



Cities for Citizenship Toolkit

10 Strategies to Launch & Strengthen Citizenship Initiatives

Cities for Citizenship (C4C) is a major national initiative to encourage cities and counties across the country to invest in citizenship and financial empowerment for eligible permanent residents.

C4C is chaired by New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio, Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel, and Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti, with support from the Center for Popular Democracy and the National Partnership for New Americans. Citi Community Development is the Founding Corporate Partner. More than 25 cities and counties across the country have joined.



Cities for Citizenship

Cities for Citizenship (C4C) is a major national initiative of more than 25 participating cities and counties aimed at increasing citizenship among eligible U.S. permanent residents and encouraging investment in citizenship and financial empowerment programs. There are currently 8.8 million lawful permanent residents (LPRs) who are eligible to naturalize across the United States. Yet, each year fewer than nine percent of those who are eligible to naturalize take the important step of applying for citizenship due to a variety of barriers. As a result, the U.S. economy misses out on billions of dollars in potential individual earnings and tax revenues.

Cities and counties play an integral role in promoting naturalization and removing the barriers that prevent LPRs from completing the citizenship process, ultimately fostering a more inclusive, robust and representative democracy. Since C4C's inception in 2014, and with support from Citi Community Development, New York City, Chicago, and Los Angeles have been at the forefront of this effort, helping to lead the way in creating scalable naturalization programs that can be replicated across the country.

There are more than 25 participating cities and counties, including Miami-Dade and Suffolk Counties - together representing over 40 additional cities, in the C4C network. To help make the program a success, we partner with AFL-CIO, the National Association of Latino Elected Officials (NALEO), the National Federation of Credit Development Unions, Welcoming America and 32 BJ SEIU - all of whom have strong roots in immigrant communities and help serve as a bridge linking immigrant communities with municipal governments.

This Cities for Citizenship Toolkit outlines strategies for cities and counties to launch and expand citizenship initiatives by sharing lessons learned and best practices from across the country.

10 Strategies to Launch & Strengthen Citizenship Initiatives

C4C's participating cities and counties, working hand-in-hand with partners, have created robust citizenship programs. Below is an outline of 10 strategies to launch and strengthen citizenship initiatives based on the work of C4C participating cities and counties:

- Strategy 1:** Identify the Eligible Population of Legal Permanent Residents
- Strategy 2:** Partner with Service Providers and Community-Based Organizations
- Strategy 3:** Build Relationships with Financial Institutions and Financial Empowerment Organizations
- Strategy 4:** Create an Office of New Americans or Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs
- Strategy 5:** Collaborate with Your Local Libraries to Establish "Citizenship Corners"
- Strategy 6:** Train Key City Staff, Commissioners, Department Chairs, and Volunteers on the Benefits of Naturalization for Your City
- Strategy 7:** Host Oath Ceremonies and Other Naturalization-Related Events in the Mayor's Office
- Strategy 8:** Promote Public Awareness of Citizenship through Media
- Strategy 9:** Expand Current Programming Capacity through New Partnerships
- Strategy 10:** Measure Impact to Ensure Success and Expand Initiatives

Strategy 1: Identify the Eligible Population of Legal Permanent Residents (LPRs)

To successfully identify LPRs eligible to naturalize, target outreach efforts, and ultimately increase naturalization rates, cities and counties must have an in-depth knowledge of their LPR population.

By using Census data or other available resources, cities and counties can identify the number or percentage of LPRs living in the area. Cities and counties can also identify the number of LPRs living in different neighborhoods or census tracts and their countries of origin and languages spoken. These data will help you target and focus your outreach efforts to ensure maximum impact.

C4C Highlight: Eligible to Naturalize Reports and Webinars

C4C works together with leading national research institutions and partners to provide the most current data on the eligible to naturalize. C4C convenes webinars to share the reports throughout the C4C network.

Below are links to these webinars and reports:

- **Webinar: “Minimizing the Barriers to Naturalization”**
 - University of Southern California’s Center for the Study of Immigrant Integration (CSII) led by Dr. Manuel Pastor, unveiled an incredible new tool, their [interactive maps](#) that allow you to search for eligible to naturalize populations down to the state, county, and PUMA (more granular than county).
 - View the “Minimizing the Barriers to Naturalization” webinar [recording](#) and the [slides](#) for your reference.
- **Report: “The Economic Impact of Naturalization on Immigrants and Cities”**
 - NYC Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Affairs, Citi Community Development, the Urban Institute and C4C [released a groundbreaking report](#) that examines the naturalization-eligible immigrant population in 21 cities across the country as well as the potential economic impact of naturalization on immigrants and the cities’ economies.
 - View the [slides](#) and the webinar [recording](#) from the C4C webinar discussing the report.

