

WHAT THEY ARE: WHERE TO APPLY

The Public Benefits programs discussed here are: Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Medicaid, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Supplemental Security Income (SSI), and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) benefits. Applications for TANF, Medicaid, and SNAP are taken at the local Departments of Social Services, or you may apply online: <https://commonhelp.virginia.gov/access/> Applications for SSI and SSDI are made at a local Social Security Office, online www.socialsecurity.gov, or by calling the toll free number, 1-800-772-1213 (TTY 1-800-325-0778).

TANF benefits are paid to support low income families with children. There is a work requirement required for some recipients of TANF. There are exemptions to the TANF work provisions--- persons over 65, disabled persons, and several other categories. A person or family can only receive a maximum of 60 months of TANF. Eligibility for TANF is dependent upon the number of people in the TANF household and the family's earned and unearned income. Persons illegally in the United States are not eligible for TANF; a child born in the United States,

however, would be eligible for TANF benefits.

Medicaid provides medical coverage for income eligible persons who are disabled, pregnant, blind or elderly. Medicaid also provides medical coverage for Low Income Families With Children, and coverage for Long Term Care of income eligible persons in skilled nursing facilities. Medicaid is also provided to any one who is receiving SSI (see below). Medicaid does not provide coverage to persons in the USA illegally.

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Amounts depend on a household's earned income plus unearned income minus the household's expenses for child care, rent/mortgage, and utilities. For families with a person 60 years of age or disabled, there is also a deduction for all medical expenses over \$35/mth. There is a work component of the SNAP Program. As with the TANF work program, there are exemptions. http://www.fns.usda.gov/fsp/applicant_recipients/eligibility.htm. Persons illegally in the United States are not eligible for SNAP.

Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) is the disability income you can receive based on the amount of FICA taxes deducted from your pay checks over the years. To be eligible for SSDI you have to show, by Medical Evidence, that you no longer can perform any job in the national economy due to your impairment(s). To be entitled to SSDI you must have worked and earned the required number of quarters of coverage based on your age. A quarter of

coverage is based on a certain amount of income; for 2014 a quarter of coverage equals \$1020. Only 4 quarters can be earned per year. You can work while receiving SSDI, but your income must fall below certain limits. The Social Security Administration (SSA) also provides benefits to divorced, disabled and surviving spouses and children. Review the web site www.ssa.gov for a complete description of all the SSA programs and benefits available.

Supplemental Security Income (SSI) SSI is administered by the Social Security Administration (SSA). SSI is not based on one's earnings. The SSI program assists blind, disabled and elderly persons who have not paid into the SSDI program, or to supplement SSDI payments that do not reach the 72% level of the Federal Poverty level for each year, and whose resources do not exceed \$2000 for one person, or \$3000 for two persons.

SSI is also paid to disabled children of families with limited incomes. You can work while receiving SSI, but your earnings will cause a reduction in your monthly SSI check.

Your Right To Appeal

In all the above programs you have the right to appeal if your benefits are denied, reduced, suspended or terminated. You are entitled to a written notice of action from the agency prior to the agency's denial, reduction, suspension, or termination of benefits.

The TANF and Medicaid programs must allow you 30 days from the date of the written notice to make your appeal. Those appeals are called a request for a fair hearing.

The SNAP program provides you 90 days to appeal to request a fair hearing.

The SSDI and SSI programs allow 60 days from the date of the notice of action to appeal. The SSDI/SSI programs offer several layers of appeal. The first is called a "Request for Reconsideration", the second is called a request for a "Hearing by Administrative Law Judge"; each one provides a 60 day appeal period.

In all the programs discussed, if you appeal within 10 days of receipt of notice of action, your benefits must continue while waiting for the hearing. There are a few exceptions to this rule.

If you believe you have been denied benefits unjustly, or that your benefits have been reduced, suspended, or terminated unjustly, or without proper prior notice, you can contact LEGAL SERVICES OF NORTHERN VIRGINIA for advice and counsel on your case and your options for proceeding.

This pamphlet contains general information about your rights. If you have specific questions consult:

Legal Services of Northern Virginia

Main Office:

4080 Chain Bridge Road

Fairfax, VA 22030

Toll Free (866) 534-5243

Email: help@lsnv.org

Website: www.lsnv.org



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PUBLIC BENEFITS



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