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**\*\*\*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE\*\*\***

## ***Legal Aid Launches Fundraising Campaign to Help Families Afford Critical Immigration Application Fees Amid Economic Crisis***

(NEW YORK, NY) – The Legal Aid Society today launched a new [fundraising campaign](#) to help low-income immigrant families afford exorbitant fees associated with filing certain United States Citizenship and Immigration Service’s (USCIS) immigration applications. The campaign was created in response to USCIS issuing [new fee regulations](#), which will raise various application filing fees and severely limit the availability of fee waivers. The regulations are scheduled to go into effect on October 2, 2020.

Some application fees will see a whopping increase of 546% from \$230 to \$1,485 (Form I-929 which is filed for spouses of certain domestic violence survivors), and 377% from \$585 to \$2,790 (Form I-193 which is filed for individuals seeking immigration status but who are unable to renew or replace their passport).

“While failing to provide economic relief to our noncitizen clients during a global pandemic, the government is also dramatically increasing the fees for immigration applications,” said **Hasan Shafiqullah, Attorney-In-Charge of the Immigration Law Unit at The Legal Aid Society**. “It is unacceptable that our clients’ and all undocumented New Yorkers’ inability to pay enormous application fees could put them at risk for detention or deportation, and permanently separate them from their families amid this unprecedented public health and economic crisis.”

The campaign goal is to raise \$50,000, which will have a direct impact by helping to keep immigrant New Yorkers at home with their families. To access the fundraiser, visit: [tinyurl.com/helpwithfees](http://tinyurl.com/helpwithfees)

## BACKGROUND

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) charges filing fees for most applications. In August 2020, USCIS announced new fee regulations, which will raise various filing fees and severely limit the availability of fee waivers, and will go into effect on October 2, 2020. Fees will increase by a weighted average of 20%, but for some of the forms regularly filed by Legal Aid on behalf of clients, the increases will be much greater. For example:

- N-400 application for citizenship through naturalization will increase by 83% (from \$640 to \$1,170);
- Form I-193 application for waiver of passport and/or visa, which is a form regularly filed for individuals who are seeking immigration status and are unable to renew or replace their passport, is increasing by 377% (from \$585 to \$2,790); and
- Form I-929 petition for qualifying family members of a U nonimmigrant visa holder, regularly filed for spouses of certain domestic violence survivors, is increasing by a whopping 546% (from \$230 to \$1,485).

For family-based immigration cases, an I-130 (petition for alien relative), I-485, I-765, and I-131 concurrent filing will increase from a total of \$1,760 to \$2,860.

Under the new rule, people who qualify for fee waivers (for the immigration benefit and later for a related adjustment of status, if applicable, and then for an eventual application for citizenship through naturalization or derivation, if applicable) are reduced to only a handful:

1. Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) self-petitioners and derivatives;
2. U visa applicants (for survivors of violent crimes);
3. T visa applicants (for survivors of human trafficking);
4. VAWA cancellation of removal applicants;
5. Temporary Protected Status (TPS) applicants; and
6. Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS) petitioners.

No other fees can be waived, including Form I-90 applications to replace/renew green cards, or any other adjustments or naturalizations than the few described above.

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*The Legal Aid Society exists for one simple yet powerful reason: to ensure that New Yorkers are not denied their right to equal justice because of poverty. For over 140 years, we have protected, defended, and advocated for those who have struggled in silence for far too long. Every day, in every borough, The Legal Aid Society changes the lives of our clients and helps improve our communities.*

<https://www.legalaidnyc.org>