



VOCATIONAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMS FOR SOUTHERN MAINE'S NEW IMMIGRANTS



November, 2013



Outreach to Underserved Populations

- Part of HUD Grant requirement
- U-POPs identified as people who typically are marginalized from public outreach process
- HUD places high priority on:
 - ▣ Immigrant populations
 - ▣ Homeless people
 - ▣ People with generational economic disadvantage
 - ▣ Persons with disabilities
 - ▣ Rural impoverished populations
 - ▣ Minorities in disadvantaged neighborhoods

Outreach to Underserved Populations

- The model: Manchester Community College
 - Partnership for Inclusive, Cost-Effective Public Participation: Champion of Change Award
- SSM Version
 - ▣ Work with USM anthropology students
 - Expanded scope outreach efforts
 - Included students in outreach process

Outreach to Underserved Populations

Focus Groups

- Immigrants
- Refugees
- Generationally economically disadvantaged
- Veterans
- Elderly

Outreach to Underserved Populations

Focus Groups

- Subsidized housing residents in Biddeford
- Dinner at Parkside Neighborhood Center with elderly living below the poverty level
- Multiple ESL classes conducted by Portland Adult Education and LearningWorks with both refugees and long term immigrants
- Tenants' meeting at Riverton Park Housing Complex
- Veteran support group in Springvale
- Homeless Voices for Justice at the Preble Street Resource Center
- Central African Dinner at Parkside Neighborhood Center attended by recent and long term African immigrants

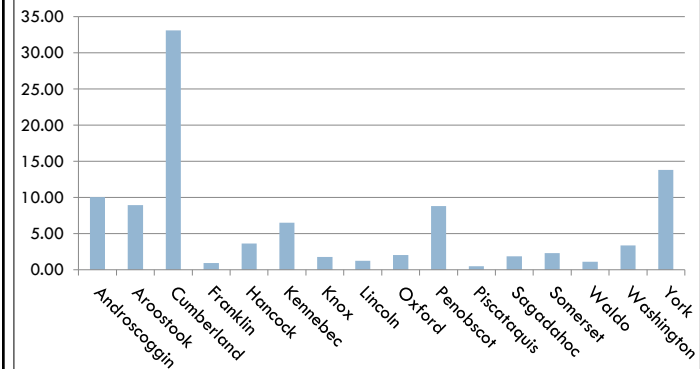
Outreach to Underserved Populations

- Topics discussed included positives and negatives around:
 - Choice of location/community
 - Housing
 - Transportation
 - Jobs

