

Medical Assistance Information

Compliments of Senior Living Advisors

Western Pennsylvania Resource Guide

We are a free service to help families choose an appropriate Independent Living apartment with services, Personal Care Home, or Assisted Living community for their loved one that matches the medical needs, financial capabilities, and geographic preferences.

With the family's permission, we will assess the candidate at home, at the skilled rehab unit, or at the hospital. After obtaining an accurate report to determine the scope of care the individual requires, we make appropriate recommendations of communities that fit the parameters of medical, financial, and geographic needs.

Senior Living Advisors will accompany the family and prospective resident on tours to help them through the process. Our skilled representatives will always make recommendations as if it were pertaining to our own Mom, Dad, or other loved one. We answer seven days a week.

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Medical Assistance Information

The following is a list of documentation that is required by the County Assistance office in order to process a Medical Assistance application. If you have any questions regarding eligibility, process or spend down process, please contact the County Assistance Office as we are unable to answer these questions. The application process can take several months from start to finish.

- Allegheny: (800) 344-4319
- Beaver: (724) 847-2262
- Butler: (888) 367-2434
- Washington: (888) 300-2704
- Westmoreland: (800) 442-8000

The Department of Human Services requires the following information when applying for medical assistance.

Medical Assistance General Eligibility Requirements

You must meet income, resources (in some cases), and other eligibility requirements in order to be eligible for Medical Assistance. These categories are grouped by:

- Adults age 19-64 with incomes at or below 133% of the Federal Income Poverty Guidelines (FPIG) (Identified for Medical Assistance purposes as MAGI-related)
- Individuals who are aged (age 65 and older), blind and disabled. (Identified for Medical Assistance purposes as SSI-related)
- Families with children under age 21
- Special Medical Assistance conditions

Income

Medical Assistance eligibility is determined using income and household size in comparison to income limits. Age and disability are also factors in determining which income limits apply. (Income limits for the various eligibility groups are listed below.) Examples of income counted in determining eligibility include:

- Wages (certain deductions are allowed)
- Interest

- Dividends
- Social Security
- Veterans' Benefits (except for MAGI MA)
- Pensions
- Spouse's income if living with him/her

Examples of income not counted when determining eligibility include:

- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) benefits
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits
- Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) benefits
- Foster Care payments
- Certain housing or utility subsidies
- Weatherization Payments
- Child Support Payments (only for MAGI MA)

Income Limits

The income limits for each category are provided in the section for that category.

Resources

Medical Assistance eligibility for some is also determined using resource and household size in comparison to resource limits. (Resource limits for the various eligibility groups are listed below or in the section for that category.)

NOTE: Resource limits do not apply to persons eligible for - Modified Adjusted Gross Income (MAGI) MA, pregnant women, families with children in the household - under their care and control, and those under the age of 21.

Examples of resources counted in determining eligibility include:

- Cash
- Checking accounts
- Savings accounts and certificates
- Christmas or vacation clubs
- Stocks and bonds
- Some trust funds
- Life insurance

- Vehicles
- Revocable burial funds
- Non-resident property
-

Examples of resources not counted in determining eligibility include:

- Your home
- Revocable and irrevocable burial reserves subject to specified limits
- Burial space and marker
- One motor vehicle
- Resource Limits
- Some Medical Assistance eligibility groups have resource limits. The charts below provide specific details:

Non-Money Payment (NMP) Medical Assistance

GA-Related

One Person = \$250

Two People = \$1,000

SSI-Related

One Person = \$2,000

Two People = \$3,000

Medically-Needy Only Medical Assistance

GA or SSI-Related

One Person = \$2,400

Two People = \$3,200

Each Additional Person = \$300

Medicare Buy-In Programs

Healthy Horizons Cost Sharing, Specified Low-Income Medical Assistance

Beneficiary, Qualifying Individual Categories

One Person = \$7,860

Two Persons = \$11,800

NOTE: There is no resource exclusion for pregnant women, children under 21 or families with children under 21 for Medicare Buy-In Programs.

Other Eligibility Requirements

- **Identity** — Identity can be verified by a driver's license, state identification card or another piece of identification.
- **Social Security Number (SSN)** — A SSN must be provided for each person applying for Medical Assistance. County Assistance Office staff will help you apply for an SSN for anyone who does not have one.
- **Residency** — Medical Assistance is available to individuals who are residents of Pennsylvania if all other eligibility requirements are met. There is no requirement regarding the length of time that a person must live in Pennsylvania.
- **Citizenship** — Medical Assistance is available to United States citizens, refugees, and certain lawfully admitted aliens. Other aliens may be eligible for limited Medical Assistance benefits if an emergency medical condition exists. U.S. citizens, refugees and legal aliens must submit documentation proving U.S. citizenship or legal alien status.
- **Household Composition** — County Assistance Office staff will determine who are mandatory or optional budget group members in the Medical Assistance application based upon household relationships and individual needs for Medical Assistance.

Pennsylvania Health Law Project

Helping people in need get the health care they deserve.

