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JANUARY 2010

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# The Chicago Community Trust

## *Investing in Public-Private Partnerships*

### **1 RESPONDING TO COMMUNITY NEEDS**

In 2006, The Chicago Community Trust conducted an environmental scan to identify trends to inform its grantmaking in metropolitan Chicago. The Trust has long been responsive to the sizable immigrant population (18 percent) within the city limits, but the environmental scan documenting booming immigrant populations in a number of suburban communities caught its attention.

In the Chicago suburbs of Berwyn, pop. 54,016, and Mount Prospect, pop. 56,265, the Trust learned that one in four residents was foreign-born, according to the 2000 U.S. Census. Well over a third of Berwyn's foreign-born population—and more than half of Mount Prospect's—had arrived in the last decade. The Village of Schaumburg, pop. 75,386, had also seen half of its foreign-born population arrive in the last decade, and one in five residents in 2000 was foreign-born. In all three communities, three in five immigrants were non-citizens. Holding claim to the immigrant gateway title, however, was

the Village of Skokie, pop. 63,348. Nearly 40 percent of Skokie residents were foreign-born, and 40 percent of those were recent arrivals.

Responding to these demographics, the Trust launched a three-year, \$1.5 million immigrant integration initiative. Two strategies involved partnering with nonprofits to develop immigrant-led organizations and expand

**Nearly 40 percent of Skokie residents were foreign-born, and 40 percent of those were recent arrivals.**

immigrant leadership opportunities. But the third strategy focused on supporting “local government leadership,” including direct grants to three villages: Mount Prospect, Schaumburg, and Skokie (a fourth, Addison, would later be added). This strategy reflected the Trust's unique historical role: In 1919, as Chicago welcomed an influx of European immigrants, the Trust had conducted a similar community survey and, as a result, organized



The Chicago Community Trust funded the feasibility study and the start-up costs for the Community Connections Center in Mount Prospect, Illinois.

an “Americanization Council” and launched a variety of joint foundation-government efforts to integrate immigrants.

## 2 WHY FUND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS?

The majority of foundations advance their mission by supporting nonprofit organizations, from major cultural institutions and research think tanks to policy advocacy groups and community-based organizations. Yet a growing number of foundations are finding that funding local governments can help them achieve their goals, particularly when resources are scarce. “A governmental agency,” says Clare O’Shea, senior planner at the Village of Mount Prospect, “can impact an entire community with a grant.”

Local governments have the infrastructure, longevity, reach, leverage, and credibility to make them effective partners. “Local government has a lot of resources, more so than a nonprofit,” says Susan Downs-Karkos, who funded multiple local governments while at The Colorado Trust. “They bring a lot of credibility. They’re good at carving out safe spaces.”

Most significantly, grants to government have the potential for tremendous leverage. The Trust’s \$50,000 grant to Mount Prospect to conduct a feasibility study of a community resource center, for example, leveraged at least \$600,000 in contributions from local social service agencies. “We wouldn’t have been able to do it without the feasibility study and the money from the Trust,” Clare O’Shea says. Similarly, the Village of Skokie leveraged its \$50,000 grant from The Chicago Community Trust to win a \$140,000 grant in support of family literacy from the U.S. Department of Education.

Foundations considering grants to local governments, however, should think about leverage in more than monetary terms. “Government doesn’t have everything, but in terms of collaboration, they can put a lot on the table, whether it

is putting people out in the community at health and dental clinics or organizing round-table discussions and forums,” says Manuel Santamaria, grantmaking director at the Silicon Valley Community Foundation in California, which has long partnered with local governments on early childhood education programs and other issues. “The creative use of funds and resources is where collaboration is most beneficial.”

Leverage can also take place within a local government—and can yield considerable impact. Ngoan Le, vice president of programs at The Chicago Community Trust and the driving force behind the initiative, explains: “If we give a grant of \$50,000 and that allows us to have the entire set of local government, including their housing agencies, human service agencies, etc. working on immigrant integration, we think that is pretty good leverage.”

