2022
Community Needs Assessment

Key Findings from Immigrant and Refugee Communities in Oregon and SW Washington

irco

ABOUT IRCO

Founded in 1976 by refugees seeking workforce services, the Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization (IRCO) is the largest community-based organization in Oregon led by immigrants and refugees, providing culturally specific and culturally responsive core services. Our programs engage community members across more than 60 sites statewide, including our four culturally specific centers: Pacific Islander & Asian Family Center, Africa House, Greater Middle East Center, and the Slavic & Eastern European Center.

IRCO has been conducting the Community Needs Assessment (CNA) since 1998, and this year's report is the 9th iteration. The CNA is a community-driven process that elevates the voices of our immigrant and refugee communities to ensure that programming and services are responsive to their needs.

To learn more about the CNA, email commneeds@irco.org.

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I. INTRODUCTION

In the past, the Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization (IRCO)'s Community Needs Assessment (CNA) was conducted through a one-day conference with breakout sessions led by bilingual IRCO staff, providing a forum for community members and leaders to identify their assets, challenges, priorities, and solutions. The COVID-19 pandemic, coupled with the housing crisis pushing immigrant and refugee communities out of urban areas, forced a departure from this method. The 2022 CNA utilized a survey questionnaire administered by a team of dozens of culturally specific Community Survey Specialists (CSSs). These bilingual CSSs reached out to community members from their individual cultural and language groups to identify each respondent's individual challenges and needs as well as those of their community. This report does not seek to be representative of any community, but rather it is a platform for community members to express their thoughts and opinions on what they and their communities need and the strategies to address those needs. Since 'community' is actively constructed and constantly evolving, only through community-driven processes such as this one can we truly understand the unique needs of immigrants and refugees in Oregon and SW Washington.

Ultimately, we successfully surveyed 528 community members from 23 different language groups representing more than 50 cultural and national backgrounds (See Table 1). Each survey interview took an average of 45 minutes to 1 hour long and was often conducted in the respondent's native language. Of the respondents, 178 are Asian, 95 are African, 87 are Slavic/Eastern European, 85 are Greater Middle Eastern, 53 are Latin American, and 30 are Pacific Islander. 58% of the respondents live in Multnomah County, 21% in Washington County, 6% in Clackamas County, and less than 5% live in Malheur County, Marion County, Southern Washington, Lane County, Linn County, and Klamath County; our most geographically diverse CNA to date, reflecting the growing diversity of immigrant and refugee communities.

Our survey questions incorporated different aspects of the social determinants of health (SDOH), defined as the "conditions in the environments where people are born, live, learn, work, play, worship, and age," and our findings are organized around the 5 SDOH domains of Economic Stability, Education Access and Quality, Health Care Access and Quality, Neighborhood and Built Environment, and Social and Community Context.[1] The SDOH are universal across all communities regardless of race, ethnicity, or country of origin, yet highlight the severity of needs of individual communities and the degree to which different communities can address those needs. Given the diversity of the community members surveyed, that there are differences across and within immigrant and refugee communities is not surprising, but the size and pervasiveness of the disparities revealed here are striking. These disparities show that there is an immediate need for more equitable services and targeted strategies for immigrants, refugees, and communities of color to better understand and respond to systemic inequities.

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[1] "Social Determinants of Health." Healthy People 2030. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Accessed online at: https://health.gov/healthypeople/priority-areas/social-determinants-health.

TABLE 1: **COMMUNITY MEMBERS SURVEYED:** BY COUNTRY OR CULTURE OF ORIGIN

AFRICAN (95)	ASIAN (178)	GREATER MIDDLE EASTERN (85)	LATIN AMERICAN (53)	PACIFIC ISLANDER (30)	SLAVIC & EASTERN EUROPEAN (87)
Swahili-speaking, from Kenya (26)	Vietnamese-speaking (45)	Arabic-speaking, from Iraq/Kuwait (44)	Spanish-speaking, from Mexico (38)	Tongan-speaking (15)	Ukrainian-speaking (43)
Swahili-speaking, from Democratic Republic of Congo (8)	Mandarin-speaking (35)	Arabic-speaking, from Syria (14)	Spanish-speaking, from Mexico (38)	Marshallese-speaking (12)	Russian-speaking, from Russia (19)
Swahili-speaking, from Tanzania (2)	Mandarin-speaking, from Vietnam (3)	Arabic-speaking, from Egypt (4)	Spanish-speaking, Hispanic or from the U.S. (10)	Chuukese-speaking (3)	Moldovan-speaking (14)
Swahili-speaking, from Uganda (1)	Karen-speaking (25)	Arabic-speaking, from Jordan (2)	Spanish-speaking, Hispanic or from the U.S. (10)		Russian-speaking from Belarus (2)
Swahili-speaking, unspecified (1)	Zomi-speaking (17)	Arabic-speaking, from Lebanon (1)	Spanish-speaking, from Guatemala (1)		Russian-speaking from Uzbekistan (2)
Tigrigna-speaking (16)	Nepali-speaking, from Bhutan (16)	Arabic-speaking, from Libya (1)	Spanish-speaking, from Guatemala (1)		Russian-speaking from Georgia (1)
Amharic-speaking (16)	Khmer-speaking (13)	Arabic-speaking, from Tunisia (1)	Spanish-speaking, from Honduras (1)		Russian-speaking from Kazakhstan (1)
Somali-speaking (15)	Nepali-speaking (9)	Arabic-speaking, unspecified (4)	Spanish-speaking, from El Salvador (1)		Russian-speaking from Kyrgyzstan (1)
Oromo-speaking (10)	Burmese-speaking (8)	Dari-speaking (10)	Spanish-speaking, from El Salvador (1)		Russian-speaking from Latvia (1)
	Burmese-speaking Rohingya (5)	Farsi-speaking (4)	Spanish-speaking, from Venezuela (1)		Russian-speaking, unspecified or multicultural (3)
	Lao-speaking (1)		Spanish-speaking, from Venezuela (1)		
	Hmong-speaking (1)		Spanish-speaking, unspecified (1)		

IMMIGRANTS AND REFUGEES IN OREGON: MAKING A HOME

In 2021, there were 412,396 foreign-born Oregonians, making up 10% of the state's population.[2] Of these, 52% of are naturalized citizens and 48% are not U.S. citizens. The number of likely refugees in the state is roughly 32,681.[3] Of all foreign-born Oregonians, 41% are from Latin America, 29% from Asia, 15% from Europe, 5% from the Greater Middle East, 4% from Africa, 4% from Northern America, and 2% from Oceania.[4]

> **In 2019 immigrants and refugees in Oregon contributed roughly $4.2 billion in local, state, and federal taxes, and had total spending power (income after taxes) of $11 billion.**

What distinguishes a refugee from an immigrant is that a refugee is protected in international law and defined as "someone who is unable or unwilling to return to their country of origin owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion."[5] However, regardless of the status by which one enters the country, immigrants and refugees both are actively engaged in homemaking: a physically and emotionally intensive process to establish security and familiarity, as well as a sense of control or autonomy, in a new environment, in order to feel safe again.[6] The fact that so many of our community members can rebuild their lives – despite the experiences of 'root shock,' the language and cultural barriers, and legacies of trauma – to make meaningful contributions to the community at large, is a testament to their agency and resilience. Beyond the rich cultural diversity and heritage brought by immigrants and refugees to the state, they also make tremendous contributions to the economy as earners, taxpayers, and consumers. In 2019 immigrants and refugees in Oregon contributed roughly $4.2 billion in local, state, and federal taxes, and had total spending power (income after taxes) of $11 billion.[7] That same year, 97% of likely refugees were employed, with a combined household income of $1.5 billion, contributing $427.6 million in local, state, and federal taxes.[8]

Homemaking, and feeling a sense of belonging more generally, is not only an individual affair, but also determined by the interactions between those groups who wish to belong (i.e., immigrants and refugees), with those in power who determine who belongs and who does not. In recent years, thanks to decades of effort by our communities, immigrants and refugees increasingly hold the roles of decision maker at all levels of government. This is reflected at the state level with the historical elections of Senator Kayse Jama, a refugee from Somalia, to the Oregon Senate; the elections of Vietnamese American Representatives Daniel Nguyen, Hoa Nguyen, Dr. Hai Pham, Khanh Pham, and Dr. Thuy Tran to the Oregon State House of Representatives; and the nominations of Cambodian American Sophorn Cheang and Toc Soneoulay-Gillespie, a refugee from Laos, to lead the Business Oregon Commission and the Office of Immigrant and Refugee Advancement, respectively. At the judiciary level, there is Judge Chanpone Sinlapasai of the Multnomah County Circuit Court, the first Laotian American judge in the country, and Judge Vadim Mozyrsky, a federal administrative law judge and refugee from Ukraine. At the school board level, there is Mohamed Alyajouri, a Yemeni American elected member of the Portland Community College Board of Trustees; Kathy Wai, a Burmese American elected member of the North Clackamas School Board; and Cayle Tern, a refugee from Laos and elected member of the Reynolds School District Board. Their successes and many others are celebrated because they reflect the progress made in Oregon to ensure that the prevailing values of equity, diversity, and inclusion are central to our collective identity, our shared home. ■

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[2] All data in this section, unless otherwise specified, is from the U.S. Census Bureau, 2021 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates

[3] "Fact Sheet: Immigrants in Oregon." American Immigration Council. August 6, 2020. Accessed online at: https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/research/immigrants-oregon.

[4] Greater Middle Eastern total includes the census-designated 'Western Asian' countries, the 'Southern Asian' countries of Afghanistan, Iran, and Pakistan, as well as 'North African' countries. These numbers are excluded from the Asian and African totals.

[5] "What is a Refugee?" The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. Accessed online on 12/21/2022 at: https://www.unhcr.org/en-us/what-is-a-refugee.html.

[6] Boccagni, P. 2017. *Migration and the Search for Home: Mapping Domestic Space in Migrants' Everyday Lives*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

[7] "Fact Sheet: Immigrants in Oregon." American Immigration Council. August 6, 2020. Accessed online at: https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/research/immigrants-oregon.

[8] Id.

