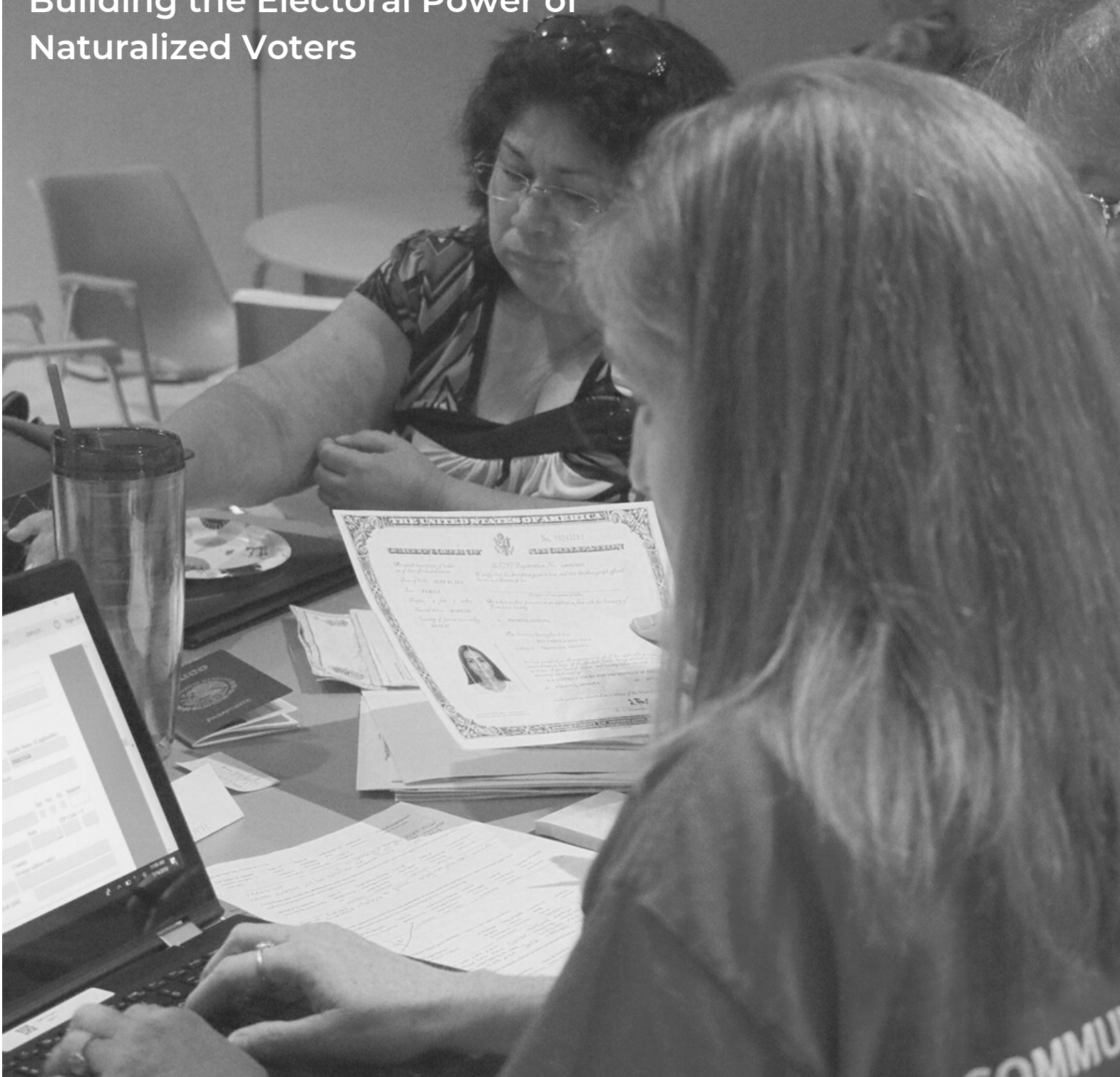


New American Voters in North Carolina

Building the Electoral Power of Naturalized Voters



NPNA
NATIONAL PARTNERSHIP
FOR NEW AMERICANS

SEIU

August 2022

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Executive Summary

The high stakes of the 2022 U.S. midterm elections showcase the urgency of engaging all eligible voters to ensure a fully participatory, representative democracy. In North Carolina, a bloc of New American Voters, recently naturalized citizens that have earned the right to vote, has the potential to play an out-sized role in the outcomes of critical federal and state races. This voting bloc is multiracial, multigenerational, geographically diverse, and majority female. New American Voters hold distinct ideologies, experiences, and viewpoints, and will be motivated by a variety of issues this November.

