

Helping Pennsylvanians in Need



Benefits and Supportive Services

DHS Office of Income Maintenance
Division of Staff Development

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The Purpose of this Training

- Recognize the importance of the various programs offered through the Department of Human Services (DHS) for Pennsylvanians in Need
- Identify the programs and some specific criteria associated with each program offered by the DHS
- Help you identify the programs that best fit your client's needs
- Provide you with additional information that may help you better assist these clients with the application process



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Requesting Assistance

- SNAP Benefits (Food Stamps)
- Medical Assistance
- Cash Assistance
- Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)
- Simplifying the Application Process

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Ways to Apply for Benefits

In person

- Individuals may apply at the Department of Human Services office in their county of residence
- Applicants may contact their local [County Assistance Offices](#)


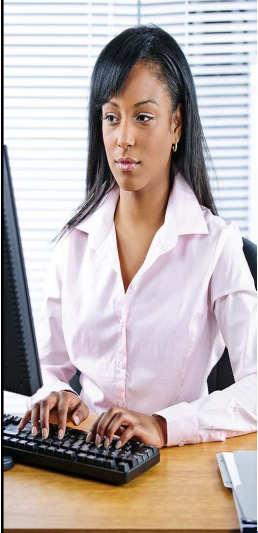
By phone

- Individuals may apply for SNAP or Medical Assistance via telephone at 1-866-550-4355
- Contact 711 for the TTY Relay service

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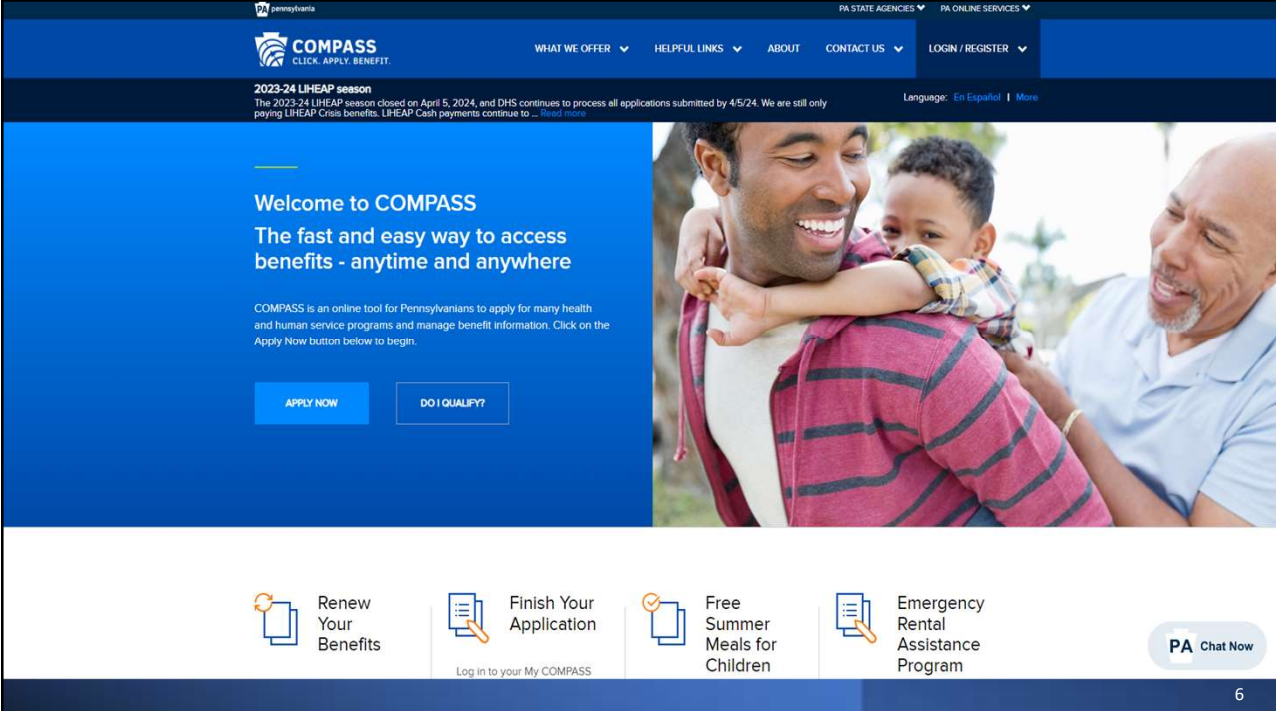
Ways to Apply for Benefits

Online

- Individuals may apply for benefits on the computer or on their cell phone
- WWW.COMPASS.STATE.PA.US
- Individuals may perform a variety of functions through this site, including:
 - Learning about programs/benefits offered through the Department of Human Services (DHS)
 - Applying for Benefits
 - Creating a MyCOMPASS Account
 - Renewing Benefits
 - Accessing the Helpful Links tab

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COMPASS
CLICK. APPLY. BENEFIT.

WHAT WE OFFER ▾ HELPFUL LINKS ▾ ABOUT CONTACT US ▾ LOGIN / REGISTER ▾

2023-24 LIHEAP season
The 2023-24 LIHEAP season closed on April 5, 2024, and DHS continues to process all applications submitted by 4/5/24. We are still only paying LIHEAP Crisis benefits. LIHEAP Cash payments continue to ... [Read more](#)





Language: [En Español](#) | [More](#)

Welcome to COMPASS

The fast and easy way to access benefits - anytime and anywhere

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.

[APPLY NOW](#) [DO I QUALIFY?](#)

-  Renew Your Benefits
-  Finish Your Application
Log in to your My COMPASS
-  Free Summer Meals for Children
-  Emergency Rental Assistance Program

[PA Chat Now](#)

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COMPASS
CLICK. APPLY. BENEFIT.

