



# Caribbean Community in Philadelphia

## Passport to Democracy

A New Citizen's Guide to Civic Engagement & Voting



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Caribbean Community in Philadelphia

# Table of Contents

<a href="#">Caribbean Community in Philadelphia - Immigration Program</a>	3
<a href="#">Naturalization Process:</a>	4
<a href="#">Voting Info:</a>	7
<a href="#">Registering to Vote:</a>	8
<a href="#">Voter ID for First Time Voters:</a>	9
<a href="#">Voting w/ Criminal Record</a>	10
<a href="#">Voter Suppression &amp; Barriers</a>	11
<a href="#">Puerto Rico's Voting Rights</a>	13
<a href="#">Applying for a US Passport</a>	15
<b>Resources/Programs</b>	
<a href="#">List of Pro Bono Legal Service Providers - Philadelphia Immigration Court</a>	17
<a href="#">Language Access Philly</a>	18
<a href="#">Next Level Learning</a>	19
<a href="#">M/W/DSBE-owned businesses</a>	19
<a href="#">PHL City ID</a>	20
<a href="#">Citizens Planning Institute (CPI)</a>	22
<b>City Government Organizations &amp; Immigrant Commissions</b>	
<a href="#">Office of Immigrant Affairs (OIA)</a>	23
<a href="#">Mayor's Commission on African and Caribbean Immigrant Affairs (MCACIA)</a>	23
<a href="#">Mayor's Commission on Asian Pacific American Affairs (MCAPAA)</a>	24
<a href="#">African Caribbean Afro-Latino Caribbean Descent PAC</a>	24
<a href="#">Committee of Seventy</a>	25
<a href="#">Philadelphia Association of Community Development Corporation (PACDC)</a>	26
<b>Immigrant Civic Engagement Agencies</b>	
<a href="#">Caribbean Community in Philadelphia (CCP)</a>	27
<a href="#">PA Voice</a>	28
<a href="#">Pennsylvania Immigration and Citizenship Coalition (PICC)</a>	28
<a href="#">The Welcoming Center for New Pennsylvanians (WCNP)</a>	29
<a href="#">Nationalities Service Center (NSC)</a>	31
<a href="#">Northeast Philadelphia Chinese Association</a>	34
<a href="#">New Sanctuary Movement of Philadelphia (NSM)</a>	35
<b>Civic Engagement</b>	
<a href="#">Neighborhood Advisory Committee (NAC)</a>	37
<a href="#">Ward System</a>	37
<a href="#">Block Captains</a>	41
<a href="#">Recreation Advisory Councils</a>	41



# Caribbean Community in Philadelphia - Immigration Program

Caribbean Community in Philadelphia under its Immigration initiatives and programming has been a community partner with United States Citizenship Immigration Service (USCIS) community relations to host and conduct monthly citizenship navigation programs with community members.

CCP is a community partner with the Museum of the American Revolution to recruit and retain members for their citizenship initiative class in American Government, American History and Integrated Civics in preparation for the US Citizenship Test.

CCP provides pro bono immigration referral services through Duane Morris LLP and other community legal services providers. CCP provides Immigration Talk Backs, Immigration Clinics and Know Your Rights information sessions. CCP is involved in immigration advocacy for the rights of Refugees, Asylees and Temporary Protective Status of Caribbean and other marginalized immigrants and International Students.

CCP is a coalition member of the United Voices for Philadelphia, a diverse immigrant group of over 40 organizations, immigrant leaders, immigrant voices in support for refugees and under-represented immigrant voters rights.

CCP Founding President and Strategic Project Director, Miranda Alexander is the Public Relations Officer of the non-partisan group, African Caribbean Afro-Latino Descent Political Action Committee founded by the late Dr. Carolina Baltazar Edwards aka 'Harris'

<https://www.caribbeancommunityinphiladelphia.com/>

The image contains three promotional graphics for Caribbean Community in Philadelphia events:

- Left Graphic:** Titled "Caribbean Community in Philadelphia". It features two speakers: Host - Miranda Alexander (Founding President & Strategic Project Director) and Guest - Jwana L. (Smith) Adebiyi (Community Relations Officer, PA/DE, US Citizenship and Immigration Services). The event is "CITIZENSHIP & NATURALIZATION WITH MOCK INTERVIEW" on Monday, March 27, 2022, from 6:00-7:00PM EST, virtual via Facebook LIVE.
- Middle Graphic:** Titled "CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY IN PHILADELPHIA". It features the same two speakers. The event is "'HUMANITARIAN PAROLE'" on Monday, June 27, 2022, from 6:00-7:00PM, at 6449 Rising Sun Ave, Philadelphia, PA 19111.
- Right Graphic:** Titled "Caribbean Community in Philadelphia TPS FOR CAMEROON". It features the same two speakers. The event is a "Special Town Hall Meeting" on Monday, May 23rd, 2022, from 6:00-7:00PM, virtual via Facebook LIVE. It is hosted at The Southern Cameroons International Town Hall (SCITH). Registration Link: <https://bit.ly/396nVuU>.

Caribbean Community in Philadelphia is a not for profit, grassroots organization with an 8-part multidimensional programming. CCP is committed to its social mission: 'Positively reframing the narrative about and for the Caribbean People'

Our vision is creating innovative programming and providing real life solutions. Our 5 core values are, Committed to Cultural Identity, Responsible Representation, Integrity in Action, Positive Cultural Affirmations, Defending Cultural Content.

## Naturalization Process:

- Definition: A legal process which oftentimes will require a legal representative to file on your behalf. This legal process can be self submitted with complex paperwork. This process is the pathway through which an immigrant to the United States of America can become a U.S. citizen.
- Requirements: those who either have been green card holders or lawful permanent residents (LPR) for 3–5 years or those who have met various military service requirements. Some candidates may be eligible by marriage, parents or the child citizenship act.
- Eligibility: for 18 years and older and those who exhibit good moral character, have a basic knowledge of the US government, can read or write basic english (some exceptions to age, mental and physical impairment).
- Time: the naturalization processing time, filing duration, your citizenship application and attendance at the Oath of Allegiance ceremony, is estimated to be 10 months and longer.
  - Step 1: Eligibility Screening
  - Step 2: Submitting your Application for Naturalization/filing fees (Form N-400)
  - Step 3: Attending your biometrics appointment
  - Step 4: Preparing for citizenship interview (study guide)
  - Step 5: Attending your citizenship interview and exam
  - Step 6: Receiving a decision on your application
  - Step 7: Taking the Oath of Allegiance and receiving your Certificate of Citizenship
- Form N-400:
  - This form is available at libraries, organizations and agencies. It's also available to file directly online at USCIS <https://www.uscis.gov/n-400>
  - If you're applying for U.S. citizenship from outside the U.S. or you're applying for a fee reduction or waiver, you are required to file by mail.
  - There are exceptions and modifications to the naturalization requirements that are available to those who qualify.
  - Along with the form, the following documents are required:
    - A photocopy of both sides of your Permanent Resident Card (aka Green Card)
    - A check or money order for the application fee and the biometric services fee (prices mentioned below)
    - Two identical passport-style photographs
      - example shown below in section: Applying for a US Passport
    - Birth certificate
    - Tax returns and bank statements for the past five years
    - Copy of original marriage certificate, documentation of marital history, and/or military service record, if applicable

- Cost: The total cost to file a naturalization application is \$725.
  - This includes a filing fee of \$640 for Form N-400 and an \$85 biometrics fee
- Caution for Non-English Speakers: If any of your documents are written in a language other than English, you must obtain a **certified English translation** of that document
  - Any document that the U.S. government requires for a green card application must be translated into English
    - Birth certificate, Marriage certificate, Divorce papers, Police records, Bank statements
  - Current immigration law allows you or your relatives to be your own translators, if you can certify that you are truly competent in both languages.
    - However, the decision to accept a certified English translation is at the discretion of the *immigration officer* reviewing your documents, therefore it is a good idea to seek the help of a **professional translation service**, like RushTranslate (\$25 per page)
- Certified English Translation
  - For a document to be considered “certified,” the person who translated it into English must write a formal letter stating that they:
    - 1. Are qualified to translate the document because they are competent in both English and the document’s original language.
    - 2. Translated the document accurately and completely to the best of their abilities.
  - In addition, the letter must include the following information about the translator:
    - Full name, Address, Signature, and Date they wrote the letter
  - You must submit this certification letter with the translations and photocopies of the untranslated documents.
- Biometrics Appointment (takes about 15-20 minutes)
  - The applicant provides their fingerprints, photograph, and signature to be used for background check processing
  - Required documents:
    - Form I-797C (appointment letter)
    - Permanent Resident Card (green card)
    - Second form of ID with photo on it (driver’s license/ state-issued ID card)
- Request for Evidence (RFE)
  - It’s possible you’ll receive a notice from USCIS requesting additional information or materials, which will be specified in a **“Request for Evidence”** (RFE)
- Citizenship Interview with a USCIS Immigration Officer
  - USCIS will send you a letter - **only once** - at your home address you provided with the date and location of your interview (Interview Notice), as well as a list of any documents that you must bring.



