

CERTIFIED WELCOMING COUNTY: EMBRACING DIVERSITY AND BELONGING

IMMIGRANT INCLUSION STRATEGIC PLAN



COUNTY OF SAN MATEO

Developed by the Office of Community Affairs
November 2024



TABLE OF CONTENTS

- A Message from San Mateo County Executive Officer 3
- A Message from the County Office of Community Affairs Director 4
- Executive Summary 5
- Introduction 7
- Immigration in San Mateo County 10
- Strategic Planning Framework 13
- Community Survey 15
- Opportunities, Goals, & Approaches 16
- Acknowledgements 23
- Appendix 1 25

A MESSAGE FROM SAN MATEO COUNTY EXECUTIVE OFFICER, MIKE CALLAGY

Dear San Mateo County Community,

We've always considered San Mateo County a welcoming and inclusive community. We welcome newcomers, support those who choose to live and work here and stand united against hate in all forms. With great pride, I share that those basic tenets of our strong and wonderful county have been formally recognized by Welcoming America. We also have the unique distinction of being the first county to join cities nationwide with the honor.

As part of that recognition and our ongoing work to promote inclusivity, diversity, and unity, the County of San Mateo presents its first Immigrant Inclusion Strategic Plan. This document you are holding — the culmination of hours of work since 2020 from numerous individuals not only from the County of San Mateo but also residents and partners who shared critical information through surveys of 2,800 people and gatherings about how best to open our arms and serve all — is a living blueprint for the future. This plan will help form policy, initiatives, and services for consideration while also highlighting the deeper systemic issues that should be addressed.

I am grateful for all the ideas, suggestions, and challenging discussions that resulted in the robust plan you now hold in your hands. While there is certainly never full consensus in the creation of any plan, ours illustrates the way our community can collaborate and find ways to reach a middle ground on matters that far too often breed division and political discord in the nation. I encourage you to take time to absorb the questions raised in this plan, the conclusions drawn, and the thoughts about where we may all go together.

By its definition, being welcome and inclusive is not a sole responsibility for a few but for all. It is also not simply a proclamation or a series of protocols, but daily acts of kindness and responsibility. We all benefit from inclusivity and the growth of our county by welcoming new friends and neighbors, with their innovation, their compassion, their dreams, and their friendship.

San Mateo County is a place to listen, understand and grow. I invite you all to join us on this journey.

Sincerely,

Mike Callagy

County Executive Officer



A MESSAGE FROM OFFICE OF COMMUNITY AFFAIRS DIRECTOR, EMMA GONZALEZ

Dear San Mateo County Community,

We are excited to share with you an achievement for San Mateo County — the introduction of our **Immigrant Inclusion Strategic Plan**. Over the past two years, we've engaged in a collaborative effort that brought together diverse sectors, including public, business, education, and the government, to help identify priorities of this plan.

This strategic plan represents a comprehensive and inclusive approach to community engagement. It reflects a commitment to creating an environment that **embraces diversity and belonging**.

What sets this plan apart is the inclusion of ideas, stories, and discussions from community members and organizations. Rooted in the lived experiences and aspirations of the people it aims to serve. We believe that by anchoring our initiatives in the real stories of our community, we can create learning opportunities and improve communication that truly meets the needs of our residents.

A core aspect of the plan is its recognition of critical systems that play a role in immigrant inclusion and belonging. This acknowledgment demonstrates our awareness of the interconnectedness of various systems in shaping a welcoming environment. We understand that for true inclusion to occur, **we must work collaboratively across different sectors**.

We take pride in the process undertaken to create this plan, which included gathering feedback, capturing lived experiences, and amplifying the voices of our immigrant communities. This strategic plan is more than a document; it is a forward-looking vision that focuses on leveraging the assets of our immigrant community.

As we embark on this journey, we look towards a brighter future where we continue to **celebrate our cultural diversity, unite as neighbors, and work collaboratively towards a more inclusive and welcoming county for ALL**. Together, we can build a community that not only acknowledges our differences but also thrives because of them.

Thank you for being an integral part of this transformative process.

Sincerely,

Emma Gonzalez

Office of Community
Affairs Director



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Our county is committed to fostering an environment that embraces diversity and belonging, with a particular focus on creating a welcoming atmosphere for immigrants. Recognizing the valuable contributions immigrants bring to our community, we developed comprehensive strategies to ensure their seamless integration and participation in all aspects of county life.

Designing an effective Immigrant Inclusion Strategic Plan requires a thoughtful and comprehensive approach. The County administered an Immigrant Inclusion Survey (2022) which served as a pivotal tool in understanding and addressing the multifaceted aspects of immigrant inclusion and belonging within our community. This survey emerged as a crucial initiative that assessed the experiences, challenges, and successes of individuals.

Identifying the biggest barriers and greatest needs is crucial for developing an effective Immigrant Inclusion Strategic Plan. Here is a breakdown based on the survey results:

Biggest Barriers

- 1** Not aware of services / allowed to participate
- 2** Lack of English language skills
- 3** Poverty / lack of resources
- 4** Fear of risking immigration status
- 5** Affordable Housing

Top 5 Greatest Needs

- 1** Affordable Housing
- 2** Healthcare Coverage
- 3** Food Assistance
- 4** Educational assistance/ scholarships
- 5** Legal Assistance

By addressing these barriers and needs through targeted strategies, the Plan aims to create a more welcoming, inclusive, and supportive environment for the immigrant community. Regular feedback and assessments will be crucial to refining and adapting the Plan over time.



Communication and Continued Learning

The County has an opportunity to increase awareness of resources allowing residents to thrive. With the understanding of San Mateo County’s resources, social infrastructure, and community leadership, we see enormous opportunities to build awareness.

What can the County do? We see an opportunity...



in expanding powerful partnerships to provide critical services. Work in partnership with stakeholders who are part of the county’s informal and formal support networks to leverage resources and maximize efforts.



to address barriers to accessing services. Ensuring that immigrants have knowledge of, and access to, services congruent with their needs, regardless of status, and know where and how to access them (providing linguistically, culturally, and technologically accessible services) is critical.



to better engage and connect residents with one another and with civic life. Strengthening connections to civic life, while simultaneously creating critical opportunities to inform decision making, can serve to actively welcome immigrants to engage with their neighbors and community institutions, while promoting inclusiveness and a sense of belonging.

The goals of an Immigrant Inclusion Strategic Plan are designed to create an environment that promotes the integration, well-being, and equal opportunities for immigrants within a community. The goals of this plan include:



Enhance immigrant **awareness** of services.



Increase **access** to language services to facilitate usage.



Coordinate **distribution** of collateral (i.e., affordable housing, food assistance, and healthcare coverage/ mental health care).



Promote **immigrant** engagement in civic and public activities.

The County of San Mateo Office of Community Affairs will design and implement two overarching approaches to meet its goals.



Communications, Outreach, and Engagement



Continued Learning to support immigrant inclusion

By prioritizing these opportunities, our County aims to serve as a model for fostering a welcoming and inclusive environment for immigrants regardless of citizenship status. We believe that embracing diversity enhances our community, strengthens our differences, and positions us for a prosperous future. Our commitment to being a welcoming county is acknowledged by the nationally recognized nonprofit Certified Welcoming with a 4-Star designation (2024).





INTRODUCTION

The County of San Mateo proudly embraces a rich tapestry of individuals from diverse backgrounds, including those who have chosen our county as their home after being born outside the United States. Remarkably, **one in every three residents in our county is an immigrant**, playing a pivotal role in our community's growth and prosperity.

Immigrants provide a fresh perspective, novel ideas, entrepreneurial ventures, and contributions to vibrant diversity enhances the cultural fabric, prosperity, and intellectual foundation of San Mateo County.

In the County, we treasure every resident, irrespective of their birthplace, appearance, language spoken, or immigration status. Our collective success hinges on fostering an environment **where all residents feel a sense of belonging**. We understand that continual progress is contingent upon the sustained inclusion of both new and long-standing immigrants.

Communities nationwide have witnessed the positive impacts of a growing immigrant population. The influx of newcomers has propelled population growth, breathed new life into neighborhoods, stimulated innovation, and enriched communities with a mosaic of cultural diversity. In response to this, forward-thinking local governments, including the County of San Mateo, are actively contemplating strategies to cultivate an environment that communicates inclusivity and social cohesion.



