

December 8, 2021

On behalf of the Protecting Immigrant Families coalition, BSP Research surveyed 1,000 ( $\pm 3.1\%$ ) Americans in mixed status immigrant families. Interviews were conducted September 1 – 30, 2021 nationwide and included 500 Latinos and 425 Asian Americans and 75 other race respondents. The survey was available in English, Spanish, Chinese (Mandarin and Cantonese), Korean, Vietnamese and Tagalog. The research was funded by Share Our Strength's No Kid Hungry campaign. This memo summarizes topline results and key takeaways related to the long-lasting impacts of the public charge rule.

### Key Takeaways

- Despite the roll back of the public charge rule by the Biden Administration and the Department of Homeland Security, mixed status immigrant families are hesitant to apply for public assistance programs in fear of jeopardizing their immigration statuses.
- When asked about trying to get assistance during the COVID-19 pandemic, **nearly half (46%) of families who needed assistance during the COVID-19 pandemic abstained from applying for assistance due to concerns over immigration status.**
- Providing more information can help. When presented with factual information about the Biden administration removing the public charge rule earlier this year, messages tested in the survey ranged in effectiveness from 38% to 44% of all respondents believing that they were “really convincing” in encouraging families to apply for public programs when they need help. **The most effective messages made clear that the Trump policy era has ended, and using public programs will have no immigration consequences for applicants or their families.**
- The most encouraging message that was tested reminded respondents about their family obligations and that there are no immigration consequences: **“Your family counts on you, and you always do what it takes. And applying for public programs like WIC and SNAP will have no immigration consequences for you or for anyone in your family.”** This message was rated 44% “really convincing” (53% among Latinos) against 12% “not convincing,” the largest boost of any of the messages.
- Following completion of the survey which provided participants with information about changes to the policy environment, **50% of respondents showed increased interest and a higher likelihood of applying for public assistance.**
  - Latinos were slightly more responsive (54% more likely) than AAPI respondents (45% more likely). US born respondents were also very responsive (59% more likely).

- **Only 22% of immigrant families “have heard a lot” about the Biden Administration’s changes made to the Trump public charge rule earlier this year.** The “a lot” response rate is more useful than a binary yes-no choice, when asking about a respondent’s factual knowledge, as a tool to manage the social desirability bias common to opinion research. Even allowing for that bias, three-in-ten respondents said they had heard nothing at all. This is a powerful indicator of the need for more outreach to the immigrant community, as there is likely to be a larger segment of the overall population who have not heard enough about this shift in policy to influence their choices about seeking needed care and help.
  - Awareness was especially low among AAPI communities (16% heard a lot) compared to Latino communities (27% heard a lot)
  
- It is important to note where immigrant families are receiving their information about immigration policies. **Over half of respondents (59%) noted relying on “TV news” for reliable information about immigration policy.** The second most popular source for news and information was **“Facebook, Social media, or online” (39%) and “Friends and family” (also with 39%).**
  
- Further, more than two-in-five believe “applying for assistance programs could cause immigration problems,” with **41% of respondents agreeing this statement was “correct” compared to only 25% who said it was incorrect and 34% said they don’t know.** Non-citizens were less likely to believe this statement was correct at 34%.
  - This misbelief was even higher among US born respondents who often help their mixed-status families navigate public bureaucracy with **47% believing applying for assistance could cause immigration problems.**
  
- Throughout the survey, the U.S. born family members in mixed status families report higher levels of responsiveness and efficacy, consistent with prior research. Longstanding theories in sociology and political science suggest immigrants, especially non-citizens have lower rates of efficacy than their U.S. born counterparts. In particular, U.S. born children of immigrants have more awareness of their full rights as U.S. citizens and are more likely to see inequality and injustice. As such, U.S. born and naturalized immigrants may be good messaging targets to convince others in their mixed-status families that the Trump-era policies are gone and access has been restored to government programs.

**Research Methodology** - The survey included 1,000 total completed interviews with adults who either live in mixed-status families or who have family members or close friends who are non-citizens. The majority of interviews (70%) are with mixed-status households, however there are also a large number of U.S. born Latinos and Asian Americans with non-citizen parents. Even though some of these younger Americans who grew up in mixed-status households now live on their own, they are still very important conduits and providers for their non-citizen parents and therefore we also included them in the survey. Among the U.S. born, 76% report having non-citizen parents and 17% report having a non-citizen sibling. The survey was fielded from September 1 – 30, 2021 nationwide and included interviews with 500 Latino, 425 interviews with Asian American, and 75

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interviews with respondents from other races, and contains an overall margin of error of +/- 3.1%. The survey was fielded through a mix of both online and live phone interviews (both landline and cellphone). To ensure representativeness of the sample, the survey was available in English, Spanish, Chinese (Mandarin and Cantonese), Korean, Vietnamese and Tagalog. The data was weighted to ensure demographic balance of the sample based on the demographic parameters defined by the American Community Survey's adult population who live in mixed-status families to the best extent possible. In many cases, respondents were able to identify more than one response option which resulted in totals not always equaling 100%.