

Data Snapshot of Immigrants in the United States: 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 depend 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—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 of us can recover from the pandemic and economic crisis. This data snapshot describes immigrants in the **United States**, 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 the United States:

- Approximately **41.1 million people in the United States**, including **12.6 million children live in families with at least one noncitizen** in the household.¹
- **17% of workers in frontline industries in the United States** are immigrants, including about **16%** of workers in the grocery, **16%** of workers in health care, and **38%** of workers in the building cleaning services industries.²

Barriers Accessing Essential Services for Testing and Treatment of COVID-19 for Immigrants in the United States:

- 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 **25.9 million people in the United States 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:

- The first round (March 2020) of COVID economic relief ("economic impact payments") excluded about 5.1 million 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 3 million citizen and SSN spouses married to immigrants and 1.5 million U.S. citizen children and other kids with SSNs with at least one parent with a SSN.⁸
- Approximately 2.2 million U.S. citizen children and other kids with SSNs with only parents who file taxes with ITIN are still EXCLUDED from economic relief.⁹

¹ Public Charge Proposed Rule: Potentially Chilled Population Data Dashboard (Manatt Health, 2018), <https://www.manatt.com/insights/articles/2018/public-charge-rule-potentially-chilled-population>.

² A Basic Demographic Profile of Workers in Frontline Industries, [A Basic Demographic Profile of Workers in Frontline Industries \(Center for Economic and Policy, April 2020\)](https://www.urban.org/research/publication/immigrant-families-continued-avoiding-safety-net-during-covid-19-crisis).

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](#).

⁴ Immigrant Families Continued Avoiding the Safety Net during the COVID-19 Crisis, (Urban Institute, February 2021), <https://www.urban.org/research/publication/immigrant-families-continued-avoiding-safety-net-during-covid-19-crisis>.

⁵ Public Charge Proposed Rule: Potentially Chilled Population Data Dashboard (Manatt Health, 2018), <https://www.manatt.com/insights/articles/2018/public-charge-rule-potentially-chilled-population>. Calculation of the potentially chilled population based on families with at least one noncitizen and earned income under 250 percent of the federal poverty level.

⁶ Immigrant-Serving Organizations' Perspectives on the COVID-19 Crisis (Urban Institute, August 2020), <https://www.urban.org/research/publication/immigrant-serving-organizations-perspectives-covid-19-crisis>

⁷ Nearly 3 Million U.S. Citizens and Legal Immigrants Initially Excluded under the CARES Act Are Covered under the December 2020 COVID-19 Stimulus, Migration Policy Institute, January 2021 <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/news/cares-act-excluded-citizens-immigrants-now-covered>.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.