



## **Immigrant Integration Task Force Meeting**

May 22, 2014

Old City Hall, Room 106  
600 East Trade Street Charlotte, NC 28202

### **MINUTES**

Attendance:

**Task Force Members:** Diego Anselmo, Audrea Caesar, Ellen Dubin, Owen Furuseth, Daniel Hernandez, Mo Idlibby, Omar Jorge, Anika Khan, Stefan Latorre, Thanh-Thu Luong, Marianne Lyall-Knusel, Victoria Manning, Amy Michelone, Tin Nguyen, Jennifer Roberts, Wil Russell, Kim Vazquez, Kristin Wade, Curt White, Emily Zimmern

**City Staff:** Tat'yana Berdan, Alexis Gordon, Krystal King, Millie Villacis

**Absent:** John Chen, Monica Colin, Mariana De Luca, Gautam Desai, Steven Garfinkel, Jennifer Pearsall, Robert Shore, Sam Wazan, Lacey Williams

#### 1. Welcome

Mr. Latorre (Chair) called the meeting to order at 2:12 p.m.

He explained that the last four Task Force appointments had been made by Mayor Clodfelter, and invited the new members to introduce themselves.

Mr. Latorre presented the April 24, 2014, meeting minutes to be voted on. Ms. Wade moved to approve the minutes. Ms. Roberts seconded the motion. All voted in favor. The motion carried.

Ms. Gordon announced that, from September to February, the monthly Task Force meetings will be held on the fourth Tuesday of each month at the same time, 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. This fall/winter schedule was decided upon in order to avoid conflicts due to holidays.

#### 2. Where We Are Today

Mr. Latorre reminded the Task Force that they are currently in the listening and learning phase, during which time several Community Listening Sessions are being conducted in order to gather feedback directly from immigrants. The Task Force hosted its first

Community Listening Session in partnership with International House on April 27, 2014, and Action North Carolina hosted a session on May 3, 2014. He reviewed the other organizations that have scheduled a listening session (see Appendix A for PowerPoint presentation), noting that the Task Force's second listening session will be held on June 24, 2014 in the evening at Bethesda Health Center. Mr. Latorre pointed out that there are still several international communities that have not committed to holding a listening session and urged the Task Force members to reach out to these groups.

Ms. Luong, who is the Executive Director of the Southeast Asian Coalition, confirmed that her organization has agreed to host a session in partnership with Nimish Bhatt, who can bring in the Hindu community. Ms. Gordon informed the members that Mr. Wazan had contacted the Muslim American Society, which is interested in holding a session but is looking to see if they can do so before mid-July. She said that the Neighborhood Good Samaritan Center also agreed to host a session.

Mr. Latorre asked the members to complete the new commitment sheets, reminding them that, as Task Force members, they need to get involved with these Community Listening Sessions and invite participants. He requested that each member attend at least two of the Task Force's three listening sessions, as well as a couple of the other organizations' listening sessions.

### 3. Sharing Feedback from Listening Sessions

#### a. Task Force Community Listening Session

Ms. Zimmern (Vice Chair) provided an overview of the Task Force Community Listening Session that was held on April 27, 2014, in partnership with International House. Approximately 50 people attended, and they were from fairly diverse backgrounds in attendance.

She reminded the Task Force of the three questions that are being asked of participants at all listening sessions:

- What is one thing that is being done well in Charlotte to help immigrants?
- What is one thing that could be improved upon in Charlotte to help immigrants?
- What is one critical need that is urgent and should be addressed in Charlotte to help immigrants?

In response to the first question, participants felt that Charlotte has done a good job of offering a large number and diverse range of cultural events and festivals. Participants are also pleased with the number of non-profit organizations available to assist immigrants. With regard to what can be improved upon, participants expressed that navigating the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools (CMS) system is difficult and there is a need for more information to be disseminated to CMS students and parents. Participants also raised concerns over public safety issues, particularly the 287(g) program. The overwhelming response regarding a critical need was access to driver's licenses/IDs. Also, many

participants suggested that a central location or “Welcome to Charlotte” directory or orientation for new arrivals would be very helpful.

Ms. Zimmern requested that Task Force members send any resources they find during their own research or work that might be useful for the Task Force to consider to herself, Mr. Latorre, and the office.

