



U.S. Citizenship  
and Immigration  
Services

# USCIS MONTHLY



## A MESSAGE FROM USCIS DIRECTOR EMILIO T. GONZÁLEZ

## FEBRUARY 2007 “Building an Immigration Service for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century”

For the past eight months, United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) has been working to update our fee structure to ensure pricing that reflects the true costs of running the largest immigration service in the world. We recently completed a comprehensive financial review and have proposed revised fees affecting all benefit categories. Some prices will be going up considerably, some will be going up modestly and others will actually be decreasing, but every applicant will receive better service and benefit from USCIS infrastructure investments.

We are adjusting our application prices to ensure that USCIS is able to make up for lost revenue, and more importantly, so that we can build an immigration service for the 21st Century. The new fees represent the comprehensive cost of what it takes to keep this agency not only afloat but moving forward.

USCIS is a two billion dollar a year agency that must remain solvent every day; that presents a notable challenge. Unlike other federal agencies, we do not rely on the American taxpayer or Congress for our operating funds. Instead, we are funded almost entirely through collected fees that go to pay our bills and overall operating expenses. Not only must we recover the cost of our operations, but we must do so while continuing to provide a quality product to an ever-increasing number of applicants and petitioners.

I understand that fee increases have human consequences. Everything we do in this agency affects people, which is why I love working at USCIS -- because the work we do can make a positive impact in the daily lives of countless individuals. What we do is concrete and far-reaching, not abstract. As a naturalized American, I naturally view the fee proposal through the prism of an immigrant. At the same time, as Director, I am mindful of my sworn duty to maintain the integrity of our immigration service. Therefore, my goal and heartfelt obligation is to make sure USCIS has the resources required to provide immigrants with the high-quality, professional assistance they expect and deserve.

The new fee revenue will improve customer service, speed-up processing, enhance security, expand our infrastructure, hire additional personnel, train those personnel, and create new business processes which will allow us to decrease overall the time it takes to get benefits by as much as 20 percent by 2009. Our agency does not profit or prosper from the services we provide, rather, the new fees allow applicants to benefit from quicker, professional service, modern facilities and enhanced electronic capabilities.

USCIS is one of the first faces of the federal bureaucracy that new residents and citizens see. We need to make sure that face is a reflection of the very best of what our Nation represents. In a short time, immigrants will see a more vibrant, technologically savvy, transparent, and speedy agency. The proposed fee increase will ensure our historic tradition as a nation of immigrants, and will keep our doors well guarded, but open to those who seek their own version of the American dream.

[A Message from USCIS Director Emilio Gonzalez](#)

[Building an Immigration Service for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century](#)

[Fee Review Resource Corner](#)

[News You Can Use](#)

[Outstanding American by Choice](#)

[Adopted Valor: Immigrant Heroes](#)

[How Do I...? Frequently Asked Questions at USCIS](#)

[Faces of America – New Citizens, Unique Stories](#)

VIEW A [VIDEO MESSAGE FROM USCIS DIRECTOR GONZALEZ](#) ON THE  
FEE REVIEW PROPOSAL (WINDOWS MEDIA PLAYER REQUIRED)

**USCIS: AMERICA’S IMMIGRATION SERVICE**



USCIS is proposing a new fee structure that ensures appropriate funding to meet national security requirements and customer service needs, and modernizes an outdated business infrastructure. The structure is built around a foundation of three **Strategic Pillars**, each designed to ensure that a secure and efficient immigration system is maintained and enhanced. Those pillars — **Enhancing National Security; Improving Service Delivery; and Modernizing Business Infrastructure** — form the core of an organizational blueprint for USCIS over the next three years and the basis for clearly measurable progress as fees increase.

## ENHANCING THE SECURITY AND INTEGRITY OF THE IMMIGRATION SYSTEM

- Improving the timeliness of background checks by expanding current name check resolution capacity, establishing co-located name check resolution capacity, and fully funding the FBI background check process
- Enhancing capability for the Fraud Detection and National Security Unit to conduct studies to determine the nature and extent of fraud in additional immigration benefit categories and to develop and implement solutions to mitigate identified vulnerabilities
- Implementing an aggressive site inspection and verification program aimed at identifying fraud among high-risk applications and petitions.



