



## ANNUAL REPORT

2016





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

I Want to  
VOTE!

# A YEAR OF EXPONENTIAL GROWTH!

Dear Friends,

In 2016, Project Citizenship established itself as New England's citizenship provider with the largest network of services. The presidential election increased the demand for citizenship services, but fortunately, at a time when Project Citizenship had the capacity to meet it.

Early in 2016, Project Citizenship opened the doors of its new Citizenship Center. The Citizenship Center is located in the Project Citizenship office, and accommodates clients who are unable to come to a workshop appointment, or who have unusually complicated applications. Volunteers staff the Citizenship Center with oversight provided by the Project Citizenship team.

Project Citizenship also utilized many media and government agency partnerships for increased outreach. Elected officials, at the federal, state, and local levels, co-sponsored events in Framingham, Lawrence, Attleboro, and Boston. Media partners helped amplify Project Citizenship's linguistic reach in the Portuguese, Spanish, and Haitian Creole speaking communities.

In September 2016, Project Citizenship held New England's largest Citizenship Day event attended by more than 280 immigrants assisted by 300 volunteers. Mayor Walsh kicked off the day by addressing volunteers, making it clear to all, that Boston welcomes immigrants and values the diversity they add to our community.

For the first time, the Project Citizenship network, which includes 12 community-based organizations, exceeded 4,000 citizenship applications. The network now serves 4 states across New England to increase geographic and linguistic reach.

The year culminated in the announcement by the Social Innovation Forum (SIF) that Project Citizenship is one of seven 2017 Innovators. SIF will help Project Citizenship to enhance its capacity to accelerate social change.

We are proud of Project Citizenship's accomplishments in 2016 and are grateful for the support so many of you provide.

Sincerely,



**James McGarry**  
*Chair, Board of Directors*  
Goodwin Proctor



**Veronica Serrato**  
*Executive Director*

## 2016 HIGHLIGHTS

- ★ **Opened the new Citizenship Center which served 497 applicants, 32% of the total clients served in 2016**
- ★ **Held New England's largest Citizenship Day event ever: Over 300 volunteers assisted 280 immigrants**
- ★ **The Project Citizenship network submitted 4,161 citizenship applications, for clients from 127 different countries**
- ★ **Selected as a 2017 Innovator by the Social Innovation Forum**



# THE MISSION

Project Citizenship's mission is to increase the naturalization rates throughout New England. Project Citizenship seeks to reduce barriers to citizenship for eligible, legal permanent residents throughout New England by working with a diverse group of community partners and a strong network of volunteers.

Estimated number of green card holders who are eligible to apply for citizenship:

U.S.	Massachusetts	Boston
8.8M	300K	48K

Only about **10%** of eligible legal permanent residents apply for citizenship each year because of many obstacles and barriers.

## To be eligible for citizenship, an immigrant must:

- Be at least **18 years old**
- Be a legal permanent resident for **5 years**
- Demonstrate good moral character
- Pay **\$725** filing fee
- Read, write, and speak **English**

## Naturalization is a long and complicated process; Project Citizenship assists each step of the way.

When a new client calls Project Citizenship, she is screened for eligibility. For clients unable to learn English due to a disability, Project Citizenship advocates for them at their immigration interview.

## Project Citizenship works to ensure that no one is priced out of citizenship.

According to USCIS, the average citizenship applicant's family income is less than \$50,000. In order to apply for citizenship, applicants were required to pay a \$680 filing fee. This fee rose in December 2016 to \$725. For indigent clients, Project Citizenship prepares a fee waiver.

## MARIE-ANNE



At the age of 104, Marie-Anne (right) is the oldest applicant that Project Citizenship served in 2016. She was born in Haiti in 1912 and has been a resident of the United States for over 30 years. The proud mother of four U.S. citizens, and a grandmother and great grandmother to many more, Marie-Anne is eager to fulfill her dream of joining her family in citizenship. Her strong will and vibrant attitude inspired everyone around her as she smiled and danced her way through our workshop in July.

