

"Deep Dive" Case Study

Initiative: Immigrant Integration/Touchscreen Democracy
Foundation: Silicon Valley Community Foundation, Emmett Carson, CEO
Category: Community Leadership

Summary Description:

In California there are an estimated 2.5 million immigrants who, as legal residents, are eligible for citizenship. Since 2009, SVCF has made significant investment in a suite of technology tools that help immigrants get legal services, learn English and navigate the naturalization process. Featured on the central hub immigrantintegrationsv.org, the tools include *CitizenshipWorks*, an innovative website developed and supported by SVCF and replicated nationally by the Knight Foundation, which provides eligibility screening, online tutorials and legal resources to those individuals who want to become naturalized citizens, a text message campaign that helps people locate their nearest legal services provider and a visa priority date calculator that help them figure out when they are eligible to apply for a resident or "green card", a necessary step toward citizenship.

Most recently, SVCF in partnership with Voto Latino, NBC Universal and Knight Foundation, unveiled a free mobile phone information app for Apple and Android phones. The app is aimed primarily at the 11 million Latinos nationwide that are not registered to vote. The app presents information in an unbiased, nonpartisan way to give people the tools and information they need to register and vote locally and in statewide elections. The app also has a matching tool that allows voters to answer questions about their views on everything from the war in Afghanistan to education to same-sex marriage to the economy. Then the tool identifies the candidate who most closely matches their beliefs. Both tools have important implications for the forthcoming national debate on citizenship.

Outcomes:

For *CitizenshipWorks*:

- Increase the capacity of legal service providers to process large number of their clients' naturalization paperwork and use new technologies for filing immigration applications.
- Develop a set of best practices and supporting materials to promote and expand access nationwide.

For *Voter Registration Mobile Phone App*:

- Increase the number of voters in the Bay Area and nation.
- Increase the information new Latino voters bring to the polls. By the time a voter who registered through the app actually votes, they will have had the opportunity to engage about their beliefs and receive election updates on issues important to them.

Learnings:

For *CitizenshipWorks*:

- All of the 13 legal service providers we fund have created their own delivery mechanisms for citizenship intake and processing. *CitizenshipWorks* and the other technology tools described above, have allowed a more efficient use of resources at a local and national level and expanded assistance to a greater number of individuals.
- Engage community members in the design of the mobile/tech project from an early stage to identify community needs and opportunity areas.

For *Voter Registration Mobile Phone App*:

- Prioritize publicity and outreach.
- Be realistic about the limitations of technology and access.
- Always include hands-on training to community members/groups.