

The Impact of Immigration on Small- to Mid-Sized Iowa Communities

A Citizens' Guide for Change



IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY
University Extension

Keokuk County

Executive Summary

During December 2000 and January 2001, a team of nine people (seven from Iowa State University Extension, an economic developer, and a member of the clergy) visited four communities in Iowa where a major influx of primarily Hispanic immigrants had occurred recently. Leaders in each of the communities were interviewed to determine the impact of immigration on the community and the lessons that could be learned to help other communities prepare for in-migration. The areas of biggest impact were found to be availability of housing, language barriers, cultural differences, and education.

File: Communities 1



... and justice for all

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Introduction and Methodology

In the year 2000, Keokuk County, Iowa, (population 11,400) was in the enviable position of having very low unemployment and local manufacturing firms that wanted to hire an additional 175 to 225 workers. Unless the county could attract new workers, there was a real possibility of losing these manufacturing companies, along with their jobs and tax base.

Less than one percent of Keokuk County's population is minority. The county has little experience interacting with different cultures. Although none of the county's businesses has made overtures to attract immigrants, immigration is one way to increase the labor force. The prospect of having a significant number of immigrants come to a relatively rural county raised many questions.

1. How should the county prepare for new residents who may be of a different culture?
2. What would immigrants need to help them settle into the community?
3. What changes might occur in the community, its school, and businesses as a result of immigration?
4. How would the community work together?



Members of the interview team

To find answers to these questions, the Keokuk County Extension Office of Iowa State University wrote and received a Value-Added Ag Field Project Grant. The purpose of the grant was to research how other communities in Iowa have dealt with an influx of foreign workers. The objective was to learn from the experiences of other communities and to provide practical educational programs for communities beginning to experience in-migration of culturally diverse workers.

A major part of the project involved visits to four Iowa communities where extensive interviews took place, drawing on the successes and failures of communities in dealing with a new immigrant population.

During December 2000 and January 2001, a team of nine interviewers visited approximately 70 people in four Iowa cities: Columbus Junction (population 1,900), Lenox (population 1,401), Perry (population 7,633), and Marshalltown (population 26,009). Interviews lasted approximately one hour each. People interviewed were identified as key leaders in each of the cities. The ISU County Extension Education Director in each of the counties helped arrange the interviews.

The predominant immigrant group in each of the four cities studied is typically classified as "Hispanic" or "Latino." The people in this group come from many different countries as well as different parts of the United States. Some come from places in the U.S. such as

Rio Grande Valley in Texas and southern California. Another large group comes from Mexico, primarily rural areas. There are also people from Central American and South American countries. Even though they may all be classified as Hispanic, this group comes from a very wide range of cultures and is by no means homogeneous. What they may have in common is the Spanish language (though dialectical variations are present and can be problematic) and their emigration in search of a better economic future.

A precise definition of the term “immigrant” is a person coming from another country. Therefore, people arriving from Texas or California may or may not be immigrants in the true sense. Many Hispanics arriving in Iowa have come from Mexico via Texas or California. However, there are a few who were born in the Rio Grande Valley or Southern California and are not immigrants in the technical sense.

Background on Cities Studied

Columbus Junction (population 1,900) has had a small population of Spanish-speaking residents for many years. When IBP, a hog “harvesting” facility, expanded the size of its hog slaughtering plant at the edge of town in about 1990, the Spanish-speaking workforce quickly swelled. Housing was immediately a major problem. Upstairs retail buildings in the downtown were converted into “dormitory” style housing. People slept in their cars because there was little affordable housing. The city tried without much success to attract developers who would build rental-housing units.



Downtown Columbus Junction

Immigration was very important to Columbus Junction. Many Columbus Junction residents credit immigration as saving the economic vitality of the community. A number of previously empty Main Street storefronts are now occupied by Hispanic businesses. The school system has received several large grants for integrating Spanish-speaking students into the school. About 60 percent of Columbus Junction elementary school students are of Hispanic background. Because of this, the school system has received substantial grants and increased state revenues, resources that wouldn't have been available otherwise.

