



# Will using benefits hurt my chances of getting a Green Card or becoming a U.S. Citizen?

## DO NOT have a green card yet?

### RIGHT NOW:



**It will NOT hurt your chances of getting a green card** if YOU, your CHILDREN, or other FAMILY members get:

- ◇ **Health Care Programs:** Medi-Cal, prenatal care, ACE, other low-cost medical care...
- ◇ **Food Programs:** CalFresh/Food Stamps, WIC, School meals...
- ◇ **Other non-cash programs:** public housing, childcare, job training...
- ◇ It does Not hurt your chances if your children get cash benefits: CalWORKs, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), CAPI, General Assistance...



You **MIGHT** have a problem getting a green card later **ONLY** if:

- ◇ **YOU get CASH benefits:** CalWORKs/welfare, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), General Assistance (GA)...
- ◇ **OR your family's only income is cash benefits**
- ◇ **OR you are in a nursing home/Long-Term Care paid by Medi-Cal**

## Do you qualify for VAWA or a U/T-VISA or Are you a REFUGEE or ASYLEE?



You can use ANY benefits (if you are eligible), including cash aid, health care, food programs and other non-cash programs, without hurting your chances of getting a green card.

**What is the Public Charge Test?** The Public Charge test applies to two types of immigrants:

- 1) Immigrants applying for visas from outside the U.S. to join family;
- 2) Immigrants living in the U.S. who are applying for green cards.

To pass the test, immigrants must show that they won't depend on government benefits to survive. Only certain benefits count and other factors (education, skills, health, work...) also count.

## Already HAVE a green card?

- 😊 USCIS CANNOT cancel your green card just because YOU or your CHILDREN, or other FAMILY members use benefits.
  - 😊 You CANNOT be denied citizenship for lawfully receiving benefits, including cash aid, health care, food programs & others.
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- 😞 But you MIGHT have a problem: ♦ if you leave the U.S. for **more than 6 months**. Talk to an immigration attorney before you leave.

## Want to sponsor a relative for a green card?

- 😞 Now: Using benefits, including cash aid, health care, & food programs should **not** prevent you from sponsoring a relative who is in the U.S. But it might affect your relative who is abroad. You must show that you or a co-sponsor have enough money to support the relative. Consult a lawyer about your own situation.

- ♦ Public charge rules have not changed for immigrants living in the U.S.
- ♦ There is no advantage to stopping your benefits right now.
- ♦ Food and health care help families thrive.
- ♦ Before you stop any benefits, talk to our lawyers for a free consultation.



For more information, call:  
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