City of Mountain View Human Relations Commission
Summary of Immigrant Services Needs & Assets Assessment Report[1]
December 10, 2020

A. Introduction

In October 2018, the City of Mountain View (MV) Human Relations Commission's (HRC) Immigrant Services Needs and Assets Subcommittee initiated the collection of data with the objective of **assessing needs and assets in relation to services for immigrants in Mountain View, in order to make associated recommendations to the City.**

The data collection process, which took place largely from 2018-2019, with some follow-up in 2020, involved:
- A review of existing statistics on characteristics of immigrants in Mountain View.
- Individual and small-group key informant interviews with City staff, representatives of community organizations in MV, and the Santa Clara County Office of Immigrant Relations.
- Collection of written responses to the interview questions from an additional community organization and current and former members of the City of MV Youth Advisory Committee (YAC).
- Focus groups with immigrants who work and/or live in MV, including Spanish-speakers, Russian-speakers, and Mandarin-speakers.
- A survey conducted largely online (and partially on paper) in English, Spanish, Russian, and Mandarin with immigrants working and/or living in MV; 268 respondents met the inclusion criteria.

The interview, focus group, and open-ended survey data were analyzed qualitatively for key themes and examples, and the closed-ended and numeric survey data were analyzed quantitatively. As most of the data were collected prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, a review of literature on the local effects of the pandemic on immigrants was conducted in October 2020.

B. Findings

Background information on immigrants in MV. According to data from the U.S. Census in December 2019, MV had a population of 80,993, of whom 41.2% were foreign-born. Among the foreign-born, the most common countries of origin included India, China, and Mexico.[2] The Census Bureau's American Community Survey (2013-2017) found that among the limited-English population in MV, the most common languages spoken at home were Spanish (32.6%), Chinese (including Mandarin and Cantonese; 28.1%), and Russian (11.7%).[3]

Immigrant perspectives. In the HRC's survey and focus groups with immigrants, MV and City government were usually reported to be welcoming to immigrants (per survey, **90.8%** and **80.8%**, respectively). Some respondents reported that MV and City government were less welcoming to low-income immigrants and/or that housing costs were displacing low-income immigrants. Different areas of greatest concern or need were expressed by the language groups included in the survey and focus group data. English-, Spanish-, and Russian-language respondents most commonly cited the high cost of housing, while Chinese-language respondents most commonly cited quality education for children.

> "I believe this is a safe place, but is it very expensive to live here, and I'd like people to consider that not just people working in tech live here, we're also gardeners, we take care of children, we clean houses, and the work we do also has worth."
>
> - Spanish-language respondent

[2] TownCharts. Mountain View, California Demographics Data. Accessed 5/26/20 at https://www.towncharts.com/California/Demographics/Mountain-View-city-CA-Demographics-data.html.
[3] CA Census 2020. Census 2020 California Hard-to-Count Fact Sheet: Mountain View City in Santa Clara County. Accessed 5/26/20 at https://census.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2019/06/Mountain-View.pdf.

Regarding public safety, some survey and focus group participants (mainly Spanish-speakers) wanted to see greater cultural and linguistic competence or sensitivity. Some Spanish-language respondents praised outreach by public safety to immigrants, while other English- and Spanish-language respondents recommended greater outreach. Chinese language respondents were most concerned about drugs and cannabis in MV and improving general public safety and reducing theft. It is important to bear in mind that these data were collected mainly in 2019, prior to the murder of George Floyd and the resultant attention to racial equity, the role of the police in society, and police-community relations. A separate forthcoming report on community experiences with the MV Police Department will provide more recent and in-depth data from MV residents, workers, and visitors, including (but not limited to) immigrants. The report is part of a process led by the HRC to gather community input and report on themes to the City Council, MV Police Department, and community.

In the area of social services, the data from the immigrant survey indicated that use of Community Services Agency (CSA) services was particularly common (per survey, **23.5%**), especially among English-, Spanish-, and Russian-language respondents. When asked about their service needs, English- and Russian-language respondents were most likely to call out legal services (per survey **24.4%** and **38.5%**, respectively), while Spanish and Chinese-language respondents commonly cited translation and interpreting services (per survey **60.7%** and **52.2%,** respectively). Overall, there was interest in (more) interpreting services at City meetings and events. Many respondents appeared to be unaware of existing City interpreting services and how to obtain them.

When asked about the best ways for the City to disseminate information about services and events, English-, Spanish-, and Chinese-language respondents most commonly cited the City website. However, they also reported difficulties navigating the site and recommended it be available in different languages.[4] Russian-language respondents (who tended to be older than other respondents) preferred to obtain information about events and services from the *MV Voice*. Respondents of diverse backgrounds suggested many additional ways to disseminate information, such as via schools, places of worship, and residences, and recommended that the City involve the different communities more in outreach activities.

