



Some families are concerned that receiving public benefits could hurt their chance to get a green card. This document can help you learn more about your situation and the public programs that will not impact your immigration status.

If you are eligible, the following government programs will not affect your immigration status and immigration application

- Medicaid and other health care (except for long-term institutional care)
- SNAP
- Public Housing
- COVID testing, treatment and vaccines
- Pandemic economic impact payments (stimulus checks)
- Pandemic-related one-time financial assistance
- EITC and child tax credits
- WIC
- CHIP
- Free or reduced school lunches
- Food banks or shelters

What is Public Charge?

Some people who apply for a green card (lawful permanent resident status) or a visa to enter the U.S. must pass a “public charge” test – which looks at whether the person is likely to depend primarily on government services in the future. Immigration officials look at all of a person’s circumstances, including their age, income, health, education or skills, family situation and their sponsor’s affidavit of support or contract. The only public benefits that are considered in the public charge test are listed below. :

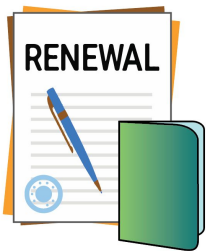
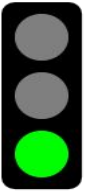
- Cash assistance programs that provide on-going payments. Examples include SSI, TANF, General Assistance
- Long-term institutional care at government expense

DOES PUBLIC CHARGE APPLY TO ME?

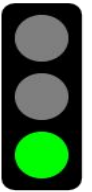
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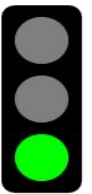
Are you and your family members U.S. citizens? Public charge does NOT apply to you. You should continue to enroll in programs you are eligible for.



Do you and your family members already have green cards? Public charge does NOT apply to you when you renew your green card or apply to become a U.S. Citizen. However, it may apply if you leave the country for more than 6 months. It is a good idea to talk with an immigration attorney if you are planning to take a long trip outside the U.S.



Are you applying for or do you have one of the following statuses: TPS, U or T Visa, Asylum or Refugee status, or Special Immigrant Juvenile Status? Public charge does NOT apply to you. If you already have or are in the process of applying for one of these immigration statuses, you can continue to use any government programs that you qualify for.



Do you plan to apply for a family-based green card? Public charge may apply. Your income, age, health, education, skills, family situation, and sponsor's affidavit of support will be considered to see if you are likely to become a public charge in the future. The only benefits considered in a public charge test are: cash assistance programs that provide on-going payments (Examples: SSI, TANF, General Assistance and long-term institutional care like in a nursing home paid for by the government). We recommend that you speak to a knowledgeable immigration attorney before submitting any immigration-related application.



Protecting Immigrant Families Michigan:

<https://michiganimmigrant.org/protecting-immigrant-families-michigan>

Have questions? Call MIRC's free and confidential intake line : (734) 239-6863.