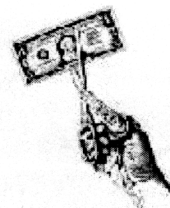


Immigrant Eligibility for Cash Assistance (TAFDC) and Food Stamps in Massachusetts

Massachusetts used to use state funds to provide cash assistance and food stamps to legal immigrants who were cut off from federal welfare benefits in 1996. **However, in July 2002, the legislature cut the funding for state cash assistance and food stamps!**



Who Is Affected?

All immigrants who are not considered “qualified” under the federal law – and some who are -- have lost their benefits. Some examples of legal immigrants who are not federally “qualified” include those who have:

- A pending application for Political Asylum
- Temporary Protected Status
- Had a family member petition for them but are not yet Legal Permanent Residents (except that an immigrant who has suffered from domestic abuse may still be eligible)

Who Will Still Be Eligible for Federally-Funded Benefits?

The rules regarding federal cash assistance (TAFDC) and food stamps are very complicated! **It is important for a trained legal advocate to review any case denied for immigration reasons in order to check for federal eligibility!** In general, categories of immigrants who are still eligible for benefits include:

- Refugees, Asylees, persons granted Withholding of Deportation or Removal, Cuban/Haitian Entrants, and Amerasian Immigrants
- Veterans of the U.S. Armed Forces and their immediate families
- Legal Permanent Residents (LPRs) who adjusted from one of the above statuses
- LPRs who have had held “qualified” status for 5 years
- LPRs who are under age 18 (Food Stamps only) *-- New as of 10/01/03!*

Additional immigrants may be eligible for benefits in certain circumstances, such as:

- Certain victims of domestic abuse and their children (TAFDC)
- LPRs who have lived in the U.S. since before 8/22/96 (TAFDC)
- LPRs who are disabled (Food Stamps)
- LPRs who have, in combination with their spouses or parents, 10 years of work history in the U.S. (Food Stamps)



Where Can Clients Go for Help?

If you need help, call **Greater Boston Legal Services** at (617) 371-1234 or 1 (800) 323-3205. Be sure to state that you are seeking help with Welfare or Food Stamps. If you have trouble getting through, you can try calling the Welfare Law Unit directly at (617) 603-1806.