PRESS RELEASE

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CITY OF INDIANAPOLIS ANNOUNCES CAMPAIGN TO PROMOTE U.S. CITIZENSHIP

INDIANAPOLIS – Working to reach the thousands of qualified residents in Indianapolis who are eligible for United States citizenship, the Office of Mayor Greg Ballard, along with the International Center of Indianapolis (ICI), today announced a partnership in conjunction with the National League of Cities (NLC) to strengthen local civic engagement in the naturalization process.

“One of the pillars of strength for Indianapolis is its diversity,” said Mayor Greg Ballard. “We are a city that is proud of our citizens and their backgrounds and we are excited to partner in this effort to make our immigrants future citizens of our great city in every sense of the word.”

Through the NewCITYzen Naturalization Campaign, the City and the International Center will work with NLC to provide outreach materials including a campaign toolkit and public service announcements reminding eligible residents of the benefits of U.S. citizenship. The campaign is an initiative of NLC’s Municipal Action for Immigrant Integration (MAII) project. Supported by the Knight Foundation, MAII is a resource for city officials and community-based organizations to address immigrant challenges in their communities.

“The International Center is proud to be a partner in this significant effort,” said International Center President and CEO Diane G. Thomas. “This work reminds us all that Indianapolis is a city that attracts international activity and welcomes the contributions of our multinational community.”

According to the United States District Court, Southern District of Indiana, which conducts naturalization ceremonies throughout the year, more than 2,300 new citizens were naturalized in Central Indiana in 2009.
“We know that there are many more qualified eligible residents not currently engaged in the process, and this program will make them better aware of the benefits and the steps necessary on the path to citizenship,” said Thomas.

In addition to the promotional aspect of the NewCITYzen campaign, the outreach project will tap into the expertise of the many local direct service organizations that work primarily on a grassroots level with those seeking citizenship. Free naturalization information workshops, presented by representatives from U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), will be held throughout the year at various locations in the city.

“The National League of Cities is pleased to collaborate with the City of Indianapolis and the International Center of Indianapolis on the NewCITYzen Naturalization Campaign,” said Ricardo Gambetta, Manager of Immigrant Integration Programs for the National League of Cities. “Promoting citizenship and naturalization strengthens the community, as well as the country as a whole. Our experience is that strong community involvement by immigrant residents ensures a more stable community and maximizes the benefits that immigrants can bring to a city.”

The list of workshops and other local resources can be found under the “Events” tab of the International Center’s Web site at www.icenterindy.org and on the Mayor’s Web site at www.indy.gov/eGov/Mayor/Pages/home.aspx.

Indianapolis is the fourth – and the largest -- city in the nation to participate in the NewCITYzen campaign to date. Other cities participating in the campaign include Fort Wayne, Indiana; Littleton, Colorado; and Grand Forks, North Dakota.

The International Center of Indianapolis works to strengthen Indiana’s global connections by providing organizations with the insight and tools to more effectively work in an international environment. Programs include training for global competency, protocol services, assisting new international residents and visitors in learning about local resources, and connection with emerging leaders from other countries through the International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP) of the U.S. Department of State.

The National League of Cities is the nation’s oldest and largest organization devoted to strengthening and promoting cities as centers of opportunity, leadership and governance. NLC is a resource and advocate for 19,000 cities, towns and villages, representing more than 218 million Americans.

NLC Resources:


For more information on MAII, please contact Ricardo Gambetta, NLC’s Program Manager, Immigrant Integration, at (202) 626-3153 or gambetta@nlc.org, or visit http://www.nlc.org/RESOURCES_FOR_CITIES/PROGRAMS__SERVICES/MAII/aboutmaii.aspx.

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