



**Department of State**  
**Office for New Americans**

# **Introduction to the New York State Office for New Americans**

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# About the Presenters



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# About NYS ONA



- The New York State Office for New Americans (ONA), founded in 2012, is the nation's first statutorily created immigrant services office.
- ONA assists all new Americans with accessing and navigating a variety of free services and support through its statewide network of community-based providers.

# Who Are New Americans?

New Americans are:

- Immigrants
- Refugees, asylees
- Unauthorized individuals
- All newcomers who reside in the U.S.

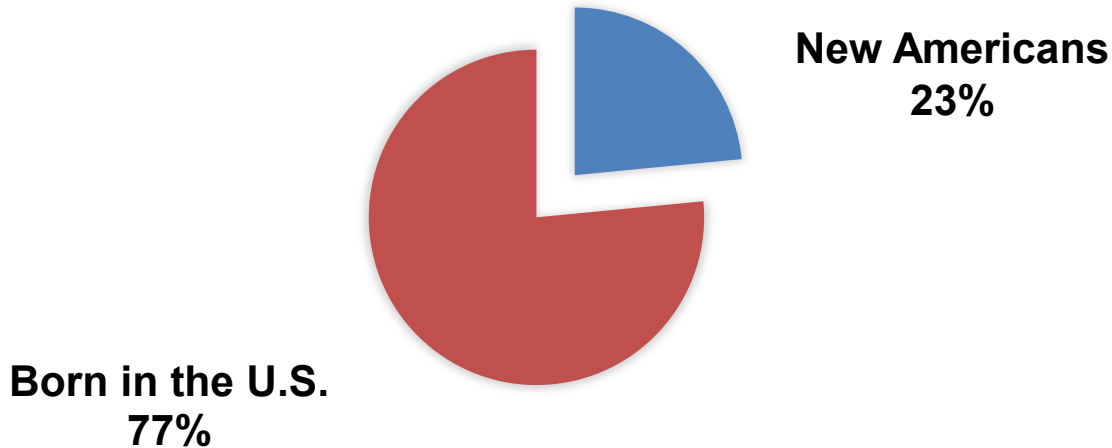


Many new American families are **mixed status** meaning different family members have different immigration statuses.



