

**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 utility shut offs, fuel shortages, or broken furnaces.
- 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 November through March. There are no work requirements for LIHEAP.

**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 consult your local Legal Aid office for assistance.**

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.

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Informational pamphlets on other legal topics can be found at

**PALawHelp.org**

Your Online Source for Legal Information and Civil Legal Aid in Pennsylvania

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# A Guide to Public Benefits

Public Information Pamphlet #34

*Cash Assistance/TANF*

*Medical Assistance*

*Food Stamps/SNAP*

*Low Income Energy Assistance (LIHEAP)*

**Pennsylvania  
Legal Aid Network**

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

■ **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 or individuals who are caring for a child in their home, and individuals who are legally blind. Two available forms of assistance are *Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF)* and *State Blind Pension Benefits*.

#### ***Eligibility***

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

Pregnant women and families with dependent children may qualify for TANF cash benefits. Specified relatives exercising care and control of dependent children may also qualify for TANF benefits.

##### *State Blind Pension Program*

Individuals with visual acuity not exceeding 3/60 or 10/200 in the better eye (with best correction) may qualify for the State Blind Pension Program.

#### ***Limitations***

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

### **Food Stamps/SNAP**

Food Stamps, or **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program** benefits, are used to buy food. Both families and individuals can apply. The amount of the benefit will vary depending on the size, income, and expenses of the family. For example, the maximum amount of Food Stamps that a family of three can receive is \$497 per month.

#### ***Eligibility***

- The gross monthly income limit for an individual is no more than \$1,533 per month.
- For an elderly or disabled individual, the gross monthly income amount is typically no more than \$1,916 per month.
- Monthly income eligibility limits increase with the size of the family.
- Resources are limited to \$5,500 for most households. For most households with an elderly or disabled individual, the resource limit is \$9000.

#### ***Limitations***

There are no time limits for receiving Food Stamp/SNAP benefits. To continue receiving Food Stamp/SNAP benefits, most households must complete reporting forms and recertification paperwork every 6-12 months.

Work requirements for able-bodied individuals without children are currently waived due to high rates of unemployment in Pennsylvania.

### **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
- 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 some work requirements for eligibility in some MA categories.