

PSC-ED-OUS

**Moderator: Marco Davis
November 20, 2013
1:00 pm CT**

Coordinator: Welcome and thank you for standing by. At this time, all participants are in a listen-only mode. During the Question and Answer session, please press star 1 and record your name as prompted.

Today's conference is being recorded, if you have any objections, you may disconnect at this time. I would now like to turn today's meeting over to Alejandra Ceja thank you, you may begin.

Alejandra Ceja: Thank you (Caroline) and welcome everyone to the 2nd installation of our monthly webinar series. My name is Alejandra Ceja I'm the executive director of the Whitehouse initiative on educational excellence for Hispanic.

Before we get started, I want to remind everyone that today's call is off the record and not for press purposes. Today's webinar topic is on immigrant integration. There are currently 11 million undocumented immigrants living in the US today. 8 million of those undocumented immigrants are currently in our workforce and an estimated 5.5 million children have at least 1 undocumented parent.

The question we will explore today is how local communities can and cities assist immigrant populations and effectively integrating in their new communities now and in the future.

Today, we have the pleasure of hearing from our colleague, Debra Suarez who's in the office of vocation on adult education here at the US Department of Education. (Deborah) is going to share how the department is partnering to create network perspective immigrant integration.

We will also hear from Rachel Steinhardt she's deputy director at Welcome in America. We'll hear on their work with US cities and county to support locally driven efforts to create more welcoming immigrant friendly environment that maximizes opportunities for economic growth and cultural vitality.

I'm going to turn it over to (Deborah) and following (Deborah)'s presentation, we will open it up to Q&A and we'll proceed with (Rachel)'s presentation. Thank you for joining us. (Deborah)?

Debra Suarez: Thank you very much (Alejandra). We're so excited to be involved in this webinar today and we'd like to extend our thanks to you, to the Whitehouse Initiative for this opportunity. It's an exciting opportunity to share with you an initiative that we have just started, several months ago on immigrant integration.

So thank you very much for the invitation and thanks to all of you for joining us. I am going to be speaking about contact initiatives that we have called adult education and immigrant integration.

This is a contract action that has come out of (old day) specifically through the division of adult education and literacy, DAEL here in the department of education.

Next slide please. Thank you. This initiative is a contract as I said that is funded through DAEL out of the office of vocational and adult education. And it is really the combination of the work and hard thoughts from many folks, including the folks here, our staff and our project team in DAEL starting with our assistant secretary, Brenda Dann-Messier, Johan Uvin who was very well known as well as Brenda in the field of immigrant integration.

Of course, Cheryl Keenan and Chris Coro are leaders at DAEL, Heidi Silver-Pacuilla who was a team leader in DAEL and we're also very fortunate to have (Slavia Jimenez) who I'm sure many of you know as well, who is working with us as a special assistant on immigrant integration.

And again I'm Debra Suarez, I'm the English language learning education specialist here as well as the core which simply means that I have a lot of day to day integration with this contract.

Now of course this is not the complete list of all of the folks who are involved in this initiative. This is the list of folks who have really put - been thought leaders behind this action. Next slide please.

Okay, so where did this initiative start? As many of you know and as has been identified, there are many challenges for immigrants in our country yet successful integration of immigrants we know is vital to the social and economic strength of the United States.

So it's important to try and integrate immigrants, however, there are many challenges that are faced which hinder their full integration and their full participation in American life. It hinders their participation in work, school, and community.

So what are some of those identified challenges? Some of those challenges include limited English proficiency. Also often a lack of access to job training and re-training. And even for immigrants who come to our shores with high skills, often faced the challenge of lack of access to credentialing and licensing, re-credentialing and re-licensing.

From a family perspective, there can be a lack of similarity with the US Educational system and of course some challenges about understanding what is spent by civic engagement in the United. It's how to participate civically. Also some lack of access to employers and often lack of access to technology.

Now we know that there are programs nationwide, really very good programs nationwide which attend to the different needs of immigrants. These challenges here touch on educational needs, linguistic needs, work force needs and we know we have very good problem - very good program.

However, very often the programs and the services provided in these programs are delivered independently of each other. So quite often they're delivered in an unrelated or even a Zylod manner, sometimes lacking alignment.

So this compartmentilation of services can be a challenge as well. Next slide please. So you have here on slide 3 bubbles which have been identified as the three pillars of immigrant integration. Linguistic, economic and civic.

Let me share a little bit about where this slide comes from, these ideas of the 3 pillars of immigrant integration because it really serves as a foundation to what we in OAEL are trying to do with the contract.

