

# EXPANDED COMMUNITY NETWORKS FOR DENVER'S NEW AMERICANS



## DENVER PUBLIC LIBRARY

### PLAZA & SERVICES TO IMMIGRANTS AND REFUGEES

**Different subject matter experts to increase access to information**



*With immigration topics at the forefront of community and national dialogue, the Denver Public Library's New Americans Project (NAP) is working with local neighborhoods and key stakeholders to build a national model for intentional work in welcoming and empowering some of our most vulnerable residents. NAP provides an array of targeted services and programs to meet the immediate and long-term needs of Denver's immigrant, refugee, and asylee populations, through holistic, integrated support. The Plaza program under NAP promotes increased access to resources and opportunities related to these populations' goals of integration and self-sufficiency, such as gaining second-language conversation skills, preparing for citizenship, and creating new networks in business. During this first year of the New Americans Project, targeted immigrant programs and events were offered across eleven branch library locations. Services for Denver's immigrants and refugees were located in some Denver's most immigrant-dense communities.*

**Cater services to meet individualized needs of stakeholders**



**Partnerships:** The Denver Public Library continues to work alongside various service providers ranging from families with a connection to all available resources and institutions to provide immigrant families with a connection to all available resources and increase awareness of different types of services offered. The Denver Public Library works with local, state, and federal partners including: United States Citizenship and Immigrations Services, the Mayor's Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs, American Immigration Lawyers Association (Colorado Chapter), Bank on Denver, Metropolitan State University, Emily Griffith Technical College, the Arts Students League of Denver, the Clyfford Still Museum, the Denver Museum of Nature and Science, Spring Institute, and other local community-based organizations. It also works alongside community based organizations, businesses, other library systems, and non-profits to cross promote and share resources.

**Meet mutual goals of your partner or collaborator with your institution**



### Creating opportunities for positive narratives

**Plaza:** This signature program serves as a starting point for our target populations to develop strategies to pursue their individualized goals and engage with their community. The program takes an open, self-guided approach to programming. It is a catered experience that matches participants' own unique needs and demands. Under the guidance of a professional librarian, facilitator or library program associate, participants can use the resource-enriched environment to engage in generalized life skills such as critical thinking, self-discipline, self-efficacy, self-criticism, develop strategies to adapt in everyday life, and teamwork as new social bonds are created – all qualities that promote success in one's everyday life.

*A dedicated immigrant and refugee space...*

- Acts as the third space (safe, trusted environment is fostered)
- Provides programming as a reference tool (develop community understanding that library values their immediate needs and can act as a bridge to other resources that they may not be immediately aware of, no question will go unanswered)
- Becomes a trusted resource (the library staff strives to provide updated, accurate community information sensitive to immigrant needs)
- Increases bilingual capacity (integrate populations into community, meeting them at their basic needs)
- Allows for holistic services (not privileging one need or one pathway of success for immigrant populations)
- Has a variety of resources are always available depending on the participants' needs



**English Conversation:** To supplement services by traditional ELL service providers, English Conversation Tables engage with critical thinking and language skills.

- Schools and universities
- Neighborhood associations
- Service providers



**Citizenship Help Programs:** Citizenship and naturalization procedures are difficult to navigate in this country. Citizenship Help programs allow participants to practice civic questions with NAP staff and seek guidance from immigrant attorneys to gain insight on the process.

- Immigration attorneys
- Service providers
- Community-based organizations
- Government agencies



**artC:** Each location providing services for immigrants and refugees strives to lift creative voices and provide outlets for intergenerational audiences to dialogue with each other. The arts can facilitate much intergenerational collaboration as individuals participate in art-making activities that embed meaning into what they see and gain new perspectives of the world around them.

- Art centers
- Cultural institutions
- Businesses

