

Melissa  
Carrasco

# WELCOME/ POSITIONALITY

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I am a Master's student in the School of Library and Information Studies at the University of Alabama. I have created this Social Justice ePortfolio (SJ-eP) as part of my work for CIS 668 (Social Justice and Inclusion Advocacy) course during fall 2023. In my SJ-eP I propose social justice actions based on analysis of existing communication and information responses to the Immigrant population in the [Clifton Public Library](#) located in Clifton, NJ.

I also propose and implement very select responsive strategies and actions plan (as relevant) to further community needs, expectations, and representation in the specific setting and workforce environment of the communication agency or information organization to identify future directions of progressive growth and professional practice. The SJ-eP provides a glimpse of social justice actions proposed and/ or taken through application of select systematic methods. It documents this process upon reflection of the limited experience to gather insights that can get operationalized in greater depth during future initiatives.

## **Who am I? My Role and Interest**

I have worked in public libraries for 16 years, I received my Bachelors degree in Justice Studies with a minor in Criminal Justice. I have always carried that with me in my journey with public libraries. Libraries today look very different than they did in the past. Social Justice places a bigger role in libraries, I would say a vital role. "Libraries have long served vital roles in ensuring access and equity in their communities. Long-standing library activities such as job-seeking assistance,

literacy courses, children's story time, and computer classes are, in fact, social service activities designed to promote social inclusion and social equity" (Jaegar, 2). In my city we have seen an uptick in people coming from other countries and the library has been there first stop. With this project I hope to bring more awareness to this population and help in any way that I can.

## Sources

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# SJ PROJECT: SCOPE & PLAN

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The focus of my Social Justice ePortfolio is to examine the offerings of the [Clifton Public Library](#) located in Clifton, New Jersey and how they serve the Immigrant Population in their community. This page will focus on the scope and plan of my project.

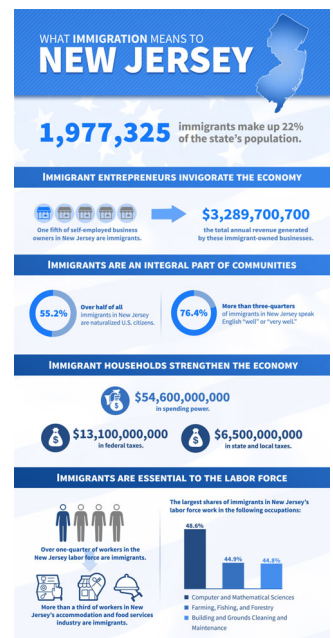
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## WHAT DO I PLAN TO DO?

In my social Justice ePortfolio I plan to analyze existing programs and resources for immigrant populations at the [Clifton Public Library](#) in Clifton, NJ . Taking a closer look at what programs or resources are offered and not offered and how we can improve upon them or create something entirely new. I do not believe at the current moment that my library is providing enough resources to the immigrant population. Everyday we see more and more people in need of services and I would like for the library to be prepared to help them.

## WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Having programs and resources available to the growing immigrant population is important because every year that number is growing. According to the New Jersey New Americans Integration report, "New Jersey has the fifth largest immigrant population in the United States with 2 million foreign born residents" (Data, 2021). When compared to the total state



American Immigration  
Council Immigrants in  
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population, New Jersey has the third largest proportion of immigrant residents, behind California and New York. This means that there are thousands of people in the state of New Jersey that will need access to resources such as ESL classes or citizenship courses. These types of services are necessary for the immigrant population to succeed.

## **HOW DO I PLAN TO DO IT?**

I plan on conducting an informal survey on how the library can best help the patrons or what programs and resources they wish to see offered. The problem with collecting data in a public library is that I cannot ask questions directly to patrons in regards to my immigration focus. I can, however, put out a broad survey with questions that can still lead me in the right direction. I will also be paying more attention to any information that patrons freely disclose and keeping a record of how many people bring up the topic of immigration or other desired programming. It is very important that we help patrons navigate life in what may be new surroundings and a new language (Grossman, 2022).

## **POTENTIAL COLLABORATORS AND PARTNERS @ THE SETTING?**

Potential collaborators for this project would be my library director and the head of adult services. My library director has a lot of contacts at other institutions and can help me find outside resources. The head of adult services would also have useful tips on how to best gather information from the public that protects people's privacy and does not negatively impact the library. I am hoping that with the help of these two individuals that I will be able to gather

useful information and resources on how to best help the immigrant population.

## **WHAT RESULTS AND OUTCOMES DO I PLAN TO ACHIEVE?**

My goal with this project is to make programming and resources available that will help the immigrant population that frequents the Clifton Public Library. Examples of programming and resources that I wish to make available at the Clifton Public Library include, a flier or brochure on how to register for social services, a computer literacy program, a workshop on how to apply for citizenship and what it entails. I also would like to have the city health department give out information on how they can access healthcare. With 23% of the New Jersey population being foreign born, we need to start fostering a relationship between that community and the library (American, 2020).