# NYS New Americans

4.4 million immigrants, 19.45 million total New Yorkers

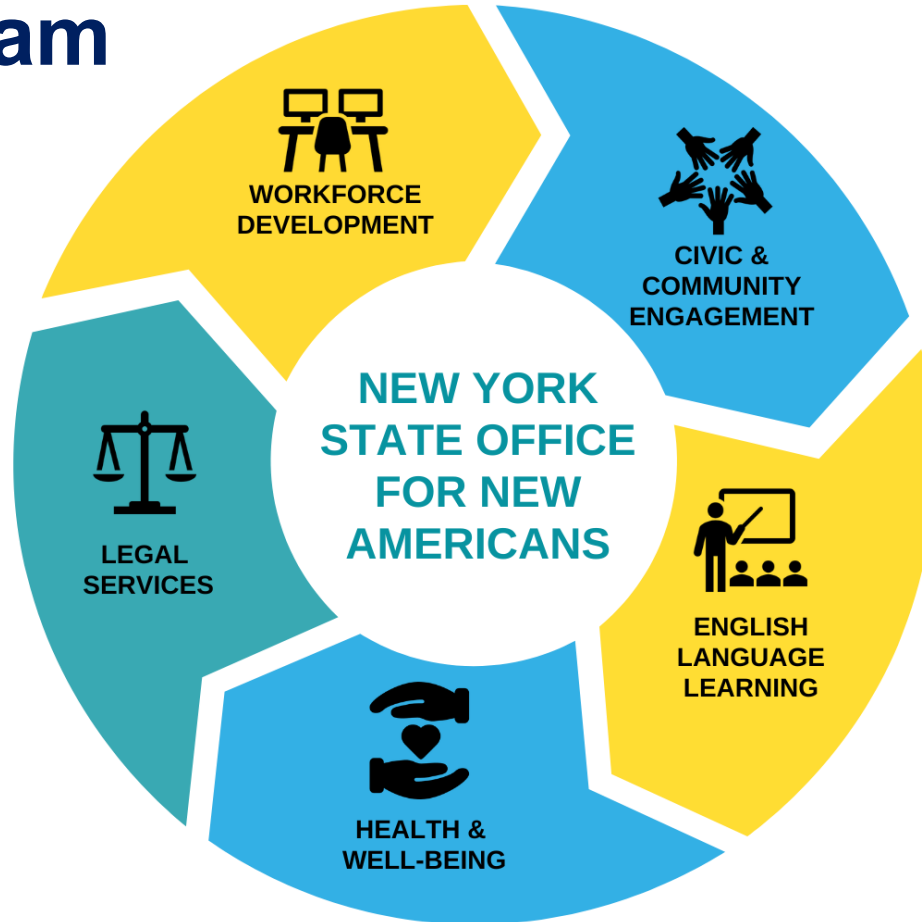


# Who We Serve

- Immigrants and refugees (4.4 million in NY State)
- ¼ of New York State residents
- 34% of all business owners in NY are immigrants
- Approximately 2.5 million New Yorkers with limited English proficiency (LEP)
- 89.7% of children with immigrant parents are U.S. citizens



# ONA Program Areas

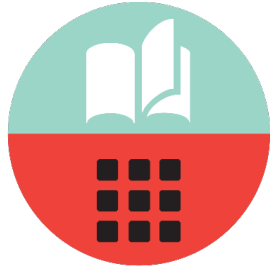


# ONA Opportunity Centers – ESOL



- Each Opportunity Center - ESOL provides language instruction to immigrants as well as workforce development programming, including assistance with resume building, interview techniques, and employment opportunities.
- Regular ESOL classes combined with individual workforce support and innovative technologies, including Cell-Ed.





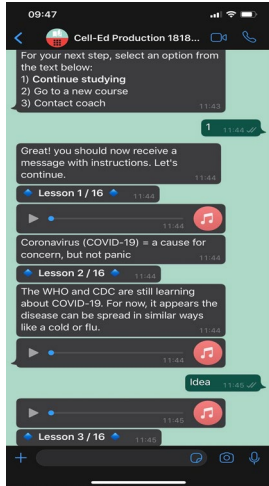
cell-ed

# Cell-Ed

Free English-language training and skills building through ANY mobile phone, tablet, or computer.

Cell-Ed allows users to:

- participate in 3-minute stackable lessons
- learn at their own pace, anywhere and at anytime
- measure their progress
- & earn certificates



# Professional Pathways for High-Skilled Immigrants



- Connects high-skilled immigrant job seekers with local ONA Job Coaches.
- Support is also provided by a statewide Lead Agency, to gain the training and certification necessary to be placed in employment that matches their skills and experience.

# NEW AMERICANS <can code>



- Provides free digital literacy training on basic computer skills for immigrants as well as more advanced software coding training.
- This program helps to ensure that New York's immigrant community has access to digital literacy education and tools.

<https://cancode.org/new-americans>



# ONA Immigrant Community Navigators

- Statewide network of grassroots leadership.
- Lead programming, including workforce development workshops, to support new Americans to access services.
- Provide accurate and reliable information to the immigrant and refugee community.
- Work with local leaders in building relationships among new Americans and local communities.



# ONA Opportunity Centers - Civics

- Citizenship Prep Classes
- Immigration Application Support
- Immigration Law Consultations
- Community Workshops
- Workforce Referrals

\*All Centers are supported by a qualified immigration attorney



# Protections for New Americans

- The majority worker protections apply to all immigrants, regardless of immigration status. Such as:

- Right to minimum wage and overtime
- Right to be paid for the work that was done
- Right to workers compensation benefits when injured on the job
- Protection under Federal, New York State and New York City anti-discrimination laws.



