



The Immigrant  
Learning Center

# Annual Report

July 1, 2022-June 30, 2023



# Dear friends,

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This year marked 30 years since The Immigrant Learning Center first opened our doors. We started our 31st year proud of the 11,500 immigrants, refugees and their families whose lives we changed. Likewise, we take pride knowing it wasn't just their lives that improved. Our assistance enabled these newcomers to make meaningful contributions in their new home. We also know there is so much more to be done.

If last year was "getting back to normal," this year was adjusting to the "new normal." We are back in the rhythm of in-person classes and helped 677 students in FY2023, but it's not business as usual. For one thing, we continued to invest in digital literacy. This year, a full-time digital literacy instructor joined us to prepare our students to face the challenges of modern-day America.

We also continued to invest in the future. We engaged the next generation directly at local schools. Nationally, we delivered more resources and training to teachers, from K-12 through adult education, so they can support immigrant students and help all students understand the role of immigration in American history.

Adaptability is one of our core values, and The Immigrant Learning Center continuously adapts to changing

conditions in the world around us. The last few years feel like the pace of change has accelerated, and it doesn't show signs of slowing down. Neither do we. We began FY2023 with 517 students on our waiting list, and by the end of June the list had grown to 1,062. The list continues to grow in FY2024. With the help of our loyal supporters, we will respond to change in ways that allow us to do the most good possible.

This report contains highlights from FY2023. We hope it helps our supporters feel good about what we accomplished together. There is always more to tell, and we are always available to answer questions and share details. In fact, everyone is invited to visit our offices in Malden, Massachusetts, to see for yourself how your support makes a difference. Contact us to schedule a visit. We will be happy to show you around.

Until next year,



**Diane Portnoy**  
Founder and CEO



**Vincent Rivers**  
Executive Director

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# Mission Statement

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**The Immigrant Learning Center, Inc. (The ILC)** of Malden, MA, is a not-for-profit organization that gives immigrants a voice in three ways.



The **English Language Program** provides free, year-round ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) classes to help immigrant and refugee adults in Greater Boston become successful workers, parents and community members.



The **Public Education Institute** informs Americans about immigrants and immigration in the United States.



The **Institute for Immigration Research**, a joint venture with George Mason University, produces valid, reliable and objective multidisciplinary research on immigrants and immigration to the United States.

# Values

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## Equality



We believe in the equality, inherent worth and dignity of all people, regardless of country of origin, immigration status, race, color, gender, sexual orientation, religion, disability or other differences. We also believe in offering everyone an equal opportunity to share their gifts and achieve their goals.

## Patriotism



We believe the United States stands for hope, freedom and opportunity. We believe in the American Dream. By giving immigrants a voice, we help new Americans achieve their dreams. We also believe that immigrants make our country stronger, and the American people's ability to welcome immigrants makes the United States the truly special place that it is.

## Adaptability



We believe in adapting to changing conditions. Whether it's the best way to teach an individual student or the best way to run an entire department, The Immigrant Learning Center finds the best way we can to give immigrants a voice. We don't hold on to "the way we always do things" when there is a better way. We stay open to possibility and constantly evaluate our work and make changes accordingly. Some changes are more successful than others, but we always learn from experience.

## Focus



At The Immigrant Learning Center, we stay focused on our mission, giving immigrants a voice, and we do it well. We adapt to changing needs but not changing trends. We don't make change for change's sake, and we don't try to be all things to all people. As hard as it can be to let a need go unfilled or a good idea not implemented, we keep our resources focused on maximizing our impact by doing what we do best.

# Students at a Glance



**“In my country, the people, we no have this right. But in the United States, the people... You can go to the vote. You have this right.” - Xuguang**

In the fall of 2022, Xuguang heard that poll workers who spoke Mandarin, Cantonese and English were needed for his local primary election, and he leapt at the chance to help.

Just a year before, working as a poll worker would have been impossible for Xuguang. He came to the United States from China speaking almost no English and enrolled at The ILC in fall 2021 in our Level 1 English class. Since then, he’s advanced a level every session.

He is now proud to speak English well enough to help English speakers and translate for voters who might otherwise be shut out of the civic process. In the future, Xuguang dreams of becoming a citizen so he can vote as well.

