



# COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

## DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

*Office of the Commissioner*

Kevin Erskine  
Commissioner

January 5, 2026

### **MEMORANDUM**

**TO:** The Honorable Glenn Youngkin  
Governor of Virginia

Members, Virginia General Assembly

**FROM:** Kevin Erskine *KE ERSKINE*

**SUBJECT:** Annual Report on Office of New Americans

The Office of New Americans was created under § 63.2-209.1 as an office to assist immigrant integration within the Commonwealth on an economic, social, and cultural level. This report is submitted in compliance with related Item 324.F. of the 2025 Appropriation Act, which states:

*F. The Department of Social Services shall provide an annual report on the activities of the Office of New Americans by December 1 of each year.*

Please contact me should you have questions at (804) 726-7011.

KE:gs  
Attachment

cc: The Honorable Janet V. Kelly, Secretary of Health and Human Resources



# 2025 Office of New Americans Report

# Table of Contents

2025 Office of New Americans Report .....	iii
Report Mandate.....	iii
Executive Summary .....	iii
Definitions .....	iv
Program Overview.....	iv
Contacts.....	iv
Statewide Strategy for Immigrant Integration .....	1
Local Coordination and Alignment .....	1
Benefits Policy and Eligibility Training.....	1
Promotion of Youth Employment and Training.....	2
Advancing Gender Equity Statewide.....	2
Direct Assistance to New Americans .....	2
Citizenship .....	2
Employment.....	2
Health .....	3
Housing.....	3
Youth Education .....	4
Young Adult Mentorship .....	4
Unaccompanied Refugee Minors .....	5
Senior and Aging Supports .....	5
Policy Guidance and Dissemination of Information.....	5
Monthly Newsletter.....	5
Resettlement Directors Calls .....	5
VDSS Broadcasts .....	6
Community Education on Health and Public Safety .....	6
Anti-trafficking and Fraud Prevention.....	6
Health Education and Outreach .....	6
Stakeholder Engagement and Liaising .....	6
Virginia Regional Community Consultations (VRCC) .....	7

Local Department of Social Services.....	7
State Partnerships and Promotion of Best Practices .....	7
Partnership with the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services .....	7
Partnership with the Virginia Department of Health.....	7
Virginia's mass and individual repatriation program.....	8
Management of Grant Programs .....	8
Looking Ahead: FFY26 ONA Programs by Resettlement Agency.....	9
Advisement to the Governor and General Assembly .....	10
The Office of New Americans Advisory Board (ONAAB).....	10
Conclusion.....	10
Appendix A: Legislative Mandate Item 324.F. Of The 2025 Appropriation Act .....	11
Appendix B: § 63.2-209.1, Code Of Virginia .....	12
Appendix C: Assistance for United States Citizens Returned From Foreign Countries Sec. 1113. [42 U.S.C. 1313].....	13

# 2025 OFFICE OF NEW AMERICANS REPORT

A Report for the Virginia General Assembly

December 01, 2025

## REPORT MANDATE

This report is submitted in compliance with [Item 324.F. of the 2025 Appropriation Act](#), which states: “F. The Department of Social Services shall provide an annual report on the activities of the Office of New Americans by December 1 of each year” (see Appendix A).

The full text of the statute that created the Office of New Americans and outlines its mandated activities (§ 63.2-209.1. of the Code of Virginia) is included in Appendix B.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report highlights the activities of the Office of New Americans (ONA), established in 2020 within VDSS to support the economic, social, and cultural integration of immigrants and refugees across the Commonwealth. Comprised of two units, Immigrant Services and Refugee Services, ONA serves as a strategic hub for statewide integration efforts, aligning with the Department’s mission to strengthen communities and promote self-sufficiency.

