Essential Services in Contra Costa County in Times of a Pandemic

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Overview

- **Statistics**: Overview of the foreign population in Contra Costa County
- **Interviews**: We looked into Health Clinics, Food Banks and Schools in order to make an assessment about the available resources to migrants in Contra Costa
- **Recommendations**: How these organizations can improve their services and what the County, State, and Federal government can do to assist them
Contra Costa Population - Major Ethnic Groups

24% of the foreign born population are Mexican Immigrants

Data Gathered through Social Explorer Using ACS 2018 (5 year Estimates)
Contra Costa Naturalized Foreign-Born

Percentage of Naturalized Foreign-Born Citizens by Region of Birth & Mexico

Data Gathered through US Census Using ACS 2018 (5 year Estimates)
Contra Costa Population- Proportion of Foreign Born

25% of the population is foreign born

54% of the foreign born population has US Citizenship

Data Gathered through US Census Using ACS 2018 (5 year Estimates)
Health Clinics & Foreign Born Population Without Health Insurance

2. Richmond: 5 Health Clinics + 2 Clinics dedicated to mental health services
3. Antioch: 3 Health Clinics
4. Pittsburg: 3 Health Clinics
5. Brentwood: 2 Health Clinics
6. Martinez: 2 Health Clinics
7. Oakley: 2 Health Clinics
8. Pinole: 1 Health Clinic
9. Walnut Creek: 1

Source: Berkeley Interdisciplinary Migration Initiative (BIMI) Map
Covid-19 Resources and Immigrants

Looked into Health Clinics, Food Pantries, Schools

- **Resources We Found Useful**
  - Contra Costa Food Distribution Map
    - [https://cocogis.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=fea1f3021a60455495b7e7e11325ecd4](https://cocogis.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=fea1f3021a60455495b7e7e11325ecd4)
  - BIMI Map
    - [https://shiny.demog.berkeley.edu/bimi/CENSUS/](https://shiny.demog.berkeley.edu/bimi/CENSUS/)
  - Contra Costa and Solano Food Bank
    - Manage multiple sites in Contra Costa
  - SHARE Food Pantry
  - George and Cynthia Wellness Center
  - Bay Point Family Health Center
  - Contra Costa County Office of Education
Interviews

Health

Food Accessibility

Students Wellbeing

Legal Aid
Health Clinic Interviews: George and Cynthia Wellness Center & The Bay Point Family Health Center

Interviewed the phone line Advice Nurses

- Receive monetary aid by the County
- Expressed the insufficient amount of face masks and safety gloves
- Recruit interpreters and are bilingual
- Hesitant to complete the interview
Our Recommendations for Assisting Health Clinics

Clinics need to be more accessible and inclusive.

- Clinics need to be more accessible and inclusive during these difficult times. In doing so, they should remove the troubling requirements of needing a member ID number or SSN to be helped through phone services. This could insure that the foreign-born population receives medical support.

- Clinical facilities who are operating remotely through phone services need to create other language options when using audio recordings that inform callers about the health line options. The majority of clinics only had an english as a default.
Language Abilities in Contra Costa

124,866 immigrants face language barriers

Interview: Contra Costa and Solano Food Bank
Policy and Advocacy Manager: Cassidie Carmen Bates

Overview of Organization:

- 6% of their budget is from the government; over 90% of budget is from grants and individual donations
- Serves around 178 thousand people every month
- Food distribution
  - Non-profit that manages over 200 food distribution sites in Contra Costa and Solano and partners with over 180 NGOs that provide food assistance and emergency services
- Collaborates with schools and churches to provide meals
- CalFresh outreach team
  - Help food bank goers apply for social services available to them
Poverty Status Among Foreign-Born in Contra Costa

Data Gathered from American FactFinder Using ACS 2013-2017 Estimates
Economic Status - Vulnerability of Immigrant Population

About 63% of the Foreign-Born population make LESS than $75,000

Data Gathered through US Census Using ACS 2018 (5 year Estimates)
Effects of COVID-19 on the Contra Costa and Solano Food Bank
Policy and Advocacy Manager: Cassidie Carmen Bates

- **Serving 50% more people**
  - Emergence of a demographic that has never in their life come to a food bank
  - Richmond and Antioch are their busiest sites

- **Expanding Services**
  - New distribution site in Concord
  - New warehouse space

- **Government Assistance**
  - Need more monetary assistance
  - National Guard helping them 40 hours a week put canned food into boxes

- **Changing the way they run their food banks**
  - Switch to giving more non-perishables
Support for immigrants:

- **Access to food resources at food banks even if undocumented**
  - Food distribution sites correspond fairly well with where the foreign born population living in poverty is: About 15 sites in Richmond, 14 sites in Antioch, 8 sites in Concord

