

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

AFRICAN YOUTH FORUM

Now in its third year, the African Youth Forum is recognized as a unique event that brings together high-school and college-age youth of color to dialogue around key issues in their communities.

This year's themes consider recent developments and ongoing concerns around Immigration, Incarceration & Youth Violence, and Education.

Y African YOUTH FORUM

Saturday - March 29, 2014
11:00 am - 4:00 pm
10 West 35th Street
Chicago, IL 60616

We want to hear your Voice!

- Immigration
- Incarceration
- Violence
- Education

For more information, contact:
United African Organization
3424 S. State Street, Suite 3C8-2
Chicago, IL 60616
T: (312) 949-9980
F: (312) 949-9981
www.uniteafricans.org
www.africansinchicago.org

Creating Dialogue
Culture • Identity

Network • Build Bridges

Leadership • Show Your Talent

Dialogue • Device Solutions

The African Youth Forum raises awareness and support for young people of color from African immigrant, African-American, and other immigrant communities to build understanding of each others' points of view through dialogue, and in the process find common ground, strengthen ties, and promote cultural, educational and leadership development.

Each of the main themes of the Forum: Immigration, Incarceration & Youth Violence, and Education will be dealt with in a discussion session. The Forum will also feature drama, music and spoken-word poetry performances. Participants will also get a chance to learn more about Africa.

Saturday, March 29, 2014 - 11am to 4:00pm

IIT Tower Building, 6th Floor, 10 West 35th Street, Chicago, IL 60616

For more information, email: events@uniteafricans.org or call 312.949.9980

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 a free citizenship workshop where they can get free assistance with their application to become a U.S. Citizen.

Attend our upcoming citizenship workshop:

Saturday, March 22nd - 9:00 am to 11:00 am - Truman College, 1145 W Wilson Ave, Chicago

HEALTH INSURANCE ENROLLMENT

The new healthcare law, called the Affordable Care Act or ObamaCare, impacts you and your family! You must have health insurance before March 31, 2014 or face paying tax penalties! Apply now by calling us at (312) 949-9980 to schedule a free appointment!

#AFRICANYOUTHFORUM

This annual event brings together high-school and college-age youth of color to dialogue around key issues and challenges in their communities. This year's themes are immigration, incarceration & youth violence, and education.

Saturday, March 29th - 11:00 am to 4:00 pm

IIT Tower, 10 W 35th Street, Chicago 60616

I WANT OBAMACARE!

For the one hundredth time, UAO's Community Resource Specialist, Lauren Herzog heard someone say "I want to get Obamacare". Although enrollment for health insurance under the Affordable Care Act ("ObamaCare") began in October, much confusion remains surrounding the new law.

The ACA is the law that requires everyone to obtain health insurance before March 31, 2014. Acceptable forms of insurance include private insurance, employer-based insurance, Medicaid, Medicare, County Care, and All Kids among others. If you already have one of these forms of insurance, you do not need to take further action.

Two types of insurance are available for those who are currently uninsured: **Medicaid** and **private insurance**. Your eligibility for these forms of insurance will be determined using your income and immigration status.

Medicaid is a free or low-cost health insurance program operated by the government for those who have household incomes below 138% of the Federal Poverty Level (up to \$16,104 annually for 1 person, \$21,707 for 2 people, or \$32,913 for 4 people). Only U.S. citizens, those who have been green card holders for more than 5 years, and those with asylum status (or pending asylum cases) are eligible for Medicaid. All others, even those with income below 138% of the Federal Poverty Level, will have to buy private insurance.

Private insurance is a plan that is bought directly from an insurance company, such as Blue Cross Blue Shield, Humana, or Land of Lincoln. You will select the plan that offers the benefits that best meet your health needs. These insurance plans are intended to be affordable; as such, your income may qualify you for cost reductions.

The deadline to apply for health insurance is **March 31, 2014**. If you do not apply before the deadline, you will face tax penalties in future years.

Still need to apply for health insurance before the March 31 deadline? Do you have questions about health care? United African Organization provides free help with the application process. Please call us at **(312) 949-9980** to schedule an appointment!

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.

ULAA INAUGURAL BALL & DINNER

The Union of Liberians Associations in the Americas cordially invites you to their 2014 ULAA Inaugural Ball. Proceeds generated will be directed to projects such as Children village and Playground sites in Liberia.
 Saturday, March 22, 2014
 Time:
 7:30 pm To 8:00 pm—
 Cocktail
 8:00 pm to 2:00 am—
 Dinner and Ball
 Venue: 1515 E. 154th St.
 Dolton, IL 60419
 Admission: \$50.00 Ordinary & \$100.00 Patrons

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

IMMIGRANTS PREPARE FOR THE NEW N-400 CITIZENSHIP APPLICATION FORM

Abdulai, a Malian immigrant and legal permanent resident since 1998 literally took time off his business for the first step to apply for naturalization to become a US citizen, and ensure an easier immigration process for his wife and child. Having no formal education, Abdulai always saw the citizenship test and interview a big hurdle. With his participation in UAO's EL/Civics class, Abdulai finally believes that he can do this. Additionally, on February 4th 2014, the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) released a new N-400 application for naturalization. The new N-400 form appears to be more user-friendly. However, it is a lot longer than the old form - 21 pages versus 10 pages. Due to the added length and complexity of the new form, it is more important than ever to seek legal guidance before applying for naturalization. Abdulai is eager to avoid using the new application form.

There is a 90-day transition period where both the old and new forms will be accepted by USCIS. However, as of May 5th 2014, only the new form will be accepted. Here is what you need to know about the new N-400:

Eligibility requirements for naturalization have not changed, which means that if you were eligible to apply under the old form, the same remains true under the new form;

Length: the new form is a lot longer than the old form - 21 pages versus 10 pages;

Additional sections: there are individual fields to collect information to more clearly complete the form;

Additional Questions Reflecting Changes in law: in order to comply with the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act (IRTPA) of 2004 and the Child Soldier Prevention Act of 2008, about 30 new questions were added regarding good moral character and national security. For instance, there are a lot more questions regarding crimes, terrorism and other possible bars to naturalization;

Additional Questions Regarding Family Members: applicants will now need to provide additional personal information regarding spouses, children and parents;

New Section for Preparer and Interpreter: the preparer's statement has changed and there is a new interpreter's statement which must be signed by the interpreter himself and the applicant;

New Technology: if the form is filled out electronically, the 2D bar-code at the end of each page captures the data entered on the form and allows USCIS to scan the bar-code and upload it directly to the system. This is meant to improve data quality and reduces errors. However, the form can still be filled out by hand in black ink;

Improved instructions: the instructions are clearer and more comprehensive.

UAO, under the New Americans Initiative program, provides free monthly citizenship workshops where lawful permanent residents can receive help with their naturalization applications. Our next workshop will be on

Saturday, March 22nd from 9:00 am to 11:00am

Truman College - 1145 W. Wilson Avenue, Chicago, IL 60640.

In addition, our staff attorney, Sondra Furcajg, is happy to answer any questions you may have at **(312) 949-9980**.

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Advocacy, Unity, Empowerment

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