Since 2003, the Welcoming Center has bolstered the economic growth of Philadelphia as well as helped thousands of individuals and families attain job-security, advance their education and careers, and expand opportunities for others.

Our mission is to accelerate immigrant integration and economic advancement through education and training, employment, and entrepreneurship. We do this by:

- Opening doors of economic opportunity for global newcomers
- Providing education and training for successful integration into the American workforce
- Helping employers attract and retain global talent
- Realizing the potential of the immigrant and U.S. born entrepreneur
- Facilitating citizenship and civic engagement
- Enhancing the economic development of the Greater Philadelphia region

Lien Lam, originally from Vietnam, comes to the Welcoming Center for English classes and help preparing for her citizenship exam.
Dear Friends,

Since our opening in 2003, the Welcoming Center has assisted more than 15,000 people from nearly every country of the world learn English, secure jobs and become essential members of our community. More than 2,300 work-authorized immigrants have been connected to employment, sustaining their families and building roots in our communities. Equally important, we have help launch over 800 individual entrepreneurs, many building businesses in our most distressed neighborhoods.

It hasn’t been easy. Against the backdrop of anti-immigrant sentiment and unpredictable public funding, we continue to encourage professionals from other countries to learn English and sharpen their skills. We also work with those who need to earn a high school degree in order to meet minimum requirements for employment in the US.

At the Welcoming Center for New Pennsylvanians, we value the success of each individual and we recognize that when done well, immigrant integration benefits our city and region. Our revised Immigrant Professionals Program supported by The Barra Foundation, the Knight Foundation, Citizens Bank, Independence Blue Cross, and The Boeing Foundation, offers practical English classes for skilled immigrants. In partnership with Mt. Airy USA, we celebrated the opening of the Philadelphia Immigrant Innovation Hub, where we provide technical support and training to business owners and aspiring entrepreneurs.

In January of 2016, as co-Chair of Mayor Kenney’s Transition Team for Immigrant Affairs, Peter was selected to represent the Welcoming Center and its participants, working on a team that creates policy and programmatic recommendations to the new administration.

Throughout this Annual Report, you will read inspiring stories about our participants and their journeys. You will see how supporting immigrants’ efforts to successfully integrate into the Philadelphia region raises our economic productivity, enhances the cultural texture of the city, and elevates the international profile of the Philadelphia region.

With your support, we will continue to value our newest citizens and support their many contributions to our region.

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The Welcoming Center for New Pennsylvanians’ total revenue in FY2015-2016 was $1,953,508. We are supported by a diverse revenue stream including generous donations from individuals, corporate sponsors, foundation funders and government contracts. Our annual Solas Awards, the Welcoming Center’s premiere gala event, generates 10% of the annual operating budget while shining a light on visionary leaders. 2016’s Solas Awards honored three highly accomplished local leaders: Mayor Jim Kenney, immigrant entrepreneur Timothy Haas, and Dan Hilferty, President & CEO of Independence Blue Cross.

**FUND DISTRIBUTION**

- Program Services 1,754,404
- Management/General 202,882
- Fundraising 99,085

**Total** 2,056,371

**FUNDING SOURCES**

- Government Grant Contracts 1,290,459
- Contributed Goods & Services 207,610
- Foundation Grants & Contributions 207,593
- Direct Fundraising 178,378
- Other Revenue 69,417
- Interest Income 51

**Total** 1,953,508
IMPACT & DEMOGRAPHICS

200,000
foreign-born individuals live in Philadelphia

13%
of Philadelphia is made up of immigrants

63%
Proportion of female and male Welcoming Center program participants

37%

80%
of our clients are racial or ethnic minorities and the vast majority do not speak English as their first language

1/3
of our clients come to us with a high school diploma or less and need help finding entry-level work

40%
of the immigrants we work with have a bachelor’s degree or higher from their home country

100%
of those who come to us are unemployed, severely underemployed, or are creating their own pathways through entrepreneurship

2/3
of our participants learn about us from a friend or a relative

2,300
work-authorized immigrants have been placed with family-sustaining employment

800
immigrant and U.S.-born entrepreneurs have received assistance launching or expanding their businesses

120
professional immigrants have been helped to establish their career pathways

Top 4 reasons for participation in our programs

Meet an educational goal
Meet an employment goal
Self improvement
Become a U.S. citizen

Philadelphia is a global city!