Pittsburgh Office: - <http://www.phlp.org/>

Helpline: (800) 274 - 3258

2325 E. Carson Street, First Floor

Pittsburgh, PA 15203

Phone:(412) 434 5779

Fax: (412) 434 0128

What does PHLP do?

PHLP provides free legal services and advocacy to Pennsylvania residents having trouble accessing publicly-funded health care coverage and services. We accomplish this by:

- helping individual clients through our Helpline;
- educating health care consumers, advocates, and providers; and
- advocating on behalf of our clients at the federal, state, and local level for policies and practices that will best address their needs and protect their rights.

Who does PHLP help?

PHLP helps Pennsylvanians – especially low-income families, persons with disabilities, and the elderly – who are struggling to obtain health care coverage or services. We specialize in helping individuals and families access health care coverage and services through programs such as Medical Assistance, CHIP, and Medicare.

Can PHLP help me if...

I've recently lost my insurance coverage?

Yes. PHLP can tell you if you are eligible for a publicly-funded insurance program (for example, Medical Assistance or CHIP). If the insurance you lost was a public program, we can also tell you if your benefit was properly stopped and, if appropriate, represent you in an appeal.

My health insurance will not pay for my prescription (or other service)?

Yes. PHLP can help you if your insurance is through a public program such as Medical Assistance or CHIP. We can assist you and the doctor who prescribed the medication or service to ensure that you receive the treatment you need.

I'm uninsured?

Yes. PHLP can tell you if you are eligible for a publicly-funded insurance program (for example, Medical Assistance or CHIP). If you are not eligible for any of these insurance programs, PHLP may be able to help you get the health care you need through other programs or funding sources.

I'm having trouble with my doctor or am unhappy with the care I've received?

No. PHLP cannot help you if you want to bring a lawsuit because you're unhappy with the quality of a health care service you received. This type of case, often called a negligence or malpractice claim, is handled by private attorneys.

I'm trying to get a Power of Attorney or to establish guardianship of a relative or friend?

No. PHLP does not handle these types of cases.

I have unpaid medical bills?

Sometimes. PHLP can advise you on (1) hospital charity care programs and (2) coverage through Medical Assistance (if your debt is less than four months old). Otherwise, we do not handle medical debt matters.

Are Helpline services confidential?

Yes. PHLP is a law office and all communications with our attorneys and paralegals are covered by attorney-client privilege. We will not disclose any information about you to anyone outside of PHLP without your permission.

Does PHLP charge a fee for its services?

PHLP does not charge individual clients for its services, regardless of the client's income. Clients with the ability and the desire to support our services may do so by making a donation. We may charge for conducting trainings and presentations to community organizations or groups.

How is PHLP funded?

PHLP is a private, non-profit, 501(c)(3) organization. We receive funding from Pennsylvania Legal Aid Network, foundations, and private donations.

Is PHLP part of the government?

No. PHLP is a non-profit law office and is not part of the state or any government agency.

What happens when I call the PHLP Helpline (800) 274-3258?

When you call our Helpline, you will reach a voicemail box where you can leave a brief message with your name, phone number, and a short description of the reason for your call. We will return your call as soon as possible.

If you email PHLP, the process is similar. You will hear back shortly from one of our legal staff, who will typically ask for your phone number so that we can discuss your problem in detail.

Do you take walk-ins?

We recommend that you call our Helpline first. If your matter is urgent, explain your situation in your message and we will return your call as soon as we can. If you do not have regular access to a phone, we can arrange to meet with you in person.

Can I contact PHLP on behalf of a relative or friend?

Yes. However, depending on the circumstances, we may ask to speak to your relative or friend directly.

SAMHSA - SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access, and Recovery (SOAR)

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's mission is to reduce the impact of substance abuse and mental illness on America's communities.

<https://www.samhsa.gov>

5600 Fishers Ln, Rockville, MD 20857

1-877-SAMHSA-7 (1-877-726-4727)

SAMHSA's SOAR program increases access to Social Security disability benefits for eligible children and adults who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness and have a serious mental illness, medical impairment, and/or co-occurring substance use disorder.

It can be a challenge for people experiencing or at risk of homelessness to gain access to Supplemental Security Income/Social Security Disability Insurance (SSI/SSDI) benefits. For those individuals who also have serious mental illness, medical impairments, and/or a co-occurring substance use disorder, the challenge can be even greater. SAMHSA's SOAR Technical Assistance Center helps states and communities end homelessness and promote recovery by increasing access to SSI/SSDI for individuals with disabling conditions.

The SOAR model is designed to assist children and adults in applying for Social Security disability benefits, including those returning to their communities from jails and hospitals. Youth aging out of the foster care system may apply 180 days before their foster care eligibility will end due to age.

SOAR Resources

SAMHSA provides case managers participating in the SOAR program with a variety of publications, tools, and other resources to assist them and their clients.

The [SOAR Application Toolbox](#) has the tools and forms case managers need to complete and submit an SSI/SSDI application using the SOAR process. The [SOAR Resources Library](#) provides articles, webinars, and other materials about topics that relate to homelessness and [mental and substance use disorders](#).

Access [common questions by topic](#) to learn more about the SOAR program and other SAMHSA services.