IMMIGRANT CIVIC INTEGRATION AND SERVICE ACCESS INITIATIVES
CITY-SIZED SOLUTIONS FOR CITY-SIZED NEEDS

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Acknowledgments

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Executive Summary

Sustained high rates of immigration—a significant amount of it to destinations beyond "gateway" cities and traditional receiving states—have encouraged local governments across the United States to seek ways to better meet the needs of immigrant residents and promote their integration. This report focuses on city governments in particular. Responsible as they are for providing essential everyday services and managing public spaces, institutions, and civic processes, city administrations have a tremendous impact on community life that goes beyond the goals or services of a single agency, neighborhood, or program. How cities respond to the challenges of ensuring broad service access and civic integration thus has far-reaching effects.

Finding and implementing solutions to these challenges is no easy task due to the breadth of actors and stakeholders involved, and the need for sustained and coordinated action to achieve and maintain results. Yet, as this report demonstrates, U.S. cities of all sizes—and with varying levels of experience with immigration flows—are designing and implementing solutions that are at scale with the broad-ranging service access and civic integration challenges they face.

This report describes the initiatives of five cities—Cupertino and San Francisco in California; Littleton, Colorado; New York City; and Seattle, Washington—that have been largely successful in their efforts to engage and include immigrants, improve service access, or effect community transformation. Their strategies range from setting up a structure of volunteer block leaders to comprehensively addressing racial disparities in all aspects of city services and civic engagement processes.

Though the aims and approaches of the five cities differ, several common elements offer important lessons for local governments:

- *Fully leverage existing resources.* Nearly all the efforts are based on existing city services, processes, and infrastructure rather than the creation of parallel or stand-alone services, or those that target only immigrants.

- *Act in coordination with others.* Particularly in the case of civic inclusion and engagement initiatives, city governments involve community leaders and members in an authentic partnership that unleashes community energy and engagement.

- *Build in the ability to adapt.* Each initiative includes design elements that ensure it remains open to and incorporates new inputs to guide future efforts.

- *Provide leadership at the city level.* Because of the cross-cutting nature of the challenges these initiatives address, success often requires the political leadership and coordination powers of a mayor's office.

I. Introduction

Sustained high rates of immigration to the United States over the past 30 years have transformed the nation's demographics, culture, politics, and workforce. These changes extend well beyond the historic immigrant-receiving states of California, New York, Texas, Florida, and Illinois (and their gateway cities) to many new destinations across the country.

While most immigrants continue to settle in the five historic receiving states, over the past two decades the lure of jobs (primarily low-wage) drew significant numbers of immigrants to areas with little prior

experience with immigration. For example, the number of foreign-born residents in Georgia, North Carolina, Arkansas, and Nebraska increased by more than 250 percent during the past 20 years.[1] Jobs also drew immigrants to new destinations within states: cities such as Littleton, Colorado and Cupertino, California—both of which will be featured in this report—experienced rapid demographic change and yet had little of the integration resources or know-how of the higher-profile urban gateways in their states.

The scale and diversity of today's immigration flows have presented integration challenges and opportunities to historic gateways and new destinations alike. To maximize the benefits of immigration for both newcomers and host communities, local governments in particular must effectively manage the growing diversity of their communities. Most immediately, this may mean taking basic steps to include immigrants in public education, health, and safety services; these often evolve to encompass broader efforts seeking successful linguistic, economic, and civic integration of new residents.

To accomplish these goals, city institutions must have the capacity to communicate with individuals who have limited proficiency in English, and the ability to promote inclusion and engagement of newcomers in the community's civic institutions and processes. In the case of the former, efforts to increase "language access" or "equal access to services" are increasingly common in the United States. These efforts are grounded in federal civil rights law and also in practical concerns about the waste of public funds and effort when communication barriers block effective service delivery.

The scale and diversity of today's immigration flows have presented integration challenges and opportunities to historic gateways and new destinations alike.