Outreach to Underserved Populations

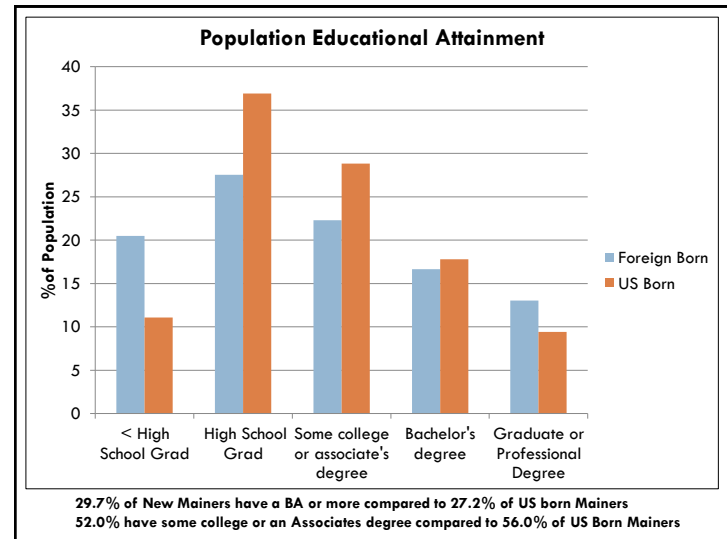
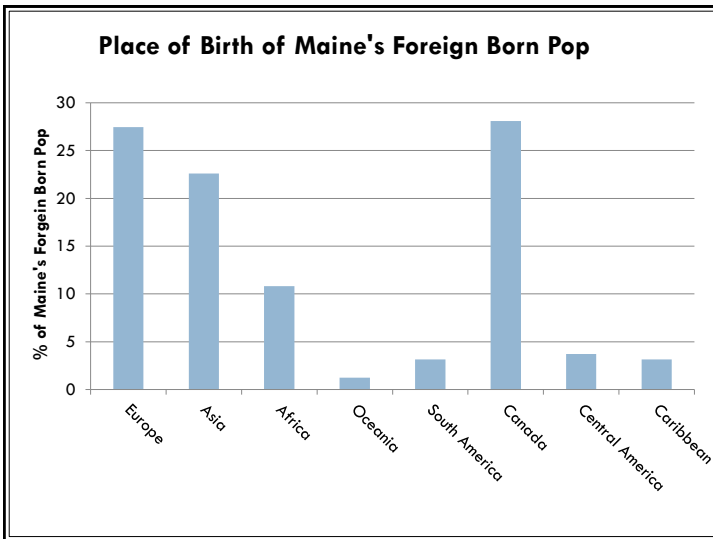
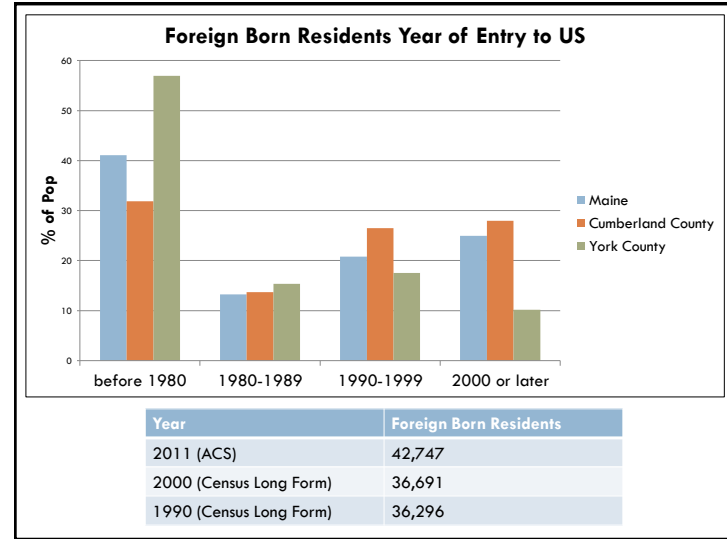
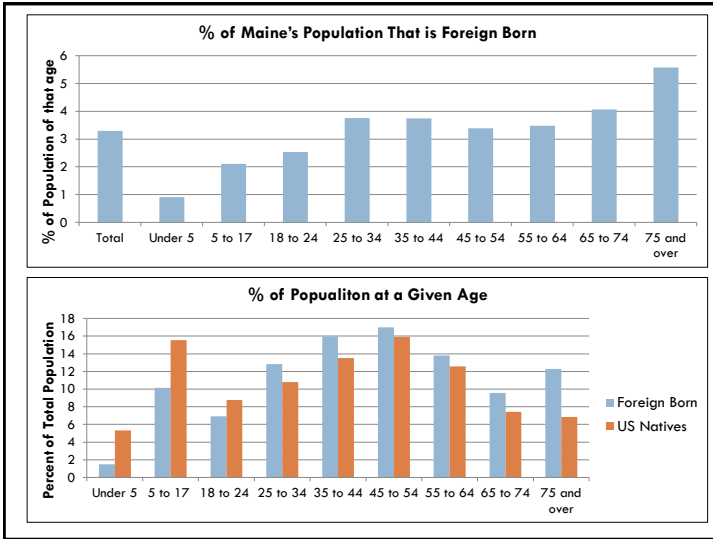
- What we heard:
 - "(Maine) is beautiful, has access to outdoors, friendly and accepting people...excellent education system"
 - "Community is safe", "Orderly and lawful"
 - "Lacks place to associate with others from homeland...or assimilate with the Maine community"
 - "Tenant and landlord rights not well understood"
 - "Affordable housing is often in poor condition"
 - "There is...poor diversity in housing unit size"
 - "Transit is insufficient"
 - Poor matching of skills to jobs...prefer to use skills from homeland
 - Desire short-term, not long-term assistance