## **Sources**

1. American Immigration Council. (2020). Immigrants in New Jersey. <https://map.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/locations/new-jersey/#>
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3. Grossman S, Agosto DE, Winston M, et al. How Public Libraries Help Immigrants Adjust to Life in a New Country: A Review of the Literature. Health Promotion Practice. 2022;23(5):804-816. doi:10.1177/15248399211001064

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## CONTEXT OF NEED

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The focus of my Social Justice ePortfolio is to examine the offerings of the [Clifton Public Library](#) located in Clifton, NJ and how they serve the Immigrant population in their community. This page will focus on the existing needs of the immigrant population in Clifton, New Jersey.

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### Social Justice Context: Environment and Setting

Inter- Disciplinary  
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The city of Clifton, New Jersey as of 2021 has an 87% citizenship rate. This sits just below the national average which is 93.4% ( DataUSA, 2021). Although 87% is up from 2020 it is still below the national average which means that we have more people than average that are in need of assistance and direction when it comes to acquiring US Citizenship. As of 2021 36.5% of the population in Clifton was foreign born, the national average is 13.6 %. That number however is decreasing every year.

SJ Research  
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**CRITICAL LENS OF SJ  
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The city of Clifton does not have a dedicated organization that helps its residents navigate citizenship. Neighboring towns however, do offer services.

My SJ + SDG via IAB

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### Social Justice Agency/ Organization Profile: Who + What?

Discussion  
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The agency that I have selected is the Clifton Public Library located in Clifton, New Jersey and governed by the city of Clifton. However, the library Director answers to a board of trustees that is made up of 12 members that includes the library director. The library has three departments, the children's department, reference department and circulation department. There is also a smaller Allwood Branch library that has a circulation department, children's department and reference librarian. Between both the Main Library and Allwood Branch there are around 50 staff members. As far as its offerings for the immigrant population it is very few if any. There was a program

in April that highlighted the book "'An Immigrants Guide: Important resources to Success in the USA" by author Trinidad DeLa Rosa. Although this program did help shed light on the issue it was not enough. The library also offered a conversation club for ESL speakers however the program has not been active in at least 3 years. In a study done by Keren Dali for the Canadian Journal Of Library and Information Science she states that when polled only around 60% of people born outside of the United States have ever visited a library (Dali, 2021). When programs like those for ESL speakers and Immigrant populations stop being provided it contributes to these low numbers.

## **Social Justice Agency/ Organization Profile: Existing How?**

### **MISSION AND VISION**

The Clifton Public Library's Mission Statement is "to enrich lives through discovery, learning, entertainment, and accomplishment of tasks essential to everyday living". Their Vision statement states "The Clifton Public Library aspires to be a welcoming resource for the community's rich and diverse population throughout their lives". This to me means that they will focus on making sure that all community members, including those from diverse backgrounds will receive adequate resources and help from the library to enrich their everyday lives.

### **VALUES, AIMS**

The Clifton Public Library aims to encourage and develop literacy in all forms as well as to provide a quiet space for studying and gathering. They want to provide professional and friendly assistance to all and make it an inviting space where everyone feels included.

### **GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

The Clifton Public Libraries goals and objectives is to encourage and develop literacy in all its forms. They plan to accomplish this through early childhood literacy programs and service. They also plan to collaborate with community groups to co-sponsor programs for literacy. Another goal of the library is to address the cultural, intellectual and social needs within the community and aims to help the diverse population.

### **STRATEGIC PLAN**

The last [strategic plan](#) (Clifton Public Library, 2019) that was adopted by the Clifton Public Library was on July 21, 2021 and covers August 2021-December 2022.



## HOW DOES THE AGENCY/ORGANIZATION MEASURE SUCCESS

The Clifton Public Library measures their success based upon whether or not the needs of the community are being met. If all of the needs of the community are being met and they can provide a safe space with friendly assistance to all then they have succeeded.

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# PROMISING PRACTICES (READINGS AND RESOURCES)

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The focus of my Social Justice ePortfolio is to examine the offerings of the [Clifton Public Library](#) located in Clifton, New Jersey and how they serve the immigrant population in their community. This page will focus on relevant readings and resources related to the immigrant population in a library setting.

**\*ALL TEXT IN BLUE ARE HYPERLINKS**

## Readings

1. [How Public Libraries Help Immigrants Adjust to Life in a New Country: A Review of the Literature](#)

**Grossman S, Agosto DE, Winston M, et al. How Public Libraries Help Immigrants Adjust to Life in a New Country: A Review of the Literature. Health Promotion Practice. 2022;23(5):804-816. doi:10.1177/15248399211001064**

This article addresses the work that public libraries are doing to help the immigrant population adjust to life in the United States. The authors searched through 810 articles across 5 databases. looking for relevant keywords such as. Immigrants and libraries and examined the information within the for similarities to each other. The research concluded that library programs and ESL classes geared towards immigrant patrons were very useful. It helped show what immigrants want and out of their public library and how libraries were fulfilling those needs. Most patrons were satisfied with the library offerings. Some however, wanted more books and resources in their native language. Having information and library materials offered in various languages makes a difference in the patron experience.

