



Commonwealth of Virginia

Office of Governor Glenn A. Youngkin



Our Communities are Worth Competing For

Annual Report 2021-2022

October 12th, 2022

To: Glenn A. Youngkin, Governor
Honorable General Assembly Members

From: Eric Lin, Chair
Office of New Americans Advisory Board



VIRGINIA
OFFICE OF
NEW AMERICANS
ADVISORY
BOARD

The Office of New Americans Advisory Board (the Board) was created in 2020 under §2.2-2496 and established as an advisory board, within the meaning of § 2.2-2100, in the executive branch of state government. The purpose of the Board is to advise the Governor, cabinet members, and the General Assembly on strategies to improve state policies and programs to support the economic, linguistic, and civic integration of New Americans throughout the Commonwealth.

As part of this duty, the Chair of the Board is required to report to the Governor and the General Assembly on the activities of the Office of New Americans and provide recommendations for improving state policies and programs to support the economic, linguistic, and civic integration of New Americans throughout the Commonwealth.

New American communities are valuable assets to the Commonwealth. We are competing with other states to realize the full economic and social potential of New Americans. In order to ensure that they reach their full potential, they need upfront investment and support. ***Our communities are worth competing for.***

In the last year, we have seen Virginia more fully emerge from the pandemic. With the incoming administration, we have also seen the opportunity to better engage the New American population in the Commonwealth to address labor and economic opportunities. As new corporate investments and business activity in the Commonwealth grows, the opportunities to leverage the growing New American population are plentiful.

Additionally, global events continue to remind us that Virginia is an international destination, refuge and place for new beginnings. Not only has the Commonwealth provided refuge and succor for Afghan and Ukrainian refugees, but it has also attracted worldwide talent to its schools and leading companies.

Investments in talent acquisition and retention should be at the forefront of our immigrant integration initiatives. These investments will produce returns in workforce development, economic opportunity and potentially business attraction and even more foreign investment in the Commonwealth or opening pathways to new markets overseas.

The Commonwealth has an opportunity to embrace these communities as we recognize that these aspiring and New Americans will enhance our workforce, create jobs and provide a more competitive edge in the global marketplace.

We have identified several recommendations that we feel will help strengthen immigrant integration in the Commonwealth, economically empower New Americans and their surrounding communities, and support a robust Office of New Americans. We look forward to engaging further to establish more comprehensive connections to these communities, develop effective support that is accessible and aligns the localities, state and Federal resources to create a more Welcoming Commonwealth - A Commonwealth in which new and aspiring New Americans are respected, valued and supported.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Office of New Americans Advisory Board (ONAAB) was created in 2020 under §2.2-2496 and established as an advisory board, within the meaning of § 2.2-2100, in the executive branch of state government. The purpose of the Board is to advise the Governor, cabinet members, and the General Assembly on strategies to improve state policies and programs to support the economic, linguistic, and civic integration of New Americans throughout the Commonwealth.

The ONAAB is pleased to submit the second annual board report to the Honorable Glenn A. Youngkin and the Virginia General Assembly. Pursuant to §2.2-2498 of the Code of Virginia, this report serves as a summary of its activities, findings and recommendations.

The foreign-born population in the Commonwealth is estimated to be 1.07 million individuals or roughly 12.4% of the total state population.¹ This fast-growing segment of Virginia's overall population ranks as the 10th largest immigrant population in the nation.²

Two-thirds of all immigrants live in Northern Virginia, but sizable immigrant communities exist in Richmond, Roanoke and other metropolitan areas throughout the Commonwealth. In fact, certain census tracts in Accomack, Rockingham and Lunenburg Counties have immigrant density similar to many parts of Northern Virginia.

Additionally, Virginia is one of the top three recipients of Afghan refugees resettling in the United States. Virginia's Office of New Americans have provided resettlement services to 6,020 Afghans as of August 22nd, 2022.

ONAAB has adopted the following **Guiding Principles** that provide an overarching focus regarding the work of the board.

- **Recognizing our Value**
- **Ensuring Linguistic and Cultural Competencies**
- **Data Integrity**
- **Championing Representation**

The Board maintains a **committee structure** that is flexible but allows for deeper analysis of the far-ranging and multifaceted issues that New American communities face in Virginia.

- **Access to Services Committee** - This committee will focus on building awareness of the specific barriers that newcomers face in accessing services and resources.
- **Economic Opportunity Committee** - This Committee will explore the economic landscape and review what supports are provided by the Commonwealth for workforce development and entrepreneurs.
- **Inter / Intra Governmental Affairs Committee** - This Committee will explore the interconnectivity of governmental policy and changes to those policies that will impact the aspiring and New American communities in the Commonwealth.

The Board also has dedicated **Language Access** and **Data Integrity** leads in line with our Guiding Principles.

The ONAAB defines "New Americans" as:

New Americans refer to foreign-born persons residing in Virginia and their children, foreign and native born.

The Board has been able to identify several recommendations that would enhance immigrant integration in the

¹ U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2021, ACS 1-Year Estimates Subject Table S0501.

<https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?q=acs%202021%20Foreign-born%20state&tid=ACSST1Y2021.S0501>

² Ibid.

Commonwealth as well as support the work of the Board and the Office of New Americans.

Committee Recommendations

Access to Services

- Require all healthcare practitioners to receive at least 2 hours of continued Medical Education on the topics of unconscious bias and cultural humility every two years.
- Ensure that all Medicaid eligible Virginians have access to dental health services by
 - creating pathways and opportunities for more dental providers to be educated and offer services to Medicaid patients
 - Emphasize a diverse dental health workforce that reflects Virginia's population
 - Increase Medicaid reimbursement rates so that more Virginia dentists will accept Medicaid insured patients
 - Consider expanding access to preventative services by increasing eligibility threshold for children's Medicaid/CHIP health coverage AND expand coverage to all income eligible children regardless of immigration status.
- Expand Medicaid reimbursement to cover interpretation costs and provide incentives for healthcare facilities who provide interpretation services.

Economic Opportunity

- Fund the Office of New Americans and the Department of Labor to study employment and educational history of New Americans to determine focus of career pathway programs, and New American capacity to fill employment gaps in the state.
- Fund the Office of New Americans, the Department of Labor, the Virginia Economic Development Partnership, and the Department of Education to explore further opportunities to recruit international talent and retain them through statewide employment initiatives.
- Provide funding to the Office of New Americans and the Department of Labor to review licensing and certification criteria and develop, translate, and disseminate career pathway maps.
- Provide funding to support for and require the Department of Small Business and Supplier Diversity to assess its outreach methods and goals and develop targeted outreach, programs and processes to build small business capacity and assist businesses in obtaining appropriate certifications.
- Require the Secretary of Administration to review all Memorandum of Understandings with Tier II and Tier III Higher Education Institutions to further prioritize and make intentional the engagement and utilization of SWaM businesses.
- Require the Department of Small Business Supplier Diversity and the Department of General Services to review the annual agency SWaM plans and provide feedback to agency leadership to ensure prioritization and intentional utilization of SWaM businesses. Additionally, procurement progress for the State and agencies, toward the SWaM goal will be made public on the DSBSD SWaM dashboard.

Inter/Intragovernmental Affairs

- Empower the Office of New Americans with oversight and financial resources to assess, partner and develop programs that address immigrant integration throughout all agencies.
- Restore at least \$10 million in funding in state financial aid for undocumented students.

Additional Language Access Recommendations

- Empower the Office of Diversity, Opportunity, and Inclusion to create, and provide oversight of a State Language Access Plan
- Fund the Office of Diversity, Opportunity, and Inclusion to oversee the compliance of agencies and

departments within the State Language Access Plan.

Office of New Americans Advisory Board Recommendations

- Support the Afghan Adjustment Act and expansion of immigration legal aid services in Virginia.
- Amend the Code to allow for more meetings per year.
- Amend the Code to raise the number of appointed non legislative citizen Board members to twenty-one.
- Amend the Code to include additional ex-officio members to the Board.
- Amend the Code governing Freedom of Information Act to allow for electronic meetings for subcommittee work of advisory boards as defined by Code §2.2-2100.

ONAAB Recommendations for the Office of New Americans

- Commission a new JLARC study to assess the integration of New Americans in the Commonwealth and update the findings from the 2004 report.
- Enhance the Office of New Americans budget to address expanded and unmet needs.

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2021-2022 OFFICE OF NEW AMERICANS ADVISORY BOARD

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Eric Lin Chair - *Chesterfield*

Kate Ayers Secretary - *Henrico*

COMMITTEE & FOCUS LEADERSHIP

Dr. Ahoo Salem Co-Lead, Ensuring Linguistic and Cultural Competencies Focus – *Roanoke*

Dr. Eva Stitt Co-Lead, Ensuring Linguistic and Cultural Competencies Focus – *Norfolk*

Michael Hoefer Lead, Data Integrity Focus – *Alexandria*

CURRENT MEMBERS

Hassan Ahmad, Inter/Intra Governmental Affairs Committee – *Sterling*

Dora Muhammad, Access to Services Committee – *Triangle*

Dr. Fern Hauck, Access to Services Committee – *Earlysville*

James Gordon - *Halifax*

Susannah Lepley, Economic Opportunity Committee – *Rockingham*

Andrei Lipan - *Chesterfield*

Bo Machayo, Economic Opportunity Committee – *Leesburg*

Krishendeo Ramsingh - *Roanoke*

Juan Santacoloma, Inter/Intra Governmental Affairs Committee – *Chesterfield*

Eric-Michel Sossou-Gloh - *Alexandria*

Dr. Milton Vickerman, Date Equity Focus and Economic Opportunity Committee – *Charlottesville*

FORMER MEMBERS

Rammy Barbari – *Falls Church*

Hannah “Mel” Borja - *Richmond*

Amelia Castaneda-Smith – *Richmond*

Dr. Jennifer Crewalk – *Reston*

El Hadji Djibril Niang – *Richmond*

SoYoung Yoon – *Manassas Park*

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS

Dr. Rosa Atkins, Chief Officer, Office of Diversity, Opportunity, and Inclusion (formerly the Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion)

Suja Amir, Chair, Virginia Asian Advisory Board

Dr. Cheryl Ivey Green, Chair, Virginia African American Advisory Board

Ashley Reynolds, Chair, Council on Women

Lyons Sanchezcocha, Chair, Virginia Latino Advisory Board

Former Ex-Officio Members

Paul Berry, Immediate Past Chair, Virginia Latino Advisory Board

May Nivar, Immediate Past Chair, Virginia Asian Advisory Board

Mona Siddiqui Deputy Chief Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Officer and Senior Policy Advisor, Office of New Americans

Dr. Janice Underwood, Former Chief Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Officer

Mona Siddiqui Deputy Chief Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Officer and Senior Policy Advisor, Office of New Americans

ABOUT THE OFFICE OF NEW AMERICANS

The Office of New Americans was created under §63.2-209.1 in 2020 as an office within the Department of Social Services. The Office of New Americans incorporated the existing Office of Newcomer Services into a new office specifically to assist immigrant integration within the Commonwealth on an economic, social and cultural level.

Under the authorizing code, the Office shall:

- 1. Implement a statewide strategy to promote the economic, linguistic, and civic integration of New Americans in the Commonwealth.*
- 2. Work with localities to coordinate and support local efforts that align with the statewide strategy to promote the economic, linguistic, and civic integration of New Americans in the Commonwealth;*
- 3. Provide advice and assistance to New Americans regarding (i) the citizenship application process and (ii) securing employment, housing, and services for which such persons may be eligible;*
- 4. Provide advice and assistance to state agencies regarding (i) the coordination of relevant policies across state agencies responsible for education, workforce, and training programs, including professional licensure guidance, small business development, worker protection, refugee resettlement, citizenship and voter education or engagement programs, housing programs, and other related programs, and (ii) the dissemination of information to localities and immigration service organizations regarding state programs that help New Americans find and secure employment, housing, and services for which they may be eligible;*
- 5. Educate localities and immigration service organizations on health epidemics and unlawful predatory actions, such as human trafficking, gang recruitment, and fraudulent financial and other schemes, to which communities of such persons may be especially vulnerable;*
- 6. Serve as the primary liaison with external stakeholders, particularly immigrant-serving and refugee serving organizations and businesses, on immigrant integration priorities and policies.*
- 7. Partner with state agencies and immigrant-serving and refugee-serving organizations and businesses to identify and disseminate beneficial immigrant integration policies and practices throughout the Commonwealth;*
- 8. Manage competitive grant programs that replicate beneficial practices or test new innovations that improve the effectiveness and efficacy of immigrant integration strategies; and*
- 9. Advise the Governor, cabinet members, and the General Assembly on strategies to improve state programs to support the economic, linguistic, and civic integration of New Americans throughout the Commonwealth.*

ABOUT THE OFFICE OF NEW AMERICANS ADVISORY BOARD

The Office of New Americans Advisory Board (the Board) was created in 2020 under §2.2-2496 and established as an advisory board, within the meaning of § 2.2-2100, in the executive branch of state government. The purpose of the Board is to advise the Governor, cabinet members, and the General Assembly on strategies to improve state policies and programs to support the economic, linguistic, and civic integration of New Americans throughout the Commonwealth.

Under the authorizing code, the Board shall have the following powers and duties:

- *Advise the Governor on ways to improve state policies and programs to support the economic, linguistic, and civic integration of New Americans throughout the Commonwealth;*
- *Undertake studies, symposiums, research, and factual reports to gather information to formulate and present recommendations to the Governor related to issues of concern and importance to New Americans in the Commonwealth;*
- *Advise the Governor as needed regarding any statutory, regulatory, or other issues of importance to New Americans in the Commonwealth;*
- *Collaborate with the Department of Social Services and other public and private entities to recognize and call attention to the significant contributions of New Americans in the Commonwealth; and*
- *Report annually by December 1 to the Governor and the General Assembly on the activities of the Office of New Americans and provide recommendations for improving state policies and programs to support the economic, linguistic, and civic integration of New Americans throughout the Commonwealth. The chairman of the Board shall submit to the Governor and the General Assembly an annual executive summary of the interim activity and work of the Board no later than the first day of each regular session of the General Assembly. The executive summary shall be submitted as a report document as provided in the procedures of the Division of Legislative Automated Systems for the processing of legislative documents and reports and shall be posted to the General Assembly's website.*

The inaugural Board was appointed on October 16, 2020 and consists of eighteen nonlegislative citizen members appointed by the Governor who represent or have experience with the faith community; local government; the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service; law-enforcement agencies; health, mental health, housing and workforce development organizations; organizations serving youth and the elderly; organizations providing legal services for immigrants; and educational institutions and institutions of higher education. In addition, the Director of Diversity, Opportunity and Inclusion for the Commonwealth and the Chairpersons of the Virginia Asian Advisory Board, the Latino Advisory Board, the Virginia African American Advisory Board, and the Council on Women, or their designees, shall serve ex officio with nonvoting privileges. Nonlegislative citizen members of the Board shall be residents of the Commonwealth.

The Board has adopted the following Guiding Principles that help provide the overarching focus with regard to the work of the Board. These Guiding principles include:

Recognizing our Value - The Board believes that investment in New Americans communities is an investment in individuals who bring significant value to the Commonwealth. This core tenet is critical to working towards a welcoming and inclusive Commonwealth.

Ensuring Linguistic and Cultural Competencies - Linguistic and cultural barriers impact practically every aspect of the New American experience. Issues and access points must be evaluated with these barriers in mind. The Board expects to be very intentional about this area of focus and recognizes that it transcends issues and areas of responsibility in the state government.

Data Integrity - It is impossible to address issues and disparities without data to identify the issues, understand disparities, and advocate for policy change. Data collection and accessibility must be modernized to properly reflect today's Commonwealth and its makeup of race, ethnicity, national origin, and other identifiers. As well, every effort should be made to make data publicly available.

Championing Representation - The Board seeks to raise up New American communities so that they are able to represent themselves while advancing their community's integration and acculturation into the native-born communities. The principle calls for a specific focus on recognizing our diversity and intentionally working for inclusion.



Based on the Board's recognition that the issues impacting the New American communities are far-ranging and multifaceted, the Board has adopted a committee structure that will be flexible but allow for the deeper dives into the issues confronting these communities.

The Board shall conduct its work through the following **COMMITTEES**:

Access to Services Committee – This committee will focus on building awareness of the specific barriers that newcomers face in accessing services and resources. Additionally, the committee will review potential solutions and best practices that will address these barriers and improve equitable access.

This Committee will explore aspiring and New American access to services by:

- Building awareness in newcomer communities of available services and resources
- Understanding the specific barriers that newcomers face in accessing these services and resources
- Recommending strategies and processes to break down the barriers that keep newcomers from utilizing services and resources
- Exploring opportunities to provide basic services to all newcomer communities, despite immigration status (healthcare, food access, etc...)

This year's Access to Services Committee members include:

- Amelia Castañeda Smith (committee lead) * term ended September 30, 2022
- Kate Ayers
- Dr. Fern Hauck
- Dora Muhammad

Economic Opportunity Committee – This Committee will explore the economic landscape and review supports provided by the Commonwealth for workforce development and entrepreneurs. Most importantly, this committee will assess where barriers exist and provide recommendations to address these barriers. Additionally, this Committee will highlight potential economic development opportunities through foreign-born New Americans and their connectivity to their home countries.

This Committee will delve deeper into this work by:

- Assessing the economic impact of New Americans in the Commonwealth
- Reviewing workforce development resources and employment opportunities

- Reviewing self-employment and business supports
- Exploring cultural and linguistic barriers and how they affect the integration of New Americans into the economy

This year's Economic Opportunity Committee members include:

- El Hadji Djibril Niang (interim committee lead) * term ended September 30, 2022
- Susannah Lepley
- Dr. Milton Vickerman
- Bo Machayo

Inter/Intra Governmental Affairs Committee - This Committee will explore the interconnectivity of governmental policy and changes to those policies that will impact the aspiring and New American communities in the Commonwealth. The Committee seeks to provide holistic support to New Americans in the Commonwealth by:

- Identifying key governmental issues impacting their communities such as assistance and advocacy for naturalization
- Providing program, policy, and regulation recommendations to the Governor and General Assembly.
- Monitoring federal, state and local legislative issues and determining their impacts
- Identifying grant opportunities to support necessary programs and initiatives

This year's Inter/Intra Governmental Affairs Committee members include:

- Hannah "Mel" Borja (interim committee lead) * term ended September 30, 2022
- Hassan Ahmad
- Juan Santacoloma

The Board also has two dedicated **Language Access** leads in line with our Guiding Principle of **Ensuring Linguistic and Cultural Competence**. These leads seek to review language access plans and cultural competencies of the various state and local agencies that engage with the New American communities, throughout the Commonwealth. Additionally, the leads will support state efforts to create and implement a state language access plan that will create linguistic and culturally appropriate pathways for more effective immigrant integration into the Commonwealth.

