics that interested them or to discuss a common issue.

Helping receiving community members learn more about the cultures of the newcomers in their community. Eight grantees developed this strategy and implemented activities such as: celebrations and festivals; cultural awareness training sessions by CIC and Global Summit; articles about immigrants and their contributions to the community (for example, a monthly series called “Who is Your Neighbor?”

in a local newspaper in Fort Morgan and a guide about Cora Indians, who make up a large percentage of the immigrants in Gunnison County); toolkits containing books, films and other resources related to immigration and the immigrant experience by Project Common Ground; and screenings at which participants discussed films that touched on the immigrant experience by PPIRC.

Assisting immigrants with their immediate needs and challenges. The next most common strategy, implemented by seven grantees, involved assisting immigrants with their immediate needs and challenges. The activities for this strategy included workshops, information sessions, individual assistance and counseling and classes that dealt with all sorts of issues: raising children in the United States, after-school tutoring, assistance in obtaining library cards, processing wage claims for workers’ compensation, accessing health services, child care and tenants’ and workers’ rights. These activities sometimes were planned ahead (e.g., through Living in the US workshops in Gunnison County) and sometimes were developed in response to emerging opportunities and needs (e.g., helping immigrants get library cards by LI3). The latter led to many one-time events with little follow-up.

Making information about services and resources more accessible to immigrants. Implemented by six grantees, the activities included disseminating information via more familiar, frequently used avenues, such as public libraries, community festivals, resource fairs, Spanish radio stations and local newspapers (including Spanish newspapers).

Helping immigrants learn English. Implemented by six grantees, activities included funding more English-as-a-Second-Language classes (e.g., in Littleton and Pueblo and Mesa counties) and purchasing Rosetta Stone products by Project Common Ground.

Assisting immigrants in developing their leadership skills and to voice their concerns or participate in mainstream organizations. Five grantees implemented this strategy through activities such as leadership development (e.g., PPIRC convened and facilitated Suenos Americanos and CIC worked with immigrant women) and increasing receiving community-operated organizations’ sensitivity to the language and cultural barriers faced by immigrants (e.g., in Summit County).

Other strategies. Two of the five grantees built multicultural coalitions (beyond the steering committees that oversaw the immigrant integration projects).

Planning and Implementation Process

In order to understand how the grantees went about planning and implementing their work and the factors and conditions that affected their performance, evaluators analyzed the interview data and grantees’ semi-annual progress reports to The Trust. During the last set of interviews, evaluators also asked the steering committee members of each collaborative to reflect on the critical moments in their work and why they considered these moments so pivotal. The findings showed that the development and implementation process for all of the projects was generally similar, with a few exceptions because of the variability in the grantees’ planning period and staff changes. The stages are discussed below as well as illustrated in Figure 2. Clear understanding of this process will be helpful to foundations, technical assistance providers and others in predicting the types of support needed for a multi-year grant strategy.

Figure 2
Developmental Stages of Grantees' Immigrant Integration Projects

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Trust and Spring Institute determined best technical assistance provider for the grantee • Grantee agency directors and grant proposal team invited people to be part of a collaborative to guide planning process (i.e., planning committee) • Gathered community input and develop plan based on input • The Trust helped prepare grantee agencies and planning committee members to strategically communicate about the project 	Year 1 (2004-2005)	EXPLORATION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical assistance provider helped planning committee re-engage collaborative members after a long planning process • Planning committees transformed into steering committees to guide and direct the projects; establish bylaws and term limits; determine whether or not anti-immigrant-persons should be allowed to participate • Participants self-selected to stay involved • Steering committee developed job descriptions for project coordinators • Hired project coordinators • Established structures and processes for project coordination, communication, staff supervision, decisionmaking, and balancing of roles among project coordinator, grantee agency director, and steering committee members • Began implementing activities 	Year 2 (2005-2006)	PROGRAM INSTALLATION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discovered that some strategies were not feasible and/or plan was too ambitious • Adjusted expectations • Dealt with growing debate about immigration at the national and state levels • Project implementation reached a stable stage 	Year 3 (2006-2007)	PROGRAM ADJUSTMENT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A stable core of steering committee members emerged and stayed involved • Collaborative continued to deal with growing debate about immigration at the national and state levels • Project implementation continued 	Year 4 (2006-2007)	FULL OPERATION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning for sustainability began • Project implementation started to slow down • Planning for sustainability continued • Community-wide meeting to celebrate project and report on accomplishments 	Year 5 (2006-2007)	SUSTAINABILITY

Figure 3
Factors and Conditions that Affected Implementation

EXPLORATION		PROGRAM INSTALLATION		FULL OPERATION		PROGRAM ADJUSTMENT		SUSTAINABILITY	
Year 1 (2004-2005)		Year 2 (2005-2006)		Year 3 (2006-2007)		Year 4 (2006-2007)		Year 5 (2006-2007)	
<p>Fit between the Spring Institute technical assistance provider and grantee agency representative</p> <p>Clarity about role of technical assistance providers and "non-negotiables" in the planning process</p> <p>Extent of planning committee members' reach into the immigrant community</p> <p>Differences between planning committee members who were more oriented towards action and those towards process</p> <p>Length of planning process, which affected the momentum at the end of the planning phase</p>	<p>Differences among steering committee members about focus of projects (advocacy vs. awareness raising vs. service provision)</p> <p>How quickly a grantee coordinator was hired and how involved was he/she in the planning process to be able to "hit the ground running"</p> <p>Grantee coordinator's strengths, especially in engaging immigrants</p> <p>Decision to be highly visible or stay "below the radar"</p> <p>Turnover in institutional leaders and representatives</p> <p>Turnover in project coordinator, grantee agency director, and leadership committee members</p>	<p>Proposal and passage of policies not supportive of immigrants and ICE raids</p> <p>Support structure and relationship among grantee coordinator, grantee agency director and leadership committee chair</p> <p>Support (or lack of) from institutional leaders for the changes desired"</p>	<p>Economic decline</p> <p>Differences among steering committee members about focus of projects (advocacy vs. awareness-raising vs. service provision)</p> <p>Commitment of grantee agency to integrate the project into its operations</p> <p>Identification of funding sources to sustain effort</p>						

Findings also showed that the grantees experienced similar facilitating and challenging factors and conditions at approximately the same time in their implementation process; these factors and conditions are included in the following discussion and shown in Figure 3. Some of these factors and conditions had a short term impact; others affected the grantees' work throughout several years.

Exploration (planning and community engagement). During the planning phase, grantees invited representatives from different sectors to be part of a collaborative to oversee the planning process ("planning committee"), and conducted community engagement activities to solicit input from immigrants and receiving community members about their community's integration needs. While The Trust designated six months for this phase, the length of the planning process varied from six months for one grantee to slightly more than one year for two grantees. On average, the planning process took eight to 11 months. It took grantees more time than anticipated to gather community input, organize participants in the planning committees into subcommittees or workgroups, and to transform the information gathered through community input into a comprehensive immigrant integration plan.

During the planning phase, eight of the 10 grantees solicited their community's input through community-wide forums, small group discussions and individual interviews. One grantee gathered input through a series of presentations to organizations in the community and another grantee used a dialogue format. According to the planning coordinators and planning committee members, more immigrants participated in the information-gathering process than had participated in previous community initiatives.

One of the 10 grantees intentionally conducted separate discussions for immigrants and receiving community members before bringing the two groups together at a large forum. This grantee's leadership understood that the immigrants in the community might not have felt comfortable or confident speaking up at a community-wide meeting, especially one with people like the mayor and chief of police in attendance. So, the grantee's staff took the time to meet with the immigrants first, allowing them to share their concerns in a smaller, more comfortable setting. This grantee continued to be deliberate in its efforts to engage immigrants and was the most successful among the grantees in doing so. This grantee was also relatively successful in cultivating the skills of the immigrant women who participated in its initiative to engage receiving community members and leaders in conversations about immigrant integration and to participate in community-wide events.

The planning process took more time, effort and resources than they expected, said planning committee members. This pervasive sentiment persuaded The Trust to increase the planning grant from \$5,000 to \$10,000 for Cycle 2.

