



White House Task Force on New Americans

One-Year Progress Report

December 2015



December 15, 2015

Dear Mr. President:

One year ago, you established the White House Task Force on New Americans, an interagency effort to develop a coordinated federal strategy to better integrate new Americans into communities and support state and local efforts to do the same. As you noted when creating this initiative, “By focusing on the civic, economic, and linguistic integration of new Americans, we can help immigrants and refugees in the United States contribute fully to our economy and their communities.” Today, we are pleased to share this one-year status report on the Task Force’s efforts.

In April, we submitted *Strengthening Communities by Welcoming All Residents: A Federal Strategic Action Plan on Immigrant and Refugee Integration*. That report outlined 16 core goals and 48 recommendations to enhance the civic, economic, and linguistic integration of new Americans. We gathered promising ideas from 16 executive departments, agencies, and White House offices, and from state and local governments, business leaders, and community, faith, and philanthropic organizations.

Among its accomplishments to date, the Task Force has:

- Spearheaded the Building Welcoming Communities Campaign to encourage local immigrant and refugee integration efforts, and organized a White House Building Welcoming Communities convening for dozens of participating cities and counties;
- Launched two initiatives: the “Stand Stronger” Citizenship Awareness campaign with a video message from you and in partnership with local communities, as well as a complementary campaign at U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services to promote awareness of the rights, responsibilities, and importance of United States citizenship;
- Committed 150 Welcoming Communities AmeriCorps members to nearly 100 communities through partnerships with the YMCA, Catholic Charities, and eight refugee resettlement organizations to assist local communities with integration efforts;
- Launched the Small Business Administration’s “Made It In America” website to promote immigrant entrepreneurship and piloted new “SBA 101” classes for immigrant and refugee entrepreneurs;
- Expanded access to linguistic integration and education by creating and disseminating best practices and hosting webinars, regional convenings, and other activities to connect new Americans with education systems; and
- Supported five communities seeking to build networks to strengthen integration through adult education providers.

Immigrants and refugees have always been a source of our Nation's strength. By extending a welcoming hand, the United States has continually tapped new sources of economic and cultural vitality. The integration plan you tasked us with developing is a more focused, deliberate approach to the federal government's efforts to integrate new Americans. This approach advances your larger goals of promoting accountability in our immigration system and better safeguarding our national security while maintaining our heritage as a nation that welcomes immigrants and refugees from countries around the globe. We can and must continue to reunite families; welcome students, workers, and entrepreneurs who seek to contribute to our economy; and be a beacon of hope for vulnerable refugees.

In the months ahead, the Task Force will continue to generate momentum on immigrant and refugee integration through a whole-of-society approach. This initiative has already helped drive greater reflection and action among government officials, business executives, teachers, philanthropists, and faith and nonprofit leaders who are effectively collaborating to strengthen local communities as places of welcome for immigrants and refugees.

As you requested, we will review and update our plan periodically, and present to you any updated recommendations or findings. On behalf of the Task Force and as the daughter and son of immigrants and refugees, we thank you for the continued opportunity to engage on this issue of great significance to our country's future. As you noted in your memorandum, "Our success as a nation of immigrants is rooted in our ongoing commitment to welcoming and integrating newcomers into the fabric of our country."

Cecilia Muñoz, Director
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THE TASK FORCE ON NEW AMERICANS MEMBERS

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The Corporation for National and Community Service

The Department of Agriculture

The Department of Commerce

The Department of Education

The Department of Health and Human Services

The Department of Homeland Security

The Department of Housing and Urban Development

The Department of Justice

The Department of Labor

The Department of State

The Department of Transportation

The Small Business Administration

The Office of Management and Budget

The White House Domestic Policy Council

The White House Office for Intergovernmental Affairs and Public Engagement

The White House Office of Science and Technology Policy

The White House National Economic Council

The White House National Security Council

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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The United States has a long and proud history as a nation of immigrants. We are stronger as a nation when we welcome immigrants and refugees into our communities and harness their talents, energy, and entrepreneurial spirit. Immigrants and refugees contribute to our country's social and cultural fabric, and are critical to our country's continued prosperity.¹

According to the most recent estimates, there are approximately 42 million foreign-born residents living in the United States.² These include the more than three million refugees who have resettled here since 1975 from countries that span the globe.³ Over the next 20 years, immigrants and their children will account for 85 percent of the net growth in the U.S. labor force.⁴ The Obama Administration recognizes that our success as a nation of immigrants is rooted in our historic ability to integrate newcomers into American society. With the growing number of newcomers, it is imperative that we continue to uphold our finest traditions of welcoming and integrating immigrants and refugees.

The federal government is guided by the core principle that being American is not about what we look like or where we come from. Rather, what makes us Americans is our shared commitment to an ideal — that all of us are created equal, and all of us have the opportunity to make of our lives what we will. In the spirit of this principle, President Obama established the [White House Task Force for New Americans](#) (“Task Force”) on November 21, 2014 to further strengthen the federal government's integration efforts and make them more strategic and deliberate. The Task Force strives to bring immigrants, refugees, and receiving communities together to create welcoming communities and to ensure that all community members have the tools and opportunities to succeed and fully contribute to our nation.

On April 14, 2015, the Task Force submitted a [Strategic Action Plan](#) to the President. The Strategic Action Plan included four areas of focus: 1) Building welcoming communities; 2) Strengthening existing pathways to naturalization and promoting civic engagement; 3) Supporting skill development, fostering entrepreneurship and small business growth, and protecting new American workers; and 4) Expanding opportunities for linguistic integration and education. The Task Force charted key goals to make progress in these areas of focus and recommended specific actions for federal departments and agencies. This report provides an update on the Task Force's progress in executing these recommended actions. Additionally, the report outlines the Task Force's plans for 2016.

BUILDING WELCOMING COMMUNITIES

Communities play a vital role in welcoming immigrants and refugees by celebrating and valuing their diverse assets, connecting new residents to long-time residents, and building support networks to encourage strong and cohesive communities. Welcoming communities recognize that immigrant and refugee integration is a two-way process with shared opportunities and responsibilities, and that maintaining America's competitive global advantage requires that communities fully embrace their strongest resource: their people.

To strengthen welcoming efforts, the Task Force launched the [Building Welcoming Communities Campaign](#) (BWCC), in partnership with [Welcoming America](#), a national nonprofit organization. The BWCC focuses on three critical integration pillars: civic integration, economic integration, and linguistic integration. Through this campaign, the President is calling on communities to engage in local immigrant and refugee integration efforts to build inclusive, welcoming communities. Currently, there are 48 BWCC member localities across the Nation. These communities are encouraging immigrants and refugees to fully participate in civic life and seeking to harness the full potential of all residents.

As part of its commitment to the BWCC, the [Corporation for National and Community Service](#) (CNCS) is supporting a new [AmeriCorps VISTA](#) project with Catholic Charities USA and the YMCA. AmeriCorps VISTA has also developed [guidance](#) to encourage CNCS State offices to identify additional opportunities to support integration efforts of local governments and nonprofit organizations. To further bolster the Task Force's commitment to welcome and resettle refugees, CNCS has also partnered with the Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS) Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) to use AmeriCorps to assist local communities with integrating refugee populations by placing AmeriCorps members in eight refugee resettlement agencies.

STRENGTHENING EXISTING PATHWAYS TO NATURALIZATION AND PROMOTING CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

As a Nation rooted in the fundamental value that all people are created equal, we recognize that we are stronger and more unified when we share in the rights and responsibilities upon which our country was founded. The naturalization process and test are designed to ensure that new citizens have the foundation to participate in American democracy and our civic institutions. Naturalization requirements, such as knowledge of basic English and U.S. history and civics, encourage civic learning and build a strong foundation upon which new citizens can exercise their rights and responsibilities. This knowledge of English and civics, combined with a greater sense of belonging and equality that citizenship confers, empower many naturalized citizens to become more civically engaged. Additionally, research has shown that citizenship benefits the U.S. economy as a whole, the communities in which immigrants live, and the businesses in which they work and which they establish.⁵

In recognition of the importance of citizenship to immigrants and the Nation, in 2015, President Obama launched the [“Stand Stronger” Citizenship Awareness Campaign](#) on September 17 (Constitution Day and Citizenship Day). This effort aims to break down the barriers for permanent residents who are eligible to apply for U.S. citizenship and to allow people of all backgrounds, whether native- or foreign-born, to have an equal stake in the future of our Nation. The “Stand Stronger” Campaign is a project of the nonprofit Civic Nation, in collaboration with the White House and the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). Launched in partnership with community partners and civic leaders across the country, the “Stand Stronger” Campaign seeks to encourage those eligible to naturalize to take this next critical step in their American journey and commit to citizenship. Consistent with the recommendations of the Task Force's Strategic Action Plan, USCIS has also developed a series of initiatives to improve customer service, highlight the importance of citizenship, and support aspiring citizens. These initiatives included new online citizenship

preparation resources, the ability to pay the naturalization fee with a credit card, a citizenship public education and awareness campaign, and new and ongoing outreach and engagement with local governments.

SUPPORTING SKILL DEVELOPMENT, FOSTERING ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND SMALL BUSINESS GROWTH, AND PROTECTING NEW AMERICAN WORKERS

Immigrants and refugees play an important role in the U.S. economy. While the foreign-born make up 13 percent of the overall U.S. population, foreign-born workers comprise 17 percent of the U.S. labor force.⁶ Immigrants and refugees are more likely than native-born individuals to start businesses.⁷ For example, a study by the Partnership for a New American Economy found that more than 40 percent of Fortune 500 companies were founded by immigrants or the children of immigrants.⁸ Another study found that over half of new tech startups in Silicon Valley had at least one immigrant founder.⁹ Like native-born Americans, immigrants aspire to obtain economic security for themselves and their families.

Through the efforts of several Task Force members, the Obama Administration is promoting the economic integration of immigrants and refugees. For example, the Small Business Administration (SBA) launched its New Americans Initiative which focuses on helping new Americans succeed in the entrepreneurial and small-business landscape. As part of this effort, SBA piloted “Small Business Training Courses for New Americans” and partnered with local organizations in targeted cities with high concentrations of immigrants and refugees to host more than 80 “SBA 101” classes. SBA also launched the [“Made It In America”](#) website to promote new American success stories and motivate individuals to take advantage of SBA tools and resources. SBA also released the Business Smart Toolkit, a 3-module ready-to-use workshop toolkit that equips community organizations to help new Americans understand the steps to starting a business that is credit ready. Additionally, the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL), with assistance from the Department of Education (ED), published the [“Career Pathways Toolkit: A Guide for System Development”](#) to help workers, including new American workers, acquire marketable skills and industry-recognized credentials by encouraging greater collaboration across adult education, post-secondary education, health and human service organizations, and other workforce partners.