Additional resources on the eligible to naturalize:

- **Center for Migration Studies:**
 - [The US Eligible-to-Naturalize Population: Detailed Social and Economic Characteristics](#) (Warren, Kerwin, 2015)
- [USCIS Immigration and Citizenship Data](#)

Strategy 2: Partner with Service Providers and Community-Based Organizations

Community-based organizations and local citizenship service providers play an integral role in helping LPRs access the support they need to initiate and complete the naturalization process. These organizations have deep ties and trust with immigrant communities and are often one of the first places where immigrants go for assistance. Partnerships with community-based organizations increase program effectiveness due to the ability of CBOs to spread the word about citizenship programming and available resources and to make referrals for assistance.

Cities and counties can capitalize on these relationships and existing connections by working closely with community-based naturalization providers that have established citizenship programming, ESL, or civics programming. In addition, to get a better sense of current capacity and needs, cities and counties can assemble regional roundtables of stakeholders to review programming capacity, current partnerships, and identify naturalization barriers and target populations for outreach.

C4C Partner Highlight: Chicago Mayor's Office of New Americans

In Chicago, the local C4C program has been led by a partnership between the City of Chicago Mayor's Office of New Americans, the Chicago Public Libraries, the Chicago Public Library Foundation, and Citi Community Development. The Mayor's Office of New Americans program provided eight grants to community-based organizations focused on citizenship and financial literacy.

The eight grantees provided workshops to local immigrant community members, which resulted in 51 citizenship workshops, serving 2,801 legal permanent residents in partnership with 643 community volunteers. In addition, they offered 60 financial literacy workshops across Chicago.

The eight community-based organizations were also organized by regional tables through the Mayor's Office of New Americans. The regional tables created partnerships amongst the community-based organizations where legal service providers and service organizations came together to host citizenship workshops at local libraries.

"We want to make sure our residents have the resources they need to become naturalized citizens. By providing free assistance to residents in their native language, we can point them in the right direction so that they can continue on their path to citizenship and protect them from any risk of consumer fraud. Chicago is a city that was built by immigrants and continues to thrive from the vibrancy of our immigrant population, and we will do everything we can to support immigrants in their quest for citizenship." - Mayor Rahm Emanuel



Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel
at an Oath Ceremony in City Hall

Strategy 3: Build Relationships with Financial Institutions and Financial Empowerment Organizations

The naturalization process creates important opportunities to offer financial empowerment services to individuals seeking to naturalize. Banks, credit unions, financial empowerment organizations and local economic development offices are critical partners in effectively integrating services and building citywide plans for long-term community asset building.

Many credit unions across the country currently offer low-cost or zero interest naturalization micro-loans to address the high cost of the naturalization application for LPRs.

Financial empowerment organizations can also partner with citizenship service providers to offer financial education classes and financial counseling to LPRs while they are in the naturalization process. Cities and counties can forge relationships with these institutions to design programs and reach LPRs with citizenship and financial empowerment services. Local offices of economic empowerment can help inform program design and facilitate connections to financial empowerment organizations that might be potential partners.

C4C Partner Highlight: New York City NYCitizenship Program

The New York City Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs (MOIA) created NYCitizenship, a citywide program that provides citizenship legal services and financial counseling at 12 public library branches. The NYCitizenship program provides free services to New Yorkers including appointments with a trusted attorney for help with citizenship applications, information sessions about the citizenship process and its benefits, and free and confidential financial counseling. NYCitizenship financial counselors help New Yorkers learn how to save for the citizenship application fee or apply for the fee waiver, check or improve their credit score, open a bank account, and manage their debt, among other services. This program is supported by Citi Community Development, Carnegie Corporation of New York, and Robin Hood Foundation.



