

Federal Changes Threaten North Carolina Immigrants' Health

Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust



Immigrant Families in North Carolina

- The state has more than **1 million** foreign born residents.
- **One in five** children has at least one parent who was born outside of the United States.
- Immigrants make up **over 12%** of the state's workforce.
- **Nearly 112,000** North Carolina taxpayers do not have a Social Security number and file with an Individual Taxpayer ID.
- Immigrant families have historically experienced **systemic access barriers** to public benefit programs and **one in three** of immigrant children in our state live in poverty.

The Federal Budget Bill is Bad for North Carolina

The federal budget bill that passed in July 2025 includes an unprecedented allocation of funds for immigration detention and enforcement while stripping away access to basic needs programs. The bill, along with a series of other federal actions, will harm the health and well-being of immigrants and their families in our state.

The bill ends the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Medicaid, Medicare, and Marketplace subsidy eligibility for many lawfully present immigrants. Undocumented immigrants have never been eligible for Medicaid, Medicare, SNAP, or Marketplace tax credits in North Carolina.

An agreement between the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) and the Department of Homeland Security also gave U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) officials the ability to **track the identity and location** of Medicaid members, which may cause mixed-status families to stop seeking health care for their children. From January to July 2025, ICE has **arrested more than 2,200** people in North Carolina. Aggressive immigration enforcement practices **contribute to widespread emotional trauma** among both immigrant and U.S.-born children living in mixed-status households.

Where We Go From Here

The Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust is sharing information about the federal budget bill and other harmful federal policies with partners, grantees, and foundations because near-term policy changes impacting immigrants will require quick adjustments, additional fundraising, and broader collaboration to face these challenges.

Looking ahead to cuts in 2026 and beyond, there are opportunities for advocacy, especially administrative advocacy, to influence how these federal policies are implemented in North Carolina.

We encourage organizations to advocate, organize, and share stories of people who will be impacted to make sure the harshest cuts are reversed.

Helping immigrant families and those with low incomes meet their basic needs isn't a handout. It's sound public health policy. It's investing in the next generation. It's economic stability. It's seeing everyone's humanity.



Timeline of major cuts 2025-2027

Immediate Impacts

- ⚠️ Thousands of immigrants who are lawfully present in North Carolina, including **8,000** refugees, will no longer be able to receive SNAP food assistance. The timing of this change depends on further federal guidance.
- ⚠️ Many lawfully present immigrants who have contributed to Medicare via payroll taxes for 10+ years no longer qualify and will be denied if they apply.
 - Medicare eligibility for new applicants is limited to green card holders, Cuban-Haitian entrants, and Compacts of Free Association migrants.



January 2026

U.S.-citizen children who don't have a parent with an Social Security number (SSN) will no longer be eligible for the child tax credit.

- To claim the child tax credit, children were already required to have an SSN. This will impact thousands of children in North Carolina who have parents that file taxes with an Individual Taxpayer Identification Number.

Many lawfully present immigrants with incomes below the poverty line will no longer be eligible for Marketplace tax credits through [healthcare.gov](https://www.healthcare.gov).

- This means that certain low-income immigrants in North Carolina, such as seasonal farmworkers earning less than \$15k per year, will no longer have any pathway to affordable health coverage.

**Data can quickly become out-of-date. While we strive to keep information current and use creditable sources, we recommend reviewing the linked sources for the most recent information.*



October 2026

Many lawfully present immigrants will no longer be eligible for Medicaid.

- North Carolina will start to receive less federal funding for emergency services provided to some individuals who are ineligible for Medicaid due to their immigration status.



January 2027

More lawfully present immigrants will lose access to health coverage.

- Many lawfully present immigrants who are currently enrolled in Medicare will be kicked off the program.
- Thousands more lawfully present immigrants will lose eligibility for Marketplace tax credits.



Timing TBD

Many lawfully residing immigrants will no longer have access to Head Start, community health centers, family planning programs, and other critical services.