



LEAH ZALLMAN CENTER
FOR IMMIGRANT HEALTH RESEARCH

LZC Winter Updates *January 2024*



Director's Note



Jessica Santos, PhD

2024 is likely to show us just how far U.S. political candidates (on all sides of the political spectrum) will go to weaponize immigration and use immigration policy as a bargaining chip. Our response here at LZC is to head into this year with eyes wide open and some new tools to shape and inform positive, evidence-informed narratives. [As I mentioned in our FY23 annual report](#), immigrant health and well-being are not just the responsibility of the healthcare system. That's why our research focuses on long-term, structural changes across a wide range of institutions and communities—see relevant findings from three of our completed projects on asylum, ESOL, and career pathways below. The overall takeaway? As newcomers achieve security and well-being, communities become healthier and more prosperous.

Starting this Spring, we'll be hosting public "LZC Coffee Chats" on specific immigrant health issues to encourage cross-sector dialogue and action. In December, we released [Spotlight on Asylum](#), the first of an ongoing Spotlight Series, where we shine a light on findings from our research and the work of our partners, and present key data points to contextualize and frame immigrant health issues currently affecting Massachusetts communities. I invite you to reach out if you have a specific issue area or topic that you would like us to prioritize in future Spotlights or Coffee Chats. Thank you in advance for joining us in getting immigrant health data, stories, and knowledge out to change hearts and minds.



**Looking for ways to support migrants in
Massachusetts?**

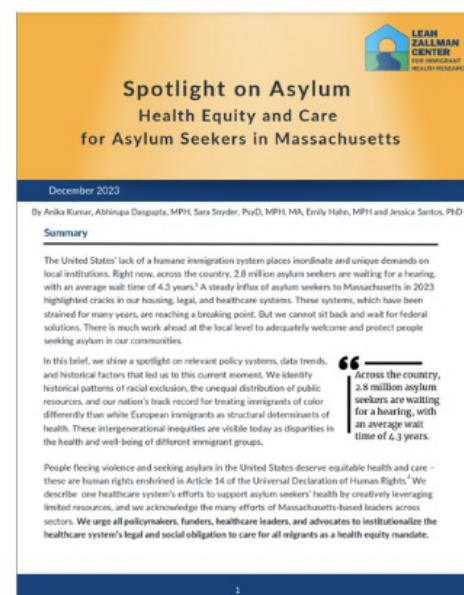
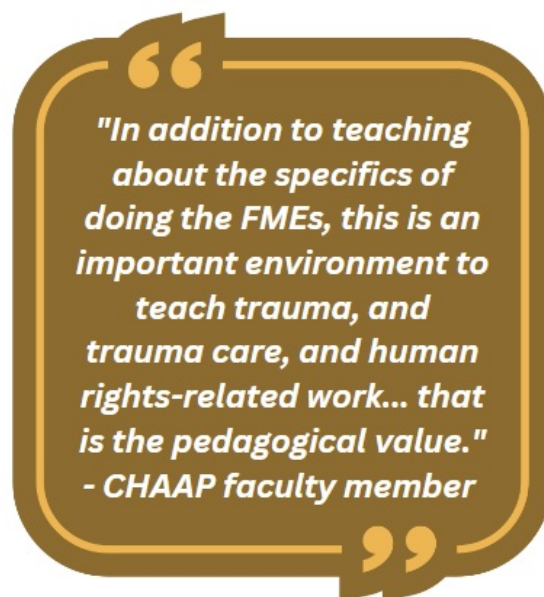
Our partners at the Massachusetts Immigrant & Refugee Advocacy Coalition (MIRA) have developed a list of resources for those interested in donating, volunteering, and much more. Check it out [here](#).

What we are learning about immigrant health: Project findings and publications

Asylum: By training residents, healthcare organizations can support migrants at scale

The healthcare system has a legal and social obligation to care for all migrants as a health equity mandate. The CHA Asylum Program (CHAAP) plays a key role in the larger asylum landscape by training medical and psychological residents to perform forensic medical evaluations (FMEs) that inform medico-legal affidavits for legal asylum cases. LZC found that the combined didactic and mentorship model of this pilot program prepared trainees well to conduct FMEs in the future. Perhaps more importantly, residents reported learning skills that will translate to improved clinical practice with immigrants in any future setting (including working with interpreters, conducting trauma-informed interviews, etc.). The benefits from this training elective extend beyond direct benefits to asylum seekers (cases filed with medico-legal affidavits are twice as likely to be granted asylum) and add value and capacity for improved clinical practice with migrants to the healthcare system as a whole.

This December 2023 Spotlight describes relevant policy systems, data trends, and historical factors that led us to this current moment. Read the brief [here](#).



