Building a stronger and fairer New Jersey where New Americans are fully integrated.

Letter from the Commissioners of New Jersey's Department of Human Services and Department of Labor and Workforce Development

Dear Friends,

New Jersey is among the most diverse states in the nation, and immigrant communities are an integral part of our economy and social fabric. New Jersey is home to two million new Americans who make the state more vibrant and prosperous. The Murphy Administration recognizes that creating inclusive communities for new Americans is critical to building a stronger and fairer New Jersey where everyone has the opportunity to thrive.

On July 4, 2019, we joined Governor Murphy at a naturalization ceremony welcoming 40 New Jerseyans who became U.S. citizens on that day. At the same time, the Governor announced Executive Order No. 74 to advance immigration integration and welcoming strategies in New Jersey. As part of these efforts, the Governor tasked our Departments -- Human Services and Labor and Workforce Development--with creating an Office of New Americans to help new New Jerseyans make their home in our great state.

While the work of the Departments began in 2019, the public health emergency caused by the COVID-19 pandemic dramatically changed the course of establishing the Office of New Americans. Throughout this crisis, the Office of New Americans has been working to reach and educate immigrant and refugee communities in our state about response efforts and resources. The pandemic further highlighted the contributions immigrants and refugees make as essential and frontline workers in healthcare, education, childcare and so much more.

Our Departments are excited to continue leading this important work, and we are committed to ensuring that the work is both inclusive of and informed by our diverse immigrant communities. Our teams have prepared this report to outlining recent accomplishments and next steps and recommendations on setting priorities for the Office of New Americans within the Department of Human Services.

We look forward to engaging with you and your communities to further this critical work.

Sincerely,

Carole Johnson Department of Human Services

Maangelo

Robert Asaro-Angelo Department of Labor and Workforce Development

Background: New Americans Demographics and Economic Impact in New Jersey

New Jersey has the fifth largest immigrant population in the United States with more than 2 million foreign-born residents. When compared to the total state population, New Jersey has the third largest proportion of immigrant residents, behind California and New York. New Jersey's foreign-born population is one the most diverse in the nation, speaking many languages at home other than English, with the top five languages being Spanish (32%), followed by Filipino and Tagalong (3.5%) and Chinese (3.4%). Within our state's immigrant population, there is wide diversity in where they live, what languages they speak, their immigration status, and education level.

LANGUAGES SPOKEN AT HOME OTHER THAN ENGLISH IN NEW JERSEY		
	36.2%	SPANISH
3.5 [%] FILIPINO, TAGALOG		
3.4 [%] CHINESE		
3.3 [%] HINDI		
3.3 [%] KOREAN		
3.2 [%] GUJARATHI		
2.7 [%] PORTUGUESE		
2.5 [%] ARABIC		
2.1 [%] POLISH		
1.9 [%] RUSSIAN		

Source: New American Economy analysis of 2018 American Community Survey, 5-year sample

Among New Jersey's immigrant population, more than half (approximately 1.1 million) are naturalized citizens¹, and another 310,911 are eligible to become naturalized citizens.² Although approximately three-quarters of New Jersey's immigrants have some form of legal status, it is estimated that approximately half a million New Jersey residents are currently undocumented.³ Just under 10% of children who are themselves U.S. citizens reside with at least one family member who is undocumented⁴. Approximately 52,000 New Jersey residents are eligible for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals ("DACA") protection, and 16,350 of those eligible are DACA recipients.⁵ Of the 16,737 New Jersey residents who are Temporary Protected Status ("TPS") holders, 96.8% are of working age, and 93.4% are currently working⁶. As of 2017, New Jersey had one of the country's largest populations of foreign-born temporary workers via the H-1B visa program.⁷

New Jersey's adult immigrant population varies in educational attainment. Among adults in New Jersey over the age of 25, immigrants are slightly more likely to have a graduate or professional degree than those born in the United States, with 17.6% of immigrant residents holding a graduate or professional

degree compared to 15.3% of U.S.-born residents⁸. Nevertheless, compared to New Jersey's U.S.-born population, immigrants in New Jersey are less likely to have completed a bachelor's degree (22.7% of immigrants compared to 25.7% of U.S.-born residents), associate's degree or some college (18.1% of immigrants compared to 25.1% of U.S.-born residents), or a high school diploma or equivalent (23.7% of immigrants compared to 27.4% of U.S.-born residents). Further, New Jersey's immigrant population over 25 includes a much larger percentage of adults who have not earned a high school diploma or equivalent (17.8%) than the state's U.S.-born population in the same category (6.5%).

