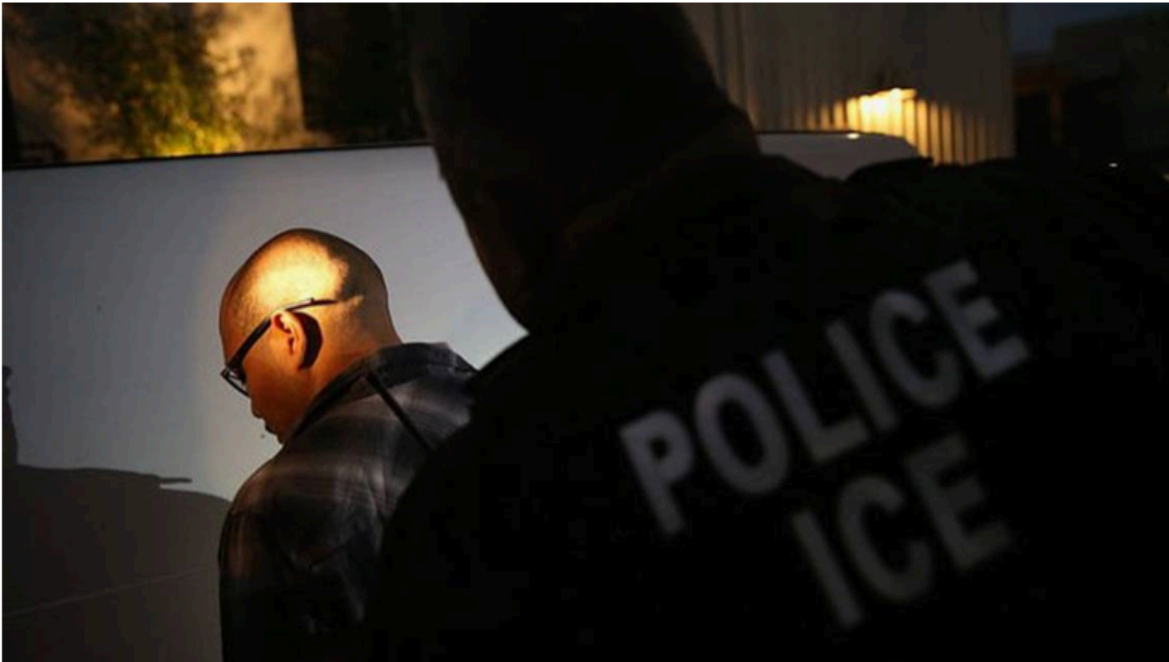


Even with a green card, an immigrant can be deported under new guidelines

BY DANIEL SHOER ROTH

Miami herald, July 13, 2018



A man is detained by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents on Oct. 14, 2015, in Los Angeles, California. John Moore Getty Images

A green card is no longer an immigrant's insurance policy against deportation in the Donald Trump era.

Documented immigrants can now be deported from the United States if they break the rules of federal and state programs that offer public benefits to immigrants.

New guidelines implemented last week by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services say that immigrants who abuse "any program related to the reception of public benefits" will be summoned to appear before an immigration court.

Immigrants will be subjected to removal procedures if there's evidence of "fraud or willful misrepresentation" in connection "with any official matter or application before another governmental agency," said the guidelines, published late last month.

In those cases, immigration officials will have [expanded authority](#) to issue Notices to Appear (NTA), documents that mark the start of deportation procedures.

The main public benefits that immigrants with legal residence permits, known as Green Cards, can receive are: Medicaid for people with low income or disabilities;

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families; Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program; Supplemental Security Income; and the Children's Health Insurance Program.

Receiving assistance from those programs could even harm an immigrant's application for a Green Card under a [proposal by the Homeland Security Department](#) designed to block documented immigrants from obtaining residence if they or their children receive public benefits, including food stamps and early childhood education programs.

"An alien's receipt of public benefits comes at taxpayer expense and availability of public benefits may provide an incentive for aliens to immigrate to the United States," the DHS draft argued.

The revised USCIS guidance for the issuance of NTAs, which the agency says was designed to enforce President Donald Trump's priorities of immigration policies, will increase and speed up deportation procedures, according to immigration experts.

U.S. authorities are also targeting permanent residents who apply for citizenship.

The USCIS [policy memorandum](#) indicated that its employees will have more leeway to start deportation procedures to immigrants whose citizenship applications are denied on good moral character grounds.

They include "applicants convicted of aggravated felonies prior to November 29, 1990, or applicants convicted of deportable offenses after obtaining lawful permanent resident (LPR) status," it added.

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Fanny Lorenzo, who had her green card stripped more than two decades after she got probation for helping her husband run a marijuana grow house, was recently deported to Nicaragua.

In a statement that accompanied the release of the memorandum to the media, agency director L. Francis Cissna said: "For too long, USCIS officers uncovering instances of fraudulent or criminal activity have been limited in their ability to help ensure U.S. immigration laws are faithfully executed. This updated policy equips USCIS officers with clear guidance they need and deserve to support the enforcement priorities established by the president, keep our communities safe, and protect the integrity of our immigration system from those seeking to exploit it."

Milagros Yanes has been in the United States for 20 years. That may change soon as the woman faces deportation to her native Venezuela.

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