

# 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 such as:

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)	SNAP Eligibility	Medicaid	Medicaid Categories	Long Term Care (LTC)
Home & Community Based Services (HCBS)	Community Health Choices (CHC)	PA Independent Enrollment Broker (PA IEB)	Pennie	Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
Diversion Cash Assistance	Special Allowances	Emergency Shelter Allowance (ESA)	Property Tax & Rent Rebate	PA Navigate

- 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

LIHEAP and Other Programs

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 mailing a completed application to the local DHS Office

### By phone or fax

- 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](http://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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# Welcome to COMPASS



Programs > About Us Help Center

English

APPLY NOW

LOG IN

1 of 3 : Pink Renewal Packets

Renewal packets will now be mailed in PINK envelopes to make them easy to spot. Watch for a large PINK envelope before your renewal is due.



## 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.

GET STARTED

RENEW NOW



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# Welcome to COMPASS



## How Can We Help You?



### Health Care Coverage

Includes Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), Medical Assistance, Medicaid for Former Foster Care Youth, Mental Health/Substance Abuse, Pennsylvania's Health Insurance Marketplace (Pennie).

[About Health Care Coverage](#)



### Food Assistance

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) formerly known as Food Stamps.

[About Food Assistance](#)



### Cash Assistance

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), State Blind Pension, and Refugee Cash Assistance give cash help to people or families in need.

[About Cash Assistance](#)



### Help With Paying for Child Care

The Child Care Works program helps families pay for child care.

[About Help Paying for Child Care](#)



[VIEW ALL BENEFITS](#)

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# Welcome to COMPASS



## COMPASS Quick Actions

Not sure where to start? Access these resources easily with COMPASS Quick Actions.



### Manage Your Benefits Online

Your My COMPASS account is a secure centralized location for your application and benefit information.

[Create a My COMPASS Account](#)



### Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP)

Start your application or recertify.

[Get Started with ERAP](#)



### Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)

The Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) helps pay your energy bills. You may apply for the 2024-2025 LIHEAP season using the COMPASS registration number you received.

[Get Started with LIHEAP](#)



### Free Summer Meals for Children

The Summer Food Service Program offers free, nutritious meals to children 18 years and younger during the summer when school is not in session. Program locations open and close throughout the summer based on community need. There is NO enrollment and NO cost to participate.

[Learn about Free Summer Meals](#)



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# Welcome to COMPASS



## Need Other Medical Assistance Services?

Home and Community-Based Services can help more than Medical Assistance for a person who wants to stay in a community. You can't apply for these programs in COMPASS, but we can send a referral to the program office for you.

### Early Intervention

[About Early Intervention Services](#)

### Intellectual Disability

[About Intellectual Disability Services](#)

### Adult Autism Services

[About Adult Autism Services](#)

START REFERRAL

## Looking for Other Resources?



### Reference Guides

- [Quick Reference Guide for Applicants](#)
- [Child Care Provider Search Quick Reference Guide for Applicants](#)
- [Quick Reference Guide for Community Partners](#)
- [Online Self-Registration Guide for Community Partners](#)



### Important Links

- [Find Early Learning Programs and Child Care Providers](#)
- [Find Home and Community Based Services Providers](#)
- [Check Application Status](#)
- [Finish Application](#)
- [Printable Forms](#)



### FAQs

- [Health Care Coverage](#)
- [Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program \(SNAP\)](#)
- [Cash Assistance](#)
- [Help Paying for Child Care](#)
- [Children's Health Insurance Program \(CHIP\)](#)


SEE ALL LINKS


SEE ALL FAQs



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# General Information about Benefits





## Additional Information for Each Program being Discussed Today:

- SNAP (Food Stamp) Manual  
<http://services.dpw.state.pa.us/oimpolicymanuals/snap/index.htm>
- Medical Assistance Manual  
<http://services.dpw.state.pa.us/oimpolicymanuals/ma/index.htm>
- Cash Assistance Manual  
<http://services.dpw.state.pa.us/oimpolicymanuals/cash/index.htm>
- LIHEAP (Energy Assistance)  
<http://services.dpw.state.pa.us/oimpolicymanuals/liheap/index.htm>

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Requesting Assistance

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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



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# 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 or Fax - Contact the Consumer Service Center for Health Care Coverage at 1-866-550-4355

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# 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 (*Ex-SNAP*), 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 5<sup>th</sup> 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 with the applicant

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## Types of SNAP Benefits



- **ESAP** – SNAP benefits for households where **ALL household members** are either one of the below criteria and the SNAP household has no earned income. These households have a recertification or renewal period of 36 months
  - Elderly - a person who is 60 years of age or older -or-
  - Disabled - a person who is disabled according to Social Security requirements -or-
  - A combination of the two criteria (*one individual is elderly while the other individual is disabled*)
- **Extended SNAP** - Benefits provided to all households leaving TANF Cash: Cash Assistance is closing (*except those prohibited by regulation*). SNAP benefits are frozen for five months to provide continued nutritional support for the families as they move from TANF to Self-Sufficiency

