

**Assisting Newcomers through
Employment and Support
Services:
An Evaluation of the New
Americans Centers
Demonstration Project in
Arkansas and Iowa**

Interim Report

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Center on Labor, Human
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Executive Summary

Immigrants make up a large and increasing share of all workers in the United States, especially those with lower skills and earnings. While immigrants' educational attainment and ability to speak English vary widely, immigrants are overrepresented among the lowest skilled workers. Limited English-speaking immigrants have fewer options in the workplace and limited English skills are the single factor most closely associated with low wages and poverty in immigrant families. Further, Arkansas and Iowa are among the 22 "new growth" states that historically were not major immigrant destinations, but whose foreign-born populations grew most quickly during the 1990s. Like other new growth states, Arkansas and Iowa are only beginning to grow accustomed to the rapid flow of new immigrants and continue to work on how best to integrate these newcomers into the community and ensure their self-sufficiency.

The New Americans Centers (NACs) Demonstration Project is a three-year project funded by the U.S. Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration (ETA). Through the project, ETA provides a three-year grant to Arkansas and Iowa to develop NACs within One-Stop Career Centers in high immigrant population areas. The purposes of the grant are to promote stability and rapid employment with living wages for those individuals or family members who are without work or are in need of new work, speed the transition of new immigrants into the communities in which they live, assist employers, and enhance the economic development opportunities of these communities.

Iowa's NACs are called New Iowan Centers (NICs) and are based on pilot programs in Ottumwa, Muscatine, and Sioux City that began in 2000. The new NICs funded under the demonstration grants are housed in One-Stop Career Centers in Council Bluffs, Des Moines, Marshalltown, and Mount Pleasant. In Arkansas, the grant was used to establish four New Arkansan Resource Network (NARN) centers in Little Rock, Malvern, Rogers, and Russellville. While all four sites are overseen by the Arkansas Department of Workforce Services, fiscal and programmatic oversight is provided by local workforce investment boards. Direct program operations are provided by local entities. Arkansas' goal is to develop the NARN into a statewide network.

The Urban Institute is conducting an evaluation of the NACs in Arkansas and Iowa under contract to ETA. This paper is the first report in an ongoing evaluation of the NACs and focuses on the initial implementation phase of the demonstration projects in Arkansas and Iowa, highlighting start-up and early operation as well as the types of services participants receive. It is based on in-person interviews with key partners in each NAC in May 2007, except for Marshalltown, Iowa, which was not operational at this time. A subsequent report will provide additional information on program operations and plans for program sustainability and will examine outcomes for participants, employers, and local communities, where possible.

The New Americans Centers

NACs are designed to help newcomers—meaning immigrants and others who are new to the area—establish themselves in the community while simultaneously enhancing the workforce,

furthering local economic development, and raising awareness of diversity issues. Key to the design of NACs is a three-pronged service delivery approach that focuses on participants, employers, and the community. First, NACs aim to ensure that participants are able to find employment and are educated about and have access to needed services. Overarching goals for participants include obtaining and retaining jobs, increasing income, achieving self-sufficiency, building awareness of civic laws and institutions, promoting civic participation, gaining English proficiency, and availing themselves of services—both public and within the community—for which they are eligible. Second, NACs strive to meet employers’ staffing needs and help them adapt to an increasingly diverse workforce by providing education on cultural awareness and diversity, offering language skills training, and advising on immigration and legal issues. Third, NACs attempt to educate the community on diversity issues and conduct extensive outreach in surrounding areas to facilitate cultural awareness for both those new to the community and those established in the community.

A key component of the NACs is the development of partnerships with local leaders and other service providers and organizations in the community. NACs have established extensive partner networks that include both public and private organizations such as health care providers, adult education providers, banks, colleges and schools, employers, and local government agencies.

Service Provision

The services provided by NACs are meant to reflect and address the specific needs of the community. While the general goals of NACs are consistent across sites, the mix of services provided varies between Iowa and Arkansas as well as among local sites within each state. In addition, NACs vary considerably in the level of service provided. Overall, in Iowa, the NICs place a greater emphasis on employment and job placement—typically through referrals to employment-related services—and often work directly with participants who are seeking work. In Arkansas, the NARN sites tend to focus on connecting new Arkansans to a wide range of supportive services and organizations in the community through referrals and information sharing. It should be noted that these emphases are not mutually exclusive; all sites assist participants with both finding employment and accessing supportive services.

Services for individuals and families make up the vast majority of the total services provided. Nearly all (95 percent) reported services in Arkansas were provided to individuals and families (other reported services were provided to employers and the community). Similarly, in Iowa, 85 percent of reported services went to individuals and families. Across all sites in both Arkansas and Iowa, participants received direct assistance or referrals to appropriate service providers in a wide range of areas. These included supportive services such as child care, clothing, food, housing, health care, translation and interpretation, employment, education and training (including ESL and civic education classes), legal and civil rights issues, immigration services, tax preparation, and banking and financial services.

To a lesser extent, NAC staff also provide services to employers and the community. NACs serve as a resource to area employers and businesses, helping them meet their staffing needs and connecting them with relevant training and resources. Services to employers include guidance and training to promote cultural awareness as well as targeted training and seminars on a range

of immigration and diversity issues. Further, NACs aim to increase awareness of diversity issues and immigration in the community at large. To this end, NAC staff have fostered relationships with local community leaders and police departments, conducted diversity training at community organizations and businesses, hosted networking events, and conducted outreach in the community to ensure people are aware of their services.

Future Plans and Sustainability

Since the inception of the NACs, both states have focused attention on issues of outreach, promoting program awareness, and sustainability, incorporating the topic in early stages of program design and planning. ETA funding for the NACs demonstrations in Arkansas and Iowa ends in June 2008, and it is incumbent upon the states to sustain the NACs through other sources of funding and support. Presently, Arkansas and Iowa are engaging in various strategies that fit the circumstances of their state and local areas.

Central to Arkansas' sustainability strategy is the development of a network of service providers to assist newcomers. By naming their NAC system the "New Arkansan Resource *Network*," they set the tone to sustain the partnerships created through the demonstration regardless of future funding availability and their ability to support dedicated staff. To varying degrees, staff from the local NARN sites have been networking and collaborating with partner agencies to create awareness of their efforts, cooperate in service provision, and discuss support to supplement current funding levels and to sustain operations after the ETA funding ends in fiscal year 2008. Efforts to engage employers and community groups and sustain and grow the project have included writing grants, participating in local community events and activities, and seeking corporate sponsorship.

In Iowa, discussions about the sustainability of the NICs are taking place at the state level, while local NIC staff are largely uninvolved in securing future funds. Currently, state appropriations support operations of the non-ETA-funded NICs. With the end of the ETA demonstration grant approaching, state-level staff are hopeful that the state legislature will increase the current level of funding to continue operations. Local communities are also encouraged to support NIC activities through in-kind donations and public-private partnerships.

Conclusions

At this relatively early stage, the NACs demonstration projects have focused on establishing local partner networks and reaching out to newcomer communities. From the perspective of staff, community partners, and employers, NACs have had a generally positive impact on the economic and social well-being of newcomers in both Arkansas and Iowa. Local NACs have established themselves as trusted and reliable resources for newcomers in their respective communities and beyond. For example, staff in Arkansas report that there is high demand for assistance and that citizenship classes are at capacity, with information about services spreading through word of mouth.

Local NACs are at different stages of program implementation; some have put more key pieces into place than others. In part, this dissimilarity stems from the varying starting points among

sites. Some NACs, particularly the NICs in Iowa, are modeled after existing sites or build on existing efforts. Other sites are starting from scratch and must establish not only service delivery mechanisms, but also the critical community networks in which to operate. Additionally, some NACs faced implementation hurdles such as difficulties hiring staff or securing adequate office space. Regardless of starting point, NAC staff have moved forward with reaching out to newcomers and providing services—both directly and through referrals.

NAC staff and local community members noted several ways in which the NACs have been successful, including integrating newcomers into the community by enhancing their civic participation and understanding and increasing their knowledge of and access to available resources and basic services, such as English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction, banking, utilities, immigration and legal assistance, and health care. Respondents also noted the increased availability of translation and interpretation assistance, which has contributed to improved access to many services including those offered through the One-Stop Career Centers.

It is not possible to determine the effect of NAC services on local communities, particularly on their receptiveness to newcomers. NACs have, however, successfully built networks of community leaders, service providers, and businesses. NACs have also come to be seen as a resource for other service providers, which seek interpretation and translation assistance as well as information on cultural diversity. In addition, NACs serve as a mechanism to disseminate information about available community resources. Often, advisory committee meetings serve as forums for information sharing among partners.

Although less developed than other services, NAC staff have worked with local employers who have come to see the NAC as a resource available to them and their employees. Some employers use the NACs as a source of new hires. Others use the NACs for interpretation and translation assistance or help with cultural and diversity issues in the workplace. Employers also refer employees to the NAC for assistance, such as ESL instruction for their employees.

While a central goal of the NACs is to increase participants' employment and earnings, it is important to note that this demonstration project is about other factors that are not quantifiable, including an improved quality of life for newcomers, better reception of newcomers in the community, improved civic participation and understanding engagement on the part of newcomers, development of an enhanced workforce, and establishment of an integrated network of services for new arrivals.

NACs' early implementation experiences have resulted in many lessons that can be shared with other states or localities looking to implement similar services. Their experiences underscore the importance of developing strong community relationships and an integrated network of service providers. This requires a solid commitment on the part of staff and the community as well as support from community leaders and other local service providers, businesses, and employers. Above all else, it is critical to define the NAC's purpose and role, which can vary depending on existing resources within the community and the identified needs of participants. The strength of the NACs lies in their flexibility to meet local needs through a mix of services and in their ability to respond to the changing needs of their constituencies (i.e., individuals and families, the community, and employers).

I. Introduction

Immigrants make up a large and increasing share of all workers in the United States, especially those with lower skills and earnings. In 2005, immigrants composed 15 percent of all U.S. workers, 21 percent of workers earning below twice the minimum wage, and 45 percent of workers with less than a high school education.¹ In 2000, over 46 percent of immigrant workers had limited English proficiency, nearly three-quarters of whom spoke Spanish.² While there is great variation in immigrants' educational attainment and ability to speak English, they are overrepresented among the lowest skilled workers. In particular, limited English-speaking immigrants have fewer options in the workplace; research shows limited English skills are the single factor most closely associated with low wages and poverty in immigrant families.³

This population of immigrants is growing rapidly, especially in smaller cities and rural communities unaccustomed to large immigrant flows. Among the 2003 foreign-born population, 14 percent had entered the United States since 2000 and 37 percent since 1990.⁴ Arkansas and Iowa are among 22 "new growth" states who historically were not major immigrant destinations but whose foreign-born populations grew most quickly during the 1990s.⁵ Between 1990 and 2000, the immigrant population in Arkansas increased 196 percent; it was the fourth-fastest growing immigrant population in the country.⁶ Iowa experienced a similarly rapid growth of immigrants during this period, with a 110 percent growth rate.⁷ This pattern has continued throughout the current decade in both states. Between 2000 and 2005, Arkansas experienced a 45.8 percent increase in its foreign-born population, and Iowa saw a 12.8 percent increase.⁸

Like other new growth states, Arkansas and Iowa are only beginning to grow accustomed to the rapid flow of new immigrants and continue to work on how best to integrate newcomers into the community and ensure their self-sufficiency. As new growth states, Arkansas and Iowa also have a higher share of undocumented, recently arrived, and limited English-speaking immigrants than is the case nationally, further complicating integration efforts. Yet, the labor force in these states is increasingly dependent on immigrant workers. For example, Arkansas' manufacturing workforce would have shrunk between 1990 and 2000 without immigration. During this time,

¹ Randy Capps, Karina Fortuny, and Michael Fix, "Trends in the Low-Wage Immigrant Labor Force, 2000–2005" (Washington, DC: The Urban Institute, 2007).

² Randy Capps, Michael Fix, Jeffrey S. Passel, Jason Ost, and Dan Perez-Lopez, "A Profile of Low-Wage Immigrant Workers," *Immigrant Families and Workers: Facts and Perspectives* Brief 4 (Washington, DC: The Urban Institute, 2003).

³ Michael Fix and Randy Capps, "Immigrant Well-Being in New York and Los Angeles," *Immigrant Families and Workers: Facts and Perspectives* Brief 1 (Washington, DC: The Urban Institute, 2002).

⁴ Luke J. Larsen, "The Foreign-Born Population in the United States: 2003." *Current Population Report* P20-551 (Washington, DC: U.S. Census Bureau, 2004).

⁵ Randy Capps, "U.S. Immigration Policy and the Children of Immigrants," presentation at the Urban Institute semi-annual board meeting, Washington, DC, May 2006.

⁶ Randy Capps, Everett Henderson, John D. Kasarda, James H. Johnson, Jr., Stephen J. Appold, Derrek L. Croney, Donald J. Hernandez, and Michael Fix, *A Profile of Immigrants in Arkansas* (Little Rock, AR: The Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation, 2007).

⁷ Randy Capps, Michael E. Fix, and Jeffrey S. Passel, "The Dispersal of Immigrants in the 1990s," *Immigrant Families and Workers: Facts and Perspectives* Brief 2 (Washington, DC: The Urban Institute 2002).

⁸ Shirin Hakimzadeh, "A Statistical Portrait of the Foreign-Born Population at Mid-Decade,"

<http://pewhispanic.org/reports/foreignborn/> accessed September 19, 2007.

the number of native-born Americans working in manufacturing fell by 9,000 (4%) while the number of immigrant workers grew by 12,000 (294%).⁹

The New Americans Centers (NACs) Demonstration Project is a three-year project funded by the U.S. Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration (ETA). Through the project, ETA provides both Arkansas and Iowa a three-year, \$850,000 grant to develop NACs within One-Stop Career Centers in high-immigrant population areas.¹⁰ The NACs are a significant part of Arkansas' and Iowa's efforts to help immigrants and other newcomers as they integrate into these states' economies and communities. The purposes of the grants are to promote stability and rapid employment with living wages for individuals or family members who are without work or who need new work, speed the transition of new immigrants into their communities, assist employers, and enhance the economic development opportunities of these communities.

NACs offer services to assist immigrants and others who are new to the community, including job placement, job training, language classes, community service referrals, resettlement assistance, and legal assistance. Customers are not solely immigrant families but also members of the community and area businesses. To ensure the speedy transition of new immigrants into the community, the centers must work closely with employers who need skilled workers, educational institutions that provide language and occupational training, economic development agencies that can facilitate employer connections, and local community groups that encourage civic participation and understanding in neighborhoods and communities.