North Carolina will be one of the most critical states during the November 2022 midterm elections and New American Voters can sway the outcome. The state has an open House seat and competitive Senate election (rated “lean R” by the [Cook Political Report](#)). This report offers data that illustrates how New American Voters can have an outsized impact.

- North Carolina is home to 70,579 citizens naturalized between 2016 and 2020. This number is nearly equal to the state’s November 2020 presidential election margin of 74,481 votes.
- Newly naturalized citizens in North Carolina are racially and ethnically diverse, with 40 percent from Asia, 36 percent from the Americas, 14 percent from the African continent, and approximately 10 percent from Europe.
- Approximately 64 percent of all persons who naturalized from 2016 to 2020 were under the age of 45 years old and around 55 percent are women.
- North Carolina ranks nearly 6th in the nation in the New American Voters Impact Model, which was created by the National Partnership for New Americans (NPNA) to showcase the potential of this critical voting bloc to influence the outcome of midterm elections.

These potential New American Voters face significant barriers to citizenship. This electoral season presents many challenges, including the need for organizations to adapt their voter engagement work to the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, language access issues that can affect New American Voters’ ability to both register and to vote, and ongoing efforts to tighten and restrict access to voting, particularly targeting voters of color. One form of voter suppression that has emerged in recent years is the increasing backlog and processing delays of citizenship applications.

According to the latest data from U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), there are over 700,000 pending citizenship applications nationwide, with 14,598 applications backlogged in USCIS’ offices in North Carolina.¹ While the national average processing delay is around 11 months, approximately 80 percent of applications are processed within 16.5 months in USCIS’ Charlotte office and approximately 80 percent of applications are processed within 15 months in USCIS’ Raleigh office. This means that immigrants who are eligible for citizenship and who would have otherwise naturalized and have had time to register to vote in this year’s elections may not be able to do so given the naturalization application backlog.

This year NPNA’s New American Voters Campaign, a non-partisan nationwide effort to encourage a potential voting bloc of 5.19 million newly naturalized citizens to register and vote is partnering the Latin American Coalition, North Carolina Asians Together and other local organizations in North Carolina to engage this emerging voting block in the Tar Heel state. The 2022 collaboration continues momentum from the 2020 campaign which engaged newly naturalized citizens in linguistically and culturally competent ways.

¹ U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, “Number of Form n-400 Application for Naturalization by Category of Naturalization, Case Status and USCIS Field Office Location.” October 1, 2021 - December 31, 2021. https://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/document/reports/N400_performancedata_fy2022_qtr1.pdf

Methodology

This report is based on USCIS data on naturalizations that occurred from Fiscal Year FY 2016 through FY 2020 and naturalization applications that the agency approved in FY 2021. Estimates for naturalizations during FY 2021 are based on previous spikes in naturalizations between FY 2019 and FY 2020, right before the presidential election.

“Newly naturalized citizens” are defined as those who have naturalized since FY 2016. “New American Voters” are defined as those who have naturalized since FY 2016 and can subsequently register to vote.