This year's Language Access Co-Leads are:

- Dr. Aho Salem
- Dr. Eva Stitt

The Board also has a dedicated **Data Integrity** lead in line with our Guiding Principles of **Data Integrity**. This lead seeks to support New Americans and all Virginia residents by publicizing and encouraging the collection of relevant data on the economic and demographic characteristics of VA immigrants. This information will be made easily accessible to all and will help inform the recommendations of the Board as it seeks to support the economic, linguistic, and civic integration of New Americans throughout the Commonwealth.

- Michael Hoefler
- Dr. Milton Vickerman

DATA ON NEW AMERICANS IN THE COMMONWEALTH

Our Board provided a comprehensive overview of updated data on Virginia's New American population in the section of our 2020-2021 Annual Report titled **New Americans in the Commonwealth: Changing Demographics**.

In this section we reiterate main demographic data from that report for the current Governor's administration as well as provide the most striking data from the recently released **Barriers to Integration of Virginia's Immigrants: Challenges and Opportunities Identified through a Needs Assessment** introduced on page 26 of this year's Annual Report.

NEW AMERICAN DATA REVIEW: 2020-2021 ANNUAL REPORT

Population Change

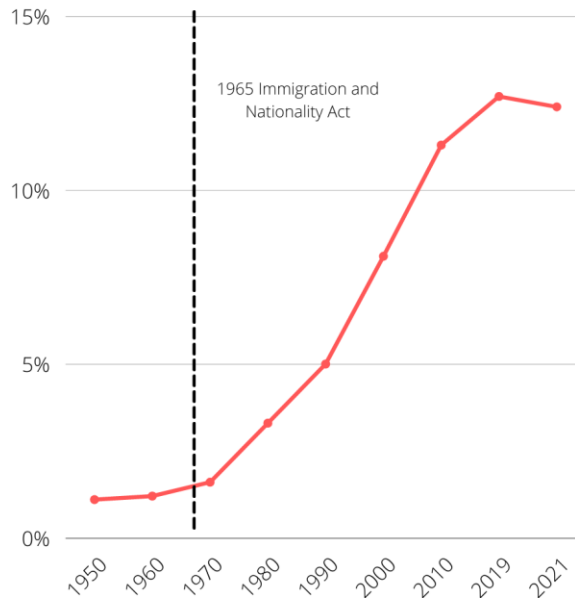
Virginia's total population more than doubled between 1960 (4.0 million) and 2019 (8.5 million), while the number of foreign-born persons in Virginia increased twenty-two times over the same period. As in other states, Virginia's population grew and became more diverse in part due to the elimination of national restrictions on immigration in 1965 by the Immigration and Nationality Act. The Act eliminated restrictions on immigration that had favored northern and western European immigration to the United States. Pursuant to the 1965 reforms, Virginia's foreign-born population grew from 72,000 in 1960 to 312,000 in 1990. It continued to increase to 1.07 million in 2021, which is the latest data available.³ Overall, Virginia's foreign-born population increased from 1.2% to 12.4% between 1960 and 2021 (see figure 1).

Virginia was the 25th highest state in numbers of foreign-born persons in 1960 but has increased more rapidly than other states. It now has the 10th largest foreign-born population. Virginia's percent foreign-born increased from 1.2 percent in 1960 to 12.4 percent in 2021. The percent foreign-born in the United States increased from 5.4 percent to 13.6 percent over the same period.

³ U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2021, ACS 1-Year Estimates Subject Table S0501.
<https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?q=acs%202021%20Foreign-born%20state&tid=ACST1Y2021.S0501>
2021-2022 Office of New Americans Advisory Board Report - October 2022

Figure 1.

Virginia Foreign-Born Population Percentage (1950-2021)

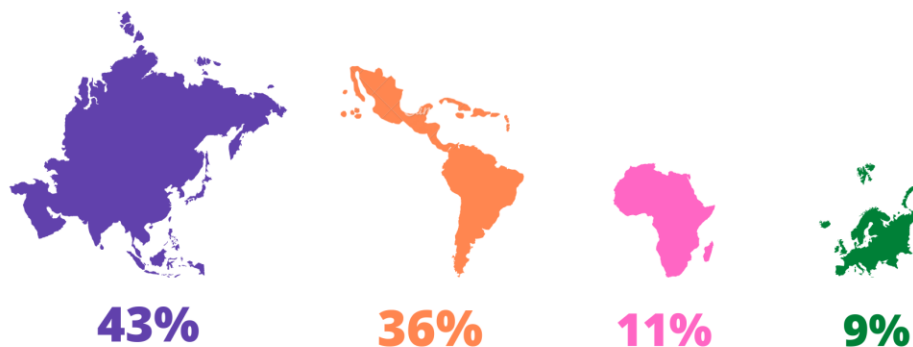


Sources: *Historical Census Statistics on the Foreign-Born Population of the United States: 1850 to 2000, Working Paper Number POP-WP081*; *The Foreign-Born Population in the U.S., U.S. Census Bureau, May 2012*; *Virginia State Data Profile, 2019 1-year ACS compiled by the Migration Policy Institute (MPI), U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2021, ACS 1-Year Estimates Subject Table S0501.*

Region and Country of Birth

Figure 2.

Virginia Foreign-Born Population by Region of Birth (2019)



Source: Migration Policy Institute, *Virginia State Data Profile*, compiled from 2019 1-year ACS.

American, Central America, Mexico, and the Caribbean) (see figure 3). Eleven percent were born in Africa and 9 percent in Europe.

Over 41 percent of Virginia’s recent immigrants with legal status, specifically lawful permanent residents (otherwise known as “green card holders”) in Fiscal Years 2016-20 were born in eight countries. The leading countries were: El Salvador (7.5%), Afghanistan (7.3), and India (6.4), followed by Vietnam (4.3), Pakistan (4.2), the Philippines (4.0), Ethiopia (4.0), China (3.9), Mexico (3.1), and Nepal (3.0). Seven of the top ten countries were in Asia.

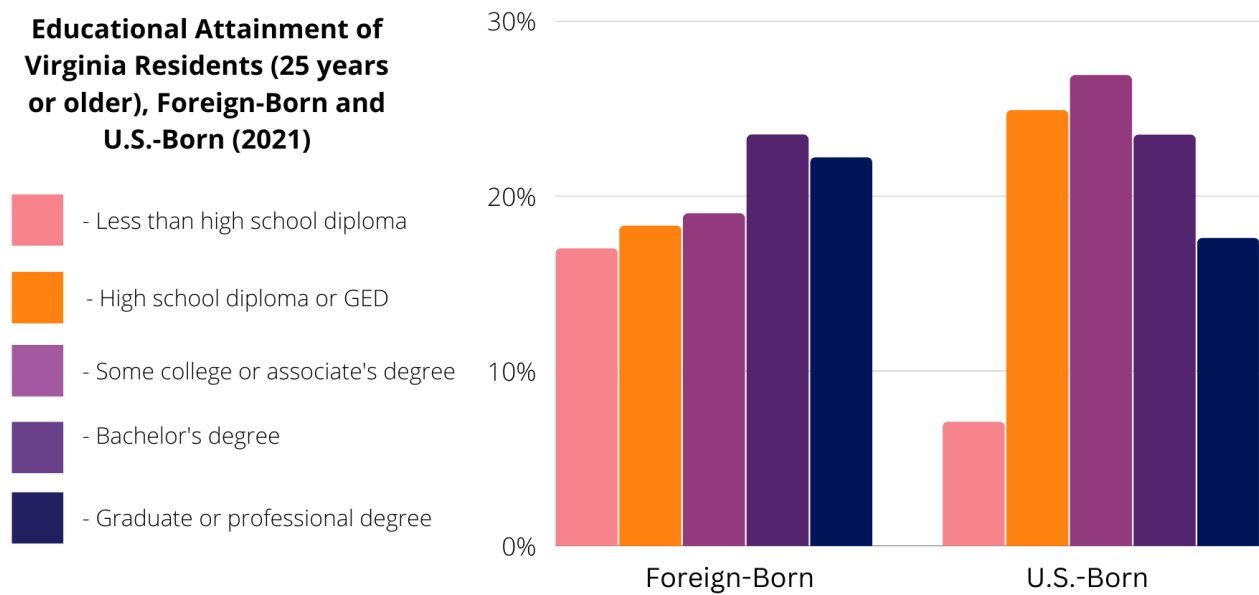
Overall Language Proficiency

Nearly 40 percent of Virginia’s foreign-born residents in 2019 were Limited English Proficient (LEP). More than 16 percent report only speaking English at home and more than 44 percent state that they speak English “very well.” Nearly 53 percent of non-citizens are LEP, while even 28 percent of naturalized citizens are LEP.

Education

Immigrants in Virginia as of 2021 exhibit a bifurcated educational pattern, with 46 percent sporting a college degree but 17 percent failed to finish high school (see figure 10). About 41 percent of Virginia’s native-born population has a college degree, while only 7 percent lack at least a high school degree.

Figure 3.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2021, ACS 1-Year Estimates Subject Table S0501.

Labor Force and Business

The following statistics and estimates were compiled primarily from the American Community Survey and reported by the New American Economy (2019) and American Immigration Council (2018).

The New American Economy reports that, as of 2019, immigrant households in Virginia had \$47.1 billion in income, paid \$4.1 billion in state and local income taxes, and paid \$9.4 billion in federal taxes. As well, the American Immigration Council reports that undocumented immigrants in Virginia paid an estimated \$441.3 million in federal taxes and \$260.5 million in state and local taxes in 2018.

According to the same American Immigration Council report, 703,057 immigrant workers make up 17 percent of Virginia's workforce. This workforce is composed of both service-based and professional fields. New American Economy reported that the top 5 industries with the highest share of foreign-born workers were taxi and limousine services (58.4%), nail salons and other personal care (56.8%), private households (48.7%), services to buildings and dwellings (39.4%), and traveler accommodation (35.5%). Specific professional fields in Virginia have a robust foreign-born workforce as well. Immigrants are 22.8% of STEM workers in Virginia. Virginia's healthcare industries by share of foreign-born workers were as follows: physicians and surgeons (29.4%), health aides (18.7%), and nurses (14.0%).

NEW AMERICANS IN THE COMMONWEALTH AND LOCAL-LEVEL DATA FROM THE NEEDS ASSESSMENT REPORT⁴

Language Proficiency at the Local Level

Northern Virginia localities contain some of the highest concentrations and number of different languages, such as Fairfax (16.8%, 139 languages), Loudon (11.4%, 114 languages), Prince William (17.3%, 108 languages) and Manassas City (32.1%, 39 languages). Additionally, Harrisonburg City schools rank 3rd (with 31.8% and 38 different languages) and Winchester City Schools are 5th [with 20.2% of students speaking at least one of 26 languages other than English (OTE) at home]. Accomack County and Galax City also stand out as rural localities outside of Northern Virginia who have more than 13% of students speaking a language other than English at home.

Figure 4.

Division Name	Students	OTE Students	% OTE	# Lang.	# Lang. w/ (10+ stu.)	Span % of OTE	Top Lang
Manassas City	7,607	2445	32.1%	39	6	93%	Spanish
Manassas Park City	3,500	1124	32.1%	22	3	93%	Spanish
Harrisonburg City	6,508	2070	31.8%	38	11	78%	Spanish
Alexandria City	15,845	4773	30.1%	95	18	66%	Spanish
Winchester City	4,269	862	20.2%	26	1	95%	Spanish
Prince William County	89,577	15497	17.3%	108	44	74%	Spanish
Fairfax County	180,076	30178	16.8%	139	59	65%	Spanish
Fredericksburg City	3,545	570	16.1%	29	6	61%	Spanish
Arlington County	26,833	4104	15.3%	69	20	65%	Spanish
Accomack County	4,864	664	13.7%	9	2	79%	Spanish
Galax City	1,323	173	13.1%	2	1	99%	Spanish
Loudoun County	81,319	9269	11.4%	114	38	58%	Spanish
Culpeper County	8,256	913	11.1%	23	3	83%	Spanish
Charlottesville City	4,259	463	10.9%	30	10	37%	Spanish
Richmond City	28,226	3029	10.7%	39	4	96%	Spanish

Source: *Barriers to Integration of Virginia's Immigrants: Challenges and Opportunities Identified through a Needs Assessment (2022)*

Immigrant Population Distribution at the Local Level

Two-thirds of all immigrants live in Northern Virginia, but sizable immigrant communities exist in Richmond, Roanoke and other metropolitan areas throughout the commonwealth. In fact, certain census tracts in Accomack, Rockingham and Lunenburg Counties have immigrant density similar to many parts of Northern Virginia.

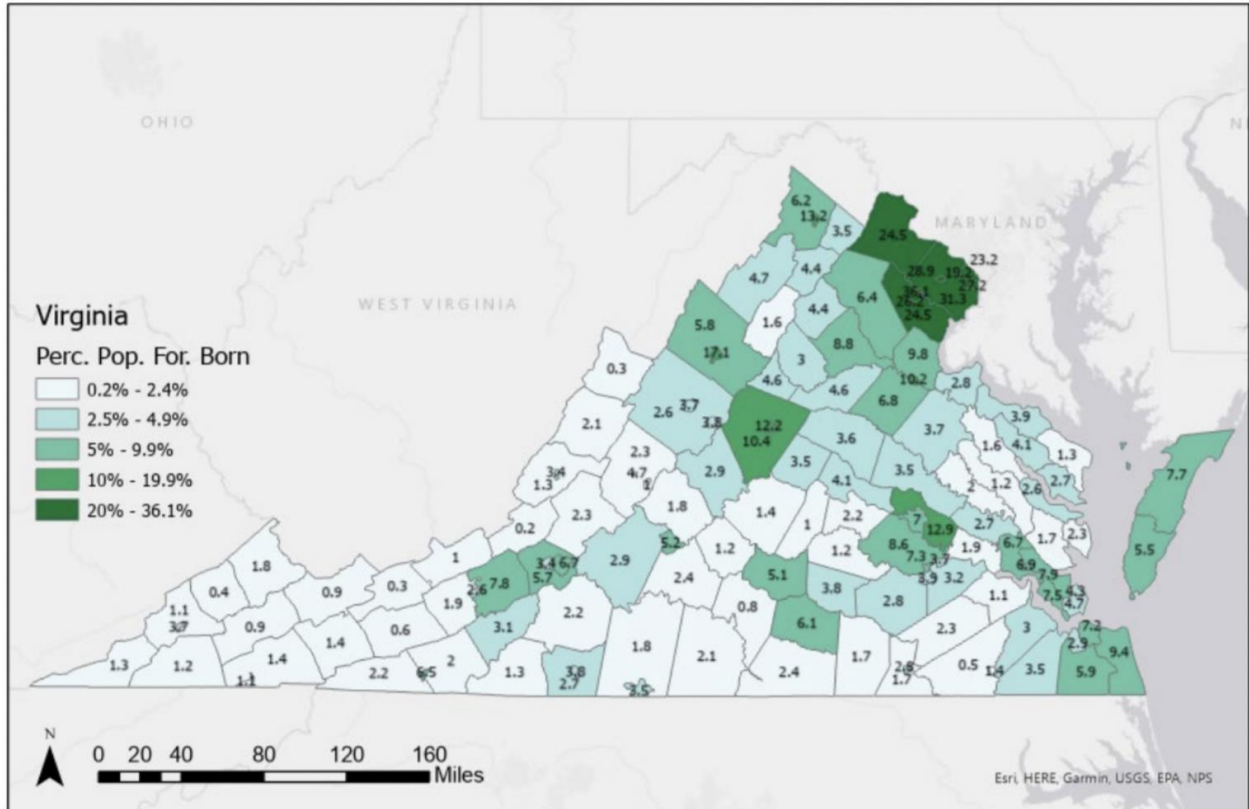
As can be seen from the histogram below, the immigrant population exceeds 10% of the population in only fifteen of 133 localities, while sixty-eight localities have an immigrant community that represents less than 3.5% of the population. Manassas Park City (36.1%) and Fairfax (31.3%) are the only localities where more than 3 in 10

⁴ Liebert, Saltanat and Grant Rissler, VCU Douglas L. Wilder School of Government and Policy, *Barriers to Integration of Virginia's Immigrants: Challenges and Opportunities Identified through a Needs Assessment (2022)*, https://www.dss.virginia.gov/files/division/cvs/ona/immigrant_services/2022-vcu_ona-study/ONA-Barriers_to_Integration_final_report_Sept_2022.pdf

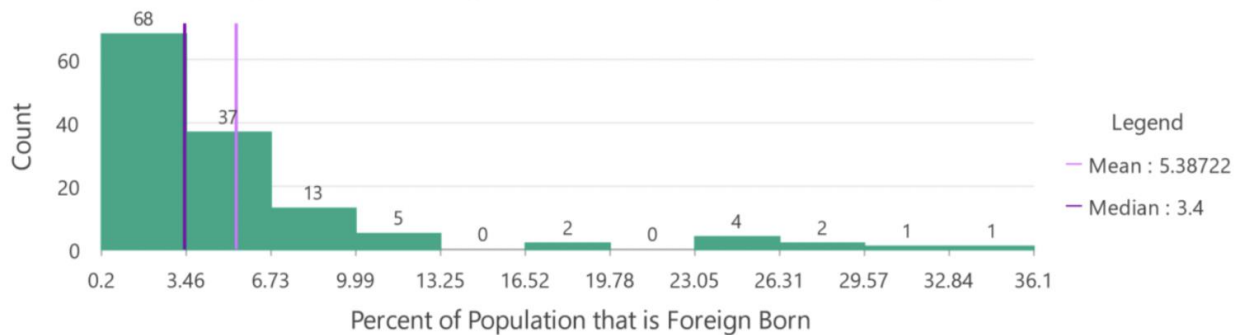
residents are an immigrant. Craig County is at the other end of the spectrum – only 0.2% of its population is foreign-born.

Smaller cities, such as Harrisonburg (17.1%), Winchester (13.2%) and Charlottesville (12.2%), alongside Henrico County (12.9%), represent the localities with the greatest concentrations of immigrants outside of Northern Virginia. Importantly, not all localities where immigrants make up more than 5% of the population are cities. The Eastern Shore as well as Prince Edward and Lunenburg Counties represent non-urban contexts that still contain significant immigrant populations.

Figure 5.



Histogram - 133 Virginia Localities by Percent Foreign Born



Source: *Barriers to Integration of Virginia’s Immigrants: Challenges and Opportunities Identified through a Needs Assessment (2022)*

Underserved Immigrant Population at the Local Level

The VCU report also used GIS mapping to identify the top 20 localities for underserved immigrant populations. The report authors mapped the locations of a list of immigrant-serving organizations developed by Virginia’s Office of New Americans, then used a 15- and 30-minute one-way drive-time analysis (at 5pm on a weekday) to identify coverage areas for the total set of immigrant service providers. The authors then calculated the portion of each census tract in the state that lies outside the coverage area (i.e. the underserved area) and multiplied the noncitizen foreign born population of the tract by the underserved area proportion. These estimations of population are then aggregated up from the census tract level to the county level.

The below table provides the total underserved population of noncitizens for both the 30-minute and 15-minute coverage areas at the state level, as well as for the top 20 counties (ranked by 30-minute underserved population). This table reveals that the far exurban counties of Northern Virginia represent the areas of greatest opportunity for serving immigrant populations.