Immigrants' impact on New Jersey's economy is unmistakable. New Jersey's more than 128,000 immigrant entrepreneurs employ nearly 390,000 people. In total, the state's immigrant residents pay close to \$30 billion in state, local, and federal taxes, and comprise almost 41% of New Jersey's STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) workforce. New Jersey's immigrant community is also an indispensable portion of its healthcare workforce: roughly 30% of nurses and more than 50% of health aides are foreign-born. Immigrants are also more than twice as likely to be physicians and surgeons than U.S.-born New Jerseyans.⁹ The immigrant community's critical role in the workforce was especially pronounced during the COVID-19 public health emergency, as many immigrants serve in positions that are on the frontlines of combatting COIVD-19.

Roughly 86% of New Jersey's undocumented immigrant population is estimated to be of working age. New Jersey's undocumented community includes nearly 25,000 entrepreneurs, generates approximately \$12.2 billion in household income, and pays \$1.7 billion in state, local, and federal taxes, including \$604 million in state and local taxes. New Jersey's undocumented workforce alone has an estimated total spending power of \$10.5 billion.¹⁰



Source: New American Economy. Immigrants and the Economy in New Jersey. Data Year 2018.

A New American Economy data report breaks down New Jersey's immigrant population by county. In New Jersey, over half of its 21 counties have an immigrant population of over 50,000 each, with Bergen, Hudson, Essex, and Middlesex counties having immigrant populations of over 200,000¹¹.



Source: New American Economy. National, State, and Metro Area Data. Data Year 2018.

The Murphy Administration's New American Integration Efforts

Governor Murphy's priority is to build a stronger and fairer New Jersey for all residents, including immigrants and refugees. While immigrant integration starts at the local level, the state has a critical role to play in advancing policies to make New Jersey a more welcoming state where new Americans are integrated economically, civically, and linguistically.

The Murphy Administration recognizes the value and contributions of new Americans in our state and the importance of including them as we build a stronger and fairer New Jersey. Since January 2018, the Administration has worked across State agencies to develop policies and initiatives that advance integration efforts and respond to federal proposals that negatively impact immigrant communities. The Murphy Administration has:

• Resumed the state's role as the State Refugee Resettlement Coordinator, after the previous administration relinquished this critical function;

- Expanded state financial aid for college students who are undocumented;
- Provided funding for legal representation for immigrants facing detention and deportation;
- Limited voluntary cooperation between local law enforcement agencies and federal immigration enforcement to build trust between local law enforcement and immigrant communities through the Attorney General's Immigrant Trust Directive;
- Strengthened labor laws to protect workers, including immigrant workers, through measures to expand New Jersey's anti-wage theft laws and requiring all employers to provide paid sick leave;
- Filed or joined at least 11 lawsuits against the Trump Administration's unwelcoming policies, including lawsuits opposing the Trump Administration's public charge rule, and lawsuits seeking to protect asylum seekers and DACA recipients;¹²
- Signed legislation to make it possible for immigrants, regardless of immigration status, to obtain a driver's license.
- Allowed foreign-credentialed physicians to obtain temporary licenses to respond to the COVID-19 health crisis;
- Signed legislation making New Jersey the first state on the East Coast to provide trained and qualified residents access to occupational licenses, regardless of immigration status.

In July 2019, Governor Murphy took integration efforts one step further by issuing Executive Order No. 74 ("EO 74") to promote immigrant integration and create welcoming policies at the state level. The order directed the Departments of Human Services and Labor and Workforce Development to collaboratively develop and launch an Office of New Americans ("ONA"), with the mission of empowering immigrants and refugees throughout the state.

In accordance with EO 74, the Department of Human Services ("DHS") and Department of Labor and Workforce Development ("DOL") have prepared this report outlining the steps taken thus far to create the New Jersey ONA and anticipated actions of the Office.

