

Benefits and Supportive Services

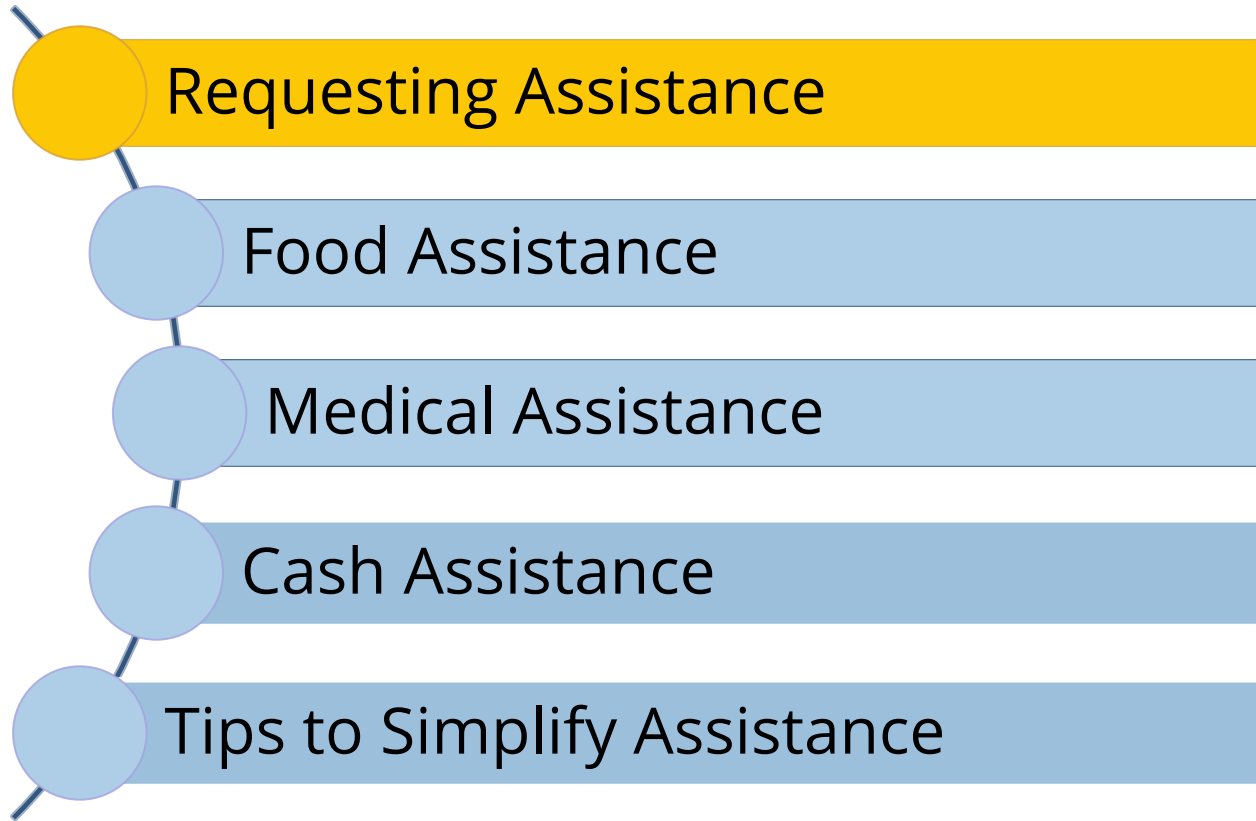
Presenters

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Ways to Apply

In person

Individuals may apply in-person at the Department of Human Services in their county

Local County Assistance Offices - [CAO Directory](#)

By phone

Individuals may apply for Medical Assistance & SNAP via telephone at 1-866-550-4355

