

# Fight Back Against Harmful New Policy Targeting Immigrant Families!

The Department of Homeland Security has proposed new “public charge” rules that will target some immigrants with moderate to low incomes, and penalize some immigrants for accessing the healthcare, nutrition, and housing programs they qualify for by denying them the green cards or visas they need to live with their families in the U.S.

**Submit comments opposing DHS’s proposed public charge rules today!** Comments play an important role in fighting these rules and anyone can submit them. Go to <https://protectingimmigrantfamilies.org> to submit your comments before December 10, 2018!

These rules will not apply to all immigrants, but confusion and fear may cause even those exempt from public charge rules to lose the benefits they are qualified to receive. Whether people are cut off from essential services like health care or nutrition assistance because of an actual risk of immigration consequences, or they give them up because of a perceived risk, the effects will be devastating for families and communities.

## Who is subject to public charge rules?

Immigration officials can deny **some** immigrants a visa or a green card if the immigration official finds that the immigrant is a public charge.

- **Many immigrants are exempt.** Federal law exempts many people from public charge rules and DHS’s new rules cannot change these exemptions.
  - ✓ The following people are not subject to public charge rules when applying for status or green cards: Refugees; asylees; survivors of trafficking, domestic violence, or other serious crimes (T or U visa); VAWA self-petitioners; special immigrant juveniles; and certain others.
  - ✓ People with green cards cannot be denied U.S. citizenship and cannot be denied reentry to the U.S. after trips abroad of less than 180 days because of a public charge determination.
  - ✓ U.S. citizens cannot lose citizenship because of a public charge determination.

## How are public charge determinations made today?

Under current policy, a public charge is someone who depends almost exclusively on the government for financial support. An immigration official may consider an



immigrant's current and past receipt of cash assistance (TANF, GA and SSI) or Long-Term Care Medical Assistance (for nursing home care, for example) when making public charge determinations in the U.S. No other benefits can be considered.

## What would DHS's proposal do?

On October 10, 2018, DHS published new proposed public charge rules. If they are implemented, the proposed rules will expand the definition of "public charge" and put many more people at risk of being denied green cards and visas.

- **Families with lower and middle incomes are targeted.** Under DHS's proposal, even an immigrant in a family of four making \$62,000/year (about \$7,000 more than the median income in Pennsylvania) could be denied a visa or green card on public charge grounds. How you live your life and contribute to your community should define you in this country, not how you look or how much money you have.
- **Immigrants are penalized for using a wide range of public benefits.** Under DHS's proposal, an immigrant's receipt of many benefits, including SNAP (Food Stamps) and federal Medical Assistance, will be heavily and negatively weighed during a public charge determination. These benefits are primarily used by working families.

## DHS's proposal harms families and entire communities.

When a child's mother or father is denied a green card, the family's unity and stability is at risk. When immigrant families, which include millions of children, are afraid to access services as basic as health care, all of our communities will become sicker and weaker.

## Fight Back!

DHS's proposed public charge rules are not in effect now and, if we oppose them strongly, they may never take effect.

Tell DHS that you oppose the proposed public charge rules today! You can use the Protecting Immigrant Families website to submit your personalized comments to DHS: <https://protectingimmigrantfamilies.org>. The last day to submit comments will be December 10, 2018.