II. METHODOLOGY

A. WHAT IS COMMUNITY?

Throughout this CNA survey process, we have sought to limit our own influence and bias on the data whenever possible. However, there are points where our influence is unavoidable, particularly in the initial process of planning the questions, themes, and determining survey targets, and the later stage of data coding and report writing.

With the former, we went through a rigorous three-month planning process where we sought and incorporated feedback from staff from different parts of the organization—and who themselves are part of different immigrant and refugee communities—as well as members of the four advisory councils at IRCO, which are comprised of community members and leaders representing the diversity of African, Asian, Greater Middle Eastern, Pacific Islander, and Slavic and Eastern European communities. This feedback from community experts and leaders, in combination with publicly available data on languages spoken at home and country of origin in Oregon and Washington, helped us to determine the language groups to prioritize for this survey (see Table 2). We decided to base our survey targets on language groups rather than race, ethnicity, or country of origin, because many immigrants and refugees come from marginalized and often stateless communities and cultures. At the same time, we did ask respondents to identify their preferred country or culture of origin which, when disaggregated, allows us to analyze differences and disparities within language groups (see Table 1).

The guidance from community experts and leaders, in combination with literature on community needs assessment best practices, health equity, and the social determinants of health (SDOH) provided by the Oregon Health Authority and elsewhere (See chart 1), helped to shape the survey themes and questions asked.[9] Although the goal of the CNA is not limited to reducing health disparities, we chose to rely on the SDOH framework because it is inclusive of the universal factors that impact all communities, which allows us to systematically analyze and understand needs and differences across communities and provides a consistent foundation to monitor changes over time and in future CNAs.

Chart 1: Social Determinants of Health

In terms of data analysis and coding, we sought to strike a balance between standardization of responses and codes to make analysis and comparison feasible, and maintaining the original community voice and meaning, as recorded by the Community Survey Specialists (CSSs). This is also why half of the questions are open-ended, so that community members can speak for themselves on issues that matter to them. During data coding, we reviewed the responses with CSSs when needed and incorporated their feedback to ensure that the analysis is

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[9] "Social Determinants of Health." Healthy People 2030. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Accessed online at: https://health.gov/healthypeople/priority-areas/social-determinants-health.

reflective of the community members' opinions. The codes used for the analysis adhere as closely as possible to the responses of the community member, as it was recorded by the CSSs.

In our analysis, we acknowledge the limitations of the survey data and the community-based assessment method and avoid making sweeping assumptions about any community from the data. Rather, the conclusions we make and summaries we provide are drawn solely from the data that is in front of us, and not from additional context or research outside of the survey data that may or may not be applicable. In some cases, limited or skewed sample sizes could lead to incorrect conclusions about a community's level of need – for example, our Greater Middle Eastern communities come across in this report as a relatively low needs community; however, this is likely due to the relatively high number of well-established Iraqi community members surveyed, and the very low numbers of high-needs communities such as Afghans and Syrians surveyed. As such, we welcome continued dialogue on the data presented here and recognize that no assessment can perfectly capture the diverse communities that IRCO serves. To better understand this context and to validate our findings and conclusions, we aim to share this report with our advisory councils and other community stakeholders and experts as part of the next phase of the CNA.

B. CHALLENGES AND LIMITATIONS

As Table 2 shows, although we were able to meet, and even exceed, many of the targets set out initially, we fell short on others (especially Somali) and failed to get any surveys for two target languages: Pashto and Kachin. Furthermore, in the case of Arabic survey responses, roughly half of respondents are from Iraq, which meant that the data is heavily skewed toward one population and is not reflective of the diverse Arabic-speaking communities in Oregon and SW Washington. In the future, we will be more intentional in targeting different cultural groups who share the same language. Overall, due to the small sample sizes, conclusions should not be made about any community from this data alone.

With any survey, there is a challenge in the labelling of respondents' backgrounds and their respective communities. Here, we find that even with close attention to the distinctions within the various communities, due to the sociopolitical nature of labelling and identification, it is impossible to achieve this in a manner that is neutral to all communities. We recognize that what we have landed on is not perfect, and hope that with additional conversation and community engagement as part of and beyond the CNA, we will continue to improve in this department.

Through this process, we found that success depends largely on existing relationships with community members and leaders from the community. The level of existing trust and engagement not only affected our ability to connect with community members for the survey, but also determined our ability to find CSSs from the communities with the necessary level of trust and community access. To ensure success of future CNAs and the success of our services, advocacy, and programming in general, we will continue to reflect on the relationships that we have to the different communities and work on building and strengthening these relationships whenever possible.

Along the same line, some communities are experiencing a generational change, which has meant that community leaders who we have traditionally relied on are no longer around or unavailable. This challenge is exacerbated by the unprecedented impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has made it harder to engage and connect with new community leaders. Overall, the COVID-19 pandemic was a compounding influence on many of the challenges we face, from the decision to depart from our usual conference event format to our ability to recruit CSSs, and their ability to find respondents and meet survey targets.

TABLE 2: LANGUAGE SURVEY TARGETS - % OF TARGETS ACHIEVED

AFRICAN	ASIAN	GREATER MIDDLE EASTERN	LATIN AMERICAN	PACIFIC ISLANDER	SLAVIC & EASTERN EUROPEAN
Somali - 60 Final: 9 (15%)	Vietnamese - 60 Final: 45 (75%)	Arabic – 60 Final: 66 (110%)	Spanish – 60 Final: 45 (75%)	Tongan – 24 Final: 15 (63%)	Russian – 36 Final: 35 (100%)
Swahili – 36 Final: 37 (103%)	Mandarin – 36 Final: 38 (106%)	Dari – 28 Final: 10 (28%)	Spanish (Ontario & Baker) – 23 Final: 8 (35%)	Chuukese – 24 Final: 3 (13%)	Ukrainian – 36 Final: 36 (100%)
Amharic – 24 Final: 17 (71%)	Nepali – 24 Final: 25 (104%)	Pashto – 20 Final: 0 (0%)	Spanish (Salem) – 10 Final: 0 (0%)	Marshallese – 12 Final: 12 (100%)	Moldovan– 12 Final: 12 (100%)
Oromo – 24 Final: 10 (42%)	Karen – 24 Final: 25 (104%)	Farsi – 12 Final: 4 (33%)			Russian, Ukrainian, or Moldovan (Salem) – 10 Final: 4 (40%)
Tigrigna – 24 Final: 16 (67%)	Lao – 24 Final: 1 (4%)	Arabic (in Ontario) – 7 Final: 5 (71%)			
Somali (Ontario) – 3 Final: 6 (200%)	Zomi – 12 Final: 17 (142%)				
	Burmese – 12 Final: 13 (108%)				
	Khmer – 12 Final: 13 (108%)				
	Hmong – 12 Final: 1 (8%)				
	Kachin – 12 Final: 0 (0%)				

III. COMMON NEEDS

More often, there were differences and disparities in needs across and within the different groups. However, there was consistency in the following areas.

- **Housing instability** is a problem for all communities, with 40% of Asian, 42% of Slavic/Eastern European, 69% of African, 75% of Pacific Islander, 77% of Greater Middle Eastern, and 87% of Latin American respondents reporting that housing instability is a problem for people in their community. High/rising costs is the most common housing challenge identified by all communities.

- Only 39% of all respondents say that there are **early learning programs** in their area with staff that look like them/their family or speak their language. Meanwhile, across all groups, respondents most often identified language lessons/immersion as the activity that would help early learning programs be more inclusive of their cultures and languages.

- **Finding affordable food** is a challenge for all communities, as less than half of Latin American, Pacific Islander, Greater Middle Eastern, and African respondents (18%, 31%, 31%, and 41%, respectively) say that they can easily find food in their neighborhood that is affordable. Meanwhile, only 60% and 61% of Slavic/Eastern European and Asian respondents, respectively, say that they can easily find food in their neighborhood that is affordable.

- During focus groups with African, Asian, Pacific Islander, Greater Middle Eastern, Pacific Islander, and Slavic/Eastern European youth, **racism/discrimination, mental health,** and **financial support** are common challenges identified across all groups.

- When asked what worries respondents the most about children in their community, all groups—except for Latin American respondents—are concerned about **children losing their native language and culture**. Specifically, 11% of Slavic/Eastern European, 16% of Greater Middle Eastern, 17% of African, 22% of Asian, and 40% of Pacific Islander respondents share this concern. **When asked what would help to maintain their home country, the most common response across all groups is** having more community events, gatherings, and cultural celebrations, as well as more language and cultural lessons.

- **Health care access** is a bigger issue for some groups more than others (particularly Latin American, Pacific Islander, and African respondents, only 31%, 48%, and 49% of whom say that people in their community can get the care they need, respectively). However, a lack of and/or high cost of health insurance are the healthcare challenges most often identified by respondents across all groups.

- Most respondents (53%) expressed challenges because of their **level of English**, and across all groups, the challenge most often identified is general communication, followed by communication with service providers, and job search/interviews.

- **Having more marketing, information, and outreach** of available workforce employment and training services is the most identified need that would help people sign up for adult education and career and training services and was also a common need identified for accessing employment, legal, health care, and mental health care services. Across all groups, most of those who received information on adult education, career, and training services were able to access those services.

- Across all groups, the most common **safety concerns** are the perceived threat of people who are homeless, crime (especially violent crime), shootings, and neighborhood safety.
- Most respondents said they are not **civically active or engaged**, and if they are, they tend to keep up with global/international issues and issues or conflict in their home country rather than U.S. or local politics. In fact, engagement with local politics, like school board, city council, or mayoral elections, is extremely low with no group recording more than 8% engagement.

A. COMMUNITIES WITH HIGH NEEDS

While there are wide differences and disparities across the different ethnic groups, there were also significant differences within the groups. Below is a list of communities whose respondents consistently reported greater needs across the various indicators compared to the overall group average.

