Building Structures of Solidarity and Instruments of Justice: The Catholic Immigrant Integration Surveys

Donald Kerwin and Kyle Barron

“We ourselves need to see, and then to enable others to see, that migrants and refugees do not only represent a problem to be solved, but are brothers and sisters to be welcomed, respected and loved. They are an occasion that Providence gives us to help build a more just society, a more perfect democracy, a more united country, a more fraternal world and a more open and evangelical Christian community. Migration can offer possibilities for a new evangelization, open vistas for the growth of a new humanity foreshadowed in the paschal mystery: a humanity for which every foreign country is a homeland and every homeland is a foreign country.”

Message of His Holiness Pope Francis for the World Day of Migrants and Refugees (2014),
Migrants and Refugees: Towards a Better World.

“Faith in the presence of Christ in the migrant leads to a conversion of mind and heart, which leads to a renewed spirit of communion and to the building of structures of solidarity to accompany the migrant.”

US Conference of Catholic Bishops and Conferencia del Episcopado Mexicano (2013),
Strangers No Longer: Together on a Journey of Hope.

Credits

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Executive Summary and Introduction

Since 2013, the Center for Migration Studies of New York (CMS) has convened the Catholic Immigrant Integration Initiative (CIII), a group of diverse Catholic institutions and individuals that seek to strengthen the multi-faceted work of the Catholic Church with US immigrant communities. CIII promotes the full membership and participation of immigrants in Catholic institutions and in the larger society. It sees this goal in historic terms. The Catholic Church created virtually all of its core US institutions in response to the needs of successive waves of immigrants, their children and grandchildren. Given the extent to which immigrants constituted the community of believers, it could scarcely have been otherwise. Once again, immigrants and the growing second and third generations are among the groups most in need of Catholic educational, health, social, legal, and pastoral ministries. And, the viability of Catholic institutions increasingly depends on the participation and leadership of immigrants, particularly youth. The CIII seeks to:

- articulate a distinctly Catholic vision of integration rooted in communion and the “integral development” of each member of the community;
- conduct and promote research on the work of Catholic and other faith-based institutions with immigrants;
- identify, publicize, and expand successful programs and ministries; and
- establish appropriate metrics for evaluating the effectiveness of the Church’s diverse commitments in this area.

In 2016, CMS — in collaboration with the Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc. (CLINIC), the US Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) Secretariat for Cultural Diversity in the Church, and Catholic Charities USA — surveyed two broad sets of Catholic institutions in order to:

- gain a better understanding of their work on immigrant integration;
- document promising and successful practices;
- identify obstacles to this work; and
- assess how Catholic institutions measure the effectiveness of their work with immigrants.

The surveys, which can be found in Appendix A, defined “immigrants” broadly as “the foreign-born, their progeny, and others from immigrant communities,” and defined “integration” as “the process of promoting immigrant well-being, empowerment and full participation in the broader society.”

The “Survey of Catholic Parishes and Schools on Immigrant Integration” was distributed in April 2016. CMS received 56 completed and 48 partially completed responses to the survey. The “Survey of Catholic Social and Charitable Institutions on Immigrant Integration” was distributed in June 2016 to charitable agencies, health care providers, community-organizing entities, legal service and refugee resettlement programs, and others. It generated 100 completed and 34 partially completed responses.

CMS used the completed responses to the surveys to produce the tables and generate the quantitative data in this report. However, it drew upon both completed and partially completed responses for narrative, quotes, and a fuller understanding of the respondents’ work.

The surveys went to agencies that serve and work extensively with immigrant communities and, thus, respondents were not representative. That said, the report offers an intimate portrait of Catholic institutions that are strongly committed to immigrant integration and that are at the vanguard of the Catholic Church's work in this area. Among its most striking findings:

- Forty-two percent of school respondents do not target immigrant communities for recruitment and 72 percent lack *madrina* programs.¹
- Immigrants constitute 39 percent of those who regularly attend mass, but only 20 percent of parish and school leadership and 21 percent of paid staff.
- Youth ministry services — although widely available and accessible in schools and parishes — ranked among the least successful integration activities.
- Nearly two-thirds of parish and school respondents (63 percent) conducted outreach to immigrant communities, but in many cases this entailed outreach through “word of mouth.”
- Only 30 percent of parish and school respondents indicated that they track the progress of immigrants who access their programs and services.
- Respondents to the survey of social and charitable agencies mostly rely on quantitative metrics, like persons served, to evaluate their work, although some use indices, questionnaires, and software to measure case outcomes. Five percent did not measure the effectiveness of their work.
- High percentages of respondent social and charitable institutions reported that outreach to immigrant communities occurred through word of mouth, the faith community, referrals, events, and schools. Fewer thought that immigrants learned of their programs through partnerships, websites, and social media. Email outreach was rated one of the *least* effective methods of reaching immigrants.
- Sixty-one percent of respondents from social and charitable entities indicated that transportation was an obstacle to immigrants accessing services. Respondents also identified communications, language, cultural issues, income, and government funding restrictions as obstacles. Fear and distrust in immigrant communities and immigrant work schedules were seen as additional barriers to services.
- These same respondents help immigrants access their services through linguistically appropriate outreach, bilingual staff and volunteers, interpretation services, and provision of services in immigrant communities. Many offer transportation or bus fare, flexible scheduling, financial assistance, and free and low-cost services.
- Immigrants constituted 75 percent of persons who accessed the services of social and charitable agencies, but only 31 percent of paid staff and 22 percent of program leadership. However, 20 survey respondents reported that immigrants filled at least one-half of their leadership positions.
- Eighty-seven percent of social and charitable organizations reported that they educate their broader faith community (natives and immigrants) about issues affecting immigrants through community events, World Refugee Day, talks in schools and other venues, and work with elected officials.

¹ In a *madrina* program, a trusted member of the immigrant community acts as a guide and interlocutor for immigrants to the institution.

The Catholic Immigrant Integration Surveys

- Twenty-eight percent, the highest percentage of respondents from social and charitable agencies, identified the “receiving community” — i.e., lack of community support, racism, anti-immigrant sentiment, and restrictionist immigration policies — as the largest obstacle to advancing immigrant integration.
- Organizational limitations represented the second most frequently cited set of barriers to integration. These included lack of funding, capacity, commitment, and preparedness to receive new groups.

