



## IMMIGRANT CONNECTIONS

SUPPORTING EDUCATORS  
AND ORGANIZATIONS

# Designing Family Engagement with Immigrant and Refugee Families in Mind: 4 Key Strategies

September 20, 2024

Laura Gardner, MSW, Founder & CEO

Immigrant Connections

[www.immigrantsrefugeesandschools.org](http://www.immigrantsrefugeesandschools.org)



## WHAT WE DO



### ❑ Face-to-Face & Virtual Professional Development

EL/immigrant family & community engagement, cultural proficiency, equity, language access, refugee resettlement, child development, cross-cultural parenting, mental health, unaccompanied minors, & more!

### ❑ Online Courses (Graduate Credit Available)

We partner with English Learner Portal to provide online courses relevant to teachers, administrators, school counselors, social workers, family engagement professionals, and more.

### ❑ Consulting

We work with school districts, refugee resettlement agencies, and other organizations on various projects related to family engagement, equity, language access, partnerships between school districts and community-based organizations, and more.

*Immigrant Connections improves the lives of immigrant children and families by helping educators, social workers, and other professionals better serve this population through training, coaching, and consultative services.*





Think about what is lost when you think about immigrant-origin students [families] simply as kids [people] who need to learn English?

– Adam Strom, Re-imagining Migration



## STRATEGY #1

Understand families' backgrounds:

- ❑ Immigrant families (not EL families, ML families, etc.)
- ❑ Cultural piece
- ❑ Systems involved with



## TERMINOLOGY DEFINED

- ❑ An immigrant *voluntarily* leaves his/her country of origin to permanently live in the U.S.
- ❑ A refugee is *forced* to flee due to persecution (based on politics, religion, race, nationality, or membership in a particular social group).
- ❑ An asylum-seeker is *forced* to flee, but doesn't ask for protection until already in the U.S. If granted protection, they are then an asylee.
- ❑ Migrants move around looking for work, usually in the agricultural or fishing industries.
- ❑ Undocumented refers to foreign-born individuals who do not possess immigration documentation. It includes people who entered the U.S. without inspection and those who entered with a visa that is no longer valid.
- ❑ Humanitarian Parole allows one to stay and work in the U.S. but it does not provide a direct pathway to permanent residency or citizenship.



[www.immigrantsrefugeesandschools.org](http://www.immigrantsrefugeesandschools.org)

## TOP 5 COUNTRIES AND LANGUAGES IN OHIO (2022)

Country	% of Immigrants
India	11.0%
Mexico	7.7%
China	5.1%
Philippines	3.1%
Canada	2.5%

Source

Language	# of People 5 yrs+
Spanish	271,951
Yiddish, PA Dutch	64,915
German	42,926
Nepali, Marathi, or other Indic lang.	41,505
Arabic	40,769

Source



## TOP COUNTRIES REFUGEES RESETTLED IN OHIO ARE FROM (FY16-FY23)

	FY16	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23	Totals
DRC	789	571	392	870	142	255	522	1,304	4845
Afghanistan	226	171	126	89	144	112	* 2,020	382	3270
Bhutan	1186	815	560	25	5	0	2	7	2600
Syria	526	360	2	15	15	58	227	403	1606
Somalia	688	422	14	14	10	15	58	110	1331
Ukraine **		142	147	241	65	27	63	72	757
Iraq	344	240	28	14	31	12	23	57	749
Eritrea			65	104	24	13	20	82	308
Burma			44	53	37	2	39	69	244
Sudan				13	3	28	64	123	231

Data from Ohio Refugee Services

\* This includes those resettled through Operation Allies Welcome

\*\* This data does not reflect the Ukrainians coming in on Humanitarian Parole



## OHIO REFUGEE DATA BY CITY (FY15-FY23)

	FY15	FY16	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23	Totals
Columbus	1,373	1,688	1,175	520	470	204	185	1,075	902	7,592
Cleveland	666	1,097	756	408	466	200	191	1,147	825	5,756
Akron	541	809	575	313	189	53	59	331	407	3,277
Dayton	202	280	184	117	301	68	104	320	493	2,069
Cincinnati	201	328	257	139	79	27	20	156	186	1,393

Data from Ohio Refugee Services





U.S. Department of Justice  
Civil Rights Division

U.S. Department of Education  
Office for Civil Rights



**Information for Limited English Proficient (LEP) Parents and Guardians and for Schools and School Districts that Communicate with Them**

This fact sheet answers common questions about the rights of parents and guardians who do not speak, listen, read, or write English proficiently because it is not their primary language.

