



NALEO EDUCATIONAL FUND

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

USCIS Proposal to Raise Naturalization Fees

1. Why is United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) proposing to raise naturalization and other immigration service fees?

- USCIS is generally required to support itself using funds collected from application filing fees. Accordingly, the agency reviews its fee schedule regularly to adjust fees to fully cover the costs of almost all its operations. As part of that process, USCIS is required to obtain public comment by publishing proposed fee changes in the Federal Register, an official publication of the federal government.

2. Which proposed fee increases would have the most impact on naturalization applicants?

- The fee for Form N-400, Application for Naturalization, would increase from \$725 to \$760 for most applicants.
- The fee for Forms N-600 and N-600(k), the Application for Certificate of Citizenship and the Application for Citizenship and Issuance of Certificate, generally used by parents to obtain documentation of a child's U.S. citizenship, would increase from \$1,170 to \$1,385.
- The fee for Form N-336, the Request for a Hearing on a Decision in Naturalization Proceedings, would increase from \$700 to \$830. Applicants use this form to obtain a hearing before an immigration officer if their application is denied.
- The fee for Form N-565, Application for Replacement Naturalization/Citizenship Document would remain at \$555.

3. How would the proposed fee rule affect the reduced fee currently available to many naturalization applicants?

- The proposed fee schedule would maintain the option for applicants who meet certain requirements to pay a reduced cost for their application. For most applicants, the proposal would lower the reduced cost of filing the application from \$405 to \$380, with the income level required to qualify for the reduced cost of filing remaining generally the same — an income no greater than 200 percent of the federal poverty guidelines.

4. How would the rule affect the waiver from the full cost of the naturalization application that is currently available to naturalization applicants?

- The proposed fee schedule would maintain the waiver for the full cost of the naturalization application. In addition, the requirements and documentation to qualify for the waiver would generally remain unchanged.

5. Why would the proposed increases be a particular challenge for elderly naturalization applicants?

- In determining the proposed fees for Form N-400, USCIS combined the current fee for biometrics (\$85) with the new proposed fee. For applicants who must provide biometrics, the proposed filing cost for Form N-400 would then become \$760. Thus, for these applicants, the cost of filing Form N-400 would represent a relatively moderate increase from the current cost (\$725, including biometrics).
- For applicants filing Form N-400 with biometrics at the reduced fee, the USCIS proposal to combine the application and biometrics fees would actually reduce the total filing cost from \$405 to \$380.

- However, applicants who are 75 years and older are not required to obtain or pay for biometrics and would not benefit from the proposed “bundling” of the biometrics fee with the Form N-400 fees. Thus, under USCIS’ proposal, the cost of filing Form N-400 for these applicants would increase from \$640 to \$760 (at full cost) or from \$320 to \$380 (at the reduced fee). These increases would have a particularly detrimental impact on elderly applicants with limited resources.

6. Why is naturalization important for our nation’s economy and democracy?

- For lawful permanent residents (LPRs) who become U.S. citizens, naturalization marks an important step toward full participation in the civic life of their new home. U.S. citizenship provides many opportunities, such as the ability to vote, the enhanced ability to reunite families, and eligibility for federal jobs.
- Several studies show that naturalization confers economic benefits on new U.S. citizens, their families, their communities, and the nation as a whole. A [2012 study](#) found that U.S. citizenship can boost individual earnings by 8 to 11 percent, leading to a potential \$21–45 billion increase in cumulative earnings over ten years that will have ripple effects on the national economy. [Data from the Center for Migration Studies](#) show that legal noncitizens have only a 42 percent homeownership rate. In contrast, the homeownership rate of naturalized citizens is 68 percent.

7. When will the proposed fees go into effect?

- USCIS is accepting public comments on the proposed fee schedule through March 6, 2023. After the comment period ends, USCIS has to review each comment submitted. It will then publish a final version of the fee schedule, with responses to comments and any changes made. This process is expected to take several months.

8. What should Congress do to keep naturalization more affordable?

- Congress should appropriate funds for USCIS’ humanitarian operations (such as asylum applications) and for reducing the lengthy backlog for naturalization and other immigration services. Because USCIS funds virtually all of its operations from application fees, additional congressional appropriation would take pressure off USCIS to cover the costs of its humanitarian programs and reducing its backlogs by raising fees on other applications.

9. Where can I learn more about the USCIS fee proposal?

- USCIS’ Frequently Asked Questions about all its proposed fee increases are [here](#).
- The notice of the proposed fee schedule is [here](#).
- USCIS’ discussion of its fee waiver policy is [here](#).

If you have questions or would like to know more about NALEO Educational Fund’s naturalization advocacy, please contact Lucas Cabral (lcabral@naleo.org)