Major Goals of the Office of New Americans

The ONA is housed within the Department of Human Services and will function as a central hub for coordinating immigrant integration efforts of DHS and DOL as well as supporting other State agencies and departments. It will examine the needs of new Americans and devise ways to meet those needs. The ONA has three major goals:

- Promote outreach, trainings, and other community supports to inform new Americans of their rights and of the services available to them;
- Increase accessibility to State programs through partnerships with organizations and advocacy groups; and
- Coordinate with organizations and advocacy groups to ensure service accessibility through cultural competency and language access.

By achieving these goals, the New Jersey ONA will help empower and integrate new Americans so they can thrive in their communities and contribute to our state.

Preliminary Steps in creating the Office of New Americans

Since Executive Order No. 74 was issued, the Departments of Human Services and Labor and Workforce Development have taken the following steps:

- **Conducted extensive research** into state and city immigrant integration efforts undertaken by other states and localities with targeted new Americans initiatives, including New York, California, Pennsylvania, Michigan, Massachusetts, Boston, Philadelphia, and the Atlanta metro area.
- **Engaged with stakeholders** to better understand existing local integration work and opportunities in New Jersey and identify current challenges in immigrant integration.
- **Developed a framework** for the design of the New Jersey Office of New Americans with the following guiding principles:
 - Directly engage immigrant communities;
 - Promote opportunity, equity, and economic mobility (as evidenced by increasing accessibility of services and supports through coordinated efforts for maximum impact); and
 - Build trust and protect immigrant communities.

Initial stakeholder engagement

The Departments of Human Services and Labor and Workforce Development engaged with stakeholders representing legal services providers, advocates, and faith- and community-based service providers to learn about current issues facing new Americans, the local work currently being done to address those issues, the landscape of service providers available to immigrant communities, and availability of data regarding outcomes from those services.

Through this process, it became clear that a pervasive atmosphere of fear exists due to federal policies regarding immigration. The impact of this fear is reflected in:

- low naturalization rates compared to the eligible population;
- low DACA participation rates compared to the eligible population;
- decreased utilization of services for which all immigrants are eligible, such as privately-run food pantries and community-based English as a Second Language classes;
- workplace exploitation;
- the effects of family separation on children; and
- misinformation regarding the federal public charge rule.

Challenges related to the judicial system – including inequitable access to courts and the legal system – were also identified. These highlight the need to:

- raise awareness regarding the availability of translation and interpretation services;
- make support available for deportation defense and related issues;
- provide training for the judiciary, attorneys, and immigrants without legal counsel regarding the effect of plea bargain agreements on immigration status;
- provide counsel for unaccompanied minors with asylum applications; and
- prevent abusive practices by notarios¹³ (people representing themselves as qualified to offer legal advices or services concerning immigration matters) and private attorneys.

The following deficiencies were identified with regard to education, cultural competency, and language access:

- barriers to accessing English Language Training programs for both children and adults;
- lack of training for educators regarding cultural and social needs of immigrants and their children, especially those living in fear of family separation; and
- lack of guidance and training for school districts regarding school enrollment and inclusion policies to better support immigrant students and their families.

Recommendations from the field

Initial stakeholder conversations led to several recommendations from community groups and service providers, including:

- Ensuring that immigrant communities and immigrant voices inform the process of program development and delivery;
- Develop trainings and messaging to inform new Americans of the availability of services and their rights to obtain services, including in the context of employment;
- Promote public/private partnerships to increase access to state programs for new Americans;
- Increase accessibility to state programs and services for those with limited English proficiency;
- Create community-based hubs to support immigrants, following New York's Opportunity Centers model; and
- Increase promotion of factual information regarding access to state and federal benefits to help counter public charge myths.

While Executive Order No. 74 established the mission of the ONA, DHS and DOL's initial stakeholder engagement helped shape the vision for the ONA's framework and top priorities.

New Jersey Office of New Americans

Housed in the New Jersey Department of Human Services, the ONA will work collaboratively with stakeholders and state and local agencies to meet the three major goals noted above. The Murphy administration understands the need to invest in programs and initiatives for new Americans in order to meet these goals. The most recent budget doubled the investment in legal services for those facing detention and deportation to a total of \$6.2 million. Additionally, the ONA has been provided with \$200,000 to build the capacity of the office. The ONA will continue to provide support on COVID-related initiatives as well as work toward the overall goals using the principles of direct community engagement, promotion of opportunity and equity, and building trust with communities.

