

BEST PRACTICES TOOLKIT

*Maintaining Momentum through Collaboration:
Tips for NAC Partners Serving Naturalization and DACA/DAPA Applicants*

ABOUT THIS DOCUMENT:

Many partners in the New Americans Campaign (NAC) who provide naturalization assistance to lawful permanent residents (LPRs) will expand their services to individuals eligible for the administrative relief programs announced by President Obama in 2014, including the expanded Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program and the new Deferred Action for Parents of Americans and Lawful Permanent Residents (DAPA).

Naturalization application assistance is a critical element of immigrant integration and the core focus of the NAC. This document contains best practices for NAC partners to successfully maintain their naturalization work while also assisting DACA/DAPA clients. These specific recommendations come from NAC partners who have found success in their current or previous work with DACA and other immigration benefits.

STRATEGY 1: Conduct outreach to LPRs and DACA/DAPA applicants simultaneously and capitalize on media interest in DACA/DAPA

- During information sessions or other public education about DACA/DAPA, speak to immigrant audiences about the importance of naturalization. Many immigrants come from mixed status families and can pass the information to their family members.
- Change the messaging for TV and PSAs from “citizenship” only to “citizenship assistance and information will be provided for DACA and DAPA.” This message to media taps into a sense of urgency.
- Work with the media to aim messages about naturalization and DACA/DAPA programs at all members of mixed status families, rather than focusing on the eligibility just for DACA/DAPA or just for naturalization. For example, an LPR whose parents are eligible for DAPA is also a candidate for naturalization. Use broad language like, “You may be able to help your family members qualify for DACA or DAPA, and we might be able to help you apply to become a United States citizen.” Advocates report that messaging targeted to both children and parents helped increase numbers of applicants during the initial DACA program.
- Consider leveraging community frustration over the injunction on DAPA and expanded DACA as a motivation for LPRs to naturalize. LPRs who are upset about the hold on DAPA could be motivated to become citizens in order to vote.
- Engage with mixed status families by adding information on DACA/DAPA services to education and outreach materials for naturalization workshops, or to presentations given at naturalization workshops to applicants who are waiting for the next station.

STRATEGY 2: Co-locate information sessions or services for DACA/DAPA and naturalization

- Consider augmenting naturalization workshops by providing DACA/DAPA information or services in a separate room or area at the same time. Some NAC partners hold continuous DACA/DAPA information sessions or workshops in a separate room during naturalization workshops. These NAC members have seen increased turnout of citizenship applicants when they co-located naturalization services and DACA/DAPA information. They have also been able to use volunteers efficiently by shifting volunteers between areas as service demands changed throughout the day or placing volunteers in the area in which they have the most expertise.
- Engage with groups who are only assisting applicants with DACA/DAPA, not naturalization. Encourage them to add naturalization services to their workshops by partnering with NAC organizations. Some DACA/DAPA groups have reported an interest in adding naturalization services as a way to empower the community and engage them long-term. Others may enjoy access to best practices that NAC can provide.

STRATEGY 3: Screen DACA/DAPA applicants for citizenship-eligible family members

- When screening or providing legal assistance for DAPA, identify applicants who are eligible for the program because of their adult LPR child. Ask DAPA applicants to encourage their children to apply for citizenship, and provide contact information for a NAC partner in the LPR's area or a link to the "[Get Help](#)" section of the NAC website. If DAPA applicants are willing, ask them to call their child after completing their DAPA application, and see if they are interested in learning more about naturalization. See the attached flyer directed at LPR children of DAPA applicants.
- Identify LPRs married to a DACA or DAPA recipient, either at a naturalization event or a DACA/DAPA event. Married LPRs who become citizens may be able to petition their spouse for adjustment of status as an immediate relative without triggering unlawful presence bars. View the [ILRC webinar](#) on advance parole for DACA/DAPA grantees married to a US citizen for more information.
- Provide flyers for upcoming citizenship workshops to all attendees at the checkout station and encourage them to refer their friends and family members for services.