## Voting Info:

- For information on upcoming dates for primary and general elections, you can visit **Ballotpedia**, a website which provides a statewide primary elections calendar where you can click on your state for relevant elections information.
- The City Commissioners Office has a list of important voter dates for Philadelphia on their website.
  - <https://vote.phila.gov/voting/important-dates-for-voters/>
  - Upcoming 2023 Philadelphia Municipal General Elections for Mayoral Candidates Cherelle Parker (D) and David Oh (R) - Tuesday, November 7, 2023
- The Committee of Seventy, a civic leadership organization discussed further below, also provides a voters guide. Its Vision for Equality is also a non-partisan group of political watchdogs advancing good governance.
  - <https://www.visionforequality.org/resources/committee-of-seventy/>
- Kinds of Elections
  - General Election: vote for federal, state, and local officials
    - Every 4 years, the General Election is also US Presidential Election
  - Primary Election: each political party selects its candidates to run for office during the general election.
    - The candidates who get the highest number of votes in the primary election go on to represent the democratic, Republican or Liberal party and run in the general election.
  - Special Election: occurs when someone in office can no longer serve.
    - This may happen when someone resigns, dies, or gets removed from office.
- Electoral College
  - Definition: a group of electors established to formally elect the President and Vice President of the United States
  - Process: During the General Election, each candidate for president chooses a list of electors. The electors for the presidential candidate who wins Pennsylvania's popular vote get to cast their vote for president and vice president.
  - Size: Each state has the same number of electoral votes as it has members of Congress. There are a total of 538 votes in the Electoral College. A candidate must win a simple majority - 270 - of those votes to win the election.
    - 270 to win is a website where information on the results of all previous US presidential elections can be accessed <https://www.270towin.com/>
- Main-In/ Absentee Ballot:
  - **Any qualified voter** may apply for a mail-in ballot. You may simply request this ballot from election authorities and then return the completed ballot by mail or through designated drop-off locations



- Absentee ballot ~ If you plan to be out of the municipality on election day or if you have a disability or illness that prevents you from going to your polling place on election day, you can request this ballot type, which still requires you to list a reason for your ballot.

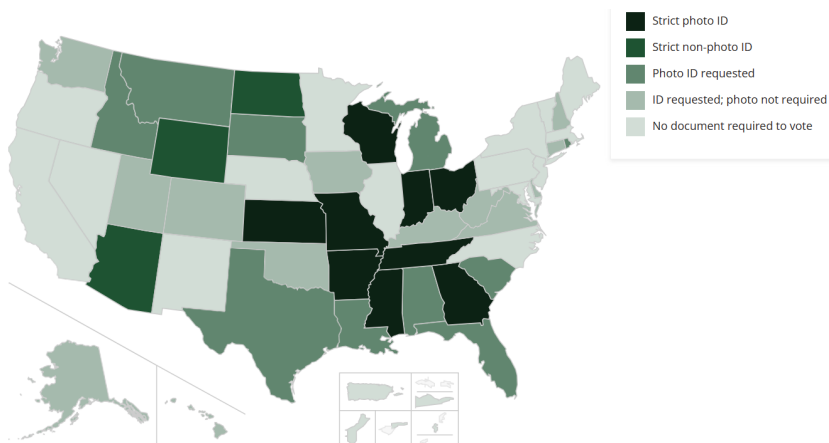
## Registering to Vote:

- **Important Note:** Only U.S. citizens are allowed to vote in federal, state, and most local elections. If an immigrant attempts to vote or register to vote, the consequences can be serious including:
  - a fine, one year in prison, or both
  - be eligible for deportation.
  - makes an immigrant inadmissible to getting a U.S. visa or naturalization in the future
- Check state deadlines for registration - information for each state's federal, state, and local election dates and registration deadlines can be found on [www.usvotefoundation.org](http://www.usvotefoundation.org)
  - Next elections in PA: Nov. 7
- Election Day
  - Once you've registered to vote, your election office will likely send you a voter registration card that tells you your polling place. On Election Day, you'll go there to vote. You'll probably need to show an ID before you can vote
- To learn about specific details on your state's voter registration process, visit your state or local territory's election office website
  - [www.vote.pa.gov](http://www.vote.pa.gov)
  - There are two democratic Commissioners (Omar Sabir - vice chair and Lisa Deeley - chair) and one Republican Commissioner (Seth Bluestein) who hold the current office of Philadelphia City Commissioners responsible for overseeing voter registration and elections for the city of Philadelphia.
- To register to vote you must fill out a voter registration application form through one of four methods:
  - Online (at your state's election office website)
  - By mail
  - In person with neighborhood official representatives or at your county voter registration office
    - Philadelphia Voter Registration Office:  
520 N Columbus Blvd, 5th Fl Philadelphia, PA 19123
    - Phone: 215-686-1591
  - at PennDOT and some other government agencies.
- Information on Pennsylvania voting is available in Spanish and Mandarin, as well as English
  - This is a recent change made due to data on immigrant populations in the Philadelphia area.

- Citizens can change their party status, update their address/personal information, and request mail-in/absentee ballot applications through the PA voting services website
  - <https://www.pavoterservices.pa.gov>
- For resources on voter registration in languages other than English, Spanish, and Chinese, you can visit the PA Democratic Party's voter page on their website.
  - <https://www.padems.com/vote/>

### Voter ID for First Time Voters:

- New Citizens can go to their designated polling station to vote (church, school, recreation center etc) for the first time. In Pennsylvania, you are required to bring voter identification but not photo ID
  - Not all states require photo identification to vote!
  - It is a good practice to bring ID with a photo to avoid issues.
- Approved forms of photo identification include:
  - Pennsylvania driver's license or PennDOT ID card
  - ID issued by any Commonwealth agency
  - ID issued by the U.S. Government
  - U.S. passport
  - U.S. Armed Forces ID
  - Student ID
  - Employee ID
- If you do not have a photo ID, you can use a non-photo identification that includes your name and address.
  - Confirmation issued by the County Voter Registration Office
  - Non-photo ID issued by the Commonwealth
  - Non-photo ID issued by the U.S. Government
  - Firearm permit
  - Current utility bill
  - Current bank statement
  - Current paycheck
  - Government check
- Voter Identification Laws In Effect



This graphic and more information on state-by-state voter ID laws can be found on the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) website. [ncsl.org](https://www.ncsl.org)

- The federal **Help America Vote Act** (section 15483(b)(2)(A)) mandates that all states require identification from first-time voters who register to vote by mail and have not provided verification of their identification at the time of registration. The act lists these options as acceptable forms of ID
  - "current and valid photo identification"
  - "a copy of a current utility bill, bank statement, government check, paycheck, or other government document that shows the name and address of the voter"

## Voting w/ Criminal Record



- You are not eligible to register and vote if you:
  - Are **currently confined in a penal institution for conviction of a felony** and will not get released from confinement until after the next election. This is even if you are also incarcerated for one or more misdemeanor offenses.
  - Are **in a halfway house or other alternative correctional facility on pre-release status for conviction of a felony** and who will not get released until after the date of the next election.
  - **Got convicted** of violating any provision of the Pennsylvania Election Code within the last four years.
- You can register and vote if you:
  - Are a **pretrial detainee**, confined in a penal institution awaiting trial on charges of a felony or a misdemeanor.
  - Were ever convicted of a misdemeanor.

- **Got released or will get released by the date of the next election** from a correctional facility or halfway house.
- **Are on probation or released on parole.**
- **Are under house arrest (home confinement).**
- When registering to vote, you cannot use a penal institution or a halfway house as your residence address where you live.
- If you are in a penal institution, your residence for voter registration is:
  - The last address where you registered to vote before confinement, or
  - Your last known address before confinement, or
  - A new residence established while confined
- If confined in a penal institution, you will vote by absentee ballot.
  - Only available to pretrial detainees and those convicted of a misdemeanor
- If you are not confined, you will vote at your polling place.

## Voter Suppression & Barriers



\*Stacey Abrams (pictured above) is an American politician, lawyer, voting rights activist, and author who founded **Fair Fight Action**, an organization to address voter suppression, in 2018.