Language access initiatives aim to address the challenges of parents who are unable to understand notices sent from their children's schools, hospital workers who are unable to communicate with injured individuals, or police who cannot speak directly with victims or witnesses of crimes. These initiatives usually involve the deployment of fairly simple and efficient translation and interpretation services that allow individuals to access complex processes across the various bodies of government that engage in verbal or written communications with residents.

Similarly, U.S. cities that are home to increasing numbers of immigrants —much like their counterparts in other areas of the world—are greatly concerned with issues of civic inclusion and engagement. City policymakers' concerns run the gamut, from wanting newcomer communities to trust and rely on local police or be active partners with teachers in their children's education, to defusing intercommunity tensions that may be approaching dangerously high levels. As with access to public services, removing barriers to civic inclusion and engagement provides a foundation upon which many other effective city initiatives and programs can be built.

This report briefly describes and draws lessons from several local government efforts to improve immigrants' civic inclusion and service access. It begins with initiatives undertaken by smaller cities that did not have a prior history of large immigration flows or explicit integration efforts—profiling the Block Leader Program in Cupertino, California and the Immigrant Integration Initiative in Littleton, Colorado, both of which address civic inclusion and engagement concerns, and in the case of Littleton improve service access. Established laws and wider-ranging policies and programs that seek to ensure service access and inclusion in the historic gateways of San Francisco and New York City are then discussed. These efforts are of a larger scale as might be expected given these cities' long history of immigrant settlement as well as the complex service and systems' environment of these large urban areas. Finally,

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1   Migration Policy Institute (MPI) Data Hub, "Immigrant Population by State, 1990-2012," www.migrationpolicy.org/programs/data-hub/charts/immigrant-population-state-1990-present.

the array of immigrant integration initiatives that grew out of the city of Seattle's Race and Social Justice Initiative are also featured. While these are exceptional in their own right, Seattle's deep systems-change effort from which they grew provides its own lessons about the determination and discipline with which such initiatives must be pursued in order to be effective.

All examples are drawn from highly rated applicants for the Migration Policy Institute (MPI) *E Pluribus Unum* Prizes for exceptional immigrant integration initiatives,[2] with additional context and analysis drawn from the efforts of MPI's National Center on Immigrant Integration Policy over the past five years to identify and support city and state efforts to improve the linguistic and cultural competence of service delivery systems.

II.   Evolving City Responses to Diversity

A.   Civic Inclusion and Engagement: The Block Leader Program, Cupertino, California

The city of Cupertino, located in northern California's Silicon Valley, has undergone an extraordinarily rapid demographic transition. Over the past 20 years, the population of the area has transformed from almost three-quarters white to almost two-thirds Asian.[3] While newcomers are not seen as a burden on city resources—most residents are relatively affluent—many longer-term residents reported feeling alienated and overwhelmed by the fast demographic changes.[4]

In their attempts to proactively address the social distance among and between long-time white residents, relatively more settled Taiwanese residents, and a growing population of mainland Chinese, Indian, and other Asian immigrants, city leaders undertook a variety of efforts, including a well-studied public dialogue project that sought to draw out tensions and build cross-cultural understanding.[5]

As an outgrowth of these efforts, the city created a signature social inclusion initiative in February 2002: the Block Leader Program. The program was designed to build relationships at the street and neighborhood levels, organize residents to articulate and build on common interests, and simultaneously connect these efforts to city management and governance processes.[6] Block leaders receive training and support from a part-time city employee; training sessions and materials include extensive information on city services and processes (via resource binders and flyers, CDs, and the city website) as well as training in cultural awareness and communication.[7]

Twenty-seven residents attended the first block leader training in 2002. There are now almost 350 leaders, each responsible for coordinating and interacting with up to 90 households within their local communities. Their activities can include developing and sharing neighborhood rosters for activity planning and emergencies, facilitating discussions on shared concerns or interests, and organizing block parties (with city-sponsored liability insurance and cooperation from local fire stations, parks, recreation facilities, and other city programs).[8] Community improvement grants are also available through the city for projects that

