

IMMIGRANT EMPLOYMENT IN GREATER DUBUQUE

Workforce Challenges in the
Face of COVID-19

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We are grateful to Professor Emilio Castilla for his mentorship and guidance with our survey to employers and interviewing methodology.

"You don't know me... but I wish that you would try, because I am just like your little children."

- Rosewood in *Silent Voices in the Shadows*, by Paula Schwendinger, PBVM

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Executive Summary

This project, undertaken by four MIT graduate students over the early months of 2020 in partnership with the Community Foundation of Greater Dubuque, studies the experiences of immigrant communities in Northeast Iowa and the employers, service providers, officials, and volunteers who help them live better lives in our country of immigrants.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. Assess the needs of immigrant communities in Northeast Iowa and how COVID-19 impacts them.
2. Understand how local employers are connected to immigrant workers
3. Outline strategies to help the Community Foundation, employers, and other community stakeholders build a more inclusive region for the benefit of all residents.

DEMOGRAPHIC CONTEXT

The Northeast Iowa region remains majority white, yet recent Census data suggests that immigrant communities represent a sizable share of the region's population, particularly in Allamakee, Dubuque, and Clinton Counties. The Guatemalan, other Hispanic and Marshallese communities in particular have a notable presence in the region. The share of immigrant residents is rising in Dubuque as it is across the state: over the past decade, an estimated 40% of Iowa's population growth has come from immigration.

METHODOLOGY

To conduct our research, we held 29 semi-structured interviews with immigrants, volunteers, public officials, employers, educators, and service providers in Northeast Iowa. We distributed a short survey to businesses in Northeast Iowa to understand their experience with hiring immigrants, their priorities, and the impacts of COVID-19, collecting 25 responses. We supplemented this research with Census data, existing reports on the region, academic literature, current local news stories, and frequent conversations with Foundation staff.

INTERVIEW FINDINGS

Members of immigrant communities face sizable language barriers

Many Hispanic, Guatemalan, and Marshallese immigrants do not speak English as their first language, and some can speak or read very little English at all.

"We speak Ixil at home, but I want my kids to learn English. My youngest is in school here, but his English is still not good." - Guatemalan resident

Members of the immigrant community feel disconnected from the broader community

A common theme across many of our interviews was a sense that immigrant communities felt disconnected and sometimes unwelcome in Northeast Iowa.

“Dubuquers tend to be uncomfortable when others speak Spanish. The last election cycle worsened things.” - Hispanic resident

Many immigrants struggle with an onerous and strict legal system

The complex and harsh nature of the US immigration system affects the lives of most immigrants in the Greater Dubuque region. Many immigrants do not qualify for federal benefits like unemployment insurance, and family members often have different legal statuses, which increases social and financial instability.

“Students who are waiting for work authorization are often in situations where they technically cannot work, but need money to pay rent. It’s a catch-22 situation and many end up working anyway.” - Service provider

Still, many immigrants express hope

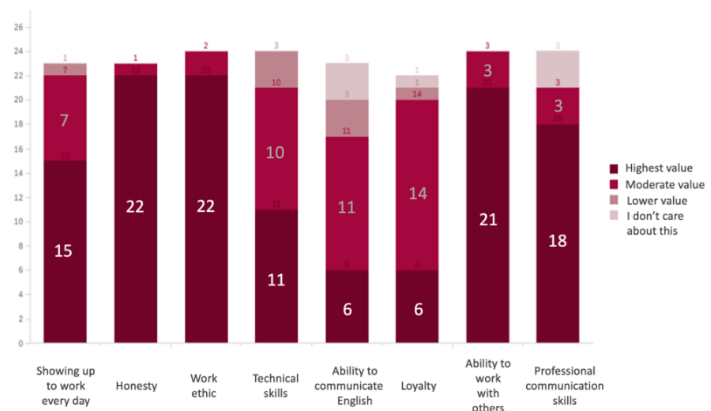
Despite our focus on challenges in the labor market and the COVID-19 pandemic, we heard inspiring stories from immigrants and others, expressing a sense of hope for a better future.

“I’ve enjoyed living in Dubuque. Our kids are here, attending school, and I’m taking a certificate course at Northeast Iowa Community College.” - Marshallese resident

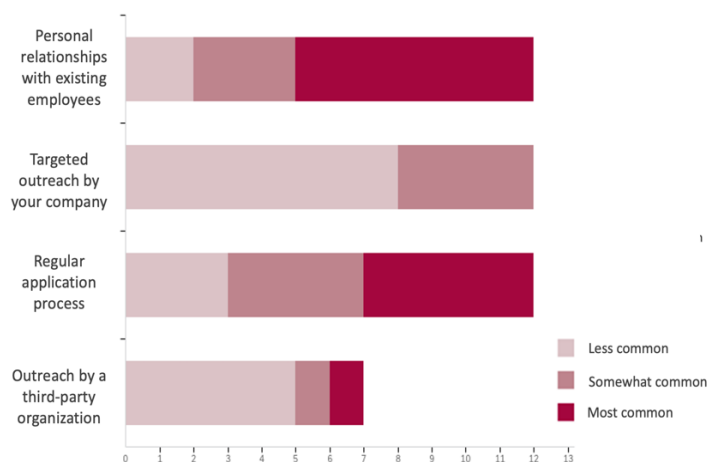
EMPLOYER SURVEY FINDINGS

Surveyed businesses value “essential” skills more than technical or language skills. Nearly all respondents named attributes like honesty, work ethic, the ability to work well with others, and professional communications skills as of “highest value.” Meanwhile, fewer than one in four listed the ability to communicate in English as a high priority, and only about half stated that technical skills were a high priority.

What attributes do you value most in your workers?



How are employees from immigrant communities commonly hired at your company?



Surveyed businesses tend to hire immigrants through personal relationships and regular application processes, rather than proactive outreach. 59% of businesses reported that they most commonly hired immigrant workers through personal relationships with existing employees. 42% of businesses reported that immigrant workers were commonly hired through regular application processes. Meanwhile, no businesses reported that they primarily hired immigrant workers through proactive outreach on their part, and just one noted that third-party organizations regularly assist with their hiring process for immigrant workers.

Surveyed businesses report uncertainty about how to hire immigrant workers and stated that help with navigating legal and cultural barriers would make them feel more comfortable doing so. Half of businesses surveyed expressed at least some uncertainty about hiring immigrants. As the leader of one large business in the hospitality industry in Dubuque observed: “[We’d feel more comfortable with] administrative support in hiring visa workers. We pursued this a couple times and got stuck in the red tape.” Another business reported that they would value “assistance from local community leaders with recruiting, interviewing, on-boarding, and training, especially if language barriers exist.”

How comfortable are you in your knowledge of how to hire immigrant workers?



These findings suggest that when job openings are available, opportunities exist to match immigrant workers with employers through targeted outreach and employer-facing services.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Drawing on our interviews and research, we identified seven categories of services that immigrants in Northeast Iowa rely on. For each, we highlighted local service providers and persistent challenges. The service categories are:

- ❖ Education and Information
- ❖ Essential Services (Shelter and Food)
- ❖ Transportation
- ❖ Childcare
- ❖ Healthcare
- ❖ Employment
- ❖ Immigration and Legal Service

RECOMMENDATIONS

COVID-19 and the current economic downturn threatens all residents in the region, but it also reveals the failures of existing economic and social systems to meet the needs of immigrants and other vulnerable residents. Our recommendations offer strategies the Foundation and its partners could pursue to create a more connected, more resilient, and more inclusive region.

- ❖ **Serve as an aggregator for immigrant support services.**
 - *Short-term goal:* the Foundation publishes a list of existing immigrant service providers in the region and facilitates connections to meet COVID-related needs.
 - *Long-term goal:* the Foundation funds a new “immigrant services information center” to connect existing service providers, share information, formalize immigrant volunteer networks, and elevate young immigrant leaders.
- ❖ **Support digital transitions for immigrant families, volunteers, and service providers.**
 - *Short-term goal:* the Foundation identifies gaps in digital access among volunteers and immigrant families, matching families with existing resources.
 - *Long-term goal:* the Foundation and partner organizations set a goal of universal broadband subscription for families across the region.
- ❖ **Develop a proactive immigrant employment strategy** in partnership with businesses, workforce and economic development officials, and community leaders.
 - *Short-term goal:* the Foundation arranges peer-to-peer conversations between business leaders and uses case studies to elevate local businesses that successfully employ immigrant workers.
 - *Long-term goal:* the Foundation and partners build a network of ‘community connectors’ who are trained to understand existing labor market needs and proactively facilitate employment opportunities.
- ❖ **Shift mindsets of white Dubuque residents about immigrant communities through inclusive messages and outreach.**
 - *Short-term goal:* the Foundation continues to signal to donors, funders, grantees, staff, and the broader community that immigrants are essential to the continued vitality of the Dubuque region.
 - *Long-term goal:* the Foundation elevates immigrant stories and facilitates human connections through events, stories, videos, and more.

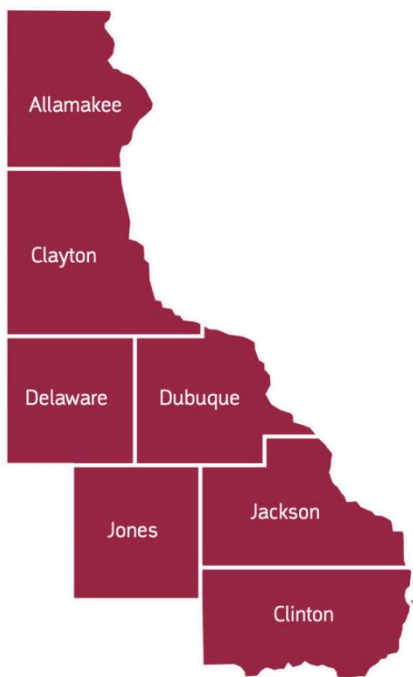
We also created stand-alone deliverables, designed to be accessible to external audiences, to support the goal of a more connected, resilient, and inclusive Dubuque. These are:

- ❖ *Immigrant Archetypes:* fictionalized life stories of Mexican, Guatemalan, Marshallese, and other foreign-born residents that are meant to help Dubuquers understand the region’s diverse immigrant communities.
- ❖ *Employer “How-to” guide:* a guide to help Dubuque area employers hire and successfully employ immigrant workers.

- ❖ *Bold Leadership toolkit*: a toolkit to help organizations train their staff and affiliates to become better allies for their immigrant neighbors.

Community Host Background

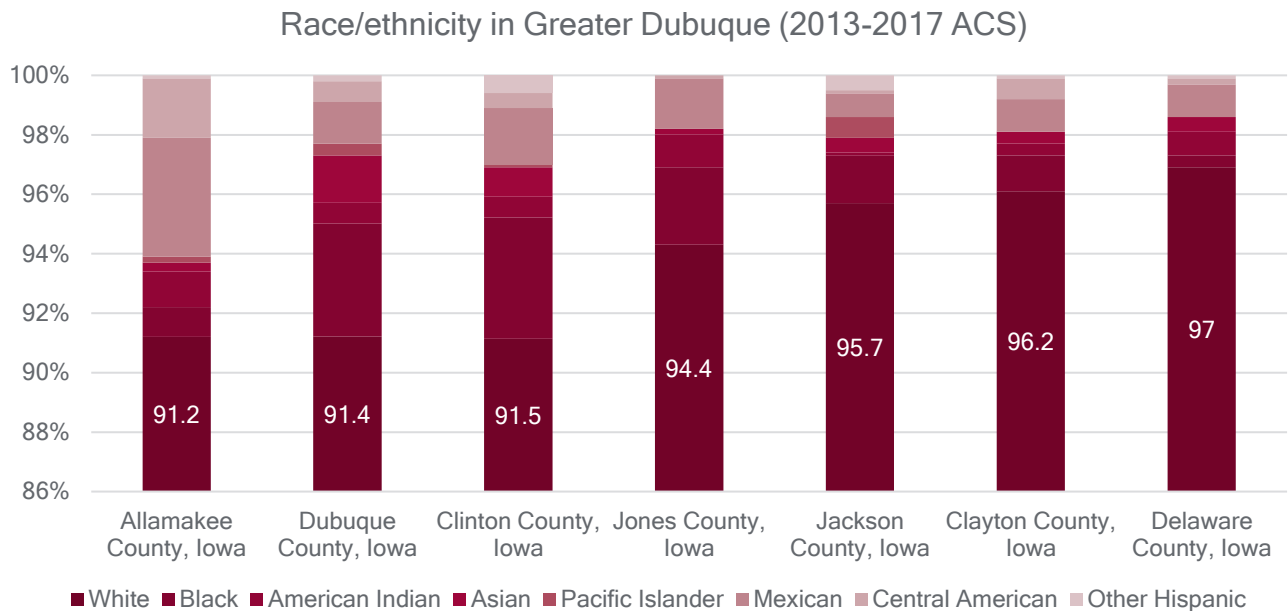
This report and research is undertaken in partnership with the Community Foundation of Greater Dubuque (CFGD), which provides grants and other services to seven counties in Northeast Iowa, including Dubuque, Allamakee, Clayton, Clinton, Delaware, Jackson, and Jones. Founded in 2002, the Foundation oversees approximately \$84 million in total assets and offers approximately \$8 million per year to individuals and nonprofit organizations across the seven-county region. As a grantor, convener, and non-partisan entity whose mission is to support a healthy and inclusive region, the Foundation has high credibility and strong ties within Dubuque and surrounding counties. Its staff, including Alex Baum, Nancy Van Milligan, and Paul Duster have been exceptionally helpful throughout this project, providing insight into the region, arranging interviews, distributing an employer survey, and offering their perspectives.



One of the CFGD's newest efforts is to create a comprehensive needs assessment of immigrant populations in Northeast Iowa. The region, which has historically been overwhelmingly white, is rapidly diversifying in recent decades thanks to the growth of Mexican, Guatemalan, Marshallese, and other immigrant communities. The Foundation seeks to understand immigrant communities' experiences in Greater Dubuque and the barriers that hold them back from greater prosperity. It has asked our team to conduct deep-dive research into one subset of this needs assessment: immigrant communities' experiences in the labor market. Given the COVID-19 spread across the country in the months following our initial engagement, our team decided to evaluate immigrant workforce challenges and identify recommendations that were appropriate in the context of the coronavirus pandemic.

