

TOGETHER, FOR YOU.

GET THE FACTS

Keeping you informed about changes to public charge

PUBLIC CHARGE SELF ASSESSMENT TOOL



KNOW WHAT MATTERS

Public charge is an immigration rule. It is not a rule about who can get public benefits. Public charge can apply when an immigrant seeks admission to the United States or applies for adjustment of status, including through a family- or employment-based green card application. Some applicants are exempt. Federal public charge rules have changed. Use the questions below to learn what you should find out before you change health care, food aid, or other support for you or your family.

Important: This tool gives general information, not legal advice. For advice about your case, talk with a licensed immigration attorney.

1 FACT CHECK 1

Does public charge apply to me?

QUESTION 1

Are you applying, or planning to apply, for a visa to enter the United States or for a green card?

YES

Public charge might apply.
Go to Question 2.

NO

Public charge usually does not apply.
It generally does not apply to asylum, refugee status, DACA, VAWA, U visas, T visas, TPS, Special Immigrant Juvenile Status, or U.S. citizenship. If you are not sure, ask a licensed immigration attorney.

QUESTION 2

Are you applying, or planning to apply, for a green card based on a petition filed by a family member or employer?

YES

Public charge might apply.
Talk with a licensed immigration attorney before making choices about benefits or your immigration case.

NO

Public charge usually does not apply.
It does not apply to some green card cases, including cases based on asylum or refugee status, VAWA, a U visa, a T visa, or Special Immigrant Juvenile Status. Ask a licensed immigration attorney about your case.

KEEP WHAT MATTERS

Get the facts before you act

If public charge might apply to you, do not make choices based on fear or rumors. Before you stop health care, food aid, or other support your family needs, get advice about your case.

Remember: Public charge does not apply to every immigration case.

2 FACT CHECK 2

What should I know before making decisions about public benefits?

Start with these facts:

- Public charge does not apply to every person or every benefit.
- Federal officials look at each person's full situation.
- Public charge rules are changing. Under the new rules, federal immigration officials will review use of means-tested public benefits. Means-tested public benefits generally refer to government paid benefits for people who meet income or resource limits. If public charge applies to your case, federal immigration officials will review any such benefits received on or after September 18, 2026. These public benefits may include cash assistance for income maintenance, Medicaid, called Medi-Cal in California, SNAP, called CalFresh in California, and other benefits covered by federal rules. Immigration cases filed before September 18, 2026, will be reviewed by federal immigration officers under the old public charge rules.
- The effect of using benefits depends on the facts of each case.
- Benefits used by your children or other family members are not treated as benefits you received. But officials can look at them when they review your family's money and support. If a family member uses benefits, ask a licensed immigration attorney how the public charge rule may apply to your case.
- Public charge does not decide who can get Medi-Cal, CalFresh, or other public benefits.

GET THE FACTS FOR YOUR CASE

Questions about your immigration case Ask a licensed immigration attorney:

- What kind of immigration case do I have?
- Am I applying now, or planning to apply, for a visa, green card, or another immigration benefit?
- Does public charge apply to my case?

Questions about your immigration case (continued)

- If public charge does not apply to me right now, could it apply to me in the future? If so, when?
- What does the new public charge rule mean for me?

Questions about benefits and family

Ask yourself and your family:

- Which benefits am I using or thinking about using?
- Which benefits are my family members using or thinking about using?
- Could any of these benefits matter in my immigration case?
- Does my family need health care, food aid, or other support?
- What could happen to my family's health, food, housing, or well-being if we stop a benefit we need?
- Where can I get help with benefit rules or renewals?

TOGETHER FOR YOU**Get the facts from the right source****For immigration questions**

Talk with a licensed immigration attorney. The California Department of Social Services maintains a list of licensed immigration attorneys at: <https://www.cdss.ca.gov/inforesources/immigration/contractor-contact-information>.

For Medi-Cal, CalFresh, or other benefit questions

Contact your county social services agency, BenefitsCal, or a trusted community organization. This may be legal aid, a community health center, your WIC local agency, an immigrant-serving organization, or a food bank.

For federal public charge information

Visit U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services at: <https://www.uscis.gov/newsroom/alerts/uscis-issues-guidance-on-making-public-charge-inadmissibility-determination>.

GET THE FACTS

Before you give up health care, food aid, or other support your family needs, get the facts about your case.

Federal officials must look at each person's full situation to determine public charge.

Get trusted information before you act.