

**OPENING MINDS,
OPENING DOORS,
OPENING COMMUNITIES:**

CITIES
LEADING FOR
IMMIGRANT
INTEGRATION

USCDornsife
*Center for the Study of
Immigrant Integration*

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AMERICA** 
BUILDING A NATION OF NEIGHBORS

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The mission of the Center for the Study of Immigrant Integration (CSII), based at the University of Southern California, is to remake the narrative for understanding and to shape the dialogue on immigrant integration in America.

CSII intends to identify and evaluate the mutual benefits of immigrant integration for the native-born and for immigrants and to study the pace of the ongoing transformation in different locations, not only in the past and present but projected into the future.

CSII brings together three emphases: scholarship that draws on academic theory and rigorous research; data that provides information structured to highlight the process of immigrant integration over time; and engagement that seeks to create new dialogues with government, community organizers, business and civic leaders, immigrants and the voting public.

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OPENING MINDS, OPENING DOORS, OPENING COMMUNITIES:

CITIES LEADING FOR IMMIGRANT INTEGRATION

The USC Center for the Study of Immigrant Integration (CSII) prepared this report. The report's chief authors, **Manuel Pastor** and **Rhonda Ortiz** from CSII and **Els de Graauw** from Baruch College, the City University of New York, are grateful for the assistance of their CSII colleagues **Vanessa Carter**, **Magaly Lopez** and **Jared Sanchez**, each of whom had a hand in field research, interviewing, analyzing and writing. The team is greatly indebted to graduate research students **Sandy Lo**, whose background research and phone interviews connected the authors with offices across the country, and **Victor Sanchez**, who pitched in near the end of the writing process. Deep appreciation also goes to the many city institutions working to integrate immigrants across the nation and who graciously opened their doors to the team.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As the electoral season heats up, attention—often of an especially heated sort—has turned to an unfinished bit of business: the country’s immigration policy.

Some are arguing that the present level of immigration, both legal and unauthorized, is more than the country can bear. Others insist that the nation needs to provide a path for those here without proper documents and create a clear plan for future immigrant workers, entrepreneurs and families.

Or for a recent example of these civic debates: some have argued that we should block entry of refugees from Syria and select Middle Eastern countries to the United States. Others think it is fundamental to our nation’s values to help and welcome those that have fled violence and atrocities.

National politics is often riven by these policy differences, and the tenor of the debate has frequently gone beyond facts and figures to deep concerns about identity, security, and a changing America. But while the debate rages on cable news and at campaign events, a quiet revolution is occurring in America’s cities and metropolitan areas. Rather than playing to fears or rejecting newcomers, many municipal leaders are coming up with new data-driven strategies to better welcome and integrate immigrants and refugees.

For some cities, it is a matter of defusing tensions that may arise when immigrants enter settings where people are unaccustomed to their presence. For these cities, creating bridges between new arrivals and long-term residents

is key to fostering harmony. For other municipalities, formulating new strategies to attract immigrants is seen as an economic imperative, as studies continue to find that metro areas with sizable foreign-born populations register more robust growth. Realizing this, civic and business leaders are working to attract immigrants and capitalize on their high rates of entrepreneurship and employment.

A third class of cities faces a different set of tasks. These cities—long-established immigrant gateways—are seeking to accelerate integration processes and other trajectories through which immigrants learn English, see their incomes rise, find employment, and become homeowners. In these cities, the local politics are less fractious but the challenges of effective policymaking remain, including the question of how to ensure that the children of immigrants, often making up 40 to 50 percent of the children in larger gateway metros, can succeed and strengthen the future of our cities and country.

WHY THE CITY?

The gap between national and local politics is not unique to the immigration arena. Increasingly, local and state officials are addressing issues that might once have been considered federal in nature, including minimum wages, access to health care, and even climate change. This devolution speaks to dysfunction in Washington, but immigrant integration is unique in one respect: It was never really a federal responsibility.

Immigration policy is, of course, national in scope. How many people get in

and out, which groups are favored (relatives or entrepreneurs, artists or scientists, farm workers or software programmers), and how border security and refugee and asylum policies are determined and enforced—these are all decisions made at the federal level. But immigrant integration—the degree of economic, social and civic mobility of immigrants once they are here—is only just beginning to be addressed by the nation.

In some sense, this lack of national attention to integration is a historical artifact. The last great wave of immigration came in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, and while those immigrants may have been greeted with suspicion, they were also able to secure employment in a burgeoning manufacturing sector that, along with the later attainment of hard-won union protections, provided a platform to economic security. Urban political machines were also interested in securing the votes of immigrants and their children, thus providing a path to civic incorporation. Integration was thought to be more or less automatic and was often considered synonymous with assimilation, a sort of erasure of the cultural differences that might divide.

The modern wave of immigration, triggered by the reform in 1965 of a racially biased immigration system from the 1920s, occurred in a different context. As immigration consequently spiked in the 1970s, the old industrial economy was faltering, making economic progress more challenging. Immigrants hailed less from Europe and more from Latin America and Asia, triggering worries about demographic change. “Assimilation”

in its previous sense became less of an explicit goal, particularly as global connectivity made retaining culture a plus. And while Washington has, at various moments in the past three decades, made disconnected efforts to provide solace to undocumented immigrants, the will to rework the overall system or to devise federal policies to promote integration has since fallen prey to political infighting.

Enter the cities. In places as diverse as Nashville, Los Angeles, Pittsburgh, Salt Lake City and Miami, municipal authorities have found that federal inaction has created both a need and an opportunity for local leadership. By our count, there are currently 26 official city offices for immigrant integration across the nation, and another 37 bodies—task forces, commissions, welcoming offices, efforts etc.—that are also promoting immigrant integration at the municipal level in some form. The number of both sorts of efforts is growing steadily, making this report a snapshot of a trend in motion. This trend is proof that cities are taking the lead on immigrant integration, with Washington following, in 2014 launching the White House Task Force on New Americans, a new and telling recognition of the role of localities.

DIFFERENT STROKES

Of course, because cities vary in their own historical trajectories and experiences with immigrants, one size does not fit all. However, for the sake of analysis and policy advice and at the risk of oversimplifying a complex and fast-moving field, we have categorized city

efforts into three categories:

- 1 Those seeking to defuse tensions triggered by new immigrants in new gateways;
- 2 Those seeking to attract immigrants in order to revitalize older cities;
- 3 Those seeking to integrate a more long-standing immigrant community, often by moving from providing them services to including them in policy formulation.

In the real world, each city effort involves elements of the categories above. Atlanta, for example, is seeking to defuse tensions and attract newcomers, partly so as to not lose out on the immigrant dynamism driving not only its own suburbs, but booming metro areas elsewhere in the South. However, there remains some utility in classifying where a city might be on the continuum, so that recommendations can suit local contexts and politics.

Perhaps one of the more dramatic cases of defusing tension occurred in Nashville, Tennessee, where an explosive growth in the immigrant population sparked talk show vitriol, the burning of a mosque, and the passage of a city ordinance—eventually vetoed by the mayor—requiring that nearly all municipal documents be available only in English. Instead of reacting with rancor, activists launched several initiatives, including Welcoming Tennessee, an effort that forged relationships, calmed nerves, and helped business understand its interest in promoting immigrant integration. From defusing to attracting, Nashville has moved up the curve, announcing in September 2014 a Mayor’s Office of New Americans.

Atlanta, as noted, falls on the continuum between defusing and attracting. A new destination area, the metropolitan immigrant population grew nearly 70 percent between 2000 and 2010. While Atlanta has a long civil rights tradition

and one might imagine a warm and welcoming attitude, the city is not an island, located squarely in a state where unease about new arrivals led to a copycat restrictionist law modeled after the infamous legislation in Arizona.

Worried that anti-immigrant sentiment would fray human relations and threaten economic vitality, Mayor Kasim Reed’s administration leaned strongly in the other direction by launching Welcoming Atlanta, an initiative that brought together business, civic and other city stakeholders to make immigrant integration a priority. Welcoming Atlanta laid the groundwork for the institutionalization of such efforts, and in 2015, Atlanta established an Office of Immigrant Affairs with a 20-point plan that emerged from community engagement. Three dedicated staff members have been hired to drive the agenda forward.

Some places lack tension as a triggering factor—primarily because they lack the immigrants. For places like Pittsburgh, the economic ravages of deindustrialization and population loss have made economic sustainability a challenge. Here, immigrants are not seen as a problem but as a solution—and the strategy, as in cities like Detroit, St. Louis and Dayton, has been to explore options for making the city more hospitable. One unique feature in Pittsburgh, for example, is a program to attract “asylum artists”—individuals who encourage cross-cultural exchange and bring new vibrancy to older and tired neighborhoods.

Some cities already have large, well-established immigrant communities, and in these locales, the real risk is inaction to continue previously successful integration work. Instead, what is generally on the table here is how to make the most of past efforts and promote intergenerational mobility that can sustain both families and the region.

San Francisco is an example of such

a mature location. Immigrants comprise more than a third of its residents, it has a well-staffed Office of Civic Engagement and Immigrant Affairs, and it has become well-known for its commitment to separating community policing from the enforcement of immigration law. Here, the challenges are more complex. They include the task of maintaining pro-immigrant policies and keeping housing prices affordable for families, as well as making sure nonprofits don't become too dependent on city resources.

WHAT'S COMMON

City Offices may be devoted to defusing, attracting or integrating—or to a combination of the three. Another dynamic that can differentiate Offices and other municipal efforts is whether they are primarily reactive or proactive. Again, a good way to think about the landscape is in terms of a continuum: Welcoming efforts may be forced into being by the desire to counter nativist worries (reaction), but they ultimately generate the sort of community-building that leads to new actions, coalitions, and policy.

Regardless of the exact mix, municipal Offices for immigrant integration tend to exhibit 10 characteristics:

- 1 They have a mayoral champion. Mayoral commitment is crucial, and it must go beyond being generally supportive to actually setting a tone and leading the charge. A mayor's efforts are key to creating a fruitful Office and are particularly effective when they couch the work in terms of broad city interests.
- 2 They help cities welcome immigrants and encourage receptivity. Offices and other city efforts try to foster relationships between immigrants and receiving communities, shifting people's perceptions and reducing fears. This human relations work can seem "soft" but is critical to setting a positive tone that can then guide civil discourse

- and fact-based policymaking.
- 3 They make the economic case. Stressing the economic benefits of immigrants to the regional economy helps explain why being welcoming eventually pays off. This requires marshaling data and corraling business leaders, and often collaborating with other cities trying to establish the economic rationale for proimmigrant policies. Effective Offices also stress the contributions of both high-skill and low-skill immigrants, recognizing that the mix is necessary to promote prosperity.
- 4 They develop, streamline, and consolidate services. Immigrants often need particular services such as document translation, English language

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Our universe of city offices for immigrant integration ("Office") is limited to those housed in the mayor's office that have a director.

.....

- classes, and microfinance support for new small business endeavors. These can be lacking, especially in new destinations, and city Offices can catalog needs and match them with programs and policies.
- 5 They coordinate city efforts. Offices make sure other branches of city government take immigrants into account. They coordinate city programs to better serve the immigrant community, building capacity within city administrations to better address a new demographic.
- 6 They work with law enforcement. Immigrant lives are shaped daily by contact with the police. If local

law enforcement is perceived to be enforcing immigrant policy, this can reduce trust and limit the effectiveness of community policing, particularly in neighborhoods with many mixed-status families. Offices both rein in the police and make them part of the integration process.

- 7 They make immigrant integration everyone's business. Integration is not just a question of aligning city services. One must also consider the range of efforts that touch immigrant lives in community colleges, neighborhood legal clinics, and workforce development systems. Convening to ensure that everyone understands their role also creates more cheerleaders for immigrant integration.
- 8 They promote civic engagement. Offices should see immigrants not just as recipients of services but also as civic actors. Leadership programs focused on immigrants are as important as efforts to raise the rate of naturalization and encourage voting and voice in the political process.
- 9 They engage policymakers. In more established Offices, efforts go beyond delivering and coordinating services for immigrants to promoting inclusive policies to address vulnerable immigrant populations, such as municipal ID cards or shifts in car-towing policies—policies that provide long-term benefits to the entire population. This requires a higher level of political consensus or autonomy on the part of Offices.
- 10 They offer leadership to their region. Offices help their cities create a wider network of immigrant services and organizations, which benefit neighboring communities and influence their larger metro regions by demonstrating what is possible and setting a tone that is more welcoming and positive.

STARTING AN OFFICE

If you're excited about the idea of starting your own Office, or if you work with an Office or similar local-level initiative and are hoping to make further progress, the following are 10 key recommendations to make cities more welcoming and, in time, create a municipal system that truly serves both longtime residents as well as the foreign-born:

- 1 Begin with mayoral commitment. Mayoral support of community-wide integration efforts is worth repeating. The remarkable roles of Mayor Reed in Atlanta and Mayor Bill Peduto in Pittsburgh are two examples highlighted in the full report. Both created a vision based on the argument that immigrant integration is good for everyone and not just for immigrants. This vision was supported and driven by a multi-sector alliance of business and civic leaders, which in turn created the community buy-in that made their cities' investment politically feasible.
- 2 Build institutional sustainability beyond the mayor. What happens if your mayor seeks another office or can no longer offer support in the same manner? Creating institutional depth—as in San Francisco, New York and many other cities, is critical. It can also help to keep a supportive tone, even if a less supportive mayor takes office.
- 3 Collaborate with unlikely allies. Sustainable efforts reach beyond the usual circles of immigrant advocates and engage business, labor and education officials. One particularly important ally: African-American leaders. While some may feel displaced economically and politically by immigrants, many, as in Atlanta, also have a strong commitment to justice and inclusion shared by immigrant advocates.

