



## "Public Charge" proposal already affecting Northern Plains kids

**The "public charge" rule change would make it harder for some people to get green cards if they receive specific public benefits, including nutrition benefits through SNAP and Medicaid**

December 06, 2018

OMAHA, Neb. ([KELO.com](http://KELO.com)) -- With a Dec. 10 deadline for public comments just around the corner, immigrants' rights groups say they're hoping Nebraskans will make their voices heard on a proposal by the Trump administration.

The "public charge" rule change would make it harder for some people to get green cards if they receive specific public benefits, including nutrition benefits through SNAP and Medicaid.

Mindy Rush Chipman, senior managing attorney with the Immigrant Legal Center in Omaha, says the rule could limit children's access to nutritious food as well as health, dental and mental health services.

"It's clear that parents' health and access to health care and proper support services impacts not just the parents, but it impacts the children as well," she states.

Chipman says the proposal has already created a chilling effect, as some Nebraska families with U.S. citizen children have stopped applying for benefits.

She says many services are still available without risk, including WIC - Women, Infants and Children - school meals and food pantries.

Proponents maintain the new rule would promote immigrant self-sufficiency and save taxpayers money.

Chipman points to a recent study by the Cato Institute that shows native-born Americans are more likely to tap government programs than immigrants.

She says helping struggling families is an important investment.

"When low-income families are provided access to preventative health care, access to safe and healthy housing and access to nutrition, that in fact saves taxpayers money in the long run," Chipman states.

Chipman says before opting out of benefits, people can get free legal advice on which services might impact their immigration status through the Nebraska Immigration Legal Assistance Hotline.