Photo credit: Ed Reed/NYC Mayoral Photography Office



Photo credit: Paula Vlodkowsky

"Citizenship is a vital piece of our citywide strategy to promote economic opportunity and equity - and cities are central to protecting and promoting the inclusion and diversity that make our country so great. Citizenship is linked to increased wages, higher rates of homeownership, and other important factors in helping people unlock vital civic and economic opportunity. We're proud to offer free legal services and financial counseling at our public libraries through the NYCitizenship program to expand opportunity for those who have long been hardworking, productive members of our country." - Mayor Bill De Blasio

C4C Partner Highlight: National Federation for Community Development Credit Unions (the Federation) and the Juntos Avanzamos Initiative

The Federation is a C4C partner whose mission to help low- and moderate-income people and communities achieve financial independence through credit unions. C4C and the Federation work together to build relationships between cities and credit unions and pathways to financial empowerment.

The Federation is leading the national expansion of Juntos Avanzamos (Together We Advance), a designation program for credit unions committed to serving and empowering Hispanic consumers. Juntos Avanzamos provides a framework for credit unions to adapt their internal policies and procedures, increase institutional capacity to become welcoming and receptive to the immigrant population, and fine-tune their programs and services to be relevant to immigrant communities.

Since the national launch of Juntos Avanzamos in September 2015, and as of August 2016, the Federation has expanded that initiative to ten additional states: AZ, CA, CO, FL, IA, IL, NJ, NM, OR and WA, as well as the District of Columbia, adding 21 credit unions to the program. These institutions range in size from \$8 million to \$4 billion in assets and range from one single office to 35 branches. Combined, they serve more than one million members and operate 165 branches.

As Juntos Avanzamos expands across the country, C4C and the Federation are working closely together to build relationships between cities and credit unions. In June 2016, C4C and the Federation co-hosted the webinar, "Building Pathways to Citizenship and Financial Empowerment," which featured the Juntos Avanzamos initiative and collaboration with cities. The webinar slides are available [here](#), and the recording can be accessed [here](#).

An example of a C4C and Federation partnership is out of City of Seattle's Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs (OIRA). In June 2016, OIRA and Federation member, the Seattle Metropolitan Credit Union (SMCU), launched two citizenship loan products to help low-income immigrants and refugees pay for citizenship applications and increase access to banking services.

Currently, more than 22,000 legal permanent residents (LPRs) in Seattle are eligible to naturalize and more than half are low-income. Although citizenship offers many benefits, many eligible residents do not naturalize because they cannot afford the current \$680 application fee. While USCIS is proposing to make the fee waiver accessible to more people, the agency's proposal to raise the fee to \$725 will continue to keep citizenship out of reach for many low-income LPRs.

SMCU's low-interest loan products titled Citizenship Xpress and Citizenship+ range from \$700 to \$4,000 and offer no application fee, no income verification requirements, and monthly payments. A no-interest, fee-based option is also available for those who need Islamic financing. Eligible LPRs in Washington State can apply by phone, in-person, or online at www.smcu.com/citizen.

Read more about Seattle's Citizenship Loan initiative [here](#). The Federation looks forward to connecting with C4C cities about opportunity to build relationships with their credit union members.



Visit the Federation website at www.cdcu.coop to learn more about the Juntos Avanzamos initiative.

If your city is interested in contacting the Federation, please email Pablo DeFilippi, Senior Vice President of Membership and Business Development, at pablo@cdcunions.org.

Strategy 4: Create an Office of New Americans or Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs

Creating an Office of New Americans or Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs is often a natural step cities and counties take to establish and develop their citizenship initiatives, demonstrating deep commitment to and investment in the immigrant community. Establishing an office creates new opportunities for immigrant families to build relationships with local government, receive naturalization services, connect with other city departments and access more resources.

Throughout the Cities for Citizenship network, many cities and counties have established offices of immigrant affairs under a variety of names to encompass the mission of their work.

Below is a list of C4C cities that have created an office specifically designated for work with immigrants and refugees:

- Atlanta, Georgia - [Office of Immigrant Affairs](#)
- Baltimore, Maryland - [Office of Immigrant and Multicultural Affairs](#)
- Boston, Massachusetts - [Office of New Bostonians](#)
- Chattanooga, Tennessee - [Office of Multicultural Affairs](#)
- Chicago, Illinois - [Office of New Americans](#)
- Denver, Colorado - [Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs](#)
- Jersey City, New Jersey - [Office of Welcoming Communities](#)
- Los Angeles, California - [Office of Immigrant Affairs](#)
- Miami-Dade County - [Office of New Americans](#)
- Nashville, Tennessee - [Office of New Americans](#)
- New York City, New York - [Office of Immigrant Affairs](#)
- Philadelphia, Pennsylvania - [Office of Immigrant Affairs](#)
- Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania - [Welcoming Pittsburgh](#)
- San Francisco, California - [Office of Civic Engagement and Immigrant Affairs](#)
- San Jose, California - [Office of Immigrant Affairs](#)
- Seattle, Washington - [Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs](#)
- Washington, D.C. - [Office on Latino Affairs](#)

C4C Partner Highlight: Miami-Dade County

When Miami-Dade County joined C4C in November 2015, Mayor Carlos A. Gimenez, Board of County Commissioners Chairman Jean Monestime and Commissioner Daniella Levine Cava announced the creation of the Office of New Americans of Miami-Dade County (ONA-MDC). Citi Community Development provided support for this effort.