2. [Towards better information services: A framework for immigrant information needs and library services](#)

**Chunying Wang, Ruhua Huang, Jiyuan Li, Jiangping Chen, Towards better information services: A framework for immigrant information needs and library services, *Library & Information Science Research*, Volume 42, Issue 1, 2020, (<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0740818819302129>)**

Researchers in this study used a systemic literature review in order to identify what libraries are offering or need to offer their immigrant population. Using a literature review the goal of this study is to answer four key questions. What are the information needs of immigrants identified in the literature? What are the sources and challenges for immigrants to obtain information? What services have libraries historically provided to meet the information needs of immigrants? What are the obstacles for libraries to provide services to immigrants? They hope to answer these questions by using a 5 stage systematic review process. In the end based on the information they received they were able to build a framework to help libraries better understand immigrant needs.

### **3. Public Librarian Perceptions of Assisting Immigrant Patrons: Results from a Multi-State Survey**

**Grossman, S., Cannuscio, C.C., Feuerstein-Simon, R. et al. Public Librarian Perceptions of Assisting Immigrant Patrons: Results from a Multi-State Survey. *J Community Health* 48, 659–669 (2023). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10900-023-01204-w>**

The authors of this paper conducted a multi-state survey with the goal of examining the interactions between libraries and immigrant patrons. Two US States were selected and within those two states around 250 public librarians were polled. The survey focused on how librarians were helping their immigrant population in regards to their health and how the library could support them on this issue. The survey found that librarians were hesitant to speak to patrons about their health or immigration status and immigrant patrons found that there were very little resources for them at public libraries. This could be due to various factors such as immigrant patrons receiving help from other sources such as lawyers or government office and due to librarians being hesitant to speak on such personal matters.

# Web Resources

## 1. [New Jersey Alliance for Immigrant Justice](https://www.njimmigrantjustice.org/)

<https://www.njimmigrantjustice.org/>

The New Jersey Alliance for Immigrant Justice is the largest immigration coalition in the state of New Jersey. Their goal is to collectively position immigrants as leaders in order to advance justice, inclusion and belonging for all immigrants. They do this by creating advocacy campaigns that are aimed to help racial, social and economic justice. They want their members to empower themselves to make radical change within their communities and make people aware of the challenges faced by the immigrant population. The alliance is currently made up of over 30 different organizations all with the goal of furthering the cause.

## 2. [Raritan Valley Community College](https://library.raritanval.edu/c.php?g=728614&p=5203402)

[https://library.raritanval.edu/c.php?  
g=728614&p=5203402](https://library.raritanval.edu/c.php?g=728614&p=5203402)

The Raritan Valley Community College is located in Branchburg, New Jersey. The University's Evelyn S. Field Library is an excellent resource for immigration services. They provide links to government websites as well as scholarship opportunities and tips on several topics related to immigration. There are also resources dedicated to helping people apply for residency and citizenship as well as how to avoid being scammed by companies. It is a very useful tool for an immigrant patron trying to find help and information.

# Environmental Scan

## 1. [Piscataway Public Library](https://piscatawaylibrary.org/new-americans/)

<https://piscatawaylibrary.org/new-americans/>

The Piscataway Public Library is located in Piscataway, NJ and has several offerings aimed at helping the immigrant community. Their website has a section for "New Americans" that is filled with useful resources that patrons can take advantage of. Some examples of their offerings include ESL classes that happen once a week, they also have links to grammar help websites, games, podcasts and much more. All of it is aimed to help new Americans navigate the English language. All of it is also available to their patrons. Some websites require a registration but others do not, it depends on what resource you are interested in.

## 2. [Bergenfield Public Library](https://www.bergenfieldlibrary.org/)

<https://www.bergenfieldlibrary.org/>

The Bergenfield Public Library has excellent resources for their immigrant population. They have several links on

their services page that include ESL, Learn English, Become a tutor, Citizenship classes and Language Resources. Each of these offerings will help any immigrant navigate the new language and the journey of becoming a citizen. They have ESL classes that are held in person and via zoom. The classes are once a week for 1 hour. They also offer citizenship classes and a language learning application called Mango. This library would definitely be in one of my top choices to refer our patrons to if they needed assistance in these areas.

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# INTER- DISCIPLINARY PERSPECTIVES

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The focus of my Social Justice ePortfolio is to examine the offerings of the [Clifton Public Library](#) located in Clifton, New Jersey and how they serve the Immigrant Population in their community. This page will focus on the inter-disciplinary perspective of this project.