The length of the planning process did not affect the quality of the implementation plans; however, it did affect momentum at the end of the planning phase, according to interviewees. The longer the process, the more listless (and restless) some planning committee members became, with the number of people involved having decreased by the end of the planning phase. In a few communities, the immigrants who had participated in planning activities also expressed impatience about how long it took to act on their input. A common phrase among committee members was "there was too much talk and not enough action." Consequently, many of the grantees had to spend time re-energizing and re-engaging these members in addition to getting their programmatic work started when they entered the implementation phase.

LESSON LEARNED: For initiatives with a planning phase, funders and technical assistance providers should pay close attention to:

- Simultaneous actions that could be taken to keep the more action-oriented people engaged, while supporting the planning process (e.g., mobilizing and organizing a small group of immigrant youth to conduct assets mapping [a process by which resources to help strengthen a community are identified and mapped⁷] to inform the solutions to the needs identified during planning)
- Activities toward the end of the planning process that could re-energize planning committee members who by this time are likely to have "planning fatigue."

During the planning phase, it was clear that a good fit between the technical assistance provider and the grantee agency director was necessary to keep the planning process focused and on schedule. A good fit meant that these two people had compatible philosophies about engaging community members and promoting community change, for example, a community development approach, dialogues or community organizing. The technical assistance provider also had to be familiar with the community's history and context, though he or she did not necessarily have to be from that community.

Based on interviews with grantee agency directors, planning coordinators and planning committee members, clarity was needed early on about what they could expect from the technical assistance providers, including the menu of services offered and the availability of technical assistance providers. Another issue that arose was the parameters of the technical assistance providers' guidance. The Trust expected them to facilitate the implementation process and not to necessarily serve as content experts, making it difficult for technical assistance providers to know how far to "push" the grantees when they observed shortcomings in the grantees' plans or actions.²³ Technical assistance providers needed clarity about the "negotiable" and "non-negotiable" aspects of their services to ensure grantees' cooperation with the technical assistance activities.²³

LESSON LEARNED: In the Initiative, a technical assistance provider was assigned to each grantee and expected to stay with the grantee for the entire grant period to provide consistency. Funders of multi-site initiatives should pay close attention to the criteria for matching a technical assistance provider with the grantee because factors such as worldview, gender, race and ethnicity, bilingual proficiency, ties with the grantee community, knowledge and experience, and facilitation style have varying levels of importance to different people. It might be a good idea to ask grantees, rather than to assume, what characteristics they would value in a technical assistance provider.

Program installation (getting started with implementation). To begin implementation (typically in year two for most grantees), the grantees had to create an infrastructure for decision-making, staff supervision and support, communications with steering committee members and others who were part of the planning process and still interested in the project's progress, and to collect data for the evaluation. Planning committees became steering committees to oversee the implementation. A few grantees chose to change the composition of their committee completely when they began implementation because: 1) after the planning process it became clear which sectors and institutions needed to be engaged in order to meet their goals; and 2) by-laws and procedures were enacted to determine eligibility for steering committee members. This meant more time was needed for implementation start-up as well as for orienting the new members.

» ***An effective project coordinator for the immigrant integration projects had the knowledge and skills to:***

- Manage the implementation process and ensure that activities occurred according to schedule, collaborative members were kept informed and reports to The Trust were completed properly
- Facilitate collaborative meetings such that immigrants felt included and heard
- Manage and transform conflicts
- Build relationships and leverage support in both receiving and immigrant communities and if the person was not able to do this alone, he or she knew who among the collaborative members to engage for assistance
- Scan the environment and anticipate opportunities and challenges that could impact the initiative, and then worked with collaborative members to respond to or address the issue.

A bilingual project coordinator enhanced the project; however, if this is not possible, the coordinator should at least know how to identify and engage people with bilingual skills to assist him or her.

Once all of these elements were in place, the steering committee began to search for a project coordinator. The hiring of this person was critical to the implementation because as many of the grantee agency directors quickly realized, someone had to be dedicated to coordinating the steering committees and multitude of project activities. In one place where the grantee agency director was not keen on hiring a coordinator, implementation was slightly delayed.

The search process was challenging, from writing the job description to identifying the best candidate. Once a project coordinator was hired, the grantees began implementing strategies and activities. By this time, it was the middle of year two or later. Implementation start-up was delayed in one place where the coordinator turned out to not be a good fit because he/she was not inclined to leave the desk and go meet immigrants in their natural gathering places.

Key Decisions in Transitioning from Planning to Implementation:

- Determine how important it is to hire an immigrant or a receiving community resident with bilingual skills for the project coordination position. As it turned out in the Initiative, **the person's residency status and race/ethnicity were less important than their capacity to engage both the immigrant and receiving communities** (for example, to meet in person with leaders and residents, and to understand how to leverage relationships).
- Decide what immigrant integration should look like and where to allocate resources for integration activities. In the Initiative, three competing priorities often surfaced: **proponents of direct services wanted to focus primarily on optimizing service delivery for immigrants; others wanted to focus on advocacy, especially in light of growing anti-immigrant rhetoric in Colorado; a third group wanted to focus on building relationships among immigrants and members of the receiving community through a variety of educational and training opportunities.** Steering committees were challenged at times to balance these three areas – a challenge well-documented in similar efforts and communities.⁸ Further, as mentioned earlier, The Trust made it clear to grantees that they could not use the funds for advocacy or lobbying activities; this created tension for the participants who wanted to focus on advocacy and, as a result, some of them disengaged themselves from the activities of the Initiative.
- Settle on whether to promote the local immigrant integration project as the go-to place for anything related to immigrant integration or to keep activities below the radar. **Many grantees reported a need to remain below the radar in light of growing anti-immigrant rhetoric in Colorado in 2006 that could stymie their activities or threaten the safety of undocumented immigrants who may have been among their participants. This was an even more salient issue in small communities (e.g., Morgan County) where people tended to know each other.** This dilemma, however, did not last long because the immigration debate in Colorado intensified and grantees found themselves responding to anti-immigrant comments through op-eds and other venues, and subsequently elevating their visibility.
- Determine which indicators of progress and success could be used for monitoring and evaluating the grantees' work and the extent to which grantees have the capacity to document and collect outcome (versus output) data.

Full operation and program adjustment. By year three, the grantees' projects were fully operational and grantees were immersed in implementing their strategies and activities. A core group of participants had formed and the project coordinators had become accustomed to their roles and responsibilities. The grantee coordinator changed a few times in two communities, and in one of these two communities, the grantee agency director also changed. Not only did the new persons have to be oriented and updated, they also brought a slightly different perspective about immigrant integration.

Several situations emerged during this time:

- **Grantees discovered that some of their strategies were not feasible or as effective as they could be when they began to implement the strategies.** For example, CIC's goal of institutionalizing bilingual education in Lake County was not supported by the leadership of the school district, and the Gunnison County grantee's objective to make banks friendlier toward

immigrants was not necessary because some immigrants did not have the proper documentation to open bank accounts. In Boulder, DII organizers realized that working through institutions to convene dialogues to achieve specific objectives was more efficient and effective than promoting and facilitating open dialogues. The LI3 learned that its program to develop friendships between immigrants and receiving community members was not as popular as anticipated because too much time was required of participants and there was no common goal toward which they could work. In the end, a citizenship mentoring program made more sense because there was a tangible outcome.

- Grantees also discovered that **they did not have the time and capacity to implement all of their strategies**, as the staff of Project Common Ground found when it tried to address access to higher education for immigrant youth. CICI staff in Pueblo County shared that they realized “they bit off more than they could chew” and had to quickly narrow their scope of work to focus on fewer activities.
- At the same time, **grantees learned that certain activities and services were well received**. In these cases, **staff often needed to enhance the project’s capacity to quickly respond to the growing demand**. The citizenship mentoring program in Littleton, for example, received more inquiries from potential mentors than grantees anticipated and the staff had to quickly expand the program.

This meant that grantees had to adjust their strategies and expectations as well as their indicators of progress and success. As a result, grantees typically did not attain stable programmatic implementation until the middle to the end of year three, slightly more than halfway through the Initiative. While it is reasonable to expect mid-course adjustments, the above situations could have been alleviated with an initial readiness and capacity assessment.