**“The Trust recognizes that while the federal government sets immigration policies, which determine the types of immigrants and the number of immigrants allowed entrance into the country each year, local governments actually have to work with immigrants who are here regardless of their legal status. Local governments have extensive authority over housing, education, public safety issues, health and social services.”**

—Chicago Community Trust  
Immigrant Integration Initiative Brief

Leverage can extend well beyond the original funded project and grant recipient. The frequent interactions among government officials and agencies—e.g., politicians attending caucuses and staff members consulting local counterparts—create natural opportunities for ideas to spread. “Our

### THE CHICAGO COMMUNITY TRUST

For more than 94 years, The Chicago Community Trust has worked with its donors to address the region’s pressing challenges and most promising opportunities. The Trust makes grants to support the arts, community and economic development, education, health and wellness, hunger and homeless alleviation, legal services; programs for youth, the elderly, and people with disabilities; and services to assure that basic human needs are met for all members of the community. Responding to demographic changes, the Trust in 2007 launched a three-year, \$1.5 million initiative to increase immigrant participation in civic, economic and social opportunities, including assuming leadership roles. The initiative also encourages diversity as a way to strengthen the region’s ability to compete in the global marketplace.

grants are not just influencing the local government we’re funding; they’re actually influencing other local governments in our region,” Le says, citing the Regional Immigration Integration Symposium organized by the Village of Skokie in June 2009, which brought together representatives from a number of neighboring municipalities to learn about the programs funded by the grant. “That was definitely an outcome we didn’t anticipate.”

Government grants, much like venture capital, can provide seed money for ideas that otherwise might not be tried. “One of the advantages of foundations working with government agencies is that we can provide non-categorical funding that allows for pilot programs within government,” says Lina Avidan, a program executive at the San Francisco-based Zellerbach Family Foundation, which has funded a variety of partnerships with the City and County of San Francisco, including some related to immigrant integration. “A foundation grant can foster innovation and experimentation in government which wouldn’t take place otherwise. Then, if the projects are proven to be effective, they can be brought to scale.”

Resources of local governments—and their ability to raise revenues—have diminished considerably in the wake of the current economic recession. Yet the situation can present excellent opportunities for strategic investment by foundations, says Terry Amsler, director of the Collaborative Government Initiative at the California League of Cities’ Institute for Local Government and previously a funder at the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. “Given budget crises facing states across the country, foundations can incentivize immigrant integration with relatively small investments.”

For local governments accustomed to the stringent requirements and formal communications process of federal and state grants, the relative flexibility of a foundation grant has fostered greater reflection and creativity. “[Ngoan Le of The Chicago Community Trust] was as interested in our failures as she was in our successes, which is brilliant,” O’Shea says. “That is how you learn whether or not to change a program.”

At the community level, partnering with government—whether through grants or other arrangements—can also foster good relations. While elected officials rotate in and out of office, staff members often remain in place for decades. “Having those folks in your community as partners is really important,” Santamaria says. “Reaching out to government can benefit a foundation’s entire grantmaking portfolio in that community.” With a grant, a foundation can both support a cause they wish to forward and build connections that will lay the groundwork for other efforts.

Finally, granting to government establishes a relationship with an almost unquestionably permanent entity. Villages, towns, and cities may see their fortunes fluctuate, but they very rarely vanish from the map. “Local governments will never go away, because someone’s got to pick up the garbage,” says Maureen DiFrancesca, human services director with the Village of

### CHICAGO COMMUNITY TRUST: SELECT GRANTS TO SUPPORT LOCAL GOVERNMENTS’ IMMIGRANT INTEGRATION INITIATIVES

**Village of Mount Prospect:** \$150,000 over three years to conduct a feasibility study for and to seed the creation of a community service center for immigrant residents. This grant has, in turn, leveraged \$600,000 in support of the creation of the center.

**Village of Schaumburg:** \$135,000 over three years to develop a plan to engage South Asian immigrants in local business and civic organizations.

**Village of Skokie:** \$135,000 over three years to support integration and leadership training programs for immigrant residents of all ages. One program has since leveraged support from the grant to win a \$140,000 family literacy grant.

Skokie. “So doesn’t it make more sense to engage them?”

