

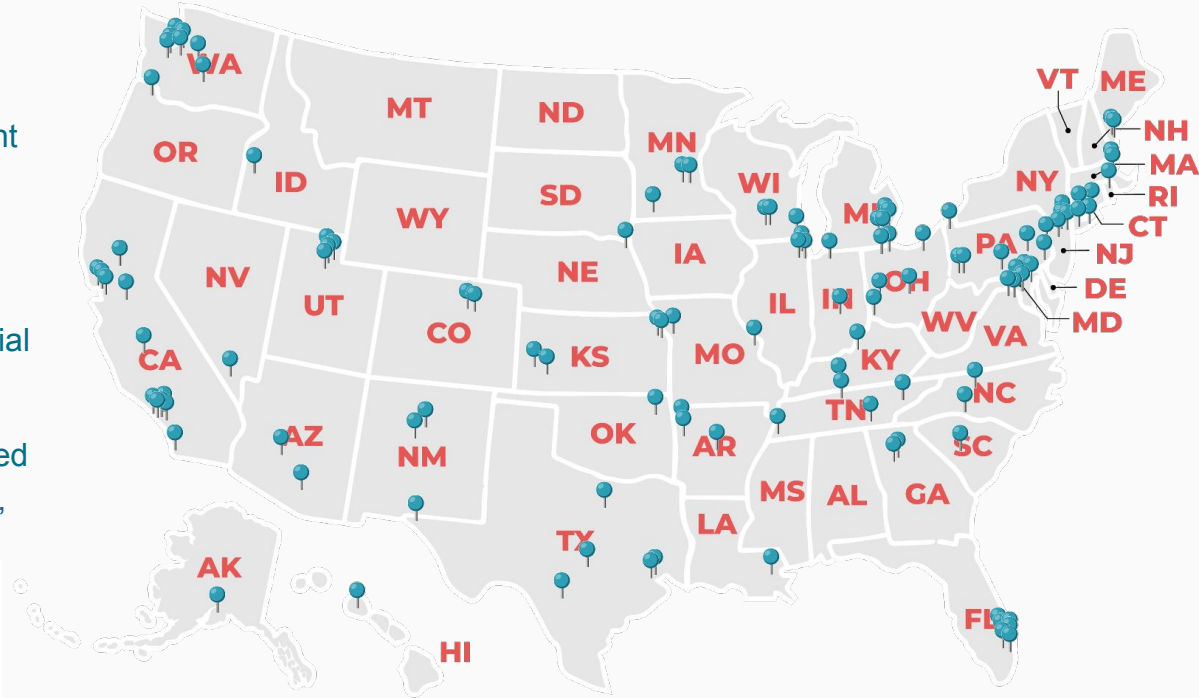
The Power of Partnerships to Advance Citizenship with Local Governments & Community Based Organizations

***Tuesday, July 22, 2025
3pm ET***



About Cities & Counties for Citizenship (CC4C)

- Launched in 2014 with just three cities, Los Angeles, Chicago & New York
- CC4C is a national network of currently 118 cities & counties aimed at increasing citizenship among eligible U.S. permanent residents
- CC4C works with local governments to promote the expansion of naturalization, immigrant & refugee inclusion and financial empowerment programs
- The CC4C Executive Committee is chaired by the mayors of New York City, Chicago, Seattle and Los Angeles



10 Ways Local Governments Can Lead on Citizenship



10 WAYS Local Governments Can Lead on Citizenship

Local governments play a vital role in supporting immigrants on their pathway to U.S. citizenship. These efforts can build stronger, more inclusive communities by supporting immigrant integration and civic participation. Here is a list of 10 ways local governments can lead on citizenship.

1 Host Naturalization Oath Ceremonies

Mayors and county executives can host naturalization oath ceremonies, in collaboration with USCIS at city halls, local libraries, airports, parks, etc.



Community-based organizations along with Dane County, WI host a naturalization oath ceremony in Madison, WI.

2 Organize or Partner to Host a Citizenship Workshop

Partner with local, trusted immigration legal service providers to provide free or low-cost assistance with citizenship applications to eligible residents.



City of Seattle's Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs partners with Asian Counseling and Referral Service to host a naturalization workshop.

3 Leverage Public Facilities for Citizenship Events

Offer city/county buildings such as libraries and community centers as venues for naturalization events and/or information sessions.

4 Host Citizenship Outreach and Informational Events

Organize outreach events and information sessions to inform eligible residents about the benefits and process of naturalization. Partnering with local nonprofits, faith-based groups, and community centers helps expand reach and trust in the community.



