



**Department of Commerce**  
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# Washington New Americans Program

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Report on Performance and Outcomes (ESSB 6444, Laws of 2010)

**September 2010**  
Report to the Legislature  
Rogers Weed, Director

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## OVERVIEW

The Washington New Americans Program was first created by legislative proviso in 2008 to help legal permanent residents in the state become naturalized U.S. citizens<sup>1</sup>. The Legislature appropriated \$253,000 of state general funds to continue the program in Fiscal Year 2010 and \$283,000 in Fiscal Year 2011<sup>2</sup>. Both provisos required the contractor to provide at least 25 percent match of non-state funding for these activities.

This report provides an overview of the New Americans Program Fiscal Year 2010 activities, its performance measures, and program outcomes required by the New Americans Program's legislative authority.

The Washington New Americans Program met all of the service delivery goals developed between Commerce and OneAmerica, the program contractor, during this program year.

The New Americans Program leveraged state funds to win two grants to help support this program and meet the state requirement for at least 25 percent match of non-state funding. U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services awarded OneAmerica \$100,000, one of only 13 grants out of nearly 300 applicants nationally. The Gates Foundation also awarded OneAmerica \$69,700 for New Americans efforts for 2010.

### **What is Naturalization?**

Naturalization is the legal process that a foreign national can use to become a U.S. citizen. To qualify for naturalization, an applicant must have held legal permanent U.S. residency (a green card holder) for 3-5 years. The first step of naturalization is submission of an application to the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. After the application is approved the applicant must interview, pass an English language test and pass a civics test. The applicant is then qualified to take the oath of loyalty and become a U.S. citizen. It can take a few years for applicants to complete the naturalization process.

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<sup>1</sup> Engrossed Substitute House Bill 2687, Laws of 2008.

<sup>2</sup> Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill 6444, Laws of 2010, 1<sup>st</sup> Spec. Sess.

## PROGRAM ACCOMPLISHMENTS FOR 2010

### Program performance and Outcomes

Commerce worked with OneAmerica to meet the Legislature’s requirement to develop performance measures. OneAmerica met or exceeded all of the measures developed for FY 2010 for the New Americans Program.

OneAmerica also exceeded the Legislature’s requirement to provide a 25 percent match of non-state funds by winning other public and private resources. In FY 2010 OneAmerica won a Gates Foundation grant of \$69,700 and was one of 13 organizations nationwide to win \$100,000 from U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. Commerce recently learned that OneAmerica also won two grants (\$25,000 and \$19,800) to support the 2011 program year.

### **New Americans Program FY 2010 Goals and Results**

Goal	Target	Outcome
Help legal permanent residents make progress toward naturalization	Assist 1,000 individuals	1,899 individuals assisted
Use Citizenship Day events to assist legal permanent residents with naturalization	Host 3 Citizenship Day events	3 Citizenship Day events were held in 12 locations statewide
Alert qualified legal permanent residents of New Americans Program	Implement the 2009-2010 media campaign	New Americans Program campaign launched statewide
Distribute media materials to multiple ethnic media outlets	Distribute information to 50 organizations	Materials distributed to 88 organizations
Use multilingual marketing materials to make legal permanent residents aware of program	Review/Develop and distribute 20,000 Materials	66,705 materials distributed
Update naturalization curriculum	Evaluate and review curriculum and expand the civics section.	Curriculum was reviewed and the Civics curriculum was expanded and is in use
Assist qualified residents submit applications for citizenship	Assist with the completion of 500 N-400 federal naturalization applications	678 N-400 applications completed

*Source: OneAmerica’s New Americans Program Annual Report*

### **OneAmerica: The Washington New Americans Contractor**

Commerce continued to contract with OneAmerica in State Fiscal Year 2010 to provide Washington New Americans Program direct services in the Seattle area and coordinate

subcontracts across the state. OneAmerica's qualifications included experience providing immigration related services to immigrant communities. OneAmerica continues to be a part of a network of organizations that engages in providing citizenship workshops for legal permanent residents.

OneAmerica subcontracted with six partner agencies to provide Washington New Americans Program services throughout the state. Subcontractors provided services that included citizenship orientation and preparation workshops, staffed and volunteered coordination at events, partnered with OneAmerica to offer their civics module, distributed multilingual materials, collected program data, and assisted with naturalization applications.

