

New Americans Toolkit

Library Services to Underserved Children and their Caregivers

New Americans

A Toolkit for Librarians

Created by Library Services to Underserved Children and Their Caregivers February 2022

Welcome to our New Americans Toolkit! Below you will find a wealth of resources, examples, and information to help you navigate working with this particular community. Before you get started, we recommend visiting our "Getting Started" page to help map out the most authentic way to work with your particular underserved community. We have a flowchart to help make this work less overwhelming and more step by step.

Engaging with the community ensures the library is not assuming what the community wants. Family engagement needs to be the core of all the programs, services, and outreach undertaken. This means working with the community, asking the community what they want/need, and advocating for them each step of the way. One way to ensure families are engaged and experiences offered through the library are authentic is to form an action group and invite members of the targeted community.

Input from families can help govern the program you are designing, build advocates for the library, and create opportunities for better understanding between community members. When possible, use library funds to reimburse committee members for their time, offer a meal, and hire licensed, qualified childcare providers to help diminish barriers to participation.

About this population



New Americans comprise an important part of United States society, with approximately 13.7% of the population - or 44 million people - being born in another country. The vast U.S. immigrant population includes:

- Latin American immigrants, the largest subgroup by percentage
- Asian diasporic immigrants, whose history in the U.S. spans more than 300 vears
- Black diasporic immigrants, the fastest growing category of immigrants
- Middle Eastern/North African immigrants, including recent Afghan refugees
- European immigrants, a segment that has sharply decreased since the early 20th century

Chronic undercounting leads to some uncertainty in <u>census tabulations</u>, but estimates suggest that almost half of new Americans do not hold citizenship, and more than a quarter have entered the country within the past ten years. New Americans contribute to U.S. society's cultural and economic vitality in numerous ways, such as starting businesses, developing technologies and companies, boosting demand for goods and services, and contributing unique perspectives.

New Americans include a variety of categories, each with their own unique needs:

- Refugees, or those who leave their own country due to risks of serious human rights violations or persecutions
- Asylum seekers, or those who leave their own country seeking protection from persecutions and serious human rights violations, but are not yet legally recognized as refugees
- Migrants, or those who choose to leave their own country for such purposes as employment, education, or reuniting with family
- Immigrants, or those who make a conscious decision to leave their own country with the intention of settling in a new one

Libraries are uniquely positioned to support new Americans, whether through basic needs like learning English to more complex topics like community and civic engagement. Doing so requires intentional processes and reflection as we consider the unique needs of each community.

The resources in this toolkit offer program service and design, communications and marketing, library materials and collections, stakeholders and partnerships, and equipping staff to serve these communities.



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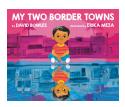


Recommended Read-alouds

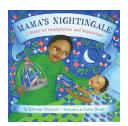


Argueta, Jorge. Somos como las nubes / We are like the clouds. Toronto, Groundwood Books, House of Anansi Press, 2016.

This book describes the terrible process that leads young people to undertake the extreme hardships and risks involved in the journey to what they hope will be a new life of safety and opportunity.



Bowles, David. *My Two Border Towns*. Penguin Random House, 2021. A picture book about a boy's life on the U.S.-Mexico border, visiting his favorite places on The Other Side with his father, spending time with family and friends, and sharing in the responsibility of community care.



Danticat, Edwidge. <u>Mama's nightingale: a story of immigration and</u> <u>separation</u>. New York, Dial Books for Young Readers, 2015.

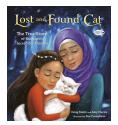
After Saya's mother is sent to an immigration detention center, Saya finds comfort in listening to her mother's warm greeting on their answering machine. To ease the distance between them while she's in jail, Mama begins sending Saya bedtime stories inspired by Haitian folklore on cassette tape. Moved by her mother's tales and her father's attempts to reunite their

family, Saya writes a story of her own that just might bring her mother home for good.



Herrera, Juan Felipe. Super Cilantro Girl / La Superniña del Cilantro. Lee & Low, 2003.

Esmeralda Sinfronteras is the winning super-hero in this tale about a child who flies huge distances and scales tall walls in order to rescue her mom. The book addresses and transforms the concerns many first-generation children have about national borders and immigrant status.



