

## Minority Outreach & Technical Assistance (MOTA)

### Resources for the Foreign Born, Inc. (FIRN) – Howard County

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FIRN -- helps ensure equal access to community resources and opportunities for all foreign-born individuals FIRN -- believes in the power of collaboration, and values the opportunity to work in partnership with other organizations to "bridge" cultures and build community. FIRN -- grew out of an informal support service for foreign-born students at Howard Community College. With initial seed money from the Columbia Foundation, FIRN -- opened its doors in October 1981, staffed only by founder Pat Hatch. In its first year, the project served 90 persons from 10 countries. In 1984, FIRN was incorporated as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Slowly its services expanded to include immigration counseling, interpreting and other critical services. Today, FIRN serves immigrants from over 75 countries and is well known as the key resource in Central Maryland for the foreign born. It also provides valuable assistance and guidance to health and human service agencies that serve immigrant clients. FIRN provides health education and awareness of tobacco -related illness and cancer risk in an effort to reduce tobacco use and cancer-related mortality among foreign-born immigrants in the Howard County area.

For more information about FIRN and the MOTA program in Howard County, contact Paula Blackwell, Program Director at (410) 992-1923.