Iowa's NACs are called New Iowan Centers (NICs) and are based on pilot programs in Ottumwa, Muscatine, and Sioux City that began in 2000. In addition, new NICs are housed in One-Stop Career Centers in Council Bluffs, Des Moines, Marshalltown,¹¹ and Mount Pleasant. In Arkansas, the grant was used to establish four New Arkansan Resource Network (NARN) centers in Little Rock, Malvern, Rogers, and Russellville, with the goal of growing the NARN into a statewide network. In some cases, due to space restrictions, NACs may be located near a One-Stop Career Center, rather than as part of the center. The maps on pages 4 and 5 display the location of each NAC and the primary area it serves.

⁹ Capps, Henderson, et al., *A Profile of Immigrants in Arkansas*.

¹⁰ Under the Workforce Investment Act, One-Stop Career Centers, or Workforce Centers, serve as the primary access point for employment and training services. Services available through the Centers include adult education; adult, dislocated worker, and youth activities; employment service; vocational rehabilitation; veterans employment and training; unemployment insurance; and trade adjustment assistance.

¹¹ At the time of our site visit in May 2007, the Marshalltown NIC was not in operation because of recent staff departures. For this reason, Marshalltown is not included in our discussion of NAC implementation and operations.

Evaluation of the New Americans Centers Demonstration Project

The evaluation of the NACs demonstration project has two components: a process analysis of program implementation and an examination of project participant outcomes, primarily employment and earnings. This paper is the first report in an ongoing evaluation of the NACs, and it focuses on the initial implementation phase of the demonstration projects in Arkansas and Iowa, highlighting start-up and early operation of the NICs and NARN sites. A subsequent report will provide additional information on program operations and plans for program sustainability and will examine outcomes for participants, employers, and local communities, where possible.

Several data sources were used for this report. Information on program operations was primarily collected during three-day site visits conducted in May 2007. During each visit, discussions were held with representatives from each local site, including staff, partners, employers, and community representatives. Data on service receipt collected through a data collection instrument used at all sites—the Annual Services and Referrals Provided Report—were also analyzed. Finally, quarterly progress reports submitted to ETA and other documentation provided by the local projects were also reviewed.

Figure 1: Map of New Arkansan Resource Network Centers

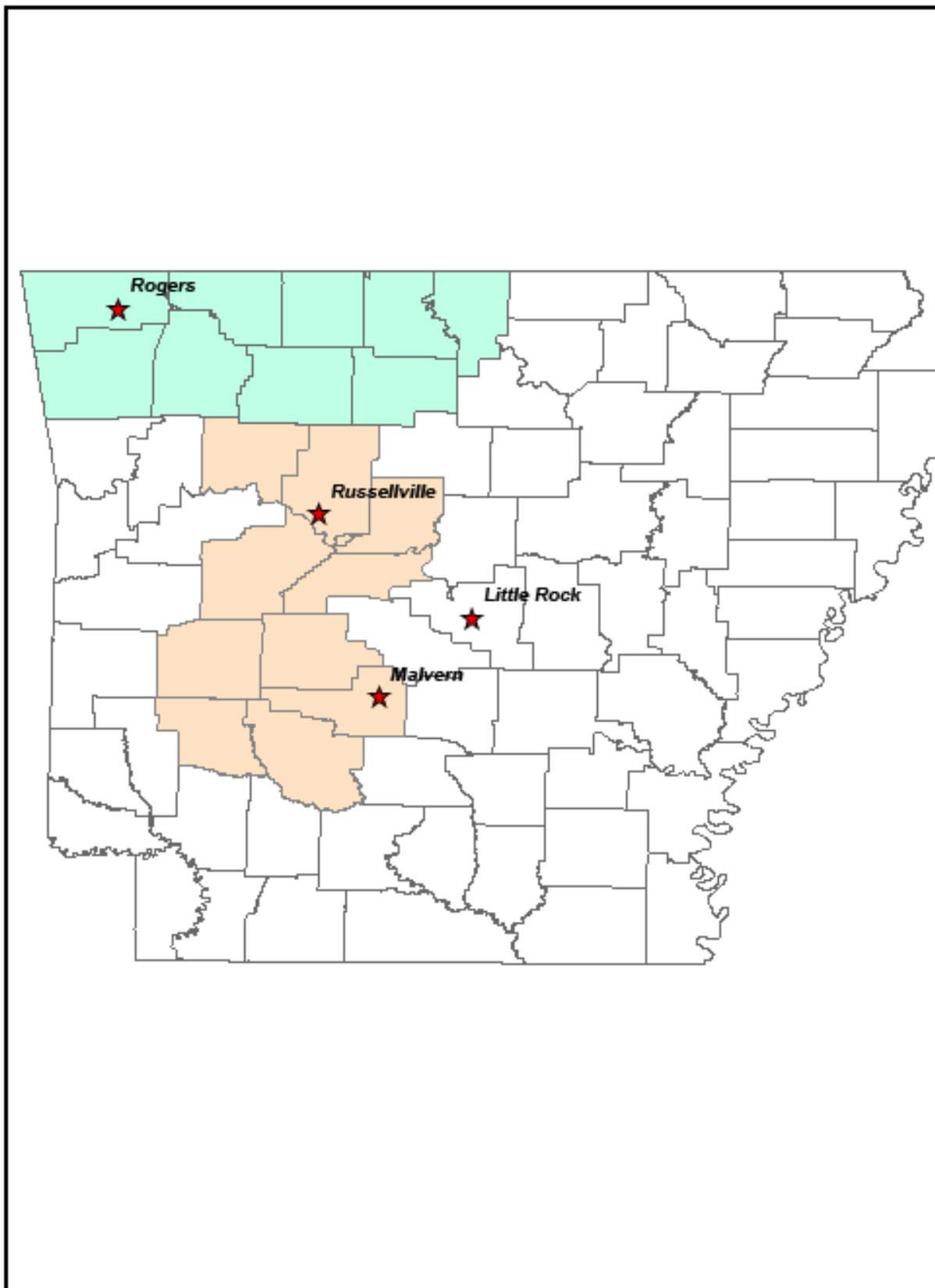
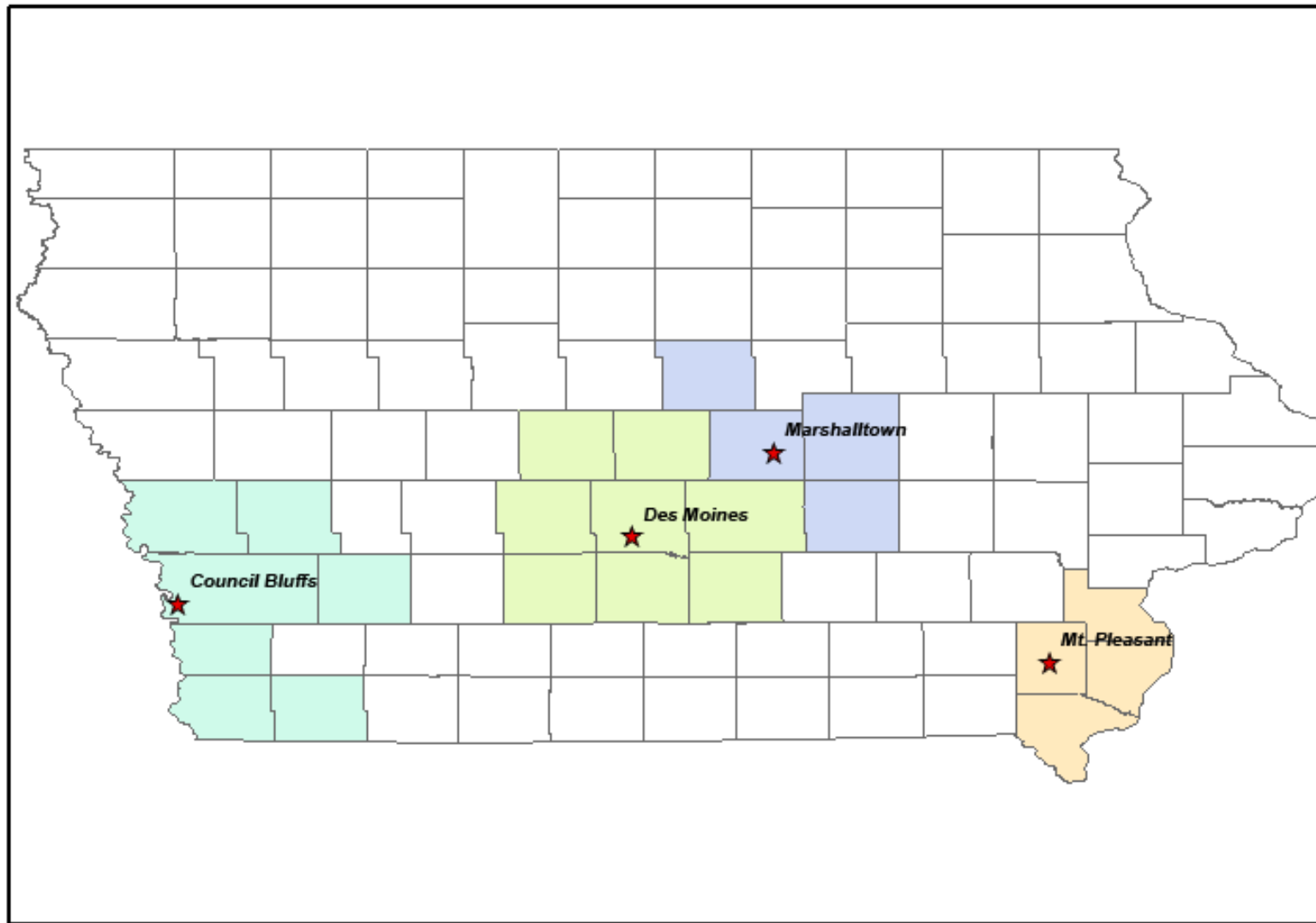


Figure 2: Map of New Iowan Centers



II. Design of the New Americans Centers

The New Americans Centers (NACs) – known as the New Arkansan Resource Network (NARN) in Arkansas and New Iowan Centers (NICs) in Iowa – operate in diverse localities and involve a broad range of organizations and services in their efforts to help newcomers integrate into local communities. This section provides an overview of the NACs by their project goals, sponsoring organizations, key partners, community context, program size, and staffing. It also addresses early planning and implementation experiences. State-specific overviews of the NARN in Arkansas and NICs in Iowa are provided in Appendix A of this report.

Project Goals

NACs aim to help newcomers—meaning immigrants and others who are new to the area—establish themselves in the community while simultaneously enhancing the workforce, furthering local economic development, and raising awareness of diversity issues. Key to the design of NACs is a three-pronged service delivery approach that focuses on participants,¹² employers, and the community. First, NACs aim to ensure that participants are able to find employment and are educated about and have access to needed services. Overarching goals for participants include increasing income, achieving self-sufficiency, gaining English proficiency, building awareness of civic laws and institutions and promoting civic participation, and availing themselves of services for which they are eligible. Second, NACs strive to meet employers’ staffing needs and help them adapt to an increasingly diverse workforce by providing cultural diversity and awareness education, offering language skills training, and advising on immigration and legal issues. Third, NACs attempt to educate the community on diversity issues and perform extensive outreach in surrounding areas to ensure that potential participants, potential employers, and the larger community are aware of NAC services as well as to familiarize NAC staff with available community resources.

While the general goals of NACs are consistent across sites, the mix of services provided varies in Arkansas and Iowa as well as among local sites within each state. Overall, sites in Iowa place a greater emphasis on employment and job placement—typically through referrals to employment-related services—and they often work directly with participants seeking work. Sites in Arkansas tend to focus on connecting newcomers to a wide range of supportive services and organizations in the community through referrals and information sharing. As evidenced by their name, NARN sites are striving to build a network of service providers that meet the needs of new Arkansans. It should be noted that these emphases are not mutually exclusive; all sites assist participants with both finding employment and accessing supportive services.

Sponsoring Organizations

In Arkansas, the Arkansas Department of Workforce Services (DWS) received the ETA grant and provides general oversight and guidance to the NARN sites. DWS has subgrants with three local workforce investment boards to provide fiscal and programmatic oversight to the four local sites. These local workforce investment boards have further subcontracted direct program

¹² Arkansas refers to participants as “registrants.” For consistency, they are referred to as participants throughout the report.

operation and staffing to a local entity. In three locations (Malvern, Rogers, and Russellville), the local workforce investment boards subcontracted with their local One-Stop Career Center operators, while in Little Rock, program operation is subgranted to the Latin Community Organization (LCO), a nonprofit organization that helps Latino individuals and families achieve self-sufficiency through resources and referrals (see table 2.1).

In Iowa, Iowa Workforce Development (IWD) received the ETA grant and maintains direct oversight of NICs (see table 2.1).¹³

Table 2.1: Organizational Structure of New Americans Centers

| Site | Oversight | Fiscal and programmatic agent | Local program operation |
|-----------------|--|---|--|
| Arkansas | | | |
| Little Rock | Department of Workforce Services (DWS) | Little Rock Workforce Investment Board | Latin Community Organization (LCO) |
| Malvern | DWS | West Central Arkansas Planning and Development District, (WCAPDD) | West Central Arkansas Career Development Center System (WCACDCS) |
| Rogers | DWS | Northwest Arkansas Economic Development District (NWAEDD) | Northwest Arkansas Certified Development Company (NWACDC) |
| Russellville | DWS | West Central Arkansas Planning and Development District, (WCAPDD) | West Central Arkansas Career Development Center System (WCACDCS) |
| Iowa | | | |
| Council Bluffs | Iowa Workforce Development (IWD) | | |
| Des Moines | | | |
| Marshalltown | | | |
| Mount Pleasant | | | |

¹³ Initially, the Central Iowa Employment and Training Consortium (CIETC) administered the NICs for IWD. Because of alleged improprieties unrelated to the NAC demonstration project, IWD removed CIETC as the fiscal agent and moved all NIC activities, including staffing, under IWD.

The vast majority of NACs are physically housed within, or adjacent to, local One-Stop Career Centers, known as Workforce Centers in Arkansas and Workforce Development Centers in Iowa. Despite separate funding streams and a distinct staffing structure, their co-location means they are essentially integrated into the menu of services and conceived as “part of the package” of One-Stop Career Center programs. The exception is the NIC in Mount Pleasant, where the One-Stop Career Center was unable to house the NIC due to space limitations. At the time of our visit, the Mount Pleasant NIC was temporarily housed on the enclosed front porch of the Fellowship Cup, a local Christian ministry. The Mount Pleasant NIC has since relocated to the Iowa State University Extension Office. Although the Mount Pleasant NIC is still overseen by IWD and staffed by an IWD employee, the NIC is less connected to the local One-Stop Career Center than in other locations.

While affiliation with a local One-Stop Career Center facilitates integration of NAC services into the greater workforce system, there are some disadvantages to close affiliation with the One-Stop Career Center, primarily around the hours of operation. Typically, One-Stop Career Centers operate during standard business hours, which may prohibit working families from seeking services. NAC staff have identified alternative locations for after-hours activities to accommodate working families. For example, some NACs hold civics education classes and ESL instruction at nearby community colleges, where classrooms are generally available in the evenings.

