

MEPD and TW Bulletin 26-17

Date: Sept. 23, 2026

To: State and Regional Operations Supervisors and Staff
Program Managers
Regional Directors
Policy Attorneys
Hearings Officers

From: Access and Eligibility Services Program Policy
State Office 2106

Subject: **1. Public Charge**
 2. Mileage Rate Increase

The information in this bulletin will be included in a future handbook revision. Until the handbook is updated, staff must use the information in this bulletin. If you have any questions regarding the policy information in this bulletin, follow regional procedures.

Active bulletins are posted on the following websites:

- [Medicaid for the Elderly and People with Disabilities Handbook \(MEPDH\)](https://fhb.hhs.texas.gov/handbooks/medicaid-elderly-people-disabilities-handbook/mepd-policy-bulletins) at <https://fhb.hhs.texas.gov/handbooks/medicaid-elderly-people-disabilities-handbook/mepd-policy-bulletins>;
- [Texas Works Handbook \(TWH\)](https://fhb.hhs.texas.gov/handbooks/texas-works-handbook/twh-policy-bulletins) at <https://fhb.hhs.texas.gov/handbooks/texas-works-handbook/twh-policy-bulletins>.

1. Public Charge

Background

Under federal law, a non-citizen's application for admission to the United States or application to change their immigration status may be denied if the person is likely at any time to become a public charge. Public charge determinations are made by the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) and are separate from Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) determinations of eligibility for public benefits. Use of public benefits, including Medicaid, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), may be considered a negative factor in a public charge determination.

On July 20, 2026, the United States Department of Homeland Security (DHS) implemented the *Public Charge Ground of Inadmissibility* final rule which changed the definition of public charge. The final rule also expands the definition of "public benefits" to include any cash benefits for income maintenance, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), TANF, SNAP, most forms of Medicaid and certain housing programs.

The final rule does not change HHSC eligibility policy related to qualified alien status or eligibility requirements for public benefits. Our policy is being updated to reflect the USCIS rule change and ensure the information provided is current. This update is focused on information sharing and does not change the requirements for qualified alien status or eligibility for public benefits.

Current Policy

[TW Programs](#)

Current policy defines a public charge as an alien who has applied for and received assistance for income maintenance programs, such as TANF cash assistance, SSI or institutionalization for long-term care, such as nursing home Medicaid. ([TWH A-315, Definition of Public Charge](#))

Receipt of TANF cash assistance places a non-citizen recipient at risk of being considered a public charge. However, receipt of SNAP or medical program benefits does not place the recipient at risk of becoming a public charge. ([TWH A-315.1, Providing Information to Immigrants Regarding Public Charge](#))

Other public assistance programs that do not result in public charge considerations include Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC), immunizations, prenatal care, testing and treatment of communicable

diseases, emergency medical assistance, emergency disaster relief, housing assistance, and childcare. ([TWH A-315.2, Receiving Other Benefits](#))

Note: The current applications for TW programs include public charge information for clients. The application language will be updated at a later date to reflect the revised information.

MEPD

Generally, a non-citizen who seeks admission to the U.S. as a lawful permanent resident establishes that they will not become a public charge by having a sponsor who signs an affidavit of support. ([MEPDH D-9000, Alien Sponsorship](#))

Note: The current applications for MEPD programs include public charge information for clients. The application language will be updated at a later date to reflect the revised information.

New Policy

All Programs

Effective Sept. 18, 2026, federal immigration officials may consider certain public benefits, including Medicaid and SNAP, received on or after that date as a factor in a case-by-case public charge decision. TANF cash assistance was already considered as a factor in these decisions. This does not change Medicaid, SNAP, or TANF eligibility rules. Staff should continue to follow existing policy and should not provide immigration or legal advice. Staff may explain that receiving public benefits does not automatically make someone a public charge. In general, a family member's receipt of benefits is not treated as receipt by the non-citizen client, but it may still be considered as part of the overall "totality of the circumstances" public charge review.

Providing Information About Public Charge

HHSC staff do not make public charge inadmissibility determinations.

When a person asks whether applying for or receiving public benefits may affect their immigration status, staff must:

- explain that HHSC does not make public charge determinations;
- explain that eligibility requirements for HHSC benefit programs have not changed as a result of the DHS rule change; and
- staff should direct individuals to U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) or qualified immigration legal assistance for questions about how the public charge rule may affect their individual immigration circumstances. Visit www.uscis.gov for additional information.

Do not advise a person to apply for, withdraw from, or decline benefits based on possible immigration consequences.

Automation

Automation changes are not required.

Correspondence

Changes to the following forms will be implemented in the future:

- [Form H0011, Texas Simplified Application Project \(TSAP\) for SNAP Food Benefits;](#)
- [Form H0011-R, Texas Simplified Application Project \(TSAP\) for SNAP Food Benefits Renewal;](#)
- [Form H1010, Texas Works Application for Assistance – Your Texas Benefits;](#)
- [Form H1010-R, Your Texas Works Benefits – Renewal Form;](#)
- [Form H1205, Texas Streamlined Application;](#)
- [Form H1200, Application for Assistance – Your Texas Benefits;](#)
- [Form H1200-A, Medical Assistance Only \(MAO\) Recertification;](#)
- [Form H1200-EZ, Application for Assistance - Aged and Disabled;](#)
- [Form H1200-MBI, Application for Benefits – Medicaid Buy-In;](#)
- [Form H1200-MBIC, Application for Benefits – Medicaid Buy-In for Children;](#)
and
- [Form H1200-PFS, Medicaid Application for Assistance for Residents of State Facilities Property and Financial Statement](#)

Handbook

The MEPDH is currently scheduled to be updated in the March 2027 revision.

The TWH is currently scheduled to be updated in the April 2027 revision.

Training

Training is not required.

Effective Date

This policy is effective on Sept. 18, 2026.

2. Mileage Rate Increase

Background

On July 13, 2026, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) issued [Notice 2026-29](#) adjusting the standard mileage reimbursement rate for 2026. The mileage rate is revised for state travel based on the current IRS rate.

Current Policy

[All Programs](#)

Households may claim deductions for transportation costs related to self-employment. The mileage rate for 2026 is 72.5 cents per mile. ([MEPDH E-6210, Self-Employment Expenses](#); and TWH [A-1323.4.5, Allowable Costs of Producing Income](#))

[SNAP](#)

Households may claim deductions for transportation costs related to medical expenses. The mileage rate for 2026 is 72.5 cents per mile. ([TWH A-1428.1, Allowable Medical Expenses](#))

New Policy

[All Programs](#)

The mileage rate for transportation costs related to self-employment from July to December 2026 is 76 cents per mile.

[SNAP](#)

The mileage rate for transportation costs related to medical expenses from July to December 2026 is 76 cents per mile.

Automation

Automation changes are not required.

Correspondence

Correspondence changes are not required.

Handbook

The MEPDH is currently scheduled to be updated in the December 2026 revision.

The TWH is currently scheduled to be updated in the January 2027 revision.

Training

Training is not required.

Effective Date

This policy is effective for all case actions disposed on or after Oct. 1, 2026.