In 2025, ONA strengthened cross-agency collaboration and served thousands of new Americans through various initiatives and federally funded programs. The Office expanded its statewide newsletter to nearly 1,900 subscribers, launched targeted outreach on fraud prevention and human trafficking, and coordinated regional mental health conferences. These efforts reflect ONA’s continued commitment to building statewide capacity, managing federal funding effectively, and fostering resilient immigrant communities across Virginia.

### About VDSS and ONA Programs

The Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) partners with local departments of social services and community organizations, to promote the well-being of children and families across the Commonwealth. We proudly serve alongside nearly 13,000 state and local human services professionals throughout the Social Services System, who ensure that thousands of Virginia's most vulnerable citizens have access to the best services and benefits available to them.

Together, we work each day to serve, empower, and create opportunities for brighter futures.

The Office of New Americans (ONA) operates within VDSS to coordinate statewide efforts supporting the integration of immigrants and refugees. By promoting access to education, employment, health care, and civic participation, ONA helps new Virginians establish stability and contribute to the state’s social and economic growth.

## DEFINITIONS

### *Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR)*

Federal agency within the Administration for Children and Families providing funding and oversight for refugee resettlement and unaccompanied minors programs nationwide.

### *Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA)*

Financial support for eligible refugees to assist with living expenses during initial resettlement.

### *Refugee Medical Assistance (RMA)*

Short-term health coverage for refugees who are ineligible for Medicaid.

### *Refugee Social Services Employment Program (RSSEP)*

A core employment program designed to help adult refugees achieve economic self-sufficiency through job training and placement.

### *Unaccompanied Refugee Minor (URM)*

Unaccompanied refugee minors are children who arrive in the United States alone because they are fleeing violence, abuse, trafficking, or are seeking to reunite with family.

### *Virginia Newcomer Information System (VNIS)*

A database for managing client data related to immigrant and refugee program participation.

## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Office of New Americans (ONA) fulfills its legislative mandate, as outlined in the Code of Virginia, by administering and supporting a range of programs and initiatives. These include refugee integration services, oversight and strategic planning for the Mass Repatriation Program, and education and outreach efforts directed toward stakeholders serving immigrant communities.

As the office of Virginia's State Refugee Coordinator, ONA administers and disburses federal funding to 20+ stakeholders, including refugee resettlement agencies, local school divisions, and partnering state agencies, to support refugee integration across the Commonwealth. The Office oversees funding for 7 direct services programs implemented by refugee resettlement agencies across 13 office locations.

## CONTACTS

### Authors

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# 2025 Office of New Americans Report

## STATEWIDE STRATEGY FOR IMMIGRANT INTEGRATION

The Office of New Americans (ONA) continues to advance its mission of promoting successful integration of immigrants and refugees across the Commonwealth through the development and implementation of a strategic plan grounded in community collaboration and measurable outcomes. This plan is designed to foster communities where new Americans can thrive and contribute fully to the social, civic, and economic fabric of Virginia. Key strategies include:

- Partnering with Secretariats, state agencies, and state policy leaders to identify and promote policies and practices that support integration and access to services.
- Engaging with federal, state, and local entities to align efforts, share resources, and strengthen the infrastructure that supports immigrant communities.
- Conducting ongoing needs assessments to identify barriers to integration, understand the evolving needs of immigrant populations, and address gaps in service delivery.
- Keeping stakeholders and the public informed through a statewide newsletter, regional community consultations, and consistent communication.

## LOCAL COORDINATION AND ALIGNMENT

In FFY25 (Federal Fiscal Year 2025), ONA directly funded or coordinated with resettlement agencies, local departments of social services, school divisions, health departments, and other service providers to support local efforts aimed at promoting community integration. Several initiatives are detailed below.

## BENEFITS POLICY AND ELIGIBILITY TRAINING

ONA supports Local Departments of Social Services (LDSS) across Virginia by providing training on refugee benefit eligibility, liaising between resettlement agencies and LDSS to address complex cases, and supporting the administration of Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA) and Refugee Medical Assistance (RMA) benefits.

