

# CITIZENS' ACADEMY



## Municipal Action for Immigrant Integration

Municipal Action for Immigrant Integration (MAII) is a National League of Cities (NLC) project focused on promoting civic engagement and naturalization among immigrant communities in cities throughout the United States. In addition, the project will establish a knowledge-sharing network across different cities and organizations. The goal of MAII is to be a resource for municipal officials and community-based organizations who seek assistance in addressing immigrant integration challenges in their communities. MAII has two components to support these efforts: (1) the NewCITYzen Naturalization Campaign, which includes materials to help city officials launch naturalization awareness campaigns in their communities; and (2) the CITYzenship Community Initiative through which MAII provides technical assistance to promote civic engagement at the local level.

## Citizens' Academies

A Citizens' academy is a training program to help promote informed and involved citizenship. It is a program designed to educate community residents; foster communication between residents and city government; and even encourage future city leaders. Participants learn about a wide variety of local topics from city services to local government function to fire safety. Citizens' academies are typically geared toward adults, but some cities and towns hold similar training programs for youth. The academies vary in length, but generally occur over several weeks and end in a graduation ceremony for participants.

## MAII Citizens' Academy

The New Americans Citizens' Academy (the Academy) will help municipal officials and community leaders educate immigrant residents about local government. This will provide immigrant residents with the opportunity to fully understand how local government functions and how, as community members, they

can play an important role in their city. The Academy will help broaden the pool of future civic leaders for service on city boards, commissions and councils. This unique program will help to improve and deepen the relationship between immigrant communities and local government agencies, including police departments.

### *Participants in the Academy will:*

- Learn about local government functions, finances, structure, city services municipal projects;
- Understand how new immigrants can become engaged in public affairs;
- Participate in dialogues with local elected officials and staff;
- Serve as role models for other members of the immigrant community by becoming effective leaders through active participation and effective interaction with local government; and
- Diversify the pool of potential candidates for city boards and commissions in the future.

### *Program Duration:*

The MAII curriculum reflects a ten-week, one-session per week program.

### *Participants:*

The program is open to members of the immigrant community who are residents of the city or town.

### *Fees and Attendance:*

The Academy program is offered free of charge. Participants are required to attend all seven sessions in order to graduate from this program.

### *Promotion:*

Promotion for the Academy is done using local government television stations, city websites and press releases, ethnic media, community-based organizations and local immigrant service providers.

# Curriculum



## Session 1 – Local Government 101

Welcome and program overview (basic orientation)  
Brief city's history  
Brief overview of local government organization  
City boards and commissions  
Tour of city hall/city council chamber

## Session 2 – Getting to Know Your City Leaders (Roles and Responsibilities)

The mayor's office/senior staff  
City manager  
President of city council  
City council  
City clerk  
County elected officials  
Chief of police  
Chief of fire department  
County sheriff

## Session 3 – City Finances, Human Resources, and Support Services

Financial/administrative services  
City budget (overview of budget process, revenue collection, capital projects, etc.)  
Information and technology  
Human resources

## Session 4 – City Services and Community Development

Public works (street maintenance, garbage collection, recycling, etc)  
Public transportation/airport  
Land use planning, building, zoning, and code enforcement  
Health department  
Tour of city garage or public works facility

## Session 5 – Leisure, Sports, and Recreation

Overview of city parks  
Recreation programs  
City library system  
Arts and culture  
Tour of parks facility

## Session 6 – Legal and Criminal Justice System

Overview of the U.S. legal system  
Difference between criminal and civil law  
Prosecutor or county attorney office  
Public defender  
Tour of county jail or court chamber

## Session 7 – Public Safety I

Brief history of American law enforcement  
Police department role in the community  
Police department organization and police operations  
Crime classifications and punishments  
Criminal acts, search and seizure, arrests procedures, and Miranda rights

## Session 8 – Public Safety II

Crime scene investigation  
Narcotics investigation  
Traffic enforcement  
Domestic violence and sexual assault  
Crime prevention and community policing  
Tour of police headquarters

## Session 9 – Public Safety III

911 emergency systems  
Fire department organization  
Fire department operations/units  
Emergency medical services  
Fire prevention and fire safety education  
Tour of fire department headquarters or fire station

## Session 10 – Civics and Financial Education

Overview of the U.S. government  
Citizenship and civic participation  
Banking, financial education, and insurance services  
Graduation ceremony with the mayor or city manager, council members, fire chief, police chief, senior city staff, and members of the community.

## NLC Contacts

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Please visit [www.nlc.org](http://www.nlc.org)  
for more details.

