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Champions of Change: Immigrant Integration

Posted by Felicia Escobar on May 31, 2011 at 04:57 PM EDT

Editor's Note: Champions of Change is a weekly initiative to highlight Americans who are making an impact in their communities and help our country rise to the many challenges of the 21st century.

As the President said in his 2011 State of the Union Address to Congress, "we are the first nation to be founded for the sake of an idea – the idea that each of us deserves the chance to shape our own destiny. That's why centuries of pioneers and immigrants have risk everything to come here...the future is ours to win. But to get there, we cannot stand still." Earlier this month, we held a [roundtable discussion](#) at the White House with Administration officials and a group of impressive community leaders who are helping the current generation of immigrants and refugees successfully integrate and thrive in their new communities.

From San Diego, CA to Utica, NY, these leaders are true [Champions of Change](#). They are answering the [President's call](#). They are not standing still. They are working every day to connect immigrants with critical services to learn English and assist in the naturalization process. They are also helping these newcomers start businesses and obtain jobs in critical fields like the health care industry, allowing them to use the professional skills, expertise, and experience they brought with them to their new country, which benefits all Americans. And by developing intergenerational programs that bring together elderly immigrants and young people and help students learn about the process of becoming a citizen, these Champions of Change are connecting newcomers to the communities where they are settling, promoting greater understanding, and inspiring pride in America.

The roundtable discussion also allowed us to highlight important conversations taking place within the Administration about the federal role in the important process of integrating immigrants into the fabric of our society. We have been particularly focused on three important facets of integration - civic, linguistic, and economic integration. Through the roundtable discussion, we identified best practices and gained helpful insight into how the federal government can shine a spotlight on successful models of immigrant integration and a convener of the diverse stakeholders involved in this dynamic process. We will soon be taking this conversation on the road, and are excited to learn more about the [work of others across the country](#). You can also [host a roundtable](#) on immigration reform in your community. Our goal is to gather feedback and develop a federal strategy on immigrant integration.

The United States has long been a beacon of hope and opportunity for people from around the world. Our success as a nation of immigrants is deeply rooted in the American values of equality and opportunity, which secure our commitment to fully welcome and integrate newcomers into our nation. Successful integration is part of President Obama's vision for winning the future. These efforts benefit not only immigrants and their families, but also strengthen our communities and our nation as a whole. We invite you to learn more about the work of these Champions of Change in the field of immigrant integration.

See more about [Immigration](#)

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