The ONA-MDC works with partners such as the Florida Immigrant Coalition (FLIC), Miami-Dade Public Library System, Catholic Legal Services, Florida International University School of Law and Catalyst Miami, among others. ONA-MDC assists LPRs in completing the N-400 citizenship applications through clinics and one-on-one sessions, screening for eligibility for the application fee waiver, and gaining access to financial coaching. See the announcement [here](#).

C4C Partner Highlight: Seattle's Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs (OIRA)

The Seattle Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs (OIRA) was officially created in 2012. The department's origins can be traced back to 2005 when advocates met with Seattle City Council members to lobby for the creation of a city-level office focused on immigrant and refugee issues. Both community members and council members recognized the unprecedented growth in Seattle's foreign-born population since the 1980s and the need to ensure that city government can easily adapt to meet the need of all residents. Between 2000 and 2014, Seattle's immigrant population grew 20% with over 113,000 foreign-born residents in 2014 (or 18% of Seattle's population).

In September 2005, the city passed a resolution to develop an "action plan to identify and address issues facing Seattle's immigrant and refugee communities." The final plan created an immigrant and refugee task force, and the task force concluded that the City of Seattle should establish an Immigrant and Refugee Advisory Board. In 2012 this body officially became the permanent Immigrant and Refugee Commission. Consistent community advocacy, as well as legislative champions in city council were both crucial in establishing this permanent advisory group. The council and then-Mayor Mike McGinn set aside funding to create the Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs. When Mayor Ed Murray took office in 2014, he raised the office to a cabinet-level department.

Initially, the office only had two staff members, a director and a policy analyst. Thanks to the leadership of Mayor Murray, OIRA grew from a staff of two to ten and its budget grew from \$385,000 to nearly \$3 million.

With a mission to improve the lives of Seattle's immigrant and refugee residents, OIRA works to facilitate their successful integration, engage them in decisions about Seattle's future, and to foster a region-wide culture built on the understanding that all aspects of society can gain from the engagement of immigrant communities.

"This budget continues and strengthens Seattle's commitment to do our part and help our immigrant communities - not just to survive, but to thrive. In Seattle, we realize that by opening our doors, not building walls, we are a stronger city." - Mayor Ed Murray on why he expanded OIRA's budget in 2015



Photo credit: Alabastro Photography

On June 15, the Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs New Citizen Program welcomed 19 new Americans at a Flag Day Naturalization Ceremony at Seattle City Hall. Additional highlights included fifth graders reading their winning essays on the topic "Why I'm Glad America is a Nation of Immigrants." The students participated in the annual Celebrate America Creative Writing Contest.

