

Do I have to work if I am receiving TA?

All adult recipients of cash Temporary Assistance must be engaged in work "as soon as practicable" (there are some exemptions for expectant mothers, one parent households with children under a year old, the disabled or elderly, or those caring for a member of the household who is ill or incapacitated). Upon approval of your application, be sure to speak with your caseworker about the different employment options that are available. Employment does not necessarily mean working in a private or public sector job; you may be able to meet your work requirement through GED programs, providing child care, through job training or community service.

Where do I apply?

Go to Windows #5 & #6 at the Rath Building (158 Pearl Street, Downtown Buffalo) and ask for an application. At that time you should identify any emergency needs you have, such as:

- 1) You are homeless
- 2) You have little or no food
- 3) Your landlord has told you that you must move or has given you eviction papers.
- 4) You do not have fuel for heating in the cold weather period
- 5) Your utilities are shut-off or are about to be shut-off, or you have a 72-hour disconnect notice
- 6) You or someone in your family has been beaten, abused or threatened with violence by a husband, wife, partner or other member of the household.

You can also obtain applications at www.wnyhomeless.org on our "Get Help" page.

What do I need to bring when I apply?

You have to establish your identity, income, resources, and shelter expenses. Documentation is different for everyone (and **DSS will accept certain alternatives to the documents listed below**), but most applicants need the following:

Identity (all applicants)

- Driver's license or photo ID or passport

Residence

- Landlord Statement or Utility Bills or Current Rent Statement or Mortgage Book/Records

Household Size

- Landlord Statement/Two statements from neighbors

Date of Birth (all applicants)

- Birth Certificate or Driver's License or School Records or U.S.A. Passport

Social Security Number (all applicants)

- Social Security Card or Letter from the Social Security Administration stating that you have applied for a Social Security Card

Wages

- Current pay stubs for (4) weeks of employment or Contact with employer stating gross wages for the last (4) weeks

Self-Employment

- Current income tax records or Records and related materials concerning earnings and expenses

Child Support

- Court order of support or Statement from person paying support

Documentation of:

- Unemployment Insurance Benefits
- Social Security Benefits
- Veterans' Benefits
- Worker's Compensation
- Food Stamp Benefits

- Bank Account Records or Credit Union Record
- IRA or other Retirement Account Record stating value, accessibility, and penalty if accessed
- Current rent receipt or Current lease or Landlord statement
- Any Utility Bills you pay

If you own your home:

- Mortgage book/records or Escrow analysis statement or Property and school tax records
- Statement or Receipt from day care center or other child care provider

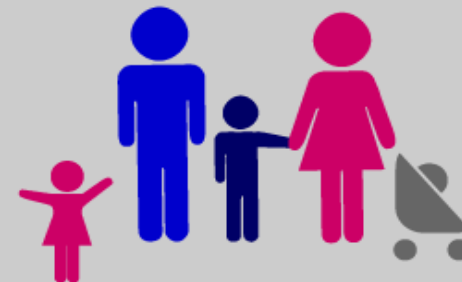
Child Support Payment

- Court order or Garnished pay stubs

School Attendance for Students Age 16 and Older

- School records or letter from school

Applying for Temporary Assistance (TANF)



NEIGHBORHOOD LEGAL SERVICES, INC.

Main Service Building, 217 Main Street, Suite 400, Buffalo, New York 14203-2794
TEL: (716) 847-0650 Fax: (716) 847-0227 TDD: (716) 847-1322



www.wnyhomeless.org

Important Numbers:

If you feel you have been unfairly denied Temporary Assistance, are having difficulty understanding your rights and responsibilities while receiving temporary assistance, or aren't sure if you are eligible, call:

Neighborhood Legal Services

847-0650

If you are homeless and need immediate assistance, call **911** or **Crisis Services at 834-3131**

What is Temporary Assistance?

Temporary Assistance is the name for two programs: Family Assistance (FA) and Safety Net Assistance (SNA).

