Increasing Naturalization Rates through Innovation and Collaboration

A Report on Year 3 of the New Americans Campaign

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Prepared for

The New Americans Campaign

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Executive Summary

INTRODUCTION

Since 2011, the New Americans Campaign (NAC) has strived to increase the number of lawful permanent residents (LPRs) who become United States citizens. To achieve this goal, NAC involves a variety of players, infusing innovation and collaboration into service delivery models and cultivating a vigorous national learning community of naturalization practitioners. Engaging in a collective impact approach, NAC has created a national network of funders, legal-service providers, community-based organizations, faith-based organizations, businesses, community leaders and other organizations focused on naturalization. NAC’s structure allows it to function at both the national and local levels. Nationally, NAC is led by the Immigrant Legal Resource Center (ILRC), and is primarily composed of a collaborative of six funders and a collaborative of nine national organizations. Locally, NAC currently operates in 17 sites across the country, each with a site leader organization and local NAC partner organizations engaging in naturalization work. In total, NAC consists of over 100 partners.

This executive summary summarizes the strengths and challenges of various aspects of the New Americans Campaign during its third year of implementation (July 2013–June 2014). It is informed by 1) an online questionnaire for 55 local NAC partners to describe the successes and challenges they experienced in Year 3; 2) one-on-one telephone interviews with representatives from 20 local NAC partners, representatives from 4 national partners that regrant to local NAC partners, and the ILRC NAC team; 3) analysis of event and office visit data in the Year 3 NAC reporting forms; and 4) a review of responses to select narrative questions in the Year 3 NAC reporting forms.

AN ANALYSIS OF SERVICE DELIVERY MODELS

To better understand how organizations participating in NAC can increase the number of naturalization applications completed, Informing Change explored the types of service delivery models currently used by local NAC partners and the models that are associated with higher efficiency rates. Informing Change created two variables. The first variable grouped each local NAC partner into one of seven “service delivery models,” according to the type and size of naturalization events they most often held in Year 3 (Exhibit 1). The second variable defined the efficiency rate of each local NAC partner by the number of N-400 naturalization applications completed in Year 3 per $10,000 of total funding used in Year 3 for NAC activities (including NAC grant funding, non-NAC grant funding and general operating funds).

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1 Additional funders invest locally in individual sites.
2 While NAC currently operates in 17 sites, this executive summary and the full report focus on the progress of NAC’s 8 original sites.
3 Event type was determined by assessing the percentage of applications completed via one-on-one office visits compared to naturalization events (workshops) in Year 3, and event size was determined by the most common size of the naturalization events held—small (24 or fewer attendees), mid-size (25–99 attendees), or large (100 or more attendees). Note that too few NAC partners held a substantial number of large events (100+ attendees) in Year 3 to be able to create a separate service delivery model for local NAC partners who held mostly large events.
Overview

Analysis of these two variables indicates that service delivery models that include at their core mid-size events (25 to 99 attendees), supplemented by some small or large events, are most efficient—close to twice as efficient as service delivery models that utilize a high proportion of one-on-one office visits. Specifically, despite having similar budgets for NAC activities, local NAC partners in Models 1 and 2 complete on average 82 applications per $10,000 of total funding used for NAC, compared to the average of 46 applications for local NAC partners in Models 6 and 7 (Exhibit 1).

Exhibit 1
Local NAC Partner Service Delivery Models

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Key Factors Associated with Efficient Service Delivery Models

Comparing the high efficiency service model group (Models 1 and 2) to the low efficiency service model group (Models 6 and 7) reveals a number of profound differences between the strengths and approaches of the local NAC partners in each group.
• **In-Kind Support:** High efficiency service delivery models are strongly associated with high amounts of in-kind support—largely in the form of access to event space, media coverage and advertising, which are all resources that increase local NAC partners’ capacity to host events. On average, local NAC partners in the high efficiency group generate more than five times as much support via in-kind resources than those in the low efficiency group.

• **Volunteer Use, Recruitment & Training:** Local NAC partners in the high efficiency service model group use three times as many volunteer hours as the low efficiency service model group, with most of the difference stemming from non-attorney/non-BIA accredited representative volunteers in particular. The high efficiency group can also better articulate their organizations’ volunteer recruitment and training processes and the ideal ratio of volunteers to applicants.

• **Collaboration with Partners:** Local NAC partners in the high efficiency group frequently highlight collaborations with both NAC and non-NAC partners—including libraries, churches, social service organizations, city university systems, legal organizations, local government agencies, school districts, neighborhood centers and media—as a key to their high outreach and event capacity.

• **Capacity to Implement Mid-Size & Large Events:** The high efficiency service model group is much more confident than the low efficiency service model group in its organizational capacity to implement events of all sizes; the difference between the two groups is most notable with mid-size and large events. On average, half of the events that local NAC partners in the high efficiency service model group hosts are mid-size, compared to local NAC partners in the low efficiency group who complete only one mid-size event for every ten events. Local NAC partners describe mid-size events as optimal given their staff and volunteer capacity, as well as type and size of event space.

• **Logistics, Preparation & Delivery:** Local NAC partners in the high efficiency service model group emphasize the importance of preparation and logistics as a key factor of high quality naturalization events and services, more often than partners in the low efficiency service model group. Specifically, local NAC partners in the high efficiency service model group commonly describe a well-organized assembly line approach with multiple “stations” that moves applicants through the process from start to finish, as well as having a sufficient number of people working at the events (both staff and volunteers).

• **Media-Based Outreach:** Local NAC partners in the high efficiency service model group conduct outreach through television and radio more often than local NAC partners in the low efficiency service model group. Furthermore, the high efficiency service model group also cites community-specific media (e.g., ethnic media roundtables, Univision) as an outreach strategy at a greater rate than local NAC partners in the low efficiency service model group.

