

# MEASURING OUTREACH BETTER



## A project, an odyssey, and an intriguing challenge for libraries

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### ABSTRACT

Stemming from the question, “How can we better assess outreach efforts?” a partnership with the Library Research Service (LRS) office of the Colorado State Library and High Plains Library District (HPLD) was formed. This partnership resulted in a multi-year project to assess the effectiveness of HPLD’s outreach efforts in relation to immigrant and refugee community members.

Measuring immigrants’ and refugees’ sense of belonging was initially identified as a way to assess whether HPLD’s outreach efforts, focused on integrating staff in areas where community members gather, are having the intended impact of building community and increasing the target population’s sense of ownership of the library. Interviews were conducted with 38 newcomers to the Greeley-Evans area, and qualitative methods were used to analyze the anonymized interview transcripts. Limited quantitative analysis was also incorporated. This report shares our findings and the lessons we learned throughout the process to guide future related research at other library systems.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT .....	1
INTRODUCTION .....	3
A Brief History of the Project.....	3
Challenges and Discrepancies .....	4
METHODS .....	4
Focus Group Planning.....	4
Conducting Interviews.....	5
Analysis.....	6
KEY POINTS .....	6
1   Throughout the study we needed to shift our expectations and assumptions. ....	6
2   Forming one-on-one relationships between newcomers and library staff is an effective way to help this community access library services. ....	7
3   Overall, newcomers reported feeling like they belong in the community.....	8
4   Language was a major barrier reported throughout the interviews as well as experienced firsthand while scheduling and conducting interviews. ....	10
5   On its own, HPLD is not positioned to meet many of the needs of newcomer community members.....	11
DISCUSSION .....	13
Participants' Experiences of Belonging .....	13
Participants' Ownership of the Library.....	13
Addressing Barriers .....	14
Growing Newcomers' Ownership of the Library .....	14
CONCLUSION.....	16
Guidance for Future, Related Research .....	16
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS .....	17
NOTES .....	17
BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	18
ADDITIONAL WORKS CONSULTED.....	19
APPENDIX A.....	20
Focus Group Questions: .....	20
APPENDIX B .....	20
Interview Instructions:.....	20

## INTRODUCTION

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The following report is an effort to assess the impact of library services on community members who are often underrepresented and/or underserved. This project was completed through a partnership of the High Plains Library District (HPLD), based in Weld County, CO and the Library Research Service (LRS) an office of the Colorado State Library.

### A Brief History of the Project

This project began in 2019 when the High Plains Library District came to the Library Research Service asking how to best gather data to assess the following questions they had about their services:

- Outreach services are expensive. HPLD had just increased the number of staff and vehicles to better connect with community members. Were the services providing enough impact to justify this use of taxpayer dollars?
- Through bringing services and programs to these communities, were outreach efforts doing more for community members beyond fulfilling the basic library service expectations?
- Part of HPLD's mission was "libraries build communities." Was this being accomplished?

"Building communities" is not used as a measurable subject in research literature. However, "sense of belonging" is something that has been assessed.<sup>1</sup> Research has indicated that when people have a high level of investment in a community, they are more likely to use the services offered to the community and are more likely to provide feedback to enhance the community resource.<sup>2</sup> Based on this information, we revised our question to ask: "How does our work support building a sense of belonging?" As the High Plains Library District had a working relationship with the Immigrant and Refugee Center of Northern Colorado (IRCNoCO), research started with the newcomer population which includes asylees, immigrants, and refugees. Due to the stresses likely experienced by the people we planned to survey; our processes used trauma-informed practices<sup>3</sup> which included:

1. Creating a safer environment by interviewing individuals rather than holding focus groups.
2. Stating and reminding participants that they could skip any question that felt uncomfortable for them.
3. Striving to use best practices to ensure that the information we received would not be connected to any specific individual. This also provided the team with direction on what tools would be used to track responses and to identify qualitative and quantitative data.

Existing literature on belonging helped us to solidify our research strategy. The concept of belonging has been established in previous literature and has been related to libraries. Tim Schlak explains in the 2020 article "Libraries and Leaders as Creators of Authentic Community: Shifting Our Story from Isolation to Ownership" how:

...our individual concerns are shared more broadly than we could have imagined and it [is] this discovery that we are not alone that sparks the feeling of belonging, which is the essence of community. As libraries have shifted from collections boxes to collaborative convening spaces at the hearts of our community, we hold the possibility of creating infrastructure and programing pathways for individuals and groups to enter our spaces that expand their social enclaves.<sup>4</sup>

This idea helped inspire our approach to this study through the lens of belonging. Other existing literature helped frame our methods. Rene's article "Exploring the Information Experiences of the Immigrants Toward Public Libraries in New York City," provided the recommendation to collect data from 40 to 50 participants when conducting interviews for related research. From that, we determined the goal to complete 40 interviews.<sup>5</sup>

Staying informed about research on similar topics throughout our study helped us approach each stage of the study with the latest findings in mind. Further, Rene finds that, "immigrants see the library as a place where they find resources, but they were not always sure what types of information librarians were willing to help them find... As far as they know, libraries are about books, and ESOL

classes.”<sup>6</sup> Findings such as these aligned with our own findings and reminded us just how important it is to continue outreach in a manner which is accessible to newcomers to help bring awareness of what all libraries can offer. John Vincent shares similar sentiments in his book, *Libraries and Sanctuary: Supporting Refugees and Other New Arrivals* and also stresses the importance of first listening to newcomers in order to learn about their experiences.<sup>7</sup> Continuing to collect up-to-date information on local communities and how they are evolving, meeting with newcomers to learn their needs, and then making sure library staff are informed on these findings are important steps, all of which HPLD took through this study.

## Challenges and Discrepancies

The research process started pre-2020 and the COVID-19 Pandemic, and the team assumed that we would be able to connect easily with interviewees. Due to the impacts of COVID-19 and the national political climate for non-US residents, scheduling interviews was more challenging than anticipated. This led us to forego our original plan for blind selection and to actively recruit participants. After conducting interviews, the team needed to learn how to use qualitative analysis tools throughout the analysis process. The complexities of coding relevant data points resulted in some challenges in identifying patterns of responses based on an interviewee’s background.

At the conclusion of the project, we assessed whether our participant population aligned with the populations entering our service areas.

