

Office of New Americans Advisory Board Meeting
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, January 4, 2023
9:30AM- 5:00PM
Tuckahoe Library
1901 Starling Dr. Henrico, VA 23229

Office of New Americans Advisory Board (ONAAB) members present: Hassan Ahmad, Kate Ayers, James Gordon, Fern Hauck, Micheal Hoefer, Susannah Lepley, Eric Lin, Andrei Lipan, Ahoo Salem (online), Bo Machayo (online), Krishendeo Ramsingh, Juan Santacoloma, Eric-Michel Sossou-Gloh, Eva Stitt, Milton Vickerman

ONAAB members absent: Dora Muhammad

ONAAB Ex-officio members present: Lyons Sanchezconcha, Chair Virginia Latino Advisory Board

Office of New Americans (ONA) and Governor's Office Staff present: Grace Reynolds, Susan Whyte

Additional Guests:

Mireya Reith, Director, Arkansas United joining via Zoom

Welcome and Call to Order

Kate called meeting to order 12:30pm

Kate called for electronic participation

Ahoo: car broke down

Bo: mother had health issues

Fern motion, Eva 2nd – approved unanimously

Previous Meeting Minutes Approval

Previous Meeting Minutes Approval

July 6th meeting:

Correction – Ahoo name correct from Yahoo

Hassan move, Michael 2nd

Member	Yes	No	Abstain
Ahmad, Hassan	X		
Ayers, Kate	X		
Hauck, Fern	X		
Gordon, James			
Hoefer, Michael	X		
Lepley, Susannah	X		
Lin, Eric	X		
Lipman, Andrei			X

Ramsingh, Kris			X
Salem, Ahoo	X		
Santacoloma, Juan	X		
Sossou-Gloh Eric-Michel			X
Stitt, Eva	X		
Vickerman, Milton	X		
<i>Bo Machayo</i>			

October 12 meeting minutes

Aye – all attending

Abstain – James

Member	Yes	No	Abstain
Ahmad, Hassan	X		
Ayers, Kate	X		
Hauck, Fern	X		
Gordon, James			X
Hoefer, Michael	X		
Lepley, Susannah	X		
Lin, Eric	X		
Lipman, Andrei	X		
Ramsingh, Kris	X		
Salem, Ahoo	X		
Santacoloma, Juan	X		
Sossou-Gloh Eric-Michel	X		
Stitt, Eva	X		
Vickerman, Milton	X		
<i>Bo Machayo</i>			

Public Comment

None

Chair Report

Kate Ayers

Chair Meetings and outreach

- Meetings with Eric, Grace Lyons, Seyoum non the books. Working to get a meeting with Michael Perez on the calendar too
- EC meetings cancelled but did work via phone on December 15th
- Individual EC communications
- Meeting with Senator Ghazala Hashmi and Delegate Kathy Tran regarding funding for Language access and funding for refugee resettlement
- Funding for refugee resettlement – report on unmet needs
- Calls with new members

- Created a framework for our 2023 work
 - Meeting with Lyons Sanchezoncha (VLAB) and Suja Amir (VAAB), Ex-Officio Members
- Reminder
- VCCI meetings are open to ONAAB members, Kate, Eric and Ahoo have joined some.
 - Kate encourages all ONAAB members to join these meetings. They are all virtual now, but they are exploring going back to in-person

Framework for 2023

- More communication with constituency, ONA, weekly email,
- Communication – ONA, ONAAB and constituency
 - Internal - Weekly emails more regular communications (Ahoo will do internal)
 - External – build out FB page, website (redo) * managed through Governor’s Office and VITA, external newsletter.
 - Seek clarity with regard the website access - see if we can move it under DSS
 - Seek member to handle external communications. Eva – work with Ahoo and Michael to develop Newsletter – Grace also noted that there will be ONA newsletters that come out periodically – some overlap potential
- If members come across interesting information – submit to Ahoo.
- Will revisit framework document at end of meeting

Office of New Americans Updates

Grace Reynolds

- Language Access money – trying to get the money to ONA – perhaps include language access coordinator. 2.5 million FY 2023
- Refugee funding – \$2 million FY 2023 ONA focused on certification and licensing. Susannah – never made available to refugee resettlement agencies. Restrictive – need to be extended and broadened.
- Board handbook in the works.
- Strategic Plan in the works for ONA. Also identifying areas of collaboration with ONAAB. Potentially Board objectives as well.
- 5 million Fed Funds – DOE Afghan – support. Partnership – ONA holds funds.
- 3200 Ukrainian arrivals – Ukrainian Unite
- Work with Islamic relief to become resettlement agency?
- Resource mapping meeting in NOVA (Seyoum, Kendra and Grace).
- At VCCI meetings – ONAAB members should identify as advisory board members.