**In FY2023,  
The ILC served...**

**677 students**

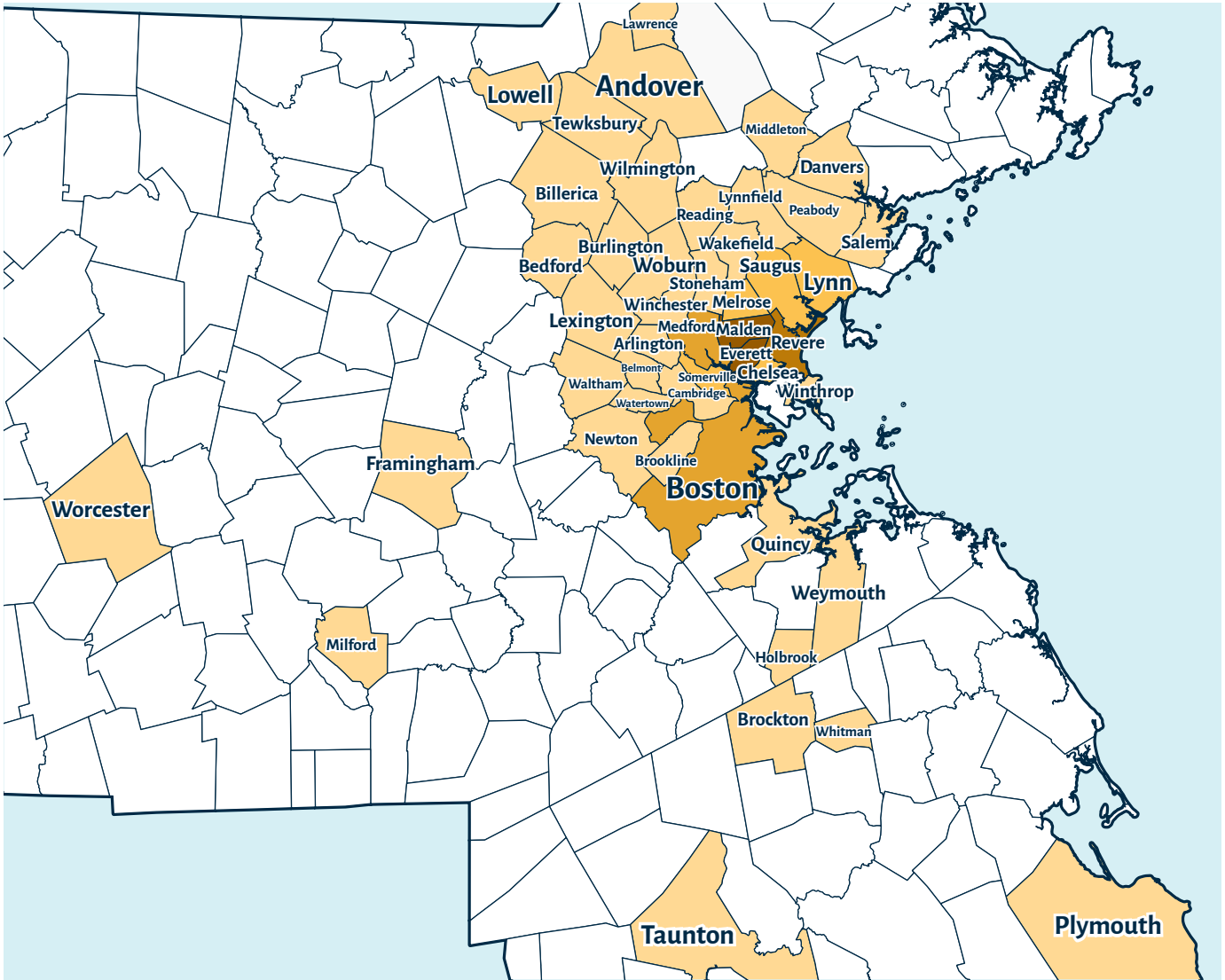
from **57** countries,  
from Afghanistan to Vietnam

