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# Fee Increase for Immigration Papers Planned

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The Obama administration on Wednesday proposed an overall increase of about 10 percent in fees for [immigration](#) documents, but kept the fee for immigrants to become United States citizens unchanged.

Alejandro Mayorkas, director of [Citizenship and Immigration Services](#), said the fee increase was necessary because declining applications for documents in the past two years had lowered revenues and left his agency — which is 90 percent financed by fees — with a budget shortfall of about \$200 million for the coming fiscal year.

“We understand the effect of a fee increase on many of the communities we serve,” Mr. Mayorkas said.

Under the proposal, the fee to apply for a green card, the document for legal permanent residents, would increase to \$985 from \$930. The application for employment authorization would increase to \$380 from \$340. A separate fee for fingerprints and other biometrics with many applications would increase to \$85 from \$80.

Among several new fees, officials said, will be a \$6,230 charge for foreigners proposing to invest \$500,000 or more in businesses to create jobs in the United States.

The fee for naturalization would remain at \$595. That fee was raised in July 2007 by 69 percent and the immigration agency was overwhelmed by applications from immigrants rushing to file ahead of that increase. Since then, naturalization applications have dropped steeply and advocates blamed the higher fee for discouraging eligible immigrants from becoming citizens.

“We are particularly pleased that [President Obama](#) is holding true to statements he made during his campaign on the need for keeping citizenship affordable,” said Fred Tsao, policy director of the Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights in Chicago.

Some fees will be reduced, like the one for foreign fiancées or fiancés seeking to come here to marry citizens, which would drop to \$340 from \$455. Fees for temporary immigrants to become permanent residents would also decline, to \$1,020 from \$1,370.

The proposed fees will be officially published this week, opening a 45-day period for public comment, Mr. Mayorkas said. The new fees would take effect sometime before Oct. 1.