

PUBLIC CHARGE

GETTING THE HELP YOU NEED



WHAT IS PUBLIC CHARGE?

“Public charge” or the “public charge test” is used by immigration officials to decide whether a person can enter the U.S. or get a green card (lawful permanent resident or “LPR” status). In this test, officials look at all of a person’s circumstances, including income, employment, health, education or skills, family situation and whether a sponsor signed a contract (“affidavit of support”) promising to support the person. Officials can also look at whether a person has used certain benefit programs (in the past, only cash assistance and long-term care were counted).



CHANGES TO PUBLIC CHARGE

The government is changing how it makes public charge decisions. Immigration officials will look more closely at factors like health, age, income, skills (including English language skills), and use of more public programs, including:

- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, “EBT” or “Food Stamps”)
- Federal Public Housing and Section 8 assistance
- Medicaid (except for emergency services, children under 21 years, pregnant women, and new mothers)
- Cash assistance programs (like SSI, TANF, General Assistance)

****Services that are not listed above will not be counted in the new public charge test. This includes WIC, CHIP, school breakfast and lunches, food banks, shelters, and many more - these programs are safe to get if you are eligible.*