

## BEST PRACTICES TOOLKIT

### *Citizenship Ambassadors*

#### PEER-TO-PEER OUTREACH FOR NON-PROFIT NATURALIZATION PROGRAMS

#### ***Best Practices***

Best practices are operating processes that produce consistently better results than other techniques. We glean best practices from the good practices of frontline organizations and leaders, and improve them through reflection, feedback, and experimentation. Best practices may be born through the efforts of one community and transformed when they are adopted by others in a new context, but the underlying understanding of their utility remains constant and is always measured against desired results.

#### ***About This Series***

Identifying and spreading best practices requires a learning network for peer-to-peer exchanges of ideas. This toolkit series serves as one mechanism for us to share and build on best practices.

#### ***About This Toolkit***

The New Americans Campaign is invested in promoting outreach strategies for naturalization programs across the country. Campaign partners have consistently described peer-to-peer outreach activities as among their most effective outreach strategies. One way the Campaign has promoted outreach programs is by providing some structure for the peer-to-peer outreach through a Citizenship Ambassador model. This toolkit describes the Campaign's Citizenship Ambassador framework and best practices shared by Campaign partners. These practices are informed by a decade of learning as we celebrate the New Americans Campaign's tenth anniversary in 2021.

## WHAT IS PEER-TO-PEER OUTREACH?

Peer-to-peer outreach is the practice of having individuals reach out to others among their social networks—people whom they know and with whom they have frequent, natural, and informal contact. At its core, peer-to-peer outreach is based on the reality that trusted recommendations most often come from people we know. Peer led outreach has proven a highly successful strategy in several settings including health, education, and immigration.

The Campaign refers to those engaged in peer-to-peer outreach as Citizenship Ambassadors. At the New Americans Campaign, Citizenship Ambassadors are defined as naturalized citizen influencers and allies who are leveraging their personal network to: (1) share their citizenship story; (2) promote naturalization events; and/or (3) discuss the importance of naturalization, with the goal of: (1) motivating Lawful Permanent Residents (LPRs) to apply for naturalization; (2) encouraging LPRs and naturalized citizens to become more civically engaged; and/or (3) recruiting additional Citizenship Ambassadors.



### Citizenship Ambassadors Defined

Citizenship Ambassadors are naturalized citizen influencers and allies who are [leveraging their personal network](#) to:

1. share their citizenship story;
2. promote naturalization events; and/or
3. discuss the importance of naturalization,

with the goal of:

- ✓ motivating LPRs to apply for naturalization;
- ✓ encouraging LPRs and naturalized citizens to become more civically engaged; and/or
- ✓ recruiting additional Citizenship Ambassadors.

## PEER LED OUTREACH IS EFFECTIVE

Campaign partners overwhelmingly report that the word-of-mouth activities of past clients are among their most effective outreach strategies. Past clients are ideally positioned to help recruit eligible to naturalize Lawful Permanent Residents (LPRs) due to their insider knowledge, credibility among their peers, and motivation to return the favor of having been served by a New Americans Campaign partner. Past clients are also a valuable addition to any naturalization outreach team because they have the potential to strengthen existing outreach efforts, deepen the breadth of outreach, and relieve staff of some outreach responsibilities.

## Community Members Bring Valuable Insider Knowledge

Past clients bring an incredibly valuable combination of skills and contributions including their social network, community relationships with key institutions and influencers, linguistic and cultural competencies, and a unique vantage point based on their life experiences. This insider knowledge is critical to reaching additional similarly situated community members not yet accessing naturalization services. Campaign partners recommend viewing community members through this asset-based lens, not only as a form of respect but also as a way to maximize their outreach efforts.

Several Campaign partners credited past clients with identifying the best social media sites, community events, and local gathering spots for outreach to additional LPRs. For example, Campaign partner Asian Pacific American Legal Resource Center (APALRC) based in Washington, DC, asked clients “Where do you share community news?” which led them to social media sites that they found to be more effective in reaching recently eligible to naturalize LPRs than traditional print ethnic media.

Similarly, Episcopal Diocese of Los Angeles-Interfaith Refugee & Immigration Services (IRIS) learned about a closed Facebook group for people from the former Soviet Union from their clients, who also volunteered to post IRIS’ events on that group. This peer led outreach increased the number of individuals from that community by 19% compared to previous quarters.

## Peer Led Outreach Offers Credibility

Peer-to-peer referrals and recommendations are powerful and effective at influencing behavior because they are genuine and come from someone with a relatable background or through a network relationship built on trust. Peer communities tend to be based on common cultures, interests, values, and lived experiences. As a result, a past client can identify and understand the barriers and motivations for other LPRs to naturalize. Incorporating these insights into outreach material and messaging makes them more persuasive. When a community member hears this sincere, relevant message being delivered enthusiastically by a peer and past client, it allows the community member to gauge the opportunity to apply for naturalization in a way that is more closely related to their personal values and preferences. Campaign partners have found that, ultimately, individuals trust word-of-mouth recommendations and that past clients who engage in peer-to-peer outreach offer instant credibility to their services. National Korean American Service & Education Consortium–Virginia (NAKASEC) notes that this type of past client engagement is a seal of approval for the organization.