- 4 Secure technical assistance from partners. Successful Offices do not go it alone; they reach out to learn from the experiences of others. Welcoming America, for example, is a national network that can offer assistance at every step of the way, and there are state resources such as California’s Institute for Local Government.
- 5 Track and evaluate success and impact. Offices survive when they can show success. This means gauging internal effectiveness as well as impacts on the daily lives of immigrants and receiving communities. Of particular importance is tracking the trajectory or progress of immigrants over time. Demonstrating longitudinal progress can be key to building the case for immigrant integration.
- 6 Partner with research organizations. Conversations about the role and impact of immigrants are more civil and productive when grounded in data. Research from think tanks and university centers can provide the hard facts and external credibility needed to move forward.
- 7 Bring together services and engagement. Offices must go beyond providing services and find other ways to intentionally engage the community, which is key to sustaining political support for Office activities. Engagement can include promoting citizenship, assisting those with deferred status, and creating leadership training that connects immigrants and native-born.
- 8 Develop policies, not just projects. New offices should make sure that lessons learned from initial projects become standard operating procedure for the city. It is important

to develop policies around language access, small business support, and community policing. This, in turn, involves political leadership, and so Offices must develop allies and political and policy skills.

- 9 Apply a racial justice lens. While messaging that immigrants are “like all of us” is an important and proven strategy for immigrant integration, Offices should have an explicit racial justice focus, which acknowledges the existing racial biases in their communities that exclude immigrants and can make integration work so challenging.
- 10 Work together and scale up. Offices can learn from one another, and should work together to effect change at the national level—a couple of examples of such collaboration being the Welcoming Cities Initiative and the Cities for Citizenship campaign.

In the following report, we stress the mechanics of launching and sustaining an Office, the need for bringing data to the table, and the importance of making an economic case for immigrant integration. But we close by noting what is most at stake in these efforts: the soul of our cities and the nation.

After all, what is often driving the concerns of those who push back against immigrant integration policies is the fear of a changing America. Yet America has always been about those who arrive with high hopes, big hearts, and a desire to embrace democracy. To its detriment, the country has not always been receptive. Now cities are taking the lead to open minds and open communities in order to both recognize our past and embrace our future.

INTRODUCTION

When Arizona passed S.B. 1070 in 2010—a measure designed to expose those living in the state without legal status—a number of states followed with what immigrant advocates saw as copycat legislation. Georgia, for example, passed legislation in 2011 that was designed to make it more difficult to hire or transport undocumented immigrants, and also empowered law enforcement to check the immigration status of anyone suspected of being undocumented. However, despite this backdrop of often hostile sentiment—and partly as a backlash to it—something remarkable happened. In 2015, the city of Atlanta leaned in the opposite direction and opened an Office of Immigrant Affairs specifically designed to shift the tone of civic discourse and welcome, rather than reject, newcomers.

Atlanta is not alone. In cities like Tucson, Nashville, and Charlotte, local leaders have responded to the anti-immigrant attitudes emerging from their respective state capitols with strategies to defuse tensions, attract new immigrants, and provide routes for economic and social integration. Indeed, the number of city offices in the U.S. specifically designed to promote immigrant integration—which we define as improved economic mobility for, enhanced civic participation by, and receiving society openness to immigrants—has quickly expanded in recent years. By our count, there are currently 26 city offices for immigrant integration across the nation, with others in the process of starting up.

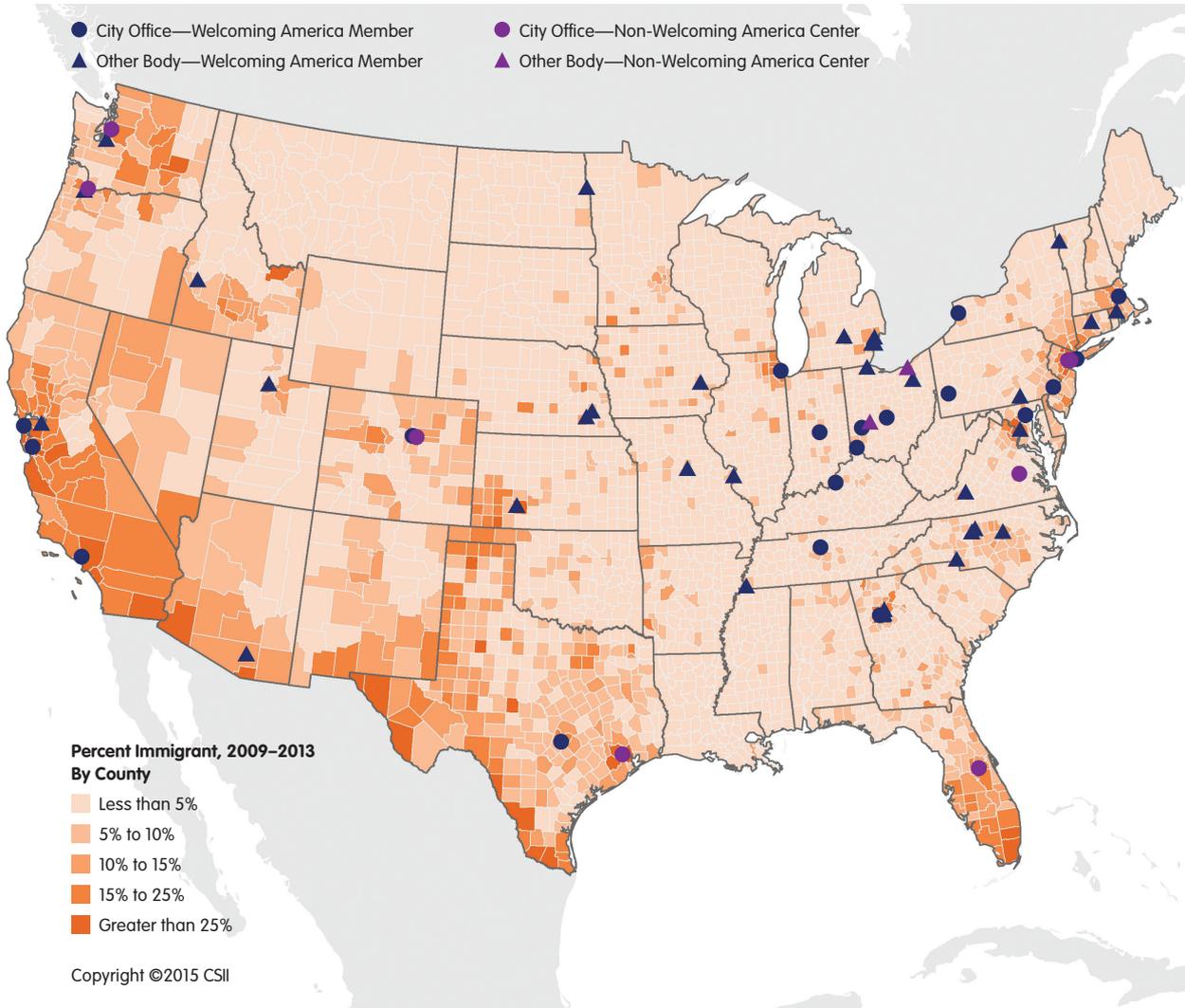
At least 37 additional bodies—task forces, commissions, welcoming offices, efforts, etc.—do not fit the definition of an Office, but are promoting immigrant integration at the city level in some form. Figure 1 shows all 63 of these city-level institutions. The icons in blue indicate institutions that partner with Welcoming America, an organization that has been instrumental in developing this field (see the box on page 35 for more on the organization). Most of these Offices have been established within the past five to 10 years, in the period in which controversy over immigrants has often been localized because of the stalemate in Washington over our federal immigration policy.

With this rapid expansion of institutions for immigrant integration, there is a demand for a better understanding of how these institutions can most effectively facilitate receiving and integrating immigrants and ultimately maximize their economic and civic contributions. This report strives to meet that demand by examining the origins, functions and goals of existing Offices and highlighting the best practices and strategies of successful initiatives. The timing of the immigrant integration movement merits a thorough investigation of these Offices, and the limited existing research on the topic makes our study all the more necessary.

Out of these 63 city-level initiatives that we initially identified, we reached out and were able to conduct over 50 interviews, some of which were during our three site visits to Atlanta, Pittsburgh and San Francisco.

We begin this report by first explain-

**FIGURE 1:
CITY-LEVEL INSTITUTIONS FOR IMMIGRANT INTEGRATION**



Notes: Official city offices are defined as mayoral initiatives operating as an administrative body housed within municipal government. These are formal offices with appointed directors often with established departmental names related to “immigrant affairs.” “Other bodies” still do operate under some auspices of municipal or county government, but have not been fully institutionalized as an official office of immigrant affairs. Examples include task forces, commissions, arms of economic bodies, or public-private partnerships. These other bodies do include solely-run community-based or advocacy efforts—but only if such a body is led by municipal or county public institutions.

ing why we think these institutions are so important—and why they have arisen at this time. In Part I, we discuss the roles and responsibilities of Offices and mayoral initiatives, starting with examples from three very different cities: Atlanta, a progressive voice in a conservative state; Pittsburgh, a revitalizing metro in search of newcomers; and San Francisco, a long-time recipient of immigrants. We suggest that these may be emblematic of three main types of efforts: those that defuse tension in hostile environments, those that attract immigrants to places with population decline, and those that actively focus on long-term immigrant integration by focusing on policy development and implementation to enhance equity and opportunity. We then identify a set of common characteristics and functions of Offices and other city-level institutions, drawing on the three cases as well as a wide range of phone interviews to identify what makes a successful Office.

We close the report with recommendations for how to build the field. We note that Offices require strong support from the mayor; multisector leadership and organizations that can provide assistance and buy-in to the mayor's vision; capacities to track and evaluate the work; partnerships with researchers to provide data to build the case; and a commitment

to incorporating racial justice into the Office's mission.

We hope this report will enable municipal entities for immigrant integration to learn from one another and will encourage new ones to form and succeed. From our perspective, the need now is more crucial than ever. The national debate over immigration is heated, but it is also poorly informed. In fact, immigrant flows into the country are stabilizing, the number of undocumented residents is on the decline, and economists and demographers are worried, particularly with an aging society, that there will be too few immigrants in our workforce. If that is the case, then it is important to accelerate the process of integrating immigrants and their families in order to ensure a robust economy in years to come. The examples of cities like New York and Toronto teach us that cities are made great because of a diverse population. Successful governance in this century means being resilient to demographic change and adapting to design cities to work better for the people who will live there in the future. City Offices can do this.

In short, immigrant integration is in all of our interest, and one of the best places to start and maintain our efforts is in the cities at the front lines of change and transition.

PART I

WHY CITY OFFICES FOR IMMIGRANT INTEGRATION?

Immigration policy is national in scope: How many people get in and out, which groups (relatives or entrepreneurs, artists or scientists, farm workers or software programmers) are favored, and how border security and refugee and asylum policies are determined and enforced, are all decisions made at the federal level. But immigrant integration—the degree of economic, social, and civic mobility of immigrants once they are here—has had little attention in terms of intentional policies driven by the federal government. There was an effort during the 1910s and 1920s called the Americanization movement in which public- and private-sector organizations came together to try to integrate immigrants,¹ but we have not seen anything similar since then.

There have been, of course, local efforts to integrate immigrants. Around the turn of the 20th century, settlement houses, unions and urban political machines served as agents or facilitators of immigrant integration² at the municipal level.³ Such efforts are more easily understood within their historical context: The industrial economy at the time made it possible for immigrants with modest skills to secure a good measure of economic mobility and attain living wages and a comfortable middle-class lifestyle within their lifetime.

Such a capacity to absorb and integrate immigrants was also likely helped by the clampdown on immigration in the 1920s, a policy shift that made the population increasingly second-generation. Added to the mix were the nationally unifying

experiences of World War II and mass suburbanization, which broadened the scope of being “American.” In this era, integration was considered synonymous with assimilation, a notion that coupled upward mobility with cultural erasure in the supposed “melting pot” of the United States.

Today’s immigration landscape differs drastically. First, the immigration reform of 1965 opened up flows from Latin America and Asia, which changed the demographic mix of newcomers in a way that provoked racial anxiety among many native-born Americans. These immigrants entered a post-industrial “hourglass economy” that many say offers fewer avenues of upward mobility, and immigrants who work in the expanding service sector often find themselves in jobs that do not pay a livable wage and offer little job security and few benefits.⁴

Despite these challenges, being an immigrant in the United States in 2015 allows for the greater possibility of retaining one’s national culture. A shift in American values around diversity, thanks in part to the high value placed on intercultural skills in a global economy, means that most Americans prefer to use the “salad bowl” metaphor over that of a “melting pot” when envisioning their country.

While the cultural expectations of how immigrants should fit into U.S. society have become more inclusive, the national policy debate has grown increasingly divisive, leading to stalled action on comprehensive immigrant integration policies.

