

# Welcoming New Citizens

Immigrants are an essential element in keeping the American economy strong. The U.S. government has forecasted a **shortage of 20 million** workers by 2026, so integrating new immigrants into our society, as leaders and vibrant members of the community is good for the Chicago region.

At Family Focus, we believe that building strong, cohesive families and keeping them together is best for children. We help **legal permanent residents** obtain the appropriate legal services they need to become United States citizens. Our **bi-lingual citizenship classes** walk immigrants through the complicated application process to become a U.S. citizen, and **provide onsite childcare** so parents can attend. We also help young people, who are eligible, apply for **deferred action**, so they can work and contribute to their communities.

Our **Welcoming Center** provides a single, convenient location for new immigrants who may lack adequate transportation, to receive comprehensive care and services. Our bilingual staff provides information about available **health services, educational opportunities, employment, and home ownership** services. They also provide workshops on issues such as financial literacy, health and nutrition, mental health, adolescent development, parenting skills, and **substance and domestic abuse**.

Through programs such as "**Abriendo Puertas**" (Opening Doors), we are increasing Latino parents' knowledge about **early-literacy skills**, social-emotional development, and health for their children. Fortified with this information, parents become advocates for their children.

Through **home visiting programs**, we are able to reduce the sense of isolation that new immigrants can experience.

To promote the importance of and access to higher education, several centers hold workshops for families on navigating the **college application process** and applying for **student loans**. Staff takes high school seniors on college **campus tours** throughout the Midwest.

Last year we served over **1150 participants**, walking 700 people through the citizenship application process and finalizing applications for over 450 people. With your support, we can continue to educate and integrate even more immigrants into our society – benefitting all of us.

[Click here](#) if you can help!