- **CalFresh Outreach**
  - Entire CalFresh Outreach team is bilingual
  - Immigrants who are undocumented and therefore not eligible for SNAP are still helped
    - Work on legislative policy to expand who is eligible
    - Connect them with other resources

- **Translators and translated publications**
  - Translators can assist individuals with applications for social services when interacting with the county
Interview: Contra Costa and Solano Food Bank

Policy and Advocacy Manager: Cassidie Carmen Bates

Where they distribute food:

- Antioch
- Bay Point
- Brentwood/Oakley/Bethel Island
- Concord
- Hercules/Crockett/Pinole/El Sobrante
- Martinez/Pleasant Hill
- Pittsburg
- Richmond
- Rodeo
- San Pablo
- Walnut Creek

Out of the 19 cities and numerous unincorporated communities in Contra Costa County, this food bank has distribution sites in 17 cities/unincorporated communities.
Our Recommendations

Public Transportation

- Immediate concerns:
  - Lower income people who rely on public transport are more at risk of getting COVID-19 by using public transportation.
  - If they do use public transportation, then it can take hours for them to get to and from food banks
    - Contra Costa County should therefore focus on opening more food distribution sites in high poverty areas or collaborate with food delivery companies to provide food for low-income populations in their county.

- Concerns in general:
  - Some low-income populations who rely on food banks are having to travel far distances just to get their basic needs
    - The government needs to be allocating more money into improving public transportation.
Our Recommendations

Supporting food banks:

- Although food banks received $20 million in the beginning of the pandemic, this is nowhere near enough funding to continue to serve the increasing number of people going to these food banks.
  - Request for the State to put $96 million dollars towards food banks
    - This will allow for the food banks like the one we interviewed to continue running.
    - For example, this will help the Contra Costa and Solano Food Bank continue to be able to package canned food for people going to their distribution sites.
Our Recommendations

Healthy food for the people:

- The Contra Costa Food Bank has had to switch from giving out perishable food to mainly non-perishables, meaning that the people they are serving have less access to healthy, balanced meals because of their economic status.

- Many farms are currently having problems with excess produce due to big bulk buyers like collages, hotels, and restaurants not buying their foods during COVID-19. Food banks can be using this produce. The county, state, and federal government should be working together to subsidize this food and send it to food banks to give to the people.
Our Recommendations

**Language Barriers**

- Contra Costa County often times does not provide translators for people who are applying for CalFresh and other social services, therefore the Contra Costa Food Bank CalFresh outreach team is having to provide translators for these immigrants and other foreign-born people not proficient in English.
  - Food banks should not have to be providing these services, for it takes away valuable personnel that can be helping with other aspects of the food banks’ services.
  - The County should, therefore, have bilingual staff who manage the appointments with county members applying for CalFresh and other social services.

**Immigrant Concerns**

- Many people express their fear and concern of whether they are able to go to and utilize the services provided at food banks due to their legal status. They should not have any uncertainty as to whether or not they are able to go to food banks and/or enroll their children in CalFresh Programs.
  - Contra Costa County needs to be more explicit in how they address the immigrant population so that the immigrants themselves are not anxious to go to food banks.
    - The Contra Costa website should make it clear that immigrants are able to go to Food Banks.
    - Work with schools to ensure that teachers and staff are sending out this information to parents.
Interview: Dover Elementary School
Principal of Dover Elementary: Melynda Piezas

About the school:

- Located in San Pablo
- Largest Elementary School in the West Contra Costa Unified School District
- Around 650 Students:
  - Around 40% of students are foreign born
  - Many students have foreign-born parents; more parents are undocumented than students
  - Largest English language learner population in the school district
Households in San Pablo are more reliant on food stamps than households in the county and U.S overall, showing that the students that attend Dover Elementary are likely to be from low-income families.
Education & COVID-19: Dover Elementary School
Principal of Dover Elementary: Melynda Piezas

Online learning & instructional struggles:

- Technological assistance to students without computers and/or internet
- Around 350 students in the school district are still on the waitlist to get WiFi
- In contact with about 90% of parents; appointments with teachers
- Just started tracking student engagement

Food and basic needs:

- Food distributed 2 times a day for students who rely on free and reduced lunch
- Additionally, food banks are distributing food on certain days at schools
- School giving out school supplies
- Safety and wellbeing of children
Immigrants’ Educational Attainment

Educational Attainment Levels of Native vs Foreign Born Population in Contra Costa

- Less than high school graduate: 5.00% (Native), 22.30% (Foreign Born)
- High school graduate (includes equivalency): 17.50% (Native), 17.70% (Foreign Born)
- Some college or associate’s degree: 33.80% (Native), 22.40% (Foreign Born)
- Bachelor’s degree: 28.00% (Native), 22.20% (Foreign Born)
- Graduate or professional degree: 15.70% (Native), 15.40% (Foreign Born)

Data Gathered through US Census Using ACS 2018 (5 year Estimates)
Households with Internet Access in San Pablo

It is important to note that this data is in reference to the population of San Pablo as a whole, not solely the foreign born population.

