

WORKING
PRACTICE
PROFILE

Cultural Competency Secrets to Success with Immigrant and Refugee Families: Spreading and Adapting 2Gen Working Practices

From rural towns to dense urban settings, immigrants and other new resident families are bringing vibrant and valuable cultural practices and beliefs that enrich American communities. As our country becomes more diverse, changes in the cultural makeup of communities can challenge longstanding practices in many aspects of human services delivery. However, as service providers build their understanding of and responsiveness to the cultures of their newer customers, they can more equitably engage with and effectively serve them, leading to better outcomes for immigrant and refugee families and the local communities in which they reside.

What does it take for service organizations to successfully implement culturally competent and responsive services, what positive results can come from deploying them, and what are some of the secrets to success that field practitioners can share? In 2021, a project team from the Aspen Institute Community Strategies Group, the Migration Policy Institute and Higher Heights Consulting set out to lift up culturally competent and responsive 2Gen practices (interventions that work with both parents and children) that work for immigrant families by listening to the organizations doing this work. There's no doubt that developing these competencies is challenging and must be done intentionally, but two broad strategies arose from our survey, interviews, webinars, and peer advising and learning convenings: service organizations should **provide culturally tailored services and recognize and design for cultural differences.**

This brief is the fourth of four that all together explore practices that service organizations are using to provide 2Gen services to immigrant and refugee families. Each brief includes anonymous interview data, as well as multiple case studies that dive into the details of how a service organization does



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its work with immigrant and refugee families. Together, the briefs address trust-building, working with families regardless of legal status, overcoming language barriers, and strategies to increase cultural competency. We hope the lessons and insights shared here can inspire other organizations to adopt and adapt these practices to better support the immigrant and refugee families they work with. To access all four briefs please visit this [website](#).¹

Why 2Gen and Immigrant Families?



It can be challenging to reach and serve immigrant families because of trust and language barriers and cultural differences — the very challenge areas that drove our research. Furthermore, many social service programs focus solely on the child or the parent, often due to funding constraints or traditional areas of expertise within the organization. The two-generation (2Gen) approach does not focus exclusively on either children or adults because their well-being is directly interconnected. Instead, it takes stock of the family as a whole and uses a holistic, family-centered lens to understand the multiple dimensions of families and consider a variety of pathways for promoting positive outcomes.²

The 2Gen model was developed over the past decade by family-based practitioners to reduce barriers to services and increase mobility out of poverty for children and adults. Championed nationally by **Ascend** and the **Community Strategies Group** at the Aspen Institute, the 2Gen mindset and model recognizes whole family units, as families define themselves, and meaningfully engages parents and caregivers in designing policies and programs that affect them. By working with families to solve problems, access new resources and sharpen existing talents and skills, the 2Gen approach creates experiences and opportunities for all families to reach their full potential and for communities to thrive economically and socially. Because of these aspects, the 2Gen approach is a good fit for organizations that work, or seek to work, with immigrant families.



The Cultural Competence Secrets to Success Webinar

The final of the four-part *Immigrant Families: Spreading and Adapting 2Gen Working Practices* series focused on how organizations can make their work more culturally responsive and effective, spotlighting powerful insights and the work of two community-based organizations that have developed such program and service approaches. Leaders from both organizations emphasized the importance of tailoring outreach and service models to respond to the specific cultural contexts of customers, including being cognizant of cultural norms and issues such as stigma attached to receipt of particular types of services and discrimination or trauma some groups and individuals are more likely to have experienced.

To learn more about cultural competence secrets to success with immigrant families, you can access the webinar recording [here](#).

Among those featured in the webinar were two leaders of the New York City-based Arab American Family Support Center's work — Rawaa Nancy Albilal, President and Chief Executive Officer, and Danny Salim, Senior Director of Solution Based Casework. As an organization that has developed expertise in serving the Arab, Middle Eastern, Muslim and South Asian (AMEMSA) immigrant and refugee communities, their programs tackle topics like healthy relationships and mental health by focusing on challenges that members of AMEMSA communities often experience. The other speaker, John Till, Senior Vice President of Strategy and Innovation for The Family Partnership, shared how this Minneapolis-based organization has focused on building bridges — between elders of different cultural backgrounds and also between the immigrant community and community resources such as mental health providers. To learn more about cultural competence secrets to success with immigrant families, you can access the webinar recording [here](#).³