Am I eligible for Family Assistance (FA)?

Eligibility is based on your income and household but there are few universal eligibility rules. **If you are having trouble making ends meet, it is encouraged that you apply for Family Assistance**. The Department of Social Services must accept your application.

You are eligible for cash Family Assistance for up to five years and cash Safety Net Assistance for 2 years. **After that time you can receive non-cash assistance indefinitely.**

How much assistance will I receive?

Below are listed the maximum grants for those who pay for gas heat as a utility separate from their rent. Those who have gas heat included in their rent have a different maximum grant.

Household of one: \$360
Household of two: \$463
Household of three: \$560
Household of four: \$656
Household of five: \$775
Household of six: \$860
Household of seven: \$ 967
Household of eight: \$1050

Rights and Responsibilities

- 1) When applying for FA or SNA, if you inform a caseworker that you have an emergency need you must be seen the same day.
- 2) Depending on your need, you may be eligible for expedited assistance. Make sure to ask if you are eligible.
- 3) If you are applying for Safety Net Assistance and you transfer any of your resources around the same time you are applying and it is discovered, you can be denied application to SNA for a year. If you have been denied assistance because of transfer of funds, call Neighborhood Legal Services (847-0650).

Who is eligible for Safety Net Assistance (SNA)?

Safety Net Assistance has a cash program (for 24 months) and a non-cash program.

You are eligible for cash assistance if you are an adult not living with a dependent child, or if you are a minor with no children and have no adult relative with whom to live.

Those eligible for non-cash assistance are:

- 1) Families who have reached the Family Assistance (FA) 60-month cash time limit.
- 2) SNA recipients who have reached their two-year cash time limit.
- 3) Families in which any adult household member or a minor head of household is found by the Department of Social Services (DSS) to be **abusing drugs or alcohol and unable to work**.
- 4) Families with a person who **fails to comply with drug and/or alcohol screening and assessment**, minus the non-complying family member. Benefits to the non-complying family member will resume upon compliance.
- 5) Childless Couples

NOTE: Those households who are receiving FAMILY ASSISTANCE and have an adult member who is found to be abusing drugs and/or alcohol will be placed on SNA non-cash assistance until that member successfully completes a treatment program.

VERY IMPORTANT:

If you apply and are accepted for Temporary Assistance, Food Stamps, or Medicaid and are overpaid (even if it isn't your fault), you may receive an overpayment letter. This is a letter stating that you were given a larger grant than you are eligible for. If the Department of Social Services sends you an overpayment letter, **respond within 10 days of receiving the letter**. The Department will work out a budget plan for you to pay back the overpayment. **If you don't reply, you will be taken to court**, resulting in fees and interest to pay back as well. It is in your best interest to respond to this letter. If you receive one of these letters or suspect you are getting an overpayment, call Neighborhood Legal Services at 847-0650.

What about other resources I have (in the bank, my car, my home, etc)?

The following resources are exempt and do not count toward eligibility for Temporary Assistance:

- 1) \$2,000 (or \$3,000 for households with a member over 60) in the bank or cash on hand.
- 2) A home that is the household's usual place of residence
- 3) A car with a fair market value of \$4,650. Cars that are used to seek or maintain employment can be valued at \$9,300. If you don't have \$2,000 in the bank or on hand (as mentioned above), you can have a car valued at \$11,300
- 4) One burial plot per household member
- 5) Funeral arrangements worth up to \$1,500 per household member
- 6) Funds in an Individual Development Account (i.e., a trust account funded with periodic contributions of earned income or contributions from non-profit organizations)
- 7) For 6 months, real property that the household is making a good-faith effort to sell
- 8) Personal property necessary for business or employment
- 9) State and Federal earned income tax credit refunds
- 10) An amount of up to \$4,650 will be disregarded if set aside in a separate bank account established by an individual in receipt of Temporary Assistance for the **sole purpose** of saving to purchase a vehicle to seek, obtain, or maintain employment.