Our proactive approach is centered on maximizing the contributions of every resident, providing the necessary tools for community members to thrive collectively. We are dedicated to creating an environment that not only acknowledges but celebrates the richness brought forth by our diverse community, fostering a spirit of unity and prosperity for all.

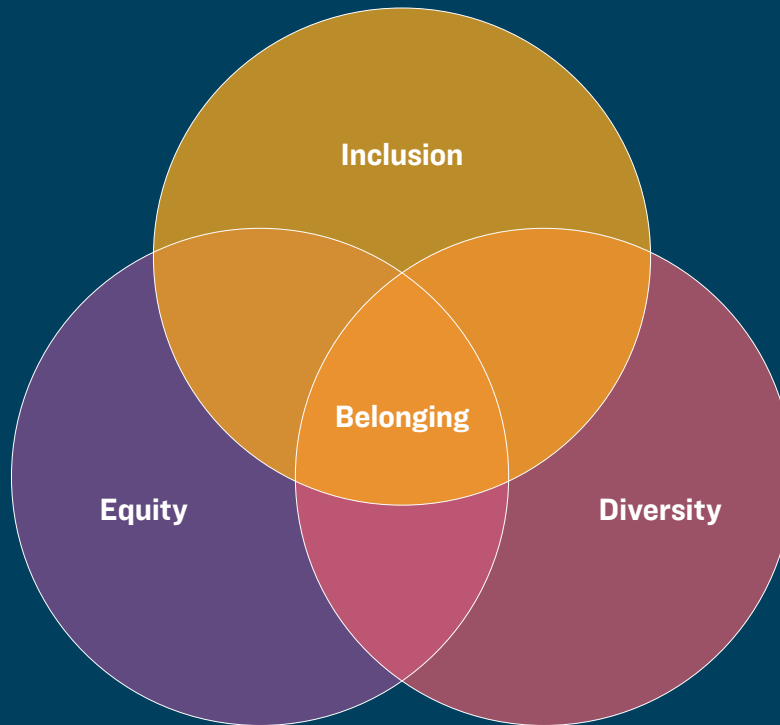
An immigrant inclusion plan reflects our willingness to uphold principles of equity. The Plan will play a significant role in advancing a diverse, cohesive, and welcoming society. This Plan will:

- 1 Promote social cohesion:** An inclusion plan helps bridge the gap between native-born citizens and immigrants, furthering a sense of belonging and unity within the community. By promoting interactions and understanding between diverse groups, it can reduce social tensions and conflicts arising from misunderstandings or prejudices.
- 2 Support economic growth and innovation:** Immigrants bring diverse skills, perspectives, and experiences to a country. An inclusion plan ensures that these talents are harnessed, creating a more dynamic and innovative workforce. When immigrants' skills are effectively utilized, they contribute to economic growth and competitiveness, benefiting the overall economy.
- 3 Foster cultural enrichment:** Embracing diverse cultures and traditions can lead to a more enriched society. Immigrants bring their customs, art, music, and cuisine, which can enhance the cultural fabric of a nation and create a more vibrant and exciting community.
- 4 Enhance Community Engagement:** The plan focuses on actively involving the immigrant community in informed decision-making processes. By seeking input from immigrants, it ensures that their voices are heard, and their perspectives are considered when developing policies and programs that directly impact their lives.
- 5 Facilitate Access to Services:** The Immigrant Inclusion Strategic Plan aims to break down barriers and improve access to essential services for immigrants. This may include language support, cultural competency training for service providers, and the removal of bureaucratic obstacles, ensuring that immigrants can fully participate in and benefit from local programs.
- 6 Foster Collaboration:** The collaborative nature of the plan encourages partnerships between local government agencies, community organizations, and education institutions to collectively address the needs of the immigrant population. By working together, these entities can create a more cohesive and supportive network for immigrants.

7 Educate and Raise Awareness: The plan may include initiatives to educate the broader community about the positive impacts of immigration and dispel misconceptions. By raising awareness and promoting understanding, the plan contributes to the creation of a more tolerant and informed society.

8 Sustain a Welcoming Environment: The goal is to create a lasting culture of belonging and hospitality within the community. This involves ongoing efforts to promote diversity, combat discrimination, and celebrate the rich tapestry of cultures that contribute to the County of San Mateo.

By implementing these approaches, the Immigrant Inclusion Strategic Plan aims to not only serve the needs of the immigrant community but also to support a more inclusive, equitable, and resilient society for years to come.



This Plan strives to create a sense of belonging for all residents of San Mateo County.

IMMIGRATION LANDSCAPE OF SAN MATEO COUNTY

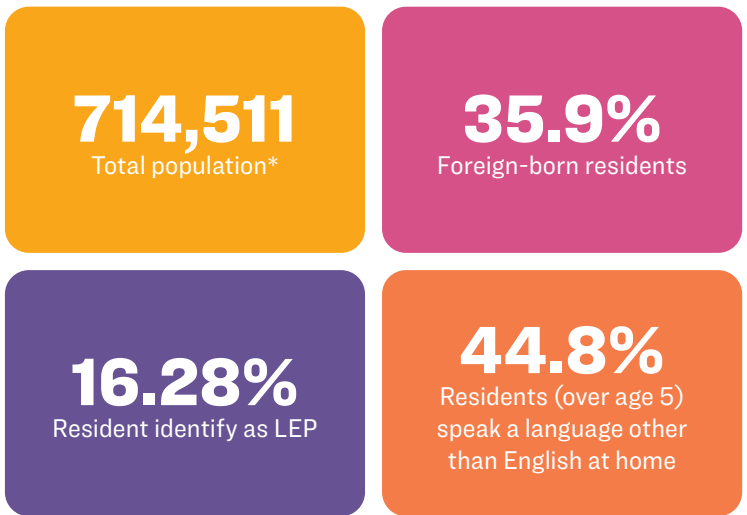
In partnership with the County of San Mateo Office of Community Affairs' Immigrant Services, a report was released by New American Economy (NAE): *New Americans in San Mateo County (2021)*. This report underscores the critical role immigrants and refugees play in driving the region's growth, supporting the local workforce, and growing the local economy.

San Mateo County is as diverse in its people as it is in its landscapes, with foreign-born residents making up 35.9% of the total population.

In the county, immigrants are 32.6% more likely to be of working age than their U.S.-born counterparts, allowing them to actively participate in the labor force and contribute to the economy as taxpayers and consumers.⁴ 59% of foreign-born residents in our county have U.S. citizenship and 54% of immigrants have lived here for more than 20 years.² The most common countries of origin are the Philippines (18.6%), Mexico (15.1%), China (11.9%), El Salvador (7.3%) and India (5.3%).⁴ More than 100 languages are spoken by residents in the county.

Between 2014 and 2019, Immigrants and refugees accounted for 27.1% of the total population growth in our county. In 2019 alone, immigrants in the region held \$12.7 billion in spending power and paid over \$4.6 billion in federal taxes and \$1.9 billion in state and local taxes. They contributed \$53.8 billion to the county's GDP or 40% of the total. Despite making up just over 35% of the area's overall population, immigrants and refugees perform an outsized share of essential workers, representing 58.2% of construction workers, 56.1% of transportation and warehousing workers, and 49.5% of healthcare workers.

Newer data from the American Community Survey (2022) reveals that just over 55% of county residents speak only English. Within the county, 16.28% of residents identify as Limited English Proficiency (LEP) individuals, including speakers of Spanish (6.7%), Chinese (4.1%), and Tagalog (2.2%).



United States Census Bureau's 2018-2022 American Community Survey, Table C16001, and 2022 American Community Survey, Table DP05

Population

269,900

immigrants² lived in San Mateo County, California, in 2019.



Between 2014 and 2019, the population in the county increased by **1.1%**



27.1% of the total population growth in the county was attributable to immigrants.



Immigrants made up **35.2%** of the total population in the county in 2019.