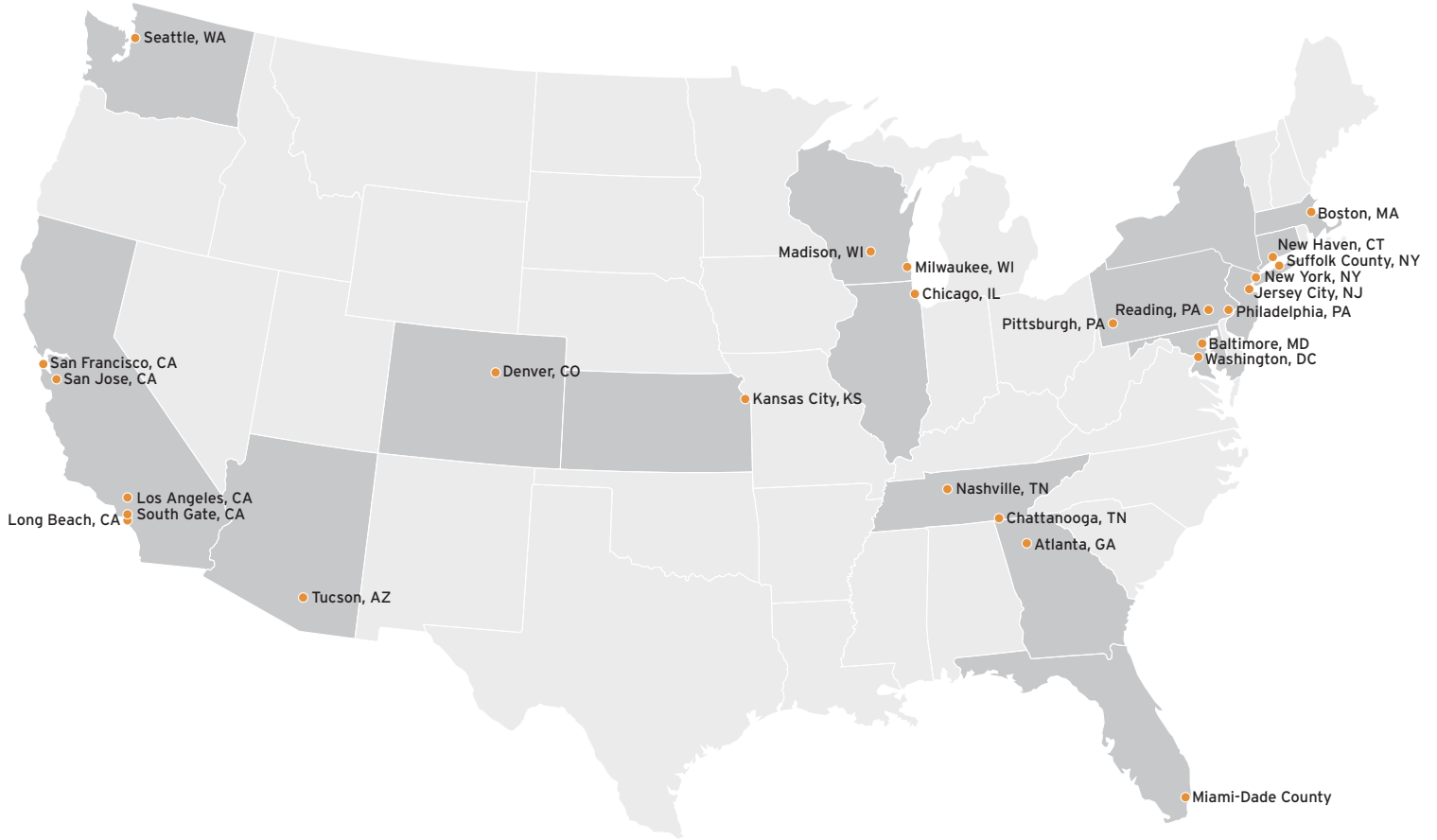


Photo credit: Alabastro Photography

Left to right: OIRA Director Cuc Vu, Seattle Mayor Ed Murray, Special Assistant to the President for Immigration Policy Felicia Escobar, and White House Deputy Policy Director for Immigration Manar Waheed.

The Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs was honored to host the White House Regional Convening on New Americans. Mayor Ed Murray called for increased and sustained participation from all sectors of society, including business, philanthropy, and financial institutions, to support Seattle's immigrant integration goals. In addition, attendees were able to talk with community leaders and government officials on why and how to advance Seattle as a welcoming city for immigrants and refugees.

Below is a map of C4C participating cities. Click on the city below to view the Mayor's office webpage.



Atlanta, GA
 Baltimore, MD
 Boston, MA
 Chattanooga, TN
 Chicago, IL
 Denver, CO
 Jersey City, NJ
 Kansas City, KS
 Long Beach, CA

Los Angeles, CA
 Madison, WI
 Miami-Dade County
 Milwaukee, WI
 Nashville, TN
 New Haven, CT
 New York, NY
 Philadelphia, PA
 Pittsburgh, PA

Reading, PA
 San Francisco, CA
 San Jose, CA
 Seattle, WA
 South Gate, CA
 Suffolk County, NY
 Tucson, AZ
 Washington, DC

Strategy 5: Collaborate with Your Local Libraries to Establish “Citizenship Corners”

Libraries are reliable and trusted sources of information and safe public space for many immigrants. Many libraries offer adult education and ESL programming, and have partnerships with other service providers for immigration services.

