



Fee Schedule Fighters Toolkit

What is the USCIS fee schedule? Every two years, USCIS must review the fees it charges for immigrant benefits applications and update, as necessary, those fees to ensure that USCIS is charging an appropriate amount.

On November 14, 2019, USCIS officially [published](#) its biennial fee review and plans to increase fees for vital immigration benefits. If the proposed changes go into effect, people will be priced out of citizenship, lawful permanent residency (or green cards), work permits, asylum, Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (or DACA) and more.

The proposed rule is not yet in effect. We need your help to fight back against the harmful proposals that would disproportionately affect low-income and working class people.

How is USCIS proposing to change its fee schedule ?

USCIS' proposed rule would:

- Establish an unprecedented, new \$50 fee for affirmative asylum
- Create a new fee for DACA renewals, raising the total cost from \$495 to \$765
- Drastically increase the cost of naturalization from \$640 to \$1,170 -- this is a historic high and a staggering 83 percent increase
- Effectively end a long-standing fee waiver program that has kept naturalization, green card renewals and other benefits accessible
- Transfer \$207.6 million in funds that should be used for immigration and naturalization processing to Immigration and Customs Enforcement, or ICE, to use for enforcement

In the past, USCIS provided 60 days for the submission of public comments on the fee review and proposed fee schedule. This administration has allowed only a 30-day comment period, which ends at 11:59 p.m. on Dec. 16. That means we have a very short time to act by registering our opposition.

If finalized, these massive changes will transform access to naturalization, safety and stability for millions. It could extinguish the dreams of all but the most wealthy and privileged.

It is up to us to stand up now, together, and remind USCIS that **we are a nation of immigrants**. The American dream belongs to all of us, no matter how much money we have in our pockets.

Learn more: <https://cliniclegal.org/fee-schedule-changes>

TAKE ACTION:

1. Submit a public comment:

Until December 16, 2019, the public has the opportunity to weigh-in on USCIS' proposed changes. Click on the links below to submit comments today!



[I oppose a wealth test on American citizenship!](#)



[I oppose a fee for asylum!](#)

To write your own comment from scratch, click [here](#). Use the resources on CLINIC's [fee fighters webpage](#) to learn more and to help you draft your comments.

**Note, you may submit more than one comment. The public comment period closes at 11:59 p.m. on Dec. 16.*

2. Amplify on social media:

With just 30 days to submit comments, we need your help to make people aware of these harmful proposals and how to oppose them. Here are a couple sample posts you can use.

Sample social media postings - general

- @USCIS is trying to make it harder to afford #citizenship, #DACA and #asylum. Submit a public comment to fight back against unfair fee hikes!
#NoPayWallForAsylum #KeepCitizenshipAffordable
bit.ly/37eVfKW
- A \$207.3 million transfer from @USCIS to @ICE puts the burden of immigration enforcement on the backs of hardworking immigrants! Submit a comment to oppose this transfer!
bit.ly/35836Yy
- With changes like a \$50 fee for asylum and an 83% increase for naturalization, the Trump administration is placing yet another wealth test on immigrants. Submit a public comment to voice your dissent!

#NoPayWallForAsylum #KeepCitizenshipAffordable
bit.ly/2NKYRMY

- Proposed #FeeChanges eliminate the most commonly sought fee waivers, change how fees can be paid and dramatically increase the cost of citizenship applications. To learn more, visit @cliniclegal's website.
#NoPayWallForAsylum #KeepCitizenshipAffordable
bit.ly/2qTJybA
- Visit @cliniclegal's website for more information on the new fee changes and what they mean for our communities. #NoPayWallForAsylum #KeepCitizenshipAffordable #HomelsHere
bit.ly/2qTJybA
- The fee hikes proposed by @USCIS would dramatically increase immigration fees and eliminate waivers that make immigration benefits more accessible to low-income immigrants. This is discriminatory and unacceptable! #NoPayWallForAsylum #KeepCitizenshipAffordable
bit.ly/37eVfKW
- Visit @cliniclegal's fee fighter's webpage to learn more about the proposed fee schedule changes and what they mean for our immigrant brothers and sisters.
#NoPayWallForAsylum #KeepCitizenshipAffordable
bit.ly/2qTJybA
- The Church teaches us to welcome the stranger, not subject them to wealth tests that impede their access to the American dream. Learn more about what @cliniclegal is doing to oppose these fees.
#NoPayWallForAsylum #KeepCitizenshipAffordable
bit.ly/2OjvBvR
- Proposed fee changes disproportionately impact low-income immigrants. Our Catholic identity calls us to take a stand with our immigrant brothers and sisters, regardless of socioeconomic status.
#NoPayWallForAsylum #KeepCitizenshipAffordable
bit.ly/37eVfKW

Sample social media posts - asylum

- Seeking asylum is a human right and tenet of international humanitarian law. It should not have a price tag attached to it! #NoPayWallForAsylum
bit.ly/2ObhJUq

- The administration's proposed fee changes would make the United States one of only four countries to force asylum seekers to pay to seek refuge. Submit a comment to oppose this harmful proposal!
#NoPayWallForAsylum
bit.ly/2NKYRMY
- The Gospel teaches us that when we welcome the stranger, we welcome Christ. The proposed fee changes are the opposite of welcoming, and the United States should not turn its back on those most in need. #NoPayWallForAsylum
bit.ly/2ObhJUq
- Charging a fee for asylum is extraordinarily cruel and undermines the promise of the United States as a beacon of hope for those seeking safety and freedom. #NoPayWallForAsylum
bit.ly/2ObhJUq

