



Funders Together

TO END HOMELESSNESS



Policy Alert

What's Happening: Final Public Charge Rule

Last week, the Department of Homeland Security published a [Public Charge Final Rule](#), ensuring that those seeking to immigrate to the United States can access critical housing and health services without risking their immigration status. The Administration reverted the policy to “the historical understanding of a ‘public charge’ that had been in place for decades,” until the previous administration added Section 8 housing and supplemental public health benefits such as Medicaid and nutritional assistance to the definition of a “public charge.”

Through the [Protecting Immigrant Families \(PIF\)](#) campaign, more than 1,000 organizations joined in opposing the previous rule and advocated for this action with the Biden Administration, recognizing that the public charge test was, as stated by the National Low Income Housing Coalition, “an antiquated policy reflecting centuries of racial and class bias.”

Cash assistance programs will still be weighed in lawful permanent residency (“green card”) applications. This is despite the fact that many American citizens across the economic spectrum benefit from and rely on public goods and services while limiting their contributions to those public goods and services through the tax code.

While homeless services were *not* included in the 2019 rule, the Trump Administration’s policy change had a [chilling effect](#) on immigrant families seeking support from public safety nets. The prior policy attempted to create additional barriers to safety and security for these individuals and families and led them to believe they were a burden on our systems. Because of this, many were forgoing critical housing or homelessness support services they needed. The 2019 rule was a part of a long legacy of efforts to perpetuate racism through immigration policy, selectively excluding and including different groups over time based on racial prejudice.

How Philanthropy Can Take Action

Support your community by [disseminating information](#) to your partners about the new rule and provide capacity for outreach and communications efforts to ensure folks are receiving the correct information to obtain the support they need. While the Biden Administration already dismissed the previous rule in 2021, the chilling effect has had a continued impact on these communities.

Additionally, [seek information about what concerns immigrants, asylees, and refugees and their advocates have about local implementation of the rule as it pertains to accessing housing or homelessness services.](#)

Philanthropy can help mitigate the harmful legacy of immigration policies in the United States by proactively, intentionally, and compassionately reaching out to your grantees and partners to better understand how the 2019 rule affected your community. Philanthropy can facilitate relationship building between people with lived expertise, advocates, and providers who understand the impacts of these policies locally and the local government officials and administrators responsible for oversight.

Our partners at PIF strongly recommend that immigrants seek trusted legal advice if they have public charge or immigration status concerns; in most cases public benefits use will not negatively impact an immigrant's legal status. Updated information and resources in more languages are available at pifcoalition.org.

Focusing on the Long-Term Vision: Preparing for Midterm Elections and the Long Haul of Principled Struggle

Labor Day marked the official start to the midterm election season. While the landscape will continue to shift over the coming months, turnover in political leadership at the local, state, and federal levels will implicitly impact on our work.

We know that white supremacy culture leads us away from racial justice and liberation, in part by encouraging us to avoid open conflict. Election season brings much of these conflicts to light, but without space to grapple with the truth and realities that live in the talking points and trending topics. To address this, we can commit to engaging in [principled struggle](#) together and reflect on how we're learning to lean into the tension and trust that conflict and truth can lead us forward if we create meaningful safety in our shared spaces. The tenets of principled struggle provide an important foundation for our work towards housing and racial justice, as individuals, within our organizations, and as a field.

We can ask ourselves: How do we stand in [principled struggle](#) together? How can we build more accountability to each other and our communities? How can we allow the truth and the tension to change and transform us?

Policy Resource Round-Up

- **Center for Effective Philanthropy:** [Think Your Foundation Can't Engage in Election Season Advocacy? Think Again.](#)
- **Center on Budget and Policy Priorities:** [Hidden Housing Instability: 3.7 Million People Live in Doubled-Up Households](#)
- **National Alliance to End Homelessness:**
 - [Employed and Experiencing Homelessness: What the Numbers Show](#)
 - [Honoring Our Sector on Labor Day - National Alliance to End Homelessness](#)
- **National Low Income Housing Coalition:**
 - [Department of Homeland Security Publishes Final Public Charge Rule](#)
- **Protecting Immigrant Families:**
 - [Public Charge Rule: A Major Win for Immigrant Families](#)
 - [Public Charge Community Resources](#)

As always, we are here to answer your questions or provide insights on public policy developments and opportunities. Please reach out to me or [Amanda](#) at any time.

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