



*Health Care For All (HCFA) advocates for health justice in Massachusetts by working to promote health equity and ensure coverage and access for all.*

You may find this information in [other languages here](#), or click on the languages listed below:

[Arabic](#)                      [Bosnian](#)                      [Cape Verdean Creole](#)                      [Chinese](#)  
[Haitian Creole](#)                      [Khmer](#)                      [Nepali](#)                      [Portuguese](#)  
[Russian](#)                      [Somali](#)                      [Spanish](#)                      [Vietnamese](#)

For fliers relating specifically to the use of SNAP and public charge, see the links below:

[Portuguese](#)                      [Haitian Creole](#)                      [Spanish](#)

## **Important Update Regarding Immigrants' Use of Benefits: Access to Health Care and the "Public Charge" Rule**

### **What is "public charge"?**

Federal immigration uses a "public charge" test to determine who may be denied a visa or adjustment of status to lawful permanent residence (a "green card"). You may have heard about policy changes that could penalize immigrants for using some public benefits (government programs that may help you pay for food, housing or health care) and would make it more difficult for a family with a low or moderate income to obtain a green card.

The U.S. Supreme Court allowed the implementation of the "public charge" rule while it is being challenged in court by several lawsuits. **The effective date of implementation of the public charge rule is February 24<sup>th</sup>, 2020. Benefits used and applications submitted before that date won't be subject to the new rule. Also, many people are not subject to "public charge" or do not qualify for the benefits listed in the rule.**

THIS FACTSHEET IS MEANT TO HELP YOU UNDERSTAND WHAT THE CURRENT RULE INCLUDES, DETERMINE WHETHER IT APPLIES TO YOU, AND MAKE INFORMED DECISIONS ABOUT HEALTH CARE OPTIONS FOR YOU AND YOUR FAMILY.

**Before making any decision regarding your use of benefits, please take this information into account:**

- **Many immigrants don't have to worry about "public charge"**, for example:
  - Lawful Permanent Residents (green card holders) applying for US citizenship
  - Lawful Permanent Residents (green card holders) applying to renew their expired cards

*HCFA, MIRA, MLRI or HLA do not offer immigration counseling and are not responsible for the immigration advice provided by any of the groups listed*

- Lawful Permanent Residents (green card holders) who need to remove the condition (green card obtained through marriage)
  - Only those Lawful Permanent Residents (green card holders) who leave the U.S. for 180 days or more may be subject to a “public charge” test when they return.
- Refugees and asylees, including people applying for asylum
- People applying for or re-registering for Temporary Protected Status (TPS)
- People applying or re-registering for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA)
- Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) self-petitioners
- Victims of crime or trafficking who hold a U or T visa
- People with Special Immigrant Juvenile Status, including people applying for this status
- **The benefits considered under “public charge” are:**
  - Cash benefits such as:
    - Emergency Aid to the Elderly, Disabled, and Children (EAEDC) from the Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA)
    - Transitional Aid to Families with Dependent Children (TAFDC) from the Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA)
    - Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
    - Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI)
  - Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
  - Federal housing assistance: Section 8 and federal public housing
  - Non-emergency Medicaid for people ages 21 and above (except pregnant women, including 60 days after pregnancy)
- **The following programs are NOT counted in the “public charge” test:**
  - Women, Infants, & Children Nutrition (WIC) Program
  - Health Safety Net
  - MassHealth Limited (Emergency Medicaid)
  - MassHealth coverage for pregnant women (including 60 days after pregnancy)
  - MassHealth coverage for children and young people under age 21
  - MassHealth coverage paid by state-only funding
  - Coverage through the Health Connector, including Advanced Premiums Tax Credits (APTC) and ConnectorCare
  - Children’s Medical Security Plan (CMSP)
  - Medicare
  - COBRA
  - Veterans Administration Coverage and Tricare

WOULD YOU LIKE TO KNOW IF YOUR HEALTH COVERAGE COUNTS FOR THE “PUBLIC CHARGE” TEST?  
**CALL HEALTH CARE FOR ALL’S HELPLINE AT 800-272-4232**

**OTHER CONSIDERATIONS REGARDING “PUBLIC CHARGE”:**

- **Most immigrants who will be subject to the “public charge” test already do not qualify for the federal public benefits that are counted negatively under the new rule.**

- Because “public charge” refers to an individual who is likely to become primarily dependent on the US government for basic needs, immigrants’ **income, health status, age or other factors may make it more difficult to get a green card** even if they have never received the benefits listed by the rule.
- “Public charge” **does not consider the use of public benefits by other family members** (including children) who are not applying for an immigration status adjustment.
- **The length of time immigrants use public benefits will be considered in immigration decisions.**
- **These changes apply to immigration applications only for people who are already in the United States.**

IF YOU ARE APPLYING TO BRING A FAMILY MEMBER TO THE U.S. FROM ANOTHER COUNTRY OR SEEKING TO ADJUST STATUS OUTSIDE OF THE US, YOU SHOULD CONSULT WITH A QUALIFIED IMMIGRATION OR PUBLIC BENEFITS ATTORNEY.