## 3 NEW PARTNERS, NEW CHALLENGES

Funding local governments may offer many benefits and leverage opportunities, but it also presents a problem generally unfamiliar to grantmakers: politics. While funding of immigrant issues always has the potential to tread on charged ground, direct grants to governments are less likely to pass unnoticed. The main risk, of course, is that the leadership can suddenly change. “Changes in leadership,

changes in city council, changes in mayor—all that can impact how much support there is for an initiative,” Downs-Karkos says.

Indeed, the Chicago Community Trust has already faced this possibility. In the approach to an early 2009 municipal election, the incumbent mayors of both Mount Prospect and Cicero were attacked by their opponents for supporting the Trust’s initiatives. Come Election Day, Mount Prospect’s mayor was reelected; Cicero’s was not. The situation only bolstered the Trust’s resolve. “That just gives us more reason to support immigrant integration initiatives,” Le says. “We certainly didn’t anticipate for it to become such a visible and public policy issue to the scale that it could affect an election. We definitely got more than we hoped.”

Local governments’ community-first ethic helps them avoid the heated rhetoric of immigration debates, says Downs-Karkos. While at The Colorado Trust, she funded projects in Greeley, which she puts “probably in the top ten in terms of nasty immigration battles.” “If local government can come on board in the first place, that is probably the biggest step,” she says. “Once they do, it is pretty smooth from there. They don’t get too embroiled in the immigration debate. I think they’re used to dealing with all sorts of people speaking out in their community about all kinds of issues.”

With certain governments, bureaucracy can pose obstacles. Avidan says a number



In June 2009, the Village of Skokie organized the Regional Immigration Integration Symposium for elected officials and staff of municipal governments in the Chicago metropolitan region.



of the grants the Zellerbach Family Foundation has made to the City and County of San Francisco has been held up for months as they waited for Board of Supervisors' approval. The Foundation has also seen knowledgeable, committed staff members leave unexpectedly to other departments due to transfers.

Apart from bureaucracy, a city's sheer size can minimize responsiveness by local government. "Even if we make a grant that to us is huge, to them it's a drop in the bucket," Avidan says. "It is easier to assure accountability from nonprofits because, in a way, they are more beholden to foundations."

## 4 HOW TO MAKE IT WORK

Any effort to fund government starts with getting their attention. As standard foundation channels for publicizing an initiative seldom reach public agencies, additional outreach is often required. Perhaps the most common method is to publicize through government networking groups and immigrant service and advocacy organizations.

The Colorado Trust, when looking for grantees in 2006 for its immigrant and refugee integration initiative, co-produced a booklet with the Colorado Municipal League titled, *"The Role of Municipal Leaders in Helping Immigrants Become an Integral Part of Colorado's Communities."* For the second round of grants, the foundation held a joint training workshop with the League and invited all members. In The Chicago Community Trust's case, the RFP was circulated to local immigrant organizations and the Chicago Metropolitan Mayors Caucus.

Another effective method is direct contact, which can educate local officials about new trends in their community—in addition to encouraging them to apply for funding.

Foundations that wish to open their grantmaking to governments need not revise their rule book. "We treated local



Officials from suburban Chicago municipalities discussed immigrant integration strategies at a June 2009 regional conference.

governments like any grantee," Le says. "They have to demonstrate, among other things, that they have a good strategy in place, that they have commitment from top leadership, that the commitment to include top leadership is genuine, and that they include immigrants in the decision-making process."

Indeed, Le says she was impressed by the progress reports and feedback from the municipalities the Trust funded. "We have found that they are very responsive to foundation requests," she says. "Governments are so used to being accountable to the public, so in certain ways, they're much more accountable in regards to reporting on progress and outcomes."

One thing nearly all foundation-government partnerships have in common is the presence on the foundation side of someone who has worked in or is intimately familiar with government. The Chicago Community Trust's program is shepherded by Le, who has worked for the State of Illinois and at various levels in Chicago government. The executive director of the Zellerbach Family Foundation has extensive experience working in government. And The

Colorado Trust drew on the government experience of its consultants.

In considering a grant to government, be aware that governments, like nonprofits, are a diverse bunch. "You might be putting out a grant to municipalities, but there is just a huge range of municipalities and the type of people you are going to get," says Jennifer Maltas, a management analyst for the Village of Schaumburg. Staff levels, training, experience, and structure can all vary.

