



The Immigrant
Learning Center

July 1, 2021 - June 30, 2022 Annual Report

Dear friends,

How do we capture an entire year in 20 pages, especially a year like 2022?

The truth is, we can't. Every one of the 620 immigrants and refugees that came to The Immigrant Learning Center during fiscal year 2022 has a story to tell. They have stories about where they came from and why. They have stories about what it was like to make a life in a strange country without being able to communicate. They have stories about how the teachers, volunteers and counselors at The ILC changed their life.

It's not just our students who have stories to tell. Teachers across the nation who attended our online trainings or accessed any of our online educational materials have stories to tell about how they helped their immigrant students or how they taught all their students to appreciate immigrants' role in U.S. history. The immigrant entrepreneurs featured in our weekly *JobMakers* podcast each has a story. The immigrant essential workers we studied in our research have stories.

When it comes to research, the Institute for Immigration Research, our partnership with George Mason University, has plenty to talk about. FY2022 marks the 10th year since the Institute was founded. Everyone who requested a custom fact sheet has their own stories about why they needed that particular data. This year's research includes data and stories about Nobel Laureates, athletes, "green" workers, STEM workers and the opinions of everyday Americans.

Why was 2022 special? Well, coming out of a pandemic was remarkable for everyone. At The Immigrant Learning Center, we nearly doubled the number of students we served from the year before. We also put in place some major advantages for the future, such as hiring our first executive director, investments in digital literacy, strategic planning and more.

We wish we could tell you everything. We hope we have told you enough that all our supporters can feel pride in what we have accomplished together. We are always available to tell you more if you have questions, and everyone is welcome to visit our offices in Malden, Massachusetts. If you want to see this work for yourself, or if you just need a pick-me-up, let us know. We would be happy to show you around.

Until next year,



Diane Portnoy
Founder and CEO



Vincent Rivers
Executive Director

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Mission Statement

The Immigrant Learning Center, Inc. (The ILC) of Malden, MA, is a not-for-profit organization that gives immigrants a voice in three ways.



The **English Language Program** provides free, year-round ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) classes to help immigrant and refugee adults in Greater Boston become successful workers, parents and community members.



The **Public Education Institute** informs Americans about immigrants and immigration in the United States.



The **Institute for Immigration Research**, a joint venture with George Mason University, conducts research on the economic contributions of immigrants.

Values

Equality



We believe in the equality, inherent worth and dignity of all people, regardless of country of origin, immigration status, race, color, gender, sexual orientation, religion, disability or other differences. We also believe in offering everyone an equal opportunity to share their gifts and achieve their goals.

Patriotism



We believe the United States stands for hope, freedom and opportunity. We believe in the American Dream. By giving immigrants a voice, we help new Americans achieve their dreams. We also believe that immigrants make our country stronger, and the American people's ability to welcome immigrants makes the United States the truly special place that it is.

Adaptability



We believe in adapting to changing conditions. Whether it's the best way to teach an individual student or the best way to run an entire department, The Immigrant Learning Center finds the best way we can to give immigrants a voice. We don't hold on to "the way we always do things" when there is a better way. We stay open to possibility and constantly evaluate our work and make changes accordingly. Some changes are more successful than others, but we always learn from experience.

Focus



At The Immigrant Learning Center, we stay focused on our mission, giving immigrants a voice, and we do it well. We adapt to changing needs but not changing trends. We don't make change for change's sake, and we don't try to be all things to all people. As hard as it can be to let a need go unfilled or a good idea not implemented, we keep our resources focused on maximizing our impact by doing what we do best.

Adapting to COVID-19

Nothing has tested The Immigrant Learning Center’s commitment to adaptability as much as a global pandemic. Fiscal year 2022 started with remote classes. In the fall, we experimented with a hybrid model where students came in-person some days and had some days online before a COVID-19 surge sent us back to remote.

Remote learning was an important support for our students through a very trying time, but it limited who we could help. Before the year ended, students and staff were thrilled to be back to full-time, in-person instruction. We could start building our class sizes and serving more people.

We were back in the building, but not back to “normal,” and we never will be. We learned too much. First, it became clear that digital literacy needs to be an even bigger part of what we teach. Second, we learned that sometimes remote learning is a better choice, and we closed out the year with Citizenship and Next Step classes remaining online.



