

## **A RECORD DAY ON PHONE LINES**

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### **Body**

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A **RECORD** NUMBER of readers called Citizenship Now! yesterday on **day** one of the week-long free immigration **phone**-in sponsored by the Daily News and CUNY.

Dozens of volunteers answered calls from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m., and with double the number of **phone lines** from past years, more New Yorkers than ever got help untangling their immigration issues.

"Everything I've been told is so helpful," said one of more than 2,000 callers who found out she can apply for citizenship for her husband.

"I was worried because we met here, fell in love, got married and are trying to build a home and family," she said. "He's a hardworking man. This is very, very good news."

This is the fifth time the Daily News and CUNY have teamed up to provide free help to New York's massive immigrant community. The number of calls answered on the first **day** was double last year's figure.

Due to overwhelming demand, there are now 48 **phone lines**, thanks to sponsor Verizon Corp., and, for the first time, half are dedicated to Spanish speakers.

As a result, the number of Spanish speakers who called in and got help quadrupled.

Callers came here from around the world, including Ghana, Egypt, Colombia and Russia, and with volunteers speaking a vast array of languages - from Albanian to Greek and Chinese - help is most certainly at hand.

"We are doing this because we care and we want to be available to help people," said Jay Hershenson, CUNY's vice chancellor for university relations.

"This is really about the future of our city and our country. To have a newspaper and university whose goal is to provide this public service sends a message of welcome."

Coverage is being provided daily in Spanish on Radio WADO (1280 AM) and Univision/Channel 41.

Assemblyman Adriano Espaillat (D-Washington Heights) took the time to answer calls during a visit to the **phone**-in yesterday.

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"The immigrant community in New York is very diverse and very important," he said. "The Daily News and CUNY are doing tremendously important outreach work."

The timing of Citizenship Now! could not be more crucial as Congress considers changes in immigration laws and moves to increase the fees permanent residents have to pay to become citizens.

The **phone lines** will be open until Friday. Nearly 200 immigration experts are on hand during the week to answer questions in confidence. [cboyle@nydailynews.com](mailto:cboyle@nydailynews.com)

The people who staff the Daily News-CUNY Citizenship Now! call-in **phone lines** are available to give information only. Although they are experts in the immigration field, they are not attorneys for callers and cannot give you specific legal advice. The call-in is not intended as, and is not a substitute for, legal advice provided by an attorney retained to counsel and assist a client on a specific problem or situation. You should consult a lawyer specializing in immigration law if you are in need of such services. The Daily News and CUNY make no representations or warranties of any kind, express or implied, as to information given to callers by the Citizenship Now! experts, and under no circumstances will they be liable to any caller or other person for damages of any nature arising in any way from the use of such information.

ALLAN WERNICK's column on immigration law appears every Tuesday and Thursday in the Daily News. He is a professor at Baruch College and director of CUNY's Citizenship and Immigration Project. He is also the author of "U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Law - Your Complete Guide" and has been the driving force behind Citizenship Now!

SONIA AGRONT,

an experienced immigration paralegal, works for the Caribbean Women's Health Association, a Brooklyn nonprofit organization that operates an immigration center. The group is accredited by the federal Board of Immigration Appeals.

OLU AJAYI is the president of the Nigerian-American

Community Association. He is

fluent in Yoruba, Ibo and Hausa.

GINA AVILES,

director of payroll services for John Jay College of Criminal Justice, reviews and approves nonresident aliens seeking employment at the school.

She is fluent in Spanish.

AI-LING CHIA, a third-year student at CUNY School of Law, is a legal intern at the CUNY Flushing Immigration Center. She is fluent in Mandarin.

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MICHAEL

DELUCA, a CUNY law student and

volunteer at the school's Citizenship and Immigration Project, is a former U.S. immigration inspector. He is fluent in Italian and

Spanish.

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RAFAEL

DOMINGUEZ,

an adviser at the CUNY Flushing

Immigration

Center, specializes in community

outreach on

citizenship and

immigration

matters.

MARY SUE

DONSKY

is an associate professor in the Department of Law and Paralegal Studies at CUNY's New York City

College of Technology. She is a member of the New York and

Florida bars.

SANCHA DOXILLY in an immigrants' rights advocate

who founded Brooklyn College Direct Action. She is majoring in political science, with a minor in law and society. She does research on immigrant

populations.

