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City of Gainesville Policy Program Preliminary Research & Analysis

TOPIC: Immigrant Support Services

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DATE: April 12, 2022

REQUESTED BY: Commissioner David Arreola

OBJECTIVE

This report looks to address research on immigrant support services that could be provided by the City of Gainesville. The main objectives of this report are:

- Evaluating the best practices from a broad array of categories to best support local migrant populations.
- Identifying funding that can directly impact migrant populations in Gainesville.
- Comparing the immigrant support services of peer municipalities, with an emphasis on unique practices and direct aid utilized.
- Assessing expected challenges and points of further discussion for whichever practices the city chooses to pursue.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report seeks to outline the best practices necessary for municipalities looking to provide a holistic variety of services to local immigrant populations. Through both external research and interviews with peer cities, it was evident that there are a wide variety of services provided by municipalities related to immigrant support, which typically fall under five categories: language access, citizenship assistance, employment assistance, legal assistance, and education assistance. Some case studies, typically in larger cities or cities that are near the United States – Mexico border, have offices or departments dedicated to providing immigrant services. However, other cities like San Antonio, Texas provide immigrant services under general departments such as the Department of Human Services. Additionally, almost all cities relied on partnerships with local community groups to provide effective services. If the City of Gainesville wishes to pursue an expansion in immigrant support services, there may be a few expected challenges. These challenges include determining what types of support or services are most needed by Gainesville immigrant populations and whether those services are better

provided through the city or through existing nonprofit and advocacy groups; finding effective ways to inform immigrants of new services; and deciding on if the City of Gainesville has the funding, capabilities, and need to create a new branch or department dedicated to immigrant affairs.

HISTORY/BACKGROUND INFORMATION

City of Gainesville

Immigrants make up a substantial amount of Gainesville’s population, comprising 11.3% of the population in 2019. Population growth in Gainesville has also been driven in part by immigration, with immigrants making up 24.4% of the population growth between 2014 and 2019.¹ The University of Florida also has its own international student community, which is made up of over 4,300 students, or 8.4% of the student population, as of 2019. The primary countries of origins for the international student community are China, India, and South Korea.² International students are primarily supported through the UF International Center, which is an entity on campus that helps international students with visa applications and making them feel welcomed on campus.

Currently, in Gainesville’s city ordinances, housing and employment discrimination on the basis of citizenship or national origin is not permitted.³ The City of Gainesville additionally declared itself a “welcoming city” in 2016.⁴ However, to be considered a certified welcoming city, a city must adhere to the Welcoming America welcoming certification. The certification process requires the city to apply to the certification, conduct a self-assessment, receive a two to three-day audit, and then create a plan based on the final report.⁵ The process allows cities to see what their strengths and weaknesses are in their immigrant-related initiatives through the lens of the third-party organization Welcoming America. The City of Gainesville has not been officially certified as a Welcoming City, however there has been progress made regarding initiatives that could allow the city to become certified.⁶

As of 2021, one of the most substantial immigrant related initiatives pursued by the City of Gainesville to push the city on track to receive a welcoming city certification was the Gainesville Immigrant Neighbor Inclusion Initiative (GINI). Jumpstarted by a grant for Gateways for Growth and New American Economy, in addition to support given by groups such as Rural Women’s Health Project, GINI aims provide a more inclusive environment in Gainesville for immigrants of all backgrounds. The initiative is directed by GINI’s Steering committee, which is made up of 60 community members from various backgrounds and careers. Within the committee is five different working groups that address five main issues relevant to immigrant support: safety, civic inclusion, language access, education.⁷ Each of these working groups convened once a month for nine months to develop policy

¹ <https://research.newamericaneconomy.org/report/new-americans-in-gainesville/>

² University of Florida International Student Report. *College Factual*.

<https://www.collegefactual.com/colleges/university-of-florida/student-life/international/>

³ City of Gainesville City Ordinances, Chapter 8: Discrimination,

https://library.municode.com/fl/gainesville/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=PTIICOOR_CH8DI

⁴ Caplan, A, (2016) ‘A statement of principle.’ *The Gainesville Sun*.

<https://www.gainesville.com/story/news/2016/12/07/candle-lighting-proclaims-gainesville-welcoming-city/24402709007/>

⁵ Become Certified. *Welcoming America*. <https://certifiedwelcoming.org/become-certified/>

⁶ <https://www.wuft.org/news/2021/07/19/gainesville-doesnt-meet-criteria-to-be-certified-as-welcoming-city-to-immigrants-two-proposals-could-help-change-that/>

⁷Gainesville Immigrant Neighbor Inclusion Initiative. *City of Gainesville*.