<u>LFSRM Refugee &amp; Asylee Program</u> <u>Demographic Data - Oct 2022 to Sep 2023</u>			<u>Project Survey Populations - Interviews</u> <u>Conducted 2020-2022</u>		
Country of Origin	Total	%	Country of Origin	Total	%
Burma	169	38.7%	Burma/Malaysia	18	47.4%
Cuba/Haitian	135	30.9%	Mexico	5	13.2%
Ukraine	40	9.2%	Eritrea/Morocco/Sudan	4	10.5%
Dem. Rep. Congo	35	8.0%	Bangladesh	3	7.9%
United States of America	29	6.6%	United States of America	3	7.9%
Mexico/Guatemala	11	2.5%	Peru	2	5.3%
Somalia	11	2.5%	Thailand	2	5.3%
Eritrea	7	1.6%	Indonesia	1	2.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>437</b>		<b>Total</b>	<b>38</b>	

**Figure 1**

According to data from the Lutheran Family Services Rocky Mountains (LFSRM) Department of Refugees and Asylees, our interview process aligned with the high number of Burmese immigrants; however, we did not connect with people from Cuba/Haiti.<sup>8</sup> LFSRM saw the influx of Cuban/Haitian immigrants, but it was not until after the interviews were already conducted that these newcomers became an identified community for the IRCNoCO.

## METHODS

This was a case study based on grounded theory. The analysis and themes that emerged were guided by what we heard from newcomers throughout the interviews,

and we began with careful planning to ensure we followed methods that would allow us to hear from a diverse participant population.

### Focus Group Planning

Initially, we were undecided between offering several

focus group sessions and/or in-depth interviews. We developed a series of questions to use as a scaffold for a focus group with the IRCNoCO community navigation staff (see Appendix A) using a trauma-informed lens. Questions focused on learning about how people feel heard and valued in their community, how newcomers understand and use libraries, what they might miss about their “home” (country, town, place), and how the transition and integration processes work in practice. HPLD’s partnership with IRCNoCO was crucial throughout this study because it helped us gain access to this otherwise insulated community. We also sought to leverage their team’s expertise and connections to inform our research process. We hoped that including these perspectives would help us assess the value of offering focus groups to the community at large. There were several challenges to using focus groups including how to best translate in a focus group setting, how to attract participants, and who to include when considering age, family status, or length of residence in the area. Via conversations and planning, we learned that an inherent risk of using focus groups for immigrant communities was that these communities often rely on a trusted leader or elder who “speaks” for the community. The IRCNoCO staff indicated that, specifically for those in East African and Southeast Asian communities, we would likely not hear the perspectives of all participants and instead would likely hear from one or two speakers primarily.

We chose to pivot by holding a focus group with the IRCNoCO staff, 5 out of 6 of whom were immigrants themselves, to help build out the overall survey for individual interviews. Through the focus group, we tried to understand how certain questions would be perceived by newcomer communities directly. We hoped to establish more deliberate ways to gather the information without losing concepts in translation or different cultural norms. Following the recorded focus group, we had a deep-dive discussion on the goals of the research project and ways we might improve the questions (see Appendix B) to get more at the crux of what we were interested in.

## Conducting Interviews

To prepare for the interviews, LRS provided training on trauma-informed research practices to the research team, and we built a resource packet that could be offered to participants after the interviews. Best practices indicated that we collect a random sample of participants from our

target population.<sup>9</sup> However, we quickly realized that we were up against unforeseen obstacles, including a lack of trust in government institutions.<sup>10</sup> Even more detrimental was that we were just starting to interview participants as the COVID-19 pandemic began. We offered a \$50 grocery card for participating in our survey and expected this to be a major draw, but it did not generate a lot of interest. Ultimately, instead of the random sample of participants we had hoped for, we targeted promotion of our study to citizenship classes offered through the IRCNoCO. We translated our promotional materials and initial interest form into several of the most common languages in our community: Burmese, Somali, French, and Spanish.

Once we had interested participants, we set up interviews. Coordinating and conducting interviews in a language that HPLD staff did not speak presented further challenges. We used LanguageLine Solutions, an interpretation service, to conduct many of our interviews. While this service was critical to our ability to conduct interviews, it came with a host of concerns as well,<sup>11</sup> starting with internet connection. On several occasions, we lost contact with an interpreter and were required to start the LanguageLine connection over. There was initial concern over using a third-party interpreter to conduct interviews that garner personal information, but we determined that Language Line was a safe option with an appropriate privacy policy.



In libraries, individual privacy is paramount and therefore, privacy was a key factor in our process. We started the interview with a signed consent form, making sure that the participants knew that their personal information would be kept confidential and that all records of the interview would be destroyed one year after the project was completed. We removed participant names from the interviews and instead assigned each participant a number. We used Syncplicity, a cloud-based platform, to store the audio recordings and transcripts of the interviews in a secure place. After the interviews, we ran the recordings through Microsoft Word’s transcription tool to produce transcripts. However, there were numerous inconsistencies in the transcripts, mostly due to the software not recognizing different speakers or having trouble understanding accents. We contracted with an individual who specialized in transcription to provide quality control with the anonymized transcripts

and recordings. Once the transcripts were ready, we uploaded them into Dedoose, a platform for qualitative and mixed methods research.

## Analysis

The Dedoose software helped us analyze the translated and anonymized transcripts of each interview to guide our work. Excerpts from each transcript were coded with words and phrases to represent concepts found throughout participants' responses. The codes focused on ideas related to experiences of belonging, positive and negative perceptions of the library and/or the community, barriers to library use, and the library services participants engaged with, among others. At least two team members coded and reviewed each transcript. Coding in Dedoose also allowed us to incorporate some quantitative data to support the qualitative findings. We used Dedoose's analysis charts, which tallied occurrences of codes and cooccurrences of codes assigned to the same text excerpts. Overall, coding in Dedoose helped us organize the data, identify patterns and themes across transcripts, and reduce bias throughout the analysis process. After coding, we compiled the results to answer our research questions, and through this process, we identified five key points that stood out as most informative for future interactions and survey efforts.

## KEY POINTS

### 1 | Throughout the study we needed to shift our expectations and assumptions.

#### Adjusting to Changing Circumstances

We faced unexpected obstacles throughout the project, such as staff turnover at HPLD and LRS, COVID-19 restrictions, difficulty recruiting participants (possibly due to a distrust of government and privacy concerns), and technical and translation difficulties. Staff turnover throughout the duration of the study caused some knowledge from the early planning stages to be lost when staff that were highly involved in the beginning of the project left. New project team members joined to continue the work, but inevitably, some continuity of the study was lost over time. Once participants were recruited, phone or video interviews were often

necessary, due to COVID-19, which made translation more difficult. Throughout each of these challenges, the research team had to remain flexible and open-minded to find a path forward and to lessen the impact of our expectations and assumptions going into the study.

## Shifting Perceptions of Belonging

The qualitative data collected through interviews helped develop our understanding of "belonging" for the purpose of this study. We initially understood belonging as the existence of interpersonal relationships and connections within a community as well as a sense of shared ownership toward community resources, such as the library.<sup>12</sup> Ownership could be shown through actions as simple as entering the library, asking a staff member for help, and/or checking out items. Someone who does not feel comfortable doing these things may not have gained a sense of ownership of the library and the resources provided within. In this study, we equated this feeling of ownership towards community resources with a stronger sense of belonging within the community.

