

COMMUNITY INTEGRATION TOOLKIT

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CATHOLIC LEGAL
IMMIGRATION
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Immigrant Integration results from an equal partnership between newcomers and the receiving community who work together to make their community more inclusive.

INTRODUCTION

Immigrant integration projects have incredible power to create a more equitable and welcoming place for all. Immigrant integration efforts seek to convene members of the receiving and welcoming communities through mutually beneficial community-based efforts. The decision-making powers are shared by all involved, as the community works to solicit input and participation from everyone. Before beginning any immigrant integration project in your community, it is important to carefully consider how your initiative will be designed, implemented and evaluated from beginning to end. The following are important questions to consider to ensure your project is successful and meets the needs of the community and your organization.

- Does your integration project reflect the needs and desires of the community?
- How will you get input from the community when designing and implementing your project?
- What are the goals and objectives of your project?
- How will you involve or allow for participation from the entire community?
- How will you make sure that participants have opportunity and influence over your project?
- How will you measure and determine success?
- Are you collecting data from your project? If so, what does this data look like?
- Are there opportunities to leverage funding in conjunction with your project? If so, what might those opportunities look like?
- How and when will you evaluate your program to see if changes are necessary?
- How will you get buy-in from your organization, both from leadership and staff?
- Do staff fully understand your project, why it is important and what it aims to achieve? If not, how will you address this?
- Do staff understand integration as a concept and the underlying importance of broad community inclusion during all stages of your project? If not, how will you address this?
- Does your community understand the benefits of integration? If not, how will you inform and educate the community?
- What are the potential challenges to making your project a reality?
- What individuals or organizations could serve as a partner to help realize your project?
- What is your project's timeline?
- How will you promote your project and market its successes?

This toolkit is meant to accompany CLINIC's whitepaper '[Immigrant and Community Integration Step by Step Guide to Local Integration Programming](#).' These materials offer informational content and accompanying worksheets to help you think through all of a project's core elements. Many of the resources in this toolkit are designed to help new programs think through effective project design. Programs with established integration programming will also find the materials helpful for evaluating and improving existing programs. Whether your integration project is in the planning stages or has been in the community for years, we hope you find this toolkit useful as you seek to make your community a more inclusive, welcoming and integrated place.

CORE CONSIDERATIONS FOR INTEGRATION PROJECTS

When designing an immigrant integration project and determining its goals, it is important to consider the large, overarching factors that will govern and influence your project. CLINIC believes the most successful and meaningful integration projects are those that have positive impacts on the lives of individuals and the community, solicit a diversity of input, and offer decision making opportunities to a wide range of individuals and groups within the community, which, similarly, encourages a wide diversity of participation. A project that does not consider these factors and work to address them will limit the overall depth and breadth of its impact.

With this in mind, let's examine a few different integration projects and how the diversity of impact, input and decision making, and participation can ultimately affect their overall success.

Individual vs Community Impact

Is your project primarily designed to impact specific groups within your community, immigrants generally, or the community as a whole? In general, projects that can impact the community as a whole tend to increase integration throughout the entire community. Additionally, who will be involved in your integration project? Will it be limited to clients you directly serve and your staff, or will it reach out to other individuals and groups within the wider newcomer and welcoming communities? As the diversity of participation in your project expands, so will its impact on the overall community.

After learning newcomers were afraid to report crimes to local law enforcement, CLINIC affiliate [Catholic Charities Diocese of Pueblo, Colo.](#), collaborated with several city officials and the Pueblo Police Department to address this troubling issue. However, Catholic Charities first had to educate the receiving community about the legal immigration process and the unique challenges immigrants faced in the community. Likewise, Catholic Charities had to have a better understanding of the city's structure and establish a working relationship with local law enforcement to build trust with the community.

Diversity of Input and Decision-Making Opportunities

Community input and power over the decision-making process is vital to any integration project. Has your project sought input from a wide range of individuals and groups? Does it allow all those involved to have some say or power in the project? Projects that can expand diversity or input and decision-making opportunities are more likely to have a significant integration impact in your community.

CLINIC affiliate [Building Hope in the City](#) requests input and feedback from community members on community projects that focus on neighborhood revitalization and enrichment. The resident-led projects have been the perfect opportunity for newcomers and receiving communities to work together for a mutual cause while learning about one another.

Diversity of Community Partnerships

Establishing partnerships with nonprofits, local government and community leaders is a valuable tool when it comes to promoting, expanding and strengthening immigrant integration. In a well-functioning partnership, all members contribute ideas to the group, coordinate dates and events so that all can participate, and mutually benefit from the partnership.

CLINIC affiliate [Hispanic Affairs Project](#) has been integrating newcomers in the western slope of Colorado since its founding. Through partnerships with libraries, local health clinics, churches and elected leaders [Hispanic Affairs Project](#) has been able to expand capacity and continue to promote integration through leadership development, advocacy and providing essential services to newcomers.