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2   For more on the *E Pluribus Unum* Prizes, visit www.integrationawards.org.
3   In the mid-1980s Cupertino's population was 74 percent white. For the most recent data, see U.S. Census Bureau, "State and County Quick Facts: Cupertino (city), California (2010)," http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/06/0617610.html.
4   Michelle Ku and Pam Marino, "Asians of Change," *Metroactive*, October 8-14, 1998, www.metroactive.com/papers/metro/10.08.98/asians-9840.html.
5   Stephen W. Littlejohn and Kathy Domenici, *Communication, Conflict, and the Management of Difference* (Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press, Inc., 2007).
6   Cupertino, "Neighborhood Block Leader," accessed September 1, 2014, www.cupertino.org/index.aspx?page=132.
7   Ibid.
8   Ibid.

grow out of the coordinated efforts of block leaders and local residents.

The Block Leader Program serves as a model for promoting social cohesion among diverse and rapidly changing populations and facilitating civic inclusion and engagement. The program has also strengthened local governance by building residents' relationships with government leaders, processes, and services.

B.   Civic Inclusion, Service Access and Service Provision: The Littleton Immigrant Integration Initiative, Littleton, Colorado

The city of Littleton, located just outside of Denver, Colorado, was majority-white until the late 1990s, when it became home to growing numbers of Latino immigrants, most of Mexican origin. While this change was evident to many city leaders and residents as it was occurring, only when the 2000 U.S. Census confirmed its rate and scale did it became a topic of public conversation.[9]

Acknowledging that the growth of immigrant residents had become a flashpoint for community tensions in other cities around the state, then–Mayor Susan Thornton began internal efforts to analyze the impacts and implications of the city's growing immigrant population.[10] Roughly 60 city leaders, meeting at an annual leadership retreat, agreed with the mayor to take steps to help Littleton become an inclusive community.

With grant support, the city was able to launch an initiative addressing identified needs in the areas of civic inclusion and service access and provision. Key components of the Littleton Immigrant Integration Initiative (LI3), launched in 2003, include:

- *A one-stop information center.* Created to improve civic inclusion and service access, this center is housed at the city's central library and provides referrals and information to immigrants on topics ranging from the navigation of city services to employment, transportation, and citizenship. Its bilingual coordinator has reported up to 250 assistance requests per month. The center has now become a permanent program of the city library.

- *A citizenship mentoring program and adult English classes.* The initiative's citizenship mentoring program matches volunteer community mentors with immigrants who are attempting to become U.S. citizens; the initiative also sponsors adult English classes and conversation partnerships with community volunteers. In addition to meeting important service needs, the mentoring program and conversation partnerships build ties between newcomers and native-born residents.

- *Health outreach coordination.* A prominent feature of LI3 work was the establishment of a cross-agency network, staffed by a community health liaison, which sought to connect immigrants to health and wellness programs and improve the cultural competence of local health-care providers. This successful effort was institutionalized in 2009.[11]

The LI3 initiative has been widely recognized as a low-cost model for small to medium cities that seek to improve the quality and accessibility of key immigrant-related services, improve cross-agency service coordination, and create positive relationships between immigrant and native-born residents.[12]

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9   Susan M. Thornton, "The Littleton Immigrant Integration Initiative," *National Civic Review* 98, no. 1 (2009): 31–9.
10   Ibid.
11   South Metro Health Alliance, "Our History: From LI3 to Today," accessed September 1, 2014, www.southmetrohealthalliance. org/about.html.
12   MPI, "2009 E Pluribus Unum Prizes Winner: City of Littleton, Colorado," http://integrationawards.migrationpolicy.org/winners-littleton.cfm; and Ricardo Gambetta and Zivile Gedrimaite, *Municipal Innovations in Immigrant Integration: 20 Cities, 20 Good Practices* (Washington, DC: National League of Cities, 2010), www.nlc.org/Documents/Find%20City%20Solutions/ Research%20Innovation/Immigrant%20Integration/municipal-innovations-immigrant-integration-20-cities-sep10.pdf.