Lenox (population 1,401) has had a few Hispanics in the community since the 1970s. It wasn't until the 1990s that the majority of the now 50 or so families began arriving. Nearly all the immigrant population work at Papetti's, a value-added egg-cracking factory. The town credits Papetti's for adding jobs to the community and stabilizing the population.

Lenox has a more thriving retail economy than other communities its size. It has four restaurants, two banks, a full-service grocery store, a large used-furniture store, a pharmacy, a satellite clinic with two doctors, and several other businesses atypical for a town its size.

Although two cultures peacefully coexist in Lenox, there is little co-mingling of people or cultures. There are no Hispanic businesses in town and almost no businesses have bilin-

gual employees. Two church services a month are offered in Spanish. There are no Hispanics in local service clubs, on the city council, or in the fire department. The police department has one bilingual officer.

Perry (population 7,633) historically was a railroad town. The railroads were major employers that fueled the local economy. The railroad jobs had left town by 1980 and Perry went into an economic decline. The population has increased since about 1990 when Hispanics first began moving into Perry to work at a meat packing company. According to one estimate, 40 percent of the population is now Hispanic.



Lenox business district

Perry has several Hispanic businesses. Although the majority of Hispanics work at IBP, a meat packing plant, Hispanics are also employed at several other businesses in other parts of the county, including a large livestock feedlot and a seed company.

Because Perry was economically depressed when the immigrants first began arriving, the community pitched in to help with diversity issues. The school system has worked hard at providing for the needs of a diverse population. There is a free health clinic open on Thursday nights.

Marshalltown is the largest city in the study with a population of 26,009. The Hispanic population started arriving in Marshalltown in large numbers about seven years ago. The employment opportunities at the Swift meat packing plant were the main reason immigrants starting coming to Marshalltown. Today twenty-five percent of the student population is Hispanic. The schools have made a significant effort to accommodate students with varying English language abilities.

There are many successful Hispanic businesses in town. Hispanics are employed at various businesses around the Marshalltown area. A couple of churches have multicultural ministry programs that serve a wide variety of human service needs for the immigrant population. Immigrants in Marshalltown come from a wide variety of nations, cultures and languages, including Bosnia, Southeast Asia, and the Sudan.

General Findings

For this report, in-depth interviews were conducted with more than 70 community leaders. The study used a “reputational” method to identify key community leaders: one person identified a community leader, that person identified two or three other leaders, etc. The people whose names were mentioned most frequently were interviewed. People not considered community leaders also were interviewed, but most of those interviewed were leaders. The views of community leaders may not represent the entire population of the town. It is unreasonable to expect any one person from another ethnic group to be an expert on the culture of that group. Just as long established neighbors don’t know everything about each other, immigrant neighbors cannot be expected to know everything about each other either.

A majority of people interviewed expressed in a variety of ways that the influx of the immigrant workforce had “rescued” their town from significant financial downturns, empty classrooms, and business closures. Immigration can benefit a community that is dwindling and suffering economically, but the community will undergo significant change in the process. Attitude seems to play a big role in whether the changes are perceived to be good or bad. Not everyone is happy to live in a community with newcomers. Because of this, a small number of established residents will leave the community rather than accept living with new immigrants.

In all four communities studied, one major employer hired nearly all of the immigrants. The role the major employer plays in integrating the immigrants into the community is critical. The study found when the employer is “a good corporate citizen,” the change is smoother and generally positive. Where the employer is not involved in the community and doesn’t work with the immigrants and the community, the transition is often rough and problematic.

The rate of turnover in the factory also is important to the community. If a factory in one community has a 50 percent turnover rate and a factory in another community has a 100 percent turnover rate, the second community will have to adjust to twice as many newcomers.

