

Public Charge Rule: What Immigrants Need to Know



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What is the Public Charge Rule?

The public charge rule is a part of U.S. immigration law that allows immigration officials to deny certain immigration benefits (such as a green card) if they believe an applicant is likely to become primarily dependent on the government for financial support in the future. The law has existed for many years, but the definition of who may be considered a "public charge" is changing.

What's Changing?

On July 17, 2026, the Trump administration finalized a new public charge rule that significantly expands the factors immigration officers may consider when reviewing certain immigration applications. The new rule is scheduled to take effect on **September 18, 2026**. Under the new rule, officers may place greater emphasis on whether an applicant appears able to support themselves financially in the future. The updated policy broadens the government's discretion when deciding whether someone is likely to become a public charge.

Who Could Be Affected?

The public charge rule does not apply to everyone.

It may affect certain people applying for:

- Lawful Permanent Residence (Green Cards)
- Immigrant visas
- Certain other immigration benefits where public charge is part of the eligibility review

Many humanitarian immigrants (including refugees and asylees) are generally exempt from the public charge ground of inadmissibility.

What Should Immigrants Do Right Now?

While the new rule has been finalized, **there is still time before it takes effect.**

If you believe the public charge rule could apply to your case:

- Speak with a qualified immigration attorney before filing an application.
- Gather documents showing your financial stability, such as:
 - Employment records
 - Tax returns
 - Bank statements
 - Evidence of assets or financial support (if applicable)
- Do not assume you are affected. Every immigration case is different, and many immigrants are not subject to the public charge rule. **Contact us today to discuss your case!**

Please note that this information is not considered legal advice and is provided for informational purposes only

