



Department of State
Office for New Americans

**NEW YORK STATE OFFICE FOR NEW
AMERICANS
2023 ANNUAL REPORT:**

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

FOR SUBMISSION TO:

TEMPORARY PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

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June 21, 2024

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June 21, 2024

To the Governor, Temporary President and Speaker:

I am pleased to provide you with the 2023 Annual Report of the Department of State's Office for New Americans, as required by Executive Law § 94-b (5) (n).

This report summarizes the activities and accomplishments from January 1, 2023 through December 31, 2023.

Throughout 2023, the NYS Office for New Americans carried out its mission to assist all new Americans with accessing and navigating a variety of free services and support through its statewide network of community-based providers.

Additional information about the Office for New Americans can be found on the agency's website at <https://dos.ny.gov/office-new-americans>

Respectfully submitted,



Walter T. Mosley
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 NYS Office for New Americans (the “ONA”). This report covers ONA’s programs and activities during the period from January 1, 2023, to December 31, 2023

HISTORY OF THE OFFICE FOR NEW AMERICANS

ONA was established in 2012 in recognition of 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.

OVERVIEW

ONA assists all new Americans in accessing and navigating a variety of free services and supports their inclusion as an integral part of New York State’s diverse cultural fabric. ONA’s programs are delivered by its statewide network of immigration service providers, which are nested within existing community-based organizations. With a holistic and comprehensive approach, ONA assists both the individual and family in their civic and economic engagement in New York State. In addition, ONA staff engage directly in a variety of constituent, outreach, and policy initiatives that help to support New York State as a leader in welcoming new Americans and supporting their overall well-being.

In 2023, ONA provided services under the following program areas¹:

¹ In accordance with Executive Law § 94-b (5) (n), this report describes the activities of the Office for New Americans, including but not limited to, summarizing calls received through the hotline and website, information on ESOL training services provided by the office, the number of immigrants assisted through the opportunity centers (both civics and ESOL), the status of any workforce development programs, and other relevant information related to ONA’s responsibilities under Executive Law § 94-b(5).

1. New Americans Hotline and Website
2. ESOL Training Services – Including Opportunity Centers – ESOL
3. Assistance in Matters Relating to Immigration Status – Including Opportunity Centers – Civics
4. Workforce Development Programs
5. Connecting New Americans to Their Communities Through Civic Engagement
6. Developing and Leveraging skills to Benefit Immigrant Communities and the State

NEW YORK STATE NEW AMERICANS HOTLINE AND WEBSITE

New Americans Hotline

The ONA network is supported by a toll-free, multi-lingual New York State New Americans Hotline, which provides live assistance in more than 200 languages and operates from 9:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. (EST), Monday through Friday (excluding Federal holidays).

The New Americans Hotline responded to general immigration and naturalization questions and provides referrals to the caller’s local ONA provider, as well as to other public and private immigrant-related programs. Additionally, the hotline received and referred immigration assistance fraud complaints to appropriate enforcement agencies with jurisdiction over the complaint. The New Americans Hotline number is 1-800-566-7636.

Table 1: New Americans Hotline Data

Services provided (1/1/2023 – 12/31/2023)	Number of Individuals Served
Number of Calls Answered	34,252
Number of Referrals	61,402

ONA Website & Social Media

ONA utilized its website (<https://dos.ny.gov/office-new-americans>) to share important information with the new American community, as well as all New Yorkers. ONA also utilized social media posts on Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/NYSNewAmericans>) and Twitter ([@NYSNewAmericans](https://twitter.com/NYSNewAmericans)) to reach community members across the state.

Table 2: Website Data in 2023

Website or Social Media Platform (1/1/23 – 12/31/23)	Number of Users
ONA Website Sessions - <i>Overall number of visitors to the landing page</i>	20,648
Facebook Page Reach - <i>The number of people who saw any content from the ONA Page or about the ONA Page, including posts, stories, ads, social information from people who interact with your Page and more</i>	50,358
Tweet Impressions – <i>The number of times users saw the ONA tweet on Twitter</i>	10,000 (<i>data only available for the last 2 quarters of 2023</i>)
Instagram Impressions – <i>The number of times users saw the ONA post on Instagram</i>	781

ESOL TRAINING SERVICES

Opportunity Centers – ESOL

ONA Opportunity Centers – English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) provided ESOL classes combined with individual workforce support. Each Opportunity Center-ESOL has an experienced ESOL teacher on staff to provide instruction to immigrants and assist participants with resume building, interview techniques, and employment opportunities. The ONA Opportunity Centers – ESOL also provided workforce development workshops for the community.