living in **69** communities,

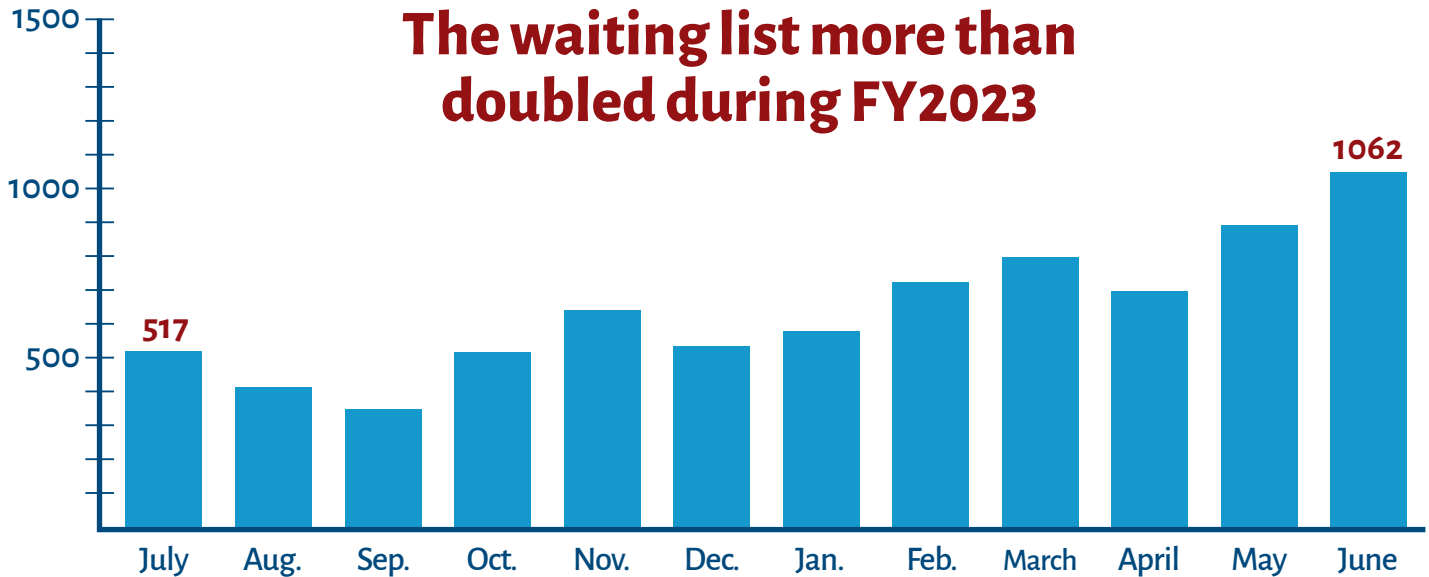
speaking **32** languages:

Haitian Creole	26%
Portuguese	18%
Spanish	18%
Arabic	12%
Mandarin	8%
Cantonese	2%
French	2%
Russian	2%
Vietnamese	2%
Other	10%

# Massachusetts communities served by The ILC in FY2023



## The waiting list more than doubled during FY2023



# Digital Literacy

Fiscal year 2023 was a big year for digital literacy. The most significant milestones were hiring our first full-time digital literacy instructor and, thanks in part to funding from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, stocking enough Chromebooks to have a full set in each classroom.



The ILC teacher Daniel Frizzel helping students find job information on the web

## In-Class Workshops

The new digital literacy instructor worked with English teachers to assess students' ability, help students set up and use Google accounts, and conduct technology workshops that fit with The ILC's lesson plans. For example, during a unit on shopping, he taught students to do web searches and use Google Sheets to track results and identify the best deals. In addition to all the English they used in this lesson, they also learned new skills in navigating the web and using spreadsheets.

## In FY2023...

**1** digital literacy instructor was hired

**175** students received individual tech help

**281** Chromebooks available for student use

**58** digital literacy workshops

## Individual Help

In addition to all the planned lessons, the instructor is available to students through tech help drop-in hours and one-on-one appointments. He helped students with a wide variety of issues, including:

- Basic computing skills such as typing, using a cursor and navigating a browser
- Applications such as Zoom, WhatsApp, Gmail, Google Docs and Google Classroom
- Additional tech supports such as Tech Goes Home, Coursera and Harvard EdX
- Job and career goals such as completing an online application and replying to emails
- Daily living tasks such as viewing and paying bills online, connecting to a telehealth appointment and booking an airline flight

Now that every student has access to digital tools and individual tech help, it will be much easier for them to thrive in their new home.



# Education/Career Advising

Learning English improves virtually every aspect of our students' lives, but the biggest concern for most students is their career. That's where our education and career advisors come in.

Using a combination of in-class workshops, specialized Next Steps classes and individual advising, these advisors help students from a wide variety of career and education backgrounds as well as varying levels of English fluency to find a job, pursue more education or both.



