New Hampshire Immigrant Integration Initiative: Promising Practices & Lessons from Local Communities

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By: T. L. Hill Group



Photo by Cheryl Senter, Courtesy of NH Charitable Foundation

hen the Endowment for Health launched the New Hampshire Immigrant Integration Initiative in 2014, it aspired to engage immigrants in all domains of community life – economic, social, political, cultural, educational and others – in the Granite state. Today the New Hampshire New Americans Loan Fund is financing small business start-ups, thanks to a strategic partnership initiated by leaders in Concord. Conversation Cafés and Welcoming Week events in Manchester are bringing together long-time and new residents. In the Lakes Region, a young foreign-born boy attended his first soccer camp last summer, and in Nashua the Latin Hispanic International Futbol Association (LHIFA) has expanded to engage over 270 children, youth, and adults playing the sport in a family league as an outgrowth of this investment. At the start of this initiative, achievements like these were envisioned. Four years later, they are the result of ongoing hard work carried out by local collaboratives in four towns that are beginning to change the way New Hampshire welcomes immigrants. The Welcoming Concord Initiative, Welcoming Lakes Region, Welcoming Manchester, and One Greater Nashua are working earnestly to foster two-way integration between new Americans and their receiving communities.

A collaborative field-building community of practice, the NH Immigrant Integration Initiative (NH III) attracted additional support from the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation and United Way of Greater Nashua. With leadership from the Endowment for Health, these investments reflect the

¹ We acknowledge that people identify and describe themselves in different ways, using language that most closely resonates with their perspectives and values. In this report, the terms "immigrant" and "new American" are used interchangeably to include immigrants, refugees, asylees, and foreign-born residents of any circumstance, without regard to their legal status. The NH Immigrant Integration Initiative was designed to invite members of the receiving community and anyone born outside the U.S. now living in NH to engage in mutual and reciprocal welcoming activities. We encourage honoring the language that immigrants/new Americans use when referring to themselves as they are welcomed into shared communities.

recognition that immigrants are important to the future vitality of New Hampshire. As stated in the initiative's request for proposals, immigrant integration is defined as an intentional effort that engages and transforms all community members, both native born and newcomers, in reaping shared benefits and creating a new whole that is greater than the sum of its parts. With funding that totaled \$1,035,404 from 2014-2018 and countless hours of in-kind support from many volunteers, the initiative has generated active networks in each city for welcoming immigrants and refugees, and it has fostered a community of practice with statewide reach that builds upon Welcoming New Hampshire.

Promising Practices & Lessons from Local Communities features programs and strategies emerging from NH III that are beginning to demonstrate community impact. Community impact is defined as any outcome or output that directly enhances the ability of immigrants in targeted NH communities to experience increased social inclusion and integration. A companion piece, Profiles of Promising Practices & Lessons from Local Communities, provides more detailed information about each promising practice. Practices highlighted in this report were identified by each local collaborative as part of a sustainability planning process facilitated by the T. L. Hill Group. Local collaboratives took stock of work outlined in their comprehensive four-year plans to identify programs that demonstrated reasonable potential for long-term viability beyond the funded grant period.

Practices profiled in this report reflect areas of sustained interest and capacity based on each site's distinct local context, leadership, and volunteer expertise. State level promising practices featured in this report are those implemented beyond a single site or identified by other sites as practices they seek to replicate or adapt in their communities. The NH III did not utilize a formal research or evaluation process to identify promising practices, nor were practices vetted using a common set of objectively determined selection criteria. Instead of engaging a panel of expert reviewers to verify evidence of success, this report draws from self-reported firsthand accounts by site members and NH III technical assistance providers. Practices exhibiting initial positive indicators of success based on performance during the 2014-2018 formal grant period are featured. For these reasons, practices highlighted in this report are referred to as "promising," meaning that they demonstrate potential for long-term success. Practices profiled by each site are not perfect, but they have been effective to date in achieving specific programmatic and strategic goals. Lessons learned by members of NH III local collaboratives, their partners, supporters, and technical assistance providers are offered to inform and strengthen the field of immigrant integration. Promising practices are making it easier for new Americans and long-time residents to recognize one another as integral members of these New Hampshire communities.

Practitioners are the primary target audience for this information. Coalitions and organizations working with immigrants on the ground in New Hampshire and in local communities in other states are invited to learn about and experiment with promising practices emerging from NH III.

The Promising Practices Guide is organized into five sections: I. Assembling & Managing a Local Collaborative, II. Planning the Initiative, III. Implementing the Initiative, IV. Promising Practices for Integrating New Americans, and IV. Sustaining Impact.

Please visit the Welcoming New Hampshire website (http://www.WelcomingNH.org) for online versions of the full report, **Promising Practices & Lessons from Local Communities**, and its companion piece, **Profiles of Promising Practices & Lessons from Local Communities**.

I. Assembling & Managing a Local Collaborative



Photo by Becky Field, FieldWork Photos

The New Hampshire Immigrant Integration Initiative was guided by the premise that welcoming and integrating newcomers would be achieved through multi-sector strategies. A sense of mutual responsibility would emerge by increasing cross-cultural connections, encouraging community adaptation, and fostering a shared vision for the future among newcomers and long-time residents. To assemble partners and attain meaningful community-wide engagement, local groups competed for grants to implement a 6-month planning process with key stakeholders. The RFP² outlined several characteristics that would exemplify a **Welcoming Community** (Appendix A). A checklist of criteria for successful immigrant integration plans provided an overview of expectations for the initial phase (Appendix B). At the end of the planning phase, newly formed local collaboratives in Concord, the Lakes Region, Manchester, and Nashua were selected to implement the initiative between April 2014 and September 2018.

A. Why assemble a local collaborative?

The local collaborative in each community serves as a central hub for gathering key stakeholders, exchanging information, learning from each other's successes and challenges, and jointly managing the efforts of participants toward fulfilling goals of the initiative. Representatives of multiple sectors offer access to a range of local resources and opportunities of mutual and reciprocal interest to long-time residents and newcomers.