Context of Need

**\*ALL TEXT IN [BLUE](#) ARE HYPERLINKS**

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***The [Clifton Public Library](#) is surrounded by a melting pot of culture. Many different countries and languages are represented this includes a robust immigrant population. However, there are not enough resources provided by the library to help this population succeed. For this project the goal was to provide more resources to the Immigrant and New American population.***

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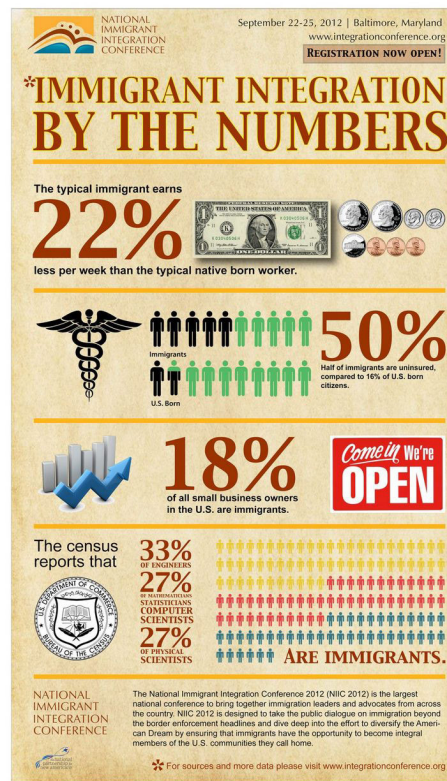
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## **(Inter) Disciplinary Lens**

As a researcher on this project I chose to position my research within a social and political lens. Ming Hsu Chen describes the interdisciplinary perspective on immigration and migration best when he states that there are many nuances to understanding what exactly constitutes an "Immigrant" and what we can do best as a society to help them (Ming, 2023). I approached my research looking at it through a social science lens and political lens because I think both disciplines describe exactly how most people look at immigrants and how they treat them. From my research I found that not enough focus is placed in libraries on immigrants mostly because staff cannot relate to them on a human and social level. They are a very stigmatized population and that is where politics comes into play. With competing points of view lately in cities when it comes to migrants people argue whose rights come first?( Kelsey, 2022). It is our job as library workers to welcome everyone regardless of status. Although there are different perspectives one can choose to take with my research I believe that taking a social and political approach to my research has helped me gain a better perspective on my goal.

## **Theoretical/Conceptual Lens**

The theoretical or conceptual lens that I used for this project was critical theory. In an article by William McCorkle he describes how immigration is one of the most controversial topics, especially in America (McCorkle, 2020). Viewing this topic of my research through a critical theory lens was the one I used because it best describes the type of perspective you gain when going through my research and research topic. Carlos Aguilar in his journal article introduces his own theoretical lens called " Undocumented Critical Theory" or UndocuCRIT for short (Aguilar, 2018). His theory is that this term better represents the nuances and struggle of the immigrant experience and challenges an immigrant binary rhetoric as well as embarking on a journey toward social justice and the empowerment of our communities. This is exactly what I wanted to convey with my project. The idea that we need to empower our communities and our libraries to include everyone. There is still a stigma against the undocumented in this country and the library should be a safe space not a place where community members feel like they do not belong. It is so important that we not forget about the marginalized and oppressed in our communities. Everyone needs to be seen and represented within the library space in some way shape or form.

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The focus of my Social Justice ePortfolio is to examine the offerings of the [Clifton Public Library](#) located in Clifton, New Jersey and how they serve the immigrant population in their community. This page will focus on the research methods used in my Social Justice Project.

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This Social Justice project is focused on the immigrant population in Clifton, NJ and how the Clifton Public Library serves their needs. For this project I used the survey and interview method. I found that these methods worked well for the research I was doing within a library setting. The only drawback with trying to gather information from patrons is a library setting is privacy. Many patrons will not feel comfortable talking or sharing information with people they don't know. Togia defines a survey as "Descriptive research method used to "describe the characteristics of, and make predictions about, a population" (Togia, 2017). A well constructed survey is not easy to develop however I did try my best to make it useful (Hoffmann, 2020). I took a poll/ survey of patrons that asked for specific programming that centered around the needs of the immigrant population. Four categories stood out, esl classes, computer help, children's esl classes and citizenship classes. The highest number of inquiries were made in reference to esl classes. This was not a surprise, patrons have been inquiring about these kinds of programs for years and it doesn't seem like upper management is listening. A downside of using the method was highlighted best by a Carlsson research article that stated " it is resource-demanding to transfer findings into service changes,

especially for smaller libraries, and results often support stepwise improvements rather than discovery of new services" (Carlsson, 2020). In the case of my library we do not offer any services towards this population so I am hoping that this method would shed some light on the needs of immigrants in the city of Clifton. I used the interview method to gather information from the circulation staff. They are on the front lines and are the first people that patrons see when they walk into the library. Staff was asked 3 questions during the interview. The first question was "What can we as a department do for the immigrant population". The second question was "What do patrons look for in relation to programming?". The last question was "How can we as a library expand on what we already offer?". The staff had great feedback. We all agreed that programming was definitely needed and that the library should be designed in a way that makes it welcoming for people of all cultural backgrounds. However, that would take more than just work from the circulation department. To achieve what we want to achieve with the immigrant population it would take collaboration and input from the entire library. Staff would also have to remove and stigmatizing content or verbiage from the library as well as realize that all cultures need to be respected and reflected within the library (Cho, 2016). Even the library of Congress acknowledged that wording and representation matter (Peet, 2016). If they can then we as library workers can too. My goal has always been with this project to try and create real change within my library. Will I achieve it? I'm hoping so but if not I feel like I have the tools to at least start the journey.