Call 711 for TTY relay services

Online

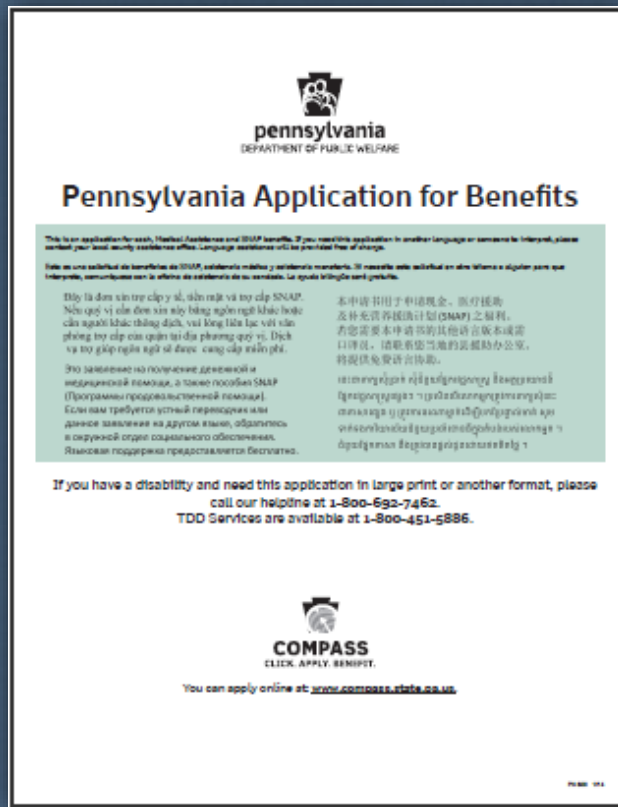
Individuals may apply via computer through COMPASS
WWW.COMPASS.STATE.PA.US

Completing an Application

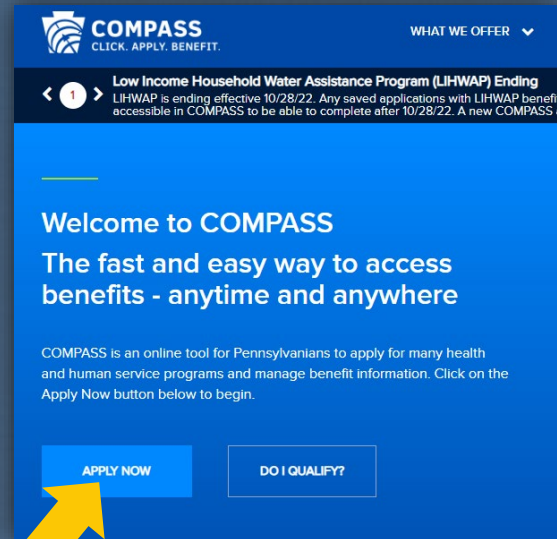
Pennsylvania accepts both paper and online applications for benefits.

Applications are processed within 30 calendar days.