*When I came to the U.S. I was in the dark about my professional life. I didn't know what to do, what path to take... Laurianne, Sally, Anna you did it!!! In such a short time you have helped me find my way, you have brought clarity to my confused thoughts, you have shined my professional life, you have shined my life.*

*- Marie Yvette from Haiti*

## In-Class Workshops

Working with The ILC teachers, advisors develop and implement in-class workshops and help students with their education and career goals. Workshops are tailored to the English ability of each class and cover topics like understanding job postings and job applications as well as career exploration.

## Individual Advising

The advisors meet one-on-one with all Next Steps and Level 4 students to help them set goals, determine their career path and/or plan how they will continue their education. Other students who want extra help working on a resume, exploring career or training opportunities, etc., can make one-on-one appointments with an advisor.

## In FY2023 there were...

**3** cycles of Next Steps class

**11** partner organizations who presented programs to The ILC Students

**296** education and career workshops

## Next Steps

Next Steps is an intensive, specialized class focused on preparing students to apply to job training or transition to college programs. It is offered online to The ILC students who completed Level 4 or new students who have equivalent English skills.

Topics include professional email communication, identifying transferable skills, learning about the Massachusetts labor market and using online tools to research career pathways. The class also includes program presentations from partner organizations such as Jewish Vocational Services and Bunker Hill Community College.



**In April 2023, after graduating from a Northern Essex Community College accounting and QuickBooks certificate program they learned about at The ILC, three former students returned to celebrate with their advisors. From left to right: Xiaolan from China, advisor Sally Nobinger, Sandra from El Salvador, advisor Laurianne Posch, Martilinda from Cape Verde and advisor Anna Fan**

# Student Achievements

Each student at The Immigrant Learning Center sets their own goals, big and small. As their English improves, nearly every aspect of their lives is impacted. Students report improvement in speaking with a doctor, filling out applications, reading newspapers and books, navigating a grocery store, and more.

## Major student milestones:

- 60 got new jobs
- 35 received pay raises
- 8 received promotions
- 1 started their own business
- 42 enrolled in higher education, training programs or continuing education programs
- 48 became new citizens
- 58 opened a bank account
- 31 found a new apartment or bought a house
- 60 received a driver's license or permit
- 20 bought a car



**“The [Immigrant Learning] Center for me was blessed... Thank you, thank you, I love this country.” - Maria Luz**

Immigrating to the U.S. is challenging under the best of circumstances, but it can be especially harrowing for an asylum seeker. When Maria Luz, a Salvadoran American student at The ILC, crossed into the United States, she, her husband and their two sons faced an uncertain future.

Happily, Maria Luz was able to successfully apply for the asylum that she and her family needed, and the experience made her deeply patriotic. She wanted to become a U.S. citizen. Her biggest obstacle was over, but she faced the same challenges as so many other newcomers: learning English and understanding the culture.

The Immigrant Learning Center was able to help with all these challenges. She now speaks English more confidently and swore her oath of citizenship in June 2023. Maria Luz credits The ILC for helping her. “The [Immigrant Learning] Center for me was blessed,” she says.

# Highlights of 2023



The ILC staff and supporters celebrated 30 years of giving immigrants a voice.

The ILC students created and performed the original production *Voice of Others*.



The youth board hosted The ILC students and their children for a Halloween party where they distributed dozens of children's books they had collected.



For the first time since the pandemic, The ILC students shared their culture at the annual International Day event.



The ILC honored the hard-working volunteers that make our work possible.



# Public Education Institute Immigrant Student Success

Educators from across the country joined us online for our free, annual conference “Immigrant Student Success: Strategies and Tools for K-12 and Adult Educators.”

“

It is so professional and is packed with such useful information that, after 18 years, I always learn something new and inspires me to get ready for the upcoming school year!

- Jacqueline Padilla DiMirco,  
William W. Niles M.S. 118, New York, NY

The ILC Public Education Institute’s Ariana Moir showed participants how to use The ILC’s resources, featured on the next page, to highlight immigrant stories and contributions in U.S. History.

The ILC Teacher Christiana Gianetta shared techniques for teaching digital literacy and demonstrated the use of Padlet in ESOL classrooms, and classroom volunteer Andy Koppel presented a guide to preparing immigrants and refugees for the citizenship interview based on the work done in our citizenship classes. Additional subject matter experts were recruited to fill out the rest of the agenda with a variety of helpful and timely topics.



