



# Center for New Americans

A Community-Based Education and Resource Center for Immigrants and Refugees in Western Massachusetts

Welcoming & Serving Immigrants  
Since 1992

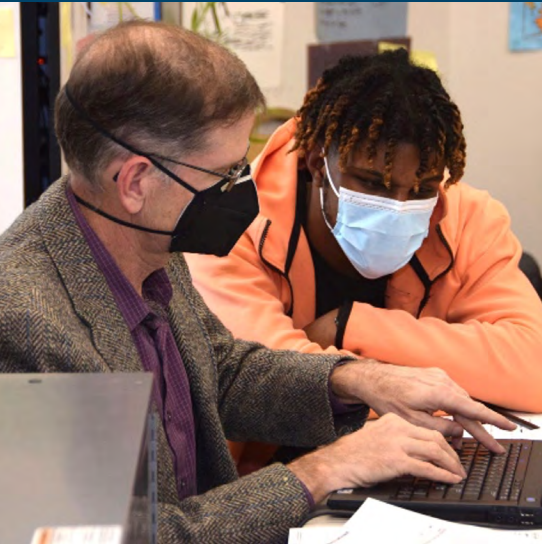


2021  
ANNUAL REPORT



## OUR MISSION

Center for New Americans (CNA) is a community-based, non-profit adult education center that provides the underserved immigrant, refugee and migrant communities of Massachusetts' Pioneer Valley with education and resources to learn English, become involved community members and obtain tools necessary to maintain economic independence and stability.





## FROM THE DIRECTOR



**OUR 2021 ANNUAL REPORT** captures program highlights for the 12 months from September 1, 2020 through August 31, 2021. Never mind that during the fall of 2021, we enjoyed the most wildly successful *30 Poems in November!* event we have ever known. That story will be told in next year's report.

For now, we look back at a year which started completely online. We met our students online, welcomed them into online classes, assisted students with resumes and job applications online, and offered citizenship and immigration legal services by phone and in parking lot meetings. Of course, to migrate services online, we also had to provide students with tablets and hotspots, which was appreciated by our student, Tabitha: "Thanks Center for New Americans for providing me and others with WiFi, this has made it easier to learn online."

As the year progressed and public spaces re-opened, we invited students and clients back into our buildings, offering classes that were partly online and partly in person, and monthly citizenship clinics in our Northampton site.

These transitions required creativity, flexibility, a commitment to fostering community, and a receptiveness to feedback—from students, colleagues, and volunteers. They also could not have happened without the unwavering guidance of our board of directors, the advocacy of our W. Mass legislative leaders, the collaboration of many community partners, and generous funding from state agencies, private foundations, and loyal individuals.

Much has been written about how the pandemic experience inspired people to reflect on where they had been, where they wanted to go next, and what makes sense for the present. A few staff members left Center for New Americans this past spring. We appreciate their years of service and many contributions. We have been fortunate to welcome new colleagues whose perspectives and experience will help us to continue to evolve.

This report is offered in gratitude to everyone who joined us this year in welcoming and supporting immigrants.

With appreciation,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Laurie Millman".

Laurie Millman

# FROM THE BOARD CHAIR



**ACCESS, INCLUSION, AND COLLABORATION HAVE ALWAYS BEEN CRITICAL** for the success of Center for New Americans (CNA). We are all facing new struggles with little time to adjust. Time itself feels altered in our collective experience. As the pandemic continues to teach us all new lessons and present serious challenges, we continue our work guiding our students and citizenship clients as they navigate new territory and cultures.

Giving our students access to learning and communication opportunities is paramount to their success. Remote models for learning reduce time, childcare, and transportation barriers. CNA offered remote learning opportunities before the pandemic, improved these services, and will continue to offer them in the future. Remote offerings will not replace in-person services and teaching. However, they undeniably provide access to opportunities in ways that address students' needs.

It is important for Center for New Americans to make every effort to have our staff and board of directors reflect the voices and

experiences of our students and citizenship clients. Our current board members have business, hospitality, immigration law, education, and technology backgrounds. Similarly, all but one arrived in the U.S. at varied life stages and from different parts of the world. Inclusion at every level helps us to realize the power of diversity.