Now that you have a better understanding of the core considerations of a successful integration project, learn about the [steps](#) of an integration project, [building support](#) for integration within your organization, and the [benefits](#) of integration to better prepare your organization as it launches its integration project. Finally, complete the [integration self-assessment](#) to gauge your organization's readiness for implementing an integration project or to assess an existing integration project.

For other organizational highlights and program inspiration, visit [CLINIC's Center for Immigrant Integration](#).

STEPS OF AN INTEGRATION PROJECT

An integration project requires a comprehensive plan that considers how the project will be designed, implemented, evaluated and ultimately improved. Below are the steps your organization needs to engage in if your project is going to have a significant integration impact in your community.

- 1. Needs Assessment** - For your project to be successful, it must address the needs and desires of both immigrants and the broader community. It is crucial that you get direct input from immigrants and other community members when deciding what sort of project you want to design. Surveys, focus groups, or steering committees that engage immigrants and the broader community are all effective ways to ensure your project represents the interests of the community.
- 2. Buy-in** - By conducting a needs assessment your organization lays the foundation for buy-in and engagement from community members. However, commitment and understanding of the project must also be established within your own organization — among staff and leadership. You may also need to do community outreach to attract additional attention for your project and to promote its benefits and the benefits of integration more broadly. Finally, formation of partnerships with other community organizations can strengthen your project and will help to achieve broader and deeper overall community involvement.
- 3. Goals and Objectives** - Make sure your project has concrete goals and objectives. Remember that a goal is the final outcome you want to achieve for your projects, while objectives are the smaller concrete steps you need to take reach your goal. Outlining goals and objectives will guide the project and determine if it has been successful. Part of this process should also be to set a time frame for when your project will end or when you will evaluate it and potentially make changes.
- 4. Implementation** - Now that your project has been thoughtfully planned and has buy-in and support from the community, it is time to begin. Ensure that your organization and community partners remain committed and involved with the project for the determined time frame.
- 5. Measurement and Evaluation** - It is important to identify what data you will collect to help measure success. The data you choose to collect can be one point or many, complex or simple, qualitative or quantitative. Assign a staff member to collect the data regularly and accurately. Collected data may also be useful for the future success or expansion of your project.
- 6. Make Changes** - Determine if the project is meeting its goals and objectives of addressing community and individual needs. Establish a plan to routinely reach out to project stakeholders for feedback. If the data or feedback you have collected indicates that it is not — or that improvements could be made — don't be afraid to make changes. The best integration projects take time to fine-tune and are not always an instant success.
- 7. Market Successes** - Market project successes widely on social media, local media and at community events. Develop talking points for project staff and agency leadership that emphasize the importance of integration to the community and the valuable contributions of everyone involved. Marketing your project will not only help to garner further community support, but it may also be a way to attract funding or other resources for your organization and all your integration efforts. Finally, follow-up with staff and leadership at your organization so they understand how the project is furthering your organization's mission, to ensure continued support for this project, and to help garner support for future integration projects.

STEPS OF AN INTEGRATION PROJECT WORKSHEET

This worksheet will guide you through the planning of your integration project. These questions will help your program to think through the various steps and elements to create a successful integration project. Consider the following questions before you begin your project or use this guide as a way to improve an existing project.

- 1. How will you conduct your needs assessment? Which members of the community will you ask for input?** (See [Immigrant Integration Measurement Survey: Client Perspective](#))

- 2. What challenges exist in getting buy-in from the broader community or specific groups?** (See [CLINIC's Immigrant Integration Survey for Community Members](#))

- 3. What challenges exist in getting buy-in and support from your organization? How will you overcome these challenges?** (See [Immigrant Integration Measurement Survey: Agency Staff Perspective](#))

- 4. What are your project's goals and objectives? Goals are the desired end-result of your project while the objectives are the smaller achievements that need to be completed to reach your goal.**

Goal(s):

Objective 1:

Objective 2:

Objective 3:

Qualitative Data:

Quantitative Data:

5. What data will you use to evaluate the success of your project?

6. How will you solicit feedback from participants to determine if changes to your project are needed?

7. How do you plan to market your project's success?

BUILDING SUPPORT FOR INTEGRATION WITHIN YOUR ORGANIZATION

TALKING POINTS

Successful integration programming requires the support of individuals and organizations throughout your community. Most critically, this support must first come from within your organization. Ideas for sound integration projects will struggle to become a reality or reach their true potential if there is not proper understanding and commitment from your organization. The following talking points will help to highlight the importance of prioritizing integration work for your organization and address common challenges in gaining support.

