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## *Lawful Permanent Resident Messaging Research*

The National Immigration Forum hired Bendixen and Amandi, a highly respected public interest research firm, to carry out focus groups and conduct a nationally representative poll to study lawful permanent residents (LPRs) and measure their attitudes towards citizenship, identify what motivates them to naturalize and determine the most effective messaging strategies.

The project consisted of qualitative research (six pairs of in-language focus groups consisting of LPRs eligible for citizenship for a total of 128 individuals) and quantitative research - a national survey in-language representative of LPRs who are eligible to become U.S. Citizens, which yielded 740 interviews. Specific ethnic groups were included to provide a comprehensive look into the perspective of LPRs across the United States. Those groups were Hispanics (Mexican and non-Mexican), Vietnamese, Korean, Chinese and Filipinos. The poll's margin of error is +/-3.6%.

Those surveyed were asked approximately 35 questions, and demographic information (age, sex, country of origin, household income etc...) was collected. Among the survey questions were ones on their uninformed perception of the process, as well as more specific questions on why participants had not undertaken the naturalization process and opinions on the process once informed. 91% of those surveyed by Bendixen and Amandi expressed a strong desire to become a citizen at some point.

### **KEY FINDINGS**

The survey revealed the following key findings:

- 1) There has not been a concerted effort to inform eligible Lawful Permanent Residents (LPRs) about how to become United States Citizens. The poll confirmed that a total of **61%** have not received any information about how to become a U.S. citizen. The lack of outreach has resulted in an information gap surrounding the naturalization process.
- 2) LPRs have a distorted perception of the naturalization process most notably as it relates to difficulty and cost. When the actual process and application costs are made clear to them, it is not as intimidating as they initially perceived it to be, especially when made aware of the fee waiver option. However, cost and language ability are still cited as barriers to naturalization. Additionally, while LPRs are unable to independently cite differences between themselves and citizens, when prompted, most are generally aware of the benefits of becoming a citizen.
- 3) LPRs have an overwhelmingly positive image of the United States, but are less interested in messaging that uses direct patriotic appeals and are more incentivized by messaging that speaks to the practical and/or transactional benefits and rights that come with becoming a U.S. Citizen.
- 4) When it comes to disseminating information about becoming a U.S. Citizen, LPRs consider government sources, particularly under the USCIS banner, to be the most credible and they consider television to be the best vehicle to communicate that information. Not only are 46% of LPRs over age 50, but an additional 26% are age 40-50, making 72% of LPRs age 40 or older, a group more likely to rely on television for information.