LESSON LEARNED: Funders, technical assistance providers and evaluators should conduct a readiness and capacity assessment early on to help grantees determine the feasibility of their ideas and strategies and their capacity for implementation, monitoring and evaluation. The assessment findings could be used to develop a technical assistance plan and to help grantees adjust their expectations and the scope and scale of their work to their capacities, and therefore, more effectively focus their energy and resources. Studies have shown that matching a strategy to a community or organization’s level of readiness and capacity is essential for success, especially for those attempting to tackle something as challenging as immigrant integration and strengthening community.^{9,10,11}

Sustainability. By the beginning of year five (the last year of the Initiative), grantees’ shifted the focus from implementation to ensuring long-term sustainability. Efforts to identify funding sources to continue grantees’ work intensified.

Two themes emerged during this stage. First, **it was crucial for the leaders in each project to develop a vision and have agreement (preferably early on) for promoting integration beyond the funding period**. Grantees that had this vision and agreement were focused and were able to plan ahead to lay the necessary groundwork. For example, the grantee in Gunnison County applied for and received a grant to sustain the Multicultural Resource Office, and PPIRC in El Paso County began discussions early on with Catholic Charities about adopting and institutionalizing their effort as part of the Catholic Charities’ programming. Grantees whose leaders were less focused and did not agree on what they wanted to sustain spent time debating whether the integration project should focus on advocacy, building awareness, education or services. In the end, these groups did not reach consensus and did not have time left at the end of their grant for sustainability planning.

The second theme was the fit between the project and its home institution. **Grantees found it useful for staff to meet with grantee agency directors about sustained support at least one year before the grant ended**. Those that were successful in getting an agreement to institutionalize their integration project included both the agency’s board and its executive director, and clarified the grantee agency’s interest in incorporating all or part of the project. For instance, when the grantee agency’s director changed in one community, the future of the immigrant integration project became tenuous. In two

other communities, the grantee agency (incidentally, a community college in both cases) made it clear early on that the fit was not right. This gave the project's steering committee, the project coordinator and the Spring Institute's technical assistance provider sufficient time to identify a new home for the integration project and to prepare for the transition.

Other Factors that Affected Implementation of the Strategies

Policy environment. The policy environment regarding immigration and how it affected the grantees' work contends that funders of immigrant integration initiatives need to determine ways to incorporate advocacy into their grant guidelines. It was the "elephant in the room" that grantees of The Trust's Initiative could not address, according to interviewees and the technical assistance providers.

According to the National Conference of State Legislators, the number of state laws enacted related to immigration increased from approximately 300 in 2005 to 1,562 in 2007 and dropped slightly to 1,305 in 2008. The State of Colorado passed three immigration laws in 2005, six the following year, another in 2007 and by 2008, had enacted an additional 10. In comparison to other states, these totals were remarkably high.¹² In addition, Colorado's governor called a special session that began in July 2006 primarily to address the issue of illegal immigration, even though other topics were covered.

In light of the increasing attention to immigration issues, grantees were forced to find ways to separate their integration work from immigration policy advocacy. They had to make a distinction because The Trust was clear that it did not wish to support advocacy efforts, that immigration reform was a federal issue beyond the purview and capacity of the grantees and their local governments, and that there was an enduring need in the local communities for awareness building and cross-cultural exchange. In a few grantee communities (e.g., Gunnison and El Paso counties), steering committee members either formed or appointed a separate group to focus on advocacy. In Pueblo County, the political environment overshadowed the grantee's focus on integration and steering committee members temporarily shifted their attention away from the project, which slowed down the implementation process.

In addition, the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency (ICE) conducted raids through Colorado, including ones at a meat packing plant in Greeley (2006), a potato farm and processing plant in Monte Vista (2007) and a concrete company in Loveland (2008). Although the raids were not in any of the communities where Cycle 1 grantees worked, participants noted that fear spread and affected immigrants, regardless of their documentation status, in their communities. The grantee in Gunnison County attributed a drop in attendee numbers at its events to this fear, and CICI staff reported that they had to help pick up immigrant children and take them to school because their parents were afraid to leave their homes. In spite of these anecdotes and many like them, no reliable data were available to evaluate the impact of the raids on the immigrant integration projects. Grantees reported that the raids diminished **immigrants' inclination to integrate because the immigrants perceived that they were unwanted.**

Turnover in crucial positions. Turnover among staff during a five-year initiative was natural and to be expected. In two communities, the project coordinator changed three times. In one of these two communities, the grantee agency director also changed three times. In these two places, each new coordinator had to spend time tracking down and piecing together information to understand the history of the project and what needed to be accomplished. **Thorough documentation by the grantee agency or steering committee chair that could be used to orient the new person and ensure continuity would have eased the disruption.** It would be helpful for funders and technical assistance providers of multi-year initiatives and collaboratives to anticipate and include this sort of capacity building (i.e., documentation and new staff orientation) in their menu of services.

Dynamics among the project coordinator, grantee agency director and steering committee chair. In order for implementation of the 10 grantees to be successful, either **the project coordinator, grantee agency director or steering committee chair had to provide leadership and ensure that the implementation process occurred according to plan.** In six of the 10 communities, it was clear that the project coordinator, grantee agency director or steering committee chair was assuming this role because the person was an established, credible and capable community leader

with the experience and time to dedicate to the task, and their work progressed fairly smoothly. In three places, the coordinators reported that they wished for more supervision from the grantee agency director because they were either inexperienced or had little decisionmaking authority. Consequently, these grantees tended to lose focus (i.e., new activities were developed very frequently), and decisions and mid-course improvements, based on recommendations from the evaluation team and technical assistance providers, were delayed or never implemented.

» GRANTEES' ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The 10 grantees achieved most, if not all, of the goals they set for themselves at the end of the planning phase to address the issues mentioned in Section 2.1 and to carry out the strategies and activities described in Section 2.2. Six grantees did not achieve one of their goals, primarily because they did not have the time and capacity or could not secure the necessary buy-in from certain institutional leaders. In two places, the grantees had very limited success in their goal to develop and support immigrant leaders and to increase immigrant representation throughout mainstream institutions.

The following sections describe the grantees' major accomplishments, based on interviews and their semi-annual progress reports to The Trust.

Language Resources

All 10 grantees provided interpretation and translation assistance to immigrants and receiving community organizations, and several of them developed resources in different languages, primarily Spanish. For example, CII in Aspen-to-Parachute updated and distributed a comprehensive community resource guide in English and Spanish. Global Summit helped establish the first full-time Spanish radio station in Summit County, enhancing the distribution of information to Spanish-speaking residents.

All grantees used their funds to send bilingual people from their community to interpreter training. These training sessions reinforced the need for professional training to ensure that interpretation and translation are conducted properly. The grantees also promoted the importance of professionally trained interpreters and translators to other organizations and service providers in their community and encouraged many of them to hire such individuals. In Morgan County, a Somali refugee, after attending a training sponsored by *OneMorgan County*, got a job at a medical clinic that needed to improve its capacity to respond to the Somali community, while another was hired by the Fort Morgan School District as a classroom assistant.

Three grantees developed and maintained a list of bilingual or multilingual volunteers ready to offer their services. These lists were frequently distributed to other organizations and service providers in the community. Aside from Gunnison County, where the hospital reported an increase in the use of medical interpreters and the police department hired more bilingual staff, there was no evidence to indicate that interpreter lists were widely used.

Interpretation and translation capacity was challenging to sustain. Funds had to be available to pay interpreters and translators, and once the grants ended, it was difficult for a few grantees to sustain the assistance unless they charged a fee for the service. In addition, interpretation and translation work was often unpredictable because interpreters and translators did not know when they might be needed.

» *For the first time....*

- Global Summit helped establish the first full-time Spanish radio station in Summit County, enhancing the distribution of information to Spanish-speaking residents.
- Two Somali refugees in Morgan County, after attending an interpreter training organized by *OneMorgan County*, were hired (one by a clinic and the other by the school district) to conduct outreach to newly-arrived Somalis.

Enhanced the Capacity of Organizations and Businesses to Assist or Work with Immigrants

Seven of the 10 grantees helped enhance the capacity of organizations and businesses in their local community to assist or work with immigrants, efforts that will last beyond the end of the Initiative. The grantees did this by:

- Providing cultural awareness training
- Providing translation and interpretation services
- Funding a part-time liaison position to reach out to immigrants.