C.   Civic Inclusion and Equal Access: Office of Civic Engagement and Immigrant Affairs, San Francisco, California

Long the center of industry, finance, culture, and immigration in northern California, San Francisco continues to be a gateway for immigrants and refugees from around the world. According to American Community Survey data from 2009 to 2011, more than one-third (35.6 percent) of its population is foreign born. Immigrants from China (Taiwan and the mainland), the Philippines, and Mexico comprise the largest shares of newcomer residents.[13] City officials have sought to advance these residents' civic inclusion and access to government processes and services through a variety of initiatives, most of which are now coordinated by the Office of Civic Engagement and Immigrant Affairs (OCEIA).

In order to create a voice for immigrant residents within the city's governance structure, San Francisco created an Immigrant Rights Commission in 1997.[14] The Immigrant Rights Commission contains 15 voting members (11 appointed by the board of supervisors and four by the mayor), eight of whom must be immigrants.[15] The commission holds public hearings to identify and gather input on community concerns, cooperates with and makes recommendations to a range of agencies that play a role in providing key programs or services for immigrants and refugees, and prepares an annual report that evaluates the effectiveness of the city's services and programs for immigrant residents.[16]

Community calls to address service access issues resulted in the adoption of an equal access law in 2001, which was amended and strengthened in 2009 and renamed the Language Access Ordinance. The law increased the number of agencies required to offer language access (i.e. translation and interpretation) services and expanded requirements for the translation of vital forms and applications, notifications of individual rights to language access services, and documentation and reporting.[17]

San Francisco's OCEIA is charged with providing training and support to agencies affected by the law, and compiling an annual report that assesses their progress and compliance in implementing it. This report is prepared in partnership with the Immigrant Rights Commission and is available online. Past reports have chronicled real growth in agency capacities but also made plain weaknesses in the law—for example, self-assessment provisions that allow agencies wide latitude in reporting their performance—as well as the challenge of holding agencies accountable for improvements in service access when they face budgets cuts or more routine competition for scarce resources.[18]

Another particularly high-profile initiative overseen by OCEIA that addresses civic inclusion concerns is the Community Ambassadors Program (CAP). The program was created in the aftermath of a series of assaults in 2010 that targeted Asian immigrants who had settled in historically Black areas of the city.[19] After community and cross-agency consultation, the CAP program was conceived with several goals: defusing

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13   U.S. Census Bureau, "State and County Quick Facts: San Francisco, California," Data for 2010-12, revised in 2013, http://quick-facts.census.gov/qfd/states/06/0667000.html; and U.S. Census Bureau, "Place of Birth for the Foreign-Born Population in the United States. Universe: Foreign-Born Population Excluding Population Born at Sea, 2009-2011 American Community Survey (ACS) Data, Table B05006, 3 year estimates," http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_11_3YR_B05006&prodType=table.
14   City and County of San Francisco Immigrant Rights Commission, "Immigrant Rights Commission," accessed August 17, 2014, www.sfgov2.org/index.aspx?page=120.
15   Ibid.
16   Ibid.
17   City and County of San Francisco, Language Access Ordinance, No 202-09 (San Francisco: Board of Supervisors, April 2009), www.sfbos.org/ftp/uploadedfiles/bdsupvrs/ordinances09/o0202-09.pdf.
18   For example, see the 2012 and 2013 compliance reports, City and County of San Francisco, Office of Civic Engagement and Immigrant Affairs, Advancing Language Access in San Francisco: Language Access Ordinance Annual Compliance Summary Report (San Francisco: Office of Civic Engagement and Immigrant Affairs, 2012), www.sfgsa.org/Modules/ShowDocument.aspx?documentID=8514; and City and County of San Francisco, Office of Civic Engagement and Immigrant Affairs, Advancing Language Access in San Francisco: Language Access Ordinance Annual Compliance Summary Report (San Francisco: Office of Civic Engagement and Immigrant Affairs, 2013), www.sfgsa.org/Modules/ShowDocument.aspx?documentID=10126.
19   Sarah Phelan, "Gascon Rolls Out Program to Address Violence against Asians on Third Street," San Francisco Bay Guardian, August 8, 2010, www.sfbg.com/politics/2010/08/05/gascon-rolls-out-program-address-violence-against-asians-third-street.