This report covers the findings of both surveys. Its charts reflect the responses to particular questions, both multiple-choice (close-ended) and qualitative (open-ended) questions.

Catholic Parish and School Survey

I. Programs and Services

The “Survey on Catholic Parishes and Schools on Immigrant Integration” began with a series of questions on the mission, programs, services, and metrics of the respondents. Approximately one-third (34 percent) of the respondents were parishes that did not run a school. Of all the respondents, nearly half (48 percent) ran elementary schools only, while 14 percent administered a K-8 or K-12 school, and only 3 percent ran a high school only. Many parishes and schools pointed to their long history of serving diverse immigrant communities as a testament to their Catholic mission. Many also spoke of serving their broader communities, especially the poor and marginalized.

Figure I. Type of School

A. Catholic Identity

Their Catholic identity strongly motivated respondents. When asked whether their work with immigrants reflected Catholic teaching and, if so, how, many stressed that they lived “the principles of Catholic social teaching” in serving the poor, the hungry, the sick, and the stranger. Several said that serving all in need — whatever their religion or background — reflected their Catholic identity. Many emphasized that they incorporated Catholic teaching into their lessons, curricula, religious education, and faith formation programs. Respondents from schools underscored the importance of preparing students for academic excellence grounded in Catholic faith.

“All our activities and programs reflect Catholic teaching. If they did not, we would not do them.”

“We help anyone in need, but focus on the poor. We accompany people along the path they are following while enrolled in our services. We will help them in every way we can, and help them access whatever help we can’t provide...We don’t ever just refer people away; we walk along with them until they get where they need to go, for as long as they want us to.”

B. Services Provided, Accessed by and Targeted to Immigrants

Figure II. Parish/Schools Programs and Services

The survey affirmed the findings of previous studies on the broad array of pastoral, social, legal, and charitable services provided at Catholic parishes (Gray, Gautier, and Cidade 2011, 48). The services most frequently identified by respondents were religious education, pastoral services, youth ministry, pastoral counseling, and elementary school. Immigrants access virtually all of the services offered by respondent parishes and schools at high rates, and health, food pantry, and translation services at very high rates. That said, the services of respondents mostly were not targeted to immigrants, with the exception of legal, naturalization, and language services.

“Most of our ministries are not intentionally targeted to immigrants. However, our parish is made up of immigrants and/or relatives of immigrants. It is not intentional: It is an essential aspect of our parish life.”

Among the particular services not listed in the above chart, respondents said that they provide:

- after-school programs;
- cultural events;
- citizenship classes;
- elder services;
- family ministry;
- free and reduced lunch;
- Hispanic ministries;
- marriage services;
- ministry to the homebound;
- restorative justice;
- retreats;
- Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA);
- sacramental preparation; and
- support for survivors of violence.

C. Services that Most Strongly Support Integration

Figure III. Programs and Services that Most Strongly Support Immigrant Integration (Open-ended)

When asked to list the programs and services that most strongly advanced integration, respondents most frequently identified bilingual and bicultural mass and English as a Second Language (ESL) classes. Youth ministry — although widely available and accessible — was infrequently mentioned as a successful integration activity.

Respondents recognized the critical importance of education to immigrant integration, including ESL and civics classes. They identified religious education — often offered in the immigrants' native language — as an important entrée to the community. They also viewed legal services and food and clothing support as important to integration, but to a lesser extent than pastoral and language services.

“I think our schools provide a wonderful service to our parish population and we do all in our power to keep the tuitions in the 3 schools as low as possible. Our graduation and college success rates are near 100 percent each year.”

II. Accessibility of Services

A. Obstacles to Integration

Forty-four percent of respondents identified language barriers as the largest obstacles to integrating immigrants in Catholic institutions and the broader community. Similarly, many reported that they lacked a sufficient number of Spanish speakers on staff to facilitate integration. Some indicated that cultural differences impeded integration and that priests and parishioners were not sufficiently welcoming. Some believed that immigrants were unable to integrate due to cultural differences or were unwilling to integrate due to their lack of immigration status and anti-immigrant sentiment in the community and nationally. Many respondents from Catholic schools indicated that more resources for scholarships could help to enroll more immigrant children into their schools.

Figure IV. What Barriers Must Immigrants Overcome to Access Your Services? (Choose All That Apply)

When asked about barriers to accessing their services, nearly 60 percent of respondents identified transportation and language barriers. Forty-four percent identified cultural barriers. One school representative said that immigrants may lack “experiences with formal education, especially private education.” Another respondent explained that immigrants failed to access their services as a result of a “lack of childcare, lack of knowledge about services, lack of adequate systemic capacity to meet the need, [and] working multiple jobs.”

Forty percent identified communication barriers (as distinct from language barriers), including lack of internet access or cell service. Other barriers included shame at having to ask for help and fear of accessing services. Although several studies have highlighted the high cost of Catholic school tuition for low-income immigrant families (Ospino and Weitzel-O’Neill 2016, 6; Kerwin and George 2014, 97, 171), only one respondent indicated that the cost of tuition could be a barrier for families to enroll their children in Catholic school.

B. Outreach to Immigrant Communities

Figure V. Does Your Parish or School Conduct Outreach to Immigrant Populations?

Sixty-three percent conducted some form of outreach to immigrant communities. However, several admitted they did very little in this regard. Some reported that they did not conduct outreach and that immigrants learned of their services through “word of mouth.” Others identified word of mouth as their only form of outreach to immigrants. Thus, lack of outreach may either be more pronounced than the above chart indicates, or word of mouth may, in fact, be an effective outreach strategy in communities with substantial immigrant communities. Several respondents believed that immigrants were already aware of their services and they did not need to reach out to these communities. Others said they wanted to conduct outreach, but lacked the capacity to do so.

Parishes and schools utilize a broad range of outreach strategies. Most identified Spanish speaking volunteers and staff as important to immigrant outreach and service to immigrant communities. Several mentioned that their priests or pastors proactively reached out to immigrants in the community and promoted their services and ministries from the pulpit and elsewhere. Many viewed bilingual events and mass as effective outreach strategies. One organized Posadas in local housing projects.

