

ANNUAL REPORT
2018





I want to be a U.S Citizen
because...

The US is my home

Citizenship keeps families together. Children who are permanent residents become U.S. citizens when a parent takes the oath of citizenship. Many clients are motivated to become U.S. citizens to protect their children and relatives, and to reunite their families in the United States. Nothing strengthens families like citizenship.



5 YEARS OF IMPACT



Dear Friends,

Since its inception in 2014, Project Citizenship has helped 5,431 immigrants achieve their dreams of becoming citizens of the United States. In addition, we have counselled thousands more immigrants seeking advice about the path to citizenship. These five years of impact have been made possible by committed and trained *pro bono* attorneys and law students, AmeriCorps volunteers, and the generous financial support of foundations, corporate sponsors, and individual donors.

Project Citizenship is New England's citizenship expert. Despite having only five permanent staff members, we are able to serve thousands of clients each year using our efficient workshop model and dedicated volunteers. The challenges and obstacles to citizenship have grown over the last five years, but we remain committed to ensuring that all immigrants have access to this opportunity, regardless of their financial resources. The government has recently taken many steps that will make the citizenship process lengthier and more difficult. Applications are being subject to increased scrutiny, leading to longer backlogs and wait times. Fee waivers for clients who receive public assistance are potentially being eliminated, and new rules make it harder for disabled immigrants to obtain waivers of the English requirement. On top of that, immigrants face a Denaturalization Task Force and threats to birthright citizenship. We have responded in turn by adding a Staff Attorney, strengthening our screening processes, and ensuring that all our trained volunteers have the information and guidance they need to help our clients. In the end, we have maintained our high success rate. 95% of our clients who apply for citizenship will succeed.

In the face of these challenges, we are more motivated and energized than ever to advocate for immigrants. We welcome immigrants and recognize their contributions to our communities. We are dedicated to enabling immigrants to achieve United States citizenship to gain all the rights and benefits that brings. Thank you for your efforts and financial support to ensure we can continue this mission.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brenda Diana Ropes & Gray".

Brenda Diana, Ropes & Gray
Chair, Board of Directors



THE MISSION

Project Citizenship seeks to increase the naturalization rate in Massachusetts and beyond. We are a nonprofit agency that provides free, high-quality legal services to permanent residents to help them become U.S. citizens. Project Citizenship offers free workshops, eligibility screening, application assistance, legal referrals and all materials needed to apply for U.S. citizenship. In addition, Project Citizenship works collaboratively with community-based partners in New England to provide a range of support services, civics instruction, application assistance, and ESOL classes.



Only 10% of eligible immigrants apply for naturalization. Immigrant outreach is our biggest challenge. Almost half of our clients find out about Project Citizenship through word of mouth from a friend or relative. We rely on ethnic print, television, and radio media to make more immigrants aware of our free services and the benefits of citizenship. We also spread the word through community organizations, government entities, health centers, and local businesses. In 2018, Project Citizenship conducted over 40 information sessions across Massachusetts, to amplify our message and ensure that anyone looking for information knows where to find it.

In 2018, we were very fortunate to partner with **Eastern Bank** to build and implement our Latino outreach strategy for our 5th annual Citizenship Day in Boston. This included a two-hour help line on **Telemundo**, where we received calls from more than 240 immigrants interested in applying for citizenship. **Eastern Bank** led an informational campaign to increase access to the right to vote, reunite family members, and to gain access to federal jobs. Those efforts led to increased calls and inquiries from immigrants beyond our September event. **Eastern Bank** is truly the most charitable bank in Massachusetts, dedicating 10% of its revenue to support nonprofit organizations.

