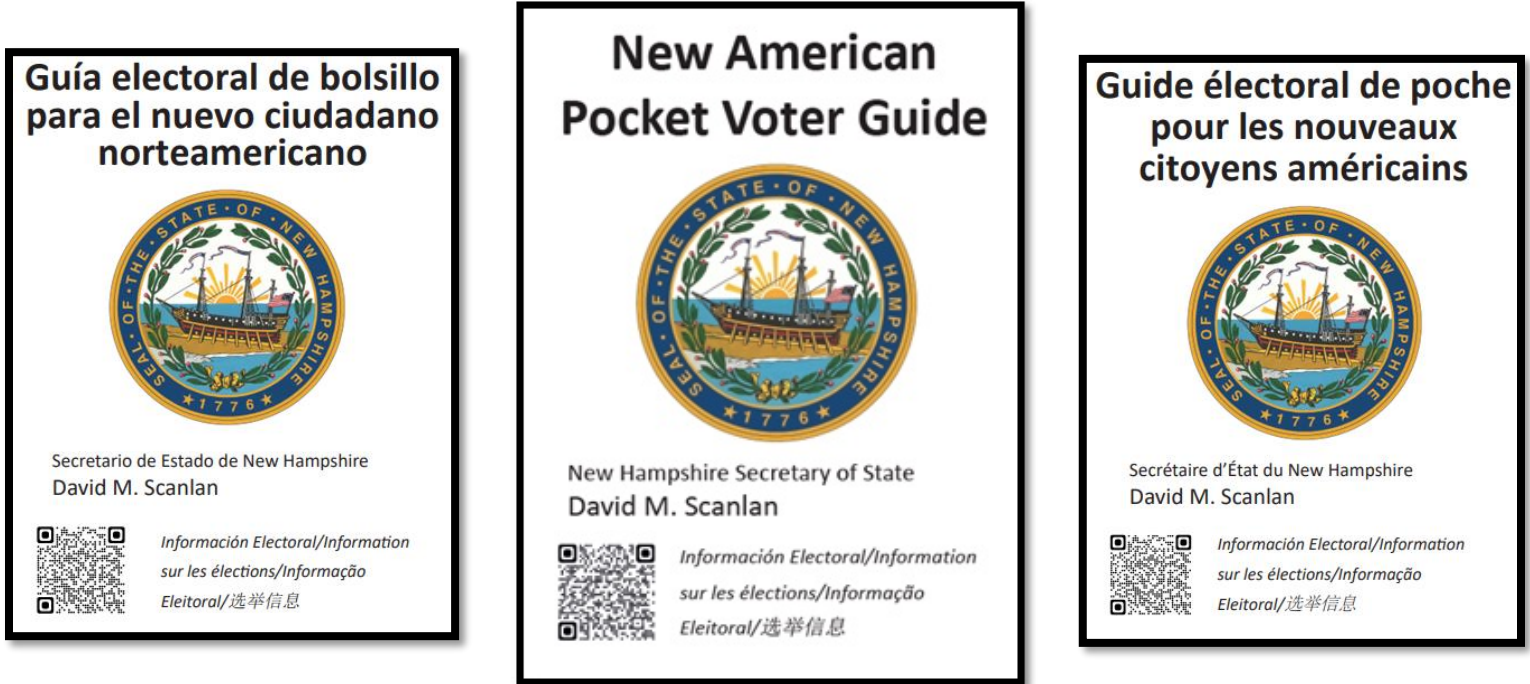


2024 NASS IDEAS Award Nomination



Project Title: New American Pocket Voter Guide

Submitted by: New Hampshire Secretary of State David M. Scanlan

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Subject Area: Elections

Project description: As the administrator of elections in New Hampshire, the Secretary of State's Office ensures everyone who is qualified to vote is given equal opportunity to do so. Naturalized United States citizens, or New Americans, are a vital part of New Hampshire's voting body, and their votes are just as important as any other person's vote. However, language barriers and unfamiliarity with the election process can deter some New Americans from registering to vote. The Secretary of State's New American Pocket Voter Guide seeks to eliminate those barriers and equip New Americans with the information they need to register to vote and make their voices heard in our democracy.



