



Press Release

September 26, 2005

USCIS ANNOUNCES FEE ADJUSTMENTS

Washington, D.C.— U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) announced today in the *Federal Register* a revised fee structure for immigration benefits. The new fee structure becomes effective on October 26, 2005 and will add an average of \$10 to each application and petition in order to account for inflation. Fees collected from persons filing immigration benefit applications and petitions are used to fund the full cost of providing immigration benefits, including the full cost of providing benefits such as asylum and refugee admission for which no fee is charged.

“USCIS is committed to delivering world class customer service,” said acting USCIS Deputy Director Robert Divine. “Because USCIS is a fee-based agency, we must charge amounts that will recover the full costs of our operations in order to continue the progress we have made in reducing the backlog. USCIS has already reduced its backlog from 3.9 million to 1.1 million cases.”

The fees were last adjusted in April 2004 to account for additional security enhancements performed on all immigration benefits after September 11, 2001 and other costs. The new fee structure reflects an inflation adjustment, as required by the April 2004 fee rule, to be published by notice in the *Federal Register* for periods on or after October 1, 2005.

USCIS does have the ability to waive fees on a case-by-case basis. Any applicant or petitioner who has an “inability to pay” the fees may request a fee waiver. In determining “inability to pay,” USCIS officers will consider all factors, circumstances and evidence supplied by the applicant including age, disability, household income and qualification within the past 180 days for a Federal means-tested benefit.

– USCIS –

On March 1, 2003, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services became one of three legacy 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.