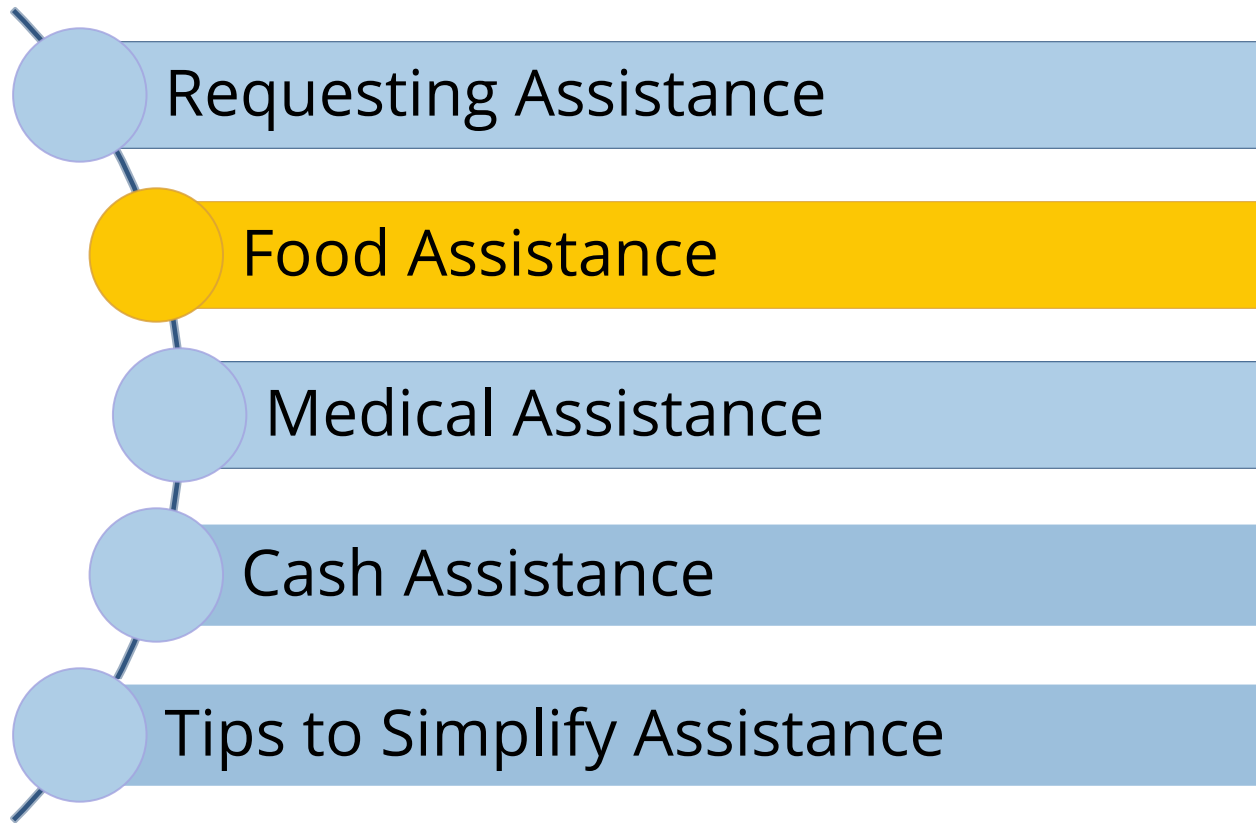
SNAP can be processed and issued within 5 days if approved for Expedited SNAP Services.



The image shows a sample of the "Pennsylvania Application for Benefits" form. At the top is the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare logo. The title "Pennsylvania Application for Benefits" is prominently displayed. Below the title, there is a notice in English and Spanish: "This is an application for cash, Medicaid, Foodstamps and SNAP benefits. If you need this application in another language or someone to interpret, please contact your local county assistance office. Language assistance will be provided free of charge." and "Este es una solicitud de beneficios de SNAP, asistencia médica y alimentos para bebés. Si necesita este solicitud en otro idioma o alguien para que interprete, comuníquese con la oficina de asistencia de su condado. Los gastos de interpretación serán gratuitos." The form contains three columns of text in English, Spanish, and Chinese. The English text includes: "This is done via your computer or by mail, either via your SNAP. Note that you can also apply for SNAP benefits online or by mail. You will need to provide your SNAP number and your SNAP number. If you need to apply for SNAP benefits, you will need to provide your SNAP number and your SNAP number. If you need to apply for SNAP benefits, you will need to provide your SNAP number and your SNAP number." The Spanish text includes: "Este se hace a través de su computadora o por correo, ya sea a través de su SNAP. Nota: también puede aplicar para beneficios de SNAP en línea o por correo. Necesitará proporcionar su número de SNAP y su número de SNAP. Si necesita aplicar para beneficios de SNAP, necesitará proporcionar su número de SNAP y su número de SNAP." The Chinese text includes: "本申請書用于申請現金、醫療補助及補充營養援助計劃(SNAP)之福利。若您需要本申請書的其他語言版本或需口譯服務，請與您居住地的貧困補助辦公室、特設提供免費口譯服務。" At the bottom, there is a section for "If you have a disability and need this application in large print or another format, please call our helpline at 1-800-692-7462. TDD Services are available at 1-800-451-6886." and the COMPASS logo with the text "You can apply online at: www.compass.state.pa.us".