• **Complex Applications Completed in Year 3:** Local NAC partners in the high efficiency service model group complete fewer complex applications, compared to those in the low efficiency group.

**OVERALL FINDINGS ON NAC STRATEGIES IN YEAR 3**

Informing Change also assessed the recent experiences and progress made overall by local NAC partners toward helping LPRs achieve citizenship, including local NAC partners’ experiences with NAC’s national infrastructure, implementation of naturalization services, and strategies utilized related to outreach and innovation.

**NAC’s National Infrastructure**

Local NAC partners are very pleased with support from and communication with NAC’s leadership, including ILRC, national partners and site leaders. More than three-quarters of local NAC partners worked
with a national partner in Year 3 around using the national partner’s materials, communications and media support, substantive legal support, organizational capacity-building and policy support.

**Belonging to a national network that fosters relationships and the sharing of ideas and lessons learned across organizations is one of the most important elements of the NAC infrastructure.** This network is alive and growing. For example, many local NAC partners describe an informal referral system whereby partners refer complex cases to other local NAC partners with high capacity to handle them. Those that report having fewer complex cases most often believe this is due to having a good network of partners to refer the complex cases to. In addition, close to three-fourths of local NAC partners interacted with local NAC partners at other sites in Year 3, and close to 90% interacted with non-NAC-funded organizations in their site. Most of these interactions were related to sharing best practices, experiences and materials.

**Implementation of Naturalization Services**

**NAC partners are confident in their abilities to implement naturalization services.** They report high organizational capacity in a variety of areas, due in part to support from NAC’s national infrastructure. Most notably, local NAC partners report high capacity in providing fee waivers for LPRs, developing and nurturing partnerships with NAC-funded partners, screening/triage for LPR eligibility and using volunteers in group processing events. Implementing processes to allow LPRs to complete applications themselves at events, influencing policymaking to make naturalization easier for LPRs and fundraising to support naturalization work were areas where local NAC partners see room for organizational capacity growth.

**The greatest challenge to implementing group processing events is that large numbers of LPRs are unprepared or lack the necessary documents.** The second greatest challenge noted by local NAC partners is burdensome logistics or time demands of group processing events. Local NAC partners also point to volunteer burnout, an insufficient number of non-attorney or non-BIA accredited representatives and staff burnout as key factors that impact the implementation of group processing events.

**Outreach Strategies**

Nearly all local NAC partners work with other organizations and individuals to generate LPR turnout for naturalization services, host workshops and presentations collaboratively or simply attend each other’s events. Local NAC partners also often use targeted strategies to generate LPR turnout, focused around a specific population (e.g., Spanish-speaking community, particular religious communities, certain ethnic groups, historically underserved geographic areas).

**Online, telephone, and direct outreach strategies were a focus of a smaller, but significant, share of local NAC partners.** These methods require more resources (e.g., computers, phones) and staff time, which are limited for most local NAC partners.

**Innovative Approaches**

The majority of local NAC partners incorporate a variety of innovative approaches to increase the completion of N-400 applications (Exhibit 2). Only 30% or fewer of local NAC partners engaged in these approaches before joining NAC, suggesting that participation in NAC has in fact encouraged organizations to innovate. Local NAC partners mention a variety of key factors that allow their organization to institutionalize innovative approaches, for example, an organizational culture of being open to exploring new ideas, and availability of staff and resources to properly decide on the best approach.
Most local NAC partners used CitizenshipWorks for at least one of their naturalization services in Year 3. On average, the software was rated as “somewhat helpful.” Common challenges include a lack of technological infrastructure—specifically, technology literacy barriers for participants and limited access to facilities with sufficient computers and internet connections.4

SELECTED RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on these findings, Informing Change offers the following recommendations (please refer to the full report for more detail):

- Build local NAC partners’ capacity to implement mid-size events.
- Support local NAC partners to increase the frequency of their events each year and work toward having at least half of their events be mid-size.
- Encourage local NAC partners to increase and diversify partnerships to generate in-kind resources and outreach support.
- Connect local NAC partners to share and increase use of well-trained volunteers.
- Consider additional approaches and measures of success to account for how sites handle and allocate complex cases.
- Combine the efficiency metric with other metrics of success for a more comprehensive understanding of successful local NAC partners.
- Conduct further analysis on efficiency of hosting large events, once data are available.
- Continue to offer a variety of supports so that local NAC partners can take advantage of what is necessary for their specific contexts.
- Identify the most effective practices to increase the proportion of LPRs who come to events prepared.
- Include robust training and technical assistance in the rollout plan for CitizenshipWorks 2.0.
- Nurture NAC’s culture of innovation by allowing for risk and selecting appropriate partners.
- Encourage local NAC partners to engage in a variety of outreach strategies to reach LPRs and share best practices of highly effective strategies.

4 Responses were based on CitizenshipWorks 1.0; improvements in CitizenshipWorks 2.0 may alleviate some of these issues.
Introduction

Since 2011, the New Americans Campaign (NAC, the Campaign) has strived to increase the number of lawful permanent residents (LPRs) who become United States citizens. To achieve this goal, NAC involves a variety of players, infusing innovation and collaboration into service delivery models and cultivating a vigorous national learning community of naturalization practitioners. This community works together to: 1) streamline the naturalization application process; 2) increase sustainable local capacity for naturalization assistance through a national infrastructure; 3) advocate at federal, state and local levels for public policies and funding that encourage naturalization; and 4) use strategic communications and positive messaging to bring attention to naturalization.5

Engaging in a collective impact approach, NAC has created a national network of funders, legal-service providers, community-based organizations, faith-based organizations, businesses, community leaders and other organizations focused on naturalization. NAC’s structure allows it to function at both the national and local levels (Exhibit 3). Nationally, NAC is led by the Immigrant Legal Resource Center (ILRC), and is primarily composed of a collaborative of six funders6 and a collaborative of nine national organizations.7 Locally, NAC currently operates in 17 sites across the country, each with a site leader organization and local NAC partner organizations engaging in naturalization work.8 In total, NAC consists of over 100 partners.