Table 3: Opportunity Centers – ESOL Data

Services provided (1/1/2023-12/31/2023)	Number of Individuals served
Clients participating in ESOL Classes	3,520
Clients receiving guidance resume building, interview techniques and employment opportunities	1,687
Clients attending workforce development workshops	2,962
Total	8,169

Cell-Ed

Cell-Ed is a first-in-the-nation public-private partnership established by New York State focusing on the delivery of mobile language learning. It is a phone-based English learning system providing English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes to individuals who have difficulty reaching a physical classroom location. Cell-Ed has the capability of reaching and educating more new Americans than traditional classroom settings and has proven to be a successful tool for immigrants seeking to learn English and build skills for life and work. This program provides unlimited access to Cell-Ed’s complete course catalog of English Language Learning, plus literacy, numeracy, civics, job readiness, digital literacy, and more.

Table 4: Cell-Ed Data

Services provided (1/1/23 – 12/31/23)	Number of Individuals Served
Active learners on Cell-Ed	3,356

IMMIGRANTS ASSISTED IN MATTERS RELATING TO IMMIGRATION STATUS

Opportunity Centers – Civics

ONA’s statewide network of Opportunity Centers – Civics provided free and confidential services

to immigrants in New York State regardless of immigration status. Housed within community-based organizations, ONA Opportunity Centers – Civics provide immigration application assistance, host Citizenship Preparation classes, provide referrals to English for Speakers of Other Language (ESOL) classes, host community seminars on topics relevant to new Americans, and host legal consultations. Each Opportunity Center – Civics was supported by an ONA Legal Counsel, experienced immigration attorneys who provide free legal support to immigrants.

In 2023, ONA doubled funding to this network, enabling partner organizations to increase the number of services provided to the community.

Table 5: Opportunity Centers – Civics Data

Services provided (2/1/2023 – 1/31/2024)	Number of Individuals Served
Clients Attending Legal Consultations at Opportunity Centers	6,862
Clients Participating in Citizenship Preparation Classes	2,090
Clients Receiving Application Assistance	2,967
Clients Attending Community Workshops	14,945
Total	26,864

Citizenshipworks

Citizenshipworks is a free online tool where immigrants can apply for citizenship easily and securely, either through their local ONA Opportunity Center, or with assistance from a “virtual” attorney - <https://www.citizenshipworks.org/Campaign/nys-ona>

Table 6: Citizenshipworks Data

Services provided (2/1/2023 - 1/31/2024)	Number of Individuals Served
Clients Enrolled in the Virtual Opportunity Center	384

ONA Legal Counsels

ONA Legal Counsels provided free legal services and direct representation to immigrants under a “universal representation” model, meaning any client in need of any type of immigration legal assistance can receive these free legal services. Legal Counsels provided regular legal consultation days at ONA Opportunity Centers, as well as other community-based sites, and also provided law-related workshops and trainings, including Know Your Rights. To facilitate this work, ONA doubled the funding to this network.

Table 7: ONA Legal Counsel Data

Services provided (5/1/2023 – 1/31/2024)	Number of Individuals Served
Clients provided legal intakes	7,691
Clients assisted at consultation days (At both Opportunity Centers and non-Opportunity Center sites)	5,034
Clients attending trainings and workshops	8,206
Clients receiving direct representation	4,757
Total	25,688

Welcoming New York

Welcoming New York ensures that newly arrived vulnerable migrants and asylum seekers receive the assistance needed to complete the complex asylum process or such other immigration processes as may be necessary to secure the ability to work legally in the United States through mechanisms including but not limited to screening, pro se assistance, pro bono assistance, and direct legal assistance. In addition, providers coordinate and provide case management services to assist migrants, including relocated families, in accessing social service programs, health services, housing and other such services for which members of this population may be eligible or become eligible. The Welcoming New York Statewide Coordinator is the New York Immigration Coalition, and the NYC Lead Agency is Hispanic Federation. Direct services are being provided through their partner networks across New York State.

Services provided (8/15/2023 – 1/15/2024)	Number of Individuals Served
Total number of Individuals Engaged (includes services provided by Welcoming Navigators, immigration legal services, and law-related support)	33,811
Total number of Additional Legal Services (includes direct legal services and applications filed for Asylum, TPS, and EADs)	8,726

Upstate Immigration Court Program

The Upstate Immigration Court / New York Immigrant Family Unity Project (NYIFUP) provided legal services to immigrant clients who are detained and appearing before the four upstate New York immigration courts. This program also assisted immigrant clients whose cases were transferred from the upstate courts to NYC immigration courts.

