Principles for Immigrant Integration in Los Angeles County
California Community Foundation
Council on Immigrant Integration

Los Angeles benefits when the communities that make up the region are healthy and the residents who work here are able to contribute fully to its vibrancy. In fact, our prosperity as a state is dependent in part on our ability and willingness to create healthier communities by encouraging residents to offer up their unique contributions and talents to our economy.

Los Angeles is also home to a great number of immigrants – both those who arrived recently and those who arrived in earlier eras – who bring incredible diversity, skills and talents. As we look forward to the future prosperity of the state, there is a strong need to make sure that Los Angeles harnesses the resources that immigrants bring and take advantage of productive capacities that they can share with our region.

The Council on Immigrant Integration has developed a set of principles to do exactly this. Our 30-member body includes representatives from across the entire spectrum of Los Angeles – from business, labor, education, law enforcement, and planners, to government agencies, and community-based organizations. Our task, as we have defined it, is to help identify the pillars of society that have been difficult for immigrants to access, and determine how we can be intentional in speeding up the process of integration so we all benefit from an even more productive Los Angeles in the years to come.

The Council on Immigrant Integration puts forward the following principles to guide our values to integrate immigrants at the economic, civic and social level. These principles represent a common ground between our diverse set of stakeholders:

1. We believe that the successful integration of immigrants and refugees into our county is absolutely critical to our ability to prosper as well as maintain the well-being and vibrancy of Los Angeles.

2. We believe that integrating immigrants is a two-way process and a mutual responsibility of both immigrants and the native born – and it is critical to encourage the openness and receptivity that will allow immigrants and the broader community to strive and thrive together. This is not an issue for a single group; it spans all ethnicities, races and communities.

3. We believe that immigrants and refugees play an enormous role in our future as a state. It is through immigration that our state, and the nation as whole, will have a workforce that is able to respond to the demands of the 21st century global economic system. This system will require a wide variety of workers, skills, proficiency in multiple languages, and great adaptability.
4. We believe that immigrants should be encouraged to play a stronger role in civic activities throughout Los Angeles. Providing avenues for immigrant participation can inculcate a spirit of engagement that can persist as many residents make the passage to becoming a U.S. citizen. Civic participation not only provides the space for immigrants to express their opinions and participate in the civic life of Los Angeles, but it is also a part of the great democratic promise.

5. We believe that Los Angeles can do a much more effective job of integrating immigrants and refugees into the social fabric of our communities by addressing their strengths and needs. This includes providing greater access to critical social services, workforce development programs, and educational opportunities, a goal that will require leadership from the media, public, private and non-profit sectors.

At a time when the country is uncertain about how to address immigration in a way that is mutually beneficial, Los Angeles – with its long history as a region with many immigrants and its important role in a globalized economy – can be an important example. The Council on Immigrant Integration hopes to support local and regional leadership in effectively integrating immigrants and making Los Angeles stronger in the short- as well as in the long-term. We understand that these issues require us to think differently about how we value our human capital and the investments we make to promote a stronger regional economy, but we also know that Los Angeles has a great incentive to get this right and a great opportunity to lead the rest of the country in a more civil and productive dialogue about our common future.

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*Organizations listed for identification purposes only.