The organizations and businesses observed an initial increase in service recipients or clients as a result of the above strategies. This encouraged them to further collaborate with the immigrant integration project in their community and in some cases, even come up with their own funds to sustain the work.

These organizations and businesses are now more able to make their services accessible to this population or bridge differences between immigrants and receiving community members.

The types of organizations affected by the grantees included schools, institutions of higher education, social and health services, and law enforcement agencies. More often than not, these organizations and businesses were ready to improve their capacity to assist or work with immigrants and, therefore, took advantage of the immigrant integration project's resources.

Among the changes grantees helped businesses and organizations make were:

- Expand parent-school liaison services at schools in Gunnison County and Littleton to ensure ongoing outreach to immigrant parents
- Provide classes and counseling services in Spanish and assistance to minority- and women-owned businesses at the Business Incubator Center in Grand Junction
- Establish a group to advise the only local mortuary in Fort Morgan about culturally appropriate mourning and burial services
- Hire bilingual staff and translate resources, including a telephone menu (the Catholic Charities in Pueblo).

» *For the first time....*

- Project Common Ground in Mesa County influenced the Business Incubator Center in Grand Junction to provide classes and counseling services in Spanish and assistance to minority- and women-owned businesses
- CIC in Lake County collaborated with the Chamber of Commerce in Leadville to hold a Business After Hours event at an immigrant-owned restaurant.

Increased Knowledge about Immigrants and their Experiences

Seven grantees completed activities to educate their community about the immigrants who live there, particularly to dispel stereotypes and to draw attention to similarities between the experiences of recent immigrants and those who arrived at the turn of the 20th century. They did this through:

- Publication of stories about immigrants through print and broadcast media
- Dialogues
- Exchange of personal stories in small group settings.

Evidence was available for four of the seven grantees about the results, while the other three grantees did not choose this indicator as a priority for their documentation:

- The CII in Aspen-to-Parachute developed stories about 34 residents – recent immigrants, immigrants who had lived in the area for 20 or more years, and descendents of immigrants. These stories were aired weekly on a local radio station (KDNK) and published every Monday in a local newspaper (Post Independent) and twice a month in two Spanish newspapers (La Union and El Montanes). The producer of these stories reported that people often contacted him or approached him in the community to tell him how much they enjoyed the stories.
- For DII, evaluation forms after each dialogue indicated that nearly all participants reported “some new learning”; in particular, receiving community members learned about the experience of immigrants.
- Immigrant and receiving community members of the CIC in Leadville exchanged personal stories during their monthly meetings. According to several steering committee members who were receiving community members, this exchange improved their attitudes toward undocumented and non-English speaking immigrants and encouraged them to stay involved in the committee.

An activity in Pueblo County that serendipitously helped to debunk the stereotype that all immigrants are from Mexico or have no desire to integrate was the city’s first naturalization ceremony since 1983. CICI worked with the U.S. Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services to organize a naturalization ceremony in August 2009. Twenty-seven people from 14 countries were naturalized; five were from Pueblo and had received citizenship assistance from CICI. Several CICI steering committee members and an article in the local newspaper emphasized the diversity of the immigrants and their willingness to become citizens.

» *Engaging policymakers in dialogues with immigrants*

The DII steering committee members found the dialogues with policymakers “particularly powerful” because they provided policymakers with an opportunity to meet face-to-face with immigrants and offered the potential to dispel myths about immigrants. The participating policymakers included three county commissioners, a majority of council members from three cities (Longmont, Lafayette and Boulder), school board members from both local districts and state representatives. According to interviewees, two policymakers (a city council member and deputy superintendent) followed up after hearing the immigrants’ accounts of experiencing discriminatory acts in two different schools. The city council member and deputy superintendent met with a principal and an assistant principal and changes were made immediately.

Increased Immigrant Parents’ Ability to Become Involved in their Children’s Education

Six grantees helped immigrant parents become more familiar with the U.S. school system and get involved with their children’s schools by:

- Conducting educational workshops for immigrant parents
- Expanding the role of the local parent-school liaison.

For instance:

- **One**Morgan County funded an immigrant parent volunteer for 10 hours per week to coordinate a parent group (Padres Triumfadores) and work with the Fort Morgan School District to engage Latino and Somali parents. In the latter part of 2008, Padres Triumfadores grew from approximately eight regularly attending parents to 15 or more parents at each meeting; an interviewee credited this growth to increased awareness among immigrants of the group’s existence and its role.

- LI3 worked with the Littleton Public Schools to expand the district's parent-school-community liaison program. The liaison updated the Spanish information line for parents on a monthly basis, responded to inquiries that came through the line, held informational sessions for parents and referred parents to LI3's One-Stop Information Center for additional services.

In Gunnison County, the school representative interviewed by Community Science stated that more immigrant parents had started to go to the school for information, and in Pueblo, school staff reported that immigrant parent participation had increased and that the parents appeared more comfortable in their interactions with school representatives.

Increased Immigrants' Access to Health Services

Four of the 10 grantees focused on improving the availability of health services to immigrants by:

- Increasing the affordability of such services through subsidies and contributions from businesses
- Working with providers to make services available at places where immigrants tend to gather or events they tend to attend.

Reports from three of the four grantees indicated an increase in immigrants' use of these services and suggested that the increase could be attributed to the grantees' efforts, either directly or indirectly. The fourth grantee did not have sufficient data.

Specifically:

- The grantee in Gunnison County developed and implemented the Light Program in 2007 to provide low-cost health care for people with little or no health insurance coverage. Eligible participants received vouchers, valued at \$20 to \$35 each, that they could use at any physician's practice, laboratory or behavioral health service. Between 2007 and 2009, the number of vouchers distributed through the program increased 57%. Approximately 72% of recipients were receiving community members and 28% were immigrants.
- LI3 arranged for a permit for the Life Interventions for Families in Transition (LIFT) mobile health van to park in front of the Bemis Public Library every Monday. The van's coordinator, LI3's health liaison and a representative from the library met regularly to discuss the rate of utilization and to improve their methods for informing immigrants about available services. Because the data received from the LIFT representative were incomplete for 2009, comparisons could be made only with the data for January to August 2008 and for that same period in 2009. The data showed that the number of people served by the van during that period in 2008 and 2009 declined from 635 to 300 people; however, the percent of Hispanics served increased from 36% in 2008 to 61.7% in 2009, and the percent of people who requested interpretation rose from 6.8% to 10.3%. Also in 2009, 3% of the service recipients were Asians compared to none in 2008. Because LIFT did not distinguish between immigrants and receiving community members, it was difficult to determine the true percentage of immigrants served; the only conclusion is that the percent Hispanics and Asians who visited the van for services increased, perhaps as a result of better coordination between LI3's health liaison, the van's coordinator and the library's representative.

Interviewees indicated that Global Summit was perceived by receiving community members as the "go-to" resource for immigrant integration. In 2009, Global Summit was nominated by a police chief and the county's public health department to become one of the prime information distributors about the HINI virus. Global Summit was selected because of its capacity to reach out to immigrants, translate information into Spanish and French, work with the school district to distribute the information to its student population and used the radio to receive and respond to questions about the virus.

- Project Common Ground participated in the annual Health Fiesta led by the Marillac Clinic and helped to expand the number of providers at the fiesta, and improved the fiesta's capacity to serve Spanish-speaking attendees with more bilingual signage and health care providers. The percentage of immigrant attendees at the fiesta increased from 35.7% to 46.1% between 2008 and 2009; the logical conclusion is that Project Common Ground contributed to this increase.

Establishment or Expansion of a Central Go-to Resource for Immigrant Integration

Three of the grantee communities lacked a central resource that both immigrants and receiving community members could turn to for integration-related information and activities. One grantee community already had a resource center albeit with limited staff and funds. Data gathered during the planning phase indicated the usefulness of such a resource in those communities. This motivated the grantees in these four communities to establish or expand one. A central resource is an essential immigrant integration strategy because it provides information and services that are usually dispersed.¹³ In Europe, the European Commission recommended "one-stop shops" in its *Common Agenda for Integration* as "an essential resource that combines both government and non-government services to immigrants and people interested in immigration issues under one roof."¹³ In the United States, states such as Pennsylvania and Illinois have opened Welcome Centers, and Maryland has centers for cultural diversity.