So a while back, to address known gaps in immigrant integration and to build the sustainable foundation for future efforts, this administration convened an inter-agency task force and that task force is known as the New American Citizenship and Integration Initiative and I'm sure many of you are familiar with the work of this initiative.

The initiative is made up of key offices from the Department of Homeland security, Department of Justice, Department of Education of course, helping you in services and of course labor.

The initiative is seeking to identify best practices and to gain insights into how the federal government can join a spotlight on successful models of immigrant integration to address the zying of services that we just discussed.

The initiative identified three important pillars of integration, linguistic, economic and civic and the thinking is, is that if these pillars are implemented effectively, we will be able to enable a better integration of immigrants into the fabric of American society.

So the initiative - let's talk about linguistic for a moment, the linguistic pillar. The initiative recognizes that linguistic integration is in a very important goal of immigrant integration. Linguistic integration occurs when non-English proficient individual have acquired the necessary English language skills as well as having acquired the necessary related cultural knowledge to be meaningfully engaged in the community, to contribute in the community as participants, as leaders, as advocates, et cetera.

Now we know that immigrant integration and opportunities to succeed as workers, to succeed as parents and community members increases with English fluency.

The initiatives definition I need to make sure I point out that the initiative definition of linguistic integration does indeed recognize the value of other languages while still recognizing the importance of English.

So what are some strategies that may have been identified by the initiatives, some potential strategies for achieving linguistic integration would include improving immigrant access to effective and innovative English language program.

Let's move on to the economic pillar. Economic integration occurs when immigrant workers have the resources to excel and obtain economic self-sufficiency. In addition to that, economic integration occurs when they can understand their right. When they are able to have access to employers. When employers are able to attract and retain the best talent, just to name of some of the elements of economic integration.

Now the vision of economic integration is not a reality for many immigrants given that immigrants are disproportionately concentrated in low wage jobs and often do not have family-sustaining wages.

So the initiatives have identified the economic pillar of immigrant integration. What are some strategies that they have identified? Well some strategies for achieving economic integration are related to career development, through training and education.

Now career development may involve training low skills or under educated immigrant for career advancement, work force entering but also career development can involve training high skilled professionals who are trained as professionals in their home countries and need help with re-credentialing and re-licensing.

So there's a lot to the economic pillar as well. And let's talk about the last one civic integration. Civic integration occurs in all of them community members belong, belong to the community. When they feel - not only do they know their rights but they're secure in their rights.

When they are able to understand how to exercise their liberties and indeed exercise those liberties. When they share ownership in a community, and they share ownership in our nation's future.

Some of the strategies for achieving civic integration of course involve supporting immigrants on a path to citizenship. So as mentioned earlier, there certainly are programs nationwide, good programs which attend to the different needs of immigrants that touch on their linguistic needs, economic needs, civic needs and educational needs.

However these programs are often delivered independently of each other are often lacking in alignment with each other. So the contract under discussion that I'm sharing with you here today, the adult education and immigrant integration contract is seeking to identify a more holistic, a more integrated, and a more evidenced-based approach to meeting these three needs.

Next slide please. So overall, these are our goals and objective. And with this contract, OVA is seeking to identify as I've said a more holistic, a more

integrated approach to meeting the linguistic, civic and economic needs of immigrants.

We are seeking to identify integrative and innovative approaches. Approaches that will reduce these barriers that we have identified reduce the linguistic barriers, employment barriers and as I've said, we are looking forward to reducing these various for low skills as well as skilled immigrants.

We are also looking to identify promising practices that more strategically cut - coordinate across services and service providers. We are looking to identify these practices and then to understand in what way these practices can be implemented, perhaps adapted give the different needs of the different areas of the country.

So these are overall the goals and objectives that we are seeking. Next slide please. We are very, very excited - two verys there. Very excited to say that through a contract - with direct contract we are partnering with World Education Inc. World Education Inc has three partner organizations, the National Partnership for New Americans, Imprint and Welcoming America and we'll be hearing from one of the partners in a few minutes.

I mean they're working together to design immigrant integration models that do coordinate across services and service providers to attend to the three pillars of immigrant integration. To promote immigrants linguistic, civic and economic integration.

And what we're expecting to be able to do is to identify innovative immigrant integration models as well as design and deliver technical assistance to help state and local communities plan and implement these models.

We've just started the project in March 2013 and will be working through March 2016. So we're very excited to have world education leading this effort with its three partner organizations. I'm very fortunate to have them on board.

Next slide please. So our contract, adult education and immigration integration has put together a project which we are calling NINA and I'm sure many of you out in the field have already heard whisperings about NINA. NINA is Networks for Integrating New Americans.