B. Who participates?

Representatives of many sectors, including private, public, nonprofit, and informal community institutions, participate in the local collaborative. Key stakeholders are local businesses, formal refugee resettlement agencies, ethnic community-based organizations (ECBOs), civic groups, advocates, faith-based organizations, arts and culture institutions, and many more. In every town, support from the

² Endowment for Health. (December 2013). Immigrant Integration Initiative: Planning Phase Request for Proposals, page 7.

mayor and other elected public officials, including local policy makers (e.g., aldermen or county council members), is cultivated by the local collaborative. This broad-based coalition effort in each town is essential for engaging key stakeholders. Local collaboratives coordinate their efforts with those of other groups working to integrate immigrants and refugees by attending each other's meetings and regularly sharing information.

<u>QUOTE</u>: "First, ask people. Be inclusive of as many people as possible. Second, establish credibility. Remember to follow through, be responsive. Be honest and straightforward about what you can and can't do." -- Joan Gilmore, Coordinator, Welcoming Concord Initiative

<u>TIP</u>: One agency doing all the work and outreach with newcomers doesn't lead to a broader set of connections and networks for newcomers. – Elizabeth (Liz) Fitzgerald, United Way of Greater Nashua

C. What role(s) does the collaborative serve? How does it operate?

The sole aim of the local collaborative is to create ways for members of the receiving community and members of the immigrant and refugee community to cultivate a shared sense of agency and belonging in every area of life – economic, social, political, cultural, educational and other domains. The local collaborative reflects the shared perspectives of a broad-based coalition of supporters. Participating groups are committed to ensuring that their communities are welcoming. The local collaborative fully engages immigrants and refugees in working together with long-time residents to create inclusive spaces, elevate their positive contributions, and thrive.

Collaboratives are geographically based and are formed by local leaders who organize around the principles of immigrant integration. Each local collaborative reflects the unique context and characteristics of the town and its residents. In every town, the local collaborative is managed by a lead organization that has employed a part-time coordinator to manage the effort and facilitate an advisory group (e.g., steering committee or leadership team) that guides implementation of the overall initiative in that area.

<u>QUOTE</u>: "We sat down at the very beginning, had food, and talked about who we are. At the beginning, getting to know each other personally as we shared food really coalesced this group so that when we went to work on Welcoming Lakes Region, we were able to understand where we wanted to go together."

-- Members of the Welcoming Lakes Region Steering Committee

<u>TIP</u>: Collaboration is messier – not all eggs are going to fit neatly into one community basket. The host organization might gravitate toward community groups that align or match with their perspectives, but the local collaborative needs to be more broadly inclusive.

-- Elizabeth (Liz) Fitzgerald, United Way of Greater Nashua

D. What governance structure works well?

Local collaboratives determine how they would like to govern themselves. The optimal governance structure enables members of the receiving community and newcomers to make decisions together about the plan for local immigrant integration and its implementation. The governance structure must be clearly defined. This includes articulating specific roles and responsibilities of the coordinator, host organization, and member organizations at the outset. It also means establishing commonly agreed upon norms and procedures for conducting meetings and carrying out business.

E. How does the local collaborative operate?

To operate effectively, members of the local collaborative need active participation by a range of key stakeholders; authentic engagement by immigrants; designated leadership with management, fiscal, and operating support; a clear governance structure; space and regular meetings to provide oversight of the initiative; agreed upon decision-making processes; and consistent use of the initiative plan as a guide for measuring progress toward achieving stated outcomes.

F. What are lessons learned (Do's and Don'ts)?

DO	DON'T
✓ Make it about the partners, about what the and aspire to have in this shared commun (Examples: LHIFA, symphony project, book rely on and partner with appropriate published and designated refugee resettlement organ help people manage basic need.	ity. (e.g., food, clothing shelter). elease) lic agencies
✓ Identify shared areas of interest that allow residents and newcomers to equally contrand expertise. (Example: Grow Nashua – people come tog bringing farming experience; just need land a partners.)	topics that reinforce the notion that one group (receiving community) has all the
 ✓ Pair up chairs/leaders so that every goal is by a duo – a long-time resident and an im refugee – leading together. 	
 ✓ Create leadership opportunities and the s New Americans to step up as leaders. 	pace for Rely on existing leadership roles that already are filled by long-time residents, making it challenging for immigrants to find ways to lead.

DO	DON'T
Be willing to trust something that is not a "known" entity and may not fit the usual parameters for action. A practice doesn't have to have tried and true outcomes measurement to be valid and worth trying. Room for innovation and culturally diverse perspectives for defining "effective" practice is essential. (Examples: Brazilfest and the "bouncy house" became part of OGN.)	Always or exclusively stick to commonly recognized, "tried and true" strategies and practices that reflect the receiving community's standard outcomes and measures of success.
✓ Make meetings of the local collaborative's leaders safe spaces for candid discussion, allowing people to speak their minds and get things off their chest. This is how professional and personal learning takes place. Some issues become emotional and merit thoughtful attention to resolve amicably.	Keep the local collaborative's leadership meetings so structured that there isn't room for dissension, debate, and disagreement.
✓ Pair the work of local collaboratives with continued strategic communications to elevate the voices of immigrants, promote shared values, and highlight their contributions. Strategic communications should happen at every step of the way to counter the national anti-immigrant rhetoric with positive examples.	Underestimate the power of media to heighten awareness of the work local collaboratives are doing.

<u>QUOTE</u>: "If at first you don't succeed, try and try again. Persist. Be willing to keep trying, going back again and again to figure out what works. The process might be cyclical, and it may not look like what you'd originally envisioned, but keep the ultimate goal in mind. Some [unexpected] ideas morphed into something, others died a quiet death."

- Joan Gilmore, Coordinator, Welcoming Concord Initiative

II. Planning the Initiative



Photo by Cheryl Senter, Courtesy of NH Charitable Foundation

Under a competitive grant process, four successful communities in New Hampshire were awarded \$10K each over a 6-month period (April 2014 to September 2014) to develop multi-sector, multi-strategy immigrant integration plans. These communities formed their own local collaboratives – the Welcoming Concord Initiative, Lakes Region Immigrant Integration Initiative, Welcoming Manchester, and One Greater Nashua.

A. Who participates in planning the initiative? Why?

Each community assembled a diverse planning team inclusive of newcomers and receiving community members from all relevant sectors, including: residents, ethnic organizations, local town or city government, business, faith-based organizations, educational institutions, health care organizations, cultural institutions, and other service agencies. Communities were required to ensure that immigrants and refugees had a major voice in the planning process and that local government was participating in a meaningful and significant way.