This report describes the strengths and challenges of various aspects of the New Americans Campaign during its third year of implementation (July 2013–June 2014).

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6 Information from New Americans Campaign Theory of Change, dated May 2013.
7 Additional funders invest locally in individual sites. The Open Society Foundations was a founding funder of the Campaign.
8 Immigrant Legal Resource Center (ILRC); Asian Americans Advancing Justice – Los Angeles (AAAJ-LA); Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Inc. (CLINIC); Immigration Advocates Network (IAN); International Rescue Committee (IRC); National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO) Educational Fund; National Immigration Forum; National Partnership for New Americans (NPNA); and Pro Bono Net.
9 While NAC currently operates in 17 sites, this report focuses on the progress of NAC’s 8 original sites.
A DESCRIPTION OF THIS PROJECT

In fall 2014, ILRC engaged Informing Change to evaluate Year 3 of NAC’s implementation. The following research questions guided the work for this project, organized by the outcome areas in NAC’s Theory of Change.

Streamlining the Naturalization Application Process

1. What are the various service delivery models that local NAC partners use to implement naturalization services? On what dimensions do they differ from each other and on what dimensions are they similar?

2. Which service delivery models (defined by characteristics such as type and size of events, frequency of events, partnerships and use of volunteers) are most efficient, producing the most completed naturalization applications per funding dollar?

Increasing Sustainable Local Capacity for Naturalization Assistance Through a National Infrastructure

3. How and to what extent does NAC’s national infrastructure support the work of local NAC partners?

4. How do local NAC partners vary in their perceived capacities to implement naturalization services? To what extent has overall capacity to provide naturalization services changed across NAC sites?

5. What are the most significant challenges that local NAC partners face when implementing naturalization services?

6. How and to what extent have local NAC partners experimented with or institutionalized innovative approaches in their work? What factors contribute to the adoption of innovative approaches?

Using Strategic Communications and Positive Messaging to Bring Attention to Naturalization

7. What outreach strategies do local NAC partners use to successfully generate LPR turnout for naturalization services?

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9 In addition to this report, Informing Change also produced other products related to this project, including short decks that describe site-specific findings and an internal memo describing questionnaire results in more detail.

10 Informing Change also developed an eighth research question that can inform a future evaluation of the communications strategy by the NAC communications team (the National Immigration Forum and New America Media): “How effective has NAC’s national/site/local-level communications strategy been in generating LPR turnout for naturalization services?” Also, the “Advocating at federal, state and local levels for public policies and funding that encourage naturalization” outcome area in NAC’s Theory of Change is not addressed by Informing Change’s project.
To answer the research questions, Informing Change’s data collection and analysis activities consisted of:

- An online questionnaire for local NAC partners to describe the successes and challenges they experienced in Year 3 of the Campaign. The questionnaire focused on organizational capacity, implementation successes and challenges, working with partners and innovation. The questionnaire was administered to 55 local NAC partners located in NAC’s eight original sites across the United States who participated in NAC at any point in Year 3 and were still participating when the questionnaire was implemented. Informing Change received full questionnaire completion from 54 respondents and one partial completion.

- One-on-one telephone interviews with:
  - Representatives from 20 local NAC partners
  - Representatives from 4 national partners that regrant to local NAC partners
  - The ILRC NAC team

- Analysis of event and office visit data in the Year 3 NAC reporting forms

- Review of responses to select narrative questions in the Year 3 NAC reporting forms

This report reflects key findings and themes from these data sources, along with recommendations for future improvements to NAC. After this introduction, the report is organized into two sections:

- **An Analysis of Service Delivery Models:** A description of the most efficient service delivery models utilized by local NAC partners and how these efficient local NAC partners differ from less efficient ones (addressing research questions one and two).

- **Overall Findings on NAC Strategies in Year 3:** A summary of recent experiences and progress made by local NAC partners more broadly (addressing research questions three through seven).

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11 Where applicable, Informing Change compared Year 3 findings to Year 1 and Year 2 findings from Harder+Company’s 2013 evaluation of the New Americans Campaign to measure change over time.
An Analysis of Service Delivery Models

NAC’s Theory of Change articulates the goal of: “... bend[ing] the naturalization curve by achieving an increase in application rates.” To better understand how organizations participating in NAC can increase the number of naturalization applications completed, this section of the report explores the types of service delivery models that local NAC partners currently use and the models that are associated with higher efficiency rates.

OVERVIEW

Overall in Year 3, the total cost per application across local NAC partners was $284 when considering dollar funding for NAC activities only (NAC grant funding, non-NAC grant funding and general operating funds), and $388 when including all resources (dollar funding, estimated value of leveraged in-kind support and estimated value of volunteer hours). To determine the most efficient service delivery model and analyze the key factors associated with efficiency, Informing Change created two variables using data from the 2015 local NAC partner questionnaire and the Year 3 NAC reporting forms. For the first variable, each of the 54 local NAC partners who fully completed the 2015 questionnaire was grouped into one of seven “service delivery models,” according to the type and size of naturalization events they most often held in Year 3 (Exhibit 4). In addition, Informing Change created an efficiency variable defined by the number of N-400 naturalization applications completed by local NAC partners in Year 3 per $10,000 of total funding used in Year 3 for NAC activities (including NAC grant funding, non-NAC grant funding and general operating funds).

Analysis of these two variables indicates that service delivery models that include at their core mid-size events (25 to 99 attendees), supplemented by some small or large events, are most efficient—close to twice as efficient as service delivery models that utilize a high proportion of one-on-one office visits. Model 1, which consists of primarily mid-size events and some small events, is most efficient. Model 2 consists of mostly mid-size events and in addition, at least one or two large events and some small events; this model follows closely as the next most efficient model. Model 7 is least efficient, consisting primarily of office visits and small events, while Model 6, consisting almost entirely of office visits, is the second least efficient.