NINA with OVA has committed three major commitments. One to improve immigrant access to effective and innovative English language programs so I'll expand upon in a month. Two, to support immigrants on the path to citizenship and third, to support immigrants career development through training and education.

Now coming to that first point in particular, the NINA initiative places adult ESOL programs adult ESOL, English as a second language, English speakers of other languages at the heart of integration initiative in its partnership with other organizations, and government agencies who are concerned with immigrant integration.

What we're looking at is - we're looking at how adult education programs can play an instrumental role in immigrant integration. Perhaps at this point in time, if we were to talk with adult education programs, they would certainly see immigrant - working with immigrant and helping immigrants is vital to their mission.

But maybe not so much immigrant integration, so this initiative is calling on them, to view their role in a new and a more expansive light as well as to build bridges to other organizations concerned with immigrant integration so we're

very excited about this new and expanded role that adult education programs can play.

As the prospect of national immigration reforms becomes a possibility, adult education programs will need to marshal all available community resources in order to effectively respond to the demand for English as a second language services as well as related social services.

So these goals that we're committed to here call for integrated multi-sector strategies that are focused on not only building but also strengthening whole communities.

Now obviously no one agency or program can achieve this and that's where we're focusing on networks integrating new Americans. And another aspect of this - of the NINA initiative is the emphasis on community.

We understand that immigrant integration is a two-way process. So we are very much focused on pulling together the community resources, working within the communities.

Next slide please. Okay so here are some of the project milestones, a few we've completed already and a few are going to be having the next 2 1/2 years.

First we're looking to create a theoretical framework which we'll guide service delivery. Please note that we have indeed completed our theoretical framework which is now available to the public and in a minute, I will give you that information as to how you can access that document.

The second milestone is to design and implement evidenced based technical assistance. As I said, we will be giving technical assistances to sites.

A third milestone which is where we are right now, it's very exciting is to recruit and select up to 5 sites, place based sites or rather immigrant integration networks who will receive this technical assistance.

And we are calling them network although sometimes you'll hear us say sites. So that's sort of interchangeable there. Another milestone of course is then to deliver this technical assistance and very important to document the effectiveness of the technical assistance as well.

From this, we're hoping to provide recommendations for the replication of models in other sites, in other communities with other population, other areas of the country. And from all of these, we are hoping to present our lessons learned.

So we have our work cut out for us and we have a good team. We're committed to the work and we've already gotten lots of good work done. Next slide please.

Okay final products. First is the theoretical framework. The theoretical framework, I really hope that you take advantage of the opportunity to take a look at this document.

The theoretical framework provides an extensive discussion of the immigrant integration initiatives that have been done, immigrant integration research. What do we know from the research? What do we still have yet to learn? What are our projects that have already been going on? What have they learned? What can we learn from this?

So it's a rich document, rich in research, rich in examples from across the country as well as there are some examples from international examples as well.

So this is a wonderful document that very deeply explores the field in order to set the foundation for what we are doing at NINA. Another product is of course the documentation of technical assistance and then finally the recommendations for replication of models.

So as that project move forward, please keep a look out for our dissemination of the technical assistance and dissemination of replication of models. Next slide.

Okay as promised, the theoretical framework, there is our link to the theoretical framework. It is available on LINCS; L-I-N-C-S which many of you perhaps know is the central repository for OVA where we have lots of information, resources. I encourage you if you go to LINCS, give yourself a cup of a coffee, and give yourself a good hour because there's lots of information there in addition to our theoretical framework. A lot of resources, a lot to offer.

But please go ahead and access that. Share it with folks. Also I'm very excited to announce that World Education will be holding an informational webinar for potential applicants.

As I said right now, we are just beginning the call for applications and we are going to have a webinar on December 3rd from 2:30 to 4:00 pm. The purpose of that webinar will be to provide more information to potential applicants as

well as to provide guidance for how to put that application together, to answer your questions.

So if you are a network, an existing network who is considering receiving technical assistance or perhaps you are someone who needs to network with some partners and come together, please take a look at joining that webinar so you can get more information about how you might be able to access this opportunity.

Now in addition to this PowerPoint that I've shared with you I know that (Emanuel) has also provided a fact sheet, a one-page fact sheet regarding this contract. And he has also provided a one-page call for application. And on that one-pager, you will see the information, the website and the phone number in order to access more information about the webinar.

And finally that first round of applications will be due, December 20th. There is the website there that you can access materials. And I also encourage you, if you have any questions, if you'd like to contact the technical assistance coordinator at World Education, the wonderful leader in the field (Andy Nash) and she will be able to address some of those questions and point you in the right direction.