community tensions in the two primary transit and business corridors where the incidents occurred, providing a visible safety presence of community members rather than law enforcement officials, modeling positive interracial and cross-cultural relationships, and improving outreach to community members and merchants regarding city programs and services.[20] Ambassador teams of 12 to 15 low-income immigrant and Black community residents were assembled to provide this visible safety presence and community outreach. Team members, who are employed by the project, receive extensive training in crime prevention, cultural competence, and outreach related to city services and programs.[21]

Community surveys conducted at the end of the pilot phase of the project found that the number of Chinese-speaking individuals who reported feeling safe using public transportation increased, as did the number of residents in the impacted areas who reported feeling "safe" or "very safe." The success of the pilot phase of the project led the mayor to make the program permanent in August 2011.[22]

San Francisco's Immigrant Rights Commission, language access ordinance, and OCEIA mutually reinforce one another and allow a "city-sized" response to service access and civic inclusion needs. The commission's public hearings and service evaluation efforts provide regularly updated information to city officials about community needs and service quality; the language access ordinance provides a legal framework and formal requirements for service access efforts; and the OCEIA is able to offer training and support for access efforts while also implementing special initiatives that may be needed from time to time to address important community concerns.

D.   *Equal Access: Citywide Policy on Language Access, New York City*

Recognized around the globe as the nation's preeminent gateway city, New York City is home to more foreign-born residents than any other U.S. city.[23] Yet, despite its inclusive and immigrant-friendly reputation, the city did not begin to address questions of whether and how to remove pervasive language barriers that impeded access to government offices and service programs until 2003, when the City Council passed the *Equal Access to Human Services* law (Local Law 73).[24] The law requires the city to provide free assistance in several specified languages for nearly all key agency offices, functions, and documents, signaling a sea change in the city's stance toward addressing these issues.[25]

Basic language access services were expanded shortly thereafter with the creation of a multilingual customer service center that can answer calls in 170 languages.[26] The mid-2000s saw steady progress in the growth of city efforts to improve agency-level access. The New York City schools chancellor issued language access regulations for the public school system, and the city created an Interagency Task Force

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20   KTVU, "Gascon, SF Supes Announces Community Ambassadors Program," KTVU, August 5, 2010, www.ktvu.com/news/news/gascon-sf-supes-announce-community-ambassadors-pro/nKfWz/; and San Francisco Office of Safety and Community Affairs, "Community Ambassadors Program: Safe, Informed and Inclusive Communities" (Central Market Safety Project Brochure, San Francisco: Office of Safety and Community Affairs, December 2011), http://sfgsa.org/modules/showdocument.aspx?documentid=8520.

21   San Francisco Office of Safety and Community Affairs, "Community Ambassadors Program."

22   San Francisco Office of the Mayor, "Mayor Lee Launches Permanent Community Ambassadors Program in Southeast Sector" (news release, August 1, 2011), http://sfmayor.org/index.aspx?page=524.

23   More than 3 million immigrants and refugees call the city home and it is estimated that more than 200 languages are spoken by its residents. New York City Department of City Planning, "Population Facts," www.nyc.gov/html/dcp/html/census/pop_facts.shtml.

24   City of New York, *Equal Access to Human Services*, Local Law no. 73 (2003), www.nyc.gov/html/imm/downloads/pdf/ll-73.pdf.

25   There is much to be admired and learned from other initiatives undertaken by individual city agencies and the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs (MOIA), including several civic-engagement projects MOIA has undertaken from time to time in partnership with nongovernmental partners. However, since these initiatives are not of an ongoing nature and were not designed to achieve cross-agency or systemic goals, they are not discussed here.

26   Matilde Roman, Kraig Cook, Fatima Shama, Daniel Wallace, Nazli Parvizi, and Monica Tavares, *Language Access Blueprint* (New York, NY: Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs, 2013), https://partner.hpdnyc.org/whalecom81b846a8d7ea6a1bb1b6bf/whalecom0/html/imm/downloads/pdf/Blueprints/language-access-digital.pdf.

