

**Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights**  
**Public Assistance for Lawful Permanent Residents**  
*I am a lawful permanent resident--Which public benefits can I receive?*



**If you are a lawful permanent resident (LPR) who entered the US *before* 8/22/96, you may qualify for the following benefits:**

**CASH**

- Temporary Aid for Needy Families (TANF)
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI), if
  - you were receiving SSI or had an application pending on 8/22/96;
  - you were legally residing in the US on 8/22/96 and later became blind or disabled
  - you have credit for 40 quarters of work
- Illinois Aid to the Aged, Blind or Disabled (AABD)
  - Only if you are 65 years and older and have been determined “not disabled” by SSA
- Illinois Transitional Assistance (TA)
- Social Security Retirement Benefits

**MEDICAL**

- Medicaid
- Kidcare

**FOOD**

- Food Stamps, if
  - you have been a lawful permanent resident for five years, or
  - you are under 18 years old
  - you receive disability-related assistance
  - you were 65 years or older and were lawfully residing in the US on 8/22/96
- Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants & Children (WIC)
- School Lunch and Breakfast

**EDUCATION**

- K-12 Education
- Title IV Federal Student Grants and Loans
- Head Start

**If you are a lawful permanent resident (LPR) who entered the US *on or after* 8/22/96, you may qualify for the following benefits:**

**CASH**

- Temporary Aid for Needy Families (TANF) – must have been Qualified Immigrant\* 5 years
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
  - Only if you have credit for 40 quarters of work and have been Qualified Immigrant\* 5 years
- Illinois Aid to the Aged, Blind or Disabled (AABD) – only if you currently receive SSI
- Illinois Transitional Assistance (TA) – must have been Qualified Immigrant\* 5 years
- Social Security Retirement Benefits

## **MEDICAL**

- Medicaid – must have been Qualified Immigrant\* for 5 years
- Kidcare

## **FOOD**

- Food Stamps, if
  - you have been Qualified Immigrant\* for 5 years
  - you are under 18 years old (regardless of date of entry)
  - you receive disability-related assistance
- Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants & Children (WIC)
- School Lunch and Breakfast

## **EDUCATION**

- K-12 Education
- Title IV Federal Student Grants and Loans
- Head Start

*\*You are a Qualified Immigrant in Illinois if you are a lawful permanent resident; refugee, asylee, Amerasian, Haitian/Cuban entrant, trafficking victim, Hmong/ Highland Laotian, member of certain Native American nations, or granted withholding of removal/deportation; a battered spouse or child in certain circumstances; paroled for at least one year or granted conditional entry prior to 4/1/80.*

## **WILL RECEIVING PUBLIC BENEFITS HURT MY CHANCES FOR CITIZENSHIP?**

**NO.** Immigration law does *not* deny citizenship to legal immigrants who are receiving public benefits *for which they are eligible*.

Receiving public benefits endangers your citizenship application only if

- you lied about your eligibility in order to receive the benefits (such as not reporting your entire income, misrepresenting the size of your family, or lying about your immigration status), *or*
- when applying for lawful residence, you lied about a disability or some other barrier to your economic independence which later caused you to depend primarily on cash assistance programs such as Temporary Aid for Needy Families (TANF), Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or Medicaid *for long-term nursing home care*. This can also endanger your legal status.

***If you are eligible, you can apply for and receive Medicaid, KidCare, SSI, TANF, Food Stamps, AABD and any other federal, state or local public benefit, without worrying about the status of your citizenship application.***

*For more information, call the Illinois Coalition for Immigrant & Refugee Rights at (312) 332-7360; fax: (312) 332-7044; email: [info@icirr.org](mailto:info@icirr.org)*