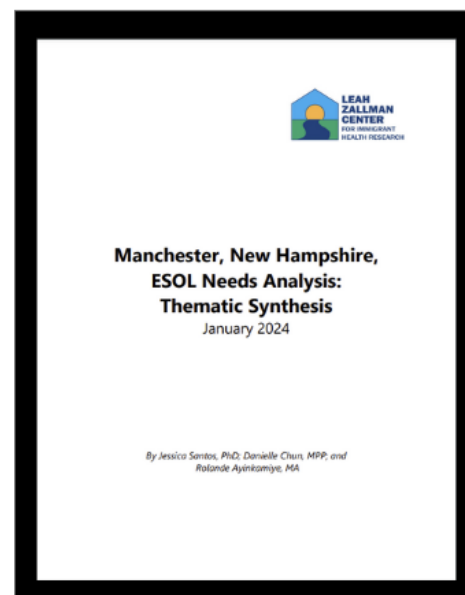
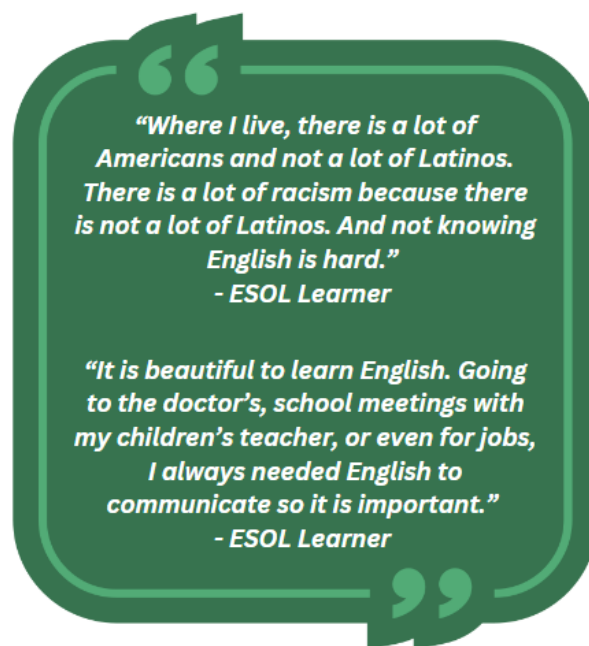
Bonus read: Emily Hahn, project manager on the CHAAP study, reflected on the program's impacts and sustainability. Read her insights [here](#).

English for speakers of other languages (ESOL): Participant stories call for tailored solutions and investment in advanced English classes

English learners in Manchester, NH come from a range of cultural, educational, and familial backgrounds. Some ESOL learners were university professors in their sending countries; others could not read or write in their native language but speak multiple languages. Some were forcibly displaced; others immigrated to the United States in search of a better future for their families.

We found ESOL learners in Manchester are mostly successful in finding free entry-level and intermediate classes, but face commonly seen barriers as they pursue English fluency over time (e.g., cost, transportation, childcare). More resources for community-based literacy and pre-college and vocational English classes and coordination with workforce development agencies could assist immigrants and refugees in achieving their goals and becoming more active members of the community. English fluency reduces immigrants' stress and increases their sense of belonging; conversely, racism and discrimination - especially from NH residents who don't understand accents - can directly impact immigrants' career goals and overall well-being.

This January 2024 thematic analysis was completed in partnership with Southern New Hampshire University's Center for New Americans and the New Hampshire Equity Collective (EqColl). Learn more [here](#).



Career pathways: Investing in refugee and immigrant careers yields multiple payoffs

Through a two-year, multi-site study of Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service's (just renamed to [Global Refuge](#)) New American Cities (NAC) model, we found that immigrants who advanced in their career through NAC received an average benefit of \$28,000 after one year, leading to tax contributions of \$6,700 more per person. Cities that invest in this model receive a return of \$1.23 for every dollar invested in the NAC model. Besides the financial payoff for NAC participants and cities alike, refugees and immigrants who participated in the program reported increased hope, greater family well-being, personal empowerment, and a new sense of belonging.

This November 2023 report was completed in partnership with Global Refuge

(formerly known as LIRS). Read the report [here](#).



Bonus read: Danielle Chun, Strategy and Partnerships Manager and project manager on the NAC study, reflected on the "parallels between the volcano snail and bacteria's symbiotic relationship and immigrant integration." Curious? Read her thoughts [here](#).

Highlights of 2023

Community engagement

Over the year, LZC researchers engaged hundreds of people from across sectors to listen to the priorities coming from immigrant communities and ensure that our research is designed for maximum impact. This included our annual event, [Power in Listening](#), and events hosted by our partners across the U.S.



Building the field of immigrant health

State of Migration: Structural Approaches to Advance Immigrant Health at Northeastern University

The Migration & Health Initiative, located at the [Institute for Health Equity and Social Justice Research](#) at Northeastern University and the Leah Zallman Center collaborated this past fall of 2023 in a panel event and Q&A session about how research, policy, and community action can respond to the systems and structures shaping migration and health. You can watch a recording of the panel [here](#).



Immigration as a Structural Determinant of Health: Social Medicine at Harvard Medical School

Dr. Santos contributed to the development of a module of HMS' social medicine course led by Dr. Rose Molina, highlighting the role of immigration as a structural determinant of health.