The grantees in Littleton, Pueblo and Leadville counties adapted the one-stop shop concept to their communities, establishing sites in familiar, publicly accessible locations and actively promoting the immigrant integration-related information centers. The grantee in Gunnison County simply expanded the existing center. The centers filled an information and service gap in the community. As a result, **the immigrant integration efforts of grantees in these four communities had a strong physical presence, which helped facilitate their integration work.** Project coordinators from two other locations lamented the fact that the absence of a central resource made their projects slightly less tangible or obvious.

The four grantees' progress reports to The Trust indicated a sharp increase in the use of the centers over the course of the grant timeframe. For example, requests for assistance from the Multicultural Resource Office in Gunnison County increased 18% between 2005 and 2006 and another 27% the following year. It had to move to a bigger location to accommodate more visitors and staff. Similarly, from the opening of the One-Stop Information Center in Littleton in 2006 to the final months of the grant in 2009, the number of inquiries increased from an average of 20 per month to 166.5 per month.

Further, records showed that **both immigrants and receiving community members used the facilities.** Immigrants visited the centers for information and assistance with a range of needs, including health services (the most popular request), legal advice, housing, citizenship applications and employment. Receiving community members turned to the centers for assistance with translation, interpretation and dissemination of information about community events and employment opportunities.

Improved Relationships Between Law Enforcement Officers and Immigrants

Law enforcement personnel and other first responders are bound to have contact with immigrants. Research has shown that immigrants are usually less inclined to initiate contact with police officers because of fear based on negative experiences in their home country or fear of deportation. Yet trust and cooperation between immigrants and the police are essential to effective crime solving and crime prevention.¹⁴ For speakers of limited English, communication is a huge barrier to accessing law enforcement services. Cultural barriers are also large, as discussed in the National Crime Prevention Council's publication *When Law and Culture Collide*.¹⁵ Agreements signed between law enforcement agencies and ICE, enabling state and local police officers to enforce immigration laws only widened the divide between immigrants and these agencies. In Colorado, the State Department of Public Safety and the El Paso Sheriff's office signed such agreements.

Three grantees implemented major activities to bridge the divide between police officers and immigrants by creating opportunities for the two groups to interact. **In Summit and Pueblo counties,**

Figure 4
**Types of Immigrant Integration Programming
 Continuing in the 10 Grantee Communities**

ASPEN TO PARACHUTE	
New & enhanced programming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Immigrant stories continued by KDNK
New educational resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Food for Thought videos available at public libraries Bilingual Community Resource Guide Information kiosks at two public libraries and one nonprofit organization
BOULDER COUNTY	
New & enhanced programming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dialogues continued at Univ. of CO at Boulder (CU) Immigrant Integration course offered at CU
Immigrant integration project sustained (entire or partial)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Immigrant Integration Dialogues relocated to Boulder County Government
EL PASO COUNTY	
New relationships & strengthened collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Black-Brown dialogue participants formed their own group
New educational resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A how-to guide for facilitating Black-Brown dialogues
Immigrant integration project sustained (entire or partial)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PPIRC became a part of Catholic Charities
GUNNISON COUNTY	
Immigrant integration project sustained (entire or partial)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multicultural Resource Office, Gunnison County HHS
LAKE COUNTY	
New & enhanced programming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Computer classes in Spanish offered by Colorado Mountain College Coffee Talks for parents and school personnel adopted by middle school Cultural awareness training/referrals to services through Full Circle
LITTLETON	
New relationships & strengthened collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> South Metro Health Alliance formed and sustained with a new grant
Immigrant integration project sustained (entire or partial)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One-Stop Information Center at the public library, sustained by city government
MESA COUNTY	
New & enhanced programming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Three Rosetta Stone programs at the Literacy Center Bilingual support at the annual Health Fiesta Business counseling services in Spanish and services for minority- and women-owned businesses at the Business Incubator Center
New educational resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Photo essay and Immigrant Integration Toolkits permanently available at public library
MORGAN COUNTY	
Immigrant integration project sustained (entire or partial)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>OneMorgan</i> became an independent 501(c)3 organization
PUEBLO COUNTY	
New & enhanced programming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Catholic Charities continued to offer GED, ESL and legal services
SUMMIT COUNTY	
New & enhanced programming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parent Chats adopted by school district and Summit Prevention Alliance First Spanish radio station
New relationships & strengthened collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Law Enforcement-Latino Advisory Task Force continued to meet

data indicated an improvement in relations between law enforcement officials and immigrants. In Pueblo, immigrants who graduated from a program sponsored by the local police department told CICI Steering Committee members that they had developed a sense of confidence in themselves and in their ability to discuss issues with law enforcement representatives. A police officer said that officers had developed personal relationships with immigrant families and received invitations to attend high school graduations, weddings and other family functions. In Summit County, the results from a survey of 220 immigrants, conducted by Global Summit, showed that the most positive responses about agencies and services in the community were related to law enforcement.

» **FUTURE OF IMMIGRANT INTEGRATION IN COLORADO**

Grantees were asked by the evaluator about the degree to which their immigrant integration efforts would be sustained. Their final reports to The Trust were reviewed for the same information. Based on these two sources, grantees' work generated the following long-term benefits:

- Greater knowledge about the meaning and promotion of immigrant integration
- New relationships and strengthened collaboration between newcomers and receiving community members
- New educational resources
- New or enhanced programming at institutions that participated in the local immigrant integration projects
- Continuing immigrant integration efforts; some of the original efforts remained intact.

While it was unclear what these changes meant for the future of Colorado, it was believed that the communities' enhanced capacity will continue to expand in support of immigrant integration.

Figure 4 illustrates the tangible ways (besides increased knowledge and new and strengthened relationships) in which immigrant integration was sustained in each of the 10 communities.

» *Among the new collaboration and alliances that were sustained at the end of the Initiative were:*

- In Summit County, a task force comprised of law enforcement officers and Latino immigrants was formed to bridge the gap between these two groups. Police chiefs from the major towns in the county were active proponents and participants of this task force, which continued to function even after the project ended. The steering committee members evaluators interviewed in Summit County all attributed the success of the task force to the police chiefs, who were persistent in their outreach to immigrants. One chief joined an exercise class attended primarily by Latino women in order to allay their fear of law enforcement officers. Police officers also served as coaches for soccer teams that typically included many immigrant youth.
- In Littleton, health organizations that participated in the steering committee capitalized on relationships developed through the immigrant integration project to form the South Metro Health Alliance. The Alliance wrote and received a grant to continue its health programs for immigrants.
- A project called Carver Conversations was established in El Paso County to address the academic achievement gap. This project grew out of a series of "Black Brown" dialogues convened by PPIRC in 2008 and involved 30 community members, including African American and Latino receiving community members and new immigrants.

Increased Knowledge about the Meaning and Promotion of Immigrant Integration

Almost all the 85 steering committee members interviewed in year five reported experiencing some change or increase in their understanding about immigrant integration. More specifically, interviewees (33%) most commonly reported greater understanding of the process of immigrant integration or of the immigrant experience. Eighteen percent of interviewees said they came to understand immigrant integration as a two-way process. Others noted learning more about the role played by receiving community members, and some interviewees realized that integration has to occur at multiple levels. For instance, four shared their new perception that it was a multi-level issue that included the need for systems or institutional-level change.

New and Strengthened Relationships among Participating Community Members

Based on information collected through surveys and interviews, many new and strengthened relationships were established among the people who participated in the immigrant integration projects' steering committees. Because only a small percentage of the committee members across all 10 communities were immigrants, it was speculated that most of the relationships formed were among receiving community members who worked together for the first time.

During the second year of the Initiative in 2006, grantee steering committee members were asked to identify up to three individuals or organizations with whom they worked closely to promote immigrant integration and to indicate which of these relationships were new. The average number of relationships per grantee was 25.8; the number of relationships ranged from eight (reported by PPIRC in El Paso County) to 38 (reported by CICI in Lake County). The average number of new relationships was 9.4 per grantee, or 36.4% of the total number of relationships reported. The steering committee members in El Paso and Pueblo counties reported the highest percentage of new relationships (75% and 89%, respectively). Half of the 38 relationships established in Lake County were new. These findings suggest that the immigrant integration projects provided an important avenue for new and strengthened relationships. These relationships were likely to continue beyond Trust funding.

