

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

LIHEAP helps eligible adults pay energy bills. Homeowners and renters are eligible. Adults living in subsidized housing may not be eligible.

### *What is available?*

- Energy assistance cash grants are available to help pay heating bills.
- Crisis grants are given to help adults pay for broken furnaces, fuel shortages, and utility shut offs.
- Weatherization repair assistance is also available to help weatherize the home.

### *Eligibility*

The amount of the grant is based on the type of fuel used to heat the home, the total household income, and the county of residence. Applications are taken during a specified time period, generally during the heating season of October through March. There are no work requirements for LIHEAP.

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REMEMBER. The law often changes. Each case is different. This pamphlet is meant to give you general information and not to give you specific legal advice.

*Please use the information found in this brochure carefully since the law is constantly changing and the information may not accurately reflect any changes in the law that occurred following the creation and publication of the brochure.*

**Pennsylvania Legal Aid Network, Inc.**  
118 Locust Street  
Harrisburg, PA 17101  
(800) 322-7572  
www.PALegalAid.net

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# A Guide to Public Benefits

Public Information Pamphlet #34

*Cash Assistance*

*Medical Assistance*

*Food Stamps*

*Low Income Energy Assistance  
(LIHEAP)*

**Pennsylvania  
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The Pennsylvania Legal Aid Network of civil legal aid programs  
provides help for people who have no place else to turn



# A Guide to Public Benefits

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■ **PUBLIC BENEFITS** are those programs that are funded by the government to provide help to individuals and families during times of need. This brochure addresses some basic information on a few of those programs

## Cash Assistance

Cash assistance can be given to families and individuals. Two available forms of assistance are *Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF)* and *General Assistance (GA)*.

### **Eligibility**

#### *Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF)*

Pregnant women and families with dependent children, the natural parents, or other relatives that may qualify as the head of household are eligible for TANF

#### *General Assistance (GA)*

Eligibility for GA is limited to those who fall under the following categories:

- Having no dependent children
- Being disabled
- Victims of domestic violence
- Persons enrolled in drug and alcohol treatment

### **Limitations**

For TANF, there is a 60 month (5 year) limit in an adult's lifetime for receiving benefits. There are also work requirements (there are some exceptions). The adult must usually work for a minimum of 20 or 30 hours per week. Education or training can sometimes be counted as work.

For GA, there is generally no time limit. Domestic violence victims and drug and alcohol treatment adults are limited to nine months of GA in a lifetime. Work requirements for GA are similar to those of TANF. Many categories of GA clients are exempt.

## Food Stamps

Food stamps are used to buy food. Both families and individuals can apply. The amount of the benefit will vary depending on the size and income of the family and the county of residence. For example, the maximum amount that a family of three can receive is \$526 per month.

### **Eligibility**

- The gross monthly income limit for an individual is no more than \$1,444 per month. The monthly income for an elderly or disabled individual is no more than \$1,805 gross per month;
- Income limit for a family of three or more ranges from \$1,984 gross or \$1,526 net and up depending on the size of the family;
- Resources are not counted.

### **Limitations**

There is generally no time limit, but some able-bodied childless adults are limited to three months in a three year period if they are not working.

There are work requirements, but they are only mandatory for certain able-bodied adults ages 18 to 49 years of age who are not living with dependent children.

## Medical Assistance (MA)

Medical Assistance provides access to medical care for individuals and families. Both individuals and families can apply for enrollment in a fee-for-service or a managed care program that provides medical services from participating providers.

### **Eligibility**

- Households who are enrolled in TANF
- GA recipients
- Other low-income persons may be eligible if they:
  - Are US Citizens or have Eligible Immigration Status
  - Meet Income and Resource Guidelines; and
  - Fit into a group or category of people that MA covers, such as disabled, elderly, requires health-sustaining medication, or have excess medical expenses

There are no work requirements for most MA categories.