Local, Regional and National Context

IMMIGRATION



2013-2017 American Community Survey, US Census

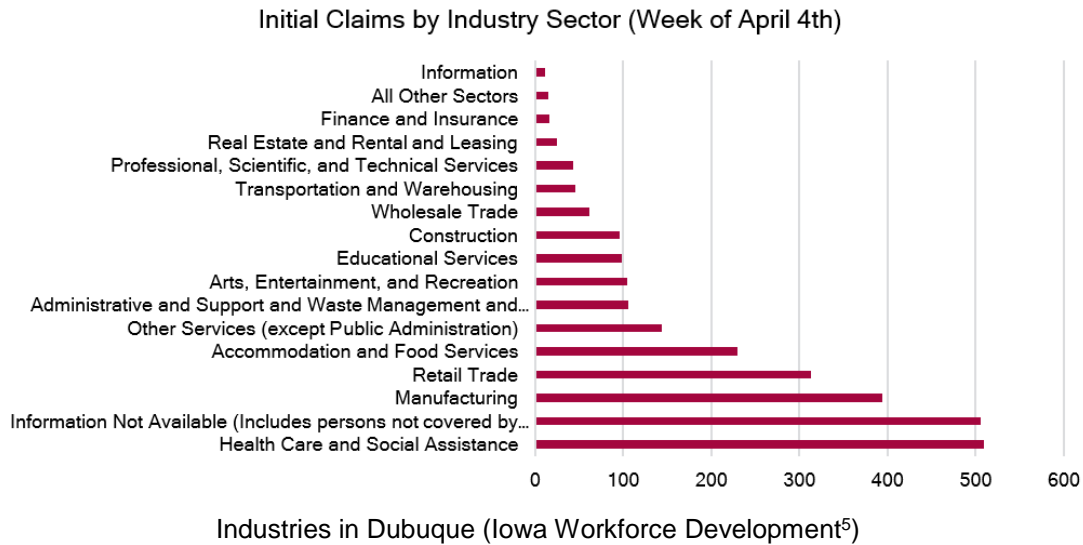
While white residents constitute an overwhelming majority in all counties in Northeast Iowa, Census data affirms that the region is home to substantial immigrant communities, particularly in the counties of Dubuque, Allamakee, and Clinton.¹ Immigrants are a growing population across the state: an estimated 40% of Iowa's population growth has come from immigration over the past decade.² Immigrant communities include Latinx, Marshallese, indigenous Guatemalan, and more. Poverty in Dubuque County is substantially higher for all minorities: 60% of black residents are poor, as are 32% of Hispanics and 17% Asian residents³.

¹ Research finds that immigrant communities are among the most likely demographic groups to be undercounted in census counts due to a variety of factors. Accordingly, these numbers should be seen as lower bounds of the region's immigrant populations.

² EMBARC Iowa, Child Care & Workforce Needs Assessment of the Refugee Community in Waterloo, 2018

³ Greater Dubuque Development Corporation, 2018 Economic Indicators Report

<https://www.greaterdubuque.org/media/userfiles/subsite_90/files/Resources/Economic%20Indicators%20Report_2018_012019.pdf>



We are witnessing economic decline real time through the staggering unemployment numbers. The week of March 21st, almost 41,000 workers in Iowa filed unemployment claims. Unemployment continued to grow to 260,700 claims between March 21 and April 25⁶. Nationwide, 30.3 million Americans have filed for unemployment claims over these six weeks⁷. President of the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis predicts the unemployment rate to reach 30% in the second quarter, posing concern for immigrant workers who already were having difficulty accessing well-paying jobs⁸. This unexpected event has placed vulnerable populations in even more stress amidst a labor market harder to penetrate.

⁵ https://www.iowalmi.gov/unemployment-insurance-statistics?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery

⁶ <https://data.iowa.gov/Economic-Statistics/Iowa-Unemployment-Insurance-Claims-Weekly-/njph-rx66>

⁷ <https://www.cnn.com/2020/04/30/economy/unemployment-benefits-coronavirus/index.html>

⁸ <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2020-03-22/fed-s-bullard-says-u-s-jobless-rate-may-soar-to-30-in-2q>

Problem Statement & Project Scope

At the beginning of this project, our team planned to conduct in-person research in Dubuque over the course of 12 days to meet with immigrant communities and local businesses, assess barriers to employment, and identify actions that the CFGD, immigrant communities, business owners, and other local stakeholders could take to support a more inclusive labor market. Our main hypothesis derived from the basis that in a region with a 2-3% unemployment rate, immigrant communities experienced unemployment rates of up to 7%. We wanted to understand why immigrant communities faced higher unemployment rates when many businesses were growing and desperately in need of workers.

Concerns about COVID-19 in early March led our institution to cancel our research trip, and we prepared to conduct interviews remotely. Then, two days into our virtual research phase, COVID-19 was designated a global pandemic and we came to understand that our initial hypothesis was obsolete. Over a series of discussions amongst ourselves and with the Foundation, our team chose to pivot and reframe our project scope substantially.

In the context of a global pandemic and an unprecedented national public health and economic crisis, we decided to look at the immediate effects of COVID-19 on employment and identify the medium and long-term needs of the immigrant communities of the Greater Dubuque region. We sought to understand how this region could recover from the contemporary economic crisis in an inclusive way.

Our revised project's intended scope is threefold:

1. **Identify the needs of immigrant populations, specifically as they relate to the impact of COVID-19 on their livelihoods.** These particularly vulnerable groups run the risk of being overlooked, and the intent of this project is to put them on the radar of local officials and service providers to address immediate and medium-term economic and health risks.
2. **Understand how immigrants are connected to local employers and the community.** Immigrant communities in Dubuque have distinct ways of finding jobs, accessing services, and sharing information. Understanding these patterns is crucial to create more integrative mid-term and long-term workforce solutions.
3. **Offer a framework to help the Community Foundation, employers, and other community stakeholders build a more inclusive regional economy for the benefit of all residents.** This could include descriptions of the risks and benefits of hiring employees from immigrant communities, recommendations for new initiatives for bold community leadership, and more.

Methodology

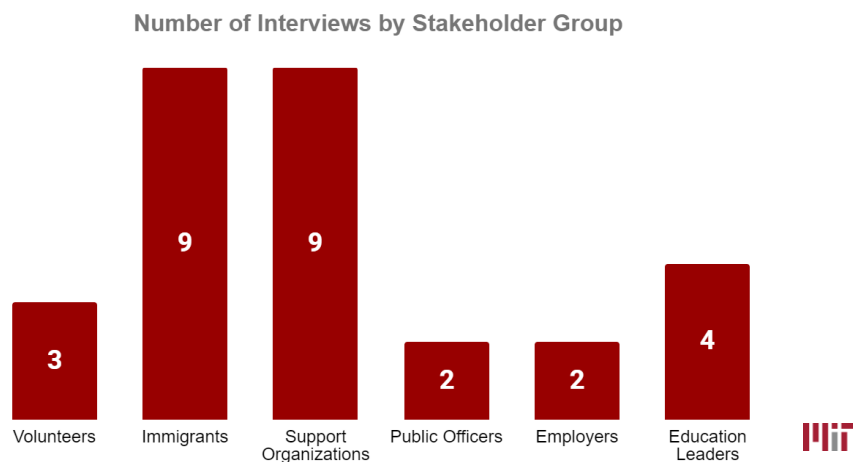
As our team was unable to travel to Dubuque to conduct in-person interviews, we gathered information through a customized Employer Survey and conducted interviews virtually. Our methodology is as follows:

- ❖ We conducted 29 semi-structured **Stakeholder Interviews** over Zoom and phone with service providers (including support organizations, public officers and education leaders), volunteers, and immigrant workers. All interviews have been kept anonymous and the MIT team has taken steps to ensure that no individual's statements can be attributed to them or their organization. The MIT team created interview guides and led all interviews, with one member of the CFGD team present for most interviews. See Appendix A for Interview Protocols and Appendix B for Interview Takeaways.
- ❖ We created an **Employer Survey** in consultation with professors at MIT Sloan with the goal of understanding local employers' hiring preferences, experience with hiring immigrants, and the expected impact of COVID-19, collecting 25 responses. All respondents were given the option to not provide their name or contact information and all respondents, including those that provided their information, have been kept anonymous. The survey was distributed via email by the CFGD, with assistance from the foundation's partners including the Greater Dubuque Development Corporation.
- ❖ **Additional Research** supplemented interview findings and employer survey results. This included public demographic data, existing reports, academic research, media productions on the region, local news sources such as the Dubuque Telegraph-Herald, and frequent conversations with Foundation staff.

Findings

Interviews

In order to get a qualitative understanding of how different stakeholder groups perceive immigrants in the context of employment, we conducted a series of interviews during the month of March 2020. In total, we conducted 29 interviews across the following groups:



Our interviews were conducted in English and in Spanish over Zoom and over the phone, and all names and affiliations have been kept confidential. The interviews focused on the interviewees' backgrounds, their stories, their work in Dubuque, and the challenges faced by immigrant communities in the Greater Dubuque area. While our interviews surfaced a number of themes, which are the basis of the ensuing Immigrant Needs Assessment, recommendations, and deliverables, we have highlighted the key themes found throughout our discussions below:

Members of immigrant communities face sizable language barriers

A common theme across interviews with employers, service providers, and immigrants was the presence and impact of a language barrier. Employers reported difficulty in hiring workers with limited ability to communicate in English, a barrier they were sometimes able to overcome by hiring bilingual managers. Many service providers provide English courses or translation support for members of the immigrant community. Key volunteers or community leaders reported that one of their main roles is to serve as translator at medical or immigration appointments. Several immigrants that we spoke to do not speak English and were unaware of how they could take English language classes. The Greater Dubuque is home to many different

"I would love to learn English but have no information on how to do that."
 - Guatemalan immigrant

immigrant communities--for example, families of students attending the Dubuque Community School District speak over 16 languages. As such, language instruction or finding translators can be complicated and require a lot of time and resources.

Members of the immigrant community feel disconnected from the broader community

A common theme across many of our interviews was a sense that immigrant communities were disconnected from the broader Northeast Iowa community. They felt alienated and unwelcome and in some cases were literally disconnected from those outside their families or tight-knit communities due to a lack of internet and transportation access. Several interviews suggested that immigrant students felt overlooked in the classroom and therefore are less engaged. Some students do not feel welcome in Dubuque and report that it does not quite feel like home. For adults, alienation often comes in the form of a language barrier which makes it difficult to interact with those outside of their community and in some cases elicits fear of how they will be perceived.

"We have a difficult time getting [immigrants] out to do anything because of fear. We've heard of people who have been physically assaulted because of their broken English."

- Support Organization

Some of our interviewees reported facing discrimination when speaking their native language in public. Members of the community who worked with non-immigrant coworkers also reported barriers between themselves and their coworkers, including in how they perceived the risks associated with the COVID-19 pandemic.

Many immigrants struggle with an onerous and strict legal system

The complex and harsh nature of the US immigration system pervaded every conversation we had. The realities of this system impact nearly every aspect of the lives of immigrants in the Greater Dubuque region. Many families are composed of individuals with different immigration statuses or work authorizations, leading to anxiety on whether families can stay together or have enough people working to support the family. We heard about several families that have been separated and are unsure whether they will ever be united or when they will next be able to speak to a loved one.

"Students who are waiting for work authorization are often in situations where they technically cannot work, but need money to pay rent. It's a catch-22 situation and many end up working anyway"

- Support Organization

Many refugee youth suffer from the slow nature of the system, sometimes waiting for months for work authorization without any other means of supporting themselves. This difficulty was echoed by community service providers with resources for immigration and related support. Volunteers provide transportation to immigration appointments in Omaha or Chicago, take in members of families that have been separated, and advocate on their behalf in immigration

cases. For employers, the complex web of immigration statuses and work authorization is difficult to navigate, and in many cases is a key deterring factor in hiring members of immigrant communities.

Still, many immigrants express hope

Despite our interviews focusing on challenges in the labor market and related to COVID-19, we heard countless inspiring stories of people, young and old, with a profound sense of hope for a better future. We heard stories about families escaping war or communities with few opportunities, filled with hope for what living in the United States and the Dubuque region would mean for them and their families. Many aspired to build more skills and find better employment. Others were uninterested in career growth, and instead focused on earning money to support their families in the Dubuque area or back home. Despite reporting feelings of alienation and recounting many difficulties with their current situation, they expressed a desire to work hard to better their situation, their families position, and the state of their community. They expressed a belief in the American dream and in many ways embodied the true American spirit. We also heard from countless service providers that are invested in the success of immigrant communities and are advocating for their wellbeing.

*"I hope that my kids can get an education here, and go to college if they choose to." -
Guatemalan resident*

*"I've enjoyed living in Dubuque. Our kids are here, attending school, and I'm taking a
certificate course at Northeast Iowa Community College." - Marshallese resident*

*"In recent years, the city has been welcoming to Latino immigrants... the Catholic Church
has been placing a lot of emphasis on Latinos, which is something I've been really happy to
see." - Hispanic resident*

Employer Survey

To gain additional perspective into how COVID-19 is affecting businesses and immigrant workers in Dubuque and surrounding counties, we created a short survey for local businesses. The Community Foundation emailed the survey to approximately 150 businesses located in Northeast Iowa in late March and early April, while other organizations, including the Greater Dubuque Development Corporation, distributed the survey to their members through newsletters and email outreach. By the time the survey closed on April 8, we received responses from 25 businesses. Due to the nature of our outreach and the responses we received, this survey is not representative of businesses in the region. Yet we believe that these responses do shed light on challenges and opportunities related to businesses and immigrant workers in the region. Here are a few summary statistics about the sample, followed by our key findings.

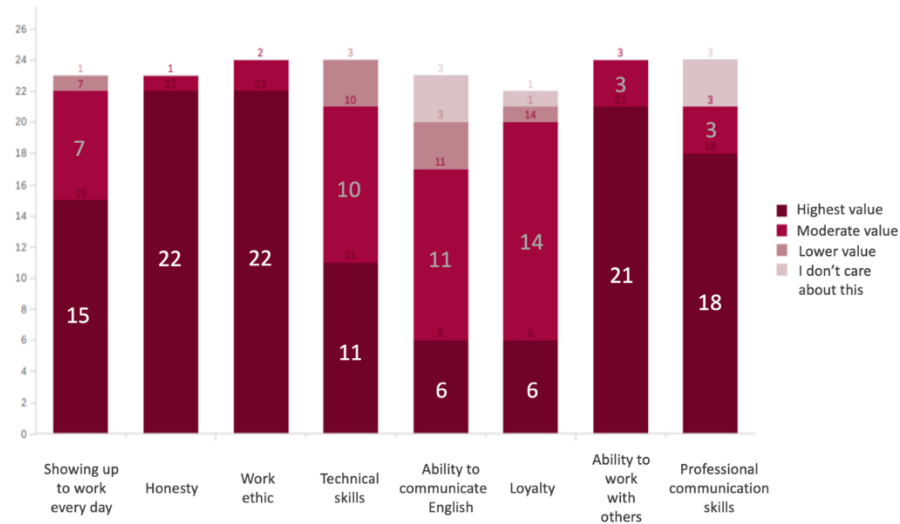
Summary statistics

- ❖ 25 businesses responded
- ❖ 68% (17 of 25) of businesses employed more than 100 workers
- ❖ 88% of businesses had at least one office located in Dubuque County
- ❖ The most common industries represented were manufacturing (4 respondents, or 16%), finance and insurance (16%), education (16%), health care (8%), and information technology (8%)
- ❖ 12 of 25 businesses (48%) reported that they currently employed immigrant workers

Key findings

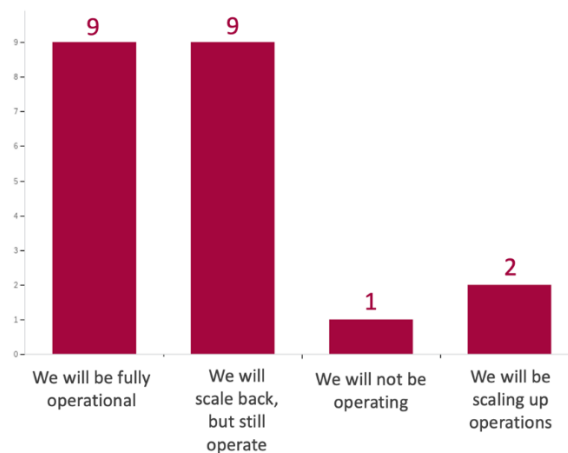
Surveyed employers value “essential” (or “soft”) skills in their employees more than technical or language skills. Nearly all respondents named attributes like honesty, work ethic, the ability to work well with others, and professional communications skills as of “highest value.” Meanwhile, fewer than one in four listed the ability to communicate in English as a high priority, and only about half stated that technical skills were a high priority.