The immigrant population increased by **+0.8%** during the same period

Demographics

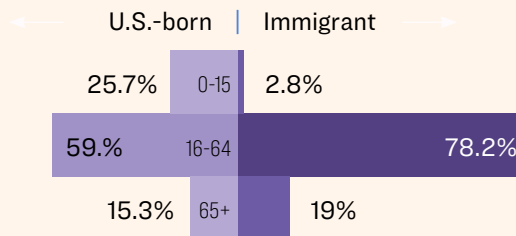
14.5%

of immigrants in San Mateo County are recent arrivals, with no more than 5 years of residency in the United States, meaning

85.5%

of immigrants in the county have resided in the United States for longer than 5 years.

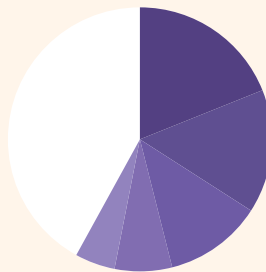
Shares of population by age groups:⁴



In the county, immigrants are

32.6%

more likely to be of working-age than their U.S.-born counterparts, allowing them to actively participate in the labor force and contribute to the economy as taxpayers and consumers.³



The top five countries of origin for immigrants living in the county:

- Philippines (**18.6%**)
- Mexico (**15.1%**)
- China (**11.9%**)
- El Salvador (**7.3%**)
- India (**5.3%**)
- Other (**41.8%**)

0.6% of immigrants in the county, or **1,600** people, were Tongans, and **0.5%** were Fijians.⁵



Report Highlights

- 1 Immigrants and refugees are helping San Mateo County meet its labor force demands.** As of 2019, immigrants and refugees made up 35.2% of the area's overall population, represented 41.9% of its working-age population, and 43.4% of its employed labor force.
- 2 Immigrants and refugees are helping the region meet its rising labor in STEM and key industries.** Immigrants and refugees accounted for **47.6% of the region's science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM)** workers, over **56% of transportation and warehousing** workers, and over **47% of healthcare workers** -- all critical industries that have been essential during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- 3 Immigrants play a particularly significant role in the region's entrepreneurs.** Immigrants represented 44.4% of the entrepreneurs in the county in 2019. About 17,800 immigrants worked for their own businesses, generating \$946.3 million in business income.
- 4 Immigrants in the county help create or preserve local manufacturing jobs.** Immigrants strengthened the local job market by allowing companies to keep jobs on U.S. soil, helping **preserve or create 12,400 local manufacturing jobs** that would have otherwise vanished or moved elsewhere by 2019.



¹U.S. Census Data 2020.

²American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

³Migration Policy Institute

⁴New Americans in San Mateo County Report from New American Economy / Gateways for Growth



STRATEGIC PLANNING FRAMEWORK

The County of San Mateo Immigrant Inclusion Strategic Plan framework—a visionary guide that steers our community toward a future defined by the voices of our immigrant community. This strategic plan is more than a document; it’s a commitment—an unwavering pledge to foster a welcoming and inclusive environment for immigrants. In the pages ahead, we’ll explore the framework that shaped our collective journey—a journey, marked by partner collaboration, opportunities, insightful analyses, and a shared commitment.

Partner Collaboration

Recognizing the paramount importance of community collaboration in achieving comprehensive immigrant inclusion, a Steering Committee comprised of more than 30 key stakeholders was established. These committee members, distinguished leaders and experts in their respective fields, contributed unique perspectives and experiences, offering invaluable feedback and insights throughout the planning process. Actively engaging the immigrant community through surveys and focus groups, they played a pivotal role in shaping the strategic plan.

Collaborative Framework Structure



The goals of the Steering Committee included:

- Guidance and input for overarching goals, strategies, and actions
- Support for community engagement efforts
- Coordination among County departments and organizations in implementation

Additionally, 5 Community Engagement Teams were created that focused on:

- Community Connectedness & Engagement
- Economic Development
- Education Opportunities & Outcomes
- Equitable Access to Services
- Safe Communities

Coming from a range of sectors and geographic areas within the county, members of the Steering Committee represented a variety of demographic segments, encompassing differences in race/ethnicity, immigration status, abilities, and languages.

In coordination with collaborative partners, these teams actively connected with the community to assess needs, identify gaps, and address challenges through an extensive survey collection initiative. This method, recognized as a national best practice, involves engaging community residents through trusted partners.

The Steering Committee and Community Engagement Teams collaborated to develop a comprehensive community survey, aiming to gain a deeper understanding of the needs and challenges faced by our immigrant community. Our goal was to have direct input from immigrant residents to shape the priorities of this plan. The San Mateo County Office of Community Affairs (OCA) partnered with the John W. Gardner Center for Youth and Their Communities at Stanford University to enhance the survey and conduct a thorough analysis of the results. This collaborative approach reflects our commitment to a thorough and inclusive planning process that truly captures the nuances and needs of our diverse immigrant community.

COMMUNITY SURVEY

The County of San Mateo recognizes and values being truly welcoming and working towards the inclusion of newcomers by creating a culture and environment where all residents feel empowered.

The Immigrant Inclusion Community Survey serves as a pivotal tool in understanding and addressing the multifaceted aspects of immigrant inclusion within our community. In an era marked by increasing global mobility, this survey emerges as a crucial initiative to assess the experiences, challenges, and successes of individuals who have chosen to make a new home in our midst. By delving into the diverse facets of immigrant life, this survey aims to uncover valuable insights that will inform policies, programs, and community initiatives, fostering a more inclusive and supportive environment for all residents. Through thoughtful exploration and analysis, the survey endeavors to illuminate the pathways toward effective integration, creating a tapestry of understanding that strengthens the bonds within our diverse community.

Nearly 2,800 immigrants from across the county responded to the survey. To effectively reach target audiences, the survey was administered in 12 languages in both online and hard-copy formats. In addition to outreach by the OCA, local community organizations provided significant support to ensure that the respondents reflected the diversity of the county. Eligible survey respondents received a \$15 gift card in appreciation of their time and the information they provided.

The survey sample included respondents from the entire county who ranged in age from under 18 to over 71 years of age. More than half of the respondents reported having a child or children under the age of 22—most of these are school-age children. More than 70% of respondents were employed, with only 14% unemployed and seeking work. More than 85% of respondents find their communities to be welcoming and inclusive and over 85% of respondents reported feeling safe in their communities.

When queried about the services that would be **most useful**, the respondents named **affordable housing, healthcare coverage, food assistance, educational assistance/scholarships, legal assistance, and mental healthcare.**

The barriers to accessing services included being unsure about qualifications for services, not understanding English well, and lack of awareness of services. Most of the respondents who cited barriers were fleeing hardship, had no formal education, and/or were non-English speakers.

See Appendix 1 for more detailed survey findings.



OPPORTUNITIES, GOALS, & APPROACHES

The County has an opportunity to increase awareness of resources allowing residents to thrive.

The collected data reveals that immigrants in San Mateo County encounter obstacles in accessing crucial services and participating in civic discussions. These challenges are genuine, but so are the strengths of our County government, community-based organizations (CBOs), business community, and residents, whether immigrants or U.S.-born. Despite facing significant hurdles in accessing essential services, the majority of surveyed immigrants perceive their communities as welcoming, inclusive, and safe. They highlight the importance of positive, friendly relationships and interactions, as well as the support received from government and community-based organizations. Moreover, 85% of respondents expressed trust in local law enforcement. Integrating these insights with the OCA's understanding of the county's resources, social infrastructure, and community leadership, we identify significant opportunities.

Opportunities

- **Powerful partnerships to provide critical services.** Working in partnership with stakeholders who are part of the county's informal and formal support networks can leverage resources and maximize impact.
- **Address barriers to accessing services.** Ensuring that immigrants have knowledge of, and access to, services congruent with their needs, regardless of immigration status, and know where and how to access them (providing linguistically, culturally, and technologically accessible services) is critical.
- **Better engage and connect residents with one another and civic life.** Strengthening connections to civic life, while simultaneously creating critical opportunities to inform decision-making, can serve to actively welcome immigrants to engage with their neighbors and community institutions while promoting inclusiveness and a sense of belonging.



FOCUS GROUP SURVEY RESPONDENT QUOTES

“Perhaps we can pay [the rent] with the salary that we have, but there's not enough for the other expenses...”

“...the barriers ... that I have as an immigrant, is the language, not being able to talk or communicate correctly in English.”