The ILC Teacher Christiana Gianetta demonstrating digital literacy techniques during the summer educator conference

In FY2023, there were...

2 days of free content

16 expert presenters

280 educators participating

“

As a newly hired ESL teacher, I learned so much about what to be aware of regarding this special population. I will highly recommend other teachers in my District to participate in this virtual conference next year!

- Maya Takase-Kay,  
ESL Teacher, Riverside School District, Cinnaminson, NJ

“

This conference covered aspects of immigration that are often overlooked.

- Jana Sims,  
Santa Rosa County School District, Navarre, FL

# Public Education Institute Teacher Resources

## Immigrant and U.S. History

The Teaching U.S. Immigration Series is a free, growing collection of lesson plans and tools for middle through high school teachers launched by The ILC Public Education Institute in 2021. These resources make it easy for educators to explore immigration as it relates to existing social studies topics.

The collection doubled in FY 2023 with the addition of three new sets of lesson plans: Immigration and the American Civil War Era, Immigration and Reconstruction, and Immigration and WWI.

These resources have been enthusiastically received at conferences and through online downloads. There are more in the works for 2024.

## Presentations

The ILC is asked to share our expertise with adult education and K-12 teachers across the country at online and in-person conferences.

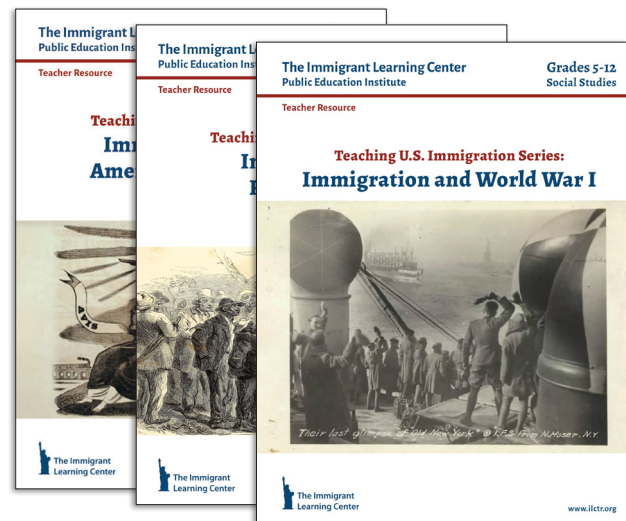
- Educators engaged with our online Educator Resource Hub at the Massachusetts Association of Teachers of Speakers of Other Languages (MATSOL) online Conference and the Coalition on Adult Basic Education (COABE) National Conference in Atlanta.
- Teachers learned about our Immigration and U.S. History resources at the Share My Lesson Virtual Conference and the National Council for the Social Studies Annual Conference in Philadelphia.
- The ILC volunteer Andy Koppel shared best practices for preparing immigrants and refugees for the citizenship interview at the First Literacy Professional Development Workshop in Boston and the Community College ESL Retreat in Jackson, MS.
- Teachers gained strategies for elevating foreign and U.S.-born students' stories in the classroom at the First Literacy Professional Development Workshop in Boston.

In FY2023, there were...

**3** new teaching resources

**7** presentations

**74,958** page views in our Educator Hub



Education Program Manager Ariana Moir sharing valuable resources with teachers at the National Council for the Social Studies Annual Conference in Philadelphia

# Public Education Institute Inspiring the Next Generation

## Essay Contest

The second annual immigration essay contest expanded to include both Malden and Medford high schools.

This contest allows young people to have their voices recognized in diverse communities and opens conversations with and about New Americans in our communities. To see a video of Makeila's reading and read the other winning essays, go to <https://www.ilctr.org/essaycontest>.



Makeila Scott, first place winner of The ILC 2023 immigration essay contest

The first place winner, Malden High School student Makeila Scott, moved everyone at the awards ceremony in May 2023, with her stirring reading of her winning essay, *Breaking Social Divisions and Inspiring Togetherness*.

Held at The Immigrant Learning Center's headquarters in Malden, the ceremony celebrating the winners was attended by the winning students and their family members, members of The ILC staff, and local government and school officials including the mayors of Malden and Medford as well as the principals of both high schools.

**In FY2023, there were...**

**8** Essay winners from local high schools

**2** classroom visits

“

I am grateful to live in a community where I am surrounded with people of all different backgrounds that fuel each part of my identity and allow me to embrace it, not hide.

