



April 30, 2004

Statement

USCIS DIRECTOR EDUARDO AGUIRRE ADDRESSES THE FEE ADJUSTMENT

WASHINGTON, DC - "Today a new USCIS fee structure takes effect. As required by law*, USCIS must ensure that our fees recover the actual cost of providing immigration services and benefits. Our latest cost analysis showed that the old fee structure was inadequate to cover post September 11 new processes, improved security checks and inflation. While we have made some progress on reducing the backlog, the new fee adjustment will also ensure that this progress can continue as we explore new ideas on how to tackle this decade old problem."

"This is an important moment for USCIS; we are fundamentally transforming a tired immigration services system, uniformly recognized in need of reform, into a more efficient and effective operation. My commitment to the nation, and to our customers, is simple and straightforward. We are dedicated to delivering world-class customer service. In the first year of our existence, we have made substantial improvements in this area through electronic enhancements such as InfoPass, E-Filing, and Case Status Online that are designed to facilitate the distribution of immigration services. USCIS is committed to continuing to build on this progress."

- USCIS -

* Section 286(m) of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) provides for the collection of fees at a level that will ensure recovery of the full costs of providing adjudication and naturalization services, including the costs of providing similar services without charge to asylum applicants and other immigrants. [8 U.S.C. 1356(m).] The INA further states that the fees may recover administrative costs as well. This revenue remains available to provide immigration and naturalization benefits and the collection, safeguarding, and accounting for fees. [8 U.S.C. 1356(n)].

On March 1, 2003, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) became one of three former INS components to join the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. USCIS is charged with fundamentally transforming and improving the delivery of immigration and citizenship services, while enhancing the integrity of our nation's security.