The image shows the COMPASS online application interface. At the top, there is a blue header with the COMPASS logo and the text "CLICK. APPLY. BENEFIT." and "WHAT WE OFFER". Below the header, there is a section titled "Low Income Household Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP) Ending" with a sub-header "LIHWAP is ending effective 10/28/22. Any saved applications with LIHWAP benefit accessible in COMPASS to be able to complete after 10/28/22. A new COMPASS e". Below this, there is a large blue section with the text "Welcome to COMPASS" and "The fast and easy way to access benefits - anytime and anywhere". Below this, there is a section titled "COMPASS is an online tool for Pennsylvanians to apply for many health and human service programs and manage benefit information. Click on the Apply Now button below to begin." At the bottom, there are two buttons: "APPLY NOW" and "DO I QUALIFY?". A large yellow arrow points to the "APPLY NOW" button.



Food Stamps or SNAP



Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
Previously known as Food Stamps

SNAP provides nutrition benefits to supplement the food budget of needy families, so they can purchase healthy food and move towards self-sufficiency.

All residents of Pennsylvania can apply for SNAP. An applicant must meet certain requirements to be eligible for SNAP benefits. Criteria includes (but is not limited to):

- Residency of the person applying
- Citizenship criteria must be met
- Criminal History requirements must be met
- All household members must be listed on the application
- Resources and income must be under the limits

Food Stamps or SNAP



If determined eligible for SNAP benefits, the recipient will receive benefits back to the date the application was submitted.

Individuals will need to obtain an EBT Card – Discussed later

Some individuals will qualify for Expedited SNAP Benefits (or fast SNAP), which will be issued within 5 days of the application being received.

Expedited SNAP Benefit Service



A SNAP household may be eligible to receive benefits within 5 days of the application date if certain circumstances are met:

1. All members are migrant or seasonal farm workers who are destitute and have \$100 or less in liquid resources and nothing else to live on.
2. All members have liquid resources that are \$100 or less, and countable monthly gross income is less than \$150.
3. All members combined monthly gross income and liquid resources are less than their monthly shelter expenses.

How to apply for SNAP



Applicants must apply for SNAP in the county in which they currently reside.

If an applicant is unable to apply for themselves, they may have another person act as an authorized representative by applying and being interviewed on their behalf. The applicant must designate the authorized representative in writing.

Once an application is submitted to the local assistance office, it will be processed within 30 days.

What is required when applying for SNAP



Once a signed application has been submitted, the applicant will need to complete an interview to determine eligibility.

The interview can be completed over the telephone or in-person.

The applicant will need to provide verification of certain criteria that will be used during the eligibility determination.

Required information includes (*but is not limited to*):

- Identification and Social Security number
- Proof of Pennsylvania residence
- Proof of all income

Using SNAP benefits



If found eligible, SNAP benefits are issued on an Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) card, which works like a debit card.

SNAP benefits are automatically loaded onto the EBT card once a month.

The EBT card can be used to buy groceries at authorized food stores and retailers.

SNAP can also be used at any public or private nonprofit organization that feeds homeless individuals and may be any of the following:

- A soup kitchen
- A halfway house, supervised shelter, or similar organization that temporarily houses people
- A restaurant that has a contract to offer meals at low or reduced prices to the homeless*