TOOLS:

- Welcoming America's Community Planning Process Guide. (2015). Jan A. Reeves, Idaho State Refugee Coordinator. https://www.welcomingamerica.org/content/community-planning-process-guide.
- Immigrant Integration Toolkit. (2006). Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees. https://www.gcir.org/publications/toolkit.

B. What topics are addressed in planning the initiative?

The planning process addressed several topics that were used as criteria³ for reviewing each plan:

- Focus on a specific geographic community with well-documented demographic shift and community need;
- Demonstrate knowledge of local newcomer communities;
- Provide evidence of true collaboration between newcomers and long-time residents;
- Demonstrate involvement and commitment of local government;
- Demonstrate a high level of understanding of immigrant integration principles and the community's current integration challenges and opportunities;
- Articulate a shared vision of how immigrant integration would benefit the community;
- Document evidence of a well-designed planning process and strong capacity to facilitate the process;
- Offer evidence of local leadership and community readiness;
- Include multiple sectors, with a strongly demonstrated public sector commitment; and
- Demonstrate an ability to engage additional funders and financial support in implementation.

C. How do you engage new Americans and receiving community members in the planning process?

Engaging members of local immigrant and refugee communities was the most significant part of the NH III planning process. Every site approached community engagement differently based on local circumstances. Several lessons emerged across NH's local collaboratives.

- Be willing to go out to meet with immigrants at tables they host for gathering (e.g., informal and formal meetings). Don't always expect immigrants to come to our meeting tables.
- Reach deeply into immigrant communities to find people interested in engaging in the local collaborative. Well-known, visible immigrant and refugee leaders are easier to find and engage, but they don't always represent the entire community.
- Identify ethnic community-based organizations to lead and convene the local collaborative whenever possible. Ensure that leaders of the ECBO are invested in providing the management, operations, fiscal, and human resources support necessary to advance the local collaborative.
- Consider the merits of offering a stipend or honorarium to members of the immigrant and refugee community who fulfill their commitments to serve in a leadership capacity (e.g., Steering Committee, leadership team) requiring regular participation in meetings, events, and various behind-the-scenes activities.

³ Endowment for Health. (December 2013). Immigrant Integration Initiative: Planning Phase Request for Proposals, page 10.

 Use a structured process like the "Right Question Strategy" early in planning and implementation to figure out how best to engage immigrants in the local collaborative.

QUOTE: "We all need to make ourselves available to go to many tables."

- Maggie Fogarty, American Friends Service Committee, Co-Founder of the Concord Civics Academy

<u>TOOL</u>: Receiving Communities Toolkit: A Guide for Engaging Mainstream America in Immigrant Integration. (2011). Susan Downs-Karkos. Welcoming America and Spring Institute for Intercultural Learning. Online at https://www.welcomingamerica.org/sites/default/files/Receiving-Communities-Toolkit FINAL1.pdf.

D. What does the plan look like?

Each community's plan outlines goals, strategies and specific outcomes to be achieved to enhance civic participation, economic integration, social inclusion, spatial integration, and health and well-being among new Americans in NH communities. Leaders representing multi-sector organizations and institutions in each local collaborative developed plans for their communities to implement the NH III between January 2015 and December 2017. Subsequently, the initiative implementation period was extended through September 2018.

SAMPLE PLAN: https://welcomingnh.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Sample-Plan OGN.pdf

TOOL: Welcoming America's Welcoming Cities and Counties Framework.

https://www.welcomingamerica.org/sites/default/files/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Welcoming-Cities-and-Counties-Framework.pdf

⁴ Visit The Right Question Institute: A Catalyst for Microdemocracy's website for additional information, https://rightquestion.org/

III. Implementing the Initiative



Photo courtesy of Welcoming NH

A logic model developed by the Endowment for Health (Appendix C) depicts the framework for NH III implementation from April 2014 to September 2018. The vision was that this initiative would create vibrant, secure and cohesive communities in New Hampshire where all people have the opportunity to attain their full potential. The four local communities (i.e., Concord, Lakes Region, Manchester, and Nashua) were awarded grants to implement their plans. In addition, funds supported a peer-to-peer Community of Practice facilitated by Cristina Aguilera, a consultant with the Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition (MIRA) and additional technical assistance providers in evaluation, communications and messaging, legal issues affecting immigrants and refugees, and sustainability. Local communities would implement multi-sector strategies at the individual, organizational, and systemic levels to enable new Americans to achieve economic integration, spatial integration, social inclusion, and civic participation with long-time residents. In addition to local outcomes, NH III would lead to statewide systems change, thereby strengthening the field through mutually reinforcing efforts across communities at the state level.

To support each site's unique needs, the Endowment for Health established project timelines for disbursing funds and annual reporting that aligned with progress made by each local collaborative. Every site formed its own leadership and decision-making group, governance structure, operations, and procedures for fiscal management of the grant.

Each community's local context influenced the types of strategies NH III collaboratives prioritized and were able to implement. Local characteristics important to consider are outlined in this section.

Communities had varying levels of support for welcoming immigrants.

In Concord, Manchester, and Nashua, community members generally were receptive to the local collaborative's efforts to welcome new Americans. However, Welcoming Lakes Region met resistance from a vocal minority of self-proclaimed concerned citizens who protested immigrant integration in several ways, including voicing opposition during

meetings of the local collaborative and publishing letters articulating their views in the local paper. Fortunately, naysayers were greatly outnumbered by those who support Welcoming Lakes Region, including the Mayor of Laconia who serves on the Steering Committee. Welcoming Lakes Region activities continue to bring together members of the receiving community and foreign-born residents in positive, uplifting ways that strengthen the community.

