

# REMOVING THE FIVE-YEAR BAR IS ESSENTIAL FOR CHILDREN IN THE UNITED STATES TO THRIVE

Currently, immigrants with legal permanent resident (LPR) status must wait five years to access critical supports like Medicaid, the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program, and Supplemental Security Income. Individuals with Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) status, Temporary Protected Status (TPS), and other immigrants authorized to be in the United States are almost entirely barred from access to public benefits.

**CLASP estimates that at least 1.7 million children in immigrant families in the United States may be impacted by barriers to public benefits.<sup>1</sup>**

A majority of states allow some access to benefits including SNAP, Medicaid, and CHIP for children with LPR status during the five-year waiting period. However, the waiting period should be removed entirely. When caregivers are able to fully access supports, they can better care for themselves and their children. Additionally, parents and youth with DACA status and other authorized immigrants remain barred from coverage.

## What would removing the 5-year bar mean for children in immigrant families?

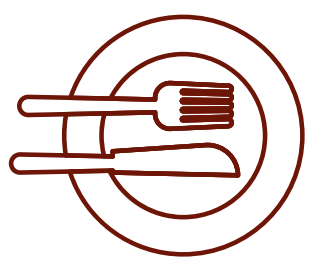
Essential health care, public benefits, and economic supports would be accessible to all eligible, lawfully present immigrants. Removing the bar would provide children the support they need for a healthy and happy childhood.<sup>2</sup>

### Increasing Access to Health Care



Children with immigrant parents are twice as likely to be uninsured over children with U.S. citizen parents.<sup>3</sup> Research has documented that child health is closely linked to that of their parents—even when children are U.S. citizens, they are less likely to be enrolled in benefits if their caregivers are ineligible for those same benefits.<sup>4</sup>

### Reducing Hunger



Access to nutrition can have a serious impact on a child's mental and physical wellbeing, yet immigrant families disproportionately experience food insecurity.<sup>5</sup> Participation in SNAP for children in immigrant families has dramatically decreased at rate nearly triple that of children with U.S. citizen parents.<sup>6</sup>

### Supporting Economic Stability



A quarter of all children in immigrant families live in poverty— a higher rate than children with U.S. citizen parents.<sup>7</sup> The pandemic has only exacerbated the economic and housing instability that immigrant families face.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>1</sup> National Center for Children in Poverty, State Immigration Policy and Children's Well-Being, <https://www.nccp.org/immigration-profiles/>; The Demographic and Economic Impacts of DACA Recipients: Fall 2021 Edition, <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/the-demographic-and-economic-impacts-of-daca-recipients-fall-2021-edition/>.

<sup>2</sup> Aileen Wang, Madalyn News, First Focus Campaign for Children, Fact Sheet: LIFT the Bar Act, [https://firstfocus.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/FACT-SHEET\\_LIFT-the-BAR.pdf](https://firstfocus.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/FACT-SHEET_LIFT-the-BAR.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Kaiser Family Foundation, Health Coverage of Immigrants, <https://www.kff.org/racial-equity-and-health-policy/fact-sheet/health-coverage-of-immigrants/>

<sup>4</sup> Georgetown University Center for Children and Families, Health Coverage for Parents and Caregivers Helps Children, <https://ccf.georgetown.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Covering-Parents-v2.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> Allison Bovell-Ammon, Stephanie Ettinger de Cuba, et al., Trends in Food Insecurity and SNAP Participation among Immigrant Families of U.S.-born Young Children, Children's HealthWatch, <https://childrenshealthwatch.org/wp-content/uploads/0001.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> Food Research & Action Center, New Data Reveal Stark Decreases in SNAP Participation Among U.S. Citizen Children Living With a Non-Citizen, <https://frac.org/wp-content/uploads/SNAP-Participation-Among-U.S.-Citizen-Children.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> The Annie E. Casey Foundation, One-Fourth of Kids in Immigrant Families Are Living in Poverty, <https://www.aecf.org/blog/one-fourth-of-kids-in-immigrant-families-are-living-in-poverty>

<sup>8</sup> Hamutal Bernstein, Cary Lou, Wesley Jenkins, Urban Institute, Policymakers Can Prioritize Better Ways to Support Children of Immigrants through Housing Assistance, <https://www.urban.org/urban-wire/policymakers-can-prioritize-better-ways-support-children-immigrants-through-housing-assistance>

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