



September 14, 2016

## **Bipartisan ‘Cities for Citizenship’ Set To Naturalize 10,000+ Immigrants**

*Amid Contentious National Election, Mayors From Across U.S.  
Join Campaign to Promote Immigrant Inclusion & Financial Empowerment*

*Kansas City, KS, Long Beach, CA, South Gate, CA,  
Suffolk County, NY, and Tucson, AZ Become Latest Members*

New York – More than 10,000 eligible immigrants are on track to becoming American citizens, while more than 65,000 have been connected with naturalization resources and more than 5,000 have attended financial empowerment classes, as a result of Cities for Citizenship.

Cities for Citizenship is celebrating its two-year anniversary on Citizenship Day, September 17.

The bipartisan effort joins 26 mayors committed to building economically robust and welcoming cities for the 8.8 million Legal Permanent Residents, or green card holders, eligible for citizenship. Research by the Urban Institute and supported by NYC’s Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Affairs and Citi Community Development shows that the U.S. is missing out on billions of dollars in tax revenues and earnings due to this naturalization gap. Cities for Citizenship enables cities to expand naturalization and financial capability programs, as well as access to legal assistance, microloans and financial counseling.

Participating cities and counties include Atlanta, GA; Baltimore, MD; Boston, MA; Chattanooga, TN; Chicago, IL; Denver, CO; Jersey City, NJ; Los Angeles, CA; Madison, WI; Miami-Dade County, FL; Milwaukee, WI; Nashville, TN; New Haven, CT; New York, NY; Philadelphia, PA; Pittsburgh, PA; Reading, PA; San Francisco, CA; San Jose, CA; Seattle, WA; and Washington DC.

And, in the past few months, Kansas City, KS, Long Beach, CA, South Gate, CA, Suffolk County NY, and Tucson, AZ also joined.

“Giving legal residents the tools they need to move toward full citizenship is mutually beneficial for those residents and the municipalities in which they live,” said **Mayor Mark Holland, Mayor/CEO of Unified Government, Wyandotte County and Kansas City, Kansas**. “We know that people who are full U.S. citizens have a greater earning power and have a greater positive impact on our communities socially and economically. For a community like ours, with a large number of immigrants, it’s important that we provide that path to citizenship so our city can grow and thrive in the way that America always has.”

“The United States is a nation of immigrants, and as an immigrant myself, I’m proud that Long Beach has joined dozens of other cities to welcome new citizens and build a strong economy,” said **Mayor Robert Garcia of Long Beach, California**.

“On behalf of the South Gate City Council, we applaud the successes the Cities for Citizenship campaign has gained throughout the country and look forward to expanding these efforts not just for the South Gate community, but for the entire southeast Los Angeles County region,” said **Mayor W.H. De Witt of South Gate, California**.

“Suffolk County, New York is proud to be one of the many municipalities across the country that is partnering with Cities for Citizenship to help thousands of immigrants who are on track to becoming American Citizens,” said **Suffolk County Executive Steve Bellone**. “Our goal is to not only assist those who are on the right path to pursuing the American Dream, but to also close the naturalization gap and maintain equal rights for all. Suffolk County is home to 1.5 million residents, and providing key services to perspective citizens, such as financial counseling and education programs, will be instrumental to the further development and enhancement of our local economy. I would like to thank my fellow colleagues in governments across the country, Citi Community Development and Cities for Citizenship for their continuous leadership on this issue.”

“I couldn’t be more pleased than to be joining with our nation’s leading mayors to aid those who are eligible to become citizens of our great country,” said **Mayor Jonathan Rothschild of Tucson, Arizona**. “This effort will strengthen our diversity, our economy and our moral fiber. Tucson has always been a leader in these efforts and will continue to offer its best practices to the rest of the nation.”

“America is a nation of immigrants, and families from across the world have helped Chicago grow, thrive, and prosper throughout our history,” **Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel** said. “Chicago would not be the great city we are today without immigration, and we remain deeply committed to opening the pathways toward citizenship for our growing immigrant population. We are proud of Cities for Citizenship’s achievements and look forward to growing our partnership as we assist as many Chicagoans as possible in navigating the naturalization process.”

"Cities for Citizenship — and the values of inclusion and opportunity that drive it — has made a tremendous difference for our immigrant communities in just two short years," said **Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti**. "The immigrant experience is integral to both our history and future, and my Office of Immigrant Affairs is working hard to help a new generation of Angelenos navigate the naturalization process, promote financial literacy, and better understand the resources available to people and their families."

“Our cities' economic activity, tax bases and civic participation expand every time an immigrant family is empowered through services that support their pathway to citizenship,” said **New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio**. “In the past year, the City of New York has continued and developed new initiatives that improve the socioeconomic welfare of our immigrant communities. More than 80 percent of immigrant New Yorkers have access to a voter registration form in their preferred language; future citizens have access to free citizenship legal services and financial counseling at our public libraries through NYCitizenship; and ActionNYC is the largest municipal investment in a community-based legal services program. As we celebrate Cities for Citizenship’s two-year anniversary, I want to thank my fellow mayors and our sister cities for their partnership and join them in renewing our commitment to this endeavor.”

