

# A GUIDE TO IMMIGRANT OUTREACH IN NYC PARKS

Partnerships for Parks

A How-to Manual for Parks Groups



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## A HOW-TO MANUAL FOR PARKS GROUPS

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**New York Immigration Coalition**

**Asian Americans for Equality**

**Centro Hispano Cuzcatlán**

**Queens Museum of Art**

**Greater Jamaica Development Corporation**

**Queens Community House**

**Hester Street Collaborative**

**El Centro del Inmigrante**

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Dylan House

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*Partnerships for Parks is a joint program of City Parks Foundation and the New York City Department of Parks & Recreation.*



## HOW THIS GUIDE CAN HELP YOU

Parks are part of the essential infrastructure of the urban landscape. They offer respite from the city's hectic day-to-day life. For city dwellers, parks are often their only backyards. Parks are also the city's truly democratic spaces, spaces that people from all walks of life can use and access without charge.

But for a park to truly play its role—to welcome everyone in the community—parks programming and activities have to appeal and be relevant to people who live in the neighborhood. New York City's parks are a testament to its extraordinary diversity: 40 percent of the city's residents are foreign-born.

Parks are also an entry point for immigrants to participate in civic life. For parks groups looking to make a difference in their communities, one question stands out: How ready is your parks group to reach out and engage immigrants?

This guide, prepared by Partnerships for Parks, aims to inspire and inform you with successful outreach tips and strategies used by organizations working with diverse groups of immigrants, the **Immigrants & Parks Collaborative**.

### About the Immigrants & Parks Collaborative

In 2007, the J.M. Kaplan Fund funded the **New York Immigration Coalition** and **City Parks Foundation**, through its Partnerships for Parks program, to offer technical assistance to the newly formed Immigrants & Parks Collaborative, with the goal of increasing immigrant involvement in several parks in New York City.

The Collaborative works to ensure the city's open spaces are democratic, representative of neighbors' wants and needs, and serve as relevant resources for all New Yorkers.

Currently, organizations in the Collaborative are:

- **Asian Americans for Equality**, Chinatown, Manhattan
- **Hester Street Collaborative**, Lower East Side & Chinatown, Manhattan
- **El Centro del Inmigrante**, Port Richmond, Staten Island
- **Queens Community House**, Jackson Heights, Queens
- **Centro Hispano Cuzcatlán**, Jamaica, Queens
- **Greater Jamaica Development Corporation**, Jamaica, Queens
- **Queens Museum of Art**, Flushing, Queens



MEMBERS OF THE IMMIGRANTS & PARKS COLLABORATIVE DURING A SITE VISIT TO SARA D. ROOSEVELT PARK, IN MANHATTAN'S CHINATOWN.

To read more about the Immigrants & Parks Collaborative, please see page 14.

## About Partnerships for Parks

**Partnerships for Parks (PfP)** is a joint program of **City Parks Foundation (CPF)** and the **New York City Department of Parks & Recreation**. CPF is an independent, nonprofit organization offering park programs in 750 parks throughout New York City. With free programs spanning arts, sports, education and community-building, and reaching more than 600,000 people each year, CPF is interested in understanding how to best connect to park users and bring culturally appropriate and engaging programming to draw new constituencies from immigrant communities to parks. CPF Executive Director David Rivel says, “We’ve learned that programming is an especially powerful tool to draw the community into the park. The Collaborative can offer lessons about reaching diverse audiences and programming to attract local audiences.”

As a program that maintains relationships with a broad array of community groups, PfP is perfectly situated to serve as a link between public agencies, non-profits, and community members. A central goal of PfP is building the capacity of community groups and helping them identify and access the appropriate decision makers and staff within the NYC Department of Parks & Recreation. PfP continually adapts its outreach strategies in order to address the changing demographics of New York City neighborhoods.

## About the New York Immigration Coalition

The **New York Immigration Coalition (NYIC)** brings its expertise in advocacy and coalition-building to the Collaborative. As an umbrella policy and advocacy organization for more than 200 groups in New York State that work with immigrants and refugees, NYIC is interested in empowering immigrant communities through community building and civic engagement. The NYIC helps lead agenda-building and advocacy among the Collaborative members, hosts monthly meetings to enhance their capacity, and works jointly on a collective agenda.

