

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

CAAP & IMMIGRATION STATUS

benefitsSF

1. I am not a United States citizen, am I still eligible to receive CAAP?

You may be. CAAP is available to United States citizens or eligible aliens (noncitizens) lawfully admitted to the United States. Lawfully admitted aliens may be holders of I151 or I551 visas (“green cards”), refugees, parolees, asylees, U/T visa holders, etc. Each situation is different so check with your worker to ensure eligibility and other program requirements.

2. Will my immigration status be reported to immigration authorities?

No. However, once you’re approved for aid, your immigration status (e.g., your alien number) will be verified through the Systematic Alien Verification for Entitlements (SAVE) to confirm that the client’s immigration status meets CAAP’s eligibility requirements.

3. Will applying for CAAP cash aid make it harder for me to get a “green card”?

Maybe. Receipt of cash aid is just one thing considered when you apply for a green card. Receipt of cash aid does not automatically make you ineligible for legal residency or make you deportable on grounds of being a “public charge.” However, you might have a problem getting your green card later if you are unable to show at that time that you no longer need CAAP cash aid, or if CAAP cash aid is your only source of support.

4. Is the information about sponsorship required as a component of applying for CAAP?

Yes, but only for sponsored immigrants who entered the U.S. on or after 12/19/97. A sponsored immigrant (alien) is a person whose entry into the United States was sponsored by a person, public or private agency, or organization and whose sponsor executed an affidavit of support or similar agreement on behalf of the alien as a condition of the alien's entry into the United States.

For applicants to the GA, PAES and SSIP programs within CAAP, if the sponsored alien is unable to provide the information due to circumstances beyond his control, i.e., inability to contact the sponsor or the sponsor refuses to cooperate, aid cannot be denied or discontinued. Neither can aid be denied if the sponsor is deceased, disabled, or abusive to the sponsored applicant (proper verification required). A sponsor’s responsibility ends at the time the sponsored immigrant becomes a naturalized citizen.

5. If I do receive CAAP benefits, will my sponsor have to reimburse the money/benefits back to the program?

CAAP does not collect money from your sponsor for money you have received. However, if you are approved SSI benefits for a period during which you were on aid on CAAP, we are required by the State to collect that money (usually from the first lump sum check you receive).

6. Do I have to get finger imaged/photographed?

Yes, but finger images and photographs can only be used to prevent welfare fraud. We will not share these images with law enforcement agencies or immigration authorities. (Pursuant to Welfare and Institutions Codes 17006 and 17006.5, the release of this information is a violation of the rules of confidentiality.)

7. Is receiving CAAP in any way connected to being drafted or serving in the military? **No.**

This FAQ provides general guidance only and is not meant to substitute for legal advice. For more information on immigrant eligibility for public benefits: National Immigration Law Center at www.nilc.org. For info about how benefits impact your immigration status: <http://www.uscis.gov> and search for "public charge."

This Fact Sheet is current as of June 2010. It is not to be used as a substitute for County regulations. The SF Department of Human Services has copies of current regulations you may review.