- Local collaboratives connected their work to existing efforts.
 - NH III intentionally sought to strengthen existing relationships in the community. Organizations already working with immigrants participated in these newly forming collaboratives. The widest possible range of people and institutions participated in local collaboratives to bridge long-standing organizations with those representing new Americans, creating new social capital for all involved.
- The Welcoming Concord Initiative Steering Committee was convened by Second Start, a private nonprofit educational corporation operating in Concord since 1971. The Lakes Region Immigrant Integration Initiative was housed at Partnership for Public Health, a regional nonprofit based in Laconia that partners with others to provide expertise, information, and tools communities need to protect their health and well-being. One Greater Nashua was hosted by the United Way of Greater Nashua, which has operated since 1930. The host of Welcoming Manchester was the Organization for Refugee and Immigrant Success (ORIS), an ethnic community-based organization established in 2011 after its original founding in 2005 as the Somali Bantu Community Association. ORIS aids in the resettlement of refugee and immigrant groups in the state of NH. ORIS was the only NH III local collaborative housed in an organization led by immigrants. Every host organization was characterized by distinct benefits and risks negotiated by each local collaborative.
- Local collaboratives were staffed differently to meet the needs of each community. In each community, a lead facilitator or coordinator was identified to regularly convene members of the local collaborative, organize its efforts, represent the initiative locally, statewide, and in national settings (e.g., conferences, workshops), and manage implementation of the local plan for immigrant integration. As the primary point-of-contact for each local collaborative, the coordinator served as the sole person staffing this initiative. In every community, this position was largely volunteer with varying levels of part-time compensation. The coordinator was employed by the host organization whose in-kind donation included a portion of staff compensation, office space with utilities, human resources and fiscal oversight, as well as minimal support for grant fiscal and project management.
- Every local collaborative determined its own governance structure.

 Local collaboratives in each community were governed by a group of key stakeholders responsible for ensuring that the immigrant integration plan was carried out. Governing structures for decision-making about the initiative were fairly similar in each community. The Welcoming Concord Initiative and Lakes Region Immigrant Integration Initiative both had Steering Committees that provided oversight of the entire effort. One Greater Nashua and Welcoming Manchester, both cities with significant ethnic diversity, based their

governance structures on goals outlined in their plans. Goal Chairs managed the strategies and people involved in implementing the plan, and these leaders convened regularly. The Welcoming Manchester Leadership Team and One Greater Nashua's "Just Chairs" group guided all aspects of the initiative. An effort was made in these local collaboratives to achieve balance and equity by having a 1:1 ratio of immigrants and receiving community members in leadership roles.

In these ways, each community exercised ownership of NH III and operated independently of one another to figure out what would best work given their local contexts.

IV. Promising Practices for Integrating New Americans



Photo by David J. Murray, ClearEyePhoto.com

The NH III was designed to elevate the engagement of immigrants in economic, social, political, cultural, educational and other domains of community life in the Granite state. The term *immigrant integration* was used intentionally to emphasize respect for and incorporation of differences and the need for mutual adaptation. A great deal of work remains to realize this goal, but in its fourth year, NH III is achieving meaningful community impact.

This section of the report features an overview of promising practices emerging at the local and statewide levels in New Hampshire. A companion report, **NH III Profiles of Promising Practices & Lessons Learned**, includes more detailed information about each promising practice. Local practices are organized by sector (e.g., business and financial, civic engagement). Profiles were developed by the members of each local collaborative who had designed and carried out the program or strategy. Each profile describes the practice and offers guidance on effective implementation. Statewide practices are grouped by type of intervention (e.g., policy, events, media/communications). A list of lessons emerging from current practice appears in each profile.

<u>QUOTE</u>: "[The NH Immigrant Integration Initiative] has changed the way people involved in immigrant integration think about power, participatory methods, who leads, who convenes ... whose table is it?"

— Jessica Santos, Ph.D., Institute on Assets and Social Policy, Brandeis University.

A. Place-based Promising Practices – What's Working in Our Communities?

In each community, local networks of key stakeholders representing multiple sectors assembled during the NH III planning phase. These local collaboratives developed comprehensive plans for

immigrant integration designed to benefit all involved. The Welcoming Concord Initiative, Welcoming Lakes Region, Welcoming Manchester, and One Greater Nashua convened regularly and leveraged relationships to carry out their plans with partners throughout these communities. Prior to these local collaboratives, Welcoming New Hampshire already was established following the model of Welcoming America.⁵ It was the only intentional immigrant integration effort that convened immigrant service providers and immigrants to foster welcoming communities through events, film screenings, and participation in national Welcoming Week. However, Welcoming New Hampshire was not a broadbased, multi-sector coalition; it needed stability and commitments from a broader base of local partners with an explicit focus on transforming these communities into places that benefit long-time residents and newcomers in mutually reinforcing ways.

Profiles of promising practices are organized by subject area. Each profile indicates where in NH the practice has been implemented and provides a descriptive overview, key factors to address when implementing the practice, and contact information for learning more. In most instances, profiles were written by members of local collaboratives who were directly involved in developing and carrying out the practice. Their perspectives and experiences as practitioners are invaluable. The dedicated hard work happening on the ground in each community to foster immigrant and refugee integration are highlighted in these profiles. By sharing these practices, NH III members aim to inspire others to join the effort to become welcoming communities.

I. Business & Economic Development

As stated in the NH III RFP, immigrants represent 5.6% of the state's population and 6.5% of the state's workforce, contributing in many ways to the economic and cultural vitality of New Hampshire. ⁶ The NH Center for Public Policy Studies found that foreign-born residents earned about \$2 billion in wages in 2013, or about 6.4% of the \$29 billion in wages earned statewide. ⁷ That same year, foreign-born workers held more than 38,000 jobs in New Hampshire, accounting for roughly 6.2% of the total state job base. ⁸ Moreover, NH's foreign-born residents are highly educated; in 2013, almost 39% had earned a bachelor's degree or better, ranking NH among the top ten states in the country based on the educational attainment levels of its foreign-born residents. ⁹ Minority-owned small businesses are growing in NH as indicated by a 26% increase in minority ownership between 2007 and 2012. ¹⁰ In addition, immigrants are more likely than native-born residents to start a business. According to the New American Economy Research Fund, more than 2.9 million new Americans generated \$65.5 billion in business income in 2014; that year they made up 20.6% of all entrepreneurs in the country, despite representing 13.2% of the U.S. population overall. ¹¹

a. Engaging Business Leaders in Local Collaboratives

⁵ Visit Welcoming America online at https://www.welcomingamerica.org/.

⁶ New Americans in New Hampshire. January 2013. Immigration Policy Center. Online at www.immigrationpolicy.org/just-facts/new-americans-new-hampshire.

⁷ Policy Notes: An Overview of New Hampshire's Foreign-Born Population. May 27, 2015. New Hampshire Center for Public Policy Studies. Online at http://www.nhpolicy.org/report/new-hampshireamp39s-foreign-born-population. 8 Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ New Hampshire Small Business Profile, 2016. U.S. Small Business Administration Office of Advocacy. Online at https://www.sba.gov/sites/default/files/advocacy/New Hampshire.pdf.