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on Language Access involving senior officials from 30 city agencies and led by the mayor's commissioner for immigrant affairs.[27]

As a result of the city's growing capacities in this arena and continued pressure from community groups, then–Mayor Michael Bloomberg issued *Executive Order 120: Citywide Policy on Language Access to Ensure Effective Delivery of City Services* in July 2008. The policy, which has been hailed as the most comprehensive in the nation, requires all city agencies that provide "direct public services" to create and implement agency-specific language assistance plans that meet uniform standards.[28]

The city's new, more systematic approach to language access services incorporates a number of established best practices in the language access field, including agency-level assessments of clientele with limited English skills, the creation of training protocols for those providing translation and interpretation services, and the development of well-articulated agency implementation plans.[29] It has also innovated in several key areas—for example, public reporting on language access indicators are now required as part of agency "report card" data submitted for inclusion in the *Mayor's Management Report* (the central, citywide accountability report on agency performance).[30] Perhaps of greater interest to smaller municipalities that may rely more heavily on volunteer translators and interpreters, the city has also created NYCertified, a comprehensive system for certifying the proficiencies of volunteer translators and interpreters.[31]

With almost 2 million Limited English Proficient (LEP) residents—an LEP population that itself is larger than the population of most major U.S. cities and even many states—ensuring service access in New York City has required a combination of legal actions, significant capacity building within city agencies, and executive-level leadership and accountability. While city agency leaders are responsible for compliance with language access requirements, the overall success of New York City's extensive language access efforts is provided by two mayoral offices whose purview extends across all executive agencies—the Office of Operations and Office of Immigrant Affairs—thus bringing the full scope of mayoral attention and powers to bear on this "whole-of-government" effort.

E.   *Ending Racial Disparities: Race and Social Justice Initiative, Seattle, Washington*

In the northwest United States, the city of Seattle has provided a gateway for a diverse array of immigrant and refugee settlers, many from China and the Philippines and smaller but significant numbers from countries such as Ethiopia, Cambodia, Somalia and Vietnam. A final example is drawn from the extraordinary work undertaken over the past decade in this city to end racial disparities—work that resulted in implementation of an array of immigrant civic inclusion, engagement and equal access initiatives across city agencies.

The city's widely heralded Race and Social Justice Initiative (RSJI) has its roots in the 2001 mayoral campaign of Gregory Nickels, who reported being surprised and moved by the "tale of two cities" that

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27   Ibid.
28   New York Office of the Mayor, *Executive Order No 120: Citywide Policy on Language Access to Ensure the Effective Delivery of City Services Executive* (New York: Office of the Mayor, July 2008), www.nyc.gov/html/om/pdf/2008/pr282-08_eo_120.pdf. This and other examples are housed online at the MPI National Center on Immigrant Integration Policy (NCIIP), "Language Portal," www.migrationpolicy.org/programs/language-access-translation-and-interpretation-policies-and-practices.
29   Kleber Palma, "Practitioner's Corner: Tips for Ensuring Translation Quality," MPI "Language Portal," www.migrationpolicy.org/programs/language-access-translation-and-interpretation-policies-and-practices/practitioners-corner; Amina Huda, "Practitioner's Corner: Testing and Training Volunteer Translators and Interpreters," MPI "Language Portal," www.migrationpolicy.org/programs/language-access-translation-and-interpretation-policies-and-practices/practitioners-corner-testing; and Federal Coordination and Compliance Section, Civil Rights Division, and U.S. Department of Justice, *Language Access Assessment and Planning Tool for Federally Conducted and Federally Assisted Programs* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, 2011), www.lep.gov/resources/2011_Language_Access_Assessment_and_Planning_Tool.pdf.
30   Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs and Mayor's Office of Operations, *Language Access 2.0: Sharing Best Practices, Improving Services, and Setting Future Goals* (New York: New York City, 2011), www.nyc.gov/html/ops/downloads/pdf/lap/la_symposium_report_part_ii.pdf.
31   New York Department of Education, "NYCertified," http://schools.nyc.gov/Employees/ParentCoordinators/NYCertified.

