

Public Charge Rule & WIC Benefits



Department of Health
& Human Services



A new federal Public Charge rule started on September 18, 2026. This rule was written and required by federal immigration authorities. Utah WIC is required to comply. Here's what you need to know if you're receiving WIC benefits.

What is a Public Charge test?

- It is a test that includes a list of factors that U.S. immigration officials use to decide if someone could become dependent on government assistance once they're in the United States.
- They may review your job history, medical history, current finances, household income, and benefits received from other government programs (such as SNAP or TANF).
- If someone doesn't pass the Public Charge test, their green card application will be denied.

Who is affected?

- Most immigrants do not receive a Public Charge test.
- The new rule will only affect specific green card applications filed after September 17, 2026. It will not affect green card renewals, citizenship applications, or refugees/asylum seekers.

How does the new Public Charge rule affect WIC?

- WIC is now included on the list of programs that immigration officials look at during a Public Charge test.
- If you received WIC benefits before September 18, 2026, that information won't be used in a Public Charge test.
- If you or your immediate family members (including children who are U.S. citizens) receive WIC benefits after September 17, 2026, that information can be used in a Public Charge test.
- During a Public Charge test, immigration officers may look at which WIC benefits you received, how long you used WIC, and how recently you received WIC benefits.

What should families do?

- Talk to an immigration lawyer if you have questions or concerns about how this could affect you and your family.
- WIC staff cannot provide legal advice or recommendations about the Public Charge rule change.