

Local Governments and Immigrant Integration

Effective immigrant participation and integration helps build stronger and more successful communities, and cities and counties in California lead and participate in local, regional and national immigrant integration partnerships.

What Your Jurisdiction May Do to Support Immigrant Integration



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Effective immigrant participation and integration helps build stronger and more successful communities. Local governments in California are using a variety of methods to create and participate in local, regional and national immigrant integration partnerships. Some of these methods and examples can be found below.

HOW TO SUPPORT IMMIGRANT INTEGRATION

1. INFORM THE PUBLIC



Provide information, ideally in multiple languages, about a public issue. This could include resources on a city or county website, a presentation by municipal staff to a community group or a city manager's column in community or ethnic media outlets. Topics to support immigrants in your community include: eligibility for and how to apply for U.S. Citizenship, eligibility for and how to apply for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), preventing and reporting immigration scams.

EXAMPLES:

- The **City of Mountain View's** [Community Resource Navigator](#) provides a list and links to programs, resources and services that may benefit residents.
- At [monthly meetings](#) beat officers in **East Palo Alto** provide law enforcement and community policing updates to community members. The beat meeting schedule is publicized in a bi-lingual city manager newsletter, the City of East Palo Alto online calendar and the Police Department's Chief Update.
- **San Mateo County** Supervisor Slocum and Sheriff Greg Munks hosted a "[Getting A Legal Driver's License](#)" panel in partnership with California Highway Patrol, Mexican Consulate and California Department of Motor Vehicles. DMV officials presented the guidelines and process in Spanish and responded to questions from community members.
- **Santa Clara County District Attorney's** [Tour to Raise Awareness of Immigration Fraud](#) offered bilingual community presentations on Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) as well as preventing and reporting immigration scams.

2. STRATEGIC ENGAGEMENT



In addition to analyzing demographic data, cities and counties can build relationships with key leaders and organizations and engage in dialogue to better understand who is in their community including: countries of origin, languages spoken, media of choice, where immigrant children attend school and the pressing issues of concern. Local governments may also partner with community and ethnic media as these media outlets often educate and orient newcomers to a community's resources, norms and values.

EXAMPLES:

- Over a five-year period, the **City of Cupertino** engaged community members to identify priorities. The city hosted a leadership event and institutionalized many of the processes established in the earlier stages of the project. A volunteer group of community members, Citizens of Cupertino Cross Cultural Consortium (5Cs) now leads a continued dialogue process in the city. This citizens group also compiled a "[Cultural Tips and Hints](#)" resource guide.
- The **City of Richmond** has developed a reciprocal, ongoing relationship with the Richmond Pulse that supports youth and community engagement.
- **San Mateo County's Sheriff's Office** [Community Alliance to Revitalize Our Neighborhood \(C.A.R.O.N.\)](#) program in North Fair Oaks and unincorporated coastal communities aims to improve the community's well-being by: reducing gangs, drugs and violence in the community; building the community's trust with law enforcement; successfully integrating immigrants; increasing community members' ownership of the community; and strengthening family relationships.

3. LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT



Citizen and leadership academies that intentionally involve immigrants, young people and other typically underrepresented members of the community can provide these participants with: knowledge of local agencies, relationships with key city and county personnel, the confidence to communicate with local agencies on behalf of their community and the ability to be an asset and ambassador for municipal governments.

EXAMPLES:

- The **Santa Clara County Office of Education** facilitates and supports school districts in the development of equitable parent leadership and voice through the [Region V Parent Engagement Initiative](#).
- Through the **North Fair Oaks Youth Initiative** each school year, forty youth collaborate with community organizations to build and sustain youth leadership through trainings, fun team building activities, a youth conference and mini-grants chosen by youth members.
- In the **City of Mountain View** residents who are not US citizens may serve on [boards and commissions](#) as part of a commitment to make these advisory bodies more reflective of the city's population.

4. PARTNERSHIPS AND LOCAL NETWORKS



Immigrant-serving organizations, neighborhood associations, local affinity networks (parent-teacher associations, sports leagues, civic groups, etc.), school districts and clergy and congregations can: offer unique and important insights into the challenges and opportunities facing their members or clients; extend an agency's outreach capacities; and help local officials build relationships and trust with community members.

EXAMPLES:

- [San Mateo County Human Services Agency](#) disseminated information on a local citizenship workshop to all their clients and agency staff volunteered at the workshop.
- The [Santa Clara County Citizenship Collaborative](#) hosts an annual Citizenship Day that offers legal permanent residents free citizenship application assistance.
- **The City of San José** partnered with United States Citizenship and Immigration Services, San José Earthquakes and Citi Community Development to host a naturalization ceremony at Avaya Stadium.
- The vice mayor of **Campbell** served as the keynote speaker at a naturalization ceremony, and **Redwood City** welcomed new citizens at a city council meeting.

5. RECOGNIZE AND CELEBRATE IMMIGRANT CONTRIBUTIONS



Local governments can partner with community members to highlight and celebrate the diversity of their community through art, culture, community dialogues or awards.

EXAMPLES:

- Welcoming Stars recognizes programs in **Redwood City** and **North Fair Oaks** that model a commitment to creating a welcoming environment for all who live, work, study and visit the community.
- The Office of Immigrant Relations Beacon of Light Award is given to individuals and organizations in **Santa Clara County** that are working to advance the rights of local immigrants residing in Santa Clara County.
- The mayors of **Burlingame, Cupertino, East Palo Alto, Mountain View, Palo Alto, Redwood City, San José** and **Santa Clara**, proclaimed June 2015 as Immigrant Heritage Month, and recognized the importance of celebrating the unique, cultural fabric of their communities.

6. ACCESSIBLE AND EFFECTIVE PUBLIC SERVICE DELIVERY



Local governments can enhance staff capacity systems and procedures to provide language access and effectively provide services to people from diverse backgrounds. Share information via internet or phone to ensure equitable access to resources.

EXAMPLES:

- **San Mateo County** funds bilingual Promotoras/Community Health Workers to partner with Puente de la Costa Sur – a community-based organization to connect low-income farmworkers and their families in isolated coastal communities to the county health system through education and outreach.
- SMC Connect is a multi-lingual searchable portal with information on the county's government assistance, children, youth and family services, emergency services and reporting resources for community members.
- 211 Santa Clara County, funded by a public-private partnership, is a dialing code for free, non-emergency community, health and disaster information in **Santa Clara County**. Callers receive personalized information and referrals from live, highly trained call specialists who provide information in over 170 languages and are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- San Francisco Language Access Ordinance is the strongest, self-imposed local language law in the nation and applies to all city departments that provide information or services directly to the public. The Office of Civic Engagement and Immigrant Affairs oversees compliance of the ordinance and provides technical assistance and on demand translation and interpretation to assist city departments, the mayor's office and the board of supervisors better meet the needs of residents and workers for whom English is not a first language.
- The City of San José's Strong Neighborhoods Initiative empowered residents from 19 low-income and ethnically diverse neighborhoods to propose and prioritize improvement projects in their neighborhoods. **San José** invested \$104 million to implement more than 75 percent of the resident-proposed projects. The Neighborhood Council is a permanent part of the city council's decision-making process.