



## NEWS RELEASE

National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO) Educational Fund

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**Contact:** Amanda Bosquez, [abosquez@naleo.org](mailto:abosquez@naleo.org)  
(202) 546-2536, (361) 548-6989 (cell)

Paula Valle Castanon, [pvalle@naleo.org](mailto:pvalle@naleo.org)  
(213) 747-7606 ext. 4414, (323) 253-6431 (cell)

### **NALEO Educational Fund Brings Together National Organizations and New Americans for Inaugural Champions for Citizenship Advocacy Day**

*Groups will educate lawmakers about the benefits of helping the nearly 8.8 million legal permanent residents—including more than 4 million Latinos—who are eligible for citizenship*

**Washington, D.C.** – As part of the inaugural Champions for Citizenship Advocacy Day on September 17, 2015, the National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO) Educational Fund will bring together leading organizations, new Americans and Latino elected officials from across the nation in Washington D.C. to educate Members of Congress from both sides of the aisle on the benefits of helping millions of eligible legal permanent residents (LPRs) take the next step and become U.S. citizens.

The meetings will take place as part of the Citizenship Day (September 17<sup>th</sup>) and Citizenship Month efforts that are occurring nationwide throughout the month of September. During these meetings, participants will encourage lawmakers to support the New Americans Success Act of 2015 (HR 3021) and other policies that would provide eligible LPRs with the resources needed to become U.S. citizens. Through the use of private donations, the bill would reduce barriers to the naturalization process by providing LPRs with increased access to English language and civics programs as well as support navigating through the naturalization process.

“We need to break down the barriers that are keeping millions of hard-working and talented legal permanent residents from contributing fully to our nation’s economy and society,” stated Arturo Vargas, NALEO Educational Fund executive director. “As part of the inaugural Champions for Citizenship Advocacy Day, we will do our part by helping to educate Members of Congress on the numerous economic and civic benefits of helping potential new Americans successfully navigate and complete the naturalization process.

America is home to nearly 8.8 million LPRs that meet the eligibility requirements to apply for U.S. citizenship. Of those, more than 4 million – nearly half of all LPRs eligible to naturalize – are Latino. Despite the many benefits of citizenship, completing the naturalization process can be a challenge for many legal residents. Language barriers and lack of access to funds to pay for legal assistance and the \$680 application fee force many LPRs to put their citizenship plans on hold.

Increasing the number of immigrants who become U.S. citizens has benefits for both new Americans and the nation. Experts have noted that citizenship can boost individual earnings by 8 to 11 percent, potentially growing our economy by [\\$21-45 billion](#) over the next 10 years.

Recognized nationally as a civic engagement pioneer and leader with more than 30 years of experience, NALEO Educational Fund has guided hundreds of thousands of eligible lawful permanent residents through the naturalization process, and helped hundreds of thousands of Latino U.S. citizens register to vote and take part in elections.

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**About NALEO Educational Fund**

*NALEO Educational Fund is the nation's leading non-profit organization that facilitates the full participation of Latinos in the American political process, from citizenship to public service.*