



NEWS RELEASE

National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO) Educational Fund

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NALEO Educational Fund Launches Nationwide Effort to Increase Number of New Americans throughout Month of September

Nearly 8.8 million legal permanent residents—including more than 4 million Latinos—are currently eligible to take the next step and become U.S. citizens

Washington, D.C. – In celebration of Citizenship Month and Citizenship Day (September 17), the National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO) Educational Fund will host numerous events across the country that will aim to provide assistance to the millions of legal permanent residents (LPRs) who are currently eligible to become U.S. citizens.

America is home to nearly 8.8 million LPRs that meet the eligibility requirements to apply for U.S. citizenship. Of those, more than 4 million – nearly half of all LPRs eligible to naturalize – are Latino. Despite the many benefits of citizenship, completing the naturalization process can be a challenge for many legal residents. Language barriers and lack of access to funds to pay for legal assistance and the \$680 application fee force many LPRs to put their citizenship plans on hold.

“We need to break down the barriers that are keeping millions of hard-working and talented legal permanent residents from contributing fully to our nation’s economy and society,” stated Arturo Vargas, NALEO Educational Fund executive director. “Throughout the month of September, we will do our part to help as many potential new Americans as possible successfully navigate and complete the naturalization process.”

Throughout the month of September, NALEO Educational Fund will partner with several organizations and media partners, including the New Americans Campaign and American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA), to eliminate many of the barriers legal permanent residents are facing in their road to citizenship. Through workshops and other public events nationwide, NALEO Educational Fund will provide potential new Americans with the information, resources and direct assistance they need to complete the naturalization process. A full list of currently planned events is available [here](#).

Increasing the number of immigrants who become U.S. citizens has benefits for both new Americans and the nation. Experts have noted that citizenship can boost individual earnings by 8 to 11 percent, potentially growing our economy by **\$21-45 billion** over the next 10 years.

In addition to events, NALEO Educational Fund will continue to operate its national bilingual citizenship hotline, 888-839-8682, from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. EDT Monday through Friday. The hotline, which is headquartered in the organization's Los Angeles offices, is staffed year-round by fully-trained operators who can answer questions about the naturalization process and the availability of local resources.

Recognized nationally as a civic engagement pioneer and leader with more than 30 years of experience, NALEO Educational Fund has guided hundreds of thousands of eligible lawful permanent residents through the naturalization process, and helped hundreds of thousands of Latino U.S. citizens register to vote and take part in elections.

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About NALEO Educational Fund

NALEO Educational Fund is the nation's leading non-profit organization that facilitates the full participation of Latinos in the American political process, from citizenship to public service.