On July 22, 2014, President Obama signed into law the [Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act](#) (WIOA), bipartisan legislation reforming the public workforce system. WIOA emphasizes job-driven approaches to workforce development with a focus on career pathway models for a range of job seekers and workers, prioritizing individuals with barriers to employment, including new Americans. The Administration has proposed regulations to implement this important law and expects to finalize these rules soon. WIOA supports the economic integration of new Americans by providing funding for State programs for adult English as a Second Language (ESL) and civics classes while obtaining higher job qualifications and securing employment.¹⁰

Additionally, the U.S. Department of Justice’s (DOJ) [Office of Special Counsel for Immigration-Related Unfair Employment Practices \(OSC\)](#) continues to enforce a federal law that protects U.S. citizens and other work-authorized individuals—including immigrants, refugees and asylees—from employment discrimination based on citizenship status and national origin. Last

fiscal year, OSC obtained more than \$1.5 million from unlawful employers in the form of civil penalties and back pay for workers.

EXPANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR LINGUISTIC INTEGRATION AND EDUCATION

English-language acquisition is vitally important for new Americans to integrate successfully into their communities. Though some new Americans are fluent in English when they arrive to the United States, many are not. Understanding and communicating in English has a significant impact on the ability of an immigrant or refugee to secure a job consistent with his or her qualifications or work experience, to advance in a career, and to become civically active in the community. Therefore, one of the most effective ways to help non-English-speaking immigrants and refugees integrate into American society is to support their acquisition of English, while also valuing and recognizing the importance of maintaining native-language proficiency to preserve culture and intergenerational communication and support our global competitiveness.

The Administration strives to ensure that English learners (ELs) in the United States have access to high-quality language instruction programs so they can ultimately advance their educational and career goals. To further this, the [U.S. Department of Education](#) (ED) released [English Learner civil rights guidance](#) in January 2015 designed to help State and local education agencies in meeting their legal obligations to ELs. A companion [English Learner Tool Kit](#), released by ED in September 2015, serves as an additional resource for providing ELs with the support needed to attain English-language proficiency while meeting college- and career-readiness standards. In addition, DOJ continued to enforce civil rights laws to make sure immigrant students can enroll in school and that ELs receive the support and instruction they need to learn English and participate equally in educational programs.

ED also continued to support five nonprofit networks to develop and refine ways to more successfully integrate immigrants and refugees through its [Networks for Integrating New Americans](#) project. These communities are establishing multi-sector partnerships to further integration efforts with adult education service providers serving in a critical convening role. In order to reach educators and community leaders serving new Americans, ED has sponsored a series of [seven webinars](#) focused on the educational and linguistic integration of immigrants and refugees.

LOOKING AHEAD TO NEXT YEAR

As we move forward next year, the Task Force will continue to implement recommended actions and develop new initiatives to meet the core goals of our Strategic Action Plan. Key efforts in 2016 will include:

- **Promoting Welcoming Communities:** The Task Force will continue to support BWCC localities and encourage new cities and counties to join the BWCC. To more directly engage with communities, the Task Force plans to host regional Immigrant Integration convenings throughout the country to bring together local multi-sector networks and strengthen regional federal interagency collaboration and local community partnerships. CNCS will continue to build local capacity through the AmeriCorps VISTA Program and

by supporting their national partners, the YMCA and Catholic Charities, and refugee resettlement organizations, as these partners place AmeriCorps VISTA members in communities to assist in building local capacity to support integration efforts.

- **Expanding Access to Information about the Naturalization Process:** The Task Force will expand the “Stand Stronger” Citizenship Awareness Campaign by focusing on regions with the largest populations of lawful permanent residents eligible to apply for naturalization. The next phase of the campaign will include new public service announcements to raise awareness and materials designed to provide information on the naturalization process and citizenship rights and responsibilities. Ongoing efforts include partnerships with USCIS and other federal entities, Civic Nation, local governments, philanthropic and business communities, and local and national organizations. To build additional capacity for citizenship preparation services at the local level, USCIS is exploring ways that its grant funding can further expand citizenship preparation programs, particularly those offered by small, community-based organizations. USCIS is also working to offer naturalization applicants the ability to use [myUSCIS](#) to e-file the Form N-400, Application for Naturalization and Form N-600, Application for Certificate of Citizenship.
- **Implementing the New Workforce Law:** Task Force members will continue efforts to implement WIOA. DOL and ED will finalize regulations and anticipate conducting robust outreach. This includes providing additional guidance to educate communities about tools available under the new law and to strengthen connections between the workforce system and immigrant- and refugee-serving organizations. Additionally, the Task Force plans to host a Credentialing Academy in early 2016. This convening will provide agencies, national experts, philanthropic leaders, and local communities with an opportunity to share current best practices and to develop tools and resources to address credentialing and licensing issues that skilled immigrant and refugee professionals confront when seeking to enter the workforce.
- **Expanding Opportunities for Linguistic Integration and Education:** In 2016, the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanics, housed within ED, will publish a brief focused on San Antonio’s early learning efforts with an emphasis on cross-sector collaboration. This information will inform later grantees and emerging communities on how to work together, leverage resources, including State and federal grants, to provide early learning for all students, including Hispanics and ELs, many of which are immigrants or the children of immigrants.

II. BUILDING WELCOMING COMMUNITIES

The United States attracts individuals from across the globe who believe in, and strive for, the opportunity to pursue the American Dream. This is what makes our country great. Today, a growing number of communities are recognizing the potential benefits of pursuing a welcoming approach. Recognizing that integration is a two-way process that occurs primarily at the local level, the Task Force outlined three specific and targeted goals in our Strategic Action Plan to support initiatives that bring together new Americans and receiving communities: (1) Build community capacity to welcome and engage immigrants and refugees; (2) Increase opportunities for communities to utilize federal funding streams to develop and implement local integration plans; and (3) Use the convening power of the Federal Government to celebrate new Americans, highlight State and local integration strategies, and encourage welcoming communities' initiatives.

Since the Task Force's Strategic Action Plan was released, many communities have responded enthusiastically to the recommendations and are implementing them on their own. Others – big cities and small towns alike – have formally committed to making their communities more welcoming by joining the [Building Welcoming Communities Campaign](#) (BWCC).

BUILDING WELCOMING COMMUNITIES CAMPAIGN

Through the BWCC, President Obama is calling on communities to commit, collaborate, and act on a set of principles that focus on creating positive environments for all. The BWCC is an opportunity to demonstrate authentic commitment to immigrant integration. Thus far, 48 cities and counties have made a commitment to implement the principles of the BWCC.

Communities can participate in the Campaign by committing to one of three tiers of involvement:

- **Tier 1** is for new welcoming communities commit to connecting immigrants and refugees with their local communities to develop policies, programs, or initiatives that build welcoming communities and provide all residents with the knowledge and tools to thrive and fully participate in their communities;
- **Tier 2** is for welcoming communities interested in taking the next step by establishing a multi-sector collaborative to create a vision and strategy and a comprehensive plan to expand opportunities for new Americans and all residents; or
- **Tier 3** is targeted at welcoming communities who seek to serve as national models by demonstrating exceptional progress along the roadmap and in one or more of three key action areas. These are include: encouraging immigrants and refugees to participate fully in civic life, harnessing the full potential of all residents, and supporting English-language learning.

The Task Force is committed to providing participating BWCC cities and counties with support and technical assistance. In August, the Task Force launched the BWCC webinar series. These webinars offer the opportunity for cities and counties to hear from federal agency experts on a variety of federal programs, policies, and initiatives and learn about best practices from other cities and counties as well as community leaders and national experts.

On October 7, 2015, the Task Force hosted the White House Building Welcoming Communities Convening in Washington, DC. This Convening brought together more than 175 participants, including Task Force members, national experts, and representatives from BWCC cities and counties. The event featured two panels where participants learned about best practices from welcoming communities and emerging efforts across the country. A key highlight of the Convening was agency breakout sessions where BWCC localities heard directly from Task Force agencies about opportunities to receive technical assistance and coordinate with agencies at the local level. The Convening provided a meaningful opportunity for cities and counties to learn from each other, for federal agencies to offer information about technical assistance opportunities, and for national experts to share insights on emerging best practices.

In an effort to provide guidance to those communities interested in creating more welcoming, inclusive environments, the Task Force has also released new tools and guidance. The Task Force created a [Roadmap to Success](#), which provides a menu of options for committed localities to transform the BWCC principles into action. Using this Roadmap, communities can choose from a menu of specific ideas for action that are built around the principles of strategic planning and infrastructure development; equitable access and trust-building; awareness of pathways to citizenship and civic engagement; skill development, entrepreneurship, and worker protections; and linguistic education and integration. The Roadmap offers concrete ideas so that localities can tailor welcoming efforts to meet unique community needs. With assistance from

Participating Cities and Counties		
Akron, OH	Crete, NE	New Orleans, LA
Allegheny County, PA	Dayton, OH	New York, NY
Anchorage, AK	Decatur, GA	Oakley, CA
Atlanta, GA	Denver, CO	Philadelphia, PA
Austin, TX	Detroit, MI	Pittsburgh, PA
Baltimore, MD	Grand Forks, ND	Salt Lake City, UT
Beaverton, OR	High Point, NC	Salt Lake County, UT
Boise, ID	Houston, TX	San Jose, CA
Boston, MA	Jersey City, NJ	Santa Fe, NM
Buffalo, NY	Lincoln, NE	Schuyler, NE
Charlotte, NC	Los Angeles, CA	Seattle, WA
Chicago, IL	Louisville, KY	St. Louis, MO
City & County San Francisco, CA	Macomb County, MI	St. Louis County, MO
City of Dodge City, KS	Montgomery County, MD	Sterling Heights, MI
Clinton Township, MI	Nashville, TN	Toledo-Lucas County, OH
Columbus, OH	Newark, NJ	York, PA

ORR, Welcoming America also published a [Community Planning Process Guide](#). This guide is designed to be a practical, hands-on approach for local communities to welcome new talent and recognize the importance of an inclusive and dynamic approach. The community of Boise, Idaho is presented as a model community that effectively fosters a community climate in which all immigrants and refugees are welcomed and encouraged to contribute to their fullest potential.

As we head into the coming year, the Task Force looks forward to offering additional technical assistance opportunities to BWCC cities and counties in eight core areas identified as priorities by current BWCC cities and counties. The Task Force will work with federal agencies as well as national nonprofit organizations to provide this technical assistance. The Task Force also looks forward to highlighting best practices among local communities, particularly those participating in the BWCC, at regional convenings and other forums so that localities can learn from each other's experiences, garner support, and collaborate to build a more welcoming nation.

