

Important information related to possible changes to immigration rules on public benefits

The State of Washington's Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) is aware of proposed changes to federal immigration rules that could apply to people who receive public benefits. We are monitoring these possible changes and want to provide accurate and reliable information for individuals and families who may be impacted by changing policies. Here is what we know.

- Programs and services administered by the State of Washington Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) remain in place and are accessible to people who are eligible.
- DSHS continues to protect the confidentiality of clients' personal information and does not share this information unless required by state or federal law.
- At this time, NO changes to the federal rules have gone into effect. There is currently no impact on benefits received by eligible clients.
- The proposed changes would impact people who are applying for lawful permanent residency (green cards) or admission to the United States, including diversity visa immigrants and applications to renew, change or extend their visa in the United States.
- The proposed changes do not impact people with lawful permanent residency (green cards) applying for their U.S. citizenship or naturalization.
- Currently, officials may only count a client's use of cash assistance or long-term medical institutionalization when considering their immigration application. The proposed changes would add certain federal health care, nutrition and housing benefits, including Washington's Basic Food or SNAP.
- The proposed policy would not be retroactive. It would not consider benefits received today. Use of these additional federal benefits would only be considered if they are received after the rule is finalized.

- The changes would not apply to all types of federal benefits. For a list of benefits that are included or excluded, see the Frequently Asked Questions. NO changes are being made to state benefits.
- This new rule does not apply to all people. It will not apply to people who are refugees and asylees, Amerasian immigrants, Afghan and Iraqi Special Immigrant Visa Holders, Cuban/Haitian Entrants, humanitarian parolees, victims of human trafficking (T-Visa), victims of criminal activity (U-Visa), Special Immigrant Juveniles or VAWA (Violence Against Women Act) self-petitioners.
- This new rule does not count the use of benefits by a person's family members. The use of benefits by children or other household members would not be counted against an individual applying for lawful permanent residency (green cards) or admission to the United States.

Individuals and families who have questions or concerns about the impact of using public benefits on their immigration status should contact an immigration attorney. Resources may be available through one of the organizations listed on the Governor's website: <https://www.governor.wa.gov/issues/issues/safe-communities/immigration-and-refugee-resources>. Additionally, you may contact one of the following organizations for help:

- CLEAR Hotline: 1-888-201-1014
- Northwest Immigrant Rights Project (NWIRP):
 - NWIRP Seattle Office: 206-587-4009
 - NWIRP Yakima Valley (Granger) Office: 509-854-2100
 - NWIRP Wenatchee Office: 509-570-0054