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For Immediate Release

New Service Puts Legal Help in the Hands of Immigrants Seeking to Naturalize
CitizenshipWorks Text Messaging Campaign Provides Local Information about Naturalization Assistance

New York, March 7, 2012 – CitizenshipWorks, an online resource committed to increasing naturalization rates among eligible immigrants, recently announced the launch of its nationwide text messaging campaign, which sends immigrants information about United States citizenship and helps them to access free or low-cost legal help in their area.

Users can text “citizenship” (“ciudadania” in Spanish) to 877877 and receive the location and contact information of nearby legal services providers as well as information about naturalization and alerts about upcoming naturalization workshops and events in their community. Available in English and Spanish, the campaign addresses the unmet need for information about becoming a U.S. citizen and directs users to local organizations providing naturalization assistance.

Nationally, it is estimated that there are 8.5 million lawful permanent residents who are eligible to apply for citizenship. However, less than 1 million naturalize every year. For many immigrants, the complex laws and regulations that govern the process of naturalization are intimidating. Others simply lack the resources to hire an attorney to begin the process.

The CitizenshipWorks website (www.citizenshipworks.org) provides free, easy-to-use, online tools to help individuals answer questions about their eligibility for naturalization, better understand the naturalization process, and prepare for the naturalization tests. CitizenshipWorks is a project of the Immigration Advocates Network (IAN), a collaborative effort of leading immigrants’ rights organizations; the Immigrant Legal Resource Center, national experts on the naturalization process; and Pro Bono Net, a national nonprofit that develops innovative and collaborative technology platforms to increase access.

The text messaging initiative complements the existing website by connecting immigrants seeking legal help to free or low-cost nonprofit immigration legal services providers in all 50 states. By making the process of naturalization more accessible and understandable, CitizenshipWorks opens the doors for many immigrants who are unsure of their eligibility or where to begin. Naturalized citizens are more civically engaged and have better access to economic opportunities.

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