Kuntz, Doug with Shrodes, Amy. *Lost and Found Cat.* Dragonfly Books, 2019.

Refugee story of an Iraqi family who loses their cat on the journey. Focuses on the world-wide community that helped bring all members of the family back together again in a safe, new home.





Kuo, Julie. *Home is a Wish*. Roaring Book Press, 2025.

In this beautiful exploration of what it's like to deal with a big change, a child moves far away from everything comforting and familiar, but slowly discovers home is where the heart is.



Martinez-Neal, Juana. <u>Alma and How She Got Her Name</u>. Somerville, Candlewick Press, 2018.

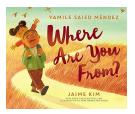
What's in a name? For one little girl, her very long name tells the vibrant story of where she came from — and who she may one day be.



McCarney, Rosemary. Where Will I Live?. Second Story Press, 2017. Written by McCarney, Canada's Ambassador to the United Nations, and photography by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, of children on the move or in refugee camps. Tompkins County Public Library did a read aloud with this title where kid volunteers each read a two-page spread, igniting tears in the storytime audience.



Meddour, Wendy. <u>Lubna and Pebble</u>. Dial Books, 2019. In this story that subtly addresses the refugee crisis, a young girl must decide if friendship means giving up the one item that brings her comfort during a time of uncertainty.

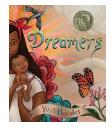


Méndez, Yamile Saied. Where Are You From? New York, Harper, 2019. (Also available in Spanish with the title ¿De Dónde Eres?) This resonant picture book tells the story of one girl who constantly gets asked a simple question that doesn't have a simple answer.



Mo, Cherry. <u>Home in a Lunchbox</u>. Penguin Workshop, 2024. When Jun moves from Hong Kong to America, the only words she knows are hello, thank you, I don't know, and toilet. Her new school feels foreign and terrifying. But when she opens her lunchbox to find her favorite meals—like bao, dumplings, and bok choy—she realizes home isn't so far away after all.





Morales, Yuyi. <u>Dreamers.</u> New York, Neal Porter Books/Holiday House, 2018. (Also available in Spanish with the title *Sonadores*)

This picture book memoir looks at the myriad gifts migrantes bring with them when they leave their homes.



Muhammad, Ibtihaj with S.K. Ali. *The Proudest Blue: A Story of Hijab and Family*. Little Brown, 2019.

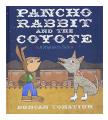
Faizah admires older sister Asiya's new, strikingly blue and beautiful first-day-hijab, finding inner strength and pride when facing bullies at school who make fun of it.



Phi, Bao. <u>A Different Pond</u>. Capstone Young Readers, 2017. An unforgettable story about a simple event - a long-ago fishing trip. Graphic novelist Thi Bui and acclaimed poet Bao Phi deliver a powerful, honest glimpse into a relationship between father and son - and between cultures, old and new.

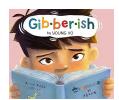


Sanna, Francesca. <u>The Journey</u>. Penguin Random House, 2016. This beautifully illustrated book explores the unimaginable decisions made as a family leaves their home and everything they know to escape the turmoil and tragedy brought by war.



Tonatiuh, Duncan. <u>Pancho Rabbit and the Coyote: A Migrant's Tale</u>. Abrams Books for Young Readers, 2013.

An allegorical picture book about the hardships and struggles of immigration.



Vo, Young. Gibberish. Levine Querido, 2022.

Dat and his Mah made a long journey to get to a new country, and Dat doesn't know the language. To Dat, everything everybody says — from the school bus driver to his new classmates — sounds like gibberish. How is Dat going to make new friends if they can't understand each other?



Recommended Apps



Duolingo

Language learning app with 38 courses designed for native English speakers to learn another language. There are also courses designed specifically for non-native English speakers to learn English and more. Duolingo is free with advertisements.



Find Hello App

Free app for finding legal services, housing, healthcare, english classes, and other ways to integrate smoothly. App can be accessed in English, Arabic, and Spanish. Website is available in more languages.

