



City of Grand Forks
Welcoming Community Roadmap
Working Group Materials

BACKGROUND

The City of Grand Forks was awarded a technical assistance grant from Welcoming America and Partnership for a New American Economy to help develop a strategic plan to leverage existing strengths and build an even more robust and integrated welcoming community. The Gateways for Growth program began in 2015, and Grand Forks is one of 25 cities selected in its second round of grants.

The Welcoming Community Roadmap project is part of a continued effort by the City of Grand Forks to find ways to welcome all new residents and ensure successful integration of immigrants and refugees as part of the community.

Our first step was a data-gathering stage which consisted of three efforts:

- A demographic report prepared by New American Economy
- A city-wide survey completed by 486 residents
- Seven focus groups of immigrant populations, UND students, and Greater Grand Forks Young Professionals

Analysis of this information led to the development of four focus areas:

- Access to Services
- Advancement Opportunities
- Economic Opportunities
- Connected Community

Our next stage is to engage a broad group of community representatives in working groups to draft recommendations for the final plan.

WORKING GROUP THEMES

Access to Services

(Chairs: Cynthia Shabb, cshabb@gfcoalition.org, and Reggie Tarr, reggiet@lssnd.org)

Ensuring all have access to basic services, such as housing, health and human services, and transportation

Advancement Opportunities

(Chair: Robin David, robinldavid13@gmail.com)

Ensuring all have the means to advance through access to education, information, and leadership opportunities

Economic Opportunities

(Chair: Becca Cruger, beccac@grandforks.org)

Ensuring all have opportunities for validating work environments and small business startup support

Connected Community

(Chairs: Alexander Azenkeng, aazenkeng@undeerc.org, and Pete Haga, phaga@grandforks.gov)

Ensuring all have opportunities to connect across race, ethnicity, country of origin, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, physical or mental disability, or veteran status

TIMELINE

July 9, 2018, noon: Working Group Kickoff at City Hall, Council Chambers

Date TBD: Separate Focus Group Meeting 1, focusing on challenges and opportunities

Date TBD: Separate Focus Group Meeting 2, focusing on recommendations and actions

Date TBD: Separate Focus Group Meeting 3, focusing on metrics

August 15: Submission of recommendations from each Working Group to project chairs

CONTACTS

Project Chairs:

Robin David (robinldavid13@gmail.com)

Pete Haga (phaga@grandforksgov.com)

Cynthia Shabb (cshabb@gfcoalition.org)

FINDINGS

Complete reports from the information-gathering stage (demographics, survey, and focus groups) are available on the Grand Forks Immigrant Integration Initiative website. This document is a compilation of some key findings within the working group themes.

Overall Findings

- 8,781 immigrants lived in the Grand Forks region* as of 2015.
- Immigrants make up 3.5% of the Grand Forks region population and 4.5% of the city's population.
- Immigrants make up 37.7% of the 2% growth in the Grand Forks Region
- The top five countries of origin for the Grand Forks Region are as follows:
 - Canada 15.2%
 - Mexico 10.7%
 - Philippines 7.1%
 - Iraq 6.1%
 - China 4.9%
- In 2015, 10.7% of the immigrant population in the Grand Forks region were likely refugees. The top five nationalities resettled to the city of GF between 2002 and 2015 are as follows:
 - Bhutan 571
 - Somalia 155
 - Iraq 69
 - Liberia 32
 - Burundi 28

*The Grand Forks region composes 16 counties in ND and MN.

Access to Services

GENERAL

- Focus group participants expressed a general feeling of security in Grand Forks.
- Immigrant focus group participants stated need for different ways of disseminating public information.
- Immigrant focus group participants expressed difficulty understanding the social service system and its paperwork.

HEALTHCARE

- 24.6% of immigrants in the region received Medicare or Medicaid, compared to 27.9% of U.S.-born residents.
- About 67.5% of immigrants had private healthcare coverage, while 25.3% had public healthcare coverage.

- Immigrant focus group participants expressed a desire for live interpreters for medical services.
- Focus group participants expressed need for affordable healthcare and insurance.

EDUCATION

- Immigrants make up 1.7 of students under 18 in the region's public schools.
- Focus group participants would like to see more adult English instruction available.

HOUSING

- While 61.7% of the region's U.S.-born population owned their own homes, compared to 29.3% of the foreign-born population.
- 54.3% of immigrants were renters.
- Focus group participants expressed concern about housing prices.