New Hampshire Secretary of State
David M. Scanlan

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

History

New Hampshire prides itself on the ease and transparency of its election process, but some New Americans face challenges when they register to vote and cast their ballots on election day. Secretary of State David M. Scanlan has made it his priority to mitigate these challenges and inspire New Americans to register to vote through the creation of multilingual election materials, the New American Pocket Voter Guide, and an instructional video that walks New Americans through the election process, from registering to vote to navigating the polls on election day.

The project began with the creation of multilingual election information in August 2022. Section 203 of the Voting Rights Act requires jurisdictions that have more than 10,000 Limited English Proficient voting age citizens, or more than five percent of the population, to provide language assistance. New Hampshire does not meet this threshold, but that does not negate the need to provide voters who speak English as a second language with information in their native tongue.

Secretary Scanlan engaged with Language Bank, a local company that provides ADA accessible translations, to translate election information into some of the most spoken foreign languages in New Hampshire. Those languages include Spanish, French, and Chinese, according to 2020 US Census data. The translated materials, available at <https://www.sos.nh.gov/elections/multilingual-election-information>, provide voters with detailed information on their voting rights, New Hampshire's registration requirements, and other resources available to them. Secretary Scanlan has encouraged local election officials throughout the state to make those materials available to voters at the polling place during every election.

In addition to written translations, the Secretary of State's Office implemented an agreement in February 2023 with Language Line, an on-demand interpretation service available to any customer that calls the Secretary of State's Office. The service enables a three-way conversation with the customer, a representative of the Secretary of State's Office, and a live interpreter. Several customers have utilized this service to learn more about state elections, how to obtain an apostille on a document, and how to form a new business. Language Line's interpretation services are available in over 200 different languages.

Following the initial push to provide multilingual election information and interpretation services, the Secretary of State's Office enhanced its engagement with New Americans by partnering with several local advocates that work directly with them. Those advocates include:

- Eva Castillo, Director of the New Hampshire Alliance for Immigrants and Refugees
- Clement Kigugu, Director of Overcomers NH
- Ahni Malachi, Executive Director of the New Hampshire Commission for Human Rights

All three individuals provided invaluable feedback informed by their own experiences as New Americans and/or advocates. Eva, a Venezuelan, became a New American after moving to New Hampshire and started her advocacy organization soon after. Clement, a native of Rwanda who worked with victims of genocide in his home country before seeking asylum in New Hampshire, founded Overcomers NH to help other refugees in New Hampshire adjust to their new life. His organization, among other services, provides free citizenship classes for individuals studying for the citizenship exam they are required to pass to become naturalized United States citizens.

Following our conversations with these community organizations, the Secretary of State's created the New American Pocket Voter Guide. The pocket-sized format of this guide makes it easy for New Americans to bring all the information they need with them to the polls on election day, empowering them to participate in New Hampshire elections. The guide is organized in chronological order, advising New Americans on how to register, how to vote absentee if they qualify, and how to navigate their local polling

place. Scannable QR codes, used liberally throughout the guide, lead to the Secretary of State's multilingual election information, Voter Information Lookup, and other relevant pages on our website.

The guide also includes a link to our instructional video for New Americans, titled "New Americans: Voting in New Hampshire". Produced by the late John Gfroerer and Concord Public TV, and made collaboratively with Eva Castillo, Clement Kigugu, and Ahni Malachi, the video features interviews with advocates and local election officials, along with several New Americans. The objective of the video is to not only to inspire New Americans to register to vote but also to advise local election officials on what they can do to assist New Americans and make the polling place a welcoming place for all.

Secretary Scanlan and Deputy Secretary Erin Hennessey have personally handed our pocket guides at naturalization ceremonies, most notably at the Strawberry Banke Naturalization Ceremony in Portsmouth, NH, held every year on July 4th.

In December of 2023, the New American guide was translated into Spanish, French, Mandarin, and Portuguese. Printable versions of these translated guides, along with ADA accessible pdf versions, are available on the Secretary of State's website at <https://www.sos.nh.gov/new-americans>.

The New American Pocket Voter Guide also inspired the creation of our [New Hampshire Voter Guide](#), which targets all new voters in our state. These guides are regularly handed out at student engagements and local town and city halls to new voters.