Employers need to be sensitive to the needs of the immigrant population and to the impact the immigrant population has on the community. Instituting cultural awareness programs, sensitivity training, and antidiscrimination policies within the company is very important. It is also important for employers and others to provide cross-language education and to help newly arrived residents find adequate housing and transportation.

The need for interpreters is great at all times, but especially when immigrants first arrive in a community. The few community people, if any, who can speak the immigrants’ language quickly get overwhelmed and burned out trying to meet the demand for interpreters. They are often expected to interpret for free at all times of the day and night. Businesses and local governments need to address the issue of language early and hire and/or train bilingual people. For example, the areas of health care and public safety need bilingual employees as soon as immigrants begin arriving. Churches also need to provide for services in the native language of the immigrants.

Findings by Issue Areas

Nine issue areas were studied: housing, schools, social, local government, merchandising, language, health, business recruitment, and cultural differences.

a. Housing

There is a housing shortage throughout Iowa. In most Iowa communities, whether the population is stagnant or growing, there is a lack of housing — both rental units and houses for sale. In communities with a growing labor force, the competition for housing, especially rental units, is intense. Rental rates increase accordingly.

The housing shortage is magnified in communities that are experiencing in-migration of

families for predominately unskilled, low-paying jobs. A housing inventory needs to be developed to identify both the quantity and quality of available housing.

Cities should re-examine their housing codes to make sure they adequately protect the health and safety of residents, landlords, and the community. Consideration should be given to make sure rental units have adequate parking and maximum occupancy standards. Also, housing codes should be examined to make sure they do not have a cultural bias.

A common stereotype is that many immigrant cultures prefer to live in crowded quarters. The reality is no one likes to live in crowded conditions. People may be forced to live eight or ten to a living unit; however, that usually happens because of necessity rather than choice.



Lack of low cost housing is a frequent barrier to immigration

People emigrate to Iowa from Texas, California, Mexico, and other locations in search of work and come with few or no financial resources. After finding work here, it is typically a month or more before they get their first paycheck. Because of this, deposits for rental housing and utilities can be difficult to come up with. Landlords often limit the number of people that can live in their units. People often live with friends before they can find and afford a place of their own. Public and private resources need to be directed at creating additional affordable housing units. In the beginning, the greatest demand will be for rental units. As families get established, the need for houses to purchase will increase.

An inspection program for rental housing units should have high priority. Rental housing units should be inspected for health and safety conditions. The structural integrity of rental units should be determined. In every city studied, some landlords provided comfortable, safe housing. However, a few landlords in every city took advantage of the new residents by providing substandard housing and trampling on the legal rights of the tenants. Common abuses include charging rent on a “per head” basis, inflating rents for immigrant families, threatening eviction if complaints are made about needed repairs, and renting substandard housing.

b. Schools

Schools in the four communities indicated that had it not been for the new immigrant population, their enrollments would have decreased rather significantly. Minority students made up from 11 to 60 percent of the school enrollment in the four communities.

The majority of immigrant families who move to these towns have young families. Children entering school will be mostly of grade-school age with a few middle school and high school-age students. Lower grade school children learn English rapidly and quickly assimilate into the classroom setting. The older the child, the longer it takes to assimilate into an English-speaking classroom setting and the more resources the process takes. Many older students leave school to go to work as soon as legally possible.

Preparation of school staff is key. Staff members need to be trained on what to expect when an immigrant population moves into a community. Additional resources must be allocated for translators, bilingual teachers, and additional support staff.

School administrators need to make accommodations for multi-language communication between staff and students and, in particular, between staff and parents. This may require letters to parents in their native language and interpreters at school programs, activities, and parent/teacher conferences. Some immigrant parents don't read either English or their native language and depend solely on oral communication. Bilingual teachers and

aides are helpful and necessary in most cases. Middle and high school students generally require more resources. Examples include bilingual teacher aides and native language textbooks to supplement English language textbooks.



