



**2016 ANNUAL REPORT:
NEW YORK STATE OFFICE FOR NEW AMERICANS**

PURSUANT TO SECTION 94-b(5)(n) OF THE EXECUTIVE LAW

FOR SUBMISSION TO:

**TEMPORARY PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE JOHN J. FLANAGAN
SPEAKER OF THE ASSEMBLY CARL E. HEASTIE**

July 18, 2018

**Andrew M. Cuomo
Governor**

**Rossana Rosado
Secretary of State**

INTRODUCTION

In compliance with section 94-b(5)(n) of the Executive Law, the Department of State (the “Department”) respectfully submits the following report on the activities of the Office for New Americans (the “ONA”). This report covers the period from ONA’s inception through December 31, 2015.

HISTORY OF THE OFFICE FOR NEW AMERICANS

In 2013, Governor Andrew M. Cuomo and the New York State Legislature established ONA, recognizing the important contributions that newcomers can make to the State’s civic and economic life. In 2014, the Legislature enacted and the Governor signed into law Chapter 206 of the Laws of 2014, which laid out the powers and duties of ONA. ONA has the proud distinction of being the first state-level immigrant office created by statute in the United States.

OPPORTUNITY CENTER NETWORK

The cornerstone of ONA’s effort is a network of 27 neighborhood-based Opportunity Centers, which are located throughout the State (for a list of ONA Opportunity Center locations, please see the Appendix to this Report or visit the ONA website at www.newamericans.ny.gov). The Opportunity Centers are hosted within existing culturally competent, language-accessible, community-based organizations. Each Opportunity Center provides new Americans with English-for-Speakers-of-Other-Languages (ESOL) training, prepares them for the United States citizenship exam, and provides instruction on how to start a new, or grow an existing, business. The network of ONA Opportunity Centers is supported by four legal counsels, each of whom is an expert in immigration law. Each legal counsel is assigned to specific Opportunity Centers in a region of the State, allowing the program to maximize its outreach to new Americans. The ONA Legal Counsels review U.S. naturalization applications, oversee citizenship drives at ONA Opportunity Centers, hold immigration law consultation days, and support the State’s effort to respond to changes in Federal immigration policy. The Opportunity Center network is also supported by an information hotline. Since its inception, the Opportunity Center network served more than 110,000 new Americans (see Table 1, below).

Table 1: New Americans Served by the ONA Opportunity Center Network	Reporting Period Ending December, 31 2015	Launch through December 31, 2015
Number of New Americans Served Through ONA Opportunity Centers	15,999	42,725
Number of New Americans Served Through the New York State New Americans Hotline	22,366	68,020
Total Number of New Americans Served by the ONA Opportunity Center Network	38,365	110,745

