

Immigration and Food Security: Assessing Levels of Food Security Among Cabo Verdean Immigrant Households and Their Use of Public Food Assistance Programs

On February 24, 2020, the Department of Homeland Security implemented the new public charge rule, which impacts new immigrants to the United States. An immigration officer must decide whether the person applying for a green card or visa will become a “public charge,” meaning that they will likely become dependent on government benefits. This project is part of a Diplomacy Lab team of KSU faculty and students sponsored by the U.S. Department of State. We are researching the experiences of new Cabo Verdean immigrants to the United States. My specific research focuses on food security and the use of public food assistance programs such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). My research question examines the level of food security in new Cabo Verdean immigrant households in the United States and how their level of food security affects their use of public food assistance programs. Our team collected data to analyze Cabo Verdean immigrants’ physical access to food as well as their economic access to food. Data collection methods included government assistance data, distributing online surveys and conducting semi-structured interviews. Findings will assist with understanding how reliant new Cabo Verdean immigrants are on government assistance programs and how this compares to other immigrant groups and the broader U.S. population.

Keywords: Immigration, Cabo Verde, Food security, Public charge, Food assistance.