Lenox Elementary School

Immigrant families normally don't qualify for many low-income support services. After the initial month or two of a child's entry into school, the family's income may be too high to qualify for free school lunches. Also, many immigrant families will choose not to ask for reduced fee lunches even though they would qualify, for the same reason many rural families refuse to accept the help. This has caused some funding problems with the school districts because many support services programs are funded based on the number of free and reduced price meals.

Educators must understand that most immigrants are very family-oriented, and their lives revolve around the family. There is a conflict of values between family needs and living within the school calendar. Children may miss several days, weeks, or months of school when their families return to their native country to visit or help sick family members. This is disruptive to the educational progress of the children and is viewed differently by family members and school personnel. Schools need to be flexible in enforcing attendance rules and standards for graduation.

A quality preschool program is very important in giving immigrant children a good start in school. A preschool program also allows for quality day care. Home visits are considered a vital part of the program and benefits both the parents and the educators. Before- and after-school programs also help improve language competencies.

Many students will arrive at school with incomplete or missing immunization records. The school should establish a process to get students immunized quickly. School records, such as level and grading scale, may be hard to obtain or translate into our system's standards. Some schools use basic testing procedures to evaluate each student's grade level. They feel that, without testing, students may be forced to struggle with both a language and a grade level barrier.

A significant portion of the immigrant population may be transitory. This creates high turnover in schools. Woodbury Elementary School in Marshalltown has a 48 percent transition rate (48 percent of the school population either started school or left school

sometime during the school year). Not all students arriving at school are ready to be placed into a class based on their age. There also tends to be a high dropout rate in high school. High schools with a high number of immigrant students should focus initially on teaching life skills, language, and trades. Acquiring sufficient credits for graduation may not be their primary goal.

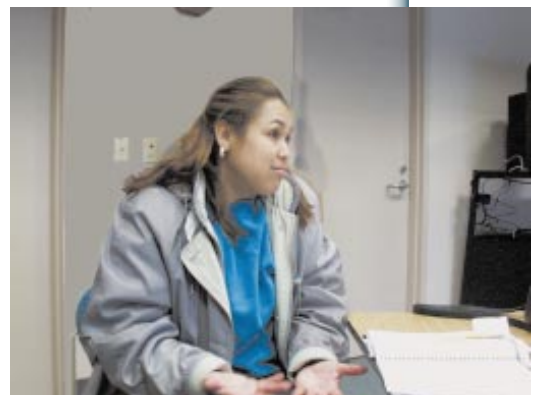
Flexibility is the key to effectiveness. School officials recommended first determining the real needs and the realistic goals, then tailoring the educational offerings to meet these needs. Frequently, the schools make these adaptations privately to minimize controversy.

Immigrant parents are very supportive of the school. At grade school parent-teacher conferences nearly all immigrant parents attend. Translators need to be provided at such events. Immigrant parents tend not to come to other school events because of work schedules and language skills that may limit their participation.

c. Social Issues

The immigrant community should not be stereotyped. Immigrants are as diverse as any other residents. Some immigrants arrive in Iowa with technical degrees and college educations. Some immigrants have only a second grade education. Many immigrants come from agricultural areas while others are from large cities.

Hispanic families usually have more children than their Anglo neighbors. They are neat, clean, hard working, and pay bills promptly and with cash. When Hispanics first arrive in Iowa, family members or acquaintances generally take them in. They do not rely on the Family Investment Program, public assistance, or social programs. They are self-sufficient and try to take care of their own needs. Families may need social service agency assistance once or twice, but usually not more than is necessary to get on their feet. They are not likely to become “welfare families.” In fact, the 1996 welfare reform law excludes non-citizens from certain benefits.



Vivian, talking about social issues

Some immigrants who arrive in Iowa are “undocumented,” meaning they do not have the proper immigration papers to legally be in this country. They may have a job and pay income taxes and social security taxes but not be eligible for any benefits. These immigrants maintain a very low profile in the community in fear of being found and deported. Many communities have set up volunteer-run programs to help them apply for proper documentation and eventually become U.S. citizens.

