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SECOND HARVEST HEARTLAND CONCERNED WITH PUBLIC CHARGE CHANGES

Proposal harms eligible immigrant families seeking needed food assistance

SAINT PAUL, Minn. (October 1, 2018) – Today, Second Harvest Heartland issued the following statement following recent Trump Administration changes to how the use of safety net programs, such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Medicaid, would impact the ability of immigrants with legal status from remaining in the United States or petitioning for family members to join them. Current federal policy allows officials to deny entry or legal permanent residency to immigrants deemed a “public charge,” or likely to require federal government assistance in the form of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) or Medicaid long-term care as their primary source of support. The Administration’s proposal would significantly expand the public charge criteria to include essential emergency food assistance – and deter the utilization of emergency food assistance for those immigrant families who might need it in the future.

“The changes proposed by the Administration will make it more difficult for Second Harvest Heartland and our network of agency partners to end hunger in our communities,” said Second Harvest Heartland Director of Advocacy Marcus Schmit. “Safety net programs such as SNAP and Medicaid are there for folks who need them, preventing Minnesotans experiencing hunger from falling further into poverty. The public charge rule changes create additional barriers that will prevent immigrants with legal status from accessing crucial food assistance for which they are eligible. We fear the consequences of this change will result in immigrant families, especially children experiencing hunger, from choosing to access critical emergency food and health care assistance if or when they need it. This proposal will make it harder to solve Minnesota’s hunger problem and doesn’t align with our mission at Second Harvest Heartland.”

About Second Harvest Heartland

Second Harvest Heartland is one of the nation’s largest, most efficient and most innovative hunger relief organizations, helping provide more than 81 million meals in 2017 alone. Second Harvest Heartland believes no one should ever go hungry, as our region produces more than enough food for everyone. Since 2001, we have worked to help provide meals for the one in 11 individuals in Minnesota and western Wisconsin who experience hunger by strengthening the hunger relief network, working with nearly 1,000 partnering food shelves, food pantries and other meal programs.