Community Context

NACs are located in a diverse range of localities that vary on several dimensions, including the local economy, community socio-demographics, and existing provider networks. These contextual factors shape the needs of new arrivals, employers, and the community, and subsequently the services offered by local NACs (see table 2.2).

Several sites (Little Rock in Arkansas, and Council Bluffs and Des Moines in Iowa) are located in urban areas, while others, including Malvern and Russellville in Arkansas and Mount Pleasant in Iowa, are located in more rural areas. Rogers, situated in northwest Arkansas, is in an area that is experiencing high economic growth and has a rapidly increasing population.

Within Little Rock, the demand occupations are health care, aerospace, government, education, and nonprofits. In surrounding areas of Polk County and much of the rest of Arkansas, agriculture and warehousing are key industries, where poultry farms and food processing plants employ many newcomers. Northwest Arkansas, where Rogers is located, stands apart from the rest of the state. This area has one of the fastest growing economies in the nation. Wal-Mart, Tyson Foods, and J.B. Hunt Transport Services are headquartered in Northwest Arkansas and many other corporations are establishing a presence. The subsequent building boom has resulted in a growth in the construction industry and other jobs, and many newcomers have arrived seeking work. Benton County’s unemployment rate, at 4.2 percent in July 2007, is significantly lower than the state’s average unemployment rate.

The unemployment rate in Iowa, which hovers between 3 and 4 percent, is below the average national unemployment rate, and there is a high demand for workers. Iowa is experiencing an

Table 2.2
Economic and Demographic Profile of New Americans Center Locations

| | Arkansas | | | | | Iowa | | | | |
|--|----------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|----------|--|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| | Arkansas | Little Rock (Pulaski County) | Malvern (Hot Spring County) | Rogers (Benton County) | Russellville (Pope County) | Iowa | Council Bluffs (Pottawattamie County) | Des Moines (Polk County) | Mount Pleasant (Henry County) | Marshalltown (Marshall County) |
| Race and Ethnicity, 2005 | | | | | | | | | | |
| Hispanic | 4.7 % | 3.2 % | 1.7 % | 12.8 % | 3.8 % | 3.7 % | 4.2 % | 5.7 % | 1.9 % | 12.7 % |
| White (Not of Hispanic Origin) | 77.0 % | 59.7 % | 86.3 % | 81.7 % | 90.9 % | 91.5 % | 93.0 % | 84.9 % | 93.3 % | 84.2 % |
| Black (Not of Hispanic Origin) | 15.7 % | 0.3 % | 10.2 % | 1.1 % | 3.0 % | 2.3 % | 1.0 % | 4.9 % | 1.8 % | 1.2 % |
| Asian or Pacific Islander | 1.1 % | 1.7 % | 0.4 % | 1.9 % | 0.8 % | 1.4 % | 0.6 % | 3.1 % | 2.2 % | 1.1 % |
| Native American or Alaskan Native | 0.7 % | 0.4 % | 0.5 % | 1.6 % | 0.6 % | 0.3 % | 0.4 % | 0.3 % | 0.3 % | 0.5 % |
| Multiracial | 1.2 % | 1.4 % | 1.1 % | 1.6 % | 1.1 % | 0.9 % | 1.0 % | 1.4 % | 0.6 % | 0.9 % |
| Foreign Born | 3.8 % | 4.2 % | <i>a</i> | 8.7 % | <i>b</i> | 3.1 % | 3.2 % | 7.3 % | <i>c</i> | <i>d</i> |
| Education Level (for persons 25 or older) | | | | | | | | | | |
| No diploma | 24.7 % | 11.5 % | 26.8 % | 19.6 % | 22.5 % | 13.9 % | 15.9 % | 11.6 % | 13.8 % | 17.7 % |
| High school graduate | 34.1 % | 29.5 % | 39.7 % | 32.8 % | 33.5 % | 36.1 % | 39.3 % | 29.5 % | 39.7 % | 37.2 % |
| Some college | 20.5 % | 22.0 % | 18.4 % | 22.6 % | 21.5 % | 21.4 % | 22.7 % | 22.0 % | 23.8 % | 21.0 % |
| College graduate | 20.6 % | 36.9 % | 15.2 % | 24.8 % | 22.5 % | 28.7 % | 22.0 % | 36.9 % | 22.7 % | 24.1 % |
| Median Income, 2000 | | | | | | | | | | |
| Household income | \$32,182 | \$38,120 | \$31,543 | \$40,281 | \$32,069 | \$39,469 | \$40,089 | \$46,116 | \$39,087 | \$38,268 |
| Family income | \$38,663 | \$46,523 | \$37,077 | \$45,235 | \$39,055 | \$48,005 | \$47,105 | \$56,560 | \$46,985 | \$46,627 |
| Unemployment Rate, July 2007¹ | 5.9 % | 5.2 % | 5.9 % | 4.2 % | 5.8 % | 3.4 % | 3.7 % | 3.1 % | 4.2 % | 3.2 % |

Sources: Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006 American Community Survey (ACS); U.S. Census Bureau, Summary File 1 (SF 1) and Summary File 3 (SF 3); Bureau of Labor Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics, Local Area Unemployment Statistics

¹Unemployment rate not seasonally adjusted.

^a2006 ACS data is not available, but according to 2000 U.S. Census data, 1.2% of the population in Hot Spring County was foreign born.

^b2006 ACS data is not available, but according to 2000 U.S. Census data, 1.7% of the population in Pope County was foreign born.

^c2006 ACS data is not available, but according to 2000 U.S. Census data, 1.8% of the population in Henry County was foreign born.

^d2006 ACS data is not available, but according to 2000 U.S. Census data, 6.6% of the population in Marshall County was foreign born.

exodus of its most educated residents; many native Iowans are leaving the state for expanded opportunities and higher salaries. This leaves many entry-level jobs in such industries as fast food and farming open to newcomers. Despite a decline in recent years, there is still a strong manufacturing presence throughout the state. Agriculture is also a big industry in much of the state.

Overall, the communities where NACs are located have been particularly receptive to immigrants. Many of these communities were already actively involved in diversity work before the NAC was implemented. For example, in Arkansas, the LCO had been active in Malvern and Little Rock since 2004, and the Rogers Chamber of Commerce's Minority Committee and the Community Support Center have been addressing diversity issues and serving newcomers since before the NARN was established. In Iowa, Mount Pleasant's Diversity Action Team was responsible for advocating for the inception of the NIC as a way to expand and complement their existing efforts. While for the most part this high level of involvement and receptiveness has helped NACs flourish in the community, in some instances, the existence of organizations with similar missions has resulted in "turf" issues and has required paying careful attention to avoid duplicative services.

NAC Planning and Implementation

Before the NACs were implemented, community meetings were held to garner support and gauge the needs of the community. Key players included local government officials, representatives from the police and fire departments, local workforce investment board representatives, service providers, employers, and business owners. These meetings served to familiarize the community with the NAC, an ongoing process key to NAC operations.

In some sites, an advisory committee was established before NAC staff were hired, while in other sites, staff were hired first. Some sites have experienced difficulty convening an advisory committee; to date, Little Rock has been unable to convene a committee. To some extent, this may result from the competing demands of potential advisory committee members. In Iowa, the creation of an advisory committee in Council Bluffs was delayed; the committee met for the first time in March 2007, one year after the NIC opened its doors. Other sites, such as Des Moines in Iowa, struggled initially to engage members and create a unified mission. For the most part, however, advisory committees have been instrumental in defining community needs and gaps in service provision.

Several sites experienced difficulty hiring qualified staff, in part because of the high demand for bilingual employees in these communities. In addition, the salary range limited the pool of available candidates, and several sites found that candidates with the necessary qualities were out of reach. In Arkansas, Rogers in particular had difficulty finding staff that were established in the community and capable of networking with stakeholders, partners, and government officials.

In Iowa, the transition from a contracted fiscal agent to state control in late 2006 initially created some personnel difficulties and operational delays. All current staff had to reapply for their positions, and the state required a realignment of supervision, requiring that a regional manager directly supervise all staff rather than local managers. Because the hiring process for state

employment is cumbersome, some positions remained vacant for some time. In Council Bluffs, for example, a key position was vacant for the first six months of the center's operation.

Staff in each locality were given flexibility to design the program to meet the specific needs of the community, with few restrictions or guidelines from the state. In addition, staff had to dedicate considerable energy to establishing the community's trust and respect during the early phases of implementation. To avoid duplication, staff attempted to map the landscape of service providers in the area to understand what services were already available. In most locations, once services were established, word of mouth was the primary mechanism bringing participants to the center.

Some sites faced considerable difficulties in implementation. In Arkansas, implementation in Little Rock was delayed for several reasons. First, there was some difficulty in convening all the necessary players. In particular, DWS and the Little Rock Workforce Investment Board (WIB) had trouble garnering support from city government, who showed little interest in committing energy or resources to the NARN. Convening and establishing buy-in of other critical stakeholders can be especially difficult without strong leadership and some political clout, particularly in a large urban area with many competing priorities. Eventually the state intervened and advised the WIB to issue a request for qualifications (RFQ) as a way to identify a service provider to implement and operate the site in Little Rock. Further complicating implementation in Little Rock were several resignations at the Little Rock WIB.

In Marshalltown, Iowa, a staff person was on board to begin offering services by fall 2006. She vacated the position, however, soon after federal immigration officials raided Marshalltown in December 2006 in search of undocumented workers. At the time of our visit, the position remained vacant and the NIC was temporarily inactive. A new staff person was hired in the fall of 2007, and the NIC is again operating, with plans to hire a second staff person in the future.

Some sites have also experienced difficulty reporting data through the Annual Services and Referrals Provided Report. State-level NAC staff provided local training sessions to NAC staff on using this spreadsheet, resulting in varying data collection methods at local sites. Further, because the quarterly reporting system is not linked to sites' local data systems, local staff must record data in multiple data systems. During this demonstration, Iowa migrated to a system that allowed information from the state data management system (IWORKS) to be tallied and entered into the NAC reporting spreadsheet. Given the many glitches associated with the development and use of IWORKS, however, staff continue to document service provision in separate record-keeping systems to cross-check against the IWORKS reports (see Appendix C for a further discussion of data issues). Given the short-term nature of a demonstration project, Arkansas opted not to invest in integrating the NAC reporting spreadsheet into a larger system.

Key Partners

A key component of the NAC is the development of partnerships with local leaders and other service providers and organizations in the community. In both states, staff have dedicated considerable effort to building these relationships. These partnerships are evident in the establishment of advisory committees that guide the development and implementation of NAC activities as well as the creation of extensive networks of local nonprofits, government agencies,

and private businesses that serve as both service providers for newcomers and sources of referrals for the NACs.

Advisory Committees

With the exception of Little Rock, NACs in both states have established working advisory committees made up of local leaders, business owners, and other community members.¹⁴

Advisory committees range in size from approximately 10 to 15 members and generally meet monthly. Their level of involvement vary from community to community, based somewhat on the stage of development of both the committee and the NAC itself as well as the level and type of support needed by local NAC staff.

Advisory committees in Arkansas play a particularly active role in local NARN operations. In Russellville, the advisory committee is viewed as the NARN's governing body, and many decisions regarding service delivery are reviewed by the board. The advisory committee in Rogers also contributes actively to NARN operations and has two committees tasked with grant writing and sustainability and media and outreach. The Malvern advisory committee meets quarterly and is not as involved in the operations as in other sites. Staff in Little Rock continue to struggle with the formation of a local advisory committee. They have found it difficult to convene meetings with potential advisory committee members. At the time of our visit, Arkansas was also looking into establishing a statewide advisory committee.

In Iowa, advisory committees were still in the early stages of development at the time of our visit and, in some cases, struggling with defining their mission. Rather than directing NIC activities, advisory committees appear to serve more as vehicles for networking and resource sharing among community members who are invested in working with newcomers.

Partner agencies and organizations

NACs in both Arkansas and Iowa have established extensive partner networks that include both public and private organizations such as health care providers, adult education providers, banks, colleges and schools, employers, and local government agencies. These organizations serve as a place to refer participants and collaborate with NAC staff on special projects and initiatives. These partners also see NACs as a resource for their customers or employees. Partner agencies refer individuals to NACs for assistance, and employers tap into the services for assistance addressing cultural and language barriers within their workforce.

In sites co-located in a One-Stop Career Center, including all four sites in Arkansas and the Des Moines and Council Bluffs sites in Iowa, staff view all other programs housed in the One-Stop Career Center as partners. This can include employment and training programs, adult education services, economic development organizations, AARP, and Job Corps, among many others. Staff receive and make referrals to other One-Stop Career Center programs and provide translation and interpretation assistance as needed, which in many cases has allowed some providers to offer services to a previously unserved population.

Staff in both Arkansas and Iowa have fostered relationships with a wide variety of other local service providers, including community- and faith-based organizations. In Arkansas, a

¹⁴ In Arkansas, the NARN refers to advisory committees as "advisory boards." For consistency, they are referred to as advisory committees throughout the report.

particularly close partnership has developed with the Latin Community Organization (LCO), a nonprofit organization founded to help Latino individuals and families achieve self-sufficiency through referrals to community resources. Established in 2004, the LCO was already providing services and referrals to members of the Latino community in the Malvern area when NARN funding became available. The NARN objectives are a natural fit with the goals of the LCO, which enabled LCO to systematize the services they were providing ad hoc. The LCO is closely intertwined with the Malvern site; the local NARN coordinator is the president and a founding member of the LCO, and several of its board members are also members of the NARN advisory committee. In fact, many participants reportedly are more familiar and comfortable with the LCO than the NARN and seek out services at this office rather than coming to the One-Stop Career Center. The LCO responded to the RFQ for organizations to operate the Little Rock NARN based on its experiences in Malvern. LCO-issued membership cards, which are accepted as a second form of identification in many places, are available through the NARN in Malvern, Little Rock, and Russellville.

In Iowa, the Des Moines NIC works closely with Refugee Cooperative Services of Lutheran Services and Refugee Resettlement Services of Catholic Charities, and the NIC frequently refers participants to the American Friends Services Committee for immigration assistance. In addition, the Des Moines NIC recently partnered with Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement, a grass-roots social, economic, and environmental justice organization, to offer a financial literacy class in Spanish. The Council Bluffs site has partnered with the local library, which allows the use of its computer lab for computer classes for participants, and the site is in the early stages of working with the Consulate of Mexico in Omaha to implement “Plazas Comunitarias,” an online educational program sponsored by the Mexican government that allows participants to complete their elementary, middle, or high school educations. In Mount Pleasant, the NIC works closely with Healthy Henry County Communities, a local coalition of health care professionals, educators, business representatives, advocates, and residents working together to improve residents’ quality of life, and its Diversity Action Team. Other local partners include the Fellowship Cup, where the NIC was housed at the time of our visit, and the Chamber of Commerce. The Mount Pleasant staff have explored the possibility of partnering with the Chamber of Commerce to offer workshops for Hispanic business owners. At the time of our visit, they were assessing the demand for such a program.