Significance

One of the most rewarding parts of the job for election administrators is witnessing qualified individuals registering to vote for the first time. It can be a coming-of-age moment for those who register as soon as they reach the age of 18, or a homecoming for New Americans who register after completing the challenging naturalization process. New Americans are a vital part of New Hampshire's voting body, and their votes are just as important as any other person's vote.

Some New Americans come from countries where voting rights are not protected, and election results do not truly reflect the will of the people. But in the United States, every qualified individual, whether a citizen by birth or through naturalization, has the right to vote and the right to a secret ballot. New Hampshire prides itself on the ease and transparency of its election process. This provides a tremendous opportunity for individuals who choose to become naturalized citizens and make New Hampshire their home.

Through our continued outreach to New Americans, the New Hampshire Secretary of State's Office not only educates individuals on our state's election process but also inspires individuals to become direct participants in our elections.

New Americans may make up a small minority of New Hampshire's voting population, but that only highlights the need to provide them with resources. Federal and state law do not require us to provide language assistance, but the Secretary of State's Office does have a duty to ensure that every qualified individual has the opportunity to register to vote and participate in our elections.

This community-focused effort connects New Americans with advocates who can relate to their experiences while eliminating the natural intimidation some New Americans feel when encountering state agencies. It also lifts the pressure small advocacy organizations with limited resources have felt in the past to provide New Americans with voter information and translated materials.

Impacts/Results

According to the [2022 American Community Survey](#), 36,845 people, or 2.7 percent of the New Hampshire population, speak Spanish; 15,493 (1.2 % of the population) speak French, Haitian, or Cajun. Another 6,334 (0.5% of the population) speak Chinese. We provide a wealth of resources in these languages,

along with Portuguese, directly benefiting the growing population of Brazilian immigrants largely concentrated in Nashua, the second-largest city in New Hampshire.

In 2023, 1,500 individuals were sworn in as New Americans in New Hampshire. This figure is on par with prior years, excluding the height of the COVID pandemic.

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) distributes our New American Pocket Voter Guide at all naturalization ceremonies across the state. Copies are also available at the Secretary of State's Office, from local election officials, and on our website at <https://www.sos.nh.gov/new-americans>. The Secretary of State's Office continues to engage with the New Hampshire Alliance for Immigrants and Refugees and Overcomers NH, along with other advocacy and "Get Out the Vote" organizations to translate more of our materials into foreign languages and distribute them widely.

We have also been working closely with USCIS to plan a naturalization ceremony in our State Archives building later this year. New Hampshire's State Archives are home to the most important documents to our state's history, including the Ratification document, which ratified the US Constitution and made the United States a country. We could not think of a better location to celebrate our newest citizens, who will become a vital part of New Hampshire's future. During the ceremony, we plan on showcasing some of our state's most precious collections and developing multilingual descriptions of their history.

Just as this project inspires New Americans in New Hampshire, New Americans inspire us. One of the most impactful moments for our office during the production of our instructional video was witnessing a New American register to vote at his local city clerk's office for the first time. He was kind enough to let us capture the moment on film, his genuine excitement palpable on the screen. This moment embodies the spirit of this project: to empower and celebrate New Americans becoming direct participants in our electoral process. We look forward to engaging with many more of New Hampshire's New Americans as we draw inspiration from their long road to citizenship and find more ways to celebrate their homecoming to the "Live Free or Die" state.



Naturalization Ceremony in Bedford, NH on March 1, 2024. Photo taken by Deputy Secretary Erin Hennessey.

SUPPORTING MATERIALS

New American Pocket Voter Guides


New American Pocket Guide (Accessible PDF):

<https://www.sos.nh.gov/sites/g/files/ehbemt561/files/inline-documents/sonh/february-2024-new-americans-voter-guide-remediated.pdf>


New American Pocket Guide: <https://www.sos.nh.gov/sites/g/files/ehbemt561/files/inline-documents/sonh/update-february-2024-na-guide.pdf>

New Americans web page & translated guides: [New Americans | New Hampshire Secretary of State \(nh.gov\)](#)

**Guide électoral de poche
pour les nouveaux
citoyens américains**




Secrétaire d'État du New Hampshire
David M. Scanlan




Información Electoral/Information
sur les élections/Informação
Eleitoral/选举信息

(French version)