When analyzing our interviews, we looked for actions and perceptions within the transcripts that indicated belonging. We developed codes such as "belonging relationships," "community information-sharing," and "access to library/library services" to label these observations. However, as we read and coded transcripts, we began to recognize that concepts such as "safety," "freedom," and "contentment" co-occurred frequently with the code "belonging relationships," so we added them as codes. For example, when asked whether participants feel at home in their community, most participants indicated that they did, but many referred to safety, freedom, and available resources in their reasoning for feeling at home. This told us that, due to the difficult circumstances many participants experienced as refugees, the baseline requirements for feeling a sense of home or belonging included factors further down on Maslow's hierarchy of needs than we had anticipated.<sup>13</sup>

Even so, participants who showed a strong sense of belonging often surmounted certain obstacles such as language barriers, cultural differences, transportation issues, and low literacy. In the instances that they overcame these barriers, we saw evidence of belonging through "ownership" of community resources, like frequent library use and requests for improved services

and resources. However, when these barriers were still in place, we saw participants struggle to understand, use, and “own” community resources like the library. Identifying a wider range of indicators of belonging helped us better understand our participants’ sense of belonging to the community through the lenses of their own experiences and perspectives.

Interviewees’ responses taught us a lot about the needs of this population, but they also showed us that we may have gone into the interviews with an oversimplified notion of measuring this community’s sense of belonging and relating it to their needs from the library. For example, questions such as, “What is something that you had where you grew up that you wish you had where you live now?” did not often yield physical things that the library could help to provide and instead prompted multiple participants to speak of relationships. Overall, this study helped us learn about newcomers’ experiences and showed us that growing the level of cultural competence in library staff is crucial for HPLD to serve newcomers to the best of the library’s ability.

## 2 | Forming one-on-one relationships between newcomers and library staff is an effective way to help this community access library services.

### Staff and Participant Interactions

Hearing about participants’ interactions with HPLD staff helped us understand newcomers’ sense of ownership of the library. Even though there was a wide breadth of different levels of experience with the library, most people answered “yes” when asked whether they had ever talked with the library staff at the IRCNoCO. Multiple participants also spoke very positively about their interactions with specific library staff members who worked at the Lending Library, a dedicated space within IRCNoCO that is staffed by HPLD librarians for a few hours each week. When asked, “What is the first picture or feeling that comes into your mind when you hear or think about the library?” one participant responded, “Tim’s face. Well, I guess it’s kind of true. He’s the kind of person who kind of introduced me more depth [sic] about what the library is.” This response shows that HPLD is viewed as a friendly face in the community and building these relationships can also be what constructs patrons’ views

of the library. HPLD is already building connections and making an impact one-on-one, and this individualized outreach approach should continue to be prioritized when working toward HPLD’s outreach goals.



Receiving positive feedback about one-on-one communications with library staff and the consistent theme of relationships with friends and family throughout interviews helped us understand that these positive interactions are likely an important way that our interviewees interact with and gain knowledge of the library. In the 2023 article “‘It Happened When I Was Connecting to the Community...’: Multiple Pathways to Migrant (Non) Belonging in a New Destination Setting” Saavedra writes that, “Often relationships themselves are what help a migrant feel like they belong, as many interviewees described having friends and other relationships as evidence of belonging.”<sup>14</sup> Although HPLD is already connecting one-on-one and building relationships, the library can be more diligent about using these interactions to increase engagement with library services because in many cases, confusion still exists regarding what all these services entail.

### Identifying and Accessing Library Services

To better measure the impact of HPLD’s outreach services, we first explored whether participants were aware of what the library is, what it offers, and whether they could identify library services. Library use varied greatly between study participants: some participants had never used the library and others used it consistently. A few participants shared their uncertainty about what the library is or does. One participant said, “I have never been to a library. I never borrowed anything from the library. I do not even know what a library does.” Some participants were also not sure whether they had used the library, particularly regarding the citizenship class offered by the library:

- Respondent:** We just go to the school that we were learning English.
- Interviewer:** Okay.
- Respondent:** That’s where we are doing the citizenship classes.

...

**Interviewer:** So, English class is IRC.  
Citizenship class is the library.

...

**Respondent:** I didn't know that.

Similarly, we learned that people sometimes do not realize they are interacting with library services when talking with people at the Lending Library inside IRCNoCO. Clients of IRCNoCO often visit the Lending Library before and after classes and make appointments with librarians to study for their citizenship interviews, a service offered under HPLD's Book-a-Librarian service. While this seamless support is helpful to clients/patrons, it can blur the distinction between the resources and staff offered by HPLD and IRCNoCO. This confusion arose repeatedly throughout interviews, and so became a point of interest and concern throughout our analysis.

While being recognized is a secondary goal to providing services, it is still important to HPLD outreach efforts for people to understand when they are using library services, so they can gain a sense of ownership of the library and increase their comfort level using library branch locations. The overall benefit for an individual's sense of belonging may be linked to relationship-building with library staff; merely providing fliers or pamphlets to attract newcomers to use the library is not always enough. Many participants recognized staff members individually before they associated them with the library. When building these relationships, we also want newcomers to know that they are interacting with the library and know how to access additional library resources of their own accord.

### 3 | Overall, newcomers reported feeling like they belong in the community.

#### Community Belonging

In general, we received overwhelmingly positive answers in response to the questions "Do you feel at home here?" and "If a family or friend was thinking about moving here, what would you tell them?" Most people stated that this community is now their home and spoke appreciatively of the library, but language barriers, citizenship tests, and/or missing family members are still frequent challenges mentioned. It is important for HPLD to understand the hardships experienced by many newcomer study participants and recognize how positively they spoke of

the Greeley-Evans area overall. These reports of belonging are in line with previous studies on similar topics. Saavedra also found that, "the majority of interviewees, regardless of their legal migration status, expressed feeling like they belong."<sup>15</sup> In response to the question, "Do you feel at home here?" 34 of the 37 participants asked this question (92%) stated that they do feel at home. Codes that were commonly applied to their responses include freedom, safety, education, and contentment. Below are two of the many responses that helped us understand participants' sense of belonging in the community:

- **So, here, I can go anywhere I want to. I bought a house...I bought a car...In Malaysia or Burma, I was not able to go anywhere...prohibited to go to school...not able to save any money because...people robbed us...the police came and charge for the money and we are not able to go to school... Here, we can save our money...go anywhere whenever I want to. And also, in my country, they did not respect us that much. So here, it's different. So that's why I feel free here. And here, there is [an option] to go to school. Even if someone is 80 years old, they can go to school. That's the beauty of that. So that's why I feel free and I feel this is my country.**
- **Yes. I feel home here because it is the safest place for me on earth where I can live and where I can have my family. But the only problem is I cannot [sic] fully happy yet because my wife was still in Burma...but I feel home because it is a safe place for me.**

These responses hint at the hardships some interviewees faced before living in the Greeley-Evans area and reveal how these past circumstances now shape their generally favorable view of their current community. It should be noted, however, that feelings of belonging were not universal, and due to the small participant population and the possibility of interview bias, these findings are only representative of our participant population.

