Nonprofit Assessment Survey Report for African and Caribbean Immigrant/Refugee-led Organizations

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City of Philadelphia, Office of Immigrant Affairs and the Mayor's Commission on African and Caribbean Immigrant Affairs

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Mayor's Commission on
African and Caribbean Immigrant Affairs

Background

2020 brought significant challenges to populations all over the globe. Philadelphia's residents were no exception. In particular, immigrant populations faced difficulties in exposure to COVID-19, employment loss and financial instability, barriers to testing and healthcare, and even exclusion from certain federal benefits programs. Black immigrants in Philadelphia faced all of these challenges, but did not have the safety and security net of a robust nonprofit ecosystem to support them. While there are a handful of established community-based organizations to support the diverse needs of Black immigrants, the demonstrated need is much greater.

The Mayor's Commission on African and Caribbean Immigrant Affairs (MCACIA) advocates for and addresses the needs of Black immigrant communities in Philadelphia. The Commissioners represent the diverse African and Caribbean immigrant population of Philadelphia with lived experience as African and Caribbean immigrants. The MCACIA strengthens the voices of local African and Caribbean immigrant communities, advises the Mayor on policies and programs, shares resources, and raises awareness about the history, geography, and culture of the African continent, the Caribbean, and their diasporas.

MCACIA was initially created in 2005 through an executive order by Mayor John Street. The Coalition of African Communities (AFRICOM) also played an integral role in the formation of the MCACIA.

In 2020, the City of Philadelphia's Office of Immigrant Affairs (OIA) partnered with the Mayor's Commission on African and Caribbean Immigrant Affairs and other community-based leaders to address immediate needs to develop targeted public health messaging and services to African and Caribbean immigrant communities. OIA has also connected with Dr. Onome Henry Osokpo, MSc., MSN, RN, an Adjunct Clinical Faculty for the University of Pennsylvania, who is committed to African Immigrant Behavioral Health Research, a field that has been sparsely studied. Recognizing the gap between government agencies and immigrant populations, OIA works to develop a robust network of community partners to minimize service delivery gaps and advocate for more equitable systems. The global pandemic showed the weaknesses in systems and illuminated areas of growth for the community alike.

This report was created to highlight the diversity of the African and Caribbean immigrant community, draw connections to the nonprofit organizations that serve and represent this community, and to identify needs for capacity building through future programming.

Introduction

African and Caribbean immigrants are among the groups to be least studied; for example, African immigrants in the United States are the least-studied immigrant group even though there are efforts to address health disparities in these immigrant communities (Omenka, Watson, & Hendrie, 2020). During the past 30 years, many African and Caribbean countries have faced civil war, political unrest, and natural disasters, often leading to immigration or seeking refuge.

It is essential to identify and understand the specific challenges of African and Caribbean communities because there are major differences in their experiences compared to African Americans. Caribbean immigrants share a history of chattel slavery in the New World while East and West African and Haitian immigrants have experienced civil wars or refugee crises. All of these communities also differ greatly due to national and tribal origin, language, education, occupation, migration experiences, and status (Singer et al., 2008).

The population growth in Philadelphia is largely due to an increase in immigration. In Philadelphia, the number African and Caribbean immigrants has grown rapidly with the number of African immigrants increasing at the fastest rate, more than doubling in number between 2000 and 2016 (The Pew Charitable Trusts, 2018). The Metropolitan Policy Program at Brookings reported in 2016 approximately 28 percent of immigrants and refugees came from Latin America and the Caribbean and eight percent came from Africa (Singer et al., 2008). In 2018, it was reported that the percentage of immigrants of the population was 11.5 percent, with approximately 699,344 immigrant residents in the greater Philadelphia region (New American Economy, 2021).

The African and Caribbean immigrant communities are dispersed over the city, though are also known to be concentrated in specific neighborhoods. Recent African immigrants and Black immigrants from the Caribbean often settle in the majority African American neighborhoods in West, Southwest, and Upper North Philadelphia (Singer et al., 2008). More specifically, Caribbean immigrants (Dominican and Haitian immigrants) were found to reside in the Olney and Juniata areas of Philadelphia (The Pew Charitable Trusts, 2018).

