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WELCOMING
AMERICA



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🏠 *Building a Nation of Neighbors*

“An Overview of Fostering Community Support for Refugees”
Webinar Transcript

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David Lubell: Hi everyone, this is David Lubell, Executive Director of Welcoming America. Thank you so much for joining us today for our opening webinar on Fostering Community Support for Refugees. We have an amazing turnout today, with nearly 400 registrants and counting. Welcoming America is so pleased that we'll have a chance to help support your efforts under this new cooperative agreement with the Office of Refugee Resettlement. We believe this represents a unique opportunity for us all to work together to strengthen how newcomers are viewed in our communities, and to ensure they receive true welcome. So again, thank you for joining us today, and I'd like to turn the webinar now over to Susan Downs-Karkos, Welcoming America's Director of Strategic Partnerships, who serves as the lead on this project and will be managing today's webinar.

Susan Downs-Karkos: Thanks, David. Before we begin, I'd like to cover a few housekeeping matters. You'll see there is an area for chat on the right-hand side of your screen. Feel free to use the chat to share your thoughts with the audience as we go through the material. If you have a question for the presenters, please use the question and answer feature at any time. We'll be spending the last 10 minutes of the call reviewing your questions.

And I'd like to extend my thanks again to everyone who has joined us today from every corner of the country. This is truly a national conference call. I'm joining you from my Denver office, we have several of the Welcoming America staff on the line from our Atlanta headquarters, and we are also joined by guest speakers Bob Montgomery from San Diego and Jan Reeves from Boise. First, to kick us off, we'll turn to Washington DC, where we'll hear from Makda Belay from the Office of Refugee Resettlement, the funder of this work.

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Makda Belay: Thank you, Susan. Hello everyone. Thank you for joining us. We are excited to have Welcoming America as our new TA provider to provide training on community engagement. I encourage you to visit ORR's website at <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/orr/> to find out the type of services that Welcoming America and other TA providers provide and also to get an update on

ORR activities and other useful resources. Thank you, Susan and everyone, for your time and interest.

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Susan Downs-Karkos: Thank you, Makda. We have an ambitious webinar agenda today and several areas that we are eager to cover with you over this next hour. We also want to leave time for your questions and comments at the end. Our desired outcomes for the call are for you to:

- Know more about the resources available from Welcoming America that can help you foster positive local climates for refugees
- Recognize why community building is important
- Develop a shared understanding of the methods that work to build understanding and support for refugees
- Find out how you can stay engaged in this work with Welcoming America and others in the network interested in advancing welcoming efforts

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We'll begin by sharing information about our technical assistance resources. Welcoming America has developed some important goals to guide this technical assistance program. Most of these speak for themselves, so I would like to spend a little extra time explaining the first. One of our most important goals is to create what we call a community of practice among organizations that work with refugees. We recognize that the organizations and individuals on this call today already seek to engage the broader community in their work to some extent. But we've also heard that there is so much more to be done. This community-building work needs to be ongoing, and the promising practices that are out there – the untold story of all that is going so well in resettlement – need to be lifted up. We believe this grant will give us the opportunity to bring together individuals and organizations that want to work together and learn from each other about what is working, explore their shared challenges, and help develop new tools. We want to elevate the wisdom that already exists in the field, and create as much potential for collaboration as we can.

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So how will we get there? Here you can see how Welcoming America is rolling out its technical assistance program. We've begun by assessing needs through key informant interviews with some of the nation's top leaders in the refugee network, learning from state refugee coordinators, national resettlement agencies, ethnic-based community organizations and other technical assistance providers about current strengths and what more could be done to improve receptivity to refugees. But we also want to hear from you. Last week we sent out a link to an online survey, asking people like you to let us know their greatest priorities for technical assistance. If you haven't yet done so, we hope you'll complete this survey and feel free to forward it to your networks so that we can get the most thorough feedback possible. "Fostering Community Engagement" is a broad topic, and your input is important to us because we want this technical assistance to be as relevant as it can be.

What we learn from key informants and the online survey will in turn inform our virtual training topics. You'll continue to have opportunities approximately every 4-6 weeks to participate in webinars devoted to specific issues related to community engagement. Each webinar will be followed by a chance to continue the conversation by joining a learning circle. Learning circles will be held quarterly in a conference call format, and they include a smaller group of people who want to explore a topic in greater depth. Learning circle participants will be able to share successes and frustrations around specific issue areas, hear from national and local experts in a particular field, examine useful tools, or identify tools that should be created. We are excited about the participatory nature of the learning circles and will be using your feedback from the survey to inform their development.