Through proactive engagement with organizations and localities, ONA addressed significant challenges from policy changes and funding reductions. The Office utilized the monthly ONA newsletter, trainings, network meetings, and direct outreach to disseminate critical updates and resources related to Medicaid and public benefits eligibility for immigrant and refugee communities.

## PROMOTION OF YOUTH EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING

In FFY25, ONA's Refugee Social Services Employment Program (RSSEP) placed a strategic focus on youth and young adult employment. While continuing to prioritize education, the program collaborated with refugee families to promote part-time job opportunities during after-school hours and summer breaks. As a result, hundreds of refugee youth gained employment in fast food, grocery, and retail sectors—experiences that enhanced their English proficiency, built resumes, and fostered self-confidence through meaningful work.

ONA continued its collaboration with the national *Skilled Immigrant Integration Program* to improve career pathways for internationally trained professionals. This included the development of career navigation guides that outline education requirements, credentialing processes, and certification pathways for high-demand fields such as healthcare, mental health, and education.

## ADVANCING FEMALE REPRESENTATION IN WORKFORCE STATEWIDE

Since 2018, ONA has prioritized female representation in workforce participation. By incorporating targeted goals into agency contracts, the program has seen a 31.6% increase in female job placements. Average hourly wages for refugee women rose from \$10.74 in 2017 to \$17.29 in FFY25, reflecting significant progress in both participation and pay parity.

## DIRECT ASSISTANCE TO NEW AMERICANS

In FFY25, ONA provided federal funding to 20 subrecipients, including 8 refugee resettlement agencies, 10 school divisions, and 2 state agency partners, to support eligible clients in the areas of citizenship, employment, housing and more.

## CITIZENSHIP

Resettlement agencies expanded access to citizenship and naturalization preparation services for eligible new Americans through English language instruction, civics education to prepare for the naturalization exam, and assistance with applications for adjustment to citizenship status. Agencies supported elderly and disabled refugees by facilitating waivers for English and civic requirements and providing interpretation services during citizenship interviews.

## EMPLOYMENT

The RSSEP is a central component of Virginia's refugee resettlement strategy, supporting adult refugees in achieving economic self-sufficiency through immediate employment and long-term career advancement. Services are available for up to five years from the date of eligibility and include:

- Vocational training and certification courses;
- Job placement and retention support;

- Career development assistance;
- English language instruction;
- Financial literacy education; and
- Barrier reduction services (i.e., transportation, childcare, health, and cultural adjustment)

In FFY25, resettlement agencies served 10,324 individuals through RSSEP. Agencies reported 3,330 job placements, including 2,469 full-time and 861 part-time positions. The average hourly wage for full-time placements was \$18.72. Beyond direct employment services, sub-recipients cultivated employer partnerships and developed workforce readiness trainings to help clients understand U.S. workplace norms. These efforts contributed to strong job retention and positive employer feedback, enhancing the program's reputation.

## **HEALTH**

The Refugee Health Education and Outreach (RHEO) Program provided services to 2,810 refugees, supporting their integration and well-being through a range of culturally responsive health initiatives. Services included health orientations introducing the U.S. healthcare system, health literacy education, health navigation and referrals for medical and mental health services, and participation in wellness and integration groups.

These groups offered hands-on activities tailored based on clients' needs. For example:

- Participants toured local pharmacies to learn about prescription and over-the-counter medications.
- Women's and men's groups used donated produce from a local farm to prepare meals and discuss healthy diets, and met to explore stress management strategies.
- Volunteer yoga instructors led mindfulness and physical wellness sessions.
- Walking groups explored local trails while learning to identify and avoid harmful vegetation unfamiliar to newcomers.

These workshops and group activities promoted health and wellness while fostering a sense of community, encouraging integration and contributing to positive outcomes for both refugees and the communities they join.

## **HOUSING**

Resettlement agencies provided housing access support and coaching to assist families in understanding how to apply for project-based voucher waitlists and available senior housing lottery systems. Additionally, through the employment program, eligible clients could receive emergency rental support when compliant with program requirements. Through financial literacy workshops, clients were also educated on home-buying and long-term saving.