Though the rationale for city offices

for immigrant integration and related local-level efforts rests largely in the fact that helping immigrants integrate civically, socially and economically is simply good government, the failure of federal action to do this has contributed to Offices' proliferation.

Our research has found that, while initiatives such as task forces and commissions are important, immigrant integration efforts are most effective when housed in government. For example, Tucson, Arizona's Immigrant Task Force currently serves as a public forum where interested community members can discuss issues related to the city's immigrant communities. But these efforts are more likely to lack the sort of institutional backing and power that can result in deeper systemic change. Chartered Offices like New York City's Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs, are instituted for the long term, signal a serious commitment to integration efforts, and can engage in policy development and reform.

Such a coordinated effort for immigrant integration housed in government is needed because local government actually plays a large role in the daily lived experience of immigrants. For example, 287(g) agreements (policies that allow state and local law enforcement entities to screen individuals for immigration status and possible deportation),^c as well as the still-in-development Priority Enforcement Program (PEP),^d can have a huge impact

on whether immigrants trust or distrust local police.⁵

But policies and programs from local governments can just as well promote immigrant integration. Consular and municipal ID programs,⁶ for example, can facilitate access to libraries, financial institutions, and many other services.⁷ Immigrant worker centers can help establish local labor rights and protect against wage theft,⁸ and language access policies can ensure that the local public sector can reach out effectively to immigrant communities.⁹

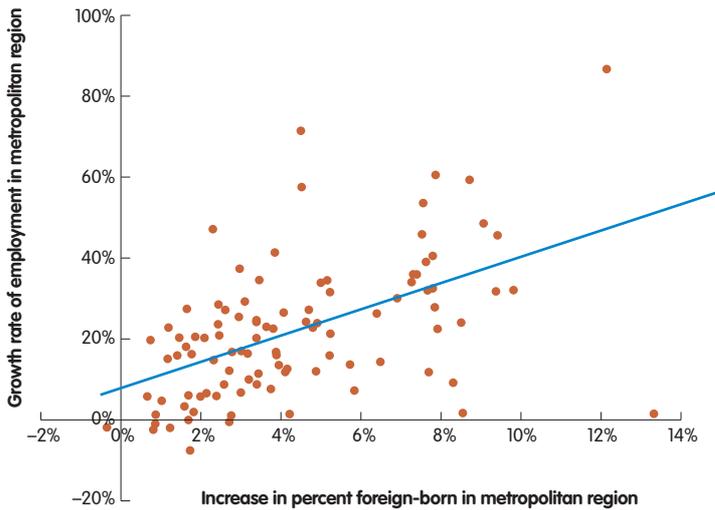
While many cities have taken on the responsibility for integrating immigrants in light of the national government's failure to do so, recent efforts show some promising signs of initiative. On November 21, 2014, the Obama administration established the White House Task Force on New Americans (a move overshadowed by the simultaneous announcement of the expansion of deferred action) and in September 2015, it launched the Building Welcoming Communities Campaign in partnership with Welcoming America. This became a coordinated effort to better integrate immigrants, and the detailed strategic plan identifies goals to build stronger and more welcoming communities.¹⁰

Federal support is a welcome turn of events, but, to paraphrase a former speaker of the House, the work of immigrant integration is ultimately local. States are responding in vastly different ways, and it is on local civic leaders to set the

c Under Section 287(g) of the Immigration and Nationality Act, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) may deputize selected state and local law enforcement officers to perform the functions of federal immigration agents. Like employees of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, so-called "287(g) officers" have access to federal immigration databases, may interrogate and arrest noncitizens believed to have violated federal immigration laws, and may lodge "detainers" against alleged noncitizens held in state or local custody.

d The Department of Homeland Security started PEP in November of 2014. The program allows DHS to work with state and local law enforcement to take custody of individuals who have been booked and, according to DHS, narrows both the criteria for issuing detainers (focusing mainly on convicted criminals) and the terms of detention. For more, see <https://www.ice.gov/pep>.

FIGURE 2:
EMPLOYMENT GROWTH AND SHIFT IN THE PERCENT FOREIGN-BORN FOR THE 100 LARGEST METROPOLITAN AREAS, 1990–2008



Source: PERE analysis of the Urban Institute’s Metro Trends database and the Building Resilient Regions database.

tone about whether their own localities are welcoming or not.¹¹

Downward devolution is also part of the American political fabric. In its best form, local control has resulted in efforts like the National League of Cities’ Municipal Action for Immigrant Integration program and the U.S. Conference of Mayors’ Cities United for Immigration Action campaign. At downward devolution’s worst, jurisdictions sign 287(g), cut funding to English programs in schools, and promote local narratives that racialize and criminalize immigrants. How immigrants experience the U.S. can be markedly different depending on the city in which they settle.

Indeed, cities are also of increasing importance because even a realm that is clearly federal—immigration enforcement—has become hyper local.¹²

Research shows that enforcement of federal immigration laws increasingly lies

on specific agreements with local jurisdictions.¹³ As such, Offices can, in theory, influence how their jurisdiction’s law enforcement works with federal immigration enforcement.

More generally, city governments are tasked with developing and implementing public policies that promote a productive local economy and a healthy and safe environment for all. Immigrants are part of that “all,” and in some cities, make up a large part of that “all.” They pay taxes, vote, contribute to the local economy, etc., and have unique barriers that, despite the existence of civil rights protections, result in unequal outcomes when compared with the native-born. Government intervention can help immigrants achieve economic mobility, political voice, and social inclusion—and this can help cities and regions prosper.

Indeed, many Offices find that a starting point to openness is to make an economic case for welcoming immigrants.

Figure 2 shows the relationship between the rise in the immigrant population (as a share of the total population) and employment growth in America's largest 100 metropolitan areas between 1990 and 2008; we end there to avoid the distorting effects of the Great Recession. As can be seen, there is a positive correlation: A rising share of immigrants is associated with a faster pace of job creation.

More specifically, many city and metropolitan civic and business leaders see immigrant entrepreneurs as helpful in retaining industries and revitalizing tired neighborhoods, which helps make attracting immigrants a key part of a city's agenda. At the same time, we cannot reduce the vitality generated by an immigrant presence to simply the economic dimension, and leaders making the economic argument should be careful that this does not simply devolve to a desire to attract only high-skill labor. As we note later, low-skill and high-skill labor often go together (think software engineers and the workers who provide

care to their children and parents).

Still, the economic rationale has been of interest to some civic leaders, often opening the door to a broader argument about why there should be a wide range of efforts aimed at welcoming and integrating immigrants. These efforts can include other bodies for immigrant integration—task forces, welcoming committees, commissions, etc.—but this report focuses mainly on city offices for immigrant integration, as well as one other initiative, Welcoming Pittsburgh (which is technically not an Office but is mayor-initiated and staffed within the mayor's office). Our view is that establishing full Offices should be the aim, partly because this signals more commitment and generally marshals the power and resources that can impact the long-term trajectory of immigrants and the communities they live in. The good work of other bodies should be recognized; in some cases they would be Offices if the political winds were blowing in a more favorable direction.

PART II

UNDERSTANDING OFFICES OF IMMIGRANT INTEGRATION

It is one thing to grasp the importance of immigrant integration offices in principle, but understanding how Offices develop and implement their visions in practice can be less simple. Additionally, since the field of immigrant integration is still evolving, so too is the concept of a city office for immigrant integration. Nevertheless, after significant energy and time spent visiting Offices, speaking with staff, and observing Office projects, we were able to identify a number of general approaches for understanding such Offices.

The best way to do this was to work with three tangible and unique case studies. The first is the Atlanta Office of Immigrant Affairs, an office working to improve the tenor (and services) for immigrants in a state and region that has historically struggled to tackle and defuse racial tensions. The second city is Pittsburgh, a city that has incorporated immigrant attraction into its strategy to revive the city's flagging economy and neighborhoods. Finally, we examine San Francisco, a city where municipal policy proactively looks out for immigrant needs, considers immigrants to have a right to a share of the city budget, and is more focused on the trajectory of immigrants over time.

Perhaps you will see traits of your city in one of these case studies. To help that along, we follow our brief tour with some analysis about what connects these case studies and other city efforts, and we propose three general categories we think most Offices can fit into.

INSIDE CITY OFFICES FOR IMMIGRANT INTEGRATION

Atlanta, Georgia:

New Immigrants, Old Sentiments, and a Way Forward

Atlanta is emblematic of how the South has emerged as a destination for immigrants from Asia and Latin America. From 2000 to 2010, the Atlanta region gained almost 300,000 immigrants—a 69 percent increase.¹⁴ Atlanta has become such a magnet due in part to economic restructuring¹⁵ and growth as a result of expanding industries and new labor markets, which have generated high demand for low-skill service sector jobs.¹⁶

Compared to places like Los Angeles and New York City, Atlanta lacks three features usually associated with cities that offer a smooth path toward immigrant integration: long-standing institutions to incorporate immigrants, mature

FIGURE 3:
IMMIGRANTS BY REGION OF ORIGIN, ATLANTA, GA

	ATLANTA CITY	ATLANTA METRO
Total Immigrants	33,431	720,983
Europe	15%	9%
Asia	34%	29%
Africa	8%	10%
Oceania	1%	0%
Latin America	39%	50%
North America (Canada)	2%	2%
Percent Immigrant	8%	13%

Source: CSII Analysis of American Community Survey 2009-2013

Notes: Atlanta Metro is defined by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget as the Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Roswell, GA, Metropolitan Statistical Area.

immigrant communities to facilitate the process, and a native-born population familiar with newcomers. Lacking assistance, recent immigrants struggle to increase their English fluency and to navigate segregated and unequal labor markets and neighborhoods. Moreover, Georgia was one of several states to enact tough state-level anti-immigrant legislation inspired by Arizona's SB 1070 law.¹⁷ This is particularly challenging for Atlanta's undocumented residents, who represent a little over 40 percent of the regional immigrant population.¹⁸

To fill this gap, Mayor Reed launched the Welcoming Atlanta Working Group in May 2014. In September 2014, Welcoming Atlanta announced a 20-point plan for how the city could enhance the civic participation and integration of new arrivals. One of the group's recommendations was the creation of the Atlanta Office of Immigrant Affairs, which launched in June 2015 and officially institutionalized Welcoming Atlanta's efforts.

In Georgia, the sort of economic considerations discussed earlier matter: A 2012 report from the Partnership for a New American Economy found that immigrant businesses in Georgia generate \$2.9 billion in revenue annually.¹⁹ Therefore, much of the effort from the beginning has been on attracting immigrants to Atlanta, encouraging them to open businesses, buy homes, and stay in the area. But the Office's focus extends beyond matters of economics, with efforts guided by Welcoming Atlanta's 20-point plan, and a focus on community engagement, talent development, and public safety.

The inauguration of the Atlanta Office as one of the first immigrant integration offices in the South was a direct response to Georgia's passage of H.B. 87 in 2011—legislation that targeted undocumented immigrants. Mayor Reed has not only championed the Office's work,

but has worked to publicly counter anti-immigrant messages that may come from the state capital. Urgently changing the message about immigrants has effectively moved Atlanta toward a culture of receptivity. The Office also organizes city dialogues between immigrants, refugees, and receiving communities. Out of these meetings leaders have learned to partner with other city agencies and programs to recommend, develop and implement policies that serve the immigrant community.

.....

“We have historically been a city that has supported integration and stood up for civil rights directly, [it’s] part of our DNA. We feel like it is our responsibility as residents of the city of Atlanta to do the right thing in the face of injustice.”

—Michelle Maziar,
Director of the Atlanta Office
of Immigrant Affairs

.....

Atlanta's welcome has been more than lip service, though. The Atlanta Workforce Development Agency has created targeted programming that recruits, trains, and connects foreign-born workers to fill jobs critical to Atlanta's economic competitiveness in the global economy. Importantly, the Atlanta Police Department made a decision to not participate in 287(g), improving the perceived tenor of the region toward immigrants and fortifying

community policing, particularly for immigrant communities characterized by families with mixed or uncertain status. In contrast, several law enforcement jurisdictions outside of Atlanta have made life more difficult for immigrants by collaborating with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and handing over undocumented detainees.

Atlanta’s contrast with its past and the state surrounding it could not be more apparent. “Suddenly Georgia was making news again—not for an immigration policy that is backwards-looking and inhumane, but for taking leadership in changing the narrative around immigration and creating an environment that is welcoming and inclusive of immigrant communities,” wrote Kate Brick^e in *Southern Cities Lead Immigrant Integration Efforts*.²⁰ The progress Atlanta has made in immigrant integration is notable, especially given the context. The Office must simultaneously defuse anti-immigrant sentiment while fostering a welcoming environment.

While the Office is still new, the discourse on immigrants in Atlanta is already shifting. People are now “paying attention, and [that] shows [that] things are changing,” says Michelle Maziar, director of Atlanta’s Office. The Atlanta experience paints a picture for what city offices can do in the midst of states that are not supportive of immigrants—but also illustrates the ways in which the measure of success may need to be more limited. Changing hearts and minds is often the first step to changing policy. Shifting tone in this important Southern city is perhaps less easily gauged but no less consequential than, say, a shift toward municipal ID cards in New Haven, Connecticut nestled in a state more welcoming to immigrants,

or San Francisco, a well-established immigrant gateway.