Using SNAP benefits

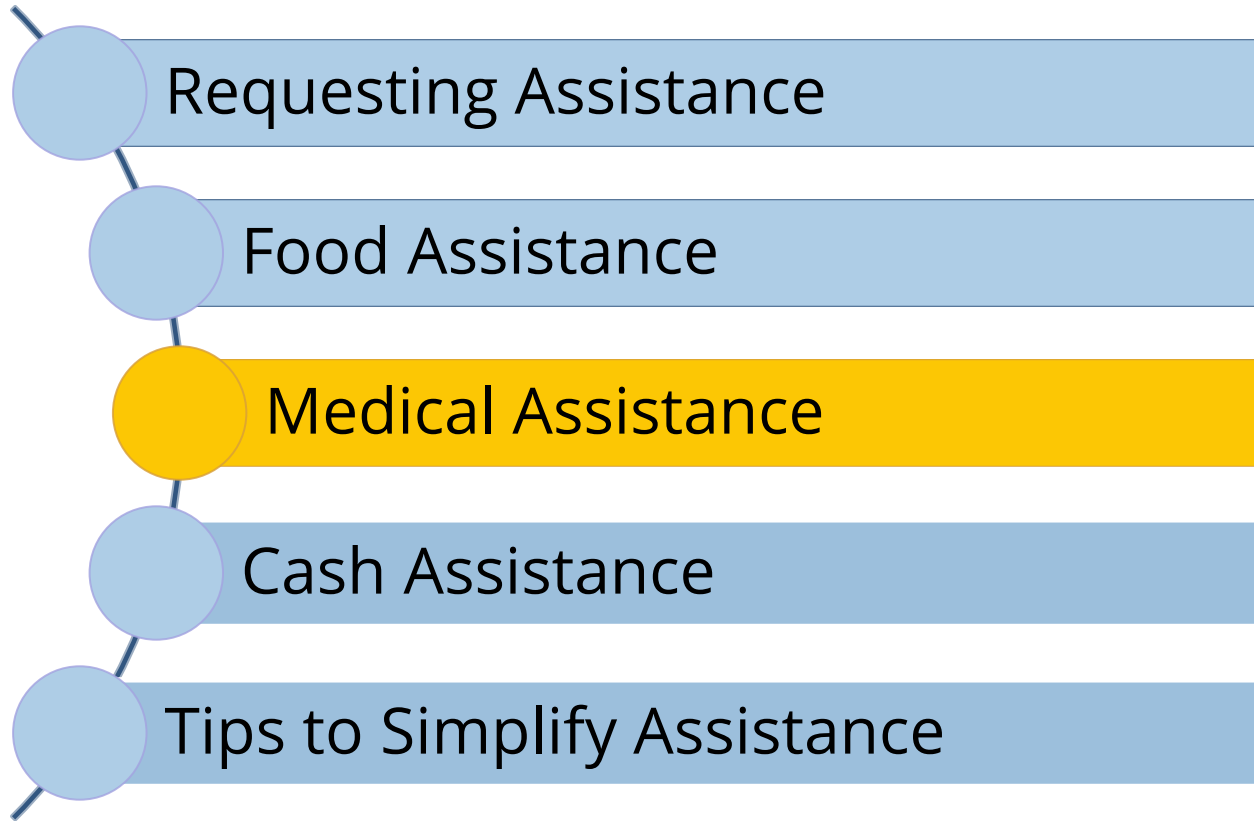


SNAP Benefit allotments are based on the number of household members and the household's income after allowable deductions.

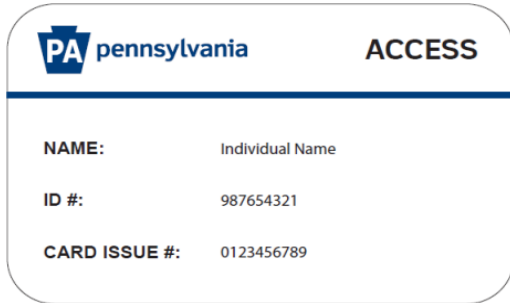
Benefits can be used for any foods including:

- Fruits and vegetables
- Meat, poultry, and fish
- Dairy products
- Breads and cereals
- Other foods such as snack foods and non-alcoholic beverages
- Seeds and plants, which produce food for the household to eat

SNAP also offers an optional employment and training program.



Medical Assistance



Medical Assistance (MA), also known as Medicaid, pays for health care services for eligible individuals.

DHS generally does not pay for new and expensive medicine or for experimental treatment.

The Medical Assistance (MA) Program provides quality medical and dental services to individuals who are eligible based on meeting non-financial, resource, and income eligibility criteria.

The Department of Human Services (DHS) makes direct payments to health professionals and vendors (*such as hospitals*) for services, medications, and medical supplies.

Medical Assistance can also pay for unpaid medical expenses that a household may have from the previous 3 months. The household/individual would first have to meet all eligibility criteria.

How to Apply for Medical Assistance



DHS will make every effort to process an application with information provided by the applicant and other available sources, such as the IRS, Labor and Industry, Child Support.

The applicant may be:

- An individual
- A medical provider
- A representative of a hospital or institution
- A child welfare agency for a foster child
- Any individual applying for someone who would like to receive MA – An authorized representative

If the DHS is unable to verify the information provided by the applicant, or if found information is inconsistent with the individual's statements on the application, then the individual is responsible for verifying their information.

