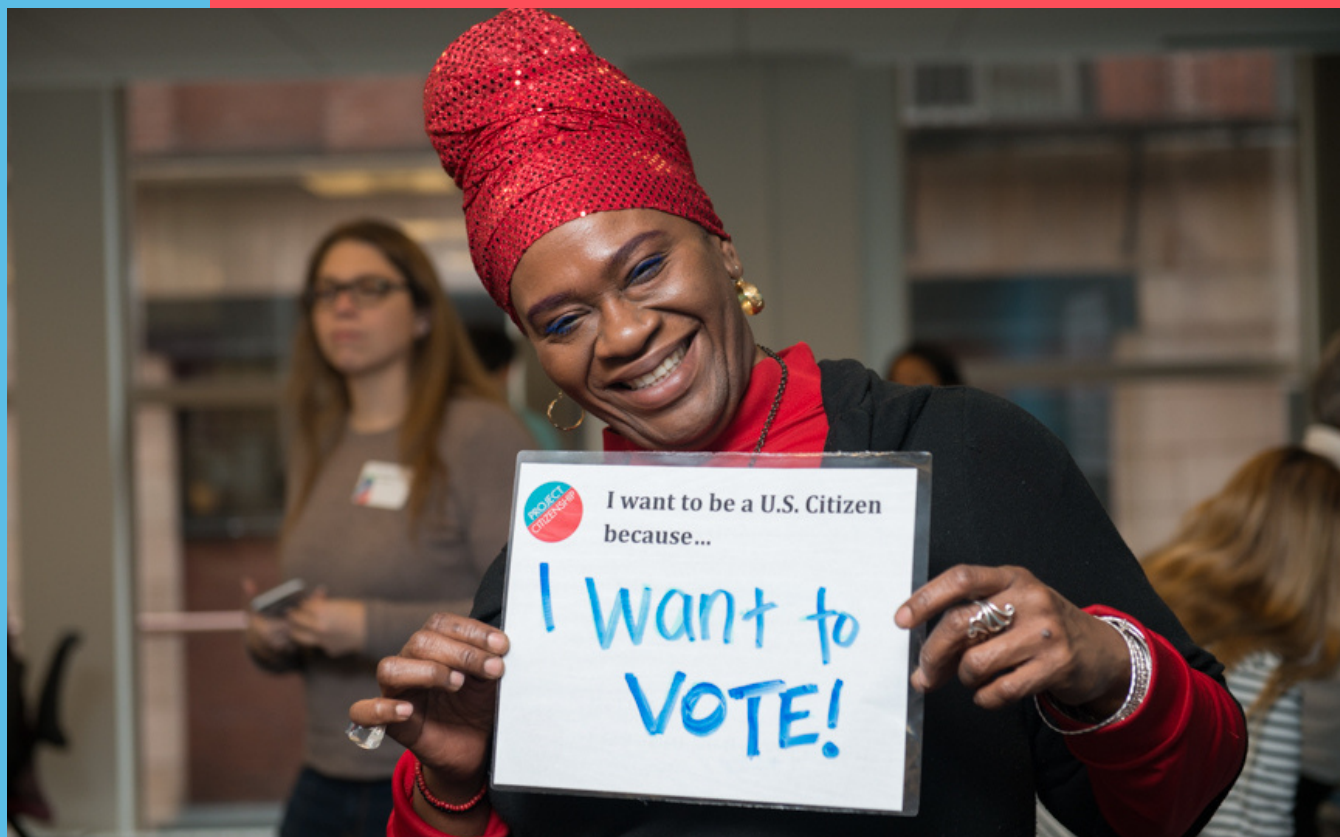




UNITY THROUGH DIVERSITY

PROJECT CITIZENSHIP

ANNUAL REPORT 2020



Immigrants are ambassadors for American values. We value the strength immigrants bring to the economic, social, and civic fabric of our great nation.

LETTER FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR & BOARD CHAIR



Dear friends, donors, volunteers, partners, and nonprofit neighbors of Project Citizenship:

What a year! We began 2020 knowing we faced hostility towards immigrants from the presidential administration, but little did we know everything would be soon upended by the pandemic, multiplying our challenges.

In spite of this, Project Citizenship came through stronger and more resilient than ever.

