

# IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT PUBLIC BENEFITS!

You may have heard that the government is considering changing the rules related to “public charge.” As of October 2018 the rules have **NOT** changed.

## WHAT IS PUBLIC CHARGE?

“Public charge” is a test to see if someone is likely to become dependent on specific government programs.

As of right now, the only programs that are part of the public charge test are:

- Cash assistance (like TANF or SSI)
- Institutionalized long-term care (like living in a nursing home) through Medicaid



The changes the government is considering would make many more programs part of the public charge test, including Medicaid, SNAP, Section 8 housing assistance, and Medicare part D. **But again, the rules have NOT changed.**

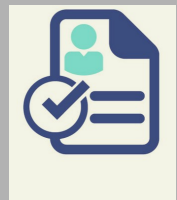
## WHO DOES PUBLIC CHARGE APPLY TO?

Applying for Green Card?



Public Charge test is part of the process

Applying for Citizenship?



Public Charge test is **NOT** part of the process

The changes the government is considering could make the public charge test part of the process of applying to renew certain visas or other statuses, in addition to the green card application. The changes would **NOT** add a public charge test to the U.S. citizenship application.

The following are **NOT** subject to the public charge test at any time, even when applying for a green card:



- Refugees and asylees,
- Victims of trafficking (T visas),
- Victims of domestic violence or other serious crimes (U visas),
- VAWA self-petitioners,
- Special immigrant juveniles (SIJS), and some other immigrants

This will not change even if the government finalizes the rules related to public charge that it is currently considering.

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## WHAT SHOULD I DO?

There may not be any advantage to disenrolling from government programs right now.

The rules have **NOT** changed as of April, 2018.



Even if the rules change, they may apply only to benefits you use after the changes are made. And even if the rules change, using government programs does not automatically make you a public charge.



## WHO CAN ANSWER MY QUESTIONS?



If you have questions about public charge related to an immigration application you already have pending or are considering, you should consult an immigration lawyer. You can call the **New Americans Hotline** at **1-800-566-7636** for suggestions about where to seek legal advice.

The hotline is free and anonymous, and help is available in many languages.