So what I have given you is an overview of our contract. I've given you the foundation and how we are consistent with the Whitehouse as initiative on the three pillars of immigrant integration. I've shared with you our outcomes and our products and then our current status.

So next slide please, so I guess the last thing that I have to say is a big thank you for interest and you know, I also want to say, thank you for all the work that you do every day on behalf of the population that we are trying to also

serve with this contract and with the NINA initiative. We are excited about this project. We're hoping that you're excited and please feel free, if you have any other questions about the contract, there's my email address, please feel free to contact me.

At this point, I'll turn it back to our coordinators.

Alejandra Ceja: Thank you Debra for your presentation. For that summary overview. Operator, we'd like to turn it over to the folks on the call for any questions.

Coordinator: thank you. At this time, we'll begin the question and answer session. If you'd like to ask a question please press star 1. Make sure your phone is unmuted and record your first and last name slowly and clearly for introduction.

To withdraw that request, you may press star 2. Once again for your question or a comment, press star 1 and record your name at this time. One moment while us standby for questions or comments.

And I'm currently showing no questions or comments at this time.

Alejandra Ceja: Okay then thanks you very much.

Coordinator: We just had one queue one moment please. And we do have a question or comment coming from (Elliane Ramos) your line is open.

(Elliane Ramos): Hi my question is, is this something that individuals can apply to or is it only organizations?

Debra Suarez: Thank you for your question. No not for individuals, for again networks. But I encourage you if you're interested, please take a look at the website that I

shared and see if maybe there's some way that you might be able to network.

Thank you.

Alejandra Ceja: Operator do we have any more questions?

Coordinator: Yes, our next question or comment is from (Jahir Lopez) your line is open.

(Jahir Lopez): Okay hi. I'm with the Department of Agriculture. And I just had a question regarding how many networks are going to - are you aiming to have participate on this? Do you have a set of number or - and also in terms of - since this is a nationwide thing, are you looking at having networks that cut across different demographics, different geographies?

Debra Suarez: Thank you for your question. To answer the question about the number of networks, we are looking to provide technical assistance for up to 5 networks and in terms of demographics - that's a very important question. And we are looking to provide technical assistance to existing networks that meet certain eligibility criteria and overall we are hoping that we would get some representation overall.

But again I encourage you, please to take a look at the call for applications. There's a call for applications we'll share eligibility requirements and we'll address some of those other questions in detail. So thank you.

Coordinator: Thank you. Our next question or comment comes from (Gerald Boyce) your line is open.

(Gerald Boyce): The only question I have is I'm not with any organization. I'm just working for Mr. Obama as an OFA and I've been kind of teach the undocumented

English and I need some you know, some a little bit of help with some of the things that I need to teach and I'm working with kids.

Debra Suarez: When you say kids, what ages?

(Gerald Boyce): There's some about 5 to 14.

Debra Suarez: Okay, 5 to 14 and you're helping them with learning English.

(Gerald Boyce): Right.

Debra Suarez: Right well let me share that OVA does a lot of - we have a rich history in developing resources to help the professional development of ESOL teachers. And now of course we've done a lot with the professional development of adult education teachers but we have resources - this resource will certainly be of value to all teachers.

So I encourage you please take a look at the links website because on the links website, you will find a wealth of resources that will help give you a theoretical background as well as lots of ideas for activities and instruction.

Again it is adult focused but it will help you. The other thing I would encourage you to do, if you haven't already is to take a look at the website, the national center for English language acquisition. I'll say that again, national center for English language acquisition NCELA and that comes out of the office of English language acquisition and that office focuses on K12. And so certainly, if you were to go to that website, you would find a lot more information to help you specifically for K12 working with K12 students.

And one other site, if you haven't already accessed which I'd recommend is the TESOL international site, T-E-S-O-L which stands for Teachers Of English for Speakers of Other Languages and you'll find lots of direction there for professional development as well as activities to help you with your work.

So I hope I've answered your question and thank you very much for your efforts in working with our population.

Alejandra Ceja: Operator I think we have time for one question, before we move to our next speaker. Is there anyone else on the queue?

Coordinator: Yes we do have one party in queue. (Courtney Mcfarlin) your line is open.

(Courtney Mcfarlin): Yes (Courtney Mcfarlin) I'm with the Caribbean American Advancement foundation here in Georgia. You mentioned about five networks and other groups can join the network.

How do you envision five groups actually dealing with the 11 million immigrants across the entire country?