Many NACs have developed relationships with local community colleges. For example, in Iowa, the Council Bluffs and Mount Pleasant sites hold citizenship classes in community college classrooms. Further, participants are often referred to classes and training programs, such as ESL or General Educational Development (GED) test preparation. In Arkansas, Rogers staff work closely with Northwest Arkansas Community College’s Department of Adult Education, which provides ESL and citizenship classes, among other services. In Arkansas, under an innovative partnership, staff in Malvern work with Ouachita Technical College, the Arkansas Economic Development Commission (AEDC), and a local welding company to provide welding training and certification to participants.

Partnerships are also developed with private businesses. In Arkansas, for example, the Little Rock site has established a partnership with Bank of America that has resulted in the bank accepting the LCO-issued identification card as a second form of identification. Another partnership with a private roofing business has led to internships for two individuals referred by

the NARN. In Iowa, the Council Bluffs site has developed a relationship with a local bank to ensure Spanish-speaking customers can be served.

Project Staffing

Staffing arrangements and responsibilities are similar across sites in Arkansas and Iowa, though site-specific variations exist. In Iowa, all NIC staff are employed by IWD, while in Arkansas NARN staff are employees of their respective local program operators. The majority of local NACs in Arkansas and Iowa have two-full time staff providing services to the community, except Mount Pleasant in Iowa, which has one full-time staff member. All NAC staff are bilingual (Spanish and English), and the majority were not born in the United States.

In Arkansas, the Little Rock, Malvern, and Russellville sites are staffed by a coordinator and an intake specialist. The coordinators generally devote much of their time to community outreach and establishing contacts among local leaders, employers, and businesses. They also develop partnerships with other service providers and work towards project sustainability through grants and other sponsorships. Intake specialists typically support the coordinators in their outreach activities and work more directly with individuals in need of services, referring them to appropriate providers and providing translation and interpretation services when necessary. Intake specialists are also responsible for entering information into the NARN data system. All staff help organize and facilitate the civics education classes. The configuration is slightly different in Rogers. Because of challenges in attracting staff with the skills needed to foster new community collaborations and conduct outreach, Rogers chose to reclassify both staff as NARN specialists, with a focus on intake or information referrals and service provision, rather than having one intake specialist and a coordinator who is more outreach focused. A recently hired part-time intake specialist in nearby Fayetteville also provides referrals and translation and interpretation assistance to participants in the community.

In Iowa, NIC staffing arrangements in Council Bluffs and Des Moines are similar.¹⁵ In Des Moines and Council Bluffs, there is a coordinator and an outreach specialist (known as a workforce associate in Council Bluffs), whose role is analogous to that of the intake specialist in Arkansas. In addition, Des Moines has a staff person in charge of the Rosetta Stone language program. At present, only one coordinator is responsible for all NIC activities in Mount Pleasant.

In both Arkansas and Iowa, all staff work with participants directly, conducting intake, providing referrals, performing translation and interpretation services, and assisting with job search. Staff, however, do not work with participants on an ongoing basis or carry caseloads. They may provide assistance to anyone at the NAC, including those who are not seeking NAC services. Coordinators are expected to devote much of their energy to conducting outreach in the community; establishing networks of community advocates, service providers, and employers; and developing plans to sustain the program beyond the ETA demonstration grant. Intake specialists/workforce associates support the coordinator and are responsible for direct services, providing referral information and resources, collecting and entering data into the data system, and running monthly data reports.

¹⁵ The NIC coordinator in Des Moines has since resigned, and the position remained vacant as of August 2007.

In both states, volunteers play an important role in service provision in some sites. In Iowa, an AARP volunteer runs ESL and citizenship classes for participants in Des Moines, and the AmeriCorps*VISTA program has provided volunteers to work with Katrina evacuees receiving NIC services. VISTA volunteers have also worked for the NIC in Council Bluffs, as well as volunteers from the Consulate of Mexico and the Red Cross and interns from Iowa Western Community College. In Arkansas, community members volunteer their time to present information as part of the civics classes facilitated by the NARN.

Regional NIC supervisors manage local sites within each half of Iowa. These supervisors directly supervise local staff, organize quarterly regional meetings, approve most major decisions, collect monthly data reports (which are then passed on to IWD), and produce quarterly reports for the ETA. Supervision in Arkansas, with the exception of Little Rock, is provided by staff from the local program administrator. In Little Rock, staff are supervised by the LCO board to avoid conflicts of interest because the LCO president is related to the Little Rock NIC staff.

Program Enrollment Levels and Demographic Characteristics of Participants

This section examines program enrollment levels and the demographic characteristics of participants in each NAC. These data are reported by NACs using a standardized reporting system developed for this project and are summarized in table 2.3. While all sites use the same data reporting system, there are significant inconsistencies in how sites count participants. Some sites' demographic data include a discrete count of the total number of individuals served, while other sites count individuals every time they receive services through the NAC. In addition, in some sites, demographic data are not collected for all individuals who receive assistance through the NAC. Specifically, in Arkansas, Little Rock and Malvern included participants in their demographic data every time they sought services at the NARN, while Rogers and Russellville counted each person once (regardless of the number of times they sought services). In Iowa, all participants seeking services were only counted once per month regardless of how many times they sought services throughout the month, until the first quarter of 2007, when they began including only new participants in their data (see Appendix C for a further discussion of data issues). Because of these constraints, these data only offer a general sense of the scale of the NACs and the characteristics of the participants they serve and the data should be interpreted cautiously.

Enrollment Levels

From the outset of the program (the first quarter of 2006) through the second quarter of 2007, Arkansas served 4,883 participants cumulatively across their four sites, while Iowa served 2,775 across its three sites that were operational at the time of our visit.¹⁶ In Arkansas, local sites' cumulative participant counts range from 968 in Little Rock to 1,461 in Rogers, and the cumulative participant count at sites in Iowa ranges from 447 in Mount Pleasant to 1,149 in Council Bluffs.

¹⁶ This cumulative total of participants in Iowa includes participants in Council Bluffs, Des Moines, and Mount Pleasant only and does not include the 17 participants recorded in Marshalltown's demographic data.

Table 2.3
Demographic Characteristics of New Americans Center Participants, by Site¹

| | Arkansas | | | | | Iowa | | | |
|---|----------------|-------------|---------|--------|--------------|------------|----------------|------------|--------------|
| | Arkansas Total | Little Rock | Malvern | Rogers | Russellville | Iowa Total | Council Bluffs | Des Moines | Mt. Pleasant |
| Gender | | | | | | | | | |
| Male | 61.7 % | 69.6 % | 64.8 % | 55.9 % | 58.8 % | 48.4 % | 53.7 % | 45.5 % | 39.6 % |
| Female | 38.3 % | 30.4 % | 35.2 % | 44.1 % | 41.2 % | 51.6 % | 46.3 % | 54.5 % | 60.4 % |
| Race and Ethnicity^{2,3} | | | | | | | | | |
| Hispanic | 98.1 % | 99.9 % | 100.0 % | 93.8 % | 99.8 % | 43.7 % | 29.5 % | 56.8 % | 42.5 % |
| White (Not of Hispanic Origin) | 0.5 % | 0.0 % | 0.0 % | 1.5 % | 0.0 % | 21.3 % | 29.0 % | 18.5 % | 1.8 % |
| Black (Not of Hispanic Origin) | 0.1 % | 0.0001 % | 0.0 % | 0.2 % | 0.1 % | 6.0 % | 0.7 % | 13.9 % | 0.0 % |
| Asian or Pacific Islander | 0.9 % | 0.0 % | 0.0 % | 2.9 % | 0.1 % | 1.0 % | 0.0 % | 2.0 % | 0.9 % |
| Native American or Alaskan Native | 0.0 % | 0.0 % | 0.0 % | 0.0 % | 0.0 % | 0.3 % | 0.2 % | 0.0 % | 1.3 % |
| Multiracial | 0.1 % | 0.0 % | 0.0 % | 0.2 % | 0.0 % | 6.5 % | 3.0 % | 0.1 % | 32.4 % |
| Age Group⁴ | | | | | | | | | |
| 14 - 18 | 8.9 % | 6.0 % | 20.7 % | 2.1 % | 6.3 % | 0.3 % | 0.6 % | 0.1 % | 0.0 % |
| 19 - 24 | 20.4 % | 30.0 % | 29.1 % | 9.9 % | 15.4 % | 2.7 % | 3.4 % | 2.2 % | 1.3 % |
| 25 - 35 | 40.8 % | 40.1 % | 39.9 % | 36.6 % | 47.9 % | 6.6 % | 7.4 % | 3.1 % | 7.8 % |
| 36 - 45 | 21.2 % | 15.0 % | 9.1 % | 35.7 % | 22.2 % | 3.4 % | 4.2 % | 2.4 % | 3.6 % |
| 46 - 54 | 7.3 % | 5.9 % | 0.7 % | 16.2 % | 4.8 % | 1.6 % | 1.9 % | 1.2 % | 1.8 % |
| 55 and Over | 2.3 % | 1.8 % | 0.4 % | 5.8 % | 0.3 % | 0.9 % | 0.8 % | 0.6 % | 0.9 % |
| Number of Observations | 4,883 | 968 | 1,340 | 1,461 | 1,114 | 2,733 | 1,149 | 1,137 | 447 |

Source: New Americans Centers Annual Services and Referrals Provided Report

¹Based on data reported quarterly to DOL/ETA by NAC demonstration projects. In Arkansas, data was reported in Little Rock beginning in the fourth quarter of 2006 through the second quarter of 2007, in Malvern from the first quarter of 2006 through the second quarter of 2007, in Rogers from the third quarter in 2006 through the second quarter of 2007, and in Russellville from the first quarter of 2006 to the second quarter of 2007. In Iowa, all three sites reported data beginning in the second quarter of 2006 through the second quarter of 2007. Data does not represent all participants served and may not be based on unique individuals. See Appendix C, Study Limitations for further discussion.

²Data on race and ethnicity were collected for only 2,184 participants in Iowa. Thus, percentages do not sum to 100%.

³For examples of countries of origin, see discussion on page 17.

⁴Data on participants' ages were reported for only 430 participants in Iowa. Thus, percentages do not sum to 100%.

Demographic Characteristics

In Arkansas, nearly two-thirds (62 percent) of participants for whom demographic data are available are male, while in Iowa, slightly over half (52 percent) of participants are female. Iowa appears to serve a more diverse population, while the vast majority (98 percent) of participants in Arkansas are Hispanic. In Iowa, Hispanics are the largest ethnic group served, at 43 percent; 21 percent of participants are white, non-Hispanic; and 6 and 7 percent are black or multiracial, respectively. Des Moines reports a higher percentage of black participants at 14 percent, while 32 percent of recorded participants in Mount Pleasant are multiracial.

Individuals between 25 and 35 years old make up the largest share of recorded participants (41 percent) in Arkansas. Approximately one-fifth of participants included in the demographic data are between the ages of 19 and 24 and one-fifth are between the ages of 36 and 45, while 7 percent are between 46 and 54 years old. Nearly one-tenth of recorded participants are teenagers (14 to 18 years old). Only a very small percentage of participants are over age 55. (Data on the age of participants in Iowa were reported for only a small portion of participants.)

According to anecdotal accounts from program staff in both Arkansas and Iowa, most participants are recent immigrants from a wide array of countries. In Arkansas, the majority are from Spanish-speaking countries in Central America such as El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, and Nicaragua. In Iowa, and particularly in Des Moines, other countries of origin include Bolivia, Bosnia, Canada, Columbia, Iraq, Morocco, Pakistan, Peru, Somalia, Sudan, and Thailand.

III. Services Provided by New Americans Centers

This section reports on the types and level of services provided to immigrants and other newcomers through the NACs. It is based on data maintained by the sites and reports on services provided through the second quarter of 2007. The sites report service receipt data using an Excel spreadsheet developed specifically for this demonstration project. The spreadsheet, called the Annual Services and Referrals Provided Report, was modeled after data collected by the original New Iowan Centers and was revised based on input from NARN and NIC program staff, Arkansas and Iowa Project Managers, the team providing technical assistance to the sites, and ETA. Sites collect information on the number of services provided to participants, employers, and the community. These three service categories (participant services, employer services, and community services) are further broken down into areas of assistance, such as interpretation and translation, supportive services, and employment.

Services are generally available to any individual or family, community organization, or employer who seeks them out. There are no eligibility requirements, nor is there any formal assessment process. Services and referrals are provided on a case-by-case basis according to individual needs and requests. As there are no participation requirements, staff do not typically follow up on referrals. They do, however, maintain case files on most individuals and families. Services may be provided directly by NAC staff or through referrals to other agencies and organizations in the community. The most common services provided to participants, employers, and the community, both across and within states, are discussed below.

While sites report services provided using a common reporting form, the sites vary in the way they define a single service. In particular, services reported by Little Rock and Russellville represent the number of *participants* that received that service, regardless of whether they received the same type of service on multiple occasions. All other sites, however, include multiple times that the same type of service is provided to the same individual in their tally. For example, if a person came to the NARN seeking translation assistance three times, this would be counted as one service in Little Rock and Russellville. In other sites, this would be counted as three services. Thus, care must be taken in interpreting service levels, and particularly in making cross-site comparisons. We report the number of *services provided* in each site, which in some cases means the number of participants that received that service but in other cases reflects the number of times that service was provided (see Appendix C for further discussion of data issues).

Even when taking the differences in the way services are counted into account, there is still considerable variation in the level of service provided across sites. In Arkansas, the total reported number of services (including services for participants, employers, and the community) ranged from 51 in Little Rock to 19,123 in Russellville. This is due in part to NARN's different stages of project implementation, where the program in Russellville got off the ground more quickly than in other sites. In Iowa, the total number of reported services ranged from 3,789 in Mount Pleasant to 9,052 in Council Bluffs (see table 3.1 below and Appendix B for detailed tables of specific services provided by site).

Table 3.1: Number of Services Provided to Participants, Employers, and the Community

| Site | Services provided to participants | Services provided to employers | Services provided to the community | Total services provided |
|-----------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Arkansas | 28,743 | 205 | 1,179 | 30,127 |
| Little Rock | 46 | 5 | 0 | 51 |
| Malvern | 365 | 1 | 67 | 433 |
| Rogers | 9,694 | 148 | 678 | 10,520 |
| Russellville | 18,638 | 51 | 434 | 19,123 |
| Iowa | 14,248 | 689 | 1,843 | 16,780 |
| Council Bluffs | 8,867 | 149 | 36 | 9,052 |
| Des Moines | 3,325 | 194 | 420 | 3,939 |
| Mount Pleasant | 2,056 | 346 | 1,387 | 3,789 |

While NACs are designed to provide services to participants, employers, and the community, services for participants make up the vast majority of the total services provided. Nearly all (95 percent) reported services in Arkansas were provided to individuals and families. Similarly, in Iowa, 85 percent of reported services went to individuals and families. This is partly because participant services were a primary focus of NAC staff during early phases of implementation, and services for employers and the community are not yet as developed as participant services.

