Impact Report

2019





The United States is a nation of immigrants made stronger through the diversity of our communities, and acceptance of all religions, races, and ethnic backgrounds. Project Citizenship's clients are more diverse than ever through outreach in geographically and linguistically isolated communities.

CITIZENSHIP FOR ALL

Dear Friends,

At Project Citizenship, 2019 was a year of challenges that we faced with our usual steadfast determination, hard work, and commitment to our mission to help our clients achieve the culmination of their immigrant journey – U.S. citizenship. It was an especially busy year because so many immigrants want to become citizens so their votes can be counted in the 2020 election. On top of that, the government continued its attacks on immigrants, with cruel and confusing policies designed to make it harder for them to become citizens, attacks which we met head on.

Most people are shocked to learn that the government charges a fee of \$725 to apply for citizenship. For many years now, low-income applicants could get that fee waived, and Project Citizenship helps them with the additional paperwork needed to obtain the fee waiver. But in 2019, a rule was instituted that would have made it nearly impossible for low-income immigrants to obtain a fee waiver, effectively preventing them from achieving citizenship. Project Citizenship fought back, and was among other litigants who sued the government to stop it from enforcing this rule. Thanks to these efforts, a federal judge postponed the rule from taking effect. But the government has now proposed a new rule that would eliminate fee waivers altogether and increase the alreadyhigh application fee to \$1,170. Project Citizenship stands by ready to sue the government again to prevent another rule from taking effect that would make it impossible for our clients to achieve their goal of becoming U.S. citizens.

During the year, with the threat of such draconian rules hanging over our clients' heads, Project Citizenship did not succumb to fear and anxiety. We fought back not just through litigation but by doubling-down in our everyday efforts to help immigrants. We increased our outreach efforts, the number of citizenship workshops we offered, and the number of volunteer trainings we held. And the results of this increased effort were astounding and record-breaking. We submitted more citizenship applications to the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) and more clients took the oath of citizenship than ever before. We are also proud to say that we helped more clients than ever before obtain a fee waiver.

We could not have achieved this remarkable success without the dedication and tirelessness of our Executive Director, Veronica Serrato, and her remarkable staff. Nor could we have done it without our army of amazing and committed volunteers, who donate their time and expertise to help us achieve our mission. And none of it would have been possible without the support of our donors — thank you from the bottom of my heart for your generosity and commitment to the power of citizenship.

We have much work to do in 2020 and beyond. With your continued support, we look forward to helping even more clients achieve the dream of U.S. citizenship.

Thank you,

Brenda S. Diana

Conendahane

Board Chair



OUR 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 whom Project Citizenship provides technical assistance. Those community partners offer a range of services including civics instruction, application assistance, and ESOL classes.

Client Stories

Rebeca (GUATEMALAN-AMERICAN)

"I am so grateful to Project Citizenship for the opportunity to become a citizen. My children were born here, my family are all citizens, and now it is my turn. I want to be able to vote to elect the next president."





Tiffany (Canadian-Chinese-British-American and Volunteer)

"When I volunteered, I saw all these people lining up to apply to become citizens and so many lawyers working with them *probono* on their applications. It made me realize that becoming a citizen is as much a right as a duty. By becoming one, my voice will be better heard, and I will finally have all the means to fully give back to my community. That was why I decided to participate in another Citizenship Day—this time as an aspiring citizen. Thank you for the great work that you are doing, Project Citizenship!"

Michael (Indian-Israeli-American)

"Applying for citizenship is a stressful process but Project Citizenship's team makes all the stress go away. The citizenship workshops are really impressive. It gives one hope in the world when you see so many people helping others."



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Marlene Rojas | NAIP AmeriCorps Fellow
Jennifer Gonzales | AmeriCorps Legal Advocate

In 2019, our small multilingual team assisted 3,124 immigrants who contacted us with interest in applying for citizenship. Each day, we work to break down the many barriers to citizenship — the English language, the \$725 filing fee, the bureaucracy, the lack of information, and fear. Our clients can rely on our expertise, encouragement, and compassion — thanks to our generous donors and partners.