# Protections for New Americans

Immigration related protections for victims of labor abuse

- Victims of Human Trafficking – **T-Visa**
- Victims of Crime – **U- Visa**
- New as of January 2023 - Victims or witnesses to labor rights – **Deferred Enforcement**



# Protections for New Americans

- **T- Visas** are available to those who are victims of serve forms of human trafficking – defined as

- Sex trafficking:** When someone recruits, harbors, transports, provides, solicits, patronizes, or obtains a person for the purpose of a commercial sex act, where the commercial sex act is induced by force, fraud, or coercion, or the person being induced to perform such act is under 18 years of age; or

- Labor trafficking:** When someone recruits, harbors, transports, provides, or obtains a person for labor or services through the use of force, fraud, or coercion for the purpose of involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery.

- T-Visas **can** lead to a path to green card/citizenship





# Protections for New Americans

- **U- Visas** are available to qualifying victims certain crimes:

Abduction	Incest	Sexual exploitation
Abusive sexual contact	Involuntary servitude	Slave trade
Being held hostage	Kidnapping	Stalking
Blackmail	Manslaughter	Torture
Domestic violence	Murder	Trafficking*
Extortion	Obstruction of justice	Unlawful criminal restraint
False imprisonment	Peonage	Witness tampering
Felonious assault	Perjury	Other related Crimes
Female genital mutilation	Prostitution	Attempt, conspiracy, or solicitation to commit any of the above mentioned crimes
Fraud in foreign labor contracting	Rape	
	Sexual assault	

- U-Visas **can** lead to a path to green card/citizenship



# Protections for New Americans

- Deferred enforcement for victims or witnesses of violations of labor rights
  - Allows deferred action for up to 2 years;
  - Is renewable if the investigation is on-going; and
  - Allows the individual to apply for work authorization.
- Beware of misinformation and fraud
  - This is temporary protection that **DOES NOT** on its own lead to a green card or path to citizenship

New!



# ONA Legal Counsels

- Statewide network of experienced immigration attorneys
- Provide free legal services, including direct representation, using a *universal representation* model, which services any immigrant, regardless of immigration status, including those in detention or at risk for deportation.
- Hold regular legal Consultation Days at ONA Opportunity Centers
- Answer immigration law questions from Opportunity Centers and provide legal trainings to community-based providers
- Host Know Your Rights and law-related workshops



# Additional ONA Legal Programs

- Upstate Immigration Court / New York Immigrant Family Unity Project (NYIFUP)
- Pro Bono Program
- DOJ Trainer
- Afghan Legal Assistance Program
- NYC Rapid Response Legal Collaborative
- NY Legal Partnership for New Arrivals



# Citizenshipworks

- A free online tool where new Americans can apply for citizenship easily & securely, either through their local ONA Opportunity Center, or with assistance from a “virtual” attorney.



<https://www.citizenshipworks.org/Campaign/nys-ona>



Department of State  
Office for New Americans

# New Americans Hotline

## 1-800-566-7636



Legal Help	In Your Community	200+ Languages
Answers to immigration & naturalization questions	Connect to ONA programs including ESOL and Workforce Development	Calls are confidential & anonymous
Referrals to free legal help and programs	Report fraud or scams against immigrant communities	Monday-Friday 9AM to 8PM (ET)



# Golden Door Family Support Program



- Supports mental health services for immigrants, including group therapy sessions that are culturally and linguistically responsive, and trauma-informed



# Ramirez June Initiative

Connecting new Americans with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (I/DD) with Vital Resources, Information, and Services in NYS

## First initiative of its kind in the nation.

- Hosts multilingual workshops about disability resources and services.
- Creates and mails free multilingual disability resources including **Voyage**, and a **Resource Guide**, on “Services for New Americans with I/DD.”
- Builds partnerships to assist new Americans with I/DD.

**Grantee and partner of the NYS Developmental Disabilities Planning Council.**



**Developmental  
Disabilities  
Planning Council**



**Department of State  
Office for New Americans**



# Connect with ONA



[NewAmericans@dos.ny.gov](mailto:NewAmericans@dos.ny.gov)



[dos.ny.gov/office-new-americans](https://dos.ny.gov/office-new-americans)



[facebook.com/nysnewamericans](https://facebook.com/nysnewamericans)



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# Questions?