Figure 6.

Localities	Foreign Born % of Total Pop	Underserved Noncitizen Pop (30min)	UndServed30 (%) of Noncitizen FB	Underserved Noncitizen Pop (15min)	UndServed15 (%) of Noncitizen FB	Noncitizen FB Population
Virginia Total	12.4	35,979	7%	104,333	21%	501,148
Frederick County	6.2	3,327	100%	3,327	100%	3,327
Winchester City	13.2	2,615	100%	2,615	100%	2,615
Culpeper County	8.8	2,522	98%	2,567	100%	2,567
Fauquier County	6.4	2,161	91%	2,363	100%	2,363
Prince William County	24.5	1,301	2%	14,249	27%	52,741
Loudoun County	24.5	1,288	3%	10,182	25%	40,324
James City County	6.7	1,081	54%	1,949	98%	1,994
Shenandoah County	4.7	1,050	90%	1,167	100%	1,167
Prince Edward County	5.1	956	100%	956	100%	956
Warren County	4.4	879	100%	879	100%	879
Danville City	3.5	860	100%	860	100%	860
Accomack County	7.7	784	41%	1,020	53%	1,914
Henry County	2.7	693	100%	693	100%	693
Pittsylvania County	1.8	675	100%	675	100%	675
Suffolk City	3.5	634	48%	1,229	93%	1,321
Orange County	4.6	554	54%	1,010	99%	1,018
Mecklenburg County	2.4	527	100%	527	100%	527
Stafford County	9.8	519	9%	4,963	82%	6,025
Franklin County	2.2	484	75%	642	100%	643
Westmoreland County	3.9	469	100%	469	100%	469

Source & Method Notes: 2019 ACS 5yr estimates of Foreign-Born Population in ESRI Living Atlas; dot density distribution of population at tract level; Immigrant Service Provider coverage area based on geocoding of ISP list developed by Virginia Office of New American with a 15 and 30 minute one-way drive-time analysis at 5pm on a Monday to any ISP; underserved estimate based on portion of tract level not within drive window, aggregated to the county level.

Source: *Barriers to Integration of Virginia’s Immigrants: Challenges and Opportunities Identified through a Needs Assessment (2022)*

BOARD ENGAGEMENT AND OUTREACH 2021-2022

GENERAL BOARD MEETINGS

The Board was created through legislation passed in the 2020 General Assembly session and the inaugural board was appointed on October 16, 2020. Since the last submission of our report the Board held the following general meetings:

- January 12, 2022 – Richmond
- April 20, 2022 – Richmond
- July 12, 2022 – Richmond
- October 13, 2022 – Richmond

The following guest speakers at our meetings provided substantive guidance and information that has contributed to the work of the Board and this report.

- Barbara Allison-Bryan - Former Chief Deputy Director, Virginia Department of Health Professions
- Dr. Danny Avula – Commissioner, Department of Social Services
- Suja Amir – Chair, Virginia Asian Advisory Board
- Dr. Rosa Atkins - Chief Officer, Virginia Office of Diversity, Opportunity and Inclusion
- Seyoum Berhe, Director, Virginia Office of New Americans
- Paul Berry -Former Chair, Virginia Latino Advisory Board
- Kathryn Dolan - Director, Business Development and Outreach Services, Virginia Department of Small Business and Supplier Diversity
- Megan Healy - Former Secretary of Labor
- Suzanne Holland - Director of Advisory Board Administration, Virginia Office of the Secretary of the Commonwealth
- Dr. Cheryl Ivey Green – Chair, Virginia African American Advisory Board
- Matthew James - Director, Virginia Department of Small Business and Supplier Diversity
- Dr. Saltanat Liebert - Associate Professor, VCU L. Douglas Wilder School of Government & Public Affairs
- Alphonso Lopez - Delegate, General Assembly - District 49
- Freddy Mejia – Research Director, The Commonwealth Institute
- Dr. Larry Merkel - Professor of Psychiatry, University of Virginia
- Jacques Mushagasha - African Business Partnership
- Michael Perez - Special Assistant, Virginia Office of Diversity, Opportunity and Inclusion
- Ashley Reynolds – Chair, Virginia Council on Women
- Dr. Grant Rissler - Researcher, VCU L. Douglas Wilder School of Government & Public Affairs
- Lyons Sanchezconcha – Chair, Virginia Latino Advisory Board
- Mona Siddiqui – Former Deputy Chief Officer, Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
- Dr. Joseph Tan - Assistant Professor of Family Medicine, University of Virginia

BOARD MEMBER ENGAGEMENT

Additionally, the members of the Board have engaged in their appointed capacity in the following manner:

- Participation at Operation Allies listening session with Governor Jack Markell and Governor Ralph Northam November 2021
- Participation in Virginia’s Future on Immigration convening November 2021
- Participation in Executive Leadership Team for Immigrant Integration discussion 2021
- Participation in Henrico County Multicultural and Faith Leader meetings 2021-2022
- Participation in the YMCA of Greater Richmond / Manchester YMCA Welcome Center Task Force 2021-2022

- Participation in Commonwealth Cross Advisory Board Chair convenings 2021-2022
- Partnership with VCU Wilder School of Government and Policy on Needs Assessment Study 2021-2022
- Participation in White House Office of Public Engagement outreach briefings 2021-2022
- Participation in OCA Citizenship Engagement series 2021-2022
- Participation in Public Private Strategies Institute briefings - workforce and small business 2022
- Participation in Virginia Latino Advisory Board Community Forum in Arlington, May 2022
- Participation in Virginia Asian Advisory Board's "New American Forum" June 2022
- Participation in ONA Language Access Roundtable July 2022

OUTREACH

Board members also attended or engaged with the following organizations and their representatives in conducting the work of the Board and creation of this report.

Sharifa Abbasi - Afghan Community leader

Rich Andre – Senior Policy Coordinator, New American Economy

Dr. Rosa Atkins - Chief Officer, Virginia Office of Diversity, Opportunity, and Inclusion

Wendy Chan - Co-Founder, One Journey

Angela Chiang – Vice President, OCA Asian Pacific American Advocates – Central Virginia Chapter

Adam Foster - Director, Manchester YMCA

Bing Goei – Former Executive Director of Global Michigan (Formerly Michigan Office of New Americans)

Mike Grundmann - Virginia Talent Accelerator Program - Virginia Economic Development Partnership|

Ghazala Hashmi – Senator, General Assembly – District 10

Kendra Hudson - Immigration Policy Specialist, Virginia Office of New Americans

Rizwan Jaka - Chair, All Dulles Area Muslim Society

Matthew James - Director, Virginia Department of Small Business and Supplier Diversity

Alphonso Lopez - Delegate, General Assembly - District 49

Heather McKay - Executive Director, Virginia Office of Education Economics - Virginia Economic Development Partnership

Dalila Medrano - Multicultural Outreach Coordinator, Chesterfield County

Freddy Mejia – Research Director, The Commonwealth Institute

Michelle Mittelstadt - Director of Communications, Migration Policy Institute

Liliana Penalver - Senior Program Consultant, Office of New Americans

Karen Phillippi, Director, New American Integration, Office of Global Michigan, Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Opportunity

Tricia Puryear - Vice President of Social Responsibility and Strategic Partnerships, YMCA of Greater Richmond

Lisa Ramirez – Senior Vice President Community Impact, YMCA of Greater Richmond

Karla Ramos - Manager, Richmond City Office of Immigrant and Refugee Engagement

Amir Saeed - Chief Information Officer, ICNA Relief

Wendy Shoaf - Procurement Specialist, Department of Social Services

Monica Smith-Callahan – Deputy County Manager Community Outreach Henrico County

Pete Stamps -Director, Department of General Services Division of Purchases and Supply

Dr. Tsehay Teferra - President, Ethiopian Community Development Council

Dalia Tejada Halter - Outreach and Member Engagement Specialist, Department of Medical Assistance Services

Kathy Tran – Delegate, General Assembly – District 42

Raina Vann - Multicultural Community Liaison, Henrico County

Michele Waslin, Program Coordinator, George Mason Institute for Immigration Research

James Witte, Director, George Mason Institute for Immigration Research

Essey Workie - Director of the Human Services Initiative, Migration Policy Institute

Michel Zajur – President and CEO, Virginia Hispanic Chamber of Commerce

BOARD REPORT

OFFICE OF NEW AMERICANS ADVISORY BOARD – NEXT CHAPTER

As noted in our 2021 Annual Report, the Board had its inaugural meeting on January 6, 2021. The initial Board engagement and onboarding was conducted under the Covid-19 State of Emergency. With the ability to utilize online resources to conduct general meetings and Executive Committee meetings, the Board leadership was able to make significant strides in creating the initial structure for the work of the Board.

In 2022 we shifted from laying our foundation to beginning the substantial work of our Board. All of our Board's 2022 meetings were in-person meetings. We also adopted a virtual participation policy for members who are unable to participate due to extreme circumstances or health concerns.

As a newly formed board only in our second year, some of the highlights of our year included:

GOVERNOR'S ADMINISTRATION TRANSITION

The Governor's Administration and the Attorney General's office changed both administrations and political affiliation in January 2022. Whenever an administration changes hands, a series of changes can be expected as key staff members leave and new staff onboard. The key supporting staff that have supported our Board's work that experienced at least some change includes:

- Removal the combined position of **Deputy Chief Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Officer and Senior Policy Advisor, Office of New Americans**
 - While there has been an appointment of a new **Immigration Policy Advisor within the Department of Social Services**, this position is not at the Cabinet level.
- **Appointment of a new Chief Diversity, Opportunity, & Inclusion (DOI) Officer** (Dr. Rosa S. Atkins)
- **Appointment of a new Department of Social Services Commissioner** (Dr. Danny TK Avula)

Additionally, the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) was disbanded as a result of the Governor's Administration transition. This change is discussed in further detail later in this report.

Like other Advisory Boards and Commissions, our Board had to take time to adjust and rebuild key relationships. We feel confident that our Board will be able to move forward and continue our work alongside our new colleagues.

OBSERVATIONS FROM THE ONGOING AFGHAN REFUGEE CRISIS

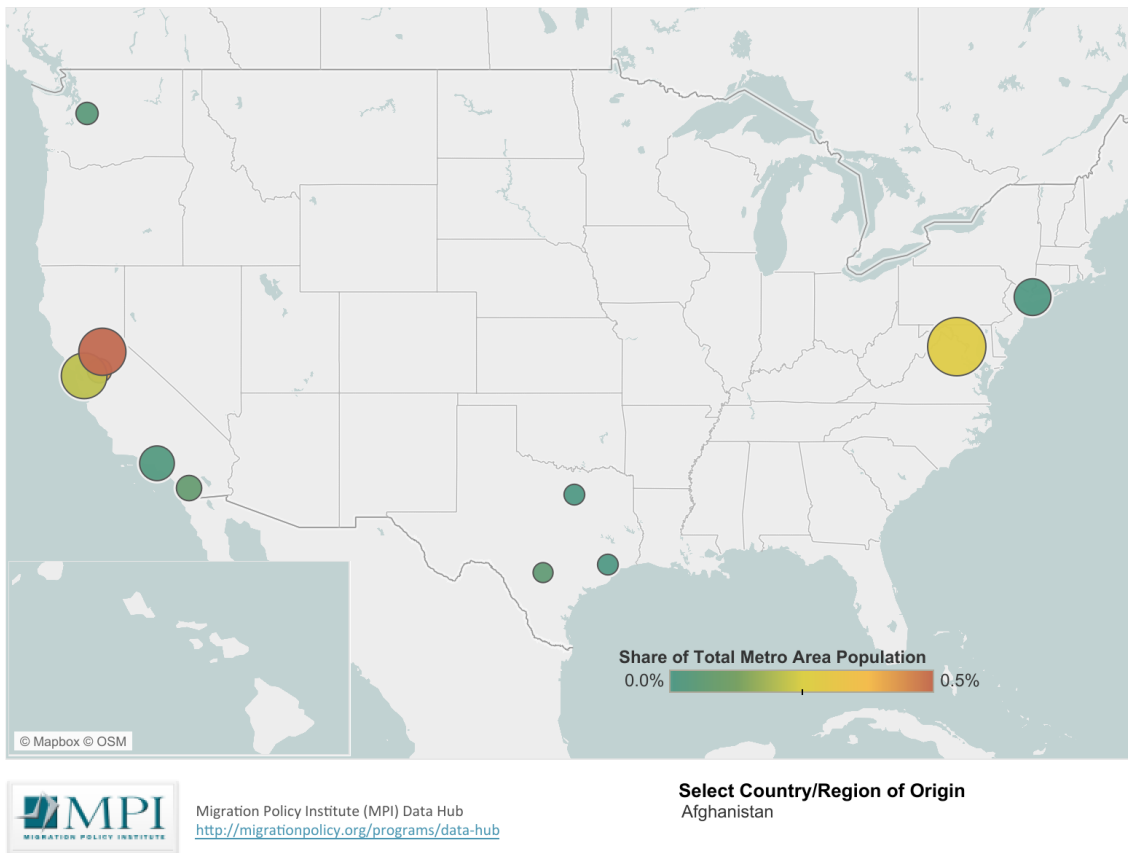
In the years before the 2021 Afghan refugee crisis, Northern Virginia had one of the largest Afghan immigrant populations in the country [see **Figure 7.**]. In fall of 2021, President Biden committed to evacuating Afghans to the United States after the withdrawal of US troops from Afghanistan and the fall of the Afghan government to the Taliban. Since then, more than 75,000 Afghans have settled across the United States and Virginia's Office of New Americans have provided resettlement services to 6,020 Afghans as of (8/22/2022).

From the summer of 2021 until September of 2022, Fort Lee, Fort Pickett, The International Conference Center in Leesburg and Quantico continually served as temporary housing for thousands upon thousands of Afghans at Risk, Special Immigrant Visa holders, asylees and Afghan parolees. The state agencies that responded to the crisis, Virginia

Department of Emergency Management, Virginia Department of Health, Virginia Department of Social Services, and the Office of New Americans were instrumental in effectively standing up the Emergency Repatriation Center and support services at the Dulles International Airport and the Dulles Expo Center. It was noted in our previous report that the state team worked in partnership with federal, state and local agencies and organizations, including Customs and Border Patrol (CBP), The American Red Cross, Dulles Airport Operations, and Office of Human Services Emergency Preparedness and Response (OHSEPR), to set up the Unified Command at the Dulles Marriott. [At the time, the Commonwealth expected to see 1,200 (or more) Afghan refugees resettle in Virginia. The number of actual resettled Afghans reported as of February 2022 is 5,171, placing Virginia behind only two other states – Texas and California – in Afghan resettlement numbers.⁵ The National Conference Center in Leesburg, Virginia is also the first stop for thousands of Afghans when they originally arrive in the U.S., regardless of if they are going to ultimately resettle in a different state.⁶

Figure 7.

U.S. Immigrant Population by Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), 2015-2019



Source: Migration Policy Institute tabulation of data from the U.S. Census Bureau's pooled 2015-2019 American Community Survey. <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/programs/data-hub/charts/us-immigrant-population-metropolitan-area>

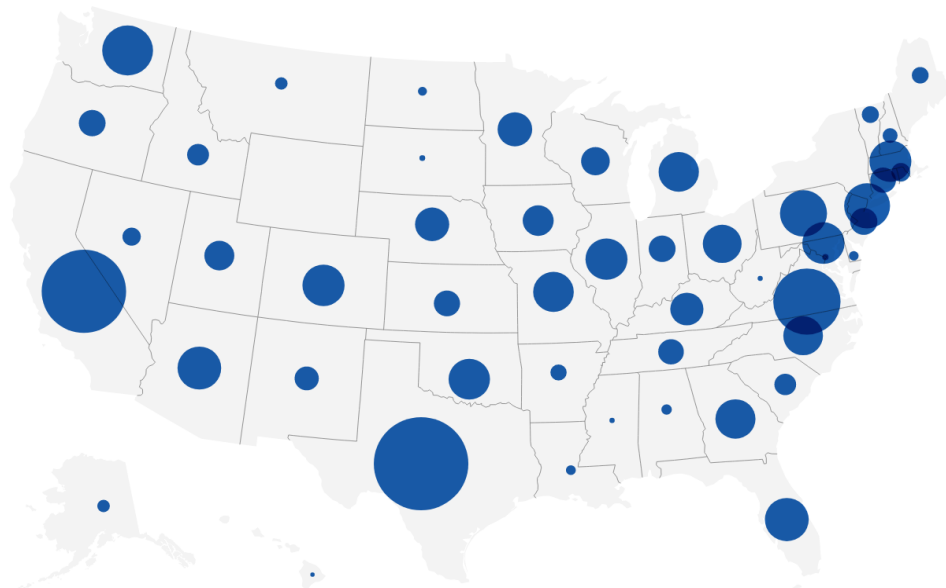
⁵ Montoya-Galvez, Camilo, Here's where Afghan evacuees have resettled in the U.S., *CBS News* 2/24/2022

⁶ Thompson, Steve, Virginia center is first stop in U.S. for thousand of Afghan refugees, *Washington Post*, 8/11/2022

Figure 8.

Where Afghan evacuees resettled in the U.S.

As of February 22, more than 67,000 Afghans have left military bases and settled across the country.



Map: CBS News • Source: State Department data

Source: Montoya-Galvez, Camilo, *Here's where Afghan evacuees have resettled in the U.S.*, CBS News, 2/24/2022

While below represents the number of Afghans resettled as of October 2021, it is important to note that this number continues to grow as secondary migrants move from another state to Virginia to be closer to friends or relatives.

- Northern Virginia Region- 3,799
- Richmond- 793
- Charlottesville - 393
- Newport News- 260
- Roanoke- 220
- Harrisonburg- 176
- Pending resettlement services - 379

Status of those who have resettled

Prior to 2021, the resettlement programs across the US had been decimated due to the low number of arrivals. This unprecedented influx of newcomers created a situation where these systems had to rebuild capacity at the same time as trying to secure affordable housing, ensure proper healthcare screenings were completed, and enroll children in schools. While resettlement programs faced many barriers to their efforts, they report that all families have found permanent housing and their children will start school this fall.

Need to develop the stronger systems for communication and information dissemination

Resettling this number of people in such a short period of time resulted in an important awareness that the Office of New Americans must develop stronger systems of communication and higher-level engagement between public and private entities.

Currently, the Office of New Americans convenes a bi-monthly meeting called the Virginia Community Capacity (VCCI) Initiative. This is a federal regulation to ensure that communities don't exceed their capacity to effectively provide services to refugees. This is currently a regulatory mechanism, but VCCI could be leveraged to create more positive interactions and more information sharing spaces. Areas for opportunities include:

- Expand VCCIs to include public, private, refugee + immigrant serving agencies to address the full spectrum of the refugee and immigrant experience in the Commonwealth
- Include community engagement and outreach to leadership from localities so they can disseminate information as the landscape for newcomer communities is changing

In the upcoming year, the Office of New Americans will be working with resettlement agencies to address the temporary immigration status of Afghans who are here under Humanitarian Parole. This is a temporary status that will require all parolees to readjust their status by applying for asylum or seeking another pathway to permanent residency. On page 56 of this report, we make an official recommendation for the Governor's Administration and those serving in the General Assembly to support and advocate for both the Afghan Adjustment Act and an expansion of immigration legal aid services in Virginia.