## ENGAGING IMMIGRANT COMMUNITIES IN PARKS: OUTREACH STRATEGIES AND TIPS

### Where to Start

For any parks group looking to engage the wide range of users in their local parks, inclusive outreach is a necessity. The good news is, you don't have to pick up new languages to reach out to the many ethnic communities in your local neighborhood.

Partnering is key. By connecting with organizations that are already working with immigrants on a daily basis, you can tap into their expertise, deep local knowledge, and extensive networks. These organizations, such as the members of the Immigrants & Park Collaborative, vary widely in size and purpose. They might provide social services, English classes, know-your-rights workshops, or arts programming. They engage immigrants on the immigrants' own terms—listening to them and providing what is needed. Often these organizations act as liaisons and advocate for their members. Sometimes, they simply give people a chance to socialize together. Through their dedicated work, they have gained the trust of those they serve. This is crucial, especially in communities where traditional means of outreach are replaced by informal means such as word of mouth.

Partnering is a give-and-take activity. Later in this section, you will read about what your group can bring to the partnership, including how to access park resources.

### The Benefits of Outreach

There are many benefits to reaching out to immigrants in your ongoing parks work. By partnering you can:

- **Reach new audiences**, from park users unfamiliar with your group's activities to people who haven't used the park before. Partners can help promote your programs and introduce your group to their networks. This is a great way to start diversifying your membership. You can also partner on some of your usual activities, or plan new activities together. Partners may also help with translations and leverage their relationships with local, non-English language media.
- **Diversify your programming**. Partners can give input on the kind of programming that would draw local immigrants into the park and even recommend local performing groups.
- **Find allies in your community work** on shared issues of concern. Immigrants and non-immigrants often share the same concerns. Health, safety, and family, are universal themes all people share.

### Decide on Your Outreach Goals

Different outreach goals require different degrees of effort and commitment. Before you start, ask yourself:

- Does our group agree on the importance of outreach to immigrant audiences?
- Do we have the time and members to carry out the outreach work at this time? Who will carry out the outreach?
- What are our outreach goals? To get more people to know about and attend to our programming? To diversity our membership? To diversity our leadership?

## Find Local Partners

Ask people in your network who they know and keep your eyes open for flyers or posters advertising potential partner groups. If you're feeling entrepreneurial, connect to local businesses serving local immigrant communities, such as restaurants, supermarkets, and laundromats, and ask them for contacts in the community.

One great resource is the New York Immigration Coalition. As an umbrella organization for immigrant groups in New York City, its staff has extensive contacts. They can be reached at (212) 627-2227.

## Look for Common Ground

When you connect with a potential partner, try to understand its mission. Be ready to share, but also to listen. Together, identify your mutual interests and how you might want to partner together.

Following are examples of successful activities held by Immigrants & Parks Collaborative members in partnership with other community groups. Use this list to inspire you, but don't be limited by it.

- **Get your hands dirty.** Some immigrants enjoy the simple act of caring and beautifying their park while getting to know parks group volunteers and working side by side. Partnerships for Parks offers support to groups organizing an event for It's My Park Day, a twice-yearly citywide event that offers a chance for all to participate by planting bulbs, painting benches, or sprucing up their park.
- **Spice up your music and arts programming.** How do you decide what to program, or who to bring in? This is where it's beneficial to connect to local organizations working with immigrants: they can provide ideas or refer you to bands or performing groups they know. Talk to these groups to figure out what people are listening to. For example, Salsa works for some Hispanic groups, but not all. Socrates Sculpture Park is well known for its annual international film festival celebrating the culture of Queens, and the Queens Museum of Art hosts summer Passport Fridays, highlighting the cultures of different countries and featuring films and performances by local cultural organizations and performance groups.
- **Throw a party.** Whether cultural, such as Cinco de Mayo or the Inti Raymi Sun Festival (a Quechua celebration from the Andes), or just a reason to bring the community together (Christmas Tree lightings, Family Fun days, Unity Days), everyone enjoys music, food, and a festive atmosphere. In addition, in areas struggling with community tensions, fun park activities can help bring people together.
- **Bring the kids.** Family is an important theme across cultures, and you can bring them into a park by programming for children. Some children also act as translators for their parents. Friends of



CHILDREN ENJOY STORY TIME IN SPANISH, ENGLISH, AND BENGALI IN TRAVERS PARK.