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12 Funding for NAC activities was analyzed at the project level rather than the event level.
13 Event type was determined by assessing the percentage of applications completed via one-on-one office visits compared to naturalization events (workshops) in Year 3, and event size was determined by the most common size of the naturalization events held—small (24 or fewer attendees), mid-size (25–99 attendees), or large (100 or more attendees). While there are a variety of other ways in which NAC could measure its success (e.g., number of organizations involved in the Campaign, media coverage, submission or approval rates, LPR satisfaction), this project was scoped to consider efficiency based on applications completed per $10,000 of total funding only.
14 While there are a variety of other ways in which NAC could measure its success (e.g., number of organizations involved in the Campaign, media coverage, submission or approval rates, LPR satisfaction), this project was scoped to consider efficiency based on applications completed per $10,000 of total funding only.
15 Mid-size events were generally evenly split between 25–49 attendees and 50–99 attendees.
### Local NAC Partner Service Delivery Models

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Specifically, despite having similar budgets for NAC activities (Exhibit 5), local NAC partners in Models 1 and 2 on average completed 82 applications per $10,000 of total funding used for NAC activities, compared to the average of 46 applications for local NAC partners in Models 6 and 7. Furthermore, the local NAC partners in Models 1 and 2 completed nearly twice as many N-400 applications on average in Year 3 as those in Models 6 and 7 (570 versus 299 applications), using similar amounts of funding for NAC activities. Interestingly, there is no specific trend related to the average number of events held in Year 3 in each model (which ranged from a low of approximately 7 events for Model 4 to a high of 20 events for Model 3).

Note that too few NAC partners held a substantial number of large events (100+ attendees) in Year 3 to be able to create a separate service delivery model for local NAC partners who held mostly large events.
The remainder of this section describes the dimensions in which local NAC partners who fell into the most and least efficient service models differ from one another. The “high efficiency service model group” (13 organizations) refers to the two most efficient service models (1 and 2) and the “low efficiency service model group” (17 organizations) refers to the two least efficient service models (6 and 7).\(^\text{17}\)

**KEY FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH EFFICIENT SERVICE DELIVERY MODELS**

Comparing the high efficiency service model group to the low efficiency service model group reveals a number of profound differences between the strengths and approaches of the local NAC partners in each group.

**In-Kind Support**

High efficiency service models are strongly associated with high amounts of in-kind support. On average, local NAC partners in the high efficiency group generate more than five times as much support via in-kind resources than those in the low efficiency group (Exhibit 6).\(^\text{18}\) This in-kind support is largely in the form of access to event space, media coverage and advertising, which are all resources that increase local NAC partners’ capacity to host events. Further illustrating this point, the majority of local NAC partners in the low efficiency service model group (75%) identify a lack of access to facilities to conduct group processing events as a significant challenge, while very few (only 23%) of the partners in the high efficiency group found this to be a challenge. Not surprisingly, eight local NAC partners in the low efficiency service model group do not currently access support from NAC in the area of “leveraging in-kind resources at a high rate,” but would like to. Conversely, only one partner in the high efficiency service model group indicates a need for further support from NAC in this area.

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\(^{17}\) As mentioned, this analysis primarily draws from data from the 2015 questionnaire and reporting forms; however, interviews with local NAC partners in the high (7 organizations) and low (6 organizations) efficiency service model groups provided additional context and nuance to the findings.

\(^{18}\) In-kind value was calculated using the sum of the estimated value of all in-kind resources in Year 3 by local NAC partners as reported in the 2015 local NAC partner questionnaire.
Volunteer Use, Recruitment & Training

Local NAC partners in the high efficiency service model group use three times as many volunteer hours as the low efficiency service model group (Exhibit 7). Most of the difference stems from the “other” volunteers (non-attorney/non-BIA accredited representative) category in particular. These highly efficient local NAC partners more often discuss the benefit of volunteers when describing their typical naturalization events. They can better articulate their organizations’ volunteer recruitment and training processes and the ideal ratio of volunteers to applicants. As one local NAC partner in the high efficiency service model group reflected, “In a perfect world, you would have one volunteer for every two to three applicants.” Local NAC partners in the high efficiency group believe that their overall capacity to train volunteers is a key contributor to their high capacity and success in implementing events. Some note that they even have a dedicated staff person or program responsible for recruiting, training and managing volunteers.

“We have a full-time volunteer coordinator… [That has] enhanced the volunteer program tremendously. We have also refined our own infrastructure for managing volunteers, and utilizing and training them.”
— Local NAC Partner (High Efficiency Service Model Group), New York

“...we have partners in place that support these types of efforts—like the city of Houston, the radio, [other local NAC partners], etc. Every single partner plays a part.”
— Local NAC Partner (High Efficiency Service Model Group), Houston

Collaboration with Partners

Strong partnerships with local NAC and non-NAC partners are essential to local NAC partners’ service delivery models in the high efficiency group. These local NAC partners frequently highlight collaborations with both NAC and non-NAC partners—including libraries, churches, social service organizations, city university systems (including law schools), legal organizations, local government agencies, school districts, neighborhood centers and media (e.g. radio)—as a key to their high outreach and event capacity.

Furthermore, while nearly all local NAC partners in the high efficiency service model group who receive support from NAC on developing and nurturing partnerships with NAC-funded partners are satisfied with that support (80%), only half of local NAC partners in the low efficiency service model group who receive this support are similarly satisfied. This indicates that local NAC partners in the high efficiency group are receiving—and perhaps

Volunteer value was calculated using the number of volunteer hours in Year 3 reported by local NAC partners in the 2015 local NAC partner questionnaire and the assumed cost per FTE staff as defined by The Resource for Great Programs, Inc. in its 2014 report “A Financial Analysis of Application Completion in the New Americans Campaign” (attorneys = $37.08 per hour; BIA-accredited representatives = $23.45 per hour; management/admin staff = $32.29 per hour; and “other” staff = $21.05 per hour).
seeking out—more useful support, a greater amount of support, or both from ILRC and other national partners to develop and nurture partnerships.