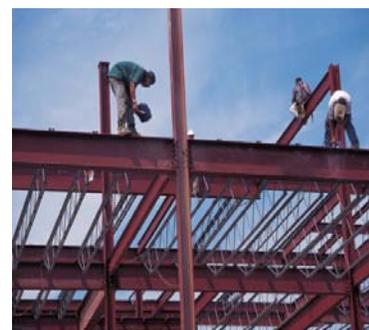
## IMPROVING SERVICE DELIVERY

- Reduce average application processing times by 20 percent from the current six month standard by the end of fiscal year 2009
- Cut processing times by the end of fiscal year 2008 for four key application types that represent a third of all applications filed
- Transform the current paper-based data systems into a modern digital processing platform
- Expand on-line services, including e-filing capabilities to both citizenship and immigrant related requests; culminating with start-to-finish electronic processing
- Ensure a high-performance workforce through a national recruitment program, including new retention and training programs
- Improve and update aging USCIS facilities



## MODERNIZING BUSINESS INFRASTRUCTURE

- Upgrading the IT operating environment for desktop computers and transitioning to the department's standard operating system
- Improving and automating business operations thereby reducing the existing paper-based processes and the underlying antiquated technology
- Enhancing the electronic transfer and information sharing of immigration records through increased digitization, such as electronic on-demand interagency sharing of immigration records



# FEE REVIEW RESOURCES CORNER

USCIS.gov offers a variety of information on the proposed Fee Review, including:

[Fact Sheet: Building an Immigration Service for the 21st Century](#) (41KB PDF)

[Fact Sheet: USCIS Fee Adjustments](#) (46KB PDF)

[A Message From USCIS Director Gonzalez: Transcript](#)

[Press Release: Building an Immigration Service for the 21st Century](#) (31KB PDF)

[Proposed Rule as Published in the Federal Register](#)

[Questions and Answers: Building an Immigration Service for the 21st Century](#) (69KB PDF)

## HOW TO COMMENT ON THE PROPOSED FEE REVIEW:

**Federal eRulemaking portal:** <http://www.regulations.gov>, follow the instructions for submitting comments.

**By email:** Send your comments to [OSComments@dhs.gov](mailto:OSComments@dhs.gov), include the docket number (USCIS-2006-0044) in the subject line of the message.

**By Facsimile:** Federal eRulemaking Portal at 866-466-5370

**By U.S. Mail:** Director, Regulatory Management Division, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, Department of Homeland Security, 111 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, 3rd Floor, Washington, DC 20529. To ensure proper handling, please reference DHS Docket No. USCIS-2006-0044 on your correspondence. This mailing address may also be used for paper, disk or CD-ROM submissions.

## OUTSTANDING AMERICANS BY CHOICE

The newly launched *Outstanding American by Choice* initiative recognizes the achievements of naturalized U.S. citizens. Through civic participation, professional achievement, and responsible citizenship, recipients of this honor have demonstrated their commitment to the country and to the common civic values that unite us as Americans. Throughout the year, USCIS Director González will continue to recognize naturalized citizens who have made significant contributions to both their communities and adopted country.



### MANUEL “MANNY” DIAZ - CUBA



Mayor Manuel “Manny” Diaz was elected Mayor of Miami on November 13, 2001, and re-elected to a second term in 2005. During his tenure as Mayor, he has emphasized the importance of government as a service-focused organization, improving the quality of life in all neighborhoods, and advancing the Miami’s economic health.

Born in Havana, Cuba, on November 5, 1954, Mayor Diaz and his mother, Elisa, fled their home country in 1961. He attended Belen Jesuit Preparatory School and continued his education at Miami-Dade Community College, Florida International University and the University of Miami Law School, graduating with high honors at both Miami-Dade and FIU.

As Mayor, he has played a major role in improving Miami’s public schools through mentoring programs, funding and sponsorship initiatives and a progressive Education Compact with Miami-Dade Public Schools that will ensure that current and future generations of Miamians have access to quality public education.