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## THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA®

### A SOCIAL JUSTICE PROJECT + SDG(S): MY INFORMATION ACTION BRIEF

A RESOURCE FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

**UN**  
**SDG** Reduce  
**# 10** Inequalities

*To reduce the inequality faced by the  
immigrant population.*

#### Starting Immigration Services at Your Library



**Authors:**  
Melissa Carrasco, [mcarrasco1@crimson.ua.edu](mailto:mcarrasco1@crimson.ua.edu)

Graduate Student, School of Library and  
Information Studies, University of Alabama [CIS  
668: Social Justice and Inclusion Advocacy: Fall  
2023].

**Series Editor:**  
Bharat Mehra ([bmehra@ua.edu](mailto:bmehra@ua.edu)), EBSCO Endowed  
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Alabama. Clara M. Chu ([cmchu@illinois.edu](mailto:cmchu@illinois.edu)),  
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Student, School of Library and Information Studies,  
University of Alabama.

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### MAKE MORE PROGRAMMING AND RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO THE IMMIGRANT POPULATION AT THE CLIFTON MAIN MEMORIAL LIBRARY

#### WHAT IS OUR GOAL?

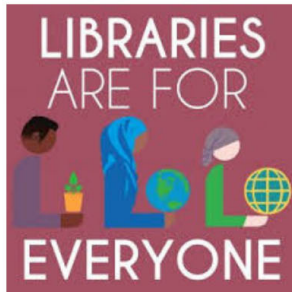
In my social Justice ePortfolio I plan to analyze existing programs and resources for immigrant populations at the Clifton Public Library. Taking a closer look at what programs or resources are offered and not offered and how we can improve upon them or create something entirely new. I do not believe at the current moment that my library is providing enough resources to the immigrant population.

\* <https://sdgs.un.org/>

## WHY SHOULD WE CARE?

"As long as libraries have been 'free to all', as the front of the Boston Public Library proudly proclaims, they have provided some kind of service to newcomers to this country." (Koerber, 2018). Libraries are often the first place that newcomers to this country look to for information. It is a safe place that does not require any money, just an open mind. Without library services geared towards the immigrant population, where else would they go? It is imperative that we make sure there is a space for them in our libraries. We cannot just leave this job to the government. We must come together as a community organization and realize how valuable we can be to the immigrant population and how our resources and institutions can change their lives.

Koerber, J. (2018). Library services for immigrants and new Americans: Celebration and integration. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO.



**“LIBRARIES ARE PLACES WHERE EVERYONE, RICH OR POOR, WHEREVER THEY COME FROM IN THE WORLD, CAN FEEL SAFE. WHERE THEY CAN ACCESS INFORMATION THAT WILL EMPOWER THEM.”**

**— FREYA SAMPSON, THE LAST CHANCE LIBRARY**

## HOW IS THIS RELATED TO INFORMATION?

Providing programming and resources for the immigrant population is related to information because everyone regardless of status or class is entitled to information and it is especially difficult for the immigrant population to access. One example of a challenge that is faced by the immigrant population is language. Most people that come into the library for the first time from a different country are not fluent in English and it makes it very difficult for them to interpret and receive information. That is why it is so important for relevant information or handouts in libraries to be in various languages. The American Library Association stated in an article that libraries should consider the way they design their spaces and accommodate those from multicultural backgrounds (1).

Libraries must also offer relevant information and grow a multicultural collection within their institutions. If we do not offer them the information that they need, why would they come to the library? An article on Hispanics and libraries by the Pew Research center highlighted the importance of this by stating that Hispanics are less likely than whites or blacks to use a public library (2). Maybe one of those reasons is that we do not have anything to offer them.

Another example on how information can be used to achieve the goal of helping the immigrant population is staff involvement in the community. An article in American Libraries Magazine addresses this issue by explaining how staff at the Los Angeles public library received accreditation to help community members with immigration services(3). This is an amazing way for libraries to provide much needed information and not have people go elsewhere. They come into the library knowing that they will receive the information they need without going to other places that they may not be trustworthy or reliable.



Sampson, F. (2021). The last chance library. Thorndike Press.





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The focus of my Social Justice ePortfolio is to examine the offerings of the [Clifton Public Library](#) located in Clifton, New Jersey and how they serve the Immigrant Population in their community. This page will focus the progress I have made on my research.

