

WHAT SHOULD I KNOW WHEN ENROLLING MY CHILDREN IN PUBLIC BENEFITS?

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Programs like Medicaid, CHIP, ACA Marketplace Coverage, School Breakfast & Lunch, WIC and SNAP (“food stamps”) help your children lead healthier lives. You may have questions about whether your child’s use of these health and nutrition programs will affect your immigration status or your application for a green card. This document provides answers to frequently asked questions to help you make good decisions for your family.

If my child receives health or nutrition assistance, will that make it more difficult for me to get a green card?

No. Health and nutrition programs are not considered in green card applications, except for long-term care (like a nursing home) that the government pays for. Health or food benefits that your children or other family members get are different from benefits that you receive yourself. Including your name on your child’s application does NOT mean that you have applied for benefits for yourself.

Do I have to give my information when I apply for benefits for my child? You will have to provide some of your information. The application requires income information for everyone in your family, even if they are not applying for benefits for themselves. However, you will not have to provide a social security number or information about your immigration status if you are only applying for benefits for your children. You can leave these sections blank.

Will I need to repay the government for benefits used by my U.S. Citizen child? No. If your child is eligible for benefits, your family will not need to repay those benefits in the future.

Will information that I put on an application for my child be used for immigration enforcement?

No. Any information you give on the application will be used only to determine your child’s eligibility and to run the program. This information cannot be shared with immigration enforcement.

What if I am undocumented? If you are undocumented and applying for your child or another family member, you should not provide any information about your immigration status. Instead, you may say or write, “I am not applying for this program for myself.”

Will receiving COVID-19 or pandemic assistance make it more difficult for me to get a green card?

No. The only kind of assistance that might be considered in your application for a green card is ongoing cash assistance and long-term care paid for by the government. Receiving COVID-19 and short-term pandemic assistance will not affect your immigration status or immigration application. This includes COVID-19 testing, treatment, vaccines, stimulus checks, one-time financial assistance, P-EBT, and child tax credits.