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## AN IMMIGRATION UPDATE FROM CATHOLIC MIGRATION SERVICES

March 22, 2018

### **Free Naturalization Workshop:**

For members of the community who are eligible green card holders interested in becoming U.S. citizens, Catholic Migration Services in partnership with New York Lawyers for the Public Interest will be hosting a free naturalization workshop on April 21st in celebration of Immigrant Heritage Week.

For more information or to register, call (212) 225-4400 or text (718) 866-3687.

### **New U.S. Government Policy Affecting Family-Based Petitions:**

In January of this year the U.S. Department of State revised its “public charge” policy in the Foreign Affairs Manual (FAM) also known as “State Department Instructions” on “public charge.” The United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) is also proposing changes to the federal government’s longstanding public charge policy.

Under the previous rules, intending immigrants had to prove that they would not become a “public charge” in the U.S. and they would be financially supported by a sponsor if needed. In order to prove this, the intending immigrant needed to submit a sworn statement from the sponsor or co-sponsor who earned enough income to prove that he or she could support the intending immigrant if necessary.

Under the new rules that were implemented at the end of January, the officer at the embassy can now consider a wide range of factors such as a family member’s or sponsor’s use of public benefits. Therefore, if you or your family member are receiving benefits from the Supplemental Assistance Program, commonly known as SNAP or food stamps it does not mean that you are banned from sponsoring your relatives. However, these factors will be considered along with several other items, which include the intending immigrant’s age, health, and employment history.

**Catholic Migration Services would like to take this opportunity to reiterate this does not mean that you should stop receiving any benefits that you currently need for your family.**

It is still too early to know how this policy change is being applied in the different consulates abroad. As a result, we will continue to do our best to keep the community informed on policy changes as we have done in the past. If you have any questions about your particular circumstance please call our office.

### **How to Contact Us:**

If you have any questions or concerns, please call Catholic Migration Services in Brooklyn at (718) 236-3000 or in Queens at (347) 472-3500 between 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. from Monday through Friday. For additional information, visit our website at [www.catholicmigration.org](http://www.catholicmigration.org) and follow us on social media via Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram @CMSBQ.