This report utilizes United Nations regional classifications to specify newly naturalized citizens' region of origin.³ These classifications are Americas, Asia, Europe, Africa, and Oceania. All of the tables referenced throughout this report are based on USCIS data. Additionally, data on naturalization gaps is based on the 2020 1-Year ACS.⁴

The New American Voters Impact Model (Figure 1) ranks states' relative “political importance” based on six factors: 1) newly naturalized citizens from 2016 to 2020 as a multiple of the state’s 2016 presidential vote margin; 2) the average presidential election margin (in 2012, 2016, and 2020); 3) group density; 4) the presence of a competitive U.S. Senate race; 5) the presence of a competitive gubernatorial race; and 6) the presence of a competitive race for control of state legislative chambers. All of these factors are multiplied by each other in order to arrive at a raw score. That raw score is standardized on a 1 to 99 scale. The 15 highest-scoring states are termed “politically important states” throughout this report. A more in-depth explanation of the model factors can be found in NPNA's national report: [New American Voters 2022: Harnessing the Power of Naturalized Citizens](#).

² See “Naturalizations,” U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, accessed May 9, 2022, <https://www.dhs.gov/immigration-statistics/naturalizations>. “Immigration and Citizenship Data,” U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, accessed May 9, 2022, <https://www.uscis.gov/tools/reports-and-studies/immigration-and-citizenship-data>

³ See “Countries or Areas,” United Nations Statistics Division, accessed May 9, 2022, <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/methodology/m49/#geo-regions>

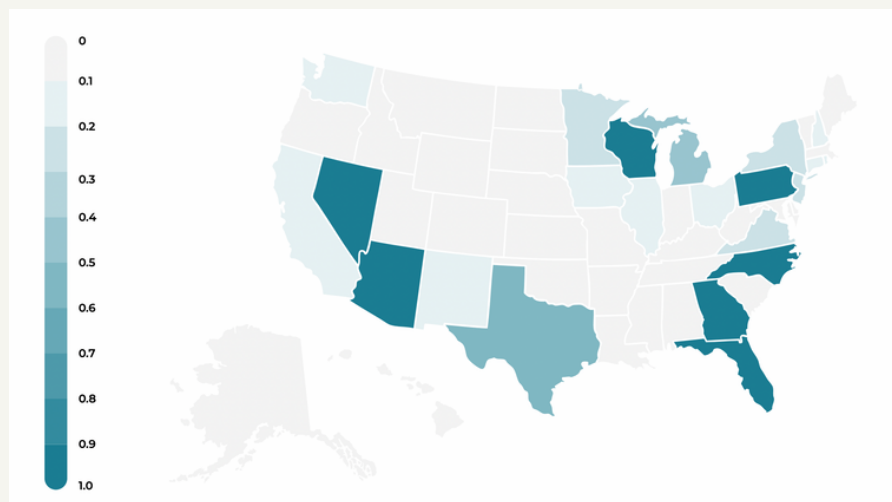
⁴ See “American Community Survey,” United States Census Bureau, accessed May 9, 2022, <https://data.census.gov/cedsci/>

Why North Carolina is so Important in 2022

New American Voters in North Carolina can play a critical role in the November 2022 midterm elections. North Carolina ranks 6th in the nation according to the New American Voters Impact Model, which was created by NPNA to showcase the potential of this critical voting bloc to influence the outcome of midterm elections. It is based on factors like the 2020 presidential election margin of victory; the average margin of victory during the last three presidential elections; the size of the foreign-born population in a state; and the presence of competitive senatorial or gubernatorial races.

Figure 1: Politically Important States

This map shows how states score in the NPNA New American Voters Impact Model



There are more than 350,000 naturalized citizens in North Carolina.

As Figure 2 shows, over one-quarter of all naturalized citizens in North Carolina have naturalized since the 2016 presidential election.

Figure 2: North Carolina State Population Figures

TOTAL POPULATION	REGISTERED VOTERS	ALL NATURALIZED	NATURALIZED 2016-2020
10,634,814	7,236,469	352,718	70,579

From 2016 through 2020, North Carolina added an estimated 70,579 newly naturalized citizens, which is nearly equal to the 2020 presidential election margin in the state.

This cohort is part of an estimated 5.19 million newly naturalized citizens across the U.S., according to [New American Voters 2022: Harnessing the Power of Naturalized Citizens](#), a report released by NPNA, the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), and the U.S. Immigration Policy Center at the University of California San Diego in July 2022. Estimates are based on USCIS data on naturalizations that occurred between Fiscal Year (FY) 2016 and FY 2020.