See Apps in the Toolkit for Spanish-Speaking Populations



Professional & Community Resources

The United States is one of the most culturally, racially, linguistically, and ethnically diverse countries in the world. Libraries often serve as community and cultural centers, and as such, have unique opportunities to support a diversity of needs. Appropriately and effectively serving this diversity requires a multi-pronged approach that goes beyond mere library services and collections. Houston Public Library's International Services recommends a five-tiered approach:

- Program and service design: Determine the type, scope, and breadth of programs that your library will offer. Look for ways that your program can support all levels of the reciprocal integration relationship, from basic needs like learning English to more in-depth opportunities like civic engagement and citizenship.
- 2. Communications and marketing: Consider how you will engage with multilingual communities, both within and outside the library. From signage to translation services, consider how to make your collections and services more accessible.
- 3. Library materials collection: Consider the types of materials you would like in your collection, including both physical and online resources. Collection evaluations should consider demographics, languages, and cultures of the entire community and support learning for all.
- 4. Stakeholders and partnerships: Understand the demographic, community, and political context surrounding your library. You need to know your community, the overall landscape, and your library's specific role.
- 5. Equipping staff: Library staff are foundational to your efforts to reach the community. Consider your staff training and recruitment practices to ensure staff are empowered and prepared to serve.

The resources included below explore each of these avenues individually. As you get started with services to new American communities, be aware of both your goals and your limitations. It may be more effective to focus on a single initiative or focus to start, finding the first small step toward more meaningful changes. Be clear on your goals and resources as you determine where to start.

Focus 1: Program and Service Design

Articles

Dannenbaum, Claire. "With Literacy and Justice for All: Library Programs for Refugees and Newcomers." *Lane Community College*, 4 Oct. 2019,



https://www.lanecc.edu/sites/default/files/fpd/dannenbaum with literacy and justice for all report.pdf.

Jules, Jacqueline. "10 Ways to Support ELLs in the School Library." *Colorín Colorado*, 2019, https://www.colorincolorado.org/article/10-ways-support-ells-school-library.

USC Center for the Study of Immigrant Integration. "State of Immigrants in LA County." Jan. 2020, https://dornsife.usc.edu/assets/sites/731/docs/SOILA full report v19.pdf.

Websites and Online Resources

60 Resources for Supporting Immigrant and Refugee Communities

A variety of compiled resources for immigrant and refugee communities, grouped by topic. Resources include toolkits, informational pages, guides, and websites by the issue areas of education, employment, health, housing and resettlement, legal, and safety issues.

Assisting English Language Learners in Your Library

Resources from U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services to support English language learning in the library, from welcoming patrons to building collections.

Black Caucus American Library Association: Services of Children to African Descent Committee

This committee promotes nationwide awareness and use of children and young adult literature through programming, publications, and outreach activities among librarians, parents, scholars, students, educators, and all persons who work with children of African descent.

Creating a Citizenship Review Class in a Public Library

A guide for developing citizenship classes in public libraries, created by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services.

Denver Public Library: Cultural Inclusivity

Denver Public Library offers collaborations to create equitable opportunities for learning, discovery, and connection across cultures. Resources include cultural exchange programs, citizenship and immigration legal help, English conversation, and local resources.

Engaging Multilingual Communities and English Language Learners in U.S. Libraries

Produced by the ALA Office for Diversity, Literacy, and Outreach Services, this guide is designed to support library personnel serving multilingual patrons. Included resources include recommendations for service and examples of programs and services.

Houston Public Library: Language and Citizenship Services



A collection of resources to support the multicultural communities of Houston. Resources include English learning programming, opportunities for connection, and citizenship resources.

Los Angeles Public Library: New Americans Initiative

Los Angeles Public Library provides free resources in support of immigration and citizenship. Resources include service appointments, citizenship classes, and COVID-19 resources.

New Americans Library Project

Includes recommendations and programming ideas for libraries serving new Americans. Explore the research behind the project and find specific applications for your library. Read the white paper here.

New York Public Library Immigrant Services

The New York Public Library offers a series of programs and services helping recent immigrants find their place in the city. Resources include citizenship resources, English resources, and New Americans Corners with dedicated space and resources.

Project Welcome

Aims to learn about and articulate ways libraries can address the information needs of refugees and asylum seekers in order to support and empower them in their resettlement and integration process.

REFORMA Children In Crisis Project

Addressing the needs of asylum-seeking children at the borders, resources include recommended books, storytime resources, and the Children in Crisis Immigration Toolkit for Libraries.

