



Statement from the San Francisco Human Services Agency and the Office of Civic Engagement and Immigrant Affairs on New Federal Public Charge Rule

We are reviewing the federal government's final [Public Charge Rule](#) and assessing its potential impacts on San Franciscans who receive or may be eligible for public benefits.

We recognize that this new federal rule may create uncertainty, fear, and concern within immigrant communities and could discourage eligible individuals and families from applying for benefits and services they are legally entitled to receive. We remain committed to ensuring that all eligible individuals and families can access and maintain the benefits and services they need, regardless of immigration status.

The Public Charge Rule does NOT apply to everyone. Immigration authorities use the term public charge when determining whether a noncitizen applying to enter the U.S. or obtain lawful permanent residency (Green Card) is likely to become dependent on government benefits. The public charge test does not apply to U.S. citizens, individuals who already have green cards, noncitizens who do not plan to apply for a green card, and noncitizens in certain special statuses (e.g., asylees, refugees).

The new Public Charge Rule is NOT currently in effect. The new rule will take effect on September 18, 2026. Until that date, the 2022 rule is still in effect. Under the 2022 rule, non-cash income-based public benefits-such as Medi-Cal, CalFresh, SNAP, WIC, school meals, and housing support-are not included in the public charge test. The notice also states that non-cash income-based public benefits received before the new rule's effective date (September 18) will **not** be considered under the new rule.

As we continue evaluating the Public Charge Rule and its impacts, we encourage community members to:

- for now, continue applying for and accessing services for which they are entitled;
- seek information from trusted sources and consult qualified immigration legal service providers with questions about their individual circumstances and what might be best for their family;
- be cautious about anyone calling or texting pretending to be immigration officials, and report scams.

The public charge rule was challenged in court during the first Trump Administration, and we anticipate there will be similar challenges this time around as well.



Anyone with questions about how current or upcoming public charge rules may affect their benefits can contact the Bay Area Legal Aid Free Advice Line at (800) 551-5554.

We will continue to provide updates on the [Public Charge page](#) within SFHSA.org.

Meanwhile, for information about public benefits available based on immigration status and application requirements, visit sfhsa.org/services/immigrants/public-benefits-immigrants.

For general immigrant resources, including legal assistance, visit sf.gov/immigrants.