Debra Suarez: Right, that's a very good question. But I think that it's going a little bit beyond the scope of what we can address right now so what I would do is to strongly recommend that you take a look at the call for applications and please attend our webinar on December 3rd because we will be able to get into detail about what we mean by networks. What do we mean by existing networks, just to answer those questions for you and I'm sure many other people who are interested in this initiative have those questions as well. So that's my best recommendation. Thank you.

Alejandra Ceja: Thank you. Debra thanks you so much for joining us. If there are any other questions, you can feel free to email us at whieeh@ed.gov and we'll make sure to get your response.

At this time in the interest of time we're going to move on to our next guest speaker, Rachel Steinhardt, (Rachel)?

Rachel Steinhardt: Great thank you so much. It's wonderful to be on the call today and I also want to begin just by thanking the Whitehouse initiative for the opportunity to participate in this call.

And I also want to recognize them and OVA in particular just for their vision in taking on this issue of integration in such a comprehensive way and also working with great works like world ed to really lift up the work that is possible at the local level.

And that I know many of you on the call are already - some of you are already a part of and I also hope that many of you will continue to step up at the local level to be part of this work.

So my organization is called welcoming America. We are national non-profit that works across the US to help communities that want to make themselves more welcoming places for immigrants and really for everyone.

And if we can go to the next slide please. And what I'd like to do today is just begin actually by taking kind of a step back and asking everyone who's on the call to consider a very big question but also in some ways a very simple question which is what if we could actually change the way that we see immigrants and the issue of immigration.

And so today, I'm going to talk a little bit about how Welcoming America is working with local communities and also local governments to do just that. And that by starting to see immigrants not as the problem but really as part of the solution and as essential asset, how communities can really reach their fullest potential.

And I want to do that with a story and that story begins with the beginning of Welcoming America's work in Tennessee with an organization called TIRRC which is the Tennessee Immigrant and Refugee Rights Coalition which is an immigrant advocacy non-profit which works to help people like the individual that you see here whose name is (Jose Luis Ayala).

Now (Jose) had moved from Mexico to Tennessee as a farm worker in 1990 and by 2006, he had established a chain of restaurants in Nashville that were doing pretty well, Las Palmas and then around 2007, (Jose)'s American dream kind of hit a wall, and basically what happened was that the immigrant population in Nashville had quadrupled and that the public's response to that was really fear.

There was a mosque that was burned down by arsonist. The city council was proposing an English only referendum and as the climate kind of deteriorated (Jose)'s immigrant employees and customers began to leave, his children were bullied at school and the organizations or TIRRC kind of realized something was missing.

And that was that, (Jose) didn't only need services like English classes in order to succeed although obviously that's critically important but he also needed a more hospitable environment for his business and for his family.

And so the very simple idea and basically the analogy that we use is a seed to a fertile soil. And as just as a seed needs fertile soil in order to flourish, immigrants like (Jose) needed welcoming environments in order to really be successful.

So TIRRC set out to do something that really had never been done before which was to try create a more immigrant friendly climate by engaging the US born community and trying to dispel some of their fears.

And you know when we think about it, change is not easy. It's not easy for immigrants who are trying to adapt to their new communities and it's also not easy for longer term residents, what we call the receiving community particularly in places like Nashville who are facing fast demographic change and no one is really talking with them about what that change means to them.

So TIRRC launched the very first welcoming initiative, Welcome in Tennessee to address some of this fear and ambivalent and to try to create a more welcoming environment using a 3-pronged approach. And if we could go to the next slide please.

Thank you and basically what that includes is leadership. So trying to identify and mobilize leaders from all sectors of the community who want to create a more welcoming environment, communications. So being to use media, billboards, other strategies to try to educate the community and put out positive messages about immigrants and probably most importantly fostering meaningful contact.

So hosting events like potluck dinners, dialogues, town hall forums that helped immigrants and US-born neighbors get to know each other. And if we could go to the next slide please. And what made this work different was that

its goal was not just focused on immigrants but it was really about involving the entire community in making sure those immigrants and integrated and included and really creating that fertile soil for people to be successful.

Well that work ended up being also highly successful and it really created a turning point for Nashville where local leaders began to speak up publicly about the value of creating a welcoming communities. Residents ended receiving that English only referendum by about 10,000 votes. There was some polling done by local university that showed that perception has shifted and things also started to improve for (Jose).

He expanded his business. His now employing over 400 Tennesseans and most importantly his family has begun to think about Nashville as their home. So even though this work really started with the idea of helping immigrants like (Jose) what we found was that, by creating a more welcoming climate for immigrants, actually everyone benefited from that which is something that we like to welcoming effect.

Immigrant entrepreneurs and corporations want to move to places that are friendly to immigrants and that are exactly what happened in Nashville. So if we could go to the next slide please.

