

Gate City Immigrant Initiative

Meeting Minutes

January 27, 2016

9:00AM – 10:30AM

Nashua City Hall, Auditorium

Present: Vivian Karian, Mikayla Foster, Bobbie Bagley, Anna Wageling, Sylvia Gale, Jenn Hosking, Mark Hastbacka, Sharon Dalton, Lauren Osowski, Beth Todgham, Amadou Hamady, Shayana Owen, Adelina Hernandez, Martha Alvarado.
Karen Emis-Williams (co-chair), Janeth Orozco (co-chair).

Meeting Commenced at 9:00AM

Working Plan for the Year:

This group would like to see a series of educational topics done throughout the year as a way to continue the discussion from the symposium.

-It would start with Ascentria and the International Institute doing a presentation on the resettlement process. This would be open to service providers and the public. There would be an invitation sent out to those who attended the symposium. It would be held at City Hall in the auditorium if space and time allows it during one of the regular monthly meetings (4th Wednesday of the month) and just extend the time. The library could be another hosting site. Karen will contact Ascentria to inquire if they could do the presentation on March 23rd. The International Institute is available on that day.

- Religious Sects. In Nashua there is a Rohingya community and they are Muslims. They've been oppressed due to their religious beliefs. The presentation needs to clarify that there are differences between each Muslim groups i.e. Bosnian, Pakistan. Bobbie stated Florentina Dinu may know of someone who could do the training. There's also a professor at Rivier University and UNH Durham that could do this presentation. It could be done in set of series.

- Cultural Competency Awareness/Training – In order for teachers to attend should have it on an early release day.

-Housing. NH Legal Assistance could talk about tenant rights and substandard housing.

Cultural Navigators:

There were 25 people who graduated from the program which composed of 18 different cultures and 10 languages. This group is not only to help refugees but any newcomer in Nashua. The community has been very receptive and they want to volunteer to be a navigator. The program is in need of a coordinator. It's also important for them to work with both of the resettlement agencies as they will now what the need is. Jen McCormack will be invited to the next Gate City Immigrant Initiative meeting in order to get more information.

Resettlement Agency update:

International Institute of New England: They've resettled 120 refugees in NH since 2013 and 68 in Nashua. Last year 28 Somali refugees out-migrated NH. On 10/1/15 placed 8 Burmese in Nashua. There's a family of 3 and 2 singles that will be resettled in Nashua and they all be Burmese. 1 single male arriving on 2/11. International Institute and Ascentria are working together and placing individuals together. The projection for Nashua for FY'16 is 50 and have placed 13. They will be from Somalia, Iraq, Sudan and Burma. Housing is still an issue in Nashua. IINE doesn't have an office space in Nashua yet.

There was a Burmese refugee family that were involved in a fire. The Nashua community was very supportive and this family has been rehoused.

Community update:

The Adult Learning Center was approached by the Telegraph and they want to do an article on the experience of immigrants and refugees living in Nashua.

Next Meeting: February 24, 2016 from 9:00AM-10:30AM at City Hall - Auditorium