



**Department of State**  
Office for New Americans

# **Introduction to the NYS Office for New Americans and its Ramirez June Initiative**

NYS ONA RAMIREZ JUNE INITIATIVE

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# Presenters



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for New Americans (ONA)**

# Agenda

- Who are new Americans?
- What is immigration status?
- How does the Office for new Americans (ONA) support immigrants in New York State?
- How does the ONA Ramirez June Initiative increase access to services for immigrants with disabilities?

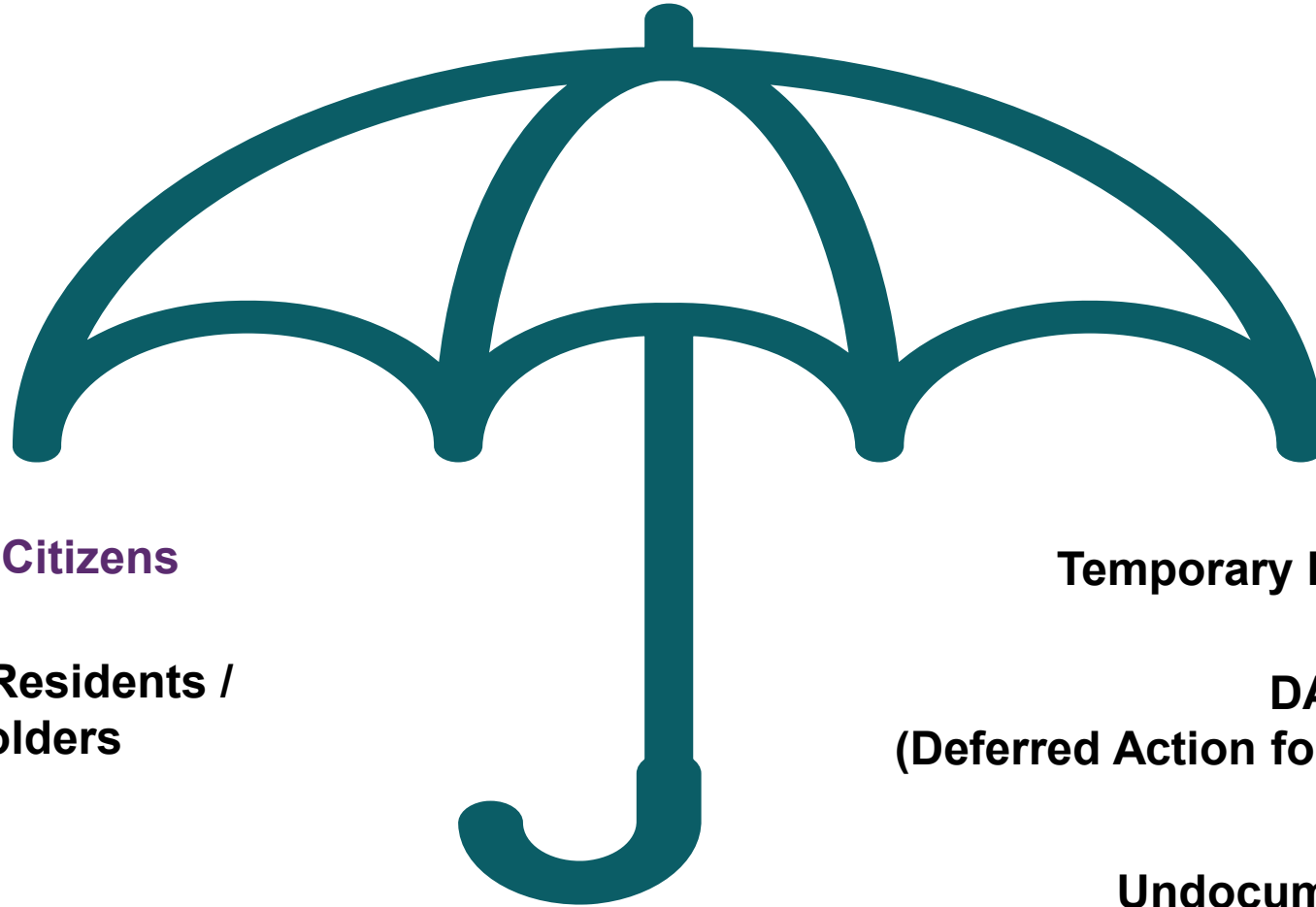
# Who are New Americans?