- **Voter ID Laws**
  - Definition: Many states require voters to present specific forms of identification before casting their ballots (Voter ID with photo)
  - Main Purpose: Helps prevent voter fraud
  - Critique: It disproportionately affects marginalized communities who may face difficulties obtaining the required IDs due to legal or economic constraints.
- **Voter Purges**
  - Definition: process of removing names from the voter registration lists or rolls, often done without the consent or knowledge of said voters
  - Main Purpose: Meant to update and maintain accurate voter registration databases

- Critique: These purges have been criticized for being inaccurate and leading to eligible voters being wrongly removed from the rolls, often without their knowledge.
- **Gerrymandering**
  - Definition: Practice of drawing the boundaries of electoral districts in a way that gives one political party an unfair advantage over its rivals or that dilutes the voting power of members of ethnic or linguistic minority groups
    - Ex. political, partisan, and racial gerrymandering
  - Purpose: To influence not only the districting statute but the entire corpus of legislative decisions enacted in its path.
  - Critique: Gerrymandering is deeply undemocratic, as it empowers politicians to choose their voters rather than voters choosing their representatives, thereby diluting the voting power of certain (marginalized) communities.
- **Reduction of Early Voting Opportunities**
  - Definition: The act of limiting or decreasing the number of days or hours during which voters can cast their ballots before the official Election Day
    - Pros of Early Voting Opportunities: allows eligible voters to participate in the electoral process on dates and times that are more convenient for them, providing greater flexibility and potentially increasing voter turnout.
  - Purpose: Often framed as an attempt to address concerns about voter fraud, protect the integrity of the electoral process, and control election costs
  - Critique: Such measures suppress voter turnout, particularly among certain demographics that are more likely to use early voting options.
- **Polling Place Closures**
  - Purpose: The reasoning given behind polling place closures can vary depending on the specific circumstances and jurisdictions involved. Some cited reasons include cost reduction and low voter turnout.
  - Critique: Closing polling places can disproportionately affect certain communities, particularly minority and low-income neighborhoods, leading to longer travel times and potential barriers to voting. This can lead to major disenfranchisement of entire communities.
- **Felony Disenfranchisement**
  - Definition: Some states have strict laws that permanently revoke voting rights for individuals with felony convictions, while others have more lenient policies that allow restoration of voting rights after completion of their sentences or parole.
    - Exs: Florida, Iowa, Kentucky, Virginia, Alabama, Mississippi, Tennessee, Arizona
  - Purpose: One of the primary arguments made by states in support of felony disenfranchisement is that individuals convicted of felonies have violated the law and, as a consequence, should temporarily or permanently lose certain rights,

including the right to vote. Other cited reasons include protecting the integrity of elections and restoring public trust in elections.

- Critiques: Such policies disproportionately impact communities of color and low-income individuals (who make up 80% of the population who are in or have been in the penal system). Felony disenfranchisement also contributes to a perpetuation of social inequalities and hinders the reintegration of formerly incarcerated individuals into society.

## Puerto Rico's Voting Rights



- Puerto Rico became a U.S. territory in 1898 following the Spanish-American War.
- In 1900, the U.S. Congress enacted the Foraker Act, establishing a civil government in the territory and then in 1917, Puerto Ricans were granted US citizenship, by the enactment of the Jones-Shafroth Act.
- The first petition for Puerto Rico's statehood was presented in 1967.
- Yet today, the US commonwealth continues to lack representation in Congress and cannot vote in presidential elections.
  - Puerto Rico has one non-voting representative in Congress called a Resident Commissioner
  - This could be argued as a disenfranchisement of around 3 million Puerto Ricans who must live under the government in the US, yet have no say in its civic leaders
- Governor Pedro Pierluisi, who served as Resident Commissioner from 2009 to 2017, and current Republican Resident Commissioner Jenniffer González have been the leading voices promoting the **Statehood Admission Act**
  - Statehood Admissions Act: a bill introduced by Florida Congressman Darren Soto that would grant Puerto Rico statehood if a majority of voters on the island voted for it in a binding "yes" or "no" referendum.

- The Puerto Rico Status Act put forward to Congress in 2022 included three options for voters to choose between at a referendum. The choices were to grant Puerto Rico statehood, to grant it independence or to grant it independence while retaining some U.S. affiliations. The bill also covered some procedures for how the changes could be implemented and designates resources for a voter education campaign.
  - Passed House in December 2022 - Failed in Senate
  - Decision made by a majority of voters in Puerto Rico
- One of the major setbacks to the Puerto Rico Statehood Movement are Republican party leaders who have prevented previous statehood bills from passing, due to their fear that such an action would lead to a rise of democratic voters.
- This a list of names of the major sponsors/supporters (US representatives) of the 2022 Puerto Rico Status Act:
  - Christina Ponsa-Krau (Colombian law professor), Congressman Steny H. Hoyer (MD-05), House Natural Resources Committee Ranking Member Raúl M. Grijalva (AZ-07), Resident Commissioner Jenniffer González-Colón (PR at-large), Rep. Nydia M. Velázquez (NY-07), Rep. Darren Soto (FL-09), Governor of Puerto Rico Pedro R. Pierluisi, Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (NY-14) and Rep. Ritchie Torres (NY-15)

## Applying for a US Passport

- One of the key benefits of naturalization and becoming a new citizen is the ability to obtain a U.S. passport. The U.S. passport is considered one of the most powerful travel documents in the world, as U.S. passport holders can travel to more than 180 locations without requiring a specific visa.
- After the COVID-19 pandemic the U.S. passports have been more difficult to attain. New Citizens are encouraged to apply for their U.S. Passports as soon as possible and no later than 3 months before any international travel.
- How To Apply:
  - Step 1 – Complete Form DS-11 (Application for a US Passport)
    - This form is used to apply in person at an acceptance facility, a passport agency (by appointment only), or a U.S. embassy, consulate, or consular agency (if abroad).
    - Applicants can download and print Form DS-11 or fill in the form online using a form filler.
  - Step 2 – Provide Evidence of U.S. Citizenship
    - If you are a newly naturalized citizen, you may submit your Certificate of Naturalization as proof of citizenship. If you are unable to present your Certificate of Naturalization, you may be able to provide secondary evidence in lieu of naturalization documents.
  - Step 3 – Present a Valid ID

- As part of the application process, you must also present a valid form of legal identification, in addition to a photocopy of the front of the ID.
          - Legal IDs such as a state-issued driver’s license or current foreign passport are generally accepted.
  - Step 4 – Obtain a Photo
    - Applicants are required to include one 2 x 2 inches (51 x 51 mm) passport photo in their application package.



Image Provided by <https://travel.state.gov>

- Step 5 – Submit Application
    - If you’re applying for your first U.S. passport, **you must apply in person at a passport acceptance facility**. Passport acceptance facilities are designated by the U.S. State Department and can include state government offices, public libraries, post offices, and other types of locations.
    - You can search for passport acceptance facilities near you on: <https://iafdb.travel.state.gov/>
- Once you’ve determined your filing location, you must submit your completed Form DS-11, including citizenship evidence documents, a photocopy of your legal ID, passport photo, and required filing fees.
- Cost:
  - For adults (age 16 and older) applying for the first time, there are two fees:
    - Application Fee: \$130
    - Execution (Acceptance) Fee: \$35
  - For children (under 16) applying for the first time, the following fees apply:
    - Application Fee: \$100
    - Execution (Acceptance) Fee: \$35
- Timeline:
  - The processing time for a routine passport application is currently 7 to 10 weeks.



- It is possible to apply for an expedited passport for an additional \$60 fee.
  - Expedited passport requests generally take between 4 to 6 weeks.
- Renewing A Passport:
  - U.S. passports issued to adults are typically **valid for 10 years**, while passports issued to children under 16 are **valid for 5 years**. It is important to be mindful of your passport expiration date and read up on the renewal process before the time comes to obtain an updated passport.