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania: Attracting Immigrants to a Struggling City

Attracting and retaining immigrants is an essential part of Pittsburgh’s revitalization plan. A paradigmatic “Rust Belt” city, Pittsburgh is still rebounding from the ravages of 1980s deindustrialization, and its emerging (and repairing) economy now relies less on manufacturing and more on health services, innovative technology, banking, and education. However, there is a shortage of workers, and Pittsburgh needs younger, more diverse workers to sustain and grow. According to a Vibrant Pittsburgh report, “minorities account for 98 percent of growth in the nation’s top 100 urban areas and over 50 percent of new workers in the U.S. workforce.”²¹ In this context, it appears that Pittsburgh’s most likely economic development option will be its foreign-born population.

**FIGURE 4:
IMMIGRANTS BY REGION
OF ORIGIN, PITTSBURGH,
PENNSYLVANIA**

	PITTSBURGH CITY	PITTSBURGH METRO
Total Immigrants	22,525	78,388
Europe	23%	31%
Asia	54%	47%
Africa	7%	5%
Oceania	1%	1%
Latin America	12%	12%
North America (Canada)	3%	4%
Percent Immigrant	7%	3%

Source: CSII Analysis of American Community Survey 2009-2013

Notes: Pittsburgh Metro is defined by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget as the Pittsburgh, PA Metropolitan Statistical Area.

^e Kate Brick is now the associate director of state and local initiatives at Partnership for a New American Economy.

Pittsburgh's population has been falling for decades due to the decline of its steel industry. In 1980 the total population of the city was just under 424,000. In 2000 it had dropped to fewer than 335,000, and in 2014, when the most recent U.S. Census data was available, that number was 305,000. In 2012, immigrants accounted for only 7 percent of the city's population. However, from 2000 to 2012, Pittsburgh had one new immigrant for roughly seven fewer native-born residents in the city.²² Efforts to revitalize the economy have focused on promoting innovation and attracting a highly educated workforce.²³ A unique demographic, in 2012, most of the city's immigrants were Asian or white,²⁴ and in 2009 it also had the highest ratio of high-skill to low-skill immigrants of the 100 largest metropolitan areas.²⁵ Among Pittsburgh's newcomers is a recent influx of refugees from Somalia, Bhutan and Burma, making the city's foreign-born population both economically and culturally diverse.

To attract and retain a new workforce of immigrants with varied skills, Pittsburgh formed a mayoral office for immigrant integration called Welcoming Pittsburgh. This mayoral initiative is a perfect example of our definition of an Office, even though it is not formally institutionalized. The initiative is fairly new and is a Welcoming America member, established in 2014 as part of Mayor Peduto's plan to promote cooperation between foreign-born and U.S.-born residents. With support from Welcoming America, the director of Welcoming Pittsburgh, Betty Cruz, guided an Advisory Council in developing a strategic plan in tandem with the city's economic growth plan. The plan was developed and implementation is currently under way with language access as a high priority. The initiative stands out for its ability to build strong relationships with organiza-

tions, agencies and leaders despite a wide range of backgrounds and priorities.

Welcoming Pittsburgh has worked hard to add value to the field rather than infringe on the work of existing immigrant organizations.

"When we launched the initiative we said, 'Look, we don't have a plan in place. We need to do it with you. You're the experts because you either lived it or so

.....

"Many immigrants are well educated—in Pittsburgh there are four highly skilled immigrants for every low-skilled immigrant—which can reflect well on a region trying to attract companies to set up shop. All these things can make immigrants an asset for communities."

—**Irina Zohorov**, reporter for Keystone Crossroads, a public media initiative in Pennsylvania

.....

many of your organizations have already been working on this and we're catching up," Cruz said, describing her intentions to build on the community's expertise.

The Latino Family Center's director, Rosamaria Cristello, affirmed Cruz's commitment to this approach, acknowledging Welcoming Pittsburgh as a space to engage in "bigger conversations" about local immigrant integration efforts as well as to showcase Pittsburgh's

initiatives at the national level.

In short, Welcoming Pittsburgh has been able to gain support from the existing social infrastructure of community advocates and leaders. Discussions prompted by the initiative have also helped nonprofits and governments to streamline and expand their services. The organizations of two Advisory Council participants noticed an overlap in services and developed a more efficient strategy to expand resources for Latino families by complementing the provision of services for early childhood and for low-income families. Similarly, as soon as the Welcoming Pittsburgh was instituted, Cruz consulted with Barbara Murock, founder of the Immigrants and Internationals Advisory Council for Allegheny County's Department of Human Services (DHS). Whereas DHS works county-wide to provide critical human services to immigrant communities, the mayor's vision for Welcoming Pittsburgh incorporates economic development, citizenship and increased collaboration into the city's plan to promote immigrant integration.

Welcoming work in Pittsburgh is not confined to Welcoming Pittsburgh. Consider Pittsburgh's City of Asylum Artist Residency Program. The program helps exiled artists find a new home and claim a stake in their city by encouraging cross-cultural exchanges in their new neighborhoods. Artists are provided with spaces to freely express themselves through public art displays, cultural events and a journal publication. Pittsburgh residents are invited to engage in cultural learning and sharing by participating in the events. Through the educational opportunities the City of Asylum programming provides, it contributes to dismantling stereotypes and increasing awareness of international crises.²⁶

Finally, Welcoming Pittsburgh helps align local efforts with broader

immigrant integration efforts in cities facing similar challenges. It is a member of the Welcoming Cities and Counties and Welcoming Economies (WE) Global Network, a coalition effort designed to strengthen the work, maximize the impact, and sustain the efforts of local initiatives across the Midwest that welcome, retain, and empower immigrant communities as valued contributors to local economies. This ensures that the local efforts are part of something bigger, adding external validation to what Pittsburgh itself is doing, even as it provides an avenue to learn from the experiences of others trying to move in similar directions.

**San Francisco, California:
Making the Move to Advocacy**

San Francisco is politically deep-blue and has long been one of the nation's most liberal and immigrant-friendly cities. The city was one of the first, in 2001, to enact legislation to make services more accessible to immigrants with limited English proficiency, and to issue municipal ID cards to undocumented immigrants in

**FIGURE 5:
IMMIGRANTS BY REGION OF
ORIGIN, SAN FRANCISCO CITY
AND COUNTY, CALIFORNIA**

	SAN FRANCISCO CITY/COUNTY	SAN FRANCISCO METRO
Total Immigrants	290,752	1,310,804
Europe	13%	10%
Asia	63%	54%
Africa	1%	2%
Oceania	1%	2%
Latin America	20%	31%
North America (Canada)	2%	1%
Percent Immigrant	36%	30%

Source: CSII Analysis of American Community Survey 2009-2013

Notes: San Francisco Metro is defined by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget as the San Francisco–Oakland–Hayward, CA, Metropolitan Statistical Area.

2008.²⁷ In October 2013, the city adopted the Due Process for All Ordinance, which bars local law enforcement officials from honoring most federal immigration hold requests issued through the Secure Communities program. As such, it should not be surprising that San Francisco also has two municipal agencies with specific immigrant-related mandates: the Immigrant Rights Commission (IRC) and the Office of Civic Engagement and Immigrant Affairs (OCEIA).

San Francisco has always been a city of immigrants, reaching a low of 16 percent of the population in 1950,²⁸ but rising ever since to a share that is currently at 36 percent.²⁹ Successive waves of immigrants (from Mexican and Chinese; to Japanese and Filipino; to Irish, Italians, Russians, and German Jews; and more Asian and Latin Americans once again) have changed the demographic composition of San Francisco time and again. After decades of economic restructuring driven by Silicon Valley, the city's economy and workforce are now highly polarized. Soaring rents and housing prices in the city have slowed immigration to San Francisco since 2000, driving more immigrants to surrounding suburbs. As a result, the share of the city's foreign-born population is leveling off—it grew by less than 5 percent between 2000 and 2013—even as its welcoming efforts for immigrants have continued to grow.³⁰

San Francisco is home to mature immigrant integration institutions. Created by ordinance in 1997, the IRC is charged with providing county supervisors and the city mayor with advice and policy recommendations on issues affecting the city's immigrants. Its mission is “to improve, enhance, and preserve the quality of life and civic participation of all immigrants in the City and County of San Francisco.”³¹ The 15 volunteer commissioners are appointed for two-year terms and at least eight commissioners must be immi-

grants, thereby serving an important civic integration function. The IRC serves as an important clearinghouse for all local issues related to the city's immigrant communities, but according to nonprofit advocates and city legislators it does not have much power to influence the local policymaking process.

In 2009, San Francisco established the OCEIA by consolidating a handful of city administrative positions. Mayor Gavin Newsom's creation of OCEIA was intended to signal the city's more serious commitment to immigrant integration. At the time it was created, the Office had three staff members and its work focused on overseeing the implementation of existing integration policies and doing outreach to immigrant communities, especially around the 2010 U.S. Census. Six years later, OCEIA has blossomed to 40 staff, including 30 employees from the Community Ambassadors Program. The program is a “street-smart public education, workforce development, and safety program designed to bridge tensions in the community due to cultural or linguistic differences.”³²

In the words of one of its staff members, OCEIA is now a multifaceted “policy, direct service and grant-making office” that focuses on community safety, citizenship and civic engagement, and immigrant-assistance programs. In other words, OCEIA takes a holistic approach to immigrant integration.

OCEIA stands out from other city immigrant affairs offices because it provides grants to community-based nonprofit organizations. Skyrocketing housing prices have transformed heavily immigrant neighborhoods, like the Mission District, and residents have been displaced by gentrification; at the same time, the city's high property taxes have put it in a position to be able to provide resources for struggling immigrant communities. In recent years, OCEIA's budget

has gone up such that it can issue competitive grants to local nonprofits to promote U.S. citizenship, assist in implementing the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program,^f to build community and city capacity to serve immigrants, and manage the city's Day Laborers Program.

City resources provide nonprofits with critical resources to serve immigrants who struggle to get by in this high-cost city. Yet they also put strains on the relationship between nonprofits and government. Nonprofits feel uneasy about their growing financial dependence, especially when they want to be advocating for immigrant communities in the halls of government. Nonprofit advocates share a variety of perspectives on OCEIA: Some are optimistic that it can indeed support and promote their work while others fear it will eventually crowd out civil society initiatives on immigrant integration. And of course, it will require much more than competitive grants to stave off the particularly aggressive gentrification that is displacing immigrant communities in the city.

OCEIA has developed a reputation for doing groundbreaking work that enjoys broad public support. However, it has shied away from more controversial matters, avoiding advocating for the rights of the city's estimated 30,000 to 45,000 undocumented immigrants.^{33,34} Now that OCEIA has built up its political capital and capacity, there is room for the Office to develop a more pronounced policy advocacy role vis-à-vis local, state and federal policymakers to complement the impressive local policy implementation work that it is currently doing.

The San Francisco office illustrates

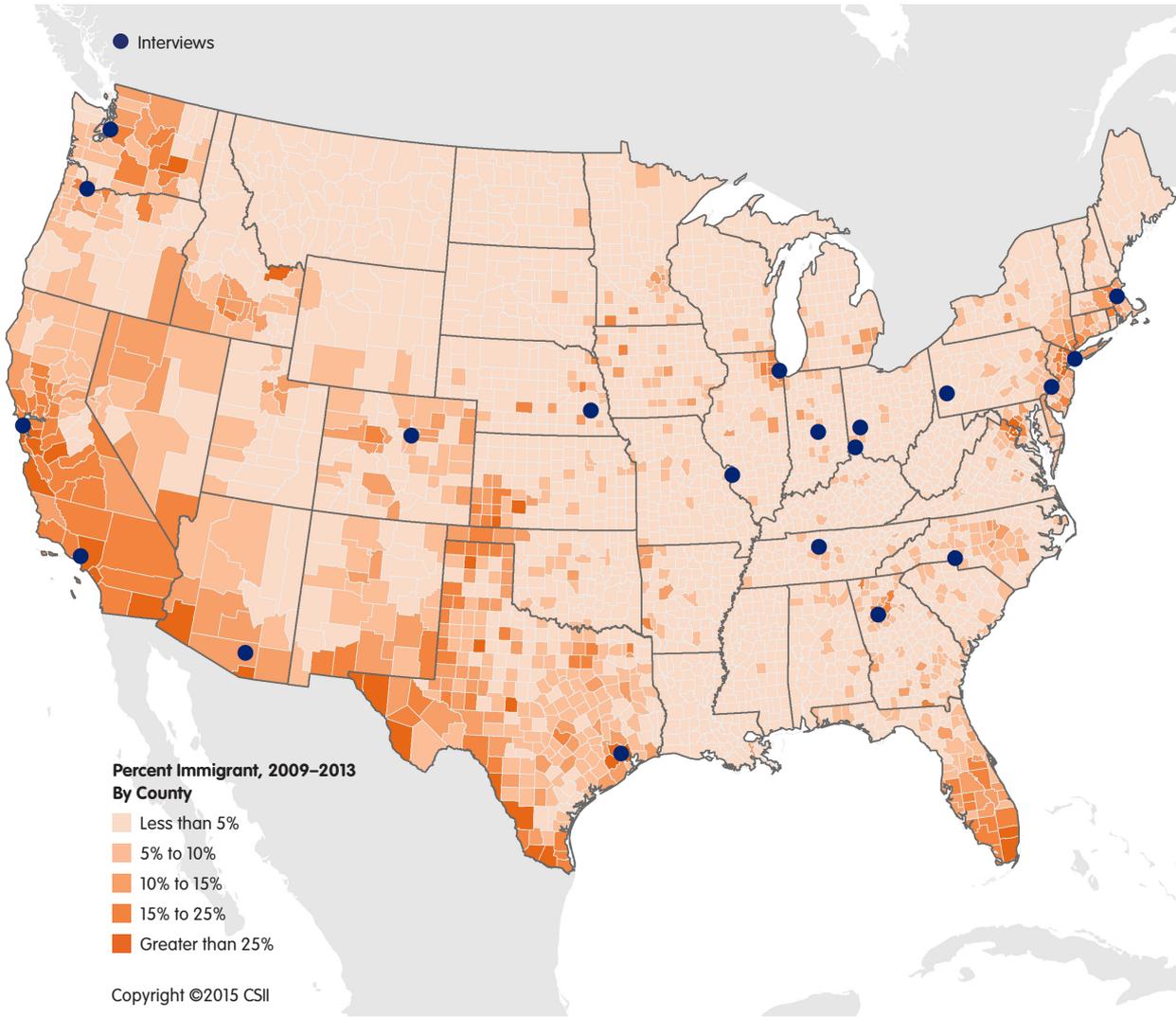
the evolution of a city Office in taking on tasks of deep integration, not simply what might be thought of as defusing immigration tensions or welcoming newcomers. At times, such a strong municipal commitment to immigrant integration may seem out of step with the rest of the nation. Take as an example the reaction of some to the killing of an innocent bystander on a San Francisco pier in July 2015 by an undocumented immigrant who had been deported to Mexico five times. While this tragic event deeply saddened all of San Francisco, it is noteworthy that elected officials have continued to support the city's sanctuary policy,³⁵ to separate immigration enforcement and community policing, and to maximize progress for law-abiding and hard-working immigrants.