# 2016 BY THE NUMBERS

**1,507**  
citizenship  
applications

**1,058**  
fee waivers

**\$713,920**  
saved by clients  
through fee waivers

**119**  
medical waivers for  
disabled immigrants

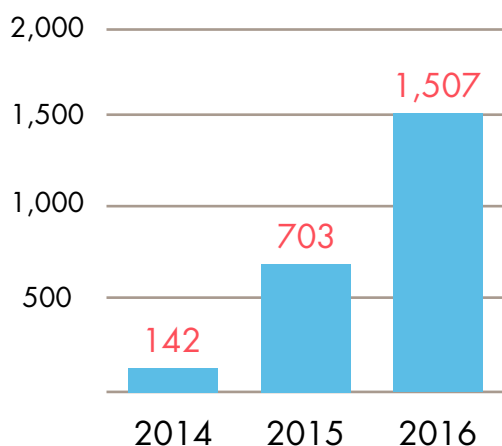
**642**  
volunteers

**25%**  
of volunteers helped  
more than once






**24**  
citizenship  
workshops

**21**  
trainings for volunteers  
and community partners

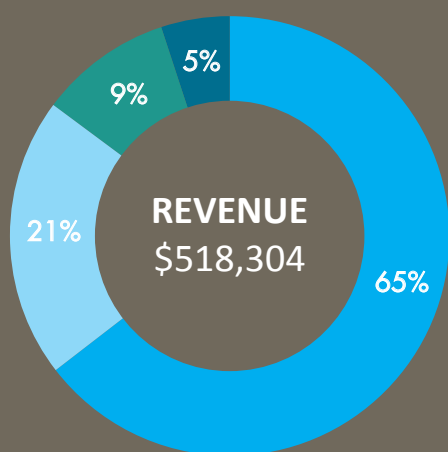
**Annual Application  
Submissions**



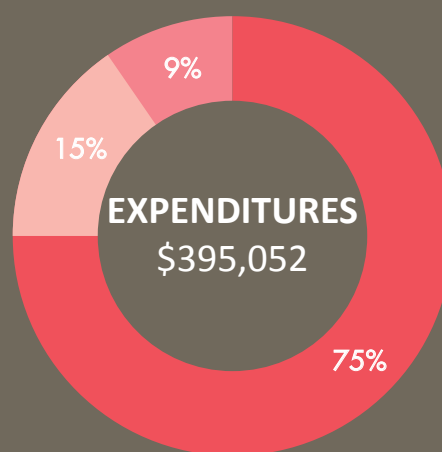
**Top 5 Countries of Origin**

1.  Dominican Republic - **25%**
2.  Haiti - **12%**
3.  Brazil - **10%**
4.  China - **8%**
5.  Colombia - **3%**

## FINANCIAL SUMMARY



Major Gifts  
Individual Donations  
Corporate Sponsorship  
Grants



Program Services  
Management  
Fundraising

# THE PROCESS

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Project Citizenship relies on its network of trained volunteers at every workshop, and also to staff the Citizenship Center. *Pro bono* attorneys, law students, and community volunteers which include former clients all provide assistance to applicants. This past year, 642 volunteers contributed their time, knowledge, and energy to help immigrants along the path to citizenship.

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## PRO BONO SPONSOR

In 2016, Goodwin Procter sponsored three workshops at their firm as well as Citizenship Day in Boston at the Timilty Middle School in Roxbury. Goodwin has been a *pro bono* sponsor since 2014 and continues to enthusiastically support our work. We are grateful for all that Goodwin has done and continues to do for us.



**1,602 Hours Dedicated to Project Citizenship**

1,294 Workshop Hours  
308 Case Hours



**118 Volunteers Involved**

110 Lawyers  
8 Paralegals



**GOODWIN**

## VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT



“The clients at Project Citizenship’s naturalization clinics have such interesting stories to tell, and they really appreciate the assistance we are able to provide them. In these dangerous times, the best protection against detention and deportation is citizenship, and I enjoy helping them achieve that goal.”