Welcoming Center for New Pennsylvanians welcomed over 800 newcomers from over 80 countries in 2016.

Where our participants come from (top 10 countries)

1 Algeria 2 Liberia 3 China 4 Haiti 5 Dominican Republic 6 Mexico 7 Morocco 8 Ethiopia 9 Republic of Guinea 10 Colombia
Our comprehensive learning and education programs are suited for immigrants, foreign trained professionals, native Philadelphians, and anyone aiming to advance their education. We offer English classes and tutoring for all learning levels, from beginners to advanced and college preparation. We also offer English classes especially geared toward healthcare professionals and entrepreneurs. Our education, literacy, and job readiness training programs provide contextualized language education and guidance to learning and then understanding cultural and workforce norms.

**GED**  
Classes help immigrants and native Philadelphians successfully prepare for and pass their GED exams and meet high-school level academic skills.

**ESL/EFL**  
Our English as a Second Language and English as a Foreign Language classes prepare non-native English speakers to learn grammar.

**LITERACY**  
Classes are geared for those wanting to build on their literacy skills as well as learn to better communicate, read and write in English.

**ADULT BASIC EDUCATION**  
Courses are tailored to the needs of adults not enrolled in school but aiming to improve their basic skills in reading, writing, math, listening, and speaking.

**VOCATIONAL LITERACY**  
Customized classes help students develop workplace specific communication styles and skills.

**CITIZENSHIP**  
Classes help students prepare for their citizenship exams as well as to build an understanding of civic engagement.

Instructor, Jesse, teaches a group of English language learners in one of our Vocational Literacy classes.
After being uprooted from everything he had ever known, Jean originally from the Republic of Benin, has rebuilt his life in Philadelphia.

"I was in the twelfth grade in my country when we had to leave, so I never graduated from high school," explains Jean Badou, who recently passed his GED exam. "When I arrived here with my family, I didn’t speak any English," said Jean.

"I heard about the Welcoming Center for New Pennsylvanians from my dad. The first time I came to the Center, I met wonderful people who work here every day to help people like me achieve our goals. My goal was to get my GED so I can go to college. I achieved my goal because of my hard work and the help and support of my teachers.

"I began taking classes at the Welcoming Center in the evening after work. But now I have my high school diploma, and all the tools I need to pursue my goal of going to college and studying medicine. The Welcoming Center has even helped me get a better job, which I will begin in two weeks.

"Every day I am learning because education is essential. With determination and hard work, you can achieve whatever you want to do in life. I want to tell the world that, with the Welcoming Center, you CAN learn a lot and achieve your goals."
The Welcoming Center serves immigrants in the Philadelphia metropolitan area with classes including English as a Second Language, Civics, and College Readiness English to prepare its clients for gainful employment. Through our training programs, we provide a host of other Job Specific Skills Training courses so that anyone who comes through our doors can be ready to enter the workforce with a solid career pathway and network of support. These courses include:

**CONTEXTUALIZED LANGUAGE CLASSES**
Customized for various career pathways

**ONE-ON-ONE CAREER PATHWAYS TRAINING**
Provides support from the Welcoming Center case management team and employment specialists

**SOFTWARE TRAINING**
Helps newcomers acculturate to the US workforce

**PROFESSIONAL WRITING**
Builds strong technical writing skills and strengthens grammar

**SERVSAFE CERTIFICATION PROGRAM**
A food and beverage safety training administered by the National Restaurant Association, certifies graduates and prepares them for jobs in the food service industry

**NCLEX, National Council Licensure Examination**
Prep for foreign-trained nurses designed to help them pass their nursing certification

**Immigrant Professionals Program (IPP)**
Training programs offered by the Welcoming Center, which help immigrants smoothly transition into the workforce, have been developed in response to the ever-changing demographics of immigrants in Philadelphia. We noticed in recent years that a steady number of new immigrants coming to the Welcoming Center hold at least a bachelor’s degree from their country of origin.

