Investing in Our Communities: Strategies for Immigrant Integration



Publisher Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees

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A TOOLKIT FOR GRANTMAKERS

About Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees (GCIR) seeks to move the philanthropic field to advance the contributions and address the needs of the world's growing and increasingly diverse immigrant and refugee populations. With a core focus on the United States, GCIR provides grantmakers with opportunities for learning, networking, and collaboration. Our information resources aim to:

- Enhance philanthropy's awareness of issues affecting immigrants and refugees.
- Deepen the field's understanding of how these issues are integral to community building in today's dynamic social, economic, and political environment.
- Increase philanthropic support for both broad and immigrant/refugee-focused strategies that benefit newcomer populations and strengthen society as a whole.

Given immigrants' growing numbers and their expanding role in the economic, social, and cultural life of nations across the globe, GCIR has become an invaluable resource to many foundations, whether they have immigrantspecific funding initiatives or wish to incorporate the immigrant and refugee dimension into their core grantmaking programs. GCIR provides members the opportunity to connect with diverse colleagues, build new skills, increase knowledge, and become part of a dynamic movement to fully integrate immigrants into U.S. society through:

- A one-stop center for high-quality electronic and printed resources, including in-depth issue reports that help funders quickly grasp the substance of specific topic areas and learn about proven grantmaking strategies.
- Substantive opportunities to learn about emerging trends and to share experiences and strategies through member-driven national and regional programs, learning circles, and national convenings.
- Technical assistance and consultation to members wishing to incorporate immigrant and refugee issues into their portfolios or seeking to expand or redirect their immigrant-related grantmaking.

In 2005, more than 1,500 grantmakers took advantage of our information resources and another 1,000 participated in our programs.

For more information, visit www.gcir.org or contact the GCIR office at info@gcir.org or 707.824.4374.

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Look for this symbol for references to the enclosed DVD in the inside back page pocket.

ABOUT OVERVIEW

THE TOOLKIT

Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees (GCIR) is pleased to present "Investing in Our Communities: Strategies for Immigrant Integration." The introduction of this toolkit is especially timely, given the heated national debate on immigration policy reform that spurred the activism of millions of immigrants and their supporters in 2006. But regardless of immigration politics and any changes in U.S. immigration

This toolkit seeks to catalyze inquiry, exploration, and action to promote effective integration programs and policies.

U.S. Immigration laws, demographic, economic, and social forces will continue to bring immigrants of all backgrounds to

our communities, and their integration into and impact on our society will remain a major issue that warrants philanthropic attention, now and in the foreseeable future.

Increasingly, foundations across the country are recognizing that their grantmaking strategies must respond to the needs and contributions of immigrants. As our nation's demography continues to diversify, GCIR firmly believes that an intentional focus on immigrant integration—particularly broad-based efforts that are multi-ethnic, multi-sector, and multi-strategy in approach—holds strategic promise to strengthen both individual communities and the country as a whole.

Built on extensive research and interviews with foundation, community, business, and government leaders, this multimedia toolkit seeks to inform the development of program, policy, and grantmaking strategies to promote immigrant integration. It also aims to help foundations, regardless of their funding priorities and geographic focus, understand the vital importance of supporting efforts that weave newcomers into the fabric of our society.

The toolkit includes a wide range of resources to meet the information needs of diverse foundations, from those new to immigrant-related issues and seeking points of entry to those with extensive experience but looking for fresh ideas to advance their work in this field. We hope the toolkit is an equally informative resource to both foundations working in emerging immigrant destinations and those funding in traditional immigrant gateways. Because successful integration requires the involvement of multiple stakeholders, the toolkit is also designed to inform and strengthen the work of diverse practitioners in the nonprofit, public, and private sectors.

GCIR envisions this publication not as an end in itself but as a tool to engage multiple stakeholder groups and facilitate ongoing discussions within institutions and communities. We want the toolkit to catalyze inquiry, exploration, and action to promote effective integration programs and policies across the United States and beyond. We invite you to peruse the following pages and consider the role you and your institution can play to build strong, cohesive communities through immigrant integration.



Italian immigrant family at Ellis Island, circa 1910.

ORGANIZATION OF THE TOOLKIT

To help the reader maximize the use of the vast amount of information and resources, we have organized the toolkit in six distinct sections:

• Executive Summary. This section provides an overview of the historical and contemporary context for integration and summarizes GCIR's Immigrant Integration Framework. Most significantly, it offers a set of concrete recommendations to guide philanthropic investment in immigrant integration activities.

• Historical Context and Contemporary Imperatives. This section offers a brief historical perspective on immigrant integration and discusses the demographic, economic, and social imperatives that drive the need for integration today. It also examines critical topics such as the rise in the undocumented population and the role of race in immigration and immigrant integration. • GCIR's Immigrant Integration Framework. This section defines the concept of immigrant integration and identifies pathways to and benefits of integration. It discusses the important interrelationships among distinct issue areas and establishes the framework as a helpful tool for funders and other stakeholders with particular issue interests. The section also offers basic guidance on evaluating immigrant integration efforts.

• Promising Practices in Immigrant Integration. Organized along GCIR's pathways for integration, this section compiles program and policy models that hold considerable promise to promote immigrant integration at the local, state, and regional levels. It also offers indicators of success and measurable outcomes that can be used to evaluate and demonstrate achievement, as well as improve immigrant integration strategies.

