



Colorado Refugee Wellness Center



Aurora Research
Institute

Evaluation Spotlight

Colorado Refugee Wellness Center

Aurora Together

Over the past 3 years, the **Colorado Refugee Wellness Center** has been working on a project through the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment's (CDPHE's) Health Disparities Grants Program. This project targeted the employment inequities commonly experienced by refugee and immigrant populations. Key accomplishments of the project included:

Community Outreach and Engagement: The first year of the project focused on outreaching and engaging various refugee and immigrant (R/I) communities in Aurora. Across 8 communities, a total of 32 meetings were held, engaging a total of 606 individuals. Focus groups held at the final meeting with each community revealed that the community members meetings were very informative, as well as provided a forum for the community members to express the specific employment barriers they face.

Vocational Services: Through a partnership with the **Provider's Resource Clearinghouse**, vocational services were provided to 108 individuals.

Identifying and Training Community Leaders: During the final community outreach meeting, each community also elected a representative ("Community Champion") to work on behalf of the communities during the final two years of the project. The community champions were provided additional trainings during the second two years of the project regarding systems and policy change. During a focus group, the Community Champions expressed a sense of personal empowerment gained through the project, as well as a sense of hope that their communities finally have representation in systemic matters impacting their employment.

Employee Rights Videos: Each community champion developed a brief video regarding critical employee rights information. Each video was produced in the native language of each community champion. The videos covered a range of topics including: R/I employment inequity, universal employment rights, employee rights related to COVID-19. These digital videos were then distributed by the community champions to members of their respective communities. The final report to the Colorado Department of Public Health and the Environment can be found [here](#).

City of Aurora Strategic Plan: The community champions and project staff worked with representatives from the City of Aurora's Office of International and Immigrant Affairs to help identify actionable employment-related issues to be part of the newly created 10-year strategic plan. Two specific ideas of the community champions were ultimately adopted into the plan.

Grassroots Advisory Board: With the assistance of project staff, the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment Stakeholders is forming a Grassroots Advisory Board comprised of immigrants and refugees to better inform policies to support these communities. The community champions are being encouraged to apply for these positions.