Types of Assistance Received by NAC Participants

This section examines the type of assistance provided to NAC participants. We first examine the proportion of total services provided in specific areas, such as supportive services, employment-related assistance, or civics education. This is instructive for understanding where sites have focused their services during the early stages of implementation. Again, as discussed above, these numbers serve as an indication of the areas of assistance provided by each NAC, but they should not be viewed as an accurate count of the level of services provided due to differences in how sites reported this data. Next, we discuss whether services were provided to participants directly by NAC staff or whether staff referred participants to other organizations for services, called “indirect” services in this analysis.

Overall, across all NACs, participants received assistance in a wide range of areas, including such supportive services as child care, clothing, food, housing, and health care; translation and interpretation; employment; education and training, including English as a Second Language (ESL) and civics education classes; legal and civil rights issues; immigration; tax preparation; and banking and financial issues. With the exception of Little Rock, where services were concentrated in three areas (citizenship classes, employment, and interpretation/translation),

NACs provided a wide mix of services. Exhibit 3.1 represents the areas in which participants received assistance, while the actual statistics are provided in Appendix B, Table B.1.

Supportive Services

As shown in Exhibit 3.1, NAC staff often assisted participants with basic and supportive services, including child care, clothing, food, housing, and health care, among other basic needs. Generally, NAC staff referred participants to organizations and agencies in the community that can assist with these needs, such as food banks or clothing drives. In Arkansas, referrals to supportive services made up nearly one-third (29 percent) of the total recorded services provided to participants in Malvern. This was also the most commonly reported type of service provided to participants in Russellville, representing 15 percent of the total services provided to participants. Referrals for supportive services made up a similar share of participant services in Rogers.

Assistance with supportive services was generally less prevalent in Iowa, representing 5 percent of reported services provided to participants across all three sites. In Mount Pleasant, however, referral to supportive services was the second most commonly reported service provided to participants, representing approximately 15 percent of the total services provided to participants. For example, the NIC coordinator often referred participants to the Fellowship Cup's clothing ministry and food pantry.

Translation and Interpretation Services

In both states, staff at all sites routinely provided translation and interpretation assistance to participants—both in the offices and out in the community. For example, staff attended parent-teacher conferences at the local schools to interpret for parents who do not speak English, translated documents such as leases and other contracts, and interpreted meetings between participants and their employers.

Across the four sites in Arkansas, interpretation and translation services make up a greater share of participant services than any other type of assistance, representing 17 percent of the total services provided to participants. Translations and interpretations represented a similar share of services provided to participants in Iowa (16 percent), making it the third most common type of service provided. Further, in three of the seven sites—Malvern and Rogers in Arkansas and Council Bluffs in Iowa—interpretations and translations represented at least one-fifth of the total participant services provided (37, 28, and 20 percent, respectively).

Employment Assistance

NAC staff also provided employment-related assistance, which includes referrals to other programs in the One-Stop Career Center and job placement agencies as well as direct assistance with job search, resume development, and interviewing skills. This included helping participants search for job leads on the computer, referring job seekers to specific employers, assisting in preparation of resumes, and checking over job applications to make sure they are completed fully and correctly, among other employment-related services.

Exhibit 3.1: Distribution of the Types of Services Provided to New Americans Centers Participants

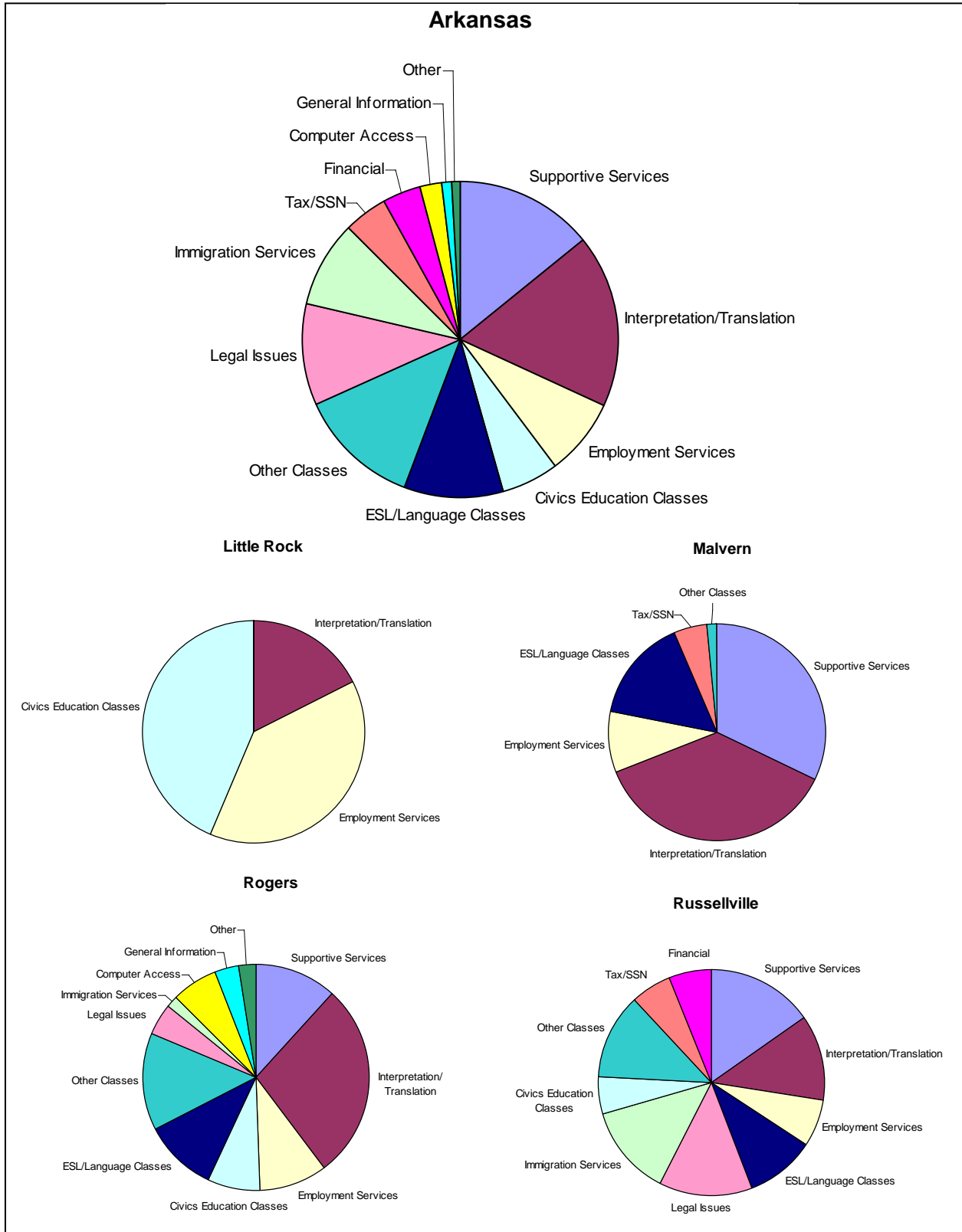
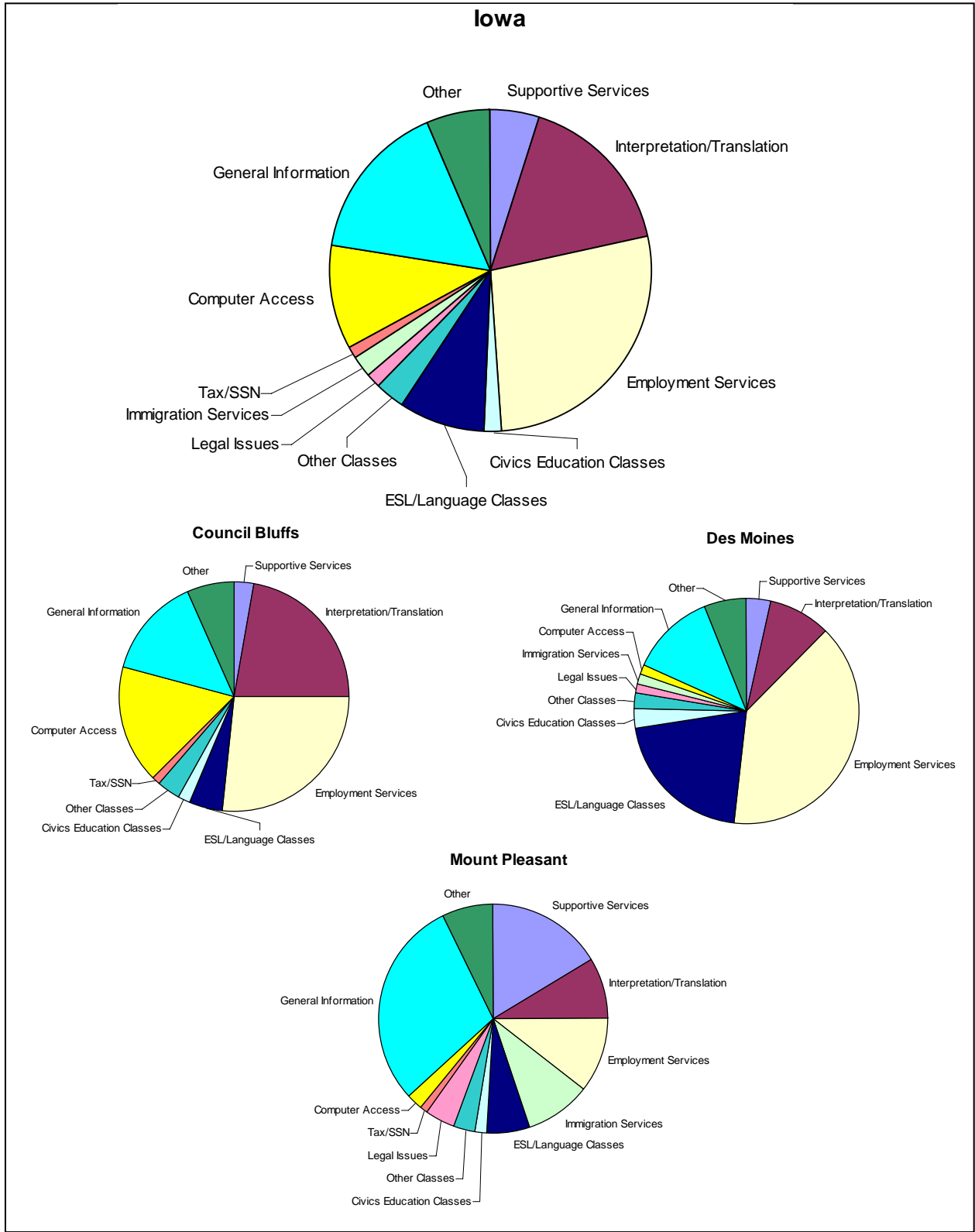


Exhibit 3.1: Distribution of the Types of Services Provided to New Americans Centers Participants (continued)



Employment-related assistance was particularly common in Iowa, reflecting a strong focus on employment in the NACs in this state. Totaled across all three sites in Iowa, employment-related assistance was more common than any other service provided to participants and constitutes one-fifth of the total services provided to participants. This was the most commonly recorded type of participant service in Des Moines, representing one-third of the total services provided to participants. Employment-related assistance was also frequently provided in Council Bluffs, where nearly one-fifth (19 percent) of services provided to participants addressed employment-related issues.

Notably, the frequency of employment-related assistance is significantly lower in Arkansas, where only two sites reported any employment-related assistance, representing less than 1 percent of total services provided to participants across the state. This likely is a reflection of the NARN's overall focus on establishing networks of service providers rather than providing direct services itself. Further, according to program staff, participants in Arkansas are likely to already be employed when they seek services from the NARN. In Little Rock, however, employment-related assistance represented over one-fifth (22 percent) of all participant services provided, suggesting this has been an area of focus in Little Rock.

Civics Education

Five of seven NACs across Arkansas and Iowa offered civics education classes for participants. During these classes, NAC staff and representatives from various partner agencies addressed issues related to becoming productive citizens within the communities. Topics included education, immigration, law enforcement, applying for Individual Taxpayer Identification Numbers (ITINs), cultural issues, taxes, local services, and connecting utilities. In sites that did not offer a civics education class, participants were often referred to similar classes in the community.

In Little Rock, nearly half of all services provided to participants (44 percent) were civics education classes (in this case, one two-session civics education class is counted as one service). In Rogers, approximately 7 percent of services provided to participants were civics education classes. In Arkansas, staff in Little Rock, Malvern, and Russellville also issued LCO membership identification cards after completion of the class, which are accepted as a second form of identification by many local organizations and businesses.

ESL Classes

Five of the seven NACs offered ESL classes. In Iowa, Des Moines and Council Bluffs offer onsite computers with Rosetta Stone, a language learning software, which were available for participants' self-directed use. In Mount Pleasant, participants could access the software at Southeastern Community College, located across the street. In Des Moines, ESL classes represented approximately one-fifth of the total services provided to participants.

In Arkansas, Malvern was the only NARN that provided ESL instruction. ESL classes at this site represented 15 percent of total services provided to participants.

Other Education and Training

Local NACs hosted other classes and workshops as well. For example, in Arkansas, Malvern and Russellville sponsored financial literacy classes. In Iowa, the Council Bluffs coordinator offered weekly basic computer skills classes at the neighboring community college, in addition to one-on-one computer skills training during the day at the NIC. Des Moines also offered computer classes for participants.

In two Arkansas sites (Rogers and Russellville) and one Iowa site (Des Moines), participants were often referred to classes in the community, including language classes, citizenship classes, and other classes that cover such topics as financial education or computer skills. For example, Rogers developed a close partnership with Northwest Arkansas Community College's Department of Adult Education, whose director serves on the NARN advisory committee, and frequently referred participants to ESL and citizenship classes. Likewise, staff in Russellville often referred participants to the Russellville Adult Education Center for ESL, Spanish, and GED classes.

Legal and Civil Rights Assistance

Staff also referred participants to organizations and services in the community that address legal and civil rights issues. In Arkansas, this service was particularly common in Russellville; it made up approximately 13 percent of all services provided to participants. Staff in Rogers also occasionally referred participants for assistance with legal or civil rights assistance. Similarly, staff in Rogers and Russellville referred participants to organizations that specifically address immigration-related issues. At the time of our visit, a staff member in Malvern was completing training through the Baptist Immigration Services Network. Once completed, this accreditation will allow him to prepare documents and represent individuals seeking to adjust their immigration status.

These types of referrals were less common in Iowa. Legal and civil rights assistance, where they represented less than 10 percent of services provided to participants.