#### b. Action NC Community Listening Session

Ms. Zimmern then provided an overview of the listening session hosted by Action NC on May 10, 2014, which had 15 people in attendance. This group stated that there is an increased number of job opportunities and more public transportation options and routes available for immigrants. Issues of concern that need improvement included access to driver’s licenses and IDs and access to information about resources. Critical needs included addressing the issues surrounding the 287(g) program, which creates fear and mistrust within the community, and better sensitivity training for police officers.

Another major issue presented at the listening session deals with the need to clarify the distinction between notaries public and notaries-at-law. Mr. Latorre explained that in many Latin American countries, a notary actually is as a lawyer and is, therefore, able to offer legal services. This is not the case in the United States. Unaware of this, many new immigrants often confuse the two and there have been many cases in Charlotte of notaries public misrepresenting their services and claiming to be able to perform legal duties. Mr. Latorre stated that this was a particularly relevant problem within the Latino community and something he has encountered often as a lawyer.

#### c. After-Session Review

Ms. Zimmern discussed the After-Session Review from the Task Force Community Listening Session, during which Task Force members discussed what they expected to happen versus what actually happened at the session, as well what was learned and what adjustments might need to be made for future sessions.

Task Force members admitted that they did not know what to expect going into the first listening session, and were pleased to learn that the turnout was so diverse. It was learned that most of the participants learned about the session through word of mouth, which is very important to keep in mind when inviting guests to future listening sessions.

At the Task Force listening session, the participants were more interested in discussing the specific topic of the small group they were in, whereas at the Action NC listening session, the participants were more interested in discussing the three general questions. Therefore, it was agreed that session leaders should continue to ask both sets of questions (the three general questions and the three topic-specific questions) whenever possible.

There was some concern about the Quality of Life category, as many participants had a hard time understanding what exactly is meant by “Quality of Life.” Also discussed was the importance of having participants write down their responses on their worksheets.

Although each small group had a note-taker, it is still difficult to capture every participant's comments. Having their answers written in their own words will help ensure that accurate feedback can be provided to the Task Force. Ms. Roberts noted how helpful it was to have someone taking notes during the discussion, which reiterated the importance of having two task force members present in each small group, with one member facilitating the discussion and the other taking notes. Mr. Latorre also stressed that the notes taken during sessions would be the Task Force's main source of data. This is why it is imperative that the Task Force members attend the listening sessions and assist with taking notes or serving as discussion leaders.

#### d. From Your Agency's Perspective

Ms. Zimmern asked the Task Force members to gather in groups to answer and discuss the same three general questions that are asked of the participants at the listening sessions and to then report out to the whole Task Force.

##### Group 1

The most compelling issue discussed was the need for immigrants to have legitimate identification. Major Anselmo of CMPD explained that the reason people are arrested when driving without a license is not because they are driving without a license, but because the police cannot prove who they really are without legitimate identification. An officer has no choice but to take the driver in to the station and fingerprint them, because if the driver gives a false name and address and the officer writes a citation under that name, whoever the person is whose name was used will be spending several years trying to clear their name. Once they are taken in to the station and identified, this has a domino effect that typically leads to the 287(g) program kicking in. If some form of legal identification was available to immigrants, it would make it easier for the police to simply give them a citation, rather than having to arrest them.

##### Group 2

With regard to what Charlotte is doing well, the group noted that there are many organizations in Charlotte that offer literacy and English as a Second Language classes to immigrants. One area that needs improvement is transportation, particularly access to more routes and having fewer transfers. Critical needs included access to higher education and in-state tuition, fair housing, and IDs.

##### Group 3

This group discussed how Charlotte has been doing a good job with public safety, particularly with reducing communication barriers and improving services to all citizens. There has also been an increase in business and community support, especially in the faith community, which has helped people feel welcome and at home in Charlotte. One area that needs improvement is documentation, and one possible solution might be to create a Charlotte-centric license or ID, which could provide that first step of identification needed.

Another need is to educate residents about the growing immigrant community and to foster a welcoming attitude and the notion that we are all Charlotteans. One critical need is to have a “one-stop shop” as a way to centralize important services and resources to make them more readily available to immigrants.