Miami’s world-class reputation is attracting new residents from all over the world. An impressive 10% population growth over the past three years will likely increase by an added 30% by the end of this decade. This is in striking contrast to total 7 percent growth experienced during the 70s, 80s and 90s.

Mayor Diaz’s work in Miami is earning him national recognition. Considered one of America’s leading Mayors, Diaz was recently honored as the Manhattan Institute’s Urban Innovator of the Year for 2004. Previous winners of the prestigious award include Washington, DC Mayor Anthony Williams (2003), Baltimore Mayor Martin O’Malley (2002), and Chicago Mayor Richard Daley (2000). Mayor Diaz is also a member of the Manhattan Institute’s Center for Civic Innovation advisory board and is currently a partner in the law firm of Diaz & O’Naghten, L.L.P.



# ADOPTED VALOR: IMMIGRANT HEROES

## FOREIGN BORN MEDAL OF HONOR RECIPIENTS

### STAFF SERGEANT ARCHIBALD MATHIES - WWII

Born in Scotland, Archie Mathies was already a naturalized American mining coal in Finleyville, Pennsylvania, when he enlisted in the Army in 1940. He attended Airplane Mechanic School and graduated just weeks before the United States entered World War II. Assigned to a U.S. Army Air Corps Bomber Wing, Staff Sergeant Mathies was a B-17 flight engineer, one of the most important and demanding positions outside the cockpit. He was responsible for servicing the airplane in flight and on the ground, and was a critical link between the pilot, bomber and its crew.

While on a bombing mission over Nazi-occupied Europe on February 20, 1944, Sgt. Mathies aircraft was attacked by a squadron of enemy fighters. Taking multiple direct hits, the copilot was killed, the pilot and radio operator were wounded and unconscious, and the plane was severely damaged.

Nevertheless, Sgt. Mathies and other members of the crew managed to right the plane and fly it back to their airfield in England, where they contacted the control tower and reported the situation. Sgt. Mathies and the navigator volunteered to attempt to land the plane. Other members of the crew were ordered to jump, leaving Sgt. Mathies and the navigator aboard.

After observing the distressed aircraft from another plane, Sgt. Mathies' commanding officer decided the damaged plane could not be landed by the inexperienced crew and ordered them to abandon it and parachute to safety. Demonstrating unsurpassed courage and heroism, Sgt. Mathies and the navigator replied that the pilot was still alive but could not be moved and they would not abandon him. They were then told to attempt a landing. After two unsuccessful efforts, the plane crashed into an open field in a third attempt to land. Sgt. Mathies was killed trying to save the lives of his fellow Americans.



**Name: Archibald Mathies**  
**Rank: Staff Sergeant**  
**Branch: U.S. Army Air Force**  
**Nation of Birth: Scotland**

## NEWS YOU CAN USE...

### FROM USCIS COMMUNICATIONS



[Fact Sheet: Honduran and Nicaraguan Re-registration for Temporary Protected Status \(TPS\) and the Issuance of Employment Authorization Documents \(EADs\)](#) - 01/26/2007

[Fact Sheet: Salvadoran Re-registration for Temporary Protected Status \(TPS\) and the Issuance of Employment Authorization Documents \(EADs\)](#) - 01/26/2007

[Chinese Orphan Among Newest U.S. Citizens](#) - 01/22/2007

[Fact Sheet: USCIS Naturalization Test Redesign](#) - 01/22/2007

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) is revising the naturalization test to create a test and testing process that is standardized, fair and meaningful. As part of the test redesign, USCIS will conduct a pilot program in ten cities beginning in February 2007 to ensure the agency has all the information necessary before the new test is implemented nationwide in 2008.

