



Center for New Americans

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

Welcoming & Serving Immigrants
Since 1992



2024
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 2024 annual report shares program highlights for the year starting September 1, 2023 and ending August 31, 2024.

As a community-based program, we pride ourselves on our capacity to respond nimbly and empathically to local needs as they evolve.

This past year, Haitian newcomers who were resettled in Greenfield, displaying a familiar sense of enterprise and resilience, discovered our classrooms and requested English classes. We added classes and onsite childcare hours to serve them, and worked closely with the MassHire Franklin Hampshire Career Center to help them secure living-wage jobs.

Refugee newcomers who were welcomed by Catholic Charities Agency were almost entirely resettled in Hampden County, far from our Northampton and Amherst centers. We launched morning and evening classes in Springfield in collaboration with a school (for the morning) and the public library (for the evening).

All our students, whether they attend morning classes in one of our four centers (Springfield, Greenfield, Northampton, Amherst) or join class online in the evenings (after working all day) are supported by our dedicated staff of teachers, advisors, technology associates, and program coordinators who weave a web of welcome. They connect students with opportunities and community resources, including our own legal team.

Our legal team served an astounding number of clients this past year, completing applications for asylum, Temporary Protected Status, and employment authorization, as well as for U.S. citizenship. We organized citizenship clinics monthly thanks to the enthusiastic participation of loyal volunteers. In fact, our amazing volunteers, who included university students, retired professionals, and program alumni supported all aspects of our



program, making it possible to offer individual attention to students and clients at all levels. And, of course, none of this year's work would have been possible without the stewardship, steadfast guidance, and careful oversight of our Board of Directors.

Because we are connected to such a caring, compassionate community of people who write and raise for *30 Poems in November!*, buy tickets to *Immigrant Voices: A Celebration of the Arts*, and cheer new citizens at our annual July 4th naturalization ceremony, we celebrate our students' and clients' milestones with you. Please accept this report with our gratitude for your contribution to another impactful year.

– Laurie Millman

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Laurie Millman".

FROM THE CHAIR



For decades, Center for New Americans (CNA) has been a beacon of hope for countless newcomers to the Pioneer Valley. Whether they are immigrants from Africa, Asia, or the Middle East seeking asylum status or newcomers from the Caribbean, South, or Central America navigating their temporary protected status or humanitarian parole application process, the services provided by CNA have been instrumental in shaping their personal success stories. This year's swift response from our administration team and staff to provide services in Springfield, a testament to CNA's flexibility and adaptability, has been unparalleled.

Our expansion of services to the Hampden County community was accomplished thanks to the contributions of our local community supporters and regional and state funders. Our existing connections with multiple regional organizations enabled us to forge new partnerships to reach the Springfield area's underserved populations and multiple asylum-seeking Haitians recently resettled in Greenfield. Once again, Laurie's leadership and fearless dedication made a difference, as did the direction and engagement of J. Vaughn, our Board of Directors Chair, from 2019 until 2023.

Kudos to the talented volunteers and staff working daily on the ESOL, legal team, clinics, and all other programs and events. Thanks to their dedication and skills, we accomplished more than was programmed at the beginning of the year. I am enthusiastic because of how connected our constituents are with our staff and volunteers. You can see the threads on the web connecting each of them with our areas of service.

We could not have achieved any of this without the unwavering support of our institutional funders and individual contributors and the countless hours our talented volunteers devoted to CNA. Their support is the backbone of our success. As we navigate the uncertainty of future developments, our dedicated Board of Directors and Administration team will adapt and take the necessary steps to provide the level of services expected from us and strengthen the connections we have already forged.

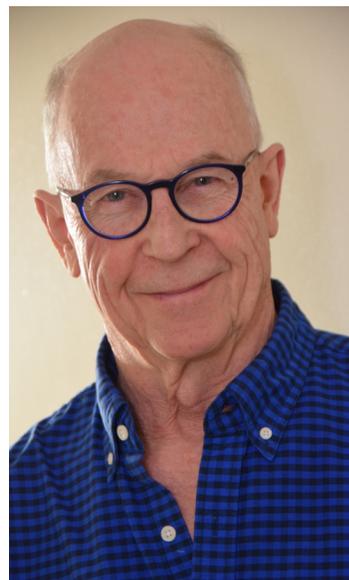
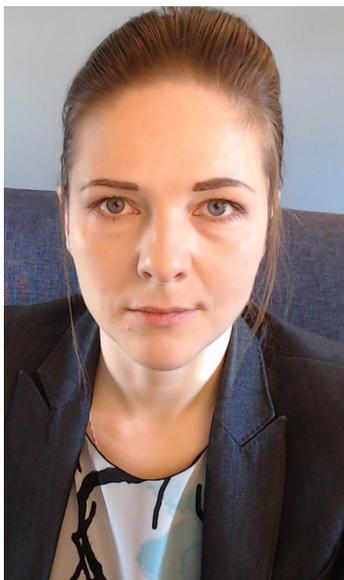
Cheerfully,
Antonio Pagan

THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Center for New Americans is guided by dedicated volunteers who meet regularly, join staff at meetings and celebrations, participate in and support Center for New Americans' events, expand Center for New Americans' resources, and provide careful stewardship.



From left to right:
Antonio Pagan *Chair*, J Vaughn *Vice Chair*, Kathryn Levesque *Board Clerk*



From left to right:
Shardool Parmar *Treasurer*, Aleksandra Peryeva, Patrick Slaney



Welcoming & Serving Immigrants in 2024

Connecting Newcomers to Community with Compassion

"I attended Center for New Americans' annual meeting and heard about the number of people they've supported this past year, the services they provided, and the incredible impact they have in our community. Stopping by gave me a chance to appreciate and express gratitude to staff and volunteers who put our intention to be a welcoming community into action, every day"
— Rep. Mindy Domb

Our strong connection with local leaders amplified students' voices and benefited clients. Congressman Jim McGovern and Senator Elizabeth Warren advocated effectively for clients whose family petitions had been approved and then stalled. Students enjoyed class visits with State Senators Jacob Oliveira, Adam Gomez, and Jo Comerford, and State Representatives Mindy Domb, Lindsay Sabadosa, and Natalie Blais. In our program, teaching civics means providing opportunities for students to express concerns and questions directly to their representatives. Bills impacting re-credentialing through the Physicians Bill and expanded language options for the nurse aide exam resulted from those visits. In addition, State Senator Comerford and State Representatives Sabadosa, Domb, and Blais met regularly with local leaders, Center for New Americans, and partners like Community Action and the MassHire Franklin Hampshire Career Center to leverage all possible resources on behalf of newcomers housed in local shelters.

Classes in English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)

"All the students are very blessed to have teachers who are so generous with their time and expertise. Thank you." — Nina

Events in 2024 stretched our capacity in multiple directions. We opened centers in Springfield to better serve refugees referred by Catholic Charities Agency and resettled in Hampden County. At the same time, we added classes in Greenfield to welcome newly arrived Haitians. As much as we could, we prioritized access, offering childcare to students with very young children and offering evening online classes to students who work during the day.

Our curriculum has expanded exponentially since its inception, layering new skills every year onto a strong foundation. In addition to teaching speaking and listening, navigating U.S. systems, and applying for employment, we have been emphasizing reading critically and writing persuasively. This past year, we also spent time building digital literacy, As proud members of the innovative Alliance





for Digital Equity, we enjoyed working in coalition with so many partners on closing the digital divide. We distributed tablets and hotspots provided by the Tek Collaborative and trained teachers and tech associates to support students in using them effectively. We collaborated with the MassHire Franklin/Hampshire and Springfield Career Centers to prepare students for their Job Fairs, and, with assistance from volunteers, organized mock job fairs to practice engagement with employers. Accompanying our students to these events, we connected with such employers as UMass Dining Services, Baystate, and GreenLeaf Foods who welcomed our students and praised their work ethic:

“For the last 5 years we’ve been having difficulties getting enough people to work and when the opportunity came up to partner with Masshire and CNA and employ some of the people they had available we jumped to the opportunity. Currently 19% of our workforce are sheltered immigrants that came to us through Masshire and for the first time in years we are fully staffed. They are very reliable, engaged, hardworking people, committed to the success of the company and above all very thankful for the opportunity.”
— Miguel Encarnacion, Plant Manager, GreenLeaf Foods

Events

In addition to our much-loved July 4th naturalization, we created opportunities to celebrate our community’s immigrants throughout the year. In the fall, our annual literary fundraiser, *30 Poems in November!*, attracted writers of varying ages and experience to write and raise awareness of and funds for our free classes for immigrants. Sarah Sullivan, a talented writer and dedicated supporter, chaired this event for the 6th year in 2024. She provided inspiration and encouragement to a growing community of writers who eagerly awaited her poetry prompts and writing workshops. Writers shared stories about immigrant ancestors and neighbors, as well as new poems, and expanded our circle of supporters by engaging family and friends. The event raised more than \$75,000 to support our free classes.

