

NEWCOMER INTEGRATION: A YMCA FRAMEWORK TO ENSURE ACCESS AND INCLUSION FOR ALL

In the U.S., newcomers (also referred to as immigrants) are among the most underserved populations. Many lack access to the key resources which contribute to personal and family stability including healthcare, language support, education, job training, or social services. With a long history of serving newcomer communities, a national reach into 10,000 communities and the technical resources of the global network of YMCAs in 119 countries, the Y is uniquely positioned to address newcomer needs in a holistic, sustainable manner. This helps to ensure that more people can reach their potential and fully participate in civil society. For more information, contact YMCA of the USA at 800 872 9622 or DIG@ymca.net.

Why Integration?

THE IMPERATIVES FOR INTEGRATION SUPPORT

*More than 13 percent of the U.S. population (or 42 million people) is foreign born. The combined population share of foreign-born individuals and their U.S.-born children is 26 percent.

*Newcomers, especially children, can become vulnerable and marginalized without access to resources or support to help their transition into American society. Receiving communities must be able to understand and respond to the unique needs of newcomer populations.

*For strong, cohesive communities, it's critical that people from all backgrounds have opportunities to connect with one another to build mutual understanding and work together towards positive social progress.

*As the nation's largest nonprofit with a mission to serve all, the Y is committed to helping everyone, regardless of their background or where they come from, build healthy spirit, mind and body to reach their full potential.

*For Ys are to remain relevant to the communities they serve, they must be able to understand and engage newcomer populations with programs that meet their unique wants and needs.

Areas of Engagement

STRATEGIC PATHWAYS FOR SUCCESSFUL INTEGRATION

Community Development: Intentionally engaging newcomers and longtime residents in a community's planning (including integration initiatives) promotes the overall safety, health and well-being of communities.

Language & Education: Eliminating language barriers, promoting English proficiency and providing access to formal education for children and adults, are key elements for integration and community development.

Health & Well-being: Programs that promote health and well-being help individuals reach wellness goals, achieve greater life balance and become more engaged with their communities.

Citizenship & Civic Engagement: Promoting citizenship and opportunities for individuals to actively participate in civic life are vital for community participation, collaboration, leadership development and democracy building.

Economic Integration & Employment: Creating opportunities for economic independence and mobility through financial literacy classes and job skills training are critical to helping newcomers establish a foothold and contribute to the prosperity of the broader community.

Areas of Opportunity

FOR THE COMMUNITY

Cohesive Communities: Connecting diverse populations and promoting mutual understanding results in a vibrant society that stands together and values all residents, regardless of experience, history, ethnicity or background.

Revitalized Communities: Contributions of immigrant families working in tandem with their native-born neighbors revitalizes declining communities.

Strong Communities: Integrated communities that embrace racial, ethnic, and economic diversity enrich the social and cultural fabric of society and are more resilient in tackling social issues.

Global Competitiveness: Increased productivity and ability to compete globally results from an expanded base of multi-lingual/multi-cultural work force, consumers, taxpayers, and entrepreneurs.

Vibrant Democracy: We create a social and cultural environment in which all groups are accepted as equal members of society with the opportunity – and responsibility – to engage and contribute to the common good.

Secure Communities: Our communities and country are more secure when all members of society – regardless of race, national origin, or socio-economic status – live in dignity and equality.

FOR YMCAs

Membership Development: Ys that reach out to new populations achieve increased membership growth and ensure continued relevance within the community.

Program Innovation: By responding to newcomer needs, Ys foster innovation and promote cross-cultural understanding and interaction within diverse communities at home and abroad.

Leadership Development: Ys develop culturally competent leaders (staff or volunteer) with a strong commitment to diversity and inclusion and a global perspective, to strengthen the Y's role in community leadership.

Collaboration: Newcomer integration initiatives helps Ys develop new partnerships with businesses, governmental agencies, foundations, non-profits, and education institutions.

Resource Development: Ys can leverage significant financial and technical resources by demonstrating their commitment to serving newcomer populations and building diverse and global communities.

Visibility: Ys that demonstrate their impact as a charitable organization and effectiveness in serving newcomer communities will generate awareness and support for the Y cause.