Travers Park and Queens Community House treated children in their community to multi-lingual story time in English, Spanish, and Bengali. In Chinatown's Sara D. Roosevelt Park, children have painted garbage cans, installed tree identification signs, and created annual lantern installations that are displayed throughout the park.

- **Play ball.** Sports are a big draw for many. Centro Hispano Cuzcatlán organizes a soccer league of 20 teams in the local park. If you're trying to plan sports programming in your local park, you'll definitely want to ask community members about sports preferences. Sports also offer opportunities to bring together people of different cultures. A diversity of sports programming has increased due to demographic changes, including a rise in soccer and cricket.
- **Find issues everyone can get behind.** For example, health and safety are issues that affect everyone. Events promoting fitness activities in parks, such as a walkathon held by the Queens Museum of Art with Alianza Ecuatoriana, or health fairs can prove popular. In Jackson Heights, the *Green Agenda for Jackson Heights* was created out of the many sessions held to gather residents' visions and ideas for their neighborhood. The partners created portable workshops that could be taken to different organizations, meetings and groups to share those visions.
- **Make a park.** New Yorkers can have a voice in how their local parks get designed. Local groups can play a role in convening the community, gathering input, and communicating with the Department of Parks & Recreation. Hester Street Collaborative has held a number of engaging visioning activities in Chinatown and the Lower East Side, such as carnival-like games, walking tours, and design charrettes to gather community input for the park redesigns. Meanwhile, American Asians for Equality has been a crucial outreach partner providing translation services (count the many dialects of Chinese heard in the park) and conducting one-on-one conversations with community members.



**HESTER STREET COLLABORATIVE ORGANIZES VISIONING ACTIVITIES TO GATHER COMMUNITY INPUT ABOUT PUBLIC OPEN SPACES.**

- **Be creative!** You never know what's going to stick. A recycling workshop offered by GrowNYC and translated into Spanish and Bengali proved popular for those interested in tenants' rights at Queens Community House, and raised questions as to whether landlords were adhering to recycling laws in their buildings.

## Be Aware of Existing Perceptions

Immigrant groups may have different experiences that must be factored into forming outreach strategies.

- **There may be a distrust of government.** Uniform-clad Parks Enforcement Patrol staff in the park may be intimidating. One way this fear can be addressed is by promoting diverse park use and fostering positive relationships with park staff. For example, in a large park, a group of immigrants

routinely—and furtively—held large events, quickly disbanding whenever they saw Parks Enforcement Patrol staff. This went on until they learned from a Collaborative member how they could get a permit enabling them to gather legitimately and without worry.

- **The idea of a volunteer Parks group could be unfamiliar.** In many countries outside the United States, public spaces are exclusively under government jurisdiction. Planting bulbs, painting a bench, organizing a park clean-up, or forming a volunteer group to care for the park may be unfamiliar concepts. For this reason, clear and targeted outreach is all the more important.

### Make It Easy for People to Get Involved

- **Keep meetings accessible and welcoming.** Is the meeting location easy to reach? Are meeting times convenient? Many people, such as working parents, juggle multiple responsibilities and can't attend morning meetings, for example. Also take note of your meeting culture: is it no-nonsense and strictly business? Is there room for socializing? In some cultures, time to be social over food and drinks is important. Be aware of the group setting and atmosphere.
- **Arrange for translation.** Look among your community partners for assistance. Printed materials such as flyers should be translated. Look for a partner to help with translation. Have your translated materials reviewed by a member of your target audience to make sure it's in everyday, clear language. (For example, a direct translation into Castilian Spanish may be inappropriate for non-European Spanish speakers in your neighborhood.)
- **Encourage local leadership.** Recruit bilingual group members who can not only translate but also act as a cultural bridge to new members.

### Building Relationships

Relationships are a two-way street. While you might get help from other organizations, you can also be a resource to them. Your group can offer in-depth knowledge of the park, such as familiarity with park rules and staff.

Offer to let others tap into your network for announcements and cross-promotion. Think of yourself as a broker of relationships. Be proactive and offer your help to help other partners reach their goals.

### Reflect & Record

Build your contact list and keep track of outreach strategies that work. When you get new participants, find out how they heard about your group or program. This will pinpoint your most effective outreach strategies.

It takes dedication and commitment to reach groups and people whose language or culture may be unfamiliar to you. But as your efforts bear fruit, you will see it is well worth it.