Shared Goals, Working Together

Mireya Reith, Speaker via zoom, fair immigration reform movement, National Partnership of New Americans, Board of National Immigration Forum. Arkansas United.

Reimagined Citizenship in arkansa: Sueccss in a red and rural state.

- Brain waste has been a great way to reach across the aisle. Also, because everyone is hiring language access is something that is good.
- Lack o fcapacity to assess foreign credentials. WES is one of the leading companies in this arena.

- Immigrants are change agents. Create spaces where they directly impacted can participate.
- Can participate with other coalitions. National Partnership for New Americans; Firm Action; National Immigration Forum. Helpful with legislatures.
- Steer way from compromise. Toward Common Ground. Starting with what we agree with. Not other issues. Get things done. A lot of good will to focus on common ground instead of differences. Lobbying the lobbyists. Using lobbyists to make strategic introductions with regards to people who might be interested.
- Media an ally. Looking for diverse stories and perspectives. Helping inform story lines. Where do people express and know each other.
- Nurses shortages where they started out.
- Affected telling stories.
- Access to Human Capital – common ground (skills, knowledge experience); economic migrants. Playing a role in the economy. Taking services to industries and employees. How to build a pipeline of immigrant workers. Immigrants still rely on trusted relationships. Loans and investment from COVID.
- Fraud is at an all-time high. People taking advantage of employer needs. \$5,000 and \$10,000 to get them a job.
- U and T visas have been space that we are protection. Common ground. We want to see people who commit crimes.
- Census – heart count.
- Who implements policy once it is made. We can build a pipeline who can fill critical roles.
- Lessons Learned – who is most desperate for change. That is how we landed on labor shortages. Interesting collaborations have emerged.

Break

Immigration Trends

Michael Hoefer

Deck attached

Immigration trends and possible reforms

Public attitudes about Immigration

- More people think immigration is a positive ~70% 2022
- Political ideologies tend to have similar overall leanings, but vary to extent – exceptions in deportation of illegal immigrants and pathways to citizenship.
- Foreign Born Demos
- 10th largest FB population in country
- 1.2% 1950-12.4% 2020
- 25% of children under age 18 in US FB
- Unauthorized Population
- Border encounters crossing – no longer seasonal, those who come are staying.

- And now, more who enter illegally, not from Mexico – more from deeper south American countries – due to turmoil in countries.
- Title 42 – repatriations due to pandemic restrictions. Spikes in 2021, due to multiple attempts.
- Humanitarian Migration
- Asylum: 743K in immigration courts in 2022 – 508k asylum seekers at USCIS in 6/22
- DACA: 594k as of 6/22
- TPS currently 16 countries mostly El Salvador, Honduras and Haiti 417k in 11/18
- Afghan Parolees 70k as of 11/22 36,400 no pathways to permanent residence
- Legal Immigration
- Historically 6 million backlogs. Current backlogs at USCIS 9 million applications per year take 8-9 months to process applications. Due to hiring freeze in 2020-2021. Net impact in VA – people not getting processed and not getting work authorizations etc.
- USCIS entirely funded by immigrants themselves – application revenue. No funding for asylees and refugees. Personal note – need to provide some type of funding for asylees and refugees.
- What is proper mix? Total 1,085,000 total Granted LPR 2017-2019
 - Family sponsored 66% (718k)
 - Employment 13% (138K limit 140K)
 - Humanitarian 13% (146k)
 - Diversity 4% (47k)
- Naturalizations projected to increase in 2022 to more than a million
- Questions – reforms:
 - Permanent
 - What is the proper mix of legal immigrants
 - Effects of country caps and category limits
 - Backlog processing
 - Waiting list for those with approved petitions
 - Temporary
 - Not enough seasonal
 - Unauthorized –
 - Increased border security
 - Employer sanction enforcement modifies Asylum procedures
 - Legalization/removal/status quo
 - Dreamer/DACA
 - Humanitarian
 - Processing delays
 - Rebuild resettlement structure
 - Afghan pathway – adjustment
 - Hire more immigration and asylum officers

Committee Report Outs

Access to Services

- Dental services. We have really poor access of poor people for Medicaid services. Harder to get someone to find provider
 - Payment disparities.
 - Reach out to dentists to ask what would make it easier
 - More cost up front but saving money later around dental visits to emergency rooms
- More payment for interpretation for interpretation with Medicaid
 - How can we utilize the services more accessible
 - ELL becomes more prioritized.
 - Building curriculum about 3-5 year period to be able to manage your own things