So here's what the welcoming effect looked like in Nashville. In 2012, Nashville actually led the country in job growth. It became the third best positioned city to "grow and prosper" in the coming decades said Forbes magazine. The New York Times calls it a place that is fresh with young new residents and alive with immigrants as well as tourist and music and it's been called Nowville by GQ magazine.

So ultimately it takes a whole community to support immigrant inclusion and ultimately the whole community benefits and while obviously there's a whole lot of other factors at play here, it's very clear to us from the kinds of things that happened in Nashville and from things that the mayor and the business community and people like (Jose) had shared and experienced that none of these really could have happened without the community making a very deliberate decision that it was going to become a welcoming place.

So what began in Tennessee has now become a national effort and a national organization, Welcoming America and we work with non-profits and municipal governments all over the country and help these institutions carry out the work in a 3-pronged approach that I talked about earlier by giving them practical guidance and resources and tools and a network of peers. And if we could go to the next slide please.

Now this year, we launched a new initiative and it's called welcoming cities and counties. And it's a program for local government who want to pledge their commitment to create welcome and exclusivity and then work with us to plan proactively for demographic change and to develop new policies and programs that create immigrant friendly environments.

And as you can see, it's not just mayors in places like Nashville where this work started like (Carl Dean) who says when immigrants pick your city that is a great honor, but other mayors who are taking on this idea.

And what's exciting about that is that in addition to sparking more efforts to support inclusion locally, this work is really creating a new dynamic nationally. So instead of hearing from leaders in places like Alabama and Arizona who are sort of competing to expel immigrants, what we're showing

is that cities actually want to compete to be seen as welcoming because that decision like Tennessee really positions them for success.

So we have quotes from leaders all over the country who are saying that inclusion of immigrants is really key to their success like mayor (Reed) here says, that this work of welcoming immigrants is key to enhancing the city's cultural fabric, economic growth and global competitiveness.

So there are 24 cities that have joined so far. They have a total population of 23 million people so you can see the tremendous potential of that. They're very diverse size, political spectrum, geography so places like New York City, Chicago, and San Francisco to places like Boise Idaho, Dodge City Kansas and even Tucson, Arizona and if you're interested, there's a full list of cities at welcomingcities.org and all of these links are included in the PowerPoint itself.

So despite the sometimes frustrating pace of change around immigration, I kind of want to offer some help here that this is something positive and proactive that your community can do. And I will say that in many cases, local officials don't realize that immigrant integration is actually very much - not just a federal issue but a local issue. And that there is actually a lot that can be done locally and I think that the NINA program really underscores that.

So we just need to start by educating our local leaders about how they can be proactive and position our communities for success. And joining this initiative is just one of the ways that we can do that.

Now even if your community is not a hostile climate like Tennessee was, your community might be a tolerant one, but this idea of welcoming is that we actually want to go beyond tolerance, we want to move past sort of ambivalent

attitude and really ensure that everyone can participate at their fullest potential.

So in addition to welcoming cities and counties, I just want to speak really briefly about some other practical tools and resources that any community organization can use to try to foster a more welcoming climate particularly when it comes to the work of communications and contact building. And if we could go to the next slide please.

I'd like to just quickly share a couple of examples from our partner Uniting NC which is an organization in North Carolina. Now when it comes to building relationships between immigrants and receiving communities, there's really infinite ways that we can do that food and culture are great ways to bring people together as our volunteer projects but in this case, Uniting NC has launched a program called Pals which is in Spanish is Pareja de Aprendizaje y Liderazgo or Learning and Leading Partners and basically what they do is they bring together Spanish speaking and English speaking parents together in pairs to meet weekly and to talk about their children, to practice their language skills and also to get to know each other and in the process of doing that, they begin to build relationships of trust. They dispel fears about one another. They also get more involved and that leads to better parent engagement and also greater student success in a place like (DUROM).

On the right is a photo from communications campaign that Uniting NC put together. There's actually a full video on the website that you can watch which pulls together these messages from everyday community members across the community who are talking about why they care about their new immigrant neighbors so really relatively simple things.

And so whether it's through communications, or building contact, it's really all about trying to create opportunities for people to discover that really they share the same values.

So we have tons of other tools available. We have a toolkit called the receiving communities toolkit which shares lots of - sort of practical ways that you can do this work from groups across the country. We have messaging guides that explain how to talk about immigrants in ways that build unity and promote diversity as strength and there are lots of links in the PowerPoint tools and resources in our website and I'll share a few at the end.

But if we could click - thank you. So the last opportunity I want to share is a big event that happened annually in mid-September called National Welcoming Week that you can plug into.

