

Title: Services to Immigrant Populations: Approaches in Public and Academic Libraries

Presenters:

- Loida Garcia- Febo, Queens Borough Library
- Omaa Chukwurah-Orezaba, Housatonic Community College Library

Sponsor: REFORMA

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Garcia-Febo began by giving us an outline of the history of Latin American Migration to the United States. She defined multicultural library services as including both the provision of multicultural information to all types of library users and the provision of library services specifically targeted to traditionally underserved groups.

Underserved groups as defined by the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions, include immigrant minorities, persons seeking asylum, migrant workers, and national minorities.

The American Library Association used to have a Commission on work to the Foreign Born and then the Office for Literacy and Outreach Services came along some 35 years ago. Today many libraries have services for immigrant populations. Some mentioned include Newark, Hartford and Multnomah Public Libraries. Toronto's Public Library has items in over 100 languages. She is creating a Spanish brochure on how to use the library.

New York libraries serving new immigrants should be somewhat lenient when issuing library cards. Reforma has a resolution about this and also a Toolkit for responding effectively to anti-Immigrant sentiment. Some of the forms of ID can include any delivered piece of mail addressed to a person, armed forces ID, Bank Statement, Check or Check Book, Credit Card Statement, Employee Photo ID, Immigration Registration, Medicare Card, New York City Welfare ID, State License, Motor Vehicle Registration, State non-driver's license, and Professional, vocational or union ID. Also passport, rent bill, rental or lease agreement, SS card, Student ID, Tax Bill or receipt, and utility bill. Also a consular card or letter from shelter with letterhead could work. Libraries funded by a city or county may have to follow their rules.

“A Case Study of Library Services to Immigrant Students at Housatonic Community College”

Omaa Chukwurah-Orezaba began by giving us some interesting statistics on Connecticut's population and then comparing it with the population in Bridgeport and the students at Housatonic.

Some facts about BRIDGEPORT PUBLIC SCHOOLS 2004-05:

22,750 enrolled

Students represent **72** languages

Insignificant preschool experience

25% of students live in poverty – nearly all students economically disadvantaged, including immigrants

Other characteristics of BRIDGEPORT PUBLIC SCHOOLS 2004-05

Academically underachieving
Overcrowded classrooms
Antiquated buildings
High dropout rates
High school violence
High student-to-teacher/administrator/social worker ratios

Source: Bridgeport Child Advocacy Council

As a group, immigrant students tend to present the same library support needs as native-born students, but for different reasons. What we do to serve immigrant students, is also largely what we do to serve the native-born.

Native-Born & Immigrant Students have the following in common

Diverse cultural knowledge and experiences
Uneven range of English language difficulties
Diverse educational needs
Poor preparation for college
Impact of local, state and federal policies
Safety concerns
Poverty

Achieve the American Dream

Institutional Challenges include the following:

Language difficulties, educational needs and poor preparation for college demand **ESL, REMEDIAL COURSEWORK** Local, state and federal policies impact access to jobs, housing, health care and economic assistance. Safety concerns crime and anti-immigrant sentiment. Both imply **RETENTION ISSUES** Poverty demands attention to **FIRST-GENERATION, FIRST YEAR EXPERIENCE NEEDS** (awareness, understanding and navigational issues)

Some Targeted Strategies for library services include:

Instruction

First-year experience: DS 099: college skills **Library Liaison program**

Communication: facilitate access to resources,
collection development, outcomes assessment

Writers in the Housatonic Classroom

Reading & Writing: English 101 Composition
Diversity goals embedded in selection process