Intergovernmental

Meeting Focus: Select potential issues

- Naturalization – Engaging New Americans as citizens
- USCIS resources
- Localities – what are they doing
- ONA – other state agencies/dept focus
- Language Access – State Plan
- Providing meaningful, intentional and accessible LEP support
- Encouraging English language skill acquisition
- Looking through lens of investing in workforce value
- ONA positioning
- Alignment in impact and mission

Action Items In-progress:

- Naturalization
- USCIS – Services/resources – find out how they are accessed and to whom?
- Language Access
- Work with Language Access leads to discuss Commonwealth Language Access Plan (CLAP)
- Speak with DOL about English Language Acquisition as part of workforce development
- Speak with legislators to determine funding from budget amendment
- Speak with ONA about the interest to support and oversee CLAP
- See how other states are addressing
- ONA Positioning
- Research other states positioning of their ONA
- Have conversations with DSS and ONA
- Have conversation with DOL
- Research where it might be possible to home the ONA
- Speak with various agencies and ONAAB committees about their work and how it relates to inter/intra governmental
- Come up with meeting schedule and plan for workflow

Deliverables

- By next meeting, plan to have more clearly defined recommendations

- Identify additional future issues/opportunities
- (item)

Economic Opportunity

Splitting into two

- Licensing
 - Nursing – increase number of

Small Business Development

- Town hall to help navigate the system.
- Foreign Trade

Language Access Planning

- Round Table turned into a plan. From perspective of stakeholders. Challenges and resources, comprehensive matrix of what it is.
- NEXT STEP IS TO GBRING BACK GROUP TO ADDRESS NEEDS. BASED ON RESEARCH AND STAKEHOLDERS
- *COMPLETE REPORT BY NEXT MEETING*
- WORK WITH INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS TO GET FUNDING FOR PLAN
- WORKING WITH WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
 - TWO MAJOR BARIERS TO QUALITY CARE.
 - Quality and quantity interpreters
 - Disseminating quality interpreters. And get DMAS to paid.
 - Funding

Looking Ahead

Framework for 2023

Build better relationships with legislators and state agencies

- April 12th meeting – legislators focus.
- Welcoming Commonwealth
- Statewide initiative to incentive localities to be more engaged with New American community.
- July 12th meeting focus
- Creating a longer term strategic plan for ONAAB
- How do we build longer term focus
 - Include Language Access, Citizenship, Welcoming Commonwealth
 - Michael to spearhead
 - Focus of Oct 4th meeting

Ahoo – USCIS is holding a stakeholder about Naturalization testing exam. Listening session to take place next week. Ahoo will get more information and share with the board.

Miscellaneous Board Business

Approval of all virtual public meeting policy

New guidance on all virtual meeting policies. Refer to document on policy.

Overall:

- Notice it as an all virtual meeting
- May have 2 or 25% (whichever is greater) each year.
- May not be consecutive.
- Public must have access.
- Must have someone designated as contact to address issues.
- Must be reflected in meeting minutes.

Hassan Motion Eric Lin 2nd

Member	Yes	No	Abstain
Ahmad, Hassan	X		
Ayers, Kate	X		
Hauck, Fern	X		
Hoefer, Michael	X		
Lepley, Susannah	X		
Lin, Eric	X		
Lipman, Andrei	X		
Ramsingh, Kris			
Salem, Ahoo	X		
Santacoloma, Juan	X		
Sossou-Gloh Eric-Michel	X		
Stitt, Eva			
Vickerman, Milton	X		
<i>Dora Muhammad</i>			
<i>Bo Machayo</i>			

Hassan –

- Firm works with 3 refugee resettlement agencies (CCC, IRLC, CWS) has taken on 200 asylum cases. Have filed 60-70 cases. Have encountered issues that have complicated filing of asylum cases. Complications include trauma, emergencies, housing, employment etc. As an ONAAB member, has a dual role here. CCC has asked Hassan to raise the issue with ONAAB. Applauds accommodations - file within 45 days and get decision within 145 days. It is difficult with complications that the 2 years of parole will be insufficient to get asylum applications filed. Most October of 2023, parole status will run out. TPS could be relevant, but is another application that requires time and resources.
- Another problem, because parole status will run out, serious looming problem with work authorizations. I-765 work permits delays – for some 330-365 days to process. If an Afghan parolee and cannot file asylum in time and could lose work permit.
- Not as simple as filing early for asylum, there are trust issues (misinformation) and lack of resources.

- CCC asks that ONAAB/ONA advocate for an executive order to extend parolee status.
- Also want ONA to understand these issues and to work with immigration attorneys staff to address concerns (funding, resources and timelines).

Grace – can work with Seyoum to open dialogue.

Susannah – funding – slow to work through system

Susannah Motion

Eric-Michel – 2nd

Unanimous among those present

Kate adjourn at 4:45pm