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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
  - **Criminal History** – Applicants must declare any criminal history at application and reapplication

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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. The CAO will use some/all these expenses as deductions to lower that "Gross" income down to a "Net" income

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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	\$2,510
2	\$3,408
3	\$4,304
4	\$5,200
5	\$6,098
6	\$6,994
7	\$7,890

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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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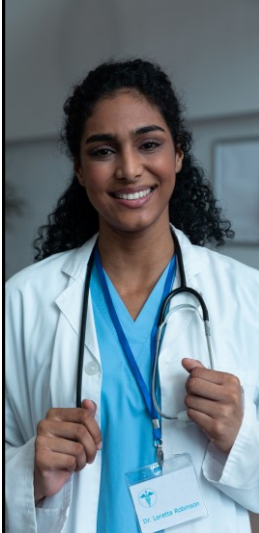
LIHEAP and Other Programs

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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## Using Medical Assistance Benefits



- 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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## 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/Fax - 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

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. 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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## 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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## LTC Services and Supports Benefit Guide



- The supports and services available to participants can be found in the [Benefits Guide](#). These services are in addition to the physical health benefits.
- CHC managed care organizations may provide additional services, such as:

Adult daily living services	Assistive technology	Behavior therapy	Benefits counseling
Career assessment	Cognitive rehabilitation therapy	Community integration	Community transition services
Counseling	Employment skills development	Financial management services	Home adaptations
Home delivered meals	Home health aide	Home health – nursing	Job coaching
Job finding	Non-medical transportation	Nutritional counseling	Participant community support
Personal assistance services	Personal emergency response	Pest eradication	Residential habilitation
Respite	Structured day habilitation	Telecare	Vehicle modifications

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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

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 start the waiver application process, go to [Apply for waiver services](#)
- To learn about the waiver application process, go to [Process for waiver application](#)
- To check the status of your application, go to [Check Status](#)

**Providers**  
You can complete and submit the Physicians Certification Form. For a guide to filling out the form.

**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 currently enrolled in PA CHC and have questions call the PA CHC Helpline at **1-844-824-3655** (TTY: 711).  
We are open Monday through Friday, 8:00 AM to 6:00 PM (EST).

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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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## Children's 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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## 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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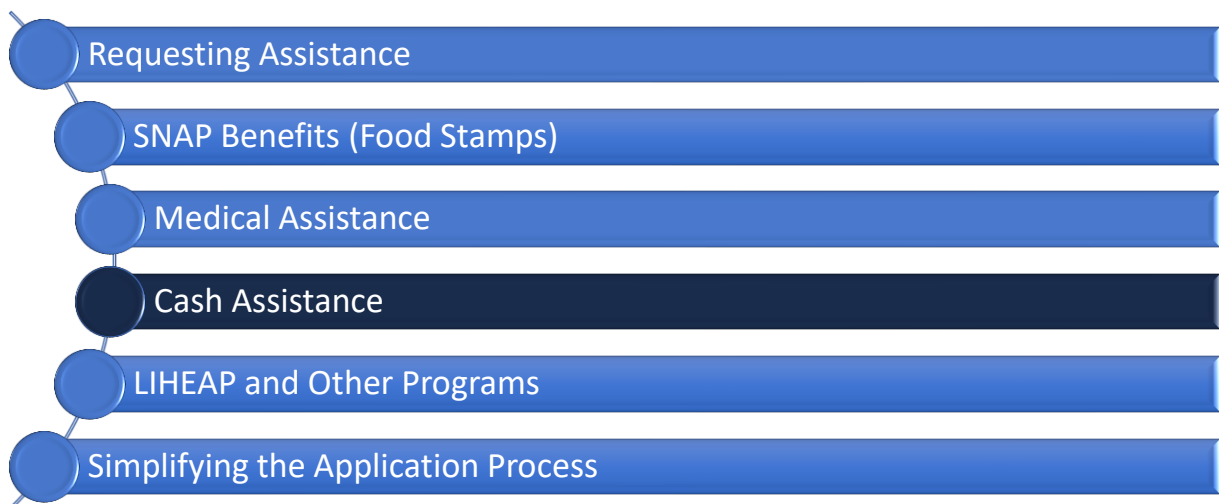
## Finding the Correct Coverage – PA MEDI



- 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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## 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

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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
    - 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.
  - **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
  - **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 - \$967.00
  - Couple - \$1450.00

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## State Supplementary Payment (SSP)