## Ownership of the Library

There was a greater variation in participants' sense of belonging in relation to the library than there was in their sense of belonging to the community. There were participants who expressed a form of ownership of the library through regular use, interactions with staff, providing recommendations, and sharing information about the library with friends and family. When people opened up about their library use, it was generally to share how the library has helped them. Some participants did not have experience with libraries before arriving in the United States and were happy to find out just how helpful the library can be. "You can ask about the things that you don't understand and get an answer for [them]. And it really does happen. Also, I asked questions that I didn't know, and I got answers for that. So, this is the picture that comes to my mind when I think about library," one participant answered. Participants that deliberately used the library consistently expressed some level of understanding that the library belongs to them. Only participants who did not recognize, or had little to no experience with, library services were unsure if the library could serve them or if they felt comfortable walking into a library:

**Once I hear the word library, it comes to me that it is the place where there are a lot of high-level books are stored and only the very high educated person can go in and read there. Although, I want to study and I want to learn in the library, my English level is not that good. I couldn't read much, and I couldn't listen, but I couldn't understand much English. So, I cannot even go inside. Yeah, the system I thought of, the library is for the highly educated persons.**

In this case, the participant felt like the library did not belong to them because they perceived the library as only welcoming to educated folks. How these perceptions are built is complex, and although only one participant shared the viewpoint of the quote above, it is likely this perception exists elsewhere in newcomer communities. Previous research, such as Caidi and Allard's 2005 article, "Social inclusion of newcomers to Canada: An information problem?" have also shared that, "library institution tends to be associated with the elites or the former colonial powers."<sup>16</sup> The perception that the library is not welcoming to people of all education levels or

backgrounds is one that outreach services are working to dispel.

There were also participants that had limited experience with the library but still expressed positive perceptions of the library: "If I heard the word library, I feel like that's a place where I can gather knowledge or I can improve my life." Though they may have had little library experience, the views expressed by this participant imply that they understand they can use the library. Their breadth of experience demonstrates that we cannot make overarching assumptions about how newcomers interact with or perceive the library.

## Library Use

Overall, participants reported more interactions with library services than previously predicted. When asked about their library use, many participants gave "yes" and "no" answers but chose not to elaborate on their experiences or lack of experiences. This may have been due, in part, to language and cultural barriers between the interviewer and interviewee. When people did elaborate, it helped us better understand how they interacted with the library, and the sentiments or stories they shared were overwhelmingly positive: "We like it [the library] very much, me and my family, because this provide [sic] a chance to learn. Back home, we were denied for the education. We never had a chance to go to school, so I really appreciate it because I can learn." This quote is from a participant who did not have access to library services in their country of origin but has found the library since coming to the United States 4-5 years ago. They now frequently use library services and are learning to read.

Participants' interactions with friends and family outside of the library can also tell us about their sense of belonging in relation to the library. When prompted by the question, "Would you or have you ever recommended any library services or programs you've used to a family member or a friend?" The majority of respondents said they would or have recommended the library to friends and family. In the 2018 article "Immigrants' Information Experiences: An Informed Social Inclusion Framework" by Beretta, Abdi, and Bruce "conveying to family and friends their library experiences and how it can assist them as well" is listed as one of the key building blocks to a library functioning "as an important information ground, where

immigrants progressively engage with the services on offer to build emotional security, connections and ultimately a sense of belonging in their new country.”<sup>17</sup> Rene also found that “Groups of immigrants might perceive public libraries positively or negatively based on the experiences of their close friends, family members, co-workers, and other acquaintances, as well as their experiences in their countries of origin.”<sup>18</sup> Thus, referring friends and family to the library shows a positive perception of the library and/or confidence in one’s own use of the library, which indicates ownership of the library or a feeling that the library belongs to them.

## 4 | Language was a major barrier reported throughout the interviews as well as experienced firsthand while scheduling and conducting interviews.

### Barriers to Library Use

To understand how HPLD’s outreach efforts can better serve participants who are not using the library regularly, we took a close look at the barriers to library use that arose throughout the interviews. We identified barriers such as language, limited literacy, time, and geography. The two most common and impactful barriers were language and limited literacy. These two barriers are also challenging for HPLD outreach librarians to overcome because, while HPLD can direct people to English language and literacy resources, the role of the library is not to provide this direct education or instruction on its own. One participant with low literacy even expressed worry that they did not know enough about libraries to participate in the study, which indicates further that language barriers or low literacy may prevent people from exploring the library due to the fear that they will not belong.

Language was also found to be a significant barrier when people could not speak with library staff to learn about what materials and/or resources are available. A Spanish speaking interviewee shared that they were almost always able to find somebody at the library to help them in Spanish, but Rohingya-speaking participants reported having a much harder time accessing services and help in their language. The language barrier also extends beyond the obvious challenge of communication between patrons and staff. Language barriers can also exist alongside

cultural barriers that may prevent library use. The Rohingya language does not have a written component, so some of the things the library is most known for (books and literacy) are not things that individuals from this community may feel like they have access to. Limited literacy was coded in six interviews, four of which were with people from Burma and two of which were with people from Bangladesh. In two-thirds of the interviews coded with low literacy the participant rarely or never visited the library.



The challenges of not having a common language were also experienced by library staff throughout the interview process. All the interviews were conducted in English, with an interpreter provided upon participant request. We interviewed people from 11 different countries, and the language barrier varied in severity across participants. 63% of our interviews included an interpreter. There were also several interviews which were conducted solely in English that may have benefited if an interpreter was included. Whether or not an interpreter was included, there were multiple instances where participants did not understand one or more of the questions. Also, language was identified as a barrier by interviewees over twice as many times as time and geographic barriers throughout the interview transcripts. This showed us firsthand just how challenging and impactful language barriers can be to providing library services.