What is required to apply for Medical Assistance



An applicant must provide proof of identity, income, medical expenses for which payment is being requested, existing medical coverage, and resources.

Sources of proof include the following:

- Written information
- Public records
- Collateral contacts
- Anything that shows that the individual's statement is true

The assistance office will accept an individual's statement of the following:

- Pregnancy
- Residency
- Household Composition
- Caretaker/Relative status
- American Indian/Alaskan Native status

Using Medical Assistance

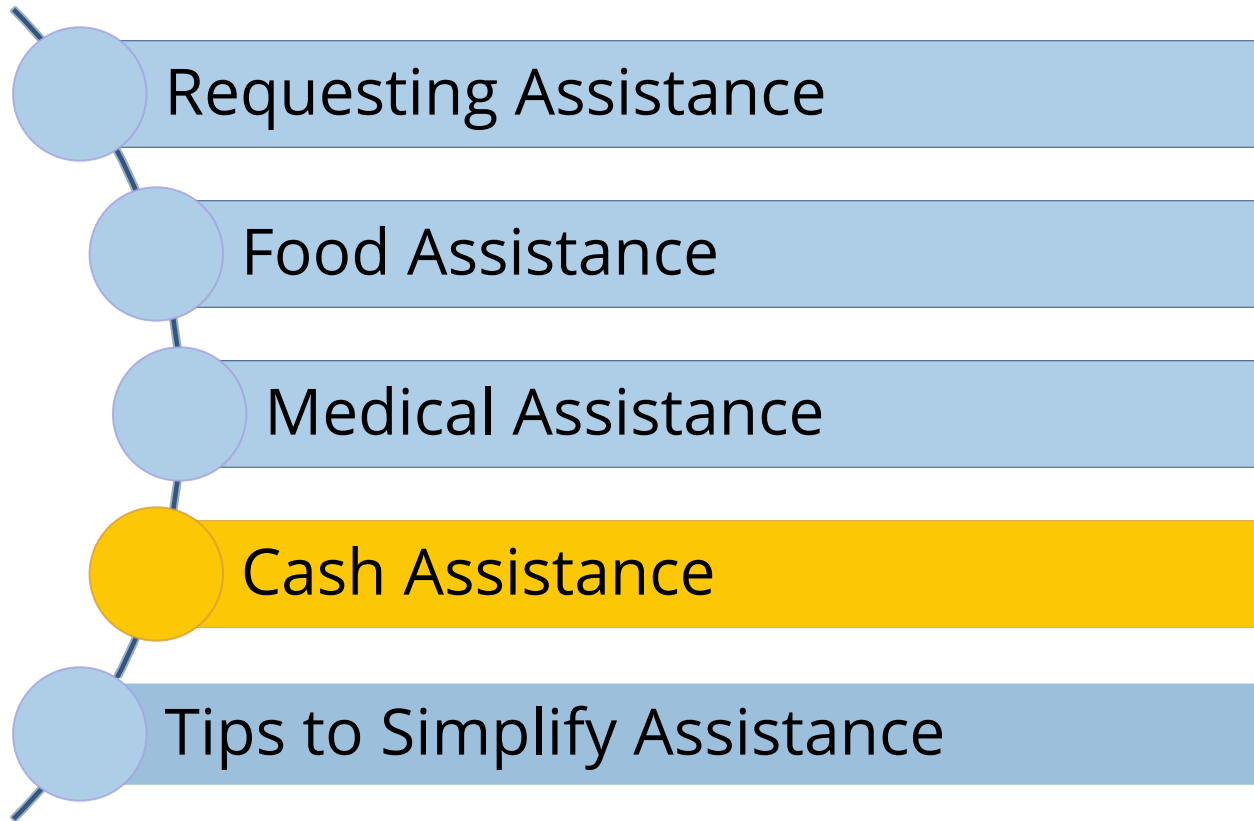


The Medical Assistance Program provides mental health, drug and alcohol, vision, and dental coverage in addition to physical health.