WHO WE ARE

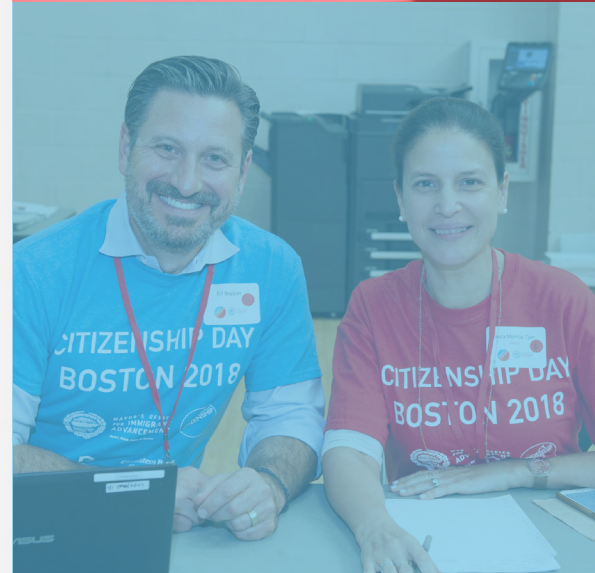
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Melanie Torres | *Director of Programs and Operations*
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Peter Haskin | *Pro Bono Programs Manager*
Molly Barstow | *Community Programs Manager*
Bridget Feldmann | *NAIP AmeriCorps Fellow*
Dani Hargus | *NAIP AmeriCorps Fellow*
Sarah Plavcan | *AmeriCorps Legal Advocate*
Belem Sanchez | *NAIP AmeriCorps Fellow*
Milourdes Augustin | *Intake Specialist*
Owen Diana | *Development Associate*

Last year, our small team screened over 3,000 immigrants interested in applying for citizenship. That's about 13 new clients each workday. Our multilingual staff brings information to our clients in their native languages, and works to break down the language barrier to citizenship and make it a bit less intimidating. Our cultural sensitivity and experience working with limited English proficient clients as well as those living in poverty helps ease the fear of the naturalization process. Simple things like sending a text message to a client, arranging for interpreters, and working with social workers and family friends can allow a client otherwise excluded from any chance of citizenship to achieve her dream. We are inspired by our AmeriCorps service members and the clients that we all serve to do more each day.





Alba GUATEMALAN - AMERICAN

Alba contacted Project Citizenship after spending almost \$1,000 to apply for citizenship. In fact, 26% of Project Citizenship clients have applied previously for citizenship, without success. Project Citizenship assisted Alba for free, and obtained a fee waiver for her based upon her receipt of Medicaid insurance. Because Alba has been a permanent resident for 15 years and is over 55 years old, Alba was exempt from the English requirements. Alba received the civics exam questions in Spanish, prepared and studied and achieved citizenship at the age of 64.

“La experiencia ha sido muy bien con ustedes y con su dulzura y paciencia.”

“The experience was very good with Project Citizenship because of your sweetness and patience.”

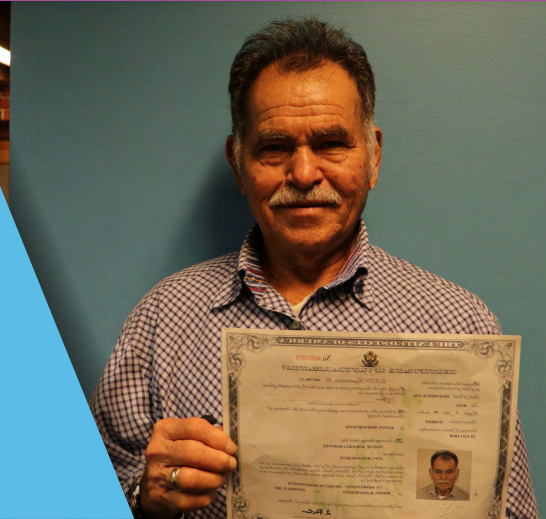
NEW CITIZENS SPOTLIGHT

Vicente SALVADORAN - AMERICAN

Vicente had his green card for over fifteen years when he applied for citizenship in April 2018. Although suffering from memory loss, Vicente was able to naturalize through a medical disability exemption with the representation of Project Citizenship. After successfully becoming a new American in October 2018, Vicente is happy that his family is able to feel safe and secure in the U.S.