**\*ALL TEXT IN BLUE ARE HYPERLINKS**

## Explain the Social Justice Project

I had initially planned on having the library start some kind of program that was geared towards helping immigrants within the City of Clifton, New Jersey. That however, did not work out as planned. I was able to show that there is a need for more programming and resources for this specific population but a program unfortunately did not come to fruition. Who would this project benefit? This project is geared towards helping the immigrant and New American population that lives in the City of Clifton. According to a survey conducted in 2019 by the Migration Policy Institute, 25% of the New Jersey population has less than 5 years of citizenship (Migration, 2019). I conducted a survey of patron requests during a one month period and found that most people in the community wanted some form of ESL and Citizenship classes available within the library. This shed some light on the current needs of the community and how the Clifton Public Library was not addressing them. I believe that such programs can change the way the community uses the library. I also surveyed several staff members as well. They responded to several questions on how to better help our patrons. At the beginning of the semester I was very excited because it seemed like I would be getting more support from the library to address patron requests within the immigrant community. That turned out not to be the case and requests still come daily for programming and resources geared towards the Hispanic and Immigrant population.

# HOW CAN WE DO BETTER?

What can we as a department do for the immigrant population?

What do patrons most look for specifically related to programming?

How can we expand upon what we already have?

## STAFF RESPONSES

*We get asked daily for ESL classes. We need more.*

*L. Barrett (Library Assistant)*

*Our handouts should be in different languages.*

*T. Igzo-Iwachow (Library Assistant)*

*Patrons are looking for more programming for non-english speakers at a convenient space like the library.*

*J. Colon (Library Assistant)*

*Children can benefit from ESL tutoring.*

*G. Albero (Children's Librarian)*

## Assess/ Evaluate The Social Justice Project



Figures 1 through 4 above explain the outcomes of my research into patron needs. I kept track of every patron question that pertained to program offerings that would be beneficial to the immigrant community. For one month I kept track of all of the program inquiries that fell into four categories, esl classes, computer help, children's esl classes and citizenship classes. The category with the most interest has been ESL classes with an average of 63 people asking on a particular month. One challenge that I faced in gathering this information was getting the staff to report the data back to me. Since I am not at the front desk all of the time I had to rely on others to help gather the information. A weakness of collecting data this way is that it does not go in depth enough as far as gathering information. I had to keep the questions simple and not go into too much detail with patrons as I was not allowed. What did work in this project was the fact that this data did show that there was an interest in these kinds of programs. That however, is a challenge with this type of work environment. You can't always ask the questions you want to and gather the kind of information that would really create change for the library. There has always been immigrants using the library but the number of immigrants using library services has increased over time (Burke, 2008). We need to make sure that we reach as many as we can and hopefully this research will help that goal.

## **THEMATIC CATEGORIZATION**

Two themes emerged from my experience in this social justice project. One theme was equality. While the library itself is supposed to be a space that is open and

available to all, for the immigrant population within the city of Clifton I do not think that this is the case. A couple of years ago we were headed in the right direction. We provided ESL classes and had programming geared towards the immigrant population. After covid happened everything changed. We stopped providing ESL classes and we do not provide any services or programming for the immigrant population. Despite the fact that it is clearly written in the library strategic plan that we will provide such services. Native English speakers and non-immigrants are offered plenty as far as programs and accessible information. Why should the immigrant population be left behind? Another theme that came up during this project was equality. I feel like my library institution does not provide enough programming equally to all community populations. "There is a need to advance U.S.- based LIS education so that new library professionals are aware of the sociopolitical implications of engagement with immigrant communities" (Ana 2020). If librarians make themselves more aware of community needs we can be of better service.

**"SO WHAT"**

**1. Strategic Action Plan**

**REVISED MISSION STATEMENT**

<b>Vision Statement, Mission Statement and Service Priorities</b>	The Clifton Public Library currently has a mission statement available. A strategic plan is available on their website. However, it does not focus enough on the needs of the immigrant population located in Clifton. Going forward a strategic plan and goal that focuses on more community involvement and diversity in programming for Non-English speakers and the immigrant population would be beneficial. Below is an example of what I would want the library mission statement to look like.
<b>Clifton Public Library ( Clifton, NJ)</b>	"Our Mission as a library is to provide a safe and welcoming space to all our community members. We strive to offer inclusive and diverse programming and resources that will benefit our diverse population which includes our immigrant and ESL speaking community. "

A strategic plan is also a very valuable resource for libraries. The Clifton Public Library currently has a strategic plan.

A. Offer more diverse programming that focuses on the immigrant population that includes citizenship classes

B. Establish regular programming for citizenship seekers by 2024

C. Create strong bonds and relationships with community leaders

D. Make sure that we fulfil the goals written in the existing strategic plan

Implementing the above strategic plan would bring about a lot of positive change for the library and the community at large. It is obvious that these are the types of programs and resources that the community is asking for. All we have to do is deliver and give them what they need.