## YOUTH EDUCATION

In FFY25, ONA provided federal funding to eight resettlement agencies and ten school divisions in support of students' learning and integration. Through the Virginia Refugee Student Achievement Project (VRSAP), 28 School Liaisons at resettlement agencies across Virginia supported 1,400 newly arrived, eligible children and their families as they navigated the U.S. education system. New school enrollments in FFY25 included 493 elementary aged youth (K-5), 234 middle school youth (6-8), 250 high school youth (9-12) and 16 youth pursuing a GED, with 317 youth not yet assigned to a grade level.

School Liaisons worked closely with local school divisions to encourage collaboration and capacity development for school staff and systems, including training, language access support, and resource provision. School Liaisons also facilitated partnerships between community stakeholders to ensure that youth had access to the necessary supplies, technology access, and tutoring and mentoring support. School Liaisons connected 90 children to early childhood education opportunities such as Head Start and the Virginia Preschool Initiative. ONA has initiated an informal partnership with Virginia's Ready Regions program to support resettlement agencies as they explore coordinated enrollment options for Virginia's youngest new arrivals.

Additionally, school divisions across Virginia expanded their capacity to serve eligible youth through the School Support for Afghan Students (SSAS) program. Funding was allocated to divisions with high concentrations of eligible students who arrived during or after Operation Allies Welcome in 2021. Priorities of the program included implementation of summer and after-school programming, the hiring of school-based counselors and multilingual family liaisons, enhancement of English Language Learner supports, provision of parent engagement opportunities, and staff training on best practices for supporting newcomer youth. Staff reported success in several areas, including reducing absenteeism, collaborating with teachers to address academic challenges, promoting healthy conflict resolution among students, and increasing parent participation in school events and parent-teacher conferences.

## YOUNG ADULT MENTORSHIP

Through the Mentoring Youth in Virginia (MYVA) program, 150 youth and young adults between the ages of 15-24 were matched with trained mentors for six months to one year to work toward educational, vocational, and social goals. The MYVA program promotes positive civic and social engagement for eligible youth, ensuring that youth are both valued members of and contributors to their communities. MYVA enrollees performed community service in their local communities and continue to find ways to give back through civic and social engagement opportunities.

## UNACCOMPANIED REFUGEE MINORS

Virginia's Unaccompanied Refugee Minor (URM) Program provided culturally sensitive, therapeutic foster care and placement services to 82 unaccompanied refugee minors and other eligible populations of unaccompanied youth in the United States. The URM program operated in Richmond, through Commonwealth Catholic Charities, and Fairfax, through Lutheran Social Services. Youth receiving support ranged in age from 5 to 23 years old and included seven Afghan Humanitarian Parolee youth who arrived in the U.S. under *Operation Allies Welcome*. Operating in Fairfax, Virginia through Lutheran Social Services and Richmond, Virginia through Commonwealth Catholic Charities, the URM program operated in parity with the state foster care program and was subject to state licensing requirements.

## SENIOR AND AGING SUPPORTS

Through the Services for Older Refugees (SOR) program, resettlement agencies served 297 clients aged 60 years and above, with a goal of increasing their social integration and independent healthy living. SOR services are provided in Harrisonburg, by Church World Service, and in Northern Virginia and Fredericksburg, by Catholic Charities Migration and Refugee Services. The program aims to expand relationships with state and local Area Agencies on Aging, provide appropriate services not currently being offered in the community, create opportunities that enable clients to live independently as long as possible, and assist clients with naturalization. Services include transportation, interpretation and translation, aging and nutrition services, assistance with Supplemental Security Income applications, home care, elder abuse prevention, and other needed supports.