“Soy muy contento. Fui a la ceremonia en Faneuil Hall para hacerme ciudadano y fue una experiencia muy buena. Soy muy agradecido al Proyecto Ciudadanía para su ayuda.”

“I am very happy. I went to Faneuil Hall to become a U.S. citizen and it was a very good experience. I am very grateful to Project Citizenship for your help.”



Marielle HAITIAN - AMERICAN | VOLUNTEER

Marielle was born in Haiti and immigrated to the U.S. with the hope of building a better life for herself and her family. After applying for her citizenship with Project Citizenship, she was sworn in as a new American in July of 2018. Now, she is giving back. In November 2018, she volunteered at our Chelsea community workshop to help others begin their paths to citizenship.

“It feels really great to be a citizen. It gives you more power. The citizenship process was really great as well because the people I worked with were very helpful, understanding, and patient. Whenever I needed anything I could call the office and they would explain everything to me. This is a great thing and I’ve referred many people to Project Citizenship because of the great work they do.”

WILMERHALE®



2018 Pro Bono Partner

WilmerHale is an extraordinary *pro bono* partner. **WilmerHale** sponsored three Citizenship Center days in our office and hosted two citizenship workshops in its office in 2018. 116 **WilmerHale** associates and partners are active volunteers. In addition, attorneys Emily Whelan and Holly Covington prepared comments in opposition to USCIS's proposal to eliminate fee waivers on the basis of means-tested benefits. Beyond that, **WilmerHale** represented Project Citizenship and two of our clients in a lawsuit against the U.S. Department of Homeland Security in the Southern District of New York. The litigation sought relief for disabled clients whose requests for language disability waivers have been unfairly rejected and improvement in USCIS's practices when reviewing disability waivers. Project Citizenship is extremely grateful for **WilmerHale's** advocacy and willingness to speak for our most vulnerable clients.

"Citizenship matters because it confers a sense of belonging. Citizenship provides immigrants, their families, and their communities with certainty about their future. This work is incredibly rewarding because without the efforts of Project Citizenship and its network of volunteers, many applicants' paths to citizenship would be foreclosed."

Kevin Yurkerwich



Christopher R. Noyes, Paloma Naderi, and Kevin Yurkerwich represented two individual plaintiffs as well as Project Citizenship in the matter of *De Dandrade et al., v. U.S. Dep't of Homeland Security, et al.*



116
ATTORNEYS

+



874
PRO BONO
HOURS

=

\$667,025
IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS

OUR WORK IN 2018

OUR CLIENTS

3,244

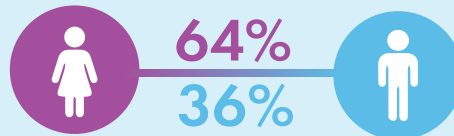
new clients in 2018

199

disabled clients

1,575

clients on the path to citizenship



18

Age range of Project Citizenship clients

95

OUR VOLUNTEERS

1,005 VOLUNTEERS

trained, mentored, and supervised

64% volunteered for the first time in 2018



TOP 10 COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN

Haiti
Dominican Republic
Brazil
El Salvador
Colombia
China
Guatemala
Cape Verde
Jamaica
Cambodia

