Rep. Pastor's citizenship drive helps ease process for applicant

PHOENIX, Ariz. — Phoenix resident Clara Guevara was 19 and thinking about becoming a U.S. citizen, but she was holding off with the application process.

"It's a very important process and you don't want to do it on your own and mess up," Guevara recalled about her hesitancy to apply. "I had looked into the application, but it looked a little intimidating, the way it was worded. I didn't want to make any mistakes."

Although her father had recently become a U.S. citizen and had paid a local charity $300 to help with his paperwork, Guevara didn't know if or when she might apply for citizenship. But when she heard about Congressman Pastor's Citizenship Drive during a television news segment on the local Univision affiliate, she seized the opportunity.

"Free assistance" was all the encouragement Guevara needed to phone Congressman Pastor's Office and set up an appointment, she said. "That was the only reason I did it."

On the day of her appointment at the citizenship drive, Guevara took the documents she had been requested to bring, and met one-on-one with a very thorough volunteer who explained every step as the paperwork was filled out.

"It was good because it was helpful to understand why they needed the information," said Guevera, who had immigrated to the United States from Guatemala in 1997. "After that, I was able to fill out (her husband) Ruben's application on my own."

In October 2005, several months after submitting her application, she was sworn in as a new U.S. citizen.

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