WHAT WE OFFER | HELPFUL LINKS | ABOUT | CONTACT US | LOGIN / REGISTER

- Health Care**
 - HealthChoices, Pennsylvania's Medical Assistance program, provides you and your family with many health care options.
 - Learn More about Pennsylvania's Medical Assistance expansion plan
 - Medical Assistance
 - Medicaid For Former Foster Care Youth
 - CHIP
 - Pennsylvania's Health Insurance Marketplace (Pennie)
- Food & Nutrition**
 - The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and the School Meals program help you and your family buy food and receive nutritious free or reduced-price school meals.
 - SNAP
 - School Meals
 - Employment and Training Services
- Home and Community Based Service Referrals**
 - Home and Community Based Services provide services beyond those covered by Medical Assistance that enable an individual to remain in a community setting. The following services are not available to be applied for on COMPASS, but you can submit a referral to express your interest in the service. Go to Do I Qualify? to submit your referral today.
 - Early Intervention Services
 - Intellectual Disability Services
 - Adult Autism Services
- Other Benefits**
 - Cash Assistance
 - Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)
 - Child Care Works
 - Long Term Living Services - Home and Community Based
 - Long Term Living Services - Nursing Home and Related Facilities
 - Emergency Rental Assistance Program
 - SEE ALL BENEFITS >

Renew Your Benefits | Finish Your Application | Free Summer Meals for Children | Emergency Rental Assistance Program

PA Chat Now

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COMPASS
CLICK. APPLY. BENEFIT.

WHAT WE OFFER | HELPFUL LINKS | ABOUT | CONTACT US | LOGIN / REGISTER

- Using COMPASS**
 - COMPASS Web-Based Tutorial
 - COMPASS Quick Reference Guide
 - COMPASS Community Partner Web-Based Tutorial
 - COMPASS Community Partner Quick Reference Guide
 - COMPASS Community Partner Online Self-Registration Guide
 - COMPASS Training Guide for Food Service Directors and Staff
 - Early Learning Program and Provider Search Quick Reference Guide
- Important Links**
 - Find Early Learning Programs and Child Care Providers
 - Find Home and Community Based Services Providers
 - 1095-B Tax Form Reprint
 - Check Application Status
 - Free Summer Meals for Children
 - Voter Registration and Information
 - Voter Registration Form
 - Family Safety Information
 - Employment and Training Programs
 - Other Health and Human Service Programs
- FAQs**
 - PLEASE READ Rights and Responsibilities
 - Health Care Coverage
 - Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP)
 - Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (Food Stamps)
 - Cash Assistance
 - Home and Community Based Services
 - Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)
 - Child Care Works
 - ERAP FAQ
 - SEE ALL FAQs >
- Site Map**
 - Apply Now
 - Do I Qualify?
 - Renew Your Benefits
 - Finish Your Application
 - 1095-B Tax Form Reprint
 - Login/Register
 - SEE ALL BENEFITS >

Renew Your Benefits | Finish Your Application | Free Summer Meals for Children | Emergency Rental Assistance Program

PA Chat Now

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The screenshot shows the COMPASS website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the COMPASS logo and the tagline "CLICK. APPLY. BENEFIT." followed by menu items: "WHAT WE OFFER", "HELPFUL LINKS", "ABOUT", "CONTACT US", and "LOGIN / REGISTER". Below the navigation bar, there are four columns of information:

- Call or Email Us:** Includes a helpline number (1-800-692-7462) and operating hours (Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:45 p.m.). It also provides a link to "Send an Email".
- Have a question about CHIP benefits or eligibility?:** Directs users to the CHIP website at www.chipcoverskids.com and to click on "FAQ" for answers.
- Have a question about the status of your School Meals application or questions about the program?:** Instructs users to contact the school their child attends.
- More Information:** Offers additional information and a link to "Go to the Contact Page".

Below this information, there are two buttons: "APPLY NOW" and "DO I QUALIFY?". To the right, there is a photograph of a smiling man. At the bottom of the page, there is a row of four service icons: "Renew Your Benefits", "Finish Your Application", "Free Summer Meals for Children", and "Emergency Rental Assistance Program". A "PA Chat Now" button is located in the bottom right corner. The page number "9" is visible in the bottom right corner.

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This screenshot shows the same COMPASS website interface but with a different content area. The navigation bar remains the same. The main content area is divided into three sections:

- Community Partners:** Describes community-based agencies, organizations, coalitions, hospitals, church groups, and sponsors of the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) that help Pennsylvanians submit applications. It includes a "Login / Register" link.
- Service Providers:** Explains that Service Providers and Business Partners are public utilities providing Lifeline and other program benefits to low-income individuals. It also includes a "Login / Register" link.
- Emergency Rental Assistance Program:** Includes a "County Agency Login" link.

On the right side, there is a section titled "Individuals & Families" which describes the My COMPASS Account as a secure, central location for applications and benefits. It lists several actions users can perform:

- Apply for benefits
- Renew your benefits
- Check the status of your application
- Upload documentation for your application or case
- View your benefit information, such as benefit amount and renewal date
- Report changes to your case, such as a change in income or address
- Receive e-Notices
- Manage other aspects of your benefits online

Below this list is a "Login / Register" link. To the right of the text is a photograph of a smiling man. The bottom of the page features the same row of service icons and "PA Chat Now" button as the previous screenshot. The page number "10" is visible in the bottom right corner.