Nonetheless, in evaluating government applicants, foundation and government officials agree on certain criteria. First, grantmakers should make sure the need is present. When funding immigrant causes, this can mean reviewing Census and third-party demographic data, as both The Chicago Community Trust and Silicon Valley Community Foundation did before launching their programs. "It's all about knowing your backyard, who's in it, and what needs to be done," Santamaria says. DiFrancesca, who works for the Village of Skokie, agrees. "You have to make sure the demographic is compelling enough."

Second, be certain that the grant will be supported by the public entity's

## STRAIGHT FROM THE MAYORS

"I haven't heard about any mayors that got elected because they are doing so much to advance immigrant integration," said Larry Hartwig, Village of Addison Mayor. "More than likely, it is going to be the opposite of that."

Hartwig should know. He recently survived an election in which Addison's freshly launched collaboration with The Chicago Community Trust, while not a major source of attacks, did provoke some murmured discontent. People told him, "Don't push so hard; don't talk so much about that."

Since launching its grant program in 2006, The Chicago Community Trust has watched governments in three of the funded municipalities face that foe so unfamiliar to foundations: electoral politics. Fortunately, none has come out the worse for the wear, but it is a reminder of the implications for municipal officials of accepting foundation money for projects that can become politically charged.

In the Village of Mount Prospect, Mayor Irvana K. Wilks watched her opponents' rail about her village's now three-year collaboration with The Chicago Community Trust to no effect. "Two of my opponents tried to make it an issue, but it did not register," she said. "It was not an issue."

In the Village of Berwyn, where The Chicago Community Trust funds a nonprofit to work with the Village, the election brought about a change in the guard—but in a good way: the election of two new Latino aldermen, a new mayor who is "absolutely behind" the project, and the Village's first bilingual employee (the mayor's assistant).

The fact remains, however, that segments of the communities harbor reservations about immigrants and government-supported immigrant integration. The question, as Hartwig lays it out, is "How do you bring the people along with you?"

Foundations can help. "Taxpayers right now in this environment don't feel that comfortable about this type of program," says Eira Corral, clerk at the Village of Hanover Park. "But if you have private money to

initiate it, then it is easy to say we can't afford to lose that program, it is essential."

When the Village of Skokie made it a goal to increase immigrant representation on its boards and commissions, Mayor George Van Dusen says he made it a personal goal. "Elected officials have to go out and ask and insist that immigrants participate," he says. He has repeatedly courted the president of the local Chinese language school, who holds a PhD in economics, to serve on the Zoning Board, Plan Commission, or even one of the Arts Boards. While the woman has convinced two friends to join, she has yet to join herself. She says her English is not good enough. "They don't participate not because they don't want to, but because they feel inadequate," Van Dusen says.

Moving slowly is also vital, adds Hartwig. Rapid change is bound to raise defenses and snuff out dialogue. If you scratch the surface, however, you may find more demand bubble up than anticipated. At the suggestion of a group of Hispanic business leaders, Addison recently held a complimentary English as a Second Language class for parents of school children, expecting 20 or 30 to show up. Three hundred and fifty did. Since then, several hundred have come to the class. Similarly, not long ago the Village organized a forum to allow long-term residents and Latino residents to share their concerns. "We thought it would be a one-day, one-shot deal," Hartwig says. They ended up holding three forums.

The direct interaction that comes from forums and sharing seats on a board can have a much greater effect than any political debate. "When you sit down and talk to someone and find out they really want the same things—they want to work hard, they want their kids to go to a good school, they want their neighborhoods to be safe—it is really hard to turn around and blame them," Hartwig says. And while it is unlikely that will devalue the political currency of immigration, it is a step towards change.

leadership. Even a project with clear need and a stellar application can be undermined by a lack of support from the top, especially when politics presents a danger. "You have to make sure the board and village manager are on board and stand behind what you're trying to do," O'Shea says. "Our grant was so successful because our village board was behind the project. They were unanimous."

Third, invest as much in preparation as in execution. The initial grant from The Chicago Community Trust to Mount Prospect went entirely to developing a feasibility plan for a community resource center. This first step was essential to both focusing the Village's idea and building rapport between the Village and

the Trust. "If foundations are going to be making contributions to governmental agencies, then ensuring they have the plan in place is key," O'Shea says. "And then subsequent funding can go beyond that." In other words, lay the foundation first.