## SOME INSIGHTS FROM THE COLLABORATIVE

### Gathering Input From Immigrant Communities

#### *Hester Street Collaborative*

As a design/build non-profit organization working with residents and students on participatory architectural projects, Hester Street Collaborative (HSC) builds broad-based coalitions around parks and open spaces. It sees itself not as the voice of the community, but as a resource and a partner.

HSC developed a series of community visioning tools, to gather input around park design to engage non-English speakers. Some successful tools are interactive voting boards,



STUDENTS CREATE LANTERNS FOR AN INSTALLATION PROJECT IN SARA D. ROOSEVELT PARK.

### How the Collaborative Does Outreach

To do outreach effectively, partner with well-connected organizations who work with immigrants on a day-to-day basis. The following are a list of outreach strategies used by the Immigrants & Parks Collaborative members. Many of these strategies are best achieved by people who know the immigrant communities intimately and have established relationships over time. Another reason to partner!

**Word of mouth.** Where there are informal networks of family and friends, word of mouth is a very effective and sometimes very speedy outreach method.

**Phone calls.** People experienced in outreach know that reminder phone calls are the way to go. Even if flyers or emails are sent a couple of weeks before, phone calls two or three days before an event will get more people out. And to be really effective, don't make it a cold call. People at the end of the line need to get a call from someone they know and trust.

**Community institutions.** Faith institutions, parents committees at schools, businesses (laundromats, grocery stores, wherever people go regularly) are good outreach venues for announcements and flyers.

**Community-based media.** Many organizations have relationships with reporters or editors to whom they can pitch a story.

walking tours using multilingual booklets, and game-like activities to engage youth while soliciting their input.

Dylan House, program manager at HSC, says, “One of the things that we try and do in a lot of our input-gathering activities is to really engage immigrant communities, mainly because that’s where we are. We’re in an under-served community that has a lot of non-English speakers and recent immigrants, so we try and develop tools that can respond to that need. On Allen Street, for instance, we tried to translate all of our materials into at least Chinese.”

*“It’s really important to build ownership within the community around any space, because these spaces belong to the community, so they should have a vested interest in maintaining them over time. But it also builds community by bringing people together saying, ‘Hey, this is actually our park.’”*

—Dylan House

HSC found that employing many different kinds of interactive tools is important for getting a broad range of input from the different groups that are using the park. “Some of the additional benefits to using non-verbal tools—other than addressing the language barrier—is that you get qualitative kind of information from people who don’t necessarily want to talk to you or write a lot. You can get richer stories from that than you would from a survey, for instance.” Input informs recommendations for park design that HSC relays back to different agencies. In the process, specific concerns about maintenance or safety are also revealed.

### Building Ownership

“It’s really important to build ownership within the community around any space, because these spaces belong to the community, and they should have a vested interest in maintaining them over time,” says House.

He adds, “But it also builds community by bringing people together saying, ‘Hey, this is actually our park.’ A lot of what comes out of our input-gathering processes is an idea of creating public art that can exist in a space and that people can get involved in creating.”

“Around the Hester Street Playground, the input that we got was that we could get the students from the local school involved in caring for the park in some way. Some of the students had an idea about creating a lantern installation. So that’s an idea about creating ownership in the kids who are using this playground and making them have a better sense that this park is their park, because they see something they created there. We’ve created a lantern installation with the middle school and the Chinatown YMCA now, and bring together 250 kids, and they all get to see their lanterns hung on the playground.”



A STRING OF LANTERNS GRACES A STREET BY SARA D. ROOSEVELT PARK.

## An Approach Based on Demand

### *Queens Museum of Art*

The Queens Museum of Art's approach is based on the needs expressed by New Yorkers, especially Queens residents. The museum also offers resources to immigrants: meeting space for groups, assistance in getting permits for parks events, and brokering relationships between groups to strengthen networks.

Gabriel Roldos, the museum's Immigrant Outreach Fellow, says, "The majority [of immigrants] are rooted in their own families and their own countries, and even regularly send money back to those countries.

That's what makes outreach at the Queens Museum so successful, because we provide space and opportunities for them to come and do programming related to the place where they come from, or we bring them references of traditional things they used to see, and then they feel a connection to the museum."