INEZ H. FRIEDMAN-BOYCE  
*Partner, Goodwin Procter*

# APPLICANT SPOTLIGHT



## RAMON AND MIRTA

“Me siento Americano, me siento orgulloso de ser parte de acá. Este es mi país. Soy Peruano de nacimiento, pero ya vivo otra realidad, este es mi realidad. Esto es mi mundo...La verdad es que nosotros nos sentimos más tranquilos teniendo ya este documento, este papel, y haber entrado a este otro nivel con más responsabilidad...Si te pones a pensar, tu mente, tu corazón ya es diferente. Viene a ser parte más grande de los Estados Unidos, y la verdad es que eso nos regocija.”

## AISHA, ANAS, MOSAAB, & OMAR

As part of our October workshop in Lawrence, we worked with this family to submit their applications to derive citizenship through their mother (pictured in the center). Originally from Iraq, they fled to Jordan in 2009 before arriving to Massachusetts one year later. When Sundes became a citizen, her four children gained all the rights and privileges of citizenship. We are proud to have helped them and congratulate them on their citizenship!



Pictured left to right: Aisha (age 14), Anas (age 10), Sundes, Mosaab (age 17), Omar (age 7)

## THE PROJECT CITIZENSHIP TEAM

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### PROJECT CITIZENSHIP STAFF

Veronica Serrato – Executive Director  
Matthew Jose – Director of Programs and Development  
Melanie Torres – Director of Programs and Operations  
Karyn Ann Shealy – AmeriCorps Legal Advocate  
Jessica Slicer – NAIP Americorps Fellow  
Peter Haskin – NAIP AMERICORPS Fellow

# THE NETWORK

Project Citizenship began as the Greater Boston Citizenship Initiative, a collaboration of community partners in Massachusetts seeking to increase naturalization rates throughout the state. The Fish Family Foundation, a philanthropic organization with a long-standing commitment to serving immigrant communities, formed the Initiative in 2011. Six community organizations worked to educate immigrants about the benefits of citizenship, and to overcome the barriers to naturalization.

## EXPANDING OUR REACH

In 2016, Project Citizenship increased its number of funded partners to twelve. The community partners received funding from the Fish Family and Davis Foundations to provide citizenship application services. The network expanded in 2016 to include community partners in Connecticut, Maine, Rhode Island and Massachusetts.

