

SECTORS OF SOCIETY SUPPORTING A NATIONAL CITIZENSHIP PROGRAM

This chapter highlights the institutions that will be essential to a national citizenship program, emphasizing the roles of federal, state, and local government agencies and private organizations. All of these stakeholders have an important role in promoting immigrant integration, citizenship, and civic participation. This chapter describes their relationship to the immigrant population, their work in this area, and recommendations for their role in a national citizenship program.

The Executive Office of the President of the United States

The President plays a dominant role in determining the extent to which the United States continues to be a nation of immigrants. Through the office's executive power, the President formulates domestic policy, establishes orders, introduces legislation, and requests funding to ensure the nation has the immigrant population it needs to grow and prosper. The President's authority over immigration laws broadly shapes which immigrant groups permanently reside in the country and which family members are reunified. Administration-sponsored changes in funding for federal means-tested benefits also affect the quality of life for immigrants who live near or below the poverty level. Other laws and regulations endorsed by the President direct how immigrants gain access to employment, courts, and government services, particularly immigration status through the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS).

Primarily, it is the President who can use the influence of office to implement a national citizenship plan—one that promotes the knowledge and appreciation of citizenship status; ensures that government immigration and naturalization services are accessible, affordable, and efficient; maintains sufficient funding to the private sector to guide immigrants through the complex naturalization process; and invites immigrants to take personal responsibility as full members of the U.S. democracy.

Prominent efforts by the White House in recent years to promote English language training, improve government services, and encourage citizenship point to what is needed to implement a national citizenship plan and develop an immigrant integration policy. In 1992 the Clinton administration, through the Immigration and Naturalization Services (INS), launched an initiative

called Citizenship USA (CUSA) to expand public outreach on citizenship eligibility and benefits and streamline the naturalization process in the face of ever-increasing backlogs and delays. In 2000 the Clinton administration also supported funding in the amount of \$6.3 million for the Department of Education to create teaching English literacy and civics education demonstration projects designed to help limited English proficient adults improve their English language skills and gain an understanding of the U.S. Constitution, laws, and system of government. Funding for this program has expanded over the years, and was \$70 million in 2006.

In 2002 President George W. Bush signed into law the Homeland Security Act, which eliminated the INS, separating its functions into several entities within a newly constituted Department of Homeland Security (DHS). USCIS administers immigration status services, such as the processing of immigration and citizenship applications, while the Office of Citizenship (OoC) has a mandate to promote instruction and training on citizenship rights and responsibilities and to provide immigrants with the tools necessary to successfully integrate into American civic culture. The bill also established a DHS position of citizenship and immigration services ombudsman to assist in identifying systemic problems within the USCIS and assist individuals and employers with specific problems.

On July 3, 2002, President Bush signed the Expedited Naturalization Executive Order, which designated the period on or after September 11, 2001, as a period of military conflict and allowed certain members of the U.S. military who served honorably in active duty during that time frame to apply for naturalization immediately.

These presidential initiatives demonstrate the power of executive action, often with congressional support, to assist immigrants and their path along the naturalization process. Funding for education, English language training, legal and social services, and civics instruction influences

the development and inclusion of immigrants overall. While essential, these actions alone do not ensure that a maximum number of eligible immigrants become U.S. citizens. More can be done towards this end, as outlined in the following recommendations.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Naturalization and Citizenship Promotion:

- 1 The Administration should lend the prestige of the executive office to promote a national citizenship media campaign that stresses the importance of citizenship, its benefits, and its responsibilities.

Citizenship Day

President Harry Truman established Citizenship Day in 1952. September 17 was chosen because it was the day on which the U.S. Constitution was signed in 1787. Citizenship Day celebrates the privileges, rights, and responsibilities of U.S. citizenship, and honors both native-born and naturalized citizens. It is traditionally commemorated with pageantry and speeches. In recent years, some U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) offices have held large oath ceremonies on Citizenship Day, and newspapers have featured articles about naturalization and new citizens.

Citizenship Day is a chance to highlight the many benefits that citizenship brings to individuals, families, and communities. With these benefits come certain civic responsibilities. In a speech celebrating the first Citizenship Day, President Truman exhorted all citizens to educate themselves about government, stay informed of the “great problems of the day,” and exercise the right to vote. He said: “The success of free government depends upon the willingness of the citizen to participate in it, to contribute to it, and to sacrifice for it.”

- 2 The Administration should acknowledge the contributions of immigrant laborers, including the poor and low-skilled, in public communications.
- 3 The Administration should prepare a videotaped address by the President for use at naturalization ceremonies. The address should emphasize immigrant contributions to the United States and the importance of their decision to become citizens.
- 4 The Administration should provide cabinet secretaries and other persons in high-level government positions to speak at naturalization ceremonies about immigrant contributions and the importance of becoming a U.S. citizen.

- 5 The Administration should encourage immigrants to prepare for naturalization as early as possible and direct them to various forms of assistance.
- 6 The President’s speeches should encourage native and foreign-born residents to be civically engaged across ethnic lines as a way of expressing their patriotism for the United States.
- 7 The Administration’s support for naturalization and civic engagement should be promoted not as a benefit or threat to one political party but as an opportunity for the advancement of patriotism, loyalty, American values, and civic knowledge among the foreign-born and their children.

Policy Development and Implementation:

- 8 The Administration should appoint a commission to study the ways in which different federal departments contribute to or inhibit immigrant integration and how integration activities can be better promoted and coordinated. The commission should study the U.S. refugee resettlement program as a model for a broader federal integration program.
- 9 At a minimum, the Administration should foster the following four pillars of integration: English language development, naturalization, civics education and activities, and voting.
- 10 The Administration should increase Department of Education funding, through the Workforce Investment Act, for its English as a second language (ESL) and civics education initiative.
- 11 The Administration’s integration policy needs to be developed in consultation with immigration experts and national security experts.
- 12 The President needs to encourage each department in the federal government to develop a coordinated immigrant integration policy befitting a “New American” agenda that can span many years and multiple administrations.

Naturalization and Citizenship Funding:

- 13 The Administration must support ample funding for the OoC to: fulfill its mandate, properly staff its activities, create and disseminate free materials, partner with charitable organizations through multiyear grants, and develop ongoing public education campaigns.
- 14 The Administration should support full funding of the OoC and eliminate the current policy of funding it exclusively from USCIS’s application fee account. Adequate public funding for OoC’s vital functions should be a shared responsibility between the nation and immigrants.

- 15 The Administration should support an increase in funding for the Department of Education's English literacy and civics education grants program. The curriculum should include a module on naturalization requirements for students wishing to continue the course in preparation for citizenship.
- 16 The Administration should support an increase in funding for the Department of Education's Adult Education and Literacy program to increase the availability of instruction for immigrants who speak limited English and are not yet prepared to pass the naturalization test.
- 17 The Administration's immigrant integration program should support local communities rather than burdening them with onerous requirements.
- 18 The Administration should support more funding to USCIS to reduce processing backlogs to an acceptable level in order to ensure that businesses are supplied with sufficient immigrant labor, immigrant families are reunited, refugees are protected, and naturalization waiting periods in every USCIS district office do not extend beyond six months.
- 19 The Administration should urge Congress to provide USCIS with flexible use of its client fee account so that it can respond quickly to sudden increases in workload. The Administration needs to ensure that each new immigration law has funding to adequately support USCIS applicant-processing responsibilities.
- 20 The Administration should ensure that the Federal Bureau of Investigation has the funding to process security clearances in an expedited manner. This will enhance national security and reduce application processing delays that sometimes extend the normal waiting time of nine months by 12 months or more.
- 21 The Administration should endorse increased funding to the Office of Refugee Resettlement within the Department of Health and Human Services for discretionary programs that promote the integration of refugees through orientation, English classes, civic engagement opportunities, and naturalization application assistance.
- 22 The Administration's budgets should reflect the needs of community colleges, libraries, and nonprofits that educate immigrants in English for life skills, employment training, General Equivalency Degrees, two- and four-year college degrees, civics education, and naturalization.

Coordination of Citizenship Services:

- 23 The President should meet with leaders of both political parties to outline the Administration's broad goals for national citizenship promotion and immigrant integration.
- 24 The Administration should call on members of Congress from both parties to promote citizenship, provide naturalization services to immigrant constituents, and introduce immigrant integration legislation.
- 25 The Administration should direct USCIS and OoC to identify ways community groups can be more involved in naturalization oath ceremonies.
- 26 The Administration should foster partnerships in support of citizenship and immigrant integration between public and private sectors.

The Congress

The U.S. Constitution empowers Congress to regulate the migration and importation of "such persons as any of the states now existing shall think proper to admit" (Article I, Section 9, Cl. 1) and to "establish a uniform Rule of Naturalization." (Article I, Section 8, Cl. 4). These two powers in tandem determine which aliens enter the United States to reside permanently and become U.S. citizens. Specific authority for naturalization eligibility requirements is found in the U.S. Code of Federal Regulations, Title 8, Chapter 12, Subchapter III, Part II. Congress has the implied authority under the power of national sovereignty and foreign policy to exclude and remove aliens, including those petitioning the government for U.S. citizenship through the naturalization process. Aliens admitted into the United States are afforded due process rights to determine their claims to stay in the country and under what status.

The Constitution also empowers Congress, specifically the House of Representatives, to "lay and collect taxes, duties, imposts, and excises, to pay the debts and provide for the common defense and general welfare of the United States..." (Article I, Section 8, Cl.1). As such, Congress legislates the appropriation of public funds to support the federal government's responsibility to regulate immigration and provide benefits to immigrants, including the conferring of citizenship.

In recent years, Congress has given piecemeal attention to immigration issues, particularly naturalization. Investigative hearings were held in 1996 concerning the flawed Citizenship USA initiative of the Immigration and Naturalization Services (INS). The Clinton administration's FY 2000 budget, approved by Congress, included an appropriation of \$124 million to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) for reduction of the backlog in processing naturalization applications. In 2000 Congress passed the Child Citizenship Act, making an unmarried,

Lawful Permanent Resident under the age of 18 automatically a citizen when a parent with legal and physical custody becomes a citizen. The Hmong Veterans' Naturalization Act of 2000 provides an exemption from the English language requirement and special consideration for civics testing for certain refugees from Laos who applied for citizenship before a set filing deadline. Also in 2000 Congress passed a waiver of the oath of allegiance for persons with severe physical or developmental disabilities or mental impairments who are unable to understand or communicate an understanding of the oath's meaning. In 2003 Congress passed legislation providing expedited naturalization for certain current or recently discharged members of the U.S. military, as well as posthumous citizenship for those who die in combat and special consideration for their surviving family members seeking immigration benefits. This legislation changed the existing three year military service requirement to a one year requirement, allowing military personnel to apply for naturalization earlier.

In 2002 the Homeland Security Act eliminated the INS and separated enforcement functions from immigrant services. It also separated the processing of immigration and citizenship applications from immigrant instruction, information, and training on citizenship rights. Operating within the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), USCIS grants immigration status, while the Office of Citizenship (OoC) provides educational services.

Congress's most active involvement with immigrant issues in recent years has been its review of laws and procedures through a prism of national security, identifying how immigrants enter, stay, change address, adjust status, and become citizens. Currently, Congress is debating competing immigration bills over how undocumented immigrants may access and keep jobs and under what conditions they may reside temporarily or stay with access to a permanent status, placing them on the path to U.S. citizenship.

It is evident that Congress plays a dominant role in shaping the general welfare of the nation, including the effects of immigration and the experience of immigrants as a growing part of the population. Regrettably, in recent years Congress has tended to view immigration only in terms of national security. In doing so, it is neglecting important legislation that would further integrate current and future immigrants through English language skills, civic knowledge, citizenship, and voting experiences. Each of these can increase immigrant support for our nation's founding principles and democratic process. The fulfillment of a national citizenship plan depends greatly on congressional leadership and will to act in support of these broad purposes.

Members of Congress Hold Naturalization Application Workshops

Rep. Edward Pastor (D-AZ) represents the Fourth District of Arizona including central, south, and western Phoenix and Guadalupe. Naturalization assistance from the congressman's office is an important service for immigrant constituents. In 2005 Pastor's office hosted three naturalization application workshops assisting over 400 people with support from 60 volunteers. The congressman's office works closely with ethnic media outlets and his staff takes calls to register people in advance and prepare any necessary documentation. Public schools work in partnership by conducting outreach to students' parents and providing space needed for hundreds attending the workshops. Businesses sponsor volunteer training by donating space and food. One workshop featured a representative from the state attorney general's office who spoke on predatory businesses and money lending schemes.

Rep. Luis Gutierrez (D-IL), representing the Fourth District in and around Chicago, also sponsors naturalization application workshops. The district's population is 40 percent foreign born. In the past, the congressman has sponsored an average of seven workshops per year. On July 2, 2005, approximately 500 potential applicants attended. Since his office began hosting workshops, the staff has assisted up to 42,000 people to become citizens. Most recently, workshops have been coordinated with Illinois' New Americans Initiative, a statewide naturalization project. Contributors to workshops are: volunteers who help with applications, ethnic media outlets that air free public service announcements, USCIS staff who offer public information at the event, and the state attorney general's office, which gives information on the unauthorized practice of law and other predatory businesses targeting immigrants.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Appropriations:

- 1 Congress should pass adequate appropriations for immigrant integration policies to ensure that local communities do not face unfunded mandates and bear a disproportionate financial burden for federal immigration initiatives.
- 2 Congress must provide significantly more funding to the OoC so that it can fulfill its mandate. With sufficient staff and budget, the OoC can: conduct national multimedia public education campaigns; create and disseminate free citizenship promotional and educational materials; make grants to charitable organizations for training,

teaching, curriculum development, outreach, and direct application assistance; provide training grants to increase professional competency in all regions of the country; promote greater federal collaboration in improving immigrant knowledge and appreciation for citizenship; encourage public-private partnerships; and host national and regional meetings for researchers, practitioners, government employees, and elected officials to discuss how American values can be better promoted in the immigrant population.

- 3 In order to make citizenship a public funding priority shared by all Americans, Congress must appropriate funding of the OoC and cease the current policy of funding it solely with monies from immigrant application fees, paid to USCIS.
- 4 Congress must eliminate the singular use of immigrant application fees to support USCIS's backlog reduction plan, USCIS litigation costs, military naturalization fee waivers, and the humanitarian work of processing refugees and waiving their application fees to adjust to Lawful Permanent Resident status.
- 5 Congress should support an increase in funding for the Department of Education's English literacy and civics education grants to better instruct immigrants in English and on the fundamentals of the U.S. Constitution, the act of law-making, and the work of federal, state, and local government.
- 6 Congress needs to increase funding for the Department of Education's adult education and literacy programs to increase the availability of accessible, appropriately designed instruction for immigrants who speak limited English and are not yet prepared to pass the naturalization test. Funding should emphasize the promotion of family literacy, civic education, and citizenship.
- 7 Congress must provide more funding to USCIS to reduce backlogs for all citizenship applications to six months or less in every USCIS district in order to keep businesses supplied with sufficient immigrant labor, reunite immigrant families, and permanently protect refugees. It is imperative for Congress and USCIS to support this goal before a national citizenship plan is implemented, in order to ensure that the plan does not overburden a poorly performing bureaucracy.
- 8 Congress should ensure that each new immigration law has sufficient funding to support USCIS's application-processing responsibilities. Application-processing backlogs should not be exacerbated because Congress fails to provide sufficient monies for additional workloads.
- 9 Congress should prioritize funding for the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) to enable it to process USCIS's security clearance requests in a timely manner. Current delays sometimes extend the average wait by an additional year or more.

- 10 Congress should require the FBI and USCIS to coordinate and share immigration security-clearance processing rates and outcomes.
- 11 Congress should expand funding to the Department of Health and Human Services' Office of Refugee Resettlement for its discretionary programs that promote the integration of refugees. These programs support orientation, English classes, civic engagement opportunities, and naturalization application assistance.

Establishing New Authority:

- 12 Congress must authorize USCIS to have flexible use of its fee account revenue to enable it to respond quickly to unexpected increases in immigration applications. When fee revenues from applications expand, its budget should expand. Alternatively, Congress could approve USCIS's budget total at a percentage higher than the anticipated fee revenue, allowing USCIS to spend only what it receives in fees until Congress authorizes spending the difference for expanded services.
- 13 When passing new immigration legislation, Congress needs to include language that authorizes USCIS to dedicate the funds from fee collections to carry out the legislation.

Improved Oversight:

- 14 Congress should engage in more oversight of: USCIS practices that are not standardized; backlog reduction efforts that continue to fail; security clearance procedures that are not efficient; technology that requires reengineering; and rising application fees that do not result in improved customer service.
- 15 Congress should establish specific processing goals for USCIS and cost controls that facilitate swift and efficient use of immigrant application fees.
- 16 Congress should declare a moratorium on fee increases until USCIS achieves a processing time of six months or less for all citizenship applications in all district offices and the agency meets other customer service benchmarks established in consultation with stakeholders.
- 17 Congress should direct OoC to report on immigrant demographics, federal and state spending on citizenship, and trends in naturalization. The OoC should also conduct studies on naturalization services in immigrant-impacted communities to ensure that productive public and private partnerships exist to promote citizenship and immigrant integration.

Amendments to General Immigration Laws:

- 18 Congress needs to reestablish noncitizen, legal immigrant eligibility for all means-tested public benefits. U.S. citizenship status should be de-linked from public benefit eligibility.
- 19 Congress needs to restore refugee eligibility for SSI without the seven-year limit imposed by welfare reform legislation. The United States should not overlook its humanitarian responsibility for the financial, health, and housing needs of refugees who cannot easily become citizens and who remain poor, unemployable, or ill after their first seven years of resettlement.

New Naturalization Laws:

- 21 Congress should pass a law broadening and extending the English waiver for elderly citizenship applicants who are age 60 or older, allowing them to take the U.S. history and civics test in their native language.
- 22 Congress should not pass laws that restrict or curtail federal courts from hearing naturalization applicants' complaints against USCIS's adjudication decisions or delays.

Improved Immigrant Constituent Services:

- 23 Congressional staff who are assigned to immigration policy and service issues should help immigrants navigate the immigration bureaucracy and resolve long-standing problems. Congressional staff should work with USCIS and community-based organizations to identify solutions to funding and service delivery problems within USCIS. Staff should attend immigration training by nonprofit organizations.
- 24 Congress must authorize USCIS-requested appropriations for backlog reduction.

Promotion of Naturalization and Citizenship:

- 25 Members of Congress should promote naturalization through every means at their disposal, including possible formation of a Citizenship Caucus, public announcements around Citizenship Day, co-sponsorship of naturalization workshops, and participation in oath ceremonies.

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

The U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) is a bureau in the Department of Homeland Security that was established in 2002 by the Homeland Security Act. The Act split the functions of the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) into separate entities, including USCIS, which is responsible for immigration services and benefits. USCIS's priorities, as described on its website, are promoting national security, eliminating immigration case backlogs, and improving customer service.

USCIS's functions include the adjudication of naturalization applications, immigrant visa petitions, refugee and asylum applications, work authorization documents, temporary protected status, and other applications previously handled by the INS. In addition, USCIS is responsible for setting immigration service policies and priorities. The agency is divided into three departments: domestic operations, international operations, and records verification. Naturalization services are located in domestic operations.

The President appoints the director of USCIS who reports to the deputy secretary for homeland security. Approximately 15,000 federal employees and contractors work for USCIS in about 250 offices in the U.S. and around the world. Headquartered in Washington, D.C., USCIS has four service centers assigned to cover different regions of the United States, a central records office in Missouri, and local field offices throughout the country. USCIS has an annual budget of approximately \$2 billion.

In keeping with federal government policy, USCIS currently does nothing to proactively encourage, promote, or facilitate U.S. citizenship. Yet, as the record keeper of all immigrants living in the United States and the agency responsible for adjudicating citizenship applications, USCIS is an excellent position to do more, both in terms of informing eligible immigrants about the benefits and requirements of citizenship and in terms of improving the application process.

Unfortunately, USCIS is plagued with problems that date back to its INS predecessor. A major challenge that has far-reaching implications is the lack of funding. Unlike most federal agencies, including its enforcement counterpart, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), USCIS receives no regular, annual appropriation from Congress to cover its operations. Instead, Congress provides that the agency may set application fees at a level required to recover the full costs of its services. Because congressional appropriations to USCIS are piecemeal, vary from year to

year, and are usually restricted to certain areas, such as backlog reduction, USCIS is essentially required to fund its operations entirely through application processing fees.

In addition, USCIS does not have full access to the fees it collects or flexibility in spending them. Each year it must estimate how much it will collect in fees and base its budget on this prediction. If applications increase due to unforeseen circumstances such as a new law passed by Congress, the fee revenue also increases, but USCIS cannot access fee revenue above its estimated budget without going through a lengthy and bureaucratic process to obtain congressional permission. As a result, the agency repeatedly incurs a deficit, and application-processing backlogs are created.

The sole reliance on fee revenue creates a vicious cycle of annual application fee increases. The citizenship application fee has more than tripled, from \$95 in 1994 to \$330 in 2005, and USCIS has predicted another increase in fiscal year 2007. While fee waivers are available, they may delay an application for months and are difficult to obtain, even for those who have already been determined low-income by other government agencies, such as the Social Security Administration. If the current trend continues, citizenship will become attainable mainly to middle and upper class immigrants, and will be nearly inaccessible or a severe financial hardship to the low-income and working poor. This disturbing trend presents a major challenge to our democracy, which elected leaders must address.

Another major challenge is poor customer service, though significant improvements have been made in recent years. Despite new online status checks, it is still difficult for applicants to find out the status of their case. Those who call USCIS's National Customer Service Call Center may wait on hold for a long time to speak to a representative. Scheduling an appointment at a local office using the new online scheduling system, called Info Pass, can be similarly time-consuming. During the citizenship interview, USCIS officers may treat applicants rudely or make improper denials, requiring the applicant to pay to file an appeal. After the interview, some applicants are delayed a year or more by the FBI security check and have great difficulty finding out the status of their case. If an applicant needs to submit additional documentation, some offices do not have a reliable system to collect the information and ensure it reaches the applicant's file so the case can be completed. Some local offices also do not have a reliable system for applicants to register a change of address, and continue to send appointment notices to an old address despite being repeatedly informed of a move.

The citizenship interview process is plagued by a lack of consistency so that applicants in different offices, or with different officers in the same office, have widely different experiences in terms of the questions asked, the level of

difficulty of the citizenship test, and the way in which the legal requirements for citizenship, such as good moral character, are applied.

Applicants with disabilities may have difficulty obtaining information on how to request reasonable accommodations. Those applying for a disability waiver, who comprise only about 2-3 percent of all citizenship applicants, are often viewed with suspicion and treated rudely by officers. Officers sometimes fail to follow the correct policies and procedures for handling disability waiver applications and subject vulnerable disabled applicants, who are typically elderly, to unnecessary delays.

How local USCIS offices relate to the community, particularly community-based organizations (CBOs) is also inconsistent. Some offices have excellent relations and regularly hold meetings with CBO representatives who can inquire about cases and be updated on new policies. Other offices, however, have no communication with CBOs and offer no system to inquire about delayed or problematic cases, discuss policies, or address problems. Although the INS drafted guidance on CBO relations for its local offices in 1998, this guidance was never released for reasons that remain unclear.

All of the challenges—funding, customer service, and community relations—have implications for USCIS's ability to handle citizenship applications, and must be addressed under a national citizenship program, which would greatly increase the number of citizenship applications. If these challenges are not addressed, citizenship application backlogs would greatly increase and applicants would be discouraged from applying, undermining the success of the program.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Funding and Fees:

- 1 When USCIS establishes fee levels, it should not have to include extra costs for the Office of Citizenship (OoC) budget, litigation, military naturalization, or refugee processing. Congress should support these separate, auxiliary costs with annual appropriations.
- 2 USCIS should place a cap on the annual percentage rate of fee increases to control rising costs and ensure that the naturalization process remains accessible for low-income and working poor immigrants.
- 3 USCIS should change its policy on fee waivers to make it less discretionary. Applicants who are already qualified to receive a federal means-tested benefit, such as Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or food stamps, should receive an automatic fee waiver and not have to go through a reevaluation of their income and eligibility.
- 4 USCIS should include more explanation about the availability of fee waivers and the fee waiver application

process in its informational materials, particularly its *Guide to Naturalization*.

- 5 USCIS should create a fee waiver application form so that applicants know what information is required and so that the application process is more standardized.
- 6 USCIS should establish an application filing discount for working poor families when two or more members of an immediate family (parents and adult children) apply for citizenship at the same time.
- 7 USCIS should offer low-income applicants the option of paying the citizenship application fee in two installments. The first installment could be paid at the beginning of the application process and the second, before the interview.