San Diego Public Library: Resources for New Americans

The San Diego Public Library serves a very diverse population. Resources collected including information about adjusting to U.S. culture and permanent citizenship.

U.S. Department of Education Newcomer Toolkit

Provides information and resources for supporting newcomers, particularly in a school or learning environment. Sections explore welcoming newcomers, instructional design, social-emotional support, and family partnerships.

Welcoming America

A nonprofit leading a movement of inclusive communities, this website includes ways to get involved, resources, and initiatives in support of new Americans.



Welcoming Week

A guide for librarians that includes suggested activities and resources to support libraries in welcoming new members to their communities. Designed around Welcoming Week in September, suggestions can be used throughout the year.

Webinars

Beyond the Welcome Sign: Tailoring Immigrant Services for Success

There is much more to supporting immigrants and refugees than hanging out a "welcome" sign at your library. Successful programs and services are specifically tailored to meet the needs of the range of populations who may come through your doors. In this webinar, learn strategies from two LJ Movers & Shakers who help new immigrants feel welcomed by the library and community.

Focus 2: Communications and Marketing

Articles

McGuire, Claire. "Multilingual Libraries: Approaching Language as Identity and Inclusion." IFLA Library Policy and Advocacy Blog, 19 February 2021, https://blogs.ifla.org/lpa/2021/02/19/multilingual-libraries-approaching-language-as-identity-and-inclusion/.

Sinhita, Sinharoy. "Welcoming New Immigrants Into Your Library." American Libraries Magazine, 21 September 2012,

https://americanlibrariesmagazine.org/blogs/the-scoop/welcoming-new-immigrants-into-your-library/

Zeman, Marybeth. "A Library Can Say Hello in Almost Any Language." *Public Libraries Online*, 30 October 2014,

http://publiclibrariesonline.org/2014/10/a-library-can-say-hello-in-almost-any-language/

Websites

ALA Store

Find a variety of multilingual posters and decor for libraries. Additional collections support particular celebrations or holidays.

Multilingual Library Signage

From the State Library of New South Wales, use the translation tool to generate phrases in a variety of languages. Choose from several available phrases or request your own translation. Each translation may be downloaded as an image or Word document.



Focus 3: Library Materials Collections

Books

Khailova, Ladislava N. The Stories We Share: A Guide to Pre K-12 Books on the Experience of Immigrant Children and Teens in the United States. ALA Editions, 2018.

Websites

Diverse Collections: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights

A statement from the American Library Association regarding the development of diverse library collections, including specific requirements.

I'm Your Neighbor

A comprehensive list of children and teen books, featuring "new arrival" cultures and groups. Browse by setting, by groups represented, and by theme.

Inclusive Collections: Building the Collection

Developed by the Massachusetts Library System, resources include book lists, social media accounts, articles, websites and blogs, awards, and resources for assessing and selecting collections. Additional resources focus on cultural competence and promoting collections.

International Children's Digital Library

The ICDL Foundation's goal is to build a collection of books that represents outstanding historical and contemporary books from around the world. Ultimately, the Foundation aspires to have every culture and language represented so that every child can know and appreciate the riches of children's literature from the world community. Browse books by language, color, shape, format, genre, and more.

LOTE Online for Kids

An online database of digital books in world languages, LOTE provides opportunities to enjoy books and language through storytime. The platform currently offers more than 1500 titles in more than 50 languages, with new releases added each month.

Mama Lisa's World

A place for songs, rhymes, and traditions from around the world. Find songs by continent, country, or language to support programming or other engagement.

We Need Diverse Books

A non-profit organization advocating for essential changes in the publishing industry to produce and promote literature that reflects and honors the diversity of children.



Resources include finding diverse books, grants and mentorships, and resources for parents, educators, and librarians.

Focus 4: Stakeholders and Partnerships

National Partnership for New Americans

The National Partnership for New Americans represents the collective power and resources of the country's 37 largest regional immigrant and refugee rights organizations in 31 states. Members provide a variety of large-scale services from naturalization to deportation defense.

New York State Office for New Americans

The New York State Office for New Americans is the nation's first statutorily created immigrant services office. Programs include legal support, opportunity centers, and more. You may find similar resources or partnerships in your own state.

United States Census Bureau

Gather demographic information about your community. Use the data tools to view information about housing, population, income and poverty, populations and people, race and ethnicity, and more.