<https://www.cityofgainesville.org/CityCommission/CommunityInterests/ImmigrantNeighborInclusion.aspx>

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recommendations for the city. A survey was put out to gain direct feedback from immigrant community members as a way for residents to express how welcome they feel in Gainesville, barriers they have encountered and methods to make the city a better environment for immigrants.⁸

Additionally, in March of 2022, GINI put out the Immigrant Inclusion Blueprint, which outlined the last year of GINI's work, as well as a list of goals GINI hopes to accomplish. The five goals listed in the blueprint were prioritizing engaged communities through immigrant inclusion; creating safe communities by improving civic education and the relationship between immigrants and police; developing equitable access to government, healthcare, and education services; ensuring healthy communities by improving healthcare access; and pushing for equitable education by addressing barriers for immigrant families in the school system. To achieve these goals, the GINI blueprint also discussed the immediate next steps of the process of immigrant inclusion: implementing telephone-based language services and hiring immigrant liaisons. For telephone language services, GINI urges the process of contracting and training people to use the service in various city organizations. Immigrant liaisons will be responsible for overseeing language access, immigrant safety and civic engagement proposals to ensure these facets are on track to aid more immigrant Gainesville residents.⁹

One part of the GINI Blueprint that has already been approved by the Gainesville City Commission has been the improvement of language access for local immigrants. The program, which aims to help those with little to no English proficiency communicate with various government services, was projected by GINI to cost approximately \$316,000 a year. The program will include initiatives such as the language translation phone line and translated city signage and documents, with the main prioritized language being Spanish. This initiative is slated to be pursued in phases, with additional languages being added in the future as needed.¹⁰

State of Florida

The Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF) serves as the primary state governmental resource for immigrant families to receive aid. A large portion of the office's resources go to aiding refugees in Florida, as the state harbors the largest refugee program in the nation with over 5,000 refugees, asylees and Cuban/Haitian entrants every year.¹¹ The Department of Children and Families Refugee Services Program receives federal funding from the Department of Health and Human Services' Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR), which aids the Florida office in providing economic and social support to refugees. Although the term "immigrant" is broad, the individuals eligible for services from the Refugee Service Program must have one of the following immigration statuses, in accordance with the U.S. Refugee Act of 1980:

1. A person who is outside his or her country
2. Is unwilling or unable to return to his or her home country

⁸ GINI Reports and Surveys. *City of Gainesville*.
<https://www.cityofgainesville.org/CityCommission/CommunityInterests/ImmigrantNeighborInclusion/ginireportsandsurveys>

⁹ Immigrant Inclusion Blueprint (2022). *Gainesville Immigrant Neighbor Inclusion Initiative*. 1-32.

<https://www.cityofgainesville.org/Portals/0/cmo/2022%20Immigrant%20Inclusion%20Blueprint-web.pdf>

¹⁰ Henderson, J. Gainesville moves ahead with translation program to help non-English speaking locals. *The Gainesville Sun*. <https://www.gainesville.com/story/news/2022/03/22/gainesville-plans-provide-translation-services-non-english-locals/7125266001/>

¹¹ General Program Overview. *Florida Department of Children and Families*.

<https://www.myflfamilies.com/service-programs/refugee-services/overview.shtml>

3. Can demonstrate persecution based on race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership in a social group¹²

The U.S. Refugee Act of 1980 also provides a definition for an asylee, which is a person who is physically present in the U.S. or U.S. port and meets the definition of a refugee. The Refugee Service Program is led by the Director of Refugee Services, which is based in Tallahassee, although there are staff in both Tallahassee and Miami. The program also employs Refugee Services Community Liaisons at DCF offices, who oversee running Refugee Task Force Meetings within their community to discuss the assessment of the needs of refugees. The office also provides federally funded direct cash and medical assistance to refugees who apply to Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) or Medicaid. Partnerships with nonprofit organizations and local government agencies have also assisted in the process of integrating refugees, with some services including pre-employment counseling and orientation, career ladder services, vocational training, English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), childcare services, tutoring for youth, vital document translation services and health screenings.¹³

Compiled by the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), there are a variety of non-governmental organizations within the state of Florida that provide immigrant assistance outside of the scope of what the State of Florida provides. Some organizations like the American Immigration Lawyers Association, Legal Services of Greater Miami, and Orlando Center for Justice provide legal assistance to immigrants looking to hire an attorney. Other groups like Church World Service and Lutheran Services Florida help with refugee and immigrant resettlement. Immigration Equality and ASISTA both represent immigrants who are LGBTQ+, HIV-positive, and survivors of domestic abuse or sexual assault. The ACLU's goal of the list is to condense resources for easier access to immigrants in need.¹⁴

National Background Information

The main source of immigrant support on the federal level falls under the jurisdiction of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), which oversees the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). The office provides immigrants with the opportunity to apply for naturalization, reside in the U.S. on a permanent basis, and be eligible to work in the U.S. as a noncitizen. The USCIS website outlines various resources that immigrants can use including immigration services scam information, study material for taking the naturalization test, and a list of forms that may need to be used by noncitizens for a variety of situations.¹⁵ The website itself also provides an online virtual assistant named "Emma" that is capable of assisting website navigation in Spanish.

Central to the services USCIS provides is its language access plan, which outlines a list of goals and guidelines to ensure that Limited English Proficient (LEP) individuals can utilize the services provided by USCIS. The main goals for improving language access are developing a "Working with an Interpreter Training" for USCIS officers, launching an online campaign within USCIS to solicit suggestions internally for language access improvement, and creating the playable Multilingual Citizenship Outreach Toolkits in 14 languages. The languages offered for the citizenship toolkits are

¹² Et al.

¹³ Et al.