**WHERE IPP PARTICIPANTS COME FROM**

**TOP 3 DISCIPLINES OF IPP PARTICIPANTS**

**LEVELS OF EDUCATION OF IPP PARTICIPANTS**
Our Immigrant Professionals Program, IPP, is aimed at helping professional immigrants find employment commensurate with their education and professional potential. The IPP is designed for immigrants living in the Philadelphia region who have a college degree from outside the US and are seeking employment in their profession. The program provides individualized career pathways for every participant including assessment and consultation; networking and business skills workshops; career mapping and guidance; workshops; and professional support. Our workshops are invaluable for presenting opportunities to sharpen networking skills, as well as meet new people. They provide a chance to use professional English, to interact with others from a variety of different cultural and ethnic backgrounds, and to meet other professionals in their fields of interest. Our rich curriculum provides practical resources and real opportunities for participants to build their American credentials.

Master-level graphic design artist, Valeria, is building her own career in Philadelphia.

Valeria was born and raised on a small farm in the village of San Vicente de Tagua Tagua, Chile. After earning her bachelor’s degree in Santiago, Chile, Valeria moved to Spain and earned her master’s degree in communications and advertising in Barcelona. She returned to Santiago where she worked as a professional graphic designer.

“Eight years ago, I left my country to come to Philadelphia. I never imagined all that would come in the following years. My suitcase was full of hopes and dreams. I was leaving all the important things in my life. I was nervous and happy at the same time. My son was born in this country. He is the greatest joy in my life and the engine of my actions. After leaving a bad marriage, I was alone, without work, money, speaking poor English, and with a baby in my arms. Despite the fact that everything was against me for a long time, I have turned adversary into something positive.

“When I came to the Welcoming Center, I had opportunities to use my graphic design expertise to work on projects for the organization. This helped me to build my reputation in the City. I enrolled in classes at the Welcoming Center, made friends, improved my English, and created a network. I eventually enrolled in the Immigrant Professionals Program and strengthened my professional network. Now, I am a freelance graphic designer and work with various nonprofits and small local businesses. My career goal is to find a job in the area of design and/or communications in an educational organization, nonprofit or government department, to interweave my knowledge with community service.

“My favorite class I took at the Welcoming Center is the Professional Writing class, with Susan. She taught me how to express myself through my writing. For me, doing this in English was difficult at first, but it pushed me to improve. I am proud of what I have accomplished.” Valeria has also become an American citizen. She and her son live happily together in Philadelphia.
EMLOYMENT

Immigrants and native Philadelphians can come to the Welcoming Center to design a career path, connect to employment opportunities, and prepare for interviews. Our employment specialists match participants with the appropriate training needed to improve English, prepare for tests, build on skills, or even run a small business.

Our reputation with employers and businesses supports our mission as we aim to strengthen Philadelphia’s economy. Research shows that immigrants can be tremendous assets to cities and in Philadelphia, this is no exception. Philadelphia’s once declining population is steadily rising due to the influx of immigrants. Immigrants are responsible for 96% of Philadelphia’s small business growth and 75% of workforce growth since 2000.

However, immigrants also face barriers to success like learning a new language, adapting to a different culture, dealing with past traumas, and many other challenges. The Welcoming Center aims to recognize and address these barriers with participants. Through our Employment workshops, immigrants and native-born Philadelphians achieve success in the workplace.

RÉSUMÉ WRITING
Group and individual writing workshops provide guidance for immigrants preparing and updating their résumés and cover letters and help to build confidence

SUCCESS IN THE U.S. WORKPLACE
'Soft-skills' training workshops bridge gaps for immigrants to understand and acculturate to American workplace culture

JOB INTERVIEW PREPARATION
Group and individual workshops are designed to help immigrants prepare for interviews with potential employers

INDEPENDENT JOB SEARCH INSTRUCTION
These workshops teach learners how to search for jobs using the internet, social networking, and research
EMPLOYMENT

Former Welcoming Center program participant, Curlea, now volunteers to help other newcomers attain employment, all while working towards a Bachelor’s degree in Human Resources at Temple.

Curlea was born and raised on the island country of Saint Lucia. “I had educational and professional experience back in Saint Lucia. It was so frustrating because I tried so hard on my own to get a job. I sent applications, résumés, and references but all of my experience was in Saint Lucia. I realized ‘No one is going to make an expensive international phone call to look into my employment history or references,'” she said.