emerged when he asked voters across Seattle's neighborhoods to describe their satisfaction with city services and governance. While white voters were generally satisfied with the government, communities of color felt poorly served or not served at all. Coupled with stark evidence of race-based disparities in nearly every aspect of the city's life, Nickels entered office determined to confront and address the legacy of institutional racism that fueled these disparities—but without a road map or model for doing so.[32]

The mayor's administration first looked inward, analyzing city processes and programs to understand the ways in which they reflected the legacy of racism, and then began to reform select city procedures and practices. By 2005 the mayor had formalized the effort, engaging all city departments in developing work plans to address racial disparities. All budget requests underwent screening for their impact on ending disparities, department heads included indicators of progress in their accountability agreements with the mayor, and Change Teams were designated in each agency to guide and support the implementation of RSJI efforts.[33]

Numerous gaps in city efforts to serve and include immigrants in the city's civic life were identified in the departmental work plans and through community engagement processes. Immigrant integration was named one of five cross-cutting areas of common concern at the cabinet level of the initiative.[34] With the energies of the initiative tightly focused on gaps in immigrant civic engagement and service relevance and access, a range of important processes and actions were created as part of a broad Immigrant and Refugee Services Initiative. This subinitiative, which engaged numerous government and community partners, created detailed action plans to address core policy and program capacity-building issues (within government agencies and nongovernmental organizations [NGOs]), and worked aggressively to support their implementation.[35]

RSJI's multiyear efforts have had many significant outcomes for immigrant and refugee communities, including the following.

1. Citywide Equal Access Policy

In January 2007 Mayor Nickels signed *Executive Order 01-07*, directing all city departments to provide equal access to city services and information through the expansion of translation and interpretation services.[36] Efforts to plan, build, and assure the quality of these services are undertaken by individual departments; coordinating efforts related to training and monitoring are undertaken by several entities, including the Seattle Office of Civil Rights and the Immigrant and Refugee Commission.

2. Immigrant and Refugee Commission

An Immigrant and Refugee Advisory Board created in the early years of the initiative evolved into a formal city commission as a result of a law passed by the City Council and signed by the mayor in the summer of 2007.[37] The commission advises the mayor, City Council, and city agencies on immigrant and refugee service access and civic integration issues more broadly, and aligns its efforts with a well-articulated work plan that addresses specific access, service relevance, and civic inclusion goals in areas such as education, health, and homelessness prevention.[38]

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32 Seattle Office for Civil Rights, *Report 2008: Looking Back, Moving Forward* (Seattle: City of Seattle, 2008), www.seattle.gov/Documents/Departments/RSJI/Jan20FINALRSJIrept.pdf.
33 Ibid.
34 Ibid.
35 Seattle Department of Neighborhoods, *Immigrant and Refugee Initiative 2010-2012 Action Plan* (Seattle: City of Seattle, 2010).
36 Gregory J. Nickels, *Executive Order 01-07: Translation and Interpretation Policy* (Seattle: Office of the Mayor, 2007), www.alicelaw.org/uploads/asset/asset_file/1287/2007_Seattle_Executive_Order_01-07.pdf.
37 Office of the City Clerk, "City of Seattle Legislative Information Service: Council Bill Number: 115940, Ordinance Number 122441," http://clerk.ci.seattle.wa.us/~scripts/nph-brs.exe?s1=&s2=&s3=&s4=122441&s5=&Sect4=and&l=20&Sect2=THESON&Sect3=PLURON&Sect5=CBOR1&Sect6=HITOFF&d=CBOR&p=1&u=/~public/cbor1.htm&r=1&f=G.
38 Immigrant and Refugee Commission, *Immigrant and Refugee Commission Workplan* (Seattle: City of Seattle, 2013), www.seattle.gov/Documents/Departments/ImmigrantAndRefugeeCommission/2013commissionWorkPlan.pdf.