- Makeila Scott,  
Malden High School student

## School visits

The ILC Public Education Institute went to Emerson College and Lexington High School in FY23 to share current immigration trends and policies, as well as inspiring stories from immigrant entrepreneurs. Students left the sessions with a better grasp of the contributions immigrants make to our communities and country.



The ILC Public Education Institute Director Denzil Mohammed with Lexington High School students learning about immigration

# Public Education Institute Immigrant Entrepreneurs

Immigration and entrepreneurship are two things that make the United States special, and they often combine to great effect. The ILC's Public Education Institute takes pride in educating Americans about all the ways our lives are improved by immigrant entrepreneurs.

## JobMakers

On the *JobMakers* podcast, produced in partnership with the Pioneer Institute, stories of foreign-born business founders come to life. Some of the entrepreneurs you can meet include:



Khamzat Asabaev, a refugee from Chechnya who cofounded SoftSmile, a software tool that helps dentists provide affordable, quality orthodontic treatment.



Sheetal Bahirat, an immigrant from India who merged science with advocacy to create Hidden Gems Beverage Company, which reduces food waste and produces a delicious, antioxidant-rich beverage from avocado seeds.



Mamba Hamissi, an immigrant from Burundi, co-founded East African restaurant Baobab Fare in Detroit's New Center neighborhood, which was named by the popular food blog, Eater, as one America's top dining destinations.

In FY2023, there were...

**18** *JobMakers* podcast episodes

**51,164**

page views of Immigrant Entrepreneur Hall of Fame profiles

## Hall of Fame

Launched in 2012, The ILC's virtual Immigrant Entrepreneur Hall of Fame features some of the United States' most iconic brands. It's fascinating to think that some of these companies might not exist if it weren't for our history of welcoming immigrants.



These logos represent some of the most popular profiles in the Hall of Fame:



# The Institute for Immigration Research

The Institute for Immigration Research (IIR) was established in 2012 at George Mason University in Virginia, in partnership with The Immigrant Learning Center to produce valid, reliable and objective multidisciplinary research on immigrants and immigration to the United States.

## Research

The IIR continued its work on immigrants' economic contributions and challenges with the release of its annual Nobel Prize report. The 2022 report focused on international collaboration and groundbreaking knowledge production among Nobel Laureates.

The IIR also developed its research on immigration policies with the release of report *Plyler v. Doe: Implementation, Challenges, and Implications for the Future*, which examines the 1982 Supreme Court decision that ensured a free K-12 public education for all students regardless of immigration status.

## In the News

As a leader in multidisciplinary immigration research, members of the Institute contribute to public understandings about immigration in the media and are often sought for their expertise.

Los Angeles Times

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

FAST COMPANY

Richmond Times-Dispatch

AP Associated Press

## In FY2023, there were...

2 reports published

374<sup>th</sup> fact sheet produced

4 webinars

9 conference presentations

9 new partnerships

## Partnerships

The IIR partners with non-profit, educational and government organizations to support programs that serve immigrant populations with research and evaluation. Such collaboration has direct benefits for partner organizations and those they serve while also expanding data on and understanding about immigrants in the United States.

The IIR initiated nine new research partnerships in FY 2023 at George Mason University and across Virginia. Some examples include a new relationship with the Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship at George Mason that will provide entrepreneurship training for refugees and another new relationship with The Virginia Department of Labor and Industry to develop apprenticeship opportunities for refugees.



## Data on Demand

The IIR continues to provide free, immigration fact sheets with customized answers and geography through its Immigration Data on Demand service. A total of 374 fact sheets have been completed since launching in 2016.

The service benefits immigration service providers, teacher associations, and city governments and their communities and are available to everyone on IIR's website. It also prepares the next generation of researchers by giving graduate research assistants opportunities to refine their research skills as part of their graduate studies.