Computer and Internet Access and Other Services

In all sites, NAC participants have access to computers with Internet connectivity and word processing. For example, participants can use these computers to search for jobs online or create resumes. NACs located within a One-Stop Career Center have computers onsite, and several sites have agreements with nearby community colleges to grant participants access to their computer labs. In Iowa, for example, participants at the Mount Pleasant NIC may use the computer room at the Mount Pleasant branch of Southeastern Community College across the street. Computer access is particularly common in Council Bluffs, representing 16 percent of all services provided to participants. In addition to providing several computers onsite, the coordinator in Council Bluffs made an arrangement with the local library so participants could use its computers one evening each week.

Many other services are provided to participants, including assistance gathering necessary information for other programs, tax preparation assistance, banking and financial assistance, and various services as needs arise. These miscellaneous services represented approximately ten percent of services provided by staff in Arkansas and approximately 24 percent of services provided in Iowa.

Indirect and Direct Services

Within each area of assistance, referrals to other organizations or agencies (“indirect services”) and services directly provided by NAC staff (“direct services”) are examined. Indirect services offered by NACs in both Arkansas and Iowa included referrals to other organizations and service providers that address a wide range of participant needs. Tapping into their network of community partners and resources, staff referred participants to organizations and community service providers for assistance with food, child care, shelter, clothing, health care, tax preparation, employment, classes, training programs, and legal and immigration counseling. Direct services are those provided by staff, such as ESL and civics education classes, assistance with job search or resume development, and interpretation and translation.

Across all sites in Arkansas, the vast majority of services provided to participants (80 percent) were indirect services, meaning that services were provided through referrals to other organizations rather than directly from NAC staff. In Little Rock and Malvern, however, where fewer services have been provided than in the other two sites, direct services account for the majority of reported participant services. Eighty-three percent of participant services in Little Rock and 57 percent of participant services in Malvern were provided directly by NARN staff. In Little Rock, the higher proportion of direct services is attributable to their regularly held civics education classes, which is their most commonly recorded service for participants.

Across all three New Iowan Centers, three-quarters of reported services for participants were directly provided by NIC staff, while the remainder constituted referrals to other organizations. Most participant services reported in Council Bluffs (77 percent) and Des Moines (83 percent) were direct services, many of which were employment-related services such as assistance developing a resume or searching for a job. In Mount Pleasant, however, approximately half (48 percent) of participant services were directly provided by NIC staff and half were indirect services. Across NIC sites, employment assistance was the primary direct service provided.

Employer Services

NACs aim to serve as a resource to area employers and businesses by helping them meet their staffing needs and connecting them with relevant training and resources. In Arkansas, because staff focused on building services for participants and the community during the early phases of NARN implementation, the level of services provided to employers is lower than the level of services provided to participants or the community. Across all four NARN sites, 205 services (or 1 percent of the total services) were provided to employers in Arkansas. In Iowa, where employer services are more established, 689 employer services (or 4 percent of the total services reported) were provided through the NICs (see table 3.1 above). The breakdown of indirect versus direct employer services mirrored the pattern of participant services in each state. Nearly all employer services in Arkansas (99 percent) were indirect referrals, while the majority of employer services in Iowa (83 percent) were directly provided by NIC staff.

Five of seven NACs across Arkansas and Iowa referred employers for assistance with staffing needs. In Arkansas, staff in Little Rock and Rogers referred employers to language classes. In Malvern, the NARN helped develop a training program when a local welding company needed certified welders. The training was delivered through a partnership with the Arkansas Economic Development Commission (AEDC), the Latin Community Organization (LCO), the local

technical college, and the employer. The course was taught by a local welding supplier with NARN staff interpreting.

In Iowa, staff in Council Bluffs and Mount Pleasant referred employers to special targeted training in the community on issues relevant to managing a diverse workforce. Staff also provided direct services to employers, including targeted training and seminars on a range of immigration and diversity issues and assistance with staffing needs. This happened in various contexts, including NIC-sponsored workshops, job fairs, one-on-one consultations, and onsite visits to workplaces and businesses. In Council Bluffs, the NIC hosted training sessions on cultural awareness and diversity and special targeted training sessions for employers. The NIC frequently hosted jobs fairs and employer panels and developed a strong relationship with several large employers in the area that regularly hire new Iowans through the NIC. Des Moines sponsored one cultural awareness and diversity training for employers and six special targeted training events, including an employer workshop on H1B visas. While the coordinator in Mount Pleasant was just beginning to develop employer services at the time of our visit, strong relationships with several large employers in the area had already been established, with plans to offer more training and presentations on diversity and immigration issues in the near future. In addition, all NICs directly assisted employers with their staffing needs by referring participants when employers have job openings.

Community Services

New Americans Centers aim to increase awareness of diversity issues and immigration in the community at large. In Arkansas and Iowa, staff are working to foster relationships with local community leaders and police departments, conducting diversity training at community organizations and businesses, hosting networking events, and executing outreach in the community to ensure people are aware of their services.

In Arkansas, staff regularly participated in local community events, including Chambers of Commerce events, job fairs, and local service provider committees. They also worked with various community organizations and companies, including pharmacies, banks, and utility companies, to have the LCO membership card accepted as a form of identification.

In Iowa, all NICs have sponsored workshops on cultural awareness and diversity and other relevant issues that are open to the public. For example, Des Moines sponsored public workshops on cultural sensitivity in the workplace, obtaining citizenship, wage and labor law, and discrimination. In addition, Des Moines hosted a nonprofit networking event as an opportunity for local organizations to share information, which was attended by approximately 90 representatives from area service providers and community organizations. Mount Pleasant hosted various workshops in conjunction with Southeastern Community College on such topics as community services and financial aid.

IV. Future Plans and Sustainability

Since the inception of the NACs, both states have focused attention on issues of outreach, promoting program awareness, and sustainability, incorporating the topic in early stages of program design and planning. ETA funding for the New Americans Centers demonstrations in Arkansas and Iowa ends in June 2008, and it is incumbent upon the states to sustain the NACs through other sources of funding and support.

From the onset, the goal in Arkansas was to build a network of service providers to assist newcomers. By naming its NAC system the New Arkansan Resource *Network*, Arkansas set the tone to sustain the partnerships created through the demonstration regardless of funding and its ability to support dedicated staff. While there is no formal state-level role in sustaining the NARN, state-level staff have been involved in discussions about private-sector support for NARN activities. A local communications company has expressed interest in helping the LCO expand into a statewide entity. There were further discussions about expanding the NARN statewide, rather than just the LCO, given the narrower, Hispanic focus of the LCO. The communications firm also would work with the NARN to “brand” the network, which includes developing a new logo and redesigning the LCO membership card. It is also exploring the possibility of convening a statewide advisory committee to support the NARN.

To varying degrees, staff in Arkansas have been networking and collaborating with partner agencies to secure funding to supplement current funding levels and to sustain operations after the ETA funding ends in fiscal year 2008. While none of these efforts on their own are sufficient to fully sustain the NARN, staff continue to seek out additional funds and in-kind support. Currently, Russellville receives \$5.00 from the cost of every LCO membership card it issues and has an arrangement with Bank of America whereby the NARN receives \$25.00 for every new account holder it refers. Russellville also planned to sponsor a fundraiser in September 2007.

In addition, local staff in Arkansas have applied for grants from a variety of sources. In Russellville, for example, the NARN has received grants from the Entergy Charitable Foundation and Bank of America and have submitted additional grant applications to a variety of potential funders, including a substantial request to the Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation and others to Entergy and Bank of America. The NARN also submitted sponsorship requests to CenturyTel, Bank of America, and several local businesses for a September 2007 fundraiser. Staff in Malvern have also submitted grant requests to support local activities.

The advisory committee in Rogers established a subcommittee specifically tasked with grant writing and sustainability. The committee has drafted a concept paper that could be included in future grant applications. In addition, Rogers partnered with the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville to submit a grant application to ETA for training long-term health care paraprofessionals with limited English proficiency. If awarded, training participants would be recruited through the NARN as well as local One-Stop Career Centers. Other avenues for sustainability under consideration in Rogers include fee-for-service projects with the business community. The Rogers NARN also has received an Entergy grant for outreach to Carroll County for a Cinco de Mayo festival.

In Iowa, discussions about the sustainability of the NICs are occurring at the state level, while local staff are largely uninvolved in securing future funds. Currently, \$160,000 in state appropriations supports operations of the nine NICs. With the end of the ETA demonstration grant approaching¹⁷, state-level staff were hopeful that the state legislature would increase the current level of funding to make up for the loss of the ETA grant. State level staff point to the NICs' strong presence throughout the state: including non-ETA-funded NICs, they are currently serving 12 of 15 of the state's workforce regions, giving them leverage in the legislature. Further, there is a sense that the current political climate and the support of the governor increases the likelihood of securing state funding to sustain the NICs. In addition, state-level staff encourage local communities to sustain operations through in-kind support. In Mount Pleasant, for example, community partners provide office space and utilities for the NIC office. Local communities are also encouraged to develop public-private partnerships with local businesses to support NIC programming.

¹⁷ Note, the New Americans Centers Demonstration Project concluded on June 30, 2008 while this paper was in review for publication.

V. Conclusions and Lessons Learned

The New Americans Centers demonstration projects are still relatively new, and, appropriately, most sites have focused on establishing local partner networks and reaching out to newcomer communities. From the perspective of staff, community partners, and employers, NACs have had a generally positive impact on the economic and social well-being of newcomers in both Arkansas and Iowa. NACs have established themselves as trusted and reliable resources for newcomers in their respective communities and beyond. Respondents in Arkansas reported high demand for assistance and indicated that their citizenship classes are consistently full. Staff in Arkansas noted that the spread of information by word of mouth is evidence of their success. Demand for NAC services is evident at the community level as well. Several communities in Arkansas and Iowa have expressed an interest in establishing NACs in their local areas. One Iowan stated NACs provide newcomers “a safe place...to ask for help or let [somebody] know their needs. Employers and organizations feel safe that we’re going to provide them with accurate information....They feel there finally is a place [to ask] questions.”

NACs are at different stages of program implementation, with some further along than others. In part, this results from the varying starting points among sites. Some local centers are modeled after existing sites or built on existing efforts, including all the Iowa sites and Malvern in Arkansas. Other sites are starting from scratch and must establish not only service delivery mechanisms, but also the critical community networks in which to operate. Additionally, some sites faced implementation hurdles such as difficulties hiring staff or securing adequate office space. Regardless of starting point, NAC staff have moved forward with reaching out to newcomers and providing services—both directly and through referrals.

To some extent, local socioeconomic conditions drive the design of the NACs and their mix of services. For example, the strong demand for workers in Iowa dictates the stronger focus on employment services. In Arkansas, on the other hand, newcomers visiting the NAC tend to be employed but in need of supportive services and improved civic participation and understanding, thus influencing the strong focus on services such as citizenship instruction, ESL instruction, and translation and interpretation services in these sites.

There is considerable variation in the level of service provided across NACs, ranging from 51 reported services in Little Rock to 19,123 in Russellville. In general, staff have focused primarily on providing services to individuals and families with less attention placed on services to communities and employers. In Arkansas, 95 percent of all reported services were provided to participants. Similarly, 85 percent of services reported in Iowa were provided to individuals and families. Of these services, indirect services, or referrals to other agencies, account for the bulk of reported participant services.

In Arkansas, staff and local community members noted several ways in which the NARN has been successful, including integrating newcomers into the community by enhancing their civic participation and understanding and increasing their knowledge of and access to available resources and basic services, including banking, utilities, immigration and legal assistance, and health care. Respondents also noted the increased availability of translation and interpretation assistance which has contributed to improved access to a multitude of services including those offered through the One-Stop Career Centers.

In Arkansas and Iowa, NACs have facilitated access to English language instruction. In Iowa, staff encourage limited English proficient individuals to make use of interactive Rosetta Stone software. Staff in both states make referrals to ESL classes offered by other community agencies or offer ESL tutoring and/or classes in-house. In Arkansas, staff and partners in Malvern, Rogers, and Russellville also stressed the value of the LCO membership card as a much-needed second form of identification that is accepted by many businesses in the community.

At this point, it is not possible to determine the effect of NAC services on local communities, particularly on their receptiveness to newcomers. NACs have, however, successfully built local networks made up of community leaders, service providers, and businesses. Staff have worked to gain support from the community, particularly from mayors, police departments, and business leaders, educating them about services they offer. Further, many NACs have worked to foster improved relations between the newcomers and the broader community, particularly local police. For example, staff have provided cultural diversity training to police officers and to school staff. In addition, staff work with newcomers to ensure they have a better understanding of what is expected of them in terms of civil laws and social norms.

NACs have also come to be seen as a resource for other service providers. Providers seek interpretation and translation assistance as well as information on cultural diversity. In addition, NACs serve as a mechanism to disseminate information about available community resources. Often advisory committee meetings serve as a forum for information sharing among partners. In Iowa, the NICs are seen by some as having helped bring newcomers to their community, and many attribute the ability of communities to attract newcomers to the education and cultural awareness provided by staff.

Although it is probably the least developed area, NAC staff have worked with local employers who have come to see the services offered as a resource available to them and their employees. Some employers use the NACs as a source of new hires. Others use them for interpretation and translation assistance or help with cultural and diversity issues in the workplace. Employers also refer employees to the NAC for assistance, such as ESL instruction. In Arkansas, Malvern's welding certification has great promise and the model is replicable but requires considerable commitment from employers and other community partners who play a major role in planning and delivering the training.

While improving economic success is a key goal of the NACs (an outcome that will be examined in a subsequent report), it is important to note that many of this demonstration's desired impacts are not quantifiable, including an improved quality of life for newcomer families, better reception of newcomers in the community, improved civic participation, understanding, and engagement on the part of newcomers, development of an enhanced workforce, and establishment of an integrated network of services for new arrivals.

Implementation Lessons

NACs' early implementation experiences have resulted in many lessons that can be shared with other states or localities looking to implement similar services. Above all else, it is critical to define the NAC's purpose and role. This tends to vary from site to site, depending on existing resources within the community. The Arkansas and Iowa NACs have consciously avoided the duplication of existing services, choosing instead to complement other service providers, and in many cases, serve primarily as a resource and referral entity. Advisory committees made up of community members are uniquely positioned to help NAC staff find their "niche" in the community.

The strength of the NACs also lies in their flexibility to meet local needs through a mix of services and in their ability to respond to the changing needs of their constituencies—individuals and families, the community, and employers. It is critical for staff to be in touch with the community and understand what their needs are. Currently, many services offered through the NACs are focused on Spanish-speaking newcomers. It is important to ensure that these services are available for newcomers from other backgrounds as well, particularly as local demographics shift.