In the spring, our immigrant students and alumni took the stage at the Shea Theater Arts Center to present *Immigrant Voices: A Celebration of the Arts*, a joyous showcase of songs, dances, and poetry from around the world. Notwithstanding the uncertain circumstances of many of the performers, several guests marveled at how glitter and glamor were on display on stage. One guest remarked: “What a marvelous thing - to see people transform from hesitant, marginalized, stuttering outsider to host, singer, dancer, exuding confidence and joy and pride. Also to see friendships/community form - one student gathering another’s children onto her lap while Mama sings, lively conversations after the show.”

None of these vital programs, services, or celebrations would thrive without the generosity and enthusiastic participation of our community of volunteers, supporters, and friends.



Citizenship and Immigration Legal Services

"I am very grateful to the CNA leaders for all the work you have been able to do for me and my whole family. We have nothing to repay you but our prayers to you that God may give you long life for your heart of love that you have shown us. for being able to make it happen. to get American citizenship. thank you very much"
— Basilwango, former student and new U.S. citizen

Center for New Americans' legal team offered a range of citizenship and immigration legal services in 2024 representing many steps along the immigrant journey. We partnered with the Massachusetts Immigrant & Refugee Advocacy (MIRA) Coalition, Western New England University School of Law, and many dedicated volunteers to offer pro se asylum clinics.

Once these applications were submitted, we applied for employment authorization so that newcomers could enter the workforce. We petitioned for the relatives of clients whose asylum we had secured, and rejoiced when families were reunited, often after a lot of advocacy. At the other end of the spectrum, we assisted 65 applicants with their citizenship applications and held our 16th naturalization ceremony on the lawn of the historic Northampton Courthouse in partnership with U.S. Citizenship & Immigration Services and the Massachusetts Trial Court. Our esteemed Federal Magistrate Katherine A. Robertson presided as she has for many years.



VOLUNTEERS

Our citizenship clinics and coaching, English instruction, childcare, and employment support all benefit from the dedication, time, and caring of volunteers. From college students to former Center for New Americans students to retired professionals, volunteers contribute to our welcoming effort and make it more effective. In addition, our literary fundraising event, *30 Poems in November!* takes place because of volunteers. They are acknowledged later in this report.

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CENTER FOR NEW AMERICANS GRATEFULLY RECOGNIZES THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE FUNDERS who support our effort to welcome and serve immigrants, evacuees, migrants, and asylum-seekers with education and immigration legal services.

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Immigrants, migrants, refugees, asylum-seekers – all newcomers to our region – rely on a welcoming web, a many-sided safety net to soften the impact of entry into a new community and foster connections to resources and opportunities.

We work closely with public schools, libraries, community health centers, survival centers, faith-based organizations, MassHire Career Centers, community colleges, legal service providers, municipal governments, Community Action, local employers, our hard-working Western Massachusetts legislative delegation, including Northwest District Attorney Dave Sullivan, and many others who join us in crafting a welcoming web. We are very clear that we would not be able to do this work, nor would our students and clients thrive as much as they do without our strong partnerships with our community partners.

DONORS

INDIVIDUAL DONATIONS

Center for New Americans gratefully acknowledges the following individuals for their contributions between September 1, 2023 and August 31, 2024. We carefully review lists of donors and volunteers for accuracy. We sincerely apologize if any names were missed.

