

A BRIEF HISTORY OF IMMIGRANT SERVICES AT YWCA MANKATO

2005

More than **13,000** immigrants from **150 countries** arrived in Minnesota—a historic high at the time. (1)

In 2006, St. Olaf Professor Joseph Mbele presented at the Lincoln Community Center to discuss **cultural clashes** among immigrants and refugees and local residents, including the **challenges that parents face raising children** in an entirely different environment. (2)

In 2008, Governor Tim Pawlenty issued an **executive order to e-verify all names of new hires** through a Department of Homeland Security database, which made it virtually impossible for immigrants to obtain a job. (3)

2010

More than **1,200** immigrant and refugee families lived in the Mankato area. (4)

2014

Every **1 in 6** children aged 0-9 in Minnesota was the child of an immigrant. (5)



2016

In a report, "[c]hildren with at least one foreign-born parent were **less likely to be up-to-date on recommended immunizations** at ages 2, 6, 18 and 36 months than were children with two U.S.-born parents." (6)

On August 5, 2017, the **Dar Al-Farooq Islamic Center near Minneapolis was bombed**, instilling fear in the growing Muslim communities in Minnesota. (8)

2018

Mankato welcomed a total of **209** refugees from **15** countries. (9)

On August 8, 2018, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) raided workplaces and targeted communities across Minnesota and Nebraska, **arresting 133 immigrant workers**. This was just one of the many raids wreaking havoc throughout the country. (10)

2019

Newly-elect Minnesota Governor, Tim Walz, supports a **path to citizenship** with the enforcement of employer labor laws.



YWCA Mankato is **1 of 32** YWCAs in the U.S. that provides immigrant and refugee services as a major program.

2006

YWCA Mankato launched **Walking in Two Worlds**, a program designed to reduce social isolation and create community among long-time and new residents.



2012

Ready to Learn began as an initiative of Walking in Two Worlds. This **volunteer-based** program focused on **pre-K instruction** of immigrant and refugee families.

2014

Ready to Learn launched a summer program to help prevent isolation through **pre-K learning and play** for the **entire family**.

In 2016, Kelli Damlo, Program Manager of Ready to Learn, gave a testimony to the Minnesota Legislature in favor of **early childhood education for immigrant and refugee populations** and its impact in the community; because it directly fulfilled the policy goals of the MinneMinds Coalition and the Minnesota Targeted Home Visiting Coalition, it served as an ideal example to gain legislative support. (7)

2017

New American Families staff, along with Early Childhood Family Education, piloted **parenting circles** for refugee mothers.

2018 - TODAY

New American families provides comprehensive home visiting with culturally competent and bilingual staff, focusing on **maternal and child health, school readiness, and family wellbeing**.



YWCA continues to provide home visiting services and works toward **eliminating racism and empowering women** through the promotion of peace, justice, freedom and dignity for all.

NEW AMERICAN FAMILIES' IMPACT IN THE COMMUNITY

In 2006, Minnesota was home to the largest **Somali** population, the largest **Oromo** population of Ethiopians, and the second largest group of **Tibetans** in the United States. (1)

2006

Static magazine reported that Walking in Two Worlds has helped one Paraguayan woman "get a feel for the area and gave her an **opportunity to get to know other people** in the community." (2)



2010 - 2012

Colorful Dialogue, another component of Walking in Two Worlds, was a community forum designed for **immigrants and refugees to share perspectives** as newcomers, discuss **community building topics**, and practice English in a natural setting.

"We were looking for ways to **connect immigrants and Americans** to other community members [...]"
-Anne Ganey, 2011 (3)

2014

"The mother expressed that the volunteer was the best volunteer she has had! She was dedicated and took the time to **understand what the children needed**." (4)



2006 - TODAY

New American Families has received **consistent support from credible agencies**, such as Greater Mankato Area United Way, L&N Andreas Foundation, Blue Cross Blue Shield of MN, and private foundations, including Kay & Lyle Jacobsen.



In the home, in school, and in the greater community—**YWCA is on a Mission.**

2006

As part of Walking in Two Worlds, **Cecil's Table** and **cooking classes** provided outlets for sharing and appreciating others' cultures.



2009 - 2011

New American Families provided a **public face** for immigrants through events, such as the **International Festival of Fashion**, as a form of **advocacy and community engagement**.



2014

After only two years in existence, Ready to Learn home visits receive positive feedback from noticeable **improvement in reading and adaptive functioning**. The program has also provided an outlet to work on social skills. (4)

2012: **49** children served
2013: **52** children served
2014: **73** children served
2015: **129** children served*

2014

78% of children who finished Ready to Learn and entered kindergarten scored **normal or above normal developmental range** on their final Ages & Stages assessment. (5)



TODAY

New American Families continues to provide **material goods, family support, and community navigation**, along with parenting circles and home visiting, to immigrant and refugee women and their families.