### Language Impacts on Belonging

We also found a relationship between participants’ English language proficiency and how they spoke about their sense of belonging. Participants that were able to complete their interviews in fluent English generally gave more detailed answers and spoke more specifically about their sense of belonging within the Greeley-Evans community than interviewees that needed a translator or did not speak English fluently. Those that were proficient in English were also more likely to speak of discrimination that they face. This suggests that there was a level of confidence and willingness to share that grew along with participants’ language skills. We also had participants share that it is difficult to communicate and connect with people in the Greeley-Evans community without English language skills:

**We are living here single. I am single and no English knowledge or English experience. So if you can arrange something, some adult education for people like me. English class, very basic English, something like that would help us to gain the citizenship or to make easy communication with people. That kind of program would help.**

Frequently, participants who did not speak English spoke of wanting to learn the language. Colorado's 2016 Refugee Integration Survey and Evaluation (RISE) Final Report also found that, "Lack of English ability was pervasive among those with low integration. Inability to speak the language hindered their ability to progress on several integration pathways, including Safety & Stability, Language & Cultural Knowledge, Social Bonding, and Social Bridging."<sup>19</sup> This quote reveals the importance of a shared language for factors that influence belonging. Throughout our analysis we recognized English language proficiency as a key skill for participation within the community and this was reflected in the ability to speak with us openly and in detail about one's experiences.

## **5 | On its own, HPLD is not positioned to meet many of the needs of newcomer community members.**

To better assess how the library can meet the needs of newcomers we asked participants, "Do you have any comments or ideas on how the library can be better?" Just under half of participants shared a suggestion in response to this question. Of the 18 participants that gave suggestions, half mentioned language services and another four asked for citizenship services. One possible reason that over half of respondents chose not to give suggestions could be that some participants did not feel comfortable enough to share critiques of the library. Our hope is that, because of actions taken from this study, newcomers become more familiar with the library, grow to feel that the library belongs to them, and want to share their suggestions freely.

### **Needs from the Library**

The following needs were expressed by one or more individuals throughout the interviews and are needs that pertain directly to materials or services that the library

does or could potentially provide: basic computer classes, more laptops and/or computers available to patrons, typing classes, private space for virtual meetings, activities for kids and teens, technology learning programs for kids, and a wider selection of materials in other languages. Of these requests for materials, one was for more books in Spanish, one was for audio CDs in Rohingya, and one was for more materials in Burmese. Overall, these requests reflect individual needs and not reoccurring themes; thus, it may be beneficial for the library to further investigate the community-wide interest and need for these requests as well as how to make the services that they already provide, such as computer literacy, more accessible to newcomers.

### **Additional Needs Outside of the Library**

Although the two most widely requested services by study participants, citizenship help and language education, are needs the library recognizes, these are largely outside of the scope of what the library can directly provide for patrons. HPLD's ongoing citizenship classes have not been able to reach everyone in need. The demand for the classes exceeds the library's capacity, with over 300 people on the waitlist for both citizenship and ESL classes. It was also evident in interviews that some people need additional help beyond the citizenship class that the library offers. The library is not set up to meet every citizenship need but can continue to connect with organizations that are better equipped to help newcomers gain citizenship for themselves and their family.

Although greater citizenship needs were expressed in interviews, participants also spoke positively about HPLD's existing citizenship classes throughout the interviews. Over half of participants had attended a citizenship class, and others shared that they would like to register. Although this study was not a program evaluation of the library's citizenship classes, it did showcase the immense value of these classes and positive interactions with lending library staff at the IRCNoCO which suggests that this partnership is at least meeting some of the newcomers' needs. Partnership could range from sharing what the library has found to be the scope of these needs to ensuring library staff are aware of where they can direct patrons to for support. However, even with a strong collaborative effort between organizations, we cannot meet community demand.

Regarding the language barriers that exist for newcomers, the library may not be able to provide extensive language classes, but it can work to hire staff who are fluent in languages other than English and ensure that staff are aware of and utilize services such as LanguageLine and Google Translate whenever needed. It is also vital for library staff to be aware of the many languages that are spoken throughout their community.

Childcare and tutoring were two additional needs that appeared in the interviews that cannot be met solely by HPLD and were expressed by only a few individuals. Still, we are noting these needs in this study because they could be widespread needs among newcomers, and there are steps libraries can take to bridge these gaps for members of this community. For example, to best direct people to experts in these fields, staff can compile lists of local resources that can be referred to quickly and shared with patrons in need. However, this only works if patrons are willing and able to come to the library or visit a library

outreach service point and ask for these services and/or resources. Therefore, the first step to getting this information to newcomers is helping them understand that the library belongs to them, so they feel comfortable utilizing the library.

## Belonging and the Library

Through these interviews we explored the library's role in helping build newcomers' sense of belonging, and this necessitated familiarizing ourselves with how newcomers are already relating to their community. Most study participants (92%) reported feeling at home in the Greeley-Evans area and hearing each interviewees' reasoning for why they do or do not feel at home revealed that growing this community's general sense of belonging may not be a realistic goal for HPLD. This is in part because each of the participants that said they do not feel at home spoke of family relationships as an essential piece to feeling at home. Below are two of their responses:

- **It's difficult because all my brother, my sister, my dad is live in Peru...sometimes when I feel sad, say, I don't know, sometimes I want back my country. And then when I think, no, if I back there, I not have job [sic] and it's difficult for me. And then I say, I think so my home isn't here. Maybe [inaudible] or Peru. It's difficult.**
- **I cannot say it feels like back home in my country. I'm away from my family, from the culture, things like that. But in general, I love the life here because this is a country where if you do not break the law, you can live freely.**

Family relationships were also brought up frequently by participants who responded that they do feel at home.

The theme of family arose again when we asked participants what they had in their home country that they wished they had now. The majority (58%) of respondents did not share anything that they missed back in their home country, but the second most common answer was family. Many newcomers are living apart from partners, parents, or children who have not been able to get to the United States. During analysis of the transcripts, the code "importance of family relationships" was applied in conjunction with the code "belonging relationships" more frequently than any other code, showing just how closely relationships and a sense of belonging are tied. This need to be reunited with family led a couple of participants to ask whether the library

could help bring family members to the United States. While the library can be a place for families to connect, when family members are separated by international borders, the library alone is not able to make these reunions possible.

To conclude, the strongest needs expressed, such as citizenship, bringing family to the United States, and English language learning, tend to be outside of the library's power to address on its own. Still, we heard several requests within the library's scope and would recommend further investigation to determine which of these needs are the most prevalent. Although family relationships arose as one of the most influential factors on belonging, meeting the participants' needs that pertain to the library could still make a positive impact on participants belonging experiences. Also, ensuring library

staff are trained to handle requests for needs outside the library's scope is essential, so they can effectively direct patrons to the correct resources.