This is an annual event that brings together immigrants and US-born folks and communities across the country, largely through service projects. With this message that immigrants make us stronger and so there's sort of infinite things you can do from the grass tops to the grass roots that we've had governor's signing proclamation recognizing the importance of being welcoming communities. We've had soccer tournaments, community service projects.

It also happened that the national welcoming week coincides with Hispanic heritage month so we would love to see some joint programming. It's very easy to get involved. And if you can go to the next slide, I can share with you, how you can do that.

So just to kind of recap here, you can get involved in a couple of different ways. First you can learn how to make your community more welcoming and share your own practice. Maybe you're doing something innovative in this

area and you can learn more and find all the tools that I talked about at welcomingamerica.org.

If you're interested in getting your local government signed on to welcoming cities and counties, you can learn more at the website here, welcomingcities.org. and you can also join us next year in September for a national welcoming week and host your own activity or participate with one of our affiliates or partners in your community or find a local affiliate in your community and you can do that by going to welcomingweek.org. And below that you have my contact information. I would love to hear from you. And I hope you'll be part of our efforts to continue to transform our country into a place where everyone including immigrants is welcomed and has the opportunity to thrive. Thank you.

Alejandra Ceja: (Rachel) thank you so much for your leadership and for the work that you're doing on behalf of our country on this important issue. Operator I'd like to open it up for any questions.

Coordinator: Thank you and again as a reminder at this time, if you have a question or a comment, please press star 1. Make sure your phone is unmuted and record your name slowly and clearly for your introduction. To withdraw your question or comment, you may press star 2.

Again for a question or comment, press star 1 at this time. One moment while us standby for questions or comments.

And we do have a question or comment coming from (Jody McBrian) your line is open.

(Jody McBrian): Hi thank you. And I really would like to thank Rachel for the exciting presentation. I first became familiar with Welcoming America at a refugee conference in Orlando, Florida this past May. And probably it'll make more sense for me to write to you in detail, but in general, I'm wondering if you are open to a partnership to expand this kind of program into another country? Because I'll be on sabbatical next year working on this exact issue in a different country.

Rachel Steinhardt: (Jody) thank you for your question and how exciting. I will say, you know, ideas can travel over borders just like people can and I have seen our work in places like Germany and Canada find some residence so I would love to hear from you about that.

(Jody McBrian): Okay I'll email you in more detail. Thank you so much Rachel.

Rachel Steinhardt: Thank you.

Alejandra Ceja: Operator any other questions?

Coordinator: Yes, our next question or comment comes from (Courtney Mcfarlin) your line is open.

(Courtney Mcfarlin): Hi Rachel this is (Courtney Mcfarlin) with the Caribbean American Advancement foundation. I want to thank you for your work. I had the opportunity to attend the neighborhood summit here in Atlanta; you guys did a couple of months ago.

I met with a couple of your folks and I meant to follow up with you guys as far as getting in love and I'm definitely going to be following now in light of the fact that you guys had done so much nationally and I'm glad - I think

Atlanta may have been the second spot that you guys have been - have been one of the cities that you guys are located in here.

Rachel Steinhardt: Yes, (Courtney) that's right. Great to hear from you and yes we are based in Decatur, Georgia which is right next to Atlanta. Does that conclude the question or comment?

(Courtney Mcfarlin): Yes, I'll definitely with an email.

Rachel Steinhardt: Great thank you.

(Courtney Mcfarlin): Thank you.

Coordinator: Thank you. Our next question or comment comes from (Catherine Pereira) your line is open.

(Catherine Pereira): Hi this is (Catherine) from Congressman (Tony Cardinal)'s office just wanted to have a little bit more details on the welcoming America program in Nashville, sort of a 3-pronged question. I'm wondering how you engaged the youth community. If and how social media was implemented and if or where I can get statistics on the positive effects that it had in Nashville.

Rachel Steinhardt: Great thank you (Catherine). I would love to follow up with you maybe on email to share some more information. I'm not so sure about Nashville in terms of social media and the youth community but we have lots of examples from all over the country where people are using both and I can do a little bit more digging in Nashville.

But you know everything from college students being part of these campaigns and doing things like going out and meeting with their local business

community to put up placards that say we want to be a welcoming place to hosting events in their schools and have dialogues around immigration and I can share with you and anyone else that's interested for some examples.

Coordinator: Thank you and again as a reminder if you have a question or comment it is a star 1 and record your name and star 2 to withdraw that request. Our next question or comment comes from (Mary Gonzales) your line is open.

(Mary Gonzales): Yes, hello?

Coordinator: yes your line is open, please go ahead.

