



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR  
CITY OF CHICAGO

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

February 12, 2013

CONTACT:

Mayor's Press Office

312.744.3334

[press@cityofchicago.org](mailto:press@cityofchicago.org)

**MAYOR EMANUEL HOSTS CITIZENSHIP CEREMONY AT THE CHICAGO CULTURAL CENTER**

*62 Children from 23 Countries are Presented with Citizenship Certificates during the Third Naturalization Ceremony Hosted by the City of Chicago*

Mayor Rahm Emanuel today, along with U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) hosted a ceremony to administer the Oath of Allegiance and distribute citizenship certificates to 62 children, representing 23 countries at the Chicago Cultural Center. The ceremony was the third hosted by the City of Chicago, the first and second ceremonies were hosted in City Hall's Council Chambers. The Mayor will host citizenship swearing-in ceremonies at City Hall and other prominent city locations on a regular basis, as part of Chicago's New American initiative.

"Today we recognize 62 children as United States Citizens who are fulfilling their dreams and their parents' dreams for a better life, for more opportunities, and a brighter future," said Mayor Rahm Emanuel. "We welcome and congratulate our young Citizens at the Chicago Cultural Center, a fitting location representing our city's history as a global city and our commitment to celebrating our immigrant communities as part of our city's future."

Mayor Emanuel was the keynote speaker for the ceremony and was joined by Alderman Ray Suarez, Lawrence Benito, CEO of the Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights (ICIRR), and naturalized citizen Angelica Atondo, Univision Chicago News Lead Anchor and Author who offered congratulatory remarks. The Oath of Allegiance was administered by the USCIS Chicago District Director Lori Pietropaoli. The presentation of colors was conducted by the Curie Metro High School Marine Corps JROTC Color Guard with the National Anthem performed by Malcolm Watkins-McNeil, Vocalist from Wendell Phillips Academy.

"Mayor Emanuel is a national leader in raising awareness of the rights, responsibilities, and importance of U.S. citizenship," said USCIS Director Alejandro Mayorkas. "Our close partnership with the Mayor's office has helped foster immigrant integration in the City of Chicago, and we are grateful for the Mayor's work and for highlighting 62 new young citizens today."

The first naturalization ceremony took place at Council Chambers in City Hall in June of last year during the launch of the Chicago New Americans Initiative. The Chicago New Americans Initiative is a comprehensive municipal efforts to assist eligible immigrants become U.S. Citizens. The second naturalization ceremony in City Hall's Council Chambers was hosted in November of last year. Mayor Emanuel was the keynote speaker for the ceremony and was joined by Congressman Luis Gutierrez and Alderman Danny Solis to offer congratulatory remarks to the new citizens.

"We are extremely proud of the collaboration with the City of Chicago's Office of New Americans to ensure that over the next 3 years 10,000 legal permanent residents will become citizens. Mayor Emanuel has demonstrated his commitment to the immigrant community by actively fighting for the full integration of all immigrants, and making Chicago the "Most American of American Cities," said Lawrence Benito, CEO, ICIRR.

The Chicago New Americans initiative will work to offer assistance to thousands of eligible, law abiding, permanent residents in becoming naturalized, U.S. citizens. Over the next three years, the Chicago New Americans Initiative will directly assist 10,000 immigrants in Chicago to become U.S. citizens; encouraging immigrants to independently initiate their naturalization process; and helping new citizens become fully active participants in the civic life of the city and state.

###

**Photo Caption:** Mayor Emanuel Distributes Citizenship Certificates Recognizing 62 children as United States Citizens

**Photo Credit:** Brooke Collins - City of Chicago