Figure VI. Language Access

An overwhelming majority of respondents reported that they celebrated mass, provided information, and had staff who spoke Spanish. Some indicated that immigrants in their communities spoke Vietnamese (22 percent) or Tagalog (18 percent), yet only a small percentage of these parishes and schools employed staff that spoke these languages. One respondent reported having more than 30 languages represented in their community

Fewer than 50 percent of respondents reported that they held mass or provided information in English, or employed staff that spoke English, although this seems unlikely.

C. Engagement of Natives on Issues Affecting Immigrants

Most of the parish respondents identified the celebration of immigrants and their traditions as an important way to educate native-born communities on issues affecting immigrants. Some held study groups and included information in homilies or church bulletins on these issues. A few took a more intentional approach to this need.

Figure VII. Does Your Parish or School Educate Native-born Parishioners or Students about Issues Affecting Immigrants?

“We hold a few events each year that focus on domestic and/or global immigration/migration. We have presentations and discussions with RCIA, youth, and young adult groups. We also maintain a website and a Facebook page. We place notices and full-page ads in the parish bulletin, and have an email distribution list. We do a variety of activities during National Migration Week, Lent/CRS Rice Bowls, and Immigrant Integration Month.”

D. Service to Seasonal Workers

Figure VIII. Does Your Parish or School Serve Seasonal Workers or Immigrants Who Must Move Often for Work (e.g. Agricultural Workers, Seafarers, Circus Workers, etc.)?

More than one-third of respondents reported that they serve seasonal workers. Many stressed the need for flexibility in meeting the pastoral needs of seasonal workers, including performing baptisms in an expedited timeframe. Others emphasized the need for creativity in identifying and reaching out to seasonal workers.

“We host a weekly meeting for those whose employers have refused payment for their labor. We contribute blankets and food to an area shelter for agricultural workers.”

III. Stakeholder Participation

A. Immigrant Participation and Leadership

Figure IX. In Your Parish or School, What Percentage of the Following Are Immigrants?

Leadership from heavily immigrant communities has been associated with increased parish registration from these communities, more parental involvement in the faith formation of youth, more stable parishes, more youth ministries in English (which youth in immigrant communities overwhelmingly speak), and greater solidarity between diverse communities (Kerwin and George 2014, 46-47). Yet, respondents reported that while immigrants represented 39 percent of persons who regularly attended mass, only 21 percent of paid staff and 20 percent of program leadership were immigrants.

Other surveys have found similar disparities. The National Survey of Catholic Schools Serving Hispanic Families determined that Hispanics constitute 60 percent of US Catholics under age 18 (more than 90 percent of whom are US citizens by birth), but only 15.3 percent of students enrolled in Catholic schools and 14 percent of Catholic school principals (Ospino and Weitzel-O'Neill 2016, 5-6, 13).

Most respondents identified language as a barrier to immigrants becoming leaders, paid staff, volunteers, or parishioners. Many also identified cultural barriers to integration. As one

respondent explained, “In the last 10 years the most prevalent barrier was the language and the culture, customs, and traditions.”

Other obstacles arose from within the parishes, schools, and the community. Some identified active resistance to immigrants from parish leadership and parishioners. One respondent said: “The parish priests are not welcoming at all — constantly criticizing things not done the ‘Anglo’ way.”² Others felt that the lack of inclusion reflected the slow pace of change.

Seven percent of respondents indicated that their community did not have a problem with immigrant inclusion, given the large number of immigrants in the broader community. One respondent said: “The neighborhood is very mixed and there seems to be no resistance to immigrants by the parish members.”

B. Agency Leadership and Immigrant-Targeted Programs

Figure X. How Often Does the Staff of Immigrant-targeted Programs Meet with Parish or School Leadership (e.g., Pastor or Principal)?

Forty-seven percent of respondents reported that their leadership meets with staff of immigrant-targeted programs often or consistently. However, 21 percent reported that meetings never or seldom occurred between leadership and immigrant program staff.

Respondents promoted cultural competency mostly through cultural events, activities, and presentations. Generally, parishes and schools organized these events to bring together immigrant and native-born communities. These events underscore the importance of “honoring” immigrant traditions, such as Posadas, Lady of Guadalupe celebrations, and Quinceañeras. Some school respondents indicated that they incorporate cultural competency into their curriculum. One respondent also mentioned using models such as the USCCB’s *Best Practices for Shared Parishes*

² The literature attributes “asymmetrical power dynamics” both to the vestiges of a church with a “different demographic profile” and to “racial privilege, bias, and discrimination” (Hoover and Ospino 2016, 44).

and Building Intercultural Competence for Ministers. More than 35 percent of respondents, however, indicated that they do not actively promote cultural competency.

One respondent emphasized the need for religious education in both English and Spanish, in part so that the non-English speaking “parents or adults” of a household can assume “the vital role of being the primary instructor of the child[rens’] religious education.”

IV. Evaluation

A. Data and Metrics

In response to a question on the data respondents collect on immigrant integration, about a quarter of parishes and schools said that they did not collect any relevant data. Most respondents, however, collect basic data on the numbers served by their programs and ministries, number of parishioners, parishioner registration, and biographical data on parishioners. Some respondents reported tracking mass and event attendance.

Some parishes expressed difficulty in measuring outcomes and spoke of a general sense that they were succeeding when the parish was “vibrant” or their students were “thriving.” Some measure success based on whether immigrants are included in leadership positions.

Attendance, test scores, and scholarships are common metrics for Catholic schools. Respondents also track graduation rates and matriculation in college. Many of the school respondents reported being very successful in these areas, as reflected in high graduation and college enrollment rates.

Still, it appears that parishes and, to a lesser degree, schools view integration into their communities as a function of participation in them. They do not assess the effectiveness of many of their programs and ministries in promoting integration into the broader society. Only one respondent mentioned collecting data through participant surveys and community sources.

