www.lincolnasiancenter.org/fusion
402.477.3446

An Ethnic Self-Help Grant for Lincoln's Refugee Communities

Fusion

www.lincolnasiancenter.org/fusion
402.477.3446

What is the Fusion Project?

The name of this project, Fusion, is from fusion energy. Fusion is a form of energy that renews itself, or in other words, is self-sufficient. This is one of the main goals of this project – assisting refugees in becoming self-sufficient.

The Fusion Project is guided by 3 main goals. The first 2 goals are driven by volunteer liaisons and PT coordinators; all of these positions are refugees from several different cultures residing in Lincoln.

The third goal is met through the head coordinator with assistance from the PT coordinators.

Fusion

3 Main Goals of Fusion

I. For the refugee communities to work together to share and learn about developing strong ethnic communities.

II. For refugee families to achieve self-sufficiency and social and civic integration into their new country and community.

III. For Lincoln's mainstream community to be better equipped to work with refugees.

www.lincolnasiancenter.org/fusion
402.477.3446

Fusion

Structure of Fusion

The refugee communities are divided into 4 groups:

- African
- Asian
- Eastern European
- Middle Eastern

Each of the groups coordinators role is to stay connected to the different communities while carrying out the plan that was developed by the volunteer liaisons to help their respective communities become self-sufficient.

Fusion

Structure of Fusion

Fusion tries to maintain at least 3 volunteer liaisons for each of the 4 teams to continue to assist with carrying out the plan and receive input from the many different refugees cultures.

The plan for each team includes several events throughout the year that include employees from several agencies that provide assistance, a newsletter with cultural advice and agency information and the development of a cultural guide book focusing on cultural advice specific to Lincoln.

www.lincolnasiancenter.org/fusion
402.477.3446

Fusion

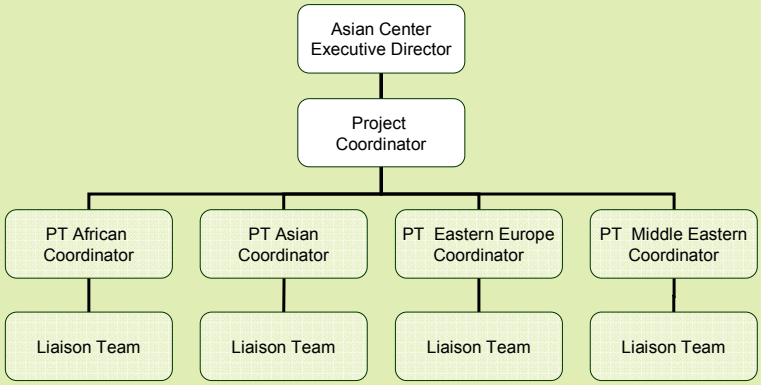
Structure of Fusion

Topics of the cultural guide book include:

- Employment
- Language and Education
- Role of the Police
- Health Care System
- Transportation
- General Information (use of libraries, dialing 9-1-1, weather preparation)

Fusion

Structure of Fusion



www.lincolnasiancenter.org/fusion
402.477.3446

Fusion

Informal Partnerships

Throughout the first year, Fusion developed a number of informal partnerships and collaborations with agencies and inter-agency groups.

Agencies include:

- Center for People in Need
- NATF
- MTI
- Lincoln Action Program
- BryanLGH
- ACLU
- Goodwill Industries
- LLCHD
- Lincoln Literacy Council
- Housing Authority
- Lincoln Police Department
- Lutheran Refugee Services

Fusion

Informal Partnerships

Fusion also presented to a number of informal agencies and inter-agency groups about Fusion and the different cultures in Lincoln.

Agencies include:

- Mayor's Multicultural Committee
- Lincoln Libraries
- Lincoln Area Agency on Aging
- St. Elizabeth
- BryanLGH
- NATF
- 27th Street Providers Group
- Bi-Monthly Refugee Group
- Housing Authority

www.lincolnasiancenter.org/fusion
402.477.3446

Fusion

Informal Partnerships

Fusion also provided several trainings to the coordinators and liaisons by local and national professional agencies. These agencies include Leadership Lincoln, FIRST Project, and the ROSE Project*. Lincoln was one of 3 cities in the U.S. chosen for this pilot project.

*A collaboration of SEARAC and Mosaica – two agencies specializing in developing curriculum on refugee advocacy and building organizations.

Fusion

Highlights of Year 1

- In our first fiscal year Fusion was received 2 TV spots,2 LJS articles; 1 on front page of the local section, an article in Neighborhood extra and in strictly business and a radio interview.
- Each of the 4 team's plan was developed by a volunteer liaison team of 14, from over 9 different cultures.
- Fusion hosted 4 events for the refugee communities that featured educational topics of employment, language, role of the police, health care and housing. Over 300 people attended.

www.lincolnasiancenter.org/fusion
402.477.3446

Fusion

Highlights of Year 1

- Newsletters began to print with 294 community members signed up to receive them in their native language.
- An independent first year project evaluation was completed by UNL department of public policy. This will be attached to the website by December of 2007.
- Multiple trainings have been provided for the coordinators, liaisons and other community advocates free of charge not only has this helped them help their communities but has begun building a bridge between many respected refugee communities from several different cultures.

Fusion

What's coming in year 2?

Cultural Guide:

Our goal is to finish by the end of 2007 and then directly disperse the guides into the different communities by the coordinators. Community members will be given a brief explanation of the purpose and how to use the guide book and encourage to share it when they meet other newcomers.

Newsletters:

Newsletter for each of the four teams will be released on a quarterly basis.

Events:

We will attempt at least 3 events for each team, reinforcing the educational aspect of the events, utilizing the respect of the coordinators and liaisions of their respective communities.

www.lincolnasiancenter.org/fusion
402.477.3446

Fusion

What's coming in year 2?

Mainstream community outreach

An attempt to involve and further educate mainstream agencies/businesses is in development. Fusion will also continue to give free presentations about the diverse cultures in Lincoln.

Further Refugee Outreach

Liaisons and coordinators will work on reaching refugee groups to involve them more with the events and aspects of Fusion plans.

…and more

Fusion

Anecdotal Results

- African event and ladies blood pressure
- Middle Eastern event and employment
- African event and drummers

www.lincolnasiancenter.org/fusion
402.477.3446

Fusion

Thank you

Thank you to the advisory committee for input and assistance:

- Beatty Brasch
- Kit Boesch
- Sue Hinrichs
- Christine Kutschkau
- Modesta Putla
- Nancy Shank

Fusion

Thank you

Thank you to the coordinators and all the liaisons making the Fusion Project possible!