Table 8: Upstate Immigration Court Data

Services provided (1/1/2023 – 12/31/2023)	Number of Individuals Served
Legal intakes	502

New York Legal Response

The New York Legal Response (NYLR) program was launched in the fall of 2022 to provide additional legal capacity to support the arrival of new migrants to New York City. Under this program, Catholic Charities Community Services, Archdiocese of NY, Immigrant Advocates Response Collaborative (I-ARC) and New York Legal Assistance Group (NYLAG)’s NYC Rapid Response Legal Collaborative (which includes subgrants with Make the Road NY and UnLocal), provided immigrants arriving in New York City with free immigration-related legal services and assistance with critical application filings and required appearances. In June 2023, ONA expanded the NYLR program with new grants in two additional regions to respond to the growing needs of the new arrivals – Lower Hudson Valley (Neighbors Link) and Long Island (CARECEN).

Table 9: New York Legal Response Data

Services provided (1/1/23 – 12/31/23)	Number of Individuals Served
Screenings	614
Clients accepted for direct representation	139
Total	753

Pro Bono Immigration Legal Services

The ONA Pro Bono program provided legal assistance to immigrants through a network of Pro Bono Volunteer Attorneys across New York State who were supported with additional training and mentorship from Supervising Immigration Attorneys

Table 10: Pro Bono Services Data

Services provided (1/1/2023 – 12/31/2023)	Number of Individuals Served
Number of legal screenings	742
Number of clients placed for direct representation by Pro Bono Volunteer Attorneys	300

Afghan Legal Assistance Program

Through federal funding provided by the Office of Temporary Disability Assistance / Bureau of Refugee Services (OTDA/BRS), ONA administered Afghan Legal Assistance Program (ALAP) grants to its existing legal providers to build their capacity across the state to support the large number of arrivals from Afghanistan, who need assistance with seeking asylum, as well as other legal services.

Table 11: ALAP Data

Services provided (1/1/2023-12/31/2023)	Number of Individuals Served
Legal services	866

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

New Americans Can Code

The New Americans Can Code program provided access for immigrants to free virtual digital literacy training in basic computer skills, as well as more advanced software training courses. It also provided students with workforce development support through individual resume critiques

and meetings with professional mentors.

Table 12: New Americans Can Code Data

Services provided (3/1/2023 – 2/29/2024)	Number of Individuals Served
Enrolled Students	136

Professional Pathways for High-Skilled Immigrants

The ONA Professional Pathways for High-Skilled Immigrants program provided employment coaching, skills training, and job placements for new Americans who are seeking to build on their professional experience and education they received in their home country, prior to coming to the United States.

Table 13: Professional Pathways Data

Services provided (2/1/2023 - 1/31/2024)	Numbers of Individual Served
Clients accepted into the program	512
Clients placed in employment	117

Immigrant Community Navigators

The ONA Immigrant Community Navigator program ensured that there was dedicated outreach and community welcoming efforts to help immigrants gain access to the same opportunities available to all others throughout New York State, with a particular focus on workforce development. The ONA Immigrant Community Navigators were responsible for coordinating and conducting outreach to immigrant communities, creating a grassroots network of support and services. Through these efforts, ONA seeks to maximize the participation of immigrant community members in New York State’s civic and economic life.

Table 14: ONA Community Navigator Data

Services Provided (1/1/2023 – 12/31/2023)	Number of Individuals served
Immigration stakeholder roundtable meetings held	1,082
Workforce Development Workshops	1,313
Community Conversations	1,045
Navigator Trainings	1,406
Impact Days	3,258
Total	8,104

CONNECTING NEW AMERICANS TO THEIR COMMUNITIES THROUGH CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

North Country Immigrant Resource Coordinator

In 2023, ONA partnered with St. Josph Community Outreach Center, to host the North Country Immigrant Resource Coordinator program. Awarded through a competitive procurement. The North Country Immigrant Resource Coordinator program, based at St. Josph Community Outreach Center, assisted immigrants in the North Country region of New York State, particularly those seeking to cross the northern border into Canada and/or entering the U.S. from Canada. The ONA Immigrant Resource Coordinator identified local resources and made referrals to meet the needs of the individuals and families, coordinated local partners, shared information about available services, and hosted immigration legal consultations through partnership with the ONA Legal Counsel in the North Country.