Our small, dedicated staff swiftly shifted our traditional in-person workshops to a virtual workshop model to ensure our clients access to service. This required not only a massive overhaul to our processes but also required our staff to become technology experts, on top of being citizenship experts. The team shined through: **we closed 2020 having successfully submitted 1,044 naturalization applications and guided 2,061 citizens-in-waiting on the path to naturalization.**

Project Citizenship's **new virtual model has revealed exciting potential.** We identified disadvantaged populations that can benefit from our virtual model: the elderly, the disabled, and those who juggle responsibilities that preclude them from attending in-person workshops. Energized by this revelation, **we aim to improve the efficiency of our virtual model so that it continues to expand our reach.** We will also, of course, resume our large in-person workshops once public health officials deem it safe.

During the pandemic we learned that 73% of our citizens-in-waiting are frontline workers! They sacrificed their safety for the sake of ours, which is reason enough why we need to have them become part of the American family.

Adding to our challenges in 2020, the pandemic arrived just as our Board of Directors was conducting a search for a new executive director. With thanks to Zoom, the Board was able to continue the search with little disruption and was **thrilled to welcome Mitra Shavarini as our new leader in December. Herself a naturalized citizen, originally from Iran, Mitra knows all-too-well the challenges that immigrants face** when they want to naturalize. Since her tenure with Project Citizenship began, the Board has welcomed seven new members energized to bring their backgrounds, skills, and insights to help Project Citizenship in its next stage of growth. Together, the Board and Mitra have embarked on developing a strategic plan.

Given the Biden Administration's stated intentions to improve our immigration system, particularly as it relates to expediting naturalization, we at Project Citizenship are excited about the pivotal role that we can play for citizens-in-waiting.

We thank you from the bottom of our hearts for all your support. **We could not have made it through this year without you**, and we hope that you will continue to help our efforts: [volunteer](#), [subscribe to our newsletter](#), or [donate](#)! This is an exciting time for Project Citizenship, and we want you along for the ride.

Sincerely,



A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Brenda Diana".

Brenda Diana
Chair, Board of Directors



A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mitra".

Dr. Mitra K. Shavarini
Executive Director

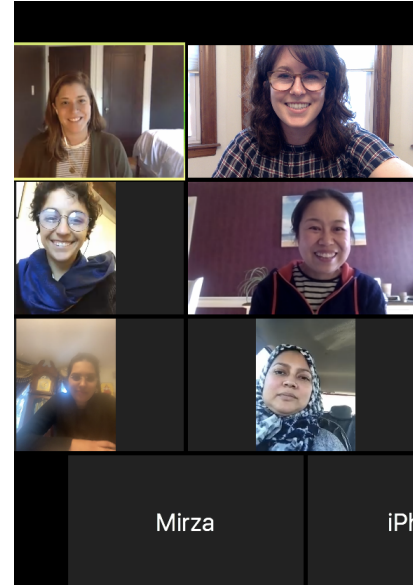
OUR MISSION

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 eligible immigrants 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 Massachusetts to provide a range of support services, including civics instruction and ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) classes.



COVID RESILIENCE RESPONSE



With over **73% of our hopeful citizens-to-be serving as frontline workers**, and **75% of folks we serve living under the federal poverty line**, COVID-19 hit our community particularly hard. We immediately pivoted our in-person programming to adapt to remote operations. As the pandemic raged on and the need grew, **we developed a virtual citizenship workshop model**. This model dramatically increased the number of volunteers needed as well as required our staff to suddenly be technology experts. Ever the resilient team, we adapted and persevered. With 62 virtual workshops we served over 2,000 hopeful citizens-to-be in 2020 despite all our challenges.