Continuing COVID-19 response efforts

In the face of an unprecedented crisis, responding to the COVID-19 public health emergency and response efforts to immigrant and refugee communities became a top priority for the ONA. Since the onset of the pandemic, the ONA focused its efforts on:

- Creating public education materials about income assistance and work-related supports available to New Jerseyans, regardless of immigration status, during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Presenting at various forums to service providers serving immigrants and refugees on assistance and resources available to immigrants and refugees and public charge implications.

 Working on data analysis, in partnership with the New American Economy, to identify languages spoken other than English by region in the State and breakdown of country of origin by county. The data is critical to guide the state's COVID-19 response and outreach efforts to immigrant and refugee groups.

Direct community engagement

Host listening sessions with immigrant communities.

New Jersey is both culturally and linguistically diverse. The Departments of Human Services and Labor and Workforce Development propose that the ONA will collaborate with local partners to host a number of listening sessions to ensure direct community input from immigrant groups across the state, as needs vary in different communities and locations. The ONA will follow best practices in this work, including employing the Atlanta metro area's One Region Initiative: Creating a Welcoming Metro Atlanta (ORI) plan, which provides a promising model for engaging and including immigrant voices in the government program planning process. In order to accomplish this, DHS and DOL propose that the ONA will take the following steps:

- Identify partners in various sectors, including philanthropy, interested in working together on the listening sessions' planning and implementation.
- Establish a steering committee to coordinate listening sessions. The committee would include community leaders, service providers, members of the business community, educators, attorneys, and immigration experts. The steering committee will help plan the listening sessions and identify locations, local trusted partners, language access needs, and outreach strategy and structure.

Promote opportunity, equity, and economic mobility

Improve access to DHS and DOL services.

More than 1 million New Jerseyans have limited English language proficiency, which means they do not speak English as their primary language and have a limited ability to read, speak, write, or understand English. New Jersey's linguistic diversity is uniquely broad. According to data provided by the New American Economy, the 10 most commonly spoken languages in New Jersey after English are: Spanish, Tagalog, Chinese, Hindi, Korean, Gujarati, Portuguese, Arabic, Polish, and Russian.¹⁴ Meeting the linguistic needs of New American communities through a language access plan can improve access to services and create language resources to be shared among agencies.

The Departments of Human Services and Labor and Workforce Development propose that the ONA will work to improve the Departments' language access messaging and initiatives by implementing the following steps:

- Develop an assessment of any existing DHS or DOL language access plans.
- Develop messaging and materials around language access that includes providing materials translated into languages other than Spanish.
- Develop a comprehensive list of language resources, such as interpreters and translators.
- Make language identification materials widely available to DHS and DOL frontline workers.

Improve access to adult education and employment services.

In January 2020, New Jersey was selected by the World Education Services Global Talent Bridge to join a cohort of communities working to fully integrate skilled immigrants into their workforce. Through the Skilled Immigrant Integration Program, New Jersey will work with a team of national experts and join a network of communities that are advancing initiatives to create pathways for skilled immigrants to integrate into our local workforce and improve their professional outcomes. The goal of the program is to develop a road map for New Jersey to increase opportunities for new Americans to capitalize on their talents and skills.

In New Jersey, 80% of our foreign-born population is of working age, which means immigrants play a key role in our state's labor force. Increasing opportunities for immigrants to participate in adult education and workforce services can help immigrant families improve their financial standing and contribute more as taxpayers.

The federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) targets workforce training programs for youth, adults, and dislocated workers, as well as subpopulations such as out-of-school youth aged 16 to 24. These training programs are available to many immigrants. For example, adult education services include a large focus on building the skills of adults who lack a high school diploma or who have limited English language proficiency. In order to maximize the potential of new Americans, DHS and DOL propose that the ONA, in partnership with the Department of Labor, take the following steps:

- Conduct an assessment to identify potential barriers to accessing workforce, adult, and literacy education programs for new Americans.
- Identify best practices in adult education and workforce services delivery that are inclusive of immigrants and English learners.
- Develop an outreach strategy for new Americans to raise awareness of these services and how to access them.
- Develop an inventory or database of English-language training and literacy programs for adults in New Jersey.
- Identify opportunities and initiatives that can support skilled immigrants in gaining work experience.