¹¹ Nearly 6 Million Workers Employed at Immigrant-Owned Businesses, New Report Finds. October 11, 2016. New American Economy Research Fund. Article online at https://research.newamericaneconomy.org/report/nearly-6-million-workers-employed-at-immigrant-owned-businesses-new-report-finds/.

In every community, NH III engaged local and regional business leaders, workforce development organizations, and others to help integrate new Americans into the local economy. These efforts created opportunities for immigrants and refugees to thrive while strengthening local workforce and small business development. A profile of the Welcoming Manchester Economic Development & Employment (EDE) Committee offers promising practices for managing the efforts of local leaders committed to economic progress that includes long-time and new residents. Welcoming Manchester and other NH III local collaboratives intentionally partnered with existing coalitions and organizations to embed their work with that of ongoing local institutions. By coordinating with the Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce, the Welcoming Manchester EDE Committee worked closely with members of the Chamber to form a new task force focused on integrating immigrants and refugees into the economic life of Manchester.

Economic Development & Employment Committee (Welcoming Manchester) – The Economic Development & Employment Committee of Welcoming Manchester was co-chaired by a new American and a long-time resident of New Hampshire. In this profile, read about how their collaborative leadership, founded on mutual respect and equity, was vital to the committee's success.

<u>Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce</u> (Welcoming Manchester) – Institutional leadership from private sector businesses belonging to the Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce (GMCC) affirmed the value of welcoming new Americans as part of the workforce, as entrepreneurs and small business owners, and as critical contributors to all facets of the NH economy. Read about what it takes for a chamber of commerce or similar non-partisan membership organization to address immigrant integration as part of advancing the business environment and the economic health and vitality of the region, as outlined in the GMCC mission.

b. Workforce Development

As NH's long-time residents get older, and as younger adults increasingly move away from the state, immigrants make up a growing segment of the workforce in NH. While some new Americans are finding jobs and managing to keep them, others are unemployed and underemployed. Employers seeking to recruit, hire, and retain qualified employees are eager to find candidates. Connecting with immigrant and refugee communities is a strategy some employers are pursuing with a measure of success. The Easterseals Workforce Development Initiative, which grew out of Welcoming Manchester, is putting people to work.

Easterseals Workforce Development Initiative (Welcoming Manchester) – A partnership between Welcoming Manchester's Economic Development and Employment Committee and Easterseals New Hampshire led to a program that recruits, trains, and hires new Americans for entry level jobs that offer living wages, benefits, and opportunities for advancement. Learn about key features of this exciting pathway to work for new Americans that benefits New Hampshire's industries as they seek to employ workers in an economy with an all-time low unemployment rate of 2.6% in May 2018.¹²

¹² 2018 New Hampshire Local Area Unemployment Statistics. June 21, 2018. New Hampshire Employment Security, Economic & Labor Market Information Bureau. Online at https://www.nhes.nh.gov/elmi/statistics/documents/laus-current.pdf.

c. Innovation & New Hampshire's Green Economy

In NH the "green" economy, including renewable and sustainable energy, local food and agriculture, and eco-friendly businesses (e.g., green construction and manufacturing), is an emerging sector. In Nashua, an initiative that engages long-time residents alongside immigrants and refugees in a healthy food enterprise is a promising practice with lots to teach.

<u>Grow Nashua</u> (One Greater Nashua) – Grow Nashua (https://www.grownashua.org/) is growing urban vegetable farms and using this common ground to empower people to strengthen community relationships. In a profile written by Grow Nashua's founder, lessons and guidance are provided on how to structure a community garden program that fosters mutual and reciprocal community-building among new American and long-time residents.

d. Entrepreneurship & Small Business Development

A 2016 study by the National Foundation for American Policy found that immigrants to the United States have started more than half of this nation's companies valued at \$1 billion or more. According to the New American Economy, although immigrants make up only 6% of the population in NH, they account for 8% of all entrepreneurs in the state. In NH in 2010, 4,925 immigrants owned their own businesses, earning \$80.2 million in income and conservatively employing 20,882 people. Small business start-ups require a solid understanding of business and finance practices in the U.S. as well as initial investments of capital, both of which can be difficult for many newcomers to acquire. The New Hampshire New Americans Loan Fund grew from an idea presented in 2016 by the Welcoming Concord Initiative to the Regional Economic Development Center in Rockingham, and it was formally launched statewide in 2018.

NH New Americans Loan Fund (Welcoming Concord Initiative) – The Regional Economic Development Center (https://www.redc.com/) is a private, nonprofit organization in New Hampshire that offers technical assistance, financing through various funding sources, and business development training. REDC established a new microloan fund in 2018 designed to support immigrants in starting businesses in NH. In the profile, read about how the Welcoming Concord Initiative sparked the idea to partner in launching this special fund.

2. Civic & Community Engagement

The NH III sought to achieve **social inclusion** and **civic participation** as outcomes that would benefit the receiving community and new Americans. Social inclusion would be evident when immigrants are included in every fabric of the community, and when members of the community value multiculturalism, inclusiveness, and diversity. Civic participation would occur when immigrants and receiving community members fully participate in civic life together. Promising practices featured in this

¹³ "Immigrants and Billion Dollar Startups." March 2016. Stuart Anderson. National Foundation for American Policy, NFAP Policy Brief. Online at https://nfap.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Immigrants-and-Billion-Dollar-Startups.NFAP-Policy-Brief.March-2016.pdf.

¹⁴ The Contributions of New Americans in New Hampshire. August 2016. "The Role of Immigrants as Entrepreneurs," New American Economy. Online at https://www.newamericaneconomy.org/locations/new-hampshire/.

¹⁶ New Hampshire Immigrant Integration Initiative Logic Model (April 2014 – September 2018). Endowment for Health.

section of the report are enabling neighbors in the four NH III communities to engage with one another, increasingly deepening the relationships needed to achieve these outcomes.

Concord Civics Academy (Welcoming Concord Initiative) – In Concord, long-time residents and newcomers get to know one another, engage with city leaders, and learn together about how their city operates, including the roles of local government officials, municipal agencies, community organizations, and opportunities for actively contributing to their communities as they participate in the Concord Civics Academy. In this profile, lessons about how to structure a highly interactive 6-week session are offered based on the growing success of this Academy over two years.