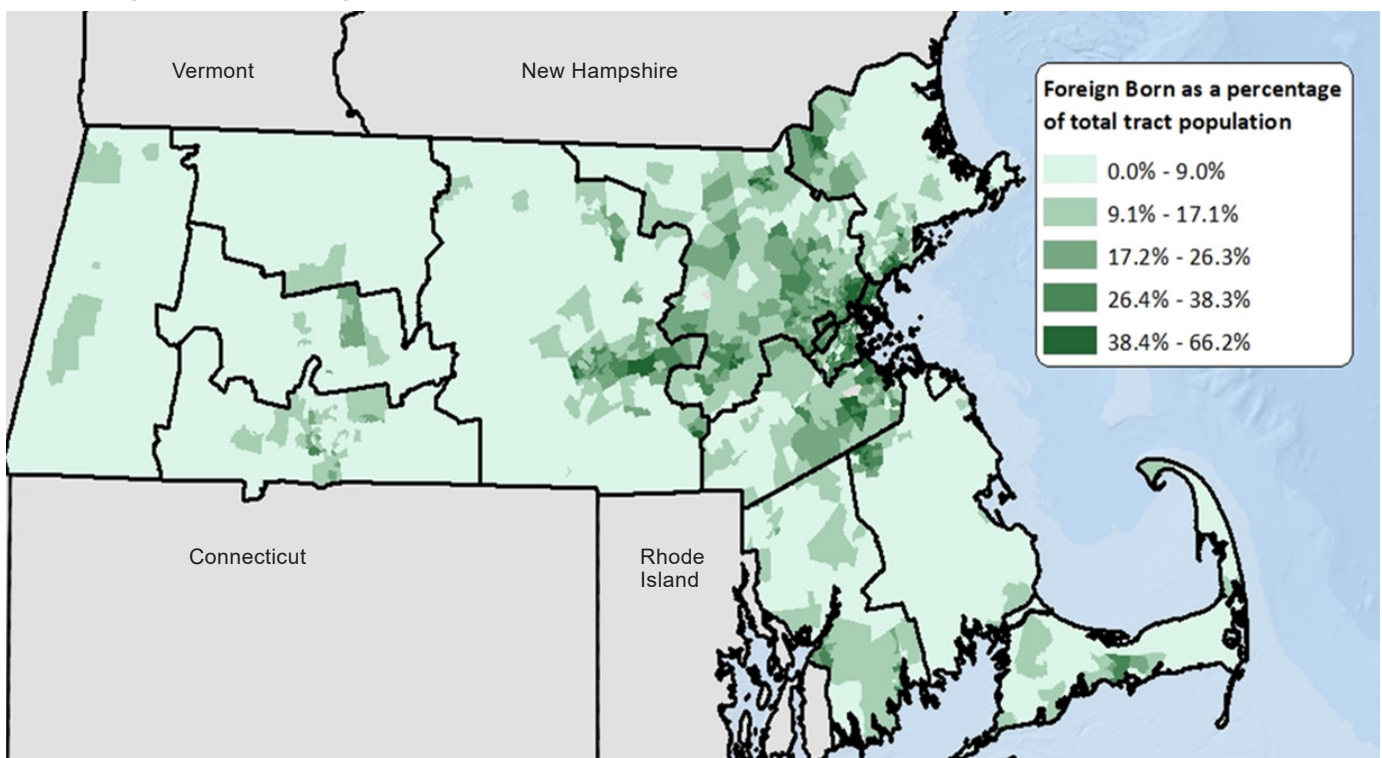
Anyone can take advantage of this free service. To request a fact sheet, visit Immigration Data on Demand online at <https://iir.gmu.edu/idod>.

## Immigrants, Athletes and Inclusion Initiative

With funding from AmeriCorps, the IIR began a multi-year project that aims to highlight how the stories and contributions of immigrant athletes can lead to greater understanding and inclusion of immigrants generally. In the first year, an in-depth survey was conducted with 3,560 respondents in a sampling of cities with major sports teams: Boston, Detroit, Miami, Philadelphia, San Jose, Seattle, and Washington D.C. to understand individuals' attitudes, sport engagement, media consumption and political beliefs.

The IIR also hosted foreign-born players from the Washington Spirit, D.C.'s National Women's Soccer League team in September 2022. Tinaya Alexander from England, Devon Kerr from Canada, and Julia Roddar from Sweden discussed opportunities and challenges that come with being a foreign-born athlete in the United States.