Cities and counties can connect with their local library branches to develop partnerships and establish “Citizenship Corners,” dedicated spaces within libraries that provide educational materials to help LPRs prepare for the citizenship process. Citizenship Corners can create opportunities for local libraries to host city-sponsored workshops and clinics, share informational material, and host naturalization ceremonies.

USCIS has a complete resource guide for setting up Citizenship Corners, available at <http://www.uscis.gov/citizenship/organizations/libraries/citizenship-corners>.

C4C Partner Highlight: City of Los Angeles, Citizenship Library Corners in Action

Over the last two years, the City of Los Angeles, in partnership with the L.A. Public Library and USCIS, has launched 73 Citizenship Corners across the LA Public Library system. The Corners are critical to LA’s C4C outreach strategy. The Central Library has hosted several naturalization ceremonies, including a children’s naturalization ceremony on September 17, 2015 hosted by USCIS and Mayor Eric Garcetti.

The Los Angeles Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Affairs recommends the following steps to establish and build out Citizenship Corners:

Step 1: Develop a partnership with your local USCIS office and receive the official USCIS citizenship resources (such as the Civics and Citizenship Toolkit available [here](#)).

Step 2: Create a dedicated space in each library branch where immigrants can find resources and information about becoming a U.S. citizen. Designate the space as a “Citizenship Corner.”

Step 3: Develop a list of local non-profit organizations that provide free naturalization assistance. Include this list as a resource in the Citizenship Corner.

Step 4: Disseminate the same materials at each Citizenship Corner for consistency in resources, information, and messaging around the importance of citizenship. This would include USCIS materials, reliable and vetted community resources, and Form N-400, Application for Naturalization.

Step 5: Train library personnel on the naturalization process and available USCIS resources at the Citizenship Corner.

Step 6: Provide access to the library community rooms for non-profit organizations so they can host Citizenship and English language workshops on-site.



LA Mayor Eric Garcetti Children's Naturalization Ceremony, September 17, 2015

Strategy 6: Train Key City Staff, Commissioners, Department Chairs, and Volunteers on the Benefits of Naturalization for Your City

City- and county-backed naturalization programs are successful when there is sufficient buy-in from key stakeholders, including staff who oversee or implement naturalization programs. Cities and counties can affirmatively seek ways to educate key stakeholders on the benefits of naturalization.

To this end, cities and counties are in an opportune position to organize informational sessions on the benefits of naturalization, including the economic, social and civic impacts of naturalization for key city staff, commissioners, department chairs and volunteers.

Cities and counties can also encourage staff to attend naturalization workshops and oath ceremonies to understand the process, volunteer and observe new citizens taking their oath of allegiance.

C4C Partner Highlight: San Jose, California - Training Park and Library Staff

In the fall of 2016, the City of San Jose is planning to train park and library staff on the basics of citizenship so they can better inform, educate, and encourage people with which they frequently interact to apply for citizenship. In addition, the City of San Jose is in the process of expanding its libraries' Citizenship Corners to five community centers, which will provide a prime opportunity to conduct extensive training and outreach.

Strategy 7: Host Oath Ceremonies and Other Naturalization-Related Events in the Mayor's Office

Cities can proactively signal their commitment to promoting naturalization by hosting oath ceremonies and other citizenship-related activities at City Hall or other symbolic city spaces. These highly public and visible events help to promote naturalization awareness and help underscore the significance of gaining citizenship.

Many C4C mayors host naturalization ceremonies in their offices and deliver keynote addresses to new citizens. USCIS field representatives and local partners provide trainings on hosting and coordinating naturalization ceremonies. Find your local field office [here](#).

C4C Partner Highlight: Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania - Oath Ceremony at Pirates Game & Open Streets Event

The City of Pittsburgh co-presented a naturalization ceremony on Tuesday, June 7, 2016 at PNC Park before the Pirates game against the New York Mets in partnership with U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services and the Pittsburgh Pirates. Twenty new Americans from fourteen different countries took their oath of citizenship on the field at PNC Park. This was the first-ever naturalization ceremony at PNC park. Read the press release of the event [here](#).

In 2015, the City of Pittsburgh also held a "pop-up" oath ceremony during its popular Open Streets event, during which the City closed major streets as part of an effort to promote biking, jogging and running.

Strategy 8: Promote Public Awareness of Citizenship through Media

Many residents need help accessing reliable information on citizenship providers, the application process, and the benefits of citizenship. Cities and counties can play a pivotal role in providing this information through Mayoral addresses, local media, public education campaigns, and organized outreach across municipal departments.