¹⁴ Suggested Immigration Assistance Contact List. *American Civil Liberties Union Foundation.*

https://www.acluf.org/sites/default/files/immigration_assistance_contact_list.pdf

¹⁵ Citizenship and Immigration Services. *U.S. Department of Homeland Security.*

<https://www.dhs.gov/topics/citizenship-and-immigration-services>

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Arabic, Burmese, Simplified Chinese, Traditional Chinese, English, Farsi, Haitian Creole, Korean, Kurdish, Somali, Spanish, Tagalog, Vietnamese, and American Sign Language. Each toolkit contains an audiovisual presentation on the naturalization process, a naturalization interview skit transcript, and translated naturalization materials. The office also provides a “Welcome to the United States” comprehensive guide about everyday life in the United States, as well as the option to translate certain pages on the USCIS website in languages like Arabic, Haitian Creole, Nepali and Spanish. Supervised by a Language Access Working Group (LAWG) composed of USCIS employees, the USCIS LAWG works to improve the office’s translation, in-language, and technology services through media such as web content, print material, and press releases.¹⁶

In addition to the services provided by USCIS, Congress established the Citizenship and Immigration Services Ombudsman, a liaison between the American public and the USCIS. The CIS Ombudsman is charged with helping resolve issues any individual may be having with USCIS, hold feedback sessions for individuals to voice their experiences with USCIS, and make recommendations to USCIS based on issues identified within the U.S. immigration system. The CIS Ombudsman is an independent office of USCIS.

Another arm of the federal government that provides services to immigrants is the Office of Refugee Resettlement, (ORR) which specifically deals with refugees and asylees. Within a year of utilizing the services in the program, the ORR claims that many refugees find and maintain employment and economic independence. The support services offered by the office are employability assessment, training and job development, vocational training and skills recertification, job placement and job maintenance. The office also specifically seeks to address barriers refugees may face within the workplace such as social adjustment, English language instruction, interpretation and translation, day care for children and citizenship and naturalization. ORR also provides funding awards to states based on the number of refugees within the state that year.¹⁷ The order of refugee applicants who are prioritized for support services are:

1. New arrivals in their first year in the U.S.
2. Refugees receiving cash assistance
3. Unemployed refugees who are not receiving cash assistance
4. Employed refugees who need to retain employment¹⁸

PRELIMINARY RESEARCH AND FINDINGS

Best Practices for Immigrant Support

When discussing immigrant support services, there are a broad variety of actions a city can take to better the living and social conditions of foreign-born residents and their families. These different avenues of support aim to aid immigrants in numerous spheres of public life, including the legal system, educational system, the workforce and in public interaction. In the following subsections, we will observe some overarching strategies outlined by experts and think tanks in terms of immigrant support.

¹⁶ Language Access Plan (2019). *U.S. Department of Homeland Security*.

<https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/uscisc-updated-language-access-plan-2020.pdf>

¹⁷ Refugee Support Services. *Office of Refugee Resettlement*.

<https://www.acf.hhs.gov/orr/programs/refugees/refugee-support-services>

¹⁸ Et al.

City Departments

One of the most prevalent recommendations provided by experts when it comes to immigrant support is either creating a new department specifically devoted to immigrant services or allocating immigrant services to an existing department. By consolidating all immigrant services to one department, it makes access much simpler and easy to find. Presentations like Dr. Marie Price's, a professor from George Washington University, "Cities Welcoming Immigrants: Local Strategies to Attract and Retain Immigrants," point specifically to immigrant inclusion being facilitated within the mayor's office, as mayors typically set the tone for a city's level of welcomeness.¹⁹ Within the existing or new department, Price recommends developing an immigrant advisory board, which can be responsible for overseeing and suggesting changes to current immigrant support services. The department can also facilitate the collection or compilation of data to get an idea of where immigrant communities live and create benchmarks for their social and economic integration. This data can hold cities accountable for making sure their services are still useful for the communities they wish to serve.

Bloomberg CityLab also points to the potential for the development of a local governmental department to oversee immigrant support, specifically through the creation of a mayor's office for immigrant affairs. This department could be tasked with immigrant integration, including through financial literacy programs, citizenship workshops and ESOL classes.²⁰ Bloomberg CityLab also cites numerous cities who have their own mayor's office of immigrant affairs already, such as New York City, Atlanta, Chicago, Nashville, and Seattle.

Safety and Health Services

Ensuring the health and safety of the local immigrant population is arguably one of the most important services a city can provide to its citizens. When discussing health and safety, the services provided are mostly services to be provided within law enforcement or the local healthcare system. Although Gainesville is said to be a "welcoming city," there are other actions law enforcement can take to make certain that local migrant residents have positive interactions with the police, mostly through outreach and engagement programs. These programs are a key way to promote safety of migrants in Gainesville, as a common source of negative interactions that immigrants have may be with law enforcement. According to the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF), establishing trust with immigrant communities is an important first step to improving relations between law enforcement and immigrants.²¹ This is mostly achieved through partnering with community leaders among different migrant communities, as well as engaging with youth in schools. PERF also recommends building relationships through programming, where law enforcement brings the engagement programs within the community to places like schools, churches, and community centers. Education on immigrants' rights, laws, and how to utilize 911 are all promoted as ways to provide support to immigrants through law enforcement.