B. Use of Data

Figure XI. How Do You Use the Data You Collect? (Choose All That Apply)

Respondents were most likely to say that they use data for program planning, improvement of services, and reporting to the diocese. Fewer use the data for strategic planning, internal reviews, or fundraising. A minority of respondents reported that they use data for advocacy and education.

C. Demographic Information on Service Recipients

Figure XII. What Types of Demographic Information Do You Collect about All Individuals (Immigrant or Non-immigrant) Who Access Your Services and Programs? (Choose All That Apply)

Respondents reported that they were most likely to collect demographic information on gender, family members, and the age of those they served. Fifty percent or more also collected information about ethnicity, preferred language, and languages spoken at home. Fewer respondents tracked country of origin (30 percent) or immigration status (11 percent). “Other” information collected included years in the country, English-language proficiency, and whether or not parishioners were the first in their families to attend college.

D. Tracking Outcomes

Figure XIII. Does Your Parish or School Track the Progress of Immigrants Who Access Your Program or Services?

School respondents use report cards, standardized testing, and other metrics to track student performance. One reported that the school did not track the progress of immigrants any differently than that of other students. Only 30 percent of parishes and schools indicated that they track the progress of immigrants who access their programs and services, a finding that may reflect the high percentage of parish respondents.

V. Catholic Schools

Forty-five percent of school respondents said that they target immigrant communities for recruitment, but 42 percent do not.

Figure XIV. Does Your School Specifically Target Immigrant Communities for Recruitment?

Most of the respondents who described their recruitment strategies indicated that they mainly relied on parish outreach to potential immigrant students, including through announcements at mass in English and Spanish. Some rely on ethnic ministry programs to recruit immigrant students and their families.

Figure XV. Does Your Pastor Actively Encourage Immigrant Families to Send Their Children to Your School?

Sixty percent of respondents indicated that their pastors actively encouraged immigrant families to send children to the Catholic schools, but 21 percent said their pastors did not.

Figure XVI. Do You Have Any Programs At Your School Specifically Targeted Toward Immigrant Students?

Nearly two-thirds of respondents (64 percent) said that they do not have programs that specifically target immigrant students. Instead, they offer their programs and activities to all of their students. ESL classes were the most common service targeted to immigrants. After-school homework assistance, college preparation services and free books (Q.29), as well as referrals to other services such as a food pantry, were also identified as immigrant-targeted services.

Figure XVII. Does Your School Offer a *Madrina* Program to Address the Needs of Immigrant Students?

Madrina programs have been identified as a best practice in attracting, retaining, serving and incorporating immigrants in Catholic schools (Kerwin and George 2014, 102). Yet only 10 percent of school respondents reported offering such a program.

Figure XVIII. Does Your School Provide Needs-based Financial Assistance to Undocumented Students (Admissions, Funding, etc.)?

Almost three-quarters of respondents said that they provide needs-based financial assistance to undocumented students. Only 15 percent said that they did not provide financial assistance to undocumented students.

VI. Success Stories

Several respondents identified immigrant integration success stories. A few of these stories follow.

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“Our pastor started this program to try to help Hispanic students enroll in the Catholic school. It took 7 people who worked together to get this going. At the end of the first year, there were 13 students enrolled. We helped [them] to apply for financial aid ... half of them qualified. We helped raise funds for others and all the students will be enrolling for another year at this school.”

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“Through [the] DAPA program a young man was able to get a driver’s license and now is studying to become a nurse.”

—————

“We have the most dedicated teachers. They work tirelessly to help our kids achieve. The best stories are all about getting kids into high schools (particularly our local Catholic high school which has been challenging due to distance and the very wealthy culture there) and on to their graduation. That’s when the teachers feel like they have succeeded. Trying to combat very early teen pregnancies has also been challenging, so when a girl ‘makes it,’ there is great rejoicing.”

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“We had a refugee family come to us last year before the start of the year. The family was looking for a school for their one child. We were able to accept the student and find the money to fund scholarships for the student. The child has been with us for this school year, and the child is academically on target. The family has become part of our community, and we are so grateful to have them here. We also know the family is working hard to send their child to our school, and they are so thankful for our community as well.”

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Survey of Catholic Social and Charitable Institutions

I. Programs and Services

Catholic Charities constituted nearly one-half (48 percent) of respondents to the “Survey of Catholic Social and Charitable Institutions.” These agencies, which are supported by their dioceses, vary in size and in the services they offer to immigrants, which can include English language classes, job training, interpretation services, housing, legal representation, and emergency support. Women religious administered over one-half of the ministries reported in the survey. Ministry activities are closely tied to the work of host parishes or dioceses: they often direct services to parishioners or congregants. However, many serve the broader public and specific populations, such as farmworkers or survivors of domestic violence.

Fourteen percent of respondents were from faith-based nonprofits not directly affiliated with a diocese or parish. Some of these organizations offered family services, such as parenting classes, tutoring, ESL, and childcare. Other nonprofits focused on specific types of services such as legal support or advocacy. A small number of respondents, most with connections to the USCCB, focused on immigrant-focused policy work and refugee resettlement.

Figure I. Descriptions of Respondents

A. Catholic Identity

Like the parish and school respondents, respondents to the “Survey of Catholic Social and Charitable Institutions” see their work as deeply rooted in their Catholic identity. One respondent reported situating its integration work within a Catholic vision of unity in diversity, communion, and solidarity.

“We endeavor to meet the goals established through the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops’ effort entitled *Welcoming the Stranger Among Us: Unity in Diversity*:

- To promote the call to conversion that welcomes new immigrants and assists them to join communities in ways respectful to their culture [and] in ways that enrich the immigrants and our Church.
- To promote a call to communion to strengthen understanding among culture through intercultural communication on the diocesan and parish levels.
- To promote solidarity which recognizes the human dignity of today’s immigrants.”

B. Services Provided, Accessed by, and Targeted to Immigrants

Catholic social and charitable institutions offer an exhaustive array of programs and services, most frequently citing educational, naturalization, legal, and counseling services. Respondents said that immigrants access virtually all of their services at high rates. They also target some services to immigrants, particularly naturalization, legal, interpretation, and language services.

