



COUNTY OF SONOMA

575 ADMINISTRATION
DRIVE, ROOM 102A
SANTA ROSA, CA 95403

SUMMARY REPORT

Agenda Date: 9/17/2024

To: Sonoma County Board of Supervisors

Department or Agency Name(s): County Administrator's Office

Staff Name and Phone Number: Maggie Luce 565-1796, Christel Querijero 565-2431

Vote Requirement: Informational Only

Supervisorial District(s): Countywide

Title:

Update on County Services for Immigrant Communities

Recommended Action:

Receive an update on what County services are provided to immigrant communities. (Information Only)

Executive Summary:

On January 23, 2024, the Board of Supervisors discussed assessing the state of immigrants in Sonoma County and directed staff to bring an update on this topic to the Board for further discussion. This item is the first update in a phased approach to understanding which County services are available to and utilized by immigrant communities, either through direct services or through contracts with community partner organizations. Also included is information on related efforts such as the University of California Berkeley farmworker survey, examples of immigrant service resources from other counties, and a preview of an upcoming gap analysis for immigrant services.

Discussion:

In January 2024, the Board of Supervisors directed staff to assess the state of immigrants in Sonoma County. According to the [American Immigration Council < https://data.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/map-the-impact/>](https://data.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/map-the-impact/), Sonoma County has 84,012 immigrants (16.8% of the County's total population). As stated in the [2021 Portrait of Sonoma County < https://upstreaminvestments.org/impact-make-a-change/portrait-of-sonoma-county>](https://upstreaminvestments.org/impact-make-a-change/portrait-of-sonoma-county), "Immigrants, both documented and undocumented, are the backbone of California's economy and bring talent and vitality to Sonoma County. Despite their countless contributions, however, they face disproportionate challenges in a number of areas."

For the first phase of the assessment, staff focused internally to determine what County services are provided to immigrants, to gather available demographic data on service recipients, and to understand the degree to which services to this community are provided through contracts with community-based organizations (CBOs).

County Services for Immigrant Communities

Services Provided by County Departments

Most County services are not specifically designated for immigrant communities. Some services, particularly programs that are federal and/or state-funded, require citizenship, a green card, or certain types of visas or

immigration status for service eligibility. These include CalFresh, CalWORKS, General Assistance through BenefitsCal, Medi-Cal, and Supplemental Security Income.

A limited number of County services are focused on immigrants. County Departments provided the following examples of County services that include a focus on immigrant communities:

- Department of Health Services has three public health Home Visiting programs (Teen Parent Connections, Nurse Family Partnership, and Trauma Informed Approach Field Nursing) that serve pregnant and parenting families. These programs served 226 (32%) non-English speaking clients between July 1, 2023 and June 30, 2024. The programs focus on relationship building with clients, providing education, referring individuals to immigration-related services such as VIDAS, the Dream Center, and Catholic Charities. Home visitors also assist clients with navigating the complex systems for obtaining health coverage, housing, food, education and/or work opportunities.
- Human Services Department (HSD). On March 3, 2024, HSD partnered with Job Link, the County Economic Development Board, California Human Development, and dozens of community partners to host a Farmworker Resource Fair. Nearly 250 farmworkers and their families attended this fair, which connected them with more than 40 government agencies, community organizations and advocacy groups that provide support with housing, food, health care, employment, immigration law, tax preparation and more.
- The District Attorney's (DA) Office's Environmental & Consumer Law Division investigates and prosecutes crimes including wage theft, which disproportionately affects the immigrant community. The DA's Victim Services Division administers a grant that aims to improve service delivery to underserved groups that include indigenous farmworkers, Asian Pacific Islanders, Filipinos, Chinese, Japanese and Mixtecos.
- Public Defender has an in-house *Padilla* attorney who advises non-citizen clients on the immigration consequences of a criminal conviction. This attorney served approximately 600 clients from April 2023 to April 2024. In June 2024, the Board approved a pilot program to fund an extra-help immigration attorney to defend the department's non-citizen clients from deportation. This new immigration attorney will appear in immigration court, argue for clients to be released from ICE custody (if they are detained), and litigate for deportation relief.
- Department of Emergency Management (DEM) and the Office of Equity (OOE) work indirectly with immigrant services providers through their collaborations and contract with Community Organizations Active in Disaster (COAD), a coalition of 70 CBOs including immigrant-serving organizations. Several coalition building activities are underway including development of a disaster recovery framework and an alert warning program for emergency alerts to individuals living in agricultural bunkhouses.