Conversation Cafés (Welcoming Manchester) – Immigrants arrive in New Hampshire from countries all over the world, from Canada to Eastern Europe, Latin America, Asia and Africa. Finding fellow native speakers of languages spoken in their countries of origin is culturally affirming and contributes to cultivating a sense of community for immigrants. Conversely, for native English speakers who are eager to learn other languages, engaging with native speakers of Spanish, French, or Kiswahili is invaluable. Conversation Cafés introduce immigrants and receiving community members and provide a forum for them to mutually and reciprocally exchange their knowledge of various languages, cultures, and perspectives on world issues.

<u>Cultural Navigators</u> (One Greater Nashua) — When one is new to a city, having someone to shepherd and assist with adapting to a new culture can make all the difference as immigrants engage in building their new social and economic lives in Nashua. Cultural Navigators of Nashua is a One Greater Nashua initiative working towards a common purpose, to "support integration of new Americans into a welcoming diverse community." In this profile, learn about three main directions that support Navigators' focus by helping newcomers "give" and "receive" the power of knowledge, ideas, resources, and by engaging them in practicing new skills.

Latino Hispanic Futbol Association (LHIFA) (One Greater Nashua) – In communities around the world, children, youth, and families engage in neighborhood sports as a past-time that fosters health and wellness, social interaction, and just plain fun. In Nashua, an international family soccer league is bringing together members of the Latino and Hispanic communities to promote a culture of achievement that is opening doors to the future for its players. Incredible passion and commitment to family drive LHIFA, which has disrupted the "pay to play" system of traditional soccer leagues, resulting in a competitive international league comprised of over 270 family members as of the 2017-2018 season. In this profile, read about what it takes to launch a family soccer league.

Concord Local Markets (Welcoming Concord Initiative) – What "signature" event in New Hampshire is more well-recognized than weekly open-air markets featuring local produce, locally crafted products of all types, and neighborly conversations across tables and at carts filled with a variety of wares brought by people who care about their communities? Concord Local Markets has become a welcoming opportunity for new Americans who are featuring their hand-made products from all over the world and engaging with fellow members of the receiving community who are doing the same. As they greet one another and visitors to the market, more than money is exchanged; the marketplace is a cultural, social, and economic integrator in Concord.

<u>Lakes Region Welcome Center</u> (Welcoming Lakes Region) – In Laconia and the surrounding area, the Lakes Region Welcome Center serves as a unique resource for foreign-born individuals and families.

The Welcome Center, single-handedly managed by the Welcoming Lakes Region Coordinator, provides foreign-born residents with information that helps them settle in as neighbors. While various public, private, and nonprofit organizations offer a range of services, supports, and opportunities for civic engagement, the Welcome Center provides newcomers with a single point-of-contact with community-wide connections. The Welcome Center connects foreign-born residents with helpful local people and information. Conversely, it assists local organizations and long-time local residents in connecting with newcomers. The Welcome Center's personal touch encourages foreign-born and native-born residents to engage with one another.

3. Cultural Events & Exchanges

In every community, there are formal and informal gatherings that bring people together. Holiday celebrations like Memorial Day and Independence Day parades are customary in many towns, engaging civic and faith-based groups, community organizations, businesses, and neighbors in honor of shared moments in our nation's history. As part of NH III, local collaboratives in Concord, the Lakes Region, Manchester, and Nashua partner with others to host various cultural events year-round. These events promote social inclusion and spatial integration – equitable sharing of the places where immigrants and receiving community members live, learn, work, and play.

As members of Welcoming America, Welcoming NH and the NH III communities are expected and encouraged to sponsor Welcoming Week activities each year. Welcoming Week is an annual series of events and activities held nationwide in which immigrants and native-born residents of communities gather to raise awareness of the benefits of welcoming everyone. In New Hampshire, Welcoming Manchester, the Welcoming Concord Initiative, Welcoming Lakes Region, and One Greater Nashua, along with partners across their towns consistently co-host activities that promote cross-cultural interaction and learning exchanges. In the Lakes Region, despite pushback from a vocal minority who are opposed to welcoming new Americans, Welcoming Lakes Region co-hosts an annual Multicultural Festival, a Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day celebration, and an international Soup-a-thon by coordinating with other organizations.

Welcoming Week Events (Welcoming Manchester) – As members of Welcoming America, communities in New Hampshire that have adopted welcoming resolutions are expected to host events during a week-long nationwide celebration each year that brings together immigrants, refugees, and native-born residents to raise awareness of the benefits of welcoming everyone. More than 700 events were held around the country in 2017 according to Welcoming America.¹⁷ Welcoming Manchester has had success in engaging partners from across the city in hosting events that week. In this profile, learn important tips for hosting activities that highlight the full range of immigrant contributions and create opportunities for meaningful engagement with members of the receiving community.

<u>Cultural Events in the Lakes Region</u> (Welcoming Lakes Region) – In Laconia, NH and the lakes which surround it, foreign-born and long-time residents join together in events throughout the year in celebration of the diverse cultures and historical contributions of everyone. Every year, a Multicultural Festival, International Soup-a-thon, and activities in observance of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day create opportunities for interaction and relationship building among neighbors throughout the Lakes Region. In

¹⁷ What is Welcoming Week? Visit the Welcoming America website at https://www.welcomingamerica.org/programs/welcoming-week

this profile, the Welcoming Lakes Region coordinator shares key elements for fostering these mutual cultural exchanges.

4. Policy Initiatives

In every city or town, local policies have the potential to help or hinder the ability of new residents, particularly immigrants and refugees, to settle comfortably into their homes and communities. The NH III's local collaboratives identified opportunities to influence policy in the course of implementing their plans. In each of the integration pathways (e.g., economic development, language and education, health and social services, etc.), NH III leaders learned how local laws, policies, and regulations might affect immigrants.

One victory is that Welcoming resolutions were approved by local elected officials in Concord, Manchester, and Nashua. These resolutions publicly affirm that immigrants and refugees will be well received by residents of these cities as fellow members of the community. Although Welcoming City resolutions do not allocate fiscal resources for carrying out welcoming activities, they have led to instituting committees responsible for ensuring that local institutions are hospitable to immigrants and that policies are non-discriminatory and inclusive of all people. Welcoming resolutions are one of several tools used by the statewide Welcoming New Hampshire initiative, which is affiliated with the national Welcoming America initiative. Both offer access to a wide range of informational and other resources.