C. Organizations, Programs, and Ministries

Figure II. Services Provided, Accessed by, and Targeted to Immigrants

All of the main services identified in the above chart might be thought to advance immigrant integration, as do many of the additional services identified by respondents (listed below):

- accompaniment;
- cultural competency (for immigrants);
- building community (through dinners that cut across both ethnicity and class lines);
- childcare;
- teaching the receiving community about other cultures;
- disaster relief;
- elder services;
- financial assistance;
- integration through religion;
- leadership training;
- parenting services/education;
- prison/detention services;
- services for survivors of violence;
- transportation services; and
- youth services.

D. Services that Most Strongly Support Integration

Respondents also answered an open-ended question about their programs and activities that “most strongly support immigrant integration.” More than 40 percent identified legal services as one of their most successful integration programs. As one explained, legal status is often crucial to accessing public benefits, employment, drivers’ licenses, and government programs. Respondents also identified education, particularly ESL classes, as a crucial bridge to opportunity, services and, ultimately, integration.

Figure III. What Have You Found to Be the Most Successful of Your Programs and Practices in Promoting Integration? (Open-ended)

Figure IV. Comparison between Programs Offered and Most Successful Integration Programs

As stated, a high percentage of respondents said that legal services and ESL classes were their most successful integration programs.

“Our legal services are geared towards helping individuals access immigration status, stay in their homes and protect their income (by recovering wages their employers may owe them). Our new pilot program for financial counseling will help those individuals who are not pursuing immigration relief for lack of funds, to apply for low interest loans or access saving programs that will also help them build a credit history.”

Several themes emerged from the survey related to how respondents viewed and sought to advance integration. Among them, respondents identified:

- community-building as an integration goal through events such as dinners and cultural festivals;
- institutional capacity-building and investment in the human capital of immigrants through leadership training, mentoring, and empowerment activities, as core integration strategies;
- religious practice as a vehicle for integration, including bringing native-born and immigrant communities together through retreats, prayer services, Bible study, pastoral care and catechist formation, and offering these activities in languages other than English;
- strong families and family services — particularly eldercare, childcare, and youth programming — as integration tools; and
- provision of services that correspond to the situation of immigrants, including services that seek to stabilize the lives of the newly arrived immigrants and others in uncertain or desperate circumstances.

Respondents identified several innovative and creative programs that support integration. One respondent, for example, cited faith identification cards, which had been endorsed by local police departments. Others highlighted the importance of financial services, like micro-loans and low-interest financing, to cover business start-up costs and legal filing fees.

E. Metrics of Success

Figure V. How Do You Measure the Success of Each of These Activites? (Open-ended)

Respondents rely heavily on broad, quantitative metrics like persons served to evaluate their work with immigrants. However, some also mentioned using specific indices and questionnaires like the World Health Organization Quality of Life Questionnaire, Geriatric Depression Scale, and the Self-Sufficiency Matrix. Respondents administer these client surveys to measure physical, mental, social, and financial well-being. These tools identify needs, help to target services, and measure progress by revealing changes in program effectiveness over time.

Others use database software to track and measure outcomes, including Apricot and Efforts to Outcomes (ETO) case management software and the Trafficking Information Management System through the US Department of Justice. Respondents use these data collection tools to maintain records of number of people served and how they are served, as well as to create service plans based on this information. These tools also allow respondents to produce charts and graphs that illustrate changes in outcomes over time. Some respondents evaluate their work through direct engagement with clients and the relevant communities, using surveys to capture clients' perspectives of service and program quality. Only 5 percent reported that they did not use metrics to assess their effectiveness.

II. Accessibility to Services

A. Obstacles to Integration and Services

Sixty-one percent of respondents identified transportation as an obstacle to immigrants accessing services. Respondents attributed transportation challenges primarily to the inability of undocumented immigrants to obtain drivers' licenses.

Communication barriers were also viewed as an obstacle to accessing services. This finding may be consistent with research on the use of technology by immigrants. While Latinos have been found to have greater adoption rates of digital communication than white Americans, for example, foreign-born Latinos lag significantly behind native-born Latinos in the use of technology like cell phones and the Internet (Livingston 2010).

Respondents also identified language, cultural issues, income, and government funding restrictions as barriers to their programs and services. They also viewed the “fear and distrust” in immigrant communities and the difficult work schedules of immigrants as barriers to access.

Figure VI. What Barriers Must Immigrants Overcome to Access Your Services? (Choose All That Apply)

Twenty-eight percent of the respondents identified the receiving community as the largest obstacle they face in advancing immigrant integration. This barrier took the form of lack of community support, racism, anti-immigrant sentiment, and restrictionist immigration policies. Organizational issues — like insufficient funds, capacity, commitment, and preparation for new groups — represented the second most frequently cited barrier to advancing immigrant integration. Transportation problems, long work hours, language barriers, and fear and distrust are also obstacles to integration.

Figure VII. What Are the Biggest Obstacles Your Organization or Program Faces in Advancing Immigrant Integration? (Open-ended)

“The international outcry against refugees is posing new problems never previously experienced in providing those services.”

“We engage in partnerships for more comprehensive services in areas of gang prevention, immigration services and advocacy, and small business development with the immigrant community. All of these activities together contribute to better integration.”

B. Outreach to Immigrant Communities

As with the survey to parishes and schools, high percentages of respondents reported that outreach to immigrant communities occurred through word of mouth, the faith community, referrals, events, and schools. While the general public learned about their work through partnerships, websites and social media, respondents said that far fewer immigrants did. Email outreach was reported to be one of the least effective outreach vehicles to immigrants.

Figure VIII. Outreach

Other outreach strategies identified by the respondents include:

- Flocknote (software that allows for group texts and emails, and is specifically targeted at faith communities);
- text messages; and
- church bulletins.

Twenty-seven percent of respondents reported that they help immigrants access their services through linguistically appropriate outreach and services. Many respondents have bilingual staff and volunteers, and some rely on interpretation services. In addition, many bring their services to immigrant communities, either by hosting events with partner organizations or through home visits. Some organizations (11 percent) indicated that they provide transportation or pay bus fare to facilitate access to their programs and services.

The location of offices and service provision within the community can obviate transportation problems and help to break down cultural barriers. Some respondents also underscored the advantage of recruiting staff and volunteers from within the communities they serve.