What attributes do you value most in your workers?



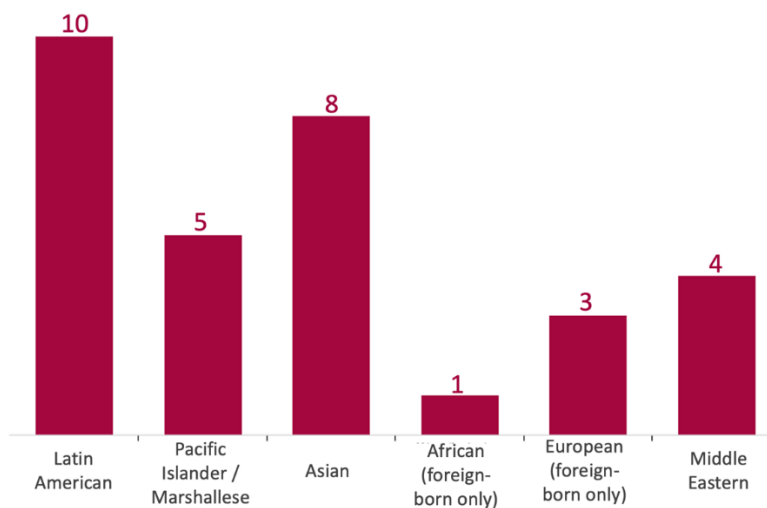
Surveyed businesses expressed optimism that they would remain operational despite COVID-19. As of early April, 36% of businesses expected that they would remain fully operational in the months to come, and another 36% expected that they will scale back, but remain open. Just one business reported that it will shut down fully, while two reported that they will be scaling up operations.

How do you expect COVID-19 to affect your business operations over the next several months?



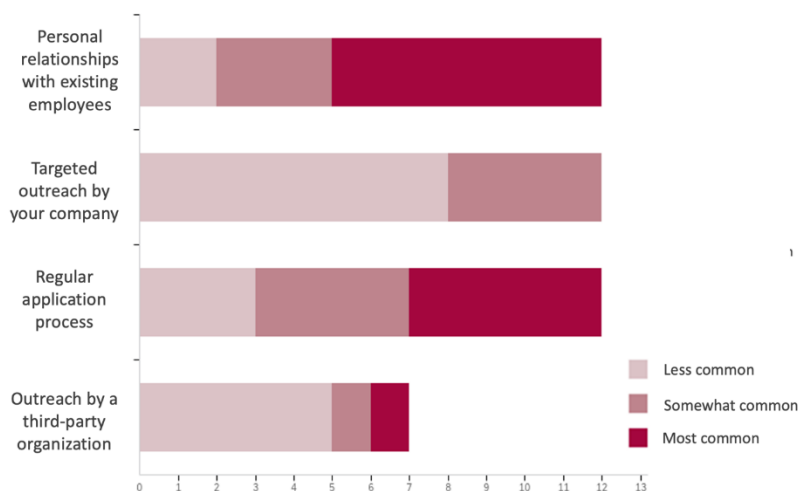
Businesses that currently employ immigrant workers in Dubuque represent a range of sectors. While we heard in interviews that Hispanic and Marshallese workers primarily work in manufacturing, food production, and hospitality, businesses in other sectors, including finance & insurance, construction, and arts & culture also reported that they employed people from these communities. Among businesses that employ immigrants in our sample, 75% employ Latin American immigrants, 67% employ Asian immigrants, and 42% employ Marshallese immigrants.

Which, if any, of the following immigrant groups are represented among your employees? Select all that apply.



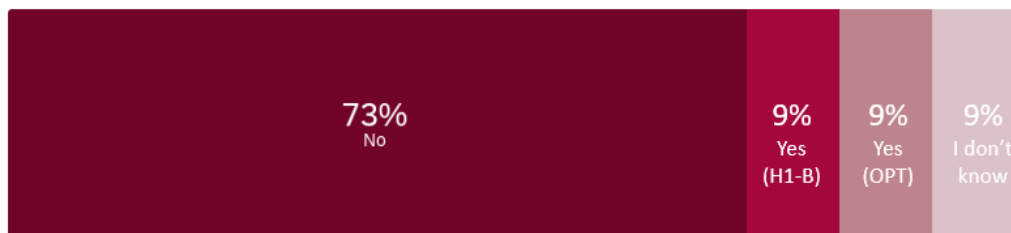
Surveyed businesses tend to hire immigrants through personal relationships and regular application processes, rather than proactive outreach. 59% of businesses reported that they most commonly hired immigrant workers through personal relationships with existing employees. 42% of businesses reported that immigrant workers were commonly hired through regular application processes. Meanwhile, no businesses reported that proactive outreach on their part was their primary way of hiring immigrant workers, and just one - a large food manufacturer in Dubuque County - noted that third-party organizations regularly assist with their hiring process for immigrant workers.

How are employees from immigrant communities commonly hired at your company?



Most surveyed businesses have not hired immigrant workers on work visas. Just 18% of businesses that employ immigrants (2 of 12) report that they have hired immigrants on visas: one through a H1-B visa, intended for highly educated workers, and another through an Optional Practical Training (OPT) visa, which enables foreign-born college graduates to work in their field of study for 12 months after graduation. The remaining 82% of businesses that employ immigrants have not actively helped immigrant workers attain work visas.

Have you ever hired an immigrant on a work visa?



A majority of surveyed businesses remain uncertain about how to hire immigrant workers. 48% of businesses report they are “somewhat comfortable” in their knowledge of how to hire immigrant workers, and another 9% report that they are “not at all comfortable”. The remaining 44% report that they are “very comfortable” in their knowledge of hiring immigrant workers.

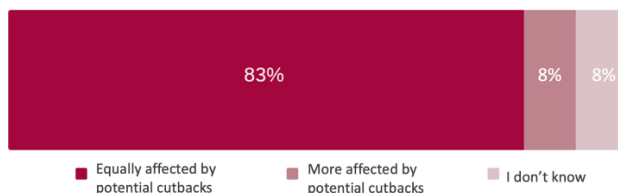
How comfortable are you in your knowledge of how to hire immigrant workers?



Surveyed businesses stated that help with navigating legal and cultural barriers would make them feel more comfortable hiring immigrants in the future. As the leader of one large business in the hospitality industry in Dubuque observed: “[We’d feel more comfortable with] administrative support in hiring visa workers. We pursued this a couple times and got stuck in the red tape.” Another business reported that they would value “assistance from local community leaders with recruiting, interviewing, on-boarding, and training, especially if language barriers exist.” At least one business that employed Marshallese immigrants highlighted the value that immigrants themselves can provide with overcoming language barriers, noting “I use my employees as interpreter[s].”

Surveyed businesses report that their immigrant workers would be equally affected by potential cutbacks as their non-immigrant workers. Just one company reported that their immigrant workers would be more likely to be affected than non-immigrant workers. This suggests that business leaders do not believe that immigrant workers take on organizational responsibilities that are substantially different than non-immigrant workers.

Compared to non-immigrant workers in your company, are your immigrant workers:



Surveyed businesses that employ immigrant workers appear to be broadly similar to businesses that don't employ immigrants. The 12 businesses that employ immigrant workers ("immigrant employers") have a similar range of company sizes as the businesses that do not ("non-immigrant employers"); a plurality of each group employs between 100 and 500 workers.

	Employers who hire immigrants	Employers who do not hire immigrants
Fewer than 10	8%	10%
10 to 50	0%	20%
50 to 100	17%	0%
100 to 500	42%	50%
More than 500	33%	20%
Total	100%	100%

Most immigrant employers and non-immigrant employers believe that they will either remain fully operational or scale back, but still operate, in the months ahead. Only a few businesses in either group expect to close entirely or scale up operations.

	Employers who hire immigrants	Employers who do not hire immigrants
Don't know	8%	10%
We will be fully operational	33%	40%
We will be scaling up operations	8%	10%
We will not be operating	0%	10%
We will scale back, but still operate	50%	30%
Total	100%	100%

Immigrant employers and non-immigrant employers also anticipate taking similar steps in response to COVID-19 in the months ahead. Majorities of both groups expect to ask employees to work remotely and do not expect to lay off employees, and approximately half of each group do not expect to cut back employees' hours (for detailed figures, see the appendix).

It's important to note that this survey is not representative of businesses in the Dubuque area. The companies that responded are disproportionately large in size; they represent many knowledge-intensive sectors like education, information technology, finance and insurance, and health care, which tend to be less accessible to workers without post-high school credentials; they express optimism that they are at least somewhat insulated from the worst of the current economic downturn. Not reflected in these responses are the perspectives of hundreds of managers of restaurants, bars, hotels, cafés, retailers, and other businesses across Northeast Iowa that have already been forced to close due to state and local orders.

One interpretation of this survey is that it represents what could be considered “aspirational” sectors for immigrant workers, as the sectors represented here are likely to provide more stable and higher-paying jobs than ones in cleaning services or the restaurant industry, for example. Our survey indicates that many of these sectors already hire immigrants, and that there are opportunities to increase immigrant workers' access to these sectors.

Collectively, this survey suggests that employers in Dubuque prioritize “essential” skills over technical or language skills. It appears that employers are not currently investing significant resources in finding immigrant workers, and are not receiving much assistance from third-party organizations. Employers have significant uncertainties about how to hire immigrants, especially with regard to work visas and immigrant workers' legal statuses. And perhaps most importantly, this survey finds that businesses that employ immigrants do not seem to be substantially different from ones that do not employ immigrants. This suggests that with the right guidance and resources, companies that currently do not employ immigrants would be well suited to do so when the opportunity arises.

Immigrant Community Needs Assessment

To better understand the current status and needs of the Greater Dubuque area's immigrant community we mapped out the key service areas, the current services available, and the challenges we heard through our interviews and survey. These are divided into seven categories: Education and Information, Essential Services (Shelter and Food), Transportation, Childcare, Healthcare, Employment, and Immigration and Legal Services. This list is by no means exhaustive, and is meant to be the starting point for further discussions and explorations into how organizations in the region can better support these communities.

EDUCATION AND INFORMATION

Education access is vital for immigrant communities to succeed in the labor market and feel integrated with the broader Dubuque community. Primary and secondary education provide young immigrants or children of immigrants with ESL programming, connections to other youth, and the potential for a high school and college degree, with the latter two leading to markedly higher incomes. Local colleges and universities provide full-time or part-time programming and credentialing that provide specialized training that can further increase income. English language classes increase immigrant communities' comfort with English, increasing the chances of getting a job and forming bonds with other Dubuquers.

The Greater Dubuque area has a strong educational system at the primary, secondary, and collegiate levels. The Dubuque Community School District employs nearly 1,800 people across 19 schools and the Western Dubuque Community School serves 90 ESL students across 5 schools⁹ ¹⁰. The Dubuque Community School District has embarked on several initiatives to increase equity and inclusion efforts in their schools, including providing free breakfast and lunches and computer and internet access to disadvantaged students during the COVID-19 crisis. DPS and telecom providers also offer discounted broadband subscriptions to students and FCC's Lifeline program offers discounted phone and internet services to eligible families already receiving other federal benefits¹¹ (families need to be eligible for federal benefits programs like Food Stamps, so some immigrant families may not qualify). The Dubuque area is also home to 12 colleges, community and technical schools, and seminaries. These colleges, which attract students from across the country and the world, increase the number of immigrants in the community, though most students from outside the community do not settle in the Greater Dubuque area.

Several colleges, including the Northeast Iowa Community College (NICC), provide English language classes to immigrants in the community. NICC has been experimenting with teaching Spanish to employers and managers, conducting classes at job sites as opposed to

⁹ <https://www.dbqschools.org/>

¹⁰ <http://www.wdbqschools.org/EnglishLanguageLearners1.aspx>

¹¹ <https://www.fcc.gov/consumers/guides/lifeline-support-affordable-communications>

classrooms, and providing childcare on-site for adult learners. Immigrant communities have additional sources of educational support through community providers such as the Presentation Lantern Center. The Presentation Lantern Center provides immigrants with English language tutoring and citizenship classes, while also providing a cultural meeting space and employment assistance.

Despite the strong educational system and existence of valuable resources and dedicated volunteers, several challenges exist in immigrant-community-focused educational services:

- ❖ **Persistent language barriers:** Language barriers remain a key issue for many immigrant communities. Recent immigrants are often unaware of the English language classes or do not have the opportunity to access services. Many immigrants may also be wary of attending language classes for fear of being targeted by immigration authorities. While many businesses have pivoted to hiring bilingual managers, the diverse array of languages spoken by Dubuque's immigrant communities (e.g., Marshallese, Spanish, Ixil, etc.) make this difficult. The lack of English skills creates barriers to employment, with employers seeking employees with whom they can communicate, and greater integration with the community. Many immigrants expressed discomfort with going to the grocery store or public places given their difficulty with English. In the COVID-19 crisis this has created further complexities for the City of Dubuque in ensuring that all immigrant communities can access up to date information on safety guidelines in their respective languages.
- ❖ **Competing priorities:** While education is commonly thought of as a route to increased earnings and success, building skills and gaining credentials takes significant investment of time, which immigrants may not have. Many individuals in the immigrant community have expressed their focus on immediate needs, such as how they will feed their kids and families. As such, while focusing on improving their English or developing new skills may be helpful to them, many immigrants do not have the luxury of focusing on these things. This extends beyond adults contemplating attending night school or weekend training courses to youth enrolled in middle and high school. Many immigrant youth balance school with part or full-time jobs, either to send money to relatives back home, supplement their family's income, or support themselves and their family. This leads some youth to diminish their focus on school work or drop out altogether.
- ❖ **Lack of adequate support:** Immigrant youth and community members often lack the support they require to succeed in the education system. Adults are lacking in flexible programming that would allow them to balance their existing work commitments with learning. Resources are limited to help highly educated immigrants translate their foreign degrees and certifications to domestic contexts. Immigrant youth are often asked to make impossible choices between education and supporting their families, all while feeling alienated in the classroom. Many youth, especially from the Marshallese Islands and Guatemala, report not being motivated in the classroom because the teachers and administration are not attuned to their needs. Many report that Dubuque does not feel

like home, a demotivating factor for developing English language skills or pursuing further education.