Promotion of Citizenship:

- 8 The USCIS director should publicize the importance of applying for citizenship through frequent speeches, press releases, and public service announcements.
- 9 In its approval letter for lawful permanent residence, USCIS should indicate when the immigrant will be eligible for citizenship.
- 10 Once an immigrant is eligible to apply for citizenship, USCIS should send him or her a reminder along with a citizenship application form.
- 11 USCIS should organize large-scale naturalization swearing-in ceremonies throughout the country on Citizenship Day, the Fourth of July, Constitution Day, and other holidays in order to give naturalization a higher media profile.
- 12 USCIS should mandate that its local offices partner with nonpartisan, civic associations that can conduct voter registration at swearing-in ceremonies. An announcement should be made that voter registration is available and encouraged at the conclusion of each ceremony.
- 13 USCIS local offices should invite civic organizations such as the Rotary Club, Daughters of the American Revolution, and Lions Club to participate in naturalization ceremonies by making speeches, passing out flags, welcoming new citizens, and encouraging civic engagement.

Customer Service:

- 14 USCIS needs to keep its promise, made in 1997 by INS Commissioner Doris Meissner and again in 2000 by President Bush, to reduce its citizenship application processing time for all applications to six months.
- 15 USCIS needs to develop a surge capacity in its workforce to allow it to respond to sudden increases in applications.

- 16 USCIS should improve training and policy guidance for officers handling naturalization applications, especially for those conducting the English, history, and civics tests. Training should be mandated and ongoing.
- 17 USCIS should provide cultural sensitivity training for its officers in dealing with different ethnic groups, the elderly, and people with disabilities. Local CBOs should be invited to make presentations at these trainings.
- 18 USCIS should hold an annual conference for district office directors to share best practices in customer service and community relations.
- 19 USCIS should improve its system to identify naturalization cases that are delayed by the FBI. It should follow up with the FBI at regular intervals until cases are cleared.
- 20 USCIS should send automatic, periodic updates on the status of delayed cases, rather than requiring the applicant to contact USCIS.
- 21 USCIS should strongly encourage its local offices to provide same day citizenship interviews and oaths to streamline customer service.
- 22 USCIS should invite outside guests to speak at oath ceremonies, as occurs at oath ceremonies administered in federal courts.
- 23 USCIS should identify best practices in its local field offices and work to replicate these practices in other offices. It should detail staff from strong to weak offices as necessary.
- 24 USCIS should set customer service standards for field offices and hold them accountable through monitoring and evaluation.
- 25 USCIS local offices need to create a formal procedure for rescheduling appointments. USCIS should allow rescheduling requests by certified mail, e-mail, voice mail, and fax, and it should designate a single point person to respond to all requests and follow through on them.
- 26 USCIS local offices should improve the system used for receipt of additional information from applicants. They should have an on-duty staff member who can accept documents in person, issue the applicant an official receipt, and ensure that the material reaches the officer who requested it.
- 27 USCIS local offices should designate a point person to handle complaints about customer service and respond to them. Unacceptable behavior should be expeditiously corrected.
- 28 USCIS local offices should identify naturalization cases pending more than 120 days after the interview and prioritize them chronologically.

Disability Waivers and Reasonable Accommodations:

- 29** USCIS should ensure that disability waiver cases are adjudicated in a timely fashion. USCIS headquarters should intervene with training and, if necessary, disciplinary measures in problem offices.
- 30** USCIS should survey its local offices on the implementation of reasonable accommodations and disability waiver guidance, and compile best practices to share with field offices.
- 31** USCIS should issue additional guidance to facilitate naturalization for disabled and elderly applicants, particularly addressing the issues of dementia, post traumatic stress disorder, and depression. It should remind local offices of the standard of review for these cases and the need for courtesy, respect, and sensitivity.
- 32** Based on the due consideration provision in 8 CFR § 312.2(c)(2), USCIS should create a new category of “special consideration” applicants for those facing loss of SSI so they may receive an easier test on English, history, and civics.
- 33** USCIS should issue nondiscretionary policy and processing guidance to service centers and local offices, that describes how elderly and disabled applicants who are facing the loss of SSI can have their applications expedited.
- 34** USCIS should utilize Form N-648B (Notice of Incomplete N-648) and update the form so that it parallels the revised Form N-648 (Medical Certification for Disability Exceptions).
- 35** USCIS should create a master list of staff who are handling requests for reasonable accommodations in each local office, along with working telephone numbers and e-mails. It should post the list on its website, and designate accommodations point persons to act as ombudsmen for disability waiver problems.
- 36** USCIS should have a tab on its homepage called, “people with disabilities and the elderly.” When users click on the tab, they should be able to access statutes, regulations, and user-friendly guidance on waivers from English, civics, and oath taking requirements and on reasonable accommodations. The tab should provide access to the N-648 form and information on how to expedite an application if loss of SSI is imminent.
- 37** USCIS should create a “Frequently Asked Questions” or FAQ sheet on disability waivers and reasonable accommodations. It should post this sheet on its website for use by medical providers, immigration advocates, the elderly, people with disabilities, and OoC community liaison officers.

- 38** USCIS policy requires field offices to provide information to applicants on how to request reasonable accommodations. USCIS should draft a sample information packet that summarizes information on waivers and reasonable accommodations.
- 39** USCIS should partner with CBOs to offer doctors periodic training on disability waiver eligibility and on how to complete the N-648 form.

Community Relations and Communications:

- 40** USCIS should issue policy guidance to its field offices on how they should relate to CBOs. Minimum standards should include quarterly meetings with CBOs, shared agendas that cover policy issues, and a mechanism for CBOs to make case status inquiries and to obtain timely responses.
- 41** Local USCIS offices should send regular e-mail updates to community organizations on policy or procedural changes.
- 42** Local USCIS offices should work closely with citizenship teachers and allow teachers to observe interviews so they can better prepare their students. USCIS offices should set up a hotline, manned by a supervisor, which teachers can call if one of their students has a problem in the interview.
- 43** USCIS should study the option of conducting off-site interviews in the offices of community-based organizations to increase accessibility for elderly and disabled applicants.
- 44** USCIS offices should develop a process for soliciting input from the local community on problems and recommended solutions, particularly those related to communications and customer service.
- 45** Local USCIS offices should train citizenship workshop volunteers and send staff to citizenship workshops who can answer questions about naturalization law, policy, and applications.
- 46** Local USCIS offices should provide regular statistics to community organizations on the number of citizenship applications received, approved, and denied.
- 47** USCIS local offices should provide CBOs with an organizational chart that includes the names of supervising officers and general duties
- 48** USCIS local offices should hold periodic open houses to allow CBOs to tour the facilities.

The Office of Citizenship

The Office of Citizenship (OoC) is a branch of the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), a bureau of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). OoC was established by the Homeland Security Act of 2002. Its mission, as mandated in its authorizing legislation, is to promote instruction and training on the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and to provide immigrants with the information and tools needed to successfully integrate into American civic culture. The office is funded by revenues received from USCIS application fees, and has an annual budget in fiscal year 2007 of approximately \$3 million. Its chief is appointed by the President.

OoC has focused on providing information to immigrants when they become Lawful Permanent Residents and are ready to begin the naturalization process. Its strategic goals are centered on outreach to permanent residents, improving and disseminating citizenship education materials, and promoting and enhancing citizenship-related ceremonies, such as swearing-in ceremonies.

The office is divided into two sections, outreach and programs. In the outreach section, headquarters staff includes a deputy chief and four staff officers. In USCIS districts, there are approximately 20 community liaison officers whose job is to work with local stakeholders such as community-based organizations, adult educators, and local officials to further OoC's objectives. The program staff is comprised of a deputy chief and four staff officers at USCIS headquarters. The programs section, with contractual support, is responsible for creating, developing, and publishing civics and citizenship educational materials. Some of the materials published so far include:

- *Welcome to the United States, A Guide for New Immigrants* is a comprehensive guide, available online in 11 languages, and is the first time that the federal government has provided orientation materials for new permanent residents;
- *Civics Flash Cards* is an instructional tool for naturalization test preparation; and
- *Learn About the United States: Quick Civics Lessons and Audio CD* are short lessons based on each of the history and civics questions on the citizenship test.

Due to funding limitations, OoC is not able to offer printed hard copies of key materials, such as the *Welcome to the United States* guide and the civics flashcards, to the public for free; rather, they must be ordered from the Government Printing Office for a fee. All of the materials are available free online in PDF format. In fiscal year 2007 the OoC plans to give a free hard copy of *Welcome to the United States* to all new permanent residents. Currently, all natu-

ralization applicants can get a free copy of *Learn About the United States: Quick Civics Lessons* when they have their fingerprints taken at a USCIS Application Support Center.

Soon after it was established, the OoC held a series of focus groups in local communities to identify immigrant integration needs and challenges in order to shape its objectives. The findings are published in a document available on OoC's website, entitled *Helping Immigrants Become New Americans: Communities Discuss the Issues*. The OoC also sponsored a conference in September 2004 on the civic integration of immigrants entitled, *Building a Common Civic Identity*.

In April 2005 OoC took over responsibility for the redesign of the citizenship test. Since then, the office has been meeting regularly with stakeholders involved in the naturalization process and working under a deadline of January 2007 set by its chief for completion of the new test.

Although OoC has produced such useful informational products for immigrants, its shoestring budget prevents these products from being readily available, particularly for immigrants without access to the internet. OoC's budget for its nationwide programs is only \$3 million, comparable to the amount spent by one state—Illinois—for its statewide citizenship initiative. The legislation establishing OoC failed to appropriate any public dollars to support its work beyond staffing costs, hindering the office from fulfilling its public information mission.

Congress's authorizing legislation limited OoC's mission to educational activities, effectively creating a public information unit. The legislation failed to give the office clear grant-making authority that would allow it to fund nonprofit organizations engaged in implementing services to promote citizenship and provide application assistance. An independent task force convened by the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations recommended grant-making authority for OoC in its report, *Keeping the Promise: Immigration Proposals from the Heartland*.¹ Members of Congress should acknowledge and address the current lack of sufficient financial support for OoC's limited mission. Otherwise, the OoC's work is more symbolic than a resource for the nation.

Despite OoC's current limitations, the office has great potential as a lead government agency in a national citizenship plan. Its mission encompasses all immigrant populations, as compared to the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR), which focuses primarily on refugees. In addition, OoC ranks higher on the DHS organizational chart and has far more visibility and authority than ORR does within the Department of Health and Human Services. Moreover, through its 20 local community liaison officers and its

national-level partnerships, the office is well networked and has the capability to reach out widely in the immigrant community to promote the message of citizenship.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Legislation:

- 1 Congress should provide grant-making authority to OoC to allow it to fund nonprofit organizations that offer citizenship assistance.
- 2 Congress should appropriate an annual budget to OoC in order to allow it to distribute its materials free of charge; fund citizenship outreach, application assistance, and classes by nonprofit organizations and community colleges; and reach its full potential as the lead agency for a national citizenship program

Programs:

- 3 OoC should create a central clearinghouse of citizenship education materials. These materials should be available on the web in written and audiovisual form.
- 4 OoC should support and facilitate training on how to teach history and civics for teachers of English as a second language (ESL) and on how to teach ESL for civics teachers.
- 5 OoC should provide civics and citizenship preparation content to the Department of Education so it can expand its English language and civics curriculum.
- 6 OoC should provide a free toolkit for training ESL and citizenship teachers on U.S. history and civics, with guidelines, posters, written materials, and audiovisuals.
- 7 OoC should partner with the American Library Association to forge a working group on immigrant integration. The group should explore ways to distribute the OoC publication, *Promising Practices for Immigrant-serving Libraries*.
- 8 OoC should lead a national citizenship campaign using outreach materials such as posters, educational information, publications, and public service announcements. The campaign should promote and encourage naturalization and provide templates of outreach materials for local service providers.
- 9 OoC should sponsor and fund a teacher-training institute bringing local teachers together with national experts to provide training on civics education. Using a train-the-trainers model, the attendees could train their colleagues in their home communities.
- 10 OoC should promote consistency and standards in citizenship education by developing model training and materials for teachers, and making this information widely available.

- 11 OoC should develop interactive, web-based self-study materials for immigrants who wish to prepare for the citizenship test on their own.
- 12 OoC should help promote Citizenship Day on September 17 by pursuing a Citizenship Day commemorative stamp, sponsoring a poster contest for school children, and encouraging media to cover oath ceremonies held on Citizenship Day.
- 13 OoC should conduct an annual mass media campaign around Citizenship Day. The campaign could include a host of activities starting on July 4 and leading up to September 17, including TV commercials, large-scale citizenship workshops, and other events.
- 14 OoC should develop citizenship promotion materials such as posters, pins, badges, and citizenship kits for distribution at oath ceremonies and other naturalization functions. It should also develop materials for schools to enable them to offer a lesson unit on the history of U.S. immigration.
- 15 OoC should conduct focus groups to determine the level of interest and feasibility of holding citizenship “affirmation” ceremonies for children who became citizens automatically by derivation. The ceremonies could be arranged by local civic groups.
- 16 OoC should continue to organize and publicize high profile naturalization ceremonies to raise public awareness of citizenship and naturalization.
- 17 OoC should create and disseminate public service announcements by celebrities or other well-known spokespersons that promote citizenship.
- 18 If it receives grant-making authority, OoC should set benchmarks for its grantees to measure improvements in immigrant integration.
- 19 OoC’s community liaison officers should facilitate the participation of local civic organizations, such as the Rotary Club, Daughters of the American Revolution, and Lions Club, in administrative oath-taking ceremonies. Civic organizations can contribute by making speeches, passing out flags, welcoming new citizens, conducting voter registration, and encouraging civic engagement.
- 20 OoC should develop a guide that describes model citizenship programs by businesses. The guide should include endorsements by participating businesses and materials for marketing citizenship to the business sector.
- 21 OoC should create a free citizenship video that is distributed by movie rental chains and public libraries.

Communications:

- 22 OoC should expand the number of community liaison officers to ensure that there is one in every USCIS district.
- 23 OoC's community liaison officers should facilitate periodic meetings between district office examiners and citizenship educators to allow examiners to give feedback to teachers on ways students are not being prepared adequately.
- 24 OoC should maintain an up-to-date master list of ethnic media outlets for use in its national campaigns.
- 25 OoC should develop and maintain a comprehensive list of state contacts involved with immigration and civic integration, such as officials from state governors' offices and state refugee offices. The list should include a contact in each state who will receive and disseminate citizenship and integration materials statewide.
- 26 OoC should use the President's new Task Force on New Americans to promote a national citizenship plan. The task force should help coordinate integration services, disseminate information on integration activities, and inform agencies on policy and procedural issues affecting immigrants.
- 27 OoC's community liaison officers should maintain a list-serve of community-based organizations and coordinate with OoC's national office to inform community organizations of changes in naturalization policies and procedures.
- 28 OoC should work with immigrant organizations, funders, and USCIS to build consultative processes on immigration. These processes should inform legislators and others on challenges facing local communities.

Funding:

- 29 If given grant-making authority, OoC should fund demonstration projects on immigrant integration in order to identify and promote best practices.
- 30 OoC should survey states about whether they have funding for citizenship assistance and maintain information on citizenship funding. Such a survey would serve as a resource for OoC and for private funders.
- 31 OoC should coordinate its future funding of citizenship classes with the Department of Education in order to ensure maximum geographical coverage and the best allocation of scarce resources.
- 32 If given grant-making authority, OoC should fund nonprofit agencies to provide technical assistance to local organizations that are engaged in application assistance and citizenship classes.
- 33 OoC should provide information and resources to corporations that may be interested in supporting citizenship activities, such as worksite ESL classes.

- 34 OoC should consult and work in partnership with ORR to track funding for citizenship and civic engagement in states and cities, and it should publicize this information.
- 35 OoC should leverage support for nonprofit citizenship activities from the philanthropic and corporate sectors, educating these sectors about the importance of citizenship and integration, and about the contributions they can make.

1 The Chicago Council on Foreign Relations. Report of an Independent Task Force. *Keeping the Promise: Immigration Proposals from the Heartland* (June 2004).

The Office of Refugee Resettlement

Established by the Refugee Act of 1980, the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) is a division of the Administration for Children and Families within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). ORR's mission is to assist refugees and other special populations to achieve economic and social self-sufficiency in the United States. To this end, ORR funds and facilitates various programs that offer benefits and services, including temporary cash and medical assistance, employment preparation and job placement, skills training, English language classes, social adjustment assistance, and aid for victims of torture. Eligible populations served by ORR are refugees, asylees, Cuban and Haitian entrants, certain Amerasians, and victims of severe forms of trafficking. Together, these groups comprise about 10 percent of the immigrant population. The President appoints ORR's director.

ORR's chief partners are state refugee offices responsible for overseeing resettlement in their states and disbursing ORR funds to local service providers. Other key ORR partners include the nine national voluntary agencies authorized by the Department of State's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration to sponsor and resettle refugees and the ethnic-based refugee community organizations called "mutual assistance associations" or "MAAs."

The President and Congress determine ORR's budget, based on the refugee admissions ceiling set each year by the President in consultation with Congress, as well as estimates on the number of refugees and other populations anticipated to be served. ORR provides formula grants to states, based on an average of refugees served over a three year period, and discretionary grants to both state and nonprofit organizations. Other categories of funding are based on ORR's programs and priorities.

ORR has more than 26 years of experience in the successful economic and social integration of refugees. Each year, as required by the Refugee Act, ORR reports to Congress on its programs and outcomes, admissions to states, refugee national origins, and refugee self-sufficiency and social integration. In 2003 ORR reported that about 55 percent of refugees age 16 or over were employed, compared to 62 percent for the overall U.S. population. The labor force participation rate for refugees was about 61 percent, compared to 66 percent for the U.S. population as a whole, while the refugee unemployment rate was lower than that of the U.S. population, 5.7 percent compared to 6.0 percent.

Following the welfare reform laws of 1996, which set strict time limits on refugee eligibility for public benefits, ORR elevated the importance of citizenship services. In 2000 ORR changed its regulations to designate citizenship assistance as a categorical social service, thus allowing it to be an ORR-funded activity. It began several new initiatives to naturalize refugees, especially vulnerable elderly and disabled refugees, in order to preserve their eligibility for public benefits.

In 1998 ORR provided \$9.625 million in grants to 20 states for citizenship and social services for elderly refugees affected by welfare reform. The program aimed to assist them to naturalize and to access traditional services for the aging. It also funded the Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc. (CLINIC) to provide technical assistance to the states and over 100 local grantees working with refugee elders.

Also in 1998, ORR provided \$2,392,541 million for 20 citizenship grants in 18 states. The purpose was to provide citizenship education and application assistance to refugees who had met, or were within one year of meeting, the five-year residency requirement for citizenship. The program targeted refugee groups that had historically low naturalization rates due to language, cultural, or other barriers. In subsequent years, ORR continued to fund citizenship assistance, though the level of funding decreased significantly because of federal revenue shortfalls starting in 2001.

In addition to citizenship assistance services, ORR has funded citizenship trainings, conferences, and publications, such as *A Time for Decision: Citizenship at the Millennium* and two CLINIC handbooks, *Citizenship for Us: A Handbook on Naturalization and Citizenship* and *Citizenship for Refugee Elders: Issues and Options in Test Preparation*.

Despite its important funding of citizenship assistance, ORR is not in the best position to lead a national citizenship program. Its mandate is limited to refugees and other special populations, who are only about 10 percent of the foreign-born population. However, many of ORR's service

delivery models for refugee self-sufficiency and integration are ground-breaking, and these models could be expanded and applied to other immigrant populations. Refugees are 1.5 times more likely to naturalize than other immigrant groups, an indication of their social integration and the success of ORR's programs.¹

In a national citizenship campaign, ORR can play an important supporting role to the broader work of the Office of Citizenship of the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS).

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Programs and Services:

- 1 ORR should work with the Department of State to ensure that resettlement agencies provide information on the benefits and requirements of citizenship in cultural orientation classes for newly arrived refugees. The classes should instruct refugees to naturalize as soon as they are eligible and to avoid activities that may jeopardize their eligibility.
- 2 ORR should require its grantees to provide information to newly arrived refugees on the need to apply for a green card after one year in the United States, and to follow-up after one year to assist them with the application.
- 3 ORR should require its grantees to assist all eligible male refugees and other populations that it serves to register for Selective Service (a naturalization requirement) upon their arrival to the United States. Alternatively, ORR should work with the State Department's Office of Population, Refugees, and Migration to ensure that Selective Service registration is included as a required service in resettlement agencies' reception and placement contracts and grants.
- 4 ORR should assist its grantees providing English as a second language services to obtain Department of Education funding by building their capacity in grant writing, reporting, and program evaluation.

Collaboration:

- 5 ORR should meet regularly with the OoC to discuss shared goals and interests, and should assist OoC in tracking citizenship funding by states and cities and making this information publicly available.
- 6 ORR should encourage research to study refugee integration, including naturalization rates, and what lessons can be learned from refugees and applied to other populations.
- 7 ORR should encourage research on hard-to-naturalize refugee populations to identify barriers and promote best practices in serving them.

Funding:

- 8 ORR should recognize the legal immigration and citizenship needs of refugees by funding citizenship assistance as a key service.
- 9 ORR should make outreach to elderly and disabled refugees on Supplemental Security Income (SSI) a funding priority, to ensure they receive English language training, aging services, and citizenship application assistance before losing their benefits.
- 10 ORR should provide flow-through citizenship funding to national nonprofit organizations rather than states. These organizations add value by providing technical assistance to local citizenship service providers (their sub-grantees) and by leveraging more dollars from private funders.
- 11 ORR should annually track its naturalization-related funding, including funding for English language classes, citizenship outreach, and application assistance. It should provide steady funding for this work.
- 12 ORR should fund citizenship preparation classes for refugees, either separately from its English classes or as a component within English classes for those who desire it.

Policy Development:

- 13 An ORR representative should attend all citizenship-related meetings between community-based organizations and USCIS to stay informed about new policy developments and challenges, and to advocate on policies affecting refugees.

Citizenship Promotion:

- 14 ORR should publicize the high rate of refugee naturalization as a hallmark of success in refugee integration, and should promote naturalization as the ultimate goal of integration.
- 15 ORR should promote citizenship for refugees in its publications and on its website. Its website should have information on citizenship requirements and benefits, and should link to the USCIS website.
- 16 ORR's annual consultation with grantees should include sessions on citizenship, including best practices and lessons learned.
- 17 ORR should provide long-term funding to a national organization that can provide technical assistance to refugee service organizations on naturalization, citizenship and civic participation.

1 Fix, M., Passel, J., & Sucher, K. *Trends in Naturalization* (Washington, DC: Urban Institute, September 2003).

State Governments

The policies of state governors and legislatures deeply affect the daily lives of immigrants. State legislators have the authority to make laws separate from federal authority, and they take up an array of issues including taxation, budgets, economic development, education, health, human services, criminal justice, natural resources, transportation, elections, and redistricting.

The policies of immigration and immigrant integration are a topic of growing debate between states and the federal government. The federal government holds sole authority to make immigration laws affecting the number, type, and nationalities of immigrants arriving legally each year. It also has ultimate responsibility to enforce immigration laws, regulate national borders, and remove people from the country. Yet its actions deeply impact state demographics, revenues, expenses, health care services, education, and many other areas. As a result, state legislators are increasingly vocal about the apparent disconnect between federal lawmaking on immigration and realities at the state level.

These tensions attest to the nation's lack of an immigrant integration policy. Because of federal control over immigration policy, local officials and residents feel disempowered to deal with challenges in communities that have significant numbers of immigrants. In town hall meetings, teacher-parent assemblies, local media, and election campaigns, debates rage over the positives and negatives of educating a growing and diverse foreign-born population of school-aged children, serving the medical and social service needs of working poor families and those who speak limited English, establishing day laborer sites for underemployed adults, and dealing with undocumented newcomers.

Helping states navigate the intricacies of immigration and immigrant integration policies and practices is the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL). As a bipartisan organization, it serves legislators by providing research, technical assistance, and forums for policy exchanges on pressing state issues. It also advocates for state government interests before Congress and federal agencies.

NCSL's Immigrant Policy Project, established in 1992, has presented state concerns to the federal government on immigration reform for the undocumented; enforcement of immigration and labor laws; tuition support for undocumented students; restoration of federally funded, means-tested benefits to legal, noncitizen immigrants; citizenship; and specific immigrant integration practices for national promotion.

The project has identified how states implement immigrant programs mandated by federal or state law and provide services ordered by courts. Too often states bear the brunt of federal policies. As a result, states have sought to: offset the expense of means-tested benefits stripped by the 1996 Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act; establish in-state tuition costs for undocumented youth seeking a college education; expand the availability of English and employment training classes for limited English speakers; and fund short-term, statewide naturalization initiatives.

Citizenship Ceremony Influences Elected Official

After attending a citizenship ceremony, Virginia state Sen. Emmett W. Hanger Jr. (R-Augusta) reversed his opposition to offering in-state tuition rates to undocumented youth seeking a public college education. Sen. Hanger cited two factors for his change of heart. Immigrant advocates made a strong case, explaining the benefits to the state in having undocumented youth better educated and not under-employed. On a more personal level, his son's fiancée, an immigrant from the Philippines, had just become a U.S. citizen. Sen. Hanger attended the naturalization oath ceremony of his soon-to-be daughter-in-law and was greatly inspired, saying: "When those immigrants become citizens and the oath of loyalty they take, and what they go through to do that . . . it makes you appreciate the citizenship we enjoy."

The NCSL supports citizenship as a national priority to move immigrants into the mainstream of American cultural, economic, and political life. As its policy statement says: "States have led the way in easing barriers for eligible newcomers to become U.S. citizens. . . . We encourage the federal government to address barriers to naturalization and assist states in their efforts."¹

Historically states have played a key role in citizenship efforts. In the early twentieth century states supported citizenship promotion as part of the "Americanization" movement. Because of this push, immigrants received more information, earlier, on citizenship benefits, requirements, and procedures than they do today. In the late 1990s, primarily as a response to the crisis posed by the 1996 federal welfare law, states partnered with community-based organizations to help immigrants become citizens through outreach, English and civics classes, and application assistance. However, these naturalization initiatives were short-lived because of shrinking state budgets starting in 2001 and the abiding belief by most state leaders that

citizenship projects, although worthy of support, should be funded by the federal government as part of its national authority over immigration.²

Because of a lack of a national citizenship program, individual states have dealt with naturalization in strikingly different ways. California has in 2006 an estimated 2.7 million immigrants eligible for naturalization. California's funding for citizenship swiftly eroded in recent years. In 1999 under Gov. Gray Davis, the legislature approved \$7 million for a naturalization program supporting application services and legal assistance. Funding fell to \$2 million in 2003, and Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger, facing rising revenue shortfalls, terminated the project on December 31 of that year. After much public advocacy, the legislature approved \$1.5 million in the fiscal year 2005-2006 budget and increased the appropriation again to \$3 million in fiscal year 2006-2007.

The state of New York funds citizenship services chiefly through its Bureau of Refugee and Immigration Affairs in a program called the New York State Citizenship Initiative (NYSCI). NYSCI began in 1996 in response to compulsory cuts in public assistance to legal immigrants under the new federal welfare law. Since 1996, funding has remained consistent, but not expanded. In October 2003 the state legislature budgeted \$2.5 million for community-based citizenship programs. Of that, \$660,000 was dedicated to an ongoing New York Immigration Hotline, linking immigrants with information specialists speaking 19 languages. Citizenship grants are administered on a three-year cycle.

Illinois has the sixth largest population of immigrants eligible to become citizens—at 340,000.³ Yet it has the most active citizenship agenda of any state, through two strong programs. After the first program, the Bureau of Refugee and Immigrant Services' Refugee and Immigrant Citizenship Initiative (RICI) was established, naturalizations doubled in the Immigration and Naturalization Service Chicago District. In 1999 Illinois significantly expanded the bureau's budget authority and services from just refugees to all legal immigrants. In 2006 the bureau's budget is \$5.15 million. RICI, with a budget of \$2.5 million, delivers English language and civics instruction, as well as application assistance, to an annual average of 13,000 people, representing over 104 nationalities. Half of RICI's budget is used by community organizations targeting Latinos, a population with a low naturalization rate and the greatest educational and legal needs. Immigrants' accomplishments through RICI inspired many to pursue further language and skill development, and led to their civic participation.

Illinois's second citizenship program is the New American Initiative (NAI). On April 21, 2004, Gov. Rod Blagojevich announced his support for the initiative, asking for a \$3 million appropriation. Funding was directed to the Illinois

Department of Human Services and granted to the Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights (ICIRR). In its first year of operation, ending in June 2005, NAI's budget supported 11 collaboratives, involving 51 community-based organizations, which helped 2,879 immigrants complete naturalization applications. The initiative expects to assist even more immigrants to complete applications and see more new citizens take the oath of allegiance in 2006. The extensive experience gained by government agencies and community-based organizations in Illinois makes the state both a test tube and potential model for a federally-funded national citizenship program.

The Maryland legislature established the Maryland Office for New Americans (MONA) in 1994 to provide coordination of services to refugees and consultation to the Governor and General Assembly. State legislation passed in 1995 established a citizenship promotion program, administered by MONA, to encourage and assist eligible immigrants to become U.S. citizens and to become civically engaged. Funding for the program was capped at \$100,000 per year. Activities authorized in the legislation included outreach, instruction, application assistance, and voter registration. Due to the program's limited budget, activities have been restricted to citizenship classes.

Massachusetts established its Office for Refugees and Immigrants (ORI) in 1985. ORI's Citizenship Assistance Program (CAP) started in 1997. Its primary concern was to assist immigrants at risk of losing federally supported public aid to become citizens and thereby regain eligibility, thus saving the state from having to fund compensatory aid. CAP was initially funded at \$2 million in 1997. Over the years, funding fell to \$1.5 million, then \$750,000. In 2002, Acting Governor Jane Swift eliminated CAP. In 2006, Massachusetts' legislature appropriated \$500,000 for CAP.

The Florida Office of Refugee Services released a Request for Proposals in 2001 for a comprehensive refugee citizenship project, including naturalization outreach, legal assistance, refugee adjustment of status legal assistance, English literacy and conversation, and naturalization test preparation assistance. In a competitive bid, Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc. (CLINIC) and its consortium of eight local, charitable immigration programs won the largest award of \$4,054,601 for an 18-month contract. In 2002, the Office of Refugee Services awarded CLINIC a second contract for two years in the amount of \$4,152,634 with the understanding that the second year of the contract would be optional, depending on the numerical success of the first year and the continuing need for naturalization services for at-risk refugees. Despite the success of the program, the Refugee Services Office canceled the final 12 months of the contract with 30 days notice, abruptly ending services for hundreds of applicants in the naturalization process and hundreds more in the midst of their required English language classes.

State funded efforts to provide naturalization and language services have been crucial, especially since federal efforts have been modest and waning. State governors and legislatures have played a critical role in informing the public and federal authorities of the local experiences of immigrants and receiving communities. Legislatures and the NCSL have made citizenship a feature of their immigrant policy. Even so, our nation's best efforts to naturalize immigrants should not be determined by which state has the political will or budget.

The millions of immigrants eligible for citizenship, coupled with the numerous, successful local efforts made by community organizations, should give federal and state government ample motivation to pursue a national citizenship plan.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Funding:

- 1 State governors and legislators should advocate for expanded funding for English and civics instruction for immigrants through appropriations to the Workforce Investment Act.
- 2 State legislators should ensure that federal dollars for English and civics education are accessible not only to institutions of higher education but also to community-based organizations. This will ensure that immigrants seeking these services outside of college can receive them. State funding should be structured to support different institutions serving all persons in need of English and civics instruction.
- 3 States should provide funding to state refugee resettlement offices to promote long-term refugee integration through English language training, naturalization, and civic engagement programs. This will supplement Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) funding, and will be particularly necessary when ORR state-formula grants do not suffice.
- 4 States should provide funding for multiyear citizenship education campaigns in order to maximize the effect of a national campaign.
- 5 States should fund citizenship and civic integration programs that fill the gaps left by national funding.
- 6 State-funded citizenship programs should augment a national program by focusing on metropolitan communities which have the greatest need and insufficient federal funds, and on smaller immigrant gateway communities.

- 7 State governors and legislators should work closely with statewide immigration coalitions to secure funding and further policy priorities related to integration and citizenship services.
- 8 State legislators should support charitable organizations that serve immigrant integration needs by helping them to leverage local private dollars.

Policy Development and Advocacy:

- 9 State governors and legislators should continue to advocate for restoration to immigrants of federal means-tested benefits, such as Medicaid, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), and food stamps.
- 10 State governors and legislators should advocate for the full restoration of SSI benefits for noncitizen refugees beyond the seven year limit.
- 11 State governors and legislators should advocate for reduction of U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) application processing backlogs and increased federal funding for this purpose.
- 12 State governors should highlight the contributions of immigrants to their states.

State Legislation:

- 13 State legislators should work with state bar associations and community-based legal immigration service agencies to pass laws that criminalize the unauthorized practice of law. They should also appropriate monies to enforce these laws.

New and Expanded State Authority:

- 14 State legislators should appropriate sufficient funding to immigrant affairs offices. These offices should be tasked with improving government relations and services with foreign-born communities, fostering greater integration between native and foreign-born residents, and coordinating federal and state policies and services that affect immigrants.

State Government Oversight and Coordination:

- 15 State legislators and the NCSL should press for better coordination by federal authorities of immigrant integration programs.
- 16 States should use their databases of refugees who receive SSI to send notices to those facing the seven-year eligibility limit and to encourage them to seek naturalization assistance from a list of charitable immigration programs.

- 17 The NCSL's Immigrant Policy Project should help coordinate federal and state citizenship program design and data collection efforts. It should identify best practices, new implementation strategies, and evaluation methods.
- 18 State citizenship and civic integration programs should be coordinated between community-based organizations and state-funded institutions, including public colleges and schools, libraries, health programs, motor vehicle registrars, and voter registrars.
- 19 State-funded English language providers should be instructed on how to give students nonlegal information on naturalization benefits and eligibility requirements, and how to offer referrals to naturalization services.

Research:

- 20 States should develop citizenship programs by studying the institutions that played a significant role in the Americanization movement at the beginning of the twentieth century and identifying positive practices of the era that can be revived for today's immigrant integration and citizenship needs.
- 21 States should support independent research on statewide, noncitizen demographics, along with surveys of immigrant priorities.
- 22 State legislators should partner with the NCSL by funding research on the economic benefits of citizenship.

Promotion of Program Models:

- 23 State legislators, through the NCSL, should convene immigrant integration policy and practice meetings to explore citizenship promotion campaigns, naturalization assistance models, English and civics education curricula, and programs leading to naturalization and civic engagement.
- 24 State citizenship programs should support all aspects of immigrant integration. They should generate broad support particularly from immigrant communities.
- 25 State-supported immigrant integration models need to reflect multidirectional influences, with different immigrant groups as interfacing with each other and with the native-born.
- 26 State governments should identify dynamic, low-cost ways to provide English language and naturalization training locally through websites, DVDs, ipods, and viewer-controlled TV program selection devices similar to TIVO and Cable On Demand.
- 27 State legislators should sponsor naturalization application workshops in collaboration with congressional representatives and community-based organizations.

Promotion of Civic Education and Engagement:

- 28 State Departments of Education should offset the declining civics education in local schools by funding classroom learning and extracurricular activities that promote American ideals and values.
- 29 State legislatures should institute annual Immigrants' Days in which youth and adult immigrant leaders could observe local government in action.
- 30 State legislators should institute an immigrant-mentoring program for youth and adult immigrant leaders who have a strong interest in elected office or other forms of community leadership.

Improvement of State Services to Immigrants:

- 31 States should identify barriers for immigrants that need to access services which promote health, education, and family.
- 32 State registrars should ensure that voter registration activities are accessible to eligible foreign-born voters. They should ensure the integrity of registration systems to avoid confusion in determining who is eligible to register to vote.
- 33 State departments of motor vehicles should be properly trained in the correct application of laws that seek to restrict access to driver's licenses so as not to improperly deny licenses to eligible immigrants.

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- 1 National Conference of State Legislatures. "Refugee Assistance and Immigration Reform," para. 16, available at: <http://www.ncsl.org/statedfed/HUMAN.htm>
 - 2 Morse, A. and Orgocka, A. *Immigrants to Citizens: A Role for State Legislators* (Washington, DC: National Conference of State Legislatures, 2004).
 - 3 Fix, M., Passel, J.S., & Sucher, K. *Trends in Naturalization* (Washington, DC: Urban Institute, September 2003).

City Governments

City governments are generally comprised of locally elected mayors, council representatives, and other elected and appointed officials who administer city services. The composition of city government and the authority of officials are shaped by the city's charter. Mayors and council members have lines of authority similar to governors and state legislators but are restricted to local affairs within a municipal boundary using locally controlled revenues. As such, local and state representatives manage parallel issues of taxation, budgets, work force development, schools, social services, housing, law enforcement, voter registration, and elections. These issues significantly impact the quality of life for local residents and the city's appeal to prospective residents, including immigrants.

Immigrant population growth in a particular city is chiefly dependent on the presence of sponsoring family members or employers, in addition to good job prospects. Close behind these draws are the availability of affordable housing, quality schools, safe neighborhoods, and a welcoming environment for newcomers, particularly people of color and those who speak English as a second language. In many respects, immigrants and native-born residents share the same preferences for city residence and the same concerns for government action.

At the local level the impact of immigrants, particularly newer arrivals, is most acutely experienced by long-term residents. City governments have the opportunity to benefit from a population diversified in age, ethnicity, language, culture, and employment skills and have a special responsibility to stem social polarization. Immigrant "gateway" cities, so called for their sudden and rapid rise in new, foreign-born residents, are experiencing the most challenges because they lack the infrastructure to serve immigrant needs effectively, something that historically immigrant-based cities like New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles have had decades to develop.

The lack of a federal immigrant integration policy leaves cities and states to respond by themselves to the integration needs of the foreign-born. Pressing concerns common to growing cities, particularly those that are immigrant-impacted, include: an increase of school children who speak limited English, the challenge of absorbing newly arriving refugees, undocumented immigrants ineligible for publicly funded services, lack of affordable housing for larger than average families, a rising need for medical and social services for low-income families, contested day laborer site locations, occasional uncooperative relations between immigrants and law enforcement, and an increased demand for adult-based English and job training classes.

Despite these challenges, local governments routinely credit immigrants with countering slow economic growth and aging population trends. City governments also appreciate that immigrants revitalize dilapidated neighborhoods with improved housing and new, small businesses. In social terms, immigrants are applauded for their strong family values and pursuit of the American dream through education, hard work, and citizenship. It is not uncommon to hear that the high school valedictorian is foreign-born or a child of immigrants. Local news programs routinely feature heart-warming stories of immigrants becoming U.S. citizens.

The best local approaches see integration as a two-way, if not a multidirectional, process between immigrants and receiving communities. Well-developed integration strategies recognize that immigrant-impacted cities are often comprised of dozens of ethnic groups and that immigrants are now, more than ever, choosing both urban centers and suburban areas as their place of first residence in the United States. City integration services tend to help those at risk of family disintegration, economic dependency, low academic achievement, or criminal conduct.

Of great importance in integration is the city's role in attracting large and small businesses that offer workers a living wage and healthcare coverage. Correspondingly, city governments seek to attract residents who possess education and job skills that are desirable to employers. In this nexus, city governments and businesses recognize the need for foreign-born labor but also the need for immigrants to access English language and job skill training programs to improve their job prospects. Unfortunately, the demand for these programs exceeds availability. Classes often have long waiting lists or are not offered at times to fit the schedules of the working poor with childcare responsibilities. Therefore, to sustain the economic growth of their communities, cities use a combination of federal, state, and local revenues to support the educational needs of workers who speak limited English.

In an effort to welcome and integrate immigrants, it is increasingly common for city governments to set up chartered offices focusing on the needs of immigrant populations. For example, the cities of Boston, Houston, Los Angeles, New York have Immigrant and Refugee Affairs Offices, or what is sometimes called a New Americans Office. Other cities like Washington, D.C. have Latino Affairs Offices. Such offices advise mayors on immigration issues, analyze federal and state legislation affecting immigrants, inform the public about immigration policies, liaise between immigrant communities and city government, advocate on behalf of immigrant constituents, and publish multilingual literature on government services. To be effective, these offices need a broad and flexible mission to educate and assist immigrants, an appropriate budget, and a willingness to seek new ways of consensus

building among newcomers and long-term residents. Immigrant affairs offices should not be used as window dressing to appease ethnic community representatives or showcase a particular mayor or political party.

After experiencing new and rapid immigrant growth, some cities have established a time-limited commission mandated to study and speak on broad immigrant issues or a few particular matters of concern to the city council. Commissions, which may be the precursor of an immigrant affairs office, typically submit a report to the city council with recommendations.

Immigrant affairs offices or immigrant-focused commissions often prioritize the need for immigrant integration initiatives. Citizenship programs are often highlighted as a priority, based on a need expressed by immigrants. The state of California's Little Hoover Commission's report, *We the People: Helping Newcomers Become Californians* identified the need for naturalization promotion and assistance from federal, state, and local governments. The Santa Clara County Office on Human Relations Citizenship and Immigrant Services Program's Summit on Immigrant Needs and Contributions also prioritized citizenship services and funding for citizenship programs.

Despite the demand for citizenship, naturalization rates are going down in some cities. The Institute for Metropolitan Affairs at Roosevelt University in Chicago produced a report in June 2003 noting that the naturalization rates and English proficiency levels for immigrants had decreased from 1990 to 2000.¹ Following this report, the state of Illinois set up a Joint Legislative Taskforce on Immigrants and Refugees that held hearings in early 2004 and identified a lack of both accurate information about naturalization and resources to assist immigrants with the process.² As a result, the Illinois governor and legislature established a statewide New Americans Initiative, which is the country's most integrated citizenship program. More and more, city governments realize that citizenship programs produce life-changing results, strengthening families and forging strong community partnerships among native and foreign-born residents alike.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Legislation and Policies:

- 1 Localities, in the absence of state laws, should pass consumer protection legislation against the unauthorized practice of law to protect low-income immigrants from the predatory practices of unqualified immigration counselors.
- 2 Localities should pass legislation to establish offices of immigrant affairs with a broad mission and sufficient budget.

- 3 City immigrant affairs offices should have advisory committees that include immigrants and a formal process to receive community input.
- 4 City governments should consider setting up commissions of civic leaders to identify strategies to promote immigrant integration, citizenship, and civic engagement.
- 5 City councils should review the option of granting noncitizens the right to vote as “citizens of the city” in local elections. Councils should consider whether giving noncitizens a voice in the local political process will encourage them to become U.S. citizens at a faster and higher rate.

Services:

- 6 City governments should survey immigrant populations on how they understand, perceive, and use city services.
- 7 Localities should ensure that their services are accessible to immigrants and should review their compliance with Title VI access requirements.
- 8 City governments should maintain parallel, multilingual websites to make their municipal services more readily available to immigrant populations.
- 9 City governments should translate guides to city services in frequently used immigrant languages.
- 10 City governments should publish and distribute directories of public and private organizations that serve specific immigrant needs, such as translation, interpretation, bilingual health screening, English language instruction, legal aid, and citizenship classes.
- 11 City governments, particularly through immigrant affairs offices, should sponsor clinics in which immigrants can receive a one-on-one consultation with a volunteer attorney on legal immigration matters.

Coordination of Services:

- 12 City governments should study the demographic profiles of their immigrant population to inform policy-making and service delivery. Research should identify numbers, source countries, residential settlement patterns, languages, socioeconomic attainment, education, labor force impact, naturalization rates, and voting rates.
- 13 City governments should help coordinate public school efforts to inform 17- to 18-year-old students about naturalization eligibility. Selective Service registration for males should be used as an opportunity to educate foreign-born male students about citizenship.
- 14 City governments should encourage program partnerships between public schools and libraries in providing English language instruction to adults and children.

- 15 City governments should encourage employers of significant numbers of immigrant workers to provide ESL and citizenship instruction in the workplace. Tax incentives should be provided to participating employers and grants to charitable organizations for this purpose.
- 16 City governments should encourage local refugee resettlement agencies to assist clients in becoming Lawful Permanent Residents and citizens. City officials should assist these agencies by identifying skilled volunteers to help applicants at workshops and to tutor applicants.
- 17 City offices for aging services should ensure that their programs address the citizenship needs of foreign-born elders, particularly refugees at risk of losing Supplemental Security Income benefits at the end of their seven-year eligibility limit.
- 18 City immigrant affairs offices should work closely with ethnic media outlets to increase immigrants’ knowledge of city officials, structures, services, and events of concern to immigrants.

Funding:

- 19 City governments should not prematurely withdraw or reduce local funding for citizenship services if federal funding increases; rather, they should coordinate a seamless transition as local organizations expand and secure their citizenship programs with federal, state, local, and philanthropic support.
- 20 City governments should use local funds to support citizenship services that federal funding may not cover, such as classes for specific ethnic and elderly populations, legal representation, naturalization oath ceremony events, voter registration, and civic engagement projects.
- 21 City councils should fund family literacy programs to reduce the literacy gap between school-aged children and their foreign-born parents.
- 22 City education departments should ensure that the U.S. history and civics curriculum for their adult basic education courses promotes U.S. citizenship status, its rights, and its responsibilities, and helps students study for the naturalization test. Alternatively, adult, ESL, and civics courses should have a citizenship component for students who wish to study for the naturalization test.

Immigrant Integration and Citizenship Promotion:

- 23 City governments should consult early with immigrant groups and service organizations when developing integration policies and strategies. Focus groups, public hearings, and a written comment process should be used to capture good ideas.

- 24 City governments should encourage naturalization among their foreign-born employees by providing information about local charitable immigration programs and distributing free citizenship materials.
- 25 City governments should encourage partnerships between public and private institutions to promote voter registration for new citizens.
- 26 City officials should mentor immigrant leaders to promote their greater civic engagement and participation in government.
- 27 City governments should convene community-based organizations to identify ways to involve immigrants in civic engagement and to prepare them for naturalization.
- 28 City government representatives should attend naturalization ceremonies and highlight the positive impact of immigrants on the community and the ways they contribute to civic life.
- 29 City officials should provide assistance to USCIS and charitable organizations in finding and securing appropriate venues for naturalization oath ceremonies.
- 30 City governments should convene public-private forums to promote the work of local organizations that provide naturalization and citizenship services.

- 1 Paral, R. and Norkewicz, M. *The Metro Chicago Immigration Fact Book* (Roosevelt University Institute for Metropolitan Affairs, June 2003).
- 2 Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights. Report to the Illinois Department of Human Services on the New Americans Initiative (2005).

Public Libraries

Public libraries are a unique and vital institution in U.S. society. Libraries assume many roles and provide varied services to meet the public's need for learning. They are an open and welcoming community center that the American public supports, absorbing and reflecting many socioeconomic and cultural differences. Libraries can be found in almost all communities—metropolitan, suburban, and rural. They are free, often centrally located, and open extended hours, including evenings and weekends.

The nation's public library system is greatly indebted to the philanthropist, Andrew Carnegie. Starting in the late nineteenth century, Carnegie, and later Carnegie Corporation, spent \$56 million to establish 1,861 public libraries throughout the United States.¹ In 1926 the corporation focused its philanthropy on improving the library profession and helping libraries to become a central point of information and services. As a result, most communities in the United States are still receiving the benefits of a "Carnegie" library.

Immigrants use libraries like any other patron. They can find answers to most questions, from the practical to the theoretical, through library loan collections, reference materials, research archives, interlibrary loan services, and the librarian reference desk. Like other patrons, they also conduct research, complete schoolwork, read, listen to music, watch movies, retrieve tax forms, and attend community meetings.

Immigrants Need Access to the Internet

Libraries are increasingly important to low-income and limited English speaking immigrants who do not own or know how to operate a computer. Now that the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) requires immigrants to make their own scheduled appointments on-line, using a system called InfoPass, immigrants without home computers often go to libraries. Also, the increasing availability of online filing of immigration forms necessitates more computer accessibility. As a result, libraries are faced with a need to budget more funds and more staff time to help people transact personal affairs on the Internet and to update their websites with immigration-related information and links.

Through their services, libraries mainstream immigrants who are engaged in familiar, everyday activities, but are in an entirely new cultural setting and often dealing with a new language. Libraries continue to be gateways for immigrants seeking information about their new community and learning new skills. As the numbers of immigrants increase, libraries are modifying budgets, material collections, programs, and staffing to adapt to immigrant patrons without displacing traditional ones.²

Library services help immigrants access information and build skills to navigate the complexities of life in a new country. These services include: non-English books and magazines with information about their home country; English as a second language (ESL) classes; literacy training in English for multigenerational family members; space for native language training for children with parents who speak a first language other than English; homework tutoring for ESL, school age students; information about government functions and services; reference desk help for information normally acquired through long-term acculturation; computer classes; and citizenship classes on English, history, and civics for the naturalization exam.

The Queens Borough Public Library in New York City is one striking example of how a library is changed by its foreign-born customers. The library serves one of the most diverse communities in the country. Queens has residents

representing 160 nationalities. One-third of residents are foreign-born.³ The library's New Americans Program (NAP), established in 1977, provides speakers of non-English languages a wide array of services. These include non-English books and publications; on-line directories of non-English newspapers; mail-a-book services for home-bound, non-English readers; cultural integration workshops; library-based ESL classes; an on-line book club that sends short English reading selections by e-mail; and referral lists for English classes, citizenship classes, and charitable legal immigration services. All these services are listed on the library's well-organized website.

The Jones Library in Amherst, Mass., represents a small community with a proportionately small immigrant population. Nonetheless, the Jones Library has an ESL center. Currently, Lynne Weintraub⁴, a noted author of citizenship instruction materials, staffs the center on a part-time basis. The center offers intermediate level English instruction, one-to-one volunteer ESL tutoring at all levels, and a citizenship class, which is conducted in ten sessions that are one and one-half hours each. Weintraub explains naturalization eligibility, distributes and helps students complete the Application for Naturalization (N-400), explains the naturalization process in detail, refers people to English classes, assigns volunteer tutors, and even makes case inquiries with the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) and helps low-income applicants complete fee waiver requests for the naturalization application fee. Weintraub reports a 100 percent pass rate for her students taking the naturalization exam.⁵

The Columbus Metropolitan Library's Hilltop Branch in Columbus, Ohio, exemplifies how a library system can respond to a quick rise in a city's immigrant population. In the 1990s the number of immigrants in Columbus particularly Somalis and Latinos, increased significantly. One low estimate of the Somali population is around 25,000. As a result, Hilltop and other Columbus library branches in immigrant-impacted neighborhoods have greatly expanded and changed their services.

Hilltop hosts six ESL classes per week in partnership with the Columbus Literacy Council. Importantly, the literacy council does not ask for documentation. The library also hosts "Homes on the Hill," home ownership classes led by a Latino service organization. It partners with a nonprofit organization to provide General Equivalency Degree (GED) and adult basic literacy classes two times per week. Hilltop's manager meets bimonthly with the county's Department of Jobs and Family Services to connect the library's ESL classes to job training. As has been shown in other resettlement cities populated by Somali refugees, immigrants with limited English and little formal education need English to improve their job market skills.⁶ In addition to questions about employment, immigrant

patrons often ask the reference librarian for referrals to free or sliding-scale health care services and legal immigration representation.

In 2004 Hilltop created a new literacy liaison library position with a Spanish-language proficiency requirement. The liaison distributes books and flyers at Latino groceries and reads English and Spanish stories to children whose parents shop at a "free" store sponsored by an interfaith coalition. The liaison draws limited English speakers to Hilltop's expanding collection of English materials for those who speak a second language and non-English books, newspapers, and periodicals.

Recently, Hilltop hosted a very popular citizenship class in collaboration with the Columbus Literacy Council. The class ended when funding from the State Library of Ohio stopped. Although space limitations posed a challenge, Hilltop's manager hopes that the library will resume the citizenship class because of its importance and popularity. The council continues to offer one free class elsewhere, but demand is so high that it could offer multiple citizenship classes at a time, if money were available.⁷

While many excellent examples exist in large and small communities, more needs to be done for libraries to be a focal point for immigrant citizenship and integration services. Many suburban and rural communities have experienced an increase in the number of immigrants, but lack community-based organizations to help serve them. A national citizenship program reaching immigrant-impacted communities across the country would greatly benefit from the utility of libraries and the spirit of assistance common to library staff, but it would require funding to support the best locally devised plans and partnerships.

Conscious of these issues, the Department of Homeland Security's Office of Citizenship (OoC) held a meeting on October 26 and 27, 2004 at the Harold Washington Library Center in downtown Chicago with people from across the country, including library staff, community-based organization staff, and ESL teachers. The purpose of the meeting was to share information about how immigrants use libraries, particularly for their integration and citizenship needs. Since then, the OoC has been seeking to involve the national leadership of library and literacy organizations in bringing proven practices to scale and trying innovative ideas. In March 2006, the OoC released a report entitled "*Library Services for Immigrants: A Report on Current Practice.*"

To promote citizenship and provide naturalization services, libraries can: disseminate posters and flyers created by the OoC and local immigration service organizations, have current Application for Naturalization (N-400) forms and support documents describing the naturalization process, keep reference desk staff informed of the fundamentals of

naturalization requirements and procedures, keep a list of charitable immigration service organizations providing direct legal representation and education, offer space for naturalization classes and naturalization application workshops, and recruit professionals and trained volunteers to provide literacy instruction for passing the naturalization exam. The list of possible services and community partnerships is extensive because of the common missions of libraries and community organizations that serve immigrants.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Planning for Immigrant Integration Services:

- 1 Local public libraries should establish a working committee to make policy, budget, and program recommendations to better serve foreign-born library users, while fitting these recommendations for long-term, institutional support into the mission of the library.
- 2 Local public libraries should use the growth in the immigrant population and its demand for services as leverage in receiving additional public funds. They should develop budgets with a line item dedicated to immigrant integration needs, as defined by the community and supported by state and local funding. The budget for immigrant integration should be proportional to the percentage of the population that requires the services and should not be based on the number of immigrants using library resources, since systemic barriers for immigrants might currently exist.
- 3 Local public libraries should seek foreign-born board members interested in helping libraries serve immigrant communities better and solicit more programmatic and material support from immigrant communities for library services.
- 4 Local libraries in partnership with immigrant community groups should identify local allies who can serve as volunteer teachers, tutors, grant writers, and fundraisers, or as donors of money and materials, for library-based immigrant integration services. Civic associations not commonly identified as immigrant-focused should be invited to learn how important libraries are to immigrants, particularly new or low-income immigrants.
- 5 Local public libraries should conduct listening sessions with foreign-born library users, English teachers, immigration advocates, refugee resettlement agencies, and ethnic-based community organizations to be better informed when making policy, budget, and program recommendations.
- 6 Local public libraries should have an ongoing or annual evaluation to receive feedback from foreign-born library users.
- 7 Local public libraries should have multilingual comment sheets clearly visible to visitors in order to solicit input

that may be unspoken in a public listening session. Questions should be both fixed and open-ended to ensure that people from cultures with different comfort levels for providing input or criticism are heard.

Immigrant Integration Services:

- 8 Local public libraries in immigrant-impacted communities should assess the need for, and hire, bilingual and multilingual librarians who can help design library shelves, kiosks, programs, and outreach messages to better serve foreign-born library users.
- 9 Local public libraries should have a written policy that supports the purchasing of English and non-English collections—novels, short stories, reference materials, dictionaries, magazines, newspapers, consumer guides, CDs, DVDs, audiotapes, and computer-based academic programs—targeting different immigrant populations in the community and reflecting their expressed reading interests and learning needs.
- 10 Local public libraries should maintain a supply of community service guides for distribution to newcomers, foreign or native-born, to increase their access to information that facilitates integration. The guide should also be available on-line. If no guide exists, library staff should call on local government and social service leaders to develop one, both in English and translated.
- 11 Local public libraries should stock their collections appropriately for a wide variety of ages and English levels by consulting, if necessary, with ESL experts.
- 12 Local public libraries should stock their collections based on immigrant integration needs and the needs of persons who serve immigrants professionally, such as teachers, social workers, community organizers, and religious leaders.
- 13 Local public libraries seeking to stock materials promoting immigrant integration should include information on: local city government services, local history, English language development, parenting, health care and wellness activities, employment search strategies, higher educational opportunities, immigration law, citizenship requirements, voting, and volunteer opportunities.
- 14 Local public libraries should stock shelves and kiosks with citizenship materials and encourage partnerships between librarians, ESL and civics teachers, and charitable, legal immigration practitioners.
- 15 Local public libraries, in cooperation with refugee resettlement agencies, should have regularly scheduled orientation tours, particularly in communities experiencing a steady stream of new arrivals. Orientation should focus on the interests of adults, school-age children, and parents helping their children's literacy and educational progress.

- 16 Local public libraries should regularly schedule family-based literacy classes, off-site if necessary, to increase English literacy at levels appropriate for people of different generations and educational backgrounds.
- 17 Local public libraries should develop after-school programs that offer the children of immigrants who work long hours an alternative to latch-key arrangements. After-school programs need to be designed with schools and solicit parent input to ensure their support and keep the programs purposeful and orderly.
- 18 Local public libraries should offer English conversation circles bringing native and ESL speakers together. Circles offer limited English speakers an opportunity to practice their vocabulary, syntax, and pronunciation and form bridges between people of different backgrounds.

Immigrant Citizenship Services:

- 19 Local public libraries, especially those with strong or developing citizenship programs, should ask the American Library Association (ALA) to develop a partnership with the OoC for program design ideas and tools, based on best practices listed in the OoC report *Library Services for Immigrants: A Report on Current Practice*.
- 20 In collaboration with charitable legal immigration programs and literacy councils, local public libraries should assemble up-to-date citizenship application packets that include an Application for Naturalization (N-400), information about the naturalization process written for limited English readers, and self-study materials for more proficient readers. The packets should include the date of the information's validity and note the importance of obtaining professional legal counsel.
- 21 Local public libraries should hold citizenship test preparation classes in partnership with community-based organizations experienced in naturalization law and testing. Libraries are perceived as a neutral place that is not designated for social services or for a particular ethnic or immigrant group, thus attracting many people.
- 22 Local public libraries with ample space should host community meetings on immigration law and naturalization application workshops in partnership with community-based legal immigration programs. They should reconsider policies opposing advertising or requiring free entry to meetings because community based-organizations that host application workshops charge a nominal fee for their professional services.
- 23 Local public libraries should maintain an ample bank of modern computers that offer Internet capability and extended use periods. USCIS requires immigrants to make appointments using its heavily trafficked on-line InfoPass service, which often necessitates many attempts. Also, USCIS plans to allow more immigration applications to be filed on-line.

- 24 Local public libraries should create portals on their website with up-to-date information about English language assistance and citizenship information. The website should have useful links to OoC and local charitable immigration programs.

- 1 Carnegie Corporation of New York. "A Short History of Carnegie Corporation's Library Program," available at: <http://www.carnegie.org/reporter/07/library/shorthistory.html>
- 2 Barr, C. W. "Rewriting Book on Libraries from Immigrants' View" *The Washington Post* (February 5, 2006), p. C01.
- 3 Queens Library. "About this Program," available at: <http://www.queens.lib.ny.us/programs/nap/aboutnap.asp>
- 4 Lynne Weintraub is a participant in CLINIC's ESL/Citizenship Instruction Working Group for research on this report. She has contributed to this report by conducting interviews and writing sections of Chapter 7. The Massachusetts Literacy Foundation recognized Lynne Weintraub as a 2005 Literacy Champion for her work in adult education and English for speakers of other languages.
- 5 Interview with Lynne Weintraub conducted by the report's authors on March 9, 2005.
- 6 Fahrenthold, D. A. "English Key to Jobs for Somalis, City Says" *The Washington Post* (February 28, 2006), p. A03.
- 7 Interview with Leroy Bokai conducted by the report's authors on March 2, 2006.

Philanthropic Foundations

Philanthropic foundations in the United States are a major social force in creating a higher quality of life for people with unmet needs in a society with great disparities. To reduce inequities and build a better community, philanthropic foundations distribute vast funds every year to charitable organizations with shared missions. While philanthropic foundations support many cultural, educational, and scientific causes, foundations that focus their wealth and influence on the needs of the poor and marginalized play a particularly vital civic role.

Foundations are not alone in reducing the strains of life often experienced by underprivileged people. Houses of worship, civic voluntary associations, and government share in this effort. Yet foundations offer a particularly powerful nexus of money, persuasion, innovative ideas, and partnerships to effect positive social change. They can also successfully leverage other funds to match their contributions, thereby increasing and diversifying the monies available to nonprofit organizations.

Without the aid of philanthropic foundations, charitable organizations' capacity to serve would be greatly diminished. The constant demands on religious institutions to do more, the rising and falling of public tax dollars, and polit-

ical or ideological conflicts in government discourse over how best to aid the poor make foundation dollars all the more important.

Some immigrants directly benefit from foundation support of charities that serve them based on their low income, limited education, narrow employment skills, health care concerns, and social service and other integration needs. The majority of immigrants, who are not poor, are still affected because they have family members or friends who have received these services or they simply live in a largely immigrant community that benefits collectively. The shared work of foundations and community service organizations visibly exemplifies good will toward immigrants who may come from societies that are underdeveloped or that are severely restricted socially or politically and restrain such charitable activities.

Large and well-endowed foundations have traditionally taken the lead in addressing the challenges that immigrants present on a national scale. In recent years, more regional and local foundations have identified immigrants and integration activities as a priority for funding, due to an array of factors: a historically high rate of legal immigration in the 1990s, a rising percentage of the foreign-born in the population total, the growing diversity of immigrants, record numbers of undocumented and vulnerable migrants, the special needs of refugees as persecuted people, new federal and state welfare laws pushing poor immigrants deeper into poverty, and the strong desire of immigrants to become U.S. citizens and participate in the nation's democratic system.

Foundations interested in promoting the well-being of immigrants fund activities involving demographic, social, and policy research; publications; conferences; professional development training; direct human services; advocacy and community organizing; English and civics classes; citizenship outreach; and naturalization application assistance. Traditionally, foundations funded charitable organizations individually and directly. Now, a widening group has begun to pool funds, sometimes through a new grant-making entity, to support large initiatives involving national, local, and regional collaborations. Examples include the Grant Makers Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees (GCIR) and Four Freedoms Fund.

In recent years, noteworthy foundation funding for naturalization and immigrant civic engagement has resulted in increased knowledge and skill among nonprofit organizations in promoting immigrant integration. A few have been groundbreaking for their size, purpose, and impact.

In 1995 the Ford Foundation provided \$135,000 in funding to the Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc. in support of nine diocesan immigration programs in five states that helped naturalize approximately 20,000 people through

478 citizenship application workshops. It is one of the earliest examples of a multisite, large-scale citizenship initiative since the reform and expansion of immigration laws in 1965. In 1996 the James Irvine Foundation launched a seven-year, \$13 million project called the Central Valley Partnership (CVP) for Citizenship, targeting tens of thousands of immigrant farm laborers living and working in rural California. The CVP project is notable for assisting more than 10,000 immigrants—predominately low-income, limited English speaking agricultural workers from Mexico and Southeast Asia—to file citizenship applications.

Welfare reform in 1996 propelled the most ambitious and productive citizenship project in the nation's modern history. The Open Society Institute, in early 1997, established the \$50 million Emma Lazarus Fund (ELF) to support a diverse array of national networks and stand-alone immigration and social welfare programs to naturalize people who were at risk of losing public benefits without citizenship status. An estimated 500,000 immigrants were assisted in the naturalization process through ELF.

A final example of a national citizenship initiative funded solely by private philanthropy is the James L. Knight Foundation's American Dream Fund. This two-year-old fund started in 2005 with \$6 million awarded to 29 local and state organizations in 14 communities where the foundation has a presence. Naturalization results of the American Dream Fund's first year will be known in late 2006.

One challenge of obtaining funding from foundations is their tendency to perceive naturalization programs as a black hole, based on persistent backlogs and bureaucratic obstacles. Another challenge is the view that naturalization services were the compelling issue in the 1990's but not today. While civic engagement is now a popular issue for immigrant funding, the focus is on organizing immigrants, with little attention to naturalization. Comprehensive naturalization services should be equally important to civic engagement activities in funding decisions. Foundations should resist funder fatigue and the urge to constantly fund new and unique projects to make their giving stand out. They need to provide multiyear funding and to leverage other sustainable funders in order to produce creative and lasting organizational partnerships and ever-rising naturalization rates.

Foundations are essential partners with nonprofit and charitable organizations assisting immigrants. They will continue to play an important role in promoting naturalization and civic engagement activities for the foreign-born, even if a national citizen program is implemented and funded. With greater public and private cooperation, more successful immigration and immigrant integration policies

will be developed and put into practice. In the process, the nation's immigrant heritage will be affirmed and immigrant contributions will continue to enrich the nation.

Foundation-Funded Research

Foundations have funded important research on immigrant demographics, rates of immigration, characteristics of immigrants, relocation preferences, language and professional skills, and naturalization rates. These reports help determine advocacy and service delivery priorities. Other research on immigration policy and programs provides knowledge of what works, what does not work, and why. A short, select list of foundation-supported documents on naturalization and immigrant integration follows.

Naturalization and Citizenship:

The Long Grey Welcome: A Study of the American Naturalization Program, David S. North, National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials' Education Fund, 1985, supported by the Ford Foundation.

Democracy on Hold: How the Citizenship Process is Failing Immigrants and Our Nation, Margery Colten, Citizenship Now Coalition, 1998, supported by the Open Society Institute.

Citizenship at Risk: New Obstacles to Naturalization, Laurie Joyce, Jeff Chenoweth, and Laura Burdick, Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc., 2000, supported by the Ford Foundation and the Carnegie Corporation of New York.

We the People: Proposed Citizenship Project, Tamar Jacoby (Manhattan Institute) and Frank Sharry (National Immigration Forum), May, 2003, funded by The Pew Charitable Trusts.

Trends in Naturalization, Brief No. 3, Michael Fix, Jeffrey S. Passel, & Kenneth Sucher, Urban Institute, September 2003, supported by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, the Pew Charitable Trusts, and the National Institute for Child Health and Human Development.

Citizenship for Us: A Handbook on Naturalization and Citizenship, 4th Edition, Aliza Becker, Laura Burdick, and Jeff Chenoweth, Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc., 2006, supported by the Carnegie Corporation of New York with earlier editions supported by the Department of Health and Human Services/Office of Refugee Resettlement.

Citizenship and Civic Engagement:

Supporting English Language Acquisition: Opportunities for Foundations to Strengthen the Social and Economic Well-Being of Immigrant Families, Tia Elena Martinez and Ted Wang, Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees, 2005, supported by the Annie E. Casey Foundation.

Immigrant Integration & Intergroup Relations: New Directions for a New Century, Dick Kirschten, National Immigration Forum, December, 1999.

Now That I'm Here: What America's Immigrants Have to Say About Life in the U.S. Today, Steve Farkas, Ann Duffett, & Jean Johnson, Public Agenda, 2003, supported by the Carnegie Corporation of New York.

Inspiring Leadership in Immigrant Communities, Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service and the Immigrant Legal Resource Center, 2003, supported by the Open Society Institute.

Immigrant-Led Organizers in Their Own Voices: Local Realities and Shared Visions, Sibora Gjecovi, Esther James, and Jeff Chenoweth, Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc., 2006, supported by the Carnegie Corporation of New York.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Funding Perspectives:

- 1 Foundations need to look holistically at the immigration experience and support immigrant integration at various stages to encourage and prepare immigrants for citizenship.
- 2 Foundations need to fund naturalization services, regardless of the persistent problems in the federal government's naturalization processes such as backlogs, lengthy waits for appointments, and rising fees.
- 3 Foundations should use their flexibility to fund immigrant civic engagement opportunities not likely to be funded by the federal government prior to, during, and after the naturalization process, to compliment government-funded activities.
- 4 Foundations need to establish a funding category for charitable legal services, which do not fit under traditional foundation funding categories.
- 5 Foundations need to mirror naturalization funding with the steady increase of newly arriving immigrants and not ignore immigrant service organizations just because immigration is a constant phenomenon. Funders should use a cross-foundational approach to match federal support.

- 6 Foundations experienced with immigration concerns need to help other foundations, particularly in new gateway communities, by sharing lessons learned to enable them to draw on programs with proven results.
- 7 If a national citizenship program is implemented, foundation support should promote the inclusion of immigrants, particularly at the local level where services are delivered.
- 8 Foundations need to consider legal, language, and test preparation services for naturalization as important as civic engagement activities and fund both equally.
- 9 Foundations should fund naturalization services in combination with civic engagement activities wherever the model fits local abilities, interests, and realities.

Funding Options:

- 10 Before a national citizenship program is implemented, foundations should collaborate with charitable organizations to create multimillion dollar naturalization projects that follow best practices in strategic cities and regions, foreshadowing what a national citizenship program could do if grown to scale.
- 11 Foundations should renew funding for state immigration coalitions and national immigration networks that are pursuing immigrant integration and citizenship projects.
- 12 Foundations should fund large, national networks that can provide training and technical support and leverage more funds. If national networks are not present, foundations should support local efforts directly, ultimately expanding coalition-building efforts.
- 13 Foundations should take the lead in funding research that seeks to answer important questions about immigrants, their approach to citizenship, and the outcomes of citizenship. A list of critical research questions are identified in this report. (See “Research Institutions” in this chapter.) For example, what are the priorities of naturalization for immigrants in general and according to demographic groupings? Are naturalized immigrants more civically engaged than immigrants who are not naturalized? Conversely, does civic engagement among immigrants result in faster and higher naturalization rates?
- 14 Foundations should fund citizenship-related services like English and civics instruction in ways unsupported by public dollars to demonstrate how more federal funds are needed to fulfill the federal government’s responsibility to immigrants and the communities in which they live.
- 15 Foundations should fund technical assistance for citizenship program models to identify, evaluate, and promote best practices, replication, and accountability.
- 16 Foundations should fund adult learning curricula in classes for immigrants in the naturalization process to

make the experience of becoming a citizen more meaningful, memorable, and rich in learning opportunities.

- 17 If a national citizenship program is implemented, foundations should fund complimentary messages on citizenship promotion and civic engagement.
- 18 Foundations should fund multisector partnerships and unorthodox alliances that government cannot support because of public funding restrictions.
- 19 Foundations should fund multimedia citizenship promotional materials including documentaries on the naturalization process and oath ceremony, web-based curricula that is interactive and explores issues beyond the content of the naturalization test, and instructional videos on the U.S. government and institutions, civic history, and other issues relevant to immigrants.
- 20 Foundations should fund experienced practitioners as well as professional researchers to publish articles in academic and specialist journals on immigrant integration and citizenship participation.
- 21 Foundations need to fund advocacy groups that lobby legislatures and federal immigration officials to improve immigrant customer services and include private groups in discussions on immigration policy. Important advocacy efforts should focus on sustainable funding, backlog reduction, naturalization testing content and methodologies, alternatives to testing, disability issues, and concerns about immigrant access to information.

Funding Capacity Building:

- 22 Foundations should help fund a full-time staff person dedicated to citizenship and immigrant integration policies at each national immigration network and state immigration coalition.
- 23 Foundations should provide capacity-building funding for ethnic-based community organizations to become recognized agencies by the Board of Immigration Appeals in order to expand the availability of qualified, charitable legal immigration services and avoid the risk of being charged with the unauthorized practice of law.
- 24 Foundations need to take the lead in funding immigrant integration strategies and programs in response to a laissez-faire federal policy.
- 25 Foundations with experience in funding naturalization programs should link other foundations with charitable immigration experts who can educate them on the benefits of citizenship, the naturalization process, barriers, and services that best help immigrants succeed in becoming citizens.
- 26 Foundations need to respond affirmatively to any significant increase in public funding for citizenship by leveraging philanthropic and corporate support.
- 27 Foundations need to hold seminars and forums to encourage businesses to offer employee compensation

to immigrants for time dedicated to learning English and other job skills that benefit the employer.

- 28 Foundations should fund roundtables and conferences on naturalization policies, advocacy training, and program replication strategies.
- 29 Foundations should feature nationalization stories and issues on their websites, as a way to attract other foundations and encourage their participation in promoting immigrant integration and citizenship.

Funding Partnerships:

- 30 Funders should support vertically and horizontally integrated collaborations functioning under a national citizenship program to ensure uniformity in standards, training, information sharing, and leadership development.
- 31 Foundations need to help private organizations link naturalization programs to programs promoting voter education, registration, and participation.
- 32 Foundations need to join federal, state, and local authorities and private sector groups in jointly considering the approaches and infrastructure of a national citizenship plan before significant federal funds are available to launch the initiative. Foundations should convey the importance of experienced national and local networks promoting citizenship and delivering naturalization services and language instruction.
- 33 Foundations dedicated to immigrant integration and citizenship in the United States and abroad can bring charitable organizations together internationally, one-on-one or in small groups, to share successful citizenship and immigrant integration models.
- 34 Foundations should fund forums and projects that bring academics, policy makers, and practitioners together, helping bridge the divide between these groups that share similar missions to help immigrants integrate and society to be more welcoming.

Research Institutions

The United States needs more research in the field of immigration. With immigration numbers at historic highs, significant diversity in the source of immigrants, and the globalization of ordinary people's personal and professional relations, the country faces a host of new questions about immigrant incorporation. More dialogue and collaboration between researchers, policy makers, and practitioners is also critical.

Topics for immigration research are plentiful. A short list includes: immigrant destinations and residential preferences, unauthorized migration rates and patterns, socioeconomic characteristics, impact on national and local economies, use of social welfare benefits, transnational

behaviors, intergenerational family relations, language acquisition, educational attainment, religious beliefs and practices, political activity, refugees, human rights, and human trafficking.

Institutions engaged in immigration research are varied. Federal, state, and local governments conduct or commission research, including the U.S. Census Bureau, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service's Office of Immigration Statistics, and the Department of Human Services' Office of Refugee Resettlement. Data on immigrants is also collected by departments like the Bureau of Labor Statistics and the Department of Education in the context of their particular missions. Important intergovernmental organizations, such as the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, provide data on the global flow of migrants and refugees and help place the U.S. experience in context.

In addition to government or intergovernmental institutions, a variety of nonprofit think tanks address immigration issues, including: Urban Institute, Brookings Institution, Migration Policy Institute, Center for Migration

International Migration Review Articles on Naturalization, Citizenship and Immigrant Integration in the United States

Determinants of English Proficiency Among Mexican Migrants to the United States, Kristin E. Espinosa and Douglas S. Massey, Vol. 31, Spring 1997, p. 28-50.

Immigrant Adaptation and Native Born Responses in the Making of Americans (Special Issue with 11 articles), edited by Josh DeWind, Charles Hirschman, and Philip Kasinitz, Vol. 31, Winter 1997.

All Under One Roof: Mixed Status Families in an Era of Reform, Michael Fix and Wendy Zimmerman, Vol. 35, Summer 2001, p. 397-419.

Under Two Flags: Dual Nationality in Latin America and Its Consequences for the United States, Michael Jones-Correa, Vol. 35, Winter 2001, p. 997-1029.

Testing the Effects of Collectively Expected Durations of Migration: The Naturalization of Mexicans and Cubans, Benigno E. Aguirre and Regelio Saenz, Vol. 36, Spring 2002, p. 103-124.

The North American Naturalization Gap: An Institutional Approach to Citizenship Acquisition in the United States and Canada, Irene Bloemraad, Vol. 36, Spring 2002, p. 193-228.

Studies, Research Institute on Social and Economic Policy, Manhattan Institute, Cato Institute, and Center for Immigration Studies.

Also pursuing immigrant research are university social science departments, including sociology, demography, urban studies, ethnic studies, political science, history, and economics. Schools of education, public policy, social work, and law contribute scholarship as well. A selection of universities with departments or centers conducting research includes: Georgetown University's Institute for the Study of International Migration; University of Minnesota's Immigration History Research Center; University of Houston's Center for Immigration Research; University of California, San Diego's Center for Comparative Immigration Studies; University of California, Irvine's Center for Research on Immigration, Population and Public Policy; and Harvard University's Graduate School of Education's Immigration Project. Some universities offer concentrations in immigration within certain degree majors. An increasing number are encouraging crossdisciplinary perspectives on immigration as the field becomes more complex and dynamic.

Many venues are used to share research. Open events like seminars, conferences, symposia, briefings, and roundtables promote face-to-face dialogue and the exchange of opinions and ideas. Websites offering immigration data,

The New Immigrant Survey

In the first effort of its kind, the New Immigrant Survey (NIS) seeks to inform immigration law, policy, and practice with survey data from nationally representative, longitudinal studies of new legal immigrants and their children in the United States. A pilot panel survey was conducted in 1996. A larger study was conducted in 2003. A third phase of the longitudinal study is planned for early 2007. The data sets provide new and more meaningful information about immigrant cohorts from a human development perspective. Without a longitudinal study, researchers can only suggest who naturalizes and who does not at certain points in time. With longitudinal data, naturalization outcomes and patterns can be known for large cohorts. Relevant survey questions for a national citizenship plan include: expected length of stay in the United States, degree of comfort with the English language, and intention to become a U.S. citizen. Each is analyzed by visa category, employment status, educational level, family composition, and other key demographic data. (Principal NIS investigators are Guillermina Jasso, New York University; Douglas S. Massey, Princeton University; Mark R. Rosenzweig, Yale University; and James P. Smith, RAND Corporation.)

which have proliferated in recent years, make information more accessible to other academics and the general public and expand a research institution's visibility. They do not necessarily promote an easy exchange between interested people.

Publications are the traditional method for most research institutions to convey their findings. One quarterly, *International Migration Review*, is notable for its scope and attention to naturalization, citizenship, and immigrant integration. The review is a peer-reviewed journal managed by an editorial board under the auspices of the Center for Migration Studies, a nonprofit organization founded in 1964, and in cooperation with the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' Migration and Refugee Services department. Over the past 30 years, the *International Migration Review* has published important articles on U.S. naturalization, citizenship, and immigrant integration.

Overview of Research Recommendations

By Michael Fix

Vice President and Director of Studies
Migration Policy Institute

The research agenda by CLINIC that follows represents an extraordinarily thoughtful compendium of study issues that spans the disciplines and requires research strategies ranging from survey research, analysis of the Census, implementation and evaluation research, and test design, to international comparative work.

The reader is immediately struck by the breadth and importance of the agenda, and—by implication—by the limited amount of ongoing work in this critical field and by the equally few resources that are expended on it, not just in the area of programs but in needed basic information. This limited knowledge base is made even more notable by the fact that citizenship is more important now than at any point in recent U.S. history as access to the social safety net and to fundamental rights, including access to residential security, now turn on it. Moreover, as this report indicates, the naturalization process is in flux as the citizenship test is being redesigned and proposals for comprehensive immigration reform would substantially increase legal immigration and, by extension, the number of newcomers eligible for naturalization. Current proposals also offer potential new sources of funding for English and civics classes.

Among the critical issues raised here include:

- The number, characteristics, and state distribution of immigrants eligible to naturalize;

- The need to map resources for language and civics learning at the local level;
- Assessing the internet and other “on demand” learning opportunities versus classroom-based instruction;
- Determining the relationship between local rates of naturalization and administrative practices on the part of community-based organizations and local Department of Homeland Security offices; and
- Pre- and post-naturalization rates of benefit use and civic engagement.

The agenda points up, in turn, the need not just for local institutional capacity but also for national institutions that can serve as catalysts, gatekeepers, and clearinghouses for the kind of information that would be generated—even if only a portion of the agenda were to be implemented. It further points up the need for monitoring ongoing research and practice in this field.

But the agenda as presented begs a number of questions that will need to be sorted out—perhaps in future work:

- How should we rank these questions in terms of their importance: the feasibility with which we can obtain results, the costs of the research entailed, and the validity of the results? Which studies can be carried out with existing data sets—in particular the Census and the New Immigrant Survey, and even the National Assessment of Adult Literacy—and which require expensive new survey work?
- What current work is being done within the academy and within governments that addresses the questions? Who is supporting it? When are results due to be released? What data sets are being used?
- An emphasis may need to emerge on the need for a careful, science-based assessment of the validity, reliability, and fairness of changes in the citizenship test now being developed by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS). This analysis will have to build on the work of the National Academy of Sciences panel and involve experts in the complex area of testing and assessment.
- The proposed work will also need to tackle head on developing a better understanding of the failure rates for the naturalization tests, how they change over time, and the reasons why. Good data in this area have been hard to come by.

Generally, we recommend the following in order to leverage immigration research to improve American policy and the practice of helping immigrants and refugees:

- Increase funding to study new questions of immigrant integration and citizenship, or to better study old questions that have not been adequately answered, in order to increase our knowledge of immigrant integration and citizenship;
- Increase collaboration between researchers outside government and those working inside government so that outside researchers can access governmental data, and government researchers can be brought up to date on outside research;
- Establish a national consortia to bring researchers in government, policy institutes, community organizations, and academia into regular contact with each other. One model might be the Canadian Metropolis project or the international Metropolis initiative, in which the United States has largely been absent.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Research on Preparation for, and Successful Completion of, Naturalization:

- 1 Researchers should study the reasons why naturalized immigrants chose to become citizens and rank them according to preference by different population characteristics. Researchers should similarly study the reasons why non-naturalized immigrants want to become citizens or do not want to.
- 2 Researchers should survey non-naturalized immigrants, identifying the relative importance of barriers that impede eligibility, filing an application, and successfully acquiring citizenship status.
- 3 Researchers in academia and USCIS should use the Application for Naturalization to its fullest to identify correlations between nationality, ethnicity, gender, age, employment, length of residence, and other socio-demographic variables, on the one hand, and success with the application process, interview, and exam, on the other.
- 4 Researchers should focus studies on reasons why specific nationalities naturalize at lower rates than others to inform citizenship programs how to best message and deliver their services.
- 5 Researchers should continue to update the Urban Institute’s original September 2003 report, *Immigrant Families and Workers: Trends in Naturalization*, to keep interested groups informed on the concentration and dispersion of immigrants eligible to naturalize and socioeconomic characteristics facilitating or impeding their naturalization. Parallel studies should be conducted by states.

- 6 Researchers should study why refugees naturalize 1.5 times more than other immigrant categories as identified by the 2003 Urban Institute report on naturalization trends. Is the increase due to targeted naturalization services to refugees or to refugee proclivity to naturalize?
- 7 Researchers should design pre- and post-tests to be used in conjunction with a national citizenship curriculum by teachers of English as a second language and civics classes to evaluate student learning.
- 8 Researchers should study the effectiveness of naturalization outreach, application assistance, and test preparation classes for passing the naturalization interview and exam. Do similar immigrants who receive services have higher success rates than those applicants who do not?
- 9 Researchers should design a test to study how effectively current Department of Education English and civics training prepares immigrants to pass the naturalization test.
- 10 Researchers should study differences in immigrant student learning and outcomes between adult public schools, community colleges, and community-based organizations teaching English, civics, and naturalization test preparation courses.
- 11 Researchers should study what immigrants do in terms of learning habits and styles between failing the first naturalization interview or test and passing the second attempt.
- 12 Researchers should survey naturalized and non-naturalized immigrants on how they acquire information about naturalization eligibility and services to see which modes of dissemination are most utilized and most accurate, including Internet, family and friends, radio, television, magazines and newspapers, community-based organizations, and private attorneys.
- 13 Researchers should study whether citizenship status is best promoted through an education model or a legal service model. Are immigrants more likely to file naturalization applications with a public campaign on learning English, history, and civics or through messages on how the naturalization process works and the assistance available?
- 14 Researchers should test various citizenship marketing messages used to attract new applicants to determine what messages work. Which messages resonate for all immigrants, and which work best for specific ethnic or language groups?
- 15 Researchers should research the types of Internet information about naturalization and the accuracy and thoroughness of the information in order to identify strengths and weakness in Internet information dissemination.

- 16 Researchers should study what persons (by name or category) are likely to be the most desirable messengers of citizenship promotion in English and non-English media.
- 17 Researchers should study ways adult, limited English speakers best learn naturalization and civics information with an interactive experience on the Internet or compact discs.
- 18 Researchers should study if civic engagement among Lawful Permanent Residents results in higher naturalization rates.
- 19 Researchers should study the naturalization process as one of social ties. How are immigrants drawn into the naturalization process? Researchers should examine connections between individuals and organizations, family, friends, teachers, and places of worship. The same social approach can identify ways government helps and hinders the naturalization process.
- 20 Researchers should study the ability of elderly immigrants, especially those with lower educational levels in their native country, to learn English.
- 21 Researchers should study the impact of fee increases on the naturalization rate to see if higher fees are a deterrent and study the availability of fee waivers to see if low-income applicants have equal access to naturalization.

Research on the Consequence of Acquiring Citizenship:

- 22 Researchers should quantify citizenship benefits and conduct research that marks the economic and social differences between citizens and noncitizens.
- 23 Researchers should study the economic benefits of gaining citizenship status in terms of job advancement, job stability, and salary increases resulting in a higher quality of living for families, including owning a home, saving for a college fund, and investing in a retirement fund.
- 24 Researchers should study whether naturalized immigrants become more civically engaged than non-naturalized Lawful Permanent Residents or undocumented immigrants. If immigrants naturalize for economic reasons, sponsorship benefits, or the desire for security, does acquisition of citizenship subsequently increase their interest in and the likelihood of their participating in civic affairs?
- 25 Researchers should study the speed with which new citizens exercise their new political rights. Why do some new citizens vote immediately in the first elections in which they are eligible? What factors facilitate the entry of new citizens into the political system?
- 26 Researchers should study what percentage of immigrants start or resume receiving public benefits after

acquiring citizenship status to address perceptions that immigrants become citizens to access benefits.

- 27 Researchers should study the number of individuals immigrating to the United States based on a relative's citizenship status and subsequent petition for family reunification. Doing so would help illuminate the role of immigration as a family-strengthening policy.
- 28 Researchers should study the effect of the naturalization process and citizenship ceremony on applicants' sense of belonging to the United States and their trust in government. Does going through the bureaucratic process of naturalization alienate immigrants from government? Does the citizenship ceremony increase feeling of being "American"?
- 29 Researchers should study how immigrant parents know about derivative citizenship status for minor children, stratified by nationality, educational status, and points of access to naturalization information and assistance.
- 30 How do children's lives change (materially or in a sense of attachment) after their parents acquire citizenship and when children derive citizenship as a result?

Research on Capacity Building for Community-based Organizations and Government Agencies Concerned with Citizenship:

- 31 Researchers should survey immigrants before and after receiving naturalization services to assess the beneficiaries' "customer satisfaction" with naturalization programs.
- 32 Researchers in immigration demographics should document forecasts of anticipated naturalization rates by years and immigrant characteristics using past naturalization data and green card rates five years and beyond. This data will be helpful for programs assessing where to target their resources and activities and evaluating numerical outcomes.
- 33 Researchers should develop topographical images of states, cities, and neighborhoods according to immigrant populations naturalized and non-naturalized to assist program directors in locating and understanding the demographics of targeted groups.
- 34 Researchers should map the supply of language and civics instruction available, their geographic concentration, funding sources and amounts, and levels of instruction in order to compare the infrastructure to facilitate learning with the location and needs of the limited English speaking population in the United States.
- 35 Researchers should study what institutions facilitate immigrant integration in medium and small towns that are new gateway destinations. The findings can help new gateway communities in their capacity building

efforts to prioritize municipal revenue and services for maximum effectiveness and desirability.

- 36 Researchers should create a client and program evaluation tool to assess the effectiveness of resources spent on a national citizenship program.
- 37 Researchers of business efficiency models should study the workforce efficiencies of USCIS immigration benefit interviews conducted off-site in the community, compared to interviews conducted in standard, federal offices. (USCIS has used off-site facilities to conduct interviews in cooperation with community organizations, but some USCIS districts have begun to end this practice claiming it is an inefficient use of time. Contrary opinion suggests it is a time-saving measure for USCIS officers and particularly for immigrants. The use of "circuit rides" brings a few federal officers and their services into the community rather than requiring hundreds of people to travel long distances.)
- 38 Researchers should study the effectiveness of different government-nonprofit partnerships in providing information on citizenship, providing services to facilitate naturalization, and administering the naturalization program.
- 39 Researchers should study the effectiveness of nonprofit naturalization programs' resource development to determine how effective such programs are in securing matching funding.
- 40 Researchers should chart different countries' naturalization requirements and services provided (both programs and dollars amounts) to their immigrant populations.

Research on General Immigrant Incorporation:

- 41 Researchers should survey immigrants to assess voting attitudes and behavior and political opinions.
- 42 Researchers should study the political values and decisions of people holding dual citizenship. Is dual citizenship harmful to one nation's interest against another? Does dual citizenship increase ties (economic, social, and political) between countries? Is political involvement in one country transferable to another?
- 43 Researchers should identify immigrant definitions of integration in the United States and rank definitions by importance ascribed by immigrants. Barriers to integration can be identified and ranked according to severity.
- 44 Researchers should study how immigrant integration works effectively or ineffectively, similarly or differently, between the United States and other nations. How effective is immigrant integration in the United States, given the lack of a coherent immigrant integration policy, compared to countries with integration policies?
- 45 Researchers should study the intergenerational learning and socialization between immigrant parents and children, especially in the area of political behav-

iors. What effect does having a large, noncitizen population have on youth political and civic beliefs and behaviors? Are children of noncitizen parents more or less politically apathetic than children of naturalized parents?

- 46 Researchers should study how immigrants use English verbal, reading, and writing skills on a daily basis to assess the utility of English in different ethnic, linguistic, and geographic communities.
- 47 Researchers should study how immigrants view English as a common language for all to use and to assess immigrant attitudes that may encourage or discourage English acquisition.
- 48 Researchers should study why immigrants do and do not learn English at varying levels of verbal, reading, and writing abilities to identify barriers that can be addressed through policy-making decisions.

Capacity Building for the Research Community and Sharing of Results:

- 49 Researchers should publish a journal issue dedicated to studies in naturalization and citizenship.
- 50 Researchers should be involved in the beginning of a national citizenship plan led by government funding and implemented by private organizations to guide policymakers and practitioners in gathering information important for research.
- 51 Researchers should work more closely with naturalization and immigrant integration program developers to combine known facts through research with program models.
- 52 Researchers, policymakers, and program designers promoting citizenship and providing naturalization services should convene a regularly scheduled conference to increase the knowledge and understanding between various professional disciplines.

Legal Institutions

Respect for the rule of law and individual rights are hallmarks of the U.S. legal system. Regrettably, U.S. immigration policies have not always honored these principles. In 1996, for example, Congress passed three laws that place immigrants at greater risk of detention, removal, separation from their families, and loss of income and health care support. These are: the Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act of 1996, the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act (IIRAIRA) of 1996, and the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996. Pro-immigrant legal agencies have worked vigorously to eliminate some of the harshest aspects and consequences of these laws.

Recent years have also seen challenges to the United States' historic commitment to citizenship. In 1990 Congress transferred the power of denaturalization from the federal courts to the Attorney General. Following the Homeland Security Act of 2002, denaturalization authority was delegated to the Department of Homeland Security's United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). Possibly no development trivializes citizenship more than administrative denaturalization.

Administrative problems have also plagued the naturalization process. Over the past decade, waiting periods due to USCIS application processing backlogs have remained at one year or more. Improper naturalization denials have added to waiting times and frustration, leading attorneys to appeal cases and litigate against the federal government. Although published in 2000, CLINIC's report, *Citizenship at Risk: New Obstacles to Naturalization*, recounts many struggles that persist in 2006. Delays in citizenship harm both immigrants and U.S. society at large by slowing immigrant integration.

Several legal entities have been active in promoting a naturalization system that reflects the rule of law and honors immigrant rights. The American Bar Association (ABA) is the largest voluntary professional membership organization in the world, with more than 400,000 members. The ABA's Coordinating Committee on Immigration Law seeks to strengthen the rights of immigrants and their access to justice. On February 13, 2006, the ABA House of Delegates unanimously approved an important series of policy resolutions presented by the Coordinating Committee. One of the resolutions supports the need for "expanded and coordinated government programs to teach immigrants English, prepare them for citizenship, acculturate them in core U.S. civic values, and otherwise promote their integration into their adopted nation." Other recommendations include: a more efficient system for administering immigration laws and backlogs, swifter processing of Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests, greater enforcement against the unauthorized practice of law, and restoration of public benefits to legal immigrants and refugees. If implemented, these recommendations would significantly strengthen a national citizenship plan.

The ABA's Commission on Immigration has also contributed to the understanding of naturalization law with its publication, *Naturalization and Criminal Offenses, Detention, and Removal* (October 2004). This manual provides guidance on how to represent Lawful Permanent Residents with criminal convictions. Another publication, *Naturalization: Citizenship by Choice* seeks to generate greater public support for immigrants seeking citizenship. It also offers suggestions on how lawyers and advocates can help immigrants through the naturalization process.

ABA also provides training in naturalization law. Advanced naturalization training is particularly needed by attorneys who do not specialize in immigration law and who need instruction in how to recognize and address barriers to citizenship, like prior convictions, debilitating disabilities, and inconsistent information in the immigration file.

Funds for legal services to the poor are critically needed across the country. A growing segment of the poor with legal needs are persons with limited English proficiency. In addition to the more common legal difficulties faced by the poor—such as housing, employment, and family issues—immigrants also encounter “access to justice” and immigration challenges. The District of Columbia, for example, has an estimated 39,000 residents who speak little English and have trouble using the legal system.¹ Low-cost legal representation and language services greatly need increased funding.²

Another important legal entity that assists the poor is the National Association of Interest on Lawyer’s Trust Accounts (IOLTA). IOLTA funds come from the interest earned from pooled accounts containing court fees, settlement agreement, real estate closing, and other client funds that can only be invested for very short periods. State bar associations and courts distribute IOLTA monies to fund charitable legal services. While attorney participation is voluntary in 22 states³ IOLTA funds distribute more than \$135 million annually, making it second only to the federally funded Legal Services Corporation as source of funding for this crucial work.⁴

Maryland IOLTA’s 2004-2005 annual report indicates that it funded four organizations that provided legal immigration and naturalization assistance: Catholic Community Services of the Archdiocese of Washington, D.C. for \$102,000; CASA of Maryland for \$74,000; Associated Catholic Charities of Baltimore for \$33,000; and Asian American Justice Center for \$30,000. Most state IOLTA funds do not fund immigration services so generously and, overall, there is a great need for additional IOLTA funding for this work.

Private attorneys in the for-profit legal profession typically charge immigrants a much higher fee for naturalization application assistance and direct representation than charitable legal immigration programs. Private attorney fees for even working poor naturalization applicants with simple cases can exceed \$1,000, whereas charitable legal immigration program fees for similar cases may be only as high as \$100.⁵ However, many for-profit attorneys provide pro bono or reduced fee representation to poor immigrants. In addition, for-profit attorneys contribute volunteer time training and completing naturalization applications at workshops sponsored by nonprofit organizations.

Law schools also play an important role in the immigration field. Increasingly, they offer courses in immigration law

and host conferences and symposia on immigration issues. The latter offer important opportunities for academics, immigration policy advocates, and government representatives to discuss these topics. Examples of these events include the National Legal Conference on Immigration and Refugee Policy, cosponsored by Fordham School of Law and the Center for Migration Studies, and the Annual Immigration Law and Policy Conference, jointly sponsored by Georgetown University Law Center, Migration Policy Institute, and CLINIC. Law school clinics provide an opportunity for students, under the supervision of faculty, to represent low-income individuals in immigration proceedings. This experience broadens student understanding of immigration law and its impact on immigrants seeking asylum, family reunification, employment, and citizenship. Law professors and students also volunteer at citizenship application workshops, take referrals for complex and time-consuming cases, engage in policy research, and advocate for changes in the law.

Georgetown University Law Center’s Federal Legislation Clinic has cooperated closely with charitable immigration organizations and USCIS in a working group on disability issues, which helped write USCIS policy guidance on reasonable accommodations for applicants with disabilities in 2000-01. In 2000, the clinic successfully lobbied Congress for a waiver to the oath requirement for severely disabled naturalization applicants. More recently, it has lobbied Congress to restore Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits to elderly and disabled refugees facing the seven-year limit imposed by the welfare reform laws.

The American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA) is the trade association for the nation’s immigration attorneys. AILA seeks “to promote justice, advocate for fair and reasonable immigration law and policy, advance the quality of immigration and nationality law and practice, and enhance the professional development of its members.”⁶ AILA offers a range of training, publishing and advocacy services for its members. The American Immigration Law Foundation, a legally distinct charitable agency, engages in high-impact litigation, public policy work, public education, and research. AILA’s interest in citizenship and immigrant integration is exemplified in its recent publication, *Power and Potential: The Growing Electoral Clout of New Citizens*. This report shows that, among registered voters, naturalized citizens vote at higher rates than natives. It concludes that the strength and influence of foreign-born voters will continue to grow.⁷

Charitable legal immigration programs help large numbers of immigrants to become citizens, and also serve those who are least likely to naturalize due to their limited income and language skills. They also provide significant outreach on the benefits and requirements for citizenship and the availability of free and fee-based services.

A number of national legal immigration organizations are helping to train local service providers and expand the avail-

ability of affordable legal immigration services. A short list of these include: CLINIC, Immigrant Legal Resource Center (ILRC), National Immigration Law Center (NILC), National Immigration Forum, Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS), U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants (USCRI), Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS), World Relief, American Friends Service Committee, Vera Institute for Justice, Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF), League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), and the Arab Community Center for Economic and Social Services (ACCESS). These agencies serve immigrants regardless of religion, race, ethnicity, or nationality. Several of them -- including CLINIC, LIRS, USCRI, and HIAS -- support networks of local member agencies. CLINIC enjoys the nation's largest network with 161 member agencies that provide direct legal services in 260 sites.

Some of these organizations concentrate on public education and advocacy, others on training and publications, and still others on the full spectrum of public education, advocacy, training, publications, legal immigration, refugee resettlement, English classes, and naturalization classes. Many have discrete naturalization programs.

Several organizations have worked collaboratively over many years to maximize resources and establish an "industry" of charitable legal immigration programs. One vehicle that has served this goal has been the Immigration Management Program (IMP), originally funded in 1995 by the Ford Foundation as a collaboration between CLINIC, LIRS, and USCRI (formerly known as Immigration and Refugee Services of America). These three networks created a manual, *Immigration Management: Building Blocks for a Successful Program*, and implemented a series of trainings that are designed to enhance the financial viability and client services provided by local charitable programs for immigrants.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Interest on Lawyer's Trust Accounts:

- 1 IOLTA funds should be expanded and additional monies should be devoted to naturalization services. Mandatory attorney participation and higher interest rates on pooled accounts would increase IOLTA funding.

Advocacy:

- 2 Legal institutions should actively support the ABA's policy in favor of "expanded and coordinated federal and state government programs to conduct large-scale citizenship outreach, assist in the naturalization application process, teach immigrants English, acculturate immigrants in core U.S. civic values, and promote integration broadly."

- 3 Legal institutions should advocate for more federal funding to USCIS to reduce application backlogs and stabilize application fees.
- 4 Legal institutions should advocate for more federal funding for English language instruction and citizenship classes that are vital in helping immigrants who speak limited English become citizens.
- 5 Legal institutions concerned about the unauthorized practice of law by naturalization counselors should advocate for state legislation defining and prohibiting the practice.
- 6 Legal institutions should advocate for more monies to state attorney general offices for staff, particularly bilingual staff, to investigate and prosecute unauthorized legal practitioners.
- 7 Legal institutions should advocate for more federal Legal Services Corporation funding for the poor, including immigrants with legal immigration and interpretation needs.
- 8 Legal institutions should support efforts to redress the funding and bureaucratic weaknesses in USCIS that inhibit immigrants from accessing services, including its increasing fees, long processing backlogs, limited client access to case status information, and poor customer service in general.

Research and Training:

- 9 Legal institutions should support research on immigrant legal needs, the effect of legal status on civic integration and immigrant attainment, and funding challenges for charitable legal immigration programs.
- 10 Legal institutions should assist in training sponsored by charitable immigration programs by providing space and serving as presenters.

Publications:

- 11 Legal institutions with expertise in naturalization and immigration law should update their training materials at least annually to ensure their accuracy.
- 12 Legal institutions that publish naturalization and citizenship materials should make them: understandable for qualified, nonattorney practitioners; affordable for charitable immigration programs; and widely advertised for easier access.

Conferences and Symposia:

- 13 Legal institutions should produce a common calendar each year that lists the conferences and symposia dedicated to naturalization, citizenship, and immigrant integration issues.
- 14 Legal institutions should include key naturalization, citizenship, and immigrant issues in their slate of educational events.

Citizenship Promotion and Direct Legal Services:

- 15 Legal institutions should join with federal, state, and local public and private funders to advocate for a national citizenship program.
- 16 Legal institutions should review the proposed national citizenship program and provide critical comments on its strengths, challenges, and expected outcomes.
- 17 Legal institutions should align themselves with nonprofit, immigrant-focused programs to help them implement best practices in immigration legal services.
- 18 Legal institutions should train, support and lend their expertise to community-based organizations that may wish to obtain BIA recognition so that they can represent low-income immigrants.
- 19 Legal institutions should participate as volunteers in naturalization application group processing workshops sponsored by charitable immigration programs. Professionals in naturalization law should review all completed applications for quality control purposes.
- 20 Legal institutions should provide expanded pro bono and sliding scale fee-based services for the most vulnerable immigrants in the naturalization process who are likely to increase in number under a national citizenship plan.
- 21 Legal institutions should provide technical assistance and otherwise support charitable organizations that provide naturalization services.

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- 1 *The Washington Post*. "Legal Services for D.C.'s Poor" (Editorial, February 17, 2006), p. A18.
 - 2 CASA of Maryland. *Unequal Justice: Barriers to Justice for Latinos in Maryland* (December 1999), p. 23-29.
 - 3 Rhudy, R. J. "Lawyers Create Income for Legal Aid Where There Was None Before" *The Daily Record* (July 1, 2005), p. 3.
 - 4 *Ibid*, p. 1.
 - 5 Interview with Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc. attorney John Holmgren conducted by the report's authors on February 21, 2006.
 - 6 American Immigration Lawyers Association. "Mission and Goals," available at: <http://www.aila.org/content/default.aspx?docid=12130>
 - 7 Paral, R. *Power and Potential: The Growing Electoral Clout of New Citizens* (Washington, DC: American Immigration Law Foundation's Immigration Policy Center, October 2004), p. 4.

Immigrant-Focused Nonprofit Organizations

Immigrant-focused nonprofit organizations that provide legal, social, and integration services would play a leading role in harnessing support for a national citizenship plan, implementing it, and driving it forward. These organizations are already involved in helping immigrants naturalize. Some of them focus on particular groups of immigrants, such as refugees, or certain ethnic groups. Some are immigrant-led, and most have immigrants on staff and in decision-making roles.

Some of the national organizations provide support to a network of local member agencies. Examples include: Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc. (CLINIC), Asian American Justice Center, National Council of La Raza, American Friends Service Committee, Arab Community Center for Economic and Social Services, and Southeast Asia Resource Action Center. National voluntary refugee resettlement agencies that support similar networks include: U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops Migration and Refugee Services, Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society, U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants, International Rescue Committee, World Relief Corporation, Episcopal Migration Ministries, Ethiopian Community Development Council, Church World Service, and Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service.

Some national organizations work almost exclusively on immigration policy advocacy, such as the National Immigration Law Center. Immigrant organizations have advocated for Congress to pass pro-immigrant legislation, such as the Hmong Veterans Naturalization Act of 2000, the naturalization oath waiver for the severely disabled, elimination of the seven-year limit on Supplemental Security Income for noncitizen elderly and disabled refugees, and funding appropriations for backlog reduction at the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS).

Other immigrant-focused nonprofits are membership organizations, such as the National Immigration Forum, the National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO) Educational Fund, the League of United Latin American Citizens, the American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA), and the American Bar Association (ABA).

State immigration coalitions provide support to local member agencies and engage in policy advocacy. Examples include the New York Immigration Coalition, Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights (ICIRR), Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition, Capital Area Immigrants' Rights Coalition, Tennessee Immigrant Rights Coalition, and the Immigrant Legal Resource Center. Advocacy for state legislation

related to citizenship tends to focus on funding for citizenship services. For example, ICIRR successfully pushed for a \$3 million citizenship initiative in 2004. While the missions of these nonprofits vary, all seek to improve the lives of immigrants.

Immigrant-focused nonprofits mobilize their constituencies through updates on pending legislation via e-mail, list serves, and website postings. They often collect case studies of immigrants who are negatively impacted by legislation and use them to humanize abstract policy. They also organize advocacy days.

Many immigrant organizations engage in citizenship-related policy advocacy at the administrative level. In Washington, D.C., immigrant organizations have met monthly at USCIS headquarters since 1997. The organizations set the agenda and ask questions about USCIS policies and services. Much of the agenda is related to naturalization. Agenda items are collected and minutes are disseminated through the National Citizenship Network, which is staffed by NALEO. At the local level, many immigrant organizations attend liaison meetings with their USCIS district office. Often after consulting with their member agencies, organizations also submit written comments on USCIS proposed regulations published in the *Federal Register*. The feedback ensures a local and direct service perspective on the impact of immigration policies.

Two working groups have spun off from the monthly USCIS meetings. The working group on the naturalization test redesign is promoting a fair test that will not disadvantage certain groups or raise the naturalization denial rate. USCIS is benefiting from consultation with this group during the redesign process because it promotes community buy-in for a controversial initiative.

The second spin-off is the disability working group, which advocates for better access to naturalization for disabled applicants. This group has helped shape several policy guidance memoranda on disabled applicants and revise the Medical Certification for Disability Exceptions (Form N-648).

When administrative advocacy efforts with USCIS failed, some immigrant organizations have engaged in litigation to address problems. In 1998 a group of three organizations—Florida Justice Institute, Florida Legal Services, and Florida Immigrant Advocacy Center—filed a class action lawsuit in Miami on behalf of disabled applicants who were wrongly denied disability waivers of the naturalization test. The lawsuit resulted in new USCIS policies and procedures that helped ensure that disabled naturalization applicants were treated fairly.

Immigrant organizations also operate programs that directly assist immigrants to apply for citizenship using federal, state, or private funding. For example, CLINIC's Refugee Naturalization Project, funded by the federal Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) from 1997 to 2003, provided community outreach and naturalization application assistance to refugees in ten cities. ICIRR's New Americans Initiative uses state funding to support local immigrant organizations in assisting Illinois's more than 340,000 Lawful Permanent Residents to become U.S. citizens. The DC Citizenship Project relies on private funding from the Washington, D.C.-based Morris and Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation to support the work of CLINIC and three local agencies in Washington, D.C., Maryland, and Virginia to provide naturalization outreach, workshops, and legal representation.

Membership organizations often provide technical assistance to their affiliates who are engaged in citizenship services. This includes: training on naturalization law, policies, and procedures; conferences; monitoring visits; immigration hotlines; and informational publications. For example, CLINIC provides at least three regional trainings on naturalization law per year and offers publications on naturalization, including *Citizenship for Us* and *Citizenship for Refugee Elders*. Immigrant Legal Resource Center's citizenship-related publications include a legal guide to naturalization and citizenship and a how-to guide for establishing liaison meetings with local USCIS offices. Technical assistance helps local organizations stay abreast of changes in immigration laws, policies, and procedures. In addition, it can help to identify and correct problems that occur when local USCIS offices fail to implement national policies.

Immigrant organizations are strongly networked and tend to have good communication channels. Most local organizations belong to national networks or state immigration coalitions, and subscribe to various immigration-related list serves. Such networks help to promote the rapid sharing of information and the coordination of advocacy needs and priorities among their participants. In addition, networks allow funders to disperse monies broadly, utilize a built-in system for technical assistance, and limit the amount of time they would otherwise spend managing a large project. It is easier for a funder such as ORR to manage one large grant to CLINIC, which is then re-granted to ten of its local member agencies, than to manage ten smaller grants to local organizations. Although national and regional immigration organizations work closely on certain issues, there is no single, overarching network to which all belong. This lack of coordination can create challenges.

Another challenge is lack of funding. Many immigrant organizations operate without sufficient and sustainable funds, leaving them to struggle to maintain the most basic services and unable to pursue new ideas or initiatives. The

lack of funding, particularly for citizenship services, has hobbled many organizations that had robust citizenship programs in the late 1990s. Federal and state funding for citizenship has declined in the last few years, leading to the elimination of many citizenship programs and services that were once available.

Constituent Services for Immigrants

The Arab Community Center for Economic and Social Services (ACCESS) has a close working relationship with Rep. John Conyer's office. The congressman's immigration caseworker comes to the ACCESS office in Dearborn, Michigan twice a week to meet with clients in need of congressional intervention with their immigration cases. The organization provides the caseworker with an office, phone, and workstation. Clients benefit because it is easier to go to ACCESS than to the congressman's office, while the congressman is able to deliver an important constituent service that promotes integration of the district's sizable Arab community and raises his profile.

Loans for Citizenship Fees

Catholic Charities of Santa Rosa, California, used a private donation to establish a fee assistance fund for its clients applying for citizenship. The agency found that fee waivers from USCIS took too long to prepare and were often denied. A loan fund proved a good alternative for those unable to pay the application fees. The agency uses the poverty guidelines or receipt of public benefits to determine eligibility and gives clients 18 months to pay back the loan.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Funding:

- 1 Immigrant organizations that provide charitable legal services need to address their chronic lack of financial support by explaining and promoting their work to funders and the general public. In particular, they need to educate the public on the impact of legal representation and the positive difference it makes.
- 2 Charitable legal immigration networks should organize forums for funders, immigration coalitions, think tanks, and government officials that highlight the importance of their work, with the aim of securing additional support.
- 3 Direct service providers need to cultivate and educate potential funders on the crucial role they play in legalization and naturalization initiatives, and dispel the myth that large-scale direct service programs are too costly.
- 4 Charitable legal immigration programs need to document the importance of their work, remove institutional barriers to expansion, and pursue long-term funding strategies.
- 5 Immigrant organizations should educate funders on their citizenship services and the large number of eligible and soon-to-be eligible immigrants.
- 6 Immigrant organizations should provide training for funders, especially in gateway communities, on the basics of immigration and naturalization.

Advocacy:

- 7 The Board of Immigration Appeals (BIA) should eliminate the restriction that requires BIA-recognized agencies to charge only a nominal fee for services. It should also not replace the restriction with burdensome administrative and reporting requirements. Charitable programs should be able to obtain support from the people who use and benefit from their services.
- 8 Immigrant organizations should advocate for their states to expand lawyer trust accounts, known as IOLTA, which provide legal aid to the poor, by establishing mandatory, rather than voluntary, participation standards for practicing attorneys.
- 9 Immigrant organizations should advocate for more federal Legal Services Corporation funding for the poor, including immigrants with legal immigration and interpretation needs.
- 10 Immigrant organizations should attend liaison meetings with their local USCIS office, or work together to establish these meetings if they do not already occur. Local organizations should appoint one person who collects agenda items, submits them to USCIS, takes notes during meetings, and distributes the notes.
- 11 Immigrant organizations should share information with one another, work together to address issues of common concern, and maximize advocacy efforts.
- 12 Immigrant organizations should identify systemic problems at USCIS and bring them to the attention of USCIS officials through letter writing, phone calls, or local USCIS liaison meetings. If their efforts are not successful, they should contact congressional offices and national networks for assistance.
- 13 Immigrant organizations should track local USCIS District Office statistics on citizenship applications received and granted and write to local and state politicians quarterly to inform them.
- 14 Immigrant organizations and funders should work together with USCIS and the Office of Citizenship (OoC) to build consultative processes on immigration, starting at the local level and building to the national level. USCIS and OoC should broadly consult with stakeholders.

Legislation:

- 15 Immigrant organizations should advocate for more congressional funding for USCIS to reduce benefit application backlogs and stabilize application fees.
- 16 Immigrant organizations should advocate for more congressional funding for English language instruction and citizenship classes that are vital in helping limited English speakers become citizens.
- 17 Immigrant organizations concerned about the unauthorized practice of law by predatory and unqualified immigration counseling services should advocate for state legislation defining and prohibiting the practice in order to protect uninformed immigrants.
- 18 Immigrant organizations concerned about the unauthorized practice of law should advocate for more monies to state attorney general offices for staff, particularly bilingual staff, to investigate and prosecute predatory counselors.

Networking and Collaboration:

- 19 National immigrant organizations and others with member agencies should network with one another and communicate regularly in order to coordinate on issues of shared concern. Funders should support a network for the networks.
- 20 Local immigrant organizations that provide citizenship application assistance should join a national, state, or regional network in order to stay informed of legal changes and have a source of technical assistance.
- 21 Immigrant organizations should work with their local public benefits offices, such as the Social Security Administration, to create a referral system for public benefits clients in need of citizenship assistance, especially those at risk of losing benefits.
- 22 Immigrant organizations that do not provide citizenship application assistance should work closely with organizations in their community that do in order to ensure efficient referrals to their clients in need of citizenship help. They can also host events for legal organizations to present information to their clientele.
- 23 Immigrant organizations should partner with English and civics instruction providers to send staff to classrooms to answer students' questions about the citizenship interview and test and to facilitate referrals of students needing application assistance.
- 24 Immigrant organizations that provide citizenship application assistance should work closely with doctors completing disability waiver forms to educate them about the eligibility requirements and ensure the forms are complete and approvable before submission to USCIS.

Working with Immigrant Community Organizers:

- 25 Immigrant organizations that provide citizenship assistance should partner with immigrant community organizers to facilitate civic engagement before and after naturalization.
- 26 Immigrant organizations should partner with immigrant community organizers and recruit a group of volunteer attorneys to give legal consultations following community meetings on immigrant issues such as affordable housing, driver's licenses, and school improvements.
- 27 Immigrant organizations that provide legal services should invite immigrant community organizers to talk at community meetings on immigration legal issues and distribute advocacy materials.
- 28 Immigrant organizations should work closely with immigrant organizers by: identifying potential immigrant leaders among clientele and referring them to organizers; inviting organizers to speak to immigration program staff about their work; offering meeting space to organizers; inviting organizers to attend group consultations, meetings, or gatherings for shared presentations to clientele; serving as an advisor to organizers on immigration law or policy; participating with organizers in a joint letter-writing advocacy campaign; joining organizers in advocacy visits with legislators; inviting organizers to attend community celebrations or events sponsored by their group to present and distribute advocacy materials; and exploring programmatic linkages and joint funding opportunities with organizers.
- 29 Immigrant organizations should promote community action by displaying advocacy information in the office and distributing advocacy materials to clients.

Working with Congressional Offices:

- 30 Immigrant organizations should work closely with their congress member's immigration caseworkers to educate them about citizenship-related issues affecting immigrants and to obtain their assistance with difficult cases.
- 31 Immigrant organizations that provide citizenship legal assistance should partner with congressional representatives to sponsor citizenship workshops in the community. Workshops can be large and celebratory, and offer civic engagement information, entertainment, and refreshments.

Outreach:

- 32 Immigrant organizations, with the help of national groups, need to maximize available technology to map out high-immigrant populations and low naturalization rates in their community in order to target outreach, media messaging, and workshops.

- 33 Immigrant organizations need to conduct ongoing, sustained outreach in their communities on the benefits and requirements of citizenship in order to maintain interest and build greater numbers of applicants over time.
- 34 Immigrant organizations should include citizenship information in all of their community outreach activities.
- 35 Immigrant organizations that provide legal assistance should send a letter to all clients who are newly granted Lawful Permanent Residents informing them of their eligibility date for citizenship, other eligibility requirements, and the location of English language classes to prepare for citizenship. As an incentive, they could include a coupon for a discount on the cost of N-400 application assistance and a cassette tape recording of the 96 questions as a study aid for the citizenship test.
- 36 Immigrant organizations should partner with local schools to conduct citizenship outreach and see if the schools can offer space for citizenship workshops aimed at parents. Additionally, they can offer presentations about citizenship and Citizenship Day for school classes.
- 37 Immigrant organizations should work with the local news media to place stories about immigrant citizenship successes, challenges faced in the naturalization process, difficult cases that need high-level advocacy, and noteworthy programs.
- 38 Immigrant organizations should display information about citizenship in the waiting area of their office, with multilingual information about the benefits and requirements.

Workshops:

- 39 Immigrant organizations need to conduct naturalization group processing workshops on a regular basis in order to ensure visibility for their citizenship services and to sustain community relations.
- 40 Immigrant organizations that provide citizenship legal assistance should recruit former clients who successfully naturalized to assist at citizenship workshops.
- 41 Immigrant organizations should establish regularly scheduled mobile citizenship workshops for remote communities that have large immigrant populations in order to facilitate access to professional assistance.
- 42 Immigrant organizations should invite a representative from the local USCIS office to attend citizenship workshops and answer questions from the applicants.

Direct Services:

- 43 Charitable legal immigration programs should compare rates for legal service fees with other nonprofits to maintain reasonable industry standards.

- 44 Immigrant organizations that provide citizenship application assistance should obtain BIA recognition in order to avoid the unauthorized practice of immigration law.
- 45 Charitable legal immigration programs should charge fees to clients for legal services to enhance client participation and appreciation for the costs involved.
- 46 Charitable legal immigration programs need to analyze and design their legal services within the broader rubric of immigrant integration, including civic participation, social change organizing, rights and responsibilities, and volunteer opportunities.
- 47 Immigrant organizations should work with their local USCIS office and district courts in order to gain permission to conduct voter registration at oath ceremonies.
- 48 Immigrant organizations that provide citizenship application assistance should offer ongoing citizenship preparation classes and brush-up classes for review of test material. Alternatively, they should ensure a smooth referral of clients to these services at other agencies.
- 49 Immigrant organizations should work with Americorps or similar agencies to obtain a full-time volunteer to coordinate or support the citizenship program.
- 50 Immigrant organizations that provide refugee resettlement should: provide information about citizenship benefits and requirements in the cultural orientation classes for new arrivals; assist all eligible male refugees to register with the Selective Service as required for citizenship eligibility; and remind refugees after one year in the United States of the need to apply for a green card and assist them with the application.
- 51 Immigrant organizations should arrange to host a naturalization oath ceremony once or twice a year and make it a celebratory event with speeches, voter registration, passport application assistance, and refreshments.
- 52 Immigrant organizations should conduct voter registration of naturalized citizens on an ongoing basis at their offices, or provide voter registration information and applications for people to submit on their own. In many communities, certain individuals or organizations can become “volunteer deputy registrars,” allowing them to accept voter registration applications on behalf of the registrar.
- 53 Immigrant organizations should conduct a volunteer drive for English and civics tutors to help immigrants prepare for the citizenship test.
- 54 National and membership immigrant organizations need to assist their local member agencies with program evaluation, monitoring, and documentation of best practices to build accountability and a strong justification for future funding needs.
- 55 Immigrant organizations providing citizenship application assistance should use an integrated database system to track client and project outcomes.

- 56 Immigrant organizations should provide holistic citizenship services whenever possible.
- 57 Charitable legal immigration programs must gear up capacity and prepare for the impact of a legalization initiative that may reach millions of undocumented and out-of-status persons. This expansion is important because the service delivery for legalization, including outreach, intake, application assistance, and representation, will likely mirror key elements of a national citizenship program.

Celebrating Citizenship Day:

- 58 Immigrant organizations should organize special events and media coverage in honor of Citizenship Day on September 17, including workshops and oath ceremonies.
- 59 Immigrant organizations should, on their own or with their national parent organization, send a letter to the editor of the local newspaper about Citizenship Day.
- 60 Immigrant organizations that are faith-based should encourage their church to incorporate Citizenship Day into the religious service by recognizing the history and vitality of immigrants in the United States and offering a special blessing for naturalized citizens.

Marketing and Outreach

The power of mass marketing is strong and pervasive in U.S. culture. The U.S. public, adults and children alike, are constantly scrutinizing, accepting, and disregarding a steady stream of media messages. For the discerning consumer, the imperative questions are: “Is this message addressing what I need, want, or desire? How will this improve my life?” The power of marketing is in knowing a consumer group’s way of thinking through surveys, focus groups, and purchasing habits and advertising a product based on consumer feedback.

Immigrants are one segment of the population targeted by strategic marketing research and specialized messaging. There are more than 2,500 ethnic-media outlets, mostly newspapers and magazines, in addition to radio and television stations.¹ Whether corporations sell mainstream or ethnic products, they are increasingly using their advertising dollars to appeal to foreign-born communities. To do so, they recognize that immigrant consumer perceptions and behaviors are influenced by their acculturation outside the United States and that they must advertise in ways that resonate with people’s primary and most rooted cultural identity. The growing generation of the children of immigrants who are bi- or multicultural and bi- or multilingual is also an emerging target group for marketing.

Marketing to immigrants is not just the purview of commerce. Government must also reach the foreign-born population with effective messages in order to inform and serve them effectively. The government uses non-English messages and ethnically matched spokespeople to notify immigrants about an array of requirements and benefits, including Selective Service registration, income tax filing, driving rules, primary and secondary school enrollment, Social Security benefits, employment law, social services, and health care.

The channels used for mass marketing are steadily increasing in variety and sophistication, adding to the powerful mix of message, image, and sound. Internet advertisements are now commonplace on the Web. Advertisers send text messages and video casts to cell phones. How people navigate the cluttered terrain of marketing is a factor of contemporary life and affects their worldview.

Yet the federal government has not invested much money or time to develop basic public information tools to promote citizenship or direct applicants to service organizations providing naturalization assistance. The Department of Homeland’s Office of Citizenship (OoC) budget is severely limited, preventing it from creating a national citizenship media campaign and forcing it to charge a fee for most of its printed educational materials. Its national outreach largely consists of issuing press releases and citizenship news stories, and offering free downloadable publications on its website. Since its establishment in 2002, OoC has had to borrow staff from the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) for its community liaison functions. As of 2006 OoC has community liaison officers in only 19 cities, while USCIS, which is responsible for processing citizenship and other status applications, has 32 district offices. The officers work with immigrants, community-based organizations, and state and local officials to promote citizenship through forums, town meetings, and press releases.