*Asian Pacific American Legal Resource Center (APALRC) based in Washington, DC, asked clients “Where do you share community news?” which led them to social media sites that they found to be more effective in reaching recently eligible to naturalize LPRs than traditional print ethnic media.*

### TIP

Including past clients in the development of outreach material may improve its relevance to new clients. Doing so has the potential to make the message more relevant by incorporating the cultural values, attitudes, and beliefs of the group an organization is trying to reach. It also increases the likelihood that organizations will also use the preferred language and appropriate literacy levels. It also allows tailoring the aesthetics of the materials to this group. New Americans Campaign partner Asian Pacific American Legal Resource Center has found that including clients in the creation of materials has helped them identify the most relevant naturalization benefits to highlight and the most effective way to address the skepticism often associated with free services. APALRC then engages their past clients in a community mapping exercise to help them identify the best outreach opportunities. Past clients are so appreciative of the services they received, they want to do more.

## Past Clients are Motivated to Reciprocate Campaign Partner Goodwill

New Americans Campaign partners have noted that it is human nature to want to return a favor or to feel obligated to reciprocate acts of goodwill. For Campaign partners this norm of reciprocity means that clients are compelled to comply with a request after having been served. Given the effectiveness of peer-to-peer outreach, it is a best practices for organizations to at a minimum ask clients to help spread the word about their services by telling their friends and family about their service experience, an upcoming event, or the benefits of citizenship generally. Some past clients might be motivated by this moral obligation to pay it forward, while other clients might be motivated by pride or wanting to avoid the stigma of need sometimes associated with free services. Providing past clients an opportunity to contribute meaningfully by taking on Citizenship Ambassador activities leverages many psychological factors and human behavior for the good of all.

## POSITIVE REFERRALS REQUIRE SATISFIED CLIENTS

The foundation of successful peer-to-peer outreach is for the client to have a positive service experience that they want to share with others. As a result, offering consistent, high-quality services is a key component of any Citizenship Ambassador program. For example, Michigan Immigrant Rights Center (MIRC) shares that word-of-mouth is consistently their most effective and reliable means to get new clients. MIRC's happy and satisfied clients tell their friends, family, neighbors, and peers about their experiences in working with MIRC's friendly staff, such that clients will regularly drive one or two hours to the office for assistance based on this positive feedback. Similarly, one of Episcopal Diocese of Los Angeles-Interfaith Refugee & Immigration Services' (IRIS) most successful strategies in reaching LPRs continues to be providing quality and professional services, which lead to word-of-mouth referrals. Providing the highest quality naturalization services is one of the five guiding principles of the New Americans Campaign.

Several Campaign partners including Bonding Against Adversity in Houston, Centro CHA, Inc., in Long Beach, and Hispanic Unity of Florida note that critical to the success of peer-to-peer outreach is to have staff that is embedded in the community and has the linguistic and cultural competencies necessary to serve community members. Bonding Against Adversity (Bonding) also notes that low staff turnover helps ensure consistent services and engagement with past clients. As Bonding puts it, their aim is for each client to feel: "I came here; I feel happy; and I am ready to help others."

### TIP

Upon having provided a valuable service for free or at a low cost, New Americans Campaign partners have generated a tremendous amount of goodwill that can be leveraged in numerous ways. Campaign partners recommend making an ask of clients—be it to donate, volunteer, or become a Citizenship Ambassador—at the end of the service while the completed N-400 application is being packaged.

### TIP

The Chaldean Community Foundation (CCF) reminds us that seeking client feedback is a key component of offering high quality services and keeping clients satisfied. For example, during COVID-19 as CCF transitioned services—including citizenship classes—to Zoom, CCF developed user surveys in order to learn, adapt, and improve their services based on the feedback of their clients.

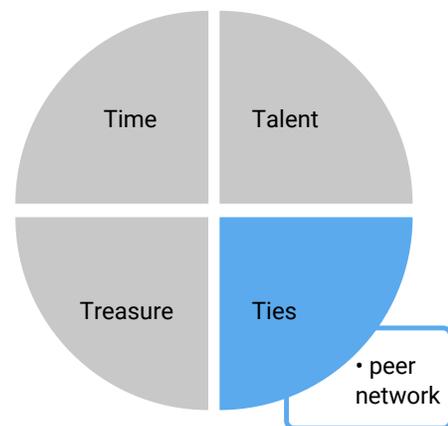
## CITIZENSHIP AMBASSADOR BEST PRACTICES

### Start by Conducting an Inventory of Client Resources

As previously described, past clients bring many resources. In recognizing the valuable assets past clients bring and in inviting past clients to participate in outreach activities as Citizenship Ambassadors, New Americans Campaign partners move community members beyond the client role and create additional value. Campaign partners such as Bonding Against Adversity in Houston, Texas recommend beginning this process by conducting an informal inventory of personal resources. This essentially entails keeping an ear out during the intake and application completion process for any resources the client may be able to contribute to Campaign partners. For example, Bonding Against Adversity ask clients: Where do you work? What are your talents? What is your capacity to reach out? When they identify clients that work at restaurant chains or large organizations, Bonding immediately ask them to help with outreach. Similarly, upon discovering that a client worked at Disneyland, World Relief Southern California immediately asked their client to help promote their services among the large employee base.