City of Houston, TX and community-based organizations, such as Woorti Juntos and Mi Familia en Accion, partner

to lead outreach events and share information about the benefits and process of naturalization.

5 Pass Citizenship Day Proclamations and Resolutions

Introduce and pass proclamations and/or resolutions that support and promote U.S. citizenship. Citizenship Day is September 17th and can serve as a date to organize proclamations/resolutions.



Harris County, TX & City of Houston, TX pass Citizenship Day Resolutions & Proclamations.



Austra Y. Zapata, MSW

Naturalization Coordinator

Harris County Housing &
Community Development

Collaborating for a stronger Harris County

- **Precincts:**

We actively table at community events such as festivals and town halls to share citizenship information and resources.

- **Libraries:**

We partner with Harris County Public Libraries to distribute a shared trifold flyer. The flyer includes:

- Direct contact information for our three main partner organizations
- Immigration hotline numbers
- Access to library-based ESL and citizenship preparation classes
- A QR code linking directly to our services and resources

- **Community Navigators:**

I, along with members of our team, volunteer at workshops hosted by community navigators.

In turn, they volunteer and support our events—creating a strong two-way partnership.



Building Relationships with Key Partners

- I collaborate regularly with **Angie from NPNA** and **Azeb from the City of Houston** through **Naturalize Now, Houston!** We stay in communication and support each other's initiatives.
- Together, we have built a **bridge between government and community**, making civic engagement more personal and accessible.
- **Visibility matters:** The community now recognizes us not only by name but by face.
- Community partners now **proactively reach out** to ask how Harris County can support their workshops and events.



Working with Legal Service Providers

Legal Partners:

- BakerRipley
- GHIRP (Galveston Houston Immigrant Representation Project)
- JFAI (Justice for All Immigrants)

These organizations are unique because they:

- Employ **full-time immigration attorneys**
- Offer **free consultations, legal screenings, and advice**

When there is a community need, partners contact either **HCD** or one of these organizations directly.

We all work together to provide timely and effective support, within our collective capacity.



Messaging & Strategies for Community Engagement

- Be **visible and consistent** in the community — build trust by becoming a familiar face
- Act as a **bridge between government and the people** we serve
- Reinforce that **citizenship offers one of the strongest protections** for immigrants
- Include **Know Your Rights (KYR)** education before or during workshops
- Host **virtual information sessions** and **virtual legal consultations** to expand accessibility
- Maintain **open communication** with partners to identify and respond to community needs





Norma Gonzalez

Spanish Citizenship
Navigator

Woori Juntos

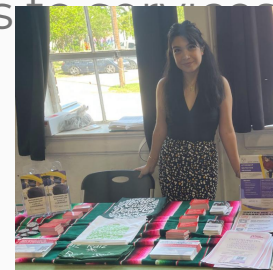
Advancing Naturalization in Harris County

- Citizenship clinic partnerships and collaboration
 - BPSOS clinic
 - India House
 - Mi Familia en Accion
- Legal support and representations provided by our partners
 - MAM (Memorial Assistance Ministries)
 - BPSOS
 - Connecting with Houston Volunteer Lawyers
- Hotline
 - We partner with HILSC (1-833-IMMI HOU)



Outreach within the Community

- Community Events: Tabling at community events and resource fairs to connect with potential applicants
- Library Partnerships: Partnering with Harris County Public Library to provide citizenship information and Know Your Rights training
- Community Engagement: Building relationships with community members and organizations to increase outreach



Celebrating Success + Building Community

- Annual Citizenship Party: Recognizing the achievements of newly naturalized citizens
- Sense of Community: Providing a sense of community and belonging for newly naturalized citizens
- Networking Opportunities: Building relationships and connections among community members





Azmi Haroun

Ethnic Media &
Communication Advisor

Seattle Office of Immigrant &
Refugee Affairs



Alexandra Olins

Director of Employment &
Citizenship Services

Asian Counseling & Referral
Service (ACRS)

Seattle Office of Immigrant & Refugee Affairs (OIRA)

Mission: to improve the lives of Seattle's immigrant and refugee communities through policies, programs, services, and community engagement

Program Areas:

- Language Access
- Ethnic Media
- Immigrant Safety
- Workforce Development
- Legal Defense Network
- Rapid Response
- Citizenship



Seattle's New Citizen Program (NCP)