- The Social Security Administration (SSA) established Supplemental Security Income (SSI) to aid needy aged, blind and disabled individuals
- 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
- 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
- Again, individuals may apply in person, by telephone/fax, by mail or online at [WWW.COMPASS.STATE.PA.US](http://WWW.COMPASS.STATE.PA.US)

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## 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

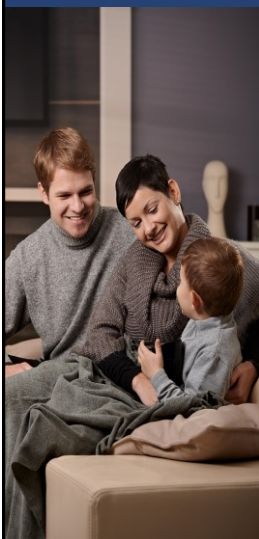
LIHEAP and Other Programs

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”
- During the 2024-2025 season, these cash grants ranged 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 (*2024-2025 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 2024-2025 LIHEAP season is currently closed and future plans for the LIHEAP program are dependent on plans being made in Washington, DC

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## Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program



- The Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program supports homeowners and renters across Pennsylvania
- This program provides a rebate ranging from \$380 to \$1,000 to eligible older adults and people with disabilities age 18 and older
- There are several ways to apply for the Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program:
  - On-Line – Apply online through [myPATH](#) (my Pennsylvania Tax Hub) for the fastest and most secure process
  - Apply In-Person – You may apply at various sites across the state which are located on [myPATH](#)
  - On Paper – Forms may be obtained on the Pennsylvania Department of Revenue website. Completed forms, proof of income and other required documentation to:

PA Department of Revenue  
Property Tax/Rent Rebate Program  
P.O. Box 280503  
Harrisburg, PA 17128-0503

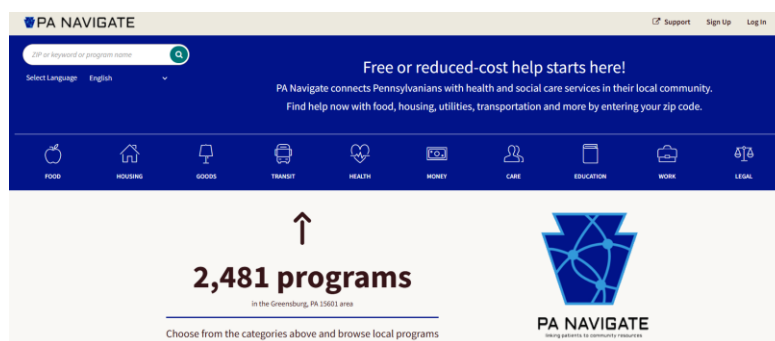
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## PA Navigate



- PA Navigate is a website that connects Pennsylvanians with health and social care services in their local community
- Individuals can find help with food, housing, utilities, transportation and more by entering their zip code



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Requesting Assistance

SNAP Benefits (Food Stamps)

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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 Accurate and Timely Processing



- After benefits have been authorized, the caseworker must reverify eligibility on a regular basis – the process is a Renewal or Reapplication
- Pink envelopes for renewal packets started mailing out to benefit recipients on Friday, April 18 for some renewal packets due in May
- Pink envelopes will help renewal packets stand out from other mail so that recipients are more likely to notice the receipt of their renewal
- Complete your benefit renewal, as required, by filling out enclosed paperwork (shorter, condensed application), provide all requested verification (resources, income...) and sign as required
- Failure to complete this renewal/reapplication process, could result in the loss of your benefits

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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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Questions/Comments?

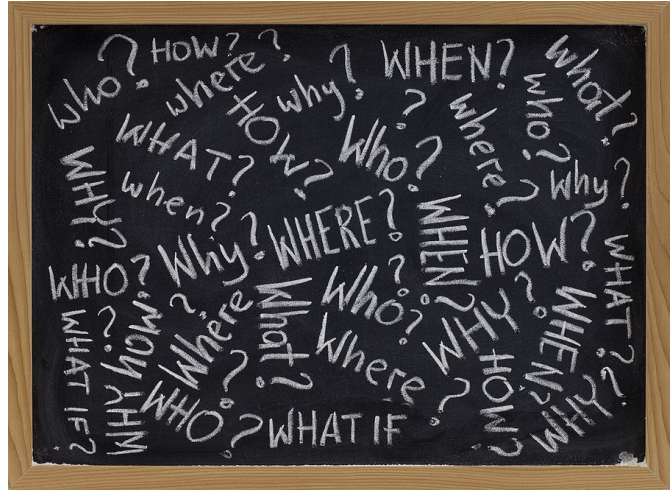


Thank you all for your time and attendance today!

## Stacey Barnhart

## OIM Staff Development Manager

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