Working Practice 1: Provide Culturally Tailored Services

The first step to working in a culturally competent way is to understand and adapt your efforts to respond to the cultural context of your target population as much as possible. Culturally insensitive or indifferent approaches run the risk of turning away families or failing to engage and meet their needs. Many interviewees noted that their family needs assessment asked families about their cultural beliefs, while others noted that asking questions in an open manner can help organization staff assess cultural differences. Understanding the cultural contexts of the families you engage and structuring engagements with them taking into account their cultural norms will help your program avoid potential pitfalls and communicate a sense of welcoming and respect to families from a variety of cultures. Tailoring programming from a cultural perspective may be as simple as knowing whom to speak with first in a family, scheduling events around important cultural festivals, providing meals that meet dietary restrictions or providing a prayer room for families to use while they are visiting your location.

In some communities, a way to advance culturally competent services is to work through community elders. Some interviewees noted that recognizing the role of elders as valuable connectors and respected leaders can be an effective first step in more broadly connecting with a new community. Working through elders or others considered trusted messengers can help with dissemination of public health or other important information. For example, one interviewee organization wanted to conduct an awareness campaign related to mask wearing during the COVID pandemic. They reached out to elders of their target community, and once they were engaged, it also turned out that many of the elders wanted to help make masks for their families.

Perhaps counter-intuitively, interviewees also recommend tailoring services to address and engage with cultural stigmas that may prevent individuals from accessing particular types of services. They suggest that organizations should develop approaches that address and work through stigmas, not shy away from or pretend that they do not exist. For example, one health-focused organization explained that they designed wraparound services that address and work to break down the cultural stigma about discussing or accessing mental health services within their target community. By starting with a recognition that certain cultural beliefs might hinder the results of a given effort, you can weave culture into the effort, engage authentically with families and family members and work to make progress by acknowledging and examining cultural beliefs.

Similarly, interviewees suggested that organizations need to recognize past trauma or discrimination families may have experienced because of their ethnic or racial backgrounds or political or religious beliefs, and they should tailor services appropriately. Interviewees suggest beginning with a needs assessment to understand the backgrounds of families, including their country of origin and their lived experiences, so services can be responsive to prior negative experiences they may have had. For example, if you learn that some of your families have personally experienced war and violence in their home country, then mental health services can be designed and tailored to address the effects of trauma they may be experiencing.

CASE STUDY 1

Arab American Family Support Center Provides Culturally Tailored Mental Health Services

Established in 1994, the Arab American Family Support Center (AAFSC) strengthens immigrant and refugee families through culturally and linguistically responsive, trauma-informed social services that serve multiple generations. Through their four priority areas — “prevent, promote, get ready and communicate” — they provide wraparound services and concentrate on preventing domestic violence and child abuse, promoting mental and physical wellbeing, getting families ready to succeed and communicating families’ needs to organization partners and policymakers.



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Many members of the Arab American Family Support Center team contributed to this work including Kerry Sesil, Associate Vice President of Resource Development, and Maia Dillane, Director of Resource Development & Impact Evaluation, who both sat for an interview in the summer of 2021. Rawaa Nancy Albilal, President and CEO, and Danny Salim, Senior Director of Solution Based Casework, participated in the national webinar focused on cultural competency secrets to success. Nancy, Danny and Maia all also joined the resource team for our cultural competency peer advising session.

The center is open to all, though they were founded by the Arab American community and have developed expertise in serving the Arab, Middle Eastern, Muslim and South Asian (AMEMSA) immigrant and refugee communities. As a settlement house with locations across all five boroughs, they served over 10,000 families in 2021 with intensive, wraparound services. Collectively, their staff speak 36 languages, including Arabic, Bengali, French, Farsi, Nepali, Pashto, Punjabi, Somali, Urdu and Wakhi.

AAFSC offers a variety of different programs that model culturally competent and responsive approaches for providing services to AMEMSA immigrant and refugee populations. Their MENar program works with boys and young men to help them develop a positive sense of self along with important life skills, such as building healthy relationship habits and financial literacy. Similarly, AYWA is a peer-to-peer support network where young women can share their struggles, craft solutions and explore potential pathways in life. The Healthy Relationships Curriculum developed by AAFSC prepares participants for strong, healthy relationships in a culturally competent way that addresses challenges such as marriage at an early age. This curriculum is used in both the MENar and AYWA programs.