### Map section of a fact sheet on immigrants in Boston requested by a researcher planning to integrate the data into a project exploring the access of migrants to mental health facilities



# Financials

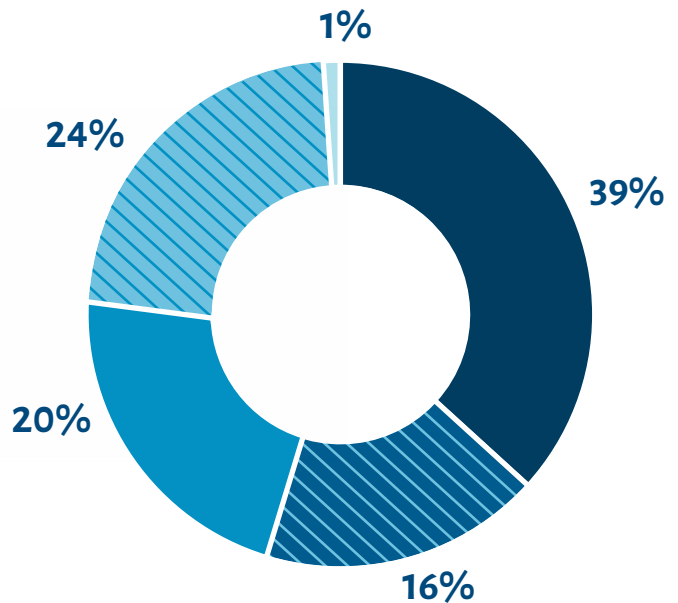
The Immigrant Learning Center's total operating revenues for Fiscal Year 2022 were \$3.6 million.

The ILC had total operating expenses of \$3.2 million.

Net assets were \$9.7 million as of June 30, 2023.

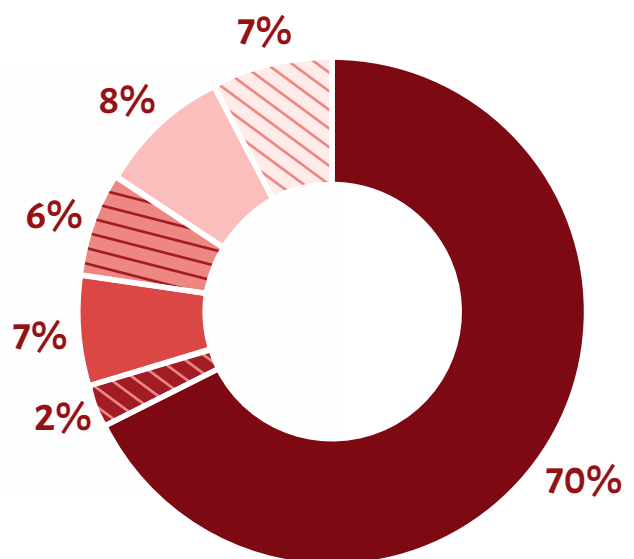
## Funding

Government funding	\$ 1,175,721
Private foundations	\$ 472,143
Corporate sponsorships	\$ 594,969
Individual giving	\$ 725,815
Other	\$ 33,149
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 3,001,797</b>



## Operating Expenses

Salaries	\$ 2,227,506
Depreciation	\$ 59,402
Property operating	\$ 232,561
Events	\$ 201,100
Office & administrative	\$ 298,194
IIR	\$ 201,895
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 3,220,658</b>



# Corporate & Foundation Donors

Adelaide Breed Bayrd Foundation  
Adelson & Associates, LLC  
AmazonSmile Foundation  
Anchor Capital Advisors LLC  
Anonymous  
Bank of America Merrill Lynch  
Bushrod H. Campbell and Adah F. Hall Charity Fund  
Capital Bank and Trust Company  
Christopher A. Avery Fund at The Boston Foundation  
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City of Malden Office of Strategic Planning & Community Development  
City of Medford Redevelopment Authority  
Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
The Congregational Church of West Medford  
Cradle to Career at The Philanthropic Initiative  
Cummings Foundation, Inc.  
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ExecuSpace Construction Corporation  
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Tracy Interiors  
The Tyler Family Fund  
The United Way of Southwestern Pennsylvania  
UBS Investment Bank  
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Vilcek Foundation  
Von Rickenbach Family Foundation  
Wells Fargo  
WTW

Thank you to Senator Jason Lewis and his staff for helping The ILC secure funding to replace our nearly 40-year-old elevator in January 2023. This ensured that both students and staff of varying physical abilities could continue to access all of our classrooms safely without pulling funds away from implementing our mission or reducing our endowment.



**From left to right: Executive Director Vince Rivers, MA Senator Jason Lewis, Founder & CEO Diane Portnoy and Assistant Director of English Language Programs Rachel Soule celebrating the completion of the new elevator**

# Thank you to our donors

Andrew Alperstein  
Marsha Alter  
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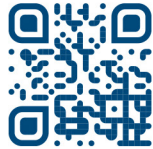
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