Respondents also rely on community and parish partnerships to help immigrants access their services. Some inform immigrants about their services during mass or at church events, or offer services after mass.

Organizations also increase accessibility through financial assistance. Many offer free or low-cost services often based on a sliding scale. Others help immigrants pay filing fees for their immigration applications.

Finally, many organizations have adapted to the often long and irregular work schedules of immigrants by providing services on weekends or in the evening. One respondent reported scheduling consultations via Skype in order to overcome scheduling and transportation barriers.

Figure IX. How Does Your Organization or Program Help Immigrants Access Your Services? (Open-ended)

How organizations overcome barriers to immigrants accessing their services:

Flexibility

- Travel to areas where services are needed (provide mobile services).
- Offer services in immigrant communities and travel to different communities.
- Provide flexible hours/schedule (nights and weekends).

Logistics

- Staff and volunteers speak the languages of immigrant communities.
- Accessibility by different forms of transportation.
- Fee waivers or sliding fee scale.
- Provide services or events through the parish.

Trust

- Word of mouth and announcements during mass and in church bulletins.

Figure X. Language Access

Respondents reported serving communities which spoke 49 languages. One organization reported having interpretation capacity for 44 languages.

“Our staff reflects the ethnic and cultural backgrounds of the immigrants whom we serve.”

“Everyone on staff is bilingual, and most are bi-cultural. We travel geographically to provide consults. We are also always reviewing and updating our community needs assessments.”

Not surprisingly, respondents provided services, held events, and conducted outreach at high rates in Spanish and English. The overwhelming majority relied on staff or volunteers who could speak Spanish (more than 80 percent), followed by English, French, Arabic, and Vietnamese. Survey responses, however, also illustrated discrepancies between the communities served and the linguistic capacity of respondents. Arabic, for example, is spoken in 43 percent of the service-areas covered in the survey, according to respondents, yet only 23 percent of respondents rely on staff or volunteers who speak Arabic.

C. Eligibility Criteria

Nearly half (47 percent) of respondents said that they have no eligibility criteria and their services are open to anyone. For those with eligibility criteria, funder-driven residency requirements and financial need were the common criteria identified.

Figure XI. What Are the Eligibility Criteria for All Your Programs and Services? (Choose All That Apply)

D. Engagement of Natives on Issues Affecting Immigrants

Figure XII. Does Your Organization or Program Educate Native-born (from the Receiving Community) about Issues Affecting Immigrant Communities?

Supporting immigrant integration not only involves addressing the needs of immigrants, but also working with receiving communities to help facilitate understanding between the native-born and immigrant communities. Eighty-seven percent of respondents indicated that they educate their broader faith community (natives and immigrant) about issues affecting immigrants, including through events, speaking in schools and other venues, and working with elected officials.

One respondent characterized the work of educating the native-born community as “the most challenging part of our job and mission” and reported that “sadly enough some of our priests are not comfortable supporting our immigrant population — under the misunderstood term illegals and political issues.”

E. Service to Seasonal Workers

Approximately one-third of the organizations reported serving seasonal workers, such as seafarers, agricultural, and circus workers. Respondents reach seasonal workers in many of the same ways that they reach immigrants generally, i.e., through parish outreach and events. However, they also travel to migrant camps to provide services on-site. Some organizations reported serving seasonal workers in the normal course of their work, but not through specific outreach to those communities. Several said it was difficult to access seasonal populations who lack transportation.

“Reaching [agricultural workers] is challenging since most work sun-up to sun-down and the farms limit outside organizations that are not from the state. This is one of our weaknesses.”

“Currently, we don’t have a mechanism to track these clients, but we recognize that they only come during certain times of the year.”

Figure XIII. Does Your Organization or Program Serve Seasonal Workers or Immigrants Who Must Move Often for Work?

III. Stakeholder Participation

A. Immigrant Participation and Leadership

Figure XIV. In Your Organization or Program, What Percentage of the Following Are Immigrants?

Respondents reported that 75 percent of those who accessed their services and programs were immigrants. However, immigrants constituted only 33 percent of paid staff and 22 percent of leadership. A similar disparity has been found between the percent of Catholics who are Hispanic (40 percent) and the percentages of Hispanic priests (7.5 percent), permanent deacons (15 percent), and lay ecclesial ministers (9 percent) (Hoover and Ospino 2016, 41-42; Ospino 2014, 4, 9, 22, 26). On the other hand, 20 survey respondents reported that immigrants occupied at least one-half of their leadership positions.

“Since all of the staff are immigrants, they are very proactive in promoting new immigrants and sponsoring programs to help educate them.”

B. Barriers to Immigrant Inclusion

Respondents identified a range of barriers to the inclusion of immigrants in leadership, staff, and volunteer positions. None of the perceived barriers, however, were identified by a large percentage of respondents. Among those cited most frequently were language barriers, insufficient education, community obstacles, funding constraints, lack of training, and recruitment issues.

“Our staff is passionate but often runs into the limits of what a small staff is capable of accomplishing.”

Figure XV. What Barriers Has Your Organization Encountered Promoting Immigrant Inclusion in Leadership, Staff, among Volunteers and Accessing Services?

These barriers might be further categorized as follows:

- a shortage of qualified, forthcoming candidates due to lack of experience, insufficient language and literacy skills, educational barriers, the difficulty in transferring credentials, and the extensive work obligations of immigrants;
- organizational issues like funding constraints, grant restrictions, anti-immigrant bias, a lack of commitment to diversity by agency leadership, and the inability to hire the undocumented; and
- community obstacles like security concerns and prejudice in the receiving community.

C. Agency Leadership and Immigrant-Targeted Programs

Forty-seven percent of respondents reported that staff of their immigrant-targeted programs met with organization leadership often or consistently, while 24 percent said such meetings never or only seldom occurred.

Figure XVI. How Often (Approximately) Do the Staff of the Immigrant-targeted Programs Meet with Organizational Leadership (Executive Director, Board Chair, President, etc.)?