Our success is fueled by our staff, volunteers, and community partners. Collaboration is key to our ability to move forward and provide for students and citizenship clients throughout the region. In the following pages, you will see highlights of the efforts of all the people who work together to make positive changes in the lives of others. At CNA, we know that we can only create possibilities and opportunities when we work together.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Vaughn', written in a cursive style.

**J Vaughn**  
Board Chair  
Center for New Americans

# THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**CENTER FOR NEW AMERICANS' BOARD OF DIRECTORS PROVIDED STEADY GUIDANCE** throughout the second year of the pandemic, meeting regularly, assessing challenges and risks, and supporting new initiatives. Center for New Americans' board includes veteran members, immigrants, former clients, and a wealth of skills and expertise.



From left to right:  
J Vaughn *Chair*, Anne-Marie Demetz, Roger Webb *Treasurer*, Antonio Pagán



From left to right:  
Aleksandra Peryeva, Shardool Parmar, Victoria Maillo de Aguilera



# WELCOMING & SERVING IMMIGRANTS IN 2021

*Providing access during the second year of a global pandemic*



“Center for New Americans has not stopped its efforts towards our learning despite the pandemic. CNA’s Board of Directors and teachers help us with much dedication and personal effort. Furthermore, they have helped us with accessing class materials to be able to study.”

FIDEL & LUISA



“Thank you for everything and for supporting and believing in all the students” ANA SOFIA



Even as the global pandemic exposed and exacerbated inequities—in digital access, healthcare, the workplace—Center for New Americans focused on enhancing access.

We embarked on a multi-year, staff-wide *Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion* initiative. Our conversations reminded us that fostering access is at the essence of our mission. Our W. Mass political leaders applied a similar lens to their legislative agenda. Since many immigrants were not eligible for the government’s stimulus checks, they allocated emergency relief funds which we were fortunate to receive and distribute through payment of people’s rent, utilities, and heating bills.

## Classes in English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)

Teaching writing, practicing dialogues in pairs, exploring local colleges, and many other class activities require more preparation for classes online than for classes in our three centers. Meeting with an advisor to prepare a job application, welcoming legislators and writing class poems are all less immediate online.

How did we get through this year? Teachers shared each new discovery. Volunteer classroom assistants helped with break out rooms so students could work in small groups. Local foundations made generous awards; local businesses, like YES Computers, bent over backwards to support our program. Our technology team members traveled across 3 W. Mass counties to deliver tablets and hotspots to students and demonstrate how to use them. As students’ schedules evolved, Center for New Americans also evolved, adding evening classes, and then adding in-person classes once it was possible to return to our buildings.



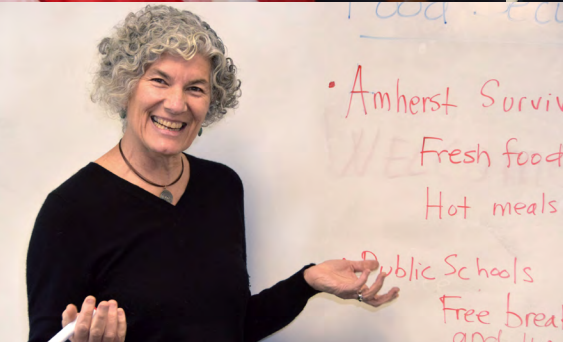




## Nursing Assistant Training

We were happy to teach this spring's nursing assistant course in person. Many of our students trained as nurses in their home countries. Still, as English language learners who must read a complex text in a language that is not their own, they find the class challenging.

It took many hands to make this course successful. Our partnership with Smith Vocational & Agricultural High School and adult education director, Lorena Turner, gave us access to a state-of-the-art health technology suite. Co-teachers Holly Quigley, RN Instructor, and Marise Lyra, ESOL instructor, collaborated to deliver a rigorous and supportive training. RN volunteers joined them on several Saturdays to make sure all students received individual guidance and coaching through the clinical practice. We were happy to see some of our graduates hired by Cooley Dickinson Healthcare.



