

APPENDIX A

BRIEF TIMELINE OF FEDERAL AND STATE POLICIES IMPACTING THE ECONOMIC SECURITY OF UNDOCUMENTED COMMUNITIES

1700-1800s

Fugitive Slave Laws of 1793 and 1850, as well as the Indian Removal Act of 1830, were some of the federal government's [first attempts to restrict migration for specific groups of people](#).

Mid-1800s

California passed several laws that sought to exclude Chinese people from society, by prohibiting attendance at public schools or holding real estate, to imposing taxes directly targeted at Chinese workers. In 1882, the federal Chinese Exclusion Act largely prohibited Chinese immigration and denied Chinese immigrants from obtaining citizenship.

1913

California Alien Land Law of 1913 prohibited "aliens ineligible for citizenship" from owning land or leasing it long-term, effectively targeting Chinese, Indian, Japanese, Korean, and Filipino immigrant farmers in California.

1934

National Housing Act of 1934 created the Federal Housing Administration (FHA), which helped establish the practice of "[redlining](#)", whereby neighborhoods were mapped and ranked in terms of their "desirability" according to race and ethnicity. A "redlined" neighborhood was predominantly black or Mexican, and loans to purchase homes in these neighborhoods were either expensive or nonexistent.

1942-1945

Japanese American internment camps forcibly moved and incarcerated people of Japanese descent, including U.S. citizens, in isolated camps.

1942-1964

The Bracero program, which created a guest worker program for workers from Mexico to temporarily work in the United States, was established in 1942. Bracero workers faced extremely poor housing conditions, little pay, and inadequate healthcare, as well as rampant discrimination and violence. In 1954, an estimated one million Mexican people were arrested, detained, and deported back to Mexico en masse.

1970s and early 1980s

In 1978, the US instituted the Haitian Program, which required detention for all Haitians, revoked their authorization to work, and created an expedited deportation process. Then, in response to charges that the detention program against Haitians was discriminatory, the federal government responded in 1982 by broadening the law to detain all migrants, [making our immigration system look much more like the carceral system that exists today](#). Black immigrants continue to be overrepresented in detention and deportation proceedings compared to immigrants overall.

1986

[Immigration Reform and Control Act \(IRCA\)](#). While IRCA allowed many undocumented individuals who had arrived in the U.S. before January 1, 1982 to become permanent residents or citizens, it also established civil and criminal penalties against any employer who knowingly hired undocumented immigrants and greatly expanded border enforcement. [The employer sanctions represented a fundamental shift in policy and significantly impacted undocumented individuals' ability to work](#), relegating them to precarious work arrangements that lack the robust worker protections and benefits associated with traditional employment. Employers now use what is known as the I-9 process to verify the authorization to work of all new hires.

1994

[Prop 187](#). A ballot initiative proposed by anti-immigrant organizations and passed with [59% of the vote](#), sought to ban undocumented immigrants from accessing public education, healthcare, and other services, while deploying medical workers and teachers as immigration enforcement officers. While Prop 187 was deemed unconstitutional, other states, including Arizona, have introduced similar proposals. In California, [Prop 187 helped galvanize pro-immigrant activism and reshape the political landscape into what it is today](#).

1996

[Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act \(PRWORA\)](#). [PRWORA](#) overhauled the United States public benefits system, and significantly restricted lawfully present immigrants' access to food, health, and cash assistance programs. This clampdown prevented immigrants who were eligible from enrolling in and receiving benefits, due to fear and confusion about rules governing the programs. As a result, participation in public benefits programs decreased sharply after PRWORA, causing severe hardship for many low-income immigrant families who lacked the support available to other low-income families. Undocumented immigrants were already barred from most federal benefits programs prior to PRWORA. Though PRWORA made it more difficult to do so, under the law states can fill in the gaps by giving state-only-funded assistance to people who are not qualified for federal programs.

1996

[Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act \(IIRIRA\)](#). IIRIRA greatly expanded the definition of who would be subject to deportation and mandatory immigration detention, adopted extremely stringent penalties against unauthorized entry, including 3 and 10 year bars for undocumented people who have lived in the United States for an extended period of time, and created significant roadblocks to asylum. It also sought to criminalize many immigration-related offenses, further entangled state and local law enforcement with immigration enforcement, greatly expanded immigrant detention and deportation, and significantly limited due process.

2019

The Trump Administration proposed a vast expansion of the [“Public Charge” rule](#), a policy that immigration officers use to assess whether applicants for lawful permanent resident status will become dependent on certain government benefits in the future. If the government determines someone is likely to become a public charge, they can deny admission to the U.S. or refuse an application for lawful permanent residency. The public charge “test” does not apply to everyone; many categories of immigrants are exempt. Also, it is based on a “totality of circumstances,” meaning a person’s entire life situation is considered, not just their use of benefits. Additionally, the proposed expansion never came to pass. Nonetheless, the threat of public charge has created a [chilling effect](#) that has prevented immigrants who are eligible for benefits from applying for and receiving them.