

#WELCOMINGWORKS

From Ecuador to
Philadelphia: Get a taste
for Maria's journey
on page 6!



ANNUAL REPORT FY 2017-2018

Welcoming
Center *for*
NEW PENNSYLVANIANS

DEAR FRIENDS,

In 2019, we celebrated 16 years of welcoming immigrants to our region. Much has changed in the world and within the Welcoming Center since we first opened our doors in March 2003, but our asset-based approach and our mission remain the same: promoting inclusive economic growth through immigrant integration.

While the federal government implemented several new policies designed to reduce the number of immigrants and refugees allowed into the United States and stepped up efforts to detain and deport individuals and families, the Welcoming Center partnered with many local and national organizations to create a sense of belonging for newcomers and to forge pathways to economic opportunity.

In FY18, we formalized our Participant Advisory Council, a group of 15-20 former participants that meet regularly to provide feedback and suggestions, to ensure that we are offering programs and services that are informed by the needs of the community we serve. To that end, we concluded a seven-year program focused on Adult Basic Education and English as a Second Language and revised our education and training programs to better prepare participants with the language and cultural skills they need for obtaining employment, participating in vocational training programs or growing a business.

With generous support from the Knight Foundation and input from our Participant Advisory Council, in FY18 we launched the Immigrant Leadership Institute, a five-month training program that has now prepared more than 100 newcomers with the skills, knowledge and networks they needed to participate more fully in the civic, social and cultural life of the city.

We also reached a critical milestone with our International Professionals Program (IPP) in 2018. After three years of private foundation support, we secured public workforce dollars from Philadelphia Works, Inc. and redesigned the program as an intensive, cohort-based series of trainings over nine weeks, followed by an

additional six months of individual job coaching. For many immigrant job seekers, gaining relevant work experience in the United States is a major hurdle to restarting their careers. To address this barrier, we partnered with the City of Philadelphia to launch the Immigrant Fellowship Program which provides paid fellowships for our IPP graduates where they gain practical experience in their professional fields. Most participants have been hired full-time at the end of their fellowship and the program is now serving as a model for private employers.

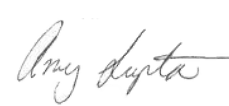
For the entrepreneurs who are creating their own path to employment, we expanded our offerings in FY18 to include an English for Entrepreneurs class for Mandarin speakers, increased the number of business planning classes and workshops designed to help people start a business. We also launched the Global Startup Accelerator, a collaboration with the University City Science Center designed to leverage the skills, knowledge, and networks of immigrants to help support Philadelphia-based startups access global markets.

Looking ahead, 2019 has already been a year of continued change and exciting growth. In January we elected our first former participant to serve on our board of directors and in March we moved to a new location in Chinatown near 13th and Race Streets. Our new space allows for more light, larger gatherings and more meaningful interactions to advance our mission. We hope you will visit us and share your thoughts on how we can make our space, our city and our society more welcoming to all people.

Thank you for your support,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Peter Gonzales".

PETER J. GONZALES, ESQ.
PRESIDENT & CEO

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anuj Gupta".

ANUJ GUPTA, ESQ.
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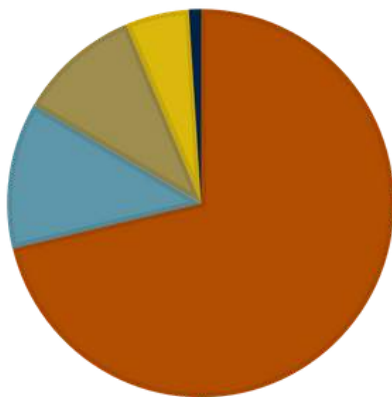
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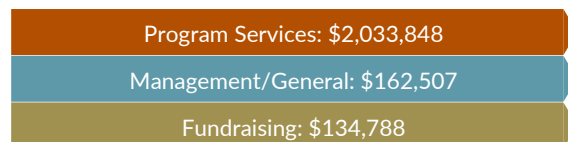
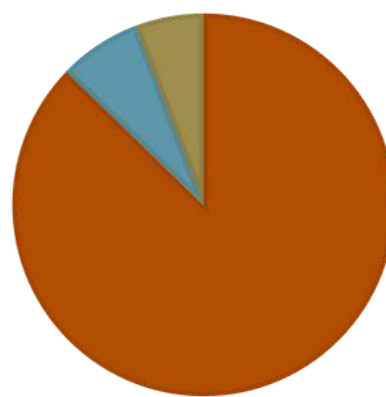
Welcoming Center for New Pennsylvanians' total revenue in FY 2018 was \$2,184,354. We are supported by a diverse revenue stream including generous donations from individuals, corporate sponsors, foundations, and government contracts. At our annual Solas Awards, the Welcoming Center's premier gala event, we raised over \$280,000, which accounted for 13% of the annual operating budget.

Funding Sources



Total Revenue: \$2,184,354

Fund Distribution



Total Expenses: \$2,331,142

2018 SOLAS AWARDS

MAY 3, 2018

Solas means “light” in Irish. Each year at the Solas Awards the Welcoming Center shines a light on visionary leaders and honors individuals and companies that illuminate the positive impact that immigrants have on our regional economy.

In 2018, we raised over \$280,000! Our inspiring and generous honorees include:

- Stephen S. Tang** - Dennis Clark Solas Award
- Maria A. Oquendo** - Realizing the American Dream Award
- Wells Fargo** - Atlas Award for Advancing Opportunity Award



OUR MISSION

The Welcoming Center promotes inclusive economic growth through immigrant integration.



