



# YEAR IN REVIEW



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# FROM THE DIRECTOR



One of the highlights of 2025 was the NAC Naturalization Practitioners' Conference in Los Angeles, CA.

**This past year, the New Americans Campaign (NAC) partners continued to serve thousands of lawful permanent residents.** The NAC also had the opportunity during our Conference to celebrate our impact and reflect on what's ahead for millions of people who are eligible to become U.S. citizens.

In 2011, the NAC began with a clear idea: naturalization benefits individuals, their communities, and the country. A coalition of nonprofit organizations and philanthropic partners came together with the goal of making that essential step more accessible, affordable, and achievable. Over the past fifteen years, the NAC has grown into a network with remarkable reach. Our partnerships span the country; our collaborative models have strengthened local and national naturalization services, and our responses to policy changes have ensured communities receive accurate guidance even during uncertain moments.

These strengths were especially visible at this year's tenth Naturalization Practitioners' Conference. Throughout the event, partners repeatedly expressed how valuable it was to be together, share practical tools, learn from peers, and discuss challenges and solutions. The conference was a reminder that collaboration and peer learning remain at the heart of this work. We invite you to watch the conference recap video [here](#).

In this report, you can read about all we have achieved together: the number of applications completed, training, policy, and advocacy efforts. But the impact is best captured by people like Lucero Cervantes Kilgore, who shared, "I don't know what the future holds for immigrants, but becoming a citizen gives me peace of mind." Her words reflect what we hear across the network every year: citizenship brings stability and allows families to plan for the future with a greater sense of safety.

As we prepare for 2026 and NAC's fifteenth year, we also recognize that naturalization services will continue to be shaped by policy changes, funding shifts, and evolving community needs. NAC will remain focused on providing partners with guidance, timely community resources, and coordinated support to help them navigate this period of change.

Thank you for your ongoing commitment. We look forward to building on this year's achievements as we move into the fifteenth year of the New Americans Campaign.

**Lucia Martel-Dow**  
Director, New Americans Campaign

# MESSAGES FROM THE NAC TEAM

**Eric Cohen**  
Executive  
Director  
ILRC



Thank you to everyone who joined us for the 2025 NAC Naturalization Practitioners' Conference. In this moment of deep fear and uncertainty within immigrant communities, helping people find security and stability through naturalization feels more important than ever. And as we enter the NAC's 15th year, I could not be prouder of the way our network has grown in reach and impact thanks to all of you.

**Ben Brokaw**  
NAC  
Associate  
Director



Seeing so many familiar faces in person at the NAC Conference in Los Angeles was the highlight of my year. Despite numerous challenges in 2025, NAC partners have shown great resiliency in continuing to make the dream of U.S. citizenship a reality. Although the next year will bring new challenges, I look forward to seeing how our network will adapt and continue to serve aspiring citizens.

**Amber  
McChesney-  
Young**  
Senior Best  
Practices  
Manager



I am incredibly grateful for the strength and resilience of our NAC partners. They continue to meet the needs of their communities while facing constant policy changes, funding cuts, and other challenges. I am especially thankful for the time we shared together in person at our NAC conference this year. We have strength in our community and collaboration, and I look forward to another year of working together!

**Leah  
Muse-Orlinoff**  
Data and  
Strategy  
Consultant



The NAC community continues to be a bright spot of collaboration and encouragement, even in challenging times. I can't say enough how inspiring it is to watch NAC partners work tirelessly to support new Americans' dreams of citizenship. For me, the NAC Conference was a special highlight; seeing friends and colleagues who have worked together for almost 15 years as well as all the new faces was incredibly special. I'm looking forward to supporting and partnering with the NAC as we move forward with strength, optimism, and fortitude.

**Philip Smith**  
Finance  
Consultant



I am so grateful for the opportunity to work with a team and network that is doing such important work. After attending the 2025 NAC Naturalization Practitioners' Conference, I felt inspired having witnessed the passion, dedication, and creativity every NAC member brings to their work. Thank you to all of the NAC partners for helping make citizenship a reality for so many.