Because of the need within the community, many of their programs have an explicit mental health focus, including *Reclaiming Our Health*, which works to destigmatize mental health issues in AMEMSA communities and increase access to mental health services. This initiative is conducted in partnership with the City’s Office of Mental Health. Some of their other programs include mental health counseling services, adult education and literacy classes, free legal support, resource navigation services that ensure families are accessing federal benefits and are enrolled in health insurance, crisis intervention and advocacy for survivors of domestic violence, case management support for families where there have been allegations of child abuse and neglect, parenting and early childhood development classes and citizenship exam prep classes, which boast a 100% pass rate. As a wraparound social service organization, AAFSC fosters links between each of their programs to ensure access to the full suite of complementary services needed to address the complex and compounding challenges facing the families they serve.

As a complement to their *Reclaiming our Health* program, AAFSC developed mental health services and counselling to address the types of trauma experienced by community members as a result of war and conflict experienced in their home countries, harrowing migration journeys traveling to the United States and discrimination and acculturative stress encountered upon arrival in their new home. When AAFSC launched *Reclaiming our Health* in 2018, they began with a Community Needs Assessment to understand how the AMEMSA populations they served experienced trauma. AAFSC staff receive trainings on trauma-informed care, equipping them

with the skills to consider and respond to the numerous and compounding traumas experienced by immigrant and refugee community members at various stages of their migration journeys. Staff learn to recognize the signs and symptoms of trauma and adapt engagement styles and service delivery approaches to consider and avoid potential triggers. Trauma-informed care is a framework that emphasizes safety, trust, mutual respect, collaboration, cultural responsiveness and empowerment. Last year, AAFSC reached 5,350 people through their culturally responsive mental health workshops and trainings.

AAFSC also began discourse around mental health to break down cultural stigmas around the topic. Organization staff saw that people were reluctant to seek help for mental health issues due to stigma and recognized that, to provide mental health services that were culturally competent, they would need to first address how mental health is discussed in AMEMSA communities. With a dearth of resources to address mental health for these populations, they worked to harness their understanding of the immigrant experience, the mental health issues immigrants commonly face and how stigma works against people getting services they need. Now, they seek to break stigmas in a holistic way, providing immediate intervention when needed and then challenging the broader societal and cultural issues that perpetuate stigmas through peer conversations.

Much of AAFSC's mental health service work helps families cope with stressors and triggers, especially those that might arise from Islamophobia, hate speech or concerns around immigration status. For too many in the community – including those with permanent legal status — fears around deportation or other immigration consequences have a direct impact on mental health. For example, under the Trump administration, changes seeking to expand the scope of a provision of immigration law known as public charge⁴ were poised to move forward nationally. Among immigrants already living in the U.S., the proposed changes would have primarily affected the relatively small share of legal immigrants whose reliance on certain public benefits would impede their ability to sponsor visas for family members to join them in the U.S. in the future. Nevertheless, the widespread “chilling effect” touched off by reactions to the proposed changes caused many immigrants to avoid health and social services. In light of this challenge, AAFSC mobilized to educate community members about their options, and the organization continues to address fears and misconceptions by empowering community members to access the services and resources needed to thrive. No amount of case work will prevent Islamophobia or hate speech or change immigration status, but AAFSC has built a toolkit to address families' needs and help them develop coping skills.



AAFSC also formed working groups to provide services using the Community Resiliency Model (CRM), a complementary framework that recognizes the potential for community members to remain resilient in the face of trauma. Their CRM training equips staff to understand the impact of trauma and stress on the body and prepares staff to identify and adopt practical strategies for returning the mind and body to a state of balance. Tenets of this model are designed to be integrated into service delivery practices to promote resiliency within the community, as well as within the practices and well-being of staff themselves. Staff help clients develop and use coping skills to manage their physiology, stressors and triggers, allowing people to better understand their physiological reactions. Working groups facilitate conversations to explain what a state of stress is and techniques for responding in a healthy way. This provides people with a long-term resiliency toolkit that they can use to build a balance in their lives.



