

# CITIZENSHIP & WELCOMING

## TIPS FOR USING CITIZENSHIP EFFORTS TO BUILD WELCOME

Since increased rates of citizenship provide many advantages for New Americans and receiving community members, citizenship efforts are a perfect opportunity for building bridges between newcomers and long-term residents. Citizens enjoy many benefits including the right to vote, more employment and education opportunities, travel benefits, and much more. When newcomers are able to civically, economically and linguistically integrate through citizenship, communities benefit from more families who are invested in the community, better representation in civic leadership positions, more income and property taxes paid, and more. Citizenship efforts are an easy way to build even greater welcome in your community.

### BUILD MEANINGFUL CONNECTIONS

There are two main strategies to harness citizenship efforts to build meaningful connections between new Americans and long-term residents: focus on recruiting and nurturing volunteers from a broad range of backgrounds who are willing to share their experiences widely, and consider citizenship programming and activities that engage the receiving community.

### ENGAGE MAINSTREAM LEADERS

Engage local leaders from diverse sectors in your citizenship efforts by having a strategy for ongoing engagement and communication and providing practical, easy opportunities for leaders to get involved.

### INCORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGIES

Share your positive stories! Citizenship ceremonies are a golden opportunity for good press, and local media outlets are often interested in the stories of New Americans and their volunteers. Be sure to use photos and stories in your other collateral as well.

### HOW TO GET STARTED

Learn more about citizenship requirements at <https://www.uscis.gov/>

Volunteer in a citizenship test preparation program or ESL Program

Serve as a conversation partner (check your local library)

Ensure your library has a Citizenship Corner

Attend a citizenship oath ceremony

Refer potential applicants to authorized service providers at <https://www.justice.gov/eoir/recognized-organizations-and-accredited-representatives-roster-state-and-city>

### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

#### CLINIC Resources

[Citizenship Navigator Project](#)

[Citizenship Toolkit](#)

[Creating a Citizenship Test Preparation Program](#)

[Partnership Toolkit](#)

#### Federal Government Resources

[BIA R&A Roster](#)

[Find an ESL or Citizenship Test Preparation Class](#)

This tool was created based on the proceedings of the Putting Out the Welcome Mat: The Power of Citizenship to Connect Communities. See [more detailed information and concrete examples](#).