[USCIS Introduces Change of Address Online Function to Web](#) - 01/12/2007

Phase One Streamlines and Improves Services for More than a Million Customers a Year

[Historic Naturalization Index Headed to National Archives Facility in Denver](#) - 01/09/2007

USCIS Saved Pre-1906 Naturalization Records from Destruction

## USCIS: IMPROVING CUSTOMER SERVICE



## “HOW DO I...?”

### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS AT USCIS

## HOW DO I...[GET A WORK PERMIT \(EMPLOYMENT AUTHORIZATION DOCUMENT – EAD\)?](#)

### **What is an Employment Authorization Document?**

U.S. employers must check to make sure all employees, regardless of citizenship or national origin, are allowed to work in the United States. If you are not a citizen or a lawful permanent resident, you may need to apply for an Employment Authorization Document (EAD) to prove you may work in the United States.

### **Who is Eligible for an EAD?**

The specific categories that require an EAD include asylees and asylum seekers; refugees; students seeking particular types of employment; applicants to adjust to permanent residence status; people in or applying for temporary protected status; fiancés of American citizens; and dependents of foreign government officials. Please see [Form I-765](#) for a complete list.

If you are a U.S. citizen, a lawful permanent resident, a conditional permanent resident, or are authorized to work for a specific employer, such as a foreign government, you do not need an Employment Authorization Document.

### **How Do I Apply?**

You may be eligible to file [Form I-765](#) electronically. Please see our [Introduction to E-Filing USCIS Forms](#) for more information. The procedures for forms electronically filed with USCIS are different than described in the following paragraphs. If you are not eligible for electronic filing, you must file a Form I-765 (Application for Employment Authorization) by mail with the USCIS Regional Service Center that serves the area where you live. Please read the entire application carefully and submit the right documents, photos, and fee. Forms are available by calling 1-800-870-3676, or by submitting a request through our forms by mail system.

If USCIS does not approve or deny your Employment Authorization Document application within 90 days, you may request an interim Employment Authorization Document. You must go to your local USCIS office and bring proof of your identity and any documents that USCIS has sent you about your employment authorization application. See our USCIS field offices.

### **How Can I Check the Status of My Application?**

More information is available on [checking the status of your application](#). If you have an application receipt number, you can check the status of your case [online](#).

### **How Can I Appeal?**

If your application for an Employment Authorization Document is denied, you will receive a letter that will tell you why the application was denied. You will not be allowed to appeal a negative decision to a higher authority. However, you may submit a motion to reopen or a motion to reconsider with the office that made the unfavorable decision. By filing these motions, you may ask the office to reexamine or reconsider their decision. A motion to reopen must state the new facts that are to be provided in the reopened proceeding and must be accompanied by affidavits or other documentary evidence. A motion to reconsider must establish that the decision was based on an incorrect application of law or USCIS policy, and further establish that the decision was incorrect based on the evidence in the file at the time the decision was made. For more information, please see [How Do I Appeal the Denial of Petition or Application?](#)

### **Can Anyone Help Me?**

If advice is needed, you may contact the USCIS Office near your home for a list of community-based, non-profit organizations that may be able to assist you in applying for an immigration benefit. Please see our [USCIS field offices home page](#) for more information on contacting USCIS offices.

For more information, see the [How Do I...Get a work permit?](#) page at [uscis.gov](#).

## VISIT [USCIS.GOV](#) TODAY!

USCIS has replaced its old website with a new, more effective, redesigned web portal. Visitors to the “new” USCIS.gov will find it easier to download petitions and applications, file forms electronically using our [E-Filing Online Application Center](#), and sign up online for appointments at their local district offices using [INFOPASS](#). Don't wait in line...Go online!

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# USCIS: MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN OUR COMMUNITIES

On January 17, 2007, the USCIS Las Vegas Field Office held a special naturalization for 47 new Americans presided over by The Honorable Judge Lloyd D. George of the U. S. District Court for the District of Nevada. Judge George invited students from the 5<sup>th</sup> Grade class at the Roberta C. Cartwright Elementary School to attend the ceremony so that they could participate in and observe firsthand the civic process through which foreign-born persons become U.S. citizens.

The children led the court in reciting the pledge of allegiance after all of the naturalization candidates took the oath of allegiance. The students' participation in this event enabled them to complete a required history/government assignment. The children were also able to see and hear first hand what becoming a naturalized U.S. citizen means to new Americans.



