

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

IT'S HERE! THE NEW HEALTHCARE LAW

It's here! Open enrollment for the new healthcare law, called the Affordable Care Act or ObamaCare, starts from October 1, 2013 through March 31, 2014. The Affordable Care Act comes with many changes that may impact you and your family! Many who have not been able to get health insurance will now be able to do so.

The U.S. is home to some 40 million immigrants, including those who are here legally and unlawfully, many of whom are uninsured or under insured. The majority of immigrants work but generally are self-employed or employed in jobs or industries that offer lower wages and provide limited access to employer sponsored insurance. As a result, non-citizens are much more likely than citizens to be uninsured and have limited access to care than citizens.

Under the Affordable Care Act, many non-citizens in the U.S. legally, like refugees, asylees, lawful permanent residents (green card holders), are expected to gain health insurance through the marketplace exchanges. Previously, many lawful permanent residents were subject to a five-year wait or bar before they may become eligible for Medicaid. Under the new healthcare law, lawful permanent holders may purchase marketplace coverage and/or receive tax credits on the same basis as citizens.

Now, what about the estimated 11 million immigrants living in the U.S. illegally? These individuals will not be able to get health insurance through the marketplace exchanges. They would have to continue relying on getting health care through community health centers and others like Carelink offered by Cook County Health and Hospital Systems.

Nearly everyone will be required to purchase health insurance starting 2014 or face a penalty.

If you are wondering how this new healthcare law affect you and your family, contact us at UAO.

To get assistance with enrollment and for more information, contact UAO's in-person counselor at **312-949-9980**.

Community Events

SPOTLIGHT AFRICA

The Chicago International Film Festival's commitment to presenting the films of cinematically significant regions of the world continues with this showcase of innovative works and exciting new voices from Africa. For the complete Spotlight Africa program visit: www.chicagofilmfestival.com/africa

All film screenings will be at AMC River East 21, 322 E. Illinois Street, October 10-24 2013.

GOD LOVES UGANDA

October 9 - A new documentary about the influence of American religious conservatives on anti-LGBTQ policies in Uganda. Location: 280 S. Columbus Drive Date: October 9, 2013 @ 5:00 p.m. [RSVP Here](#)

MOTHER OF GEORGE

The Sundance-award winning film MOTHER OF GEORGE is in Chicago! Location: Gene Siskel Film Center of the School of the Art Institute of Chicago 164 N. State Street | Chicago, IL 60601 Showtimes: Friday September 27 - Thursday, October 3 Buy Tickets: www.siskelfilmcenter.org

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

U.S. CITIZENS AND GREEN CARD HOLDERS - PETITION FOR SPOUSE

With more African immigrants and refugees becoming U.S. citizens and legal permanent residents, one important immigration topic people inquire about is how do they bring their family members here to live with them. UAO continues to educate the community to know their rights and understand these immigration processes.

On CAN TV last month, UAO staff attorney Sondra Furcajg discussed "**How to file a Petition for your Spouse**".



Immigration Petition for Spouse of a U.S. citizen or Legal Permanent Resident

Under U.S. immigration law, a U.S. citizen who is over the age of 18 and resides in the U.S. can file a "spousal petition" for his or her spouse to become a legal permanent resident. There are two scenarios under which the spousal petition may be filed:

1. If the spouse of a U.S. citizen is currently in the U.S. and has a non-immigrant status:

In this case, the spouse who is a U.S. citizen needs to file an immigration petition (I-130) with USCIS, with all supporting documents and fees. At the same time, the foreign spouse needs to file an application to adjust his or her status to permanent resident (I-485).

2. If the spouse of a U.S. citizen is currently outside of the U.S.

Here, the spouse who is a U.S. citizen needs to file an immigration petition (I-130) with USCIS on behalf of the foreign spouse. After the petition is approved, it will be sent for consular processing at the consulate of the foreign spouse's home country, and the consulate will provide notification and processing information. At this point, the foreign spouse must contact the consulate immediately to complete the immigrant visa processing and schedule an interview. If approved, the spouse will be granted permanent residency immediately upon arrival in the U.S.

A U.S. permanent resident may also file an immigration petition (I-130) on behalf of his or her spouse. However, foreign spouse of permanent residents receive second preference (F2A) and must wait until their visa number is current before filing for adjustment of status (I-485) in the U.S. or completing the consular process abroad.

In all cases, the marriage must be proven to be bona fide (true) in order for the spouse to receive permanent resident status. This is typically easier to prove if the spouses shared residence, owned joint property, filed joint income taxes, or had a child together.

If the marriage to a U.S. citizen or permanent resident is less than two-years old, the spouse will receive a "conditional" permanent resident status valid for two years. The condition may then be removed by filing an I-1751 petition during the 90-days before the expiration of the conditional permanent resident status.

Please contact UAO at (312) 949-9980 for more information.

Upcoming UAO Events:**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 workshops:

Saturday, October 12th from 9:00 am to 11:00 am at Truman College - 1145 W. Wilson Avenue

Tuesday, October 22nd from 9:00 am to 11:00 am at Devon Bank - 6445 N. Western Avenue

Please contact us at (312) 949-9980 for more information.

HEALTH AND WELLNESS DAY

Truman College's African students association presents a Health and Wellness Day. Receive free health screening, Health Insurance Information, and more...

Location: Truman College-1145 W. Wilson Ave

Date: October 3, 2013

BE COVERED CARE FAIR

The new healthcare law is changing the way we get healthcare coverage, but what does it really mean for you? The health fair is a great opportunity to find out more about how it affects you.

Sunday, October 6th
11:00am - 5:00pm
Chicago Indoor Sports
3900 S. Ashland

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT! - AFRICAN UNITY Gala & Awards

On September 21st, many of our UAO supporters and friends, came out to support us at the African Unity Gala & Awards. We appreciate all of you who contributed in diverse ways to make this year's annual benefit a success. *Can't imagine us without you!* Thank you for your generous support!

Emceed by EnKay Boateng of *Legend Talk Radio*, the evening included high-energy interactive performances by *Kwa-Ntukiri Inter*, *The African Kings* and a monologue from Hans Nkansah. The evening's catering included delicious food from some of your favorite restaurants: *The Gage*, *Yassa African Restaurant*, *Demera Ethiopian Restaurant*, *PK's Catering*, *Cedars*, *C'est Si Bon!*, and *Brown Sugar Bakery*.

Honored at the gala were Kim Hunt, *Ubuntu Leadership Award*; Ebere Ekechukwu, *Community Hero Award*; and Umu Igbo Alliance, *Civic Engagement Award*. The Albert Dono Ware Memorial scholarships for 2013 were presented to Ferima Samake and Michelle Byamugisha.

[It's not too late to join in!](#)

UAO always relies on contributions from supporters like you to help build and make this organization stronger. The African Unity Gala & Awards helps raise critical general operating funds to support United African Organization's policy advocacy, community organizing, public education, leadership development, and other programs aimed at empowering the African community in Illinois.

[We appreciate your generous support!](#)

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Advocacy, Unity, Empowerment

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