**Must my child's school provide information to me in a language I can understand?**

Yes. Schools must communicate information to limited English proficient parents in a language they can understand about any program, service, or activity that is called to the attention of parents who are proficient in English. This includes, but is not limited to, information related to:

- registration and enrollment in school and school programs
- language assistance programs
- report cards
- student discipline policies and procedures
- special education and related services, and meetings to discuss special education
- parent-teacher conferences
- grievance procedures and notices of nondiscrimination
- parent handbooks
- gifted and talented programs
- magnet and charter schools
- requests for parent permission for student participation in school activities

**Must a school provide language assistance if I request it even if my child is proficient in English and I am somewhat proficient in English?**

Yes. Schools must respond to a parent's request for language assistance and remember that parents can be limited English proficient even if their child is proficient in English.

**May my child's school ask my child, other students, or untrained school staff to translate or interpret for me?**

No. Schools must provide translation or interpretation from appropriate and competent individuals and may not rely on or ask students, siblings, friends, or untrained school staff to translate or interpret for parents.

**What information should I expect from the school if my child is an English learner?**

When your child enrolls, you should receive a home language survey or similar form to fill out that helps the school identify potential English learners, who are eligible for language assistance services. If your child is identified as an English learner, the school must notify you in writing within 30 days of the school year starting with information about your child's English language proficiency level, programs and services available to meet your child's educational needs, and your right to opt your child out of a program or particular services for

# STRATEGY #2

## Language access







- ❑ Apps that translate are not enough!
- ❑ Need infrastructure for interpretation (oral) & translation (written) services
- ❑ Major equity issue



<https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/frontpage/pro-students/issues/roi-issue03.html>

## SPECTRUM OF OPTIONS:

Most- to least-meaningful communication practices when there is a language barrier with parents.

					
	<b>Trained interpreter, face-to-face or remote</b>	<b>Trained interpreter, by phone (OPI)</b>	<b>Partner with a bilingual colleague to deliver message</b>	<b>Using a translation app</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Personal</li> <li>+ Accurate</li> <li>- Time to request</li> <li>- Cost</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Accurate</li> <li>- Not as personal</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Personal</li> <li>- Not accurate</li> <li>- Pulling away from job</li> <li>- Not building own relationship</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Quick and free</li> <li>- Not accurate</li> <li>- Likely has little meaning</li> <li>- May not satisfy federal requirements</li> </ul>	

<https://www.immigrantsrefugeesandschools.org/post/how-to-fulfill-interpretation-translation-requirements-tools-for-guiding-decisions>



## OCR Search

## Office for Civil Rights Recent Resolution Search

The Office for Civil Rights (OCR) is providing access to resolution documents reached on or after October 1, 2013. The resolution documents cover aspects of laws OCR enforces. You have access to all currently uploaded documents that meet OCR's document upload criteria. Additional documents will be posted on a continual basis. Use the search box below to conduct your search. Search criteria assistance is provided below.



Search

Reset

Order By:

Cases ordered by Institution A-Z

[Search by type of discrimination](#)

## Topics:

To further refine your results please select the following criteria below.

State Clear All

- Ohio (10)

Type of Institution Clear All

- Elementary and Secondary (10)

Statute Clear All

- Race and National Origin Discrimination (10)
- Disability Discrimination (5)

Elementary and Secondary	X
English Language Learners	X
Race and National Origin Discrimination	X
Ohio	X

Displaying 10 results

CINCINNATI PUBLIC SD (OH) (15121011)	07/14/2016
<input type="button" value="Letter"/> <input type="button" value="Agreement"/>	
CLEVELAND METROPOLITAN SCHOOL DISTRICT (OH) (15081276)	09/15/2011

[Replicate my search here](#)

## STRATEGY #3

Partner with your local immigrant and refugee community-based organizations as well as faith-based institutions that serve this population. (And remember all communities, not just Hispanic or Latino.)