- ❖ **Lack of connectivity:** Many immigrant families in the Dubuque area have limited access to computers or broadband internet. Smartphones are often the only digital links with the outside world. This poses challenges to accessing educational resources, which are increasingly reliant on an internet connection. This issue is particularly salient during the COVID-19 crisis where all Dubuque area schools have been closed and instruction has moved online. While Dubuque Public Schools has recently begun providing students with laptops and mobile connections, the underlying reality is that many immigrant families remain disconnected from the online world.

ESSENTIAL SERVICES (SHELTER AND FOOD)

Traveling to a new environment with varying levels of family or economical support leads to immediate and in many cases long-lasting challenges in accessing safe and affordable shelter and food. Families and individuals are particularly vulnerable when they first arrive in the area, as they begin searching for employment and are unfamiliar with the resources and community. Over time, many members of the community are able to navigate the system and secure adequate housing, in some cases banding together with other individuals or families to rent larger houses. However, these arrangements are often precarious and can be put at risk if one of the adults loses her job or has trouble with immigration authorities. This precariousness has been highlighted by the COVID-19 crisis, with many individuals laid off or working reduced hours.

In terms of housing and shelter, immigrants have several services they can leverage. Many come to Dubuque because they already have family or friends in the area and therefore stay with them upon arrival. Community volunteers play a key role in finding housing and helping connect individuals to other families that can help. Organizations such as Catholic Charities offer affordable housing to low-income families in the Dubuque, Waterloo, and Maquoketa areas, while Resources Unite has been providing rental assistance to families during the COVID-19 crisis¹². The Dubuque area is also home to several homeless shelters that provide temporary or longer-term housing to the homeless population, while the various Sisters Orders in the region have also provided housing to immigrant families in the past¹³. In the longer term, individuals tend to rely on other members of their community or extended family to pay for housing.

Like housing, food security is an important issue for families that extends beyond initial arrival to the Greater Dubuque area. Local charities and organizations, including homeless shelters provide food assistance, and in some cases food pantry access, on a periodic basis. Several

¹² <https://catholiccharitiesdubuque.org/affordable-housing>

¹³ <https://www.homelessshelterdirectory.org/cgi-bin/id/city.cgi?city=Dubuque&state=IA>

volunteers play a key role in providing food to families in need and other families receive food through the school systems. Unfortunately, the COVID-19 crisis has highlighted the vulnerabilities of some families' food access, with some volunteers no longer able to provide the same assistance they could before the crisis.

With the major labor market disruptions caused by the COVID-19 crisis, food security and the paying rent have become key concerns of immigrant communities and the organizations that support them. Additional challenges include:

- ❖ **Overcrowding:** Many individuals and families in the immigrant community live with extended family or other community members. While there are many benefits to living in extended nuclear families, including childcare assistance, this can lead to many people and families living in small apartments, an issue that has become more acute with the social distancing guidelines of the COVID-19 crisis. While some of this is driven by the initial situation of new families and individuals arriving in the Dubuque area, many members of the community rely on such arrangements for extended periods of time. For many, this is because area rent and utilities are too expensive based on their income. This vulnerability is underscored by the crisis many families or living units face when one or more adults in the household are unauthorized or otherwise unable to work.
- ❖ **Food insecurity:** Though less common and pressing, even before the COVID-19 crisis, food security was a concern for some members of immigrant communities. Given uncertainty around work authorization and persistent language barriers, many individuals are forced to rely on charitable organizations or area volunteers for food assistance. Many of these volunteers and organizations have stepped up food assistance during the COVID-19 crisis.
- ❖ **Fear in enrolling for social safety net programs:** While many public programs are out of reach for undocumented workers, many other members of the immigrant community with work authorization fear enrolling in public assistance programs such as SNAP, TANF, or public housing. On February 24, 2020, the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services enacted the Public Charge Grounds final rule which deems immigrants in need of public assistance inadmissible for immigration¹⁴. As such, immigrants who find themselves in precarious situations are discouraged from applying to services for which they qualify as it may impact their future immigration status.

¹⁴ <https://www.uscis.gov/greencard/public-charge>

TRANSPORTATION

Mobility is a key need of all residents in the Greater Dubuque region, especially given the dispersed nature of the region. The most commonly reported method of transportation is driving alone. In Dubuque County, 82.4% of respondents primarily drive alone and the average household owns 2 cars¹⁵.

Many members of the immigrant community live in Dubuque or Postville but work across the Greater Dubuque area. Families may have adults who work in one area and children who go to school in another. Students attending public school can use the school bus system, though private or parochial schools may not offer their own mode of transportation. The city of Dubuque also has a public bus system, The Jule, which runs from 6AM to 9:15PM Monday to Friday, 8AM to 9:15PM on Saturdays, and does not run on Sundays. The Jule also offers The Minibus and DuRide services, door to door transportation for the elderly and qualifying individuals under the Americans with Disabilities Act¹⁶. Outside of Dubuque, the Northeast Iowa Community Action Corporation offers EARL Public Transit, a door-to-door transportation service in Allamakee, Clayton, Fayette, Howard, and Winneshiek counties¹⁷. Members of immigrant communities also often rely on local volunteers to drive them to work, doctor appointments, and in many cases immigration appointments in Omaha or Chicago.

While there are many transportation resources for members of immigrant communities, several key challenges persist:

- ❖ **Limited public transportation options:** While the Jule and EARL provide coverage in their respective areas, public transportation can be difficult for members of the immigrant community to access. The limited route and restrictions on door to door transportation within The Jule network mean that individuals may not be close to a bus stop or may not be able to get to their end destination in a time-efficient manner. Lack of awareness or language barriers may also preclude individuals from using door to door transportation options such as EARL.
- ❖ **Reliance on volunteer transportation:** Our interviews indicate that many individuals in the immigrant community rely on a small number of dedicated volunteers for transportation to important appointments, work, and other needs. While the volunteers are dedicated and deeply trusted by members of the community, many of them are elderly and have been sidelined by the COVID-19 crisis. This underscores the vulnerability of a system of relying on a small set of individuals for essential services. In their absence, many of the volunteers are unsure what the individuals who rely on their services are doing for transportation.

¹⁵ <https://datausa.io/profile/geo/dubuque-county-ia>

¹⁶ <https://www.cityofdubuque.org/274/Transit>

¹⁷ <http://www.neicac.org/transit>

- ❖ **Difficulty reaching immigration appointments:** Members of the immigrant community who are actively involved in an immigration, refugee, or work authorization case are periodically required to travel to regional Immigration Courts. For individuals residing in Iowa this entails a 5-hour drive to Omaha, while those in Illinois and Wisconsin face a 3-hour drive to Chicago. Though transportation options are far more limited and cost prohibitive for many members of the immigrant community, missing an appointment can lead to deportation or loss of work authorization and community members therefore rely heavily on volunteers to make these appointments.
- ❖ **Limited access to driver's licenses:** Despite high car ownership and prevalence of driving alone when commuting, members of the immigrant community face barriers in obtaining drivers licenses. In some cases, individuals may not have the right documentation to prove residence, especially when they first arrive in the area. Iowa requires a Social Security Number to secure a driver's license, so many without this documentation travel to Illinois or drive without a license. Language barriers may pose additional challenges to passing driving tests or navigating the process of obtaining a driver's license.

CHILDCARE

For families with children, having access to reliable childcare can be the difference between one or multiple family members working full-time, part-time, or not at all. In immigrant communities where there are limited options for relatives to watch children and incomes are not high enough to allow adults to work limited hours, this can be particularly difficult. Reliable and affordable childcare is a key issue for families across the United States. The Center for American Progress's Early Childhood Program Participation Survey found that a mother's employment, ability to increase her earnings, and ability to advance her career is closely tied to access to reliable childcare.¹⁸ Nationally, roughly half of American families report difficulty finding childcare. While the need for childcare is a problem across the United States, it is a particularly acute problem in Iowa. According to the Child Care Resource & Referral of Iowa, Iowa has lost 40% of its regulated childcare providers in the last five years. Furthermore, according to the Center for American Progress, about 25% of Iowans live in "childcare deserts," where there is an acute shortage of regulated childcare¹⁹.

Our interviews with immigrants and service providers indicate that members of immigrant communities in the Greater Dubuque region currently have few options for affordable childcare. They often rely on family members, volunteers, other members in their community, such as friends or neighbors, for childcare. The Greater Dubuque Development Corporation, Northeast

¹⁸ Center for American Progress, The Child Care Crisis is Keeping Women Out of the Workplace, 2019 <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/early-childhood/reports/2019/03/28/467488/child-care-crisis-keeping-women-workforce/>

¹⁹ <https://www.desmoinesregister.com/story/news/investigations/2019/08/28/iowa-day-care-crisis-workforce-child-care-daycare-costs-expense-worker-shortage-business-incentive/2055804001/>

Iowa Community College, and Presentation Lantern Center all offer or have offered childcare for parents taking training programs or using their resources.

In addition to the persistent challenges of childcare in the US more broadly as well as in Iowa, there are several issues particular to members of the local immigrant community:

- ❖ **Reliance on volunteers, friends, or family:** Many members of immigrant communities in the Greater Dubuque rely on informal childcare as opposed to regulated childcare providers or hired babysitters. While this offers real benefits such as lower costs, greater ease of access, and increased comfort by relying on trusted individuals, the informal nature of these relationships means that they are constantly at risk. Family members or friends may leave the area or secure alternate employment. Volunteers may have limited hours of availability or be prevented from caring for kids due to extenuating circumstances. The latter has come about through the COVID-19 crisis where volunteers, many of whom are elderly, are unable to leave their homes and care for children.
- ❖ **Impediment to workforce opportunities:** Childcare is a key impediment to greater workforce participation and advancement. Many immigrant parents in the region reported the lack of childcare preventing them from working more hours. In some cases, parents could not work more than 4 or 5 hour shifts as they had to pick-up their kids from school. This unfortunately conflicts with aspirations of securing better jobs to pay for a babysitter.

HEALTHCARE

Affordable and quality healthcare is an essential ingredient for safe, thriving, and productive communities. Iowa faces several challenges when it comes to healthcare, including a large amount of rural hospitals and lack of adequate physicians. 82 of Iowa's 118 hospitals are critical access hospitals, or hospitals with less than 25 beds, with an additional 8 slightly larger hospitals designated as rural hospitals. Rural hospitals across the country have faced cash flow issues and many have closed in the last few years. A recent Navigant study indicates that 17 of Iowa's hospitals are at high financial risk. Furthermore, in 2016, Iowa ranked 46th out of 50 states for the number of physicians per 100,000 patients²⁰.

The majority of Iowa residents have some form of insurance--Iowa's uninsured rate is 4.7% compared to 8.8% across the United States²¹. 19% of Iowa's population are covered by Medicaid or CHIP while an additional 15% are enrolled in Medicare. The majority of the 59% of Iowans with private insurance receive it from their employers, with only 5% of Iowans

²⁰ <https://www.thegazette.com/subject/news/health/as-iowas-rural-hospitals-grapple-with-challenges-larger-health-systems-offer-avenue-for-specialty-care-20190930>

²¹ <https://www.americashealthrankings.org/explore/annual/measure/HealthInsurance/state/IA>

purchasing non-group insurance plans²². US nationals and documented immigrants are eligible for coverage through the Health Insurance Marketplace, including many refugees who can get coverage through the Medicaid expansion, CHIP, or other options through the Affordable Care Act²³.

Residents in the Greater Dubuque area with healthcare coverage can seek medical care from hospitals and clinics throughout the area (depending on their specific insurance coverage). For residents without health insurance or with limited coverage, their options are more limited. All individuals can seek care in a hospital's emergency room without fear of being denied service. The Greater Dubuque area is also home to community health centers such as Crescent Community Health Center, which provides primary health and dental care on a fee for service basis for those without insurance coverage. Members of the immigrant community rely heavily on the community health center network as well as local volunteers who provide transportation and translation support.

Key healthcare challenges for the Greater Dubuque area's immigrant community include:

- ❖ **Limited access to insurance or government provided insurance schemes:** Many members of the Greater Dubuque area's immigrant community have difficulty accessing private or government provided insurance. While most lowans receive private insurance from their employer, many members of the immigrant community work in food service or other industries that typically do not provide healthcare coverage. Some immigrants may not have the right authorization to apply for or receive government provided insurance and therefore cannot access the services. Others may fear what enrolling in these programs may do to their future eligibility for citizenship or work authorization given the recent enactment of the Public Charge rule. On February 24, 2020, the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services enacted the Public Charge Grounds final rule which deems immigrants in need of public assistance inadmissible for immigration²⁴. The area's Marshallese community is further impacted by an oversight in the Compact of Free Association (COFA) which provides the Marshallese legal residency and work authorization in the United States but does not include access to Medicaid. The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 removed COFA migrants from the qualified immigrants category, thereby eliminating their access to Medicaid and CHIP.
- ❖ **Limited access to healthcare:** Consistent access to healthcare can be difficult given the lack of insurance across some of the immigrant community. Relying on emergency room care or expensive community health centers means that many individuals and families

²² <https://www.kff.org/other/state-indicator/total-population/?currentTimeframe=0&sortModel=%7B%22colId%22:%22Location%22,%22sort%22:%22asc%22%7D>

²³ <https://idph.iowa.gov/Portals/1/userfiles/206/Health%20Insurance%20%20Refugees%20in%20Iowa%20%2882019%29.pdf>

²⁴ <https://www.uscis.gov/greencard/public-charge>

delay care or do not practice preventative medicine, leading to worse outcomes and in many cases considerably higher costs. The COVID-19 crisis has further highlighted this issue. Members of immigrant communities are unsure of where to seek care if they require it and in cases where individuals have gotten sick, they are not able to get the care they need because of a lack of medical services.

