

## Keep Your Benefits

Rules about public benefits and immigrants are confusing. The government wants to change how health, age, income, skills (including English language skills), and use of certain public programs are used to decide who can enter the U.S. or get a green card based on a family petition. Courts have blocked recent changes.

**Benefits can help your family stay healthy and thrive.** To learn more, use these tools:



**KeepYourBenefitsCA.org** and **TusBeneficiosPublicos.org** explain the current rules. The guide asks a few questions to see how a particular immigration status may be affected. You can also learn where to get help near you.



**Text “benefits” (for English) or “libre” (for Spanish) to 650-376-8006** to access a simple screening tool. It asks a few simple questions to help you learn when benefits don’t count and when to seek legal advice.

### For More Information about Sharing These Tools

Partners who are interested in sharing these tools, including making them available through their own websites, can contact Hope Nakamura at [hnakamura@legalaidsmc.org](mailto:hnakamura@legalaidsmc.org).



[caimmigrant.org](http://caimmigrant.org)  
[cpca.org](http://cpca.org)  
[childrenspartnership.org](http://childrenspartnership.org)



[legalaidsmc.org](http://legalaidsmc.org)



[protectingimmigrantfamilies.org](http://protectingimmigrantfamilies.org)

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## Tips for Facilitators

KeepYourBenefitCA.org, TusBeneficiosPublicos.org, and the related text application provide tools to help immigrants and their families understand the federal “public charge” rule. Community organizations and service providers who assist community members are also welcome to use the tools. Please keep the following tips in mind:

### Tip 1: The tools do not provide legal advice.

- ◆ Public charge rules and immigration rules are complex.
- ◆ Every situation is different. Consult an expert for specific advice.
- ◆ To find legal assistance, go to <https://www.immigrationadvocates.org/nonprofit/legaldirectory/>

### Tip 2: The tools help explain which immigration applications include a public charge test and which public benefits may affect these applications.

- ◆ For example, if someone enters “Lawful Permanent Residents (green card holders)”, the result will say that LPRs do not face a public charge test when they apply for citizenship. But, if an LPR goes out of the U.S. for more than six months, that person could face a public charge test.
- ◆ The tools do not cover every immigration status; they mention the more common low-income immigrant statuses.
- ◆ *Public benefits are just one part of the public charge test.* Health, age, employment/skills/ education, and family/ sponsor income are also considered.

### Tip 3: The text application is simple and does not provide details.

- ◆ Use 650.376.8006 to text “Benefits” for English or “Libre” for Spanish.
- ◆ After the prompts, enter the letter next to an immigration status. The text response will provide information about how using public benefits may or may not affect a mentioned status.
- ◆ Re-text Benefits, etc. to try a different status.

### Tip 4: The KeepYourBenefitsCA.org and TusBeneficiosPublicos.org websites offer more details about public charge and how benefits fit into the test.

- ◆ Use the “guide” button to learn which immigration statuses face a public charge test and what benefits, if any, count in the test. Follow the prompts to choose a status.
- ◆ Use the “more information” button to learn more about public charge.
- ◆ Use the “back” button to try a different status.

### Tip 5: General messages:

- ◆ Eligibility rules for public benefits have not changed.
- ◆ Most immigrants who face a public charge test aren't eligible for the benefits that could affect their immigration status.
- ◆ Benefits used by family members are not counted. (Immigrants applying through a consulate face changing rules and should consult an immigration expert.)
- ◆ Talk to an immigration expert if you have questions about using benefits.