## DISCUSSION

We built this project with the goal of learning about newcomers' sense of belonging in relation to the Greeley-Evans area and HPLD because we posited that understanding this community's experiences of belonging is a prerequisite to evaluating whether the library's outreach efforts are having a positive impact on those experiences. Before drawing conclusions about participants' sense of belonging, we first had to decide how we were defining and measuring belonging through the lens of the immigrant and/or refugee experience. This proved challenging, since belonging is a subjective experience which can manifest differently from person to person.<sup>20</sup>

### Participants' Experiences of Belonging

It is important to be careful when drawing conclusions about newcomers' sense of belonging to ensure we consider the context of their experiences and do not impose our own assumptions of what belonging means to them. Particularly when participants were not English speaking, a few of our questions inadvertently confused participants, and we were fighting the inevitable interview bias and power dynamics at play.<sup>21</sup>

Through our analysis, we recognized that participants generally progressed along a scale of belonging, with indicators of progression along this scale ranging from basic needs being met, to positive personal relationships, to accessing and improving community resources. Not enough information was collected through the interviews to develop a full understanding of each participant's sense of belonging within the community. However, we were able to approximate where participants were located along this scale of belonging.<sup>22</sup>

We found that participants' sense of belonging within the Greeley-Evans community varied widely throughout our survey population, but many respondents appeared to land at the beginning of the sense of belonging progression scale, meaning that they expressed belonging because their physical needs were being met, and they felt

comfortable in their current circumstance. Although it was less common, we also had participants that shared ideas for improvement of resources and displayed confidence when speaking about their experiences at the library, school, or other places within their community, showing a stronger combination of belonging and ownership.

### Participants' Ownership of the Library

Relationship building is the critical foundation that allows staff to define what the library is to newcomer populations; however, explicitly sharing what the library offers to them through outreach services is complex because of the barriers that exist. Misunderstanding or not understanding what a library is, language barriers, low literacy, cultural differences, lack of time, transportation issues, and distrust of government entities are all barriers that can limit or stop members of this community from engaging with the library. Where these barriers are surmounted, we see evidence that people feel ownership of the library, and where they are still in place, we see community members struggle to use the library and feel like it belongs to them.

In many cases, newcomers have been able find and utilize the library even if they did not have access to library services in their country of origin or did not know what a library was. In response to the question, "What is the first picture or feeling that comes into your mind when you hear about the library?" one participant responded:

**It's a lot because when I come in here in United States first, some people help me get one card for the library. I can't believe [it], can I have the card and then I go to the library, borrow different books I want. I can't believe because in my country, no have place like that.**

In this case, it's unclear who helped this participant use the library for the first time, but it is clear that they did not have access to libraries before coming to the United States. This scenario sheds light on why it is so important for outreach services to exist and reach people from under-resourced communities. Despite the barriers in place, there were many participants who were able to not only find the library but also receive any assistance they might have needed to use its services. HPLD's outreach librarians play a huge role in making this possible, and it

is evident that their work is having the intended impact of increasing this community's sense of ownership of the library, building goodwill and trust, and providing library services.

## Addressing Barriers

HPLD's largest challenge for successful outreach is reaching people who face the barriers listed above. The language barrier is highlighted as a key point in this report because it had a great impact on our study and was brought up frequently throughout interviews by participants. One potential tool for navigating this barrier is the interpretation service we used in this study, LanguageLine Solutions. HPLD has readily available data on their usage of LanguageLine across branches. Monitoring this data to learn which branches are using the service and which languages are being translated most frequently would help library staff better understand both which communities are utilizing the library, and which branches are utilizing LanguageLine to serve these communities.

After language and limited literacy, time was the next most frequently coded barrier. A couple of participants stated outright that they do not have time to visit the library. This barrier often arose from participants who were caretakers. Although children were identified as a possible connection point to the community, they also appeared as a challenge for getting to the library. One participant suggested that library services be provided to moms that cannot leave their location. Jobs also contributed to participants' lack of time for the library: "I am living alone right now. My family is still back in Burma and I'm trying to bring them here. So, for me, I won't be able to use the library because I'm just busy with my work and my home. So, I don't go other places." Work hours are a barrier for both community members and library staff since it is challenging to provide consistent library services during evening hours when people with full-time or multiple jobs may not be working.

Geographic barriers, such as transportation to the library, were only mentioned in a couple of interviews. This does not mean, however, that transportation is not a large barrier for newcomers. The participants of this study had the ability to visit the IRCNoCo, so our participant pool was not representative of those with major transportation barriers and likely not representative of those that cannot

reach the library.

Even when these barriers are overcome, being recognized as the same entity across library services and separate from partner organizations such as the IRCNoCO is a critical need. The following quote shows how outreach efforts are perceived differently by people with different levels of library experience:

**You guys are really good at advertising, but if it wasn't like... How do you say a word of mouth? Something like that. Then my mom probably wouldn't have known. So you guys do a really good job, because I know of it and I see the flyers and I see, oh this is the High Plains library. But if it weren't me, if it were another person in the Spanish community, they'd be like, 'oh what is this?'**

In this case, the participant is explaining that HPLD's marketing works well for those who already know about the library. On the other hand, those who have little to no experience with the library may rely on word of mouth to find the library because they may not understand the flyers that they come across. Since it is important for HPLD's outreach services to reach people who do not already know about the library, this reveals a possible area for improvement. At the same time, word of mouth will always be an effective way to convey information, and it is good to learn that people are talking about HPLD and recommending library services.

## Growing Newcomers' Ownership of the Library

Although the small data pool in this study prevents us from identifying specific, feasible, and actionable programs HPLD should implement to be guaranteed to reach many newcomers, there were several important takeaways that HPLD can incorporate moving forward. The first actionable item is for HPLD to increase awareness of what is already offered. 11 of 38 study participants shared that they had not visited the library, and as previously stated, this number comes from a study population that was already involved in the community enough to be reached through the IRCNoCO and agree to participate in an interview. It can, therefore, be assumed that the actual percentage of newcomers who have not used the library is higher. Also, the confusion between

library services and the IRCNoCO is concerning because every time that library services are mistaken for IRCNoCO services, HPLD is missing an opportunity to build recognition and trust with a potential patron.

A direct way to increase awareness and utilization of what HPLD already provides is to increase advertising of services and advertise more effectively. Continuing to reach under-resourced populations at community events is one way in which HPLD can improve upon its outreach efforts, but it is also important to reach people at the places that they attend regularly as well. One participant gave us great advice on how HPLD advertising could be more effective:

- Interviewer:** Do you have recommendations on how to reach the Spanish community?
- Respondent:** Putting flyers out in... How do I say it? Our stores.
- Interviewer:** Oh, right. Where they go when they're shopping really.
- Respondent:** Yeah. Like [foreign language]. La Tarahumara
- Interviewer:** Where they get their groceries.
- Respondent:** Yeah. Most definitely. And then just flyers like that would be a ton of help. And not just in the Spanish community, like the other culture, just making sure they know that you guys are out there.