Another aspect of supporting immigrant communities' safety is through creating equitable access to healthcare, as this remains a struggle for many migrant citizens. According to Welcoming America,

¹⁹ Price, M. (2015). Cities Welcoming Immigrants: Local Strategies to Attract and Retain Immigrants. *World Migration Report*. https://www.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbd1486/files/our_work/ICP/IDM/2015_CMC/Launch-WMR/Price/WMR_2015-Marie-Price-10-13-15-copy.pdf

²⁰ Kerr, J. (2018). Want Immigration Reform? Look to Cities. *Bloomberg CityLab*. <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2018-01-23/9-ways-to-build-a-more-welcoming-city-for-immigrants>

²¹ Strengthening Relationships between Police and Immigrant Communities in a Complex Political Environment: Multicultural Outreach and Engagement Programs for Police Agencies. *Police Executive Research Forum*. <https://www.policeforum.org/assets/PoliceImmigrantCommunities.pdf>

it is recommended that partnerships are developed with local organizations versed in providing healthcare services, as they will be able to provide information on health care and health insurance options available to migrant populations.²² These organizations can also highlight the options for certain treatments, testing, preventative health care services and mental health resources in the area. These materials may need to be translated into prominent languages like Spanish to be sure that information is being conveyed correctly.

Language Access

At the forefront of immigrant support services is language access, as language can provide large barriers for immigrants' access to schools, healthcare, and employment. While providing English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes for immigrants to learn English is highly recommended to acclimate migrant residents to the United States, it also may be necessary to provide translation and interpreters in some situations to make sure that communication is effective for immigrants who are not fluent in English. One recommended practice by the Migration Policy Institute (MPI) is the establishment of a volunteer language bank, which is made up of a bilingual staff that can provide translation and interpretation services.²³ The problem many language banks face is that there are typically no skill requirements, so MPI highly recommends both testing and training volunteers to prevent miscommunication.

In Gainesville, a volunteer language bank could be a useful venture, as the City of Gainesville could call upon UF or Santa Fe students who are enrolled in language courses at their respective college to volunteer. Another way to improve language access is to provide options for certain websites or webpages to be multilingual. So, in the case of the City of Gainesville, this would refer to the city's website. It is strongly encouraged not to rely on machine translations. MPI states that websites should make their translation options obvious on their global navigation tools, and there should be scheduled routine maintenance to ensure that updated English pages are also updated in their respective translated languages.²⁴ Another general language access service is to translate important government documents into select languages.

Community Engagement

Community engagement is another large factor in providing immigrant support, as numerous organizations are devoted to delivering services to migrants. Brookings Institution identifies multi-stakeholder partnerships within the community, including those in the private sector, to be a significant source of improving the implementation of immigrant support services.²⁵ Bloomberg CityLab also cites the joining of "coalitions for collective action" to ensure that cities can implement meaningful practices to serve their immigrant population. One example of a coalition mentioned by CityLab is Cities for Action, a coalition made up of over 150 mayors in the United States, which shares best practices and advocates for immigrants on the national level.²⁶ Another group, Welcoming

²² The Welcoming Standard and Certified Welcoming. *Welcoming America*. <https://welcomingamerica.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Welcoming-Standard-Certified-Welcoming.pdf>

²³ Huda, A. Practitioner's Corner: Testing and Training Volunteer Translators and Interpreters. *Migration Policy Institute*. <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/programs/language-access-translation-and-interpretation-policies-and-practices/practitioners-corner-testing>

²⁴ Practitioner's Corner: Top 10 Best Practices for Multilingual Websites. *Migration Policy Institute*. <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/programs/language-access-translation-and-interpretation-policies-and-practices/practitioners-corn-0>

²⁵ Brandt, J. (2018). How American cities can lead on migration. *Brookings Institution*. <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/the-avenue/2018/11/15/how-american-cities-can-lead-on-migration/>

²⁶ Kerr, J. et al.

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America, supports partnerships to strengthen community support, as these community partners can assist the city in its mission to provide equitable access, safety, education, and civic engagement to its citizens.²⁷

Other Relevant Practices

Outside of the four categories for immigrant support outlined, there are also a large amount of miscellaneous immigrant support services that can be utilized by municipal governments. These services pertain to topics such as citizenship, urban planning, and other social support services to provide a more welcoming environment for immigrants living in Gainesville. They are as follows:

1. Implementing a municipal ID card program to give immigrants access to services like library cards, pre-paid debit cards, and public transportation like RTS buses²⁸
2. Promoting non-discrimination in housing regulations and tenant protections within local houses or apartments²⁹. This policy exists in the City of Gainesville, as described in the History and Background section.
3. Engaging immigrant residents by supporting their participation at city commission meetings and other local government meetings, as well as providing education on the road to citizenship³⁰
4. Providing employment counseling for immigrants seeking a job and support opportunities for networking or mentorship in chosen work fields³¹
5. Assessing practices that may be harmful to local immigrant workers and providing education on workers' rights and safety to immigrants³²
6. Creating events that support cultural life of all backgrounds to promote the celebration of cultural diversity³³
7. Incorporating an awareness of local migrant communities into future urban planning by the city to disincentivize segregation between native-born and immigrant communities³⁴

Funding

A crucial part of supplying quality services is gaining funding from national entities equipped at either aiding local government programs or giving direct aid to immigrants. Regarding refugees, there are numerous programs that supply direct services and cash assistance to those who apply. Some programs include the Wilson/Fish Alternative Program and the Targeted Assistance Program.³⁵ While creating awareness for immigrant eligibility for federal programs like Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and Supplemental Security

²⁷ Welcoming America, et al.

