

SHOULD I KEEP MY KIDS ENROLLED IN HEALTH AND NUTRITION PROGRAMS?

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Programs like Medicaid, CHIP, Marketplace Coverage (“Obamacare”), School Breakfast & Lunch, WIC and SNAP (“food stamps”) can help your children lead healthier and stronger lives. You may have questions about whether your child’s use of these health and nutrition programs will affect your immigration status or your application for a green card. This document provides some facts to help you make good decisions for your family. Below are answers to frequently asked questions.

If my child receives health or nutrition assistance, will that make it more difficult for me to get a green card in the U.S.? No. Benefits your children receive will not count against you if your green card application is processed in the U.S. Benefits that you get for your children or other family members are different from benefits that you may receive yourself. Including your name on your child’s application does NOT mean that you have applied for benefits for yourself.

If I apply for benefits for my child, will I have to give information about myself? Yes, some. The application requires income information for everyone in your family, even if they are not applying for benefits for themselves. However, you will not have to provide a social security number or information about your immigration status if you are only applying for benefits for your children. You can leave these sections blank.



Will I need to repay the government for benefits used by my U.S. Citizen child? No. If your U.S. Citizen child is eligible for and receiving benefits now, your family will not be responsible for repaying those benefits in the future.



Will information that I put on an application for my child be used for immigration enforcement? No. Any information you give on the application will be used only to determine your child’s eligibility for the program. This information is not used for immigration enforcement. You should make sure you provide only the information needed and should not provide any false information.

What if I am undocumented? If you are undocumented and applying for your child or another family member, you should not provide any information about your immigration status. Instead you may say or write, “I am not applying for this program for myself.”

If my child receives health or nutrition assistance, will that make it more difficult for our family members who need to go to their green card interview outside of the U.S.? Different rules apply to people who have their immigration applications processed outside of the U.S. Immigration officials at consular offices in other countries are allowed to ask questions about the use of benefits by family members. They can consider this information – along with other facts about your family’s situation – when deciding whether to grant permission to enter the U.S. or grant a green card.

Remember, health and nutrition assistance can help your children thrive! For more information, visit <https://protectingimmigrantfamilies.org/know-your-rights/>.

Local non-profits and immigration advocates may also be able to provide individual help and legal advice. For free or low-cost options visit: <https://www.immigrationadvocates.org/nonprofit/legaldirectory/>