USCIS Fiscal Year (FY) 2014 Citizenship and Integration Grant Program

<u>Important Guidance for Preparing Your Proposal</u>

Use the following information to help you prepare a high-quality proposal for the FY 2014 Citizenship and Integration Grant Program funding opportunity. For a full description of the requirements, please review the <u>funding opportunity announcement</u>.

In the "Citizenship Instruction Program" section of the Project Narrative:

✓ Distinguish the lawful permanent resident population you serve from other immigrant populations.

✓ Distinguish your proposed citizenship instruction services from that of other providers in the area.

✓ Discuss your organization's experience with citizenship instruction, not just experience with English as a Second Language (ESL).

✓ Explain how the grant-funded services will differ from your existing services. Explain clearly how the program will expand the availability (for example, you will offer new classes or serve more students) and enhance the quality (for example, you will hire new qualified teachers or additional tutors for students) of your current program. Provide the number of lawful permanent residents that will be served with grant funds.

✓ Make sure the curriculum includes the U.S. history, government, and English content needed to pass the naturalization interview and test.

✓ Textbooks and materials should cover content related to adult citizenship preparation, reflect the most recent version of the naturalization test (2008), and be at the appropriate English proficiency level for the class.

✓ Successful citizenship instruction programs offer more than one class level to meet the different instructional needs of students. If you are offering a multi-level class, be sure to explain how you will manage the different levels.

✓ The citizenship instruction program should have a paid program coordinator who is qualified to manage and oversee an education program.

✓ Résumés should include dates for each position listed, schools attended, and degrees received.

✓ The staff structure should not be *solely* volunteer-based.

✓ Use charts to provide information about program staff.

✓ If volunteers are the main providers of citizenship instruction, you should provide a comprehensive volunteer training program and sufficient program oversight.

In the "Naturalization Application Services Program" section of the Project Narrative:

✓ Distinguish the lawful permanent resident population you serve from other immigrant populations.

- ✓ Distinguish your proposed naturalization application services program from that of other providers in the area.

- ✓ Focus on your organization's experience with naturalization application services, not just general immigration services.

- ✓ Explain how the grant-funded services will differ from your existing services. Explain clearly how the program will expand the availability (for example, you will serve more clients or offer additional services) and enhance the quality (for example, you will increase case management or add BIA accredited staff) of your current program. Provide the number of lawful permanent residents that will be served with grant funds.

- ✓ Keep in mind that staff members should not provide naturalization representation or legal advice if they do not have the qualifications to do so. For more information, see the definitions for "representation," "practice," and "preparation."

- ✓ Be sure to sufficiently staff the program with employed attorneys or BIA accredited representatives or make sure to explain how volunteers authorized to practice immigration law will provide the naturalization application services. Only authorized individuals may provide legal advice; review and file Form N-400, Application for Naturalization, with an accompanying Form G-28, Notice of Entry of Appearance as Attorney or Representative; and represent clients before USCIS at the naturalization interview.

- ✓ Résumés should include dates for each position listed, schools attended, degrees or licenses received, and bar admissions.

- ✓ Use charts to provide information about program staff.

- ✓ The staff structure should not be *solely* volunteer-based.

In the "Program Administration" subsections of the Project Narrative:

- ✓ Congress requires that only lawful permanent residents receive services under this grant program. Programs must implement an internal process of *documenting in the student and client files* that only lawful permanent residents receive grant-funded services.

- ✓ The outreach plan should use a variety of outreach strategies and should not rely solely on media advertising.

In the "Integration of Services" section of the Project Narrative:

- ✓ This section applies to all applicants, whether you plan to work with a sub-awardee organization or not. Describe how the citizenship instruction program and the naturalization application services program will work together to implement the grant project.

- ✓ Consider how a lawful permanent resident will be able to complete the naturalization process from start to finish using your proposal's services and how you will help this individual access both types of services.

- ✓ If you plan to work with a sub-awardee organization, explain how you intend to make the partnership successful.

In the Program Goal Chart:

- ✓ Adjust your goals for student enrollment, eligibility screenings, and naturalization applications filed to allow for start-up time in the first quarter of the performance period.

- ✓ Adjust your goals to include USCIS processing times for Form N-400, Application for Naturalization. For example, it is unlikely that any naturalizations will occur during the first quarter of the performance period.

- ✓ The proposed goals for each quarter should be realistic and appropriate for the activities described in the project narrative. For example, if you offer fewer classes in the summer, your goals for Quarter 4 should be lower than other quarters.

In the Budget:

- ✓ Include reasonable costs that support and reflect the activities described in the project narrative. The budget should be consistent with the project narrative.

- ✓ Ensure that the budget demonstrates a balance between costs for the citizenship instruction program and costs for the naturalization application services program.

- ✓ Include salaries for a sufficient number of staff members to operate the program. At least some portion of the salaries for key personnel should be charged to the grant. Include a full-time equivalent (FTE) percentage for each staff person.

Before Submitting the Application:

- ✓ Ensure that you include all requested items in the application.

- ✓ Carefully proofread the application for spelling or grammatical errors, formatting problems, or any markings from the "Track Changes" tool.