When immigrants first start coming to a community, the turnover rate is high. Males predominate in the first wave of in-migrants, but they are soon followed by their families. The longer immigrants remain in a community, the more stable their population becomes.

Non-English church services divide the community. Both groups want the services in their own language. The English-speaking congregation often feels like too much attention is being paid to the new, non-English speaking church members. At the same time,

the immigrants are often quite religious and rely on the church for both spiritual and social needs. Extra efforts are needed to bridge this gap and bring the church community together. Language is a difficult factor for groups such as churches to work through. However, in many communities, including Perry, both groups are amicably working together to overcome these problems.

d. Local Government

An increasing workforce and population require more government services. More emergency services (police, fire, ambulance) are needed. Law enforcement officials agree that the amount of crime will increase whenever a community has an increase in population. The increase in crime cannot be attributed to any one immigrant group but is spread over all population groups. Immigrants are law abiding once they know the laws, and they do not cause more crime than any other group of people. As in other public services, cultural sensitivity training and translators are needed.



Bilingual signage

Cities need to look at their ordinances and try to anticipate problems and make adjustments before a large group of new people move into the community. Housing codes need to be enacted to protect the community, the landlords, and the renters. Ordinances relating to trash pickup and parked cars need consideration. Noise and public social gathering ordinances need to be reviewed and explained to the new population. Signage in public areas and government offices needs to be multi-lingual.

Many new immigrants do not have a dependable car. Therefore, public transportation becomes an important issue. If new housing units are going to be built, public expenditures for infrastructure (roads, sewers, water, etc.) need to be expanded accordingly.

e. Merchandising

In general, immigrants shop locally and are loyal customers. They don't travel far to purchase goods and services. They may have an inherent distrust of banks and financial institutions. Despite the language barrier, merchants indicate that Hispanics immigrants are "good customers," making few demands and paying in cash. They increase activity on Main Street.

Restaurants and grocery stores in the four communities studied have added ethnic foods and menu items that will appeal to Hispanics: chilies, peppers, shells, and fresh vegetables. The grocery store owner in Lenox stated that if it weren't for the Hispanics, the store would have closed. Used car dealers, auto parts stores, Laundromats, used furniture stores, and convenience stores also benefit from Hispanic customers.

Three of the four communities studied have several Hispanic-owned businesses. These businesses are largely family-operated and include many types of businesses, from auto repair shops to bakeries, grocery stores, and restaurants. Hispanic businesses typically locate in the central business district because of easy access to customers and lower rents.

Hispanic business owners and their families put in long hours, often being open from early morning to late at night. The long hours preclude them from participating in community activities.

There appears to be a slight undertone of resentment in the Anglo community when an Anglo business owner advertises to attract immigrant customers. It doesn't appear to be a significant factor, but some established customers may temporarily boycott a business actively seeking immigrant customers. "It makes me uncomfortable when several Hispanics are in the store," one customer was quoted as saying.



Ethnic food in a grocery store

f. Language

Language is the biggest barrier the immigrants and the community face. Both English-speakers and non-English speakers feel uncomfortable when a group of people is standing around talking in a language they don't understand. It is human nature to be afraid of what we don't understand. It's hard to get to know and accept someone with whom you cannot communicate.

Nearly all immigrants want to learn English. They clearly recognize that to get good paying jobs, they need to be able to speak English. They also realize that learning a new language as an adult takes years. The demands of jobs and a cultural emphasis on spending time with their family limit their ability to learn English.

There are programs to teach English. The schools and churches in most communities have conversational English classes. Some employers offer English classes, although these tend to be poorly attended. The better-educated non-English speakers tend to learn English faster than lesser-educated people. Some of the immigrants in Iowa communities have minimal education and cannot read their own native language. This makes learning English that much more difficult.

The language barrier works both ways. Although there are a few classes available to people who want to learn a foreign language, this is the exception and not the rule. Most established residents believe that the non-English speakers should learn English and they shouldn't have to learn a foreign language.