- Within the African group, **Oromo-speaking respondents** reported greater need than average in more indicators than any other African language group, followed by **Tigrigna-speaking** and **Amharic-speaking** respondents. All three are part of the Ethiopian diaspora.
- Within the Asian group, **Zomi-speaking** respondents reported greater need than average in more indicators than any other Asian language group, followed by **Burmese-speaking** respondents and **Nepali-speaking** respondents from Bhutan.
- Within the Greater Middle Eastern group, **Syrian** respondents most often reported greater need than the group average.
- **Latin American** respondents generally reported high need across most of the indicators.
- Responses from certain Pacific Islander communities were sparse, so it is difficult to make comparisons, but in general **Pacific Islander** respondents, especially **Tongan** speaking respondents, reported high need across most of the indicators.
- Within the Slavic and Eastern European group, **Ukrainian** respondents most often reported greater need than average.

The disparities within the different ethnic groups revealed here reinforces the importance of more disaggregated data to better reflect the diversity of immigrant and refugee communities and highlights the need for more intentional, tailored strategies to understand and address disparities experienced by certain communities.

IV. CROSS-CUTTING NEEDS

A. ECONOMIC STABILITY

Economic Stability covers factors such as employment, income, English proficiency, and access to services.

1. COVERING COSTS

The ability to cover monthly costs varies from community to community. In our survey, only 32% of Latin American respondents reported being able to cover their food, housing, and other costs each month, followed by 50% of Pacific Islander respondents, and 57% of African respondents. Meanwhile, 63% of Slavic and Eastern European respondents could cover monthly costs, as well as 73% of Asian respondents, and 74% of Greater Middle Eastern respondents.

However, within each of these groups there are respondents from certain language groups that are struggling more than others. For example, although on average 73% of Asian respondents can cover their monthly costs, no Karen-speaking, and only 18% of Zomi-speaking and 38% of Khmer-speaking respondents reported being able to cover their monthly costs.

Although on average, 63% of Slavic/Eastern European respondents can cover their monthly costs, only 30% of Ukrainian respondents said they can cover their monthly costs.
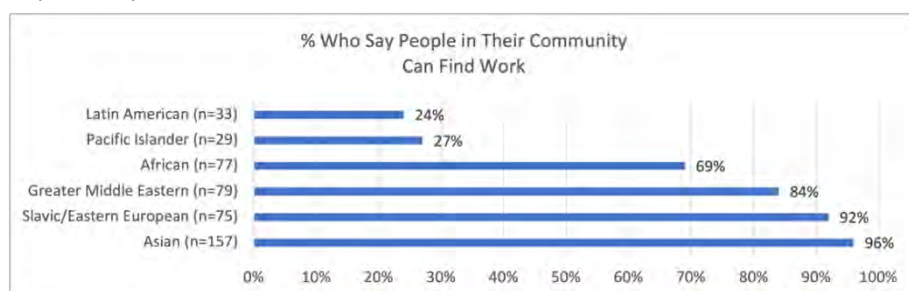
Within the African group, only 40% of Oromo-speaking, 53% of Swahili-speaking, and 56% of Amharic-speaking respondents can cover their monthly costs.

Within the Greater Middle Eastern group, only half of Syrian Arabic-speaking respondents can cover their monthly costs.

Only 22% of Tongan-speaking respondents can cover their monthly costs.

2. FINDING WORK & JOB SATISFACTION

69% of African, 84% of Greater Middle Eastern, 92% of Slavic/Eastern European, and 96% of Asian respondents say that people in their community can find work. On the other hand, only 24% and 27% of Latin American and Pacific Islander respondents say that people in their community can find work, respectively. Finding work is especially a struggle for Tongan-speaking, Somali-speaking respondents in Ontario, and Oromo-speaking respondents, only 15%, 17%, and 20% of whom say that people in their community could find work, respectively.

% Who Say People in Their Community Can Find Work

Group	%
Latin American (n=33)	24%
Pacific Islander (n=29)	27%
African (n=77)	69%
Greater Middle Eastern (n=79)	84%
Slavic/Eastern European (n=75)	92%
Asian (n=157)	96%

> **"I am concerned for our community that when you lose your job it is difficult to get it back."**
>
> Spanish-speaking respondent from Mexico

Language barriers were identified as a challenge when job searching by most of the respondents across all groups, except Pacific Islander respondents, only 31% of whom identified it as a problem. The second and third most common challenge across all groups were lack of education and/or training and lack of work experience.

> **"Discrimination and low language level makes it hard to get a job, lack of affordable daycare also makes it harder for mothers to get work."**
>
> Swahili-speaking respondent

Some groups also faced unique job search challenges. For example, 10% of African respondents identified discrimination and racism as a challenge. Similarly, 13% of Latin American respondents say that it is difficult to find a respectful work environment. 16% of Greater Middle Eastern respondents identified non-transferrable education or credentials obtained in their home country as a challenge. 64% of Tongan speaking respondents identified not having required documentation, such as a green card or Social Security Number, as a challenge for people in their community.

Only 36% of African respondents are satisfied with their job, and job satisfaction is especially low for Oromo-speaking respondents, Somali-speaking respondents in Ontario, and Tigrigna-speaking respondents, 0%, 17% and 44% of whom are satisfied with their job, respectively. On the other hand, most Asian, Slavic/Eastern European, and Greater Middle Eastern respondents are satisfied with their job. 61% of Latin American respondents are satisfied with their job, although only 59% feel that their contribution is valued.

> **"It was very difficult [to find a job]. First, I had to learn the language. Then get the certificate. Only then I was able to find a job."**
>
> Russian-speaking respondent from Russia

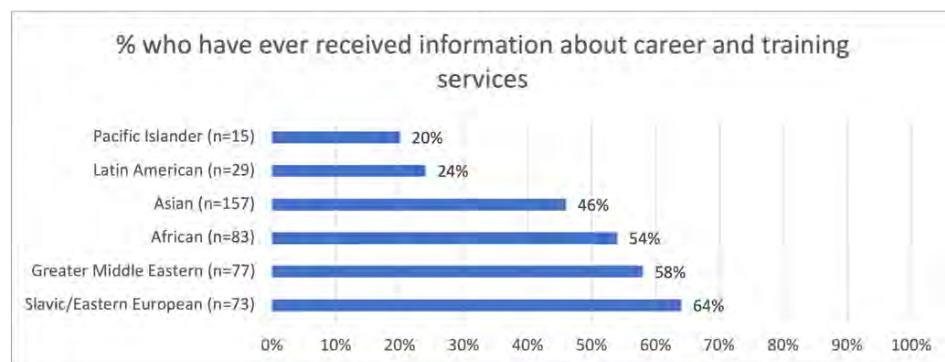## 3. EMPLOYMENT SERVICES AND ADULT EDUCATION/TRAINING

The most common employment-related needs expressed across all groups are vocational and skills training, general employment services (such as help with job search, resume assistance, career coaching, and interview prep), and having more information, marketing, and outreach regarding available resources.

Only 20% of Pacific Islander respondents, 24% of Latin American respondents, and 46% of Asian respondents have ever received information on career and training services. Meanwhile, 54% of African, 58% of Greater Middle Eastern, and 64% of Slavic and Eastern European respondents have received information. A lower share of Ukrainian-speaking, Somali-speaking, Zomi-speaking, and Karen-speaking respondents received information on career and training services than their group average.

Most respondents who received information about career and training services were able to access those services, although Latin American respondents reported the lowest access, with only 57% of respondents reporting being able to access those services.

% who have ever received information about career and training services

- Pacific Islander (n=15): 20%
- Latin American (n=29): 24%
- Asian (n=157): 46%
- African (n=83): 54%
- Greater Middle Eastern (n=77): 58%
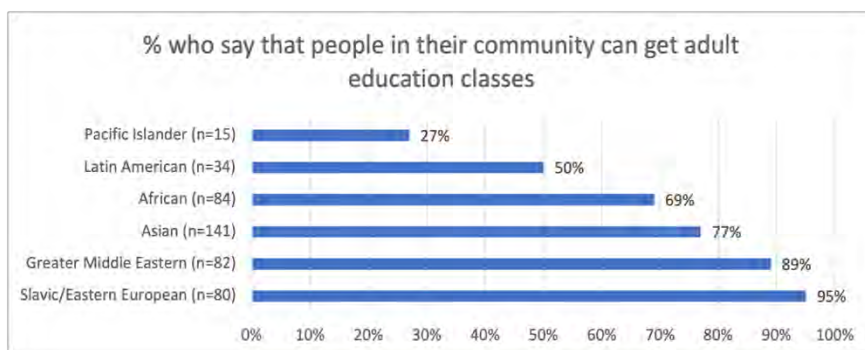- Slavic/Eastern European (n=73): 64%

Respondents across all groups identified that having more information, outreach, and marketing on career and training services would help people sign up. This need was cited by 33% of African respondents, 71% of Greater Middle Eastern respondents, and 76% of Latin American respondents. For Asian respondents, the most common need is bilingual navigators, and for Slavic/Eastern European respondents, tuition assistance was cited as the highest need.

When asked what jobs respondents are interested in that would require more education, the most frequently mentioned jobs are those in the healthcare sector such as nursing, certified nursing assistants, caregiving, phlebotomists, and dental assistants. There was also interest in jobs and classes in computer science, cyber security, and IT; business/management and professional services like accounting; CDL for truck and bus driving; teaching/childcare; and the trades. Many respondents also mentioned a need for jobs and training suitable for stay-at-home, or single moms.

69% of African, 77% of Asian, 89% of Greater Middle Eastern, and 95% of Slavic/Eastern European respondents say that people in their community can get adult education classes. Meanwhile, only 27% of Pacific Islander respondents and half of Latin American say that people in their community can get adult education classes.

% who say that people in their community can get adult education classes

- Pacific Islander (n=15): 27%
- Latin American (n=34): 50%
- African (n=84): 69%
- Asian (n=141): 77%
- Greater Middle Eastern (n=82): 89%
- Slavic/Eastern European (n=80): 95%

Similar to career and training services, the most common need that would help people sign up for adult education classes is more information, marketing, and outreach on available services. This need was cited by 41% of Latin American, 50% of Pacific Islander, and 67% of African respondents. Other supports or services that would help are lower cost or tuition assistance, culturally specific or language specific support and navigation, and more flexible scheduling such as evening classes.

