

Office of New Americans Advisory Board Meeting  
Meeting Minutes  
Wednesday, April 12, 2023  
12:00-2:40 pm  
Libbie Mill Library  
2100 Libbie Lake East St, Henrico, VA 23230

**Quorum was not met for this meeting**  
DRAFT FOR REVIEW

**Office of New Americans Advisory Board (ONAAB) members present:**

*Kate Ayers, Dr. Fern Hauck, Susannah Lepley, Eric Lin, Dr. Milton Vickerman, Andrei Lipan, Dr. Ahoo Salem  
Hassan Ahmad, Michael Hoefer (joined by zoom 1:00PM)*

**ONAAB members absent:**

Juan Santacoloma  
Dr. Eva Stitt  
Kris Ramsingh  
Eric-Michel Sossou-Gloh  
Dora Muhammad  
Bo Machayo  
James Gordon

**ONAAB Ex-officio members present:**

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**Office of New Americans (ONA) and Governor's Office Staff present:**

Seyoum Berhe  
Michelle L'Hommedieu

**Additional Guests:**

*Dr. Danny Avula, Commissioner, DSS*

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**Welcome and Call to Order**

Kate Ayers, at 12:00

Because we did not have enough in-person attendance, we did not meet a quorum and could not take any actions as a board.

**Previous Meeting Minutes Approval**

As we did not have a quorum, we could not approve the January meeting minute. We will approve the January minutes in the July meeting.

## **Public Comment**

None

## **Chair Report**

Kate: highlighted report outline needs to be submitted by June

Kate and Ahoo will work on making sure the outline gets to everyone.

## **Dr. Fern Hauck, Access to Services Committee**

### **1. Dental services for adults who use Medicaid**

Have been using the DMAS survey on access to health services, including dental. Most of reporting and research for dental for Medicaid has focused on general Medicaid users and not LEP individuals. Going ahead, the committee will focus on specific barriers for LEP LEP individuals.

Identified barriers to dental services for Medicaid users:

- Reimbursement
- Efficacy of reimbursement
- Interpreter access is available but is complicated to do so and reimburse

Nest steps: exploring private-public partnerships

The idea is that Improvement of adult dental care can improve workforce participation.

Trying to raise funds for dental care from corporate giving (such as Walmart) so that the adults can be effective workforce members

### **2. Improving access of LEP to English acquisition**

Some barriers: time of ESL services for working adults, caregiving responsibilities, and transportation

Can private/public partnerships be created to eliminate these barriers?

Kate will provide more information on the barriers.

## **Eric Lin: Intergovernmental Affairs**

### **1. Naturalization**

Resources and localities and what they are doing to address citizenship

### **2. Language access:**

Language access State plan: Commonwealth Language Access Plan (CLAP)

- Looking into the VCU report and seeing how it aligns with WIOA
- Looking into the funding for the language access plan and where it will be allocated
- Speaking with Seyoum about ONA's role in the language access plan
  - Michigan has passed language access as a state law (no longer a compliance matter for Title VI)

\*This committee's work differs from access to services in the sense that Intergovernmental looks into the oversight and administration of this plan.

3. Language acquisition  
Workforce development and language acquisition: Looking into language acquisition as an employment benefit.
4. ONA: Looking into other states and seeing where they have placed their ONA

**Susannah Lepley and Dr. Milton Vickerman: Economic opportunity**

Borke down their piece of report and review and revise that.

They are focusing on workforce development: training and certification processes.

- Nursing: legislators passed a nursing bill to make it a little easier
  - Before, only two companies provided English training, and one company provided nursing certification
  - The new legislation increases the number of these providers
  - The nursing certification now has two steps, looking into the previous background to see if one has taken enough courses AND one needs to take an additional exam
  - This could be made into one step
- The next step for nursing certification: will go to the nursing board

After the nursing certification, the committee will look into other professions and certification

- In the meantime, working with ONA on pathways (e.g., for medical professions)

The other two members of this committee are more interested in small business and international trade.

