# Recommendations for Expanded Benefits to Immigrants in Maine

1. **Which subcommittee is submitting this recommendation?**

   Healthcare, Nonprofits, Child Care and Support Services

2. **Please list the other subcommittees that support this recommendation:**

3. **Which sector does this recommendation support?**

   This supports the immigrant community in Maine. Among other sectors, there are high numbers of immigrant workers represented in health care fields such as in-home care, group homes for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities, and nursing facilities, and in other sectors including food processing.

4. **What is the recommendation?**

   This proposal recommends that the Governor use her emergency power to extend access to state funded TANF, SNAP, Medicaid, and child care subsidies to noncitizens, who are currently ineligible for these benefits, on the same basis as US citizens. The subcommittee recommends that eligibility be available until 90 days after the expiration of the public health emergency. These individuals and families are not currently able to access programming due to statutory eligibility requirements and limitations on federal funding.

5. **Is this a quick-start, July 15 or Dec 1 recommendation?**

   This is a July 15 recommendation.

6. **What are the benefits of this recommendation?**

   Economists, business leaders, and experts in our workforce have repeatedly named immigrants as being essential to Maine’s future and important contributors to a strong economy. This proposal will provide critical supports, including health care, food security, and help to pay for child care for immigrant workers, many of whom have been providing essential services during the pandemic. The proposal seeks to close the gaps in our safety net that leave many people without supports due to immigration status. For example, there are hundreds of newly arrived asylum seekers who are legally authorized to work and help generate revenue for Maine businesses and the economy, but who do not qualify for various forms of assistance in times of need – even though they pay taxes and often fill low-wage, frontline occupations referenced above. Finally, non-white Mainers have borne the brunt of the COVID-19 pandemic, representing 29.4% of COVID-19-positive cases in Maine, with another 11.5% of cases without a disclosure on race/ethnicity – potentially bringing this group as high as 40% of the COVID-19 cases. Finally, community leaders will argue that any statistics are an underrepresentation of the impact of COVID-19 on immigrant communities due to a lack of access to health care and other factors.

7. **How much would this recommendation cost to implement?**

   The subcommittee has received different estimates for the cost of implementing this proposal, ranging from approximately $2 to $7 million, depending on the assumptions and length of support. Additional work to finalize these estimates is ongoing.
8. When should implementation begin and when is an outcome realized?

This proposal should be implemented as soon as possible to support the immigrant workforce and families impacted by COVID-19.

9. Will any populations, communities, or industries be disadvantaged by this recommendation?

This will not disadvantage other populations or communities.

10. Is there an existing model for this, in or outside of Maine?

11. What additional data or information is needed, if any?
A final estimate for the cost of this recommendation is needed.

12. What else should be considered to evaluate this recommendation?