“This center being opened up is one of the biggest things that make me feel welcome. You can come here to learn different things and meet new friends. You can also come here to seek all sorts of assistance.”



Goals

The goals of an Immigrant Inclusion Strategic Plan aim to establish an environment fostering the integration, well-being, and equitable opportunities for immigrants within a community. The goals of this plan include:

- **Enhance immigrant awareness of services.**
- **Increase access to language services to facilitate usage.**
- **Coordinate distribution of collateral** (i.e., affordable housing, food assistance, and healthcare coverage/mental health care).
- **Promote immigrant engagement in civic and public activities.**

Approaches

OCA will design and execute two overarching approaches to achieve its goals. Included in the approaches are:

- **Communications, Outreach, and Engagement**
- **Continued Learning to support immigrant inclusion**

The approaches outlined in the Plan acknowledge OCA's commitment to addressing obstacles faced by immigrants in accessing services and engagement. These challenges include issues like awareness and information gaps, insufficient English language skills/support, and fear of jeopardizing immigration status. A particular focus is placed on ensuring access to critical services such as affordable housing, healthcare coverage (including mental health), and food assistance. Moreover, these approaches underscore the significance of OCA becoming a learning organization engaged in meaningful collaboration with partners. This collaborative effort enables the organization to leverage its strengths and address challenges effectively.



Approach One: Communications, Outreach, and Engagement

Forge Equitable Access to Services:

- Build awareness of the importance of intentional delivery of programs and services to meet the needs of immigrant communities.
- Increase awareness of priority programs and services, with a particular focus on affordable housing, affordable healthcare coverage / mental health services, and food assistance for the most vulnerable populations, including access to English language support.

Increase Civic Engagement and Community Connection by:

- Encourage and engage immigrants to participate in civic activities that build community connectedness, foster a sense of belonging, and emphasize the value of contributing knowledge and input.

Approach Two: Continued Learning to Support Immigrant Inclusion

Build understanding of Community Assets, Resources, and Needs:

- Improve community outreach that informs internal and external programming and services.
- Conduct ongoing assessments to learn about and stay apprised of local programs and services, as well as service needs gleaned directly from immigrant community members.

Moving Forward

As we start on the next phase of our Immigrant Inclusion Strategic Plan, more inclusive and welcoming communities will begin to take tangible shape. Our commitment to fostering an environment that values diversity and embraces the contributions of immigrants is unwavering. The successes achieved thus far have laid a strong foundation, but now, as we move forward, we must capitalize on the momentum and explore innovative avenues for further progress. This next phase calls for **strategic thinking, collaboration, and a shared dedication** to ensuring that our immigrant community not only thrives but also plays an integral role in shaping the future of our county.

Embarking on the next phase of the strategic plan, our focus will delve into specific themes and action items, charting a course for the implementation of targeted initiatives.

Cross Sector

- Facilitate monthly immigrant forum where agencies working with immigrant communities convene to share resources and information, discuss issues facing local immigrant communities, and build collaborative cross-sector relationships
- Demonstrate a Commitment to fostering a welcoming community with proclamations supporting: Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islanders (AANHPI) Heritage Month; Immigrant Heritage Month; Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Questioning, Intersex, Asexual and Two-Spirit and Pride Month; Hispanic Heritage Month; Juneteenth; United Against Hate Week, Welcoming Week
- Regularly highlight issues impacting immigrant communities through Spotlight Series presentations focused on immigration

Opportunities for Partner Organizations:

Community Connectedness

- Better utilize existing outreach opportunities to share information about education, resources, and other services available
- Better promote established groups, like mother and child groups, by bringing in speakers
- Develop programs/ assistance for those who do not read or write
- Voting and Elections:
 - Create and provide easy-to-understand election materials and collaborate with partners to distribute the information as trusted messengers
 - Provide materials in multiple languages
 - Table at existing events (not just election-events) and coordinate with other organizations to reduce duplication of efforts



legal resources; safety net resources such as housing, food, and healthcare; LGBTQIA+ community resources; family/domestic violence prevention and resources; trafficking prevention and resources; financial literacy and entrepreneurship resources; and other topics as they intersect with the needs of immigrant communities

- Develop and distribute comprehensive local resource guide — available digitally and in print in multiple languages—to support community members in identifying and accessing resources related to housing, healthcare, nutrition, legal services, and more
- Regularly reassess immigrant engagement and needs, identifying key services needed as well as gaps and barriers, share findings with community partners, and adjust operations and programs based on the findings
- Maintain and affirm our commitment to fostering an inclusive and welcoming environment for all residents through our nationally recognized 4-Star certification as a Welcoming County
- Promote and build bridges across cultures, promote understanding, and foster a sense of belonging for newcomers and established residents
- Foster learning and collaboration by meeting with community-based organizations and attending partner meetings, including: ACCEL, Chinese Health Initiative, Coastside Collaborative, Human Trafficking Initiative, Latino Collaborative, Rapid Response Meetings, SAMCEDA Public Policy Committee, Welcoming Redwood City
- Host Immigrant Summit and offer local agency partners the opportunity to come together and learn, share, and collaborate on immigration-related topics and projects
- Promote cross-sector collaboration and awareness of services through a mixer geared toward immigrant-serving organizations

Community Connectedness & Engagement

- Foster dialogue and partnership by participating in events geared toward immigrant communities, such as health fairs, farmworker events, Know Your Rights workshops, Immigrant Heritage Month events, cultural celebrations, and Welcoming Week events
- Implement strategies outlined in the Community Engagement Toolkit to ensure that public outreach and engagement are carried out with an equity framework, making civic participation accessible to diverse communities
- Engage in equitable public outreach and engagement strategies, tailor civic participation opportunities to meet the needs of local immigrant

Opportunities for Partner Organizations:

Educational Opportunities

- Create a “Welcome Center” or Immigrant Coordinator role at each school site as part of best practices
- Offer regular evening office hours for families to talk to teachers / staff / parent liaison
- Convene webinars for specific industries / stakeholders to promote the services available in the region
- Promote awareness and educate residents about how to navigate the school system (both preK-12 and adult education)
 - Provide forums at the library
 - Provide inclusive cultural events inviting community to participate
 - Invite school counselors from throughout the County to present and share information
 - Provide more workshops (eg. ESL, Citizenship, etc)



communities, and adjust programming as needed to incorporate feedback and lessons learned from local immigrant communities, immigrant-led efforts, and immigrant-serving partners

- Maximize opportunities for engagement, by considering where engagement might dovetail with other programs (e.g., citizenship ceremonies and voter registration, ESL and outreach to language learners with low literacy levels through adult school, partners, or libraries)
- Celebrate Welcoming Week by organizing multiple events celebrating immigrants and newcomers and building connected communities and residents

Economic Development

- Promote immigrant entrepreneurship and support immigrant-owned small businesses with the establishment of three Economic Opportunity Centers located around San Mateo County: South San Francisco, North Fair Oaks, and Half Moon Bay – all which have large immigrant communities
- Promote financial literacy and access to tools and banking opportunities
- Build and maintain relationships with immigrant small business owners and serve as a liaison as needed to ensure that their needs are elevated to County leadership
- Deepen partnerships between local employers, labor unions, community colleges, the San Mateo County libraries and local city libraries, SAMCEDA, Mission Asset Fund, the Renaissance Center, JobTrain, and immigrant-serving organizations to expand job training programs that connect individuals to employment opportunities

Equitable Access to Services

- Improve equitable access to language services by contracting to provide interpretation and translation services to County departments, engaging in multilingual outreach efforts, and highlighting language access as a key feature of public-facing programming
- Maintain language access dashboard so that community members have transparent, updated information available regarding County translation and interpretation service usage by department
- Regularly update website to include up-to-date, multilingual information regarding community resources, initiatives, and events
- Use an equity framework to approach community engagement

Opportunities for Partner Organizations:

Equitable Access to Services

- Develop culturally and linguistically appropriate outreach materials for CBO's and other County partners, to ensure that economic self-sufficiency (ESS) programs (MediCal, CalFresh, CalWorks) are advertised in correct languages, include information about being free, and that language assistance is available
- Continue multilingual outreach on public charge and benefits
- Increase multilingual Health Consumer Center outreach
- Provide multilingual outreach through meal programs and on-site center outreach to participants
- Offer mentoring for academic advancement
- Work in collaboration to elevate the voice of parents/caregivers
- Increase and link housing development to childcare – BuildUP