Welcoming Pittsburgh Plan: In May 2014, Mayor Bill Peduto, launched the [Welcoming Pittsburgh](#) initiative, convening a diverse and distinguished 40-person Advisory Council from a pool of more than 100 applicants, to collaborate in developing priorities and recommendations. The process included seven Advisory Council planning sessions and a broad public-outreach initiative that engaged more than 3,000 people to ensure a community-driven planning process. The [Welcoming Pittsburgh Plan](#) was released in June 2015. It identifies community-led recommendations and includes a broad set of recommendations that are prioritized as Short term (6 months to 1 year), Mid-term (1 to 2 years), Long term (3 to 5 years), and Ongoing, and are grouped into three categories: Welcome, Neighbor!; Bridge to the City; and Prospering Together.

WELCOMING REFUGEES

In the wake of the Syrian refugee crisis, Americans around the country have shown compassion and a willingness to “welcome the stranger,” building on our country’s rich, long history of welcoming those seeking refuge from persecution. The United States is rightfully proud of its history of welcoming immigrants, which includes a longstanding commitment to resettling refugees. The [U.S. Refugee Admissions Program](#) reflects not only our nation’s laws, but also our American values and aspirations of compassion, generosity, and leadership. In September 2015, President Obama announced, after consultation with Congress, that the United States will increase the annual number of refugees it accepts over the next 2 years. The President also committed to increasing the number of Syrian refugees admitted to the United States to at least 10,000 in fiscal year (FY) 2016, up from fewer than 2,000 in FY 2014.

Even as the United States accepts more refugees, including Syrians, we do so only after they successfully pass the most rigorous screening and security vetting of any category of immigrants seeking to enter this country. Following the attacks in Paris and other recent acts of terrorism, the President has made clear that we cannot turn our backs on vulnerable refugees who all too often have themselves been the victims of terrorism, and that we can and must continue to welcome these individuals while also ensuring the safety and security of our country.

Over the last year, the Task Force has promoted efforts to recognize the invaluable contributions of refugees and those who honor our richest traditions by welcoming them. On World Refugee

City of Seattle's Refugee Women's Institute: The [Seattle Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs](#) launched the [Refugee Women's Institute \(RWI\)](#) to build understanding and trust between refugee communities and the Seattle Police Department (SPD). The institute aims to build a grassroots network of refugee women leaders while increasing the cultural competency of the female officers who participate by pairing refugee women with SPD mentors over 8 weeks. Following the program, participants were surveyed. SPD employees reported that they now know more about refugees and the available resources for working with refugees in the future. Data indicated that refugee participants finished RWI feeling more comfortable calling 911, calling the police, paying bills, searching for housing and accessing other City services. OIRA is now making plans to expand the program to reach other refugee populations.

Day, President Obama [encouraged](#) the American people “to join our partners in the international community in recognizing the dignity, value, and potential of every one of these lives.” The White House honored individuals—including former refugees—who are making a difference in the lives of refugees, both domestically and internationally, at a [White House Champion of Change World Refugee Day](#) event. Other senior Administration officials joined in the efforts of [honoring](#) World Refugee Day and [encouraging](#) the welcoming of new Americans such as refugees. In November, the Administration encouraged Americans to join in celebrating [Welcome Weekend](#), an interfaith coalition to bring congregations and communities together to

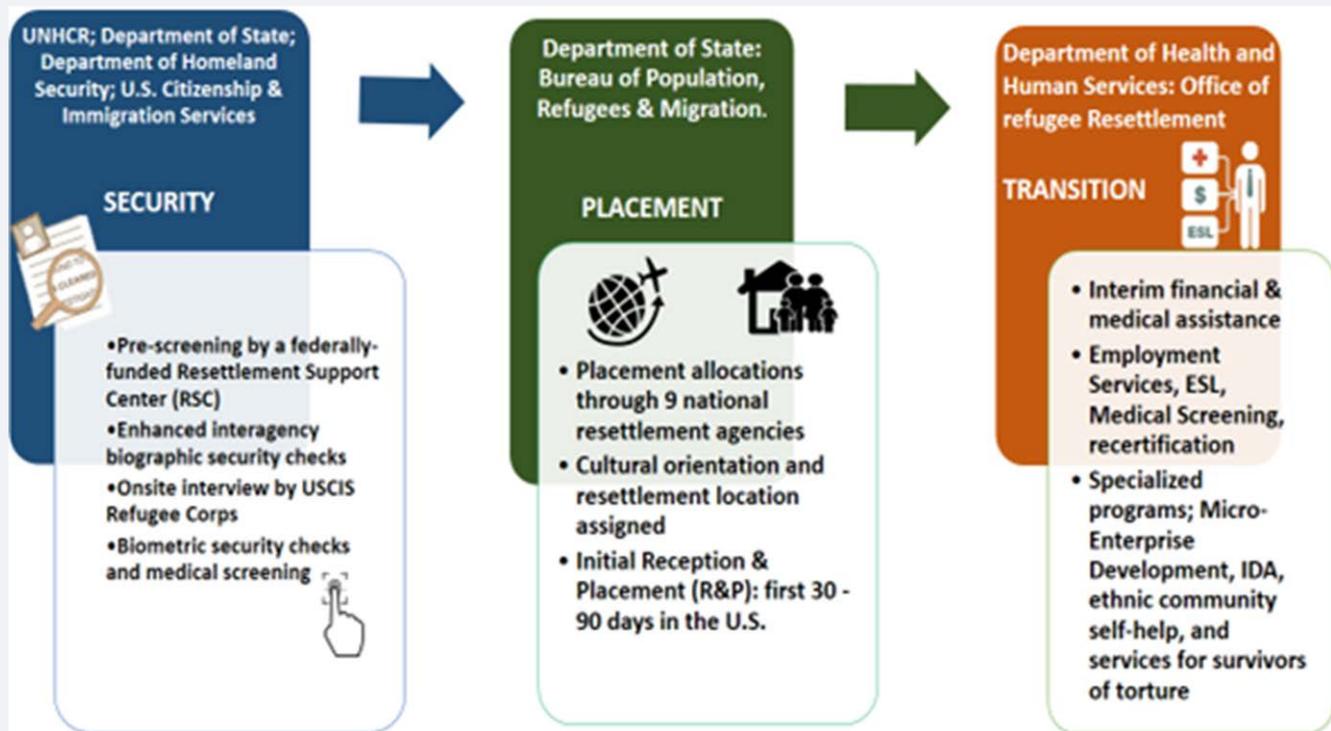
help refugees who have come to the United States. White House and Administration officials also attended a [Refugees' First Thanksgiving Dinner](#), organized by the Ethiopian Community Development Corporation to offer refugee families an opportunity to celebrate this important American tradition. In addition, the White House has launched [AidRefugees.gov](#) to provide the American public with information on the Syrian refugee crisis, on how our international humanitarian assistance is being put to good use, and on opportunities to volunteer at local refugee-serving organizations.

In the coming months, the Administration will continue to focus on ensuring that those individuals who make it through the robust, multi-layered screening process that is an integral part of the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program have the tools to succeed when resettling in their new communities. To that end, ORR at HHS is implementing several new programs and policies to strengthen local capacity to assist in the integration process. Examples of ORR initiatives include the following:

- ORR has recently expanded its regional presence by creating [ORR Regional Representatives](#). These individuals will provide expertise, direction, and oversight in implementing services and policies that cut across programs while increasing consultation and engagement with State and local governments, including State Refugee and Health Coordinators, refugee-serving agencies, and other key officials to promote integrated efforts in the best interest of refugees.
- ORR is seeking to strengthen [ORR-funded refugee service providers'](#) practices in data collection, management, and analysis while also helping to drive evidenced-based programming through a new grant to the [International Rescue Committee](#).

About the Refugee Resettlement Process

The U.S. refugee resettlement process is a multi-faceted process that involves different federal agencies and rigorous security and vetting background checks. It can take between 18 to 24 months. Moreover, refugees undergo more rigorous screening than anyone else we allow into the United States.



The Departments of Homeland Security (DHS), State (DOS), and Health and Human Services (HHS) work together to uphold America's humanitarian response to refugees through the [U.S. Refugee Admissions Program](#) (USRAP).

- The refugee admissions process begins overseas. Once the United Nations and U.S. embassies refer refugee cases for resettlement consideration, officers from DHS's [USCIS](#) conduct individual interviews and clearances and make final refugee determinations.
- The State Department's [Bureau for Population, Refugees, and Migration](#) coordinates admissions and allocations to specific cities and resettlement agencies, in conjunction with [nine national resettlement agencies](#) that oversee a network of some 305 affiliates in 47 States plus the District of Columbia through the [Reception and Placement Program](#). When refugees arrive at their destination in the United States, these local affiliates greet them at the airport, help them with housing, and facilitate access to other resources.
- From the date of arrival, [ORR](#) at HHS provides short-term financial and medical assistance to new arrivals, as well as case management services, English language classes, and job readiness and employment services—all designed to facilitate refugees' successful transition in the United States, and help them to attain self-sufficiency.

- ORR is seeking to build capacity among refugee resettlement organizations to increase naturalization and citizenship preparation services to refugees. With ORR's support, the [Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc.](#), is creating a citizenship navigator program to support and encourage refugee-serving organizations to offer low-cost legal services, and use technology to provide easily accessible citizenship resources and information to refugee communities.
- ORR will continue to support [Higher](#), a project of Lutheran Immigrant and Refugee Service to support career entry and advancement for resettled refugees and other new Americans. In the coming year, Higher will focus on strengthening access to mainstream workforce resources for out-of-school youth and highly skilled refugees, and on institutionalizing employment expertise with new eLearning resources for job-readiness preparation and expanded adoption of new approaches to job development.
- ORR will also continue to partner with [Welcoming America](#) to provide refugee resettlement organizations with the tools and support needed to enhance and sustain their community-engagement and public-awareness work in local communities, deepen their practices and local collaborations, and develop broader support for refugees, which is essential to refugees' longer-term civic, linguistic, and economic integration. Welcoming America is focused on supporting activities for the following areas: building support for Syrian refugees, strengthening connections with LGBT organizations and refugees in their communities, supporting the growing immigrant economic development field that refugee-serving organizations can tap into, and building bridges between refugee communities across race, religion, and ethnicity.
- ORR will work with the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops to expand their [Bridging Refugee Youth and Children's Services \(BRYCS\)](#) program. BRYCS, a popular website and clearinghouse that many in the field have come to rely on for expertise and information exchange, is the nation's largest online collection of resources related to refugee and immigrant children and families. Some of the expansion efforts include improving the BRYCS Refugee Portal for ease of use, translating the popular illustrated parenting handbooks, and converting these resources into interactive online learning modules recorded by native speakers in refugee languages. BRYCS will also bring together experts in the field of refugee resettlement and social work by developing a Refugee Technical Assistance Bureau to provide both remote and on-site consultations, monthly blogging and peer-to-peer exchanges, and online learning modules on critical topics.