Build trust and protect immigrant communities

Create an effective communications strategy.

Unwelcoming federal government policies on immigration have negatively impacted trust of government in immigrant communities. Actions such as increased immigration enforcement by federal Immigration and Customs Enforcement officers and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Public Charge Rule have created a climate of fear, a "chilling effect" on seeking help, and a lack of trust in state and local government agencies and services.

This fear magnifies the already existing challenge of ensuring access to services for eligible immigrants, and creating programs that are sensitive to the challenges of cultural and linguistic diversity. In the face of the federal government's unwelcoming policies, states are left with the critical task of fighting back on

these policies and communicating their potential impact to our immigrant communities. In order to address this fear and build trust, DHS and DOL propose that the ONA will take the following steps:

- Create effective messaging with accurate and comprehensive information about which services immigrants, including undocumented immigrants, can access without fear. For example, the Center for Law and Social Policy and the National Immigration Law Center have created a Protecting Immigrant Families campaign that presents information about accessing public services using a traffic light analogy: green light programs can be accessed without fear, yellow light programs warrant consultation with an attorney or other expert, and red light programs could put a person's immigration status at risk. Adopting a similar model could help the Departments quickly communicate critical elements of any given program.
- Develop training for DHS and DOL frontline workers regarding legal, policy, and regulatory changes and resources, and promote cultural competency and responsiveness training to better understand the unique needs of New Jersey immigrant and refugee communities.
- Conduct a review of data collected by the Departments via applications for programs and services to ensure that vulnerable populations are not put at risk by unnecessary data collection.

Continue building DHS's capacity to support refugees, asylum seekers, and other humanitarian groups.

In 2019, in collaboration with the International Rescue Committee (IRC), New Jersey resumed the state's role in managing refugee resettlement efforts in New Jersey, which former Governor Chris Christie had relinquished to the federal government in 2016. Specifically, DHS has appointed a State Refugee Coordinator along with three staff positions. The DHS team is working collaboratively with IRC's New Jersey Office of Refugee Resettlement to ensure that refugees have seamless access to the federal and state assistance and social services programs for which they are eligible, and has submitted its Refugee Resettlement Program State Plan to the federal Office of Refugee Resettlement.

Provide resources for unaccompanied minors.

Unaccompanied minors are one of the most vulnerable populations in New Jersey, and the state resettles a relatively large proportion of the country's unaccompanied minors. Every year since Fiscal Year 2014 through the most recent FY 2020, New Jersey has accepted more than 5% of the nation's unaccompanied minors, with only four to six states resettling more unaccompanied minors annually.¹⁵ The number of unaccompanied minors accepted in New Jersey dropped slightly between FY 2017 and FY 2018, from 2,268 to 1,877, and then more than doubled in FY 2019, rising to 4,236. As of May 2020, the reported number of unaccompanied children released to sponsors in New Jersey in FY 2020 is 867, tracking national trends¹⁶. Since FY 2014, New Jersey has received a total of 15,468 unaccompanied minors.¹⁷

Unaccompanied minors are at risk for becoming victims of trafficking, smuggling, or other forms of exploitation; not completing high school; and developing mental health issues including anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder. DHS and DOL propose that the Office of New Americans will take the following steps to address the unique challenges faced by these children:

• Work with the resettlement agencies and other service providers serving unaccompanied minors to identify their needs and challenges faced when resettling in communities across New Jersey.

- Develop best practices and identify initiatives or programs to support the needs of unaccompanied minors.
- Liaise with other State agencies such as the Departments of Children and Families, Health, and Education to help connect unaccompanied minors to resources available through other State agencies.

Improve access to legal services.