Safe Communities

- Increase regular dialogue with the Board of Supervisors to help build trust with partners and their expertise in engaging their communities



by partnering with trusted messenger organizations, prioritizing bidirectional learning, ensuring that outreach materials are multilingual, utilizing multimodal communication strategies, and seeking community input/feedback throughout the process of delivering programming

- Develop a language access ordinance for County departments to ensure equitable communication with Limited English Speaking residents. This effort aims to bridge language barriers by translating critical correspondence, demonstrating a commitment to accessibility, effective communication, and the overall well-being of a diverse population within their jurisdiction

Educational Opportunities & Outcomes

- Continue to build relationships with the San Mateo County Department of Education, with a particular focus on engaging newcomer staff leaders in each district
- Cultivate and maintain partnerships with adult schools and the immigrant communities they serve by engaging in outreach efforts with students and staff
- Develop civic leadership and engagement opportunities geared specifically toward immigrant students as well as their families

Safe Communities

- Support the protection of immigrant rights by partnering with legal service providers to provide education and outreach around pathways to citizenship, legal permanent residency, protected status, and deferred action
- Support outreach and education efforts such as Know Your Rights workshops
- Promote and facilitate alternative pathways to citizenship through no-cost accessible legal workshops
- Continue support for community partners operating the Rapid Response Network and promote this resource to ensure that community members at risk of deportation have the tools to access legal support and assistance
- Enhance outreach and support for disaster preparedness and emergency responses that are linguistically and culturally responsive through coordination with community agencies and City and County Office of Emergency Services/Management
- Sustain and grow relationship with CARON, SAL and PAL by partnering on immigrant-focused activities, workshops and events

Opportunities for Partner Organizations:

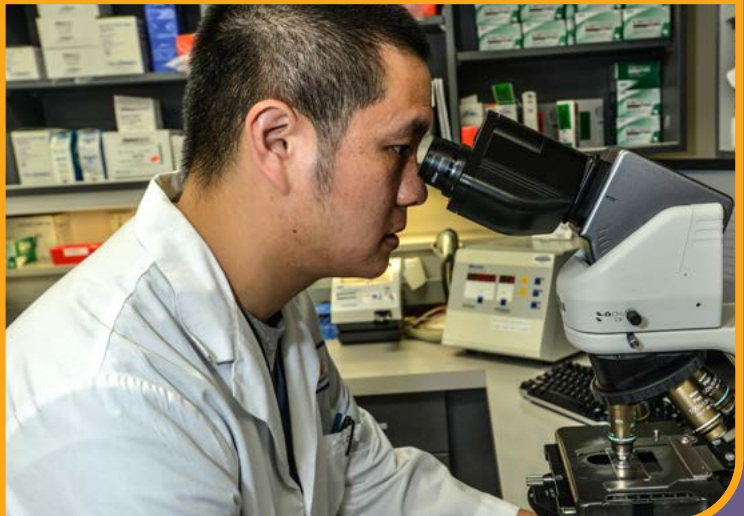
Economic Development

- Provide forums at the library to provide information about available resources
- Provide inclusive cultural events inviting the community to participate
- Provide more multilingual workshops (ESL, Citizenship, etc)

Equitable Access to Services

- Collaborate with partners in identifying key indicators that document program impact and allow for improvement to be tracked
- Sharing of childcare data and links to other partners (CCPC, Big Lift)
- Partner with immigrant-serving organizations to distribute and collect surveys to help identify needs and inform program priorities





ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The County of San Mateo Office of Community Affairs and the Immigrants Services Team express gratitude to all individuals who contributed to the development of the Immigrant Inclusion Strategic Plan for San Mateo County.

County Leaders

Special appreciation is extended to our County leaders for their unwavering support and guidance.

County of San Mateo, County Executive Officer	Mike Callagy
County of San Mateo, Deputy County Executive	Justin Mates
County of San Mateo, Chief Equity Officer	Shireen Malekafzali
County of San Mateo, Chief Legislative Officer	Connie Juarez-Diroll
County of San Mateo, Office of Community Affairs Director	Emma Gonzalez
County of San Mateo, Office of Community Affairs, Immigrant Services Manager	Megan Gosch
County of San Mateo, Office of Community Affairs, Outreach Supervisor	Kenny Chu
County of San Mateo, Office of Community Affairs	Immigrant Services Coordinators
County of San Mateo, District 1	Legislative Aides
County of San Mateo, District 2	Legislative Aides
County of San Mateo, District 3	Legislative Aides
County of San Mateo, District 4	Legislative Aides
County of San Mateo, District 5	Legislative Aides
County of San Mateo, Aging and Adult Services	Community Program Analyst II
County of San Mateo, County Attorney's Office	Brian Kulich
County of San Mateo, Health	Senior Community Health Planner
County of San Mateo, Housing Department, Management Analyst	Anthony Parenti
County of San Mateo, Human Services Agency	Director of Self-Sufficiency Services
County of San Mateo, Office of Education, Executive Director, Equity, Social Justice & Inclusion	Niambi Clay
County of San Mateo, Sheriff's Office, CARON, Program Coordinator II	Jose Luis Aguirre
First 5 San Mateo County	Kitty Lopez, Michelle Blakely & Jenifer Clark



We acknowledge the significant contribution of the **John W. Gardner Center for Youth and their Communities**, whose meticulous analysis of the survey collection. We express our appreciation to the **Gateways for Growth** advisors whose invaluable support and technical expertise contributed to the development of this strategic plan.

A deep appreciation goes out to the County of San Mateo Office of Community Affairs **Outreach Team** for their unwavering support and diligent efforts in facilitating residents' completion of the Immigrant Inclusion Survey. We also extend our gratitude to the **County Communications Team** for their ongoing support and promotion of these endeavors. Lastly, a heartfelt acknowledgment goes to **Megan Gosch** from the Office of Community Affairs for her contributions in leading the efforts and shaping the inaugural Immigrant Inclusion Strategic Plan.

Strategic Plan Steering Committee

Ka'Ryn Holder-Jackson, PhD, Adult-Education, College, and Career Educational Leadership (ACCEL)

Carlos Garcia, Catholic Charities

Judith Guerrero, Coastside Hope

Cristina Dos Santos, Community Legal Services in East Palo Alto (CLSEPA)

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Sheryl Muñoz-Bergman, Immigration Institute of the Bay Area (IIBA)

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Community Partners

Adult-Education, College, and Career Educational Leadership (ACCEL)

Amgen

Casa Circulo Cultural

Catholic Charities

Coastside Hope

Community Legal Services in East Palo Alto (CLSEPA)

Daly City Partnership

El Concilio of San Mateo County

First 5 of San Mateo County

Grove Foundation

Healthways

HIP Housing

Immigration Institute of the Bay Area (IIBA)

Jefferson High School

JobTrain

La Raza Centro Legal

Legal Aid Society of San Mateo County

League of Women Voters of North & Central San Mateo County

Moonridge

Multicultural Institute

Nuestra Casa

One Life Counseling Center

Peninsula Conflict Resolution Center (PCRC)

Puente

Redwood City Public Library

Samaritan House

San Francisco 49ers Academy

San Mateo County Economic Development Association (SAMCEDA)

Self-Help for the Elderly

Senior Coastsiders

Sequoia Adult School

Silicon Valley Community Foundation

Skyline College

Stanford University

Taulama for Tongans

The Big Lift

The Primary School

Thrive Alliance

Upward Scholars

Upwardly Global

Westmoor High School



APPENDIX 1

The survey instrument included seven sections. The Gardner Center analyzed the survey results. A summary of the findings follows, organized by section.

Demographics of Respondents

- Respondents represented the entire county. Largest response rates were from residents of San Mateo, Redwood City and North Fair Oaks.
- Respondents ranged in age from under 18 to over 71 years old. The majority of respondents were 25-39 (44 %) and 40-49 (27%) years old.
- Slightly more women than men responded to survey.
- Most respondents have lived in the U.S. for multiple years. Over 20% lived in the US for 6-10 years and 19% for more than 25 years.
- The education level of immigrant respondents was variable. Nearly 20% have never attended formal school. 43% have completed post-secondary school and training in the US. 45% completed post-secondary school outside of the U.S.
- 45% of the respondents reported moving to the US to flee hardship.
- Nearly ¾ of respondents speak English and another language. Spanish is the most common language in addition to English.