The 5<sup>th</sup> grade class from at the Roberta C. Cartwright Elementary School joins Judge Lloyd George for a Naturalization Ceremony and the United District Court of Nevada

One new citizen, Mr. Alberto Gonzales, formerly of the Philippines, is an active duty member of the Armed Forces. His emotionally powerful words of gratitude and appreciation to USCIS for enabling him to become a U.S. citizen brought many in attendance to tears. Judge George reminded the newly naturalized U.S. citizens and the children of the importance of our democratic form of government, and the responsibilities associated with citizenship. He emphasized to all in attendance the value of learning English and shared civic duties. After the conclusion of the oath ceremony, Judge George personally gave the children a guided tour of his office and chambers. One of the participating student is the daughter of the FDNS Officer in the LVG office. The students left the courthouse with renewed appreciation for what it means to be an American.

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## NATURALIZATION TEST PILOT

USCIS experts have worked diligently to design a new Naturalization Exam that is more meaningful, substantive, and fair. Led by the Office of Citizenship, USCIS will begin to administer the pilot exam to approximately 5,000 volunteer citizenship applicants in 10 cities nationwide, beginning February 2007.

USCIS included new questions that focus on the concepts of democracy and the rights and responsibilities of citizenship. In designing the new exam, USCIS received assistance and worked with test development contractors, U.S. history and government scholars, and English as a Second Language experts. USCIS also sought input from a variety of stakeholders, including immigrant advocacy groups, citizenship instructors and district adjudication officers.

The exam pilot program will allow USCIS to work out any problems and refine the exam before it is fully implemented nationwide in the spring of 2008. All of the new [Questions and Answers](#) are posted on [uscis.gov](http://uscis.gov) and a [Naturalization Exam Pilot Fact Sheet](#) is also available.

## WOULD YOU LIKE TO WORK AT USCIS?

Visit [USAJOBS Online](#) for more information on openings and opportunities at USCIS and other federal agencies.

**OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE NATIONWIDE, APPLY NOW!**

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**USCIS: ENHANCING EFFICIENCY**



# FACES OF AMERICA

## NEW CITIZENS, UNIQUE STORIES

### JUANA MONTENEGRO – CUBA

On January 26th, Ninety-seven year old Juana Montenegro became a United States citizen in Miami, Florida. Montenegro, who was born in Cuba, came to America with her son in 1952, to live with her daughter in New Jersey. Soon after, Montenegro was joined by her husband and their third child joined them, and the family made a new life for themselves in the United States.

A very active grandmother and an accomplished domino player, Montenegro says the family decided to emigrate because their small town in the province of Matanzas, Cuba, did not offer the opportunities and freedom she wanted for her children. They stayed in New Jersey for 20 years, and then moved to Miami. Montenegro says that soon after the family moved to Florida, she and her husband started preparing for the test to become U.S. Citizens. "But my husband died and I was heartbroken, so I didn't do anything about it. I forgot about that project and focused all of my energies on my family, my children and grandchildren," explains Montenegro.

Last year, Juana visited relatives who happened to be filling out naturalization applications and studying for the test. She decided to join them. A few months later, she took the exam and missed only one question. She was thrilled.

"And that's how it happened", Montenegro adds. "I swear my allegiance to a country that gave much to my family and allowed us to stay together throughout the decades. My husband will be very happy today when he looks down from heaven and sees me become a U.S. citizen."



Juana Montenegro takes the Oath of Allegiance and shows off her Certificate of Naturalization (above, left)

**ARE YOU ONE OF THE FACES OF AMERICA?**  
**SHARE YOUR STORY WITH USCIS**

## ON ANY GIVEN DAY AT USCIS...

...the **15,000** federal and contract employees of USCIS accomplish the following at our **250** offices worldwide:

- Conduct **135,000** national security background checks
- Receive **135,000** visitors to our Internet site ([www.USCIS.gov](http://www.USCIS.gov))
- Process **30,000** applications for immigrant benefits

Check the next issue of [USCIS Today](#) or the [USCIS Day in the Life](#) profile for more statistics on what we do every day to effectively and efficiently administer our nation's immigration system.

**USCIS AND DHS: SECURING OUR HOMELAND**