	FY2019	FY2020	FY2021	FY2022
In-person	823	515	0	263
Remote	0	338	376	277
Hybrid	0	0	0	113

Digital Literacy

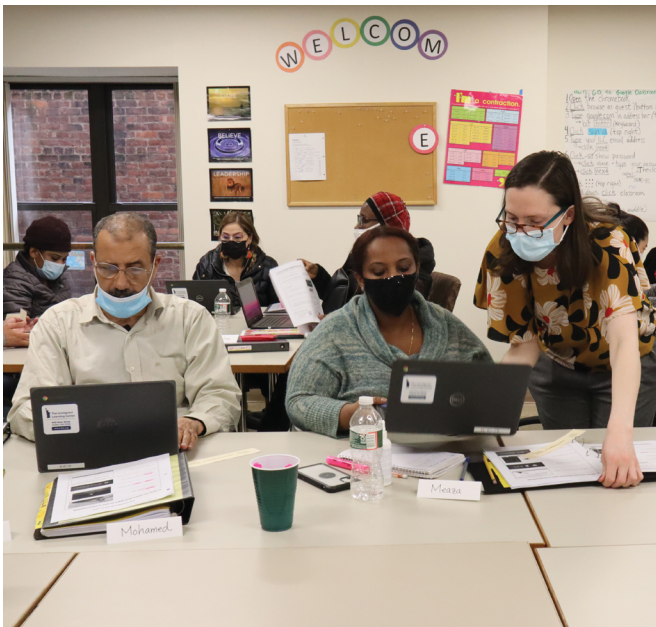
In FY2022 ...

37 Chromebooks were added to The ILC stock

38 students borrowed Chromebooks

33 students received free Chromebooks

6 students received free hotspots with one year of free service



Just prior to the pandemic in 2020, The ILC had already begun to shift our approach to digital literacy. To better integrate digital lessons into the classroom, we purchased 25 Chromebooks. These devices came in handy when we saw students struggling to get online for remote classes. Students with limited or no access to such devices at home were able to borrow a Chromebook and continue learning English.

This year, whether we were teaching remotely, hybrid or in-person, technology played a crucial role. The computer teacher worked one-on-one with any student who struggled to learn the technology for remote classes. When we returned in person, the Chromebooks were more integrated into classroom learning than ever before, and a significant number of students were using technology to continue their studies at home.

A survey of our students in the spring revealed that one quarter had no computer or tablet at home, and half of those who did were sharing them with children doing schoolwork or other adults in the home. We continued to lend Chromebooks and helped students get access to hotspots from the library. A partnership with MassHire Metro North and a grant from the Adelaide Breed Bayrd Foundation made it possible for 33 students to get free Chromebooks of their own.

The Immigrant Learning Center is committed to giving immigrants and refugees the knowledge they need to be successful in our communities. Digital literacy is a crucial part of that and will only grow in importance.