One webinar and learning circle topic we have already identified are community action plans. We are partnering with Boise, Idaho to help other communities that would like to consider a comprehensive planning approach that brings together many different community sectors to learn more from Boise's model. You'll hear a bit more about that from Jan Reeves a little later on this call.

While our technical assistance is designed to maximize technology, Welcoming America will offer an in-person Master Trainer class in the fall for those champions of community engagement who are interested in fine tuning their engagement skills and who can commit to going back to their own communities and training others on these approaches. We'll be sharing more with you about this opportunity in the coming months.

Welcoming America is also providing technical assistance in the form of a rapid response team, lending advice and support to communities that may find resistance to refugees starting to bubble up. Welcoming America is able to work with a handful of communities that would benefit from an outside, neutral convener. We'll want to hear from you about pressing situations where Welcoming America's help might be of most benefit.

With your help, we'll be identifying and developing new tools to improve outreach and engagement with receiving communities. We'll also continue to communicate with you, through our growing website devoted to promising practices in fostering community support for refugees. We want to feature your voices and examples on this site. You can also expect to receive regular email updates from us and invitations to join webinars like this one. You are part of a growing network of organizations, cities and communities promoting welcoming work, and we will keep you abreast of other ways to stay connected to Welcoming America.

Finally, we will be weaving evaluation into all of our technical assistance. We'll be starting by asking you to complete a short on-line survey following the webinar. Let us know how we are doing so that we are in the best position to help you create community change.

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So now that you've heard about the technical assistance Welcoming America is offering, I'd like to take a step back and make sure we have a common understanding of why this work is so important and why it has been elevated in recent years. It's perhaps no surprise that in the last 20 years our demographics have changed dramatically in this country, particularly with the arrival of immigrants and refugees to new, nontraditional gateways. Newcomers are coming to places like Lewiston, Maine; Clarkston, Georgia; Cactus, Texas; and Boise, Idaho, among so many others. Sometimes these changes are difficult for longer-term members of communities to accept. They may not understand why their new neighbors are here. Language, cultural and even religious differences can get in the way of getting to know their new neighbors. And sometimes the result is ambivalence on the part of the receiving community and even fear.

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However, we at Welcoming America believe that a new opportunity is emerging to help build understanding and a broader base of support. We believe that by focusing intentional effort on the concerns of receiving community members, and helping them understand how much they have in common with their new neighbors, so much more is possible. Our focus is not direct service provision to refugees; rather it is a focus on the broader receiving community, listening to and responding to the concerns and fears that people may have. Our focus in particular is on the unsure and the untapped. The unsure – the 60% of Americans who aren't really sure what to think of newcomers; and the untapped – those who would be positively inclined but really haven't been involved in community building efforts with refugees. We know there are effective ways to proactively reach out and help create greater understanding by focusing on these two groups.

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What we've found through research and from on-the-ground practice is that this Receiving Communities Model has the potential to help transform our communities. It consists of three components: Contact – building connections between newcomers and longer-term residents who typically have little ongoing interaction with each other; leadership – engaging mainstream leaders who have credibility with the broader community and are important voices to extol the benefits of demographic change; and communications – using messages and communication strategies that help the community recognize how demographic change brings opportunity.

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So why do we focus on contact-building? It's well known that an important way to reduce the anxieties that different people feel towards each other is to bring them into meaningful contact. Contact theory, a branch of social psychology, has studied this relationship.

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There are a variety of ways that organizations and communities are trying to build meaningful contact between newcomers and native-born Americans. Joint service projects, like this community gardening one, allow people to work side-by-side on a common interest, so they get to know each other over time and recognize their commonalities. The possibilities for bringing refugees and native-born Americans together are endless. We'd like to feature some of the work you've been doing in this area and invite you to reach out after the webinar and share your promising practices.

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Dialogues are another appealing way to build contact, especially for those who may not have time for an ongoing commitment. Welcoming America has identified several dialogue curricula that are useful, and we have a dialogue toolkit available on our website. We have many examples of testimonials from people who have left dialogues feeling that the safe space that was established and the opportunity to listen to others and to be listened to, had really challenged their assumptions and opened up their minds to newcomers.

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Our second strategy is communications. Everyone on this call communicates about their work in some way, through how they describe it to friends and family, or on their organization's website, or through everyday interactions with the receiving community. Finding ways to change the narrative about refugees, especially in places where there is more push-back, is important. Local communication campaigns are effective, though admittedly they can be time consuming and expensive. But working closely with the local media, and doing that in collaboration with other community spokespeople, not just service providers, is important. We also think the arts are a great way to get the word out – through music, visual arts, and theater.