African and Caribbean immigrants are a population that continues to grow while contributing to economic revitalization in many parts of Philadelphia. Often immigrants come to Philadelphia from elsewhere for more affordable homes as well as to begin businesses (Takenaka & Osirim, 2010). The Pew Charitable Trusts (2018) also reported that in 2016, 11% of working immigrants were self-employed or owned their own incorporated business. Hence, African and Caribbean immigrants, while not often recognized or provided access to capacity building initiatives, provide diverse economic revitalization that needs further support.

Survey Development

Romana Lee-Akiyama, Deputy Director of the Office of Immigrant Affairs for the City of Philadelphia and Victoria Smith, a Master of Social Work (MSW) Intern from Temple University developed the Nonprofit Assessment for the MCACIA. The survey was created using Google Forms including 40 questions divided into the following sections: Organizational General Information, Services and Programs, Operations and Management Information, and Areas of Growth and Future Planning.

The questionnaire first solicited general information of the organization including the organization's contact information, website, social media platforms, and mission statement. The next section, Services and Programs, inquired information regarding what populations and areas are served, what languages are offered, the programs and services offered, if COVID-19

has influenced the programs and services, and any identified community partners. The survey then transitions to requests for Organization and Management Information including the organization's annual budget size, primary funders, number and types of staff and volunteers, 501(c)(3) status (if applicable), and Board of Directors or Advisory Committee information (if applicable). This section also reviews if the organization is audited annually and if the organization completes an IRS 990 form.

The last section, the primary section to detail requests for capacity building needs, identifies the Areas of Growth and Future Planning to review areas in need of technical assistance or support (e.g. marketing, language services, leadership/program development, etc.). The section also solicits if the organization has received technical support, what technical support has been most helpful, if the organization has any areas of self-identified strong capacity, and if they are willing to share their knowledge. The section and survey concludes by inquiring about the organization's hopes for sustainability and growth, the organization's barriers, and potential solutions to those barriers.

After the survey was developed, it was distributed to the friends and partners of the MCACIA via email and announced at the monthly MCACIA Town Hall Meetings. The Commission's leadership and members supported the OIA's survey by providing further outreach to community members, leaders, and organizations. The Deputy Director and MSW Intern conducted a general search of African and Caribbean Immigrant-led organizations in Philadelphia to cross reference with the survey responses and invite any unsolicited organizations to participate.

Findings

Overall, 24 nonprofit organizations responded to the Nonprofit Assessment Survey. The results demonstrated that approximately 71% of the organizations have a website and 75% have social media for promotion and outreach.

The results displayed a wide array of populations served and ways in which those populations are served. The populations served span including the following communities: African Diaspora, African American, African, Afro-Caribbean, Caribbean-American, Ethiopian, Eritrea, Jamaican, Liberians. Additionally, organizations reported that they also serve youth and adults, Christian populations, elderly, children with disabilities, and individuals inside and outside of Philadelphia. The organizations also offer a variety of languages including English, Spanish, French, Mandigo, Creole, Haitian Creole, Swahili, Arabic, Sudanese Arabic, Amharic, Tigrinya, Patwa, Mende, Yoruba, Liberian Patois, Bambara, Somali, Pulaar, and Wolof.

The organizations reported offering numerous programs, with the most common offerings detailed in Figure 1 below. Due to COVID-19, many of the provided services changed, as 75% of the organizations reported a change due to the pandemic. The changes range from canceling events, to restructuring curriculum or work for virtual programs, and difficulty meeting community members for outreach and support.

Programs and Services Offered

Figure 1: Programs and Services Offered by Reporting Organizations

There were also common trends noted from the organizations' financial information. As displayed in Figure 2, approximately 54% of the organizations have an annual operational budget between $5,001 and $20,000. The organizations reported their most common primary funders including general public/donations (79%), private funding (33%), government funding (21%), and corporations (17%). It is also noted that many of the organizations do not have full-time or part-time staff, as 75% of organizations reported no full-time staff and 54% of organizations reported no part-time staff. However, almost every organization shared that they have a number of regular volunteers, as only two organizations did not report having any volunteers. The majority of the organizations, 79%, reported having 501(c)(3) status and filing a 990 IRS tax form.