New Americans are people who were born outside the U.S. who moved to the U.S. to live here.

- New Americans = immigrants and all newcomers.
- New Americans can be people who have recently moved to the U.S. or people who have lived here for decades.
- Some new Americans are people with disabilities and developmental disabilities.



# “New Americans” is an Umbrella Term



**Naturalized Citizens**

**Lawful Permanent Residents /  
Green Card Holders**

**Refugees & Asylees**

**Asylum Applicants**

**Temporary Protected Status**

**DACA  
(Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals)**

**Undocumented Immigrants**

**And many more!**

# Why is Understanding Immigration Status Important?

- Immigration status refers to the type of presence a person has in the U.S.
- You cannot determine someone's immigration status based on how they look, their culture, or the language they speak.

## Immigration status affects:

- Eligibility for public benefits like **Medicaid** and **Supplemental Security Income (SSI)**.
- Authorization to work in the U.S.
- Whether someone is lawfully present in the U.S. at the time.



# Pathways to an Immigration Status

- One's immigration status can change over time.
- Immigration laws and policies often change.
- An **immigration attorney** can consult with someone who is undocumented, or any new American in need, to determine if they have a pathway to obtain an immigration status.
- NYS Office for New Americans (ONA) offers free immigration legal support & screenings.



**NYS New Americans Hotline**  
**1-800-566-7636**





# Work Authorization for New Americans



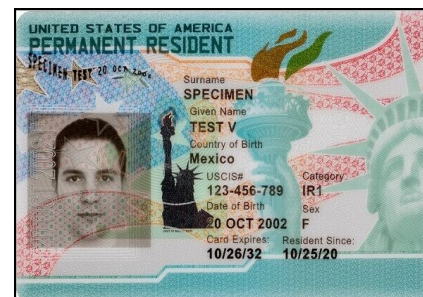
- Non citizens can be work authorized in the U.S.
  - Many new Americans are authorized to work in the U.S!
- There are different forms of documentation that demonstrate authorization to work in the U.S.
- Understanding work authorization can help new Americans with disabilities to access disability employment services.



# Work Authorization

- The green card is evidence that someone is legally authorized to work in the U.S.
- New Americans with certain immigration statuses are eligible for an **Employment Authorization Document (EAD)** which enables them to work lawfully in the U.S.
- Refugees and asylees are granted work authorization through their status which is documented by their **I-94 form**. They can also get an EAD as additional proof of employment authorization.
- Connect new Americans who are work authorized employment services.

“Green Card”



Employment Authorization Card (EAD)



I-94 Form Example



# Examples of Immigration Statuses



**Mei, “Green Card” Holder**



**Nsayi, Refugee**



**Chen, Asylum Applicant**



**Carlos, Asylee**



**Manuel, Undocumented Individual**

# Refugees, Asylees, & Asylum Applicants



**Nsai**

**Refugee status** is applied for and granted before entering the U.S.



**Carlos**

**Asylum status** is applied for inside the U.S., either at U.S. border, a port of entry, or after an individual has entered the country with a different immigration status or without a status. After an individual has been granted asylum, they are officially recognized as an **asylee** and have the legal right to stay in the U.S. and receive protections.



**Chen**

**Asylum applicants** have applied for asylum but have not yet been granted asylum status. Asylum applicants have not had their right to remain in the U.S. determined.

# Refugees, Asylees, & Asylum Applicants



**Nsai**

Nsai was granted **refugee status** before entering the U.S.



