



NTFB VOICE Advocacy Update

ADVOCATING FOR A HUNGER-FREE, HEALTHY NORTH TEXAS

PUBLIC CHARGE

In Brief - The Supreme Court says that SNAP usage can be considered against an applicant trying to obtain a Green Card

Monday January 27, 2020

The [US Supreme Court](#) will allow SNAP enrollment to be considered when deciding whether or not a non-citizen can move forward in the immigration process to obtain a Green Card (or Legal Permanent Resident Status). The new rule expands the old definition of public charge by considering the use of cash and non-cash benefits, such as SNAP, some Medicaid users, and housing subsidies, when deciding to grant immigrants their Green Cards.

Please note that the rule change does not directly apply to that many people in the United States, as very few non-citizens are eligible for SNAP. Non-citizens who do not have a Green Card must meet several criteria to apply for public benefits, such as documented work or have a particular immigration status.

However, indirectly, the new Public Charge policy may impact our communities. There exists a certain “fear factor” for many SNAP recipients who may be concerned about their own, or their family’s, consequences for using SNAP. It is important to direct people who may be concerned about this rule change to contact an immigration lawyer when looking for advice. Team members of the North Texas Food Bank are not qualified to give legal advice to those who may have questions or concerns.

The Public Charge test applies only for those wanting to obtain a Green Card and does NOT apply for those trying to become a Citizen of the United States.

The consequence produced from fear and from misunderstanding of this rule change could cause households to unenroll from public benefit programs, such as SNAP, decreasing food security. Decreased use of SNAP in food insecure households could increase assistance needed from the emergency food network of food banks and food pantries.

The DHS rule is eligible to now go into effect nationwide, except in Illinois. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me at policy@ntfb.org. [Additionally you can find more information here.](#)

Questions or Comments?

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