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**NEW AMERICANS TASK FORCE**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**Tuesday, July 25**

**I. Welcome**

- Alfredo Santiago - Chase Brexton Health Services (Baltimore City)
- Bishop Bruce Lewandowski - Baltimore City and Delegate for Hispanic Ministry
- Kevin Meadowcroft, Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services
- Nan Ross, International Rescue Committee
- Truphena Choti, AfriThrive
- Gabriel Ramirez - Johns Hopkins University - School of Medicine
- Bybiose Larochele, Baltimore County Government

**II. Approval of Meeting Minutes**, Mary Clay moved to approve meeting minutes and task force approved

**II. Welcoming Plan Feedback**

- a. The end product is to create a Welcoming Plan/Report for Baltimore County
- b. Maximize partnership with Baltimore County Public Library
- c. SD report - (aligns with Baltimore County's strategic plan) - models are similar; good format to develop a similar welcoming plan that aligns with the County's Strategic Plan
  - i. SD plan is comprehensive - there is overlap in key areas - i.e. financial literacy is essential, school curriculum, resources at the library
  - ii. There are a number of items that can be learned through financial literacy that can help us be more productive as County residents
- d. Valerie - highlighted the importance of developing trust
  - i. Language access - cultural competencies and lived experiences, competency and awareness of culture uniqueness
- e. Hiring and compensating individuals with cultural competency - Incentivize the work - consider the opportunity costs for soliciting volunteers
  - i. Currently this is not feasible as there are no budgeted/allotted \$ to compensate volunteers
- f. Rachel - SD #9 recommendations to remove barriers.....expand family engagement and support
  - i. Life Skills
  - ii. Academic ESL - remove barriers to work better together
  - iii. Narrative section of the recommendations: highlighting stories of immigrants - reinforces the importance of partnerships and accomplishments of New Americans in their community (duplicate this for the Baltimore County Report)
- g. Alejandra - SD resonated the most with Baltimore County - appreciated the recommended strategies and how they have a timeline for when strategies need to be developed/implemented
  - i. Having inter-cultural competency, cultural humility



- ii. Education - financial barriers - tool to help 1st generation families and students (apply for scholarships and financial aid)
  - 1. Access to higher education and consider the greater implications in the future
- h. Alfredo - Latinx parents are new to the college application process (currently not being guided in high school)
  - i. Proposed workshops for navigating the college application and admission process
- i. Laure - appreciate the language used to describe the positive impact New Americans have in the community
- j. Twin Cities - % of immigrant business owners in Minneapolis is impressive - economic infrastructure, resource sharing to support/sustain a viable business - foster entrepreneurial spirit.
- k. Catalina - identify what is already available in Baltimore County and focus on the gaps
  - i. What's in existence already?
  - ii. What fits within the scope of Baltimore County Gov't?
  - iii. Leverage existing resources, consider making systems more accessible

### III. Subcommittee Chair Introductions

- Civic Engagement/Community Engagement: Bella Owens & Laura Brown
- Connected, Safe, and Healthy Communities: Cindy Kolade
- Economic Development and Entrepreneurship: Tasha Gresham-James & Mary Clay
- Education: Jennifer Hernandez & Annette Karanja
- Equitable Access: Catalina Rodriguez-Lima & Ra'Mona Brown Carter

### IV. Subcommittee Breakout Sessions Feedback

#### Equitable Access - Giuliana

- Meetings will be held on the last Thursday of every month
- Defined Equity
- Identified what's working well in Baltimore County
  - BCPS ESOL Welcome Centers
  - BCPS moving out of having designated ESOL educational programming outside of the student's immediate/local community
  - Giuliana's department hiring staff to help welcome New Americans
- Not working
  - Healthcare/Emergency Care
  - Funding and ability to fund specific programs because of county budget/funding limitations
- Action Items
  - Create Java Board to continue to share information

#### Economic Development & Entrepreneurship - Mitch



- Reviewed the purpose of the subcommittee and overarching goals/expectations
- Discussed current barriers that prevent New Americans from achieving economic prosperity
  - Prioritize
  - Make programmatic recommendations
- Our work will involve policy recommendations for the County - Giuliana confirmed
- Will meet on Fridays at 9 am - exact date TBD

#### Civic & Community Engagement - Laura Brown

- Discussed barriers to civic & community engagement
  - Systematic barriers such as funding
- Will create a poll to determine meeting date/time

#### Connected, Safe and Healthy Communities

- Will create a Doodle poll to determine meeting cadence
- Need public safety representative on the Community - Major Orlando Lilly
- Discussed the need to determine what is currently in place in Balt. Co - i.e. Chase Brexton, other community service providers?
  - Determine gaps and what needs to be improved
- Discussed the need to connect with the community in-person

#### Education

- Need to determine meeting date/time
- Discussed Balt. Co. strengths
  - Offices dedicated to serving New Americans - particularly in the university system
- Discussed improvement opportunities
  - Connect with community members interacting with the educational system - i.e. CCBC interaction is not as deep due to it being a commuter school and remote learning opportunities
- School system being educated on what New Americans can access, have rights to - financial aid offices, school counselors
- Provide programs for "in between" individuals that don't follow the traditional high school learning route - alternative options for obtaining a HS diploma/GED
- Financial barriers - tuition costs

### **V. Survey Questions Review**

- There will be two surveys produced by our contractor one specific to the immigrant community and one to the welcoming/receiving community.
- The surveys will be translated to the 5 most commonly spoken languages in the county.
- Survey will gauge community involvement and leadership

### **VI. Closing**



- Be on the lookout for Teams or Google forms invitation to work collaboratively on survey questions.