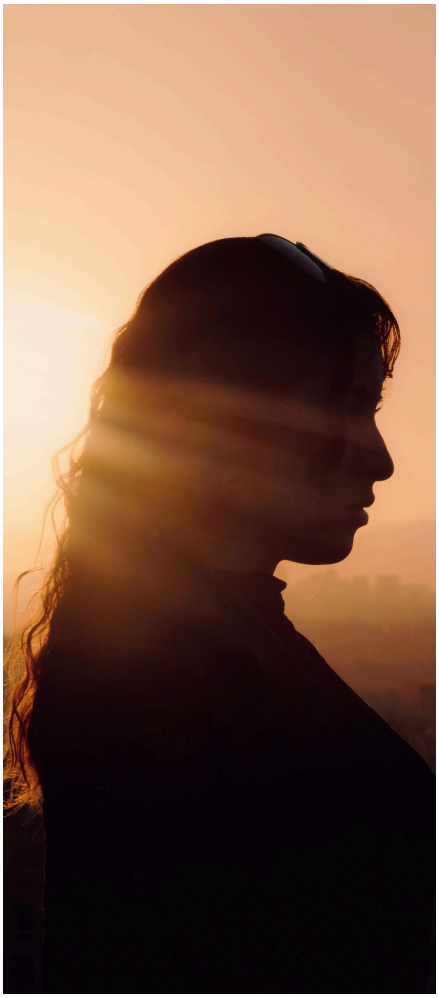
KNOW YOUR BENEFITS:

A Guide for Immigrants



Survivors of Domestic Violence

If you are a current or former spouse or child of a U.S. citizen or legal permanent resident who is the survivor of extreme cruelty or battery, and who has received lawful immigration status through a "VAWA self-petition," Medicaid changes are coming. Here's what you need to know.

- People with ***approved*** VAWA self-petitions will lose eligibility for Medicaid on October 1, 2026.
- However, if you receive legal permanent residency (green card), you are eligible for Medicaid after a five-year wait. You are also eligible for SNAP (food stamps), TANF (Work First cash assistance), and Supplemental Security Income (SSI, for persons with disabilities) after five years.
  - If you have an approved VAWA self-petition but have not yet applied for a full green card, you can should do so as soon as possible after your priority date becomes available (spouses of U.S. citizens can apply at the same time as their VAWA self-petition).

IMPORTANT:

VAWA self-petitioners who are pregnant women and children under 19 will continue to be eligible for Medicaid after October 1, 2026, even if they do not yet have their green cards.

NOTE: Wait times for your green card approval can be long! If you have not yet started the process to obtain your green card, you should speak with a lawyer as soon as possible.

- If you are a VAWA self-petitioner who does NOT yet have a green card, you are eligible for the following programs, as long as you meet all other eligibility criteria:
  - Health coverage from Healthcare.gov (but only through December 31, 2026)
  - Women, Infant, and Children's nutrition program (WIC)
  - School lunch and breakfast
  - Social Security disability and Social Security retirement

TO FIND OTHER HEALTH CARE OPTIONS:

For help finding low or no cost health care / prescription drugs, applying for benefits, finding local food or housing options and more, check out our Health Resources sheet at www.ncjustice.org/health-resources

The IMMIGRANT & REFUGEE RIGHTS team protects and defends the rights of immigrants and refugees through advancing pro-immigrant public policies and providing strategic legal representation.

NORTH CAROLINA JUSTICE CENTER

PO Box 28068 | Raleigh, NC 27611
(919) 856-2570 | www.ncjustice.org