Annual Budget Size

- $5,000 or less
- $5,001 to $20,000
- $20,001 to $50,000
- $50,0001 to $100,000
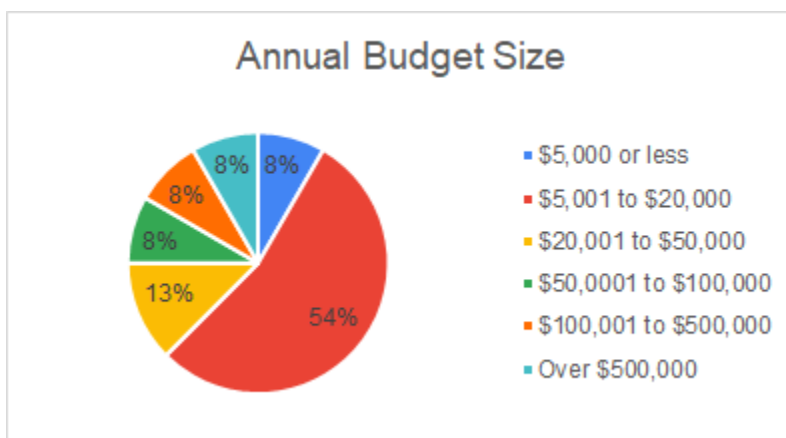- $100,001 to $500,000
- Over $500,000

Figure 2: Annual Organizational Budget Size for Reporting Organizations

The responses of the survey also demonstrated the organizations' areas of core strengths and areas of growth. Figures 3 and 4 detail the areas of self-identified core strength and the areas organizations need additional technical support or assistance. The most common areas of self-identified core strength include the partners and collaboration, program development, and leadership development. The most frequently noted area of needed technical assistance is fundraising/development, followed by innovative models for revenue generation and marketing and promotion. The most common reported barrier was funding or finances, and organizations are most prominently looking to overcome this barrier through grant applications, diversified funding sources, and management of program costs with the support of the city of Philadelphia. The majority of the organizations expressed that they have not received technical assistance before (75%) and are interested in future OIA/MCACIA capacity building initiatives (92%).
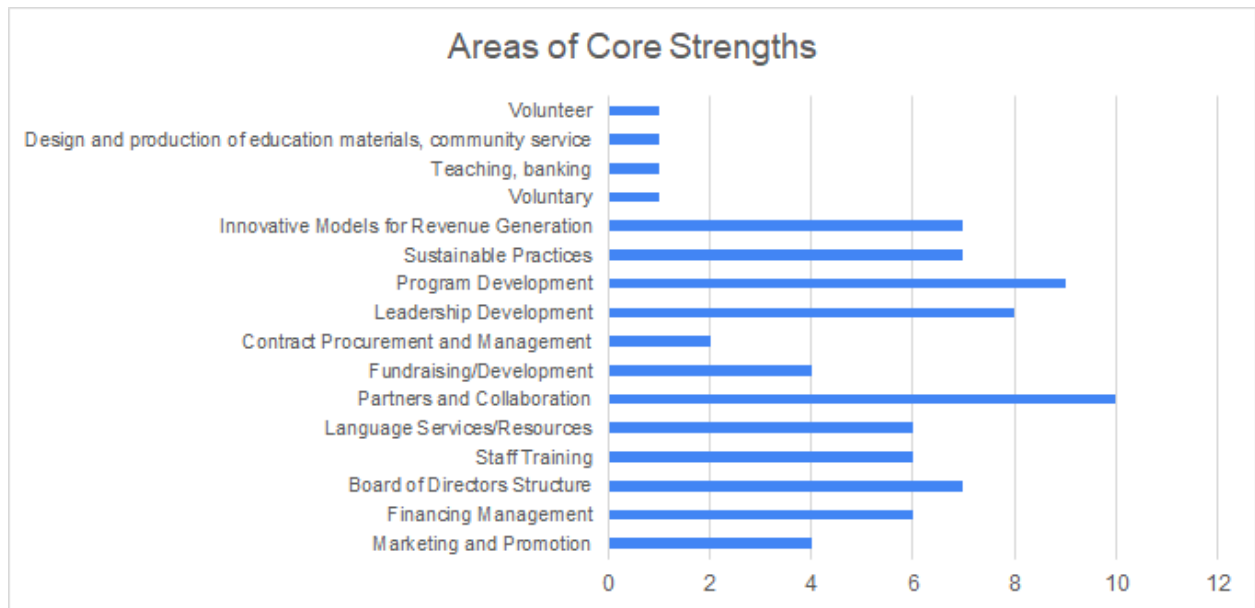

