COVID-19 IMPACTS ON IMMIGRANT COMMUNITIES IN ST. LOUIS

Results Snapshot: Provider Survey

October 2021

Background and Methods. The Immigrant Service Providers Network (ISPN) and Washington University researchers at the Institute for Public Health co-designed a study to understand how the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted immigrant communities and immigrant service providers in the broader St. Louis region. Two surveys (community + provider) were administered electronically. The provider survey was distributed directly to IPSN members and was open from February to April 2021.

Provider Demographics and Organization Descriptions. Fifty responses from service providers were included, mostly (71%) from the community-based nonprofit sector. Providers who completed the survey were administrators (23%), followed closely by case managers (19%). Other provider roles included health care providers, community engagement staff, board members, and outreach workers.

Seventy-two percent of providers selected immigrant and refugee well-being as a focus of their organization. Other organization focuses include education, translation and English language services, advocacy, civil rights work, law, research, and economic mobility. The word cloud illustrates the provider-supplied organization descriptions.

Service Provider Survey Results

- The #1 shift provider organizations made due to the Covid-19 pandemic was the move to electronic communication, for both clients and staff / colleagues (no in-person meetings or appointments).
- Over half of provider organizations moved to remote or hybrid work, and roughly one-third implemented health check policies for employees.
- When asked what was the top issue faced during the pandemic, providers reported 1) moving to remote work (48%); 2) inability to charge fees for services (13%), and 3) postponing programming (13%).
- Twenty-eight percent of providers ranked their Covid-19 response competing with other community needs (e.g. Census) as one of the top five issues their organizations faced.
- Seventy-two percent of providers indicated that their staff members were extremely or moderately concerned about catching Covid-19. Additionally, 93% of providers had staff who had been tested for Covid-19, and 75% had staff that had been diagnosed with or had Covid-19 (reported at the time of the survey).
- Thirty-one percent strongly agreed or agreed that public policies and officials advocated appropriately for immigrants during the pandemic, while 40% strongly disagreed or disagreed.
- Forty-two percent agreed that their organization struggled financially in 2020 during the pandemic, and 36% indicated that their organization has financial concerns for the upcoming fiscal year.

Service Provider Observations about Immigrants' Experiences

- Eighty-seven percent of providers agreed their clients had unmet needs specifically related to the Covid-19 pandemic. Seventeen percent of selections (n=142) indicated they saw adults with children experience an increase in need, and 14% saw the elderly experience an increase in need.
- Providers selected mental health resources, access to healthcare, and legal assistance as their clients' most pressing unmet needs before the Covid-19 pandemic. Those top needs shifted to the ability to cover rent, mental health resources, and access to healthcare once the pandemic began. Of note, legal resources were not cited by any of the providers as a number one ranked issue after the pandemic started.

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