## ***2. Projections***

I would love to say that I project that the library would step up and implement all of the suggestions in my project but I do not think that would be the case. I recently learned that such a project was introduced to the library director years ago via a donation from a generous patron. The community member donated money to the library with the goal of the library using that money to create programming geared towards immigrants and the Hispanic population. This started in 2018 and since then only 2 programs have occurred. I recommend that the Clifton Public Library really starts listening to patron needs and realizes what a positive impact programs geared toward the

immigrant and non-English speaking population would have. The ways that one's language is preferred and promoted in public domains impact the perceptions of children and their parents about the desirability of their heritage language ( Kim, 2023). Library workers can make a difference if we make a conscious effort to make our libraries spaces of inclusion and equality.

## SOURCES

1. Ana Ndumu and Michele Villagran. "New Ways of Teaching Library Service to Immigrant Communities" Association for Library and Information Science Education: ALISE 2020 Conference Proceedings (2020).
2. Burke, S. K. (2008). Use of Public Libraries by Immigrants. *Reference & User Services Quarterly*, 48(2), 164–174. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20865036>
3. Kim, Yahnghee; Kim, Hyun Chu Leah; Kim, Junye. (July 2023). Korean immigrants' perceptions of library services and library multicultural programs for Asian communities before and during COVID-19. *Sec. Language, Culture and Diversity*. Volume 8 - 2023 | <https://doi.org/10.3389/feduc.2023.1081143>
4. Migration Policy Institute.(2019). Profile of the Unauthorized Population: New Jersey. <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/data/unauthorized-immigrant-population/state/NJ>





# DISCUSSION LEADERSHIP

Welcome/  
Positionality

The focus of my Social Justice ePortfolio is to examine the offerings of the [Clifton Public Library](#) located in Clifton, New Jersey and how they serve the Immigrant Population in their community. This page will focus on my Discussion Leadership PowerPoint Presentation and critique.

SJ Project: Scope &  
Plan

Context of Need

**\*ALL TEXT IN [BLUE](#) ARE HYPERLINKS**

Promising Practices  
(Readings and  
Resources)

**What did you learn with regard to your social justice project during your presentation?**

**SJ SCHOLARSHIP:  
CRITICAL LENS\***

Inter- Disciplinary  
Perspectives

I learned that my library, the Clifton Public Library, could be doing a whole lot more to help the community than they currently are. In both of these articles the researchers expressed a desire to make real change within their communities.

SJ Research  
Paradigms/Methods

Whether it be through academic institutions or through library programming. I was very impressed with the authors of both of these articles because they inspired me to think outside the box and work harder. The authors in the second article were able to inspire their community to do more programming and get more involved. They also shed light on existing programs. I hope to be able to do the same kind of work with the immigrant population in my community.

**CRITICAL LENS OF SJ  
ANALYSIS**

My SJ + SDG via IAB

SJ Research  
Assessment  
(Progress)

**SOCIAL JUSTICE  
PRESENTATIONS**

**Memo of Relevance: Article Critique and Review [CLICK  
HERE](#)**

Discussion  
Leadership

Insights

[Perryman, C. L., and Jeng, L. H. \(2020\). Changing Models of Library Education to Benefit Rural Communities. Public Library Quarterly 39\(2\), 102-114.](#)

*Melissa Carrasco*

- ▶ *Currently live in Passaic, New Jersey*
- ▶ *16 years of service in the Clifton Main Memorial Library*
- ▶ *3 years as a Circulation Supervisor*
- ▶ *SJ4A Scholar in my 3rd semester*
- ▶ *Social Justice Project focuses on the offerings and programs or lack of, geared towards the Immigrant Population at the Clifton Main Memorial Library*



## "Changing Models of Library Practice to Benefit Rural Communities"

### Critique and Review by Melissa Carrasco

Perryman, C. L., and Jeng, L. H. (2020). Changing Models of Library Education to Benefit Rural Communities. *Public Library Quarterly* 39(2), 102-114. Mehra, B., Sikes, E. S., and Singh, V. (2019)

## PURPOSE OF THE ARTICLE

- ▶ Examine "Transforming Libraries into Community Anchors in Rural Texas" program (TLCART)
- ▶ Explore how librarians can get out into their communities and work with community leaders and residents to facilitate needed and wanted change.
- ▶ To discuss previous successful programs at other institutions and how they affect change in their communities.

## What is TLCART?

TLCART stands for Transforming Libraries into Community Anchor's in Rural Texas.

- Program provides financial support for students online, asynchronous learning in a 24 month program of study resulting in ALA accredited Master of Library Science degree with a specialty in community informatics.
- Texas Woman's University School of Library and Information Studies host the program via a grant awarded under the IMLS Laura Bush 21st Century Librarians Program in 2018.
- Students in the program will engage in community development activities, grant writing project planning, and needs assessments within their own small and rural communities.
- Project is informed by the work of Dr. Bharat Mehra and colleagues at the University of Tennessee and funded under IMLS Laura Bush 21st Century Librarian Program entitled "Rural Library Professionals as Change Agents in the 21st Century: Integrating



Members of the TLCART grant cohort pose with their mentors at the annual TLA conference.