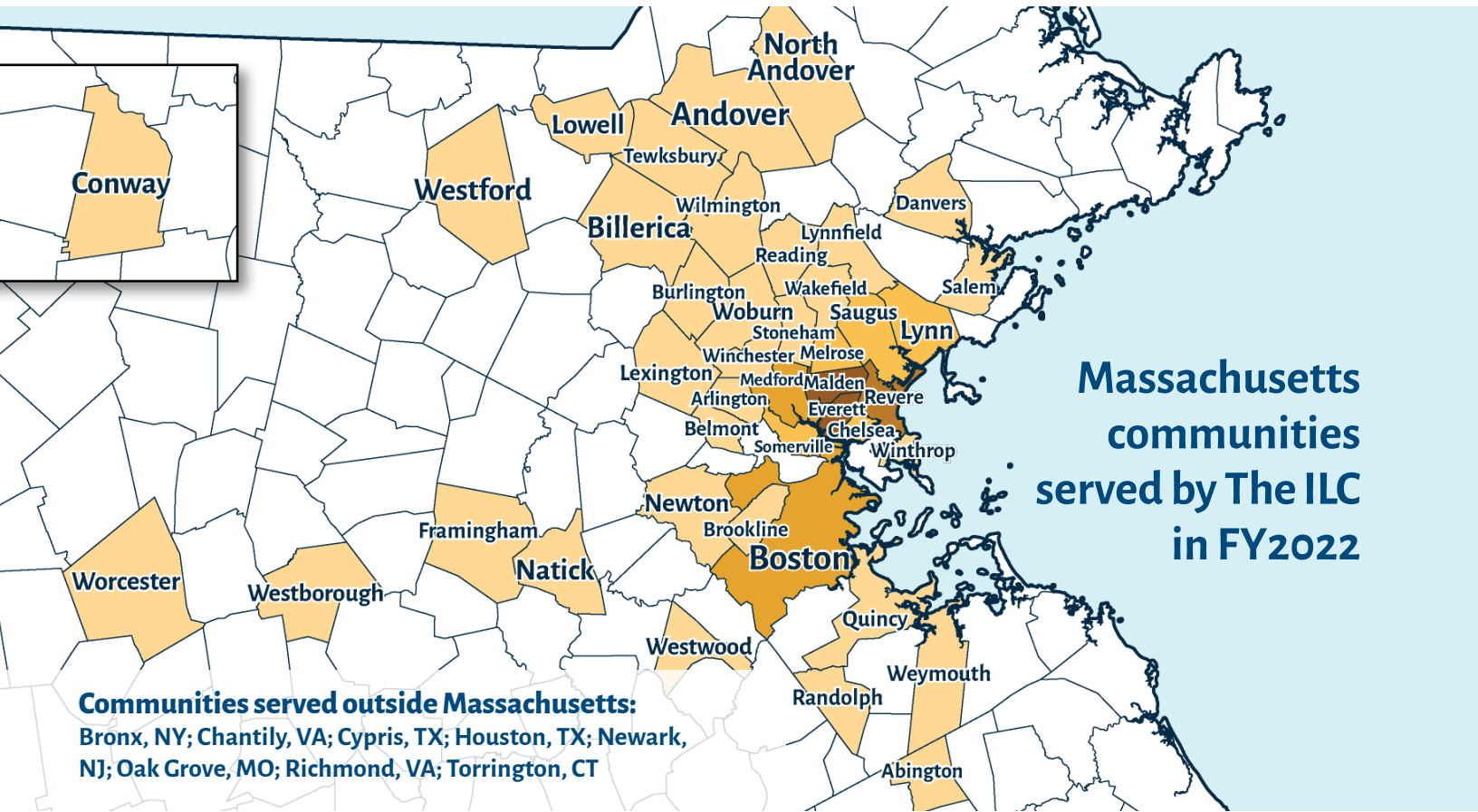
Students at a Glance

In FY2022,
The ILC served ...
620 students

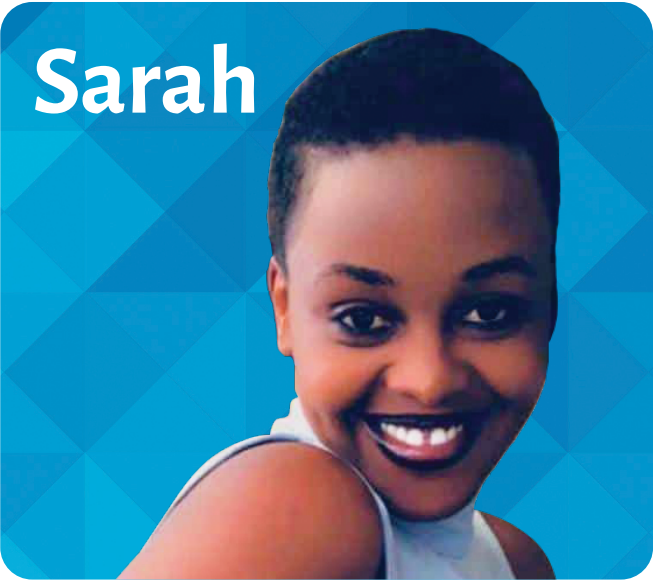
from **56** countries,
from Afghanistan to Vietnam,

and living in **57** communities,
from Abington to Worcester.

33 languages spoken, from Albanian to Vietnamese	
Haitian Creole	22 %
Portuguese	20 %
Spanish	17 %
Arabic	15 %
Mandarin	8 %
Vietnamese	3 %
Nepali	2 %
French	2 %
Other	12 %



Not speaking English can turn simple tasks, like reading street signs, navigating a doctor's visit or using a computer, into enormous challenges. For students like Sarah, who weren't given the opportunity to learn to read in their countries of origin, meeting these challenges is especially difficult. That's why The Immigrant Learning Center provides specialized literacy classes for students who received limited education before enrolling. Today, Ugandan American Sarah is fully literate in English, has become a U.S. citizen, plans on attending college and makes enough money to fund her younger siblings' educations so they don't face the same problems she did.