Cambridge Health Alliance (CHA) Academic Poster Session

Emily Hahn, Anika Kumar, and Dr. Santos presented *From Labor of Love Towards a Center of Excellence: Scaling the Cambridge Health Alliance Asylum Program (CHAAP)* at CHA's annual poster session.

Upcoming in 2024

Upcoming Webinar: February 13th

The Leah Zallman Center and No Kid Hungry are co-sponsoring *From Fear to Trust: Community-led Solutions to Increase Food Access in Immigrant Communities, Creando Confianza: Soluciones Comunitarias para Incrementar el Acceso a la Alimentación en Comunidades Inmigrantes*, on Tuesday, February 13th, 2-3pm EST. The webinar will be bilingual in English and Spanish with simultaneous interpretation available. Click [here](#) to register!

From Fear to Trust

Community-led solutions to increase food access in immigrant communities

- Strategies to counter the ongoing chilling effects of public charge and improve SNAP uptake
- Learn from evaluation findings from a year-long initiative in four border states
- Engage with immigrant advocates on the front lines of food justice

Tuesday, February 13, 2024

2-3 pm EST

CLICK HERE TO REGISTER

Professional live simultaneous English-Spanish interpretation available

ELSA GONZALEZ
Proyecto Vida Digna
San Benito, TX

ROSY BAILEY
Hispanic Services Council
Tampa, FL

MARISSA CALDERÓN
Chicanos Por La Causa
Phoenix, AZ

MARLOM PORTILLO
National Day Laborer Organizing Network
Pasadena, CA

Ariela Braverman Bronstein joins the LZC core team

Ariela Braverman Bronstein, MD, MPH, PhD, is an Epidemiologist III and Principal Investigator at the Institute for Community Health. She is joining the LZC core team as the Health and Equity Research Advisor. In this capacity, she will add to our collective expertise in statistical modeling, human rights medicine, and health equity. Learn more about Ariela [here](#).



New event series: LZC Coffee Chats

We are excited to kick-off the new year introducing a new series of events: LZC Coffee Chats. Through this quarterly series, we hope to engage with our partners in meaningful conversations around immigrant wellness topics. Be on the lookout for the first virtual LZC Coffee Chat in March.

Open applications for the Immigrant Scholar Internship Program

Applications are now open for the summer cohort of the Immigrant Scholar Internship Program! We're looking for three bachelor's/associate's, master's, and doctoral students who are passionate about immigrant health and working with the LZC team to build the Center and advance immigrant well-being. More information about the internship program can be found [here](#). Applications will be reviewed on a **rolling basis** until March 15, 2024.



Date coming soon: 2024 LZC Spring Event: Listening in Action

We are starting to prepare for our 2024 annual spring event, *Listening in Action*. We're taking the best of our *Power In Listening* event in 2023 and our 2022 launch event *Hope in Power*, and taking it to the next level. This Spring, we will come together with our partners and community through dialogue, music, food, and joy. We will also offer some concrete evidence-based data and tools so that you leave prepared to advance immigrant health in your own work. Be on the lookout for more information soon!

Advisory Council updates



Lenita Reason



Ayatt Elawad



Dr. Diya Kallivayalil



Dr. Sarah Kimball

As many of you know, the Leah Zallman Center works closely with an Advisory Council that advises the Center on research and policy opportunities, and helps to ensure that our work is grounded in and responsive to the priorities of immigrant communities. We would like to thank the following outgoing Advisory Council members for their service: [Lenita Reason](#), Executive Director of the Brazilian Worker Center; [Ayatt Elawad](#), former Director of Health Equity at ACEDONE; [Dr. Diya Kallivayalil](#), Co-Director of the Cambridge Health Alliance Asylum Program; and, [Dr. Sarah Kimball](#), Director of the BMC Immigrant and Refugee Health Center.

Learn more about the LZC Advisory Council [here](#)!

Updates from the Institute for Community Health

LZC is a center at the Institute for Community Health (ICH). Through participatory evaluation, applied research, and other services, ICH staff work with local and national partners to improve community health in a sustainable and equitable manner. There are many exciting things happening at ICH, including projects focused on [racial equity in substance use disorder treatment and overdose prevention initiatives](#), [maternal and child health](#), [social determinants of health](#), and so much more. Visit [our website](#) to learn more about the work that we do and check out our latest [blog posts](#) and [publications](#), and take a look at ICH's [December newsletter](#) for a spotlight on our behavioral health focus area.



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HEALTH**

**Support the Leah Zallman Center for Immigrant
Health Research at the Institute for Community**

Health

The work of the Leah Zallman Center for Immigrant Health Research is made possible by generous private donations that support our unique and intensive model of community-engaged, participatory research. Join us in centering the perspectives and knowledge of immigrants and growing future leaders.

DONATE NOW

About LZC

The Leah Zallman Center for Immigrant Health Research is a research center at the Institute for Community Health. We are a team of interdisciplinary social science researchers with expertise at the intersection of immigrant, economic, and social justice.



A CENTER AT



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