The three factors described above—in-kind support, use of volunteers and partnerships with local organizations—are often described as interwoven and building upon one another. For example, volunteer support and other in-kind support are frequently described as going hand-in-hand, and both often result from leveraging strong partnerships with other local NAC and non-NAC partners.

“One of the major benefits of interaction and collaboration with each other is sharing innovative ideas, learning from success stories [and having an] outlet for our organization to express our frustrations and any major issues.”

— Local NAC Partner (High Efficiency Service Model Group), Los Angeles

Capacity to Implement Mid-Size & Large Events

The high efficiency service model group is much more confident than the low efficiency service model group in its organizational capacity to implement events of most sizes; the difference between the two groups is most notable with mid-size and large events (Exhibit 8). While local NAC partners in the high efficiency service model group report high capacity to implement events of 25—49 and 50—99 attendees and above average capacity for events of 100—299 attendees, local NAC partners in the low efficiency service model group report average capacity to implement events of 25—49 attendees and below average capacity to implement events of 50—99 attendees and 100—299 attendees. Overall, similar to Year 2, local NAC partners report higher organizational capacity to implement small events and one-on-one office visits than for mid-size and large events, but this trend is most apparent in the low efficiency service model group.
On average, half of the events that local NAC partners in the high efficiency service model group host are mid-size, compared to local NAC partners in the low efficiency group who complete only one mid-size event for every ten events. Many local NAC partners in the high efficiency service model group describe mid-size events as optimal given their staff and volunteer capacity, as well as type and size of event space. Mid-size events can be held in different locations to reach LPRs in different areas, while larger events require greater preparation and resources. Despite a stronger preference for mid-size events, as a whole, local NAC partners do value larger events in other respects—particularly for garnering exposure and publicity, engaging local politicians, energizing their volunteer base and capturing the interest and attention of a wider net of LPRs.

**Logistics, Preparation & Delivery**

Local NAC partners in the high efficiency service model group emphasize the importance of preparation and logistics as a key factor of high quality naturalization events and services, more often than partners in the low efficiency service model group. Specifically, local NAC partners in the high efficiency service model group commonly describe a well-organized assembly line approach with multiple “stations” that moves applicants through the N-400 application process from start to finish, as well as having a sufficient number of people working at the events (both staff and volunteers). Others in the high efficiency service model group describe supporting LPRs in achieving citizenship in a way that goes beyond completing the application itself, such as by providing other classes and trainings (e.g., English language classes) and advising them on how to dress at their naturalization ceremony.

**Media-Based Outreach**

Local NAC partners in the high efficiency service model group conduct outreach through television and radio (including community-specific media) more often than local NAC partners in the low efficiency service model group. Nearly all local NAC partners in the high efficiency service model group mention use of television, radio, or both to reach LPRs in Year 3 (92%), compared to about one-third (35%) of low efficiency partners. Furthermore, the high efficiency service model group also cites community-specific media (e.g., ethnic media roundtables, Univision) as an outreach strategy at a greater rate than local NAC partners in the low efficiency service model group.

**Complex Applications Completed in Year 3**

Local NAC partners in the high efficiency service model group complete fewer complex applications, compared to those in the low efficiency group. While nearly all local NAC partners in the high efficiency service model group complete fewer than 20% complex applications, NAC’s site-level goal, only half of all local NAC partners in the low efficiency service model group successfully meet this goal (i.e., they complete more complex applications). As further described in the following section of this report, many local NAC partners describe an informal referral system for complex applications (referring complex cases to local NAC partners who are most equipped to handle them). Local NAC partners in the high efficiency group refer a higher proportion of complex applications from office visits to other organizations (one application for every three they complete) than low efficiency local NAC partners do (one application for every eight they complete). This finding suggests that local NAC partners in the low efficiency service model group may be engaging in more difficult work and therefore need to rely more on one-on-one office visits, which may contribute to their lower efficiency rate. However, the available data on local NAC partners’ completion of complex cases is not sufficient to confirm this hypothesis.
CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

Findings from this section indicate that access to a well-balanced mix of resources—dollar funding, volunteers, and in-kind resources—are key to highly efficient service models. Local NAC partners in the high efficiency service model group have found a sweet spot of achieving both quality (which typically includes having ample in-kind resources, volunteers, partnerships, event space and preparation) and quantity (identifying the optimal number of attendees at group processing events). Based on these findings, Informing Change offers the following recommendations for NAC’s leaders to foster greater efficiency in the work of local NAC partners:

1. **Build local NAC partners’ capacity to implement mid-size events.** Adjusting service delivery models requires ample time and investment from local NAC partners and support from NAC’s leaders. Since mid-size events can range from a low of 25 attendees to a high of 99 attendees, conceivably all local NAC partners could eventually offer events of this size. Building capacity for these events could include increasing support for local NAC partners to strengthen community partnerships, continuing to provide training to develop and run a formal volunteer program and focusing support in other key areas that differentiate high efficiency organizations from low efficiency organizations. This may also include fostering conversations between highly efficient local NAC partners and their peers about the effective approaches to mid-size events and the choices to make to maintain high quality.