OUR SERVICES

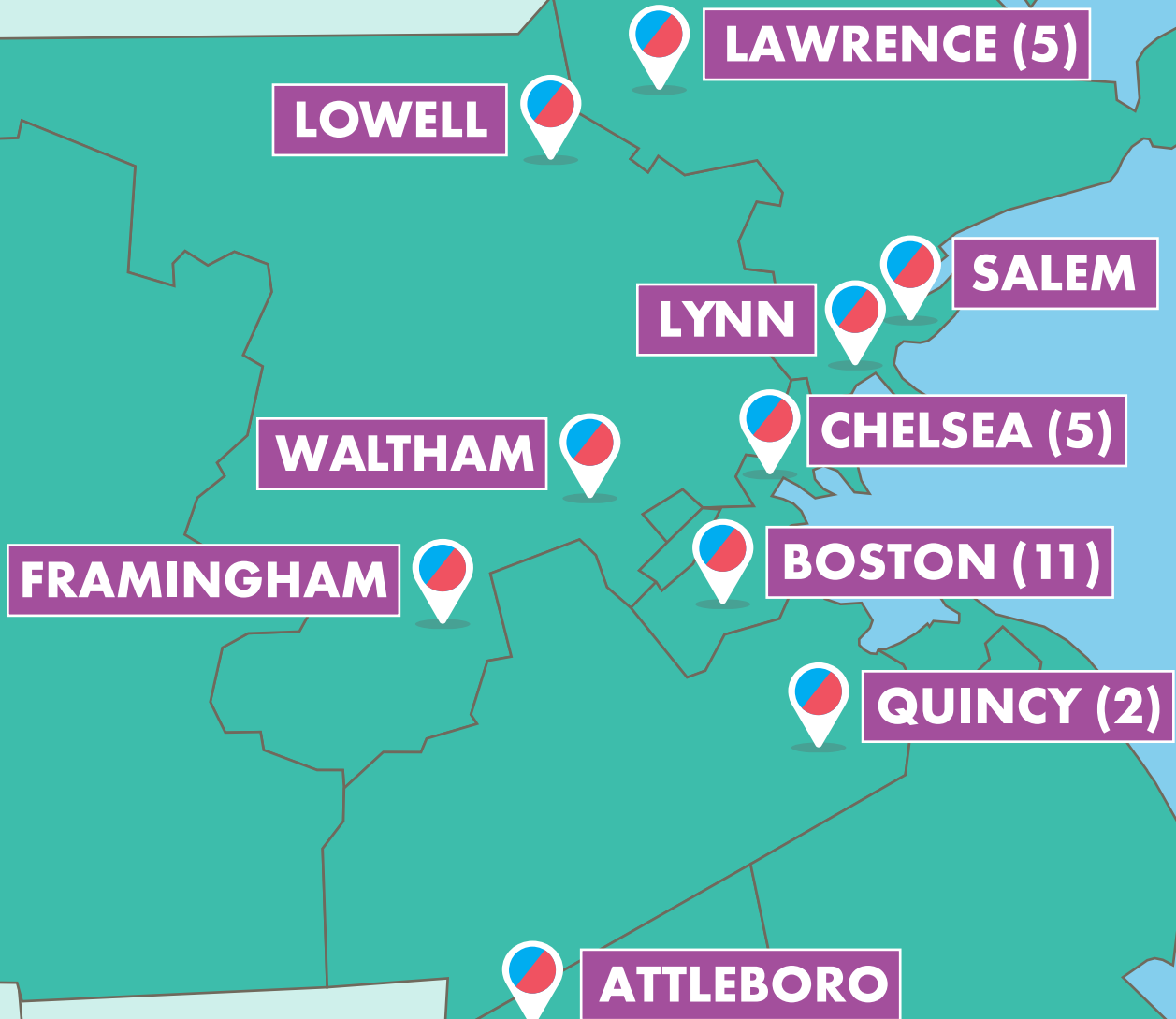
40 Citizenship Center Days + **32** Workshops = **72** Workshops Total

The Citizenship Center is a key component of our work and is supported by the [Ludcke Foundation](#) and [Santander Bank](#). Located in Quincy Market, we host mini-workshops three to four times per month to accommodate clients with child care or work schedule demands as well as those with physical limitations. In 2018, we served 601 clients in the Citizenship Center, as compared to 350 in 2017.

Project Citizenship travels throughout Massachusetts to serve isolated immigrant communities. We are grateful for the support of the **Foundation for MetroWest** for its funding of our work for communities like Framingham and Waltham. We are grateful for our partnerships with **Lawrence CommunityWorks** that has collaborated with us since 2016 as well as the **Chelsea Public Library** that has collaborated with us since 2017.



