

San Mateo County Immigrant Forum

August 20, 2026

Meeting Summary

Immigrant Legal Resource Center Updates

Public Charge

- The new public charge rule takes effect September 18, with updated USCIS guidance expanding the types of public benefits that may be considered negatively: for example, government-funded health coverage, cash assistance, housing assistance, and financial aid. Other benefits like Social Security, Medicare, and veteran's benefits will not be considered.
- Many immigration categories—including asylum, U visas, and SIJS—remain exempt from public charge. ILRC emphasized the importance of understanding the new guidance while continuing to encourage people who are not subject to public charge to access benefits for which they are eligible. The PIF Coalition has a great explainer on “Does Public Charge Apply to Me” [here](#).

Travel / Advance Parole

- Advance parole allows some people without permanent resident status, including certain DACA and TPS recipients, to travel outside the U.S. with permission to return. Previously, travel under advance parole generally did not trigger the 3- or 10-year bars that can apply when someone leaves the U.S. after a period of unlawful presence.
- A new decision, *Matter of del Carmen-Lara*, **changes** that interpretation, meaning future travel under advance parole may trigger these bars and create additional risks when returning to the U.S. The decision is not expected to affect past travel retroactively. ILRC is still assessing the impact and recommended that people who may be affected seek legal advice before applying for advance parole or traveling.

Rulemaking updates:

- **Appellate Procedures rule:** In February 2026, the current administration issued an interim final rule that would have made it harder to appeal immigration court decisions. Among other changes, the rule would have shortened most appeal deadlines from 30 days to 10 days and allowed some appeals to be dismissed earlier in the process. Implementation of the rule was blocked in March 2026, and the administration filed an appeal of the block.
 - The administration has now dropped its appeal of that court decision, so the blocked changes will remain on hold for now. However, we expect the administration to revise the rule and try to make similar changes in the future.
- **Request for Evidence (RFE) rule:** New guidance gives immigration officers more ability to deny an application without first sending a Request for Evidence (RFE) or Notice of Intent to Deny (NOID), which normally gives applicants a chance to provide missing information or evidence.

- This may require applicants to submit stronger, more complete applications from the start. For example, asylum applicants may have less opportunity to add evidence later in the process, making access to legal support early in a case more important.

Enforcement at Airports

- There has been an uptick in immigration enforcement/detentions at airports recently, including at SFO, and including on domestic flights.
- Reports suggest enforcement may be affecting people who overstayed visas, have pending immigration applications, or have certain removal orders even when they have protections such as withholding of removal or CAT. The National Immigration Law Center (NILC) has an explainer with more detail [here](#).
- ILRC recommended that travelers who may be at risk speak with an immigration attorney before flying.

Other Brief Updates

- **Birthright Citizenship** – After the Supreme Court struck down the administration’s previous executive order seeking to end birthright citizenship, the administration proposed two new executive orders aimed at limiting birthright citizenship and restricting visas for people suspected of traveling to the U.S. to give birth. These orders do not revoke citizenship from anyone already born in the U.S., and both are expected to face legal challenges.
- **Expedited Removal** – A court decision lifted protections that had prevented some people who entered the U.S. with parole from being placed in expedited removal, a faster deportation process that provides fewer opportunities to appear before an immigration judge.
- **Asylum Fees** – A recent ruling allows immigration judges to dismiss or consider an asylum application abandoned if a required asylum fee is not paid by the deadline set by the judge.
- **ILRC Biweekly Briefings** – Interested in learning more about what is happening in the world of immigration law? You can register for the ILRC's bi-weekly, hour-long briefings [here](#).

Guest Presentation

Second Harvest of Silicon Valley

- **Organization or Program Contact:** Patricia Cervantes, pcervantes@shfb.org
 - Can e-mail if you have questions about the presentations or need more information
- **Program Mission:** Second Harvest’s mission is to end hunger in all communities. Our volunteers, donors and supporters help provide food to families, multi-generational households, seniors and college students. They offer more than just nourishments, they are helping the people in their own community feel a little more secure and find joy in the pleasure of cooking and sharing a meal with loved ones.
- **How to qualify for food:**

- Call 1-800-984-3663, if the line is busy, clients may select to get a call back without losing their spot in line. A Food Connection team member will call back within 24-hours
- Food Connection team member will need the following to establish a client Id#: zip code, name (**can stay anonymous by using an alias, but client will need to remember the name they use for future requests**), phone number (cell phone preferable), and address
- Client ID # may be needed at every pantry registration/use
- **Frequently Asked Questions:**
 - **Is there anything clients should know regarding Public Charge changes:** distribution sites are preparing to increment orders (depending on site) from 5-10%, to prepare for an increase in usage. Patricia also recommends checking out the PIF Coalition's resource on public charge [here](#).
 - **How can I find food:** Go to Second Harvest's website for a "Get Food" locator ([click here](#)). It will show you an up-to-date list of food distribution sites as well as important details like phone number, address and hours of operation. Please check this site frequently as site availability may change, but the locator is always the most up-to-date place for info.
 - **What other resources can clients find on the 2H website:** on the website you can find a [Nutrition Center](#) full of recipes to cook with the food they get from Second Harvest.
 - **What if I don't live in San Mateo, just work there? How can I get connected to food?** You can call the Food Connection Hotline for inquiries on how to qualify for food through Second Harvest of Silicon Valley-1-800-984-3663
 - **Can families visit multiple sites to get more food?** From Second Harvest's end -- yes, families can go to any distribution site and get as much food as they need. They may also pick up food for other family members, neighbors or friends. They would need to have the other members' Client ID card to pick up for them.
 - Requirements may change depending on site, it is worth calling in advance.

OCA Updates

Office of Community Affairs updates and shares:

- Building off our Second Harvest presentation, here is an article from Coyote (independent newspaper) on [How to Make the Most of Your Food Pantry Haul](#)
- We are preparing for **Welcoming Week** (September 10th – 19th). Please share any welcoming events you are hosting so that we can co-brand and share on our socials. You can share these/ask us questions at immigrantservices@smcgov.org
- **HSA benefits videos:** Please share widely and show your clients/community members these videos on how to apply for County Benefits and keep their contact information updated to not lose vital benefits in a time of changes to programs such as CalFresh, Medi-Cal and cash assistance. Video links here in [English](#), [Spanish](#)

Agency Updates

- **Nuestra Casa:** Carmela shared that food distributions are one of the staples sites our Promotoras attend weekly to provide community resources to people in line. Please reach out if you have ideas or locations where their Promotoras can support sites in EPA, Belle Haven, NFO, or RWC - cmeehan@nuestracasa.org.
- **HSA Outreach:** Daisy shared that the team will be at sites including MidPen Housing in Menlo Park and Half Moon Bay to help with changes to Medi-Cal and CalFresh. Check out the [calendar of events](#) to see more details.
- **CARON Feria de Recursos** will be on September 17, 2026, from 5-8pm in NFO, if you are interested to have a table, please reach out to José Luis Aguirre, tables are limited: jaguirre@smcgov.org