(Mary Gonzales): Okay, I just wanted to make a comment, I teach or I taught for many years at El Paso Texas and now I work for Action with Obama and I thought the way to I think is a comment is to get children and parents involved from all diversity and cultures is to start with the teachers.

The teachers are such a tool and a huge help. We use to do different country food and from all countries when we were teaching, and the schools participated and that's how you get also the children to start looking at the diversity that even though we are different colors, we are all humans and we can all live together.

And the parents are such great help and I just wanted to make that comment, that you start with the schools, with the children and the parents get them involved, and it just trickled down as a domino effect.

Rachel Steinhardt: Yes, I totally agree with that (Mary) and I really appreciate that comment. I also really appreciate that you - it sounds like you've been doing some of these work where you are and I think that's what it's most exciting about this.

I think a lot of people are experimenting with this kind of work and by coming together and sharing our practices and really kind of lifting up this work at a national level, I think we can all do our work more effectively and find inspiration in the work that we're each doing.

(Mary Gonzales): Yes, we can. Thank you so much for your help. I really appreciate what you're doing. Thank you.

Rachel Steinhardt: Thank you, you too.

Coordinator: Thank you. Our next question or comment comes from (Kayla Williams) your line is open.

(Kayla Williams): thank you. Hello, my name is (Kayla Williams) I'm an American core member in the city of Buffalo and I'm cited in the mayor's office and my question is about actually joining the welcoming cities initiative.

My concern is that the city of Buffalo, we do have emerging immigrant population; however, we don't have an established department or unit to deal with that. I know looking at the website, I saw some of the cities already have multi-cultural affairs offices, or immigrant relation offices but the city of Buffalo doesn't have that quite yet.

Is it still possible to join welcoming cities without that established entities?

Rachel Steinhardt: Great question (Kayla) and I'm really excited to hear about Buffalo. We were actually just talking yesterday with someone from Buffalo. It sounds like there's a lot of emerging interest there.

I think you know, we recognize that everybody is starting out in the different place. Some cities and counties have been at this work for a long time. Others are just beginning to think about this. And so everyone has a different level of capacity.

You know we want to work with places that have at least someone within City government who can be thinking about this issue and you know, can participating actively in a cohort of other municipal government leaders. So that requires some minimal level of capacity but you know at the same time, we're not expecting that everyone will have already established an office.

But just that they are committing to trying to advance that and move this work forward, so we're trying to meet where they are.

(Kayla Williams): Okay thank you so much.

Rachel Steinhardt: Thank you.

Coordinator: Thank you. Our next question or comment is from (Domingo Gomez) your line is open.

(Domingo Gomez): My question is, how the negative environment is where Latinos are being deported daily and families breaking apart daily. How is it that you can combine a welcoming environment called welcoming America when families are being broken apart? What is your analysis on that?

Rachel Steinhardt: Great question. Well I mean obviously you know, we're all doing this work with this backdrop and you know really our work is about asking communities to put this question out to themselves what is it that our - you know sort of what is it that our communities can do to take care of people who are here on

this community, what is it that we can do to live up to this value of being welcoming and there is actually a lot that communities can do.

And you know frankly I think if we want to move our country to a place where we really are living up to this idea of being welcoming, it's going to take a lot of people who've never cared about this issue or who don't understand this issue to have a sort of pathway that helped them immigrants as people, understand who they are and begin to see that you know, of course we want to keep families together and of course we want what's best for everyone in the community including immigrants.

(Domingo Gomez): Thank you.

Alejandra Ceja: Operator I think we have time for one more question. Any additional questions that folks have can be emailed to us at whieeh@ed.gov and we will get you a response.

Coordinator: And I'm currently showing no further questions or comments at this time.

Alejandra Ceja: Great well let me take this time to thank both of our presenters. Rachel thank you again for the wonderful work that you're doing. The Whitehouse initiative aims to bring key information to the stakeholders, thank you all for joining and I know you all have very busy schedules.

We want to be sure to continue this type of networking opportunities. Ensuring that we can highlight key information on the federal investment and initiatives that are taking place here at the department of Ed and also highlight the examples of the bright spots taking place across our country and I think the work that you're doing Rachel signifies that.

So I want to thank you for joining us. for those of you that are interested in additional information on the work of Whitehouse initiative, please take a look at our website and sign up for our newsletter, (unintelligible) we will include additional information on the upcoming webinar that will take place in December.

So with that I'd like to thank the operator for her assistance today and our presenters and all of you who joined us for the call. Thank you very much.

Coordinator: That concludes today's conference call, thank you for participation, you may disconnect at this time.

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