## EXAMPLE: Re:Source Cleveland's Youth Mentoring Program (grades 4-8)



- ❑ 1:1 mentoring with a volunteer + group activities and field trips, etc.
- ❑ Family Engagement
  - Home Visits
  - Check-in Phone Calls
  - Home Language Interaction
  - Wraparound Support
- ❑ School Interactions
  - Parent - Teacher Conference Support
  - Progress reports
  - Supportive Intervention
  - Advocacy



## REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT ORGS IN OH

From the federal government's directory here (click R & P Affiliate Directory)



Community Refugee And Immigration Services	4645 Executive Drive	Columbus	43220	+16142355747	<a href="https://www.crisohio.org/">https://www.crisohio.org/</a>
Jewish Family Services of Columbus	1070 College Avenue	Columbus	43209	+16142311890	<a href="http://www.jfscolumbus.org">www.jfscolumbus.org</a>
The Near West Multi Service Corporation DBA The May Dugan Center	4115 Bridge Ave	Cleveland	44113	+12166314595	<a href="http://www.maydugancenter.org">www.maydugancenter.org</a>
Greater Toledo Newcomer Center powered by Jewish Family Services of Washtenaw County	4427 Talmadge Rd.	Toledo	43623	+12489105066	<a href="https://jfsannarbor.org/">https://jfsannarbor.org/</a>
Ethiopian Tewahedo Social Services- Columbus	4300 East Broad St Suite D	Whitehall	43213	+16142525362	<a href="https://ethiotss.org/resettlement">https://ethiotss.org/resettlement</a>
Catholic Charities	7162 Reading Rd., Suite 600	Cincinnati	45237	+12169393737	<a href="http://www.ccswoh.org">www.ccswoh.org</a>
Migration And Refugee Services (Catholic Charities)	7800 Detroit Ave St Augustine Tower	Cleveland	44102-2814	+12169393737	<a href="http://www.ccdocle.org">www.ccdocle.org</a>
Catholic Social Services	1046 Brown Street	Dayton	45409	+19372237217	<a href="http://www.cssmv.org">www.cssmv.org</a>
International Institute Of Akron, Inc.	20 Olive Street, Suite 201	Akron	44310	+13303765106	<a href="https://www.iiakron.org/">https://www.iiakron.org/</a>
USCRI Cleveland	3167 Fulton Road Suite 306	Cleveland	44109	+12167814560	<a href="https://refugees.org/uscri-cleveland/">https://refugees.org/uscri-cleveland/</a>



# OTHER AGENCIES SUPPORTING IMMIGRANTS IN OH

- ❑ [Asian Services in Action \(Cleveland and Akron\)](#)
- ❑ [Comité Mexicano \(Cleveland\)](#)
- ❑ [El Centro \(Lorain County\)](#)
- ❑ [Esperanza \(Cleveland\)](#)
- ❑ [HOLA \(Painesville area\)](#)
- ❑ [OCCHA \(Mahoning, Trumbull, and Columbiana Counties\)](#)
- ❑ [Ohio Hispanic Coalition \(Columbus\)](#)
- ❑ [Ohio Latino Affairs Commission \(statewide\)](#)
- ❑ [Our Lady of Guadalupe / Catholic Social Services \(Columbus\)](#)
- ❑ [Refugee Connect \(Cincinnati\)](#)
- ❑ [Re:Source Cleveland \(Cleveland\)](#)
- ❑ [Spanish American Committee \(Cleveland\)](#)
- ❑ [Su Casa Hispanic Center of Catholic Charities \(Cincinnati\)](#)
- ❑ [US Together \(Cleveland, Columbus, Toledo\)](#)



## STRATEGY #4

Create welcoming schools through policies, high expectations, and staff training.





# NEW CATALOG NEW CATALOG NEW CATALOG

2024



...because supporting English Learners is about more than just language.

[www.immigrantsrefugeesandschools.org](http://www.immigrantsrefugeesandschools.org)

## ONLINE SELF-PACED COURSES

**Understanding the Backgrounds of Refugee Students & Families**

Five HOUR TRAINING

**Supporting Unaccompanied Immigrant Youth in U.S. Schools**

Five HOUR TRAINING

**Engaging Immigrant & English Learner Families in a Virtual World**

Five HOUR TRAINING

**Immigrant Family & Community Engagement in Schools - Part 1**

Five HOUR TRAINING

**Immigrant Family & Community Engagement in Schools - Part 2**

Five HOUR TRAINING

**Cultivating Leadership Skills Among Immigrant & English Learner Parents**

Five HOUR TRAINING



<https://www.englishlearnerportal.com/courselistabc>





**IMMIGRANT  
CONNECTIONS**

SUPPORTING EDUCATORS  
AND ORGANIZATIONS

## CONTACT US



(202) 997-8545



[laura@immigrantsrefugeesandschools.org](mailto:laura@immigrantsrefugeesandschools.org)



[www.immigrantsrefugeesandschools.org](http://www.immigrantsrefugeesandschools.org)



[@ImmigrantsRefugeesandSchools](https://www.facebook.com/ImmigrantsRefugeesandSchools)



[@LauraGardner79](https://twitter.com/LauraGardner79)