In addition, several departments currently conduct outreach to immigrant populations through community events and collaborations with CBOs. As a commitment to improve access to County services, the [Board of Supervisors approved a language access policy and implementation plan](https://sonoma-county.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=6660921&GUID=92160618-5373-4E18-B73F-1AE315C28F5F&Options=&Search=>) <
<https://sonoma-county.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=6660921&GUID=92160618-5373-4E18-B73F-1AE315C28F5F&Options=&Search=>> on May 14, 2024. 26.4% of the County's population speaks a language other than English at home. 19.3% of the county's population speaks Spanish at home.

Data Collection Challenges

Most County Departments do not currently collect data on the immigration status of clients served through

County programs. The primary barriers to collecting data are concerns about privacy and data sensitivity, particularly relative to citizenship status and risks of deportation. Limited staffing capacity and infrastructure to collect and analyze disaggregated data specific to all the subcategories of immigrant communities are also barriers to data collection.

When data is collected on the immigration status of recipients of County services, it may not be representative of the actual number of immigrants receiving services since individuals sometimes withhold personal information to protect themselves from immigration authorities. In the past, the rule of public charge prevented mixed-status families from applying for government-funded supports for fear that doing so may limit future opportunities to obtain a visa.

Some models within the County that could be replicated and/or expanded to increase data collection and analysis capacity exist. The American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Community Resilience Programs is the first to implement Anti-Racist Results Based Accountability (AR-RBA) methodology to support meaningful programmatic monitoring and reporting. This approach enables disaggregation of program data by race and other identity markers to measure success at the population (community) level.

Another example of the County expanding capacity for data collection and decision-making is the development of the County's Universal Disaster Intake Process. This process enhances the intake process during emergencies by consistently collecting demographic data (participant profiles) to improve County disaster services in real-time, and client recovery outcomes across different points of the emergency and recovery journey.

[County of Sonoma Commission on Human Rights](https://sonomacounty.ca.gov/administrative-support-and-fiscal-services/human-resources/boards-commissions-and-committees/commission-on-human-rights) <

<https://sonomacounty.ca.gov/administrative-support-and-fiscal-services/human-resources/boards-commissions-and-committees/commission-on-human-rights>>(CHR)

The CHR commissioners advise the Board of Supervisors on areas that impact the human rights of members of our community. The CHR's [Visibility Project](https://socohrvp.org/), <<https://socohrvp.org/>> which includes a confidential online reporting tool, tracks data of human rights violations happening in Sonoma County. According to the CHR, as of August 26, 2024, there were no Visibility Project violations submissions related to individuals who are undocumented, but there were three submissions for violation cases related to farmworkers.

Services Provided through Community-Based Organizations

The County also contracts with CBOs to deliver services. Through these partnerships, the County funds educational, and health and social services that are beyond the services generally provided by local governments to community members.

Similar to the County services, CBOs may provide services to immigrant communities, but few contracts specifically focus on immigrant populations. The County's American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Community Resilience Program, [approved by the Board on May 24, 2022](#), <

<https://sonoma-county.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=5653998&GUID=9FB5C12C-F225-4A2D-839A-F3B8201E2585>> includes funding to support immigrants through CBOs that provide workforce development programs, financial assistance, mental health services and nutrition education, housing navigation, and fair housing education and tenant assistance.

Some additional examples of services for immigrant communities provided through CBOs:

- In 2019, the [County executed a contract with United Way of the Wine Country](#) <<https://sonoma-county.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=3920619&GUID=0FC63A4E-24CC-4E40->

> ([UWWC](#)) to transition leadership of 2-1-1 Sonoma County, a free information and referral service for Sonoma County that connects Sonoma County residents to available health and human services. The scope of services for the contract (\$216,808 for FY 2024/2025) includes 2-1-1 services, CalFresh outreach, and application assistance. 2-1-1 phone and texting is available in English and Spanish; phone interpretation services are available in 150 languages. A summary of immigrant and farmworker resources referred through 2-1-1 is attached to this item (Attachments A & B).

