Data Snapshot of Immigrants in Michigan: Effective COVID Relief Depends on the Inclusion of Immigrants

The COVID-19 crisis has shown that we are interconnected: the health and prosperity of each of us depends on the health and prosperity of all of us. Yet, the legislation enacted to date has excluded millions of immigrants and their families from health care and economic relief. A response that leaves out immigrants and their families in Michigan—many of whom are providing care for our loved ones and delivering groceries—will undermine our public health and economic recovery. We need to ensure that no one is excluded from relief so that ALL Michiganders can recover from the pandemic and economic crisis. This data snapshot describes immigrants in Michigan, some of the barriers to accessing health care they face, and the number of immigrants and their family members still excluded from COVID economic relief.

Immigrants in Michigan:
- Approximately **545,000 people in Michigan**, including **167,000** children, live in families with at least one noncitizen in the household.¹
- **8% of Michigan workers in frontline industries** are immigrants, including about **8%** of workers in the grocery, **8%** of workers in health care, and **7%** of workers in the building cleaning services industries.²

Barriers Accessing Essential Services for Testing and Treatment of COVID-19 for Immigrants in Michigan:
- Because of the public charge regulation’s “chilling effect,”³ immigrant families, including many who are not subject to the public charge test, are avoiding public programs.⁴ About **307,000 people in Michigan could potentially be deterred from public programs** because of immigration-related consequences.⁵
- A survey of community-based organizations found evidence of avoidance of COVID-19 relief programs because of immigration concerns. Despite not being implicated in Trump’s public charge regulation, immigrant-serving organizations reported chilling effects in Pandemic EBT and other key federal relief programs.⁶

Estimated Number of Individuals in Mixed-Status Families Still Excluded from COVID Economic Relief in Michigan:
- The first round (March 2020) of COVID economic relief (“economic impact payments”) excluded about **63,000** individuals in mixed-status families if both spouses on the return did not have a work-authorized Social Security Number (SSN).⁷
- The second round (December 2020) of economic relief included a partial fix for approximately **43,000** citizen and SSN spouses married to immigrants and **21,000 U.S. citizen children and other kids** with at least one parent with an SSN.⁸
- Approximately **21,000 U.S. citizen children and other kids with SSNs with only parents who file taxes with ITIN** are still EXCLUDED from economic relief.⁹

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³ President Joe Biden has begun the process to reverse Trump’s public charge policy. While regulatory reversal could take a few months, legal challenges to the public charge regulations and related policies are being heard in courts across the country. For up-to-date information, please refer to this PIF fact sheet.[Immigrant Families Continued Avoiding the Safety Net during the COVID-19 Crisis](https://www.urban.org/research/publication/immigrant-families-continued-avoiding-safety-net-during-covid-19-crisis).
⁶ Ibid.
⁷ Ibid.