WHO ARE NORTH CAROLINA'S NEW AMERICAN VOTERS?

Of the total number of persons who naturalized in North Carolina from 2016 to 2020, approximately 40 percent are from Asia, which includes Asian and Pacific Islander countries, approximately 36 percent are from the Americas, which includes Latin America and the Caribbean, approximately 14 percent are from the African continent, and approximately 10 percent are from Europe.

**FIGURE 3: NORTH CAROLINA NATURALIZED CITIZENS
BY REGION OF ORIGIN**

REGION	NUMBER OF NEWLY NATURALIZED CITIZENS	PERCENTAGE
Asia	27,916	40%
Americas	25,057	36%
Africa	9,893	14%
Europe	7,254	10%
Oceania	268	0.4%
Other/Unknown	191	0.3%
Total 2016-2020	70,579	

40%

Newly Naturalized
Citizens from Asia

36%

Newly Naturalized
Citizens from the
Americas



The table below shows the top 20 countries of origin for persons who naturalized in North Carolina from 2016 to 2020. Newly naturalized citizens from Mexico lead the way, followed by India, then Vietnam.

FIGURE 4: NORTH CAROLINA NEWLY NATURALIZED CITIZENS BY COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

RANK	COUNTRY OF ORIGIN	TOTAL
1	Mexico	7,996
2	India	7,971
3	Vietnam	3,023
4	China, People's Republic	2,475
5	Philippines	2,308
6	El Salvador	2,016
7	Burma	1,978
8	Colombia	1,929
9	United Kingdom	1,638
10	Canada	1,471
11	Dominican Republic	1,468
12	Pakistan	1,153
13	Honduras	1,134
14	Korea, South	1,120
15	Nigeria	1,099
16	Jamaica	1,023
17	Cuba	911
18	Peru	908
19	Bhutan	892
20	Ecuador	862

31%

Newly naturalized U.S. citizens
35-45 years old

25%

Newly naturalized U.S. citizens
25-34 years old

19%

Newly naturalized U.S. citizens
45-55 years old

10%

Newly naturalized U.S. citizens
55-65 years old

8%

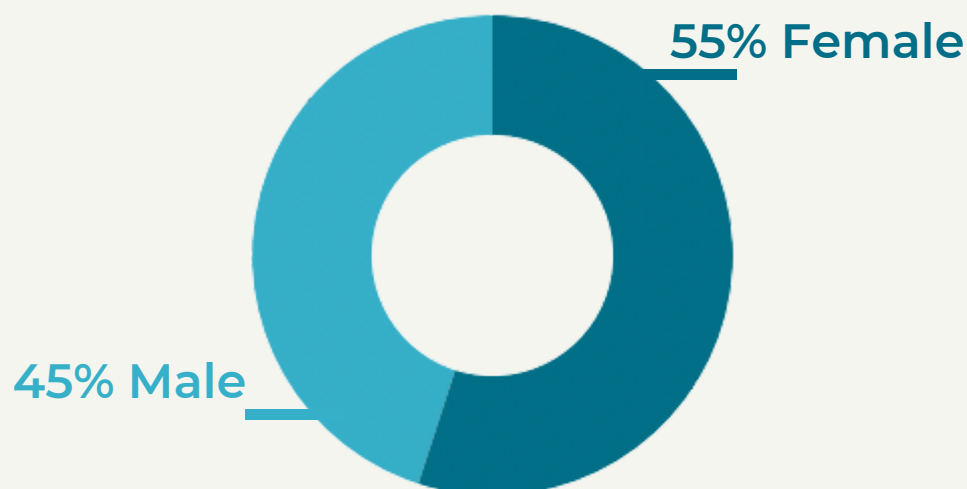
Newly naturalized U.S. citizens
18-24 years old

Approximately 66 percent of persons who naturalized in North Carolina from 2016 to 2020 were below the age of 45 and approximately 55 percent were women. The full breakdown by age and gender is shown in the table below.

