

## Public Charge Sign-On Letters

Attached are two sign-on letters developed by several your CIII colleagues. The letters, intended to address philanthropy and policy makers respectively, articulate the significance of the public charge issue, with a galvanizing call to action for funders and policy makers alike to respond. If your foundation would like to sign onto either or both of these letters—or have questions—please contact Deb Kong at Packard ([dkong@packard.org](mailto:dkong@packard.org)).

**Letter to philanthropists** asking them to 1) take a stand against public charge by joining us in signing the letter and 2) fund organizations that can help mitigate the effects and advocate for change

- **Goals:** Bring in additional funding to our collective grantees, direct toward new grantees, show a united front against public charge, encourage other California funders to join
- **Audience:** California funders
- **Dissemination:** Packard can host at [packard.org](http://packard.org) with an initial batch of signatures (thanks for NCG for offering to include in that initial outreach its list of funders with a strong interest in public charge) and update regularly as more come in. We hope NCG and SCG will share the letter widely via their newsletters once it's posted with the preliminary list.

**Letter to policymakers** urging them to take specific actions to mitigate the effects of the rule and to continue informing us of their work so that we are aware of the potential for any public/private partnerships

- **Goals:** Show that philanthropy is united against public charge; call for state and county governments to take specific action to mitigate effects and help mount evidence for the fight against public charge; and open public dialogue with policymakers going forward
- **Audience:**
  - State level: Governor Gavin Newsom, Assembly Speaker Anthony Rendon, Senate President pro Tem Toni Atkins
  - County level – targeted to Santa Clara and San Francisco, the two counties that have filed suit to block the public charge rule: Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors, San Francisco Board of Supervisors, County of Santa Clara Office of Immigrant Relations, San Francisco County Office of Civic Engagement and Immigrant Affairs
- **Dissemination:** To be sent via hard copy to each of the offices above, with foundation logos included on the letter and live links moved to footnotes.

When you have a moment, please review the attached letters and let us know if your organization will sign on by emailing Deb Kong at [dkong@packard.org](mailto:dkong@packard.org).

If you choose to sign on, please email Deb Kong ([dkong@packard.org](mailto:dkong@packard.org)) with:

- (1) Which letters you're signing (either letter individually or both letters);
- (2) The full name of your organization as you'd like it included in the letter;
- (3) The full name and title of the CEO or Director of your organization you'd like included on the letter;
- (4) If you're signing the policymaker letter, your organization's logo for inclusion on the policymaker letter;
- (5) If you have strong feelings about what issue areas should be included in the highlighted portion of the letter, please include that suggestion too.

We have drafted these to fit as many foundations as possible. Please let us know if you see any inaccuracies, or if your foundation would be able to sign on with suggested edits for the group to consider.

Dear California philanthropic institutions,

As home to 11 million immigrants – more than any other state – California has long benefited from their contributions to its economy and its communities. Yet in recent months, families’ health and well-being have been jeopardized by a federal effort that will deter immigrants from receiving services that help them meet basic human needs such as health care, food, and housing, undermining their ability to remain strong, productive, and stable.

With the [finalization of a new federal “public charge” rule](#), set to go into effect on October 15, **we urge all funders in California to join us in signing onto this letter**, committing to fight against this rule that will drive families away from critical services they are legally eligible to receive. United together, we can help create the vibrant, inclusive California we all believe is possible.

**We believe that philanthropy has a vital role to play in directly helping affected children and families and in driving lasting change. This includes rapid response funding for organizations providing direct services to affected children and families; supporting efforts by researchers to monitor, document, and study the harm caused by the rule changes; helping to build a long-term movement infrastructure; and supporting advocates in their efforts to reduce or reverse harmful policies at the federal level.**

Representing foundations located across California and serving a wide variety of communities in our state, we support improving health care, building strong communities, and [\[other funders to add issue areas\]](#). We are deeply concerned about how the new “public charge” rule could erode decades of hard-fought progress by our grantees and longtime investments in each of those areas.<sup>1</sup> According to a [recent analysis](#) by the California Budget & Policy Center, the new rule could lead to 165,000 more Californians being pushed into poverty as they are likely to avoid CalFresh food assistance and the housing subsidies they need, and the state losing out on \$1.67 billion in federal benefits that help the state’s economy.

The simple rumor of a potential rule change quickly led to a “chilling effect” as human service providers reported families disenrolling from programs they are eligible for because they fear potential consequences on their immigration status.<sup>2</sup> Up to 765,000 immigrants in California could drop nutrition assistance and health insurance due to the rule and almost 70 percent of those losing benefits would be children, according to [an estimate](#) by UCLA, UC Berkeley, and California Food Policy Advocates. The Children’s Partnership has also analyzed the [potential impact by county](#), and the California Association of Food Banks has [warned of increasing hunger](#) that could result across California.