Some examples of covered services are:

- Inpatient and outpatient drug & alcohol services
- Inpatients and outpatient hospital services
- Psychiatric hospitalization
- Psychiatric and counseling services
- Physician services
- Prescription drugs
- Primary care provider services
- Crisis services
- Medical transportation

When seeking healthcare with a medical provider, the ACCESS card, like all other medical insurance cards, must be presented at the time of service.



Cash Assistance



Cash Assistance provides money and other supportive services with the purpose of promoting self respect, rehabilitation, and independence.

Cash Assistance is designed to meet one or more of the following goals:

- To quickly engage adults in work or work activities
- To divert families from the need for long-term cash assistance
- To assist working families receiving TANF
- To help Pennsylvania families reach the highest level of work participation possible

Any individual who is eligible for Cash Assistance is also eligible for Medical Assistance and receives an ACCESS Medical Assistance card.

It is best practice to indicate both Cash Assistance and Medical Assistance when completing an application.

How to Apply for Cash Assistance



Everyone has the right to apply for Cash Assistance, and by doing so, they will have an application interview. An individual may apply on their own behalf or on behalf of someone else (*Authorized Representative*).

A personal interview must be completed for all Cash Assistance applications. This interview will be scheduled within 13 days of the date the application was turned into the office.

Cash Assistance is available to families with children, pregnant single women, and refugees.

Once an application is submitted to the DHS, it will be processed within 30 days.

An individual can receive supportive services in addition to Cash Assistance benefits.

What is required when applying for Cash Assistance



As a condition of eligibility, the person who is required to sign the application, is also required to verify the information provided.

The person must provide information about the age, residence, citizenship, employment, income, and resources of all applicants, legally responsible relatives, stepparents, parents of minor parents, and sponsors of non-citizens.

Additional Requirements:

- Cooperate, unless claiming good cause, with DHS or DRS in determining paternity and establishing support
- Apply for any potential income that may decrease the need for assistance
- Participate in employment and training activities
- Develop an Agreement of Mutual Responsibility which includes long-term and short-term goals intended to help the individual obtain self-sufficiency

Using Cash Assistance



Cash Assistance is issued through the EBT card, just like SNAP.

Individuals can use their card to make purchases at eligible retailers. They can also withdrawal funds from an ATM.

Monthly cash benefits are automatically loaded onto the EBT card two times each month.

Cash Assistance funds issued through the EBT card are not to be used in:

- Liquor stores
- Casinos (*gambling casinos, gaming establishments*)
- Places for adult entertainment where performers undress or perform without clothes

Supportive Services



Some individuals who can work will be referred to employment and training service providers based on that individual's needs and goals:

- EARN
- Work Ready
- KEYS
- ELECT
- Job search activities, employment, and career preparation
- Refugee employment providers
- Rehabilitative services

The DHS is also able to provide financial support for:

- Transportation expenses
- Clothing
- Vehicle purchases
- Work, education, and training expenses
- Childcare (*provided through ELRC*)

Emergency Shelter Allowances



Emergency Shelter Allowance are available to assist homeless or near homeless families or persons who need financial assistance to:

- Prevent eviction or foreclosure
- Obtain permanent housing
- Obtain temporary shelter

To prevent eviction or foreclosure:

- \$400 for an individual under 21 or with children under 21
- \$300 for an individual over 21 and no children over age 21

To provide permanent living quarters:

- \$300 for an individual under 21 or with children under 21
- \$100 for an individual over 21 and no children over age 21

To provide temporary shelter: \$100 maximum

Supplemental Security Income (SSI)



SSI is a Federal Cash Program that is funded and administered by SSA. That means that the SSA determines eligibility, and the monies are paid by SSA directly to the recipient.