## Resources/Programs

### List of Pro Bono Legal Service Providers - Philadelphia Immigration Court

- ACANA (African Cultural Alliance of North America)  
5530 Chester Ave • Philadelphia, PA 19143; Tel: 215-729-8225;  
<https://acanaus.org/legal-services/>
  - Board of Immigration appeal accredited community-based organization
- Catholic Social Services, Archdiocese of Philadelphia  
222 N. 17th Street, Suite 901 • Philadelphia, PA 19103; Tel: (215) 854-7019 Fax: (215) 854-7021; [immigrationlegalservices@chs-adphila.org](mailto:immigrationlegalservices@chs-adphila.org) // [www.immigrationlegalservices.org](http://www.immigrationlegalservices.org)
  - By appointment only/no walk-in service
  - Will represent seeking asylum and relief from removal
  - Priorities include Cancellation of Removal, Family Petitions, and Naturalization'
  - Will not accept detainee cases or bond hearings
- Jewish Family & Children's Service  
2100 Arch Street • Philadelphia, PA 19103; Tel: (267) 256-2100; [info@jfcspgh.org](mailto:info@jfcspgh.org) // [www.jfcspgh.org](http://www.jfcspgh.org)
  - No Asylum or Employment Cases
- Equal Access Legal Services  
402 Bethlehem Pike • Glenside, PA 19038; Tel: (267) 888-6703; [mfc@equalaccesslegal.org](mailto:mfc@equalaccesslegal.org) // [www.equalaccesslegal.org](http://www.equalaccesslegal.org)
  - No Walk-ins
- HIAS (Pennsylvania)  
600 Chestnut St, Suite 500B • Philadelphia, PA 19106; Tel: (215) 832-0900 • Fax: (215) 832-0919; [hiaspa.org](http://hiaspa.org)
  - Hours: Tuesday 2-4:30 pm, Wednesday 9:30 am-12:30 pm
  - Priorities Include asylum, youth, interpersonal violence, naturalization, and family petitions
- Prime – Ecumenical Commitment to Refugees  
P.O. Box 5 • Lansdowne, PA 1905; Tel: (610) 259-4500 • Fax: (610) 259-4515;  
[primeimmigrationministries@gmail.com](mailto:primeimmigrationministries@gmail.com); [www.prime-immigration.org](http://www.prime-immigration.org)
  - No walk-ins
  - Languages: Spanish and Arabic interpreters

- Nationalities Service Center  
1216 Arch St., 4th Floor • Philadelphia, PA 19107; Tel: (215) 893-8400 • Fax: (215) 735-9718;  
[legal@ncsphila.org](mailto:legal@ncsphila.org) // [www.ncsphila.org](http://www.ncsphila.org)
  - Languages: Spanish and French
- Aldea – The People’s Justice Center  
532 Walnut Street • Reading, PA 19601; Tel: (484) 877-8002 • Fax: (484) 877-8003;  
[coordinator@aldeapjc.org](mailto:coordinator@aldeapjc.org) // [www.aldeapjc.org](http://www.aldeapjc.org)
  - Languages: Spanish
- American Bar Association Detention and LOP Information Line  
[immcenter@americanbar.org](mailto:immcenter@americanbar.org) // <https://www.americanbar.org/groups/publicinterest/immigration>
  - Pro se case assistance for detained Respondents only
  - Dial 2150# from the detention center
  - To contact on behalf of a detained individual, email [immcenter@americanbar.org](mailto:immcenter@americanbar.org)

## Language Access Philly



\*In May of 2016, Mayor Jim Kenney signed Executive Order No. 7-16, creating the city-wide program Language Access Philly (LAP) and establishing the Office of Immigrant Affairs (OIA), formerly the Mayor’s Office of Immigrant and Multicultural Affairs (MOIMA).

- In 2015, Philadelphians voted to amend the Home Rule Charter to require all City agencies to provide language access services.
- The **Office of Immigrant Affairs** manages Language Access Philly, the City’s language access program that oversees language access policies and language services.
- Language Access Philly ensures that City departments can communicate with people with limited English proficiency (LEP).
- In addition to bilingual staff, language access services offered by the City may include:
  - Interpretation over the phone.
  - Interpretation in person.
  - Translation of documents.

- Every department must provide services in other languages when needed and requested by a resident. (These services are provided free of cost to the person seeking service.)
- For general information about City government services, please dial 311 and request an interpreter.
- Everyone has a right to access all City services and information in their language, **regardless of residency or citizen status**. This also includes visitors and tourists.

## Next Level Learning

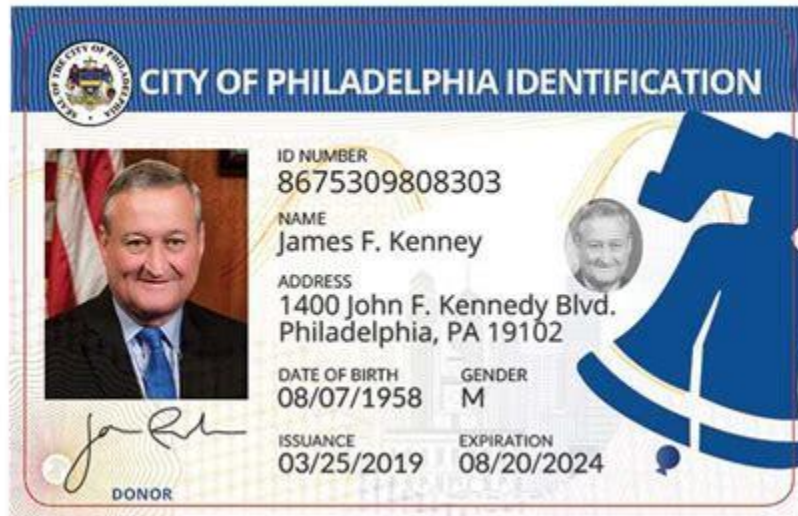


- The City of Philadelphia works with community-based organizations to provide Next Level Learning for residents who are 16 and older.
- Adult education classes are offered on a variety of subjects, including:
  - Reading, writing, and math.
  - Basic computer skills.
  - High school equivalency preparation, including GED and HiSET preparation.
  - English for speakers of other languages (ESOL).
- Contact to learn more about classes and enroll:
  - Call hotline at **(833) 750-5627**.
    - It's best to call between 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., when a Career Navigator can answer. Live translation is available for the call.
  - Discuss your goals and enroll in a class.
    - Discuss your educational goals with the Career Navigator. They'll help you enroll in the right class for your schedule and needs.

## M/W/DSBE-owned businesses

- Registering as an M/W/DSBE with the Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO) can provide your business with opportunities. Once certified and registered, **M/W/DSBEs get preference in the City contracting process.**
- Steps:
  - Get Certified
    - To qualify, your business must have at least 51% ownership by a minority, woman, or person with a disability.
    - If you are a minority, woman, or disabled-owned business and would like to get certified, you must do so with a **recognized certification agency**.
      - List of such organizations can be found on the City of Philadelphia website
  - Join the Registry
    - After receiving certification, one can sign up for the Office of Economic Opportunity's registry through an **online application**
      - The application takes roughly 30 minutes.
    - Once the application is approved, your company will receive a registration letter by email. This message will include:
      - A registration number.
      - North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) code.
      - The date issued.
      - An expiration date.
  - Finding Contracting Opportunities
    - **Contracts Hub** is a search engine created by the City of Philadelphia which searches multiple procurement websites at once to help you find opportunities for your business.
      - If your business receives a City contract, you may be required to follow labor standards and wage regulations.

## PHL City ID



- The PHL City ID provides a secure and affordable photo identification card for anyone living in Philadelphia, age 13 and older. It is a valid, government-issued identification card that is **accepted by all City services and City-funded programs**.
- The PHL City ID displays the cardholder's name, address, date of birth, and self-identified gender. It assigns a unique identification number to each Philadelphian and displays an issue and expiration date on the card.
- Information available in multiple languages including: Vietnamese, French, Spanish, Mandarin, Portuguese, and Russian (@ [www.phila.gov](http://www.phila.gov))
- Uses:
  - As identification within Philadelphia.
  - To sign in to schools and City buildings.
  - To access recreation centers.
  - To interact with a law enforcement official.
  - For other situations where they need identification.
- To get a PHL City ID, **you must prove your identity and residency** in Philadelphia.
  - Proof of Identity:
    - U.S. or foreign passport.
    - U.S. or foreign birth certificate.
    - Social Security card.
    - Veterans' identification card.
    - SEPTA Key senior ID card.
    - U.S. or foreign driver's license.
    - High school or college student ID card.
    - Inmate identification card.
    - Consular Identification Card (CID).
  - Proof of Residency:

- Utility bill.
  - Bank statement.
  - Current lease.
  - Vehicle registration.
  - Pay stub.
  - Letter from hospital, health clinic, shelter, or social service agency.
- The PHL City ID uses a four-point system for the application. Different documents are worth different numbers of points. (nearly same process as getting a driver's license)
  - Document points guide available on program website
- Process:
  - Appointment
    - Scheduled online: Monday to Friday 8:30 – 4:00 p.m.
    - The PHL City ID team meets by appointment at City Hall, Room 167
    - PHL City ID also accepts walk-in visitors without appointments on a first-come, first-served basis until capacity is reached for the day.
  - Prescreening and Application
    - PHL City ID application
    - Prescreen of documents to be sure you have enough documents to prove your identity and residency
  - Authentication, Verification and Payment
    - Your proof of identity documents will be checked using a database to confirm they are not expired, fake, or copies. Another database is used to verify your address.
    - PHL City ID costs \$5 for someone 13–17 years old, \$10 for someone 18–64 years old, and is free for everyone 65 and older.
      - You can pay using cash, and money orders.
  - Signature and Photo
    - After collecting your payment, you will sign the signature pad and we will take your picture.
- You should receive your PHL City ID **within 30 minutes of beginning prescreening.**

## Citizens Planning Institute (CPI)

- Contact Info: (215) 683-4648
- Program run by the Philadelphia City Planning Commission
- CPI is the education and outreach branch of the Philadelphia City Planning Commission
- Main Function:
  - Eight-week course, offered every spring and fall, to a new and diverse group of thirty residents who bring new-found skills and resources back to their neighborhood organizations.

