



## NEWS RELEASE

**For Immediate Release**  
January 3, 2023

**Contact:** Marcus Silva, [msilva@naleo.org](mailto:msilva@naleo.org)  
(510) 456-5444

Luis Acosta, [lacosta@naleo.org](mailto:lacosta@naleo.org)  
(956) 460-3598

### **NALEO Educational Fund Statement on USCIS Proposed Naturalization Fee Increase**

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** – The National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO) Educational Fund released a statement from CEO Arturo Vargas in response to the proposed U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) naturalization fee increase announcement:

“While any increase could impose a greater financial burden on applicants, we are relieved that the proposed five percent increase from \$725 to \$760 is relatively modest. We recognize that USCIS has made progress in addressing barriers to naturalization, but given the current economic environment and other factors, the increase could represent an additional burden to the many obstacles that lawful permanent residents face on their road to U.S. citizenship, especially for low-income residents.

“The naturalization process has allowed generations of Americans to realize their dreams of U.S. citizenship while expanding our diversity, growing our economy, and enriching our democracy through increased participation in the American political process. Unfortunately, fee increases of any kind can pose financial barriers for many lawful permanent residents who wish to start the naturalization process, including the more than four million Latinos eligible to become U.S. citizens.

“Additionally, while the fee waiver is being retained as it is under current policy, we urge the agency to make the application form available online. Moreover, the proposed cost for the Request for a Reduced Fee (partial fee waiver) would decrease from \$405 to \$380, and we are grateful that it is being made more accessible to more applicants.

“Furthermore, the application for a certificate of naturalization, which is often used for children of parents who are U.S. citizens, is already too expensive at \$1,170 and would become more costly with the agency’s proposal to raise it to \$1,385. Additionally, in many cases, processing this application is not complex, and USCIS should streamline it to reduce the application cost.

“Finally, USCIS’ proposal would significantly increase the fees for other critical immigration services. These proposed increases are, in some measure, attributed to our nation’s flawed system for financing immigration services, which requires USCIS to be funded almost entirely by fees. Congress should ensure it provides sufficient funding so USCIS can reduce backlogs and address humanitarian programs. We call on Congress to appropriate adequate funding to the USCIS for these purposes in its FY 2023 budget and beyond.

“For more than 37 years, NALEO Educational Fund has remained committed to advocating for policies that make the naturalization process fair and more accessible for lawful permanent residents. The organization has also guided thousands of lawful permanent residents through the naturalization process and will thoroughly review USCIS’ proposal to assess its impact on the Latino community.

“In the lead up to public comments being due by March 6, 2023, NALEO Educational Fund will launch a campaign to mobilize its constituents and stakeholders to provide comments to USCIS by the deadline. Once public comments are in, it is critical that the agency takes time to carefully review the comments and reflect on the effect its fee increase proposal could have in communities across the nation before implementing it.”

In the meantime, we urge lawful permanent residents eligible to apply to begin the naturalization process before a potential fee increase goes into effect. Individuals interested in applying for U.S. citizenship can call NALEO Educational Fund’s toll-free bilingual hotline at **888-839-8682** from 8:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m. ET, Monday through Friday. Bilingual operators are available to provide potential new U.S. citizens with vital information on every aspect of the naturalization process, including referrals to NALEO Educational Fund naturalization workshops in their area or with staff who are available to assist with the U.S. citizenship application remotely.

For additional information on the naturalization process, please visit our [website](#).

###

**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.*