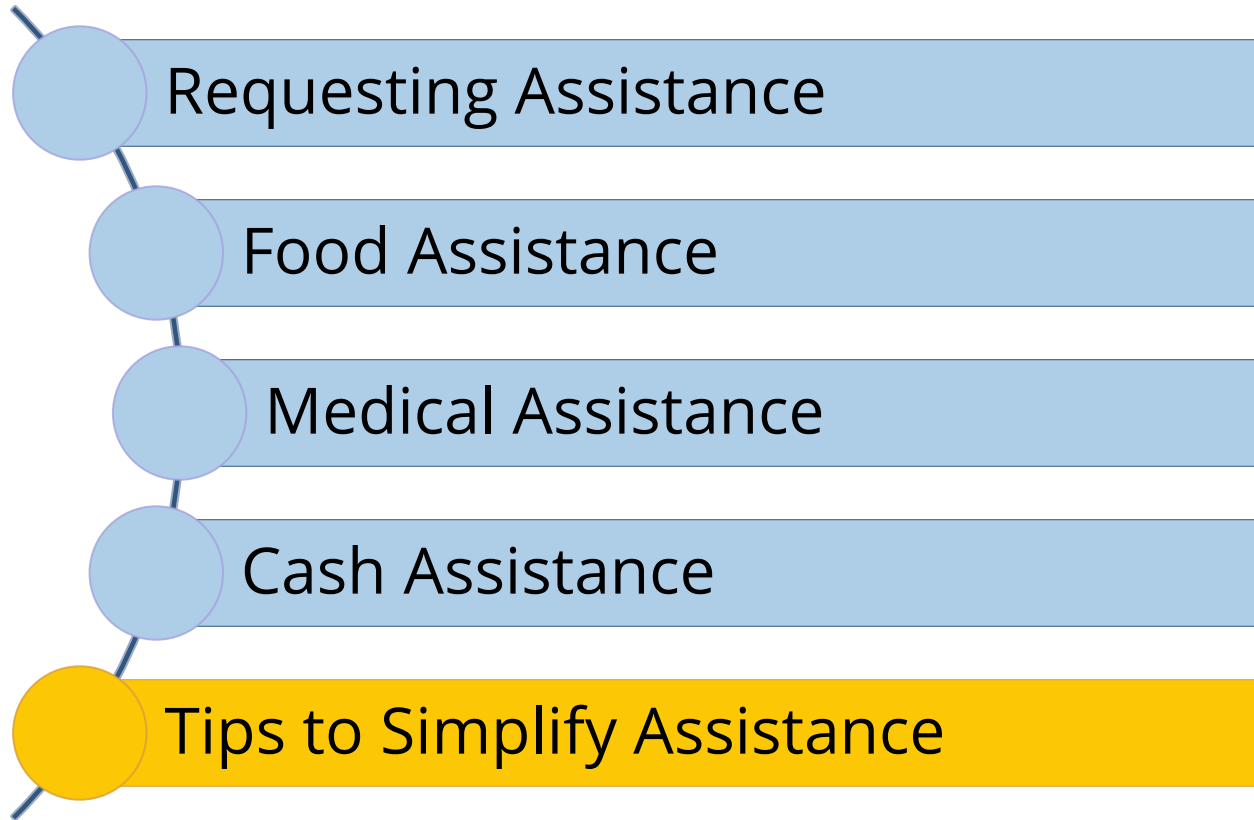
Supplemental Security Income (SSI) is a monthly cash payment to a person who meets the requirements of age, disability, or blindness and has minimal or no work history.

The SSI amount is a national minimum assistance standard which does not consider the differences in the cost of living throughout the country. To address these differences, Congress allowed States to provide additional assistance through a State Supplementary Payment (SSP). Pennsylvania opted to provide the SSP to eligible individuals.

SSP Amounts

Single	\$22.10
Couple	\$33.30

DHS manages the Medical Assistance to which all SSI recipients are entitled.





Tips to get your application processed accurately and timely:

- **Always sign** the application, SAR, and/or renewal before submitting/mailing
- **Answer all questions** on paperwork
- **Provide supporting documents**
 - ID for all applying
 - Verification of income, both earned and unearned, resources, etc.
- Sign the **Rights and Responsibilities** page/section
- **Cooperate** fully with caseworker by quickly providing any additional verification/documentation that is requested



Tips to maintain assistance:

An individual must report changes timely to their local CAO or to the Statewide Customer Service Center (SWCSC)

- Changes can include a change of address, a new job, a new telephone number, a job loss...
- SWCSC phone 1-877-395-8930

Pick up and review your mail regularly

Return all required reporting forms including, but not limited to the:

- Semi-annual reporting form
- Renewal packet

Questions?



Thank you for your time and attention!

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