Additionally, DII staff reported that in 2006, dialogues resulted in 14 new relationships outside of the events. For example, five participants "exchanged phone calls [and attended] two social meetings [and] two meetings for mutual help or help to immigrants, three meetings for language practice and two meetings to work on projects together."

In three grantee communities (Littleton, El Paso and Summit counties), the relationships led to new collaboration and alliances that helped sustain relationships and activities.

New or Enhanced Programming Promoting Integration

In six communities, various institutions either adopted the grantees' programs or enhanced their own programs as a result of the immigrant integration projects' influence. There was no single strategy that the six grantees used to ensure this outcome. Sometimes, grantees made concrete plans (e.g., Project Common Ground in Mesa County had planned to enhance the existing efforts of the Business Incubator Center, Literacy Center and Marillac Clinic, resulting in business counseling services in Spanish and services for minority- and women- owned businesses, additional Rosetta Stone programs and bilingual support at the annual health festival). At other times, the sustained programming was serendipitous (e.g., faculty at the University of Colorado Boulder wrote and received a grant to sustain the dialogues at a residential hall in order to continue the relationship building between the immigrant workers and student residents).

In all six communities the institutions understood or experienced the value added by the activities initiated by the immigrant integration projects and, therefore, were willing to commit their own resources or raise additional funds to sustain the activities.

Continuation of Entire Immigrant Integration Efforts or a Significant Portion of the Efforts

By the end of the Initiative, five grantees succeeded in sustaining either their entire immigrant integration effort or a significant portion of their efforts. These grantees, except for the effort in Morgan County, were different from the other grantees in the following ways:

- Encouraged by their technical assistance providers, they had discussions about sustainability well before their grant funding ended (i.e., at the end of the fourth year).
- They either had the commitment of the organization or agency in which the work was supposed to continue (e.g., Gunnison County's Department of Health and Human Services was committed to sustaining the Multicultural Resource Center as part of the department's services) or had the foresight to cultivate the relationships needed to help sustain the integration effort (e.g., DII's steering committee in Boulder County deliberately engaged the county commissioners early on to lay the groundwork for the county government's adoption of the project).
- The steering committee for the projects in these four locations had a clear vision about how they wanted integration to continue. Therefore, they were focused in their sustainability plans. For example, the LI3 steering committee was clear that the information center was critical to integration and worked with the city government and public library to plan for the center's sustainability.

*One*Morgan County was different from the four efforts described above because the grantee agency in which it was located (a community college) had neither the time nor the infrastructure to continue to operate the immigrant integration project. On the other hand, it was similar to the four other efforts in that its steering committee wanted to sustain the whole project because there was nothing else like it in Morgan County. They established a transition team at the beginning of its last year to explore sustainability options; they eventually became an independent nonprofit organization.

New Educational Resources

CII, Project Common Ground and PPIRC developed educational resource materials that facilitated access to information or cultural exchange. These materials included a set of three videos that featured the cooking techniques of newcomers and receiving community members; a bilingual community guide and information kiosks that included information about various types of resources and services that immigrants were likely to seek; a photo essay that highlighted several immigrants and their community contributions; toolkits containing books, movies and articles related to immigrants and their experiences; and a how-to guide for facilitating Black-Brown (i.e., African Americans and Latinos) dialogues. The grantees worked with their local public libraries and a nonprofit frequented by immigrants to ensure that these resources would continue to be available.

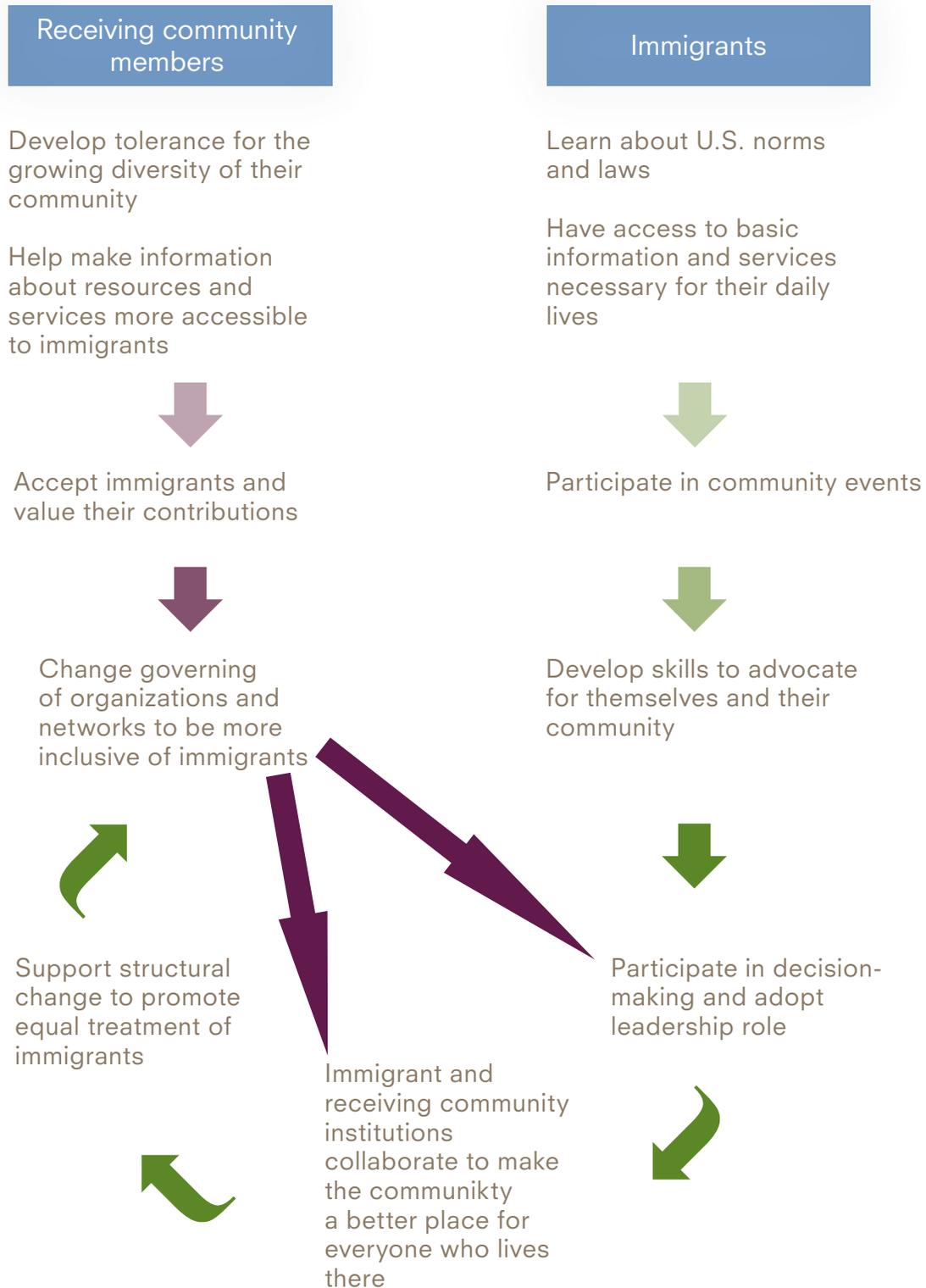
» LESSONS LEARNED

This section describes additional lessons learned from the Initiative that will be useful to other immigrant integration efforts.

Immigrant Integration Work is about Community and Systems Change, with an Added Layer of Complexity

The evaluation team asked 111 collaborative participants from across the 10 communities in year one of the Initiative how immigrant integration could be operationalized in their communities, beyond the notion that it is a two-way street. Their responses revealed that immigrant integration was typically understood as helping immigrants to adjust and fostering positive interactions between immigrants and receiving community members in order to make their community a better place for everyone. At the end of the Initiative, evaluators asked 85 collaborative participants if their involvement had changed their understanding of immigrant integration, and a portion of them, albeit small, learned that integration has to occur at multiple levels, including at the institution- and systems- levels.