**THIS RESOURCE IS NOT A REPLACEMENT FOR LEGAL ADVICE  
FROM A TRAINED IMMIGRATION OR PUBLIC BENEFITS ATTORNEY.**

Health Care For All (HCFA), the Massachusetts Immigrant Refugee Advocacy Coalition (MIRA), Health Law Advocates (HLA), Massachusetts Law Reform Institute (MLRI) and many other organizations work to protect Massachusetts immigrants and ensure they have the right to access public benefits, including health care.

To learn more about changes regarding the “Public Charge” determination and how to be part of the campaign to oppose these changes, you can send an email to [organizing@hcfama.org](mailto:organizing@hcfama.org).

Below is a list of organizations that are trusted in the community and provide free immigration services. Some of these organizations may have limited capacity and may not accept new cases. Please call first to ensure that they can help you. **The organizations with an asterisk next to them should be able to answer specific questions about “public charge.”**



*HCFA, MIRA, MLRI or HLA do not offer immigration counseling and are not responsible for the immigration advice provided by any of the groups listed*



## Immigration Resources in Northeastern Massachusetts/North Shore

Legal Services		
* <u>Children's Law Center of Massachusetts</u> ^for children and youth under 21	298 Union Street, 2 <sup>nd</sup> Floor Lynn, MA 01901	Ph: (781) 581-1977 Statewide Helpline: 1-888-543-5298 Info@clcm.org
* <u>International Institute of New England- Lowell Office</u>	155 Merrimack Street, 5 <sup>th</sup> Floor Lowell, MA 01852	Ph: (978) 459-9031
Lawrence Family Development and Education Fund, Inc.	404 Haverhill Street Lawrence, MA 01841	Ph: (978) 794-5399
* <u>Northeast Justice Center</u>	50 Island Street, Suite 203A Lawrence, MA 01840 35 John Street, Suite 302 Lowell, MA 01852 181 Union Street, Suite 201A Lynn, MA 01901	Ph: (978) 458-1465
* <u>Northeast Legal Aid</u>	50 Island Street, Suite 203A Lawrence, MA 01840 35 John Street, Suite 302 Lowell, MA 01852 181 Union Street, Suite 201A Lynn, MA 01901	Ph: (978) 458-1465 <a href="https://www.northeastlegalaid.org/get-legal-help">https://www.northeastlegalaid.org/get-legal-help</a>
* <u>Open Door Immigration Services</u>	57 Wharf Street, Suite 3A, Salem, MA 01970	Ph: (978) 594-1095
<u>New American Association of MA</u>	330 Lynnway, Suite 302 Lynn, MA 01901	Ph: (781) 593-0100

## Immigration Resources in Greater Boston/ Eastern Massachusetts

Legal Services		
* <u>Action for Boston Community Development (ABCD)/Fenway Neighborhood Service Center</u>	714 Parker Street Roxbury, MA 02120	Ph: (617) 445-6000
* <u>African Community Health Initiatives (ACHI)</u>	15 Court Square, Suite 360, Boston. MA 02108	Ph: (857) 753-4886
* <u>Agencia ALPHA</u>	62 Northampton Street, Suite 203 Boston, MA 02118	Ph: (617) 522-6382
* <u>Asian American Civic Association</u>	87 Tyler St, 5 <sup>th</sup> Floor Boston, MA 02111	Ph: (617) 426-9492 <a href="mailto:info@aaca-boston.org">info@aaca-boston.org</a>
Catholic Charities (Refugee and Immigrant Services)	275 West Broadway South Boston, MA 02127	Ph: (617) 464-8100
Centro Presente	12 Bennington Street, Suite 202 East Boston, MA 02145	Ph: (857) 256-2981
<u>Compassion Immigration Services, Inc. at Freedom Hill Community Church</u>	77 Kennedy Dr Malden, MA 02148	Ph: (781) 480-4179

*HCFA, MIRA, MLRI or HLA do not offer immigration counseling and are not responsible for the immigration advice provided by any of the groups listed*