“Citizenship is an economic asset that opens the way to better-paying jobs, access to savings and homeownership,” said **Bob Annibale, Global Director, Citi Community Development**. “Citi is proud to support Cities for Citizenship, and connect eligible immigrants with the financial, legal and educational support to build a more stable financial future. We celebrate the growing number of members from three to now nearly 30.”

“We are proud of Cities for Citizenship’s tremendous growth and impact since the program’s launch and feel honored to be able to work side by side with our participating cities to promote naturalization and ultimately build welcoming and inclusive cities across the country,” said **Shena Elrington, Director of Policy & Strategic Research at the Center for Popular Democracy**.

"As a founding partner of Cities for Citizenship (C4C), we are thrilled to mark 10,000 legal permanent residents that have become U.S. Citizens through C4C; and, welcome 4 new cities and 1 county to the network. C4C cities and counties across the country demonstrate what it means to welcome immigrants; and, the economic and societal benefits are clear. We look forward to bringing on new cities and counties that are committed to embracing and supporting immigrants," said **Sarah Mesick, Outreach and Training Coordinator at the National Partnership for New Americans**.

Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel, Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti and New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio chair Cities for Citizenship. Citi Community Development is the founding corporate partner. The effort is coordinated by two leading non-profit partners, the Center for Popular Democracy and the National Partnership for New Americans.

Since the program’s launch:

- 10,000+ individuals have pursued citizenship/initiated the citizenship process;
- 6,000+ individuals received legal assistance/referrals;
- 5,000+ individuals have attended financial empowerment classes;
- 900+ individuals have participated in 1-1 financial coaching sessions;
- 12,000+ have received information on the fee waiver, financial counseling, and/or citizenship microloan assistance; and
- Outreach has been conducted in more than 15 different languages, including Amharic, Arabic, Armenian, Chinese, Creole, Farsi, French, Ilocano, Khmer, Korean, Laotian, Mandingo, Punjabi, Romanian, Russian, Somali, Spanish, Tagalog, Twi, Ukrainian, and Vietnamese.

This week, the program also released a toolkit “10 Strategies to Help Cities Launch and Strengthen Citizenship Initiatives”, available at <http://citiesforcitizenship.com/c4c/wp-content/uploads/C4C-Toolkit-2016.pdf>.

Legal Permanent Residents are documented residents, who pay taxes and work lawfully, but 52% of whom remain low-income. Increasing naturalization rates would boost individual earnings for legal permanent residents by 8.9% or \$3,200, and employment rates by 2.2 percentage points, resulting in a \$5.7 billion earnings increase for 21 historic gateway cities for immigrants, according to a study “The Economic Impact of Naturalization on Immigrants and Cities”, available at <http://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/alfresco/publication-pdfs/2000549-The-Economic-Impact-of-Naturalization-on-Immigrants-and-Cities.pdf>.

Follow the initiative on Twitter with #Cities4Citizenship.

###

**About Center for Popular Democracy (CPD)**

The Center for Popular Democracy (CPD) promotes equity, opportunity, and a dynamic democracy in partnership with base-building organizations, organizing networks and alliances, and progressive unions across the country. CPD builds the strength and capacity of democratic organizations to envision and advance a pro-worker, pro-immigrant, racial and economic justice agenda. Visit [www.populardemocracy.org](http://www.populardemocracy.org) and [www.twitter.com/popdemoc](https://www.twitter.com/popdemoc).

**About National Partnership for New Americans (NPNA)**

[The National Partnership for New Americans](http://www.partnershipfornewamericans.org) (NPNA) harnesses the collective power and resources of the country's 34 largest regional immigrant rights organizations in 29 states. Our aim is to achieve a vibrant, just and welcoming democracy for all. Immigrants are the soul of our organization, and immigrant communities inspire, implement and champion our work. NPNA sponsors the annual National Immigrant Integration Conference and, in the past two years, NPNA partners have assisted over 50,000 immigrants to become U.S. citizens and pursue legal status. Additional information may be found at [www.partnershipfornewamericans.org](http://www.partnershipfornewamericans.org) | NIIC: [integrationconference.org](http://integrationconference.org) Facebook: [www.facebook.com/newamericanspartnership](https://www.facebook.com/newamericanspartnership) | Twitter: @npnewamericans

**About Citi**

Citi, the leading global bank, has approximately 200 million customer accounts and does business in more than 160 countries and jurisdictions. Citi provides consumers, corporations, governments and institutions with a broad range of financial products and services, including consumer banking and credit, corporate and investment banking, securities brokerage, transaction services, and wealth management.

Additional information may be found at [www.citigroup.com](http://www.citigroup.com) | Twitter: @Citi | YouTube: [www.youtube.com/citi](http://www.youtube.com/citi) | Blog: <http://blog.citi.com> | Facebook: [www.facebook.com/citi](https://www.facebook.com/citi) | LinkedIn: [www.linkedin.com/company/citi](https://www.linkedin.com/company/citi)

**Media Contacts:**

Anita Jain, Center for Popular Democracy, 347-636-9761, [ajain@populardemocracy.org](mailto:ajain@populardemocracy.org)