

LETTER OF AGREEMENT

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ON INITIATIVES TO PROMOTE CITIZENSHIP AWARENESS, EDUCATION,  
OUTREACH, AND CIVIC PARTICIPATION  
IN THE CITY OF HOUSTON

BETWEEN

THE OFFICE OF THE MAYOR OF THE CITY OF HOUSTON

AND

U.S. CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION SERVICES

This Letter of Agreement (LOA) is entered into by and between the City of Houston ("City") and U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) (hereinafter, "Parties") to promote citizenship awareness, education, outreach, and civic participation in Houston.

**WHEREAS**, the United States of America is a nation of immigrants;

**WHEREAS**, more than 1 in 4 Houstonians are foreign-born (28.3 percent) and represent more than 150 countries of birth;

**WHEREAS**, the Parties are committed to supporting the principle that America benefits when immigrants understand the naturalization process, are aware of citizenship rights and responsibilities, learn English, and are afforded expanded opportunities for civic participation;

**WHEREAS**, immigrant integration is a two-way process that requires not only that immigrants become vested members of our communities, but also that the receiving community provides welcoming messages and tools to help immigrants succeed.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT AGREED THAT:**

- I. The Parties recognize the need in the City of Houston to promote education on the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and highlight the importance of becoming fully vested participating members of the community. Therefore, the Parties will work together to distribute prepared materials to promote and highlight the benefits and responsibilities of U.S. citizenship to residents of the City of Houston.
- II. The Parties recognize that the delivery of accurate and current information regarding the naturalization process is critical to promoting citizenship awareness amongst the eligible population. Therefore, in addition to distributing materials, the Parties will work together to co-sponsor a series of naturalization information sessions in the City of Houston. These information sessions shall be based on USCIS information resources. As necessary and feasible, the City of Houston will make available municipal facilities for these information sessions.
- III. The City of Houston, through its libraries, community centers, and other facilities, regularly comes into contact with residents who are eligible, or will soon become eligible, to apply for naturalization. Therefore, the City of Houston agrees to distribute information from USCIS on the naturalization process and/or guide residents on how to obtain such information, which may include hard copies of USCIS educational and informational resources, provided at the discretion of USCIS, at the City of Houston's public points of contact including Houston Public Library branches, community centers, and other facilities. The Parties recognize that public libraries are especially important venues for immigrants to obtain information on the naturalization process. Therefore, USCIS, to the extent practicable, will make available relevant training on citizenship and the naturalization process to Houston Public Library staff members as well as other staff from other city facilities as applicable to help them provide accurate information and resources to immigrant patrons.
- IV. The Parties also recognize that it is necessary to equip applicants with the knowledge and tools they need to make informed decisions concerning the immigration and naturalization process and identify credible sources of information and support. It is also necessary to provide applicants with information on the Unauthorized Practice of Immigration Law (UPIL) and how to recognize potential immigration services scams. Therefore, the Parties will make available information on the naturalization process and UPIL to residents of Houston through the Parties' websites and at municipal facilities.
- V. The Parties recognize that community involvement is a critical element of successful immigration integration. The City of Houston will seek new opportunities to promote a community-wide approach to immigrant integration, recognizing that members of the community in the City of Houston who are eligible to apply for naturalization now or in the near future are numerous and diverse and that no single outreach effort will reach all of these individuals. Therefore, the City of Houston will collaborate with USCIS to identify and implement additional measures to increase awareness among eligible residents about the naturalization process and citizenship rights and responsibilities.

- VI. Recognizing the importance and effectiveness of the Internet for disseminating information, USCIS will provide the City of Houston with information on USCIS web-based resources for the City of Houston's website.
- VII. Recognizing that the success of these efforts can be measured in both tangible and intangible ways, the Parties will work together to develop evaluation metrics, track progress, and promote achievements.
- VIII. The Parties recognize that the implementation of these efforts must be delegated to a representative of each party (Designees) who will be responsible for implementing the terms of this agreement. Accordingly, the City of Houston designates its Manager of Immigrant & Refugee Affairs to be the primarily responsible person for implementing this agreement on behalf of the Mayor and USCIS designates its Chief of the Office of Citizenship to be the primary responsible person for implementing this agreement.
- IX. The Parties recognize that it may be necessary to provide information on other USCIS programs and initiatives. Therefore, if the parties mutually agree there is a need, the parties will distribute information on such relevant topics to residents of the City of Houston through existing communication channels, the Parties' websites, and at City facilities selected by the City of Houston.
- X. Usage of Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Visual Identities:

The term "DHS Visual Identities" as used in this agreement means the DHS or DHS component name, initials, seal, insignia, trademark or certification marks of DHS or any DHS component or any combination, variation, or colorable imitation of them alone or in combination with other words used in a manner reasonably by DHS or any DHS component. The Office of International Communities of the City of Houston is granted permission to use DHS Visual Identities as provided by the USCIS Office of Citizenship.

- i. Usage of DHS Visual Identities must be in compliance with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security Seal and Signature Usage Guidelines and Trademark Usage Terms. Depiction of the DHS Visual Identities must maintain the integrity of the identities as distributed and marketed by DHS.
- ii. To ensure that DHS Visual Identities are displayed in conformity with the usage guidelines, DHS shall review the final rough cut and/or pre-press proof of all recorded and printed materials and may require modifications of any such materials.

This LOA is intended to reflect the intentions of the Parties to work in partnership and to put forward their best efforts to cooperate in the respects described. The Parties' Designees will convene to plan and assess progress on a quarterly basis. This LOA does not create any enforceable legal obligation on either Party and is not intended to be binding on either signatory individually or on the City of Houston or USCIS. The Parties acknowledge that no appropriations have been made

available pursuant to this LOA and neither Party has an obligation to pay any money thereunder. This agreement may be modified upon the mutual (written) consent of the Parties.

This LOA will remain in effect for three (3) years from the effective date or until terminated by mutual agreement or by either Party upon thirty (30) days advance written notice to the other Party.

This LOA is effective upon the date of countersignature by the City Controller.

THE CITY OF HOUSTON

*Annise D. Parker*  
*Amanda Washington*

ANNISE D. PARKER  
Mayor  
City of Houston

U.S. CITIZENSHIP AND  
IMMIGRATION SERVICES

*Leon Rodríguez*

LEON RODRÍGUEZ  
Director  
U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services

ATTEST/SEAL:

*Christine Russell*

City Secretary

COUNTERSIGNED:

*Ronald C. Polk*  
*Ronald C. Polk*

City Controller

DATE COUNTERSIGNED: 8-19-15

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

*[Signature]*

Assistant City Attorney  
L.D. No. 0391500111001