²⁸ Kerr, et al. <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2018-01-23/9-ways-to-build-a-more-welcoming-city-for-immigrants>

²⁹ Welcoming America, et al.

³⁰ Et al.

³¹ Et al.

³² Et al.

³³ Price, M & Chacko E. (2012). Migrants' Inclusion in Cities: Innovative Urban Policies and Practices. *UN Habitat and UNESCO*. https://unhabitat.org/sites/default/files/documents/2019-05/migrants_inclusion_in_cities_-_innovative_urban_policies_and_practices.pdf

³⁴ Charles, A & Guna, D (2017). We need to get better at integrating migrants into our cities. Here's how. *World Economic Forum*. <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2017/10/we-need-to-get-better-at-integrating-migrants-into-our-cities-here-s-how/>

³⁵ Immigration and Refugee Assistance. *Benefits.gov*.

<https://www.benefits.gov/categories/Immigration%20and%20Refugee%20Assistance>

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Income (SSI) is an important facet of ensuring that local immigrant families get the support they need,³⁶ there are also grant programs that can support organizations who serve immigrants.

For example, the Department of U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services gave out \$10 million in grants within its Citizen and Integration Grant Program to 40 organizations around the country that help prepare immigrants for naturalization in 2021. The grants specifically go to organizations that provide educational opportunities for learning English, U.S. history and civics. These 40 organizations will continue to receive federal funding until September 2023, where the department approximates around 25,000 lawful permanent residents (LPR) will be naturalized as a result of the funding. The grant program has existed since 2009, with more than \$112 million being granted to various immigrant-serving organization in 39 U.S. states.³⁷ Although grant recipients have largely been community and faith-based groups, entities like public libraries are also eligible to apply to the grant program.

Case Studies

City of Orlando, Florida

The City of Orlando has a relatively high immigrant population, with 21.5% of the population being foreign born in 2019.³⁸ In the City of Orlando, immigrant support services are provided through several different departments, depending on the type of service being requested. According to the City of Orlando's Inclusion, Diversity and Equity Senior Specialist, a liaison employee within the Office of Multicultural Affairs works to develop policies and service expansion by collaborating with different departments to increase equity for immigrants to access municipal services.³⁹ The liaison also works very closely with the City of Orlando's Hispanic Office for Local Assistance (HOLA). The city not only promotes departmental partnerships for immigrant services, but Orlando also partners with more than 100 organizations vetted by the HOLA coordinator. Through these partnerships, immigrants with questions for the HOLA office on services are referred to a specialized organization with the exact services they need.

Many of the organizations that partner with the city for immigrant services receive money through the community impact fund, which budgets for translation services, HOLA staff and programs and the Multicultural Affairs liaison. The Multicultural Affairs Board also exists so immigrant residents can provide feedback to the community on the services the city provides. Some current services being provided in Orlando include several events in partnership with the Orlando Justice Center and Florida Legal Services to help aid immigrants eligible for Temporary Protective Status and Citizenship. Through the City of Orlando Housing Department, immigrants can receive rental assistance, regardless of immigration status. The city also funds ESOL programs for immigrants through community impact grants. The HOLA office also provides services by partnering with Career Source Central Florida, which is a nonprofit that comes into the HOLA office to help immigrants improve their resume and find jobs in the region. Recently, the city passed a Trust Act that prohibits all municipal employees from asking about immigration status, which applies to law enforcement as well.

³⁶ Broder, T. (2021). Overview of Immigrant Eligibility for Federal Programs. *National Immigration Law Center*. <https://www.nilc.org/issues/economic-support/overview-immeligfedprograms/>

³⁷ Fiscal Year 2021 Citizenship and Integration Grant Program. *U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services*. <https://www.uscis.gov/citizenship/civic-integration/fy-2021-grant-recipients>

³⁸ Orlando, FL. *Data USA*. <https://www.gainesville.com/story/news/2022/03/22/gainesville-plans-provide-translation-services-non-english-locals/7125266001/>

³⁹ Interview with Felipe Sousa-Lazabellet, Inclusion, Diversity, and Equity Senior Specialist; City of Orlando

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Some ways the City of Orlando is looking to expand its immigrant services is through the creation of an official language access policy and a legal defense fund to support immigrants facing deportation. Currently, handling immigrants with various immigrant statuses and providing housing assistance have been the largest challenges faced by the City of Orlando.⁴⁰

