



NC DEPARTMENT OF  
**HEALTH AND  
HUMAN SERVICES**  
Division of Social Services

ROY COOPER • Governor

MANDY COHEN, MD, MPH • Secretary

SUSAN G. OSBORNE • Assistant Secretary for County Operations

July 13, 2021

Dear County Directors of Social Services

Subject: Public Charge Rule

You received a letter in September of 2019 from the Department of Health and Human Services with information about the federal rules on the public charge ground of inadmissibility, which changed in 2019. This letter is to make you aware that the 2019 changes to the public charge rules are no longer in effect, and to explain the current status of public charge rules.

“Public charge” is a term used in immigration law to determine whether a person is likely to become dependent on the government for support and is used as one of several factors to determine certain legal resident statuses. The 2019 rule change expanded the number of public assistance programs that would be considered for a public charge determination, creating new barriers to getting a green card or immigrating to the U.S. and creating fear about accessing health and benefit programs.

As of early March 2021, courts across the United States have blocked the 2019 rule change and the current Presidential administration has stopped enforcement of the 2019 rule change in accordance with Executive Order No. 14012. Now that the rule has changed, the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) within the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has reinstated the 1999 Field Guidance to govern public charge decisions, which is the same policy that governed public charge decisions from 1999 through 2019.

Because of the important role you play in providing services in your community, we want to provide the most accurate information to ensure that those eligible to access benefits and services will not fail to do so out of fear that is based on a lack of understanding about current public charge rules.

The attached flyers, created by immigration legal specialists unaffiliated with DHHS, provide an educational resource that explains the current status of public charge rules. This flyer is also available online in [English](#) and [Spanish](#) on the website for the North Carolina Justice Center and links to the flyers will soon be available in relevant areas of the DHHS website. The Justice Center also has updated videos about public charge [on its website](#) and may soon have flyers in other languages.

We are asking for your assistance with disseminating this accurate information about public charge as outlined below:

1. Print hard copies of the English and Spanish versions of the flyer referenced above and make them available in lobbies of public facing DSS spaces.

**NC DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES • DIVISION OF SOCIAL SERVICES**

LOCATION: 820 S. Boylan Avenue, McBryde Building, Raleigh, NC 27603  
MAILING ADDRESS: 2401 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-2401  
www.ncdhhs.gov • TEL: 919-527-6335 • FAX: 919-334-1018

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY / AFFIRMATIVE ACTION EMPLOYER

2. Communicate with county staff that the public charge rule has changed once again, provide them with the flyer explaining the change and the link to the video, and encourage them to provide the flyer to those who may need or want information about public charge. While county staff cannot and should not provide advice regarding public charge or other matters related to immigration status, this flyer can serve as a resource for accurate information about public charge and how to seek additional information.

3. Consider adding links to these flyers and videos in relevant places on your county website.

As always, we appreciate the work you do every day in your community as well as your partnership in this work on public charge to ensure accurate information is available to those who need public benefits.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Susan G. Osborne".

Susan G. Osborne

Assistant Secretary for County Operations

North Carolina Department of Health & Human Services

Division of Social Services