FIGURE 5: NORTH CAROLINA NEWLY NATURALIZED CITIZENS BY AGE AND GENDER

AGE	FEMALE	MALE	TOTAL	%
18-24 YEARS	3,147	2,843	5,990	8%
25-34 YEARS	10,044	7,326	17,370	25%
35-45 YEARS	12,043	9,966	22,010	31%
45-55 YEARS	6,936	6,576	13,512	19%
55-65 YEARS	3,940	3,373	7,313	10%
65 YEARS AND OLDER	2,484	1,890	4,383	6%
TOTAL	38,594	31,985	70,579	

FIGURE 6: NORTH CAROLINA NEWLY NATURALIZED CITIZENS BY GENDER



Note: USCIS does not collect data on transgender or non-binary individuals.

REGION OF ORIGIN REPRESENTATION

Compared to all other states, North Carolina ranks 11th when it comes to newly naturalized citizens from the Americas, which includes Latin American and Caribbean countries, 14th when it comes to newly naturalized citizens from the African continent, 14th when it comes to newly naturalized citizens from Europe, and 15th when it comes to newly naturalized citizens from Asia, which includes Asian and Pacific Islander countries.

FIGURE 7: NEWLY NATURALIZED U.S. CITIZENS ORIGINALLY FROM ASIA BY STATE

ASIA		
RANK	STATE	TOTAL
1	California	355,638
2	New York	142,189
3	Texas	117,185
4	New Jersey	63,996
5	Illinois	52,143
6	Virginia	47,695
7	Florida	45,253
8	Michigan	41,676
9	Washington	41,417
10	Pennsylvania	38,095
11	Massachusetts	38,022
12	Georgia	37,773
13	Maryland	31,914
14	Ohio	30,407
15	North Carolina	27,916

FIGURE 8: NEWLY NATURALIZED U.S. CITIZENS ORIGINALLY FROM THE AMERICAS BY STATE

AMERICAS		
RANK	STATE	TOTAL
1	Florida	340,938
2	California	298,491
3	New York	184,528
4	Texas	176,930
5	New Jersey	77,969
6	Massachusetts	46,336
7	Illinois	37,639
8	Arizona	35,307
9	Georgia	34,479
10	Virginia	27,382
11	North Carolina	25,057
12	Maryland	24,534
13	Pennsylvania	22,618
14	Nevada	20,392
15	Connecticut	19,427

FIGURE 9: NEWLY NATURALIZED U.S. CITIZENS
ORIGINALLY FROM AFRICA BY STATE

AFRICA		
RANK	STATE	TOTAL
1	Texas	33,480
2	New York	29,528
3	Maryland	26,428
4	California	23,614
5	Minnesota	20,706
6	Massachusetts	18,701
7	Virginia	17,350
8	New Jersey	16,124
9	Georgia	15,510
10	Ohio	14,559
11	Pennsylvania	12,476
12	Florida	10,493
13	Washington	10,223
14	North Carolina	9,893
15	Illinois	9,313

FIGURE 10: NEWLY NATURALIZED U.S. CITIZENS
ORIGINALLY FROM EUROPE BY STATE

EUROPE		
RANK	STATE	TOTAL
1	California	48,996
2	New York	45,464
3	Florida	31,365
4	Illinois	28,119
5	New Jersey	19,314
6	Massachusetts	16,782
7	Texas	15,055
8	Washington	14,466
9	Pennsylvania	11,456
10	Michigan	9,700
11	Virginia	8,272
12	Georgia	8,180
13	Connecticut	7,916
14	North Carolina	7,254
15	Ohio	6,446