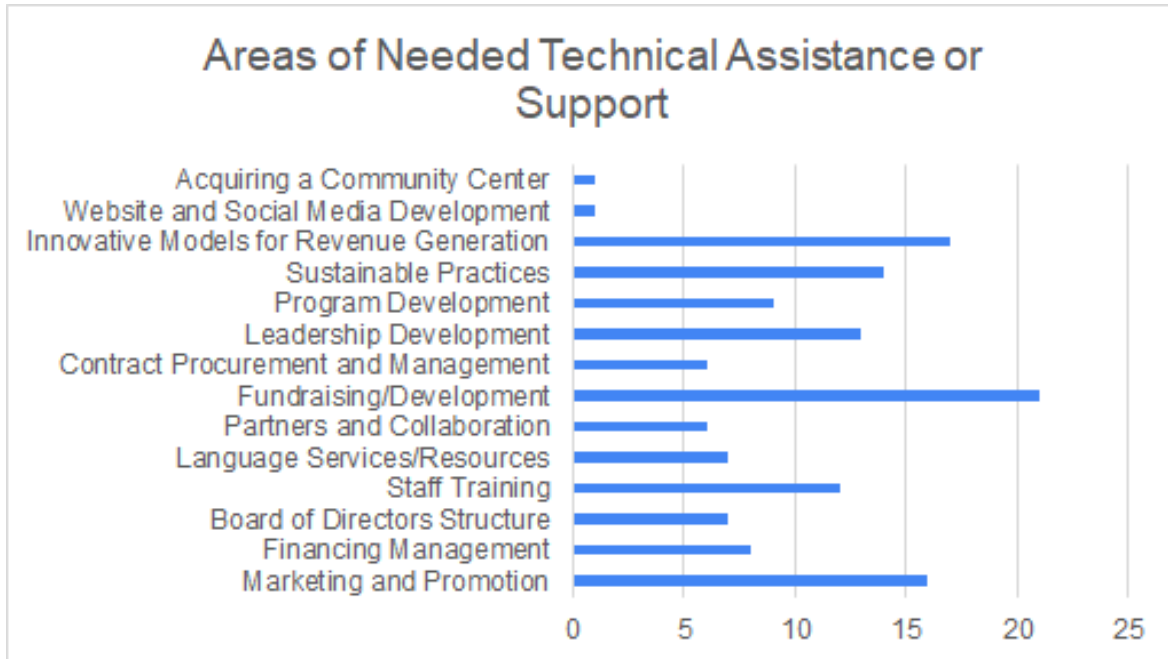Figure 3: Areas of Core Strength Identified by Reporting Organizations

Areas of Needed Technical Assistance or Support

Area	Value
Acquiring a Community Center	1
Website and Social Media Development	1
Innovative Models for Revenue Generation	17
Sustainable Practices	14
Program Development	9
Leadership Development	13
Contract Procurement and Management	6
Fundraising/Development	21
Partners and Collaboration	6
Language Services/Resources	7
Staff Training	12
Board of Directors Structure	7
Financing Management	8
Marketing and Promotion	16