Evaluating individual funding requests aside, foundations should consider the benefits of granting to multiple governments at once. With a group, the infrastructure built for one can help many and the experience of each can instruct all. "It's always very important to have a peer-to-peer kind of learning," Le says. "When we select three or four local governments that we fund, there is actually a network of local government people that work together on various issues."

That is not to say that governments can only learn from governments. The Colorado Trust held mixed meetings for grantees of its immigrant integration initiative and found that its government grantees had as much to learn from—and to teach to—the nonprofit grantees as from the other governments. "I don't think the challenges were that different," Downs-Karkos says.

Once a grant is underway, foundations should work on developing their partnership with the full institution, not just the government's main staff member or supportive elected official. "I think there is a potential for foundations to latch onto and champion a single local official," Amsler says. "You can latch onto an official who isn't going anywhere or is term limited next year."

## 5 FORMS OF COLLABORATION

While The Chicago Community Trust's initiative primarily involved direct grants to local governments, collaboration with public entities can—and does—take a variety of forms.

One approach involves funding a nonprofit that in turn works closely with a local government. Such an arrangement can be preferable to both the foundation and the government entity. From a government perspective, this arrangement may be preferred when there is no clear lead office for the project or when they do not wish to be seen as the lead agent on a politically charged issue. Downs-Karkos cites The Colorado Trust's collaboration with the State Refugee Services program in Denver as one example. "The City of Denver was very involved but didn't want to be the lead," she says. "Part of it had to do with fiscal requirements, administrative overhead." So The Trust instead funded the independent State Refugee Services program, which worked closely with the state government, but held all of the administrative duties. "For various reasons it seemed to be the easiest arrangement," she says.

For foundations, making grants to a nonprofit to support engagement of local government can help avoid government bureaucracy and accompanying delays, ensure the funds are spent according to foundation wishes, and/or maximize resources. When looking to expand language access at San Francisco schools, the Zellerbach Family Foundation chose to fund a nonprofit that trained community members as interpreters because its capacity and leverage were superior. “The district doesn’t have nearly the capacity or the resources to provide the translation or interpretation at the level we’ve been doing, and because most of the labor is provided by volunteers, really what we’re paying for is coordination,” Avidan says.

For smaller municipalities, informal approaches can also bring government on board without involving them contractually. It can be as simple as inviting government to come to meetings, sit on the steering committee, and provide input. “In many communities, that’s all it takes,” says Downs-Karkos.

In addition to direct grants or grants through nonprofits, foundations can take a visible leadership role in partnerships with government. Le, for instance, co-chaired Illinois’ New Americans Initiative. Under the three-year, \$9 million program, the Illinois Department of Human Services and the Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights (ICIRR) joined forces to promote citizenship.



## 6 CASE STUDIES

### Skokie

After winning an immigrant integration grant from The Chicago Community Trust in early 2007, Skokie turned first to the core volunteers of its nearly two-decade long Festival of Cultures. The Village also tapped community leaders from other large ethnic groups; staff from the Skokie Public Library, Skokie Park District, and Oakton Community College ESL program; and staff from the Human Services Division, Marketing/Public Information Division of the Manager’s Office, and the Police Department. These individuals eventually constituted a grant advisory committee that developed a three-prong effort to fund integration programs targeting recent immigrants, established immigrants, or all Skokie community members. In a bid to involve the whole community, the Village sponsored a Know Your Neighbor Week. In preparation, each host received a kit with a world map, “conversation starters,” and coupons for coffee cake. Then, over a week in October 2008, 61 hosts opened their doors to their neighbors—in all, nearly 1,300 residents participated. In a follow-up survey, 33 of 35 responding hosts said they would participate again.

In their effort to target established immigrants, the Village funded an International Leadership Academy. Its intention was to encourage long-time immigrants to become civic and community leaders. In the pilot 2007 session, the Village experimented with curriculum, but by 2008, it had revised the list to include discussions with state legislatures, an overview of local government structure, lessons on leadership in American history, U.S. etiquette, and public speaking. One of the 35 participants of the 2008 session was recently appointed to the Village’s Human Relations Commission.