TRANSPORTATION

- UND students in focus groups stated that wait times for public transportation were too lengthy.
- Focus group participants are utilizing Uber.
- UND focus group participants would like to see a bike share program.
- Focus group participants noted that the cost of bus passes for children to get to school was expensive.

Advancement Opportunities

HIGHER EDUCATION

- 25.4% of U.S.-born residents held a bachelor's degree, compared to 36.2% of immigrants.
- 7.3% of U.S.-born residents held an advanced degree, compared to 20% of immigrants.
- 1,694 students in GF colleges and universities were temporary residents, supporting 343 local jobs and spending \$37.9 million.

INVOLVEMENT/CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

- Immigrant focus group participants would like to see more opportunities for immigrants and refugees to move into leadership roles.
- Focus group participants expressed lack of awareness about community activities and opportunities for involvement.
- Focus group participants would like to see more opportunities for residents to engage local government.
- Focus group participants would like to see children's activities at the public library during evenings and weekends.

INFORMATION

- Focus group participants would like to see more global materials at the public library.

Economic Opportunities

IMMIGRANT CONTRIBUTIONS

- In 2015, foreign-born residents contributed \$353.7 million to the GDP of the Grand Forks Region.
- In 2015 immigrant households earned \$177.7 million, contributed \$50.1 million to federal taxes and \$14.4 million to state and local taxes, leaving them \$113.3 million in spending power. They also contributed \$20.4 million to Social Security and \$5 million to Medicare.

IMMIGRANT LABOR FORCE

- The foreign-born population made up 3.5% of the region's population but represented 3.8% of its employed labor force and 4.8% of STEM workers.
- Immigrants make up the most significant percentages of the following workforces in the region:
 - Healthcare 6.8%
 - Education 6.0%
 - Professional Services 5.1%
 - Manufacturing 4.7%
 - Recreation & Accommodation 4.3%
- Immigrant focus group participants expressed abundance of lower-skilled jobs but difficulty advancing to higher positions.
- Immigrant focus group participants expressed concerns about discrimination in hiring and employment.
- Immigrant focus group participants suggested they are sometimes hired to fulfill desire for diversity in employer's public relations.
- Immigrant focus group participants expressed desire for labor union representation but saw employers as hostile to unionization.

IMMIGRANT ENTREPRENEURSHIP

- While 11.3% of U.S.-born residents were self-employed, only 4.5% of the foreign-born population was self-employed.
- Immigrant focus group participants expressed entrepreneurial interests but found barriers in navigating legal documents, loans, and renting space.

LOCAL SALARIES

- Young Professional focus group participants expressed satisfaction with their jobs but desire for higher salary.

Connected Community

GATHERING SPACES

- Focus group participants suggested gathering spaces in apartments are not available, resulting in complaints about noise and visitors.
- Focus group participants found lack of public gathering spaces, with private spaces too expensive to secure and too inflexible.

- Focus group participants would like to see more gathering space in the public library and a more updated look.

RELATIONS ACROSS GROUPS

- Focus group participants reported not interacting with their apartment neighbors.
- Focus group participants noted school bullying incidents that were addressed.
- Focus group participants expressed a general feeling of welcome, especially from those in existing cultural community.
- Focus group participants noted an outward friendliness but deeper distrust of newcomers.
- Focus group participants suggested people need more opportunities to connect with those outside of their groups.
- Focus group participants expressed a desire to share their culture and traditions with the broader community.
- Focus group participants would like to see more opportunities for UND students to engage with the broader community and make connections off campus.

COMMUNITY EVENTS

- UND students in focus groups noted that transportation to summer events off-campus can be difficult.
- Focus group participants would like to see more activities for youth under 21.
- UND focus group participants expressed a desire for more community activities and a more vibrant, dynamic feel.
- Focus group participants would like to see more community orientation for international students.

SAMPLE CITY PLANS

Strategic plans from other cities are available on the Gateways for Growth website:

<http://gatewaysforgrowth.org/map/strategic>. These plans can serve as inspiration or helpful reference as we design our own. San Jose, Aurora, Baltimore, and Chicago are a good place to start browsing.

You can also browse Welcoming America's Welcoming Standard for a comprehensive community framework:

https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1APX_5AaqrodhGxh7k9M71YEj_YFodRkIVh1aFCz018s/edit?usp=sharing.

RECOMMENDATIONS TEMPLATE

Focus Area:

Goal:

Recommendation 1:

Lead Agencies:

Key Partners:

Strategy 1 By Year

Strategy 2 By Year

Strategy 3 By Year

Partners:

Timeline:

Metrics: