

# Cities and Counties for Citizenship: Five Insights to Advance Naturalization with Local Government



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25 children pose with the Mayor of Tulsa G.T. Bynum during the first Child Citizenship Ceremony hosted by the City of Tulsa. Photo credit: City of Tulsa Communications team



Dear Partners,

In 2014, Cities for Citizenship launched with support from visionary leaders in three cities—Chicago, Los Angeles, and New York—with a shared mission to build a more representative, responsive democracy by launching and expanding citizenship initiatives. Eight years later, Cities and Counties for Citizenship (CC4C) has a new name that reflects the network’s diversity, growth, and impact. We share this

report, detailing the collective efforts of 103 localities promoting naturalization and citizenship for eligible immigrants living in the U.S., to inspire other cities and counties to join us.

This work is personal to me: I saw firsthand how naturalization opened new opportunities for my grandfather, who arrived in this country at age 16 and took his oath of citizenship nearly four decades later, at Denver’s City Park Center in 2001. Becoming a U.S. citizen cemented both his love for and roots in this country. He grew his business, purchased a home, traveled internationally after he retired, and—most importantly—never missed the opportunity to vote.

Today, more than nine million people like my grandfather—U.S. permanent residents eligible for citizenship—face economic, linguistic, and other barriers to naturalization. As the convener of CC4C, the National Partnership for New Americans (NPNA) is committed to making this process more accessible. Serving as an NPNA legal services practitioner and now as its executive director, it is my honor to champion naturalization and citizenship in communities across the country.

Naturalization and civic engagement is key to building a multicultural, multiracial, multiethnic democracy that works for, protects, and promotes opportunity for all. As CC4C enters a new chapter of growth and transformation, we remain committed to ensuring that all who aspire to become citizens will encounter robust partnerships and the resources to help them naturalize.

In gratitude,

Executive Director, National Partnership for New Americans (NPNA)

# INTRODUCTION: A NETWORK APPROACH TO ADVANCING NATURALIZATION

Across the United States, more than 9 million green card holders are eligible to become U.S. citizens, but have yet to do so.<sup>1</sup> Factors including cost, language barriers, and bureaucratic issues have kept too many eligible individuals from completing the process. Yet promoting naturalization for eligible immigrants holds an enormous untapped opportunity, as research shows citizenship is linked to higher incomes and higher rates of employment, homeownership, and financial inclusion.<sup>2</sup> If every working-age person eligible to naturalize became a U.S. citizen, analysts estimate a \$9 billion increase in wages, along with additional spending power and local tax revenues.<sup>3</sup>

Box 1

## Requirements to Become a U.S. Citizen Through Naturalization

*Naturalization in the process to become a U.S. citizen for individuals born outside of the U.S. To qualify to naturalize, individuals must meet the following requirements:*

- Be at least 18 years of age at the time you file the application;
- Have been a lawful permanent resident for five years (or three years if you are married to a U.S. Citizen);
- Have continuous residence and physical presence in the United States;
- Be able to read, write, and speak basic English;
- Demonstrate good moral character;
- Demonstrate a knowledge and understanding of U.S. history and government;
- Demonstrate a loyalty to the principles of the U.S. Constitution; and
- Be willing to take the Oath of Allegiance

Source: U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), "Become a U.S. Citizen Through Naturalization," <https://www.uscis.gov/forms/explore-my-options/become-a-us-citizen-through-naturalization>



*100 Tulsa residents became U.S. citizens at the City of Tulsa's largest ceremony in March 2022. Photo credit: City of Tulsa Communications team*

Naturalization is also a key to building a representative democracy and expanded civic engagement. Naturalized citizens who are eligible to vote now make up roughly one in ten potential voters, largely outpacing the growth of the U.S.-born potential voters, and represent an electorate that is multi racial, multi generational, and composed of a slight majority of women.<sup>4</sup>

In recent years, cities and counties across the U.S. have championed innovative ways to boost access to naturalization – and, a growing national network, Cities and Counties for Citizenship (CC4C) is scaling what works.

In 2014, the mayors of Chicago, Los Angeles and New York City launched the bipartisan national initiative – then called Cities for Citizenship (C4C) – to support eligible immigrants in becoming U.S. citizens, with support from the National Partnership for New Americans (NPNA), Center for Popular Democracy, and Citi Community Development. In 2015, 18 additional municipalities became part of the network, and the network has grown every year since. In 2022, after growing to include 103 cities and counties, the initiative changed its name to Cities and Counties for Citizenship (CC4C).

Now fully coordinated by NPNA, CC4C is not only transforming the lives of new Americans, but also encouraging them to become civically engaged and creating a more representative democracy. The network has inspired cities and counties to create citizenship and immigrant integration programs, champion immigrant leaders, and celebrate naturalized U.S. citizens as assets to their communities.

Box 2

## How Naturalization Benefits Eligible Immigrants

Naturalized U.S. citizens enjoy many benefits not offered to legal permanent residents (green card holders), including:

- The right to vote in all federal elections
- Eligibility to run for public office
- No need to renew green card or other immigration forms
- Ability to apply for government jobs, grants, scholarships, and other benefits
- Protection from deportation
- Ability to petition family members into the U.S.
- Automatic U.S. citizenship for eligible children
- Ability to travel with a U.S. passport

Source: Boundless, "Is U.S. Citizenship Right for You?," <https://www.boundless.com/immigration-resources/benefits-of-us-citizenship/#what-are-the-benefits-of-us-citizenship>



*Tulsa residents take their Oath of Allegiance at Tulsa City Hall. Photo credit: City of Tulsa Communications team*

This report highlights the pioneering work of CC4C partners across the country, drawing from a *Survey to Advance Local Citizenship Initiatives for Eligible Immigrants* conducted in collaboration with the University of Texas at Austin and completed by CC4C partners in early 2022, as well as in-depth interviews with city and county leaders from across the network. This report demonstrates how an effort that began as a handful of cities promoting citizenship has now become a national movement. It shares the wide range of citizenship-related services and activities being sponsored by local governments and offers insights and examples for other cities and counties to adopt in establish their own citizenship and naturalization programs, including:

- **Insight 1: Tailored Approaches to Serve Diverse Communities.** There is no one-size-fits-all approach to effective naturalization programming.
- **Insight 2: Focus on Barrier Reduction.** Access and affordability drive effective naturalization programming.
- **Insight 3: Limited Budgets, Endless Potential.** Even modest investments in naturalization programs produce significant returns.
- **Insight 4: Pandemic Pivots Drive Innovation.** COVID-era virtual programming and public health models produce promising results.
- **Insight 5: Networked Efforts Advance Programs & Policy Change.** The CC4C network is scaling local promising practices at a national level.

Entering its eighth year, CC4C continues to demonstrate its impact, value, and innovative approaches to naturalization initiatives and investment, reaching over 1 million lawful permanent residents each year. CC4C members have also become drivers of immigrant inclusion efforts tied to economic recovery, workforce development, language access, legal defense and refugee resettlement. Looking ahead, CC4C has incredible potential to not only continue advancing naturalization initiatives, but also expand immigrant inclusion policies and programs that build a multicultural, multiracial, multiethnic democracy that works for, protects, and promotes opportunity for all.

## CC4C Insight Leaders

This report features insights and expertise from the following city and county leaders from the CC4C network:

- **Leticia Calvillo**, Resilience Project Associate, Office of the Mayor, Tulsa, OK
- **Krystina François**, Director, Office of New Americans, Miami-Dade County, FL
- **Lorey Gonzalez-Flores**, Community Outreach Coordinator, Community Services Department Office of New Americans, El Paso County, TX
- **Christina Guros Peña**, Citizenship Program and Policy Specialist, Seattle Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs, Seattle, WA
- **Julien Labiche**, Manager, Gilchrist Immigrant Resource Center, Montgomery County, MD
- **Edmundo Lijo**, Assistant City Attorney, Saint Paul City Attorney's Office and Welcome Saint Paul Immigrant & Refugee Program, Saint Paul, MN
- **Michael McLean**, Division Director, Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Immigrant Affairs, Jersey City, NJ
- **Krystal Reyes**, Chief Resilience Officer, Office of the Mayor, Tulsa, OK
- **Michelle Rivero**, Director, Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs, Minneapolis, MN
- **Juan Salcedo**, Immigration Integration Coordinator, Office of New Americans, Miami-Dade Community Action and Human Services Department, Miami-Dade County, FL
- **Joaquin Uy**, External Affairs Manager and Policy Advisor, Seattle Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs, Seattle, WA
- **Diane Vy Nguyễn Vũ**, Director, Office of Community Partnerships, Montgomery County, MD

# INSIGHT 1: TAILORED APPROACHES TO SERVE DIVERSE COMMUNITIES

Across 103 CC4C communities, immigrant populations vary significantly in size, country of origin, and length of residency in the U.S. with some communities having welcomed significant numbers of newcomers in recent years. CC4C communities' diverse approaches to developing naturalization programs demonstrates that the most effective initiatives are those most closely tailored to the needs of local communities.



"We are a welcoming community, key to our identity, where more than half of our residents are immigrants. It is precisely our diverse population that has made us the innovative, resilient, entrepreneurial community we are today. I deeply believe that we all benefit when every single resident has the opportunity to participate and contribute.

– **Daniella Levine Cava**,  
Mayor of Miami-Dade County

Many CC4C partners have established naturalization programs that reflect the existing structure of their local government. When asked who was most influential in starting citizenship-related programming, the majority of survey respondents said the mayor or county executive, and, in a close second place, community-based organizations. Several citizenship and immigrant integration offices are established within mayor's and county executive offices – as in Boston, New York City, Los Angeles, Erie, Tulsa, and Salt Lake County – but other CC4C partners have taken many different approaches. The CC4C network survey

revealed that citizenship-related activities are spread across multiple departments, but most have one office or agency that is responsible for all or most activities. For example:

- In **Austin**, the Immigrant Affairs Program is part of the Equity Office, which collaborates with other city departments, local institutions, non-profits, and other community organizations in fostering capacity-building and leadership development from a racial equity lens. Programming includes multiple training offerings and one-on-one equity consultations. The office trains more than 500 people annually, and consults on more than 600 different programs, services, policies raised by city staff and community concerns.
- In **Jersey City**, the Division of Immigrant Affairs was created under its Department of Health and Human Services in 2018, replacing the Office of Welcoming Communities in the mayor's constituent services office.<sup>5</sup> Jersey City's multilingual staff help clients complete immigration forms and provide referrals to non-profit experts and resources. All services are free to Jersey City residents, regardless of immigration status.
- In **Miami-Dade County**, where 53% of the population is foreign-born, local leaders created an Office of New Americans through a 2015 resolution of the Board of County Commissioners.<sup>6</sup> In 2021, the Miami-Dade Office of New Americans became fully housed within the county with a budget allocation of \$750,000.

- In **Minneapolis**, the Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs is part of the Neighborhood and Community Relations Department. Next door, in Saint Paul, the Immigrant and Refugee Program is part of the City Attorney's Office.<sup>7</sup> The cities of Minneapolis and Saint Paul are dedicated to fostering communities that are welcoming to all regardless of race, ethnicity, or place of origin. Both offices have initiated programming that promotes community health and stability, public safety, economic vitality and growth.
- In **Tulsa**, the New Tulsans Initiative is run by the Mayor's Office of Resilience and Equity.<sup>8</sup> The initiative is the result of a community-driven process that involved gathering information and data, as well as engaging both newcomers and longer-term residents. A comprehensive Welcoming Plan outlines pathways for Tulsa to welcome immigrants and become more inclusive for all residents.



"Welcoming new Americans to Tulsa through our naturalization ceremonies is one of the most rewarding things I get to do as mayor. In Tulsa, we want to be one of the most welcoming cities in the United States because we know how hard our immigrant community has worked to become citizens."

– **G.T. Bynum**, Mayor of Tulsa

Working as stand-alone programs or housed within larger mayor's or county offices, CC4C partners are sponsoring a wide range of naturalization offerings, activities and services. In the partner survey, respondents were provided a list of 22 policies and programs – best practices compiled by the CC4C network in 2017<sup>9</sup> – and asked to indicate which initiatives they had implemented locally. As shown in Box 4, some of the most common and effective actions have involved creating a dedicated office to serve immigrants, recruiting volunteers to work on citizenship-related programming, providing information on naturalization, and passing supportive resolutions.

Despite variations in structure and programming, CC4C communities rally around a common vision for naturalization: The vast majority of CC4C annual survey respondents said their main reason for launching citizenship initiatives was that they wanted to promote the political, social and economic integration of immigrants. And, as Lorey Gonzalez-Flores, who runs El Paso County's Office of New Americans, noted, even in places that are politically divided, "citizenship is one of the topics that we can all come together around."

## Box 4

### Common CC4C Naturalization Policies & Programs

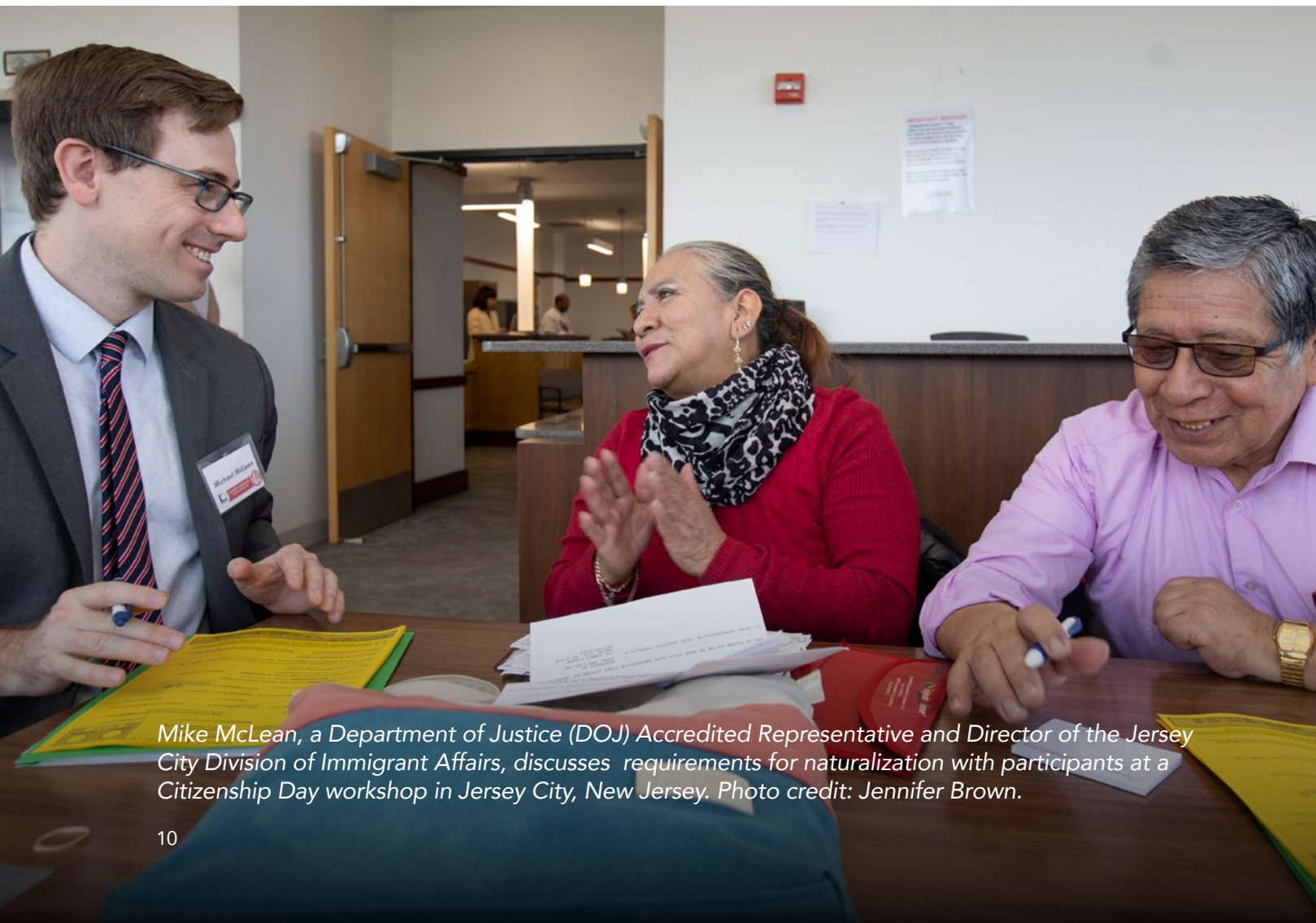
- Establish an local office or agency to support immigrant and refugee inclusion in local communities
- Pass a city or county resolution promoting citizenship and naturalization
- Host oath ceremonies, either virtually or in-person, to celebrate new U.S. citizens
- Fund naturalization programming and initiatives with local community-based organizations
- Host naturalization workshops to guide eligible immigrants through the process
- Promote naturalization via communications campaigns, community information sessions, "Citizenship Corners" and more.
- Recruit community volunteers to staff local naturalization workshops and clinics

## INSIGHT 2: FOCUS ON BARRIER REDUCTION

U.S. citizenship applications are expensive: At \$725 (\$640 plus \$85 for biometrics), the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) naturalization fee is one of the highest in the world.<sup>10</sup> For an individual earning \$15 per hour, the fee is equal to six days' gross pay. There can also be additional costs associated with naturalization, including transportation to citizenship classes, fees for application clinics or legal services providers, transfer costs to request documents from abroad, and, if needed, expenses to hire a lawyer.

Asked for the top reason why eligible immigrants in their communities haven't naturalized, CC4C survey respondents were most likely to cite the cost, followed by the language requirements. CC4C partners are finding innovative ways to address these challenges, including:

- In **Seattle**, Seattle Credit Union and the Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs, through their New Citizen Campaign, worked together to develop citizenship loans to support families in covering the costs of citizenship application fees. Similar strategies have been adopted by other CC4C members and immigrant advocacy organizations.<sup>11</sup>



Mike McLean, a Department of Justice (DOJ) Accredited Representative and Director of the Jersey City Division of Immigrant Affairs, discusses requirements for naturalization with participants at a Citizenship Day workshop in Jersey City, New Jersey. Photo credit: Jennifer Brown.



"Our city has been enriched and strengthened by the generations of immigrants who've made Chicago home. We know that when immigrants naturalize, their earning power increases and they become more civically engaged. That's why the City of Chicago is removing barriers to naturalization and advocating for greater inclusion of immigrants in our country. We are excited to welcome the strategic expansion of the network to include more counties, and additional city partners"

– **Lori E. Lightfoot**, Mayor of Chicago and CC4C Executive Committee member

- **Saint Paul** partnered with Affinity Plus Federal Credit Union to create the New American Loan Program, which helps immigrants access financial services, resources, and educational support for the naturalization process. Affinity Plus Credit Union offers a no-interest loan of up to \$2,000 to be paid off in one year to help cover the cost of applying for naturalization.<sup>12</sup>
- Maryland's **Montgomery County** supports a local community-based organization, CASA, to provide scholarships to low-income applicants.<sup>13</sup> If eligible, applicants can receive a \$150 or \$300 scholarship to cover partial costs of the naturalization application fee.
- **El Paso County** approved a fund for naturalization scholarships of \$29,000 that will allow local legal service providers to support up to 40 individuals with their naturalization applications.
- **San Francisco** teams up with the Mission Asset Fund to help individuals looking for fee assistance to access zero-interest loans for USCIS application fees, including naturalization.
- In Florida, **Miami-Dade County** launched a donation-based New American Fund.<sup>14</sup> As of April 2022, it had raised \$30,000 and given out 43 scholarships. Beneficiaries commit to completing the process through the county, which not only covers the full cost, but provides an information session, free application assistance, and preparation for the citizenship interview. The New American Fund promotes community involvement with options to "sponsor a New American" for \$1,000 or become a "Friend of New Americans" with a monthly \$100 donation.

CC4C partners recognize that efforts to make naturalization more accessible for those eligible benefit not only immigrants and their families, but also the communities where they live. New U.S. citizens have stronger ties to their communities and are able to make greater civic and economic contributions.

## INSIGHT 3: LIMITED BUDGETS, ENDLESS POTENTIAL

When the CC4C survey asked partners to describe the challenges they face in growing their citizenship work, the most common responses were lack of funding and lack of staff. (Box 5). In Saint Paul, Edmundo Lijo heads a one-person Immigrant and Refugee Program – and has for three years. In Miami-Dade County, Krystina Francois was in the same situation until last fall, when she hired an immigrant integration coordinator. In El Paso County, Lorey Gonzalez-Flores has had only interns to support her work since the local Office of New Americans was established in mid-2020, but this spring she was finally able to add one more staff member.

Box 5

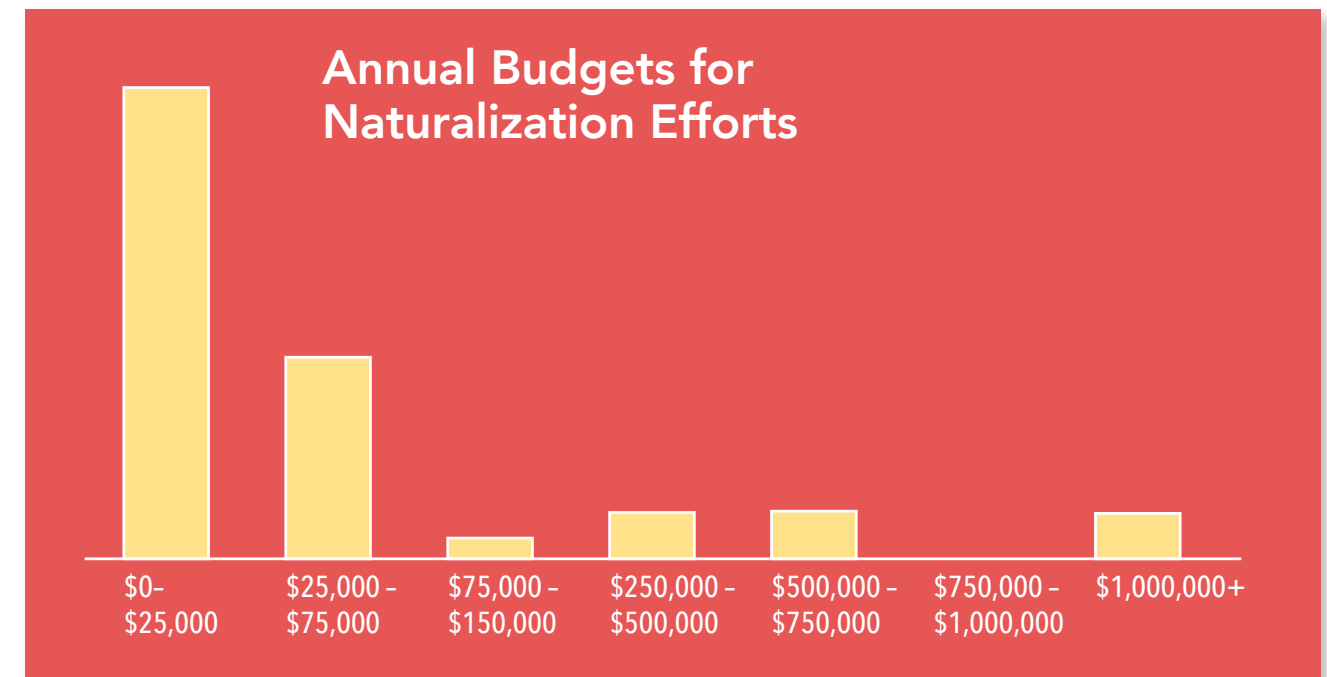


Source: Survey to Advance Local Citizenship Initiatives for Eligible Immigrants, administered by NPNA and the University of Texas at Austin to CC4C partners, 2022.

Even large teams may not have significant resources for naturalization. The Boston Mayor’s Office for Immigrant Advancement, for instance, has a staff of 12, but it supports citizenship mainly through community partners, advocacy, information, and referrals, so managing citizenship services is only a fraction of a single staffer’s job.<sup>15</sup> Similarly, in Miami-Dade County, which has large Haitian and Venezuelan communities who hold Temporary Protected Status (TPS) and therefore are not eligible to naturalize, François’ main focus recently has been supporting TPS applications and renewals.

CC4C partners’ budgets for citizenship programming also tend to be modest, with most reporting that they spend less than \$25,000 in promoting naturalization annually, though a few communities are making much larger investments (Box 6).

Box 6



Source: Survey to Advance Local Citizenship Initiatives for Eligible Immigrants, administered by NPNA and the University of Texas at Austin to CC4C partners, 2022.

Notably, a majority of survey respondents said they rely – partially or exclusively – on city or county budgets to fund their citizenship work. Some get additional support from the mayor’s or county executive’s budget, and several have obtained private grants. Only a handful of respondents receive state funding, and a few said they do not have budgets for citizenship. Only two cities who responded to the CC4C survey reported receiving federal funding for citizenship programming. Many were unaware of the availability of USCIS to support citizenship and immigrant integration work; those who were aware had never applied, thinking they were ineligible or not wanting to ‘compete’ with nonprofit partners for limited funds. Despite budget challenges, CC4C partners are finding innovative solutions to maximize programmatic impact, including:

- Twin cities **Minneapolis** and **Saint Paul** have large immigrant and refugee populations: Data from the Gateways for Growth initiative suggests that 19,600 individuals – 16% of immigrants in both cities – are eligible to naturalize. However, each city has one full time-staff person focused on citizenship. To maximize capacity, the cities have partnered on many of their citizenship and naturalization efforts, including workshops, outreach, and education. The two offices collaborate extensively with local community-based organizations, legal services providers, and other partners who share their commitment to supporting immigrants and refugees – in Minneapolis, St. Paul, and other neighboring communities. “We see it kind of as a regional approach,” said Lijo, of the Saint Paul office. “Seeing the CC4C model made us think, ‘hey, maybe we could do something like this in Minnesota.’”

Innovative partnerships, resource sharing, and collaborations help civic leaders maximize limited budgets to promote naturalization. “It takes a lot to help somebody achieve citizenship,” said Michael McLean of the Division of Immigrant Affairs in Jersey City. Yet the result is “transformative,” according to François of Miami-Dade County. “It’s not just because of the security it gives to immigrants, but also to affirmatively take ownership of the communities they’ve been living in for so long,” she said.



## INSIGHT 4: PANDEMIC PIVOTS DRIVE INNOVATION

The COVID-19 pandemic has prompted many CC4C communities to pivot in their delivery of naturalization and citizenship programming, accommodating social distancing measures by organizing virtual workshops and outdoor oath ceremonies, and incorporating public health services and information during events. These program innovations, meant to be temporary when they launched, have proven to be beneficial for local communities. Many CC4C programs are now adopting COVID-era delivery models as permanent program enhancements, including:

- In response to COVID-19, **Tulsa** adapted its citizenship ceremonies to support social distancing measures. At the city’s first drive-in ceremony, hosted in October 2020 at a local drive-in movie theater, 55 participants representing 22 countries took the Oath of Allegiance. The new U.S. citizens also had the opportunity to complete the Census and register to vote after the event.
- **Miami-Dade County** began offering virtual citizenship classes and application clinics during the pandemic, and the new programming worked even better than expected. “We got higher attendance, better participation, so they’ve kept it online,” said François. “We’ve seen this with clinics too. Folks who wouldn’t have been able to make it in person are able to be on Zoom on their phone.” After completing their applications online, clients go to in-person, socially distanced printing stations to compile the documents, get a final review, and mail them out. For applicants who need more technical support, Miami-Dade offers a hybrid model, with community-based computer labs staffed by navigators.
- In **Jersey City**, the naturalization process now connects clients to a full array of public health resources: the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) nutrition program, the Division of Senior Affairs, community health educators, and lead inspectors. “We were able to use our models of trusted messengers, accompaniment and relationship-building to mobilize for COVID testing, emergency deliveries of free food, vaccine rollout, and distribution of PPE and other materials,” said McLean.

As the COVID-19 pandemic promoted local government to amp up public health efforts and offerings, CC4C partners became trusted collaborators in mobilizing for COVID-19 testing, vaccine rollouts, distribution of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and other efforts. Partnerships developed in response to the pandemic will bolster both community health and naturalization efforts in years to come.



“Jersey City’s public health approach to integration and our federally accredited immigration legal services make an enormous difference for our citizenship seekers. Cities for Citizenship helps us hone our inclusive vision, incorporating best practices from other cities so immigrants across the nation can contribute more and benefit more.”

– **Steve Fulop**, Mayor of Jersey City

Melad Latif, a Department of Justice (DOJ) Accredited Representative at the Jersey City Division of Immigrant Affairs, explains the benefits, requirements, and steps to citizenship to participants at the Welcome Home community gathering in Jersey City, New Jersey. Photo credit: Mike McLean



## INSIGHT 5: NETWORKED EFFORTS ADVANCE PROGRAMS & POLICY CHANGE

In the CC4C survey, partners reported seeing multiple benefits from their programs and activities. As shown in Box 7, the most widely reported impact was an increase in naturalizations, but many also cited improved access to local government programs, greater connections between immigrants and long-term residents, greater public recognition of immigrant contributions, and increased investments in citizenship programs.

Box 7



Source: Survey to Advance Local Citizenship Initiatives for Eligible Immigrants, administered by NPNA and the University of Texas at Austin to CC4C partners, 2022.

CC4C partners are committed to scaling this work, both within the network and with other communities. CC4C facilitates collaboration and communication amongst partners, creating space for cities and counties of all sizes and geographies to share best practices, build relationships, and implement effective naturalization initiatives. Through CC4C monthly partner calls, webinars, one-on-one communication, annual reports, and in-person opportunities like an annual Municipal Gathering, CC4C is a deeply connected network of members that have built valuable relationships and share a commitment to promoting naturalization and immigrant inclusion.

- In **Miami-Dade County**, François said that when she took her job in 2018, “I really looked at my sister-offices to see what they were doing, what were they asking for, how were they staffed, the services provided, what were they doing besides citizenship.” When she pursued an anti-*notario* ordinance, cracking down on notary publics who fraudulently present themselves as qualified legal services providers, she sought out CC4C expertise to learn about what worked or didn’t work for other partners.



“CC4C really does feel like a cohort. “I’ve worked with others and had others reach out to me, and when we do get connected, people are really excited and willing to help and share what they’ve learned.”

– **Krystina François**, Director, Office of New Americans, Miami-Dade County, FL

- In **El Paso County**, Gonzalez-Flores said the CC4C network has given her valuable support, including best practices in program and service delivery and providing technical assistance. Her work has benefitted from hearing from other cities and counties about how other programs work at local levels.
- In **Minneapolis**, Rivero said she’s “constantly on the lookout for ways to do more,” and CC4C is a source of ideas. Rivero prizes the network’s insights about federal policy and national-level advocacy, messaging guidance, and opportunities to get involved in efforts ranging from sign-on letters to social media strategies.
- In **Saint Paul**, Lijo signaled many of his initiatives, such as efforts to help applicants afford naturalization application fees, or to create materials in multiple languages, came from being part of CC4C. “I get fired up when I see what other cities are doing, and it’s encouraging,” he said. *America is Home*, a 2018 impact report published by CC4C,<sup>16</sup> is also a prized resource, which he shares widely: “It convinces anybody that this is something cities would be doing.”

The most significant example of CC4C’s networked impact is in influencing federal policies. CC4C partners were part of a successful nationwide fight to stop naturalization fee increases in 2019, and will be engaged in advocacy this year to ensure naturalization fees are not increased when the newest fee rule is released. More broadly, CC4C members are also advocating for the Biden Administration to reduce barriers to naturalization,<sup>17</sup> including addressing naturalization backlog and processing delays at USCIS, increasing the budget for the USCIS Citizenship and Integration Grant Program to \$100 million per year, and funding other legal services initiatives and pilot programs.

Box 8

### Naturalize #2Millionby2022 Campaign

CC4C partners are engaged in the #2MillionBy2022 campaign, led by National Partnership for New Americans (NPNA). Naturalize #2MillionBy2022 is a national effort to increase naturalization and reach 2 million new citizens by the end of 2022. This effort will build momentum for the New American Voters 2022 campaign. The campaign is a collaboration of the country’s leading immigrant and refugee advocacy and service organizations, cities and counties, and national advocacy organizations and unions, all committed to hosting events and mobilizing resources to encourage at least two million eligible immigrants to become U.S. citizens — and new American voters. With timing just before midterm elections in November 2022, more than a dozen CC4C partners have participated in #2Millionby2022 by hosting press conferences, and promoting the campaign along with their local citizenship efforts. Learn more at [newamericanvoters.org](https://newamericanvoters.org).

## LOOKING AHEAD: EXPANDING THE NETWORK, DEEPENING IMPACT

As the CC4C network has grown, participating cities and counties have also deepened their commitments to making naturalization more accessible to eligible immigrants. CC4C communities have invested in and strengthened their programs, created dedicated offices for immigrants and refugees, and launched innovative programs that promote citizenship.



“Welcoming immigrants and refugees into our community enriches our entire city. CC4C’s leadership and advocacy has enhanced our work to ensure new residents experience Saint Paul as a place of belonging.”

– **Melvin Carter**,  
Mayor of Saint Paul

The message that emerges is clear: Even small investments in promoting naturalization create significant returns in economic mobility and civic engagement for both new Americans and their communities. The benefits can be even greater when city and county leaders become champions for citizenship and naturalization, allocate resources for immigrant inclusion programs, hire dedicated staff, and build strong partnerships with community-based organizations.

CC4C is committed to supporting cities and counties in both establishing and expanding high-impact naturalization programs. Now at 103 cities and counties strong, CC4C has built a network with a robust foundation, expertise, commitment and reach to not only deepen naturalization programs, but also to continue advancing immigrant inclusion policies and programs across all localities to truly build a multicultural, multiracial, multiethnic democracy that works for, protects, and promotes opportunity for all.

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3. Manuel Pastor and Justin Scoggins, “Citizen Gain The Economic Benefits of Naturalization for Immigrants and the Economy,” Center for the Study of Immigrant Integration (CSII), December 2012, [https://dornsife.usc.edu/assets/sites/731/docs/citizen\\_gain\\_web.pdf](https://dornsife.usc.edu/assets/sites/731/docs/citizen_gain_web.pdf), 17.
4. Iñiguez-López, D. “Naturalize Now, Vote Tomorrow: New American Voters 2020,” National Partnership for New Americans (NPNA), February 2020 [https://partnershipfornewamericans.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Naturalize\\_Now\\_Vote\\_Tomorrow\\_FINAL.pdf](https://partnershipfornewamericans.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Naturalize_Now_Vote_Tomorrow_FINAL.pdf)
5. The City of Jersey City, “The Division of Immigrant Affairs,” [https://www.jerseycitynj.gov/cityhall/health/division\\_of\\_immigrant\\_affairs](https://www.jerseycitynj.gov/cityhall/health/division_of_immigrant_affairs)Note; Immigrant-related cultural programming is run by the Mayor’s Office of Cultural Affairs.
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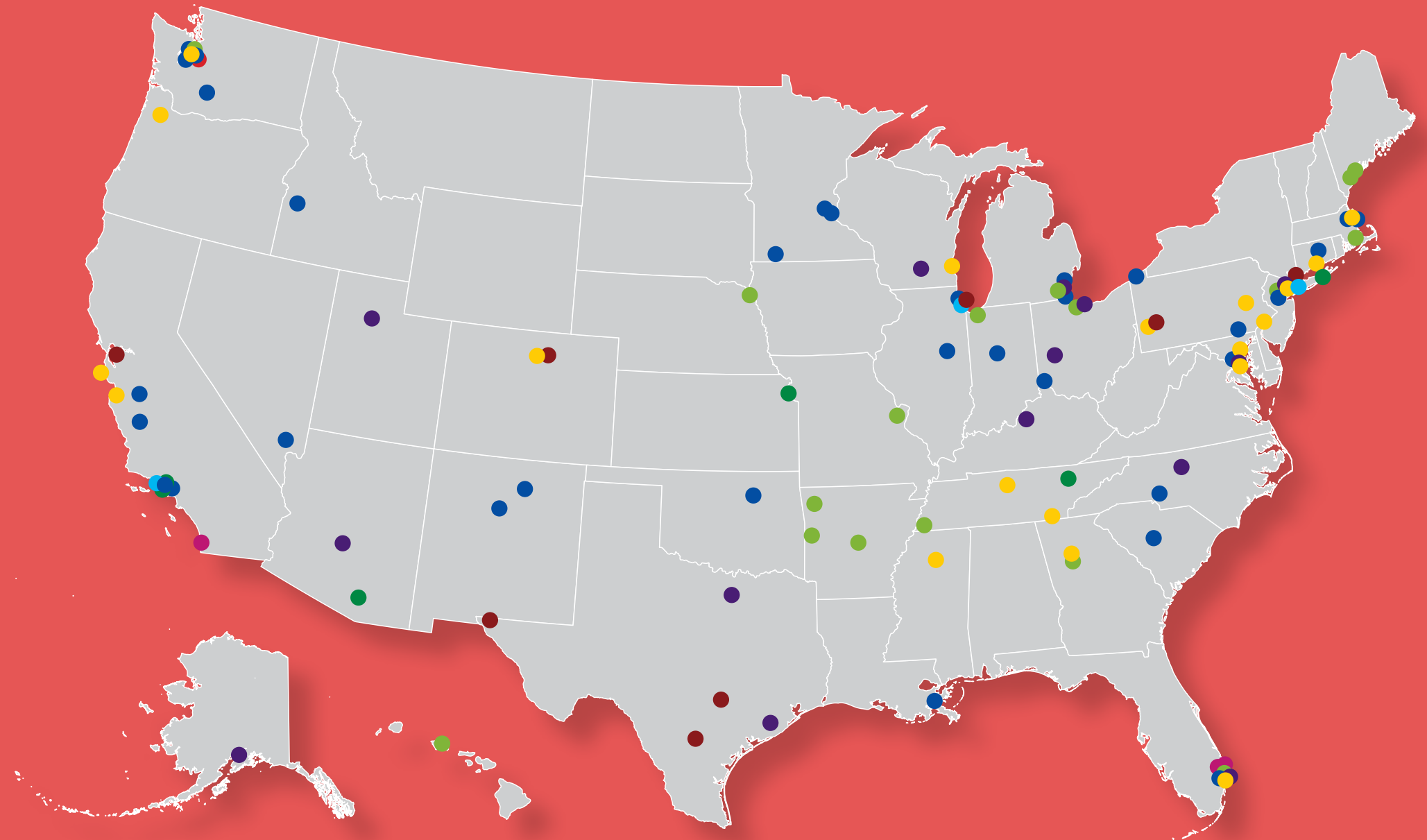
# CITIES & COUNTIES FOR CITIZENSHIP NETWORK