4. CHALLENGES BECAUSE OF ENGLISH LEVEL AND CULTURALLY SPECIFIC SERVICES

26% of Pacific Islander, 36% of African, 46% of Greater Middle Eastern, 58% of Asian, 68% of Slavic/Eastern European, and 69% of Latin American respondents experience challenges because of their English level.

Within the Slavic/Eastern European group, this rate was particularly high for Russian-speaking and Moldovan-speaking respondents, 71% and 75% of whom reported challenges, respectively.

Among Asian respondents, 71% of Burmese-speaking, 75% of Karen-speaking, 87% of Nepali-speaking, and 100% of Zomi-speaking respondents reported challenges.

Among Greater Middle Eastern respondents, 70% and 71% of Dari-speaking and Syrian Arabic-speaking respondents reported challenges, respectively.
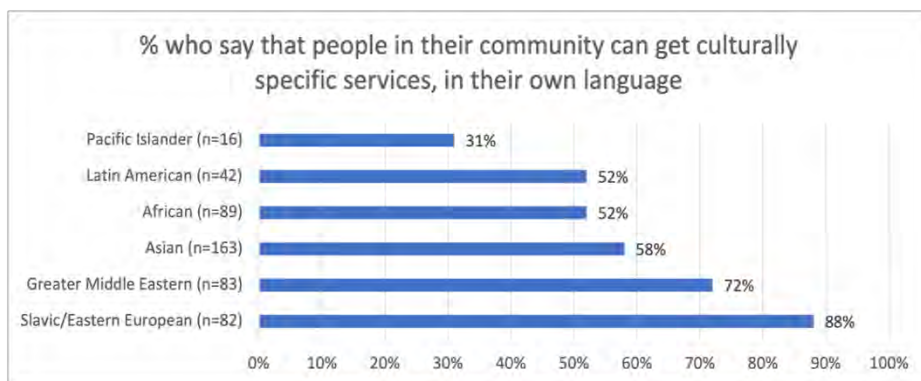
The most common challenges across all respondents related to their English language ability are general communication, communicating with service providers, and job search and interviews.

72% of Slavic/Eastern European respondents and 88% of Greater Middle Eastern respondents say that people in their community can get culturally specific services in their language. Meanwhile, only 38% of Pacific Islander respondents, 52% of African and Latin American respondents, and 58% of Asian respondents say they can get culturally specific services.

Of African respondents, only 36% of Swahili-speaking respondents say that people in their community can get culturally specific services. No Oromo speaking respondents say that people in their community can get culturally specific services. Within the Asian group, no Zomi-speaking, and only 31% of Mandarin-speaking and 38% of Khmer-speaking respondents say that people can find culturally specific services.

% who say that people in their community can get culturally specific services, in their own language

Group	%
Pacific Islander (n=16)	31%
Latin American (n=42)	52%
African (n=89)	52%
Asian (n=163)	58%
Greater Middle Eastern (n=83)	72%
Slavic/Eastern European (n=82)	88%

> **"I think it will be very helpful if people can have a place to go if they need support and they know somebody who speak their language will be there to support them."**
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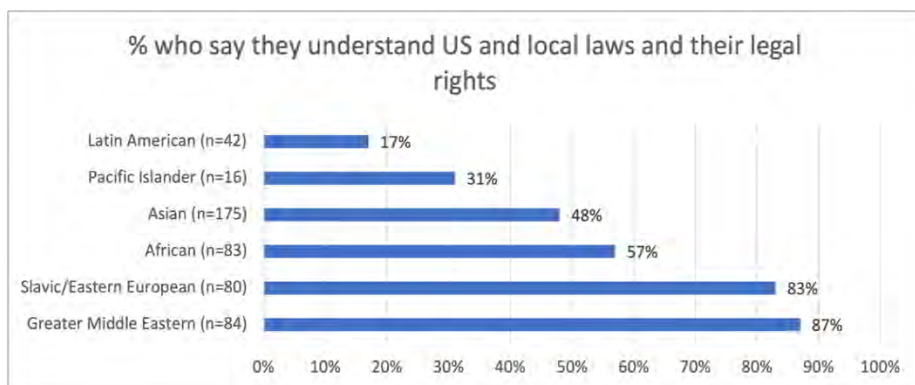> Oromo-speaking respondent

5. ACCESS TO LEGAL SERVICES AND INFORMATION

82% of Greater Middle Eastern and 83% of Slavic/Eastern European respondents say that they understand U.S. laws, local laws, and their legal rights. Meanwhile, only 17% of Latin American, 31% of Pacific Islander, 48% of Asian, and 57% of African respondents say that they understand their legal rights and U.S./local laws. Specific language groups reporting the lowest rates of understanding U.S./local laws and their legal rights are Oromo-speaking, Zomi-speaking, Mandarin-speaking, Bhutanese Nepali-speaking, Tongan-speaking, and Spanish-speaking respondents.

> **"[People need] workshops that explains different laws that they are qualified to have. I believe that having an understanding of your rights is very important."**
>
> Vietnamese-speaking respondent

According to respondents, the most common challenges that people in their community face when trying to access legal services or information are the language barrier, cost, and lack of information or knowledge about the law and available services. Additionally, 18% of African respondents were fearful of seeking services or lacked trust.

% who say they understand US and local laws and their legal rights

Group	%
Latin American (n=42)	17%
Pacific Islander (n=16)	31%
Asian (n=175)	48%
African (n=83)	57%
Slavic/Eastern European (n=80)	83%
Greater Middle Eastern (n=84)	87%

> **"The cost of legal services is high, people fear giving too much of their information to lawyers, lack of understanding legal terminology, mistrust of the legal system and courts."**
>
> Swahili-speaking respondents from Kenya

B. EDUCATION ACCESS AND QUALITY

Education access and quality covers factors such as childcare and early learning programs, inclusivity in school, and concerns related to children and youth.

1. CHILDCARE AND EARLY LEARNING

64% of Slavic/Eastern European, and 67% of Pacific Islander respondents say that there are preschools or childcare programs in their area that have staff who look like them or their family, and who speak their language. Meanwhile, only 18% of African, 36% of Asian, 38% of Latin American, and 44% of Greater Middle Eastern respondents say that programs with culturally specific staff exist in their area.

> **"I love for them to be able to play or learn from cultures that includes them. Books that look like [them], music that is diverse, toys that are inclusive."**
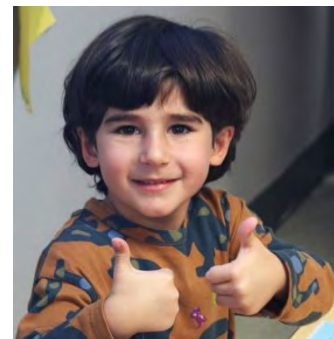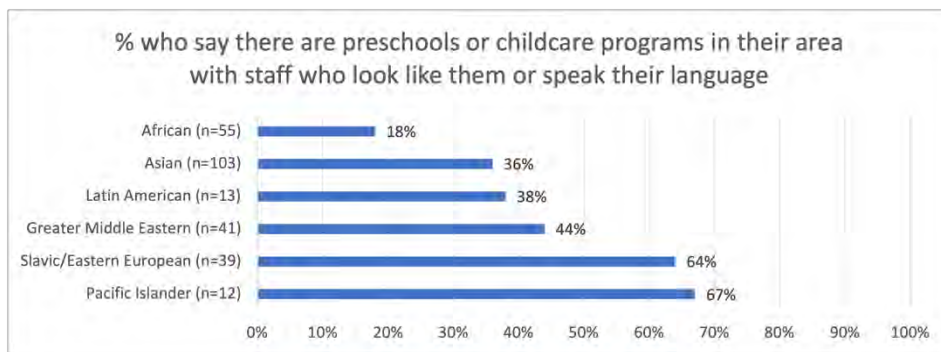>
> Oromo-speaking respondent

> **"I want to see more special programs including moms to see and learn from those programs."**
>
> Arabic-speaking respondent from Syria

Fewer than 20% of respondents from every African language group, with the exception Somali-speaking respondents, say that there are programs with culturally specific staff in their area. Among Asian respondents, this is a particular challenge for Bhutanese Nepali-speaking, Burmese-speaking Rohingya, Khmer-speaking, and Zomi-speaking respondents where almost none of whom say that there are programs in their area with culturally specific staff.

Respondents say that early learning programs can be more inclusive of their culture and language by teaching their native language/having language immersion programs, having more cultural education, celebration, and representation (e.g., books, food, toys) in the classroom, and having culturally specific or bilingual staff.

> **"If children get support in their language, it is very good to build confidence."**
>
> Amharic-speaking respondent

% who say there are preschools or childcare programs in their area with staff who look like them or speak their language

- African (n=55): 18%
- Asian (n=103): 36%
- Latin American (n=13): 38%
- Greater Middle Eastern (n=41): 44%
- Slavic/Eastern European (n=39): 64%
- Pacific Islander (n=12): 67%

2. YOUTH AND K-12 LEARNING

Approximately half of Asian and Greater Middle Eastern respondents, as well as 64% of Latin American respondents, received help when signing their child up for K-12 school. Meanwhile, only 22% and 36% of African and Slavic/Eastern European respondents received help when signing up, respectively. Most of the respondents who received help received language specific help, except Asian respondents, only 35% of whom received language specific help. Most respondents found it was easy to sign up or that they received help.

When asked what has helped or would help their children in their community feel welcomed at school, respondents across all groups most often mentioned having a safe, welcoming environment, supportive teachers who greet and check in with them, culturally specific staff and teachers, and opportunities for students to socialize and welcome one another.

When asked what respondents feel is missing or wish was taught in their child's school, respondents across nearly all groups most frequently mentioned teaching values, respect, and morality, followed by their native language or culture. 38% of Greater Middle Eastern, 40% of Pacific Islander, and 46% of Asian respondents feel that their native language or culture is missing from their child's school.

Respondents across the groups would like to be involved in their student's learning by supporting and encouraging them, getting updates from and communicating with the teacher, and attending or volunteering in school activities. The most common challenges to being involved cited by respondents is a lack of time/conflict with work and the language barrier.

Most respondents across all groups say that they can communicate their concerns and expectations with their child's teacher and school staff, except for Latin American respondents, where only 24% of whom felt that they could.