- The course looks to empower citizens to take a more effective and active role in shaping the future of their neighborhoods and of Philadelphia through a **greater understanding of city planning and the steps involved in development projects**.
- Has been offering semi-annual classes since 2010 to educate Philadelphians about city planning and encourage residents to learn more about creating a more livable, green, and sustainable Philadelphia.
- Participants meeting all requirements receive recognition with a Certificate of Completion as a Citizen Planner
- Graduates receive a minimum of 15 hours of instruction balanced with interactive group exercises.
  - The course includes seven evening classes: a class orientation, three introductory classes on planning, land use and zoning, and the real estate development process; and three special topic classes, which change every session.
- Each participant is also required to complete a final project in order to earn their Certificate of Completion as a Philadelphia Citizen Planner. You will receive information about this at the first class.
- Cost:
  - The in-person class is a total of \$100. Fees cover a buffet dinner and course materials.
    - Core Classes: \$50 total for the orientation and 3 core classes (required)
    - Special Topic Classes: \$25 per class (minimum 2 required)
  - Courses fees have been adjusted for online sessions. The virtual course is \$25.
- Scholarships are available for those with financial need. Participants can also choose to be a program “Champion” by paying for someone’s scholarship.
- If interested in applying, sign up for their newsletter to be notified of the next application period.

They receive many more applications than they can approve so in selecting the participants for each course, CPI considers how applicants will be able to use the information they receive.

## **City Government Organizations & Immigrant Commissions**

### Office of Immigrant Affairs (OIA)

- The mission of the Office of Immigrant Affairs (OIA) is to promote the well-being of Philadelphia’s immigrant communities.
- Implementing policies and programs and ensuring access to services that strengthen the well-being of Philadelphia's immigrant communities.
- Address: 1401 John F. Kennedy Blvd., Philadelphia, PA 19107 (Suite 1430)
- Contact Info:

- (215) 686-0876 // [OIA@phila.gov](mailto:OIA@phila.gov)
- For more information, visit their website at <https://www.phila.gov/departments/office-of-immigrant-affairs/>
  - Made available in English, Spanish, and Chinese
- Programs Provided:
  - Language Access Philly
  - Long list of local resources for immigrants and refugees
- CCP is in partnership with OIA, working with diverse community leaders to create a welcoming network task force.

## Mayor's Commission on African and Caribbean Immigrant Affairs (MCACIA)

- Part of the Office of Immigrant Affairs in Philadelphia.
- It is chaired by former Councilmember, Jannie Blackwell and its mission is to connect the voices of Philadelphia's African and Caribbean immigrants to City government.
- The commission works to **strengthen the voices** of local African and Caribbean immigrant communities, **advises the Mayor on policies and programs** to improve their lives, and **shares resources and raises awareness** about their history, geography, and culture.
- Encourages the development and implementation of City-sponsored policies and programs focused on improving the social, economic, political, educational, cultural, and general well-being of African and Caribbean immigrants, refugees, and asylees.
- Assists African and Caribbean-led organizations in achieving self-sufficiency, developing partnerships with City agencies, and creating access to City resources
- The commission meets monthly to discuss the diaspora's needs. For example, a recent meeting in March included topics of **domestic violence and homelessness** in the Caribbean community, **Census 2020 efforts**, and **women's wellness**
- Director: Amy Eusebio
  - (215) 686-0876
  - [amy.eusebio@phila.gov](mailto:amy.eusebio@phila.gov)

## Mayor's Commission on Asian Pacific American Affairs (MCAPAA)

- Part of the Office of Immigrant Affairs but functions under the Office of Public Engagement.
- Composed of 25 professionals and community leaders who represent the diversity of Philadelphia's Asian American population.
- the MCAPAA:
  - Advises the Mayor on issues and policies that are important to Asian communities in the City.



- Ensures diversity and inclusion for Asian communities within City policies.
- Helps Asian American community organizations develop strategies and programs that enhance the social, cultural, and economic status of the Asian American community.
- The commission operates as a bridge between the APA community and city government, ensuring that the voices of APA residents are heard and represented in various aspects of city governance and decision-making.

## African Caribbean Afro-Latino Caribbean Descent PAC

- Established non partisan Political Action Committee with membership from the African, Caribbean and Afro-Latino Caribbean Communities
  - Non-partisan: not biased or partisan, especially toward any particular political group.
  - Political Action Committee ~ there are 3 types
- Founded by Dr. Carolina Baltazar Edwards (aka Harris) in 2012
- Members support candidates that best represents their civic and community views
- Gives bipartisan support and endorsement of candidates running in the primary and general elections in three major PA counties (Philadelphia, Delaware, Montgomery)
- Mission: To create a political atmosphere in which all individuals and groups come together with one voice to participate in the political process in local and state elections
- Members are encouraged to support political education and civic engagement. Members encourage their constituents to represent at the polls on election day, by working the polling stations in their communities
- How does it work ~
  1. Candidates are recommended to come to us for support and members observe potential candidates who represent our common interests.
  2. Months leading up to the Primary or General Elections, members gather to select candidates, republicans or democrats who are running in townships, boroughs and in the city of Philadelphia
  3. Members observe candidates, their platforms and their proposals on what they would do in our communities, if they were elected. Members are particularly concerned about how immigrant, undeserved, and marginalized communities are respectfully treated by candidates

## Committee of Seventy

- Committee of Seventy: a nonpartisan civic leadership organization that advances representative, ethical and effective government in Philadelphia and Pennsylvania through citizen engagement and public policy advocacy.
  - Ended Cash Gifts

- Philadelphia's elected officials and employees can no longer accept cash gifts, thanks in large measure to Seventy's advocacy.
- Slayed the gerrymander
  - **Draw the Lines PA**, gave thousands of citizens the power to draw their own maps and inform the upcoming formal process for drawing congressional, legislative and city council maps.
- Banned ultra-rich pension bonuses
  - Seventy prompted Pennsylvania to ban ultra-rich pension bonuses for elected officials in Philadelphia and across the state.
- Educated voters
  - Seventy led a non-partisan statewide coalition of 185 groups to educate voters on how to be prepared for voter ID rules.
- Partnership with BallotReady
- C70's Interactive Voter Guide: The guide contains full bios of candidates, campaign links, and their responses to C70's candidate questionnaire
- Advocates for statewide vote-by-mail
- Build Your Own Ballot (BYOBallot) tool
- 2023 election calendar - all the important dates and deadlines for this year's primary and general elections.