Figure 4: Areas of Needed Technical Assistance or Support

Recommendations

The Nonprofit Assessment Survey identified numerous ways African and Caribbean immigrant-led organizations in Philadelphia need additional support for capacity building initiatives. As detailed above, one of the key areas organizations have identified as a need is fundraising and development support. Organizations expressed concerns with accessing grants and needing additional grant writing support. Given that 52% of the organizations that completed the survey have budgets of under $20,000, it is a challenge for said organizations to secure funding from traditional sources of philanthropy. The climate in many mainstream philanthropic circles is also caution of feeding the smaller fishes in the sea of an overcrowded nonprofit market. Funders would rather support collaboration and strategic partnerships, rather than helping the little fish grow, unless there is demonstrated innovation and an unmet need that a nonprofit is providing. Understanding and dismantling the systemic barriers that Black-led organizations have faced historically within the mainstream philanthropic world is also key to solving this challenge of underfunding (United Way Worldwide, 2020).

Recommendation 1: Develop a pool of funding to support strategic initiatives

Our **first recommendation** is to **develop a pool of funding to support strategic initiatives** led by Black immigrant leaders and organizations that lead to growth of ideas and much needed community programs. As we saw with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, many smaller grassroots initiatives led by African and Caribbean communities did not have access to mainstream funding resources. Left to their own strategies to support their community, they turned to mutual aid and community-based fundraising to deploy critical support to community

members in need. Alternatively, if a pool of dedicated funds was available to build the ongoing capacity of smaller,grassroots initiatives, we can build a foundation of support so that no one is left behind in the next global crisis. Mini-grants can be distributed in line with communities' needs in the form of capacity building, leadership development and collaborative initiatives.

Recommendation 2: **Create a circle of learning**

The **second recommendation** is to **create a circle of learning** for leaders of community-based organizations and initiatives. The MCACIA has historically functioned collaboratively with individuals representing a wide array of communities and organizations that share ideas, resources, and obstacles to overcome in their communities. MCACIA could formalize this process and make intentional regular capacity building learning meetings to delve into topics that impact organizational growth and health. The Stanford Social Innovation Review introduces a model of these processes, a cohort model, that considers a larger ecosystem and provides opportunities for community leaders to share their struggles and develop plans to move forward. The cohort model is also helpful specifically within immigrant and refugee groups who may experience frequent isolation due to either linguistics or culture (Nishimura et al., 2020).

Recommendation 3: **Document and identify the patterns of systemic exclusion**

The **third recommendation** is **to document and identify the patterns of systemic exclusion**, which have led to the limited access for support for Black immigrant communities. In doing so, organizations and those offering capacity building initiatives can develop a more trusting and culturally resonant relationship with community leaders (Nishimura et al., 2020). Underrepresented communities' voices and experiences need to be heard, recognized, and understood, to develop more tailored opportunities since there has been systemic exclusion. Documenting and identifying the patterns will further allow for the adaptation and the creation of new tools that fit for organizations that are immigrant or refugee led.

Recommendation 4: Establish a network of organizations

Our **fourth recommendation** is **to establish a network of organizations** that can share back office infrastructure and administrative support, and identify resources together. The organizations that participated in the survey express the need for support in the following areas:

- Financial support;
- Management and leadership development;
- Innovative models for revenue generation; and
- Marketing and promotion.

Larger, well-established African and Caribbean-led organizations can provide technical support, leadership guidance and other capacity building resources to support the growth of smaller organizations. Additionally, sensitivity to geopolitical alignment is key as well as ensuring equity amongst different ethnic groups to make room for growth of ethnic groups that have been underrepresented.

Recommendation 5: Invest in leaders

The **fifth recommendation** is to **invest in leaders**. It is crucial to provide opportunities for community leaders to be involved in the operations and visioning of such groups including the Mayor's Commission on African and Caribbean Immigrant Affairs and its committees. It is especially important to invest in the next generation of community leaders. Bridging the intergenerational gap and transferring knowledge between generations is also a key priority to the MCACIA. Leaders of the Commission have even explored the idea of creating a Young African and Caribbeans Leadership Academy or initiative to help foster supportive relationships and mentoring opportunities. It is clear that organizations need healthy and strong leadership to achieve greater transformation in their communities. In order for the community to think of legacy and impact, we should provide leaders with a variety of ways to increase their inner well-being from self-care options to professional development and training opportunities (Nishimura et al., 2020).

