

USCIS Announces Final Rule Increasing Filing Fees on December 23, 2016

PUBLISHED ON

November 18, 2016

On October 24, 2016 the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) posted a notice in the Federal Register announcing an increase in filing fees for most types of immigration filings. These fee increases are scheduled to go into effect December 23, 2016.

USCIS Rationale For Fee Increase

USCIS is required to conduct fee reviews every two years to determine how much must be collected to support the agency's activities. USCIS is nearly entirely funded by fees paid by applications and petitioners for immigration benefits. This is the first fee increase since 2010 when USCIS increased fees by 10 percent. In 2007, the agency had increased fees by 66 percent.

Timing And Percentage Of Fee Increase

Pursuant to the final rule, USCIS filing fees will increase by an average of 21%. Any petitions or applications received by the USCIS on or after December 23, 2016 must include the fee set under the new rule.

Three Fee Levels For Naturalization Applications

The final rule also establishes a new three-tier fee system for applications for naturalization (form N-400). The first tier is the standard application fee, which will increase from \$595 to \$640. The second tier will be for those who have a family income greater than 150 percent, but not more than 200 percent, of the federal poverty guidelines. These applicants will pay a reduced fee of \$320. The final tier will be for those who meet certain U.S. military service requirements or for those who are granted a fee waiver based on having an income at or below 150 percent of the federal poverty guidelines. These applicants will not be charged any fee.

Fees That Will Stay The Same

- Biometric Services Fee
- Premium Processing
- Refugee Travel Documents
- Forms I-821 and I-821F

To the extent possible, make sure that your petitions and applications for immigration benefits are filed with USCIS before December 23, 2016. If you have any questions about filing an application or petition according to the new fee schedule, please feel free to contact one of the attorneys or paralegals in the Barley Snyder Immigration Group.

:



Silas M. Ruiz-Steele

Counsel

Tel: (610) 898-7153

Email: sruizsteele@barley.com



Becky W. Munscher

Paralegal

Tel: (717) 852-4991

Email: rmunscher@barley.com