

Washington Building Integrated Communities

Executive Summary

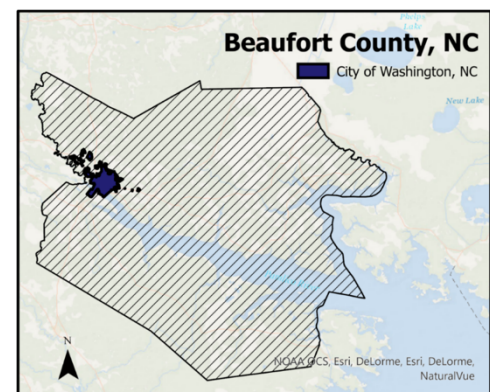
Overview

In 2020, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill selected the City of Washington, North Carolina to participate in the [Building Integrated Communities](#) (BIC) initiative. BIC is a collaboration of the City and the Institute for the Study of the Americas at UNC Chapel Hill that aims to understand the experiences of immigrant residents and develop recommendations for City leaders to consider that support the integration, wellbeing, and leadership development of community members. This Community Assessment provides an overview of Washington and Beaufort County’s global neighborhoods and includes information about racial and ethnic disparities. The Assessment presents research findings, resource lists, and recommendations for the City of Washington.

Methods

We used a variety of methods to gather information for this assessment, including:

- Secondary data compiled from the U.S. Census and other sources.
- Informal interviews with immigrants.
- A language access survey of staff members of the City of Washington.
- Analysis of reports, service offerings, and other information from organizations and churches that provide services to immigrants.
- Social media research.
- An inventory of small business resources.
- Interviews and conversations with people working in non-profit organizations, churches, businesses or local government in Washington, Beaufort County, and Greenville, NC.



Recommendations

The report shares promising practices and recommendations to expand the City’s capacity to communicate with residents with limited English proficiency; increase civic engagement; support and expand Washington and Beaufort County’s businesses; build relationships between local government and community members; expand and diversify City leadership; and create more welcoming spaces in Washington for residents and visitors. The assessment also provides a working document entitled the “Washington-Beaufort Community Resource Guide”.

Summary of Recommendations



Language Access and Communication: Expand the City's communication capacity by creating a City-wide language access plan. Effectively reach more residents with limited English proficiency and make information available in both Spanish and English (on websites, utility bills, social media, text alerts and flyers); hire more bilingual staff in local government; and enhance bilingual publicity of events, disaster response, and other local information.



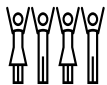
Business: Support and expand Washington and Beaufort County's businesses by creating partnerships with community stakeholders. Support local entrepreneurs by providing legal resources and education in Spanish on how to buy a house/office/property and financing options. Create bilingual hiring policies and hire more bilingual staff in local government to support businesses, permitting processes, labor inspection, and compliance with other regulations. Strengthen ties with and between local Latino business owners.



Public Safety: Build relationships between local government and community members by collaborating with key partners such as local churches on community health and educational events. Make information available in both Spanish and English and create bilingual videos to educate about community safety themes such as police encounters and how to prepare for natural disasters and health emergencies. Recruit foreign-born community members for leadership opportunities that address public safety issues.



Leadership and Inclusion: Expand leadership opportunities and civic engagement by establishing accessible spaces for community members to inform local government decisions. Diversify the leadership of local government to include residents with community knowledge and language expertise. Publicize events with welcoming language and share public messages of support for residents born in foreign countries.



Tourism and the Arts: Expand welcoming spaces in Washington for residents and visitors by creating signage in English and Spanish throughout the City of Washington. Expand investments in community art and murals by local artists that celebrates city's Latin American heritage. Create partnerships with Latin American organizations to provide cultural programming.