Charitable nonprofits also use media and marketing strategies to attract immigrants. Depending on their mission, such organizations seek to communicate that they educate, serve, train, and empower immigrants, their families, and communities. In sophisticated or rudimentary ways, nonprofits devise outreach plans to attract people’s attention using flyers, brochures, posters, community presentations, print advertisements in non-English newspapers and magazines, radio commercials, community cable TV commercials and talk shows, and radio and TV public service announcements. Few local nonprofits have the money or expertise to create messages that have an appeal equal to those produced in the commercial sector. Even without a high degree of sophistication, the messages of nonprofit services easily resonate among people who have particular needs and trust the service organization.

Historically, promoting citizenship and providing naturalization services has been the purview of nonprofits. Without much direct assistance from government or businesses, nonprofits have relied on their own skills to relay the importance of citizenship. Partners in spreading information may include other social service agencies, places of worship, schools with adult English as a second language and vocational classes, and ethnic stores. The best outreach includes a combination of one-on-one contact, intermediary institutional contact, and a broad message through news sources accessed by immigrants.

Unlike many other aspects of immigration, citizenship is rarely debated, but rather embraced. Simply put, the native-born wish immigrants to become citizens and the vast majority of immigrants want to be citizens. The support of the native-born rests on the belief in equality and the democratic system. In turn, the foreign-born want citizenship as an expression of their appreciation for living in the United States, their desire to remain in the country, and their belief in the ideals of the U.S. government. There is much common ground in promoting citizenship and helping people achieve this particular aspiration.

The challenge before the United States is in overcoming the stinginess with which citizenship is encouraged and facilitated. The lack of financial resources for these purposes, especially outreach and communication efforts, is well-argued in many places in this report.

The foremost barrier immigrants face in becoming citizens is lack of information, according to interviewees informing this report. This is due to the lack of a highly visible citizenship campaign that inspires immigrants to act and directs them to local, professional services. There is no advertising about citizenship that is equal to the sophisticated campaigns promoting alcohol-free driving, abstinence from smoking, or reading to children at an early age. There is no national outreach saying citizenship is desirable and has specific benefits, requirements, and responsibilities. A media campaign adjoined to a national citizenship program is indispensable.

Currently helping to advance a widespread, pro-immigrant message is the National Immigration Forum, a nonprofit established in 1982 that is dedicated to affirming and sustaining America's tradition as a nation of immigrants. The forum conducts focus groups and surveys to poll the public's opinions on immigration, advocates for pro-immigration legislation and policies, publishes reports on immigrant integration and contributions, and develops media stories. It also provides media and messaging training for nonprofits to improve their skills in communicating the complexities of immigration. The forum and other pro-immigrant advocacy organizations experienced in commu-

nications are available to advise the federal government on how to develop and implement a national citizenship media campaign and what tools to use locally.

Non-English television and radio, newspapers, and magazines are an essential conduit of immigration information. Non-English television and radio stations frequently host talk shows on the issue. Ethnic radio and television talk show celebrities wield considerable influence among a large number of consumers on a range of issues, including immigration laws, citizenship promotion, and get-out-the-vote drives. For example, New California Media, a nonprofit organization of more than 400 ethnic media outlets, found that "ethnic media reaches 84 percent of California's three largest minority groups: Latinos, blacks, and Asians."² *La Opinion*, a Spanish daily newspaper, includes immigration issues as a bread-and-butter topic.³ Such media influence has been attributed in part to the large numbers of people demonstrating in the spring of 2006 in favor of legislation to legalize undocumented workers.⁴

Television and radio broadcasters frequently reserve air time for call-in programs to enable viewers and listeners to ask immigration questions of experts, often immigration attorneys either from a for-profit practice or nonprofit immigration program.⁵ A future national citizenship media and public information campaign could benefit from the free air time media companies give for public service announcements, and work with talk show hosts interested in citizenship issues, especially those offering callers a chance to hear extended, detailed information.

Promoting citizenship messages through talk shows and similar media outlets can be problematic, however. Legal immigration practitioners complain that media too frequently gets the facts wrong, spreading misinformation or causing unnecessary alarm in the immigrant community. Talk show hosts or their guests may not consistently uphold legal and ethical concerns espoused by immigration practitioners.⁶ They may simplify or omit complex terms and facts to fit available airtime, even if given scripted information prepared by legal immigration experts. Immigration experts, in turn, should restrict their media-based messages to broad facts and avoid offering individual immigration advice over the airwaves.

Even without a national citizenship program or media campaign, some states are successfully conveying citizenship messages. The most active citizenship campaign currently is the New Americans Initiative (NAI), operated by the Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights (ICIRR). In late 2004 ICIRR began to develop a community outreach and media strategy to promote citizenship. An experienced, for-profit marketing consultant was funded to create a comprehensive communications plan, develop messages based on research, produce four 15-

second television ads and two 60-second radio ads, place newspaper ads, and help service providers with event planning. Materials such as flyers, brochures, tear-off pads, and posters were produced in English, Spanish, Korean, Chinese, and Polish. Media spots directed people to NAI's toll-free number and website where calls and website hits were tallied.

The mass media initiative helped draw thousands of people to make contact with service providers, attend naturalization application workshops, and come prepared with the necessary documentation. During the campaign, ICIRR learned that immigrants and ethnic organizations respond best to print images that reflect themselves; something not easily achievable with a limited budget and a desire to create a brand look for the project. Yet direct service providers were able to modify the brand look slightly to add more appeal to their target populations. In a national citizenship plan, a media campaign should have a common nationwide look, but allow for local adaptations in messaging.

In another form of outreach, video can be used to make naturalization test preparation materials more widely available. Common teaching tools are instructional booklets used mostly by limited English speakers in a classroom. However, video instruction can reach a much wider audience. In 1997 Coors Brewing Company produced an English-based instructional video of the 96 naturalization questions. Ethnic-based organizations such as Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society, Asian American Justice Center, and Horn of Africa Services developed instructional videos in English and non-English languages in the mid-1990s, a historically high period for naturalization. A challenge for nonprofits is having the time and money to regularly revise videos based on changes in the naturalization process.

An McDowell, a citizenship teacher in Salinas, Calif., for 27 years, began developing audiovisual preparation materials for citizenship preparation in 2001. Her company, now called Citizenship Resources, distributes a recently updated video called *Citizenship, Success at Your CIS Interview*, which takes the immigrant from the waiting room through the entire interview and includes questions on trips out of the country, moral character, allegiance to the United States, and U.S. history and government. Over 40 native- and foreign-born volunteer actors play the part of the USCIS examiner and the applicant in simulated mini-interviews. The immigrant viewer can practice his or her own answers in eight "It's your Turn" sections. The video (or DVD), which is designed for all levels of English and literacy, is available in Spanish for those who qualify to take the test in their native language.

In addition to video outreach, naturalization information is increasingly available on websites. The USCIS website provides materials, referrals, other organization's resources

and related links. Other websites are hosted by commercial enterprises and nonprofits providing information about naturalization eligibility and requirements, the application process, and educational tools to prepare for the naturalization test. Website instruction can be an accessible, attractive, and effective medium for highly skilled English speakers who have the computer literacy necessary to study independently. However, users should always check the date indicating when the contents were last updated. They should also avoid using on-line services to have a naturalization application reviewed for legal advice. On-line review has serious limitations and cannot be a substitute for a face-to-face review by a legal expert.

An online Citizenship Exam Preparation course is provided by The English Center, a division of Miami-Dade County Public Schools in Florida. The online course was adapted in early 2006, based on an earlier curriculum written by Dr. Gemma Santos. It provides a multimedia survey of topics related to U.S. history, U.S. government, and information considered essential for passing the naturalization exam. The student is able to access the course 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Each student is assigned a teacher who guides, instructs, monitors, and is available as a resource at specified hours. The course includes many links to outside websites related to the chapter topics. The course is free but available only to students who are Florida residents and enrolled in the center's programs. More efforts need to be made in web-based learning for the millions of immigrants who do not attend citizenship classes but need and desire specific information and instruction.

In summary, a national citizenship program should use marketing and outreach strategies wisely, based on research and input from target audiences. Effective messaging is critical to informing immigrants about citizenship. Any national media campaign should have a branded image that is easily recognizable and readily adaptable for local campaigns to insert information about neighborhood resources. Monies for media marketing and outreach should be ample for the scope of the national initiative but directed chiefly to local markets and organizations that have the confidence and trust of consumers. National and local marketing efforts should have an evaluation component to assess the best use of funds and the effectiveness of the messages.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Marketing and Outreach Partnerships:

- 1 A national citizenship campaign needs to be a national priority in partnership with prestigious companies, individuals, and service organizations.
- 2 Media marketing experts should partner, for free or at a reduced rate, with the OoC and local charitable legal immigration programs in periodic national citizenship

promotion campaigns to keep citizenship visible and services readily identifiable.

- 3 Network and cable television should promote citizenship through public service announcements, along with a list of community resources and events on the community calendar that facilitate naturalization.
- 4 Media specialists working on a national citizenship program should partner with citizenship service experts to produce an instructional video of the naturalization process designed for the limited English speaker and persons with special needs, coupled with an effective distribution plan.
- 5 National and local citizenship media campaigns should be scheduled in coordination with national networks and local immigrant service organizations in order for them to be prepared for a sudden increase in the number of calls for help.

Planning and Strategy Development:

- 6 Mass media campaigns promoting citizenship should only be launched after a national citizenship program's infrastructure has been established, in order to sufficiently build up the necessary capacity and partnerships for any large response.
- 7 Media campaigns promoting citizenship should follow the success of using spokespersons to support voter registration and get out the vote drives.
- 8 Media experts should test market high profile naturalized immigrants as potential spokespersons for a national citizenship promotion campaign. They should do similar testing in targeted local markets with local, high profile, foreign-born citizens. Candidates should be selected for their successful professional life, admirable character, and contributions to the community and country.
- 9 Media researchers participating in a national citizenship campaign strategy should conduct focus groups of naturalized and non-naturalized immigrants, focusing on immigrant groups that have the lowest naturalization rates.
- 10 Media campaigns for citizenship promotion using public funds should not have trademark or image branding limitations, but be designed for easy and affordable adaptation by local charitable organizations for local production and distribution.
- 11 Before a national campaign, local citizenship campaigns should test market messages and images with different nationalities and ethnic groups to determine which are most appealing and memorable in promoting citizenship. The successful branding devices should then be test marketed nationally before being used for a national campaign.
- 12 Local citizenship campaigns should feature people who assist immigrants in becoming citizens to demonstrate

how helping others obtain citizenship is personally rewarding and builds community spirit.

- 13 Media campaigns promoting citizenship should rely heavily on national and local ethnic media .
- 14 As part of a campaign for citizenship, a 1-800 number should be set up for information about local citizenship services. Media campaigns for citizenship should draw audience attention to this number. The number should ask, "What language do you speak?" followed by a second request, "What is your mailing zip code?" whereby the message in the chosen language provides information about local citizenship services.
- 15 Media campaigns should occasionally be directed beyond the immigrant community at the broader society, in order to keep all Americans informed and appreciative of citizenship.
- 16 A national citizenship promotion campaign should include a timely Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) airing of a commissioned documentary of the naturalization process, featuring immigrants in the process of becoming citizens and showing their struggles, failures, and successes.
- 17 A national citizenship promotion campaign and accompanying educational materials should be supported by a sufficient budget to provide regular updates about the naturalization process as laws, regulations, and procedures change.

Marketing and Messaging Ideas:

- 18 Outreach to news and other media to build appreciation for immigration should be based on true-life stories of individuals. Stories should be told simply, avoiding immigration complexities and focusing on the benefits of immigration. Stories about individual immigrant achievements, particularly in a family context, that mirror native-born Americans' hopes will help people to better identify with immigrants.
- 19 Media messages to build appreciation for immigration and show that citizenship is worth obtaining should have a strong emotional component, matched with practical information.
- 20 Media messages promoting citizenship should focus on the highest priorities immigrants consistently articulate for their lives: economic progress, family unity, and having a political voice through voting. Messaging should affirmatively state, with personal examples, how citizenship helps achieve these goals.
- 21 Media messages promoting citizenship should make clear that a national citizenship campaign is not about legalization for undocumented immigrants.
- 22 Media messages promoting citizenship should avoid using images of large naturalization oath ceremonies so as to not arouse undue concern that there are too many immigrants in this country. Stories promoting citi-

zenship should not focus on the number of immigrants or aspiring citizens, but on individual success stories.

- 23 Media messages promoting citizenship that feature small naturalization oath ceremonies should highlight the relationships between foreign and native-born citizens, such as native-born relatives, friends, coworkers, pastors, or English tutors, who are celebrating the experience together.
- 24 Campaigns promoting citizenship should target the media on the important dates of July 4 and September 17 (Citizenship Day) when naturalization oath ceremonies are often given special attention.
- 25 As part of a national citizenship campaign, positive depictions of the decision to become a U.S. citizen and the naturalization process should be incorporated into the scripts of dramas or “novellas,” typically aired on Spanish language and other non-English language television shows.
- 26 Outreach to encourage immigrants to apply for citizenship should use a multimedia approach through television, radio, posters, and flyers and incorporate various native languages and ethnic images.
- 27 Media messages to encourage immigrants to apply for citizenship should capture people’s attention quickly, provide practical information, and end with an encouraging message on how to take action.
- 28 Media messages to encourage immigrants to apply for citizenship should not recount the difficulty, length, or cost of the naturalization process but focus on the high percentage of success among the hundreds of thousands of immigrants who apply each year.
- 29 Messaging for radio should not require the listener to write down detailed information. Rather, radio announcements should be inspirational and deliver only simple facts that can be easily retained. Television messages can offer both inspiring images and written facts and information.
- 30 Local community television stations in English and other languages should run immigration programs that have charitable immigration attorneys or representatives accredited by the Board of Immigration Appeals to share immigration news and answer general questions that do not require case specific information.
- 31 Mass media campaigns to promote citizenship on a national or state level should be professionally developed but not exorbitant in cost. Most of the funders’ resources should provide messaging opportunities for grassroots initiatives that can be done more cheaply and effectively where citizenship-driven activities will occur. Mass media campaigns should not take away funds from much-needed direct services.
- 32 A mass media campaign promoting citizenship should be developed with input from a voluntary panel of media experts, immigration service providers, immigration advocates, and immigrant-led organizers.

- 33 Media corporations should partner with the OoC and citizenship instruction experts in designing multimedia learning for students who self-study for the naturalization exam. If affordable, accessible, and appropriate, on-line and DVD materials could be instrumental in helping millions of immigrants obtain citizenship.

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 - 2 Akst, D. “New Americans Fresh Off the Presses” *Carnegie Reporter* (Spring 2003), p. 4.
 - 3 *Ibid.*, p. 4.
 - 4 Flaccus, G. “Spanish-Language Media Rallies Immigrants” *The Washington Post* (March 28, 2006), available at: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/03/28/AR2006032800948.html>
 - 5 Brulliard, K. “Spanish Radio Tunes In to Immigration Quandries” *The Washington Post* (April 3, 2006), available at: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/04/02/AR2006040201232.html>
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Faith Communities

The United States is a religious nation. A 2004 Gallup poll found that six out of ten Americans described religion as “very important” to their daily life, 64 percent said they belonged to a church or synagogue, and 43 percent had attended religious services in the past seven days.¹ A 2002 poll by the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life found that religion is greatly valued by many Americans, with 58 percent responding that “the strength of American society is based on the religious faith of its people.”²

Faith communities bring people together and forge social and spiritual bonds. They provide numerous forms of support for their members, such as emergency cash assistance, food pantries, child care, and counseling. Religious leaders and laity are also often involved in the political sphere, taking positions on policy issues that affect or concern members. They played key roles in the movement to abolish slavery and to advance civil rights. Because they have a history of assisting immigrants and offering services to foster their full integration into society, many faith communities are active on immigrant issues, including citizenship. For example, an interfaith coalition in 2006 is working on immigration reform.

Faith communities have an important role to play in a national citizenship plan for several reasons. First, they can lend depth to the discussion of citizenship by speaking about human rights and the responsibility to be a good citizen and give back to one’s community. Second, they are

effective agents of change because they have the ability to rally large numbers of people to a cause, both at the grass-roots and national level.

Third, many faith communities have significant numbers of immigrant members. A study of the religious preferences of recent immigrants who are Lawful Permanent Residents found that nearly two-thirds described themselves as Christian: 42 percent identified themselves as Catholic, 19 percent as Protestant, and 4 percent as Orthodox Christian. The next largest group was Muslim (8 percent), followed by Buddhist (4 percent), Jewish (3 percent), and Hindu (3 percent).³

Fourth, many faith communities have a long tradition of caring for immigrants and specifically teach how their members should treat immigrants. Many local communities have ethnic ministries that reach out to specific immigrant groups and minister to their spiritual needs. In the United States, faith-based organizations are the backbone of the refugee resettlement program and work closely with local congregations that provide a wealth of resources to new arrivals. Out of nine national voluntary agencies that resettle refugees, six are faith-based and all have long histories that date back to World War II or earlier. Many that began primarily aiding refugees now offer immigration services, including citizenship assistance, as part of their efforts to fully integrate newcomers.

One of the national refugee resettlement agencies, the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society, was founded in the 1880s to assist Russian Jewish immigrants. In the Jewish tradition, care for the immigrant is rooted in the Torah, which in 36 instances commands the Israelite community “to be kind to the stranger, to care for his needs and indeed to love him.”⁴ Because the Israelites had once been foreigners in Egypt, they were enjoined to be especially aware of the needs of strangers in their own midst, and to treat them humanely out of empathy.

“You must not oppress the stranger; you know how a stranger feels, for you lived as strangers in the land of Egypt.” –Exodus 23:9

Various Christian traditions have also demonstrated a concern for immigrants. In 1944 the National Association of Evangelicals established World Relief, an international relief agency, with a mission to “work with, for, and from the Church to relieve human suffering, poverty, and hunger worldwide in the name of Jesus Christ.” As part of this mission, the agency mobilizes U.S. churches to reach out to newcomers and provides immigration services, including citizenship assistance and English language training. The World Relief vision statement reads: “We believe showing suffering people that Christians care and

that the Church wants to make a lasting impact on their lives is a powerful expression of our faith and our love for God.”⁶

The Lutheran Church in the United States cares for immigrants and refugees through Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service, founded in 1939 to bring “new hope and new life.”⁷ The agency seeks “a world where all communities welcome refugees and migrants.”⁸ It bases its service to migrants on love of God, the sacredness of human life, and the need to treat all people with dignity, compassion, and respect.

The Presbyterian Church also works to aid immigrants and integrate them into the community. In a 1999 statement, the 221st Assembly of the Presbyterian Church noted: “In Christ, barriers no longer divide and alienate; reconciliation is the new reality. All persons in all cultures are our neighbors. Jesus identified with the stranger in his own context and clearly emphasized hospitality as one sign of the reign of God.”⁹

Welcoming Immigrants

Ecumenical Ministries of Iowa, which represents ten Protestant denominations, joined with the University of Northern Iowa to produce a guide entitled, *Welcoming New Iowans*. The guide contains information and resources on the history of immigration in Iowa, the Christian responsibility to newcomers, and ways to welcome newcomers in Iowa’s communities and churches. In explaining the Biblical basis for welcoming the stranger, the document states: “The powerful message that pervades the Old and New Testaments is that when we humbly offer hospitality to a stranger we meet on the road—even someone who might be among the least worthy to receive our attention and help—we encounter God.”¹⁰

In Catholicism, there is a rich tradition of care for the immigrant, and migrants occupy a place of almost unique reverence. The Catholic Church identifies with migrants based on its own history and experience. The Church cites the Holy Family, fleeing from King Herod, as “the models and protectors of every migrant, alien, and refugee of whatever kind who, whether compelled by fear of persecution or by want, is forced to leave his native land, his beloved parents and relatives, his close friends, and to seek a foreign soil.”¹¹

More importantly, the Church identifies newcomers and other marginalized people with God. “I was a stranger and you welcomed me” (Matthew 25:35). Thus, Catholic social teaching calls believers to welcome newcomers as “brothers and sisters.” This moral imperative encompasses

pastoral care and political empowerment. The Church treats the participation of all immigrants in civil society as their right and the community's responsibility.

Catholic Bishops Support Citizenship

U.S. Catholic bishops have eloquently affirmed the importance of citizenship. In their 1999 statement, *From Newcomers to Citizens: All Come Bearing Gifts*, the bishops stated, "The Catholic Church believes that citizenship affirms basic human dignity by allotting full political and legal rights to the individual."¹² They further stressed the importance of citizenship to the wider community by quoting Cardinal Theodore McCarrick: "By becoming citizens, [immigrants] reinforce the equities that they have built in this country and become full partners in the course and life of our nation."¹³ The bishops also addressed the need for citizenship assistance, stating: "As citizens, we have a responsibility to assist those who qualify to take advantage of the opportunity to become U.S. citizens."¹⁴

The Muslim faith also has a history of caring for migrants. The calendar in Islamic countries begins with the year that the Prophet Mohammed took flight from the Arabian city of Mecca and sought refuge in Medina. It is known as the hijra calendar, hijra being the Arabic word for flight or migration. In Medina, Mohammed found safety after being persecuted for his belief in one God. Consequently, Muslims know through the Prophet Mohammed's flight the importance of finding sanctuary for one's beliefs.

Welcoming the stranger is embedded in Arab culture, especially in Arab Bedouin culture. Historically, a weary, unfamiliar traveler is welcomed in one's home and given water, food, and rest for days without being asked who he is, where he comes from, or why he is traveling. Bedouins welcome the stranger based on need rather than social status.

In the United States, Muslims and Buddhists also demonstrate their concern for migrants through concrete programs and services benefiting their own communities. For example, mosques may provide emergency cash assistance for members in need and Buddhist temples often provide socialization programs or citizenship classes for elders. These faith communities often help support refugees' long-term integration needs after resettlement services end.

Many religious communities are involved in citizenship-related activities. In Los Angeles, Catholic churches with large numbers of Latino parishioners host citizenship assistance workshops offered by Catholic Charities. They also

provide publicity about the workshops by distributing flyers and printing announcements in their bulletins. Churches also host brush-up classes to help applicants prepare for the naturalization interview and review U.S. history and civics questions for the test. The workshops, which are held several times each month, typically produce 20-35 citizenship applications.

For several years, the Buddhist Temple in Silver Spring, Md., provided citizenship classes for elderly Cambodian, Vietnamese, and Chinese refugees. The Baltimore City Community College (BCCC) sponsored the classes. When families went to religious services on Sunday mornings, they brought the elders to attend class. When BCCC tried to schedule classes in fall 2005, it learned there was no longer a need for them because all of the elders in the community had successfully naturalized.

The Karbala Islamic Center in Dearborn, Mich., has partnered with Community Immigration Legal Services of the Archdiocese of Detroit to provide citizenship information to its members. Arabic-speaking staff from the archdiocese visit the center on a regular basis to give presentations and answer questions. The visits coincide with religious events or services and also are scheduled when changes are made to immigration law and large numbers of people are seeking information. Topics include the benefits of citizenship, what to expect at the citizenship interview, and the importance of professional legal assistance. In addition, the Center distributes citizenship outreach materials to its members.

In central New Jersey, the Bris Avrohom Center for Russian Jewish immigrants provides daytime and nighttime English language and periodic citizenship classes to help immigrants and refugees integrate into American society. The citizenship classes are geared to elders who need extra help to pass the test. The center also recruits volunteers to tutor students in English.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1 Faith communities, especially those with a large immigrant membership, should assist immigration service agencies in community outreach efforts on naturalization. In particular, they can make announcements at their worship services, post flyers, and place notices in their bulletins.
- 2 Faith communities that have affiliated schools or daycare programs with children from immigrant families should provide information to parents about the benefits and requirements of citizenship.
- 3 Faith communities that provide social services for the poor should conduct citizenship outreach through these programs.

- 4 Faith communities should provide space to immigration service agencies for citizenship workshops, English language classes, and citizenship classes.
- 5 Faith communities should recruit volunteers from among their members to assist at citizenship workshops, teach English and civics classes, and tutor students.
- 6 Faith communities should participate in advocacy efforts on immigration reform and citizenship promotion.
- 7 Faith community leaders should speak out about the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and the need to assist immigrants in this process.
- 8 Faith communities should use their national denominational forums to talk about immigration and immigrant integration issues, including citizenship, and to share best practices in programming.
- 9 Faith communities should include immigration and citizenship issues in their publications dealing with social justice and social services.