US Resettlement Partners

From national and state government partners to resettlement agencies, identify local and national resources to assist new Americans.

We Welcome You to Welcome Everyone

Define your library's narrative by determining the data, the library's role, and the community landscape. Included are links for key data sources, professional organizations, and key barriers facing new Americans.

YMCA of Greater New York New Americans Initiative

The Y's New Americans Initiative provides a safe haven for immigrants looking for support and services ranging from English classes to citizenship preparation to computer literacy courses. Look for similar partnerships in your own community.

Focus 5: Equipping Staff

Articles

Bolivar, Christine, et al. "Equitable, Diverse and Inclusive Staffing: Go from Ordinary to Extraordinary." *CLA Leadership*, Developing Leaders in California Libraries, 7 May 2019,

https://claleadership.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Diversity-in-Librarianship-Briefing-Paper.pdf.



Kung, Janice Y, et al. "Diversity Initiatives to Recruit and Retain Academic Librarians: A Systematic Review." *College & Research Libraries*, vol. 81, no. 1, 2020. Retrieved from https://crl.acrl.org/index.php/crl/article/view/17484/32063.

Websites and Online Resources

Bystander Intervention Training

Provides resources to help individuals actively and visibly take a stand against harassment. Strategies include ways to support those harassed, create a culture that does not support harassment, and demonstrates the power of individuals in making our communities safer.

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion (DEI) in Libraries

This staff training initiative from Duquesne University includes recommended reading and resources on a variety of topics, from DEI to cultural competency to allyship. Each page includes videos, articles, or resources in support of the topic.

Examining Racism in the Library

Curated lists of articles and books related to revealing, confronting, and fighting racism. Topics covered include recruiting and retaining diverse employees, allyship, and cultural competence.

Libraries Respond: Immigrants, Refugees, and Asylum Seekers

This page collects resolutions, statements, and ALA resources related to providing services to immigrants, refugees, and asylum speakers. Explore additional resources for supporting immigrants, responding to U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, and relevant news articles.

Project Implicit

A series of implicit association tests for a variety of topics, including skin tone, race, age, gender, weight, and religious affiliation. Learn to identify your automatic preferences and be more aware of your implicit biases.

Recruiting for Diversity

From ALA Office for Diversity, Literacy and Outreach Services, this document includes suggestions for diverse recruitment and hiring practices.

Services to Refugees, Immigrants, and Displaced Persons Sub-Committee

This committee supports and promotes ALA, libraries, and communities to ensure that libraries provide the best possible services to support refugees, immigrants, and displaced persons. Resources developed include toolkits and initiatives in support of new American communities.



Materials for the Children's Room

ALA Store Posters/Decor/Bookmarks (here are some highlights):

- Me and Mama by Cozbi A. Cabrera
- New Kid Poster by Jerry Craft
- Niño Poster by Yuyi Morales
- Read Around the World Poster
- Featured languages included: American Sign Language, Arabic, Braille, Chinese, English, French, German, Hawaiian, Hebrew, Hmong, Italian, Korean, Navajo, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, Swahili, Tagalog, Urdu, Vietnamese, and Wolof.
- Read Tall Tales by Charly Palmer
- Reading Without Walls by Gene Luen Yang
- Twins Poster by Shannon Wright
- Vamos! Let's Go Read Poster by Raúl the Third
- We Are Water Protectors by Michaela Goade
- <u>Welcome Poster</u> Represented Languages: Amharic, Arabic, Bosnian/Croation/Serbian, Chinese, English, Farsi, French, German, Greek, Hebrew, Hmong, Italian, Japanese, Khmer, Korean, Lao, Norwegian, Oromo, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Somali, Spanish, Swedish, Vietnamese
- You Matter by Christian Robinson

Baobao Learns Chinese Song Book and Coco Learns Spanish Song Book

Bitty Bao

Bilingual (Chinese, Cantonese) board books and felt toys.

Culture and Heritage Toys from Cre8tive Minds

Dolls:

American Girl Dolls

Whatcom County Library System circulates American Girl Dolls to make playing with these dolls accessible to all children. Newer dolls include dolls with various backgrounds and the company has a feature for <u>creating any type of doll</u> that you can use to tailor to your community.