- **Focus:** assist low-income immigrants on their path to US citizenship who face significant barriers due to age, disability, limited-English proficiency, low-literacy, and complex legal issues
- **Services:** N400 application, fee waiver & reduced fee, N648 disability waiver, citizenship instruction, interview practice, interview representation, N600 application, case management
- **Impact:** assist ~1,000 individuals per year on average, including 600-700 new N400s filed and 7,000+ hrs of instruction
- **Budget:** \$1.25 million annually (varies)

Partnership in NCP's Funding Model

Program Funding Sources:

- City of Seattle General Fund (~25%)
 - Washington state Department of Social & Health Services – competitive grant (~70%)
 - Seattle Housing Authority (~5%)
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- All 3 funders have contributed to NCP since its inception in 1997
 - Partnership originally formed due to concern for low-income eligible-to-naturalize community losing access to benefits in wake of 1990s welfare reform
 - Blended funding model helps sustain program in the event one funding source is impacted by budget cuts

NCP's CBO Partnership Model

- OIRA partners with 10 DOJ-recognized community organizations to provide citizenship services through full representation/case management model
- Diversity of organizations helps meet unique community needs
- NCP Cohort Model:
 - Orgs exchange referrals, resources, collaborate on case consults, and share information to try to identify trends
 - Quarterly cohort meetings
 - Orgs not only partnered with OIRA but with each other through this model

NCP Partner Organizations

- Asian Counseling & Referral Service (ACRS)
- Catholic Immigration Legal Services
- Literacy Source
- Multicultural Self-Sufficiency Movement
- Neighborhood House
- Northwest Immigrant Rights Project (NWIRP)
- Refugee Women's Alliance
- Sea Mar Community Health Centers
- St. James Immigrant Assistance
- Ukrainian Community Center of Washington



Other Partnerships

- Outreach & Citizenship Promotion:
 - Seattle Public Library
 - Ethnic media outlets
- Advocacy & Policy Coordination:
 - New Americans Campaign
 - Naturalization Working Group
 - AILA Washington



ACRS/OIRA Partnerships

Over the years, ACRS and OIRA have partnered closely on:

- Seattle NAC table
- Federal advocacy activities
- Naturalization Workshops

Seattle New Americans Campaign

Since 2015, ACRS and OneAmerica have been co-site leads of the Seattle NAC. Together we:

- Worked closely to get all OIRA NCP members to join the Seattle NAC
- Held combined monthly meetings for NAC and NCP
- Provided joint TA and training to NAC/NCP members
- Co-hosted NATZ workshops
- Conducted joint advocacy & policy activities

Federal Advocacy

In the first Trump administration, OIRA and ACRS worked closely together to:

- Challenge proposed fee increases to the N-400 application
- Push back against Public Charge
- Host information sessions about criminal/immigration issues, attended by Representative Adam Smith and community members
- Host “commenting parties” to push back on proposed form and regulations changes, etc.
- Worked together to share challenges with USCIS & coordinate responses

Naturalization Workshops

In the first Trump administration, ACRS and OIRA partnered on several workshops, including:

- Know Your Rights and legal consultation workshop on inauguration day 2017
- Mega NATZ workshop in 2018 at Seattle Center
- Several smaller NATZ workshops across the city in 2018 & 2019

Questions & Answers





20th Anniversary Citizenship Day 9.20.25



[AILA Citizenship Day](#) will take place on or around September 20, 2025, with local chapters planning their own events. Join AILA and our partners for webinars on topics such as organizing events, hot topics in naturalization, fee waivers, and the N-400 application so you are ready to volunteer!

AILA Citizenship Day Training Series

- **Best Practices in Planning a Productive Citizenship Day Event**
 - *July 31, 2025, at 3 p.m. ET*
- **Preparing for Success: Screening Applicants and Integrating Citizenshipworks at Your Event**
 - *August 6, 2025, at 3 p.m. ET*
- **Amplifying Citizenship Day: Social Media Engagement with Local Partners**
 - *August 13, 2025, at 3 p.m. ET*
- **N-400 Volunteer Preparation**
 - *August 26, 2025, at 3 p.m. ET*
- **Fee Waiver Volunteer Preparation**
 - *September 2, 2025, at 3 p.m. ET*
- **Hot Topics in Naturalization**
 - *September 5, 2025, at 3 p.m. ET*

Additional Resources

- CC4C: [10 Ways Local Governments Can Lead on Citizenship](#)
- CC4C: [Naturalize Now: How to Increase Naturalization in Your Community](#)
- [AILA's Citizenship Day: Coordinator & Volunteer Trainings](#)

Thank You!

