



WHAT IS PUBLIC CHARGE?

The term “Public Charge” is used by the federal government to refer to a person who is considered likely to become primarily dependent on the government for subsistence. A public charge assessment is made when a person applies to enter the US, applies to adjust status to become a Legal Permanent Resident (LPR/green card holder) or a LPR leaves the US for more than six consecutive months and reenters.

HOW PUBLIC CHARGE COULD CHANGE

Under the current policy the use of the following benefits are considered in determining who is likely to become a “public charge:” cash assistance, such as Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and government-funded long term institutional care. **But** on October 10th, 2018 the Department of Homeland Security proposed to dramatically change this policy to include specific standards for income, health, age, and English proficiency and expands the forms of assistance that are counted in a “public charge” determination. The proposal includes the following benefits: non-emergency Medicaid; Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP); and low income subsidy for prescription drug costs under Medicare Part D and housing assistance, such as Section 8 and Public Housing.

PUBLIC CHARGE RULE CHANGE HARMS THE HEALTH & WELLBEING OF MILLIONS

At WSCAH we are already seeing families decline assistance due to the fear this proposal has created. Recently a client closed her family of four’s SNAP case even though they still qualified and wouldn’t be affected even if this proposal passes. Additionally, though she has \$600 remaining on her benefit card she stated that she will not use it because she is so fearful of the possible effect of this proposal. She, like many immigrants, is being forced to give up the ability to feed her family due to the fear prompted by this proposal.

TAKE ACTION NOW!

The public has the opportunity to submit comments on the proposal. The deadline for individuals and organizations to submit comments is **December 10th, 2018**. Please visit [HTTPS://PROTECTINGIMMIGRANTFAMILIES.ORG/](https://protectingimmigrantfamilies.org/) to let the government know they should immediately withdraw its proposal and instead advance policies that strengthen—rather than undermine—the ability for our communities to thrive.

In solidarity,

Chef Greg Silverman, Executive Director

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