Of course, ORR will continue to administer core refugee resettlement programs, including its short-term financial and medical assistance programs and additional programs, to serve [all eligible populations](#) beyond the first eight months after arrival, including micro-enterprise development, ethnic community self-help, agricultural partnerships, and services for survivors of torture. Refugee resettlement is intended to occur in close cooperation and consultation with federal, State, and local entities. This is why key partners across sectors and shared services agencies are crucial for ensuring successful U.S. resettlement and long-term integration. Serving

refugees, among other new Americans, requires a government- and community-wide engagement across the Nation, to ensure resettled individuals have timely access to health care, social, and other social services that are essential to promoting their health, socioeconomic well-being, and self-sufficiency.

ENSURING ACCESS TO INFORMATION AND SERVICES IN-LANGUAGE

Many new Americans are eager to improve their English skills. Still, it can be challenging to learn the language needed to navigate through complex matters—such as obtaining health or government services, seeking the protection of law enforcement, or enforcing their rights in court. Whether in an emergency or in the routine course of business, the success of government efforts to communicate with the public depends on the information being understandable. It is in the public interest that individuals have equal access to the services they need and be able to understand the information in a language in which they are proficient.

City of Denver's Mini-Grants Program: The [Denver Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs](#) (OIRA) hosted its 1st Annual Mini-Grant competition for immigrant integration projects in 2015. The mini-grants program was created to spur innovative and locally relevant approaches to building welcoming communities. Denver OIRA received over twenty-five applications from area nonprofits, faith based organizations, community groups, neighborhood organizations, and residents. In April 2015, [six mini-grants](#) were awarded to community projects developed by local residents and community-based organizations. These projects aim to bridge immigrant, refugee, and receiving community members in fun, creative and impactful ways.

Providing accessible information and services to all individuals has long been a priority of the Obama Administration and others before it. This year marked the 15th anniversary of President Clinton's [Executive Order 13166](#), "Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency." The order seeks to ensure that federal agencies continually evaluate their services, identify gaps, and develop processes and standards to enhance meaningful access for limited English proficient (LEP) individuals. Doing so helps ensure that federally conducted and assisted activities do not discriminate on the basis of national origin in violation of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and its implementing regulations.

Over the last 15 years, federal agencies have made great progress to prioritize and improve in-language standards across government. Through DOJ's Interagency Working Group on Limited English Proficiency, these agencies work together to improve federal responses through best practices, use enhanced data to drive decision-making and services, and leverage technology to provide information to local communities.

For example:

- DOJ's Civil Rights Division recently created new [interactive and downloadable maps](#), using U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey [data](#), which identify the concentration of LEP populations at the national, State, judicial district, and county level. These maps provide data on the number of LEP persons and the languages they speak, allowing agencies to identify and respond to language needs and improve targeted outreach efforts.

- DOJ, the Social Security Administration, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, the Internal Revenue Service, and the White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (WHIAAPI), housed within ED, worked together to create a [video training series](#) for federal employees on how to identify a LEP individual’s language needs and on essential do’s and don’ts.

Over the next year, a Task Force working group, created in partnership with WHIAAPI, DOJ’s Civil Rights Division, and the General Services Administration, will identify opportunities to streamline and improve language access across federal agencies. As a part of these efforts, this working group is evaluating tools for procuring translation and interpreting services, assessments of language capabilities across agencies, and ways to further leverage technology to provide in-language services without creating barriers for those without access to technology.

BUILDING WELCOMING COMMUNITIES’ CAPACITY

CNCS is encouraging new Americans to volunteer in their communities and to serve through its programs. These efforts are critical to the immigrant and refugee integration process. Individuals who volunteer or serve in programs such as AmeriCorps and Senior Corps contribute to solving difficult problems, connect with others in their community, and contribute to the spirit of civic engagement that is integral to the American identity. In addition, volunteers and national service participants gain hard and soft skills that can help them obtain future employment and achieve educational goals. Additionally, CNCS is helping immigrant- and refugee-serving organizations meet the needs of new Americans. For example, the English Skills Learning Center (ESLC) brings the promise of integration, security, and empowerment to adult immigrants and refugees in Salt Lake County, Utah. ESLC’s AmeriCorps VISTA project provides a high-quality and culturally appropriate family, financial, and health literacy curriculum to Utah refugees and immigrants.

To help further strengthen capacity, CNCS has committed 150 Welcoming Communities AmeriCorps members to nearly 100 different communities through partnerships with the YMCA, Catholic Charities, and national refugee resettlement organizations. Welcoming Communities AmeriCorps will help local communities develop and implement immigrant and refugee integration plans. Under the partnership with Catholic Charities, 28 AmeriCorps VISTA members will be placed with Catholic Charities affiliates in 24 cities to recruit, train, and support a network of volunteers that will help implement Catholic Charities’ work serving immigrant and refugee communities. AmeriCorps VISTA members will also work to develop fundraising and outreach materials for the Catholic

Ohio Communities Working Together: The Ohio communities of Cincinnati, Dayton, Columbus, Toledo-Lucas County, Cleveland, and Akron have formed the Ohio Welcoming Initiatives network to share best practices on what their respective regions are doing to attract and welcome immigrants. This effort was launched with help from economic-development nonprofit [Global Cleveland](#) and support from [JobsOhio](#) and Ohio’s [Office of Workforce Transformation](#). The coalition has been continuously working to develop policy in such areas as retention of international students, career pathway assistance for skilled immigrants, and easier access to capital for foreign entrepreneurs.

Charities affiliates. CNCS will work with the YMCA to place 22 AmeriCorps VISTA members and two VISTA leaders in 16 cities across the country.

CNCS is also partnering with ORR to use AmeriCorps to assist local communities with integrating refugee populations. Through this partnership, eight resettlement agencies have been determined by CNCS to meet the AmeriCorps service requirements as part of the ORR Preferred Community Program. This partnership seeks to expand support for refugees in areas such as education, job readiness, housing, and financial literacy; and will also recruit, train, and manage volunteers to provide services to increase capacity and foster refugee integration. Those individuals who complete the AmeriCorps Program requirement will be eligible for a CNCS educational award.

Importantly, CNCS is supporting additional research to better understand the motivations and benefits of new Americans' volunteer efforts. For example, CNCS awarded a grant to George Mason University to research the extent to which higher levels of social capital, civic engagement and volunteering among immigrants are associated with greater economic opportunity and success for individuals and communities. In addition, AmeriCorps VISTA has developed [guidance](#) to encourage State offices to identify additional opportunities to support local government and nonprofit efforts to increase the civic, economic, and linguistic integration of new Americans. Over the course of the next year, this guidance could lead to additional efforts to build the capacity of city and county governments that are expanding multi-sector networks and/or developing or implementing local immigrant integration efforts.

USING THE TASK FORCE'S CONVENING POWER

The Task Force is already using its convening power to bring together state and local elected officials as well as faith, community, business, and philanthropic leaders to advance integration and welcoming efforts. Over the last year, the Task Force held a White House Champions of Change event honoring individuals dedicated to serving refugees in the United States and abroad, and the White House Building Welcoming Communities Convening. Additionally, many Task Force members have participated in regional conferences and local gatherings. These included events in Los Angeles and New York and also in places such as Springdale, Arkansas, and Camp Hill, Pennsylvania.

Welcoming Communities Conference in Camp Hill: In October 2015 the International Service Center (ISC) hosted a [Welcoming Communities Conference](#) in Camp Hill, Pennsylvania to further expand immigrant and refugee integration efforts and build welcoming communities across the State. Over 300 community members, including service providers, State and local government employees, business leaders, health providers, refugee community leaders, educators and volunteers, attended. Conference organizers took inspiration from the Task Force's Strategic Action Plan, organizing discussions in key areas such as Civic Engagement/Good Citizenship Practices; Pathways to Starting a Business for Immigrants & Refugees; Promising ESL Practices & Resources for Serving LEP Immigrants & Refugees; Helping Immigrants & Refugees Avoid Immigration Scams; and Meaningful Access to Housing Programs for LEP Immigrants & Refugees.

Next year, the Task Force will take its efforts on the road, hosting regional immigrant integration conferences throughout the United States. The purpose of these regional convenings will be to:

(1) Strengthen the federal regional infrastructure supporting welcoming and integration efforts; (2) Highlight best practices; and (3) Broaden and deepen multisector partnerships at the local level to advance civic, economic, and linguistic integration efforts. The Task Force looks forward to partnering with cities participating in the BWCC, national nongovernmental partners, and local leaders from a variety of sectors.

III. STRENGTHENING EXISTING PATHWAYS TO NATURALIZATION AND PROMOTING CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Citizenship is a critical component of immigrant integration. It provides immigrants with the same rights as native-born Americans and fosters a sense of belonging and inclusion—building blocks of shared ownership in society. Recognizing the nexus between citizenship and immigrant integration, the Task Force prioritized a series of initiatives to strengthen existing pathways to naturalization and promote civic engagement. This civic integration strategy, outlined as part of the Task Force’s April 2015 action plan, includes four federal strategic goals and 13 recommended actions. The four goals are: (1) Welcome new immigrants and promote citizenship; (2) Ensure greater accessibility to the naturalization process; (3) Enhance citizenship resources and information for qualified individuals; and (4) Expand opportunities for new Americans to serve and engage in their local civic life.

In the 8 months since presenting their strategic action plan, Task Force members have worked to implement recommended actions. Of the Task Force’s 13 recommended actions to strengthen existing pathways to naturalization and promote civic engagement, nine have been completed and the remaining four are already in progress. For example, USCIS, the agency within DHS that adjudicates applications for naturalization, has implemented several new initiatives in response to the action plan, and CNCS has used its experience mobilizing volunteers to establish and promote new civic engagement opportunities for new Americans. Several other Task Force members, including DOL, SBA, HHS, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) have also worked to strengthen existing pathways to naturalization and promote civic engagement.

“STAND STRONGER” CITIZENSHIP AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

On September 17, 2015, Constitution Day and Citizenship Day, President Obama launched a multilingual public awareness campaign to promote the rights, responsibilities, and opportunities of citizenship. The [“Stand Stronger” Citizenship Awareness Campaign](#) reflects the belief that we are, and have always been, a nation of immigrants, in addition to underscoring that immigrants and refugees make us stronger when they are able to set down roots, harness their skills, contribute to our economy, and commit to citizenship. To launch this effort in partnership with Civic Nation and USCIS, the President released a [video message](#) encouraging eligible lawful permanent residents to commit to citizenship.

As part of this campaign, the White House is working to engage immigrant- and refugee-serving organizations that assist individuals eligible to naturalize; businesses that provide citizenship workshops and English-language classes to their employees; municipalities that bring immigration services to places where immigrants and refugees live and work; and the philanthropic community that is focused on furthering these efforts.