CHARACTERISTICS OF CITY OFFICES FOR IMMIGRANT INTEGRATION

Our three case studies usefully illustrate specific types of Offices and other mayoral-led efforts, but, in order to draw broader lessons from a larger sample, we also visited Houston, Texas, reviewed online materials, and conducted telephone interviews with Offices and their personnel in other cities (Figure 6 shows the cities represented in our interviews). We also examined forthcoming research from a new volume co-edited by John Mollenkopf and Manuel Pastor that reviews the state of immigrant integration in seven different metropolitan areas, a project that also teased out the demographic, economic and political factors that tend to promote welcome or rejection.³⁶

^f In June 2012, President Obama created the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program to offer qualified young undocumented immigrants a two-year (renewable) stay of deportation and the ability to apply for a work permit. To qualify for DACA, applicants must be under 31, have arrived before age 16, demonstrate continuous presence during the five years prior, pass a criminal background check, and meet educational eligibility requirements. The cost to apply for DACA is \$465.

FIGURE 6:
LOCATIONS OF INSTITUTIONS INTERVIEWED



Site Interviews

- | | |
|------------------|-------------------|
| Atlanta, GA | Los Angeles, CA |
| Boston, MA | Nashville, TN |
| Charlotte, NC | New York, NY |
| Chicago, IL | Philadelphia, PA |
| Cincinnati, OH | Pittsburgh, PA |
| Dayton, OH | Portland, OR |
| Denver, CO | San Francisco, CA |
| Houston, TX | Seattle, WA |
| Indianapolis, IN | St. Louis, MO |
| Lincoln, NE | Tucson, AZ |

**FIGURE 7:
OFFICES FOR IMMIGRANT
INTEGRATION* SUMMARY**

Cities with Office for Immigrant Integration	26	100%
City Offices with State Immigrant Affairs Office	9	35%
Welcoming Cities Member	18	69%
Median Year Established	2012	

* Note the definition for Offices on page 11.

Our preliminary research helped us identify 26 cities that had an official Office (see Appendix A for more detail) according to our definition. From there, we narrowed down our interview selection to form the basis of the data for this report. Our main focus in selecting institutions to interview was on diversity—geographic, demographic, economic, etc. We also focused on the unique individual stories each city had to contribute to a national analysis. We ultimately conducted 20 interviews with institution directors, primarily over the phone, in addition to visiting Atlanta, Pittsburgh, and San Francisco. During these visits, we conducted over 50 in-person interviews with Office and initiative directors, advocates, business leaders, legal experts, academics, and local residents. While the field of Offices we researched is as varied as the nation’s immigrant populations, we tried to identify key commonalities and differences among them. While we focused here primarily on city Offices, in some instances we included examples from nonoffice bodies with innovative efforts that could be effectively applied to any type of city institution. In the following sections, we detail the key purposes and aims of most Offices and mayoral initiatives, highlighting along the way the practices that have helped some Offices find success in achieving their goals.

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Dayton’s Voices of the Immigrant Experience Program

An Ohio State University study on attitudes toward immigrants identified neighborhoods with negative attitudes toward the foreign-born. Dayton’s Office then became a stronger presence in those same neighborhoods. Through Voices, activities such as panel discussions provide an opportunity for deeper government engagement with neighborhoods and open channels of communication between immigrants and native-born Dayton residents.

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They Have a Mayoral Champion

Mayoral leadership plays a crucial role in determining the level of power and responsibility Offices are afforded. In our case study cities, Mayors Reed, Peduto and Newsom actively elevate the issue of immigrant integration, driving inclusive policy and dedicating resources to their city’s programs. These mayors and others leading similar efforts are not themselves immigrants—and indeed there seems to be some advantage to having a bit of distance. For example, Los Angeles’ Office of Immigrant Affairs withered under Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, the son of a Mexican immigrant, before being rebooted and revamped by his successor, Eric Garcetti. Sometimes mayors who seemingly have the greatest distance from immigrants—think Mayor Bloomberg in New York City—may have the most political room to catalyze action. In all cases, the mayoral role and commitment are critical to success.

They Help Cities Welcome Immigrants and Encourage Receptivity

All city Offices for immigrant integration are welcoming to immigrants, without exception. In Pittsburgh, that meant Vibrant Pittsburgh working to attract immigrants; in Atlanta, it meant the Mayor improving the public narrative; in San Francisco it was providing workforce development opportunities to immigrants, among other things. Dayton's Voices of the Immigrant Experience initiative, as well as the St. Louis Mosaic Project, both focus on building relationships between U.S.-born and immigrant residents (see boxes, pages 25 and 27). Fostering relationships between immigrants and the native-born is a best practice for immigrant integration,³⁷ and evidence shows that having direct contact with immigrants changes people's perceptions for the better. Offices have a unique ability and charge to create spaces for immigrants and the native-born to interact and recognize their common goals for the community and the future.

They Make the Economic Case for Immigrants

Making the economic case for immigrants is a common characteristic of all Offices. In

Tucson, the city's immigrant task force is moving in a more business-oriented direction as it recognizes and highlights immigrant contributions to small business.

"We are in the process of collecting data on immigrant-owned businesses and contributions of the immigrant community. ... We have a lot of immigrants in Tucson, and a lot of immigrants start their own businesses," remarked Nicholas Ross, the task force's facilitator.

Recall Atlanta, where immigrants are part of the city's economic transition, or Pittsburgh, where they are seen as key to sustaining the city as it loses native-born residents, or San Francisco, where immigrants are such a large share of the population that they are the local economy. The variations in the economy argument matter, but the point is the same: Immigrants contribute to local economies and their strength determines the strength of the city.

Effective Offices emphasize the contributions of both high-skill and low-skill immigrants, recognizing that this mix is necessary to promote prosperity. After all, entrepreneurship requires workers, all those software engineers rely on people who provide food, take care of children, and tend gardens, and not every industry (for example, agriculture) is driven by those with H1-B visas, granted to foreign professionals in specialist jobs. Emphasizing the complementarity of labor also avoids a situation in which one group of immigrants is pitted against another, a phenomenon that weakens welcome and erodes receptivity.

They Develop, Streamline and Consolidate Services

Some Offices function as a resource center by streamlining city services for immigrants. For example, after Chicago's Office of New Americans found that immigrants are 50 percent more likely to start a business than non-immigrants, the Office led a one-stop shop in which city resources were brought to immigrant neighborhoods. Director

FIGURE 8: POTENTIAL SERVICES OFFERED OR CONSOLIDATED BY OFFICES

- Outreach/education for available city services
- English as a Second Language program availability
- DACA and DAPA assistance
- Public safety awareness (cooperation with local PD)
- Immigrant fraud education
- Implementing city language access plans
- Naturalization assistance
- Advancing immigrant integration as a city agenda item

Making St. Louis Marketable

St. Louis needs to attract a diverse population in order to grow—a reality local leadership is well aware of. The St. Louis Mosaic Project is a public-private initiative housed in the regional economic development organization that has worked to make the city more inviting to new talent. Its programs and partnerships encourage direct participation in helping to address the needs of a diverse immigrant community. One of the project's striking features, and a lesson for other such efforts, is its emphasis on attracting low-skill and low-income people as a key pillar of the project's strategies for increased economic vitality.

Betsy Cohen, executive director of St. Louis Mosaic, says the initiative promotes a complimentary relationship between the low-skill workers and local emerging businesses, both key to the city's success. "There are opportunities for training for the native and foreign-born," Cohen told us. "We have clusters. We have financial services and call centers for low- and high-skill people. We connect the foreign-born to our growing business clusters."

Partnerships with regional business

network organizations also help the Mosaic office educate businesses on corporate sponsorships and workplace inclusion, helping to match new immigrants and international students with a network of companies. Cohen highlighted her excitement about a partner's program that will help immigrants move into the job market through networking opportunities and assistance with resumes, among other things.

Beyond business engagement, the St. Louis Mosaic Project coordinates a number of diverse programs to help the foreign-born connect with their communities. For example, the Immigrant Entrepreneurship Program helps foreign-born entrepreneurs start anything from neighborhood-based to high-tech businesses. Soccer Connections cultivates cross-cultural connections through pick-up soccer games. Through these types of activities, both the receiving community and the newcomers are learning how to contribute to a growing economy and create a new community together.

Tonantzin Carmona remarked that the Office now takes "staff and resources to neighborhoods to teach them how to start their own business." Her staff speaks to immigrant communities about accessing capital and getting licenses.

"It takes the process of having to go to City Hall and streamlines it, bringing resources to those neighborhoods," Carmona told us. Chicago's efforts mirror those in San Francisco, where the OCEIA brings programs emphasizing community safety, citizenship and civic engagement to immigrant communities.

They Coordinate City Efforts

City Offices are uniquely positioned to promote an immigrant integration agenda

throughout city departments and agencies. According to Nisha Agarwal, commissioner of the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs in New York, immigrant integration means other city agencies and departments bring an "immigrant integration lens" to the varied work that they do so that immigrant integration becomes "part of the DNA of the city." In a similar vein, Philadelphia's Mayor's Office of Immigrant and Multicultural Affairs provides technical assistance in relation to cultural sensitivity and improving communication and outreach to immigrants in other city agencies.

"We convene [the departments] internally to ensure that programs and policies do take into consideration immigrants,

and we also advise the mayor,” Jennifer Rodriguez, the Office’s executive director, told us. We heard such sentiments from the Mayor’s Office of New Bostonians and other places as well.

They Work Effectively with Law Enforcement

By collaborating with law enforcement, some Offices make efforts to protect immigrants from anti-immigrant policies like 287(g). In cities like Tucson, the task force’s first directive was gaining police authorities’ support against 287(g), which was facilitated by the sheriff’s active role on the task force. As a result, the Tucson police department does not participate in the 287(g) program. Similarly, Philadelphia opted out of the Secure Communities^g program through an executive order signed by Mayor Michael Nutter. It stipulated that the city would only cooperate with ICE if the person was convicted of an aggravated, violent felony, and if ICE had a warrant. And, as we note below, we have even seen a local police department, in this case in Norcross, Georgia, run a citizen academy in order to build trust with immigrants in their city. While city offices cannot change policing laws that supersede municipal jurisdictions, they can still make an impact locally and exert influence regionally.

They Make Immigrant Integration Everyone’s Business

City Offices expand consensus, reach, and impact by collaborating with and convening diverse sectors. Welcoming Pittsburgh brought together

representatives from community-based organizations, the business sector, service providers, police departments, and faith-based organizations, among others, to form an advisory council that formulated a collective plan of action that represented a diverse set of organizations and interests.

“We sit down together with a group of people who all recognize the value of immigrants but have different perspectives and have different ways of accomplishing it. We are all dying for all of our ideas to come in, but at some point you have to recognize that we have to institute change and have realistic goals,” one member of the council remarked. Offices also tap into the expertise of these stakeholders. For example, the NYC Office partners with the City University of New York to provide legal services at scale and to build capacity within legal and community organizations. Diverse partnerships help to expand the efficacy and capacity of city Offices.

