

GETTING BY IN THE U.S. AS AN IMMIGRANT:

2. EDUCATION, HOUSING, MEDICAL CARE AND BENEFITS

PUBLIC EDUCATION

Does My Child Have the Right to Go to Public School?

Yes. All children may attend public school in the United States free of charge, no matter their immigration status. In fact, all children of a certain age must attend school. In Pennsylvania, children ages 8 - 17 are required to attend school. School administrators should not report the immigration status of students to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS).

What Documents Do I Need to Enroll My Child?

- ✓ Proof that your child lives in the district
 - Utility bills, pay stubs, and driver's licenses are acceptable if they provide your name and current address
 - Personal checks and lease agreements are not acceptable
 - You do not need to show a green card or Social Security Number in order to enroll your child in school
- ✓ Proof that your child has been immunized
- ✓ Proof of your child's age
 - Birth certificates or religious certificates containing your child's birth date are acceptable

Is My Child Eligible for Other Programs?

Public schools provide many additional programs for children. Contact your local school system to find out which programs are available in your district. Programs include:

- English as a Second Language (ESL) Classes
- Bilingual Education
- Special Education for students with physical or mental disabilities
- Programs for gifted children
- Free bus service
- The Breakfast Program and National School Lunch Program for eligible children, based on family income and size
- The Special Milk Program
- After-school activities
- Tutoring and homework centers
- Counseling services

MEDICAL CARE

Can I Receive Emergency Medical Care?

Everyone in the U.S. is entitled to receive emergency medical care, no matter their status or whether or not they have insurance. No one should be turned away from the emergency room for being uninsured or for not having a Social Security Number (SSN).

What If I Can't Pay for the Medical Care?

In Pennsylvania, undocumented immigrants are entitled to assistance for Emergency Medical Conditions. These are conditions manifesting themselves by acute symptoms of sufficient severity such that the absence of immediate medical attention could result in placing the patient's health in serious jeopardy or seriously impairment the patient's bodily functions. Labor and delivery are considered emergency medical conditions, but organ transplants and related procedures are not.

Will the Hospital Ask About my Immigration Status?

Emergency Room personnel may ask for your SSN, in order to determine if you are eligible for public assistance. If you are applying for emergency medical assistance, however, you do not need to present an SSN or a green card.

Remember: If you do not have insurance, you are not required to tell anyone at the hospital about your immigration status!

Will the Hospital Report Me to Immigration?

No. Emergency Room personnel have no obligation to share any information about you with DHS.

BANKING

What Should I Do With My Money If I am an Undocumented Immigrant?

It is important to keep your money in a safe place. It is never a good idea to carry large amounts of money with you, because you may become a target for thieves. A bank is a safe place to keep your money. Some banks allow people to open accounts with an Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN) and a matrícula consular card or passport. Check your bank's requirements.

What is an ITIN and How Can I Apply for One?

An ITIN is a number provided by the Internal Revenue Service in order to assist people who do not have SSNs in filing their tax returns. ITINs should never be used for employment purposes.

You can apply for an ITIN by going to www.irs.gov or calling 1-800-829-3676. You can only apply when filing your tax returns.

HOUSING

Can Landlords Refuse to Rent to Me Because of My Immigration Status?

No. Landlords cannot refuse to rent to you because of your race, religion, national origin, or sex. In addition, landlords cannot discriminate against you based on your immigration status in the following ways:

- Refusing to rent or sell housing
- Making housing unavailable
- Providing different terms to different people
- Setting different conditions or privileges for sale or rental property
- Denying access to or membership in a facility related to the sale or rental of housing
- Refusing to make a mortgage loan

What Are My Rights if I am Renting My House?

Renters (tenants) have certain rights when they rent a place to live, including:

- Right to livable conditions
- Right to privacy and, under most circumstances, the right to get 24 hour notice before the landlord accesses the premises
- Right to protection from eviction and rent increases during the lease period
- Right to be free from retaliation for exercising your legal rights
- Right to move out if, after reasonable notice, your landlord fails to carry out his duties

What Can I Do If My Landlord Discriminates Against Me?

Contact your local housing advocacy group. In Pennsylvania, contact the Tenant Union Representative Network (TURN) at 215-940-3900.

PUBLIC BENEFITS

What Public Benefits am I Eligible for as an Undocumented Immigrant?

Immigrants, regardless of their immigration status or date of entry, are eligible to receive a number of public benefits, including:

- Medical assistance for pregnant women
- Medical assistance for children and women who are or have been victims of domestic violence and have pending or approved immigration cases
- Non-Medicaid-funded public health assistance, such as:
 - Immunizations for children
 - HIV/AIDS-related care
 - TB screening and treatment
 - Communicable disease testing and treatment
- Women, Infants and Children (WIC): supplemental food programs for pregnant or breastfeeding women, infants, and children under 5 who are found to be at nutritional risk

Are there Any Public Benefits that Undocumented Immigrants Are Not Eligible For?

Yes. Undocumented immigrants are not eligible for:

- Food stamps
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI): assistance for persons of limited income who are 65 or older, blind, or disabled
- Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF): assistance for pregnant women and those responsible for children under 19 years old
- Student Loans
- Medicare/Medicaid (except emergency Medicaid)

What Benefits Are Available for My Child Who Was Born in the U.S.?

U.S. Citizen (USC) children of undocumented immigrants are eligible for all the same benefits as children of USC parents. Their parents do not need to verify their immigration status when applying for these benefits.

Produced by Esperanza
For more information
visit www.esperanza.us or call 215-324-0746



** The contents of this presentation do not constitute legal advice. Please consult an attorney for legal advice.*