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The screenshot shows the COMPASS website homepage. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the COMPASS logo and the tagline 'CLICK. APPLY. BENEFIT.'. Below the navigation bar, there is a banner with the text '2023-24 LIHEAP season' and a notice that the season closed on April 5, 2024. The main content area features a large blue box with the text 'Welcome to COMPASS' and 'The fast and easy way to access benefits - anytime and anywhere'. Below this text are two buttons: 'APPLY NOW' and 'DO I QUALIFY?'. The 'DO I QUALIFY?' button is highlighted with a yellow border. To the right of the text is a photograph of a family. Below the main content area, there are four service icons: 'Renew Your Benefits', 'Finish Your Application', 'Free Summer Meals for Children', and 'Emergency Rental Assistance Program'. A 'PA Chat Now' button is located in the bottom right corner. The page number '11' is visible in the bottom right corner.

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This screenshot is identical to the one above, showing the COMPASS website homepage. In this version, the 'APPLY NOW' button is highlighted with a yellow border, while the 'DO I QUALIFY?' button is not. The rest of the page content, including the navigation bar, banner, service icons, and chat button, remains the same. The page number '12' is visible in the bottom right corner.

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- Requesting Assistance
- SNAP Benefits (Food Stamps)
- Medical Assistance
- Cash Assistance
- Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)
- Simplifying the Application Process


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The Importance of the SNAP Program



- The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), previously known as the Food Stamp program, helps low-income Pennsylvanians purchase healthy foods
- The program provides a monthly food assistance allotment to eligible households
- As of January 2024, the United States Department of Agriculture reports that there were 1,064,248 households receiving SNAP benefits or Food Stamps in Pennsylvania - this equates to roughly 1,984,531 individuals receiving benefits
- It is important for us to remember who these benefits are supporting:
 - Households with Children – 61%
 - Households with Elderly or Disabled individuals – 46%
 - Households that are Working Families – 46%



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Requirements of the SNAP Program



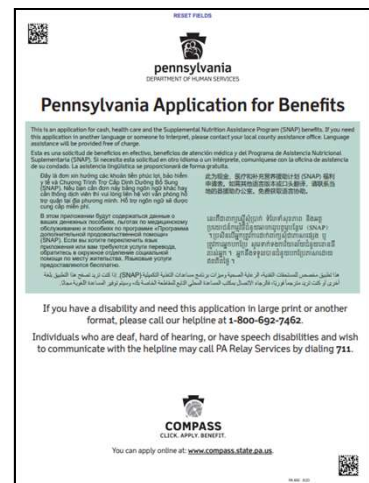
- All residents of Pennsylvania can apply for SNAP
- An applicant must meet certain requirements to be eligible for SNAP benefits. Criteria includes (but is not limited to):
 - Residency
 - Citizenship
 - Criminal History
 - All household members must be listed on the application
 - Resources and income must be under the limits



SNAP Application Processing



- 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
- Individuals may apply for SNAP benefits the following ways:
 - Online – Apply for or renew SNAP benefits online by using [COMPASS](#)
 - In-Person – File an application at the local County Assistance Office - [CAO Listing](#)
 - Telephone - Contact the Consumer Service Center for Health Care Coverage at 1-866-550-4355



SNAP Application Processing



- Once a SNAP application has been submitted to the local Department of Human Service office, it will be processed for ongoing SNAP benefits within 30 days
- Some individuals may qualify for “*quick SNAP*” or Expedited Service, which is authorized for SNAP households **who need** benefits right away
- An eligible applicant household that meets Expedited Service criteria must receive (*and have a reasonable opportunity to use*) their first benefit no later than the 5th calendar day after the application filing date

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What Determines an Ex-SNAP Case?



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

- 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
- All members have liquid resources that are \$100 or less, and countable monthly gross income is less than \$150
- All members combined monthly gross income and liquid resources are less than their monthly shelter expenses



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SNAP Application Processing



- The application process begins when a household submits an Identifiable Application to the correct County Assistance Office:
 - A name
 - An address
 - A signature on the application
- Once an Identifiable Application has been submitted, an interview must take place via telephone or face-to-face; *however*, the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) has currently approved an interview waiver for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
- This waiver is effective *until June 30, 2024*

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SNAP Application Processing



- The applicant will then need to provide verification of certain criteria that will be used during the eligibility determination, including (but not limited to):
 - **Residence** – The applicant must apply in the county where they currently reside, and they must provide [verification of that address](#)
 - **Identity** – Individual completing the application must provide [verification of their identity](#)
 - **Citizenship** – Applicants must declare their citizenship to the United States; verification is only necessary when proving immigration status for all household members or if there is information to the contrary from what is listed on the application
 - **Enumeration** – Each individual applying for or receiving benefits must provide or apply for a Social Security Number

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SNAP Application Processing



- The applicant will then need to provide verification of certain criteria that will be used during the eligibility determination, including (but not limited to):
 - **Criminal History** – All requirements must be met
 - Ineligibility for SNAP may result if the applicant or recipient:
 - Is violating the terms of their probation or parole and is actively sought with the purpose of enforcement
 - Is fleeing to avoid prosecution, custody or confinement after a felony conviction
 - Is incarcerated
 - Has been convicted of fraudulently misrepresenting identity or residence to receive multiple SNAP benefits which will result in an ineligibility of 10 years after conviction or state agency finding
 - Has been found guilty of being an Intentional Program Violator

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SNAP Application Processing



- The applicant will then need to provide verification of certain criteria that will be used during the eligibility determination, including (but not limited to):
 - **Resources** – Applicant must list their resources on the application. Examples of some resources include; cash-on-hand, bank accounts, vehicles, property...
 - **Income** – The applicant must provide [verification of their income](#). Provide at least the last 30-days worth of income. Examples of types of income can include; wages, self-employment, SSI, Social Security, VA Benefits, child support...
 - **Expenses** – The applicant will list their expenses on the application. Examples of some expenses can include; recent medical bills, support paid to a non-household member, shelter costs (rent, mortgage, electric, water...), childcare costs paid to someone who is not in the household...