**Carlos**

Carlos came to the U.S. without a status. Within the U.S., he applied for asylum and after 8 years he was granted **asylum status**.



**Chen**

Chen is an **asylum applicant**. He applied for asylum in the U.S. but has not yet been granted asylum status.



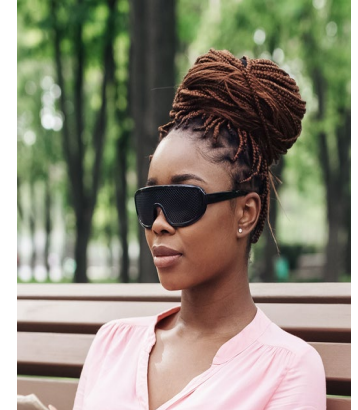
# Refugees and Asylees

## Benefit Access:

- Refugees and asylees have a 7-year limit to accessing Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits.
- Refugees and asylees must become U.S. citizens to keep or reinstate SSI benefits after the 7-year limit ends.



- ✓ Support & Connect with an immigration attorney to **naturalize** to keep SSI benefits before the 7-year limit expires.



**Nsayi,**  
refugee



**Chen,** aslyee

## Take Aways

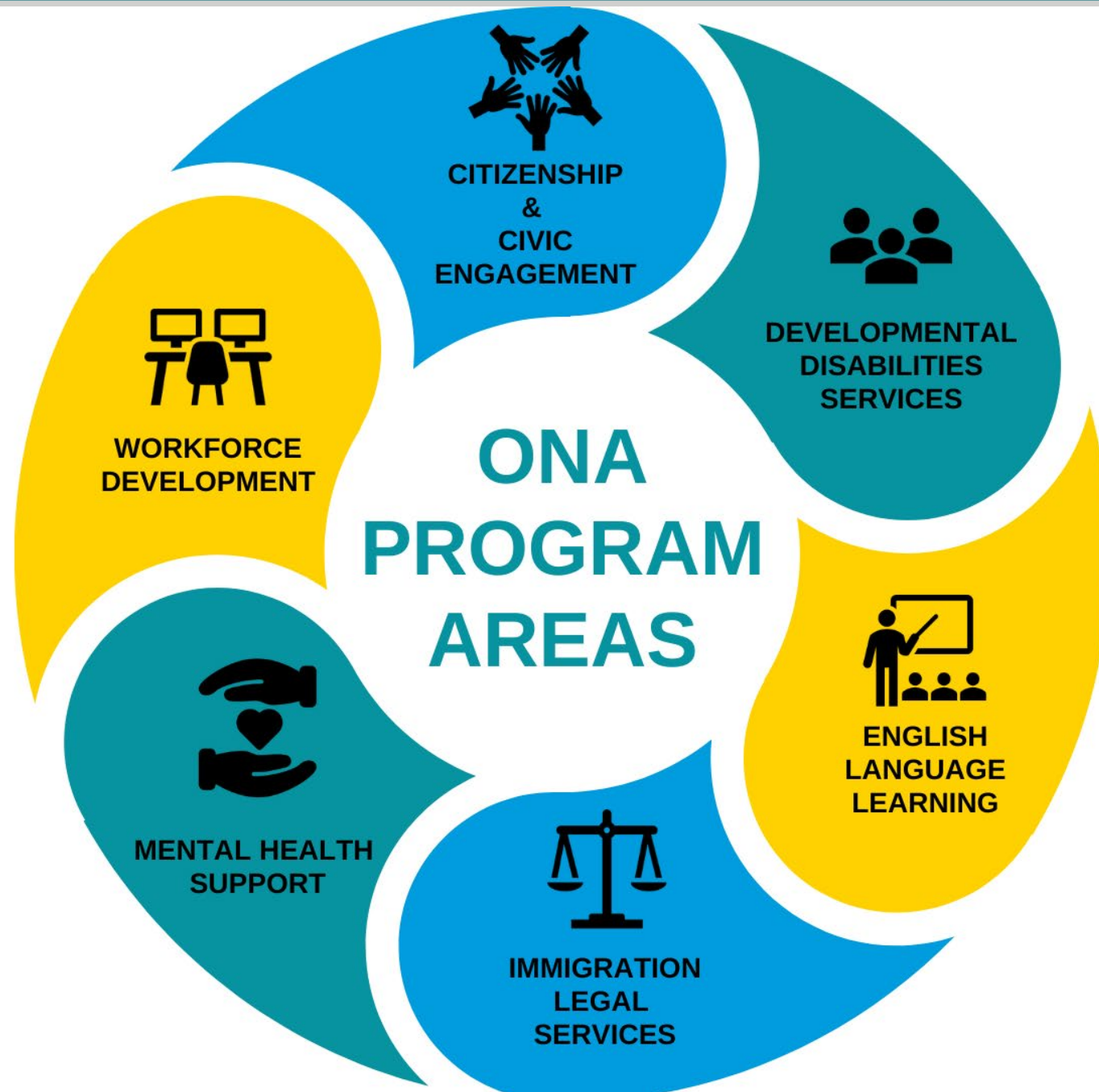
- Immigration status affects access to work authorization and public benefits.
- One's immigration status can change overtime.
- Immigration law and policies often change.
- Assist new Americans with disability employment services and work opportunities as well as benefits they are eligible for, as needed.
- Connect new Americans in need with immigration attorneys.