2. **Support local NAC partners to increase the frequency of their events each year and work toward having at least half of their events be mid-size (Exhibit 9).** Hosting events more frequently will not only increase the number of applications completed, but will also increase organizational capacity, accelerate lessons learned and result in more frequent contact with NAC and non-NAC partners. To be feasible, this increase in the number of events should be incremental. NAC partners who are successfully holding small events of 2–24 attendees should focus on hosting more medium events of 25–49 attendees, while partners who are successfully holding events of 25–49 attendees should grow to host events of 50–99 attendees. NAC partners who are already successfully hosting large events should continue to do so. Furthermore, since high efficiency organizations maintain a ratio of one mid-size event to every two events they host in all, other local NAC partners should work toward this ratio as well.

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**Exhibit 9**

**Examples of Highly Efficient Service Delivery Models**

Support local NAC partners to offer at least 50% mid-size events, with the remaining consisting of small events, large events, or a combination of both.
3. **Encourage local NAC partners to increase and diversify partnerships to generate in-kind resources and outreach support.** To secure additional in-kind resources and outreach support (areas critical to high efficiency), NAC organizations should increase and diversify their partnerships with both funded and unfunded NAC partners. These partnerships could build organizational capacity to host more mid-size or large events, and they can also serve as opportunities for lower capacity organizations observe or learn from higher capacity organizations to better understand how to implement group processing events efficiently and effectively.

4. **Connect local NAC partners to share and increase use of well-trained volunteers.** NAC national partners should consider offering support related to volunteers in addition to the work that is already underway, for example, connecting organizations to share well-trained volunteers. A sufficient number of reliable, well-trained volunteers will accelerate capacity for group processing events. In particular, a sufficient number of non-attorney volunteers may be important, given that high efficiency local NAC partners also have a higher proportion of these types of volunteers.

5. **Consider additional approaches and measures of success to account for how sites handle and allocate complex cases.** In particular, NAC leaders should make deliberate and strategic decisions about how many and which partners engage in more complex (and therefore more time-intensive and costly) work, and how resources and support should be allocated differently to these partners. For example, one local NAC partner in each site could be designated as responsible for all or most of the complex applications in the site.

6. **Combine the efficiency metric with other metrics of success for a more comprehensive understanding of successful local NAC partners.** Combining the efficiency variable with other key inputs—such as staff capacity—and outcomes—such as event participant satisfaction, working successfully with diverse communities, and complex cases processed—related to naturalization work will provide deeper insight into what success looks like for a wide range of local NAC partners. By including other important variables in defining successful service models, NAC leaders can gain a more nuanced understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of diverse local NAC partner organizations.

7. **Conduct further analysis on efficiency of hosting large events, once data are available.** Our findings and recommendations with respect to large events (100+ attendees) are limited given that in Year 3, only a handful of local NAC partners implemented large events, and no local NAC partners conducted primarily large events. Once enough local NAC partners (at least six or seven organizations) are conducting large events on a regular basis, NAC will be better able to compare the efficiency of service delivery models emphasizing primarily mid-size versus large events.
Overall Findings on NAC Strategies in Year 3

Informed by the 2015 questionnaire and supplemented by additional data, this section describes recent experiences and progress made overall by local NAC partners toward helping LPRs achieve citizenship. It begins with findings on NAC’s national infrastructure, then discusses local NAC partners’ implementation of naturalization services, continues with strategies related to outreach and innovation and concludes with recommendations based on the findings.

NAC’S NATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE

Local NAC partners are very pleased with communication with NAC’s leadership, including ILRC, national partners and site leaders. The vast majority (70% or more) believes NAC leaders are communicative and effective, and that goals are clearly communicated at their site. Local NAC partners also appreciate that site leaders coordinate across sites, organize meetings and events and, as a convening party, encourage collaboration among local NAC partners. Local NAC partners were similarly positive in their ratings on communication when asked about their Year 2 experiences.

More than three-quarters of local NAC partners worked with a national partner in Year 3 around using a national partner’s materials, communications and media support, substantive legal support, organizational capacity building and policy support (Exhibit 10). In fact, all local NAC partners interacted with their national partners at least once or twice in Year 3. Consistent with their ratings in Year 2, on average local NAC partners rate the support they received from national partners in Year 3 as a four on a scale of one to five.

“The training [the national infrastructure] provided is huge. The resources they have in Dropbox for flyers, documents and webinars to train people have all been helpful. They have a media toolkit that they share with us that is very helpful too.”

– Local NAC Partner, Dallas
For many local NAC partners, belonging to a national network that fosters relationships and sharing ideas and lessons learned across organizations is one of the most important elements of the NAC infrastructure. This network is alive and growing. As found in Year 2, in Year 3 all eight NAC sites have greater within-site interaction than they did before NAC (see Exhibit 11 for the growth in communication between local NAC partners in New York as one example, and refer to the appendix for detail on all eight sites).

Close to three-fourths of local NAC partners interacted with local NAC partners at other sites in Year 3, and close to 90% interacted with non-NAC-funded organizations in their site. Most of these interactions were related to sharing best practices, experiences and materials. Further, the majority of local NAC partners (53%) believe that they would be able to continue collaborating with one another even if NAC funding were to end. The most frequently mentioned challenges to collaborating with others are finding the time to interact at higher levels (especially in-person), as well as aligning the goals and approaches of each organization—local NAC partners vary in their levels of effort, models and senses of ownership over the work.

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20 In the “Before NAC” network, there is no data for relationships between local NAC partners and New Americans Workforce Project (NAW) and MinKwon Center for Community Action (MCCA), which appear in “After Year 3.” Data for “Before NAC” were collected and analyzed by Harder+Company using the same methodology as Informing Change.
Many local NAC partners describe an informal referral system whereby partners refer complex cases to other local NAC partners with high capacity to handle them. While some local NAC partners say having a good pre-screening process allows them to weed out complex cases early on, those that report having fewer complex cases most often believe this is due to having a good network of partners to refer the complex cases to. Additionally, about half of the local NAC partners that handle a high volume of complex cases indicate that they do so because they feel they have high staff capacity or experience with these cases compared to other local NAC partners. About a third of local NAC partners who handle more than 20% complex cases indicate that there is no one they can refer their complex cases to who would not charge large fees, so they feel a responsibility to handle them.