- ❖ **High rates of chronic health issues:** 35.3% of adult Iowans suffer from obesity, an issue which carries over and in some cases is more acute within different immigrant communities²⁵. The Marshallese, across the US and in the Marshall Islands, have one of the highest prevalence of type 2 diabetes in the world, with estimates ranging from 25-50% compared to 8.3% for the US as a whole. The Marshallese population also exhibits disproportionate rates of Hepatitis B, tuberculosis, and other chronic illnesses²⁶. These health inequities are perpetuated by the oversight in the Compact of Free Association (COFA) that eliminated their access to Medicaid and CHIP²⁷. As a result, the Greater Dubuque areas' Marshallese community faces an undue lack of healthcare and health-related risks.
- ❖ **Support navigating the system:** The healthcare system can be difficult to navigate for any individual, a difficulty which is compounded for members of the immigrant community. Many individuals require transportation to appointments or translation services to explain symptoms and understand diagnoses and treatment regimens. The translation issue has become particularly acute during the COVID-19 crisis where many individuals in immigrant communities experienced delays in receiving information and guidance on how to safely navigate the crisis.

EMPLOYMENT

Prior to the COVID-19 crisis, Dubuque's unemployment rate was very low, in the 2-3% range²⁸. Many businesses were actively seeking workers and struggled to find talent. The COVID-19 crisis has impacted many local businesses, causing reduced hours, furloughed employees, and in some cases layoffs. As a result, Dubuque County's unemployment rate spiked to an estimated 21% in April²⁹. Our survey of local businesses has indicated that the crisis has added uncertainty, impacting many businesses' hiring and operation decisions. Many members of the Greater Dubuque area's immigrant communities are actively employed by local businesses and

²⁵ <https://www.americashealthrankings.org/explore/annual/measure/HealthInsurance/state/IA>

²⁶ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4358182/>

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ https://www.bls.gov/eag/eag/ia_dubuque_msa.htm

²⁹ https://www.telegraphherald.com/news/tri-state/article_c6edda5c-d937-5788-a9a4-9a906cb43a0a.html?utm_source=thonline&utm_medium=click_source&utm_campaign=homepage_top_news_card_more_stories

are valuable members of the area's workforce. Our interviews indicate that the majority of immigrants are employed in the food service, agricultural, and manufacturing sectors.

There are several organizations that provide workforce development and employment support to the area's immigrant communities. Organizations like the Presentation Lantern Center provide career center-type resources such as resume and cover letter support, interview preparation, and mock interviews. They also spend time focusing on understanding individual goals and career aspirations and refer individuals out to the Northeast Iowa Community College or other training programs when possible. Our interviews indicated that the majority of workers in the area's immigrant community hear about opportunities or their current job through family, friends, or other community members. There are also several workforce development organizations in the area, such as IowaWorks and the Greater Dubuque Development Corporation (GDDC). IowaWorks provides applicant support, such as resume building, connections to employers and available jobs, and other holistic job search support including specific support to immigrants on temporary work visas. GDDC similarly provides wraparound support to job seekers, including a local community job board, short-term certificate training, and newcomer services.

Despite the strong ecosystem of workforce support in the area, several challenges persist:

- ❖ **Job opportunities primarily spread via word of mouth:** Our interviews and surveys indicate that most members of immigrant communities hear about job opportunities through their own networks. While there are many benefits to this system, including an informal vetting process where individuals can be assured the employer and work conditions are acceptable, this can limit the amount of opportunities that immigrants hear about. This model limits the supply through largely relying on current employers and a small set of trusted individuals. As such, the likelihood of members of the immigrant community hearing about or taking jobs in industries where they are less represented or with employers who have not previously hired immigrants is less likely.
- ❖ **Many employers do not hire immigrants:** While there are many employers in the area that have had great experiences hiring members of immigrant communities, there are others that have never hired immigrants. There are a variety of reasons why this may be true—for some, they may not know the opportunity to hire members of immigrant communities exists or may not know how to navigate the work authorization and permit system. Others may be opposed to hiring immigrants. Confusion around work permits and work authorization is a persistent issue with our survey and interviews indicating that employers are concerned about inadvertently violating the law. The myriad of different immigration classifications or authorization types makes it difficult for them to understand the process they should take and what limitations, if any, a given authorization places on a prospective employee. For those that are opposed to hiring immigrants, our interviews and surveys indicated a lack of awareness of the benefits of hiring immigrants, worry around language or cultural barriers, and some cases of employers who are directly opposed to hiring immigrants.

- ❖ **Work in vulnerable jobs:** Our interviews indicated that many members of immigrant communities work in the food service industry. While these jobs have benefits such as being very accessible to these communities, offering flexible hours, and lower language barriers given the concentration of immigrant workers in the industry. However, many of these jobs can have low job security and limited benefits. This has become increasingly prevalent during the COVID-19 crisis with the food service industry being hit particularly hard. With many restaurants closed or open for delivery only, our interviews indicate that workers have seen their hours slashed and many have been furloughed.
- ❖ **Disconnected from unemployment services:** Given the precariousness of the employment situation of many members of the immigrant community, access to unemployment services is a way to ensure individuals can support themselves and their families while searching for a new job. Unfortunately, many members of the immigrant community are disconnected from unemployment support and therefore do not have this safety net. Lack of legal status or work authorization is a key reason for lack of eligibility, meaning that particularly vulnerable groups such as refugee youth are impacted. For those that do qualify for unemployment benefits, like the Marshallese community, language barriers can prevent individuals from filling out unemployment claims. While there are members of the Marshallese communities that have been helping with translation, translated unemployment forms or increased translation services would be useful for future use.
- ❖ **Temporary work agencies are not always providing viable avenues for quality employment:** Temp agencies are an important source of employment for certain immigrant groups, but their *client* is the employer not the prospective employee, and as such, they promote the interests of the business, rather than those of the worker, who is seen as the *candidate*. For example, they are not thinking about giving workers steady hours or predictable schedules, they are only trying to fill a gap. This affects immigrants who need to juggle childcare needs at home, family obligations, in addition to employment constraints. In order to address this issue, it would be helpful for temp agencies to try to address the interests of both stakeholders, employers and workers, as much as possible.

IMMIGRATION AND LEGAL SERVICES

Current and future immigration status is top of mind for many of the Greater Dubuque region's immigrant communities. Immigration and the associated work authorization status dictates what an individual can and cannot do, governing how they live their lives. In many cases, immigration status is not a straightforward issue, as there are numerous ways an individual can enter the United States and apply for legal status, including through refugee resettlement, COFA, temporary work permits, and H1B visas, to name a few.

Despite the difficulty of navigating the immigration process, immigration is becoming increasingly important to Iowa. Between 2010 and 2017, international in-migration accounted for 40% of Iowa's population growth, with the actual figure higher if secondary immigrants, or those who first settled elsewhere in the US before moving to Iowa, were counted³⁰. As such, several resources exist to support individuals and families through the immigration process. Catholic Charities' Immigration Legal Services program offers free consultations and affordable immigration attorney and legal assistant support to help individuals and families navigate the immigration process and advocate on their behalf³¹. The Greater Dubuque region is also home to several individual attorneys and volunteers who provide pro bono legal services and strong advocacy. For example, Dubuque for Refugee Children provides guidance, advocacy, and monetary support for medical and legal expenses for individuals and families as they navigate the refugee resettlement process.

Despite the support systems that have emerged to support members of the immigrant community through the legal immigration process, several challenges persist:

- ❖ **Deterioration in immigration court efficiency:** Individuals applying for refugee status in the United States do so to escape a variety of difficult circumstances in their native countries. However, in recent years the number of asylum case closures has decreased significantly, declining by 64% under the Trump Administration. This has led to an increase in case backlog from an average of 41,000 cases under the Obama administration to 145,000³². Furthermore, inequalities exist across different immigration courts—immigrants in the Greater Dubuque region are split on immigration court jurisdiction with those in Iowa going to Omaha and those in Illinois and Wisconsin going to Chicago. Which court an individual goes to plays an important role in whether asylum is granted, with the court in Omaha granting a mere 5% of cases compared to nearly 30% in Chicago. This rate rises even higher outside of the Midwest, with the New York court granting 66% of cases³³. While some of this can be explained by the idiosyncrasies of particular cases, the large variation is likely not indicative of cases in Omaha and Chicago being weaker but instead a function of the court's judges. In Chicago, between

³⁰ <https://www.thegazette.com/iowalideas/stories/immigrants-propping-up-iowa-population-growth-20170922>

³¹ <https://catholiccharitiesdubuque.org/immigration-legal-services>

³² <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-immigration-court-exclusive/exclusive-under-trump-prosecutors-fight-reprieves-for-people-facing-deportation-idUSKBN1H5187>

³³ <https://www.gao.gov/assets/690/680976.pdf>

2013 and 2018 the denial rate by judge ranges from 95.9% on the high end to 15.8% on the low end. In Omaha across the same period, the rate ranged from 95.2% to 81.9%³⁴.

- ❖ **Difficulty to navigate the system:** Given the variety of immigration pathways and statuses, the process can be difficult for individuals and families to navigate. As such, legal counsel is indispensable. Despite the presence of several pro bono lawyers and low cost advocacy services, costs still may be too high for some members of the immigrant community. In many cases families must decide between paying legal fees for immigration cases that almost certainly will be denied or putting food on the table. This is a particularly acute issue given the recent court process time—many individuals find themselves caught in limbo waiting for their court date but without legal authorization to work.
- ❖ **Inability to access financial support services:** As mentioned previously, immigrant workers are concentrated in the hospitality, food service, retail trade, and manufacturing industries, all of which have been greatly impacted by COVID-19. While furloughed workers have access to unemployment insurance benefits, there are few places that provide immigrants and their families with financial support in the event that they lose their job. California is the only state that has provided cash transfers to unauthorized immigrant state residents through state funds³⁵. However, cities like Austin, Chicago, Minneapolis, Seattle (with King County, Washington), St. Paul, and Washington, DC, along with Montgomery County, Maryland have also created similar funds to help low-income families.
- ❖ **Difficulty in reaching asylum meetings:** As previously discussed, individuals with immigration or asylum cases must travel to Omaha or Chicago for their appointments. This can be quite difficult as individuals working through the legal system would not yet have the right documentation to qualify for a driver's license. As such, they often rely on volunteers for transportation, as the consequences of missing an appointment is often deportation.
- ❖ **Continuously changing immigration law:** In addition to the complexity of immigration laws and regulations, members of immigrant communities have to contend with continuously changing laws. As such, it is hard for many individuals to track the latest requirements and many are therefore caught in limbo.

³⁴ <https://trac.syr.edu/immigration/reports/judge2018/denialrates.html>

³⁵ <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/COVID19-immigrants-shut-out-federal-relief>

SUMMARY OF KEY SERVICES

Below is a list of services that we identified through our interviews that can serve as a starting point for a resource for members of the immigrant community. Please note that this is not intended to be an exhaustive list of services.

Category	Service	Service Provider
Education & Information	English language classes	Northeast Iowa Community College
	English language classes	Presentation Lantern Center
	Technical training	Northeast Iowa Community College
	Technical training	Greater Dubuque Development Corporation
	Internet connection	FCC Lifeline Program
	Citizenship tutoring	Presentation Lantern Center
Essential Services	Food	Resources Unite
	Affordable housing	Catholic Charities
	Rental assistance	Resources Unite
	Temporary housing	Sisters of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary
Transportation	Public transit	The Jule
	Public transit	EARL Public Transit
Healthcare	Urgent care	Finley Hospital Emergency Room
	Urgent care	Mercy Medical Center
	Primary care	Crescent Community Health Center
Employment	Applicant support	Presentation Lantern Center
	Applicant support	IowaWorks
	Applicant support	Greater Dubuque Development Corporation
	Job portal	IowaWorks
	Job portal	Greater Dubuque Development Corporation
Immigration & Legal Services	Immigration support	Catholic Charities

Recommendations & Deliverables

This report comes at a challenging time for the Dubuque region. As of May 2020, many public-facing businesses have closed or severely curtailed their hours. Thousands of Dubuque residents have filed for unemployment, and Dubuque county's unemployment rate, which was approximately 3%³⁶ when we began our research in February, now surpasses 20%³⁷. Our research suggests that many immigrant families face compounding disadvantages in this crisis. They are more likely than white Dubuque residents to work in service-sector industries that are especially vulnerable to the economic downturn; to lack access to high-quality health insurance and medical care; to have limited financial reserves; to rely on networks of volunteers who can no longer risk meeting them; to struggle to understand English-language notices about health and safety updates; and to be ineligible for public benefits like unemployment benefits, food stamps, or stimulus checks. Yet it is clear that the economic and health crises brought about by COVID-19 threaten the health and well-being of all in the region. Dubuque, like many places across the United States, faces an ongoing crisis, an uncertain future, and a potentially long, slow road to recovery.

It is important to recognize that most of the disadvantages immigrant communities face in Dubuque existed long before COVID-19 came to the United States. More than anything else, COVID-19 exposed the frailties and failures of existing economic and social systems in the region, uncovering the ways that the status quo is untenable for the vulnerable residents. This crisis thus presents an opportunity for Dubuque residents to collectively reimagine its systems in support of a more connected, more resilient, and more inclusive region.

We offer the following recommendations in the hopes that they can inform efforts by the Foundation and its partners to create such a region. For each, we offer potential short-term and longer-term goals.

- ❖ **Serve as an aggregator for immigrant support services.** Dubuque benefits from a network of organizations and volunteers that provide healthcare, English-language education, meals, rental assistance, transportation, information, and pro bono legal support to immigrant communities and other vulnerable people in the region. Yet our research suggests that these service networks are not well integrated and rely on a small number of volunteers and staff. This dynamic makes the social services networks less accessible to immigrant families, business leaders, or potential volunteers, and vulnerable to disruption in the event of crises like COVID-19.
 - **Short-term goal:** the Foundation publishes a list of existing immigrant service providers in the region on their website and facilitates connections between

³⁶ <https://www.iowaworkforcedevelopment.gov/local-area-unemployment-statistics>

³⁷ https://www.telegraphherald.com/news/tri-state/article_c6edda5c-d937-5788-a9a4-9a906cb43a0a.html?utm_source=thonline&utm_medium=click_source&utm_campaign=homepage_top_news_card_more_stories

service providers and immigrant families to meet immediate COVID-related needs.

- **Long-term goal:** the Foundation establishes or funds a new “immigrant services information center” to integrate and convene existing service providers, share up-to-date information, and provide services like language translation to the Dubuque community. This center formalizes volunteer networks to assist with translation, transportation, food delivery, English language education, digital skills training, and other services³⁸. Lastly, this center cultivates ‘immigrant leadership cohorts,’ providing professional development opportunities for individuals committed to serving their communities.