**New American
Pocket Voter Guide**




New Hampshire Secretary of State
David M. Scanlan




Información Electoral/Information
sur les élections/Informação
Eleitoral/选举信息

**Guía electoral de bolsillo
para el nuevo ciudadano
norteamericano**




Secretario de Estado de New Hampshire
David M. Scanlan




Información Electoral/Information
sur les élections/Informação
Eleitoral/选举信息

(Spanish version)

**美国口袋选
民新指南**




新罕布什尔州州務卿
David M. Scanlan




Información Electoral/Information
sur les élections/Informação
Eleitoral/选举信息

(Mandarin version)

**Guia de bolso do novo
votante americano**




Secretaria do Estado de New Hampshire
David M. Scanlan




Información Electoral/Information
sur les élections/Informação
Eleitoral/选举信息

(Portuguese version)

**New Hampshire
Pocket Voter Guide**



New Hampshire Secretary of State
David M. Scanlan



Información Electoral/ Information
sur les élections/Informação
Eleitoral/选举信息

How to register

Before election day: Register at your town/city clerk's office OR at a local supervisors of the checklist meeting.

Contact your town/city clerk for the registration deadlines. Scan the QR code to find their contact info.



Election day: Register at your polling place.

Absentee: You may register by mail using the absentee process if you cannot apply in person because you are temporarily out of town or have a disability that prevents you from applying in person.

Once you are registered, request an absentee ballot from your clerk and return your completed ballot to them by mail (by **5:00pm on election day**) or in person (by **5:00pm on the day before the election**)

Scan the QR code for more info on absentee voting.



You can register as a Democrat, Republican, or Undeclared voter.

Voting with disabilities

Every polling place in New Hampshire must be accessible to voters with disabilities.

Accessible Absentee

If you have a print disability (you cannot mark a paper ballot by hand), you can vote using an online accessible absentee ballot. This system allows you to complete your ballot on a computer, print it out and return it to your local clerk before an election. Contact your clerk for more information.

At the polls

Every polling place in New Hampshire has an accessible voting system known as "one4all". The tablet has touchscreen and audio settings that voters with disabilities can use to produce a marked ballot.



Your local election officials are your trusted source of information. Do not hesitate to ask them for help!

At the polls



At check-in, show the ballot clerk your photo ID and announce your name and address if you are already registered.



The ballot clerk will hand you a blank ballot.



In the voting booth, vote for the candidates of your choice. Make sure you completely fill in the oval.



Exit the booth and place your ballot in the ballot-counting device (larger cities & towns) or hand it to the moderator to place in the ballot box (smaller towns).

Scan the code to find your polling location and hours.



We are here to help!

Your right to vote is protected by law. If you think your voting rights are being violated, tell your local moderator or contact the Attorney General's Office at (866-868-3703) or electionlaw@doj.nh.gov.

If you have any questions, the Secretary of State is happy to answer them! Call (603-271-3242) or email elections@sos.nh.gov.

Other helpful contacts:

- NH Commission for Human Rights
humanrights@hrc.nh.gov / (603-271-2767)
- New Hampshire Alliance for Immigrants and Refugees: ecastillo@miracoalition.org / (603-661-2873)
- Overcomers NH: director@overcomersnh.org / (603-856-7507)

Scan the QR code for helpful links.
We are here to help!



New American Videos

New Americans: How to Vote in New Hampshire – full video: [New Americans: How to Vote in New Hampshire \(youtube.com\)](#)

New Americans: How to Vote in New Hampshire – shortened version: [New Americans: Voting in New Hampshire \(Short Version\) \(youtube.com\)](#)

Online Resources

New Americans web page: [New Americans | New Hampshire Secretary of State \(nh.gov\)](#)

Multilingual Election Information: [Multilingual Election Information | New Hampshire Secretary of State \(nh.gov\)](#)

Press Releases:

[08-29-22 New Hampshire Secretary of State Offers Voting Information in Spanish French and Mandarin Chinese](#) 

[01-18-24 Secretary of State Releases Instructional Video for New Americans](#) 

Media clips

New Hampshire Public Radio (8/30/2022): For the first time, N.H. is providing official voter information in three additional languages.