"It is important for families that have kids, or for second or third generations, because those kids didn't get exposure to their parents' culture at home. They go to public school and get no information about their country, or some parents work a lot, so they cannot nurture them as much. They speak so much English they even have trouble speaking with their parents."

"To generalize, we respond to demand. So if the demand is references for the home culture, we do so. If the demand is for film, we do that. If the demand is sports-related, we do that. If it's to have a meeting to just organize themselves, we give them the space. The point is we want them to come to the museum and use the space and look around and connect."



**THE QUEENS MUSEUM OF ART HAS HELPED COMMUNITY GROUPS ORGANIZE THE INTI RAYMI FESTIVAL OF THE SUN IN THE PARK.**

## Finding a Comfortable Point of Entry for Immigrants

### *Queens Community House*

Given the services offered by the Queens Community House (QCH), many residents pass through its doors every day. At its Jackson Heights location, over 600 students attend the free daily English classes. The classes are a natural outreach venue to disseminate information. In addition, those who would like to use their skills to advocate for positive change can join the Action Group and pick an issue area of interest, one of which is parks. Students on the parks committee serve as liaisons to external groups and take the lead on parks-related activities.

QCH focuses on how to give immigrants a comfortable point of entry for getting involved, which can often be the start of further civic involvement.

Anna Dioguardi, director of community organizing and development at QCH, says, “It’s important to help the immigrant community realize that the park is *their* park first of all. It’s a place not only to bring your children to play, but also a place that you have ownership over and where you can get involved.”

Several volunteers have found their niche in parks work. Some who started with hands-on park cleanups gradually became aware of open space issues and became advocates in the process.

When the opportunity came to take part in the 78<sup>th</sup> Street Play Street,<sup>1</sup> organized by local volunteers to maintain a street closure and organize activities for children, the focus was to make the Action Group members feel comfortable in the process of getting involved. Being part of the group gave them the confidence needed to collaborate with other community groups.

“By going out and being a multi-cultural group within themselves,” Diogardi says, the group also drew other families of immigrants, who felt comfortable approaching the group and asking questions.

## The Importance of Trust

### *Centro Hispano Cuzcatlán*

Centro Hispano Cuzcatlán addresses a broad range of issues affecting local immigrants, from labor abuse to immigration rights to lack of playing space for soccer. Co-founder Eduardo Barahona says the services they provide are crucial to getting people involved in community events that the organization puts together, often using the local park—health fairs, park cleanups, peace vigils, Christmas tree lightings.

“Participation and organizing come from a need, from the person, or the sensibility of the person,” Barahona says, “Mostly people join because of their needs. Then we use that—in a good way—to motivate them to participate. We talk about all our programs, about how people can benefit from our organization. It takes patience to get people to participate.”



**CHILDREN ENJOY ACTIVITIES ORGANIZED BY THE QUEENS COMMUNITY HOUSE ACTION GROUP.**

<sup>1</sup> The 78<sup>th</sup> St. Play Street is a project in Jackson Heights that has closed down 78th Street alongside Travers Park on summer Sundays to increase the space available to the community.

“The best outreach tool is a one-on-one relationship. We know most of the people we’re calling. If we make a general invitation or a general call for just anybody, it works less well.”

Personal relationships and persistence are integral to their approach. Co-director Natividad Hernandez gives an example: “If I see you on the street, I’ll remind you that we have a vigil next week. I’ll also call you two or three days before.”



**YOUNG VOLUNTEER AT WORK ON IT'S MY PARK DAY IN RUFUS KING PARK.**

## THE IMMIGRANTS & PARKS COLLABORATIVE

The Immigrants & Parks Collaborative advocates for inclusiveness in the way parks are programmed, promoted, and managed, especially for immigrants. It takes a three-pronged approach: engaging immigrants in their local communities through parks; creating a peer network; and providing a vehicle for collective action.

Through funded fellowships, Collaborative members dedicate a staff person—in some cases an Immigrant Outreach fellow—to work on connecting immigrants with their local parks. Organizations also receive technical assistance from the New York Immigration Coalition and Partnerships for Parks.

The agenda developed by the Collaborative is focused on language access, vending and permitting issues, and the creation of an immigrant liaison staff position at the Parks Department.

### Language Access: Achievements

The Collaborative has realized significant achievements since its inception, first working with the New York City Department of Parks & Recreation to improve language access, a cross-cutting issue that Collaborative members determined should be addressed at a citywide level.

