

**Greater Chicago Food Depository  
Statement on Public Charge Rule Change  
September 25, 2018**



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On September 22, the White House unveiled a proposal to change the way families across the United States access federal nutrition programs and other critical programs. The proposed executive action will hurt families who immigrate to this country legally while potentially increasing hunger throughout immigrant communities.

Under current federal immigration policy, officials may deny entry or legal permanent residency to immigrants on the basis that they are likely to become a public charge, or dependent on government benefits as their main source of support. To make this determination, officials currently consider receipt of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) cash benefits and Medicaid long-term care during case evaluation. The proposed rule would broaden the definition of public charge to include whether an individual received certain public services, including food assistance through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

The Greater Chicago Food Depository opposes this rule, which will use SNAP – our nation’s most effective anti-hunger program – to threaten the lawful residency or citizenship of people in our community and across the United States. As a food bank that works to serve all of our neighbors in need, we are concerned that this rule will generate fear and confusion that may discourage immigrants from seeking food assistance of any kind.

At the Food Depository, we believe that no person – immigrant or citizen – should go hungry in Chicago, Cook County or the United States. Together, with a local network of agencies and programs, we are inspired by our vision that everyone in our community will have access to nutritious food to live stable, healthy lives. For these reasons, we are a proud member of the Protecting Immigrant Families (PIF) Illinois committee.

On behalf of our partner agencies and the people we serve, the Food Depository urges the White House to rescind this rule.

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