OBSERVATIONS IN THE AFTERMATH OF RUSSIA'S INVASION OF UKRAINE

In response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, President Biden articulated support for Ukrainians to come to the United States. To date, Virginia has received about 2,000 Ukrainian refugees. Although we have observed some of the Ukrainian refugee crisis in Virginia, it is quite distinct from the Afghan refugee crisis for several reasons.

First, unlike Afghan newcomers, Virginia is not yet a key resettlement area for Ukrainians (this may be due to a relatively small existing Ukrainian community in Virginia). Additionally, a form of private sponsorship is the primary model being used by Ukrainians resettling (this is similar to the model in Canada). This private sponsorship will increase the need for public/private partnerships, as well as communication and information sharing so that private sponsors are connected to the same kinds of resources that resettlement agencies are.

CHANGES TO FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT

FOIA constraints have continued to limit the ability of the members to collaborate freely while engaging in the work of the Board. We understand that the need for transparency in our government will impact the efficiency of our work, however, the operational adjustments have been challenging. There are very recent changes to FOIA guidelines, however, and their impact has yet to be realized in our Board's work.

By code §2.2-2497, we are allowed only 4 general meetings per year. Our Executive Committee has elected to meet every month in between these general meetings, and our Subcommittees meeting as they deem necessary. To date, we have been able to achieve quorum at each of our general meetings and our Executive Committee has maintained its meeting schedule. We are fortunate that, similar to last year, all members of the current Executive Committee reside in the Central Virginia Region. However, in the future, we would not be able to depend upon that fortuitous geographic distribution of the leadership of the Board. However, it has been difficult for our Subcommittees to meet due to the in-person meeting requirements since our Subcommittees include individuals

from different geographic regions and this provides significant logistical barriers to the work of our Board. Our Board consists of volunteer appointees, and nearly all have regular employment. Their efforts on behalf of the Administration come at a cost, and it is difficult to spend additional time traveling for Committee meetings in addition to the regular general Board meetings.

Our Board has adopted an electronic participation policy that allows members to request the ability to virtually participate in a particular meeting due to extraneous personal circumstances. The body must meet its in-person quorum requirement in order to vote yes or no on a specific request. This has alleviated some, but not enough, logistical burden.

Very recent changes to FOIA guidelines now permit public bodies to have two or one-quarter of all their meetings of a specific public body, whichever is more, as long as they are not consecutive. Under these guidelines, our General Board, Executive Committee, as well as our three additional Subcommittees are all considered their own separate public bodies.

The support of administrative staff and legal counsel have been instrumental in the Board's development of appropriate policies and procedures and acclimation to these operational guidelines and the recent changes that have taken place. Ultimately, in order to better advance the work of the Board, we would like to see FOIA guidelines such that all Committee meetings are permitted to take place virtually. We include this recommendation on page 57 of this report.

LAUNCH OF VCU NEEDS ASSESSMENT SURVEY

The last comprehensive Virginia-specific study of Virginia's New American population was the study released by the General Assembly's Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission (JLARC) in 2004. This report examined the integration of immigrant and refugee communities in the Commonwealth. However, the Commonwealth's New American population has changed significantly in the two decades since and new data was desperately needed. The Office of New Americans at the Virginia Department of Social Services commissioned a research team at Virginia Commonwealth University to conduct a needs assessment to identify barriers to integration that Virginia's immigrants encounter and to propose policy solutions to address the unmet needs and barriers to integration.

Our Board is excited that the resulting needs assessment titled ***"Barriers to Integration of Virginia's Immigrants: Challenges and Opportunities Identified through a Needs Assessment"*** is now complete and was released in September 2022. The research team interviewed 46 immigrants and 51 immigrant-serving organizations and other community stakeholders. The team also used Geographic Information System (GIS) to provide geospatial data on Virginia's foreign-born population by census tract, plot locations of immigrant service providers, and identify geographic areas needing additional service providers oriented toward immigrants. In addition to offering 10 different recommendations to best promote immigrant integration, the report concludes that:

"Maximizing the human capital of its immigrants, alongside analysis of market-based drivers of chronic and temporal labor shortages, both by sector and region, will position Virginia as a competitive force in the global economy. In turn, this would enable the Commonwealth of Virginia to reap benefits in the form of higher tax revenues to public coffers, and happier, productive, and more engaged new members of the society."

We have included the data that we find most striking from this report on pages 13-16 of this Board Report.

Our Board is deeply grateful for the work of Saltanat Liebert, PhD and Grant Rissler, PhD as well as all community stakeholders throughout the Commonwealth who participated in the survey. This groundbreaking report reveals the unmet needs and barriers to integration regarding Virginia's immigrant populations. It is the ONA's hope that the report will continue to highlight these unmet needs and barriers and develop recommendations to address these issues at all levels.

OFFICE OF NEW AMERICANS ADVISORY BOARD COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

ACCESS TO SERVICES

Regardless of immigration status, resettled newcomers from diverse backgrounds face similar barriers to community integration upon arrival. These barriers, combined with cultural and systematic differences, make it very difficult for newcomers to understand and access American systems and services. But New American communities are also valuable assets to the Commonwealth. We are competing with other states to realize the full economic and social potential of New Americans. In order to ensure that they reach their full potential, they need upfront investment and support.

The Access to Services Committee focuses on building awareness of the specific barriers that newcomers face in accessing services and resources. The committee reviews potential solutions and best practices that will address these barriers, improve equitable access, and maximize the community members' potential.

We recognize that access to appropriate healthcare is essential for all Americans to achieve their potential. New Americans are no different, and face specific types of barriers when accessing them. Our Committee interviewed various stakeholders who work in healthcare with newcomer communities, as well as convened a panel discussion with individuals who work in the healthcare industry and are members of newcomer communities themselves.

Through this investigation, three specific barriers were identified, and recommendations made for how to reduce barriers to access to healthcare systems. The three barriers that will be addressed include:

1. Implicit Bias and the need for all health practitioners to undergo cultural competency training;
2. Limited Medicaid Coverage for Dental Care in VA and the need to expand coverage beyond basic dental care, and
3. Lack of Medicaid Coverage for Interpreter Services and the need to increase language access.

The recommendations our committee puts forth that have been adopted by the full Board are:

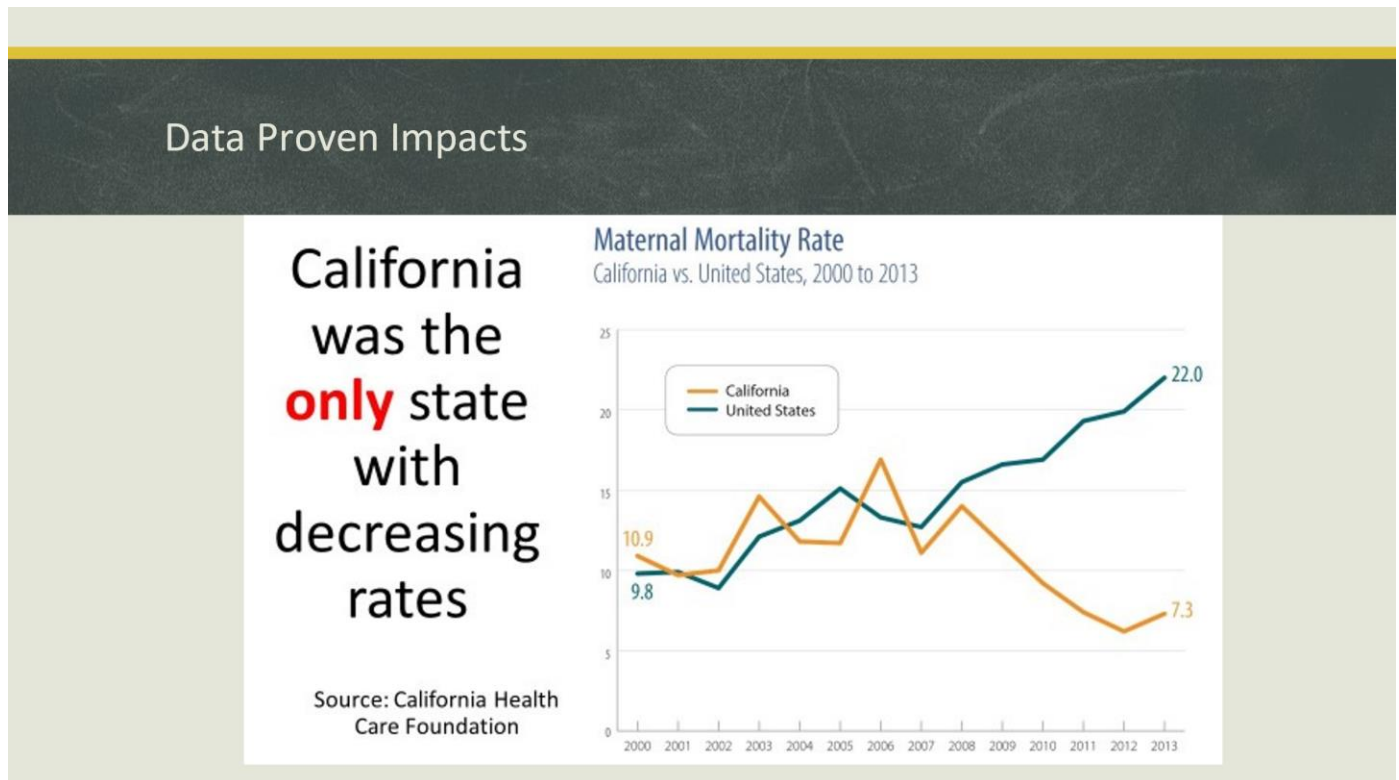
- **Require all healthcare practitioners to receive at least 2 hours of continuing Medical Education on the topics of unconscious bias and cultural humility every two years to maintain their licensure**
- **Ensure that all Medicaid eligible Virginians have access to dental health services by**
 - a. **creating pathways and opportunities for more dental providers to be educated and offer services to Medicaid patients**
 - b. **Emphasize a diverse dental health workforce that reflects Virginia's population**
 - c. **Increase Medicaid reimbursement rates so that more Virginia dentists will accept Medicaid insured patients**
 - d. **Consider expanding access to preventative services by increasing eligibility threshold for children's Medicaid/CHIP health coverage AND expand coverage to all income eligible children regardless of immigration status.**
- **Expand Medicaid reimbursement to cover interpretation costs and provide incentives for healthcare facilities who provide interpretation services.**

Implicit Bias and Cultural Humility: Policy Implications

Some healthcare facilities do provide implicit bias and cultural humility training to their practitioners, but it is typically reactionary rather than preventive, and often only at the physical level. Research shows that mistakes that are made when practitioners and office staff do not understand how to communicate with their patients due to language and cultural barriers are very expensive and at the detriment of the patient and the practitioner.

In 2019, Virginia's Maternal Mortality Review team found that 51% of pregnancy associated deaths are due to provider-related factors with a direct correlation to unconscious bias.⁷ The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found that these behaviors often result in a delay or lack of diagnosis, treatment, follow-up, and referral, and that 80% of pregnancy associated deaths are preventable. The National Cancer Institute released a report that showed that implicit bias is the most insidious and least recognizable mechanism that can cause inequities and disparities. The state of California is a leader in requiring this training, and the impact is clear: When all medical staff receive unconscious bias and cultural competency training, their patients have significantly better outcomes.⁸

Figure 9.



Source: Joynt, Jen, 2019 Edition - *Maternity Care in California*, California Health Care Foundation, 11/25/2019⁹

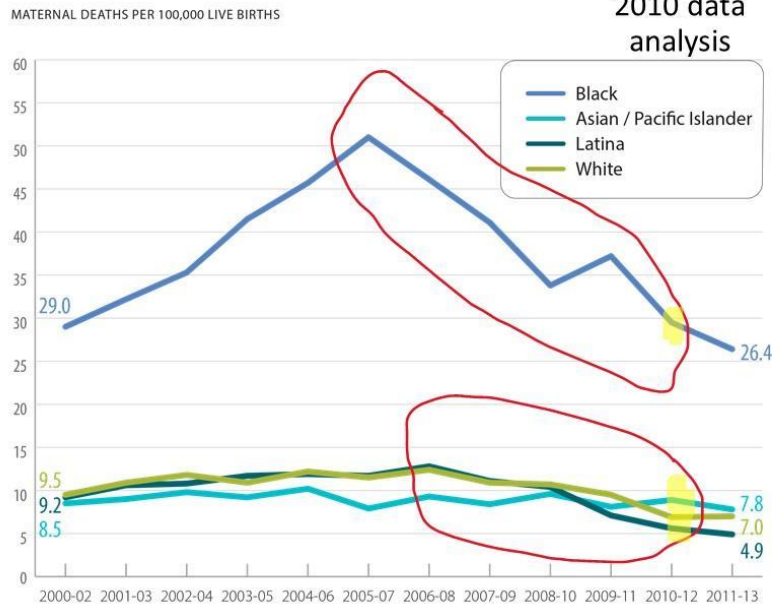
⁷ Virginia Department of Health, Maternal Mortality Review Team Reports

⁸ Joynt, Jen, 2019 Edition - *Maternity Care in California*, California Health Care Foundation, 11/25/2019

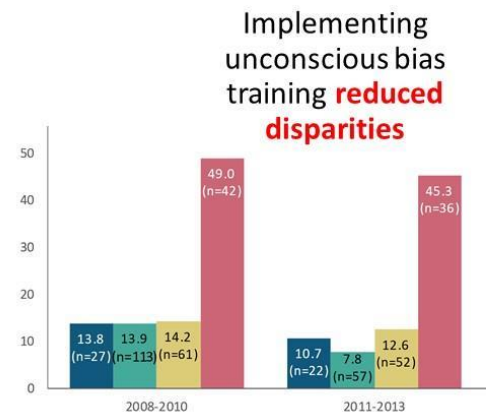
⁹ ibid

Figure 10.

Maternal Mortality, by Race/Ethnicity California, 2000 to 2013



2006 complete clinical and admin overhaul reduced totals only



Source: Joynt, Jen, 2019 Edition - *Maternity Care in California*, California Health Care Foundation, 11/25/2019

Virginia’s Interfaith Center for Public Policy has been leading the charge to address unconscious bias and cultural humility by recommending that all practitioners receive at least 2 hours of continued Medical Education every two years. The legislation is already written with a House referral through the Department of Health Professions and a Senate referral through the Task Force on Maternal Health Data and Quality Measures.

The Office of New Americans Advisory Board supports this recommendation to require all healthcare practitioners to receive at least 2 hours of continuing Medical Education on the topics of unconscious bias and cultural humility every two years to maintain their licensure.

Medicaid Coverage for Children & Dental Care in VA: Implications for Access

Healthcare access is critical for individuals and families, and this is especially true for young children. Children with health coverage have more routine visits with physicians, better chances of medical attention for injuries, high rates of dental care, and better outcomes from hospital visits. They are also more likely to have a routine provider for preventive care.¹⁰ Such improved outcomes have a lifelong impact on both the children themselves and their families.

¹⁰ National Library of Medicine, America’s Children: Health Insurance and Access to Care., *National Center for Biotechnology Information, National Academy of Sciences* 1998

Every child in Virginia should have access to affordable and comprehensive health coverage. Yet many barriers stand in the way of covering all kids in the Commonwealth of Virginia, one of the most significant of which is one's relationship to the immigrant experience. Undocumented children in Virginia are not eligible for adequate medical care through Medicaid. And immigration status alone does not itself remedy lack of access – immigrant children who do have status may not access health care coverage due to family members' confusion or misinterpretation on their eligibility. They also may not be income-eligible for public health coverage programs under the low current income thresholds.

Current Virginia Medicaid Access Requirements

Currently, to be eligible for Virginia Medicaid, you must be a resident of the state of Virginia, a U.S. national, citizen, permanent resident, or legal resident, in need of health care/insurance assistance, whose financial situation would be characterized as low income or very low income.

You must also be one of the following:

- Pregnant, or
- Be responsible for a child 18 years of age or younger, or
- Blind, or
- Have a disability or a family member in your household with a disability, or
- Be 65 years of age or older.

The Annual Income Eligibility Limits are also as follows:

Annual Household Income Limits (before taxes)

Household Size*	Maximum Income Level (Per Year)
1	\$18,075
2	\$24,353
3	\$30,630
4	\$36,908
5	\$43,186
6	\$49,463
7	\$55,741
8	\$62,018

Source: Benefits.gov¹¹

¹¹ Benefits.gov, Virginia Medicaid
2021-2022 Office of New Americans Advisory Board Report - October 2022

Foreign-Born Virginia Residents and their Health Coverage

Additionally, foreign-born individuals without U.S. citizenship have four times the uninsured rate as their naturalized counterparts. Naturalized citizens are also over twice as likely to have public health coverage (i.e. Medicaid) than foreign-born individuals without citizenship.¹²

Naturalized Citizens (%)	567,743
With health insurance	92.0%
With private health insurance	79.0%
With public coverage	26.3%
No health insurance coverage	8.0%
Noncitizens (%)	502,839
With health insurance	64.6%
With private health insurance	54.9%
With public coverage	12.2%
No health insurance coverage	35.4%

Source: Migration Policy Institute¹³

Dental Access for Virginians on Medicaid

Oral health is linked to overall health and needs to be expanded to all groups of people. Prior to Medicaid expansion, children and pregnant individuals were the only Medicaid groups with dental coverage. This lack of coverage came at a cost to Virginians. Lack of dental care led to costly emergency department visits: of the 16,000 Virginia Medicaid recipients that visited emergency rooms in 2018, more than half were treated for “non-traumatic dental conditions” like tooth aches and loose teeth. In addition, Virginia spent \$3.31 million on 12,617 visits to the ED for dental-related pain and infection. There are also Racial disparities in dental care access and oral health outcomes. A recent study showed that 71% of black adults in Virginia (45-64 years) report losing at least one tooth to infection in comparison only 49.7% of white adults.¹⁴

While basic medical care is now expanded to all adults, a lot of work needs to happen to ensure that individuals are actually able to access these benefits. While Medicaid adult dental coverage was included in the state budget in 2020, only 1 in 7 newly eligible adults has accessed dental services by 2022. A major barrier to accessing these services is that there is a lack of providers that will accept Medicaid patients (at this time only 1,894 dentists see Medicaid Patients).

¹² Migration Policy Institute, Virginia State Demographics Data

¹³ Ibid.