By default, children of immigrants often serve as interpreters. Children go to the bank with their non-English speaking parents to translate. Children often are used in schools to translate for teachers, parents, and other students. This can lead to conflicts. Educators have learned not to allow children to translate at parent-teacher conferences.



Translators and bilingual staff are needed

g. Health Issues

Health services are very important to newly arriving immigrants. Access to quality health care may not have been available to these individuals for years prior to their arrival. New workers often do not have health insurance or are under insured, even when such benefits are available. Hospitals and doctors need to hire bilingual staff. Language is a significant barrier to good health.

Immigrant families, because they are frequently of child bearing age, have a disproportionate need for prenatal care and childcare. Expanded outreach is very important. Many second shift workers need access to medical care and child care other than 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. The general public tends to think immigrants are using up health care resources, but they actually are less likely to use the health system than their Anglo counterparts. New residents often are suspicious of all institutions. Because of this, health care should be provided in a non-threatening environment.

h. Business Recruitment

The majority of immigrant workers are attracted to the community because of one major employer. It takes many years in the community before other companies hire immigrants in any number, citing the language barrier and “health and safety” issues for not doing so.

Immigrants almost always find themselves in low-paying jobs that established residents don’t want. The work often is difficult physically and the working conditions are not ideal.

Even in communities that can’t meet industry’s labor demands without immigrant workers, some people will feel that the immigrants are “stealing our jobs.”

Because of the lack of opportunity for advancement as employees, immigrants, once they have saved some money, will often attempt to form their own businesses. However, few immigrant-owned businesses join the local Chamber of Commerce. It is unclear if they don’t join because they haven’t been asked or for other reasons.

The major companies employing immigrants set the tone for community impact. Significant problems can occur in a community if the employer doesn’t provide resources to help immigrant workers adapt to the community. Health care services, translation services, and cross-cultural training opportunities are necessary. Employers should recruit and hire a family-based workforce. Young, single males are less likely to remain on the job or integrate into the community.

The “legality” of the workforce also is important. Employers should be careful to hire documented workers. The process of filling out immigration and legalization papers is a time consuming and expensive process. There need to be community services to help immigrants complete the legalization process.

i. Cultural Differences

Most immigrants arrive in Iowa because of economic or political reasons. They would prefer to remain in their native countries but are forced to look for opportunities elsewhere. Many have stories of hardship and danger before coming to Iowa. When they

arrive in Iowa, they find a harsh climate, jobs that are hard, and a foreign culture and language. Many of them leave family and friends behind in their native countries.

Many immigrants do not plan on staying in Iowa indefinitely. They want to make money and then return to their homeland. Economic or political conditions in their home country often preclude or complicate their return. It may be more appropriate for the receiving community to expect and to plan for them to become permanent residents rather than planning for the day these newcomers leave town.

Family is very important, particularly in Hispanic households. Family comes before job and community. Money is typically sent back home to support parents and other family members. Traditionally in the agrarian society, the male is the head of the family and makes most of the decisions. The wife is responsible for bringing up the children, running the household, and doing a good deal of the farm work.

When immigrants come to Iowa, changes occur in the traditional family structure. Parents, who normally live very near, are now thousands of miles away. Women, who wouldn't typically work outside of the home, now work to support the extended family. Children, who typically respect and are subservient to their parents, are now given uncharacteristic power because they can translate for their parents and control the communication channel to the English-speaking world. Some cultural bias and conflicts may arise when women have supervisory authority over men.

Law enforcement, as we know it in Iowa, is a different experience for most Hispanics. They have an innate distrust of the police and authority. Law enforcement officials need to understand the immigrant culture and be responsive to their needs. Building trust is very important. Bilingual officers are needed to bridge the language barrier. The police departments in all four cities studied indicated that Hispanics do not cause any more crime than any other group of people. In general, the group of people most often involved in crime is young males age 16 to 25, regardless of race or culture. Residents and immigrants need to understand there are different beliefs in housing, yard usage, loud music, parked cars, etc.