OneAmerica also continued a multilingual ethnic media campaign to make qualified residents aware of the New Americans Program, with special focus around the Citizenship Day events.

A key milestone for New Americans participants is the completion and submission of the federal N-400 Application for Naturalization (N-400) to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. Once OneAmerica or their subcontractors determine that individuals meet the requirements to apply for U.S. citizenship, they assist individuals in completing their N-400. Application review and approval takes an average of six months, so an error or omission in the N-400 can delay naturalization by a year or more. The New Americans Program focuses on ensuring that the application is completed properly so that the applicant can move to the next steps; an interview, and English language and civics testing.

OneAmerica expanded the civics sections of their curriculum to include more culturally appropriate activities to inform clients about the American political system and broaden their understanding of how to affect changes within the system by becoming more engaged citizens. OneAmerica organizers presented five two-hour civics modules in six sites. Despite some issues with language barriers, the civics module successfully imparted the value of civic engagement and community involvement. OneAmerica will address the language barriers by increasing coordination with class instructors, as well as creating materials geared toward low-level English speakers.

### **Citizenship Day Events: Investing in Proven Methods**

The New Americans Program provided resources for 3 Citizenship Day events at 12 sites across the state. Between October 2009 and April 2010, 650 clients were assisted through Citizenship Day events.

Nearly all of the staffing of the Citizenship Day events are volunteers, many are from the Washington Chapter of the American Immigrations Lawyers Association (AILA). OneAmerica's community partners also recruited volunteers to interpret, make copies, help provide child care, and provide other administrative support. A total of 375

volunteers were involved, including 84 volunteer attorneys. A conservative estimate of the value of in-kind services provided by volunteer attorneys is \$254,700. All volunteers provided a total of 3,425 hours of service, according to OneAmerica's 2010 New Americans Report.

OneAmerica connected applicants with volunteer immigration law experts so that N-400 forms were properly completed. A total of 650 immigrants were served at the Citizenship Day events, where 268 were assisted with completing the N400 applications.

### **Reaching the target audience: New Americans Program Media Campaign**

In order to provide assistance to Washington's legal permanent resident population eligible for the New Americans Program, the contractor had to inform the population of the program. In 2009, OneAmerica developed a comprehensive outreach and marketing plan that utilized a wide variety of creative strategies to reach immigrant communities and was able to build upon this success to expand their reach.

OneAmerica continued to maintain their Web site, [wanewamericans.org](http://wanewamericans.org), which serves as a resource for people seeking information on naturalization and the New Americans Program. Information about the benefits of becoming a U.S. citizen, the naturalization process and requirements, answers to frequently asked questions, and all Citizenship Day events is available in six languages. Additionally, visitors to the Web site can sign up to receive more information on becoming a citizen, and if they are interested, in volunteering. The Web site generated 546,600 hits. The Web site was only operational for seven months in 2009; however, the average number of Web sessions in 2010 of 4,688 represents a 136 percent increase from the 2009 average of 1,985.

OneAmerica continued to maintain their multilingual toll-free citizenship hotline, which received 1,989 requests for information about naturalization. The hotline provides service in 20 languages and was staffed by the contractor, subcontractors, and community partners, who were fluent or native speakers of the languages offered. They utilized a Web-based telephone service, which notified hotline staffers when a new message was logged. This allowed staffers to respond to the message in the language requested.

OneAmerica continued to maintain their text messaging service, where when individuals text the word "citizen" to 69302, they receive the date and location for the nearest Citizenship Day event. This information was included on OneAmerica's print advertisements and Web site.

The Ethnic Media Campaign included purchases of 38 print, 806 radio, and 608 television advertisements, as well as obtaining free advertisement through articles written on the program by various media sources, including an article from the Associated Press.

The New Americans Program helped fund 806 radio advertisements in English, Spanish, Russian, and Korean. OneAmerica found that radio has consistently proven to be one of their most successful methods to reach immigrant communities. The Spanish radio station KSVR FM in Mount Vernon broadcasted live from the February 6, 2010 Citizenship Day event, which was helpful in bringing more people to the event. Also, OneAmerica staff and their community partners were able to appear on radio shows in the days leading up to Citizenship Day to announce the event, which made these events more successful.

A transit advertisement campaign was conducted where large format print ads were displayed on the interior and sides of buses. 354 placements were bought on transit in Central and South Seattle, with 14 ads being placed on transit in the Port Angeles and Forks area.