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- 4 Kurtz, V. "The Jewish Imperative to Help the Stranger in our Midst" Passages (Spring 2004), p. ii.
- 5 World Relief. Ministry Handbook (undated), p. 1.
- 6 World Relief. "Vision," available at: <http://www.wr.org/ourorganization/vision.asp>
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- 8 Ibid.
- 9 Woodrick, A. and Grey, M. *Welcoming New Iowans: A Guide for Christians and Churches* (Cedar Falls, IA: The University of Northern Iowa New Iowans Program, 2002), p. 21.
- 10 Ibid.
- 11 Pius XX. Apostolic Constitution, *Exsul Familia*, Introduction (1952).
- 12 National Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee on Migration. *From Newcomers to Citizens: All Come Bearing Gifts* (Washington, DC: United States Catholic Conference, 1999), p. 5.
- 13 Ibid, p. 4.
- 14 Ibid, p. 6.

Civic Organizations

Civic organizations forge social bonds between people and strengthen communities. They bring people together for social and recreational activities. At the same time, they are involved in charitable activities and contribute many volunteer hours to humanitarian causes. Importantly, civic organizations build social capital, described as "the collective value of all 'social networks' and the inclinations that arise from these networks to do things for each other."¹ In his seminal book, *Bowling Alone*, Robert Putnam notes that social networks "affect the productivity of individuals and groups" and lead to "norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness."²

Civic organizations, both national and local, have an important role to play in a national citizenship plan for two key reasons. First, they have an interest in promoting citizenship because they have increasing numbers of immigrant members, who tend to be significantly younger than traditional members. *Bowling Alone* notes the decline in membership in civic organizations, which peaked in the 1950s and 60s. By promoting naturalization, civic organizations can increase their visibility in immigrant communities and recruit new members. For example, less than 10 percent of Lions Clubs in the United States are predominantly immigrants, but the newest clubs are immigrant-based and have younger members.³ The Knights of Columbus, a Catholic fraternal organization, has dedicated staff to Hispanic recruitment and the formation of Hispanic councils throughout the United States.

Second, naturalization and citizenship activities fit easily within many civic organizations' missions and interests, particularly those that emphasize patriotism. Even organizations with other missions can mesh citizenship activities within their goals. For example, some civic organizations focus on education or specific groups, such as children, families, or the elderly. The Lions Club promotes service and "building a brighter future for [the] community."⁴ The Rotary Club emphasizes "the ideal of service in each Rotarian's personal, business, and community life."⁵

Most local civic organizations belong to national or international networks, which foster coordination and information sharing and would be advantageous in a national citizenship campaign. One national network that could work on naturalization-related issues is the National Conference on Citizenship (NCoC), created in 1946 to encourage a more active, engaged citizenry. It was federally chartered in 1953 and mandated to: hold an annual, national conference on citizenship; assist in making citizenship more effective by encouraging local, state, and regional citizenship conferences; and highlight how organizations can contribute to a more active citizenry. Its

members include U.S. history and civics teachers, students, historians, professors, nonprofit and foundation leaders, and officials at the federal, state, and local levels.

Many civic organizations are not aware of the range of citizenship-related activities available and the great need for assistance. However, several organizations are already involved in these activities. In Alexandria, Va., the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) attend citizenship swearing-in ceremonies where they provide U.S. flags to new citizens, lead the Pledge of Allegiance, and give speeches. They encourage voting and civic engagement and urge new citizens to be proud of their heritage and to participate in the civic life of their new country. DAR chapters in other communities also participate in citizenship swearing-in ceremonies, thus furthering the organization's commitment to patriotism.

The Knights of Columbus, which emphasizes patriotism and civic engagement, partners with Catholic Charities immigration programs to assist immigrants in becoming citizens in several communities, including Los Angeles, Dallas, Long Island, N.Y., and Richmond, Va. The Knights volunteers conduct community outreach on the benefits and requirements of citizenship; assist immigrants in completing the citizenship application at workshops; teach classes on U.S. history and civics; and attend citizenship swearing-in ceremonies where they hand out flags, conduct voter registration, and help complete passport applications for new citizens. The Knights of Columbus provided financial support for these citizenship services through a one-year grant to Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc. (CLINIC).

AmeriCorps, a volunteer program that is part of the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), places full-time volunteers in nonprofit, faith-based, and other community organizations to work on anti-poverty and other projects. Its Citizenship AmeriCorps Project now has 37 full-time volunteers in 12 immigration service agencies throughout the country where they are assisting immigrants to naturalize. The volunteers make at least a one-year commitment and receive a stipend to cover their living expenses and an education award that can be used for tuition or college loan repayment. They teach English and civics classes, assist immigrants in completing the citizenship application, recruit more volunteers for the citizenship program, and plan naturalization events. The U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants runs the program through a grant from CNCS.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1 Civic organizations should partner with immigration legal service agencies to assist with citizenship workshops, community outreach, English and civics classes, and swearing-in ceremonies.
- 2 Civic organizations should partner with local U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services offices and courts to participate in citizenship swearing-in ceremonies by conducting voter registration, providing U.S. flags, assisting with passport applications, and providing other kinds of help as needed.
- 3 Civic organizations that are involved in citizenship swearing-in ceremonies should consider expanding their role to include volunteer work at citizenship application workshops, as well as English, history, and civics classes.
- 4 Civic organizations that provide grants should fund citizenship legal service agencies. A grant as modest as \$3,000 can support outreach and quarterly citizenship workshops in the community.
- 5 The NCoC should use its network of members and contacts to advocate for more funding for the Department of Education to expand English and civics instruction.
- 6 The NCoC should partner with the Office of Citizenship and teachers experienced in English as a second language and civics instruction to develop a U.S. history and civics curriculum.
- 7 The NCoC should feature speakers on naturalization at its national conference and look for ways to increase the naturalization rate.
- 8 National volunteer service programs such as AmeriCorps should strive to place more volunteers on citizenship projects with immigration legal service agencies and as English and civics instructors.

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 - 3 Ly, P. "Immigrant Twist on an American Tradition" *The Washington Post* (September 21, 2005).
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The Business Community

Immigrants relate to the business sector as employees, business owners and suppliers, and customers. In 2000 immigrants were 11 percent of the U.S. population and nearly 15 percent of the labor force.¹ The business sector, and the U.S. economy in turn, benefits greatly from immigrant workers. In the 1990s immigrants “accounted for half the growth in the U.S. workforce.”² According to the Employment Policy Foundation, “without the contribution of immigrant labor, the output of goods and services in the U.S. would be at least \$1 trillion smaller than it is today.”³

Immigrant workers are distributed broadly across various occupations, but the largest percentage, 44 percent, are employed in managerial, professional, technical, sales, and administrative support occupations.⁴ Many industries, particularly in the retail, agricultural, and service sectors, depend overwhelmingly on immigrant labor. Immigrants represent 34 percent of those working in “private households,” 21.4 percent of those providing other “personal services,” 18.5 percent of the workers in “eating and drinking places,” and 12.8 percent of construction industry employees. In 1997-98, a full 81 percent of farmworkers were foreign born.⁵ Immigrants also dominate garment industry, meatpacking, and poultry processing jobs. The majority of foreign-born workers in the United States—63 percent—are noncitizens.⁶

While immigrant workers enrich our nation and improve our quality of life, many do not reap the just benefits of their work. Instead, they endure subminimum and nonpayment of wages or do not earn enough to escape poverty. In addition, immigrants work disproportionately in jobs that do not provide health insurance or other benefits that most workers take for granted. Only 26 percent of immigrants have job-based health insurance⁷ compared to 59.8 percent of the general population.⁸ At the same time, many immigrant workers suffer from occupational hazards.

Like immigrants of the past, many immigrants today are business owners and entrepreneurs. The U.S. Hispanic Chamber of Commerce reports that the number of Hispanic-owned businesses grew by 31 percent from 1997 to 2002. In New Mexico, Texas, Florida, and California, 15 to 22 percent of businesses are Hispanic-owned, and the Internal Revenue Service predicts that by 2007 one in 10 small businesses will be Hispanic.⁹ A recent report from the U.S. Census Bureau found that “Hispanics are opening businesses at a rate that is three times faster than the national average.”¹⁰ One third of all minority businesses are owned by Asian Americans, yet these businesses accounted for 51 percent of the revenue generated by minority businesses in 1997, a gross receipt of \$306 billion. In 2000 over 2.2 million workers were employed by Asian American businesses.¹¹ Increasingly, the business sector is made up of immigrant business owners.

In addition to being workers and business owners, immigrants are increasingly affluent customers who cannot be ignored. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the number of Hispanic households with incomes over \$100,000 increased by 137 percent between 1990 and 2000. Hispanic purchasing power is nearly \$700 billion, and is expected to reach up to \$1 trillion by 2007.¹² Asian Americans have approximately \$230 billion in spending power, and in 2000 they had the highest median household income of all ethnic groups, at \$51,205.¹³

For a number of reasons, the business sector should do more to help immigrants become fully integrated citizens in U.S. society. First, businesses have greatly profited from immigration. Consequently, the business sector has strongly supported comprehensive immigration reform and guest worker programs, and opposed immigration restrictions. Second, businesses have the financial means to promote and encourage citizenship. Federal funding and leadership in a national citizenship program must be matched with private industry funding to help build the infrastructure necessary for a national effort.

Third, businesses with significant numbers of immigrants in their workforce provide an excellent conduit for citizenship outreach and public information, as well as space for citizenship classes and workshops. Given that 62 percent of low-wage immigrant workers have limited English proficiency,¹⁴ businesses can also subsidize worksite English classes to help their employees gain the language skills required for citizenship. Studies have shown that immigrants “who are fluent in oral and written English earn about 24 percent more than those who lack fluency, regardless of their qualifications.”¹⁵ A program by the U.S. Department of Education combining job training with language acquisition for employees resulted in decreased attendance problems, better production, increased job retention, and increased quality control.¹⁶ Clearly, worksite English classes are a win-win proposition for employers.

Finally, immigrants who are citizens will be more rooted in their community and more stable employees, so businesses should encourage citizenship out of self-interest. At the same time, citizenship is a way for businesses to invest in the wider community and promote civic engagement. Even businesses that do not have a significant immigrant workforce often have large numbers of immigrants as customers, and could benefit from supporting citizenship activities as a way of appealing to their customer base and improving their image. In addition, some businesses, such as banks, often emphasize civic engagement and philanthropy in the local community, and citizenship promotion complements such activities. Businesses that are owned by immigrants or their children, in particular, would be well positioned to support citizenship activities.

There are several examples of businesses that promote or encourage citizenship for their employees, mainly through English classes. In Baltimore, Md., Trifinity Manufacturing, a company that makes air fresheners, offers on-site English classes in partnership with Baltimore City Community College (BCCC). The company, formerly known as Medo, has sponsored this program since the early 1990s. BCCC pays for the instructors through a grant, and Trifinity pays employees half time to attend the classes. The classes are scheduled over an afternoon shift change so that employees can attend either at the beginning or end of their shifts. In past years, the company encouraged its employees to become citizens by offering citizenship preparation classes, reimbursing them for the cost of a naturalization application successfully completed, and honoring new citizen employees with a party. Over 30 employees successfully naturalized in this way. The company feels that the English and citizenship programs have paid for themselves many times over in terms of money saved on employee turnover. As a result of these programs, the company has an employee retention rate in the high 90s, loyal employees, and excellent morale.

Wegmans Food Markets, a chain based in Rochester, N.Y., with locations in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Virginia, and Maryland, began offering English classes to its employees in 1999. The classes are conducted two times per week, and employees are paid to attend. At Wegmans' Sterling, Va., store, instructors from Northern Virginia Community College teach the basic level English classes, while a private company, called Wizard, provides higher level English classes that focus on pronunciation and conversation skills. The Sterling store has approximately 700 employees who speak 30 different languages. Wegmans views diversity in its staff as a strength, and places employees' language on their name tags to facilitate communication with customers who may speak the same language. The company decided to offer the English classes in response to the shortage of convenient, affordable classes in local communities and a desire to improve employee retention through better advancement opportunities. Wegmans found that it retains 80 percent of English class graduates. In addition, employees who complete the English classes are more comfortable interacting with customers. Wegmans views the English program as a worthwhile investment that greatly benefits the company as well as the employees. As a result of the company's education programs and other employee benefits, Wegmans was ranked number two on *Fortune* magazine's list of the "100 Best Companies to Work For" in 2006.

In Passaic, N.J., St. Mary's Hospital offers free, on-site English and citizenship preparation classes to its employees as well as the larger community. The hospital has a staff of nearly 800 and is a major employer in the city. For the English and citizenship program, the hospital pays for a program coordinator and secretary, and raises

\$6,000 per year from private donors to pay for the instructors. The program serves 60 students per year and partners with pro bono attorneys and Catholic Charities for document preparation and legal assistance with citizenship applications.

In Chicago, Ill., Mt. Sinai Hospital is collaborating with the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS) to conduct an assessment of employees' immigration and citizenship needs. HIAS is offering periodic open house sessions in the hospital cafeteria where employees can drop in to ask immigration questions. The needs assessment is funded by a private grant. Once the assessment is complete, HIAS hopes to offer citizenship classes and citizenship application assistance on site for hospital employees. In addition, HIAS hopes to provide information about citizenship in the hospital's orientation sessions for foreign-born nurses. The hospital views these services as a benefit that will improve retention of its foreign-born employees.

In Northern Virginia, the Fairfax County Office of Adult and Community Education has contracted with area employers, including restaurants, hotels, banks, construction companies, and landscapers to set up worksite English classes since the mid-1980s. The classes, which meet twice a week for 12 weeks, are customized for each employer's needs and focus on vocabulary required for the job. Employers pay the county for the classes, purchase any necessary books, and pay their employees to attend. Approximately 25 to 30 employers participate in the program each year. Employers who have participated have reported better employee morale, improved safety, and better communication skills on the part of employees.

Even businesses that do not have a large immigrant workforce can play a role in a national citizenship program by providing material support. In Phoenix, two major utility companies cosponsor citizenship workshops with Rep. Ed Pastor (D-N.M.) and provide space and food for the trainings for workshop volunteers. In 1997 Coors Brewing Company produced a free video, with copies available upon request, to assist immigrants in preparing for the U.S. history and civics test. The video featured the 96 citizenship study questions in Spanish and English.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Citizenship Promotion:

- 1 Businesses with a significant number of immigrant employees should provide information about the benefits and requirements of citizenship and referrals to local nonprofit immigration service agencies for application assistance.
- 2 Businesses should encourage citizenship by reimbursing employees for the cost of a successful naturalization application and should foster pride in new

citizens through parties for newly naturalized employees and other forms of recognition.

- 3 Businesses should distribute materials such as brochures, flash cards, videos, and CDs from the Office of Citizenship (OoC) and charitable immigration programs to inform immigrants about the benefits of citizenship and assist them in preparing for the test.
- 4 Ethnic-based Chambers of Commerce should take a leadership role in promoting citizenship among their members by sponsoring events, providing funding, and featuring activities and projects on their websites, in their publications, and at their national conferences.
- 5 Businesses should be approached through networks such as trade associations and regional consortiums to support a national citizenship program. Corporate foundations and industry-wide educational foundations should also be approached to assist in recruiting employers.
- 6 Federal, state, and local governments should provide tax credits to businesses that offer on-site English or citizenship classes for their employees.
- 7 National and local trade associations should promote citizenship by featuring businesses involved in citizenship activities in their publications, on their websites, and at conferences.
- 8 Government and national and local trade associations should publicly recognize and encourage businesses involved in citizenship activities through special awards for best programs and practices.
- 9 Businesses that support philanthropic activities and are frustrated with the lack of government leadership on citizenship issues should support citizenship initiatives in their local communities. Such citizenship initiatives have many benefits for businesses: they are nonpartisan, they offer many “feel good,” human interest stories, and they have clear and positive outcomes for individuals and communities.

Programs:

- 10 Businesses with a significant number of immigrant employees should offer worksite English language and citizenship classes, paying for employees’ time to attend classes, for the instructor, and for textbooks.
- 11 Businesses should encourage employees who are citizens to volunteer their time to help immigrants going through the naturalization process, especially other employees, by tutoring them in English and civics and providing other kinds of support. They should offer time off for employees who are naturalizing and for those mentoring them to attend citizenship appointments and the swearing-in ceremony. Citizenship-related activities should be included in business volunteer programs.

Partnerships:

- 12 Local mainstream and ethnic-based Chambers of Commerce should encourage employers to provide worksite English and citizenship classes in partnership with community-based organizations.
- 13 The OoC and the Office of Refugee Resettlement should assist in recruiting businesses for worksite English and citizenship classes and for support of citizenship services in the broader community.
- 14 Businesses with a significant number of employees eligible for citizenship should partner with local nonprofit immigration service agencies to offer application assistance through on-site citizenship workshops.
- 15 Large businesses should partner with nonprofit immigration service agencies to lend their expertise and assistance in marketing citizenship, messaging, and advertising citizenship services to the community.
- 16 Local charitable immigration programs should utilize business consultants who specialize in corporate development to assist in recruiting employers to participate in citizenship activities.
- 17 Small businesses that wish to participate in citizenship activities should form a consortium to pool their resources.
- 18 Business leaders, especially those who are immigrants or children of immigrants, should serve on an advisory council for the OoC to assist in recruiting businesses to participate in citizenship activities and to advise on marketing a national citizenship plan to immigrants and the general public.

Funding:

- 19 Businesses such as utility companies that are large, highly profitable, and serve the vast majority of the community, including immigrants, should provide financial and staff support for citizenship workshops. Workshop organizers can give them the opportunity to advertise and set up vending tables at workshops in exchange for their support.
- 20 Businesses that sponsor philanthropic activities should make citizenship and English language training a priority and fund the work of both local and national nonprofit immigration service agencies.
- 21 Businesses should sponsor celebrations at citizenship swearing-in ceremonies.
- 22 Local charitable immigration programs should establish roundtables of wealthy business investors to fund citizenship initiatives in their community.
- 23 Businesses should provide financial support for a national Ad Council campaign promoting citizenship.

- 1 National Immigration Law Center. "Facts About Immigrant Workers" (April 2004), available at: <http://www.nilc.org>
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- 3 National Immigration Law Center. "Facts About Immigrant Workers," para. 6.
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- 5 Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc. *Work Without Justice: Low-Wage Immigrant Laborers* (Washington, DC: Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc., 2000).
- 6 Migration Policy Institute. "The Foreign Born in the U.S. Labor Force: Numbers and Trends" (January 2004), available at: <http://www.migrationpolicy.org/pubs/2004.php>
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- 9 United States Hispanic Chamber of Commerce. "Statistics," available at: <http://www.usbcc.com/res-statistics.html>
- 10 Williams, K. and Kang, C. "Study Shows Increase in Hispanic Entrepreneurship" *The Washington Post* (March 21, 2006), para. 1.
- 11 U.S. Pan Asian American Chamber of Commerce. "AA Facts and Statistics," available at: http://www.uspaacc.com/web/aboutus/aa_facts.htm
- 12 United States Hispanic Chamber of Commerce. *Ibid.*
- 13 U.S. Pan Asian American Chamber of Commerce. *Ibid.*
- 14 National Immigration Law Center. "Facts About Immigrant Workers."
- 15 *Ibid.*, para. 17.
- 16 *Ibid.*

Labor Unions

Labor unions play a key role in U.S. economic, social, and political life. Through the use of collective bargaining, unions gain benefits for workers, such as higher wages, health insurance, pensions, and safer working conditions. According to the U.S. Department of Labor, union members have wages an average of 27 percent higher than non-union members, and 92 percent of union members have health coverage through their jobs, compared to 68 percent of non-union members. In addition, 73 percent of union members have a guaranteed, defined benefit pension, while only 16 percent of non-union members do.¹

By organizing and mobilizing their members and supporters in the labor movement, unions have helped improve the standard of living for U.S. society at large. They are credited with ending child labor, improving worker safety, increasing wages for both union and non-union members, reducing the number of hours in the work week, and winning public education for children, along with many other benefits.² Unions pushed for the creation of the Department of Labor in 1913 to protect the rights and welfare of all U.S. laborers, and union leaders proposed the Labor Day holiday, established by Congress in 1894 to celebrate the U.S. worker. Unions are largely responsible for the rise of the middle class in America through their success in negotiating stable, middle-class incomes for workers.

The number of labor unions in the United States began increasing in the mid-nineteenth century with the country's industrialization and peaked in the 1950s, when 30 percent of workers were union members. In the later half of the twentieth century, union membership declined, and by 2000 only 12 percent of U.S. workers belonged to unions.³ In addition to the number of members, the demographics of unions have changed significantly. Over the last 20 years, "women have made up the majority of new workers organized, and union growth has been significantly higher among workers of color and immigrant workers than among white male workers."⁴ The increase in immigrant union members reflects a larger trend in the U.S. labor market. Immigrants are now crucial participants and half of the workers who entered the U.S. labor force during the 1990s were immigrants.⁵ Another change experienced by unions has been in the types of jobs held by their members. With the decline of manufacturing jobs in the United States, more union members hold jobs in healthcare, restaurants, hotels, and other areas of the service sector.

In a national citizenship program, labor unions would play an important role. Because many unions have large numbers of immigrant members, they would be an excellent vehicle for outreach and citizenship application assistance by attorneys. Unions offer other unique strengths. Unlike nonprofit organizations that depend on grants and donations for their programs, some unions have existing financial resources that could be allocated to a citizenship program. Unions also have a firmly established member base and extensive experience in reaching out to their members, which could be utilized for citizenship promotion. In addition, unions are in a good position to negotiate citizenship-related benefits in the work place, such as English language classes.

In recognition of their immigrant members and issues of importance to them, many unions are already actively engaged in the movement for comprehensive immigration reform. Citizenship progresses naturally from immigration reform, which emphasizes lawful permanent residence, and

citizenship programs would increase the effectiveness of union advocacy by creating more voters. Citizenship also furthers the broad goals and objectives of unions to improve the lives of their members by giving them the right to vote and other rights and benefits of full membership in U.S. society. As more unions focus their efforts on organizing and recruiting new members, citizenship assistance can be another important benefit of union membership.

Some labor unions are already involved in citizenship-related activities. In New York City, the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Local 1199 has an extensive citizenship program for its 250,000 members and their dependents. Citizenship assistance is a negotiated benefit in the union's contract with employers. The SEIU program, which began in 2001, grew from recognition of the need for workers to be able to vote on issues of importance to them and to have holistic benefits. It provides outreach, citizenship application assistance and legal advice, and English language classes. One to two times per month, the program conducts citizenship workshops led by attorneys and representatives accredited by the Board of Immigration Appeals and drawing 30 to 40 applicants each. It also partners with other New York organizations for citizenship drives, case referrals, and citizenship policy advocacy. Another New York union, the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) DC 37, provides citizenship application assistance as part of an extensive menu of legal services available as a benefit to members.

In California, SEIU United Healthcare Workers-West, a statewide union with 150,000 members, has been providing citizenship outreach and assistance to its members and their families for the last three years. The citizenship program is housed within the union's education and training department and is supported by member dues. It is one of the union's least expensive programs. The union decided to start the program several years ago because it had a large number of immigrant members who often contacted the union seeking citizenship or immigration assistance. The citizenship program was seen as a way of strengthening the union's connection with members. Through the program, the union provides regularly scheduled, two-hour citizenship information sessions to educate members about the citizenship requirements and process. Attendees complete their own citizenship applications during the sessions and are screened and referred to the Immigrant Legal Resource Center if they have any eligibility problems. They are referred to English and citizenship classes in the community if needed. The union also provides a four-hour citizenship refresher course to prepare those with pending applications for the interview. The union informs its members about the citizenship program and course schedule through flyers, its website, and its quarterly magazine.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1 Unions should conduct outreach to their members on the benefits and requirements of citizenship and where to obtain application assistance.
- 2 Unions should offer citizenship application assistance, with attorney support or via community-based immigration programs, and English language classes as a benefit for their members.
- 3 Unions should partner with charitable immigration legal service providers to organize citizenship drives and workshops for their members and others in the community.
- 4 Unions should negotiate with employers to establish worksite English language and citizenship preparation classes.
- 5 Unions should partner with English as a second language (ESL) providers as needed to organize English and citizenship classes at worksites and other convenient locations.
- 6 Unions that provide citizenship application assistance should partner with immigration legal service providers to advocate with United States Citizenship and Immigration Services on policy issues of mutual concern.
- 7 Union national offices should promote citizenship assistance models at their conferences and meetings with local members and provide technical assistance to unions interested in starting citizenship programs.
- 8 Unions that organize immigrants to advocate for immigration reform should promote citizenship as a means to full political participation for their members.

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- 1 Change to Win. "The Union Advantage," available at: <http://www.changetowin.org/facts.html>
 - 2 Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopedia. "Labor Unions in the United States," available at: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Labor_unions
 - 3 Ibid.
 - 4 Ibid, para. 3.
 - 5 Urban Institute. "Immigration Studies: A Program of the Urban Institute," available at: <http://www.urban.org/toolkit/issues/immigration.cfm>