#### 4. Determining the Survey Needs

Mr. Latorre directed the Task Force members to the handout of sample questions from surveys conducted in Belgium and Chicago and by the Charlotte International Cabinet (see Appendix B). He explained that the survey needs to be finalized very soon so the Task Force needs to discuss and decide on which questions they want included in the survey.

Ms. Gordon informed the group that there are two national resources for the Task Force to tap into: Welcoming America and the Americas Society/Council of the Americas. She has been contacting peer cities to learn about their immigrant integration strategies. Most of these cities have conducted surveys of either the receiving community or agencies and providers, as opposed to surveying the immigrant community.

Ms. Gordon introduced Eric Caratao, a research specialist with UNC Charlotte’s Urban Institute, who will help the Task Force develop the phone survey. Neighborhood and Business Services will be paying for the phone survey to be created and conducted. The Neighborhood and Business Services’ community research team will be working with the Task Force to develop the written survey, which will be published online and can be printed and taken to different locations.

Mr. Latorre mentioned that the largest Latino festival will be on June 15, 2014, and the festival organizers have already agreed to give the Task Force a space for the purpose of distributing the survey. Ms. Gordon also mentioned that one of the Latino newspapers had offered to publish the survey in its paper and that other local ethnic newspapers might be willing to publish it as well. Héctor Vaca, the Director of Action NC in Charlotte and one of the guests present at the meeting, offered to post the survey on his organization’s website to reach more people.

When asked for some pointers on what makes good survey questions, Mr. Caratao explained that limiting the number of open-ended questions, using scaled and multiple choice questions and keeping the survey to 15 minutes or less would produce the most comprehensive data.

The Task Force then split into three groups to review the sample surveys and discuss possible questions to include in the survey.

##### Group 1:

Group one suggested that there be a question on the survey to allow participants to rate a variety of services provided by the city or county on a scale from very satisfied to very unsatisfied. There should also be a question about access to housing and navigating the housing system, but they were unsure of how to phrase the question. Another suggestion

was to ask questions about whether immigrants feel welcome and/or safe in their neighborhoods, if they know their neighbors, or if their neighbors are friendly to them. Lastly, it is important to ask a question about immigrants' access to financial institutions, but to not use the term "banking," because many immigrants use financial mechanisms other than banks.

#### Group 2:

Group two had a more general discussion about the survey and thought that the questions should focus on the eight topics previously identified by the Task Force. They also stressed the importance of gathering demographic information during the survey, such as country of origin, how long a person has lived in the United States, and the reason why a person came here (i.e., as a refugee or an asylee, for business, etc.).

#### Group 3:

The third group also suggested basing the questions on the topics already identified, with one general question per topic that has many multiple choice answers. This would provide a lot of information that would be easy to tally and quantify. They also suggested having a question to capture immigrants' status (i.e., legal permanent resident, citizen, deferred action, no status, etc.).

### 5. Feedback and Closing

Ms. Gordon reminded the Task Force what the next steps would be. After the listening sessions and the surveys have been completed, the Task Force will split into subgroups to begin devising recommendations for City Council based on the data collected. Experts in the fields related to the policy recommendations created will be invited to work with each subgroup to advise on the feasibility of the policy recommendations. There will then be a public hearing held at the Government Center for immigrants and community members to attend and provide their feedback on the recommendations. The Task Force must have their recommendations finalized by their last meeting in February 2015.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:05 p.m.

**Appendix A:**  
**May 22, 2014, Immigrant Integration Task Force Meeting PowerPoint Presentation**



**CHARLOTTE**  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

# Immigrant Integration Task Force

May 22, 2014



- Introduce New Appointees
- Learning and Listening Phase
  - Community Listening Sessions Through July
  - Launch Survey this Summer