# About NYS ONA

- The New York State Office for New Americans (ONA), founded in 2012, is the nation's first statutorily created immigrant services office.
- ONA assists all new Americans with accessing and navigating a variety of free services and supports through its statewide network of community-based providers.







# ONA Legal Services

- Statewide network of experienced immigration attorneys
- Free immigration legal services, regardless of your immigration status.
- Consultation days available at ONA Opportunity Centers.
- Know Your Rights and law-related workshops



**NYS New Americans Hotline**

**1-800-566-7636**



# Cell-Ed



**Free English-language training and skills building through ANY mobile phone, tablet, or computer.**

- Cell-Ed allows users to:
  - participate in 3-minute stackable lessons
  - learn at their own pace, anywhere and at anytime
  - measure their progress
  - & earn certificates



# Golden Door Program



- Offers mental health support groups for immigrants across the state and connects to other free resources supported by a licensed mental health provider.



# ONA Ramirez June Initiative

## Increasing Access to Disability Services for New Americans through Outreach, Training, and Partnership.



- The Initiative is a first of its kind in the nation, it launched as a grant from the NYS Council on Developmental Disabilities (CDD) in 2019 and continues to build capacity to support new American with disabilities.

# Achievements of the ONA Ramirez June Initiative



**201 Workshops**



**6,489 Workshop Attendees**



**5,802 Copies of Voyage mailed**

**10/2019 – 09/2025**



# ONA Bilingual Coordinator Program – Case Management for Disability Services



- Launched in February 2023.
- Started through the ONA Ramirez June Initiative.
- Provides bilingual case management services.
- Connects clients with disability and mental health services with a focus on connecting with OPWDD services.