OUR VOLUNTEER COLLABORATORS

Each year, we depend on our Board of Directors, our *pro bono* law firms, our foundation and government supporters, law schools, local nonprofits, bar associations, in-house counsel and beyond, in order to support over 2,000 individuals yearly on their path to citizenship. We could not do any of this without all of **YOU!**

OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Brenda Diana - Chair - Ropes & Gray
Sameer Ahmed - Vice Chair - Harvard Law School
Milton Manousaridis - Treasurer - Cambridge Trust
Alicia Rubio-Spring - Clerk - Goodwin Procter
Jim McGarry - Chair Emeritus - Goodwin Procter
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Natalia Ivanytsky - PwC
Peter Torrebiarte - MASS Design Group
Teresa Maynard - Sweet Teez Bakery
Mitch Montgomery - Chin & Curtis
Deva Hirsch - DH Advisors
O'Neil Outar - Rhode Island School of Design
Charles Sanders - Latham & Watkins
Amy Wax - Law Offices of Amy M. Wax

In 2021, we also added 7 new Board members

Andy Liebman - EditShare
Katherine Rivet - Boston Consulting Group
Nancy Rousseau - My Life My Choice
Jean Russell - HUB International New England
Detlev Suderow - FLIR Systems, Inc. (Retired)
Kim West - Ashcroft Law Firm
Susan Eaton - Brandeis University

OUR LAW SCHOOLS, BAR ASSOCIATIONS & EDUCATION PARTNERS

Boston College Law School
Boston University School of Law
Harvard Law School
City University of New York Law School
Northeastern University School of Law
Suffolk University School of Law

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

Boston College
Boston University

OUR LAW FIRMS

Chin & Curtis*
Dechert LLP
DLA Piper LLP
Foley Hoag LLP*
Fragomen*
Goodwin Procter*
Kirkland & Ellis LLP

* indicates financial support

Latham & Watkins, LLP*
MCD Immigration Law
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Ropes & Gray LLP*
Sullivan & Worcester LLP
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Hinckley, Allen & Snyder LLP

OUR IN-HOUSE COUNSEL

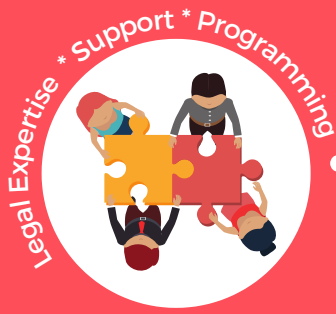
AON Risk Solutions
Bain Capital, LP
Bank of America*
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MassMutual
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Corporation RMR Group*
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Vertex Pharmaceuticals*



OUR PHILANTHROPIC PARTNER

The Philanthropy Connection

2020 BY THE NUMBERS



8 Staff
Members



4 Americorps
Members



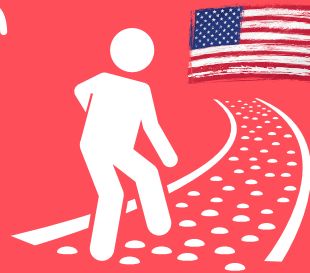
704
Unique Volunteers



98.2% success
rate on
applications
filed in 2020!



2,061 immigrants served



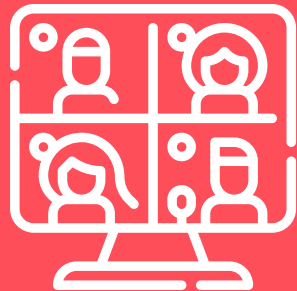
1,044 citizens-to-be
on the path to
citizenship



155 people with
disabilities
provided support



1,243 new citizens
sworn in



62 newly adapted virtual
citizenship workshops
+ 10 in-person workshops pre-pandemic

72 total workshops



696 fee waivers
filed

OUR HOPEFUL CITIZENS-TO-BE

Through our 72 workshops in 2020,
our 2,061 citizens-to-be were:



FROM
106 COUNTRIES



58% FEMALE,
42% MALE



4 YEARS OLD TO
92 YEARS OLD

TOP 10 COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN



IMPACT STORIES



Oscar and his wife Nidia applied for citizenship with us in September 2020 and became citizens in February 2021. They are both originally from Guatemala. Oscar has had a long and harrowing immigration story, having lost most of his family in a massacre in his village in Guatemala. (**Learn more about his story by watching the documentary *Finding Oscar* or reading this [article](#)**). Oscar and Nidia were both eligible for citizenship at the same time and were eager to apply with Project Citizenship.



"It was very nice because we learned from each other. We also studied together, and I feel like it was easier this way," Oscar said about applying with his wife. Now that he is a U.S. citizen, **Oscar is most excited to participate in U.S. elections.**

Citizenship applications are hard enough on their own, but sometimes you need a disability waiver if you are unable to learn English or civics. Marie's **case was not accepted at her first interview**, and she had to obtain a new disability waiver from her doctor to complete the citizenship process in her native Haitian Creole. Project Citizenship **liaised with her doctor** to make sure the form was completed correctly and she was finally **approved at her second interview**. Marie is grateful for Project Citizenship's help.