Silvett Garcia, housing and community development coordinator at the New York Immigration Coalition (NYIC), says the problems of language access emerged as a central issue for communities early on, when park users attempt to communicate with park staff, or are asked to leave a park due to misunderstanding park rules. Garcia says one incident involved an adult Chinatown resident who was practicing Tai Chi in an empty playground. “He could not read the park playground signs warning ‘No Adults Without Children’ and was consequently arrested by police for breaking park rules,” she says.

The Collaborative’s decision to address language access issues was timely. In July 2008, New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg issued Executive Order 120, mandating all government agencies to develop and implement a language access plan. PfP connected NYIC and Collaborative members with the Parks Department’s Citywide Operations division. The Collaborative made recommendations for the agency’s language access plan and worked with the agency to test its new language access system via a “secret shopper” program in recreation centers, after having trained 29 bilingual “shoppers,” who collectively spoke eight languages.

The Collaborative is also working to clarify the agency’s permitting and vending processes (see their tip sheets in the Additional Resources section).

### Partnerships for Parks: Helping to Navigate the Agency

A strength of Partnerships for Parks is helping groups engage in their activities so the NYC Department of Parks & Recreation finds their efforts valuable. PFP builds on this by also helping groups form strategies and identify partners, which can include park managers and administrators, and local CBOs.

Jason Schwartz, director of Partnerships for Parks, says, “The New York Immigration Coalition has tremendous knowledge about building coalitions and significant expertise in advocacy. At Partnerships for Parks, we’re not advocates, but we make those advocacy efforts more effective, and can help advocates frame their efforts in the context of the agency’s work. One example is the language access issue, which has been a goal of NYIC for years—they were successful at having Mayor Bloomberg lay out some expectations. Now

for us, working through the Collaborative, partners were able to come back on the other side, and help the agency meet the language access requirements.”

“Anytime anyone’s advocating at the level of city government, whether it is for health or other issues, it usually begins with an adversarial relationship. But there’s also a time and place for a less explored approach—to first work together and build relationships. The part of this effort that’s special is the collaborative aspect.”

## NYC Department of Parks & Recreation: Keeping in Touch With Diverse Communities

The NYC Department of Parks & Recreation’s Citywide Operations division worked with the Collaborative as it developed and implemented a language access plan, which was completed in January 2009.

Parks Commissioner Adrian Benepe says, “The Collaborative provided many ideas throughout this process that we have adopted. For example, the Collaborative suggested that we offer the Parks Post<sup>2</sup> in multiple languages. The Post is now produced in English and Spanish, and soon we will also have Chinese versions. The Collaborative offered suggestions for our multi-lingual signage. We have now prepared over 2,000 new multi-lingual signs since the executive order went into effect, with more coming out of the sign shop each day. Most notably, the Collaborative has conducted random inspections at our recreation centers and permit offices to assess the effectiveness of the interpretation services we provide on-site and through our contract with Language Line. We have posted signs in many languages to let customers know that our front desks can offer interpretation services if needed. Our staff connects our customers with Language Line interpreters. The Collaborative helped Parks test the effectiveness of these services and prepared a report for us on this. Parks is still working on these services, and the Collaborative has been productive and supportive.”

“The Collaborative itself is a key example of how Parks is working to keep in touch with communities throughout the City and to stay apprised of changing needs and interests. Community board meetings, advocacy from elected officials, and customer surveys are all ways to keep informed, though the best feedback is the experience and interactions between park users and our field staff every day.”

## The New York Immigration Coalition: Leading Through Advocacy

The Collaborative model is a staple of the New York Immigration Coalition. NYIC staff moves the agenda along, plans, and facilitates monthly meetings with diverse organizations around priority issues identified by its member organizations, such as access to health care, immigrant tenants’ rights, and immigrant engagement in public parks.

Silvett Garcia, housing and community development coordinator at the NYIC, says, “What makes our Collaborative model special and effective is its inherent inclusiveness. By drawing member organizations from different boroughs that have different constituencies and skill sets, the collective agenda is one that reflects a wide range of community voices. The Collaborative allows the groups to interact with the Parks Department in a way that they had not even imagined that they could do before. These groups that have functioned primarily as local organizers, through the Collaborative, are able to recommend parks policy changes on a city-wide level. This work has opened up doors for the groups to work on other issues with the Parks administration to help benefit New York City.”

