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MAYOR EMANUEL HOSTS NATURALIZATION CEREMONY AT THE HAROLD WASHINGTON LIBRARY

100 Individuals from 33 Countries are Presented with Citizenship Certificates during the Fourth Naturalization Ceremony Hosted by the City of Chicago

Mayor Rahm Emanuel and the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) today hosted a ceremony to administer the Oath of Allegiance and distributed citizenship certificates to 100 individuals representing 33 countries at the Harold Washington Library. The ceremony was the fourth hosted by the City of Chicago, as part of Chicago's New American Initiative.

"Whether you hail from Bosnia or Brazil, Poland or Pakistan, Mexico or the Mideast, you can call Chicago home," said Mayor Emanuel. "Chicago is the most American of American cities because generations of immigrants found their way to the shores of this city – America's Third Shore – to give their children a chance that they could not have had anywhere else. As the grandson of an immigrant who found his way to Chicago, it is my honor to welcome America's newest citizens and the newest residents of our great city."

Mayor Emanuel was the keynote speaker for the ceremony. Alderman Joe Moreno, Chicago Public Library Commissioner Brian Bannon, and author Aleksander Hemon, a Bosnian born author who moved to Chicago and became a naturalized citizen in 2000, also offered congratulatory remarks.

The Oath of Allegiance was administered by USCIS Field Office Director Martha Medina-Maltes. The presentation of colors was conducted by the Fenger Academy High School JROTC Color Guard with the National Anthem performed by Jalisa Laws from Fenger High School.

The first naturalization ceremony took place in City Council Chambers at City Hall in June of 2012 during the launch of the Chicago New Americans Initiative. The Chicago New Americans Initiative is comprehensive municipal efforts to assist eligible immigrants become U.S. Citizens.

The Chicago New Americans Initiative works to offer assistance to thousands of eligible, law abiding, permanent residents in becoming naturalized, U.S. citizens. Over the next three years, the

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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.

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Photo Caption: Mayor Emanuel congratulates newly naturalized citizens representing 33 countries at the Harold Washington Library during National Library Week.

Photo Credit: Brooke Collins/City of Chicago