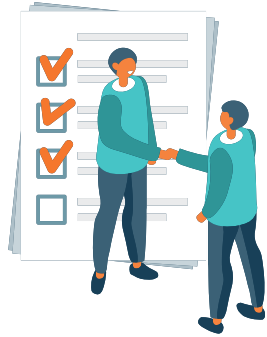


OUR VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers are the backbone of our work. In 2020, our **704 individual volunteers** were from 49 unique partner organizations. We are so grateful to our volunteers for donating time to help us increase the naturalization rate in Massachusetts.



**49 UNIQUE PARTNER
ORGANIZATIONS**



**387 FIRST-TIME
VOLUNTEERS**



**28+ MULTILINGUAL
VOLUNTEERS**



**317 RETURNING
VOLUNTEERS**

VOLUNTEERS SHARE THEIR REASONS TO SUPPORT



"Because my parents immigrated from Egypt to become American citizens, I was privileged to have certain rights and opportunities throughout my life and career as an attorney. I believe it is the least I can do to give back by helping others on their path to citizenship – **volunteering with project citizenship** is a way for me to do just that and is **often the most rewarding part of my week!**" -Tina Zakhary

"By volunteering with Project Citizenship, I'm able use what I learned in law school to **assist others on the first step toward their American Dream.**" -Stephanie Karanevskii

"Volunteering with Project Citizenship is an incredibly rewarding part of my pro bono practice. **My personal experience with helping family through the naturalization process has shown me the significant benefits of citizenship** and how daunting the process can seem, and I look forward to helping those at each workshop to begin their journey to citizenship." - Steven Tjoe



OUR NEW VIRTUAL MODEL

Our **in-person** citizenship **workshops** were our primary service delivery method. Utilizing large groups of volunteers and completing tens to hundreds of applications in one day was a thing of the past in March 2020

We pivoted to virtual models. At first, we did 2-hour phone appointments. As demand rose and the pandemic continued, we began planning to adapt our entire workshop model virtually.

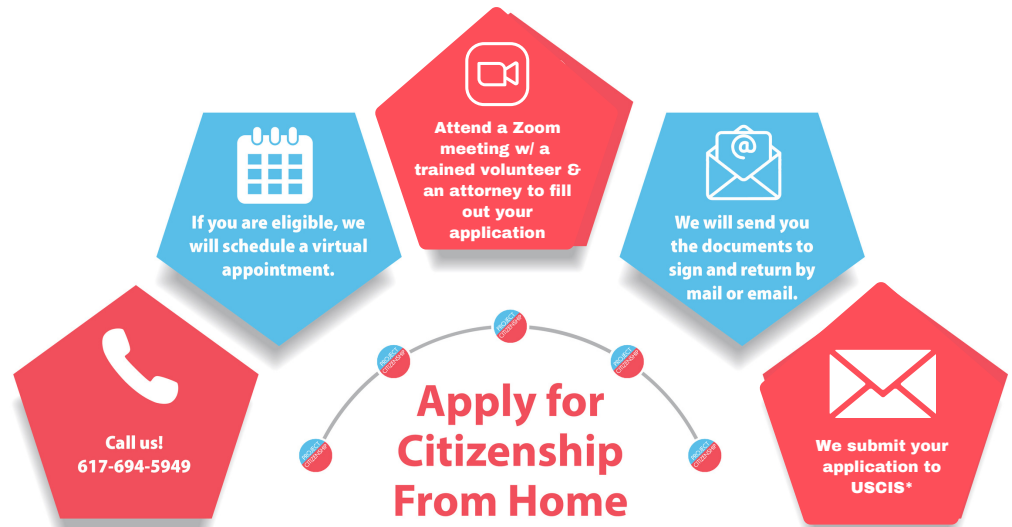
At Project Citizenship we then:

- **Collected feedback from citizens-to-be on their access to technology**
- **Connected with local and national organizations for advice and best practices**
- **Tested out a few pilot workshops**

In August 2020, we launched our virtual workshop model

- **We have served 1,160 clients in weekly virtual workshops**
- **During the screening process, we ask about their technology access to tailor the appointment to the person's needs**
- **This model requires more volunteers, so we need more support**

While the pandemic has widened the technology divide, Project Citizenship is working to make sure our workshops remain accessible to all immigrants across Massachusetts looking for citizenship legal services.