<sup>2</sup> The Parks Post is a bimonthly newsletter from the NYC Department of Parks & Recreation with borough-specific information for park users. It is posted at locations throughout the five boroughs and can be found online at <http://www.nycgovparks.org>.

Collaborative members are more empowered through their work of engaging with Parks. Garcia says, “One of our greatest achievements has been the shift in the way that immigrants who are involved in these grassroots organizations view their parks. We always recognized parks as great places for community building and organizing, but now we also see ourselves as stewards and important stakeholders in our public spaces.”

### **New Opportunities**

The communication between the Collaborative and the Parks Department is now a two-way street. The agency, which is in the planning stages of coordinating an anti-littering campaign, reached out to the Collaborative for assistance.

Commissioner Benepe says, “We are hoping to engage Collaborative involvement in the anti-litter campaign for two purposes: one, to help us develop messaging that would be well-received by the communities they work with; and two, to partner with us in active support of these communities. Collaborative members have been on the ground with us in recreation centers, talking about and assessing the implementation of language access. We hope they will do the same in the parks and ball fields promoting the anti-litter campaign.”

NYIC’s Garcia says, “This was unexpected, but the relationship that the Immigrants & Parks Collaborative has built with the Parks Department through the previous work on the language access issue has opened new doors for immigrants’ perspectives to be heard.”

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

### Resources From the Immigrants & Parks Collaborative

The Immigrants & Parks Collaborative has created tips sheets on how to obtain special events and vending permits from the NYC Dept. of Parks & Recreation. The Collaborative has also written case studies detailing its approach and work, “Parks, Immigrant Outreach & Civic Engagement: Successful strategies for local outreach and citywide advocacy.” These documents will be available through the Immigrants & Parks Collaborative online resource library.

<http://www.immigrantsparks.org>

### People Make Parks

People Make Parks is a project to help communities participate in the design of their parks. It informs citizens about the process of making physical improvement to parks (known as “capital projects”), helps them collect information relevant to design, communicate it to decision-makers at the NYC Department of Parks & Recreation in a timely way, and transition into long-term park stewardship. The “Roadmap to the Capital Process” brochure is the first published component of People Make Parks. It will be followed by the People Make Parks website in Summer 2011. People Make Parks is a project of Hester Street Collaborative and Partnerships for Parks.

<http://www.partnershipsforparks.org>

<http://www.hesterstreet.org>

### Resources From Partnerships for Parks

Contact the Partnerships for Parks outreach coordinator in your area for support with your park project. PFP also has an online resources library with tips on conducting outreach, as well as other topics of interest to parks groups.

<http://www.partnershipsforparks.org>

### Resources From the New York Immigration Coalition

The NYIC produces a wide range of informational materials for community members, policymakers, and advocates on immigration and related issues. To learn more about its work and for a comprehensive list of immigrant organizations across New York State visit the NYIC website.

<http://www.thenyic.org>

### Demographic Information

More up to date information about New York City's immigrant population will be coming as a result of the 2010 Census. In the meantime, NYC Department of City Planning's "Newest New Yorkers 2000" Report features information about immigrant populations, from demographic profiles to settlement patterns.

<http://www.nyc.gov/html/dcp/html/census/nny.shtml>

## Translation Services

Through a partnership between the Queens Borough President's Office and the Asian-American Center at Queens College, a free translation service is available to non-profit organizations, government agencies, and civic groups. Documents can be translated from English to Spanish, Chinese, Korean, or Hindi. Translations take 4-6 weeks from date of submission.

*[http://www.queensbp.org/content\\_web/immigrant/immigrant.shtml#](http://www.queensbp.org/content_web/immigrant/immigrant.shtml#)*

## Queens Library Resources

The Queens Library maintains a comprehensive website of resources, including agencies that serve immigrants, community resources in the most widely spoken languages in Queens, information on Queens demographics, and relevant publications. It also maintains WorldLinQ, a plethora of multiethnic resources, including links to ethnic media, cultural and arts organizations, and much more.

*<http://www.queenslibrary.org>*

## Mayor's Office of Immigrants Affairs

MOIA has an online directory of social service agencies that provide services to immigrants. Searchable by borough.

*<http://www.nyc.gov/html/imm>*