



Public Charge: Health & Well-being of Immigrant Families

**Community Leaders Coalition
'Protecting Immigrant Families' Committee
February 27, 2020**

Today's Presentation

- Learn about the Public Charge rule
- Learn about the 'chilling effect' of policies affecting the health & well-being of immigrant families
- Learn about impacts on Napa Valley Unified School District
- Hear recommendations about supporting immigrant families



Community Leaders Coalition



Mobilize community leaders
to collectively advocate for
the needs of vulnerable
populations throughout Napa
County

What is Public Charge

“Public Charge” is a test that is applied by immigration officials when someone is applying to become a legal permanent resident of the U.S. It is designed to identify people who may likely depend on the gov. as their main source of support.

Factors including a person’s age, health and financial status, education level, knowledge of the English language, skills and if the individual has used public benefits. If the government determines that a person is likely to become a “public charge,” it can deny a person admission to the U.S. or lawful permanent residence.

Programs Affected by Public Charge

PROGRAMS NOT AFFECTED

- Medi-Cal used by children under 21, pregnant women or for emergency services
- WIC | School Lunch | Breakfast Programs
- Emergency Disaster Relief

PROGRAMS AFFECTED - MOST COMMON

- Medi-Cal (over the age of 21)
- CalFresh | Food Stamps | EBT
- Cash assistance (i.e., SSI, TANF, General Assistance)
- Federal public housing and Section 8 assistance
- Institutionalization for long-term care at government expense

Current Status

On 1/27 SCOTUS lifted a nationwide injunction blocking implementation of the rule.

Public Charge rule changes went into effect on February 24, 2020 and only applies to applications post marked on/after that date.

Legal challenges continue in circuit courts



The Chilling Effect



The “chilling effect” is the impact of proposed restrictions that make people fearful to access benefits and services in support of their health and well-being regardless of whether the policies impact them.

Significant potential to prevent hundreds of local residents from using the programs their tax dollars help support, preventing their access to healthy, nutritious food and secure housing.

The Chilling Effect

Napa Valley Unified School District

1 in 4 students in Napa Valley Unified
(3,529 students)



Might not participate in programs that make their families healthier and stronger

Recommendations – Messaging

- Share vetted messaging/information about public charge & information about free reputable services that can be consulted via the School District's own information channels (i.e. website, newsletters, school bulletin board, etc).
- Provide families with specific information about free & reduced lunch not affecting their immigration status.
- Send home letter to families letting them know where they can get access information & resources that support their family's health and well-being.

Recommendations – Training

We recommend training school staff that regularly interact with families about better supporting the health & well-being of immigrant families.

The CLC can support you with this.

Recommendations – Documenting the Chilling Effect

It is important that we are aware of any local trends impacting the health and well-being of immigrant families. This information will support in identifying and addressing the growing unmet needs in the community in real time.

We recommend monitoring the following:

- Any drops in free/reduced school lunch programs
- Increases in housing challenged families and/or student homeless rates

Recommendations – Participate in a Coordinated Local Response

- Participate in collective convening including schools, local government, non-profits, faith-based groups & community members to collaborate on how we will continue to support the health and well-being of immigrant families.
- The CLC will support and organize the local convening and our ask is that the school district is at the table during these discussions.
(Early 2020)

Thank you

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