

Understanding Public Charge



What is Public Charge?

Public charge is a test used by immigration officials to decide whether a noncitizen is likely to be dependent on the government for support. It is one of several factors they look at when deciding whether to approve a **visa** to enter the U.S. or a **green card** to become a legal permanent resident.

Many benefits don't count toward the public charge test. We have included a few of the most common ones below.

Which Benefits Do Not Count?

Generally, supportive services **do not** count toward a public charge determination, including Medi-Cal and CalFresh, or supportive service benefits collected by family members.*



Which Benefits Do Count?

Cash benefits, including CalWORKs or Cash Assistance Program for Immigrants (CAPI), **are considered** when immigration officials determine if you are likely to be dependent on government support. When Medi-Cal is used for long-term care, such as a nursing home, it is also considered.*



Learn More About Public Charge

- Visit the State of California's [Immigrant Guide](#)
- CA Health & Human Services [Public Charge Guide](#)
- Consult with an immigration attorney



Immigration Resources in Ventura County

- [El Concilio Family Services](#), 301 S. C St., Oxnard, 805- 486-9777
- [Mixteco/Indigena Community Organizing Project](#) (MICOP), 135 Magnolia Ave., Oxnard, 805-483-1166

*The public charge rule was last updated in 2022 and is subject to change. This document provides an overview. Please see the resources above for more detailed information.