County of Miami-Dade, Florida

Unlike other case studies listed in this report, a large portion of immigrant support services in the Miami area are facilitated by Miami-Dade County's Office of New Americans. Through this office, local immigrants, which made up 54% of the population between 2016-2020 according to the US Census, can take free or low-cost classes to prepare them for their citizenship test, get one-on-one assistance with naturalization, obtain fee waivers for citizenship applications, and receive one-on-one financial counseling.⁴¹ The office also partners with numerous community organizations such as Catholic Legal Services, Hispanic Unity, Center for Immigrant Advancement, and the Florida Immigrant Coalition. Miami-Dade County also hosts Miami Citizenship Week, which sheds light on the contributions immigrants have made to the local community while also informing immigrants about the pathway to citizenship. The week hosts numerous cultural events, citizenship workshops, and opportunities to highlight locally immigrant-owned businesses in the Miami-Dade area.⁴²

On March 8, 2021, the Office of New Americans announced a new Miami-Dade New American Task Force, which is an initiative funded by the Gateways for Growth Challenge Award. The office has also pursued many services to help immigrants deal with the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic such as:

1. Web-based information update sessions and digital media awareness campaigns about the citizenship process
2. A mobile and web-based application to access citizenship resources
3. Virtual citizenship classes and pro-bono legal services
4. Micro-grants for immigrant families and immigrant-owned businesses⁴³

City of Tampa, Florida

According to the City of Tampa Media Relations Manager, the City of Tampa does not provide any immigration services to its immigrant population, who make up 16.7% of the population.⁴⁴ Instead, local migrant residents rely on the services provided by Tampa-based nonprofits and advocacy groups. Many of these organizations primarily provide legal help to immigrants in need of deportation defense or citizenship aid, with one example being the Tampa Immigration Law Center. The center offers services to assist in applying for U.S. citizenship, getting fiancé(e) visas, waivers of inadmissibility, humanitarian assistance, deportation removal defense and immigrant visas.⁴⁵ Many small to mid-sized cities, or cities with smaller immigrant populations, operate similar to Tampa and rely on existing nonprofit and advocacy groups to provide support services to immigrant populations.

City of San Antonio, Texas

⁴⁰ Et al.

⁴¹ The Office of New Americans. *Miami-Dade County*.

<https://www.miamidade.gov/global/initiatives/citizenship/home.page>

⁴² Miami Citizenship Week. *The Office of New Americans*. <https://www.officeofnewamericans.org/welcome>

⁴³ Our Work. *The Office of New Americans*. <https://www.officeofnewamericans.org/our-work>

⁴⁴ Interview with Lauren Rozyla, City of Tampa Media Relations Manager.

⁴⁵ Tampa Immigration Law Center.

https://www.tampaimmigrationlawcenter.com/?utm_medium=referral&utm_source=idealist

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Located in the City of San Antonio's Department of Human Services, a long list of resources available to immigrant populations is provided under Immigration Services, which serves around 14% of the San Antonio population who identify as foreign born on the US Census.⁴⁶ On the website, San Antonio shows two separate "Welcome to America" videos in English and Spanish. The city has taken on a variety of different support methods for immigrant populations, with one of the most unique being a Migrant Resource Center established on March 30, 2019. This center was established for Central American asylees seeking refuge to get access to services they needed. The resource center also hosted other migrants from countries such as Angola, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Haiti, totaling the number of migrants served to over 32,000 people. The center closed on October 25, 2019, marking an important instance of collaboration between city government and local nonprofits to support the center.⁴⁷

Another of the most prominent features of the City of San Antonio's immigration services is its City Immigration Community Liaison, who operates under the City Manager. This position was added during the 2018 fiscal year and has since developed a list of initiatives to aid immigrant and refugee communities in partnership with local community stakeholders. The Immigrant Liaison operates a newsletter about immigrant-related news and events to subscribers. The city also supports immigrants through funding legal services for immigrants facing deportation, resulting in the resident contacting the three designated legal service providers — American Gateways, Catholic Charities, and RAICES — to obtain free legal representation.⁴⁸

In 2019 and 2020, San Antonio developed an immigration strategic plan to provide a list of community-based recommendations on how to make the city more accommodating for migrants. Some important points from the plan include:

1. Establish parent liaisons for K-12 schools to serve as translators
2. Work with higher education institutions to validate foreign credentials and create policies that better serve immigrant students
3. Provide information sessions on local health services in multiple different languages
4. Address immigrant cultural beliefs that may be harmful to health, like stigmatization of STDs or vaccination
5. Create an information hotline that connects immigrants with legal service partners in the area
6. Host resource fairs that show immigrants and refugee the entire variety of resources the city provides
7. Launch a campaign to help immigrants and refugees feel safe in exercising their right to vote and engaging with civil discourse⁴⁹

City of Santa Fe, New Mexico

With approximately 14.6% of Santa Fe residents identifying as foreign born in 2019, according to Data USA, the city has a higher percentage of immigrant residents than the national average.⁵⁰ Due to

⁴⁶ San Antonio, Texas. US Census. <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/sanantoniocitytexas>

⁴⁷ Immigration Services. *City of San Antonio*. <https://www.sanantonio.gov/humanservices/ImmigrationServices>

⁴⁸ Et al.

⁴⁹ San Antonio Welcoming Plan. *San Antonio Chamber of Commerce and City of San Antonio Office of Immigration*.