“I fight for my right to learn how to read and to write because I’m thinking my survival, learning how to read, that’s the important thing in my life ... The thing that The Immigrant [Learning] Center is doing, it’s perfect. Teaching someone to read, that’s the best gift you can give someone.”

— Sarah, The ILC Student



Moving to the United States from Brazil was a shock for Isaac. Without strong English skills, he couldn't find work, travel, study or even go the movies like he could in Brazil. Luckily, his mother was a former student at The ILC. She encouraged him to enroll at the school, saying, “You'll learn everything there that you'll need.”

After studying hard at The ILC, Isaac discovered that she was right. After just six months, he was able to write a resume and complete a successful job interview. He has had to stop classes while he works at his new full-time job, but he looks forward to someday returning to his studies at The ILC. “Everything in the class, I liked so much,” said Isaac. “The Immigrant Learning Center is so fantastic with the students. It’s amazing.”

Student Achievements

Students at The Immigrant Learning Center set their own goals, big and small. As their English improves, nearly every aspect of their lives is impacted. Students report that they can now use portable devices, Zoom, download apps to learn English, speak in English with a doctor, fill out applications, apply for jobs online, and read the newspaper and books.

Here are the major milestones we track that students accomplished in 2022:

- 50 got new jobs
- 23 received pay raises
- 7 received promotions
- 7 started their own business
- 23 enrolled in higher education, training programs or continuing education programs
- 32 became new citizens
- 42 opened a bank account
- 38 received a driver's license or permit
- 50 got library cards



"In United States, if you work hard and you have a goal, you can get there ... My teachers, they were so good." — Rachel

Rachel, a Tanzanian American immigrant, saw an opportunity to give back and support her family in the early days of the COVID-19 crisis. When personal protective equipment was in short supply, she began sewing and selling masks in bright fabrics that represented her Maasai tribe roots.

Without strong English skills, however, starting a business in the U.S. was a challenge. At The ILC, her teachers taught her the English she needed to establish her online store and communicate with her customers. After studying, she was able to confidently expand her business, sometimes working until 2:00 AM to meet the enormous demand.

Immigrants and refugees are highly entrepreneurial, and our students are no exceptions. Rachel was one of seven students who started businesses in fiscal year 2022 alone.



"You change the life of a lot of people, not just me." — Ana Maria

Research shows that becoming a citizen can boost individual earnings by eight to 11 percent. Ana Maria is a good example of why that is true. Preparing for her citizenship interview in our Citizenship Class improved her English skills and her confidence. This gave her the courage to successfully interview for a better job as a legal assistant.

Ana Maria referred six friends and family to our class. They all became citizens, and she reports, "They got better jobs when they got their citizenship ... Every person who goes to The Immigrant Learning Center, they have a really good experience."

Ana Maria wants to be part of that "good experience." She plans to come back and volunteer. She explained, "I want to give some of what I received from you, The Immigrant Learning Center."

Citizenship

In FY2022, there were ...

- 32 students who became U.S. citizens
- 306 downloads of The ILC N-400 guide in the first 2 months
- 1,972 views of The ILC civics videos
- 1,583 views of The ILC citizenship application videos

Of all the goals The ILC helps newcomers achieve, U.S. citizenship can be the most life-altering. One unexpected outcome of the pandemic was being able to help more people become new Americans than ever before.

The ILC citizenship teacher and volunteers poured their years of expertise into helpful materials their students could access online. This included videos about the citizenship application process, videos about American history and civics, and a PDF guide to the 20-page form known as the N-400 that applicants are quizzed on during their citizenship interview.

Because these materials are made available for free on The ILC's website and YouTube channel, anyone can use them. While 32 of The ILC students became citizens in FY 2022, enabling them to find work, participate in civic life, achieve stability and safety, and reunite with family, many more were helped toward their citizenship dream.

Public Education Institute

Immigrant Entrepreneurs

For more than a decade, The ILC Public Education Institute has been raising awareness of the critical role of immigrant entrepreneurs in our society, and there was plenty to talk about in 2022.