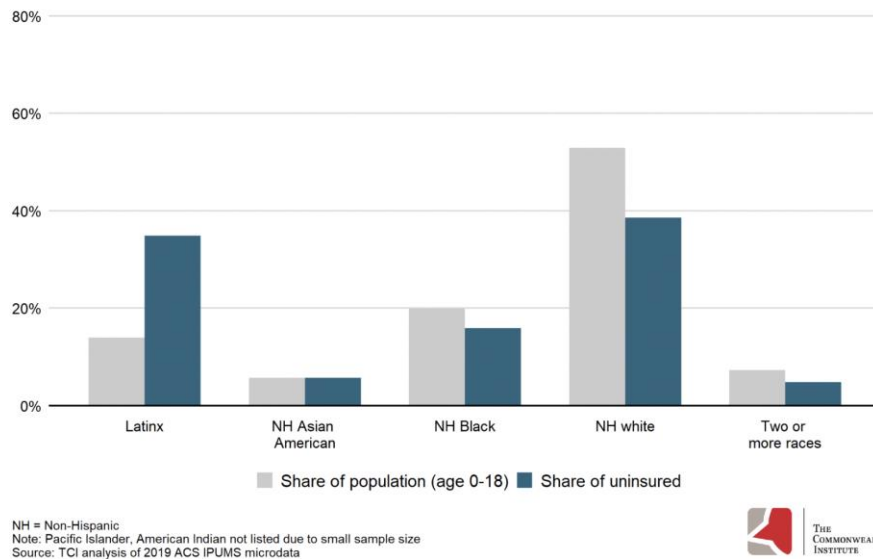
¹⁴ Department of Medical Assistance Services, Virginia Oral Health Report Card - Companion Narrative 2016
2021-2022 Office of New Americans Advisory Board Report - October 2022

Virginia's Uninsured Children

Approximately 4.5% (88,000) of Virginia children from birth through age 18 were uninsured. An estimated 78.6% (70,000) were between the ages of 6 and 18 years, with a substantial number of uninsured children between the ages of 13 and 18 (42.6%, or 38,000).¹⁵ Children who are either Latinx, immigrants, or from families with low to moderate incomes face significant barriers to health coverage. Latinx children are significantly overrepresented in the number of uninsured children. While only making up 14% of the child population (aged 0-18) in Virginia, Latinx children account for 35% of all uninsured children in the state.¹⁶

Figure 11.

Latinx children in Virginia account for 35% of all uninsured children in the state, while making up only 14% of the total child population



Source: *The Commonwealth Institute for Fiscal Analysis*¹⁷

Being a noncitizen or having immigrant parents puts a child at greater risk of being uninsured than citizen children in native-born families. This risk is substantial even when controlling for parents' education and the duration of parents' residence in the United States, as well as core determinants of uninsurance. The risk of being uninsured is greatest for noncitizen children, regardless of ethnicity. U.S. citizen children with immigrant parents also bear a greater risk of uninsurance than do those with U.S.-born parents.¹⁸ If the Medicaid/CHIP income eligibility cap was increased and the program was expanded to all children regardless of status, over 30,200 children¹⁹ currently uninsured and ineligible for Medicaid/CHIP would have new access to affordable and comprehensive coverage. This policy change would provide a new and affordable health coverage option to roughly 1 in 3 (31%) uninsured children in Virginia.²⁰ This change also invests in Virginia's future by investing in the health and well-being of children today. Immigrant children will grow up to be the next generation of economic actors in Virginia.

¹⁵ Shartzter, Adele and Joshua Aarons, A Profile of Virginia's Uninsured, 2019, Urban Institute, 3/5/2020

¹⁶ Mejia, Freddy, It's Time to Cover All Kids, The Commonwealth Institute, 5/10/2021

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ National Library of Medicine, America's Children: Health Insurance and Access to Care., National Center for Biotechnology Information, National Academy of Sciences 1998

¹⁹ Mejia, Freddy, It's Time to Cover All Kids, The Commonwealth Institute, 5/10/2021

²⁰ Ibid,

To ensure that all Medicaid eligible Virginians have access to dental health services, The Office of New Americans Advisory Board recommends that we continue to:

- 1) Create pathways and opportunities for more dental providers to be educated and offer services to Medicaid patients (about 1.3 million people in Virginia live in a Dental Care Health Professional Shortage Area)**
- 2) Emphasize a diverse dental health workforce that reflects Virginia’s population**
- 3) Increase Medicaid reimbursement rates so that more Virginia dentists will accept Medicaid insured patients**
- 4) Consider expanding access to preventative services by increasing eligibility threshold for children’s Medicaid/CHIP health coverage AND expand coverage to all income eligible children regardless of immigration status.**

Medicaid Coverage for Interpreter Services: Some States Have It, VA Does Not

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act and Executive Order 13166 require all medical facilities that receive federal funding (that includes Medicaid and Medicare) to provide interpretation services. However, Medicaid and Medicare do not cover these costs in Virginia, and they are prohibitive for many medical institutions, limiting their willingness and ability to provide language access. Patients with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) often have not developed fluency in the English language to navigate the complexity of healthcare and healthcare systems. They benefit from having an interpreter and from having documents translated into their primary language.²¹

Besides Title VI, there are Legislation and Regulatory Compliance Standards for Providing Interpreter and Translation Services to LEP Patients:

- Executive order 13166 (passed in 2000)
- Section 1557 of the Affordable Care Act
- Code of Federal Regulation (CFR) at 45 CFR Part 92 (Section 1557)
- Health and Human Services Office of Minority Health: Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Care (CLAS) Standards
- Joint Commission: Standards for patient centered communication
- Individual hospital standards

These laws mandate that interpreting services should be timely, secure, and free to the patient and that any entity, organization, or facility that receives federal funding, like Medicaid, must provide language access to LEPs who are eligible to receive healthcare services. The medical interpreter must be qualified and certified. And these entities, large or small, include medical offices, laboratories, mental health facilities, dentists, occupational therapists, hospitals, and pharmacies.

The biggest barrier for many Medicaid facilities (especially smaller ones) is cost. There is a shortage of certified interpreters and a shortage of healthcare providers who know how to work with interpreters. Fourteen states and the District of Columbia have legislation that allows medical facilities to submit for reimbursement for interpreters.

The Office of New Americans Advisory Board recommends that Virginia expand Medicaid reimbursement to cover interpretation costs and provide incentives for healthcare facilities who provide interpretation services.

²¹ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Civil Rights - Limited English Proficiency
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ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

Economic issues loom large for immigrants and can disproportionately motivate the difficult decision to leave their country. Even when other issues serve as proximate causes for migration – e.g., ethnic or political persecution – economic motives typically remain important. As with other Virginians, our aspiring and New Americans pursue economic opportunity primarily through employment and entrepreneurship. However, unlike the general populace, New Americans encounter more barriers to economic opportunity due to language and cultural barriers in addition to lack of access to capital and corporate or business competencies.

The Economic Opportunity Committee explores the economic landscape and reviews what support is provided by the Commonwealth for New American workforce development and entrepreneurs. Most importantly, this committee assesses where barriers exist and provides recommendations to address these barriers. Additionally, this Committee highlights potential economic development opportunities through foreign born New Americans and their connectivity to their home countries.

The recommendations our committee puts forth that have been adopted by the full Board are:

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

- 1. Through Budgetary action, provide funding to the Office of New Americans and the Department of Labor to study employment and educational history of New Americans to determine focus of career pathway programs, and New American capacity to fill employment gaps in the state.**
- 2. Through Budgetary action, provide funding to the Office of New Americans, the Department of Labor, Virginia Economic Development Partnership, and the Department of Education to explore further opportunities to recruit New American talent and retain them through statewide employment initiatives.**
- 3. Through Budgetary action, provide funding to the Office of New Americans and the Department of Labor to review licensing and certification criteria and develop, translate, and disseminate career pathway maps.**

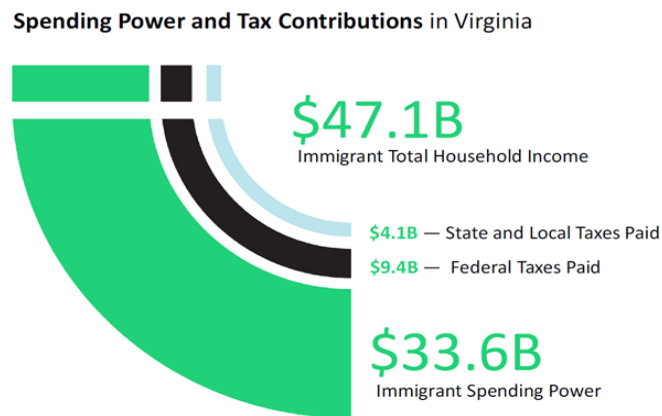
SMALL BUSINESS SUPPORT - Prioritization and Intentionality

- 1. Through Budgetary and Legislative Action, provide funding to support for and require the Department of Small Business and Supplier Diversity to assess its outreach methods and goals and develop targeted outreach, programs and processes to build small business capacity and assist businesses in obtaining appropriate certifications.**
- 2. Through Executive action, require the Secretary of Administration to review all Memorandum of Understandings with Tier II and Tier III Higher Education Institutions to further prioritize and make intentional the engagement and utilization of Small, Women and Minority Owned Business Program (SWaM) businesses.**
- 3. Through Legislative and Budgetary action, require the Department of Small Business Supplier Diversity and the Department of General Services to review the annual agency SWaM plans and provide feedback to agency leadership to ensure prioritization and intentional utilization of SWaM businesses. Additionally, procurement progress for the State and agencies, toward the SWaM goal will be made public on the DSBSD SWaM dashboard.**

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

In our 2021 Annual Report we noted that when New Americans are employed in our businesses or able to pursue their entrepreneurial dreams, they generate billions of dollars in revenue or income, tax payment, and consumer spending. These economic contributions support our state and local governments, our private sector, and our public infrastructure.

Figure 12.



Source: New American Economy Report to ONAAB 1/6/21

The ONAAB has explored the critical economic areas of workforce development and entrepreneurial support. We believe that there are significant opportunities to support these areas. Which in turn will provide better returns on the investment in these communities.

As the world continues to change around us, we also see changes in the attitudes towards the New American population that other states have embraced. Since 2014, Michigan has adopted an aggressive talent acquisition and retention program for New Americans. Former Governor Rick Snyder specifically created Michigan's Office of New Americans to address the loss of talent and skilled employees due to the downturn in the automotive industry. Similarly, fifteen states have also created Offices of New Americans or other offices that focus on successful immigrant integration. These states are California, Colorado, Illinois, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Nevada, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Oregon, Washington, Wisconsin and Virginia.²²

Leaders in these states have looked at their changing demographics, and have concluded that leveraging growing New American populations will result in increased talent, skills and resources. These valuable elements can allow economies to better compete in the national and global market. Virginia must attract and retain New American talent. Here are some compelling reasons why this is important to the Commonwealth:

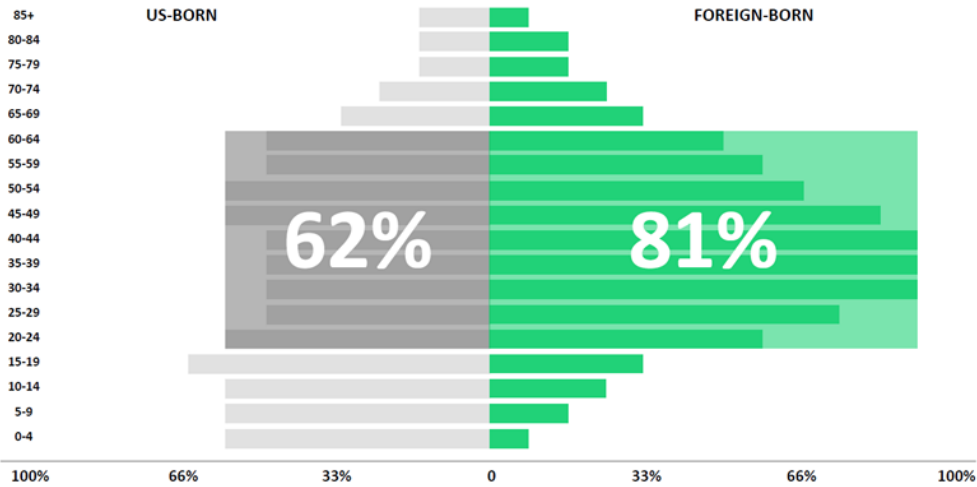
Working Age Population: Since 2000, immigrant workers and their children have become the major contributors to our workforce growth.²³ The average age of the native-born population in the Commonwealth has steadily increased as the baby boomers have progressed towards retirement age. **Figure 13** illustrates the demographic trends that make our New American workforce even more critical to sustained economic growth for the Commonwealth and nation.

²² New American Economy , Office of New Americans ONA State Network

²³ Singer, Audrey and Dowell Myers, *Labor Force growth increasingly depends on migrants and their children*, 9/29/2016

Figure 13.

Immigrants are More Likely to be Working Age in Virginia



Source: New American Economy Report to ONAAB 1/6/21

Engagement Across Industries:

New American workers are engaged in all industries. Depending on skill sets, education and past opportunities, our New American workers range from laborers to professionals. According to a Joint Economic Committee report from 2021 (Figure 14.), our national immigrant workforce represents significant portions of our essential work sectors.

Figure 14.

Immigrants Disproportionately Work in "Essential" Sectors	
Sector	Share of Workers Who Are Immigrants
Manufacturing	19%
Transportation and Utilities	20%
Professional and Business Services	21%
Leisure and Hospitality	21%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	23%
Construction	28%
Overall	18%

Source: Joint Economic Committee "Immigrants are Vital to the US Economy" 4/26/21

This has not been more apparent than during the last 2 years of the Covid-19 pandemic. Reports show that during the pandemic, New American health care workers were disproportionately responsible for in-person care and were essential workers on the front lines.. Nationally, New Americans make up 38 percent of home health aides, 29

percent of physicians and 22 percent of nursing assistants.²⁴ In Virginia, with New Americans making up 12.7 percent of the population, 29.4 percent are physicians and surgeons, 18.7 percent are health aides and 14.0% are nurses.²⁵ New Americans are disproportionately responsible for in-person health care, This underscoring the availability and type of talent that resides within the New American workforce.

National efforts are being made to highlight this bridge to global talent. Initiatives such as World Education Services Global Talent Bridge²⁶ are increasingly focusing on the economic benefits of immigration. World Education Services Global Talent Bridge is dedicated to helping skilled immigrants fully utilize their talents and education to achieve professional and academic goals. They focus on uplifting these skilled workers through their Skilled Immigrant Integration Program.²⁷

Virginia was recently a participant in this program focused on supporting foreign-born educators to help fill teacher shortages in our public school systems. The number of Virginia teacher vacancies exceeded 2,500 teaching positions in the 2021-2022 school year.²⁸ And for the 2022-2023 school year, the top 10 critical teaching shortages include Elementary Education K-6, Middle School Grade 6-8, Mathematics Grades 6-12, Science, and Foreign Language PreK-12. These are all areas that potential teachers from the New American workforce can fill.

In order to help alleviate the Commonwealth's teacher shortage, Senate Bill 68 permits the Board of Education to provide a provisional license to educators who were certified or licensed to teach within the last 5 years.²⁹ Fortunately, SB 68 was passed by the General Assembly and signed by Governor Youngkin to help alleviate the Commonwealth's teacher shortage.

Talent Acquisition:

There are many avenues for attracting talent. Some occur organically, while others are driven by employers. The Commonwealth has several initiatives focused on the attraction of talent to the state. The Virginia Economic Development Partnership and Department of Labor are leading many talent acquisition initiatives that focus on developing talent and putting them to work. Even with programs like Virginia's Tech Talent Investment Program,³⁰ Virginia Talent Accelerator Program,³¹ and Virginia Career Works³² there are still more opportunities to attract, develop and retain talent within the New American communities.

While Virginia has a 12.7 percent share of the population, 22.8 percent of the STEM workers are New Americans. While this signals that we are attracting talent, we are not leveraging one of our best resources – our centers of higher education – to do so. Each year, almost 600,00 patents are filed by companies, research centers and institutes of higher learning.³³ And in a study from by the New American Economy in 2012 these details are

²⁴Batalova, Jeanne, Immigrant Workers: Vital to the U.S. COVID-19 Response, Disproportionately Vulnerable, *Migration Policy Institute* 5/14/2020

²⁵ Andre, Rich, New Americans in Virginia - An overview of immigrants' contributions to the commonwealth, *New American Economy*, 1/6/2021

²⁶ World Education Services, Global Talent Bridge

²⁷ World Education Services, Skilled Immigrant Integration Program

²⁸ Virginia Department of Education, VDOE Staffing and Vacancy Report

²⁹ Favola, Barbara, SB 68 Provisional teacher licensure; teachers licensed or certified outside of the United States., Virginia Legislative Information System 2022

³⁰ Virginia Economic Development Partnership, Virginia's Tech Talent Investment Program

³¹ Virginia Economic Development Partnership, Virginia Talent Accelerator Program

³² Virginia Career Works

³³ U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, U.S. Patent Activity Calendar Years 1790 to the Present

compelling:

- 76 percent of the patents had a foreign-born inventor.
- 54 percent of the patents were awarded to the group of foreign inventors most likely to face visa hurdles: students, postdoctoral fellows, or staff researchers.
- Foreign-born inventors played significant roles in the fields of semiconductor device manufacturing (87 percent), information technology (84 percent), pulse or digital communications (83 percent), pharmaceutical drugs or drug compounds (79 percent) and optics (77 percent).
- The nearly 1,500 patents represented inventors from 88 different countries.

From 2012 until 2021, the number of international students in the United States rose from 819,644³⁴ to 914,095³⁵. Virginia has some of the highest ranked universities and colleges in the country, yet Virginia is not a top 10 destination for international students, and no Virginia higher education institution is within the top 20 schools for international students.³⁶ This is a lost opportunity to attract talent to the Commonwealth and potentially retain them as a highly educated and skilled workforce.

There is opportunity to leverage our notable universities and colleges to become talent attractors.

Worker Licensure:

Another avenue for attracting talent is to find ways to leverage the talent that already exists in the Commonwealth. Many New Americans who come to the Commonwealth possess valuable skills and experience. Unfortunately, these skills and experience are not being utilized due to specific education or certification requirements. As noted earlier, recent legislation (SB68) has created pathways for teachers who were licensed educators in foreign countries to work provisionally in Virginia to help alleviate an area of dire need. There are many other industries that have similar needs. Virginia Career Works and the Virginia Office of Education Economics has identified a list of high demand occupations for 2021-2022. This list includes several areas of need that we have already noted as areas the New Americans have excelled:

- Business/Finance
- Education
- Computers/Math/Engineering
- Construction
- Healthcare
- Production and Transportation/Material Moving³⁷

If Virginia could address opportunities and create career pathways to licensure and employment in these areas, we could address some areas of greatest need while leveraging valuable skills and experience available in the New American communities.

The Global Michigan Office has created these pathways and have made the information readily accessible through their Career Pathway Guides through their Licensing and Regulatory Affairs office.³⁸ Here, immigrant residents can find more than 40 Career Pathway Guides to chart a path to licensure and, in some cases, create simplified

³⁴ Brookings Institute Report 8/29/14 "The Geography of Foreign Students in U.S. Higher Education: Origins and Destinations"

³⁵ Open Doors report 2021 Fast Facts International Students, 2021

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Virginia Economic Development Partnership, Virginia's 2021-2022 High Demand Occupations List and Underlying Methodology Report

³⁸ Michigan Licencing and Regulatory Affairs, An Online Resource for Skilled Immigrants
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pathways to licensure.