## POLICY GUIDANCE AND DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION

### MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

ONA expanded its statewide newsletter to 1,890 subscribers, enhancing communication and resource sharing among state and local stakeholders serving refugee and immigrant populations across the Commonwealth. The monthly publication delivers timely and relevant information, highlighting current policy, professional conferences and summits, webinars and training, and community resources. Each edition includes a calendar of local housing workshops, legal clinics, citizenship classes, and regional celebrations of multiculturalism.

### RESETTLEMENT DIRECTORS CALLS

The State Refugee Coordinator and members of the ONA team met biweekly with directors from 8 Virginia resettlement agencies to discuss relevant policy updates and provide guidance amidst the evolving resettlement landscape. Frequent communication and transparency are a marker of the Office's partnership with local providers.

## VDSS BROADCASTS

The Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) announced a change to the eligibility period for RCA and RMA, reducing it from 12 to 4 months for individuals whose eligibility date is on or after May 5, 2025. In response, ONA issued a broadcast to all VDSS and LDSS offices across Virginia to inform staff of the change, provided targeted trainings, and updated resource materials to support accurate implementation and continued support of eligible clients.

## COMMUNITY EDUCATION ON HEALTH AND PUBLIC SAFETY

### ANTI-TRAFFICKING AND FRAUD PREVENTION

ONA conducted statewide outreach through participation in community events, engaging localities and service providers. Multilingual resources were distributed to raise awareness about human trafficking, scams, fraud prevention, and community protection strategies. These efforts were supported through ongoing partnerships with the Center for Countering Human Trafficking (CCHT) – Blue Campaign, and the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), ensuring continued access to culturally and linguistically appropriate resources.

The Office leveraged its newsletter to highlight the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) *Blue Campaign* for human trafficking prevention, and disseminate multilingual educational materials on scams and fraud, empowering professionals and community members to recognize and avoid exploitation.

### HEALTH EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

Through the RHEO program, resettlement agencies provided educational workshops and coaching on topics such as immunizations, healthy habits, heart disease, breast cancer awareness, and mental health. ONA staff attended health fairs and shared multilingual health resources and clinics through the monthly newsletter.

## STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT AND LIAISING

ONA expanded support for partners through regular policy updates, collaboration in statewide and regional networks, targeted technical assistance, frequent resource-sharing, and direct engagement. These efforts ensured that stakeholders remained informed, connected, and equipped. The Office liaises with stakeholders in several ways:

## **VIRGINIA REGIONAL COMMUNITY CONSULTATIONS (VRCC)**

The VRCC is a forum established in each region of the Office's service area, providing a venue for dialogue between the resettlement agencies and community stakeholders. These meetings are conducted quarterly, where community members and stakeholders may engage the resettlement agencies to discuss gaps in services, opportunities, and challenges. Resettlement agencies also use these meetings to lay out resettlement projections and upcoming initiatives. When challenges are identified in these meetings, resettlement agencies will often conduct break-out sessions where working groups will try to solve the issues raised.

VRCC meetings are organized by the following regions and localities: Northern Virginia, Fredericksburg, Charlottesville, Richmond, Newport News, Roanoke, Winchester, and Harrisonburg.

## **LOCAL DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES**

The Office serves as a liaison between the Local Department of Social Services and Resettlement Agencies to ensure eligible refugees receive and are enrolled in Medicaid, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA), or Refugee Medical Assistance (RMA) Programs for financial, medical, and nutritional assistance.

## **STATE PARTNERSHIPS AND PROMOTION OF BEST PRACTICES**

### **PARTNERSHIP WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF BEHAVIORAL HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES**

In partnership with the Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS), the Office organized three regional mental health conferences in Richmond, Harrisonburg, and Roanoke. The conferences focused on trauma-informed care and prevention for refugee and immigrants with 300+ professionals and community leaders in attendance.

Workshops covered cultural awareness, language access, and impacts of displacement trauma on mental health. Local experts were invited to share knowledge, strengthen prevention efforts, and expand upon culturally responsive resources.