WORKSHOPS



A white outline map of New England (Maine, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, and Vermont) is set against a blue background. Several purple location pins with red and blue circular markers are placed across the map to indicate various locations. The text 'Expanding OUR REACH' is written in white on the right side of the map.

Expanding OUR REACH

Boston, MA

Agencia ALPHA
Action for Boston Community Development
MIRA Coalition
Refugee and Immigrant Assistance Center

Cambridge, MA

Massachusetts Alliance of Portuguese Speakers

Lawrence, MA

Greater Lawrence Community Action Council

Lowell, MA

Cambodian Mutual Assistance Association

Worcester, MA

Ascentria Care Alliance

Hartford, CT

Hartford Public Library

Providence, RI

Dorcas International Institute of Rhode Island

Portland, ME

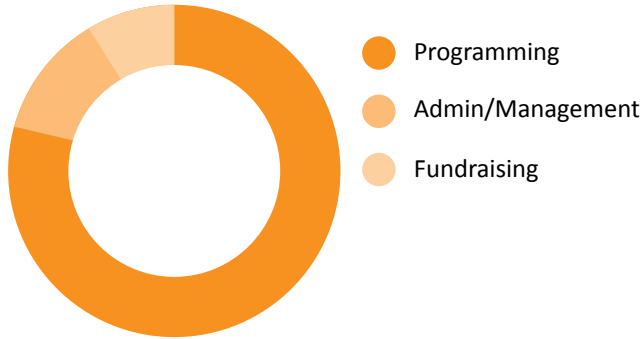
Immigrant Legal Advocacy Project

THE NETWORK

In 2018, the **Fish Family Foundation** provided additional funding to support the work of 11 community partners throughout New England. The network of community partners in Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island assisted an additional 1,363 immigrants to apply for citizenship in 2018. 9% of the cases involved a request for a disability waiver. 10% of these cases were for children of naturalized citizens seeking certificates of citizenship. Fee waivers for 66% of clients served saved \$652,030 in filing fees alone. Project Citizenship provides technical assistance, training and legal expertise to our community partners.

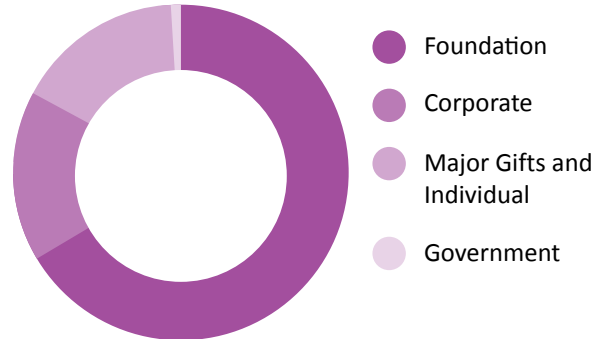
FINANCIAL SUMMARY

2018 EXPENSES



\$703,901

2018 REVENUE



\$830,331 *

*\$126,430 in revenue has been designated by the Board of Directors as operating reserves.



We are grateful for the support of the **Rands Foundation** to ensure that disabled clients have access to citizenship. Our requests for disability waivers rose from 9.6% in 2017 to 12.6% in 2018. Requests for disability waivers take three times the amount of attorney and staff time to advocate for the client with a physician as well as with USCIS. We are happy to report that we have a 93% success rate with disability waiver requests compared to the national average of about 56%.

SPONSORS & SUPPORTERS

Project Citizenship is very grateful for the generous support of the foundations, corporations, city governments, and individuals that support our work. Thank you!

A special thanks to the
Fish Family Foundation
for its vision and for ongoing support and belief in the
power of citizenship.