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I don't know what the future holds for immigrants, but becoming a citizen gives me peace of mind.

**Lucero Cervantes Kilgore**

## IMPACT BY THE NUMBERS

**2011 - 2025**



**701,000 N-400**  
naturalization applications  
completed



**261,000** fee waivers  
(full and partial)



**\$786 million total savings**  
(legal costs and USCIS filing fees)

**Jan 1 - Sept 30, 2025**



**29,000**  
naturalization applications  
completed



**16,000** fee waivers  
(full and partial)



**\$36 million total savings**  
(legal costs and USCIS filing fees)

# BEST PRACTICES AND CAPACITY BUILDING

## Supporting the Field: Trainings and Technical Assistance



in-person  
naturalization legal  
trainings



best practices  
trainings



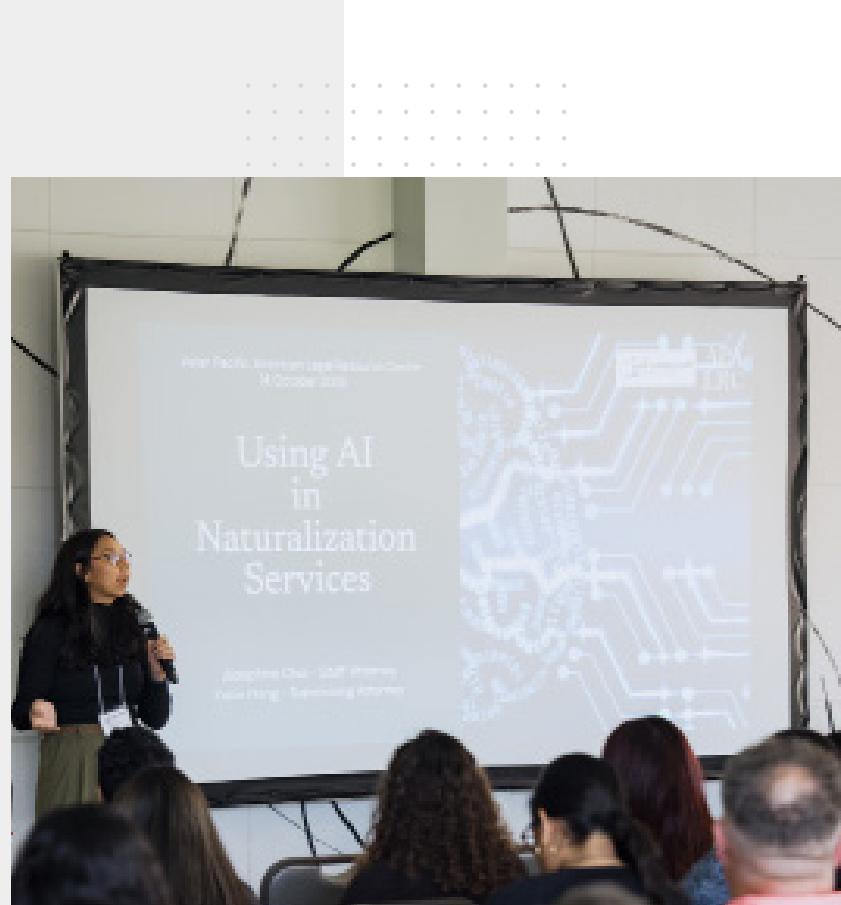
legal webinars and  
online courses



questions answered  
through ILRC Attorney  
of the Day technical  
assistance program

## AI Innovation Grant

The NAC provided small grants to seven partner organizations to test generative AI tools that could improve naturalization services and internal operations. Many partners reported significant efficiencies, particularly for writing, translation, and administrative tasks, while also noting challenges such as privacy protections and the high cost of certain AI tools. At the NAC conference, AI grantees discussed their projects during a dedicated AI panel. Conference attendees expressed interest in AI usage and a need for additional guidance on ethics, implementation, and developing internal policies around AI usage. In response, the NAC plans to offer an AI training in 2026 on responsible AI use led by one of our national partners.



