

Module 5: Understanding Legal Issues Relevant to New Populations

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Introduction

This module is designed for the extension educator working in communities with immigrant populations. A general overview of this module includes demographics of new immigrant groups in the United States, their socio/economic history, and factors that will have implications for health and legal issues. The Bureau of Immigration and Citizenship data indicates that more than one million immigrants were granted legal permanent resident status during Fiscal Year (FY) 2002. Of this number, 384,427 were aliens who entered the U.S. on immigrant visas. Due to the continued increase in immigrant populations throughout the United States, there is a strong need to better prepare extension educators to work with these new groups in the community, understand the legal issues affecting them, and assist business and community organizations work with the legal implications. The following topics will be covered in this module:

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Introduction

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<u>UNIT 2</u>	Understanding Cultures – Building Bridges Across Cultures in Communities
<u>UNIT 3</u>	Accessing Public Benefits
<u>UNIT 4</u>	Life Skills & Challenges
<u>UNIT 5</u>	Work Permits, Green Cards, Permanent Residency, Citizenship & Deportation
<u>UNIT 6</u>	Sources for Basic Immigration & Legal Information

Each unit in this module is complete within itself. It is recommended that the program commence with the Introduction, which provides an overview of the historical, as well as current immigration trends, by region and country of origin, and implications for communities where these populations tend to concentrate. Unit 1 is recommended as the second lesson. It briefly reviews the range of legal issues that will be addressed in greater detail in the subsequent units. Unit 2 builds a basic understanding of culture, an acceptance for cultural differences, and the economic and social benefits of building strong cultural communities. Unit 3 offers the educator basic information on the availability of public assistance for immigrant populations, how they qualify, and where they go to seek services. Unit 4 addresses the day-to-day life issues that we all encounter at one time or another, which for new entrants can present tremendous difficulty and frustration. The extension educator should be prepared to assist new groups learn how to take care of everyday activities, i.e., opening a bank account, cashing a check, applying for a driver's license, accessing emergency services, posting a letter, etc. Effective training of new populations in these areas will go a long way towards helping them to make a smooth transition into the new society. Unit 5 addresses the all important issues of how to help ensure that the new entrants stay in a legal status, and how they move through the system to acquire a green card, work permit, apply for citizenship, etc., based on their needs and circumstances. This module is concluded with Unit 6 which provides information on where the educator can go for resource information on immigration as well as legal issues, as it relates to immigrant populations.