- ❖ **Support digital transitions for immigrant families, volunteers, and service providers.** Our interviews suggest that some immigrant families lack broadband connections, computers, and digital skills, which limits their ability to access information about jobs or services. Volunteer networks and service providers rely on in-person meetings with immigrants, which are less feasible today due to COVID-19 concerns. While some services, such as offering rides, cannot be accomplished remotely, many other interactions can, including English language education, career mentorship, and job information. Supporting digital connections will be necessary while COVID-19 remains a threat, but increasing digital access and knowledge among immigrant communities and volunteers will help make both groups more resilient and successful in the years to come.
 - **Short-term goal:** the Foundation and partners reach out through existing volunteer networks to identify gaps in digital access and capabilities among volunteers and immigrant families. When possible, it can match those in need with existing resources for digital inclusion, as provided by Dubuque Public Schools or others.
 - **Long-term goal:** the Foundation sets a goal of universal broadband subscription for families across the region, and partners with state or city efforts to provide low-cost or no-cost computers and broadband subscriptions to families that are currently disconnected.

- ❖ **Develop a proactive immigrant employment strategy** in partnership with business champions, workforce and economic development officials, and community leaders. Our research suggests that most businesses that hire immigrants do so with minimal assistance, yet many have questions about navigating legal, language, and cultural barriers.
 - **Short-term goal:** the Foundation identifies “business champions” that have successfully hired immigrants, arranges peer-to-peer conversations with other business leaders about best practices, and memorializes successful efforts in short case studies.

³⁸ Some of these volunteer networks already exist, such as English language education at the Presentation Lantern Center, and could be referred to or used as a model for Foundation efforts.

- **Long-term goal:** the Foundation and partners build a network of ‘community connectors’ who are trained to understand existing labor market needs, earn the trust of immigrant workers, meet with interested businesses, and proactively facilitate employment opportunities.
- ❖ **Shift mindsets of white Dubuque residents about immigrant communities through inclusive messages and outreach.** Our research suggests that many immigrants still feel out of place or unwelcome in Dubuque, and remain fearful that attending public gatherings will result in deportation or harassment by federal or local law enforcement officials. This dynamic contributes to social isolation and disconnection, which is harmful to immigrant and native-born Dubuquers alike. As a respected institution in the region, the Foundation has an important role to play in supporting social and economic inclusion of immigrants.
 - **Short-term goal:** the Foundation continues to communicate to donors, funders, grantees, staff, and the broader community that immigrants are essential to the continued vitality of the Dubuque region. Foundation leaders share toolkits with business leaders and immigrant stories, including ones in this report, to build empathy and understanding of Dubuque’s immigrant communities. The Foundation also partners with national messaging campaigns to support immigrants, such as the National Immigration Forum’s #AllofUs campaign.
 - **Longer-term goal:** fund efforts to document immigrants’ experiences and contributions to the Northeast Iowa region, create spaces for shared understanding of immigrant communities through events and small-group conversations, and take other actions to ensure that immigrant communities are part of the narrative of what it means to be from Dubuque.

To support the goals of the Foundation and its partners to create a more connected, resilient, and inclusive Dubuque, we have also created several deliverables intended for specific external audiences. These deliverables are included in the following section of this report, but are designed to be accessible independent of our research. Deliverables include:

- ❖ **Immigrant Archetypes:** stories of fictionalized immigrants in Dubuque, based on our interviews, that are intended to help business leaders and other Dubuque residents gain a better understanding of the lives, legal constraints, and perspectives of Dubuque’s diverse immigrant communities.
- ❖ **Employer “How-to” Guide:** a guide to help Dubuque employers hire and successfully employ immigrant workers, based on conversations with immigrant-employing businesses in the region and supplemental research.
- ❖ **Bold Leadership Toolkit:** a toolkit to help organizations train their staff and affiliates to become bold leaders and advocates for their immigrant neighbors, based on our research.

Immigrant Archetypes

Northeast Iowa is home to many immigrant communities, each with different arrival stories, challenges, and lived experiences. The following are fictionalized accounts of individuals from five contemporary immigrant groups in the region, drawing on interviews conducted with foreign-born immigrants and other Northeast Iowa residents in the spring of 2020. It is our hope that these stories can shed light on the perspectives of some of the newer residents of this region—though it should be noted that many individuals from these communities have lived in Northeast Iowa for many years, even decades. These communities join a long history of immigration to the region, including the French-Canadian, Irish, German, Scandinavian and Italian waves of settlement.



Christopher Marshallese Immigrant

Age: 52 years old

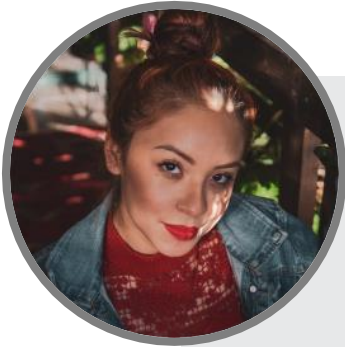
Language skills: speaks English as a second language; native Marshallese speaker (speaks Marshallese with his family)

Legal status: legal permanent resident of the US with authorization to work, but not a citizen.

Education: high school diploma

Christopher has lived in Dubuque for the past eight years. Originally from the Marshall Islands, he moved to Dubuque with his wife and three kids when the meatpacking plant he'd been working at in Oklahoma closed. He is a legal resident and has work authorization, and currently works in a food processing facility outside of town. He lives with his wife and youngest daughter, who is a senior in high school; his two older children live a few blocks away, and often come over for meals with the entire family.

Christopher is happy to be living in Dubuque and sees it as his long-term home, but his children are less committed. His youngest daughter has had trouble focusing on school, and talks regularly about wanting to return to the Marshall Islands. His son has worked on and off as a janitor and at a large retailer since moving out of the house three years ago; he's not working in the economic downturn and filed for unemployment a few weeks ago with the help of the pastor at the church the family goes to. Christopher's wife has diabetes, and he's worried about exposing her and their kids to coronavirus by continuing to work, but feels that he doesn't have a choice.



Daniela

College DREAMer

Age: 21 years old

Language skills: fully fluent in English and Spanish

Legal status: undocumented DACA recipient

Education: bachelor's degree (expected)

Daniela grew up in Milwaukee and came to Dubuque to attend college. She's the first in her family to do so; she came to the US from Mexico when she was five, and no one in her immediate family has legal status in the US. As a DACA recipient, she has successfully applied for a two-year work permit, though she worries that her work permit will not be renewed when it expires in a few months. She has worked part-time while in college as a tutor and babysitter for a professor's children. She doesn't feel at home in Dubuque and wants to return to Milwaukee when she graduates. She's a psychology major and is thinking about becoming a teacher.



Maria

Mexican Worker

Age: 36 years old

Language skills: speaks English as a second language, but has limited ability to read it; native Spanish speaker

Legal status: undocumented; her family are citizens

Education: high school diploma

Maria moved from Houston, TX to Dyersville ten years ago with her husband and her daughter; her husband found work at a large manufacturing facility outside of town, and still works there. She and her husband have had two other children since moving to Dubuque. Their family has a mixed legal status; her husband is a naturalized citizen, and her children are US citizens, but she is undocumented, having moved to Texas with her family when she was a teenager.

She and her family go to a Catholic church in town, which has been offering more frequent services in Spanish. She started taking English lessons at her church a few months ago, but stopped going after she heard that local police were following people home and reporting the meetings to ICE officials.

Her oldest daughter, a high school sophomore, was given a laptop computer last year, the family's first. Coronavirus hasn't changed her day-to-day life that much; because of her immigration status, she had been staying away from public events and large gatherings long before self-isolation started. She is glad that the facility where her husband works is still operating, as his job is the family's only source of income, but she worries that her husband could get sick.



Diego

Guatemalan Asylum Seeker

Age: 19 years old

Language skills: native Ixil speaker; speaks a few words of English; fluent in Spanish but has trouble reading and writing it

Legal status: legal resident, but pending asylum status; authorization to live and work in the US conditional on approval

Education: dropped out of school as teenager to work full-time

Diego came to Dubuque two years ago. He left Guatemala because of widespread poverty and a lack of job opportunities in his hometown. He joined his mother and older sister in Dubuque, who had arrived six months earlier, and lives with them and an older Guatemalan couple. A lawyer in Dubuque helped the family file claims for asylum, and volunteers drive each of them to Cedar Rapids for their required monthly in-person meetings with ICE.

He cleans tables twice a week at a restaurant and is paid in cash. A few months ago, he received his work authorization while still waiting for a ruling from the state immigration court. The work authorization means that he could find work in a grocery store, a warehouse, or food processing plant, but without a car and speaking limited English, and hasn't started looking for a new job yet.

The restaurant where he works closed down because of Coronavirus and he's not working at all at the moment. His lawyer tells him that it's unlikely that he'll be granted asylum, but doesn't know when his case will be decided. He'd like to finish his high school degree and learn English, but is mostly concerned about being able to earn money to support himself and his family while he's still allowed to live in Dubuque.



Eduardo

International Student

Age: 20 years old

Language skills: fully fluent in English and Spanish

Legal status: student visa holder; authorized to work for 12 months after graduating through the OPT program; hopes to find an employer to sponsor an H1-B visa for him

Education: college degree (expected in two years)

Eduardo grew up in Bogota, Colombia, and is a sophomore at a college in Dubuque. He's an economics major and learned programming in high school. He had a comfortable childhood in Colombia but hopes to stay in the United States after graduating, as he thinks there are more opportunities for him here. He will be applying for Optional Practical Training (OPT) as part of his student visa, which would allow him to work in the US for 12 months after receiving his degree. His goal is to find a company that can help him apply for an H1-B visa, which would allow him to keep working in the US after his OPT status expires.

He likes Dubuque and would be happy to stay in the area. When his college switched to online classes and asked students to leave the dorms, he decided to return to Colombia, and is taking classes remotely from there. He worries that being outside of the US will make it impossible to get an internship in the US this summer, an important step in his plan to find a company that can sponsor him.

Employer How to Guide

Best Practices for Integrating Immigrants into Businesses

Successfully hiring immigrant workers means meeting the goals of everyone involved:

- ❖ **Employer:** create work environments for all employees to safely, effectively, and efficiently do their jobs
- ❖ **Employee:** be self-sufficient and given the opportunity to fulfill career goals and grow wealth
- ❖ **Community:** believe there is a level playing field and that services and opportunities are being distributed fairly and equitably

1 Increase company awareness of immigrant worker challenges.

Managers should be aware that immigrant workers may face distinct challenges and should adjust company strategies to support the needs of both immigrant and non-immigrant workers. (Creticos, Schultz, Beeler, & Ball, 2006).

2 Set up employees for success through inclusive communication & training practices.

Give immigrant workers the tools they need to safely, effectively, and efficiently work (Enchautegui, 2015):

1. Translating official company policies in workers' primary languages
2. Translating important safety protocols in workers' primary languages and integrating graphics where possible
3. Conducting safety and occupational training in workers' native languages
4. Ensuring workers with limited English speaking abilities work closely with bilingual workers and/or have an authority figure who speaks the same language.

3 Support employee skill building inside and outside the workplace.

Increase individual worker productivity and quality by (Enchautegui, 2015):

1. Providing English language training on-site or providing resources for off-site courses as needed
2. Encouraging worker self-improvement of other soft skills
3. Connecting immigrant workers with immigrant serving organizations such as the Presentation Lantern Center, IowaWORKS and NICC.

4 Regularly evaluate how workers are integrating into the business.

Worker integration is a long-term process that requires continuous measurement and improvement. (Creticos, Schultz, Beeler, & Ball, 2006):

1. Holding regular employee check ins
2. Tracking progress of workers engaging in upskilling
3. Evaluating integration strategies and programs based on intended results v. unintended outcomes.

5 Implement additional integration strategies (if company finances allow).

1. Hire or train HR staff to be well-versed in immigration-law compliance
2. Hire additional bilingual workers or promote employees to improve communication gaps
3. Offer naturalization assistance to employees with temporary worker permits
4. Provide workers access to training funds

Employer How to Guide

Visa Overview & COVID-19 Impacts

Visa Type	Visa Classification	Typical holders	Forms & Costs ³⁹	Duration	Covid Impact
H-2B	Temporary workers performing other services of skilled or unskilled	Seasonal foreign workers	\$460 filing fee plus \$150 fee plus \$150 anti-fraud fee \$1,225 for optional "Premium Processing Service Request"	Up to 1 year; can be renewed twice for a maximum of 3 years	On Mar 20, 2020, USCIS temporary suspended premium processing service for all Form I-129 and I-140 petitions until further notice due to COVID-19
H-2A	Temporary agricultural workers	Mexico/ Central America Immigrants	\$460 filing fee	Up to 1 year; can be renewed twice for a maximum of 3 years	On April 20, 2020, the federal government relaxed requirements for H-2A workers and temporarily lifted the 3-year maximum allowable stay
OPT	Temporary employment for an F-1 student's major area of study	International Students	\$495 for Form I-765	1 year	Unclear or no work authorization impacts
COFA Compacts of Free Association	Nonimmigrants when admitted under the COFA. Not citizens or nationals of the U.S. are eligible to work in the US indefinitely	Citizens of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), The Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) and Palau	N/A	No limit	Unclear or no work authorization impacts
DACA	Young undocumented immigrants protection from deportation, access to work permit	All	\$495 for Form I-795	2 years; can be renewed	Unclear work authorization impacts.

³⁹ <https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/research/employment-based-visa-categories-united-states>

Bold Leadership Toolkit

Background

In situations of crisis, the cracks in the system that leave vulnerable populations behind become chasms. While these groups were already disenfranchised, they are now at risk of losing their homes, their livelihoods and their health. It is particularly in times of crisis that we need to invest in the social fabric of our communities, and this is only possible through **bold leadership**.

We recognize that some public officials, civic leaders, employers, and community members in Northeast Iowa do not always see immigrant populations as an asset to the community. This risk is compounded during the COVID-19 crisis. We believe that steps can be taken to help these audiences transform feelings of fear and powerlessness into compassion and trust.

Who is this toolkit for?

This toolkit is designed for community organizations, such as the Community Foundation of Greater Dubuque (CFGD), that support vulnerable populations, and want to provide resources and training to the leaders they engage with (including Executive Boards, committee boards, leaders of affiliate organizations, etc.) so they can become better advocates and allies for immigrants. The focus of this toolkit will be on immigrant communities but can be applied in other contexts where existing narratives portray at-risk populations in a negative light.

What does this toolkit include?

This toolkit includes 10 tools your organization can use to develop bold leaders who uphold the dignity and worth of every person in your community. It is divided into five systems to invest in, and five skills to develop. These might include policies you already implement, and if so we encourage you to continue doing so. For each of these tools, we include one or two programs or resources to dive deeper.

SYSTEMS TO INVEST IN	SKILLS TO DEVELOP
1. Diverse and Representative Leadership	6. Empathy
2. Showcasing Role Models	7. Trust-building
3. Mentorship	8. Relationship-building
4. Crisis Leadership Frameworks	9. Storytelling
5. Tying Metrics to Best Practices	10. Cultural Competence

SYSTEMS

As an organization, you have the institutional ability to design systems to prepare your leadership to become more effective advocates, creating new behaviors that strengthen society as a whole.

