



April 23, 2025

OUR CITY OF NATIONS

“Stronger Together: 10 Years of Our City Of Nations and an Eye on the Future”

Executive Summary

Introduction

Our City of Nations (OCON) 7.0 was a one-day virtual conference held on Zoom and administered by the Medical College of Wisconsin’s Office of Global Health. The conference focused on timely current United States federal administrative policy changes caused by the change in presidency, as well as the past successes of the OCON initiative as well as highlighting the important social and governmental organizations supporting newcomers to our country. A total of 271 registered participants represented 87 different organizations mainly across Wisconsin but also the nation and world. Through the conference, attendees were able to come together to strengthen relationships across academic, behavioral health, government, healthcare, legal, non-profit, and social service sectors and their personal understanding of newcomer needs. The 2025 conference welcomed thirty speakers of diverse professional backgrounds, providing services to and with newcomers or those transitioning to establish residency in the United States. We heard varying perspectives from the State of Wisconsin Department of Children and Families’ Bureau of Refugee Programs leadership, local refugee influencers, and professionals working in and around the resettlement field which created a safe space to share information and discuss current issues.

Conference Vision

Provide a platform for improved skills attainment, sharing, and captivation of advanced research and practices within the prism of human wellness, being interchangeably influenced by local and global factors.

Conference Goal

Mobilize and harness the diverse knowledge, capacities, and services of various stakeholders engaged to learn from and with those who interface with refugee and immigrant communities in the United States.

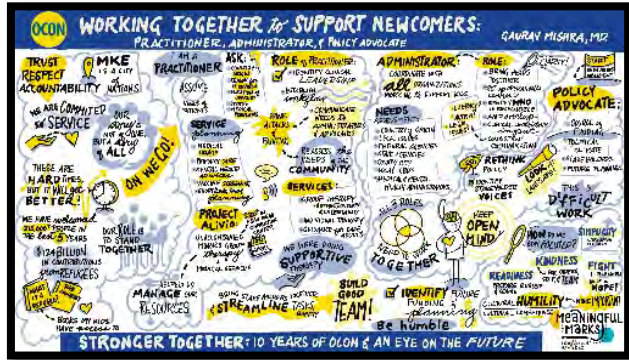
Conference Educational objectives

1. Celebrate the achievement of 10 years of OCON and learn about our shared vision and goals.
2. Discover 2-3 practical strategies to strengthen their professional network, broaden resource accessibility, and implement best practices for effectively serving and collaborating with newcomers through an interdisciplinary and intersectoral approach.

Content Covered

Through keynote and plenary speakers, a panel discussion, and breakout sessions, the conference covered the following topics: Supporting Newcomers: Practitioner, Administrator, and Policy Advocate, Defending Immigrants, Refugees, and Asylum Seekers Against Unlawful Cruelty, Navigating Refugee Services in a Rapidly Changing Landscape, When Girls Paint the World, Lessons from ESL Teachers in MPS, Health Videos as a Culturally Sound Approach to Integration Among Newcomer Population, Inspiring stories of refugees reaching success, The Benefits of Complementary Therapies in Contributing to Torture Survivors, Developing Collaborative Partnerships to Care for Complex Medical and Mental Health Cases of Immigrants, and Refugee Healthcare.

Throughout the conference artist Sherrill Knezel drew the conversation, creating meaningful works of art that illustrate the sentiment of the attendees.

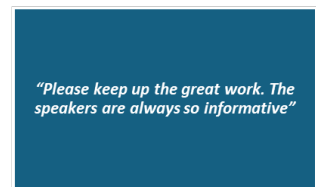
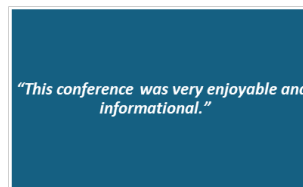
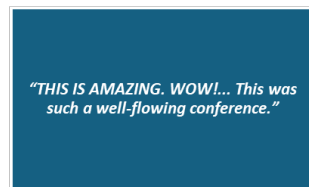
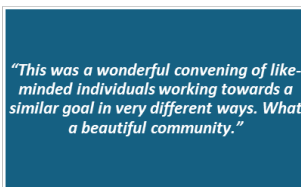


Symposium Evaluation

Participants' formal feedback on the conference was documented through two online evaluations. The first survey asked participants who sought continuing education credits, what they learned from each session. This survey was completed by 18 participants. The data from this survey shows that every presentation either *met or exceeded expectations*, with most falling into the latter. The second survey asked participants their thoughts on the conference overall. This anonymous survey was emailed after the event. The survey consisted of seven questions and was completed by few (three). They did confirm their ability to deliver services to newcomers improved, and they were able to identify two new resources and agency connections to share with colleagues, and the populations they serve. A full summary of responses for both surveys is available upon request.



Participant Feedback



Future Steps

The future direction for OCON 8.0, which will be held on November 5, 2026, at the Milwaukee School of Engineering will be a continuation of the conversation of this seventh convening. Feedback on the conference was documented online and the overall consensus was that conference goers benefit from in-person convening. Participants mentioned that online conferences do not offer the ability to form long-term connections. OCON is committed to working together for the betterment of our neighborhoods, cities, and region.

Gratitude

The Medical College of Wisconsin's Office of Global Health is the fiscal and administrative home of OCON's initiatives. **We are grateful to the following 2025 conference co-sponsors for their generous donation to sustain this educational opportunity.**