Hall of Fame

The Immigrant Entrepreneur Hall of Fame on The ILC's website houses 75 profiles of immigrant entrepreneurs from 29 countries who founded some of today's most influential brands, businesses that fuel regional economies and not-for-profits that enhance the lives of many Americans. Two of them were added in 2022: Arianna Huffington, founder of Huffington Post and Thrive Global, and Hamdi Ulukaya, founder of Chobani, a yogurt company that has created more than 2,000 U.S. jobs. [To learn more, visit the Hall of Fame on The ILC website.](#)

JobMakers

On the weekly *JobMakers* podcast, Director of The ILC Public Education Institute Deniz Mohammed talks with foreign-born business founders to learn about their journeys to the United States and becoming an entrepreneur. There were 44 episodes aired in FY2022, starting with Russian-born venture capitalist Semyon Dukach and ending with Mei Xu, a Chinese American entrepreneur who built Chesapeake Bay Candle and ultimately sold it for \$75 million.

JobMakers is produced in partnership with Pioneer Institute, a Boston think tank, and hosted on Ricochet, a platform for conservative voices, as well as most major podcast platforms. New episodes are released every Thursday at noon. [You can also listen to their stories on The ILC website here.](#)

In FY2022, there were ...

- 2 new Immigrant Entrepreneur Hall of Fame profiles
- 44 *JobMakers* podcast episodes
- 4 Immigrant Entrepreneur Awardees

Awards

After a two-year, pandemic-induced hiatus, the Barry M. Portnoy Immigrant Entrepreneur Award Benefit returned on March 8, 2022. The honorees were:



Neighborhood Business
Jitka Borowick from the Czech Republic
Founder, Nové Yoga and Cleangreen
Cape Cod, MA



Business Growth
Roger Magalhaes from Brazil
Founder, Shades in Place and
Trading Up Consulting LLC
Franklin, MA



Life Science Business
Avak Kahvejian from Canada
General Partner, Flagship Pioneering
Cambridge, MA



High Tech Business
Ling Chai Maginn from China
Founder, Jenzabar, Inc. and
All Girls Allowed
Boston, MA

Public Education Institute

Research



Research



Infographics



News



Events

In FY2022, there were ...

- 218 downloads of *Immigrant Essential Workers During the COVID-19 Pandemic*
- 1,500+ research reports available in library
- 12,342 downloads from library
- 56,136 visitors to library

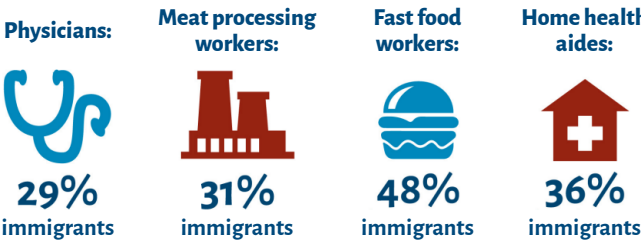
In a nation awash with misinformation, where can people turn to get the facts about immigration? At The ILC Public Education Institute, we work hard to be the answer to that question.

Research Library

In partnership with Dr. Nicholas Montalto of Diversity Dynamics, LLC, The ILC Public Education Institute maintains the Immigration Research Library (www.immigrationresearch.org), the only comprehensive, online database of free, U.S. immigration research reports. We added 16 new research reports in 2022, bringing the total number of free, accurate reports available to more than 1,500. In the past year, more than 56,000 people turned to the site to access un-paywalled, accurate information.

Reports in the library were cited by major publications like The New York Times, Bloomberg, Teen Vogue and Texas Tribune. To promote facts over "fake news," the news section of the library was re-vamped in April and routed 6,923 information seekers to accurate articles within the first four months of its re-launch.

Essential Workers



We wanted to give a voice to the many immigrant essential workers getting us through the COVID-19 crisis. After digging into Census data and interviewing 31 immigrants and immigration experts across the country, we released the report *Immigrant Essential Workers During the COVID-19 Pandemic* in December 2021, along with an accompanying webinar.

Explore the report or read the executive summary at <https://www.ilctr.org/essential-report/>.

Public Education Institute

The Next Generation

One in four children in the United States belongs to an immigrant family, yet immigration is frequently left out of school curricula and classrooms, and studies show that bullying based on immigration status is still prevalent. The ILC Public Education Institute is determined to fill the knowledge gap and counter harmful misinformation for young people in the United States.

Essay Contest

With that goal in mind, we launched an annual essay contest this year with the theme, “How has immigration benefited Malden?” to highlight stories of immigrants and immigration in our own backyard. Students at Malden High School, just down the street from The ILC headquarters, wrote compelling, powerful essays about migration and their lives. Their work incorporated research, personal stories and powerful depictions of the contributions of Malden’s immigrants.