**Asian American Civic Association**  
Boston, MA

**Action for Boston Community Development**  
Boston, MA

**Agencia ALPHA**  
Boston, MA

**Ascentria Care Alliance**  
Worcester, MA

**Dorcas International Institute of RI**  
Providence, RI

**Hartford Public Library**  
Hartford, CT

**Immigrant Legal Advocacy Project**  
Portland, ME

**Jewish Family Service of Western Mass**  
Springfield, MA

**Massachusetts Alliance of Portuguese Speakers**  
6 Massachusetts locations



**Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition**  
Boston, MA

**Refugee and Immigrant Assistance Center**  
Boston, MA

**United Neighbors of Fitchburg**  
Fitchburg, MA



# THE NETWORK BY THE NUMBERS

**12**  
community partners

**2,654**  
citizenship applications

**2,596**  
fee waivers

**\$1.6M**  
saved by clients  
through fee waivers

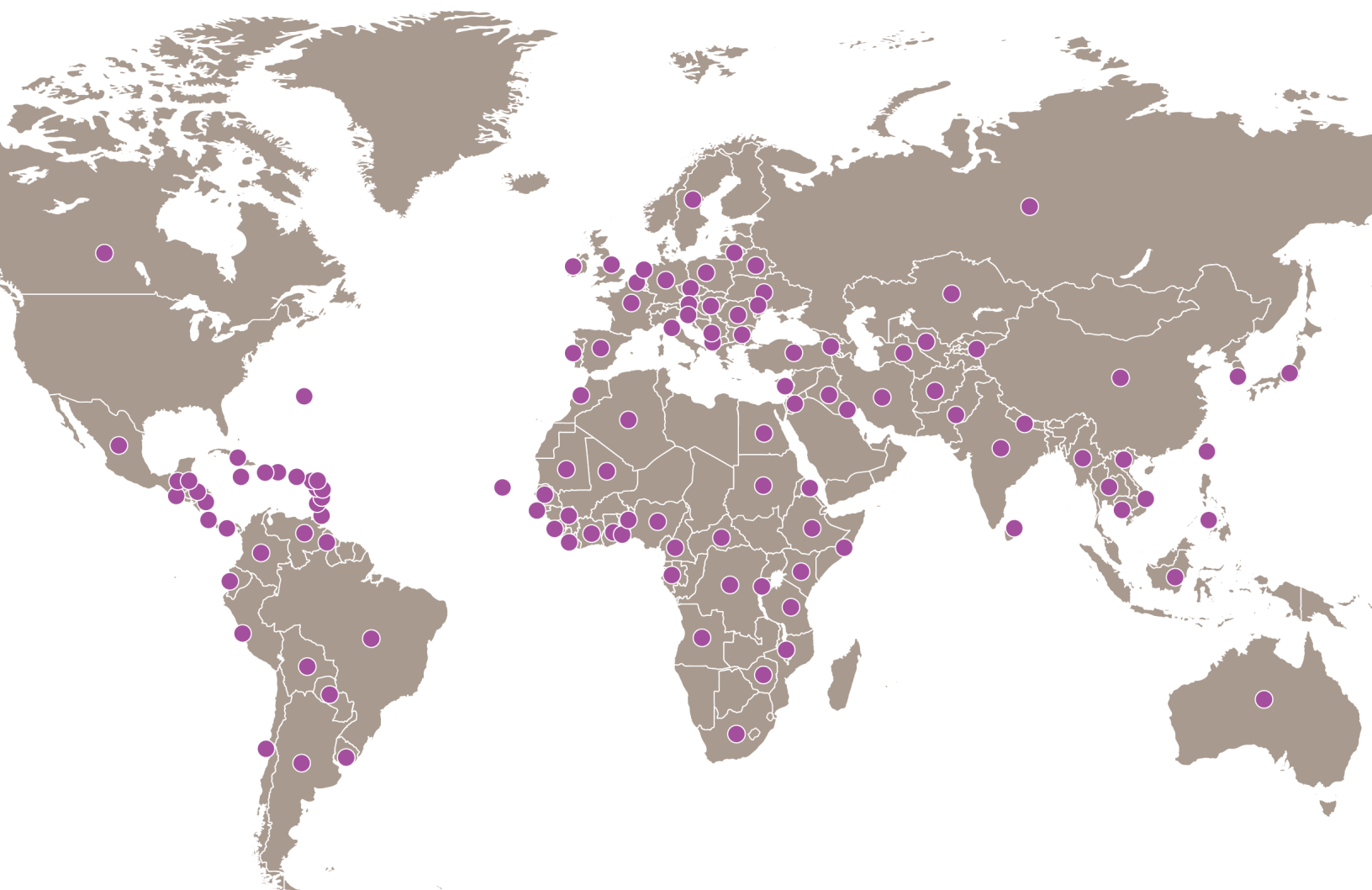
**127**  
different countries  
of origin

**335**  
medical waivers for  
disabled immigrants

**66%**  
of applicants were  
female

**35-44**  
most common age of  
applicants

## COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN



# SPONSORS & SUPPORTERS

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Project Citizenship would like to extend its sincere gratitude to all of its funders, donors and collaborators who contributed in 2016. It is apparent through the increased citizenship applications through the past year that Project Citizenship has been hard at work. This work was made possible with the support and collaboration of those listed below. Participation at any level moves the organization forward. Any donation of time or funds demonstrates a commitment to an inclusive community building and attaining equal opportunity for those seeking citizenship.

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Sinovision  
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Telemundo  
The Republican  
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Total Health TV  
Univision  
Wake Up with Tayla Andre  
World Journal

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Bertucci's  
Boloco  
Charles River Canoe and  
Kayak  
Deluxe Depot  
Franklin Park Zoo  
Isabella Stewart Gardner  
Museum  
Lawrence Community Works  
Lawrence Senior Center  
Maggiano's  
MIT  
Starbucks  
Town of Framingham  
Wegmans

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Mayor's Office of Immigrant  
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Rep. Niki Tsongas  
Rep. Seth Moulton

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