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So how do we best talk about our work so that it resonates with the unsure? We've learned that we need to start with messages that connect people. That help them see themselves in the community vision, much like this Nebraska billboard does. Every community is different – so messages that resonate in New York may be fairly different from what resonates in Spokane. Think about the shared values in your community and how the refugee story connects with those.

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The final strategy is leadership engagement. This is a tough one and there is no one approach that works. It requires thinking about who has power and influence in your community and might be positively inclined towards your work. Who might be a positive, credible voice for refugees?

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Perhaps you are lucky enough to have the support of your local mayor. How do you strengthen and capitalize on that support and tap into your mayor's other influential contacts? Perhaps it's a bank president who adopted a child from another country. Perhaps it's a small business owner who has employed refugees. Taking the time and effort to continue to reach and engage these potential partners is time consuming but well worth the effort in the long-term.

We've only begun to scratch the surface today on these three strategies, and rest assured, we'll be featuring them in greater depth in upcoming webinars and learning circles. But we wanted to give you a foundation for the work that Welcoming America promotes. Now, I'd like to hear from some of the leaders in the field, people who have worked with refugees and receiving communities for years, and can provide some perspective on why this work is so important.

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We'll start with Bob Montgomery, the Executive Director of the San Diego International Rescue Committee, and a 2011 winner of the Migration Policy Institute's E Pluribus Unum prize for excellence in immigrant integration.

Bob Montgomery: One of San Diego's most dynamic programs is our afterschool youth program, *Students Plus*. I have often cited the program's success in assisting refugee teens to compete and excel academically in spite of the fact that their educational experience before arriving to the United States may have been spotty at best. My feelings were bruised when the principal at the high school that hosted *Students Plus* told me one day that our program was not part of the solution but part of the problem. He explained that because we only served refugees, the program was inadvertently creating a schism between the mainstream student body and the refugee students. At the time, *Students Plus* was solely funded by ORR so we were mandated to only serve refugees but I saw the wisdom in what the principal said.

So we began to look for ways to first diversify the funding for the program. Once that was accomplished by attracting financial support from several local foundations we were able to open the *Students Plus* Program to any student in the school, both refugees and non-refugees alike. Almost immediately we experienced more interactions among the refugee students and the mainstream students. Further we were able to strengthen our relationship with the school administration as they now viewed us a true community partner. Further, this experience provides us with a blueprint for a community engagement approach that ensured that helped us to become more engaged in the communities that we resettled refugees. This investment into these communities also helped us to diversify our funding base while at the same time ensuring that the refugees we resettled had a smoother transition into their new home.

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Susan Downs-Karkos: Thank you, Bob. And now for another perspective, we're joined by Idaho State Refugee Coordinator Jan Reeves, who will share how the people of Boise came together to address concerns people had and develop an action plan.

Jan Reeves: Thank you, Susan. And thanks to Makda and the Office of Refugee Resettlement, as well, for supporting this webinar and for bringing so many of our colleagues around the country together on a topic of such obvious interest.

The story I have to share is really one of bringing people with good minds and good hearts together at a time of crisis in order to deal with and resolve some serious problems. Most of us work really hard to avert crises, and absolutely, without question, **prevention is the best cure**, but there are just times when crises overtake us and all we can do is react.

I'm going to quote Rahm Emmanuel here, former White House Chief of Staff and now Mayor of Chicago, **who famously said, "Never let a serious crisis go to waste."** Our crisis in Boise doesn't quite compare to the 2008 financial collapse that Rahm was talking about, but we have taken his sage advice to heart.

I **will** take just a few minutes to explain **what this Plan of ours is** and **how it came about**. In a nutshell, as the clunky name implies, it is a **community-ownership model** of strategic resource planning and partnership development that emerged in my hometown of Boise during the first half of 2009.

Now, there's nothing at all new about strategic planning and partnership formation. I'm sure everyone on the call has either led such efforts or has been involved in them . . . time and time again. What was new territory for us, though, was applying these approaches to the **community-wide** problem of refugee integration.

At the time, Boise had been experiencing **historically high numbers of refugee arrivals without major issues** . . . until the recession hit . . . and the entire community was suffering . . . and job opportunities were disappearing fast . . . and the safety net for newly arrived refugees quickly became totally inadequate and, to make matters worse, mainstream resources were stretched beyond their ability to provide the level of support demanded by this new economic reality.