*United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS)

COMMUNITY PARTNERS & CITIZENSHIP COLLABORATORS

Citizenship Collaborators

- Boston Mayor's Office for Immigrant Advancement (MOIA)
- KIND (Kids in Need of Defense)
- Lawrence CommunityWorks

Community Partners

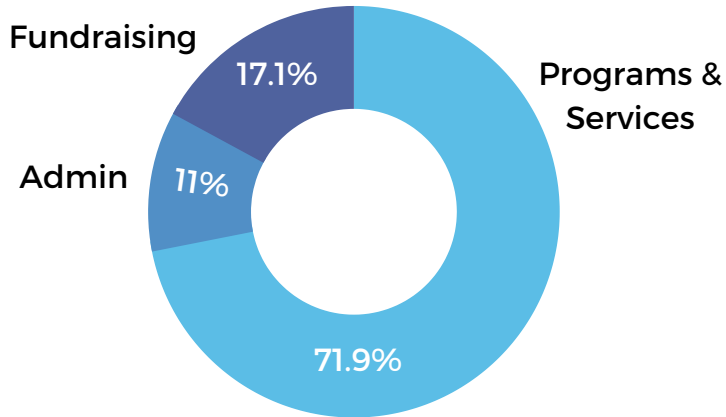
- Action for Boston Community Development (ABCD)
- Agencia ALPHA
- Boston Chinatown Neighborhood Center
- Cambodian Mutual Assistance Association (CMAA)

Community Partners

- International Institute of New England - (IINE)
- Massachusetts Alliance of Portuguese Speakers (MAPS)
- Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition (MIRA)
- New Americans Campaign
- Northeast Justice Center
- Quincy Asian Resources, Inc. (QARI)
- Refugee & Immigrant Assistance Center (RIAC)
- St. Mark's Community Education

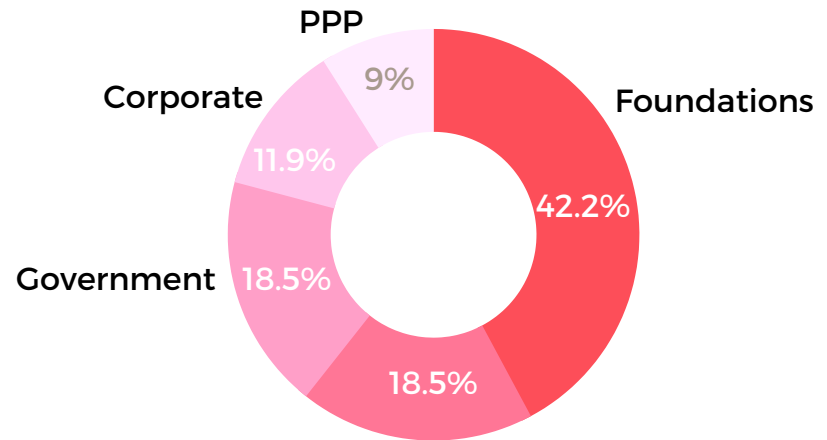
OUR FINANCIAL SUMMARY 2020

2020 EXPENSES



\$917,972

2020 REVENUE



\$1,170,726

OUR IN-KIND SERVICES

3,521 *volunteer* hours

+

2,460 *pro bono* hours

from

704 volunteers

=

\$3,441,743 million dollars of
donated services

\$

2020 required nearly 2x the
number of volunteers
to meet our new virtual needs!





BEYOND APPLICATIONS: LITIGATION SUPPORT



At the start of the pandemic, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) cancelled biometrics appointments, interviews, and oath ceremonies. At that time, **249 of our clients had been approved for naturalization, but were not sworn in as U.S. citizens due to pandemic cancellations.**

We [led an effort](#), along with 9 nonprofits, **asking USCIS to administer the Oaths of Allegiance to applicants remotely.** With **Harvard's Immigration and Refugee Clinical Program**, we [urged](#) the U.S. District Court of Massachusetts to do the same.