Cities and counties can include information about naturalization in their resident engagement plans and facilitate coordination between municipal agencies that frequently interact with immigrants to help disperse information on naturalization. Featuring success stories of residents who recently naturalized on your city, county, or department's website and through local ethnic media are key to building a successful public engagement strategy.

C4C Partner Highlight: Atlanta, Georgia - Material, Media Campaign and Street Cars

The City of Atlanta's Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs has developed comprehensive outreach materials highlighting the benefits of naturalization. Several of these items are distributed in its "Citizenship Resource Corners" and at city sponsored naturalization events. There are 22 "Citizenship Resource Corners" located throughout the metro Atlanta area including in Fulton County Libraries, City of Atlanta Recreation centers, and immigrant-owned supermarkets. Welcoming Atlanta has participated in seven community events on citizenship and hosted a citizenship ceremony last July. Additionally USCIS hosts information sessions at the public libraries on citizenship.

Additionally, in April 2016, the office launched a media and public education campaign across the city. The public education campaign focused on putting USCIS Citizenship Posters on all of Atlanta's Street Cars. The posters were posted at each of the 8 Atlanta Street Car stops and in one of each of the two trams. Posters were also part of the "Taste of Welcoming along the Atlanta Street Car" promotional event that promoted immigrant-owned business along the Atlanta Street Car route.

Promotion of citizenship and available related resources is done every single time a Welcoming Atlanta representative speaks to the media. This past year Welcoming Atlanta and citizenship resources have been highlighted in five separate media interviews and in a Citizenship Public Service Announcement that runs on a local channel once a month.



City of Atlanta's "Citizenship Resource Corner"

Strategy 9: Expand Programming Capacity through New Partnerships

Successful citizenship programs require adequate funding and resources. Nonetheless, even cities and counties with limited budgets can adopt creative solutions to address staffing and resource needs to support their naturalization efforts.

Several C4C cities and counties began their initiatives with very little funding under the charter of their city's Office of Immigrant Affairs or Office of New Americans. They developed a strategy for fundraising to support their efforts in collaboration with key partners like community-based organizations and local financial institutions.

In addition, several C4C cities and counties deepened their relationships with organizations that offered citizenship workshops, supporting their efforts by providing in-kind donations of venues, volunteers, and outreach assistance for naturalization-related events.

C4C Partner Highlight: Boston, Massachusetts - Staffing Innovation with AmeriCorps VISTAs

In June 2015, the City of Boston received an AmeriCorps VISTA grant to help staff the Mayor's Office for Immigrant Advancement (then the Office of New Bostonians). As a result of additional staff capacity, Boston was able to develop and execute a plan for establishing Immigrant Information Corners throughout the Boston Public Libraries in just a few months. The Immigrant Information Corners promote citizenship in Boston by providing materials on the naturalization process, warning residents about scams, and highlighting the benefits and responsibilities of U.S. citizenship at all library branches. The Corners also provide financial empowerment resources and information about City services, with some locations featuring information sessions, office hours, and workshops. The initiative involves a collaboration between the City of Boston, USCIS, Boston Cares, Corporation for National and Community Service, Citi Community Development, and community organizations.

"Immigrants interact with the city's library branches more than any other city agency, which offers us a great opportunity to engage our residents in their neighborhoods," said Mayor Martin J. Walsh. "The impact that immigrants have on our city will continue to grow in the years ahead and it is important that we plan for this growth and make sure it reaches everyone."

In addition, the Mayor's Office for Immigrant Advancement collaborates with partners, such as Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition (MIRA) and Project Citizenship, to hold citizenship-related workshops, including a large application assistance clinic on Citizenship Day every September.



April 14th, 2016 - Boston Mayor Walsh launches Immigrant Information Corners at the Boston Public Library's Central Library in Copley Square and 24 neighborhood branches to provide information about resources and services available to help advance the well-being of the city's immigrant residents. Read more [here](#).

Strategy 10: Measure Impact to Ensure Success and Expand Initiatives

Measuring the reach and impact of cities' and counties' naturalization efforts is critical to ensuring success. Impact data can provide useful information on the effectiveness of the program, identify new or unidentified barriers that might prevent LPRs from naturalizing, and cues to help cities and counties adapt to changing needs or shifting populations.

Given the importance of measuring impact to cities and counties with naturalization programs, the C4C network has created a C4C participating city survey track the following metrics:

- **Citizenship and Events Programming**

- Workshops hosted, oath ceremonies held, civic engagement classes hosted, ESL classes hosted, materials distributed, legal service referrals, and applications completed.