1 Diverse and Representative Leadership

Executive boards and other leadership bodies benefit from incorporating underrepresented perspectives into their decision-making processes, including immigrants. Having the voices of the people you serve represented in your boards allows for a more inclusive decision-making process and to better respond to external influences. Below are some tips to have in mind:

- Be mindful that new participants may not have traditional backgrounds or skillsets, and be open to relaxing existing criteria that could pose barriers to recruiting valuable participants, such as expected financial contributions for Board membership.
- Avoid tokenization, or having diversity for the sake of checking off a diversity box. Instead, make sure there are mechanisms in place for full empowerment and participation to happen.

Additional Resources [Diversity on Nonprofit Boards](#) - National Council of Nonprofits
[How to Create a Diverse Board](#) - KelloggInsight

2 Showcasing Role Models

Use your newsletters, press releases, and other communications platforms to lift up businesses that are doing exemplary work or leaders that exemplify the type of bold leadership you are seeking. This could take the form of a marketing campaign, highlighting what they are doing right to encourage others to follow.

As you identify role models, try to answer questions such as: “What does bold leadership look like in times of crisis?” or “What actors, employers or organizations are showing where we need to go? How are they doing it?”. If more specific to employment and immigration, you can ask questions like “What does an immigrant-friendly employer look like?”

Additional Resources [Protect Caregivers from Coronavirus](#) - National Domestic Workers Alliance
[Worker-led Campaigns with U.S. and Multinational Companies](#) - coworker.org

3 Mentorship

We can all benefit from mentors to learn what bold leadership looks like in times of crisis. Mentorship can go two ways: (1) leaders mentoring leaders, similar to a buddy system where more seasoned leaders sponsor someone that is less engaged or less familiar with the topic; and (2) pairing leaders with members of the vulnerable population they are serving, e.g., an immigrant worker. For that to be effective, you can:

- identify those that are willing to go the extra mile and be mentors;
- create structure and oversight by piloting a mentoring program in small scale that will help you determine the ideal frequency of meetings, and the program’s format and objectives;
- facilitate longer term engagement, for relationships between mentor and mentee to develop over time; and
- design commitment mechanisms for mentees, whose engagement in their learning outcome is as important as that from their mentors.

Additional Resources [Resources for Mentoring Programs](#) - National Mentoring Resource Center
[Mentor Dubuque](#) - Hillcrest Family Services

4 Crisis Leadership Frameworks

In times of economic uncertainty, leaders are forced to address the fear and anxiety that their community or organizations experience. In this shift to a more individualistic mindset, they need to be equipped with crisis leadership narratives that help them address questions such as “how will this crisis disrupt my organization?”, “will I be able to keep my employees?” or “will my family be okay?”

Once these questions are acknowledged and addressed, individuals can move from a “what’s in it for me” mindset to a “what’s in it for us” mindset. Such a framework triggers an attitude shift where we address the fear to lose what is dear to us and leverage this shift to relate to how immigrants might be dealing with the same crisis.

Additional Resources

[A Guide to Crisis Management for Non-Profit Organizations](#) - New England Insurance Services
[Nonprofit Crisis Case Studies: Tips for Crisis Planning](#) - JD Supra
[Real Leaders Are Forged in Crisis](#) - Harvard Business Review

5 Tying Metrics to Best Practices

This is particularly relevant for grant-giving organizations, such as foundations and government institutions. Leaders are incentivized to follow best practices when they are measured against metrics that are tied to funds. This is most effective with a clear understanding of what the best practices are, and who the audience is.

Connecting KPIs (Key Performance Indicators) and other success metrics to the outcomes you want to see in the immigrant community allows you to accurately track and identify progress on best practices. For example, if you want your bold leaders to increase their cultural competency, that can become a performance measure on your grants. Similarly, if you want your member organizations to have more diverse and representative executive boards, you can define that metric as a condition for fund disbursement.

Additional Resources

[How to Construct Performance Measures](#) - Walton Family Foundation
[Measuring What Matters in Nonprofits](#) - McKinsey

SKILLS

The following tools are a long-term investment in your community's resilience. Developed over time, these skills can be integrated into everyday interactions, workshops and operating frameworks to create a culture of integration and inclusive problem-solving.

6 Empathy

Building empathy is about more than putting yourself in someone else's shoes—it is an effort of imagination and an ability to experience what the other person is feeling. Fortunately, empathy is a skill that can be developed.

To build empathy towards immigrants, the first step is to understand the circumstances that brought them to the United States in the first place. Some guiding questions to get started could be: “what are different reasons why someone would leave their hometown to start from scratch in a new country?” and “what would push me to leave my home to start in a different country?”.

Often, leaders arrive at a place of empathy by being exposed to a transformative experience. Active listening, being present, or asking questions are all tools for effectively building empathy.

Additional Resources

[How to Turn Empathy into Your Secret Strength](#) - IDEO U

7 Trust-building

Immigrant communities place a high value on the trustworthiness of the people around them. One way to build trust is to demonstrate personal vulnerability, which can establish an authentic space for meaningful dialogue. Small details can play a big role in helping immigrant communities feel appreciated, from how the lobby looks when someone is greeted, to how we listen and show interest. Some best practices for building trust include:

- Welcoming conversations with others
- Asking questions
- Refraining from making initial judgements
- Give people your full attention and time whenever possible

Additional Resources

[The Essential Importance of Trust: How to Build It or Restore It](#) - Forbes

8 Relationship-building

Building relationships requires a time investment. Building both empathy and trust are great precursors to building healthy relationships that are genuine and non-transactional. For bold leaders to be effective, your organization should invest in peer-to-peer relationship-building, both between your board and your staff, and between your board and your beneficiaries.

Through meaningful and personal relationships, it is possible to weave a stronger social fabric, where populations that are most isolated can find linkages with each other and with the larger community.

Additional Resources

[Three Keys to Relationship Building](#) - Zenger/Folkman

9 Storytelling

A strong communication framework is an important skill for leaders to develop. Personal storytelling ties into why we do what we do, what drives us, and what drives our leaders. Instead of asking your leadership to come in wearing a specific individual hat (for example “board member”, “employer”, “public official”), ask them to bring their whole selves and the narratives that take them to where they are today.

A potential exercise for this piece is to ask the leaders you engage with in the community to share their “why”: “why are you engaged in this work?” and “why do you serve on this board?”.

Additional Resources

[Storytelling That Moves People](#) - Harvard Business Review
[A Nonprofit Storytelling How-To](#) - classy.org

10 Cultural Competence

Exposure to a community you fear or know little about is the first step toward building cultural competence. This is particularly relevant in contexts where a majority of the population belongs to a homogeneous cultural, ethnic or religious group with fewer opportunities to engage in an exchange with people from different cultures. Developing tolerance towards difference requires knowledge and awareness.

Cultural competence not only includes learning about the language, food and cultural traditions of a given group—it also encompasses competencies to be able to relate to the group and spark curiosity to expand that knowledge. When working with immigrants, learn about their different countries of origin, the particular idiosyncrasies of each country, the music and flavors that define that particular group, and the specificities that define that community when it is uprooted.

Additional Resources

[Crossroads Anti-racism Trainings](#) - Crossroads Anti-Racism Organizing & Training
[Planning Culturally Competent Programs](#) - The Grantsmanship Center

Appendix A

Interview Protocols

For this project, we interviewed 29 stakeholders including service providers (support organizations, volunteers, public officers and education leaders), employers, and immigrant workers. Most of these interviewees were introduced to us by the Community Foundation of Greater Dubuque or via references. The goal of these interviews was to learn more about the needs of the immigrant community in the Greater Dubuque region, in particular around employment and impacts of COVID-19 on their livelihood. We conducted semi-structured interviews over Zoom videoconference or phone call that lasted one hour on average. These interviews were not recorded to respect the privacy of the people we interviewed, but some of the learnings from each conversation can be found in Appendix B, “Interview Takeaways”. Below is the interview question protocol, with questions broken down by topic as they were addressed in the interviews.

We started every interview with the following introductory remarks (Target: 5 minutes to introduce ourselves and kick off the interview):

“Before we begin, I want to thank you for agreeing to this interview. I greatly appreciate your time and willingness to assist us in our research. We are a team of MIT graduate students interested in learning about the workforce needs of the Greater Dubuque area. This survey will contribute to a report that will be shared with the Community Foundation of Greater Dubuque later this spring. We would be happy to share the results of this project but we will keep all names anonymous. Along the same lines, I promise you anonymity, and commit to keeping your responses secure and confidential. Do you have any questions? [PAUSE] We’ll start with a brief survey for background information and then get into the interview.”

1. Service Providers Interview Protocol

To Learn About the Interviewee’s Background (Target: 15 minutes of the interview). This section of the interview included the following questions:

- What is your name?
- What is the organization you’re working for? What is its mission?
- Who does your organization primarily serve?
- How did you get to this job and position?
- Who does your organization primarily serve? In which counties are you most active?

To Learn About Work Experiences (Target: 30 minutes of the interview). This section of the interview included the following questions:

- How has your organization played a role in helping immigrant workers find jobs in Dubuque and the surrounding area?
- What challenges have you come across with this work?
- What are some of the barriers that hold immigrant workers back?
- What are some of the reasons that hold businesses back from hiring immigrant workers?
- What are some common issues in workplaces that hire immigrants?
- What about your work do you think is most effective? What about your work would you like to improve?

Interview Wrap Up (Target: 10 minutes of the interview). This section of the interview included the following questions:

- We're looking to hear from other organizations in the area that help immigrant workers find jobs in Dubuque. Could you recommend another person or organization that we should speak with?
- What else would you like to share about your organization and how it works with Dubuque's immigrant communities?

End of Interview: Thank you for your time!

2. Employers Interview Protocol

To Learn About the Interviewee's Background (Target: 15 minutes of the interview). This section of the interview included the following questions:

- What is your name and title?
- Which company do you work for?
- How many employees do you directly employ?

To Learn About Workforce Needs (Target: 10 minutes of the interview). This section of the interview included the following questions:

- What are your biggest workforce needs?
- What are you looking for in a new worker?
- How many workers do you expect to hire next year?
- How do you expect Covid-19 to impact your business?

To Learn About Immigrants in the Workforce (Target: 20 minutes of the interview). This section of the interview included the following questions:

- Are you currently employing immigrant workers, including people of Guatemalan, Mexican, Marshallese, or another heritage? (Which immigrant communities?)
- Could you tell me more about why (or why not) you're employing immigrants?

If not employing:

- What are your concerns about employing immigrant workers, if any?
- What would make you more likely to hire immigrant workers in the future?

If employing:

- Tell me more about the experience of hiring and working with immigrant workers. Have you done anything to help your immigrant workers adapt to your workplace or perform their job better?
- Have other organizations helped you find immigrant workers? Which ones, and how did they help?
- In your opinion, what are some of the best ways to find and hire immigrant workers?
- Are there any other lessons you've learned about hiring and employing immigrant workers that you can share?
- Are you unique as an employer?
- Unique concerns to immigrant workers that are different to other workers?

Interview Wrap Up (Target: 10 minutes of the interview). This section of the interview included the following questions:

- We're looking to hear from other companies in the area about their workforce needs. Could you recommend another company that we should speak with?
- We're interested in understanding how we can make our analysis useful to business leaders in this community. What types of information do you think would be most helpful to you and other businesses in the area? (Case studies about companies, stories about immigrant workers, 'how-to' guides for how to hire immigrant workers, etc.) What formats would be most accessible? (Short memos, full reports, public meetings, etc)
- Is there anything else about your company's workforce needs that you'd like to share with us?

End of Interview: Thank you for your time!

3. Immigrant Workers Interview Protocol

To Learn About the Interviewee's Background (Target: 15 minutes of the interview). This section of the interview included the following questions:

- What is your name?
- Tell me about how you came to Dubuque. What brought you here?
- Have you enjoyed your time in Dubuque? In the United States? Why or why not?
- How has Covid-19 impacted you?
- What supports do you need to overcome these difficulties (if any)?

To Learn About Work Experiences (Target: 30 minutes of the interview). This section of the interview included the following questions:

- Are you currently working for a company? If so, what is your job?

If working:

- Approximately how many hours do you work each week? Do you want to increase or decrease the number of hours you work?
- Is this your first job in Dubuque, or have you worked for other companies?
- How did you find your current job? Who helped you find it?
- Do you like your job? Are you hoping to keep working there, or would you prefer to work at another job?
- What are your frustrations with your current job? Do you feel comfortable working there?
- Are there companies you don't want to work for? Why not?
- What are some things that you wish your employer would do to help you?
- In what ways do you think Covid-19 has or could impact your job?

If not working:

- Are you looking for a job?
- (if no) Why not?
- (if yes) What is your biggest difficulty in finding a job?
- What type of work are you hoping to do?
- Are there companies you want to work for? Why? Are there companies you don't want to work for? Why?
- What do you think you need to find a good job?
- In what way do you think Covid-19 will impact your ability to get a job?

Interview Wrap Up (Target: 10 minutes of the interview). This section of the interview included the following questions:

- We're looking to hear from other immigrants in the area about their work experiences in Dubuque. Could you recommend another person that we should speak with?
- Is there anything else related to your work and life in Dubuque that you would like to tell us?

End of Interview: Thank you for your time!