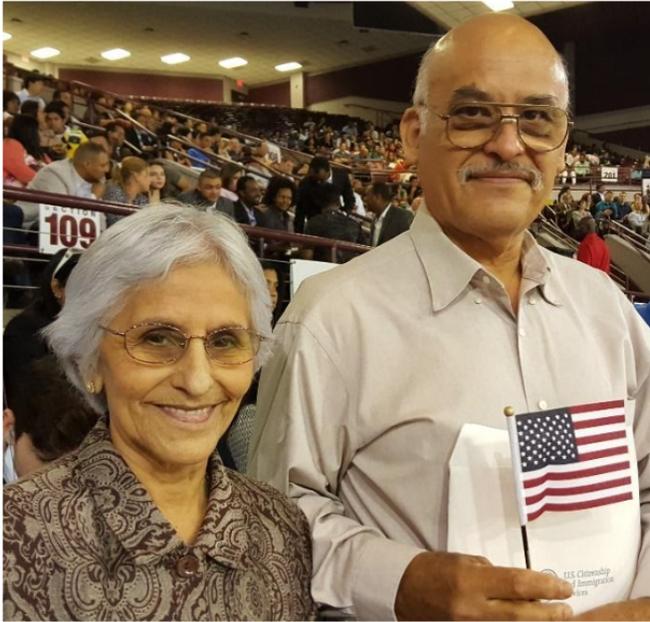
#### Sample Inventory of Personal Resources

The time, talent, treasure, and ties of past clients are all valuable. Time encompasses the ability of a community member to volunteer hours—be it helping with set-up, as a greeter, or engaged in Citizenship Ambassador activities. Talent comes into play when a community member is using their expertise to benefit your naturalization programs—be it cooking for your naturalization event, providing translation services, or teaching a class. Treasure refers to a traditional financial donation. Ties, in this inventory of personal resources, is the leveraging of community members' peer network to recruit more LPRs for naturalization services.



When getting to know their clients, Bonding Against Adversity is also looking to identify community influencers in order to make past clients the face of their services. Bonding is constantly looking to uncover their clients' talents and match their outreach needs with the talents of the community members they serve. Central to Bonding's Citizenship Ambassador program is an expectation that past clients give back in some way—be it by volunteering at a workshop, posting a flyer at work, or sharing Bonding's services on social media. Bonding explicitly tells clients that the service they are receiving is not actually free; they say "Nothing is free—we help you, and you help others." Bonding instills in their clients a responsibility to make the most of their existing resources and to be an active member of their community. Bonding Against Adversity recognizes that this type of engagement does take more time and requires training staff but attributes their growth to this strategy and notes that deep relationships with community members do pay off. Bonding Against Adversity underscores that especially in an environment of reduced funding, identifying and leveraging the time, talent, and ties of past clients is critically important.

*Bonding Against Adversity explicitly tells clients that the service they are receiving is not actually free; they say "Nothing is free—we help you, and you help others."*



Bonding Against Adversity successfully naturalized the community members pictured above, who now serve as Citizenship Ambassadors assisting with application completion, teaching classes, and outreach efforts. (Photo: courtesy of Bonding Against Adversity)

New Americans Campaign partners recommend conducting an informal inventory of personal resources even in situations where an organization is not able to complete an N-400 for a community member. For example, a client who has not had their permanent resident status long enough to apply, or who decides to wait until they are eligible for an English language exemption, may still appreciate the advice they received and be willing to give back. Community Lawyers, Inc., in Los Angeles, for example, realized while working with a community member that her daughter was an aspiring immigration attorney. Community Lawyers was then able to offer their past client's daughter an internship (pictured at the right).



This week we highlight our intern Yitzel Jimenez! She is a 4th year political science major at UCSB interested in becoming an immigration lawyer. She started working with us a year ago, after we helped her mother with her citizenship application. Since then she has helped with the growth of our communications team, legal clinics, and many N-400 applications! Thank you Yitzel for everything you've done, we're glad you're part of the team! 🍌❤️

## Identification as a Citizenship Ambassador Promotes Outreach Behaviors

Several Campaign partners such as Proyecto Inmigrante Immigration Counseling Services, Inc. in Dallas, Redlands Christian Migrant Association in Florida, and World Relief Southern California highly recommend adopting the term “Citizenship Ambassador” because clients love having a title. The title is a simple way of having community members and specifically past clients align with New Americans Campaign partner organizations. The title also has the effect of changing a client’s self-image, and as a result promotes the outreach behaviors that align with being a Citizenship Ambassador. World Relief points out that providing a title also serves as a token of appreciation.

Proyecto Inmigrante has found that using the title “Ambassador” or “Embajador” empowers past clients and has gone a very long way in encouraging past clients to share their citizenship story and to help with peer-to-peer outreach. During the final phase of serving clients, Proyecto Inmigrante very enthusiastically builds up the self-esteem of clients by telling them “You are amazing—you are a beacon of hope in the community” and entreats clients to share their service experience and naturalization journey by saying “you are an ambassador—you are the one that knows the community—you know the people—you are going to reach out to others with your testimonial.”

*Proyecto Inmigrante entreats clients to share their service experience and naturalization journey by saying “You are an ambassador—you are the one that knows the community—you know the people—you are going to reach out to others with your testimonial.”*

### TIP

While a client is waiting for the final legal review of their naturalization application or during the final review stage of application completion, ask them to list the names of their LPR friends, family, and acquaintances. This informal social network mapping can be a productive way to fill wait time during the service delivery experience and can be a first step toward priming clients to engage in peer-to-peer outreach. In doing so they are helping the community and becoming Citizenship Ambassadors!

## Use Pledge Cards to Secure Commitment

Several New Americans Campaign partners such as the Employee Rights Center in San Diego, the International Rescue Committee’s Seattle field office (IRC–Seattle), and Promise Arizona, all use and highly recommend pledge cards. IRC–Seattle asks clients to sign a pledge card at the same time they are signing their completed N-400 application. The pledge card requests that the client return to the IRC’s office in Seattle with their certificate of naturalization and pose for a photograph. IRC–Seattle notes that clients love doing this and even while services are being offered remotely, clients still call to share the good news. IRC–Seattle then uses the photos for outreach and storytelling purposes.

