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**MAYOR DE BLASIO ANNOUNCES THE LAUNCH OF THE NATIONAL ‘CITIES FOR CITIZENSHIP’ EFFORT WITH MAYORS EMANUEL AND GARCETTI**

**NEW YORK**—Mayor Bill de Blasio announced today the launch of Cities for Citizenship (C4C), a major initiative by the mayors of New York, Los Angeles and Chicago aimed at increasing citizenship among eligible U.S. permanent residents and encouraging cities across the country to invest in citizenship programs.

“I’m proud to stand today with my fellow mayors Rahm Emanuel and Eric Garcetti as we launch the national Cities for Citizenship initiative,” said **Mayor Bill de Blasio**. “This win-win effort will help us create more inclusive cities that lift up everyone. From increased economic activity to larger voting and tax bases, the advantages of citizenship will not only expand opportunity to our immigrant families, but to all New Yorkers and residents nationwide.”

The national C4C initiative builds on the Mayor’s pledge to reduce economic inequality and improve immigrant integration in our City. Benefits of naturalization range from higher earning potential home ownership rates, to increased voting and political participation. Naturalizing the 684,000 legal permanent residents who are currently eligible for U.S. citizenship is estimated to add up to \$4.1 billion over 10 years to the City’s economy.

“Increasing immigrant access to citizenship is a powerful tool for fighting poverty,” said **Nisha Agarwal, New York City Commissioner for Immigrant Affairs**. “This initiative will help thousands of people who haven’t taken the final step to citizenship because of cost, fear of a cumbersome process, or access to legal counsel.”

The announcement comes in conjunction with a pledge by Citi Community Development to contribute \$1.15 million to the C4C initiative, which will be coordinated by two leading national non-profits, The Center for Popular Democracy and the National Partnership for New Americans. Citi Community Development is making its largest contribution to date to this public-private partnership, and the funds will be divided among New York City, Chicago and Los Angeles.

“Citi believes that citizenship is an asset that enables immigrants to gain financial capability, and building a national identity must go hand-in-hand with building a financial identity,” said **Bob Annibale, Global Director of Citi Community Development and Citi Microfinance**. “We are proud to work with Mayor Emanuel, Mayor Garcetti and Mayor de Blasio to launch this initiative, which will lead to direct economic benefits for immigrant families and their communities.”

The funds will be used by New York City for NYCitizenship, the first large-scale, coordinated effort by a municipal government to connect low- and moderate-income New Yorkers to free, high-quality legal assistance for naturalization applications and to address the financial barriers to naturalization. NYCitizenship works with City agencies to connect the hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers eligible to become U.S. citizens with the critical assistance they need to take the final step to citizenship, including legal advice, application assistance,

financial counseling, and case management support. NYCitizenship is also forging new partnerships with the public libraries to promote awareness of citizenship and further expand the City and the libraries' citizenship work.

"Cities for Citizenship is a big win for immigrant families and for New York City," said **Andrew Friedman, co-executive director of the Center for Popular Democracy**. "Facilitating naturalization will open doors for millions of New Yorkers and boost our economy from the ground up. We salute the Cities of New York, Los Angeles, and Chicago for modeling smart, progressive leadership for Mayors across the country."

"Thousands of HRA clients are eligible to become citizens, and this new initiative will open up a pathway to citizenship and an opportunity to move off of the public assistance caseload and out of poverty," said **HRA Commissioner Steven Banks**. "For our older clients becoming citizens through this new effort will help to address income inequality among seniors who often have no choice but to subsist on public assistance."

The Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs will also commission a first-of-its kind study on the economic impact of citizenship programs for mayors across the country. The study will demonstrate the importance of new municipal investments in naturalization, as well as the financial impact of connecting immigrant communities with legal support.

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