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Chicago Mayor Emanuel, Los Angeles Mayor Garcetti, New York City Mayor de Blasio and Citi Launch Cities for Citizenship

National initiative to aid eligible permanent residents complete the path toward American citizenship through expanded naturalization and financial capability programs

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NEW YORK – Today, Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel, Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti, New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio, and Citi jointly launched Cities for Citizenship – a major initiative aimed at increasing citizenship among eligible U.S. permanent residents to forge more inclusive and economically robust cities.

Cities for Citizenship will enable cities to expand naturalization and financial capability programs, as well as access to legal assistance, microloans and financial counseling, boosting economic opportunity for immigrants and communities nationwide. The effort will be coordinated by two leading non-profit partners, The Center for Popular Democracy and the National Partnership for New Americans, with the aim of encouraging cities across the country to invest in their citizenship programs. In total, Citi Community Development, the founding corporate partner, is contributing more than \$1 million to the program.

There are currently 8.8 million legal permanent residents in America who are eligible for citizenship. These are documented residents, who pay taxes and work lawfully, but 52% of whom remain low-income. Their naturalization would provide access to better paying jobs (up to an 11% increase to their personal earnings), academic scholarships, and a myriad of other benefits. It would also provide a \$37 billion to \$52 billion lift to the national economy over the next ten years. This would mean up to \$1.6 billion for Chicago's economy, \$2.8 billion for the Los Angeles economy, and a \$4.1 billion boost for New York City's economy, according to "[Citizenship: A Wise Investment for Cities](http://on.citi.us/1oPWemB)," available at <http://on.citi.us/1oPWemB>. This report by the Center for Popular Democracy and the National Partnership for New Americans with the USC Dornsife Center for the Study of Immigrant Integration is a preview of a larger study New York City will release next year with Citi Community Development's support.

"Immigrants who become naturalized citizens make significant contributions to our communities, our city, and our country and it's in our collective interest to promote naturalization in Chicago," said **Mayor Rahm Emanuel**. "We are proud to join Mayor Garcetti of Los Angeles and Mayor DeBlasio of New York in leading Cities for Citizenship, which will help thousands of immigrants in Chicago and in cities across the

country through the naturalization process, leading to economic benefits for our immigrant families and city as a whole. “

“Immigrants are the backbone of our economy. It's time we encouraged their successful integration into our social and political tapestry to continue boosting our economy and not stand in the way of it,” said **Mayor Eric Garcetti**. “We are committed to expanding citizenship education and making sure people have the help they need to navigate this complex system.”

“I'm proud to stand today with my fellow mayors Rahm Emanuel and Eric Garcetti as we launch the national Cities for Citizenship initiative,” said **Mayor Bill de Blasio**. “This win-win effort will help us create more inclusive cities that lift up everyone. From increased economic activity to larger voting and tax bases, the advantages of citizenship will not only expand opportunity to our immigrant families, but to all New Yorkers and residents nationwide.”

“Citi believes that citizenship is an asset that enables low-income immigrants to gain financial capability, and building a national identity must go hand-in-hand with building a financial identity,” said **Bob Annibale, Global Director of Citi Community Development**. “We are proud to work with Mayors Emanuel, Garcetti and de Blasio to launch this initiative, which will lead to direct economic benefits for immigrant families and their communities.”

Cities for Citizenship will connect mayors and municipalities with immigrant organizations and the business, faith and labor communities in public-private partnerships.

"The National Partnership for New Americans believes that Cities for Citizenship will encourage millions of immigrants to take the important step of becoming U.S. citizens and full participants in the economic, cultural, and civic life of this nation. NPNA will bring immigrant organizations into partnership with Mayors to grow Cities for Citizenship in dozens of cities across the U.S." said **Eva Millona, the co-chair of the National Partnership for New Americans** and herself a naturalized U.S. citizen.

“We applaud the Cities of New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles for making a wise investment for all of our communities,” said **Ana Maria Archila, Co-Executive Director of the Center for Popular Democracy**. “In addition to infusing local economies and workforces with a new vitality, Cities for Citizenship will strengthen our nation’s commitment to an inclusive democracy. We hope other cities will join us in this ground-breaking initiative, and join the growing number of American cities that are modeling progress for the federal government.”

Follow the initiative on Twitter with #Cities4Citizenship. Learn more at CitiesforCitizenship.org.

Impact of Cities for Citizenship:

Chicago • The City has pledged to help about one-third of its immigrants to become U.S. citizens through the Chicago New Americans initiative, in partnership with the Illinois Coalition of Refugee Rights and the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS).

- The City of Chicago Office of New Americans will offer financial education and

citizenship workshops in Citizenship Corners in public libraries in multiple languages, as well as support organizations that offer these services.

- In addition, staff from Chicago public schools and community organizations will visit high schools with a large concentration of immigrant students and parents to create a one-stop shop for information about the naturalization process, free immigration legal assistance, and financial coaching.
- The City's Small Business Center will also provide services to immigrant business-owners through periodic visits. At the same time, the City will target large immigrant employers for citizenship and financial coaching support. The City will also recruit attorneys and legal firms to provide pro-bono services in naturalization workshops.
- All of this information and more will be housed on the 'City of Chicago Citizenship' website.

Los Angeles • The nation's largest population of legal permanent residents reside in Los Angeles, with more than 750,000 in the county.

- The Office of Immigrant Affairs will work with businesses that have large numbers of eligible citizens, and immigrant populations will be directly targeted for citizenship and financial coaching support.
- The City will employ a coalition of librarians to work in Citizenship Corners in public libraries and hold workshops that offer financial coaching and access to responsible products and services to begin building positive financial identities that are essential to long-term asset building.

New York City • The five boroughs are home to 684,000 Legal Permanent Residents.

- The Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs will expand NYCitizenship, the first large-scale coordinated effort by a municipal government to address the barriers to naturalization, currently supported by Citi Community Development. This expansion will significantly increase immigrant access to financial counseling and microloans, as well as access to immigration legal assistance.
- In its first two years, NYCitizenship has already provided support to more than 7,000 participants. The City of New York will build on the existing school-based program and partner with the Human Resources Administration, a municipal agency that serves low-income New Yorkers, to dramatically expand.
- The Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs will also commission a study on the economic impact of citizenship programs for mayors across the country to demonstrate the importance of new municipal investments in naturalization and fee assistance programs as a poverty-fighting tool.

Citi Community Development is leading Citi's commitment to achieve economic empowerment and growth for underserved individuals, families and communities by expanding access to financial products and services, and building sustainable business solutions and innovative partnerships. Our focus areas include: commercial and philanthropic funding; innovative financial products and services; and collaborations with institutions that expand access to financial products and services for low-income and underserved communities. For more information, please visit www.citicommunitydevelopment.com.

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About National Partnership for New Americans (NPNA) The National Partnership for New Americans (NPNA) is a national multiethnic, multiracial partnership. NPNA harnesses the collective power and resources of the country's 20 largest regional immigrant advocacy organizations to mobilize millions of immigrants to become active and engaged citizens, working for a vibrant, just, and welcoming democracy for all. 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 | NIIC: integrationconference.org Facebook: www.facebook.com/newamericanspartnership | Twitter: @npnewamericans

About The 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 and www.twitter.com/popdemoc.

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