COLLABORATINGFOR CITIZENSHIP

Project Citizenship collaborates with elected officials, community organizations, schools, and local businesses to increase citizenship services throughout Massachusetts. These collaborations include:

- The Boston Mayor's Office for Immigrant
 Advancement co-hosts our annual Citizenship Day
 in Boston event and supports the event with media
 advisories, outreach in the Boston Centers for Youth
 and Families and a public service announcement to
 encourage immigrants to naturalize.
- Eastern Bank is a corporate sponsor and supports
 Project Citizenship through an annual media campaign
 with radio and television ads that reached Spanish,
 Haitian and Cape Verdean speakers in 2019.
- Lawrence CommunityWorks hosts a citizenship workshop six times each year to offer free citizenship services to their participants and the Lawrence community.

- Cambodian Mutual Assistance Association has been a vital community partner, hosting citizenship workshops every two weeks, providing outreach about the services we offer, and encouraging Lowell residents to apply for citizenship.
- The Bilingual Education Department of the Brockton Public Schools and Brockton Mayor's Office partnered with Project Citizenship on an outreach campaign through the schools, local media outlets and community organizations, culminating in a workshop at West Middle School in November 2019.

LITIGATINGFOR CITIZENSHIP

We actively advocate for our clients as a leader in the immigration community focused on citizenship.

With WilmerHale's pro bono support, Project Citizenship opposed a proposed rule to eliminate fee waivers in June 2019. We rallied opposition to the proposed rule and encouraged thousands of clients, volunteers, and supporters to add their voices in opposition. USCIS opened the rule for three rounds of comments. That new rule is anticipated to be announced in 2020.

With **Ropes & Gray's** *pro bono* support, Project Citizenship challenged a new USCIS rule in November 2019 that eliminated fee waivers on the basis of public assistance and required tax transcripts for those requesting an income-based fee waiver. A parallel complaint filed in the Northern District of California resulted in a preliminary injunction against this promulgated rule in December 2019.

VOLUNTEERINGFOR CITIZENSHIP



"It is personally very satisfying to help people who are seeking 'The American Dream' and who want to make a good life for themselves. I like hearing the strength, positivity, and resilience of people's stories. I am honored to help them. This is life-changing work."

Pro Bono Relationships

Project Citizenship recruits, trains, and mentors more than 1,000 volunteers each year. Volunteers meet one-on-one with clients to prepare the 20-page citizenship application. *Pro bono* attorneys then review the applications before final submission. Volunteers are vital to our organization and allow a small staff to serve more than 2,000 clients each year. The value of our *pro bono* legal services is estimated at \$3.5 million.

Law Firms

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Choate Hall & Stewart LLP
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Citizens Bank

Vertex Pharmaceuticals Wells Fargo

Law Schools

Boston College Law School Boston University School of Law Harvard Law School Northeastern Law School

Bar Associations

Boston Bar Association Massachusetts Bar Association South Asian Bar Association of Greater Boston