As a result, many reasonable, responsible and otherwise supportive members of the community started to ask how they were supposed to deal with the multiple and seemingly endless needs of so many families. Community support was ebbing away . . . and there was this growing perception that the community's capacity to absorb refugees had reached a critical tipping point.

Boise Mayor Dave Bieter was getting phone calls, the public school system was operating in crisis mode because of the impact of refugee kids on some of the schools . . . I was getting calls from the District Superintendent . . . and rumors of

potential massive refugee homelessness were flying around. It's understandable that all of these forces would lead to the idea that imposing practical limits on resettlement made sound **economic sense**.

{I'm sure this story sounds familiar to many of you, because I know Boise hasn't been alone in experiencing this kind of public concern}.

So, anyway, after several meetings and talks over coffee with the Mayor's staff, we agreed that the Mayor would convene a broad-based group of community stakeholders, city government folks, refugee service providers, and refugees to get a handle on the capacity problem and find a way forward toward some real solutions.

It became obvious very quickly that many community stakeholders did not adequately understand the rationale or the process of refugee resettlement and did not know who were coming as refugees or why. The most immediate need of this group was for information and education.

{I recognize that this may sound awfully simplistic to many of you on the call, but I swear this is how it happened.}

After gaining a much clearer understanding of the refugee resettlement process and the compelling need for host communities like Boise to provide opportunities for protection through resettlement, the planning group easily agreed that **imposing limits on the number of refugees was not the answer**; that the issue to be dealt with was really the availability of resources; and that capacity could grow if resources were better identified, better coordinated, and more strategically deployed to address the underlying problems facing refugees.

I'm not going to go into any details here of the planning process or the structure and implementation of the Plan . . . These can be discussed at another time. For now, I just want to say that two of the most important lessons we've learned through this initiative have been:

- Community education and understanding of refugee issues is fundamental to the development of productive partnerships needed to foster the integration effort; and
- Developing strong supportive partnerships can help reframe the dialogue, moving away from **"How do we limit the number of refugees coming into our community?"** to **"How can we be more strategic to ensure that our capacity continues to grow?"**

So, with that, thanks to everyone and I'll turn the mic back to Susan so we can all move on with Welcoming America.

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Susan Downs-Karkos: Thanks so much Jan and Bob. Again, I'd like to invite those of you on the call who have models of receiving communities engagement to share to please send those into us. We'll be looking for opportunities to feature more examples, so we'd like to hear from you. Before we open it up to your questions, I'd like to close by giving you a little background on Welcoming America. We are a

national organization focused on building greater understanding between U.S. and foreign-born Americans. We have Welcoming America affiliates in 23 different communities across the country, and we also work with a growing number of organizations like those on the call today that are interested in building a greater base of support for new Americans.

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Our roots are in Tennessee and the Tennessee Immigrant and Refugee Rights Coalition, where community members recognized they needed to take a more proactive approach to addressing immigrant backlash by building understanding between everyday people, a story many of you may have seen profiled in the film “Welcome To Shelbyville.”

And it was from that proactive work that a new story of Tennessee emerged – of people paying taxes, wanting to contribute, working hard and calling America their home. This is a story that communities across the country wanted to replicate, and Welcoming America was created to help that story grow.

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Welcoming America’s national desk now provides training and support to a variety of thought leaders and practitioners.

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Some of the tools we offer are already available on our website. “All Immigration Is Local” provides the research and demographic arguments for working with receiving communities to support immigration. The Receiving Communities Toolkit highlights promising practices and lessons learned from the growing field of organizations working to improve receptivity to newcomers.

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Building a Nation of Neighbors is an online training module, based on Welcome to Shelbyville, that helps organizations learn how to put some of these welcoming ideas into practice.

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Friends of Welcoming is a way for individuals to connect to this work and model welcoming in their own personal lives – it provides ideas and examples of how to get started with this approach.

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These tools are a great way for you to get to know our work better. And we want to get to know your work better. First, we want to hear from you and encourage you to complete our technical assistance needs survey. Also, just by signing up for this webinar, we’ll be placing you on our email list so that you can stay abreast of updates and new opportunities. If you have promising practices to share related to building meaningful contact, leadership engagement, or communication strategies,

we invite you to share those with us through email. We will be featuring some of the top promising practices on our new refugee-focused website. And we hope you will continue to connect with us through webinars, learning circles and other mechanisms.