### **PARTNERSHIP WITH THE VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH**

In FFY25, 2,427 refugee medical screenings were performed by the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) contracted providers. The State Refugee Health Coordinator collaborated regularly with resettlement agencies and local clinics and departments of health to address delays in screenings. ONA's State Refugee Coordinator meets weekly with the VDH Refugee Health Coordinator to discuss public health concerns and challenges with screenings.

## **VIRGINIA'S MASS AND INDIVIDUAL REPATRIATION PROGRAM**

ONA administers both the Routine Repatriation Program and the Emergency Repatriation Program under the U.S. Repatriation Program. These programs provide temporary assistance to U.S. citizens and their dependents returning from overseas due to destitution, illness, war, or similar crises, as authorized under Section 1113 of the Social Security Act (See [42 U.S.C. § 1313](#) in Appendix C).

ONA supports returning individuals through strong partnerships with International Social Services and local Departments of Social Services. The Office participates in a federal workgroup led by the Office of Human Services Emergency Preparedness and Response (OHSEPR), contributing to national policy discussions. In collaboration with OHSEPR and its contractor, the International Community Foundation, ONA developed a process map to guide routine repatriation procedures in Virginia.

The Office has drafted a new emergency repatriation plan, currently under review by OHSEPR and state and local partners. The office maintains active partnerships with select agencies, including the Virginia Department of Emergency Management, the Virginia Department of Health, and the American Red Cross. New collaborations are also being established with organizations such as the Northern Virginia Emergency Response System (NVERS) to enhance response capacity. ONA continues to engage in a federal workgroup for states with cooperative agreements, contributing to the development of federal guidance and policy. Participation in an in-person design lab in Washington, D.C. has strengthened inter-state collaboration and information sharing, further enhancing Virginia's repatriation planning and preparedness.

## **MANAGEMENT OF GRANT PROGRAMS**

ONA administers competitive 100% federally funded grants for innovative and effective refugee integration support services across the Commonwealth. Two-year emergency agreements were issued for FFY25 and FFY26. The Office incorporated emergency funding into its contract planning to support Afghan and Ukrainian humanitarian parolees in alignment with allocations from the federal Office of Refugee Resettlement. These funds were designated for individuals displaced due to evacuations from their home countries.

As the oversight body for competitive grants, ONA ensures subrecipient performance aligns with federal standards and contractual obligations. Agreements include use of the Virginia Newcomer Information System (VNIS) system, a database for statewide client data collection. Accurate and timely data collection ensures the Office can monitor subrecipient activities and track service provision. Performance is monitored through outcome-based metrics, mid-year and annual reviews, and risk-based assessments. Agencies identified as higher risk receive enhanced monitoring and technical assistance.

In addition to programmatic oversight, ONA conducts monthly financial reviews and collaborates with local Departments of Social Services to ensure compliance with evolving federal and state policies. In FFY25, the State Auditor of Public Accounts conducted an audit of ONA's monitoring program and found it to be fully compliant, with no findings reported.

In FFY25, ONA disbursed federal funding to the following subrecipients:

- Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services
- Virginia Department of Health
- Church World Service
- Commonwealth Catholic Charities
- Dar-Al-Hirah Refugee Services
- Ethiopian Community Development Council
- International Rescue Committee
- Lutheran Social Services
- Catholic Charities Diocese of Arlington, Migration and Refugee Services
- Resettlement Action DC
- Albemarle County Public Schools
- Alexandria City Public Schools
- Charlottesville City Public Schools
- Fredericksburg City Public Schools
- Henrico County Public Schools
- Prince William County Public Schools
- Roanoke City Public Schools
- Spotsylvania County Public Schools
- Stafford County Public Schools
- Winchester Public Schools