The Workforce Development recommendations our committee puts forth that have been adopted by the full Board are:

1. **Through Budgetary action, provide funding to the Office of New Americans and the Department of Labor to study employment and educational history of New Americans to determine focus of career pathway programs, and New American capacity to fill employment gaps in the state.**
2. **Through Budgetary action, provide funding to the Office of New Americans, the Department of Labor, Virginia Economic Development Partnership, and the Department of Education to explore further opportunities to recruit New American talent and retain them through statewide employment initiatives.**
3. **Through Budgetary action, provide funding to the Office of New Americans and the Department of Labor to review licensing and certification criteria and develop, translate, and disseminate career pathway maps.**

SMALL BUSINESS SUPPORT: Prioritization and Intentionality

Small, Women-owned, and Minority-Owned Business (SWaM) program:

The SWaM program was created in 2006 by executive order to enhance opportunities for small, women and minority owned businesses in government contracting. As part of Governor Tim Kaine's Executive Order 33 of August 10, 2006,³⁹ the Department of Minority Business Enterprise was created to oversee the program and specific measures including:

- Setting an overall annual goal of 40 percent for the participation of small businesses in Commonwealth contracts and procurements;
- Requiring prime contractors to include SWaM participation plans as part of their bids or proposals for Commonwealth contracts and procurements;
- Requiring Commonwealth agencies to develop processes to track the participation of SWaM-certified businesses in their contracts and procurements;
- Requiring the Department of General Services to create a small business set-aside program and implement other efforts to enhance small business participation in Commonwealth contracts and procurements;
- Requiring Commonwealth agencies to submit SWaM plans that include information about their implementations of the SWaM Program to SBSD on an annual basis;
- Requiring Commonwealth agencies to actively recruit small businesses to bid or propose on their contract and procurement opportunities; and
- Requiring Commonwealth agencies' purchasing manuals, regulations, and guidelines to include SWaM purchasing regulations and guidelines. (excerpted from BBC Research and Consulting, 2020 Disparity Study Commonwealth of Virginia, January 2021)

In July of 2014, then Governor Terence McAuliffe, via Executive Order 20,⁴⁰ created the microbusiness category; raised the SWaM annual goal for state contracting and procurement to 42 percent; reaffirmed the need for agency SWaM procurement plans and more robust data collection. Governor McAuliffe's successor, Governor Ralph

³⁹ Kaine Timothy, Executive Order 33 (2006): Enhancing Opportunities for Small, Women- and Minority-owned Businesses, Office of the Governor, Commonwealth of Virginia, 2006

⁴⁰ McAuliffe, Terence, Executive Order 20 (2014): Advancing Equity for Small, Women and Minority Owned Businesses, Office of the Governor, Commonwealth of Virginia, 2014

Northam reaffirmed the 42 percent SWaM contract and procurement goal during his administration with Executive Order 35 on July 3rd, 2019.⁴¹ This goal is still in place (with an additional 50 percent goal for construction).

In early 2021, The Department of Small Business Supplier Diversity received a disparity study that was commissioned to assess the effectiveness of the SWaM Program in encouraging the participation of minority- and women-owned businesses in state contracts and procurement. The *2020 Commonwealth of Virginia Disparity Study* conducted an analysis of case law, regulations and quantitative analyses of outcomes in state procurement for 117 agencies and departments, as well as 16 Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) for small, minority-owned and women-owned businesses to assess:

- The percentage of contract and procurement dollars that small, minority-owned, and women-owned businesses might be expected to receive based on their availability to perform specific types and sizes of Commonwealth and HEI prime contracts and subcontracts (i.e., *availability*).
- The percentage of contract and procurement dollars—including subcontract dollars—that Commonwealth agencies and HEIs awarded to minority and women-owned businesses during the study period, which was defined as July 1, 2014 through June 30, 2019 (i.e., *utilization*); and

It is important to note that this study did not include small businesses that were not minority or women-owned. Based on the findings presented in the report, the overall availability of minority- and women-owned businesses in the Commonwealth is 32.8 percent. This indicates that minority-owned and women-owned businesses can be expected to receive 32.8 percent of contract and procurement dollars that the Commonwealth awards yearly.

Figure 15.

Overall availability estimates by racial/ethnic and gender group for Commonwealth work

Business group	Availability %
Non-Hispanic white woman-owned	10.9 %
Asian American-owned	6.6
Black American-owned	7.1
Hispanic American-owned	5.3
Native American-owned	2.9
<hr/>	<hr/>
Total Minority-owned	21.9 %
Total Minority- and Woman-owned	32.8 %

Source: BBC Research and Consulting, 2020 Disparity Study Commonwealth of Virginia, January 2021

Additionally, Tier II and Tier III HEIs have various levels of autonomy in their contracting and procurement and are governed by biennial (every two years) memorandum of understanding with the Commonwealth. Tier II HEIs have some autonomy, whereas Tier III HEIs have complete autonomy of their contracting and procurement. According to the report, both Tier II and Tier III HEIs have even lower levels of minority-owned and women-owned awards

⁴¹ Northam, Ralph, *Executive Order 35 (2019): Advancing Equity for Small-, Women-, Minority-, and Service Disabled Veteran-owned Businesses in State Contracting*, Office of the Governor, Commonwealth of Virginia, 2019
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than other state agencies and departments, at 30.5 percent and 29.4 percent respectively.

Figure 16.

Overall availability estimates by racial/ethnic and gender group for Tier II and Tier III HEIs

Business group	HEI tier	
	Tier II	Tier III
Non-Hispanic white woman-owned	11.1 %	11.5 %
Asian American-owned	7.0	6.4
Black American-owned	5.3	7.6
Hispanic American-owned	6.0	3.2
Native American-owned	1.1	0.6
Total Minority-owned	19.4 %	17.9 %
Total Minority- and Woman-owned	30.5 %	29.4 %

Source: BBC Research and Consulting, 2020 Disparity Study Commonwealth of Virginia, January 2021

The report then analyzed the utilization of minority-owned and women-owned businesses on relevant construction, professional services and purchases of goods and services reported under prime and subcontracts awarded by the state.⁴² The results reported in the analysis are not encouraging for minority-owned and women-owned businesses in the Commonwealth. Utilization rates are far lower than the current 42 percent goal. The following charts illustrate the utilization of minority and women owned businesses within state procurement and our Tier II and Tier III HEIs. We were unable to verify the current state SWaM procurement levels; however, with the results shown from the disparity report it is apparent that these should be considered opportunities lost.

Figure 17.

Utilization results for Commonwealth contracts and procurements

Business group	Utilization %
Non-Hispanic white woman-owned	5.5 %
Asian American-owned	1.1
Black American-owned	3.4
Hispanic American-owned	3.3
Native American-owned	0.1
Total Minority-owned	8.0 %
Total Minority- and Woman-owned	13.4 %

⁴² Prime contracts are those that have been chosen or awarded state procurement dollars for all categories of procurement. Subcontractors are businesses that have subcontracted to prime contract winners.

Figure 18.

Utilization results for Tier II and Tier III HEIs

Business group	HEI tier	
	Tier II	Tier III
Non-Hispanic white woman-owned	7.4 %	6.1 %
Asian American-owned	2.5	0.3
Black American-owned	0.3	1.2
Hispanic American-owned	0.6	0.2
Native American-owned	0.3	0.1
Total Minority-owned	3.7 %	1.9 %
Total Minority- and Woman-owned	11.1 %	8.0 %

Source: BBC Research and Consulting, 2020 Disparity Study Commonwealth of Virginia, January 2021

It should be noted that more minority-owned and women-owned businesses were engaged in the procurement and contracts as subcontractors instead of prime contracts. The chart represents a utility analysis by contract role, prime or subcontractor.

Figure 19.

Utilization analysis results by contract role

Business group	Contract role	
	Prime contracts	Subcontracts
Non-Hispanic white woman-owned	5.4 %	10.1 %
Asian American-owned	1.1	4.4
Black American-owned	3.5	0.4
Hispanic American-owned	3.2	6.0
Native American-owned	0.1	0.0
Total Minority-owned	7.9 %	10.8 %
Total Minority- and Woman-owned	13.3 %	20.9 %

Source: BBC Research and Consulting, 2020 Disparity Study Commonwealth of Virginia, January 2021

From this data, we also can consider how subcontractors are included in bidding or competition for procurement and contracts. The Virginia Public Procurement Act (VPPA) and the Agency Procurement and Surplus Property 2021-2022 Office of New Americans Advisory Board Report - October 2022

Manual (APSPM) provide guidance on state procurement processes and procedures for all state agencies, departments and entities. Under these guidelines, and under the purview of the Department of General Services, state procurement does give priority to SWaM businesses in all categories of procurement. These include microbusiness set asides and required subcontractor plans.

It is important to consider the two parts noted in the disparity study, *availability* and *utilization*, separately for the purposes of this report. This is necessary as the availability of SWaM certified businesses falls under the purview of the Department of Small Business and Supplier Diversity. The utilization of SWaM certified business falls under the purview of the Department of General Services (DGS), Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and the Virginia Information Technologies Agency (VITA) which have procurement policy autonomy for enforcement.

Availability: The report notes that the minority and women owned SWaM availability of 32.8 percent was based on the collection of vendor data from businesses that participated in relevant Commonwealth and HEI prime contracts and subcontracts during the study period. The 5 year study period from July 1, 2014 to June 30, 2019 encompassed a universe of 18,345 and attempted to contact 15,025 businesses. According to the study, the potential availability of minority-owned and women-owned businesses that could have been available for contracts came in at almost 39 percent.

Figure 20.

Percentage of businesses in the availability database that were minority- or woman-owned

Business group	%
Non-Hispanic white woman-owned	15.0 %
Asian American-owned	7.7
Black American-owned	9.4
Hispanic American-owned	5.6
Native American-owned	1.0
Total Minority-owned	23.8 %
Total Minority- and Woman-owned	38.8 %

Source: BBC Research and Consulting, 2020 Disparity Study Commonwealth of Virginia, January 2021

This is a significant difference between the 13.4 percent noted in **Figure 17** compared to the availability of roughly 39 percent within the state, noted above. This indicates that there is further opportunity to engage minority and women owned SWaM businesses in the Commonwealth’s procurement processes.

Both the report and website for the DSBSD indicate there are measures in place for outreach and information sharing about SWaM certification.⁴³ These include the website itself, events, the outreach and development staff, and connectivity to partners such as business associations, chambers of commerce and so forth.

⁴³ report and Virginia Department of Small Business and Supplier Diversity
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In discussions with various business interests within the New American communities, several factors may contribute to the lack of interest in SWaM certification.

Lack of awareness of program and benefit. It should be noted that a significant number of New American business owners do not have any knowledge of the SWaM program, or do not feel that certification would benefit their businesses. In many cases, they are not aware simply because they are not affiliated with chambers of commerce or business associations that are outreach partners with the DSBSD. For those who do not feel that SWaM certification will benefit their businesses, these generally fall into two categories: 1) those who have or know of businesses that were SWaM certified but did not receive any procurement contracts or business; and 2) those who engage in businesses that they do not feel the State would need.

Difficulty with Application Process. Additionally, there are some business owners who began the process, but did not complete the certification process for various reasons. These included language barriers; not having the documentation required; or felt that the process was difficult to navigate.

Lack of Success. Some business owners have been SWaM certified, but did not renew once the 3 year recertification became necessary. This is attributed to lack of successful procurement contracts, or perceived value to their business.

In reviewing current outreach, it is highly recommended to connect with additional community-based business partners to survey potential, current and past certified business owners to understand where they access information and what barriers they may experience in seeking SWaM certification and business support. Seeking out additional contact points to augment contact with these businesses may be warranted. With the network in place under the Director of Outreach, there should be better access to the various business communities where those regional representatives are placed. The Office of New Americans has developed a living database and would be an ideal partner for this outreach.

The certification process needs to be efficient, as straightforward as possible, and free from linguistic or cultural barriers. It is also advisable that the DSBSD update the Expenditure Dashboard⁴⁴ with current SWaM procurement goal levels as well as the estimated time for SWaM certification processing. To further assess the efficiency of the certification process, the leadership of the DSBSD should have expected measurables in place for the certification process to ensure timely processing of applications.

Utilization: We are not certain of the current overall SWaM utilization rate as it was not noted in the report, nor is this information available on the DSBSD dashboard. However, if we are to base the assertion that the Commonwealth is underutilizing minority-owned and women-owned businesses in SWaM procurement, we need to address these disparities.

Again, the Virginia Public Procurement Act (VPPA) and the Agency Procurement and Surplus Property Manual (APSPM) provide guidance on state procurement processes and procedures for all state agencies, departments and entities. The VPPA also provides specific exemptions for various agencies and departments in §2.2-4343 -§2.2-4346 with regards to use of SWaM suppliers. These exemptions may allow flexibility, quality control, training and workforce opportunities, federal supplier qualification compliance in state procurement for these agencies, departments and purchasing entities. However, this does preclude SWaM businesses from the opportunities inherent to state procurement.

As noted earlier, the VPPA does provide exemptions for Tier II and Tier III HEIs. This does have an impact on Tier II and Tier III HEIs performance with regard to SWaM procurement. This autonomy may be of necessity. However if

⁴⁴ Virginia Department of Small Business and Supplier Diversity Expenditure Dashboard
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the Commonwealth prioritizes the development and critical importance of SWaM businesses, then there may be additional opportunities for procurement with Tier II and Tier III HEIs.

With Tier II and Tier III HEI's, there are specific Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) that are made between the Secretary of the Administration's Office and the respective HEI's. This occurs every two years. In these MOU's, the HEIs procurement plans are outlined along with other administrative agreements between the state and the respective HEI. When these MOU's are drafted and agreed upon, there is an opportunity for the State to be intentional and prioritize SWaM businesses by asking Tier II and Tier III HEIs to include more robust SWaM procurement plans into their overall procurement plans.

Likewise, with state agencies, there is an opportunity to be more intentional about the opportunities for SWaM businesses. One of the provisions of Governor Northam's Executive Order 35 (which is still in place) is that:

“Each Executive Branch Agency shall submit annual agency SWaM plans to DSBSD on September 1, to include promotion and utilization of small, any subcategory of small, small women-owned, small minority-owned small service disabled veteran-owned and employment service organizations. Executive Branch Agencies shall review and update their goals, policies, and procedures to conform with this Executive Order and the implementing regulations adopted pursuant to § 2.2-1605(A)(6) of the Code of Virginia and thereby ensure that a greater percentage of purchases is made from certified small businesses in goods, services, and construction categories from which the Commonwealth makes its purchases.”

This presents an opportunity to review submitted agency SWaM plans to ensure they include robust and intentional measures to meet or exceed the 42% SWaM procurement guidelines. The DSBSD and the Department of General Services (DGS) should work collaboratively to provide feedback to agency heads after review of the agency SWaM plans. The agency's progress towards these goals should also be available to the public on the DSBSD dashboard.

Avoid Settling for Mediocrity and Shrinking into “Growth”. In the 2020 Disparity Study Commonwealth of Virginia report, a recommendation is made under Chapter 9 - Program Considerations that pertains to the statewide SWaM procurement goal of 42 percent as noted in Executive Order 35.

“The availability analysis provides information that the Commonwealth can use for establishing a base figure for its overall aspirational goal. The analysis indicates that minority- and women-owned businesses are potentially available to participate in 32.8 percent of the Commonwealth's contracting and procurement dollars. The Commonwealth could consider 32.8 percent as its base figure for its overall aspirational goal.”

The report cites factors contributing to this recommendation, including historical levels of SWaM participation of minority-owned and women-owned businesses, market place considerations, access to funding, insurance and other resources, and other factors. The ONAAB absolutely believes that a downward adjustment from the current SWaM procurement goal of 42 percent to a lower percentage, based on those reasons, will be detrimental to the small business and entrepreneurial base of the Commonwealth. The study cites that these limiting factors are reasons for a downwards adjustment of the goal, as if these factors cannot be changed or improved through the performance of the agencies involved or additional support to provide access, funding and other support. The Commonwealth cannot grow its small business sector by shrinking its goals and expectations.

The Small Business Support recommendations our committee puts forth that have been adopted by the full Board are:

- 1. Through Budgetary and Legislative Action, provide funding to support for and require the Department of Small Business and Supplier Diversity to assess its outreach methods and goals and develop targeted outreach, programs and processes to build small business capacity and assist businesses in obtaining appropriate certifications.**
- 2. Through Executive action, require the Secretary of Administration to review all Memorandum of Understandings with Tier II and Tier III Higher Education Institutions to further prioritize and make intentional the engagement and utilization of Small, Women and Minority Owned Business Program (SWaM) businesses.**
- 3. Through Legislative and Budgetary action, require the Department of Small Business Supplier Diversity and the Department of General Services to review the annual agency SWaM plans and provide feedback to agency leadership to ensure prioritization and intentional utilization of SWaM businesses. Additionally, procurement progress for the State and agencies, toward the SWaM goal will be made public on the DSBSD SWaM dashboard.**

INTER/INTRA GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

Everyone in the Commonwealth is impacted by federal, state and local policies and rules. Services and resources are provided based on funding from these multi-level decision makers; eligibility is determined by criteria specified by these entities; and delivery is made through the outlets and offices associated at the various levels. Overall, this has been an effective system to serve the populations' needs. However, for the aspiring and New American communities many of the services and resources are more complex and change frequently based on modifications to guidance and policy. This Committee explores the interconnectivity of governmental policy and changes to those policies that will impact the aspiring and New American communities in the Commonwealth.

The recommendations our committee put forth that have been adopted by the full Board are:

- 1. Through Executive Order, imbue and support the Office of New Americans with the oversight responsibilities and budgetary resources to assess, partner and develop linguistically and culturally competent programs and initiatives with agencies that provide direct services and resources to New American communities. Additionally, the Executive Branch should make it an Administration imperative to engage in intentional and positive immigrant integration throughout all agencies.**
- 2. Restore at least \$10 million in funding in state financial aid for undocumented students.**

Immigration Integration Collaboration Between Virginia State Government Agencies

In response to the increased focus on integration of Afghan evacuees in Virginia, then-Governor Northam announced the creation of the Executive Leadership Team for Immigration Integration (ELTII). Per the announcement of this initiative on September 7, 2021, the team would "work across agencies to ensure that Virginia's refugee resettlement and immigrant integration systems are strong enough to provide for the arrival of SIV families and other evacuees resettling in Virginia, and help these immigrants integrate meaningfully into their new communities."

The ONAAB was very pleased with the development of this executive level interagency effort to address the issues that our Board had identified in our work. While we had originally hoped that the Board would be invited to participate in these higher-level discussions, the ELT was unfortunately disbanded as a result of Administration transitions in the Office of the Governor. The ELTII has not been re-created

The ELTII is critical to address the complexities in access to services as well as other challenges to full integration of aspiring and New Americans into the Commonwealth.

