



## Creative Community Conversation: Experiences of Immigration

### Overview

This yearlong, arts-based, countywide project invites cultural arts, immigrant and educational organizations to create programs that foster conversations on both historic and contemporary issues of immigration. Participating organizations will draw on their individual expertise to develop exhibitions, performances, presentations, music, films, displays and readings designed to raise the level of community knowledge, awareness and engagement on this important topic. *Creative Community Conversation: Experiences of Immigration* is not a policy focused project. Rather than seek to support a particular immigration policy, it uses the power of art to bring people together to learn from each other about experiences of immigration that have shaped the United States.

### Project Goal

To use the arts to catalyze, engage and inform county residents on both the historic and contemporary issues of immigration in order to foster greater understanding and make this a more welcoming and inclusive community. Toward this end, the project will:

- Create cross-discipline arts collaborations on immigration themes
- Use the knowledge of immigrant organizations to inform project content
- Develop a broad range of arts experiences designed to educate and engage the public in conversations on immigration
- Celebrate the cultural capital of all our immigrant communities

### Rationale

The United States is deeply rooted in immigration history. In fact, almost the entire population—beyond those who are Native American or were brought here during the slave trade—have an immigrant past. Yet many citizens don't know much about our history, which is really their history, or about current immigration policy. Boulder County is an ideal place to begin this unique American conversation because it has a reputation for engaging openly in dialogue on both national and international issues. For example, the City of Boulder recently received national press for appointing the first undocumented person to a city commission. Still, according to the Trends Report published by The Community Foundation, only 43% of people surveyed said Boulder County is open to immigrants. How much stronger would our county be if the immigrant population, and the cultural assets it brings, were woven deeply into the fabric?

The arts tell the story of human experience and create empathy, engaging participants in conversations they might not otherwise have. Through this project, cultural arts organizations, in collaboration with immigrant and educational groups, will create arts experiences to bridge the disconnection and discomfort

### Steering Committee Chair

Carmen Ramirez  
Kirsten Wilson

### Countywide Liasons

Charlotte LaSasso  
Elvira Ramos  
Janet Heimer  
Jose Beteta  
Laurel Herndon  
Maria Velasco  
Richard Garcia

### Lafayette Liasons

Gustavo Reyna  
Karen Raforth

### Louisville Liason

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### Longmont Liasons

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that conversations on immigration often raise. These conversations, in turn, will become a catalyst for understanding and foster a more inclusive community.

Participating organizations will build relationships among themselves and with new audiences across the county. A greater appreciation of immigration history by all residents will eliminate some cultural barriers that currently exist, and diverse audiences will come together to share common history and experience.

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### **Project Organization**

A *Countywide Steering Committee* composed of representatives from participating cities will manage the overall organization of the project. This committee will include leaders in sectors of cultural arts, immigrant rights and education.

*Community Action Committees* composed of representatives of each of the three sectors (arts, immigration and education) and formed within each community, Boulder, Lafayette, Longmont and Louisville, to generate program content and to plan outreach.

*Project Staff* will support the work of the Countywide Steering Committee and each of the Community Action Committee. Every effort will be made to coordinate project activity to maximize participation by a broad public. Staff will generate project-wide publicity materials, create a web site and seek funds to support participating organizations in their outreach to targeted audiences.

One-Action is a collaborative project led by a diverse group of organizations but managed by the Boulder County Arts Alliance. One-Action creates an arts-centric series of conversations on a topic of importance in our community. These conversations are designed to inspire learning about our history, to discuss present issues, and to take action that will create a more inclusive Boulder County.

The One-Action Project for 2012 focused on Chief Niwot, a leader of the Southern Arapaho people, and his role in attempting to maintain peace as the Anglos moved into what is now Colorado. More than 50 organizations and 18,000 people participated in this project. (See this short trailer for more info on One-Action/2012 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o2bIblfYIJQ>).

*The One-Action Creative Community Conversation on Immigration could potentially serve as a model to inspire other communities beyond our own to use the arts as a way into the immigrant conversation – so much a part of the national fabric in this moment.*

To get involved: Contact One-Action at [oneactionmotus@gmail.com](mailto:oneactionmotus@gmail.com)