# NATURALIZATION PRACTITIONERS' CONFERENCE

This October, the NAC hosted its tenth Naturalization Practitioners' Conference in Los Angeles, bringing together more than 200 partners from across the country.

Prior to the conference, the NAC held a day-long meeting for site leaders and national partners to come together and discuss the present and future of the NAC. The team also took this time to honor longtime NAC partner and former CEO of NALEO Educational Fund, Arturo Vargas, ahead of his retirement, for his countless contributions and decades of dedication to the NAC.

The next day, Montebello's Mayor Pro Tem Georgina Tamayo and Assemblymember Mike Fong opened the conference with welcoming remarks before participants spent two days attending informative and interactive sessions. Sessions included legal trainings on red flags and screening in naturalization cases and the impact of drugs and alcohol on naturalization, as well as discussions around how to use eligible to naturalize data for outreach and service strategies and how to navigate the new media landscape around naturalization.

Following the conference, NAC's Los Angeles site hosted a naturalization workshop where U.S. Representative Judy Chu thanked our network and all the conference attendees who volunteered their time to help dozens of aspiring citizens with their naturalization applications, bringing them one step closer to U.S. citizenship.

Overall, the conference was a huge success and a much-needed opportunity for our partners to connect and learn from one another.



# NATURALIZATION RESEARCH

In 2025 the NAC collaborated with the Center for Race, Immigration, Citizenship, and Equality (RICE) at the UC College of the Law, San Francisco to explore the meanings of American-ness and community participation among naturalized U.S. citizens. NAC partners connected their clients with researchers from RICE who interviewed them about their journey to citizenship, how becoming a citizen shaped their sense of connection to the U.S., and ways that they participate in U.S. civic society. The researchers found that naturalized citizens are proud to be American, and that their sense of belonging was stronger after naturalizing and “entails a personal identification with an American social, economic, and political community.” The interviewed citizens also explained how and why they participate in various forms of civic engagement including community organizations and voting.

The RICE and NAC teams worked together to develop an academic paper based on the research and findings; our article was published as “Citizenship and Civic Engagement Among New Americans: Arab, Asian, and Latino Americans During a Shifting Political Landscape” in November’s edition of the UC Law Journal Online. You can read the full article online [here](#).

# NATURALIZATION POLICY AND ADVOCACY



Throughout the year, the Naturalization Working Group (NWG) continued to lead the NAC’s policy efforts, with ILRC and NAC partners actively contributing to public comments, advocacy letters, and policy analysis shared with the network.

While naturalization applicants continued benefiting from key policy wins from the previous administration, especially the expansion of the reduced fee option, which drove a significant increase in reduced fee filings, the network also worked to protect access to naturalization amid new challenges. NWG members weighed in on proposed changes to the N-400, expansions of social media collection, and challenges related to the N-648 disability waiver, all while responding to the early termination of the USCIS Citizenship and Integration Grant Program.

USCIS has signaled increased scrutiny for applicants, including possible neighborhood visit investigations. The Citizenship Test Working Group played an especially active role in responding to the implementation of a more challenging civics test. While naturalization processing times currently remain stable, the NAC is preparing for potentially significant policy changes anticipated in 2026.



## Hamkae Center

Immigrant Civic Voice Project, Open Access, Civic Engagement  
Immigrant Family Empowerment  
John & Gertrude Hamkae  
Memorial Fund

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I wanted to vote, I wanted to have a voice. I began to think it's time to become a citizen.

**Allison Kim**

## National Partners



## Our Funders

California Wellness Foundation  
Carnegie Corporation of New York  
Freedom Together Foundation  
Grove Foundation

Houston Endowment  
John S. and James L. Knight Foundation  
Kaphan Foundation  
Open Society Foundations

**Thank you to all of our funding partners for your continued support!**