Community group perspectives. In interviews and written responses to interview questions, community-based organizations and other community groups serving or representing immigrants reported that a wide variety of services are available to immigrants in MV, via the City and community organizations. Respondents viewed City services for immigrants positively, overall, but wanted to see services expanded to reach more people and groups, and for the City to expand and clarify communication about these services via multiple channels. Respondents also indicated that a number of important service needs remain, such as in relation to low-income housing, that should be addressed through collaborations. According to respondents, the City should be an even more vocal and present advocate and example of how to create a safe space for immigrants.

City staff perspectives. According to City staff who were interviewed, City department and programs are providing many services and resources that address the needs and preferences of immigrant communities. However, many interviewees reported that they would like to have additional staff and volunteers that speak the languages of their clients and potential clients, and to be able to offer more resources in diverse languages. They also recognized a need to expand outreach efforts to diverse communities in ways that are accessible and appealing to those communities.

Limitations. It is important to bear in mind several key limitations of the needs and assets assessment. First, young people and South Asians were under-represented in the data that were collected. Second, the survey data reflect a convenience sample and cannot be generalized to the wider population of immigrants (or to subpopulations of immigrants) living and/or working in MV. Finally, most information in this report was

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[4] The City of MV homepage (https://www.mountainview.gov/contact/services.asp) does have a "Select a language" menu (in English) that permits the user to select from among many languages; once a selection is made, Google Translate provides a machine translation of all pages. A City disclaimer indicates that accuracy cannot be guaranteed.

collected between late 2018 and late 2019, prior to the Coronavirus pandemic and the murder of George Floyd. While a brief update based on county, state, and national-level information follows, it is not specific to MV. ***Update: since the pandemic began.*** In Santa Clara County, immigrants are among those most impacted by COVID-19. Many are in frontline work, which puts workers and their families' health and lives at risk, or work in sectors that have experienced shutdowns or mass lay-offs.[5] In addition, immigrants have lower rates of health insurance[6], and the federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act) excludes many non-citizen immigrants from relief opportunities.[7] (However, the State of California and private funders have offered some relief funds to the undocumented in California.[8]) The digital divide, particularly for low-income immigrants, affects children's access to school in Santa Clara County[9] and all ages' access to civic and social life. Asian and Pacific Islander communities are experiencing a rise in racist and xenophobic attacks all over the country.[5] Despite extensive outreach efforts, immigrants in Santa Clara County have been undercounted in the latest U.S. Census, which will affect funding for services and representation in Congress.[10]

C. Preliminary Recommendations to the City

Recommendations reflecting urgent needs that the City Council should consider prioritizing:

1. Develop and roll out a communications plan focused on immigrant communities that leverages a variety of media/pathways and expands the group of organizations and volunteer immigrant community liaisons who can assist with dissemination of information.

2. Conduct an information campaign around the City's Multilingual Community Outreach Program's (MCOP) interpreting and translation services; and investigate the potential need for services in other languages, especially based on the 2020 Census findings.

3. Collaborate with the non-profit, education, and business sectors to continue to reduce the digital divide among immigrant (and non-immigrant) communities in Mountain View.

Recommendations for actions already identified (in whole or in part) as a City Council priorities:

4. Continue to offer the Spanish Civic Academy, provide up-to-date information on the Academy and the associated Ambassadors Program on the City website, and plan and implement similar linguistically and culturally tailored academies in other languages (for example, Mandarin).

5. In developing programs and policies addressing housing cost and displacement, community-police relations, and other equity-linked issues, consider impacts on diverse immigrant subcommunities.

For the future, post-pandemic:

6. Develop an orientation in several languages for non-English speakers who are new to the City, addressing diverse services offered by the City, County, local public schools, and private non-profit entities; consider partnering with other organizations on this effort.

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[5] Gutiérrez M, Rocha L, Nguyen H. (2020; Jun. 19). Opinion: Communities of color are bearing brunt of coronavirus. *The Mercury News.* Available at: https://www.mercurynews.com/2020/06/19/opinion-join-immigrant-refugee-and-youth-voters-in-standing-up-to-racial-injustice/.

[6] New Americans in San José Metro Area. (2020). Available at: https://research.newamericaneconomy.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2020/08/COVID_SanJose.pdf.

[7] American Immigration Council. (2020). The Impact of COVID-19 on noncitizens and across the U.S. immigration system. Available at: https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/research/impact-covid-19-us-immigration-system?gclid=EAIaIQobChMI-e79pqGf7AIVi7bICh3QjgsmEAMYASAAEgL25vD_BwE.

[8] GCIR and philanthropic partners announce Creation of California Immigrant Resilience Fund. (2020; Apr. 15). Available at: https://www.gcir.org/news/gcir-and-philanthropic-partners-announce-creation-california-immigrant-resilience-fund.

[9] Gonzales R. (2020; Oct. 5). COVID-19 has made the digital divide a canyon for Latino students. *San José Spotlight*. Available at: https://sanjosespotlight.com/gonzales-covid-19-has-made-the-digital-divide-a-canyon-for-latino-students/.

[10] County of Santa Clara. 08.24.20 COVID-19 Briefing Live Stream Transcript. Available at https://pastebin.com/RHeMxw3j.