- Brains and Beauty Dolls
 - Black dolls designed with natural hair.
- Harperiman
 - Handmade linen dolls of color.
- Healthy Roots

Dolls and storybooks to represent diversity in our communities.



Family Diversity Blocks from Miniland Educational

Modi Toys

Indian toys and books.

Reggae First Playlist by Cali's Books

Sushi Slicing Play Set from Melissa and Doug

Upbounders by Little Likes Kids

Includes puzzles and memory games to celebrate cultural differences.

We the Future Posters by Amplifier

Posters of youth leaders intended to be in schools as teaching tools.



Materials for Programming

Storytime Song/Rhyme Resources:

- <u>8 Children's Nursery Rhymes That Are Actually Racist</u> by Eisa Nefertari Ulen
 Ulen provides insight into the racist historical backgrounds of popular children's
 nursery Rhymes.
- <u>Bilingual Storytime Resources</u> (Spanish)
 Resources, webinars, blogs, and videos compiled by Jbrary. Includes a link to a
 Youtube channel by K Librarian.
- Good Morning Song Multilingual
 Sond has translated lines assisting land.

Can be translated into multiple languages through the help of bilingual staff, patrons, or community members. Melody Leung was inspired by the <u>Jose Luis Orozco version</u>. Doing the song in programs, building a growth mindset and trust with your attendees, and then asking if there are other languages they would like to sing it in can help you learn about your communities and how you can incorporate their culture in an inclusive and everyday way.

- Mama Lisa's World
 - A place for songs, rhymes, and traditions from around the world. Find songs by continent, country, or language to support programming or other engagement.
- StoryBlocks
 - Songs, rhymes, and fingerplays in English, Spanish, Vietnamese, Amharic, Arabic, French, Italian, Russian, and American Sign Language.
- Yo Te Amo
 - Similar to the "Good Morning Song," "Yo Te Amo" can be sung in different languages and creates a welcoming and inclusive environment for children and caregivers. The lullaby works well in baby storytimes as a gentle goodbye song.

American Indians in Children's Literature

Dr. Debbie Reese reviews literature that feature Native American character(s) and sheds light as to how that representation can negatively or positively impact Native peoples.

Facing History and Ourselves

Short articles written for teachers about how to talk and instruct kids about current events with the mission of "using history to challenge teachers and their students to stand up against bigotry and hate".

Mirrors, Windows, and Sliding Glass Doors by Rudine Sims Bishop Bishop writes about the importance of positive representation in children's literature and how stereotypes can harm underrepresented groups.



Reimagining School Readiness Toolkit

Research-backed resources from the Bay Area Discovery Museum to help prepare ages 0-8 for success in school and life. Posters, activities, and flyers available in English, Chinese, Farsi, Spanish, Tagalog, and Vietnamese.

Social Justice Books

Created by Teaching for Change to provide teachers and parents tools to create spaces where students can change the world. There are specific book lists for different types of communities as well as book ratings to help practitioners evaluate books for library use, including problematic titles.



Successful Library Programs

How Can Libraries Support Children and Immigrant Families? By Doing What We Do Best.

Through consistent connection and resources, all libraries can create a pathway to information and inclusivity through books (Brooklyn Public Library backpacks for children going through immigration legal hearings through Kids in Need of Defense), legal help, brochures, and outreach (San Diego Public Library tours for a shelter with migrant children).

Library Services for Immigrants: A Report on Current Practices

A document created by the U.S. Immigrant and Citizenship Services and the Institute of Museum and Library Services with examples from 8 library systems of how they used partnerships to provide services for immigrants.

Overwhelmed by: Outreach to Migrant Communities

Details a project created through a coalition of partners for a migrant camp community including book walks, craft kits, summer camp participation, and outreach programs that supported this community throughout the year.

The Plaza Program at the Denver Public Library

This program has been providing services to immigrant, refugee, and asylee community members since 2009. Plaza staff, including multilingual community members with immigration experience, currently offer online English conversation groups, citizenship study groups, and meetings with pro-bono legal services. There are also one-on-one appointments available for other information, including technology assistance and referrals to local service providers. In-person programming is anticipated to resume in 2022.

Small Talk

Conversational English program through Plano Public Library that has been successful even during the pandemic. It is one of the programs and services they offer for New Americans.