

African Advocate

Voice of African Immigrants & Refugees In Illinois

NEWSLETTER OF THE UNITED AFRICAN ORGANIZATION (UAO)

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OUR MISSION

The United African Organization is a dynamic coalition of African community-based organizations that promotes social and economic justice, civic participation, and empowerment of African immigrants and refugees in Illinois.

OUR GOALS

- ◆ Build the leadership and organizational capacity of the community
- ◆ Advance public policies to increase opportunities and support for immigrant and refugee integration
- ◆ Ensure that African immigrant and refugees have an active role in multiple civic arenas
- ◆ Promote community development and access to social services
- ◆ Serve as a viable model of African Unity and Empowerment

THANK YOU TO OUR VOLUNTEERS AND INTERNS!

Please join us in celebrating our dedicated volunteers and interns during the National Volunteer Week from April 6 through April 12.

To all our current, past and future volunteers and interns, your time and effort are appreciated each and every day at the United African Organization. You are AMAZING!

Your dedication helps us achieve our mission with great success. Thank you for all you do!

Sincerely,
UAO Team!



2014 AFRICAN YOUTH FORUM A SUCCESS!

The 3rd annual African Youth Forum was held on Saturday, March 29. This exciting event brought together 60 youth participants from throughout the Chicago community. During the course of the day, participants attended sessions on immigration and legal rights. They had great, insightful questions for our presenters! While taking a break to enjoy lunch from Yassa African Restaurant and Demera Ethiopian Restaurant, the youth impressed us with

their talents! Later, a panel of young professionals in the community came to speak to them about higher education, career opportunities, and the importance of hard work. Our participants enjoyed hearing these stories and even shared their own experiences. One of the participants told us, "The speakers were motivational and I am thinking about going back to school." We are looking forward to seeing the bright futures of this group of young people!



Upcoming UAO Events:**FREE CITIZENSHIP WORKSHOP**

All residents who are Green Card holders for at least 5 years, or 3 years and married to a U.S. citizen are invited to attend our citizenship workshops where they can get free assistance with their application to become a U.S. Citizen.

Attend our upcoming citizenship workshop:

Saturday, April 26th - 9:00 am to 11:00 am - Truman College
1145 W Wilson Avenue
Chicago, IL 60640

Please see list of documents needed

WORKSHOP ON IMMIGRATION, WORKPLACE RIGHTS, AND FREE HEALTH SCREENING

Do you want to know more about immigration? Wondering about your rights in the workplace? Join us on Saturday, April 12th, for a workshop to learn more about these important subjects.

[**CLICK HERE FOR FREE REGISTRATION**](#)

Topics covered will include:

(1) IMMIGRATION 101:

- Understanding public charge
- Petitioning for family members
- Options for victims of domestic violence
- Options for victims of trafficking
- Options for those who are undocumented and out-of-status

(2) RIGHTS AT THE WORKPLACE

FREE Hepatitis B screenings will also be available! Hepatitis B is a serious illness that affects the liver, but it often does not cause any symptoms. Come to this event and receive a free test for Hepatitis B, and we can tell you where you can get **FREE** Hepatitis B vaccines! Make sure you and your family do not miss this important opportunity to protect your health!

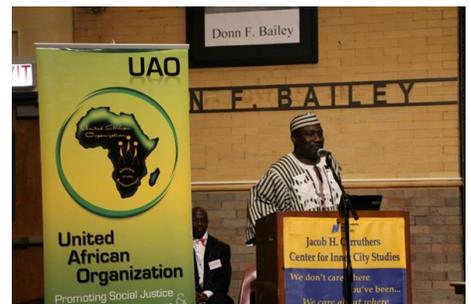
Saturday, April 12
IIT Tower Building, 6th Floor
10 West 35th Street, Chicago, IL 60616
10:00 am - 12:00 pm

CHICAGO AFRICAN SUMMIT & RESOURCE FAIR FAST APPROACHING!

Don't forget to mark your calendar for the 2014 Chicago African Summit and Resource Fair! This unique event is the premier forum of its kind in the Midwest with a focus on contemporary African issues, public policy advocacy, and community empowerment. It brings together scholars, legislators, community activists, policy advocates, students and community allies to engage in constructive dialogue and reflection on critical issues facing Africa and the Diaspora. This year's themes will be Immigration, Health, and Africa Beyond Mandela.

Additionally, the summit will include a Community Resource Fair that provides information about employment, immigration, legal services, housing, health screenings and other resources for participants.

Saturday, May 31, 2014
Schultz Auditorium
Illinois Institute of Technology
10 West 35th Street
Chicago, IL 60616



[**CLICK HERE FOR FREE REGISTRATION**](#)

Community Events

ETHIOPIAN COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION OF CHICAGO'S 30TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION
SAVE THE DATE!
 ECAC will be celebrating its 30th year on Saturday - May 3rd at Saint Andrew Greek Orthodox Church.

N-400 VERSUS N-600: DO YOU KNOW THE DIFFERENCE?

Both forms have to do with citizenship, but they serve two different purposes. The Form N-400 is the Application for Naturalization whereas the N-600 is the Application for Certificate of Citizenship.