As this participant explains, simple methods such as hanging flyers should not be overlooked because they can still effectively reach the community. To grow connections within the community, meeting potential patrons where they are is critical in building trust and increasing ownership of the library. There are large, systemic reasons why the library cannot provide much of what may be missing for this community, but there are realistic steps HPLD can take to progress towards their outreach goals.

Technology access and classes emerged as a prominent request that is within the scope of HPLD's work. One participant gave the suggestion of providing the space and technology for patrons to have a job interview:

**If a library have a place, like a computer and a room where people can interview for work, or any of this stuff. I've read the story about this**

**guy who didn't have a place to interview, and he has to do it remotely. He doesn't have a computer, and all that stuff. But this library, one of this branch, I don't know, I can't remember what it was, but they kind of let him do the interview, and he got the job and everything. And I think that would be another resource and materials for the library that could be useful to the patrons.**

Identifying and holding to a set standard for technologies, devices, and equipment for meeting spaces throughout library locations would be a benefit for both staff and patrons. Staff will be better able to relay accurate information and more easily able to handle requests. Patrons will have more confidence in knowing what can be expected and not feel like they are asking for special accommodation which is additionally stressful when trying to navigate other barriers.

The key point that forming one-on-one relationships is helping HPLD meet its outreach goals led us to consider opportunities for newcomers among the HPLD workforce. Having library staff that can understand, relate to, and represent newcomers from a variety of backgrounds may help build relationships while employing the skillsets of these community members. HPLD already has language contractors that speak languages such as French, Swahili, Somali, Burmese, Rohingya, and Spanish. Still, during an interview, we had a participant ask for Rohingya library staff members. Increasing workforce diversity takes time and funding but could make a significant difference in the reach of the library to newcomers. Even though this did not appear as a reoccurring theme throughout interviews, increased diversity in HPLD's workforce has been a need observed by outreach librarians during their work. However, there are barriers to hiring newcomers that cannot be easily overcome. For instance, library work requires communication with the public and the use of technology, both of which were identified within our interviews as struggles newcomers may face.

Recognizing the need for more intermediaries between HPLD and newcomers kept us returning to questions such as how HPLD can address barriers to entry into the library workforce. HPLD already implements equitable hiring practices laid out in the organization's policies, but we continued to ask whether there is more that can be done. New intermediary staff members may require extensive

training, so proactively offering cultural trainings for the workplace was identified as an initial step that could benefit both potential hires and current staff. These could include public programs and trainings to the entire HPLD staff that prepare them to bridge cross-cultural barriers. In-depth training for new hires to prepare them to succeed in their positions by addressing cultural differences such as timeliness and communication best practices when needed could also be implemented.

Whether it is partnering with a related organization, providing access to technology, accessible advertising, a positive interpersonal interaction, overcoming a language barrier, or directing someone to the right resource, there is quite a lot that library staff can do today to grow newcomers' sense of ownership of the library for the future.

## CONCLUSION

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The Measuring Outreach Better project was a winding road, with several logistical challenges and unpredicted outcomes. Although the results of our interviews did not fully match our expectations, belonging was still a helpful lens through which to examine the impact of HPLD's outreach efforts because it helped us better understand the factors that influence how this community interacts with the library, whether they feel a sense of ownership of the library, and the library's role in meeting their needs.

Even though there are many factors that influence belonging that the library does not have control over, such as missing family members, childcare needs, or English language acquisition, there are also multiple library services, such as technology access and help, citizenship classes, and reference, that can make a positive impact on newcomers in our community. We discovered that one-on-one interactions between study participants and staff were the most widely experienced kind of library interaction, and the positive way that these interactions were spoken of showed us that this is an effective and meaningful way of fostering belonging in the community. We distinguished between the ways in which the library can support newcomers along their path to belonging and the needs that other community agencies and organizations are better equipped to support. A library can work to strengthen community networks to best refer newcomers to the most appropriate resources for their

needs. At the same time, libraries can improve the services we offer and continue to build relationships with our patrons as we interact with them both in the library and while meeting them where they are at out in the community.



## Guidance for Future, Related Research

We were learning continuously throughout this study from identifying our target population, recruiting participants and conducting interviews, to analyzing and compiling our findings. There were multiple factors, such as COVID-19, that were out of our control but also challenges that, with the experience we now have, could be foreseen and mitigated in future studies.

As discussed earlier, recruiting participants was challenging. Word about the project and the incentive for participating did not snowball as we anticipated, causing us to fall just short of our goal of 40 interviews. A couple of the final participants we recruited were immigrant or refugee staff members at the IRCNoCO. Anticipating this potential challenge and developing alternative recruiting strategies earlier on could make the process more efficient in future studies. For example, asking newcomers how they would like to be incentivized for their time during the planning stage could help libraries provide an incentive that draws in more participation.

We tried to mitigate language barriers by conducting interviews with interpreters when participants expressed the need for it. However, there were some participants that did not express the need for an interpreter yet did not display fluent English language skills. In these cases, participants' responses were often short and there was the possibility for misinterpretation between the interviewer and interviewee. This could have been mitigated by having an interpreter be a standard practice in all interviews unless the participant chose to opt out of this service because they were fluent in English.

Finally, to meet our initial goal of assessing HPLD's outreach efforts by measuring newcomers' sense of belonging, we would have had to collect considerably more data from our participants. Conducting less structured interviews, to make space for meaningful follow-up questions to engage participants in a conversation around their answers and ensure that

questions are not being misinterpreted, could be a method used to gather a more substantial dataset in future research on this topic.

Future research could focus on the needs that the library can meet expressed in interviews to see whether these needs extend throughout newcomer communities. We could also explore whether their outreach efforts are having an impact on additional communities that the library may not readily hear from, such as the unhoused population. Zooming out to the larger community of library research, there's potential for further investigation of methods for assessing outreach efforts that complement regular practices such as counting interactions, visits, and circulation. Through library outreach work, it is common to see the lifechanging, positive benefits that discovering and utilizing library resources can have on people, but it is difficult to measure this impact, which may only reach a relatively small number of individuals but is incredibly significant for those that it does reach.

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## APPENDIX A

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### Focus Group Questions:

1. Tell me about a time when you felt someone really understood you. How did that make you feel? What did the person do that made you feel that way?
  - a. How about when you felt misunderstood?
2. What is a library? How would you define the library?
  - a. Did this definition change at all since you have worked at IRC or came to the United States?
3. Do you use the library? If so, how? If not, why not?
4. Do you feel listened to or valued when you interact(ed) with the library?
5. How would you define "community"?
6. When you think about the town you live in and your home country/town, what things did you have there that you wish you had here?
7. What would you say is missing for you/your family/friends/community where you live?