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SNAP Application Processing



- There are a few factors that contribute to higher SNAP allowances and income limits in Pennsylvania (*these limits are subject to yearly updates*). Factors include household size, monthly income, and if a member of the household is 60 years old or older or has a disability. ***The best way to determine if household will qualify for SNAP - is to apply***

Household Size	Maximum Gross Monthly Income
1	\$2,430
2	\$3,288
3	\$4,144
4	\$5,000
5	\$5,858
6	\$6,714
7	\$7,570

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Using SNAP Benefits



- If an individual or household is approved for SNAP assistance, this benefit will be deposited onto an Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT ACCESS Card) once a month
- This EBT card works exactly like a debit card:
 - Eligible recipients receive a Pennsylvania Access Card and select a Personal Identification Number (PIN) to access authorized benefits
 - When paying for groceries, the recipient swipes his or her EBT Access Card through a Point-of-Sale (POS) terminal and enters their PIN to access their SNAP benefit account
 - The pin and account balance is verified electronically, and the retailer receives an authorization or denial
 - The recipient's account is then debited for the amount of the purchase, and the retailer's account is credited

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What Can be Purchased using SNAP?



- Households can purchase any food items, such as:
 - Fruits and vegetables
 - Meats, 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 can also be used at any public or private nonprofit organization that feeds homeless individuals such as a soup kitchen, a halfway house, supervised shelter (*or similar organization that temporarily houses people*)



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What Cannot be Purchased with SNAP?



- Households cannot use SNAP benefits to purchase:
 - Beer, wine, liquor, cigarettes, or tobacco products (vaping items)
 - Vitamins, medicines, and supplements (if an item has a Supplement Fact Label, it is considered a supplement thus it is not eligible for a SNAP purchase)
 - Live Animals (except for shellfish)
 - Any non-food items, such as:
 - Pet foods
 - Cleaning supplies, paper products, and other household supplies
 - Hygiene items and/or cosmetics



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Requesting Assistance

SNAP Benefits (Food Stamps)

Medical Assistance

Cash Assistance



Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)

Simplifying the Application Process

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Medical Assistance Information

- Medical Assistance (MA), also known as Medicaid (*not Medicare*), pays for health care services for eligible individuals
- Department of Human Services (DHS) generally does not pay for new and expensive medicine or for experimental treatment
- 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

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MA Application Processing



- Individuals may apply for MA benefits in different ways, including:
 - Online – Apply for or renew your benefits using the [COMPASS](#) application
 - Telephone - Contact the Consumer Service Center for Health Care Coverage at 1-866-550-4355
 - In-Person – Applicants can contact their local [County Assistance Office \(CAO\)](#)
 - On Paper – Applicants can download [an application](#) and send it to the local CAO

PA pennsylvania ACCESS	
NAME:	Individual Name
ID #:	987654321
CARD ISSUE #:	0123456789

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MA Application Processing



- In order to qualify for benefits, individuals must meet non-financial, resource (*in some cases*), income, and other eligibility requirements
- The methodologies for determining the correct Medical Assistance category are based on each categories individual criteria
- The category of MA is based on the following criteria, which are not related to money or income (non-financial):
 - Age
 - Temporary/permanent disability
 - Blindness
 - Specified relatives
 - Deprivation of support or care
 - Pregnancy
 - Resident in a long-term care facility
 - Receives home and community-based services
 - Diagnosis and the need for treatment
 - Family Planning Services for Women
 - Employability

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SSI-Related Medical Assistance



- An SSI-Related category is approved for individuals who meet the qualifications of:
 - Aged (*age 65 or older*)
 - Disabled (*according to the Social Security Administration (SSA) disability requirements*)
 - Blind
 - Have 20/200 or poorer vision in the better eye with the best correcting lens
 - Have such limited vision that the widest diameter of the visual field subtends an angle no greater than 20 degrees

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MAGI Medical Assistance



- Modified Adjusted Gross Income (MAGI) is a new income methodology used for determining MA eligibility based on federal tax rules with some exceptions
- Modified Adjusted Gross Income (MAGI) covers individuals in the following categories:
 - Children aged 18 and under
 - Pregnant women
 - Parents and caretakers of children under 21
 - Adults ages 19-64 with incomes at or below 133 percent of the Federal Income Poverty Guidelines (FPIG)
 - Family planning services

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MA for Workers with Disabilities (MAWD)



- Medical Assistance for Workers with Disabilities (MAWD) helps individuals with disabilities work while receiving MA coverage
- The CAO will inform the individual who is eligible for MAWD that he/she must pay a monthly sum of money, called a premium, to receive MAWD benefits
- The monthly premium is 5% of the individual's earned and unearned income
- The premium does not have to be paid, when:
 - The monthly premium is under \$10.00
 - The individual shows good cause why he or she should not have to pay it

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MA for Workers with Disabilities (MAWD)



- MAWD gives benefits to individuals who meet the eligibility rules in the following groups:
 - Worker with a disability (*Category PW*). Individuals in this group must:
 - Be at least age 16 but under age 65
 - Be employed and getting paid
 - Be disabled according to the Social Security Administration (SSA) or the DHS rules (except for earnings)
 - Have countable monthly income, after allowable deductions, below 250% of the Federal Poverty Income Guidelines (FPIGs)
 - Have countable resources of \$10,000 or less

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MA for Workers with Disabilities (MAWD)