## LOOKING AHEAD: FFY26 ONA PROGRAMS BY RESETTLEMENT AGENCY

		FY26 Programs						
		CCC	CWS	ECDC	IRC	LSS	MRS	REACTDC
	Newport News, Roanoke, Richmond	Harrisonburg, Winchester	Arlington	Richmond, Charlottesville	Fairfax	Alexandria, Woodbridge, Manassas	Fairfax	
RSSEP	RSS	X	X	X	X	-	X	-
	ASA	X	X	X	X	-	X	X
	UHP	X	X	X	-	-	X	-
RSI	RSS	X	X	-	X	-	X	-
	ASA	X	X	X	X	-	X	X
	UHP	-	X	X	-	-	X	-
RHP	RSS	X	X	X		X	X	-
	ASA	X	X	X	X	X	X	-
	UHP	-	X	X	-	X	X	-
SOR YM	RSS	X	X	-	X	X	X	-
	ASA	X	-	X	X	-	X	X
	RSS	-	X	-	-	-	X	-
	ASA	-	X	-	-	-	X	-

## **ADVISEMENT TO THE GOVERNOR AND GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

### **THE OFFICE OF NEW AMERICANS ADVISORY BOARD (ONAAB)**

The ONAAB consists of 15 citizen-members tasked to advise and support the Commonwealth's efforts to promote successful integration of immigrants and refugees. The Board is charged with providing informed recommendations to the Governor, the Governor's Cabinet, and the Virginia General Assembly on policies and practices. ONA works alongside the Advisory Board to provide updates to both the Board and Office, and to discuss and promote strategies to support integration strategies. Together, ONA and ONAAB identify and promote evidence-based strategies to support integration, many of which are reflected in their respective annual reports submitted to state leadership. Board members remain committed to contributing meaningfully to the Commonwealth's integration efforts.

## **CONCLUSION**

While ONA fulfills its mandated role in supporting the linguistic, civic, cultural, and economic integration of New Americans throughout Virginia, its impact extends well beyond these requirements. Since 2021, Virginia has experienced unprecedented arrivals of Afghan and Ukrainian nationals. ONA has led the response, coordinating with partners and adapting programs to meet increased demand. Recent and proposed changes to eligibility for public benefits have created uncertainty for immigrants with parole, asylum, or other visa statuses. Eligibility for benefits remains complex, often depending on visa type or federal classification (e.g., Afghan, Ukrainian, Venezuelan). This lack of clarity makes it difficult for local providers to assess eligibility and deliver consistent support. The Office is closely monitoring these developments and working to prepare partners for potential impacts on service access and community well-being.

Though ONA's Refugee Services unit is fully federally funded and able to meet resettlement mandates, the Immigrant Services unit operates with minimal staffing and no direct service funding. Nevertheless, the Office stays deeply committed to serving all new Americans in the Commonwealth by offering information and training, expanding access to services, and building bridges between people and organizations. Working hand in hand with partners devoted to the same mission, the Office recognizes New Americans' journeys traversed, and contributions made, to the success of the Commonwealth of Virginia.

## **APPENDIX A: LEGISLATIVE MANDATE ITEM 324.F. OF THE 2025 APPROPRIATION ACT**

F. The Department of Social Services shall provide an annual report on the activities of the Office of New Americans by December 1 of each year.

## APPENDIX B: § 63.2-209.1, CODE OF VIRGINIA

### § 63.2-209.1. Office of New Americans

A. There is created in the Department an Office of New Americans (the Office) to assist immigrant integration within the Commonwealth on an economic, social, and cultural level.