<u>*De Novo</u>	1 West St Cambridge, MA 02139	Ph: (617) 661-1010 (617) 405-5479 (immigration hotline)
<u>Dominican Development Center</u>	42 Seaverns Ave Boston, MA 02130	Ph: (617) 524-4029 (616) 272-3666
East Boston Ecumenical Community Council	50 Meridian Street, Suite B1 East Boston, Ma 02128	Ph: (617) 567-2750
<u>*Greater Boston Legal Services</u> (Immigration Unit)	197 Friend Street Boston, MA 02114	Ph: (617) 603-1700 (617) 603-1808 (617) 603-1806
<u>*Haitian American Public Health Initiatives</u>	1601-1603 Blue Hill Avenue Mattapan, MA 02126	Ph: (617) 298-8076
<u>*Harbor Communities Overcoming Violence for Domestic Abuse Survivors</u>	148 Shawmut Street Chelsea, MA 02150	Ph: (617) 884-9799 (617) 884-9909 (24 hr hotline)
<u>Mayor's Office for Immigrant Advancement</u>	1 City Hall Square, Room 806 Boston, MA 02111	Ph: (617) 635-2980
<u>*International Institute of New England (Boston Office)</u>	2 Boylston Street, 3 <sup>rd</sup> Floor Boston, MA 02116	Ph: (617) 695-9990
<u>*Rian Immigrant Center</u>	One State Street, Suite 800 Boston, MA 02109	Ph: (617) 542-7654
<u>Justice Bridge Legal Center</u> UMASS School of Law, Boston Office	67 Batterymarch Street, Lower Level Boston, MA 02110	Ph: (617) 860-3414

### Immigration Resources in MetroWest/Central Massachusetts

Legal Services		
<u>Ascentria Care Alliance</u>	11 Shattuck Street Worcester, MA 01605 94 North Elm Street, Suite 401 Westfield, MA 01085	Ph: (774) 243-3100  Ph: (413) 787-0725
<u>*Catholic Charities of Worcester</u>	11 Hammond Street Worcester, MA 01610	Ph: (508) 860-2234
<u>*Central West Justice Center</u> (Affiliate of Community Legal Aid)	405 Main Street, 4 <sup>th</sup> Floor Worcester, MA 01608	Ph: (855)252-5342 <a href="https://www.cwjjustice.org/get-help/">https://www.cwjjustice.org/get-help/</a>
<u>*Community Legal Aid</u>	515 Main Street Fitchburg, MA 01420 405 Main Street Worcester, MA 01608	(855) 252-5342 <a href="https://communitylegal.org/get-help/">https://communitylegal.org/get-help/</a>
<u>Friendly House</u>	36 Wall Street Worcester, MA 01604	Ph: (508) 755-4362
<u>*MetroWest Legal Services</u>	63 Fountain Street, Suite 304 Framingham, MA 01702	Ph: (508) 620-1830 (508) 371-4029 <a href="https://mwlegal.org/getlegalhelp/online-intake-form">https://mwlegal.org/getlegalhelp/online-intake-form</a>

### Immigration Resources in Western Massachusetts

Legal Services		
----------------	--	--

*HCFA, MIRA, MLRI or HLA do not offer immigration counseling and are not responsible for the immigration advice provided by any of the groups listed*

* <u>Berkshire Immigrant Center</u>	88 South Street Pittsfield, MA 01201	Ph: (413) 445-4881 info@berkshireic.com
* <u>Center for New Americans</u>	42 Gothic Street Northampton, MA 01060 150 Fearing Street Amherst, MA 01002 278 Main Street, Suite 207 Greenfield, MA 01301	Ph: (413) 587-0084  Ph: (413) 239-9550  Ph: (413) 772-0055
* <u>Community Legal Aid</u>	One Monarch Place, Suite 400 Springfield, MA 01144 20 Hampton Avenue, Suite 100 Northampton, MA 01060 152 North Street Pittsfield, MA 01201	Ph: (855) 252-5342 <a href="https://communitylegal.org/get-help/">https://communitylegal.org/get-help/</a>

### Immigration Resources in Southeastern Massachusetts/ Cape Cod and Islands

Legal Services		
* <u>Catholic Social Services of Fall River</u>	1600 Bay St./PO Box M/So. Station Fall River, MA 02724	Ph: (508) 674-4681
<u>Community Action Committee of Cape Cod and Islands, Inc.</u>	372 North Street Hyannis, MA 02601	Ph: 508-771-1727 x236
<u>Immigrant's Assistance Center, Inc.</u>	58 Crapo Street New Bedford, MA 02740	Ph: (508) 996-8113
* <u>Justice Center of Southeast Massachusetts, LLC</u>	231 Main Street, Suite 201 Brockton, MA 02301	Ph: (800) 244-8393
<u>Community Economic Development Center</u>	1285 Acushnet Ave New Bedford, MA 02746	Ph: (508) 979-4684
* <u>South Coastal Counties Legal Services Inc.</u>	22 Bedford Street Fall River, MA 02720 460 West Main Street Hyannis, MA 02601 21 South Sixth St. New Bedford, MA 02740	Ph: (508) 676-6265  Ph: (508) 775-7020  Ph: (508) 979-7150  General Intake Line: (800) 244-9023 <a href="https://sccls.wufoo.com/forms/z1ajztiy1vfrk5p/">https://sccls.wufoo.com/forms/z1ajztiy1vfrk5p/</a>