City of New York City & Public Libraries: In June 2015, Mayor Bill de Blasio and U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) expanded [their partnership](#) to strengthen citizenship education and awareness in New York City, together with the City’s three public library systems (the Brooklyn Public Library, New York Public Library, and Queens Library systems). Under the expanded partnership, New Americans Corners have been established in all 217 library branches in the five boroughs. Visitors are able to access information and resources about citizenship, as well as obtain information about financial empowerment, and entrepreneurship support.

On October 5, 2015, the White House also held a special naturalization ceremony to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA). Deputy Secretary of Homeland Security Alejandro Mayorkas, himself a naturalized U.S. citizen, and USCIS Director León Rodríguez presided over the ceremony welcoming 14 new Americans from 13 countries. Pulitzer Prize-winning author and historian Taylor Branch spoke about the historic change that the INA brought

about as a piece of civil rights legislation. In his words, “Over the past 50 years, our openness to applicants from all nations has transformed the face of the United States literally and figuratively.”

PRESIDENTIAL AMBASSADORS TO PROMOTE CITIZENSHIP AND NATURALIZATION

Launched in September 2015, the [Presidential Ambassadors for Citizenship and Naturalization \(PACN\)](#) program is a first-of-its-kind collaboration between the Obama Administration and prominent naturalized citizens and U.S.-born individuals with immigrant roots. This program seeks to share inspirational stories to promote the importance of naturalization, bolster integration, and increase awareness of the contributions of new Americans in every facet of society. The inaugural cohort of Presidential Ambassadors include renowned chef and restaurateur José Andrés, actress Diane Guerrero, singer and songwriter Dave Matthews, and former Los Angeles Dodgers pitching great Fernando Valenzuela. In 2016, the PACNs will work with local communities to help promote the naturalization process. The Task Force will seek to continue to name additional PACNs who can speak to the diversity of the immigrant experience and the contributions of new Americans in a variety of sectors.

USCIS CITIZENSHIP PUBLIC EDUCATION AND AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

According to the most recent estimates by the DHS Office of Immigration Statistics, 8.8 million lawful permanent residents are eligible to apply for citizenship.¹¹ In an effort to raise awareness about the rights, responsibilities, and importance of U.S. citizenship, and provide information on the naturalization process and USCIS educational resources, USCIS launched the [Citizenship Public Education and Awareness Campaign](#) in July 2015. This campaign began by targeting digital media markets in California, New York, Texas, and Florida—States with large numbers of potentially eligible lawful permanent residents. In September, USCIS expanded the campaign into six additional States: New Jersey, Illinois, Massachusetts, Virginia, Washington, and Arizona. Together, these 10 States are home to 75 percent of the country’s 13.1 million lawful permanent residents.¹²

USCIS also released a new series of [print ads](#) in Korean, Spanish, and Tagalog, along with new [widgets](#) (small applications that can be embedded into Web pages or social media sites) in English and Spanish. USCIS has encouraged community organizations, libraries, and cities to support the campaign by distributing and sharing the materials throughout their networks and communities. Through this campaign, USCIS will continue to use these materials and leverage the support of its community partners in sharing this message. USCIS will also explore the feasibility of releasing additional data on the population of lawful permanent residents potentially eligible to apply for citizenship as well as information on naturalization applications filed.

CITIZENSHIP AND INTEGRATION GRANT PROGRAM

Through the [Citizenship and Integration Grant Program](#), USCIS has continued to expand the availability of high-quality citizenship preparation programs for lawful permanent residents in communities across the Nation. In September 2015, USCIS announced nearly \$10 million in grants to 40 organizations that will help lawful permanent residents prepare and apply for U.S. citizenship. Located in 26 States, these organizations will receive funding to support citizenship preparation services through September 2017.

Since it began in 2009, the Citizenship and Integration Grant Program has awarded a total of \$53 million through 262 competitive grants to public or private nonprofit organizations in 35 States and the District of Columbia. Now in its 7th year, the program has helped more than 130,000 lawful permanent residents prepare for citizenship. USCIS anticipates that approximately 25,000 lawful permanent residents will receive citizenship preparation services by September 30, 2017 as a result of the FY 2015 awards issued through the grant program. An additional 12,000 lawful permanent residents are expected to be served under the FY 2014 program, which continues to provide services through September 30, 2016.

USCIS has also worked to expand citizenship preparation programs in communities by harnessing and sharing the lessons learned from its grant recipients. USCIS grant recipients have demonstrated impressive creativity and innovation as they use grant funds to promote citizenship and immigrant integration in their local communities. USCIS highlights grant recipients' [promising practices](#) in its [Citizenship Resource Center](#) so that other immigrant-serving organizations can learn from them.

City of Los Angeles's "Step Forward LA" Initiative:
The Mayor's [Office of Immigrant Affairs](#) is collaborating with many local partners, including the Los Angeles Public Library, to provide resources and support for individuals interesting in learning more about U.S. citizenship. Working with USCIS, Los Angeles has created Citizenship Corners in local libraries and trained Library staff to provide information and resources about citizenship directly to eligible community members. This year on Constitution Day and Citizenship Day, Mayor Eric Garcetti kicked off the "[Step Forward LA](#)" initiative, which aims to reach 100,000 individuals who are eligible to naturalize in Los Angeles. The initiative provides Web-based tools to help individuals learn if they may be eligible for citizenship and where to find local organizations that can help them through the process. It also features inspiring stories of Los Angeles residents who have naturalized. Mayor Garcetti celebrated Citizenship Day and the launch of "Step Forward LA" at a USCIS Children's Citizenship Ceremony held at a local public library where more than 80 children became U.S. citizens.

Looking to the future, USCIS is exploring ways that grant funding can further expand citizenship preparation programs, particularly those offered by small, community-based organizations. USCIS will also offer informational webinars for organizations interested in learning more about the Citizenship and Integration Grant Program and the federal grant application process.

EXPAND CITIZENSHIP OUTREACH PARTNERSHIPS

Because immigrant integration happens primarily at the local level, the Federal Government can increase the effectiveness of its integration efforts by collaborating with State and local governments to build welcoming communities. USCIS relies on State and local government partners to help educate immigrants about the benefits of and process toward naturalization. Through formal partnerships, USCIS provides information and resources to support outreach and engagement, training and technical assistance, and citizenship education in communities. USCIS has expanded its municipal partnerships. Currently USCIS has [formal partnerships](#) with the City of Los Angeles; City of Chicago; Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County, Tennessee; City of Atlanta; City of New York; City of Boston; City of Houston; and City of Seattle.

City of Atlanta: USCIS and the City of Atlanta entered into a [formal partnership](#) in April 2015 to strengthen citizenship education and awareness efforts among the city’s growing lawful permanent resident population. To date, USCIS and Atlanta have established 18 Citizenship Corners and distributed more than 24,000 copies of informational materials at Atlanta-Fulton Public Library branches serving highly populated immigrant communities, at recreation centers, and at Atlanta City Hall. Additionally, Atlanta hosted a special naturalization ceremony in September 2015 that included community partners to provide additional resources and information. The Coca-Cola Company provided the new citizens with commemorative bottles labeled “Share a Coke with a New American” modeled after its “Share a Coke” campaign. USCIS is also collaborating with the Atlanta-Fulton Public Library to offer naturalization information sessions across the city.

Under these partnerships, USCIS has distributed nearly 400,000 copies of educational materials on citizenship and the unauthorized practice of immigration law; established 348 citizenship corners in municipal facilities; conducted more than 20 naturalization information sessions; provided training on the naturalization process to library and other municipal staff members; aired USCIS educational videos and public service announcements on public broadcast stations; and conducted naturalization ceremonies at local government venues.

INCREASE MOBILE IMMIGRANT SERVICES

In agricultural and rural communities that have significant numbers of immigrants but are not located near a USCIS office, distance can be a barrier to completing naturalization and other immigration processes. In response, USCIS is working to establish a formal partnership with USDA’s Farm Service Agency to provide temporary office space for USCIS officers in communities that are distant from a USCIS office. Services will include biometrics collection, interviews associated with applications or petitions, informational appointments, and general presentations on immigration benefits. In September 2015, USCIS conducted a pilot project at the Farm Service Agency office in Fort Myers, Florida. Two USCIS officers conducted 26

naturalization interviews over three days and held an on-site ceremony to naturalize 25 of those individuals.

NEW TOOLS TO INFORM ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS AND ASSIST IN CITIZENSHIP PREPARATION

In addition to promoting general public awareness of the importance of citizenship, the Task Force recommended that USCIS explore options to provide targeted messaging to lawful permanent residents who may be eligible to apply for naturalization. Acting on this recommendation, USCIS developed and implemented the capability to notify lawful permanent residents about their potential eligibility for naturalization through its [Electronic Immigration System](#). When lawful permanent residents seek to renew or replace a green card online, a pop-up message notifies them that many lawful permanent residents in the United States are already eligible to apply for naturalization, and directs them to resources to learn about citizenship. USCIS will continue to seek opportunities to proactively inform lawful permanent residents about naturalization eligibility requirements and available citizenship education resources.

City & County of San Francisco: The [San Francisco Pathways to Citizenship Initiative](#) (SF Pathways) is a 3-year public, private partnership between the City's [Office of Civic Engagement & Immigrant Affairs](#) (OCEIA), six philanthropic organizations, and seven expert community based naturalization service providers who are developing new approaches, methodologies and service delivery models to promote citizenship and civic participation among San Francisco's eligible immigrants. Service providers offer free legal advice, application assistance, language services, fee waiver application assistance and other services. SF Pathways partners have reached over one million Bay Area residents, assisted thousands of residents with their applications for citizenship, provided free legal and other assistance, and trained over 500 community volunteers over the past 2 years.

USCIS is working to develop innovative new tools to enhance the user experience and help lawful permanent residents prepare for the naturalization process, locate English and citizenship classes, determine naturalization eligibility, and apply for citizenship. USCIS launched an [interactive civics practice test](#) in English in September 2015, followed by a Spanish version in November, to help people prepare for the civics portion of the naturalization test. Individuals can also find English-language and citizenship preparation classes in their local area using a [new online class locator](#). Next year, USCIS aims to offer applicants the ability to use [myUSCIS](#) to e-file the [Form N-400, Application for Naturalization](#) and [Form N-600, Application for Certificate of Citizenship](#).

PROVIDE INDIVIDUALS WITH SETTLEMENT RESOURCES

In November 2015, USCIS published an updated version of [Welcome to the United States: A Guide for New Immigrants](#). This guide contains practical information to help new immigrants settle into everyday life in the United States, including resources on general and specific challenges such as finding a place to live, getting a Social Security number, and learning how the U.S. system of government works. Available in 14 languages, this revised edition also includes a new chapter called "Taking Care of Your Money" that provides information on personal finance,

taxes, and financial scams. Another new chapter, “Understanding Education and Health Care,” offers information on the education system, adult education programs, and the health insurance marketplace. All lawful permanent residents are notified about the availability of this free publication when they receive their permanent resident card (green card).