- 1. Integration is a core part of your agency's mission** - Intentionally promoting immigrant integration through the services provided by your agency matches your mission, even if integration may not be explicitly listed in your organization's mission statement. A welcoming community that promotes and values integration is your agency's goal, as evidenced by its service delivery model, its clientele and its mission to ensure equitable access to resources within the community.
- 2. Your organization is well positioned to lead on integration work** - As an immigrant service provider, your organization is uniquely well-positioned to promote integration and lead on integration initiatives. You already have developed trust and connection to immigrant groups within your community, which gives you a better sense of the integration challenges that immigrants face and what initiatives may be most helpful. Similarly, your reputation and connection to local government and other community-based organizations sets you up to serve as a liaison between individuals and groups.
- 3. Local initiatives are the most successful** - Local organizations are best situated to create initiatives specific to their community needs and, as a result, have the flexibility needed to be successful. Your organization — in partnership with others in your community — should take the lead in addressing your community's specific integration needs.
- 4. Promoting integration makes core work easier and more efficient** - Framing integration work as part of your goal to provide your clients with holistic services can also help to build support within your organization. Primarily, serving and facilitating clients' integration needs increases overall client well-being. When your clients' overall needs are better served — and they feel more comfortable and secure in the host community — they will be better able to focus and engage on other core services that your agency provides. Positive outcomes for your clients can result in less staff time and energy needed to serve each client. This, in turn, allows your agency to serve more clients in your community and deepen your integration impact.
- 5. Integration projects can be simple, inexpensive and don't necessarily require intensive staff time** - Integration work can be a simple addition to something you're already doing, it can be led by volunteers and its timeframe can be limited.
- 6. Successful initiatives can lead to funding** - Successful integration initiatives will not only help to promote integration within your community, they can also lead to further funding for your organization. As part of committing to any integration project, your organization should be setting clear goals and objectives and collecting regular data to measure progress. If your organization can clearly show the impact of your project on immigrants and the community, you may be able to leverage funding thereby expanding and deepening your project's reach.

BUILDING SUPPORT FOR INTEGRATION WITHIN YOUR ORGANIZATION WORKSHEET

This worksheet will help prepare you for internal discussions on your integration project and integration work. Gather input from staff and leadership to receive insight into how staff understand integration within your organization. Consider the following questions and have prepared answers before you approach staff or your organization's leadership.

- 1. Describe staff's understanding of integration: what it is why it is important, and why it is key to your work? What are your plans to further staff education on this topic?** (Assess your agency staff's perspective using CLINIC's [Agency Immigrant Integration Measurement Survey](#))

- 2. What does your organization do well with respect to immigrant integration?**

- 3. What aspects of immigrant integration could your organization improve upon?**

- 4. What are the greatest opportunities for integration work for your organization?**

- 5. What are the biggest challenges to making integration work a more central and explicit aspect of your organization's work? How will you overcome these challenges?**

6. What individuals in your organization will be best able to help further integration work?

BENEFITS OF INTEGRATION

COMMUNITY TALKING POINTS

Much of the work of an immigration legal services provider is inherently connected to immigrant integration. However, in order to help deepen integration within your own community you must be a spokesperson for integration. This means being prepared to discuss the benefits of an integrated and welcoming community with community members that may be skeptical of your integration efforts. Consider the following talking points on how integration improves the lives of individuals and the larger community.

- 1. Integration helps to increase equality in your community** - An integrated community ensures that all residents are treated equally and enjoy the same basic rights and privileges. The belief that all community members should be treated equally is something we can all agree is important and fundamental to the American Spirit. Communities should make every effort to welcome and assist new arrivals in their transition to their new home. The end goal of immigrant integration is to have a community that is inclusive and welcoming for all. This begins by supporting immigration reform and assisting qualifying immigrants to apply for citizenship.
- 2. Integration helps to ensure that everyone has access to essential resources** - A welcoming community that promotes integration works to make sure that everyone in the community has access to essential services, such as public education, financial assistance, or emergency services. Local governments are obligated to ensure access to public services by all residents. When immigrants are fearful or ignorant of public resources, they and the community as a whole suffer. Immigrants given full access and information to essential resources are likely to succeed, which in turn, positively impacts the community.
- 3. Integration helps immigrants feel safe in their new homes** - In communities where police and emergency services make clear that they are there to serve all members of the community, immigrants tend to feel more secure. Where trust is built, immigrants will be more likely to call on emergency services without fear of mistreatment by authorities or fear of immigration related consequences. Increased interactions and information sharing with emergency services and law enforcement makes the community a safer place for all community members.
- 4. More cohesive and prosperous communities** – Ultimately, the prosperity of any community is directly connected to the health and well-being of all its community members. Immigrants make many contributions and improve the state of their new homes by encouraging economic growth and community revitalization in addition to the diversity of ideas, skills and perspectives they bring with them. As integration seeks to support and include newly arrived immigrants, it will enhance these contributions resulting in the improved well-being of the welcoming community and all those who live in it.

