

This year has been one for the history books: a global pandemic, economic freefall, rising white nationalism, and a record-breaking election. Through it all, one thing is perfectly clear: our democracy and our country need people like us.

From serving as essential workers on the frontlines of the COVID-19 pandemic to standing against racism and poverty as grassroots leaders and elected officials, New Americans are proving to be the leaders that our country and communities have been waiting for.

Our alumni did not get scared off, they got creative. The challenges of 2020 laid bare in very clear terms the need for decisive, authentic leadership that embraces their full constituencies. This was a motivating factor for our candidates. A record number of New Americans ran for and won public office, from school boards to the White House. In turn, these inspiring candidates attracted even more New Americans to volunteer and to vote, setting in motion a lifetime of civic engagement.

For ten years, New American Leaders (NAL) has been the only organization to champion immigrants and refugees as crucial leaders in the American political system. This year has proven how important our mission is. More than ever, we are committed to empowering New Americans to run, win, and lead.



2020 At a Glance

114 
Alumni ran for office

 **65%**
won their election

46 
Campaigns with alumni staff

 **35**
Alumni now in state legislatures

Accomplishments

Despite the evolving realities of the year, our work not only continued, but grew:

- Converted to virtual Ready to Lead® and Ready to Win® trainings
- Launched a new campaign training reaching young women of color
- Created rapid response skills webinars to address campaigning during COVID
- Expanded one-to-one coaching that provides the encouragement our alumni need to run
- Hosting a virtual Power & Policy summit and New American Leadership Academy for state and local elected officials
- Released report, The State of Representation, on New Americans in state legislatures
- Launched The Tea on Democracy, a digital series covering key topics and current events from an immigrant perspective
- Multiplied digital footprint increase by over 10%

2020 Alumni

- 69% Women
- 33% Latino
- 24% Asian
- 16% Black
- 5% Arab
- 20% Multiracial
- 20% LGBTQ
- 13% Muslim

"The most transformative part is that we are not learning how to run for office the way it has always been done. We are using our experience as New Americans to revolutionize what campaigning and serving in office means."

Raie Gessesse, Minnesota; 2020 NAL Alum

State of Representation Report Findings

- New Americans are 25.7% of the population but only 3.5% of 7,383 state legislative seats
- Underrepresented in 46 of the 50 states
- Nine states have no New American state legislators
- Black New Americans only account for 0.5% of all state legislators

Alumni Highlight

Ranjeev Puri often thinks back to a moment in November 2012. He was celebrating the election results with other members of President Obama's campaign team, when the President looked him in the eye and said, "Now it's your turn."

Eight years and two small children later, Ranjeev is set to be the first person of color ever to represent Michigan's 21st District and the first Sikh American elected to the Michigan State Legislature.

But the campaign path in Trump's America was not easy. One morning, his family woke up to broken glass and bullets scattered in the yard where his 1-year-old and 4-year-old play. He even encountered racism among his own party members, the same ones who claimed to embrace diversity, in his primary against a white opponent.



This is why the space that NAL creates is transformative. "It felt like a dream to walk into the Ready to Lead training, full of people with immigrant roots from all over the world, and to realize that we all have so much in common," Ranjeev says. "It wasn't just a training, it became a family."

The NAL network continued to have Ranjeev's back long after that training weekend. Alumni helped him produce campaign materials in eight different languages and created multilingual phone and text banks, to help activate voters typically ignored by traditional campaigns. In the end, Ranjeev won with 72% of the primary vote, proving that his community, including white voters, were ready to embrace a new kind of leader. Now, Ranjeev is determined to inspire others to run, just as President Obama did for him.

Lessons from the Ground

Even in the midst of health threats and economic crises, our alumni did not back down from running. Candidates and elected officials adapted to the challenges and community needs by:

- Using virtual events and digital campaigning like phone and text banks to reach constituents
- Organizing mutual aid and assistance groups to provide food, information, and economic relief to marginalized communities
- Combining campaigning and community response efforts with those of local organizations to help reach traditionally excluded communities in the political process and provide relief to those impacted by the coronavirus

These innovative approaches resulted in historic voter turnout and trailblazing wins proving that when people like us run, we win.

Our Vision for 2021: Keep Building Our Democracy

As we enter our second decade, NAL will continue to build a political home for those who are too often excluded from decision-making and leadership by:

- Expanding our reach and impact by moving to regional trainings
- Increasing gender parity in office by developing women-only initiatives
- Moving more alumni from their first training to running, winning, and leading
- Providing leadership training and networking to help New Americans succeed once in elected office
- Building local NAL networks and state-based ecosystems needed for transformational change
- Addressing racial equity meaningfully within staff, board, and programming to create truly inclusive spaces for all people