## Citizenship and Immigration Legal

“Today was a big day for me, a dream came true, after a long, stressful, and painful process it finally happened! I had my citizenship interview today and I passed it! I want to thank God, all the beautiful angels in heaven watching over me, my family, my friends, and Center for New Americans!”

**GLENYS, FORMER STUDENT, CITIZENSHIP CLIENT**

The aftermath of the 2020 presidential election was dramatic. One positive outcome was the easing of some barriers. The revised rule of public charge, which led many immigrants to refrain from using Mass Health, was abandoned, as was the longer citizenship test.

The more welcoming tone, which coincided with a cautious re-opening of some public spaces, resulted in a flood of requests for assistance with legal permanent residence, employment authorization, and petitions to reunite families. We developed and implemented more robust systems. One of the most effective was the scheduling of monthly citizenship clinics staffed by volunteers. We have been so touched by the willingness of so many volunteers to mask up, venture into our center, and spend a couple of hours with our citizenship applicants helping them to complete their applications.



## Events

Our seasons are punctuated by events which have become annual traditions. The *30 Poems in November! Reading & Celebration, Immigrant Voices: A Celebration of Arts*, the July naturalization ceremony, and our end-of-semester gatherings spotlight our students' and clients' successes and contributions, highlight our services, and offer welcome opportunities to celebrate as a community. Of course all of these events had to be adapted to pandemic realities this past year.

More than 60 writers shared their poems at our virtual Reading in December. Sarah Sullivan, *30 Poems* Event Chair and the evening's host, helped us to recognize and acknowledge the tremendous display of literary talent.

Many students participated enthusiastically in our annual performance, *Immigrant Voices*. Hosted by Biani Salas and Tabitha Muriithi, who served as the evening's MCs from the stage of the Shea Theater, the event featured videos created by students who enthusiastically showcased their country's artistic traditions, often taking advantage of technology to include family and friends from their home countries.

Happily, U.S. Citizenship & Immigration Services reinstated oath ceremonies in June, just in time for our 13th annual July naturalization ceremony on the grounds of the Northampton Courthouse. Although it poured, Judge Katherine Robertson, Northampton Mayor David Narkewicz, our colleagues, board members, volunteers, and political leaders welcomed the new U.S. citizens in yet another memorable event.

## VOLUNTEERS

Center for New Americans is a "community-based" organization: we serve our W. Mass community of immigrants, we extend our reach and capacity through our W. Mass. community of volunteers, and we work together to create a community of welcome, support, and safety.

Pandemic restrictions made volunteering more challenging, but did not deter most of our loyal volunteers. Volunteer tutor and citizenship coaches met with students and clients on zoom, joined online classes as classroom assistants and anchored breakout rooms, picked up food at Survival Centers and delivered it to students, helped students learn to drive. Volunteers also came into our building, masked, to support our monthly citizenship clinics, meeting with applicants to help them complete citizenship applications.

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Center for New Americans is grateful for the steadfast support of public and private funders who supported our efforts to engage students in classes, connect them to community resources, continue our immigration legal work, and provide emergency relief aid to those who were not supported by government funds. We gratefully acknowledge our W. Massachusetts legislative delegation for advocating for funding on behalf of W. Massachusetts residents.

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Center for New Americans works in close partnership with public schools, community health centers, public libraries, survival centers, career centers, resettlement agencies, faith-based organizations, local governments, and many other organizations. Our experience reinforces the adage that it really does “take a village” to welcome and integrate newcomers into a new community.



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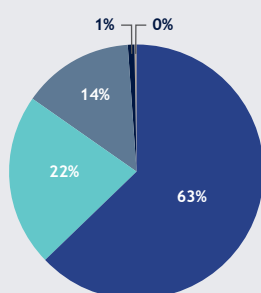


# 2021 FINANCIAL STATEMENT

**CENTER FOR NEW AMERICANS MANAGED TO MAINTAIN, ADAPT, AND EVEN EXPAND** our English classes and immigration legal support during the second year of a global pandemic thanks to the generosity of our community. From government agencies to private foundations to neighbors and friends, our community recognized the tremendous need and responded with an outpouring of support. As a result, we were able to retain staff, lend technology, distribute emergency relief to mitigate the challenges of the pandemic for immigrants, migrants, and refugees in W. Mass.