Working Practice 2: Recognize and Design for Cultural Differences

It is important to recognize that families who appear to have a similar background or share important characteristics may have different cultures. Families may speak a similar language, practice the same religion, etc., but still have different cultural values. For example, though Spanish may be an official language in many South and Central American countries and many of these countries also have large Catholic-practicing populations, significant shares of individuals from these countries have distinct languages as well as cultural beliefs and practices, many of which are rooted in the region's Indigenous traditions. Organization staff should therefore refrain from making assumptions about a family's culture based on characteristics such as national origin; instead, staff should receive support in developing cultural knowledge where needed and be encouraged to speak with families, hear their stories and adopt approaches to family issues that consider their cultural context.

Organizations may also need to be prepared to navigate tensions between different racial, ethnic and cultural groups within their community. Interviewees suggest diffusing tensions by promoting dialogue among leaders of the different communities. Bringing cultural leaders together to inform decisions about programming or staffing can help to promote peacemaking and build cultural competency. One interviewee suggested mapping out intercultural relationships using focus groups and then offering services and holding meetings in a culturally competent way. For example, they asked in their focus group if families would attend community meetings held at a particular local church. Many families answered no, sharing that "every time we go there, they look down at us. If you held a meeting there, we would not be comfortable." Because of the insight gained during the focus group, the organization was able to choose a more neutrally agreeable location for meetings.

Interviewees also noted that it is important for an organization to take culture into account when making hiring decisions, especially for cultural connector or community ambassador roles. First, understand how your connectors prefer to communicate, and the hours they are willing to work (for instance, one interviewee noted that members of a target cultural group are not ready and available to work until after 11 a.m.). Interviewees noted that sometimes hiring cultural connectors in-house is not ideal for the community, and instead it may be better to have them work as contractors or volunteers. One noted that a network of non-profits that serve the community could share cultural connectors with expertise on different topics.

CASE STUDY 2

The Family Partnership Successfully Designs for Cultural Difference

Founded in 1878, The Family Partnership⁵ has evolved from a children's legal support organization into an integrated 2Gen effort that delivers culturally competent services to families and children in the greater Minneapolis area by focusing on understanding the community's needs. They became the first grassroots leadership program in the area to work with immigrants on the neighborhood planning process — a group that was traditionally left out of these conversations. Since the late 1990s, they have worked with Latino, Somali and



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Two members of The Family Partnership team contributed to this work, including John Till, who sat for an interview in the summer of 2021 and participated in the national webinar focused on cultural competency secrets to success. Maria Zavala, The Family Partnership's Mobility Mentoring Program Coordinator and 2Gen Specialist, joined John and the rest of the resource team for our cultural competency peer advising session.

other immigrant families, and through this work they have developed an organizational understanding of how to engage different groups and recognize their strengths and needs. This work includes hiring and supporting community navigators, local, state and national policy and advocacy, investment in immigrant leaders and community organizing. They have also done grassroots organizing to preserve affordable apartment communities where most immigrant families live. To date, they have helped over one million people "clear the path for success" and have "maintained hope for families through world wars, pandemics, the Great Depression and social unrest."

Of the Family Partnership's customers, 64 percent are children, teens and young adults (Ages 0-24), 95 percent have incomes below 200 percent of the federal poverty level and 90 percent are people of color. Their theory of change states: "Our whole family approach promotes child and family well-being across generations to increase economic security, educational success and overall healthy development. We believe that families, no matter what their form, are the foundation of strong communities and we are here to partner with them on their journey."

The Family Partnership manages two multicultural, therapeutic preschools with full-day, year-round education and care — the North Minneapolis Preschool and Four Directions for children (age 6 weeks+) to kindergarten-ready, as well as after-school programming for children up to 12 years. Because Four Directions primarily serves Indigenous children, early education there includes a partnership with Wicoie Nandagikendan, an Ojibwe and Dakota language immersion program. Services offered include free student transportation; healthy meals and snacks; early therapy intervention on site; dental, vision, and hearing checkups and services; and developmental screenings. The Family Partnership employs experienced, multilingual and culturally diverse teaching staff.

Mental health and therapy are another major initiative for The Family Partnership. Their mental health work focuses on outpatient mental health for children and families, Multi-Systemic Therapy for families with a youth at-risk of correctional involvement, transgender mental health support, early intervention to improve success in school and life and early childhood education behavioral therapies. The Family Partnership built its capacity for culturally appropriate mental health services through years of community building outreach to immigrant communities, also supported by a clinical internship for advanced standing clinical interns who are people of color, immigrants or LGBTQ. In this way, The Family Partnership seeks to increase immigrants' access to culturally congruent therapy through both direct services and by increasing the number of immigrant clinicians with licensure.