Conclusion and Next Steps

As the City continues to recover from the global pandemic of COVID-19, it is essential to invest in immigrant community-based organizations, including Black immigrant organizations and leaders. OIA recognizes that community-based organizations have played a critical role in delivering life saving public health information and services, as well as economic recovery resources. Without healthy community-based organizations, communities such as African and Caribbean immigrant communities are left behind. Municipal government depends on the nonprofit community to effectively reach marginalized communities. If a strong network of such organizations does not exist, then it is the community that suffers.

Funding and resources are key to moving forward to support capacity building for African and Caribbean-immigrant led organizations. OIA and MCACIA are committed to working with funding partners in the region to support strategic initiatives and increase access to capacity building opportunities for Black immigrant communities. Additionally, by utilizing the circle of learning and cohort model, in FY22, OIA will develop the first phases of a three-year capacity building program designed to address the gaps in effectively reaching Black immigrant populations. The recommendations to create a circle of learning, establish a network of organizations, and invest in leaders will push the capacity building opportunities further. This survey is the groundwork for the OIA to develop a concrete plan for how to proceed further.

OIA has secured a VISTA through the Mayor's Office of Civic Engagement and Volunteer Services beginning Summer 2021 for a three year project to focus on a capacity building initiative targeting Black immigrant community based organizations. OIA will establish a structure and project that incorporates all five recommendations as identified above. OIA will be recruiting philanthropic partners, capacity building institutions and other key supporters to ensure the success of the project by serving 15 organizations by the summer of 2024. The VISTA will primarily focus on the following: structuring and designing the cohort-based capacity building model; developing curriculum and training modules; and connecting priority City agencies and departments for training opportunities. Over the course of those three years, OIA

hopes to see the recommendations coming to fruition so that we can eliminate barriers and allow for the full participation of Black immigrants into the civic, cultural and economic life of the city of Philadelphia.

Resources

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Appendix

Survey

Nonprofit Survey for Immigrant/Refugee-led organizations

This survey is being generated by the City of Philadelphia's Office of Immigrant Affairs in partnership with the Mayor's Commission on African and Caribbean Immigrant Affairs. The results will be used to create programs and make recommendations for City-wide policies to improve the well-being of immigrant populations in Philadelphia, including capacity building initiatives for community-based organizations.

Please complete the survey by Friday, October 30. Completion of this survey will help your organization to be eligible to participate in future capacity building and technical assistance initiatives from OIA and the Mayor's Commission on African and Caribbean Immigrant Affairs.

If you have any questions regarding the survey, please contact Romana Lee-Akiyama, Director of Multicultural Affairs, OIA at romana.lee-akiyama@phila.gov.

Organizational General Information

Description (optional)

What is the name of your organization? *

Short answer text

Address of organization: *

Short answer text

Do you have a website? *

◯ Yes

◯ No

If yes, what is the URL?

Short answer text

Do you have social media for your organization? *

○ Yes

○ No

If yes, please list your organization's social media handles. For example, @PhillyOIA

Long answer text

Who is the primary leader or point of contact for your organization? List their name and title. *

Short answer text

Phone number for organization's leader(s): *

Short answer text

Email address for organization's leader(s): *

Short answer text

What is the mission of your organization? *

Long answer text

Services and Programs

Description (optional)

What populations does your organization serve? *

Short answer text

What languages does your organization offer? *

Short answer text

Does your organization serve populations within specific geographic boundaries (can be defined by neighborhood or zip code)? *

Short answer text

What programs and services does your organization offer? *

- [ ] Arts & culture

- [ ] Citizen application help

- [ ] English (ESL) classes

- [ ] Health/mental health services

- [ ] Housing assistance

- [ ] Immigrant advocacy

- [ ] Immigrant focused youth programs

- [ ] Job readiness

- [ ] Legal services

- [ ] Refugee/asylee services

- [ ] Victim/witness support

- [ ] Other…

If you would like to add further descriptive information about your programs and services, please write it below.