Intentional Immigrant Integration through the Office of New Americans

The United States has a history that is built upon the contributions of immigrants. Since the first colonies were established, newcomers have continued to come to America and Virginia. Today, Virginia has the 10th largest foreign born population in the United States at 1,070,003 Virginians (US Census 2021 American Community Survey 1-yr).

These New Americans come from South America, Asia, Europe, Africa and Australia. They come as investors, refugees, workers, students, asylees and entrepreneurs. Some come speaking only their own languages, others come fluent in more than a few. Some New Americans come fleeing war and conflict, others come at the call of our most prominent companies and universities.

The experiences and paths of our New Americans are varied and likewise, their futures in the Commonwealth are different. For those who come as refugees, their needs will be greater. Assistance will be necessary to help them get back on their feet in a place that is unfamiliar and daunting. Others may be fortunate to come here, farther

along with skills or education that can be immediately leveraged in their new home and country. The reality is that all newcomers to the Commonwealth and this nation, will have different challenges and experiences along this full spectrum of immigrant integration.

This is why it is critical for the Commonwealth to have a more intentional plan to identify opportunities to leverage the New American populations and at the same time identify the investments that are necessary to prepare a 21st century workforce that will be able to compete in a global economy.

The recently released *Barriers to Integration of Virginia's Immigrants* report completed by the VCU L. Douglas Wilder School of Government and Public Affairs, led by Dr. Saltanat Liebert and Dr. Grant Rissler, outlined several recommendations that involve a wide range of government focus to fully engage and utilize our New American populations. The findings in the report outline needs including centralized information resources, needs for service navigators, transportation and housing issues, workforce and licensing issues and educational barriers. These issues are multifaceted and fall within several agencies and departments within the state government.

The report also notes that Virginia does have some infrastructure to address immigrant integration in the Office of New Americans (ONA), the Office of New Americans Advisory Board (ONAAB) and various agencies including the Department of Education. What should also be noted is that the Office of Diversity, Opportunity, and Inclusion (formerly the Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion) also directly supported the ONA and ONAAB in its work.

This was directly noted in the report provided by the Governor Ralph Northam's Executive Leadership Team on Immigrant Integration (ELTII) that was co-chaired by former Chief Diversity Officer Dr. Janice Underwood and former Commissioner of the Department of Social Services Duke Storen. This report was released in November of 2021 as a result of the crisis created by the United States withdrawal from Afghanistan and the ensuing influx of Afghan evacuees and refugees. The crisis may have created the necessity for the ELTII and the ensuing report, however the experience of repatriating tens of thousands of US citizens and status holders revealed the complex and expansive issues that impact all aspiring and New Americans.

The report noted that in order to develop a sustainable framework to implement sound measures to meaningfully integrate New Americans in Virginia, there needs to be a statewide strategy that creates an interagency map that guides strategic, intentional and embedded initiatives across state agencies.

These initiatives should be rooted in the understanding that New Americans, once economically integrated into the Commonwealth, are incredibly important drivers in the workforce and the economy. The initiatives also must recognize that engagement with these Virginians will involve development of more language access and cultural competency resources and tools across the whole of government effort to better integrate these immigrants. The ONA was created for just this purpose. Even though the ONA rests in the Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) it's mandate per code §63.2-209.1 specifies that it shall:

- Implement a statewide strategy to promote the economic, linguistic, and civic integration of New Americans in the Commonwealth.
- Work with localities to coordinate and support local efforts that align with the statewide strategy to promote the economic, linguistic, and civic integration of New Americans in the Commonwealth;
- Provide advice and assistance to New Americans regarding (i) the citizenship application process and (ii) securing employment, housing, and services for which such persons may be eligible;
- Provide advice and assistance to state agencies regarding (i) the coordination of relevant policies across state agencies responsible for education, workforce, and training programs, including professional licensure guidance, small business development, worker protection, refugee resettlement, citizenship and voter education or engagement programs, housing programs, and other related programs, and (ii) the dissemination of information to localities and immigration service organizations regarding state programs

- that help New Americans find and secure employment, housing, and services for which they may be eligible;
- Educate localities and immigration service organizations on health epidemics and unlawful predatory actions, such as human trafficking, gang recruitment, and fraudulent financial and other schemes, to which communities of such persons may be especially vulnerable;
- Serve as the primary liaison with external stakeholders, particularly immigrant-serving and refugee-serving organizations and businesses, on immigrant integration priorities and policies;
- Partner with state agencies and immigrant-serving and refugee-serving organizations and businesses to identify and disseminate beneficial immigrant integration policies and practices throughout the Commonwealth;
- Manage competitive grant programs that replicate beneficial practices or test new innovations that improve the effectiveness and efficacy of immigrant integration strategies; and
- Advise the Governor, cabinet members, and the General Assembly on strategies to improve state programs to support the economic, linguistic, and civic integration of New Americans throughout the Commonwealth.

By this definition and specificity in the Code of Virginia, the ONA must engage and lead the immigrant integration efforts in the Commonwealth.

Other offices of New Americans across the country have similar mandates. Two of the most notable ONA's that have successful immigrant integration programs exist in New York⁴⁵ and Michigan⁴⁶. These offices were created in 2012 and 2014 respectively and have developed robust services in economic advancement and opportunity, workforce development and licensing, health and mental health care access, education and more. These ONA's also oversee their state's immigrant integration efforts and partner with the agencies that provide these services and resources.

Per Bing Goei, the first Director of the Michigan Office of New Americans, now Global Michigan, "The purpose of the creation of ONA Michigan was to focus on talent acquisition and talent retention for Michigan. To do that, ONA had to own a part of the work that each agency undertook to fulfill this mission." This interagency framework which places the ONA at the critical nexus of immigrant focused initiatives provides consistency, language and cultural competency focus, centralized access and communications. Virginia should learn from the success of these offices and create a similar framework in the Commonwealth.

The Office of New Americans Advisory Board recommends that the Governor's Office, through Executive Order, imbue and support the Office of New Americans with the oversight responsibilities and budgetary resources to assess, partner and develop linguistically and culturally competent programs and initiatives with agencies that provide direct services and resources to New American communities. Additionally, the Executive Branch should make it an Administration imperative to engage in intentional and positive immigrant integration throughout all agencies.

State Financial Aid for All Virginia Students

State financial aid for higher education is a critical determinant of a young person's decision to attend university, no matter what their background is. This is no less true for undocumented students, who are poised to be serious economic contributors in the Commonwealth.

⁴⁵ New York State Office of New Americans - New York Department of State

⁴⁶ Michigan Office of Global Michigan - Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Opportunity
2021-2022 Office of New Americans Advisory Board Report - October 2022

Who are Virginia’s Immigrant Students?

First and second-generation individuals comprise 28% of all students enrolled in higher education.⁴⁷ The U.S. is home to more than 427,000 undocumented students enrolled in higher education.⁴⁸ These undocumented students are a diverse population: 48.5% are Hispanic, 24.2% are Asian, and 12.5% are Black.⁴⁹ In their pursuit of higher education, undocumented students actively ready themselves to fill critical skill shortages and become better positioned to support their families, communities, and the U.S. economy.

Virginia’s share of undocumented and DACA-eligible students enrolled in higher education is quite small.

Undocumented and DACA-Eligible Students in Higher Education in Virginia, 2019

Undocumented Students in Postsecondary Education	Share of Undocumented Students in Postsecondary Education	DACA Eligible Students in Postsecondary Education	Share of DACA-Eligible Students in Postsecondary Education
12,387	2.0%	*	0.8%

* Indicates sample size is too small to report for the state

Data reported by New American Economy based on U.S. Census Bureau; American Community Survey, 2019 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimates.

Additionally, undocumented immigrants – including DACA-eligible residents – play a crucial role in the Commonwealth’s economy and development, contributing spending power and paying federal, state, and local taxes.

All Immigrant Residents in Virginia	1,089,294
Immigrant Share of Total Population	12.8%
Undocumented Immigrants in State	265,830
DACA-Eligible Residents in State	21,848
Spending Power of DACA-Eligible Residents	\$386.5 million
DACA-Eligible Residents Federal Tax Contributions	\$72.7 million
DACA-Eligible Residents State and Local Tax Contributions	\$46.7 million

Note: DACA-eligible residents are a sub-group of undocumented immigrant residents.

Source: Higher Ed Immigration Council, adopted from New American Economy⁵⁰

⁴⁷ President’s Alliance on Higher Education and Immigration, Immigrant-Origin Students in U.S. Higher Education 10/15/22

⁴⁸ New American Economy, Undocumented Students in Higher Education 3/2/21

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Higher Education Immigration Portal - Virginia

Barriers to Higher Education for Immigrant Students

As seen in the above graphs, only a fraction of Virginia’s DACA-eligible and undocumented students are enrolled in higher education. While this fraction may be due in part to the median age of Virginia’s undocumented population, we expect that another key factor is the set of barriers students in Virginia face in access higher education. Students in Virginia received their free K-12 education from our local schools. But after they graduate from 12th grade, many of them – especially undocumented immigrants – do not continue onward to higher education. This is due to a variety of socioeconomic factors.⁵¹ For many of these immigrant children, pursuing a professional career is extremely difficult due to barriers posed by their immigration status, financial hardship, and lack of financial aid eligibility.

Undocumented students may not receive any in-state tuition to pursue higher education, which was the case in Virginia until 2021. Undocumented students face barriers even in states that provide in-state tuition access to higher education for undocumented students. Critically, across the country undocumented students are ineligible for federal financial aid. Without access to federal or state financial aid, even undocumented students in states with access to in-state tuition face serious funding challenges. In Virginia, which as of 2022 has no access to state aid (for reasons described below), the funding challenges are likely to be insurmountable for some students even at schools at which they are allowed to enroll.⁵²

In-State Tuition Access in Virginia

Since July 1, 2020, Virginia allows certain undocumented students living in Virginia to access in-state tuition. Undocumented students must meet certain requirements to qualify for in-state tuition, including:

1. *Attended high school for at least two years in the Commonwealth and either,*
 - a. *Graduated on or after July 1, 2008, from a public or private high school or program of home instruction in the Commonwealth, or*
 - b. *Passed a high school equivalency examination approved by the Secretary of Education;*
2. *Submitted evidence that they, in the case of a dependent student, or at least one parent, guardian, or person standing in loco parentis has filed, unless exempted by state law, Virginia income tax returns free at least two years prior to the date of registration or enrollment; and,*
3. *Register as an entering student in a public institution of higher education in the Commonwealth.*

Also as of 2020, Virginia provides certain individuals admitted to the United States as refugees or who have a Special Immigrant Visa (SIV) with access to in-state tuition.⁵³

However, tuition is only one part of accessibility to higher education. Students must also have access to financial aid.

⁵¹ Perez, Maria, Immigrant Students Face Barriers to Attend College, *Naples Daily News*, 8/8/2016

⁵² Halloran, Sybil C., Fear, Funding and Ambiguity: The Policy Dilemmas of Undocumented Students in Virginia Institutions of Higher Education, Virginia Commonwealth University Scholars Compass, 2015

⁵³ Higher Education Immigration Portal - Virginia

Financial Aid Access: Virginia's Recent Reversal

Virginia's state legislature passed Senate Bill (S.B.) 1387 in February 2021 to expand access to state financial aid to undocumented students.⁵⁴ The legislation allowed the state's undocumented students to be eligible for state financial aid, school-issued aid, and Tuition Assistance Grants (TAG) if they meet certain requirements.⁵⁵ The bill was signed into law on March 12, 2021.

In 2022, state lawmakers elected to redirect 10 million dollars in state funding from undocumented students in the state.⁵⁶ Our Board strongly disagrees with that decision. The 2022 removal of this aid specifically allocated for the state's undocumented students contracts opportunity where it should be expanded. Every young adult who aspires to higher education should be able to attend without serious financial barriers. This is no less true for undocumented students in Virginia. State funding should be reallocated to undocumented students' financial aid in order to maximize these students impact personally and professionally.

Policy Recommendation and Its Impact

All Virginia residents benefit from the tax payments and productivity gains by the Commonwealth's immigrant families, the majority of whom are Hispanic, Asian, and/or Black. Reallocating state funding for undocumented students' financial aid invests in Virginia's future by investing in its workforce's education today. We are in competition with other states to keep our young people here in Virginia, where they can live, work, and thrive.

The Office of New Americans Advisory Board recommends the following that Virginia lawmakers restore at least \$10 million in funding in state financial aid for undocumented students.

⁵⁴ Boysko, Jennifer, SB 1387 Students; eligibility for in-state tuition. Virginia Legislative Information System, 2021

⁵⁵ Kolenich, Eric, General Assembly Votes to give Undocumented students access to financial aid, Daily Progress, 2/18/2021

⁵⁶ Moomaw, Grant and Kate Masters and Sarah Vogelsong, General Assembly hands Youngkin wins, losses on budget amendments Virginia Mercury, 6/17/2022

ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE ACCESS RECOMMENDATIONS

In the last year, we have seen Virginia more fully emerge from the pandemic. With the incoming administration, we have also seen the opportunity to better engage the New American population in the Commonwealth to address labor and economic opportunities. As new corporate investments and business activity in the Commonwealth grows, the opportunities to leverage the growing New American population are plentiful.

Additionally, global events continue to remind us that Virginia is an international destination, refuge and place for new beginnings. Not only has the Commonwealth provided refuge and succor for Afghan and Ukrainian refugees, but it has also attracted worldwide talent to its schools and leading companies.

Our Language Access Recommendations include the following:

- 1. Empower the Office of Diversity, Opportunity, and Inclusion to create and provide oversight of a Statewide Language Access Plan, in partnership with the Office of New Americans and the Office of New Americans Advisory Board, that would provide guidance and expectations for agency and department language access plans throughout the government of Virginia. The State Language Access Plan would also include procurement policies and review of Code for provisions that would limit or restrain the implementation of a State Language Access Plan. This would then be accompanied by legislative action for compliance provisions.**
- 2. Provide adequate funding to fully staff the Office of Diversity, Opportunity and Inclusion to oversee the compliance of agencies and departments within the State Language Access Plan. The ODOI would also be tasked with the periodic review of the State Language Access Plan for compliance with federal guidelines and current best practices.**

The Need for a Statewide Language Access Plan

In our report from 2021, we noted that there are roughly 1 million foreign born individuals in the Commonwealth and along with this diverse population, linguistic and cultural barriers impact practically every aspect of the New American experience. To best leverage this talent, we need to invest in the development of this talent.

In the 2004 Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission of the Virginia General Assembly (JLARC) report *Acclimation of Virginia Foreign Born Populations*, it was noted that

“Under Title VI of the federal Civil Rights Act of 1964, agencies in receipt of any amount of federal funding are required to ensure that persons with a limited command of English are not denied meaningful access to benefits and services as a result of their English abilities.”

This is true, however if we consider the value of New Americans as our workforce, innovators, international and cultural advisors, entrepreneurs and economic drivers, it makes sense to look at addressing issues such as language access and cultural competencies as investments into these valuable assets. We need to understand that the engagement with these individuals are not a few years, but rather for generations as they grow, mature and become significant producers and assets to the Commonwealth. This development of a continuum of integration for Virginia’s workforce so they feel welcomed and flourish.

The previously mentioned 2004 JLARC report, along with the recommendations made in the VCU Study on Ensuring Language Access Equity in Virginia Government Services report from 2021, acknowledged that the Commonwealth does not have a comprehensive or coordinated state language access plan. Recommendations made in 2004 are still true today, and have not been implemented.

State Language Access Plan: Without a state language access plan, agencies and departments have developed individual plans of varying consistency and effectiveness. In the VCU Study, eight state agencies/departments had existing language plans; 4 had plans in progress and 6 had elements of language access plans. These are shown here.

Agencies with Existing Plans (8)	Agencies with Plans in Progress (4)	Agencies with Plan Elements (6)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Circuit Courts • Court of Appeals • Department of Medical Assistance Services • Department of Motor Vehicles • Judicial Inquiry and Review Commission • Supreme Court of Virginia • Virginia Department of Health • Virginia Department of Transportation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department of Corrections • Department of Professional and Occupational Regulation • Office of the Children's Ombudsman 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired • Department for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing • Department of Education • Department of Elections • Department of Labor and Industry • Virginia Employment Commission

Source: Wilder School of Government and Public Affairs, Virginia Commonwealth University, “Ensuring Language Access Equity in Virginia, 12-3-21

This is of high concern as there are more than 100 state agencies/departments within the government of Virginia. A significant number of outward facing agencies, who work with the general public and New American communities, do not have plans or even elements of a language access plan.

Even with the agencies that had existing plans, resources and efforts were inconsistent. Some agencies have documents translated into key languages, while others do not. Some agencies depend on telephonic language line resources for translation services while others employ bilingual staff. Some agencies look internally to develop their plans while others have contracted out to consulting firms.

Staff from these agencies do demonstrate a desire to address language and cultural competency issues. The Office of New Americans and Department of Social Services hosted a multi-stakeholder virtual roundtable on July 8, 2022. This event was titled “Developing a Framework for Language Access and Workforce Development Programs in Virginia” and included stakeholders from state and local agencies, resettlement agencies, health care organizations and other community-based organizations. The post event survey showed that:

- 73% of survey respondents agreed that Language Access was very important to their operations.
- 60% of survey respondents agreed that Workforce Development was important.
- 80% of survey respondents indicated that they would like to incorporate more language access resources into their work.

The Office of New American Advisory Board recommends that the Virginia Governor empower the Office of Diversity, Opportunity and Inclusion to create and provide oversight of a Statewide Language Access Plan, in partnership with the Office of New Americans and the Office of New Americans Advisory Board, that would provide guidance and expectations for agency and department language access plans throughout the government of Virginia. The State Language Access Plan would also include procurement policies and review of Code for provisions that would limit or restrain the implementation of a State Language Access Plan. This would then be accompanied by legislative action for compliance provisions.

Oversight of State Language Access Plan

In both the JLARC study and the VCU study, there was a strong acknowledgement that a cabinet level oversight body be empowered to guidance and assistance to state and local agencies as well as limited English proficiency constituents to address language accessibility issues. This is incredibly important to provide consistency and overall quality of language access and cultural competency initiatives.

In the VCU study, it was recommended that this responsibility fall under the Governor's Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, which has since been reauthorized as the Governor's Office of Diversity, Opportunity and Inclusion (ODOI). The ONAAB highly supports this proposed oversight structure as it places the responsibility of such oversight directly under the Governor's Executive team and provides appropriate importance to the issues within this arena.

However, the ODOI is currently understaffed as it counts only one staff member, Special Assistant Michael Perez outside of the Chief Diversity Officer Dr. Rosa Atkins. The office is charged with the role of promoting ideas, policies and economic opportunities for all Virginians. To add these additional responsibilities to oversee the State Language Access plan would require additional staffing to help create, support and enforce the provisions of the plan.