Link: <https://www.nhpr.org/nh-news/2022-08-30/for-the-first-time-new-hampshire-voters-can-access-information-in-three-other-languages-from-nh-secretary-of-state>

New Hampshire Bulletin (8/30/2022): Secretary of State's Office makes voter information available in Spanish, Mandarin, French

Link: [Secretary of State's Office makes voter information available in Spanish, Mandarin, French • New Hampshire Bulletin](#)

Business NH Magazine (9/1/2022): NH Voting Info Available in Multiple Languages

Link: [Business NH Magazine: NH Voting Info Available in Multiple Languages](#)

Concord Monitor (11-28-2023): Secretary of States office to provide voting info for New Americans

Link: [Concord Monitor - Secretary of States office to provide voting info for New Americans](#)

New Hampshire Bulletin (1/9/24): NH Primary Voting Information for New Americans

Link: [NH primary voting information for New Americans • New Hampshire Bulletin](#)

InDepth NH (1/18/2024): SOS Scanlan Shows New Americans How To Vote in NH in New Video

Link: [SOS Scanlan Shows New Americans How To Vote in NH in New Video - InDepthNH.org](#)

Social media

Strawberry Banke Naturalization Ceremony:

<https://x.com/NHSecretary/status/1676291989661163525?s=20>



NH Secretary of State @NHSecretary · Jul 4, 2023



Congratulations to all the New Americans who were sworn in as US citizens today at Strawberry Banke, Portsmouth! SOS Scanlan and Senior Deputy SOS Patty Lovejoy were thrilled to take part in the ceremony and hand out our New American Pocket Voter Guide!



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NH Secretary of State @NHSecretary · Jan 18



Becoming a US citizen is a special milestone, one that opens the door to many opportunities like the right to vote! We're thrilled to share this video on registering to vote as a New American in NH, produced in partnership with the amazing @ConcordTV!



youtube.com
New Americans: How to Vote in New Hampshire
Becoming a naturalized United States citizen, or New American, is a special milestone, one that ...

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NH Secretary of State @NHSecretary · Jul 4, 2023



“Everybody’s vote is exactly the same and everybody’s vote matters.”

Check out our online resources for New Americans registering to vote for the first time! sos.nh.gov/new-americans



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New Hampshire Secretary of State

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One of the most precious rights we have in a democracy is the right to vote. Congrats to the all the New Americans who were sworn in today in Bedford and can now register to vote! Deputy Secretary of State Erin Hennessey was thrilled to attend and share our voter resources for New Americans, including our pocket voter guide and instructional video.

Visit <https://www.sos.nh.gov/new-americans> for more.



Boost this post to reach up to 1733 more people if you spend €35.

Boost post

44

1 comment 2 shares

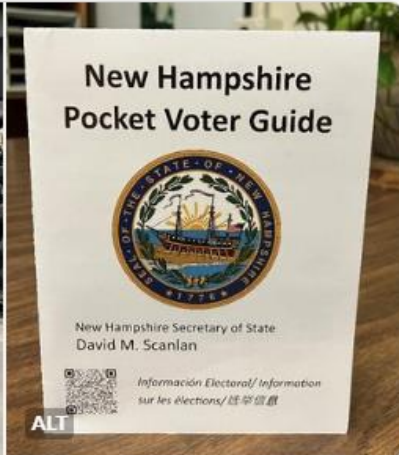


NH Secretary of State @NHSecretary · Nov 8, 2023

Secretary Scanlan and Deputy Secretary Hennessey spoke to students at Colby Sawyer today about the importance of the First-in-the-Nation Primary and voting in New Hampshire (made easy with our pocket voter guide)! Thank you, @colbysawyer, for the opportunity!



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NH Secretary of State @NHSecretary · Aug 29, 2022

Did You Know?

The NH Secretary of State's Office offers election information in Spanish, French and Mandarin Chinese. Visit sos.nh.gov/multilingual-e... #nhelections



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NH Secretary of State @NHSecretary · Oct 13, 2022

Secretary Scanlan had the pleasure of speaking to the NH Commission for Human Rights in Manchester today. At the event, he highlighted the proactive steps the SOS Office is taking to reach out to and serve all citizens of NH.



NH Voting Rights @NHVotingRights · Aug 30, 2022

#VotingRights Victory

This year we championed @mannyfornh's pro-voter bill HB1442. It didn't pass, but thanks to the dedicated work of advocates some materials are available in Spanish, French & Mandarin to polling locations statewide. Read [#NHPolitics](#)



Multilingual Election Information

From sos.nh.gov



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