

**Institute of Museum and Library Services - Year 2010
National leadership Grant (NLG) Demonstration
Hartford Public Library, Hartford CT**

Overview of Project Design

Project Design

This proposed demonstration project will employ two interconnected and complementary goals based on the concept of *building networks of trusting relationships* to address the critical need for immigrant civic integration.

Goal 1: *Facilitate the transition of newly arrived immigrants into the community and build trusting relationships of mutual understanding with long time residents and others.*

Goal 2: *Develop and implement a structure that will help better established immigrants participate in civic integration and become involved in broader community building efforts.*

Each of these goals is described below. This will be a three year project, beginning October 1, 2010 and ending September 30, 2013.

Goal 1: *Facilitate the transition of newly arrived immigrants into the community and build trusting relationships of mutual understanding with long time residents and others.*

Scope and Activities

The target population for Goal 1 will be immigrants who have been here two years or less who have very limited social supports beyond immediate family and friends.

The key to this strategy will be recruiting and training Cultural Brokers, volunteers who will facilitate the transition of the newly arrived immigrants into the community. The Cultural Brokers, who will receive an honorarium, will work directly with immigrant families to assist them in building relationships that will be beneficial not only in making the initial transition but will also be of long-term value. Cultural Brokers will be recruited from already existing, well established volunteer immigrant programs at HPL and other organizations that provide immigrant services.

HPL will partner with the Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL), a leading national publisher in the field of newcomer integration, to develop an interactive multimedia online tutorial for the Cultural Brokers titled "*How to Become a Cultural Broker @ Your Library.*" This online tool will be designed to facilitate intercultural communication and understanding and promote newcomer integration. Key modules will include: basics of cross-cultural communication; an overview of various immigrant categories and experiences (such as chronic post-traumatic stress syndrome); immigrant integration barriers and strategies for overcoming them; diverse belief systems; cultural variations in the perception of government, rights and responsibilities, education, health care, community involvement; and cultural influences on help-seeking behaviors and attitudes toward service providers. Each section will automatically generate a test that will evaluate knowledge acquisition. An additional tool will allow for the Broker to provide feedback on the Tutorial itself.

An editorial review board will be formed including library staff, adult educators, university faculty, and immigrant service providers to provide feedback on the manual during the course of its development.

Goal 2: *Develop and implement a structure that will help better established immigrants participate in civic integration and become involved in broader community building efforts.*

Scope and Activities

The target population for Goal 2 will be immigrants who have been here approximately two to four years and who have a stronger foot hold in the community than newly arrived immigrants, but who are still mostly dependent on their own enclave as a support network. A citywide *Advisory Council on Inclusivity* (ACI) will be established that will succeed and build on the work of the existing Immigrant Advisory Group (IAG). This inter-agency group was established in 2007 for the purpose of facilitating communication and resource sharing among service providers working with immigrants. The ACI will have five purposes:

1. Serve as the overall coordinating body for the demonstration project.
2. Develop and implement two deliberative democracy dialogues designed to achieve active immigrant participation in the community. (The deliberative democracy dialogues are described below.)
3. Assist in recruiting participants for all project activities (both Goal 1 and Goal 2).
4. Identify immigrant barriers and concerns and take action to address them.
5. Facilitate communication and resource sharing among immigrant service providers.

ACI membership will include a broad representation from key sectors of the community, such as representatives from the immigrant community, City department staff, members of the City Council, Library staff, representatives from neighborhood associations, as well as the Multicultural Liaison and the Cultural Brokers described under Goal 1. Immigrant representatives on the ACI will particularly include the “go-to” person within each enclave, i.e., those individuals who serve as the critical link between the immigrant enclave populations and the broader community, e.g., religious and ethnic organization leaders. The ACI will average 30 members and will report periodically to the City of Hartford, Mayors Office. The ACI will be based at the Library and will meet monthly or as needed. It will continue its work indefinitely, beyond the life of this proposed project.

The ACI and HPL will collaborate with Everyday Democracy (ED) to plan and conduct two deliberative democracy dialogues, one each in Year 2 and Year 3 of the project. The focus of the deliberative democracy dialogues will be determined by the ACI but may include topics such as immigrant rights to vote locally, cultural competency in the workplace, or adult literacy services, among other possibilities. The dialogues are a well established model that fosters open communication and stresses the inclusion of diverse perspectives from both within and outside the immigrant community, and that supports the collaborative development of an action agenda.

To provide a structure for the forums ED will create discussion guides and, if needed, will work with the ACI and project participants to create new materials or to adapt existing materials to meet specific needs, including multiple language editions as needed.