## Philadelphia Association of Community Development Corporation (PACDC)

- Organization's Mission: "As a membership association, we foster strong community development corporations and non-profit community organizations by enhancing their skills and advocating for resources and policies to create a just and inclusive Philadelphia."
- PACDC's **Equitable Development Policy Platform** offers 22 recommendations to lay the foundation for a thriving and inclusive future for Philadelphia that benefits all communities, all residents and all workers. Over 100 community leaders and residents were interviewed to identify the 22 areas with needed changes to the law, policy, funding, or service delivery that will build a more equitable Philadelphia. The organization has split these 22 recommendations among Six Platform Planks:
  - 1. Quality of Life
    - R1: Improve Neighborhood Safety
    - R2: Healthy and Welcoming Public Spaces through Equitable Support, Services, and Programs
    - R3: Resource neighborhoods for street cleaning and litter and trash removal
    - R4: Adopt equity-centered budget
  - 2. Inclusive Communities

- R5: Increase the capacity of community-based organizations
    - R6: Adopt wage equity in city contracts
    - R7: Infuse Zoning Board of Adjustment (ZBA) with greater transparency and community input
  - 3. Anti-Displacement
    - R8: Create a coherent property tax relief system
    - R9: Expand shallow rent subsidy
      - housing assistance program that provides a partial or modest subsidy to eligible low-income individuals or families
    - R10: Address tangled titles and estate planning
      - Related to historical practices of racism and discrimination, such as redlining and discriminatory lending policies
    - R11: Support legacy businesses
  - 4. Housing
    - R12: Create more affordable homes for households <30% area median income
    - R13: Preserve and expand Black and Latino homeownership
    - R14: Preserve expiring government subsidized rental units
    - R15: Improve the condition of affordable private market rental housing
    - R16: Expand mandatory inclusionary housing requirement
      - Philadelphia City Council passed a bill that requires any development with 10 or more housing units to set aside 20% of the units as affordable
      - More work is necessary in parts of North, West, and Northeast Philadelphia where residents are seeing rents rise and are at risk of displacement.
  - 5. Economic Development
    - R17: Boost commercial corridor recovery
      - Commercial Corridor Recovery refers to efforts or strategies aimed at revitalizing and rejuvenating commercial areas in the city that have experienced decline or stagnation.
    - R18: Integrate housing and workforce programs
    - R19: Increase access to capital and technical assistance for BIPOC business owners
    - R20: Expand youth job program
  - 6. Vacancy and Blight
    - Create a revolving, rapid-access property acquisition fund
    - Improve land bank performance
- [Affordable Homes for a Growing Philly Campaign](#)
  - Mixed Income Housing Program (Bill No 170678-AAA signed in October, 2018)

- The Mixed Income Housing Program requires that developers set aside 10% of the new homes they create for income-restricted households, or make a payment to the Philadelphia Housing Trust Fund
- Double the Housing Trust Fund Campaign
  - In September 2018, City Council and Mayor Kenney reached an agreement to direct **at least \$70 million** to it between FY19 – FY23.
    - As of November 2020, more than \$67 million has already been transferred into the fund

## Immigrant Civic Engagement Agencies

### Caribbean Community in Philadelphia (CCP)

- Caribbean Community in Philadelphia (CCP) is a grassroots non-profit organization, fiscally managed by CultureTrust Greater Philadelphia.
- Established in 2013 by founding president and strategic project director, Miranda Alexander, through our online social media platform.
- This organization is dedicated to building a **well-represented image** of the Caribbean Diaspora People and providing a safe space to interface and explore rich Caribbean Cultural Identity and Heritage.
- CCP helps to reframe our multi-cultural and multi-linguistic identity narrative through an 8-part programming initiative focused on:
  - Arts & Culture, Sports, Health, Education, Seniors, Immigration, Business, Climate Change & Natural Disaster Support.
- Caribbean Community in Philadelphia is one of the leading organizations who endorse events in June for the celebration of National Caribbean American Heritage Month, as well as National Immigrant Heritage Month.
- To view upcoming cultural events, as well as voter related information sessions in September visit the CCP website at:
  - <https://www.caribbeancommunityinphiladelphia.com/>
- CCP's annual events and programs include:
  - Caribbean Edutopia Quiz Competition
  - Caribbean Heritage Day Celebration at Reading Terminal Market
  - World Oceans Day Celebration
  - Health and Wellness Resource Fairs

### PA Voice

- PA Voice Guiding Principles:
  - Democracy requires full participation and representation
  - The pathway to power in Pennsylvania values BIPOC communities
  - A fair and justice society will be achieved collectively
- PA Voice Program Areas:

- Civic Engagement ~ Year-round integrated voter engagement campaigns to increase voting, voter registration, and participation in civic life among all Pennsylvanians and specifically Black, Indigenous and communities of color
- Voting Rights and Access ~ Modernizing elections to make voting more convenient and fully accessible to all
- Reflective Democracy ~ Investment in community leadership and governance that is accountable to community interest and needs
- Racial Justice

## Pennsylvania Immigration and Citizenship Coalition

### (PICC)

- Diverse coalition of over 60 member organizations and hundreds of individual supporters
- Membership includes community groups, social, health and legal service providers, advocacy organizations, labor unions, and faith communities
- Only organization in Pennsylvania that brings together organizations and individuals representing different ethnicities, immigration statuses, faiths, and other backgrounds, to work collectively on immigrant rights in Pennsylvania.
- Within the Philadelphia area, their partners include:
  - Amnesty International – Philadelphia Chapter
  - Aquinas Center
  - Ceiba
  - Coalition of African Communities (AFRICOM)
  - Community Legal Services
  - Esperanza Immigration Legal Services
  - New Sanctuary Movement of Philadelphia (NSM)
  - Northwest Philadelphia Immigrant Action and Mobilization
  - Philadelphia Jobs With Justice
  - The Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia
  - Welcoming Center for New Pennsylvanians
- **Driving PA Forward Campaign**
  - a coalition of organizations working to push the state legislature to approve Driver’s License legislation to allow everyone in PA to drive safely and legally.
    - The campaign is coordinated by PICC members, **Movement of Immigrant Leaders in PA (MILPA)**, and **New Sanctuary Movement of Philadelphia (NSM)**.
- **Shut Down Berks Campaign**
  - The Shut Down Berks Coalition is a group of organizations and individuals fighting to close the Berks immigrant prison in Pennsylvania.
- **PA is Ready!**

- An innovative, community-led network and participatory grantmaking fund rooted in and serving diverse immigrant and refugee communities across Pennsylvania.
- **Youth Organizing Project**
  - PICC's statewide project to bring forward the voices of immigrant and refugee youth
  - Through the youth committee meetings and local trainings they teach youth about organizing 101, storytelling, advocacy, strategy and campaign development.

## The Welcoming Center for New Pennsylvanians (WCNP)

- The Welcoming Center is a nonprofit organization based in Philadelphia that promotes inclusive economic growth through immigrant integration.
- The center provides a range of services to help newcomers overcome various challenges and establish themselves in their new home.
- Services:
  - Workforce Development: The Welcoming Center works with immigrants at all skill and education levels to prepare them for success in the U.S. job market. If you are an immigrant in the Philadelphia region looking for your first job or a better job, please contact them on their website!
    - Career Support Services
      - Contextualized ESL (English as a Second Language) & Skills Training
      - The Welcoming Center also connects students to high school equivalency prep (GED®, HiSET®), and Adult Basic Education (ABE) classes.
        - These classes are coordinated by the City of Philadelphia's Office of Adult Education.
          - Find a class in your neighborhood through the myPLACE system.
            - Contact: (215) 557-2626
    - English for Job Search
      - English for Job Search is an **8-week class** where participants work on improving their English language, digital literacy, and job search skills. Participants also get support to pursue training, education, or employment.
    - International Professionals Program (IPP)
      - Eligibility
        - Foreign-educated professional
        - Unemployed or underemployed
        - Live in Philadelphia
        - Have work-authorization

- Designed to build the skills you need to secure professional employment in the U.S.
  - 8 week intensive program with an additional 6 months of support from IPP team to help connect graduates to employment opportunities and provide career coaching along the way.
  - Immigrant Fellowship Program
    - The Fellowship program offers 12-weeks of full-time, paid work experience for graduates of IPP and ongoing coaching and support from TWC to fellows and employer partners throughout the 12 weeks.
      - The Immigrant Fellowship Program (IFP) connects IPP graduates with employers for short-term, paid experiences in a variety of industries and professions.
- Entrepreneurship
  - Business Technical Assistance
    - Business experts are available to support entrepreneurs through the process of establishing or expanding a business. Their hands-on assistance helps business owners to **understand city regulations, develop a business plan, understand business operations, identify capital, create a marketing strategy, and much more.**
    - For more information, fill out their application form on their website and a staff member will contact you.
  - Business Training Program
    - In partnership with the Neighborhood Development Center, WCNP assists start-up and new businesses obtain business training, financing, and other support within their own communities.
    - The lessons include:
      - planning for business success, the market, customers and competition, marketing and web-based marketing, credit and financial planning, management and operations and more.
    - Students are eligible for personalized consultations. Their hands-on assistance helps business owners with addressing their needs.
- Community Engagement
  - Immigrant Leadership Institute
    - The Institute represents a dynamic approach to creating opportunities where immigrants speak for themselves and participate in the cultural, political, and social life of the city.