They Promote Civic Engagement

Offices encourage the civic engagement of immigrants. The San Francisco Office has funded the DreamSF Fellowship program, a 30-week program that provides DACA-approved youth the opportunity to do paid work with community organizations to serve the city’s immigrant communities while gaining valuable professional and leadership training. The Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Affairs in New York City has started a four-month Immigrant Women Leaders Fellowship to help immigrant women become effective social change

^g Secure Communities was an immigration enforcement program administered by ICE from 2008 to 2014. The program was designed to identify immigrants in U.S. jails who were deportable under immigration law. Under Secure Communities, participating jails submitted arrestees’ fingerprints not only to criminal databases, but to immigration databases as well, giving ICE access to information on individuals held in jails. Unlike other ICE-local partnerships, Secure Communities gave ICE a technological, not a physical, presence in prisons and jails. Unlike the 287(g) program, no local law enforcement agents are deputized to enforce immigration laws through Secure Communities.

leaders in the human services field and in the city's immigrant communities. Both of these examples come from places with long histories of immigrant integration work, but such efforts can be done even with limited resources, for example by holding citizenship ceremonies, organizing diversity celebrations, and recruiting volunteers for city events.³⁸ The police department in Norcross, Georgia, a city near Atlanta experiencing a steady growth of new immigrants over the past decade, has started various initiatives, including a police-run citizenship academy led in Spanish.³⁹

They Promote Immigrant Integration Policies

Some Offices have the latitude and resources to promote immigrant integration policies, beyond offering or consolidating services. We found the fewest examples of this because it seems to come later in the life of an Office, once it has been significantly institutionalized. San Francisco's Immigrant Rights Commission provides policy advice and recommendations to the mayor and county supervisors, and New York's Office has been directed by its Mayor to be actively engaged in policy. Here, there is a degree of political autonomy. The Office is part of the city's charter and thus is better protected from changing political winds. Getting to policy is important because it can scale up successful projects and make them widespread; policy change can also break down some structural barriers that limit the economic mobility of immigrants (e.g., access to medical care regardless of documentation), an issue of importance to Offices working to improve their trajectory.

They Offer Leadership to Their Regions

Some city Offices lead on immigrant integration for their larger metropolitan areas, beyond the bounds of their

jurisdiction. This is key, as immigrants have been moving to the suburbs and new rural destinations for some time now, places where there is often underdeveloped civic and social services infrastructure.^{40,41} One example is the Office in Lincoln, Nebraska, which serves immigrants two hours away from Lincoln in a town where immigrants can find jobs at a packing plant but no infrastructure for immigrant integration. Places like Los Angeles and Atlanta are jurisdictionally complex regions—Los Angeles County has a whopping 88 cities. So while these Offices might not have access to the mayors in surrounding cities, they still have influence.

CATEGORIZING OFFICES: DEFUSING, ATTRACTING, AND INTEGRATING

Not every Office will exhibit all the characteristics previously listed. Some Offices are just starting and may find that simply convening stakeholders and promoting civic engagement is a big accomplishment, particularly when immigrant populations are nascent and community tensions are flaring. Other Offices might find that a bit “old hat” and will focus more on relations with law enforcement, integration policy, and regional influence. What an Office might do depends on where it is—both in the country and in its trajectory toward immigrant integration.

We find it convenient to think of three broad functions for city Offices and other local efforts: defusing tensions, attracting newcomers and integrating immigrants. While often an Office may be focused on one much more than another, it is clear that the actual mix, in practice, largely depends on the local context in which Offices exist. Offices that defuse tension are often in new destinations seeking to address the anxieties (and anti-immigrant attitudes) rapid demographic change

can trigger. Offices that primarily attract immigrants are often in distressed metros and see their activities as nested in a larger revitalization process. Offices that integrate are often in areas with a long history of immigration and, even when the Offices themselves are new, the tasks are often less focused on human relations and more on civic engagement and policy development that moves the city and its immigrants closer to immigrant integration. We explain each, in turn, below.

As suggested, Offices in cities with recent increases in their immigrant population that are facing an anti-immigrant environment are often focusing primarily on *defusing* tension. These tend to be Offices in liberal cities working to integrate immigrants in the middle of harsh conservative states (such as Atlanta, Nashville, Tucson, Houston and Charlotte), and the typically high share of Latino immigrants, rather than a more diverse mix, often results in a negative racialization of all immigrants. One way this is damaging is when it undercuts metros trying to remain or become competitive in the global economy (i.e. those in the U.S. South). Nashville and Atlanta's Offices were both developed in response to anti-immigrant policy—Nashville's English-only referendum in 2009 (eventually defeated by the electorate) and Georgia's anti-immigrant H.B. 87 in 2011, respectively.^h These places are mired in political tensions and require time up front to temper hostilities.

In such locales, those promoting a more welcoming environment and more responsive structures may need to build on pre-existing efforts. For example, in her pioneering volume, *Nashville in the New Millennium*, Jaime Winders notes that

refugees were part of the Nashville landscape long before Latino migration.⁴²

While there are differences between the practices needed to serve refugees and those needed to serve Nashville's now largely Latino and undocumented immigrant community, the existing refugee-service infrastructure eased the transition to new immigrant populations. We see in the Atlanta case how the existing civil rights infrastructure has contributed to a more welcoming tone. Certainly, the faith community is also an important bulwark for shifting to receptivity.

Another set of Offices is often located in cities that are losing native-born populations and look to immigrants for the future health of their communities. In these locales, Offices are being started from the ground-up, with an emphasis on *attracting* immigrants. These cities tend to be aging rapidly and experiencing adverse economic conditions and so must be proactive in reversing their demographic and economic declines. These Offices often argue that immigrants are important as an economic development tool and enjoy much more latitude in making the case for immigrant integration due to massive depopulation and disinvestment. Welcoming Pittsburgh is one of these efforts, along with those in other Rust Belt cities, such as Dayton, Ohio.

To be clear, Offices that attract must also defuse; not all existing residents will be in favor of the arrival of new populations, even if business leaders are on board. And for those that are defusing—because their locales have already attracted immigration—part of their task is showing that immigrants can be good

^h For more on the Georgia case, see the introduction. In Nashville, the defeat of an English-only bill in 2009 led to the mayor creating a New Americans advisory council, then the MyCity Academy and other programs, and then their city Office in 2013 to house all these programs.

for economic growth. But what both Offices that focus on attracting immigrants and defusing tension share is that they are earlier in their stages of development. To progress toward their goals of changing the hearts and minds of the receiving communities, many Offices partner with Welcoming America. Receptivity is their most important objective, one often pursued by leading with economic competitiveness arguments and highlighting refugee and high-skill immigrants while downplaying matters related to undocumented residents. Both types of Offices rely heavily on their relationships with local nonprofit, immigrant-serving organizations.

Offices in cities that have a long history with immigrants and boast a mature nonprofit and advocacy infrastructure are able to focus on the trajectory of immigrants—that is, on *integrating* immigrants. These Offices tend to combine effective service delivery with policy development that emphasizes immigrant mobility and equity. New York City, San Francisco and Chicago neatly fit into this category. We include Los Angeles and Seattle as well, even though the former has only recently rebooted and the latter is not a traditional gateway city. In their messaging, these Offices recognize that immigrants are part of the fabric of their communities, that they make the region a draw to outsiders, and that their full economic and social integration will make the region stronger for everyone. These Offices can focus on issues that impact immigrants, beyond making them feel welcomed. For example, in New York City, addressing workforce concerns, poverty, and access to services for undocumented residents are among the larger tasks.

Of course, Offices fit into these three

categories in a fluid way. We intend here to provide a framework for thinking more than anything else. One of the most dramatic and archetypical cases of defusing tension occurred in Nashville, where an explosive growth in the immigrant population sparked talk show vitriol, the burning of a mosque, and the passage of a city ordinance—eventually vetoed by the mayor—requiring that nearly all municipal documents be available only in English. Instead of reacting with rancor, activists launched Welcoming Tennessee, an effort that forged relationships, calmed nerves, and helped business understand its interest in promoting immigrant integration. From defusing to attracting, Nashville has moved up the curve, announcing in September 2014 a new Mayor’s Office of New Americans.

Denver’s Immigrant and Refugees Affairs Office is another example of an Office in the process of moving more towards policy development and implementation. Led by Jamie Torres, Denver’s Immigrant and Refugees Affairs has its origin in 2007, when it received a grant from The Colorado Trust.

“I have been working a lot more on what role I could play in a different capacity that wasn’t tied to grant funding. We did an agency-wide system of assessment [that led us toward] not doing direct services but more in the area of advocacy, policy development and research,” Torres remarked.

In January of 2015, Denver’s Office rebranded and renamed itself. This is not to say that all Offices will progress in the same manner. Many Offices fail to progress at all, with many collapsing, going dormant, or losing funding. How to build and sustain Offices is the topic of our next section.

PART III

CREATING AND SUSTAINING A SUCCESSFUL OFFICE

We have offered a wide range of information about what Offices do, the contexts they operate in, and the ways in which we might categorize their main functions or purposes. But we would be remiss if we did not use all this research to offer some directions to the field, particularly to those seeking to create or sustain an office for immigrant integration, and even to those hoping to support these efforts through philanthropy or federal policy.

In this section, we offer a set of recommendations about practices that can lead to success. This is by no means intended to be a comprehensive list nor one to which all Offices should conform. As it turns out, one size fits few. We anticipate that the following elements will be tailored to the very specific contexts of different cities, but we hope these recommendations can help guide those thinking about starting a new Office or taking an existing Office to the next level. The list is roughly ordered from more basic recommendations to those that may require more staff, more resources and more time, as in an established Office. Unlike Part II, we disproportionately draw examples from long-established Offices, as they have been through more and have refined more practices for success.

1 **Begin with Strong Mayoral Commitment**

It bears repeating that the sustainability and power of an immigrant integra-

tion office within local government will largely be shaped by mayoral leadership, at least at the start. Recall that in San Francisco Mayor Newsom was key to the creation of the Office of Civic Engagement and Immigrant Affairs. In recent years, OCEIA has seen its budget go up under the leadership of current San Francisco Mayor Ed Lee, putting the Office in the enviable position where it can issue competitive grants to local nonprofits.

Mayors, in particular, are able reshape the public narrative to develop a receptive culture through consistent, positive messaging that reinforces the contributions of immigrants. Monica Fuentes, formerly with the Atlanta Office, told us that messaging is an especially important expression of mayoral commitment for cities like Atlanta, which represent an accepting voice in a conservative, anti-immigrant state.

Maziar, at the Atlanta Office, echoed Fuentes. “The governor has stopped saying negative things because every time he says something negative, Mayor Reed says something positive.”

2 **Build Institutional Sustainability Beyond the Mayor**

While mayoral support and leadership is critical, if the Office is too tied to the mayor and not the structure of its city government, the Office can be overly vulnerable to shifting political winds. Because of this, Offices should immediately begin to plan for long-term institutionalization. Finding a long-term home with sustainable funding matters. The Office of International Commu-

nities in Houston, for example, is now a division of the city's Department of Neighborhoods as a result of a government reorganization ordered by Mayor Annise Parker. San Jose is in the process of creating a new Office within the city manager's office. Offices can be their own division, housed under the supervision of the city administrator, or can be added to the city charter, as happened in the New York City Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs in 2001. The San Francisco Office of Civic Engagement and Immigrant Affairs is housed in the city's General Services Agency under the direct supervision of the city administrator and receives funding for staff and programming through the city budget.

Part of institutionalizing beyond the mayor includes building broad-based political support. Early in their formation, many Offices create some sort of advisory council of local decision-makers and community leaders. It is important at this point to ensure that this is a diverse group of leaders from many different sectors who can serve as advisors, but also as the first supporters as staff embark on this work. In Charlotte, North Carolina, this advisory board, along with Task Force International Relations manager Alexis Gordon, drafted the Immigrant Integration Task Force's action plan by which the city initiative will be guided. In Los Angeles, the Council for Immigrant Integration, convened by the California Community Foundation, helped create a multisector group that was able to support the city's Office of Immigrant Affairs when it was relaunched under Mayor Garcetti. The most effective Offices are intentional about developing engagement strategies as they join an existing social infrastructure of diverse community advocates, civic leaders and local decision-makers. Advisory boards help, and, in general, the most successful Offices draw on the expertise of long-time advo-

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“[Since the Welcoming Pittsburgh Plan was released] we get emails all the time from people saying, oh I’m so excited about what you’re doing. I want to talk to you about recommendation number 13 and how I can help... we have easily over 100 people who have actively reached out and have a specific way in which they can help so we want to help mobilize that.”

— **Betty Cruz**, Special Initiatives Manager of Welcoming Pittsburgh

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cates. This link between city government and the immigrant advocate community builds the trust and loyalty necessary for an Office to fulfill its mission.

3 Collaborate with Unlikely Allies

Key to an Office's success is the willingness to go beyond the usual defenders of immigrant rights and work with unexpected allies. For example, some might think that law enforcement, the business sector, and labor unions are anti-immigrant, but, in fact, these sectors often prove to be allies. The police generally do not want to alienate communities, business understands the

contributions immigrants make, and labor has realized that immigrant workers are more organizable than previously thought to be the case.⁴³ For example, in Dalton, Georgia, the “carpet capital of the world,” both of the city’s 2011 leading mayoral candidates responded to a county anti-immigrant policy by running on platforms welcoming immigrants, and the Dalton Chamber of Commerce’s executive board endorsed a bipartisan bill in the U.S. Senate to overhaul the nation’s immigration laws despite lack of support from either of Georgia’s conservative senators.⁴⁴ In a similar way, Silicon Valley elites are now pushing for immigration reform, partly because they rely on immigrants with high-tech skills but also, as we note below, because they realize that they rely on low-skill immigrants. Getting business on board—or any other unexpected allies—can change the conversation more dramatically than rounding up the usual suspects.