ABOUT US

The Welcoming Center is based in Philadelphia and was founded in 2003. We seek to open doors of economic opportunity for immigrants of all education and skill levels and to build immigrants' individual and collective agency to address barriers to integration and wellbeing. We collaborate with our participants, a broad spectrum of organizations, and public and private sector institutions to advance learning, shape policy, and grow the economy.

We focus on 3 core program areas:

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Integrated ESL Education and Training: Our innovative training models expand access and address barriers to economic opportunity for immigrants and English language learners.

International Professionals Program: IPP addresses “*brain waste*” among highly educated, foreign-trained immigrant professionals in Philadelphia who are unemployed or underemployed. This program combines classroom-based and experiential training with one-on-one coaching to support participants in securing meaningful employment.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Business Training Classes: Our English for Entrepreneurs class offers a specialized curriculum covering English vocabulary and pronunciation, customer service skills, and cultural competence. Our PlanIt! Business Classes, in partnership with the Neighborhood Development Center, assists start-up and new businesses obtain business training, financing, and other support within their own communities.

Business Technical Assistance: Our hands-on assistance helps entrepreneurs understand city regulations, develop a business plan, understand business operations, identify capital, create a marketing strategy, and much more.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Immigrant Leadership Institute: The Immigrant Leadership Institute is a five-month training program that prepares the residents of Greater Philadelphia with the skills, knowledge, and tools necessary to engage in civic life. The Institute represents a dynamic approach to creating opportunities where immigrants speak for themselves and participate in the cultural, political, and social life of the city.

Participant Advisory Council: The Participant Advisory Council comprises our program graduates and provides the Welcoming Center with insight into the needs, challenges, and opportunities to help improve programs.

PARTICIPANT PROFILES

LUCIANA IMMIGRANT LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

Luciana came to the U.S. from southwest Brazil with 15 years of public health experience advocating for workers in industries with environmental risk. She did not speak English when she arrived in 2018. After progressing from beginner to intermediate and then advanced level classes, she enrolled in the Immigrant Leadership Institute (ILI), a program which focuses on building social leadership skills and learning civic engagement strategies.

"ILI gave me the opportunity to build relationships, learn about different aspects of our region, and integrate into civic life on a personal as well as professional level." Collaborating with participants from all over the world, Luciana built and executed a project designed to reduce social isolation and overcome barriers to entering the workforce.

When she finished the program, she felt more confident about herself. "In my life, I have fought for other people, but sometimes I felt like I left my voice in my country, and I know some immigrants have the same feelings. ILI made me believe in myself again, in my potential, and my background and experience." Luciana subsequently joined the Welcoming Center staff. She now works as a program coordinator for ILI helping other immigrants achieve their goals.

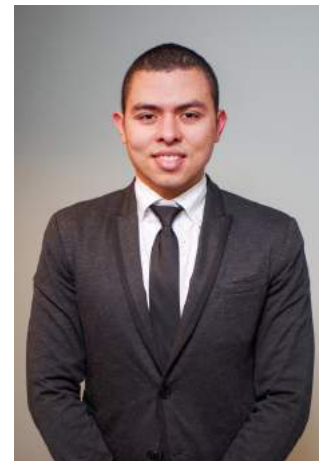


JEAN PHILLIPE INTERNATIONAL PROFESSIONALS PROGRAM

Jean Phillippe moved to the United States several years ago from Venezuela. "It was overwhelming. I was used to traveling around the world, but being an immigrant is different than being a tourist." He struggled until he found the Welcoming Center. "Everything started because I wanted to learn more about the International Professionals Program (IPP)."

IPP is designed for individuals like Jean Phillippe who have earned a bachelor's degree or higher before coming to the U.S. yet are unemployed or grossly underemployed. "IPP allowed me to interact with professionals in the construction and engineering industry. I could get advice, recommendations, and experience from them that helped me get to where I am now." Jean Phillippe found his first job as an engineer through the Welcoming Center.

He recently took a higher position at a second company. Jean Phillippe found a community of support that remains with him. "A couple of weeks later I started my journey in that amazing organization that not only helped me to find my career reinsertion but allowed me to connect with amazing people that I consider good friends now."



MARIA ENTREPRENEURSHIP PROGRAM

Maria is originally from Ecuador. Her mother was unable to care for Maria and decided it would be better for her and her siblings to be adopted. Maria attended school through 6th grade and at age 15 entered into an arranged marriage.

After spending time in Spain, Maria moved to the United States. She first worked as a cleaner for commercial and residential spaces. All the while, she was saving money to purchase a food truck so she could rely on herself to earn an income for her family. She invested tens of thousands of dollars but when she finally launched her business, she fell victim to scammers masquerading as business experts. She was pushed around from venue to venue because she didn't know how to navigate the licensing system and interact with inspectors.

Maria came to the Welcoming Center for advice on how to navigate the food truck industry. The Welcoming Center staff provided information, counseling, and planning services. Maria is now licensed to vend in LOVE Park, FDR Park, and Drexel University. Maria is still seeking to achieve a sustainable family income. Challenges remain. But for the first time, she feels like she's on the right track.



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#WelcomingWorks to build community, expand opportunity, and spark change. Be welcoming. It works.



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For more information, contact Rebecca Rathje, 215-557-2658, or rebecca@welcomingcenter.org.

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