FIGURE 11: NEWLY NATURALIZED U.S. CITIZENS ORIGINALLY FROM OCEANIA BY STATE

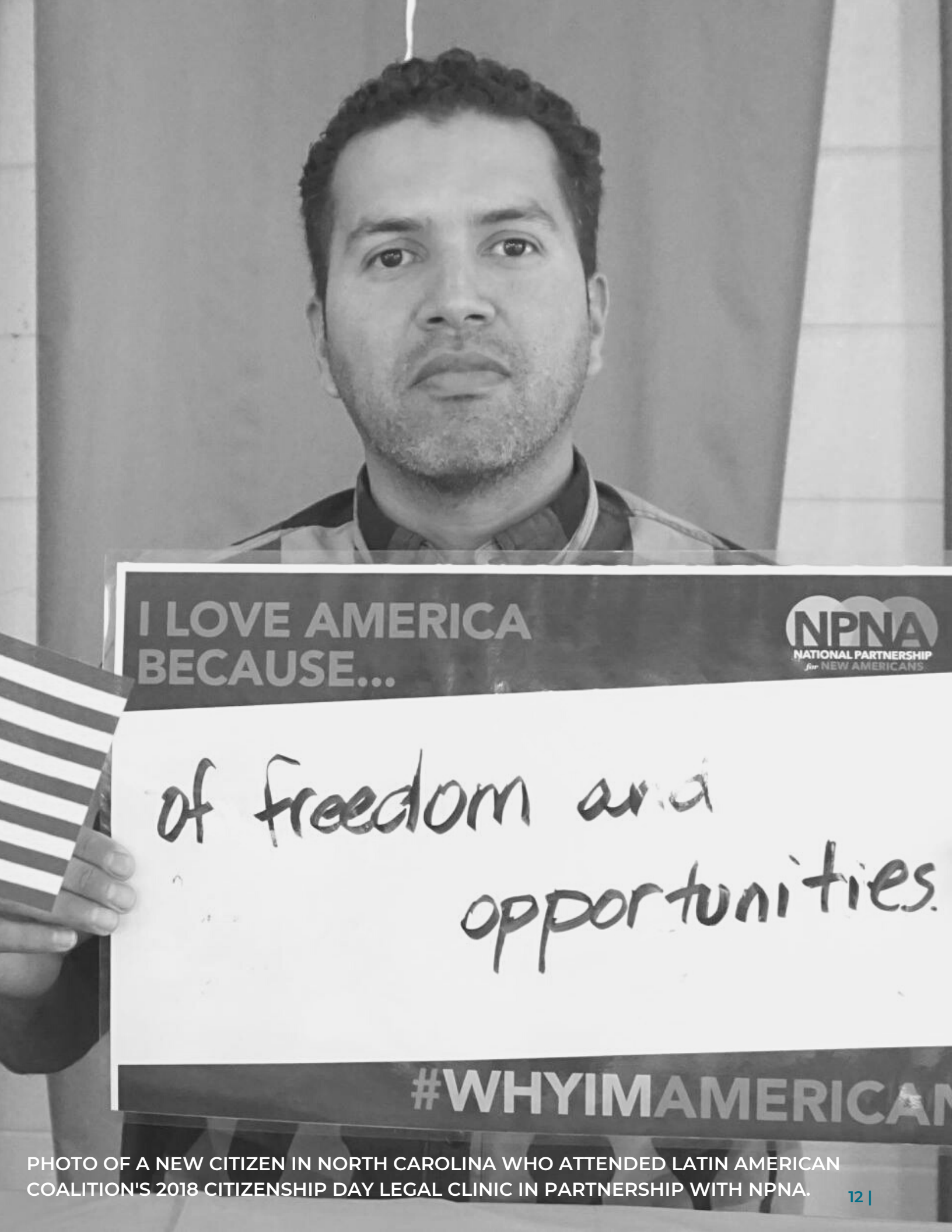
OCEANIA		
RANK	STATE	TOTAL
1	California	6,633
2	Washington	1,411
3	New York	964
4	Texas	907
5	Utah	744
6	Hawaii	612
7	Florida	602
8	Colorado	441
9	Oregon	423
10	Massachusetts	327
11	Georgia	311
12	Arizona	308
13	Virginia	306
14	Illinois	299
15	Nevada	270

WHERE ARE NORTH CAROLINA'S NEW AMERICAN VOTERS?