We mobilized our pro bono attorneys to **advocate for 38 particularly vulnerable clients to be naturalized immediately and several were [sworn in](#)** while USCIS was still closed.

In August 2020, with support from **Ropes & Gray**, we **filed a lawsuit against USCIS' proposed fee increases** and effective elimination of fee waivers. Instead of hosting an in-person workshop to celebrate Citizenship Day, we filed a motion for a preliminary injunction to stop USCIS from enacting the proposed fee rule. The City of Boston along with 34 other cities, counties, and municipal agencies, filed an amicus brief in support of our lawsuit.

In October 2020, **a federal court highlighted our work in ruling against USCIS' proposed fee changes.** Out of 43,108 comments submitted to USCIS, **the Court specifically quoted our comments**, which were drafted and submitted with the *pro bono* assistance of **WilmerHale**.

"The comments offered by Project Citizenship reflect...detailed, analytic evidence presented to DHS...DHS's response to this and similar comments is both inconsistent and inadequate."

The court's decision can be viewed [here](#).

OUR SPONSORS & SUPPORTERS 2020

Foundation Support

\$220,000+

Fish Family Foundation

\$30,000-\$50,000

Clowes Fund

Ludcke Foundation

The Klarman Family Foundation

The Rands Foundation

\$10,000-\$29,999

Combined Jewish Philanthropies

Nathaniel and Elizabeth Stevens Foundation

Sailors' Snug Harbor of Boston

The Philanthropy Connection

\$1,000-\$9,999

Aubert J. Fay Charitable Fund

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Cambridge Community Foundation

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Social Innovation Forum

Corporate Sponsors

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Government Support

\$4,000-\$140,000+

Massachusetts Office of Refugees and Immigrants

City of Boston

U.S. Citizenship & Immigration Services

Harvard-Allston Partnership Fund



Individual Donors

\$30,000+

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\$10,000-\$29,999

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*An Extra Big Thank You to the
 Fish Family Foundation*

Throughout our formal 7 year tenure as a non-profit and informal community projects before that, the Fish Family has **always** generously supported our aims to increase the naturalization rate and support democracy-building through citizenship.

THANK YOU!



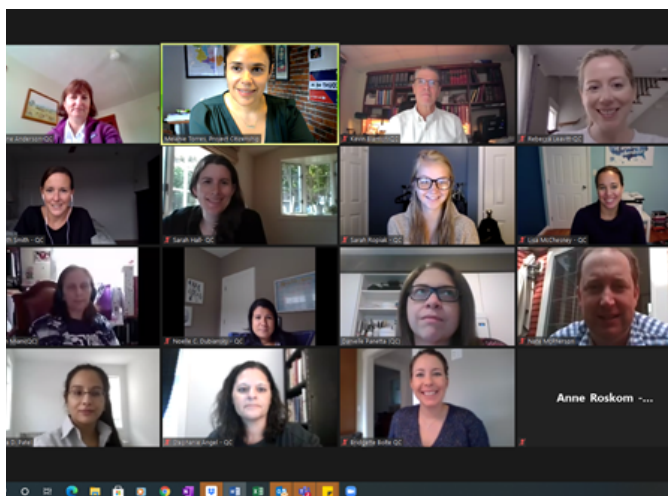
Thank you!



**THANK YOU FOR HELPING US WITH OUR DEMOCRACY BUILDING IN 2020,
WE LOOK FORWARD TO CONTINUING THE ONGOING WORK!**

"Estoy llamando para darles gracias por la ayuda que me brindaron. gracias a ustedes, ya soy ciudadana norteamericana. gracias, gracias, muchas, muchas gracias

[I am calling to thank you for the help you provided me. Thanks to you, I'm a US Citizen. Many, many thanks!]



"Tuve el examen de ciudadanía y todo fue un éxito, inclusive se juramentaron el mismo día. Deseo expresarle mi agradecimiento por su cooperación en este caso, especialmente por haberme gestionado el grant para la aplicación de mi form N-400."

[I had my citizenship exam and everything was a success, including my oath ceremony the same day. I want to express my gratitude for your help with this case, especially for awarding me the grant for my N-400 application]