The proud winners received their awards in a May ceremony that was attended by families, teachers, Principal Chris Mastrangelo and even the mayor of Malden. 10th grader Dina Genene took first place, second place went to 12th grader Julie Huynh, third place went to 11th grader Michelle Dang, and Linh Le, Saad Mecbah and Hadjar Yousfi received honorable mentions. [Read their essays here.](#)



Malden High School students receive awards for their entries to The ILC Annual Essay Contest.



Students from Belmont Hill School visit The ILC to learn about immigration.

Classroom Presentations

The ILC also visited middle schools, high schools and colleges to share accurate information about immigration with young people. These included a talk on the causes of migration at Lexington High, a discussion about refugees at Chenery Middle and a dialogue about Malden’s immigrants with Emerson College students.

Your presentation was very informative and perfectly summarized and connected materials and information from our Unit. ... I am sure students got the message and left the class with more knowledge on this topic. I hope we can do this again in the future.

— Erick Martha-Reynolds, Lexington High School



First place winner Malden High School student Dina Genene meets The ILC Founder, Diane Portnoy.

Public Education Institute

Teacher Resources

In FY2022 ...

11 experts shared teaching strategies at the Immigrant Student Success Conference

253 educators participated in the Immigrant Student Success Conference

2 new curricula were published for Teaching U.S. Immigration

13 new resources were released for K-12 and adult educators

Immigration and U.S. History

As part of our Teaching U.S. Immigration series, we produced two new curricula in FY 2022: Teaching Chinese Immigration in the 19th Century, and Immigration and the American Revolution. [These are available on The ILC website](#) and on the website Share My Lesson.



This is the 3rd year I have attended these workshops. They NEVER disappoint! Useful and interesting.

— Tina Kern, teacher, NJ Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages/ NJ Bilingual Educators

Immigrant Student Success

Every summer, teachers and administrators from across the country count on The ILC Public Education Institute to bring them fresh ideas for helping their immigrant students and for integrating immigration topics into their curriculum in our free, virtual conference called “Immigrant Student Success: Strategies and Tools for K-12 and Adult Educators.” This year more than 200 people participated from 37 states and the District of Columbia. Participants reported they learned new ideas and strategies to apply in the upcoming school year.

Day 2 was EXACTLY what I was looking for: Practical, applied learning for teachers and creative ways to elicit participant interaction while still using a webinar format. Thank you for your work and for making this FREE resource available to teachers everywhere.

— Kristyn Joy, ESOL instructor, Highline College, Seattle, WA

The Institute for Immigration Research

The Institute for Immigration Research (IIR) was established in 2012 at George Mason University in Fairfax, Virginia, in partnership with The Immigrant Learning Center. For 10 years, the Institute has produced valid, reliable research about immigrants and immigration that is accessible to academics, policy-makers, the media, the business community and the general public.

“When Diane Portnoy came to Mason with the idea to help create the IIR, it opened new opportunities for our faculty, students and staff to join The ILC in its efforts to give immigrants a voice with data and narrative stories about the wide-range of contributions immigrants make to America.”

—James Witte, PhD, Director of the Institute for Immigration Research

In the News

During 2022, the IIR's work was referenced in *The New York Times*, *PBS*, *NBC* and other high profile news organizations.

The New York Times



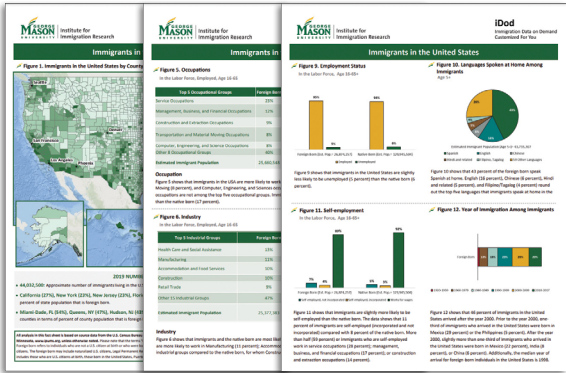
In FY2022, there were ...

6 reports published
35 on-demand fact sheets
6 webinars
302 webinar attendees

Data on Demand

The Immigration Data on Demand service, which provides free, immigration fact sheets with customized answers and geography, completed 35 requests in 2022. As of the end of FY 2022, the IIR completed a total of 337 fact sheets since launching the service in 2016.

Thirty-two organizations, including community colleges, teacher associations and city governments, received the information they needed about their community. Anyone can take advantage of this free service. To request a fact sheet, visit Immigration Data on Demand online at <https://iir.gmu.edu/idod>.