Figure 5
Continuum of Immigrant Integration



Based on what the interviewees said and what was learned from the Initiative after five years, immigrant integration work at heart is about:

- ***Responding to demographic changes*** so that neighbors and residents from different racial, ethnic and cultural backgrounds get to know one another and discard their stereotypes, fears and biases. As part of this process, it is necessary to help immigrants and receiving community members understand what is expected of them to make this happen (e.g., immigrants ought to learn English and the laws of this country and receiving community members should learn about the immigrants' cultures and their aspirations).
- ***Building the cultural competency of organizations to engage and work with immigrants, and building the capacity of immigrant organizations to participate in mainstream systems and processes.*** For instance, a school district needs to learn how to engage immigrant parents in decisions that affect their children's education. An immigrant organization, on the other hand, needs to have representatives who have the knowledge and skills to represent the organization at meetings with elected officials and other receiving community leaders.
- ***Changing community.*** Immigrant and receiving community leaders have to develop the skills to collaborate with one another to identify common concerns and mobilize and organize their community members to take collective action, and make the community a better place for everyone who lives there.
- ***Changing systems*** to ensure that immigrants have equal opportunity to succeed and contribute to their community. Two grantees were keen on influencing their school system to increase immigrant children and youth's likelihood for success; they did not have adequate capacity to do this.

Immigrant integration work has a layer of complexity; integration efforts have to intentionally address cultural and language differences, xenophobia and racism.

The perspective on immigrant integration described here means that **a more strategic and long-term approach that clearly links the activities to changes at the individual, organizational, community and systems levels is necessary.** Framed in this perspective, the 10 grantees' efforts were the first steps toward integration and it is evident that this Initiative succeeded in contributing to an environment that was supportive of immigrants. More work is needed to effect community and systems change that would ensure integration.

Immigrant integration continuum. A continuum, illustrated in Figure 5, which places the grantees' work in the above perspective, was created. This process begins with receiving community members and immigrants acclimating to the changes in their lives and community. Immigrants have to improve their English-language skills and learn about their new environment in order to fulfill basic needs, such as housing, employment and education for their children. Receiving community members have to help immigrants access the information and resources they need to fulfill these basic needs. In many cases, it is also necessary for receiving community members to change their attitudes to become more tolerant of immigrants.

Once immigrants are able to fulfill their basic needs, they have the time and resources to engage with the receiving community and participate in decisions that affect their lives. For instance, they can begin to participate in civic and community-wide activities, mobilize other immigrants to participate in the integration process and share their aspirations and fears with the receiving community. Receiving community members, on the other hand, have to begin to adjust their activities, decisionmaking structures and processes to be more inclusive. They might also encourage immigrants to become citizens. During this stage, immigrants and receiving community members grow more accustomed to and accepting of each other's presence.

As a result of their increasing acceptance of each other, members of both groups may begin to collaborate to strengthen the community in which they live and share. Immigrants have to begin to develop relationships with decisionmakers and policymakers in the receiving community, create or strengthen their own organizations and develop advocacy skills in order to improve their quality of life in the United States. Receiving community members in turn have to develop relationships with leaders and decisionmakers in the immigrant community. Both groups have to develop the ability to build multicultural coalitions in order to work together to achieve common goals.

When immigrants and receiving community members learn to collaborate with each other, they develop the collective capacity to effect structural changes in order to ensure that everybody in the community, regardless of their racial, ethnic and socioeconomic background, will be treated equally and with respect. The number of community organizations that have the knowledge, skills, commitment and relationships to work with each other then increases. The number of elected representatives who value and support immigrants also will grow and immigrant voices will become increasingly represented in decisions that affect their lives and community.

As the integration process progresses over a long-term period, the separation between immigrants and receiving community members becomes less distinct.

The Workplace, Neighborhood and School are Key Venues for Integration

As mentioned in the Introduction, one of the data sources for the evaluation was a community-wide survey of approximately 100 immigrants and receiving community members in each of the 10 grantee communities. In the survey in 2005 (total of 825 respondents) and 2007 (total of 911 respondents), respondents were asked to identify a setting in which most of their cross-cultural contact (i.e., between immigrants and U.S.-born residents) occurred. The settings most frequently reported both times by receiving community and immigrant respondents were the workplace, neighborhood and school. With the exception of schools, only a few grantees had strategies for influencing the workplace or neighborhood.

***The workplace.* Employment is a primary driver for global migration, which means that most immigrants are attached to some sort of workplace; therefore, the opportunity to promote immigrant integration through the workplace should not be missed.**¹⁶ Among the strategies for promoting immigrant integration at the workplace are:

- Supporting ESL or vocational ESL classes, particularly if the workers are recent immigrants
- Promoting common goals (e.g., expand market, apply for an award) between receiving community and immigrant employees
- Fostering a team spirit by engaging receiving community and immigrant workers to collaborate on a project
- Providing opportunities for receiving community and immigrant workers to exchange information about each others' cultures
- Ensuring that immigrants have equal opportunity for recognition and promotion.

Only a few grantees had a strategy to impact the workplace; grantees especially wished for more businesses to be involved. Staff from two grantees reported that they wished they had tried harder to involve the private sector. They believed that businesses would have been more likely to help fund the continuation of their efforts because they rely on immigrant labor.

Engaging the private sector in promoting immigrant integration is very challenging.¹⁸ Even though there are several major U.S. corporations that offer or sponsor integration programs, promoting immigrant integration as a business practice is still not considered a norm (e.g., a wellness programs) or a real benefit (e.g., a LEED [Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design] certification, which can help a company be more competitive). Also, **businesses alone cannot promote integration; they have to partner with the public and nonprofit sector.**^{17, 18}

In retrospect and given that the agriculture, meat processing and ski resort industries in Colorado depend on immigrant labor, it would have been helpful early on for The Trust and the Spring Institute to develop an Initiative-wide strategy to involve the private sector.

The school. Schools were cited by survey respondents as another place where receiving community members and immigrants have frequent contact. Existing research on immigrant integration support this survey finding, citing that schools:

- Introduce and expose immigrant children to the American political and social culture
- Provide opportunity for social interaction between immigrant and receiving community children¹⁹
- Are the places where immigrant families, by having to enroll their children in school, have to interact with receiving community members (i.e., school personnel and teachers)²⁰
- Provide an avenue for teaching immigrant parents advocacy skills by engaging them in a subject that truly concerns them – their children’s well-being.¹⁹

Six grantees had activities that engaged the schools; these activities included funding support for parent liaison position, convening of parents and teachers, and cultural awareness training for teachers and school staff. **Schools must continue to be engaged in immigrant integration efforts.**

The neighborhood. Survey respondents indicated that their place of residence was one of the venues where cross-cultural contact was frequent. In places where immigrants and receiving community members live close to each other, the neighborhood is another venue for promoting integration. **Activities such as block parties and planting community gardens provide the opportunity for immigrants and receiving community members to get together and socialize.**

None of the grantees focused on the neighborhood as a venue for promoting integration, perhaps because in some of the 10 locations, immigrants and receiving community members tend to live in segregated areas. LI3 did one activity at the neighborhood level when it supported ESL classes in a park near a housing complex occupied primarily by immigrants. Immigrant adults attended short ESL lessons as their children played at a nearby playground.

In retrospect, The Trust should have considered a focus on neighborhoods and their surrounding areas, especially in communities that span a large geographic area (e.g., Aspen-to-Parachute) or in larger cities (e.g., Colorado Springs). This could have made the work more manageable and the potential for impact more feasible.

Immigrant Voices Must be Heard and their Immediate Concerns Addressed in Order to Retain their Participation

With one exception (i.e., CIC in Leadville), when asked about challenges in their immigrant integration efforts, all grantees indicated that the engagement of immigrants in their steering committees where decisions were made, was a significant challenge. Four grantees reported struggles with the engagement of immigrants at both the leadership and program levels, either at one point in their project or throughout. In addition, immigrants who got involved at the programming level tended to be from Spanish-speaking nations; immigrants from Asia and Africa were not as engaged.

The data were examined to better understand the challenges faced by grantees in engaging immigrants at the leadership level in order to advise other immigrant integration efforts with a similar challenge.