Opportunity Centers

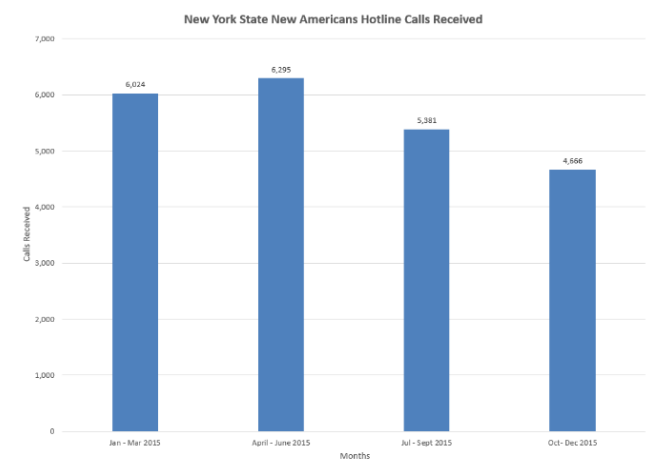
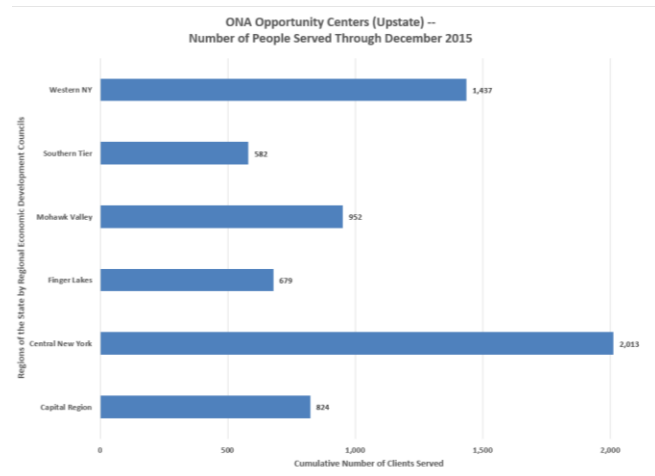
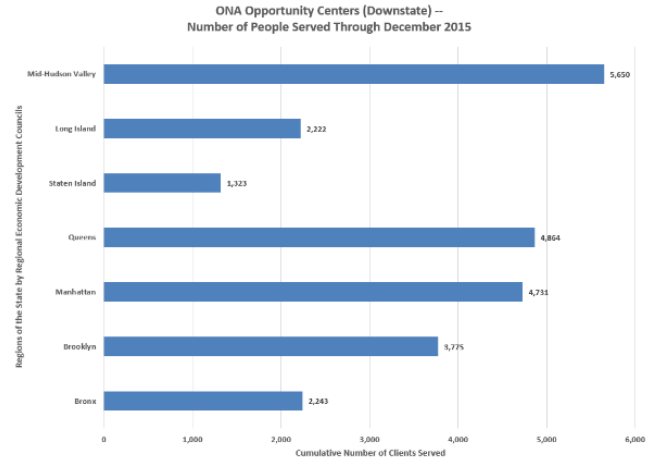
During the reporting period, the Opportunity Centers provided services to 15,999 new Americans, which brings the three-year total to 42,725. A breakdown by region is contained in Figures 1 and 2. In addition to their primary functions set forth above, Opportunity Centers also connect new Americans to additional opportunities, including job training, interview skills training, resume writing workshops, and professional networking opportunities.

The network has transformed the traditional delivery of immigrant integration services by blending technology into the learning environment. ESOL instruction has been dramatically advanced by combining tablet and technological instruction with listening, reading, writing, and speaking activities. Each Opportunity Center uses CitizenshipWorks, a new software program that simplifies the naturalization process.

New York State New Americans Hotline and Website

As noted above, the Opportunity Center network is supported by a toll-free, multi-lingual telephone hotline, which provides live assistance in more than 200 languages and operates from 9AM to 8PM (ET), Monday through Friday (excluding Federal holidays). The hotline responds to general immigration and naturalization questions and provides referrals to other public and private immigrant-related programs including the Opportunity Centers. It also acts as a resource to coordinate immigration assistance fraud complaints. The New York State New Americans hotline number is 1-800-566-7636. During the reporting period, the hotline rendered general assistance to 22,365 new Americans, which brings the three-year total to 68,020. The hotline is operated by Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of New York. A breakdown of calls by quarter is contained in Figure 3.

ONA is also supported by a dedicated website, www.newamericans.ny.gov. Through the website, new Americans can locate their nearest Opportunity Centers and find out additional information about the immigrant integration services available in their community.



IMMIGRATION FRAUD CAMPAIGN

In 2015, the State launched a comprehensive initiative to protect immigrants from immigration-related fraud and exploitation. The initiative includes:

- Launching a multilingual public service campaign warning immigrants against fraud;
- Signing legislation making it a felony to commit immigrant assistance services fraud (went into effect in February 2015);
- Expanding the New York State New Americans Hotline (800-566-7636) as a resource to coordinate immigration assistance fraud complaints, as well as offer service referrals;
- Helping local immigrant-serving not-for-profit agencies become federally-accredited to provide certain services by expanding free immigration law training;
- Strengthening enforcement against the unauthorized practice of immigration law by enhancing coordination via the ONA-led Protecting Immigrant New Yorkers Taskforce between the Attorney General, District Attorneys' offices, local government consumer affairs departments and federal agencies through complaint referrals; and
- Issuing a resource guide with the community for local governments and law enforcement to better understand the issue and protect immigrant from this fraud (<http://voicesofny.org/2016/02/a-new-guide-to-help-fight-immigration-fraud>)

FREE ESOL TRAINING VIA MOBILE PHONES

On April 27, 2015, the New York State Office for New Americans [launched a pilot program](#) to provide free English-language training via mobile phones to hundreds of immigrants in New York State, who may lack regular access to a classroom, a computer or the Internet. Learners gain access to self-paced audio and text lessons through their personal cell phones. The program initially reached farm workers in several areas: the “dairy belt” in both the Finger Lakes and North Country regions, and downstate in the Hudson Valley and New York City where immigrants face transportation challenges.

REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

In July 2015, ONA released a new Request for Applications (RFA) to find partners for its signature [Opportunity Centers](#) and [Legal Counsel Programs](#). The new RFA improved the structure of the programs and expands services being offered to the public. This new structure builds on the experience of the first three years of operations.

FIRST NATURALIZATION CEREMONY AT THE NEW YORK STATE FAIR

On August 28, 2015, the federal government, the New York State Office for New Americans, and the New York State Fair designated a [New Americans Day](#) at the 2015 Great New York State Fair. The day was marked with a special naturalization ceremony, cultural performances celebrating the rich diversity of New York State, and culinary specialties from around the world. This is the first time a naturalization ceremony was held at the State Fair. More than 100 New Yorkers became U.S. Citizens at the ceremony.

CONCLUSION

By the end of 2015, more than 110,000 immigrants from across the State had been assisted through ONA. ONA will continue to assist the many newcomers eager to contribute to the State's economy and become a vibrant part of our society. Working vigilantly, ONA will continue to work to protect new Americans as they transition to full participation in New York's communities by addressing the issue of immigrant services fraud.

APPENDIX

ONA Opportunity Center - Albany

Stuyvesant Plaza, 1475 Western Ave. STE 59

Albany, NY 12203

REDC: Capital

Host Organization/Partners: Empire Justice Center, The Legal Project

Phone Number: (518) 435-1770

ONA Opportunity Center - Bronx

2155 University Avenue

Bronx, NY 10453

REDC: New York City

Host Organization/Partners: Research Foundation of CUNY/Bronx Community College

Phone Number: (718) 289-5100

ONA Opportunity Center - Bronx

401 East 145th St.

Bronx, New York 10454

REDC: New York City

Host Organization/Partners: Mercy Center

Phone Number: (718) 993-2789

ONA Opportunity Center - Dutchess

218 Church Street

Poughkeepsie, New York 12601

REDC: Mid-Hudson

Host Organization/Partners: Catholic Charities, Dutchess Community College

Phone Number: (845) 452-1400

ONA Opportunity Center - Erie

20 Herkimer Street

Buffalo, NY 14213

REDC: Western New York

Host Organization/Partners: Catholic Charities of Buffalo

Phone Number: (716) 842-0270

ONA Opportunity Center - Brooklyn

25 Thornton Street

Brooklyn, NY 11206

REDC: New York City

Host Organization/Partners: Opportunities for Better Tomorrow

Phone Number: (718) 387-1600

[ONA Opportunity Center - Brooklyn](#)

[7111 5th Avenue](#)

[Brooklyn, NY 11209](#)

REDC: New York City

Host Organization/Partners: Arab American Association

Phone Number: (718) 745-3523

[ONA Opportunity Center - Monroe](#)

[87 North Clinton](#)

[Rochester, NY 14604](#)

REDC: Finger Lakes

Host Organization/Partners: Rochester Collaborative for New Americans (Catholic Family Center), Rochester Public Library, Somali Community Western NY

Phone Number: (585) 232-1840

[ONA Opportunity Center - Nassau](#)

[134 Jackson Street](#)

[Hempstead, NY 11550](#)

REDC: Long Island

Host Organization/Partners: Economic Opportunity Commission of Nassau County

Phone Number: (516) 623-1472

[ONA Opportunity Center - Nassau](#)

[187 Smith Street](#)

[Freeport, NY 11520](#)

REDC: Long Island

Host Organization/Partners: Literacy Nassau

Phone Number: (516) 867-3584

[ONA Opportunity Center - Manhattan](#)

[55 Exchange Place](#)

[New York, New York 10005](#)