Research

In 2022, the IIR published research covering crucial topics like immigrants' contributions during the COVID-19 pandemic and views of immigrants in the United States.

In the research report *Continuing to Lead Through Creativity and Innovation During the COVID-19 Pandemic and Beyond: Immigrant Scientists and Information Technology Workers*, the IIR highlighted immigrant heroes of the COVID-19 pandemic, including:



Dr. Katalin Karikó
Hungarian American scientist and mRNA pioneer



Dr. Niall Lennon
Irish American scientist and COVID-19 testing leader



Dr. Nasir Ahmed
Indian American computer science expert and trailblazer in videocall technology

A new initiative highlighting immigrant leaders in professional sports shed light on an under-explored aspect of immigrants' contributions. Op-eds in publications like *The Hill* and *Richmond-Times-Dispatch* expanded the project's reach.

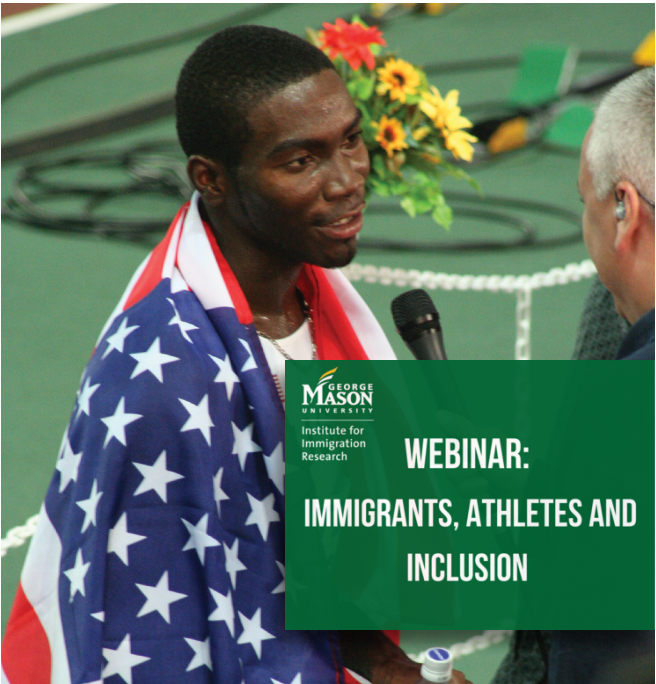
Read the IIR's op-ed for *The Hill* at <https://bit.ly/3sV21RT> or scan the QR code to the right.



Webinars

A series of six webinars on topical issues like migration and climate change, and the benefits of immigrant entrepreneurs, made complex research accessible to more than 300 attendees.

To view webinar recordings, visit <https://bit.ly/3gE8NZn> or scan the QR code to the right.



“At least 34 of the [2021] Team USA Olympians were not born here, but made the U.S. their home and proudly represent this country ... These foreign-born athletes comprise approximately five percent of the U.S. delegation and represent the best of U.S. athletics in track and field, equestrian, fencing, table tennis, volleyball, water polo and 15 additional sports.”

—Michele Waslin, PhD, program coordinator at the Institute for Immigration Research, for *The Hill*

Financials

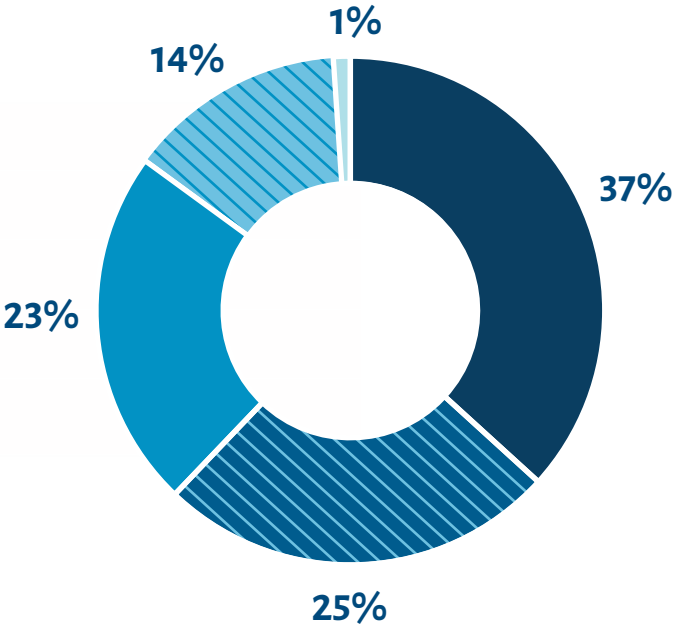
The Immigrant Learning Center’s total operating revenues for Fiscal Year 2022 were \$3.7 million.