As we will mention more explicitly below, African-Americans are another necessary ally for immigrant integration. Some African-American organizations have expressed concerns about competing with immigrants for jobs and government resources, a stance often hardened by overblown fears about job scarcity and fiscal shortfalls.⁴⁵ Breaking with the stereotype, in Houston—where City Council members included political conservatives who spoke out against creating and funding such an office—Mayor Lee Brown, an African-American, supported the creation of the Mayor’s Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs. Councilmember David Howard in Charlotte and Mayor Reed in Atlanta have done similarly. This leadership matters—but it also means immigrant integration efforts

must take into account how to promote a positive trajectory for long-time African-American residents of the city in question.

4 Secure Technical Assistance from Partners

Successful Offices do not go at it alone—and, fortunately, there are resources on which to draw. Welcoming America has been a leader in the movement to build city offices for immigrant integration. Recall Figure 1 which shows a map of the Welcoming America member institutions in dark blue. Many of the newest Offices are part of Welcoming America’s member municipalities, which affords those Offices a formal national network to learn from one another and access up-to-date tools, advice and resources for immigrant integration. This is especially helpful as a support system as Offices come of age. The Denver Office, for example, noted that the network has been useful in helping them understand “how other cities are doing things relative to how we [Denver] are addressing [integration]. ... It’s good for strategizing.” And other Offices, such as Philadelphia’s, agreed, with Director Rodriguez calling the Welcoming America network “instrumental in providing support and assistance as the Office was being created.”

Other organizations helping Offices include the Institute for Local Government,ⁱ which has committed to providing coaching and long-term technical assistance in two cities in California’s Silicon Valley, in order to support a comprehensive immigrant integration strategy in the region. Currently, the Institute is assisting the San Jose city manager’s office as it develops a three-year Welcoming San Jose plan. This means

i The Institute for Local Government provides resources and case studies on immigrant engagement and integration at <http://www.ca-ilg.org/immigrant-engagement-and-integration>.

Welcoming America, Welcoming Immigrants

Welcoming America is a national nonprofit that works to help communities better welcome foreign-born newcomers. Welcoming America was established in 2009 and has become a leader in the field of city-level immigrant integration efforts. Its network of 62 Welcoming City members connects community leaders, government and nonprofits across the nation to share tools and ideas to create more welcoming places. The Welcoming America model is based on three approaches: connecting, building and changing communities.

One example of how Welcoming America tries to nurture connections between native-born and immigrant residents is the Welcome to Shelbyville effort. The centerpiece of the effort was a documentary film featuring the efforts of Welcoming Tennessee to help residents of Shelbyville adjust to their evolving community. It featured the stories and relationships between Somali immigrants, Latinos (native-born and immigrant), white and black residents, and others as new questions about the local economy, religion and community were raised. Welcoming America facilitated special screenings across the nation (in partnership with

Shelbyville Multimedia) to provide viewers with real-life examples of how things could go in their own communities.

Welcoming America provides support and resources for local initiatives throughout the country. A city with Welcoming America support is likely to engage in a learning community, form a local advisory council, and facilitate the development of an action plan with integration strategies for local government. City leaders have access to how-to videos, reports, webinars, and presentations on making the case for inclusive communities, including topics like unaccompanied children, messaging strategies, and even housing.

Currently, Welcoming America is working on scaling up existing efforts. Already, it provides cities with methods that have worked. In addition, Welcoming America is developing a Welcoming Community Certification to distinguish communities that have established inclusive policies and culture and to propose a national standard for immigrant integration. It continues to host Welcoming Week, an annual event highlighting immigrants' contributions to communities. In the long term, it hopes to promote change in systems and culture.

providing technical assistance to develop membership, operation guidelines, structure, and plans for a multisector steering committee that will ultimately develop the plan for moving forward.⁴⁶

5 Track and Evaluate Success and Impact

Creating a system to show progress and impact from the outset will help secure funding and assist in institutionalizing an Office. For newer Offices, the initial focus tends to be on tracking fundraising efforts, staff expansion and overall engagement with the immigrant com-

munity. Offices may draw up monthly, quarterly or annual performance reports, as the Indianapolis Office of International and Cultural Affairs does, which it then shares with supervising officials in the mayor's office.⁴⁷ In these cases, attention to tracking success has focused internally on measuring institutional stability and staff effectiveness.

Other Offices are finding creative ways to track external impact. The Seattle Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs hired a consultant to measure levels of trust between immigrant communities and local police. The Mayor's Office

of Immigrant Affairs in New York City tracks the city's municipal ID card program in terms of the number of cards issued and card usage with a broad range of participating city government and arts institutions. The San Francisco Office of Civic Engagement and Immigrant Affairs has metrics built into DACA implementation and the language access grants it issues to community-based organizations. Of course, tracking requires the resources necessary to design robust analytics and to train staff to conduct ongoing evaluation—but with even a little investment of time and energy, staff at Offices can begin this important aspect to the work.

Another form of tracking external impact involves following exactly how Offices and their policies are changing the lives of immigrants. Here, one key recommendation is to focus not just on the current state of affairs but also on the trajectory over time. For example, the Center for the Study of Immigrant Integration at the University of Southern California developed a California Immigrant Integration Scorecard that shows not only whether immigrants are poor—which we might expect for many new arrivals—but whether they are acquiring English skills, gaining income, and purchasing homes over time.⁴⁸ This sort of longitudinal picture is probably only possible in areas with more settled immigrants, but showing that progress does occur is key to making the case for immigrant integration efforts and establishing a link between intentional integration efforts by city Offices and various outcomes in immigrant communities.

6 Partner with Research Organizations

When organizations seek to respond to immigrants, they often look to the data for a sense of common strengths and struggles. Detailed community profiles are helpful but require statistical

skill that is not always available within the Office, which is why relationships with researchers are so important for developing data to drive the necessary policy for immigrant integration. The New York City Office, for example, is working with the Urban Institute on a “return on investment study” for its citizenship program to determine how immigrants becoming U.S. citizens affects the city's tax base and immigrants' local use of government benefits.

Offices often find themselves on the cutting edge of research needs. “There is corporate sector understanding that immigrants really do contribute a lot of the economic vitality of cities [but I] don't know if we've figured out a way to activate that,” remarked Jennifer Rodriguez of Philadelphia's Office of Immigrant and Multicultural Affairs. Strong research partnerships are key, because researchers may be able to find out how to get to a particular measurement that an Office is looking for or simply to provide data on demand to get general information on the immigrant communities within a city. Researchers can also help identify and evaluate best practices. As with community partnerships, research-Office partnerships can advance the work but also require spending time to build trust to yield best results and clearer understandings of what Offices really need.

7 Bring Together Services and Civic Engagement

Successful Offices build relationships and trust with immigrant communities by connecting services and civic engagement. Many immigrants come to the U.S. with a fear or mistrust of government because of their past experiences or imperfect documentation.⁴⁹ Offices can use the services they offer to temper this fear and promote relationships. For example, Offices in Boston, Nashville,

San Francisco and Seattle have developed initiatives to promote the local implementation of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, and this forges relationships with mixed-status families. Most, if not all, Offices have developed initiatives to promote citizenship and widen access to the naturalization process, especially for immigrants with limited English proficiency and those facing financial hardship. Such services tangibly help immigrants and reinforce that city government can be an ally.

With a sense of familiarity and a budding relationship established, Offices can then develop civic engagement opportunities for immigrants in local government. One example is the police-run citizen academy in Norcross, Georgia, mentioned in Part II. Another example is the MyCity Academy which empowers immigrants to understand and participate in Nashville's government. Over the course of seven months, participants learn how their government works, and, by the end of the program, can guide other residents, immigrants and non-immigrants alike. MyCity shows how immigrant integration is a two-way street. Such programs are avenues of direct engagement with local governments that build trust with and empower immigrants, giving them another way to contribute to their city.

8 Develop Policies, Not Just Projects

Making the move from defusing and attracting to integrating requires policy development and a new set of capacities within Offices. Strategies that focus on changing the public narrative and serving immigrants are vital, but ensuring that new best practices become standard operating procedure means also passing and implementing immigrant integration policy.

“Our mayor ... wants us to direct the policies and actions on the ground, so

I've had the freedom to hire people, especially lawyers, who can draft and advise on policy,” commented Commissioner Agarwal of the NYC Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs.

Some directors interviewed were eager to move to policy development but noted that they would need more resources and reassurance that taking a more active role in policy development was part of their mission. This means focusing on political relationships as well as immigrant constituencies. If an Office is housed in the mayor's office, its policy work will need to be pursued in collaboration with other city elected officials and, unless it is a consolidated city-county region, county officials as well. This may mean building committees in other branches of government. The New York City Council has shown a collective dedication to immigration issues, and San Francisco's Immigrant Rights Commission (see Part II) provides members of the Board of Supervisors and the mayor with advice and policy recommendations. Absent such bodies, the staff of city immigrant affairs offices will need to develop partnerships with policymakers and their staff members.

9 Apply a Racial Justice Lens to the Work

While messaging that immigrants are a part of our region, “like all of us,” is an important and proven strategy for promoting immigrant integration, it is imperative to realize why such a message is necessary. Racialized reactions to new immigrants often drive anti-immigrant sentiment. Given that this is the case, Offices may need to tackle questions of race, racism and discrimination directly—as uncomfortable as that might be. Understanding the racial dimensions of reactions to immigrants and to the immigrant integration process helps one understand the unique experiences

of different types of immigrants. Offices must understand the differences in experiences that immigrants have, depending on their region or country of origin, and should partner with other civil society groups that address the unique struggles of different groups. Organizations like the Priority Africa Network and the Black Alliance for Just Immigration, for example, point to clear and distinct experiences of African immigrants, as well as the diversity within the African immigrant population. Understanding these nuances can facilitate a much more effective approach to integration.

There is, however, a broader message here. Despite our frequent emphasis on stressing economic gains and acquiring business allies, immigrant integration is part of a broader social justice agenda.⁵⁰ For that reason, Offices should also work in coalition with other institutions and organizations that are making progress with other marginalized communities and, in particular, African-American communities. Immigrant advocates run the risk of losing support from these organizations if they do not stand in solidarity, as well.⁵¹ There is plenty of ground for collaboration, as each organization works toward the broader goal of equality. Areas for collaboration include over-criminalization (whether from mass incarceration or deportation), workplace challenges (whether from unemployment or working poverty), and the myriad issues stemming from living in lower-income neighborhoods.⁵²

10 Work Together and Scale Up Offices are an important part of the ecosystem of immigrant integration, but they cannot permanently stand in for long overdue federal policy reform. Offices that focus largely on defusing tension by reining in the police and changing the narrative would be able to focus more on policy if Washington

passed federal reform. All Offices could also spend less time working on important but stop-gap policies that are required because of our broken federal system, such as DACA implementation, driver's licenses for the undocumented, municipal ID cards, health care, etc. Instead, they could fully turn their attention to matters of language acquisition, workforce development, and the like. In short, Offices may find themselves now filling the gap left by the federal government, but they should still band together to push for federal immigration reform and the implementation of a federal immigrant integration program.

The good news is that the federal government is interested. As noted above, the least publicized part of the president's executive actions in November 2014 was mandating a White House Task Force on New Americans to "identify and support state and local efforts at integration ... and consider how to expand and replicate successful models." In April 2015, the Task Force released its report, a blueprint on developing welcoming communities, promoting citizenship, and improving access to language skills, workforce development and small business creation. This offers both a framework for local work and a way to tie together the local work.

As usual, Offices cannot just wait for the feds. Cities scaling up with their own networks are part of the package. Cities for Citizenship—a national initiative chaired by the mayors of New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles to increase citizenship through city programs—is a good example of what can occur. The WE Global Network—of which the Pittsburgh initiative is a member—is an example of another such network that focuses on immigration integration as a way to strengthen the economy of the Midwest.

Meanwhile, Welcoming America is organizing Offices and Welcoming Offices on a regular basis, and in June 2015, San Francisco's OCEIA organized a conference of city offices, bringing together about a dozen city offices, funders, and representatives from the White House and Citi Group. Offices in large cities may be able to nurture Offices in smaller surrounding cities, as we have seen happen in Atlanta. Such scaling up creates a chorus of demand for federal change, while improving the day-to-day experiences of immigrants by providing a vehicle for sharing best practices.

Finally, there is a role for the philanthropic community. Part of this is resources, and while funders may face restrictions in grantmaking for city programs, they can create the capacities and conversations that allow local advocates to pressure for the creation of Offices, and then participate in their evolution. Local philanthropy can also

support the sort of welcoming efforts not profiled here, such as those that are driven by or hosted in the nonprofit sector. Community foundations are particularly important since they play a role as civic convener that goes beyond the funding they bring to bear.

We could also discuss the scaling that needs to happen for Chambers of Commerce, interethnic organizing efforts, law enforcement, civic groups and others. But you likely get the point. The nation may find itself split by passions around immigration, but cities and regions often find that such passions create more heat than light. Instead, they are turning to the sort of face-to-face interactions that lead to mutual understanding and then to better practices and policy to promote immigrant integration. Taking that local wisdom and scaling it nationally may offer some guidance to a nation going through growing pains about what it is becoming and what it should be.