<u>QUOTE</u>: As representatives of Manchester, NH we recognize that cities that proactively welcome newcomers and take steps to ensure their successful integration will be strategically positioned as globally competitive, 21st century leaders.

Opening statement of Welcoming City Resolution unanimously approved by all present for the City of Manchester Board of Aldermen meeting on October 6, 2015.¹⁸

Another victory in Manchester, NH is a proposed Mayor's Advisory Council on Immigrants and Refugees. As the result of a proposal to Mayor Joyce Craig by the Welcoming Manchester leadership team in January 2018, the Mayor is preparing to soon announce the formation of an Advisory Council.

Mayor's Advisory Council on Immigrants and Refugees (Welcoming Manchester) – As Welcoming Manchester continues its work beyond the formal NH III grant period, one tremendous legacy will be the formation of a new Mayor's Advisory Council on Immigrants and Refugees. When Mayor Joyce Craig was elected in November 2017 as the first woman to serve as mayor of the Queen City, the Welcoming Manchester leadership team approached her with an idea for institutionalizing her interest in promoting policies that uplift and advance immigrant integration. This profile describes how this Advisory Council is being formed.

¹⁸ City of Manchester, Board of Mayor and Aldermen Agenda (Minutes). October 06, 2015. Online at http://sire.manchesternh.gov/sirepub/cache/2/xbez5jbvfy0czpuf0wf3xuhr/7940531201804394934.pdf.

B. Statewide Practices - What's Working at the State Level?

The New Hampshire Immigrant Integration Initiative was designed to promote statewide systems change in addition to serving as a catalyst for integrating immigrants in four NH communities. Statewide advocacy and messaging, as well as contributing to the Welcoming NH movement, are strategies aimed at cultivating a more welcoming state.

Community of Practice

To support work underway locally and statewide, a Community of Practice was formed and facilitated by Cristina Aguilera Consulting as part of the Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition (MIRA). The educational theorist Etienne Wenger defines Communities of Practice (COP) as "groups of people who share a concern or passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly."

The NH III Community of Practice (COP) aimed to provide a strong field of organizations, practitioners, immigrants, and allies that encourage integration of immigrants at the local, regional, and state levels in New Hampshire.¹⁹ The NH III COP used a peer-to-peer learning/action model designed to (I) promote the emergence and synthesis of local knowledge and experience, and (2) advance an immigrant integration agenda.²⁰ Cristina Aguilera Consulting/MIRA and COP members agreed to four operating principles, namely an asset-based approach to peer learning, collaborative decision-making with practitioner ownership, fostering trusting relationships to increase the probability of sustaining NH III long-term, and using participatory methods to encourage active problem-setting and problem-solving by immigrants and refugees.²¹

To accomplish its field-building work, the COP convened bi-monthly year-round during the planning, implementation, and sustainability phases of NH III. Each COP meeting lasted three hours to allow sufficient time for reflection and planning. The COP meeting location rotated among all four communities. Cristina Aguilera Consulting/MIRA facilitated COP meetings with a methodology based on action and reflection to build community identity and strengthen the group's problem-solving capacity.²²

The COP has been a neutral space for information and knowledge exchange. Three-hour bimonthly COP meetings have evolved from agendas packed with models and trainings to open discussion to ensure that lessons learned by practitioners are brought to the conversation. The challenges local collaboratives are facing in their immigrant integration work are also discussed and met with advice and better practices from partners' related experiences.

The most productive Community of Practice meetings have been those for which: (I) the agenda is set collaboratively – prior to each meeting, members give their input about topics relevant to discuss or learn more about together; (2) the technical assistance team joins a conference call prior to each COP meeting to share updates on the work they each have done with the members; (3) the COP

¹⁹ Endowment for Health Immigrant Integration Community of Practice Model. March 2014. Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition (MIRA).

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

agenda includes a component on relationship building among peers, training by an expert on a pressing topic, an hour-long open discussion to learn from one another and pose questions for others to help answer, and updates on events and other relevant information anyone might bring to share; and (4) participants leave the COP ready to share what they've learned with their steering committees and leadership teams.

The Endowment for Health continues to support ongoing convening of the COP. In addition, the COP works collaboratively with the Welcoming NH initiative. The Welcoming Table, a monthly meeting hosted by Welcoming NH, also includes agenda items from NH's III local collaboratives.

Welcoming New Hampshire

Welcoming NH has been a critical partner in the New Hampshire Immigrant Integration Initiative. Since its inception in 2012, the Welcoming NH initiative has brought together foreign and native-born residents to achieve positive integration of immigrants and refugees into the social fabric of their receiving communities.²³ Managed as a statewide effort, Welcoming NH is an affiliate of the national Welcoming America initiative.

Over the course of NH III's implementation from 2014-2018, Welcoming NH led policy advocacy trainings with the four local collaboratives, organized civil protests in response to federal actions affecting the status of immigrants and refugees in the United States, regularly provided information and updates to NH III leaders during bi-monthly COP meetings, hosted conferences and meetings, and assisted in managing an annual legislative day at the state capital in Concord, NH. On legislative day, Welcoming NH and representatives of the four NH III local collaboratives met with interested state legislators during the lunch hour. They provided information about issues affecting immigrants and refugees and efforts to better integrate them in their towns and across NH. Lunch was catered locally with international fare to encourage conversation and learning about the day's multicultural cuisine. This and other activities helped promote an atmosphere of equity, inclusion, and empowerment among newcomers and receiving community members within institutions, to inspire them to adopt sustainable practices for immigrant integration.

Welcoming NH Legislative Day (Welcoming New Hampshire) -- To foster civic engagement by immigrants at the local and state levels, Welcoming New Hampshire coordinates efforts with NH III local collaboratives to host a Legislative Luncheon at the state capital. In its second year, Legislative Luncheon Day introduces immigrants to state elected officials during a lunch break catered with international fare made locally that reflects many immigrants' countries of origin. Over multicultural food, legislators and new American guests chat informally to get to know one another and learn about the state legislative process. No politics are on the table for this event.