The ILC had total operating expenses of \$2.8 million.

Net assets were \$9.4 million as of June 30, 2022.

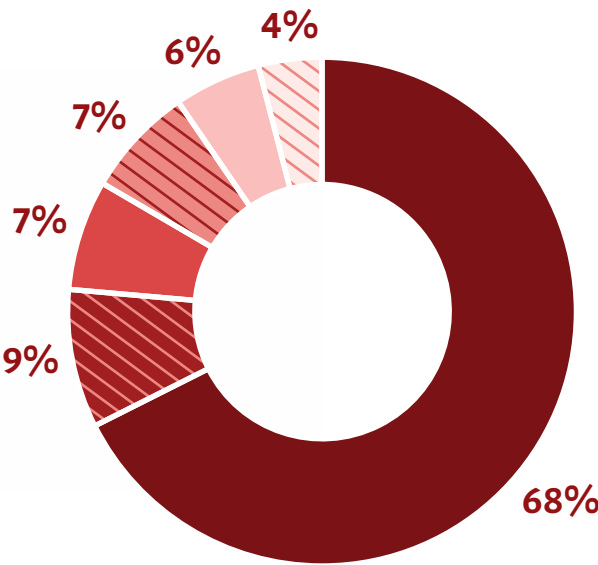
Funding

Private foundations	\$ 1,346,952
Individual giving	\$ 929,882
Government funding	\$ 839,372
Corporate sponsorships	\$ 508,784
Other	\$ 39,459
Total	\$ 3,664,449



Operating Expenses

Salaries	\$ 1,917,070
IIR	\$ 250,000
Depreciation	\$ 199,133
Office & administrative	\$ 199,013
Property operating	\$ 156,585
Events	\$ 114,779
Total	\$ 2,836,580



Volunteers

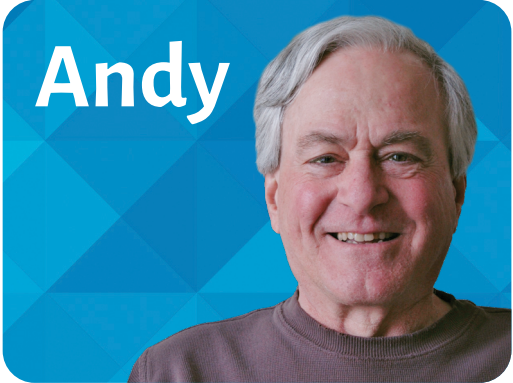
The contributions of the amazing, dedicated volunteers who support The Immigrant Learning Center’s work in and out of the classroom are essential to maximizing our impact. They’ve quizzed students on vocabulary, talked them through opening a bank account, conducted practice citizenship interviews, edited educational video resources and more. Their impact is incalculable. Meet two of the committed volunteers who help The ILC give immigrants a voice.

“

I want to do as much as I can to help these people ... become what everyone claims they want immigrants and refugees to become, which is English-speaking, productive citizens, which in fact is what all our students want.”

— Andy, The ILC Volunteer

After becoming a citizen, one student returned to class to tell Andy Koppel, a volunteer and critical member of the citizenship team, “Your willingness to help and prepare us for the interview [is] indescribable. You schedule a meeting at any time if needed to help us. Holidays, weekends, etcetera.” That’s all true, but Andy says helping students become citizens has also paid off for him personally. “I have benefited immensely ... this has been the most transformative experience of my life,” he said.



Garry Reidister was one of the 16 volunteers who transcribed episodes of *JobMakers*. The podcast highlights extraordinary immigrant entrepreneurs and experts in immigrant entrepreneurship. Publishing transcripts is vital for making the stories accessible to all people, including hard of hearing/deaf people and people who are still developing their English skills. In three months of volunteering, Garry transcribed nine episodes. By highlighting and sharing these stories with the world, digital volunteers like Garry promote our mission of giving immigrants a voice.

“

There hasn’t been one [immigrant entrepreneur] I haven’t enjoyed reading [about] or been inspired by. They’re coming for opportunities, for work. They want to make tremendous sacrifices for their children, better life for them all, the whole family.”

— Garry, The ILC Volunteer

Thank you to our donors

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