<https://www.sanantonio.gov/Portals/0/Files/HumanServices/ImmigrationServices/StrategicPlan.pdf>

⁵⁰ Santa Fe, NM. Data USA. <https://datausa.io/profile/geo/santa-fe-nm/#:~:text=Foreign%20Born%20Population&text=12.7k%20people->

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a large portion of Santa Fe residents being immigrants, the city adopted Resolution No. 1999-6 in January 1999, which declared the city policy of non-discrimination based on nationality and the creation of an immigration task force. The task force is made up of nine representatives within Santa Fe County from different areas of specialization: human rights, social services, business community, health care, labor organizations, religious community, youth service providers, women's advocacy groups, educators and legal services.⁵¹ The committee provides services for local immigrants such as Spanish resources for helping immigrants know their rights, as well as linking immigrants to the Santa Fe Community Foundation — an organization that takes donations to help support refugees and asylum seekers. The committee also receives community feedback to implement new actions to improve immigration services.

City of San Francisco, California

In the City of San Francisco, immigrant support services are provided through the Office of Civic Engagement and Immigrant Affairs. The office's mission for immigrant support is founded upon the idea of integrating immigrant services with topics like civic engagement, workforce development, participation, and volunteerism.⁵² Within the office, events are held for local immigrants and services are provided through the website, which assists San Francisco's immigrant population that makes up 34.2% of the population according to the US Census.⁵³ The current services offered by the City of San Francisco include:

1. Providing a list of community organizations who can give immigrants free legal aid
2. Making Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) renewal fees free for immigrants who are eligible
3. A hotline to report to the Rapid Response team about a person being detained by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE)
4. San Francisco Pathways to Citizenship workshops to give free help for immigrants seeking naturalization
5. The Community Ambassadors Program (CAP), which is a community safety and engagement job training program
6. The DreamSF Fellowship, which provides immigrant youth with a paid leadership program
7. A 311 phone line to ask a Community Ambassador to walk you home or to an appointment
8. A formal complaint process for reporting City departments that do not provide adequate translation
9. Invitation to virtual Immigrant Rights Commission hearings for public comment⁵⁴

City of New York, New York

The Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs is the main governmental entity in New York City that deals with immigrant support services. The office's website provides numerous outreach flyers to inform immigrants of different resources, such as informational pieces on immigration fraud, knowing your rights with ICE, accessing free immigration legal aid, and what public benefits immigrants can

,As%20of%202019%2C%2014.6%25%20of%20Santa%20Fe%2C%20NM%20residents,the%20rate%20has%20been%20decreasing.

⁵¹ Immigration Committee, *City of Santa Fe*. https://www.santafenm.gov/immigration_committee

⁵² Immigrant Affairs. *San Francisco Office of Civic Engagement and Immigrant Affairs*.

<https://sf.gov/org/ccsfgsa/oceia/immigrant-affairs>

⁵³ San Francisco, CA. <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/sanfranciscocountycalifornia>

⁵⁴ Office of Civic Engagement and Immigrant Affairs. *City of San Francisco*. <https://sf.gov/departments/city-administrator/office-civic-engagement-and-immigrant-affairs>

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receive.⁵⁵ The flyers are available in English, Arabic, Bengali, Chinese, French, Haitian Creole, and Spanish. The office also has an active presence on various social media platforms like Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and Medium. Recently, the office added a tab specifically to give resources to Ukrainian New Yorkers looking for assistance. Due to the size of the office, the City of New York's Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs can provide numerous services to the public including:

1. An easy-to-read road map of city services in 30 different languages
2. Information on COVID-19 guidance, vaccination, and testing in different languages to combat COVID-19 misinformation among immigrants
3. NYC Health+ Hospitals that provide care to all residents, regardless of immigration status
4. NYC Well, which is a free, confidential mental health helpline in 200+ different languages
5. Food Bank NYC, which is free regardless of immigration status and provides groceries and hot meals
6. Cash assistance for eligible immigrants
7. We Speak NYC, which provides free online English classes, as well as adult literacy programs
8. Small Business Services Resource Fair and Webinars, which gives information on re-opening in the COVID-19 pandemic, safety plans, inspections, financial assistance, and employee support⁵⁶

City of Chicago, Illinois

Just like many of the other large cities mentioned, the City of Chicago has its own department for immigrant support services: The Office of New Americans. On the office's website, it outlines topics such as the benefits and process of applying for citizenship, eligibility and applications for DACA, language access, and an FAQ for being detained by ICE.⁵⁷ The Chicago Office of New Americans also has a list of immigrant support-related accomplishments in the city released in 2015, which lists services and achievements such as:

1. Expansion of ESOL and General Education Development (GED) programs for immigrants
2. Providing specialized immigrant training for school faculty
3. Passed a Welcoming City ordinance, which protects immigrants from having citizenship information requested or disclosed⁵⁸
4. Hosting citizenship swearing-in ceremonies
5. Supported legislation that called for driver's licenses for all
6. Created the Chicago STAR scholarship open to Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors Act (DREAM Act) recipients
7. Implemented the Chicago New Americans Advisory Committee, which is made up of 50 Chicago leaders from various sectors to identify challenges and barriers for immigrants

⁵⁵ Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs. *City of New York*. <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/immigrants/index.page>

