



## NEWS RELEASE

**For Immediate Release**  
July 2, 2021

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### **NALEO Educational Fund Commends Biden Administration and DHS on Nationwide Push to Promote Naturalization and Immigrant Integration**

*There are more than nine million lawful permanent residents eligible to become U.S. citizens, at least 3.8 million are Latino*

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** – The National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO) Educational Fund today released the following statement from CEO Arturo Vargas following the release of the Department of Homeland Security’s [Interagency Strategy for Promoting Naturalization](#) on the eve of Independence Day:

“Today’s release of the Department of Homeland Security’s (DHS) [Interagency Strategy for Promoting Naturalization](#) is a welcome and meaningful initiative that will encourage aspiring lawful permanent residents (LPRs) to pursue U.S. citizenship by adopting a comprehensive approach involving ‘unprecedented collaboration’ throughout the federal government. We commend the Administration, DHS Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas, and the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) for launching this strategy, which recognizes the importance of naturalization, and will engage stakeholders in the public and private sector to help eligible LPRs realize their dream of U.S. citizenship.

“Through our more than three decades of work with Latino LPRs, we know that educating eligible LPRs about the opportunities of U.S. citizenship and guiding them through the naturalization process is critical to ensure that they are successful on the path to become full Americans. We applaud the Administration for its proposals to leverage the work being done by states, localities and a broad spectrum of other stakeholders that reach and are trusted by these LPRs.

“We are also encouraged to see that many of the plans in the [Interagency Strategy](#) include recommendations made by NALEO Educational Fund and other naturalization advocates to make naturalization more accessible, including:

- Providing stakeholders with valuable tools to promote naturalization and guide applicants through the naturalization process;
- Relaunching and expanding the Citizenship and Public Awareness Campaign;
- Dissemination of data on the size and demographic characteristics of the LPR population eligible for naturalization;
- Expansion of technical support for adult citizenship education providers;

- Examining the feasibility of USCIS accepting private donations to expand public-private partnerships;
- Expanding the scope of the naturalization services provided by the Citizenship and Integration Grant Program; and
- Outreach to eligible LPRs and other immigrants earlier in their immigration journey to educate them about naturalization.

“NALEO Educational Fund also welcomes the many actions taken by USCIS to eliminate barriers to naturalization, including rejecting the exorbitant fee hikes proposed by the previous Administration, and halting the implementation of an unfair naturalization civics test.

“The Administration’s [new initiative](#) will only be successful if it continues to eliminate barriers to naturalization, such as the backlog of naturalization applications that could potentially grow larger if the Administration’s new initiative results in significant increases in applications. We know the Administration, the DHS and USCIS share our vision of a streamlined and accessible naturalization process without long waits for applicants, and we look forward to continuing to work together to achieve this important goal. ”

*Interested naturalization applicants can receive assistance with the naturalization process or register for virtual events by calling NALEO Educational Fund’s toll-free national bilingual citizenship hotline 1-888-839-8682, which is operated from 8 a.m. – 8 p.m. ET out of the organization’s Los Angeles offices. The hotline is staffed year-round by fully-trained bilingual operators.*

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**About NALEO Educational Fund**

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