FOUNDATION SUPPORT

\$100,000+

Fish Family Foundation

\$10,000-\$100,000

Blue Hills Bank Foundation
Combined Jewish
Philanthropies
Kingsbaker Brown Fund
Ludcke Foundation

Rands Foundation

\$1,000-\$9,999

Cambridge Community Foundation
Morby Family Charitable
Foundation, Inc.
Sherry and Alan Leventhal Family
Foundation

The Boston Foundation

The Offensend Family
Foundation

The Tow Foundation, Inc.

\$1-\$999

Eleanor and Alan Lefkowitz
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\$10,000+

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MFS Investment Management
Ropes & Gray LLP
Santander Bank
Vertex Pharmaceuticals

\$1,000-\$9,999

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Bank of America
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Circle

Enterprise DB
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Fragomen
Latham & Watkins
Leader Bank
Mintz Levin
Morgan Lewis
The Literacy Center
WilmerHale

\$100-\$999

Enterprise Bank
First Literacy
Harvard Pilgrim Health Care

Karpas Strategies
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\$2,500-\$9,999

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Roberto Bracerias

Joanne & Bruno

Brancaccio

Grace Brittan

Andrew Brownsword &

Beth Muccini

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Leo Burd

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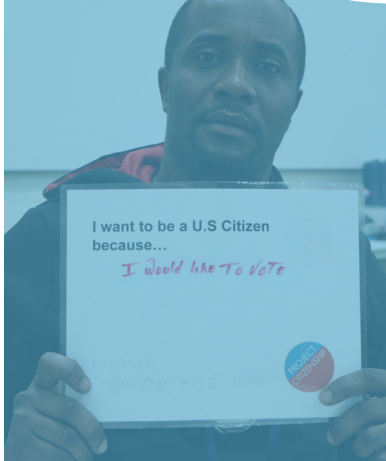
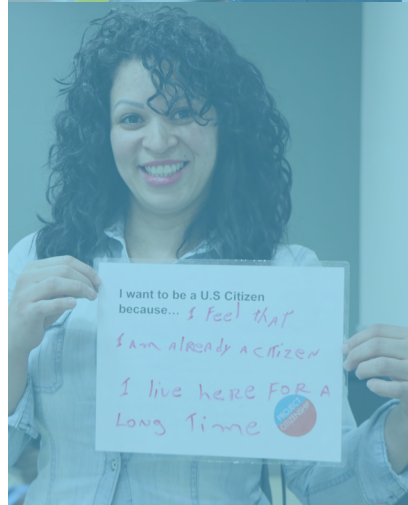
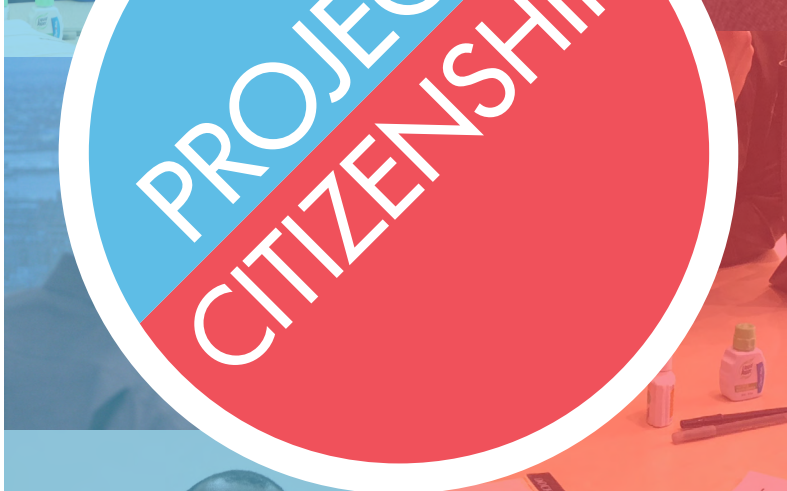
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del Carmen Vallejo de
Zuniga

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www.projectcitizenship.org | (617) 694 - 5949
4 Faneuil South Market Building, 3rd Floor
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