

Will using benefits hurt my chances of getting a Green Card or becoming a U.S. Citizen?

Good News! Citizenship and Immigration Services says:

If you DO NOT have a green card yet

- 😊 It will NOT hurt your chances of getting a green card if YOU, your CHILDREN, or other FAMILY MEMBERS use:
- ✧ HEALTH CARE, such as: MassHealth, Healthy Families, WIC, prenatal care, other free or low-cost medical care
 - ✧ Food Programs, such as: Food Stamps/SNAP, WIC, school meals, and other food assistance
 - ✧ Other programs that do not give cash, such as: public housing, disaster relief, childcare services, job training, transportation vouchers

- ☹️ You MIGHT have a problem getting your green card later ONLY IF:
- ✧ You use CASH WELFARE, such as: TAFDC, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), EAEDC
 - ✧ OR your family's only source of support is cash welfare received by your CHILDREN or other FAMILY MEMBERS
 - ✧ Or you are in a nursing home or other LONG-TERM CARE paid for by MassHealth or other government funds

Call your local legal services program for more information.

If you are a VICTIM OF ABUSE


- 😊 WHO has filed a self-petition under the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), use of cash welfare and other programs will NOT count against you.


If you are a REFUGEE or ASYLEE

- 😊 You can use ANY benefits, including cash welfare, health care, food programs and non-cash programs, without hurting your chances of getting a green card.




If you already HAVE a green card

-  You **CANNOT** lose your green card if YOU, your CHILDREN, or other FAMILY MEMBERS use:
- ✧ HEALTH CARE, FOOD programs and other NON-CASH programs
 - ✧ CASH WELFARE
 - ✧ LONG-TERM CARE


-  But YOU MIGHT have a problem:
- ✧ If you leave the U.S. for more than 6 months continuously and you have used cash welfare or long-term care
 - ✧ OR in extremely rare cases, if you use cash welfare or long-term care during your first 5 years in the U.S., for reasons (such as illness or disability) that existed before you entered the country

Call your local legal services program for more information.

If you are applying for U.S. citizenship

-  You **CANNOT** be denied U.S. citizenship for lawfully receiving benefits, including cash welfare, health care, food programs and non-cash programs.

If you want to sponsor your relative

-  Using benefits, including cash welfare, health care, food programs, and non-cash programs, should not prevent you from sponsoring your relative. But you will need to show that you or your co-sponsor earn enough income to support your relative.

For more information, call your local legal services program.

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