Conclusions

Multi-cultural community development is a process that needs to be presented to people in a realistic manner. All the communities surveyed said the increased cultural diversity was positive and they wouldn't want to go back to the way it was; however, there are challenges along the way. The community definitely changes with cultural diversity.

It takes time to nurture and develop a cohesive, multi-cultural community. In the beginning, there will be major problems to overcome. As the different cultures gain experience and trust in working together, they gradually find that their differences aren't as great as they once thought. At that point, they start to be one community with different and interesting people living in it.

If multi-culturalism is to succeed, both the immigrant community and the established community will move through an "understanding curve" and an "appreciation curve." At any one time individual community members will be at different points on the curves and

moving at very different rates toward understanding and appreciation of their neighbors. Conflict, not only between cultures but also among long-term residents concerning the place of immigrants in the community, is to be expected as communities move along the bumpy road to incorporation of this new wave of immigration.

For a little while it will seem “uncomfortable” to go into stores and down streets, seeing and hearing languages and people different from you. After a while you will realize that the “gang” in the grocery store has a name. It is “family.”

Summary Recommendations

1. Be realistic about expectations. Problems will arise, and the community will need to rally to overcome them. If leaders paint the picture too rosy, people will resist the bill of goods they are being asked to accept.
2. Enlist the help of existing community members of the same nationality/culture (if possible) to plan a welcoming strategy. They know best what is needed and how to provide it. There is a level of trust there. Get the immigrant population involved in planning strategies for the community.
3. Institutions in the community should hire at least a couple of bilingual interpreters until they are able to recruit bilingual staff. Translators will be needed at schools, medical facilities, emergency services, and human service agencies. A list of volunteer translators should be developed and circulated to community services agencies and employers. Try not to burn them out!
4. Establish a single community “welcome center” from which new residents can be directed to various “settling in” services. The new immigrants want to know “how



Marshalltown school administration

people live here.” This greatly facilitates follow-through by the immigrants and helps the community marshal its resources in an effective manner. Immigrants may prefer to have the welcome center located separate from official government offices, such as in a church, storefront, or community center. In some communities a “faith-based” support system has developed trust and acts as a clearinghouse for services. The task of the welcome center is to assist the immigrants in getting established in the community, register children in school, get driver’s licenses, housing, utilities, find a church, understand social and residential rules, and where to place the garbage on collection day. Basic household supplies (beds, furniture, pots and pans), school supplies, and warm coats are needed when immigrants arrive in a community. To prevent burnout of volunteers, the number of people assisting the immigrant population needs to expand.

5. Employers need to participate in the integration of the immigrants into the community. Employers should be encouraged to recruit family units and not young, single men. Employers should help the community provide support services and help people learn each other’s language. Cross-cultural community events help bridge the gap between cultures.

6. A housing needs assessment is a critical first step. In most communities, ongoing housing shortages are commonplace. Housing codes need to be in place to protect the community and the immigrant families.
7. School readiness needs to be assessed. Space needs and language considerations need to be addressed. A plan for integrating new students into the school system needs to be in place. Identify people who will write grants to support the educational needs of new students.
8. This report focuses on Hispanic immigrants and certain recommendations may not be relevant to communities experiencing new residents of other cultures. The conclusions reached in this report are intended to give communities with new immigrants some ideas how to plan a successful assimilation.