STRATEGY 4: Use staffing and volunteer models that will support functional programs

- At a minimum, maintain the number of naturalization workshops held by an organization or site before DACA/DAPA was announced. Remain cognizant of the number of naturalization applications required by NAC and other grants.
- Create a firewall between naturalization and DACA/DAPA programs if necessary, to protect the funded FTEs for naturalization work. Organizations need to maintain a point person to uphold the public outreach and naturalization services. Small organizations with limited staff can create internal systems to allow work across programs without reducing the focus on naturalization.
- Anticipate that volunteer legal review capacity will tighten with DACA/DAPA, which accentuates the need to plan in advance with partners (e.g., AILA) who will provide legal assistance.

- When USCIS begins accepting DACA/DAPA applications, consider the pros and cons of sharing volunteers between naturalization and DACA/DAPA programs. Some NAC partners are using volunteers who expressed an interest in DACA/DAPA for naturalization work now.
 - Pros: Leverage volunteers by presenting multiple opportunities; engage long-term volunteers with the organization rather than the program.
 - Cons: Potential for volunteer burnout due to multiple asks; higher risk of confusion.

STRATEGY 5: Maximize resources by optimizing event efficiency

- Plan a twelve-month or six-month calendar of events, with NAC partners, that maps out both naturalization and DACA/DAPA workshops. Use NAC best practices such as a community calendar, a shared volunteer database, and other means of centralizing information.
- Have site leaders facilitate local coordination by adding DACA/DAPA updates to NAC meeting agendas so organizations whose staff will work on both naturalization and DACA/DAPA can share information.
- Partner for larger workshops to create a multiplier effect for events; NAC partners recommend increasing the size of planned workshops (not necessarily mega-workshops, but larger than what partners typically do).
- Ensure naturalization services are as efficient as possible by:
 - ✓ Serving applicants at workshops instead of one-on-one appointments
 - ✓ Using volunteers to free up staff time
 - ✓ Increasing the number of applicants served at workshops
 - ✓ Incorporating Do It Yourself (DIY)/self-completion processes
 - ✓ Having applicants complete portions of the application in advance or while waiting.

See the NAC “[Tips from the Field](#)” and [Best Practice Webinars](#) for more ideas on increasing efficiency in naturalization services. These are available on the NAC Ning, <http://naturalization.ning.com>.

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Are you a Lawful Permanent Resident who is helping your parent apply for DAPA?

If so, YOU might be able to apply to become a U.S. CITIZEN!

Generally, to be eligible for U.S. citizenship, you must:

- Have been a Lawful Permanent Resident (Green Card holder) for at least 5 years **OR** if you are married to a U.S. citizen, have been a Lawful Permanent Resident (Green Card holder) for at least 3 years

AND

- Have made a home in the U.S. for at least the past 5 years **OR** if you are married to a U.S. citizen, have made a home in the U.S. for at least 3 years

AND

- Be at least 18 years old, have good moral character, and know basic English and basic United States history and government (Note: There are some exceptions for the English and United States history and government requirements)

Benefits of Citizenship:

- You can apply for family members to **get green cards more quickly**
- You can **vote**
- You can have access to **more jobs**, including federal jobs
- You will have **protection from deportation**
- You will have the **ability to travel on a U.S. passport**

What can you do now?

- Help your parents apply for DAPA.
- Contact an organization in your city to help you begin your application for U.S. citizenship. **Go to** <http://www.immigrationadvocates.org/nonprofit/legaldirectory/> or to <http://newamericanscampaign.org/partners> to locate legal help and more information.
- Get a copy of your **Green Card (front and back)** and two **current passport style photos of yourself**.
- **Save your money.** The fee to apply for citizenship will be \$680. You must make your check payable to Department of Homeland Security.

For more information, contact:

[Insert your organization or collaboration's contact information]