Respondents Demographics

Respondents represented the entire county. Largest response rates were from residents of:

San Mateo
Redwood City
North Fair Oaks



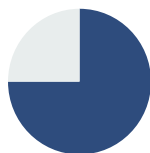
Most have lived in the U.S. for **multiple years.**



Respondents ranged in age from **under 18 to over 71 years old.**



Education level varied.



Nearly **75%** speak English and another language.

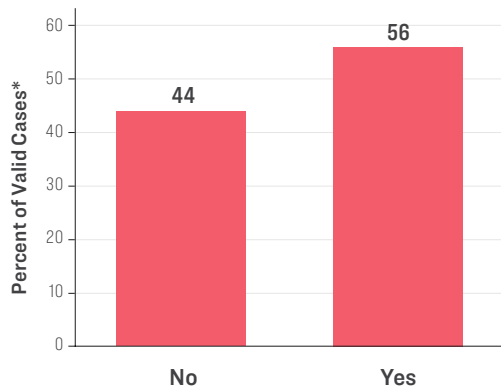


45% reported moving to U.S. to flee hardship

Educational Opportunities and Outcomes

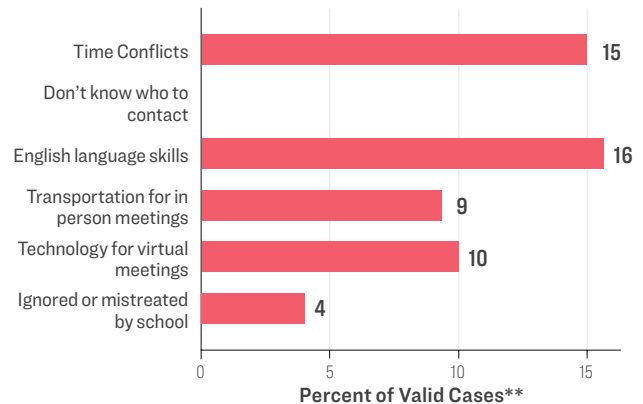
- More than half (56%) of respondents reported having a child or children under the age of 22. Of those with children, 62% are school age in grades K-12.
- When queried about the kinds of support that would be most useful for their children, respondents overwhelmingly cited English language support (e.g., speaking, reading, and writing).
- Similarly, respondents cited their English language skills and time conflicts as impeding contacting the schools to seek support for their children.
- Respondents named four primary areas for support to meet their goals: English language support, scholarships/financial support, tutoring sessions, and social and emotional learning.

Do you have a child or children under the age of 22 in San Mateo County?



* The number of valid cases used as the base for the percentage calculation is 2,708 whereas the total number of legitimate responses is 2,779.

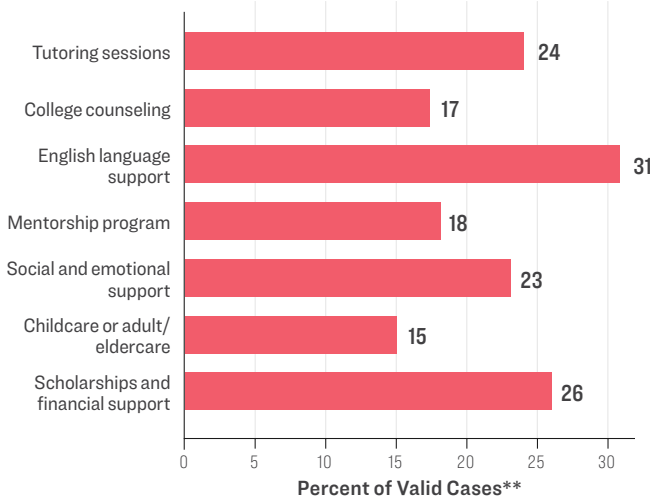
Do any of these reasons make it difficult for you to contact your children's school, teachers, or counselors?*



* Respondents can choose more than one answer.

** The number of valid cases used as the base for the percentage calculation is 2,710 whereas the total number of legitimate responses is 2,779.

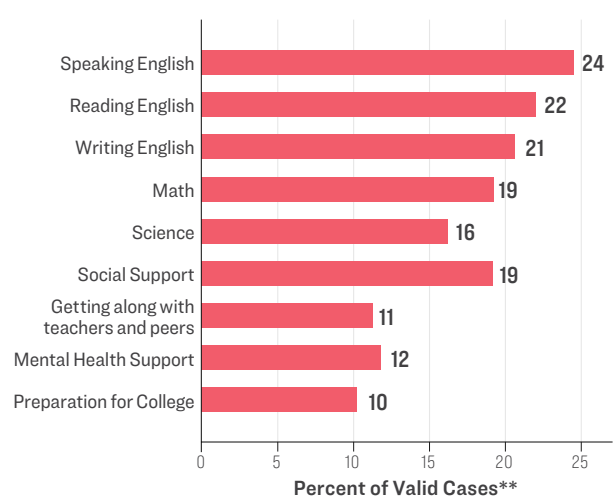
If you are in or considering an educational program, which of the following services would help achieve your goals?*



* Respondents can choose more than one answer.

** The number of valid cases used as the base for the percentage calculation is 2,710 whereas the total number of legitimate responses is 2,779.

Would your child(ren) in elementary, middle, or high school benefit from additional support in any of the following areas?*



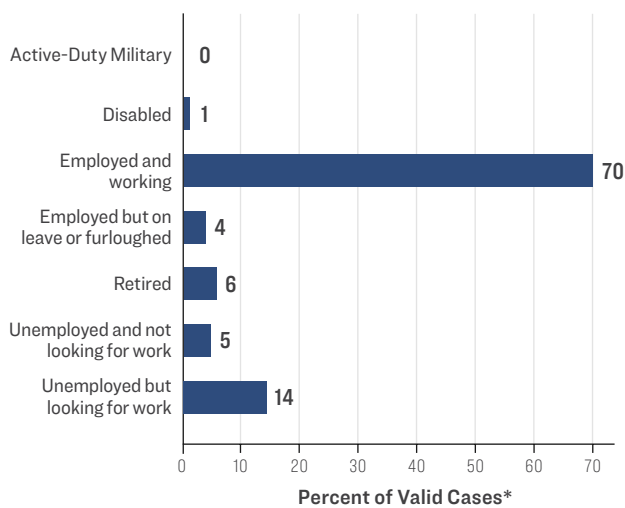
* Respondents can choose more than one answer.

** The number of valid cases used as the base for the percentage calculation is 2,711 whereas the total number of legitimate responses is 2,779.

Economic Development

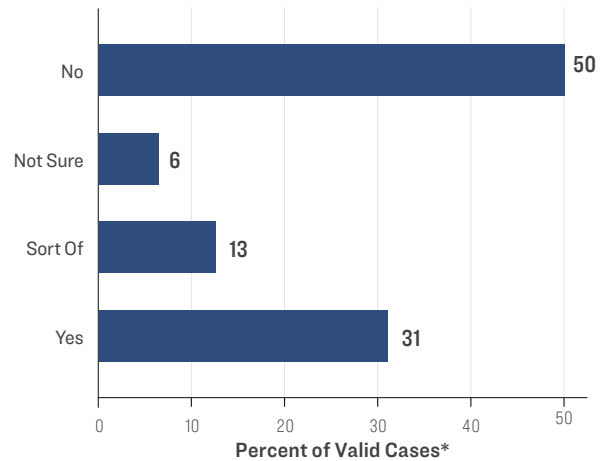
- 70% of respondents reported being employed; 14% were unemployed and seeking work.
- Regarding job fit, 50% of respondents said they were not overqualified for their current job. 31% reported being overqualified for their current jobs.
- Three primary factors prevented them for seeking jobs that better fit skills and training: needing to pay bills, English language, and credential from home was not recognized.
- The kinds of support respondents requested included: skills training; resume, cover letter, interview preparation; leadership training and development.