The Family Partnership staff understand and follow cultural norms to avoid disrespecting or turning away families. When working with Somali families, they report that there can be issues of trust when it comes to religious beliefs, cultural practices, the role of women and LGBTQ issues. In their experience they have found that there can be many potential missteps that could drive people away — for example, hosting an event without halal food or a place to pray.

To create a culturally sensitive and trusting relationship between cultural communities that sometimes come into conflict in neighborhoods with stretched resources, The Family Partnership staff has facilitated conversations between elders from different cultural backgrounds to promote peace and understanding. When there was conflict between American Indian and Somali members of the community, staff brought together elders from each group around peacemaking to work things through. The Family Partnership had already employed a Somali organizer, and following the suggestion of the community, they also hired a Native organizer. Community conflict decreased and it led to unexpected benefits like joint neighborhood walks of the elders from both communities.

The Family Partnership seeks to reflect the community they serve by training and hiring immigrants to serve in a variety of frontline roles as connectors and ambassadors for the culturally sensitive work of the organization. As noted above, to train more staff, particularly mental health workers, the organization started the Diversity and Social Work Advancement Program and opened quality internships for immigrants and other therapists of color. The State of Minnesota also wanted to promote increased licensing of people of color in order to improve access to culturally congruent care, so the effort was a win-win. The Family Partnership often hires these students when they complete their internships.

Policy Implications

Across the United States, social services, education, health and other service providers increasingly find themselves operating in super-diverse contexts — meaning that those they are expected to serve are extremely diverse along multiple dimensions, and especially with regard to racial, ethnic, linguistic and cultural background.⁶ Building the capacities needed to ensure local programs are able to provide high quality and effective services in such contexts is now recognized as an urgent priority across many systems and programs that seek to support two-generation success. However, making progress in doing so requires the close attention of policymakers and agency leaders who shape the designs and practices of major service systems, including attention to the different levers available to key leaders and actors depending on whether they are situated at the federal, state or local levels.

Broadly speaking, current equity-focused efforts (e.g., President Biden’s Executive Order 13985⁷ and similar initiatives in states and localities) could play a significant role in unmasking the nature and extent of challenges and untapped opportunities that many service systems face in building capacities to provide linguistically and culturally responsive programming. These initiatives could lead to unprecedented progress along the path to achieving program frameworks that are more responsive to community needs and more equitable in serving diverse populations. For example, expanding the reach of Home Visiting programs is a top priority for numerous states and localities that are attempting to close maternal and child health and school readiness and success gaps facing many young children and their families. Yet, state Home Visiting needs assessments often do not capture key challenge factors facing immigrant families;⁸ furthermore, calculations that could capture the incidence of multiple challenge factors facing some immigrant families — and be used to target services proportionately to those most in need — are rarely if ever used in such programs.

Policymakers seeking to operationalize equity in their program approaches can look to efforts like those of Washington’s King County. Recognizing the need to engage more service providers that possessed the linguistic and cultural competency to provide effective Home Visiting services to immigrant families, the county rethought numerous aspects of its service design and contracting processes. These included: efforts to understand community needs and capacities at the front end of the process; targeting underserved communities for service

expansion; valuing the strengths of linguistically and culturally responsive providers in proposal processes; and providing capacity-building resources to support potential new providers in navigating the funding process.⁹ Approaches such as these could rather easily be adopted in other 2Gen service and system contexts.

Policy initiatives focused on improving the scope, efficacy and management of language access services (generally understood to mean translation and interpretation or bi/multilingual services) are another important avenue for supporting provision of linguistically and culturally responsive services — whether in a health, human services or education system, or across a broad range of services provided by a state or locality. Since definitions and evidence of cultural competence in program services can be difficult for some bureaucracies to define and incorporate into their funding competitions, evidence of and support for language access services could prove crucial in distinguishing programs that are skilled and effective in serving linguistically and culturally diverse populations. For example, requiring and scoring an agency’s language access plans, services, quality measures and evidence of fidelity in execution can provide useful evidence of its basic abilities to provide linguistically and culturally responsive services. Such plans are commonly required in major service systems that receive federal funds; existing frameworks for their creation and use can be adapted across service systems, helping to improve the linguistic and cultural competence of services broadly, and more specifically strengthen frameworks used to award funds and evaluate program quality. Adoption of state and local language access laws that set forth agency responsibilities to overcome language barriers — and, ideally, create a coordinating structure to provide capacity-building support and oversight of service quality — can also strengthen the foundation upon which linguistically and culturally responsive services can be scaled.¹⁰

