

NYC Fact Sheet: Public Charge Messaging Survey Findings *June 2019*

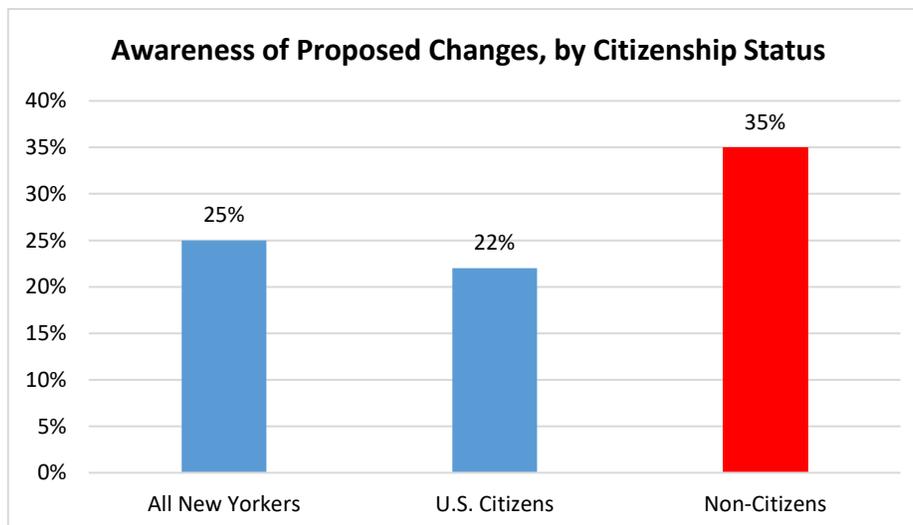
On October 10, 2018, the Department of Homeland Security published a proposed rule change that would, if finalized, greatly expand the applicability of “public charge” inadmissibility.¹ In response, the Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Affairs commissioned a survey, in partnership with the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene and the Department of Social Services, to examine potential effects of this proposed rule on New York City residents. Specifically, the survey aimed to:

- Measure general awareness of the public charge proposal among citizens and non-citizens in New York City; and
- Learn messaging best practices (particularly for non-citizens) geared towards preventing individuals from withdrawing from services unnecessarily or without understanding what it could mean for their immigration cases.

Conducted between January and February 2019, the City surveyed over 2,000 New York City residents in English and Spanish.² This fact sheet presents the key findings from this survey.

About one-quarter of all New Yorkers are aware of the proposed public charge rule

- 25 percent of New Yorkers said they have heard of the public charge proposal.
- Non-citizens are significantly more likely to have said they heard about it (35 percent, compared to 22 percent of citizens).
- Neither age nor income level was associated with any difference in New Yorkers’ awareness of the proposed changes.



Potential chilling effect: about three-quarters of non-citizens said that they would consider forgoing services

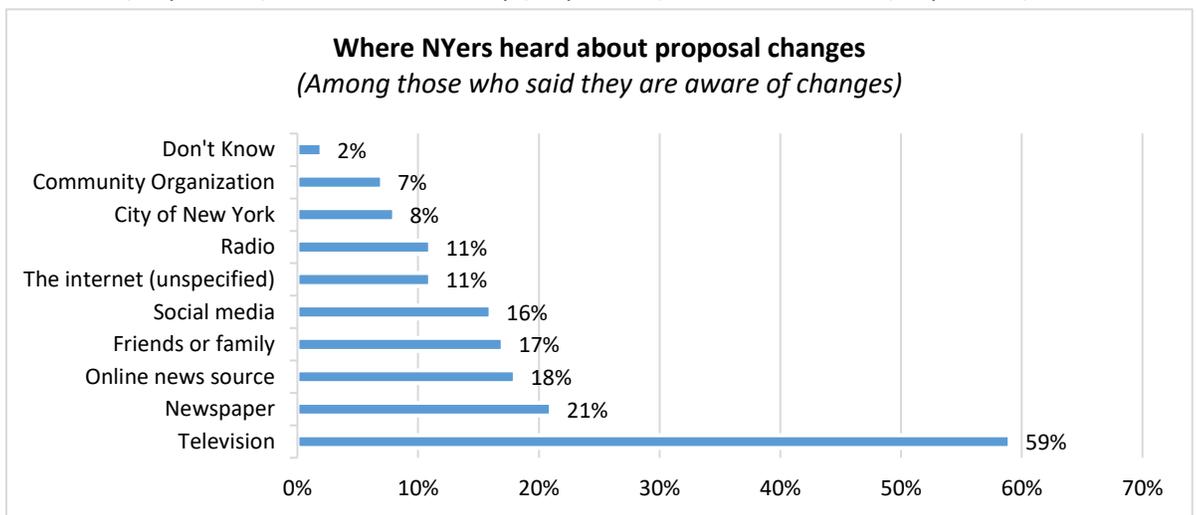
- Once non-citizens learned about the proposed rule, 76 percent responded “yes” that they would consider withdrawing from or not applying to services they need should the rule go in to effect.
- When first asked, nearly half (47 percent) said they would consider withdrawing or forgoing services; when prompted by specific services (such as Medicaid, public housing assistance, and food stamps), another 29 percent of non-citizens said they would consider it.

¹ Inadmissibility on Public Charge Grounds, 83 Fed. Reg. 51114 (Oct. 10, 2018). For more information on the rule, see <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/immigrants/help/legal-services/public-charge.page>.

² Data were weighted in order to a. be fully representative of the NYC citizen and non-citizen population, by demographics and b. correct for known biases due to sampling and non-response.

Best practices for messaging to New Yorkers about public charge

- **Messaging.** Non-citizen New Yorkers rated statements mentioning the availability of “free legal help” as most effective in either convincing them to stay enrolled or to continue seeking services should the public charge proposal go in to effect. 77 percent of respondents rated this messaging as either very or somewhat effective.
- **Most NYC residents heard about the proposed rule through television.**
 - Among the 25 percent of NYC residents who had heard of the proposed rule, more than half (59 percent) said they heard about the proposal changes on television.
 - Non-citizens were more likely to hear about it on television (75 percent) compared to U.S. citizens (52 percent).
 - Remaining respondents heard about the proposal through the newspaper (21 percent), online (18 percent), from friends/family (17 percent), and social media (16 percent).



- **Moving forward, NYC residents want to learn more and get updates about the proposed rule from a variety of news sources.**
 - Notably, 18 to 29 year olds show stronger preferences for online news sources (49 percent) and social media (39 percent) than do those aged 65 and older, who prefer television (54 percent) and the newspaper (34 percent) as media sources.