Network building and community support are critical early steps. While NACs make available an array of services for newcomers, many services are provided through referral to existing community providers. Appropriately, most staff have devoted considerable effort into building networks of service providers, nonprofits, and community businesses to support newcomers. That being said, it is important to bring together existing services rather than creating new ones. Staff have also worked to gain the trust of newcomers who otherwise are hesitant to trust public institutions and seek out services.

Successful NAC implementation has required community buy-in from the outset. Support from local officials, other service providers, and the business community has been critical to the success of the NACs, and staff have worked diligently to foster the trust of both newcomers and the broader community. Gaining this trust requires the development of personal relationships. It is equally important to have buy-in from community leaders. The lack of outward support from both the city and the local Workforce Investment Board has perhaps stymied the development of the advisory committee and community services in Little Rock.

Dynamic and committed staff are essential. Much of the success of NACs rides on the personalities and strengths of local staff who reach out to individuals and families, community members, and employers. Staff are often the only interface between the NAC and community leaders and other service providers. They are also responsible for ensuring the continuity of services through local support, outreach, and promoting program awareness. For the most part, staff have personal connections to the community and are dedicated to serving the newcomer communities and making the NACs succeed. Administrators who are passionate about serving the newcomer populations and who are devoid of political agendas also contribute to the success of the NACs.

Avenues to foster communication between staff at different locations should be enhanced. The individual NACs have small staffs—only one or two individuals working in each location. A

lack of communication across sites leaves some staff feeling isolated. Increased communication among staff would encourage information and resource sharing and perhaps lead to more creative service delivery, outreach, or program awareness efforts.

Location is a factor in service delivery. While housing NACs within One-Stop Career Centers facilitates referrals and coordination with other work-related services, it provides some obstacles to service delivery. Staff have had to identify alternative locations to offer services, such as civics education classes and ESL instruction, during nonstandard work hours to accommodate the schedules of working families. Additionally, non-citizens are often resistant to seeking out services in unfamiliar locations, which may be perceived as unfriendly toward immigrants. Through the development of trusting relationships and word of mouth, NAC staff have generally been able to overcome any resistance on the part of newcomers to seeking out services within a One-Stop Career Center.

Project sustainability is challenging and requires support at a high level. The integration of the NICs into Iowa's governmental and fiscal structure has lent a sense of permanency to the services they provide. In addition, local communities are encouraged to support their operation through in-kind contributions and public-private partnerships. In Arkansas, staff have been charged with sustaining the future of the NAC. Although only partway through the demonstration period, it appears that in the absence of a dedicated funding stream, sustainability of individual NACs may be beyond the means of local NAC staff and their advisory committees. While staff have been successful at securing smaller grants and contributions, supporting full-time staff and office space requires more substantial funding than has been raised locally to date. Support from advisory committee members and/or other members of the community who are more experienced in grant writing and other outreach mechanisms appears to be critical. In the absence of financial support from the state, there is a need for experienced grantwriters and other sources to contribute to the sustainability of the programs in each state.

Data collection and reporting needs to be consistent. While the demonstration's technical assistance contractor developed a spreadsheet system for reporting quarterly data to ETA, insufficient hands-on training was provided to ensure that local staff were entering data uniformly. The current data reporting system allows NACs to report data in a unified format, but the lack of training on how to collect and report data has resulted in inconsistent data collection at the local level. In retrospect, additional training and ongoing oversight of local staff to ensure consistent reporting would foster better-quality data collection. Future demonstrations should allow time for hands-on and repeated training on data collection requirements. Additionally, the use of a quarterly reporting system that is not linked to the local data system has resulted in staff having to enter data in multiple systems, which can be time consuming. Future efforts should attempt to incorporate an electronic link to in-house electronic case files that would facilitate reporting and reduce burden on local staff.

In closing, the experiences of NACs in Arkansas and Iowa underscore the importance of developing strong community relationships and an integrated network of service providers. The early phases of NACs suggest that this requires a strong commitment on the part of staff and the community as well as support from community leaders and other local service providers, businesses, and employers. The next study report will provide further information on the continuing implementation and impacts of the New Americans Centers demonstration projects.

APPENDIX A

New Americans Centers Site Summaries

New Arkansan Resource Network
New Iowan Centers

New Arkansan Resource Network Site Summary

Project Locations: The New Arkansan Resource Network (NARN) operates out of four sites in central, northwest, and west central Arkansas: Little Rock, Malvern, Rogers, and Russellville.

Overview: The NARN was established in July 2005 under a demonstration grant from the U.S. Department of Labor. The primary goal of the NARN is to speed the transition of new Arkansans into communities, promote stability and rapid employment with good wages, and enhance economic development. This goal is met through information dissemination, outreach to the community, and employer services with the assistance of a network of partner agencies.

Target Population: “New Arkansan” is defined as any person new to the State of Arkansas. Services are provided to anybody who needs them regardless of country of origin or current residence. Most participants (referred to as registrants in Arkansas) are recent immigrants, with the majority coming from Spanish-speaking countries such as El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, and Peru. Other countries of origin include China, the Marshall Islands, and Vietnam.

**Organizational
Information/
Lead Agency:**

The NARN is locally operated under the guidance of the Arkansas Department of Workforce Services (DWS). Local workforce investment boards provide fiscal and programmatic oversight, while direct operation, staffing, and service delivery is subcontracted to the local One-Stop Career Center operators in three sites and a community nonprofit organization in the fourth. All four sites are physically housed within local One-Stop Career Centers, or Workforce Centers.

- *Malvern:* West Central Arkansas Career Development Center System operates the NARN with fiscal and programmatic oversight from the West Central Arkansas Planning and Development District, (WCAPDD) agent for the West Central Arkansas Workforce Investment Board.
- *Little Rock:* The Little Rock site is operated by the Latin Community Organization (LCO), a nonprofit organization that helps Latino individuals and families achieve self-sufficiency through education and referrals, under contract with the Little Rock Workforce Investment Board.
- *Rogers:* The Northwest Arkansas Certified Development Company (NWACDC) operates the NARN under contract with the

Northwest Arkansas Economic Development District (NWAEDD), the fiscal agent and administrative agency for the Northwest Arkansas Workforce Investment Board

- *Russellville:* West Central Arkansas Career Development Center System operates the NARN with fiscal and programmatic oversight from the West Central Arkansas Planning and Development District, (WCAPDD), agent for the West Central Arkansas Workforce Investment Board.

Staffing:

Each local NARN site has two staff providing services to the community. All NARN staff are bilingual (Spanish and English) and most are non-native born. In Little Rock, Malvern, and Russellville, the NARN is staffed by a coordinator and an intake specialist, while the Rogers NARN has a slightly different configuration with two network specialists. In general, coordinators devote more effort to outreach in the community and are additionally responsible for developing strategies to sustain the NARN. Intake specialists typically work more directly with individuals in need of services and are also responsible for entering data in the NARN data system.

Key Partners:

Three of the four local NARN sites (Malvern, Rogers, and Russellville) have established working advisory boards made up of local leaders, business owners, and other community members, while staff in Little Rock continue to struggle with the formation of a local advisory board. They have found it difficult to convene meetings with potential advisory board members. At the time of our visit, Arkansas was looking into establishing a statewide advisory board.

Locally, NARN has established extensive partner networks. These networks include both public and private organizations such as banks, health care providers, colleges and schools, employers, and local government agencies. In addition to operating the Little Rock site, the LCO is a key partner in both Malvern and Russellville.

Primary Services and Activities:

There is some variation in the types of resources and services available across the NARN. Uniformly, the NARN serves primarily as a resource and referral agency rather than as a direct service provider.

Participant Services

The majority of participant services are provided through referrals to other organizations. Referrals are often made for the following services: employment assistance (including job services, job training, and unemployment insurance); education (e.g., ESL and adult education, scholarships, etc.); and community services (such as legal

services, immigration assistance, health care, banking needs, money management, and food and shelter). Staff in all four NARN sites routinely provide translation and interpretation assistance to participants—both in the offices and out in the community. Other direct services provided through the Russellville NARN include notarization and driver’s education. Little Rock, Malvern, and Russellville offer a civics education class, which addresses issues related to becoming productive citizens within the respective communities. In Rogers, individuals are referred to civics and citizenship classes provided by the Northwest Arkansas Community College Adult Education Center. Staff in Little Rock, Malvern, and Russellville also issue LCO membership identification cards, which have come to be accepted as a second form of identification by many local organizations and businesses. The Rogers site does not issue the LCO membership identification cards because local government leaders do not endorse the cards.

Community Services

NARN staff regularly participate in local community events, including Chambers of Commerce events, job fairs, and local service provider committees. They also have worked with various community organizations and companies, including pharmacies, banks, and utility companies, to have the LCO membership card accepted as a second form of identification. NARN staff have fostered relationships with local community leaders and police departments, enabling them to educate both newcomers and the broader community about cultural differences.

Employer Services

During the early stages of implementation, the NARN focused more heavily on developing services for participants, and the community, and employer services are not yet as extensive. However, staff provide translation and interpretation services to employers, and in some cases, they have gone to a worksite to discuss safety and workplace issues with employees. In Rogers and Malvern, NARN staff have worked with employers on conversational Spanish and cultural awareness issues. In addition, local employers alert NARN staff to job openings and several newcomers have been referred for jobs.

Future Plans and Sustainability:

State-level staff are involved in discussions about private-sector support for NARN activities and possible statewide NARN expansion. DWS staff have had discussions with a local communications company to discuss the formation of a statewide

advisory board and “branding” the network, including developing a new logo and redesigning the LCO membership card.

At the local level, staff have been exploring future funding possibilities to varying degrees. Sustainability efforts undertaken by NARN staff include hosting fundraisers, submitting grant applications to a wide variety of foundations and other funders, and developing partnerships with local businesses. In Rogers, the NARN advisory council established a subcommittee specifically tasked with grant writing and NARN sustainability.

New Iowan Centers Site Summary

Project Locations: There are four ETA-funded New Iowan Centers (NICs) in Iowa, located in Council Bluffs, Des Moines, Marshalltown, and Mount Pleasant. At the time of our visit, the Marshalltown NIC was not in operation due to recent staff departures.

Overview: The four NICs funded by ETA were modeled after three preexisting centers established under the Iowa Workforce Development agency (IWD), an agency focused on Iowa’s workforce issues.

NICs are designed to help newcomers to Iowa establish themselves in the community by providing services to new Iowans, area employers, and the community at large. In general, NICs aim to “grow Iowa” by ensuring new Iowans are educated about and have access to necessary services, helping new Iowans adapt to the community, connecting employers and job seekers, and educating the community on issues of immigration and cultural diversity.

Target Population: NIC staff define “new Iowans” as anyone new to Iowa, regardless of geographic origin. Many participants are recent immigrants from a wide array of countries, with the majority from Spanish-speaking ones, such as El Salvador, Honduras, Mexico, and Nicaragua. Other countries of origin include Bolivia, Bosnia, Canada, Columbia, Iraq, Morocco, Pakistan, Peru, Somalia, and Sudan.

NIC services are generally available to anyone who walks through the door, though efforts are focused within loosely defined geographic areas, which vary by site. The Des Moines NIC operates mainly in Polk County. The Council Bluffs NIC serves the greater metropolitan area, including employers from neighboring Omaha, Nebraska, that hire Iowans. The Mount Pleasant NIC has focused its work in the first 12 months on building relationships in the city of Mount Pleasant, with plans to expand outreach to the entire county in the near future.

**Organizational
Information/
Lead Agency:**

Iowa Workforce Development, the state workforce agency, provides fiscal and programmatic oversight for the NICs. The Des Moines and Council Bluffs NICs are located within local One-Stop Career Centers, or Workforce Centers. The Mount Pleasant NIC is co-located at the Iowa State University Extension office because the local One-Stop Career Center did not have adequate space for it. The Marshalltown NIC is co-located with the local Workforce Investment

Act (WIA) training provider because adequate space was not available in the One-Stop Career Center.

Staffing:

NICs are overseen by a targeted services bureau chief from Iowa Workforce Development. The state is divided into two regions, eastern and western, each with a regional supervisor who manages the NICs within that half of the state. The NICs in Des Moines and Council Bluffs were each staffed by two people, a coordinator and an outreach specialist in Des Moines and a coordinator and a workforce associate in Council Bluffs. However, the NIC coordinator in Des Moines resigned in August 2007 and the position remains vacant. Des Moines has an additional workforce associate in charge of the Rosetta Stone language program. The Mount Pleasant NIC is staffed by a coordinator who is responsible for all NIC activities. All staff work with new Iowans directly, conducting intake, providing referrals, translating and interpreting, and assisting with job search. Coordinators focus their energy on community outreach, establishing networks, including state and county agencies, community advocates, service providers, and employers, in addition to working to develop plans to sustain the program beyond the ETA demonstration grant. The Workforce Associates in Des Moines and Council Bluffs support the coordinators and are responsible for collecting and entering NIC participation data into IWORKS, IWD's data system. The coordinator is responsible for these task as well and running monthly data reports. All staff are bilingual in English and Spanish, a requirement of the job.

Key Partners:

All three operational sites have established advisory councils made up of representatives from local businesses, nonprofit organizations, and government agencies. The advisory councils, which generally meet monthly, serve as a chance for members to network, share information and resources, and brainstorm future NIC activities. While in some cases individual members of the local advisory council were involved in the planning stages, the advisory councils did not convene until after the NICs were operational. At the time of our visit, advisory councils were still in the early stages of development and, in some cases, struggling with the challenge of defining their mission and purpose.

Local NICs have developed reciprocal partnerships with numerous community service agencies, businesses, community colleges and schools, health care providers, and government agencies. These organizations refer participants to the NICs, collaborate with NIC staff on special projects and initiatives, share information and resources, and provide services to NIC participants. In Des Moines and Council Bluffs, where the NIC is located within the local One-

Stop Career Center, NIC staff view all other programs housed in the One-Stop Career Center as partners. In addition, all three NICs have developed relationships with local community colleges. NIC participants are often referred to classes and training programs, and in Council Bluffs and Mount Pleasant, NIC citizenship classes are held in community college classrooms.

**Primary Services
and Activities:**

NICs statewide provide services to participants, the community, and employers. Designed to be responsive to community needs, site-specific services vary based on contextual factors, available resources, and resident needs.

Participant Services

Employment assistance makes up the bulk of services provided to new Iowans. NIC staff help participants search for job leads on the computer, refer job seekers to specific employers, prepare resumes, and check over job applications to make sure they are completed fully and correctly, among other employment-related services. Interpretation and translation services are also commonly provided by NIC staff. The NIC coordinator in Council Bluffs also runs a basic computer class. NIC participants in Des Moines and Mount Pleasant are regularly referred to ESL classes at the local community college, churches and other local organizations. In Des Moines and Council Bluffs, onsite computers with Rosetta Stone, a language learning software, are available for NIC participants' self-directed use. In addition, local NICs commonly host other classes and workshops on a range of topics, including financial literacy and basic computer skills.