3. Individual Agency Efforts

All city agencies have integrated RSJI initiatives and commitments into their agency work plans. All department goals, strategies, and work plans are available for public review online.[39]

Efforts taken by individual agencies include:

- Office of Economic Development actions to target technical assistance services to businesses in the immigrant-dense Chinatown/International and southeast areas of the city; promote the creation of immigrant-focused business associations; and support efforts to create an entrepreneur training curriculum, vocational English as a Second Language (ESL) program, and a small business lending program that would better include immigrants in economic development efforts.

- Department of Neighborhoods actions to better engage immigrants and refugees in neighborhood planning processes, including the hiring of a diverse team of 13 public outreach liaisons as well as the extensive use of ethnic media, and efforts to better orient immigrant and refugee organizations to city grant-making guidelines and procedures so that qualified organizations might more successfully compete for funding.[40]

- Many targeted Office for Education initiatives to improve the engagement and education of immigrant and refugee children. These include the creation of funding priorities for English Language Learner services, funded partnerships between schools and immigrant and refugee organizations, the expansion and tailoring of parent engagement initiatives for diverse populations, and the improvement of early learning program services and access for immigrant and refugee families.[41]

While Seattle's equal access policy and Immigrant and Refugee Commission have no doubt resulted in significant integration advances for the city's immigrants and refugees, the deep changes in individual city agencies' engagement, budgeting, and program activities arguably have resulted in as great or even greater integration gains. The RSJI's reach into all aspects of city agency business, insistent use of a disparities reduction framework, and rigorous accountability measures opened the city's eyes to its changing population, and focused the full apparatus of government on understanding and responding to the implications of those changes.

III. Conclusions

The city-led initiatives outlined in this report, while taken from different contexts, nevertheless have several common features that offer important lessons for city governments:

1. *Fully leverage existing resources.* In nearly all cases, these access and inclusion initiatives built on existing city services, processes, and infrastructure, rather than creating parallel or stand-alone services or initiatives that target only immigrants. The larger-scale and more complex initiatives (San Francisco, New York, Seattle) leveraged resources such as the powers of top agency managers and the planning and accountability structures within which they operated.

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39   City of Seattle, "RSJI Outcomes, Strategies, and Actions (ROSA)," http://web6.seattle.gov/fas/rosa/ROSAWebHome.aspx.
40   Seattle Department of Neighborhoods, *Immigrant and Refugee Initiative 2010-2012 Action Plan.*
41   Seattle's Families and Education Levy, *Annual Report 2010-11* (Seattle: City of Seattle, 2011), www.seattle.gov/neighbor-hoods/education/documents/2010-11_AnnualReport_final.pdf.

2. ***Act in coordination with others.*** Particularly in the case of civic inclusion and engagement initiatives, city governments engaged community leaders and members in authentic and dynamic partnerships. This is most easily seen in the Cupertino initiative, where government provided a framework, legitimacy, and some limited support to catalyze stakeholder engagement, and then allowed the energy of community actors to flow into and shape the effort. While the description of Seattle's RSJI focused largely on the vigorous and disciplined actions of government entities, the scope, intensity, diversity, and quality of community and private-sector engagement in its efforts have been extraordinary.

3. ***Build in the ability to adapt.*** Each initiative includes design elements that ensure it remains open to and incorporates feedback. For example, the advisory board, commissions, and block leader programs are organized to receive community feedback, which allows changing community or individual needs or issues to be raised and acted upon. The equal access and RSJI initiatives have mandatory process requirements for new inputs, assessments, and goal setting each year. While not a guarantee that the initiatives won't stagnate, these features challenge them to continually learn and adapt to new information.

4. ***Provide leadership at the city level.*** Because of the cross-cutting nature of the challenges these initiatives address, success often requires the political leadership and coordination powers of a mayor's office. Executive powers are essential to ensure fidelity and quality in implementation as well as accountability for results. This is certainly the case for the complex, large-city initiatives described here and it appears to be true even for smaller cities. Undertaking "city-sized" integration initiatives may also require expending significant political capital, or changing a familiar government posture to one that is new and temporarily uncomfortable. In these cases most likely only a mayor will have the political and operational powers necessary to guide such an effort to success.

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