The section profiles promising practices to address immigrants' needs and facilitate their contributions. These practices are drawn from both established immigrant gateways and newer immigrant destinations, primarily in the United

We invite you to use GCIR as a resource and to tell us what you're learning and whether and how these toolkit resources are making a difference. States. The reader will find models of varying scale, scope, stage of implementation, population and

geographic focus, race and ethnicity, level of philanthropic investment, among many other factors. Consistent with GCIR's Immigrant Integration Framework, this section highlights models that are multiethnic, multi-sector, and multi-strategy in approach, particularly those that engage both newcomer and native-born residents. Unable to include every exemplary approach and organization, this section identifies basic principles and components of promising practices that can be applied to and replicated in other settings to promote immigration integration.

• Films about the Experiences of Newcomers in America. This filmography provides a listing of recent documentary films that put a human face on complex immigration issues. They bring today's rich and varied immigrant integration experiences to life and illustrate the human consequences of policy decisions in a way that statistics and words alone cannot do.

• Additional Resources. Resources include an overview of U.S. immigration history, a selection of fast facts on immigration and immigrant integration, a glossary of terms, and an annotated listing of recommended readings for those who wish to dig more deeply. The DVD-ROM in the toolkit back-cover pocket contains film clips and other resources to help the reader engage foundation colleagues and other stakeholders in productive discussions on immigrant integration.

The reader should note that the policy environment was highly volatile during the production of this toolkit. Some of the information, particularly relating to immigration reform, will surely be outdated by the publication date. But the need for immigrant integration remains vital despite the ebbs and flows of policy and politics, and we believe the toolkit's core content will have a lengthy shelf life.



AN INVITATION

GCIR hopes that our Immigrant Integration Framework and the promising practices and resources in this toolkit will inform your work and inspire you to explore a new or expanded role in supporting immigrant integration efforts within your funding priorities and communities.

As you consider immigrant integration issues within your foundation, let us know how the GCIR network can help inform your discussions and deliberations. Our staff and consultants have in-depth knowledge and expertise to support your work. At the most basic level, we can provide additional information resources, serve as a sounding board, organize funder briefings, and connect you to colleagues with similar funding interests. For those interested in a higher level of service, we can conduct research, help prepare board memos and presentations, and offer customized consultation to meet the specific needs of your foundation.

In addition to letting us know how we can help, we invite you to tell us what you're learning and whether and how these toolkit

resources are making a difference in your grantmaking and in your communities. We also invite you to contri

invite you to contribute promising practices and other resources; we'll make them available to the field via our website, electronic newsletters, and *New Americans* publication.

We welcome your questions, concerns, ideas, and suggestions and look forward to being both a resource to and a partner in your immigrant-related grantmaking.

Susan Downs-Karkos

Co-Chair, GCIR Board of Directors Senior Program Officer The Colorado Trust, Denver

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As you consider immigrant integration issues within your foundation, let us know how the GCIR network can help inform your discussions and deliberations.

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First and foremost, GCIR gratefully acknowledges the project funders for their financial support and for their confidence in our ability to produce a resource that would inform and strengthen the field.

We wish to thank the Annie E. Casey Foundation and the Ford Foundation, both longtime institutional supporters of GCIR, for their early investment. Their grants gave us the time needed to fully explore the issues and to conduct muchneeded research, and their thoughtful questions helped us conceptualize a strong framework for immigrant integration.

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With a small core staff, GCIR relies considerably on outside expertise for our publication projects. Susan Drake, former longtime executive director of the National Immigration Law Center, conducted extensive research, including interviews and literature review, to ensure that the framework we developed draws upon the latest thinking and theoretical constructs in the field. Her health, immigration, and public benefits expertise significantly strengthened the toolkit.

Ted Wang, a highly regarded consultant most recently with Chinese for Affirmative Action/Center for Asian American Advocacy, took the lead in researching and writing the promising practices in language, education, health and wellbeing, economic mobility, and equal treatment and opportunity. We are indebted to Ted for his invaluable contribution; the toolkit has much greater depth and breadth because of his work.

Craig McGarvey, a well-respected consultant formerly with the James Irvine Foundation, was the point person on the promising practices in communitywide planning and civic participation and contributed to the section on social and cultural interaction. We extend our appreciation to Craig for his critical role on the team and for his moral support throughout the project.

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Michael Kay, a former intern and a regular contributor to *New Americans*, provided invaluable editing assistance on a number of case studies and promising practices. His work helped improve the toolkit's clarity and accessibility, particularly for readers who are not immersed in immigration and immigrant integration issues.

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Bryan Rhodes, our executive assistant and office manager, spent countless hours researching photographs, conducting fact checks, and providing research and administrative support. Alison De Lucca, our program director, conducted focus groups on immigrant integration in new gateway states. She also took charge of programmatic matters, as other organizational resources were directed toward toolkit production. Alison and Bryan are consummate professionals and amazing colleagues, and GCIR is lucky to have them on our staff. This project would not have been possible without their hard work, patience, and support, especially during the final three months of production.

GCIR's incredible board members have our gratitude for their guidance, ideas, push-back, and encouragement throughout the project. A roll-up-your-sleeves board, they helped with every aspect of the toolkit, including framing key integration issues, sharing their resources and contacts, organizing focus groups, reviewing various drafts, editing sections that draw on their expertise, and screening film clips for the DVD-ROM. Their contributions were much appreciated.

Sharon Bouton, our graphic designer, made the toolkit an inviting resource, no easy task given its complexity and substantial girth. Axie Breen, Caroline Prado, and Matt Bail assisted with production and added design touches of their own. We convey our deepest thanks to these talented designers and production artists—as well as Barlow Printing, a small family-owned business for their hard work in getting the toolkit completed in time for release at our June 2006 national convening.

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Daranee Petsod

GCIR Executive Director June 2006

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