Table 15: North Country Immigrant Resource Coordinator Data

Services provided (12/1/2022-11/30/2023)	Number of Individuals Served

Number of individuals assisted with coordination and referrals	464
Number of individuals attending each Immigration Integration Roundtable	98
Number of Individuals attending Legal Consultation Days	106
Total	668

Constituency Work

ONA’s constituent team assisted new American constituents, as well as other members of the community, with important legal referrals and other resources. ONA received constituent requests through the New Americans Hotline, from the Governor’s Office, through its network of providers, and from other state agencies.

Table 16: Constituent Data

Source of constituent referral (1/1/2023 – 12/31/2023)	Number of Constituents assisted
Correspondence from constituents to the Governor’s Office	218

Golden Door Support Program

In 2023, ONA expanded its Golden Door partnership, partnering with three not for profit providers in New York City, Long Island, and the Hudson. Partners were selected via a competitive procurement and began work in June 2023.

The ONA Golden Door program supported a network of “parent support groups” located at sites statewide and led by qualified mental health counselors, to facilitate information and resources for

immigrant caregivers including mental health support. The Golden Door program also provided direct counseling with program supervisors as a crossover to individual therapy, counseling, family therapy, domestic violence shelters, case managers at site locations, and the New York State suicide hotline. In 2023 there were 255 participants in the Golden Door programming.

DEVELOPING AND LEVERAGING SKILLS THAT BENEFIT IMMIGRANT COMMUNITIES AND THE STATE

DOJ Trainer

The Department of Justice (DOJ) Trainer program assists not for profit immigrant service providers operating in New York State in obtaining and/or retaining DOJ recognition and training the staff at those organizations to receive and maintain DOJ accreditation.

In 2023, ONA provided addition funding to the DOJ Trainer program, in order to increase the number of trainings offered Statewide.

Table 17: DOJ Data

Services provided (2/1/2023 – 1/31/2024)	Number of Individuals Trained
DOJ Trainings	1,328

ONA Ramirez June Initiative

The ONA Ramirez June Initiative, funded by and in partnership with the NYS Council on Developmental Disabilities (CDD), formerly the Developmental Disabilities Planning Council (DDPC), has built the capacity of the ONA network to serve immigrants with developmental disabilities (DD) and their families. The ONA Ramirez June Initiative, a first of its kind state-run program, provides targeted technical assistance, outreach trainings, and builds partnerships among immigrant service providers and developmental disability service providers in New York State. In 2023, the ONA Ramirez June Initiative surveyed participants in its trainings, and 97% of survey

respondents reported satisfaction with the trainings. As a result of participation in Initiative trainings, 92% of professionals and family members reported they feel better able to support people with DD.

Table 18: Ramirez June Initiative Data

Services provided (1/1/2023 – 12/31/2023)	Number of Individuals
Participants in the 29 ONA Ramirez June Initiative outreach trainings.	962

ONA Bilingual Coordinator Program

In 2023, the ONA Ramirez June Initiative launched the ONA Bilingual Coordinator Program to respond to the urgent need to connect new Americans with developmental disability and mental health services. The ONA Bilingual Coordinator Program was led by the Chinese-American Planning Council in Brooklyn, NY, and provides bilingual case management services in Chinese languages to help new Americans bridge gaps and overcome challenges to access the services they need. The program supported its clients to access diagnoses of their disabilities in order to access eligibility determinations for needed developmental disability services, and helps clients to navigate complex service systems, and advocate for their needs.

Table 19: Bilingual Coordinator Data

Services provided (2/1/2023 – 1/31/2024)	Number of Individuals Served
Clients provided case management services	20
Clients connected with a diagnosis of their disability	13
Clients connected with disability services	13
Clients connected with mental health services	5
Referrals made for non-clients	24
Clients reporting satisfaction with the services they received in the long-term satisfaction survey	100%

ONA Webinars

Through the monthly Webinar Series, ONA connected its grantees and the greater network of immigrant serving community-based organizations with timely information and assistance on topics relevant to the immigrant community. ONA's webinar series was also a platform to convene its grantees so that they can learn from one another. In 2023 ONA hosted 11 webinars with 152 average participants per webinar.

CONCLUSION

Through strong, innovative programming and the dedication of its statewide network of community-based providers, ONA was able to assist new Americans across the State and serve communities through a comprehensive series of programs, including launching new and innovative programs, all while focusing on the key issue areas impacting immigrant integration as outlined in its legislation, including ESOL, legal services, workforce development, community and civic engagement, and support of the ONA network. Working vigilantly with all of its partners, 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. Thus, with its partners, in 2023, ONA looks to build on the successes from the past year to continue to make New York State a welcoming place for all new Americans.