D. Immigrant Community Engagement

Figure XVII. Please Explain the Formal Process, If Any, For Engaging Immigrant Communities or Immigrant Leaders

No one standard or dominant way emerged to engage immigrant communities and leaders. The methods cited most frequently were:

- meetings and informational sessions;
- parish outreach;
- partnerships;
- public education;
- community outreach;
- immigrant inclusion in agency leadership (board and staff positions); and
- invitations.

Some respondents expressed frustration that their immigrant engagement initiatives had not led to higher levels of participation by immigrants in their institutions and programs.

Some of the most frequently identified ways to engage immigrant communities and leaders include:

Outreach

- Invitations to immigrant community leaders to meetings and information sessions.
- Engagement through programming and daily work.
- A dedicated community liaison position.
- Personal development through education.

Partnerships

- Parish and diocesan partnerships.
- Working with other immigrant-serving organizations to complement services and identify community leaders.

Inclusion

- Volunteers to strengthen community ties.
- Immigrants in leadership positions (board and staff).
- Hire from immigrant communities, which brings language ability, cultural competency and other advantages.

“Because of our shared faith, many of our members feel a strong connection to [us] and place a high priority on participating in ... actions and mobilizations, even traveling from distant [places] to participate. [We are] led by a member steering committee that meets monthly for intensive leadership development, sets the agenda for general meetings, and helps to determine strategy for organizing. We develop leaders through popular education, building critical consciousness through one-to-one and small-group dialogue conducted with understanding of their social context. We also facilitate interactive workshops, participation in legislative advocacy and community mobilization, and ongoing evaluation. Our objective is to strengthen

connections between members and offer a sense of ownership of [our organization]....”

E. Cultural Competency

Figure XVIII. Does Your Organization or Program Promote Cultural Competency to Understand the Immigrants and Their Families That You Serve? If So, Please Describe What You Do to Promote Cultural Competency. (Open-ended)

Respondents reported that they promote and build cultural competency in a variety of ways, including through education and training, immigrant leadership, hiring immigrant staff, meetings and information sessions, daily work with immigrants, and community outreach. Education, training, and inclusion strategies believed to be particularly valuable include:

- cultural events and retreats;
- celebrate the holidays and traditions of immigrants;
- trainings, orientation and informational sessions, including the USCCB program on Building Intercultural Competence for Ministers, immigration training, and Catholic Charities USA training;
- immigrant staff-led community consultations;
- vetting ideas with clients; and

- relying on staff who come from immigrant communities, have lived and worked outside the United States, or have experienced the same systems and programs as agency clients.

Other respondents did not see the need to promote cultural competency. As one put it, “Cultural competency is not applicable in our endeavors. Our attempts are to merge the immigrant community into the legal status in the U.S.”

“We work closely with the contacts that we have made and nurtured in the communities that we serve. They are a source of helping us navigate the cultural landscape. We also take every opportunity to learn more about the communities we serve through refugee backgrounders and other cultural orientation materials.”

IV. Evaluation

A. Metrics

Figure XIX. Does Your Organization Track the Progress of Immigrants Who Access Your Services?

Fifty-eight percent of respondents track the progress of immigrants who access their services, but 33 percent do not, a disparity which may reflect the different kinds of entities that responded to the survey, from smaller community-based programs, to larger, more sophisticated, government-funded agencies. When asked how organizations measured the success of their programs in supporting immigrant integration, most mentioned persons served, case outcomes, and client surveys and feedback. Reported metrics included outcomes in legal immigration cases, employment, housing, success in school, and self-sufficiency.

Examples of how integration progress is tracked:

- scoring guidelines to track refugee stability;
- longitudinal studies;
- follow-up on legal cases until resolution; and
- ongoing contact with clients.

B. Use of Data Collected

Figure XX. How Does the Organization Use the Data Collected?

Respondents reported using the data they collected for multiple purposes, including applications for funding, program and strategic planning, and reporting to funders and to parent agencies.

C. Demographic Information

Figure XXI. What Types of Demographic Information Do You Collect about All Individuals?

Respondents collected extensive information on clients and participants in their programs and ministries. Beyond the information set forth above, respondents reported collecting information on sacraments received, criminal history, immigration history, disabilities, benefits received, and employment history.

V. Success Stories

The survey encouraged respondents to identify success stories. A few blurbs from these stories follow, adding texture to the survey findings and a human face to the work of Catholic institutions on immigrant integration.

“A Spanish speaking mother saved her infant’s life because she was taught infant CPR before taking her baby home....”

“We had a student who was enrolled in a college however he did not speak much English and had difficulty with reading and writing. He was failing almost of all his classes. This organization advocated on his behalf. He now has a tutor and a mentor from our organization. He currently is enrolled in courses that will assist him with English, etc. This semester, he is passing his courses!”

“A woman came to our agency fleeing an abusive relationship — she was afraid, spoke no English and was financially insecure having left her family and friends in Colombia. [She] took English as a Second Language and Adult Basic Education classes at [our organization]. She excelled in all of her studies. She quickly learned English, and, soon after, transferred to [a] community college to further her education and pursue a career in nursing. To help finance her education and care for her two sons, [she] attained her license to start her own cleaning business. She hopes to expand the business by hiring others and managing the business while going to school. ‘I feel free. No one is controlling me or being abusive. I am not afraid and I speak English now!’ Four years ago, [she] didn’t know how to speak English, didn’t have a driver’s license, didn’t have a job and wasn’t going to school. Today, [she] knows how to speak English, owns her own business and is going to college. ‘Today, I look back and have come so far and would not have done it without [your organization].’”

“99 year old lady — we helped her become a US citizen.”

“[A woman] came to our food pantry after losing her job in January of 2015. She had been employed by the same company for over a decade. One day the company went bankrupt and closed without notice. She found herself struggling to pay her rent, bills and buy food for her 3 small children. [She] was referred ... by her neighbor. [She] was very grateful for the food that she received on her first visit to our

center. However, she stated that she did not want to rely on the food forever. Her goal was to improve her English skills to hopefully find a job. We invited her to attend our first English class in February 2015. She then attended every class weekly for the next 6 months. One day, she told us that with the English classes that she had taken, she felt confident enough to start applying for jobs. We suggested that she apply for an open position with one of our partner companies that is a major donor... [She] was selected for the position after successfully completing an interview conducted exclusively in English. She has been working for the company for a few weeks now, and is thriving in this new environment.”