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In the meantime, please feel free to drop me or Hannah an email anytime with your questions, examples, suggestions or concerns. We want to build this community of practice together, and we need your help.

And now we will take questions and comments from the audience. Please use the question and answer feature, and feel free to ask me, Bob or Jan questions. Rachel Steinhardt, Welcoming America's Deputy Director, will moderate.

Rachel: Thank you, Susan. Good afternoon everyone. We are getting some great questions, and I encourage everyone to please chime in. I am going to be starting with a question for Jan. The participant points out that the population of Boise is about a quarter of a million people and asks, "At what point is the community too large for a single community action plan and instead is better served by integrated plans from multiple sectors?" So Jan, could you speak to that a little bit?

Jan: Currently our plan is really an integrated plan from multiple sectors. I didn't go into the details of the plan during my part of the presentation. We have essentially six plans within the entire plan. These six plans are around education, employment, healthcare, social integration, transportation, and housing. Each of these six sectors of our plan has an overarching goal and a set of objectives that deal specifically with that sector. I don't know the answer to the question about what point the community becomes too large. I would say that our plan really is better described as an integrated plan from multiple sectors than a single plan.

Rachel: Great. Thank you, Jan. I am going to ask this next question first of Bob and then of Jan because I think that it is a really important one that both of you have probably encountered in your work. The participant says, "I find that Americans who participate in these meaningful cross-cultural encounters are the people who are already interested. In other words, it can be preaching to the choir. Do you have any suggestions about how to move past this audience and focus on people who are unsure?"

Bob: That's a good question, and I'm not sure I have a great answer. Recently, in San Diego we've seen a large influx for refugees from Iraq. It places a great impact over the school district, healthcare providers, and other institutions in one community of the San Diego area. There was a fair amount of criticism regarding the impact on resources from the general community. One of the first things we had to do was educate the community about who refugees were and why these people were coming to their community. So we had to do a lot of outreach both directly through small meetings and the media as well, talking with government officials,

school districts, community health clinics and the like. Our main office was not in that community impacted, so we immediately opened an office in that community and began to interact with other community players. We introduced ourselves to the other community players and explained what resources we had and how we could assist them with the challenges that they were facing with such a large influx. We created a collaborative of these organizations, so that we could better keep them informed of arrival patterns and other challenges that this new group was bringing. So we found it was incumbent upon ourselves to reach out to those who didn't know why refugees were there and just through education begin to try to encourage them to support this effort that we were undertaking to help people who had clearly been displaced and could not return home. Based on that work, I think we have a much more welcoming community than we had when we started.

Rachel: Thank you, Bob. Jan, how would you respond to that?

Jan: Well, in a similar way, first of all, at a couple of different levels I would like to address the question. We were successful to a significant degree in engaging community partners that were not already partners. That were finding that they were encountering refugees in their daily work, they weren't sure how refugees got into our community, they didn't know exactly how to assess their needs. There was a struggle on the part of some mainstream providers when our economy began to sink into the basement that they were seeing more and more people who they hadn't encountered before because there hadn't been so much need before. These people became some of our best partners. One of example of this was the United Way in our local Tracer Valley, which is the larger metropolitan area that we reside in. Previously they had not really had as much opportunity to encounter refugees, but was seeing more and more of that and really was seeking ways to be of more assistance. I think in any partnership it was to be give and take. You have to provide something of value to a partner just as you're hoping that they will be able to provide something of value to you. If it's not this two way street of mutually beneficial relationships then it's not going to go too far. I have to go back to what Susan was saying about the strategy of meaningful contact. I didn't address this in my presentation, and our plan didn't really specifically seek to enlarge opportunities or create new opportunities for mainstream populations and refugee populations to interact, but there are a couple of antidotal situations that reflect that. Last summer with our refugee school impact grant, we organized an international summer school for middle school aged kids, so we had an equal number of native born children and refugee children attending a summer school so that they could have opportunities to interact, get to know each other, make meaningful contact, and make friends. I think that's by far the best way to nurture the uncertain about whether or not immigration or refugee resettlement is a good thing or not. The second antidotal piece that I want to add is that part of our plan addressed the need for transportation for refugees. Through outreach, we found a driver's education provider for refugees. This guy had never met a refugee before, but once he began to teach refugees to drive, it became his passion. EMM created a video that featured a refugee and this driver's training instructor and what great friends that became

just by having an opportunity to get to know each other. So I think that meaningful contact is really the key strategy to convincing the unsure or untapped.