(1) Minnesota's global focus: An immigrant story.
(2) *Static*.
(3) Mankato Magazine.
(4) MN Compass.
(5) ENR RFP 05.
(6) "Policy Agenda" and "Policy".
(7) *Static*.
(8) *Static*.
(9) "Program Highlights".
(10) *Static*.

(1) Olson J, citing Advocates for Human Rights.
(2) *Static*.
(3) Olson J, interview with A. Ganey.
(4) Damlo and Nguyen.
(5) Olson and Olson.
(6) Murray 2.
(7) Damlo.
(8) *Static*.
(9) *Static*.
(10) *Static*.

How does home visiting target these impact areas of focus?

Here is the truth from a real New American Families participant.

"[R]acial and ethnic groups in Minnesota face **significant barriers to care** and high levels of **adverse health outcomes.**" (1)

Somali immigrant women in Minnesota encounter **barriers to cervical cancer screening**, one of which includes a **lack of trust in interpreters.** (2)

In 2016, **20 percent** of immigrants in Minnesota **did not have health insurance** (3).



Home visiting allows families to build meaningful relationships with **culturally-competent and bilingual** Outreach Workers. We actively work to **connect caregivers to local health services**, although there is a need for more healthcare providers who share the same characteristics as our Outreach Workers.



One woman from South Sudan recalled the difficulties of moving to the U.S.—not knowing English, the residents, or how to rent an apartment without a background check or an income. "They're thinking we're bad people because we don't have a background check," she explained. At the time, she had a small child and was pregnant. She described how scary it was to uproot her and her family's lives, but this quickly changed for the better when she joined Walking in Two Worlds several years ago. She remembered planting beans and okra in the garden, going to community events and dinner with friends, and participating in the International Festival of Fashion. **"These people from here, appreciate them. That's why I'm still here."** Now, after living in her apartment with her husband and children for 11 years, she and her family have moved into their own four-bedroom home. She works at night and attends ELL classes during the day, and her oldest daughter is going to college. She shared her desires to keep going to school and to help others like her as they work to build new lives here in Mankato. **"I want to help people because so many helped me."**

"By 2020 Minnesota will have more retirees than school children, and migration will become the **largest source of new workers** in the state" (5).

In 2016, **72.7 percent** of the foreign-born population 16 and older were in the civilian workforce, compared to **69.1 percent U.S.-born.** (6)

In 2006, the **Latino workforce added approximately \$484 million per year** in South Central Minnesota, which lowered tax rates for non-Latino residents. (7)

Empowerment & Economic Advancement

Our home visiting services address economic wellbeing in low-income families through **early childhood education.** We strive to prepare immigrant and refugee children ages 0-5 with the **academic and social skills** needed to succeed in a new school environment, as well as foster parent-child relationship building. **Preparing for kindergarten = preparing for the future.**



"We might do certain things wrong in the system, but **we're people contributing to Minnesota.** We have a lot of businesses. We have a great economical impact on Minnesota with our businesses. **We're people with ambitions.**" (9)



Domestic work, largely occupied by women of color and immigrant women,

encompasses jobs such as house cleaning, nannies, and care workers. They experience economic and emotional hardship due to a lack of benefits and sick time, a disuse of official contracts, irregular pay, and abuse and injury on the job (8)

Racial Justice & Civil Rights

New American Families **illuminates** immigrant and refugee experiences and **empowers** families through knowledge and skill building to lead successful lives in their community, while also finding ways in which to **maintain their native culture and practices.** Keeping immigrant and refugee women and their families at the forefront of our focus, we strive for **racial justice and equality among all.**



"The blunt weapon that is the U.S. immigration-enforcement apparatus is being wielded against a widening swath of the immigrant community, **regardless of their ties to this country,** regardless of whether or not they are actually criminals" (10).

In 2018: Thelma, a woman of color, and her family were **evicted from their home** in Faribault, MN, and one neighbor told Thelma that she should **"go back where she came from"** (11).

Maria de Pineda, a mother of three and residing in Nobles Co., MN, was held in jail even after her bond was paid. **"It is trauma. What they have done. Psychologically. Not just to me, but to my children,"** she says. (12)

The federal administration **barred an unaccompanied immigrant minor** in federal custody from **obtaining an abortion** for a month. (13)



YWCA Mankato is dedicated to eliminating racism, empowering women and promoting peace, justice, freedom and dignity for all.



(1) Pomeroy 20
 (2) Ghelani et al.
 (3) Zeng et al.
 (4) Minnesota Health Disparities Initiative 2014-16
 (5) Pomeroy 22
 (6) "Minnesota Demographics & Issues"
 (7) Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights
 (8) Burstein 23, 24
 (9) Interview with M. Doh. Interview, "Recovering Minnesota: Stories of Resilient Immigrants and Refugees."
 (10) Dering et al.
 (11) Goodman
 (12) "ACLU Litigates Challenge to Minnesota County Detention Policy"
 (13) "Supreme Court Issues Decision in Jane Doe Abortion Case"