⁵⁶ Resources for Immigrant Communities during COVID-19 Pandemic. *City of New York*. <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/immigrants/help/city-services/resources-for-immigrant-communities-during-covid-19-pandemic.page>

⁵⁷ Office of New Americans. *City of Chicago*. https://www.chicago.gov/city/en/depts/mayor/provdrs/office_of_new_americans.html

⁵⁸ Welcoming City Ordinance, City of Chicago. <https://www.chicago.gov/content/dam/city/depts/mayor/Office%20of%20New%20Americans/PDFs/WelcomingCityOrdinance.pdf>

8. Launched Citizenship Corners at Chicago Public Libraries, which are citizenship workshops open to the public⁵⁹

City of Atlanta, Georgia

As part of the City of Atlanta’s executive offices, the Office of Immigrant Affairs works to make Atlanta an inclusive city for all residents through affordable and equitable services. For language access, the City of Atlanta launched iSpeak ATL, which provides free language services to immigrant populations who have limited English proficiency. Through the service, migrant residents can request interpretation services for all departments within city government. The city also has a document translation request system for all vital documents, which has mostly been utilized for Spanish.⁶⁰

Another service provided is MyCity ATL, which launched in 2016 to inform immigrants about how to engage with various city services. The six-month program is made up of individuals participating in the Atlanta Public Schools Adult ESOL program, who attend meetings to learn about city departments, learn how the city’s agencies work and how to become a citizen ambassador for their respective communities. The program has also expanded to create career pathway guides for foreign-born residents seeking employment in Atlanta.⁶¹ The Office of Immigrant Affairs also connects migrants in need of food assistance with food pantries in the region, as well as teaches them how to apply for SNAP.⁶² Lastly, the office specifically works with migrants to assist them on the road to citizenship by providing them with applications, eligibility guidelines and a list of local naturalization assistance providers.⁶³

PRELIMINARY ADVANTAGES/DISADVANTAGES ANALYSIS

Potential Expected Challenges

1. Determining what types of support and/or services are most needed by immigrant populations in Gainesville.
2. Determining if support and services ought to be created and provided by the City of Gainesville or through partnerships with existing nonprofit and advocacy groups.
3. Finding efficient ways to inform immigrant populations about any new support services being provided by the city.
4. Ensuring translations are completed effectively to prevent miscommunication on governmental websites or documents.
5. Delivering the same level of support and awareness to undocumented immigrants in comparison to documented immigrants, who may feel fearful or intimidated by working with city government.
6. Navigating public discourse on the extent support services should be provided to immigrant populations.
7. Determining if any existing department should facilitate over immigrant affairs or if a new department should be created to be dedicated to the aforementioned services.

PRELIMINARY AND ILLUSTRATIVE LIST OF POTENTIAL STAKEHOLDERS

⁵⁹ Accomplishments to Date. (2015). *Chicago Office of New Americans*.

<https://www.chicago.gov/content/dam/city/depts/mayor/Office%20of%20New%20Americans/ONAInitiativesAccomplishedtodate.pdf>

⁶⁰ iSpeak ATL. *City of Atlanta*. <https://www.welcomingatlanta.com/ispeakatl/>

⁶¹ MyCity ATL. *City of Atlanta*. <https://www.welcomingatlanta.com/mycityatl/>

⁶² Food Assistance. *City of Atlanta*. <https://www.welcomingatlanta.com/food-assistance/>

⁶³ Citizenship. *City of Atlanta*. <https://www.welcomingatlanta.com/citizenship/>

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The aspect of identifying stakeholders is essential to ensuring a collaborative effort to provide sufficient immigrant support services. These stakeholders, both internal and external to the city government, serve as important potential partnerships. These potential stakeholders include:

1. Gainesville City Commissioners
2. Gainesville Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
3. Gainesville Immigrant Neighbor Inclusion Initiative
4. City of Gainesville Parks, Recreation and Cultural Affairs Department
5. The University of Florida
6. Santa Fe College
7. University of Florida International Center
8. Alachua County Board of Commissioners
9. Alachua County Library District
10. Gainesville Police Department
11. University of Florida Police Department
12. Cities for Action and other immigrant coalitions
13. City of Gainesville Communications and Engagement Office
14. Alachua County Public Schools
15. List of community stakeholders listed in GINI March 2022 Blueprint such as, but not limited to:
 - a. Welcoming Gainesville & Alachua County, Inc.
 - b. Interfaith Alliance for Immigrant Justice
 - c. Madres Sin Fronteras
 - d. Gainesville for All
 - e. Rural Women’s Health Project

RECOMMENDED POINTS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH/DISCUSSION

The following points are aspects of immigrant support within Gainesville that needs further research and discussion:

1. Producing data on immigrant populations such as residency status, length of residency and race to document gaps in support between certain communities and log progress made in relation to economic and social factors.
2. Producing data on the types of support and services most needed by Gainesville immigrant populations.
3. Assessing what languages should be prioritized for translation, in addition to the extent of documents and resources slated to be translated.
4. Developing a concrete list of local organizations to partner with and what aspects of immigrant services they will be tasked with supporting.
5. Determining the capabilities of city government to staff certain immigrant support services.
6. Identifying areas where the city can receive aid or collaboration either with the state or federal government, or both.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

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