OneAmerica developed outreach materials in multiple formats and languages and distributed a total of 66,705 print materials. Through feedback from Citizenship Day client exit surveys, OneAmerica has concluded that their print materials were not nearly as successful at reaching the community as their radio and television advertisements. In the coming year, while they will continue to distribute print materials, they will focus their efforts on television and radio.

## **Populations Served**

The breadth and scope of the program’s reach is reflected in the diversity of the clients served. Demographic information was gathered through client intake forms that were completed by clients at Citizenship Days and at subcontractor locations. A total of 1,899 immigrants received services through the program.

Gender was split nearly evenly, 49.7 percent of clients completing intakes were female, 50 percent male.

The median income for clients who completed intakes was \$27,500 and the average income was \$27,500. At least 662 clients (45.88 percent) from both Citizenship Day events and who were seen by subcontractors were below 100 percent of the federal poverty guidelines. 597 of these clients were referred to the Office of Refugee and Immigrant Assistance Program (ORIA/DSHS) because they may have been eligible for ORIA’s services.

### **Percent of Clients by Age**

Percent of program population	Age range of program participant
43.9 percent	30-49 years old
20.5	50-64 years old
20.3	18-29 years old
15.3	65 years old and older

*Source: OneAmerica’s New Americans Program Annual Report*

Ages of program participants ranged between 18 and 65+ years. Most New Americans Program clients were 30-49 years old (43.9 percent).

Immigrants may become eligible for citizenship within three to five years of holding legal permanent resident status in the country. Most program clients (47.9 percent) had been in the U.S. for less than ten years. One legal permanent resident had been in the United States for 54 years.

**Percent of Clients Served, Time Residing in the U.S.**

Percent of program population	Time as a legal permanent U.S. resident
47.9 percent	0-9 years
30.6	10-19 years
20.5	20 years or more

*Source: OneAmerica's New Americans Program Annual Report*

Participants included immigrants from 85 countries. The top five countries of origin were Mexico (29.8 percent), Vietnam (11.6 percent), Ukraine (10.4 percent), Russia (5.4 percent), and Cambodia (4.3 percent).

More than 53 languages were spoken by people receiving New Americans Program services. Interpretation services were requested by 28 percent of those completing intakes. The top five language backgrounds represented reflected the top five countries of origin, with 37.2 percent citing Spanish as their primary language, 11.9 percent Vietnamese, 8.6percent Ukrainian, 8.4 percent Russian, and 4.5 percent Khmer (Cambodian).

## CONCLUSION AND FINDINGS

OneAmerica successfully teamed with media and immigrant organizations to combine resources and expertise in order to increase this program's impact. For example, Gregg Rodgers, an American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA) attorney in Seattle, has provided the training to all of OneAmerica's volunteers since the program's inception.

- The program met or exceeded all its FY 2010 goals
- Nearly 400 volunteers provided in-kind legal, interpretation, and other services
- 1,899 immigrants in Washington state received services through this program
- 66,705 multilingual brochures and other print materials were distributed
- 546,600 hits on the New Americans Program Web site
- 678 N-400 applications for naturalization were completed

Clients consistently report through Citizenship Day exit surveys that the three most significant barriers to naturalization are lack of information about the naturalization process and services available, the high cost of private counsel, and the \$675 filing fee that the N-400 requires. The New Americans Program helped legal permanent residents make progress toward overcoming obstacles to naturalization.

OneAmerica's extensive outreach has proved to be very successful in reaching immigrant communities and encouraging immigrants to learn about the naturalization process and become US citizens. Immigrants who hear about the program and contact OneAmerica for help are able to easily access basic information and find out where to go for help.

In addition, OneAmerica is working to provide solutions to the difficulty many immigrants have in paying the filing fee. OneAmerica is establishing partnerships with banks across Washington State to implement a microloan program with the specific purpose of providing immigrants with citizenship loans. Those loans will help more immigrants to apply for citizenship and help integrate immigrants into our state's financial system.

The New Americans Web site will be translated into Tagalog next year to expand information to more immigrant communities. Additionally, they are expanding the resources on their Web site to offer information specifically for vulnerable immigrant populations, including the elderly and victims of domestic violence and human trafficking.

The number of people served in the 2010 fiscal year represents a 15.3 percent increase from 2009 and OneAmerica expects the demand for New Americans to increase in the next program year.