- MAWD gives benefits to individuals who meet the eligibility rules in the following groups:
 - Worker with a medically improved disability (*Category PI*). Individuals in this group must:
 - Meet the age, income and resource requirements of the worker with a disability group
 - Work at least 40 hours a month and earn at least minimum wage
 - Have a medically improved disability that no longer meets the SSA's disability rules:
 - The individual must continue to have a severe impairment, as determined by medical professionals*
 - Have received ongoing MA coverage in the workers with a disability group in the past and have had benefits discontinued because of medical improvement

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Long Term Care (LTC)





- The Department of Human Services (DHS) will help pay the cost of Long-Term Care (LTC) services for anyone who is assessed functionally and financially eligible
- LTC providers evaluate and give care for individuals with illnesses, injuries or disabilities that have a medical/functional need for LTC services
- Long Term Care (LTC) services include both Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) and LTC Facility Services
- If a person applies for medical assistance and payment of LTC services, they must also meet the non-financial and financial medical assistance eligibility

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Home and Community Based Services

- The Federal government permits states to waive certain Medical Assistance (MA) program requirements in order to provide Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) to specific groups of clients
- HCBS Programs are an alternative to institutional or extended inpatient hospital care as they allow the individual to remain in their own home environment with assistance determined through a medical assessment
- HCBS Programs are sometimes called Waiver Programs. Both terms mean the same thing
- All HCBS Programs are made available through one of the Department's various Program Offices


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PA Independent Enrollment Broker (IEB)



The [PA Independent Enrollment Broker \(PA IEB\)](#) is a contracted statewide service that facilitates the enrollment process for Pennsylvania residents seeking home and community-based services



[Contact us](#) | [Get answers](#) | [Provider resources](#) | [Program resources](#) | [Contacts and links](#)

Welcome to the PA Independent Enrollment Broker (PA IEB)
 The PA IEB is a contracted statewide entity facilitating the enrollment process for Pennsylvania residents seeking home and community based services and supports as well as long term services and supports.

Apply ▾
 Apply for Long Term Services and Supports (LTSS) Waiver

Check Status ▾
 If you have already applied for waiver you can check the current status of your application.

Choose ▾
 If you are currently enrolled in the Community HealthChoices Program you can change your Health Plan or Provider anytime.

Waiver Applicants
 The PA IEB provides enrollment support for Pennsylvania's Home and Community Based (HCBS) waiver programs.

- To begin the waiver application process, go to [Apply](#)
- To check the status of your application, go to [Check Status](#)

Providers

Questions?
 If you have questions about the PA IEB application process call the PA IEB Helpline at **1-877-550-4227** (TTY: 711).
 If you are already enrolled in PA CHC and have questions call the PA CHC Helpline at **1-844-824-3656** (TTY: 711).

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Community Health Choices (CHC)



- The Department of Human Services (DHS) is committed to increasing opportunities for older Pennsylvanians and individuals with physical disabilities to remain in their homes through the Community Health Choices (CHC)
- If an individual is 21 or older and has both Medicare and Medicaid (*dually eligible*) or receives long-term supports through Medicaid because they need help with everyday personal tasks, these individuals will be covered by Community HealthChoices (CHC) in the Medical Assistance program
- CHC will coordinate the individual's health care coverage to improve the quality of their health care experience — serving more people in communities rather than in facilities, giving them the opportunity to work, spend more time with their families, and experience an overall better quality of life

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Childrens Health Insurance Program



- The [Children's Health Insurance Program](#) (CHIP) is a joint federal and state program that provides health coverage to uninsured children in families with incomes too high to qualify for Medicaid, but too low to afford private coverage
- In order to be eligible for CHIP, a child must be:
 - Under 19 years of age,
 - Uninsured (determined ineligible for Medicaid, and not covered through a group health plan or creditable health insurance),
 - A citizen or meet immigration requirements,
 - A resident of the state, and
 - Eligible within the state's CHIP income range, based on family income, and any other state specified rules in the CHIP state plan

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Using Medical Assistance Benefits



- 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, psychiatric hospitalization and counseling services
 - Physician services and primary care provider services
 - Prescription drugs
 - Crisis services
 - Medical transportation



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Referrals to the ACA Marketplace



- When individuals are not eligible for any medical assistance in the state of Pennsylvania, an electronic referral is sent to Pennie®, Pennsylvania's health insurance marketplace under the Affordable Care Act (ACA)
- Once an individual receives notification that this action has taken place, they must self-initiate by contacting Pennie® to request coverage



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Finding the Correct Coverage - Pennie®



- [Pennie®](#) is the official online marketplace made possible by the State of Pennsylvania and the top private insurance companies to provide affordable, high quality health insurance plans to Pennsylvanians
- Pennie® is a mix of public and private entities collaborating to create a safe, trusted insurance marketplace for Pennsylvanians to shop for health care coverage
- Pennie® is a place that provides financial savings to help lower your monthly premium and possibly out-of-pocket costs for Pennsylvanians
- Pennie® provides step-by-step help to get you the high-quality coverage that is right for each person

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Finding the Correct Coverage – PA MEDI



- When individuals turn 62, they may receive Medicare (*remember, this is different than Medicaid*). Medicare is administered by the Federal Government, not local state agencies
- Individuals receiving Medicare will be required to select a provider
- Pennsylvania offers a free health insurance counseling program called PA MEDI
- This program helps older Pennsylvanians with Medicare questions as their counselors are specially trained staff and volunteers
- They can answer your questions about Medicare, as they can give you easy-to-understand information about Medicare, Medicare Supplemental Insurance, Medicaid, and Long-Term Care Insurance
- The PA MEDI Helpline can be reached by calling 1-800-783-7067 - The call and all services are free and confidential

