



January 31, 2007

# Press Release

## **BUILDING AN IMMIGRATION SERVICE FOR THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY**

### *USCIS Proposes New Fees for Immigration and Naturalization Benefit Applications*

WASHINGTON—U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) is seeking public comment on a proposal to adjust fees for immigration and naturalization benefit applications and petitions. The proposed fee structure has been transmitted to the [Federal Register](#) and is needed to improve customer service, strengthen the security of our immigration system, and modernize its business infrastructure for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

“As a fee-based agency, we must be able to recover the costs necessary to administer an efficient and secure immigration system that ultimately improves service delivery, prevents future backlogs, closes security gaps, and furthers our modernization efforts,” said USCIS Director Emilio Gonzalez. “We’re confident that this fee adjustment will enable the type of exceptional immigration service our nation expects and deserves.”

The revenue from a new fee structure will, if implemented in full this summer, enable a 20 percent reduction in average application processing times by the end of fiscal year 2009, and it will cut processing times by the end of fiscal year 2008 for four key application types that represent a third of all applications filed. These application types are the I-90 (Renew / Replace Permanent Resident Card), I-140 (Immigration Petition for Alien Worker) and I-485 (Adjustment of Status to Permanent Resident), which will improve from six to four months processing time, and the N-400 (Naturalization), which will improve from seven to five months processing time.

The proposal highlights an average increase for application and petition fees of approximately 86 percent. The increase in actual costs to applicants and petitioners will be only 66 percent, however, because applicants for adjustment of status will no longer be required to pay a fee to apply for interim benefits. This review found that the current fee structure does not allow USCIS to recover the full costs of providing services associated with the adjudication of millions of applications.

The last comprehensive fee adjustment occurred in 1998 when fees were increased by an average of 76 percent. USCIS has periodically adjusted fees for inflation, most recently in October 2005 and prior to that in February 2002. The agency began charging a fee for fingerprinting services in 1998, and later adjusted that charge in April 2004 to recover the full costs of biometric services.

The proposed fee structure will be available for public comment at [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov) for a period of 60 days, beginning February 1, 2007. The proposal does not by itself raise fees, but it is the beginning of a regulatory process by announcing an intention to change regulations. For more information concerning the proposed fee rule, please visit [www.uscis.gov/21stCenturyService](http://www.uscis.gov/21stCenturyService).