

JULY 17, 2024

FACT SHEET: Biden-Harris Administration Announces New Actions to Expand Opportunities for Latino Communities and Ensure Every Family Has a Fair Shot at the American Dream

President Biden and Vice President Harris are working to ensure that all Latino families and communities can achieve greater opportunity. Over the past three years, the Administration has taken historic action to expand opportunity for Latino families and communities, including creating more than 15 million jobs – with 5 million created for Latinos, helping Latino entrepreneurs start new businesses at the fastest rate in over 10 years, working to ensure equitable educational opportunity for students, addressing our broken immigration system through new executive actions, and more.

Today, the Biden-Harris Administration is announcing new actions to advance educational opportunities for Latino communities and give more families a fair shot at achieving the American dream.

Advancing Educational Equity, Excellence, and Economic Opportunity through Hispanic-Serving Institutions

Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs) play a critical role in shaping the future of our Nation. With more than 500 HSIs across 27 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico, HSIs make an extraordinary contribution to our Nation's higher education system, including educating more than 4.7 million students. More than 65 percent of Hispanic and Latino college students in the U.S. attend an HSI, and nearly 40 percent of those students attend a two-year HSI.

To strengthen the Federal Government's commitment to advancing opportunity, today, President Biden will sign an Executive Order establishing

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the White House Initiative on Advancing Educational Equity, Excellence, and Economic Opportunity through Hispanic-Serving Institutions. This Executive Order creates a new Initiative and President's Board of Advisors for HSIs that will work to:

- Increase awareness of opportunities for HSIs to equally participate in Federal programs and enhance the capacity of HSIs to meet the educational needs of their students.
- Identify best practices for HSIs to scale effective strategies, programs, and initiatives to support the educational success and economic mobility of their students.
- Improve the ability of HSIs to align program offerings with the economic needs of the Nation and their local economies, especially in Science, Technology, Engineering, Math, and teaching.
- Coordinate efforts to help HSIs become or remain fiscally secure institutions.
- Foster cross-sector collaboration among HSIs and philanthropic, public, and private sector organizations.
- Strengthen Federal recruitment activities at HSIs to build accessible and equal pathways into Federal career opportunities for HSI students, faculty, staff, and alumni.
- Provide tools, data, and analytics to support HSIs in improving educational equity, excellence, and economic opportunity for students.

Making America's Immigration System More Fair and More Just

Since Day One, President Biden has called on Congress to fix our broken immigration system. While Congress has failed to act on these critically needed reforms, the Biden-Harris Administration has taken action to make our immigration system more fair and more just.

Today, the Administration is highlighting steps taken to fulfill the President's promise to keep families together and allow more Dreamers to contribute to our economy, and announcing new actions to expand access to legal representation and immigration services so that more people have the tools

and support they need to navigate our complex immigration system. These actions build on steps the Administration has taken to strengthen and improve our immigration system, including eliminating the backlog of naturalization applications, vigorously defending the DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) policy in court, extending Affordable Care Act coverage to DACA recipients, and streamlining, expanding, and instituting new programs so that families can stay together while they complete the immigration process.

Today's new announcements include:

Announcing key progress on actions to keep families together

On June 18th, the President announced a new process to help U.S. citizens with noncitizen spouses and children who have been here for 10 years or more keep their families together. This new action – which will help certain noncitizen spouses and children apply for lawful permanent residence without leaving the country – is expected to apply to approximately half a million spouses of U.S. citizens, and 50,000 noncitizen children whose parent is married to a U.S. citizen. And today, **the President is announcing that beginning on August 19, 2024, eligible spouses and children will be able to apply for this process to obtain legal status while remaining with their families.**

In June, President Biden also announced new actions to help young people who have been educated in the U.S., including DACA recipients and other Dreamers, receive work visas more quickly. These actions will help more young people use their talents to enrich our communities and strengthen our economy. The Department of State has updated its [public guidance](#) – making it clear that it is in the public interest that individuals who graduated from a U.S. institution of higher education and are seeking a work visa are able to put their degree to use in the United States, and that these factors should be considered favorably when recommending waivers in the visa application process.