B. The Office shall:

1. Implement a statewide strategy to promote the economic, linguistic, and civic integration of new Americans in the Commonwealth;
2. Work with localities to coordinate and support local efforts that align with the statewide strategy to promote the economic, linguistic, and civic integration of new Americans in the Commonwealth;
3. Provide advice and assistance to new Americans regarding (i) the citizenship application process and (ii) securing employment, housing, and services for which such persons may be eligible;
4. Provide advice and assistance to state agencies regarding (i) the coordination of relevant policies across state agencies responsible for education, workforce, and training programs, including professional licensure guidance, small business development, worker protection, refugee resettlement, citizenship and voter education or engagement programs, housing programs, and other related programs, and (ii) the dissemination of information to localities and immigration service organizations regarding state programs that help new Americans find and secure employment, housing, and services for which they may be eligible;
5. Educate localities and immigration service organizations on health epidemics and unlawful predatory actions, such as human trafficking, gang recruitment, and fraudulent financial and other schemes, to which communities of such persons may be especially vulnerable;
6. Serve as the primary liaison with external stakeholders, particularly immigrant-serving and refugee-serving organizations and businesses, on immigrant integration priorities and policies;
7. Partner with state agencies and immigrant-serving and refugee-serving organizations and businesses to identify and disseminate beneficial immigrant integration policies and practices throughout the Commonwealth;
8. Manage competitive grant programs that replicate beneficial practices or test new innovations that improve the effectiveness and efficacy of immigrant integration strategies; and
9. Advise the Governor, cabinet members, and the General Assembly on strategies to improve state policies and programs to support the economic, linguistic, and civic integration of new Americans throughout the Commonwealth.

## **APPENDIX C: ASSISTANCE FOR UNITED STATES CITIZENS RETURNED FROM FOREIGN COUNTRIES SEC. 1113. [42 U.S.C. 1313]**

### Assistance For United States Citizens Returned From Foreign Countries

Sec. 1113. [42 U.S.C. 1313] (a)(1) The Secretary is authorized to provide temporary assistance to citizens of the United States and to dependents of citizens of the United States, if they (A) are identified by the Department of State as having returned, or been brought, from a foreign country to the United States because of the destitution of the citizen of the United States or the illness of such citizen or any of his dependents or because of war, threat of war, invasion, or similar crisis, and (B) are without available resources.

(2) Except in such cases or classes of cases as are set forth in regulations of the Secretary, provision shall be made for reimbursement to the United States by the recipients of the temporary assistance to cover the cost thereof.

(3) The Secretary may provide assistance under paragraph (1) directly or through utilization of the services and facilities of appropriate public or private agencies and organizations, in accordance with agreements providing for payment, in advance or by way of reimbursement, as may be determined by the Secretary, of the cost thereof. Such cost shall be determined by such statistical, sampling, or other method as may be provided in the agreement.

(b) The Secretary is authorized to develop plans and make arrangements for provision of temporary assistance within the United States to individuals specified in subsection (a)(1). Such plans shall be developed and such arrangements shall be made after consultation with the Secretary of State, the Attorney General, and the Secretary of Defense. To the extent feasible, assistance provided under subsection (a) shall be provided in accordance with the plans developed pursuant to this subsection, as modified from time to time by the Secretary.

(c) For purposes of this section, the term "temporary assistance" means money payments, medical care, temporary billeting, transportation, and other goods and services necessary for the health or welfare of individuals (including guidance, counseling, and other welfare services) furnished to them within the United States upon their arrival in the United States and for such period after their arrival, not exceeding ninety days, as may be provided in regulations of the Secretary; except that assistance under this section may be furnished beyond such ninety-day period in the case of any citizen or dependent upon a finding by the Secretary that the circumstances involved necessitate or justify the furnishing of assistance beyond such period in that particular case.

(d) The total amount of temporary assistance provided under this section shall not exceed \$1,000,000 during any fiscal year beginning after September 30, 2009, except that, in the case of fiscal years 2017 and 2018, the total amount of such assistance provided during each such fiscal year shall not exceed \$25,000,000. [\[35\]](#)

(e)(1) The Secretary may accept on behalf of the United States gifts, in cash or in kind, for use in carrying out the program established under this section. Gifts in the form of cash shall be credited to the appropriation account from which this program is funded, in addition to amounts otherwise appropriated, and shall remain available until expended.

(2) Gifts accepted under paragraph (1) shall be available for obligation or other use by the United States only to the extent and in the amounts provided in appropriation Acts.