



# Fact Sheet

December 6, 2007 (Revised)

## **TASK FORCE ON NEW AMERICANS**

### *First-Year Initiatives*

Created in June 2006 by President George W. Bush, the Task Force on New Americans is an inter-agency effort to help immigrants learn English, embrace the common core of American civic culture, and fully become American. The Task Force works to develop a more cooperative federal approach to assimilation, one of the five pillars of the President's comprehensive immigration reform plan.

Established within the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Secretary Michael Chertoff serves as Chair of the Task Force and Emilio González, Director of U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), serves as Executive Secretary. Task Force membership includes representatives from 12 Cabinet-level departments and a technical working committee of eight additional federal agencies.

Since June 2006, the Task Force on New Americans has been working to develop inter-agency initiatives to help immigrants settle in their new country and maximize the use of federal resources in promoting integration. By providing technical resources to communities and organizations, encouraging volunteerism, developing effective training methods, and conducting targeted research efforts, the Task Force seeks to encourage successful immigrant integration in a comprehensive manner. The following are current and planned Task Force initiatives:

#### **Improve Access to Information and Resources for New Immigrants**

- With the launch of [WelcometoUSA.gov](http://WelcometoUSA.gov), the federal government presents newcomers with basic information, through a comprehensive web portal, on settling in the United States and other essential information to fully embrace the common core of American civic culture. In addition to settlement information, [WelcometoUSA.gov](http://WelcometoUSA.gov) contains links to help new immigrants find an English class and ways to get involved in their community through volunteering.
- Before arriving in the country, all successful immigrant visa recipients now receive a brochure from the Department of State providing instructions, in their native language, to call the USCIS forms line (1-800-870-3676) to request a hard copy—in English, Spanish, or Chinese—of the comprehensive publication for newcomers, [\*Welcome to the United States: A Guide for New Immigrants\*](#), at no charge.

#### **Encourage Volunteerism Among U.S. Citizens and New Immigrants**

A major Task Force initiative, entitled the *New Americans Project*, seeks to encourage volunteerism among both U.S. citizens and new immigrants. The Task Force will accomplish this through, among other projects, a zip code based [search engine](#) listing volunteer opportunities to work with immigrants and a series of outreach events to promote volunteerism. In addition, the *New Americans Project* aims to provide opportunities for immigrants themselves to integrate into their communities by volunteering. The Task Force will be working closely with USA Freedom Corps on the *New Americans Project*.

## **Provide Training and Technical Resources to Organizations that Serve Immigrants**

The Task Force will provide public libraries, adult educators, and volunteers with training and resources to assist them in establishing programs to help immigrants settle in and learn about the United States.

- Public libraries in the United States have a long history of helping immigrants integrate into their communities and better understand life in their new country. With more and more immigrants settling outside of traditional immigrant gateways, it is important that all public libraries are equipped with resources to assist immigrants. In response, the Task Force will be distributing the *Civics and Citizenship Toolkit*, which contains educational materials to help immigrants learn about the United States. Interested public libraries may register to receive a free copy of the *Civics and Citizenship Toolkit* at [www.citizenshiptoolkit.gov](http://www.citizenshiptoolkit.gov). The Government Printing Office (GPO) will also distribute the *Toolkit* to the nearly 1,300 members of the Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP). Beginning in January 2008, registration will be expanded to include all established immigrant-serving organizations.
- [U.S. Civics and Citizenship Online: Resource Center for Instructors](#) is a web-based tool hosted by USCIS offering teachers and volunteers a single source to locate resources to incorporate civics into English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction and prepare adult students for naturalization. The website includes links to curricula, lesson plans, teacher assessments, and other instructional material.
- In October 2007, USCIS introduced a web-based electronic training module for volunteers and adult educators that includes courses and materials in the following three content areas: the naturalization process, U.S. government, and civics education.
- To complement the civic education online training module, USCIS will convene eight regional training conferences to help refine skills and prepare adult civics and citizenship instructors and volunteers for teaching American history, civics, and the naturalization process to immigrant students. The first training conference was held October 26, 2007 in Miami, FL.
- Lastly, a “How To” manual for organizations interested in establishing ESL and citizenship classes will help prepare places of worship, community-based organizations, and other immigrant-serving organizations with the resources they need to build a successful program.

## **Gather Input on Successful Integration Practices**

In February 2007, the Task Force began holding a series of roundtable discussions across the United States to learn more about successful immigrant integration practices. These roundtables will gather input from immigrant-serving organizations, businesses, state and local governments, academia, community and faith-based organizations, adult educators, public libraries, foundations, and traditional civic organizations. The Task Force will present its findings and recommendations in a formal report to the President.

## **Task Force Membership**

The Task Force consists of twelve cabinet-level departments and a technical working committee of eight federal agencies. They include: Department of Agriculture, Department of Commerce, Department of Defense, Department of Education, Department of Health and Human Services, Department of Homeland Security, Department of Housing and Urban Development, Department of the Interior, Department of Justice, Department of Labor, Department of State, Department of the Treasury, Corporation for National and Community Service, Federal Trade Commission, General Services Administration, Government Printing Office, Institute of Museum and Library Services, National Endowment for the Arts, National Endowment for the Humanities, and the Small Business Administration.

For more information about the Task Force, visit <http://www.dhs.gov/ximgtn/committees/details.shtm>.

For more information about U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, visit [www.uscis.gov](http://www.uscis.gov).