FARUK GASHI is a nonresident alien tax specialist for CUNY. He holds a B.A. in business and completed an advanced immigration course at the CUNY Graduate Center. He is fluent in Albanian, French and Serb.

PAT MABRY is

an admissions counselor at

Hostos Community College.

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VIVIENNE MCLEAN is

enrolled in the CUNY Immigration Law Certificate course. As a member of the NYC/CUNY Citizenship Corps, she helps with citizenship application projects in immigrant communities.

BARBARA MEDINA is the assistant

director for project

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personnel at

Hunter College's Office of Research Administration. She is pursuing

a master's degree in social work

at Fordham

University.

ALEJANDRO

MEDRANO is a member services

supervisor for HomeFirst, a

program within Metropolitan

Jewish Health

Systems. He is

fluent in Spanish.

KRYSTYNA

MYSSURA

works in the

Immigrant Community Liaison Unit of the New York State Bureau of Refugee and Immigrant Assistance. She is

fluent in Polish.

THRESINE

NICHOLS, an adviser at the CUNY Citizenship and Immigration Project, assists students, faculty and the community on citizenship and immigration issues. She is pursuing a master's degree in international relations.

MANUEL

SALVADOR

OROCHENA is a

community arbitration trainer and freelance interpreter. A law school graduate, he has more than 20 years of experience assisting immigrants with citizenship

applications. He is fluent in Spanish.

JEANNE

PEARSON-GRAY is a SEEK counselor at Baruch College. She has more than 10 years of experience assisting and advising students. She also serves as a paralegal in the U.S. Army Reserve.

FRANKLYN

PEREZ has been

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a practicing attorney for the past 26 years representing many clients before the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services and in immigration court. His present focus is in the area of higher

education law.

TEUTA RAFTI, an accountant, is participating for the second time in the CUNY/Daily News Citizenship Now! call-in. She is fluent in Albanian and Greek, and understands Italian.

LUAN REXHEPI is an immigrant community liaison for the governor's Citizenship Unit in New York City. Fluent in Albanian, he is responsible for Balkan, Eastern Europe and Middle Eastern immigrant affairs.

CHUN SHA is an immigrant community liaison at the governor's Citizenship Unit. She does outreach in the Asian community to provide information on seeking

legal residence and applying for citizenship.

SOPHIA SHAW is an immigration

counselor. She has over five years of experience assisting

immigrants with family-based

petitions.

KAREEM SWABY is an immigration specialist with Erasmus Neighborhood Federation. He counsels and assists immigrants on family petitions, citizenship, change of status and passport applications.

RAMON TERCERO is assistant to

the director of Language and

Literacy Programs at CUNY. He's a graduate of

the CUNY Immigration Law

Certificate

program and is fluent in Spanish.

PATRICIA TRIM is a student immigration counselor

at CUNY. She is also the CEO/founder of Tots and Teens In Focus

and Guyana Tots and Teens, a

cultural and

educational

program that airs on Brooklyn

Community

Access Television.

MILAGROS

VICENTE is a paralegal in the CUNY Citizenship and Immigration Project at Hostos Community College. A graduate of John Jay College, she has been a paralegal for 17 years.

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KAREN WYSOKI is a college assistant at the International Students and Scholars Office at Queens College. She has eight years of experience assisting foreign students with visa and immigration issues. She is fluent in Hebrew.

LILY YI-ELKIN, coordinator of International Student Services at the Borough of Manhattan Community College, has more than 12 years' experience in higher education.

ANTHONY ANDREWS is the assistant director of student activities at York College. He has a degree in political science from York College and a master's from Baruch College.

MARK DRUCKER has over 30 years of

immigration law experience and is

adjunct professor at CUNY's School of

Professional Studies. He has a general immigration law practice and is fluent

in Spanish.

PATRICIA JOHNSON is a counselor in the Student Development and Counseling Department at Baruch College. She has more than 30 years of experience counseling in the SEEK Program.

ANGIE McELROY is a staff member in the CUNY Citizenship and Immigration Project. She has more than four years of experience in the immigration and social fields.

RONALD RANUS is a judge in Bronx Traffic Court. He has a B.A. in political science and a doctorate in law from SUNY-Buffalo. He is enrolled in the CUNY Graduate Immigration Law Certificate Program.

## Graphic

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PHOTOS

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