For new immigrants, the Village allocated funding to two local social service agencies, hosted an informational series, and published an Immigrant Services Directory. Money went both to Metropolitan Family Services Immigrant Transition Program, an agency that assists immigrants transfer into local schools, and Niles Township Schools English Language Learners Parent Center, which provides a variety of services to immigrant families. The Village also held monthly informational



meetings on services for new immigrants, but the gatherings, despite advertising, suffered “disappointing attendance.” A directory was also distributed in print and online.

But not every program fit neatly into these categories. One of the largest programs, a dual series of Police Academies, one for youth and another for adults, was open to all residents but focused on issues of importance to immigrants. Topics included U.S. policing practices and prioritization of individual freedoms; dialogue and questions were encouraged. “We aimed at educating about the differences with home countries,” said Ann Tennes, director of marketing and communications for the Village of Skokie. Enrollment at the International Youth Academy, as it came to be called, quickly reflected the new priority. At the June 2007 academy prior to the shift in priority, minorities and immigrants had made up just eight percent of participants. In August after the new priority was instituted, they made up 46 percent. In 2008, 71 percent of participants reported that their family did not speak English at home. The Village’s International Citizen Academy, which taught the same themes to adults, also saw minority and immigrant attendance rise, from 30 percent in 2007 to 80 percent in 2008—nearly four in five of whom did not speak English at home.

The Village also used grant dollars to fund a Housing Information Series which was open to all residents but well-attended by ethnic minorities. Two sessions were offered: a Tenant Information Session to educate tenants about fair housing, maintenance code, and legal issues; and a Landlord Information Session on the same topics from a landlord’s perspective, plus a new Skokie nuisance property ordinance.



Village of Mount Prospect officials and residents celebrate the opening of the Community Connections Center in August 2009.

## Mount Prospect

When Village of Mount Prospect Mayor Irvana K. Wilks heard about The Chicago Community Trust’s immigrant integration grant program at a diversity taskforce in late 2006, applying was a no-brainer. At that time, nearly one of every four residents of the Village was born outside the United States. These newcomers hailed from Mexico, India, Poland, Korea, Russia, Romania, Iraq, Sub-Saharan Africa, and more. It was a landlocked Ellis Island; four of seventeen Census tracts in Mount Prospect were identified as immigrant ‘ports of entry.’

In its application, the Village proposed constructing a neighborhood resource center. It would be a one-stop service center for low-income, limited English-speaking, and under-served residents. It was a choice based on observation; over the previous decade, the Village had watched many neighboring communities construct such centers to build relationships between incoming populations and native residents. The efforts, by and large, had been successful. The foundation said yes.

The process started with planning. The first grant went primarily to

Millennia Consulting, a firm specializing in advising public and nonprofit organizations in, among other things, language access, cultural competence, immigrant policy and immigrant integration strategies.

Millennia consultants came at the problem from both outside and inside. They looked at best practice examples of other community centers—services offered, locations, organizational structure—and they researched national best practices in immigrant integration. They also interviewed Mount Prospect government officials, community leaders, and other stakeholders—“really anyone who would talk to us,” said Mount Prospect Senior Planner Clare O’Shea—to plumb their feelings on everything from staffing levels and security needs to desired services and financial sustainability.

The final report accomplished three things. First, it provided an exhaustive detailing of demographic, service, structural, and financial considerations. Second, it convinced Mount Prospect to build a neighborhood resource center. Third, it helped leverage \$600,000 in support for the center from the following donors: Mount Prospect Public Library,

Northwest Community Hospital, Community Consolidated School District 59, and District 214 Community Education—as well as the Kiwanis Service Club and Wal-Mart.

The Trust's second grant—which paid for planning sessions, training village staff in cultural and language competency, and the startup costs of the center—has now concluded, and the final grant in year three will continue to support these efforts. In many ways the heavy lifting has already been done. “It all goes back to having a plan in place,” O’Shea said. “For us it was really important to go through the feasibility study to build our partnership with the Trust and ensure that they understood why we were recommending the things we did and why we shaped the center the way we did.”