“[NAC] has enabled us to solidify partnerships with the partner agencies in our area. [These partnerships were] not as strong before we were in the collaborative.”
– Local NAC Partner, San Jose

IMPLEMENTATION OF NATURALIZATION SERVICES

Overall, local NAC partners are confident in their abilities to implement naturalization services; they report high organizational capacity in a variety of areas (see the appendix for details). Most notably, local NAC partners report high capacity in providing fee waivers for LPRs, developing and nurturing partnerships with NAC-funded partners, screening/triage for LPR eligibility and using volunteers in group processing events. Local NAC partners reference a number of ways in which NAC’s national infrastructure supports their organizational capacity, including providing information on best practices, legal expertise, training and access to a trusted network. Interestingly, NAC partners also provide high ratings on their capacity to integrate NAC approaches into their organization’s other work, indicating that the approaches they have learned through NAC have potential for broader impact beyond their NAC-specific work.

Implementing processes to allow LPRs to complete applications themselves at events, influencing policymaking to make naturalization easier for LPRs, and fundraising to support naturalization work were areas where local NAC partners see room for organizational capacity growth. Overall, organizational capacity ratings remained stable from Year 2 to Year 3.

The greatest challenge to implementing group processing events—reported by 86% of all local NAC partners—is that large numbers of LPRs are unprepared or lack the necessary documents. The second greatest challenge noted by local NAC partners is burdensome logistics or time demands of group processing events (80%). Local NAC partners also point to volunteer burnout (79%), an insufficient number of non-attorney or non-BIA accredited representatives (77%) and staff burnout (74%) as key factors that impact the implementation of group processing events.

OUTREACH STRATEGIES

Nearly all local NAC partners work with other organizations to generate LPR turnout for naturalization services, host workshops and presentations collaboratively or simply attend each other’s events. Local NAC partners benefit from working with traditional organizations (e.g., local NAC partners, national partners, other organizations doing naturalization work) that have their own outreach methods because it reduces the resources needed to reach LPRs. Also, working with nontraditional organizations (e.g., libraries, community centers, schools) that community members already trust provides an easier “in” with that community.
Local NAC partners often use targeted strategies to generate LPR turnout, focused around a specific population (e.g., Spanish-speaking community, particular religious communities, certain ethnic groups, historically underserved geographic areas). For example, two-thirds of partners turn to community-targeted newsletters and ethnic media outlets, which local NAC partners’ target applicant population often view as more trustworthy than mainstream media. Nineteen local NAC partners offer informational sessions to introduce their organizations and their services to the community, talk about changes in the N-400 applications and discuss the benefits of becoming a citizen.

Online, telephone, and direct outreach strategies were a focus of a smaller, but significant, share of local NAC partners. A third of local NAC partners use online tools such as websites, Facebook, Twitter and email (18 local NAC partners), and a similar share mention phone calls, text messages or hotlines (15 local NAC partners). Direct outreach is also less common (18 local NAC partners), including conducting one-on-one outreach and going door-to-door in communities. These methods require more resources (e.g., computers, phones) and staff time, which are limited for most local NAC partners.

“One of our ideas was to send mailers to past clients attached with a note to pass on the information to their networks. The thinking was that LPRs usually have family or friends that are also LPRs, and if we have served them once, the trust factor will be great. We only sent out about 70 mailers as a test, but we received a high rate of return on it.”
– Local NAC Partner, Charlotte

INNOVATIVE APPROACHES

The majority of local NAC partners incorporate a variety of innovative approaches to increase the completion of N-400 applications (Exhibit 12). More than half of local NAC partners have explored each of the seven innovative approaches listed in the 2015 questionnaire. Furthermore, only 30% or fewer local NAC partners engaged in these approaches before joining NAC, suggesting that participation in NAC has in fact encouraged organizations to innovate. Local NAC partners mention using additional innovations as well, such as new pre-screening processes, and recruiting LPRs as volunteers and to help disseminate information.

“[We] participated in a media roundtable with reporters and publishers from local ethnic media outlets... This successful event led to at least five articles in local digital and print media quoting [our] attorneys on the benefits of naturalization, including the N-400 updates.”
– Local NAC Partner, Detroit
Local NAC partners mention a variety of key factors that allow their organization to institutionalize innovative approaches, many of which are internal to their individual organizations. Commonly mentioned factors include having an organizational culture of being open to exploring new ideas and implementing change (9 local NAC partners); availability of staff and resources to properly decide on the best approach (7 local NAC partners); identifying an organizational need for more productive or efficient approaches (5 local NAC partners); and learning from the experiences of other local NAC partner leaders, site leaders and national partners (5 local NAC partners).

Most (65%) local NAC partners used CitizenshipWorks for at least one of their naturalization services in Year 3. While local NAC partners are integrating CitizenshipWorks into their naturalization services, on average the software was rated as “somewhat helpful” rather than “mostly or extremely helpful.” The most common challenges include a lack of technological infrastructure—specifically, technology literacy barriers for participants and limited access to facilities with sufficient computers and internet connections. It is important to note that these responses were based on CitizenshipWorks 1.0; improvements in CitizenshipWorks 2.0 may alleviate some issues. Local NAC partners believe that additional staff training and resources from NAC would help facilitate their use of CitizenshipWorks.

**CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS**

In summary, ILRC leads a growing campaign in which local NAC partners are faring especially well when it comes to partnering with others, engaging in new approaches to their work and seeking support from NAC leaders to address gaps in capacity. Ensuring that LPRs arrive at events with the necessary documents, securing sufficient staff and volunteer capacity, and incorporating CitizenshipWorks effectively are continuing challenges for these organizations.