Since 2018, the Murphy Administration has funded legal representation for immigrants facing detention or removal proceedings. The funding has helped four legal services providers in New Jersey increase their capacity to serve this population, this program has provided critical legal representation to over 1,500 immigrants facing deportation. The FY21 budget transfers the legal services appropriation to the Department of Human Services and doubles funding to \$6.2 million. DHS plans for the ONA to oversee this program and increase partnerships between the legal service providers and social services, workforce, and State agency services. Building these connections would help strengthen collaboration between entities providing a variety of services to immigrants and their families. The Office of New Americans will support and guide these efforts going forward, including gathering information and outcomes related to the legal services supported by this funding.

Conclusion

In New Jersey, diversity is at the core of the state's strength. Since 2018, New Jersey has made tremendous progress in establishing welcoming policies and practices in the areas of education, law enforcement, worker protection, and social services coordination. DHS and DOL recognize that continued partnership with community groups, advocacy organizations, service providers, and state and local government agencies is critical to the success of any welcoming efforts. The vision outlined in this report centers those partnerships in the design and launch of New Jersey's first Office of New Americans. DHS and DOL plan to continue on this path to coordinate the efforts of the Office of New Americans and support immigrants and refugees to promote a stronger and fairer state for all New Jersey residents.

- ⁴ American Immigration Council. Immigrants in New Jersey. October 13, 2017. https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/research/immigrants-in-new-jersey
- ⁵ Migration Policy Institute. Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) Data

⁶ Migration Policy Institute. State Immigration Data Profiles: New Jersey. Retrieved from <u>https://www.migrationpolicy.org/data/state-profiles/state/demographics/NJ</u>

¹ Migration Policy Institute. State Immigration Data Profiles: New Jersey. Retrieved from <u>https://www.migrationpolicy.org/data/state-profiles/state/demographics/NJ</u>

² Center for Migration Studies. State-Level Unauthorized Population and Eligible-to-Naturalize Estimates. Retrieved from <u>http://data.cmsny.org/state.html</u>

³ New American Economy. Immigrants and the Economy in New Jersey. Retrieved from <u>https://www.newamericaneconomy.org/locations/new-jersey/</u>

Tools.<u>https://www.migrationpolicy.org/programs/data-hub/deferred-action-childhood-arrivals-daca-profiles</u>

⁷ Ruiz, Neil. Key facts about the U.S. H-1B visa program. Pew Research Center. 2017. https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/04/27/key-facts-about-the-u-s-h-1b-visa-program/

⁸ U.S. Census Bureau. Table S0501: Selected Characteristics of the Native and Foreign-Born Populations, 2018 American Community Survey 1-year Estimates.

https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?q=S0501%3A%20SELECTED%20CHARACTERISTICS%20OF%20THE%20NATIVE %20AND%20FOREIGN-BORN%20POPULATIONS&g=0400000US34&hidePreview=true&tid=ACSST1Y2018.S0501

⁹ New American Economy. "Immigrants and the Economy in New Jersey". Data Year 2018. Accessed at <u>https://www.newamericaneconomy.org/locations/new-jersey/ in March 2020.</u>

¹⁰ <u>Ibid.</u>

¹¹ New American Economy. National, State, and Metro Area Data. Data Year 2018.

Accessed at https://data.newamericaneconomy.org/en/counties/index.html

¹² O'Dea, Colleen. "The List: New Jersey v. Trump, on a Case-by-Case Basis." *NJ Spotlight*. October 22, 2019.

https://www.njspotlight.com/2019/10/the-list-new-jersey-v-trump-on-a-case-by-case-basis/

¹³ American Bar Association. "About Notario Fraud". July 19, 2018. Retrieved from

https://www.americanbar.org/groups/public_interest/immigration/projects_initiatives/fight-notariofraud/about_notario_fraud/

¹⁴ New American Economy analysis of 2018 American Community Survey, 5-year sample.

¹⁵ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Office of Refugee Resettlement. "Unaccompanied Alien Children Released to Sponsors By State." November 27, 2019. <u>https://www.acf.hhs.gov/orr/resource/unaccompanied-alien-children-released-to-sponsors-by-state</u>

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid. Note that when this data was initially accessed on November 25, 2019, FY 2014 – FY 2019 were available on this website. The webpage and its data were updated on November 27, 2019, at which time the FY 2014 numbers were deleted and the FY 2020 numbers were added. The new total reflects all data from FY 2014 – FY 2020 as of February 27, 2020.