

**Congress of the United States**  
Washington, DC 20515

September 6, 2023

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy  
Speaker of the House  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries  
Democratic Leader  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Speaker McCarthy and Leader Jeffries:

We write to request your continued support for funding for the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) Citizenship and Integration Grant Program, a critical program for supporting the integration of immigrants into the social, cultural, economic, and civic life of the United States. We were deeply disappointed that the Appropriations Committee removed all funding for the Citizenship and Integration Grant Program in its FY 2024 bill despite years of demonstrated success, and we urge you to maintain funding for the program.

As you know, the USCIS Citizenship and Integration Grant Program (CIGP) has been part of a multifaceted effort to provide U.S. citizenship preparation resources, support, and information to immigrants and immigrant-serving institutions. Since 2009, the CIGP has awarded more than \$132 million through 579 competitive grants to immigrant-serving organizations in 39 states and the District of Columbia. The program has helped more than 300,000 lawful permanent residents (LPRs) prepare for U.S. citizenship.<sup>1</sup>

Unfortunately, even after important investments in citizenship preparation resources, the CIGP currently serves only a fraction of eligible immigrants and immigrant-serving institutions. Despite its life changing impact, the 300,000 LPRs reached by CIGP in its entire history represent less than one percent of the over nine million potentially-eligible LPRs (.033 percent).<sup>2</sup> On an annual basis, the number of LPRs who will receive citizenship preparation services through the CIGP is even smaller, an estimated 25,000 due to FY 2021 funding.<sup>3</sup> Notably, this group of eligible LPRs consists of an estimated 32% who have an income level below 150% of the federal poverty level, and an estimated three million who speak little to no English. By

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<sup>1</sup> USCIS, "Fiscal Year 2022 Citizenship and Integration Grant Program," <https://www.uscis.gov/citizenship-resource-center/civic-integration/fiscal-year-2022-citizenship-and-integration-grant-program>.

<sup>2</sup> Bryan Baker, "Estimates of the Lawful Permanent Resident Population in the United States and the Subpopulation Eligible to Naturalize: 2015-2019," DHS Office of Immigration Statistics, [https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/immigration-statistics/Pop\\_Estimate/LPR/lpr\\_population\\_estimates\\_2015\\_-\\_2019.pdf](https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/immigration-statistics/Pop_Estimate/LPR/lpr_population_estimates_2015_-_2019.pdf).

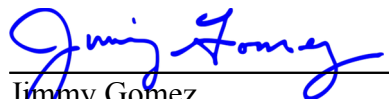
<sup>3</sup> USCIS, "USCIS Awards FY 2021 Citizenship and Integration Grants," <https://www.uscis.gov/newsroom/news-releases/uscis-awards-fy-2021-citizenship-and-integration-grants>.

providing increased assistance through the Grant Program, this eligible population could have greater access to naturalization and English-language classes. Clearly, the need exists to support LPRs interested in becoming citizens, and the vehicle for meeting that need is to increase investments in CIGP.

Additionally, while USCIS reviewed and supported funding for only 66 organizations nationwide, recipient organizations served both traditional immigrant population centers and emerging immigrant population centers in only 35 states, out of 50 states and several territories. Increasing funding for the CIGP will both support immigrant-serving institutions, as well as increase the capacity for additional qualified legal service providers to assist with the naturalization application and process. This will allow USCIS to more efficiently adjudicate applications by reducing filing errors, likely contributing to the agency-wide effort towards reducing casework backlogs and improving processing times. Increasing funding will also further the goals of the Interagency Strategy for Promoting Naturalization, established by Executive Order 14012, Restoring Faith in Our Legal Immigration Systems and Strengthening Integration and Inclusion Efforts for New Americans.<sup>4</sup> This Order established a naturalization working group that aims to promote naturalization through education, capacity building and partnerships.

We urge you to continue funding for the Citizenship and Integration Grant Program to maintain and expand support for the integration of immigrants into the social, cultural, economic, and civic life of the United States.

Sincerely,

  
Jimmy Gomez  
Member of Congress

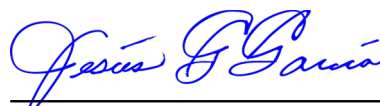
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<sup>4</sup> The White House, “Executive Order on Restoring Faith in Our Legal Immigration Systems and Strengthening Integration and Inclusion Efforts for New Americans,” <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/presidential-actions/2021/02/02/executive-order-restoring-faith-in-our-legal-immigration-systems-and-strengthening-integration-and-inclusion-efforts-for-new-americans/>.



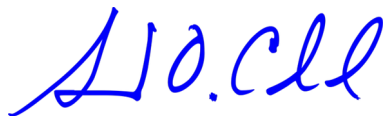
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Jan Schakowsky  
Member of Congress



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Jesús G. "Chuy" García  
Member of Congress



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Salud Carbajal  
Member of Congress



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Sydney Kamlager-Dove  
Member of Congress



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Rashida Tlaib  
Member of Congress



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Dan Goldman  
Member of Congress



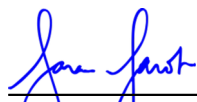
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Joaquin Castro  
Member of Congress



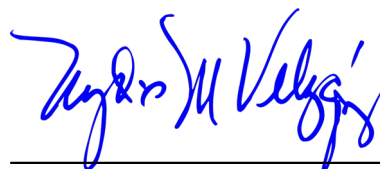
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Robert Garcia  
Member of Congress



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Sara Jacobs  
Member of Congress



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Nydia M. Velázquez  
Member of Congress



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Ted W. Lieu  
Member of Congress



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Tony Cárdenas  
Member of Congress



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Julia Brownley  
Member of Congress



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Eleanor Holmes Norton  
Member of Congress



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Grace F. Napolitano  
Member of Congress



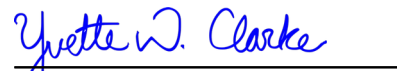
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Jamaal Bowman, Ed.D.  
Member of Congress



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Raúl M. Grijalva  
Member of Congress



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Yvette D. Clarke  
Member of Congress



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Nanette Diaz Barragán  
Member of Congress



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Veronica Escobar  
Member of Congress



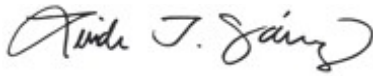
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Darren Soto  
Member of Congress



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Seth Moulton  
Member of Congress



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Linda T. Sánchez  
Member of Congress



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Nikema Williams  
Member of Congress



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Marilyn Strickland  
Member of Congress

CC: Chairwoman Kay Granger, House Appropriations Committee  
Ranking Member Rosa DeLauro, House Appropriations Committee