Appendix A: Advisory Committee

A citizens advisory committee composed of people from Keokuk County was formed to provide guidance and direction for the project. The advisory committee met twice before this report was written. The committee members were:

Joe Swanson, Sigourney Foods
Dave Harris, Sigourney School Superintendent
Father Timothy Regan, Holy Trinity Parish, Keota
Laurie Appleget, Sigourney Area Development Corporation Director
Paul Davidson, Sigourney Christian Church Pastor
Beth Danowsky, Iowa Department of Economic Development
Russ Parcell, Sigourney Grade School Principal

Appendix B: Interview Team

Gary Bickmeier, project leader, Keokuk County Extension Education Director
Shanna Cellman, ISU Extension Families Field Specialist
Sue Hooper, ISU Extension Families Field Specialist
Terry Steinhart, ISU Extension Swine Specialist
Tom Quinn, ISU Extension Community Development Specialist
Cheryl Carney, Washington County Extension Education Director
Kim Merkey, ISU Extension Sociology Department, Leadership Specialist
Laurie Appleget, Director of Sigourney Area Development Corporation
Father Timothy Regan, Holy Trinity Parish, Keota

Appendix C: List of People Interviewed

Columbus Junction people interviewed: Perry people interviewed:

Julie Heindel, City Clerk
Mark Huston, Columbus Junction State Bank
Tom Huston, Columbus Junction State Bank
Craig Helmick, Community Bank
Dan Vogeler, Roundy Elementary Principal
Chris Wulf, Roundy Elementary Guidance Counselor
Georgina Buendia, Schools Liaison to Families
Natalie Martinez, Elementary Bilingual Aide
Mark Spence, EconoMart
Joshua M. Helscher, Louisa County Sheriff's Department
Father Burney Weir, Guadalupe Mission, Muscatine
Jack Story, Louisa County Board of Supervisors
Jack Estle, Louisa County Board of Supervisors

Julius Little, Dallas County Board of Supervisors
John and Paat Joebgen, Joebgen Shoe Store
Jon Morrison, City Manager
Richard Peel, City Housing Authority
David Wright, Mayor and pharmacy owner
John Doyle, Chamber of Commerce
Kathy Henely, McCreary Community Building
Kathy Powell, Parish Nurse/Free Clinic Coordinator
Vivian de Gonzales, Dallas County Family Support Worker
Jesus Martinez
Dan Brickner, Chief of Police
Judy Arellano, Community Action Agency
Ellyn Wrzeski, Superintendent of Schools
Linda Hobbin, Curriculum Director of Schools
Doug Six, Progressive Foundry/City Council
Alice Bolin, Pastor First Christian Church
Ron Bronneman, Pastor Mount Olivet Lutheran Church

Lenox people interviewed:

Hugh Vogel, City Council member
Sister Joanna Reitenmeier, St. Patrick's Church
Tom O'Kane, Papetti's of Iowa
Karen Zabel, City Clerk
Mike Cheese, Lenox Development Corporation
Tim Maxa, United Presbyterian Church
Debbie Duncan, Landlord
Dennis Bunch, Bunch Hardware
Mary Borland, Chamber of Commerce
Jennifer Miller, School Nurse and EMT
Nissa Ingraham, ESL Teacher
Maria Muñoz, Teacher Aide
David Henrichs, High School Principal
Lana Bearden, Elementary School Principal
Dan Griffith, Chief of Police
Father Daniel Siepker, St. Patrick's Church
G.G. Walters, G.G. Walters Furniture Store
Gary Zabel, First Community Bank
Lydia Brumfield, Neighborhood Store

Marshalltown people interviewed:

Floyd Harthun, Mayor
Gordy Johnson, Board of Supervisors
Sara Pothast, Home Care Plus
Lon Walker, Chief of Police
Dick Doyle, Superintendent of Schools
Pat Kremer, Schools
Joan Redalen, Schools
Sister Christine, St. Mary's Hispanic Ministry
Tom Renze, Principle of Woodbury School
Edgar Cruz, Native Language Specialist, School
Sally Wilson, After School Coordinator
Sally Robertson, School Nurse
Jeanne Kugler, Department of Human Services Office
Jay Stanish, Department of Human Services
Jerry Stephans, High School Principal
Ken Anderson, Chamber of Commerce
Martha Garcia, Food and Nutrition Program Assistant, Iowa State University Extension
Sam Carbohoyle, School