Promise Arizona (PAZ) recommends using simple pledge cards to secure the commitment of past clients to refer at least three family members or friends to PAZ’s services. As part of the New Americans Campaign’s Innovation Fund, Promise Arizona experimented with pledge cards to test their hunch that if their clients committed to a future behavior such as referring friends and family, then they would be more likely to follow through with the referrals than a client who did not sign the pledge. PAZ has found that since they began using pledge cards, they have experienced a 58% increase of new applicants who were referred by friends and family as compared to previous naturalization workshops. PAZ’s experience suggests that introducing this pledge commitment did activate a basic psychological desire in clients to behave in a manner consistent with their stated commitment, their own self-perceptions, and/or PAZ’s expectations of their clients.

*Promise Arizona found that “Since we began using pledge cards, we have experienced a 58% increase of new applicants who were referred by friends and family as compared to previous naturalization workshops.”*

Sample Pledge Card (English)



**YES! I WANT TO JOIN  
THE MOVEMENT!**

FULL NAME \_\_\_\_\_  
 ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
 EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_  
 PHONE \_\_\_\_\_ TEXT MESSAGE? YES NO

*I pledge to...*

*Learn more about the process of becoming a citizen and  
once a citizen to register to vote.*

*Ask my family and friends to vote in national, state and local elections. They can be  
 the voice for those who cannot vote.*

**Invite 3 or more family and friends that I know they are permanent residents to  
 become citizens by attending a future citizenship workshop**

THE NEW AMERICANS CAMPAIGN PHOENIX SITE

Sample Pledge Card (Spanish)



**SI, QUIERO UNIRME  
AL MOVIMIENTO!**

NOMBRE COMPLETO \_\_\_\_\_  
 DOMICILIO \_\_\_\_\_  
 EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_  
 TELEFONO \_\_\_\_\_ MENSAJE DE TEXTO? SI NO

*Me comprometo a...*

*Aprender más sobre el proceso de volverme ciudadano y una vez que sea ciudadano  
 registrarme para votar.*

*Pedir a mi familia y amigos que voten en elecciones nacionales, estatales y locales.  
 Ellos pueden ser la voz para aquellos que no pueden votar.*

**Invitar a 3 o más familiares y amigos que yo conozco que son residentes  
 permanentes a hacerse ciudadanos en talleres de ciudadanía proximos.**

THE NEW AMERICANS CAMPAIGN PHOENIX SITE

## Provide Clients with Flyers and Business Cards to Distribute

Several Campaign partners such as United African Organization in Chicago, Asian Community Development Council (ACDC) in Las Vegas, and Friendly House in Phoenix provide their clients with flyers and/or business cards to make it easier for the client to engage in peer-to-peer outreach. A simple way to engage in peer led outreach is simply to hand out flyers and business cards at the end of the service and ask clients to give them to family and friends. For example, at the end of the service, ACDC tells clients about all their services and ask them to refer their friends and family. One client was so grateful that he offered to tell all his family and friends. Staff encouraged him to do so, gave him a business card and flyers, and told him they would appreciate that. He spread the word at his Filipino church and has referred almost 10 people including the pastor and his wife. Another client asked for flyers to post at his wife's hair salon that serves a largely Latino clientele.

## Follow-Up with Applicants Helps Reinforce Outreach Behaviors

Follow-ups and reminders also help reinforce the behavior of Citizenship Ambassadors. Proyecto Inmigrante in Dallas, for example, calls clients after a naturalization workshop to confirm the applicant mailed their application and to encourage clients to celebrate their eventual naturalization by posting pictures of their oath ceremony and sharing their testimonial. They also remind clients that they are now Citizenship Ambassadors and are expected to reach out to their peers.

The Indo American Center (IAC) in Chicago also calls previous clients to tell them about upcoming workshops so that they may refer family and friends. When a client calls IAC to share application progress, IAC always ask them to refer friends and family. Similarly, Community Lawyers, Inc., in Los Angeles follows up with everyone on their N-400 spreadsheet regarding the status of application, and when they call their clients, Community Lawyers always ask them to refer a friend or family member, which leads to 90-95% of clients being referred by past clients.

BPSOS Center for Community Advancement in Orange County asks clients to return to their offices with their certificate of naturalization to take a picture and be added to the wall of naturalized citizens. Their clients love being added to the wall and scanning it for people they recognize. This is a great opportunity to ask if they know anyone else interested in being added to the wall.

### TIP

Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition (MIRA) created an email template to send after they mail a client's application to encourage Citizenship Ambassador activity.

*Hello!*

*Congratulations on submitting your application for citizenship. We're honored to be part of the process and will continue to support you the rest of the way.*

*As a reminder, our services are free. If you want to pay it forward, we have a few suggestions.*

- 1. Tell your friends and family who are eligible to naturalize about us!*
- 2. Follow us on social media, Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. Or you can sign up for our [email bulletin](#) (blue button at the top right of the main page) to get important immigration updates.*
- 3. Share your immigration or naturalization story on social media and tag us! We are also looking for people to be featured on our social media, if you are interested. You may wish to wait until the day of your oath ceremony and share a picture from that day.*

## Post Clients' Success on Social Media

Employee Rights Center (ERC) in San Diego asks every client to return to their office with their naturalization certificate after their oath ceremony. ERC encourages their clients to tap into their personal networks, share their own stories, and educate people about ERC's support system for aspiring citizens. ERC also celebrates their client's naturalization accomplishment by posting their story on social media.

Asian Pacific American Legal Resource Center in Washington, DC has found that client posts are much more powerful than an organization's posts and encourages clients to use their social media to post on behalf of the organization. In some cases, it may not even be possible for the organization to post on sites that clients can access, like WeChat. World Relief Southern California also agrees that the best social media posts come from the clients themselves. But when that is not possible, a great alternative is to have the client associate themselves with an organization's post by tagging themselves, responding in the comments, and amplifying the message.