PROVIDE SPANISH LANGUAGE IMMIGRANT VISA INFORMATION

On September 17, 2015, the Department of State’s Bureau of Consular Affairs [debuted Spanish translations](#) of immigrant visa information on its public-facing website (travel.state.gov). The Bureau of Consular Affairs issued approximately 147,000 immigrant visas in 2014 to applicants in countries where Spanish is either the official or national language. In addition, there are more than 1.9 million applicants with pending immigrant visa petitions (both in family-preference or employment-based categories) at overseas posts who are chargeable to a country where Spanish is either the official or national language.

City of Chicago’s New Americans Initiative: In July 2013, as part of Chicago’s New Americans Initiative, the Mayor’s Office [partnered](#) with USCIS to host citizenship workshops and disseminate information on the naturalization process at select Chicago Public Library locations. “Citizenship Corners” are available at 12 locations of the Chicago Library to disseminate USCIS publications in the languages most commonly spoken in Chicago. In addition, 17 “Citizenship Hub” locations work with Board of Immigration Appeals- recognized legal-service groups and community organizations to host immigration, ESL classes and citizenship workshops. As part of this partnership, more than 50 librarians were trained on citizenship resources by USCIS staff and their community partners, and all 79 library locations have one or more copies of the USCIS Civics and Citizenship Toolkit available for individuals to check out from the library.

INCREASE OPTIONS TO PAY FEES AND ASSESS POTENTIAL TO EXPAND FEE WAIVER

In September 2015, USCIS began accepting [credit card payments](#) for [Form N-400](#). Previously, these fees could only be paid with a check or money order. USCIS is currently evaluating the feasibility of an expanded fee-waiver process that includes a partial fee for Form N-400, Application for Naturalization based on income. USCIS is considering the effects of an expanded Form N-400 fee waiver in its FY 2016/FY 2017 biennial review of the fees it charges for all immigration benefits. The results of that review will determine if DHS needs to adjust the USCIS fee schedule to recover the full costs of the services it provides, including services provided without charge to refugee and asylum applicants and to other customers eligible for fee waivers or exemptions. USCIS anticipates publishing a notice of proposed rulemaking by mid-year in 2016 with the goal of having a new fee schedule in effect for FY 2017. If USCIS proposes an expanded Form N-400 fee waiver, it will be included in this notice of proposed rulemaking. USCIS last adjusted its fees in November 2010. These fee adjustments were based on the FY 2010/FY 2011 fee review.

ACCESS TO LEGAL SERVICES AND COMBATING NOTARIO FRAUD

In recognition of the need to increase local capacity to provide low-cost legal services for immigrants and refugees, DOJ [published a regulation](#) to streamline the authorization process for representatives of nonprofit religious, charitable, social service, or similar organizations to represent individuals in immigration proceedings. Accredited representatives may assist

immigrants in proceedings before the Executive Office for Immigration Review's immigration courts and Board of Immigration Appeals, or before DHS, or both. In September 2015, DOJ also published two final regulations to improve legal services in immigration proceedings. These included a rule to enhance eligibility requirements for pro bono legal providers to be included on list for public use, and a rule to allow a legal representative to assist individuals in custody and bond proceedings without having to commit to representation in all proceedings before the court, thereby allowing more individuals representation in these sensitive matters. Additionally, the Task Force continues efforts to protect individuals from the unauthorized practice of immigration law and immigration scams. Empowering individuals with information necessary to avoid contact with unscrupulous *notarios* and scammers is also a critical component to welcoming immigrants and fostering integration.

IV. SUPPORTING SKILL DEVELOPMENT, FOSTERING ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND SMALL-BUSINESS GROWTH, AND PROTECTING NEW AMERICAN WORKERS

New Americans contribute significantly at all levels of our economy. As previously noted, immigrants and refugees (and their children) will be responsible for most of the net growth in the U.S. labor force in the coming years. Immigrants also start new businesses that provide opportunities for all workers.

Recognizing that economic integration yields numerous benefits for new Americans and the larger economy, the Task Force identified five key goals in its Strategic Action Plan: (1) Collaborate with employers, educational institutions, and other stakeholders to enhance skill development, career pathways, and integration into the workforce system; (2) Facilitate credentialing for new Americans as part of overall efforts on credentialing to strengthen the workforce; (3) Expand outreach to new Americans to ensure that workers understand their rights and that employers are fulfilling their responsibilities; (4) Support small businesses and entrepreneurship among immigrants and refugees; and (5) Increase accessibility to affordable housing and homeownership.

Task Force members have dedicated resources to further the economic integration of immigrants and refugees across the country. For example, SBA has launched training courses targeted at new American entrepreneurs and a campaign to encourage new Americans to use SBA tools to start or grow their businesses. DOL and ED are also implementing a new workforce law through publication of regulations, guidance, and other resources and have developed tools to help expand career pathways for new Americans.

CAREER PATHWAYS AND CREDENTIALING TOOLKIT

While about thirty percent of all immigrants have college degrees, they are disproportionately likely to be underemployed for a variety of reasons.¹³ For example, as a result of the decentralized professional certification process in the United States, many foreign-trained new Americans encounter complicated obstacles as they seek recognition or recertification of their foreign credentials. These obstacles include overlapping—and sometimes contradictory—local, State, and national rules, procedures, and examinations.¹⁴ Additionally, new Americans sometimes face barriers securing jobs that are most relevant for their skills because they are LEP or lack the confidence in their English skills to effectively pursue those positions. According to a recent OECD report, roughly 40 percent of immigrant adults lacked basic English literacy and 48 percent lacked basic numeracy, which makes it challenging for this population to access training programs that lead to industry-recognized credentials.¹⁵

In September 2015, DOL, in collaboration with ED, HHS and other federal agencies, released the [Career Pathways Toolkit](#) to provide a framework, resources, and tools for States and local partners to develop, implement, and sustain career pathways systems and programs. The toolkit features six key elements of career pathways that help to guide local and State teams through the essential components necessary for developing a comprehensive career pathways system. The toolkit includes several examples of current best practices for serving immigrants, refugees, and new Americans. DOL and partner agencies plan to release a companion workbook that includes additional tools and resources to assist States and local partners in developing, implementing, and sustaining career pathways systems and programs, sector strategies, and registered apprenticeships.

Michigan Office for New Americans (MONA): MONA was created to help grow Michigan's economy by attracting global talent to the State and promote the skills, energy, and entrepreneurial spirit of Michigan's immigrant communities. The Office helps coordinate existing services to immigrants and facilitate partnerships with nonprofits, foundations and the private sector. MONA has worked with Global Detroit, a local initiative, and Upwardly Global (UpGlo), a national nonprofit organization, to open an UpGlo Detroit office. This office is helping to advance and promote several initiatives, including online licensing guides for 15 professions, developed by UpGlo with support from the Michigan Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs. Additionally, in November 2015, MONA launched the [Michigan International Talent Solutions](#) program that will help skilled immigrants who are new to Michigan return to their careers by offering invaluable resources to connect immigrants in their professional job search with employers who are hiring, particularly in STEM fields.

In 2016, the Task Force will bring together governments and associations that significantly influence immigrant labor market success at a Credentialing Academy. This convening will be used to: (1) Highlight how state and local policies and practices can either help or hinder credential attainment and recognition, along with the role that professional associations play in mapping out credentialing pathways; (2) Spotlight and share best practices; (3) Secure state, local, union, employer, and other commitments to support the credential attainment and recognition for immigrants; and (4) Recognize the credential attainment and accomplishments of immigrants and refugees.

IMPLEMENT NEW WORKFORCE PROGRAMS IN PARTNERSHIP WITH NEW AMERICANS

On July 22, 2014, President Obama signed into law the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), bipartisan legislation reforming the public workforce system administered by DOL and ED and implemented by State and local public and nonprofit agencies. WIOA emphasizes job-driven approaches to workforce development with a focus on career pathways models for a range of job seekers and workers, prioritizing individuals with barriers to employment. WIOA also drives the implementation of sector strategies within local economic regions to support growth industries and help employers meet demand for skilled workers. Finally, WIOA requires partnerships and coordination across multiple federal job training and supportive services programs for workers. The new law went into effect on July 1, 2015 with various provisions phased in over several years.

Since WIOA was signed into law, DOL ED, and HHS have been working closely to establish and provide guidance and technical assistance to the State and local workforce system implementers and to support overall implementation of WIOA, both through the transition to the new law, and ultimately to achieve the job driven vision for WIOA. DOL has established the

[Innovation and Opportunity Network \(ION\)](#), an up-to-date online resource on WIOA implementation that includes a clearinghouse of all documents pertaining to the new law.

Welcoming Center for New Pennsylvanians: The [Center](#) connects newly arrived individuals from around the world with the economic opportunities that they need to succeed in the greater Philadelphia area. The Center has been serving the immigrant community since 2003 and has assisted more than 10,000 people from over 140 countries. In November 2015, the Center hosted a two-part symposium series titled “Immigrants: Boosting Economic Growth.” The symposium focused on furthering the Center’s efforts to take advantage of immigration to reinvigorate its communities, infuse local economies with new businesses and talent, attract and retain newcomers, and be competitive in the global economy.

To date, DOL and ED have issued a joint Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) interpreting the joint provisions of the new law, including State planning, one-stop career center provisions, and performance reporting. DOL and ED have also issued a joint Information Collection Request (ICR) covering required reporting in the law. DOL and

each of its federal partner programs have issued a joint Information Collection Request for Unified and Combined State planning provisions across programs. In addition, the Departments have issued NPRMs and ICRs for the individual program provisions administered by each Department. The public responded with extensive, thoughtful comments on these proposals. The Departments are currently in the process of analyzing and responding to these comments.

In addition, DOL has issued Operating Guidance to support the public workforce system’s implementation of WIOA. In the coming months as WIOA implementation is phased in, DOL will continue to issue guidance that will, for example, support States in developing and submitting State plans as required by the law, and to provide additional information on new performance and reporting requirements under WIOA. In addition to this guidance, DOL continues to provide technical assistance through the ION in the form of webinars and regional meetings as well as planning tools developed for use by the States. Further, DOL and ED are working to hold a national convening in Washington, DC, in January 2016. This convening will pull together State and local teams nationwide to support implementation efforts.