Sample social media posts - citizenship

- A thirty day comment period on proposed #FeeChanges? Submit a public comment to hold @USCIS accountable for discriminatory fee spikes in citizenship and naturalization.
#KeepCitizenshipAffordable
bit.ly/37eVfKW
- Proposed fee increases will make citizenship a privilege only for the wealthy, limit contributions of working class immigrants and hinder integration within our communities.
#KeepCitizenshipAffordable #ProtectCitizenship
bit.ly/37eVfKW
- The United States should protect immigrants and encourage access to the American Dream, not gauge them on fees for citizenship and naturalization. Submit a comment to fight back on these latest attacks against the American dream!
#KeepCitizenshipAffordable
bit.ly/37eVfKW
- An 83% increase in the cost of naturalization does not reflect the Church's teaching on immigration, justice and mercy. Submit a public comment opposing these changes today!
#KeepCitizenshipAffordable
bit.ly/37eVfKW
- Immigration benefits should remain affordable, regardless of an immigrant's socioeconomic background. Submit a public comment opposing discriminatory fee changes today! #KeepCitizenshipAffordable
bit.ly/37eVfKW

Sample social media posts - preparing our community

- USCIS has proposed historic increases in the fees for immigration applications. The new fees are not yet in effect. If you are eligible for an immigration benefit or considering a filing, see a qualified legal representative to get more information.
bit.ly/32QCtpJ
- Have you heard about the upcoming USCIS fee increases for naturalization? Get up-to-date and accurate information on @cliniclegal website. #NaturalizeNOW
bit.ly/37eVfKW
- Are you worried about the upcoming USCIS fee hikes? Be sure to get help from a reliable source.
bit.ly/2q82Ava
- Learn more about how to avoid immigration scams on @cliniclegal webpage
bit.ly/2Okq2x2

3. Put out a press statement or write an Op-Ed:

Use the talking points below to draft a press statement or op-ed calling attention to the administration's latest attempt to put a price tag on the American Dream.

TOPLINE: USCIS' proposal to raise fees for immigration benefits and naturalization is another attempt to impose a wealth test on the American Dream.

- The proposal raises fees across the board while simultaneously slashing the availability of fee waivers.
- The intent and result is to set up a paywall that will price people out of vital immigration benefits, depriving individuals and families of safety, stability and citizenship.
- USCIS mismanagement should be put on those in charge, not on the backs of hardworking and vulnerable immigrants.

TOPLINE: Raising the fee to apply to naturalize by 83 percent, from \$640 to \$1170, while simultaneously eliminating all fee waivers will rob our country of reaching its full potential.

- Citizenship allows immigrants to more fully integrate into the United States, giving them a say in the government they live under, allowing them to get certain jobs and take advantage of other opportunities and responsibilities.
- This radical move to suppress naturalization for all but the highest bidder is divisive and unAmerican, establishing second class citizenship.

TOPLINE: A \$50 fee for asylum is extraordinarily cruel and undermines the promise of America as a beacon of hope for those seeking safety and freedom.

- Establishing a fee for asylum will further endanger asylum seekers, who are by definition the world's most vulnerable people.
- Asylum seekers may have little to nothing to their names as they travel to the United States, let alone \$50. People may put themselves in even more dangerous situations to try to come up with the money to pay for asylum or to seek alternative routes to safety. It is unconscionable to only offer protection to those who can pay.
- The world is watching how the U.S. is treating refugees and asylum seekers. The U.S. should not be added to the short list of countries who impose a fine for seeking safety.

TOPLINE: Raising fees for DACA renewals by 55 percent, from \$495 to \$765 every two years, is another callous move by the administration to harm the hundreds of thousands of young people who are American in every way but on paper.

- The contributions of DACA recipients to America are immeasurable. This massive increase in fees serves only a political agenda, not the future of American families and society as a whole.

TOPLINE: While USCIS proposes massive fee increases and slashing fee waivers, it simultaneously proposes to transfer over \$200 million to ICE to conduct enforcement.

- This transfer of fees is illogical at best and another clear showing of the agency departing from its longstanding mission and abandoning its mandate to function as a customer service agency under the current administration.
- The administration must be held accountable for attempting to turn USCIS into a new enforcement agency. USCIS must uphold its Congressionally-assigned purpose and obligations to its customers.

TOPLINE: In addition to the egregious content of the proposed rule, USCIS is attempting to silence the voices of stakeholders by providing only a 30-day comment period as opposed to the standard 60-day comment period.

- This procedural abnormality further underscores the administration is trying to utilize what should be a nonpartisan review of fees and turn it into a political weapon.
- Advocates and local governments who will be dramatically impacted by the rule if implemented have called on USCIS to [grant](#) the normal 60 day comment period.

TOPLINE: USCIS' proposed fee changes would harm state and local economies and workforces.

- High increases in fees would cut off immigrants' access to the documentation they need to work, drive and to prove lawful presence in the United States, leading to loss of employment and a significant decrease in state revenue from income and consumer taxes, as well as fees for services provided by state agencies, including driver's license fees.
- Excessive increases of naturalization fees would deny long-time residents, who are deeply rooted in communities across the country, access to citizenship and participation in the civic and democratic processes that help improve localities, including voting and jury service.

Press release samples:

- **CLINIC:**
<https://cliniclegal.org/news/proposed-uscis-fee-increase-will-have-devastating-consequences>
- **AILA:**
<https://www.aila.org/advo-media/press-releases/2019/new-rules-would-create-potentially-insurmountable>
- **OneAmerica, La Casa Hogar, and Asian Counseling and Referral Service:**
<https://weareoneamerica.org/2019/11/14/press-release-oneamerica-la-casa-hogar-and-asian-counseling-and-referral-service-oppose-exorbitant-fee-hikes-for-citizenship-daca-and-other-forms-of-status/>