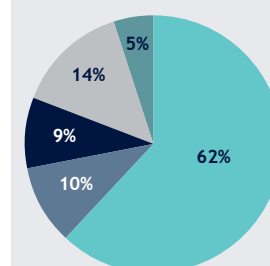
## FY21 Funding Sources

Government	694,812
Other Grants	241,378
Contributions	151,127
In-Kind	12,692
Misc. Income	3,683
<b>Total Sources</b>	<b>\$ 1,103,692</b>



## FY21 Functional Expenses

Adult Basic Education	612,456
Emergency Funds	94,000
Citizenship & Immigration Services	93,862
General & Administrative Services	133,700
Development Services	49,454
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 983,472</b>



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Sarah Sullivan  
Event Chair



Aidin Martinez  
Student Spokesperson



## 30 Poems in November!

We are producing this annual report in the spring of 2022, after a groundbreaking *30 Poems in November!* in the fall of 2021. Nevertheless, since this is our 2021 Annual Report, this report acknowledges events from the Fall of 2020, when the entire event was conducted online. Our event chair, Sarah Sullivan, was undeterred by the pandemic challenges. She helped to engage approximately 100 writers, sending a variety of daily poetry prompts, organizing online workshops, and cajoling writers to write and raise in equal measures. Aidin Martinez signed on as Student Spokesperson. In that capacity, she visited English classes and shared her experiences writing poetry in her English class, and she attended writing workshops to share her experience as a Center for New Americans student. Many writers participated in our online *Reading in December* and many of their supporters joined as audience members. The following list acknowledges writers for the contributions they generated.

### \$1,000+

Elsa Phillippi Cline  
Patricia Crosby  
Mary Ellen Kelly  
Patricia Lee Lewis  
Paul Redstone

Sarah Rossmassler  
Mary Ellen Shaughan  
Sarah Sullivan  
Virginia Sullivan  
Gail Thomas

Kester Warlow-Harry  
Joannah Whitney  
Jane Yolen

### \$500–\$999

Jean Blakeman  
George Cernada  
Amy Dryansky  
Howie Faerstein  
Anita Gallers  
Tzivia Gover  
Madlynn Haber  
Terry S. Johnson

Becky Jones  
Phyllis Katz  
Valerie Linet  
Ellen Miller-Mack  
Laurie Millman  
Linda Neas  
Nerissa Nields  
Jayne Pearl

Lindsay Rockwell  
Emily Samuels  
Deborah Schwartz  
Lanette Sweeney  
Adin Thayer  
Tommy Twilite  
Yenna Yi

### \$100–\$499

Doug Anderson  
Joan Axelrod-Contrada  
Robin Barber  
Therese Carr  
Linda Castronovo  
Martha Cohen  
Mary Cowhey  
Lori Desrosiers  
Amelia Durban  
C.D. Finley  
D. Dina Friedman  
Hillary Gardner  
Nora Glass  
Rochelle Goldfarb  
Jette Goldman  
Michael Goldman

Maceo Golossi  
Samantha Grossman  
Amy Horowitz  
Peg Johnson  
Tamara Kaplan  
Michael MacDonald  
Shoshana Marchand  
Melissa Miller  
Alison Murchie  
Katharine Nelson  
Lesléa Newman  
Rose Oliver  
Poemas par la salud  
y bienestar  
Laura Pravitz  
Philip B. Price

Jendi Reiter  
Carol Rinehart  
Brooks Robards  
Adrie Rose  
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Cassie Platt Sanderell  
Jodie Shapiro  
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Leah Stanton  
Fungai Tichiwangana  
Sharon Tracey  
M. Underwood  
Arianna Valocchi  
Isabell VanMerlin  
Teresa Wong  
Gerald Yelle

### \$1–\$99

Alice Barrett  
Julie Cavacco  
Carolyn Howard-Johnson  
Amy Mitrani  
Tzynthia Pinchback  
Laurie Pollack

Deidre Purcell  
Dorothy Riehm  
Smith Writers for Equity and Justice  
Alexandra Standish  
Laura Torracco  
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