Council on  
Developmental  
Disabilities





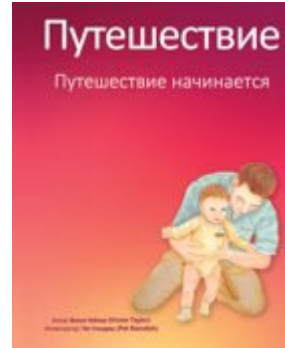
# Voyage is in 13 languages



Spanish



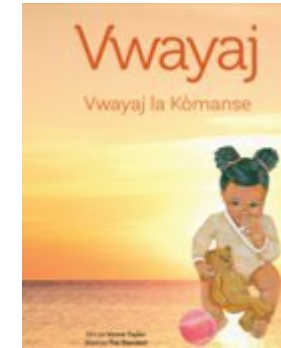
Simplified Chinese



Russian



Bengali



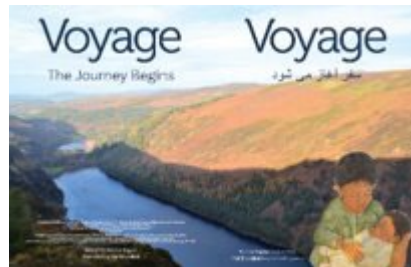
Haitian Creole



Korean



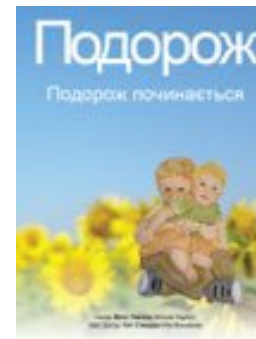
Arabic



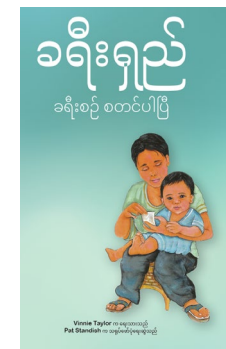
Dari



Pashto



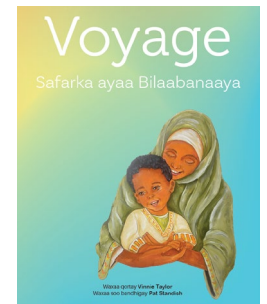
Ukrainian



Burmese



Karen



Somali

# What's in *Voyage*?



- Multilingual information on child development (2 months – 5 years) and the early identification of disabilities.
- Each copy is bilingual with all content in English and a second language.
- Provides ages for developmental screenings (starting at 9 months), autism screenings (starting at 18 months), Well-Child Visits, developmental milestones, activities to promote child development, and disability resources in NYS.

# Order Free copies of *Voyage!*

Access the Voyage Order Form in English or Spanish

## Espanol Formulario



**Formulario de Pedido de El Viaje:**  
<https://forms.office.com/g/cBVcvmbSUn>

## English Order Form



**Order form:** <https://bit.ly/OrderVoyage>

# Connect with ONA's Free Services

## Call the New Americans Hotline:

# 1-800-566-7636

- TOLL-FREE
- 9 am - 8 pm, Monday to Friday (except holidays).
- Anyone can call for information and referrals, regardless of citizenship or immigration status.
- Calls are private.
- Assistance available in 200+ languages.
- Information can also be found on the ONA website:  
<https://dos.ny.gov/office-new-americans>





Department of State  
Office for New Americans

KNOW YOUR **RESOURCES**

# KNOW YOUR RIGHTS



Resources are available to everyone,  
including immigrants:

[dos.ny.gov/know-your-rights](https://dos.ny.gov/know-your-rights)



**New Americans Hotline:**



**1-800-566-7636**

Monday – Friday, 9 AM – 8 PM EST

**MULTI-LINGUAL AND ANONYMOUS**



To share information regarding  
federal government action  
in New York State:

[ag.ny.gov/federal-actions-form](https://ag.ny.gov/federal-actions-form)





# We Welcome Your Feedback!



Survey link: <https://forms.office.com/g/Sev1svV2U6>

# Connect with ONA



[NewAmericans@dos.ny.gov](mailto:NewAmericans@dos.ny.gov)



[dos.ny.gov/office-new-americans](https://dos.ny.gov/office-new-americans)



[facebook.com/nysnewamericans](https://facebook.com/nysnewamericans)



[twitter.com/nysnewamericans](https://twitter.com/nysnewamericans)



# Discussion Questions



- Do you have experience supporting new Americans with disabilities?
- What challenges do new Americans with disabilities face?
- What support is needed for new Americans with disabilities?
- How can we make New York State more welcoming for new Americans with disabilities?



# Department of State Office for New Americans