It is important to recognize that, even with greatly expanded efforts to increase the availability of linguistically and culturally responsive services for immigrant families, it will take many years — perhaps even decades — for systems to build the necessary capacities to serve such families equitably and effectively. What can be done in the meantime to address the yawning gap, particularly in early childhood education and care systems, in capacities to competently engage with immigrant parents and equitably serve their children? With parents feeling the greatest motivation to support their children’s success, scaling programs that arm them with strategies to support their children’s healthy physical, cognitive and socioemotional development are an obvious choice. Bold strategies to do so should provide them with direct access to child development knowledge, information and connections to local systems and supports, as well as an onramp into opportunities to achieve their longer-term aspirations for themselves and their family.

Finally, with services for Arab-American families featured prominently in this brief, it is important to underscore the problems caused by the lack of data on Arab-background individuals collected via the U.S. Census. Because they are folded into the White/Caucasian category in Census data, it is impossible to equitably include the socio-demographic characteristics and needs of Arab-Americans in public policy development, allocation of public dollars and other processes that are routinely informed and driven by Census data. Various proposals to address this major policy lapse have been advanced — for example, creating a new racial category for individuals from the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region.¹¹ With many greatly disappointed that the category was not included in the 2020 Census, hopes are high that President Biden’s past support for inclusion of the MENA category,¹² and other opportunities created via his Executive Order 13985,¹³ will result in action to address this significant problem.

Conclusion

Across the country, service organizations are doing the hard work of developing responsive cultural competency to better serve immigrant and refugee families. Working in and through culture is challenging, regardless of target population, but the stories, lessons and insights shared in this brief and related webinar provide insight for organizations that want to strengthen their work with immigrant families. Within the context of providing culturally tailored services and recognizing and designing for cultural differences, the list below synthesizes many of the top-level findings related to this work.

- **Understand and follow cultural norms as much as possible.** Understand and follow cultural norms to avoid disrespecting or turning away families — this may involve communicating primarily through a specific person in the family, scheduling events around important festivals, providing meals that meet dietary restrictions or providing a prayer room.
- **Tailor services to address cultural stigmas.** Develop wraparound services that address cultural stigmas that may limit family participation in important programs. For example, tailor programs so they recognize and attempt to bridge barriers to discussing and accessing mental health services.
- **Design responsive programs that incorporate cultural differences and family experiences.** Begin with a needs assessment to understand the backgrounds people are coming from, so services can be responsive to family culture and prior experiences they may have had (e.g., trauma).
- **Recognize that even families with similar backgrounds may have different cultures.** Families may be from the same origin country, speak a similar language, practice the same religion, etc., but still have different cultural values — staff should refrain from making assumptions about a family's culture.
- **When hiring staff who are representative of the community, be cognizant of cultural dynamics.** It is important for the staff to reflect what the population you serve looks like; cultural norms and family dynamics should be one factor among the many considered during the hiring process.
- **Diffuse tensions between cultures by promoting dialogue between leaders of the different communities.** There may sometimes be tension between two cultural groups. Bringing cultural leaders together and hiring staff from each community helps to promote peacemaking.



Description of the Project

With support from the Annie E Casey Foundation, the project team explored and examined the challenges and promising 2Gen working practices used by organizations that serve immigrant families. Composed of the Aspen Institute Community Strategies Group, the Migration Policy Institute's National Center on Immigrant Integration Policy (MPI), and Higher Heights Consulting, the project team also received valuable input from Ascend at the Aspen Institute.

We were initially interested in how the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic shaped current challenges and responses of immigrant-serving organizations, but we also wanted to discover durable and promising 2Gen practices that could be replicable (and therefore valuable) within other organizations. A related goal of the effort was to advance the entire field of service provision by helping organizations who were not yet or only partially implementing a 2Gen approach improve their work with immigrant families.

To discover 2Gen working practices, we first needed to assess organizational challenges and responses. The project team conducted a national survey of immigrant serving organizations, reaching a target audience of over 1,000 through multiple national service organization networks including the National Community Action Partnership, the United Neighborhood Houses, and Welcoming America. The survey netted over 125 complete responses, and analysis revealed positive trends grouped around four major areas: building trust, overcoming language barriers, developing cultural competency and working through documentation status.