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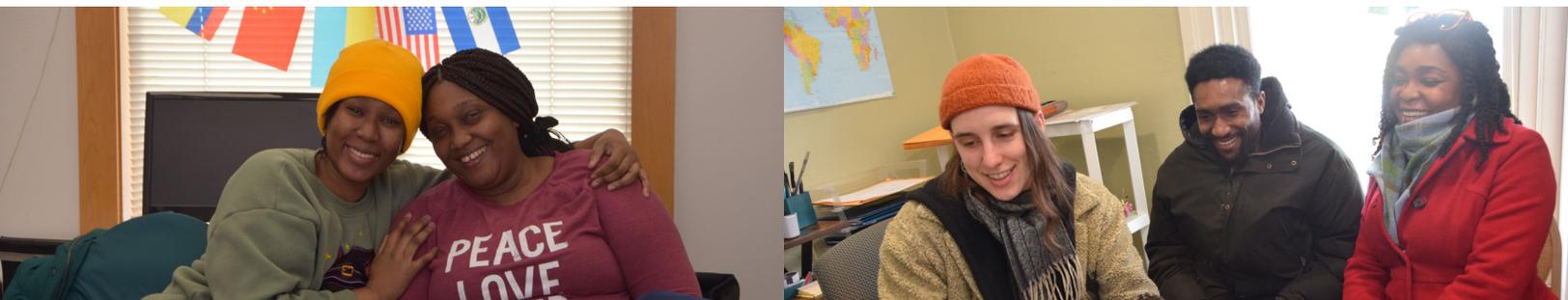
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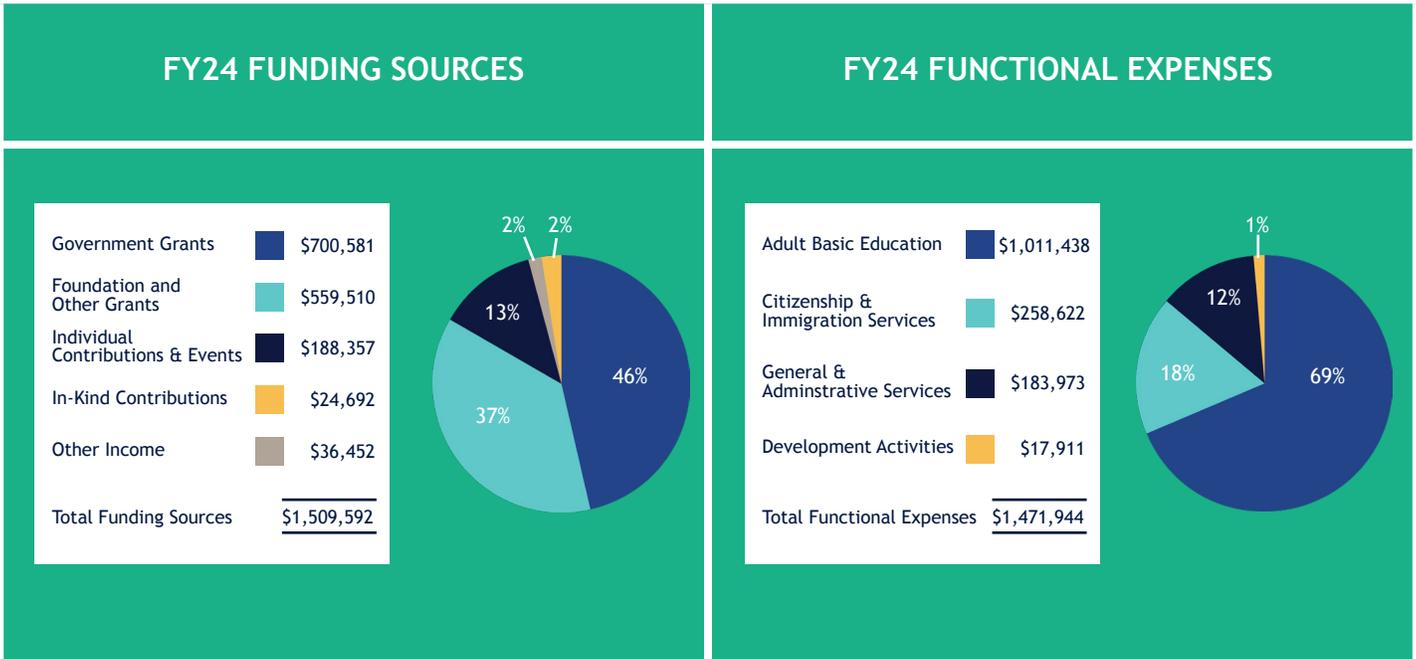


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2024 FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Center for New Americans' classes and immigration legal services expanded in 2024, as they had in 2023, as we adapted to welcome refugees from Syria, Sudan, and the Democratic Republic of Congo, among other countries, and newcomers from Haiti and Venezuela. Our expenses increased, but fortunately, thanks to generous public and private funders, our revenue increased more than expenses, resulting in another year with a surplus.



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30 Poems in November!

Sarah Sullivan chaired our 15th annual *30 Poems in November!* literary fundraiser in the fall of 2023. More than 80 writers, including Center for New Americans teachers, circle of care volunteers, well-known published authors, and first-time poets signed up to harness their literary talents to raise awareness of immigrants and funds to support them. Sarah fostered a warm writing community, inspiring writers with daily prompts and modeling and encouraging bold fundraising outreach.



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Center for New Americans

42 Gothic Street
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