- **Financial Empowerment Related Events Programming**

- Financial empowerment classes held, financial counseling sessions completed, fee waiver applications assisted, new bank accounts opened as a results to naturalization + financial empowerment programming, increased savings by participants, reduced debt, and referrals to financial institutions.

- **Partnerships and Capacity Building**

- Staff members and volunteered recruited to participate, partnerships with USCIS and local libraries, partnerships with schools/universities, CBO partnerships, and local media engagement.

In addition to the metrics above, cities and counties can gather qualitative data, such as testimonials from LPRs who have benefited from participating cities' naturalization related efforts. These testimonials can powerfully illustrate the impact of cities' and counties' naturalization programs and the benefits of citizenship. They can be a useful outreach tool in helping cities and counties convey the importance of citizenship to immigrants.

Cities and counties can also regularly conduct surveys to target LPR populations to evaluate their program's effectiveness in addressing common naturalization barriers and meeting the needs of the community. Lastly, the qualitative and quantitative data gathered by cities and counties can be used to create studies and reports evaluating the benefits and impacts of naturalization locally, which can be used to make the case for more funding or resources to support naturalization efforts.

C4C Partner Highlight: Seattle's Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs Expanding Initiatives

Seattle's Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs strengthens Seattle's immigrant and refugee communities by focusing on what they call the "three rails of immigrant integration": citizenship and civic engagement, language access, and English as a Second Language. The focus is based on current research: improvements in these areas leads to gains in employment, income and other tangible measures for foreign-born individuals and families. Key programs include:

- **New Citizen Campaign:** Helps eligible residents naturalize and become civically engaged.
- **Seattle Votes Survey:** Engage thousands of immigrant and refugee residents to identify barriers to citizenship and civic participation.
- **Ready to Work:** Provides ESL, computer literacy and job readiness training for those who experience immense barriers in learning English and obtaining employment.
- **Immigrant Family Institute:** Provides leadership skills to help immigrant youth of color (ages 10-14) and their parents/guardians to self-advocate and navigate legal, educational and city systems; and provides the Seattle Police Department with skills to serve immigrant youth and families with cultural responsiveness.
- **Language Access:** Ensures city departments serve all city residents regardless of the language they speak.
- **Ethnic Media Program:** Partners with over 80 media outlets to effectively reach immigrant and refugee communities.
- **Immigration Action:** Support and advocate for programs and policies that support refugees and immigrants, including DACA-eligible residents.
- **Better Government:** Provide expertise to city departments to develop coordinated and strategic policies and programs to overcome barriers to immigrant integration.

For questions or more information, contact Nhi Tran at Nhi.Tran@seattle.gov.



Immigrant and refugee members of the spring 2016 graduating class of Ready to Work present their class projects and celebrate the completion of their program. This is the second class ever to graduate from this innovative program, which combines an English language curriculum and job training classes with culturally relevant case management.

Conclusion

Cities and counties play a pivotal role in reducing barriers to naturalization and supporting immigrants on the pathway to citizenship. They are uniquely situated to amplify and further legitimize the naturalization efforts in communities.

Municipal and county offices bring access to resources, such as funding, staffing, and communications support, that allow cities and counties to target naturalization efforts to diverse immigrant communities, and tailor messages and support to the needs of immigrant families. By implementing the strategies highlighted in this toolkit, cities and counties can learn how to start citizenship programs, expand current citizenship initiatives, and learn from C4C participating cities and counties. Doing so will not only benefit immigrants but also the cities where they live by fostering a more inclusive and representative democracy.

Join Cities for Citizenship!

Joining Cities for Citizenship (C4C) provides cities and counties with a network of relationships and resources to start up citizenship initiatives.

The C4C network facilitates this collaboration between participating cities and counties by providing the following:

- Technical and policy support to help cities and counties strengthen their naturalization programs;
- Best practices from cities and counties across the country to inform outreach efforts and program development;
- Assistance planning and coordinating naturalization-related events and activities; and
- Communications and press strategy support to help cities and counties amplify the reach and scope of their naturalization-related efforts.

Joining Cities for Citizenship is easy! To join the C4C network, contact C4C Program Coordinators, Shena Elrington of Center for Popular Democracy (CPD) and Sarah Mesick of National Partnership for New Americans (NPNA) at cities4citizenship@populardemocracy.org.