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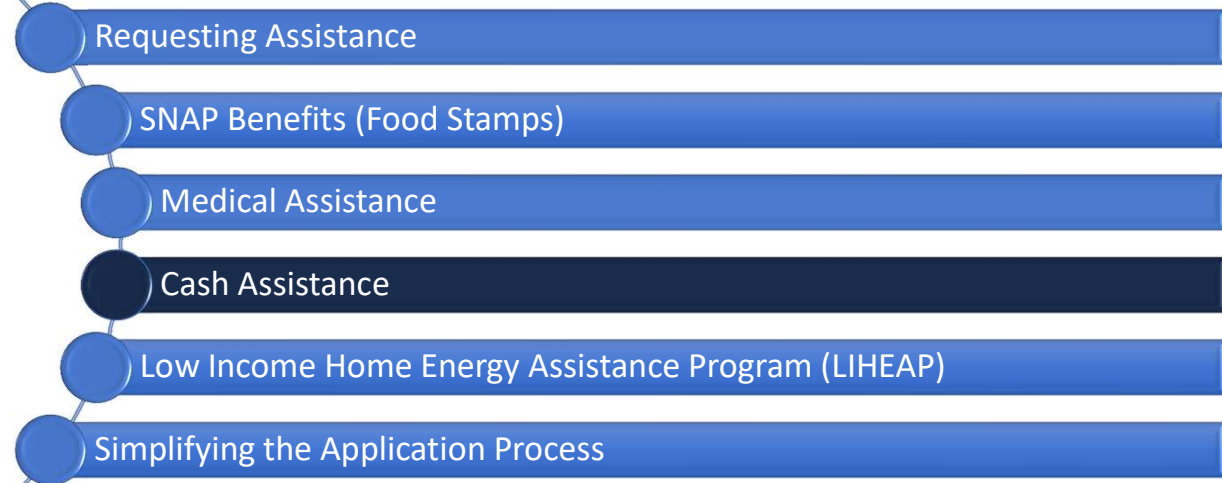
Finding the Correct Coverage - PA MEDI



- PA MEDI counselors can help individuals:
 - Understand their Medicare benefits, including what services are covered under Medicare Parts A and B and their Medicare Summary Notice
 - Understand their Medicare Prescription Drug (*Part D*) benefit
 - Make informed choices about Medicare coverage choices, Medigap policies and Medicare Advantage Plans
 - Understand Medicare eligibility and enrollment
 - Understand programs such as the Extra Help and Medicare Savings Plan. Individuals may qualify for these programs that help pay for Medicare premiums, deductible and co-pays, and prescription drug needs
 - Understand and provide assistance with the Medicare appeal process
 - Understand benefits under Long Term Care policies

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Cash Assistance Information



- Cash Assistance provides money and other supportive services with the purpose of promoting self respect, rehabilitation, and independence
- Any individual who is eligible for Cash Assistance is also eligible for Medical Assistance and receives an ACCESS Medical Assistance card
- This assistance is provided to promote self-respect, rehabilitation, and independence while helping families maintain a decent and healthful standard of living

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Cash Assistance Information



- Cash Assistance is available to families with children, pregnant single women, and refugees
- An individual can revive TANF Cash Assistance for 60 months (*5 years*) total over the course of that individual's life
- Once an application is submitted to the DHS, it will be processed (*approved or rejected*) within 30 days
- As a condition of eligibility, a personal interview must be completed for all Cash Assistance applications. This interview will be scheduled within 13 days from the date the application was turned into the office
- Along with receiving Cash assistance monetary benefits, an individual can also receive supportive services

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Types of Cash Assistance



- Federal funded Cash Assistance programs:
 - **Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)** – This is the most common type of Cash Assistance. This category is for children (*up to 18 years of age and age 18, enrolled full-time in high school*), certain relatives and pregnant women. To qualify, the children must live with a specified relative and be deprived of support or care because of the:
 - Absence of one or both parents including the death of a parent
 - Incapacity of a parent
 - Unemployment or underemployment of a parent



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Types of Cash Assistance



- Federal funded Cash Assistance programs:
 - **TANF Diversion** – The Diversion initiative is an alternative to Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). Diversion covers a short-term financial gap when a household's earned income temporarily stops or reduces. The intention of Diversion is to “*divert*” the household from the immediate crisis and the need for ongoing TANF benefits reducing the accumulation of TANF time
 - A Diversion payment is a lump sum of either one, two, or three months of the Family Size Allowance (FSA), depending on the amount and time span of the need
 - A Diversion period extends from the first day of the month that the County Assistance Office (CAO) authorizes Diversion until the last day of the final month of Diversion eligibility
 - Recipients can only receive Diversion once in 12 months
 - The intent of Diversion is to fill a short-term, non-recurring financial gap until a household's income resumes

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Types of Cash Assistance



- Federal funded Cash Assistance programs:
 - **TANF Diversion** – While Diversion has the same criteria as TANF eligibility, there are also other requirements:
 - The household must be [eligible for TANF](#)
 - The household must have a short-term [financial need](#) such as car repairs, mortgage, home repairs, childcare costs, car payments...
 - The Diversion payment cannot be used to cover court costs, fines, bail, restitution payments, and child support payments
 - The household must [have a recent work history](#) or job skills training
 - There can be [no overlapping Cash Assistance](#) benefits

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Types of Cash Assistance



- Why take TANF-Diversion over regular TANF? Just a few reasons:

Diversion	TANF
No child support requirements	Filing for child support at the Domestic Relation office is required, with the court order being assigned to the DHS (unless good cause is claimed)
Recipient keeps the entire amount of child support	Recipient keeps up to the first \$200 of child support through a support pass through
Recipient is not eligible for TANF until the end of the Diversion period, with a few exceptions	Recipient may receive ongoing TANF benefits without an ineligibility period
Recipient does not have to comply with any RESET/Employment and Training activities	RESET hourly work requirements, including eligibility for skills training programs based on employability and TANF day count
No TANF day count/No TANF clock	TANF time limit of 60 months (5-years in a lifetime)
Family Size Allowance (FSA)/grant amount is not adjusted by income	Income is considered and adjusted to the FSA/grant amount
MA application must be made for Medical Assistance	Automatic Medical Assistance coverage

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Types of Cash Assistance



- Federal funded Cash Assistance programs:
 - **Extended TANF (E-TANF)** - This category is for families or pregnant women who would qualify for TANF, except for the fact that they have exhausted their TANF time limits. These households must meet specific hardship. E-TANF is program that is there to provide additional time to overcome significant barriers to achieving family sustaining income
 - **Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA)** - These benefits are for refugees who enter the United States under a specific resettlement program. Refugee Assistance is time-limited, like TANF; however, Refugee Assistance is limited to a maximum of 12 months from the initial Date of Entry into the U.S

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Types of Cash Assistance



- Federal funded Cash Assistance programs:
 - **State Blind Pension (SBP)** - This category is for persons who meet vision and other eligibility requirements such as, being a resident of the state of Pennsylvania, being at least 21 years of age and meeting the resource and income requirements
 - **Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)** - This program pays some heating costs. Payment is made either to the vendor or in some cases to the person (*discussed later*)
 - **Supplemental Security Income (SSI)** - These benefits are for aged, blind or disabled persons who meet certain requirements. The Social Security Administration (SSA) administers SSI. The Department of Human Services (DHS) supplements the benefit through the State Supplementary Payment program

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Supplemental Security Income (SSI)



- SSI is a Federal Cash Program that is funded and administered by the Social Security Administration (SSA). The SSA determines eligibility, and the amount of money paid by SSA directly to the recipient
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI) provides monthly payments to people with disabilities and older adults who have little or no income or resources
- One of the misconceptions about SSI benefits is that they are the same as RSDI benefits – the two are totally separate
- The current SSI amounts are as follows:
 - Single individual - \$943.00
 - Couple - \$1415.00

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State Supplementary Payment (SSP)



- The Social Security Administration (SSA) established Supplemental Security Income (SSI) as a means to provide assistance to needy aged, blind and disabled individuals
- The SSI amount is a national minimum assistance standard which does not take into account 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
- The current SSP amounts are as follows:
 - Single individual - \$22.10
 - Couple - \$33.30

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Cash Assistance Application Processing

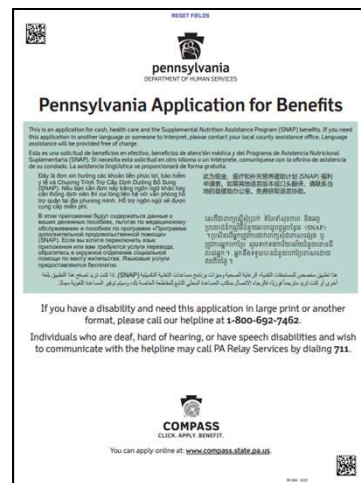


- Any person who wants to apply for cash benefits for himself or herself or on behalf of someone else may contact the County Assistance Office (CAO) to file an application
- When completing an application, the CAO must get the signatures of the following persons either during the application interview or within 30 calendar days from the authorization date:
 - The payment name, if it is not the same as the applicant
 - Anyone applied for who is 18 years old or older
 - Any emancipated minor

Cash Assistance Application Processing



- There are three ways that individuals can apply for the Cash Assistance:
 - Online – Individuals may apply for benefits online using the [COMPASS](#) website
 - On Paper – Applicants can download the [Cash Assistance application](#) and return it to the local County Assistance Office
 - In-Person – Individuals may file a Cash Assistance application at their local [County Assistance Office](#)



Cash Assistance Application Processing



- Once an Identifiable Application has been submitted, a face-to-face or telephone interview will take place within 13 days
- The applicant will then need to provide verification of certain criteria that will be used during the eligibility determination, including (*but not limited to*):
 - **Residence** – The applicant must apply in the county where they currently reside, and they must provide [verification of residency](#)
 - **Identity** – All applicants listed on the application must provide [verification of their identity](#)
 - **Citizenship** – Applicants must declare their citizenship to the United States; verification is only necessary when proving immigration status for all household members or if there is information on the contrary of the statement on the application
 - **Enumeration** – Each individual applying for or receiving benefits must provide or apply for a Social Security Number (*does not apply to Refugee Cash Assistance*)

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Cash Assistance Application Processing



- The applicant will then need to provide verification of certain criteria that will be used during the eligibility determination, including (*but not limited to*):
 - **Resources** – Applicant must list their resources on the application and [provide verification](#). Examples of some resources include; cash-on-hand, bank accounts, vehicles, property...
 - **Income** – The applicant must [provide verification of their income](#). Provide at least the last 30-days worth of income. Examples of types of income can include; wages, self-employment, SSI, Social Security, VA Benefits, child support...
 - **Expenses** – The applicant will list their expenses on the application. Examples of some expenses can include; recent medical bills, shelter costs (rent, mortgage, electric, water...), childcare costs paid to someone who is not in the household...