Philanthropic Organizations

The Philanthropy Connection

OUR 2019 WORK

Our Clients

3,124 new clients

257 clients with disabilities

1,974 clients on the path to citizenship

1,257 clients sworn in as new citizens

60% women



40% men

AGE RANGE: 3 yr. old 99 yr. old

Our Volunteers



63% volunteered for the first time

trained, mentored, and supervised

Top 10 Countries of Origin 2019



DOMINICAN REPUBLIC



COLOMBIA



HAITI



CAMBODIA



CAPE VERDE



JAMAICA



CHINA



EL SALVADOR



GUATEMALA



BRAZIL

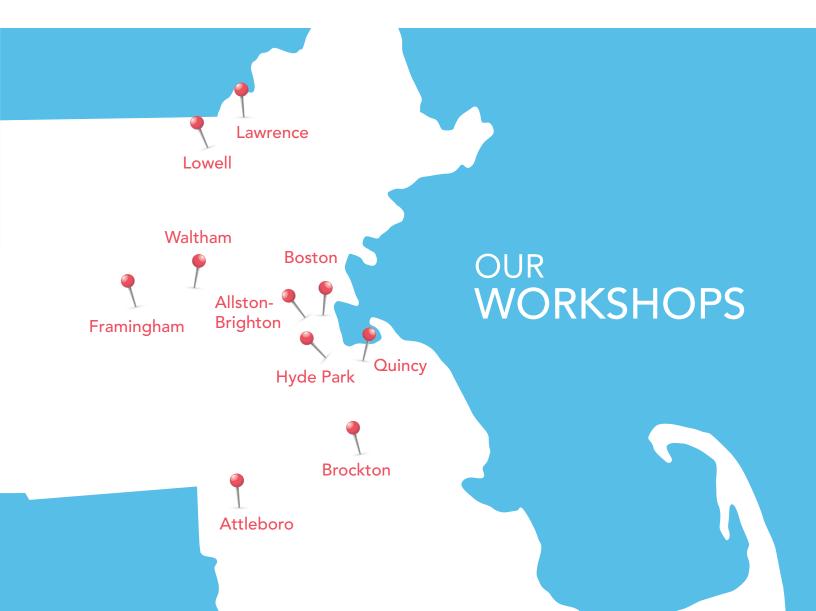
Our Services

30 Workshops + 34 Citizenship = 64 TOTAL Citizenship workshops

Project Citizenship travels throughout Massachusetts, supported by Mifflin Memorial Fund. With the support of the Foundation for MetroWest, we offered services in communities like Framingham and Waltham. With the support of Wellesley Bank and the Rabbi Abraham Halbfinger Charlesview Charitable Fund, we offered services in Allston-Brighton. Blue Hills Bank supported our work in Hyde Park. The Cambridge Community Foundation and Brookline Community

Foundation supported citizenship services in their communities. The **Parker Foundation** supported our services that started 172 Lowell residents on the path to citizenship.

Our Citizenship Center was supported through the generous contributions of **Santander Bank** and **Vertex Pharmaceuticals**.



CONVERSING ABOUT CITIZENSHIP

Project Citizenship hosted a speaker series to discuss the value of citizenship and the importance of immigrants in the U.S.



U.S. Congresswoman Katherine Clark, 5th District, MA:

"Project Citizenship is a beacon during these dark times."

U.S. Congressman Joe Kennedy III, 4th District, MA:

"The power of the individual to vote and to advocate builds our democracy."





Abdi Nor Iftin, author of Call Me American:

"I did not come here to take anything. I came here to contribute, and to offer and to give." Mr. Iftin emigrated to the United States from war-torn Mogadishu after winning the diversity lottery. He is now a US citizen.

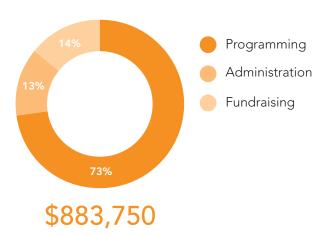
Attorney Kim West hosted a conversation in Concord and invited Attorney General Maura Healey to speak about her office's commitment to protecting immigrant rights.

Photo of Ed Boyajian, Veronica Serrato, Maura Healey, and Host Kim West.

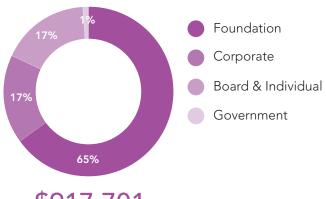


FINANCIAL SUMMARY

2019 EXPENSES



2019 REVENUE



\$917,701







These generous donors supported our core services in 2019: **Klarman Foundation**, **Ludcke Foundation**, the **Rands Foundation**, and **The Philanthropy Connection**. We were very excited to also receive a surprise "Out of the Blue" grant from the **Richard and Susan Smith Family Foundation**.

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\$300,000+

Fish Family Foundation

\$10,000-\$30,000

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At our annual mega workshop in Roxbury, 437 immigrants began the path to U.S. citizenship in one day.

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