The ONAAB would embrace the opportunity to assist in the development and review of a State Language Access plan. As individuals who work closely with communities often confronted with language access and cultural barriers to public resources and services, we are uniquely qualified to provide input into a comprehensive and consistent plan for the Commonwealth.

The Office of New American Advisory Board recommends that adequate funding be provided to fully staff the Office of Diversity, Opportunity and Inclusion to oversee the compliance of agencies and departments within the State Language Access Plan. The ODOI would also be tasked with the periodic review of the State Language Access Plan for compliance with federal guidelines and current best practices.

OFFICE OF NEW AMERICANS ADVISORY BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS

Support the Afghan Adjustment Act and expansion of immigration legal aid services in Virginia. [Administrative] As our Board demonstrated in pages 21-24 of this report, Virginia had a significant Afghan population before the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan and is one of the top three destinations for Afghan refugees in the country post-withdrawal with more than 7,000 refugees, asylees and parolees. Of particular concern is that parolees, whose status and benefits will run out in 2023, will have few options for status once their humanitarian parole expires. Without a path to legal permanent resident status, they will be forced to apply for either temporary protected status (TPS) or asylum, thus burdening our already overtaxed immigration and legal system. These options are also lengthy, complicated and not guaranteed. If these parolees are not able to access a pathway to permanent residency through adjustment, potential outcomes could be deportation or an existence here as undocumented individuals. We urge Governor Youngkin to actively support Afghan Adjustment by expressing that support to the Biden Administration and our congressional delegations. We also urge Governor Youngkin to support Afghan parolees with immigration legal aid services to reduce burdens on our legal and immigration systems.

Amend the Code to allow for more meetings per year. [Legislative] Current code limits meetings of the Board to four per year. Allowing for more meetings will assist with more collaborative and focused engagement of the Board and Committees. This would also make the operational limitations of the Board consistent with the Code that governs the other advisory boards. Virginia Asian Advisory Board §2.2-2449, Virginia African American Advisory Board §2.2-2492, Virginia Council on Women §2.2-2630, Virginia Latino Advisory Board §2.2-2459, and Virginia LGBTQ+ Advisory Board §2.2-2499.1

Amend the Code to raise the number of appointed non legislative citizen Board members to twenty-one. [Legislative] This would be consistent with the other advisory boards which have 21 appointed citizen board members. This would also allow for more subject matter expertise and engagement in our committee work. Virginia Asian Advisory Board §2.2-2449, Virginia African American Advisory Board §2.2-2492, Virginia Council on Women §2.2-2630, Virginia Latino Advisory Board §2.2-2459, and Virginia LGBTQ+ Advisory Board §2.2-2499.1

Amend the Code to include additional ex-officio members to the Board. [Legislative] The current ex-officio members include the Director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, and the Chairs of the Virginia Asian Advisory Board (VAAB), Virginia African American Advisory Board (VAAF), Virginia Council on Women (VCW) and Virginia Latino Advisory Board (VLAB). These are welcome additions to the Board. However, like the other advisory boards, the work of the Board involves a multitude of considerations in multiple agencies across multiple secretariats. The other advisory boards have representatives from relevant secretariats represented as ex-officio members. Virginia Asian Advisory Board §2.2-2449, Virginia African American Advisory Board §2.2-2492, Virginia Council on Women §2.2-2630, Virginia Latino Advisory Board §2.2-2459, and Virginia LGBTQ+ Advisory Board §2.2-2499.1

VAAB	VAAAB	VCW	VLAB	VLGBTQ+AB
Commerce & Trade	Commerce & Trade	Appointed by Governor	Commerce & Trade	Commerce & Trade
Commonwealth	Commonwealth		Commonwealth	Commonwealth
Education	Education		Education	Education
Health and Human Resources	Health and Human Resources		Health and Human Resources	Health and Human Resources
Public Safety and Homeland Security	Public Safety and Homeland Security		Public Safety and Homeland Security	Public Safety and Homeland Security
			Transportation	

As the responsibilities of the Board also involve work with agencies under specific secretariats, it is recommended that the code be amended to include ex-officio members representing:

- Commerce and Trade
- Education
- Health and Human Resources
- Labor
- Public Safety and Homeland Security
- Transportation
- Virginia LGBTQ+ Advisory Board

Amend the Code governing Freedom of Information Act to allow for electronic meetings for subcommittee work of advisory boards as defined by Code §2.2-2100. [Legislative] By definition, advisory boards, commissions and councils are non-policy making bodies, but may participate in the development of public policy by providing comment and advice. The Board understands that FOIA exists at the intersection of efficiency and transparency in government. We also believe in that accountability. However, as noted previously, the application of the in person standard has deleterious impacts on the operation of a body that exists to help advise on policy and not serve in any regulatory or rule-making capacity.

Very recent changes to FOIA guidelines now permit public bodies to have two or one-quarter of all their meetings of a specific public body, whichever is more, as long as they are not consecutive. Under these guidelines, our General Board, Executive Committee, as well as our three additional Subcommittees are all considered their own separate public bodies. Despite these changes, our Board maintains that all Subcommittee meetings should be able to take place electronically.

In 2013, [Senate Bill 1263 VA FOIA](#); meeting by electronic communication means by certain committees, etc. of State bodies was passed and introduced the following:

Virginia Freedom of Information Act; meeting by electronic communication means by certain committees, subcommittees, etc., of state public bodies; personal matters. Authorizes an advisory public body, defined as any state public body classified as advisory pursuant to § 2.2-2100 or any committee, subcommittee, or other entity,

however designated, of a state public body created to advise the state public body, to meet by electronic communication means without a quorum of the advisory public body being physically assembled at one location, provided, among other requirements, the meeting is conducted utilizing a combined audio and visual communication method. The bill requires any advisory public body holding this kind of electronic communication meeting to make an audiovisual recording of the meeting, which recording shall be preserved by the advisory public body for a period of three years from the date of the meeting. The bill also enhances the annual reporting requirements for any public body authorized to conduct electronic communication meetings and requires the FOIA Council to develop a form that an authorized public body must make available to the public at any such meeting for public comment. The above-described provisions of the bill by its terms will expire on July 1, 2014. Finally, the bill allows a member of any public body to participate in a meeting by electronic communication means due to personal matters under certain circumstances. Currently, such remote participation is allowed only for emergency, medical condition, or distance from the meeting location of more than 60 miles. The bill is a recommendation of the Virginia Freedom of Information Advisory Council.

This legislation passed both houses in 2013 and expired July 1, 2014. At the time of its sunset, no advisory bodies exercised the electronic meeting provisions due to the following:

- In 2013-2014, the use of online meeting platforms like Zoom, WebEx, Goto Meeting, Windows Teams and Google Meets were not readily available and technology requirements were unsurmountable without funding.
- Audio and visual recording mechanisms were not easily employed, and the preservation provisions were high bars to meet.
- Advisory boards had inconsistent access to resources and state staffing to assist with the management of the resources necessary to implement the opportunity.

The Board supports this recommendation for these reasons:

- During the Covid-19 State of Emergency, the business of the administration was conducted effectively and in compliance with FOIA for the duration of the State of Emergency.
- Online meeting platforms like Zoom, Goto Meeting, and Google Meets are now ubiquitous and employed with much success. Many of these services are free to access as attendees, and subscription costs are nominal for those hosting these online meetings.
- Employing electronic meeting resources makes the government MORE equitable and accessible while also preserving the FOIA requirement for recordkeeping and access.
- As an advisory body, the Board does not engage in any regulatory action or rule-making.

ONAAB RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE OFFICE OF NEW AMERICANS

Commission a new JLARC study to assess the integration of New Americans in the Commonwealth and update the findings from the 2004 report. [Legislative] The 2004 JLARC study “Acclimation of Virginia’s Foreign-Born Population” provided the first snapshot of the foreign-born population and their adjustment to life in Virginia. The immigrant populations have almost doubled since the initial report was released in 2004. Additionally, the countries of origin of these newcomers are much more diverse and have added more complexities to the conversations around language access and cultural appropriateness of services and resources. We also have more multigenerational considerations regarding the New American populations as more immigrants and refugees make their homes in the Commonwealth.

A new JLARC study is incredibly important to developing the full scope of the ONA and connectivity with other agencies in the Administration. Additionally, while we recognize and appreciate that the VCU Needs Assessment Survey fills in some important gaps in data about New Americans in the Commonwealth today, our Board also recognizes that JLARC studies are the gold-standard for Virginia policymaking.

Enhance the Office of New Americans budget to address expanded and unmet needs. [Administrative, Budgetary, Legislative] The 2021-2022 budget for the Office of New Americans is \$320,435 for the fiscal year. This includes two staff under the direction of Seyoum Berhe, the Director of the Office of New Americans, administrative costs and costs to support the work of the Office of New Americans Advisory Board.

Per the authorizing code outlined on page 8, the Office shall:

- 1. Implement a statewide strategy to promote the economic, linguistic, and civic integration of New Americans in the Commonwealth;*
- 2. Work with localities to coordinate and support local efforts that align with the statewide strategy to promote the economic, linguistic, and civic integration of New Americans in the Commonwealth;*
- 3. Provide advice and assistance to New Americans regarding (i) the citizenship application process and (ii) securing employment, housing, and services for which such persons may be eligible;*
- 4. Provide advice and assistance to state agencies regarding (i) the coordination of relevant policies across state agencies responsible for education, workforce, and training programs, including professional licensure guidance, small business development, worker protection, refugee resettlement, citizenship and voter education or engagement programs, housing programs, and other related programs, and (ii) the dissemination of information to localities and immigration service organizations regarding state programs that help New Americans find and secure employment, housing, and services for which they may be eligible;*
- 5. Educate localities and immigration service organizations on health epidemics and unlawful predatory actions, such as human trafficking, gang recruitment, and fraudulent financial and other schemes, to which communities of such persons may be especially vulnerable;*
- 6. Serve as the primary liaison with external stakeholders, particularly immigrant-serving and refugee serving organizations and businesses, on immigrant integration priorities and policies;*
- 7. Partner with state agencies and immigrant-serving and refugee-serving organizations and businesses to identify and disseminate beneficial immigrant integration policies and practices throughout the Commonwealth;*
- 8. Manage competitive grant programs that replicate beneficial practices or test new innovations that improve the effectiveness and efficacy of immigrant integration strategies; and*
- 9. Advise the Governor, cabinet members, and the General Assembly on strategies to improve state policies and programs to support the economic, linguistic, and civic integration of New Americans throughout the Commonwealth.*

As noted earlier in the report, there are more than one million foreign born individuals living in the Commonwealth, roughly thirteen percent of the entire population of the state. Based upon the priorities outlined in the code, the ONA needs to increase capacities and resources to address these mandates.

As the ONA continues developing its strategic plan, the most immediate needs to support the necessary work would be to increase support to address unmet needs. The Board recommends the following:

Increase budget to enhance staffing to address issues affecting immigrant issues (\$2 million). The Office of New Americans needs additional capacity and personnel to address critical issues for all New Americans. The expected outlays would allow hiring of 3 Full Time Employees to work specifically on the following issues impacting New Americans.

- Orientation in the United States as a foundation of integration
- Job readiness training and placement
- Health information
- Language Access
- Education
- Citizenship education

Increase budget to create five regional staff positions (\$500,000 salary and benefits) This increase in staff capacity would create positions in the following regions:

- Northern Region
- Central Region
- Hampton Road and Eastern Region
- Southern and Southwest Regions
- Valley Region

Each staff member would work closely with existing Department of Social Services offices and nonprofit agencies, resettlement agencies, educational institutions, localities and other community partners in facilitating collaboration and ensuring that New Americans' needs are addressed in a culturally and linguistically appropriate manner. Additionally, the staff would:

- Provide technical support that includes training for funded and other immigrant serving agencies or organizations.
- Serve as navigators for New Americans and New American serving organizations regarding state services, links and resources.
- Conduct annual monitoring of funded agencies to provide oversight of contracted services.
- Identify and report opportunities and challenges in each region to ONA and state leadership.
- Report on activities and achievements in each region to ONA and state leadership.

Increase budget of the Office of New Americans to support the work of the Office of New Americans Advisory Board per code. (\$63,000) In the 2021-2022 budget, the ONA's budget included \$30,000 for expenses in support of the work of the Board. This provision is noted in the final engrossed impact statement.²⁶

Assuming the Board meets the maximum number of times prescribed by the bill (four times annually), annual expenses for all 18 members and five ex officio members are estimated to be \$30,000, based on updated travel costs for similar boards. These expenses include mileage, lodging, meals, and incidentals. DSS employees will likely incur travel costs, as well, since the bill requires the agency to provide staff support to the Board. Annual DSS staff travel expenses are estimated at \$2,600 for the maximum four meetings a year. Actual travel costs will depend on the number of times the Board actually meets.

As the Board is requesting to change the meeting limitation and is expected to host six meetings per year, the budgeted costs for meetings and staff support should be increased 50% to \$45,000. It should also be noted that the staff travel expenses would also increase by roughly 50% to \$3,900.

In addition, the Board plans to host town halls and focus groups in the furtherance of its work. The costs to host town halls would be estimated to be \$4,500 per event to include facility rental, refreshments, recording costs, equipment rental, security and incidentals. Travel costs would not need to be considered as these town halls are expected to be hosted in concert with scheduled general board meetings. The expectation is to host four town halls per year therefore the budgeted request would be \$18,000 per year.

Therefore, the total budgetary enhancement for 2022-2023 would be \$2,563,000 in addition to the current budget for the Office of New Americans. Budget year 2023-2024 would include a similar budget enhancement and may include additional requested funding as further services and resources are developed.

OFFICE OF NEW AMERICANS ADVISORY BOARD RECOMMENDATION INDEX

We have included these recommendations broken out into the types of actions that are needed.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

Access to Services

Administrative

- Require all healthcare practitioners to receive at least 2 hours of continued Medical Education on the topics of unconscious bias and cultural humility every two years. (p. 29)
- Emphasize a diverse dental health workforce that reflects Virginia's population (p. 33)

Legislative

- Ensure that all Medicaid eligible Virginians have access to dental health services by
 - a. creating pathways and opportunities for more dental providers to be educated and offer services to Medicaid patients (p. 33)
 - b. Increase Medicaid reimbursement rates so that more Virginia dentists will accept Medicaid insured patients (p. 33)
 - c. Consider expanding access to preventative services by increasing eligibility threshold for children's Medicaid/CHIP health coverage AND expand coverage to all income eligible children regardless of immigration status. (p. 33)
- Expand Medicaid reimbursement to cover interpretation costs and provide incentives for healthcare facilities who provide interpretation services. (p. 33)

ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

Administrative

- (Small Business Support) Require the Secretary of Administration to review all Memorandum of Understandings with Tier II and Tier III Higher Education Institutions to further prioritize and make intentional the engagement and utilization of SWaM businesses. (p.46)

Budgetary

- (Workforce Development) Fund the Office of New Americans and the Department of Labor to study employment and educational history of New Americans to determine focus of career pathway programs, and New American capacity to fill employment gaps in the state. (p.39)
- (Workforce Development) Fund Office of New Americans, the Department of Labor, Virginia Economic Development Partnership, and the Department of Education to explore further opportunities to recruit international talent and retain them through statewide employment initiatives. (p.39)
- (Workforce Development) Provide funding to the Office of New Americans and Department of Labor to review licensing and certification criteria and develop, translate, and disseminate career pathway maps. (p.39)
- (Small Business Support) Provide funding to support for and require the Department of Small Business and Supplier Diversity to assess its outreach methods and goals and develop targeted outreach, programs and processes to build small business capacity and assist businesses in obtaining appropriate certifications.(p.46)

Budgetary and Legislative

- (Small Business Support) Require the Department of Small Business Supplier Diversity and the Department of General Services to review the annual agency SWaM plans and provide feedback to agency leadership to ensure prioritization and intentional utilization of SWaM businesses. Additionally, procurement progress for the State and agencies, toward the SWaM goal will be made public on the DSBSD SWaM dashboard. (p.46)

INTER/INTRA GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

Administrative

- Empower the Office of New Americans with oversight and financial resources to assess, partner and develop programs that address immigrant integration throughout all agencies. (p. 49)

Budgetary & Legislative

- Restore at least \$10 million in funding in state financial aid for undocumented students. (p. 52)

LANGUAGE ACCESS RECOMMENDATIONS

Administrative & Legislative

- Empower the Office of Diversity, Opportunity and Inclusion to create and provide oversight of a Statewide Language Access Plan, in partnership with the Office of New Americans and the Office of New Americans Advisory Board, that would provide guidance and expectations for agency and department language access plans throughout the government of Virginia. The State Language Access Plan would also include procurement policies and review of Code for provisions that would limit or restrain the implementation of a State Language Access Plan. This would then be accompanied by legislative action for compliance provisions. (p.55)

Budgetary & Legislative

- Provide adequate funding to fully staff the Office of Diversity, Opportunity and Inclusion to oversee the compliance of agencies and departments within the State Language Access Plan. The ODOI would also be tasked with the periodic review of the State Language Access Plan for compliance with federal guidelines and current best practices. (p.55)

GENERAL BOARD RECOMMENDATIONS

Administrative

- Enhance the Office of New Americans budget to address expanded and unmet needs. (pg. 59)
- Support the Afghan Adjustment Act and expanded immigration legal aid services in Virginia (pg. 56)

Budgetary

- Enhance the Office of New Americans budget to address expanded and unmet needs. (pg. 59)

Legislative

- Amend the Code to allow for more meetings per year. (pg. 56)

- Amend the Code to raise the number of appointed nonlegislative citizen Board members to twenty-one. (pg. 56)
- Amend the Code to include additional ex-officio members to the Board. (pg. 56)
- Amend the Code governing Freedom of Information Act to allow all subcommittee meetings to be electronic as defined by Code §2.2-2100. (pg. 57)
- Commission a new JLARC study to assess the integration of New Americans in the Commonwealth and update the findings from the 2004 report. (pg. 59)
- Enhance the Office of New Americans budget to address expanded and unmet needs. (pg.59)

CONCLUSION

The Office of New Americans Advisory Board wishes to thank Governor Glenn Youngkin, the Office of the Governor, our General Assembly members, the Cabinet Secretaries and their offices, the many agencies within the Administration, Chief Diversity, Opportunity and Inclusion Officer Rosa Atkins, Commissioner of the Department of Social Services Dr. Danny TK Avula, Director of the Office of New Americans Seyoum Berhe, Senior Program Consultant Grace Reynolds and DSS and ONA leadership and staff for their support of the Board. We would also like to recognize the administration's focus on the integration of aspiring and New Americans as valuable contributors to the Commonwealth.

The Board has embraced this vision of a more welcoming and inclusive Commonwealth and is dedicated to the development of an agency and system that will address the multifaceted needs and opportunities confronted by and presented through these newcomers. We continue to emphasize that these individuals and communities present an incredible opportunity for innovation, global competitiveness and positive economic impacts for Virginia and the nation.

We look forward to leveraging our experience, knowledge, networks and connectivity to the aspiring and New American communities to make Virginia a recognized leader in opportunity and inclusivity.

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