

California Benefits Infographic – VAWA,
Sarah Register, Suzana Coelho, and Leslye E. Orloff (June 9, 2026)

VAWA Children¹

- All children under 26 are eligible for full-scope Medi-Cal coverage regardless of immigration status
- Eligible for California Student Aid, Grants and Loans if attended 3 years of high school, adult school or community college in California (may be a combination), and meet other condition
- All California residents are eligible for state issued driver's licenses and IDs.
- All children are eligible for K-12 public education regardless of immigration status

Zero Months: At Filing:

-Public and Assisted Housing
-TANF,* SSI,* Medicaid (Under 26),*

5 Months after Filing: If abuser citizen parent/step-parent (USC abuser):
Work Authorization, **Real IDs, Driver's License, Unemployment**

3-4 Months after Filing:
Prima Facie Determination (*Qualified Immigrant and lawfully present*)
- Federal Student Aid, - LIHEAP, SNAP (Under 18),*

48.5 Months (~4 years) after Filing:

-Approval ; Deferred Action,²
-If abuser lawful permanent resident parent/step-parent (LPR abuser): Work Authorization/³ and eligibility to apply for Lawful Permanent Residency;
Real IDs, Driver's License, Unemployment

Issued Lawful Permanent Residency (LPR) (Green Card)⁴: 4.0 (USC abuser) or 5.2 (LPR abuser) Years after Filing. **LIHEAP**
5.3 years after filing with LPR: **SNAP (under age 18)⁵, TANF, Medicaid/CHIP**

7.0 (USC abuser) or 8.2 (abuser LPR) Years after Filing for VAWA; 3 Years after Lawful Permanent Residence: Apply for Naturalization

7.8 (USC abuser) or 9.0 (LPR abuser) Years after Filing for VAWA; 9.68 Months after Application for Naturalization⁶: **Naturalization**

10.3 (USC abuser) or 15.2 (LPR abuser) Years after Filing for VAWA: **SSI**

*State funded available prior to meeting federal: 5-year bar, 40 quarters, and lawful permanent residence requirements.

State funded blue font – State benefits charts <https://niwaplibrary.wcl.american.edu/all-state-public-benefits-charts/>

¹ Child is up to age 21 under immigration law. For public benefits age limit varies by benefits program see state public benefits charts.

² Formal protection from removal/deportation

³ If spouse/child/stepchild of citizen abuser filed lawful permanent resident application with VAWA self-petition

⁴ If spouse/child/stepchild of citizen abuser filed lawful permanent resident application with VAWA self-petition. Wait time is an average of all California field offices with a range of 10 to 17 months

⁵ Must be under age 18, disabled, met the 5-year bar, or earned 40 quarters (10 years) of work credit since work authorization.

⁶ Based on average from all California Field Office/Service Centers, wait times range from 8 months to 12 months

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VAWA Adults

- All income eligible 26+ adults are eligible for full-scope Medi-Cal regardless of immigration status.
- Eligible for California Student Aid, Grants and Loans if attended 3 years of high school, adult school or community college in California (may be a combination), and meet other conditions.
- All California residents are eligible for state issued driver's licenses and IDs.

Zero Months: At Filing:

-Public and Assisted Housing
- TANF,* SSI*

5 Months after Filing: If abuser citizen parent/step-parent (USC abuser):
Work Authorization, **Real IDs, Driver's License, Unemployment**

3-4 Months after Filing:
Prima Facie Determination (*Qualified Immigrant and lawfully present*)
- **Federal Student Aid, - LIHEAP, SNAP (Under 18),***

48.5 Months (≈4 years) after Filing:

-Approval; Deferred Action,⁷
-
-If abuser lawful permanent resident parent/step parent (LPR abuser): Work Authorization/⁸ and eligibility to apply for Lawful Permanent Residency;
Real IDs, Driver's License, Unemployment

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