

New Bedford workforce training partnership program formed for new U.S. citizens

The Immigrants' Assistance Center, Inc. (IAC) received a capital grant in the amount of \$23,000 from the Richard and Susan Smith Family Foundation to establish a technology-based learning environment for English language, citizenship classes, and workplace readiness training.

In a unique partnership, the IAC and Mass Hire Greater New Bedford Career Center, have formed the first-ever Citizenship and Workforce Readiness program. This program will offer new U.S. citizens the opportunity to develop job-based computer skills, contribute to the workforce and increase economic mobility.

At the core of the IAC's services is citizenship. The IAC encourages everyone who is eligible to apply for citizenship as the only permanent protection for immigrants, as well as the key to securing employment and self-sufficiency. Since 2016, citizenship applications at the IAC have grown 350%.

The IAC's multi-lingual team of teachers, case managers, tutors, and volunteers will take students through all levels of learning. The computer classroom will enable students to take advantage of online tools for learning English and U.S. civics and to practice test-taking in an online environment, as the citizenship test is no longer administered on paper. MassHire will provide computer-based job training in the IAC's computer classroom.

The Immigrants' Assistance Center is determined to respond to the current human services crisis around immigration by stepping up to meet the increased demand in low-income clients seeking U.S. citizenship. Computers in the classroom will not

just put more immigrants in New Bedford on the pathway to citizenship, but will reduce barriers to economic mobility for these new U.S. citizens, with repercussions that will positively impact the City's workforce development for years to come.