

Guidance for Citizenship Communications with the Chinese Community

The New Americans Campaign conducted a nationally representative poll to study lawful permanent residents (LPRs) and measure their attitudes toward citizenship, identify what motivates them to naturalize, and determine the most effective messaging strategies. Here's what we found:

Chinese Lawful Permanent Residents

96% of Chinese LPRs have lived in the U.S. for five or more years, and 87% want to become U.S. citizens. An overwhelming number (92%) of Chinese LPRs have a positive perception of the United States, but nearly half of Chinese LPRs experience a feeling of not being fully integrated in the U.S.

Important demographic and socio-economic considerations include:

- 55%, are between the ages of 34 and 50, and 29% are 51 or older.
- 66% of Chinese LPRs are originally from the western region of China, and 78% of Chinese LPRs speak a Chinese dialect.
- Chinese LPRs are a highly educated community. 49% of Chinese LPRs are college graduates and possess a post-graduate degree, and another 13% have some college or technical school experience.
- 33% of Chinese LPRs earn less than \$25,000 per year before taxes. Household income for another 35% of Chinese LPRs is distributed fairly evenly between three different wage brackets: \$25K-\$50K, \$50K-\$75K, and \$75K-\$100K. 23% earn more than \$100,000 per year before taxes.

How to Talk About the Naturalization Process

The most effective framing focuses on the following messaging points:

1. Naturalizing is easy.
2. Fee and language waivers are available.
3. There are many benefits to naturalizing.

There has not been a concerted effort to inform eligible LPRs about how to become U.S. citizens. In fact, 72% of Chinese LPRs say they have never received information about naturalization. Those who have received information cited that it was in the English language. While Chinese LPRs demonstrate an openness and willingness to become U.S. citizens, the lack of outreach has resulted in an information gap surrounding the naturalization process — one that would be easy to overcome. When talking about the naturalization process, it's important to consider the following:

- 36% of Chinese LPRs are concerned that their English language skills are a barrier.
- 23% say they haven't had the time to start the naturalization process.
- Chinese LPRs seem to be less concerned about the application fee. Only 16% cite the cost as a barrier.

Best Vehicles to Reach the Chinese LPR Community

The wide variety of vehicles to reach people include TV, radio, print and digital media. The majority of Chinese LPRs surveyed said that television was their preferred medium to receive information, and 60% said they would use a secure online system to apply for citizenship.

Topline Message:

“Becoming a U.S. citizen is easy and opens the door to many new opportunities. Start the process to naturalize today so you can have access to all the privileges, protections and opportunities that come with being an American citizen ...”

Motivators for Naturalization

When conveying the topline message, keep in mind the following key motivators for naturalization:

1. Travel/living outside of the U.S./traveling with a U.S. passport.
2. Access to benefits.
3. Increased job opportunities.
4. Voting and running for office.
5. Bringing additional family to live in the U.S.
6. Protection from deportation.

These are the top six motivators for naturalization. For internal reference, 58% of citizenship-eligible Chinese LPRs indicated travel/living outside of the U.S./traveling with a U.S. passport as the most important benefit; 42% cited access to benefits; 24% cited increased job opportunities; 18% cited voting and running for office; 17% cited bringing additional family to live in the U.S.; and 6% cited protection from deportation. Note: Respondents were allowed to choose more than one benefit as “most important.”

Sample Messages and Talking Points

These sample messages should be adapted for various uses, such as text-messaging campaigns, social media posts, flier language and public service announcements. Consider adapting the messaging for the different media you use to reach out to LPRs. Remember that your messages should always include a “call to action” that directs people to a workshop, information session, hotline/telephone number or website.

- “Did you know that you could be eligible to receive a fee waiver to help cover the cost of the citizenship application? Call [NAME OF ORGANIZATION] at [PHONE NUMBER] for more information.” [You could also link to a page on your website, if applicable.]
- “Don’t let the English language hold you back from becoming a citizen. We offer free courses to help you learn what you need to know for your citizenship application and exam.”
- “You live here, work here and pay taxes here, yet you still don’t have a say in who represents you or in the laws of this country. If you want the government to respect your values you must vote, and to vote you must be a citizen.”
- “U.S. citizens have access to more job opportunities and higher income. Become a citizen today so you can have more employment and financial opportunities.”
- “As a U.S. citizen you can petition the government to bring your family to live legally in the United States. Find out how by [INSERT A CALL TO ACTION].”