



OVERVIEW OF THE IMMIGRANT SERVICES NETWORK OF AUSTIN

A collaborative response to immigrant issues in Central Texas

City of Austin Commission on Immigrant Affairs – April 8, 2013

Brief History and Context

History



- First iteration of ISNA in 2003 as a quarterly networking/educational group
- Travis County HHS/VS staff (Research & Planning) stewarded processes to:
 - ▣ Conduct the Immigrant Assessment, 2006-2007
 - ▣ Present findings at a Community Forum, June 2007
 - ▣ Provided ongoing staff support to ISNA, 2007- 2012
 - ▣ Revise the Immigrant Assessment, 2010
- Building on the Assessment and its findings, ISNA took the lead as a planning and action body around immigrant issues

Our Mission and Vision

□ **Mission**

ISNA is a working group of diverse community stakeholders and immigrant service providers operating together to *coordinate efforts, increase public awareness, and inform policy*, in order to better serve the immigrant community.

□ **Vision**

ISNA promotes the success and well-being of immigrants in order to secure the long-term prosperity of the entire community.

Our Values Platform



- We share information with each other, and educate and outreach to the community at large
- We come together in order to have a stronger, broader voice on immigrant issues
- We maintain ISNA as a neutral, non-political arena where stakeholders can convene in order to work towards local solutions
- We engage and remain in dialogue with partners from all issue areas and sectors
- We support one another in our respective work to care for the immigrant community
- We respect the dignity and humanity of all immigrants, regardless of status

Our Role in the Community



- Neutral Convener
 - ▣ A place where *all* parties can engage in a dialogue
- Non-Political
 - ▣ Immigrant well-being and community prosperity as a framework
- Inclusive Membership and Scope
 - ▣ Any person or organization who embraces the values platform has a right to participate
 - ▣ A forum to address a broad range of immigrant issues

Our Membership

Member Agencies

- ❑ American Gateways*
- ❑ Any Baby Can
- ❑ Austin Community College
- ❑ Austin Free-Net
- ❑ Austin Police Department, Victim Services
- ❑ Austin Police Department, Office of Community Liaison
- ❑ Austin Public Library
- ❑ AVANCE Austin
- ❑ Caritas of Austin
- ❑ Casa Marianella
- ❑ English at Work*
- ❑ Foundation Communities / Community Tax Centers*
- ❑ Holy Word Lutheran Church*
- ❑ The Law Offices of Thomas Esparza, Jr.
- ❑ Literacy Coalition of Central Texas
- ❑ SafePlace
- ❑ Saheli
- ❑ St. Helen Catholic Church*
- ❑ Travis County Health and Human Services & Veterans Service
- ❑ Travis County Health and Human Services, Research and Planning Division
- ❑ Travis County Sheriff's Office
- ❑ Travis County Sheriff's Office, Victim Services
- ❑ And individual volunteers*

**Denotes an agency or group represented on the Steering Committee in 2013.*

Our Membership, cont.



Other Contributors

- ❑ City of Austin Commission on Immigrant Affairs
- ❑ City of Austin Health and Human Services Department
- ❑ Compass Bank
- ❑ Consulate General of Mexico
- ❑ Goodwill Industries of Central Texas
- ❑ Grass Roots Leadership
- ❑ The Police Monitor
- ❑ Refugee Services of Central Texas
- ❑ Texas Civil Rights Project
- ❑ Texas Council on Family Violence
- ❑ Texas Rio Grade Legal Aid
- ❑ U.S. Citizenship & Immigration Service
- ❑ Workers Defense Project/Proyecto Defensa Laboral (PDL)
- ❑ And individual volunteers

Our Current Work

Immigrant Services Resource Directory

- **Product:** A directory of services needed by immigrants, including healthcare, English language instruction, basic needs, and more.
- **Purpose:** This referral resource will help effectively resettle immigrants in a respectful, efficient way by allowing them to gain access to appropriate, critical services.
- **Uses:** Intended for case workers and service providers to improve information and referral.
- **Access:** Completed in January 2010 and available for download on the ISNA website.

Family Safety Planning Toolkit

- **Product:** A workbook with tools and worksheets addressing “Know Your Rights” information, family and children’s safety (including communication, guardianship, and medical planning), financial and legal planning, etc.
- **Purpose:** To educate immigrant residents about their rights, and to assist individuals and families with preparing an emergency plan for their household.
- **Uses:** Providers working with immigrants can use the toolkit to help them plan for their families’ well-being. Providers can also distribute materials to clients.
- **Access:** Completed in April 2010 and available for download on the ISNA website

Immigrant Public Safety Training

- **Product:** A public safety training, being developed in partnership between ISNA and the Austin Police Department
- **Purpose:** To increase immigrants' awareness of U.S. laws and their understanding of their rights and responsibilities as Austin residents
- **Uses:** Interactive training conducted by APD officers and cadets, within the agency setting, to increase public safety knowledge and build trust in law enforcement