According to the US Census Bureau 2014-2018 Statistics, the foreign born population accounts for 46.2% of the total population of San Pablo. Therefore, it is likely that the foreign-born population is included in the 14.1% of people who do not have access to internet.

Dover Elementary is located in San Pablo, and some students are being affected by not having Wi-Fi.

Source: US Census Bureau 2014-2018 Statistics
Our Recommendations for Assisting Schools

Student Services and Lack of Funding

- There are around 350 students still waiting for access to WiFi in the West Contra Costa Unified School District (WCCUSD), therefore, more staff is needed for student resource requests.

- Although the school receives a lot of Title 1 Funding due to its size and large English Language population, they rarely receive any monetary donations from parents because the families that attend this school are lower-income immigrant families.
  - The “edFund” on WCCUSD website, which provides emergency services to families during coronavirus also allows for people to specify if they want their donation to go towards a school club or other project. This fund’s primary focus should be helping its lower-income schools prior to allowing donors to pick where they want their donation to go. Many of the families are struggling to provide basic needs for their children that attend these schools and need this money more than a club.
  - District should develop partnerships with companies to provide basic needs for families who are in need of assistance in their school district.
Our Recommendations: Schools

Communication with parents:

- It was difficult to get in contact with people from numerous schools in this district. The phone numbers or email addresses of staff and the principals of schools were either not given or they were hard to locate on the website. Even when trying to contact staff, most were unresponsive.

- Many parents do not have the time to navigate school and district websites to look for important contacts. This information, therefore, needs to be more accessible on the websites and schools. More staff need to be available to answer questions of parents and students.
Interview: JFK Advocacy Clinic

Interviewed: Phone Representative

- Initially, was helped by Bay Area Legal services and was then referred to the JFK Advocacy Clinic through appointment
- Bay Area legal clinic provide services for low-income residence of the Bay Area
  - Including Contra Costa
- The JFK Advocacy Clinic specializes in advocating for low-income residents having housing troubles such as evictions or tenant issues
- JFK Advocacy Clinic Staff are proficient in other languages most being bilingual
  - The phone operating machine provide both spanish and english options for the Bay Legal Clinic
- Legal advice and information are free
- Since COVID-19, the number of people they provide services for have increased
- Across the bay area, no evictions during COVID-19 can take place
Our Recommendations for the Legal Clinic

- Since the JFK Advocacy Clinic during COVID-19 should provide services without needing long appointments to get a hold of legal aid
  - The appointment slot to get in contact with a representative lasted a week
- The Legal Clinic phone services should be more inclusive
- Legal Clinics should be more accessible
  - They only provide services by requiring that you have a SSN
Interview: International Institute of the Bay Area
Legal Attorney for the Brentwood Office

- Direct legal service provider specifically for immigrant legal services
- Charge fees on a sliding scale
- Part of the Contra Costa collaborative (receives half its funding from the county)
  - Obligated to provide a certain number of free consultations every fiscal year free of cost
- Under the California Department of social services they
  - Offer citizenship application
  - Certain UV’s (victims of violent crimes they help gain legal status)
  - And other services
Interview: International Institute of the Bay Area

Legal Attorney for the Brentwood Office

COVID-19’s Effect

- Difficulty Spreading Information
  - Currently posting legal aid resources on social platforms (facebook, instagram, etc.)
    - Many immigrants are not tech savvy
    - Aren’t able to directly connect to a larger portion of the community as they used to

- Lack of Immigrant Access to Resources
  - Lack of technology is making their work hard
    - Many immigrant households do not have printers
    - Libraries used to be used to access resources unavailable at home, but they’re closed
Our Recommendations

- **Provide Discounted Rates for a Main Platform**
  - Despite needing a main platform where information can be relayed, another issue posed during the interview was that many of these organizations need to pay for things like Zoom. In order to establish this main platform, it would be best for organizations to have the option of being able to get these platforms at a discounted rate from the county.

- **Establish Sites for Direct Access to these Resources**
  - Since libraries and other places where students/families had direct access to hardwares like printers, the county needs to establish a location that still follows the social distancing guidelines where these resources are made available.
Thank you!