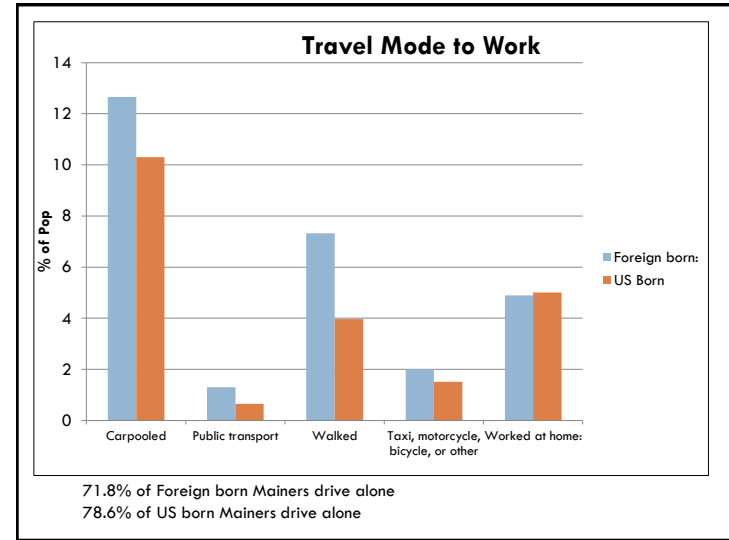
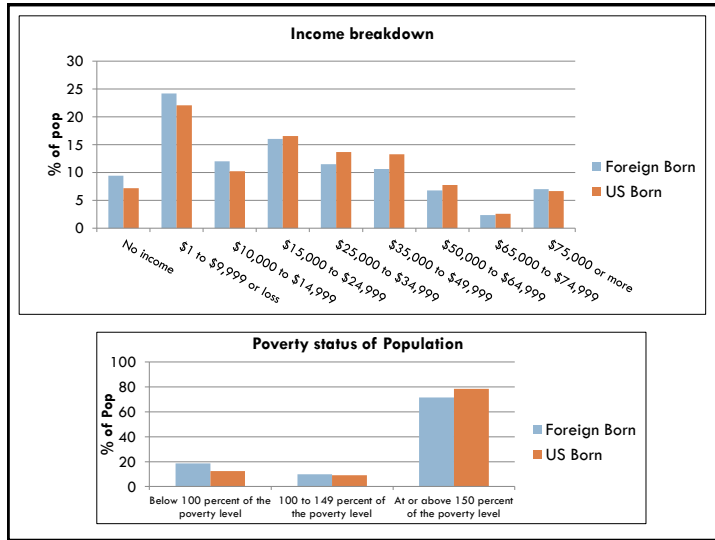
% of Maine's Foreign born Pop in each County



3.29% of Maine's Population is Foreign Born.


33.1% of Maine's foreign born population lives in Cumberland county and 13.8% live in York County, Making for 46.9% living in "Southern Maine".





Immigrants in the U.S. Labor Force

- 32% of all U.S. immigrants have a bachelor's or higher
- 22% of U.S. immigrants are underemployed, compared to native-born average of 16%
- Among U.S. immigrants with a master's degree or higher:
 - ▣ On average, each individual paid \$22,500 in total taxes, but only consumed \$2,300 in government services (in 2009)
 - ▣ Each 100 immigrant workers who have advanced degrees creates 44 other new jobs (86 other new jobs when immigrants are working in STEM fields)



(Source www.imprintproject.org)
IMPRINT is a national umbrella group of nonprofits supporting professional re-entry of underemployed skilled immigrants.

Developing the Recommendations

Follow-up to Knowledge Sharing Session:

- 1) Cataloged existing services, noting unmet needs
- 2) Incorporated outreach by USM and SSM
- 3) Included information from Portland Adult Education and Maine Association for New Americans
- 4) Conducted research to find national solutions applicable to SSM region

Cataloging Existing Vocational Services for Immigrants

- Developed inventory of 40+ vocational programs categorized by organization type, geography, etc.
- Includes summary of program offering
- Distributed list to stakeholders for review

Recommendation Categories

- Capital Improvements
- Community Advocacy / Education
- Improved Processes
- Research

Capital Improvements

- 1) Creation of an umbrella organization to facilitate vocational service provider coordination throughout the SSM Region.
Example: Portland Adult Education 2 Year Pilot Project
- 2) Support creation of mixed use immigrant housing / resource center or centers in the region
Example: Portland Adult Education / AVESTA Collaboration

Community Advocacy / Education

- 3) Assist immigrants with overcoming English barrier
- 4) Increase immigrant familiarity with U.S. systems
- 5) Increase internship / on-site immersion programs
- 6) Provide low / no interest microloans for startups
- 7) Provide legal services allowing immigrant workforce entry

8) Form Volunteer Welcoming Committee

WELCOMING
AMERICA



▲ *Building a Nation of Neighbors*

Community Advocacy / Education

- 9) Communicate benefits of immigrant's to public officials
- 10) Provide workforce development training to immigrant services staff
- 11) Increase outreach to business community
- 12) Coordinate legislation with state government
- 13) Convene immigration service providers at state level
- 14) Build and maintain online resources

Improved Processes

- 15) Establish structures to identify and support immigrants with professional or other advanced skills
- 16) Use "Fast-track" case by case management approach for different types of professionals
- 17) Improve access to transportation for new immigrants

Research Initiatives

- 18) Collect data on immigrant job skills and education
- 19) Identify workforce gaps that could be filled by immigrant's existing skills set
- 20) Proactively plan for immigrant inclusion in centers of opportunity
- 21) Perform international economic research to leverage immigrant language and professional skills
- 22) Produce economic impact analysis showing difference between immigrants working in skilled vs. unskilled positions

Questions or Comments?



*Partnering to strengthen our economy,
environment and community*