# Listening Sessions

<b>Organizations Committed to Host:</b>	<b>Organizations contacted/considering:</b>	<b>Largest Populations Meck. County:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Action NC – done</li> <li>• Charlotte Chamber of Commerce (May 29)</li> <li>• Refugee Support (June 18)</li> <li>• CIC/Choice Translating (Mid-June)</li> <li>• IITF at Bethesda Center (June 24)</li> <li>• Latin American Coalition</li> <li>• CPCC</li> <li>• CMS</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Southeast Asian Coalition</li> <li>• Vietnamese American Senior Association</li> <li>• Muslim American Society</li> <li>• Asian Library</li> <li>• CAACC</li> <li>• Neighborhood Good Samaritan Center</li> <li>• Community Relations Committee</li> <li>• Mecklenburg Ministries</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Latin America               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Mexico</li> <li>◦ El Salvador</li> <li>◦ Honduras</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Asia               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ India</li> <li>◦ Vietnam</li> <li>◦ China</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Europe               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ United Kingdom</li> <li>◦ Germany</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Africa               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Nigeria</li> <li>◦ Liberia</li> <li>◦ Ethiopia</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

## Task Force Member Commitments

- Recruit organizations to hold a Listening Session
- Invite people to attend Listening Sessions
- Facilitate topic discussion at Session(s)
- Lead the After-Session Review



# Listening Session Feedback

- Task Force Session – April 27<sup>th</sup> – about 50 people
  - What Charlotte is doing well:
    - Cultural events and festivals
    - Variety of nonprofit organizations to assist immigrants
  - What Charlotte can improve:
    - Information to CMS students and parents (how to navigate education system, grades, buses, etc.)
    - Study the impact of 287(g)
  - Critical Needs:
    - Driver's license/ID access
    - Central location for resources; a "Welcome to Charlotte" directory or orientation



## Listening Session Feedback (cont.)

- Action NC Session- May 10<sup>th</sup> – about 15 people
  - What Charlotte is doing well:
    - More public transportation options and routes available
    - Festivals
    - More job opportunities available
  - What Charlotte can improve:
    - Driver's license/ID access
    - Access to information about resources (need to advertise to immigrants better)
  - Critical Needs:
    - 287(g) program creates fear & mistrust, immigrants lose jobs because can't drive to work
    - Cultural sensitivity training for police
    - Notary public v notaries-at-law issues

- Task Force Community Listening Session
  - Task Force members had little to no expectations
  - Group more diverse than expected: Japan, Congo, Colombia, Ecuador, Bhutan, France, Peru, Mexico, El Salvador, Nicaragua, West Africa, and India
    - Most heard through word of mouth
  - Learned:
    - Participants more interested in discussing specific topics, not general questions (opposite in Action NC session)
    - Participants wanted to say answers, not write down
  - Suggestions for next session:
    - Very important to make sure they write answers on sheet
    - Have time keeper or time cards to display
    - Better definition for Quality of Life

In your groups

- Answer the 3 General Focus Questions
- Discuss your answers with one another
- Share what topic generated the most interest in each group

## Learning from Others

- Peer City Calls
  - Mainly receiving community and agency questionnaires
- Web Research
  - Few share questions online
- Talking to Local Partners

## Local Partners

- Urban Institute
  - Develop phone survey
- N&BS Community Research team
  - Develop written survey

## What to Ask

- Demographic questions, 3 Focus Questions, ...



Break into different groups

- Discuss thoughts on survey samples
- Come up with possible questions
- Share three questions developed in each group

Please leave your feedback  
for today's meeting on the table

## **Appendix B: Sample Survey Questions**

### **Immigrant Citizen Survey – Belgium – King Baudouin Foundation**

#### **Employment:**

- What's your job situation?
- What type of organization do you work for?
- Does your job use all your skills?
- Is your education sufficient?
- What reasons prevent you from participating in a training course?
- How many years have you worked?
- What problems have you had finding jobs?
- How much education do you have?
- Have you applied to get your qualifications recognized and were you successful?

#### **Language:**

- What's your mother tongue?
- What other languages do you speak well?
- Did you have any problems that discouraged you from learning the country's language(s)?
- Have you taken a language or integration course in the country?
- How has this course helped you personally?

#### **Civic and Political Participation**

- In this country, are you part of a political party or group? Trade union? Immigrant or other organization?
- Do you know an association run by immigrants?
- Have you heard of the immigrant consultative body?
- Did you vote in the last national or local election in this country?
- Why did you not vote?
- Would you vote if there was a general election tomorrow (and you had the right to)?
- Does this country need more parliamentarians with an immigrant background and why?

#### **Family Status**

- What's your marital status?
- What's the nationality of your spouse?
- Since you moved here, have you ever had a partner or child living outside the country?
- Have you ever applied for family reunion?