> "More picture on the walls of people look like us. More bilingual staff to help kids and make them feel welcome. I think it's also how the teacher treat the kids and make them love school."
>
> Arabic-speaking respondent from Syria

> "Enrolling is not easy for us because of the language barriers, so we want our Zomi language instruction or Zomi language social worker."
>
> Zomi-speaking respondent

> "[I want children to learn] World history so they also get a chance to learn about their history and where their parents come from."
>
> Nepali-speaking respondent from Bhutan

3. CONCERNS AND SUPPORTS

When asked what worries respondents most about the children in their community, all groups—except for Latin American respondents—were concerned about children losing their native language and culture. Specifically, 11% of Slavic/Eastern European, 16% of Greater Middle Eastern, 17% of African, 22% of Asian, and 40% of Pacific Islander respondents share this concern. Safety was also a common concern, mentioned by 7% of Greater Middle Eastern, 11% of Slavic and Eastern European, 13% of Pacific Islander, 21% of Asian, 22% of Latin American, and 24% of African respondents. Another common concern was bullying and/or discrimination, cited by 14% of African 19% of Greater Middle Eastern, and 30% of Latin American respondents.

Across all groups, drug use was the most reported concern for teenagers. 33% of Greater Middle Eastern, 33% of Latin American, 40% of Asian, 43% of Pacific Islander, and 49% of African respondents share this concern. Other concerns commonly cited are negative influence from peers/peer pressure, safety, social media/screen time, and bad behavior.

Across all groups, the most common services or support that respondents wish were available to the youth in their community are more mentorship, accessible afterschool and summer activities, sports and physical activity opportunities, and more cultural resources and events.

> **"I worry mostly about my great grandkids because they seem to be losing their Somali language as they are all born here."**
>
> Somali-speaking respondent

> **"We need culturally specific groups where youths can come to make good friends and talk to mentors who can guide them to make good choices in life and influence them positively."**
>
> Swahili-speaking respondent

HIGHLIGHT: IMMIGRANT AND REFUGEE YOUTH NEEDS

In addition to the survey, we conducted a series of focus groups with 68 youth from Asian, Greater Middle Eastern, Pacific Islander, and Slavic/Eastern European communities in the Portland metropolitan region, as well as Greater Middle Eastern and African youth in Ontario, to understand their needs and strategies to address those needs. Below is a summary of the needs that were consistent across the groups:

Racism/Discrimination and Sense of Belonging

Racism/discrimination was a common need expressed by all groups and was the top need for Asian youth. Asian youth were concerned about 'casual racism,' racism being overlooked or dismissed, stereotypes, and Asian hate crimes. Greater Middle Eastern youth were concerned about racism, feeling of not belonging, and criticisms from other kids in school. Pacific Islander youth were concerned about racial profiling and a lack of Pacific Islander representation. Slavic/Eastern European youth were concerned about anti-Russian discrimination, and public ignorance of the Slavic community. Ontario youth reported feeling xenophobia, feeling unwelcomed, and a lack of places to practice their faith.

Ontario Youth Focus Group

Mental Health

Mental health was a common need expressed by Asian, Greater Middle Eastern, Pacific Islander, and Ontario youth. Mental health was the top identified need for Pacific Islander and Ontario youth. Pacific Islander youth stressed the stigma in their community around mental health, and lack of mental health support from their parents. Asian youth talked about mental health, depression, anxiety, and stress, especially as it relates to high expectations and stereotypes. Greater Middle Eastern youth emphasized a feeling of 'culture shock' and 'trauma' from that shock, in addition to feeling of depression, not belonging, and homesickness.

Financial Support

The youth across all groups were sensitive to the rising costs of living and education. This was among the top two needs for Asian, Pacific Islander, Slavic/Eastern European, and Ontario youth groups. Asian youth were concerned about the costs of paying for college and supplies, Pacific Islander and Ontario youth were concerned about unemployment and poverty, and Slavic/Eastern European youth with the cost of gas and living expenses.

Other Needs

Beyond the issues mentioned above, other needs reported include quality education access, public safety (e.g., in their neighborhood, on public transit, etc.), transportation, hunger, government, and drug use. ■

C. HEALTH CARE ACCESS AND QUALITY

Health Care Access and Quality include access to health and mental health care needs and impact of COVID-19.

1. HEALTH CARE ACCESS, CHALLENGES, AND NEEDS

64% of African, 68% of Pacific Islander, 68% Slavic and Eastern European, 70% of Latin American, 93% of Asian, and 94% of Greater Middle Eastern respondents say that they and their family go to a primary care provider/family physician for their health needs. Among African respondents, only 30% of Oromo-speaking, and half of Amharic-speaking and Tigrigna-speaking respondents have access to a primary care provider.

Just 31% of Latin American respondents and less than half of Pacific Islander and African respondents (48% and 49%, respectively) say that people in their community can get the care they need, compared to 70% of Slavic/Eastern European respondents, 86% of Greater Middle Eastern respondents, and 91% of Asian respondents.

Within the African group, only 30% of Oromo-speaking respondents, as well as half of Amharic-speaking and Tigrigna-speaking respondents, say that people in their community can get necessary care. Among other groups, only 36% of Tongan respondents, 44% of Syrian Arabic-speaking respondents, and half of Russian-speaking respondents say that people in their community can get the care they need.

> **"The reason why it's hard for people to get healthcare for my community is because some people can't qualify or [don't] have the funds to do monthly payments."**
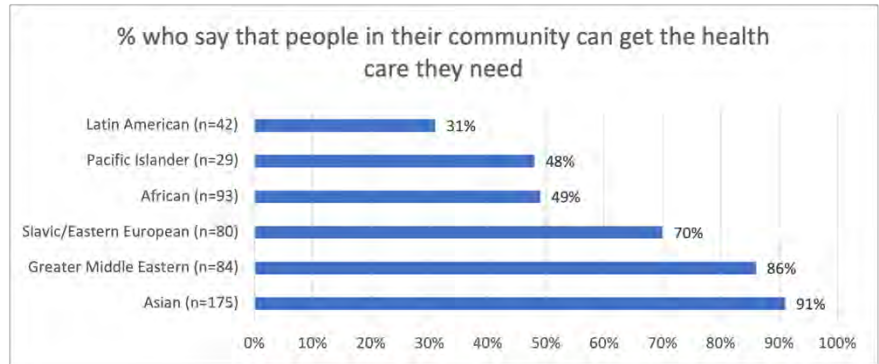>
> Hispanic Spanish-speaking respondent

> **"People need to meet qualifications they can actually meet. In reality, not all households have good income, paperwork to represent, or [they] don't understand the qualifications they need to be able to get healthcare."**
>
> Tongan-speaking respondent

% who say that people in their community can get the health care they need

Group	%
Latin American (n=42)	31%
Pacific Islander (n=29)	48%
African (n=93)	49%
Slavic/Eastern European (n=80)	70%
Greater Middle Eastern (n=84)	86%
Asian (n=175)	91%

The most common challenges to accessing healthcare across all groups are high cost, cited by 11% of Asian, 14% of Pacific Islander, 20% of African, 21% of Slavic and Eastern European, 30% of Greater Middle Easter, and 66% of Latin American respondents. Similarly, a lack of health insurance was a common challenge for all groups except Latin American; cited by 20% of African, 23% of Greater Middle Eastern, 29% of Pacific Islander, and 44% of Asian respondents. Another common issue is a lack of knowledge or information on available resources and how to navigate the healthcare system, cited by 18% of Pacific Islander, 24% of Asian, and 29% of African respondents.

The most common healthcare needs identified across all groups are affordable healthcare or health insurance, cited by 20% of Asian, 21% of Pacific Islander, 25% of Slavic/Eastern European, 28% of Latin American, 40% of African, and 47% of Greater Middle Eastern respondents. Another common need is information, education, and healthcare navigation, cited by 12% of Greater Middle Eastern, 14% of Latin American, 21% of African, and 22% of Asian respondents. 10% of African, 12% of Greater Middle Eastern, and 28% of Asian respondents also identified interpretation and language support as a need.

2. MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

66% of Latin American, 76% of Asian, 78% of Slavic/Eastern European, and 83% of Greater Middle Eastern respondents say that people in their community seek help when feeling intense or prolonged feelings of sadness, anxiety, or distress. Meanwhile, only 37% and 46% of African and Pacific Islander respondents say that people in their community seek help when they have these feelings, respectively. The most frequently cited reason provided by African respondents as to why people in their community do not seek help is because of cultural differences and stigma/taboo, followed by fear, hesitation, or a lack of trust, preference for relying on family, friends, and community support, and a lack of mental health information or education.

Where people go for emotional and mental support varies. For example, African, Slavic/Eastern European, and Pacific Islander respondents most often mentioned family or friends as the place where people in their community seek support, followed by a faith leader or spiritual leader. On the other hand, Greater Middle Eastern and Latin American respondents most often mentioned a mental health specialist/counselor or a healthcare provider such as a doctor, as the places where people go to for help. Asian respondents most often said family and friends, followed by a healthcare provider.

3. COVID-19 IMPACT

41% of respondents say that someone in their household worked in an environment that is high-risk for contracting COVID, including 8% of Slavic/Eastern European, 31% of Pacific Islander, 43% of Asian, 46% of Latin American, 47% of Greater Middle Eastern, and 63% of African respondents

51% of all respondents say that someone in their family has gotten sick due to COVID-19, including 40% of Slavic/Eastern European, 45% of African, 46% of Asian, 55% of Pacific Islander, 59% of Greater Middle Eastern, and 77% of Latin American respondents.

