



### Organizational Overview

**Citizenship Counts** is a national, nonpartisan 501(c)(3) organization whose mission is to **educate** today's youth on the tenets of citizenship, encourage them to **appreciate** their rights and responsibilities as Americans and give them the opportunity to **celebrate** citizenship by hosting a naturalization ceremony at their school or by participating in service to their community.

Our **FREE** high school civics curriculum provides students with comprehensive lessons and activities that explore the concepts of citizenship and promote critical thinking about immigration and the naturalization process. As circumstances permit, the program culminates in a school-based naturalization ceremony conducted by the USCIS. These ceremonies provide the students with a deeper understanding of the role that immigration has played in creating our diverse and dynamic country.

### Program Highlights

- Since our inception in 2008, **Citizenship Counts** has been incorporated into schools and community groups in **38 states**, reaching thousands of students in rural and urban communities alike across the country. We are the **only school-based civics program in the country** that focuses on bringing authentic naturalization ceremonies into schools and other local venues.
- **Citizenship Counts** has coordinated naturalization ceremonies at unique venues such as **The Smithsonian's Museum of American History, the National Constitution Center, The Mall of America and George H. W. Bush's Presidential Library**.
- In February 2016, **Citizenship Counts** collaborated with the Phoenix Suns and USCIS to coordinate **the very first naturalization ceremony ever to be held during halftime at a National Basketball Association (NBA) game**.
- All 37 middle schools in Orange County Public Schools (**the 10<sup>th</sup> largest district in the U.S.**) in Orlando, FL utilized our program to meet the state's mandate in civics education. The ceremony was featured on **The Today Show** in October 2012.
- In 2012 four **Citizenship Counts** Ambassadors embarked on a **3,500-mile journey across America**, biking and walking from San Diego to New York City. Their efforts were focused on **promoting engaged citizenship and awareness of the naturalization process**. Along the route, **Citizenship Counts** partnered with schools across the nation where the students' learning culminated with naturalization ceremonies or other community-wide celebrations of American citizenship.

### Awards & Recognition

#### Gerda Weissmann Klein

- Our Founder, Gerda Weissmann Klein received the **2010 Presidential Medal of Freedom**, the highest honor awarded to a civilian in the United States, in a special ceremony held at the White House.
- In January 2011, Gerda Weissmann Klein received USCIS's prestigious **ABC (American By Choice) Award**, in recognition of her efforts to give back to her adopted country, the United States of America.
- Gerda Weissmann Klein was one of the recipients of the **2012 Ellis Island Medal of Honor**, a prestigious award given to individuals who have made outstanding contributions to the United States of America.

#### Alysa Cooper

- In January 2019, Alysa Cooper was a recipient of the inaugural Beacon Award. The Beacon Award was created to change the narrative about immigration and show that immigrants and their progeny are important contributors to the social, cultural and economic fabric of our nation.
- In 2011, Alysa Cooper, was recognized as a "**Champion of Change**" by the White House. Her work with **Citizenship Counts** was highlighted as one of the top innovative programs across the nation in the field of "immigrant integration."

### Why Citizenship Counts: The Impact of Civic Education

- As citizenship issues are currently at the forefront of our national dialogue, **the need for our program is greater than ever**.
- **Currently 17 states require students to take the citizenship test in order to graduate high school**. This provides an incredible opportunity for **Citizenship Counts** to become **recommended programming** for integration in these key states as **educators seek ways to deepen their students' appreciation about citizenship and immigration**.