World Relief Southern California client follows the organization on Instagram. He responded to the post and tagged others to help spread the word.

Employee Rights Center Facebook post featuring a recently naturalized client who returned to ERC offices with their certificate of naturalization.

## Develop an Ongoing Relationship with Past Clients

While serving a naturalization application in a workshop may be transactional at times, New Americans Campaign partners often recommend that for the purposes of implementing peer-to-peer outreach practices, it is best to develop an ongoing relationship with clients. For example, when the Michigan-based Chaldean Community Foundation serves a client, they do not just want to serve that individual client, but rather seek out to serve the client's entire family and circle of friends as well. As such, they ask clients to please recommend CCF's services to family and friends. CCF suggests offering clients high quality services and staying in communication on an ongoing basis to build trust and long-lasting relationships.

Other New Americans Campaign partners are committed to establishing long-term relationships with clients because of their commitment to building a naturalization-to-voter pipeline. National Korean American Service & Education Consortium–Virginia (NAKASEC) and Promise Arizona, for example, find great synergy between their civic engagement and Citizenship Ambassador work. As part of their civic engagement efforts, both NAKASEC and Promise Arizona remain in contact with clients as they progress from completing their application to taking their naturalization oath in order to help their clients register to vote as soon as they become eligible to do so. Having these deep connections with clients allows for opportunities to ask them about others in their families who may be interested in naturalizing or may be eligible to vote but have not registered. BakerRipley in Houston also hosted a Citizenship Block Party in help clients progress through the immigrant integration continuum (detailed later in this toolkit).

## Incorporate Citizenship Ambassador Concepts into Other Programs

Employee Rights Center (ERC) in San Diego operates a \$25,000 revolving loan fund so that clients that cannot afford the USCIS filing fees may access a no-interest loan. In addition to paying the money back, approved applicants must agree to become a Citizenship Ambassador or to help with fundraisers. ERC asks loan recipients to sign a moral agreement to become an ambassador to help spread the word about ERC's citizenship services and loan program. Clients also promise to bring their certificate back and allow the organization to take a picture and share their story on social media. At any given time, ERC has 25 to 40 ambassadors, ready to reach out and encourage a new client to begin the process. One Citizenship Ambassador says "You just put out the word and let people know all the benefits of the program. I give people flyers. I pass along the phone number and tell them who to talk to. I let them know that if they have any doubts or any questions just call me and I will answer, and they can decide whether this is for them or not." See a full story on this ERC initiative on the New Americans Campaigns' From New Americans Blog: <https://www.newamericanscampaign.org/adriana-huerta-and-the-erc-citizenship-ambassador-program-a-loan-with-a-catch-builds-a-program/>.

### TIP

Consider SMS and text communication as a way to maintain an ongoing relationship with past clients. Bonding Against Adversity uses the texting platform Zingle to communicate with clients and community members. They recommend it as an effective communication tool with Citizenship Ambassadors. In fact, text is the principal way Bonding recruits and communicates with volunteers. Similarly, and as detailed later in this toolkit, United African Organization in Chicago highly recommends using WhatsApp as a communication tool to reach African immigrants and refugees. Catholic Legal Services, Archdiocese of Miami has found that past clients respond better to texts from a traditional, seven-digit number than texts from a four-digit short code.

*A Citizenship Ambassador for the Employee Rights Center says "You just put out the word and let people know all the benefits of the program. I give people flyers. I pass along the phone number and tell them who to talk to. I let them know that if they have any doubts or any questions just call me and I will answer, and they can decide whether this is for them or not."*

TIP

Here is a summary of simple ways to convert past clients into Citizenship Ambassadors. Tell clients: Today's services were free—one way you could pay it forward is by...

1. Following Campaign partner on social media and amplifying messages
2. Posting on personal social media about service experience or motivations to apply
3. Texting your friends and family the link to naturalization services
4. Posting a flyer at a popular business frequented by LPRs
5. Providing a review for Campaign partner's Citizenshipworks profile
6. Interviewing for posting on blog, email newsletter, or social media
7. Providing feedback on your remote experience

## INCENTIVES & RETENTION THROUGH RECOGNITION AND REWARDS

In the words of New Americans Campaign partner World Relief Southern California: "Who doesn't like to be recognized?" Campaign partners have found that incentives such as gift cards and raffle prizes motivate Citizenship Ambassadors and also that recognition and rewards such as certificates and community events are a great way to retain Citizenship Ambassadors.

### Providing Certificates Is a Low-Cost Way to Recognize Ambassadors

Campaign partners have found that certificates issued by their organizations are a relatively easy way to help past clients identify as Citizenship Ambassadors, communicate appreciation, and boost the outreach activity of community members. Campaign partner Centro CHA in Long Beach, California takes this activity even further by partnering with their local municipality to issue recently naturalized clients certificates of recognition and proclamations. Long Beach Mayor Robert Garcia is himself a naturalized citizen and champion of naturalization services. This type of recognition coming from local government and local politicians increases community members' sense of belonging and moves them even further along the immigration integration continuum. Centro CHA recommends developing a close relationship with local government officials at the executive level to facilitate this type of partnership. Centro CHA staff also use this additional touchpoint with their past clients to remind them to get their U.S. passport, inform their Social Security office of their change in status, and register to vote.

Florida-based partner Redlands Christian Migrant Association adds that this certificate may be the only certificate the community member has ever received or the only certificate they have received in a long time, so it goes a long way. As detailed in the section below, several New Americans Campaign partners present certificates of appreciation at community events.