Appendix B

Interview Takeaways

Category	Interview	Key Takeaways	Unexpected Finds
Education Leaders	Northeast Iowa Community College (NICC)	<p>1. Flexibility is important for training immigrants, and the NICC is experimenting with it, including by teaching Spanish to managers at the request of specific businesses; sending teachers to job sites, rather than asking employees to come to classrooms; providing childcare on-site for adult learners, rather than a mile down the road.</p> <p>2. Immigrants face many barriers to building skills; people need to put food on the table to support their families and/or send money home, so there's a time constraint. There are also fears that in the current political climate, attending class could lead to being targeted by ICE or police officers.</p> <p>3. More than specific trades like welding and nursing (though there is some of that), most immigrants are learning foundational skills like English, communication, and cultural norms (like timeliness).</p>	<p>- Employers asking for Spanish lessons to communicate with employees.</p> <p>- Importance of childcare onsite.</p>
Education Leaders	University of Dubuque	<p>1. International student services are run almost completely by one person, making it difficult to help with students' job searches and other support that they might need.</p> <p>2. Employers know little about immigration paperwork and have limited to no resources to sponsor students.</p> <p>3. Students report racism in the workplace.</p>	<p>Applications for visas are very expensive and burdensome for students. This is on top of the struggles they already face in terms of finding a job.</p>
Education Leaders	Loras College	<p>1. Domestic students of color have very different profiles than international students at Loras College. Domestic students tend to come from cities in the Midwest, tend to be first-gen and from mixed-status families, tend to go into nonprofits/social work/advocacy, and return home after graduation. International students tend to be wealthier, more focused on making money through business, finance, and pre-law, and seek to stay in the US.</p> <p>2. Businesses often don't understand how to file paperwork for students' alternative work statuses, and the difference between DACA, undocumented, and international work statuses.</p> <p>3. Summer internships are important pathways for international or DACA students to gain an employer's trust and facilitate job offers after graduation. COV-19 has led to cancellation of these programs.</p>	

Education Leaders	Dubuque Community School District	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The School District seems aware of a lot of the systemic problems around engagement but it's unclear how they envision addressing them 2. The school has several highly successful initiatives around free breakfast and lunch and access to computers / internet 	Strong focus on equity
Employers	Reel Core Inc.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The company has become pickier and less desperate about who they hire, which yields higher quality workers 2. Top leadership and middle managers are crucial partners for hiring immigrant workers. In order to shift people's mindsets, you need leadership bought in. 3. Referrals are the best recruiting tool 	Surprisingly few hiccups in integrating a more diverse workforce and a strong commitment to bringing people together
Employers	Travel Dubuque	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Travel and hospitality industry are very heavily hit by the crisis, revenues at zero. Curbside pickup and other activities that can happen during the coronavirus are no replacement for lost revenue from in-person businesses and events; for the most part, they seem to be a way to keep spirits high. 2. Most hospitality companies have retained senior management but laid off or furloughed other employees. Businesses are mostly shut down, and there is great uncertainty 3. Immigrant workers are mostly employed as cleaning staff, in restaurants, etc. Biggest groups: Marshallese and Russian. Legal issues haven't come up in many discussions in the hospitality industry. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Russian immigrants as cleaning staff: this group hasn't come up before. - Legal status of immigrant workers didn't seem to be a focus or concern in the hospitality industry (unlike manufacturing, agriculture, etc)
Public Officers	City of Dubuque	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Focus on mid to long term planning is really useful 2. The city does a lot of translation but other organizations are less consistent 3. Our project's focus on immigrant communities is useful because the city generally focuses on the community as a whole 	
Public Officers	IowaWorks	<p>COVID-19 related:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Immigrant populations are afraid and uninformed, so they don't access medical services <p>Non-COVID-19 related:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. H2A visas do not offer a path to citizenship and are impossible for current undocumented residents to access 2. Trust is key for immigrant populations and without it employers will not be able to reach these workers 3. The best way to relay information to immigrant workers is in person (email and phone is very difficult) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It is very hard for new employers to find workers who do not know about them through word of mouth. - Reduction in seasonal work visas might benefit migrant workers in Iowa because of new openings in the agricultural sector

Support Organizations	Presentation Lantern Center	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Some Marshallese are homeless as they wait for work authorization for months (even though they have authorization) 2. There are some highly skilled immigrants that are starting from scratch as they move to the US 3. Biggest issue for immigrants is immigration status/papers and related problems with the US immigration system 4. Transportation remains a big issue 	There are many other immigrant communities beyond Marshallese/Guatemalan/Hispanic
Support Organizations	GDDC	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Immigrant employment connections largely rely on proactive individuals within companies and immigrant communities. Employers are going out and finding people who are bilingual and have the trust of other immigrants. These bilingual connectors bring along friends and family members, and provide language translation, transportation, and other services for their cohort. 2. It's likely that when jobs become more scarce, resentment for immigrants will build. People will ask: "how come my cousin doesn't have a job, and you're giving a job to an immigrant?" Support for hiring immigrants will be reduced. 3. The best-off immigrants will be those with skills and a job in a company that is somewhat insulated from the economic downturn. The worst-off will be ones without jobs with limited English or formal education, especially since skills training is on hold. 4. GDDC has strong partners on skills development (Career Pathways Certificate at NICC); it lacks resources for visa/legal questions about work authorization. 5. The coronavirus crisis has shifted GDDC's strategic focus on workforce issues from students, colleges, internships to how to help current employees keep their jobs. 	Dubuque's history with recent economic downturns can be a helpful guide to the current one, and merits further study
Support Organizations	Sisters of the Presentation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Children of immigrants take on enormous burdens as translators, caretakers, navigators of life with their families. What does this mean for their psychological well-being, as well as their ability to develop, invest in themselves, and find stable jobs? 2. The problem of not gathering publicly isn't new to the coronavirus: the communities have been living in fear for several years due to the hostile political climate and fears of apprehension from ICE. 3. Some recent events remain in communities' collective memory and shape their behavior today. These include an ICE raid in Postville years ago (prompting fear that ICE will detain them too) and the departure of Ertl manufacturing (prompting misplaced resentment of immigrants for job losses) 	

Support Organizations	Sedona Staffing	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Of immigrants employed in the manufacturing sector, most are Marshallese 2. Clients are 300 businesses in the area with whom they have relationships 3. "family values" and "culture fit" identified as some of the barriers that hold businesses back from hiring immigrant workers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Not much expected impact on the manufacturing sectors due to COVID-19 and employment may increase. - Heard more about immigrants being employed in manufacturing than before (mainly Marshallese)
Support Organizations	Immigration Attorney	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Guatemalan immigrants are looking for different things: some want to stay, while others want to gain an education, earn some money, and return to Guatemala. Knowing this can help service providers give them what they need. 2. Young Guatemalan men (age 16-24) are struggling to adjust most, driven by the immense pressure they feel to provide for themselves and their families and their struggles to learn English. A conversation-based English class just for this cohort could make a big difference in their lives. 3. Guatemalan asylum cases are more likely to be denied than Venezuelan or Nicaraguan, as the violence they suffered is more remote, and their economic reasons are less compelling to judges than political violence. Guatemalans in Iowa suffer an additional barrier of going to Omaha, a much less friendly court on asylum cases than Chicago, which handles asylum cases for Wisconsin and Illinois. 4. There's a lack of trusted staff who can be social workers, personal finance coaches, etc. to this community; volunteers are stretched thin. Adding a few others to help, and helping some Guatemalan immigrants take the next step towards opening bank accounts, getting loans, buying cars, entrepreneurship, etc. would enable them to help their family and friends. 	

Support Organizations	Dubuquers for Refugee Children	<p>1. Guatemalan immigrants work in limited occupations, many of which are vulnerable to the coronavirus. If they don't have work authorization, most work in restaurants, which are either closed or scaled back. If they do, some also seek jobs in warehouses, agriculture, grocery stores, and more.</p> <p>2. Gaining skills and education isn't often a top priority for Guatemalan immigrants - getting a job and earning money to support their families is. As a result, it can be challenging to encourage them to stay in high school or pursue credentials at NICC.</p> <p>3. Guatemalan families often lack Wi-Fi and computers/tablets that would enable them to learn, work, or access services remotely. If families have a child in Dubuque public schools, they are given a laptop and can access a cheap internet subscription (MediaCom's "Connect to Compete" program), which can be a lifeline for the rest of the family.</p> <p>4. The immigration courts are responding to coronavirus as they did during the government shutdown in January 2019; they're only processing cases of currently detained people, and postponing all other asylum cases (after January 2019, it took 6-12 months to reschedule them). This is a problem for immigrants, as postponing asylum hearings pushes back the timeline of when they can apply for a work permit.</p>	
Support Organizations	Sisters of St. Francis of Dubuque	<p>1. No SSN makes it hard for immigrants to keep quality work.</p> <p>2. A lot of the jobs in the restaurant industry are informal and many are being let go right now, without the possibility to access Medicaid or social security benefits.</p> <p>3. Some immigrants' biggest fears during this crisis is that the loss of income will lead to not being able to pay rent.</p> <p>4. Food insecurity is being addresses but housing is the most likely to be threatened.</p>	<p>- Relationship issues due to stress leave families in even more dire situation</p> <p>- A lot of immigrants work even though they don't have documents</p>
Support Organizations	Greater Dubuque Chamber of Commerce	<p>1. The situation is changing every day, businesses are closing and things are constantly shifting.</p> <p>2. The State of Iowa has \$4M and distributed small grants to businesses that were between 2K-2.5K.</p> <p>3. Every single industry and sector will be affected.</p>	Creative solutions are needed to support small businesses and try to help employees to keep working

Support Organizations	Resources Unite!	<p>1. Building trusting relationships matters: how people feel when they walk into the lobby, how you actively listen, being vulnerable with them, asking about their story.</p> <p>2. Non-profits and corporations need best practices to deal with vulnerable populations. You incentivize nonprofits by tying funding to use of best practices, and corporations by surfacing and celebrating stories that showcase best practices (public attention).</p> <p>3. Effective service provision meets more than just immediate material needs, like food, or utility bill payments, or Christmas gifts; it can simultaneously help vulnerable families more broadly through coaching, social connections, and referrals to counselors, employers, colleges, etc. Meeting immediate needs helps get people to show up in the first place.</p>	<p>- Sometimes what people need is someone that can listen to them, understand their longer term needs, their aspirations</p> <p>- One way to understand an immigrant-friendly employer is through their company's volunteering culture.</p>
Volunteers	Volunteer	<p>1. Immigration status and documentation are the most important things for Guatemalan immigrants.</p> <p>2. Students take restaurant jobs because they don't have official authorization, many drop out of school.</p> <p>3. Greater focus on short-term earnings than training for better jobs and higher long-term earning potential.</p>	<p>- Working the night shift in manufacturing jobs (11pm to 7am) is ideal for many families</p> <p>- Deportation is always a possibility that's expected, and they still want to be here for as long as possible to make money and send it back home</p>
Volunteers	Volunteer	<p>1. Most Guatemalan immigrants don't have Green Cards or work authorization, but have managed to get SSNs anyway. As a result, they mainly work in restaurants.</p> <p>2. Youth face difficulties in school and most focus on work instead, they don't end up learning English.</p> <p>3. Ultimately, many Guatemalan immigrants want to work and earn money, and are focused on the short term.</p>	<p>-A lot of potential volunteers, and many are retired</p> <p>-Guatemalan immigrants expect to get deported at some point and just want to earn enough money before then</p>

Volunteers	Volunteer	<p>1. The Marshallese are very isolated from the rest of Dubuque, in part by choice. They are reliant on a handful of community institutions and touchstones for information and guidance: 5 churches, the Crescent Community Health Center, the small staff at the Pacific Islander project, and a few others. They rarely join public events and many adults do not speak English fluently.</p> <p>2. This community is heavily dependent on the Crescent Community Health Center for the medical treatment they need. Accessing health care has been a longstanding need and goal, due to very high rates of diabetes, and it has proven to be an entry point for providing the community more services (including accessing bus passes, learning English, finding jobs, etc)</p> <p>3. Many barriers stand in the way of employment for the community, including health concerns (especially diabetes), limited English (especially for adults), cultural differences (Marshallese tend to run late, do not assert themselves when speaking with outsiders), confusion over their legal work status (legal for COFA refugees, but employers remain concerned due to unfamiliarity with non-green card holders), and aspirations (young people from the community have felt ostracized and unmotivated by school, and some want to return home).</p>	<p>- The Marshallese diaspora extends across the US and has a hub in Springdale, Arkansas.</p> <p>- Young people have felt disengaged and wanting to return home, while adults seem committed to staying.</p>
Immigrants	"Cafe Latino"	<p>1. Information sharing is the largest issue. A resource center that provides legal, political, health, etc related news would be really useful.</p> <p>2. Many service efforts for immigrant communities are driven by everyday people - translating, bank information, health information.</p> <p>3. There is racism and discomfort felt by the Hispanic community in Dubuque</p> <p>4. There is a strong need for translation and information sharing with the Latino community in Dubuque. The City of Dubuque translates their documents, but many other critical service providers (hospitals, non-profits, lawyers) don't.</p>	
Immigrants	Guatemalan	<p>1. Biggest needs are food and rent, but the biggest worry are the kids.</p> <p>2. Spouse in prison, brother was captured and then released by ICE, the fear of deportation is real.</p> <p>3. Have been receiving donated food, which has helped a lot.</p>	<p>- Night shift is best because then they can take kids to school, pick them up, and take care of them before going to work around 8pm.</p>
Immigrants	Guatemalan	<p>1. The worst experience about coming to the US was going through immigration.</p> <p>2. Used to work 5 hours per week because of son's school schedule.</p>	<p>- A fast food chain has verbally said they would take them back after the</p>

		<p>3. Likes job at the fast food chain but is open to doing any job as long as it pays well.</p> <p>4. Doesn't regularly receive information about any services available, and their cell phone is the best way to reach them.</p>	<p>COVID-19 closures, so far they are not receiving any income</p>
Immigrants	Guatemalan	<p>1. Is only here for a temporary visa for 2 years and wants to go back to Guatemala.</p> <p>2. If they could find a higher-paying job that would allow the family to pay for daycare, which is preferred.</p> <p>3. Big barrier of entry is language, particularly when starting a job and trying to learn the ropes with limited ability to communicate</p> <p>4. No information or awareness about COVID-19</p>	<p>- entered the US with daughter because was easier to get work permit with a child</p> <p>- there didn't seem to be any issues right now</p> <p>- thinks they will be able to go back to work anytime</p>
Immigrants	Guatemalan	<p>1. Immediate needs and surviving are top of mind; no room for thinking medium or long term.</p> <p>2. Focused on giving kids more opportunities and access to education, which isn't a possibility in Guatemala.</p> <p>3. They are co-dependent and reliant on people around them, living paycheck to paycheck.</p>	<p>- very difficult to communicate, even in Spanish</p>
Immigrants	Guatemalan	<p>1. Left Guatemala with two of their four kids, and had the others join 1.5 years later as unaccompanied minors. Suggests how important it was for the family to leave.</p> <p>2. Some involvement with the court; got a work permit recently but couldn't find work.</p> <p>3. Illiterate, no writing or reading abilities, and only speaks Ixil, with some fluency in Spanish.</p>	<p>- the only resources that they are aware of are connected to volunteers helping them.</p>
Immigrants	Marshallese	<p>1. Working as a janitor and taking classes for building construction at NICC.</p> <p>2. A nun at the community church signed them up for NICC classes after asking about their work and goals,</p> <p>3. Working full-time despite COVID-19 because feels that they have no choice, but is worried about the coronavirus and doesn't want to put the family at risk.</p>	<p>- very hard to communicate in English</p>
Immigrants	Marshallese	<p>1. Very strong faith, religious beliefs guide entire life and decisions.</p> <p>2. Cares a lot about family</p> <p>3. No COVID-19 related safety measures whatsoever at the dairy farm where they work besides giving out hand sanitizer and masks at the entrance. There is a stigma around masks and fear of contagion.</p> <p>4. Workers seem to continue working their regular hours at the dairy farms</p>	<p>- Takes coronavirus extremely seriously, Doesn't think the company, coworkers, or rest of Dubuque are.</p> <p>- Extremely religious</p> <p>- Marshallese community seems to be pretty aware of the risks and finding ways to stay connected</p>

