

Philadelphia Ranks High as an Immigrant-Friendly City

By Bonnie Eisenfeld

Philadelphia is the sixth most immigrant-friendly city of the 100 largest U.S. cities measured by the New American Economy's 2018 *NAE Cities Index*. The NAE ranks cities on a variety of factors in two major categories: local policies and socioeconomic outcomes. On a scale of 1 to 5 with 5 being the highest, our city scored 4.40 in the policy category, based on government leadership, economic empowerment, inclusivity, community, and legal support; and 3.25 in the socioeconomic category, based on job opportunities, economic prosperity, livability, and civic participation. The five cities ahead of Philadelphia are Newark, Baltimore, New York, Chula Vista, CA, and San Francisco.

Miriam Enriquez, Director of Philadelphia's Office of Immigrant Affairs, told WHY? that the city's high ranking in policy is due to collaboration among local government, nonprofits, and community organizations, and limited cooperation with federal immigration-enforcement agencies. To raise the socioeconomic score, she said the city must work on attracting immigrant entrepreneurs.

Pew's *Philadelphia Research Initiative* reports that in the 1990s, the city's immigrant-friendly policies started reversing its population decline. From 2000 to 2016, the foreign-born population increased by 95,000 (69 percent), more than replacing over 40,000 native-born residents who died or moved out of the city. Immigrants constitute almost 15 percent of city residents, 19 percent of workers, and 14 percent of those living in poverty.

Educationally, immigrants cover a wide spectrum. About 30 percent of immigrants have college degrees or higher; conversely, 30 percent have little schooling and limited proficiency in the English language. Immigrants who do not have much formal education or whose foreign degrees are not recognized in the U.S. often become entrepreneurs. Newly arrived immigrants lacking formal education tend to do physical labor at lower pay or longer hours. Asian, South American, and the Caribbean nations have contributed the highest number of immigrants; African nations are now the fastest-growing source of immigrants.

A majority of Philadelphians surveyed by Pew said they appreciated the contributions immigrants make to the city.

Cities included in the NAE Index had a total population of more than 200,000 people and a foreign-born population of more than 9,000 people, more than 3.3 percent of total population. New American Economy is a bipartisan coalition of business leaders and mayors. The Index is based on analysis of data from a variety of sources collected from 2016 to 2018. To see the full New American Economy report, go to <https://www.newamericaneconomy.org/interactive-index/>. To learn the details of the NAE Index methodology, go to <https://www.newamericaneconomy.org/interactive-index/about-cities-index/#methodology>.

The Pew Philadelphia Research Initiative report is based on 2016 government and survey data. To see the full report including sources and methodology, go to <https://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/reports/2018/06/07/philadelphias-immigrants>

City Lit

"Bedrock of Civil Society," Library Must Include People with Mobility Impairments

By Bonnie Eisenfeld

On September 8, the *New York Times* published an opinion piece by Eric Klinenberg, "To Restore Civil Society, Start With the Library." In it, Klinenberg says: "Libraries stand for and exemplify something that needs defending: the public institutions that — even in an age of atomization, polarization and inequality — serve as the bedrock of civil society... Libraries don't just provide free access to books and other cultural materials, they also offer things like companionship for older adults, de facto child care for busy parents, language instruction for immigrants and welcoming public spaces for the poor, the homeless and young people... For older people, especially widows, widowers and those who live alone, libraries are places for culture and company,

through book clubs, movie nights, sewing circles and classes in art, current events and computing... For new parents, grandparents and caretakers who feel overwhelmed when watching an infant or a toddler by themselves, libraries are a godsend... Libraries are highly popular among adolescents and teenagers who want to spend time with other people their age."

The Philadelphia City Institute of the Free Library on Rittenhouse Square holds programs for all of these people *on the lower level, currently accessible only by stairs.* A



lift is needed to give them all equal access to these resources.

So far 40 percent of the lift project goal of \$400,000 has been raised. As of October 22, there were 120 gifts from individuals and families, and six from organizations. There is a long way to go. Besides donating, you can help in other ways: If you have a contact with a local business owner, bank branch, condo board, or other potential generous donor, or if you would like to help complete grant applications, please contact Pamela Freyd, President of Friends of Philadelphia City Institute, pamfreyd@earthlink.net. And send a check—large or small—to Free Library of Philadelphia Foundation/PCI Lift, 1901 Vine Street, Suite 111, Philadelphia PA 19103.