



**For Immediate Release**

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## ACCESS receives USCIS grant to help 200 additional clients through naturalization and citizenship process

DEARBORN, Mich - For the past 37 years, ACCESS has been helping thousands of legal permanent residents of various immigrant communities to live out the American Dream and become U.S. citizens through immigration and naturalization support, as well as English as a Second Language courses and citizenship courses since 2002.

And thanks to a grant of more than \$176,000 from U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), the Dearborn-based economic and social services agency will be able to continue and expand its efforts, serving 200 additional legal residents over the next two years in understanding the naturalization process, providing them with the citizenship instruction and assisting them with applying for citizenship. That's in addition to the immigration services ACCESS provides to more than 200 diverse members of the community.

"At ACCESS, we provide lawful permanent residents with the support they need to be successful on their path to citizenship," said Amne Talab, Director of ACCESS' Social Services East Department. "It is a privilege to work with these aspiring citizens, and we now have an even greater ability to assist those in the greater Detroit community through this generous grant."

ACCESS is one of 40 organizations across the country to receive this competitive grant award. The funding the agency will receive will help support its citizenship preparation services for the next two years.

"A naturalization swearing in ceremony is a joyous and moving event, which all Americans should have the opportunity to witness," Talab said. "Immigrants from countries near and far vow to support and defend the Constitution, recite the Pledge of Allegiance and proudly wave the American flag. For most new citizens, getting to this milestone is the result of hard work and preparation."

The American Dream: Citizenship program at ACCESS will provide services to more than 200 legal permanent residents of Arab, Latino, Bangladeshi, African, Albanian, and Bosnian descent concentrated in the Detroit metropolitan area. ACCESS is centrally situated within these communities. The program will offer free services including a U.S. citizenship prep course, citizenship days that provide

naturalization eligibility screening, case management and data tracking, assistance submitting applications for citizenship, informational workshops, and citizenship attainment.

Participant groups are comprised of low-income, new immigrant populations, including seniors and refugees. This program seeks to build a deeper level of trust between immigrant communities and federally supported agencies that offer citizenship and naturalization services, and will reach a population of people who are currently assisted with these services on the marginal level.

This is the fifth year USCIS has awarded grants to expand the availability of high-quality citizenship preparation services for lawful permanent residents across the nation. With this USCIS grant, ACCESS' efforts will have a larger impact in helping some of its fellow community members achieve their dream of U.S. citizenship. By helping immigrants improve their English language skills and learn about our country's history and government, and the rights and responsibilities that define citizenship, ACCESS will help them civically integrate – and that's great for the whole community.

With civic integration comes participation – in service groups, school boards, homeowners associations, charitable organizations and many other worthy causes. This citizen-driven community participation is a hallmark of what makes this country great.

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*Grounded in the Arab American tradition of hospitality, ACCESS has a 41-year history of providing health, education, employment and social services in greater Detroit to empower people to lead healthy, informed, productive lives. Today, ACCESS extends that mission to a national platform through advocacy, arts, culture and philanthropy. Visit us online at [www.accesscommunity.org](http://www.accesscommunity.org).*