How would you describe your current employment status?*



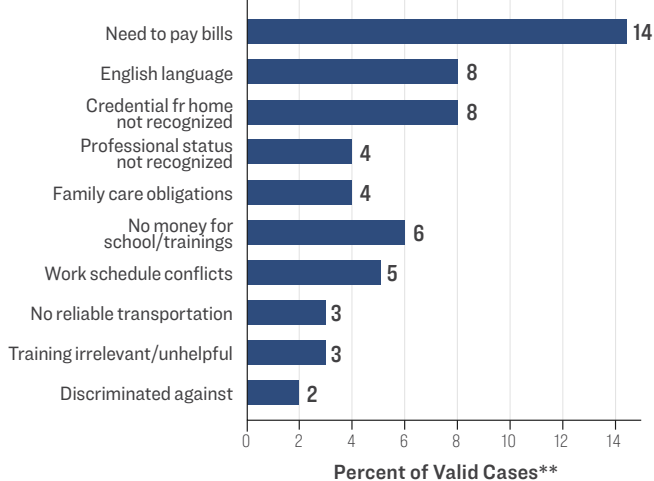
* The number of valid cases used as the base for the percentage calculation is 2,678 whereas the total number of legitimate responses is 2,779.

Do you have a degree, skills, or training that you are unable to use at your current job (are you overqualified for your job)?



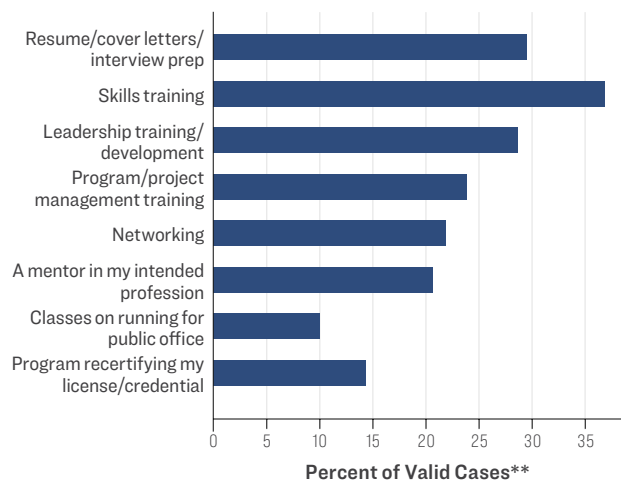
* The number of valid cases used as the base for the percentage calculation is 1,958 whereas the total number of legitimate responses is 2,779.

Do any of these reasons prevent you from being employed in a job that fits your skills and training?*



* Respondents can choose more than one answer.
 ** The number of valid cases used as the base for the percentage calculation is 2,697 whereas the total number of legitimate responses is 2,779.

What support would be useful in obtaining your career goals?*

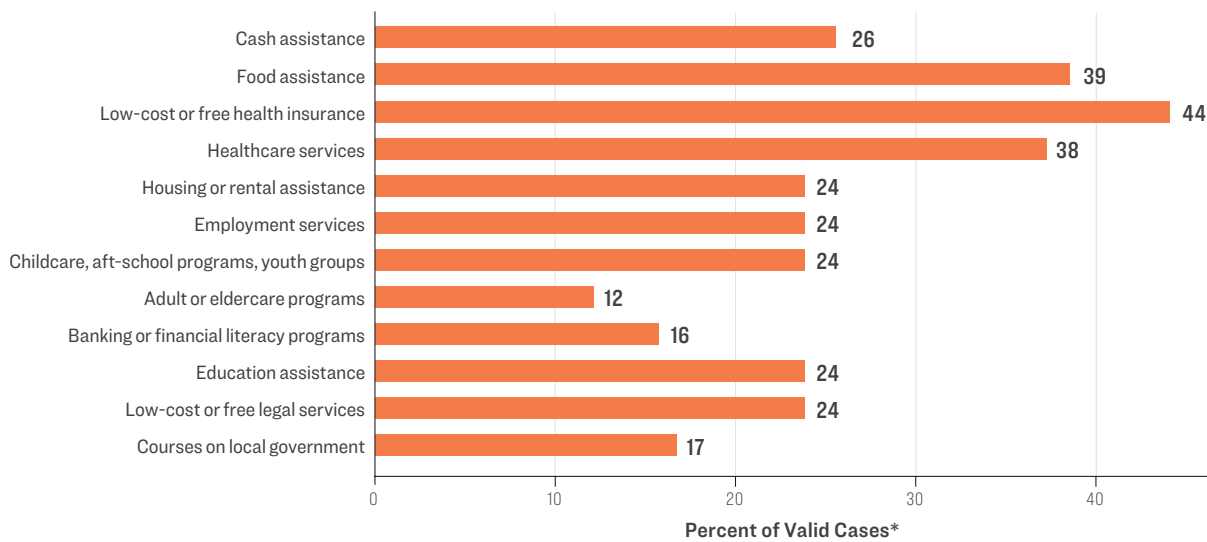


* Respondents can choose more than one answer.
 ** The number of valid cases used as the base for the percentage calculation is 2,697 whereas the total number of legitimate responses is 2,779.

Equitable Access to Services

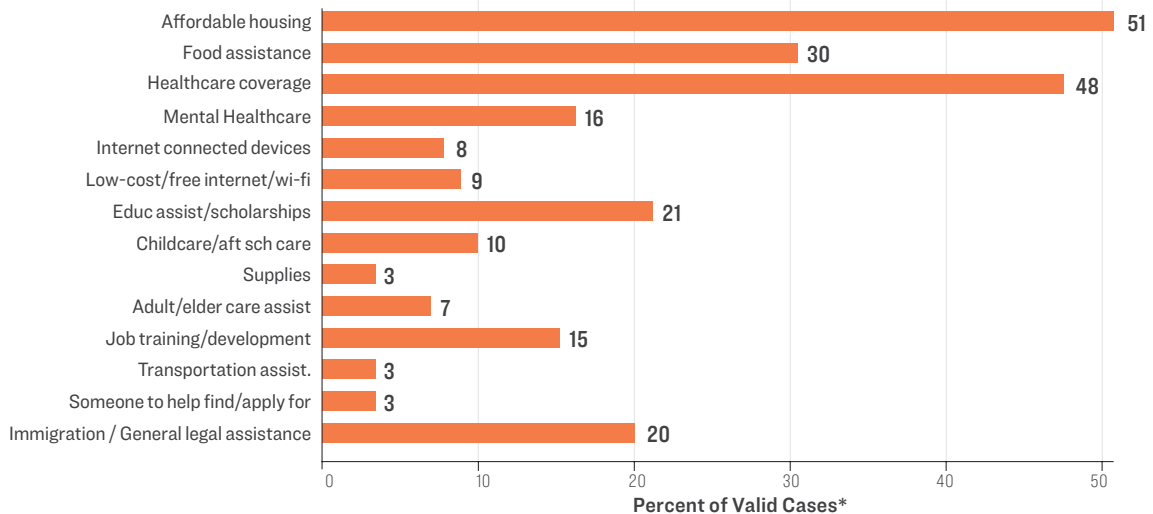
- Respondents reported high levels of awareness and use of many types of services.
- Services cited as most useful included: Affordable housing, healthcare coverage, food assistance, educational assistance/scholarships, legal assistance, and mental healthcare.
- There were no significant differences in interest for services by demographic groups.
- The most common barriers to accessing services included: not sure if I qualify, do not understand English well, not aware services are free or not aware of services, and fear of risking immigration status.
- Most respondents who cited barriers were most likely fleeing hardship, had no formal education, and were non-English speakers.

Which are the following types of programs are you aware of or have used at least once?



* The number of valid cases used as the base for the percentage calculation is 2,392 whereas the total number of legitimate responses is 2,779.

Which of the following services would you find most useful? (choose top three)



* The number of valid cases used as the base for the percentage calculation is 2,693 whereas the total number of legitimate responses is 2,779.