Mayor Robert Garcia of Long Beach presents Centro CHA's recently naturalized citizens with additional certificates and proclamations. (Photo: courtesy of Centro CHA, Inc.)

## Celebrating Milestone and Successes Engages Past Clients

Several partners underscore the importance of celebrating naturalization milestones as a way of engaging past clients. Houston-based Campaign partner, BakerRipley, hosted a successful family-friendly Citizenship Block Party in the heart of a well established LPR community. The purpose of the party was to celebrate the accomplishments of recently naturalized citizens, connect with existing clients, encourage LPR community members to learn more about the benefits of naturalization, and provide voter education and registration. This patriotic-themed event included citizenship information, voter education and registration, a photo booth with patriotic props, face painting and a bouncy house for children, diverse music, and local ethnic food.

BakerRipley advertised the event by mailing invitations to past clients and encouraging them to bring friends and family. Staff and volunteers also called former clients to remind them all were welcome and of all the services being offered: LPRs would be offered information about BakerRipley's naturalization services, while U.S. citizens would be provided voter education and registration all in a lively, family-friendly event. BakerRipley found that past clients indeed brought their U.S. citizen family members, neighbors, and friends—especially their young adult children—who had yet to register to vote. BakerRipley also encouraged all students in their citizenship classes to attend, so they could meet and hear from recently naturalized community members. It was also an opportunity to hear from students about what was working for them and get their feedback.

Smaller scale events are also quite effective. On a quarterly basis, the Chaldean Community Foundation hosts a celebration for recently naturalized clients. The celebration includes certificates, cake, and social media posts. Along with this congratulatory message is also a request for past clients to refer their friends and family. Similarly, the Indo American Center (IAC) in Chicago invites LPRs to attend a dinner to honor IAC's clients that became citizens. During this event, clients shared their stories about why they naturalized with IAC's help, in part to inspire others to do the same.

### TIP

Organizations should keep community events family-friendly and include activities specifically for children like face-painting and bouncy houses. Free food and giveaways also make for an enjoyable event. Use volunteers to staff registration and check-in stations so that you know which clients returned and which new community members are interested in your services.



BakerRipley honors recently naturalized citizens with additional certificates, voter registration opportunities, and family-friendly activities at a Citizenship Block Party. (Photo: courtesy of BakerRipley)

## Gift Cards

As part of the New Americans Campaign's Innovation Fund, International Rescue Committee's Seattle field office (IRC–Seattle) experimented with offering ESL-civics students and past clients gift cards in exchange for the referral of additional students and naturalization applicants. This strategy led to a doubling of students in the class and boost of naturalization applications. IRC–Seattle describes the multiplier effect of this strategy as a circle of giving that goes on and on. IRC–Seattle offered \$50 Visa gift cards, but believes that the program would have been effective with a lower-value gift card as well. An alternative strategy IRC–Seattle looks forward to experimenting with is splitting the \$50 between both the past client and the newly referred client and also including a variety of gift card options including to grocery stores and drug stores. For gift cards mailed while services are offered remotely, IRC–Seattle also included a thank you card, which is another low-cost way of recognizing the contributions of past clients.

*IRC–Seattle shares that their gift card “strategy led to a doubling of the students in the ESL-civics class and a boost of naturalization applications.”*

## Raffles

Also as part of the New Americans Campaign's Innovation Fund, Arkansas Immigrant Defense (AID), a Campaign affiliate in northwest Arkansas, began actively asking its clients and volunteers to refer their friends and family for their services, and offering them incentives to do so. Specifically, AID offered entries into a raffle for all applicants and volunteers that acted as Citizenship Ambassadors. AID structured their raffle such that clients could receive one raffle ticket upon applying for naturalization. Clients and volunteers could also earn a raffle ticket each time they referred someone to either complete their N-400 or volunteer. The five prizes included: AirPods Pro headphones, a Keurig Coffee Maker, a Vizio TV, an Insta Pot Cooker, and a Chromebook laptop. AID placed these items on a highly-visible, decorated table at their workshops leading up to the raffle draw.



Staff at Arkansas Immigrant Defense cheer after all 5 winners were chosen during their Facebook Live video announcing the raffle winners.

AID staff and volunteers at the packaging station of the naturalization workshop would provide the client one raffle ticket and offered them the opportunity for another raffle ticket if they referred someone else to complete their naturalization application or volunteer with AID. AID found that this offer incentivized clients to provide the name and phone number of an LPR friend or family member interested in naturalizing, on the spot. Those that received raffle tickets could choose which item they wanted to put their tickets(s) in. To select the winners, AID staff streamed themselves pulling tickets out of containers on Facebook Live. The video itself then became a source of promotion, and has now been watched over 1,400 times. Learn more about AID, their clients, and this raffle initiative on the New Americans Campaign's From New Americans Blog: <https://www.newamericanscampaign.org/martha-olivas-and-michel-rangel-for-so-long-i-felt-that-this-is-my-childrens-country-my-grandchildrens-country-and-now-i-know-it-is-my-country-too/>.

For future raffles, AID recommends holding off on ordering the raffle items until a winner has been selected, and at that point purchasing the item and having it shipped directly to the winner. This reduces the security risk and storage burden associated with having so many large and high-value items. AID would also consider reducing the referral requirements in future raffles. Instead of requiring that the referred LPR complete their application before a raffle ticket is earned, AID suggests only requiring the past client to show a screen shot of their text, WhatsApp, or social media referral to earn an additional raffle ticket in order to encourage more outreach activity.