% with family member who passed away from COVID-19

Latin American (n=43)	28%
Pacific Islander (n=29)	21%
Greater Middle Eastern (n=84)	12%
African (n=94)	6%
Slavic/Eastern European (n=83)	2%
Asian (n=177)	2%

24% say that someone in their family had been hospitalized because of COVID-19, including 7% of Slavic/Eastern European, 15% of Asian, 21% of Pacific Islander, 34% of Greater Middle Eastern, 38% of Latin American, and 40% of African respondents. 8% say that someone in their family passed away from COVID-19, although this rate was higher for Greater Middle Eastern, Pacific Islander, and Latin American respondents, 12%, 21%, and 25% of whom said a family member passed away, respectively.
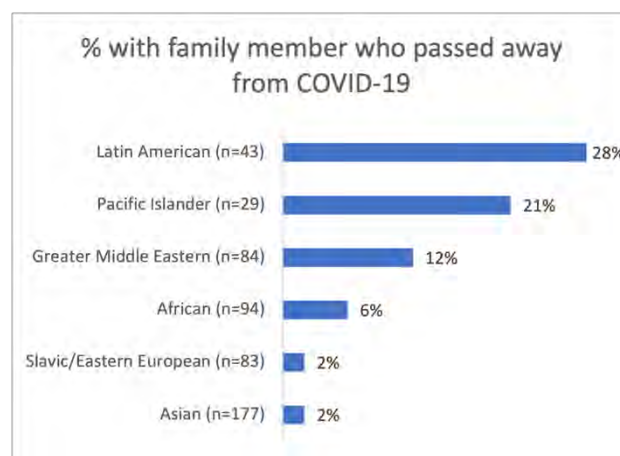
"It was hard to isolate with a multigenerational home."

Marshallese-speaking respondent

"The way that the Pandemic affected us was that some of us didn't have money to pay bills nor enough money to get groceries and there were very few food pantries open for us to get food."

Hispanic Spanish-speaking respondent

"The pandemic left me financially struggling, and emotionally depressed, I do not feel comfortable leaving my house anymore."

Oromo-speaking respondent

"I got to stay at home during the pandemic time. It was a really tough time for all my family. Another way [I was] affected was I had waited for my husband to [come to] the US from my back home country and because of that, all the doors closed, and it was too much on me to manage."

Arabic-speaking respondent from Iraq

"We lost so many family members. And now we are afraid to go places."

Lao-speaking respondent

HIGHLIGHT: NEEDS OF IMMIGRANTS AND REFUGEE SENIORS

ON OCTOBER 26, 2022, we conducted a focus group of 17 immigrant and refugee seniors, including 5 Asian (2 Nepali from Bhutan, 2 Vietnamese, and 1 Mandarin-speaking), 4 African (2 Tigrigna/Amharic, 1 Oromo, and 1 Swahili-speaking), 4 Greater Middle Eastern (3 Iraqi and 1 Kurdish), and 4 Slavic seniors (all "Ukrainian/Russian").

The biggest needs identified by the African seniors are **ESL classes**, more opportunities for **exercise and physical activity**, more **social activities**, such as knitting, art, and cultural exchange programs. Other needs include access to healthy **food and meals** and **healthcare navigation**.

Immigrant and Refugee Seniors Focus Group

Among Asian seniors, Nepali-speaking seniors identified **spiritual needs**—including a need for more priests to conduct ceremonies and rituals and places of worship—which have led people to move out of the state. They also identified a need for **more community gatherings and trips** like before the pandemic (e.g., to visit gardens, the coast), more **affordable housing** (especially for seniors/when families split), **transportation** (to go to parks and activities), more **availability of medical appointments**, more **translation/interpretation**, and help with expenses in the winter as SSI income is too low. Vietnamese-speaking respondents expressed concerns about **safety** (in particular, road safety, a lack of trust in the police, and concerns about homelessness), difficulty booking medical appointments, **the high cost of utilities** especially in winter, and a need for **free or low-cost insurance**. The Mandarin-speaking senior identified a need for better outreach and information for **food pantries**, more food and cash assistance, and **financial assistance** to cover high Medicare bills, especially for newcomers.

Greater Middle Eastern seniors expressed concern that **SSI income was too low**, and as a result, they are ineligible for loans to **buy a home**, and need **rental assistance**. They also expressed a need for a **cultural center** for the Arabic community, more **gatherings** to socialize and play games, like dominoes, and translated signs and information regarding **Halal food** at grocery stores.

Slavic/Eastern European seniors all identified that their top need is more **ESL classes**, especially those after 5pm when community members get off work. They also expressed concerns with **discrimination and conflict** from within the community because of language and nationality, especially among the youth. ■

D. NEIGHBORHOOD AND BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Neighborhood and Built Environment includes factors such as housing, safety concerns, neighborhood food access, and transportation.

1. NEIGHBORHOOD

The neighborhood responses are heavily influenced by the surveyor's own network and location and therefore, the patterns identified should not be assumed to reflect that of the communities.

Most Asian and Latin American respondents (77% and 92%, respectively), and roughly half of African and Slavic/Eastern European respondents (47% and 52%, respectively), live in a zip code within the City of Portland. Most of those that lived within Portland lived in a zip code east of 82nd Avenue. 63% of Greater Middle Eastern respondents lived in a Washington County zip code, along with 19% of African respondents. 59% of Pacific Islander respondents lived in a zip code within the City of Salem. The remaining lived in parts of Multnomah County outside of Portland, Clackamas County, and a few live in Ontario or Eugene.
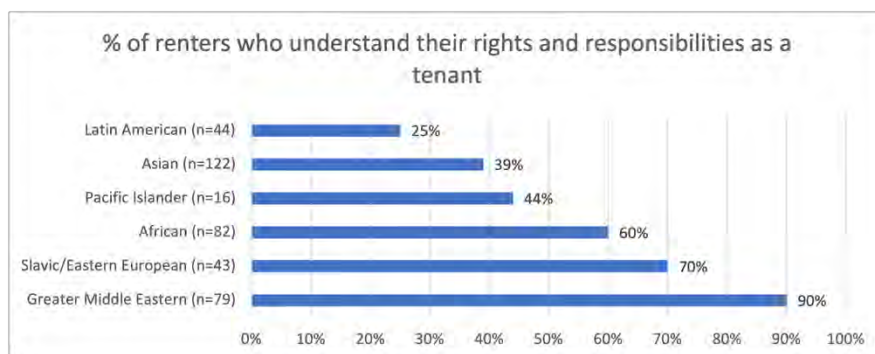
2. HOUSING CONDITIONS

Most Greater Middle Eastern, African, Latin American, and Pacific Islander respondents are renters (66%, 74%, 80%, and 88%, respectively), while less than half (41% and 45% respectively) of Asian and Slavic/Eastern European respondents are renters.

> **"One person working in the family [is] not enough to rent an apartment. Many families share housing."**
>
> Karen-speaking respondent

Within the African group, the share of renters was higher for Tigrigna-speaking respondents where 75% of whom are renters, and Somali-speaking and Oromo-speaking respondents, all of whom are renters. Within the Asian group, the share of renters was higher for Nepali-speaking respondents from Bhutan, Zomi-speaking respondents, and Burmese-speaking respondents (75%, 76%, and 86%, respectively).

% of renters who understand their rights and responsibilities as a tenant

- Latin American (n=44): 25%
- Asian (n=122): 39%
- Pacific Islander (n=16): 44%
- African (n=82): 60%
- Slavic/Eastern European (n=43): 70%
- Greater Middle Eastern (n=79): 90%

> **"We need case workers to help teach clients on their housing rights and responsibilities as some landlords take advantage of newcomers with low English levels."**
>
> Swahili-speaking respondent from Congo

Across all groups, renters are less likely to be satisfied with their housing than those who live in a home that they or their family own. For example, 56% of Asian renters are satisfied with their housing, compared to 93% of Asian homeowners. Meanwhile, less than half of African, Pacific Islander and Latin American renters are satisfied with their housing. Within the African group, no Somali-speaking renters in Ontario and only 20% of Oromo-speaking are satisfied with their housing. Within the Asian group, only 33% of Burmese-speaking renters and 38% of Zomi-speaking renters are satisfied with their housing. Within the Slavic/Eastern European groups, only half of Ukrainian renters are satisfied with their housing.

48% and 81% of Latin American and Pacific Islander respondents are worried about the safety of their housing structure (e.g., building safety, lead, mold, etc.), respectively, compared to 18% of Slavic/Eastern European respondents, 25% of African and Asian respondents, and 31% of Greater Middle Eastern respondents. Within the Asian group, 45% of Bhutanese Nepali-speaking and half of Burmese-speaking respondents are concerned.

Of those who are tenants, only 25% of Latin American, 39% of Asian, and 44% of Pacific Islander respondents knew their rights and responsibilities as a tenant. Among Asian respondents, no Burmese-speaking Rohingya or Zomi-speaking respondents reported knowing their tenant rights and responsibilities. Meanwhile, 60% of African respondents, 70% of Slavic/Eastern European respondents, and 90% of Greater Middle Eastern respondents say that they understand their rights and responsibilities.

3. HOUSING CHALLENGES AND NEEDS

40% of Asian, 42% of Slavic/Eastern European, 69% of African, 75% of Pacific Islander, 76% of Greater Middle Eastern, and 87% of Latin American respondents say that housing instability is a problem for people in their community. Meanwhile, less than half of Asian and Slavic/Eastern European respondents (40% and 42%, respectively) reported housing instability as a problem.

Within the Greater Middle Eastern group, housing instability is particularly acute among respondents from Iraq/Kuwait and Syria, 86% of whom say that it is a problem for people in their

> **"Some families move a lot, so their kids have been in and out of school. they do not stay in one school, and this affects their education. Rent is very expensive and too high for them to afford. Sometimes there is too many people in the apartments, but that is how they can afford the apartment, so they are forced to move out."**
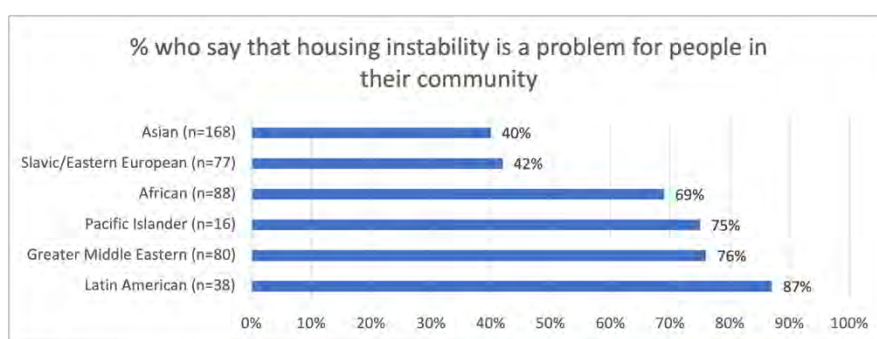>
> Chuukese-speaking respondent

community. Within the African group, 74% of Swahili-speaking, 80% of Amharic-speaking, 80% of Somali-speaking (in Ontario), and 100% of Oromo-speaking respondents report that housing instability is a problem for people in their community. Within the Asian group, housing instability is particularly acute among Zomi-speaking and Khmer-speaking respondents, 65% and 77% of whom report it as an issue in their community, respectively, as well as Bhutanese Nepali-speaking respondents and Burmese-speaking Rohingya respondents, 92% and 100% of whom report it as an issue within their community, respectively.

