

BUSH FOUNDATION
Immigrant & Refugee Grantmaking Overview
July 2008

Intent of the Foundation

A March 2001 internal memo from Jane Kretzmann to the Bush Board of Directors states, "Like the bulk of other human services grantmaking, refugee/immigrant funding has proceeded in response to proposals." However, it is incorrect to conclude that staff has not been intentional in their review and recommendations of proposals targeting Immigrant/Refugee (I/R) populations. In an earlier (spring 1990) staff overview of Bush grantmaking for Southeast Asian refugees in Minnesota, Kretzmann wrote that "the Bush staff has favored proposals with the following characteristics: those which would strengthen a community's capacity to manage new life in America, which had credibility within the refugee community, and which developed or improved a current system of services." In a 2000 report Marg Walker Bringewatt also observed that the "most effective organizations seem to be those which demonstrate their commitment to the new group by recruiting staff or board members from that population."

According to John H. Kohring (2002), what is unique about I/R communities is that "immigration laws are subject to frequent change according to political developments." He notes that the Foundation's "open door" policy for human service grant requests has allowed Bush "to respond successfully to rapid developments" and be a major funder for projects that provide legal services for immigrants.

Body of Work

To date, 449 proposals requesting support for programs or services targeting I/R populations have been reviewed:

	Approved	Amount	Declined	Amount
1972 – 1999	109	\$7,000,383	63	\$3,530,336
2000 – 2008	167	\$22,956,237	110	\$13,835,748
TOTALS	276	\$29,956,620	173	\$17,366,084

Summary of Grants Made

The first grants coded as serving I/R populations were made to organizations serving primarily Spanish-speaking populations between 1972 and 1988. A legacy of Bush grants during this time period is a 1972 grant made to Ramsey Action Programs, Inc. to establish the West Side Community Health Center, otherwise known as La Clinica, in Saint Paul. Beginning in 1989, the growing Southeast Asian populations presented more immediate needs. Bush grants helped establish or strengthen the growing number of Mutual Assistance Associations (MAAs), defined by the federal Office of Refugee Resettlement as "incorporated self-help organizations whose board and staff are refugees or former refugees." Examples include Lao Family of Minnesota, Vietnamese Social Services, and the Centre for Asians and Pacific Islanders.

A 2001 Bush grant also supported a partnership between Lao Family of Minnesota, the Lao Veterans of America, and the Southern Minnesota Regional Legal Services that helped an estimated 20,000 Hmong and Lao veterans (and their spouses and widows) take a simplified and standardized U.S. citizenship test in their own language. Many

Hmong and Lao cast their votes for the first time in electing state Representative Cy Thao (BAF) and state Senator Mee Moua.

In 1996 grant made to Pillsbury Neighborhood Services to hire an English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher and an advocate for the growing Somali population in Minneapolis' Cedar Riverside neighborhood aided the development of the Confederation of Somali Community in Minnesota, which continues to be a critical force in Cedar Riverside and promises to break new ground in Somali women's centers and day care services.

Most recently, two Southeast Asian MAAs requested Bush support to hire Karen refugee staff to work with the growing number of Karen families and youth in the metropolitan area. The legacy lives on.

Reports/Evaluations

- 1) Kretzmann, Jane. "Bush grantmaking for Southeast Asian refugees in Minnesota: A brief staff overview." 1990
- 2) Kretzmann, Jane. "Refugee and Immigrant cluster evaluation: Suggestions for next steps." 3/6/01 Internal Memo
- 3) Gehrman, Richard and Associates. "The Bush Foundation assessment of services for immigrants and refugees in Minnesota." April 2000
- 4) Walker Bringewatt, Margaret. 2-Part report – "Funding for Refugee/Immigrant Programs: A profile of Bush Foundation grants 1988-1998" and "Challenges in Grantmaking for Refugee/Immigrant programs: A summary of interviews with Bush Foundation board, staff, and consultants." 6/15/00
- 5) Kohring, John H. "A report to the Bush Foundation on legal services for immigrants, refugees, and asylees." 3/1/02

The Foundation's staff and grantmaking legacy in Minnesota's I/R communities has also contributed to national publications by Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees (GCIR), including

- 1) "Pursuing democracy's promise: Newcomer civic participation in America." 2004
- 2) "Investing in our communities: Strategies for immigrant integration." 2006
- 3) "Expanding immigrant and refugee funding in Minnesota: What foundations and nonprofits can do." 2007

Other

The Twin Cities has been selected as one of four sites (Utica, NY; Denver, CO; and Chicago, IL) has been selected by the Immigrant Integration Work Group (IWG) of the federal Office of Refugee Resettlement to do a case study of immigrant integration. The IWG's definition of integration is "a dynamic, multicultural process in which refugees and the receiving communities intentionally work together, based on a shared commitment to acceptance and justice to create a secure, welcoming, vibrant, and cohesive society." The plan aims to focus on individuals and groupings who have demonstrated the important component of the definition, i.e., refugees and the receiving communities working together. GCIR's working definition of immigrant integration is "a dynamic, two-way process in which newcomers and the receiving society work together to build secure, vibrant, cohesive communities."

This appears to be an excellent opportunity within our new "Leadership/Capacity Building for Problem Solving" goal.