REDC: New York City

Host Organization/Partners: Hispanic Federation, Northern Manhattan Coalition for Immigrant Rights, ASPIRA, Community Association of Progressive Dominicans (ACDP)

Phone Number: (212) 233-8955

[ONA Opportunity Center - Manhattan](#)

[560 West 181st Street](#)

[New York, NY 10005](#)

REDC: New York City

Host Organization/Partners: Research Foundation of CUNY/Manhattan

Phone Number: (212) 568-4692

[ONA Opportunity Center - Manhattan](#)

[165 Eldridge St.](#)

[New York, NY 10002](#)

REDC: New York City

Host Organization/Partners: Chinese American Planning Council

Phone Number: (212) 941-0920

[ONA Opportunity Center - Utica](#)

[309 Genesee Street](#)

[Utica, NY 13501](#)

REDC: Mohawk

Host Organization/Partners: Mohawk Valley Resource Center for Refugees

Phone Number: (315) 738-1083

[ONA Opportunity Center - Onondaga](#)

[527 Salina Street](#)

[Syracuse, NY 13202](#)

REDC: Central New York

Host Organization/Partners: Catholic Charities of Onondaga County, Literacy Volunteers of Greater Syracuse, Interfaith Works of Central NY, & the Spanish Action League of Onondaga County

Phone Number: (315) 474-7428

[ONA Opportunity Center - Orange](#)

[321 S William Street](#)

[Newburgh, NY 12550](#)

REDC: Mid-Hudson

Host Organization/Partners: Catholic Charities - Orange County, Orange County Community College

Phone Number: (845) 344-6222

[ONA Opportunity Center - Queens](#)

[92-10 Roosevelt Avenue](#)

[Jackson Heights, NY 11372](#)

REDC: New York City

Host Organization/Partners: Make the Road

Phone Number: (718) 565-8500

[ONA Opportunity Center - Queens](#)

[35-56 159th Street](#)

[Flushing, NY 11358](#)

REDC: New York City

Host Organization/Partners: Korean Community Services, Chinese American Planning Council & MinKwon Center for Community Action

Phone Number: (718) 939-6137

[ONA Opportunity Center - Queens](#)

[138-46 Northern Boulevard](#)

[Flushing, NY 11354](#)

REDC: New York City

Host Organization/Partners: Young Men's Christian Association of Greater New York (YMCA)

Phone Number: (718) 961-6880

[ONA Opportunity Center - Queens](#)

[74-09 37th Ave](#)

[Jackson Heights, NY 11372](#)

REDC: New York City

Host Organization/Partners: Queens Community House

Phone Number: (718) 898-7461

[ONA Opportunity Center - Staten Island](#)

[285 Vanderbilt Avenue](#)

[Staten Island, NY 10301](#)

REDC: New York City

Host Organization/Partners: Young Men's Christian Association of Greater New York (YMCA)

Phone Number: (718) 981-4382

[ONA Opportunity Center - Rockland](#)

[24 West Street](#)

[Spring Valley, NY 12231](#)

REDC: Mid-Hudson

Host Organization/Partners: Haitian American Cultural and Social Organization

Phone Number: (845) 352-5897

[ONA Opportunity Center - Suffolk](#)

[1090 Suffolk Avenue](#)

[Brentwood, NY 11717](#)

REDC: Long Island

Host Organization/Partners: Make The Road -- Long Island, CARECEN

Phone Number: (631) 231-2220

[ONA Opportunity Center - Tompkins](#)

[315 North Cayuga Street](#)

[Ithaca, NY 14850](#)

REDC: Southern Tier

Host Organization/Partners: Catholic Charities Tompkins/Tioga

Phone Number: (607) 272-5062

ONA Opportunity Center - Westchester

360 North Avenue

New Rochelle, NY 10801

REDC: Mid-Hudson

Host Organization/Partners: United Community Center of Westchester, New Rochelle Public Library

Phone Number: (914) 813-2896

ONA Opportunity Center - Westchester

46 Waller Ave

White Plains, NY 10605

REDC: Mid-Hudson

Host Organization/Partners: Westchester Hispanic Coalition, Westchester Community

Phone Number: (914) 948-8466