

Update on Public Charge Final Rule: Implementation on February 24, 2020

EHSD REPORT TO THE FAMILY AND HUMAN SERVICES
COMMITTEE

FEBRUARY 24, 2020

CONTRA COSTA COUNTY

EMPLOYMENT & HUMAN SERVICES

The Rule Change

What is Public Charge?

The term “public charge” is used to indicate a person who may be likely to become dependent on the government for subsistence. A public charge determination can be used as grounds to reject a legal immigrant’s application for a visa or green card.

What will change on February 24, 2020?

- New heavily weighted factors to the totality of circumstances are considered, including negative weight for receipt or use of one or more designated public benefits.
- New benefits programs added to the list of programs that will be included in the public charge determination.

Impacts of the Rule Change

- Families may forego critical supports, feeling that they must choose between food, health care and services they need, and obtaining the citizenship they are legally on track to obtain
- Due to a “chilling effect,” even non-affected immigrant families may not enroll – or disenroll – in programs for which they are eligible
- The changes pose a risk of worse health outcomes and greater poverty for those in need and negative health and economic impacts for the community at large

What Actions Have the Board Taken?

- The new rule runs counter to our values as a Welcoming County (Resolution No. 2018/245)
- It also do not align with the EHSD core value that embraces diversity, and honors individual differences and equal treatment of all
- For these reasons, the Board of Supervisors submitted a Public Comment OPPOSING the proposed rule on December 7, 2018

EHSD Response to Public Charge Implementation: February 24, 2020

Equipping Our Staff

- **Current:**

- Training in progress for all EHSD staff (almost 1/3 of Eligibility Worker staff already trained)
- Continue to monitor USCIS and Department of State guidance

- **Planned:**

- *Public Charge Webinar and Employee Guide for all staff*
- *Identify and enroll Public Charge "Champions" within EHSD ranks*

Empowering Our Customers

- **Current:**

- Update EHSD.org Public Charge/ Immigration Landing page with latest info, press release, and community resources
- Finalize and publish Public Charge video and post to EHSD.org
- Continue to track data trends ("chilling effect")

- **Planned:**

- *Finalize and Distribute Public Charge Community Flyer*
- *Plans for materials in other languages (currently English/Spanish)*

Coordinating Efforts with County and Community Partners

- **Current:**

- Re-convene Public Charge partnership group (EHSD, CCHS, Clinic Consortium, Stand Together CoCo, and legal service providers) for increased clarity on rules and coordination of efforts
- Coordinate with partners on outreach events

- **Planned:**

- *Coordinate a Public Charge community forum*
- *Identify opportunities for further understanding about the public charge rule, focus on training resources for attorneys*