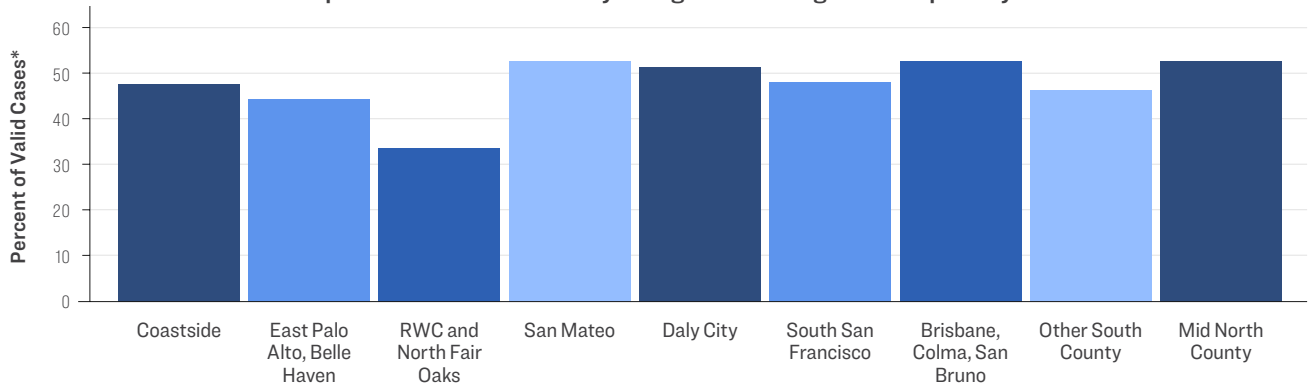


Community Connectedness

- More than 85% of respondents find their communities to be welcoming and inclusive.
- Key factors related to feeling welcome included community level relationships and friendly interactions; structural factors like government and organizations that supported them, and cultural connections with other immigrants.
- About 1/3 of respondents participated in public meetings hosted by a local organization or 20% participated in parent teacher association meetings and/or school board meetings.
- The primary reason named for not participating in public meetings was a lack of knowledge that they could participate followed by a lack of information.
- When asked about voting during the last 5 years, 37% reported voting, 39% reported not voting and 24% were not eligible to vote. Reasons that influenced not voting included not knowing if they were eligible and not knowing how to register.

Service: Healthcare coverage

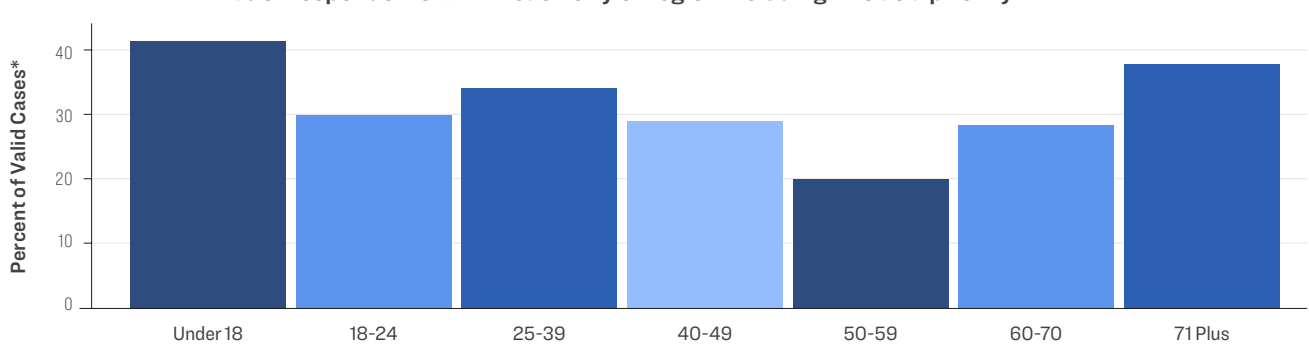
% of respondents within each city or region including this as a priority



Coastside includes Pacifica, HMB, San Gregorio, Pescadero, Montara, Moss Beach, El Granada, La Honda, Loma Mar. Other South County includes Menlo Park, Atherton, West Menlo Park, Woodside, Portolla Valley, Ladera. Mid North County includes Milbrae, Burlingame, Hillsborough. Mid South County includes San Carlos, Foster City, Belmont. Note: The total number of responses from each city/region is used as the base to calculate the percentage.

Service: Food Assistance

% of respondents within each city or region including this as a priority

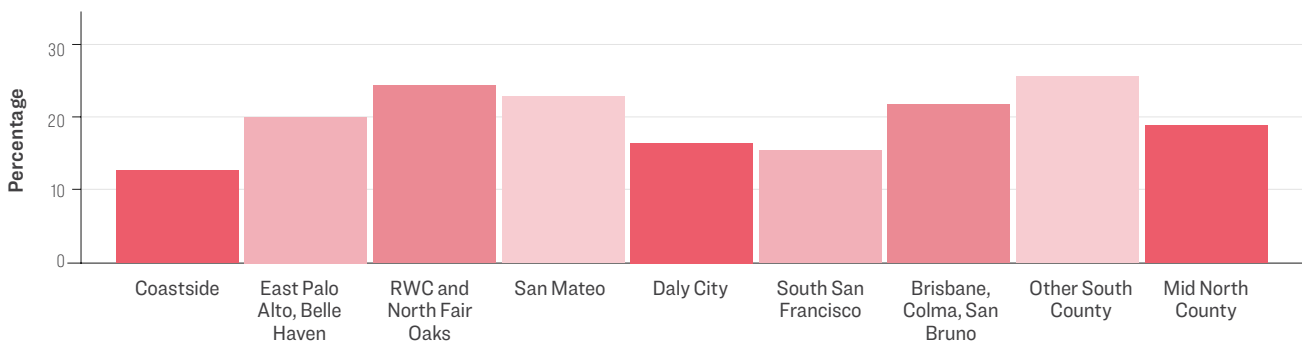


Note: The total number of responses from each age group is used as the base to calculate the percentage.

Safe Communities

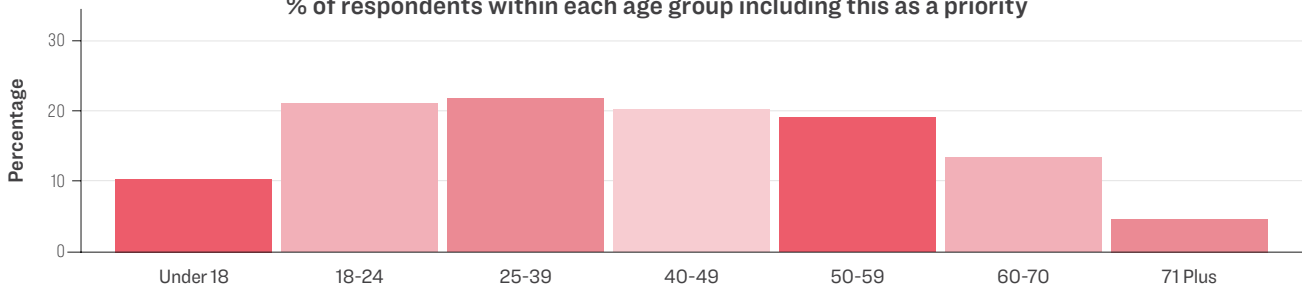
- Over 85% of respondents reported feeling safe in their communities.
- Key factors related to feeling safe were structural (e.g. police and local government infrastructure) as well as community level connections with neighbors. Living amongst immigrants was another important safety factor.
- More than 85% reported trusting local law enforcement.
- When facing an emergency, 70% of respondents reported calling friends, family, or neighbors; 50% would call 911.

Service: Immigration or General Legal Assistance
 % of respondents within each city or region including this as a priority



Coastside includes Pacifica, HMB, San Gregorio, Pescadero, Montara, Moss Beach, El Granada, La Honda, Loma Mar. Other South County includes Menlo Park, Atherton, West Menlo Park, Woodside, Portolla Valley, Ladera. Mid North County includes Milbrae, Burlingame, Hillsborough. Mid South County includes San Carlos, Foster City, Belmont. Note: The total number of responses from each city/region is used as the base to calculate the average.

Service: Immigration or General Legal Assistance
 % of respondents within each age group including this as a priority



Note: The total number of responses from each age group is used as the base to calculate the percentage.

Outreach

- More than half of respondents named email as their preferred way to learn about local resources and events. Social media and learning from friends and neighbors were then next most popular ways to learn of local events.
- More than half of respondents described community-based organizations as the places where they seek services and information. The next most popular choice was internet searching.