Based on these findings, Informing Change offers the following recommendations:

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"Some innovations are around efficiency, others are around scale and reach. We are exploring the possibility of figuring out a loan fund or lending circle... to address the barriers. [We are also trying] different experiments with [holding] English classes.”

– Local NAC Partner, Miami
1. **Continue to offer a variety of supports so that local NAC partners can take advantage of what is necessary for their specific contexts.** Other than financial support, there is no single leading support that will propel all local NAC partners to increase the number of applications they complete each year. Instead, NAC leaders should continue to provide a menu of supports (e.g., support for outreach, sharing learnings around innovative approaches) so that local NAC partners can take advantage of what is necessary for their specific contexts.

2. **Identify the most effective practices to increase the proportion of LPRs who come to events prepared.** LPR preparedness is a significant challenge to increasing the number of LPRs served at group events. NAC partners should focus future efforts on identifying the most effective practices that will increase the proportion of applicants who come to workshops prepared and with all documents and information.

3. **Include robust training and technical assistance in the rollout plan for CitizenshipWorks 2.0.** Once CitizenshipWorks 2.0 is fully implemented, we recommend conducting focus groups with local NAC partners to see what challenges the software update has mitigated and what challenges remain (e.g., lack of equipment, applicants’ barriers to technology), and then identify how to address ongoing challenges through training, technical assistance and other resources.

4. **Nurture NAC’s culture of innovation by allowing for risk and selecting appropriate partners.** Not just one innovation will lead to scale, so it is important for NAC to be broad in determining best practices and sharing them with local NAC partners so that they can implement them. Based on the key factors that allow local NAC partners to institutionalize innovative approaches, NAC may see more innovation if, as a criterion for further expansion, it selects organizations to join NAC that have an organizational culture of continuous improvement. NAC leaders should also continue to share best practices and learnings around successful innovative approaches, as well as provide the opportunity and incentive for local NAC partners to take risks in their approaches.

5. **Encourage local NAC partners to engage in a variety of outreach strategies to reach LPRs and share best practices of highly effective strategies.** NAC leaders should encourage local partners to engage in a variety of approaches, as it is unlikely that a single strategy on its own will suffice to reach the diverse LPR community. We recommend that NAC develop and share a best practices toolkit on a variety of effective outreach strategies, including those that the high efficiency local NAC partners frequently engage in (e.g., community-specific media), as well as those that a smaller share of local NAC partners engage in, such as online tools and word-of-mouth referrals.

NAC is a complex and ambitious campaign that has created impact and exhibited success on a variety of levels in a relatively short amount of time. Local NAC partners are learning and growing in their approaches, and NAC leaders should utilize the findings and recommendations in this report to further strengthen the Campaign, deepen its impact and help it to more powerfully advance its goals.
Appendix

**EXHIBITS A: LEVELS OF INTERACTION BETWEEN LOCAL NAC PARTNERS**

1 – No interaction  
2 – Networking  
3 – Coordination  
4 – Cooperation  
5 – Collaboration

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1. Maps show levels of interaction for organizations before joining NAC and after Year 3 and are based on unidirectional relationships between organizations. Each line represents an average of two organizations’ reported levels of interaction between one another. Data for “Before NAC” were collected and analyzed by Harder+Company using the same methodology as Informing Change. In some cases, the local NAC partners in a site vary from year to year.

2. Because New American Workforce (NAW) is not directly comparable to other local NAC partner organizations, NAW’s interactions are depicted with gray, rather than red, circles for Houston, Los Angeles, Miami, New York and San Jose.
Three local NAC partners in Los Angeles—Cambodian Association of America (CAA) and Long Beach ICO—did not provide data for this item and are therefore not represented in the social network map.

Catholic Migration Office of Brooklyn (CMDB) was previously known as Catholic Migration Services of Brooklyn (CMSB).
**EXHIBITS B: LOCAL NAC PARTNERS’ REPORTED ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY IN YEAR 3**

**Partners**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Capacity Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coordinating group processing events with other organizations</td>
<td>4.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing and nurturing partnerships with NAC-funded partners</td>
<td>4.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing and nurturing partnerships with nontraditional organizations</td>
<td>4.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Very low capacity* | *Average capacity* | *Very high capacity*
### Exhibit B2
**Volunteers**

- Recruiting non-attorney/non-BIA rep volunteers: Very high capacity (3.80)
- Training non-attorney/non-BIA rep volunteers: Very high capacity (3.98)
- Recruiting attorney/BIA rep volunteers: Average capacity (3.43)
- Training attorney/BIA rep volunteers: Average capacity (3.58)
- Using volunteers in group processing events: Very high capacity (4.08)
- Developing and running a formal volunteer program: Average capacity (3.48)

### Exhibit B3
**Serving & Reaching LPRs**

- Conducting outreach to eligible LPRs: Very high capacity (3.91)
- Working with the media in order to attract LPRs to events: Average capacity (3.61)
- Screening/triage for LPR eligibility: Very high capacity (4.15)
- Implementing processes that allow LPRs to complete the N-400 themselves at events: Average capacity (3.34)
- Maintaining efficient applicant flow during workshops (e.g., no bottlenecks at stations, line is controlled): Average capacity (3.98)
- Providing fee waivers for LPRs: Very high capacity (4.21)
Exhibit B4

Other

- Collecting and reporting quarterly NAC data: 4.06
- Influencing policymaking in order to make naturalization easier for LPRs: 3.00
- Fundraising to support naturalization work: 2.84
- Integrating NAC approaches into my organization’s other work: 3.88
- Practicing naturalization law: 3.91

CONTACT INFORMATION & ATTRIBUTION

For more information about the New Americans Campaign, contact Melissa Rodgers at mrodgers@ilrc.org or visit newamericanscampaign.org.

For more information about the Immigrant Legal Resource Center, which leads the Campaign, visit ilrc.org.

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