### Consider These Additional Incentive Ideas

Community Lawyers, Inc., in Los Angeles created an incentive program consisting of getting priority appointment slots when a friend or family member is referred for services. Friendly House in Phoenix designed a flyer specifically asking clients to refer friends and family and offered a \$50 coupon off a future service. Friendly House recommends making the offer for a limited time only in order to incentivize clients to act before the expiration date.

**Sample Coupon**



**FRIENDLY HOUSE  
IMMIGRATION LEGAL SERVICES**

**REFER A FRIEND OR FAMILY MEMBER**

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**Receive \$ 50.00 off**

**Initial Immigration Consultation  
Must present coupon by the time of the appointment**

**Location: 801 S. 1st Avenue Phoenix, AZ 85003  
Call: 602-545-5064 to schedule appointment**

**Valid only from October 01,2020-December 30,2020**

### Menu of recognition and rewards based on capacity and culture of organization

Certificate	Event	Gift Card	Stipend	Wage	Professional Development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Naturalized Citizen</li> <li>•Certified Citizenship Ambassador</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Broader community audience</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Low cost and monetary</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•May be linked to deliverables</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Staff position</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Leadership</li> <li>•Organizing</li> <li>•Immigration</li> </ul>

## STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS MAY ALSO BE CITIZENSHIP AMBASSADORS

In addition to past clients, staff and volunteers also have the potential to be Citizenship Ambassadors among their peer network.



### Consider Launching Your Citizenship Ambassador Program with Staff Members

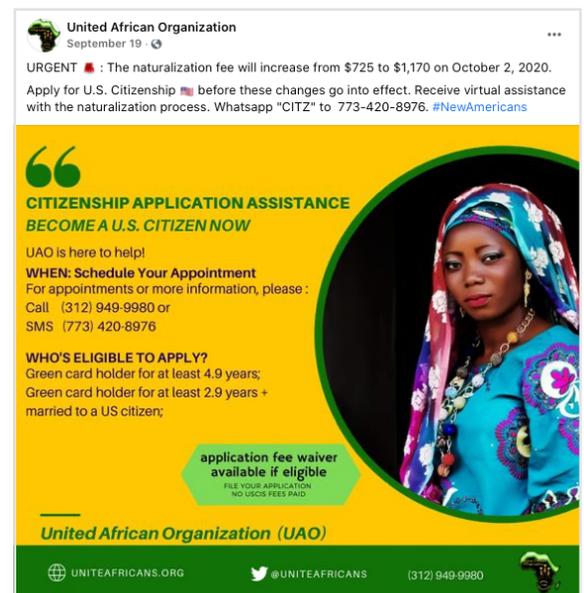
Naturalized staff members have a unique vantage point of having experienced their own citizenship journey and also being well-versed in the organization's service offering. If introducing Citizenship Ambassador practices with past clients seems daunting, consider launching the program with naturalized staff members.

The Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles (CHIRLA) experimented with explicitly marketing their citizenship services to staff and the friends and family of staff members. CHIRLA also offered to pay the application fee for staff, as well as their family and friends. As part of this mini-campaign, CHIRLA assisted 40 people, including two staff members. However, CHIRLA only paid for the application fee of 15 applicants because the majority qualified for fee waivers. One staff member referred five family members, and all are naturalized citizens now. Another staff member had both parents apply and naturalize. Through this outreach strategy staff members either naturalized or invited their friends and family to do so. This effort also had the added benefit of being an employee perk offering.

### Volunteers as Citizenship Ambassadors

Hanul Family Alliance in Chicago has found that the most successful way to recruit volunteers for their organization is to reach out our former clients. For example, one recently naturalized client has been assisting program staff by translating, interpreting, and outreaching to the Polish neighborhoods near their Mt. Prospect office.

The United African Organization (UAO) also based in Chicago has had great successes in including naturalized citizen volunteers into their outreach efforts. UAO provides past clients and volunteers with flyers to post in local business and on social media. One dedicated UAO volunteer is a naturalized citizen from Mali who is also the president of Illinois Braiders, a statewide hair braiding association with a large WhatsApp following. UAO citizenship workshops and services are promoted on this WhatsApp group with great success, and even attract interest from out of state residents. UAO particularly recommends using WhatsApp as a communication tool to reach African immigrants and refugees.



United African Organization provides flyers to their clients and volunteers and encourages posting in local businesses and on WhatsApp.

## Convert Students Into Citizenship Ambassadors

Asian American Advancing Justice–Atlanta (AAAJ–Atlanta) has developed a successful citizenship program for high school students called Citizen You. AAAJ–Atlanta partners with Clarkston Public High School, a local high school with a large refugee population, to host one of its largest naturalization workshops on the school grounds. Two or three weeks before the workshop, AAAJ–Atlanta staff meet with students to educate them about the benefits and process of becoming a citizen and to promote the upcoming workshop. AAAJ–Atlanta staff delivers presentations to students in select classes, hosts an information table in the cafeteria, and posts flyers throughout the school.

As part of the Citizen You offering, high school students are explicitly asked to become Citizenship Ambassadors and actively encourage their friends and family members to apply for naturalization. Furthermore, students are provided flyers and post cards about the upcoming workshop. These outreach materials also have a bitly link to the Atlanta New Americans Campaign site with a full list of upcoming workshops. AAAJ–Atlanta has found that is also a great opportunity to outreach to LPR staff working at the school and highly recommends implementing a Citizen You program in partnership with a local high school.