- On [February 27, 2024](#) < <https://sonoma-county.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=6549555&GUID=3545A29B-B897-433A-> >, the Board approved contracts with [Community Organizations Active in Disasters \(COAD\)](#) and the [Child Parent Institute](#) of up to \$550,000 for the distribution of disaster emergency financial assistance to individuals during declared emergencies, which could benefit immigrant communities, particularly those ineligible to receive other emergency benefits due to Federal guidelines.
- Creative Sonoma's Arts Impact Grant program has funded several organizations that provide services to immigrant communities as part of their mission, including [La Luz Center](#), [Luther Burbank Center for the Arts](#), and the [Imaginists](#).
- The Family Justice Center Sonoma County (FJCSC) serves as a "one-stop" point of entry for victims and their families. The FJCSC has several agreements that enable services for immigrant communities. [Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Santa Rosa](#) provides support services to immigrant survivors of domestic violence, including accessing U-Visas and other federal assistance that is available through the Violence Against Women Act. They make the necessary linkages and referrals to the full range of their social service programs, as appropriate, such as housing, food, immigration, citizenship, shelter, and employment assistance. [Legal Aid of Sonoma County](#) furnishes on-site legal personnel to provide civil legal services to victims of domestic violence, such as restraining and protective orders, and additionally provides linkages to other legal services.

Report on Agricultural Workers & Wildfires Impacts

In July 2024, the Board directed staff to connect with the University of California's Berkeley's Environmental Health Sciences team from the Human Rights Center and the School of Public Health that is working on a survey (Attachments C & D) and report on the impacts on farmworkers working in wildfire evacuation zones. The *Working in Wildfires: Protecting the Health, Safety, Economic Security, and Data Privacy of Agricultural Workers During Wildfire Evacuations* survey examines the health, physical safety, economic security, and data privacy of agricultural workers in Sonoma County working during wildfire evacuations. For this project, U.C. Berkeley conducted a law and policy analysis regarding the County of Sonoma's Ag Pass program ([approved by the Board on September 19, 2023](#) < [conducted key informant interviews with stakeholders such as law enforcement, community groups, and the Board of Supervisors; and administered surveys to over 1,000 agricultural workers in Sonoma County to understand their experiences working in agriculture during wildfires. The project team will hold community forums from 10am-12pm at the Sonoma Works Building \(2227 Capricorn Way\) on Friday October 4, Thursday October 10, and Friday October 18.](https://sonoma-county.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=6354027&GUID=6023ECC2-7CE2-437A-85BE-F8BC506B770C&Options=&Search=>)

Other Counties

Staff conducted a broad review of how other California counties deliver immigrant services. Examples of these

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services are included in Attachments E & F.

Next Steps

Through a grant from the California Governor’s Office of Business and Economic Development, Sonoma County’s Economic Development Collaborative, the County Administrator’s Office, and the Office of Equity will partner with Secure Families Collaborative to create an asset map and gap analysis. County Secure Families Collaborative (SFC) is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization established by the County Board of Supervisors to meet the needs of the immigrant community.

The asset map project will result in a comprehensive map of Sonoma County’s economic development and social service providers, focusing on immigrant communities. The finished asset map will assist County departments, area nonprofits, and service providers in providing more up-to-date information and referrals, avoid duplication of services, and create a stronger and more connected network of care for immigrant community members.

Strategic Plan:

N/A

Racial Equity:

Was this item identified as an opportunity to apply the Racial Equity Toolkit?

Yes

Prior Board Actions:

[May 23, 2017: Sonoma County Immigration Initiative Update <](#)

[https://sonoma-county.granicus.com/MetaViewer.php?view_id=&clip_id=709&meta_id=220690>](https://sonoma-county.granicus.com/MetaViewer.php?view_id=&clip_id=709&meta_id=220690)

FISCAL SUMMARY

Expenditures	FY23-24 Adopted	FY24-25 Projected	FY25-26 Projected
Budgeted Expenses			
Additional Appropriation Requested			
Total Expenditures			
Funding Sources			
General Fund/WA GF			
State/Federal			
Fees/Other			
Use of Fund Balance			
General Fund Contingencies			
Total Sources			

Narrative Explanation of Fiscal Impacts:

N/A

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Staffing Impacts:			
Position Title (Payroll Classification)	Monthly Salary Range (A-I Step)	Additions (Number)	Deletions (Number)

Narrative Explanation of Staffing Impacts (If Required):

N/A

Attachments:

- Attachment A: 2-1-1 immigrant and farmworker resources ENGLISH
- Attachment B: Attachment A: 2-1-1 immigrant and farmworker resources SPANISH
- Attachment C: UC Berkeley Farmworker Survey ENGLISH
- Attachment D: UC Berkeley Farmworker Survey SPANISH
- Attachment E: Other County Immigrant Services ENGLISH
- Attachment F: Other County Immigrant Services SPANISH
- Attachment G: Racial Equity Analysis ENGLISH
- Attachment H: Racial Equity Analysis SPANISH
- Attachment I: Presentation ENGLISH
- Attachment J: Presentation SPANISH

Related Items “On File” with the Clerk of the Board:

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