



U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Fee Schedule Rule Change

Jennifer E. Cossyleon, University of California-Merced

Socio-economic stability appears to be not only a requirement for naturalization, but also one of its effects. But for many leaders in my recent study of grassroots family-focused organizing in Chicago, this stability is out of reach. Through in-depth research in Chicago on the family-focused community organizing led by Latina and African American mothers and grandmothers, I learned firsthand about how US citizenship was simultaneously coveted and unreachable for community members because of cost. These grassroots leaders were deeply involved in their communities, taking information and suggestions to policy makers in order to improve the policies and practices that benefit all of our families. Yet, many had little legal claim to a country they called home, where their children were born, and where they had lived and worked for decades, simply because they were not US citizens.

Expanding access to US citizenship is a vital step towards strengthening the democratic participation and economic stability of immigrants. However, not having enough money is one of the reasons nine million permanent residents (green card holders) have not applied for naturalization, even though most have been able to do so for over ten years. I believe this rule change is yet another way the current administration is attempting to marginalize immigrant communities who immensely contribute to our nation.