

Public Charge

January 2017	DRAFT ORDER CIRCULATED The draft order outlining intended changes to public charge circulates among government officials and is leaked to the public. Changes to public charge include new standards for when an immigrant would be considered a public charge, including considering SNAP, TANF, and Medicaid use in a determination. This release sparks fear and confusion, causing a chilling effect among immigrant communities
October 18, 2018	NOTICE OF PROPOSED RULEMAKING ISSUED The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) issues a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, opening a 60-day comment period. Over 266,000 public comments are submitted.
August 14, 2019	FINAL "INADMISSIBILITY ON PUBLIC CHARGE GROUNDS" RULE PUBLISHED DHS publishes the final public charge rule, set to go into effect on October 15, 2019.
August - September 2019	LAWSUITS FILED AGAINST THE PUBLIC CHARGE RULE Twenty-two states and the District of Columbia, and several counties, community-based organizations, and advocacy organizations file suits against the public charge rule.
October 2019	INJUNCTIONS BLOCK IMPLEMENTATION FOR OCTOBER 15, 2019 Four U.S. District Courts place injunctions on the final rule, blocking DHS from implementing it. Three of the injunctions put a nationwide block on implementation. DHS appeals these injunctions.
December 5 and 9, 2019	TWO INJUNCTIONS REMOVED, ONE REMAINS U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth and Fourth Circuits grant DHS' motion for a stay on the preliminary injunctions, removing its block to implementing the rule. One nationwide injunctions still block DHS from implementing the rule.
January 8, 2020	COURT DENIES REMOVAL OF INJUNCTION U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit denies the government's request of a stay on the injunction, leaving the injunction and block on implementing public charge in place.
January 28, 2020	SUPREME COURT LIFTS INJUNCTION The U.S. Supreme Court lifts the final nationwide injunction, making a pathway for the rule to be implemented.
January 30, 2020	USCIS ANNOUNCES IMPLEMENTATION DATE U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) announces that applications submitted on or after February 24, 2020, will be subject to the final public charge rule.
February 24, 2020	PUBLIC CHARGE RULE IMPLEMENTED All applications submitted on or after February 24, 2020 will be assessed by the standards in the final public charge rule.
July 29, 2020	NEW INJUNCTION BLOCKS IMPLEMENTATION A nationwide injunction due to COVID-19 national emergency blocks implementation of the DHS's final public charge rule. The injunction also blocks the Department of State rule (for applicants applying outside the U.S and the Presidential Proclamation requiring healthcare for new immigrants.
August 12, 2020	INJUNCTION LIMITED TO THREE STATES U.S. Second Circuit court limits the injunction to New York, Connecticut, and Vermont.
September 11, 2020	INJUNCTION LIFTED, PUBLIC CHARGE IMPLEMENTED U.S. Second Circuit courts removes the injunction, allowing the final public charge rule to be implemented nationwide.
November 2, 2020	PUBLIC CHARGE RULE BLOCKED Federal district court vacates the DHS public charge rule, blocking its implementation nationwide for new cases.
November 3, 2020	PUBLIC CHARGE RULE ALLOWED TO BE IMPLEMENTED U.S. Seventh Circuit court stays the November 2, 2020 ruling, allowing the final public charge rule to be implemented nationwide while the Federal district court's ruling is being appealed.

Public charge is a test considered when someone applies for a green card. The previous definition is a person who is "likely to become primarily dependent on the government for subsistence." The final rule changes the definition to a person who receives 12 months of Medicaid, SNAP, federal housing assistance, or state or federal cash assistance programs within a 36-month period. To make that assessment, officials look at overarching factors in a "totality of circumstances test," including a person's age, health, family status, income, education and skills, and affidavit of support. If a person is deemed likely to become a public charge, his or her application may be denied.