In the face of federal anti-immigrant actions, California has consistently charted a different course. [Governor Newsom](#) and the [California Health and Human Services Secretary](#) have criticized changes to the federal public charge policy that would restrict access to vital social programs. We applaud the [state of California](#), the [counties of San Francisco and Santa Clara](#), and the [advocacy groups](#) who are suing to block the public charge rule before it takes effect in mid-October.

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<sup>1</sup> The “public charge” rule is used by immigration officials to decide whether a person can enter the United States or get a green card. To determine a person’s likelihood of becoming reliant on government support in the future, officials look at a person’s circumstance and whether that person has used specific benefit programs in the previous three years. The new rule defining this term significantly broadens the range of programs to Medicaid, public housing, and food assistance (exceptions to the rule include pregnant women and children under 21 on Medicaid).

<sup>2</sup> Already, in 2018, overall child enrollment in Medicaid and the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP) dropped more than 828,000 (2.2 percent) nationally and more than 150,000 (3 percent) in California, according to the [Georgetown University Center for Children and Families](#). Before the final rule was published, [local](#) and [national](#) news outlets reported that immigrant families were already asking to be disenrolled from supplemental nutrition and health insurance benefits. The Migration Policy Institute has published a [summary](#) of the many ways the final rule is anticipated to have a chilling effect on families accessing resources.

Last year more than 30 foundations across California opposed the rule after it was first proposed, and more than 266,000 people and organizations submitted comments overwhelmingly opposing it. Despite the resistance, the new version of the rule has been put in place and will go into effect in October.

For more information on how you can help affected children and families, Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees' [website](#) helpfully includes a range of ways to support organizations tackling both rapid response work and larger strategic efforts. Whatever path we each choose, we are committed to doing our part.

No one should be forced to choose between necessities such as food, housing, and health care, and their future. We stand with immigrant families and are working towards a day when all Californians have opportunities to thrive.

**If you are a California funder who shares these beliefs, we urge you to join us in our commitment to secure the communities, success, and future of our state by signing onto this letter. For information on how to join, please contact Deb Kong at [dkong@packard.org](mailto:dkong@packard.org).**

Signed:

NAME, TITLE, FOUNDATION

Dear [Mayor/Commissioner/Representative X],

As home to 11 million immigrants – more than any other state – California has long benefited from their contributions to its economy and its communities. Yet in recent months, families’ health and well-being have been jeopardized by a federal effort that will deter immigrants from receiving services that help them meet basic human needs such as health care, food, and housing, undermining their ability to remain strong, productive, and stable.

With the [finalization of a new federal “public charge” rule](#), set to go into effect on October 15, philanthropy stands united in our commitment to fight against this rule that will drive families away from critical services they are legally eligible to receive. **Together with policymakers like yourself, we can help create the vibrant, inclusive California we all believe is possible, and we are writing you today to seek your help in making that happen.**

Representing [#of fdns signing] foundations located across California and serving a wide variety of communities in our state, we support improving health care, building strong communities, and [other funders to add issue areas]. We are deeply concerned about how the new “public charge” rule could erode decades of hard-fought progress by our grantees and longtime investments in each of those areas.<sup>3</sup> According to a [recent analysis](#) by the California Budget & Policy Center, the new rule could lead to 165,000 more Californians being pushed into poverty as they are likely to avoid CalFresh food assistance and the housing subsidies they need, and the state losing out on \$1.67 billion in federal benefits that help the state’s economy.

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In the face of federal anti-immigrant actions, California has consistently charted a different course. [Governor Newsom](#) and the [California Health and Human Services Secretary](#) have criticized changes to the federal public charge policy that would restrict access to vital social programs. We applaud the [state of California](#), the [counties of San Francisco and Santa Clara](#), and the [advocacy groups](#) who are suing to block the public charge rule before it takes effect in mid-October.

Last year more than 30 foundations across California opposed the rule after it was first proposed, and more than 266,000 people and organizations submitted comments overwhelmingly opposing it. Despite the resistance, the new version of the rule has been put in place and will go into effect in October. Therefore, philanthropy now has an even more vital role to play, and we are committed to directly helping affected children and families and to driving lasting change.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> This includes rapid response funding for organizations providing direct services to affected children and families; supporting efforts by researchers to monitor, document, and study the harm caused by the rule changes; helping to build a long-term movement infrastructure; and supporting advocates making the case at the local and state levels about the negative impacts of these changes while reducing or reversing policies at the federal level. Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees’ [website](#) helpfully

**But we can't do it alone, and we need your help. We are writing today to encourage policymakers like yourself in state and local governments to help us create the inclusive California we believe in:**

- We urge you to reach out to communities with accurate information in a variety of languages about what the rule does and does not mean;
- We also urge you to continue to [provide free legal assistance to immigrants](#) who need it;
- We request that you help us by tracking disenrollment that results from the rule; and
- We invite you to update us on the actions you've taken on this important issue, we commit to doing the same, and we hope we can continue to work together to protect our communities moving forward.

No one should be forced to choose between necessities such as food, housing, and health care, and their future. We stand with immigrant families and are working towards a day when all Californians have opportunities to thrive.

Signed:

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