A Lost Boy from Sudan “was assisted with case management, medical case management and employment services. Catholic Charities assisted with his first job as a janitor ... within one month of his date of arrival. While working, he attended community college to obtain his Associates degree, and then progressed to his Bachelor’s, then eventually obtained his Master’s in Business Administration. He continues to work for the same corporation, but now serves as their auditor. In 2014, he started his own nonprofit organization for South Sudanese and was recently named one of Fortune 500’s Heroes.”

“A typical success story is a female client/mother who is an undocumented Spanish speaking immigrant from Central America. She has spent the last five years since arriving ...trying to raise her kids while her husband works at a low wage job in construction. After arriving at our food pantry, she hears about the Family Strengthening Program and is interested in setting goals and receiving case management support. So she signs up and begins leaving her house for the first time in order to participate in the community and take classes in ESL, parenting and personal finance. Her confidence grows, she gains new skills, and for the first time since arriving in America begins to feel good about herself after a long period of depression. After two years in the program, she sets the goal of starting her own cake baking business for First Communions and Quinceañeras. She sets a goal to finish an entrepreneurs’ micro-business course offered [at our center] and learns how to write a business plan and get her operations going. A year later she is using her kitchen non-stop to sell homemade cakes for \$100 a piece to neighbors and fellow parishioners and is providing her family with valuable extra income every week. She continues, meanwhile, to plot her grand dream of opening a brick and mortar bakery in the neighborhood which she plans to do once she has saved enough money selling cakes out of her home.”

Conclusion

Catholic institutions remain extraordinarily robust, but their success and viability will increasingly depend on immigrants and their progeny. Of the 67.7 million Catholics, 15.1 million are foreign-born (CARA 2017). This number would be far higher if it included the growing second and third generations. In addition, the rate of immigrants who actively participate in Catholic institutions is likely high, compared to their overall numbers. For example, Hispanics, a heavily immigrant population, constitute roughly two-thirds of US Millennials who regularly attend mass (PRRI 2013). If Catholic institutions need immigrants, so too do many immigrants need Catholic institutions, including:

- the extensive pastoral, social, educational, and charitable programs and ministries in the nation's 17,233 Catholic parishes;
- the nation's 5,266 Catholic elementary schools, 1,212 Catholic secondary schools, and 221 Catholic colleges and universities;
- Catholic Charities agencies that provide services worth \$3.7 billion, serve roughly 8.3 million persons each year, and administer the nation's largest networks of legal immigration and refugee resettlement programs; and
- the 549 Catholic hospitals that treat roughly 88 million persons per year (CARA 2017).

Respondents to the two surveys were heavily invested in service to immigrant communities, but different institutions measured the success of their work with immigrants in different ways. Catholic parishes, for example, appropriately measure integration through participation in parish life. Most do not, however, also assess the effectiveness of their programs and ministries in promoting the integration of immigrants into the broader society. Only 30 percent of parishes and schools indicated that they track the progress of immigrants who access their programs and services, compared to 58 percent of respondents from social and charitable institutions.

While leadership and effective outreach strongly influence the participation of immigrants in Catholic institutions, both surveys revealed great disparities between the composition of their communities and their paid staff and leadership. Respondent charitable and social agencies, for example, reported that immigrants represented 75 percent of those who accessed their services and programs. However, they constituted only 33 percent of paid staff and 22 percent of agency leadership. In addition, 47 percent of respondents from this survey reported that staff of immigrant-targeted programs met with institutional leadership often or consistently, while 24 percent said meetings never or seldom occurred.

Similarly, parish and school respondents reported that immigrants represented 39 percent of persons who regularly attended mass, but only 20 percent of leadership and 21 percent of paid staff. Only 47 percent of parish and school respondents reported that their leadership met with staff of immigrant-targeted programs "often" or "consistently." Forty-five percent of school respondents said that they target immigrant communities for recruitment, but 42 percent do not. Sixty percent of respondents indicated that their pastors actively encouraged immigrant families to send children to the Catholic schools, but 21 percent said they did not.

The academic literature identifies both the receiving community and the human and social capital of immigrants as essential ingredients in their integration. Respondents to both surveys raised

several issues related to the “reception” of immigrants. In particular, they identified barriers to accessing their programs and services, some of them exogenous (like poor transportation options) and some institutional (like insufficient funding, outreach, and low levels of immigrant leadership). A few reported resistance to immigrant participation in their institutions. To be effective integrating agencies, Catholic institutions must address these obstacles and model openness to immigrants (Kerwin and George 2014, 164).

In addition, many respondents identified the broader receiving community as an obstacle to integration, as reflected in lack of community support, racism, anti-immigrant sentiment, and anti-immigration policies. Perhaps to address this challenge, 55 percent of parishes and schools and 87 percent of social and charitable agencies reported that they educate their communities on issues affecting immigrants. This work will need to become a greater priority for Catholic institutions in the years ahead. While survey respondents overwhelmingly view their work with immigrants as a core priority and central to their Catholic identity, they need to strengthen and expand this work and, just as importantly, make the case for its crucial importance to their fellow Catholics and to the society at large.

Many survey responses raised questions which merit further exploration. For example, while immigrant youth are crucial to the future of the Catholic Church in the United States, respondents did not view youth ministry as a successful integrating tool. In addition, it is difficult to explain why fewer than 50 percent of parish and school respondents reported having staff that spoke English or offering mass and information on their services in English. This finding may reflect, in part, a small number of respondents from mono-ethnic parishes. More likely, it indicates confusion over whether the survey only sought information on the use of languages other than English. As another example, the cost of tuition has been repeatedly identified as a barrier to the enrollment of immigrant youth in Catholic elementary and high schools. Yet, only one survey respondent raised this concern. This anomaly should also be explored.

Additional research is also needed on the degree to which diverse Catholic institutions collaborate with each other and with other institutions in promoting integration and the “integral” development of immigrants. Given the Catholic Church’s ambitious vision of integration and the immense needs (and gifts) of immigrant communities, effective partnerships and integrated services should be high priorities.

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