Photo: Andrés Bautista



Photo: Anna Dvorak



## 2014

- Chicago, IL
- Los Angeles, CA
- New York, NY

## 2015

- Atlanta, GA
- Baltimore, MD
- Boston, MA
- Chattanooga, TN
- Denver, CO
- Jersey City, NJ
- Miami-Dade County, FL
- Milwaukee, WI
- Nashville, TN
- New Haven, CT

- Philadelphia, PA
- Pittsburgh, PA
- Portland, OR
- Reading, PA
- San Francisco, CA
- San Jose, CA
- Seattle, WA
- Washington DC

## 2016

- Kansas City, KS
- Knoxville, TN
- Long Beach, CA
- South Gate, CA
- Suffolk County, NY
- Tucson, AZ

## 2017

- Anchorage, AK
- Cleveland, OH
- Dallas, TX
- Dayton, OH
- Detroit, MI
- High Point, NC
- Houston, TX
- Louisville, KY
- Madison, WI
- Miami City, FL
- Montgomery County, MD
- Paterson, NJ
- Phoenix, AZ
- Salt Lake County, UT

## 2018

- Albuquerque, NM
- Anaheim, CA
- Arlington, VA
- Boise, ID
- Cambridge, MA
- Champaign, IL
- Charlotte, NC
- Cincinnati, OH
- Columbia, SC
- Cudahy, CA
- Erie, PA
- Hamtramck, MI
- Hartford, CT
- Huron, CA
- Indianapolis, IN

- Kitsap County, WA
- Livingston, CA
- Las Vegas, NV
- Lucas County, OH
- Minneapolis, MN
- New Orleans, LA
- North Miami, FL
- Princeton, NJ
- Redmond, WA
- Santa Fe, NM
- Skokie, IL
- Somerville, MA
- St. Paul, MN
- Tacoma, WA
- Tulsa, OK
- Worthington, MN

## 2019

- Fall River, MA
- Fayetteville, AR
- Fort Smith, AR
- Honolulu, HI
- Kirkland, WA
- Little Rock, AR
- Memphis, TN
- New Brunswick, NJ
- North Miami Beach, FL
- Portland, ME
- Riverdale, GA
- South Bend, IN

## 2020

- Aurora, CO
- El Paso County, TX
- Austin, TX
- Yolo County, CA
- New Rochelle, NY
- Cook County, IL
- San Antonio, TX
- Allegheny County, PA

## 2021

- Tamarac, FL
- San Diego, CA
- Lauderdale Lakes, FL

## 2022

- King County, WA

## Acknowledgements

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## About National Partnership for New Americans

The National Partnership for New Americans (NPNA) is a multi-ethnic, multiracial coalition of 60 of the nation's largest immigrant and refugee organizations across 40 states. NPNA works together with its members to advance immigrant equity and inclusion policies; build and expand capacities around immigration legal services and integration programming; and, drive campaigns that strengthen democracy through increased civic participation.

## Cities and Counties for Citizenship

Cities and Counties for Citizenship (CC4C), convened by the National Partnership for New Americans (NPNA), is a growing national initiative of 103 cities and counties aimed at increasing citizenship among eligible U.S. permanent residents and encouraging localities across the country to promote and expand citizenship programs. It is chaired by New York City Mayor Eric Adams, Chicago Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot, Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti, and Seattle Mayor Bruce Harrell, with support from the National Partnership for New Americans. To learn more or join Cities and Counties for Citizenship, visit [cc4citizenship.com](https://cc4citizenship.com)

 National Partnership for New Americans

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FOR NEW AMERICANS