

Public Benefits for Immigrants

Benefits and Consequences

It is important that you be honest with your caseworker and on any application that you complete for food stamps, medical cards, cash assistance or other government program.

You do NOT have to be a U.S. Citizen or Lawful Permanent Resident (greencard holder) to receive certain public benefits. Many other immigrants are eligible for benefits depending on their status.

YOUR RIGHTS:

- The public aid office (Illinois Department of Human Services) can NOT report you to or share any of your information with U.S. Citizenship & Immigration Services (formerly INS).
- The public aid office can NOT report you to or share any of your information with IRS or the police except in specific circumstances (for example: child abuse)
- The public aid office can NOT discriminate against you because of your race, religion, ethnicity, national origin, gender or language that you speak.
- The public aid office must provide you with an interpreter if you do not speak English. You might want a friend or advocate to call ahead if you will need an interpreter for a language other than Spanish.
- The public aid office can NOT ask for the immigration status of anyone in your family who does not want to receive benefits.

If you feel that you have been discriminated against or if a caseworker threatens to report you to U.S. Citizenship & Immigration Services, please call the Legal Assistance Foundation at 1-888-893-5327

YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES:

- You should report any and all income for yourself and family members who live with you. You can report income that you receive illegally and/or under a false Social Security Number. The public aid office will NOT report you to U.S. Citizenship & Immigration Services or the IRS.
- You should accurately report the immigration status of everyone in your household who is applying for benefits. If you are applying for benefits for your children but not yourself, you do NOT have to report your immigration status.
- You should report all expenses especially for child care (babysitters), rent, utility bills and medical bills. This can help you receive more benefits.
- You can provide your own interpreter but you are NOT required to. You should NOT use children to interpret for you. The public aid office will provide you with a competent interpreter.

Do not ever write on an application or tell a caseworker you are a citizen if you are not. This is considered a 'false claim to citizenship' and can be grounds for denying you legal status in the future.