## APPENDIX B

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### Interview Instructions:

Sections 1-3 **must** be completed in full.

1. Personal Introduction and informed consent
  - a. Interviewer shares:
    - i. Introduce yourself and get the participant's name.

- ii. “Great! I’m really excited to talk with you today. My name is [name]. Today we’re going to talk about how you feel about where you live. I’m going to tell you a little about where I’m from to get us started. I live in [place] now and I’m from [hometown].”
- b. Review informed consent “We need to go over a few things before we get started.”
  - i. Review informed consent document
    - 1. “I am happy to answer any questions you have about the project before we get started. Then I’ll ask you to say that this is ok with you before we get started.”
    - 2. “Do you have any questions about what we will happen during this interview, recording this interview, your privacy or anything else? Was anything in the form confusing?”
      - a. Answer any questions
  - ii. Where did you find out about this project? You don’t have to name specific people, but was it a flyer or IRC or from a friend?
  - iii. “Ok, so now that we talked about your questions, I want to ask you if you still feel good about talking with me today, us recording your answers, and then using them to make the library better. I’m going to start recording, so I can record your answer. Remember, it is totally up to you and it’s ok to say no. You will still receive the groceries gift card. Do you want to answer my questions today and are you ok with us recording it?”
    - i. Wait for response
    - b. If response is YES
      - i. “Thank you. I’m going to keep recording and I’ll start asking my questions.”
      - ii. SKIP TO START INTERVIEW #4
    - c. If response is NO
      - i. “Thank you. I’m going to **stop recording** and I’m not going to ask you any questions.”
      - ii. Get them their gift card #2 OR #3

### **Start of interview**

*Throughout the interview, you can ask: “Could you tell me more about that?” if you get a very short answer or do not understand the answer.*

*You can also say: “It’s ok, please take as much time as you want to think about it” if someone seems to be struggling to answer or seems to be rushing in general.*

*Helping the participant feel comfortable is still very important, so ask gently and move on if they seem to feel uncomfortable.*

*You can also use a different but similar word from the question phrasing if someone doesn’t seem to understand a concept, like vehicle, van or truck.*

- 2. Explain project
  - a. “I want to tell you a little about this project. We thought a lot about how we want the library to be part of our community. And we realized we needed to talk to people in our community about their experiences living here. We want to know more about your life. And we hope that will help us do a better job of being part of the community.”
  - b. “Do you have any questions about the project?”
    - i. Answer questions
- 3. Set up ground rules & warm up
  - a. “It’s really important to me that you feel comfortable, and this feels like a nice conversation to you. I want you to skip questions if you feel uncomfortable. I won’t ask you why. We can also stop the whole conversation anytime you want. Just let me know. You can just say stop or skip.”
  - b. For you to get to know me better I want to tell you something about me. When I was a child, I liked to do\_\_\_\_\_.
    - 1. *This is where you set the tone for the rest of the interview. Try to share several sentences about the activity and include some details. Be mindful to choose something that doesn’t have social class associations. Some things that would work well are: run barefoot, dig holes, collect rocks*
  - c. “Do you have any questions about me?”

- i. Answer questions
- d. For me to know you a little better, can you tell me something you liked to do when you were a child?

End of mandatory section

In this section, bolded questions must be asked. Others are optional based on time.

4. Demographics

"I just want to remind you that I want you to skip questions if you feel uncomfortable. I won't ask you why. We can also stop the whole conversation anytime you want."

- a. **What city or town do you live in now? (Greeley, Evans, etc.)**
- b. **Where did you grow up?**
- c. Is there another place you spent a lot of time when you were young and is important or like a home to you?

5. Current library interactions and perceptions

"I just want to remind you that I want you to skip questions if you feel uncomfortable. I won't ask you why. We can also stop the whole conversation anytime you want."

- a. **What is the first picture or feeling that comes into your mind when you hear/think of a library? (WHY?)**
- b. **"I'm going to say some ways you can use the library. For each one, I want you to tell me if you have ever done them while you've lived here. You can ask me to explain more about any of them."**
  - i. Have you ever borrowed stuff from the library
  - ii. Have you ever used the library website
  - iii. Have you ever attended a Citizenship Class at the library
  - iv. Have you ever talked with Tim, Salah, or other library staff at the IRC
  - v. Have you ever interacted with a library vehicle(bus/truck) at an event or in your neighborhood?
  - vi. Have you ever called the library
  - vii. Have you ever come to the library?
  - viii. Have you ever attended a storytime in person or online
  - ix. Have you ever attended an event where the library was there
- c. **Would you or have you recommended any of the library services or programs you've used to a friend or family member?**
  - 1. Which ones? Can you tell me a little more about why you recommended these services or resources?
- d. **Do you or your family want to use the library? (y/n)**
  - i. **If yes then ask: Is it relatively easy or hard for you or your family to use the library?**
    - 1. **Can you tell me more about why or what makes it easy or hard?**
  - ii. **If no then ask: Can you tell me more about why you feel that way?**
- e. Do you have any comments or ideas on how the library can be better?
  - i. Would you like to complete a survey to tell us more about what you want from the library later?
  - ii. If yes, get their email address after you finish recording This question is important, try to get as much as you can here.

6. Community

"Now I'm going to talk to you about your community."

"I just want to remind you that I want you to skip questions if you feel uncomfortable. I won't ask you why. We can also stop the whole conversation anytime you want."

- a. **If a friend or family member was thinking about moving here, what would you tell them?**
  - i. If they give a brief answer like, "Yeah, it's great" or "it's not good" follow up with:
    - 1. Can you tell me about a specific experience here that makes you feel like that?
- b. What is something you had where you grew up that you wish you had where you live now?
- c. Can you tell me about some of the places you usually went to each week before the pandemic—like the grocery store, work, a park, your place of worship.
  - i. Thank you. Of those places you just said, which ones did you go to because you really

enjoy being there?

d. **Do you feel at home here? Tell me why you feel that way?**

**7. Wrap up**

- a. Thank you for participating!
- b. Do you have any other questions for me?
- c. Do you want me to follow up with you about this project?
  - i. How would you like to be reached? What about this project are you interested in hearing more about?
- d. Connect with resources as needed
  - i. We have a collection of resources available for participants and their community, friends, and family to help them learn more about the following.
    1. Mental health
    2. Documentation status
    3. Community needs
  - ii. Give them resource packet
- e. Is there anything else I can help you with?
  - i. Are there questions or resources you or your family need to remain happy, healthy, or informed?
- f. Thank you again for taking time today to participate in this research study to help the library learn more about how your community is meeting the needs of you and your family. If you ever have any questions, comments, or concerns please reach out to the number you called to set up the interview. I am going to now stop the recording. **Stop recording**