The 2,400-square foot ‘Community Connections Center’ opened in August 2009. Through its doors, residents of Mount Prospect can get financial assessments, counseling, community policing services, or rent books, DVDs, or use computers at the public library’s “South Branch.” It also provides a pleasant, neutral space for neighbors to meet one another.



## Schaumburg

As its name suggests, Schaumburg was settled by German immigrants. The last few decades, however, have seen a steady influx of South Asian immigrants. By 2007, the U.S. Census Bureau’s annual American Community Survey estimate put the proportion at more than one in six. But while the new residents’ presence was evident in Village’s business directory—in the form of six hookah lounges and numerous South Asian restaurants and grocery stores—they were nearly absent from civic and community life.

Schaumburg spent the first year of the grant doing groundwork. First, officials consulted with the Schaumburg Business Association. Next, they hired Northern Illinois University-Outreach to conduct a community survey. Lastly, they created an advisory group of South Asian community and business leaders. The group and representatives from the Village met monthly as they drafted the plan. “We didn’t want to make grants before knowing what was going on,” said Village of Schaumburg management analyst Jennifer Maltas. What they found was that the new residents were more educated, more likely to be employed in their chosen profession, and made more money than their native counterparts.

In the second year of the grant, Village officials proceeded with their original intention: to increase new residents’ involvement in community activities. They recruited South Asian residents to serve on the Schaumburg Business Association Board, the Board of Health, and the Prairie Center for the Arts Foundation Board. They hosted an informational booth about the grant and South Asian Culture at a village festival, paid for a South Asian restaurant to participate in a food festival, and sponsored a parade float celebrating the South Asian community in an annual parade, which won ‘Best Float’ that year. The Village also gave tickets to South

Asian children for a performance of the Nutcracker and sponsored a South Asian performer at the local arts center. For the minority of immigrants who needed basic services, the village produced a brochure on getting settled in Schaumburg. The Village also conducted another survey, this time targeting native-born residents. Among the findings: native residents who frequently interacted with the South Asian community had the most positive feelings toward them.

The Village’s goal for the third year is to follow, not lead. After conceiving, planning, and executing much of previous

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**Schaumburg conducted a survey, this time targeting the village’s native residents. Among the findings: native residents who frequently interacted with the South Asian community had the most positive feelings toward them.**

year’s activities, Village officials hope to push the advisory council into the driver’s seat. Also, with the grant concluding, they hope the council will evolve into a group that not only plans, but fundraises. Mentoring other South Asian leaders and recruiting South Asian residents to serve on civic boards will be one aspect of their role, but to continue the new programs will require outside dollars. Nevertheless, there are many activities planned for the grant’s final year. They include a seminar on the differences between American and South Asian business practices; sponsoring the participation of a South Asian-owned business in the business fair; organizing gatherings between South Asian seniors and the Committee on Aging; and organizing dialogues between the South Asian community and the police department.

Two years into the grant, things have changed. South Asian participation in civic events is up. South Asian membership in the Schaumburg Business



Association is up. The number of South Asian residents on community boards is up. The Village now knows how to communicate with the South Asian community.

There have been challenges, too: Most events have been staff driven; community members have declined to participate in surveys due to mistrust of government; and factional interests of the advisory group members have at times overshadowed the group's larger goals.

It is clear to Maltas, however, where Schaumburg would be if the Village had never heard about the Trust's grant program. "There are a lot of things you might want to do but you don't have the money to do," Maltas said. "Without the grant, I don't think any of our communities would have embarked on what we did or went as far as we did."

#### ABOUT GCIR

Since 1990, Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees (GCIR) has been providing resources that foundations need to address the challenges facing newcomers and their host communities and to strengthen society as a whole. Our mission is to influence the philanthropic field to advance the contributions and address the needs of the country's growing and increasingly diverse immigrant and refugee populations. GCIR helps funders connect immigrant issues to their funding priorities by serving as a forum to:

- **Learn** about current issues through in-depth analyses, research reports, and online data, tools, and resources tailored specifically for grantmakers.
- **Connect** with other funders through programs, briefings, and conferences that examine major immigration trends and how they impact diverse communities.
- **Collaborate** with grantmaking colleagues on strategies that strengthen immigrant-related funding locally and nationally.



GRANTMAKERS  
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