

## ***Guidance for Citizenship Communications with the Latino 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:

### **Lawful Permanent Residents of Latino Origin**

91% of Latino LPRs have had their green card for more than 5 years, and 52% of Latino LPRs have lived in the United States for 20 or more years. A majority of Latino LPRs (97%) want to become U.S. citizens, and 78% have no plans to return to their country of origin. The majority of Latino LPRs (62%) experience a feeling of being fully integrated in the U.S.

At 38%, Mexicans make up the largest group of Latino LPRs eligible for citizenship. Mexicans are fiercely proud of their culture, and despite their long-term commitment to the United States, 56% of Mexican LPRs experience a feeling of not being fully integrated in the U.S.

Important demographic and socio-economic considerations include:

- Over half (55%) of Latino LPRs are between the ages of 40 and 64, and another 14% are 65 and older.
- 40% have a household income of \$25,000 or less per year before taxes, and 29% have a household income between \$25,000 and \$50,000 per year.
- Mexican LPRs are less educated than other Latino LPRs. 69% have a high school education or less. 13% are college graduates and 12% have some college or technical school experience, whereas 36% of other Latino LPRs have some college or technical school experience.

### **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, 58% of Latino LPRs say they have never received information about naturalization. While Latino 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:

- 77% of Latino LPRs are Spanish speakers.
- 36% cite the application cost as a barrier.
- 26% of Latino LPRs, particularly those from Mexico, are concerned that their English language skills are a barrier.

## Best Vehicles to Reach the Mexican LPR Community

Latino LPRs cited television as their preferred medium to receive information, and 78% 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. Voting and running for office
3. Access to benefits
4. Increased job opportunities
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, 50% of citizenship-eligible Latino LPRs indicated travel/living outside of the U.S./traveling with a U.S. passport as the most important benefit. The top motivator for Mexican LPRs is voting and running for office. 33% indicated this as the most important benefit. 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 public service announcements, text-messaging campaigns, flier language and social media posts. 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].”
- “Once you become a U.S. citizen, you have something that no one can ever take away from you. You can travel freely, bring your family to the United States and live without any fear of being deported.”