Referrals to other organizations and programs are also common. Tapping into their network of community partners and resources, NIC staff refer participants to community service providers (for assistance with food, child care, shelter, clothing, health care, tax preparation, etc.), educational and training programs, and legal and immigration assistance.

Community Services

NICs aim to increase awareness of diversity issues and immigration in the community at large. To this end, NICs have conducted diversity trainings at community organizations and businesses, hosted networking events, and done outreach in the community to ensure people are aware of their services.

Employer Services

NICs serve as a resource to area employers and businesses. In addition to connecting employers with job seekers, NICs offer translation and interpretation services and educate employers on a range of immigration and diversity issues. This happens in a variety of contexts, including NIC-sponsored workshops, job fairs, one-on-one consultations, and onsite visits to workplaces and businesses. While the Mount Pleasant NIC was just beginning to develop its employer services at the time of our visit, the NIC coordinator had already established strong relationships with several large employers in the area, with plans to begin offering trainings and presentations on diversity and immigration issues.

Future Plans and Sustainability:

The NICs are operated by Iowa Workforce Development with several additional non-demonstration-funded sites supported by the state. NIC administrators are optimistic that the state will sustain their financial support for New Iowan services. In addition, the state-level program administrator encourages local communities to contribute resources towards local NICs as well as the formation of public-private partnerships to support programming.

APPENDIX B

Type and Number of Services Received by New Americans Centers Participants, Employers, and the Community

Table B.1
Services Provided to Participants by New Americans Centers, by Site¹

| | Arkansas | | | | | Iowa | | | |
|---|----------------|-------------|------------|--------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|--------------|----------------|
| | Arkansas Total | Little Rock | Malvern | Rogers | Russellville | Iowa Total | Council Bluffs | Des Moines | Mount Pleasant |
| Indirect Participant Services | | | | | | | | | |
| Supportive Services Referral | 4,058 | 0 | 107 | 1,119 | 2,832 | 702 | 251 | 124 | 327 |
| Interpretation/Translation Referral | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 123 | 109 | 0 | 14 |
| Employment Services Referral | 2,212 | 8 | 33 | 945 | 1,226 | 882 | 619 | 181 | 82 |
| Referral to Civics Education Classes | 1,653 | 0 | 0 | 717 | 936 | 72 | 37 | 3 | 32 |
| Referral to ESL/Language Classes | 2,893 | 0 | 0 | 1,020 | 1,873 | 255 | 160 | 56 | 39 |
| Referral to Other Classes | 3,582 | 0 | 0 | 1,327 | 2,255 | 384 | 251 | 67 | 66 |
| Legal Issues Referral | 2,913 | 0 | 0 | 426 | 2,487 | 207 | 70 | 51 | 86 |
| Immigration Counseling and Referral Services | 2,578 | 0 | 0 | 151 | 2,427 | 268 | 82 | 33 | 153 |
| Tax/SSN Referral | 1,233 | 0 | 18 | 84 | 1,131 | 134 | 104 | 11 | 19 |
| Financial Referral | 1,118 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 1,115 | 21 | 17 | 3 | 1 |
| Referral for Computer Access | 218 | 0 | 0 | 218 | 0 | 90 | 88 | 1 | 1 |
| Referral for General Information | 301 | 0 | 0 | 301 | 0 | 446 | 197 | 21 | 228 |
| Other Referral | 250 | 0 | 0 | 250 | 0 | 31 | 16 | 3 | 12 |
| Total Units of Indirect Participant Services | 23,009 | 8 | 158 | 6,561 | 16,282 | 3,615 | 2,001 | 554 | 1,060 |
| Direct Participant Services | | | | | | | | | |
| Supportive Services Assistance | 9 | 0 | 9 | 0 | 0 | 9 | 0 | 0 | 9 |
| Interpretation/Translation | 5115 | 8 | 133 | 2692 | 2282 | 2,259 | 1805 | 293 | 161 |
| Employment Services | 12 | 10 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 2,961 | 1,711 | 1,112 | 138 |
| Civics Education Classes | 47 | 20 | 0 | 0 | 27 | 184 | 94 | 90 | 0 |
| ESL/Language Classes | 58 | 0 | 56 | 0 | 2 | 978 | 259 | 630 | 89 |
| Other Classes | 21 | 0 | 5 | 0 | 16 | 42 | 38 | 4 | 0 |
| Legal Issues Assistance | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Immigration Services | 4 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 49 | 0 | 16 | 33 |
| Tax/SSN Assistance | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| Financial Assistance | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Computer Access | 458 | 0 | 0 | 441 | 17 | 1,438 | 1,349 | 44 | 45 |
| General Information | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1,817 | 1,052 | 378 | 387 |
| Other | 10 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 10 | 894 | 558 | 202 | 134 |
| Total Units of Direct Participant Services | 5,734 | 38 | 207 | 3,133 | 2,356 | 10,633 | 6,866 | 2,771 | 996 |
| Total Units of Participant Services | 28,743 | 46 | 365 | 9,694 | 18,638 | 14,248 | 8,867 | 3,325 | 28,743 |

Source: New Americans Centers Annual Services and Referrals Provided Report

¹Based on data reported quarterly to DOL/ETA by NAC demonstration projects. In Arkansas, data was reported in Little Rock beginning in the fourth quarter of 2006 through the second quarter of 2007, in Malvern from the first quarter of 2006 through the second quarter of 2007, in Rogers from the third quarter in 2006 through the second quarter of 2007, and in Russellville from the first quarter of 2006 to the second quarter of 2007. In Iowa, all three sites reported data beginning in the second quarter of 2006 through the second quarter of 2007. Data does not represent all participants served and may not be based on unique individuals. See Appendix C, Study Limitations for further discussion.

Table B.2
Services Provided to Employers by New Americans Centers, by Site¹

| | Arkansas | | | | | Iowa | | | |
|--|----------------|-------------|----------|------------|--------------|------------|----------------|------------|----------------|
| | Arkansas Total | Little Rock | Malvern | Rogers | Russellville | Iowa Total | Council Bluffs | Des Moines | Mount Pleasant |
| <u>Indirect Employer Services</u> | | | | | | | | | |
| Referral for Assistance with Staffing Needs | 67 | 0 | 0 | 18 | 49 | 68 | 64 | 1 | 3 |
| Referral to ESL/Language Classes | 54 | 5 | 0 | 49 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Referral to Cultural Competency Training | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Referral for Special Targeted Training | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 7 | 5 | 0 | 2 |
| Other Referrals | 81 | 0 | 0 | 81 | 0 | 41 | 1 | 3 | 37 |
| Total Units of Indirect Employer Services | 202 | 5 | 0 | 148 | 49 | 116 | 70 | 4 | 42 |
| <u>Direct Employer Services</u> | | | | | | | | | |
| Assistance with Staffing Needs | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 108 | 56 | 27 | 25 |
| ESL/Language Classes | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Cultural Competency Training | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 10 | 9 | 1 | 0 |
| Special Targeted Training | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 14 | 6 | 6 | 2 |
| Other Direct Assistance | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 441 | 8 | 156 | 277 |
| Total Units of Direct Employer Services | 3 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 573 | 79 | 190 | 304 |
| Total Units of Employer Services | 205 | 5 | 1 | 148 | 51 | 689 | 149 | 194 | 346 |

Source: New Americans Centers Annual Services and Referrals Provided Report

¹Based on data reported quarterly to DOL/ETA by NAC demonstration projects. In Arkansas, data was reported in Little Rock beginning in the fourth quarter of 2006 through the second quarter of 2007, in Malvern from the first quarter of 2006 through the second quarter of 2007, in Rogers from the third quarter in 2006 through the second quarter of 2007, and in Russellville from the first quarter of 2006 to the second quarter of 2007. In Iowa, all three sites reported data beginning in the second quarter of 2006 through the second quarter of 2007. Data does not represent all participants served and may not be based on unique individuals. See Appendix C, Study Limitations for further discussion.

Table B.3
Services Provided to the Community by New Americans Centers, by Site¹

| | Arkansas | | | | | Iowa | | | |
|---|----------------|-------------|-----------|------------|--------------|--------------|----------------|------------|----------------|
| | Arkansas Total | Little Rock | Malvern | Rogers | Russellville | Iowa Total | Council Bluffs | Des Moines | Mount Pleasant |
| <u>Indirect Community Services</u> | | | | | | | | | |
| Referral to Cultural Competency Training | 133 | 0 | 0 | 133 | 0 | 6 | 6 | 0 | 0 |
| Referral for Special Targeted Training | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Other Referrals | 1038 | 0 | 60 | 545 | 433 | 503 | 3 | 43 | 457 |
| Total Units of Indirect Community Services | 1171 | 0 | 60 | 678 | 433 | 510 | 10 | 43 | 457 |
| <u>Direct Community Services</u> | | | | | | | | | |
| Cultural Competency Training | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 14 | 12 | 1 | 1 |
| Special Targeted Training | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 34 | 5 | 27 | 2 |
| Other Direct Assistance | 8 | 0 | 7 | 0 | 1 | 1285 | 9 | 349 | 927 |
| Total Units of Direct Community Services | 8 | 0 | 7 | 0 | 1 | 1333 | 26 | 377 | 930 |
| Total Units of Community Services | 1,179 | 0 | 67 | 678 | 434 | 1,843 | 36 | 420 | 1,387 |

Source: New Americans Centers Annual Services and Referrals Provided Report

¹Based on data reported quarterly to DOL/ETA by NAC demonstration projects. In Arkansas, data was reported in Little Rock beginning in the fourth quarter of 2006 through the second quarter of 2007, in Malvern from the first quarter of 2006 through the second quarter of 2007, in Rogers from the third quarter in 2006 through the second quarter of 2007, and in Russellville from the first quarter of 2006 to the second quarter of 2007. In Iowa, all three sites reported data beginning in the second quarter of 2006 through the second quarter of 2007. Data does not represent all participants served and may not be based on unique individuals. See Appendix C, Study Limitations for further discussion.

APPENDIX C

Demographic and Service Receipt Data for New Americans Centers Participants

The primary source of data on the types of services participants received at the NACs is drawn from a reporting system developed specifically for this demonstration project. The Annual Services and Referrals Provided Report (ASRP Report) is an Excel spreadsheet developed by McNeil Technologies, the demonstration's technical assistance contractor, with significant input from the sites in Arkansas and Iowa and based, in large part, on Iowa's original data reporting system. McNeil Technologies, ETA, and local NAC staff worked together to modify the template and identify and define common data elements. The reporting system was refined throughout the first year of the demonstration, and due to different perceptions by staff on how to use the reporting system, staff in Arkansas and Iowa reported they were able to use the spreadsheet to accurately record information starting in the first quarter of 2007 (January–March). This is explained further below.

Using the ASRP Report, local NAC staff document basic demographic information as well as information on services provided to participants, employers, and the community on a quarterly basis. Participant data includes basic demographics: gender, ethnicity/race, and age. Service categories are divided into three categories: participant services, employer services, and community services. Within each category, services are broken into several subcategories, including immigration assistance, legal assistance, child care, banking, basic needs, employment search, translation, targeted training, staffing needs, and cultural awareness and diversity training. These subcategories are more narrowly divided into specific types of services. For example, "legal services" includes legal assistance access, human/civil rights issues, taxes/ITIN, and Social Security issues. Each service category is further defined as being a direct service (i.e., service provided directly by NAC staff to an individual, employer, or the community) or a counseling/referral service. It is important to note that there is no direct correlation between the demographic data and the participant service data reported in any given quarter. For example, an individual who visits the NAC to receive assistance finding a job may not be captured in the demographic data for that particular quarter because he or she had already registered with the NAC for services in a prior quarter. However, the individual's referral to a local employer as well as ESL classes will be recorded in the service data.

In Arkansas, staff from each local NARN site enter their own data into a site-specific spreadsheet which is then rolled up into the statewide ASRP Report each quarter. Demographic information is compiled from registration forms completed by NARN participants when they seek services for the first time. Local staff have developed their own systems for daily and/or monthly recordkeeping, with most relying on hand tallies for reporting.¹⁸

In Iowa, staff initially used a Lotus Notes spreadsheet to track service receipt and participant demographics. During the period from June through December 2006, NIC staff relied on hand tallies to generate aggregate data entered into the NAC reporting system. As of December 2006, NIC staff began entering all their participant data directly into the state's IWORKS data management system. Each quarter, regional supervisors generate reports from IWORKS and

¹⁸ In Little Rock, for example, a Word document is used to track services provided which are then tallied by hand and entered into the NAC reporting system. In Russellville, although staff enter information into an Access database developed specifically for this project, they continue to rely on hand counts to develop a monthly tally of services provided. Similarly, staff in Rogers enter information into an Access database but keep a weekly tally of services provided from which they compile monthly and quarterly service counts.

then enter counts generated from these reports onto the NAC spreadsheet to meet quarterly reporting requirements. Given problems associated with the development and use of IWORKS, NIC staff continue to use their own recordkeeping systems to cross-check the IWORKS reports. As in Arkansas, many staff keep hand tallies rather than relying on data from the IWORKS system.¹⁹

Another limitation is that the ASRP Report does not represent an accurate count of individuals served through the NACs. In both states, individuals who receive services but do not complete a registration may not be included in the participant count. For example, if an individual receives translation assistance at a school fair, his or her demographic data would not be included (but would be included in the count of services provided). If the person came into the office and registered for assistance and then had documents translated, he or she would be counted in the demographic data. Before 2007, individuals in Iowa seeking assistance through the NICs were counted once a month, for a maximum of three times a quarter, no matter how many times they received services. As of the first quarter in 2007, however, NICs report demographic information for new participants only. In Arkansas, the way in which participants are counted ranges greatly. Two NARN locations record participant data the first time an individual seeks services; their demographic data are based on an unduplicated participant count and represent unique individuals. Demographic data in the other two sites do not represent unique individuals. In one location, demographic data are reported each time an individual receives services. The other site counts participants each time they come in for services, but no more than once a month or 12 times each year.

There are also inconsistencies in the data reported for participants, employers, and community services. Based on discussions with staff, we believe that the quarterly reports undercount participant services provided in some locations. While staff in Iowa, for the most part, count a service each time it is provided to an individual, the story is more complicated in Arkansas. Staff in two locations record services each time they are provided to an individual. In the other NARN locations, however, multiple deliveries of the same service for a single individual are counted as a single service. Rather than reporting the total number of times a specific service is provided, they tally the number of people who receive a specific service. For example, if a person comes to the NARN seeking notary assistance three times over the course of one month, it would be recorded as one instance of notary services. In addition, staff in Arkansas vary in how they record participation in the civics classes, which are made up of two sessions. In some locations, attendance at both sessions is counted as participation at two sessions, in others it is counted as one.

¹⁹ Staff in Des Moines and Council Bluffs keep a log of services provided, and staff in Mount Pleasant uses a Client Services History Record Form from which they generate a service count.