City of Louisville: On May 22, 2015, the [AS/COA Immigration and Integration Initiative](#) held a public luncheon in Louisville that brought together government, the private sector, and community leaders from the city and across the country. Panelists discussed the role of immigrants in making Louisville a globally competitive and culturally vibrant hub and proposed strategies for attracting foreign-born talent and nurturing immigrant-led entrepreneurial ventures. The AS/COA’s Immigration and Integration Initiative works with the business community, public sector, and civil society in new gateway cities to advance the integration of immigrants and promote positive dialogue around the economic contributions of immigrants in the United States.

DOL is also currently implementing a customer-centered design project in 25 States. This project is working with communities and their one-stop career centers to come up with innovative new

concepts identified by WIOA, quickly prototype them, implement them, and improve services to customers. DOL anticipates holding a learning exchange for these communities in early 2016, and to continue peer mentoring throughout the spring of 2016. As part of its ION technical assistance network, DOL is planning to provide technical assistance in 2016 to the workforce system around serving populations facing barriers to employment, including new Americans. In November 2015, DOL joined a webinar hosted by ORR on WIOA and refugee populations. DOL anticipates future work with specific populations to educate community groups on the workforce system and provisions under WIOA, as well as outreach and guidance to the workforce system to facilitate connections with welcoming communities and immigrant-serving organizations.

SUPPORTING SMALL BUSINESS AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP AMONG NEW AMERICANS

In spring 2015, the SBA launched its New Americans Initiative to support the goals of economic integration by focusing on helping new Americans succeed in the entrepreneurial and small-business landscape. The initiative combines educational training with a robust public-engagement and media campaign, and is expanding outreach through partnerships at the local, State, and federal level. New Americans Initiative activities include the following:

- In collaboration with local partners, SBA is piloting “SBA 101” classes in targeted cities with high concentrations of immigrants and refugees. These classes provide a primer on resources available to entrepreneurs and small businesses focusing on business planning, capital access, and counseling services. Thus far, SBA has held over 80 classes across the country.
- To help increase accessibility to information and ease of use, the SBA launched a page targeted to new Americans. The [Made It In America](#) website contains a resource list with links, a calendar of upcoming events and SBA 101 trainings, and videos of new Americans who have made it with the help of the SBA. One of those Americans is the Administrator, Maria Contreras-Sweet, whose immigration story video is featured.
- During Small Business Saturday on November 28, 2015, a day to support small businesses and all they do for their communities, the SBA helped promote new American entrepreneurs through business visits and social media.

City of St. Louis: In May 2015, St. Louis Mayor Francis Slay announced an [agreement](#) with the U.S. Small Business Administration to promote entrepreneurship to immigrants in St. Louis. The agreement fosters cooperative efforts between the City of St. Louis and the local SBA office to boost outreach on entrepreneurship training, counseling and small business development in St. Louis neighborhoods, with particular emphasis on immigrant and refugee communities. The SBA is also working with the St. Louis Mosaic Project and the St. Louis Economic Development Partnership to promote this initiative. [Anna Croslin](#), President and CEO of the International Institute of St. Louis, was featured as a White House Champion of Change during World Refugee Day. Anna was instrumental in the founding and operation of the St. Louis Mosaic Project, a nationally-recognized multi-sector effort that aims to make St. Louis the fastest growing U.S. metropolitan area for immigrants by 2020 by welcoming newcomers, and harnessing their new energy, ideas, and talent.

- SBA also released the “Business Smart Toolkit,” a 3-module ready-to-use workshop toolkit that equips community organizations to host a workshop that lays the groundwork for helping new Americans understand the steps to starting a business that is credit ready. SBA has partnered with 10 National organizations to deploy Business Smart Workshops across the United States. The toolkit is available in both English and Spanish.

SBA’s resource partners understand the challenges many immigrant entrepreneurs face. SBA’s [Small Business Development Centers](#) and the [SCORE Association’s](#) “Counselors to America’s Small Business” have experienced counselors who offer entrepreneurs consulting and business advice. [Women’s Business Centers](#) are addressing the needs of aspiring women immigrant entrepreneurs across America each day. To help increase access to capital, the SBA is helping new American entrepreneurs obtain access to capital to start and grow their businesses through its Microloan Program. SBA is helping new American entrepreneurs obtain access capital to start and grow their businesses through its [Microloan program](#). The average SBA microloan is about \$13,000. Funds are made available by intermediary lenders, which are nonprofit, community-based organizations with experience in lending as well as management and technical assistance.

As a member of the Task Force, the U.S. Department of Commerce supports business development and capacity building for new American entrepreneurs through the Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA). MBDA helps create and maintain U.S. jobs by promoting the growth and global competitiveness of large, medium, and small businesses owned and operated by members of the minority communities.

Many new American entrepreneurs belong to the diaspora of businesses that are owned or controlled by the following persons or groups of persons are eligible to receive MBDA business assistance services: African American, Hispanic American, American Asian and Pacific Islander, Native American (including Alaska Natives, Alaska Native Corporations and Tribal entities), Asian Indian American, and Hasidic Jewish Americans.¹⁶

MBDA sponsors various resources in support of minority businesses. They include:

- A national network of more than 40 business centers and a wide range of domestic and international strategic partners to provide minority businesses with technical assistance and assistance with access to capital, contract opportunities, and new markets;
- An internet Web portal that provides information for and about minority businesses, as well as tools and resources to support business start-up, growth, and development; and
- A nationwide network of strategic partners to assist the needs of start-up and micro businesses.

Looking ahead to next year, SBA is exploring additional avenues to reach and serve new American entrepreneurs through expanded partnerships with nongovernment organizations as well as municipal governments. This past year, SBA signed a memoranda of understanding with the cities of Nashville and St. Louis to increase education and outreach in their cities specifically

toward new Americans. SBA and MBDA will also explore ways to partner together to better serve new American entrepreneurs and businesses.

INCREASING MEANINGFUL ACCESS TO HOUSING PROGRAMS

Building capital and nurturing individual and family assets and well-being provides new Americans a way to establish long-term financial stability, thereby bolstering immigrant integration as well as driving economic growth in neighborhoods and local communities. In July 2015, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) announced a new grant opportunity to fight housing discrimination. Under its 2015 Fair Housing Initiatives Program (FHIP), HUD made \$39 million available for [six new types of grants](#) that support fair housing capacity building, education and outreach activities, and testing in rental and sales transactions.

Through FHIP's Fair Housing Organizations Initiative, and Education and Outreach Initiative, HUD awarded grants to help build the capacity and effectiveness of nonprofit fair housing organizations, particularly organizations that focus on the rights and needs of underserved groups such as rural and immigrant populations. One of these grants will serve immigrants, particularly those with limited English proficiency, to increase knowledge of fair housing rights with a primary emphasis on housing discrimination related to national origin. Under the Education and Outreach Initiative grants, the National Programs Component will enable organizations to address one or more forms of national origin discrimination in rental, sales, or lending.

V. EXPANDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR LINGUISTIC INTEGRATION AND EDUCATION

English-language acquisition is vitally important for new Americans to integrate successfully into their communities. Though some new Americans come to the United States fluent in English, many do not. Understanding and communicating in English has a significant impact on the ability of an immigrant or refugee to find a job, advance in a career, and become civically active in his or her community. Therefore, one of the most effective ways to help non-English-speaking immigrants and refugees integrate into American society is to support their acquisition of English-language skills while also valuing and recognizing the importance of maintaining native language proficiency to preserve culture and intergenerational communication.

The Task Force has been focused on implementing strategies to advance four key goals to enhance language acquisition: (1) Ensure all new Americans can access high-quality language instruction; (2) Ensure that new Americans have meaningful access to high-quality early learning from birth to kindergarten; (3) Raise the EL high school graduation rate so it is equivalent to the overall national graduation rate; and (4) Improve new Americans' access to postsecondary education and training.

HIGHLIGHTING EFFECTIVE PROGRAMS, COMMUNITY MODELS, AND POLICIES

To support the work of the Task Force, ED launched a [monthly webinar series](#) focused on the educational and linguistic integration of immigrants and refugees. The webinars have brought together ED staff, researchers, and practitioners to highlight promising practices that support the educational attainment of immigrants and refugees. The webinar topics have included: America's Youngest Pioneers: Immigrant Children, Youth and Adults—What does the data show?; Creating Welcoming Schools; Engaging Immigrant Parents, Families, and Concerned Adults; The Benefits of Dual-Language Learning; and Early Learning Opportunities for Every Child. ED recently held a [webinar](#) on the impact of early life trauma for children who are adopted internationally into American families and continues to explore ways to more fully respond to the needs of this population.

Instituto del Progress Latino's Carreras En Salud Program: Staff members at [Instituto del Progreso Latino](#) in Chicago, Illinois, learned early on that to keep their adult population engaged in learning they needed an innovative curriculum approach. Contextualized basic skills courses allowed the *Carreras En Salud* program to combine academic instruction with technical training for the healthcare industry. Instituto's curriculum developers observed the workplaces of their employer partners, specifically looking at the duties, skills, and information required to perform jobs such as Certified Nursing Assistant ("CAN") and Licensed Practical Nurse ("LPN"). These observations led to the production of a customized curriculum that combined skill building based on the needs of employers with basic academic skills instruction that learners needed. Instituto's success is clearly demonstrated in its high retention rates (70 percent to 90 percent, depending on the cohort) and the average wage increases of their LPN program participants (\$10 to \$25 per hour). Additionally, 88 percent of students complete their Vocational English Language Acquisition ("ELA")/Pre-CNA courses and 77 percent advance to the bridge portion of the program.

Additional webinars will highlight the ED's recent Pathways to Postsecondary Education and Career Training Success. To date, the ED has held five successful webinars with over 400 participants.

Additionally, during the 2015 Hispanic Heritage Month, the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanics, housed within ED, released the "[Bright Spots in Hispanic Education](#)" national online catalog. This catalogue features over 230 programs, models, organizations and initiatives that are investing in the educational attainment of Hispanics, from cradle-to-career, including programs supporting immigrant integration for Hispanics. The President also announced 150 "[Commitments to Action](#)" with a collective investment of over \$335 million that will build on and accelerate federal, State, and local investments in high-quality education, from cradle-to-career, for students across the country, including new immigrants, refugees, and ELs.

[EARLY LEARNING TOOLKIT FOR PARENTS](#)

The HHS Administration for Children and Families (ACF), in collaboration with [Too Small to Fail](#) and ED, developed a suite of resources that can help enrich children's early language experiences beginning from birth. This toolkit includes tip sheets for families, preschool teachers, and infant/toddler teachers and caregivers, as well as a fact sheet that highlights the evidence behind the benefits of being bilingual and embracing children's home languages.

Additionally, ED and ACF is engaged in numerous efforts to create greater awareness about the benefits of early learning for immigrants and refugees.