To sharpen the promising 2Gen working practices that organizations use with immigrant families, the project team selected 25 geographically-diverse and reputationally-strong organizations¹⁴ and conducted 90-minute interviews with each one. Nine of these organizations were invited to participate as expert panelists at four webinars that individually covered the four positive area trends mentioned above. They also participated as part of the resource team for peer advising and learning session on that same topic, held following the webinar. The learnings from the survey, interviews, topical webinars and peer advising and learning sessions are gathered in a set of four issue briefs – of which this is one.

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Endnotes

- ¹ "Working with Immigrant and Refugee Families," *Aspen Institute*, <https://www.aspeninstitute.org/programs/community-strategies-group/family-economic-success/2gi/>.
- ² For more on the 2Gen approach, visit the Ascend at the Aspen Institute website; "The 2Gen Approach," *Ascend at the Aspen Institute*, <https://ascend.aspeninstitute.org/2gen-approach/>.
- ³ "Cultural Competence Secrets to Success with Immigrant Families: Spreading and Adapting 2Gen Working Practices," *Aspen Institute*, 10 November 2021, <https://www.aspeninstitute.org/events/cultural-competence/>.
- ⁴ For more on public charge and working through legal status issues, see the second brief in this series at this [webpage](#); "Working with Immigrant Families Regardless of Legal Status: Spreading and Adapting 2Gen Practices," *Aspen Institute*, 16 September 2021, <https://www.aspeninstitute.org/events/2gen-in-immigrant-communities-working-through-immigration-status/>.
- ⁵ See website; "About us – The Family Partnership," *The Family Partnership*, <https://www.thefamilypartnership.org/about/>.
- ⁶ Maki Park, Jie Zong and Jeanne Batalova, *Growing Superdiversity among Young U.S Dual Language Learners and Its Implications*, Migration Policy Institute, February 2018, <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/growing-superdiversity-among-young-us-dual-language-learners-and-its-implications>.
- ⁷ "Executive Order 13985," *The White House*, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/presidential-actions/2021/01/20/executive-order-advancing-racial-equity-and-support-for-underserved-communities-through-the-federal-government/>.
- ⁸ Maki Park and Caitlin Katsiaficas, *Leveraging the Potential of Home Visiting Programs to Serve Immigrant and Dual Language Learner*, Migration Policy Institute, August 2019, <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/home-visiting-immigrant-dual-language-learner-families>.
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- ¹⁰ Jacob Hofstetter and Margie McHugh, *A Framework for Language Access: Key Features of U.S. State and Local Language Access Laws*, Migration Policy Institute, October 2021, <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/state-local-language-access-policies>.
- ¹¹ "Ensuring a Fair and Accurate County in the 2020 Census: Promoting Representation of Our Communities," Arab American Institute, 2019, https://drive.google.com/viewerng/viewer?url=https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5c96c17de5f7d145081a1f94/t/5d5f0a721aabda00017d6163/1566509682639/2019_LD_Census_Issue_Brief.pdf&wmode=opaque.
- ¹² Biden and Harris, "Joe Biden and the Arab American Community: A Plan for Partnership," accessed 28 February 2022, <https://joebiden.com/joe-biden-and-the-arab-american-community-a-plan-for-partnership/>.
- ¹³ Nivine K. Zakhari, "US Census 2030: Count MENA," *Medium*, 27 November 2021, <https://medium.com/@nivinezkakhari/us-census-2030-count-mena-87ea09df8163>.
- ¹⁴ For a list of people and organizations interviewed, [visit this webpage](#).

ABOUT CSG AND MPI

The **Aspen Institute Community Strategies Group** convenes, equips, and inspires local leaders as they build more prosperous regions and advance those living on the economic margins — with our primary focus on rural America since our founding in 1985. Committed to increasing equity and opportunity, CSG advances an asset-based and systems-building approach to improve economic, social, and health outcomes through community and economic development.

The **Migration Policy Institute's National Center on Immigrant Integration Policy** is a crossroads for elected officials, researchers, state and local agency managers, grassroots leaders, local service providers, and others who seek to understand and respond to the challenges and opportunities today's high rates of immigration create in local communities.