CONCLUSION

America is at a crossroads. Even as immigration into the country has slowed and the undocumented immigrant population declines, national politics around immigration policy has become increasingly polarized. The tenor of the national debate has frequently gone beyond facts and figures to deep concerns about identity and a changing America. But while the debate rages on cable news and during campaign events, a quiet revolution is occurring in America's cities and metropolitan areas. Rather than playing to fears or rejecting newcomers, municipal leaders are coming up with new data-driven strategies to welcome and better integrate new Americans.

This report has tried to highlight the lessons learned from those efforts, looking for commonalities even as we stress that one size does not fit all. We have noted that some Offices are in locales where there has been a recent and new influx of immigrants, which has created a need to defuse tension. Other Offices find themselves in older cities lacking economic and demographic vigor, and their central task lies in attracting immigrants who can provide the energies for revitalization. Finally, some are in long-established gateway cities, and their central task is to accelerate integration, which leads to positive trajectories for immigrants and their families.

Whatever the context and the task, we hope this report makes clear how any Office can contribute to immigrant integration and learn from the best practices being developed across the nation. Being academics, we necessarily draw common

lessons and offer some key recommendations. We do so with more than the usual trepidation: Since this is an early attempt to get some bearings on this emerging field, we do not anticipate that we got it all right or captured all of the many nuances. But we do know that this is a critical moment of transition in our country, and we hope that this work will be a foundation for Offices looking to put their own work in context and looking for new possibilities for growth.

We also hope this work contributes to making the case for welcoming immigrants. Our country and its cities are made better by the process. Indeed, as Susan Eaton notes in her forthcoming book, *Integration Nation: Immigrants, Refugees and America at Its Best*,⁵³ there is more than an economic case for welcoming immigrants. It is also about our very soul as a nation, whether we understand our own past, embrace the new, and accept change. America is made better by immigrants, and as she notes, we are at our best when we are opening minds, opening doors, and opening communities.

As we concluded months of conversations with the directors of these Offices and their collaborators, we felt like we did indeed see the best of our nation. Those at the helm of these Offices are engaged, eager and intelligent. They are searching for strategies and policies for their communities that promote reception and trajectory, and they are willing to put in the time and effort to make it happen. May we follow not only their best practices but the entire ethos of their work. In so doing, we are sure to find a stronger America ahead.

METHODOLOGY

We set out to determine the number and different types of city institutions that focus on integrating immigrants at the local level across the country. To begin this process we created a matrix with all cities in the United States with a population greater than 100,000, using data from the 2008–2012 American Community Survey, which gave us a list of 295 cities. An extensive literature review, Internet search and phone calls allowed us to identify city institutions for immigrant integration among the cities on this list. This was easier for some of the larger and more populous cities like New York and Los Angeles, but was more difficult to determine for smaller cities. In many of these cases we were able to cross reference our list with the Welcoming America list of city members.

From these sources we identified 26 cities that had “Offices,” which we define as being institutionalized, governmental entities with a full-time director (some of which are officially labeled offices, while others are dedicated mayoral initiatives, as in Pittsburgh). These Offices do not include task forces, commissions, NGOs or any other bodies housed outside city administration. However, for this paper, to get at the nuanced dynamics of all entities associated with immigrant integration, we define the totality of all immigrant integration bodies as “municipal institutions.” These include, for example, the remainder of the Welcoming America member municipalities and other city efforts with a mission of immigrant integration. To be clear, these do not include advocacy efforts by nonprofits or

community-based organizations. By these definitions, we assigned four categories, expressed in Figure 1 of the report. Again, we identified 26 official Offices, as well as 37 entities we consider as “other bodies.”

From this information, we narrowed down our interview selection to form the basis of the data for this report. Our main focus in selecting institutions to interview was on diversity—geographic, demographic, economic, etc. We also focused on the unique individual stories each city had to contribute to a national analysis. We intended to get a diversity of institution types with a reasonable amount of energy and activity around active efforts. From this we conducted 20 interviews (see Appendix B) with institution directors, primarily over the phone.

From these lists we selected three cities to visit, each reflecting a different context in which Offices typically operate. During these visits we conducted 34 interviews in person (see Appendix B). Site visits entailed a set of broader interviews not just with Office directors, as was the case in our phone interviews, but also with advocates, leaders in the business community, legal experts, academics and local residents. Their invaluable perspectives added depth to our phone interviews and in many cases opened the analysis to new levels.

There are some limits to our methodology, given our selection criteria and choice of case studies. We are, as mentioned, limited to places that have developed an Office, which certainly biases our results to not only successful efforts (as they are still in existence) but places with enough political will and capital to get an Office off the ground.

APPENDIX A

LIST OF CITY OFFICES FOR IMMIGRANT INTEGRATION

OFFICES FOR IMMIGRANT INTEGRATION

CITY	OFFICE NAME	YEAR ESTABLISHED	WEBSITE
Atlanta, GA	Office of Immigrant Affairs	2015	http://www.atlantaga.gov/index.aspx?page=1232
Aurora, CO	International & Immigrant Affairs	2015	https://www.auroragov.org/CityHall/InternationalandImmigrantAffairs/index.htm
Austin, TX	Welcoming Cities Initiative	2013	https://www.austintexas.gov/internationalwelcome
Baltimore, MD	Mayor's Office of Immigrant and Multicultural Affairs	2013	http://mayor.baltimorecity.gov/node/2229
Boston, MA	Mayor's Office for New Bostonians	1998	http://www.cityofboston.gov/newbostonians/
Buffalo, NY	Office of New Americans	2015	http://www.wcnews.com/nys/buffalo/news/2015/06/10/immigrant-heritage-month.html
Chicago, IL	Office of New Americans	2011	http://www.cityofchicago.org/city/en/depts/mayor/provdrs/office_of_new_americans.html
Columbus, OH	New Americans Initiative	2004	https://columbus.gov/Templates/Detail.aspx?id=65002
Dayton, OH	Welcome Dayton	2011	http://www.welcomedayton.org/
Denver, CO	Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs	2011	https://www.denvergov.org/content/denvergov/en/human-rights-and-community-partnerships/our-offices/immigrant-and-refugee-affairs.html
Houston, TX	Office of International Communities	2001	http://www.houstontx.gov/oic/
Indianapolis, IN	International and Cultural Affairs Office	2008	http://www.indy.gov/eGov/Mayor/programs/diversity/ICA/Pages/Home.aspx
Jersey City, NJ	The Office of Diversity and Inclusion	2013	http://www.cityofjerseycity.com/mayor.aspx?id=15169
Los Angeles, CA	Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs	2013	http://www.lamayor.org/immigrants
Louisville, KY	Office for Globalization	2011	https://louisvilleky.gov/government/globalization
Nashville, TN	Mayors Office of New Americans	2013	http://www.nashville.gov/Mayors-Office/Priorities/New-Americans.aspx
Newark, NJ	Mayor's Office of International Relations and Diaspora Affairs	2014	http://www.ci.newark.nj.us/government/mayor/intl-relations-diaspora-affairs/
New York City, NY	Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs	1984	http://www.nyc.gov/html/imm/html/home/home.shtml
Orlando, FL	Office of Multicultural Affairs		http://www.cityoforlando.net/multicultural/
Philadelphia, PA	Immigrant and Multicultural Affairs	2013	http://www.phila.gov/ima/Pages/default.aspx
Pittsburgh, PA	Welcoming Pittsburgh	2014	http://pittsburghpa.gov/welcoming-pittsburgh/
Portland, OR	New Portlanders	2008	https://www.portlandoregon.gov/oni/62226
Richmond, VA	Office of Multicultural Affairs	2012	http://www.richmondgov.com/HispanicLiaison/
San Francisco, CA	Office of Civic Engagement and Immigrant Affairs	2009	http://sfgsa.org/index.aspx?page=957
San Jose, CA	Office of Immigrant Affairs	2015	https://www.sanjoseca.gov/index.aspx?NID=4615
Seattle, WA	Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs	2008	http://www.seattle.gov/office-of-immigrant-and-refugee-affairs

APPENDIX B

LIST OF INTERVIEWEES

OFFICE DIRECTOR INTERVIEWS

CITY	INSTITUTION	INTERVIEWEE	POSITION
Atlanta, GA	Office of Immigrant Affairs	Michelle Maziar; Monica Fuentes; Luisa F. Cardona	Director; Chief Service Officer; Deputy Director
Boston, MA	Mayor's Office for New Bostonians	Alejandra St. Guillen	Director
Charlotte, NC	Immigrant Integration Task Force	Alexis Gordon	International Relations Manager
Chicago, IL	Office of New Americans	Tonantzin Carmona	Director
Cincinnati, OH	Task Force on Immigration	Alfonso Cornejo	President, Hispanic Chamber
Dayton, OH	Welcome Dayton	Melissa Bertolo	Program Coordinator
Denver, CO	Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs	Jamie Torres	Director
Houston, TX	Office of International Communities	Staff Member	Staff Member
Indianapolis, IN	International and Cultural Affairs Office	Jane Gehlhausen	Director
Lincoln, NE	New Americans Task Force	Sara Hoyle	Director of Human Services for Lincoln/Lancaster County
Los Angeles, CA	Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs	Linda Lopez	Director
Nashville, TN	Mayors Office of New Americans	Shanna Hughey	Senior Advisor
New York, NY	Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs	Nisha Agarwal	Commissioner
Philadelphia, PA	Immigrant and Multicultural Affairs	Jennifer Rodriguez	Director
Pittsburgh, PA	Welcoming Pittsburgh	Betty Cruz	Special Initiatives Manager
Portland, OR	New Portlanders	Ronault LS Catalani (Polo)	Program Coordinator
San Francisco, CA	Office of Civic Engagement and Immigrant Affairs	Staff Member	Staff Member
Seattle, WA	Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs	Sahar Fathi	Policy, Strategy, Programs Lead
St. Louis, MO	St. Louis Mosaic Project	Betsy Cohen	Project Director
Tucson, AZ	Immigrant Task Force	Nick Ross	Project Coordinator

SITE INTERVIEWS

CITY	INSTITUTION	INTERVIEWEE	POSITION
Atlanta, GA	Georgia State University	Charles Jaret	Professor of Sociology
Atlanta, GA	Advancing Justice—Atlanta	Helen Ho	Executive Director
Atlanta, GA	Culture Connect	Alexis Dalmat Cohen	Executive Director
Atlanta, GA	Atlanta Regional Commission	Liz Sanford	Manager, Community Engagement
Atlanta, GA	Georgia Latino Alliance for Human Rights	Adelina Nicholls	Executive Director
Atlanta, GA	Metro Atlanta Chamber of Commerce	Jorge Fernandez	Vice President, Global Commerce
Atlanta, GA	Welcoming America	Rachel Peric	Deputy Director
Atlanta, GA	The Community Foundation for Greater Atlanta	Kathy Palumbo	Director of Programs
Atlanta, GA	Georgia Institute of Technology University	Anna Joo Kim	Assistant Professor of City and Regional Planning
Atlanta, GA	Georgia Association of Latino Elected Officials	Jerry Gonzalez	Executive Director
Atlanta, GA	City of Norcross Police Department	Warren Summers	Chief of Police
Pittsburgh, PA	City of Asylum	Silvia Duarte	Program Manager
Pittsburgh, PA	Somali-Bantu Community Association of Pittsburgh	Aweys Mwaliya	President
Pittsburgh, PA	Vibrant Pittsburgh	Melanie Harrington	President and CEO
Pittsburgh, PA	AIU Latino Family Center	Rosamaria Cristello	Director
Pittsburgh, PA	Cohen & Grigsby	Ana Maria Miele	Director
Pittsburgh, PA	Northern Area Multi-Service Center	Kheir Mugwaneza	Director
Pittsburgh, PA	Jewish Family and Children's Services	Leslie Aizenman	Director, Refugee and Immigrant Services
Pittsburgh, PA	Baker Tilly	Jesus Torres	Associate Consultant
Pittsburgh, PA	Allegheny County Department of Human Services	Barbara Murock	Immigrants and Internationals Initiative Manager
Pittsburgh, PA	Casa San Jose	Sister Janice Vandemeck	Director

SITE INTERVIEWS

CITY	INSTITUTION	INTERVIEWEE	POSITION
San Francisco, CA	Board of Supervisors	Two supervisors representing immigrant-dense districts	Two supervisors representing immigrant-dense districts
San Francisco, CA	Central American Resource Center	Staff member	Staff member
San Francisco, CA	Chatholic Charites	Staff member	Staff member
San Francisco, CA	Chinese for Affirmative Action	Two staff members	Two staff members
San Francisco, CA	Dolores Street Community Services	Staff member	Staff member
San Francisco, CA	Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees	Staff member	Staff member
San Francisco, CA	Immigrant Legal Resource Center	Staff member	Staff member
San Francisco, CA	Immigrant Rights Commission	Commissioner	Commissioner
San Francisco, CA	International Institute of the Bay Area	Staff member	Staff member
San Francisco, CA	La Raza Centro Legal	Staff member	Staff member
San Francisco, CA	Mayor's Office of Housing and Community Development	Staff member	Staff member
San Francisco, CA	San Francisco Unified School District	Staff member	Staff member
San Francisco, CA	Youth Commission	Commissioner	Commissioner

ENDNOTES

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