If an individual is over 18 and is eligible for naturalization, then they should file an N-400 form in order to apply for citizenship. Once the N-400 Form is filed, the applicant will have to pass the citizenship interview and test and attend an oath ceremony in order to become a U.S. citizen.

The purpose of filing the N-600 is only to obtain a Certificate of Citizenship which serves as proof of an individual's U.S. citizenship. The N-600 is for people who are already considered by the U.S. Government as U.S. citizens. There are two cases in which you may file a Form N-600:

- You were born abroad but are a U.S. citizen at birth through your parents;
- You automatically became a U.S. citizen by operation of law after birth but before you turned 18.

Along with the N-600, you will need to submit supporting documents, such as evidence of your parents' citizenship. A parent or guardian may also file an N-600 on behalf of a minor child. Most applicants will not be required to go through the citizenship interview and test nor will they have to attend the oath ceremony. Once the N-600 is approved, the applicant will receive his/her Certificate of Citizenship as proof of U.S. citizenship.

Filing an N-600 is not mandatory; it is an optional form. An individual can apply directly for a U.S. Passport which is generally sufficient evidence of U.S. citizenship. However, you may be required to submit a Certificate of Citizenship when applying for certain benefits, such as:

- Social Security benefits;
- State issued ID, Driver's License or Learning Permit;
- Financial Aid;
- Employment;
- Passport Renewal.

There is a \$600 filing fee for the N-600. The fee may be waived based on your income and/or eligibility for certain benefits such as SNAP (food stamps), Medicaid etc.

If you have any questions regarding the N-400 or the N-600, please feel free to contact our staff attorney Sondra Furcajg at (312) 949-9980.

Do you have events going on in your community? Let us know by emailing: events@uniteafricans.org

Share Your Story

We all have stories about how we, each in our own way, enrich our communities. Tell us how you GIVE BACK to YOUR COMMUNITY...

You could be featured in the next issue of African Advocate!

Email:

editor@uniteafricans.org

UNDERSTANDING YOUR NEW HEALTH INSURANCE

On March 31, 2014, the first annual open enrollment period of the Affordable Care Act (Obama Care) ended. Many of you came in and enrolled here at our office. Now that you have insurance, many of you are now asking yourselves, "Now what?" For those of you that now have new health insurance plans, here are a few tips to make sure you are using it properly:

It is important to verify that the doctor you want to see is in your insurance plan's network because not every insurance plan includes every doctor. Most insurance companies allow you to search on their website for a list of doctors that are covered by the insurance plan. You can also call a doctor's office to check if they are in your insurance plan's network. Remember that many insurance plans cover very little when you go to a doctor who is not in the network.

You will also need to choose a Primary Care Physician. These are doctors who practice general medicine and can attend to most of your basic medical needs. By having a doctor that you see regularly, your doctor will become familiar with you and your medical history. Your doctor can also determine if you need to see a more specialized doctor, such as a cardiologist, for any health services. If you do need to see a specialist, your insurance plan may require a referral from your Primary Care Physician. Some insurance plans will not pay without a referral, so it is important to understand how your specific plan works.

Specifically, you should be familiar with your insurance plan to know how much you will be expected to contribute for medical services and how much your insurance company will cover. Four of the most important terms for understanding your plan are **premium**, **copayment**, **deductible**, and **out-of-pocket maximum**.

- A **premium** is the monthly amount that you will pay for your health insurance, regardless of how little or how much you use medical services. Like a car insurance plan, you pay each month so that you will be covered when you need services. If you stop paying your premium, your insurance plan will be canceled and you may face tax penalties next year!
- A **co-payment** (or copay) is a set amount of money that you will have to pay to access particular services. For example, your insurance company may require you to pay a co-payment of \$25 to see a primary doctor and \$35 to see a specialist. You will almost always have to pay your co-payment when you go to the doctor, even if you have already reached your out-of-pocket maximum.
- Your **deductible** is the amount that you will have to pay before your insurance starts to contribute to your medical bills. For example, if your deductible is \$500, you will be responsible for paying the first \$500 of your medical expenses for the year. After that, your insurance company will start helping you pay your medical bills.
- Your **out-of-pocket maximum** is an important number to know. Apart from the small co-payment that you will pay each time you see a doctor, you will not have to pay more than this amount each year. For example, if you have a \$15,000 surgery and your out-of-pocket maximum is \$1,000, you will be responsible for \$1,000, and your insurance company will cover the rest. After reaching your out-of-pocket maximum, your insurance company will pay for all other in-network covered services for the rest of the year.
- Make sure you go to the doctor regularly, not only when you are sick. Regular checkups and preventive care services are important to being healthy and staying healthy. Your new insurance plan may even offer some preventive care services, such as certain immunizations and screenings, for free!

If you have any questions about your insurance plan, please call us at (312) 949-9980.

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United African Organization

3424 South State Street
Suite 3C8-2
Chicago, IL 60616

www.uniteafricans.org
www.africansinchicago.org

Phone: 312-949-9980

Fax: 312-949-9981

E-mail: editor@uniteafricans.org

Advocacy, Unity, Empowerment

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