“The Welcoming Center helped me get my first job at Kenneth Cole. It was a seasonal job which was perfect. I needed American work experience and was the opportunity desperately needed. With this experience, I had a company and a manager who would vouch for my work ethic and professionalism and shortly after, I landed a job in a nursing home. This job allowed me to save enough money to begin taking college courses at the Community College of Philadelphia. After working three years in the nursing home, I decided to attend school full time. After graduating with my associate’s degree in Business Administration, I began at Temple University and am currently working towards my bachelor’s degree in Human Resources.

“I have a passion for helping people and I know now that I am really good at it. I decided to get involved with a student group and volunteering with the Welcoming Center – the organization that gave me so much. I help out in the evenings with the mock-interviewing and résumé writing workshops. I identify with participants when they express frustration and disappointment.

“I know that feeling. You leave everything you know, all the people you love, and you tell people back home, ‘I’m going to America and I am going to make something of myself’. It is the most frustrating feeling when you can’t. You are stuck. I tell those I help at the Welcoming Center that it’s going to be okay and that they need to be persistent, stay positive, and cannot become discouraged. I share my experience and it really helps them to see what I have done and to hear all that I am doing. I am on the right track and I am doing really well. It is hard – the life of a student is very difficult but I look on the bright side. If you want something, you have to work for it. My mother always told me that. I tell people at the Welcoming Center the same thing.” Curlea will graduate with her bachelor’s degree in Human Resources in 2018.

Union Packaging founder, and commendable business leader Mike Pearson started Union Packaging in 1999 with one goal – to bring economic opportunities to the greater Philadelphia region. Pearson recognized the decline in wage-providing labor-force opportunities in his hometown so he set out to develop a profit-generating, healthy business that would create opportunity while incorporating his own values of respect, diversity and inclusion.

One of the core pillars of Union Packaging is its commitment to investing in a diverse and inclusive workforce. Pearson says, “This is not only the right thing to do, morally, but it’s good for business. Since I first connected with the Welcoming Center, it’s been a great relationship. We hire newcomers looking for American work experience and we provide valuable, sustainable jobs. We also hire immigrants who want to grow with our company. Union Packaging greatly benefits from this hiring relationship.

“The Welcoming Center’s training programs really prepare immigrants to enter the workforce, ready to go. I trust them for their reputation and from my own experience. I have met some incredible people over the years and I am extremely proud of the collaborative effort that we have taken on.”
The Welcoming Center provides services to aspiring entrepreneurs and small business owners as they look to start or grow their business in our region. We provide training opportunities including English for Entrepreneurs, business development clinics, and specialized business advice, in addition to connecting business owners to valuable resources. The Welcoming Center also provides support to communities working to integrate immigrant business owners into their commercial corridors by providing technical assistance to community organizations and through community events. We offer entrepreneurship skills training, English for Entrepreneurs classes, business workshops and consultations, technical assistance, guidance on licenses and regulations, and more resources. Today, we have helped more than 800 small businesses successfully grow and expand. Through our partnerships with the Philadelphia Department of Commerce, Mount Airy USA, and other institutions, we are able to develop and execute practical and comprehensive business development courses for micro-entrepreneurs in Philadelphia.

**Global Enterprise Hub**

The Welcoming Center offers free business training and supports to help immigrants start or grow their businesses. Global Enterprise Hub participants gain access to:

- Free business technical assistance
- Regular workshops and legal clinics
- Networking opportunities with fellow entrepreneurs
- English classes and business skills training programs through our English for Entrepreneurs class
- Assistance with building a business plan and where to access capital
- Training and support for creating a business website, social media strategy, and Google Maps profile
- City resources for businesses in Philadelphia
- Trainings geared towards market research, advertising, and financial planning

Issa Horn, a vendor in the 52nd Street Corridor of Philadelphia, is proud of his business.
El Soto Deli & Grocery is much more than your typical corner store. You’ll find a variety of fresh produce, a delicious selection of hoagies, an array of dried chilis, peppers, and spices, as well as popular cooking staples from Philadelphia to Mexico, and Central America.