- When did you apply?
- What happened to your application?
- What problems did you have applying?
- How has reuniting with your family helped you personally?
- Would you like to apply for family reunion? Why not?
- How might reuniting with your family help you personally?

### **Long Term Residency**

- Have you ever applied for long term residence?
- When did you apply?
- What happened to your application?
- What problems did you have applying?
- How has becoming a long-term resident helped you personally?
- Do you want to become a long-term resident? Why not?
- Why do you not want to become a long-term resident?
- How might becoming a long-term resident help you personally?

### **Citizenship**

- Have you ever applied to become a citizen?
- When did you apply?
- Which procedure did you use?
- What happened to your application?
- What problems did you have applying?
- How has becoming a citizen helped you personally?
- Do you want to become a citizen? Why not?
- How might becoming a citizen help you personally?

## Welcoming Questionnaire Feedback – Chicago

### Opening

Introduce Office of New Americans and Welcoming City plan project  
Introduce Civic Consulting/pro bono partner

### Background

1. Describe your organization's mission/your interest and involvement with immigrants

### Overview of Chicago immigration issues

2. What challenges do Chicago immigrants face?  
What makes them uniquely difficult for immigrants?  
What are the strategies for facing these issues?  
How long would it take to implement these strategies?  
Who are the most important stakeholders in addressing these issues?  
What are the potential barriers to success?

### Review focus area/initiative list, and ask for input to expand and prioritize

3. Is our list of goals and initiatives complete?  
What would you add/remove?  
Anything to rephrase/reframe? Nuances to consider?  
How would you prioritize between the goals and initiatives?  
How can we develop our understanding of the goals we have set? (Note: not sure what this question is trying to get at; does it refer to measuring impact in different ways?)

### Proposed additional questions:

Are there any goals which could be developed further? If yes, how would you recommend doing so?

If you could make ONE investment to serve immigrants, what would it be?

### Next steps/looking forward

4. Who else should be involved? Which experts and stakeholders should we interview?  
5. Are there other cities or other sectors that you think we can learn from? Examples?

## Questions from Recent Charlotte International Cabinet Surveys and Other Suggestions

- Age:
- Gender:
- Country of birth:
- Year moved to US:
- First US city you lived in:
- Year move to Charlotte:
- What brought you to Charlotte: Job School Family Other
- How welcoming is Charlotte? 1= very unwelcoming 7=Very welcoming
- How would you rate the quality of your housing? 1= very low quality 7=Very high quality
- How would you rate the price of your housing? 1 = too expensive
- What are some POSTITIVE things you tell people from outside the United States about Charlotte, NC?
- What are some NEGATIVE things you tell people from outside the United States about Charlotte, NC?
- Highest Level of Education Completed: High School Some College Associate's Degree  
Bachelor's Degree Master's Degree Doctorate Professional Degree
- Is your degree from another country? Is it recognized in the US? If not, what is your highest level of education recognized in the US?
- Have you interacted with any of the following non-profit organizations? (Maybe change to open ended)
- How can Charlotte be a more "international" city?
- How can Charlotte be a more "welcoming" city?  
What do you believe the City of Charlotte needs to focus more efforts on to better serve all its citizens (for example, transportation, public safety, environment, taxes and services, etc.)?
- What is the best way to communicate with the population your organization serves [for example, church bulletins, the internet, local media (TV, radio, newspaper? which stations/publications?), flyers at the library, social media, etc.]?
- What can you, as an immigrant community, do to facilitate integration?
- What will you do, differently, to promote communal citizenship?
- What programs, ways, or means do you believe will provide you with a home-town climate?
- How do you see your community (of immigrants) in two, five, and ten years?
- What are the obstacles that you face in pursuing what you initially thought will be the American dream?
- What cultural values do you hold on to and are passing to future generations in your family and community?
- What cultural values do you retain and would like to mold into your way of life here in Charlotte?
- What problems are you experiencing that you otherwise wouldn't have in your country of origin?
- Where do you go for help to address or resolve these problems...in question 8?
- Since you immigrated, what is/was the most powerful enabler of your success?
- Since you immigrated, what is/was the most debilitating factor that stood in your way of success?