



Will using benefits hurt my chances of getting a Green Card or becoming a U.S. Citizen?

Good News! INS says:

If you DO NOT have a green card yet



It will NOT hurt your chances of getting a green card if YOU, your CHILDREN, or other Family Members use:



HEALTH CARE, such as: Medi-Cal, Healthy Families, WIC, prenatal care, other free or low-cost medical care



Food Programs, such as: Food Stamps, WIC, school Meals and other food assistance



Other programs that do not give cash, such as: public housing, disaster relief, childcare services, job training, transportation vouchers



You MIGHT have a problem getting your green card later ONLY IF:



You use CASH WELFARE, such as: CalWORKs, Supplemental Security Income (SSI) General Assistance (GA), Cash Assistance Program for Immigrants (CAPI)



OR your family's only source of support is cash welfare received by your CHILDREN or other FAMILY MEMBERS



Or you are in a nursing home or other LONG-TERM CARE paid for by Medi-Cal or other government funds

Call one of the phone numbers listed on the back for more information

If you are a VICTIM OF ABUSE



Who has filed a self-petition under the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), use of cash welfare and other programs will NOT count against you

If you are a REFUGEE or ASYLEE



You can use ANY benefits, including cash welfare, health care, food programs and non-cash programs, without hurting your chances of getting a green



If you already HAVE a green card



You CANNOT lose your green card

if YOU, your CHILDREN, or other Family Members use:



HEALTH CARE, FOOD programs and other NON-CASH programs



CASH WELFARE



LONG-TERM CARE



But You MIGHT have a problem:



If you leave the U.S. for more than 6 months continuously and you have used cash welfare or long-term care



OR in extremely rare cases, if you use cash welfare or long-term care during your first 5 years in the U.S., for reasons (such as illness or disability) that existed before you entered the country

Call one of the phone numbers below for more information

If you are applying for U.S. citizenship



You CANNOT be denied U.S. citizenship for lawfully receiving benefits, including cash welfare, health care, food programs and non-cash programs.

If you want to sponsor your relative



Using benefits, including cash welfare, health care, food programs, and non-cash programs should not prevent you from sponsoring your relative. But you will need to show that you or your co-sponsor earn enough income to support your relative.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CALL:

OR CALL:

IN NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

Services Immigrant Rights &
Education Network
(408) 286-1698 Spanish
(408) 286-1448 Vietnamese
(408) 286-5680x108 Farsi
(408) 286-5680x109 Chinese

IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Coalition for Humane Immigrant
Rights of Los Angeles
(888) 6-CHIRLA Spanish
Asian Pacific American Legal Center
(213) 977-7500
Chinese & Vietnamese

Developed by the Asian Pacific American Legal Center for the **California Immigrant Welfare Collaborative**, a joint project of:
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