Julio was born and raised in Mexico City. When he came to America, Julio and his brother worked numerous jobs in restaurants and saved their earnings so they could eventually open their own store in South Philadelphia.

“I always paid attention to the service industry standards. No matter what job I had, I noticed how my employers treated customers, how they managed their employees, and how they maintained relationships with partners. I never owned a business before but my brother and I just said, ‘Let’s give it a try.’ When we finally purchased our space, I thought, ‘we could do something different here, and simply focus on making fresh, high-quality sandwiches and traditional Mexican favorites.’

“I take great pride in what we make. We make classic Philly hoagies and sandwiches but we also put our own twist on our menu with our Mexican tortas and Mexican-inspired hoagies. When I came to Philly, I saw Italian hoagies, Vietnamese hoagies, and so on and I thought, ‘I can make a Mexican hoagie and it would be delicious!’ People love our Mexican sandwiches.”

After about three years running El Soto, Julio and his brother wanted to take their business to the next level. After some research, they came across the Healthy Corner Store Initiative which would provide assistance in increasing El Soto’s capacity to sell and market healthy items in order to improve healthy options in their neighborhood, as well as provide them with training and technical assistance to help make these healthy changes profitable. This brought Julio to the Welcoming Center.

Julio has seen marked success as his business grows, since making the change to a healthy corner store. The Welcoming Center has been there every step of the way. “Any time I have a question, or a concern, or if I need help, I know I can turn to the Welcoming Center. Herman [Nyangangal] and Natalie [Cramer] have been so great. They have helped us in designing our menu, building our website, marketing and branding, and getting our catering business off-the-ground.”

Make a visit to El Soto on a Saturday or Sunday morning for fresh, traditional tamales. But get there early - they don't last long!
Solas means ‘light’ in Irish. The Solas Awards are a hallmark of our organization and the primary fundraising event to recognize key community organizations and business leaders for their work supporting immigrant integration in Philadelphia.

The 2016 Solas Awards was held at the Sheraton Philadelphia Downtown Hotel on April 20, 2016 and was attended by 380 guests, including business, civic and community leaders. A total of $219,000 was raised.

Honorees
Every year, we honor individuals and businesses that illuminate the positive impact that immigrants make to the regional economy:

**Atlas Award for Advancing Opportunity:** Daniel J. Hilferty and Independence Blue Cross

**Realizing the American Dream Award:** Timothy Haahs

**Dennis Clark Solas Award:** Mayor Jim Kenney

**Employers of Distinction**
We work with more than 140 employers across the five-county Philadelphia region. Each year we recognize a select group for their commitment to building a diverse workforce and for their partnership in the employment of work authorized immigrants who come to us for job placement and educational support services:

Cintas West Philadelphia
Microcision LLC
Weber Display & Packaging
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Individual Donors FY 2015 - 2016

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The Welcoming Center appreciates each and every dollar that is contributed! We strive for accuracy in our donor list. If you would like to make changes to your listing, please call 215-557-2858.
GET INVOLVED

Join the Welcoming Center for New Pennsylvanians in supporting immigrants in Philadelphia by making a contribution to our annual fund. **Donating** has never been easier!
Donate online using PayPal through our website, welcomingcenter.org/donate
Text “give” to 215-515-0509
Write us a check written to, **Welcoming Center for New Pennsylvanians**

Interested in **volunteering**? Fill out our volunteer application and our volunteer coordinator will contact you to arrange an in-depth information interview. welcomingcenter.formstack.com/forms/volunteers

**Want to make a lasting contribution?**
Become a sustaining donor by joining the Welcoming Circle – an esteemed group of high-level donors who are committed to the longevity and sustainability of the Welcoming Center. For More information, contact Rebecca Rathje, 215-557-2858, or rebecca@welcomingcenter.org.

A gift that transforms our organization or one of our programs is a wonderful philanthropic expression. These are often made by donors in their wills or living trusts. Please let us know if you’re considering leaving the Welcoming Center in your estate planning. For More information, contact Rebecca Rathje, 215-557-2858, or rebecca@welcomingcenter.org.

The Welcoming Center for New Pennsylvanians is a 501(c)3 charitable, nonprofit organization, Federal Tax ID# 23-3001411.

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