- In June 2015, the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanics, housed within ED, held the "2015 Early Learning Symposium: Fulfilling America's Future: Research, Practice and Policy Advancing Early Childhood Education for Hispanics" in Chicago, IL. The symposium was used as a venue to disseminate ED's early learning work on the promising practices and opportunities facing Hispanic dual-language learners and share the research, policies, and national efforts taking place with nonprofits at the local level.
- In June 2015, ACF also hosted a [regional symposium](#) to link refugee families with early learning programs such as Child Care and Head Start in partnership with ORR, Offices of Head Start, and Child Care and Maryland's Departments of Education and Human Services. About 40 refugee resettlement and early learning professionals from Baltimore and its six surrounding counties participated in the symposium. During the symposium, participants worked across sectors to develop local plans for improving refugees' access to early learning, including having Head Start workers co-located at resettlement agencies to assist with enrollment. The symposium received high marks; 94 percent of participants stated that the event facilitated collaboration across networks.
- In October 2015, the Office of Regional Operations (ORO) provided a presentation at the Virginia Head Start Association's Health and Family Institute, focused on the intersection of two Presidential initiatives: early learning and immigrant integration.

- In November 2015, ORO, OHS, OCC and ORR co-hosted a webinar on immigrant integration and early learning, including tools for replicating the regional symposium held in June 2015. This webinar is provided tools for regional, State and local officials to jointly host a symposium or other activities to better link refugee families with early learning opportunities.

ENGLISH LEARNER TOOL KIT

In September 2015, with assistance from DOJ, ED released its completed [English Learner Tool Kit](#) to support States, districts, and schools in meeting their legal obligations to ELs and ensuring access to quality education.

Included in the EL Tool Kit are resources for identifying ELs, delivering high-quality EL programs, evaluating the effectiveness of these programs, preventing unnecessary segregation, providing qualified staff, ensuring access to school programs and activities (including disability-related services), transitioning ELs from language programs at the appropriate time, monitoring students' progress, and supporting LEP parents. Following its release, the Tool Kit received praise from around the country and from nonprofit organizations, federal agencies, and school districts. ED continues to look for ways to promote and disseminate the Toolkit to communities seeking to advance high-quality language instruction.

English for New Bostonians/English Works: [English for New Bostonians \(ENB\)](#) is a public-private-community collaboration addressing the need for increased English-language learning opportunities for adult immigrants in Boston. ENB collaborators include the City of Boston, foundations, corporations, nonprofits, and community organizations. It has built several partnerships to expand and enhance English-language learning programs. For example, ENB partnered with the Massachusetts Immigration and Refugee Coalition to develop a free 11-week program that offers computer-assisted English classes and legal assistance completing immigration applications. Through the [English Works](#) campaign, a coalition of immigrant community leaders, labor unions, business and civic leaders, educators, and advocates across Massachusetts are working to create a sustainable, high-quality ESOL system that meets the needs of immigrant workers and their employers.

NETWORKS FOR INTEGRATING NEW AMERICANS

ED's Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education (OCTAE) is committed to understanding how adult education can improve immigrants' access to effective and innovative English-language programs, support immigrants on the path to citizenship, and support immigrants' career development through training and education. Since March 2013, OCTAE has supported the [Networks for Integrating New Americans](#) project through a contract with World Education, Inc., and its partner organizations, including National Partnership for New Americans, IMPRINT, Network Impact, Community Science, and Welcoming America. Together, these organizations have been supporting and documenting immigrant integration models that strategically coordinate across services and providers to promote linguistic, civic, and economic integration. This effort is guided by a [theoretical framework](#) and provides technical assistance to help local immigrant integration networks plan and implement immigrant integration activities.

Five diverse networks were selected through a national, competitive application process. The networks and their lead organizations are: (1) Central Valley Immigrant Integration Network in Fresno, California, led by the Fresno Adult School; (2) Neighbors United Network in Boise, Idaho, led by the Idaho Office for Refugees; (3) Lancaster Refugee Coalition in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, led by the Lancaster Literacy Council; (4) We Rhode Island Network in Providence, Rhode Island, led by the Rhode Island Family Literacy Initiative; and (5) White Center, Promise in King County, Washington, led by the White Center Neighborhood Development Association.

On October 29, 2015, representatives from World Education, along with the coordinators and members of each network, met with the Task Force to provide a briefing on the status of their work and lessons learned. It was also an opportunity for the federal partners to ask questions of the Networks, and to share information about their federal initiatives that might be helpful to their local efforts. Across the five networks, a key accomplishment is the increased participation of immigrants and refugees in adult education services and civic engagement. For example, the Central Valley Immigrant Integration Network partners have realized increased participation in ESL, Adult Secondary Education and their new Vocational ESL program for DACA-eligible residents, and they have increased their voter registration efforts in Network celebrations and adult school events.

Accomplishments also include better collaboration that allows various immigrant- and refugee-focused groups and their partners to successfully capture funding opportunities. Several Networks have been able to create and implement a better-integrated funding model, and they are receiving multi-year funding from different funding sources. This integrated funding is enabling the Neighbors United Network in Idaho to increase its members' capacity to help highly educated, high-skilled immigrants and refugees to receive re-credentialing and higher-paying jobs within their professions. Successful integrated funding is also helping the White Center Network in the State of Washington to integrate ESOL with civic engagement, as well as to implement creative ways for members of the receiving community to read, share and learn about immigrant experiences.

Walmart Foundation's Increased Investment in Immigrant Integration: The Walmart Foundation is supporting several efforts to advance immigrant integration among their employees. For example, in September the [Walmart Foundation](#) announced the Hispanic Integration Project that will provide \$1.5 million in grant funding to the Hispanic Federation, the League of United Latin American Citizens, and the National Council of La Raza to support ESL training and civic engagement in 11 States providing services to nearly 19,000 Hispanic immigrants. The Walmart Foundation is also investing in efforts to increase English-language skills among retail workers through a new project, [Skills and Opportunity for the New American Workforce](#), a coalition between the National Immigration Forum, Miami Dade College, and the Community College Consortium for Immigrant Education.

Seattle's Ready to Work Program: Seattle Mayor Ed Murray, the Seattle City Council, and three City agencies—the Human Services Department, Office of Economic Development, and the Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs (OIRA)—along with a group of engaged stakeholders took action to create the [Ready to Work \(RTW\) program](#). RTW was created as a prototype of English-language acquisition and employment. Through RTW, Seattle aims to empower and support immigrants, refugees, and others to overcome barriers to reach milestones on their difficult journey to economic stability, quality jobs, and integration into life in Seattle. The program combines ESL classes with computer literacy instruction and case management to help immigrants gain job readiness skills and take steps toward economic self-sufficiency. The success of RTW will be measured over the next year by determining the rate at which participants achieve their employment and English-language proficiency goals. OIRA is contracting with RTI International to conduct an independent evaluation of RTW and its findings will be reported to the Mayor's Office and City Council.

Other accomplishments include better collaboration with employers. For example, the We Rhode Island Network has more meaningfully engaged potential employers to strategize ways to better meet the real workforce needs of employers and therefore create real job opportunities for immigrants and refugees. The Lancaster Refugee Coalition in Pennsylvania has engaged employers and their workforce development partners to create an improved articulation of career pathways supports for English-language learners, including immigrants and refugees who are learning English as an additional language.

In addition to the meeting with the Task Force, the Networks engaged in a two-day convening at ED, receiving further technical assistance from World Education, their partners, and nationally recognized subject matter experts in network development, workforce development, ESL, and immigrant integration.

The two key themes emerging from this project are (1) the critical importance of network development in support of immigrant integration, and (2) the central role of adult-education providers in immigrant integration efforts. Both of these themes will be explored and further described, based in the experiences of the networks, in the project's final report expected in March 2016. OCTAE's technical assistance to these networks will continue through February 2016 and will include a national webinar during which the networks will share the final outcomes of their projects, as well as their plans for sustaining these efforts beyond the project period.

As we head into 2016, ED will launch a \$2.4 million technical assistance investment in FY 16 using National Leadership Activities funds available under Title II of WIOA, the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA), to assist state and local adult educators in scaling place-based network models of immigrant integration. AEFLA provides over \$70 million of formula funding for "integrated English literacy and civics education (IELCE), which are education services provided to English language learners who are adults, including professionals with degrees and credentials in their native countries, that enables such adults to achieve competency in the English language and acquire the basic and more advanced skills needed to function effectively as parents, workers, and citizens in the United States. Such services shall include instruction in literacy and English language acquisition and instruction on the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and civic participation, and may include workforce training. This new technical assistance investment will assist local recipients of the IELCE formula funds in understanding how they can best achieve the program's purpose as well as fulfill its requirements by adopting a collective impact, network-based approach to providing immigrant integration

services. Additionally, ED will be issuing further guidance in the next year on new statutory requirements that apply to the IELCE program under WIOA.

VI. CONCLUSION

As President Obama reminded us during [Immigrant Heritage Month](#), one of the remarkable things about America is that nearly all of our families originally came from someplace else. We're a nation of immigrants. It's a source of our strength and something we all can take pride in. Our tradition of welcoming immigrants and refugees from around the world has given us a tremendous advantage over other nations. New Americans are the Nation's future workforce, entrepreneurs, and innovators. It is incumbent upon us to meet the integration needs of immigrants and refugees and to build strong, cohesive communities that are more inclusive and economically robust.

This is why the Obama Administration is committed to strengthening the underlying federal infrastructure to meet the needs of and capitalize on the momentum created by proactive integration and welcoming efforts in receiving communities. The Task Force will continue to seek to institutionalize its work to ensure coordination among federal agencies and maximize the impact of their efforts. The Task Force's initial process for developing the federal strategy has already increased cross-agency collaboration. Several agencies have developed joint recommendations in cross-cutting areas and are now implementing these ideas. For example, CNCS and ORR are partnering to develop national service opportunities to integrate refugee populations by placing AmeriCorps members in eight refugee resettlement agencies. Similarly, SBA is teaming up with DOL to provide small businesses with more information on their responsibilities to workers. And USCIS is working with USDA to bring their immigration services to rural communities. The Task Force will continue to convene to enhance information-sharing efforts and crosscutting efforts, in areas such as adult education and workforce training, that bolster the integration of new Americans.

As we move forward next year, the Task Force will strive to continue meeting its core goals by implementing the new initiatives mentioned in this report as well as seeking opportunities to convene leaders in the private, philanthropic, and public sectors dedicated to enhancing the integration of new Americans. Recognizing the crucial role that communities play in helping to institutionalize the Task Force's core goals, we will also continue to leverage outreach and federal-state-local partnership opportunities by engaging trusted voices across regional, State, and local levels. We also hope to expand the reach of the Building Welcoming Communities and the "Stand Stronger" Citizenship Awareness Campaigns. By building and strengthening welcoming communities, promoting successful long-term integration, and sharing our stories, we can stay true to our heritage as a nation of immigrants and keep the American Dream alive for generations to come.

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