Long answer text

Have your programs and services changed since COVID-19? *

◯ Yes

◯ No

If yes, how so?

Long answer text

Please list any of your organization's community partners or groups that you regularly work with. *

Long answer text

Operations and Management Information

Description (optional)

What is your organization's annual budget size? *

○ $5,000 or less

○ $5,001 to $20,000

○ $20,001 to $50,000

○ $50,001 to $100,000

○ $100,001 to $500,000

○ Over $500,000

Who are your primary funders? *

- [ ] General public/donations

- [ ] Corporate

- [ ] Private

- [ ] Government

- [ ] Other…

Number of Full-time paid staff: *

Short answer text

Number of Part-time paid staff: *

Short answer text

Number of regular volunteers (non-Board members): *

Short answer text

Is your organization a 501(c)(3)? *

○ Yes

○ No

If so, what year was your organization approved as a 501(c)(3)?

Short answer text

Do you have a Board of Directors or an Advisory Committee? *

○ Yes

○ No

If so, how many individuals are on your board or committee?

Short answer text

Is your organization audited annually? *

○ Yes

○ No

○ Other…

Does your organization file a 990? *

○ Yes

○ No

Areas of Growth and Future Planning

Description (optional)

In what areas does your organization need technical assistance or support? (Check all that apply) *

- [ ] Marketing and Promotion

- [ ] Financing Management

- [ ] Board of Directors Structure

- [ ] Staff Training

- [ ] Language Services/Resources

- [ ] Partners and Collaboration

- [ ] Fundraising/Development

- [ ] Contract Procurement and Management

- [ ] Leadership Development

- [ ] Program Development

- [ ] Sustainable Practices

- [ ] Innovative Models for Revenue Generation

- [ ] Other...

Has your organization received technical assistance previously? *

- ( ) Yes

- ( ) No

If so, what was the assistance and what was the most helpful?

Long answer text

Does your organization need any specific support from the OIA for language materials? *

- ( ) Yes

- ( ) No

- ( ) Other...

In what areas does your organization have a strong capacity? (Check all that apply)

- [ ] Marketing and Promotion

- [ ] Financing Management

- [ ] Board of Directors Structure

- [ ] Staff Training

- [ ] Language Services/Resources

- [ ] Partners and Collaboration

- [ ] Fundraising/Development

- [ ] Contract Procurement and Management

- [ ] Leadership Development

- [ ] Program Development

- [ ] Sustainable Practices

- [ ] Innovative Models for Revenue Generation

- [ ] Other...

Are you willing to share your knowledge with other community based organizations?

○ Yes

○ No

○ Maybe

How is your organization hoping to sustain and grow in the future? *

Long answer text

What are your biggest barriers to reaching your goals as an organization? *

Long answer text

What are your proposed solutions to overcoming the barriers to success, and what kind of technical assistance do you need? *

Long answer text

Are you interested in learning more about or participating in future OIA/MCACIA capacity building initiatives?

○ Yes

○ No

○ Maybe

Name and Title of person completing this form

Short answer text

Reporting Organizations

African Community Learning Program

African Cultural Alliance of North America

African Family Health Organization (AFAHO)

AFRICOM

All For All Agency: AFA Agency

Antigua and Barbuda Association of Philadelphia Inc

Asia Adams Save OUR Children Foundation

Caribbean Community in Philadelphia

Caribbean Festival & Cultural Organization of Pennsylvania

Consulate of Jamaica, Philadelphia

Debre Genet Kidus Ammanuel Church

Echoes of Africa

Ethio-Mental Health Council

Ethiopian Community Association of Greater Philadelphia

Haitian-American United for Change

Ivorians of the Deleware Valley (IDV)

Jamaicans United of Greater Philadelphia, Inc

Liberian Association of Pennsylvania

Moringa Love

Salone FC

The St. Vincent and the Grenadines Organization of Pennsylvania Inc (SVGOP Inc)

St. Kitts and Nevis Tri State Association

The Sudanese American Community of Greater Philadelphia

Team Jamaica Bickle Philadelphia