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Cash Assistance Application Processing



- Additional requirements of Cash Assistance may include:
 - **Paternity and/or Support** – The applicant must cooperate with paternity and child support requirements, unless they have a good cause for not cooperating
 - **Potential Income** – The applicant must apply for and actively seek any potential income that may decrease the need for Cash Assistance. Examples of this type of income could be Spousal Support, Unemployment Compensation Benefits...
 - **Road to Economic Self-Sufficiency through Employment and Training (RESET)** – Participate in all required Employment and Training activities (*activity and required hours will be discussed during the face-to-face interview*)
 - **Agreement of Mutual Responsibility (AMR)** – All Cash Assistance members are required to help their caseworker complete an Agreement of Mutual Responsibility (AMR), which is a plan for what work/self-sufficiency activities will be required

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Using Cash Assistance Benefits



- Individuals can use their card to make purchases at eligible retailers. They can also withdrawal funds from an ATM
- TANF/RCA benefits are automatically loaded onto the EBT card two times each month
- SSP/SBP/SSI benefits are paid monthly
- 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

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TANF Work Requirements



- Individuals who are physically and mentally able to 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



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Special Allowances/Supportive Services



- While individuals are participating in their approved work programs, the Department of Human Services can provide financial support for items through Special Allowances (SPALs)
- SPALs must be a requirement for a job interview, approved activity, or to accept employment. Some SPALs that are available, include:
 - Transportation expenses / Vehicle purchase
 - Clothing to participate in work activities
 - Books and educational supplies
 - Work, education and training expenses (licenses, professional f
 - Childcare (*provided through Early Learning Resource Centers*)
- There are limits to frequency and amounts related to SPALs



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Emergency Shelter Allowances



- Emergency Shelter Allowances are available to assist homeless or near homeless individuals or a family who needs financial assistance to:
 - Prevent eviction or foreclosure
 - Obtain permanent housing
 - Obtain temporary shelter
- To prevent eviction or foreclosure:
 - \$400 for an individual under age 21 or a family with a child under age 21
 - \$300 for an individual over age 21 or a family with all members age 21+



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Emergency Shelter Allowance



- To provide permanent living quarters:
 - \$300 for an individual under age 21 or a family with a child under age 21
 - \$100 for an individual over age 21 or a family with all members age 21+
- To provide a temporary shelter: \$100 maximum

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Requesting Assistance

SNAP Benefits (Food Stamps)

Medical Assistance

Cash Assistance



Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)

Simplifying the Application Process

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LIHEAP Information

- The Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) helps families living on lower incomes pay their heating bills in the form of a “cash grant”
- These cash grants range from \$300 to \$1,000 based on household size, income, and fuel type
- Households in immediate danger of being without heat can also qualify for “crisis grants” up to \$1000 (*2023-2024 season amounts*)
- The cash grant is a one-time payment sent directly to the utility company/fuel provider to be credited on your bill
- The 2023-2024 LIHEAP season is now closed. Application for the 2024-2025 LIHEAP season will be available in early Autumn 2024

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LIHEAP Application Processing



- There are two ways that individuals can apply for the LIHEAP Program:
 - Online – Individuals may apply for benefits online using the [COMPASS](#) website
 - On Paper – Applicants can download the [LIHEAP application](#) and return it to the local County Assistance Office

- Eligibility Information:
 - The household must meet the income guidelines and have a heating responsibility
 - The household does not need to be on any other types of assistance – not a requirement
 - Individuals do not need to be “*behind*” in heating bills – you do not need unpaid heating bills
 - Individuals can either rent or own their home

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LIHEAP Application Processing



- The 2023-2024 Income requirements (*these limits will change for the 2024-2025 Season*):

Household Size	Income Limit
1	\$21,870
2	\$29,580
3	\$37,290
4	\$45,000
5	\$52,710
6	\$60,420
7	\$68,130
8	\$75,840
For every additional household member, add \$7,710	

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Crisis Grants



- Households experiencing a heating crisis may be eligible for additional benefits through the LIHEAP crisis program
- Emergency situations include, but are not limited to:
 - Broken heating equipment or leaking lines that must be fixed or replaced
 - Having no heat at all
 - The main heating source or second heating source (*a source that is used to operate the main heating source or used if the main heating source is not working*) has been completely shut-off
 - The danger of being without fuel (*less than a 15-day supply*)
 - The danger of having utility service terminated (*applicant has received a notice that service will be shut off within the next 60 days*)

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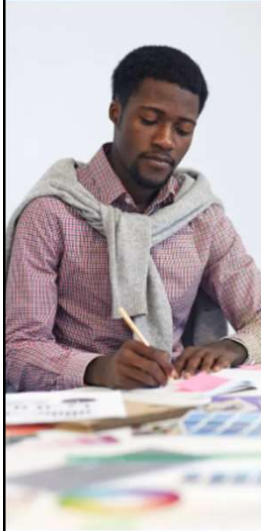


- Requesting Assistance
- SNAP Benefits (Food Stamps)
- Medical Assistance
- Cash Assistance
- Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)
- Simplifying the Application Process

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Tips for Accurate and Timely Processing



- The application, Semi-Annual Reporting form and/or Renewal form must be signed prior to mailing
- Answer all questions listed, including providing a telephone number so the office may reach the applicant for quick and easy questions
- Provide the supporting documentation, as requested:
 - Identification (ID) when applying for benefits
 - Proof of income (*earned and unearned*), resources and any other requested documentation
- Rights and Responsibilities page/section must be signed
- Cooperate fully with the caseworker by quickly providing any additional verification/documentation that is requested

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Tips for Simplifying Ongoing Benefits



- Individuals receiving benefits are required to report changes to their local Department of Human Services or to the Statewide Customer Service Center (SWCSC) at 1-877-395-8930
 - Changes that are reportable include, but are not limited to:
 - Changes in address
 - A new telephone number – it is very important to keep a current telephone number on file
 - New employment or employment ending
 - A household member leaving/entering the household (*household composition*)
- Pick up and review mail regularly
- Return all required reporting forms (*Semi-Annual Reporting Form and the Renewal Packet*) to the CAO completed with all documentation requested

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