

Key thresholds for ‘public charge’: 125% and 250% of the federal poverty level

The question asked by the new “public charge” test is whether someone is “more likely than not” to need public benefits someday – whether or not they receive any or are even eligible as immigrants. Income below 125% of the federal poverty level would weigh heavily *against* an applicant; income above 250% of the FPL would weigh favorably.

Household size	125% of FPL	250% of FPL
1	\$15,612	\$31,225
2	\$21,137	\$42,275
3	\$26,662	\$53,325
4	\$32,187	\$64,375
5	\$37,712	\$75,425
6	\$43,237	\$86,475
7	\$48,762	\$97,525
8	\$54,287	\$108,575

How many people in Massachusetts earn less than 125% and 250% of the FPL?

U.S. Census data show that the median household income in Massachusetts in 2013–2017 was \$74,167 (see www.census.gov/quickfacts/MA). Still, the consultancy Manatt estimates that about 30% of all Massachusetts residents and 50% half of non-citizens are below 250% of the FPL, and 15% and 27%, respectively, are below 125% of the FPL.

Population group	Income level	Population estimate	Margin of error
<i>All Mass. residents</i>	All income levels	6,742,143	1,212
	< 125% FPL	982,240	12,995
	< 250% FPL	2,044,845	17,246
<i>Non-citizens in Mass.</i>	All income levels	507,234	9,025
	< 125% FPL	138,085	5,598
	< 250% FPL	253,516	7,435
<i>Non-citizens in Mass. + family members</i>	All income levels	866,556	13,624
	< 125% FPL	220,905	8,574
	< 250% FPL	420,012	11,023

Source: Manatt, 2018. Public Charge Proposed Rule: Potentially Chilled Population Data Dashboard. <https://www.manatt.com/Insights/Articles/2018/Public-Charge-Rule-Potentially-Chilled-Population>