**Kate Ayers: EC report**

1. Meeting with Michael Perez and Martin Brown
2. Meeting with VLAAB and VAAB

-International Business Symposium

- This initiative helps ONAAB better understand how we can fit into the plans of this administration and work together
- focus on Businesses is a great connection between Immigrants as resources for international trade and business opportunities, and this administration's focus
- Everyone is very excited about this symposium. It will focus on the following four areas:
  - Workforce dev
  - Education (helping inform people in State Agencies about barriers around student visas)
  - International trade
  - Small Business Development/ small business suppliers
- Timeline: June 2024. Around Immigrant Heritage Month. Each advisory board will nominate two members to be on the steering board of this symposium.

Eric provided more information about the international trade summit that he was involved in:

- Foreign investment and econ development are linked to the new American Communities through their ties with international trade (2011)
  - Outcomes: over 250 individuals and small businesses attended this event
  - At the time, VAAB and VLAB were not supported that much by the governor
    - This summit showed the administration that the Boards had the ability to weigh in on economic development
  - Connected the Boards with consular officials as well as the board's target population
  - Symposium connected the communities with service providers
3. VCMRDS symposium  
Good group to bring and present at ONAAB → invite to the next meeting.
4. Kate and Grace discussed the SOPs.  
Provide revisions and feedback on the SOPs by email  
We will move to vote on the SOPs in the July meeting  
Ahoos will send out the SOPs in the next ONAAB meeting and send it out
5. Kate announced the first issue of the ONAAB newsletter.

## **Office of New Americans Update**

### **How to navigate state agencies**

Dr. Danny Avula, Commissioner, DSS

Three topics of relevance for the agency

1. Medicaid enrollment → redetermination process
  - Automated approach
  - Medicaid based on income → Those applications will be processed by DMAS (or an entity hired by DMAS)
  - Those who receive Medicaid and other benefits → need to follow up with their local DSS.
2. Language Access
  - DSS has not perceived with urgency the role they can have in languages access
  - DSS has submitted its plan of action regarding DSS, and Kendra Hudson is assigned to pursuing language access on behalf of DSS/ ONA. Some details of the plan of action
    - i. First target location (DSS) and first target languages, starting with Spanish and then seven other languages
    - ii. Includes interpretation and translation, primarily of forms used by clients
  - DSS should see some good progress regarding language access
3. Workforce: getting people back to work and hired
  - Building connections between workforce boards and potential employers
  - Employers who are interested in hiring non-English speaking populations and tapping into the New American communities as workforce

- i. Secretary of Labor Bryan Slater is in tune with these initiatives

### **ONA Update**

*Seyoum Berthe, Director, Office of New Americans*

1. Arrivals: So far, 1700 arrivals (from Oct 1st till now). We will get the allocated amount of about 3,000 arrivals. We expect arrivals from Afghanistan, Ukraine, and DRC.
2. ONA refugee services: refugees as workforce
  - The workforce is going well
  - Youth programs (My VA)
  - Challenges: immigration assistance for Afghan Parolees and housing → these are still challenge but not an urgent challenge anymore
  - New areas of focus: language access and mental health
  - ESL and Digital literacy important for workforce development
  - ONA received funding to provide mental health to Afghan parolees and also funding from DOE to help Afghan students catch up with their school work
3. ONA immigration services: Liliana is educating and informing about all matters (she started with a focus on health). Now she is focusing on employment and language access and connecting immigrants with resources.  
ONAAAB to advocate for funding from ONA's immigrant services!

### **Governor's Office Update**

*Jesse Lynch, Senior Policy Advisor to the Governor*

Not able to attend

### **Presentation: How to work with legislators**

*CWS Advocacy Team*

This training will be pushed to our July meeting since we do not have many members in attendance today.

### **Miscellaneous Business**

*SOPS*

*Board Members*

5 members' terms will end on June 30th. Dr. Fern Hauck, Juan Santacoloma, Dr. Eva Stitt, and Hassan Ahmad

ONAAAB meetings are open meetings, so members who roll-off can still attend the meetings. Nonmembers cannot serve on committees but can be invited as subject matter experts.

ONAAP report: The expectation is that by June, some type of written outline of our report is submitted.

The meeting adjourned at 2:40