Framing the Issues & Cultivating Messages that Work

The NH III engaged Davey Strategies (http://www.daveystrategies.com/) to frame immigrant and refugee integration as an issue relevant for the Granite state to address. Local collaboratives reported throughout the initiative that assistance with framing the issues equipped them to inject new messages into the community, impact how people think about immigrants, increase positive media around the role

²³ Welcoming New Hampshire website, About Us. Online at https://welcomingnh.org/.

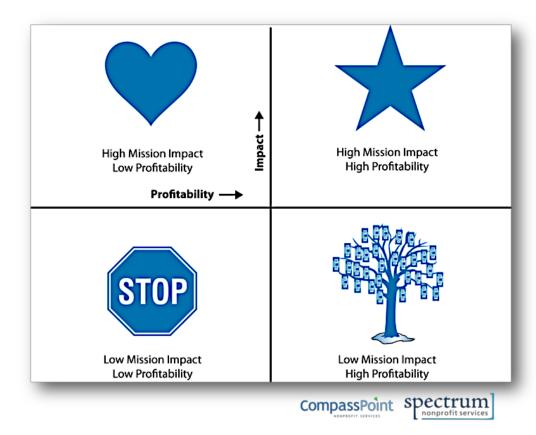
of immigrants, and hold people accountable. The NH III produced welcoming posters, flyers, and messages for use in engaging people across the state in promoting social inclusion of newcomers. One notable success was the production in 2016 of "We are New Hampshire" - a video documentary highlighting the stories of one woman from each of the four NH III communities.

We Are New Hampshire – As the state of New Hampshire's population grows, it is becoming increasingly diverse. According to the NH Center for Public Policy Studies, while the state's overall foreign-born population is small compared with much of the rest of the country, immigration is increasing at a pace critical for NH as the native-born population ages and younger people move outside the state.²⁴ Foreign immigration is responsible for a slight increase in population growth in New Hampshire, without which the state would have seen a net outmigration (more people leaving the state than moving in) from 2010 to 2014.25 In this video documentary, hear the voices of four women whose life stories are part of this important evolution of diversity in the Granite State.

²⁴ New Hampshire's Foreign Born Population. May 27, 2015. New Hampshire Center for Public Policy Studies. Online at http://www.nhpolicy.org/UploadedFiles/Reports/ForeignBornMay2015.pdf.

²⁵ Ibid.

V. Sustaining Impact



In 2017, members of each site engaged in sustainability planning with the T. L. Hill Group. The first step was to assess work carried out to date using the Program Sustainability Assessment Tool (https://sustaintool.org/) developed by the Center for Public Health Systems Science, George Warren Brown School of Social Work, Washington University in St. Louis. This framework assesses eight domains that contribute to program sustainability, namely environmental support, funding stability, partnerships, organizational capacity, program evaluation, program adaptation, communications, and strategic planning. Local collaboratives completed this assessment and prioritized domains that merited attention.

Leaders of each local collaborative identified the types of tools that would most effectively enable them to assess efforts likely to be viable long-term. The Welcoming Concord Initiative and its Steering Committee decided to pursue a "legacy" strategy that institutionalized highest value strategies by embedding them in the work of existing partner organizations for ongoing implementation. The Lakes Region Immigrant Integration Initiative Steering Committee applied the Results-Based Accountability® framework to clarify community impact and measures of success for their work locally. The One Greater Nashua "Just Chairs" group and the Welcoming Manchester Leadership Team each implemented Matrix Mapping™ (see image above), an analytic tool designed by Jeanne Bell and Steve Zimmerman, featured in their book, *The Sustainability Mindset: Using the Matrix Map to Make Strategic Decisions* (2015). By identifying the most effective projects and strategies within their comprehensive plans, leaders of each local collaborative determined a core set of practices that would merit attention for long-term implementation. These core practices, the most promising ones, would become focal

points for each community to devise fund development plans, including fund raising and other types of revenue generating activities. All four local collaboratives are committed to fostering positive immigrant integration beyond the funded NH III grant period, which concludes in September 2018.

TOOLS:

- Program Sustainability Assessment Tool. Center for Public Health Systems Science, George Warren Brown School of Social Work, Washington University in St. Louis. Online at https://www.sustaintool.org.
- Results-based Accountability. Fiscal Policy Studies Institute. Online at http://resultsaccountability.com.
- Matrix Mapping[™] in The Sustainability Mindset. (2015). Jeanne Bell and Steve Zimmerman.
 Online at http://www.nonprofitsustainability.org.
- Andy Robinson, Fund Raising Consultant. "Diversify Your Income Raise More Money,"
 August 2017 presentation to COP. Online at http://andyrobinsononline.com.

Conclusion



Photo courtesy of Welcoming NH

The New Hampshire Immigrant Integration Initiative has sparked deeper conversations in Manchester, expanded local market exchanges in Concord, widened community gardens in Nashua where neighbors are growing relationships alongside the vegetables they tend, encouraged multicultural awareness among foreign-born and native-born residents of the Lakes Region, helped open new immigrant-owned businesses in targeted communities statewide, enhanced policy awareness and civic engagement across the Granite State, and led to a host of other emerging and promising practices in New Hampshire. These selected practices demonstrate progress made by the Welcoming Concord Initiative, Welcoming Manchester, Welcoming Lakes Region, and One Greater Nashua from 2014 to 2018. These intentional efforts to engage and transform all community members, both native born and newcomers, in reaping shared benefits and creating a new whole that is greater than the sum of its parts, are showing early potential for sustained impact. The lessons learned within and beyond each community, as well as insights they have gained over the past four years, are informing their ongoing work to advance immigrant integration. While there is more to accomplish in fostering two-way integration between new Americans and their receiving communities, everyone involved in cultivating a welcoming New Hampshire is eager to forge ahead together.

APPENDICES

- A: Endowment for Health. December 2013. Immigrant Integration Initiative: Planning Phase Request for Proposals. https://welcomingnh.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/Immigrant-Integration-Initiative-RFP-12-13.pdf
- B: Endowment for Health. December 2013. The Checklist. A Successful Immigrant Integration Plan Will ... https://welcomingnh.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/A-SUCCESSFUL-IMMIGRANT-INTEGRATION-PLAN-WILL.pdf
- C: Endowment for Health. 2015. Immigrant Integration Initiative Logic Model (April 2014 September 2018). https://welcomingnh.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/NH Immigrant Integration Logic Model.pdf