

# **NATION OF IMMIGRANTS: 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY CHALLENGES**

Summary of roundtable discussions at conference

February 21, 2008

## **1. Identify and prioritize the needs of the immigrant population in the Dallas area.**

- Communication (learn English)
- Access to health care
- Rights and Responsibilities / Protection
- Education for adults and children
- Citizenship procedures/classes for both adults and children (possibly at libraries)
- Change citizenship laws for the elderly (age 60 +)
- Funding
- Engage the immigrant community
- Housing
- Access to social services/legal representation/cultural orientation/parenting skills
- Transportation
- Advocacy
- Day labor centers
- Family must take primary role of educating children

## **2. How can individual citizens and/or organizations help meet these needs?**

- Outreach to community
- Multicultural social services (i.e. HIPPIY, Vickery Meadow Learning Center, AVANCE etc.)
- Spread the word
- Coalition to continue dialogue and take action steps
- Immigrant women to help immigrant women
- Funding – possible small increase in sales tax / grants / individual dollars / gifts in-kind
- Political involvement at the local level

- Education of cultural differences for both cultures
- Write letters to city and representatives / VOTE
- Volunteer for immigrant organizations / pro-bono work
- Organize a push for pro-immigrant legislation / advocacy
- More involvement from faith based organizations
- Centralization of information

**3. If Dallas establishes an Office of Immigrant Affairs, what should be its mission and role (referral, information, other services)?**

**Mission:**

- To create an environment that is supportive of progressive immigration reform

**Role:**

- To be a trusted source of information & updated referrals
- Provide legal clinic
- Meeting place to meet with officials, hold discussions and provide citizenship process
- Network & advocate for policy reform
- Educate community about the culture of the immigrant and educate the community about bringing together different cultures
- Empower the immigrants
- To be a liaison with police, mayor's office, medical and any organization that deals with immigrants
- Provide services for housing and jobs
- Fund the programs that are already working
- Needs to be accessible to public transportation
- Look at Houston's office as a model
- Give economical guidance
- Teach tradition & culture