BENEFITS OF INTEGRATION COMMUNITY TALKING POINTS WORKSHEET

Your community is unique and has its own specific needs and considerations with respect to integration. Use this worksheet to think about how to engage the community and partners in your integration project and plan outreach and awareness. (Assess your community's integration baseline using CLINIC's Community Immigrant Integration Measurement Survey)

1. What does your community do well with respect to immigrant integration?

2. What aspects of immigrant integration could your community improve upon?

3. What are the greatest opportunities for integration work in your community?

4. What are the largest challenges to realizing a more welcoming and integrated community?

5. What partners or individuals can help message the positive impacts of immigrant integration?

6. For potential partners you have identified, describe how you will recruit them. What makes your project appealing to their organization? What makes them a good partner? What additional information or resources might you want before approaching this partner?

Partner Name:

Partner Name:

Partner Name:

INTEGRATION SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL

Immigrant integration is an equal partnership between newcomers and the receiving community who work together to make their community more inclusive. CLINIC believes that efforts to promote immigrant integration are most successful at the local level.

Use the following self-assessment to measure your organization's immigrant integration efforts at the agency level, in the community, and implementing or sustaining a current integration project or initiative.

Directions: Answer 'yes' or 'no' to the statements below. If you answer 'no' to any two statements or more, please review the corresponding resources that will support your organization's effort to promote integration within your agency and community.

Immigrant Integration: Agency Perspective

1. Leadership and program staff understand the definition of immigrant integration.
2. Leadership and program staff understand the role legal services play in the integration of an immigrant into the receiving society.
3. Promoting and encouraging integration within the community are program objectives.
4. Discussions between agency programs are held to determine an interdisciplinary service model to serve the community, so that immigrants receive information and services for all their needs, not just legal.
5. Newcomers have decision-making power over integration related activities or initiatives hosted by my organization.
6. My organization has educated the community about the importance and benefits of immigrant integration.

Resource(s):

[Immigrant Integration Surveys: Agency Staff, Client, and Community Member](#)

[Immigrant and Community Integration: Fulfilling Catholic Social Teaching and American Values](#)

[Integration Basics Podcast](#)

[What is Immigrant Integration and Why is it important?](#)

[Follow the Mission: The Vital Role Immigration Legal Service Providers Play in Integration Work](#)

[Follow the Faithful: The Vital Role Faith-based Organizations play in Integration Work](#)

Immigrant Integration: Community Perspective

1. Members of the community (newcomers and the receiving community) understand the definition of immigrant integration.
2. Members of the community (newcomers and the receiving community) understand the role they have in promoting integration into the community.
3. Community partnerships are forged to design and plan a community-wide approach to encouraging and promoting immigrant integration.
4. Efforts are made to include the immigrant community on integration-related project planning to correctly reflect and address issues present in the community.
5. There are meaningful opportunities for members of the welcoming community (outside of my organization) to participate in integration related activities or initiatives.
6. There are meaningful opportunities for newcomers and the receiving community to collaborate on integration related activities or initiatives.

Resource(s):

[Immigrant and Community Integration Step by Step Guide to Local Integration Programming](#)

[Affiliate Highlights and Project Inspirations](#)

[Program-Specific Resources](#)

Immigrant Integration: Implementation and Sustainability

1. Measurable objectives for integration-related activities are created and included in program planning.
2. Assessment procedures for integration-related activities are created and included in project/initiative planning.
3. Leadership and program staff actively seek funding to support integration-related endeavors.
4. Staff attend training on integration-related topics.
5. Newcomers can suggest changes or influence how integration related activities or initiatives progress.
6. The organization's integration related activities or initiatives seek to impact the broader community.

Resource(s):

[Immigrant Integration Surveys: Agency Staff, Client, and Community Member](#)

[Expanding Into the Community](#)

[Email us to share your integration projects with CLINIC](#)

[Integration Funding Guide](#)



“Our strategy builds upon both the church’s call to welcome newcomers and upon the U.S. history as a place where people from around the world are welcomed and given a chance to succeed. ”

— Immigrant and Community Integration: Fulfilling Catholic Social Teaching and American Values (CLINIC Resource)

ABOUT THE CATHOLIC LEGAL IMMIGRATION NETWORK, INC.

Grounded in Catholic social teaching, the Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc., is the largest network of community-based nonprofit immigration legal programs, with over 450 affiliates in 49 states and the District of Columbia. CLINIC’s principal services include legal and management training for our affiliates, advocacy for humane immigration policies, representing foreign-born religious workers, and leading several national projects to protect the rights and promote the dignity of immigrants. We also provide some pro bono representation to detained individuals and families, and offer public education materials on immigrants’ rights and Catholic teaching on migration.