It was found that first, **there has to be authentic interest and commitment among receiving community members to listen to what the immigrant participants have to say.** The grantee representatives and collaborative members interviewed by evaluators, which included both immigrants and receiving community members, distinguished between the engagement of newly-arrived immigrants and those that were more established. They said that immigrants who had been in the United States longer (and were likely to be more proficient in English) were easier to engage and often participated at the leadership and decisionmaking level. The few immigrants who participated in steering committees

and who were not as proficient in English or confident in their communications skills shared that when they did voice their opinion, they felt dismissed by the other members. They implied that they were treated as token immigrants on the committee and not taken seriously. On the other hand, CIC in Leadville explicitly and deliberately made the decision to always listen to and test their immigrant members' recommendations. This approach increased the immigrant members' confidence in sharing their opinions and eventually engaging in discussions with receiving community members about each other's viewpoints. CIC also ensured interpretation at every steering committee meeting.

Second, **there has to be a strategy and activities to intentionally build relationships and trust between immigrant and receiving community participants in the steering committee.** Several representatives from one grantee lamented that they did not spend more time addressing the differences and power dynamics not only between immigrants and receiving community members, but also between recent immigrants from Mexico and Mexican Americans who have lived in the community for generations, and among immigrants from different parts of Mexico and Central and South America. Consequently, tensions between certain members undermined the sustainability of this grantee's work. In contrast, CIC deliberately set aside time at steering committee meetings for the immigrant and receiving community members to share stories about their lives and experiences. Such exchanges often allow people from different racial, ethnic and cultural backgrounds to focus on their similarities and not just their differences. Research on intergroup relations shows that identifying and acting on common interests is key to building trust and overcoming prejudice.²¹

Third, **there has to be a strategy and activities to address pressing issues that affect immigrants' daily lives** (e.g., obtaining driving licenses for undocumented immigrant workers, raids by ICE in collaboration with local law enforcement agencies, legislation that prevented undocumented immigrants from accessing services). Tapping into people's self-interest has been cited by some researchers as essential to their retention and involvement in community collaboratives and coalitions.²² Most immigrants, particularly recent newcomers, do not have the time to engage in planning processes or to attend meetings, especially if these meetings are not part of their jobs (unless, for instance, they are responsible for community outreach at their organizations) or if they cannot envision how their participation might address an immediate concern.

CIC in Leadville was the only grantee that successfully engaged and supported a core group of immigrant women leaders. Through deliberate training and empowerment of its immigrant members, CIC helped members of the Immigrant Women Empowerment Group to:

- Take it upon themselves to prepare dishes for parent teacher conferences at four schools
- Develop a relationship with a representative from a health agency (a member of CIC) to learn more about healthy alternatives to preparing Mexican food
- Invite 10 school administrators to discuss student academic achievement and parental roles and obligations (in turn, one of the mothers gave a presentation to a 7th grade class about her experience of immigrating to the United States)
- Invite and welcome a county commissioner to speak to them about their rights, particularly related to their interactions with law enforcement officers.

Anticipate a Developmental Process and Align Capacity Building Support and Evaluation with the Process

All 10 grantees reported that it was the first time they took on an immigrant integration project. Their initial understanding about the knowledge, skills, relationships and commitments needed to conduct the work was limited. A few grantees "bit off more than they could chew" and had to drop some of their strategies during implementation when they realized that they didn't have the knowledge, skills and time to implement them. A few, after developing their implementation plan, learned that they didn't have the target organization's or system's support (e.g., school, police department). A few more, after working

with the evaluator to develop indicators of progress, realized that they didn't have adequate staff skills or time to document their progress (e.g., survey school personnel about cultural competency policies and practices) and had to reconsider the strategies they anticipated would lead to the desired change. Over time, however, the grantees learned about what did and did not work and their strengths and limitations.

Initial and ongoing assessments to determine if grantees had the capacity to implement their immigrant integration strategies are important. These assessments would enable technical assistance providers to plan their support to match the grantees' current abilities and stage of implementation. For example, if a grantee were interested in making the local schools more culturally competent and responsive to immigrant parents, the grantee needed to ask the questions before implementing any activities: did the school's leadership share the same interest; was there a steering committee member who either represented the school or had a relationship with someone in the school; who among the grantee staff or steering committee members had skills in cultural competency training and if they didn't, who would conduct the training; and how would the school's cultural competency improvements be monitored and evaluated. Based on the answers to these questions, the grantee would assess what it takes to increase the cultural competency of the local schools and develop a strategy.

The above example reflects a developmental approach, where grantees set realistic expectations, take incremental actions, focus its energy and resources, and even achieve "small wins" that will further motivate them. Technical assistance should be aligned to gradually build the grantees' capacities to match the scale and scope of their strategies over time. Evaluators should take the same approach and measure the grantees' capacity changes and "small wins," while maintaining focus on the long-term outcomes.

Grantees Should be Required to Allocate Resources for Monitoring and Evaluation

Grantees did not consistently collect data to monitor their progress and outcomes, largely because of limited capacity, even though they received technical assistance for this task. The grantee coordinators did not always have adequate time, knowledge, skills or support from steering committee members to do this. When activities were implemented by project partners, it was even more challenging to collect data about the activities and their impact. Further, The Trust did not require grantees to allocate grant funds for collecting data about their progress and outcomes. Therefore, most of the data collected by grantees related to the number of workshops, trainings, dialogues and other events they conducted and the number of people who participated.

If a funder wants to understand the impact of their investment in immigrant integration, they should require that grantees allocate a percentage of their grants for monitoring and evaluation and assess early on (in collaboration with the technical assistance provider and evaluator) grantees' capacity to collect data and document their outcomes.

» CONCLUSIONS

The Initiative helped lay the groundwork for continued integration in 10 communities across Colorado. The grantees successfully brought together representatives from diverse sectors (e.g., education, health, human rights) to form committees to plan and guide their immigrant integration work. During the planning phase, they effectively included and listened to a wide range of immigrants and receiving community members; in some of the communities, the number and types of people included exceeded participants' expectations. While the grantees were able to get extensive input from immigrants to develop their plans, they were less successful in engaging immigrants in their steering committees during the implementation phase.

The 10 grantees achieved most, if not all, of the goals they set for themselves. Some goals were not achieved because grantees did not have the time and capacity or could not secure the necessary buy-in from certain institutional leaders. A few grantees also learned that their strategies were not as effective as they had anticipated halfway through implementation.

It was difficult to determine whether or not the Initiative had increased the sense of integration among *all* residents because the grantees did not implement strategies targeted at changing the entire communities. Their strategies were targeted at small groups of people (primarily immigrants) and specific organizations. For this reason, The Trust decided to terminate the immigrant integration survey after the third year. Nevertheless, it could be concluded that integration had occurred among the immigrant and receiving community members who participated in the grantees' programs and activities. As described in Sections 3 and 4, several first-time events, relationships and changes resulted from the Initiative that will continue beyond the life of the grant.

The Initiative also uncovered the complexity of funding, supporting and evaluating immigrant integration work. The change process depicted in the Initiative's logic model in Figure 1 anticipated that receiving community members would change systems, and immigrants would fully participate and contribute to the community; these outcomes were generally not achieved. This was probably because, as mentioned before, the Initiative was not framed as a systems change initiative and immigrant engagement was a challenge for nine of the 10 grantees.

If the logic model were revised based on the evaluation's findings and lessons learned, the following changes would be necessary to Figure 1:

- Identification and explanation of a set of evidence-based immigrant integration strategies that grantees would be expected to implement
- Identification of short term outcomes that are aligned with the strategies
- Inclusion of more incremental outcomes (the steps described in the integration continuum in Figure 5 could be incorporated into the logic model as immediate and intermediate outcomes)
- Organization of the strategies and outcomes into individual, organizational, community and systems levels.

In retrospect, given the complexity of immigrant integration work, The Trust, technical assistance provider (Spring Institute) and evaluator (Community Science) should also have spent more time during the design phase to align their understanding, expectations and strategies, and communicated clearly their expectations to grantees. Most important was everyone's common understanding about what it meant for the grantees to be able to achieve the outcomes depicted in the logic model. A more deliberate process should have been established for more frequent and continuous reflection on the evaluation's findings and implementation challenges to be able to make informed decisions about mid-course adjustments.



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