The housing challenge cited by most respondents across all groups is high and/or rising housing cost. This issue is cited by 35% of Latin American, 44% of Slavic/Eastern European, 45% of Pacific Islander, 54% of Asian, 57% of African, and 72% of Greater Middle Eastern respondents. Additional challenges frequently mentioned are low wages, a lack of credit history, and a lack of housing options (e.g., space for big families, in good condition, or in a desired area). The housing needs most often cited by respondents across all groups are housing/rental assistance, more affordable or low-income housing, and classes and/or support for first-time homebuyers.

> **"Rents are high, some don't know how to apply for rent assistance programs, some have low incomes and no stable jobs, some struggle to even fill rent leasing forms as the don't know English."**
>
> Swahili-speaking respondent from Tanzania

% who say that housing instability is a problem for people in their community

Group	%
Asian (n=168)	40%
Slavic/Eastern European (n=77)	42%
African (n=88)	69%
Pacific Islander (n=16)	75%
Greater Middle Eastern (n=80)	76%
Latin American (n=38)	87%

4. SAFETY CONCERNS

Overall, less than half of Slavic/Eastern European, African, and Asian respondents (39%, 42%, and 43%, respectively) are concerned about the personal safety of people in their household or community. Meanwhile, 55% of Greater Middle Eastern, 62% of Latin American, and 66% of Pacific Islander respondents were concerned.

However, within the African group, 73% of Tigrigna-speaking and 80% of Oromo-speaking respondents are concerned about the safety of people in their household or community. Similarly, within the Asian group, 63% of Nepali-speaking respondents and 74% of Mandarin-speaking respondents are concerned. Within the Greater Middle Eastern group, 64% of Arabic-speaking Syrian and 67% of Dari-speaking respondents are concerned.

> **"As an immigrant, a black person, there is always fear in this country."**
>
> Swahili-speaking respondent from Tanzania

> **"Hate crimes, it appears they have been targeting the senior residents. My children don't want me leaving the house on my own."**
>
> Mandarin-speaking respondent

> **"I am Muslim and wearing hijab and I am afraid to go out for a walk at night."**
>
> Arabic-speaking respondent from Libya

The top safety concerns among groups vary. For instance, the top concerns for Pacific Islander respondents are crime and health concerns related to the pandemic (cited by 32% and 16% of respondents, respectively). For Latin American respondents, the top concerns are neighborhood safety and the perceived threat of people who are homeless (cited by 62% and 48% of respondents, respectively). For Asian and Greater Middle Eastern respondents, the top concerns are crime (cited by 40% and 34% of respondents, respectively) and gun violence (36% and 19%, respectively). For African respondents, the top concerns are discrimination, racial profiling, and hate crimes and the perceived threat of homeless people (cited by 27% and 24% of respondents, respectively).

And for Slavic/Eastern European respondents, the top safety concerns are the perceived threat of people who are homeless and gun violence (cited by 32% and 27% of respondents, respectively). Respondents across all groups mentioned crime and gun violence and respondents across all but one group mentioned the perceived threat of people who are homeless, as well as drug use and/or drug trafficking.

The most common concerns within the environment mentioned by respondents across all groups are neighborhood safety, water quality, and climate change. Each group except the African respondents identified neighborhood safety as the most common environmental concern, while the top concern for African respondents was the extreme weather (especially heat) and the lack of air conditioning (cited by 26% of respondents).

In terms of problems within the community, drug use, crime, alcohol use, discrimination, and hate-violence were most often cited across all groups. Among Asian and Latin American respondents, not having safe parks and green spaces was also identified as a problem (cited by 40% and 43% of respondents, respectively). Among Greater Middle Eastern and Slavic/Eastern European respondents, domestic violence was also identified as a problem (cited by 31% and 38% of respondents, respectively).

5. POLICE

The level of trust toward the local police varied across the different groups. 78% of Asian, 95% of Greater Middle Eastern, and 96% of Slavic and Eastern European respondents trust the police, compared to less than half of Pacific Islander, African, and Latin American respondents (42%, 43%, and 46%, respectively).

Within the African group, distrust of the police was especially high among Oromo-speaking, Somali-speaking in Ontario, and Tigrigna-speaking respondents, 60%, 67%, and 73% of whom do not trust the local police, respectively. Within the Asian group, distrust of the local police was higher among Mandarin-speaking and Bhutanese Nepali-speaking respondents, approximately half of whom do not trust the police.
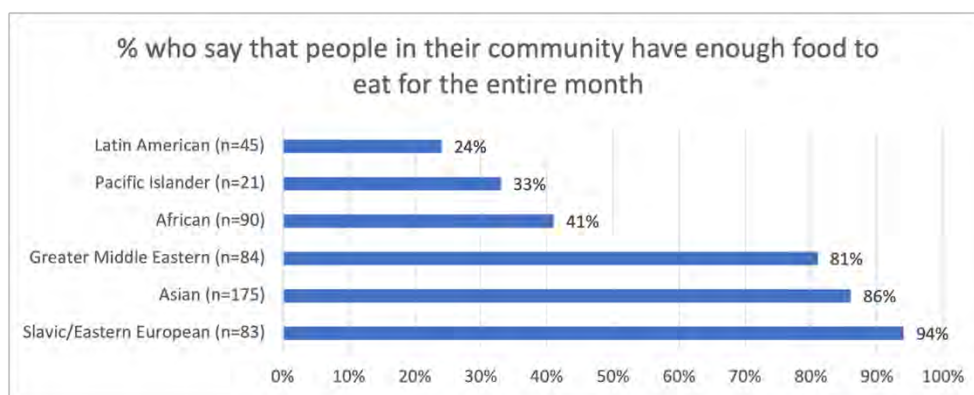
Less than 25% of respondents from all groups, except Latin American and Pacific Islander respondents, have interacted with the police. Meanwhile, 46% of Latin American and 49% of Pacific Islander respondents have interacted with the local police. For Pacific Islander and African respondents, the most common reasons as to why they do not trust the police is because of fear of racial profiling and discrimination (cited by 15% and 21%, respectively) and because of past deaths and shootings—as seen in the media or elsewhere (cited by 19% and 11% of respondents, respectively). 31% of Latin American respondents said they do not trust the police because they were unresponsive or unreliable.

6. FOOD ACCESS

Only 24% of Pacific Islander respondents, 27% of Latin American respondents, and 41% of African respondents say that people in their community have enough food to eat for the entire month. In contrast, 81% of Greater Middle Eastern respondents, 86% of Asian respondents, and 94% of Slavic and Eastern European respondents say that people in their community have enough food to eat for the entire month. Within the African group, only 10% of Oromo-speaking respondents say that people in their community have enough food to eat for the entire month.

% who say that people in their community have enough food to eat for the entire month

Group	%
Latin American (n=45)	24%
Pacific Islander (n=21)	33%
African (n=90)	41%
Greater Middle Eastern (n=84)	81%
Asian (n=175)	86%
Slavic/Eastern European (n=83)	94%

Less than half of Latin American, Pacific Islander, Greater Middle Eastern, and African respondents (18%, 31%, 31%, and 41%, respectively) say that they can easily find food in their neighborhood that is affordable. Among Greater Middle Eastern respondents, no Dari-speaking respondents and only 31% of Arabic-speaking respondents say that they can easily find food in their neighborhood that is affordable. Among African respondents, affordability was a particular challenge for Swahili-speaking and Tigrigna-speaking respondents where only 24% and 38% of whom say they can easily find food that is affordable, respectively. While 60% of Slavic/Eastern European respondents say they can easily find food that is affordable, less than half (45%) of 'Other' Slavic/Eastern European respondents (those not Ukrainian, Russian, or Moldovan) and half of Moldovan respondents say they can easily find food that is affordable. While 61% of Asian respondents say they can easily find food that is affordable, only 10% of Nepali-speaking respondents (combined from Bhutan and Nepal), 17% of Burmese-speaking respondents (including Rohingya), and 35% of Zomi-speaking respondents say they can easily find affordable food in their neighborhood.

> **"Food pantries are good, but we don't eat those food. I have a little garden and I grow culturally [specific] vegetables. We have plenty of culturally [specific] food but [it's] not affordable if we don't get food stamp."**
>
> Karen-speaking respondent

> **"[People need] More culturally specific food pantries, people in our community usually do not eat those food they have at pantries, therefore [they] don't go there even if they are in need."**
>
> Oromo-speaking respondent

> **"For purchasing culturally specific food we have to travel far from home, and they are costly."**
>
> Farsi-speaking respondent

Less than half of Latin American and African respondents (16% and 47%, respectively) say that they can easily find food in their neighborhood that is fresh and healthy. Meanwhile, only 31% of Greater Middle Eastern respondents say that they can easily find food in their neighborhood that is culturally specific. Finding culturally

specific food was also particularly challenging for Tigrigna-speaking respondents, only 15% of whom say that they can easily find food that is culturally specific.

The most common food support or services desired across all groups are more food pantries, especially ones that contain more fresh and culturally specific food. The second most common response is gardening access and education. Other needs include cooking and food-related classes (e.g., nutrition, shopping, etc.), increasing financial support and food stamps, and more culturally specific food businesses such as a grocery store or bakery.