Rachel: Thank you, Jan, and I think that those kinds of stories of impact are incredibly compelling. The next question I would like to ask, first of Bob and then of Jan, is, what kinds of data are you collecting on the impact of your work on things like integration or other areas that are of concern and will help you build your case in the community?

Bob: Well, certainly, we're more focused on data collection and evidence based programming than we have been in the past. We just a database called Efforts to Outcomes which enables us to assess the effectiveness of programs that we are running. However, I'm not sure that we're at a place yet with this initiative that we can say how it's helping with our integration in the community. I think it's a little premature for that and we haven't really focused our efforts on that. We do look to see how we're integrating within our own office because that's important to make sure that our clients have access to all of the programs we have. As far as integration with the community, I don't think we have developed any hard data on that.

Rachel: Great, certainly very understandable. Jan, how about you?

Jan: I think it's a similar story for us. WE really don't have a good data on integration indicators. One of the problems we have is that the bulk of our funding, in fact, virtually all of our funding is to make sure that refugees are successful in terms of self-sufficiency. It's really a very narrow period of time that we're doing that measurement. It's a matter of a year, maybe two years in most cases. We really don't have the resources and we don't have the mechanism to track these kinds of integration indicators. I would point the questioner and everyone on this call to the USC Center on Immigrant Integration at http://csii.usc.edu/documents/Technical_CAIMMSCORECARD.pdf where they have developed a community scorecard in California rating communities on how well they have integrated immigrants within those communities. It's a very interesting set of data. I'm not sure where the data originated, but it looks like a lot of census data that has been used to do an evaluation of how well immigrants integrate into those communities. That might be a model that we could use in the future.

Susan: Rachel, if I might add, this whole area of data collection and figuring out how we're making an impact is really ripe for further technical assistance. Welcoming America has done a lot of thinking and work on developing logic models related to this, looking at different indicators. This is a whole field that we will be spending some more time on in future webinars and learning circles to help us continue to know that we're on track when it comes to fostering community engagement and tell the story of the impact that that kind of work makes.

Rachel: Susan, do we have time for one more question or shall I turn things back over to you?

Susan: Why don't we take one more question?

Rachel: Well, I know that there are many folks out there who are interested in the costs and benefits. So I'll start with you, Bob, and then go to you, Jan. When you talk about the work that you have done, I'm sure that there was significant investment of time and resources. In what way do you feel like those resources have paid dividends in the end?

Bob: Well, I think that with our integration efforts, we first changed our image in the community from an international organization that only has a focus on bringing people into a community and helping them for a very short time and leaving them to create an image of being a community partner. What that has also done has helped us to access local resources, local funding that we previously didn't have access to because people didn't see us as a community based organization that was focused on a wider view of the community and neighborhood. Since we've been able to make that change, clearly I can see the benefits of the work that we've done with outreaching and working to help better transition refugees into the mainstreams of their communities, providing services that refugees and non-refugees alike can take advantage of. Those are things that the efforts are providing the outcomes that we want and making it both cost-effective and welcomed results.

Rachel: That's wonderful to hear, and how about you, Jan?

Jan: It's hard to determine the cost of our initiative. We've been actively involved in it for four years. We do have a facilitator and implementation coordinator on contract to make sure that the objectives of the plan are being pursued actively and results are coming from those objectives and action steps that are being implemented. The actual dollar cost of that is about \$20,000 a year. I think our overall cost of the initial part was close to about \$20,000 in the first year, so we did expend some dollars to make this happen. More than that, we have 25 to 30 different agencies and organizations, schools, universities, involved through the first stages of our development to the implementation. Over a 100 and maybe more at this time individuals involved in some phase or some part of implementing the plan. The cost of that time and effort is impossible to determine. Many people are doing this work as part of their regular job. It's being sustained by the energy and dedication that people who are implementing it. In terms of cost-benefit analysis, it's very hard to determine. We see a lot of awareness about what's happening in the community. We can point to some really important improvements in the resource base for refugees that I know will lead to a better resettlement process for many, many people. It's mostly antidotal, but I can't help but believe in my heart that it's worth it, every bit of it.

Rachel: Great, thank you both so much, and Susan, I'm going to turn the floor over to you now.

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Susan Downs-Karkos: I'd like to wrap up today with this quote from Richard Florida, recognizing how the very future of our country, in this globally competitive era, depends on our willingness to welcome newcomers. He writes, "*The growth and development of great cities comes from their ability to harness diversity, welcome newcomers and turn their energy and ideas into innovations and wealth.*"

This is the untold American success story. You are part of this greater future. Please join with us.

Thank you very much.