- Its Goal: to prepare foreign born residents of Greater Philadelphia with the skills, knowledge, and tools necessary to engage in the civic life of our city and region.
- Intercultural Wellness Program (IWP)
  - IWP is a hands-on initiative offered to promote community wellness and wellbeing among immigrant communities of Greater Philadelphia.
  - The program is offered to immigrants who want to help their community **utilize coping mechanisms** to overcome the challenges they face.
    - Cohorts of 20-25 participants meet to discuss wellness concepts guided by external experts from various fields of expertise, including immigrant leaders.

## Nationalities Service Center (NSC)

- All information on website is provided in over 50 different languages
- The Nationalities Service Center (NSC) is a non-profit organization that provides a range of services to immigrants and refugees in the Greater Philadelphia area.
- The NSC's primary goal is to assist immigrants and refugees in their transition to a new life in the United States. They offer a variety of programs and services to address the diverse needs of individuals and families from different countries and backgrounds.
- Services Provided:
  - Community Support ~ NSC has initiatives and programs that address basic needs, like fans and air-conditioners, food access, and winter coats.
    - Food Access Program
  - Survivor Services ~ NSC provides comprehensive supports and a path for healing for survivors of domestic violence, torture, and trafficking.
    - Bridge to Wellness Program (BTW)
    - Anti-Human Trafficking Initiative (AHT)
    - Philadelphia Partnership for Resilience (PPR)
  - Language Access ~ NSC is committed to enhancing access to resources and information for people with limited English proficiency. They offer English courses throughout the year, as well as Interpretation and Translation Services to bridge language barriers across communities.
    - English Classes
      - Rolling enrollment offered in four sessions a year (Winter, Spring, Summer, Fall).
      - To register as a new student, fill out the Student Information Form on the NSC website



- Call (215) 609-1525 or email Betsy O'Neil Smith (boneilsmith@nscphila.org) for help with registering OR if you are a returning student.
- Family Literacy Program
  - The program aims to work with families with children between the ages from zero to eight years old who speak **Arabic, Dari/Pashto, and Swahili/Kinyarwanda**.
- Health and Wellness ~ NSC helps refugees, immigrants, asylum seekers, and survivors of torture connect with needed case management, health care, mental health care, and wellness support.
  - Wellness Program
    - Services include clinical therapy, holistic therapeutic services and support groups.
  - Health Access Program (HAP)
    - Helps NSC clients overcome barriers to quality healthcare, including language access, and access to health insurance.
  - Youth Wellness: offers four free programs for Youth ages 14 to 24
    - **Ready 4 Life** Program: a 16-hour workshop series for youth to learn life skills and communication skills to help them have more success in the United States.
    - **Wellness Workshop**: an 8-part workshop series for youth to learn about the eight dimensions of wellness and how to achieve more overall wellness in all aspects of life.
    - **English for Spanish Speakers** Program: an 8-part ESL class for Spanish speaking youth who are new to English
      - Taught in Spanish to help them have the strongest foundation possible in English Language Learning.
    - **Youth Career Readiness** Program (YCRP): provides youth with a career pathway in a specific industry or to support youth in entering post-secondary schooling.
      - Serves 16-24 year olds in Philadelphia who are not currently enrolled in school
    - All programs accept new clients on a rolling basis, and class schedules are flexible.
- Economic Empowerment:
  - Matching Grant Program (MG)
    - Post-resettlement program that provides employment services to refugees and other ORR-eligible populations (ORR - Office of Refugee Resettlement).
  - Employment Readiness & Placement Program (ERP)

- State-funded employment program designed to assist refugees, asylees, and eligible immigrants who have been in the United States for less than 5 years.
  - Refugee Career Pathways (RCP)
    - Helps clients launch successful careers beyond their first jobs in the United States.
  - Good Job Happy Family (GJHF)
    - Provides support to TANF-eligible refugee families who are within their first 18 months of arrival. (TANF - Temporary Assistance for Needy Families)
- Legal Services:
  - NSC offers programs to provide free legal services for detained immigrants, survivors of domestic violence, human trafficking, and torture, and for unaccompanied minors.
  - Fund for Immigrant Justice
    - Supports free legal services for low-income individuals that were not eligible for services through other programs
  - PA Immigrant Family Unity Project (PAIFUP)
    - A collaborative of nonprofit organizations in Pennsylvania formed to achieve universal representation for detained immigrants in removal proceedings in the state.
    - PAIFUP is Pennsylvania's first publicly funded defense counsel project for detained immigrants.
  - Pathway to Permanency (P2P)
    - The program partners with pro bono lawyers in the Philadelphia area to assist refugees and asylees obtain legal permanent residency (green card) and U.S. citizenship.
- Refugee Resettlement & Placement: NSC connects refugees and their families to resources that will allow everyone to feel established, grounded, and connected during the resettlement period
  - Refugee Health Access Program:
    - Connects newly arrived refugees with screening and ongoing primary care, with support through clinic liaisons.
  - Philadelphia Refugee Health Collaborative (PRHC)
    - A regional coalition of Philadelphia's resettlement agencies and refugee health providers.
  - INSPIRE (Innovative Support Program for Immigrant and Refugee Empowerment)

- Serves immigrants and refugees with extensive healthcare needs, including developmental and intellectual disability, through intensive case management and occupational therapy support.

## Northeast Philadelphia Chinese Association

- Contact Information:
  - Phone 电话: 267-225-4628
  - Email 电子信箱: nepca.chinese@gmail.com
  - WeChat ID 微信: PEARL6108
- The Northeast Philadelphia Chinese Association (NEPCA) is a grassroots community-based non-profit organization which, like Caribbean Community in Philadelphia, is under the fiscal sponsorship of Culture Trust of Greater Philadelphia (CTGP)
  - CTGP: a 501(c)(3) organization made of a community of individuals, projects, and organizations working in all fine and performing arts. It provides affordable shared management resources for arts and heritage programs of diverse cultural traditions.
- Mission: Support the Asian American community living in the Northeast Philadelphia neighborhoods to achieve cultural, education, and economic advancements and become contributors to the region.
- Services Provided:
  - Offer services and resources to help immigrants bridge the language gap
    - They collaborate with many other community partners and organizations in pursuit of this larger goal.
  - Educational workshops and online information (in Chinese)
    - Used to help people improve their quality of life, promote understanding of American cultural and public policies, increase knowledge of public resources, and address the shortage and high demand for English literacy programs
  - Community Engagement
    - The organization facilitates communication and understanding among people with different backgrounds, provides a forum to address common issues and social awareness, and creates opportunities for community engagement and services (like local cultural events).

## New Sanctuary Movement of Philadelphia (NSM)

- Contact Information:
  - Number: (215) 279 7060
  - Email: nsm@sanctuaryphiladelphia.org
  - Office Address: 2601 Potter St., Philadelphia, PA 19125

- NSM emerged in 2007 when a group of clergy and organizers from the immigrant and ally communities began yearning for a bold, faith-rooted vision for immigrant justice.
- The New Sanctuary Movement of Philadelphia builds community across faith, ethnicity, and class in its work to end injustices against immigrants regardless of immigration status and express radical welcome for all.
- Services Provided:
  - Accompaniment Program
    - The Accompaniment Program involves pairing immigrants facing deportation or attending immigration hearings with trained volunteers from faith communities and other allies.
    - The goals of this initiative are to:
      - Support the family
      - Make sure the court knows that our community is watching
      - Bring the visual representation of God's presence in a place that is violent and has so much power over people's lives.
      - Bearing witness (as opposed to protesting)
    - These accompaniment volunteers provide emotional support, attend court hearings, and help navigate the complex immigration system. The presence of accompaniment volunteers can be a **vital source of encouragement** and may help reduce the fear and vulnerability experienced by immigrants facing deportation.
  - Community Education and Know Your Rights Workshops
    - The NSM conducts community education programs and "Know Your Rights" workshops to empower immigrants with knowledge and information.
    - These workshops:
      - Help immigrants understand their legal rights
      - Provide guidance on interacting with law enforcement and immigration authorities
      - Offer resources for accessing legal assistance and support.
  - Sanctuary Congregations
    - NSM works to create and support "Sanctuary Congregations", which are faith-based communities that have made a commitment to offer a safe and supportive environment to immigrants at risk of deportation.
    - Sanctuary Congregations provide physical shelter, legal assistance, and community support to individuals and families in need.
    - When an individual seeks sanctuary within a congregation, they are **shielded from immediate deportation.**

- Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) typically avoids conducting enforcement actions within sensitive locations like places of worship, schools, and hospitals.
  - The emotional support provided to individuals and families seeking sanctuary from faith communities can create a sense of belonging and solidarity, helping to alleviate some of the isolation and fear that comes with the threat of deportation.
- Campaigns:
  - Advocacy and Policy Reform
    - NSM is actively engaged in advocacy and policy reform efforts at the local, state, and national levels.
    - They work with other immigrant rights organizations, community leaders, and policymakers to push for:
      - Comprehensive immigration reform
      - Pathways to citizenship for undocumented immigrants
      - Policies that protect the rights of immigrants
      - A challenge to unjust deportation practices
      - The promotion of alternatives to immigrant detention

## Civic Engagement

### Neighborhood Advisory Committee (NAC)

- NAC organizations help residents learn about City programs that could benefit them. NACs provide information about initiatives to:
  - Promote neighborhood sustainability
  - Prevent homelessness
  - Preserve housing
  - Reduce energy costs
  - Develop resident job skills
  - Mentor youth
  - Engage residents

### Ward System

- Qualifications:
  - To run for committee person, you must be:
    - A registered voter in the division you wish to represent.
    - Registered as a member of the political party you are seeking to represent.
- Ward System:
  - The bedrock of the City Committees is the ward system. If you want to influence your party, its positions, and its candidates, the best way to start is by getting involved in the city committee and the ward system.