7. TRANSPORTATION

On average, most respondents across the groups have a personal vehicle for transportation. However, respondents from particular-language groups were less likely to have a personal vehicle. Among African respondents, 38% of Amharic-speaking and 50% of Tigrigna-speaking respondents did not have a personal vehicle. Within the Asian group, approximately half of Nepali-speaking respondents (from both Bhutan and Nepal), Burmese-speaking respondents, and Khmer-speaking respondents did not have a personal vehicle. Within the Greater Middle Eastern group, 80% of Dari-speaking respondents did not have a personal vehicle. The average commute time for those without a personal vehicle was longer than the overall average commute time of their larger ethnic group. For example, while the average commute time for all Greater Middle Eastern respondents was 26 minutes, the average commute time for Dari-speaking respondents was 41 minutes.

> **"We have to cross the road, but there are no transportation facilities here and the park is far from us."**
>
> Dari-speaking respondent

E. SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY CONTEXT

Social and Community Context includes factors such as community involvement, civic engagement, community spaces, and maintaining culture.

1. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

African, Asian, Pacific Islander, and Slavic/Eastern European respondents were most often involved in their community over the past year through religious activities, while Greater Middle Eastern and Latin American respondents were most often involved through volunteering. Overall, these two activities were the most common ways that respondents were involved in their community.

Overall, most respondents from all groups do not tend to keep up with political issues and the share of those who keep up with political issues ranged from 6% of Latin American respondents to 47% of Slavic/Eastern European respondents. Of those that do keep up with political issues, they were more likely to follow global/international politics and/or political issues or conflicts in their home country. Only 15 out of 532 respondents (3%) kept up with local politics, like school board, city council, and mayoral elections.

2. COMMUNITY SPACES

Among African, Asian, Greater Middle Eastern, Pacific Islander, and Slavic/Eastern European respondents, the most common response when asked about a space that respondents consider a center of their community is a place of worship such as a church, mosque, or temple. For African, Asian, and Slavic/Eastern European respondents, the second most common response is that they do not know of a space or that there is not one. For Greater Middle Eastern respondents, the second most common response is a community center or culturally specific school. For Pacific Islander respondents, the second most common response is IRCO.

Arabic-speaking and Tigrigna-speaking respondents are the only groups where most respondents (cited by 54% and 83% of respondents, respectively) mentioned a community center as a center of their community. Specifically, Arabic-speaking respondents mentioned the Muslim Educational Trust, the Islamic Community Center of Hillsboro, and Bilal Masjid, while Tigrigna-speaking respondents mentioned the Ethiopian and Eritrean Cultural and Resource Center.

11% of Asian, 13% of Pacific Islander, 21% of African, 25% of Latin American, and 38% of Slavic/Eastern European respondents wish that there were a community or cultural center available to them and their community. Specifically, 50% of Oromo-speaking and 57% of Ukrainian-speaking respondents say that they wish a community or cultural center were available to their community. 15% of Asian, 18% of African, and 33% of Greater Middle Eastern respondents also wish that an event/gathering space was available for their community. Meanwhile, 44% of Pacific Islander respondents wish that there were more parks available for their community.

> **"We need active Vietnamese community leaders and groups (like AHSC before) to connect with each other and support as needed."**
>
> Vietnamese-speaking respondent

> **"Nowadays I constantly watch the news about my home country because of the war."**
>
> Ukrainian-speaking respondent

> **"I do not know if we even have [a community center] but it would be nice to have an office space or agency for Ukrainian people where they can come to receive support or advice."**
>
> Ukrainian-speaking respondent

> **"[We need] places that are free of discrimination to allow us to be free and safe."**
>
> Swahili-speaking respondent from Congo

> **"The social bonds that are created at the community centers help build strong, safe, and inclusive communities."**
>
> Arabic-speaking respondent from Iraq/Kuwait

HIGHLIGHT: INTERSECTIONAL IDENTITIES

IMMIGRANTS AND REFUGEES WITH DISABILITY

On October 26th, 2022, we conducted a focus group for immigrants and refugees with disabilities, with two participants. They identified a need for more **safe places to stay**, such as shelters and hotels, including for those with no children, **healthier environments** in low-income housing (e.g., less smoking, noise, etc.), and more **support with housing applications and education** on tenant rights/responsibilities. They also highlighted a need for more **advocacy and education** to help understand the available laws and protections, especially when it comes to **violations of the right to a service animal**; more **transportation assistance** to get to appointments, including options outside of public transit. One challenge identified is people finding it difficult to fit into their community and to get what they need; a need for more **screenings and earlier diagnosis of disabilities**; and education on available services and support, including for family members and caretakers. Participants also reported a need for more **adult education classes**, such as driving classes, and connections to **employment opportunities** that can accommodate disabilities, such as work from home jobs. Both participants agree that **one solution is access to strong advocates** to help educate and connect available services; one who has adequate training, sufficient pay, smaller caseload, and lived experience. Other strategies identified include partnering with ride-share companies, increasing education, engagement, and representation (including representation of different disabilities), and more support for family members and caretakers of people with disabilities.

LGBTQIA2+ IMMIGRANTS AND REFUGEES

We conducted a short survey of LGBTQIA2+ immigrants and refugees to understand their needs and received four responses. Specific issues or needs that respondents mentioned include "**work equality** and human rights," "**feeling safe around coworkers** and directors," and "immigrants, refugees and LGBTQIA2 need more **support and respect**." 3 of 4 strongly agreed that there are existing resources available for them and/or immigrants and refugees in the LGBTQIA2+ community to address their needs, and 1 said they agree. However, 1 disagreed when asked if there are places they feel comfortable going to if they wanted support for LGBTQIA2+ issues/experiences. 3 agreed that they feel safe within their larger ethnic or cultural community, but 1 disagreed. When asked about specific resources desired, respondents mentioned "work, health and safe environment," "everything, classes, doctor, more community support" and "educational tools and events". Some potential barriers identified are language availability, price, location, and discriminatory staff/providers.

ARABIC-SPEAKING WOMEN IN ONTARIO

On September 28th, 2022, IRCO Greater Middle East Center (GMEC) staff conducted a focus group of 5 Arabic-speaking women living in Ontario, Oregon. 3 of the participants identified as Syrian and 2 identified as Iraqi. All came from refugee families, and 2 identified Ontario as their first resettlement city in the U.S. When asked to identify their top needs, participants shared it was difficult to find **housing that was affordable and suitable** to their needs. **Employment** was also an issue as there are limited opportunities and not many employers in the area. A **lack of activities and recreational spaces for children** is another issue, as well as the lack of **access to ethnic halal stores**. Lastly, participants expressed difficulty in **connecting with the community**, the **lack of community events**, **and feeling isolated**. Possible solutions identified by the participants include better ways to communicate with the community, more culturally specific engagement from IRCO, support with small enterprise projects, more activities for children and more community events in general. When asked about the barriers to these strategies, participants reported that small projects usually fail because the city is too small and there is no clientele, and that the activities available are scattered around the area and require driving which makes gas expenses go up for the families and cause financial hardships. ◼

3. MAINTAINING CULTURE

Across the groups, the most common challenges when trying to maintain their culture are a lack of language support and opportunities to practice as well as infrequent community gatherings and activities. Within the Asian group, a challenge that particularly impacts Nepali-speaking, Vietnamese-speaking, and Mandarin-speaking respondents (29%, 30%, and 43%, respectively) are a lack or loss of community. Within the African group, 17% of respondents identified the pressure to assimilate, and the influence of American culture as challenge, including for 29% of Swahili-speaking respondents.

Across all groups, the most common need that would help respondents and their communities maintain their home culture is having more community events, gatherings, and cultural celebrations, more language and cultural lessons, and having a community or cultural center.

> **"I am happy that my community has come together to celebrate. I am happy when I see my community getting together wearing our cultural clothing proudly. It is like we are still in our home country but being proud of our cultural heritage."**
>
> Chuukese-speaking respondent

> **"I think the hard thing is to get more respect from other people to accept my culture."**
>
> Arabic-speaking respondent from Syria

4. OTHER COMMUNITY CHALLENGES

When asked what are some larger issues that are affecting people's happiness, each group gave unique answers. African respondents most often identified mental health/trauma, as well as social pressure, expectations, and a fear of being judged as larger issues affecting people's happiness. Asian respondents most often identified a lack or loss of community as an issue. This was particularly felt by Nepali-speaking respondents and Zomi-speaking respondents, 50% and 90% of whom cited it, respectively. Slavic and Eastern European respondents most often cited the Russian-Ukrainian war and increasing community division because of the war as an issue. Greater Middle Eastern respondents most often cited loneliness, isolation, and homesickness as an issue. Both Latin American and Pacific Islander respondents most often mentioned low wages as an issue affecting the happiness of people in their community.

> **"People are working 2,3 jobs [so] they don't have enough time to come together. People are barely always trying to survive."**
>
> Oromo-speaking respondent

> **"Here that we are in the USA we have no family and no gatherings, not a lot of friends. This will affect people to feel happy."**
>
> Arabic-speaking respondent from Iraq

> **"[We need to create] opportunities to engage and celebrate our festivals. We used to have many cultural celebrations, but we don't have them anymore due to communities moving out of state and getting disconnected with one another"**
>
> Nepali-speaking respondent

5. COMMUNITY HOPE

Below are some responses when asked about the ways respondents are hopeful for the future of their local community:

"[I am hopeful] when I see young kids hanging out with each other regardless of families' religious or political beliefs."
Tigrigna-speaking respondent

"I hope that more [of] our next generation will get to work at community offices and government offices so that they will be helpful for the community member who cannot speak English. I also hope that we have Karen Community Office."
Karen-speaking respondent

"I'm happy when I see my kids succeed, melt into society very fast, and understand the new life easily. The same thing happened with all my big family's kids who live around."
Arabic-speaking respondent from Iraq

"[I hope we'll] grow more the community, [get] more education, and see more students graduate."
Spanish-speaking respondent from Mexico

"I am hopeful that my local cultural community will continue their education and work. I am also hopeful they can work together as a Chuukese community to help each other improve. Our community will improve in different aspects."
Chuukese respondent

"I hope that the situation in the world will not be able to destroy our Slavic community and will not be able to divide people."

Ukrainian-speaking respondent

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