Helping thousands of Dreamers transition successfully to college

Today, the Administration is also announcing that the Department of Education is issuing a proposed rule to expand the federal TRIO program to

ensure Dreamers and others can enroll. By providing high school students with services and supports such as college campus visits, tutoring, and help completing college and financial aid applications, the TRIO program helps students from low-income backgrounds and students who would be the first in their family go to college successfully transition from high school to college. The proposed expansion would mean that an estimated 50,000 more students each year would be able to access TRIO programs and services, and thousands more would go to college.

Expanding access to legal representation

Today, the Department of Justice Executive Office of Immigration Review (EOIR) is doubling the number of locations for their “Attorney of the Day” program, which makes volunteer lawyers available in immigration courtrooms to provide assistance to those who do not have representation at their initial immigration court hearings. The Department will expand this program to include immigration courts in Hyattsville, Maryland; New York City; and Atlanta in addition to the three current locations: San Francisco, New Orleans, and Chicago. The Department is also increasing free and low-cost legal representation by increasing participation of law students in clinical programs and expanding training opportunities such as its mock trial program.

Earlier this year, the Department of Justice announced the launch of the [Respondent Access Portal](#), a secure online platform that allows unrepresented noncitizens with proceedings before EOIR to view case information and scheduled hearings, download their electronic case record, and file documents directly with the immigration court.

Additionally, the Justice Department is creating a new leadership position focused on improving access to the immigration system and finding innovative ways to increase representation rates for noncitizens in immigration court.

Finally, the Administration is announcing a call to action for members of the legal community, including law firms, nonprofits, advocacy organizations, and other stakeholders to make commitments of pro bono support for those who are unrepresented in immigration proceedings. In response, the American Bar Association will leverage its existing resources to help and

encourage more lawyers to provide pro bono support to unrepresented noncitizens in immigration proceedings. The Administration welcomes additional commitments from interested stakeholders to build upon these efforts.

Ensuring access to immigration services

The Department of Homeland Security's U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) is announcing the launch of a new initiative – “USCIS to You” – to bring immigration-related assistance into local communities, including rural and underserved areas. Services that may be provided include naturalization interviews and oath ceremonies, customer service appointments, and education on immigration benefits and processes. “USCIS to You” events will be coordinated in partnership with communities, including libraries, community colleges, and other local entities.

USCIS is also providing up to \$2.6 million to help small public and non-profit organizations establish new citizenship programs and train staff to assist lawful permanent residents in understanding and navigating the naturalization process. USCIS has released this new Notice of Funding Opportunity and plans to announce grant recipients by September 2024.

Today's announcements build on additional historic action President Biden has taken to advance opportunity for Latino communities, including:

- Bringing the Latino unemployment rate to a near record low of 4.9%.
- Taking action to support Latino-owned businesses, which are now starting up at the fastest rate in fifteen years.
- Doubling Latino enrollment in health coverage through the Affordable Care Act, and fighting to protect the Affordable Care Act.
- Expanding access to Affordable Care Act benefits to DACA recipients.
- Expanding the Child Tax Credit which lifted 1.2 million Hispanic children out of poverty in 2021.

- Investing over \$15 billion in Hispanic-serving colleges and universities—the largest ever investment. This investment strengthened the capacity of HSIs to better serve their students, including meeting their basic needs and completing their programs.
- Securing a \$900 increase to the maximum Pell Grant award – the largest in the last decade – to benefit students from low- and middle-income backgrounds in their pursuit of a college degree.
- Canceling \$167 billion in student loan debt for 4.75 million borrowers. Student loan debt disproportionately burdens Latino borrowers who are more likely to take on student loans than their white peers and who also end up holding nearly twice as much debt as their white peers four years after graduation.

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