- Philadelphia is geographically divided into 66 wards, however has 69 Ward Leaders in all.
  - 39th, 40th, and 66th wards have an additional ward leader due to size
  - Each ward is further divided based on population into divisions that are used for ward committee person elections
- What is the main difference between a ward leader and a ward committee person?
  - A **ward leader** is elected by the committee people of their ward to represent the ward, while a **ward committee person** is elected by the registered voters of their district to represent their district.
  - A ward leader also has more responsibilities and influence within their party than a ward committee person
- Ward Leaders:
  - The ward leader for each party serve on the City Committee
  - Ward leaders vote to decide which candidates receive the official party endorsement
  - The ward leaders' most important job is electing the party Chair every four years.
  - Most elections in Philadelphia are significantly influenced by the support of ward leaders. As a result, candidates often court ward leaders. This can include:
    - Financial contributions known as “street money” used to pay committee persons to get petition signatures door-to-door or hand out flyers at their polling place on election day
    - Direct lines of communication after being elected
    - A promise of a job in the candidate's office for one of the ward leader's committee persons
- Ward Committeepersons:
  - Ward committee people are the political block captains of the local Democratic and Republican parties
  - Committee people represent their immediate neighborhoods and are elected every four years.
- Main Responsibilities:
  - Ward leaders and committee persons make up the democratic and republican party structures in the City of Philadelphia, and serve to drive voter registration for their party and support of endorsed candidates. This involves responsibilities like:
    - Getting signatures from voters to get candidates on the ballot and running a get-out-the-vote (GOTV) program
    - Building a network of reliable voters
    - Working outside the polling places on election day to distribute campaign materials
    - Recruiting committee people for all open seats

- Raising funds—often, but not exclusively, from candidates running for office
- Most city officials and employees are prohibited from serving as a committee person.
- An elected official can be a ward leader. It is an **unpaid position** within the party and many elected officials were ward leaders before they were elected to office and retained their position.
  - Committee people also don't receive official salaries.
- Election Process ~
  - Every four years, during the primary election of the governor's race, registered democratic and republicans voters in each division elect two of their neighbors to serve as the division's democratic and republican committee persons.
  - The elected committee persons make up each party's ward committee, and vote for a ward leader shortly after the election, usually informally at a meeting of the ward committee.
  - Getting on the Ballot:
    - If you have decided to run, your goal is to be one of the two candidates in your division and in your political party with the most votes in the Primary Election
    - Two ways to be elected:
      - Running as an Official Candidate: In order to get your name on the Primary Election ballot for committeeperson, you must file an official "nominating petition" before the May election
      - Running as a Write-in Candidate: If you choose this option, your name will not appear on the official ballot presented to the voters. However, a voter can cast a "write-in" vote for you.
  - Running as an Official Candidate ~
    - Nomination Petitions:
      - Nomination petitions are documents signed by registered voters who live within your division and belong to the same political party as you.
        - Shows that there is enough support for a candidate to require the City Commissioners to print the candidate's name for that party's nomination on the primary ballot.
      - Nomination petitions can be downloaded from PhiladelphiaVotes.com or picked up at the City Commissioners' offices City Hall, Room 142
        - Check PhiladelphiaVotes.com for updates as to when nomination petitions are available and dates for deadlines.
    - Signatures:

- Candidates for committee person are required to obtain a minimum of 10 voter signatures on nomination petitions in order to get on the ballot.
  - It's strongly recommended that you get 2-3 times as many signatures as necessary.
- Voters who sign nomination petitions must be registered in the same political party as the candidate and reside in the same division as the candidate for committee person.
- A voter may sign nomination petitions for only two (2) candidates for committee person.
  - So, when you (or your designee) are collecting signatures, you should ask the voter if he or she has signed a nomination petition for other candidates seeking the same office.
- When you are finished collecting all the signatures required for your nomination petitions, they should be bound together with the petition sheets numbered consecutively.
- Circulator
  - The person collecting signatures is referred to as the “circulator” and could be you or a volunteer.
  - A circulator has to be registered in Pennsylvania and a member of the party named in the petition. It is important that the circulator, whether you or a volunteer, completes a **circulator’s affidavit**, which is pre-printed on the petition.
- Candidate’s Affidavit
  - The completed signature sheet and circulators’ affidavit must be accompanied by a single affidavit signed by the candidate. Here is the information that must be included in a candidate’s affidavit (this is a pre-printed form):
    - Candidate’s name and address
    - Voting division in which the candidate resides
    - Office for which the candidate is filing
    - Party registration
    - Affirm that candidate is eligible for the office stated in the petition
    - Affirm that candidate will not knowingly violate any provision of the Election Code or any other law regulating or limiting election expenses or prohibiting corrupt practices in connection therewith



- Affirm that candidate is not a candidate for nomination of any other party for this office
- Affirm that he or she is not a candidate for an office which he or she already holds, the term for which will not expire in the same year as the office subject to the affidavit.
- Filing
  - Nomination petitions for candidates seeking a position as a committee person must be filed with the **County Board of Election**.
    - No filing fees are required
  - Address: Philadelphia County Board of Elections, City Hall, Room 142, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19107
  - Contact Info: (215) 686-3943, [www.philadelphiavotes.com](http://www.philadelphiavotes.com)
- Running as a Write-In Candidate ~
  - If you miss the deadline to file your nomination petition to get on the ballot, you still have a chance to run as a write-in candidate.
  - In order to run you must:
    - Campaign in your division by asking voters to write your name on the ballot when they go into the voting booth.
    - Receive at least 10 votes
    - Be one of the top two candidates when the votes are counted.

## Block Captains

- Trash, recycling, and city upkeep
- Block captains work to make their block safe and beautiful. For example, they may:
  - Sweep walks and gutters.
  - Plant flowers.
  - Plant new street trees.
  - Help neighbors paint and renovate.
  - Organize block parties.
  - Remind neighbors of trash and recycling collection days and guidelines.
- Block captains also organize block cleanups with the Philadelphia More Beautiful Committee (PMBC).
- Any resident can be a block captain.
- Steps:
  - Request a clean block petition.
    - Contact PMBC at (215) 685-3971 or use the online form to express interest and receive a petition in the mail.
  - Collect signatures & Elect Block Captain

- Circulate the petition among your neighbors to elect a block captain. You need 51% of the residents on your block to sign the petition. You can only collect one adult signature per household.
- Mail your completed petition back to PMBC.
- A clean block officer will contact you to help you get started.

## Recreation Advisory Councils

- Improving Rec Centers
- Anyone can join their local Advisory Council. All you have to do is attend one meeting and have your name appear on at least one sign-in sheet to become a member.
- Members of Advisory Councils:
  - Help raise money for new supplies and equipment.
  - Help decide what programs they want at their local centers.
  - Plan special events.
  - Help keep rec centers clean.
  - Share information with the community about great things happening at the rec center.
  - Make sure their neighborhood's natural spaces are protected.
- Elected Positions
  - Members of Advisory Councils who would like to be more involved and who meet certain requirements can be elected to the offices of **President, Vice-President, Treasurer, or Secretary.**
- All members who are eligible to vote in an Advisory Council election are eligible to hold office. **To hold office, the Advisory Council member must meet all of the following:**
  - Be 18 years of age or older at the time of the vote or election
  - Be one of these:
    - A registered volunteer in any activity at the recreation facility
    - A registered adult participant in an organized activity at the recreation facility
    - The parent of a registered minor (under 18 years old) participant in an organized activity at the recreation facility
  - Have attended at least 70 percent of the Advisory Council meetings during the current election cycle.