Educational Roundtables



- Legislative Monitoring
 - ▣ Policy analyst guest speakers from Texas Council on Family Violence and American Civil Liberties Union
- Immigrants, Public Safety and Local Law Enforcement
 - ▣ Guest Speakers from APD (Chief of Police) and TCSO (Lieutenant Day Watch East)
- Federal Enforcement under a New Administration
 - ▣ Guest speakers from U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (San Antonio Field Office Director) and U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (Area Director)

Welcoming Initiative – (retired)

- **Product:** A toolkit for speaking ambassadors
- **Purpose:** To change public dialogue and opinion about immigrants in Austin through public education
- **Uses:** Training and presentations at schools, churches, civic organizations, etc.

Legal Services Workgroup (retired)

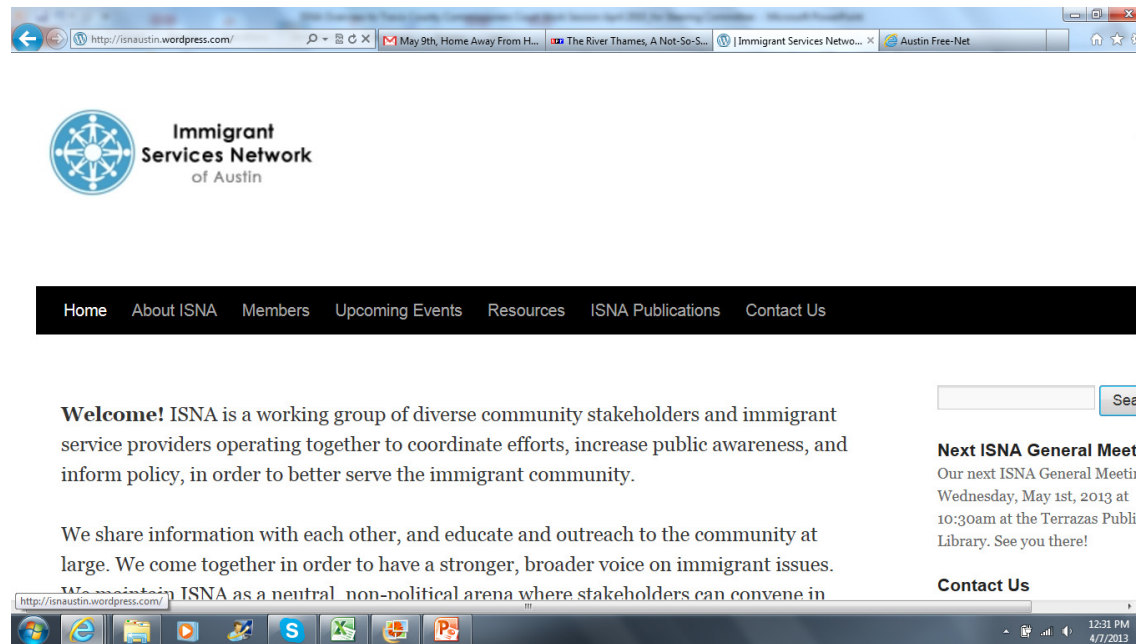
- **Products:**

- A networked group of legal service providers in Austin and San Antonio who meet every 2-3 months
- A Capacity Inventory of their U, T, and VAWA cases, updated quarterly and posted online

- **Purpose:** Coordination and communication on a regional level will enable:

- Better readiness to respond to emerging community needs
- Better preparedness for potential federal policy changes

New ISNA Website



- <http://isnaustin.wordpress.com/>
- Download all of the products discussed today

Looking to the Future ...

2013 Projects and Plans



- ❑ Collaborate with AISD on Summer 2013 outreach event
- ❑ Continue outreach/distribution of completed publications
- ❑ Continue the Immigrant Public Safety Training program
- ❑ Continue to monitor emerging issues (e.g. 2013 Legislative Session) and respond to community needs as they arise
- ❑ Continue educational roundtables

Key “Take Home” Messages

- Immigrants are a key population in the City of Austin/ Travis County
- ISNA has been and continues to be a good investment – a platform to build on
- Travis County’s support was crucial in the past; ISNA is now actively seeking additional and diverse partnerships to sustain its institutional structure and work
- We are a resource to you for knowledge/expertise and connection to the immigrant community

For More Information

- ❑ Attend our monthly meetings:
 - ❑ First Wednesday of every month, 10:30am at the Terrazas Branch Library (1105 East Cesar Chavez 78702)
- ❑ Contact a Chair:
 - ❑ Amy Thompson, saferepatriation@gmail.com
- ❑ Visit the ISNA website: <http://isnaustin.wordpress.com/>

Our publications and tools are available online, including the 2010 Immigrant Community Profile.