The following table shows the total number of naturalized citizens in metropolitan areas in North Carolina. The Charlotte-Concord-Gastonia metropolitan area, which includes parts of South Carolina has over 124,000 naturalized citizens, followed by the Raleigh metropolitan area with just over 80,000 naturalized citizens, and then the Virginia Beach-Norfolk-Newport News metropolitan area, which includes parts of Virginia, with approximately 76,000 naturalized citizens.

FIGURE 12: NORTH CAROLINA NEWLY NATURALIZED U.S. CITIZENS BY METRO AREA AND REGION OF ORIGIN

Metropolitan Area	Total	Africa	Americas	Asia	Europe	Oceania
Charlotte-Concord-Gastonia, NC-SC	124,184	14,680	49,994	43,936	15,494	80
Raleigh, NC	80,007	8,838	19,365	38,754	12,217	833
Virginia Beach-Norfolk-Newport News, VA-NC	75,553	4,795	22,425	38,174	9,595	564
Greensboro-High Point, NC	28,563	6,550	7,258	10,241	4,514	N/A
Myrtle Beach-Conway-North Myrtle Beach, SC-NC	18,468	1,760	5,588	3,584	7,536	N/A
Winston-Salem, NC	16,442	446	9,185	4,017	2,794	N/A
Fayetteville, NC	14,836	599	7,617	4,632	1,988	N/A
Asheville, NC	13,299	377	4,679	4,796	3,427	20
Hickory-Lenoir-Morganton, NC	6,268	N/A	2,593	2,541	1,134	N/A
Burlington, NC	6,021	561	3,807	1,285	368	N/A
Greenville, NC	5,638	1,052	1,272	2,555	759	N/A
Wilmington, NC	5,124	N/A	703	2,584	1,837	N/A
Goldsboro, NC	2,675	N/A	1,715	877	83	N/A
Rocky Mount, NC	786	22	594	170	N/A	N/A



I LOVE AMERICA
BECAUSE...



of freedom and
opportunities.

#WHYIMAMERICAN

ENGAGING NORTH CAROLINA'S NEW AMERICAN VOTERS

The New American Voters 2022 campaign is a c3, non-partisan nationwide effort coordinated by the [National Partnership for New Americans \(NPNA\)](#) to encourage newly naturalized citizens to register and vote. Newly naturalized citizens in North Carolina interested in becoming citizens or new voters can reach out to the following NPNA Member and partner organizations below for more information.

North Carolina Organizations

La Coalición (Latin American Coalition) - is a community of Hispanics, immigrants, and allies who promote the full and equal participation of all people in the civic, economic, and cultural life of North Carolina through integration, education, celebration, and advocacy.
<https://www.latinamericancoalition.org/>

North Carolina Asian Americans Together (NCAAT) is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization committed to supporting equity and justice for all by fostering community among Asian Americans and allies in North Carolina through civic engagement, leadership development, grassroots mobilization, and political participation.
Learn more at www.ncaatogogether.org

Alianza Americas is the premier transnational advocacy network of Latin American migrant-led organizations working in the United States, across the Americas, and globally to create an inclusive, equitable and sustainable way of life for communities across North, Central and South America. Alianza's digital organizing powerhouse is Presente.org.

National Partners

The Service Employees International Union (SEIU) unites 2 million diverse members in the United States, Canada and Puerto Rico. SEIU members working in the healthcare industry, in the public sector and in property services believe in the power of joining together on the job to win higher wages and benefits and to create better communities while fighting for a more just society and an economy that works for all of us, not just corporations and the wealthy. Learn more at www.seiu.org

The U.S. Immigration Policy Center (USIPC) at UC San Diego was the lead author of this report in partnership with NPNA and SEIU. USIPC conducts and supports rigorous social science research to advance understanding of the foundations and consequences of U.S. immigration policy. Immigration has played an integral role in American history and is sure to feature prominently in America's future. But what should the immigration policies of our nation of immigrants be? The USIPC brings together leading academics, policy analysts, immigrant rights leaders, and policymakers across all levels of government to conceptualize, debate, and design a new U.S. immigration policy agenda that meets the demands of the 21st century. Learn more at <https://usipc.ucsd.edu/>