## Goal of TLCART

- To develop a new generation of librarians highly competent in using data and technology to empower their own communities.
- To support a cohort of students empowered to engage effectively with their communities within and beyond the walls of libraries.
- To broaden the reach of existing information services and create sustainable, community defined solutions to issues of shared concern.
- To partner with community organizations to enhance broadband access, build coalitions, and support the health, education, and wellbeing of residents in their own communities.



## Recruitment

- Focused on individuals living or working in rural communities, prioritizing Hispanic individuals.
- Applicants were reviewed in terms of their ethnicity and race, residency in or access to a small or rural area, aptitude and interest in community informatics, technological proficiency, and demonstrated community engagement.
- Recruitment efforts were targeted communities in the border regions, encompassed by TLA Districts 4, 6, and 10, or West Central Texas, South Texas and the Rio Grande Valley which have the most substantial Hispanic population.
- Applicants would apply to the TWU Graduate School, SLIS and to the TLCART program and must complete an in depth survey and admissions essay as well as open ended responses in their applications.

Mehra, B., Sikes, E. S., and Singh, V. (2019). Scenarios of Health Engagement Experiences and Health Justice in Rural Libraries. *International Journal of Information, Diversity, & Inclusion* (Special Issue: Health Justice Part I. Edited by Beth St. Jean, Gagan Jindal, Yuting Liao, and Paul T. Jaeger), 3(3), 56-87.  
<https://jps.library.utoronto.ca/index.php/ijidi/article/view/32963/25305>





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Welcome/  
Positionality

The focus of my Social Justice ePortfolio is to examine the offerings of the [Clifton Public Library](#) located in Clifton, New Jersey and how they serve the Immigrant Population in their community. This page will focus on the insights on my Social Justice Presentation.

SJ Project: Scope &  
Plan

Context of Need

**\*ALL TEXT IN [BLUE](#) ARE HYPERLINKS**

Promising Practices  
(Readings and  
Resources)

SJ SCHOLARSHIP:  
CRITICAL LENS\*

## What did you learn with regard to your focused aspect of social justice scholarship during your presentation?

Inter- Disciplinary  
Perspectives

I learned that it is very important for the library to think outside of the box and to expand its offerings to include all patrons. Patrons that come inside the library and those that don't. I learned that we have to be creative in the ways that we reach out to our community and that we need to actively collaborate with our community if we want to see real change.

SJ Research  
Paradigms/Methods

CRITICAL LENS OF SJ  
ANALYSIS

My SJ + SDG via IAB

## What were the challenges and aspects meaningful to you in the course?

SJ Research  
Assessment  
(Progress)

SOCIAL JUSTICE  
PRESENTATIONS

The challenges that were meaningful to me in this course were time management and workload. I work full-time, have a family and usually take 2 classes per semester. That in and of itself takes a lot of work and effort to balance. I did however, find this course to be very meaningful to me because it inspired me to work harder within my institution to create change for the immigrant population. This class has taught me ways in which I can implement what I learned within my work setting. In talking to different staff members about certain aspects of my project it has made them more aware of changes that need to happen at the Clifton Library. They are actively trying to help me get the word out about what changes and additions to our offerings need to be made. I am very grateful for that this class

Discussion  
Leadership

Insights

has inspired me to look beyond what I don't see in the moment and think about what can be.

## Social Justice ePortfolio: Focus on programming and resource accessibility for the immigrant population at the Clifton Main Memorial Library

Creator: Melissa Carrasco



## WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF MY PROJECT

- Bring more awareness towards the Immigrant and New American population
- To convince the library to provide more ESL classes and Citizenship classes within the library
- Interviewed several staff members on their opinions about the lack of immigrant services
- Kept a running log of patron questions and inquiries on ESL and Immigrant services (Averaged about 10+ questions a week)



# Foreign-Born Population

As of 2020, 37.6% of Clifton, NJ residents (32k people) were born outside of the United States, which is higher than the national average of 13.5%. In 2019, the percentage of foreign-born citizens in Clifton, NJ was 36.9%, meaning that the rate has been increasing.

[Clifton, NJ | Data USA](#)

## Citizenship

87%

2021 CITIZENSHIP

85.9%

2020 CITIZENSHIP

As of 2021, 87% of Clifton, NJ residents were US citizens, which is lower than the national average of 93.4%. In 2020, the percentage of US citizens in Clifton, NJ was 85.9%, meaning that the rate of citizenship has been increasing.

The following chart shows US citizenship percentages in Clifton, NJ compared to that of it's neighboring and parent geographies.

Data from [the Census Bureau ACS 5-year Estimate](#).

## Survey Questions

What can we as a department do for the immigrant population?

What do patrons most look for specifically related to programming?

How can we expand upon what we already have?

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