Proyecto Inmigrante serves LPRs throughout Dallas, Fort Worth, and Wichita Falls, Texas. Proyecto Inmigrante hosts one of their largest citizenship workshops in partnership with an adult education school. Proyecto Inmigrante co-hosts an annual mega workshop with Casa Durango Dallas with the purpose of generating a large number of Citizenship Ambassadors. In fact, every student served is explicitly asked to become a Citizenship Ambassador.

*As part of the Citizen You offering, Asian American Advancing Justice–Atlanta asks high school students “What are the duties and responsibilities of citizens? What does it mean to be a good citizen? What are examples of good citizens in our school, our town, our state, our country? Why would someone want to become a citizen of the United States?”*

**Citizen You: You are a Citizen**

**A citizen is a member of a community who has rights and responsibilities.**

- The word “citizen” can have two meanings:
  - People who live in a certain place or are a member of a community.
  - People who are legally recognized by a nation and being entitled to protection by the nation aka US Citizenship.



**Levels of Citizenship**

- United States
- Your State: GA
- City: Clarkston
- Your School
- You

 ASIAN AMERICANS ADVANCING JUSTICE | ATLANTA

Sample content from Asian American Advancing Justice–Atlanta’s Citizen You high school presentation.



A past client of Community Lawyers, Inc., in Los Angeles brought classmates from her English and civics class from Lynwood Adult School to a workshop. The professor of that class keeps workshop flyers and promotes events on an ongoing basis.

## CITIZENSHIP AMBASSADORS BECOME COMMUNITY NAVIGATORS

In its [Survey Report on the Impact and Value of Community Navigators](#), New Americans Campaign national partner National Partnership for New Americans (NPNA) defines Community Navigators as “community members who receive specialized training to provide quality immigration services for their communities in an empowering and effective way. Community Navigators are also liaisons between their community, legal services providers, social service organizations, and government representatives.” Citizenship Ambassadors and Community Navigators work along the same peer-to-peer outreach, information, and service provision continuum. Peer-led outreach has the potential to provide community members with the skills and impetus to become more civically engaged or participate in larger advocacy efforts.

Several New Americans Campaign partners have robust Community Navigator programs. Catholic Charities of Los Angeles (CCLA) is one such program that has supported past clients through the transition from Citizenship Ambassador volunteers to Community Navigator staff. By way of example, one current Department of Justice (DOJ) Accredited Representative on staff at CCLA began this process by first seeking out CCLA for its naturalization services. After becoming a citizen, she then volunteered with the naturalization and refugee services departments. She began by helping clients complete intake forms, and with additional training then transitioned to helping with application completion. CCLA’s existing DOJ Accredited Representatives provided some of the trainings while others were developed by the Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc., (CLINIC) who is also a New Americans Campaign national partner. Once this past client-volunteer became more familiar with the forms and eligibility requirements, she then participated in more intense trainings, delivered on-line or in person by CLINIC and the Immigrant Legal Resource Center (ILRC). The trainings and mentorship began with naturalization services and then covered broader immigration topics. At that point, the Community Navigator assisted with screenings, and eventually gained enough experience to apply for her DOJ accreditation. She was also hired on as staff as a legal assistant and is now a DOJ Accredited Representative.

CCLA recognizes that past clients have the potential to contribute meaningfully as volunteers and also creates pathways for them to become staff members. CCLA recommends promoting volunteer services widely and partnering with other legal organizations for trainings and DOJ Recognition and Accreditation support. CLINIC is a national expert in this area and offers a wealth of resources on its website: <https://cliniclegal.org/toolkits/recognition-accreditation>.

Some partners find that peer led outreach contributes to an effective sustainability model. Providing training and support helps build community leadership and strengthens community ownership of immigrant integration activities. Peers may begin by doing more simple forms of outreach like providing their personal testimonial to friends or family or referring a community member to an upcoming naturalization event, but with training and support may progress to more formally volunteering or working for the organization or even becoming a DOJ Accredited Representative.

The DOJ Recognition and Accreditation: A Step-by-Step Guide for Non-Profit Community-Based Agencies is available for download at <https://cliniclegal.org/issues/recognition-and-accreditation>.

## Sample Citizenship Ambassador to Community Navigator Continuum

### Citizenship Ambassador Activities

### Community Navigator Activities



#### TIP

Create a pipeline for past clients to become DOJ Accredited Representatives by helping community members build a similar resume. See pages 49-51 of CLINIC's and World Relief's "[DOJ Recognition and Accreditation: A Step-by-Step Guide for Non-Profit Community-Based Agencies](#)" for a sample resume.

### Sample Resume Sections for Partial Accreditation

#### NAME

[Use the individual's work address and contact information rather than his/her personal contact information. You may also put the resume on agency letterhead.]

#### RELEVANT EXPERIENCE

[Only include experience that involves immigrants and working with other cultures. Be sure to include any shadowing or hands-on experience gained with other organizations.]

#### Immigration Benefit Applications Assisted and Familiar with:

[Make sure to list both the form number and name.]

#### EDUCATION

[List degrees and location. You may add the date of graduation if you like, but it is not required.]

#### IMMIGRATION TRAININGS

[Make sure you have at least one recent course that provides a comprehensive overview of immigration law. Ideally you want 5-6 other recent trainings to supplement the comprehensive overview course. It is fine if the majority of trainings are web-based. Make sure to list the organization that actually taught the training, not the host organization. If in-person, list city and state. For each training, add a couple of sentences describing what was taught, or attach the training agenda.]

#### SPECIAL SKILLS

[Language]



## BEST PRACTICES TOOLKIT

### *Citizenship Ambassadors*

PEER-TO-PEER OUTREACH FOR NON-PROFIT NATURALIZATION PROGRAMS

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